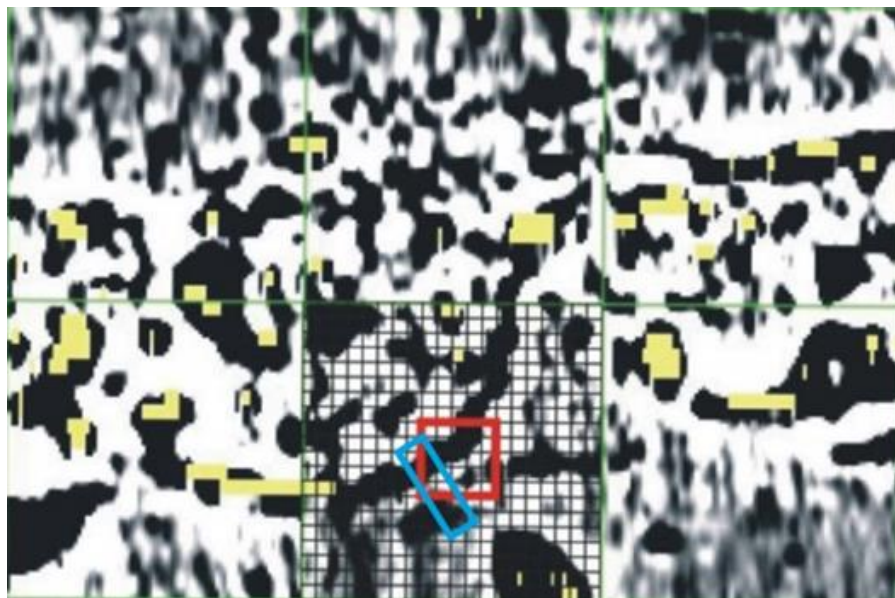


## Boing Boing Boing Boing.....Spring!

Straight to it this season so, Misterton:

We've completed the first of a series of evaluation trenches in field #3 (see graphic below). We targeted two anomalies on the geological ridge that runs east-west across both fields south of the train track.



Above: the geophysics showing trench location

We excavated a trench 1m wide by 7m long running approximately N/W – S/E to the bedrock which was below 27cm – 35cm (approx) of plough soil. This means it's likely that any remaining archaeological features are cut into the bedrock thus preserving them, whilst anything above that is likely to have been compromised by ploughing.



Above: the stalwart excavators hard at work in the trench



We found a substantial post hole, surrounded by an area of disturbed bedrock, in the southern end of the trench and a substantial ditch cut, through the bedrock, in the northern end. Materials gathered from both features appear to indicate that the ditch was Roman, probably second century with a number of diagnostic sherds of BB1 in situ (see images below). However, there was little obvious dating material from the post hole. We had a relatively small number of artefacts (good!) including bone, pottery, metals and flint. We also found some laminated white lias fragments. This material does not naturally occur in the area, so is likely to have been brought in. This material is usually associated with roof tiles (Stapleton Farm etc).





*Details of the trench*

The trench has been fully recorded, located and is now back filled. As mentioned above, the features cut into the bedrock appear the only remaining features as the stratigraphy above is now almost completely compromised. We will test this assumption when we designate the next evaluation trench, likely to be further north, towards the train track, up on the plateau or top of the ridge. We hope to be able to continue with this long term research once the crop has been harvested in October of this year.

Thanks to the Bowdidge family for the access, Mike Charles (Ski) for making all the necessary arrangements, all the staff at Sue's Café and all the staff at Bradfords Building Supplies for all their support throughout our work. Thanks also to Adrian, Steve, Neil, Liz & Peter and Nessie for the work in getting this done on time.



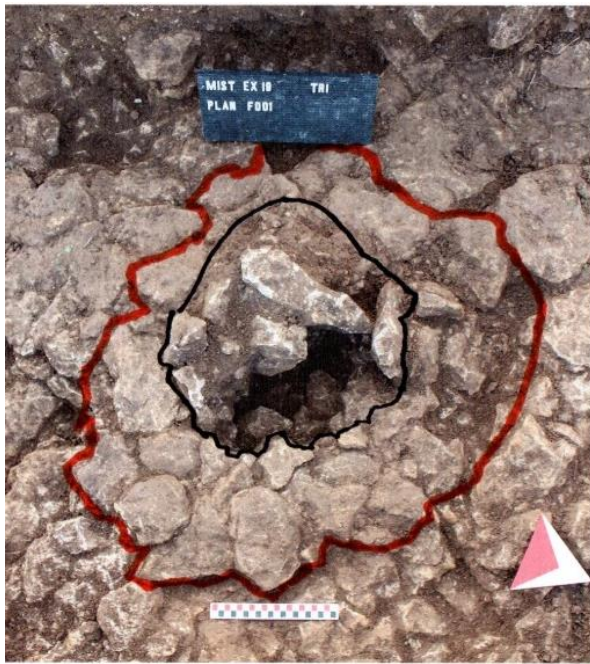
*F002- ditch cut*



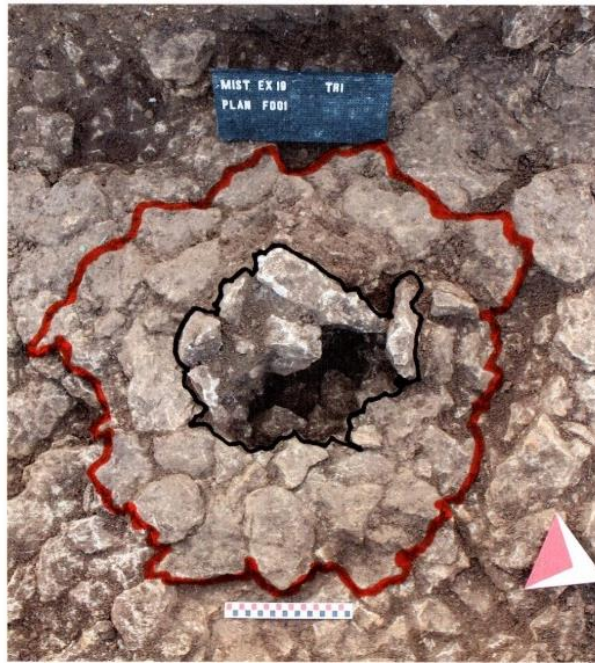
*F001 – posthole*

With the 'eye of faith' you can also see that the posthole below has another setting of stones (packing) around the exterior of the feature. Unfortunately, a single post hole, in isolation of other coherent or associated features, means that the information we can get from this feature is limited.

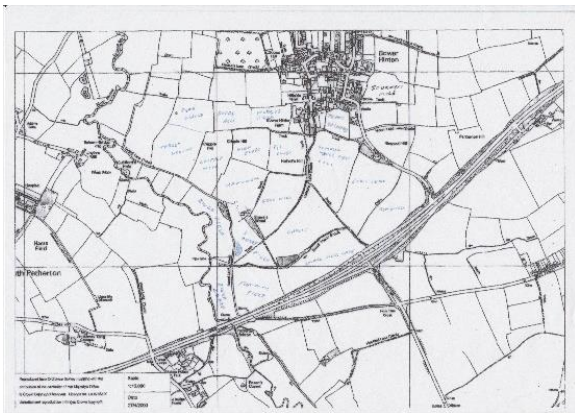




**F001 - post hole with interpretation.**



Our next piece of fieldwork has come in as a priority. We will be doing a limited geophysical survey of a site at Bower Hinton Farm, Bower Hinton. The owners have come across a series of features whilst 'sub-soiling' and uncovered a potential floor area and an area of burnt material (see below). Metal detectorists Greg Wales and Johnny have recovered Roman artefacts and pottery from the area.



The floor area is made up of large sandstone slabs, heat-affected (burnt) stone blocks and fragments from at least two different quern stones. After careful consideration we (SSARG Research Director, field work co-ordinator and other committee members) agreed to get in to the field before planting (potato crop to go in) to get the sensitive areas surveyed in, with the plan to return later in the year, post crop, and complete the survey work. We do not, at this stage, intend to excavate this site, but to do the survey work and then assess. The features appear to be lying on the sub-soil and are out of the plough zone so hopefully are not too compromised. We aim to survey 7/8/9<sup>th</sup> April 2019.

All this means that we're re-appraising Sandford Orcas, which WILL BE our next test pitting which we hope to complete in May, depending on accessibility. We have access to Stapleton Farm from 1<sup>st</sup> June, where we will be doing a series of evaluation trenches, as we did at Misterton. We will agree a series of anomalies for investigation when possible and publish the details by the next issue.

We are still formulating our strategies for Pen Selwood, though it's likely that we'll be completing the resistivity survey on the west side of the field as a priority, with an option to do a limited excavation should the archaeology require such an intervention.

We also intend to complete our survey of the field containing the Roman villa at Lufton but this now will be in the autumn, after the crop has been harvested. We've a lot going on, with potentially more on the horizon, so keep a little time free and come and get involved. We're slightly down on key figures at present, so any offers of help will be appreciated. We look forward to seeing you all at some point in a busy busy season. Enjoy the cherry blossom and magnolias, enjoy the good weather and enjoy ya Easter eggs.

YowZha! Nigel H Harveytron