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Archaeological  
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CAR COLSTON TO SCARRINGTON  
PUMPING MAIN RENEWAL

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**DRAFT**

13 Aug 91.

Mike,  
Comments please, John.

ps. Scarring to Eastwards?

SMR:

EA135

EA136

EA137

EA138

EA139

L11348

L11349

L11350

L11351

L11352

L11353

L11354

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L11356

L11357

L11358

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L11360

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L11363

L11364

L11365

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L11368

L11369

L11370

L11371

L11372

(L7766)

M18294

(M1561)

## CAR COLSTON TO SCARRINGTON PUMPING MAIN RENEWAL

### Summary

- The Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust were asked by Rushcliffe Borough Council to undertake a watching brief on the laying of the new pipe.
- Fieldwalking identified a concentration of Roman material which limited salvage excavation confirmed as part of the Car Dyke Roman Villa, now shown to be much greater in extent than previously realised.
- Previously unidentified house platforms together with the remains of substantial walls were discovered at Scarrington.
- A c. 17th century cobbled surface was discovered at an old stream crossing south of the Car Dyke.
- Though investigations in Hall Close, Car Colston revealed little a stone conduit in Sharpe's Close showed some possible connection with the Car Colston villa.

## Car Colston to Scarrington Pumping Main Renewal.

### *Introduction*

The replacement pipe from Car Colston to Scarrington (fig.1) was laid in February/March 1991 by contractors Charles Gregory acting on behalf of Rushcliffe Borough Council, the agents for Severn Trent Water.

The Trent and Peak Archaeological Trust was asked by Rushcliffe Borough Council to provide a watching brief on the laying of the pipe. Fieldwalking was undertaken along the length of the pipe and an archaeologist was on site throughout the excavation work.

A search of the Nottinghamshire Sites and Monuments Records revealed several features on, or close to, the line of the pipe. Chief amongst these was the Hall Close complex of medieval earthworks at Car Colston (NMR 2953a-f) and the Roman villa (NMR 1466) within the medieval enclosure (figs. 1,2). The pipeline cut through 2953d, described as the remains of medieval ponds, and passed close by the villa, cutting across Sharpe's Close (SC, fig 1), where NMR 1468 records the discovery of sherds of Roman pottery. Crossing field 2500 the pipe ran between a large rectangular enclosure (NMR 1479) and a group of smaller enclosures by a trackway (NMR 1480) seen as crop-marks on air photographs. NMR 1561 records the existence of a second Roman building in the field just north of the point where the pipe crossed the Car Dyke. A further crop-mark reference (NMR 1560) was apparently erroneous as the air photographs clearly showed a point one kilometre to the south.

A working width of between 10m and 15m was fenced off along the entire 2km length, and c.0.30m of topsoil removed in a 5-10m strip to facilitate pipe-laying and provide easier access for vehicles. Trenching was for the most part done with a toothed-belt trenching machine, though in areas where a greater depth was required, or where conditions were intractable, a Hi-Mac with a 2ft toothed bucket (1ft bucket in Hall Close/Sharpe's Close) was used.

After the topsoiling of the field (0844) immediately adjacent to the compound at Scarrington and that just to the north of the Car Dyke (5877) it became evident that substantial remains (respectively, medieval and Roman) lay in the path of the pipe and further excavating and recording staff were deployed for salvage excavation on the line taken by the pipe.

The archive and finds are currently held by TPAT. The work was supervised by S. Malone.

### *The Geology*

The geology throughout is of underlying Mercian mudstone clays interleaved with bands of skerry sandstone and beds of gypsum. Geological Survey maps to the contrary, there is no depth of alluvium to the north of the Car Dyke, though a thin skim (c. 0.05m) of grey water-lain clay extended to c. 100m north. On the south side a greater depth of deposit was observed 1.00-1.50m deep by the dyke with a c. 0.15m thick deposit of peat some 0.50m below the ploughsoil extending some 20m to the south. The clay deposit (0041) extended 90m south to the obvious base of slope where it overlay feature 0040 to a depth of 1m at its northern limit, reducing to a few centimetres at its southern (upslope) edge.

It was evident from the pipeline cut itself that the Car Dyke at this point now runs in a man-made channel (this is supported by the meandering of the parish boundary along the valley (fig.1), for in all probability this originally followed the course of the dyke). The depth of alluvium to the south together with its relative absence to the north suggest that the course of the dyke was previously to the south of its present line, tying in with the interpretation of feature 0040 (field 7364) as a remnant of an old stream crossing on the track from Scarrington to Car Colston.

### *The Fieldwalking*

Where the field was in a suitable condition, the fenced-off working width was fieldwalked in advance of the topsoil stripping. Two to four lines were walked the length of each field, varying in spacing from 2-10m depending on the width of the stretch to be topsoiled, and the finds plotted (figs. 4,5). The finds fell into the following categories:

#### Pottery

SK7241.7364	:	7 Medieval, 1 Saxon	5 flint
5877	:	28 Romano-British	1 Quernstone, 1 flint
3700	:	1 ?PostMed, 3 Medieval	1 flint
SK7242.2500	:	1 ?PostMed, 4 Medieval	1 flint
1445	:	2 ?PostMed, 3 Medieval	2 flint

The concentrated scatter of Roman material on field 5877 was the first indication that the known Roman site (NMR 1561) at SK727418 extended westwards beyond the field boundary. A cursory inspection of the rest of field 5877 revealed a similar scatter of stonework, pottery and tile (including fragments of box-flue tile) extending to the western boundary of that field and at least into the margins of the next, an extent of some 150m.

The flint was examined by Daryl Garton of TPAT. There were two diagnostic pieces, AAT and AFH, identified as late neolithic to early Bronze age, though the presence of the blade fragments ABL, AAW, ABV could hint at earlier flint working.

7364: AAS core fragment  
AAT blade-like flake with shallow retouch on left side and distal end of right side - probably plough damaged flake knife  
AAW blade fragment  
AAY flake fragment  
ABC flake fragment with plough damage

5877: AAD plough bashed natural nodule  
AFH flake fragment, semi-abrupt retouch on right-hand edge, broken, plough damaged, ?knife fragment (exc. find)

3700: ABE flake

2500: ABL blade-like flake fragment - plough damaged

1445: ABS flake - plough damaged  
ABV blade fragment

0844: AQH plough bashed natural nodule (exc. find)

Hall Close: ANI flake (exc. find)

### *EDM Survey*

Where the line of the working easement crossed the Hunt's Close earthworks in Car Colston it was decided to survey the standing earthwork in order to provide a record of the portion to be disturbed by topsoiling. A Topcon GTS 3B20 Electronic Distance Measurer was used to record a spot height at each fence post along the enclosed portion thus providing a profile of the medieval earthworks along the line of the fence. The position of each post was also logged allowing the production of a plan of the easement in this area (fig. 10). Points were also surveyed along the field boundary and several taken at significant breaks in slope within the working area.

### *Topsoil stripping*

Except for the concentration of Roman finds just to the north of the Car Dyke very little was found in the course of the topsoil stripping. Even the substantial stonework surviving at Scarrington was not obvious until the exposed subsoil had weathered and since the ground was for the most part immediately covered with snow and then churned up by the contractors' vehicles in the course of the thaw, the potential for spotting features in the subsoil was limited throughout.



## Salvage excavation.

### 1. *Scarrington* (fig.6)

At its southernmost point, on the land adjacent to Manor Farm in Scarrington, the working easement cut obliquely across an area of earthwork some 60m north-south and extending at least 50m either side to the west and east (where a modern bungalow had been built atop the platform). On the southern edge a shallow (c. 0.10m deep) hollow ran across the field immediately followed by a c. 0.25 m rise on to a platform some 27.50m across, this rose slightly to its northern edge defined by another c. 0.25m slope downward before the land rose again quite sharply onto the modern farm track which nevertheless appears to run atop the raised earthwork as evinced by the distinct hollow and presence of another old wall on its northern edge in an area only recently brought under cultivation (AP SK7341-11).

After topsoil removal, the hollow on the southern edge was immediately recognisable as a ditch (0020) from the darker topsoil fill remaining in the hollow, and a section was dug on the line of the pipe cutting revealing a shallow (c. 0.30m deep) broadly v-shaped profile with a narrow slot running along the bottom, obliquely to the line of the ditch. This slot and the lower part of the ditch contained a large amount of charcoal and lumps of slag together with a few fragments of medieval and early post-medieval pottery.

Much stone and a large area of burning was observed on the platform (from 10 to 35m N ) and a c. 1.00m wide cutting along the line of the pipe was cleaned up (0.05-0.10m spit) across this area. The burning proved to be superficial, though perhaps connected with the greater concentration observed in the ditch (0020), but the stone was seen to be concentrated into distinct packed areas.

Weathering of the surface revealed larger blocks of stone on the centre of the platform under one or two centimetres of soil the removal of which revealed the remains of a substantial wall, c.0.75m wide, comprising facing blocks and a hardcore centre, extending from the eastern section to within 1.50m of the western section. The wall was disturbed in places, especially at the western edge (perhaps by the laying of the earlier pipe in 1967) where it was evident that only a single course of stones remained. A smaller wall c.0.25m wide, c.1.25m long abutted the main wall at a right angle and there was a suggestion of an opening and return 6.00m from the eastern section. Sherds of medieval pottery were discovered throughout the cleaning of the area around the wall.

A piece of walling of similar dimensions and on much the same alignment was discovered north of the farm track on the cultivated part of field 0844 (though within the area seen to be under pasture on AP SK7341-11, 1971). A small section was cleaned and photographed (CS 169-180) and the wall traced across the width of the easement where it turned south for c.2.50m (DR2). Where the wall was to be destroyed a small box (0.50m wide, 1.00m from the western section) was opened demonstrating the survival of two courses of stone at this point. Several pieces of medieval pot were recovered from the area.

These remains point to substantial medieval occupation on this site (with some evidence for early-post-medieval metal working), and would seem to indicate that the medieval village of Scarrington was centred further to the south and west, these house platforms having been left deserted by the north-eastwards migration. An area some 100x75m remains under pasture (though cultivation has encroached from the north) and would benefit from detailed survey to delineate its precise extent since as yet it remains unrecorded on the Nottinghamshire Sites and Monuments record

## 2. Field 7364

Some 75m <sup>south</sup> north of the Car Dyke (SK 72856741546) the topsoiling revealed an 0.80 x 3.00m area of vertically set stones (c. 0.05 x 0.15m) followed by a horizontal course c. 0.25m wide, two more vertical courses and a further horizontal course. They followed a steeper incline than the present slope of the land - the second horizontal course was some 0.30m below the surface - and were much disturbed on the western edge, presumably by the line of the 1967 pipe. The 1991 pipe trench just cut the eastern edge of the laid stone and a rough section was obtained by taking levels at various points before the trench was backfilled (fig. 9). see fig 9

This section showed the vertical courses continuing downwards, giving an overall length of 4.50m with a drop of 1.15m from N to S. The southern end was 1.03m lower than the present ground level at the bank of the Car Dyke, thus supporting an interpretation as embanking to allow traffic to safely negotiate the drop down onto the marshy plain of the dyke (the line of the public right of way, represented by a track for 1km from the Car Colston side, runs up to Scarrington through this point). It may even have specifically been the edge of a ford since the dyke ran south of its present position in times past (as evinced by the meanderings of the parish boundary along the valley). On the 1955 O.S. 6 inch map, sheet 74SW, however, the track from Car Colston to Scarrington is shown crossing an old field boundary at this point, so the former is perhaps more likely (fig. 9). Two sherds of Midland black pottery were found just above the stones towards the bottom of the section pointing to a 17th century date for the crossing.

## 3. Car Dyke (fig. 7)

The topsoiling in field 5877 immediately to the north of the Car Dyke revealed a scatter of stone, Roman pottery and tile, extending from roughly 35-65m north of the dyke, within a thin matrix of grey calcareous clay (0002).

In order to more fully investigate the remains to be destroyed a c. 0.05m spit was removed from an area c. 1.00m wide and 32.00m long along the prospective line of the pipe (trench 01 - the southern 10m of this trench were initially designated 02, but it was decided to amalgamate the two cuts in order to obtain better coverage of the site, this combined trench retaining the appellation 01). Something of the order of 100 sherds of pottery were discovered within this superficial layer, the removal of which revealed several features cut

into the Mercia mudstone natural. Oyster shells were also found scattered throughout, though only one from within context (0004).

At the north end, a c. 0.75m wide band of grey-brown silty clay (0006) ran roughly E-W across the trench with a c. 0.60m diameter, roughly circular, patch of stones in a darker loamy fill (0005) cut into it near the eastern section.

Excavation of 0005 revealed it to be a post hole, c. 0.36m in depth, the stones clearly forming a packing around an 0.16m diameter post-pipe containing little or no stone. Seven sherds of pottery, a fire-cracked pebble and a small amount of animal bone were retrieved from the fill. The pottery was found both within the fill of the post-pipe and among the stones of the packing but consisted entirely of undifferentiated Grey wares of uncertain date (though typical of the broad assemblage from cut 01).

As its shape suggested 0006 proved to be a ditch some 0.40m deep with a broad U-shaped profile and containing a large amount of charcoal in the lower fill. There were no finds from the excavated section but of the four sherds found in the initial 0.05m spit of 0006, three were of possible Iron Age date.

Between 23.50 and 28.00m N a concentration of stone (including the only section in 01 at all suggestive of standing remains) in green-grey calcareous clay (0002) yielded: 50 sherds of pot, all of which appear to fall within a L2nd-E3rd date range excepting AGO, which could be L1-M2, and AGL, which is a Greetham/Bourne product dated 3rd-4th; 2 pieces of roof tile (one tegula, one imbrex); and one flint (late neolithic/early Bronze age).

At 20.00m north a c. 1.00m wide linear band of light grey silty calcareous clay (0004) ran across the trench in a NE-SW direction. Excavation revealed a flat-bottomed, 0.40m deep, ditch from which 13 sherds of pot were recovered (for the most part grey ware - but including one piece of calcite gritted ware and a possible sherd of Derbyshire Ware - and where dateable falling in the late 2nd to early 3rd centuries) as well as a small amount of animal bone.

Some 1.60m south of this was a thinner (0.40m) band of dark grey silty clay (0003) running slightly obliquely across the trench. This ditch was U-shaped and c. 0.20m deep - only one sherd of pottery was found, and this from the disturbed top layer.

Between 8.50 and 14.00m north an area of stony, green-grey clay (0011) covered the trench, sealing ditch 0009 at its southern edge. This was effectively a continuation of 0002 (as was 0012 which sealed 0007/0008) which outside the area of trench 01 was seen to cover the whole topsoiled surface. As with 0002 above, this layer was seen to be rich in finds, generally L2-E3, though including a further Greetham/Bourne sherd (in 0011) and a mortaria rim fragment of a 4th century, hammerhead type (in 0012).

8.00m south of 0003 another 0.40m wide band of dark silty clay (0009) ran across the trench at the same angle as 0003 and, on excavation, proved to have a similar profile c. 0.20m deep. The six

sherds of grey ware (M2-E3) recovered were all from within the top 0.05m.

1.80m south of 0009 an area of scattered stone and pot in green-grey clay cleaned back to reveal a c.1.20m wide band of orange/grey-brown silty clay (0008) running across the trench with a roughly semi-circular patch of charcoaly dark grey silty clay (0007), c.0.20m in diameter sitting against the centre of the NE section. It was attempted to excavate 0007 separately but only a thin skim remained after the previous spit and so it is only seen in section (DR 9a). 0008 proved to be relatively shallow (c.0.30m deep) with a profile suggestive of a re-cut. The layering of the fills, however, does not support this and the presence of a particularly hard, stony patch of natural at this point may account for the profile. One sherd of grey ware was found within 0007. 0008 yielded two grey ware sherds and on piece of R/B wall tile, all from within the upper levels and all again consistent with a L2-E3 date.

The whole of the area between 0.00m and 32.00m N outside trench 01 was rich in finds (including a pair of bronze tweezers and a bronze harness ring), particularly in the two stonier areas c.5.00-8.50m and 18.50-23.00m N, roughly adjacent to 0008/0009 and 0003/0004 respectively. Several pieces of flue tile and tegula were discovered supporting the impression that the Roman building would have been of some substance.

Though some finds hint at earlier occupation on the site, the main focus would appear to be L2nd-E3rd centuries, with diminished activity extending to the 4th century A.D. Such a narrow cutting renders any interpretation very speculative but contexts 0003, 0004, 0008, 0009 do appear to form two pairs of ditches (0004,0008 and 0003,0009) of distinctive dimensions and alignment, perhaps indicating two phases of construction. The size of the finds scatter points to extensive occupation, though the connection with the villa at Car Colston is obscure, such close neighbours being unusual. The site may have been part of a larger Car Colston complex or a portion of a partible inheritance villa (Todd, 1978, *Studies in the Romano-British Villa*). A second century date has been suggested for the Car Colston villa, though with little discernable evidence, and so it is possible that the two buildings were not contemporary (though both must have had some relationship with the town of Margidunum at Castle Hill on the Fosse Way about 2km away - fig.2).

Such questions would best be answered by larger scale excavation, which in view of the considerable, and continuing, plough damage to the site should be considered something of a priority.

#### 4. *Car Colston*

Despite the well-preserved medieval earthworks to be seen on Hall Close, the topsoiling of the easement in this area revealed little of any note. The most northerly section is much disturbed by the line of the 1967 pipe running down the centre, but areas of close-set stone were observed to either side and round onto the first 10m of the NE-SW

arm. The remainder of the easement in Hall Close revealed nothing. The section crossing Sharpe's Close revealed only a line of stone slabs, c. 0.30m on a side, running N-S. Medieval pottery was recovered in a thin scatter across all of this area, with occasional greater concentrations (including 25 sherds, presumably from a single vessel, from one 0.20m square).

In the absence of any obvious features within Hall Close, selected areas along the line of the pipe were cleaned (c. 0.05m spit removed). Fourteen cuts (Nos 10-23) were made in all, c. 1.00m wide and varying in length from 1.50-6.00m (fig. 10).

Cuts 11, 15, 17-23 revealed nothing, though 19-22 were not deepened below the level of the red clay (0033), initially presumed to be natural, but seen in the box-section of cut 18 to be re-deposited natural cast up from the boundary ditches to the north and east and sealing a c. 0.50m deposit of ploughsoil. The remaining cuts were centred on areas of stone.

The scatters in 12 and 16 (0032 and 0037) were not particularly close-set, though they did yield medieval pottery and may therefore have been some kind of stone surfacing. Cut 14 revealed a narrow (c. 0.20m wide) linear band of stone (0036), rather haphazardly set, which may represent the remains of a narrow wall.

Cuts 10 and 13 contained much greater concentrations of stone. That in 13 (0035) was c. 3.50m wide, fairly closely packed, and slightly cambered, running NE-SW. Medieval pottery was again found just above the surface of the stones which appeared to form a single layer resting on the natural clays. Though being on the line of what was identified as a hollow way in the 1967 earthwork survey and having the general appearance of a trackway surface the camber would suggest it running roughly at right angles to the hollow way. Disturbance from the 1967 pipe trench precluded the further tracing of the metalling.

The c. 0.75m wide section, cut 10, proved to be a ditch (0031) 0.36m deep and some 5m wide, steeply cut on the N edge with a long (c. 3.50m) shallow S edge. The fill, almost entirely composed of blocks of stone was suggestive of the deliberate infilling of what may have been a channel connected with the medieval ponds to the west (c. f. the thin layer of blue clay, 0031d, at the base of the ditch). Finds from within the fill were again almost exclusively medieval.

Where the line of stone slabs (0030) in Sharpe's Close had been disturbed by the passage of the contractor's vehicles, two lines of vertically set stones c. 0.15m apart were observed beneath. A box section was therefore put across the part to be destroyed and the vertical stones seen to form the sides of a conduit c. 0.15m deep on a natural clay base. The silted up channel was cleaned out for a further 1.50m southwards where the capping stones had been displaced and yielded two small fragments of pottery of uncertain, but early, date. Levels taken on the capping stones at either end, and on the base of the channel where exposed, indicated a N-S incline running in the direction of the Roman Villa on Hall Close (fig. 8)

### *Watching*

Other than the section obtained of 0040 (and this was constrained to a series of levels taken as the trench was backfilled around us) the actual cutting of the pipeline trench turned up nothing that wasn't seen after the initial topsoiling. The method of working was not, on the whole, conducive to the discovery of archaeological features. The majority of the trench was cut using a toothed belt trenching machine, somewhat akin to taking a chainsaw to the ground. The cut was very narrow (c.0.30m) and up to 2m deep. A bed of sand was laid down from a hopper following along immediately behind, thus further obscuring the sections which were only open for a short time, the pipe being laid and the trench backfilled as they progressed. In areas where a deeper cut was required or ground conditions were intractable, the trench was opened with a Hi-Mac digger using a 2ft toothed bucket (1ft bucket in Hall Close) which added nothing to the clarity of the section, the method of working being otherwise substantially the same. One find was retrieved from the bucket of the digger where it cut through the Car Dyke Roman site and this was a large piece of a Roman grey ware pot, comprising most of the base (0.12m in diameter) and half the body to a height of 0.07m which may have come from the unexcavated portion of ditch 0004.

### *Damage to the site*

The pipe trench itself was of sufficient depth to destroy all archaeological features along its line. In addition the traffic of contractor's vehicles along the easement has substantially damaged superficial levels throughout as well as the exposed stonework at Scarrington. At Car Colston the combination of the 1967 disturbance and the 1991 work will have almost obliterated any remains where it skirts the NE corner of the Hall Close complex.

- Figs: 1. Location map  
2. Hall Close earthworks  
3. Car Colston Villa/Margidunum region  
4. Fieldwalking finds (5877)  
5. Fieldwalking finds  
6. Scarrington: Medieval features and earthworks  
7. Car Dyke: Excavated features  
8. Sharpe's Close conduit  
9. 7364 stream crossing  
10. Hall Close cuttings

Fig. 1

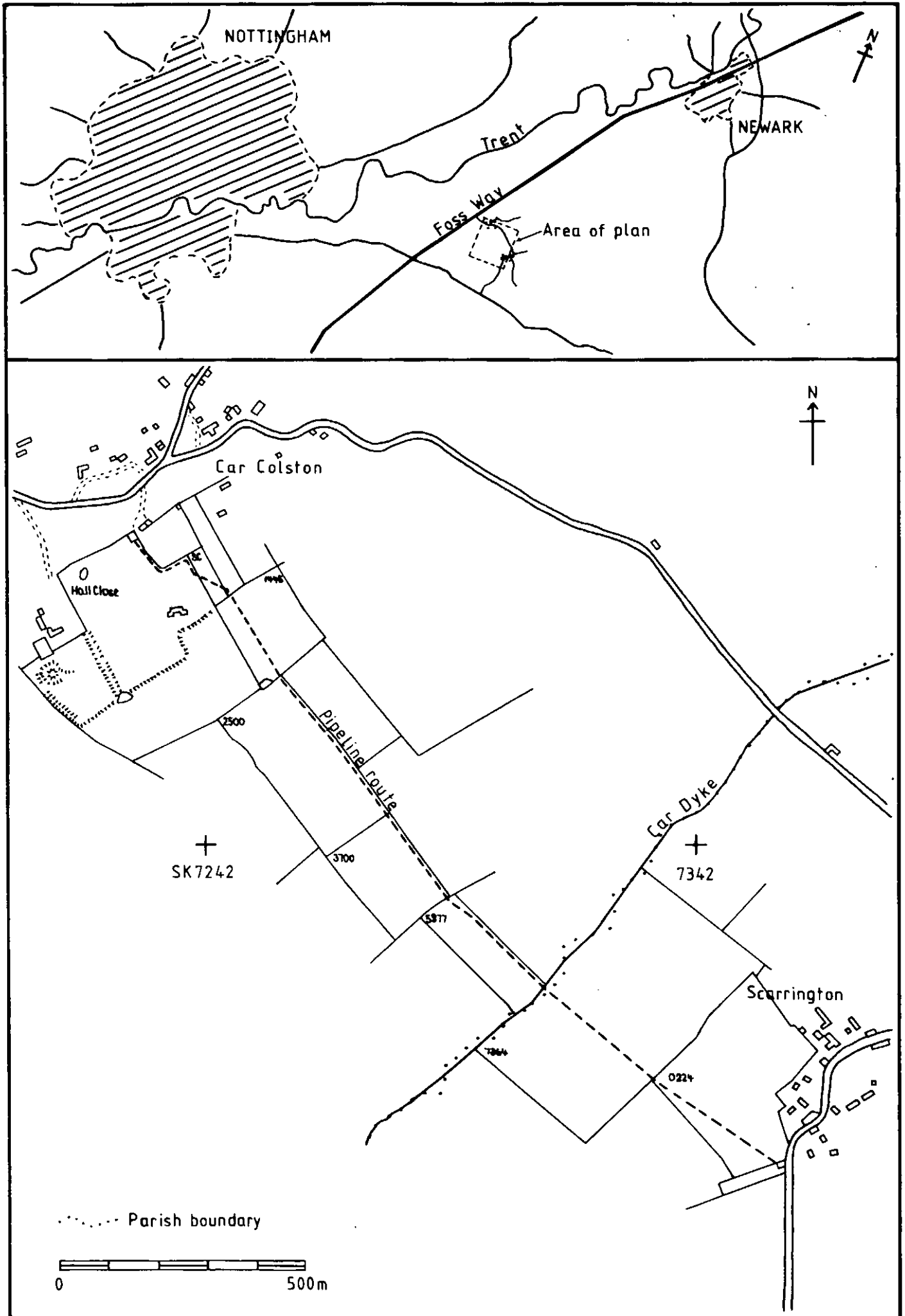


Fig. 2

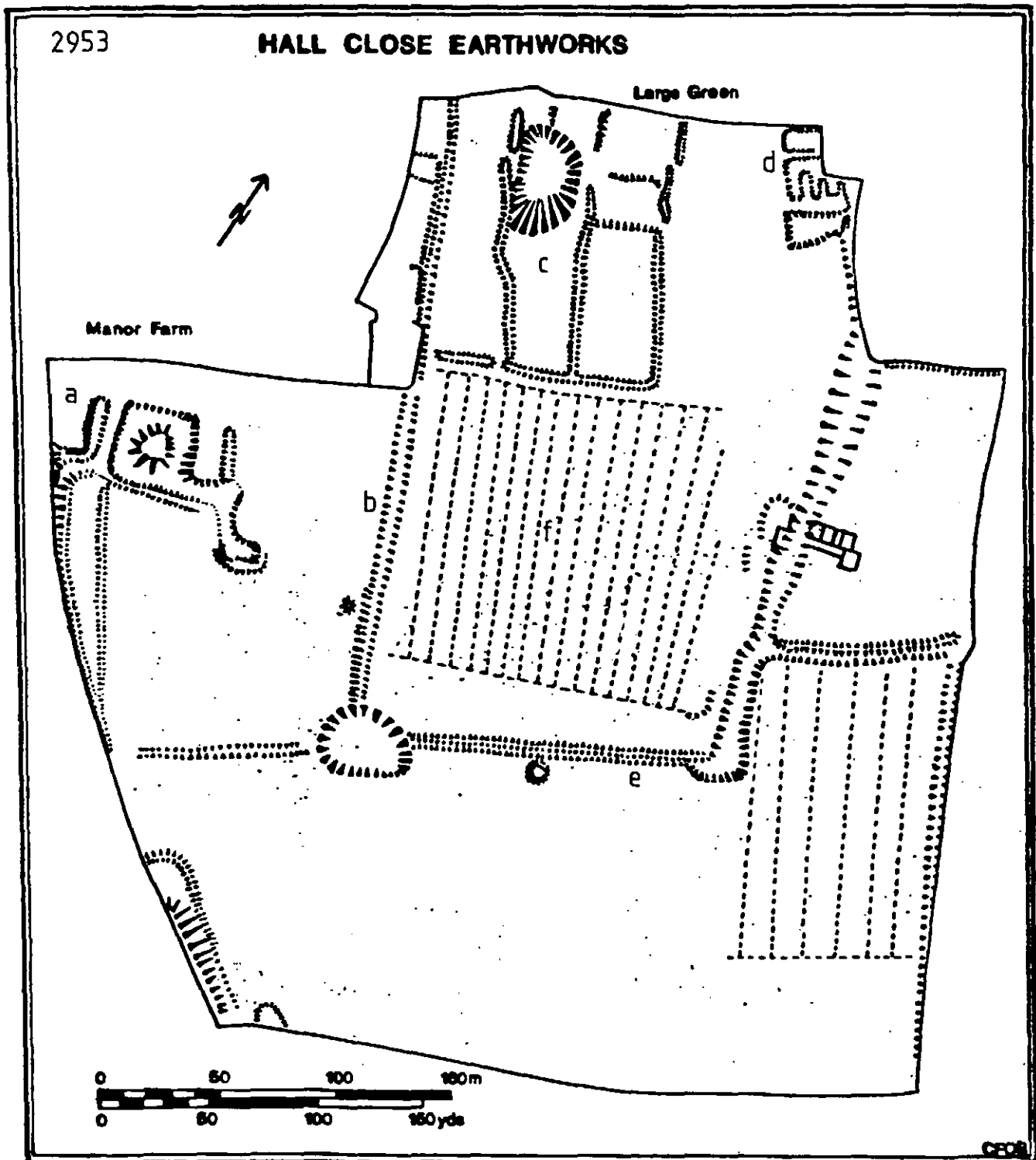
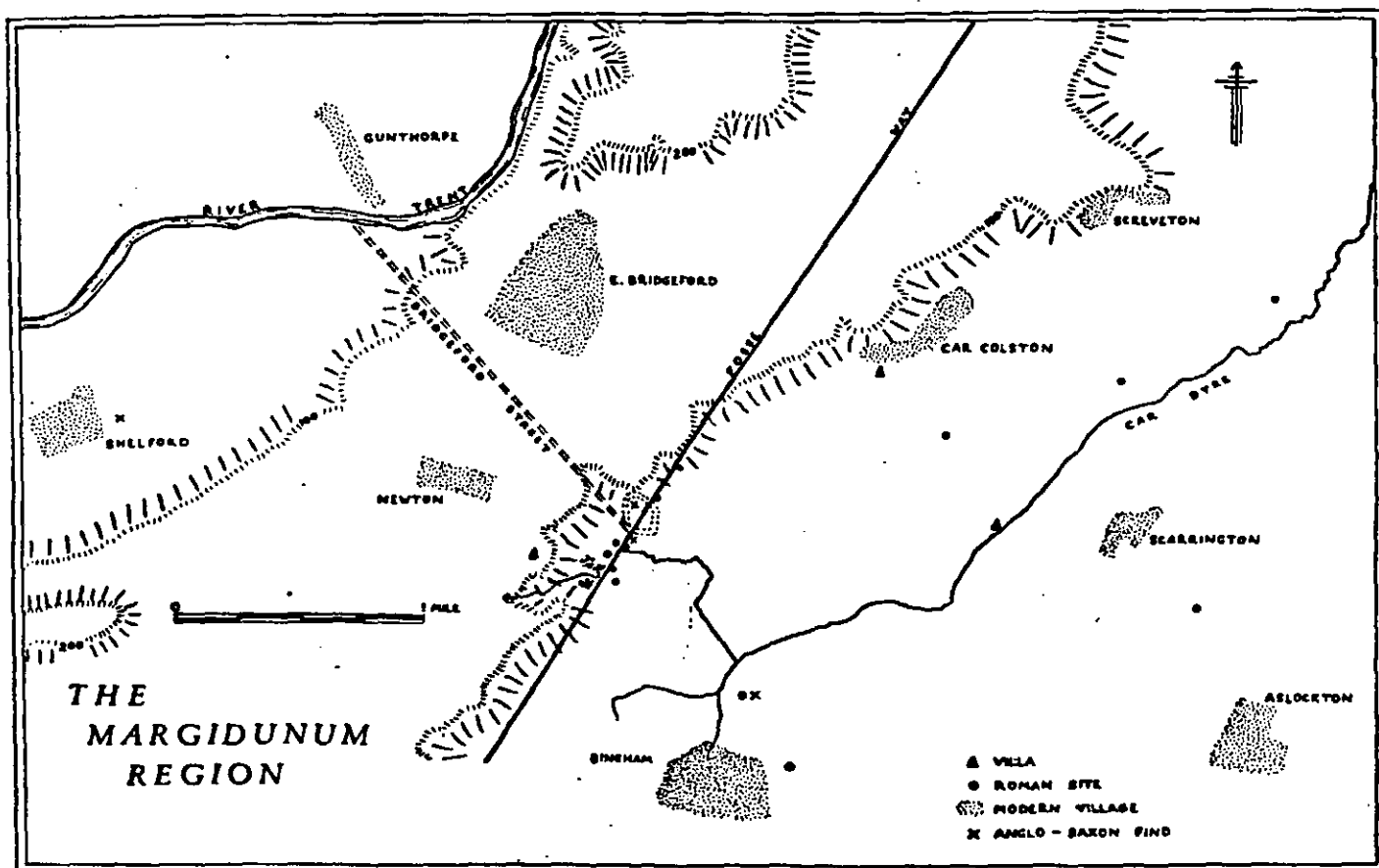
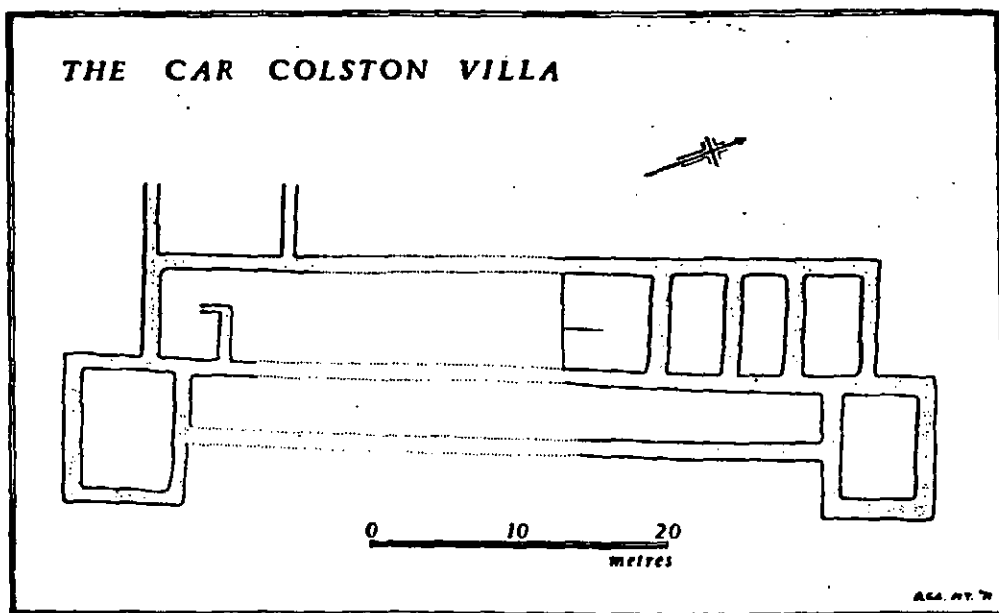
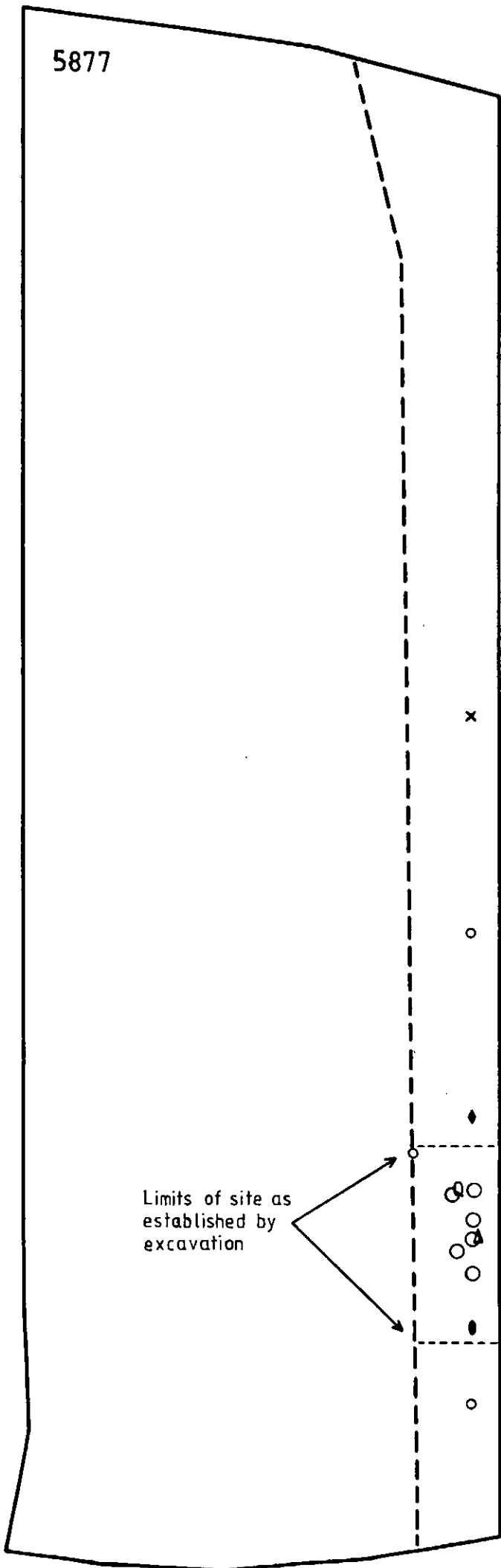




Fig. 3



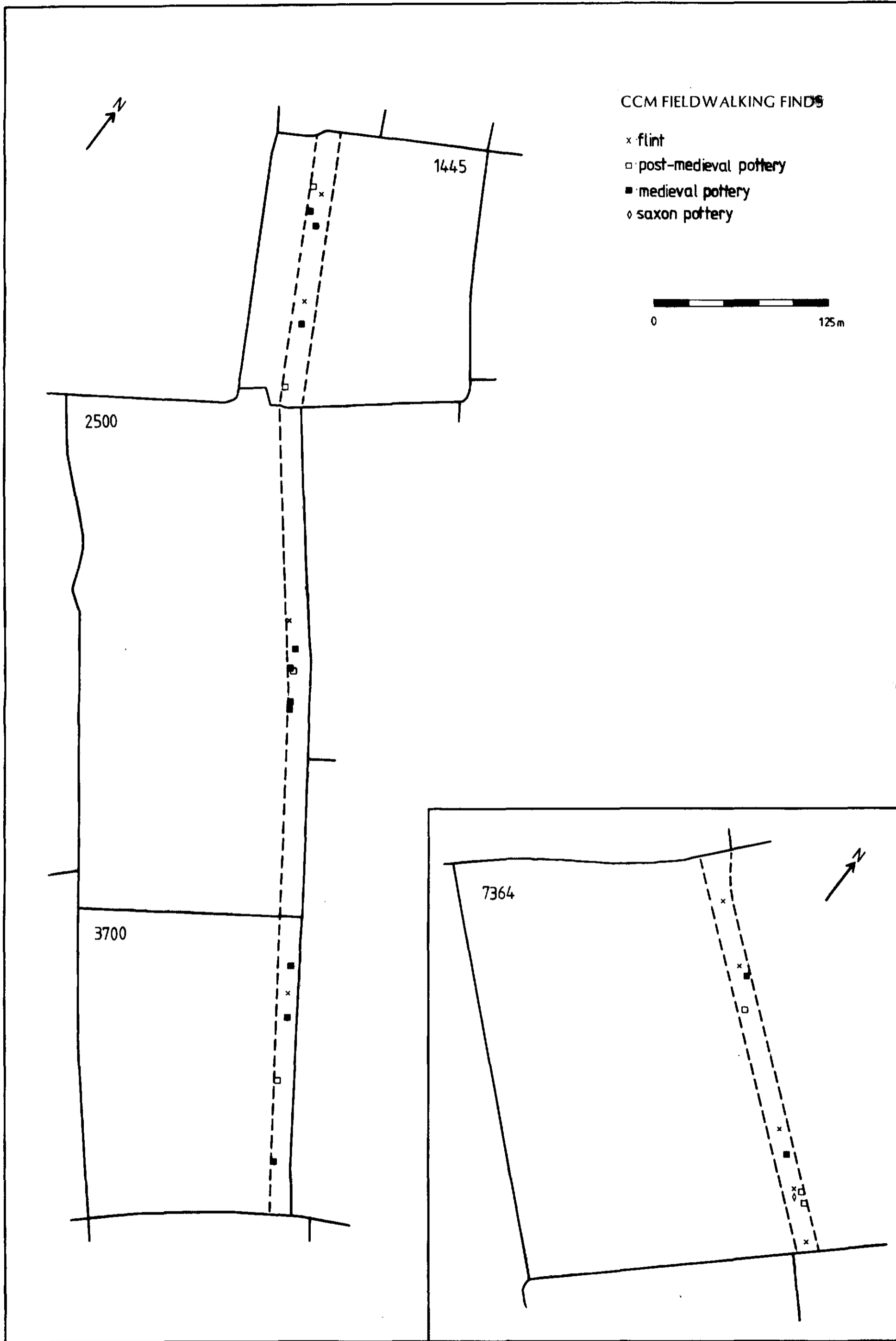


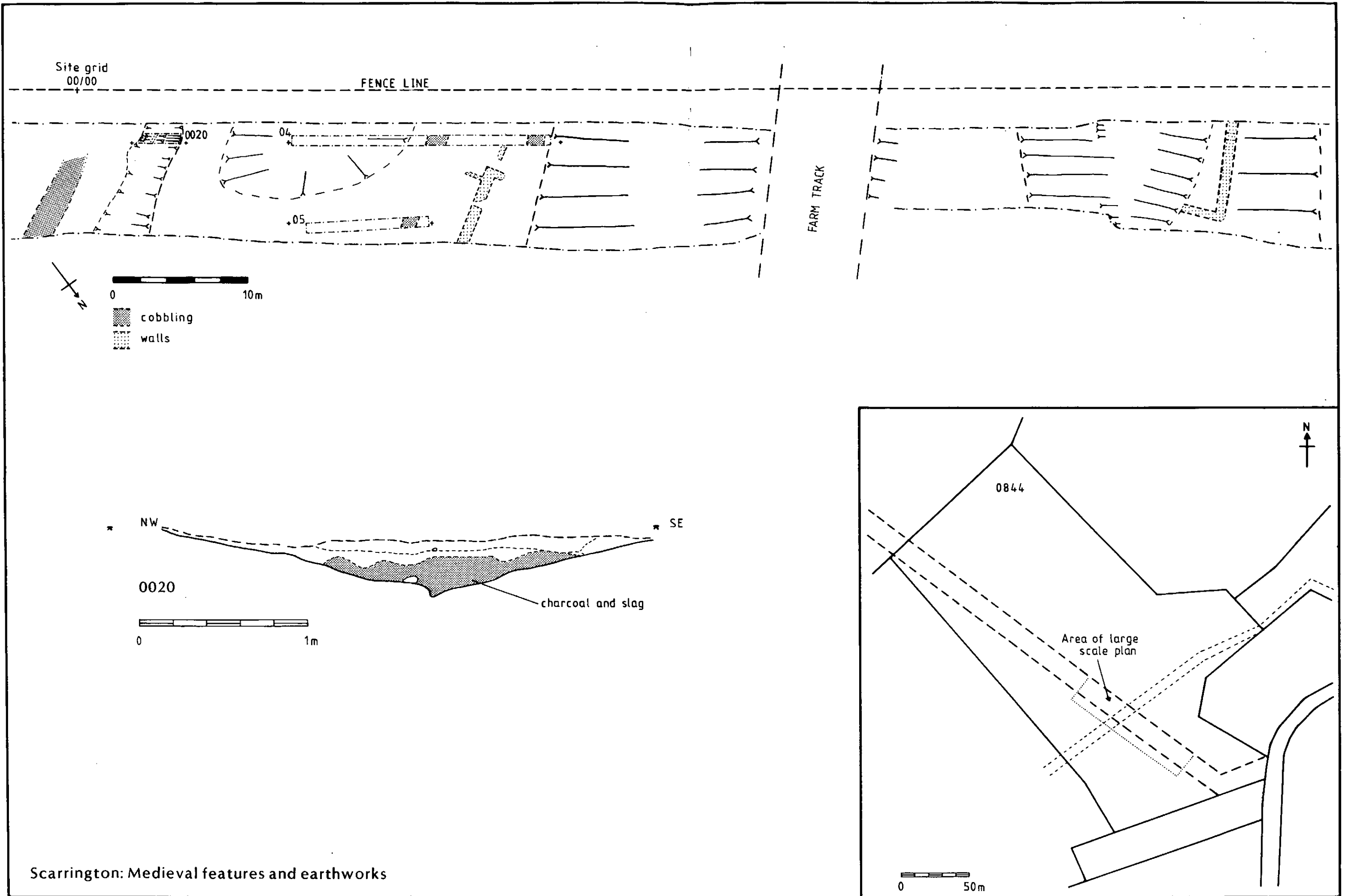
CCM FIELDWALKING FINDS

- x flint
- ♦ misc. coarse ware
- o grey ware (o = multiple finds)
- Δ calcite gritted ware
- white ware
- q quernstone

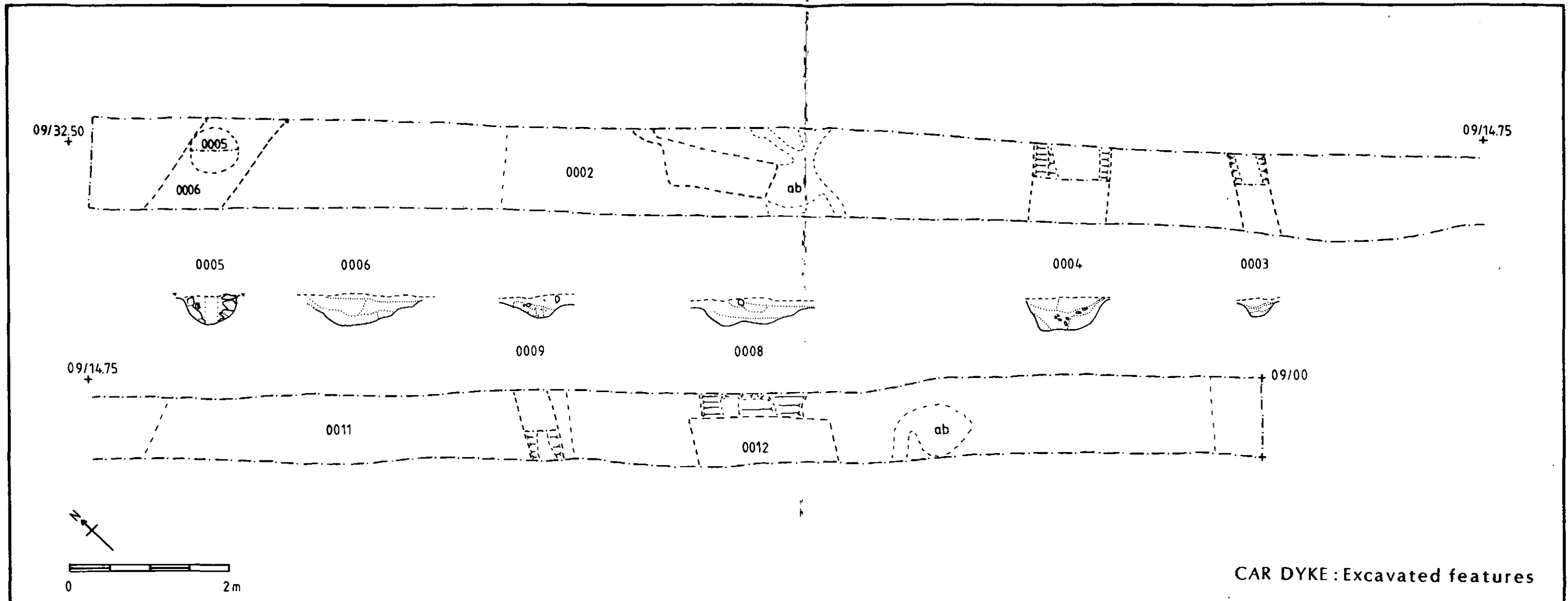


Fig 4





Scarrington: Medieval features and earthworks



CAR DYKE: Excavated features

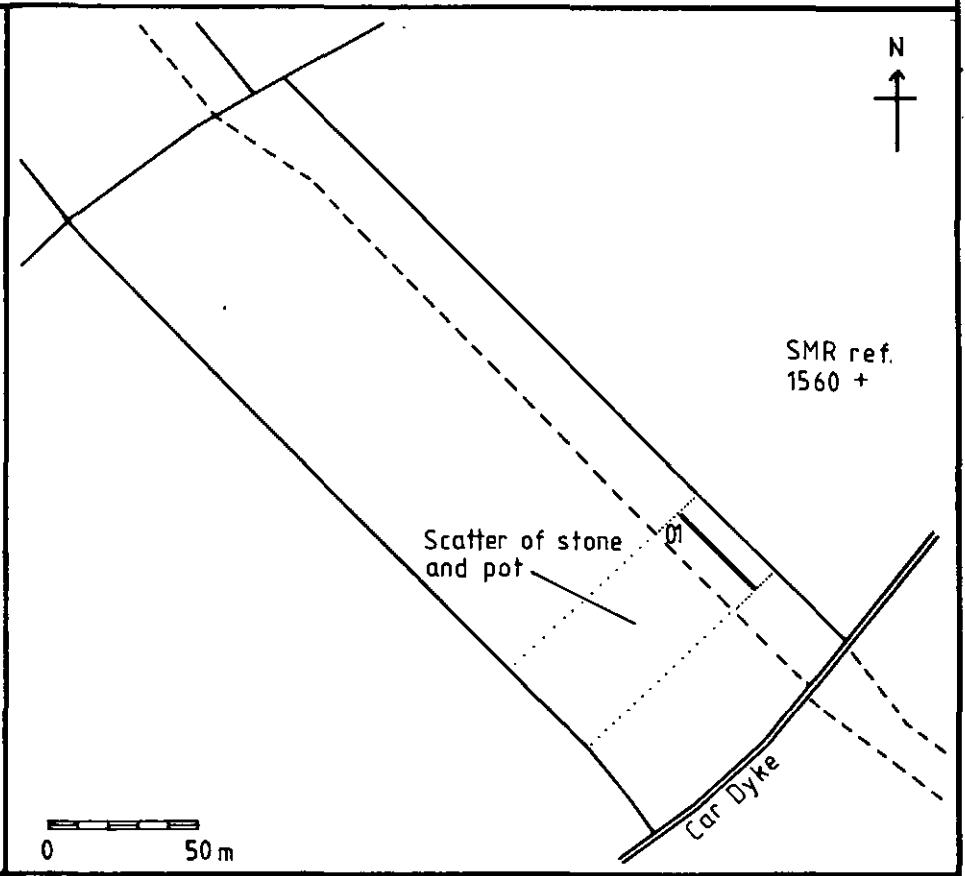
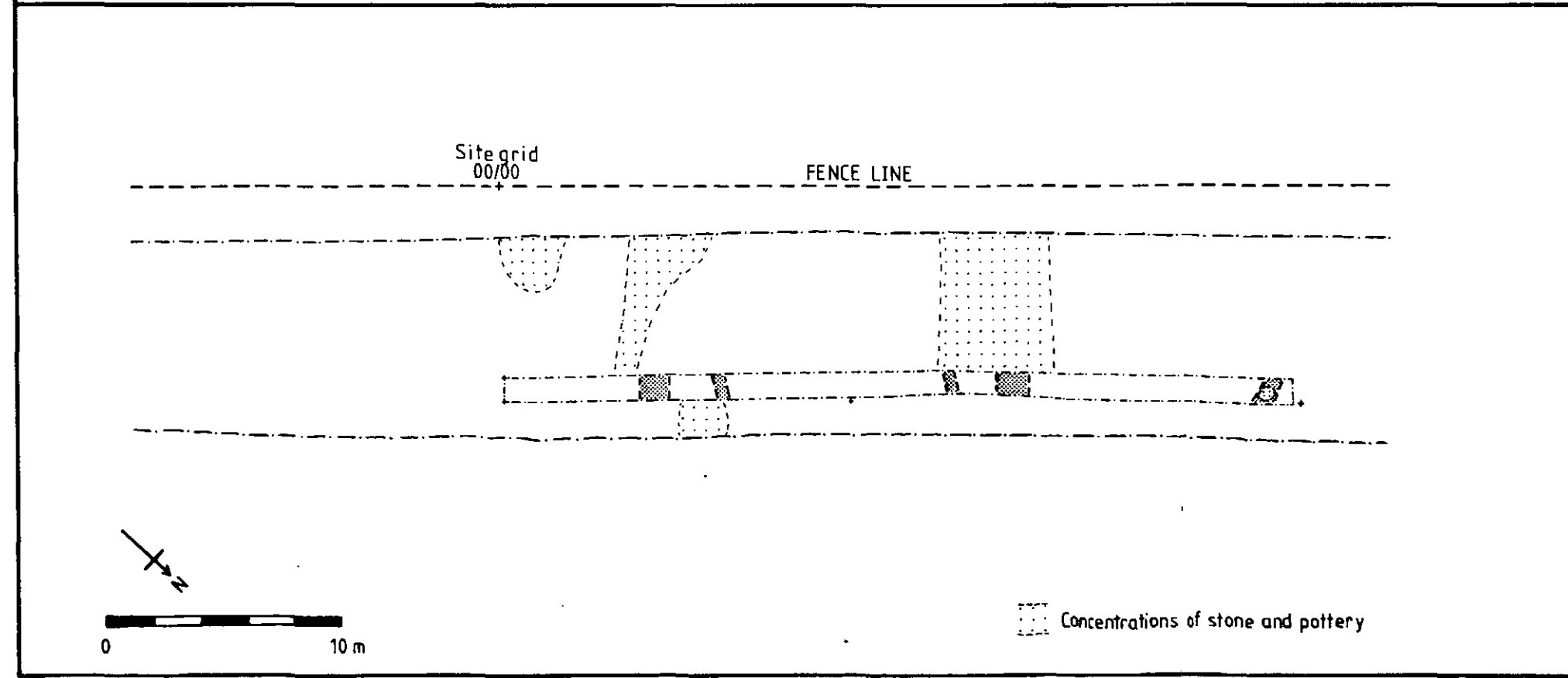


Fig. 8

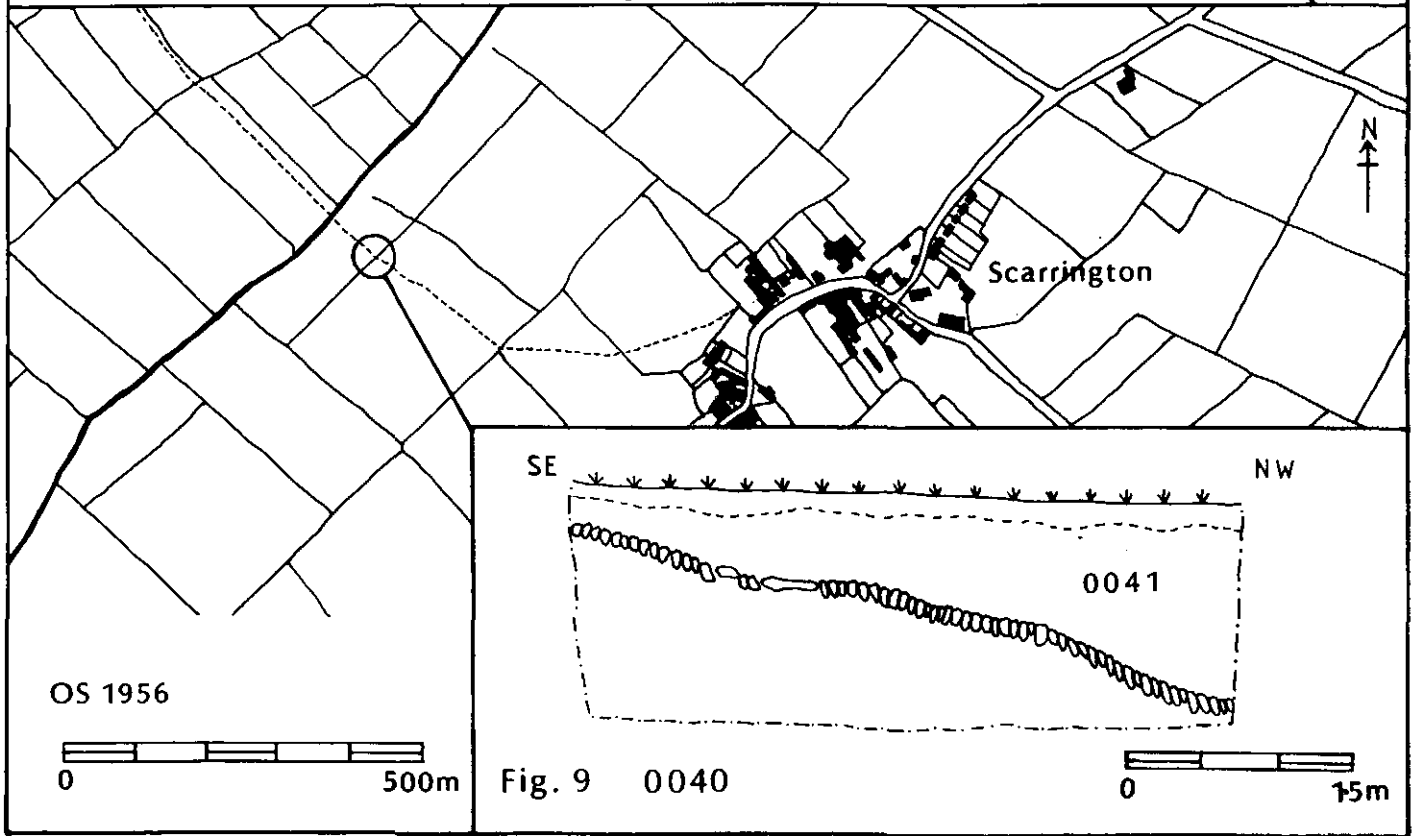
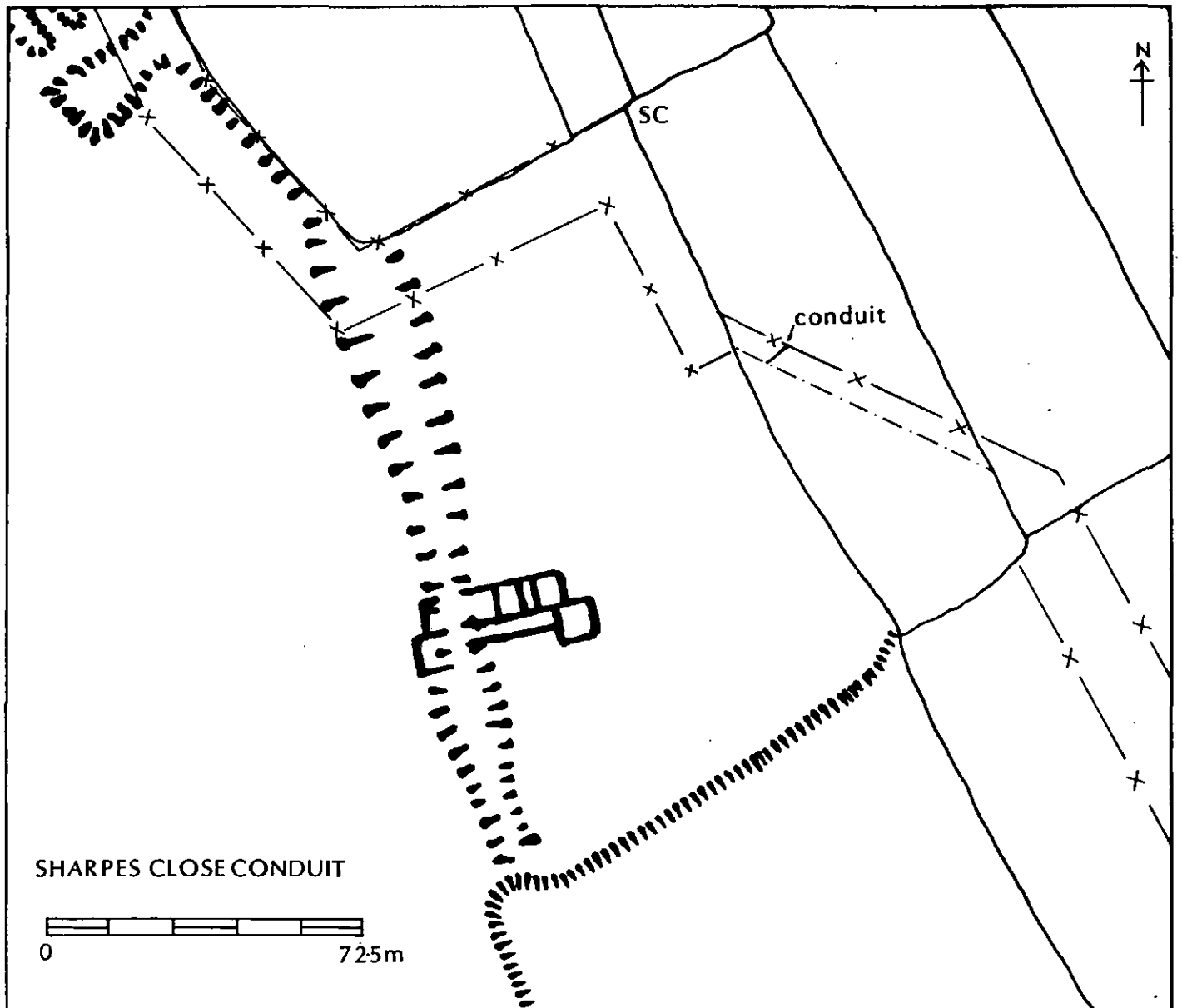
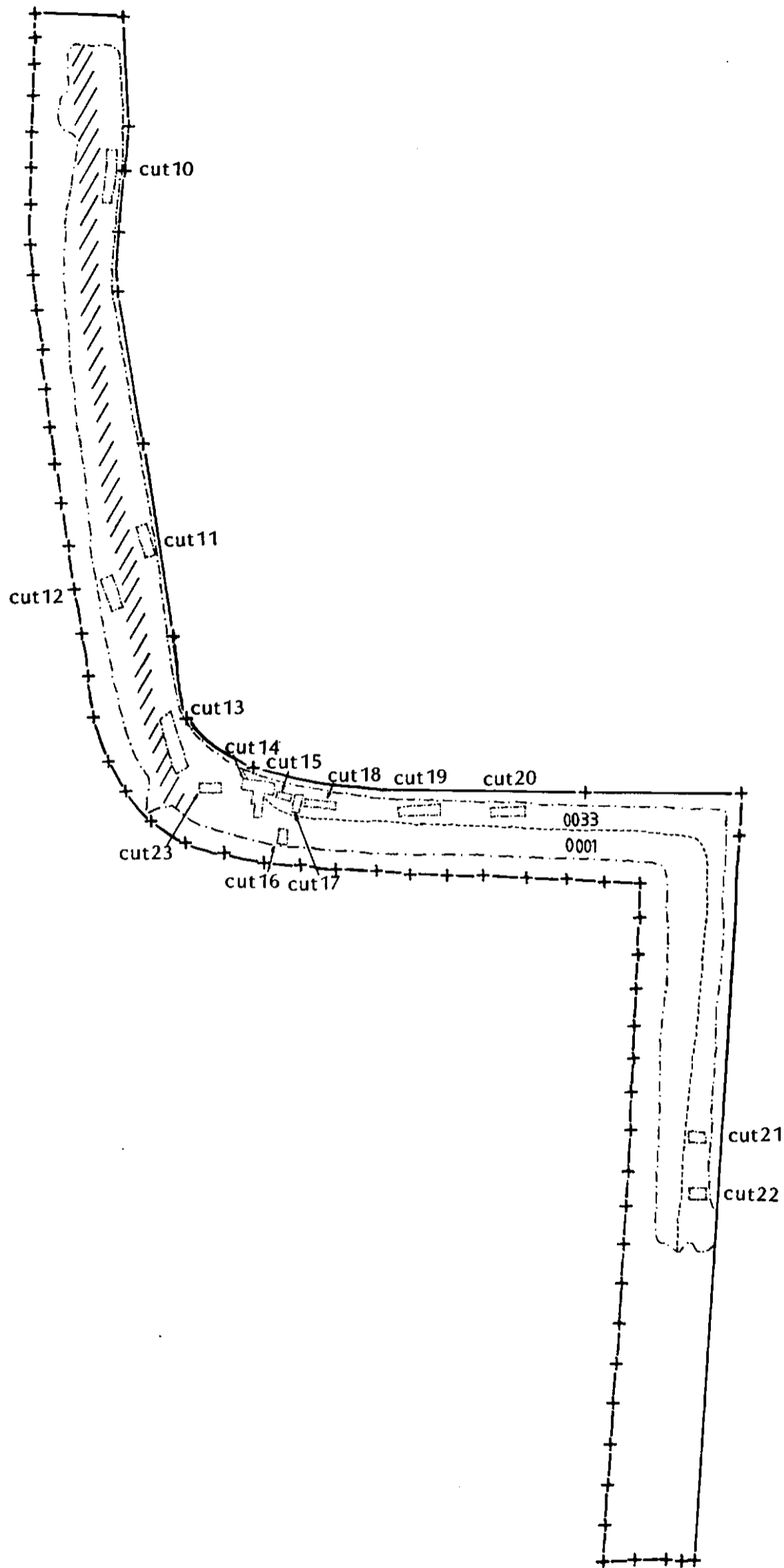
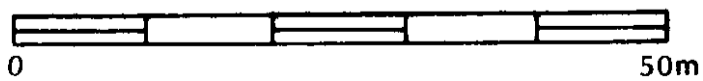


Fig. 10 Hall Close



--+-- Plotted from EDM survey

////// Backfill of old pipe trench



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