Archaeology Wales

1402 Battle of Pilleth
Pilleth, Monaughty, Powys

Battlefield Survey

By
Chris E Smith BA (Hons) MA MIfA

Report No. 1110

Prepared for:

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

CBHC
RCAHMW

Cadw

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Crynodeb Anhechnegol

Mae'r adroddiad yma, ar gyfer Comisiwn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru (CBHC), yn crynhoi a chyflwyno canlyniadau'r gwaith arolygu diweddaraf ar faes brwydr dybiedig Bryn Glas (1402), Pilleth, ger Mynachdy, Powys. Y mae'r astudiaeth yn rhan o ymchwiliad mwy eang sy'n cynnwys tri o feysydd brwydrau Cymru. Amcan y gwaith yw hel tystiolaeth ynglŷn â maint a lleoliad phob safle ar gyfer cofrestr awgrymedig Llywodraeth Cymru o Feysydd Brwydrau Hanesyddol Cymru.

Yn dilyn gwaith rhagarweiniol 2012, fe ddychwelodd Archaeology Wales i ymgymryd gwaith archwilio ychwanegol. Roedd yr archwilio yma yn cynnwys cerdded caeau'r maes, arolygon pellach gyda datgelydd metel, yn ogystal a chloddio tyllau a ffosydd prawf. Fe wnaeth y tyllau prawf ar y twmpathau ar waelod y dyffryn sydd yn draddodiadol gysylltiedig â'r frwydr, ddangos eu bod yn nodweddion naturiol. Cloddiwyd ffosydd prawf yn y coed uwchlaw Eglwys y Santes Fair, lleoliad arall sy'n gysylltiedig ag olion cyrff o'r frwydr. Ni ddarganfyddwyd unrhyw olion esgyrn dynol yma. Wrth gerdded y caeau o gwmpas Castell Foel Allt, ni ddarganfyddwyd unrhyw ddeunydd yn gysylltiedig â'r frwydr ond fe wnaeth arolwg datgelydd metel i'r gogledd-orllewin o Gastell Foel Allt a dwyrain Llys Pilleth ddarganfod deunydd domestig canol oesol gydag ambell eitem a all fod yn gysylltiedig â cheffylau, o bosib o gyfnod y frwydr.

O ganlyniad i'r gwaith archwilio flaenorol a'r gwaith yma mi ddylai'r maes brwydr cynnwys Bryn Glas, uwchlaw'r Eglwys, yn ogystal, o bosib, a'r cae dwyreiniol gerllaw Llys Pilleth.

Non-Technical Summary

This report draws upon the results gained by a second phase of survey work undertaken at the reputed site of the 1402 Battle of Pilleth at Bryn Glas, Pilleth, near Monaughty, Powys, for The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW). The work forms part of a larger investigation, the objectives of which are to gather evidence that will verify and inform the location and extent of Welsh battlefields and to inform the consideration of each site for inclusion on the Welsh Government proposed Register of Historic Battlefields in Wales.

The work undertaken at Pilleth comprised test-pitting, the excavation of evaluation trenches, fieldwalking and metal detector surveys. Test pitting took place on three mounds traditionally associated with the battle located in the valley bottom, but the work demonstrated that the mounds are natural in origin. Evaluation trenching was undertaken adjacent to a stand of trees located above St Mary's church. However, this failed to identify any evidence for the burial of bones, despite the fact that such material is reputed to have been found there previously. Fieldwalking took place in an area adjacent to Castell Foel Allt, although no material contemporary with the battle was identified. Metal detector surveys were located north west of Castell Foel Allt and east of Pilleth Court. This led to the recovery of medieval material that was mostly of domestic origin, although some horse related items included in the assemblage may have been contemporary with the battle.

The results of this phase of work, combined with that undertaken in 2012, has helped to redefine the postulated area associated with the 1402 battle. It now includes the hillslope of Bryn Glas, above St Mary's church, and, more tentatively, the field east of Pilleth Court.

1 Introduction

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In February 2013 Archaeology Wales carried out a series of archaeological investigations around Bryn Glas, Pilleth, Powys, NGR SO 25242 68223 (Fig 1). A metal detector survey, fieldwalking and the excavation of trenches and test pits were carried out.

1.1.2 The work was carried out at the request of Louise Barker of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (Henceforth – The Commission) and was funded by the Welsh Government. It formed part of a series of on-going battlefield surveys undertaken by Archaeology Wales Ltd on behalf of The Commission, the primary objective of which is to inform the consideration of each battlefield site for inclusion on a proposed Battlefields Register for Wales.

1.1.3 The investigations formed a second phase of work. The previous phase, undertaken in 2012, comprised a metal detector survey concentrated on the slope of Bryn Glas above St Mary's church, an assessment of previous work, a site visit and analysis of LiDAR data. Based on the dateable finds recovered, and their distribution, it was tentatively concluded that the slope of Bryn Glas hill above St Mary's church may have been involved in the battle (Smith 2012).

2 Aims & Objectives

2.1 Outline Requirements

2.1.1 The objective of the work at each site is to gather evidence that will help verify and inform the location, extent and archaeological character of the associated battlefield. The fundamental criterion is that in order for a battlefield to be protected, and for change to be managed, its location and extent must be confidently identified. In addition, the battlefield must meet at least one of the following three criteria:

2.1.2 **Be associated with historical events or figures of national importance** (i.e. military innovations, direct associations with nationally important figures or events and whether the engagement played a key role in a campaign); and/or

2.1.3 **Have significant physical remains and/or archaeological potential** (i.e. include natural or constructed physical features at the time of the engagement, evidence from the engagement or other related buried archaeological evidence); and/or

2.1.4 **Have a clear landscape context that allows the events of the battle to be understood or interpreted** (i.e. the initial area of deployment and fighting, wider landscape incorporating earthworks, skirmishes, camps, burial, line of advance and retreat, and detached elements such as memorials)

2.2 2013 Phase of Work

2.2.1 The main aim of the second phase of work was to further define areas around Pilleth that may have been associated with the 1402 battle (Fig 2).

2.2.2 This was to be achieved by:

- Undertaking further metal detector surveys and fieldwalking in areas adjacent to Castell Foel Allt and Pilleth Court
- Excavating test pits in the mounds located in the valley bottom
- Excavating evaluation trenches within the stand of Wellingtonia trees said to mark the location of bones ploughed up in the 19th century

2.3 Geology and topography

2.3.1 The underlying solid geology of the Pilleth area is primarily made up of the undifferentiated Ludlow Rocks series, composed of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone deposits (British Geological Survey, 2001).

2.3.2 The battle site of Pilleth occupies two distinct soil zones. The upper slopes consist of the typical brown earths of the 541j DENBIGH 1 series, consisting of well drained fine loamy or silty soils overlying Palaeozoic slaty mudstone and siltstone.

2.3.3 Within the lower-lying section of the battlefield (the valley floor of the Upper Lugg) the predominant soil type consists of the typical alluvial gley soils of the 811b CONWAY series, comprising deep stoneless fine silty and clayey soils variably affected by seasonal groundwater flooding.

2.3.4 The hill of Bryn Glas, on the eastern slope of which the 1402 battle is supposed to have largely taken place, has a steep gradient, rising from 200m OD at its base to an eventual height of 332m OD, although at the top it is comparatively flat . The hill is bounded to the north, west and south by Black Hill (404m OD), Glog Hill (408m OD) and Llan Fawr (387m OD) respectively.

2.3.5 The flat and wet valley bottom, through which the river Lugg runs, is located some 400m to the south and is separated from Bryn Glas by the route of the B4356.

2.4 Archaeological and Historical Background

2.4.1 A complete description of the Battle of Pilleth is contained within the pilot study undertaken by Border Archaeology (2009). The main events, however, can be summarised as follows:

2.4.2 The battle of Pilleth should be viewed against the backdrop of the intensification of Owain Glyndwr's rebellion during the years 1401-2 and the failure of the English Crown (Henry IV) and the Marcher lords to deal effectively with the revolt. At some point during the summer of 1401, Glyndwr's forces appear to have inflicted a defeat on a sizeable English force mustered from Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire at Hyddgen to

the north of Plynlimon. It would appear that this success heralded a significant broadening and intensification of the revolt; Glyndwr subsequently appears to have mounted a substantial raid into Radnorshire, storming the castle at New Radnor and massacring the garrison, followed by attacks on the Marcher strongholds of Montgomery and Welshpool in the autumn, while the important royal castles of Aberystwyth and Harlech were placed under siege.

2.4.3 Following attacks on the lordships of Ruthin and Dyffryn Clwyd in April, Glyndwr's attention appears to have turned once again to Radnorshire, dominated by the extensive estates of the Mortimer family which were then in the possession of the Crown during the minority of Edmund, son of the late Roger Mortimer, fourth earl of March (d.1398). There appears to have been a pronounced absence of leadership among the gentry and nobility of the central Marches at the time of Glyndwr's attack in June 1402; which is perhaps reflected in the fact that responsibility for countering the Welsh attack was given (possibly in haste) to the late earl of March's younger brother, Edmund Mortimer, who appears to have been a relative non-entity up to this point, holding a fairly sizeable estate in Herefordshire and Shropshire.

2.4.4 Probably the most detailed contemporary account is that contained in the continuation of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, compiled by a monk of Evesham in or shortly after1402. The author of the *Vita* states that Edmund Mortimer, 'at that time present in the town of Ludlow, received news that the said Owain Glyndwr had come down from the Welsh mountains with a small force and that he was upon a mountain next to Pilleth, not far from the town of Ludlow. Edmund therefore hastily sent for his men and tenants of Maelienydd 'that they should not fail to come to his aid in this hard necessity'.

2.4.5 The events of the battle itself are described in several contemporary and near contemporary chronicle sources which differ somewhat in content and level of detail, although they appear to agree broadly on the principal details of the engagement and its aftermath. Probably the most informative account of the battle, given in the continuation of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, compiled by a monk of Evesham Abbey either in or shortly after 1402, states that when they (Mortimer's men and the tenants of Maelienydd) came to him (ie. Mortimer), with them and many others in great strength he boldly ascended the hill'.88 From this account, it would appear that Mortimer gathered his forces as he marched from Ludlow toward Glyndwr's position, meeting the contingent of Maelienydd somewhere close to Pilleth (possibly, as Hodges suggests, at nearby Whitton to the N of the River Lugg) before advancing on Glyndwr's forces, which are explicitly stated as occupying a hilltop position.

2.4.6 Significantly, two other contemporary or near-contemporary accounts, which otherwise provide little detail as to the course of the engagement, corroborate the statement in the *Vita* that the battle took place on a hill. Of particular importance is the account given in the Mortimer family chronicle compiled at Wigmore Abbey, only 9 miles due E from Pilleth and therefore in a good position to receive reliable information concerning the battle, which explicitly states that the battle took place 'on a mountain called Bryn Glas within Maelienydd, close to Knighton'. The account contained in a prose version of the English *Brut*, probably compiled in about 1437 and including interpolations by

someone who clearly had a knowledge of Welsh affairs and particularly the Glyndwr revolt, states that 'this battle was in the Blak Hill beside Pymaren'.

2.4.7 The account of the battle in the *Vita Ricardi* then relates how 'having come together with great impetus, the said Welshmen of Maelienydd, not of the tribe of Judah, but born to be similar traitors, traitorously turned their faces and weapons against their own lord'. It would appear from this passage that the battle commenced with Mortimer advancing with the bulk of his army against Glyndwr's position, presumably intending to overwhelm the Welsh by sheer force of numbers. However it would seem that, in the midst of battle, the contingent of troops from Maelienydd suddenly defected to Glyndwr's cause, which immediately turned the tide of the battle.

2.4.8 The *Vita* further describes how 'ill fortune therefore befell our men, the Lord Edmund was captured immediately and many others with him. Then there came on Owain's part a certain Welshman named Rees a Gytch, who was harsher than the others, he either killed, mutilated or captured all who resisted him'. Following an account of the casualties suffered by the English during the battle (giving the relatively small estimate of 200 dead), the chronicler provides a remarkably vivid description of the carnage of the battlefield, stating that 'the corpses were left lying under the horses hooves, weltering in their own blood, as burial was forbidden for a long time afterwards'.

2.4.9 It is difficult to establish the respective size of the English and Welsh armies at Pilleth, based on the available documentary evidence. The author of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi* described Glyndwr as having come down from the Welsh mountains with a small force (*cum paucis*). Thomas Walsingham, in his *Annales Henrici Quarti*, describes Glyndwr's force as a horde or rabble (turba) of Welshmen, which might imply a large number of troops, although in the *Historia Anglicana* he uses the more non-committal term of 'comitiva', denoting a band or company.

2.4.10 The size and composition of Edmund Mortimer's army is similarly difficult to establish, however the chronicle sources appear generally to agree that it was a substantial force. The author of the *Vita Ricardi* states that Mortimer 'sent for his men and tenants of Maelienydd', perhaps suggesting that the bulk of Mortimer's force consisted of two distinct elements, comprising his own household retainers and the 'tenants of Maelienydd'.

3 Methodology

3.1 Metal Detector Survey

3.1.1 A detailed metal detector survey was undertaken by local volunteers and local metal detector clubs under the direction of Chris Smith. Areas subject to survey are shown on figures 2 and 3.

3.1.2 All the areas surveyed were divided into transects of equal width, marked with canes, to ensure regular coverage. Each individual transect was assigned to a metal detectorist who scanned the area twice, once going up the field and once going down.

3.1.3 All metal detectors were set to 'All Metal' mode so as to include responses from ferrous objects.

3.1.4 When a find was located it was placed *in situ* within a finds bag with a marker flag placed next to it. A waterproof label was placed in the bag with the depth of the find marked on it in indelible ink. Subsequently, the finds were collected by the supervising archaeologist. Each find was labelled with an individual find number and each numbered findspot was located using a Topcon GTS 725 total station.

3.1.5 The grid coordinates from each findspot were entered into an excel spreadsheet. This detailed all the finds, their descriptions, dates and locations. The total station survey was overlaid onto a map to show the distribution of the finds across each assessment area.

3.1.6 Finds that were clearly identifiable in the field as being of 20th – 21st century in date (agricultural/machinery/litter) were not retained and do not form part of the project archive. These were removed from site and discarded away from the survey area.

3.2 Fieldwalking

3.2.1 Areas subject to fieldwalking (Fig 4) were sub-divided into corridors and marked out with bamboo canes.

3.2.2 When a find was located it was placed *in situ* within a finds bag and a marker flag was placed next to it Subsequently, the finds were collected by the supervising archaeologist. Each find was labelled with an individual number and each numbered findspot was located using a Topcon GTS 725 total station.

3.3 Trench and Test Pit Excavations

3.3.1 Three machine excavated trenches, between 10m and 20m in length, were excavated within the stand of Wellingtonia trees located above St Mary's church (Fig 5). Initial removal of overburden, topsoil and subsoil deposits was undertaken by mechanical excavator (a 1.5 ton, tracked, mini-digger) under close archaeological supervision. Reinstatement was also undertaken by mechanical excavator under close supervision. Post-backfill record photographs were taken.

3.3.2 Sieving of material from the spoil heaps took place to aid the identification of possible small bone fragments. Ten litres of material was sieved from every square metre of spoil. Hand sieves with a 0.05m grade mesh were used.

3.3.3 A total of eight test pits, varying is size between 1.0m by 1.0m and 2.5m by1.0m, were excavated on the mounds at the valley bottom (Figs 6, 7 & 8). These were all hand excavated. Turf was removed and stored adjacent to the test pit. All reinstatement was undertaken by hand. Post-backfill record photographs were taken.

3.3.4 All exposed areas were subsequently cleaned by hand by suitably qualified AW staff.

3.3.5 All areas were photographed using high resolution (14+ Mega Pixels) digital cameras.

3.3.6 All areas were scanned with a metal detector prior to excavation. Spoil heaps and exposed surfaces were also scanned.

3.3.7 Site illustrations were undertaken on drafting film using recognised conventions and scales (1:10, 1:20, 1:50) as appropriate.

3.3.8 All works were undertaken in accordance with the IfA's *Standards and Guidance: for an archaeological evaluation* (revised 2011) and current Health and Safety legislation.

4 Fieldwalking Results

4.1 Ground and weather conditions

4.1.1 The fieldwalking was undertaken in overcast and cloudy conditions. Periods of snow and rain had left the ground soft and wet.

4.2 Field North East of Castell Foel Allt

4.2.1 The field had been ploughed and planted before the fieldwalking was undertaken. The crop was approximately 0.1m high. Permission to metal detect the field was not given, because of the potential damage that digging holes could have done to the crop, so fieldwalking was undertaken as an alternative.

4.2.2 Four corridors, each measuring approximately 200m by 10m, were laid out with bamboo canes traversing the field (Fig 4).

4.2.3 No finds of particular archaeological significance were located. A total of 32 sherds of modern ceramics (including porcelain, blue & white ware and earthen land drain) were recovered along with modern window and vessel glass. Metal items located consisted of nails, shotgun cartridge bases, wire and four pieces of scrap lead.

4.2.4 None of the finds were retained.

5 Metal Detector Survey Results

5.1 Ground and weather conditions

5.1.1 The metal detector survey was undertaken after a period of heavy snowfall and between frosts. The ground was thus very wet in places.

5.1.2 The survey area was divided between two fields (Figs 9, 10 & 11). The first, and largest, was located to the north and west of Castell Foel Allt. The second was the smaller field located east of Pilleth Court.

5.2 NW of Castell Foel Allt

5.2.1 Discussions with the landowner of the largest field revealed that the area had been used on at least three occasions for historical re-enactments as well as various other modern activities. These activities had resulted in significant amount of contaminations within the areas surveyed. Metallic debris such as drinks cans, foil, and modern currency (UK and foreign) were present in dense concentrations.

5.2.2 A total of 53 finds were recovered from the survey areas within the largest field. Of these only two were medieval: fragments of a handle and a leg, both from bronze vessels (Plates 1&2). Each fragment was located adjacent to the edge of the scheduled site of Castell Foel Allt. Whilst vessels of this type would certainly have been in use at the time of the battle (early 15th century) the locations of the finds suggests the more likely association is with the adjacent castle.

5.2.3 A single flint flake, recovered from top of a mole hill, represents the earliest find from the area.

5.2.4 The remainder of the finds were either post-medieval or modern in date (although a significant amount consisted of unidentifiable corroded ferrous lumps).

5.3 Field East of Pilleth Court

5.3.1 The field to the east of Pilleth Court was surveyed under the same conditions as the previous field. Ground conditions were thus similar.

5.3.2 Discussion with the landowner revealed that the area had been detected on numerous previous occasions.

5.3.3 Contamination by modern metallic objects within the field was limited to aluminium ointment tubes for treating livestock. A large number were recovered and discarded away from the site.

5.3.4 A total of only 26 finds were recovered from the field. Of these, five were medieval. Three of the medieval items were fragments of bronze vessels (two rim pieces and a further leg – Plates 3&4) whilst the remaining two were ‘loops’ (Plate 5), most likely associated with horse equipment. An exact parallel was located during the 2012 phase of work on the top of Bryn Glas.

5.3.5 Three slightly later, post-medieval, finds were also recovered from the field to the east of Pilleth court. They included two copper alloy ‘beehive’ thimbles of 16th century date (Egan 2005, Johnson 1982), both in a poor state of repair, and a silver Elizabeth I shilling, fourth issue, dated 1579-82 (Plate 6, Spink 2003) (the date on the coin itself is illegible).

5.3.6 Most of the remaining finds were either later post-medieval or modern in date. A number could not be dated, because they were either too fragmentary or they were ferrous objects that had become too heavily corroded.

6 Test Pit Results

6.1 Valley Bottom Mounds

6.1.1 The three large mounds located within the valley bottom were investigated by field walkover during the 2012 phase of work. The valley bottom, known as the 'water meadows', had only been drained in recent times, and this, combined with their appearance, suggested that the mounds were probably natural, glacial, features.

6.1.2 Despite this, local tradition has it that the mounds are associated with the events of the battle, being identified as the locations of possible mass graves.

6.1.3 Each mound was subject to test pitting to establish its origins. The easternmost and central mounds had 1m test pits excavated at their bases and at their tops. All spoil and exposed surfaces were scanned with a metal detector.

6.1.4 Eastern Mound, Base Test Pit (Fig 6, Plate 7)
Removal of turf and topsoil was undertaken by hand. The topsoil was composed of a mid-brown clay silt with a large amount of root matter. A very thin layer of subsoil was present. This was a mid/pale orange brown clay silt. This was located above a layer of compact, pale orange clay with frequent, small, sub-rounded, gravel inclusions. This was interpreted as a natural horizon located at 0.2m below the current ground surface.

6.1.5 Eastern Mound, Top Test Pit (Fig 6, Plate 8)
Removal of turf and topsoil was undertaken by hand. The topsoil was composed of a mid-brown clay silt with a large amount of root matter. A layer of subsoil, thicker than that located within the lower test pit, was noted. Again this was a mid/pale orange brown clay silt. It was located above a layer of firmly compacted mid brown/orange clay with frequent small gravel inclusions and occasional larger, sub-rounded, stone inclusions. This was interpreted as a natural horizon located at 0.2m below the current ground surface.

6.1.6 Eastern Mound Summary
Excavation in both test pits on the eastern mound showed evidence of bioturbation within the thin topsoil and subsoil deposits. The natural horizon, in each test pit composed of hard packed clay and gravel, was located at a very shallow depth. No finds were located within the test pits.

6.1.7 Central Mound, Base Test Pit (Fig 7, Plate 9)
Removal of turf and topsoil was undertaken by hand. Similar to that observed on the eastern mound, the topsoil was composed of a mid-brown clay silt with a large amount of root matter. Again, a very shallow subsoil horizon was located above a compact, orange brown, clay and gravel natural. Natural was again observed at 0.2m below the current ground surface.

6.1.8 Central Mound, Top Test Pit (Fig 7, Plate 10)
Removal of turf and topsoil was undertaken by hand. The topsoil was composed of a mid-brown clay silt with a large amount of root matter. A very shallow subsoil horizon was located above a compact, orange brown, clay and gravel natural. Larger stones, up

to 0.2m, were more frequent within the natural deposit than was observed on the eastern mound and the lower test pit on the central mound. Natural was again observed at 0.2m below the current ground surface.

6.1.9 Central Mound Summary
Excavation in both test pits on the central mound showed evidence of bioturbation within the thin topsoil and subsoil deposits. The natural horizon, in each test pit composed of hard packed clay and gravel, was located at a very shallow depth. Larger and more frequent stones were noted within the natural deposit seen in the upper test pit. No finds were located within the test pits.

6.1.10 Western Mound (Fig 8, Plates 11-12)
The westernmost mound was subject to a geophysical survey as part of the previous phase of work (Smith 2012). The results suggested that natural origins were most likely though a single linear feature of anthropomorphic origin was identified.

6.1.11 A longer test pit was situated so as to bisect the linear feature, so that it could be examined more closely.

6.1.12 Removal of turf and topsoil was undertaken by hand. The topsoil was composed of a grey/brown clay silt with occasional small stone inclusions. A mid brown clay subsoil, again with occasional small stone inclusions, was located beneath the topsoil and above a firmly compacted orange brown clay and gravel natural. Natural deposits were again reached at 0.2m below the current ground surface.

6.1.13 In the area of the linear feature, identified by the 2012 geophysics, a band of denser gravel, with less clay, was noted. Excavation showed that this was natural gravel.

6.1.14 Because the linear feature was identified as natural gravel, the decision was made to divide the remaining trench into three 1m test pits, spread across the mound to identify potential differences in composition. All three pits returned the same results, with compact stony clay natural being reached at a depth of 0.2m.

7 Evaluation Trench Results

7.1 Bryn Glas Hill Trenches

7.1.1 The evaluation trenches were located in the area of Wellingtonia trees located 100m to the south west of, up slope from, St Mary's church. They were positioned here in an attempt to locate bones similar to the ones said to have been ploughed up her in the nineteenth century.

7.1.2 A total of three trenches were located within the stand of trees (Fig 5). The area is on a steep slope, made more uneven by numerous rabbit warrens, tree stumps and fallen branches. The positions and sizes of the trenches were defined by the surrounding features. All spoil and exposed surfaces were scanned with a metal detector.

7.1.3 Trench 1 (Plates 13-15) measured 22.0m by 1.5m and, to avoid a tree stump, was slightly curvilinear in layout. It was aligned approximately north-west to south-east. Removal of overburden (deep organic matter) and topsoil revealed an orange subsoil with evidence of bioturbation in several places. Root runs containing a darker brown silt were evident within the subsoil. The subsoil varied in depth between 0.1m and 0.25m. It was located above a compact orange clay with frequent stone inclusions, very similar to that observed in the test pits on the mounds in the valley bottom. This was taken to be the natural horizon. A small sondage excavated mechanically in the middle of the trench showed denser concentrations of stone with less clay at deeper depths (up to 0.8m).

7.1.4 Trench 2 (Plates 16-18) measured 13.0m by 1.5m and was aligned north to south. Overburden in this area was not as deep as that seen in trench 1. Topsoil and subsoil deposits were both similar in composition to those seen in trench 1 though each had considerably less depth. Compact orange clay natural with frequent small stone, gravel, inclusions was reached at a depth of between 0.4m and 0.7m. Root runs with darker silt fills were present within the surface of the natural. A sondage, excavated mechanically, at the southern end of the trench revealed a continuation of the orange clay and stone natural deposit to a depth of 1.0m.

7.1.5 Trench 3 (Plates 19-22) measured a total of 25.0m by 1.0m and was 'L' shaped in plan (Fig 5). One axis was aligned east west whilst the other was aligned north south. Removal of dead organic matter and topsoil was undertaken by mechanical excavator. This revealed, at a depth of 0.3m, an orange brown silt clay subsoil with frequent stone inclusions. Bioturbation at this horizon was again in evidence. Removal of the subsoil revealed the same orange clay and stone natural deposit seen in the previous two trenches. The depth of the natural varied between 0.8m and 0.5m.

7.1.6 The spoil was sieved so that smaller fragments of bone could be located. All spoil removed from the base of the trench during hand cleaning was sieved through a 5mm mesh.

7.1.7 Spoil was collected in ten litre tubs from locations spaced evenly at one meter intervals along the spoil heap and sieved. This material represented both topsoil and subsoil.

8 Fieldwork Summaries

8.1 Finds

8.1.1 Whilst the finds assemblage from the 2013 phase of work included more items of medieval date than those found in 2012, they appear to be main domestic in nature, relating to metallic vessels. Examples of likely parallels from other Welsh contexts are presented by Lewis (1978). The location of these finds (immediately adjacent to castle earthworks and next to the medieval settlement of Pilleth) also argues for them being domestic rather than related to the battle.

8.1.2 The two copper alloy ‘loops’ are of more interest, as they are likely to represent the cheekpieces of horse snaffles. A similar item, located at the top of Bryn Glas in the 2012 survey, was interpreted as being 14th century in date (Clark 1995).

8.1.3 The flint flake was the oldest find recovered.

8.1.4 All of the buckles and buttons recovered during the detector survey post-date the battle (Whitehead 1996, Bailey 2004, Egan 2005).

8.2 Test Pits

8.2.1 The test pits on the three mounds in the valley bottom has shown that they are natural features composed of firmly compacted clay and gravel. No evidence of anthropomorphic origin was noted.

8.3 Evaluation Trenches

8.3.1 No features were identified in the three evaluation trenches excavated within the stand of trees above St Mary’s church. No bones or other finds were located either visually during excavation or as a result of sieving the excavated spoil.

9 Discussion and Interpretation

9.1 Reliability of field investigation

9.1.1 The field investigation was hampered by snow and frozen ground, leading to the postponement and rescheduling of various aspects of the fieldwork.

9.1.2 Metal detecting could not take place in the field to the north and east of Castell Foel Allt because of the presence of a young crop. Fieldwalking was undertaken as a lower impact alternative.

9.1.3 Past activities in the field to the north and west of Castell Foel Allt, most notably the historical re-enactments, resulted in the deposition of large amounts of modern metallic objects across the area. This restricted the viability of the metal detector survey.

9.2 Overall interpretation & Evidence for the Battle

9.2.1 On the basis of the evidence from the 2013 phase of investigatory work at Pilleth, none of the areas subject to survey can be linked to the 1402 battle with any certainty.

9.2.2 The only items within the 2013 finds assemblage which could feasibly be linked to the battle were the copper alloy cheekpieces, objects which, according to Clark (1995) are roughly contemporary. It is perhaps noteworthy that an exact parallel was located at the top of Bryn Glas hill in 2012. These finds may, very tentatively, link the field to the east of Pilleth court with the battle.

9.2.3 As noted in the report on the first phase of fieldwork at Pilleth (Smith 2012), surveys undertaken between 1993 and 2003 (Frost 2003) on the lower ground around the base of the hillslope failed to locate not only any battle related material, but any medieval material at all. However, the recovery of the horseshoes on the hillslope in 2012 linked that area with the battle. Horse equipment - the cheekpieces - was also found during the recent phase of fieldwork, so it seems reasonable to assume that the field to the east of Pilleth court may have formed part of the battlefield as well.

9.3 Conclusions

9.3.1 Based on the evidence of the current survey it can be concluded that the hillslope above the church, and possibly the field to the east of Pilleth court, can be linked to the 1402 battle. However, as noted in the previous 2012 report, even this is tentative, as the supposition is supported by finds related to the use of horses in general rather than the battle in particular. In support of the theory, it is worth noting that no earlier or later horseshoes were recovered.

9.3.2 Based on the results of the test pits cut into the mounds in the valley bottom, it is likely that all three are natural features. This, in combination with the drainage of the valley bottom which occurred in the relatively recent past, conclusively rules them out of involvement in the battle.

9.3.3 The three trenches excavated in the area of the stand of trees located above the church, said to mark the location of bones uncovered during ploughing, produced no bones or other finds, either by hand excavation or sieving. Whilst this does not conclusively prove or disprove that bones were found here in the 19th century, it probably rules out the likelihood that a mass grave exists in the area.

9.3.4 The map presented in figure 12 defines the area that can be linked with the 1402 battle, as based on the evidence of the 2012 and 2013 surveys.

9.4 Recommendations for further investigations

9.4.1 Given the amount of work which has now taken place at and around the site, it seems significant that all the finds that may have been contemporary with the battle were recovered from the hillslope upon which the battle is reputed to have taken place.

9.4.2 However, in the future it may be worth undertaking a metal detector survey on the northern edge and face of Bryn Glas. This would augment the work already undertaken and test the hypothesis that Mortimer's army may have made its ascent here, the gradient being slightly shallower than that of the main east facing slope.

10 Acknowledgements

10.1.1 Thanks are due to the landowners of the assessment areas for allowing access and to Louise Barker of the Commission for her help. Special thanks are reserved to the local

volunteers and members of the metal detecting clubs who gave up their free time in very cold conditions.

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APPENDIX I:

Figures

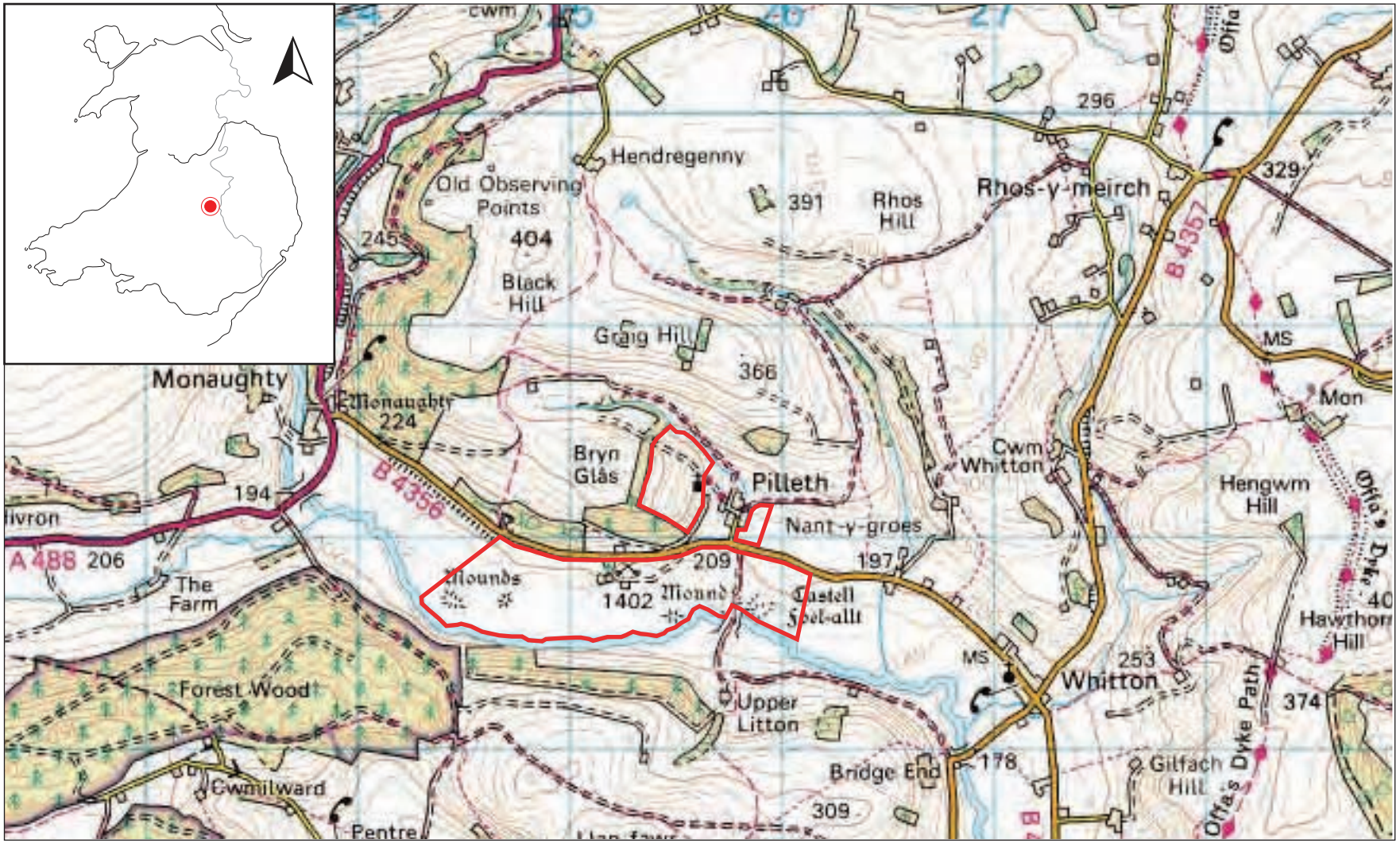

Fig 01: Map showing general location of assessment area

Fig 2: Map showing location of survey area NW of Castell Foel Allt

Fig 3: Map showing metal detector survey area within field to the east of Pilleth Court

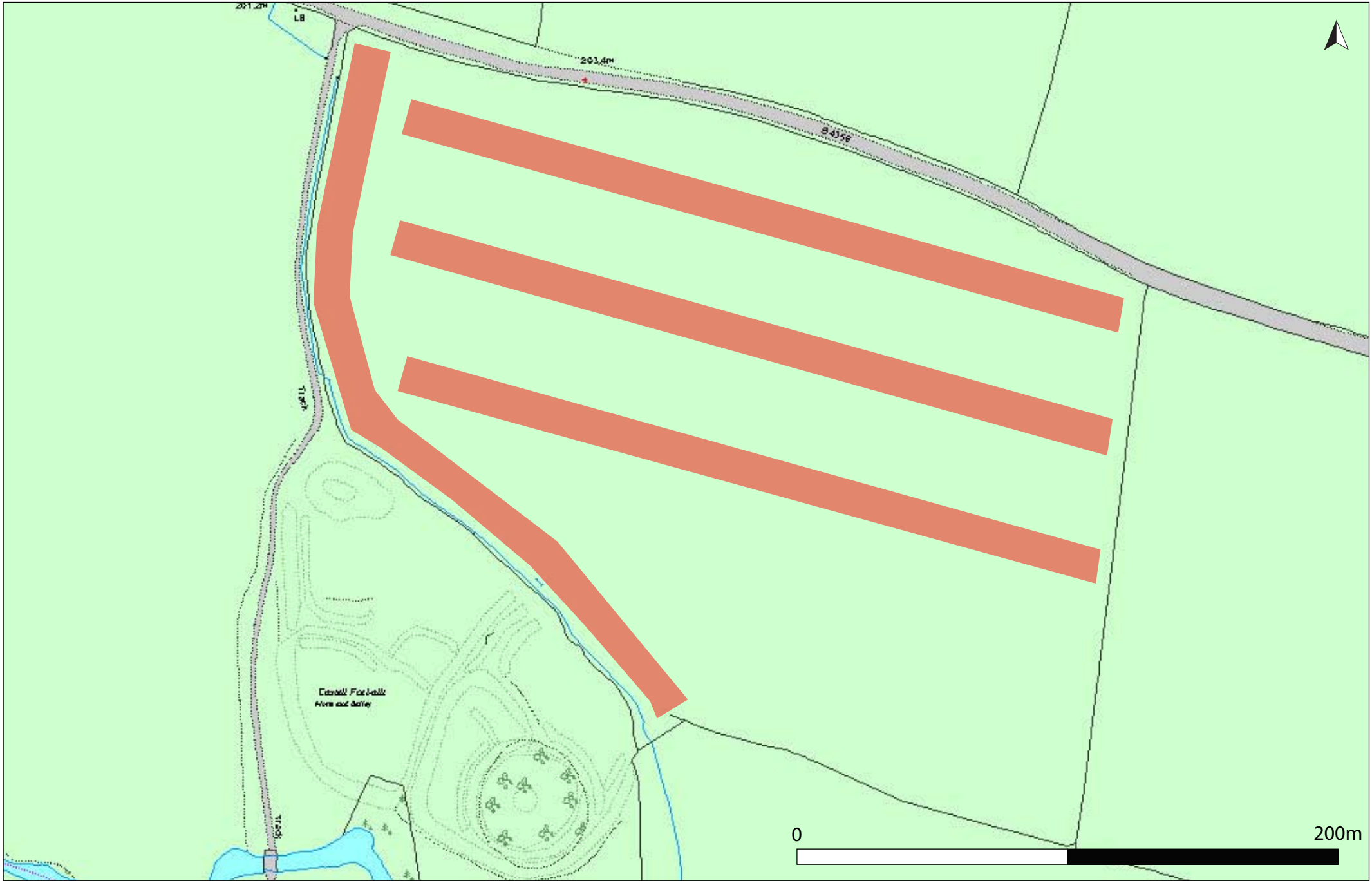

Fig 4: Map showing areas subject to fieldwalking north east of Castell Foel Allt

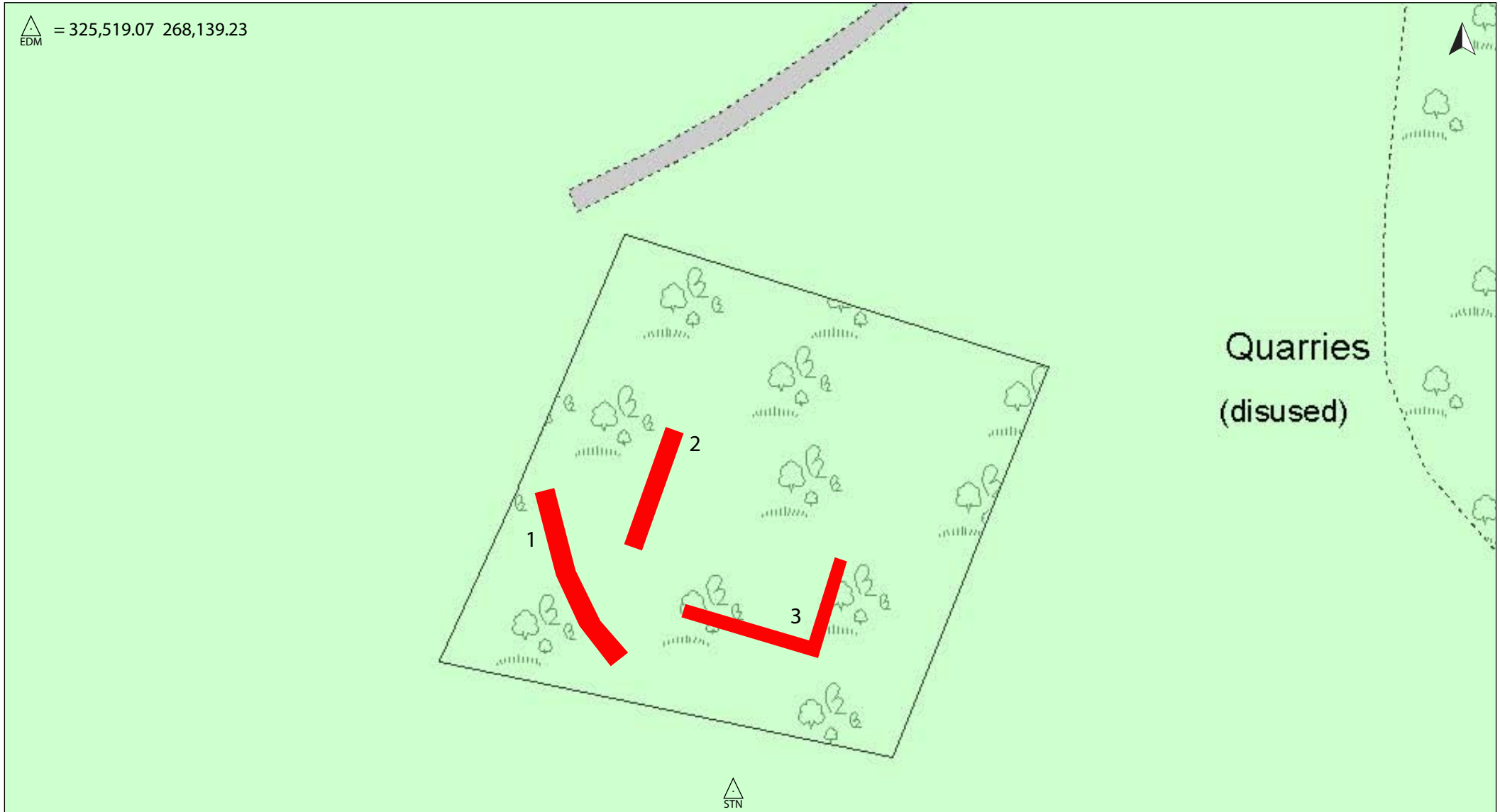

Fig 5 : Map showing locations of trenches within stand of Wellingtonia trees

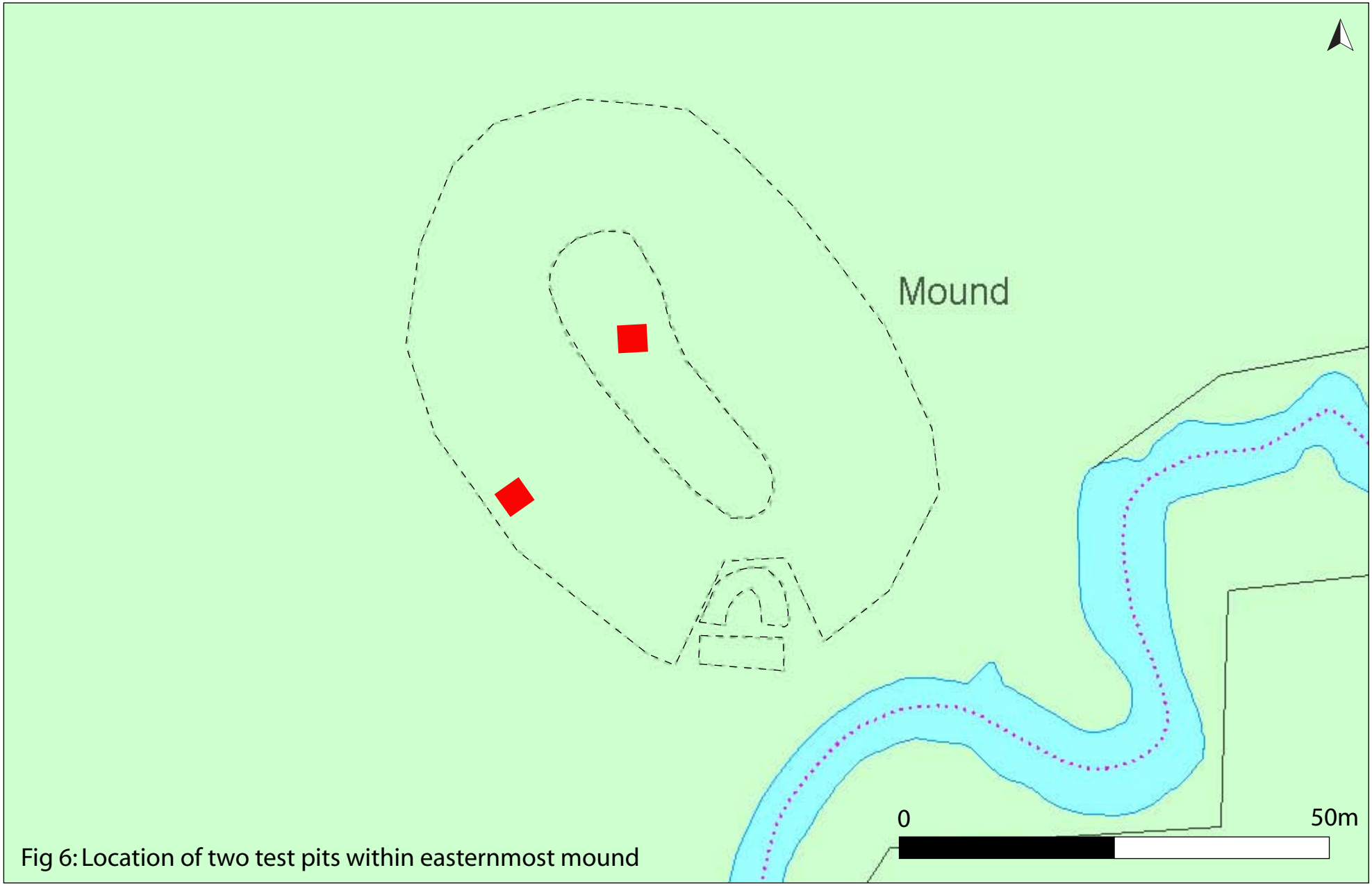

Fig 6: Location of two test pits within easternmost mound

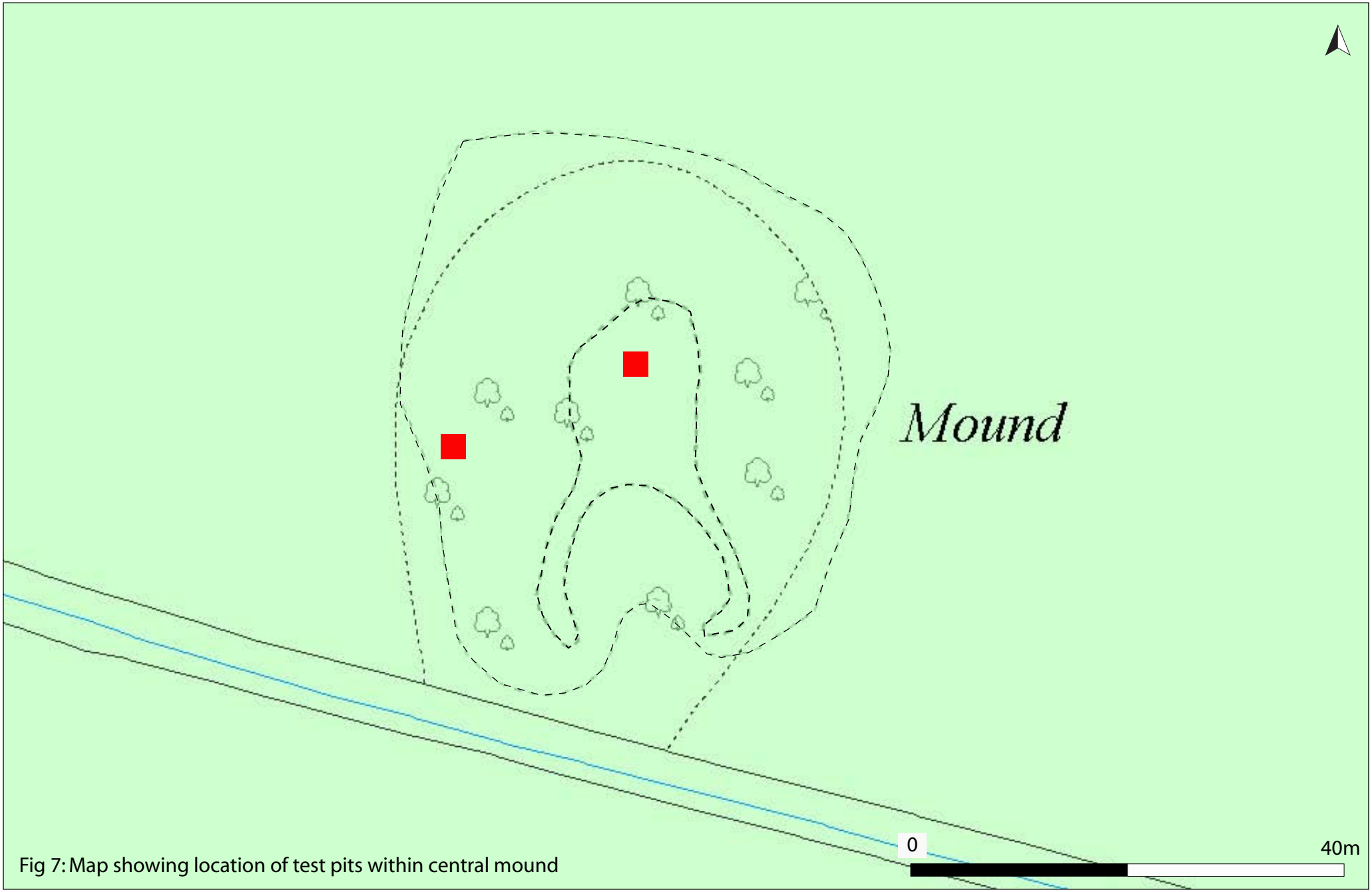

Fig 7: Map showing location of test pits within central mound

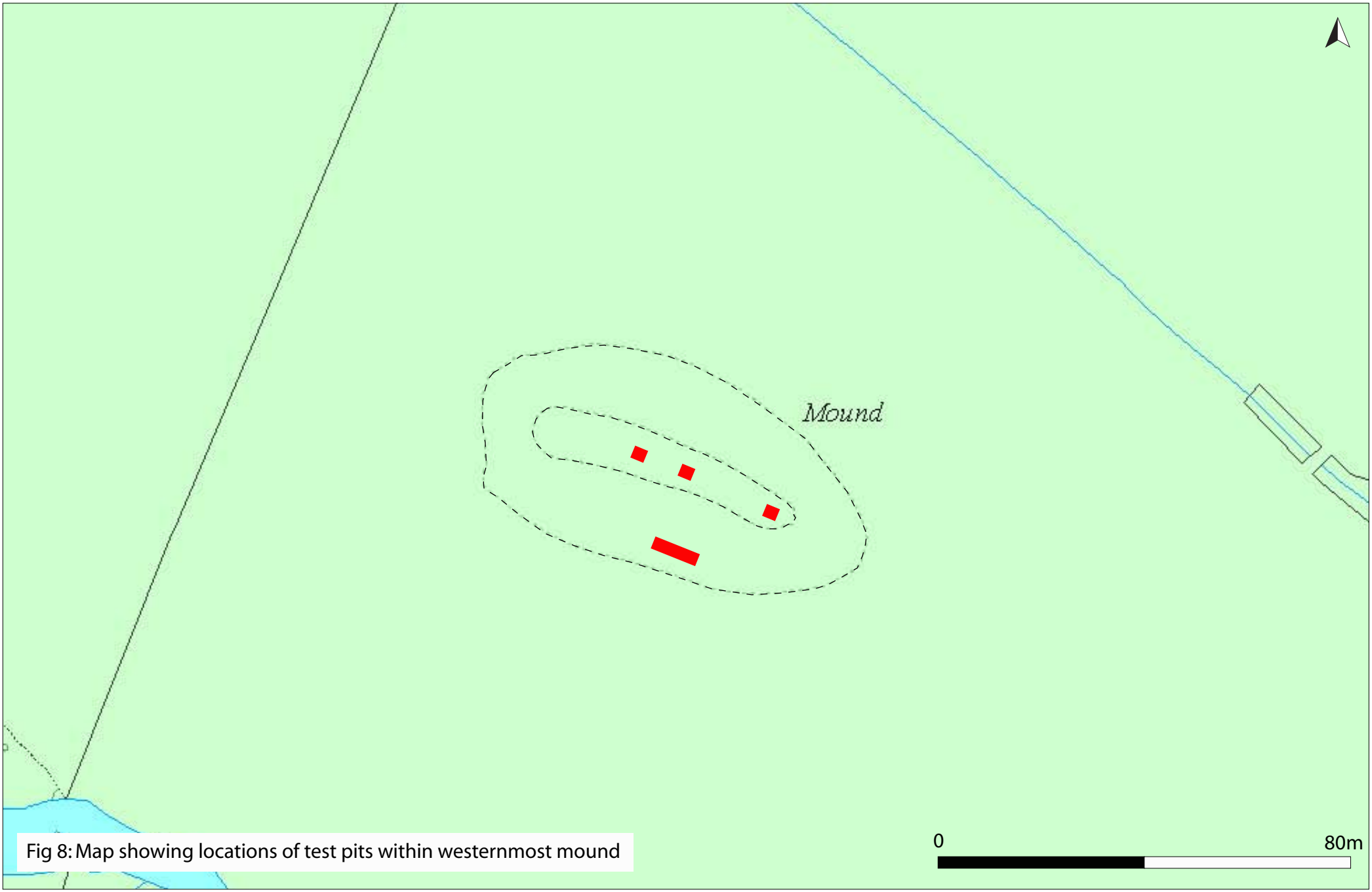

Fig 8: Map showing locations of test pits within westernmost mound

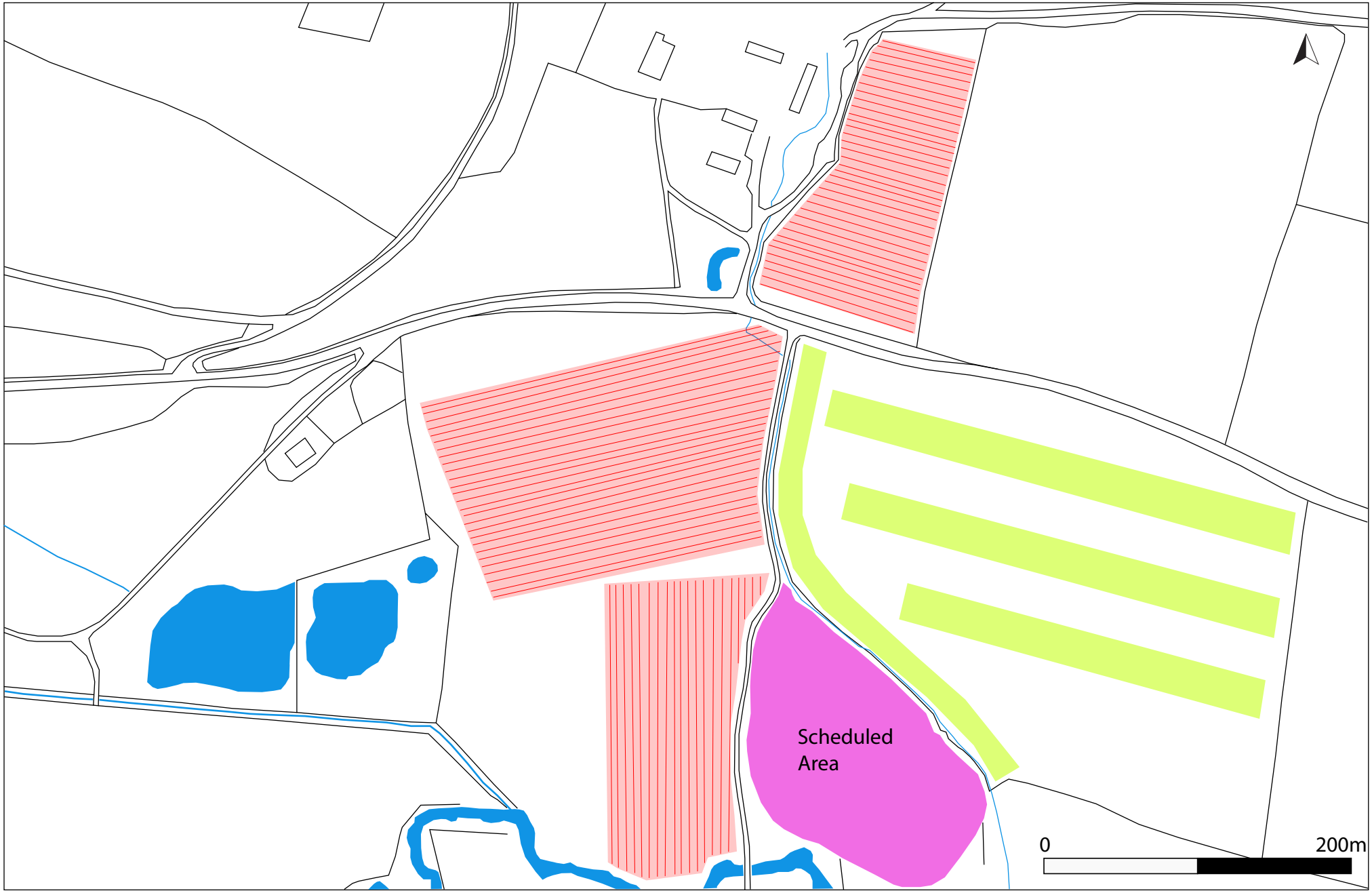

Fig 9: Locations of detector surveys areas and traverses

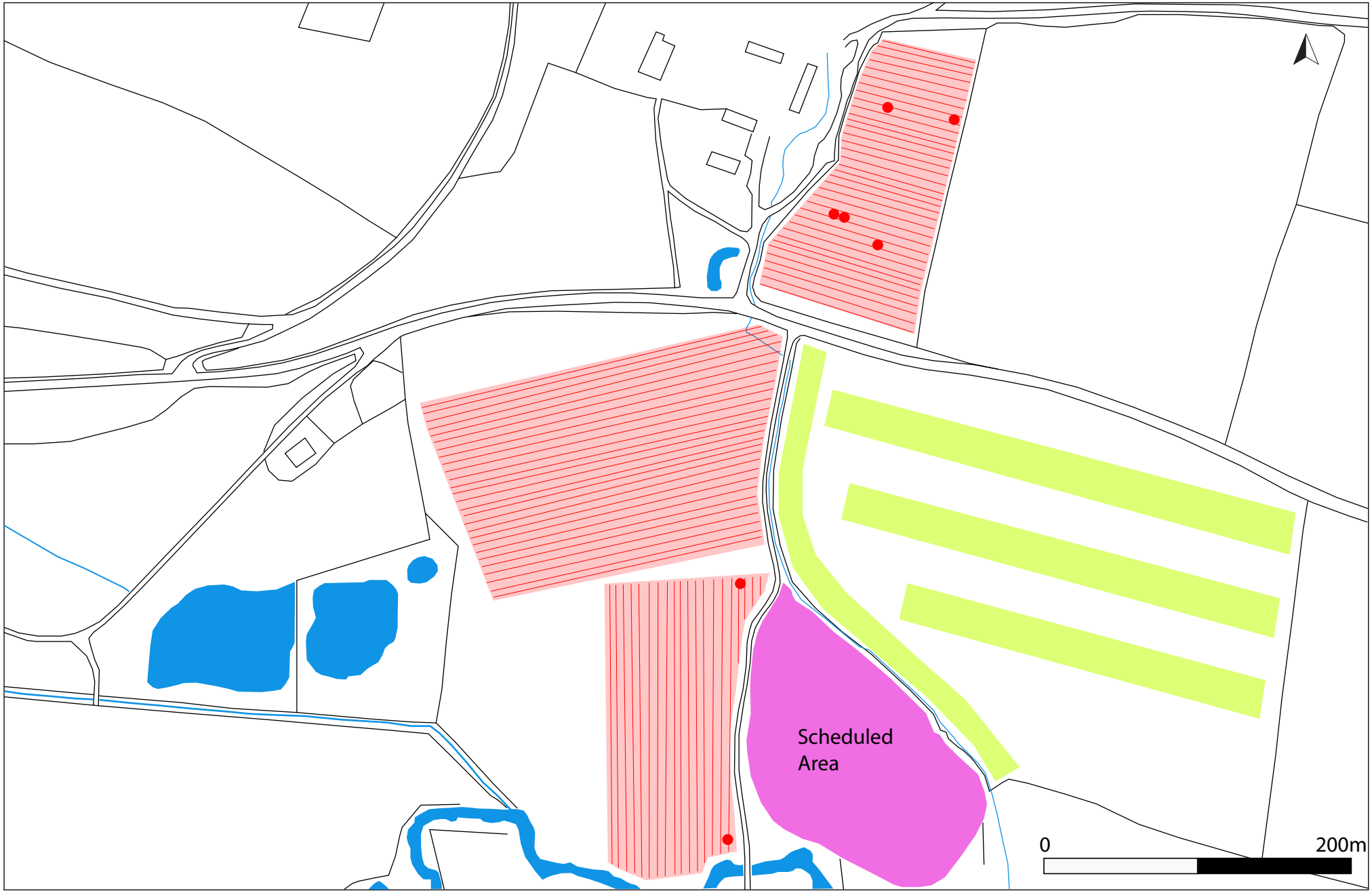

Fig 10: Locations of medieval findspots

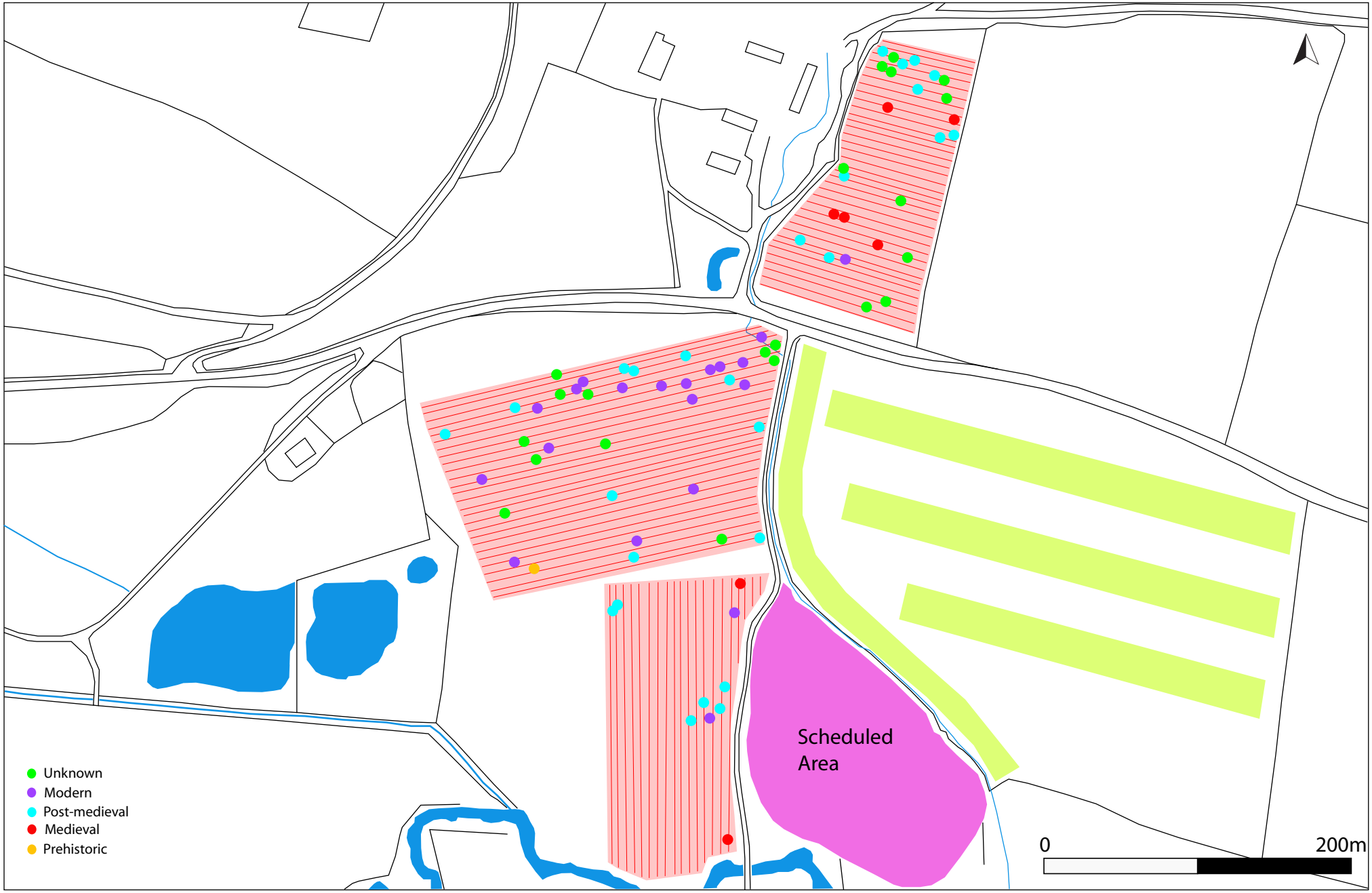

Fig 11: Locations of all findspots

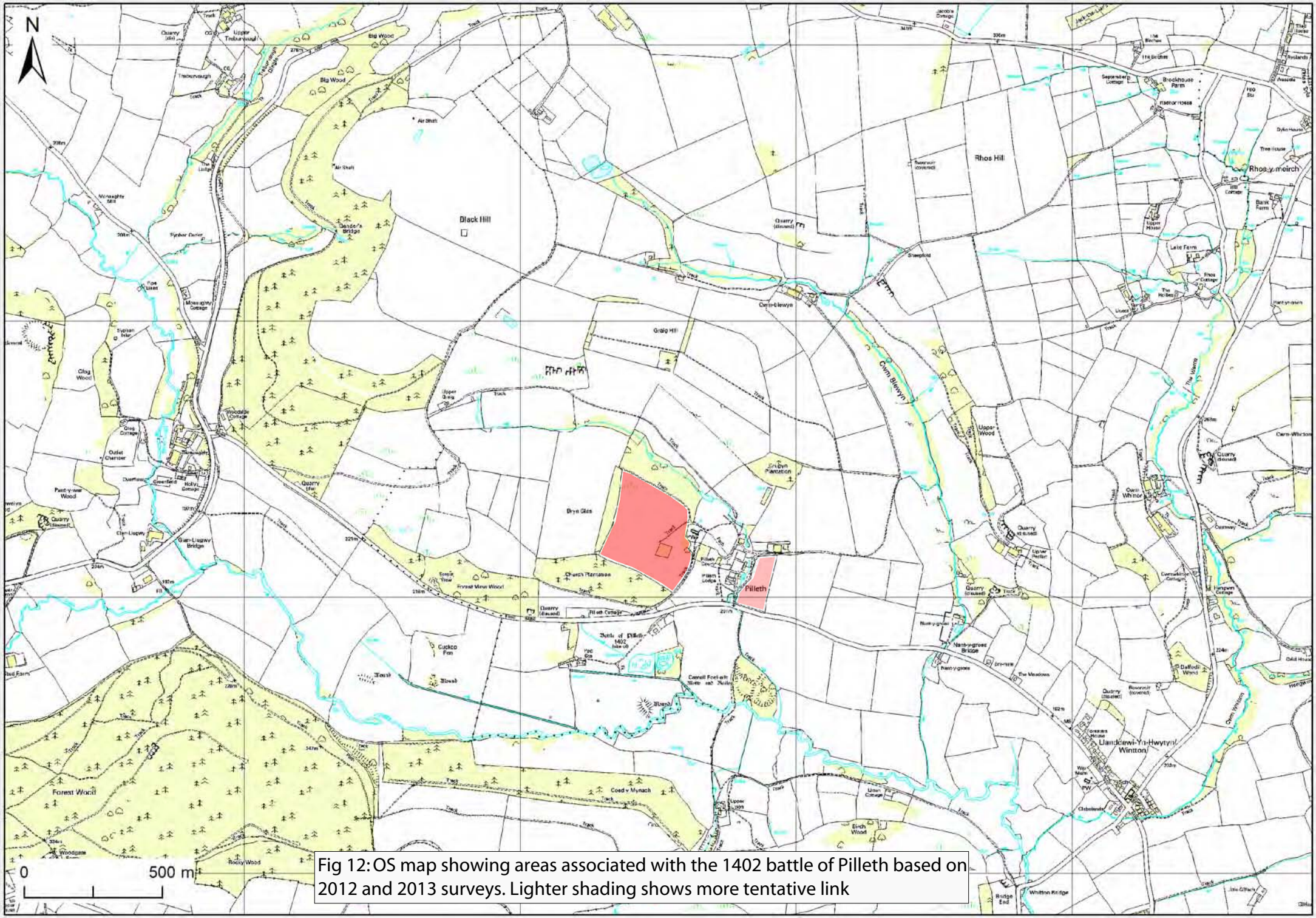

Fig 12: OS map showing areas associated with the 1402 battle of Pilleth based on 2012 and 2013 surveys. Lighter shading shows more tentative link

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APPENDIX II:

Plates

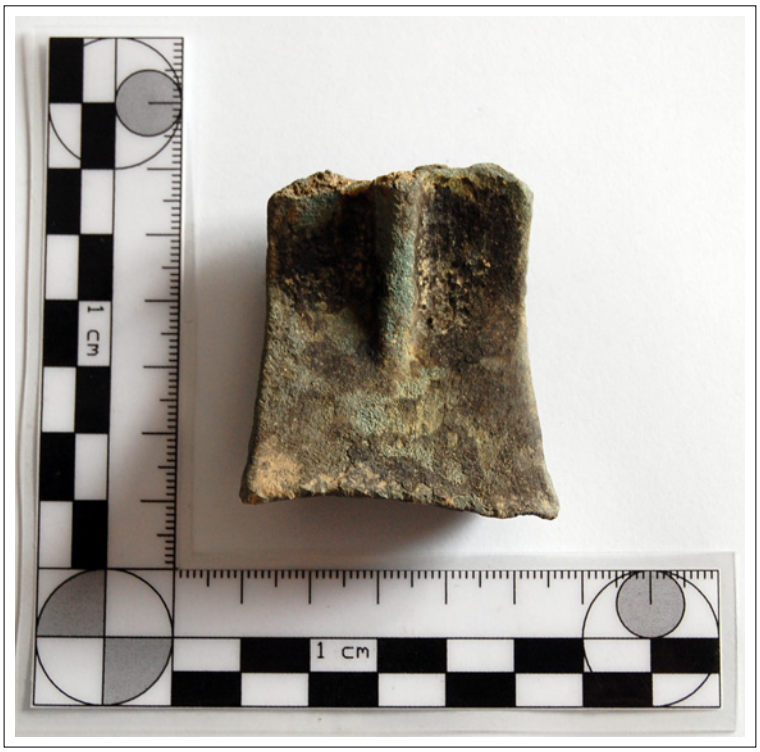

Plate 1: Bronze vessel handle, Find no 47

Plate 2: Bronze vessel leg, Find no 40

Plate 3: Bronze vessel rim sherds, Find no.s 61 & 75

Plate 4: Decorated bronze vessel leg, Find no 65

Plate 5: Two copper alloy cheekpieces, Find no.s 64 & 67

Plate 6: Queen Elizabeth I shilling, 1579-82. Find no 62

Plate 7: View of natural deposits in test pit at base of eastern mound
Scale 1x1m

Plate 8: View of natural deposits in test pit at top of eastern mound
Scale 1x1m

Plate 9: View of natural deposits in test pit at base of central mound
Scale 1x1m

Plate 10: View of natural deposits in test pit on top of central mound
Scale 1x1m

Plate 11: View of natural deposits, including gravel band, within longer trench at base of western mound
Scale 1x2m

Plate 12: Example of natural deposits shown in one of the three test pits located on the top of the western mound. Scale 1x2m

Plate 13: View of natural deposits within evaluation trench 1
Looking north west, Scale 1x2m

Plate 14: View of natural deposits within evaluation trench 1
Looking south east, Scale 1x2m

Plate 15: View of natural deposits exposed within evaluation trench 1
Looking east south east, Scales 2x2m

Plate 16: View of natural deposits exposed along length
of evaluation trench 2, Looking south west
Scales 2x2m

Plate 17: View of natural deposits exposed within evaluation trench 2
Looking south south east, Scales 2x2m

Plate 18: View of natural deposits exposed within evaluation trench 2
Looking north west, Scale 1x2m

Plate 19: View west along east-west axis of evaluation trench 3
Scales 2x2m

Plate 20: View east along east-west axis of evaluation trench 3
Scales 2x2m

Plate 21: View south along north-south axis of evaluation trench 3
Scales 2x2m

Plate 22: View north along north-south axis of evaluation trench 3
Scales 2x2m

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APPENDIX III:
Finds Catalogue

Find No.	Description	Date	Easting	Northing	Depth
1	Fe lump	Unknown	325,807.74	267,945.66	0.23m
2	Pb strip	Unknown	325,792.32	267,939.21	0.15m
3	Fe lump	Unknown	325,791.57	267,941.54	0.1m
4	Fe object	Modern	325,797.80	267,947.09	0.25m
5	Fe nail	Modern	325,774.23	267,937.87	0.1m
6	Cu coin & Fe lump	Modern	325,775.22	267,922.54	0.2m
7	Fe nail	Modern	325,753.17	267,932.76	0.1m
8	Worn blank Cu coin	PM	325,765.65	267,925.80	0.15m
9	Fe nail	Modern	325,759.54	267,934.11	0.14m
10	Fe object	Modern	325,737.87	267,923.65	0.2m
11	Fe 'ring'	Modern	325,739.11	267,918.51	0.1m
12	Fe nail	Modern	325,721.49	267,921.77	0.2m
13	Pb Token	PM	325,704.21	267,930.91	0.15m
14	Pewter button	PM	325,736.88	267,941.52	0.17m
15	Fe object	Modern	325,734.82	267,944.18	0.2m
16	Cu Alloy object	Unknown	325,675.26	267,916.80	0.15m
17	Fe nail	Modern	325,696.54	267,920.76	0.2m
18	Fe ring	Modern	325,672.10	267,924.86	0.15m
19	Fe nail	Modern	325,667.19	267,919.43	0.1m
20	Pb object	PM	325,627.87	267,908.00	0.2m
21	Fe lump	Unknown	325,657.12	267,916.82	0.15m
22	Fe lump	Unknown	325,655.09	267,929.54	0.24m
23	Cu Alloy buckle	PM	325,697.23	267,933.67	0.2m
24	Cu Alloy stud	Modern	325,642.20	267,907.73	0.1m
25	Au plated Cu alloy button	PM	325,583.01	267,891.98	0.2m
26	Fe object	Modern	325,606.72	267,862.31	0.2m
27	Fe ring	Modern	325,649.98	267,882.19	0.2m
28	Pb object	Unknown	325,641.76	267,874.71	0.16m
29	Fe lump	Unknown	325,634.51	267,886.51	0.2m
30	Cu Alloy fragment	Unknown	325,686.78	267,885.09	0.23m
31	Pewter disc	PM	325,796.73	267,893.25	0.2m
32	Fe object	Modern	325,742.58	267,855.95	0.2m
33	Cu worn blank penny	PM	325,690.91	267,852.22	0.15m
34	Cu disc	Unknown	325,621.86	267,840.29	0.2m
35	Fe object (penknife)	Modern	325,628.19	267,809.44	0.1m
36	Pewter button	PM	325,705.91	267,818.51	0.21m
37	Flint Flake	Prehistoric	325,640.28	267,805.43	Surface
38	Pewter button	PM	325, 781.90	267,841.76	0.15m
39	Pb object	Unknown	325,761.13	267,824.12	0.1m
40	Bronze vessel leg	Med	325,773.74	267,795.37	0.3m
41	Large handmade Fe nail	PM	325,784.41	267,824.47	0.15m
42	Pewter button	PM	325,694.63	267,782.34	0.2m
43	Cu Alloy buckle frag	PM	325,691.37	267,778.16	0.2m
44	Cu Coin	Modern (1914)	325,706.26	267,822.37	0.15m
45	Pewter button	PM	325,763.60	267,729.51	0.13m
46	Ag plated Cu button	PM	325,760.32	267,715.09	0.15m
47	Bronze strap handle	Med	325,765.93	267,632.45	0.2m
48	Worn blank Cu coin	PM	357,755.81	267,677.25	0.1m
49	Cu Alloy button	PM	325,752.73	267,707.67	0.16m
50	Fe object	Modern	325,753.81	267,709.51	0.2m
51	Small Cu Alloy button	PM	325,756.13	267,712.41	0.2m

52	Large Earring	Modern	325,768.84	267,776.57	0.1m
53	Cu Beehive thimble	PM (16th)	325,875.46	268,128.42	0.23m
54	Pewter button	PM	325,884.41	268,130.94	0.2m
55	Fe object	Unknown	325,863.84	268,126.55	0.2m
56	Cu Alloy object	PM	325,865.49	268,132.01	0.15m
57	Pb weight	PM	325,884.92	268,111.64	0.23m
58	Pb object	Unknown	325,904.12	268,106.31	0.15m
59	Pb object	Unknown	325,870.22	268,132.28	0.2m
60	Cu Alloy stud mount	PM	325,899.31	268,081.44	0.2m
61	Bronze vessel rim	Med	325,908.98	268,092.92	0.23m
62	Elizabeth I Shilling	PM 1579-82	325,912.79	268,082.81	0.2m
63	Pb object	Unknown	325,838.01	268,061.00	0.2m
64	Cu Alloy ‘loop’	Likely Med	325,832.46	268,032.83	0.15m
65	Bronze vessel leg	Med	325,833.56	268,032.47	0.3m
66	Cu Alloy button	PM	325,837.83	268,056.45	0.2m
67	Cu Alloy ‘loop’	Likely Med	325,860.11	268,012.73	0.2m
68	Pb object	Unknown	325,879.54	268,004.45	0.25m
69	Fe object	Modern	325,839.32	268,003.51	0.2m
70	Fe Stirrup	PM	325,828.62	268,004.72	0.28m
71	Pb Buck Shot	PM	325,810.43	268,015.66	0.12m
72	Cu Alloy ‘ring’	Unknown	325,852.71	267,973.51	0.2m
73	Pb object	Unknown	325,865.82	267,975.62	0.12m
74	Pb object	Unknown	325,874.78	268,040.34	0.26m
75	Bronze vessel rim	Med	325,866.11	268,100.61	0.23m
76	Cu Alloy stud mount	PM	325,921.72	268,132.45	0.2m
77	Cu Alloy object	Unknown	325,864.19	268,125.59	0.15m
78	Pb object	Unknown	325,902.83	268,117.51	0.16m
79	Cu Beehive Thimble	PM (16th)	325,896.76	268,120.63	0.18m

Prehistoric	1	1.26%
Medieval	7	8.85 %
Post-medieval	29	36.71%
Modern	21	26.59%
Unknown	21	26.59%

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APPENDIX IV:
Archive Cover Sheet

ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Pilleth Battlefield, Pilleth, Powys

Site Name:	Pilleth
Site Code:	WBS/13/SUR
PRN:	-
NPRN:	306352
SAM:	-
Other Ref No:	-
NGR:	SO 25242 68223
Site Type:	Battlefield
Project Type:	Survey
Project Manager:	Chris E Smith
Project Dates:	Feb-March 2013
Categories Present:	Prehistoric-Modern
Location of Original Archive:	AW
Location of duplicate Archives:	-
Number of Finds Boxes:	1
Location of Finds:	-
Museum Reference:	-
Copyright:	AW
Restrictions to access:	None

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