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BULLETIN OF THE SUTTON HOO RESEARCH COMMITTEE



No. 8 July 1993

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We also acknowledge with pleasure the participation of:

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PREFACE

Bulletin No. 8 is the latest and last to be issued by the Sutton Hoo Research Committee and contains notice of all archaeological discoveries made from 1989 (reported in Bulletin No. 7) to the conclusion of field operations in 1992. It has been confusingly trailed as 'Bulletin No. 8/9' and 'Bulletin No. 8 (1991) and No. 9 (1992)', but such aspirations to chronological harmony have been abandoned in the face of reality. The three seasons reported here were extremely hectic. That in 1990, dedicated to Mounds 6 and 7, was over four months long, occupying all the space allowed by university terms. In 1991, even four months was insufficient, since it culminated in the discovery of the horse-burial under Mound 17, the excavation of which continued until the last leaf had fallen from the trees and the winds began to cut in from the North Sea. The Mound 17 burial, only the second to have been found intact, was a marvellous bonus at the end of nine diligent years. A final three-week season in 1992 completed the recording and initiated the programmes of site management and presentation with the back-filling of the excavation and the re-creation of Mound 2.

This Bulletin gives interim accounts of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery and an inventory of the 56 burials which have been excavated there; of the prehistoric settlement which preceded it, including the numerically dominant features and pottery of the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age ('Beaker' period); and of the environmental investigations which have been carried out in pursuit of the vegetation sequence and soil history. The work at Sutton Hoo has always been seen as a contribution to the research programmes of Suffolk and East Anglia. Some of the results of these programmes reported here, the Deben Valley Survey and the newly discovered Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Boss Hall, will be vital for the interpretation of Sutton Hoo and the origins of the East Anglian Kingdom.

The records made during the campaign of field work are now at the University of York, where the *Field Reports* and the *Publication* are in preparation. Meanwhile, at the site itself, the execution of the *management plan* for the long term protection and presentation of Sutton Hoo to the public is underway.

It remains to salute more than 500 volunteers, students and professional archaeologists who worked with us during the evaluation and the seven seasons of excavation that followed, and the visitors and friends who looked, surmised and gave advice. All are listed here or in earlier *Bulletins*, since all are members of that large, informal, ephemeral and extended team which is necessary to coax an archaeological site out of its earth-bound coma into the forum of history.

Martin Carver University of York July 1993

TABLE 1: LIST OF INTERVENTIONS TO 1993

INT.	4.554			
NO	AREA	DATE	ORIGINATOR	ACTIVITY
1	(UNKNOWN)	1860	BARRITT	REMOVAL OF MOUND
2	MOUND 3	1938	BROWN	TRENCH
3	MOUND 2	1938	BROWN	TRENCH
4	MOUND 4	1938	BROWN	TRENCH
5	MOUND 1	1939	BROWN & PHILLIPS	TRENCH
6	MOUND 1	1965-67	BRUCE-MITFORD	RE-EXCAVATION
7	MOUND 1	1967-70	ASHBEE	EXCAVATION
8	MOUND 1	1971	CARNEY	TRENCH
9	MOUND 1	1971	CARNEY	TRENCH
10	MOUND 1	1971	CARNEY	TRENCH
11	AREAA	1966	LONGWORTH & KINNES	EXCAVATION
12	AREA C	1970	LONGWORTH & KINNES	EXCAVATION
13	AREA B	1968-69	LONGWORTH & KINNES LONGWORTH & KINNES	EXCAVATION EXCAVATION
14	AREA B AREA B	1968-69 1968-69	LONGWORTH & KINNES	EXCAVATION
15 16	AREA B	1968-69	LONGWORTH & KINNES	EXCAVATION
17	MOUND 11	1982	WEST	ROBBER PIT
18	ZONE A	1982-84	COPP	SURFACE MAPPING
19	ZONES D.E.F	1983-84	COPP & ROYLE	FIELDWALKING
20	ZONE F	1984	CARVER	EXCAVATION
21	ZONE F	1984	CARVER	EXCAVATION
22	ZONE D	1984	CARVER	EXCAVATION
23	ZONE A	1984	CARVER	EXCAVATION
24	ZONE B	1984	CARVER	EXCAVATION
25	ZONE A	1984	CARVER	PREPARATION FOR
20			J,	EXCAVATION (Mound 5)
26	ZONE A	1984-85	CARVER	EXCAVATION (Mound 2)
27	ZONES A-F	1983-84	ROYLE	METAL-DETECTOR
28	ZONES A-F	1984	GORMAN	MAGNETOMETER
29	ZONES A-F	1984	GORMAN	RADAR
30	ZONE A	1983-84	BRUCE, INGRAMS, COOPER	CONTOUR
31	ZONE C	1984	CARVER	EXCAVATION
32	ZONE F	1985	CARVER	EXCAVATION
33	ZONE A	1966	HIPKIN	CONTOUR
34	ZONE A	1980	HIPKIN	CONTOUR
35	ZONE F	1984	BARTLETT	FLUXGATE
36	ZONE F	1985	WALKER	RESISTIVITY
37	ZONES D,F	1985	GURNEY	PHOSPHATE
38	ZONE F	1986	CARVER	EXCAVATION MAPPING
39	ZONE F	1986	CARVER	EXCAVATION
40	ZONE F	1986	CARVER	SIEVING
41	ZONE A	1986	CARVER	EXCAVATION (Mound 2 & 5)
42	ZONE A	1986	ROYLE	CONCRETE GRID
43	ZONE F	1986	BETHELL	SOIL SAMPLES
44	ZONE A	1988	CARVER	EXCAVATION (Mound 6 & 7)
45	ZONES A,D,F	1988	ROYLE/CLARK	MAGNETIC SUSCEPTIBILITY
46	ZONE A	1988	OCEANFIX	RADAR
47	ZONES D,F	1988	YORK UNIVERSITY	RESISTIVITY
48	ZONE A	1989	CARVER	EXCAVATION (Mound 18)
49	ZONES D,F	1989	CLARK	RESISTIVITY
50	ZONE A	1990	CARVER	EXCAVATION (Sector 1)
51	ZONE A	1991	DUNK & LAWTON	RESISTIVITY
52	ZONE A	1991	CARVER	EXCAVATION (Track)
53	ZONE G	1991	CARVER	ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLE
54	ZONE F	1991	BETHELL	TAPHONOMY
55	ZONE A	1991-2	CARVER	EXCAVATION

CONTENTS

Preface (M.O.H. Carver)	
List of Interventions to 1993	
	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Research Reports 1990-92	
Strategy and the Fieldwork Programme at Sutton Hoo (M	I.O.H. Carver)
The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery: An Interim Report (M.O.H. C	·
The Prehistoric Settlement: An Interim Report (M.R. Hum	ımler)
The Environmental Investigations: An Interim Report (M.	O.H. Carver)
The East Anglian Kingdom Survey: South-East Suffolk (J	l. Newman)
The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Boss Hall, Ipswich (J. Nev	wman)
Management Reports	
Publication Programme (M.O.H. Carver)	37
Management Plan for the Sutton Hoo Site, 1992 (M.O.H.	
Chronicle 1990-92	
Publications	43
Additions to the Archive	
Public Lectures	
BBC Television	
Visitors	
Exchange Schemes	
Staff and Participation	. <i></i>
Sponsorship and Expenditure	
The Sutton Hoo Society	
Acknowledgements	
Farewell to the Field and Project Team	
LIST OF	FIGURES
Fig. 1: Sutton Hoo 1983-92: The areas excavated	Fig. 11: Beaker pottery from INT 55 24
and mapped 4	Fig. 12: Pit cluster of the Beaker Period in INT 55
Fig. 2: The Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Sutton Hoo: Burials known up to 1992 6	
Fig. 3: Burials beneath Mound 17 8	Fig. 13: Monolith stations for pollen and soil micromorphology sampling
Fig. 4: Mound 14: Chamber, robber pit and quarry ditch 9	Fig. 14: Probable Anglo-Saxon settlement sites in the south-east Suffolk survey area
Fig. 5: Satellite burials of Group 2 surrounding Mound 5 and furnished graves, Burials 15, 16	Fig. 15: Archaeological survey in south-east Suffolk 1980-89 (Newman)
and 12 (Mound 20)	Fig. 16: The Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Boss Hall,
Fig. 6: Burials of Group 1 on the eastern periphery, including those excavated in 1991 (INT 52) 12	Ipswich
Fig. 7: Excavation trenches probably belonging to	Hoo in relation to roads (above) and to nature
an undocumented 19th century archaeological	reserves and other local destinations (below) 38
campaign (schematic), with, below, the form of these excavation trenches	Fig. 18: Management plan: Ownership, access and
Fig. 8: Preliminary and strictly provisional model of	protected area
the sequence of burial at Sutton Hoo 16	Fig. 19: Management plan: Scheme for presentation of the site
Fig. 9: Principal prehistoric features 20	
Fig. 10: Prehistoric pottery from Sutton Hoo – principal types of the Neolithic and Beaker	Drawings by Trevor Pearson from originals by M. Carver, N. Macbeth, A. Copp and M. Hummler
periods 22	

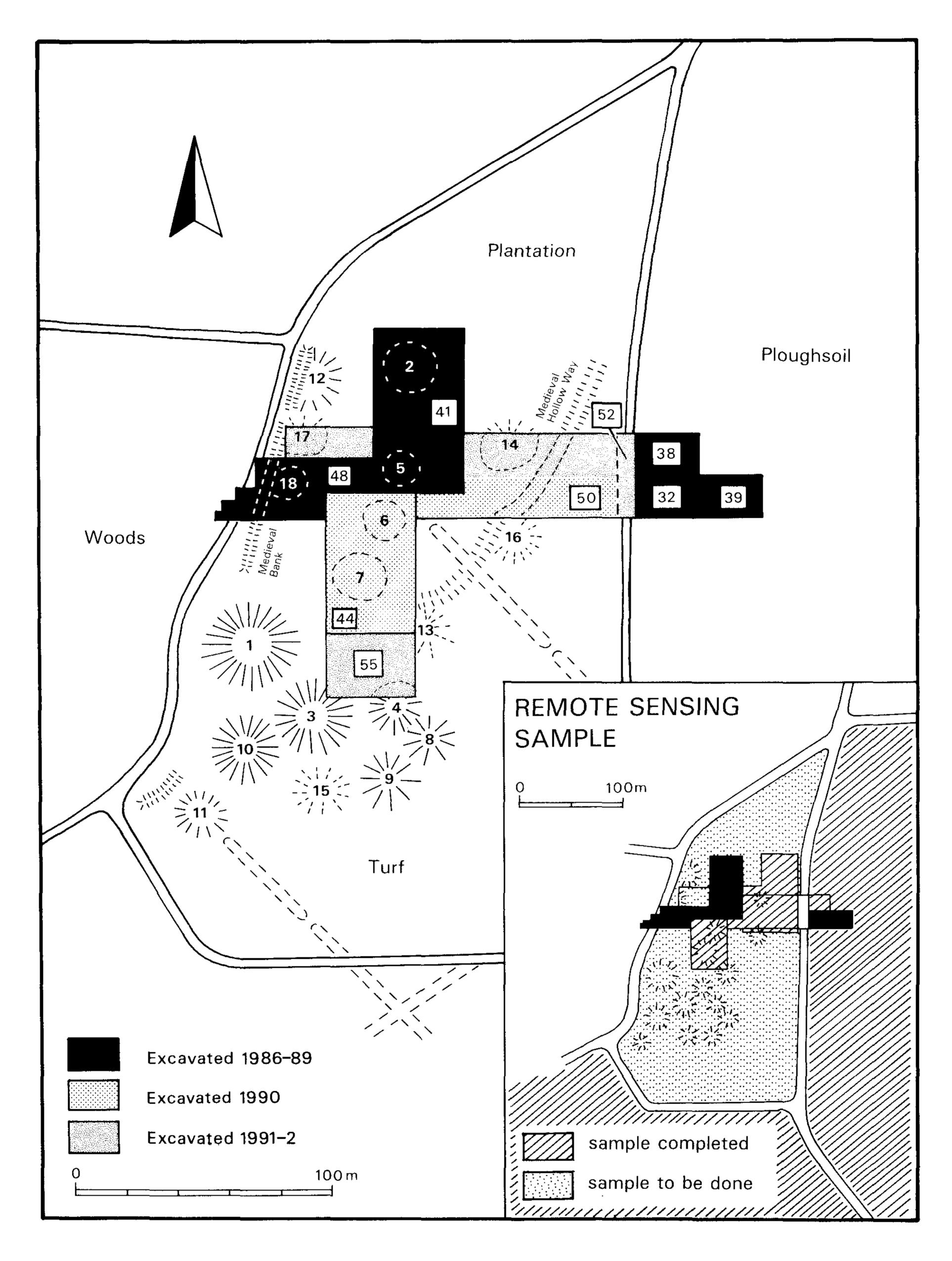


Fig. 1: Sutton Hoo 1983–92: The areas excavated and mapped

RESEARCH REPORTS 1990-92

STRATEGY AND FIELDWORK PROGRAMME AT SUTTON HOO

The strategy proposed in the Sutton Hoo research design (*Bull.* 4, 1986) entailed a programme of field operations conducted at three levels:

- Excavation at Sutton Hoo (1 hectare)
- Remote mapping of the Sutton Hoo area (12 hectares)
- Settlement survey of the Deben Valley area (5,000 hectares).

In general, the field research has conformed to the spirit of this programme, with some minor modifications and omissions.

EXCAVATION

The excavation area as published in *Bull.* 7, fig. 1 was modified in 1991 by the reinstatement of the northern strip of INT 48 (fig. 1). This had been dropped from the 1990/1 fieldwork programme with the intention of sparing the resource, since Mound 18 alone was to have been representative of the cemetery at its western extremity (*Bull.* 7, 5). In the event, as reported in the same *Bulletin* (p.15), Mound 18 and its burial had been nearly erased by ploughing, and had offered only basic evidence for the burial rite and date — a cremation of the Anglo-Saxon period. Thus the decision was taken to include the northern strip which would confirm the existence of Mound 17 and, hopefully, indicate the character of its burial. This should be achieved with little additional expenditure of effort, since this northern strip had, in any case, been largely excavated already by the British Museum (INT 11).

With the addition of this small area, the excavation proceeded according to plan as follows:

In 1990: INT 44, with Mounds 6 and 7

INT 50 (south)

In 1991: INT 50 (north), with Mound 14

INT 52, the area of the excavation sample beneath the farmer's track

INT 48 (north), with Mound 17

INT 55, connecting the excavation-sample to Mounds 1, 3 and 4

INT 53, a trench dug off site for environmental research purposes

In 1992: Completion of INT 55

The excavation was completed in April 1992, and the site was backfilled immediately afterwards (see *Manage-ment*, below).

The results of the excavation seasons are reported below, divided into Anglo-Saxon, prehistoric and environmental sections. The yield of each intervention may be summarised as follows:

INT 44: Mound 6, a robbed Anglo-Saxon cremation burial, was completely excavated, as were the buried soil and the prehistoric features beneath it. The area of the buried soil platform had already been halved by a (probably) nineteenth-century excavation trench dug to rob the mound. Mound 7 proved also to be a robbed Anglo-Saxon cremation, trenched most probably in the nineteenth century in the manner of Mound 6, with which it was nearly contemporary. The prehistoric settlement had also been extensively erased by the quarry-ditches of Mounds 6 and 7. For these reasons, Mound 7 and the buried soil beneath it were not anticipated to add greatly to the Anglo-Saxon, prehistoric or environmental research programme and were left unexcavated.

INT 48: The principal intention here was to confirm the existence of Mound 17, and the area was accordingly subjected to intensive horizon-mapping; it was expected to contain the relic of an unscrambled buried soil platform, and this proved to be the case. The cuts for the rich Mound 17 grave (*Burial 9*) and the horse-burial (*Burial 10*) were both clearly visible against the surface of the truncated buried soil beneath the ploughsoil. The cuts for the prehistoric ditch system beneath the mound were also visible within the buried soil strata. Their plan and stratigraphic relationships were recorded, but the majority of prehistoric features (already sampled elsewhere) were deliberately left unexcavated.

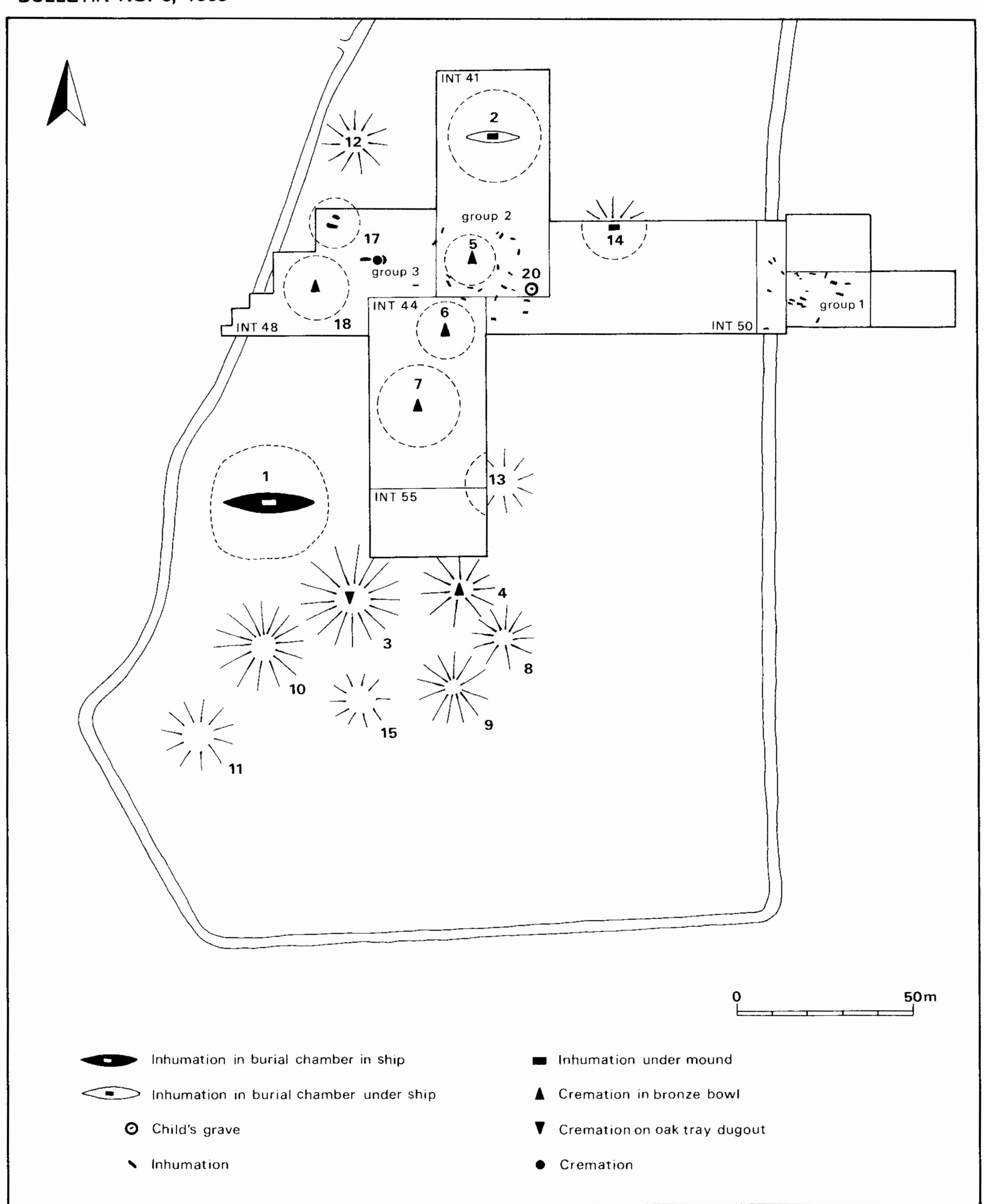


Fig. 2: The Anglo-Saxon cemetary at Sutton Hoo: Burials known up to 1992

INT 50: This area contained only three Anglo-Saxon features (*Burials 8, 15 and 16*), all of which were completely excavated. Half of Mound 14 (which had contained the robbed *Burial 8*) was deliberately conserved outside the excavated area. The prehistoric target was the mapping of the *ditch system*, which was then left unexcavated apart from the testing of stratigraphic relationships. A *neolithic pit cluster* was located and completely excavated.

INT 52 was the strip connecting the eastern sample arm (INT 50) with the far eastern sample (INT 32,38,39), and it lay beneath the farmer's track. Conservation of features was here generally equivalent to that beneath the modern ploughsoil (INT 32) and under the turf in the scheduled area (INT 50). In all cases, features had been truncated by c. 30cm, due to ancient and modern ploughing. INT 52 yielded five Anglo-Saxon burials without grave goods, including some with deviant body-positions (*Burials 35-39*). These can be assigned to Group 1, the putative sacrificial burials on the eastern periphery.

INT 53 was a trench cut through colluvium in the valley below Top Hat Wood, for the purposes of environmental research. It offered 1.3m of stratified soils, bearing pollen (see *Environmental Research*, below).

INT 55 was designed to connect the sample excavated with *Mounds 1, 3 and 4* excavated in 1938/39. It was also designed to test the character of the supposed *Mound 19* (*Bull.* 7, fig. 1). This was shown not to have existed, and there were no Anglo-Saxon features here apart from the quarry ditches for *Mounds 3, 4* and *13*. These were tested for the existence of satellite burials, and found wanting. The area did produce a single stray find of Anglo-Saxon date: a small gold and garnet cylindrical fitting, which probably derives from the robbing of *Mounds 3, 4* or *13. Mound 13* was sectioned, leaving half the mound unexcavated outside the sample area and revealing an east-west robber trench, but no evidence for burial rite. In the central part of INT 55 was an important *pit cluster.* It proved to contain a rich assemblage of the *Beaker period* (see *Prehistory*, below).

EXTENDING THE EXCAVATION SAMPLE: DISCOUNTED PROPOSALS

The original research design suggested that the excavation of a cruciform transect would allow the detection of the basic geography of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery and prehistoric settlement. The east-west transect was intended to stretch from edge to edge of the cemetery, and this it is believed to have done. To the west (INT 48) the excavation sample reached over the scarp and down the slope covered by Top Hat Wood, where no burials are expected to be. Similarly, no burials are expected further east of the excavation sample INT 32, and none occurred in INT 39 (see fig. 2).

However, the distribution of the Group 1 burials, as suggested by excavation in INT 32, 52 and above all in INT 50 (where none occurred) implies that they form an isolated group fortuitously located, rather than being typical of the eastern limit. The full excavation of INT 38 (hitherto subject to horizon mapping only) and new extensions north from INT 38 and south from INT 32, were contemplated to test this idea. The proposal was, however, discounted because (a) INT 52 endorsed the picture of isolation, and (b) extensions north and south would be unreliable negative evidence for burials on the eastern periphery, unless the excavations were extended for 100 metres or more in each direction. Such expenditure would neither be merited by the expected yield, nor bring increased certainty to the answer.

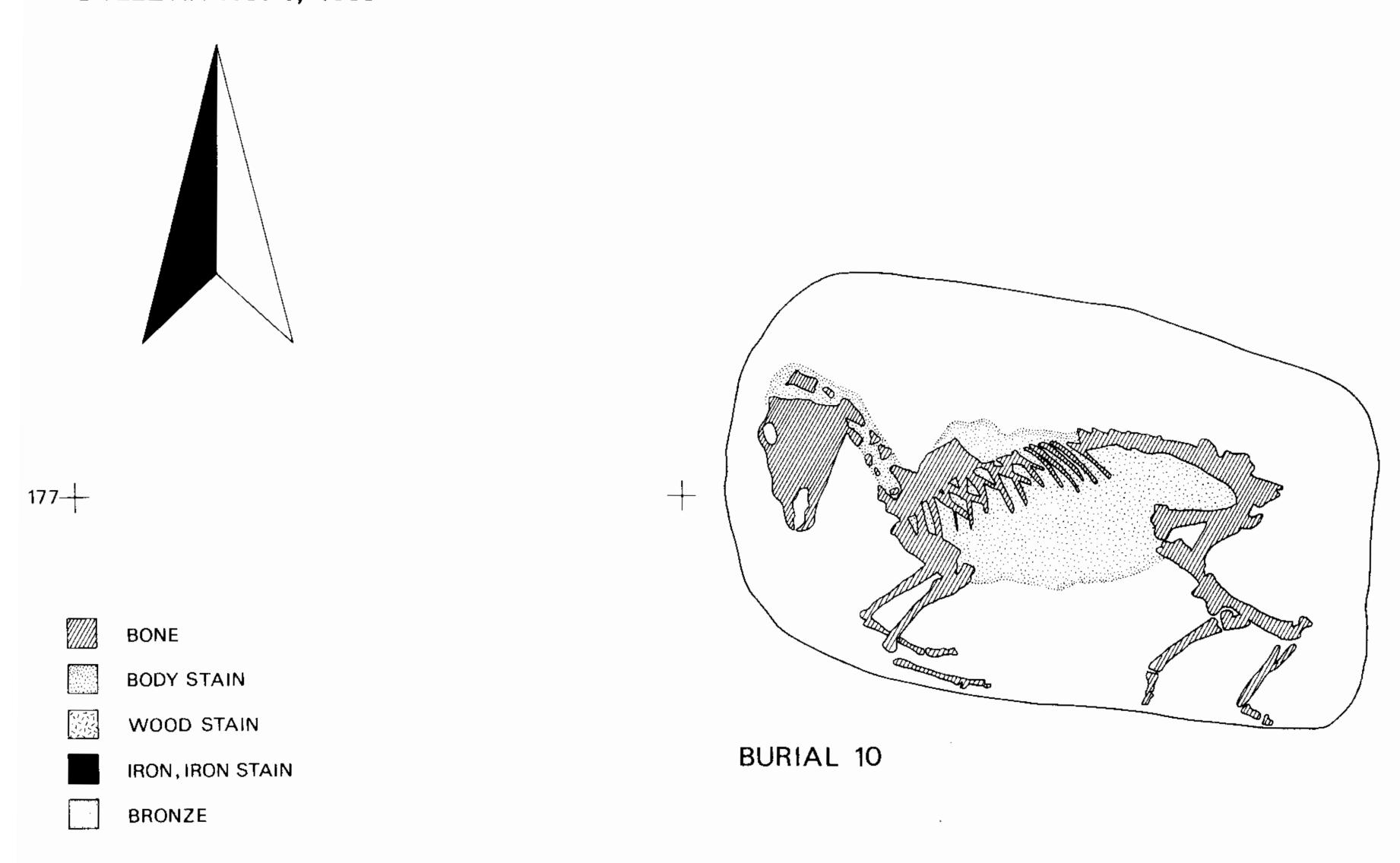
The north-south transect of the excavation sample was never expected to reach the edge of the cemetery, either to north or south. Its purpose was to provide an axis orthogonal to that running east-west in order to detect more easily the chronological growth of the cemetery. Air photographs taken by a member of the public, and received in 1991, appear to show two burial mounds between Mound 2 and the break of slope at the north end of the cemetery (which runs just beyond the track running south-west to north-east, see fig. 1). A preliminary plan to investigate these mounds, in order to confirm that this area deserved scheduled status, was abandoned after it had been decided to confirm its protected status in any case. The burial site is very likely (on topographical grounds) to continue to the north, as well as the south, and may even continue along the ridge for several hundred metres towards and beyond Sutton Hoo House, where surface finds have raised important questions about the geography of the Sutton Hoo area (see below).

The excavation sample was not extended, therefore, and the published interpretation will depend only on the excavations programmed in 1986 and completed in 1992.

REMOTE MAPPING

The remote mapping programme has made less punctual progress than the excavation, and has been more difficult to fund. In Zone A (the central area of the cemetery), resistivity and magnetic susceptibility proved less sensitive and more easily distracted by interference than in the ploughsoil (Zones D and F).

Radar mapping, resumed with the assistance of Oceanfix Limited, remains in need of further development. It is



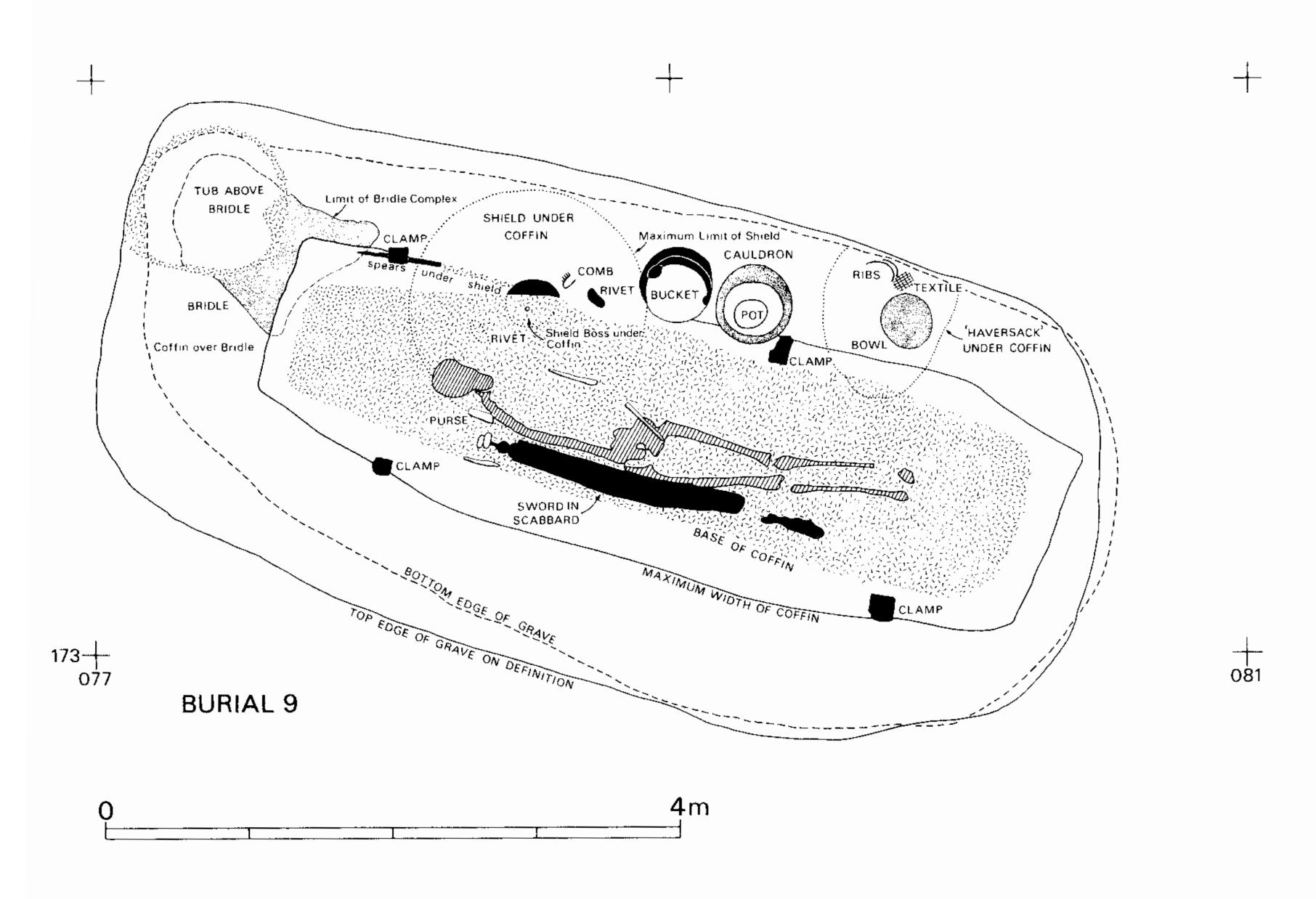


Fig. 3: Burials beneath Mound 17

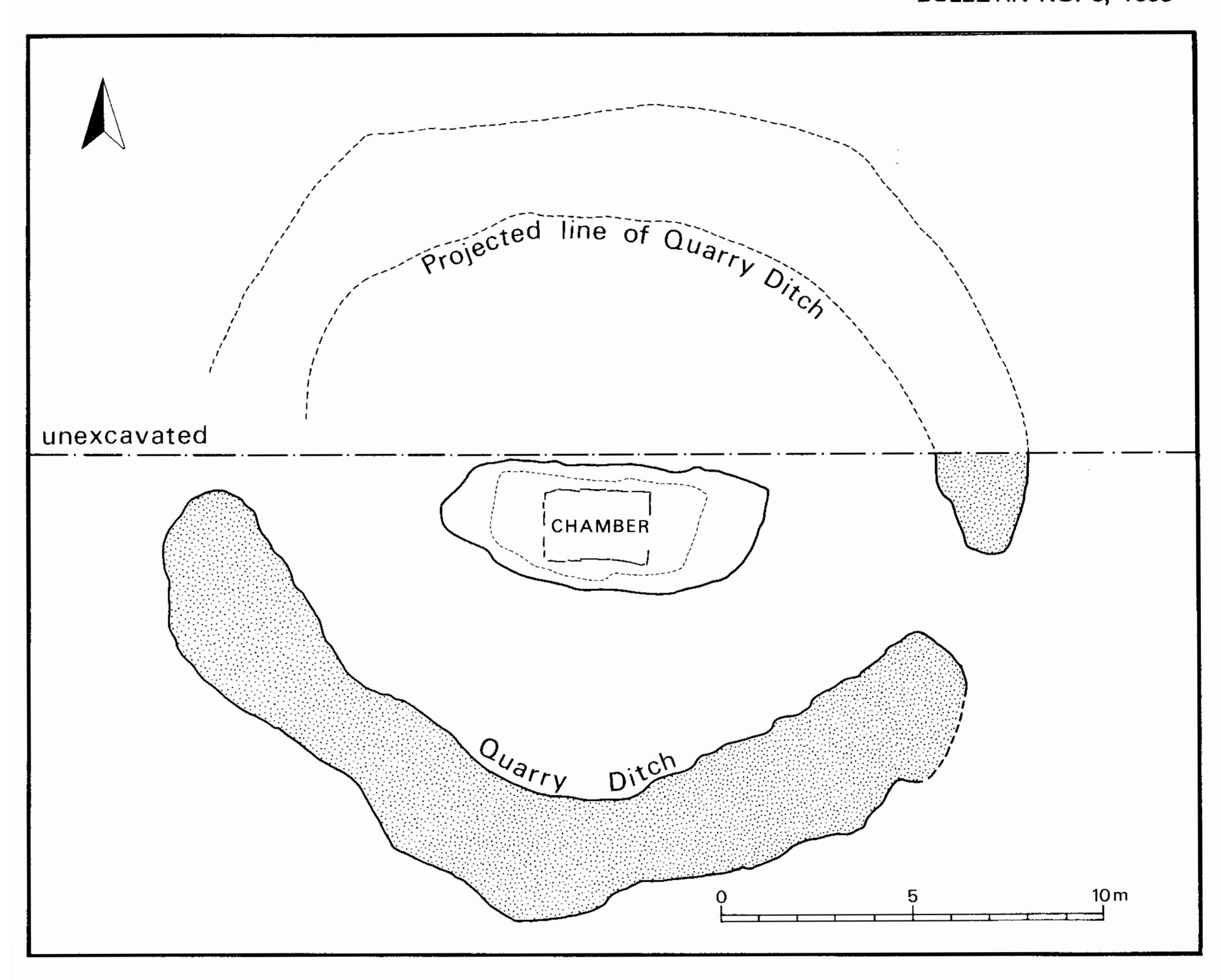


Fig. 4: Mound 14: Chamber, robber pit and quarry ditch

still unable, for example, to distinguish between a burial chamber and a robber trench, mainly because of problems of assigning the returning signals to soil interfaces at particular depths. This problem is being addressed at the Centre for Archaeological Remote Mapping and Evaluation at the University of York.

Surface collection has not been extended in Zones D and F, which has been dedicated for three years to the growing of turf. The work of Suffolk Archaeological Unit, however, continues to assist in the definition of the Sutton Hoo resource. Finds in the fields north of Sutton Hoo House included a sixth-century Mediterranean bucket, a gold coin of Honorius and Ipswich ware (published by Mundell Mango et al. in *Antiquity* 63 [1989]: 295-311). This is ambiguous evidence, implying either a settlement site or a new cemetery or a continuation of the present one.

It is intended to continue and complete the remote mapping by geophysical survey over the immediate area of the Sutton Hoo cemetery, and extend intensive surface collection to the north, south and east. This work will be advanced within Suffolk Archaeological Unit's programme for the area.

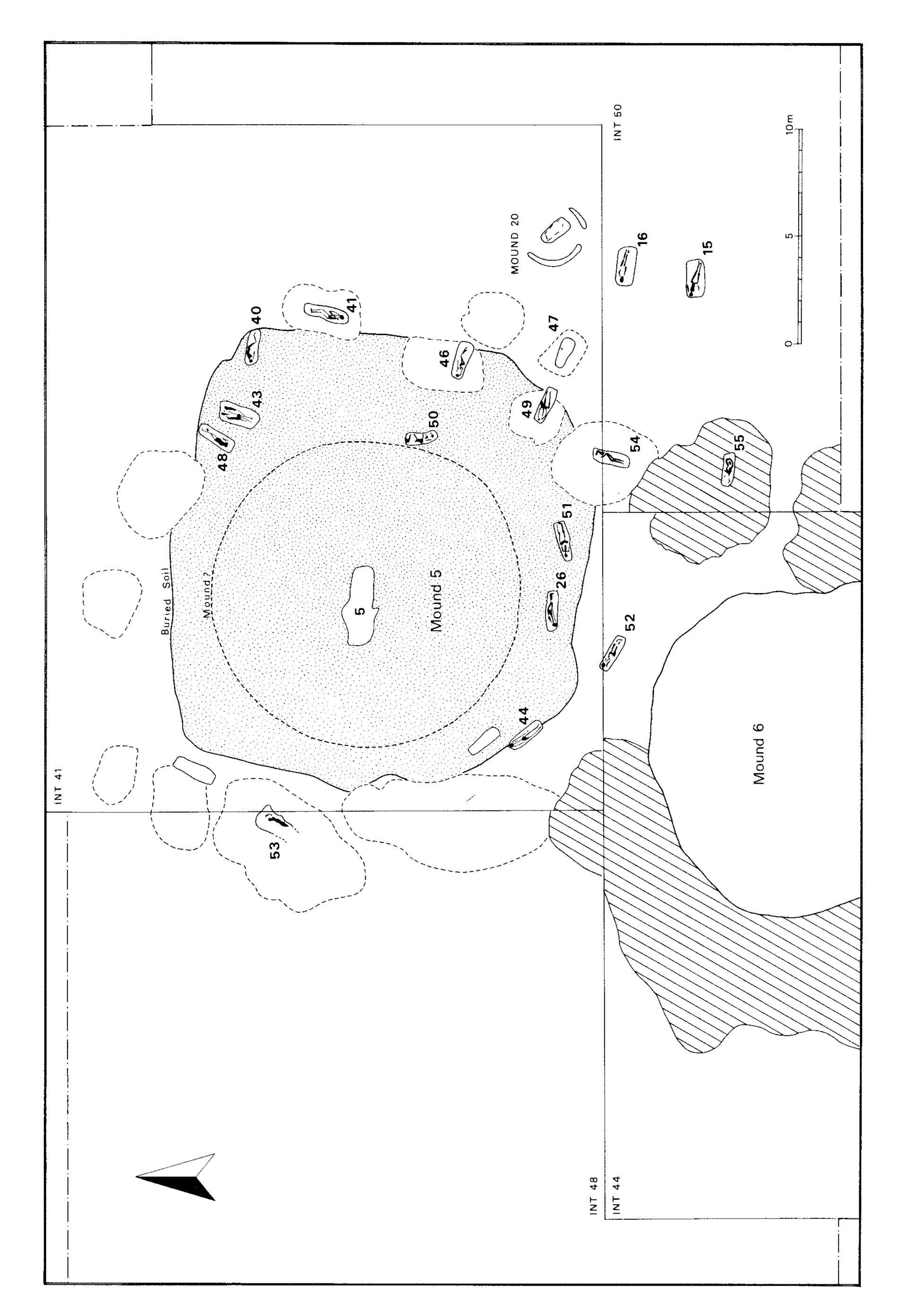
SETTLEMENT SURVEY

The survey of the Deben Valley area by John Newman has been completed to an extent of 134 square kilometres, producing a model for the Anglo-Saxon settlement pattern, and for its visibility (see below, The South-East Suffolk Survey).

The form and the dynamic of the Anglo-Saxon settlement and the social organisation that went with it would be greatly enhanced if the other five 'patches' proposed in the 1986 research design of the 'East Anglian Kingdom Survey' (*Bull.* 4, 1986, 29-31) could now be completed.

It is hoped and expected that this work will develop under the direction of Suffolk Archaeological Unit, with appropriate participation from the University of York.

Martin Carver



Satellite burials of Group 2 surrounding Mound 5 and furnished graves, Burials 15, 16 and 12 (Mound 20) Fig. 5:

THE ANGLO-SAXON CEMETERY: AN INTERIM REPORT

A total of 56 burials thought to be of Anglo-Saxon date is now known from Sutton Hoo. Four of these (*Mounds 1-4*) were excavated in the 1938-39 campaign, and six (the cremations *Burials 13, 14* [of uncertain date]; and the inhumations *Burials 45, 50, 51, 56*) in the campaign of 1966-71. The remaining 46 were excavated in the present campaign of 1986-91. The inventory of burials is given in table 2 (p. 18), and their distribution in plan in fig. 2. The NEW burials to be noted in this Bulletin are those associated with *Mounds 6, 7, 14* and *17*, and the furnished graves without mounds, *Burials 15 and 16*. Additions were also made in the last seasons to the satellite burials of Group 1 (*Burials 35-39*) and Group 2 (*Burials 52, 54 and 55*).

MOUND 17 (fig. 3)

Mound 17 was predicted from topographical survey during the evaluation. Little of the mound remained, but the buried soil platform was definable. It was cut by two rectangular pits, with a silt-filled depression between them, all of which were at first thought to be robber trenches. The central depression remains unidentified, but the rectangular pits flanking it to north and south proved to be a *horse-burial (Burial 10)* and an *inhumation in a coffin (Burial 9)*.

The horse-burial, *Burial 10*, was unaccompanied, unless anomalies recorded in the fill prove to be organic material related to the burial. The animal bone was in excellent condition and the burial also featured a strong body-stain. The individual bones are preserved well enough to allow detailed measurements and ascertain whether they belonged to a horse or pony. The grave was excavated by Kent Burson and Steve Timms.

Burial 9 was excavated in descending 2cm spits along running quadrants at recovery level D. The grave was excavated between July and November 1991 by Annette Roe, assisted in the latter stages by a team from the British Museum's Conservation Laboratory (Hazel Newey, Fleur Shearman and Man-Yee Liu). Excavation was carried out on a tailor-made cradle, under a portable perspex roof, both constructed by Peter Berry, and lit by generator, as winter crept on.

The state of preservation was again favourable here; the human skeleton was retrievable, apart from the rib cage and arms, in spite of lying in a timber coffin, which usually inhibits bone preservation. The timber was traceable as a thick black stain in the case of the coffin, and a brown stain in the case of other timber objects. A high degree of visibility allowed the grave goods to be counted, and their order of deposition to be stratigraphically determined, with some confidence.

The two **spears** were placed in the grave first. There were traces of a shaft near the spearheads, which lay close and had fused together. Above them was placed the **shield**, its minimum diameter being given by the position of a wood trace on one of the spearheads. This diameter implies that the **bucket** came next, probably followed by a small **cauldron** containing a pot. Beside the cauldron was an area of stained sand in which a **bronze bowl** lay above **ribs** of animal and **textile**. This zone has been supposed to represent a textile or leather bag ('haver-sack') and its contents (food).

At the west end of the grave, a rectangular zone rich in metal finds was consolidated and lifted in the soil-block for dissection in the British Museum. It has so far contained at least five large gilt-bronze circular strap-distributors with pendants and traces of leather straps 10-20mm in width. There is also an iron bit, also furnished with pendants. An iron buckle implies a leather strap 25-40mm in width, which might in turn imply a girth strap. This material is still under investigation in the British Museum Laboratories, but is likely to represent a horse harness and, possibly, a saddle.

The grave had thus been already furnished when a large **coffin**, cylindrical in form and secured by four iron **clamps**, was lowered in position. The coffin contained the body of a male in his early twenties, and was accompanied by a **sword** with **bronze buckle** inlaid with garnets, and a fire-steel **purse**, sited near the head and containing fragments of jewellery. It is likely that the destination of the coffin was intended to be the south side of the grave, where there were no furnishings; but in the event the coffin was placed in the centre of the grave where it was canted up on top of the shield boss, causing the body to roll southwards onto the sword.

The **comb** was apparently thrown in onto the coffin, since it was found vertically upright against the bulge of the coffin's northern wall. Backfilling began then, interrupted only for the addition of a wooden **tub**, which it would be logical to associate with a horse.

Of the size and shape of the mound which was raised above *Burials 9 and 10* little is known. The centre of the relict buried soil platform appeared to be the silt depression which lay between the two burials; it was shallow and offered no immediately diagnostic features.

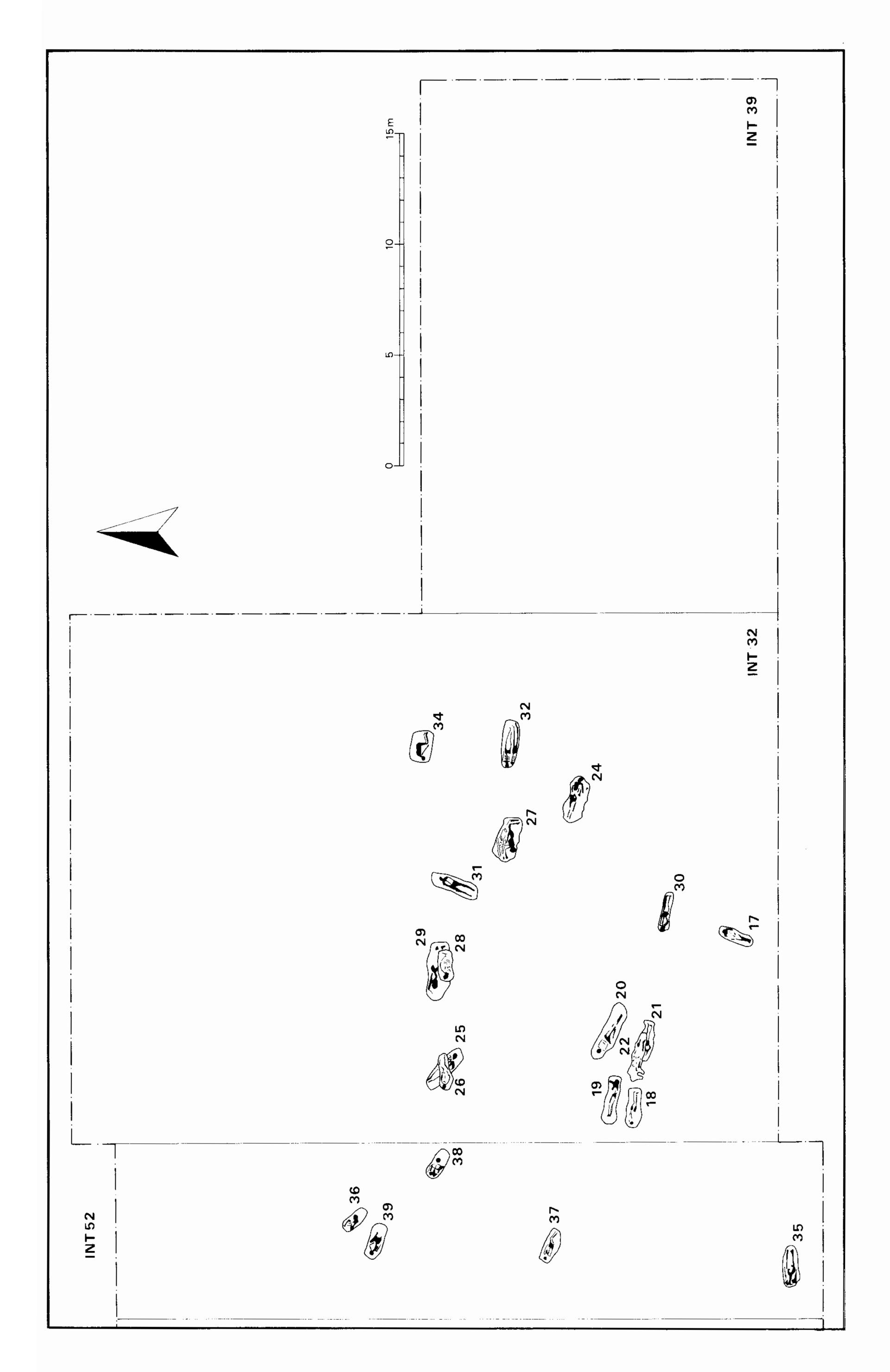


Fig. 6: Burials of Group 1 on the eastern periphery, including those excavated in 1991 (INT 52)

The centre of the mound also lay above one corner of a later prehistoric enclosure, as had *Mound 5*. *Mound 6* and *Mound 18* also appear to have been located on the bank and ditch of this same prehistoric feature (see below, fig. 9).

MOUND 14 (fig. 4)

It was intended to sample *Mound 14*, which was visible to topographic survey, by excavating its southern half only. This was done, and the southern half proved to have contained the original burial and its robber trench; they were excavated by Graham Bruce.

The burial at *Mound 14* was a chamber grave, lined with upright overlapping planks in the manner employed in Mound 2, but smaller in scale and more delicate. The burial had been badly disturbed by a robber-pit, running east to west, with steps cut at the west end. To their misfortune, and our happy chance, the pillagers had in this case been interrupted by a deluge which washed a thick layer of grey-brown silt into the partially-quarried chamber. Converted to a mush by the robbers' feet, this opaque trample trapped over a hundred fragments of the assemblage, including a chatelaine and objects of silver. This material is still under investigation at the British Museum; what has been seen so far strongly suggests that *Mound 14* will be identified as the inhumation of a woman.

MOUND 6

The excavation of *Mound 6* was completed by Andrew Copp in the period under review. Only a few centimetres of the former mound remained above the buried soil platform, which had been cut by an east-west robber trench equipped with access steps (to the east) and a barrow run (to the west).

The robber trench had effaced all structural traces of the original burial. This was determined, from fragments recovered from the robber trench, as a cremation wrapped in cloth and placed in a bronze bowl.

MOUND 7

The pattern was repeated on a still larger scale in Mound 7, where the robber-trench and burial-traces were dissected by Angela Evans and Helen Geake. The robber-trench here had its access steps to the west and its barrow run to the east (fig. 7). Although massive, the robber-trench contained very little trace of the disturbed burial in its backfill, which contained evidence for sieving. The cavity containing the original burial had, however, been left intact, and the cremation itself was found — a small hemisphere of cremated bone, apparently formed when the bowl containing it had been tipped upside down. Some finds (e.g. bone counters) had been left unseen among the cremated bone.

A NINETEENTH-CENTURY EXCAVATION CAMPAIGN?

The Mound 7 investigation provided further evidence for a systematic excavation campaign in which east-west trenches with access steps and barrow runs were regularly employed (fig. 7). Judging by the increasing competence of their work, the excavators had probably begun at Mound 2 and worked south, perhaps losing patience after a run of five consecutive cremations (Mounds 5, 6, 7, 3, 4), following early rewards at Mound 2 and Mound 14. Only this seems to have prevented their engaging Mound 1.

The mention of the excavations conducted by the landowner (a Mr Barritt) in about 1860 and their association with the findings in *Mound 2* (*Bull.4*:7), strongly suggest that the whole of this comprehensive and well-founded campaign belongs to that time.

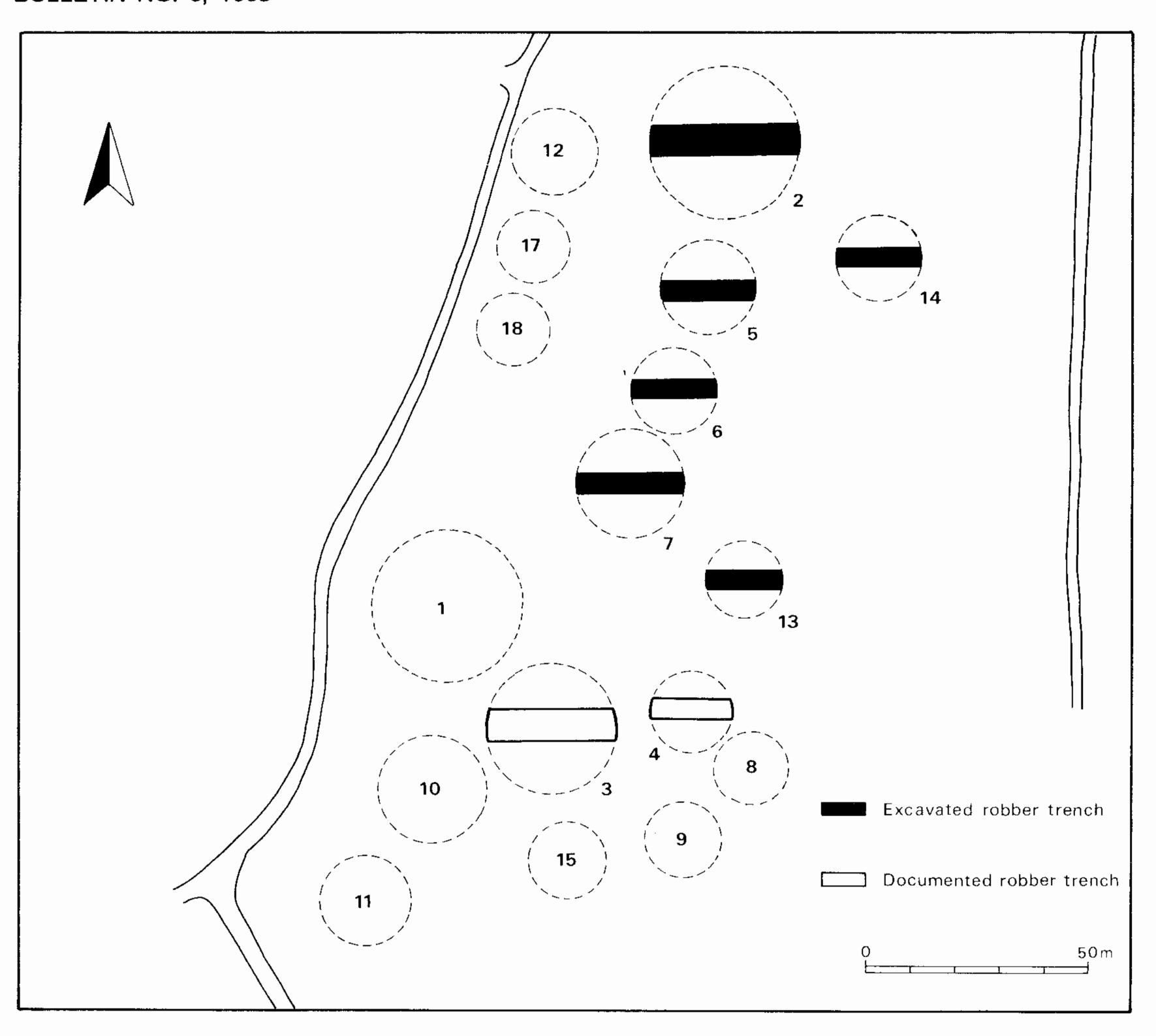
OTHER BURIALS

To the east side of *Mound 6* lay a row of three graves, of which one — *Burial 12*— had already been excavated (by Mark Johnson) in 1987. It was the burial of a high status child in a coffin, surrounded by a ring ditch 2.5 metres in diameter, which implied a mound. To the south were *Burials 15* and *16*, both in coffins, both furnished, both east-west, both with badly preserved bones and both (probably) juveniles. *Burial 15* (excavated by Annette Roe) was probably a young male, and contained two buckles and a knife or dagger. *Burial 16* (excavated by Steve Keenan) is suggested to be female, since it contained modest ornaments and a possible chatelaine.

These are the only furnished graves to be found which do not lie under mounds. *Burial 56*, an isolated grave near *Mound 17*, may however be another example.

MOUND 5 SATELLITE BURIALS (fig. 5)

Excavation in INT 44, 48 and 50 added four more candidates (*Burials 52, 53, 54, 55*) to the satellite burials of Group 2 which surround *Mound 5*. *Burials 53* and *54* were very fragmented and may offer evidence for the exposure of the corpse. Both were at the bottom of (open) quarry pits. *Burial 55*, also at the bottom of an open quarry pit, was an example of strongly marked ritual trauma, the body being apparently halved or quartered.



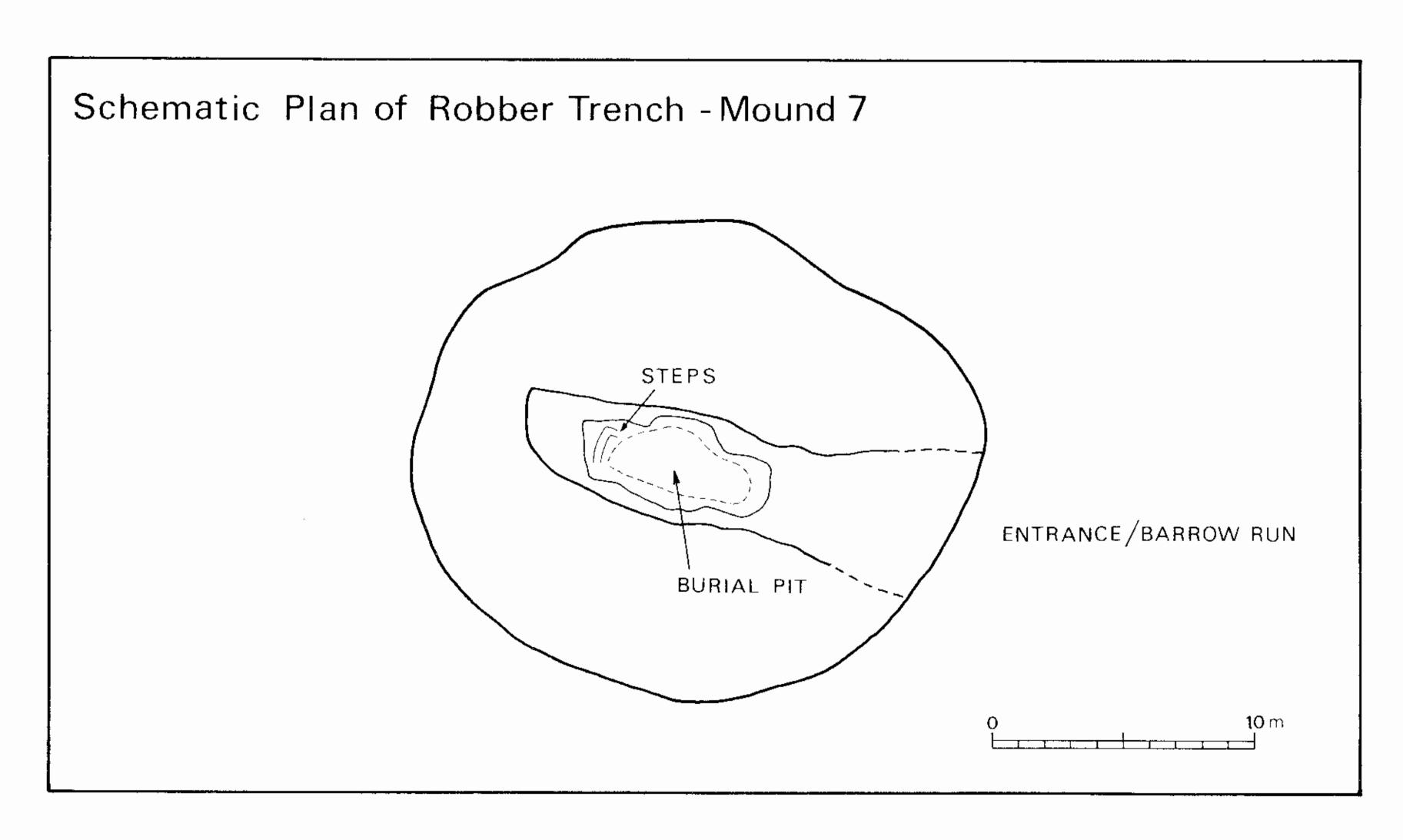


Fig. 7: Excavation trenches probably belonging to an undocumented 19th century archaeological campaign (schematic), with, below, the form of these excavation trenches

The position of *Burial 55* was equivocal in that the quarry pit it lay in is more likely to have referred to *Mound 6* than *Mound 5*. Mound 6 quarry pits cut those of *Mound 5*, and there were no pits between the two mounds. This suggests a stratigraphic sequence in which *Mound 6* is constructed to the south of the pre-existing *Mound 5*, the single sacrificial *burial 55* either intended as an envoi to Mound 5, or as an initiating ritual to Mound 6. If the ritual did refer to Mound 6, this practice did not continue. There were no traces of satellite burials in the other quarry-pits or quarry-ditches surrounding *Mound 6*, or in those adjacent to *Mound 7*, *Mound 13*, *Mound 3* or *Mound 4*.

BURIALS ON THE EASTERN PERIPHERY (fig. 6)

Excavations beneath the farmer's track (INT 52) added five burials to Group 1 (*Burials 35-39*), including a child (*Burial 36*) and three burials giving evidence for ritual trauma (*Burials, 35, 38, 39*), where *Burial 35* was a beheading. There were no burials to the north of *Burial 36* or to the west within INT 50, and the set of 20 appears to be an isolated group.

THE ANGLO-SAXON SEQUENCE - A PROVISIONAL AND PRELIMINARY MODEL (fig. 8)

The stratigraphic evidence for sequence within the cemetery is very meagre and is unlikely to improve decisively even after detailed analysis of the records. The most positive relationships appear to be that *Mounds 6* and 7 were constructed at the same time with a common quarry, and that *Mound 6* followed *Mound 5*. *Mound 17* on the edge of the scarp may be among the earliest of the mounds examined, *Mound 5*, with its satellite burials, should also be among the earliest mounds. The buried soil has been truncated (presumably by mound builders) beneath *Mound 6* and possibly *Mound 2* (see *Environmental Investigations*, below). Analysis, including micromorphology, may be able to put some dimensions on this 'truncation chronology', which would in turn provide evidence for a sequence. The programme of radiocarbon dating may also provide some indications of sequence.

The sequence given here (illustrated in fig. 8), which is also that published in *The Age of Sutton Hoo* (Carver 1992), is that suggested at the cessation of fieldwork and before analysis, and is strictly provisional.

SUMMARY

Phase A: Mound 17, a high status inhumation accompanied by a horse beneath a mound on the western limit of the cemetery. This should belong to the early founders of an independent aristocratic burial ground.

Phase B: Mound 5, a cremation wrapped in cloth, placed in a bronze bowl. Cremation continues beneath mounds which process southwards (Mounds 6, 7, 3 and 4). Mound 5 is surrounded by fifteen 'satellite burials' (Group 2) including evidence for ritual or judicial killing.

A group of similar burials on the eastern periphery of the cemetery may be contemporary (Group 1).

Phase C: Mound 14, a female inhumation in a chamber grave and Burials 12, 15 and 16, a row of juvenile inhumations in coffins, are added to the east of Mound 6. Though evidence is scant, Mound 13 may also belong to this phase.

Phase D: Two ship burials: a ship placed on top of a chamber grave under Mound 2, and a chamber within a ship under Mound 1.

Whether this sequence will be upheld or modified by the analysis that is currently under way remains to be seen. Whichever sequence is best supported by the evidence, it may be read as a history of ideological preference, allowing insight into the aspirations and political pressures experienced in the formative years of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of East Anglia.

FUTURE WORK ON ANGLO-SAXON EAST ANGLIA

The story so far from the Sutton Hoo excavation should be read in conjunction with the work reported by John Newman on the Deben Valley Survey and on the excavations at Boss Hall, Ipswich (below).

Many East Anglian cemeteries have now produced evidence for burial mounds, although none of them consist, as does Sutton Hoo, almost exclusively of rich burial mounds. The cemeteries at Ipswich start in the fifth century and continue to signal in pagan style until the early eighth. Sutton Hoo appears to be confined to little more than a hundred years around the seventh century. Within the context provided by the discoveries at Ipswich and elsewhere, Sutton Hoo still appears to be the sole example of a separated cemetery reserved for an elite with especially emphatic non-Christian messages to convey.

John Newman also shows that Rendlesham has retained its special status among settlements. It is the only example so far of a settlement with continuity from the early Saxon through to the middle Saxon period. The

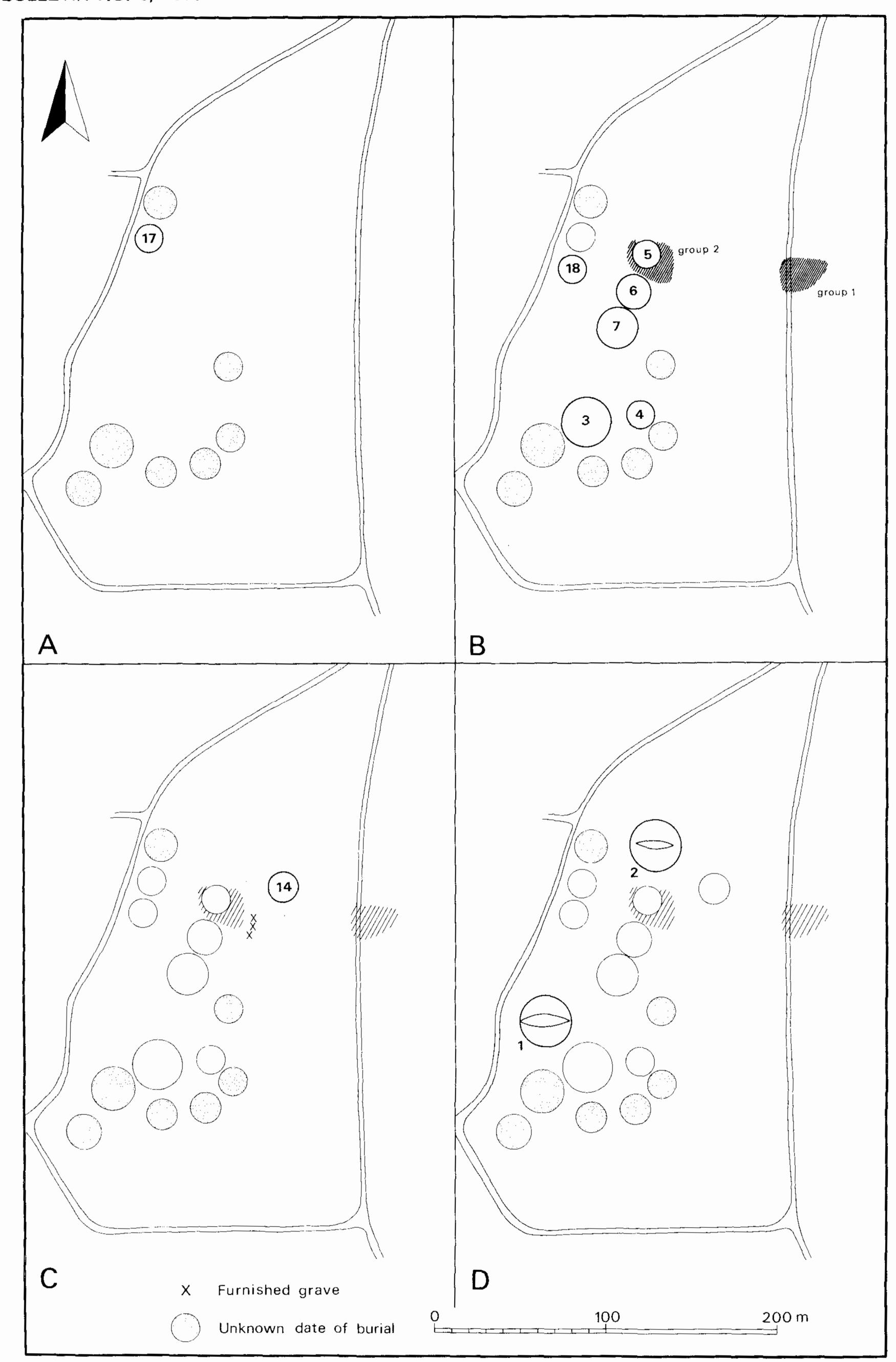


Fig. 8: Preliminary and strictly provisional model of the sequence of burial at Sutton Hoo

picture otherwise is of a radical redeployment of settlement, and presumably a reorganisation of land, in the seventh century.

The importance of the seventh century in the redesign of the social organisation of the English has been re-emphasised by the work at Sutton Hoo. It may be that the way to throw a clearer light on this process is to look now at the settlement of Rendlesham. If the crucial attribute of kingship, as suggested in Carver 1989, is the imposition of territorial tax, then its arrival should be reflected in the settlement plan of Rendlesham. To conform with the hypothesis, Rendlesham should change from a farm, to a manor, to a *villa regalis* in the late sixth to early seventh centuries.

* * *

Sutton Hoo and Rendlesham are twin peaks of the new kingdom, as Rupert Bruce-Mitford surmised many years ago. As we finish one phase of exploration and plan the next within Suffolk, a county so informative of early Anglo-Saxon England, let us salute a great scholar who has pioneered and promoted the study of the early English for over fifty years.

Martin Carver

TABLE 2: SUTTON HOO: INVENTORY OF ANGLO-SAXON BURIALS

MOUNDS, UNEXCAVATED AND CONSERVED FOR FUTURE STUDY

Mound 8, 9, 10 (possibly robbed), 11 (attempted robbing 1982: [INT 17]), 12, 15, 16.

MOUNDS, OR FORMER MOUNDS, EXCAVATED TO DATE

- MOUND 1: [Burial 1] INHUMATION W-E in chamber in ship in trench; with sword, shield, helmet, regalia, silverware, lyre, drinking horns, clothing, buckets, cauldron, etc.
 INTACT: Excavated 1939; 1965-71 (INT 5-10); published Bruce-Mitford 1975, 1978, 1983.
 DATED: c. 625 AD (grave goods and historical association).
- MOUND 2: [Burial 2] INHUMATION W-E in chamber under ship; originally with sword, shield, belt-buckle(?), silver buckle, drinking horns, tub(?), iron-bound bucket, cauldron(?) bronze bowl, blue glass jar, silver-mounted box, silver-mounted cup, 5 knives in sheaths, textiles.

 ROBBED or EXCAVATED without record, possibly in 1860 (INT 1). Excavated 1938 (INT 3; Bruce-Mitford 1975) and 1986-9 (INT 26, 41).

 DATED: late sixth/early seventh century (grave goods).
- MOUND 3: [Burial 3] CREMATION on oak tray or dug-out boat; with limestone plaque, bone facings (for box?), bronze ewer lid, francisca, comb, textile, pottery sherd(?), horse (cremated).

 ROBBED or EXCAVATED without record (nineteenth century?). Excavated 1938 (INT 2; Bruce-Mitford 1975).

 DATED: late sixth/early seventh century (grave goods).
- MOUND 4: [Burial 4] CREMATION in bronze bowl (fragments), with playing piece, textile, horse (cremated). ROBBED or EXCAVATED without record (nineteenth century?). Excavated 1938 (INT 4; Bruce-Mitford 1975).

 DATED: late sixth/early seventh century (grave goods).
- MOUND 5: [Burial 5] CREMATION in bronze bowl (fragments), with composite playing pieces, iron shears, silver-mounted cup, comb, knife in sheath, ivory fragment, glass fragments, textiles, animal bone possibly dog (cremated).

 ROBBED or EXCAVATED without record (twice, latterly probably in the nineteenth century). Excavated 1970 (INT 12; Longworth and Kinnes 1980), 1988 (INT 41). SURROUNDED by 'satellite burials' of Group 2 (see below).

 DATED: late sixth/early seventh century (grave goods).
- MOUND 6: [Burial 6] CREMATION in bronze bowl (fragments), with copper-alloy sword pyramid, bone comb (fragments), textiles.

 ROBBED or EXCAVATED without record (nineteenth century?). Excavated 1989-91 (INT 44).

 DATED: late sixth/early seventh century (grave goods); stratigraphically later than Mound 5.
- MOUND 7: [Burial 7] CREMATION in bronze bowl (fragments), with reticella bead, bone gaming counters, silver-gilt fragment, iron knife, textiles, animal bone.

 ROBBED or EXCAVATED without record (nineteenth century?). Excavated 1990-1 (INT 44).

 DATED: late sixth/early seventh century (grave goods).
- MOUND 13: Unidentified burial rite. 2 iron fragments from robber trench.

 ROBBED or EXCAVATED without record (nineteenth century?). Mound sectioned 1991-2. Burial unidentified (INT 55-INT 44).

 UNDATED

MOUND 14: [Burial 8] INHUMATION (possible female) in chamber; grave-good fragments under analysis; grave-goods expected to include: silver-mounted cup(?), silver buckle, silver chain, bronze fittings for box(?), bronze pins, bronze chatelaine, bronze girdle hangers, bronze bowl(?), textiles.

ROBBED or EXCAVATED without record (nineteenth century?). Excavated 1991 (INT 50).

DATED: late sixth/early seventh century (grave goods).

MOUND 17: [Burial 9] INHUMATION W-E in iron-clamped wooden coffin, with (in coffin) sword, bronze buckle inlaid with garnets, two silver(?) sword pyramids, bronze-fitting, iron dagger, fire-steel purse (containing garnet and millefiori fragments and buckle); (outside coffin within grave pit) two spears, shield (with shoulder strap), bucket, cauldron, pottery vessel, 'haversack'(?) containing animal ribs and flanged bronze bowl; comb, harness for horse (including gilt-bronze discs, axe-shaped pendants with animal ornament, an iron snaffle bit, leather straps), wooden tub.

[Burial 10] INHUMATION of HORSE, adjacent and parallel to Burial 9. Unfurnished.

INTACT: Excavated 1991 (INT 48).

DATED: sixth/seventh century (by associating with Burial 9).

MOUND 18: [Burial 11] CREMATION in bronze bowl (fragments), with textiles and bone comb (teeth only). PLOUGHED AWAY. Excavated 1966, 1989 (INT 11, 48)

DATED: Anglo-Saxon (comb).

[MOUND 19 - shown not to have existed during excavation in 1991 (INT 55)]

MOUND 20: [Burial 12] INHUMATION NW-SE in wooden coffin of child, with iron spear-head, bronze buckle and bronze pin.

INTACT Excavated 1987 (INT 41).

DATED: Anglo-Saxon (grave-goods).

BURIALS WITHOUT EVIDENCE FOR MOUNDS

CREMATIONS

Burial 13 [INT 11, Aiii]: Unurned cremation. Undated

Burial 14 [INT 11, Aiv]: Cremation in pottery vessel. Sixth-seventh century(?)

FURNISHED INHUMATIONS

Burial 15 [INT 50, F54]: W-E, extended on back, in coffin, with two bronze buckles and dagger/knife in sheath.

Burial 16 [INT 50, F58]: W-E, extended on back, in coffin with bronze needle-case(?) having leather stopper, bronze ring-headed pin and glass ring-beads, and iron rod, chatelaine or coffin-fitting.

SATELLITE BURIALS

GROUP 1: On Eastern Periphery

INT 32

Burial 17 [F9 (254)]: N-S, flexed, on back. DATED 540-700 AD (C14).

Burial 18 [F39 (101, 245, 246): W-E, extended, on back, in coffin.

Burial 19 [F40 (102, 247)]: E-W, extended, prone, with hands tied behind back(?).

Burial 20 [F106 (248, 249)]: NW-SE, extended, on back, in coffin/tree-trunk, with animal joint(?). Under cairn.

Burial 21 [F108 (251)]: W-E, extended, on back, without head.

Burial 22 [F109 (252)]: W-E, extended, on back; above Burial 21 and with head of F251 in lap. DATED: 680-820 AD (C14 accelerator).

Burial 23 [F137/1]: E-W, MALE, extended, on back, with broken neck.

Burial 24 [F137/2]: Prob. MALE, crouching, beneath Burial 23.

Burial 25 [F146 (258)]: SE-NW, prob. MALE, extended, prone, with wrists and ankles 'tied'.

Burial 26 [F154 (259)]: W-E; extended, on back, above Burial 25.

Burial 27 [F161 (260, 261)]: W-E, on side, in 'ploughing position', with ard and rod. Prob. MALE.

Burial 28 [F163 (262)]: W-E, kneeling, top of head missing.

Burial 29 [F166 (263)]: W-E, extended, on back, hands 'tied' and stretched above the head.

Burial 30 [F173 (264)]: W-E, MALE, extended, on back, wrist over wrist.

Burial 31 [F231 (237)]: N-S, extended.

Burial 32 [F227/1 (238)]: W-E, extended, prone.

Burial 33 [F227/2 (239)]: W-E, extended, prone, lying with Burial 32.

Burial 34 [F235 (240)]: W-E, flexed, in square coffin, chest or barrel.

INT 52

Burial 35 [F4 (34)], W-E, extended, on back, head detached and placed looking north on right arm. DATED: 650-955 AD (C14)

Burial 36 [F37 (71)]: NW-SE, tightly crouched, lying on right side, head facing north.

Burial 37 [F25 (72)]: NW-SE, flexed at knees, lying on back.

Burial 38 [F35 (75)]: NW-SE, lying on back, knees bent back to shoulders.

Burial 39 [F36 (74)]: NW-SE, kneeling, face down, left arm behind back.

GROUP 2: Associated with Mound 5

INT 41

Burial 40 [F81 (152)]: W-E, prob. MALE, flexed, on side in 'sleeping' position, with head detached and rotated.

Burial 41 [F82 (507, 509, 510)] S-N, flexed, on side; with organic stains (= additional human limbs?). Cuts quarry pit F508.

Burial 42 [F86/1 (148)]: N-S, MALE, extended, on back, with head detached and lying with neck uppermost. DATED: 650-780 AD (C14).

Burial 43 [F86/2 (149)]: N-S, prob. FEMALE, extended, prone on top of Burial 42 with human limbs/jaw.

Burial 44 [F124 (542)]: NW-SE, extended, on back.

Burial 45 [F154 (55) = INT 12, grave 3]: W-E, prob. MALE, prone.

Burial 46 [F424 (499)]: NW-SE, flexed, on side. Cuts quarry pit F130.

Burial 47 [F435]: Body piece, possibly part of a long-bone. Grave cuts quarry pit F133.

Burial 48 [F486 (555)]: S-N, slightly flexed, on side, head detached and placed below knee.

Burial 49 [F517 (524, 525)]: NW-SE, extended, on back, head wrenched out of alignment with organic 'scarf' around neck. Cuts quarry pit F129, which contained bone fragments of large mammal.

Burial 50 [F588 = INT 12, grave 1]: S-N, flexed, on side.

Burial 51 [F590 = INT 12, grave 2]: W-E, extended, on back.

INT 44

Burial 52 [F215 (216)]: NW-SE, extended, on back, lower left leg broken, head detached and turned through 180 degrees.

INT 48

Burial 53 [F349 (351)]: N-S, extended, prone, under plank, right arm extended above head; with organic stains; within quarry pit F287.

INT 50

Burial 54 [F141 (162)]: S-N, flexed, on side, in 'sleeping' position, without head. Cuts quarry pit F30.

Burial 55 [F341 (379)]: E-W, bent over backwards, or truncated. Cut by later cow burial F342.

GROUP 3: Isolated Grave near Mound 17

DATED: 670-830 AD (C14).

Burial 56 [INT 11, pit 1]: E-W, skull only, detached and facing foot end, with glass bead and bronze fitting. (Longworth and Kinnes 1980).

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Fig. 9: Principal prehistoric features

THE PREHISTORIC SETTLEMENT: AN INTERIM REPORT

In the 1ha cruciform transect excavated at Sutton Hoo between 1985 and 1992, over 2000 features, the vast majority prehistoric, have been identified, photographed, mapped, and many hundreds excavated. But, to make sense of this palimpsest — stakeholes, postholes, scoops, pits, treepits, gullies, ditches, palisade trenches, fencelines, ploughmarks, cultivation marks — is far from straightforward. Important lessons were learnt during the excavation of Int 41 and a warning was given by the analysis of the survival of structures on buried soil platforms under Anglo-Saxon mounds and the implied severe loss of information elsewhere on the eroded sandy subsoil surface (Copp in *Bulletin* 6, 1989: 25-6).

It thereafter became apparent that only the major prehistoric landscape elements could be apprehended at Sutton Hoo, with the occasional bonus of discrete sets of features and associated finds' assemblages. Thus, the excavation strategy was tailored to answer one main question: how was the landscape organised and how did it change through time from the Middle Neolithic to the Iron Age?

Excavations ended in April 1992 and 6 months later results are still provisional. It must also be remembered that the shape of the Sutton Hoo sample is largely dictated by the Anglo-Saxon cemetery topography rather than by a putative prehistoric one. Nevertheless, a broad sequence can be put forward.

PERIOD 1: MIDDLE NEOLITHIC SETTLEMENT

The earliest activity at Sutton Hoo is betrayed by substantial amounts of Middle Neolithic pottery of the bowl tradition, as well as Mildenhall ware and associated flint waste and implements, deposited in widely dispersed pits. This widespread, but ill-focused, occupation occasionally comes to prominence in the form of pit clusters. One such cluster was excavated by Katie Lister in Summer 1991 in Int 50 (marked 'pits' on fig. 9, to W of Mound 14): there were 10 pits (F300-309), up to 70cm in diameter and surviving to a depth of 35cm, set close to each other over an area of c. 12m² in a horseshoe shape. It would be difficult to argue here for the presence of a standing structure. Two of these pits (F304 and F309) contained large parts of Neolithic coarse pots, or even whole pots (3-4 vessels), broken before deposition, but some had been deliberately arranged to 'line' the sides and base of the pits. Further analysis should enable us to put forward some explanations for this form of rich pit deposits, a practice that continues in the later Neolithic and early Bronze Age (there are examples of scoops with Grooved ware or Food vessels only from Int 41). A ritual function need not be ruled out and the pits may be put in relation with the presence of trees at Sutton Hoo: indeed, several dozen tree pits are now documented and there are indications that pit deposits occur more often than not in their vicinity.

PERIOD 2: LATER NEOLITHIC/EARLY BRONZE AGE - LAND BOUNDARIES AND SETTLEMENT

In the later Neolithic and earliest Bronze Age, Peterborough ware, Grooved ware, fine and coarse Beakers, Food vessels and Collared urns form part of the material repertoire of what was to be the most active episode in Sutton Hoo's prehistory (see figs 10 and 11 for a selection of pottery). It is proposed that it is at this stage that the broad ditches criss-crossing the Sutton Hoo promontory and hinterland, mapped by aerial photography (see Bulletin 6, 1989, fig. 8), began to come into existence. These land boundaries are long-lived, respect the same alignment through time, disregard local variations in topography (e.g. the two E-W ditches of the excavated sample plunge sharply downwards and westwards into what is now Top Hat Wood) and have been laid out as part of an integral system. Indeed, excavation of stretches of these ditches and their butt-ends in Int 41, 48, 50 and 32 proved that these broad, 3m wide, ditches are the result of up to 5 recuts of narrower (1.20 - 2m wide) 'gullies', very slightly offset from each other but following the same itinerary and that the butt-ends recur on the same spot, generally a junction with another alignment. This would suggest, not only that land was parcelled on a broad scale, but also that this carving up of the landscape was respected for some considerable time. The dating of these boundaries is notoriously difficult, but a superficial scan of the assemblages would be in agreement with the dating put forward by Longworth and Kinnes (1980: 16, 28), who note Peterborough ware in their ditch 1, but also mention the presence of Ardleigh urns in the latest recut of this feature. A starting date at the end of the Neolithic and a persistence well into the Bronze Age is therefore likely. To propose such an early date for the appearance of land boundaries will require careful documentation but is not impossible, as early land divisions have been claimed elsewhere in East Anglia (Fengate: Pryor 1980: 177 ff). If the Sutton Hoo land boundaries are constant in their alignment, it seems, on the other hand, that they are not constant in their form: it is perhaps possible that the soft sandy subsoil allows for variations in the depth and profile of the component ditches and gullies. Although postholes (and spademarks) have been recorded in their bases, it is not proposed that these ditches held palisades. However, lines of postholes have been recorded alongside the ditches in Int 48, 41 and 50. It is finally

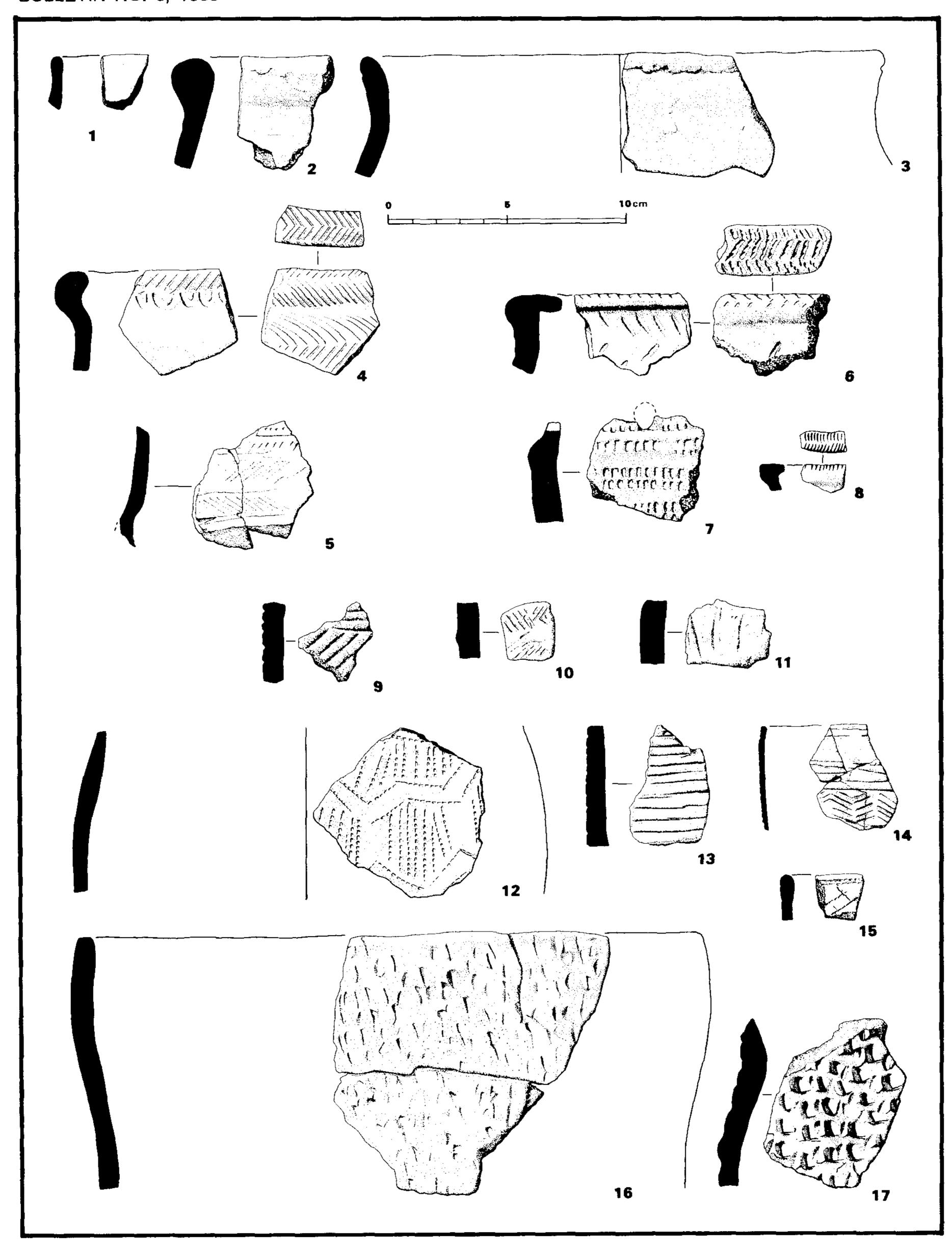


Fig. 10: Prehistoric pottery from Sutton Hoo – principal types of the Neolithic and Beaker periods

also possible that open ditches, perhaps accompanied by stretches of flanking fences, give way – over time – to fences, hedges or palisaded boundaries (in Int 32/39). This trend towards timber boundaries heralds changes that were to come in the later Bronze and Iron Ages (see below).

Within this broadly-defined landscape plenty of activity, of domestic nature, is indicated by postholes, pits and scoops, often severely truncated. Most will remain uninformative holes. But one episode in Sutton Hoo's prehistoric life is beginning to emerge: it is a late Beaker settlement, encountered episodically over the whole excavated hectare. The impression is that it is loosely spread, with domestic foci at intervals (of 50-100m). 5 such foci have been identified: pit and posthole clusters under Mound 1 (Paul Ashbee, Int 7), in Int 55 (of which more below), in Int 48, in Int 32 and under Mound 2 in Int 41. The latter was a porched roundhouse of 5.5m in diameter, with central hearth and a rich pit group immediately to the SW, excavated and presented by A Copp in Bulletin 6 (1989: 15 and fig. 13). Int 55 may also possess such circular structures, but the area had been much more severely eroded. The main contribution of Int 55 to the Beaker domestic scene was a group of 16 pits (and 3 postholes) (fig. 12), very closely packed together or intercutting. These were excavated by Roy Jerromes and Madeleine Hummler in the final weeks of the campaign in April 1992. The pits appear remarkably uniform in their shape, depth, profile, sequence and type of infilling, which is very rich in charcoal, organic residues, burnt flint, flint waste, flint implements (22 implements, mostly scrapers but including one arrowhead) and ceramic sherds. 525 sherds of pottery, all part of a single late Beaker group, were recovered from these pits, often in large enough proportions to allow the reconstruction of individual vessels. Two such fine Beakers - one incised (A) and one comb-impressed (B) are shown in fig. 11. They can be placed within the late Southern group of Beakers and comparable vessels are to be found in East Anglia, at Risby Warren, Hockwold-cum-Witton, Edgethorpe, Fifty Farm or Bury St Edmunds (see Case 1977: 72, 82; Bamford 1982 passim; Gibson 1982 passim; Clarke 1970). Fine vessels account for 27% of the pottery assemblage, 73% being made up of Beaker domestic wares, of which the rusticated variety is the most common, but not the only representative; there was also a type of 'rilled ware' executed in Beaker fabric but featuring vertical and horizontal ribs and pottery which seems to owe more to the Grooved ware vocabulary than to the Beaker one. It is in showing such a range of pots, deposited in a single short-lived space of time in a homogenous complex that the strength of the Int 55 assemblage lies. Altogether, some 2 or 3 dozen pots were smashed and thrown as rubbish into the pits: there seems to be no reason to doubt the domestic nature of this rubbish, but models incorporating the disposal of rubbish originating from other types of activities may still need to be taken into consideration.

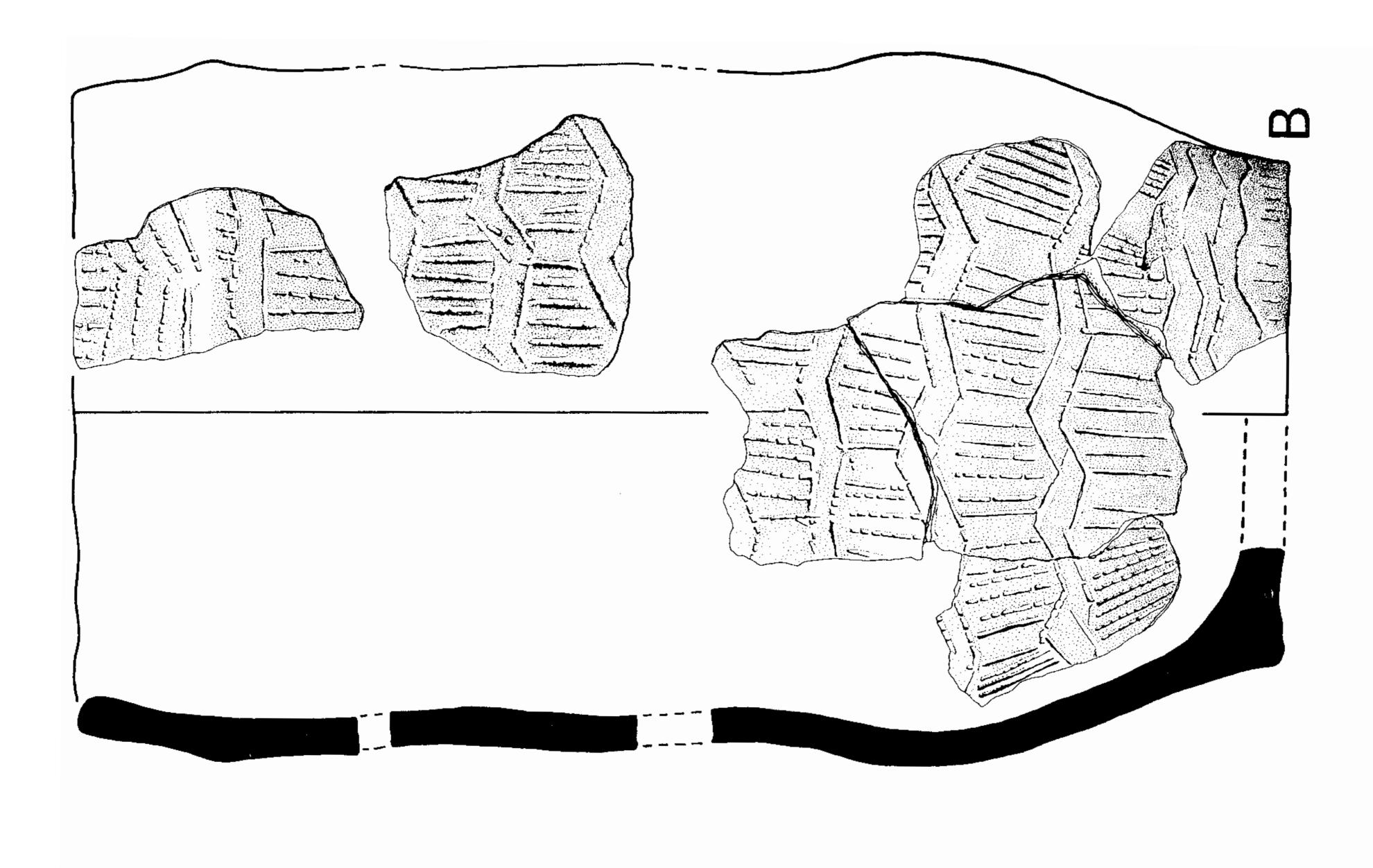
PERIOD 3: LATER BRONZE AGE LAND BOUNDARIES

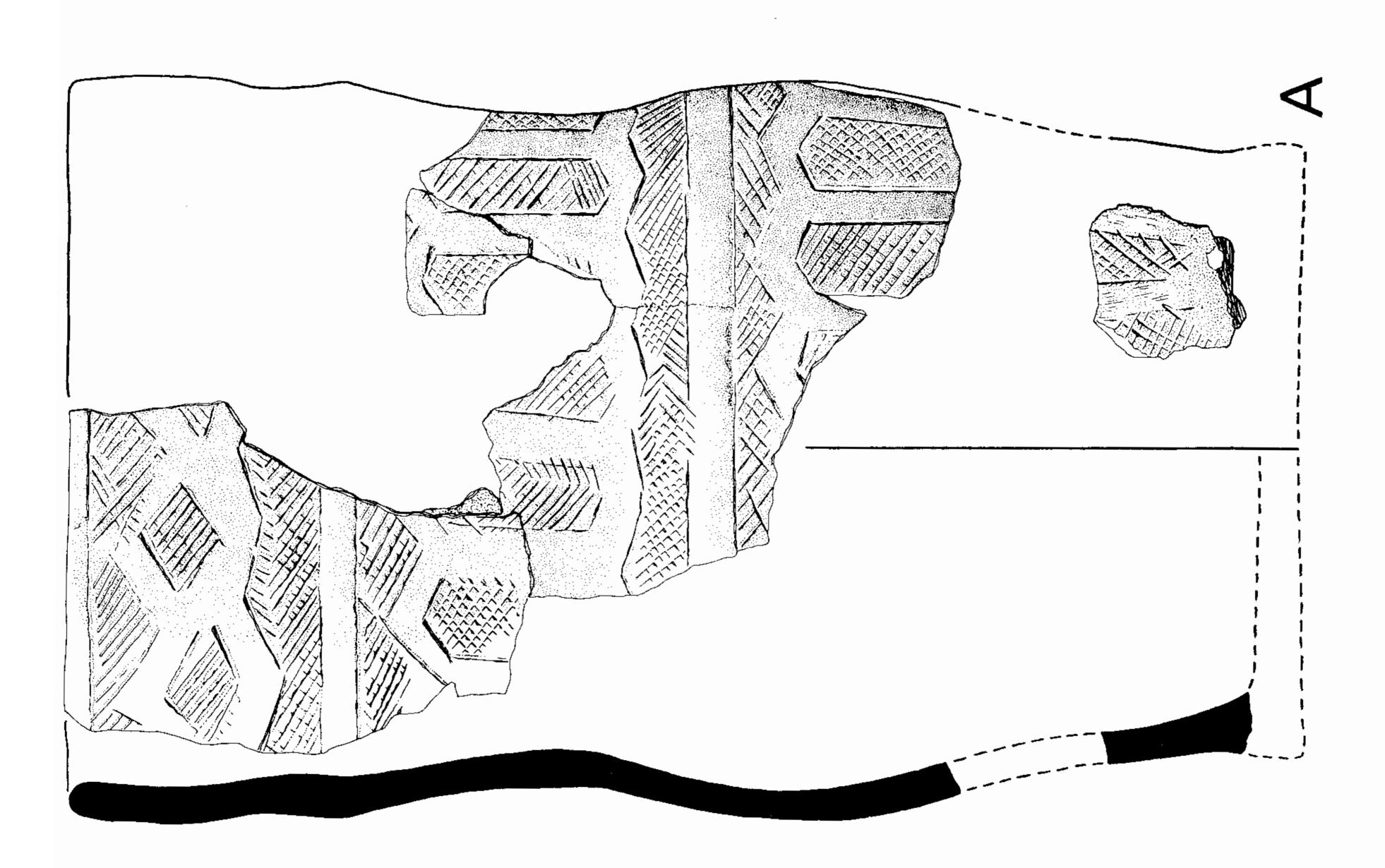
Sometime during the Bronze Age land boundaries and settlement debris make way for a new form of structure, a strong fence with posts set every 30-50cm and enclosing an area of at least 60 x 80m on the western edge of the Sutton Hoo promontory. Dating evidence (except that it is later than the ditch system and earlier than the Iron Age enclosure) hardly exists and it is difficult to ascribe features within the enclosure to this episode of Sutton Hoo's prehistory. The fenced enclosure's position, respecting the contours of the promontory, and its change of alignment are certainly a new departure; its solid construction could suggest that livestock were being kept (out or in?). Perhaps the findings of soil micromorphology (see below) which propose a degradation of the soil cover as early as during the Bronze Age will lend support to the suggestion that the Sutton Hoo community may have been adapting to increasingly pastoral regimes.

PERIOD 4: IRON AGE ENCLOSURE

Finally, a square or rectangular palisaded enclosure, 40m across and dated to the Iron Age by the presence of Darmsden ware replaces the hypothetical Bronze Age fenced enclosure. It has been presented in *Bulletin 7* (1990: 12-17), where it was suggested that this enclosure, though defunct, was still somehow visible in the Anglo-Saxon period and influenced the location of barrows, with Mounds 18, 17, 5 and 6 set along its course, with their central burials cutting its corners. This link between the prehistoric and the historic part of Sutton Hoo, though highly tenuous, serves as a reminder that the Anglo-Saxon burial ground inherited a rich and varied part of Suffolk's landscape.

Madeleine Hummler





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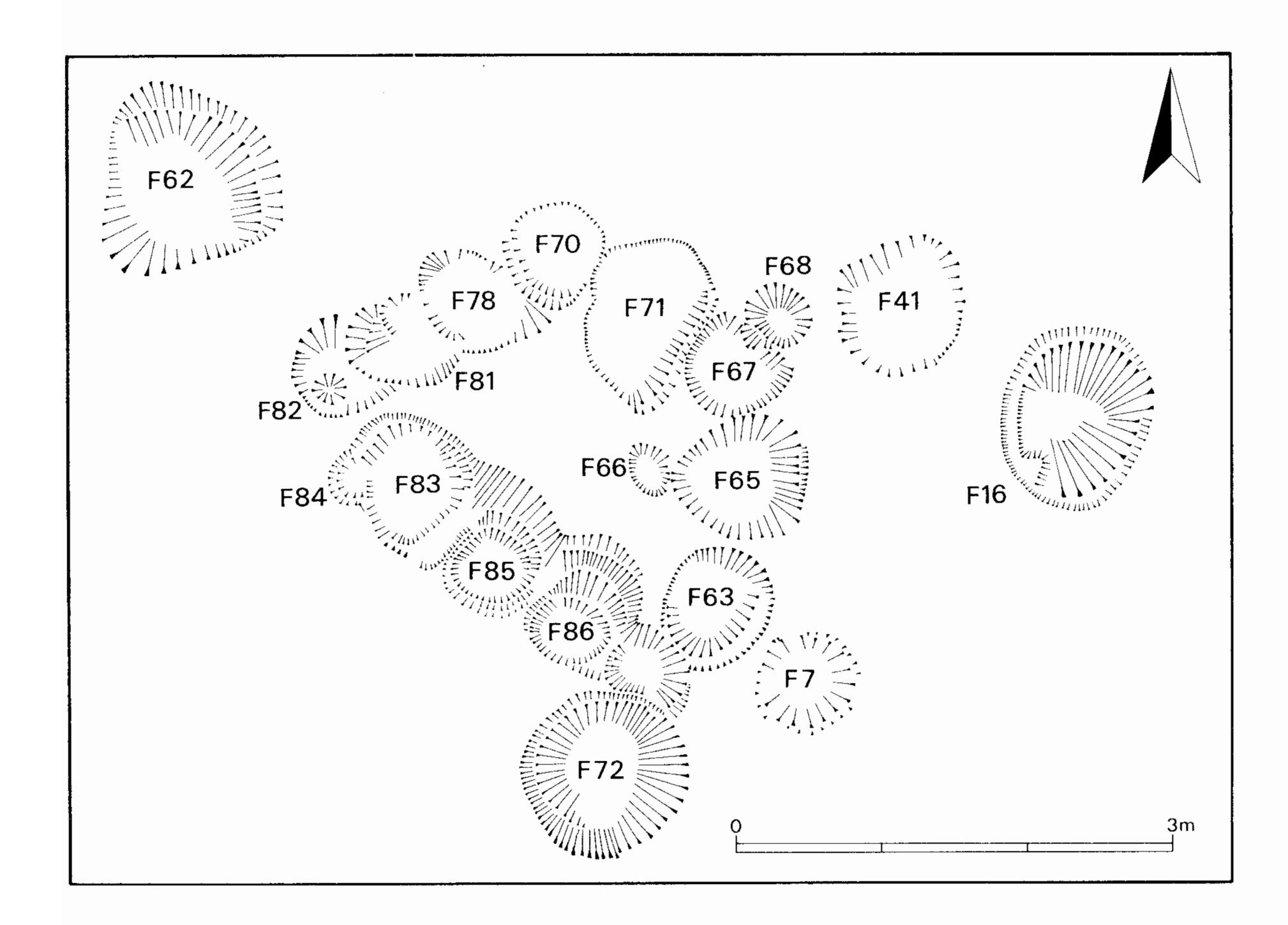


Fig. 12: Pit cluster of the Beaker Period in INT 55

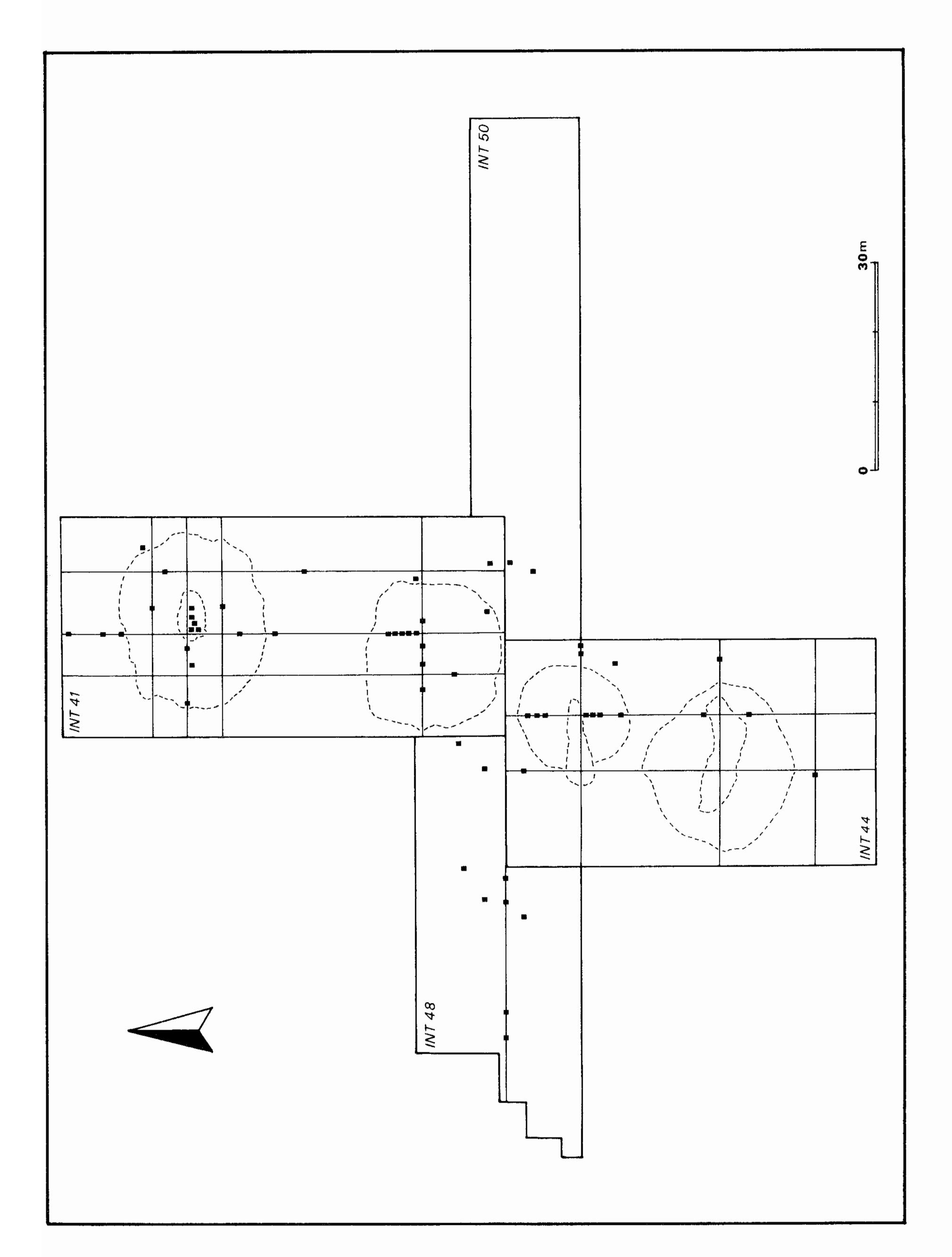


Fig. 13: Monolith stations for pollen and soil micromorphology sampling