

KEMPSFORD (GL)

**Bowmoor, Kempsford
Gloucestershire**

SU 181 993

Archaeological Assessment

**Oxford Archaeological Unit
September 1989**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT.

KEMPSFORD, BOWMOOR

INTRODUCTION

An archaeological assessment was undertaken in August & September 1989, by the Oxford Archaeological Unit, on behalf of ARC to provide information for a planning application for gravel extraction.

The application site (SU 181/993) occupies approximately 16 hectares and is located on first terrace gravel, just north of the River Coln. The present land use is arable and the topography consist of low irregular rises interspersed across the site. The fields to the west and east have already been extracted and the land to north is due for extraction over the next few years.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The assessment site lies just south of an intensively studied archaeological landscape. Excavations and fieldwork over the last decade has shown that this band of first terrace gravel was systematically and extensively utilised in the later prehistoric and Roman periods. An extensive late prehistoric settlement lies immediately to the north (Thornhill Farm - currently being excavated by the OAU) and a Roman trackway links it to a Roman settlement 1km. to the north east (Claydon Pike - excavated by OAU 1979-1984). Four areas of archaeology are known, from aerial photography and fieldwork, in the assessment area.

- 1) Cropmarks of an enclosure and ditches have been recorded in the NW segment of the assessment area (SU 181993).
- 2) Roman occupation debris and a rubble scatter (but no tile) have been located by fieldwalking in the north of the area just south of a present ox-bow in a stream delimiting the northern extent of the application area (SU 181994). Nine coins recovered from this area are principally late third and early fourth centuries.
- 3) Cropmarks to the north suggest that a rectangular enclosure may impinge into the NW corner of the assessment area (SU 180995).
- 4) A Roman trackway, defined by paired ditches, approaches the area from the north east and would run adjacent to the cropmarks and Roman occupation described in 1 & 2 above.

STRATEGY

The objective of the work was to assess the character, preservation and density of any archaeological deposits. The sampling strategy consisted of mechanically excavating trenches, 30m x 1.6m, using a 360° excavator with a five foot ditching bucket. These trenches had been laid out in a systematic grid over the entire area in order to provide a 2% sample of the assessment site. Additional trenches were then placed, to establish more precisely the extent of concentrated areas of archaeological activity. A sample of archaeological features were excavated by hand, to obtain dating evidence and to assess their character and state of preservation.

SOILS

The modern ploughsoil consisted of a silty loam, varying in depth between 0.20-0.25m. A clay loam subsoil lay underneath the ploughsoil. It was between 0.15-0.20m deep and directly overlay the natural gravel or periglacial disturbances.

RESULTS (figs 1,3-7)

Relic Stream Courses: Trenches 1,4,5,17,16,19,22,28,31,34,40, and 53. (fig 2)

A large expanse of old stream channel was encountered on the assessment, running in a broad band across the centre of the assessment site in a north west to south easterly direction. Organic remains were observed at the bottom of a few of these channels but only in a severely deteriorated condition.

Roman Occupation: Trenches 8,11-15, 17 and 35 (figs 2-4,7)

In Trench 8 one ditch was encountered, 10m from the south end of the trench, orientated in a NW-SE direction. No finds were recovered. The ascription of a Roman date to this feature is based on its proximity to the intensive occupation, directly to the north, and the orientation of the ditch, which is on the same axis as the majority of those in the Roman settlement.

In Trench 11 Six ditches were recorded, concentrated in the western half of the trench. The ditches appeared to be running at approximately right angles to each other, forming enclosures. They were orientated NE-SW and NW-SE. Two parallel ditches (11/5 and 11/8) formed the trackway, which had previously been observed by aerial photography in fields to the north east and which continued through into trench 15. Both of these features were 1.70m wide and 11/8 was 0.45m deep. Ditch 11/5 was not excavated.

Between the modern ploughsoil and subsoil a variably preserved layer 11/6 was

recorded. This layer had been badly disturbed by ploughing. It was preserved only in patches but occurred in several other trenches in this area of Roman activity. The layer was a dark brown silty loam with charcoal, limestone rubble, burnt clay and occupation debris interspersed through it. One patch of stone and clay seemed to have been burnt in situ and may represent the remains of a hearth or oven. At its best it survived to a depth of c 0.10 metres but as noted above the upper parts had been mixed by ploughing. Similar layers have been recorded on adjacent sites (Claydon Pike and Whelford Bowmoor - OAU excavations) and have been interpreted as truncated ground surfaces. By its very nature relationships with ditched features were equivocal. Limestone rubble however survived mostly in the upper fills of ditches where it would have been more protected from the plough. Roman pottery was recovered from several features.

In Trench 12 the truncated ground surface was again recorded extending 6m from the south end of the trench, it contained substantial quantities of pottery sherds and overlaid posthole 12/4. At the north end of the trench a ditch 12/5 was found orientated approximately east-west.

Trench 13 contained two ditches and a pit. Ditch 13/6 was orientated NE-SW and ditch 13/7 was aligned NW-SE to the south of these two ditches the pit 13/5 was recorded but not excavated, finds of Roman date were collected from its surface. The truncated ground surface was located in this trench, becoming thinner towards the north of the trench.

Eight ditches and the truncated ground surface were located in Trench 14. Ditches 14/4, 14/5, 14/6, 14/8 and 14/9 were orientated NW-SE. Ditches 14/7, 14/11 and 14/12 ran from NE-SW. Roman pottery was recovered from four of the ditches. The truncated ground surface was not continuous throughout the trench but was interspersed throughout it.

Trench 15 contained seven ditches and one possible pit. The majority of the ditches were aligned NE-SW. The parallel ditches, found at the south end of the trench, 15/10 and 15/11 formed the trackway mentioned previously in the discussion of trench 2. They were both 1.20m wide and approximately two metres apart. None of these features were excavated.

At the end of Trench 17 one pit and an intercutting ditch were recorded. The north side of pit 17/4 cut into the ditch 17/5 and contained substantial quantities of Roman pottery and animal bone. At the base of the pit the well preserved leather upper of a shoe was found. This pit was 0.54 metre deep (the deepest excavated feature on the site) and other organic material (insect remains etc.) survived, but not exceptionally.

Trench 35 contained nine ditches, several of which were intercutting, two gullies and restricted areas of the Roman truncated ground surface. Again the ditches were orientated at right angles to each other, forming enclosures. Their principal axes were SW-NE and SE-NW. Ditch 35/8 and gully 35/9 contained different fills to the other features, being composed of loose clay loam. They contained no finds and probably represent a modern field boundary, marked on

the old one inch O.S. map. Roman pottery was recovered from the surface of several features.

Undated Archaeological Features Trenches: 7,16,24,26,30,36,37,41,46,& 48. (figs 5,6)

One posthole was found at the eastern end of Trench 7. No dating material was recovered from this feature.

Trench 16 placed to transect the cropmark, previously recognised by aerial photography, contained a ditch at its eastern end. This probably corresponds to the NE side of the rectilinear enclosure shown in aerial photographs. It was orientated NW-SE and had been disturbed by both animal burrowing and a tree hole. The only finds recovered were small quantities of animal bone. No other archaeological features were recorded in this trench, apart from part of the palaeo-channel that runs centrally across the site.

Trench 24 contained a ditch aligned approximately NNE-SSW, which curved away in a SE direction at its southern end. Two recuts were noted in the section of this feature. No finds were recovered. At the northern end of the trench a modern drainage ditch was located.

in Trench 26 four ditches and one post hole were found. Three of the ditches were orientated NE-SW. The ditch 26/7, on a NW-SE axis, was a modern drainage ditch and probably corresponded with the one recorded in Trench 24.

A single ditch was found at the western end of Trench 30, orientated on a NE-SW axis. This feature was not excavated and no finds were recovered from the surface. A possible pit was located near the centre of Trench 36. No dating evidence was found during its excavation.

Trench 37 contained a modern drainage ditch, which lay on a NW-SE axis and was located near the centre of the trench. In Trench 41 a large ditch (1.45m wide) was located at the northern end of the trench. Approximately 15 metres to the south there was a modern drainage ditch. No finds were recovered.

At the south end of Trench 46 a ditch orientated NE-SW was recorded but not excavated. Trench 48 contained two parallel ditches at its south end, approximately two metres apart, placed on a NW-SE axis. No dating evidence was found.

SUMMARY (fig 2)

- 1 The assessment located a broad band of a relic water course running across the site in a NW-SE direction.
- 2 A small Roman settlement in the northern part of the site previously located through fieldwalking, was more clearly defined. Activity associated with it appeared to spread over a hectare but with a smaller area of scattered rubble within it. The settlement consisted principally of ditches and gullies, which formed a series of enclosures. Preservation of structural remains appeared poor with limestone rubble concentrating principally in the top fills of features although some "positive" archaeological features may survive - viz trench 11. Little useful stratigraphic information probably survives in the Roman "truncated ground surface" but it should still contain valid artefact distributions. Pottery, metalwork and animal bone were preserved on the site and the leather shoe attests to the potential for organic preservation in some of the deeper, waterlogged features. On the basis of the pottery and coin evidence occupation seems to span from the second to the early fourth centuries.
- 3 The trackway plotted by aerial photography in the field to the north was located within the assessment site in association with the Roman settlement. However attempts to locate the trackway south of the settlement were unsuccessful, implying that the trackway either radically alter its course or terminates south of the settlement.
- 4 Part of the cropmark, which appeared as a circular ditch enclosed within a rectilinear enclosure, was observed in the eastern end of trench 16. However there appeared to be no concentration of archaeological activity associated with this feature and on this basis one can suggest that it represents a peripheral enclosure, associated with the main Roman settlement.
- 5 The large rectangular enclosure just outside the NW corner of the assessment area was not located in trench 18 and therefore does not impinge into the application area.
- 6 Seven ditches and a possible pit were found in the SW part of the assessment area. At least two of these were modern drainage ditches.
- 7 In the eastern half of the assessment area six ditches were recorded, two being modern drainage ditches. One possible pit was found. They did not appear to be associated with any occupation.

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Context Concordance

Context Type	Width	Depth	Finds	Date	Excavated
** Trench = 7 3 Posthole	0.28	0.12			Yes
** Trench = 8 4 Ditch	1.36	0.28		Roman?	Yes
** Trench = 11 4 Ditch	1.00	0.47		Roman	Yes
5 Ditch	1.70	0.00		Roman	No
6 Layer	2.80	0.15	pottery	Roman	Yes
7 Ditch	1.50	0.45	pottery	Roman	Yes
8 Ditch	1.70	0.45		Roman	Yes
9 Ditch	0.00	0.00		Roman	No
10 Ditch	1.10	0.16		Roman	Yes
11 Layer	0.00	0.15		Roman	Yes
** Trench = 12 3 Layer	0.00	0.13	pottery, animal bone	Roman	Yes
4 Posthole	0.80	0.25	pottery	Roman	Yes
5 Ditch	1.50	0.00		Roman	No
** Trench = 13 4 Layer	0.00	0.12	pottery	Roman	No
5 Pit?	1.20	0.00	pottery	Roman	No
6 Ditch	1.40	0.00		Roman	No
7 Ditch	2.85	0.00		Roman	No
** Trench = 14 4 Ditch	0.60	0.27		Roman	Yes
5 Ditch	0.60	0.00		Roman	No
6 Ditch	0.40	0.00	1 pottery sherd	Roman	No
7 Ditch	0.40	0.00	1 pottery sherd	Roman	No
8 Ditch?	0.80	0.00		Roman	No
9 Ditch	1.20	0.00	1 pottery sherd	Roman	No
10 Layer	0.00	0.07	pottery	Roman	No
11 Ditch	1.70	0.00	pottery sherds	Roman	No
12 Ditch	0.80	0.00		Roman	No
** Trench = 15 4 Ditch	1.60	0.00		Roman	No
5 Ditch	3.00	0.00		Roman	No
6 Ditch	1.00	0.00		Roman	No
7 Ditch	1.30	0.00		Roman	No
8 Pit?	1.80	0.00		Roman	No
9 Ditch?	1.30	0.00		Roman	No
10 Ditch	1.20	0.00		Roman	No
11 Ditch	1.25	0.00		Roman	No
** Trench = 16 4 Ditch	1.40	0.40	animal bone	Roman?	Yes
** Trench = 17 4 Pit	2.40	0.54	pottery, animal bone	Roman	Yes
5 Ditch	0.86	0.28		Roman	Yes
** Trench = 24 4 Ditch	0.80	0.18			Yes
** Trench = 26 3 Ditch	1.90	0.00			No
4 Ditch	1.00	0.00		Modern?	No
5 Ditch	0.35	0.00			No
6 Posthole	0.40	0.17			Yes
7 Ditch	0.60	0.08			Yes

Context Type	Width	Depth	Finds	Date	Excavated
** Trench = 30 4 Ditch	1.00	0.00			No
** Trench = 35 4 Layer	0.00	0.15		Roman	No
5 Ditch	0.67	0.00		Roman	No
6 Ditch	1.08	0.00		Roman	No
7 Ditch	0.65	0.00	pottery	Roman	No
8 Ditch	1.10	0.00		Roman	No
9 Gully	0.25	0.24		Roman	Yes
10 Ditch	0.60	0.00		Roman	No
11 Ditch	0.80	0.00	pottery	Roman	No
12 Ditch	0.40	0.00		Roman	No
13 Gully	0.40	0.24	pottery	Roman	Yes
14 Ditch	0.96	0.00		Roman	No
** Trench = 36 4 Pit?	1.06	0.33			Yes
** Trench = 37 3 Ditch	0.70	0.00		Modern?	No
** Trench = 41 3 Ditch	1.65	0.00			No
5 Ditch	0.45	0.00			No
** Trench = 46 5 Ditch	0.80	0.00			No
** Trench = 48 4 Ditch	1.30	0.00			No
5 Ditch	1.50	0.00			No
** Trench = 56 15 Gully	0.40	0.00		Roman	No

996

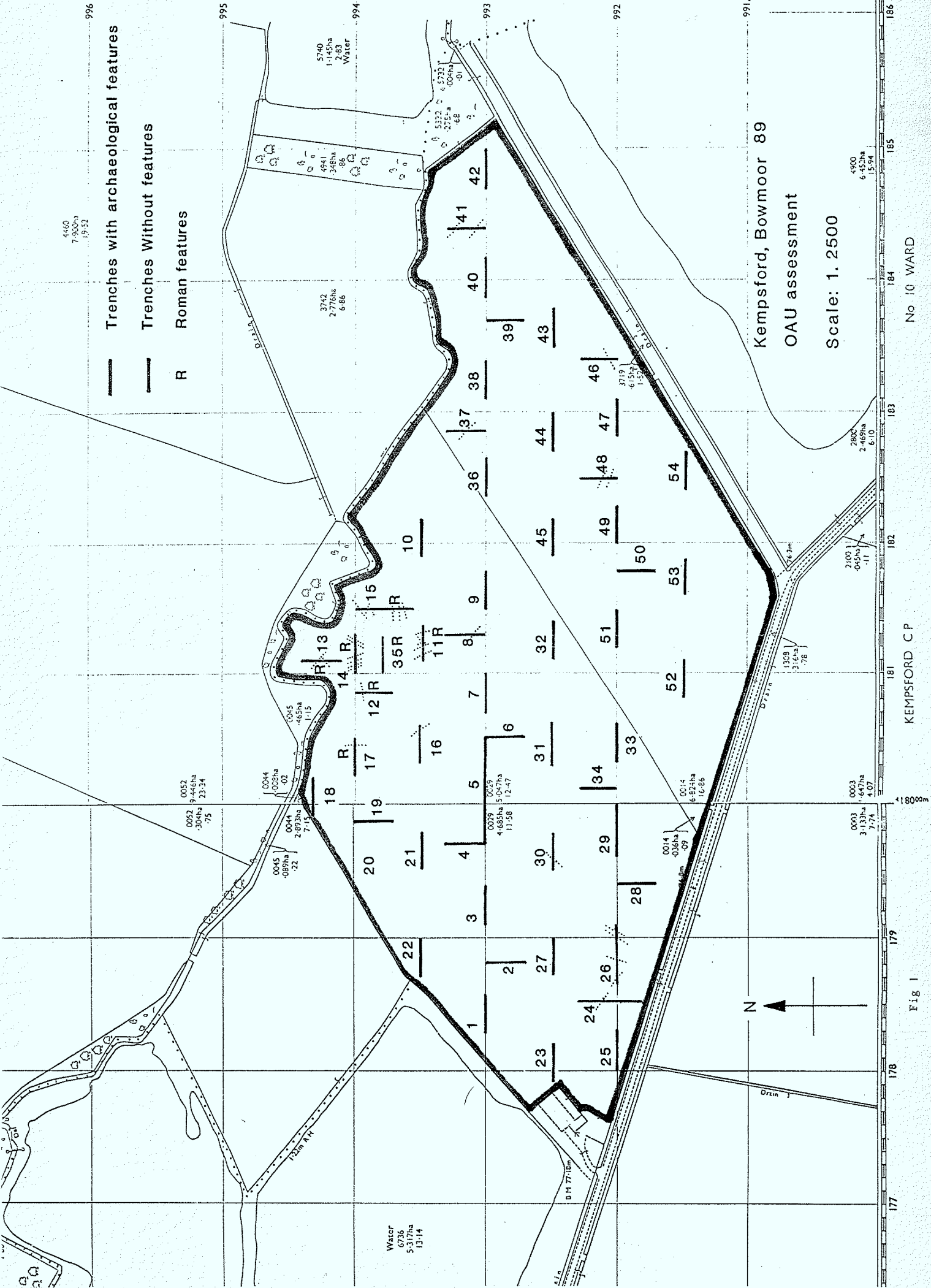
4460
7.500ha
19.52

Trenches with archaeological features

Trenches Without features

R Roman features

995



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OAU assessment

Scale: 1: 2500

186

185

184

183

182

181

18000m

179

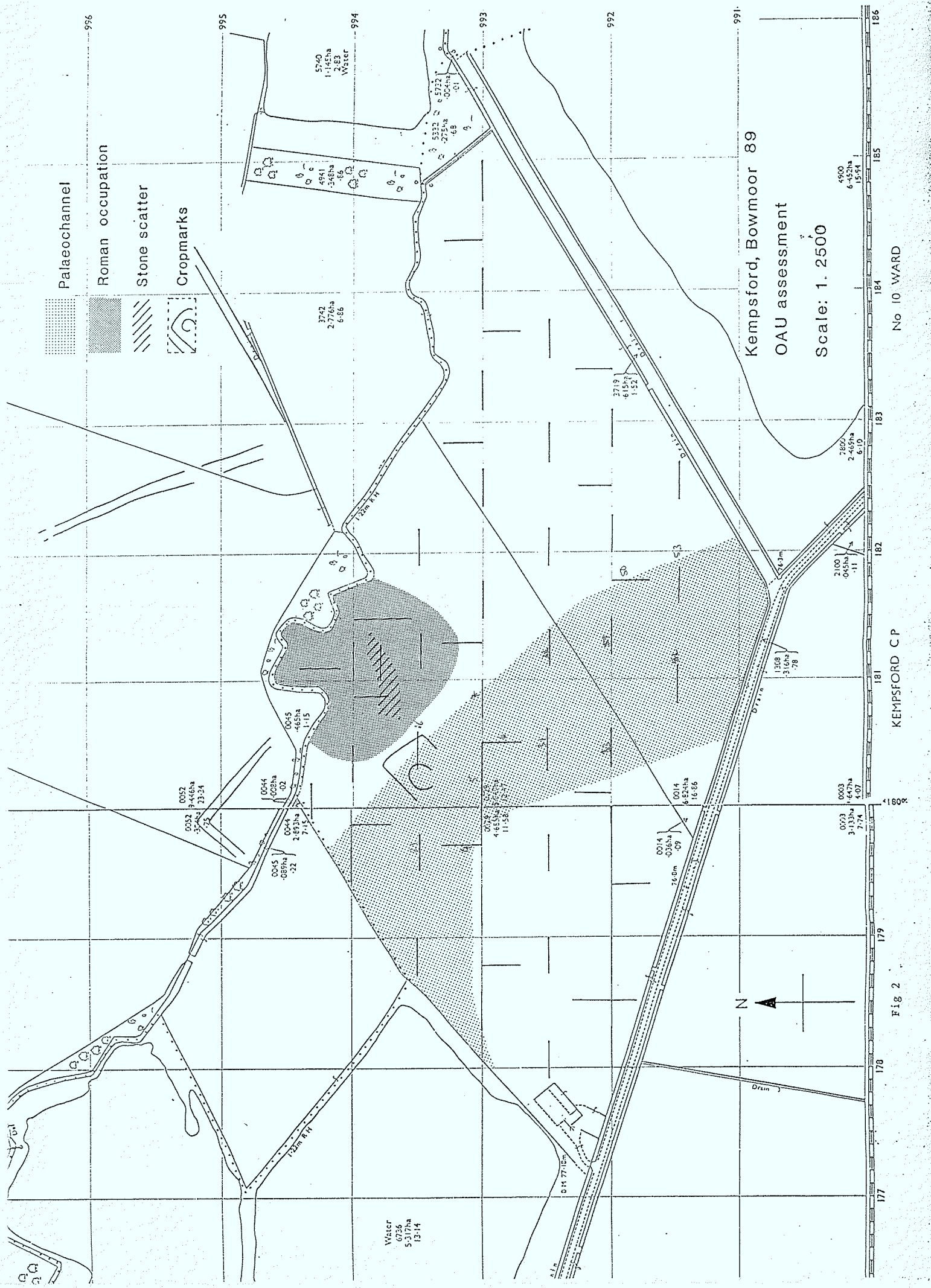
178

177

No 10 WARD

KEMPFORD C/P

Fig 1



- Palaeochannel
- Roman occupation
- Stone scatter
- Cropmarks

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 OAU assessment
 Scale: 1: 2500

No 10 WARD

KEMPFORD C.P

Fig 2

Water
 0736
 5.31ha
 13.14

3740
 2.72ha
 6.66

5740
 1.145ha
 2.83
 Water

0038
 4.65ha
 11.56

0014
 0.16ha
 0.07
 76.8m

0073
 3.13ha
 7.74
 4.07

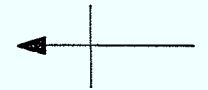
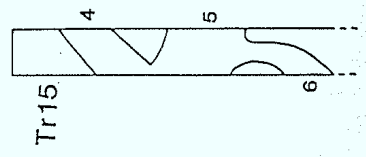
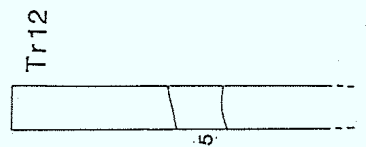
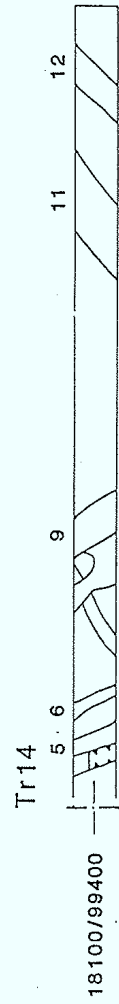
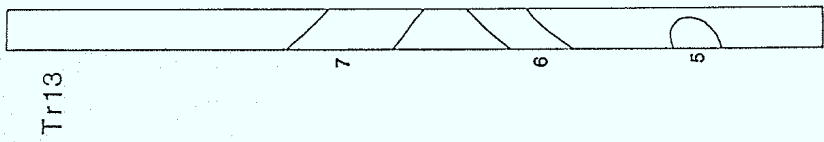
2100
 0.45ha
 1.11

2820
 2.46ha
 6.10

4900
 6.64ha
 15.91

177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186

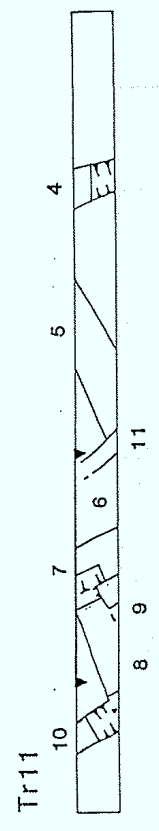
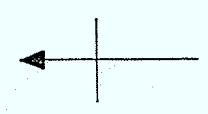
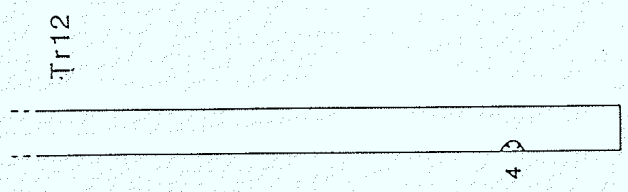
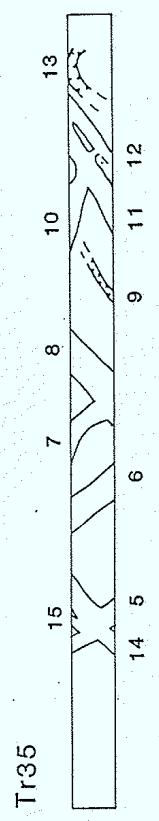
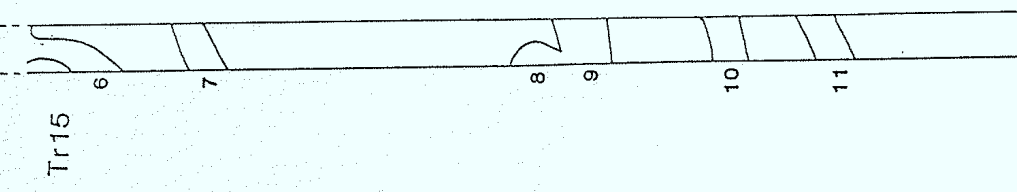
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 OAU assessment



Fig 3



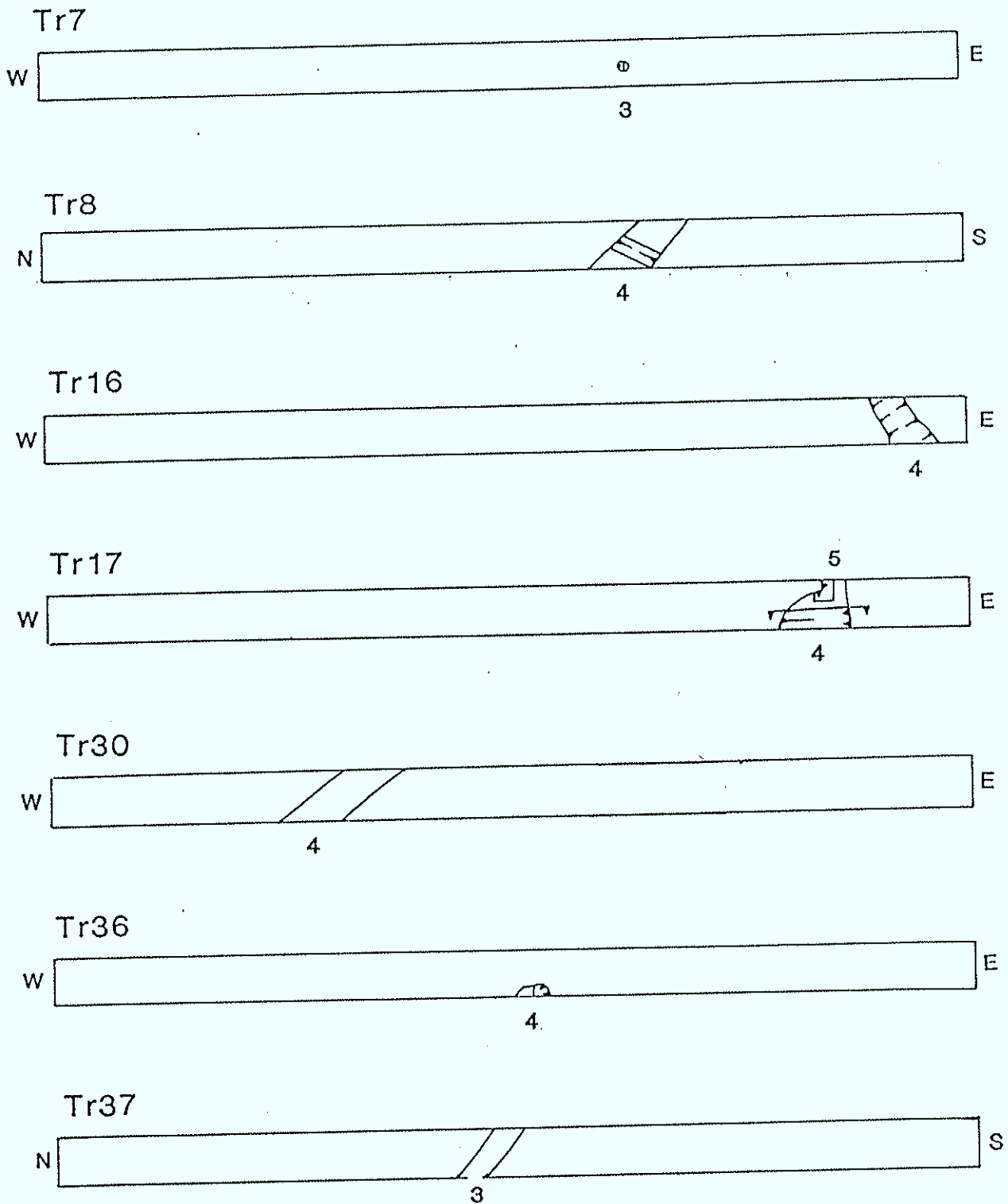
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Fig 4



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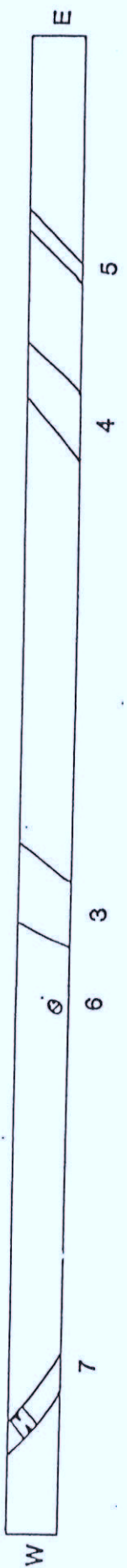


Fig 5

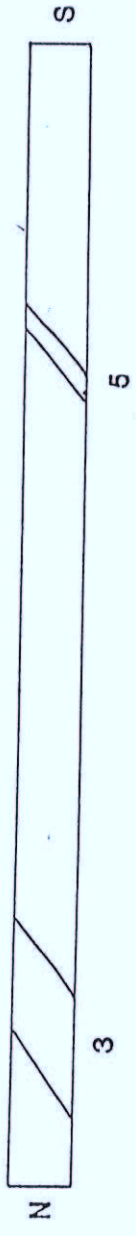
Tr24



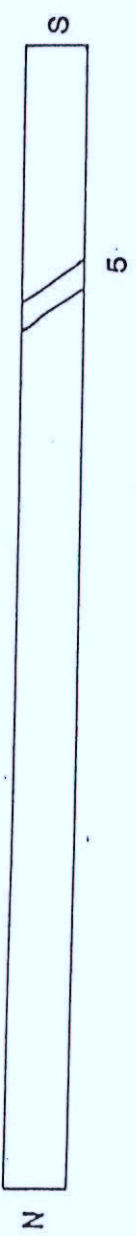
Tr26



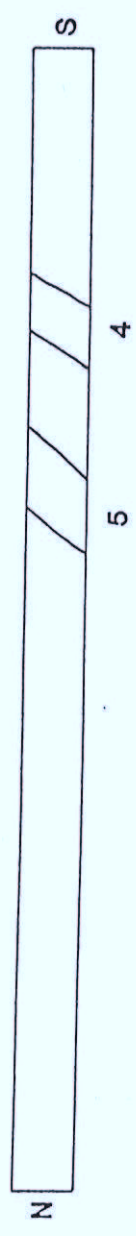
Tr41



Tr46



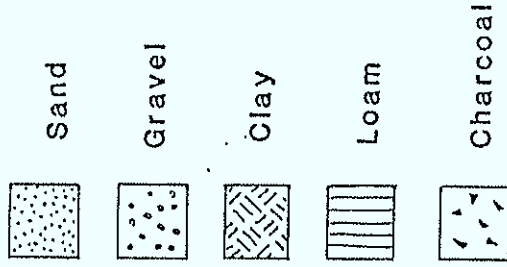
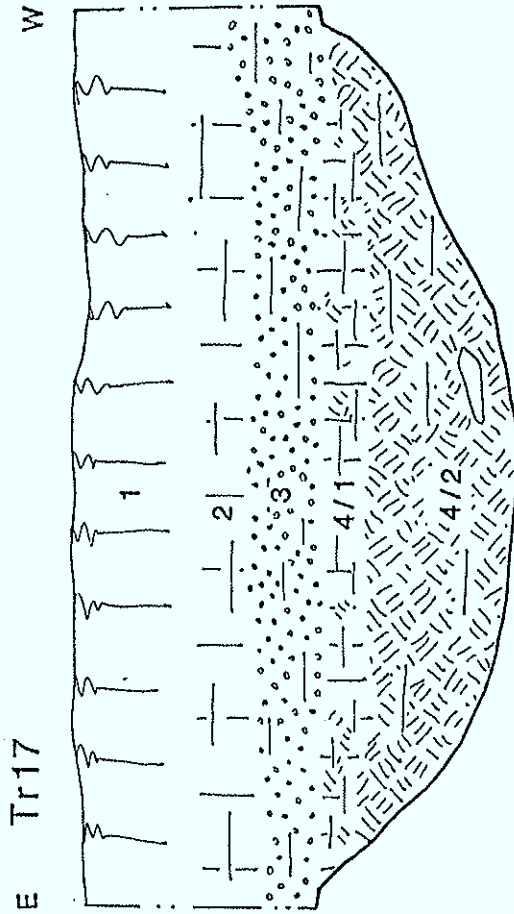
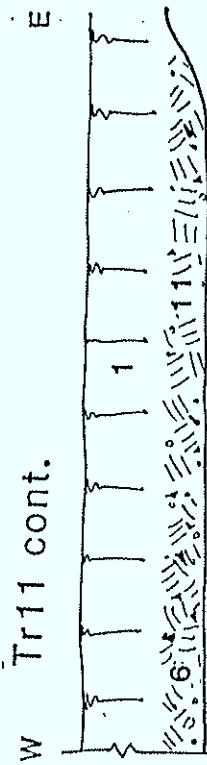
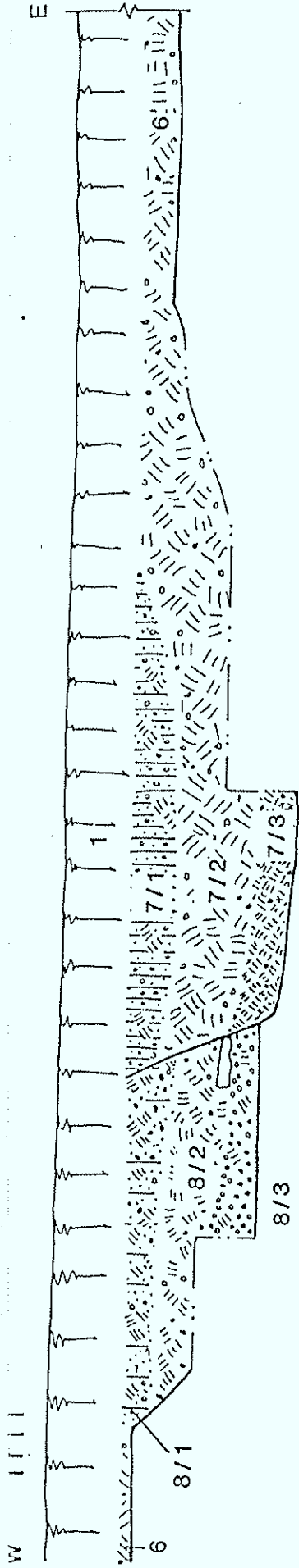
Tr48



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Fig 6



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Fig 7

