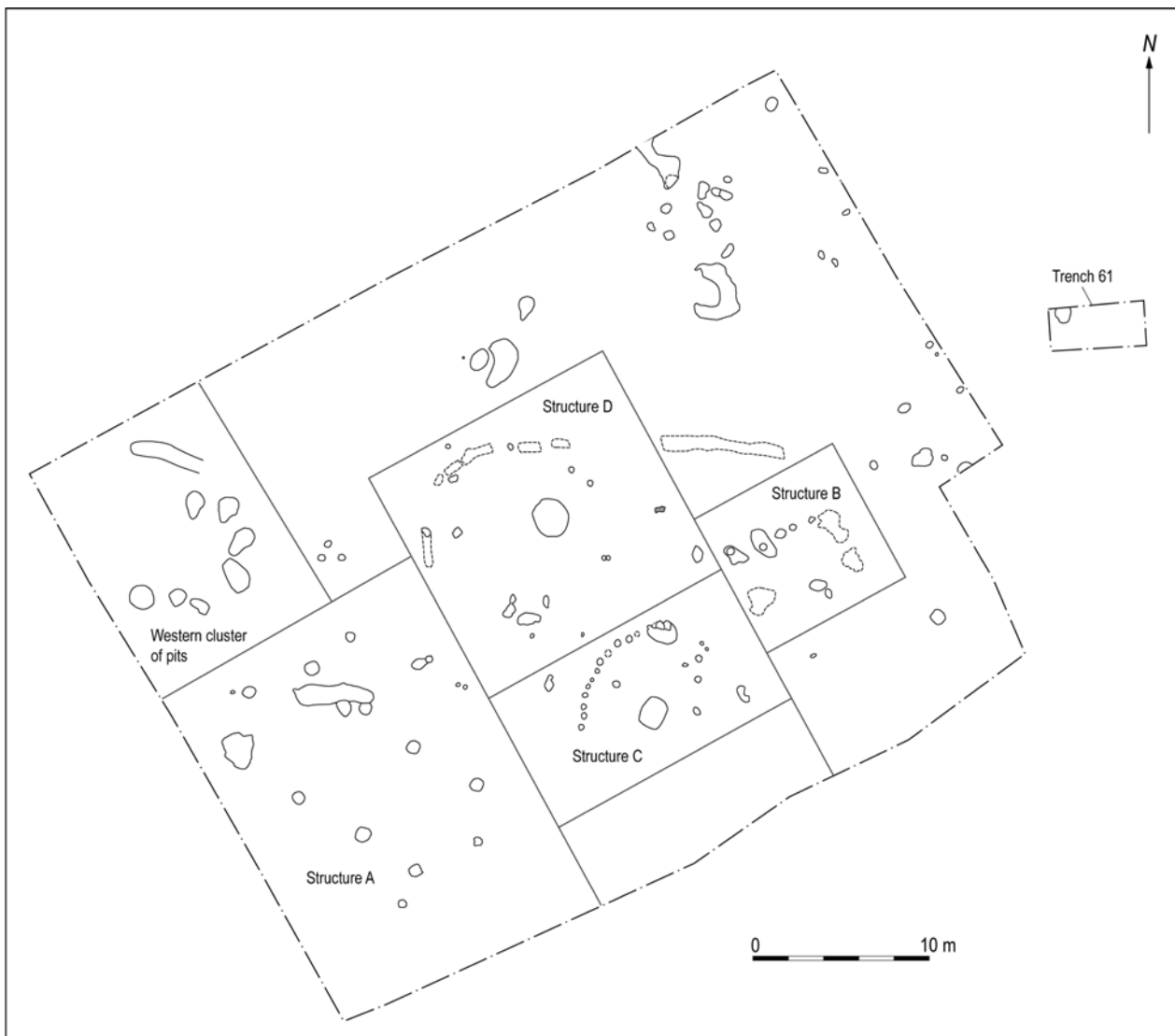

4 LAIGH NEWTON WEST, *by Heather James, Dave Swan & Joe Somerville*

An excavation area was located where previous evaluation trenches had noted a number of shallow pits and linear features, from one of which a sherd of medieval pottery was recovered (illus 1). Machine excavation of the 0.3–0.5m deep topsoil recovered a variety of unstratified finds, including a single fragment of corroded metal, a flint flake, prehistoric pottery sherds and fragments of quartz and chert. Once natural variations and patches of topsoil had been eliminated, numerous archaeological features were visible above the underlying bands of fluvio-glacial and glacial sands and gravels (Context 002). Most of the archaeological features comprised discrete features with no demonstrable stratigraphic relationships to each other. However, as many of the features apparently formed discrete

clusters, it was possible to recognise probable spatial relationships between individual features (illus 2).

4.1 Structure A

In the south-west corner of the excavation trench (illus 3 and 4), a sub-rectangular arrangement of ten post-holes appeared to form a 15.1m long by 6.2m wide structure. The south-west side comprised a large, irregularly shaped post-hole (247), interpreted in the field as a possible tree-throw but more likely to owe its irregular form to disturbance caused by the displacement of packing stones by plough action, and three smaller post-holes (246,



Illus 2 Laigh Newton West – feature groups and outline of structures



Illus 3 Aerial view of Laigh Newton West with Loudoun Hill in the background (image by Hawkeye Photography)

176 and 135). There were four opposing post-holes on the north-east side (031, 208, 151 and 004). There were also two axial post-holes on the north-west and south-east sides (248 and 130).

Many of the post-holes (031, 151, 004, 135, 176, 246 and 248) that defined Structure A contained in situ packing stones, though not always apparent in section. A particularly large packing stone was set vertically within the 0.70m deep north-west axial post-hole (248). The opposite axial post-hole (130), however, had been truncated to a depth of only 0.12m and contained no packing stones. Another post-hole (208) contained a post-pipe but no packing stones.

The only apparent internal features within Structure A were a linear pit (005) and a smaller sub-circular post-hole (154). However, as the linear pit (005) partially cut the fill (209) of one of Structure A's post-holes (208) the linear pit must succeed the abandonment of Structure A. The fill (153) of the linear pit itself was probably cut by the sub-circular post-hole (154), though in section they were too truncated for a relationship to be recorded.

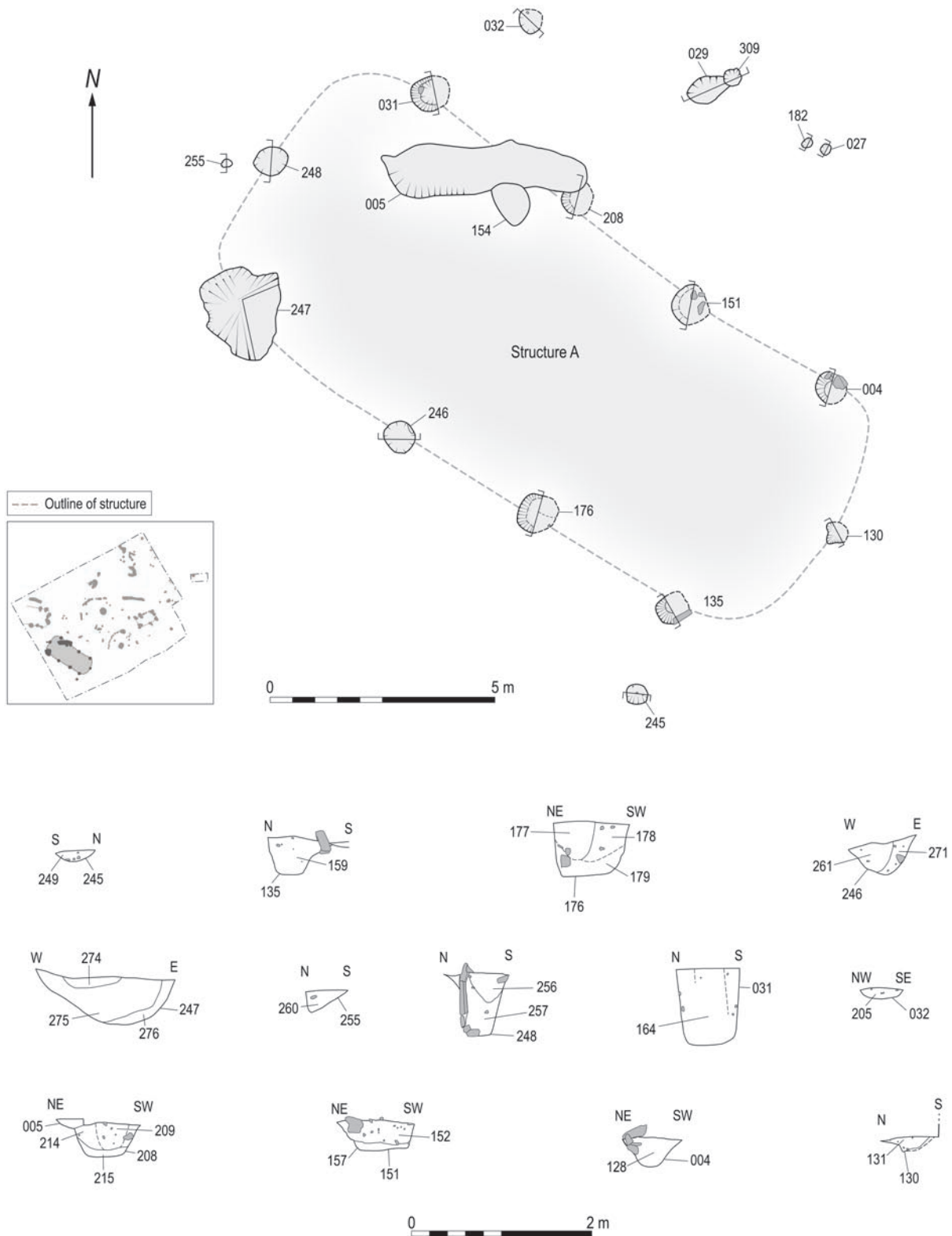
There were a few external features that may be associated with Structure A by virtue of their alignment and proximity to some of the individual features that defined the structure. A stake-hole

(255) lay to the immediate west of the north-west axial post-hole (248). Aligned parallel to the north-east side of the structure, at a distance of *c* 2–4m, were a series of features (post-holes 032, 029, 309, 182 and 027) that appeared to align specifically with post-holes along the north-east side of Structure A (031, 208 and 151). On the south-west side, a single post-hole (245) also appeared to align with another of Structure A's post-holes (135).

The finds from Structure A comprised a quartz chip from the fill (164) of post-hole 031, half a hazelnut shell from the basal fill (275) of post-hole 247 and small fragments of burnt bone from the fill (205) of post-hole 032. Varying amounts of charcoal were also recovered from a number of features (see **Ramsay** below).

4.2 Structure B

A second possible rectilinear structure was located towards the south-eastern corner of the excavation area (**illus 2** and **5**). Structure B included an ENE/WSW aligned line of six post-holes (052, 211, 050, 049, 048 and 046), two of which (052 and 211) appeared to have been cut through two pits (299 and 051) respectively. A parallel line of post-holes (053, 301, 054, 216 and 047) appeared to form the

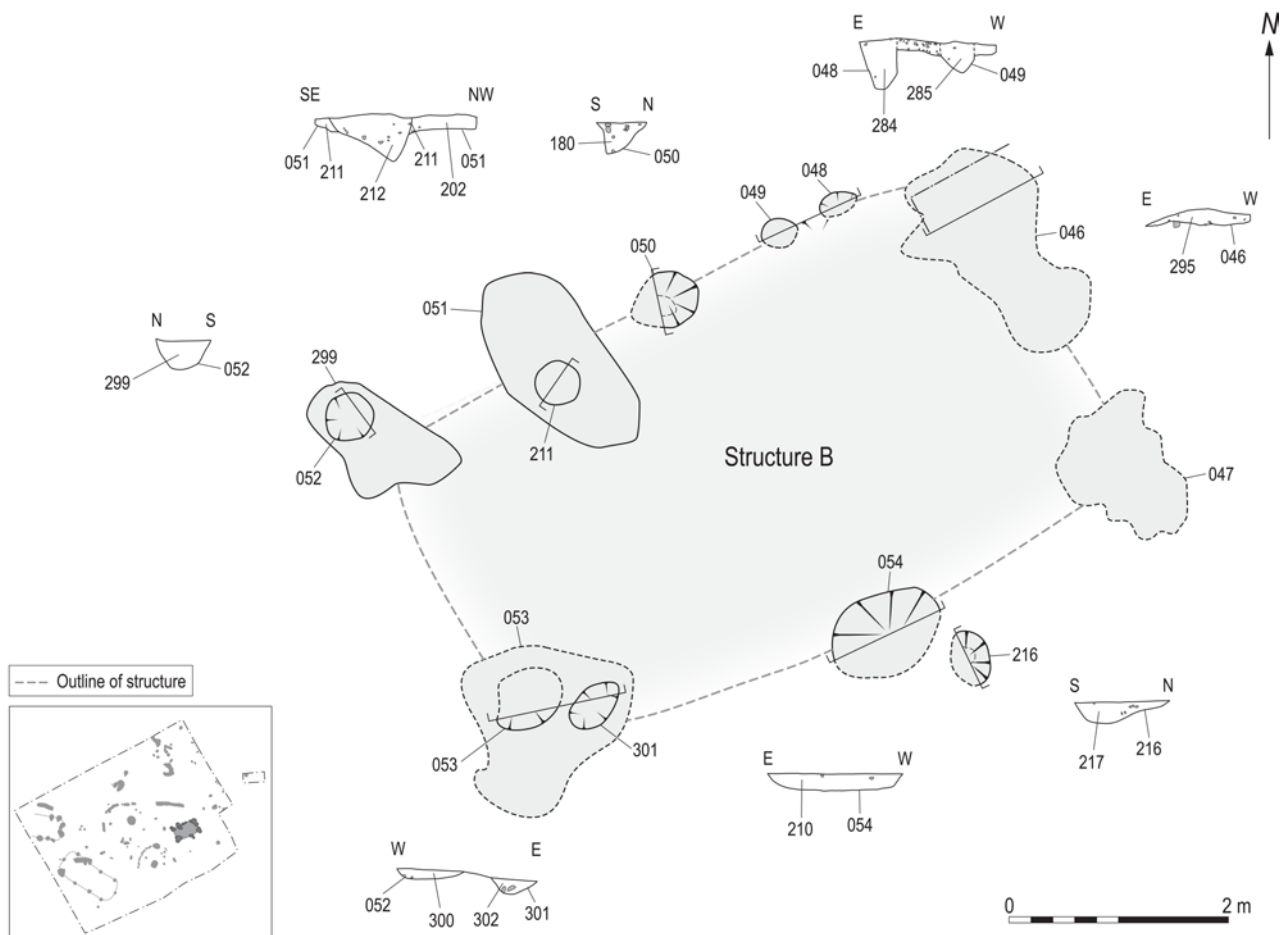


Illus 4 Structure A with details of post-holes

southern matching side of rectangular, timber-built structure measuring c 6m long and 3.5m wide. One of the post-holes (047) was heavily truncated by animal burrowing. There were no finds associated with this possible structure, though some of the post-hole fills contained charcoal (see Ramsay below).

4.3 Structure C

Located between Structures A and B, was a large pit (099) 1.7m long, 1.3m wide and 0.8m deep, and U-shaped in profile with a flat base (illus 2 and 6). It was filled with large angular and rounded stones (100), which appeared to have slumped into the



Illus 5 Structure B with details of pits and post-holes

centre. The soil matrix surrounding the stones was loose sandy gravel (024), with flecks of charcoal but no artefacts.

A series of 12 small post/stake-holes (080–087 and 015–018) formed an arc around the pit at a distance of c 3m. There were no artefacts retrieved from these features, but the fills of two of the post/stake-holes (086 and 087) contained charcoal flecks. The post/stake-holes forming the arc were generally spaced about 0.3m apart. There were several other features to the north (019, 093, 094 and 133) and a further five post-holes (112, 110, 090–092, 121 and 122) to the east of the pit, which did not appear to form part of any apparent obvious pattern. Two kidney-shaped pits (171 and 239) lay immediately to the west and east of this general cluster of features.

4.4 Structure D

A large circular pit (040) occupied the centre of the excavation area (illus 2 and 7). It had a stepped profile and three fills (116, 115 and 114). The primary deposit (116) contained significant amounts of charcoal and a single flint flake. The

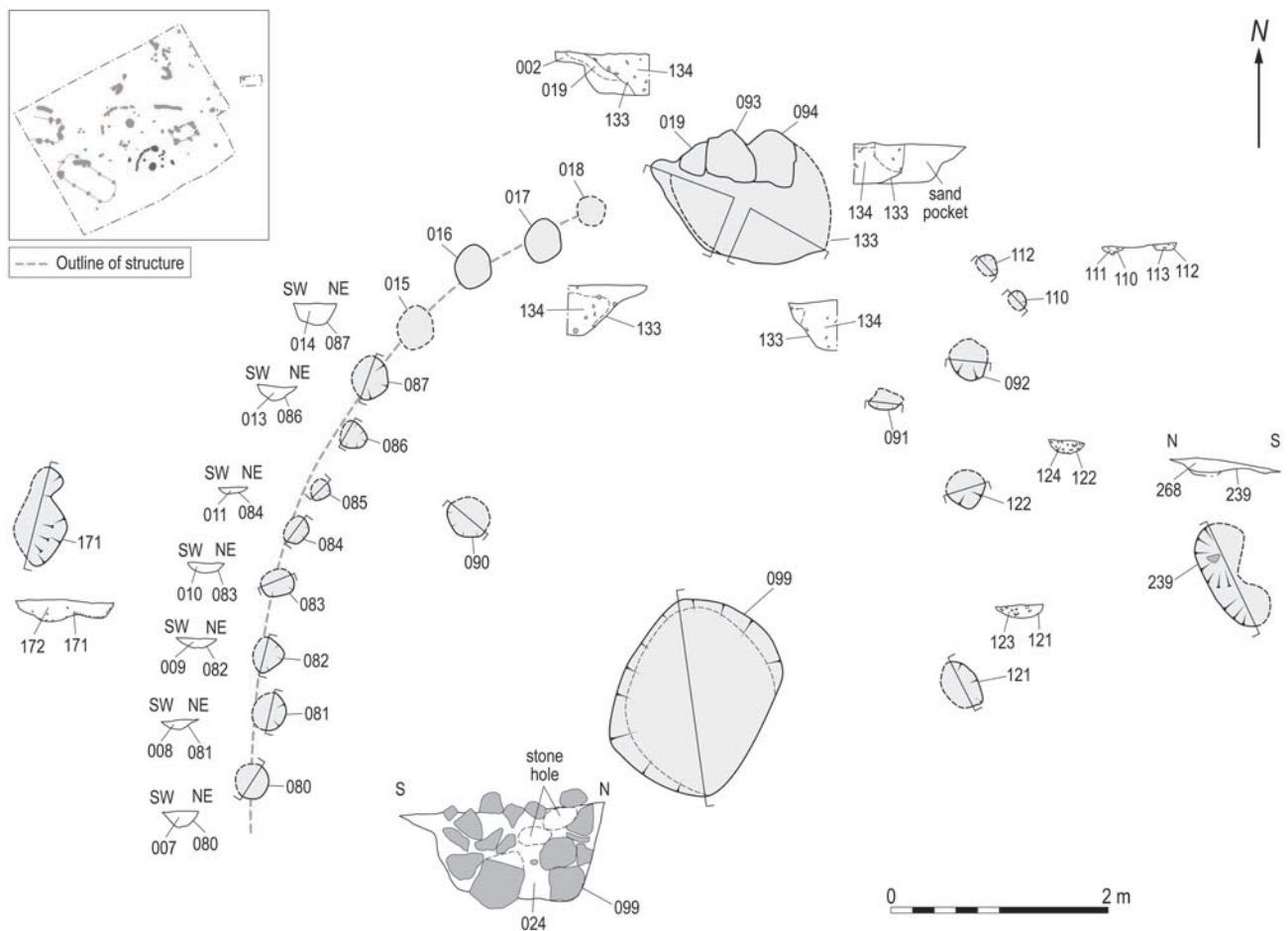
secondary fill (115) contained a few charcoal flecks and the final fill (114) again contained significant amounts of charcoal and two flints (see Ballin below).

Curving around the north and west sides of pit 040 was a segmented linear feature (033, 126, 037 and 043), which ran east/west across the excavation area. To the north-west of the excavation area (illus 8), a 5m length of ditch (065) ran on the same east/west alignment. At least one constituent part of this segmented linear feature (043) appeared to have squared terminals (illus 9).

Just overlapping the course of the linear segmented feature (037) was a trapezoidal arrangement of post-holes (036, 035, 034, 042, 186, 185, 183, 184, 044, 039 and 038), the approximate centre of which was occupied by the pit (040). A single sherd of decorated prehistoric pottery was recovered from the fill (160) of a post-hole (034) and another sherd of pottery was recovered from the fill (196) of another post-hole (184) (see Ballin Smith below).

4.5 Western cluster of pits

In the western corner of the excavation area (illus



Illus 6 Structure C with details of pits and post-holes

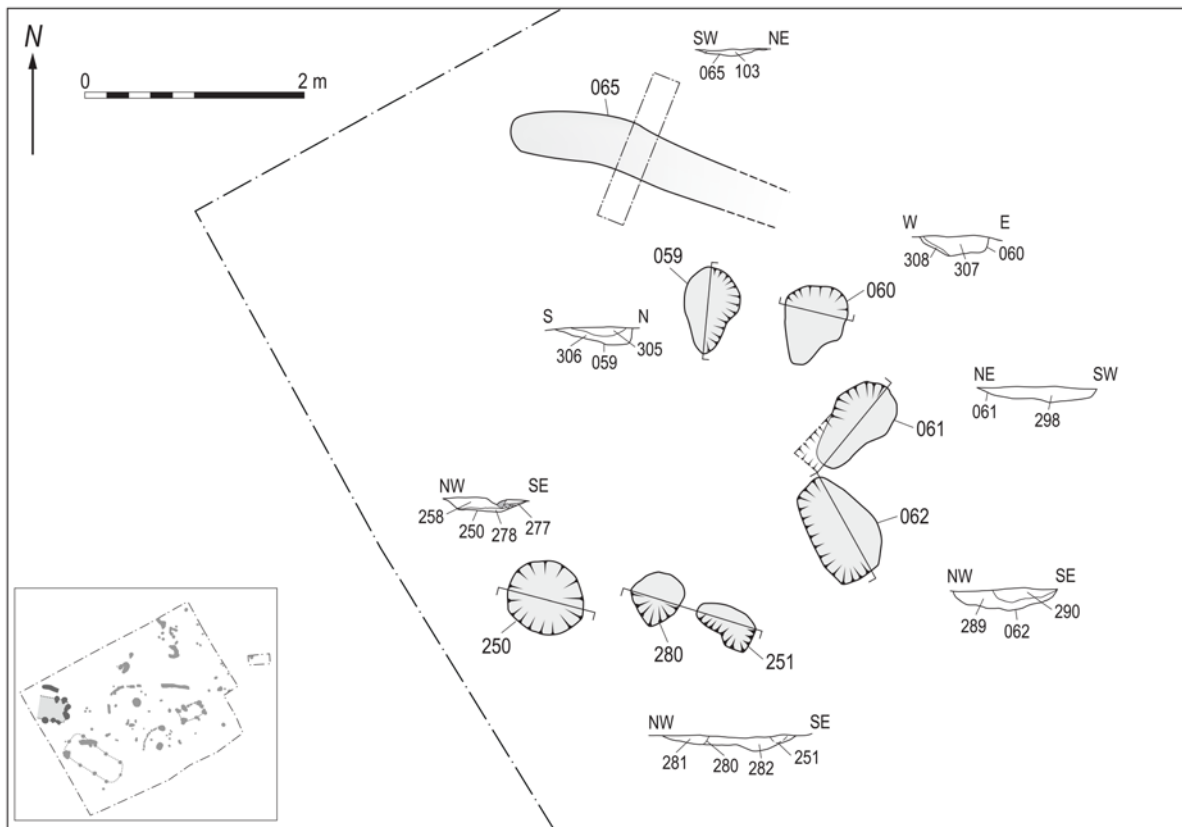
8), was a shallow, nearly circular-shaped pit (250), which contained three fills (278, 277 and 258). The lower two fills (277 and 278) had no finds and were interpreted in the field as re-deposited natural gravel. Within the upper fill (258), there were packing stones, 24 sherds of Bronze Age pottery, fragments of burnt bone, three lithics/worked stones and some charcoal (see [Ballin Smith](#), [Ballin](#) and [Ramsay](#) below).

Pit 250 lay at the south-west extremity of a U-shaped arrangement of large pits (280, 251, 062, 061, 060 and 059). The fill (281) of one of the pits (280) contained a single sherd of pottery, while the other pits contained nothing more than occasional charcoal flecks. There was no evidence of post-pipes or packing stones from any of these pits.

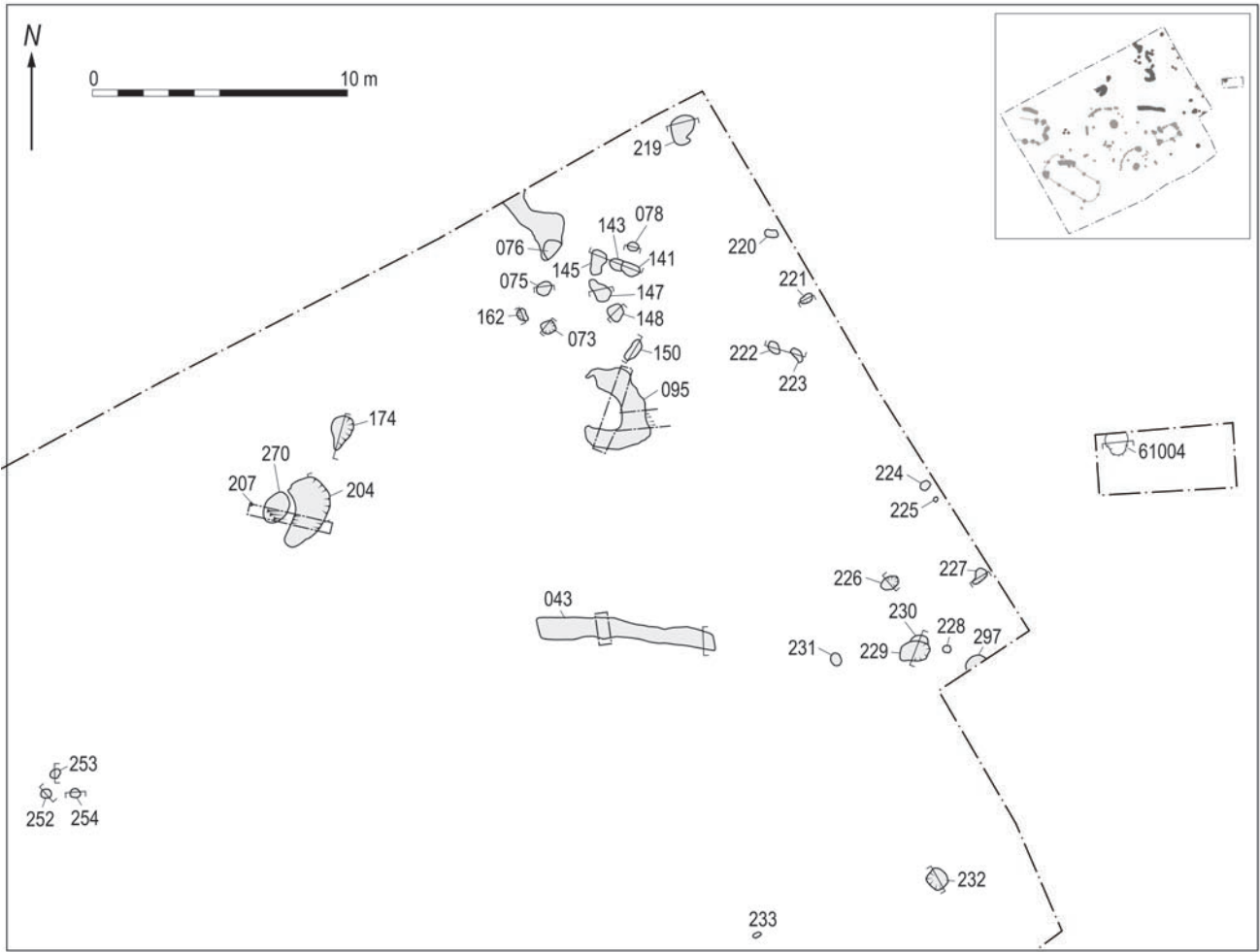
4.6 Miscellaneous features

North of the linear segmented feature (065, 126, 037 and 043) were clusters of irregular pits (270, 174, 204 and 095) and post-holes (073, 162, 075, 141, 143, 145, 147, 148, 150, 078, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225 and 227; *illus 9*). These features showed evidence of considerable animal disturbance and were generally filled with lenses of re-deposited

natural subsoil, apart from the uppermost fill (175) of one of the pits (204), which comprised very dark grey-brown silty sand containing charcoal, with some discolouration caused by burning noted at its base. Another circular pit (61004), encountered slightly to the east during the 2005 evaluation, also contained a large amount of charcoal in its fill (61003) and a discoloured interface between the base of the pit and the fill. Further pits containing evidence for in situ burning included a pit (230) containing fire-reddened gravel (265) at its base, with a charcoal-flecked upper fill (264). These fills had been cut by another pit (229), which also contained a charcoal-rich fill (263). Another similar pit (226) also had a fire-reddened base (267) and a charcoal-rich fill (266). The fill (055) of a tree-throw hole (095) contained charcoal and two sherds of pottery, as did the fill (149) of another post-hole (148). The fill (097) of post-hole 075 contained a large packing stone while another post-hole (078) contained a small fragment of calcified material. To the south of the excavation area were a possible pit (232), a stake-hole (233) and a post-hole (239), and to the west were three small post-holes (252, 253 and 254), none of which appeared to form a coherent pattern or be associated with any other feature.



Illus 8 Western cluster of pits with pit profiles



Illus 9 Laigh Newton West – features in the northern part of the site