



Appendix 8.5

RELEVANT CORRESPONDENCE

WEEK 1 PROGRESS REPORT

Please find below a summary of the Begbroke trenches progress to 09/12/22.

We have been working with one machine in the current fields, as we don't want to the trenches to get too far ahead of the hand excavation due to the risk of flooding.

Team size has been 6 this week, going up to 11 next week.

35 trenches have been opened, as shown on the attached plan. Of these 14 have been fully recorded and surveyed and are mostly ready to backfill (mostly those with little or no archaeology showing). 21 are open and awaiting excavation/recording of features.

Dense Roman settlement Area 1

There is generally a good correlation between the geophysical survey and features on the ground.

The main dense concentration of features south of the landfill site correspond closely with an area of gravel geology at the upper end of the slope. The trenches at the NW end of the field all contain numerous cut features and possible occupation spreads. No masonry structures have been seen as yet. All pottery seen so far in the tops of features has been Roman. The depth of soil cover is very thin at the top of the slope and gets deeper further down slope due to a build-up of colluvium.

Trench 18 in that area has not been opened because fresh badger burrows have been found next to the planned location. We are awaiting specialist ecological advice on whether it can be excavated, arranged for Monday. If a 30m exclusion zone has to be left around it probably can't be excavated.

Deep sequences in the west side of site

There are some tricky deep sandy loam soil sequences in the western side of the site, infilling a landscape depression, as well as alluvial deposits along the edge of the floodplain along the south edge of site. Most of the trenches in this part of the site have been excavated to 1m (the maximum depth allowed for safe access) without encountering either terrace sand/gravel or the underlying Oxford Clay. The trenches in this area have a few archaeological features showing up within them at less than 1m depth. These are of uncertain date as not yet excavated but correspond with probable Roman features on the geophysics plot. We intend to dig some deeper test pits with the machine (not for personnel access) to test the depth of these superficial deposits above the Oxford Clay. The deep holes can't be left open overnight but we can open a couple up for you to inspect when you come around on Wednesday. We have a geoarchaeologist embedded in the team to assist in interpretation of the deposits.

Trench signing off

The trenches are mostly dry at present, except for a couple where land-drains were cut. The forecast is dry for the next few days but we do need to fill these deep trenches ASAP before any rain. I will send a separate email with the request to backfill and photographs. In this report are example photographs, one showing the feature rich Roman area (Trench 30) and two of the deeper soil sequences in Trenches 34 and 49.

Stuart Foreman

Oxford Archaeology

09/12/2022



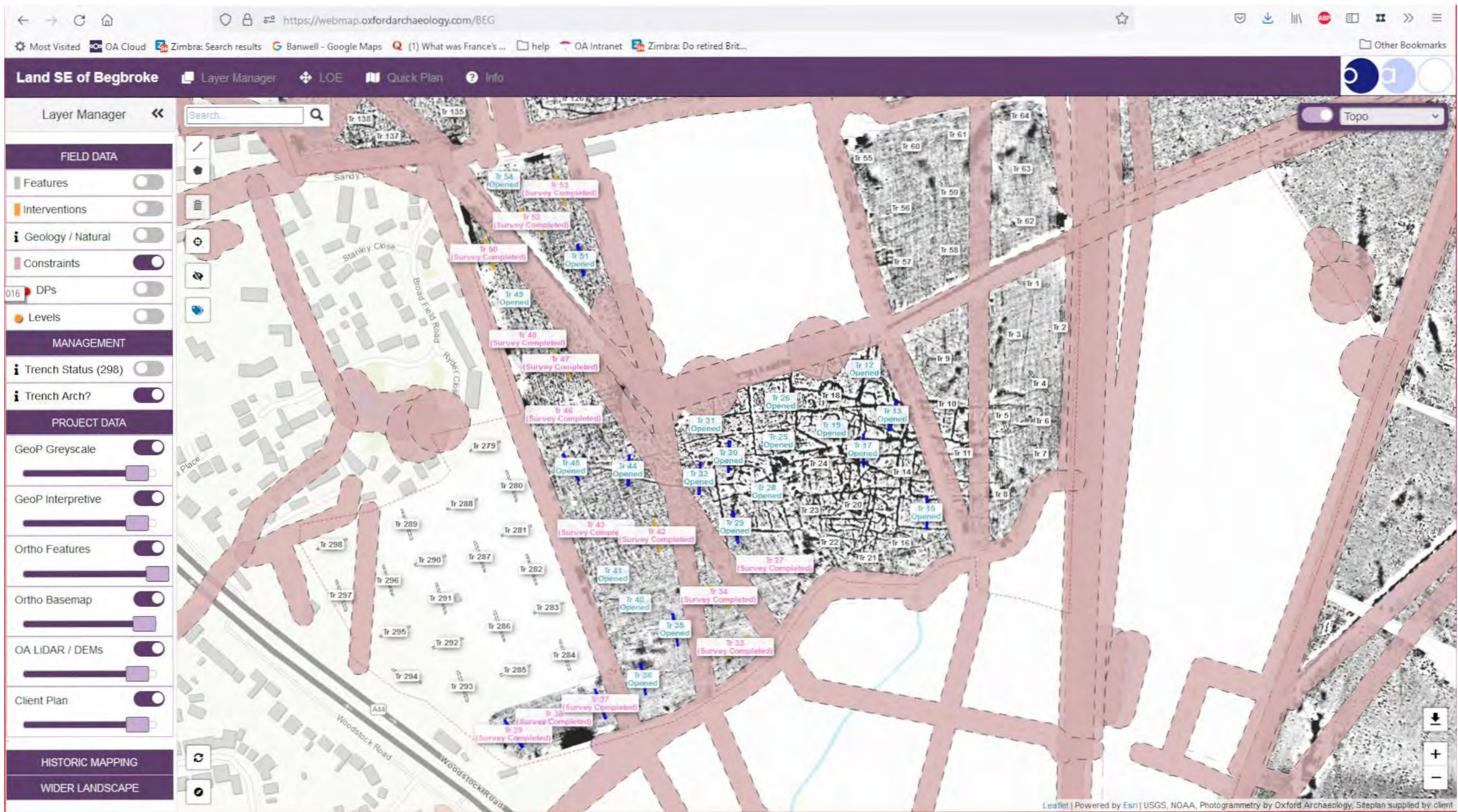
TRENCH 30, illustrating trenches in the dense Roman settlement area to south of the Sandy Lane landfill site



TRENCH 34, illustrating the deep Holocene soil sequence in the south-west part of the current fields



TRENCH 49, illustrating the deep Holocene soil sequence in the south-west part of the current fields



Trench plan update showing current progress in the current fields

WEEK 2 PROGRESS REPORT

Please find below a summary of the Begbroke trenches progress to 16/12/22.

18 trenches were opened this week and 15 completed trenches were backfilled, as shown on the enclosed plan.

Team size has averaged about 6 this week, with four people off sick for all or part of the week.

Progress has been slow this week due to severe frost. The hardness of the ground was a particular problem for hand excavation of features. Overall, we are somewhat behind programme due partly to weather and partly to logistical and personnel factors around the Christmas break. We have been working with one machine in the current fields, as we don't want the trenches to get too far ahead of the hand excavation due to the risk of flooding and need to minimise trenches left open over the Christmas holiday.

Next week (commencing 19/12/22) will mostly be taken up with hand-digging trenches in the dense Roman settlement area, as will the first week in the new year.

We expect to start moving welfare, cones and other equipment to Welfare Location 2 about 9th Jan. At that point we plan to bring in a second excavator to speed progress.

Dense Roman settlement Area 1

There continues to be close correlation between the geophysical survey and Roman settlement features on the ground. The main dense concentration of features south of the landfill site correspond closely with an area of gravel geology at the upper end of the slope. Due to the frozen ground conditions most work this week was focussed excavating probable Roman features in newly opened trenches Trenches 1 to 11, in the SE corner of site. Work was possible in freshly opened trenches.

Specialist ecological advice has confirmed that a 30m exclusion zone has to be left around newly discovered badger sets near the planned location of Trench 18. This means that Trench 18 cannot be excavated.

Deep sequences in the south-east side of site

There are some further deep soil sequences in the south-eastern side of the site (Trenches 1-3 and 56-64). Some of the trenches in this part of the site have come down onto terrace gravel, while others have been excavated to 1m (the maximum depth allowed for safe access) without encountering either terrace sand/gravel or the underlying Oxford Clay. To date no archaeological features or finds have been found in association with these deeper sequences. Some deep test pits will be excavated to confirm the level of the terrace gravel.

Trench signing off

To date 15 trenches have been signed off and backfilled by OCAS (Vicky Green). The forecast is dry today but wet for the next few days. We need to fill these deep trenches ASAP before any rain. I will send a separate email with the request to backfill and photographs.

Stuart Foreman

Oxford Archaeology

19/12/2022



TRENCH 16 in the dense Roman settlement area to south of the Sandy Lane landfill site



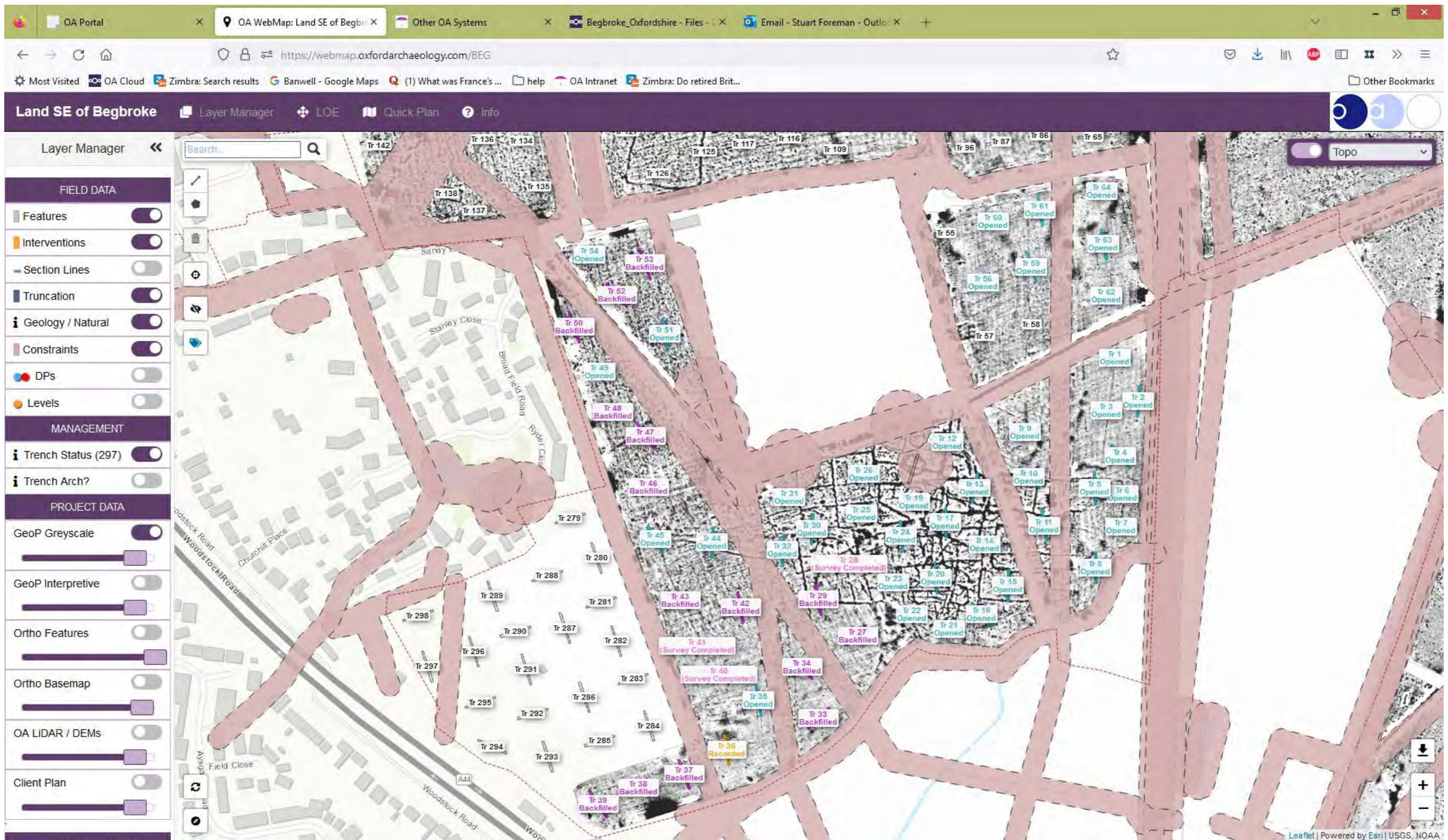
TRENCH 8 in the dense Roman settlement area to south of the Sandy Lane landfill site



TRENCH 28, ditch 2811



Excavator working



Trench plan update showing current progress in the current fields

WEEK 3 PROGRESS REPORT

Please find below a summary of the Begbroke trenches progress to 23/12/22.

37 trenches have been completed and backfilled, as shown on the enclosed plan. 22 trenches containing archaeology that is still under investigation will be left open over the holiday period. The deepest trenches have been backfilled and any trenches deeper than 0.5m have been fenced with Netlon. Warning signs have been placed.

Team size has averaged about 6 this week, due to holidays and illness.

Progress has been fair this week, although affected by sporadic heavy rain. The ground has defrosted and was much more workable than last week. Friday was a half day and a reduced team due the Christmas holiday. Overall, we are somewhat behind programme due partly to weather and partly to logistical and personnel factors around the Christmas break. We are still working with one machine in the current fields, as we don't want to the trenches to get too far ahead of the hand excavation due to the risk of flooding and need to minimise trenches left open over the Christmas holiday.

First week in the new year (commencing 03/01/22) will mostly be taken up with hand-digging trenches in the dense Roman settlement area. It will be a four day week.

We expect to start moving welfare, cones and other equipment to Welfare Location 2 about 9th Jan. At that point we plan to bring in a second excavator to speed progress.

Dense Roman settlement Area 1

Most work this week was focussed excavating probable Roman features in trenches to the south of the Sandy Lane landfill site. The only finds recovered to date from the settlement have been consistently Roman.

Two human burials were found in Trench 30, located on the western edge of the Roman settlement, next to a trackway. This accords with Roman burial customs which required adult burials to be placed outside the settlement. They are commonly found along the approach roads to settlements. The burials are east-west aligned extended inhumations lying side by side. A burial licence has been obtained from Ministry of Justice to excavate any burials found during the evaluation. However, only the feet and lower legs of the burials were exposed within the trench. For this reason, following discussions with the OCC monitoring archaeologist (Vicky Green) and the OA Osteology team, the burials have been left *in situ* pending future open area excavations.

Trench signing off

To date 37 trenches have been signed off OCAS (Vicky Green).

Stuart Foreman

Oxford Archaeology

23/12/2022

OA Portal

OA WebMap: Land SE of Begbroke

https://webmap.oxfordarchaeology.com/BEG

Land SE of Begbroke

Layer Manager

FIELD DATA

- Features
- Interventions
- Section Lines
- Truncation
- Burials
- Geology / Natural
- Constraints
- DPs
- Levels
- Samples

SAMPLES (DRS)

- All Samples (2)
- Bulk (2)

MANAGEMENT

- Trench Status (297)
- Trench Arch?

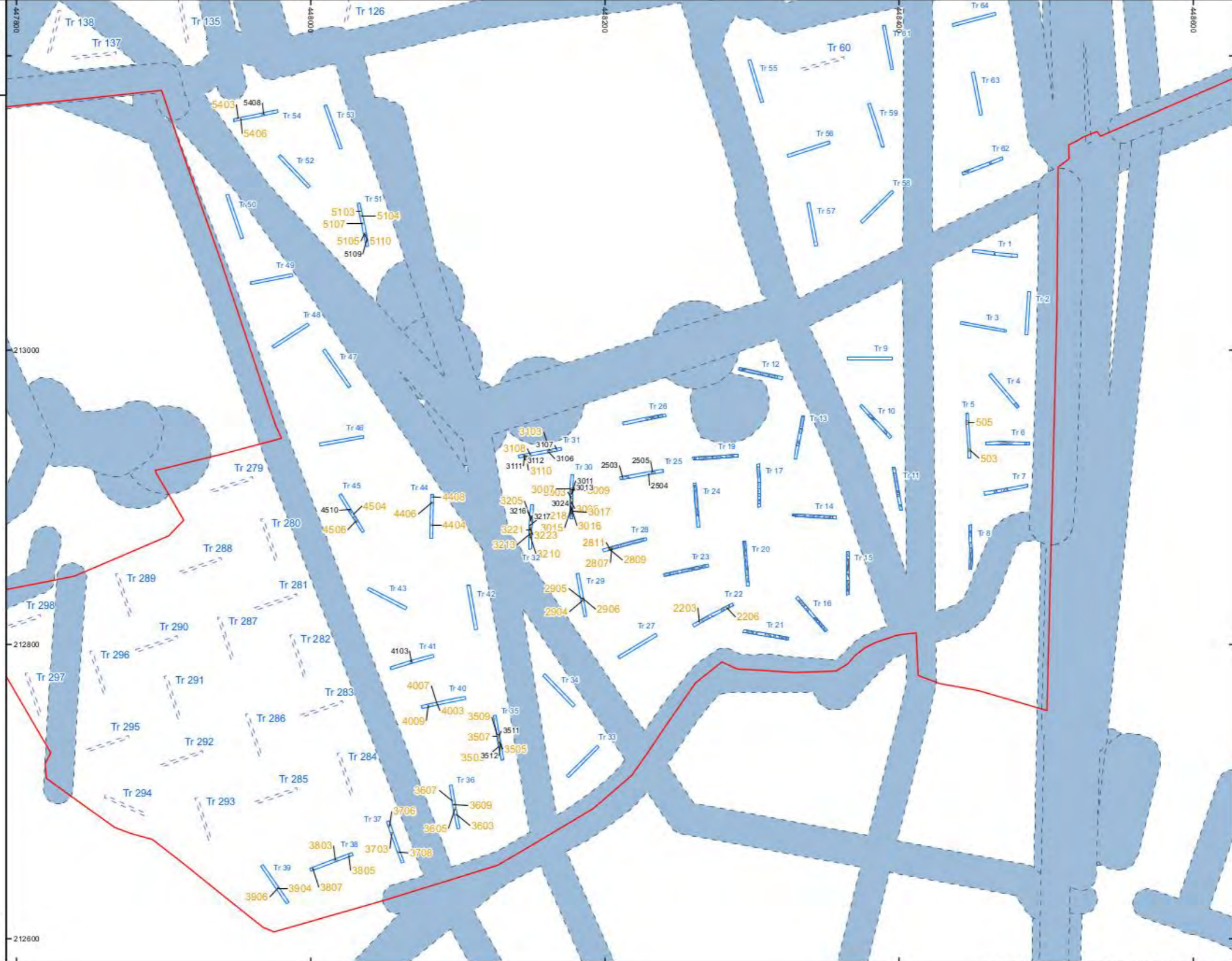
PROJECT DATA

- GeoP Greyscale
- GeoP Interpretive
- Ortho Features
- Ortho Basemap

Trench plan update showing current progress in the current fields



- Site Boundary
- Evaluation Trench
- LOE Bottom
- Proposed Trench
- Intervention
- Feature
- Natural / Geology
- Constraint



0 100m
1:2,500 @ A3

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WEEK 4 PROGRESS REPORT

Please find below a summary of the Begbroke trenches progress to 06/01/22, the first week back after the Christmas holiday, a 4 day week.

Of the 63 trenches to the south of Sandy Lane, 37 trenches have been completed and backfilled, leaving 8 with archaeology still being worked on, as shown on the enclosed plan. The first of two very dense areas of Roman archaeology will be completed by 13/01/21, subject to weather conditions

Team size has averaged about 9 this week.

Progress was fair this week, although slowed significantly by heavy rain. Overall, we are somewhat behind programme due partly to weather and partly to logistical and personnel factors around the Christmas break. Only one excavator has been deployed to date for logistical reasons. The trenches to the south of Sandy Lane are expected to be finished by c.12/01/22, although that is weather dependant.

We expect to start moving welfare, cones and other equipment to the north side of Sandy Lane on 16th Jan. At that point we plan to bring in a second excavator to speed progress.

Dense Roman settlement Area 1

Most work this week was focussed excavating probable Roman features in trenches to the south of the Sandy Lane landfill site. The finds recovered to date from the settlement have been mostly Roman, with a few possible later prehistoric sherds. The scale and form of the settlement appears consistent with a 'complex farmstead', as defined by the Roman Rural Settlement Project. These are most commonly found in river valley locations. There are no traces of masonry structures in this part of the site and the artefacts recovered from the Roman features are relatively sparse so far.

Trench signing off

Vicky Green visited on 06/01/22 to sign off more trenches. A next visit is provisionally planned for 12/01/23 or 13/01/23 to sign off the last trenches south of Sandy Lane.

Stuart Foreman

Oxford Archaeology

12/01/2023

The following photographs are of a selection of probable Roman features worked on this week to the south of Sandy Lane landfill site.

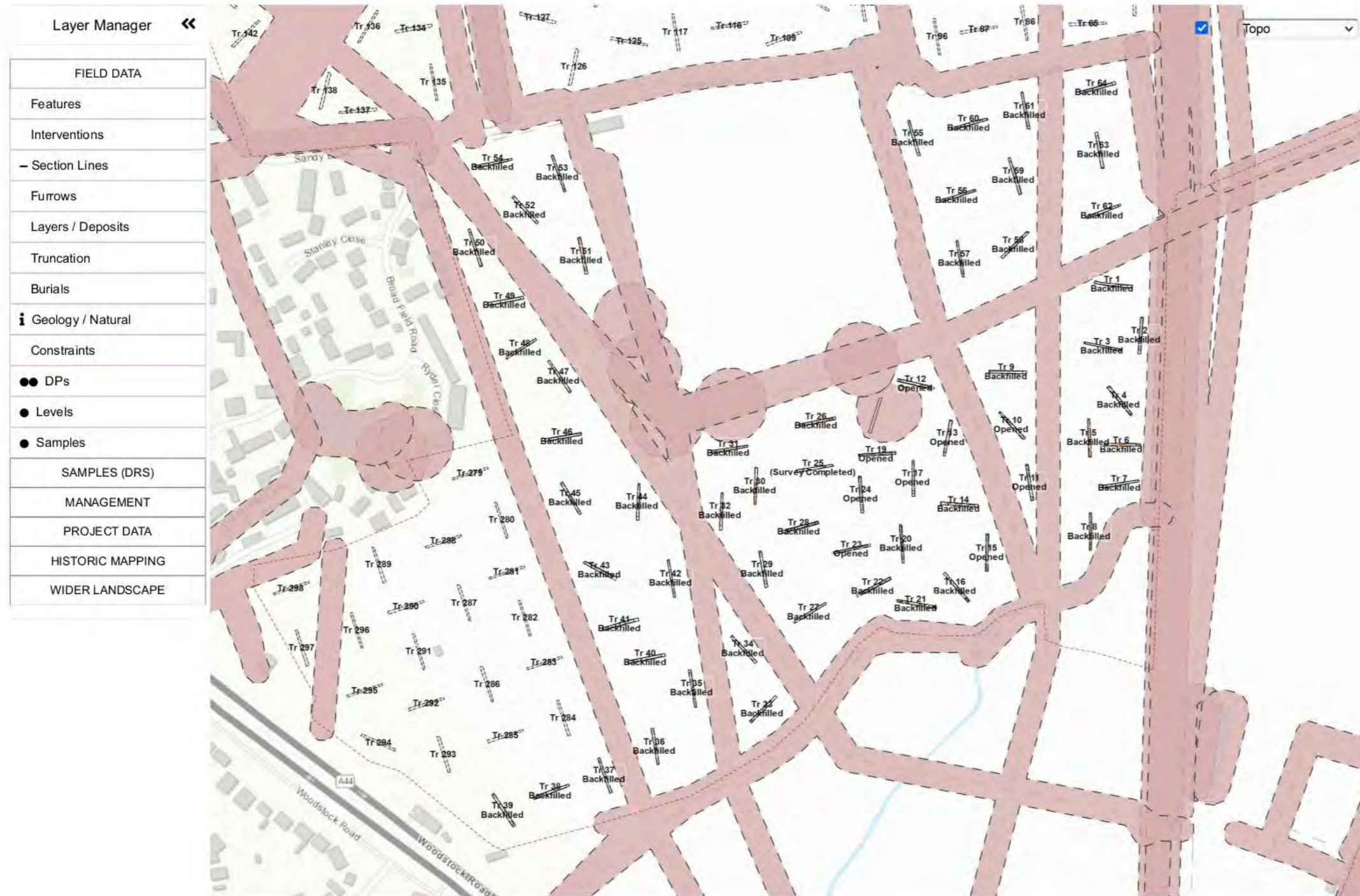












Trench plan update showing current progress in the current fields

WEEK 4 PROGRESS REPORT

Please find below a summary of the Begbroke trenches progress to 13/01/22 (the fifth week of the programme, excluding the Christmas holiday).

Of the 63 trenches to the south of Sandy Lane, 58 trenches have been completed and backfilled, leaving 5 with archaeology still being worked on, as shown on the enclosed plan. Completion of the first of two very dense areas of Roman archaeology has been slowed by very wet weather.

Team size has averaged about 13 this week, higher than planned but justified by the large number of features to dig.

Progress was slow slowed significantly by heavy rain and focussed exclusively on finishing the dense area of Roman settlement. The excavator was partly standing this week as needed to complete backfilling to the south of Sandy Lane before it can be transported to the northern fields. That transport has been delayed until Wednesday 18th Jan. Overall, we are still somewhat behind programme due partly to weather and partly to logistical factors. Only one excavator has been deployed to date for logistical reasons. The trenches to the south of Sandy Lane are now expected to be finished by c.17/01/22, although that is weather dependant.

Welfare, cones and other equipment will start moving to the north side of Sandy Lane on 16th Jan. At that point we plan to bring in a second excavator to speed progress. The trenches are mostly about 1m deep and will flood if not backfilled promptly. They therefore have to be backfilled in a rolling programme. There are a large number of trenches in the northern fields which are expected to empty of archaeology if the geophysics is correct, which should allow one team to make progress digging and recording empty trenches while the bulk of the team starts work on the second main concentration of archaeology. If the machine excavation gets too far ahead of hand excavation we may have to pull the second machine off to avoid flooding issues.

The geophysical survey has thus far proved a reliable guide to the presence of significant archaeology.

Dense Roman settlement Area 1

Work continued this week was focussed excavating probable Roman features in trenches to the south of the Sandy Lane landfill site. The trenches closest to the stream were flooded and required pumping and a lot of work to complete. The finds recovered to date from the settlement have been mostly Roman, with a few possible later prehistoric sherds. As previously reported the scale and form of the settlement appears consistent with a 'complex farmstead', as defined by the Roman Rural Settlement Project. There are still no traces of masonry structures in this part of the site and the artefacts recovered from the Roman features are relatively sparse so far.

Trench signing off

Vicky Green visited on 12/01/22 to sign off the last group of trenches south of Sandy Lane. A next visit is provisionally planned for 18/01/23 to inspect the first trenches north of Sandy Lane.

Stuart Foreman

Oxford Archaeology

16/01/2023

The following photographs are of a selection of probable Roman features worked on this week to the south of Sandy Lane landfill site. The final photo illustrates challenging working conditions in one of the flooded trenches next to the stream.









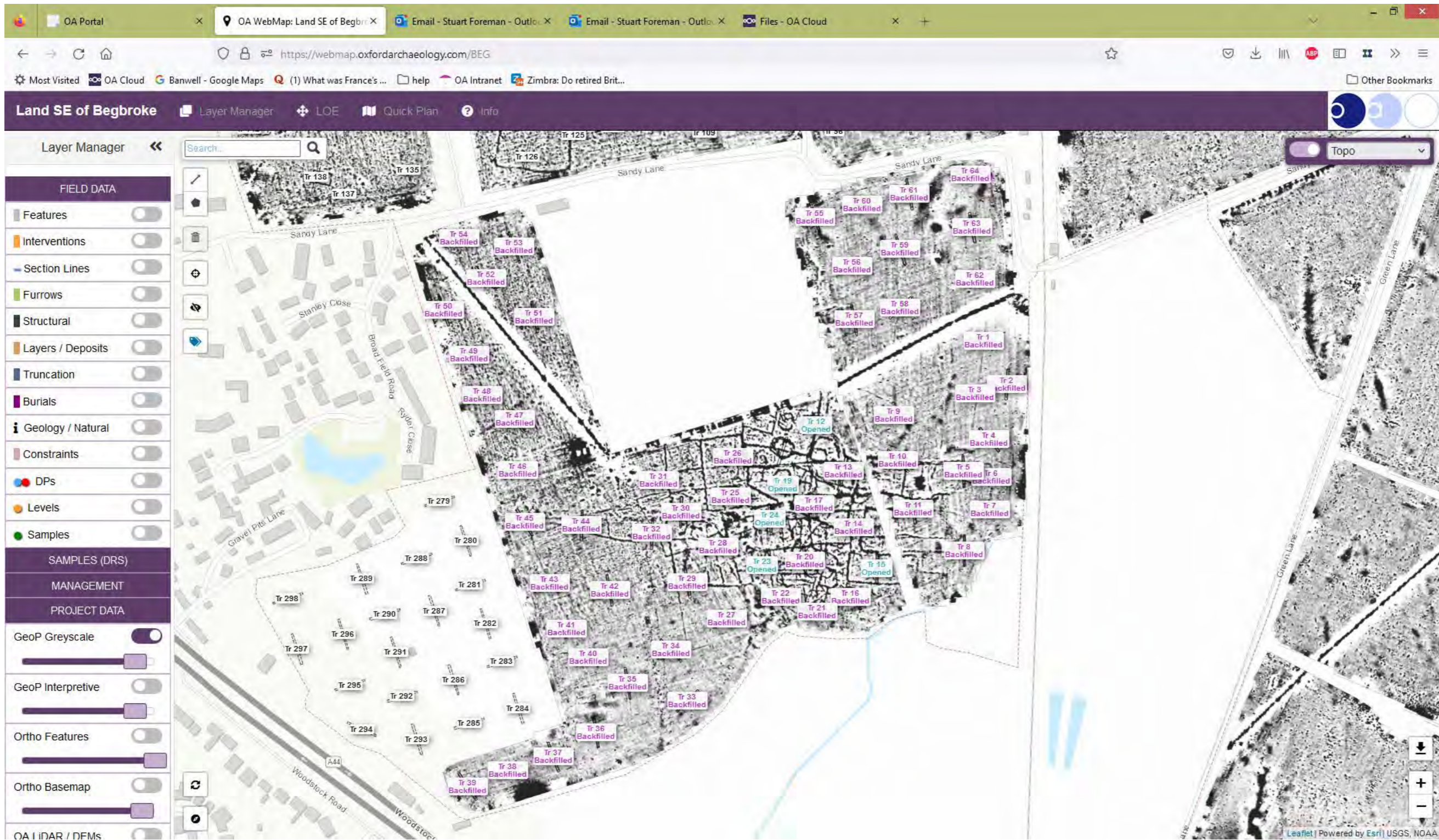








Trench plan update showing current progress in the current fields



WEEK 6 PROGRESS REPORT

Please find below a summary of the Begbroke trenches progress to 20/01/2023 (the sixth week of the programme, excluding the Christmas holiday).

Final trenches to the South of Sandy Lane were completed and backfilled on Wednesday 17th. This machine was then transported to Begbroke Hill to commence work on the main fields surrounding the Science Park, starting with the second dense area of settlement archaeology in the vicinity of Trench 83. It is necessary to get this area underway promptly to keep the hand-digging team fully occupied and maintain the programme. It took 5 weeks to complete the first very dense settlement area and a similar amount of archaeology has to be completed at this location. We expect that completion of this group of trenches will dictate the end date for the programme as a whole.

The first group of trenches to the north of Sandy Lane was opened (Trenches 156-165) by a second 13T machine delivered to Begbroke Hill on Monday 15th. No archaeology was found in these and they were signed off on the basis of photographic evidence by OCAS. Once backfilled the machine was then tracked over Begbroke Hill to commence work in the field closest to the A44 (Trenches 166-202).

Team size averaged about 13 this week, higher than planned but justified by the large number of features to dig.

Welfare, cones and other equipment were moved over during the week to the north of Sandy Lane and utility exclusion zones set up prior to excavation commencing in each field.

The trenches are mostly about 1m deep and will flood if not backfilled promptly. They therefore have to be backfilled in a rolling programme and the machine excavation cannot get too far ahead of survey and hand excavation. The second machine will be taken off site on Monday 30th once it has finished backfilling the trenches in the fields closest to the A44, which thus far contain no archaeology, as predicted by the geophysics.

The geophysical survey has thus far proved a reliable guide to the presence of significant archaeology.

Trenches 106 and 107, excavated this week through a large curvilinear feature on the geophysics plot, proved it to be a springline feature.

Trench signing off

Vicky Green (OCAS) did not visit this week as there were only a few trenches open and those contained no archaeology. Due to a need to backfill the trenches promptly for logistical reasons and to prevent flooding, VG agreed that the trenches could be signed off remotely on the basis of photographic evidence. A next visit is provisionally planned for 25/01/23.

Stuart Foreman

Oxford Archaeology

23/01/2023

The following photographs are of a selection of features and trenches worked on this week to the north of Sandy Lane. These all show the main concentration of probable Roman settlement located beside the railway. The higher trenches in this group are on gravel geology and well-drained. The trenches closest to the Oxford Canal are on the edge of the floodplain alluvium and will flood.





BEG22
TR 92
TRENCH 16



BEG 22
TR 101
TRENCH



