

**An archaeological excavation
on the site of the West Clacton
reservoir and pumping station,
Dead Lane, Great Bentley, Essex
April-May 2007**

**report prepared by
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**on behalf of
Tendring Hundred Water Services Ltd**

NGR: TM 1152 1836 (c)
CAT project ref.: 07/2d
Colchester and Ipswich Museums accession code: 2007.49



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CAT Report 425
October 2007

Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological background	2
4	Aim	2
5	Results	2
6	Finds	
6.1	The glass, <i>by H E M Cool</i>	3
6.2	The prehistoric and Roman pottery <i>by Stephen Benfield</i>	6
6.3	The worked flints <i>by Hazel Martingell</i>	8
7	Conclusions	8
8	Archive deposition	9
9	Acknowledgements	9
10	References	10
11	Glossary	11
12	Context and finds list	11
	Appendix 1: details of glass <i>tesserae</i>	12
	Figures	after p 16

EHER summary sheet

List of figures

- Fig 1 Site location, showing excavated field systems.
Unexcavated cropmark sites are shown to the west of Hollybush Hill and to the east of Dead Lane.
- Fig 2 Site plan.
- Fig 3 Sections.
- Fig 4 Prehistoric pottery.

1 Summary

Aerial survey has revealed the cropmarks of unexcavated and undated field systems on either side of this site. An evaluation in 2006 uncovered a number of field ditches, as well as evidence of prehistoric and Roman activity.

The 2007 excavation (reported here) was located in the southern half of the evaluated field. Two field systems were revealed. The first was aligned north-south, and was undated. The second was aligned north-west to south-east, and was dated to the Late Iron Age or early Roman period. Earlier occupation was indicated by the presence of residual Neolithic flints and Bronze Age pottery in the ditch fills.

The results of the excavation differ in two ways from those of the evaluation. First, the evaluation indicated that there were medieval and post-medieval ditches over the whole of the evaluation area, but none of those on the excavation site (in the southern half of the evaluation area) were dated later than 1st century Roman, although some were undated and may be medieval or later. Second, the northern part of the evaluation area produced fragments of loomweights and Mayen lava which are evidence of a mixed farming economy in the Late Iron Age and Roman periods, but the excavation (in the southern part of the evaluation area) produced few finds of this date. One interpretation of this would be that the excavated area coincided with the farmed fields rather than the settlement centre, which lies to the north in the area unaffected by the construction of the reservoir.

The most remarkable find was a group of small fragments of Roman coloured glass – the raw materials of enamelling – from the fill of an early Roman ditch. The circumstances of discovery indicate that these were in a cloth or leather bag dropped or placed in the ditch. This discovery, which will be fully published elsewhere, has implications for local enamelling and metal-working.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

- 2.1 This is the archive report on an archaeological excavation on the site of a proposed reservoir and pumping station on land between Hollybush Hill and Dead Lane, Great Bentley, Essex.
- 2.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by Tendring Hundred Water Services Ltd, and was undertaken by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) between 18th April and 3rd May 2007. Post-excavation work took place between May and October 2007.
- 2.3 The 0.45ha site is located 3km south of Great Bentley, adjacent to the Dines Farm Holiday Park and between the converging roads Hollybush Hill and Dead Lane, site centre at NGR TM 1152 1836 (Fig 1).
- 2.4 The land was under cultivation prior to the excavation described here.
- 2.5 Descriptions of the excavation and recording methods used may be found in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the site produced by CAT in February 2007.
- 2.6 This report follows the standards set out in the Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CM 2002) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (CM 2003), and the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (IFA 1999) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IFA 2001). The guidance contained in the documents *Management of archaeological projects* (MAP 2), and *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1. Resource assessment* (EAA 3), *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy* (EAA 8), and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14) was also followed.

3 **Archaeological background** (Fig 1)

The Tendring peninsula is rich in archaeological cropmark sites, very few of which have been excavated. No cropmarks were known within the area of the excavated site itself, although there are cropmark sites to the east and west of the site (Fig 1). The largest area of cropmarks is to the east of Dead Lane (Essex Historic Environment Record or EHER no 2948). These include ring-ditches, a number of sub-rectangular enclosures, an irregular oval enclosure, and ditches and trackways. The features are all undated, although a prehistoric and/or Roman date is usually assumed for them. The cropmark west of the site represent field boundaries, a possible trackway, and a ring-ditch site (EHER no 2958). Similarly, these are undated but probably prehistoric, and it seemed probable that cropmark features from the east and west would continue into the proposed reservoir site.

A trial-trenching evaluation in November 2006 revealed an area of prehistoric and Roman occupation dating from the Middle Iron Age to the Roman period (not necessarily continuously), which was probably marginal to the cropmark sites to the east and west. Later, a field system defined by medieval and post-medieval ditches was laid out over the site. There was no strong evidence for medieval or later settlement here, and an origin for both the finds and the ditches may be found in the farms and areas of settlement to the west and north of the site (CAT Report 401).

4 **Aim**

The aim of the excavation was to 'preserve by record' the character, extent, date, significance and condition of any archaeological remains and deposits likely to be affected by the construction of a new reservoir and pumping station.

5 **Results** (Figs 2-4)

Using a mechanical excavator with a flat-edged bucket, the site was stripped of 0.25m of ploughsoil (L1) and up to 0.16m of the underlying layer (L2). This revealed natural subsoil L3, a dry, medium yellow sand, in which archaeological features were visible. All excavation of archaeological features was done by hand.

Compared with the evaluation, the excavation produced very few archaeological features or finds. The principal discovery was a group field ditches on two different alignments and therefore perhaps of two separate periods (Fig 2).

The first alignment consisted of a pair of parallel ditches on a north-west to south-east alignment (F16/F44 and F1/F7/F41). These probably defined a double-ditched trackway 12.8m wide (ditch centre to ditch centre). Two shorter and unconnected stretches of ditch 12m to the east (and parallel to F1/F7/F41) may also be of the same period (F10, F42). The west ditch of the trackway consisted of F16 and F44, which, although separated by an unexcavated area on the edge of the site, were clearly the same ditch. F16/F44 was sectioned in four places (Fig 3). Its maximum surviving width and depth were 1.79m and 0.72m respectively (at F16 Sx 2). The principal dating evidence from this ditch was a Late Iron Age or early Roman grog-tempered sherd, a residual sand-tempered sherd (probably Middle Iron Age in date), a heat-affected stone, and ten residual prehistoric flints (two of which were Early Neolithic blades). The date of this ditch would therefore appear to be Late Iron Age/early Roman.

The east ditch of the trackway was defined by ditches F1/F17 and F41. These were not continuous, but were separated by a 1.6m gap. Also, ditch F41 was only 25m long, and did not extend beyond the edge of the excavated area. F41 was sectioned in three places. Its maximum surviving width and depth were 0.85m and 0.17m respectively (at F41 Sx 2, Sx 3). The west side of the trackway continued as ditch F17. F1 was sectioned in two places and F17 in one. F1 had a maximum surviving width and depth of 1.2m and 0.2m respectively (at F1 Sx 2). F17 had a maximum surviving width and depth of 0.75m and 0.70m respectively. Ditch F1/F17 is the only part of the site with any stratigraphical sequence, which will be explained

here. The earliest element was ditch F18, which was recut as ditch F17 (which = F1). Neither F18 nor F17 produced dated finds, but F1 contained a sherd of flint-gritted ware which probably dates to the Middle Bronze Age or the Late Bronze Age. Ditch F1/F17 was then cut by pit F2, which contained a Late Iron Age/early Roman grog-tempered sherd, three residual prehistoric flints, and a group of small glass *tesserae* (reported on below). Another feature in this stratigraphical group was a shallow feature F12, which was cut by ditch F17. It also contained a Late Iron Age/early Roman grog-tempered sherd and is also assigned to the Late Iron Age or early Roman period.

The second main alignment of ditches consisted of the north-south-aligned F19. Four ditches extended off it, F23 to the north-east, F22 to the south-east, F21 to the west, and F31 to the north-east. The last three of these were very short lengths of ditch. A small post-hole or pit F35 was located on the east end of short ditch F31 (the two may be connected). This ditch system was sectioned in nine places. No finds were recovered from any of the sections. F19 had a maximum surviving width and depth of 1.20m and 0.22m respectively (at Sx 2 and Sx 1 respectively). Maximum surviving widths and depths of the off-shoot ditches were: F21, 0.94m and 0.34m; F22, 0.90m and 0.56m; F31, 0.60m and 0.34m respectively. This ditch system produced no finds. The difference in alignment between the two ditch systems on this site may or may not indicate a difference in date.

There were a few other features. First, there were a few short lengths of ditch. F9 extended more or less west to east, south of the south terminus of ditch F10, which may have been part of the first ditch system (above). It was not quite in alignment with either of the two ditch systems, so it cannot be assigned to either system with any certainty. It was excavated in two places. Its maximum surviving width and depth was 0.9m and 0.3m respectively. F9 was cut by two undated pits (F11, F13). There were a few other short ditch-like features, ie F6, F14, F15 and F32. None produced finds, and it is difficult to interpret them. A small number of other features (F29, F37, F38) contained burnt flints or other heat-affected stones. These features are also undated, but a prehistoric date might be suggested.

There were also ten 'natural features' which may be products of the last glaciation, or, alternatively, the results of a programme of tree clearance by early settlers (F3, F5, F7, F27, F28, F33, F34, F36, F45, F46).

6 Finds

6.1 The glass

by H E M Cool

Pit F2 produced a most remarkable group of 230 glass artefacts. The bulk of them may loosely be termed *tesserae* and have been knapped to a rhomboid shape, sometimes approaching a cubic form. A small number are either triangular or of an irregular shape, and there are also four flakes with conchoidal fractures deriving from the knapping process. Thirteen different colours and shades may be identified, the most common of which is an opaque mid blue, occasionally with black streaks. *Tesserae* of this colour often have voids in them caused by bubbles. Also common are mid blue translucent *tesserae*. The full range of colours and shapes is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: the *tesserae* and flakes.

Colour	Rhomboid	Triangular	Irregular	Flake	Total
Mid blue opaque	92	11	3	1	107
Mid blue translucent	36	2	-	1	39
Yellow opaque (many bubbles)	23	2	-	-	25
Pale cloudy blue	14	-	-	-	14
Yellow-tinged mid green opaque	11	-	-	-	11

Mid green opaque	7	1	-	-	8
Red (terracotta) opaque	7	-	-	-	7
Turquoise opaque	1	1	-	2	4
Green-tinged yellow opaque	3	1	-	-	4
Pale blue, appearing opaque	3	-	-	-	3
Pale grey/blue with many bubbles	2	-	-	-	2
Peacock opaque	1	-	-	-	1
Peacock translucent, bubbly	1	-	-	-	1
Total	201	18	3	4	226

In addition to the material summarised in Table 1, there are also fragments (four) from two cakes of raw glass. One is mid blue and, although it appears opaque because of its thickness, it can be seen to be translucent on the broken edges. Originally the cake was a shallow plano-convex shape of about 150mm diameter. The maximum thickness preserved is 22mm. Two fragments from the edge of the cake are present comprising approximately 20% of the circumference and weighing 58.1g. The other cake is opaque turquoise and is represented by two joining fragments from the edge weighing 12.8g. It appears to have been of a similar diameter to the blue cake, in the region of 150-160mm. Approximately 8% of the circumference is preserved and the maximum preserved thickness is 17.5mm. The mid blue translucent *tesserae* obviously came from the first cake and the opaque turquoise ones from the second. The fragments of the latter were probably not used to make more *tesserae* as they are full of large voids. The mid blue cake fragments would still have been serviceable to make more *tesserae*.

The *tesserae* were all weighed to the nearest 0.1g, and measured in three dimensions to the nearest millimetre. Details for each are given in Appendix 1 at the end of this report, and the data for all the rhomboid ones are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: summary of the weight and size of the rhomboid *tesserae*.

	Weight (g)	Dimension 1 (mm)	Dimension 2 (mm)	Dimension 3 (mm)
Minimum	0.20	9.0	5.0	2.0
First quartile	0.50	8.0	7.0	5.0
Median	0.70	9.0	7.0	6.0
Mean	0.77	8.7	7.3	6.1
Third quartile	1.00	9.0	8.0	7.0
Maximum	2.00	17.0	10.0	10.0

There are some differences in size between the various colours, as can be seen from Table 3, where the weights are compared for those colours with seven or more examples. Where there is clear evidence in the form of cakes or conchoidal flakes that the *tesserae* were being manufactured either on the spot or by the person who owned this collection (mid blue, opaque and translucent), it is noticeable that the two colours are, on average, bigger than many of the other colours. There is only one complete turquoise *tessera* and that too is a large example (0.8g). There is no evidence that the *tesserae* of other colours were actually manufactured from raw glass cakes by the same person, and the small average size of, for example, the red ones might perhaps hint that these were 'bought in' ready-made. This has to remain, though, only a tentative suggestion.

Table 3: weights of selected colours.

Colour	Mean weight (g)	Minimum weight (g)	Maximum weight (g)
Mid blue translucent	1.10	0.3	1.6
Pale cloudy blue	0.85	0.6	1.3
Mid blue opaque	0.72	0.3	2.0
Yellow opaque	0.67	0.2	1.1
Mid green opaque	0.56	0.4	1.0
Yellow-tinged mid green opaque	0.55	0.4	1.0
Red (terracotta) opaque	0.49	0.4	0.9

Tesserae such as these are not uncommon finds on sites but generally occur only in ones or twos. Most of the recorded examples are blue. The next most common colour is green. Red, yellow, turquoise and white have occasionally been found. Prior to the discovery of this group, the largest assemblage came from Caerleon where 134 *tesserae* of opaque 'deep royal blue glass' from a Hadrianic or Antonine context were recovered from within an officer's quarters (Zienkiewicz 1993, 105-6). The next largest group came from the *vicus* at Castleford where 18 recognisable *tesserae* and a further 32 melted fragments probably to be associated with them were found in contexts primarily of the mid third of the 2nd century with a few coming from contexts dated earlier in the century (Cool & Price 1998, 193-4). These were all of opaque blue with the exception of a single opaque yellow example. Since those examples were published, a further eight have been recognised from adjacent sites in the south of the *vicus* (sites 44, 45, 51 – unpublished). Again, these are primarily opaque blue, although there are also two opaque green examples. One fragment from Castleford was originally described as a melted lump (*ibid*, 194 no 287, fig 67). With the benefit of hindsight gained from the West Clacton examples, it might perhaps now be described as part of a glass cake.

It is sometimes assumed that the recovery of glass *tesserae* is indicative of the presence of mosaics, and it has been suggested that these were likely to be *emblemata* set into a wall as glass *tesserae* are rare in the floor mosaics found in Britain (Neal & Cosh 2002, 20). For some time, though, it has been obvious that this simple explanation was unlikely, given the nature of the sites they are frequently found on. These often show no evidence of the sort of élite occupation which might give rise to rooms decorated with such mosaics. Instead they often have evidence of metal-working, and a more likely interpretation is that they were used as raw material for enamelling (see Cool *et al* 1995, 1592-3; Manning *et al* 1995, 307). The latter interpretation is strengthened by the unpublished *tesserae* from Castleford, as the sites they came from also produced lumps of raw opaque red glass, and enamelling is known to have taken place there (Bayley 2005). Silver- and bronze-working were also known to have taken place in the officer's quarters at Caerleon which produced the blue *tesserae* (Zienkiewicz 1993, 124-6).

The recovery of this group of *tesserae* from West Clacton also strongly suggests that they were destined to be raw material for enamelling. The colour range can be compared with the enamels used on brooches. The brooch enamel data is derived from Bayley and Butcher's survey (2004, table 17), using only the figures for the simple enamels and excluding the decayed enamels the colours of which cannot be identified with certainty.

Table 4: comparison of enamel colours used on brooches with the colours of the *tesserae* from West Clacton (see text for discussion of brooch data).

	Brooch (number)	Brooch (%)	<i>Tesserae</i> (number)	<i>Tesserae</i> (%)
Red	127	30	7	3
Blue	114	27	163	73
Turquoise	93	22	2	1
Green	20	5	19	9
White	18	4	-	-
Orange	15	4	-	-

Yellow	14	3	29	13
Black	13	3	-	-
Golden brown	4	1	-	-
Peacock	-	-	2	1
Total	418		222	

Although there is a mismatch between the proportions in each colour, the three commonest colours in the enamels are represented in this group of *tesserae* as well as two of the less common enamel colours. In comparison, where glass *tesserae* have been found in Romano-British mosaics, they tend to be blue and used to highlight features as other colours could be derived from stone, pottery and tile (Neal & Cosh 2002, 19-20). A mosaicist would not have needed the range of coloured *tesserae* seen at West Clacton that an enameller would have done. It seems very likely therefore that this group of *tesserae* is indicative of the presence of a bronze smith in the vicinity, rather than a mosaicist preparing to decorate an élite dwelling.

Finally the date of the group can be considered. *Tesserae* such as these have been found in contexts ranging from the later 1st century to the early 4th century (see Manning *et al* 1995, 307 for references), but they appear to be commonest in the 2nd century, with the two large groups from Caerleon and Castleford both coming from contexts of that date. A 2nd-century date might also be suggested by the presence in the group of two deep blue chips which seemed more likely to come from vessel glass than these specialist glasses. Deep blue glass was used for vessel glass in the 1st century, and, although broken pieces would have been available for use by an enameller as raw material into the 2nd century, it is unlikely that they would have been available in the 3rd or 4th centuries.

6.2 The prehistoric and Roman pottery (Fig 4)

by Stephen Benfield

Introduction

Only a very small quantity of pottery, ie eight sherds, weighing 50g, was recovered from the site. This pottery came from four features (F1, F2, F12, F44). The sherds are small. A single sherd from F1 makes up half of the total weight (25 g), so that the remaining seven sherds have an average weight of only 3.6 g each. As the quantity of pottery is very small, individual sherds have been weighed and described in the catalogue of pottery below (a full table is stored in the archive). Where possible, fabric codes have also been used to describe the pottery. Two codes have been assigned to the Late Iron Age and early Roman pottery, ie Fabric GTW and Fabric RCW. For the remaining sherds, the lettered fabric codes have been assigned following those devised by Nigel Brown for recording prehistoric pottery in Essex (Brown 1988). All of these fabrics are described below.

Description of fabrics

Fabric C

Tempered with small-medium flint fragments with occasional large fragments.

Fabric D

Tempered with small to large flint fragments poorly sorted in the matrix.

Fabric H

Tempered with a moderate amount of fine sand.

Fabric J

Tempered with a moderate amount of fine sand, with voids from organic matter – particularly in the surface.

Fabric GTW Grog-tempered wares

Generally thick sherds, with patchy red-brown to dark-brown surfaces. Fabric contains various quantities of crushed fired clay (grog) and is grey to brown.

Fabric RCW Romanising coarse ware

Sherds thickness is generally medium-thin. Surfaces are dark grey-brown. The fabric is grey-brown with red-brown margins and contains fragments of burnt organic matter and grog. The fabric sometimes has a tendency to laminate.

Pottery discussion

The pottery consists almost entirely of small body sherds, with the exception of one rim sherd from F1. The fabrics represented are of four distinct groups; flint-tempered (Fabrics C and D), sand-tempered (Fabrics H and J), grog-tempered (Fabric GTW), and burnt organic temper with ?grog (Fabric RCW). The grog-tempered sherds, from F2 and F44, can be dated to the period of the Late Iron Age (early-mid 1st century BC to mid 1st century AD). The wheel-made sherd in Romanising coarse ware (Fabric RCW) from F12 can be dated to the early Roman period (mid 1st-early 2nd century AD). The remaining sherds are less securely dated. The flint-tempered sherds are hand-made and are clearly prehistoric in date. The rim sherd from F1 is rounded and comes from a slightly closed bowl form. The form of this sherd and the coarse flint-tempered fabric suggest a Middle-Late Bronze Age date. This may be supported by the oxidised surface, which has been noted on Late Bronze Age plain wares elsewhere (Sealey 2006). The other flint-tempered sherds, both of which also have oxidised surfaces, can probably also be assigned to the same period. A sand-tempered sherd from F2, although quite fine at 5mm thick, appears to be hand-made. It possibly originally contained some organic temper as small voids are present in the surfaces, and there is the possible impression of a small piece of burnt-out grass or straw on the inner surface. The sherd is difficult to date. It is probable, although not certain, that it is of late prehistoric or slightly later date, possibly Middle Iron Age or more probably Late Iron Age or Roman. However, although probably unlikely, a later date of Anglo-Saxon cannot be excluded. A second similar sand-tempered sherd was recovered from F44.

It can be noted that a very small quantity of pottery was recovered from the evaluation of this site (Benfield 2007). This consisted of five sherds dated as ?Middle Iron Age and Late Iron Age or early Roman.

Catalogue of pottery

F1 Sx 2, finds number 5

Rim from a flint-tempered bowl (25 g), the rim is rounded and comes from a slightly closed bowl form, reddish-brown exterior surface, brown interior, grey fabric core, body 9 mm thick, tempered with crushed flint fragments up to 6 mm across, Fabric D.

F2, finds number 2 (total 7 g)

Sandy sherd (5 g), about 5 mm thick, small voids in surfaces, possibly burnt-out impression from a piece of grass or straw, dark grey fabric, interior surface faintly brownish-grey, possibly hand-made, slightly abraded, Fabric J.

Sherd fragment (2 g), 8 mm thick, brownish-grey fabric, tempered with fine dark grog, Fabric GTW, Late Iron Age.

F12, finds number 6

1 sherd (3 g), laminating fabric with dark grey surfaces and brown core, black inclusions of burnt organic matter and ?grog, voids in surface from burnt-out organic matter, slightly abraded, Fabric RCW, Roman 1st century.

F44 Sx 1, finds number 12

Two non-joining flint-tempered sherds probably from the same pot (13 g), thick sherds, up to 10 mm, grey-brown exterior surface, red-brown interior, with reddish-brown fabric, tempered with sparse large fragments of crushed flint and containing small dark fragments and dark bands possibly representing ?dung temper, Fabric C.

Sherd flake about 2 mm thick (1 g), outer surface missing, dark brownish-grey fabric, interior surface brown-grey, possibly hand-made, abraded, Fabric H.

Abraded small sherd fragment (1 g), brownish-grey fabric, tempered with dense fine dark grog, Fabric GTW, Late Iron Age.

6.3 The worked flints

by Hazel Martingell

A total of thirteen worked flints was recovered.

Pit F2

Two blades, one of which is probably early Neolithic in date, and one flake.

Ditch F44

One blade, one bladelet also probably Neolithic, five flakes, one chipping and two waste blocks were recovered from this ditch.

These features are in the southern part of the site, and suggest some early Neolithic activity here.

Flints list

F2, finds number 2

One blade, tertiary, butt half, Early Neolithic.

One blade, secondary, converging to point.

One flake, tertiary.

F44 Sx 1, finds number 12

One chipping, tertiary.

One flake, secondary, waste.

One flake, secondary, cortex platform.

F44 Sx 2, finds number 13

One bladelet, secondary, 31mm long, Early Neolithic.

One blade, tertiary, butt part, thin section, good grey flint, Early Neolithic.

Two flakes, secondary.

One flake, secondary, small, waste.

Two waste blocks/core fragments, secondary.

7 Conclusions

General

This site lies between fields which show cropmarks of enclosures, field systems, and a ring-ditch (a possible ploughed-out burial mound), none of which have been excavated.

An evaluation on this site in 2006 covered the whole field (as shown on Fig 1), and revealed fourteen ditches, three pits and five natural features. The dated ditches belonged to a number of different periods: prehistoric (two), Roman or later (one), medieval (three), and post-medieval (four). None of the ditches were so precisely aligned that definite field systems could be seen, but the overall impression was of a long-lived farming landscape, with fields laid out perhaps in the prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods. There were also sufficient loose finds to suggest that Middle Iron Age, Late Iron Age and Roman period occupation sites may not have been located too far away.

The excavation site (the area stripped for the construction of the reservoir coincided with only the southern part of the evaluated field, by agreement with the ECC HEM team. How did the results of the excavation differ from those of the evaluation? The excavation revealed two field systems, one dated to the Late Iron Age/Roman period, and the other undated. There were no dated ditches of the medieval or later periods, in contrast to the evaluation. The following sequence of activity may be suggested:

Neolithic

A number of Neolithic blades indicate activity here in that period. The difficulty lies in identifying what the activity might have been. A possible clue may lie in the ten features described as 'natural'. This description can include glacial-period features (not man-made), and 'tree-throws' which can be the result of trees toppling over, through natural causes, or because they were uprooted by early people. The flint

blades could therefore have been used by early settlers, with one of their tasks being tree clearance.

Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age

There were no subsoil features which necessarily dated to this period, but residual sherds of Middle Bronze Age/Late Bronze Age and Middle Iron Age pottery in later features indicate that there was some activity at this time. Some of the undated features may belong in this period. It is debatable whether the evidence is strong enough to suggest permanent occupation on the site – on balance, probably not. The latest finds in one of the field ditches (F1) was Middle Bronze Age or Late Bronze Age, but the ditch is assigned to the Roman period because it was cut by Late Iron Age or early Roman pit F2.

Late Iron Age/early Roman

A field system was laid out. It included a trackway, and possible associated ditches lying parallel to it. This field system was associated with only two sherds of Late Iron Age or early Roman pottery. Despite this being rather limited evidence, it seems a reasonable assumption that the ditches were Late Iron Age or early Roman. Residual Neolithic flints, Bronze Age pottery and burnt flints were also found in the ditch fills.

The most remarkable find was a group of small fragments of coloured glass – the raw materials of enamelling. These came from a ditch whose latest-dated find was a sherd of Late Iron Age pottery. There are perhaps two interpretations of this discovery: first, they were buried by a passing Late Iron Age metal-working specialist, and are of no special relevance for this site; second, they suggest that Late Iron Age high-status metal-working was taking place on this site, presumably for local clients.

The excavated part of the site seems to have coincided with an area of farmed fields. Finds from the evaluation stage indicate that a domestic focus may be located somewhere to the north of the excavated site.

Medieval and later field systems

The excavation results differ from the evaluation, in that the evaluation showed that there were medieval and post-medieval ditches here. However, the excavation (in the southern half of the evaluation area) has shown that, although a medieval or later date cannot be ruled out, none of the ditches in the excavated area can be positively dated to later than 1st century Roman.

The date of the adjacent field systems

The excavated field systems share alignments with cropmarks to either side of the site. The parallel field boundaries on the west side of the site (F16/F44, F1/F41, F10) are in alignment with the rectilinear cropmarks north of the holiday park. It seems probable, therefore, that the cropmarks near the holiday park are also those of an early Roman field system.

Although the undated cropmark on the east side of the site (F19, etc) is not in alignment with the early Roman system, it is an alignment with the cropmark which lie to the large field to the east. Again, it is probable that they are all contemporary, but secure dating of this system awaits solution at a future date.

8 Archive deposition

The evaluation archive, including the site records and finds, will be permanently deposited with Colchester and Ipswich Museums under accession code COLEM 2007.49.

9 Acknowledgements

The Colchester Archaeological Trust would like to thank Tendring Hundred Water Services Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. The project was monitored by

Pat Connell, Essex County Council Historic Environment Management (HEM) team officer. The site work was directed by Ben Holloway and carried out by C Lister, W Clarke and L Driver.

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11 Glossary

AOD	above Ordnance Survey datum point based on mean sea level at Newlyn, Cornwall
bladelet	little blade
CM	Colchester and Ipswich Museums
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, maintained by Essex County Council
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists
LBA	Late Bronze Age, c 1,000 BC-800 BC
LIA	Late Iron Age, the period from the 2nd century BC to AD 43
medieval	the period from AD 1066 to c AD 1500
MBA	Middle Bronze Age, c 1,500 BC-1,000 BC
MIA	Middle Iron Age, c the 5th to the 2nd century BC
modern	period from c 1850 onwards to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
post-medieval	period from c 1500 to c 1850
Roman	the period from AD 43 to AD 410 approximately
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

12 Context and finds list

Context	Description	Finds nos and detail	Period
F1	ditch	5: MBA/LBA sherd	LIA/early Roman
F2	pit	2: flints (1 Early Neolithic), daub, MIA and LIA sherds, 3: ?enamelling <i>tesserae</i> (SF 1)	LIA/early Roman
F3	natural pit	-	-
F4	pit	1: heat-affected stone 7g; tile or pot scrap	LIA/early Roman?
F5	natural pit	-	-
F6	ditch	-	undated
F7	natural pit	-	-
F8	pit	-	undated
F9	ditch	-	medieval or later?
F10	ditch	-	LIA/early Roman?
F11	pit	-	undated
F12	quarry-pit?	6: charcoal piece, LIA sherd	LIA/early Roman
F13	pit	-	undated
F14	ditch	-	undated
F15	pit?	-	undated
F16	ditch	4: ?	LIA/early Roman
F17	ditch/pit	-	LIA/early Roman
F18	ditch	-	LIA?
F19	ditch	-	medieval or later?
F20	pit	-	undated
F21	ditch	-	medieval or later?
F22	ditch	-	medieval or later?
F23	ditch	-	medieval or later?
F24	pit	-	undated
F25	pit	-	undated
F26	natural pit	-	undated
F27	natural pit?	-	-
F28	natural pit	-	-
F29	post-hole/pit	7: heat-affected stones	prehistoric
F30	post-hole	-	undated
F31	ditch or pit	-	medieval or later?
F32	ditch	-	undated
F33	natural pit?	-	-
F34	natural pit	-	-
F35	post-hole/pit	-	undated
F36	natural pit	-	-

F37	pit	8: 3 small stones	prehistoric
F38	pit	9: 9 heat-affected stones	prehistoric
F39	pit		undated
F40	pit		undated
F41	ditch	10: burnt flint	LIA/early Roman
F42	ditch	11: 18 heat-affected stones	LIA/early Roman?
F43	natural feature		-
F44	ditch	12: heat-affected stones, MIA and LIA sherds, flint flakes (prehistoric) 13: flints including early Neolithic blade	LIA/early Roman
F45	natural pit		-
F46	natural pit		-
L1	topsoil		modern
L2	subsoil		post-Roman
L3	natural		-

Appendix 1: details of glass tesserae

ID no	Colour	Shape	Weight (in g)	Dimension 1	Dimension 2	Dimension 3
1	Green	rhomboid	1.0	9	8	8
2	Green	rhomboid	0.4	9	6	6
3	Green	rhomboid	0.4	10	6	4
4	Green	rhomboid	0.7	8	8	6
5	Green	rhomboid	0.4	7	6	6
6	Green	triangular	0.4	10	7	6
7	Green	rhomboid	0.5	8	7	6
8	Green	rhomboid	0.5	8	7	6
9	Green/yellow	triangular	0.4	10	6	5
10	Green/yellow	rhomboid	0.4	7	7	5
11	Green/yellow	rhomboid	0.5	8	7	6
12	Turquoise	rhomboid	1.0	8	8	8
13	Turquoise	triangular	0.4	9	6	5
14	Turquoise	flake	0.4			
15	Turquoise	flake	0.4			
16	Turquoise	chips	0.3			
17	Peacock	rhomboid	0.4	10	6	5
18	Peacock translucent	rhomboid	0.6	8	7	6
19	Deep blue	chips	0.5			
20	Red	rhomboid	0.4	6	6	5
21	Red	rhomboid	0.4	6	5	5
22	Red	rhomboid	0.5	8	5	5
23	Red	rhomboid	0.4	8	6	4
24	Red	rhomboid	0.9	8	8	7
25	Red	rhomboid	0.4	8	6	6
26	Red	rhomboid	0.4	7	5	5
27	Green/yellow	rhomboid	0.6	8	7	4
28	Yellow/green	rhomboid	1.0	9	8	8
29	Yellow/green	rhomboid	0.4	8	6	5
30	Yellow/green	rhomboid	0.6	8	6	6
31	Yellow/green	rhomboid	0.4	8	6	4
32	Yellow/green	rhomboid	0.4	7	6	5
33	Yellow/green	rhomboid	0.5	9	7	5
34	Yellow/green	rhomboid	0.5	7	7	6
35	Yellow/green	rhomboid	0.6	7	7	7
36	Yellow/green	rhomboid	0.6	8	6	6
37	Yellow/green	rhomboid	0.6	8	8	6
38	Yellow/green	rhomboid	0.4	6	6	4
39	Yellow	rhomboid	0.8	8	8	7
40	Yellow	rhomboid	0.2	8	6	2
41	Yellow	rhomboid	0.5	8	8	5
42	Yellow	rhomboid	1.1	9	8	7

ID no	Colour	Shape	Weight (in g)	Dimension 1	Dimension 2	Dimension 3
43	Yellow	triangular	0.7	11	9	7
44	Yellow	rhomboid	0.6	7	7	6
45	Yellow	triangular	0.5	10	7	5
46	Yellow	rhomboid	0.7	8	8	6
47	Yellow	rhomboid	0.4	8	5	5
48	Yellow	rhomboid	0.9	11	8	7
49	Yellow	rhomboid	0.4	8	5	5
50	Yellow	rhomboid	0.7	9	9	5
51	Yellow	rhomboid	0.8	12	7	6
52	Yellow	rhomboid	0.8	10	8	7
53	Yellow	rhomboid	0.7	9	8	6
54	Yellow	rhomboid	0.7	9	7	6
55	Yellow	rhomboid	0.7	10	7	6
56	Yellow	rhomboid	0.9	11	8	5
57	Yellow	rhomboid	0.6	10	7	6
58	Yellow	rhomboid	0.6	7	7	6
59	Yellow	rhomboid	0.5	7	6	6
60	Yellow	rhomboid	0.7	9	7	6
61	Yellow	rhomboid	0.8	17	7	5
62	Yellow	rhomboid	0.6	10	7	6
63	Yellow	rhomboid	0.4	8	6	5
64	Yellow	chips	0.5			
65	Pale blue	rhomboid	0.8	11	7	5
66	Pale blue	rhomboid	0.4	8	5	5
67	Pale blue	rhomboid	1.0	10	8	6
68	Pale grey blue	rhomboid	1.2	8	8	7
69	Pale grey blue	rhomboid	1.2	8	8	7
70	Deep translucent blue	chips	0.8			
71	Pale cloudy blue	rhomboid	0.7	9	7	5
72	Pale cloudy	rhomboid	0.7	8	7	7
73	Pale cloudy blue	rhomboid	0.9	10	9	8
74	Pale cloudy blue	rhomboid	0.6	12	6	6
75	Pale cloudy blue	rhomboid	1.0	8	8	6
76	Pale cloudy blue	rhomboid	0.7	9	7	5
77	Pale cloudy blue	rhomboid	1.2	11	8	8
78	Pale cloudy blue	rhomboid	0.9	9	8	6
79	Pale cloudy blue	rhomboid	1.3	10	8	7
80	Pale cloudy blue	rhomboid	0.7	8	7	6
81	Pale cloudy blue	rhomboid	1	10	7	6
82	Pale cloudy blue	rhomboid	0.6	8	7	6
83	Pale cloudy blue	rhomboid	0.7	9	7	5
84	Pale cloudy blue	rhomboid	0.9	9	7	7
85	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.1	10	8	7
86	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	0.3	8	8	4
87	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.0	9	8	8
88	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.1	8	8	7
89	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.0	9	8	8
90	Mid blue translucent	triangular	1.0	12	8	8
91	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.5	11	9	8
92	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.1	9	8	8
93	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.0	10	10	6
94	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.0	8	8	7
95	Mid blue translucent	triangular	0.5	9	7	7
96	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.1	8	8	6
97	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.1	11	8	5

ID no	Colour	Shape	Weight (in g)	Dimension 1	Dimension 2	Dimension 3
98	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.4	9	9	9
99	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.0	10	8	8
100	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.1	10	9	7
101	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	0.8	8	8	7
102	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	0.9	10	7	7
103	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	0.9	8	7	7
104	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.1	8	7	7
105	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.1	9	8	7
106	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	0.9	8	8	6
107	Mid blue translucent	homboid	1.4	9	9	8
108	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.4	12	9	7
109	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.1	8	8	8
110	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.4	10	9	7
111	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.4	9	8	8
112	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.2	9	8	8
113	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.1	9	9	6
114	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.5	10	10	8
115	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1	9	7	7
116	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.1	9	7	7
117	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.6	9	8	8
118	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.1	8	8	7
119	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.1	8	8	7
120	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	1.2	10	9	6
121	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	1.0	9	8	6
122	Mid blue opaque	triangular	0.4	8	8	6
123	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.8	9	7	6
124	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	1.0	10	7	7
125	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.7	7	7	7
126	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	9	6	5
127	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	1.0	10	9	7
128	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.7	8	7	5
129	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.4	6	6	6
130	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	8	5	5
131	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	1.4	10	8	8
132	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.5	9	8	4
133	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	1.1	8	8	7
134	Mid blue translucent	rhomboid	0.9	9	7	7
135	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.8	8	6	6
136	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	9	7	5
137	Mid blue opaque	triangular	0.5	9	6	5
138	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.7	8	7	5
139	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	1.3	10	8	7
140	Mid blue opaque	triangular	1.2	11	9	8
141	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.7	8	8	5
142	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.7	9	7	7

ID no	Colour	Shape	Weight (in g)	Dimension 1	Dimension 2	Dimension 3
143	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.8	9	8	6
144	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	6	6	6
145	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.4	8	6	5
146	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.4	7	6	6
147	Mid blue opaque	irregular	0.8	13		
148	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.3	7	5	4
149	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.4	8	7	6
150	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.9	8	8	7
151	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.4	8	6	5
152	Mid blue opaque	irregular	0.8	9		
153	Mid blue opaque	triangular	0.3	7	6	6
154	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	1.0	9	8	7
155	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.8	8	7	6
156	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	2.0	11	10	10
157	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	10	7	5
158	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	1.1	10	8	7
159	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.7	8	8	5
160	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	7	7	7
161	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.4	7	7	6
162	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	8	7	7
163	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	1.1	9	8	7
164	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.9	10	7	5
165	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.5	7	7	5
166	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.7	10	7	7
167	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	7	7	6
168	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.5	7	7	4
169	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	1.0	10	8	7
170	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.8	9	7	5
171	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	7	6	6
172	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.8	9	7	6
173	Mid blue opaque	triangular	0.4	9	6	5
174	Mid blue opaque	triangular	0.3	7	5	4
175	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.8	10	7	6
176	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	1.4	9	9	7
177	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.8	9	7	7
178	Mid blue opaque	triangular	1.1	10	9	7
179	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.8	8	8	6
180	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	1.0	9	8	7
181	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.4	7	5	5
182	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.7	10	7	5
183	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.5	8	7	6
184	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.3	8	7	4
185	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.7	9	8	5
186	Mid blue opaque	triangular	0.7	10	8	8
187	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.5	8	6	5
188	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	1.1	9	8	7
189	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.4	7	6	5
190	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.8	8	8	7
191	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	8	7	7
192	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	9	7	6
193	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.7	11	8	6
194	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.4	7	6	6
195	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.5	8	7	5
196	Mid blue opaque	triangular	0.6	10	8	7
197	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.5	8	7	5
198	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	1.0	10	8	8
199	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.8	11	9	6
200	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	1.1	9	8	8
201	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.3	10	6	4
202	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	1.0	10	7	7
203	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	7	7	6
204	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	9	9	4
205	Mid blue opaque	triangular	0.7	9	8	7
206	Mid blue opaque	triangular	0.7	11	7	6
207	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	9	6	5
208	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.5	9	6	6
209	Mid blue	rhomboid	1.1	9	8	8

ID no	Colour	Shape	Weight (in g)	Dimension 1	Dimension 2	Dimension 3
	translucent					
210	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	1.3	12	9	7
211	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	1.0	9	8	8
212	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	9	7	5
213	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	8	7	6
214	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.5	10	6	5
215	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.8	9	8	6
216	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	9	8	6
217	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	8	8	5
218	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.8	8	7	7
219	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.4	10	7	4
220	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	8	6	5
221	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.8	9	8	7
222	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	7	7	7
223	Mid blue opaque	irregular	0.4	8		
224	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.6	7	7	6
225	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.5	10	8	3
226	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.7	8	8	5
227	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.4	9	7	5
228	Mid blue opaque	rhomboid	0.4	9	9	4
229	Mid blue opaque	flake	0.4			
230	Mid blue translucent	flake	0.3			

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Distribution list:

Tendring Hundred Water Services Ltd (Mr Martin Henderson)
Pat Connell, Historic Environment Management (HEM) team, Essex County Council
Colchester and Ipswich Museums



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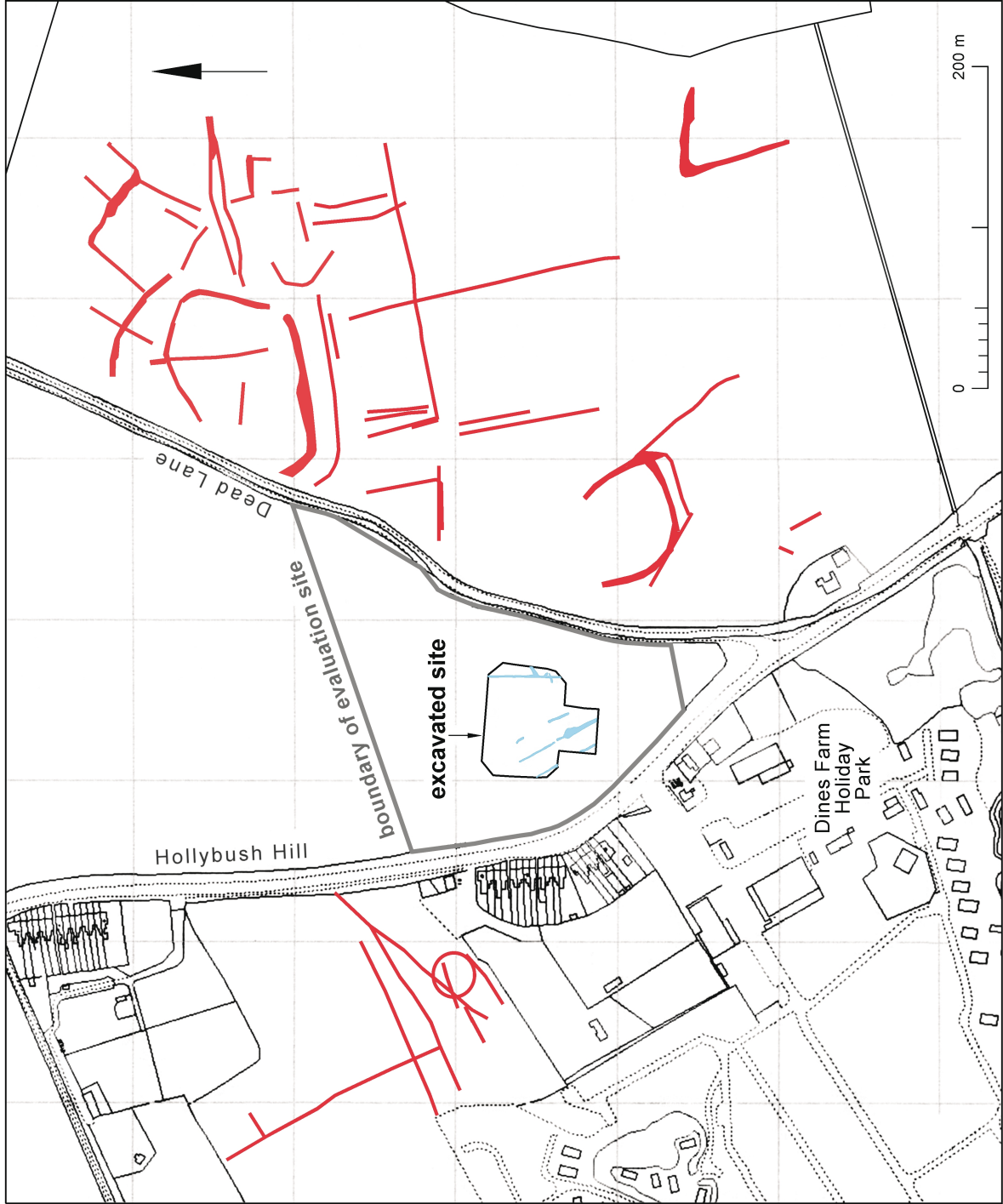


Fig 1 Site location, showing excavated field systems. Unexcavated cropmark sites are shown to west of Hollybush Hill and east of Dead Lane.

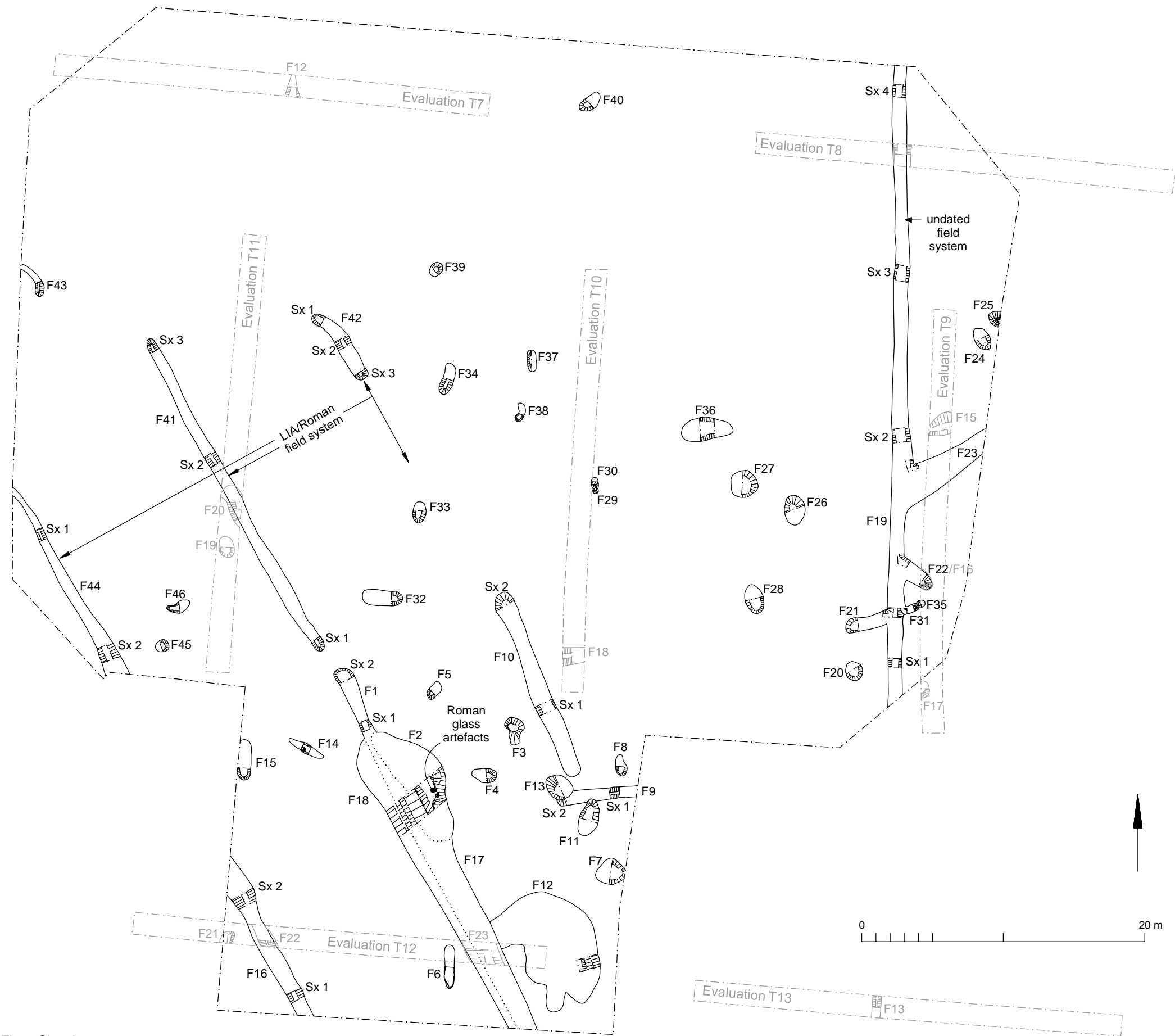


Fig 2 Site plan.

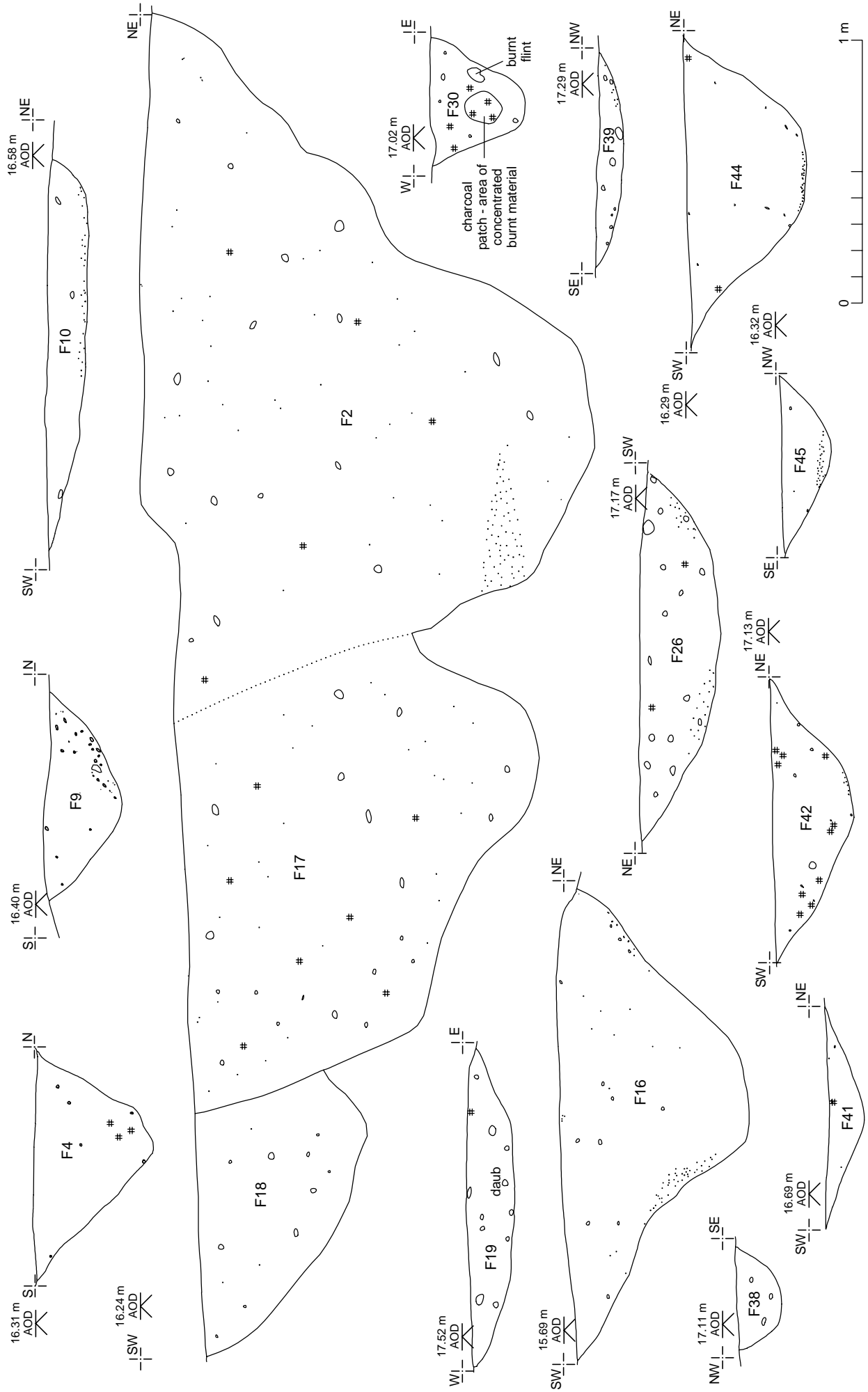


Fig 3 Sections.

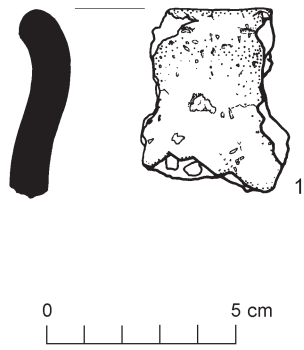


Fig 4 Prehistoric pottery.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ *Essex Archaeology and History*

Summary sheet

Site address: the site of the West Clacton reservoir and pumping station, Dead Lane, Great Bentley, Essex	
Parish: Great Bentley	District: Tendring
NGR: TM 1152 1836 (centre)	Site code: Museum accession code: COLEM: 2007.49
Type of work: Excavation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: April-May 2007	Size of area investigated: approximately 0.45ha
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester and Ipswich Museums	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER nos: 2948, 2958
Final report: CAT Report 425 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: prehistoric and Roman	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p><i>Aerial survey has revealed the cropmarks of unexcavated and undated field systems on either side of this site. An evaluation in 2006 uncovered a number of field ditches, as well as evidence of prehistoric and Roman activity.</i></p> <p><i>The 2007 excavation (reported here) was located in the southern half of the evaluated field. Two field systems were revealed. The first was aligned north-south, and was undated. The second was aligned north-west to south-east, and was dated to the Late Iron Age or early Roman period. Earlier occupation was indicated by the presence of residual Neolithic flints and Bronze Age pottery in the ditch fills.</i></p> <p><i>The results of the excavation differ in two ways from those of the evaluation. First, the evaluation indicated that there were medieval and post-medieval ditches here, but none of those in the excavated area were dated later than 1st century Roman, although some were undated and may be medieval or later. Second, the northern part of the evaluation site produced fragments of loomweights and Mayen lava which are evidence of a mixed farming economy in the Late Iron Age and Roman periods, but the excavation (in the southern part of the evaluation site) produced few finds of this date. One interpretation of this would be that the excavated area coincided with the farmed fields rather than the settlement centre, which lies to the north in the area unaffected by the construction of the reservoir.</i></p> <p><i>The most remarkable find was a group of small fragments of Roman coloured glass – the raw materials of enamelling – from the fill of an early Roman ditch. The circumstances of discovery indicate that these were in a cloth or leather bag dropped or placed in the ditch. This discovery, which will be fully published elsewhere, has implications for local enamelling and metal-working.</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: CAT Report 401	
Author of summary: H Brooks and B Holloway	Date of summary: October 2007

