

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN  
SOCIETY



VOLUME XLIII

JANUARY 1949 TO DECEMBER 1949

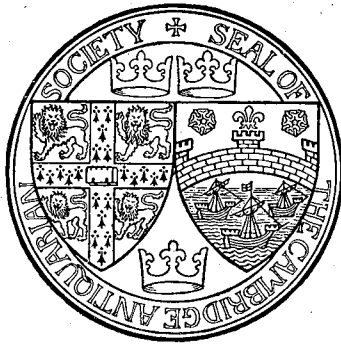
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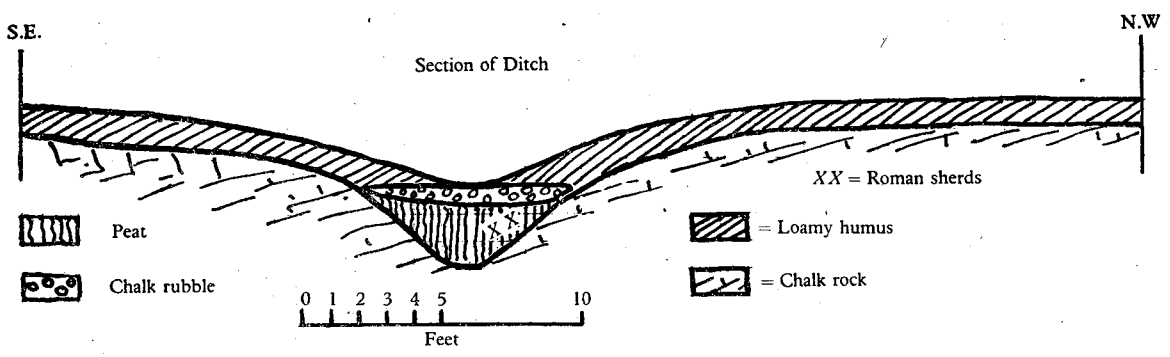
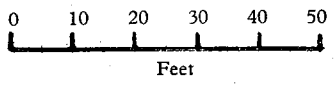
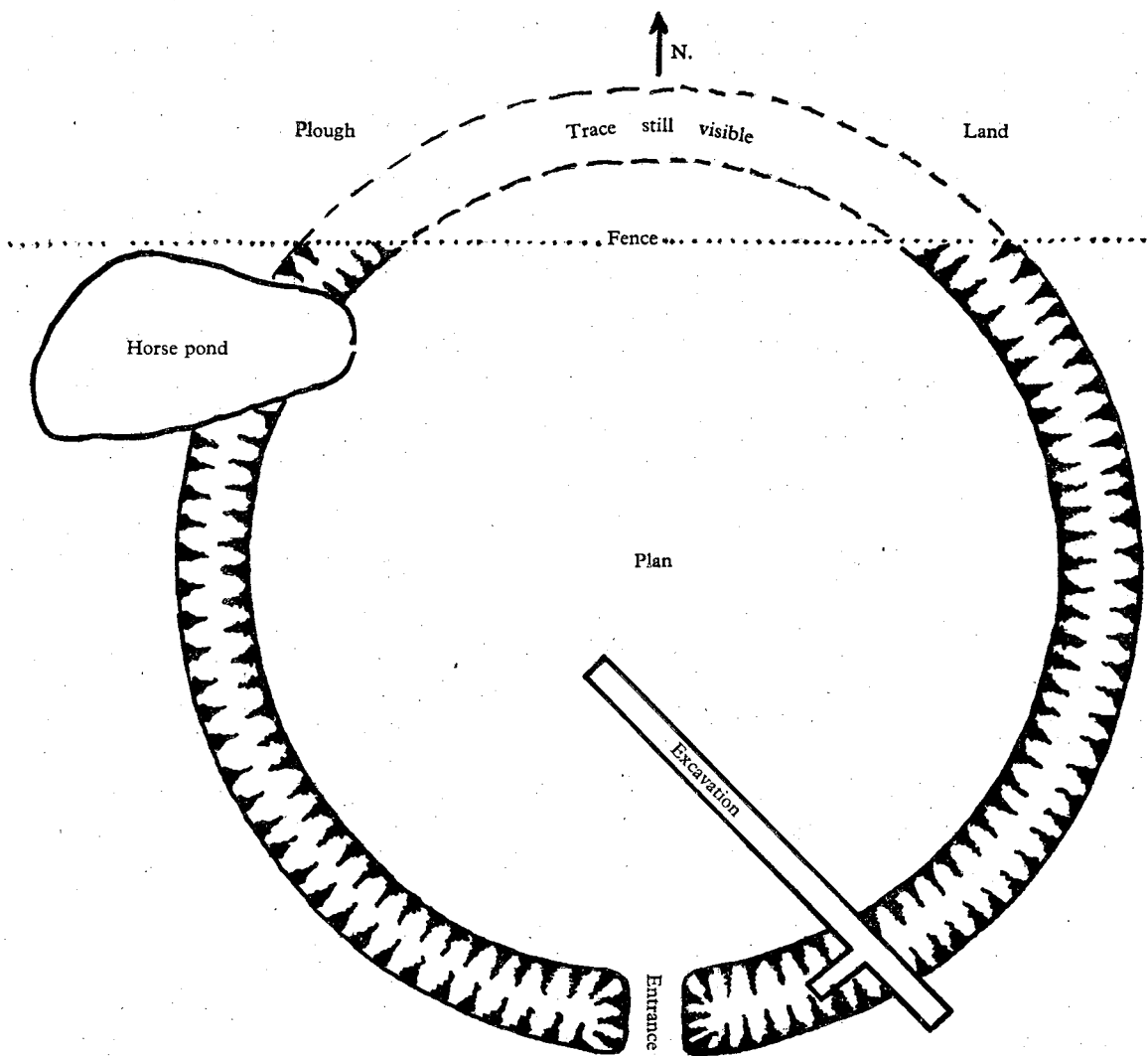
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Plan and section of ditch at Undley

# TRIAL EXCAVATIONS IN UNDLEY RING-WORK

GORDON FOWLER, M.A., F.S.A.

THE earthwork is in the first field<sup>1</sup> north-east of Undley Hall Farm House and garden, in Undley, a small village  $1\frac{3}{4}$  miles south-west of Lakenheath, Suffolk. There is a tradition in Undley that many years ago three silver bells were buried in Undley Hall Farm, and that some time later a man came from France and told the farmer there that he had a plan showing where the bells were buried. He asked the farmer for permission to dig for them, but the farmer insisted that he should first be shown the plan. As the Frenchman did not trust the farmer, he would not show him the plan, and returned to France; so the three silver bells have never been found.

Undley now has only three old and four new houses, but it is recorded as a Ville in the Domesday Book, and has an ancient and now unused causeway across the fen to Lakenheath. Undley belonged to the Monastery of Ely in the fourteenth century, and had a chapel or cell there then.

The earthwork was investigated, as shown below, by the writer and Mr Stanley Hopkins in April 1948. Mr Hopkins kindly provided professional labour from his farm for the purpose of the excavation. The discovery of Romano-British pottery at a relatively high level in the silting of the ditch suggests that the work is of early Iron Age date. The earthwork, which is about 132 ft. in diameter from east to west, but not exactly circular, is situated in old pasture land. The plan given here is diagrammatic, but the section of the ditch is measured with care. A section was cut through the ditch and into the central portion of the work. There is about 1 ft. of loamy humus above chalk in the field and within the earthwork. No post holes were seen here. There were many joint-bones of ox and pig in the last  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ft. of the muddy or peaty filling of the original ditch. Also a few small round stones suited for sling stones, and unlike any stones to be found in the district, were found. Romano-British potsherds, including second-century Samian ware, were found below the rubble filling, but not in the bottom of the ditch. The muddy peat in the lower filling of the ditch contained a few freshwater snails' shells—*Limnea* and *Planorbis*.

<sup>1</sup> O.S. Sheet 76, inch grid map, grid reference 155005.



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