

## **2005 Excavation Results**

### **5.8 Trench 40**

**Figures:** 57, 58, 59, 60 and 61.

Trench 40 was excavated in November 2005 and located directly over trial trenches exposed in 2004 in order to excavate the terminal ends of the possible entranceway of the outer enclosure ditch. An rectangular area of 3.70m by 8.60m was de-turfed and hand excavated down through the previous backfill to the known archaeological horizon, 1.10m deep. A 1.50 m wide section was then placed over the eastern terminal end, the western terminal end was revealed but not excavated. The western terminal end consisted of a primary silting layer, followed by a large purple-brown wet clay containing frequent quantities of angular and sub angular material (506), silting of silty sands then fills the remainder of the ditch. No archaeological dateable material was recovered from this trench.

### **Discussion**

The identification of the two sections of ditches, are significant in that they are the same ditch, the outer enclosure ditch, and that it does continue across Area E, running approximately along the contour lines towards Mellor Old Hall. Indicating that although the geophysics conducted upon this area did suggest a few possibilities of features, however it was unable to distinguish the ditch from the clay and bedrock background. It is suspected that this is due to the similarities between the infill and the natural geology, along with the waterlogged conditions present wherever clay is present on the site. Showing that if an area is identified as void of features using the geophysical results, this does not necessarily conclude that there are no features present. Therefore excavation must be conducted throughout such areas to positively conclude any results.

The discovery of two terminal ends to the ditch is extremely significant as this is the first entrance way identified within the excavations at Mellor. Although small, the entrance for the outer enclosure ditch need not have needed to be any larger; wide enough for people and cattle move through into different areas. It would be safe to presume that this would not be the only entranceway within the outer enclosure ditch, and that there are likely to be a few more over the large area covered by the enclosure ditch. Any further entranceways have not been identified as yet.

The lack of any dateable material found within the excavation of these two terminals, may indicate a specific date for the feature. It is common place for the deliberate deposition of object into ditch terminals in the late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age periods, where as this practice becomes less common into the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age.