

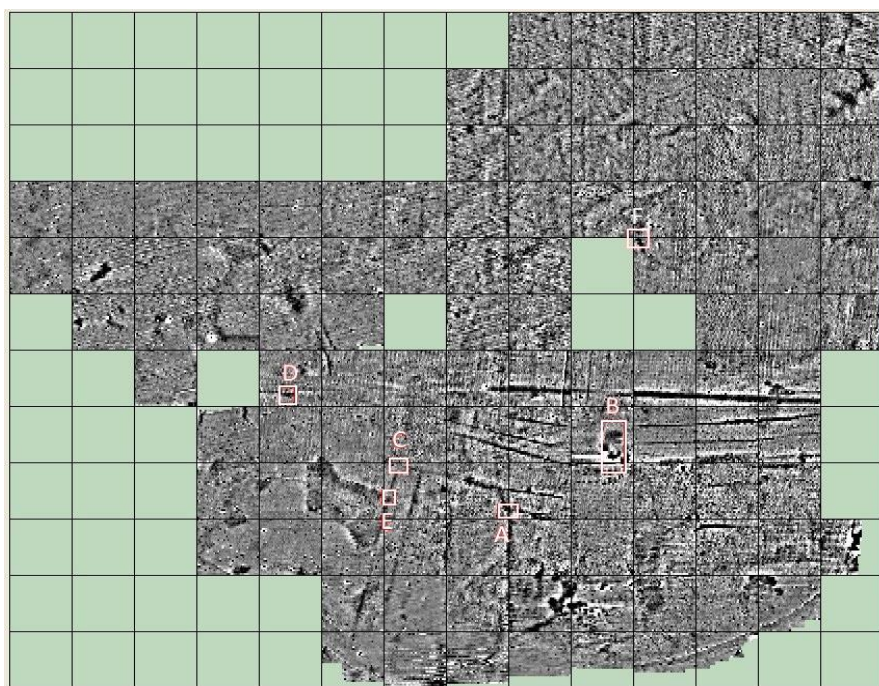
CAMBRIDGE INDEPENDENT ARCHAEOLOGY – CIA19 (NWW16)

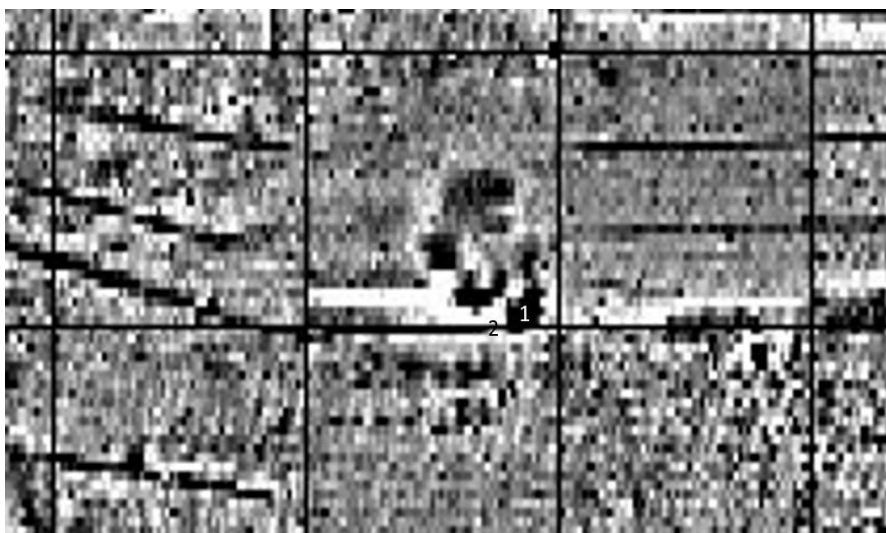
Interim report of excavations at Nine Wells, Whittlesford in 2016

Please note: This report covers trench TR 21, other trenched excavated in 2016 are covered by separate reports.

LOCATION

This trench, (and Trench 20), were positioned over the geophysical anomalies identified by Box B in the plot shown below. The aim was to identify the condition of the archaeology and test if further investigation was required.





Point 1 is centre of dark area (5)45264.76
(2)47501.74

Point 2 is end of ditch/track/? line (5)45259.7
(2)47503.7

Trench 21 was established roughly in position 2 above. Initially a 6 metre by 0.5 metre trench was commenced. This was extended by a further 1.5 metres later (see below for reasoning).

In view of the fact that this excavation was providing a keyhole in an area of potential and, that on the basis of what was found, there will be an open area excavation in 2017 to investigate the features found in Trench 20, 21 et al, this report will concentrate on providing information on what was found with limited analysis on what this means. This is because much more and better information will be obtained in 2017 which can be viewed and analysed in conjunction with the 2016 finds in order to provide more reasoned hypotheses.

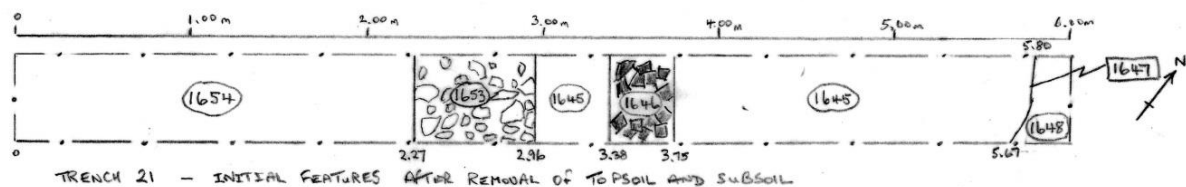
Context 1641 – Typical plough layer (0-approx 30cms) with hard clay towards the bottom except for a slightly softer area in the middle of the trench. Finds were very small pieces of CBM and a piece of clay pipe.

Context 1642 – Hard yellow subsoil (30-35cms) with very few finds apart from two small modern intrusions.

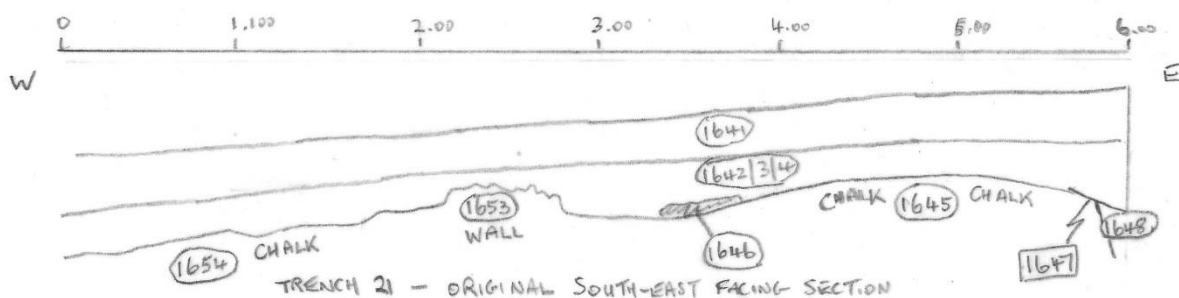
Context 1643 – Yellow-brown clay silt. (35-50cms). Hard but becoming softer, with small inclusions of chalk, flint and mortar-like material. Starting to find roman pot and CBM. At the bottom of this context we have clarified that a soft dark brown fill appears in the last 20cms at the NE end of the trench, a chalk surface is showing for about 50cms from the dark fill and several areas of cobble, stone and tile are beginning to appear at various points along the trench.

Context 1644 – Chalky clay silt mix (50-60cms). At the bottom it is apparent that there are features in the trench. Flint wall (1653) present between 227cms and 296cms from SW end of the trench, apparently sitting on the chalk surface. From that point moving north-east there is about 50cms of chalk before reaching a spread of tile (Context 1646) covering the trench for an extent of 35-40cms. Thereafter there is approximately 200cms of chalk (Context 1645) before dipping down into the soft dark brown silt first identified at context 1643. The cut in Context 1645 filled by the dark brown silt is Context 1547 (see below). At this stage it is unknown whether the chalk (1645) is re-deposited or natural. Note that the area between the wall and the dark fill appears to rise up slightly forming a flattened ellipse. It is suggested that this may represent a track or walkway with, possibly, the tile spread being a repair. See plan and section below.

PLAN DIAGRAM



SECTION DIAGRAM



AT THIS POINT, THE TRENCH WAS EXTENDED BY 1.5m AT THE NE END IN ORDER TO FURTHER INVESTIGATE THE DARK FILL FEATURE (Context 1648).

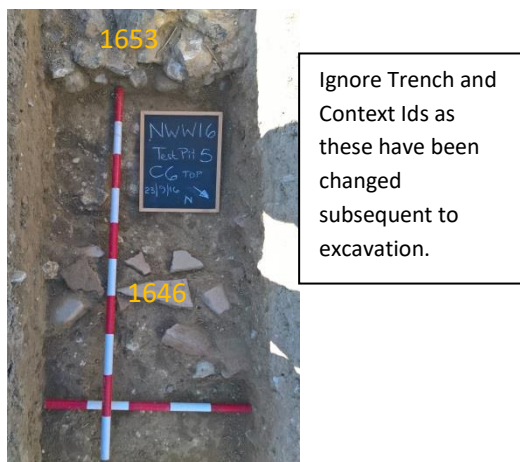
Context 1654 - Re-deposited or natural chalk to the south-west of the wall

Context 1653 – Flint Wall – Seemed to be unmortared in Trench 21, in contrast to Trench 20 where it was mortared. This needs to be investigated further in 2017.



Context 1645 – Either redeposited or natural chalk possibly forming part of a trackway.

Context 1646 – Spread of tile about 3cms deep, possibly a repair to the chalk surface.

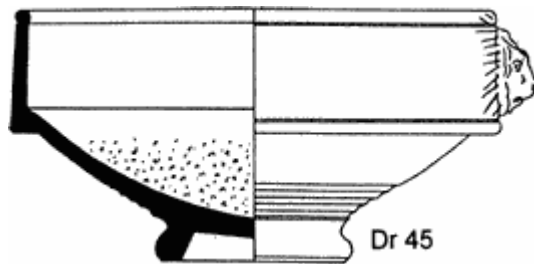


Context 1647 – Cut in chalk (Context 1645). Extends almost vertically for 50+cms before breaking into a 45 degree slope.



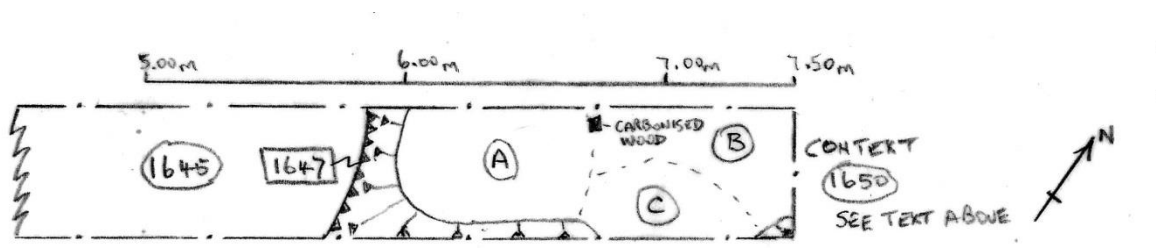
Context 1648 – Consists of a fine dark brown silt with frequent lighter mottles. 55cms – 110cms. Unusually, there are almost no inclusions. The consistency is mainly soft but with occasional harder

areas where the silt has become compressed. It has substantial quantities of pot, kiln-related material, CBM, animal bone, chalk lumps, charcoal, nails and also a very strange type of grey concretion which requires further analysis to determine its origins. An almost complete mortarium was found inverted at a depth of 68cms about 140cms from the NE end of the trench. It is in 2 pieces and represents about 7/8ths of a complete vessel, just missing the spout section. It replicates a Dragendorff Type 45 shape but is in an imitation Samian probably produced by the Oxford potteries dated 240-400ad (Pers. Comm. Katie ? PCA).



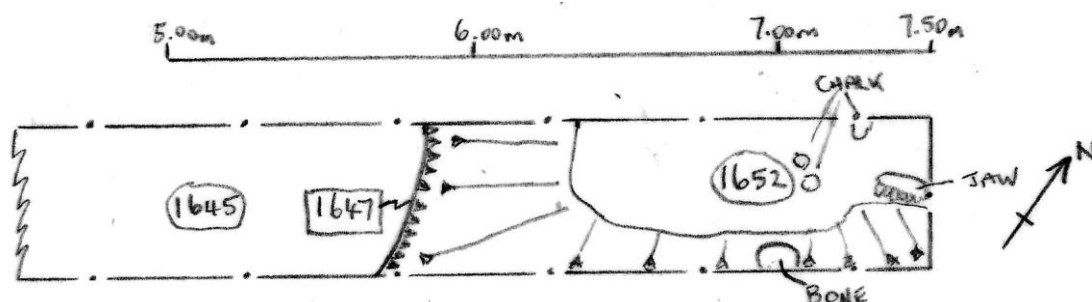
Context 1649 – (110 – 130cms). At this point it was decided to allocate new contexts even though the fill looked very similar in order to differentiate the depth that finds occurred. The type of finds remained constant but with larger lumps of kiln material appearing and 1 piece of window glass.

Context 1650 – (130 – 150cms). Started to see some changes. Cut 1647 has a break of slope from the vertical, sloping chalk starts to appear in the bottom from the south-east edge of the trench. The fill changes from the uniform dark brown silt with lighter mottles into 3 general areas but with no clear delineation, more a gradual merging of colour change. See diagram below. Area A is dark brown silt with lighter mottles, Area B is a dark grey silt and chalk mix, Area C is an orangey brown silt. Interestingly, Area C had no finds in it. A sample of the orangey-brown silt was taken at this point. A large piece of carbonised wood was taken from Area A at this depth.



Context 1651 – (150 - 160cms). The chalk slope continues to grow larger. The orangey brown area also expands towards the NW edge of the trench. Some large chalk nodules left at the bottom of the context.

Context 1652 – (160-165cms). Final cleaning identified that the orangey brown area continued to extend in the same direction. It gives the impression of being fire debris. An animal lower jaw and the end of an animal leg bone were left in situ. – see diagram below for the final plan of the context.



View of
'pit'
looking NE

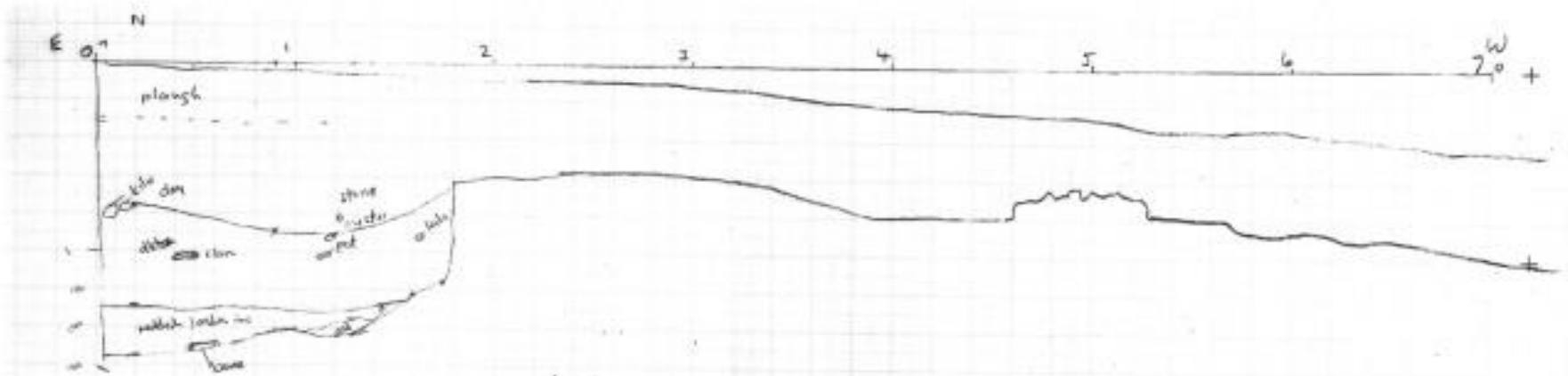
Bottom of 'pit'
showing
orangey-brown
layer at the
bottom



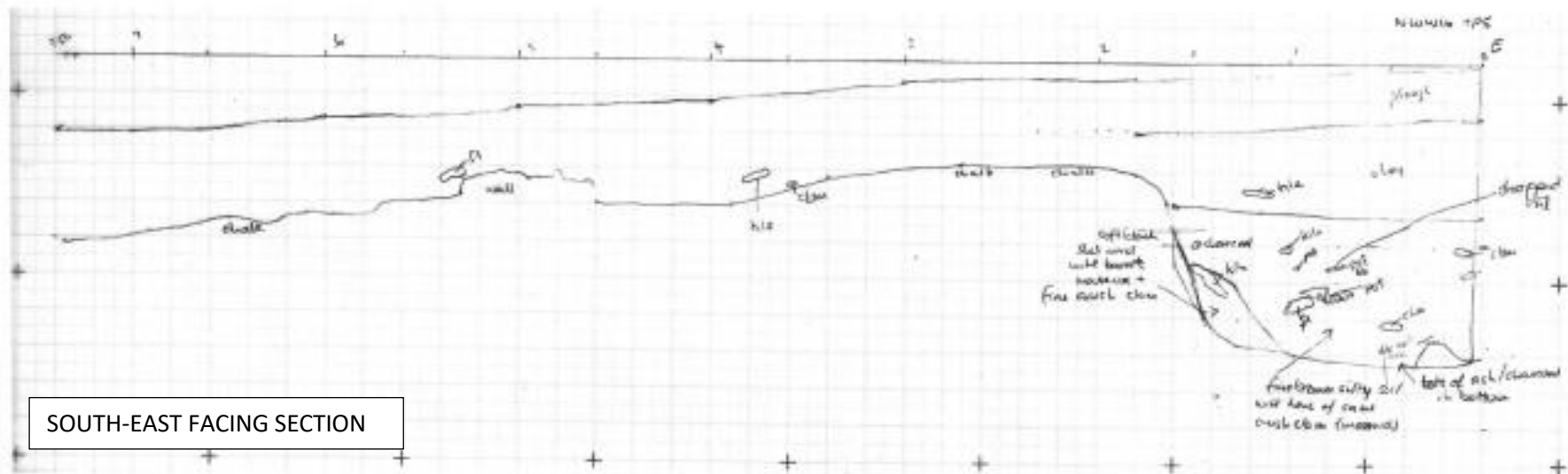
IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT FOR THE LAST 30-40cms IN DEPTH, THE LACK OF LIGHT MEANT THAT COLOUR CHANGES WERE VERY DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE. DIGGING WAS TERMINATED BEFORE NATURAL WAS REACHED DUE TO THE EXCESSIVE DEPTH REACHED.

The final Section drawings are shown in Appendix 1

APPENDIX 1 – Trench 21 SECTIONS



NORTH-WEST FACING SECTION



SOUTH-EAST FACING SECTION