Supplement to
The Frome Francisca, SOM-C39446
Fieldwork at Marston Mill, 2020-2021

Trial trenches 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7

John Oswin and Gillian Vickery

Bath and Counties Archaeological Society

Abstract

In 2019, a metal detector discovered a late/post Roman throwing axe (francisca) in a field immediately to the south of Marston Mill, Spring Gardens, Frome, Somerset. Subsequent geophysical survey revealed a number of features in that field which could relate to that find. Trial trenches were dug in the immediate vicinity of the axe find, but did not elucidate the historical context of the find. These trenches have been reported in a separate document.

In 2020, further trial trenches were dug across the field. Trenches 3, 4 and 5 cut into a strong, large magnetic anomaly just next to the causeway to the mill. The feature turned out to be a large pit , hand-dug in the nineteenth or twentieth century, filled with ash and other burnt residue.

Trench 6 crossed an embankment which appeared to separate the area where the axe was found from the lower valley floor. The bank was found to revetted on the south (axe area) side, with some stone on top and possible post holes on the north (lower) side. Sherds of Saxo-Norman pottery were found both on the upper surface and amongst the revetment. This suggested a date between 10th and 12th century, too late to be connected with the axe.

Trench 7 landed on a hard standing comprised of stones and pebbles typically 50 – 100 mm in size, laid on a soft bed. No datable evidence was found. The test trench was subsequently found to be too far to the east to find a possible structure shown by geophysics.

Supplement to The Frome Francisca, SOM-C39446.

Fieldwork at Marston Mill, 2020-2021

Trial trenches 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

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Bath and Counties Archaeological Society

November 2023

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Preface

The purpose of this document is to provide details of the trenches dug in summer and autumn of 2020 at Marston Mill to improve the contextual understanding of the find of the Frome Francisca, SOM-C39446. This supplement covers only trenches 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Full details of excavations of trenches 1 and 2 have been covered in a separate document by R Holley.

This is not intended as a stand-alone document, but should be read in conjunction with the document already issued: The Frome Francisca, SOM-C39446, Fieldwork 2020-2021.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Dr Robert Heath and his wife Dr Frances Liardet of Aldefeld Hall, Marston Mill, Frome for being so encouraging and being such excellent hosts.

Thank you also to Robin Holley and Shaun Wilson, former and current directors of excavation for the Bath and Counties Archaeological Society for their advice.

Plans used may have made use of Google Earth, to whom acknowledgements are made. Any modern Ordnance Survey mapping displayed is published under licence agreement 100060399.

Thanks also to John Richards for his help in sorting out the formatting problems associated with the context sheets.

1 Introduction

1.1 Location

Marston Mill with Aldefeld Hall are at the eastern end of Spring Gardens, to the north of Frome, just above the confluence of the Mells Stream with the River Frome. The land slopes up to the west, with the mill at approximately 60 m above Ordnance Datum (OD). The grid reference (central) for the area is ST 771 498.

Outside the gardens of Marston Mill and Oldfield Hall to the south is Barn Close, a field of approximately 4 ha. The field is kept under grass. Two footpaths cross this field, as does the drive on its causeway. The latter is on a causeway some 1 m above field level and it bisects the field into eastern and western portions. All trenches were in the western portion of Barn Close.

Figure 1.1: Location

Figure 1.1 shows the general location, and figure 1.2 locates the site in greater detail.

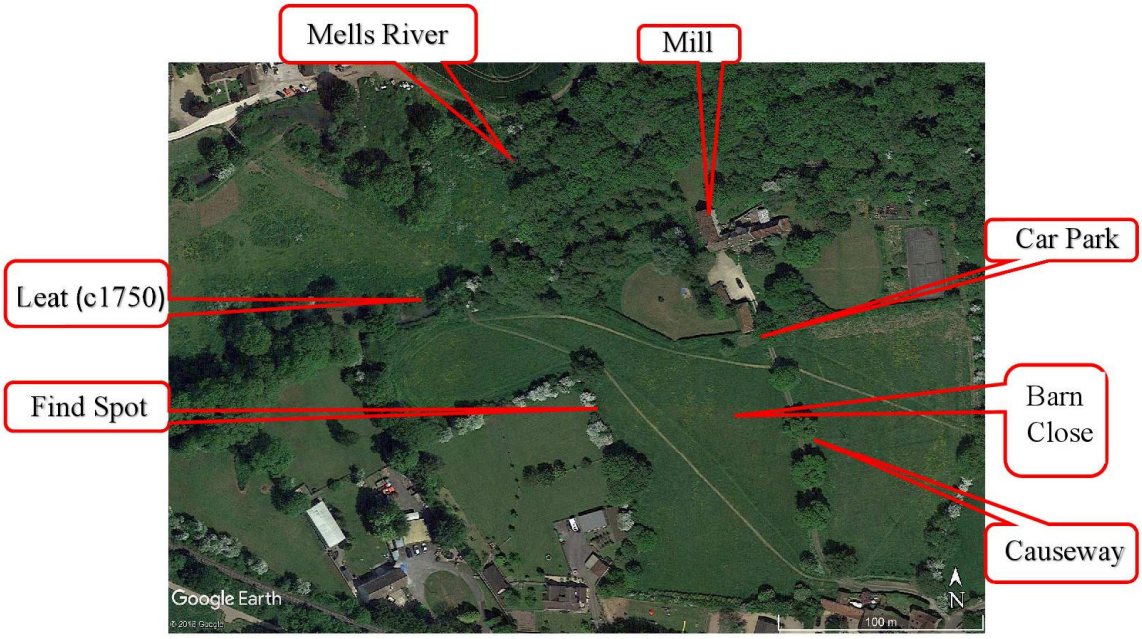


Figure 1.2: Detail plan for location.

1.2 Dates

The excavations were done at various dates between July 2020 and April 2021.

1.3 Personnel

The excavations were done by Gillian Vickery and John Oswin, supervised by Robin Holley (Director of excavations for BACAS at that time).

1.4 Scope of this document.

This document reports only on the excavation details of trenches 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 at Marston Mill, Barn Close, Frome. It is a supplement to a document already published giving full details of the geophysics of the Marston Mill site and outline details of trenches 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Trenches 1 and 2 have been fully published separately by Robin Holley.

This document does not intend to discuss the geophysics, except where it might be relevant to the interpretation of any of the trenches discussed here.

There will be a location on the field grid shown for each of the trenches, and then the detailed description will principally consist of plan and elevation drawing with appropriate notes, and also the context sheets will be included.

2 Method

2.1 Location

The geophysics grid had been lost at the start of this exercise, but was subsequently re-established so that the locations of the trenches could be mapped. This map is shown in figure 2.1. This includes trenches 1 and 2, although they are not covered in this report.

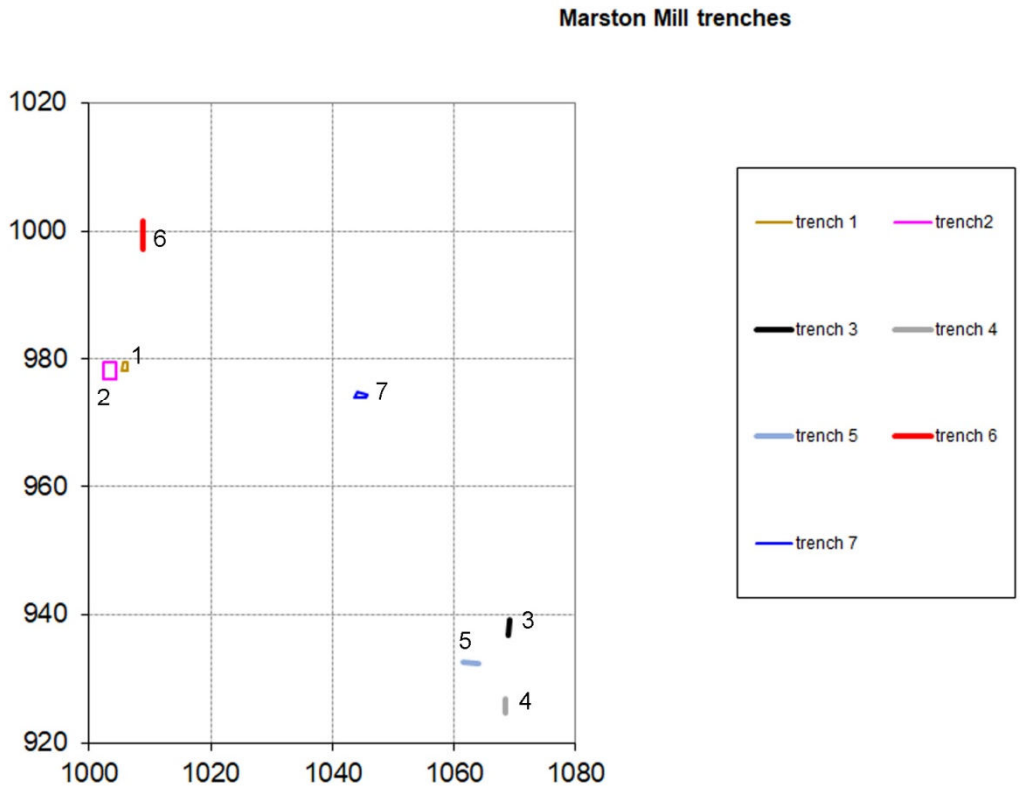


Figure 2.1: Location of trenches on geophysics grid

The first of the trenches described here, trench 3 was set by observing a parch mark close to the causeway, and setting up a north-south line which straddled the transition to parched grass, so that the edge of the feature could be seen in excavation. That line was then continued south after completing the trench, and trench 4 was marked out such that its southern edge was 14 m along the line from the northern edge of trench 3 (11 m between trenches). This also straddled the change from parched to normal grass.

A line was taken perpendicular to this north-south base line at 5.5 m south of the zero point and extended west for 8 m until it too straddled the change from normal to parched grass. This set trench 5, which was important as a resistivity profile in geophysics appeared to show a very dry object, perhaps masonry, below the surface.

Note that in all three cases actual trench widths were restricted to 0.5 m, and length was sufficient to show the detail needed. They were not necessarily excavated to the full length originally marked out. Dimensions should be taken from the plans given in subsequent chapters of this report.

Trench 6 was designed to straddle the bank just to the north of the axe find spot. It was laid out taking a line at the eastern end of trench 1 and extending it northwards some 20 m or more until it had crossed the bank. Width was restricted to 0.5 m. Dimensions can be taken from the plan provided in this document.

Trench 7 was an attempt to intercept the possible building running north-south across Barn Close. The idea was to locate a high resistance point which peaked from both north and west to try to find the junction of an internal wall. This failed as the highest reading obtained turned out to be in the area of 'hard standing' viewed in geophysics to the east of the building. The trench had needed to be some five to eight metres further to the west.

2.2 Excavation.

For all of these trenches, they were de-turved using a spade, with loose earth shovelled out. They were then excavated by trowel.

Context sheets were prepared, and plan and section drawings done, except in the case of trench 7, where only a plan was produced.

3 Trenches 3, 4 and 5.

These all covered the same ground feature, so will be considered together in this chapter.

3.1 Trench 3

Figure 3.1 shows the plan and elevation drawings for trench 3. Context sheets are given after.

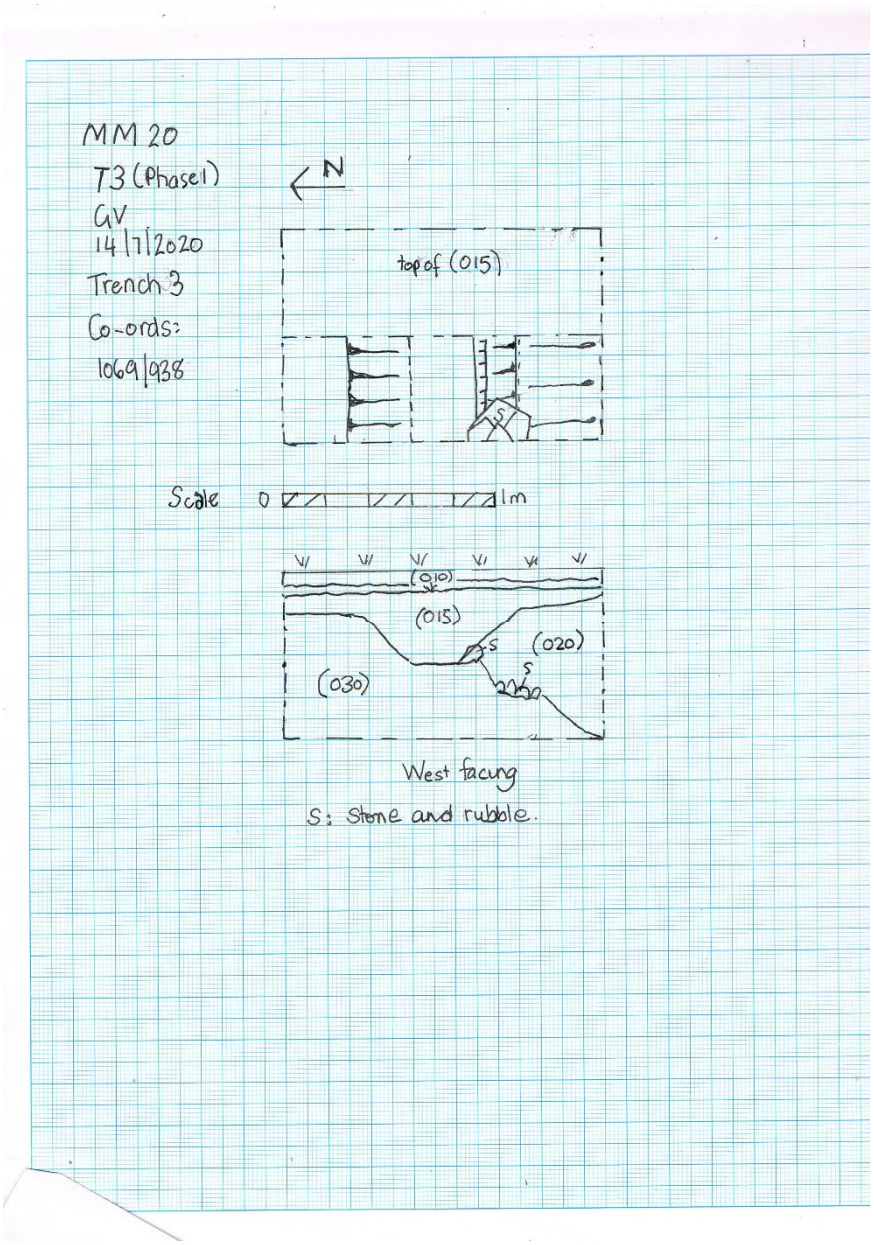


Figure 3.1 Trench 3 plan and elevation. North to left.

Project Code: Area:	Co-ordinates: E / N	Context Type:	Context No:
MM20 T3	1069/938 local	Deposit	(010)

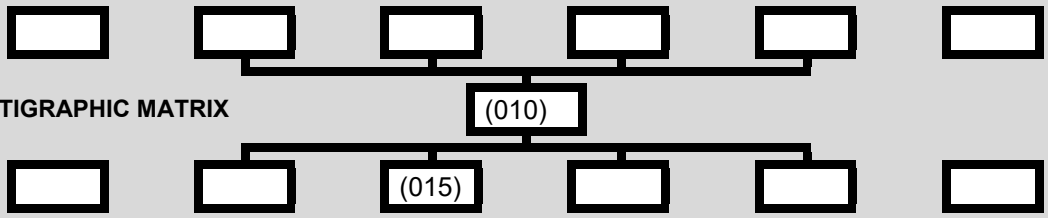
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Fairly Firm
	2. Colour	Mid to Dark Brown
	3. Texture/composition	Silty Sandy Clay
	4. Inclusions	Occasional Fragments of Stone and Flint 2%
	5. Dimensions	1.5 m * 0.5 m wide. Lens from 0.12 to 0.08 m deep
	6. Contamination	Highly
	7. Method/level of recovery	Spade and Trowel
	8. Weather conditions	Dry
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**	
	2. Orientation	
	3. Profile	
	4. Sides	
	5. Base	
	6. Dimensions	
	7. Fill numbers	
	Sketch plan/section/matrix	

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Topsoil formed over pit.

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Top soil.

Related Contexts:

Plan: see fig 3.1	**Section/other drawings: fig 3.1**	**Environmental samples: No**	
Colour print: No	**Colour slide: No**	**Black & White print: No**	**Digital: Yes**

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	**Excavated contents: None**

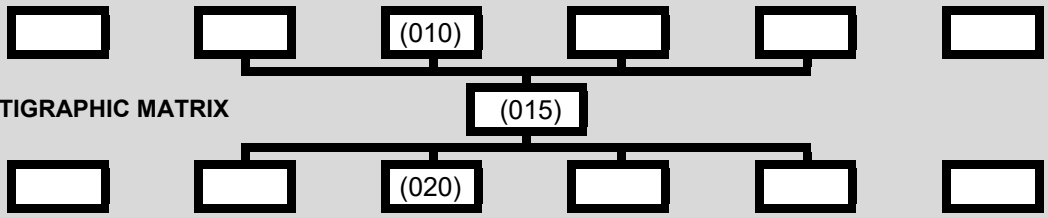
Project Code: MM20	Area: T3	Co-ordinates: E / N 1069/938 local	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (015)
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Loose		
	2. Colour	Ash grey		
	3. Texture/composition	Ash and burnt cinders		
	4. Inclusions	charcoal		
	5. Dimensions	1.5 m * 0.5 m wide. Lens up to 0.33 m thick		
	6. Contamination	Highly		
	7. Method/level of recovery	Trowel		
	8. Weather conditions	Dry		
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**			
	2. Orientation			
	3. Profile			
	4. Sides			
	5. Base			
	6. Dimensions			
	7. Fill numbers			
	Sketch plan/section/matrix			

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

One of the types of burnt material thrown into the pit.

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

One of the lenses of burnt material thrown into the pit at various times in succession, probably over a very short time period

Related Contexts:

Plan: see fig 3.1	Section/other drawings: fig 3.1	Environmental samples: No	
Colour print: No	**Colour slide: No**	**Black & White print: No**	**Digital: Yes**

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	Excavated contents: None

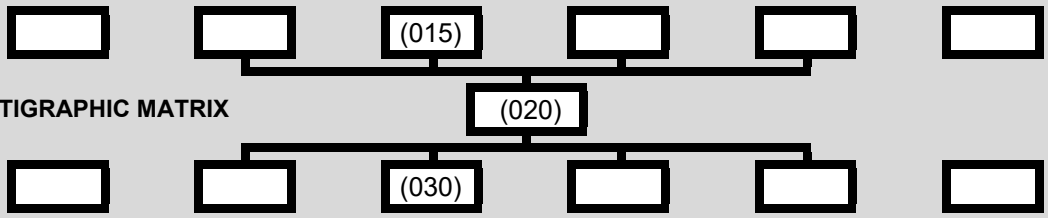
Project Code: MM20	Area: T3	Co-ordinates: E / N 1069/938 local	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (020)
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Loose		
	2. Colour	Dark Grey		
	3. Texture/composition	Charcoal, ash and soil		
	4. Inclusions	charcoal		
	5. Dimensions	1.5 m * 0.5 m wide. Lens up to 0.75 m deep		
	6. Contamination	Highly		
	7. Method/level of recovery	Trowel		
	8. Weather conditions	Dry		
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**			
	2. Orientation			
	3. Profile			
	4. Sides			
	5. Base			
	6. Dimensions			
	7. Fill numbers			
	Sketch plan/section/matrix			

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

One of the types of burnt material thrown into the pit.

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Lens of burnt waste material thrown into base of pit first before (015) added on top.

One of several differing heaps of burnt waste thrown into pit, probably in short time scale.

Related Contexts:

Plan: see fig 3.1	Section/other drawings: fig 3.1	Environmental samples: No	
Colour print: No	**Colour slide: No**	**Black & White print: No**	**Digital: Yes**

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.

Excavated contents: None

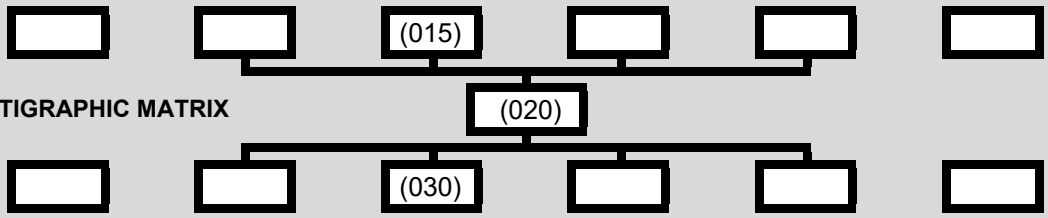
Project Code: MM20	Area: T3	Co-ordinates: E / N 1069/938 local	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (030)
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Firm and hard		
	2. Colour	Orange to yellow		
	3. Texture/composition	Clay subsoil		
	4. Inclusions	none		
	5. Dimensions	1.5 m * 0.5 m wide. Shelving down to 0.8 m depth		
	6. Contamination	none		
	7. Method/level of recovery	Top surface cleaned with trowel.		
	8. Weather conditions	Dry		
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**			
	2. Orientation			
	3. Profile			
	4. Sides			
	5. Base			
	6. Dimensions			
	7. Fill numbers			
	Sketch plan/section/matrix			

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Subsoil into which pit was dug.

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Subsoil into which pit was dug.

Rough sloping sides indicate rough digging by spade, with no need to make a nice finish.

Related Contexts:

Plan: see fig 3.1	Section/other drawings: fig 3.1	Environmental samples: No	
Colour print: No	**Colour slide: No**	**Black & White print: No**	**Digital: Yes**

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	Excavated contents: None

3.2. Trench 4.

The plan and elevation (east side) of trench 4 are shown in figure 3.2 below.

The north-south line from trench 3 was continued, and trench 4 started such that its southern end was 14 m to the south of the northern end of trench 3. This ensured that both north and south banks of the pit were sampled.

Context sheets are given after the figure.

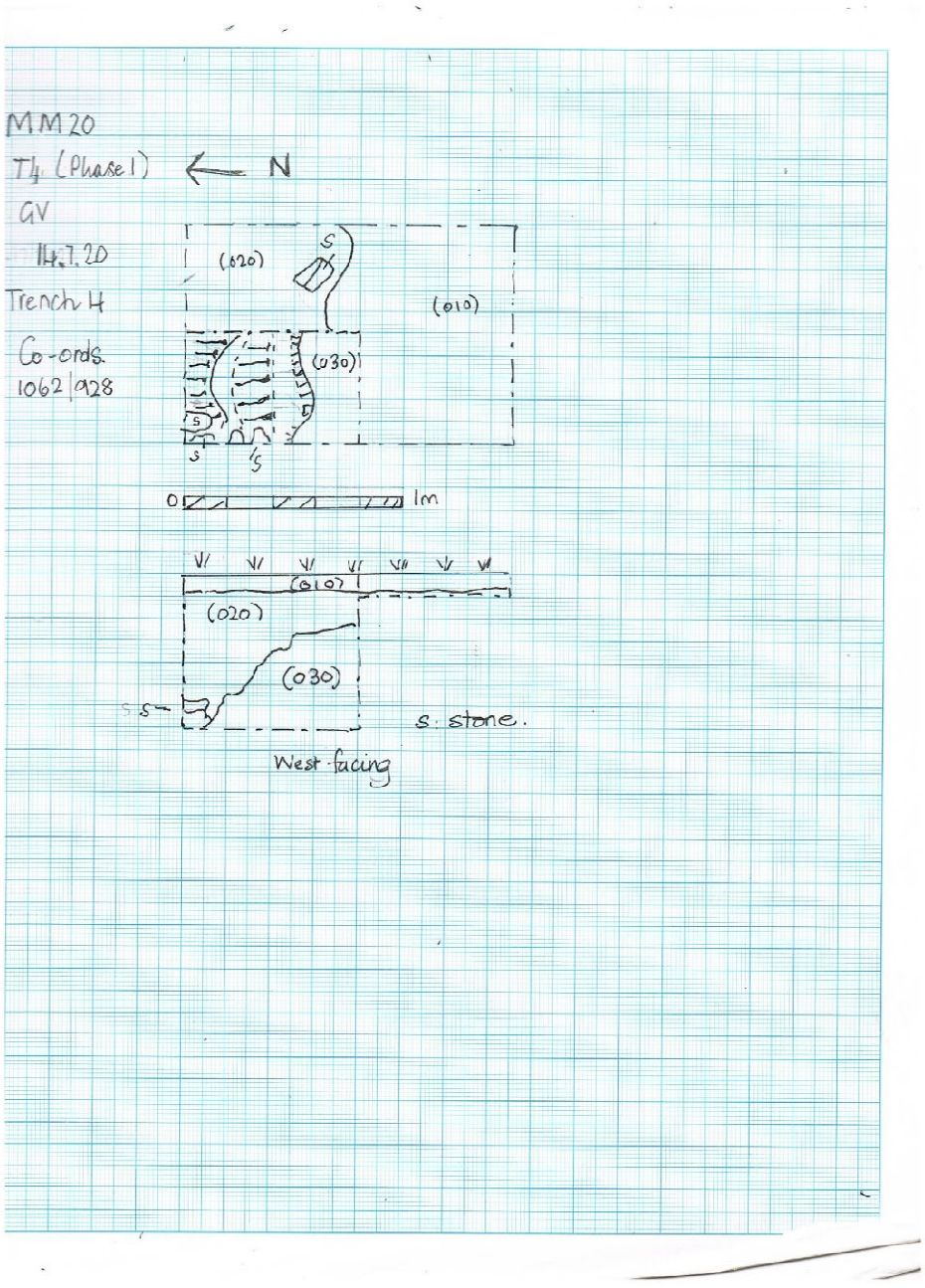


Figure 3.2 Plan and elevation of trench 4. North to left.

Project Code: MM20	Area: T4	Co-ordinates: E / N 1062/928 local	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (010)

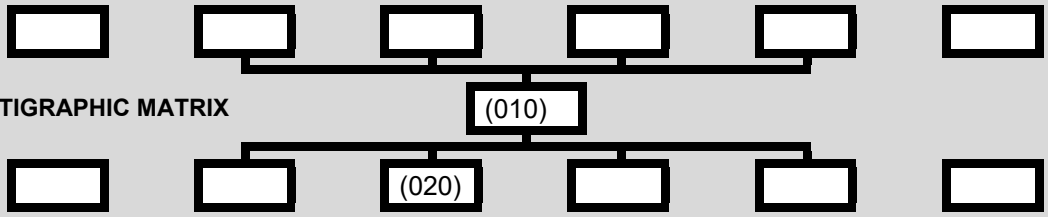
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Fairly Firm
	2. Colour	Mid to Dark Brown
	3. Texture/composition	Silty Sandy Clay
	4. Inclusions	Occasional Fragments of Stone and Flint 2%
	5. Dimensions	1.5 m * 0.5 m wide. 0.08 m deep
	6. Contamination	Highly
	7. Method/level of recovery	Spade and Trowel
	8. Weather conditions	Dry
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**	
	2. Orientation	
	3. Profile	
	4. Sides	
	5. Base	
	6. Dimensions	
	7. Fill numbers	
	Sketch plan/section/matrix	

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Topsoil formed over pit.

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Top soil.

Related Contexts:

Plan: see fig 3.2	**Section/other drawings: fig 3.2**	**Environmental samples: No**

Colour print: No	**Colour slide: No**	**Black & White print: No**	**Digital: Yes**

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	**Excavated contents: None**

Project Code: MM20	Area: T4	Co-ordinates: E / N 1062/928 local	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (020)
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Fairly Firm		
	2. Colour	Dark grey to black		
	3. Texture/composition	Charcoal, ashy material		
	4. Inclusions	Occasional Fragments of Stone and Flint 2%. I pc pottery, 19/20 C		
	5. Dimensions	0.8 m * 0.5 m wide.. Lens 0.12 to 0.72 m deep		
	6. Contamination	Highly		
	7. Method/level of recovery	Trowel		
	8. Weather conditions	Dry		
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**			
	2. Orientation			
	3. Profile			
	4. Sides			
	5. Base			
	6. Dimensions			
	7. Fill numbers			
	Sketch plan/section/matrix			

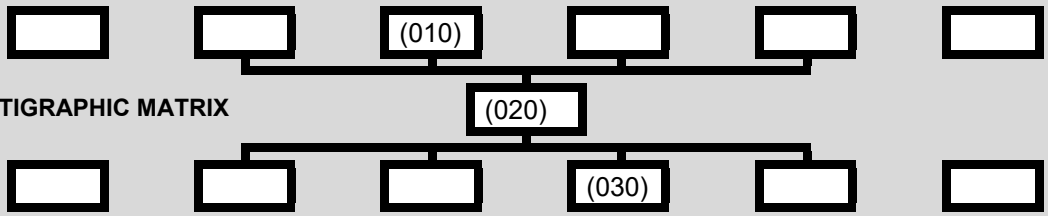
Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Similar to context (020) in trench 3.

Piece of pottery approx. 25 mm square lying at base of context on top of (030). Similar to Verwood ware

Datable only to mid C19 to mid C20. **Contd?**

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Fill of pit, dated to mid C19 to mid C20.

Related Contexts: Similar to trench 3, context (020).

Plan: see fig 3.2	Section/other drawings: fig 3.2	Environmental samples: No	
Colour print: No	**Colour slide: No**	**Black & White print: No**	**Digital: Yes**
Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	**Excavated contents: None**		

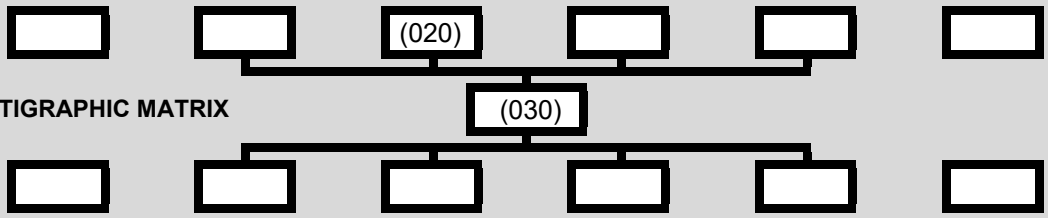
Project Code: MM20	Area: T4	Co-ordinates: E / N 1068/928 local	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (030)
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Firm and hard		
	2. Colour	Orange to yellow		
	3. Texture/composition	Clay subsoil		
	4. Inclusions	none		
	5. Dimensions	0.7 m * 0.5 m wide. Shelving down to 0.8 m depth		
	6. Contamination	none		
	7. Method/level of recovery	Top surface cleaned with trowel.		
	8. Weather conditions	Dry		
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**			
	2. Orientation			
	3. Profile			
	4. Sides			
	5. Base			
	6. Dimensions			
	7. Fill numbers			
	Sketch plan/section/matrix			

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Subsoil into which pit was dug.

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Subsoil into which pit was dug.

Rough sloping sides indicate rough digging by spade, with no need to make a nice finish.

Related Contexts: Trench 3, context (030)

Plan: see fig 3.2	Section/other drawings: fig 3.2	Environmental samples: No	
Colour print: No	**Colour slide: No**	**Black & White print: No**	**Digital: Yes**

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	Excavated contents: None

3.3 Trench 5

Trench 5 was placed orthogonally to trenches 3 and 4, across the western edge of the pit. It was on a line starting 7 m down from the northern end of trench 3, with its eastern end 5.5 m west of the line joining trenches 3 and 4.

The reason for this extra trench was that an electrical resistivity profile in 2019 had shown an area of much higher resistivity within the pit, and this was initially interpreted as possibly being a stone structure. The trench was intended to test this.

The plan and elevation are shown in figure 3.3.

The context sheets follow.

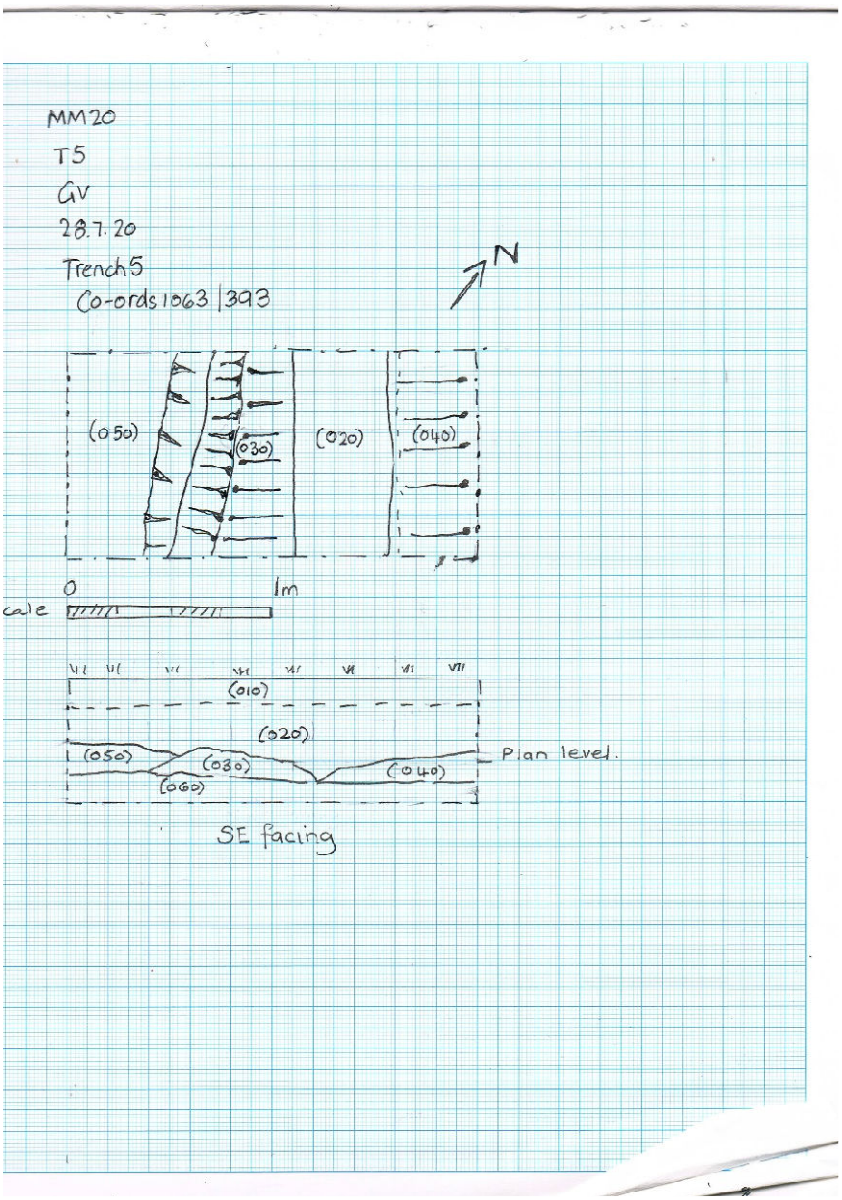


Figure 3.3. Trench 5, plan and elevation. West to left.

Project Code:	Area:	Co-ordinates: E / N	Context Type:	Context No:
MM20	T5	1063/933	Deposit	(010)

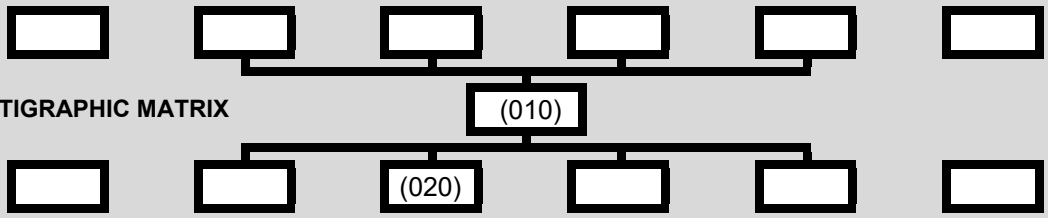
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Fairly Firm
	2. Colour	Mid to Dark Brown
	3. Texture/composition	Silty Sandy Clay
	4. Inclusions	Occasional Fragments of Stone and Flint 2%
	5. Dimensions	2 m * 0.5 m wide * 0.15 m length, 0.12 m deep
	6. Contamination	Highly
	7. Method/level of recovery	Spade and Trowel
	8. Weather conditions	Dry
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**	
	2. Orientation	
	3. Profile	
	4. Sides	
	5. Base	
	6. Dimensions	
	7. Fill numbers	
	Sketch plan/section/matrix	

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Topsoil

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Topsoil directly under the turf line

Related Contexts:

Plan:	Section/other drawings:	Environmental samples:
Fig 3.3	Fig 3.3	No

Colour print:	Colour slide:	Black & White print:	Digital:
No	No	No	Yes

Recorded by and Date:	Excavated contents:
G Vickery 2020.	

Project Code: MM20	Area: T5	Co-ordinates: E / N 1063/933	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (020)
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Loose		
	2. Colour	Grey to Dark Brown		
	3. Texture/composition	Rubble and large pieces of clinker		
	4. Inclusions	Window glass, melted glass, clay pipe, iron corrosion, slate pencil		
	5. Dimensions	2 m * 0.5 m wide, up to 0.5 m deep		
	6. Contamination	Highly		
	7. Method/level of recovery	Trowel		
	8. Weather conditions	Dry		
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**			
	2. Orientation			
	3. Profile			
	4. Sides			
	5. Base			
	6. Dimensions			
	7. Fill numbers			
	Sketch plan/section/matrix			

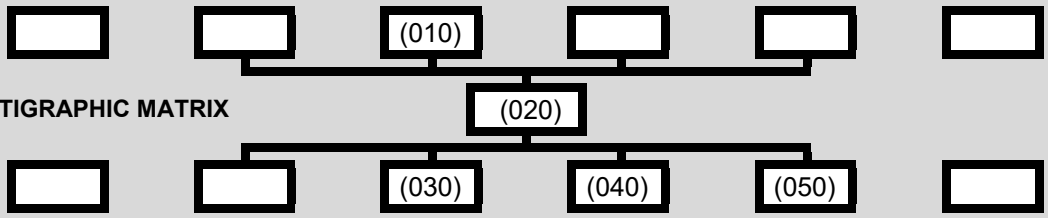
Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Top fill of pit, generally similar to industrial burnt waste found in T3, T4.

Slate pencil suggests mid C19 to mid C20 date

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Top fill of pit at western end.

Related Contexts:
T3, (020), T4, (020).

Plan: Fig 3.3	Section/other drawings: Fig 3.3	Environmental samples: No	
Colour print: No	**Colour slide: No**	**Black & White print: No**	**Digital: Yes**

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	Excavated contents:

Project Code:	Area:	Co-ordinates: E / N	Context Type:	Context No:
MM20	T5	1063/933	Deposit	(030)

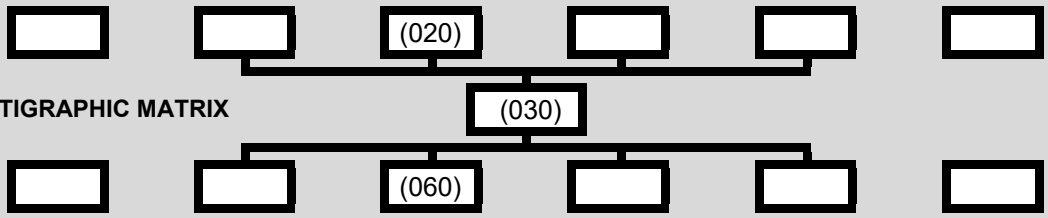
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Soft
	2. Colour	Greenish grey
	3. Texture/composition	Clay/sandy
	4. Inclusions	None
	5. Dimensions	Lens up to 20 cm high, 50 cm wide.
	6. Contamination	High
	7. Method/level of recovery	Not excavated
	8. Weather conditions	Dry
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**	
	2. Orientation	
	3. Profile	
	4. Sides	
	5. Base	
	6. Dimensions	
	7. Fill numbers	
	Sketch plan/section/matrix	

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Against rising edge of pit. Irregular sandy deposit

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Sandy lens of material at base of pit, under main fill.

Related Contexts:

Plan:	Section/other drawings:	Environmental samples:
Fig 3.3	Fig 3.3	No

Colour print:	Colour slide:	Black & White print:	Digital:
No	No	No	Yes

Recorded by and Date:	Excavated contents:
G Vickery 2020.	

Project Code:	Area:	Co-ordinates: E / N	Context Type:	Context No:
MM20	T5	1063/933	Deposit	(040)

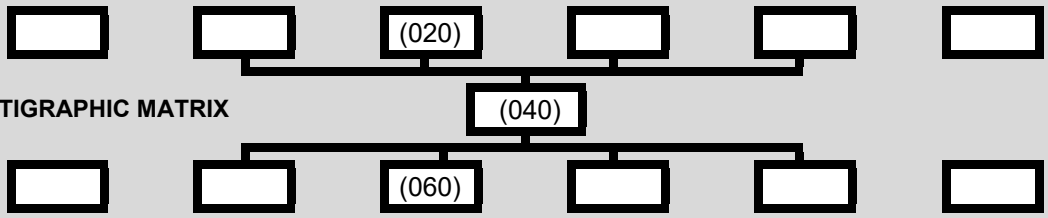
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Loose
	2. Colour	Yellow/grey
	3. Texture/composition	Burnt, gritty, sandy
	4. Inclusions	Small stones
	5. Dimensions	Lens up to 40 cm high, 100 cm wide, continuing into baulk.
	6. Contamination	high
	7. Method/level of recovery	Trowel
	8. Weather conditions	Dry
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**	
	2. Orientation	
	3. Profile	
	4. Sides	
	5. Base	
	6. Dimensions	
	7. Fill numbers	
	Sketch plan/section/matrix	

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

At base of pit, under (020). Much more sandy texture, but including burnt material.

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

A much more sandy, gritty deposit than the ash and clinker above.

Not seen in T3 or T4.

The sandy nature of this lens probably accounts for the high resistivity observed.

Related Contexts:

Plan:	Section/other drawings:	Environmental samples:
Fig 3.3		No

Colour print:	Colour slide:	Black & White print:	Digital:
No	No	No	Yes

Recorded by and Date:	Excavated contents:
G Vickery 2020.	

Project Code: MM20	Area: T5	Co-ordinates: E / N 1063/933	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (050)

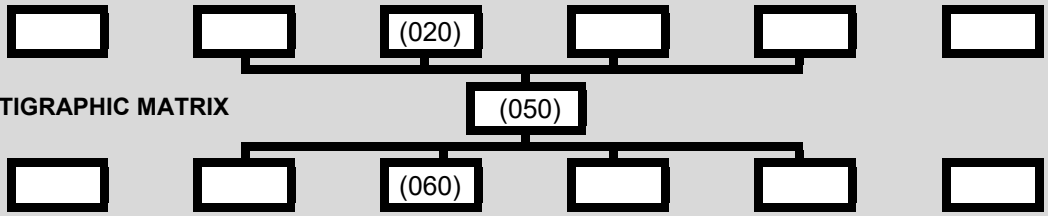
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Hard, not too firm
	2. Colour	Orange to yellow
	3. Texture/composition	Disturbed clay subsoil
	4. Inclusions	
	5. Dimensions	Lens up to 30 cm high, 80 cm wide, continuing into baulk.
	6. Contamination	Some soil
	7. Method/level of recovery	Trowel top surface clean
	8. Weather conditions	Dry
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**	
	2. Orientation	
	3. Profile	
	4. Sides	
	5. Base	
	6. Dimensions	
	7. Fill numbers	
	Sketch plan/section/matrix	

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

At base of pit, under (020). Disturbed lens above subsoil base of pit.

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

The clay subsoil, but a small disturbed lens above firm subsoil

Related Contexts:

Plan: Fig 3.3	Section/other drawings: Fig 3.3	Environmental samples: No	
Colour print: No	**Colour slide: No**	**Black & White print: No**	**Digital: Yes**

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	Excavated contents:

Project Code: MM20	Area: T5	Co-ordinates: E / N 1063/933	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (060)

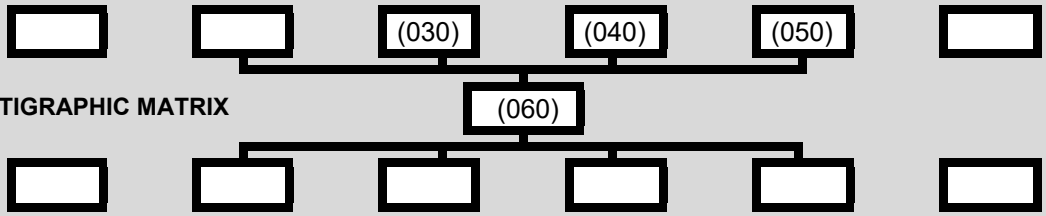
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Firm and hard
	2. Colour	Orange to yellow
	3. Texture/composition	Clay subsoil
	4. Inclusions	
	5. Dimensions	2m wide, continues under all baulks
	6. Contamination	none
	7. Method/level of recovery	Trowel top surface clean
	8. Weather conditions	Dry
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**	
	2. Orientation	
	3. Profile	
	4. Sides	
	5. Base	
	6. Dimensions	
	7. Fill numbers	
	Sketch plan/section/matrix	

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Clay subsoil, undisturbed.

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Clay subsoil, undisturbed

Related Contexts:

Plan: Fig 3.3	Section/other drawings: Fig 3.3	Environmental samples: No	
Colour print: No	**Colour slide: No**	**Black & White print: No**	**Digital: Yes**

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	Excavated contents:

4 Trench 6 and Trench 7

4.1 Trench 6

Approximately 20 m north of trenches 1 and 2, where the axe was found, there is a low but distinct bank running from west to east across the field, separating the flat area from the descent to the valley bottom. Trench 6 was placed north-south across this bank to determine whether it had any relationship to the axe, in terms of date or landscape.

Trench 6 is seen in plan and elevation in figure 4.1 below. Note that there were problems setting up the grid and it became necessary to start the tape from the southern end, so although this is the east-facing elevation, north is to the right, not the left.

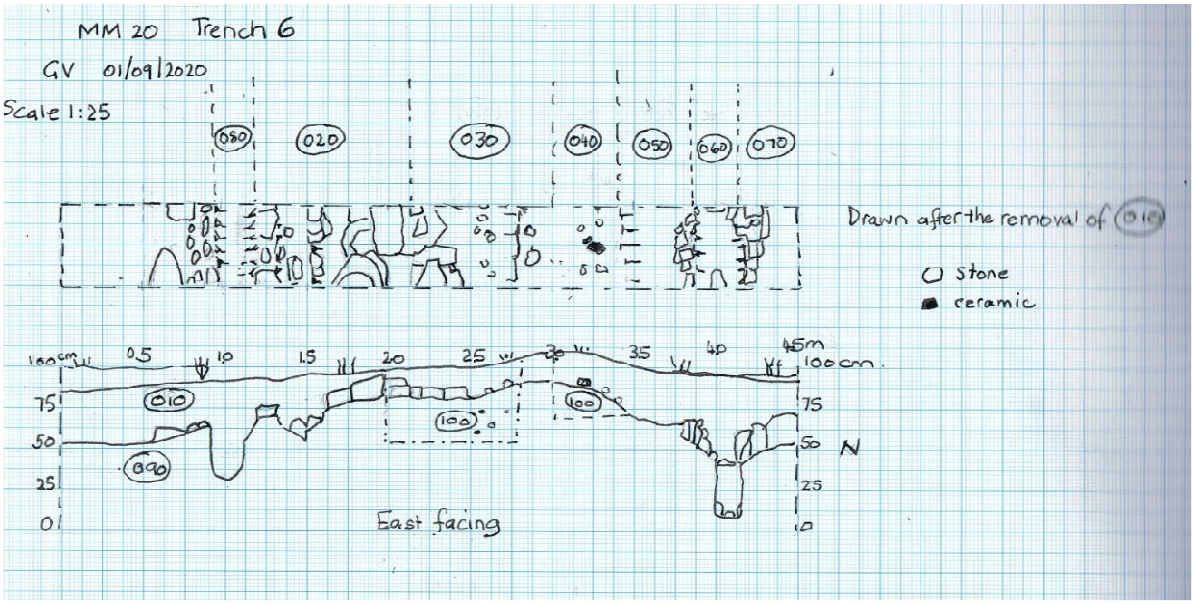


Figure 4.1. Trench 6. Plan and elevation. South to left, north to right.

The context sheets for trench 6 follow.

Project Code:	Area:	Co-ordinates: E / N	Context Type:	Context No:
MM20	T6	1008/1000	Deposit	(010)

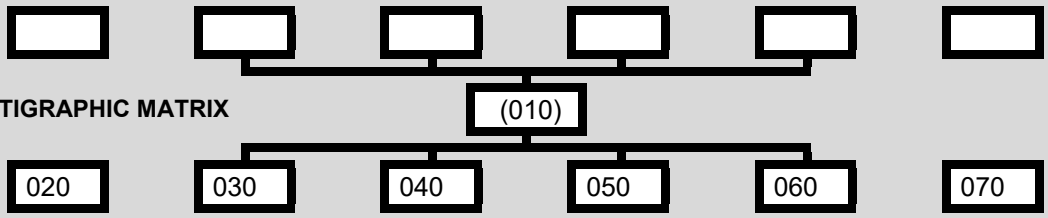
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Fairly Firm
	2. Colour	Grey
	3. Texture/composition	Loose soil, roots
	4. Inclusions	Coal fragments, < 1 %
	5. Dimensions	5.5 m * 0.5 m wide * 0.05 to 0.15 m deep
	6. Contamination	Slightly
	7. Method/level of recovery	Spade and Trowel
	8. Weather conditions	Dry
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**	
	2. Orientation	
	3. Profile	
	4. Sides	
	5. Base	
	6. Dimensions	
	7. Fill numbers	
	Sketch plan/section/matrix	

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Topsoil, over bank and both sides.

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Topsoil directly under the turf line

Related Contexts:

Plan: Figure 4.1	Section/other drawings: Fig 4.1	Environmental samples: No

Colour print: No	Colour slide: No	Black & White print: No	Digital: Yes

Recorded by and Date:	Excavated contents:
G Vickery 2020.	See finds sheet

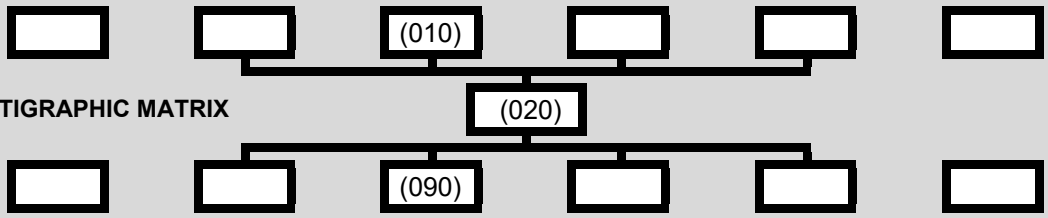
Project Code: MM20	Area: T6	Co-ordinates: E / N 1008/1000	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (020)
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Loose		
	2. Colour	Grey/Brown		
	3. Texture/composition	Friable		
	4. Inclusions	Stones, 20 cm to 5 cm.		
	5. Dimensions	0.4 m NS * 0.5 m wide. Depth up to 25 cm		
	6. Contamination	Pottery, bone, soil		
	7. Method/level of recovery	Trowel		
	8. Weather conditions	Dry		
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**			
	2. Orientation			
	3. Profile			
	4. Sides			
	5. Base			
	6. Dimensions			
	7. Fill numbers			
	Sketch plan/section/matrix			

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Stone revetment against south side of bank.

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Stone revetment against south side of bank core.

Pottery appears to be c10/c11, black

Related Contexts:

Plan: Figure 4.1	Section/other drawings: Fig 4.1	Environmental samples: No	
Colour print: No	**Colour slide:** No	**Black & White print:** No	**Digital:** Yes
Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	**Excavated contents:** See finds sheet		

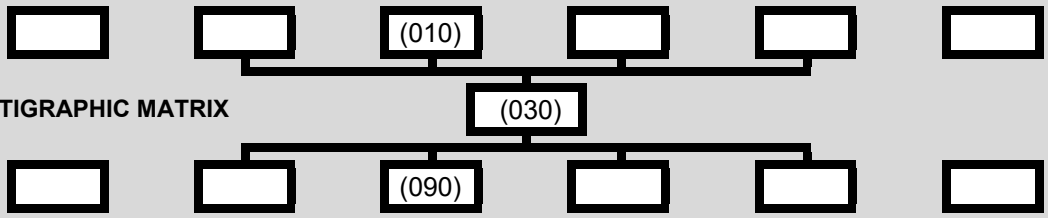
Project Code: MM20	Area: T6	Co-ordinates: E / N 1008/1000	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (030)
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Hard		
	2. Colour	Light Brown		
	3. Texture/composition	Dry, crumbly		
	4. Inclusions	Many small stones, typ 1 cm		
	5. Dimensions	0.5 m NS * 0.5 m wide. 0.3 m high		
	6. Contamination	Pottery on top surface		
	7. Method/level of recovery	Trowel		
	8. Weather conditions	Dry		
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**			
	2. Orientation			
	3. Profile			
	4. Sides			
	5. Base			
	6. Dimensions			
	7. Fill numbers			
	Sketch plan/section/matrix			

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Main portion of bank as built, with steep sides. This with flat top and some pottery sherds on top.

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Main portion of bank. This with flat top, whereas (040) slopes.

Pottery appears to be c10/c11, black

Related Contexts: (040)

Plan: Figure 4.1	Section/other drawings: Fig 4.1	Environmental samples: No

Colour print: No	Colour slide: No	Black & White print: No	Digital: Yes

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	Excavated contents: See finds sheet

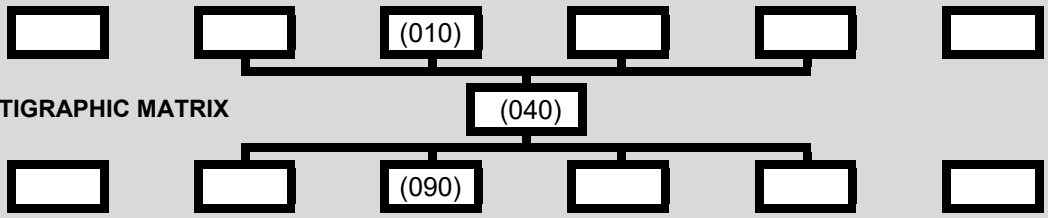
Project Code: MM20	Area: T6	Co-ordinates: E / N 1008/1000	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (040)
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Hard		
	2. Colour	Light Brown		
	3. Texture/composition	Dry, crumbly		
	4. Inclusions	Many small stones, typ 1 cm		
	5. Dimensions	0.3 m NS * 0.5 m wide. 0.3 m to 0.2 m high, sloping		
	6. Contamination	Pottery on top surface		
	7. Method/level of recovery	Trowel		
	8. Weather conditions	Dry		
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**			
	2. Orientation			
	3. Profile			
	4. Sides			
	5. Base			
	6. Dimensions			
	7. Fill numbers			
	Sketch plan/section/matrix			

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Main portion of bank as built, with steep sides. This portion sloping, while (030) had flat top.

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Main portion of bank. This sloping gently to north from flat of (030).

(030) and (040) comprise a single fill, but with differing envelope.

Related Contexts: (030)

Plan: Figure 4.1	Section/other drawings: Fig 4.1	Environmental samples: No	
Colour print: No	**Colour slide: No**	**Black & White print: No**	**Digital: Yes**

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	Excavated contents: See finds sheet

Project Code: MM20	Area: T6	Co-ordinates: E / N 1008/1000	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (050)
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Fairly hard		
	2. Colour	Brown		
	3. Texture/composition	stony		
	4. Inclusions	Soil within stones		
	5. Dimensions	0.3 m NS * 0.5 m wide. 0.3 m to 0.1 m high, sloping		
	6. Contamination			
	7. Method/level of recovery	Trowel		
	8. Weather conditions	Dry		
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**			
	2. Orientation			
	3. Profile			
	4. Sides			
	5. Base			
	6. Dimensions			
	7. Fill numbers			
	Sketch plan/section/matrix			

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Stony soil below firm bank,

Main portion of bank as built, with steep sides. This portion sloping, while (030) had flat top

Contd?

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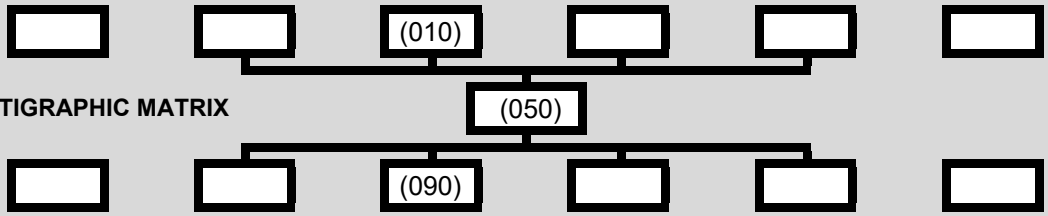
STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Slumped material from bank on north side.

Related Contexts:

Plan: Figure 4.1	Section/other drawings: Fig 4.1	Environmental samples: No	
Colour print: No	**Colour slide:** No	**Black & White print:** No	**Digital:** Yes

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	Excavated contents: See finds sheet

Project Code:	Area:	Co-ordinates: E / N	Context Type:	Context No:
MM20	T6	1008/1000	Deposit	(060)

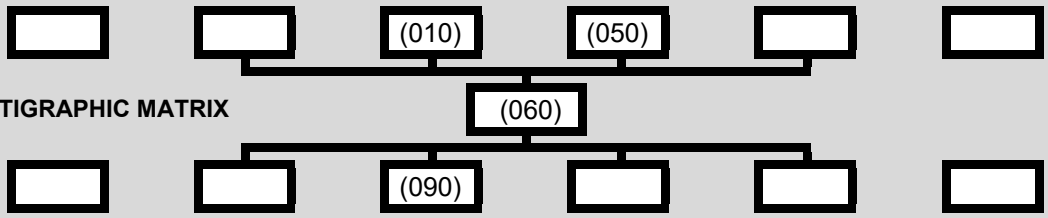
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Friable
	2. Colour	Dark brown
	3. Texture/composition	Loose soil
	4. Inclusions	Small stones
	5. Dimensions	0.18 m diameter, half section. Depth 0.36 m below top soil/ slump.
	6. Contamination	
	7. Method/level of recovery	Trowel
	8. Weather conditions	Dry
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**	
	2. Orientation	
	3. Profile	
	4. Sides	
	5. Base	
	6. Dimensions	
	7. Fill numbers	
	Sketch plan/section/matrix	

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Fill of possible post hole [160] to north of bank. Half sectioned.

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Possible post hole fill.

Related Contexts: [160]

Plan: Figure 4.1	**Section/other drawings: Fig 4.1**	**Environmental samples: No**	
Colour print: No	**Colour slide: No**	**Black & White print: No**	**Digital: Yes**

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	**Excavated contents: See finds sheet**

Project Code: MM20	Area: T6	Co-ordinates: E / N 1008/1000	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (070)

DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Stony
	2. Colour	brown
	3. Texture/composition	Hard
	4. Inclusions	Small stones
	5. Dimensions	0.3 m NS to end of trench. 0.5 m wide
	6. Contamination	
	7. Method/level of recovery	Not excavated
	8. Weather conditions	Dry
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**	
	2. Orientation	
	3. Profile	
	4. Sides	
	5. Base	
	6. Dimensions	
	7. Fill numbers	
	Sketch plan/section/matrix	

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Soil above subsoil.

Contd?

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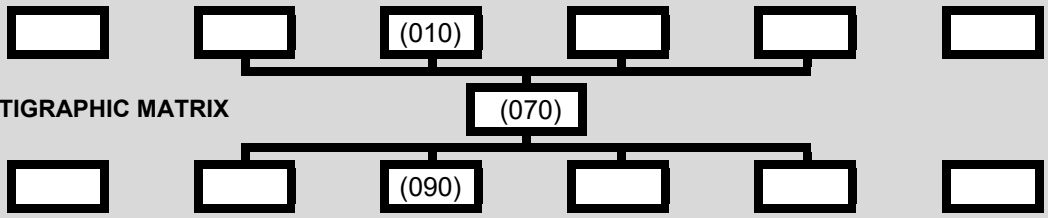
STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Soil above subsoil, going down on to valley bottom

Related Contexts:

Plan: Figure 4.1	Section/other drawings: Fig 4.1	Environmental samples: No	
Colour print: No	**Colour slide: No**	**Black & White print: No**	**Digital: Yes**

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	Excavated contents: See finds sheet

Project Code: Area:	Co-ordinates: E / N	Context Type:	Context No:
MM20 T6	1008/1000	Deposit	(080)

DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Damp soil
	2. Colour	brown
	3. Texture/composition	Soil and stones equally
	4. Inclusions	Small stones, bone, pottery
	5. Dimensions	0.1 m wide NS, 0.5 m width, 0.28 m below (010)
	6. Contamination	
	7. Method/level of recovery	Trowel
	8. Weather conditions	Dry
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**	
	2. Orientation	
	3. Profile	
	4. Sides	
	5. Base	
	6. Dimensions	
	7. Fill numbers	
	Sketch plan/section/matrix	

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Possible ditch, half section

Contd?

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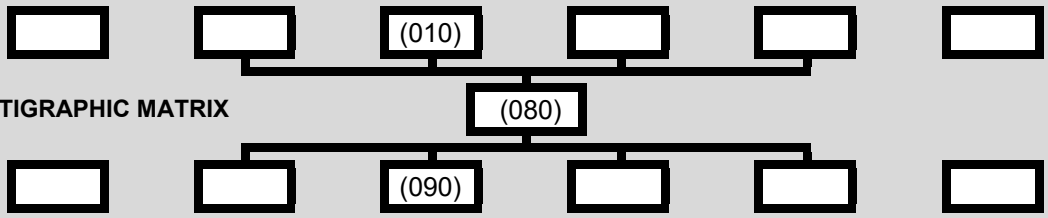
STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Possible fill of ditch [180] half sectioned.

Related Contexts: [180]

Plan: Figure 4.1	Section/other drawings: Fig 4.1	Environmental samples: No

Colour print: No	Colour slide: No	Black & White print: No	Digital: Yes

Recorded by and Date:	Excavated contents:
G Vickery 2020.	See finds sheet

Project Code: MM20	Area: T6	Co-ordinates: E / N 1008/1000	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (090)
DEPOSIT	1. Compaction	Hard		
	2. Colour	Brown/orange		
	3. Texture/composition	Clay		
	4. Inclusions			
	5. Dimensions			
	6. Contamination			
	7. Method/level of recovery	Not excavated		
	8. Weather conditions	Dry		
CUT	1. Shape in plan			
	2. Orientation			
	3. Profile			
	4. Sides			
	5. Base			
	6. Dimensions			
	7. Fill numbers			
	Sketch plan/section/matrix			

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Subsoil

Contd?

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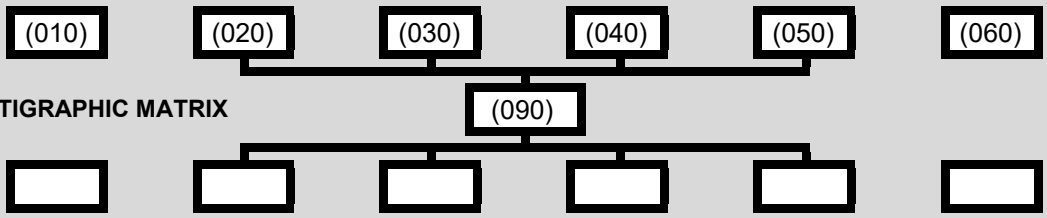

INTERPRETATION:

Subsoil

Related Contexts:

Plan: Figure 4.1	Section/other drawings: Fig 4.1	Environmental samples: No	
Colour print: No	Colour slide: No	Black & White print: No	Digital: Yes

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	Excavated contents: See finds sheet

Project Code: MM20	Area: T6	Co-ordinates: E / N 1008/1000	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (100)

DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Moderate compaction
	2. Colour	Dark brown
	3. Texture/composition	Soil/clay mix, grainy
	4. Inclusions	Stones, pottery
	5. Dimensions	Triangular portion into bank, 0.3m max height, 0.5 m NS. 0.25 m wide
	6. Contamination	
	7. Method/level of recovery	Trowel
	8. Weather conditions	Dry

CUT	**1. Shape in plan**	
	2. Orientation	
	3. Profile	
	4. Sides	
	5. Base	
	6. Dimensions	
	7. Fill numbers	
	Sketch plan/section/matrix	

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Material of original bank.

Contd?

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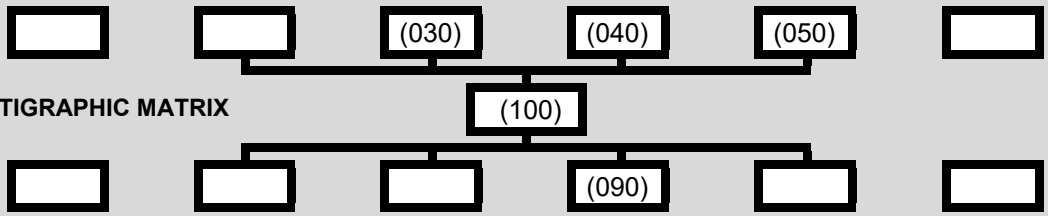
STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Material from excavated portion (half width) of original bank. (030), (040)

Related Contexts: (030), (040)

Plan: Figure 4.1	Section/other drawings: Fig 4.1	Environmental samples: No

Colour print: No	Colour slide: No	Black & White print: No	Digital: Yes

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	Excavated contents: See finds sheet

Project Code:	Area:	Co-ordinates: E / N	Context Type:	Context No:
MM20	T6	1008/1000	Cut	[160]

DEPOSIT	1. Compaction	
	2. Colour	
	3. Texture/composition	
	4. Inclusions	
	5. Dimensions	
	6. Contamination	
	7. Method/level of recovery	
	8. Weather conditions	
CUT	1. Shape in plan	Cylindrical, 0.18 m dia
	2. Orientation	
	3. Profile	vertical
	4. Sides	vertical
	5. Base	flat
	6. Dimensions	0.18 dia, 0.36 m depth below subsoil
	7. Fill numbers	(060)
	Sketch plan/section/matrix	Fig 4.1

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Possible post hole to north of bank

Confirmation would need wider trench to pick up another post hole. **Contd?**

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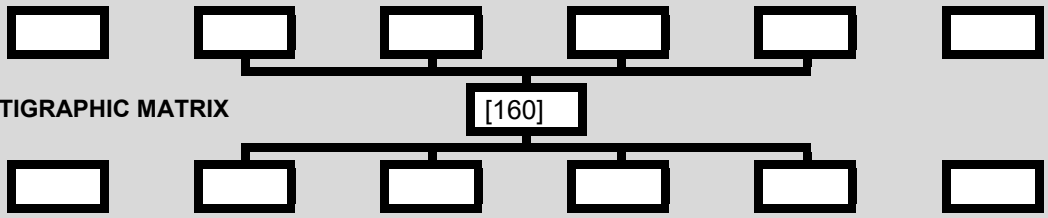
STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Possible post hole to north of bank

Related Contexts: (060)

Plan: Figure 4.1	Section/other drawings: Fig 4.1	Environmental samples: No	
Colour print: No	Colour slide: No	Black & White print: No	Digital: Yes

Recorded by and Date:	Excavated contents:
G Vickery 2020.	See finds sheet

Project Code:	Area:	Co-ordinates: E / N	Context Type:	Context No:
MM20	T6	1008/1000	Cut	[180]

DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	
	2. Colour	
	3. Texture/composition	
	4. Inclusions	
	5. Dimensions	
	6. Contamination	
	7. Method/level of recovery	
	8. Weather conditions	

CUT	**1. Shape in plan**	**linear**
	2. Orientation	EW
	3. Profile	U shape
	4. Sides	steep
	5. Base	flat
	6. Dimensions	0.1 m across, 0.5 m width of trench, 0.28 m into subsoil
	7. Fill numbers	(080)
	Sketch plan/section/matrix	**Fig 4.1**

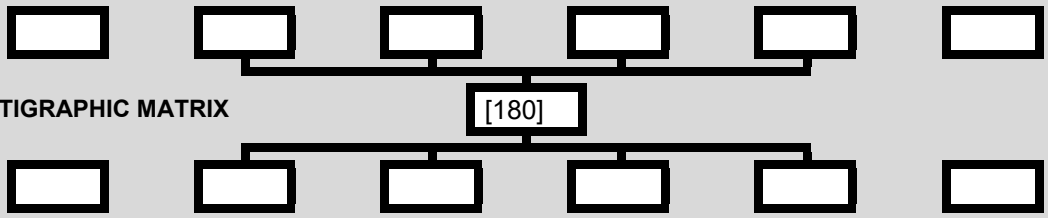
Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Possible trench to south of bank

Contd?

.

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Possible trench to south of bank

Related Contexts: (080)

Plan: Figure 4.1	Section/other drawings: Fig 4.1	Environmental samples: No

Colour print: No	Colour slide: No	Black & White print: No	Digital: Yes

Recorded by and Date:	Excavated contents:
G Vickery 2020.	See finds sheet

4.2 Trench 7

Trench 7 was an unsuccessful attempt to investigate the possible north-south building. It was set out at a time when the geophysics grid had been lost. Un-logged geophysics was used to try to find a maximum using twin-probe resistance. This unfortunately located a point amongst a hard surface some 8 or 10 m further east than what had been the intended target.

The incorrect location became obvious once the original geophysics grid was reinstated but it was too late then to add an extra test pit.

Trench 7 is shown in figure 4.2 below.

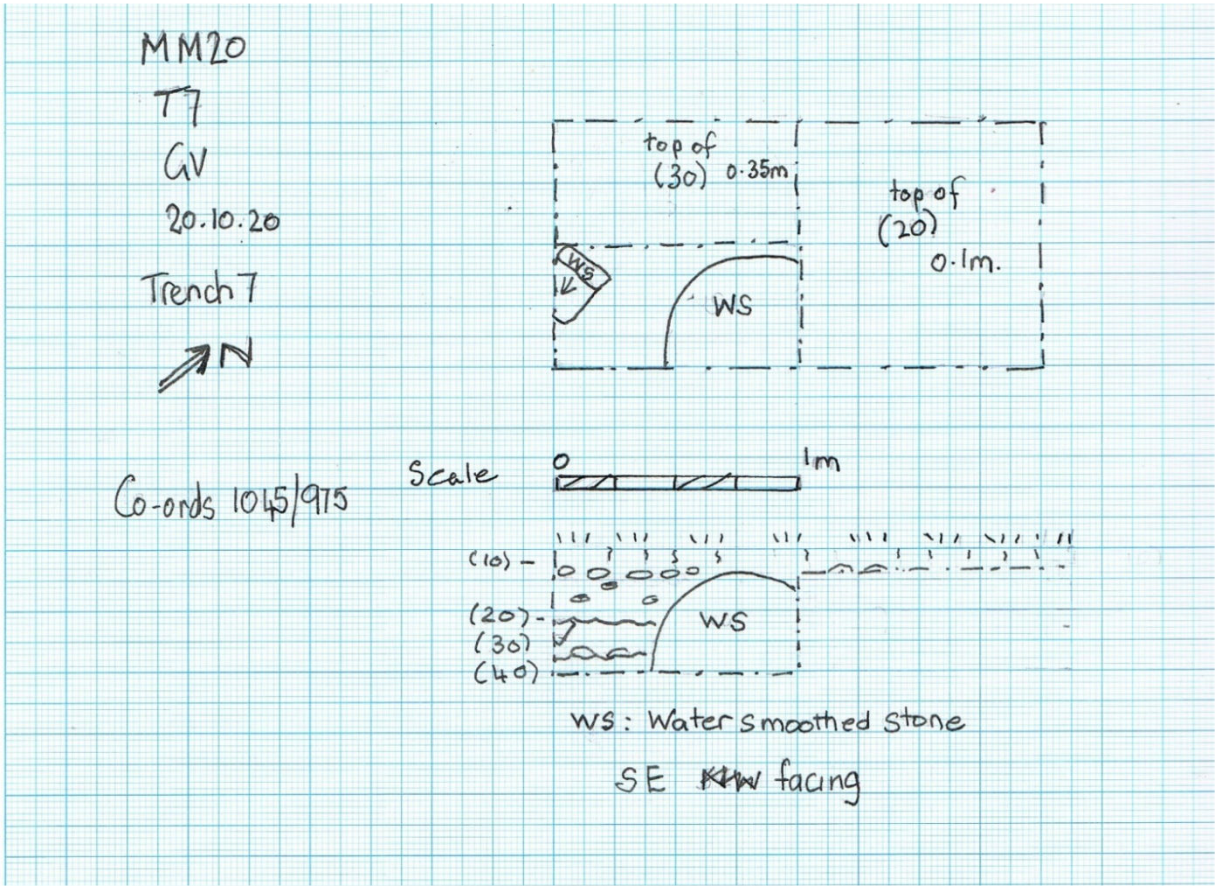


Figure 4.2. trench 7 plan only. North to top.

The context sheets for trench 7 follow.

Project Code: MM20	Area: T7	Co-ordinates: E / N 1045/975	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (010)

DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Fairly Firm
	2. Colour	Grey
	3. Texture/composition	Loose soil, roots
	4. Inclusions	None
	5. Dimensions	1.5 m * 0.5 m wide * 0.1 m deep
	6. Contamination	None
	7. Method/level of recovery	Spade and Trowel
	8. Weather conditions	Dry

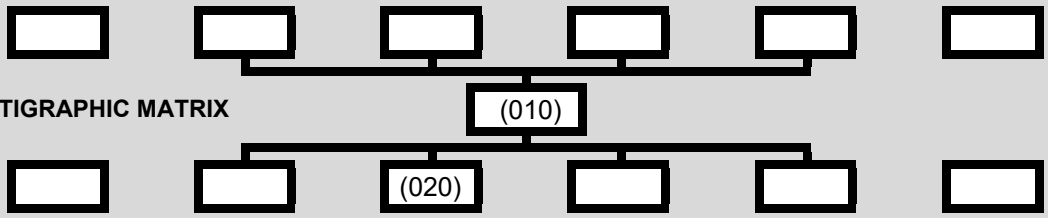
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**	
	2. Orientation	
	3. Profile	
	4. Sides	
	5. Base	
	6. Dimensions	
	7. Fill numbers	
	Sketch plan/section/matrix	

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Topsoil.

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Topsoil directly under the turf line

Related Contexts:

Plan: Figure 4.2	Section/other drawings: Fig 4.2	Environmental samples: No	
Colour print: No	**Colour slide: No**	**Black & White print: No**	**Digital: Yes**

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	Excavated contents: See finds sheet

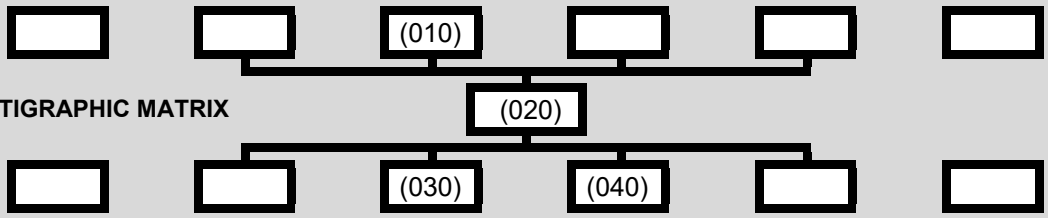
Project Code: MM20	Area: T7	Co-ordinates: E / N 1045/975	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (020)
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Compact pebbles		
	2. Colour	yellow		
	3. Texture/composition	Firm packed		
	4. Inclusions	Large stones > 100 mm		
	5. Dimensions	1.5 m * 0.5 m wide * 0.25 m deep		
	6. Contamination	None		
	7. Method/level of recovery	Trowel		
	8. Weather conditions	Dry		
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**			
	2. Orientation			
	3. Profile			
	4. Sides			
	5. Base			
	6. Dimensions			
	7. Fill numbers			
	Sketch plan/section/matrix			

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Well-compacted hard standing. Pebbles may be local from Mells River.

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Hard standing. Date unknown.

Related Contexts:

Plan: Figure 4.2	Section/other drawings: Fig 4.2	Environmental samples: No	
Colour print: No	**Colour slide: No**	**Black & White print: No**	**Digital: Yes**
Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	**Excavated contents: See finds sheet**		

Project Code: MM20	Area: T7	Co-ordinates: E / N 1045/975	Context Type: Deposit	Context No: (030)

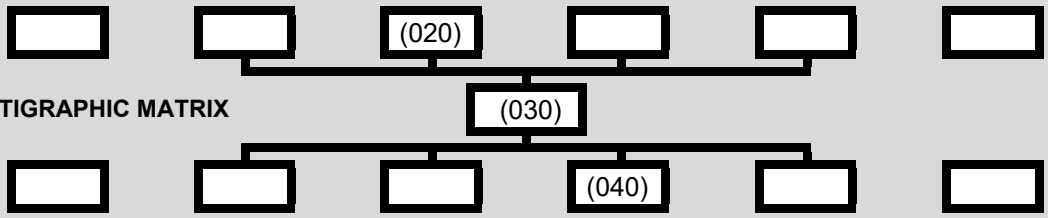
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Soft
	2. Colour	white
	3. Texture/composition	Compact but soft layer, damp
	4. Inclusions	
	5. Dimensions	0.25 m * 0.5 m wide * 0.25 m deep
	6. Contamination	
	7. Method/level of recovery	Trowel
	8. Weather conditions	Dry
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**	
	2. Orientation	
	3. Profile	
	4. Sides	
	5. Base	
	6. Dimensions	
	7. Fill numbers	
	Sketch plan/section/matrix	

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Soft fill under stones, possibly to level. May fill earlier watercourse.

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Fill below hard standing.

Related Contexts:

Plan: Figure 4.2	Section/other drawings: Fig 4.2	Environmental samples: No

Colour print: No	Colour slide: No	Black & White print: No	Digital: Yes

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	Excavated contents: See finds sheet

Project Code: Area:	Co-ordinates: E / N	Context Type:	Context No:
MM20 T7	1045/975	Deposit	(040)

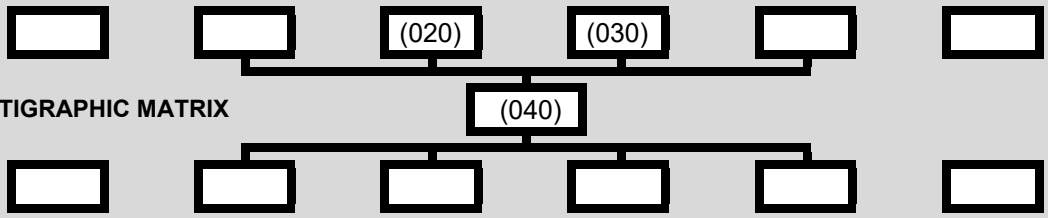
DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	Hard
	2. Colour	Yellow
	3. Texture/composition	Clay subsoil
	4. Inclusions	Some pebbles, stones pressed into surface
	5. Dimensions	0.25 m * 0.5 m wide * --- deep
	6. Contamination	
	7. Method/level of recovery	Not excavated
	8. Weather conditions	Dry
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**	
	2. Orientation	
	3. Profile	
	4. Sides	
	5. Base	
	6. Dimensions	
	7. Fill numbers	
	Sketch plan/section/matrix	

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Subsoil

Contd?

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Subsoil

Related Contexts:

Plan: Figure 4.2	**Section/other drawings: Fig 4.2**	**Environmental samples: No**

Colour print: No	**Colour slide: No**	**Black & White print: No**	**Digital: Yes**

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	**Excavated contents: See finds sheet**

Project Code: MM20	Area: T7	Co-ordinates: E / N 1045/975	Context Type: Cut	Context No: [120]

DEPOSIT	**1. Compaction**	
	2. Colour	
	3. Texture/composition	
	4. Inclusions	
	5. Dimensions	
	6. Contamination	
	7. Method/level of recovery	
	8. Weather conditions	

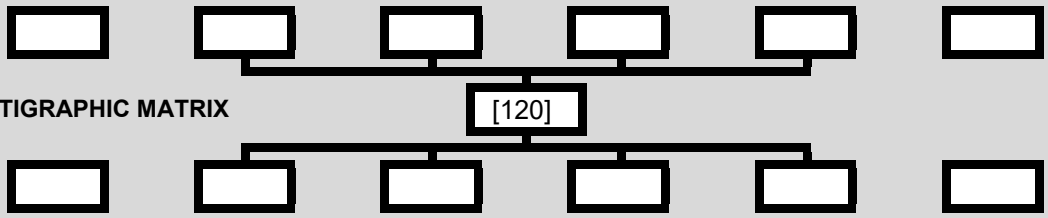
CUT	**1. Shape in plan**	**Rectangular sondage**
	2. Orientation	NS at E end of trench 7
	3. Profile	Rectangular
	4. Sides	Vertical
	5. Base	Flat
	6. Dimensions	0.25 * 0.5 * 0.25 m deep
	7. Fill numbers	(020)
	Sketch plan/section/matrix	

Further DESCRIPTIVE data including significant physical relationships:

Sondage through (020) down to (030)

Large water-worn stone fills part of sondage. **Contd?**

STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



INTERPRETATION:

Sondage through hard standing down to soft fill above subsoil.

Related Contexts:

Plan: Figure 4.2	Section/other drawings: Fig 4.2	Environmental samples: No

Colour print: No	Colour slide: No	Black & White print: No	Digital: Yes

Recorded by and Date: G Vickery 2020.	Excavated contents: See finds sheet

5 Comment

Trenches 3, 4 and 5 revealed industrial archaeology which may be of interest in the Frome area, but was not relevant to the story of the axe. A patch of high resistivity in trench 5 was shown to be caused by a dry sandy lens of burnt material rather than by an earlier structure. The trenches appeared to show a spade-dug pit with uneven sloping sides to a depth of 0.8 m filled with ash, clinker and burnt waste. The pit was too small for major industrial waste tipping, suggesting only local use. The road passing the end of the lane is called ‘Coalash Lane’, suggesting a possible nearby source.

Trench 6 showed a small firm embankment under the present grass, originally flat topped with some black pottery atop. It has a stone revetment on its south side, with similar pottery buried within the stones and a possible narrow ditch beyond. The north side was marked by a post hole, but the area excavated was too small to see if there was a line of post holes forming a fence, or whether we had just hit an isolated hole

The pottery appeared to be ‘Saxo-Norman’, c10-c12, so too late to be relevant to the axe, but may represent a re-parcelling out of the land, possibly associated with the formation of ‘Aldefeld’. Geophysics had shown this bank to be part of a landscape overlying an earlier territorial arrangement.

Trench 7 appeared to show hard standing of unknown date. Unfortunately, it had been placed too far east to intercept the possible north-south building, but this area of higher resistance was seen on the geophysics to go as far as the building, so may be associated with it. The possible building was perpendicular to the bank excavated in trench 6 so may be contemporary. This hard standing may well be associated with that structure.

Related documents

Oswin, J, 2020, The Frome Francisca SOM-C39446, Geophysics, Supplement to the December 2019 report. BATH: Bath and Counties Archaeological Society.

Heath, R, 2021, The Aldefeld Francisca. BATH: Bath and Counties Archaeological Society.

Holley, R, 2021, Marston Mill, Spring Gardens, Frome, Somerset. Archaeological evaluation report for the three trenches at the axe site. BATH: Bath and Counties Archaeological Society.

Appendix A

Context sheet master

Trench 3

(010)	deposit	Top soil
(015)	deposit	Lens of burnt material
(020)	deposit	Burnt waste material at base of pit
(030)	deposit	Sub soil.

Trench 4

(010)	deposit	Top soil
(020)	deposit	Burnt waste fill of pit
(030)	deposit	Sub soil

Trench 5

(010)	deposit	Top soil
(020)	deposit	Main burnt fill of pit
(030)	deposit	Sandy lens of material at base of pit
(040)	deposit	Sandy/gritty lens at base of pit
(050)	deposit	Disturbed sub soil
(060)	deposit	Sub soil

Trench 6

(010)	deposit	Top soil	
(020)	deposit	Revetted south side of bank	c10/12 pottery inclusion
(030)	deposit	Main flat-top portion of bank	c10/12 pottery inclusion
(040)	deposit	North-sloping portion of bank	c10/12 pottery inclusion
(050)	deposit	Slumped material on north base of bank	
(060)	deposit	Possible post hole fill	
(070)	deposit	Soil in valley bottom below bank	
(080)	deposit	Possible ditch fill, south of bank	
(090)	deposit	Sub soil	
(100)	deposit	Soil in sectioned portion of bank	
[160]	cut	Possible post hole ref (060)	
[180]	cut	Ditch fill ref (080)	

Trench 7

(010)	deposit	Top soil
(020)	deposit	Stony layer, hard standing
(030)	deposit	Soft fill below stony layer
(040)	deposit	Sub soil
[120]	cut	Sondage through stony layer ref (030)