

THE WALLINGFORD BURH TO BOROUGH RESEARCH PROJECT

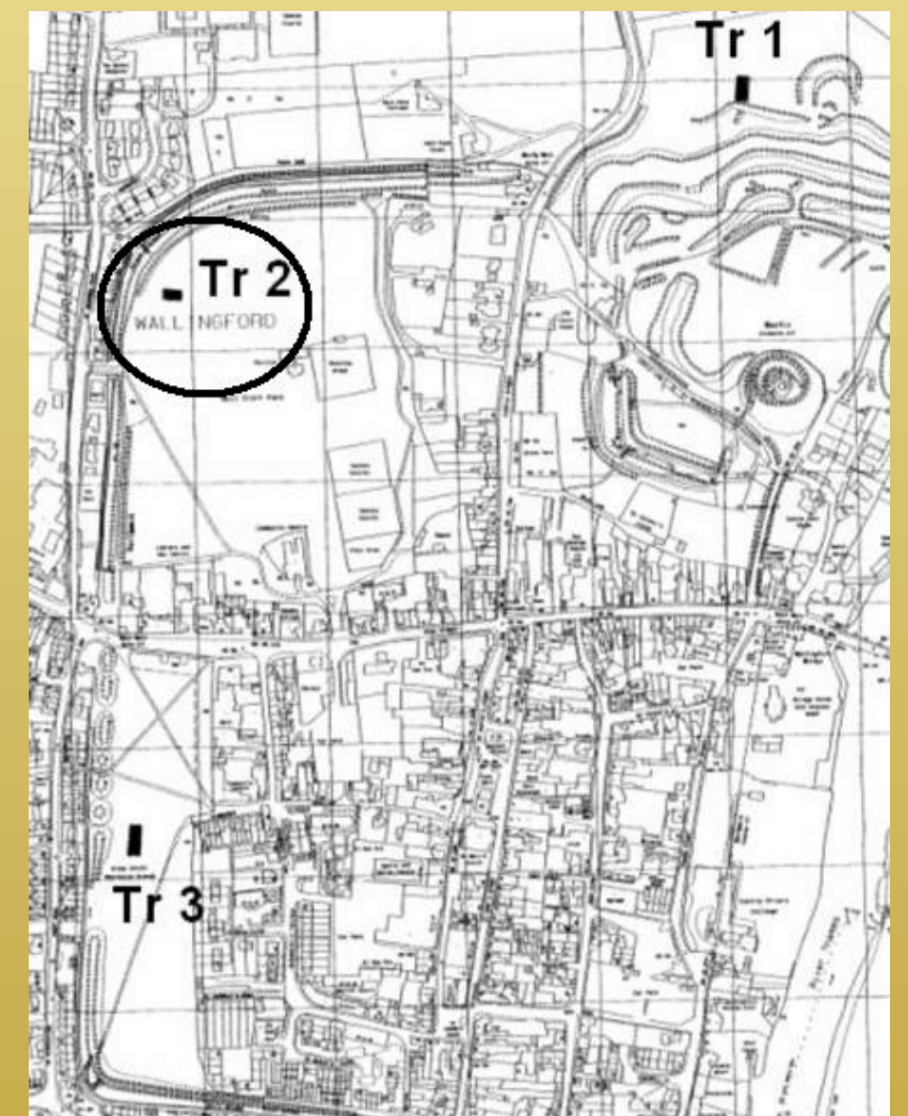
EXCAVATIONS IN THE BULLCROFT – SUMMER 2008



The machine and driver arrive to start opening up the site, its location selected on the basis of geophysical survey at Easter.



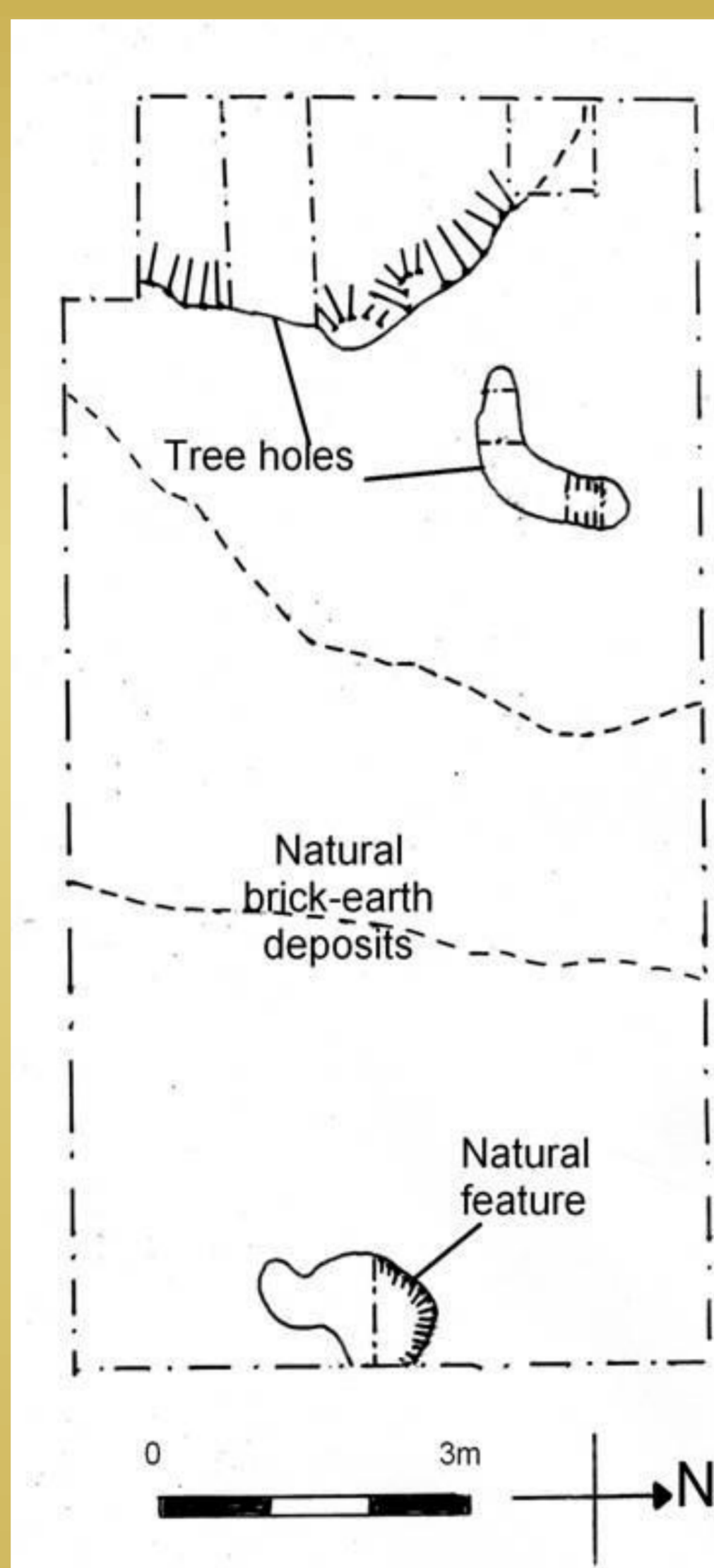
Job well done! And just time for a team photo before the machine returns to backfill.



Tr 2 was the smallest of the three trenches to be opened in 2008.



Machining away the topsoil layers under the guidance of professional archaeologists.



The Bullcroft - A Rural Space Inside the Town

This was not a typical urban excavation. In the vertical sections patterns of ridge-and-furrow were observed, indicating that the whole of the north of the Bullcroft had been extensively ploughed in late medieval times. Underneath the ridge-and-furrow were tree-holes that show the area had previously been at least partially wooded. The largest of the tree-holes was over 4m wide and was formed by what must have been a massive tree. When the tree was blown over it left a convenient natural pit to put rubbish in. Medieval pottery was found in the fill of the tree-hole.

One clue as to why the results from the Bullcroft and the Kinecroft were so different may lie in the soil. The gravelly soils of the Kinecroft were much better drained and more suitable for occupation than the orange silty clay soils of the Bullcroft. The absence of traces of settlement, therefore, can itself be taken as extremely useful evidence. It is likely that for much of the medieval period, the Bullcroft was in agricultural use as part of land belonging to Wallingford Priory, a Benedictine cell of St Alban's Abbey.



Removing the last of the fill from the tree-hole.



Recording features on to plans and context sheets



Systematic and careful trowelling of the surface to find archaeological features.



Features cleaned up and ready to be recorded.



Half-sectioning a large feature in the west of the trench.



The feature turns out to be a large tree-hole, later re-used as a rubbish pit, containing medieval pottery.



Cleaning vertical sections to find traces of ridge-and-furrow.



Investigating other 'possible' features to clarify its human or natural origin.

The 2008-2010 Project is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and is a joint academic venture between the archaeology departments of the Universities of Leicester, Exeter and Oxford. The project is run in collaboration with Wallingford Museum and The Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society (TWHAS), and is supported by Wallingford Town Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Archaeology Service, English Heritage, the Northmoor Trust, the Ashmolean Museum and Reading Museum.