

# The Globe Field 2023

## Draft Stratigraphic Narrative (December 21<sup>st</sup> 2023)

### Natural

The natural (context (125)) was a yellow-brown clay, containing rare large (up to 300mm?) sub-angular fragments of Lias limestone. The surface of the natural was commonly very disturbed and difficult to define. Rooting, animal burrow and poaching may all have played a part in the development of this interface.

### Phase 1

The natural was reached in three sondages within trench 1. Phase 1 is employed for deposits and features below the base of the laterally-continuous soils of Phase 2 which locally rest on the natural, but which may overlie features cut into the natural clay. The Phase 1 features may thus be a palimpsest and may require further phasing in due course. The Phase 1 features/deposits differ in the three sondages, so they are designated Phase 1a for those in the north sondage and Phase 1b for those in the central and southern sondages. The relative ages of the deposits are not known.

### Phase 1a

In the northern sondage, the identification of the lesser cut features is problematic because of disturbed nature of the top of the natural and the features identified as stake holes in particular are uncertain.

Potential or certain cut features include five possible stake holes, one post hole, one gully, a metalworking hearth and one, possibly two, graves.

The hearth was constructed in a 0.75m x 0.61m oval cut 210mm deep [186]. The cut appeared to have had a thin clay lining placed in it, this was sampled as context (183) on the distal side and (184) on the floor. The hearth had been blown from the SE across the minor axis of the hearth. The SE side of the hearth showed signs of both failure and relining. To the NW side the hearth contained a fired clay slab that had probably dropped into the hearth from a position slightly high in the wall. A single sherd of probably Roman pottery was recovered from between the placed clay floor of the hearth (184) and the underlying natural (125). The complex lining and slag mass on the proximal side of the hearth was lifted as context (185). The hearth contained a single fill of charcoal-rich deposit (167) which was not really distinguishable from the overlying context (124).

A possible stakehole E of the hearth had cut [173] and fill (174). The hole was 340mm x 270mm seen and was 210mm deep. A channel led from this hole into the side of the hearth bowl and was strongly suggestive of an animal burrow; this was not numbered.

A possible stakehole NE of hearth had cut [175] and fill (176). It was 250 x 190mm and 150mm deep.

A possible stakehole N of hearth had cut [177] and fill (178). It was very irregular in shape and 120mm deep.

A possible stakehole W of the hearth, 120mm x 170mm was not numbered because it was not emptied.

A grave cut [165] was 0.85m long and 0.30m wide. This contained infant skeleton (164) and fill (163). A partial rib from skeleton (164) has produced a data of cal. AD 700-740 (4.9%)/770-900 (88.3%) / 920-950 (2.1%) (Beta-682558; 1200 +/- 30 BP). At its foot the grave was overlain by a posthole with cut [172] containing remains of probable stone packing and darkish fill (174).

To the south of [165] a second probable grave, [171] had fill (170) but was not bottomed as so much under the adjacent stone wall.

Gully [180] with fill 181 lay at the west side of the sondage. The west side of the gully was not seen and the E side was hard to trace above its base (where it cut the natural) – the gully probably cut (179), but the relationship with (163) was uncertain.

The surface of the natural sloped down westwards from the area of the hearth. This was labelled cut [162], although it is not clear if this was a deliberate cut. It was overlain by dark soil (179), through which the graves and the gully were probably cut. This was not separated during excavation and finds from (179) will have been lumped with those from the overlying (160) which was a slightly browner soil W of (113) and below (144).

These features were very hard to separate. Tentatively, deposit (179) may have developed on the natural downslope of hearth [186] during operation of that hearth. This was abandoned and the graves (and gully?) cut through context (179). Deposit (160) may be associated with that abandonment. This was then overlain by the Phase 2 deposits.

## Phase 1b

In the southern sondage, the natural lay at a greater depth below surface than it did further north. This is attributed to the existence of a small palaeochannel running downslope from E to W, and nominally given contexts [155] and [159] for the erosion surface below the basal deposits within it to the east and west of the sondage respectively. In the eastern part of the sondage, the natural surface was highly disturbed with large patches of darker material extending down below the more typical top of the natural and with wisps of clay resembling that of the natural occurring well above the typical top. This has been interpreted as poaching. The lower deposits in this area are greyish brown clays (context (169)) in the west, greyish brown clays with some large stones in the NE (context (168)) and a swathe of large stones (context (182)). Context (169) contains west-dipping horizons (just possibly one horizon) of rounded limestone pebbles, that appear to overlie stone deposits of the western part of context (182). Context (169) also produced several human bones, at least some of which lay above the pebble horizon. A femur from this context gave a data of cal. AD 700-740 (9.5%) / 770-900 (85.9%) (Beta-682559; 1210 +/- 30 BP). Context (168) may be broadly equivalent to context (169).

Above the basal contexts of the palaeochannel fill, the succession in the east of the trench continues with 156 (a stone pad). A large hollow on the E of the sondage was filled with greyish clay (154) which abutted the stone pad (156). The distribution of stony deposits (156) and (182) are complementary and it is possible they represent a single deposit that accumulated preferentially at the top and the bottom of the eastern slope of the palaeochannel.

Below wall (111) the stratigraphy was complicated because of the failure of the wall. Context (150) here may be equivalent to (154)

In the central sondage a shallow pit or hollow [155] was filled with some stones and greyish clay (154) – features reminiscent of context (150) in the S sondage.

Higher levels west of wall (111) were complicated by the downslope movement of the wall. Context (151) was a brown clayey soil that overlay context (169). It produced some later medieval pottery and one possibility is that it is an artificial context embracing the base of the later medieval succession and the top of the early medieval channel fill. Context (151) was overlain by context (152) which comprised a layer with abundant stone. This was locally overlain by a horizon rich in charcoal (context (129); both (152) and (129) only occurred in the northern part of the sondage), which was in turn overlain by a more widespread clayey soil, context (121). Context (121) may grade laterally into context (147) below the deformed wall (111). Context (121) is overlain by stony layer (106) that represents collapse and disuse of wall (111).

## Phase 2

This phase is represented by a laterally persistent layer of slag-rich dark soil. This layer is continuous below the subsequent walls.

Various context numbers have been assigned to this deposit in different sectors of the trench. In general the deposit is darker and richer in slag towards the north of the trench.

In the eastern part of the north sondage this phase was represented by context (124). This level was dug as two separate contents (137) overlain by (136) below wall (113). Context (148) was a compacted dark clay that appeared to either be pressed into context (137), or be a compressed variant of context (137) directly below the large stones of wall (113). The effects of compaction also showed below context (136) with shallow compacted hollows in the surface of the natural being filled with context (161), probably a synonym of contexts (124) and (136).

To the west of wall (113) Phase 2 is represented by context (144). It is possible that context (144) also includes some horizons that would be equivalent to (120) (or even perhaps (116)), particularly towards the west, so finds need treating with caution.

In the central sondage, Phase 2 was represented by context (142) to the north of wall (112), context (153) below the wall and context (145) to the south of it.

In the southern sondage, Phase 2 was represented by context (118) to the east of wall (111), and probably by context (147) below the wall, although the deformation of the wall and a lack of colour contrast made precise correlation under the wall difficult. Phase 2 is not represented west of wall (111) in the southern sondage.

Throughout the distribution of Phase 2 deposits they show inclusions of clay from the natural and the surface of the natural below is disturbed. The interpreted poaching of the surface of the natural may therefore have occurred through the Phase 2 deposits, perhaps from the keeping of cattle in this area.

## Phase 3

Phase 3 embraces the construction of the stone walls. Joins between all of the walls were not visible, but where evidence was preserved, it suggested that all were constructed in a single phase of activity. Where preserved (which was particularly on the upslope side), the walls appeared reasonably well faced given the variable fracture of the Lias limestones. The facing stones commonly had the bedding oriented vertically (as seen in Roman drystone walling at Caermead), particularly in the large basal blocks. There was no evidence for footings being placed in foundation cuts but, as noted above, there was local evidence for compaction of the deposits below the wall (both of Phase 2 deposits and of the underlying natural clay).

The width of the walls varied between 0.66m and 0.86m, with a typical width of 0.72m. The lowest row of stones was typically large, ranging up to 0.5m in maximum dimension.

The main N-S wall was (111), with the slightly oblique section in the North sondage (113). Context (112) was the uphill E-W wall and (131) the downhill E-W wall.

## Phase 4

This phase comprises a series of soils, probably agricultural, which mostly bear medieval pottery.

The soils uphill of wall (111) and north of wall (131) were indistinguishable from the Phase 2 soils below, so they were simply dug to the level of the lowest stone course in the adjacent walls. These soils were mostly dug in 2 spits, allowing the use of Phase 4a for the lower half and Phase 4b for the upper half of the soils. In the eastern part of the south sondage they were dug in four thinner, but unequal, spits (the lower two Phase 4a, the upper two Phase 4b).

Phase 4a contexts include (109), (115), (120), (138), (143),

Phase 4b contexts include (103), (105), (116), (134), (140)

This phase is poorly understood W of wall (113). Phase 4 is broadly equivalent to context (130) E of drain (128) and to context (119) west of it, but there is less confidence that these contexts were dug to the equivalent levels as deposits close to the main walls.

In general, the colour and slag content decreased upwards and southwards.

Deposits of Phase 4c are agricultural soils in the area west of wall (111) and south of wall (131). They too contain medieval pottery, but initial inspection suggests there may be no overlap of age with Phase 4b. They contain only a very small quantity of slag and are paler in colour. Deposits immediately south of wall (131) were not excavated but appeared superficially to be similar to those north of it – so the relationships along the length of this part of the trench are uncertain, there may be another discontinuity that we haven't found yet between wall (131) and the S sondage.

In the south sondage, Phase 4c commences with context (151) which overlies (169), but the interface is difficult to identify. (169) does not appear to extend to the N side of the sondage, where (151) rests directly on natural (125). Context (151) is a brownish clay-rich deposit and is overlain by a stony deposit (152) which does not extend to the S side of sondage. This deposit is overlain by context (129) which is rich in charcoal and occupied a limited area of the sondage. This is overlain in turn by context (121), another brown clayey soil that was distributed across the western side of the sondage and passed under (and between?) the displaced wall blocks of the downslope face.

## Phase 5

Phase 5 represents the collapse of the walls and their disuse.

The phase is mainly represented by a spread of fallen wall materials, context (106), west of wall (111), and a possibly similar spread of fallen wall material west of wall (113) forming contexts (132) and (133) to the west and east of drain (128). The precise horizon of the stone spreads adjacent to the drain are uncertain. In the central sondage context (139) was loose or displaced wall material.

## Phase 6

Phase 6 represents the accumulation of agricultural soils on the W side of wall (111), mostly labelled as context (104). In addition to the main deposit, some areas had later material intruding down into failed stone areas: material listed as wall (112) may also represent material penetrating from the top of that wall. and context (135) represents the gap the was pulled apart between the two faces of wall (111) as the wall deformed in the south of the trench.

## Phase 7

This represents the renewed accumulation of agricultural soils (context (101)) across the whole site (although context (148) was used for a probably equivalent deposit that was not completely excavated in the west arm of the trench). It is possible that context (101) was formed through the reworking of the upper part of context (104), so (104) was only preserved where thickest.

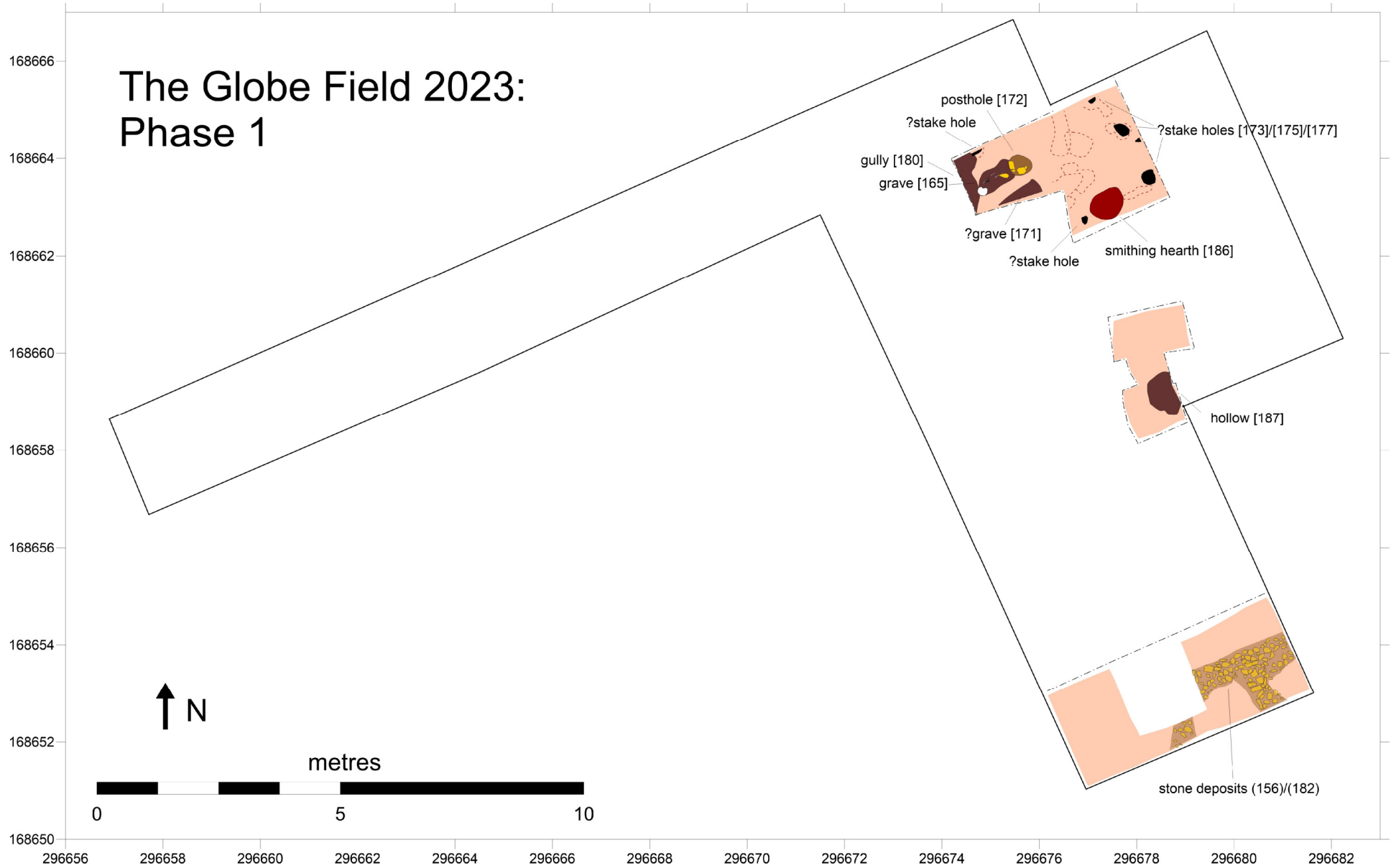
Two postholes were found and in neither case was the level from which they were dug established, but it may have been from within (101) – although it could be lower and within (104), or indeed from the top of (101). Cut [158] was filled with fill (107) and cut (123) with fill (122). In both cases the fill contained a great deal of stone, not clearly in-situ packing.

Drain [128] was also problematic, but was probably dug from the top of (101). The cut was asymmetrical and carried a stone kerb (126) on its western edge. The fills of the drain include context (149), a dark stoney soil at the base, context (117) a dense stone fill and context (102), a loose stone upper fill that was initially interpreted as a robber deposit – but this was revised to be the upper fill.

## Phase 8

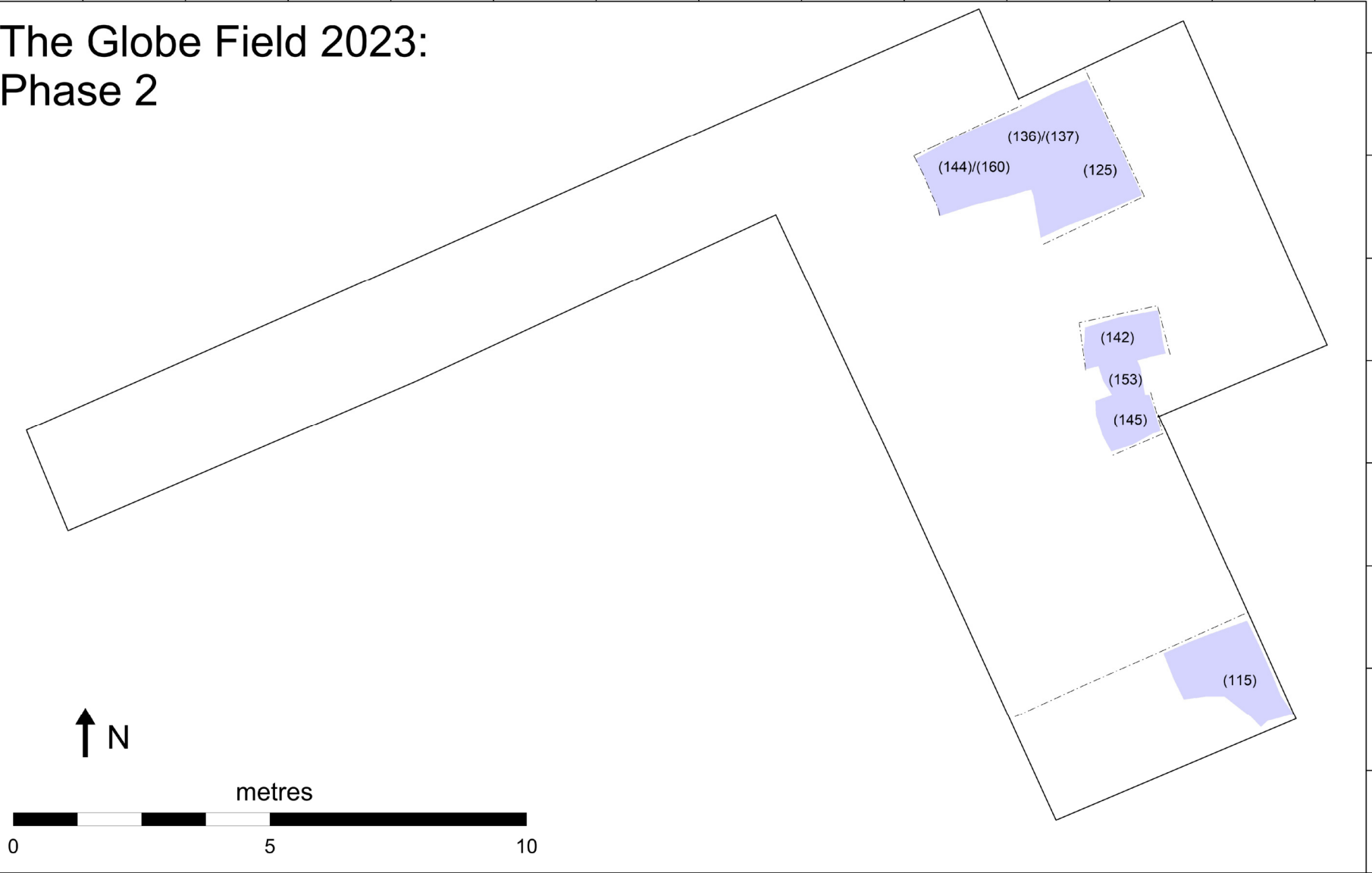
The modern topsoil (100) represents an almost stone-free layer that has probably developed since WW2.

# The Globe Field 2023: Phase 1



# The Globe Field 2023: Phase 2

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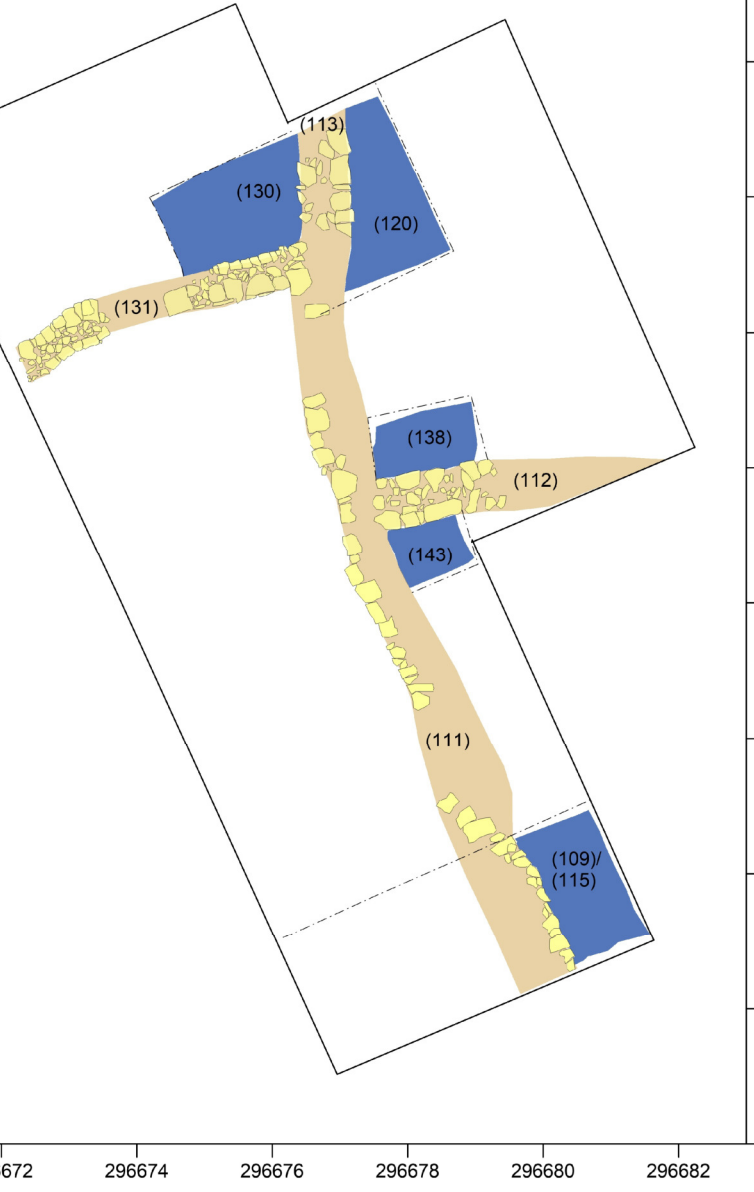


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# The Globe Field 2023: Phase 3/4a

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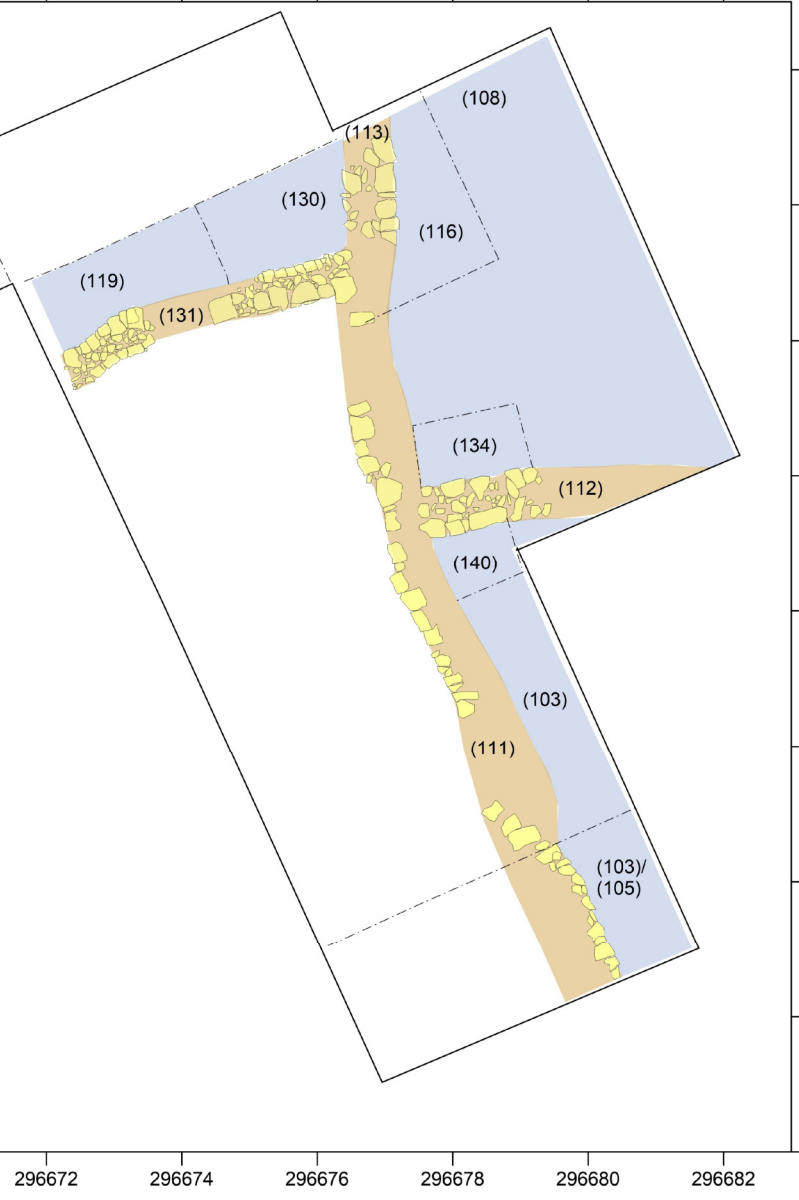


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# The Globe Field 2023: Phase 4b

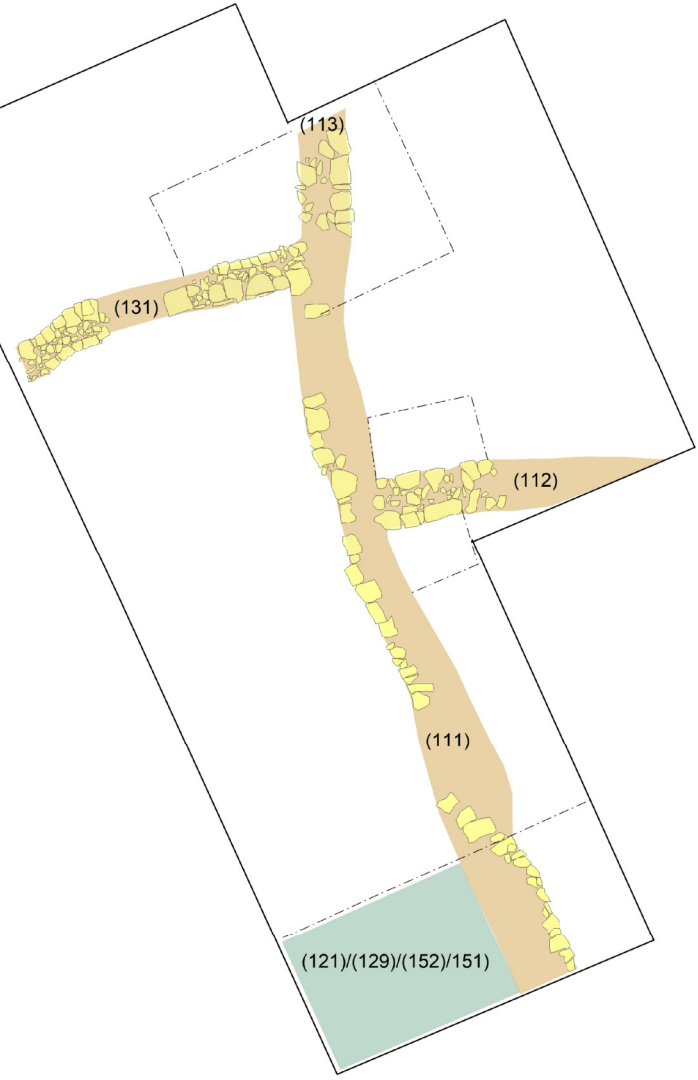
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# The Globe Field 2023: Phase 4c

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# The Globe Field 2023: Phase 5

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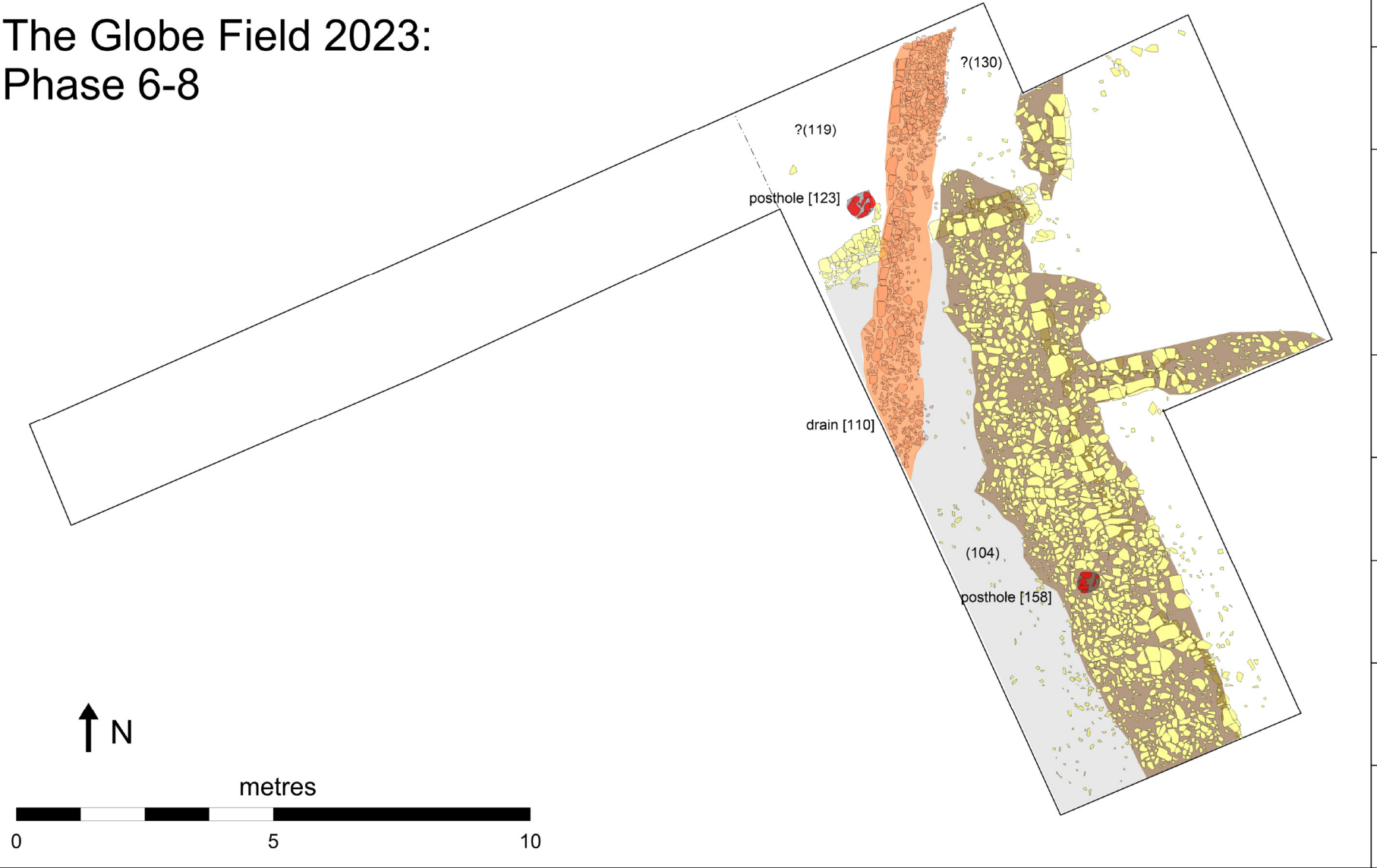


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# The Globe Field 2023: Phase 6-8

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