

4. 2004: Aims, Objectives and Methodology

The archaeological excavations at Mellor are designed as an evaluation programme to try and answer some fundamental questions about the site, its age, size and nature of the settlement on the hill top. Each year the results from previous seasons are assessed and a plan of excavation developed for the following season.

In 2004 it was decided to excavate seven trenches each located to try and answer specific questions raised by excavation in previous years (see figure 5):-

Trench 26 was excavated to see if the large ditch located in Trench 18 continued north into Area C and to investigate the nature and extent of the curving gully identified within the 2003 trial trenches. It was also designed to test the indications from test pits and Trench 20 that there was high level of archaeological survival in this area.

Trench 27 was excavated to expose the enclosure ditch as close as possible to the north wall of the Old Vicarage where it formed a boundary between Area A and Area B. It was hoped that this trench would shed light on the discrepancy in height between the two areas at this point. In addition it was designed to confirm the alignment of the outer enclosure ditch with the large ditch found in Trench 1.

Trench 28 and Trench 29 were designed to examine the level of archaeological survival in the north and west of Area C.

Trench 30 was excavated to investigate a linear anomaly identified by geophysical survey within Area E (see figure 3).

Trench 31 and Trench 32 were excavated adjacent to Trench 18 to confirm the presence of a palisade slot.

Trial trench 16 ran south east to north west in Area B, close to and parallel with the boundary wall separating Area B from Area A. Its purpose was to look for indications that the large ditch found in Trench 18 might loop into Area B before turning south west into Area A to link with Trench 1. It would also provide a chance to assess the level of archaeological survival in the segment of Area A that lies inside the enclosure ditch. The difference between the trial trench and the other trenches is that it was never the intention to carry out any excavation in the trial trench. The methodology is simply to strip away the topsoil and subsoil and then observe and record what is revealed.