

7. 2005: 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 2005 the archaeological excavations consisted of two large open area excavations, and a further seven trenches designed to answer the specific questions raised during the excavations of previous years (see figure 25).

Trench 33 was designed to verify the continuation of the inner enclosure ditch identified by geophysical survey undertaken within the Old Vicarage garden in 1999 within trenches 1, 2 and 18. The trench proposed to answer a number of questions relating to the ditches excavated in Trenches 1 and 2, the continuation of the inner enclosure ditch, the positive identification of an associated palisade slot, and identification of any remains of internal settlement.

Trench 34 was designed in order to assess the potential for internal settlement in close proximity to the possible post hole structure identified within trench A.

Trench 35 was located in order to evaluate the true nature of the post pit identified within the trench one extension and whether or not this was part of a larger structure or remained an individual feature.

Trench 36 was a large open area designed to identify the continuation and extent of the curvilinear gullies identified within Trench 26. Assessing the immediate area surrounding the location where the flint dagger was recovered, for any associated structure or possible burial.

Trench 37 was placed to confirm, to the furthest assessable point within the Old Vicarage boundary, the expected line of the inner enclosure ditch and its associated palisade slot.

Trenches 38 and 39 were designed to expand the known line of the outer enclosure ditch, either side of that identified within trench 30 and positioned according to the results of a geophysical survey conducted in the spring of 2005.

Trench 40 was conceived to excavate the possible ditch terminals and entrance way of the outer enclosure ditch, located but not excavated within trial trenches. Trench 41 was designed to further enhance the known extent of the outer enclosure ditch within Area D and placed over the trial trench.

In 2005, trenches 33, 34, 35 and 36 were all uncovered by machine, the remainder, 37, 38, 39, 40 and 41 were all exposed by volunteers by hand. Subsequent excavation of all trenches resulted in hand excavation conducted by volunteers under the supervision of three professional archaeologists, supplied by the University of Manchester Archaeological Unit and one experienced amateur archaeologist provided by the Mellor Archaeological Trust.