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Archaeological Evaluation at  
**CHURCH FARM, CALDICOT, GWENT.**

Report No. 371/1998

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**Bristol and Region  
Archaeological  
Services**



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February, 1998.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological field evaluation was carried out on land at Church Farm in Caldicot in Gwent (NGR ST 4830 8900) (Fig.1). The fieldwork was commissioned from Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) by Crest Homes Ltd. in response to a planning application for the construction of domestic houses on the site.
- 1.2 A Desk-based assessment of the planning application area undertaken by Oxford Archaeological Associates (OAA) had expressed reservations about the likelihood of discovering significant archaeology on the site (OAA 1993). This was despite the area being considered as being a medium to high archaeological potential area by the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT).
- 1.3 Consequently, prior to the field evaluation a geophysical survey comprising topsoil magnetic susceptibility mapping and magnetometer survey was carried out over the majority of the site. The results of this survey contributed to the positioning of the archaeological trenches (see below).
- 1.4 The fieldwork took place between 23rd June and 22nd July 1997 to determine whether there was surviving archaeology on the site and, if so, to provide information to formulate a suitable mitigation strategy should the proposed development be shown to have a damaging affect on the archaeology.
- 1.5 The evaluation was directed by Reg Jackson, assisted by Pete Insole (who compiled this report), John Turner, Tim Hallam, Patrick Watson and Caroline Barker.
- 1.6 The site record will be deposited at Chepstow Museum with the Accession Number C.1.1997.

## 2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The evaluation covers an area of approximately 7.5 hectares of Church Farm, encompassing four areas (A-D) around the modern Church Farm buildings (Fig.2).
- 2.2 The site is bordered to the west by the existing Church Road, to the north by modern field boundaries, to the east by the flood plain of the Nedern Brook and to the south by the public footpath to Crick.
- 2.3 In the extreme south west the site lies below 10m OD on the flood plain of the Nedern while the land to the north of the Church Farm buildings rises up to a small hillock at approximately 30m OD.
- 2.4 The underlying geology varies across the site but is mainly Triassic Mercian Mudstone over sandstone. On the flood plain the underlying geology is alluvial silts, clays and organic beds similar to the Wentlooge Formation of the Severn Estuary.
- 2.5 Two standing buildings lie within the evaluation area; a modern bungalow (the present farm house) that together with its garden will be retained by the development, and a modern barn (which will be demolished).

### 3. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Caldicot lies within an area that is rich in archaeological remains, its position close to the Severn, the Forest of Dean and its industry has contributed to this becoming a highly significant area historically. The Nedern Valley is known to have attracted human activity at least as early as the Bronze Age while Caerwent and Caldicot Castle stand as testimony for the continuation of human activity in the area throughout history up to the present day.
- 3.2 Excavations on the flood plain of the Nedern at the Caldicot Castle lake site (ST 481 883), c.400m from the southern boundary of the evaluation area, recovered the organic remains of human activity preserved by waterlogging. Eight phases of river channels were recorded as well as wooden structures, such as a possible boat and bridge. The material recovered from this site has produced radiocarbon and dendrochronological dates of between 3750 BC and 989 BC (Nayling and Caseldine 1997).
- 3.3 Other Bronze Age finds are known from the area, an evaluation at Crick Lane, Portskewett (ST 495 884) produced flints and pottery of possibly Bronze Age date (Newns 1993) while a single flint arrowhead was found at ST 4732 8805 (SMR 4307). The only other prehistoric finds within the vicinity of the evaluation mentioned by the sites and monuments record are five flint flakes and one flint tool found at ST 4944 8840 (SMR 4313).
- 3.4 Very little evidence of Iron Age activity is known from the vicinity of the site although the presence of substantial hillforts, such as Llanmelin Wood Camp (SMR 1026, ST 4610 9257) and Wilcrick Hill Camp (SMR 474, ST 411 878) on higher ground to the north and west suggests a significant agricultural economy prior to the Roman invasion.
- 3.5 Approximately 500m to the west of the evaluation an Iron Age settlement that continued into the Romano-British period was excavated at ST 473 893 (Vyner and Allen 1988). This site has been interpreted as being a low status farmstead during the Romano-British period using Caerwent as a market centre.
- 3.6 The Romano-British *Civitas Capital* of the native tribe the Silures (*Venta Silurum* or Caerwent) lies c.1km to the north west of the evaluation. The close proximity to the *Civitas Capital* means that within the vicinity of the site there are a variety of Romano-British sites. A settlement of villa status was partially excavated in 1933 on the summit of Portskewett hill at ST 4981 8874 and another possibly high status site was located by air photography at ST 483 874 (SMR 482), although unexcavated the site appears to be 'villa-like' in plan.
- 3.7 There are also several Romano-British industrial sites in the area most notably the Caldicot pottery kilns excavated in 1965-66 (Barnett, Stanley, Trett, and Webster 1990). Six pottery kilns were discovered at ST 474 878 (SMR 2356-60) all producing pottery in the late 3rd to early 4th centuries with indirect evidence for the production of pottery in the earlier 3rd century. There is also a possible Romano-British iron ore mine on the lower slopes of Portskewett Hill (SMR 504, ST 4997 8840) (Wheeler 1925).
- 3.8 The evaluation at Crick Road produced evidence of Romano-British agricultural activity in the form of ditches (Newns 1993) and numerous spot finds of Roman date are known from across the area; silver coin SMR 3997 (ST 478 895), silver coin SMR 4025 (ST 4705 8970), Domitian coin SMR 1058 (ST 48 90), five 4th century coins SMR 485 (ST 46 87), and a fibula SMR 4030 (ST 499 906). Two Romano-British inhumations are also noted on the sites and monuments record in the vicinity of the site, both were probably buried in the Roman

tradition beside roads leading away from Caerwent; SMR 498 (ST 4675 8860) and SMR 4362 (ST 4741 9025).

- 3.9 This abundance of Romano-British evidence is helping to build up a detailed picture of the Caerwent/Caldicot area in the Roman period. There appears to have been a dispersed settlement pattern along a fertile strip, that included reclaimed land on the levels (Rippon 1996), between the Severn and the uplands to the north. Just off the levels there appears to have been an industrial fringe in the Caldicot area indicated by the kilns and iron ore mine. This may be an extension of the industrial activity in the Forest of Dean.
- 3.10 The Caldicot area continued to be of major importance in the medieval period as evidenced by two motte and bailey castles within a few hundred metres of the evaluation area. There is also a sizeable earthwork at Portskewett that has been attributed to Harold's hunting lodge mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as being built in 1065 (Garmondsway 1953) before being destroyed by Caradoc, son of Gruffydd, the King of South Wales (OAA 1993).
- 3.11 Caldicot is known to have existed by the time of Domesday; in a charter of c.895 in the book of Llandaff it is called Castel Conscuit (OAA 1993).
- 3.12 Both of the motte and bailey castles are Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The Berries castle to the east of the Nedern has not been excavated, although the local name for the earthwork of Bullan has been associated with a family holding land in the area in the late 11th century (OAA 1993).
- 3.13 Caldicot Castle was probably constructed early in the 13th century, although as with many medieval castles the main buildings have been constantly adapted especially in the last century.
- 3.14 Church Farm is likely to have a medieval origin especially as the original farm buildings which still survive on the opposite side of Church Road appear to be early post-medieval in date (SMR 3162). There are also substantial lynchets on the slopes going down to the Nedern which are possibly the result of continual ploughing in the medieval period, although an earlier date cannot be discounted. These lynchets and the original river channels of the Nedern show up clearly in some of the air photographs, such as the RAF photographs of 1946, although no other earthworks are visible within the evaluated area.
- 3.15 Finally there are two lime kilns shown close to the site on the map of c.1800 one of which survives as a shallow hollow to the north east of the site at approximately ST 4825 8935.
- 3.16 A study of all the relevant maps, plans and air photographs has shown that the majority of the site has remained open land throughout documented history and that the field boundaries have survived largely unchanged since the first edition OS map of 1885.

#### 4. THE GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY (Fig.3)

- 4.1 Prior to the field evaluation a geophysical survey was undertaken by Oxford Archaeotechnics Limited (Oxford Archaeotechnics Limited 1995). This survey comprised topsoil magnetic susceptibility mapping and in four areas (A-D) showing significant magnetic enhancement a gradiometer survey was also undertaken.
- 4.2 The topsoil magnetic susceptibility survey in the northern area of the site showed several strong foci of topsoil magnetic enhancement indicating human activity amplifying the magnetic contrast with the background geology. Three of these foci were located around the present gateways to the fields where hard core has been deposited. Two isolated circular foci in Area B were interpreted as possibly being lime kilns, although gradiometer surveying in this area proved inconclusive. The strongest readings were located in the north western part of Area A and extended across the top of the field towards Area B. Gradiometer surveying in this north western area (Area A, Fig.3) revealed several linear features, probably field drains and two near parallel curvilinear features.
- 4.3 The survey in the southern area (C) produced more subtle readings than those in areas A and B. The foci of topsoil magnetic enhancement were confined to an area close to the modern farm buildings (Area C, Fig.3) and an area close to the field boundary with Church Road. These anomalies were interpreted as being either associated with modern farm activity or were natural in origin. The gradiometer survey in these areas again proved inconclusive.
- 4.4 The results of the geophysical survey, particularly the location of the curvilinear features in Area A and the possible lime kiln in Area B, dictated the positioning of some of the evaluation trenches especially Trenches 4, 10 and 16 in Area A and Trench 14 in Area B.



## 5. THE EVALUATION

### 5.1 Methodology

32 trenches were excavated by 180 degree mechanical excavator in the positions shown on the trench location plan (Fig.2). The trenches in Area's A and B were located in response to anomalies located by the geophysical survey. The trenches in Area C and Trenches 20 - 24 in Area D were positioned to locate possible medieval features surviving from the original Church Farm as was Trench 32 which was positioned within a separate paddock. Trenches 25 and 26 were positioned on the flood plain of the Nedern in order to examine the alluvial deposits and hopefully correlate them with the results of the Caldicot Castle Lake excavation.

All the trenches were cleaned, recorded, photographed and located onto plan before being backfilled. All the trenches measured between 10 and 20 metres in length and between 1.5 and 2 metres in width.

### 5.2 AREA A

#### Trench 1 (Fig.4)

Removal of 0.2 - 0.3 m of topsoil (101) from the area of trench 1 revealed a red, brown, clean, sandy clay (102) interpreted as the natural Mercian mudstone. Four stone features were also revealed cutting or lying on top of 102. Two patches of stonework at the western end of the trench (103 and 104) appeared as a limestone rubble spread above 102, these two contexts were probably part of the same feature but had been disturbed by ploughing. Context 105 at the eastern end of the trench was similarly another patch of limestone rubble lying over 102. In the centre of the trench was a curvilinear structure 106 measuring 4.5m in length and 0.5m wide. This consisted of laid and pitched limestones within a shallow cut. The stonework of 106 is the same as the patches of rubble 103, 104 and 105 suggesting that ploughing has removed stonework from the structure spreading the rubble in the nearby area.

The only finds recovered from Trench 1 were two flint flakes (SF 4) from the topsoil. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 28.76m OD, approximately 0.4m below the present ground surface.

### 5.3 Trench 2 (Fig.5)

Topsoil was removed to a depth of 0.2 - 0.3 m revealing rubble spreads, rough cobbles and a linear gully. The gully 203 was situated in the western half of the trench and was aligned SW - NE measuring 4.5m long and 0.3m wide. It was filled with red silty sand and cut the deposits 202, 204 and 205 at the western end of the trench. Also cutting 202 was a possible plough furrow (206/206a) aligned approximately east - west. The cut contained grey/green clay with patches of brown staining. The feature (202) was a linear spread of rubble approximately 4m in length and up to 3m wide, aligned WSW - ENE. It is possible that contexts 202 and 204 are part of the same feature separated by the gully 203, although the pottery from these features is slightly different in date, 202 dated to the late 3rd - early 4th century AD whereas 204 produced ceramic material of 2nd - 3rd century date. Also recovered from 202 were fragments of animal bone, a flint flake (SF 7), a whetstone (SF 8) and an iron nail (SF 9).

The eastern end of the trench contained mostly areas of cobbles (208) with evidence of repairs (211) and disturbance (210), probably by ploughing. Context 208 contained a variety of stone types although rounded limestone fragments predominate there is a large quantity of rounded

sandstone. A patch of smaller limestone pebbles at the southern edge of the trench (211) may indicate a later attempt at repairing the surface. Pottery of late 3rd to early 4th century date was recovered from over the cobbles as well as fragments of animal bones, iron slag, an iron nail (SF 3), a small fragment of a copper alloy brooch (SF 5) and a fragment of post-medieval glass (SF 12).

The presence of a possible post hole (209) against the northern section of the trench may indicate the edge of a timber structure. Context 209 contained two large limestone blocks that may be post-packing.

All the ceramic material from Trench 2 was of Romano-British date, mostly late 3rd to early 4th century although context 204 produced a slightly earlier date of 2nd to 3rd century (see Appendix 1).

Trench 2 was excavated to a maximum depth of 29.32m OD, approximately 0.4m below the ground surface.

#### 5.4 Trench 3 (Fig.6)

A maximum depth of 0.2m of topsoil was removed from the area of trench 3 revealing a mid brown sandy silt (302). Two box sections were excavated through this deposit at either end of the trench. At the southern end of the trench 302 was found to be 0.3m deep and overlying a natural Triassic deposit of Tea Green Marl (304) - a similar deposit to the Mercian mudstone except for being slightly sandier in texture and green in colour. The Tea Green Marl was 0.2m deep and overlay yellow Triassic sandstone. The northern box section revealed that 0.25m of context 302 overlay a cobbled surface (303) of multi-coloured rounded sandstone cobbles lain on the Tea Green Marl (304). This surface was aligned south west - north east and was defined on either side by parallel cuts (305 and 307) that contained red/brown sandy silts (306 and 308).

The only ceramic material recovered was from the topsoil (301) and was of late 3rd to early 4th century date.

Trench 3 was excavated to a maximum depth of 28.15m OD, approximately 0.5m below the ground surface.

#### 5.5 Trench 4 (Fig.7)

A depth of 0.25m of topsoil was removed from the area of trench 4 followed by a further 0.2m of red/brown sandy subsoil (402). Beneath 402 were found three structural features; two parallel linear stonework features 404 and 405 lying approximately 2 m apart, aligned SWS - NEN, and a small post hole (406/7) adjacent to the eastern face of 405. Contexts 404 and 405 were of similar construction to 106 in Trench 1 consisting of laid and pitched limestone blocks in a shallow cut 0.4m wide. It appears that 405 continues into Trench 16 (**Plate 1**) connecting with 1604 and that 404 must join 1603, also in Trench 16, although these latter two stone features are on quite different alignments (see below). These stone features are likely to be the curvilinear anomalies located in the geophysical survey (see above).

No finds were recovered from Trench 4. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 27.92m OD, 0.5m below the ground surface.

#### 5.6 Trench 5

Removal of topsoil from Trench 5 revealed no archaeological features only a reddish brown

clean sandy clay, interpreted as the natural Mercian mudstone. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 24.87m OD, 0.3m below the ground surface.

The only find recovered from Trench 5 was a flint flake (SF 6).

#### 5.7 Trench 6 (Fig.8)

Excavation of Trench 6 revealed that 0.2m of topsoil overlay a light brown sandy deposit (602). Cut into this layer were four modern field drains (604 not illustrated, 606, 608 and 610). Of these field drains one 606 was found to be cutting a stone linear feature (611) similar to the stone features in Trenches 1, and 4. Context 611 was aligned approximately north west - south east and consisted of limestone blocks packed into a shallow cut (630) 0.35m wide.

No finds were recovered from Trench 6. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 24.4m OD, 0.4m below the ground surface.

#### 5.8 Trench 7 (Fig.9)

Trench 7 produced similar results to Trench 6 with 0.2m of topsoil overlying a light red/brown sandy deposit into which was cut a field drain (704, not illustrated) and drystone linear feature (705), aligned north south.

No finds were recovered from Trench 7. The trench was excavated to a depth of 23.81, 0.4m below the ground surface.

#### 5.9 Trenches 8 and 9

Both these trenches were located in the south eastern part of Area A and were devoid of archaeological features or finds. Removal of 0.2m of topsoil from both trenches revealed a reddish brown clean sandy clay natural deposit (Mercian mudstone).

#### 5.10 Trench 10 (Fig.10)

Topsoil to a depth of 0.3 m was removed from the area of Trench 10 to reveal a light red brown sandy deposit with occasional flecks of charcoal (1002). Sections through 1002 revealed that it was 0.15m deep overlying the natural Mercian mudstone. Cut into the natural was a 0.15m wide and 0.1m deep timber slot (1003) that contained a similar deposit to 1002 although slightly darker in colour and containing a larger number of charcoal inclusions.

The only artefactual material recovered from Trench 10 was a fragment of iron slag from context 1002. Trench 10 was excavated to a depth of 26.97m OD, 0.55m below the ground surface.

#### 5.11 Trench 16 (Fig.11)

Removal of 0.2m of topsoil revealed two similar stone features to those in other trenches (1603 and 1604) and these appear to be connected with the two stone features in Trench 4 (see above). Certainly 1604 is on an exact alignment with 405 in Trench 4 (PI.1), curving slightly from an ESE - WNW alignment to a more east west alignment. Context 1603 however, is aligned almost exactly north south whereas 404 is aligned parallel with 405 in a ESE - WNW direction. If 404 and 1603 do connect then there must be quite a sharp turn in the structure between the two trenches.

No finds were recovered from this trench. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 27.63m OD, 0.3m below the ground surface.

#### 5.12 Trench 17

No archaeological features or finds were revealed in Trench 17. Excavation showed that 0.35m of topsoil overlay 0.15m of red brown sandy clay subsoil (1702) which overlay the Mercian mudstone.

Trench 17 was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.45m below the surface, 27.6m OD.

#### 5.13 AREA B

##### Trench 11 - 15

These five trenches produced little in the way of archaeological evidence. All the trenches revealed a shallow depth of topsoil (0.2 - 0.35m) overlying natural marls which varied across the area. In Trenches 11 and 15 the natural was a red brown marl, whereas in trenches 12 - 14 the natural was a paler fawn colour and almost pure sand, presumably weathered sandstone. The only significant feature from Area B was a 19th - 20th century rubbish pit in Trench 14. Some residual Roman material was recovered from the topsoil in Trench 15 (see Appendix 1) all other ceramic material in Area B was post-medieval in date.

#### 5.14 AREA C

##### Trench 18 (Fig.12)

Excavation of this trench revealed that 0.1 - 0.2m of topsoil overlay 0.5m of post-medieval make-up (1801) consisting of tarmac, limestone rubble and yellow and grey sand. Below this make-up at the southern end of the trench was an area of rough cobbling, possibly for a yard surface, (1802) consisting of fragments of limestone and sandstone in a reddish brown sandy clay. North of this layer was a similar reddish brown deposit (1806) with fewer stones and occasional charcoal flecks, probably the make-up for 1802. A sondage was excavated through this deposit which was found to be 0.24m deep and overlying sandstone. Context 1806 was cut by the construction trench for a rectangular structure (1803). This structure was constructed using large well-dressed limestone and sandstone blocks on its eastern face behind which were smaller roughly hewn stones that continued into the west section. The structure 1803 measured 2.36m in length, suggesting that this was a small ancillary building associated with the original Church Farm buildings on the opposite side of Church Road.

The only finds recovered from Trench 18 were post-medieval sherds of pottery from the make-up deposit 1802 and a modern copper button (SF 13) from the topsoil. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 11.59m OD, 0.9m below the ground surface.

#### 5.15 Trench 19 (Fig.13)

A depth of 0.6 to 0.8m of topsoil and make-up were removed from the area of Trench 19 to reveal a collection of pits and structural remains. The earliest features within this trench appear to be the stone structures (1907) and (1911). Structure 1907 survives as a short wall of limestone slabs 0.8m in length, 0.4m wide, abutted by a make-up layer of brownish red sandy clay (1905) and truncated by a large sub-circular pit, measuring 0.8m in diameter (1906). In the south west corner of the trench another, possibly earlier, make-up deposit (1902) had been truncated by a small post hole (1904) measuring 0.3m in diameter and containing large sandstone packing. At the eastern end of the trench structure 1911, consisting of large flat slabs, may be the remains of a floor surface. This structure had been badly truncated by several pits (1909, 1910 and 1912), a hand-excavated section through one of these pits (1912) recovered pottery dated to the late 13th or early 14th century. Other artefacts recovered from this pit included animal bones and a badly corroded iron spur (SF 16).

Trench 19 was excavated to maximum depth of 11.04m OD, approximately 1m below the ground surface.

**5.16 Trench 27**

No archaeological features were present in Trench 27: 0.5m to 0.8m of topsoil and make-up and a 0.2m to 0.3m thick layer of red brown sand were removed onto sandstone bedrock.

No finds were recovered. The trench was excavated to a depth of approximately 1m below the ground surface, 12.08m OD.

**5.17 Trench 28 (Fig.14)**

A depth of 0.3m to 0.5m of topsoil and make-up were removed from Trench 28 onto a natural sandstone surface. Cut into the sandstone were numerous hollows and gullies clearly some of which were natural weathering features (such as 2808 and 2859), several others contained pot sherds (2805/6, 2821/2, 2832/3, 2834/5, 2836/7, 2854/5), charcoal or post packing. All the hollows were filled with red brown sandy clay. The pottery recovered from these hollows dates to the 12th and 13th centuries (see Appendix 1).

Trench 28 was excavated to a maximum depth of 10.94m OD, 1m below the surface.

**5.18 Trench 29 (fig.15)**

Topsoil and make-up was removed from the area of Trench 29 to a depth of 0.6m revealing a similar collection of hollows in the bedrock as Trench 28. Two of these features were interpreted as post holes (2905/6 and 2907/8). Context 2905 consisted of a red brown silty clay within a 0.35m diameter and 0.17m deep cut (2906). One pottery sherd was recovered from 2905 dated to the 12th century. Context 2907 was also a red brown silty clay within an irregular shaped cut (2908) that was 0.4m wide and 0.2m deep. The only artefactual remains recovered from this context was an animal bone fragment.

The only other finds from this trench were late 13th to early 14th century pot sherds from a red/brown silty clay sealing deposit (2904) overlying the bedrock.

Trench 29 was excavated to a maximum depth of 10.4m OD, 0.76m below the ground surface.

**5.19 Trench 30**

Topsoil and make-up was removed from Trench 30 to a depth of 0.85m below the ground surface, 10.7m OD. This revealed a bedrock surface of sandstone and no archaeological features. No finds were recovered from this trench.

**5.20 Trench 31 (Fig.16)**

Excavation in Trench 31 revealed various 'tip' layers of rubble that appear to have been deposited from the direction of the old farm buildings to the west (see section Fig. 16). Beneath 0.3m of topsoil was a rubble layer (3102) 0.15m deep containing clay pipes and 19th century pottery. Below this was a thicker layer of rubble (3104), approximately 0.4m deep, containing 17th century pottery. Context 3104 overlay a red silty sand containing late 13th to 14th century pottery and a whet stone (SF 62). One later feature cut into this deposit was a small post-hole (3107), 0.4m in diameter and 0.1m deep. The posthole contained large angular limestone packing stones.

Trench 31 was excavated to a depth of 9.96m OD, approximately 1.5m below the ground surface.

### 5.21 Trench 32

Archaeological features were absent from Trench 32. The removal of 0.25m of topsoil and 0.55m of light red brown sandy subsoil revealed natural yellow sandstone bedrock at a depth of 18.75m OD. No finds were recovered from this trench.

### 5.22 AREA D

#### Trenches 20 - 24

All five of these trenches were located on slightly higher ground above the flood plain and produced little in the way of archaeological evidence. All were excavated down to natural Mercian mudstone which was encountered at 0.4 - 0.5m below the surface. Overlying the natural was c. 0.2m of light red brown sandy subsoil beneath c. 0.2m of topsoil. Only Trench 21 produced pottery from the subsoil (2102) dated to the 12th to early 13th century. The negative evidence from these trenches suggests that this area has always been open fields.

#### 5.22 Trenches 25 (fig.17) and 26

These two trenches were positioned on the flood plain of the Nedern Brook to examine the waterlogged deposits which may correlate with those recorded at the Caldicot Castle Lake site. The trenches were machine excavated to a depth of approximately 3.5m below the ground surface, 2.54m OD and both exhibited a similar sequence of alluvial stratigraphy.

The upper 1.13m of stratigraphy consisted of light - mid brown sands and silty loams (2501 - 2504) to a depth of 4.71m OD. Below 4.71m was the most recent alluvial deposit (2505): a grey clay with veins of light brown and darker organic streaks. This deposit was 0.28m in thickness and overlay a thin band (50mm) of very dark brown to black poorly preserved organic material (2509). Beneath 2509 was a very similar deposit to 2505 (2510) that was 0.64m deep. This overlay context 2506: a blue grey clay with flecks of black fibrous material. This deposit was 0.4m thick and bottomed onto a thick layer (0.55m) of brown well-preserved fibrous peat (2507) at 2.97m OD. Context 2507 was sampled for radio carbon dating for comparison with similar deposits at similar depths from the Castle Lake site. Underlying the peat was a layer of light blue clay (2508) that was not bottomed.

No finds were recovered from either Trench 25 or 26.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The evidence recovered by the evaluation has led to a mitigation strategy of further excavations in two areas of the development site. It was concluded that the material and structural remains located in Trenches 1 - 3 were sufficient to justify a full excavation (preservation by record) of this northern part of the field. This work has now been completed and the results will be published (Insole forthcoming).

6.2 The medieval remains in Area C in the area of Trenches 19, 30 and 31 will also be subjected to full excavation at a later date. The remaining evaluation trenches in Area C lie outside the area affected by the development and so 'preservation by record' was not considered necessary.

### 6.3 Area A

The rubble, cobbles and linear features in Area A are associated with a Romano-British farmstead probably centred in the adjacent field to the north. The curvilinear features have been shown by further excavation to post-date the farmstead (Insole forthcoming), although a more exact date could not be established.

6.4 Within the topsoil of trenches 1 - 3 in Area A there was a large quantity of modern farm refuse such as silage bags and chicken wire. It is highly probable that this dumped material contributed to the anomalies detected by the geophysical survey in the northernmost part of the field.

6.5 The curvilinear features located in the gradiometer survey have been shown by the evaluation to be dry stone linear features in Trenches 1, 4, 6, 7 and 16 and are of unknown date.

### 6.6 Area B

The possible lime kiln in Area B, noted by the topsoil magnetic susceptibility survey, is in fact a 19th century rubbish pit, located in Trench 14.

6.7 No other significant archaeological remains were encountered in this area.

### 6.8 Area C

The evidence recovered from Area C supports the hypothesis that Church Farm has a medieval origin. The earliest contexts in this area being the post holes in Trenches 28 and 29 that have been dated from ceramic material to the 12th century (see Appendix 1).

6.9 The stone structures in Trenches 18 and 19 (1803, 1907 and 1911) could not be dated but are assumed to be medieval or early post-medieval in date as they are sealed by post-medieval make-up. From the evidence of the 'tip' layers in Trench 31 it is possible that this make-up material began being deposited in the 17th century, it is therefore possible to attribute a 16th century date or earlier for the stone structures. Structure 1911 appears to have an earlier medieval date as it has been truncated by pit 1912 containing late 13th to early 14th century pottery.

6.10 It is possible that the 'tip' layers sectioned in Trench 31 account for the subtle geophysical anomaly located alongside Church Road in Area C. However, there has also been a

considerable amount of modern farm dumping in this area similar to that in the northern part of Area A which may have obscured or even confused the geophysical data.

6.11 The negative evidence from Trenches 27, 30, and 32 suggest that this area of the evaluation lies on the very periphery of the medieval farm between the original farm house, on the opposite side of Church Road, and the open fields of Area D. We would therefore expect the structures recorded by the evaluation to be out buildings around a yard of rough cobbles such as those in Trench 18 (1802).

#### 6.12 Area D

The lack of medieval evidence from the trenches in Area D and the presence of the lynchets support the hypothesis that this area has always been undeveloped, open fields.

6.13 The peat deposit (2507) examined and sampled in Trench 25 was encountered at a height of 2.97m OD, the base of this layer lies at 2.42m OD. This deposit was radiocarbon dated at the University of Waikato, New Zealand and produced conventional age results of 4630 +/- 60 BP (lab code Wk 5820) for the base of the deposit and 3990 +/- 60 BP (lab code Wk 5819) for the top of the deposit. These dates have been calibrated to a two sigma age range (95% confidence intervals) using cal20.dta dataset, resolution 1 (Stuiver and Kra 1986, Stuiver, Long and Kra 1993) producing dates of 3650 - 3100 BC and 2850 - 2300 BC respectively. These results lead us to the conclusion that the peat here began forming in the early to mid neolithic period and continued forming into the late neolithic. The height and date of this deposit compares favourably with a phase 1 deposit from the Caldicot Castle Lake site (G.1) which produced dates of 4670 +/- 80 BP for the base of the deposit and 4370 +/- 80 BP for the top (Nayling and Caseldine 1997). This would suggest that the Castle Lake deposit began to form at approximately the same time as that at Church Farm but ceased forming at an earlier date. A further difference between these deposits is that, whereas the Church Farm layer (2507) is a true 'woody' peat, the deposit at the Castle Lake site was an organic silt and would therefore have less concentrations of pollen. Study of the pollen and diatoms in the G.1 deposit at the castle site suggested that during the Neolithic period the Nedern Valley was subject to marine influence with nearby salt marsh and woodland on the higher ground (Nayling and Caseldine 1997). The expected higher concentrations of palaeoenvironmental information contained within the 'woody' peat of Church Farm would, if studied, provide a greater knowledge of the Neolithic environs especially as regards the type of woodland on the higher ground.

6.14 The lack of artefactual remains within Trenches 25 and 26 suggests that this area lies beyond the focus of Bronze Age activity which, at the Castle Lake site, may have been associated with a crossing point of the Nedern (*ibid.*).



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## Maps and Plans

- 1759 An exact Map of the Manor of Caldicot (Gwent Record Office D1670.69)  
c.1800 John Foord's Map Book (a book of maps of the commonable fields of Caldicot before they were enclosed) (Gwent Record Office D25.1972)  
1858 Copy of the Caldicot Tithe Award Map (Gwent Record Office D/Pa4.24)  
1859 Caldicot Enclosure Map (Gwent Record Office Q/Inc Aw 14)  
1881 OS 25" First Edition  
1964 OS 6"map of Caldicot area with boundary of manor added (Gwent Record Office D.1670.59)

## Vertical Aerial Photographs

- 1946 RAF CPE UK 1828, frames 3058-9: shows evidence of ploughing in Area A. Lime kiln, lynchets and former river courses obvious.  
1966 OS 66 043, frame 131: field drains obvious.  
1971 BKS, frames 167020-1: lynchets just visible.  
1971 39 RAF 3764, frame 42 108: lynchets obvious.  
1985 J A Story 0985, frames 146-7: lynchets and river channels obvious, signs of 'fly' tipping in northern part of Area A.  
1991 H 010, frames 5991 56-7: mound of spoil along northern boundary of Area A.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) would like to thank Harvey Heavens (landowner), Lawrence Clarke (Crest Homes), Peter King (Crosbi Plant Hire), the staff of Gwent Record Office, the staff of Newport Reference Library, the staff at the Welsh Office: Central Register of Air Photography for Wales, the excavation team, Ann Linge (illustrator), Julie Jones, Vanessa Staker, Nigel Nayling, Astrid Caseldine and Andy Young (Avon Archaeological Unit).

## **Appendix 1: Policy Statement**

This report is the result of work carried out in the light of national and local authority policies.

### **NATIONAL POLICIES**

Statutory protection for archaeology is enshrined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), amended by the National Heritage Act, 1983. Nationally important sites are listed in the Schedule of Ancient Monuments (SAM). Scheduled Monument consent is required for any work which would affect a SAM.

### **DOE PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE**

The Planning Policy Guidance of Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16) consolidates advice to planning authorities. The Guidance stresses the non-renewable nature of the archaeological resource, details the role of the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), encourages early consultation with county and district archaeological officers and sets out the requirement for developers to provide sufficient information on the archaeological impact of development to enable a reasonable planning decision to be made.

PPG 16 also indicates the circumstances where further work would be necessary and outlines the use of agreements and conditions to protect the archaeological resource.

## **Appendix 2: The Pottery**

by Rod Burchill

The pottery assemblage recovered during the site evaluation at Church Farm, Caldicot consisted of 389 sherds weighing 4.025gm 179 sherds of which were Romano-British in date. The Romano-British pottery was identified and dated by comparison to a fabric series prepared by the present writer (Burchill forthcoming), the post-Roman fabrics were identified and dated by comparison to Vince's Chepstow Type Series (1991). A full description of the pottery fabrics present and their distribution by context will be found in the site archive.

The Pottery ranged in date from the Romano-British to the modern period. Trenches 2,3 and 15 contained only Romano-British pottery mostly of later 3rd or 4th century date, whilst Trenches 11, 19, 21, 28, 29 and 31 contained post-Roman material mostly dating to the late-13th or 14th century. Context 3104 was dated to the early 17th century by the presence of a black-glazed cup : probably a Falfield vessel. Residual Romano-British fabrics were present in most contexts. A single sherd of pottery from Trench 5 is probably Romano-British but it could not be identified with any certainty.

The Romano-British material was comprised almost entirely of kitchen wares with a single sherd of decorated Samian.

The post-Roman wares were more mixed comprising both coarse wares and glazed vessels. Most of the post-Roman pottery can be dated to the later 13th and early 14th century although noticeable quantities of 12th century material was also present. The cooking vessels mostly belonged to Vince's Ha group. Most of these fabrics are unsourced; however, Vince attributed them to an area stretching from Glamorgan to the Forest of Dean. The most common glazed vessels were part of Vince's Hg group all produced in the Vale of Glamorgan and dated to the later 13th and 14th century. The assemblage also included cooking vessels in Ham Green fabric and jugs from the Bristol/Redcliffe kilns. Context 1912 also produced 3 sherds of a green glazed jug in Vince's fabric Nb. These vessels were produced in the area around Saints in the Girond, Southwest France. It is likely this vessel was imported through Bristol which had a thriving trade with the Bordeaux region during the medieval period.

### **Conclusions**

It is clear the Romano-British pottery recovered from Church Farm formed part of a much greater assemblage associated with the site subsequently excavated by P.Insole on the north side of the evaluation area (Burchill in P.Insole forthcoming).

The pottery recovered from trenches 19 to 31 suggests the presence of a medieval occupation starting sometime in the second half of the 12th century and continuing until the later 14th century. The small number of sherds dated to after 1400 are probably the result of later agricultural activity on the site.

## Chronology of Contexts

### *Romano-British contexts*

#### **Context**

- 201: later 3rd/4th century
- 202: late-3rd/early-4th century
- 204: 2nd/3rd century
- 208: late-3rd/4th century
- 210: later 3rd/early-4th century
- 301: late-3rd/4th century
- 1501: mid/late-3rd century

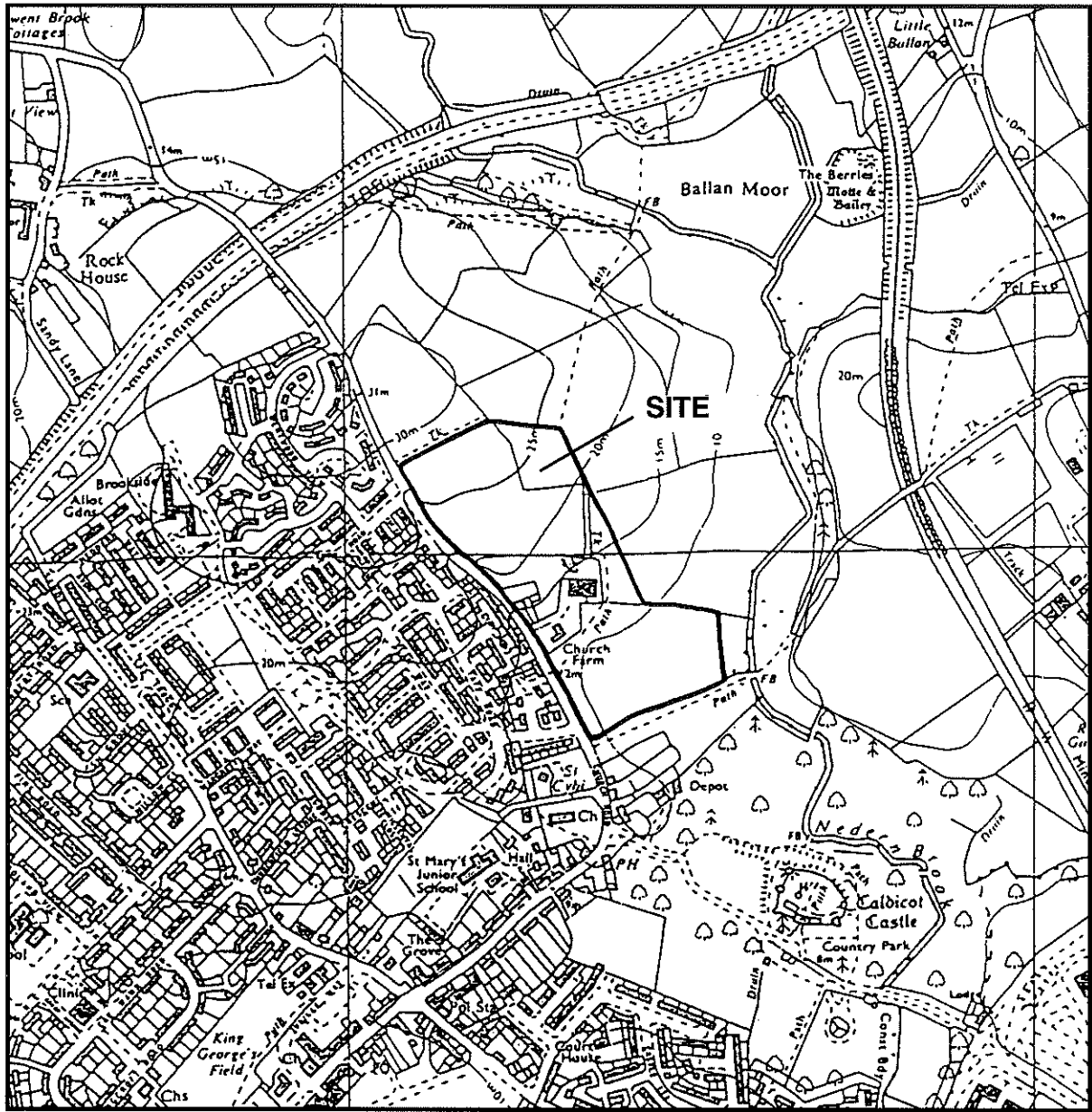
### *Post-Roman contexts*

#### **Context**

- 101: modern
- 1912: late-13th/early-14th century
- 2102: 12th/early 13th century
- 2806: late-12th/13th century
- 2822: 12th century
- 2833: late-13th/14th century
- 2835: 13th century
- 2837: 12th/13th century
- 2855: 12th/early-13th century
- 2904: late-13th/early-14th century
- 2905: 12th century
- 3101: late-13th/early-14th century
- 3102: 19th century
- 3104: 17th century
- 3105: late-13th/14th century.

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1997
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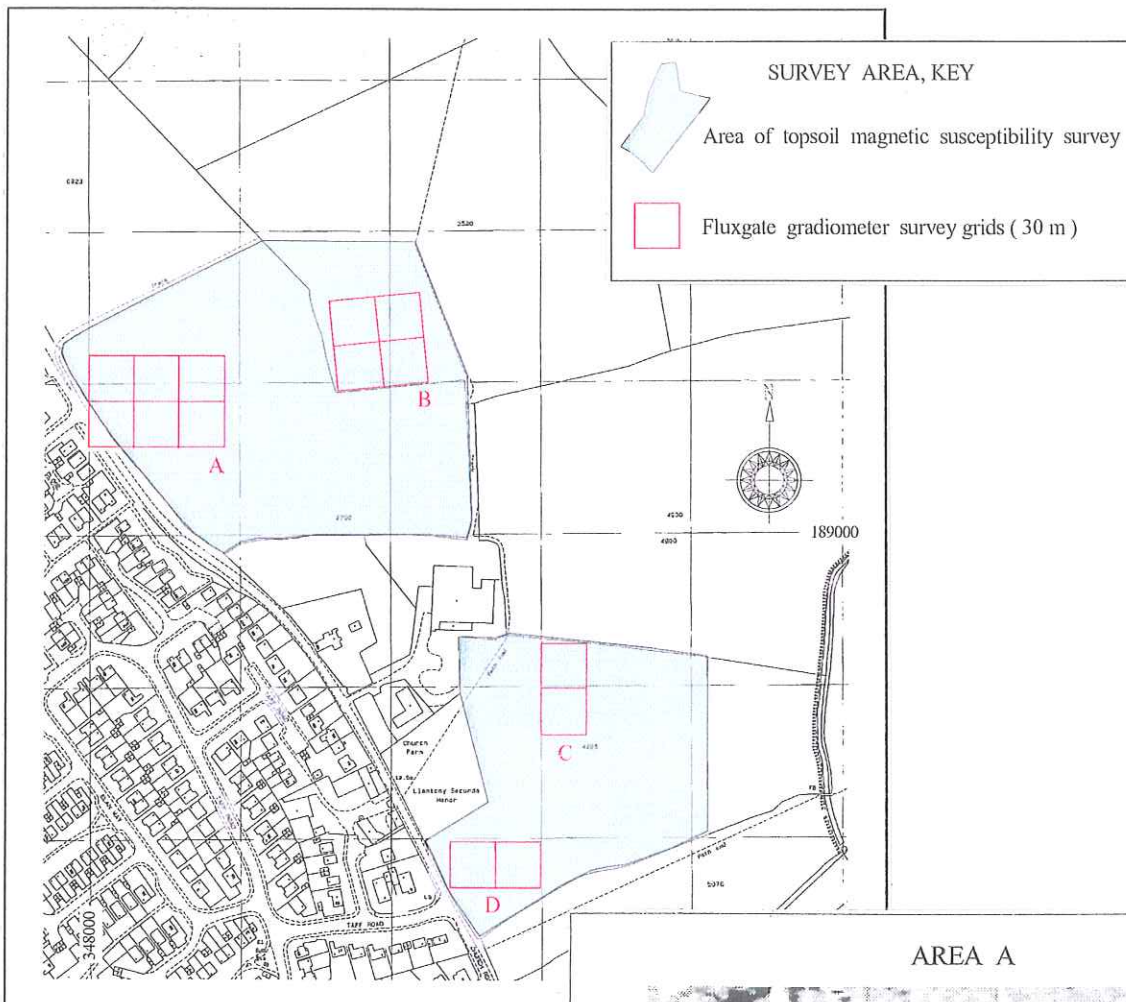


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Fig.1 Site location plan, scale 1:10,000



Fig.2 Trench location plan, with illustrated trenches shown in blue



SCALE 1:5,000

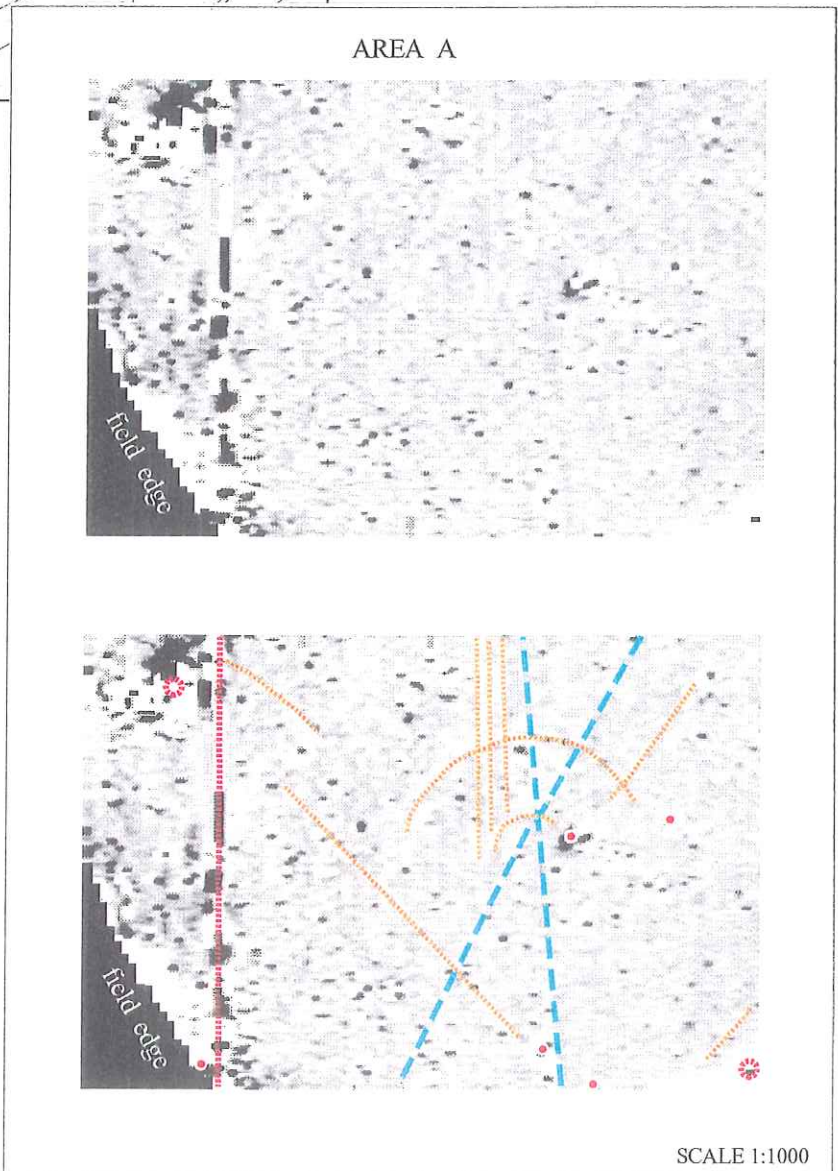


Fig.3 Geophysical survey results





Fig.4 Trench 1

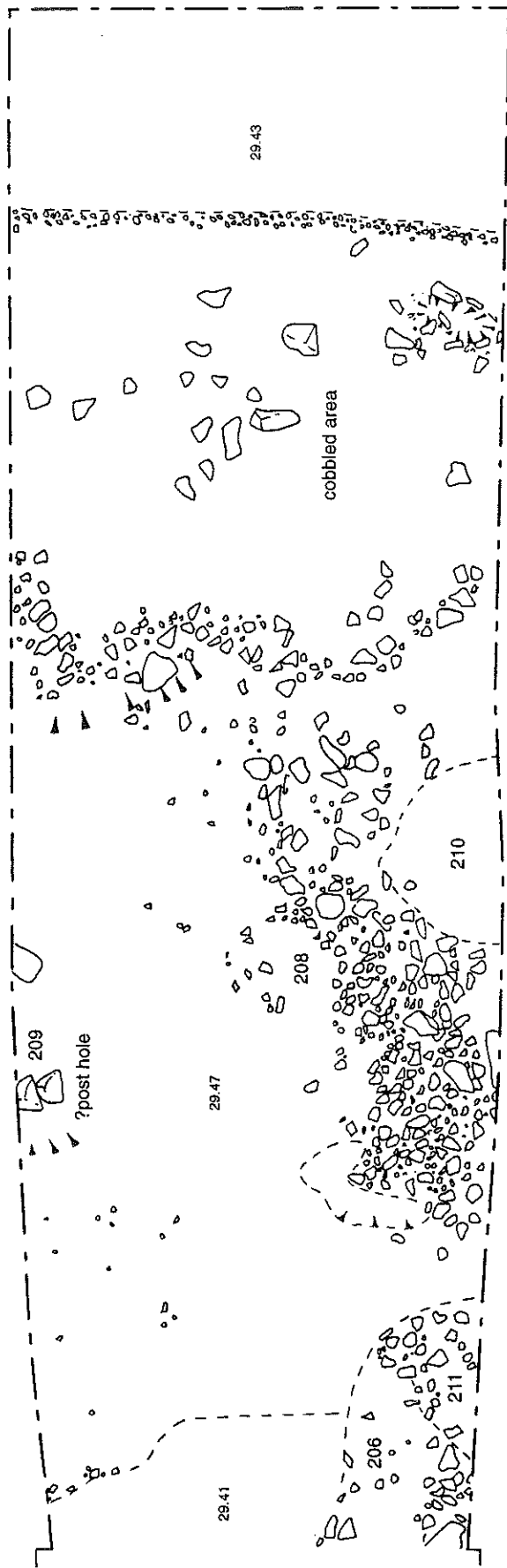
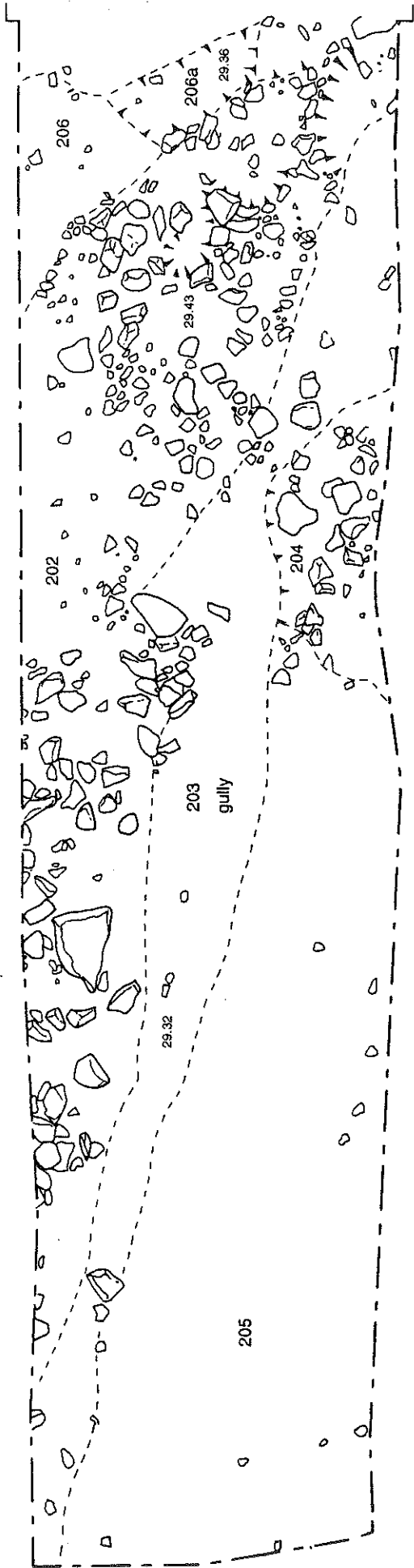


Fig.5 Trench 2

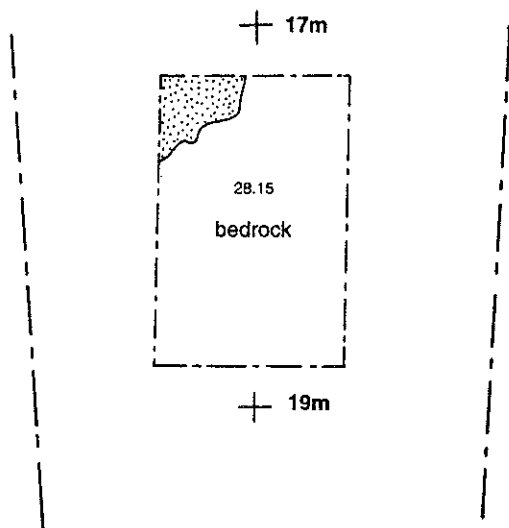
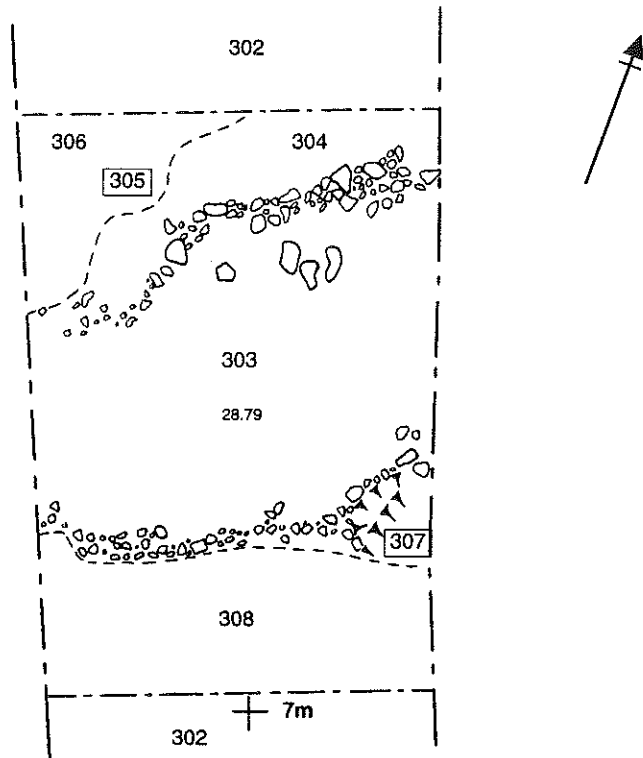


Fig.6 Trench 3

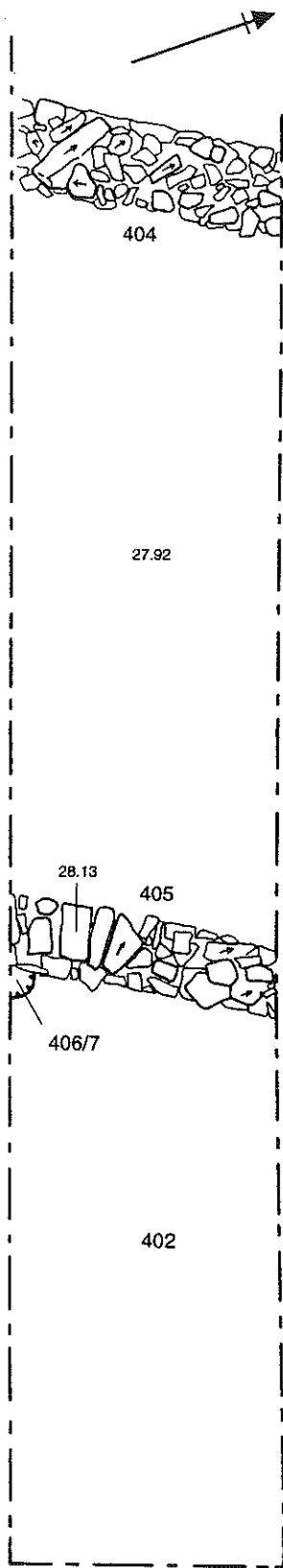


Fig.7 Trench 4

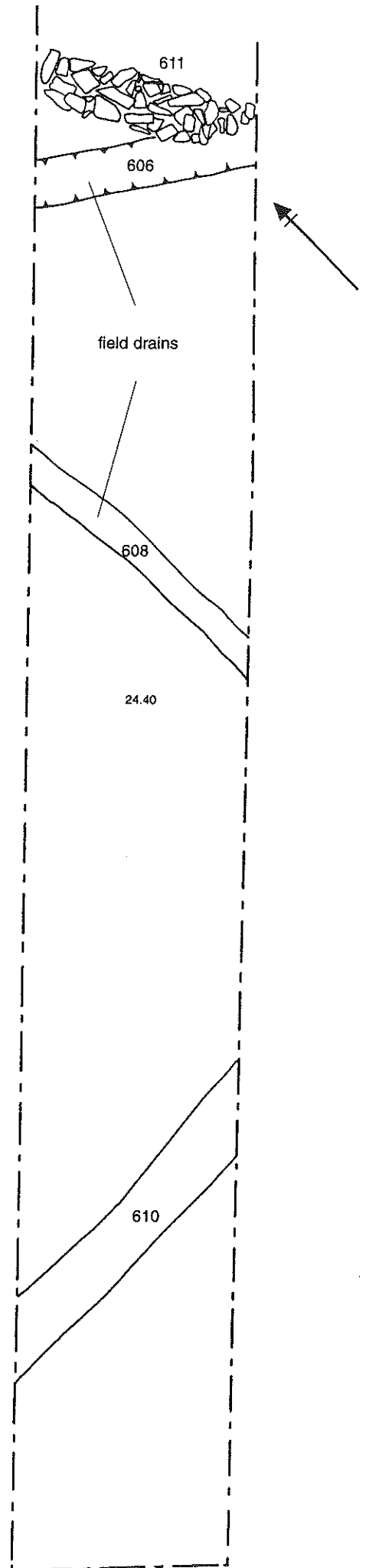


Fig.8 Trench 6

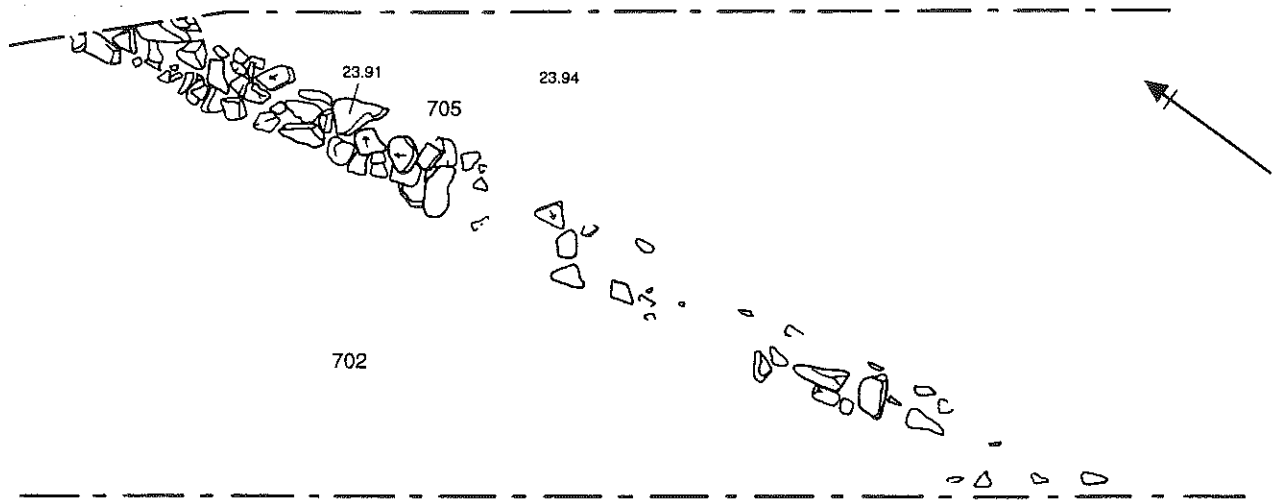


Fig.9 Trench 7

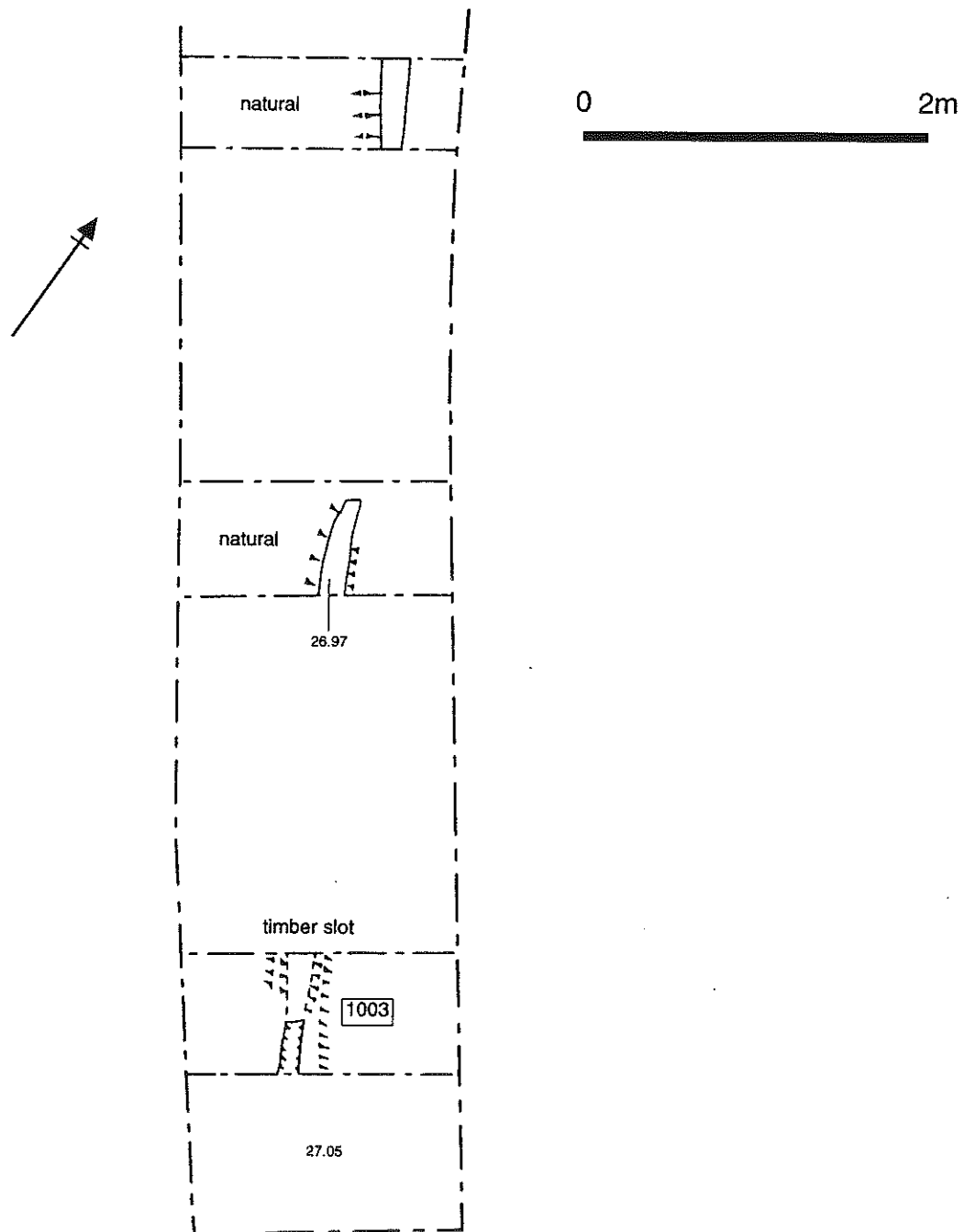


Fig.10 Trench 10

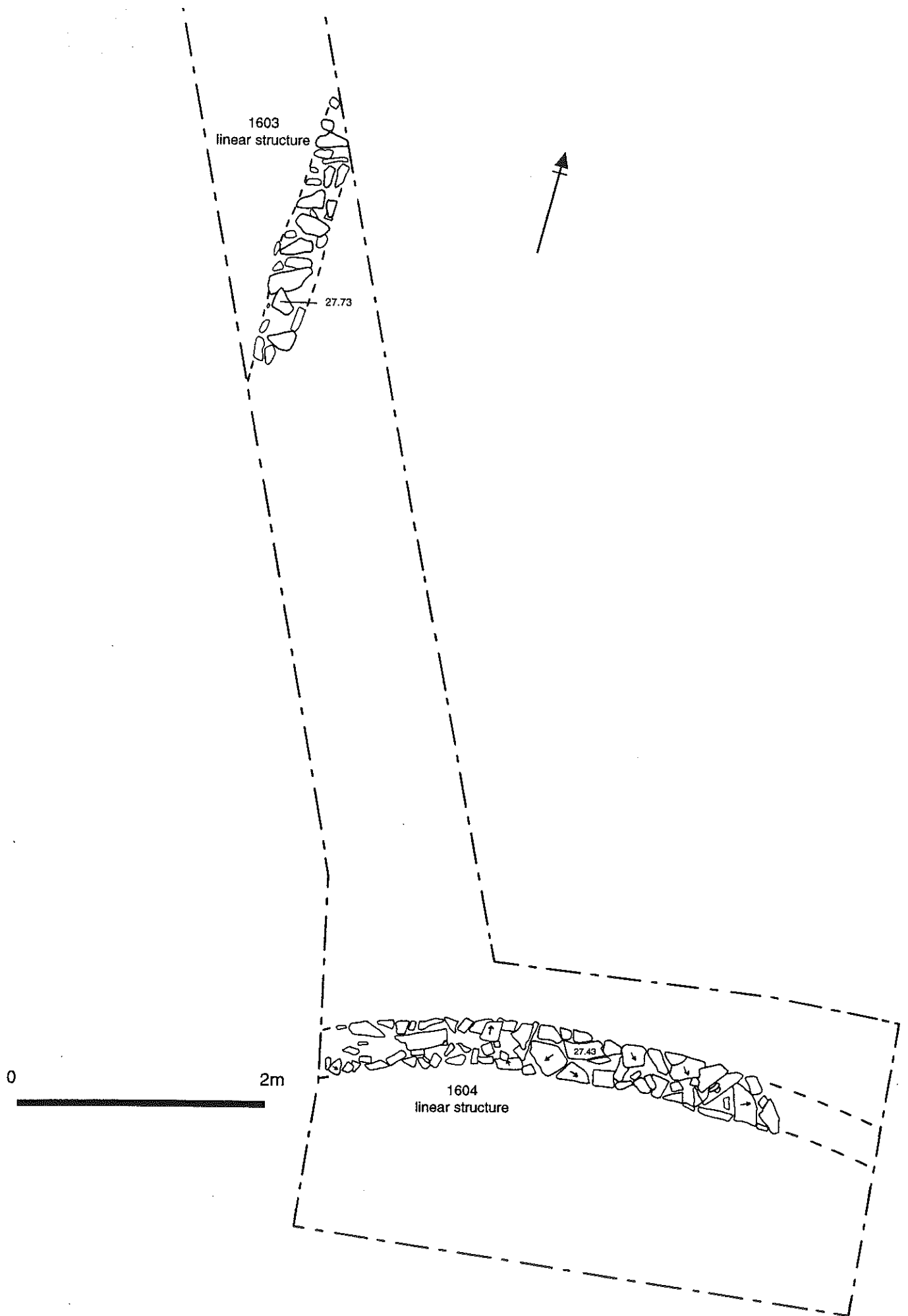


Fig.11 Trench 16

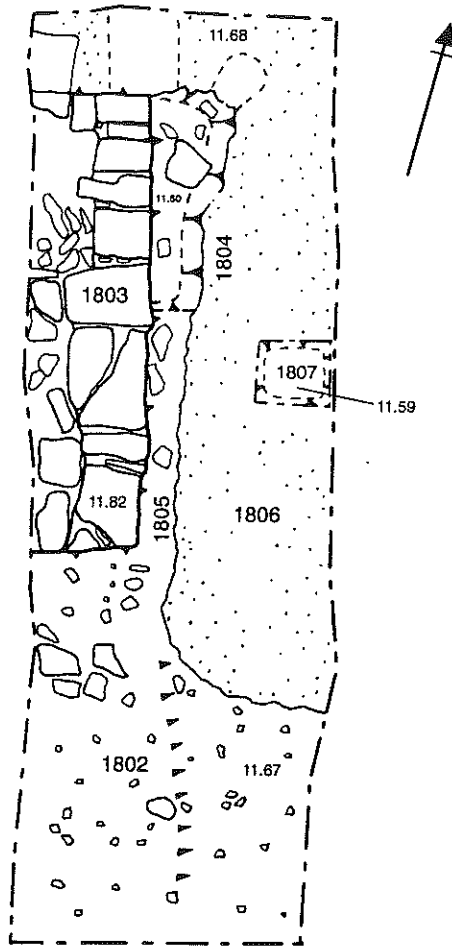


Fig.12 Trench 18

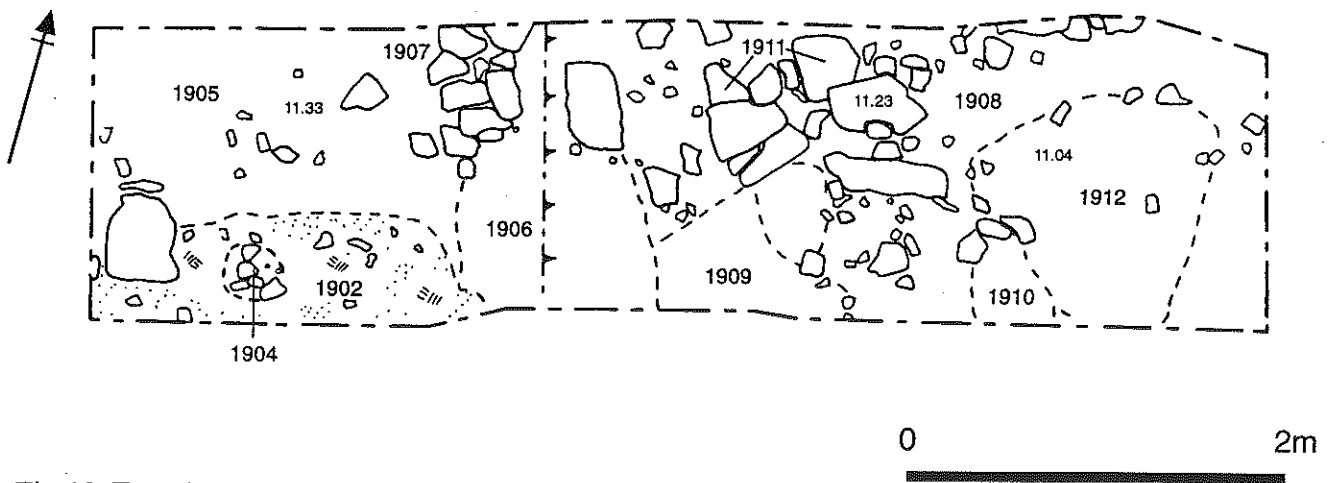


Fig.13 Trench 19

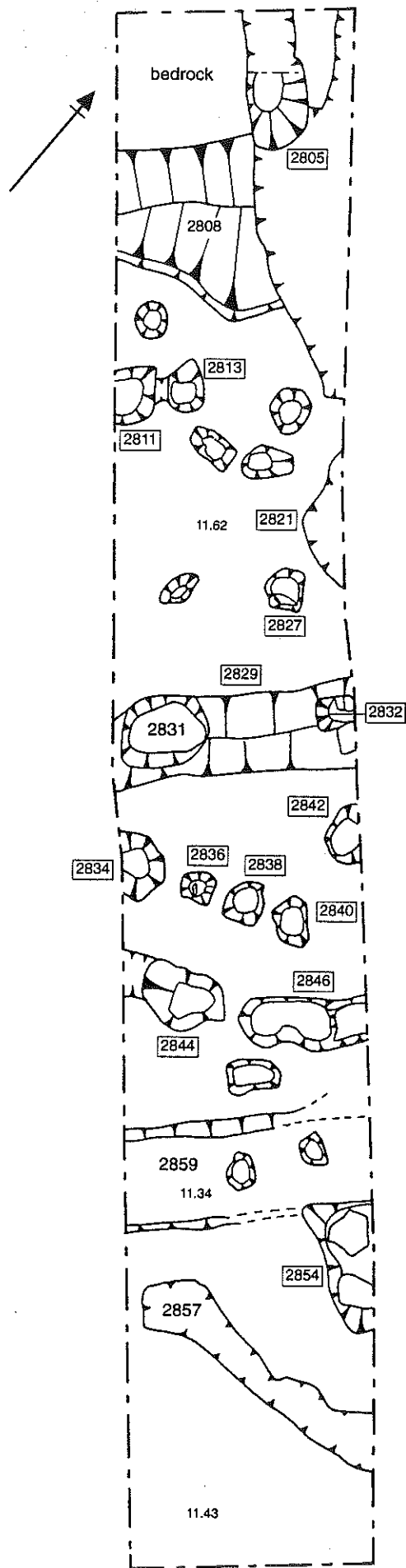


Fig.14 Trench 28

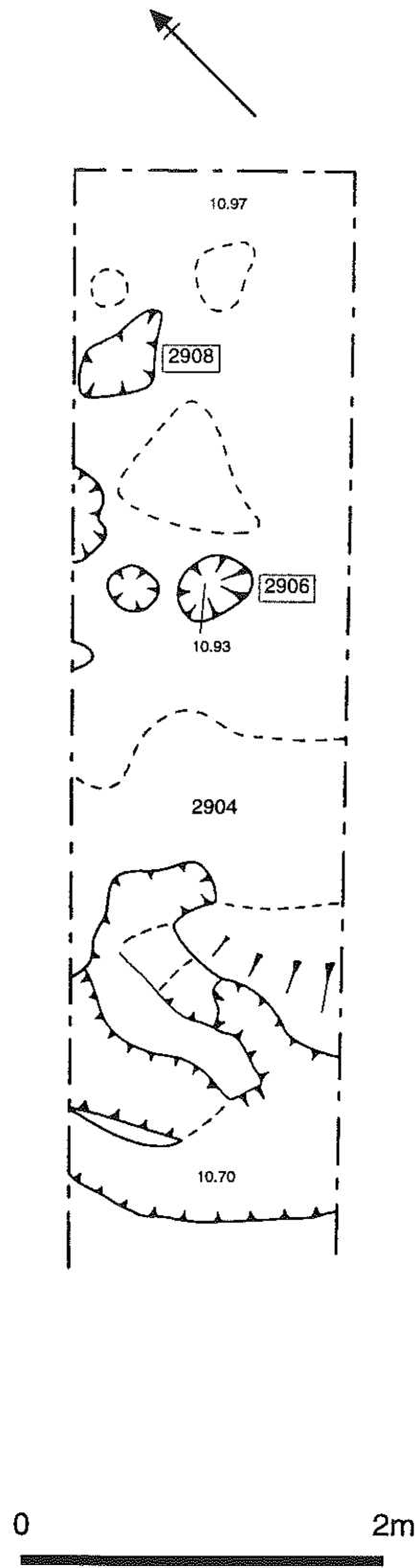


Fig.15 Trench 29



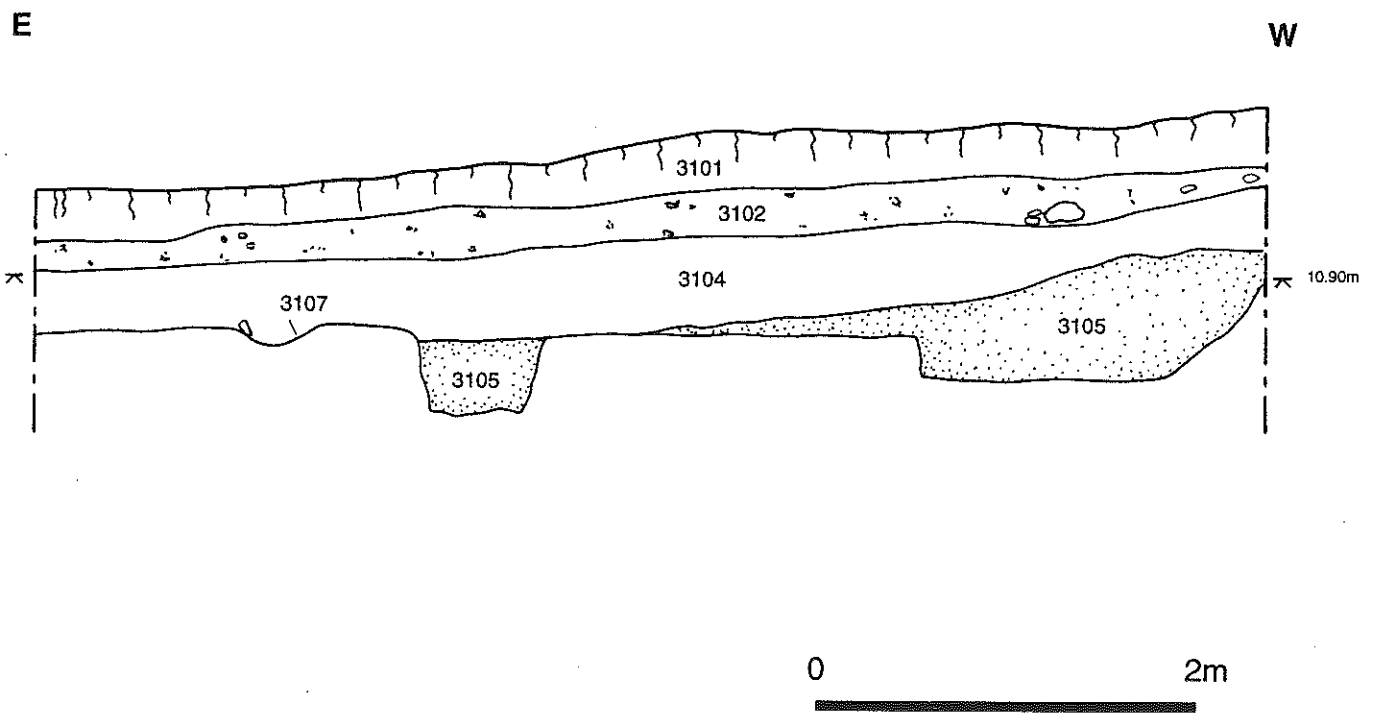
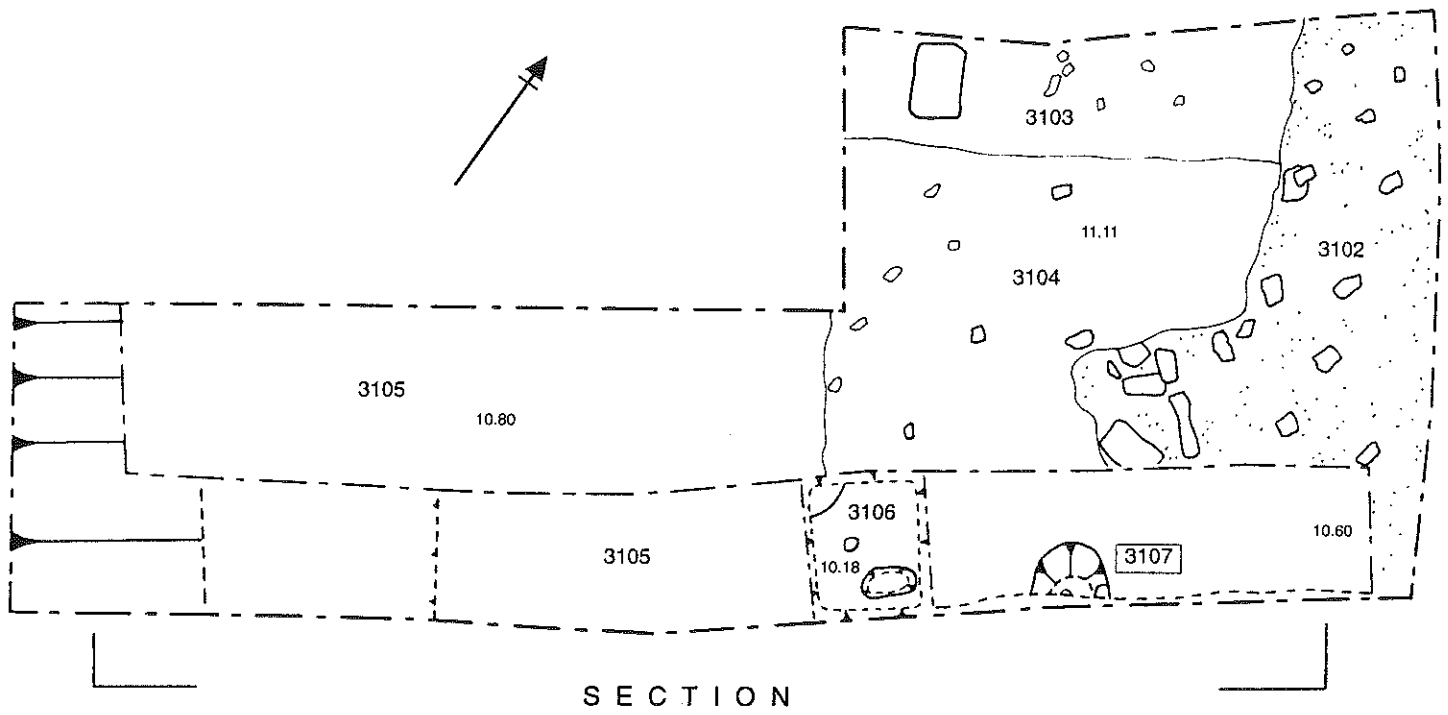


Fig.16 Trench 31 and section

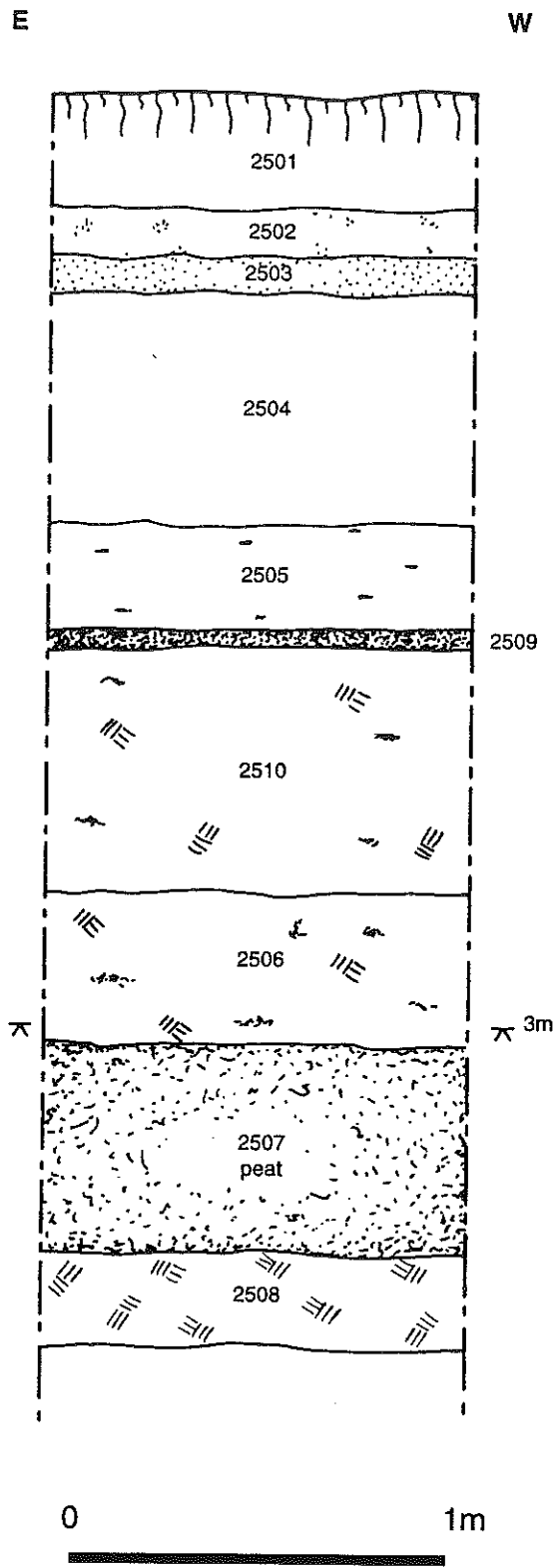


Fig.17 North-facing section from Trench 25



Plate 1 Structure 405, Trench 4 with 1604, Trench 16 (background), viewed from the west



Plate 2 Structure 1803, Trench 18, viewed from the east

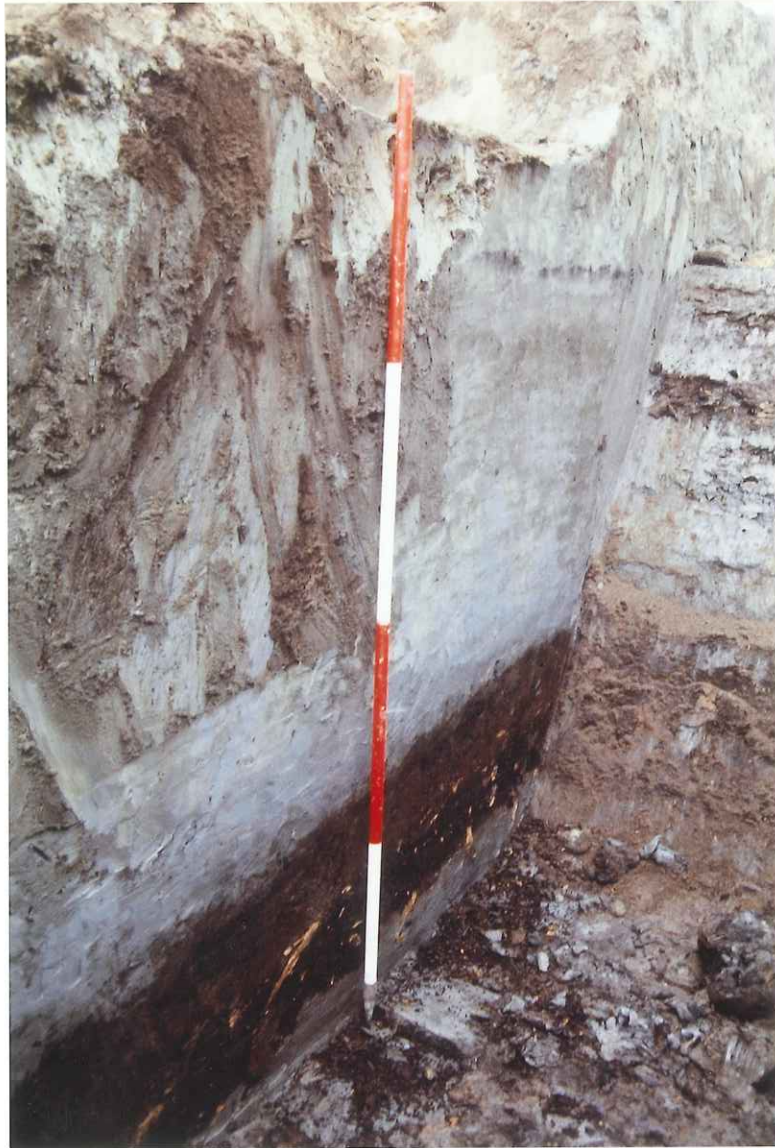


Plate 3 North-facing section of Trench 25, showing woody peat deposit 2507, viewed from the east