

KSG 99

**Results of an Archaeological Watching Brief at Kinegar
Sand and Gravel Pit, Cockburnspath, Borders: Phase 6**

Client: Kinegar Sand and Gravel

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August 2002

CONTENTS

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Site Location and Description**
- 3. Archaeological Background**
- 4. Aims and Methods**
- 5. Results**
- 6. Conclusions**
- 7. Acknowledgements**

Summary

Headland Archaeology were commissioned to undertake an archaeological watching brief during topsoil stripping at Kinegar Sand and Gravel Quarry, Cockburnspath, Scottish Borders. This, the sixth phase of the watching brief, identified two archaeological features and recovered several small fragments of possible prehistoric pottery.

1 INTRODUCTION

This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief conducted by Headland Archaeology Ltd at Kinegar Sand and Gravel Quarry, Cockburnspath, Scottish Borders. This is the part of an ongoing watching brief, required by the conditions of the quarry's two most recent planning consents. The watching brief on all topsoil stripping at the quarry commenced in 2000 (Conolly 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2002a and 2002b).

The work was carried out on the 29th July 2002 in fair conditions.

2 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION (Figure 1)

Kinegar Quarry is located to the south of Cockburnspath, Scottish Borders (NT 770 706). The area stripped during this phase is immediately to the south of the area stripped in Phase 5 and crosses the top of a rounded knoll.

At the time of the watching brief, the field was under grass, but had previously been used for growing potatoes.

The underlying geology is sandy gravel and sand overlying boulder clay.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The quarry is situated in an area where several prehistoric cist burials have been discovered, including two within the quarry itself, and a number of cropmark sites are also known, one of which lies at the southern end of the current application area.

Previous phases of the watching brief have identified several clusters of small pits, with Neolithic and Bronze Age pottery being recovered from several features (Conolly 2000, 2001a & b and 2002).

4 AIMS AND METHODS

The watching brief was intended to ensure that any archaeologically significant deposits that would be destroyed by quarrying operations might be appropriately recorded.

The topsoil strip was carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, operating under continuous archaeological supervision.

Any potential features identified during the strip were hand cleaned, investigated and recorded appropriately.

5 RESULTS (Figures 1 & 2)

A rectangular area totalling approximately 2975 m² was stripped of up to 0.3 m of topsoil. Two features were identified.

The first, Pit 225, contained large quantities of charcoal and therefore may have been a hearth, though there was no clear evidence of *in situ* burning. The second, Feature 229, is likely to have been a tree throw. Two small fragments of fired clay were recovered from its basal fill (28); these may be pieces of heavily abraded prehistoric pottery.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The results of this phase of work at Kinegar are consistent with low-level occupation of the area during the prehistoric period, with single use hearth pits being dug as and when necessary.

All features identified during the course of the watching brief were excavated and recorded and consequently no further fieldwork is necessary. However, the possible pottery fragments should be incorporated into any further assessment of pottery from Kinegar that may be prepared.

The full archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The fieldwork was carried out by Richard Conolly. A curatorial role was provided by John Dent for Borders Council. The illustrations were prepared by Mike Middleton.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX 1: SITE REGISTERS

CONTEXT REGISTER

Context Number	Description	Dimensions (l x w x d)
1 - 223	Used in previous phases	-
224	Fill of Pit 225. Black slightly silty sand with abundant charcoal, including roundwood, and sparse gravel c. 3 cm.	-
225	Cut of pit/possible hearth. Sub ovoid with moderately sloping, slightly concave sides and near flat base.	0.5 x 0.4 x 0.08 m
226	Upper fill of Feature 229. Mid yellowish brown soft medium sand with sparse gravel rare charcoal flecks.	-
227	Fill of Feature 229. Dark brownish grey slightly silty sand with common sub-rounded to angular gravel < 10 cm concentrated at base of deposit.	-
228	Basal fill of Feature 229. Light yellowish brown soft medium sand with rare charcoal flecks.	-
229	Cut of feature. Possible tree throw. Sub-ovoid with steeply sloping concave sides breaking gently to slightly concave base.	2.2 x 1.8 x 0.55 m

PHOTO REGISTER

Film numbers 1 – 22 were used in previous phases.

Film no. 23		Film Type: Colour Slide and Colour Print
Shot no.	Direction Facing	Description
1	-	ID shot
2	N	Pre-ex shot Pit 225.
3	N	Pre-ex shot Pit 225.
4	N	Pre-ex shot Pit 225.
5	N	Post-ex shot Pit 225.
6	N	Post-ex shot Pit 225.
7	N	Post-ex shot Pit 225.
8	SW	South-east facing section Feature 229.
9	SW	South-east facing section Feature 229.
10	SW	South-east facing section Feature 229.

DRAWING REGISTER

Sheet number.	Drawing	Scale	Description
1 - 113	-	-	Used in previous phases.
114	A	1:10	South facing section of Pit 225
114	B	1:20	Post-ex plan of Pit 225
114	C	1:10	Post-ex plan Pit 229
115	A	1:20	North facing section Pit 229

APPENDIX 2: ASSESSMENT OF SAMPLES

SITE CODE	KSG99	SITE NAME	Kinegar Sand and Gravel
AUTHOR	Jo Dawson		

Methodology

The samples were subjected to a system of flotation in a Siraf style flotation tank. The floating debris (flot) was collected in a 250 μ m sieve and, once dry, scanned using a binocular microscope. Any material remaining in the flotation tank (retent) was wet-sieved through a 1mm mesh and air-dried. This was then sorted and any material of archaeological significance removed.

Sampling Strategy

Bulk soil samples were taken from all features in order to recover artefacts and palaeoenvironmental material.

Number of Samples	2
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RESULTS

Context Number	Sample Number	Context Type	Heated Clay	Charcoal	
				Qty	AMS
224	47	Fill of pit	+	++++	*
227	49	Fill of pit		++	*

Key: + = rare, ++ = occasional, +++ = common and ++++ = abundant
 * = sufficient material for AMS dating

COMMENTS

- Sufficient charcoal was recovered from both samples to allow AMS dating to be carried out, should this be required. Identification of the wood species present would need to be carried out prior to dating.
- The heated clay was fragmentary and undiagnostic. It was therefore not retained.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A record of the methodology and results should be included in any published report on the site.

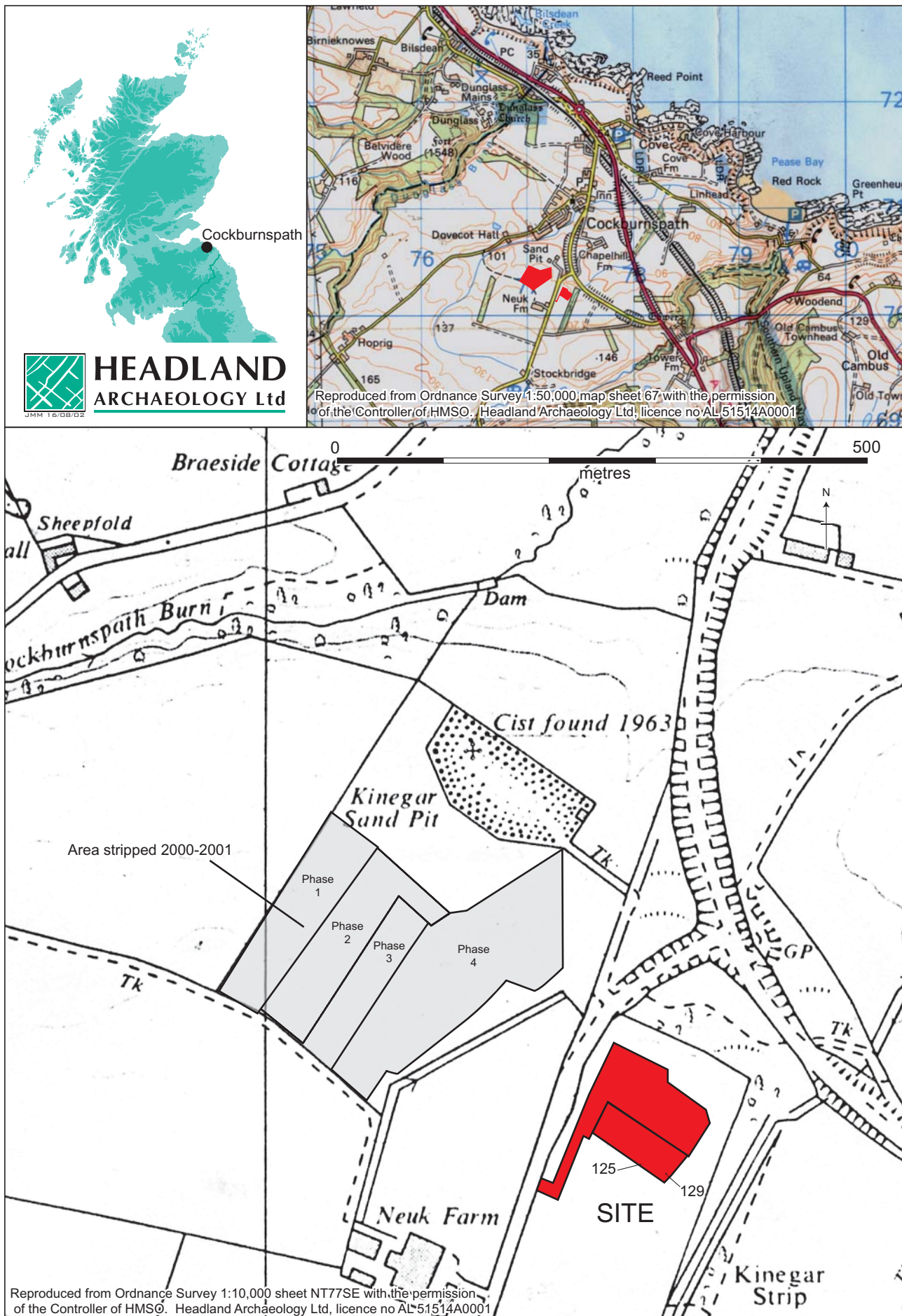


Figure 1. Kinegar Sand and Gravel: Site location.

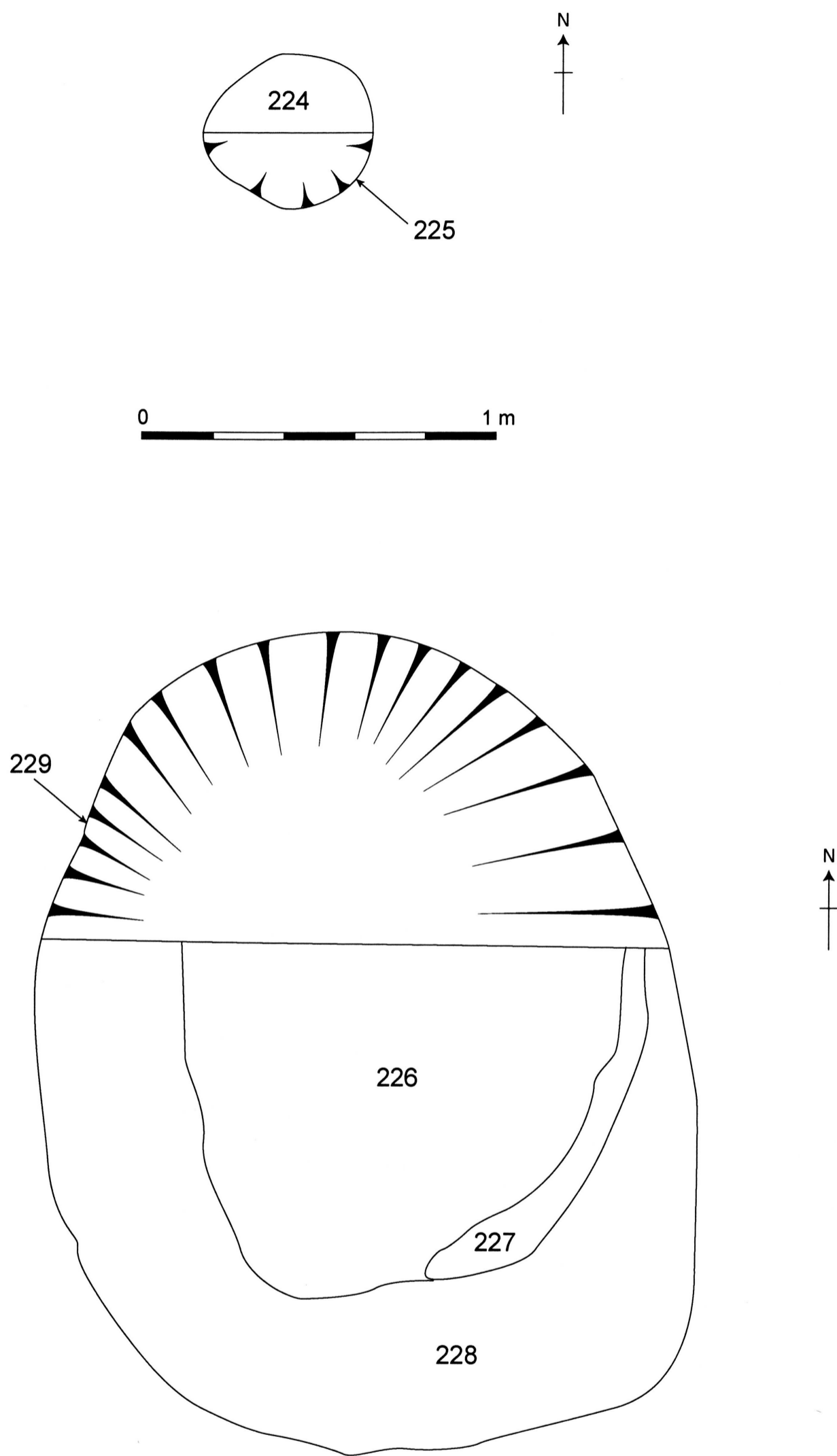


Figure 2. Kinegar Sand and Gravel: Features.