Coxhill Mount
River
Dover

Evaluation report

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Frontispiece General view of the Coxhill mound from the north, 12 April 2018

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Evaluation trenching on Coxhill Mount, River, 2018

1. Summary

1.1 Evaluation trenching undertaken in April 2018 around a circular mound visible on the summit of Coxhill Mount overlooking the Dour valley at River, near Dover (NGR TR 28729 43427, centred) established that this represented the upstanding remains of a previously unrecognised prehistoric round barrow.

1.2 The mound is situated at the break of slope, seemingly to take advantage of the natural fall of the land here. It is most impressive when viewed from downhill, on the north-eastern side, where it appears around 3 metres high but uphill, to the south-west it merges imperceptibly with the summit of the natural ridge. On the surface, the mound has a diameter of about 25–26 metres, with no indications of any enclosing ditch or outer bank.

1.3 Two hand-dug evaluation trenches established that the mound was encircled by a flat-bottomed ditch, with an estimated diameter of around 21.50m, indicating that the visible mound has spread slightly from its original footprint. The ditch was best preserved on the uphill side in Trench 1 where it was about 1.90m wide and 1.00m deep, with convexly sloping sides and a flat base.

1.4 On the downhill side, Trench 2 showed that when the ditch was partially filled, it had been cut into by a broad irregular pit, apparently dug as a quarry to obtain flints for knapping. The filling of this pit produced large amounts of prehistoric struck flint, including a series of nodules tested for their suitability as raw material to be further worked. Stylistically, this flint assemblage is of the later Bronze Age.

1.5 The excavation results suggest a mound of early Bronze Age date with a subsequent episode of late Bronze Age flint quarrying. Two small fragments of Ebbsfleet style decorated pottery (*c*. 3350–2800 BC) and part of a Neolithic chipped axe found as residual material in the upper ditch fill of Trench 1 suggest occasional Neolithic activity in the area long before the barrow was erected.

2. Introduction

2.1 During the course of an archaeological survey of Kearsney Abbey park in 2015, an artificial mound was identified on Coxhill Mount overlooking the Dour valley (Parfitt 2015). Its weathered profile clearly indicated that this was a long-established landscape feature (Frontispiece), which could potentially represent a previously unrecorded round barrow (i.e. burial mound).

2.2 As part of the Kearsney Parks enhancement project, and working in close association with the Parks' Community Engagement Officer, Anita Sedgewick, it was subsequently possible to undertake some limited evaluation trenching on the site (Plate I). This was conducted during April 2018 and provided sufficient evidence to suggest that the mound was indeed a round barrow of prehistoric date. As such, it joins a number of other similar monuments surviving in the region, although there are no specific antiquarian records for the existence of the present site (see below).

2.3 Located on the summit of Coxhill Mount, in the parish of River, the mound occupies the north-eastern end of a downland ridge, which is defined on three sides by steep slopes associated with the Dour valley system (Figs 1 & 2; Plates IX & X; NGR TR 28729 43427, centred). The underlying geology here is chalk of the Lewes Nodular Formation. Deposits of Clay-with-flints cap the ridge further to the south-west. Today, the site is partially covered by scrub but this has developed since the Second World War; in the earlier part of the twentieth century this was all open chalk grassland, known to locals as 'the Meadow'. There is no evidence that the area has ever been ploughed, nor did the mound appear ever to have been dug into.

2.4 The mound itself lies on sloping ground and stands at an elevation of between 78.25 and 82.50m above OD. It was seemingly deliberately situated at the break of slope on the hillside to take full advantage of the natural fall of the land here (Figs 2 & 3; Plate IX). Thus, it is most impressive when viewed from downhill, on the north-eastern side, where it appears around 3 metres high (Frontispiece); on the uphill south-west side, however, it merges imperceptibly with the summit of the main ridge (Fig. 5).

2.5 In detail, the mound appears roughly circular in shape, with a diameter of about 25–26 metres (Fig. 3 & 4; Plate IX). There are no surface indications of any enclosing ditch or outer bank but the two hand-dug evaluation trenches cut in 2018 established that the mound was encircled by a flat-bottomed ditch, with an estimated diameter of around 21.50m, indicating that the visible mound has spread slightly from its original footprint.

2.6 Finds from the trenching suggest that the mound is most probably of Bronze Age date and its identification as a previously unrecognised round barrow now seems quite certain. Details of the excavation results are set out below.

3. Archaeology and the Kearsney Parks project

3.1 In 2015 Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT) was commissioned by Dover District Council (DDC) to prepare a study outlining the known history and archaeology of the landscapes constituting Kearsney Abbey and Russell Gardens (Parfitt 2015).

3.2 The main purpose of that study was to assist the Council formulate an overall strategy for the future management of these popular parks, and to help develop DDC's *Parks for People* project. The report included suggestions for a number of themed archaeological research topics, envisaged as being undertaken by locally-based community volunteers.

3.3 Amongst the archaeology field projects listed was an investigation of the possible barrow mound identified on Coxhill Mount, in an effort to confirm something of the character of this site and its date. The fieldwork there was successfully undertaken over a six day period in April 2018, with 51 local volunteers taking part in the work at different times.

4. Archaeological background

4.1 ***Barrows around the Dour valley*** (Plate X)

4.1.1 Eighteenth-century antiquary, William Stukeley, seems to have been the first to note around Dover 'many barrows on the sides of those hills' (Stukeley 1776; Iter V, 128 note). Perhaps following Stukeley, Edward Hasted reported '…there are many other barrows, or tumuli, scattered about on the different hills in the neighbourhood of Dover' (1800, 428). A number of these mounds were probably later, Anglo-Saxon ones but others were fairly certainly of Bronze Age date.

4.1.2 Since Stukeley and Hasted's day many of these mounds have been destroyed without trace, but some still remain (Plate X; see below). There are four sites in the immediate area of the Dour valley where upstanding, probably prehistoric, barrow mounds survive, with the remains of at least two more levelled ones known from excavation (Plate X). The extant sites are: Little Watersend Farm near Lydden (1), Ewell Minnis (1), Lousyberry Wood (3) and Whinless Down (4). The levelled sites are Wolverton in the Alkham valley and on Long Hill, Buckland (see Inventory below, **4.2** and Table 2).

4.1.3 Including the levelled sites, there are thus at least ten probable prehistoric round barrows overlooking the 8km long Dour valley complex (Plate X). One or two other potential barrow mounds

are presently under consideration and doubtless others have been destroyed without record. From what remains, however, such monuments appear to be quite densely scattered in the area and comparable densities extend across the adjacent downlands. There, however, virtually all the barrow sites have been levelled by the plough and they are represented solely by buried ring-ditches visible on aerial photographs. A few of these sites have now been excavated (e.g. Eastling Down and Haynes Farm) demonstrating that these monuments can be quite complex in structure and development. The available evidence indicates that these sites are of Bronze Age date, but with potentially late Neolithic origins for some (Hammond 2014).

4.1.4 Of the mounds around the Dour itself, few have been dug and none has been carefully excavated under modern conditions. Digging during the later eighteenth century at the barrow near Little Watersend Farm (see below) apparently yielded nothing of significance. A trench cut in the 1930s through one of the barrows on Whinless Down produced a single Deverel-Rimbury pot-sherd but no details concerning this find are available and which of the four mounds on the ridge was excavated is not known. The opportunity to examine the remains of a barrow ring-ditch site on Long Hill, Buckland was unfortunately largely missed during the 1950s but another at Wolverton in the Alkham Valley has seem some excavation in recent years (see Inventory below).

4.1.5 All the extant mounds known around Dover were carefully surveyed by the Ordnance Survey Archaeology Division in 1964 and the details then recorded essentially remain the definitive statements concerning their surviving form. Information on individual sites is set out below and is summarised in Table 2.

4.2 ***Inventory of barrows*** (Plate X)

4.2.1 *Little Watersend Farm, Lydden*, TR 2739 4477
(Kent HER ref. TR 24 SE 3; Grinsell 1992, LYDDEN 1; Scheduled Ancient Monument: 24403)
Hasted (1800, 428) records the existence of a large barrow on the hill close to and behind Little Watersend, west of Temple Ewell (Plate X, 1). It had been opened lately but nothing was found in it. In 1964 the Ordnance Survey field investigators described the mound as a large flat-topped bowl barrow, situated on an east facing slope at the end of an unploughed down-land spur, and measuring 25 metres (NW–SE) by 22 metres (NE–SW). These dimensions have been more recently revised by English Heritage to 29 metres (NW–SE) by 24.5 metres transversely. The mound is 3.7m in height with no sign of a ditch. Today, it is covered by mature trees and has been affected by burrowing animals. A quantity of prehistoric struck flint has been noted in the up cast of a number of the burrows. The site was scheduled as an Ancient Monument in 1994.

4.2.2 *The Minnis, Temple Ewell*, TR 2686 4375
(Kent HER ref. TR 24 SE 2A; Grinsell 1992, ALKHAM 1)
A somewhat mutilated bowl barrow is situated on The Minnis adjacent to the parish boundary between Temple Ewell and Alkham (Plate X, 2). It measures 21 metres (E–W) by 15 metres (N–S) and stands to a height of 0.90m. There is no surrounding ditch visible. The south quadrant has been cut into by a field bank carrying the Alkham/Temple Ewell parish boundary which changes direction on the mound.

4.2.3 *Wolverton, Alkham*, *c.*TR 2732 4265
A heavily plough-damaged barrow site located on a sloping, bull-nosed spur between the main Alkham Valley and a converging dry valley, facing north-east at an elevation of around 112m OD (Plate X, 3). Excavations in 2007 located traces of a surrounding ring-ditch but no surviving evidence for a mound. An Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemetery had subsequently been focussed on this earlier monument, as at Buckland and Lousyberry Wood (notes taken from interim site report on Alkham Valley Project website, accessed on online 17.4.18 –http://www.alkhamarchaeology.co.uk/index.htm).

4.2.4 *Whinless Down, Dover*, TR 296 416 and TR 294 416
(Kent HER Ref. TR 24 SE 17; Grinsell 1992, DOVER 1–4) (from Phillips 1964).

Two pairs of conjoining bowl barrows, placed about 170 metres apart, are situated on the summit of Whinless Down, overlooking the western outskirts of Dover (Plate X, 4). The mounds are situated upon a narrow, almost knife-edge downland ridge between Elms Vale and Coombe Valley that has never been ploughed. One of the mounds, it is not clear which, was excavated in 1939 and produced a sherd of a Bronze Age urn. This is now in Canterbury Museum (Acc. No. RM 6737) and may be identified as being of Deverel-Rimbury type (Macpherson-Grant 1992).

Clearance work in 2014 and 2015 re-exposed these mounds for the first time after many years of being completely overgrown and covered in bushes. Careful observation showed that the barrows survived in a somewhat mutilated condition with none intact. A recent boundary ditch running along the summit of the ridge has, to some degree, damaged the northern edge of all these monuments. The site of the 1939 trench could not be singled out from several other modern disturbances visible.

The Ordnance Survey Archaeology Division made a detailed record of the moments to which little may be added. It is worth highlighting the fact that each pair of barrows includes one larger diameter mound (Barrows A & C) and one smaller one (Barrows B & D). The western pair (C & D) occupy slightly higher ground that the eastern pair (A & B).

- Barrow A (east pair), TR 2960 4168, measures 17.0m E–W by 7.0m transversely and is about 0.6m in height; there is no visible ditch.

- Barrow B (east pair), TR 2961 4168, measures 9.0m E–W by 6.0m transversely and is about 0.6m in height; there is no visible ditch. The N. half of both barrows has been destroyed during the construction of an old boundary bank.

- Barrow C (west pair), TR 2942 4167. A shapeless mound measuring about 14.0m N–S by 12.0m transversely and 0.3m in height. It is slightly mutilated at the centre and has no visible ditch.

- Barrow D (west pair), TR 2941 4167. A shapeless mound measuring about 10.0m N–S by 8.0m transversely and 0.3m in height. It has been mutilated by recent trenching and has no visible ditch.

Ground survey in 2015 established that the western pair of mounds, occupying the highest point in the immediate area, had subsequently been enclosed by the earthworks of a First World War redoubt, implying that their strategic location was not lost on the later military engineers. There was no specific evidence that the mounds have suffered any major disturbance during this process, although any one of several pits and hollows noted in their surface could be connected with this event.

4.2.5 *Long Hill, Buckland*, TR 3105 4304
(Kent HER ref. TR 34 SW 991; Grinsell 1992, DOVER 5)

Rescue excavations undertaken between 1951 and 1953 ahead of the construction of a new housing estate revealed the encircling ring-ditch of an otherwise destroyed round barrow, surrounded by an extensive early Anglo-Saxon cemetery (Plate X, 5). Unfortunately, sufficient time and resources were not available to allow the thorough examination of the prehistoric monument. Some useful information was, however, recorded (Evison 1987, 15). Situated under present day Hobart Crescent, the ring-ditch had an internal diameter of just over 18 metres but there was no sign of any central burial. The ditch, itself, was about 1.14m in width and 0.61– 0.76m deep. It was clear that the entire monument had been severely eroded by subsequent ploughing.

4.2.6 *Lousyberry Wood, Temple Ewell*, TR 291 443
(Kent HER ref. TR 24 SE 14; Grinsell 1992, TEMPLE EWELL 1–3)

Three bowl barrows situated upon a south-westerly slope in woodland on the end of a spur of high ground overlooking the Dour valley (Plate X, 7). They all bear traces of having been opened, and have trees growing upon them, but otherwise they are in fair condition. There are no visible ditches. Mounds B and C lie close together higher up the slope than Mound A, which lies about 100 metres south of B.

- Barrow A (south-west), TR 29063 44287, measures 17.0m N–S by 15.0m transversely and is 1.7m in maximum height on the downslope side. There is a large shallow depression in the centre.

- Barrow B (centre), TR 29145 44348, measures 10.0m NE–SW by 9.0m transversely and is 0.7m high.

- Barrow C (north-east), TR 29161 44362, measures 14.0m NE–SW by 11.0m transversely and is 1.0m high. There are traces of excavation in the SW quadrant

NB: Part of a later, Anglo-Saxon cemetery has been revealed in the area of Barrow A (Parfitt and Dickinson 2007).

4.3 ***Prehistoric flint scatters and other discoveries***

4.3.1 Extensive surface scatters of struck flints have been recorded on the clay-capped plateau-land above the Dour valley in a number of areas, particularly around St Radigund's Abbey; around Honeywood Parkway at Whitfield, and on Whinless Down. Similar flint spreads have been noted on the valley sides at Lousyberry Wood, Temple Ewell; Old Park Hill, Whitfield; within colluvial deposits contained in the Buckland Valley; Long Hill, Buckland; and in Coombe Hole at Guston. *In situ* material has been excavated on the lower valley side along York Street, Dover and within Archcliffe Fort further to the south-west. A few struck flints were recovered from the area of Coxhill Mount during a walk over survey in 2015 (Parfitt 2015) and further material was recovered during additional searches made as part of the 2018 investigations. The bulk of this flint material is likely to be of late Neolithic, or more probably Bronze Age date, suggesting settlement activity in the region throughout this period.

4.3.2 More definite evidence for local prehistoric activity, on the lower valley slopes, has been recorded at Crabble Paper Mill, on the north-eastern side of the river, about 1.36km down-stream to the south-east of Coxhill Mount. At that site, a number of pits filled with charcoal and burnt flint have been radiocarbon dated to the late Neolithic–early Bronze Age period (*c*. 2570–2130 Cal BC; Parfitt 2006: Kent HER ref. TR 34 SW 1072). A hoard of late Bronze Age bronze axe-heads and other implements apparently comes from the Old Park estate, opposite Coxhill Mount but contextual details are lacking (Kent HER ref. TR 34 SW 37).

5. Project aims and methodology

5.1 The main aim of the 2018 evaluation was to recover evidence that would confirm or disprove the identification of the mound on Coxhill Mount as the remains of a prehistoric round barrow, whilst causing only limited disturbance of the structure itself. No attempt at full excavation of the mound structure was to be made.

5.2 The work on site was directed by Keith Parfitt, BA, FSA, MCIfA of Canterbury Archaeological Trust. The investigations were divided into two specific operations – excavation and surface survey/artefact collection. The excavation work was limited to two trenches cut at the foot of the mound, one on its south-western (uphill) side and one on the north-eastern (downhill) side. These were hand-dug, between 7.45 and 9.15m long and were primarily designed to ascertain if there was an encircling ditch around the mound and if present, to provide a sample of material for dating.

5.3 Each trench was excavated, recorded and backfilled over a three day period, by an enthusiastic team of volunteers, some new to fieldwork. Site surveying was carried out by Paul-Samual Armour from CAT, using GPS equipment.

5.4 ***Surface survey/artefact collection***

5.4.1 Simultaneously with the trenching work, a second team searched the area surrounding the site for other features of archaeological interest and to collect prehistoric flintwork, already established as being present hereabouts. A thorough search of animal disturbances and bare earth patches on the grass-covered mound surface itself yielded a light scatter of prehistoric struck flints, although it was not clear if this was residual material weathered out from the body of the mound or debris dropped on its surface at a later date. A proportion of the few calcined flints collected are quite possibly the product of recent burning rather than being of prehistoric date (see below).

6. The excavated trenches

6.1 ***Trench 1*** (Figs 3, 4, & 6; Plates 1–V)

6.1.1 This trench was cut on the south-western edge of the mound over the weekend of 14–15 April, 2018. It measured 9.15m in length (NE–SW), about 1.15m in width, and succeeded in locating a section of the substantial barrow ditch [F. 19] enclosing undisturbed chalk rubble mound deposits (Fig. 6). There was no evidence that this ditch had ever been enclosed by any outer bank. Outside the ditch, undisturbed natural chalk bedrock (Context 12) was revealed, buried at a depth of about 0.30m. It was sealed by a thin layer of subsoil (Context 11) that also extended across the infilled ditch and over the edge of the mound. This deposit produced a few prehistoric struck flints. A layer of modern topsoil and turf between 0.12 and 0.22m thick (Contexts 10 & 13) sealed the subsoil layer.

6.1.2 *Barrow enclosure ditch, F. 19* (Figs 4 & 6; Plate III)

The ditch enclosing the mound was located crossing the central part of Trench 1. The ditch here was of quite substantial proportions, measuring about 1.90m in width and 1.00m deep. It was of broadly 'U' shaped profile, with convexly sloping sides and a flat base between 0.52 and 0.58m across (Fig. 6; Plate III). The base stood at an elevation of about 81.00m OD.

The sides showed two different angles of slope, with the lower walls slightly steeper than the upper walls. This was most clearly seen on the north-eastern, inner side and must represent the product of differential weathering, when the lower sides of the ditch were soon buried and preserved by scree eroded from the upper side (Fig. 6).

6.1.3 *Ditch fills, Contexts 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 & 21* (Fig. 6; Plate III)

Resting on the base of the ditch, a very thin layer of fine cream-white chalky silt (Context 21) represented the primary filling that must have been deposited very soon after the ditch had been cut. It was no more than 0.03m thick and the only find recovered was a single prehistoric struck flint. Above this primary layer, the lower half of the ditch was filled with a largely sterile, homogenous deposit of loose small chalk rubble (Context 18), up to 0.70m thick. Amongst the few flints contained within this layer was just a single struck flake (Table 1).

Sealing the lower chalk rubble fill (18), was a deposit of light brown chalky loam containing frequent small chalk pieces and some flints (Context 16). This was thickest on the sides of the ditch (up to 0.25m) and thinned towards the centre. It produced a quantity of humanly struck flints and a few fragments of animal bone.

Within the central hollow left by the deposition of Context 16, a quantity of sizeable flints, both nodules and broken fragments, had accumulated (Contexts 15 & 17). The lower zone of these (Context 17) were contained within a sterile layer of cream-white chalky silt, about 0.17m thick. In the upper zone (Context 15) the flints were contained within a deposit of light brown loam and chalk about 0.14m thick. This upper layer also produced a quantity of prehistoric struck flints, six small sherds of prehistoric pottery and a few animal bone fragments. The similarity of these flinty deposits to Context 32 subsequently located in Trench 2 (see below) suggests that these may all be contemporary and associated with a late episode of flint knapping on the site (see below for further discussion of this).

In the top of the ditch, the final depression left when the feature was largely infilled was occupied by a deposit of light brown loam containing small chalk fragments, flints and very occasional charcoal specks (Context 14). This was up to 0.15m thick and again produced a significant amount of prehistoric flintwork, including part of a fine chipped axe of Neolithic date (Plate IV), which is probably residual (see below).

Subsequently, the infilled ditch was sealed by a deposit of subsoil (11) perhaps representing down-washed material derived from the rising ground to the south-west.

6.1.4 *Tail of the mound, Context 20* (Fig. 6)

Below the topsoil and subsoil deposits (Contexts 11 & 13) in the north-eastern part of the trench, a deposit of small chalk rubble with some flint nodules (Context 20) clearly represented the make-up of the undisturbed barrow mound. This deposit ran up to the edge of the ditch implying that there had never been any open berm between the mound and its enclosing ditch.

A small slot cut through the edge of this mound deposit adjacent to the ditch showed that it was between 0.15 and 0.20m thick, resting directly upon the natural chalk bedrock (12), without any pre-mound soil deposit being present.

6.2 Trench 2 (Figs 3, 4, & 7; Plates VI–VIII)

6.2.1 This trench was cut on the north-eastern, downhill edge of the mound over the weekend of 21–22 April, 2018. It measured 7.45m in length (NE–SW), and was 1.00m in width, enlarged to 2.00m in the central sector. Another portion of the barrow ditch [F. 38] enclosing undisturbed mound material (Context 34) was located, but this was found to have been partially cut away by a later quarry pit [F. 33] on the north-western side of the trench.

6.2.2 *Barrow enclosure ditch, F. 38* (Plate VII)

A portion of the ditch enclosing the mound was identified in the central part of Trench 2 but this had been cut away by a later quarry pit on the north-western side (F. 33, see below). The ditch was less substantial than the section examined in Trench 1, here measuring between 0.75 and 0.90m in width and no more than 0.35m deep. It was again of broadly 'U' shaped profile, with steep to sloping sides and a flat base between 0.45 and 0.48m across (Fig. 7, Section 4; Plate VII). The base stood at an elevation of 78.36m OD, some 2.60m lower than the base of the ditch in Trench 1 – a clear reflection of the sloping hillside. The lesser proportions of the undisturbed ditch here are likely to reflect the original configuration as there is no evidence to suggest that there had been any significant erosion on this lee side of the mound.

6.2.3 *Ditch fills, Contexts 36 & 37*

A thin deposit of sterile small chalk rubble (Context 37) occurred in the angle between the base and outer wall of the ditch but the bulk of the feature was filled with a single deposit of brown loam containing very frequent small chalk lumps and occasional large flint nodules (Context 36). This produced a quantity of struck flints (Table 1).

6.2.4 *Quarry pit, F. 33* (Fig. 4; Plate VIII)

At some stage after the barrow ditch [F. 38] was largely full, it was cut into by an irregular pit [F. 33], which had seemingly been dug as a quarry to obtain flint nodules for knapping. As seen in the excavation, this feature appeared roughly L-shaped in plan, measuring about 3.10m (NE–SW) by at least 1.90m (NW–SE), with a reasonably flat base. Along the northern (downhill) side, the pit was cut no more than 0.05m deep into the chalk but the deepest part on the south-western side was about 0.22m and it had completely destroyed the profile of the ditch here.

6.2.5 *Filling of quarry pit, Context 32* (Fig. 7; Plate VIII)

Quarry pit F. 33 was filled by a single deposit of mid grey-brown loam containing very frequent large and medium sized flint nodules and angular lumps, together with a quantity of small chalk lumps (Fig. 7, Context 32). Of particular interest was the fact that many of the large flints had seen a certain amount of knapping, probably during the testing of their suitability as raw material to be

further worked; also in association were very significant quantities of waste flint chippings, some of which may be re-fitted onto the larger struck nodules (Table 1). Two small flint-tempered prehistoric pot-sherds recovered from this deposit cannot be dated with any precision.

Significantly, Context 32 extended well beyond the confines of the quarry pit itself, to cover the tail of the barrow mound and the infilled ditch where it survived undamaged (Fig. 4, inset). The general impression gained was that this deposit of flint debris represented material derived from adjacent digging and working, initially dumped into a previously exhausted quarry but then subsequently spilling out over the top of this pit as more waste was added. All of this would seem to provide good evidence for a perhaps extensive episode of late flint exploitation on the lower side of the existing barrow. Further away, flint deposits 15 and 17 in Trench 1 might also be related (see above; Fig. 6).

7. Finds (Plate IV)

7.1 A substantial quantity of finds was recovered during the course of the investigations on Coxhill Mount. The great bulk of this material is prehistoric flintwork (Plate IV, Table 1), with only very small amounts of pottery, animal bone and a single marine shell. Most of the flintwork recovered came from Trench 2.

7.2 The material has been processed by site volunteers and catalogued according to standard Canterbury Archaeological Trust procedures. It currently remains in the possession of the Trust (Dover Office) but will be transferred to Dover Museum in due course. Notes on the various categories of find are set out below.

7.3 ***Pottery*** (not illustrated)

7.3.1 The excavations produced a total of nine sherds of pottery (30g). These are all small fragments, between 10 and 30mm across. Most of the pieces came from Trench 1 (Context 10, topsoil over ditch, 1; Context 15, upper ditch fill, 6). Two more sherds were recovered from the filling of the quarry pit in Trench 2 (Context 32, 5g).

7,3,2 All are plain wall sherds in coarse prehistoric flint-tempered fabrics, varying in colour from black to brown, orange and buff. Two pieces from Context 15 show evidence of external decoration. These are apparently from the same vessel with a black core and inner surface and a buff-brown exterior. The type of decoration on each is slightly different, with the larger sherd bearing clear whipped cord ornament. These pieces have been tentatively identified as coming from a vessel of mid–late Neolithic Peterborough ware (Ebbsfleet style), dated *c*. 3350–2800 BC.

7,3,3 The remaining sherds lack any clear diagnostic features for dating but a broad Neolithic to Bronze Age date-range seems most likely.

7.4 ***Prehistoric flintwork*** (Plate IV; Table 1) *by Geoff Halliwell, Gordon Hutchinson & Keith Parfitt*

7.4.1 A total of 1369 pieces of struck flint (60.03kg) was recovered during the course of the project, including 90 tested nodules 'bashed lumps' and cores/core fragments (Table 1). There is also one post-medieval gun-flint. Numerically, waste flakes account for the bulk of the assemblage (1258 pieces; 92%) and almost half of these came from the filling of quarry pit F. 33 in Trench 2 (Context 32, 572 pieces), with further significant amounts from the overlying soils, Contexts 30 & 31 (total, 395). The greatest weight of material, however, is represented by the substantial group of tested nodules and bashed lumps recovered from Trench 2. The table below summaries the distribution of the flints recovered (Table 1). Nearly all the material collected has a pale blue or white patina typical of material found on chalky soils.

Context	Tested nods/bashed lumps	Cores, core frags & unclass. frags	Waste flakes	Tools, worked, misc. retouch & utilised	Total
Surface finds					
1 (*mound surface*)	0	0	28	1	**29**
2 (*ridge-top SW of mound*)	0	0	46	3	**49**
3 (*slopes to N of mound*)	0	0	71	2	**73**
			(*145*)	*(6)*	**(*151*)**
Trench 1					
10	0	0	19	0	**19**
13	0	4	14	1	**19**
14	1	5	40	5 (inc. axe)	**51**
15	0	1	16	3	**20**
16	1	0	29	0	**30**
17	0	0	1	0	**1**
18	0	0	1	0	**1**
21	0	0	1	0	**1**
	(*2*)	(*10*)	(*121*)	(*9*)	**(*142*)**
Trench 2					
30	0	10	280	0	**290**
31	4	1	115	0	**120**
32	42	14	572	6	**634**
36	0	7	25	0	**32**
	(*46*)	(*32*)	(*992*)	(*6*)	**(*1076*)**
TOTAL	***48***	***42***	***1258***	***21***	**1369**

Table 1 Distribution of prehistoric flintwork recovered from Coxhill Mount

7.4.2 Surface searches for prehistoric flints were undertaken across the mound and adjacent areas. A light scatter of material was established as being present in the general vicinity of the mound (Contexts 2 & 3; 122 pieces, including a few exhibiting miscellaneous retouching), although to what extent this flintwork is contemporary with the construction of the monument remains unclear – a post-medieval flint found to the south-west of the mound is certainly much more recent. A careful search of the mound surface, itself, particularly areas disturbed by burrowing animals, produced only a small collection of struck flints (Context 1, 29 pieces).

7.4.3 Flints contained in the lower, primary fills of the ring-ditch, such as might have been deposited only slightly later than its original excavation were scarce in Trench 1, with just two waste flakes from Contexts 18 and 21. Slightly more material came from the ditch filling in Trench 2, where Context 36 yielded 25 waste flakes and few core fragments. There is nothing particularly diagnostic in terms of dating amongst this material, however.

7.4.4 *Tested nodules and bashed lumps*

In some respects, the most noteworthy feature of the flint assemblage overall is the quantity of tested nodules and 'bashed lumps' present. Virtually all of these came from Trench 2, derived from the filling of the late quarry pit, F. 33. There are more than 40 such pieces (Table 1), weighing over 40kg, showing evidence of being involved in just the initial stages of the knapping process before being discarded. The largest ones measure 20 x 16 x 10cm (3643g) and 20 x 12 x 11cm (3208g).

7.4.5 *Cores and core fragments*

A proportion of the nodules tested during the late flint quarrying episode were apparently selected for continued working on site and a number of cores were recovered, with the greatest numbers from Contexts 30 and 32 in Trench 2 (total, 24). They are all quite roughly produced, being of variable

size, with no standardisation in their form. They have one, two or three platforms and range in weight from 258 to 1488g.

7.4.6 *Waste flakes*

About 92% of the struck flints recovered are waste flakes, with very few blades or blade-like flakes present. Most are either secondary or tertiary flakes, but almost a quarter are primary ones, mainly contained within Context 32. Cortex on the primary and secondary flakes demonstrates that local downland flint provided the raw material, whilst the evidence from Context 32 implies that the monument itself was the main source of this.

7.4.7 *Worked material*

Only 21 of the flints recovered showed any evidence of being worked. Most impressive is the broken chipped axe from the ditch fill in Trench 1 (Context 14) but this piece stands apart from the other worked material (see below). Apart from the axe fragment, there are no other formal tools, such as scrapers, within the assemblage and all the remaining worked material amounts to nothing more than a miscellaneous collection of flakes showing traces of casual retouch along their edges or some limited evidence of utilisation. Six such pieces came from Context 32, filling the quarry pit [F. 33] in Trench 2. Another five worked pieces are included amongst the surface material collected south-west and north of the mound.

Chipped axe (Plate IV)

The most finely worked piece from the excavations is part of a bifacially worked chipped axe, broken across the mid-section, probably during manufacture due to a hard, cherty inclusion. The piece is in a generally fresh condition with a deep white patina.

Surviving length: 82mm
Max width: 54mm
Max. thickness: 28mm
Weight: 127g

There is evidence of deliberate crushing/blunting along both edges. This edge-blunting and the overall style of working suggests a Neolithic date for the axe (*c*. 3800 – 2500 BC). The implement is thus most likely to be residual from an earlier period in relation to the construction of the barrow.

7.4.8 *Concluding comments*

The excavated trenches have produced a very useful sample of lithic material directly associated with the monument. Collectively, the presence of this material must serve to confirm that the mound and it associated ditch represent the remains of a previously unrecorded prehistoric round barrow.

Most of the flintwork recovered came from the downhill side of the mound in Trench 2 and there seems little doubt that the pit located there [F. 33] represents part of a shallow, perhaps somewhat casual, quarry dug sometime after the construction of the main barrow in order to extract workable flint from the body of the mound and from the sides of the ring-ditch. Raw material recovered had been tested for knapping suitability on the spot and then either discarded, with no more than a flake or two being detached, or more extensively worked, producing a series of rough cores and significant quantities of waste flakes, all of it dumped into and over the presumably by then worked out portion of the pit (Context 32),

A quantity of waste flint comprising more than 80 waste flakes and three bashed lumps/cores, found in the upper filling of the enclosure ditch in Trench 1 (Contexts 14, 15, 16 & 17) may represent similar late flint working on the uphill side of the monument and could suggest that searching for useable flint occurred all around the circumference of the barrow.

The small number of casually worked and utilised flakes recovered from Context 32 (n=6) appear to represent nothing more than expedient tools of the moment made to undertake minor odd tasks on site, such as perhaps repairing digging tools. Most of the implements produced from the extracted flint, however, were seemingly removed to a main activity or settlement area elsewhere, either as completed or part finished tools.

Although digging raw flint material from the margins of what may be assumed to once have been regarded as a sacred site could be seen as an act of desecration, it might equally be that flints gathered here were believed to be somehow imbued with advantageous properties by the spirits of the place. In fact, the recovery of relatively late flint working debris in the upper fills of early Bronze Age round barrow ditches in not an uncommon occurrence and most often seems to date to the later Bronze Age period. Other local instances of such findings occur at Mill Hill, Deal; Martin; Bay Hill, St Margaret's and Ringlemere.

The surface lithic material found scattered across the Coxhill Mount area further suggests prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the barrow, although whether before or after the construction of the mound itself, is not entirely clear from the somewhat undiagnostic material recovered. Overall, it would seem that the density of surface struck flint in this region is not as great as on Whinless Down, for example.

The chipped axe recovered from the upper filling of the ditch in Trench 1 (Fig. 6, Context 14; Plate IV) would appear to be earlier than the bulk of the flints recovered from the excavation and it is very probably residual in its excavated context. A Neolithic date seems most likely for this implement. Although there are no other recognisable tools that may be readily assigned to this period, it remains possible that a small proportion of the other lithic material excavated is broadly contemporary with this axe. The general impression gained, however, is that the bulk of the flintwork recovered during the investigations is of Bronze Age date.

7.5 ***Burnt and calcined flint***

A total of 44 pieces of burnt and calcined flint (967g) was recovered during the investigations. More than half were surface finds or were contained within the topsoil over the mound (Contexts 10 & 30). There is a strong suggestion that much of the high-level material is of relatively recent date and derives from modern scrub clearance or barbeque parties in the area. The smaller quantities of material found in the upper filling of the ditch (Context 14, 5 pieces) and the quarry pit (Context 32, 2 pieces), however, are more certainly prehistoric in date. Such material could well be contemporary with some of the struck flint recovered and is perhaps connected with cooking activities in the area. The quantity of material found is not sufficient to suggest that such activity had been very extensive.

7.6 ***Animal bone and marine shell***

A few small fragments of heavily eroded animal bone came from the upper filling of the ditch in Trench 1. Context 15 produced 5 pieces (18g) and Context 16 contained 8 pieces (13g). None of this material is closely identifiable and its significance in relation to the infilling of ditch remains unclear – it may all be residual, derived from earlier prehistoric activity in the area. Context 16 also produced a single oyster shell.

8. General conclusions

8.1 The trenching at Coxhill Mount would seem to have amply confirmed that the visible mound previously identified is the remains of a prehistoric round barrow. As such, it joins a number of others known on the sides of the Dour valley (Plate X), although these are probably the last survivors of a greater number, if Stukeley and Hasted are to be believed.

8.2 In terms of date, the mounds noted by Stukeley probably included monuments of both Anglo-Saxon and prehistoric date – certainly excavation has shown that a number of Anglo-Saxon ones have long-since been levelled on Old Park Hill (Parfitt 2018) and on Long Hill at Buckland (Parfitt and Anderson 2012).

8.3 From their size, all the local mounds surviving today are likely to be of prehistoric date, although few have seen any good excavation and unfortunately none has produced any prehistoric burials with finds (Table 2).

8.4 A feature of several of the valley side barrows is their careful utilisation of a natural hill slope position so that they appear as impressively large mounds from the downhill side but are hardly visible when viewed from uphill. The implication would thus seem to be that these monuments were designed to be both viewed and approached from the downhill side.

8.5 Based on the above, it could follow that the settlements associated with these mounds should be sought on the lower slopes and in the bottom of the adjacent valley. From a practical point of view placing such monuments on marginal slopes would also avoid wasting valuable agricultural land located on more level ground.

9. Dating of the Coxhill Mount barrow

9.1 Without more extensive excavation, the date of the Coxhill Mount barrow is difficult to determine precisely. From its general form and the material recovered during the trenching, however, there seems no doubt that it is of prehistoric, rather than Anglo-Saxon, date. In Britain generally, prehistoric round barrow construction was largely confined to the late Neolithic and Bronze Age periods, *c*. 2400–1100 BC and the present site is most likely to fall somewhere within this range.

9.2 The small fragment of Ebbsfleet decorated pottery (*c*. 3350–2800 BC), together with the chipped axe (Plate IV) and perhaps a few of the other struck flints recovered during the excavations, combine to indicate that there had been occasional Neolithic activity in the area but the evidence is probably insufficient to suggest that the barrow itself is as early as this. More likely, these odd finds are residual and relate to casual activity that occurred in the area some considerable time before the barrow was erected.

9.3 Although the construction date of the barrow is not certain, it does seem clear that the finished monument had later seen activity concerned with the procurement and preparation of raw flint material for knapping. A mound of early Bronze Age origin which subsequently saw an episode of flint exploitation during the late Bronze Age is suggested by the site evidence, and this reflects a generally well-established sequence of events for such prehistoric monuments across southern Britain.

10. Local context

10.1 The visible barrows positioned upon the hills overlooking the Dour valley (Plate X; Table 2); provide some of the clearest evidence for Bronze Age habitation in the area and the Coxhill Mount site may now be added to this list. These mounds are all most likely to be of early or middle Bronze Age date but there is no good dating evidence from any.

10.2 Firm evidence for Bronze Age activity in the bottom of the Dour valley, such as might be broadly contemporary with the known round barrows, is limited. Although there is scattered evidence for activity in and around the Dour Valley throughout the Bronze Age, the bulk of the evidence in the form of isolated chance finds, many now lost.

10.3 Prehistoric settlement evidence along the valley bottom generally, is scarce but two locally investigated sites, at Manor View Nursery, Temple Ewell and Crabble Paper Mill at least provide some evidence for ancient, river-side occupation in the area. About 600m north of Coxhill Mount, trenching at the Manor View Nursery site, off Lower Road, revealed three deeply buried pits datable to the period to *c*. 600−300 BC (Parfitt 2018). Such occupation will most likely post-date the late flint quarrying episode that occurred at the Coxhill barrow site but it clearly demonstrates continued prehistoric habitation in the general locality.

Monument	Main axis	Length (m)	Width (m)	Height (m)
Little Watersend Farm	NW–SE	29.0	24.5	3.70 (downslope side)
Ewell Minnis	E–W	21.0	15.0	0.90
Lousyberry Wood, A	N–S	17.0	15.0	1.70 (downslope side)
Lousyberry Wood, B	NE–SW	10.0	9.0	0.70
Lousyberry Wood, C	NE–SW	14.0	11.0	1.00
Whinless Down, A	E–W	17.0	7.0	0.60
Whinless Down, B	E–W	9.0	6.0	0.60
Whinless Down, C	N–S	14.0	12.0	0.30
Whinless Down, D	N–S	10.0	8.0	0.30
Coxhill Mount	-	25.5	25.5	3.0 (downslope side)

Table 2 Details of extant barrows around the Dour valley (see Plate X for locations)

10.4 About 1.4km to the south-east of Coxhill, evidence for rather earlier prehistoric activity comes from the Crabble Paper Mill site where a series of pits filled with charcoal and burnt flint were recorded during building work (Kent HER ref. TR 34 SW 1072). On the evidence of three radiocarbon dates and worked flints, activity or occupation close to the river occurred here sometime during the late Neolithic−early Bronze Age period, *c*. 2570−2130 cal. BC (Parfitt 2006; Bates *et al*. 2008).

10.5 The presence of at least one other Bronze Age habitation area, on the foot of the Western Heights, near the coast, may be strongly suspected from the evidence of an abandoned wooden boat associated with a certain amount of domestic rubbish found in the ancient river bed below Townwall Street in 1992 (Parfitt 2004). The occurrence of late Neolithic−Bronze Age flint material on the rising valley sides adjacent provides further evidence for prehistoric settlement hereabouts. The boat itself is dated to *c*. 1550 cal. BC, placing it in the middle Bronze Age period.

11. Recommendations and the future

11.1 There can now be no doubt that the mound on Coxhill represents the largely intact remains of a prehistoric, presumably Bronze Age, round barrow. As such, it constitutes an important new prehistoric field monument that may be added to the list of such sites already known around Dover (see above). Having identified this new monument, it is important that it is not lost again through lack of knowledge or interest.

11.2 ***Preservation and maintenance***

The Coxhill mound should be preserved and maintained for the benefit of future generations. Accordingly:-

- The site should be kept under regular surveillance by a Parks representative
- The site should be kept clear of bushes and trees in order to reduce root damage of the undisturbed structure of the mound (which may well contain contemporary graves).
- Burrowing animals should be discouraged from digging into the mound but any new excavations/burrows that are dug should be regularly inspected for ejected archaeological material, especially burial remains.
- A suitable long-term management plan should be drawn up, working with local ecologists

11.3 ***Enhancement and presentation to the public***

Together with the barrows on Whinless Down, the monument on Coxhill Mount is located on amenity land and is readily accessible to the public, although it is not sufficiently visually impressive

to draw great numbers of casual visitors. Perhaps the site is best left unmarked on the ground but highlighted on public display boards within the main Abbey complex around the lake and cafe. It might be possible to incorporate details of the monument into a more general *Park history trail.* This could be presented as providing scope for a family 'archaeological expedition' following in the foot-steps of the field archaeologist – the monument is 3000 to 4000 years old and is rather eroded and indistinct but can ***you*** climb the hill and discover it?

11.4 ***Protection and further archaeological investigation***

It is debatable whether the Coxhill mound is sufficiently significant to warrant protection through Scheduling as an Ancient Monument of national importance (although some discussion with Historic England officials may be worthwhile to consider the point).

Increased public awareness of the monument does heighten the risk of illicit digging and metal detecting on the site, which could cause unnecessary damage to the monument. Equally, if it is well known to the public any such activity would soon be discovered and reported.

Total archaeological excavation of the mound might initially seem an attractive idea but this would be a very costly operation. All archaeological excavation effectively constitutes scientific destruction of any surviving remains. Since there is no identifiable threat to the present site, such as new building work, the monument seems best left for future generations to enjoy and perhaps investigate with more advanced techniques and greater resources. Such a policy would be in keeping with current archaeological thinking.

Although total excavation presently does not seem justifiable, further more limited excavation may be warranted in order to advance some specific research topic. This might include detailed sampling for palaeoenvironmental evidence, especially land snails, which could provide details on past vegetation and land use in the area.

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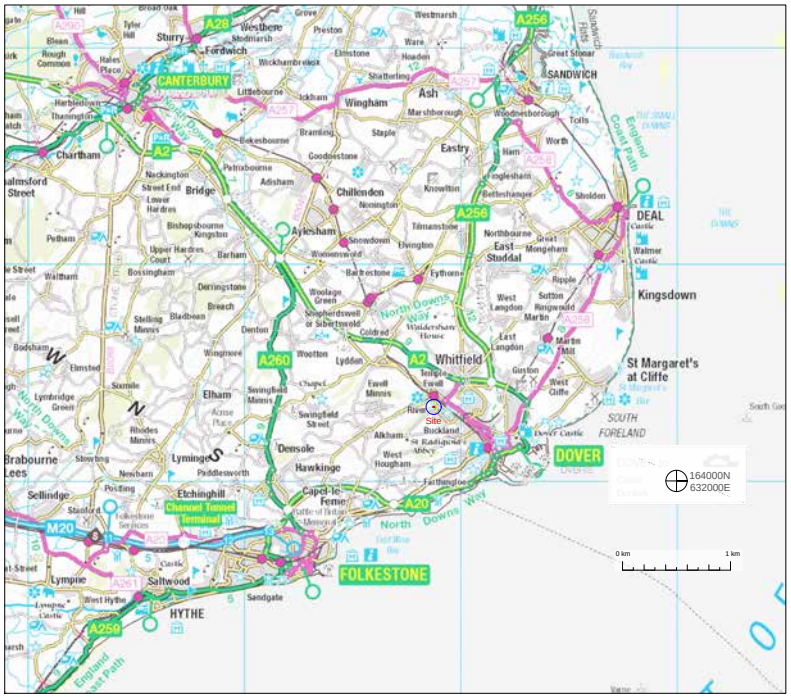
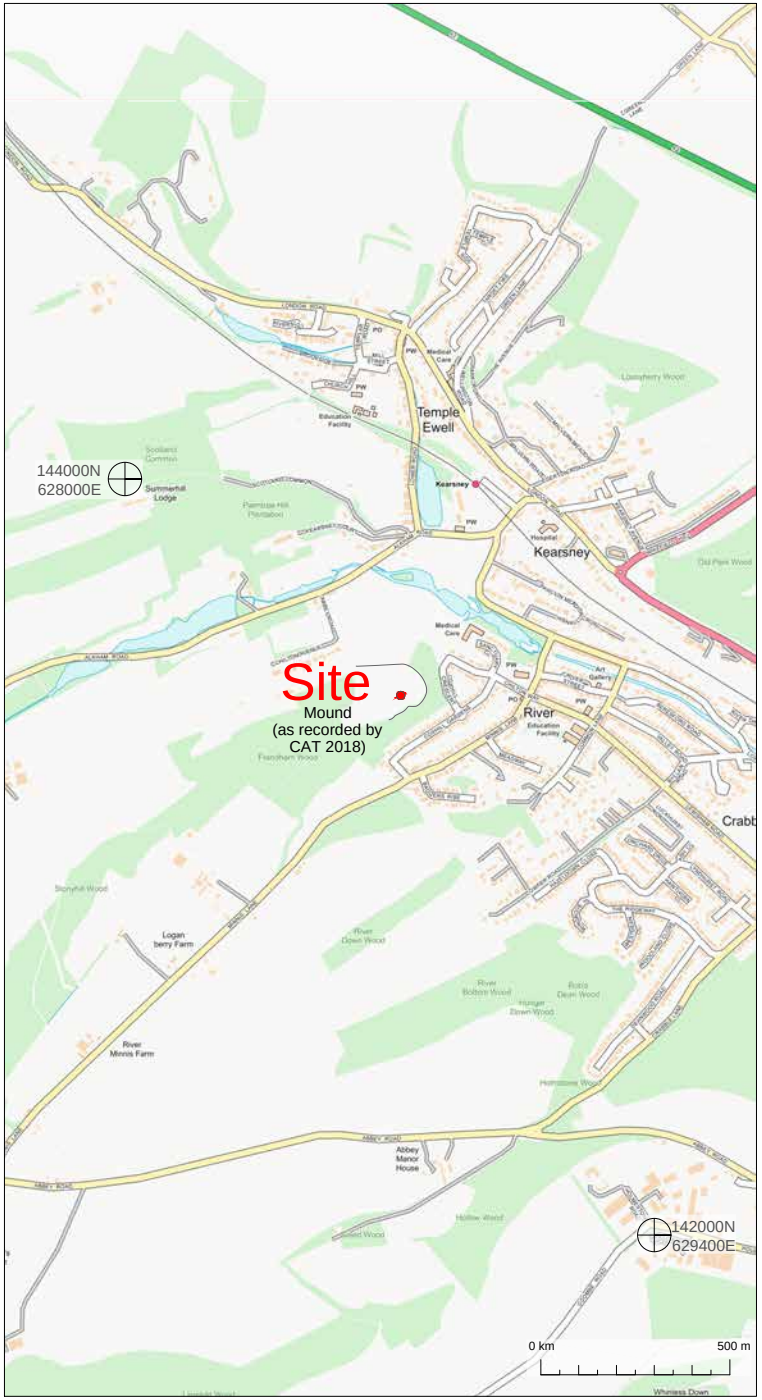


Fig. 1 Map showing general location of the investigated site



(Based on Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, ©Crown Copyright Licence No.AL100021009)

Fig.1

N

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PROJECT NAME	Coxhill Mount
PROJECT CODE	KCHM-EV-18
SITE ADDRESS	Coxhill Mount Kearsney Dover
DRAWN BY	P-SA
SCALE(S)	1:25,000 @ A4
DATE	25/04/18
LAST REVISION	04/12/18
CHECKED	KP

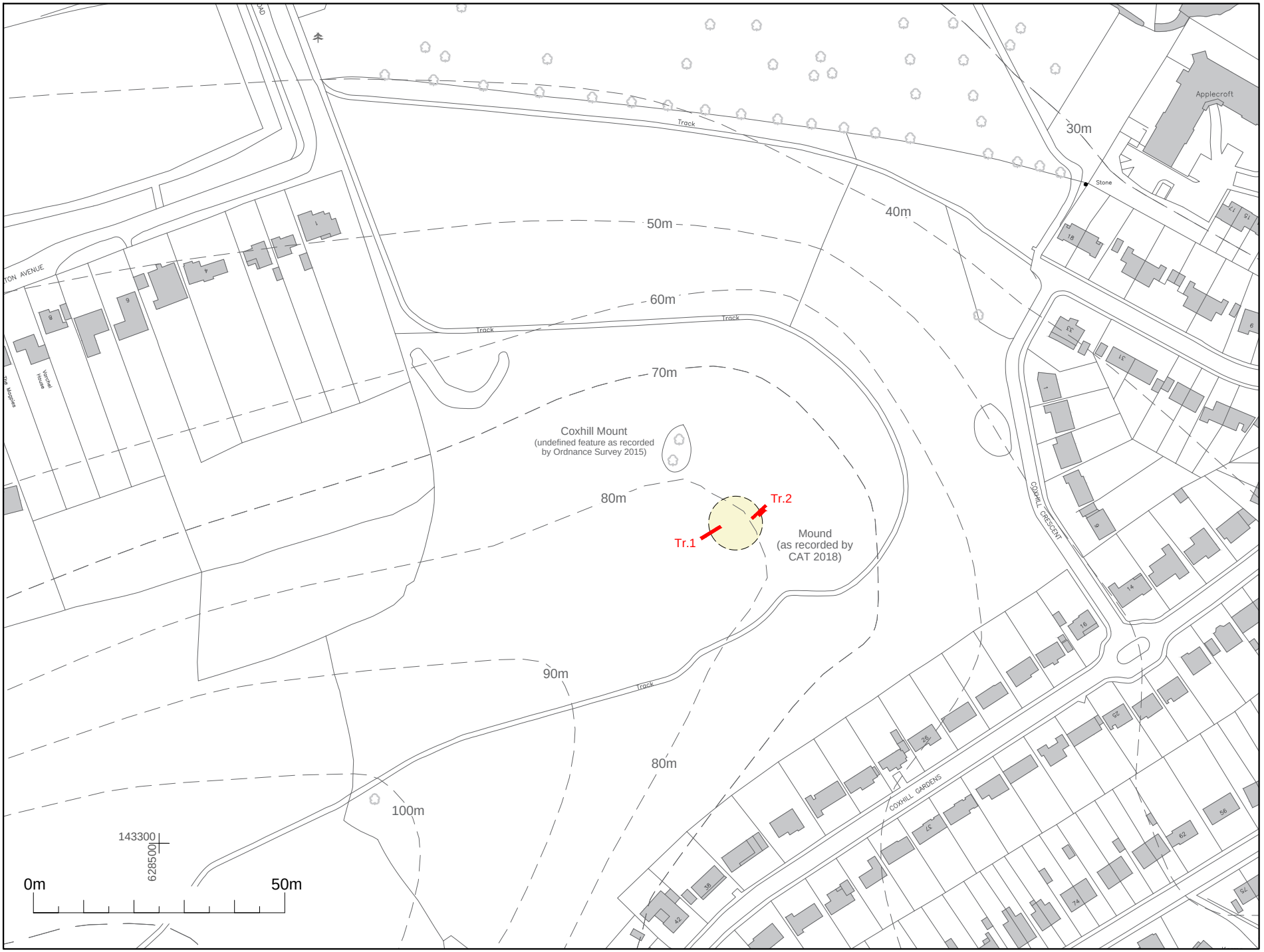

Fig. 2

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DATE	25/04/18
LAST REVISION	04/12/18
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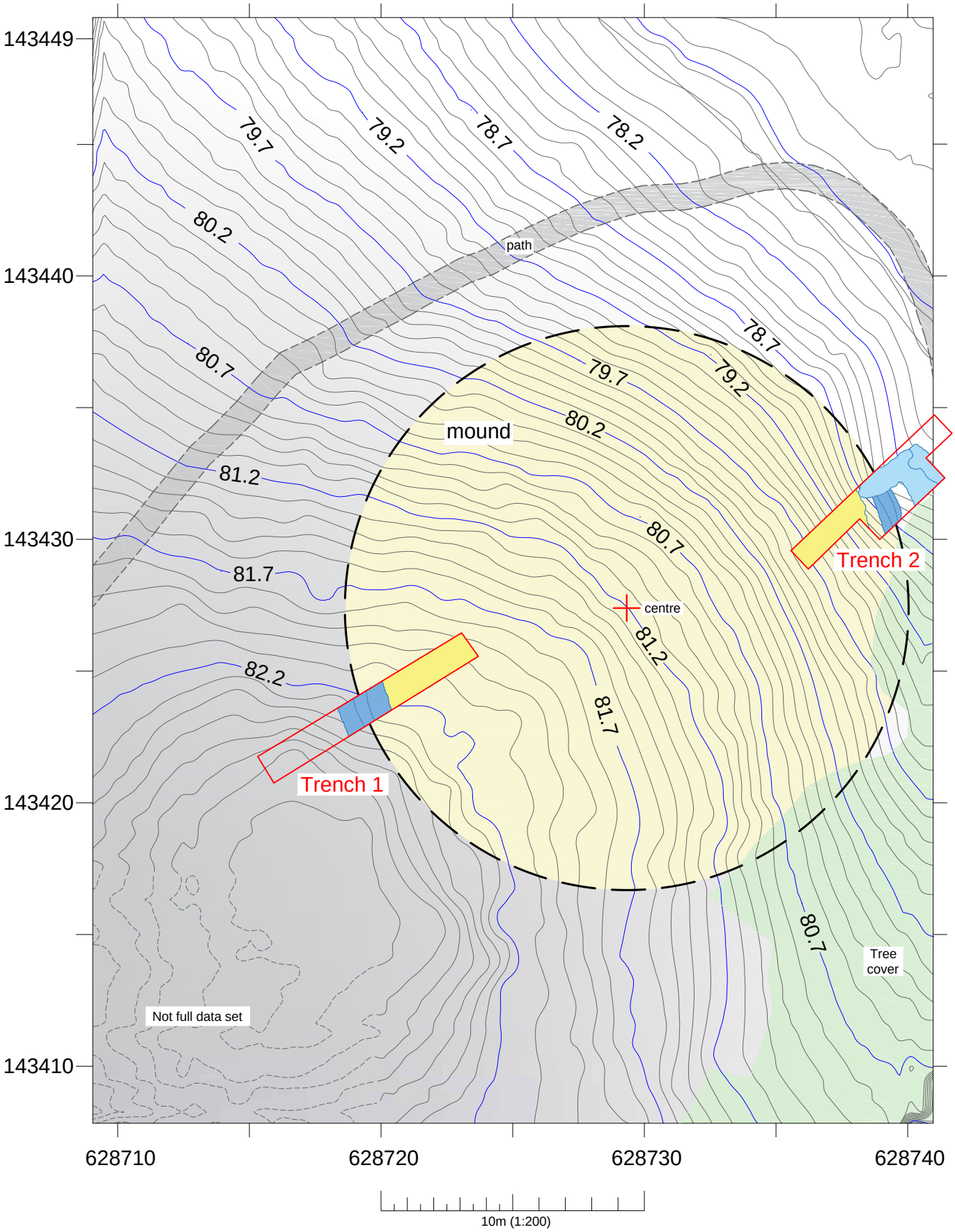
Fig. 2 Plan showing position of the investigated mound (in yellow), with major contours and position of excavated trenches

Coxhill Mount Contour Survey



CANTERBURY ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD. A REGISTERED CHARITY	PROJECT NAME: Coxhill Mount	DRAWN BY: P-SA	SCALE(S): 1:200 @ A4
92a Broad Street . Canterbury Kent . CT1 2LU Tel 01227 462062 Fax 01227 784724 Email admin@canterburytrust.co.uk	PROJECT CODE: KCHM-EV-18	DATE: 25/04/18	LAST REVISION: 04/12/18
	SITE ADDRESS: Coxhill Mount Kearsney Dover		

Evaluation Trench

Extent of mound

82.7 Ordnance Datum *(height in meters)*

N

Fig. 3

Fig. 3 Contour plan showing area of mound (in yellow) and position of excavated trenches

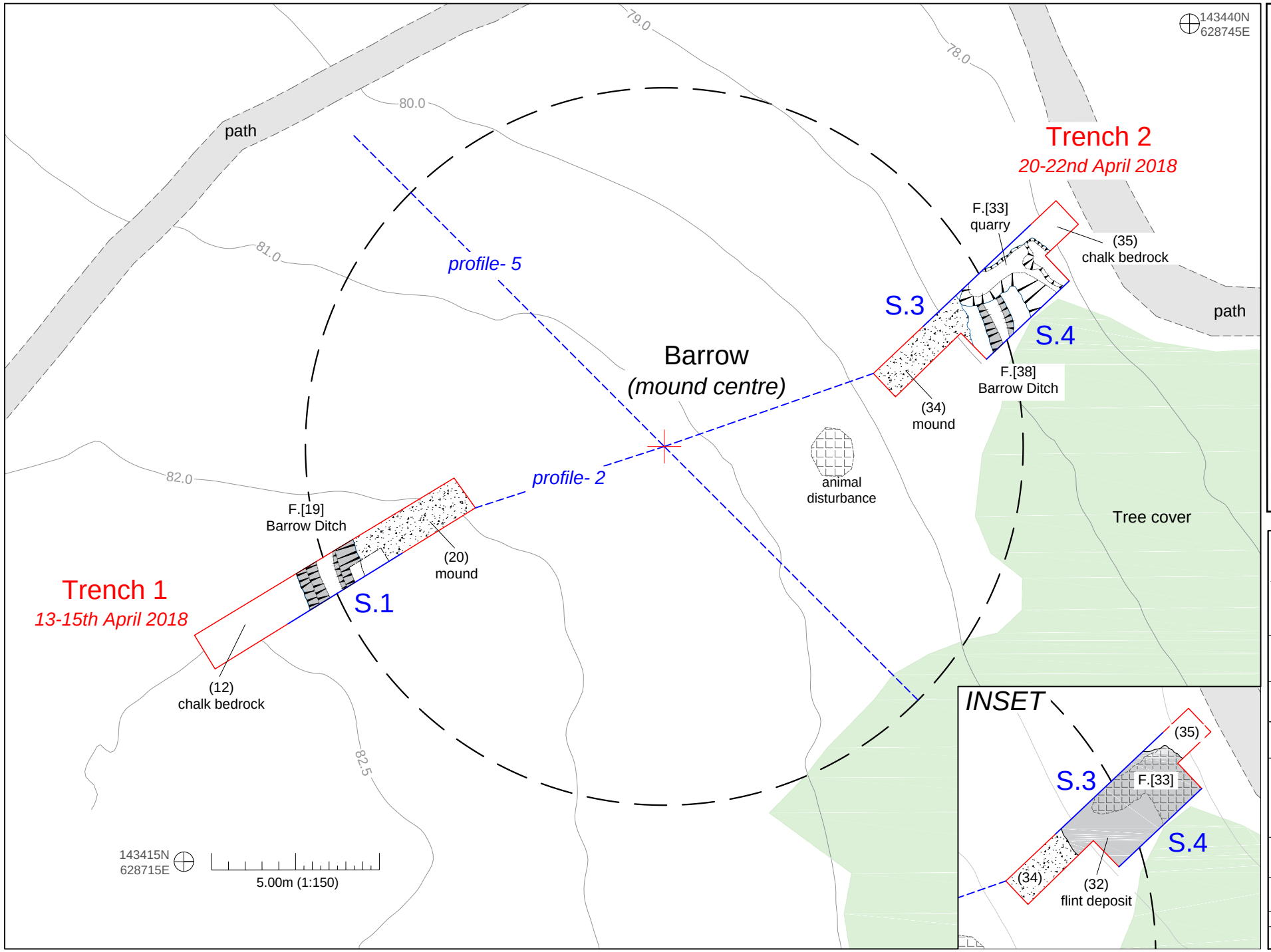


Fig. 4

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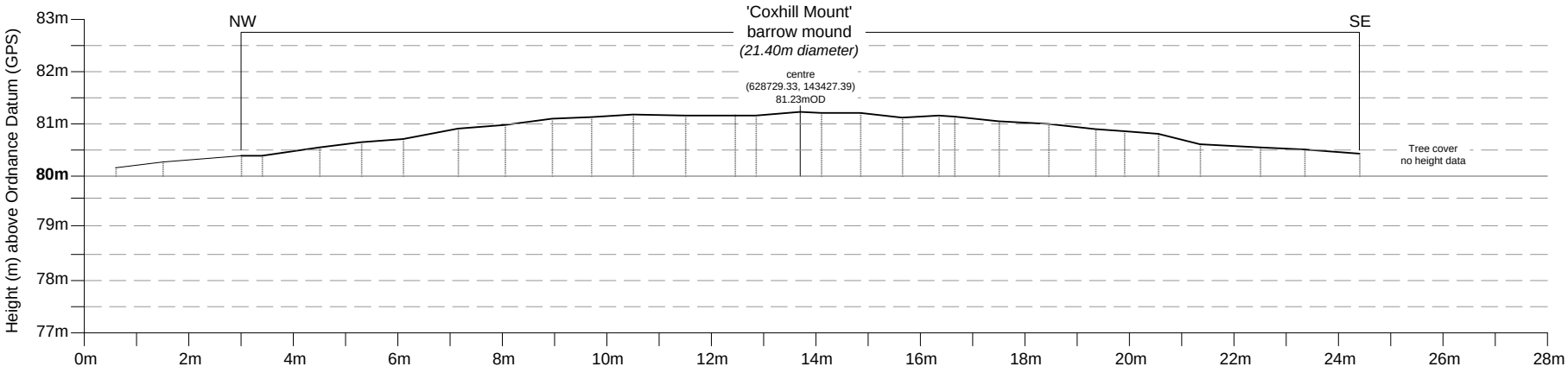
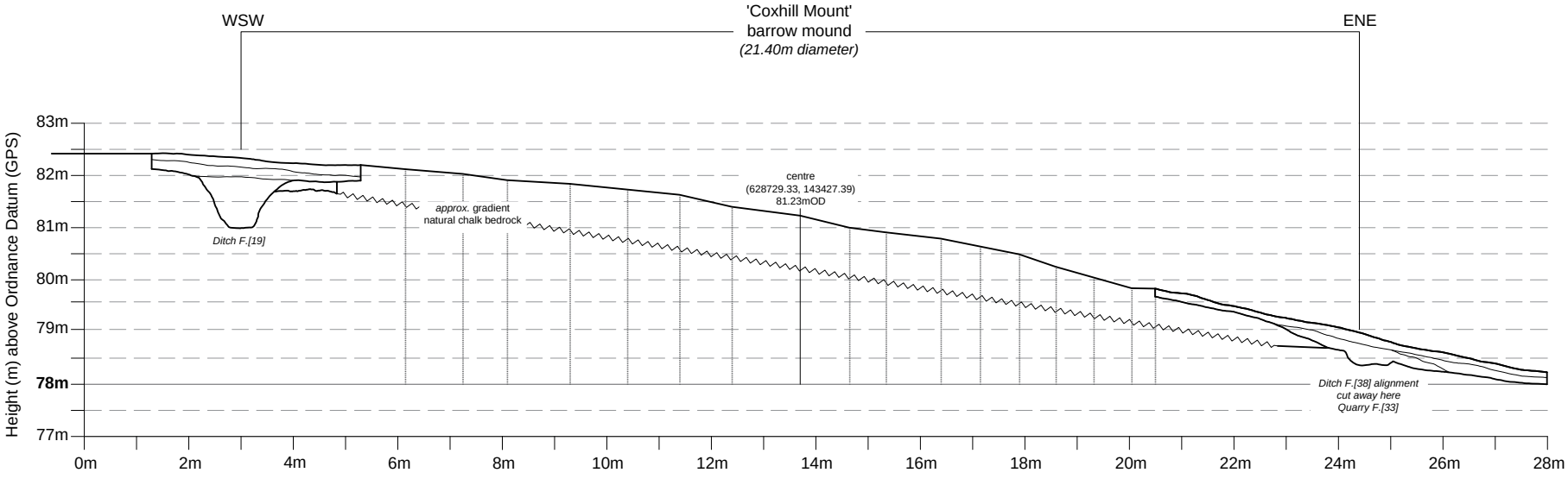
Fig. 4 Plan of mound showing position of excavated trenches and lines of representative profiles

Fig. 5



NW-SE Profile: Section- 5



WSW-ENE Profile- 2 (includes Section 1 and 3)

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SCALE(S)	1:125 @ A4
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Fig. 5 Representative profiles across Coxhill mound

Trench 1 13-15th April 2018

Section. 1

(in reverse)

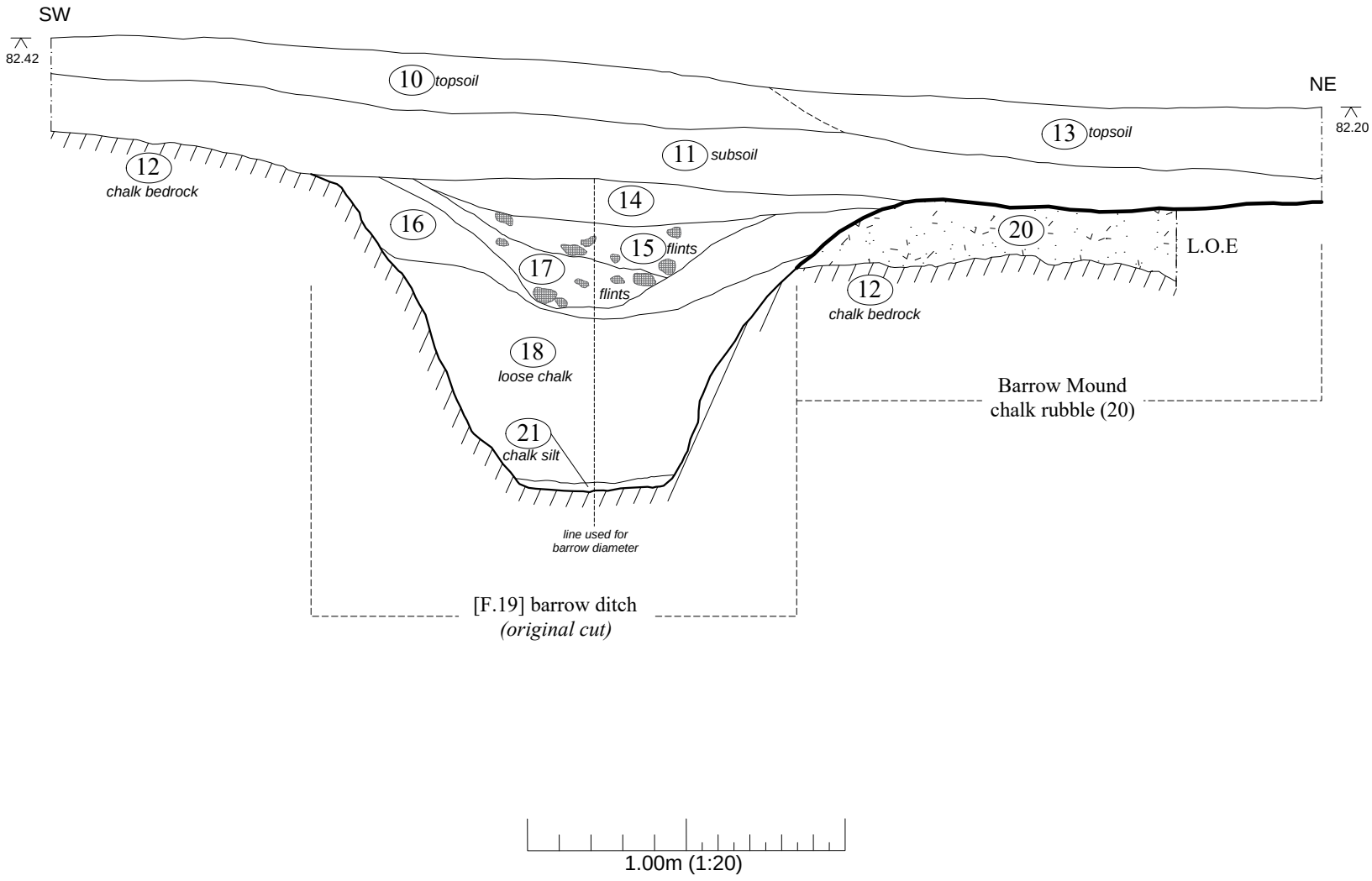

Fig. 6

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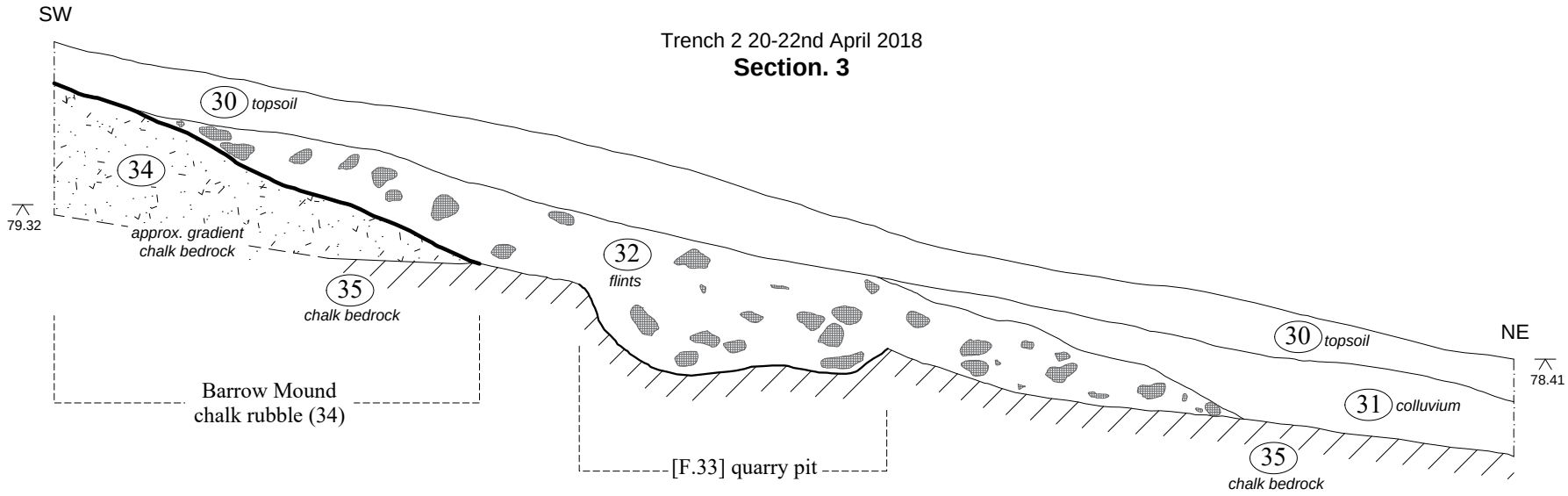
Fig. 6 Trench 1- Section through Barrow ditch [F.19] and associated mound (20)



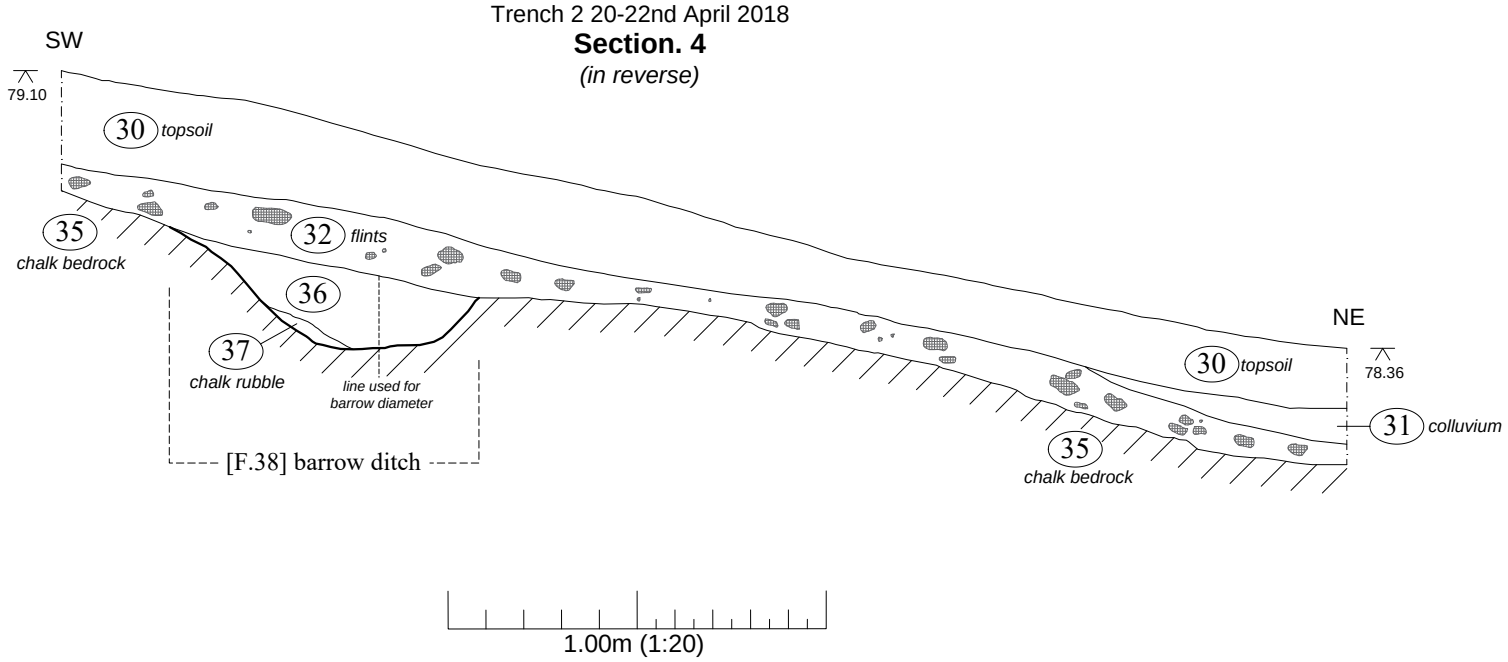


Fig. 7

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PROJECT CODE: KCHM-EV-18

SITE ADDRESS: Coxhill Mount
Kearsney
Dover

DRAWN BY	SCALE(S)
P-SA	1:20 @ A4
DATE	LAST REVISION
25/04/18	18/05/18

CHECKED KP

Fig. 7 Sections across quarry pit [F. 33] and barrow ditch in Trench 2

Plate I Work on Trench 1, looking north-east

Plate II Trench 1 completed, looking south-west. Scales, 1m and 50cm

Plate III Detail of excavated ditch [F. 19] in Trench 1, looking SE. Scale, 1m

Plate IV Chipped axe fragment from ditch in Trench 1. Max width: 54mm

Plate V Volunteers backfilling Trench 1, looking east

Plate VI General view of Trench 2, looking north-east across Dour valley. Scale 1m

Plate VII Detail of excavated ditch [F. 38] in Trench 2, looking SE. Scale, 50cm

Plate VIII Ditch [F. 38] cut away by quarry pit [F. 33] in Trench 2, looking SW. Scale, 50cm

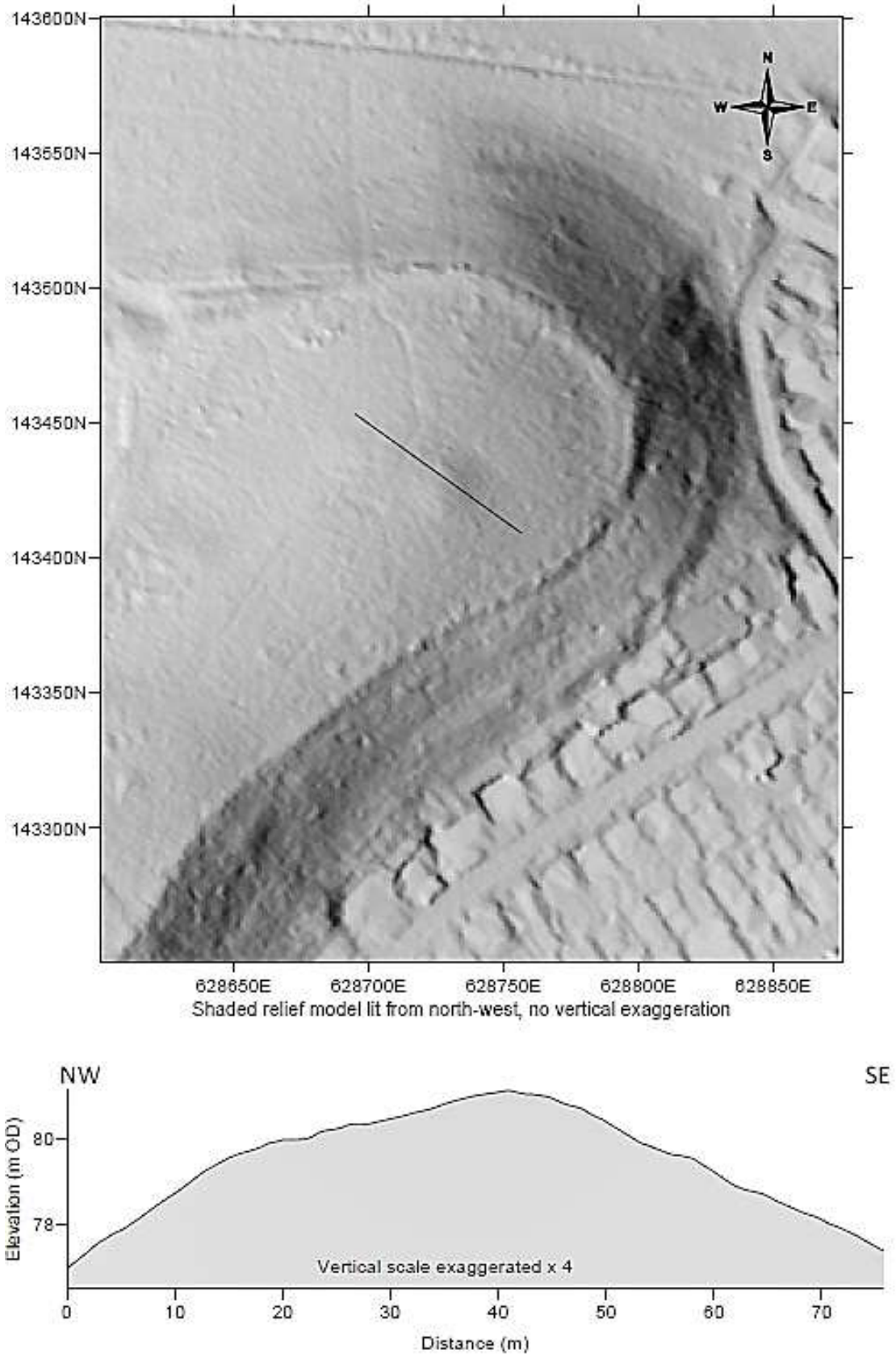

Plate IX LIDAR view of the barrow on Coxhill Mount, with profile

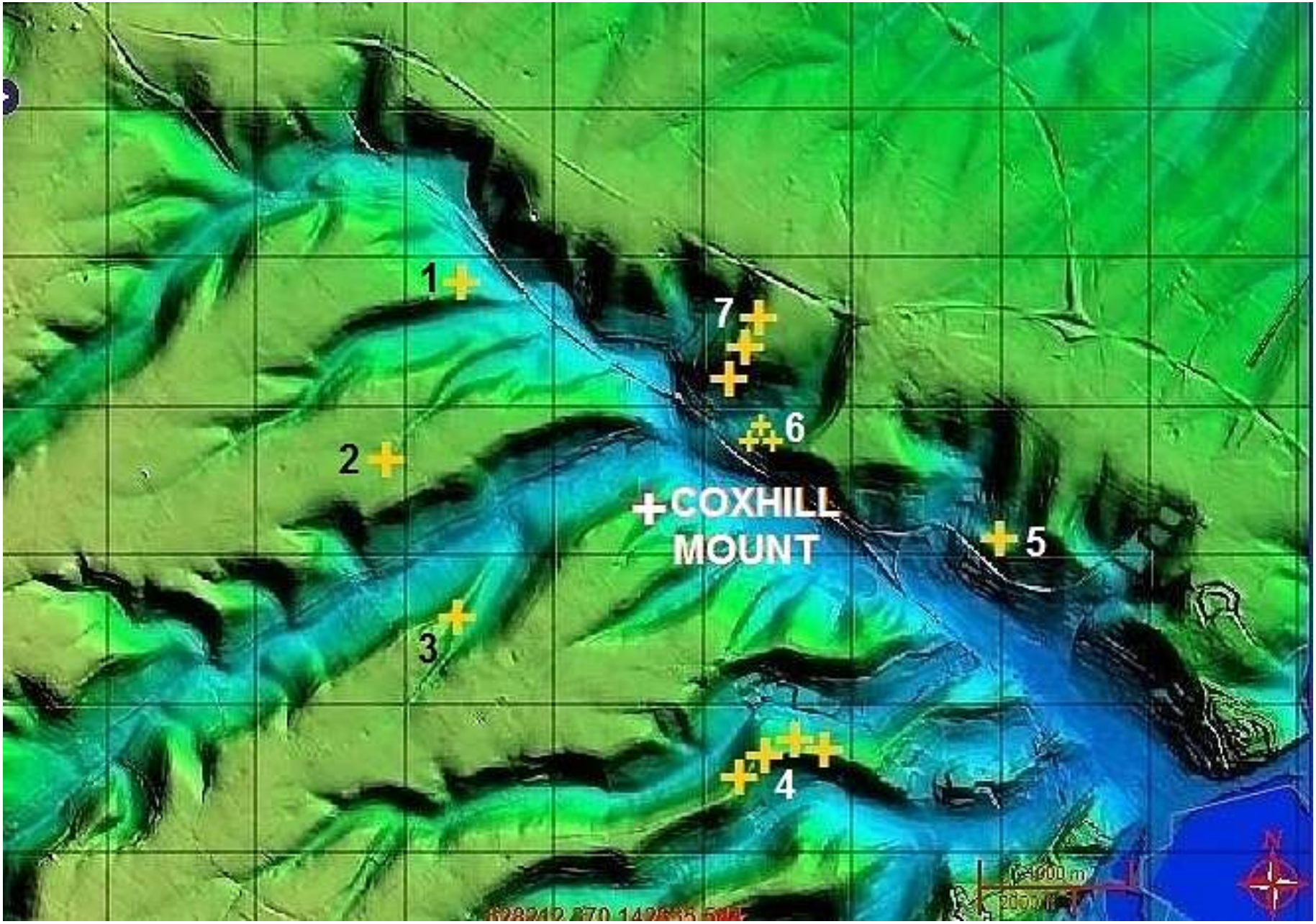

Plate X Digital terrain model of the Dover valley system showing the distribution of known round barrows (+)
1, Little Watersend Farm; 2, Ewell Minnis; 3, Wolverton; 4, Whinless Down; 5, Long Hill; 6, Old Park Hill (Anglo-Saxon); 7, Lousyberry Wood