BRETTENHAM
MELFORD MEADOWS, THETFORD

Archaeological evaluation

October 1993

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Brettenham, Melford Meadows: archaeological evaluation of the site of a proposed residential development near Thetford, Norfolk

Summary

Fieldwalking on this site revealed two distinct surface concentrations of artefacts, a minor one in the centre of the field and a major one at the northern end, consisting mainly of prehistoric flint and Roman pottery. Subsequent trial trenching produced slight evidence for ancient activity in the centre of the field, though few features there were dated. At the northern end of the field a spread of features of varying density covered a fairly well-defined area. Most of these were probably of Roman date and indicate a settlement site in use in the later 3rd and 4th centuries and perhaps occupied for much of the Roman period. The exact layout and nature of the settlement are as yet unclear. There was no unequivocal evidence of prehistoric features, though their former existence is indicated by the finds, as is the presence of activity in the early Anglo-Saxon period.

Introduction

The site (centred c NGR TL 87758245) covers an area of almost 9 hectares (c 22 acres) adjacent to and east of the Rivers Thet and Little Ouse just to the southeast of Thetford (see Fig 1). (The precise boundaries of the site, particularly to the west, were poorly defined and in some places bore no relation to those shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale map; this caused problems which are referred to below). Known finds from the area suggested that archaeological material and deposits might be encountered here. Accordingly when an application to develop the land for housing was submitted to Breckland District Council (No. 3/93/0059) an archaeological evaluation was required in advance of the determination of the application. This evaluation took the form of field walking, accompanied by a metal detector survey. Once the results of this work had been assessed, 19 trial trenches were excavated, their location being based largely on the results of the field walking. The work was carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit for Savills (property consultants), acting for the landowner. The earlier stages of the project were overseen by Colm Moloney and the trial trenching was carried out under the supervision of Paul Booth. The site code was 17269 BRT 93 and the project archive will be held by Norfolk Museums under that code.

Topographical and archaeological background

Despite its proximity to the Rivers Thet and Little Ouse the site lies above the flood plain of these rivers, except for a small part of its extreme NW corner, where recent peat deposits were encountered (see below). The subsoil throughout the field is sand, with variable amounts of localised gravel and larger flints (the latter being encountered only at the southern extremity of the field) and was generally very soft. The surface of the field is undulating, with a number of quite marked small hollows, particularly at the northern end. The field had been pasture before the recent work, but local information revealed that it had been ploughed several times within the last 10 years.

The site was thought to lie outside the known limit of late Saxon and medieval Thetford, though the Castle Mill (Norfolk SMR PRN 5930) lies close to the west side of the site. Two palaeolithic hand axes (PRN 5800) are known from just north of the site. Within the area of the field itself a number of metal detected finds are known. These include 63 Roman coins, ranging in date from Tiberius to Arcadius but mainly of the 3rd and 4th centuries, a Roman steelyard weight and an Anglo-Saxon cruciform brooch. The Thetford area is well known for activity of the late Iron Age and Roman periods, and the find spot of an important late Roman treasure is roughly 3 km distant from the present site.

Field Walking (Figs 2-6)

The field was under grass before work commenced, so it was necessary to have it ploughed preparatory to surface collection of artefacts. The collection was carried out along transects spaced at 20 m intervals aligned north-south on the National Grid. Collection units (stints) were also of 20 m length. The transects and stints were defined respectively by a letter and a number indicating the distance from the starting point (south end) of the transect (see Fig 2). The numerical value is always that of the mid point of the stint in question (ie B/30 indicates transect B, second stint - the midpoint between 20 m and 40 m).

The principal artefact classes recovered in the fieldwalking were flint, pottery and tile and small quantities of a number of miscellaneous categories. All the main finds categories occurred in clearly defined concentrations, mainly in the northern part of the field (for further discussion see below). Computer generated plots were produced of most of the artefact categories. Those for flint, burnt flint, Roman and Anglo-Saxon pottery and undated tile are reproduced here (Figs 3-6).

Flint by Philippa Bradley and Frances Healy

A total of one hundred and twenty-seven pieces of struck flint and twenty-two pieces of burnt unworked flint were recovered from fieldwalking. The material has suffered some plough-damage and is generally lightly corticated; occasional pieces are heavily corticated, perhaps indicating the reuse of 'old' nodules. The flint seems to be exclusively good quality chalk flint.

Quantification and typology
Flakes and blades 113
Cores/core fragments 4 (3 and 1 fragment)
Core rejuvenation flake (tablet) 1
Irregular waste 2
Retouched 7
Burnt unworked flint 22

In terms of technology the collection is characterised by unsystematic, mostly hard-hammer flaking and would seem to be of Bronze Age date. There are frequent hinge fractures and other mis-hits. There is some evidence for slightly more controlled flaking; blades and blade-like flakes were recovered (H/30, I/190, K/90, M/210, O/70, O/170, P/130, P/150, Q/30, R/70, R/110, S/70). Although the majority of these have been hard-hammer struck and may be accidental rather than deliberate removals. A hard-hammer struck flake from L/250 has previous parallel blade scars on its dorsal face and there is evidence for platform preparation. Soft-hammer struck blades, blade-like flakes and flakes occur (G/90, Q/150, R/90), some pieces also show evidence for platform preparation (Q/150 and possibly F/150). A core rejuvenation flake (tablet) from J/70 also indicates some care was being exercised during knapping. Some of the blade material may be of Neolithic date.

The cores recovered are generally unsystematically worked, with one, two or more platforms (J/70, E/210, O/210, P/10). They have all been extensively worked and do not appear to have been prepared prior to, or during flaking.

Retouched forms are mostly fairly undiagnostic and consist of four scrapers, (K/150, K/190, O/50 burnt, Q/130), one ? piercer, (D/70), one backed knife (O/90), and a miscellaneous retouched piece (O/150). The scrapers are neatly retouched and are probably of Neolithic or Bronze Age in date. The backed knife may also be of this date. The end and side scraper from K/150 is invasively retouched and may be early Bronze Age in date. The piercer has a long point and may be mid to late Bronze Age in date.

Burnt and calcined flint was recovered from transects I, J, L and N. Some of the fragments are fairly

large (80-150 g). A concentration seems to occur in transect L. Heavily calcined flint is frequently found on Bronze Age sites.

The collection is typical of the many from the East Anglian Breckland in raw material and composition. There is no obvious Grime's Graves Floorstone. There is an obvious concentration of flint in the N part of the field.

Pottery

The pottery was almost entirely of Roman date. 233 sherds were recovered, of which only one was post-medieval, five were perhaps early Anglo-Saxon and the remainder were probably Roman, though a very few sherds occurring within the main concentration of Roman material could have been of pre- or post-Roman date.

The Roman material consisted primarily of reduced coarse wares, the bulk of which would have been of relatively local origin. Many of these were undiagnostic sand tempered body sherds which do not permit close dating. They did however include a few sherds in a distinct, micaceous fabric consistent with products of the Wattisfield industry. There was a single reduced sherd in a grog tempered fabric for which a 1st century AD date is likely, and some of the sand tempered reduced wares might also have been of early Roman date.

There was a small extra-regional component in the assemblage. This included a single samian ware sherd (the only continental import) and fine wares from the Nene Valley, Oxfordshire and Much Hadham industries. A small number of shell tempered sherds also occurred. Most of these were probably late Roman products, perhaps from the production site at Harrold (Beds). A single oxidised sherd with a characteristic combed finish may have been from a large jar produced in the Horningsea kilns, though these vessels are usually reduced.

The diagnostic material is thus generally of later Roman date, and it is likely that the bulk of the Roman material is of this date, though there are at least a few sherds which suggest that there may have been some activity on the site throughout the Roman period.

Other finds

The most important of the other finds from the fieldwalking (in numerical terms) was tile. Some 179 fragments of brick and tile were recovered, but this consisted mainly of small fragments and included no diagnostically Roman material (definable on the basis of distinctive fabrics, tile/brick types or the thickness of smaller fragments). A few pieces were clearly of post-medieval date, and the great majority of the material is likely to have been of this date.

The remaining material included animal bone, shell, clay pipe, coal, iron slag and occasional iron nails and other fragments. A small fragment of dark blue glass from S/50 might have been Roman, and if so is likely to be of 1st-2nd century date rather than later.

Summary of field walking results

There was a scatter of flintwork across the field, but the material was particularly concentrated at the northern end, with a lesser concentration in the central area. Most of the burnt flint occurred in the central part of the field and on the southwest margin of the main, northern flint scatter. The concentration of Roman pottery and of undated tile was even more markedly confined to the northern end of the field, though the centres of the two distributions did not coincide exactly, that of the pottery being stronger to the northeast of the area, and that of the tile stronger to the southwest. The distributions suggest that at least some of the tile should be seen as being of Roman date. Nevertheless, the character of the material did not suggest this and it was noticeable during the trenching phase of the project that other modern building material (20th century brick and concrete

fragments), while not numerous, did occur almost exclusively on the surface of the northern part of the field.

While the majority of artefact concentrations indicated that the major focus of both prehistoric and Roman activity was at the northern end of the field there was a significant secondary scatter of flint in the centre of the field. It was also in this area that five pottery sherds of probable early Anglo-Saxon date were found, suggesting a possible minor focus of activity of that date away from the main centre of the Roman settlement to the north.

Metal-detecting survey

A metal detector was used in conjunction with the field walking to enhance the recovery of metal objects in the initial survey. This was largely unsuccessful. Four iron nails (one a long spike) and three other iron fragments (a ?buckle and two pieces of sheet/strip) were recovered. No non-ferrous objects were found, which suggests that the field has already been extensively worked by metal detector operators who have removed coins and other copper alloy objects but have not recovered iron. The record (above) of 63 Roman coins and other objects is consistent with this.

Trial trenching

Nineteen trenches were dug using a 360° excavator with a 1.85 m wide ditching bucket. All were 30 m in length unless otherwise stated. The trenches were excavated to the top of the natural subsoil and were then hand cleaned and any identifiable features examined and recorded as necessary. The soft sand subsoil was particularly susceptible to disturbance of a number of types. The most common of these were animal and tree root activity, which were widespread in many of the trenches. Modern ploughing had also disturbed the subsoil, but only the most recent ploughing operation had left clearly identifiable marks in it. In many cases the character of marks visible at the interface of the topsoil and the natural subsoil was unclear, so machining was often taken a little deeper to clarify these issues, and in particular to ensure that poorly defined features, especially those of earlier prehistoric date, were not missed through being concealed by superficial disturbance of the subsoil. In some cases 'natural' features (ie those caused by plant and animal disturbance) were excavated and recorded, but such features were generally ignored when there was little reasonable doubt about their character. The extensive root and animal disturbance may have had a considerable affect on the location of artefacts. It certainly explains the occasional occurrence of objects within the 'natural' subsoil. This was particularly a problem in trench 4 (see below).

In view of the very soft nature of the soils it is unsurprising that very few deposits survived between the recent ploughsoil and the top of the subsoil. Localised deposits of this type did occur, but did not form a consistent pattern in that some overlaid the fills of features cut into the subsoil and others were cut by such features. The distinction between the recent ploughsoil, earlier possible ploughsoils and other deposits (including, in trench 18, accumulation layers over or upper fills of Roman features) was in any case extremely difficult. All such deposits tended to be very similar in colour and texture.

A 1 m square of topsoil was excavated by hand at one end of most of the trenches. This was intended as a check on the machine excavation, to determine the density of artefacts which might have gone unnoticed in the removal of the topsoil by machine. In fact almost none of the hand dug test pits produced any objects of any kind, emphasising the generally low level of artefactual material (notwithstanding the results from the formal fieldwalking) on the site.

The trenches fell into three principal groups. The majority of the trenches, 1-10 and 18 and 19, were sited in the northern part of the field to define and characterise the apparent foci of prehistoric and Roman activity. Trenches 18 and 19 were opened towards the end of the excavation in order to clarify the extent of the settlement focus evident in trenches 1-4. Trenches 11-14 were located in the central

part of the field where flint and Anglo-Saxon sherds had occurred. Trenches 15-17 were quite widely spread in the southern part of the field, where surface collection had produced nothing beyond a general scatter of flint. The description of the trenches is in numerical order except that trenches 18 and 19, at the very northern end of the site, are described first. Plans (at a scale of 1:100) and sections (usually at 1:20) are only given for those trenches in which significant archaeological features occurred.

All the trenches except 18 and 19 were aligned on the National Grid, either north-south or east-west. Orientations in the description of these trenches are therefore in relation to grid north. In trenches 18 and 19, aligned roughly north-south and east-west respectively, true north-south and east-west orientations have been assumed for the purposes of the description of the features. The material comprising all the deposits is sand, unless otherwise specified.

Trench descriptions

Trench 18 (aligned c N-S) Fig 7

This was the last of the trenches to be excavated. Located at the extreme N end of the site, it contained the deepest and apparently best-preserved archaeological deposits, though the definition of some of the features presented considerable problems. The topsoil/ploughsoil in this trench, generally c 0.30 m deep, may have been up to c 0.40 m deep in places. It was indistinguishable from a number of substantial underlying layers or feature fills. The wide extent of these features meant that they did not appear as discrete entities during the initial machining of the trench, and in places up to c 0.40 m of undiagnostic layer or feature fill may have been removed in the machining because it could not be differentiated from the overlying deposits nor did it have defined edges. Pressure of time at this stage in the project meant that very few features were excavated by hand. While a considerable density of features is therefore demonstrated, their depth and character is not generally known.

At the N end of the trench a probable pit (1804) c 0.90 m across projected from the E baulk of the trench. Immediately to the S of this was an E-W aligned ditch or gully c 0.60 m wide (1806). This cut the yellow-brown subsoil 1801 and an adjacent, darker brown sand 1802 which may have represented discoloured subsoil or possibly (but less likely) the fill of an earlier feature or features. 1802 was cut to the E by a NNE-SSW aligned edge (1831), probably of a ditch or gully some 0.70 m wide. An E-W edge adjacent to 1831 presumably belonged to a different feature, filled with 1807 to the S. There was a slight suggestion that 1831 cut 1807, but its fill was substantially indistinguishable from 1807 (and 1808 to the S of it). These perhaps filled a hollow or, more likely, a complex of features bounded to the S by a very clear E-W aligned edge (1809) cut in the subsoil 1801. This may have corresponded to the E-W edge near 1831, 8 m to the N, but another clear edge in the subsoil (1801) running NNE from 1809 reflects the alignment of 1831 to the N and suggests that a number of different but indistinct features are present. All the fills were of very dark greyish brown sand and produced Roman pottery (mainly, where identifiable, of late Roman date) and animal bone.

S of 1809 were a number of discrete features, probable pits (1811, 1817 (which may have represented more than one feature) and 1819) and postholes (1813, 1815, 1821 and 1823). To the S of these features was a NE-SW aligned edge (1829) which formed the northern boundary of another extensive spread of very dark grey-brown sand (1826 and 1828) similar to 1807 and 1808 to the N. A short length of gully (1825) projected northwestwards from this edge, but the relationship between the two was not discernible. Repeated cleaning suggested that this southern spread of dark deposits may have had an irregular southern boundary at the extreme end of the trench. Within it lay a fairly well-defined patch of flint cobbles (1827) forming a roughly rectilinear block c 1.30 m SW-NE by c 0.75 m NW-SE, in a matrix of brown sand with chalk flecks. Its relationship to the dark sand layers 1826 and 1828 is uncertain but they were probably subsequent to the feature rather than cut by it. The function of this feature is uncertain but it could perhaps have formed part of an unmortared foundation for a structure. Just to the SE of 1827 was a cache of 20 iron nails (small find no. 2). These were initially thought to be Roman but subsequent inspection suggested that they were of relatively modern date. It is assumed that they were intrusive in context 1828 in which they appeared to occur.

Trench 19 (aligned c E-W) Fig 8

The topsoil/ploughsoil in this trench (1900) was c 0.28-0.30 m thick over the natural subsoil (1901). A number of features, principally linear ones with a broad E-W alignment, were observed cutting the subsoil. The largest of these features, 1920, a shallow ditch c 0.90 m wide, appeared to terminate just inside the W end of the trench. Its fill (1915) was of brown sand which contrasted with the darker grey brown of most of the other feature fills in this trench. 1920 disappeared beneath the N baulk of the trench, but was traceable for about 9 m E from its terminal. A substantial ?posthole (1918), c 0.40 m across and almost 0.50 m deep, lay a little to the E of the point at which 1920 ceased to be visible. 1914, adjacent to 1918, may have been the fill of a similar feature lying mostly beneath the N baulk of the trench, but it was not examined.

E again of these features was the junction of two roughly E-W aligned gullies, 1912 and 1909. 1912 lay mostly beneath the N baulk of the trench and was not excavated, its width is uncertain. 1909 was variable in width, but where sectioned it was c 0.40 m wide and 0.52 m deep, with steeply sloping sides and a flat bottom. Its total length within the trench was c 9 m. It may have terminated at the E end where it met 1912. The relationship between the two was uncertain. It appeared to be obscured by a distinct oval patch of very dark sand which may well have been a later natural disturbance, perhaps a tree hole. A further gully, 1907, rather straighter than 1909 and 1912 and aligned roughly WNW-ESE, projected some 2 m into the trench from the N baulk and then terminated roughly in line with the point at which 1909 either terminated at its E end or, more likely, turned out of the trench to the S. Within the space defined by the gullies was a further posthole (1916). The only other archaeological feature in the trench was another gully, c 0.35 m wide (1903), this time on a NW-SE alignment, at the extreme E end. This feature and gully 1909 each produced two Roman reduced ware sherds, but dating evidence was otherwise lacking. The plan and variations in the character of the fills of the various features suggest that several phases of activity are represented. All may have been of Roman date, but this cannot be certain.

Trench 1 (aligned N-S) Fig 9

This trench lay on the NW edge of the field and at its N end sloped down towards the narrow floodplain of the River Thet. Beneath the topsoil (100), which was generally c 0.30 m deep but at the N end up to c 0.37 m thick, the subsoil (101), of soft yellow-brown sand, showed discolouration at its extreme N end which on the evidence of trench 6 (see below) was consistent with the proximity of waterlogged deposits. In the NW corner of the trench and extending 1.60 m southwards from it was a fairly steep sloping-sided cut (114) c 0.65 deep. The lowest fill of this feature, 115, was a thin layer of dark brown peaty sand, overlaid by a dark grey sand (116) and a lighter reddish-brown sand (117). This sequence was very similar to that seen filling the natural hollow across which trench 6 was cut (see below), but in trench 1 the profile of 114 suggested that it was an artificial rather than a natural feature. Its function is unknown.

Elsewhere in trench 1 there was extensive mottling and staining of the subsoil, much of which represented animal and root activity. The only likely archaeological features were a possible shallow ditch terminal (103), c 0.80 m wide and 0.14 m deep, which extended c 1 m into the trench from the W side, and a WNW-ESE aligned gully (113) c 0.40-0.50 m wide and 0.23 m deep. The proximity of the former feature to the edge of the of the possible habitable area of the site might suggest that it was not in fact a man made feature. None of the features produced any finds.

Trench 2 (aligned E-W) Fig 10

This trench was sited across a marked hollow in the surface of the field. The difference in elevation between the highest point (at the E end) and the lowest was just over 1 m. The ploughsoil (200) was c 0.25-0.30 m thick above a layer of loose yellow-brown sand (201) which was initially distinguished from the underlying natural subsoil but clearly derived from it. A single Roman sherd came from this layer. Near the W end of the trench 201 was cut by 207, a large pit or perhaps a natural hollow c 7

m E-W and extending beyond the width of the trench to N and S. This feature had a well-defined edge on its W side, where it was approximately 0.65 m deep. To the E it became shallower and its E edge was less well-defined. The fill (206) of the feature was of yellow-brown slightly silty sand and contained no finds.

Towards the E end of the trench a small pit (205) projected a little way from the S edge. It was at least 0.76 m across (E-W) and perhaps c 0.50 m deep. It contained a collection of modern pottery and glass very similar to that in feature 1109 in trench 11 (see below). At least one further modern pit was identifiable in the N section of the trench owing to the presence of rusty iron fragments. There may have been a number of such features, dug barely below the level of the topsoil and therefore largely destroyed by recent ploughing.

At the E end of the trench was a NE-SW aligned gully c 0.42 m wide and 0.14 m deep. Its alignment suggested a Roman date but it produced no finds.

Trench 3 (aligned N-S) Fig 11

This trench was located in the centre of the relatively high ground in the northern part of the field. With trench 18 it produced the greatest density of Roman features.

The modern topsoil/ploughsoil was up to c 0.40 m thick. It overlaid the yellow brown natural sand subsoil (338) but in the N half of the trench also sealed a further possible ploughsoil (334) perhaps as much as 0.38 m thick. This deposit overlaid a number of feature fills. Towards the N end of the trench the subsoil 338 was also overlaid by 337, a layer of mottled yellow-grey sand extending up to c 4.50 m N-S. This was of uncertain depth but may have been another natural deposit.

Cut features in the trench were generally discrete and non-linear. N of 337, in the extreme NW corner of the trench, was part of a pit at least 0.90 m across and c 0.75 m deep (336). Its fill (335) was overlaid by layer 334. Some 8 m further S was a probable pit complex (333), the complex outline suggesting more than one cut, but distinctions between fills being otherwise unidentifiable. S again were two small oval pits (331 and 329), lying in a relatively slightly disturbed area, in contrast to the intense activity seen in the southern third of the trench.

At the northern end of this densely-featured area lay two small slots (323 and 325), roughly at right angles to one another. They were respectively 0.30 m and 0.25 m wide, with sloping-sided profiles which rather argue against the idea that these features might have been beam slots for a timber structure. The presence of a structure may be implied by a row of postholes (309, 313, 319 and 321, with two larger possible features further N), which ran very roughly parallel to the line of 323. Further small postholes and pits in this area were 315, 307, 311 and 317. It is unknown if all these features were contemporary, but the plan perhaps suggests more than one phase of construction.

At the S end of the trench were further pits. The largest of these, 305, was of unusual form, up to c 2.50 m long N-S but apparently with one rounded and one squared end. The sides sloped fairly steeply and the base was flat. S of 305 a smaller pit or a large posthole c 0.50 m across (302) lay partly beneath the W baulk.

A number of the features in the trench produced Roman pottery, mostly reduced wares for which close dating was impossible. Only layer 334, above the features at the N end of the trench, produced a sherd (of Nene Valley colour coated ware) which suggested a later Roman date. Curiously the large pit (305) at the S end of the trench, though almost half emptied, only produced a single flint flake. It is possible therefore that this feature was not of Roman date. Enough of the other pits and postholes, however, produced Roman pottery to suggest that most of these features are likely to have been of Roman date.

Trench 4 (aligned E-W)

Despite its location on the higher ground at the N end of the field this trench produced no certain archaeological features. The topsoil/ploughsoil (400), c 0.25-0.30 m thick, overlaid a very mixed horizon (401) from c 0.30 m up to a maximum of c 0.50 m thick above the relatively less disturbed natural subsoil (403) of yellow sand. A sample box 2 m in length and the width of the trench was excavated between 6 and 8 m E of the W end of the trench. A concentration of irregular dark marks (402) in 401 just to the E of this box was also examined in some detail but it seems certain that these features represent tree holes. The extent of the root disturbance was such that Roman sherds were recovered from context 403 as well as 400-402. Most of these were reduced wares which are not closely datable, but they also included single sherds of characteristically late-Roman fine wares from the Oxfordshire and Much Hadham industries. It is possible that there had originally been (?late) Roman features in the western half of the trench, which were subsequently completely obliterated by later tree growth.

In the eastern part of the trench the only identifiable feature was a straight sided cut (405), aligned SSW-NNE, for a modern plastic pipe.

Trench 5 (aligned N-S)

This was the most easterly of all the trenches. Like trench 2, it was partly sited over a distinct hollow in the surface of the field, running from the base of this hollow up to its northern lip. The modern ploughsoil/topsoil, up to c 0.30 m deep, sealed an earlier deposit, perhaps also a ploughsoil (504) which survived beneath it in the deepest part of the hollow, to a maximum depth of 0.12 m. 504 was traced for c 10 m N from the S end of the trench, beyond which point it had presumably been truncated by 500, which directly overlaid the natural subsoil (501) in the northern part of the trench. The only feature cutting 501 was a NW-SE aligned cut c 0.25 m wide and c 0.45 m deep which contained a modern pipe as in feature 405 (above).

The only artefact from this trench was a single large fragment of Roman tile from the machined topsoil.

Trench 6 (aligned E-W) Fig 12

This trench was mainly situated in the low lying floodplain of the River Thet at the western margin of the site. Only its extreme E end sloped quite sharply up above this level. Much of the trench contained deep deposits of peat and peaty sand. These were partly excavated by machine (to a maximum depth of 1.80 m below the ground level), but their bottom was not reached in the middle of the trench. Upon excavation the deeper parts of the trench rapidly filled with water which was subsequently augmented by very heavy rainfall. Recording was thus confined largely to the accessible parts of the E end of the trench, the evidence from which was combined with notes made at the time of the initial excavation to reconstruct a section through the sequence of deposits. The logistical problems also prevented sampling of the peat deposits. The absence of immediately adjacent, relatable and datable archaeological deposits was, however, an additional factor influencing the decision not to sample the peat.

The topsoil (600) was generally up to c 0.25 m and, while basically a sand, contained large amounts of decaying wetland grasses in its upper parts. It had only been affected by the most recent ploughing at its extreme E end, where it directly overlaid the soft yellowish brown sand of the natural subsoil (601). Between 5 and 6 m from the E end of the trench 601 faded into 602, a darker buff brown sand. This was really the same layer as 601 but owed its coloration to its proximity to waterlogged deposits.

The lowest detected layer in the sequence above 601/602 was a dark brown peat (607), the eastern edge of which was located c 13 m W of the E end of the trench at a depth of c 1.50-1.60 m below the ground surface (at roughly 8.60 m above OD). The peat deposit appeared to increase in thickness to the W. It was impossible to assess the extent to which peat deposits were interleaved with sand or peaty sand. In the middle of the trench 607 was overlaid by very dark grey brown (605), dark grey (604) and brown mottled grey (603) sands. These deposits extended successively further E and may

represent a fairly lengthy sequence of infill of the E edge of the natural hollow of the flood plain of the river. The maximum combined depth of the sands was probably about 1.30 m.

A layer of clean yellow slightly sticky sand (606) extended c 6 m E from the W end of the trench, apparently directly beneath the topsoil. It was c 0.05-0.10 m thick and appeared to rest almost immediately on top of peaty deposits. Its interpretation is uncertain, but it is most likely to represent a fairly recent flood deposit.

Trench 7 (aligned N-S) Fig 13

This trench lay at the S end of the concentration of features in the northern part of the field. It was notable for a number of WNW-ESE aligned ditches.

The modern ploughsoil/topsoil (701) attained a maximum depth of c 0.40 m and generally overlaid the natural yellow-brown sand subsoil (717), except at the extreme N end of the trench where a deposit of dark brown sand (702) extended up to c 5.50 m into the trench. This was probably a variant of the subsoil rather than a feature fill.

Some 5 m s of 702 was the most northerly of the WNW-ESE ditches (714). This was a substantial feature, up to c 2.30 m wide and 1 m deep, with sloping sides and an irregular base. Parallel to 714 to the S was 712, with a remarkably square profile, vertical sided and flat bottomed. There was no evidence in plan for the relationship between the two features, a possible linking feature being almost certainly the result of animal disturbance, but there was a slight hint in a section (which collapsed before it could be drawn) that 714 was later than 712. The latter produced no finds. There were two sherds from the upper part of 713, the principal fill of the former. One of these was Roman, the other almost certainly of Anglo-Saxon date, but their location close to the top of the infill sequence means that they are of limited value for understanding the date of the feature, particularly in view of the potential extent of post-depositional disturbance across the site. Nevertheless, if taken at face value the sherds imply an early Anglo-Saxon terminus post quem for the upper fill 714.

Some 1.50 m S of 712 was a small ?posthole (710), and c 6 m S of 712 was a further WNW-ESE ditch or gully (708), V shaped in profile, c 0.70 m wide and 0.55 m deep. This feature appeared to cut a possible N-S aligned ditch (716) which extended southwards from the line of 708. 716 appeared in the side of 708, but was not detected in plan. It was c 0.60 m wide and 0.40 m deep. It may possibly have represented animal disturbance, but the profile, although irregular, seemed too well-defined for this to have been the case.

About 4.30 m S of the S edge of 708 the N edge of another ditch or group of ditches was located adjacent to the W baulk of the trench. The S edge of this feature (706) was quite well defined but its northern edge less so. In a slot excavated against the W baulk of the trench the N edge appeared to diverge from the S one in a way which suggested that there were perhaps two ditches, meeting roughly at right angles. If this was so, the more northerly of these features was, like the adjacent 716, unidentifiable in plan. None of these features produced any dating evidence. The fill (705) of 706 was cut by a NE-SW aligned slot c 0.40 m wide (704) for a modern pipe.

Trench 8 (aligned N-S)

The topsoil (800) in this trench was up to c 0.30 m deep and overlaid 801, the upper brown-stained surface of the natural subsoil. Particularly distinct patches of staining towards the centre of the trench were numbered 802. Also in the middle of the trench were two very distinct but irregular, black sand patches (803 and 807). These were probably tree holes and may have represented some burning of trees in situ. 807 was cut by a NE-SW aligned modern pipe trench (806), almost certainly a southerly continuation of feature 704 in trench 7 (above).

Trench 9 (aligned E-W)

The modern ploughsoil/topsoil in this trench (900) was up to c 0.40 m thick. It overlaid a patchy soft yellow-brown sand layer (901) up to 0.20 m thick in places, but completely absent in others, which appears to have filled undulations in the upper surface of a more compacted deposit of sandy gravel (902). No features were observed.

Trench 10 (aligned N-S) Fig 14

The modern ploughsoil/topsoil (1000), generally, c 0.30-0.35 m thick, for the most part directly overlaid the natural subsoil (1001) and a number of natural features within it. The only archaeological feature of significance was a ditch, aligned almost N-S, which extended from the S end of the trench for c 11.50 m before disappearing beneath the E baulk. A small easterly extension to the main trench was excavated by machine in order to expose the full width of this feature. The resulting section showed that the ditch was of two periods and cut an earlier layer of brown sand 0.15-0.20 m thick (1011), which was only seen E of the ditches. The relationship between 1011 and 1002, the earlier of the ditch cuts, is unknown because it was completely removed by the later ditch cut (1012). There was no evidence in the trench W baulk for the presence of 1011 to the W of 1002. The layer seems too extensive to have represented upcast from the original digging of 1002.

The initial ditch cut (1002) was at least c 1 m wide and c 0.30 m deep, with gently sloping sides. Its initial fill (1006) was of dark brown-black sand, overlaid by a lighter brown sand (1005) in turn sealed by another darker fill (1003). The later cut (1012) was c 0.60 m wide and 0.27 m deep with a curving U-shaped profile. Its fill (1004) was indistinguishable in plan from 1003, and both were similar in colour to 1011 through which 1012 was cut.

There were no finds from this trench.

Trench 11 (aligned E-W) Fig 15

This was the first of the group of trenches sited in the centre of the field to investigate a secondary flint scatter and a minor concentration of Anglo-Saxon pottery located in the field walking. The topsoil/ploughsoil depth was 0.30-0.50 m and directly overlaid the natural subsoil of soft yellow sand (1101).

The principal archaeological feature, located roughly in the centre of the trench, was a shallow but well-defined hollow (1105) which projected c 1.55 m S from the N baulk of the trench and had a maximum depth of c 0.20 m. It extended c 3.20 m along the baulk. The fill (1105) of this feature, which contained a single large 4th century sherd, overlaid or was indistinguishable from the fill (1106) of a posthole (1107), c 0.50 across and 0.44 m deep, which lay close to the SE side of 1105. It was impossible to determine if the posthole was earlier or later than 1105, but it is also possible that the two features were broadly contemporary. The interpretation of 1105 is uncertain. It could represent the fill of a natural hollow or a shallow pit, but it is also possible that it is the truncated base of a sunken featured building of early Anglo-Saxon date. The association of posthole 1106 would be consistent with this interpretation, since most features of this type had a post at each end of the long axis. The absence of early Anglo-Saxon material is not necessarily a problem here, but serves to underline the very tentative nature of any conclusions.

Some 4 m to the SE was a further, smaller, oval posthole (1103). At the E end of the trench the corner of a large rectilinear and vertical sided cut (1109) projected from the S baulk. This proved to contain a group of modern rubbish including glass bottles and jars, a sherry glass, cups saucers and plates and tin cans. A mid 20th century date for this material seems likely.

Trench 12 (aligned N-S) Fig 16

The topsoil/ploughsoil (1200) was generally c 0.25-0.30 m thick. It overlaid a layer of brown sand (1206) up to c 0.20 m thick which extended c 13 m S from the N end of the trench. This deposit in

turn overlaid the mottled natural subsoil (1201).

It was not always clear that 1206 and 1201 were distinct deposits, but two 'features' in the northern part of the trench (1203 and 1205) were thought to be sealed by 1206 but cut 1201. 1203 was initially defined as a sub-circular feature c 0.60 m across with a marked concentration of flint nodules. Excavation showed that the sides of this feature were very difficult to define and it was eventually seen as an irregular feature c 0.90 m (N-S) and at least 0.80 m E-W, extending beneath the W baulk of the trench, with a depth of 0.28 m. It is possible that it was a natural feature. 1205, lying partly beneath the E baulk of the trench, was even less regular and was almost certainly a tree-hole or tree root feature. It was cut to the N by 1208, which almost certainly also cut the overlying layer 1206. 1208 appeared to be a large oval pit, c 2.50-3.00 m N-S and more than 1.10 m E-W, with fairly steeply sloping sides. Its maximum depth was c 0.70 m. Despite a lack of finds 1208 is more likely to have been an archaeological feature than 1203 and 1205. Its date, however, is unknown. The only sherd from the trench was a fragment of Anglo-Saxon date from the top of the subsoil (1201) towards the southern end of the trench.

Trench 13 (aligned E-W)

The topsoil/ploughsoil in this trench (1300) was up to c 0.50 m in places and overlaid the natural orange brown sand subsoil (1304). From the top of the latter deposit came a flint core (see below) and a single sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery. Small patches of dark sand in 1304 (1301, 1302 and 1303) proved on examination to be natural stains.

Trench 14 (aligned N-S)

The topsoil/ploughsoil in this trench (1401) was c 0.30 m deep and overlaid a sequence of sand deposits including layers which appeared to have burnt. None of these produced any artefacts and there were no other associated archaeological features so the sequence is presumed to represent one or more 'natural' or accidental events. The top of the basal layer of the sequence (1410, of orange sand) was c 0.90 m below the modern ground surface and was only seen at the S end of the trench in a deep cut excavated by machine to examine the geological as well as the archaeological sequence. The overlying layer (1409), a dark brown sand with lighter mottles, varied in thickness from c 0.12-0.45 m. At the N end of the trench it appeared to be directly beneath 1401. The layers overlying 1409 at the S end of the trench, 1408, 1407 and 1406, were respectively a white sand, a thin layer of black burnt sand and a clean, light yellow-brown sand, all of which extended approximately over the southern two thirds of the trench.

Two modern pipe trenches were located. One, cut 1405, was aligned c NNE-SSW at the N end of the trench. The other, cut 1403) was at right angles to 1405 and some 15 m S of it. Both contained the narrow black plastic pipe seen elsewhere on the site.

Trench 15 (aligned E-W)

This trench, like trench 14, contained a series of undated and probably naturally formed sand layers, overlaid by the topsoil/ploughsoil (1500) which was up to c 0.30 m thick.

The natural subsoil (1504) was a dark reddish brown sand with many dark mottles. In the western 5 m of the trench a brown sand (1505) lay between 1504 and 1500. In the eastern half 1504 was overlaid by 1503, 1502 and 1501, respectively light grey, very dark greyish brown and brown sands. These layers were deepest at the E end of the trench. They then rose to a point in about the middle of the trench where they were truncated by the modern ploughsoil. There were no finds from this trench.

Trench 16 (aligned N-S) Fig 17

This trench lay on the N slope down from the high point at the southern end of the field to the level but relatively low lying area of the centre of the field.

The topsoil/ploughsoil (1600) was up to c 0.50 m thick over the natural subsoil of orange sand with flints (1603). (The base of the most recent ploughing was represented by N-S aligned furrows 1608 and 1609/1610). A darker red brown sand (1602) which extended c 6.50 m from the S end of the trench beneath 1600 was also a natural deposit, containing probable tree root disturbance marks 1601.
The only significant archaeological feature was a roughly E -W aligned probable ditch (1607). This was c 1.70 m wide and 0.55 m deep, with fairly steeply sloping sides and an irregular base. It had two fills (1605 and 1604), both of brown sand. 1604 was almost indistinguishable from 1606, to the N, which may have filled an adjacent natural hollow, a northward extension of 1607 (in a secondary phase), or (perhaps more likely) have represented some sort of natural disturbance. There were no finds from this trench.

Trench 17 (aligned E-W) Fig 18

The topsoil/ploughsoil (1700) ranged from 0.20-0.40 m in thickness over the natural subsoil which, as in trench 16, consisted of orange sand with flints.

The only significant archaeological feature was a NNE-SSW aligned ditch (1708) up to c 0.90 m wide and 0.40 m deep, with moderately sloping sides, filled with yellowish-brown sand.

At the E end of the trench a possible posthole (1706) up to c 0.36 m across and 0.24 m deep lay adjacent to the N baulk, between two modern linear features, 1702 and 1704, aligned NNE-SSW. 1704, c 0.35 m wide and over 0.40 m deep, resembled the cuts for black plastic pipes seen elsewhere on the site. 1702 was a more substantial feature 1 m wide and over 0.70 m deep. Excavation was halted when a large ceramic pipe was reached in the bottom of the feature.

There were no finds from this trench.

The finds

There were relatively few artefacts from the trial trenching. Pottery was the principal material class recovered, and all other material occurred in very small quantities.

Flint by Philippa Bradley

Only eight pieces of struck flint and one burnt unworked flint were recovered from the evaluation trenches. The material is similar to that found in the fieldwalking both in composition and raw material. The eight struck pieces comprised 7 flakes and blades and a blade core.

Blades and blade-like flakes (although hard-hammer struck) are perhaps a more significant element in the group than was apparent in the field walking material. The excavated pieces included one blade and three blade-like flakes. A blade core from context 1304 would also suggest an earlier date for some of the material than the predominantly Bronze Age emphasis of the field walking finds. The core showed signs of platform preparation.

The remaining flakes are hard-hammer struck and may be Bronze Age in date. Dating is tentative owing to the small size of the assemblage, the lack of diagnostic pieces and the likelihood that the majority of the material is redeposited.

Pottery

Only 83 sherds of pottery were recovered. 80 of these were of Roman date and three were Anglo-Saxon. Material from two rubbish pits (205 and 1109) of approximately mid 20th century date was not

kept.

The Roman material was exactly comparable to that from the fieldwalking, consisting largely of reduced coarse wares (65 of the 80 sherds). The reduced ware fabrics were generally moderately sandy and usually micaceous, some containing conspicuous amounts of mica. The Wattisfield industry is the likely source of much of this material. There were very few diagnostic forms amongst these wares. A single flanged bowl of 4th century type was the only certain reduced vessel which was not a jar.

Other coarse ware fabrics were miscellaneous oxidised wares (4 sherds) and single sherds of ?early Roman grog tempered and late Roman shell tempered wares. Fine wares consisted of a single sherd of samian, two sherds each of Oxfordshire and Much Hadham fine wares (with a further possible Hadham sherd) and one certain and one possible Nene Valley colour-coated sherd. A single mortarium sherd, from a feature in trench 11, was in the Oxfordshire white colour-coated fabric, of 4th century date.

The three sherds assigned to the Anglo-Saxon period were consistent with those from the field walking thought to be of the same date. All were tempered with coarse quartz sand and most were burnished. The sherd from the top of ditch fill 703 had a slightly ridged surface, indicating the use of shallow linear indentations as a decorative technique.

Other finds

The only non-ferrous metal object was a copper alloy coin from 1826. This had been folded in antiquity, so its obverse could not be seen. A worn standing figure on the reverse might suggest a later 3rd rather than a 4th century date, but in broad terms the coin certainly belongs to the later Roman period.

Iron objects were entirely nails, single examples of which came from 330, 332 and 1200. The last of these may have been of post Roman date. A group of 20 nails was found as a hoard in context 1828. Most of these were bent and had presumably been salvaged from a structure of some kind. Most were flat with a square section, but a few round sectioned nails amongst them indicate that the group was of relatively recent date.

Building material consisted solely of five pieces of Roman tile (and a single post-medieval fragment from topsoil in trench 4). The Roman pieces were all from trenches at the N end of the field, but even so the lack of true concentrations of this material was notable. Tile types represented were a probable box flue (from trench 5), a tegula (from trench 18) and a large flat tile (from trench 3).

Twenty one pieces of animal bone were recovered. Its survival was variable. The one place where it appeared to be well preserved was in trench 18 (13 pieces were came from a number of contexts here), though even here only larger bones were seen and small bones may not have survived. The remaining fragments were from trenches 3, 4, 11 and 19, ie principally from the northern end of the site. Where it was associated with other artefacts the dating suggested that most of the bone was probably from later Roman features.

Discussion

The principal archaeological remains on this site relate to the Roman period, during at least the later part of which there was a settlement at the northern end of the field, but there are also slighter traces of activity of other periods, particularly of Bronze Age and early Anglo-Saxon date.

Prehistoric activity on the site is indicated by surface scatters of flintwork. The principal concentration of this material was at the northern end of the site, but a lesser concentration in the centre of the field, associated with burnt flint, probably also indicates a genuine focus. None of the features

examined in the course of the trial trenching could be certainly assigned a prehistoric date, but it is possible that such features still remain to be found. The quantities of flint recovered in the trenching were much smaller than those from the field walking. In view of these small quantities it is uncertain if the apparently slightly earlier bias of the excavated material is of any significance. The great majority of the flint can be assigned with some confidence to the Bronze Age.

The major concentrations of Roman features broadly reflected the pattern of the flint distribution. The most important of these was at the northern end of the field (Fig 19). This focus is defined to the west by the low lying ground immediately adjacent to the River Thet, and to the east by a total absence of Roman features in trenches 4 and 5, though it is possible that Roman deposits in the former trench had been obliterated by later tree root activity, since the 28 sherds from here represented a large proportion of the total Roman pottery recovered in the trenching.

The densest concentrations of Roman features were in trenches 18 and 3, though the character of the features in the two trenches was markedly different. In trench 18, at the northern extremity of the site, the fills of complexes of intercutting features may have been blanketed by general accumulation layers of late Roman date, perhaps forming in a slight natural hollow. Here also was the only possible trace of a stone building foundation, though it is likely that the superstructure of any buildings in this part of the site was of timber. Ceramic building material was in very short supply, though the few fragments collected from across the site hint at the presence of a building with at least one heated room. There was no direct evidence for any such building within any of the excavated trenches, however. In trench 3 there was also some evidence suggesting a timber structure or structures, but the area examined was not sufficiently extensive to permit assumptions about the size and character of these structures. The majority of the features here were pits and postholes, whereas elsewhere in the northern part of the field the most readily identifiable features were usually linear ditches and gullies. Such features were common in trenches 18 and 19, and there were also examples in trenches 1 and 2. Not all produced dating evidence, however, so in some cases a Roman date is presumed, but not proven.

The dating evidence for the Roman site seems to concentrate in the 3rd and 4th centuries, but since the majority of the pottery, consisting of reduced coarse wares of relatively local origin, is not closely datable any such conclusion should be treated with caution. A few diagnostic sherds, including two fragments of samian ware, hint at the possibility of some later 1st-2nd century occupation. The sole coin from the trial trenching is of late 3rd or 4th century date, as would have been expected, and is thus consistent with the evidence of previously known metal detected material. Taken together the artefacts and limited structural evidence suggest a settlement of low to middle status, but the occurrence of distinctive tile types (see above), if these pieces were not imported to the site from elsewhere, does suggest that a potentially higher status structure might be found somewhere within the settlement.

The southerly extent of the Roman site beyond trench 3 is uncertain. A complex of WNW-ESE aligned ditches in trench 7 is unfortunately undated, apart from the presence of one Roman and one Anglo-Saxon sherd from the upper part of the fill of one of them. It is possible, but on present evidence quite unprovable, that one or more of these ditches marked the southern limit of the Roman site. South of here only two Roman sherds were found in each of trenches 9 and 11. The sherds in trench 11 were both from feature fills, one from a large shallow pit (1105) which has been suggested (above) could possibly represent the base of a truncated sunken featured building of Anglo-Saxon date. This is again a very tentative conclusion, but the very slight ceramic evidence can be used to support it, insofar as the distribution of Anglo-Saxon sherds from the site (five from fieldwalking and a further three from the trenching) does centre on the area of trenches 11-13 (indicated as a minor concentration of features on Fig 19). None of these sherds is securely stratified, however.

No dating material of any kind was recovered from the trenches at the southern end of the field, and there was only one significant (linear) feature in each of trenches 16 and 17. It is quite possible, but unprovable, that the principal undated features in the trenches away from the focus of Roman

settlement were also of Roman date. These would include the NNE-SSW aligned ditches in trenches 17 and 10 and the probable ESE-WNW aligned ditch in trench 16. The NNE-SSW alignment was a common one for Roman features in trenches 18 and 3 at the northern end of the site. It is even possible to see the features in trenches 17 and 10 as part of the same system, since they were of similar dimensions, profile and alignment, but this is quite unprovable. It is noteworthy, however, that the ditch in trench 10 did not appear in trench 9 just to the north. It must therefore have terminated short of this trench or turned sharply to east or west.

There was no datable evidence for activity on the site between the Anglo-Saxon period and the 20th century. Pits in trenches 2 and 11, containing distinctive (and very similar) assemblages of recent crockery, glass and tin cans, are suggested as relating to the use of the field as a military camp during the 2nd world war. A scatter of relatively recent building material at the northern end of the field might possibly also relate to this, but such material could have been introduced at other times. The network of 50 mm black plastic pipes across the field presumably indicates a relatively recent programme (of drainage?), perhaps associated with some of the more recent ploughing..

Ploughing, including the work done this year, has severely damaged deposits across most of the field with the result that, in general, only features cut into the subsoil survive. There are sufficient undulations in the field, however, to suggest that better preservation of deposits may prevail locally, as appears to be demonstrated in trench 18. Not only deposits are relatively well-preserved at this point, but artefacts are generally in good condition and animal bone also survives well, though this does not seem to have been the case in other parts of the field. There is also the potential for the recovery of waterlogged environmental material immediately to the west of the Roman site, particularly if these deposits can be directly related to archaeological features, which was not possible within the scope of the evaluation.

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October 1993

Appendix: Table of evaluation trench contexts

This table provides a summary of information for each context recorded in the evaluation. More extensive records are held in the project archive. The trenches are listed in th eoreder in which they are described in the text above. All dimensions are in metres and a + sign indicates that thecontext in question extended beyond the confines of the trench.

CONTEXT	TYPE	LENGTH	WIDTH/ DIAMETER	DEPTH (MAX)	FINDS	DATE	COMMENTS
Trench 18							
1800	Layer	30 m +	1.90 +	0.40	-	Modern	Ploughsoil
1801	Layer	30 m +	1.90 +	?	-	?	Subsoil
1802	Layer	3.20	0.90	?	-	?	?Subsoil or possible feature fill
1803	Fill	-	0.90	?	-	?RB	Fill of 1804
1804	Cut	-	0.90	?	-	?RB	Pit
1805	Fill	1.90 +	0.75	?	-	?RB	Fill of 1806
1806	Cut	1.90 +	0.75	?	-	?RB	Ditch/gully
1807	?Fill	c 6.00	1.90 +	?	3 RB sherds 7 bone frags	RB	Layer filling or overlying several features
1808	Fill	c 2.20	1.90 +	?	4 RB sherds 1 RB tile 1 bone frag	RB	Fill contiguous with 1807, in 1809
1809	Cut	?	1.90 +	?	-	RB	S edge of group of features
1810	Fill	-	0.80	0.45 +	1 RB sherd	RB	Fill of 1811
1811	Cut	-	0.80	0.45 +	-	RB	?Pit
1812	Fill	-	0.35	0.15	-	?RB	Fill of 1813
1813	Cut	-	0.35	0.15	-	?RB	Posthole
1814	Fill	0.28	0.30	0.14	-	?RB	Fill of 1815
1815	Cut	0.28	0.30	0.14	-	?RB	?Posthole
1816	Fill	1.30 +	1.10	?	2 bone frags	?RB	Fill of N part of 1817, cf 1830
1817	Cut	2.50 +	1.10	?	-	?RB	?Intercutting pits or irregular gully/hollow
1818	Fill	1.30	0.50	?	-	?RB	Fill of 1819
1819	Cut	1.30	0.50	?	-	?RB	?Oval pit
1820	Fill	-	0.18	?	-	?RB	Fill of 1821
1821	Cut	-	0.18	?	-	?RB	?Posthole
1822	Fill	0.30	0.25	?	-	?RB	Fill of 1823
1823	Cut	0.30	0.25	?	-	?RB	?Posthole
1824	Fill	0.90	0.16	?	-	?RB	Fill of 1825
1825	Cut	0.90	0.16	?	-	?RB	Gully

1826	Fill	8.50	1.90 +	?	Late 3-4C coin 4 RB sherds 2 bone frags	RB	Fill, probably of a number of features, or an accumulation over fills in cut 1829 etc
1827	Stone	1.30	0.75	?	-	RB	?Wall foundation
1828	?Fill	c 2.20	1.90 +	?	5 RB sherds 1 bone frag 20 Fe nails	?RB	?Fill or layer, ?continuous with 1826 to N
1829	Cut	2.80	?	?	-	RB	Contains 1826
1830	Fill	1.40	1.00	?	-	?RB	Fill of 1817
1831	Cut	2.50 +	?0.75	?	-	?RB	?Ditch
1832	Fill	2.50 +	?0.75	?	-	?RB	Fill of 1831
Trench 19							
1900	Layer	30 m +	1.90 +	0.30	-	Modern	Ploughsoil
1901	Layer	30 m +	1.90 +	?	-	?	Subsoil
1902	Fill	2.20 +	0.35	?	2 RB sherds	RB	Fill of 1903
1903	Cut	2.20 +	0.35	?	-	RB	Gully
1904	?Fill	0.70	0.14	?	-	?	Fill of natural feature
1905	?Fill	0.80 +	0.70	?	-	?	?Feature fill
1906	Fill	2.00 +	0.32	?	-	?	Fill of 1907
1907	Cut	2.00 +	0.32	?	-	?	Gully
1908	?Fill	2.20	1.70 +	?	-	?	Natural feature or stain
1909	Cut	9.00 +	0.70	0.52	-	RB	Gully
1910	Fill	9.00 +	0.70	0.52	2 RB sherds Fired clay frag	RB	Fill of 1909
1911	Fill	2.70 +	0.30 +	?	-	?RB	Fill of 1912
1912	Cut	2.70 +	0.30 +	?	-	?RB	Gully
1913	Fill	-	0.40	0.12	-	?	Fill of 1918
1914	?Fill	0.60	0.27 +	?	-	?	?Feature fill
1915	Fill	9.00 +	0.90	0.20	-	?	Fill of 1920
1916	Cut	-	0.28	0.17	-	?	Posthole
1917	Fill	-	0.28	0.17	1 bone frag	?	Fill of 1916
1918	Cut	-	0.40	0.49	-	?	Posthole
1919	Fill	-	0.40	0.37	-	?	Fill of 1918
1920	Cut	9.00 +	0.90	0.20	-	?	Gully
Trench 1							
100	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.37	-	Modern	Ploughsoil
101	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	?	-	-	Subsoil
102	Fill	0.97 +	0.80	0.14	-	?	Fill of 103

103	Cut	0.97 +	0.80	0.14	-	?	?Ditch
104	Fill	?	1.00	0.11	-	?	Fill of 105
105	?Cut	?	1.00	0.11	-	?	?Natural feature
106	Fill	1.60	1.20	0.40	-	?	Fill of 107
107	?Cut	1.60	1.20	0.40	-	?	?Natural feature
108	Fill	-	0.60	0.14	-	?	Fill of 109
109	?Cut	-	0.60	0.14	-	?	?Natural feature
110	Fill	-	0.50	0.25	-	?	Fill of 111
111	?Cut	-	0.50	0.25	-	?	?Natural feature
112	Fill	1.90 +	0.50	0.25	-	?	Fill of 113
113	Cut	1.90 +	0.50	0.25	-	?	Gully
114	Cut	1.60 +	1.50 +	0.65 +	-	?	?Pit
115	Fill	-	0.35 +	0.06	-	?	Fill of 114
116	Fill	-	1.32 +	0.20	-	?	Fill of 114
117	Fill	1.60 +	1.50 +	0.42	-	?	Top fill of 114
Trench 2							
200	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.30	-	Modern	Ploughsoil
201	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	?	1 RB sherd	?	Subsoil
202	Fill	1.90 +	0.42	0.14	-	?	Fill of 103
203	Cut	1.90 +	0.42	0.14	-	?RB	Gully
204	Fill	0.35 +	0.76	0.46	20C pot etc	20th C	Fill of 205
205	Cut	0.35 +	0.76	0.46	-	20th C	Pit
206	Fill	1.85 +	7.00	0.65	-	?	Fill of 207
207	Cut	1.85 +	7.00	0.65	-	?	?Pit
Trench 3							
300	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.40	-	Modern	Ploughsoil
301	Fill	-	0.50	0.45	1 RB sherd	RB	Fill of 302
302	Cut	-	0.50	0.45	-	RB	?Posthole
303	Fill	2.20	1.10 +	0.70	1 flint flake	?	Fill of 305
304	Fill	0.80 +	0.28	0.30	-	?	Bottom fill of 304
305	Cut	2.20	1.10 +	0.70	-	?	Pit
306	Fill	-	0.30	0.15	-	?RB	Fill of 307
307	Cut	-	0.30	0.15	-	?RB	Posthole
308	Fill	0.70	0.45	0.12	-	?	Fill of 309
309	Cut	0.70	0.45	0.12	-	?	?Posthole/pit
310	Fill	0.45	0.35	0.21	-	?	Fill of 311
311	Cut	0.45	0.35	0.21	-	?	?Posthole

312	Fill	0.30	0.25	0.25	1 RB sherd	RB	Fill of 313
313	Cut	0.30	0.25	0.25	-	RB	Posthole
314	Fill	0.26	0.14	0.12	-	?	Fill of 315
315	Cut	0.26	0.14	0.12	-	?	Posthole
316	Fill	0.32	0.25	0.38	-	?	Fill of 317
317	Cut	0.32	0.25	0.38	-	?	Posthole
318	Fill	0.32	0.24	0.30	1 RB sherd	RB	Fill of 319
319	Cut	0.32	0.24	0.30	-	RB	Posthole
320	Fill	0.40	0.30	0.20	1 RB sherd 2 bone frags	RB	Fill of 321
321	Cut	0.40	0.30	0.20	-	RB	Posthole
322	Fill	2.20 +	0.30	0.20	-	?	Fill of 323
323	Cut	2.20 +	0.30	0.20	-	?RB	?Beam slot
324	Fill	1.40 +	0.25	0.12	-	?	Fill of 325
325	Cut	1.40 +	0.25	0.12	-	?RB	?Beam slot
326	Fill	0.29	0.20	0.28	2 RB sherds	RB	Fill of 327
327	Cut	0.29	0.20	0.28	-	RB	Posthole
328	Fill	0.70	0.30	0.28	-	?	Fill of 329
329	Cut	0.70	0.30	0.28	-	?RB	Pit/?gully
330	Fill	0.60 +	0.40	0.12	Fe nail	?RB	Fill of 331
331	Cut	0.60 +	0.40	0.12	-	?RB	Pit/?gully
332	Fill	1.80	1.40 +	0.45	6 RB sherds Fe nail	RB	Fill of 333
333	Cut (s)	1.80	1.40 +	0.45	-	RB	Pit complex
334	Layer	9.00 +	1.85 +	0.38	9 RB sherds 1 RB tile	?RB or later	?Plough soil
335	Fill	-	0.90 +	0.75	-	?	Fill of 336
336	Cut	-	0.90 +	0.75	-	?	Pit
337	Layer	4.50	1.85 +	?	4 RB sherds	?	?Contaminated natural deposit
338	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	?	-	?	Subsoil
Trench 4							
400	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.30	4 RB sherds 1 PM tile	Modern	Ploughsoil
401	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.50	10 RB sherds 1 bone frag 4 fired clay frags	?RB	?Very disturbed Roman Layer, or natural deposit
402	Fill(s)	10 m	1.85	0.30	9 RB sherds 2 RB tiles 1 bone frag	?	?Post-Roman disturbance of layer 401

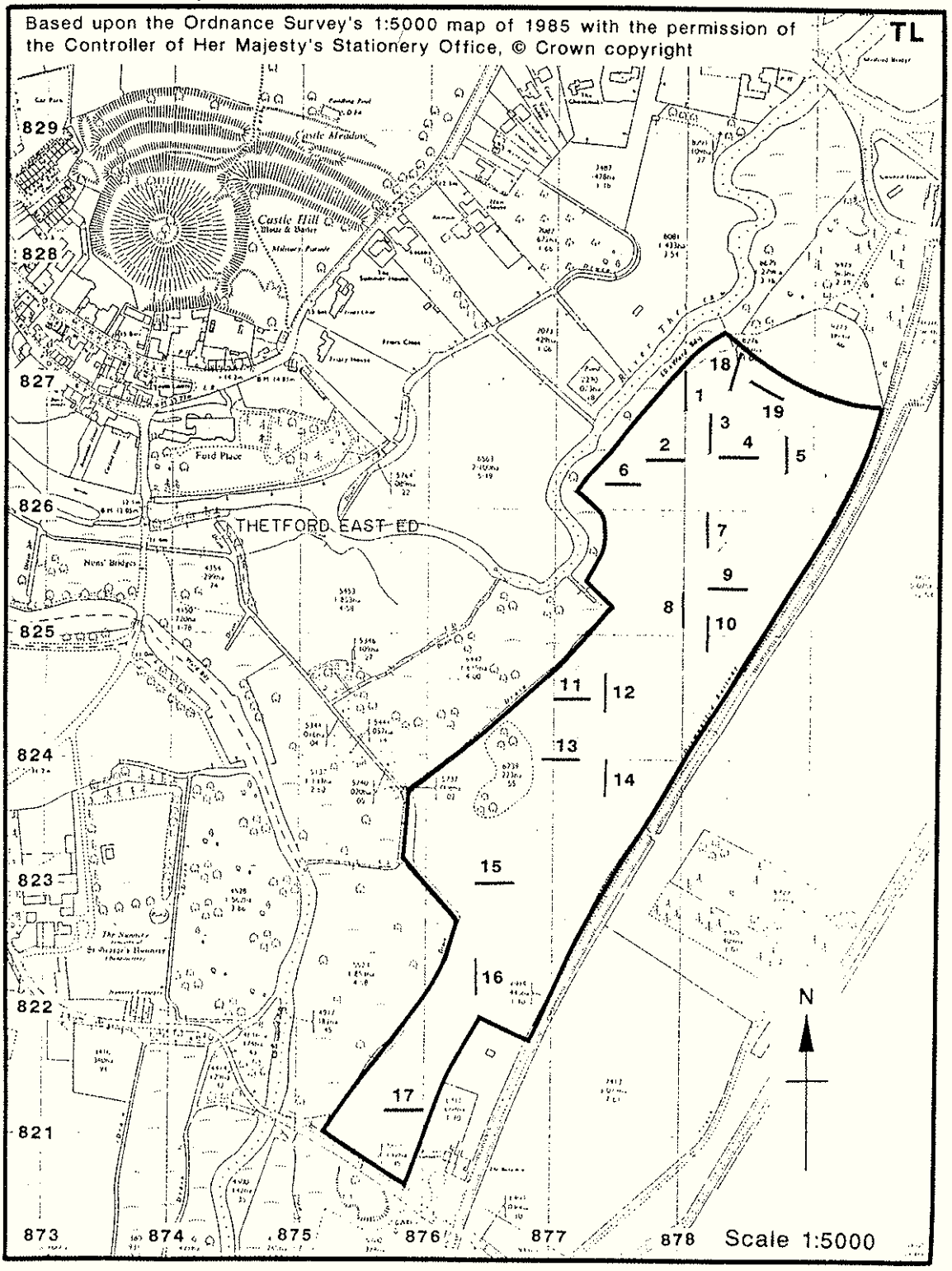
403	Layer	30 m	1.85	?	5 RB sherds	?	Subsoil (disturbed)
404	Fill	1.90 +	0.40	0.60	-	Modern	Fill of 405
405	Cut	1.90 +	0.40	0.60	-	Modern	Pipe trench
Trench 5							
500	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.30	1 RB tile	Modern	Ploughsoil
501	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	?	-	?	Subsoil
502	Fill	1.90 +	0.28	0.44	-	Modern	Fill of 503
503	Cut	1.90 +	0.28	0.44	-	Modern	Pipe trench
504	Layer	10 m +	1.85 +	0.12	-	?	Ploughsoil
Trench 6							
600	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.25	-	Modern	Topsoil
601	Layer	6 m +	1.85 +	?	-	?	Subsoil = 602
602	Layer	24 m +	1.85 +	?	-	?	Subsoil = 601
603	Layer	12 m +	1.85 +	0.27	-	?	
604	Layer	8 m +	1.85 +	?? 0.60	-	?	
605	Layer	6 m +	1.85 +	?? 0.55	-	?	
606	Layer	6 m +	1.85 +	0.10	-	?	
607	Layer	?12 m +	1.85 +	?1.00 +	-	?	Peat deposit(s)
Trench 7							
701	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.40	-	Modern	Ploughsoil
702	Layer	5.50 +	1.85 +	?	-	?	?Subsoil variant
703	Fill	3.20 +	0.40	0.60	-	Modern	Fill of 704
704	Cut	3.20 +	0.40	0.60	-	Modern	Pipe trench
705	Fill	2.00 +	1.90	0.75	-	?	Fill of 706
706	Cut	2.00 +	1.90	0.75	-	?	Ditch(es)
707	Fill	2.00 +	0.70	0.55	-	?	Fill of 708
708	Cut	2.00 +	0.70	0.55	-	?	Ditch
709	Fill	-	0.16	0.08	-	?	Fill of 710
710	Cut	-	0.16	0.08	-	?	Posthole
711	Fill	2.00 +	1.45	0.70	-	?	Fill of 712
712	Cut	2.00 +	1.45	0.70	-	?	Straight sided ?ditch
713	Fill	2.00 +	2.30	1.00	1 RB sherd 1 AS sherd flint flake	?	Fill of 714, sherds from top
714	Cut	2.00 +	2.30	1.00	-	?	Ditch
715	Fill	1.50 +	0.75	0.40	-	?	Fill of 716
716	Cut	1.50 +	0.75	0.40	-	?	?Ditch

717	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	?	-	?	Subsoil
Trench 8							
800	Layer	30 m +	1.85	0.30	-	Modern	Ploughsoil
801	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	?	-	?	Subsoil
802	Layer	3.00	1.85 +	?	-	?	?Natural discoloration of subsoil
803	Fill	1.50	0.50 +	0.38	-	?	Fill of tree hole
804	Fill	4.50 +	0.50	0.75	-	Modern	Fill of 806, = 805
805	Fill	4.50 +	0.50	0.75	-	Modern	Fill of 806, mixed with 804
806	Cut	4.50 +	0.50	0.75	-	Modern	Pipe trench
807	Fill	0.90	0.60	?	-	?	Tree hole fill as 803
Trench 9							
900	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.35	1 RB sherd 2 flint flakes	Modern	Ploughsoil
901	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.20	1 RB sherd	?	Discontinuous deposit over 902
902	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	?	-	?	Subsoil
Trench 10							
1000	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.35	-	Modern	Ploughsoil
1001	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	?	-	?	Subsoil
1002	Cut	11.50 +	1.00	0.30	-	?	Ditch
1003	Fill	11.50 +	0.60	0.20	-	?	Fill of 1002
1004	Fill	?11 m +	0.75	0.27	-	?	Fill of 1012
1005	Fill	?	0.60	0.12	-	?	Fill of 1002
1006	Fill	?	0.55	0.08	-	?	Fill of 1002
1007	?Fill	1.00	0.70	?	-	?	Natural feature
1008	?Fill	0.80 +	0.60	0.04	-	?	Natural feature
1009	Fill	2.60 +	0.15	?	-	Modern	Fill of plough furrow
1010	Fill	1.60 +	0.19	?	-	Modern	Fill of plough furrow
1011	Layer	2.30 +	1.85 +	0.20	-	?	Cut by 1012
1012	Cut	?11 m +	0.60	0.27	-	?	Ditch
Trench 11							
1100	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.50	-	Modern	Ploughsoil
1101	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	?	-	?	Subsoil

1102	Fill	0.27	0.22	0.38	1 RB sherd	?RB	Fill of 1103
1103	Cut	0.27	0.22	0.38	-	?RB	Posthole
1104	Fill	3.20 +	2.20 +	0.40	1 RB sherd flint flake 3 bone frags	??AS	Fill of 1105
1105	Cut	3.20 +	2.20 +	0.40	-	??AS	Shallow pit or possible sunken featured building
1106	Fill	-	0.50	0.44	-	?	Fill of 1107
1107	Cut	-	0.50	0.44	-	?	Posthole
1108	Fill	3.00 +	1.75 +	1.10 +	20C pottery glass, iron etc	20th C	Fill of 1109 Finds not kept
1109	Cut	3.00 +	1.75 +	1.10 +	-	20th C	?WW2 rubbish pit
1110	Fill	3.00 +	1.75 +	0.10 +	as 1108	20th C	Fill of 1109 interleaved with 1108 Finds not kept
Trench 12							
1200	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.30	Burnt flint plastic, coal	Modern	Ploughsoil
1201	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	?	1 RB sherd	?	Subsoil
1202	?Fill	0.90	0.80	0.28	-	?	Fill of 1203
1203	?Cut	0.90	0.80	0.28	-	?	?Natural feature
1204	Fill	-	0.60	0.38	-	?	Fill of 1205
1205	?Cut	-	0.60	0.38	-	?	?Natural feature
1206	Layer	13 m +	1.85 +	0.20	-	?	?Ploughsoil
1207	Fill	2.50	1.10 +	0.70	-	?	Fill of 1208
1208	Cut	2.50	1.10 +	0.70	-	?	?Pit
Trench 13							
1300	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.50	2 flint flakes	Modern	Ploughsoil
1301	?Fill	0.60	0.50	?	-	?	Natural feature
1302	?Fill	-	0.30	0.12	-	?	Natural feature
1303	?Fill	0.40	0.20	0.20	-	?	Natural feature
1304	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	?	1 AS sherd flint core	?	Subsoil
Trench 14							
1401	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.30	-	Modern	Ploughsoil
1402	Fill	2.30 +	0.20	0.55	-	Modern	Fill of 1403
1403	Cut	2.30 +	0.20	0.55	-	Modern	Pipe trench
1404	Fill	3.40 +	0.25	0.85	-	Modern	Fill of 1405
1405	Cut	3.40 +	0.25	0.85	-	Modern	Pipe trench

1406	Layer	24 m +	1.85 +	0.27	-	?	
1407	Layer	?20 m +	1.85 +	0.10	-	?	
1408	Layer	?20 m +	1.85 +	0.30	-	?	
1409	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.45	-	?	?Subsoil
1410	Layer	2.00 +	1.85 +	0.30 +	-	?	Subsoil
Trench 15							
1500	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.30	-	Modern	Ploughsoil
1501	Layer	c 15 m +	1.85 +	0.08	-	?	
1502	Layer	11 m +	1.85 +	0.10	-	?	
1503	Layer	14.50 +	1.85 +	0.15	-	?	
1504	Layer	15 m +	1.85 +	?	-	?	Subsoil
1505	Layer	5.50 +	1.85 +	0.12	-	?	
Trench 16							
1600	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.50	-	Modern	Ploughsoil
1601	?Fill	6.50 +	1.85 +	?	-	?	Fill(s) of natural features in 1602
1602	Layer	6.50 +	1.85 +	?	-	?	Subsoil
1603	Layer	23.30 +	1.85	?	-	?	Subsoil
1604	Fill	1.85 +	1.70	0.28	-	?	Fill of 1607
1605	Fill	1.85 +	1.00	0.25	-	?	Fill of 1607
1606	?Fill	1.85 +	2.70	0.35	-	?	Fill of ?natural feature
1607	Cut	1.85 +	1.70	0.55	-	?	Ditch
1608	Fill	4.00 +	0.30	?	-	Modern	Plough mark
1609	Fill	4.00 +	0.35	0.10	-	Modern	Fill of 1610
1610	Cut	4.00 +	1.85 +	0.10	-	Modern	Plough mark
Trench 17							
1700	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	0.40	-	Modern	Ploughsoil
1701	Fill	1.90 +	1.00	0.70 +	-	Modern	Fill of 1702
1702	Cut	1.90 +	1.00	0.70 +	-	Modern	Trench for large pipe
1703	Fill	1.90 +	0.35	0.40 +	-	Modern	Fill of 1704
1704	Cut	1.90 +	0.35	0.40 +	-	Modern	Pipe trench
1705	Fill	0.36	0.26	0.24	-	?	Fill of 1706
1706	Cut	0.36	0.26	0.24	-	?	Posthole
1707	Fill	2.10 +	0.90	0.40	-	?	Fill of 1708

1708	Cut	2.10 +	0.90	0.40	-	?	Ditch
1709	Layer	30 m +	1.85 +	?	-	?	Subsoil



Trench Location Plan

Figure 1

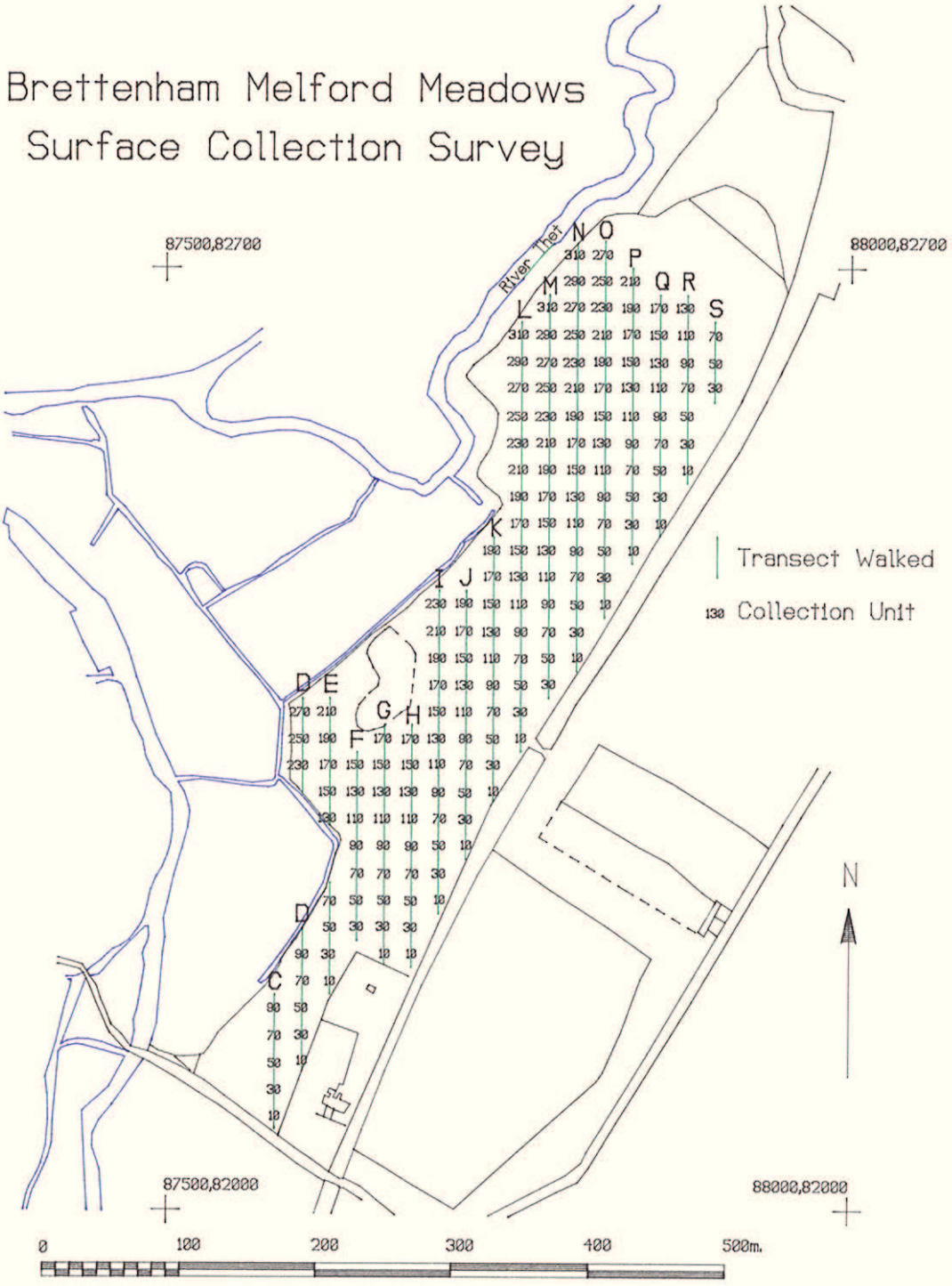

Brettenham Melford Meadows
Surface Collection Survey
87500,82700
88000,82700
River Thet
Transect Walked
130 Collection Unit
N
87500,82000
88000,82000
0
100
200
300
400
500m.

Figure 2

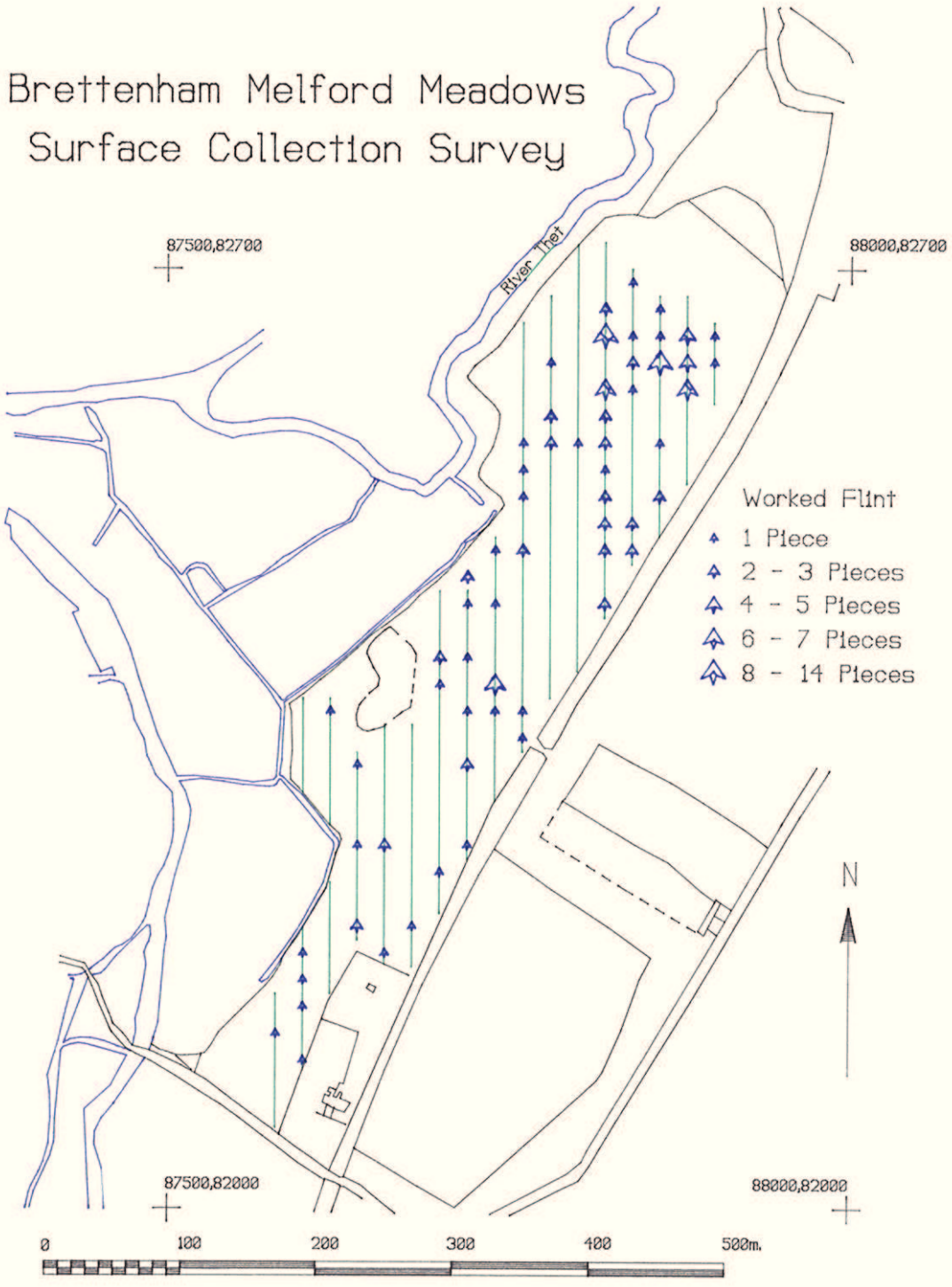

Brettenham Melford Meadows
Surface Collection Survey
87500,82700
88000,82700
River Thet
Worked Flint
1 Piece
2 - 3 Pieces
4 - 5 Pieces
6 - 7 Pieces
8 - 14 Pieces
N
87500,82000
88000,82000
0
100
200
300
400
500m.

Figure 3


Brettenham Melford Meadows
Surface Collection Survey
87500,82700
88000,82700
River Thet
Burnt Flint
1 Piece
2 Pieces
3 Pieces
N
87500,82000
88000,82000
0
100
200
300
400
500m.

Figure 4


Brettenham Melford Meadows
Surface Collection Survey
87500,82700
88000,82700
River Thet
Roman Pottery
1 - 3 Sherds
4 - 10 Sherds
11 - 17 Sherds
18 - 23 Sherds
Saxon Pottery
1 Sherd
2 Sherds
3 Sherds
N
87500,82000
88000,82000
0
100
200
300
400
500m.

Figure 5


Brettenham Melford Meadows
Surface Collection Survey
87500,82700
88000,82700
River Thet
Tile
1 - 2 Sherds
3 - 5 Sherds
6 - 9 Sherds
10 - 12 Sherds
13 - 16 Sherds
N
87500,82000
88000,82000
0
100
200
300
400
500m.

Figure 6

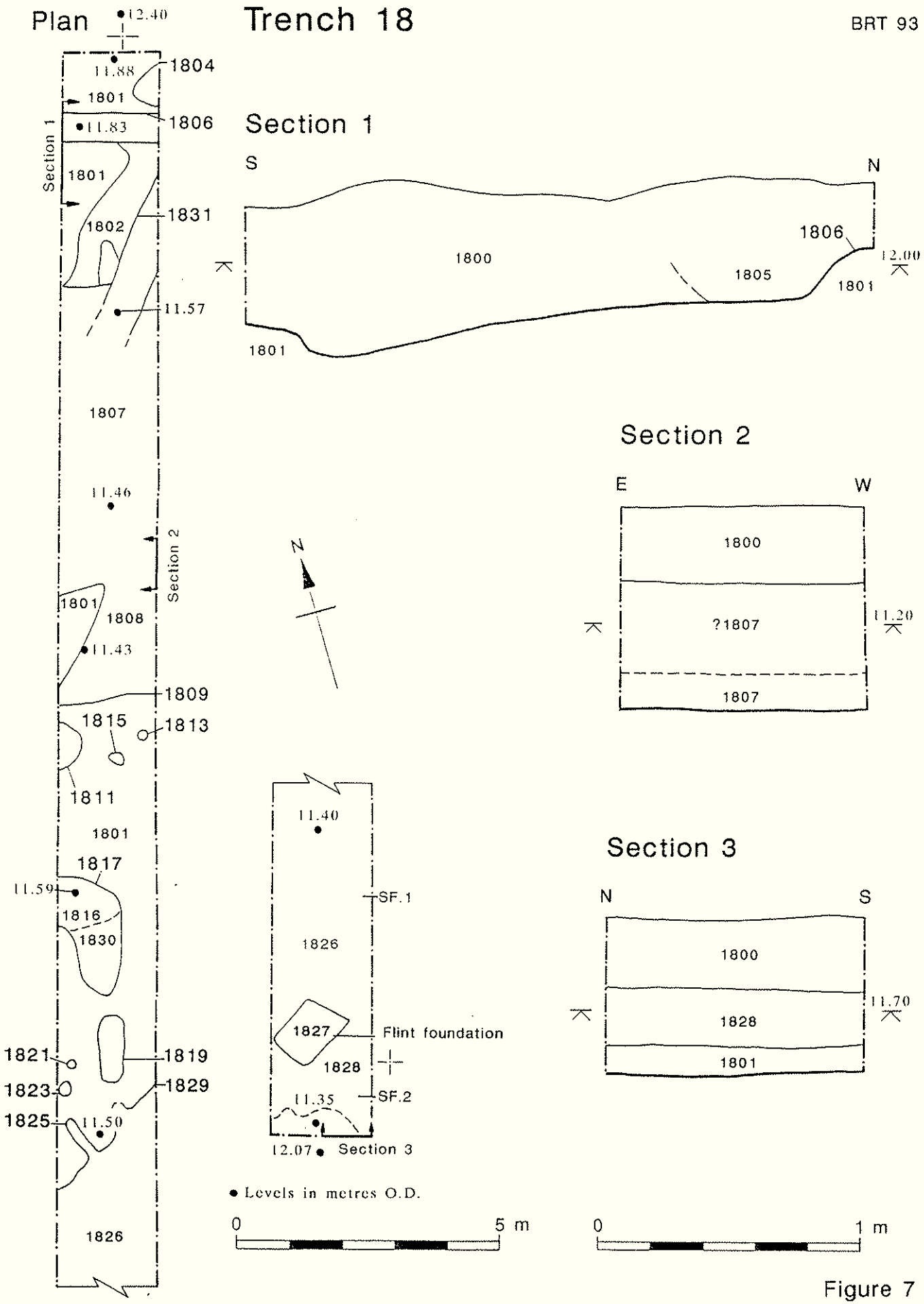
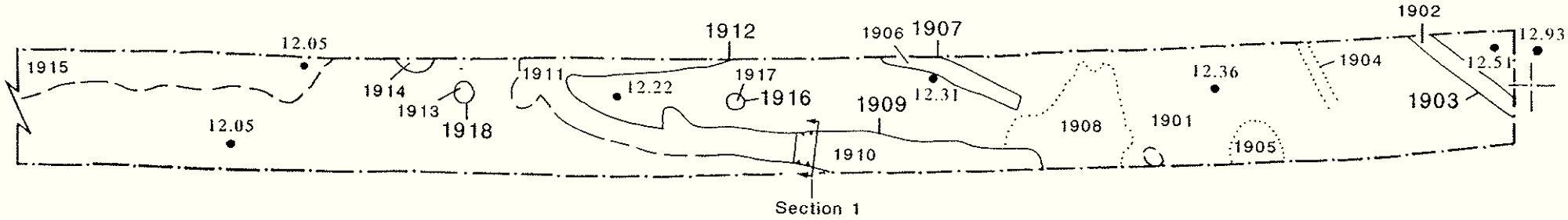
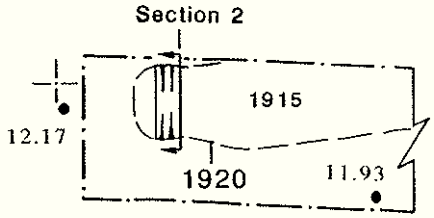

Plan
Trench 18
BRT 93
12.40
11.88
1804
1801
1806
11.83
Section 1
1801
1831
1802
11.57
1807
11.46
Section 2
1801
1808
11.43
1809
1815
1813
1811
1801
1817
11.59
1816
1830
1821
1819
1823
1829
1825
11.50
1826
Section 1
S
N
1800
1806
12.00
1805
1801
1801
Section 2
E
W
1800
?1807
11.20
1807
N
11.40
SF.1
1826
1827
Flint foundation
1828
11.35
SF.2
12.07
Section 3
Section 3
N
S
1800
1828
11.70
1801
Levels in metres O.D.
0
5 m
0
1 m

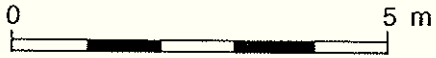
Figure 7

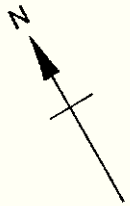
Trench 19

Plan

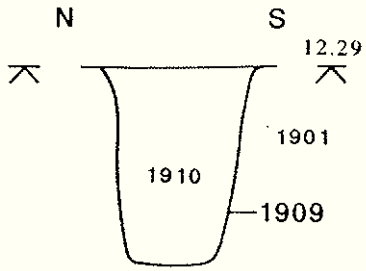








Section 1



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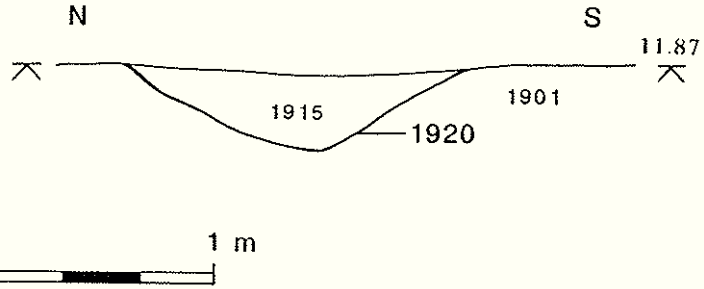


Figure 8

Plan

Trench 1

BRT 93

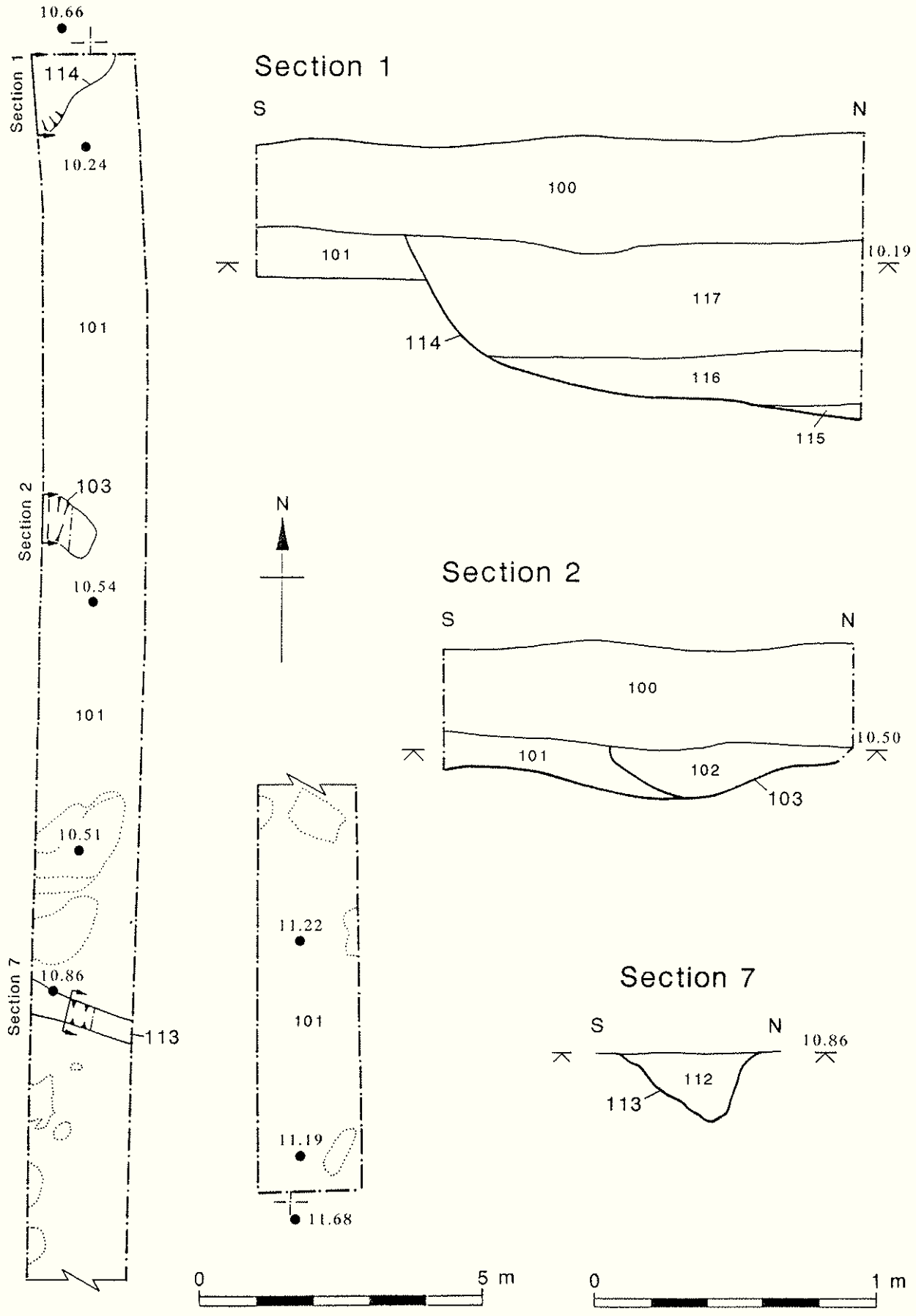
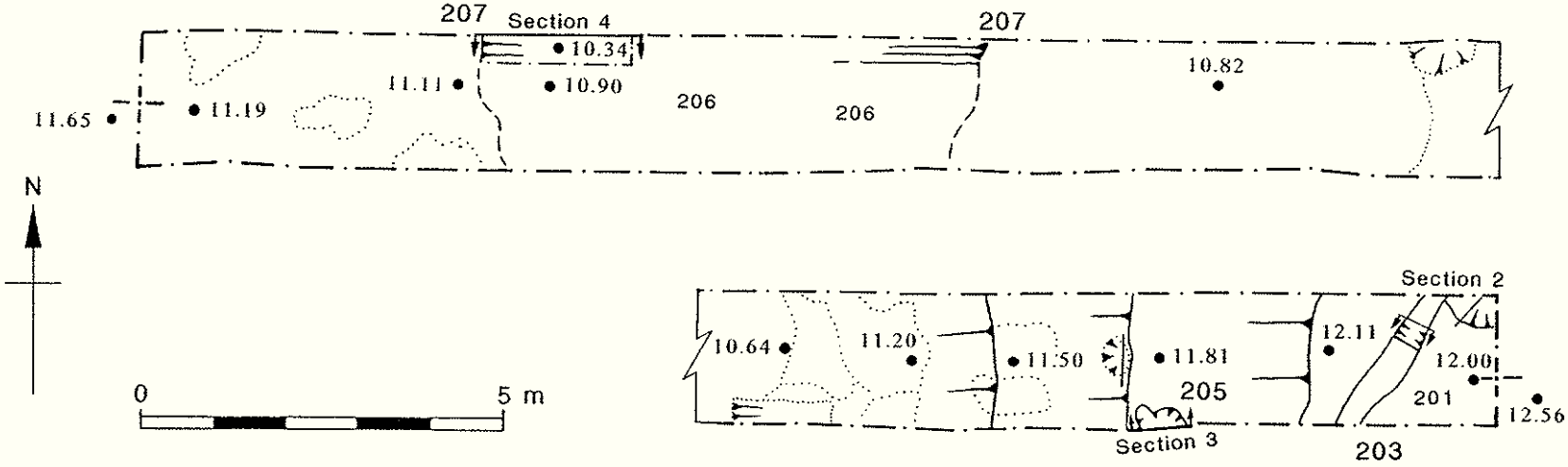


Figure 9

Trench 2

BRT 93



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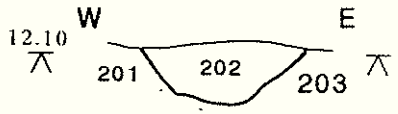

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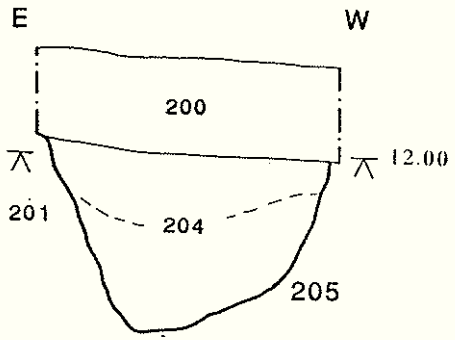

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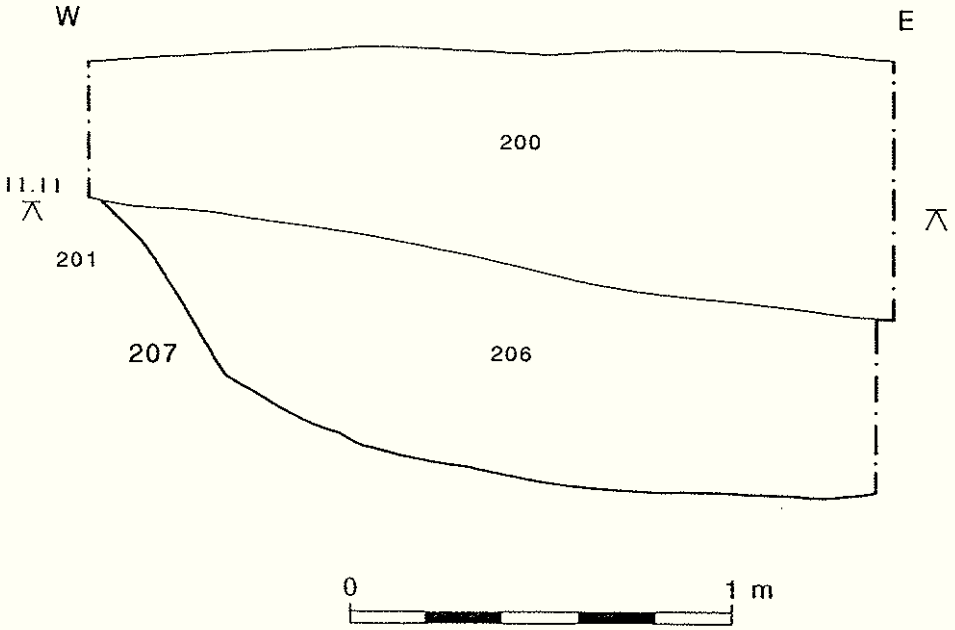
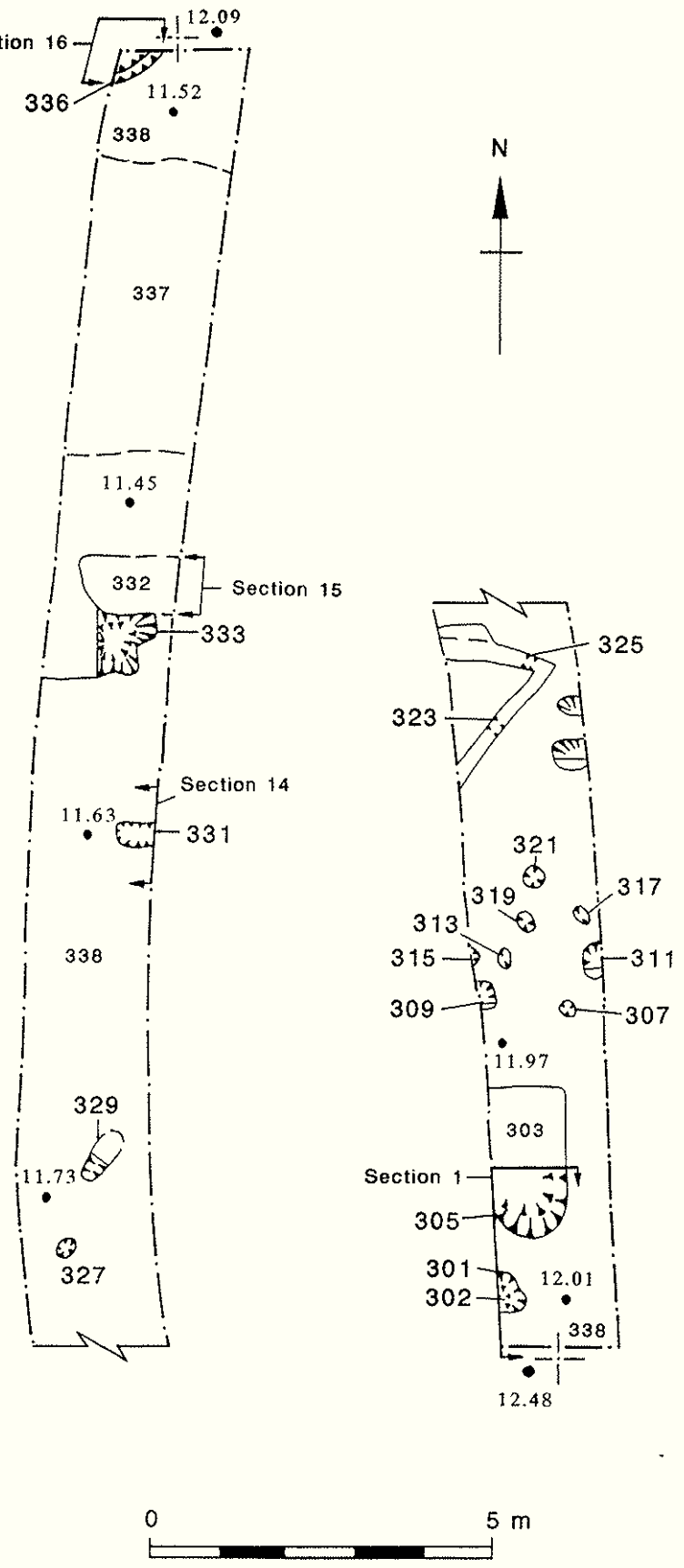


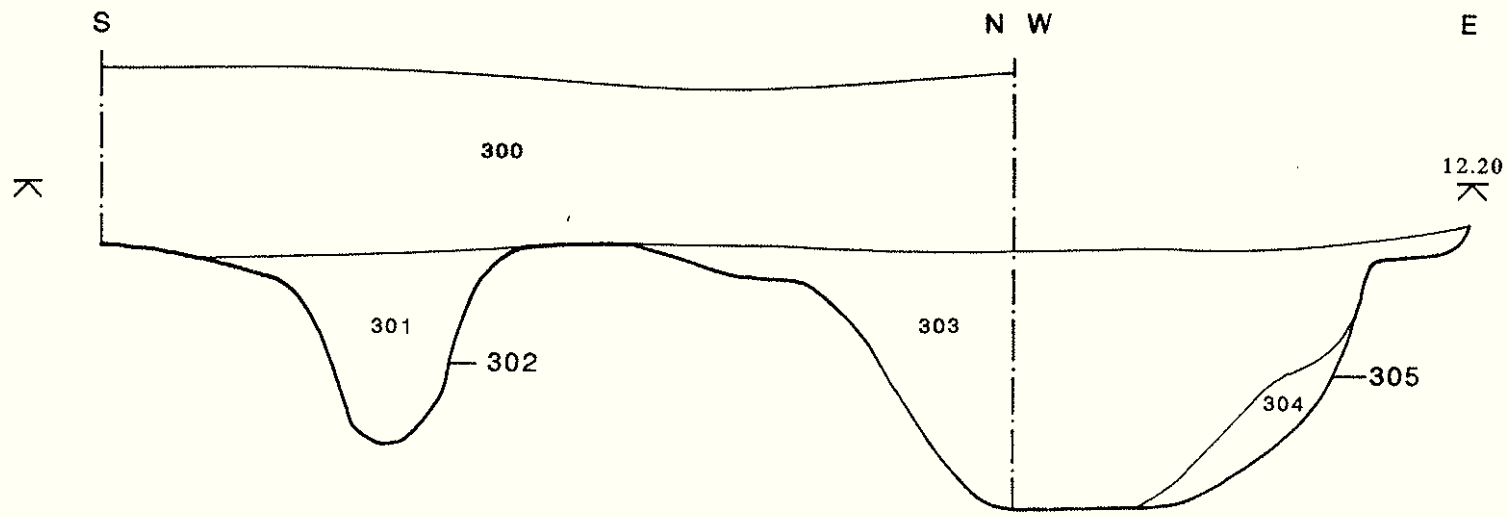
Figure 10

Trench 3

Plan



Section 1



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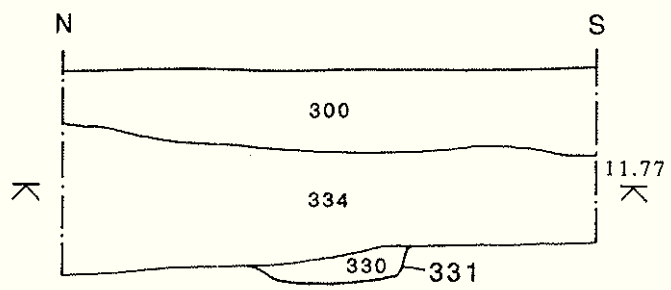

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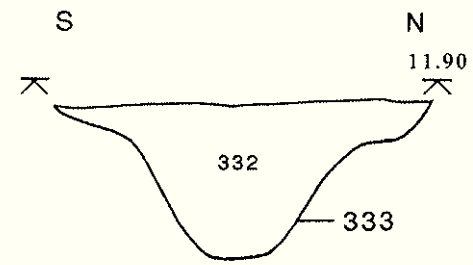

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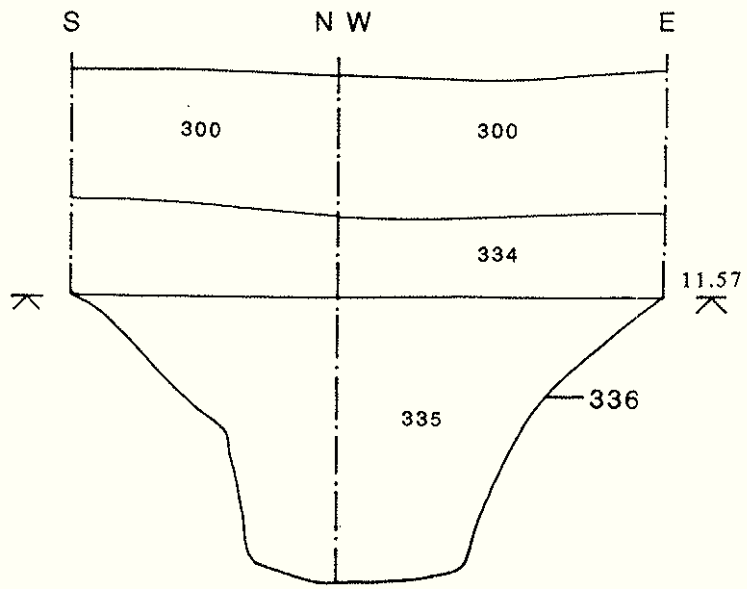
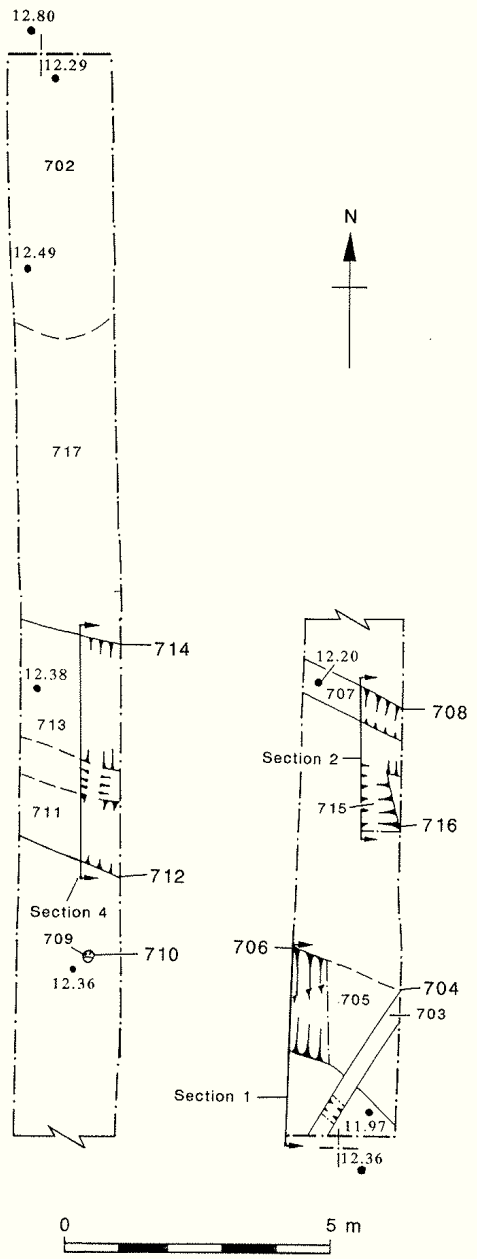


Figure 11

Trench 7

BRT 93

Plan



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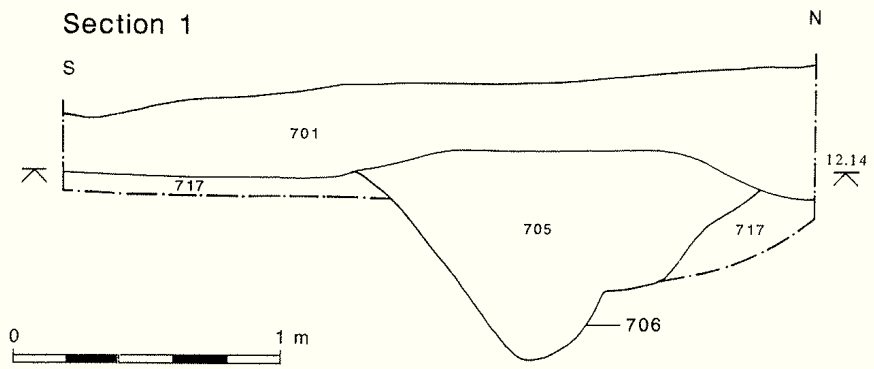
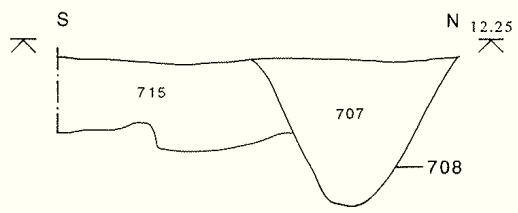


Section 2



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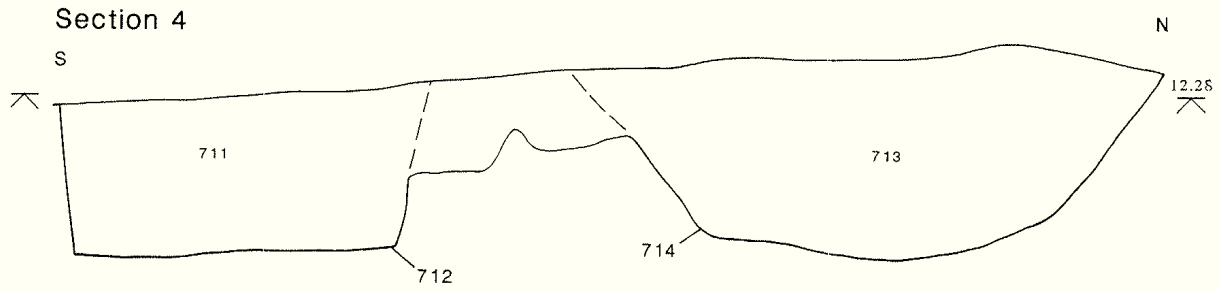
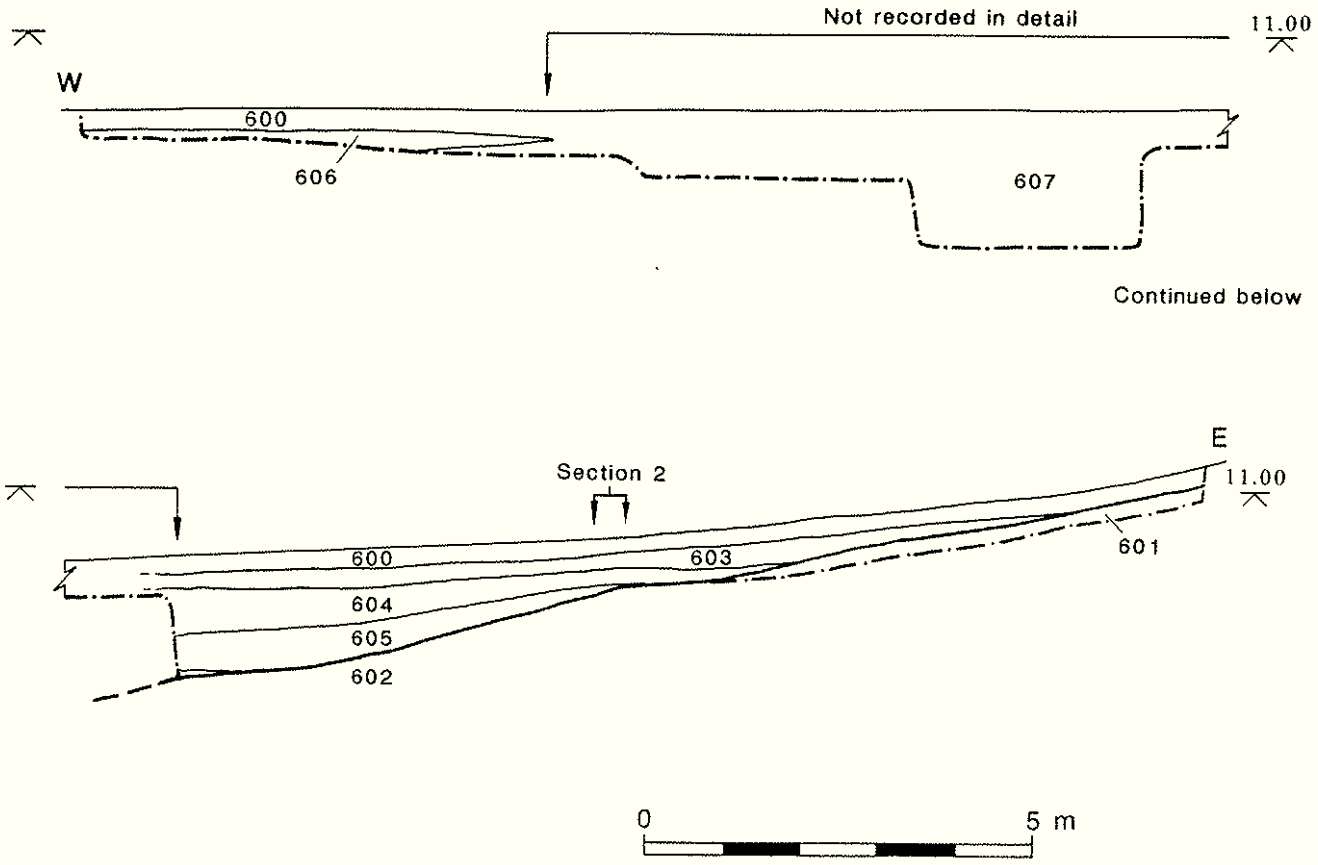


Trench 6

BRT 93

Section 1



Section 2

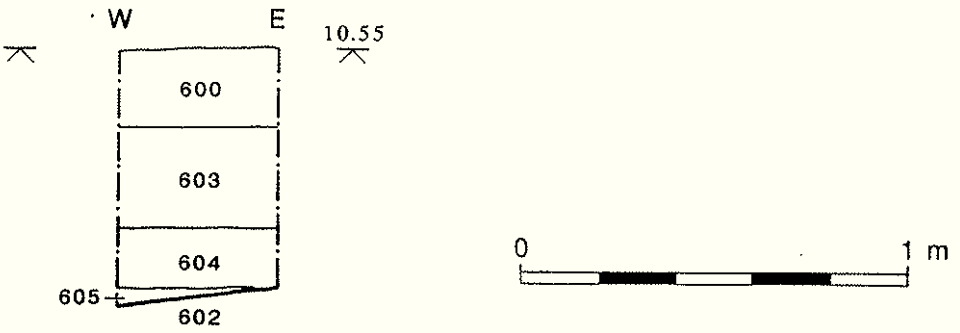


Figure 12

Trench 10

BRT 93

Plan

Section 1

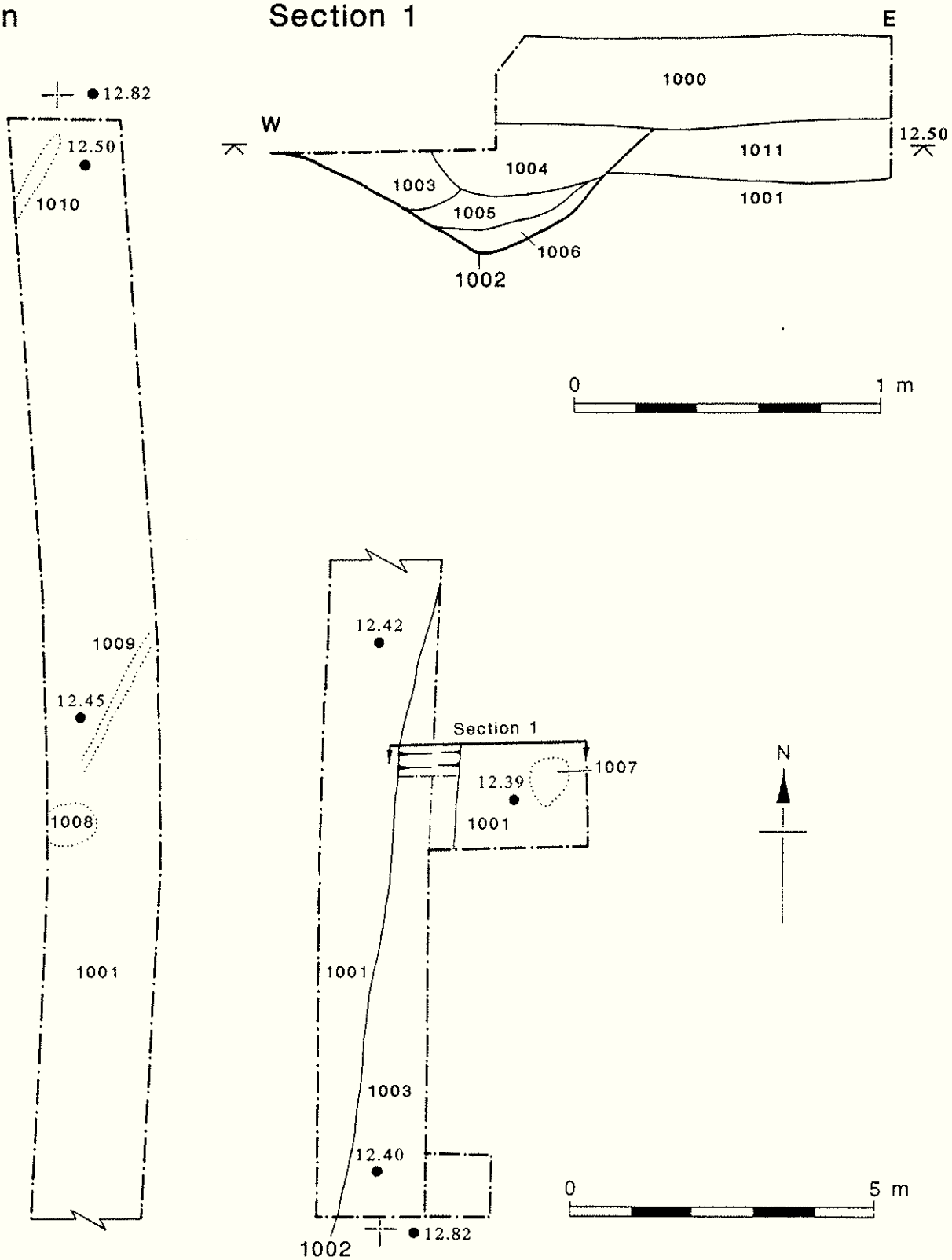
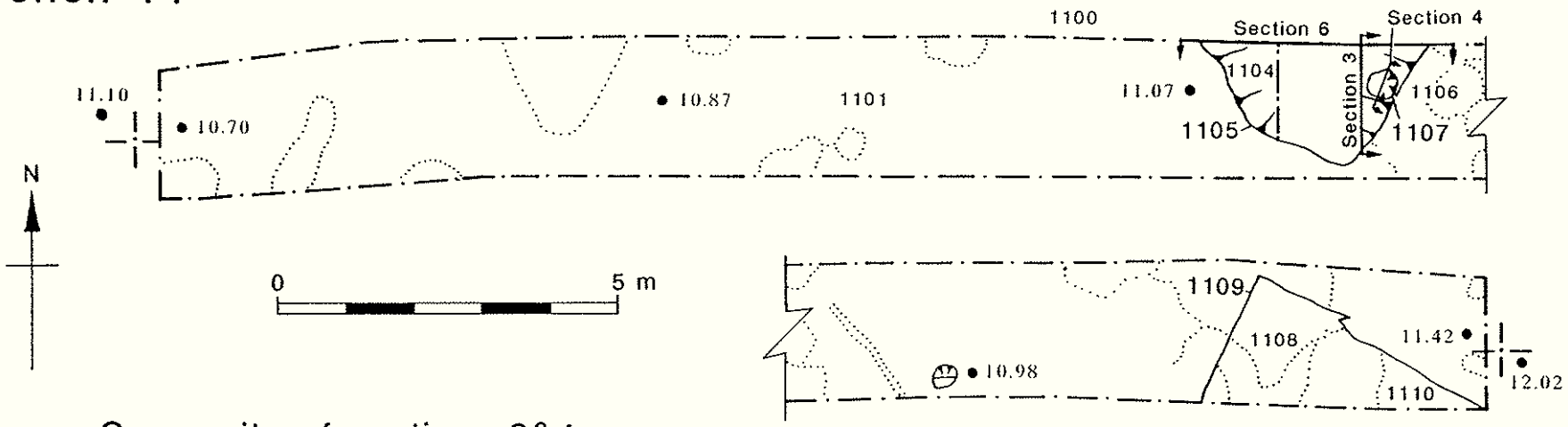


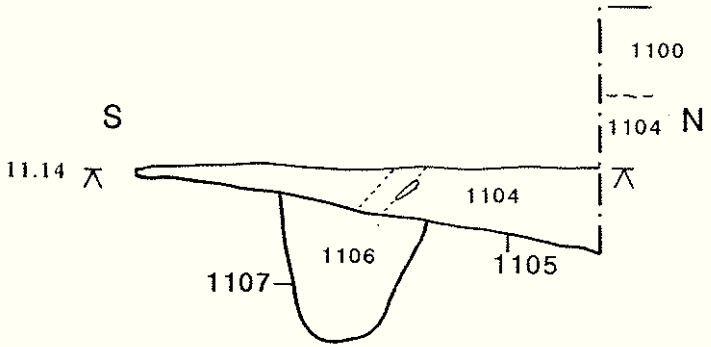
Figure 14

Trench 11

BRT 93



Composite of sections 3&4



Section 6

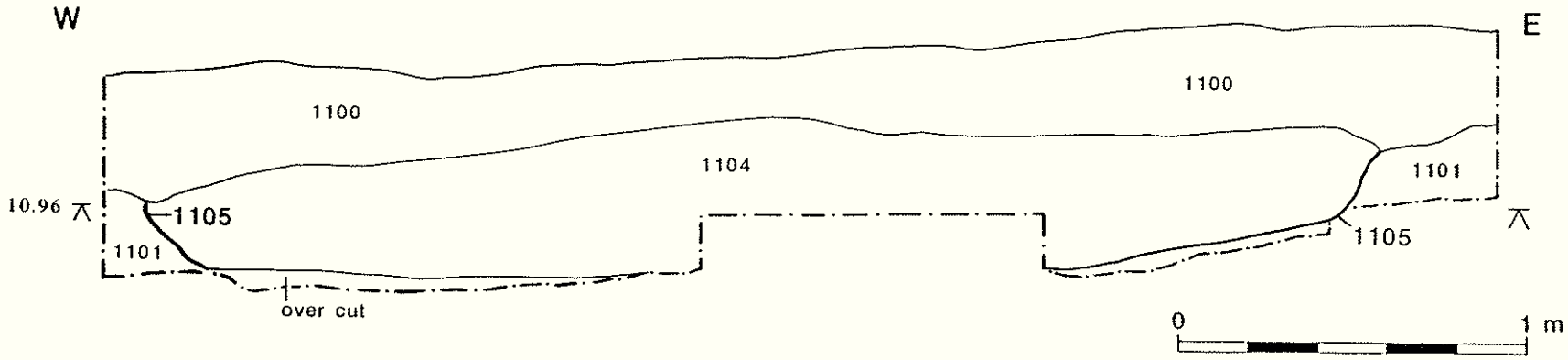


Figure 15

Trench 12

BRT 93

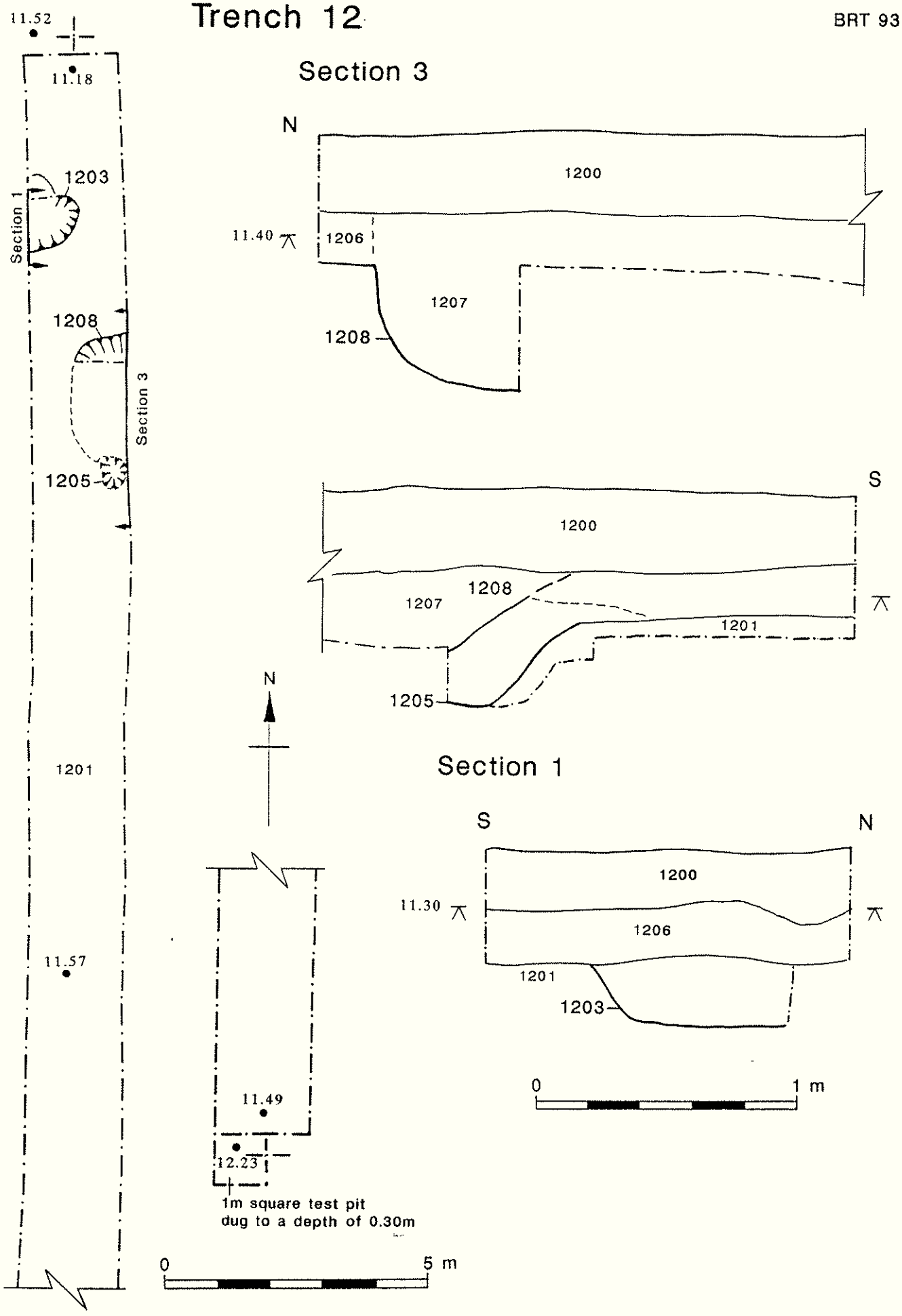


Figure 16

Trench 16

BRT 93

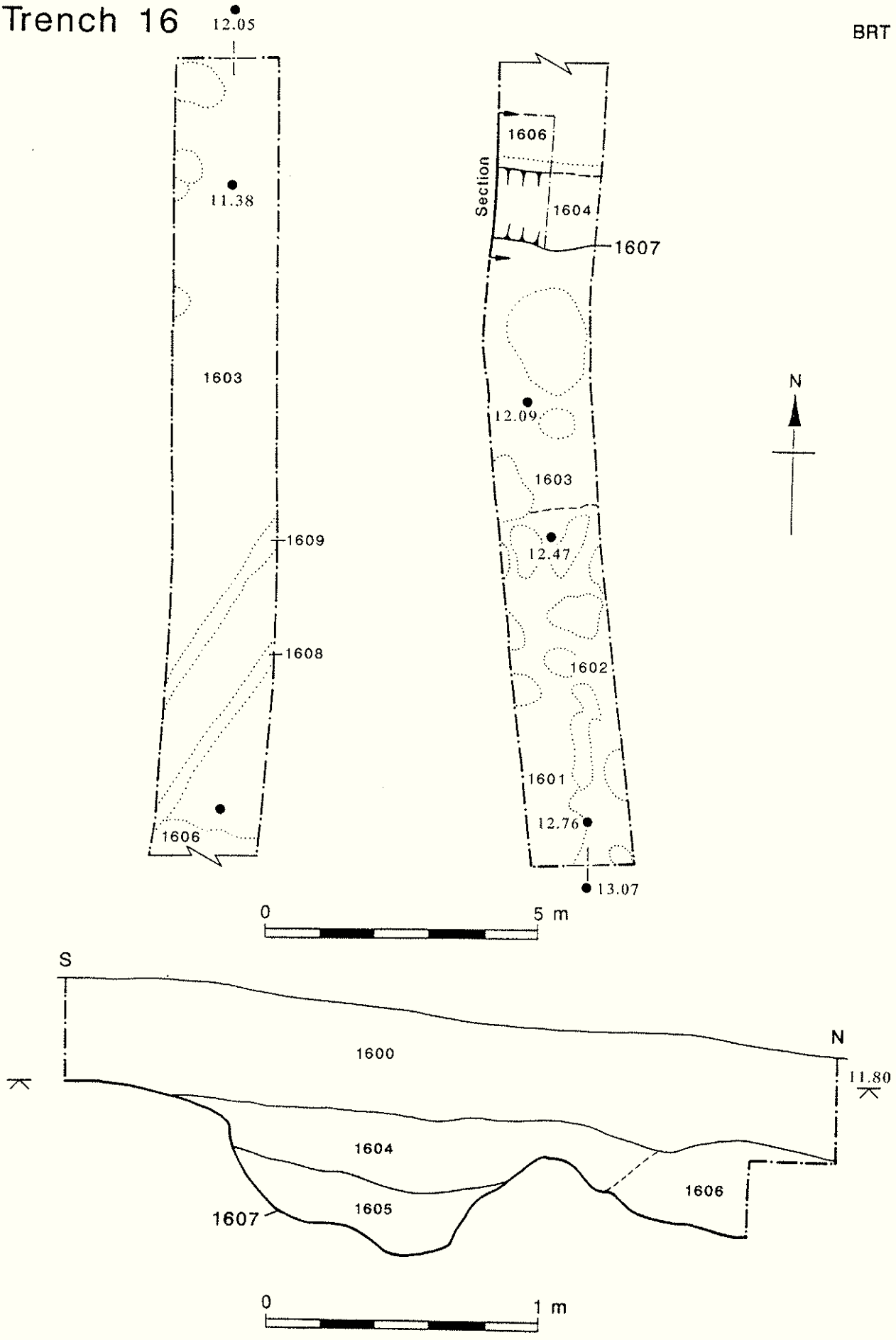
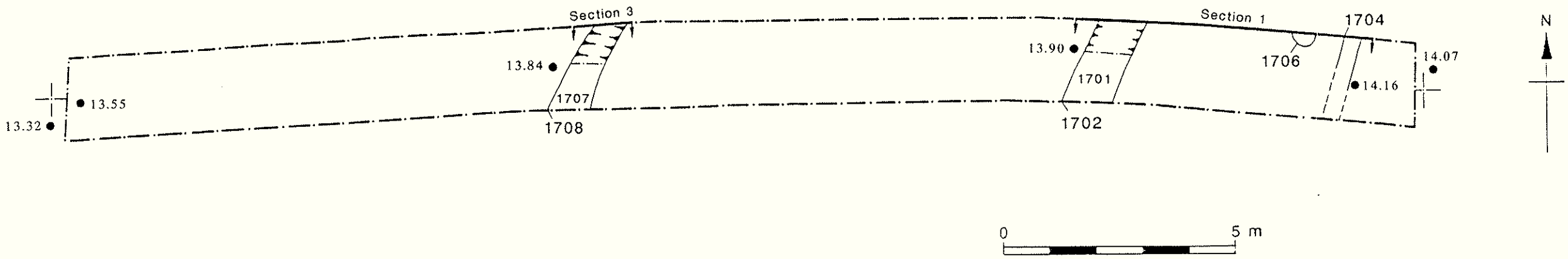


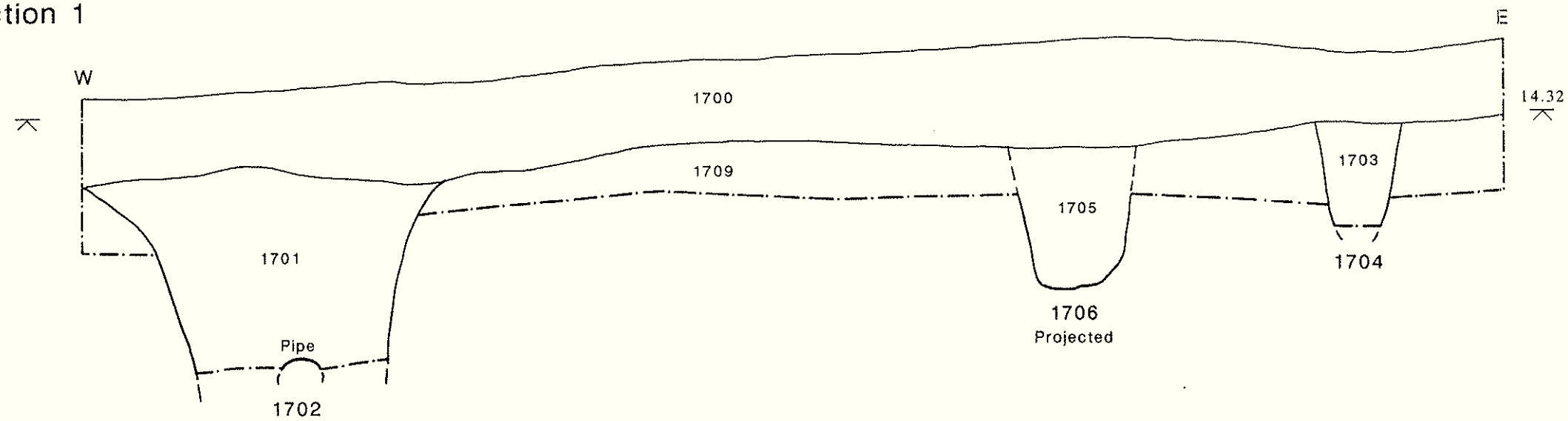
Figure 17

Trench 17

Plan



Section 1



Section 3

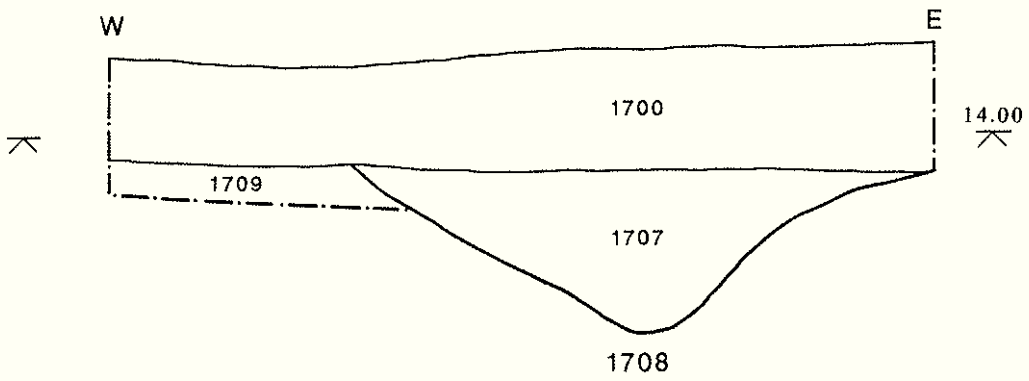
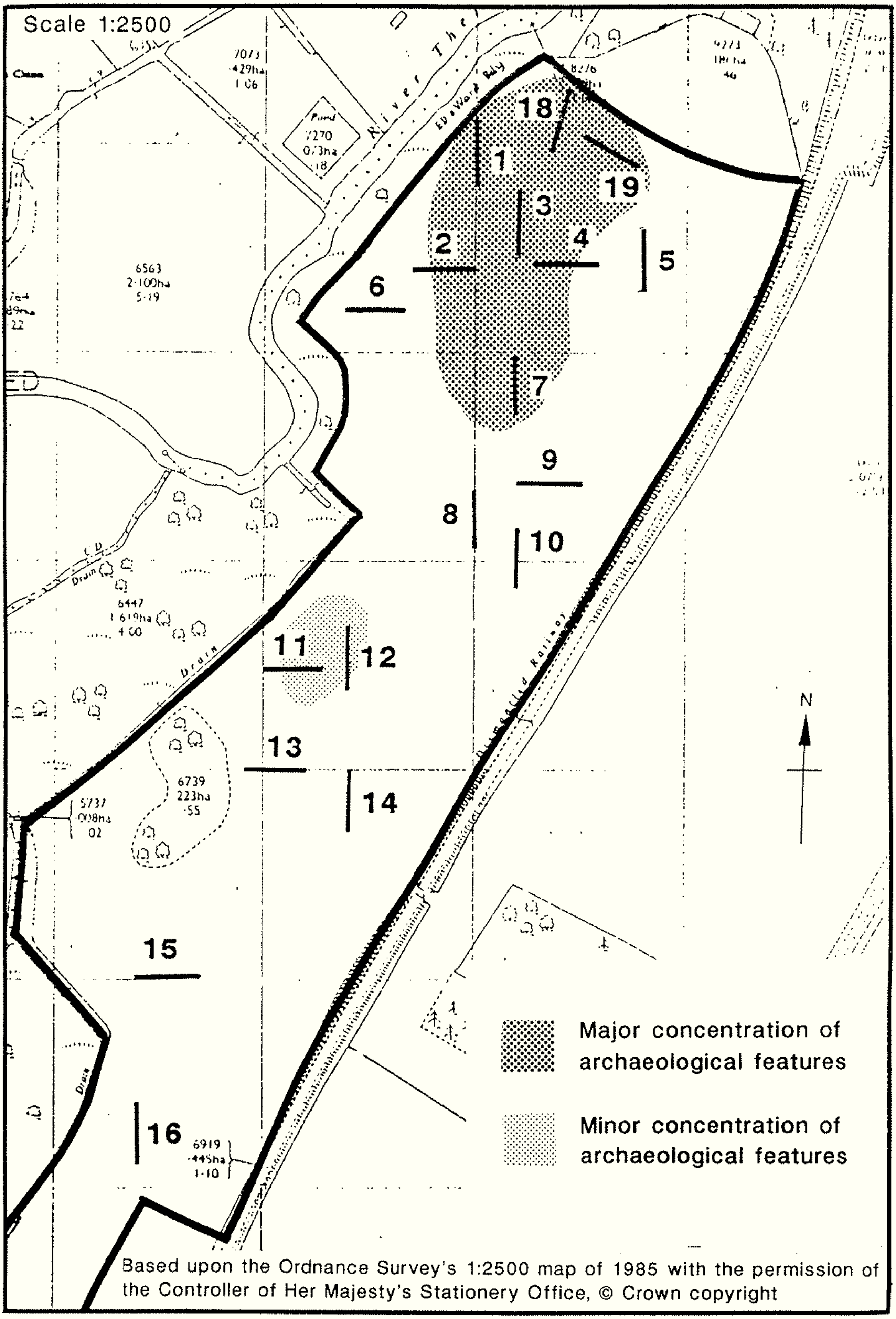


Figure 18


Scale 1:2500
River The
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N
Dismantled Railway
Drain
Major concentration of archaeological features
Minor concentration of archaeological features
Based upon the Ordnance Survey's 1:2500 map of 1985 with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown copyright

Figure 19

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