

## Grim's Bank, Little Heath, Berkshire

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IN May 1952 the opportunity occurred for an observer from the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, Ministry of Works, to be present at the cutting of a section through Grim's Bank at a point 700 ft. from the south-western end of the earthwork in Keyser's Plantation, Little Heath.<sup>1</sup>

The earthwork here is well preserved, its rampart standing to a height of some 5 ft. above the present ground-level, with a base of almost 40 ft., and the ditch measuring 20 ft. across by 4 ft. deep. The natural ground is medium-sized grey gravel with a substratum of heavier orange gravel, the junction of the two containing occasional pockets of sand and clay. Above this, the original turf-line was clearly visible in section beneath the base of the rampart, being cut through on the north-west by the digging of the ditch, and fading into the present topsoil on the south-east where a wash of gravel from the heel of the rampart had made it indistinct. The rampart itself consisted of a core of the upper grey gravel, about 19 ft. wide and 2 ft. high, above which the main body was of the lower orange gravel standing to a height of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ft. above the old turf-line and measuring 24 ft. across the base. There was no berm, the toe of the rampart coinciding with the point where the turf-line had been cut by the ditch. An area 12 ft. in length and extending 4 ft. back from the toe into the body of the rampart was hand-excavated down to the natural surface, but no traces of post-holes were found. At the point of section, the crest of the rampart had been disturbed by rabbit burrows.

The slope of the inner face of the broad and shallow ditch was a continuation of that of the forward face of the rampart, and it had been cut through the upper and into the lower stratum of gravel. Its original dimensions had been 25 ft. wide by 5 ft. deep and, except for a deposit of a few inches of black silt on its V-shaped floor, it contained only waterlogged organic matter associated with the modern turf-line. The ditch here holds water at present and probably has always done so. Immediately below the black silt there were a few inches of fine, grey waterlogged sand, due to the action of the water on the upper surface of the natural sandy gravel. No finds were made in the rampart or in the filling of the ditch.

Grim's Bank and the other linear earthworks covering the northern and western approaches to Silchester were studied by the late Mr. B. H. St. J. O'Neil,<sup>2</sup> who put forward a sub-Roman

<sup>1</sup> O.S. 6 in. Berkshire, sheet XLIV S.E.

<sup>2</sup> B. H. St. J. O'Neil, "The Silchester Region in the 5th and 6th Centuries A.D.", *Antiquity*, xviii, 113-22 (1944); B. H. St. J. O'Neil and H. J. E. Peake, "A Linear Earthwork on Greenham Common, Berkshire", *Archæological Journal*, c, 177-87 (1945).

date for their construction. The section now published (fig. 4) confirms in general the structural details of the earthwork already revealed by him at Padworth,<sup>3</sup> the rampart providing an inverted section of the material won by excavating the ditch. At Padworth, however, there were probable indications of a timber revetment to the forward face of the rampart, which were not present at Little Heath.

<sup>3</sup> B. H. St. J. O'Neil, "Grim's Bank, Padworth, Berkshire", *Antiquity*, xvii, 188-95 (1943).

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*Editorial Note*

**COUNCIL FOR BRITISH ARCHÆOLOGY**

The Members of the Council of the Berkshire Archæological Society wish to place on record their appreciation of the assistance given by the Council for British Archæology in making grants towards the publication of the following papers in this current issue of *The Berkshire Archæological Journal*.

The "Ruins" at Virginia Water

by G. E. Chambers.

The Rebuilding and Repair of Berkshire Churches During the 17th,  
18th and early 19th Centuries

by B. F. L. Clarke and H. M. Colvin.

Part 2.

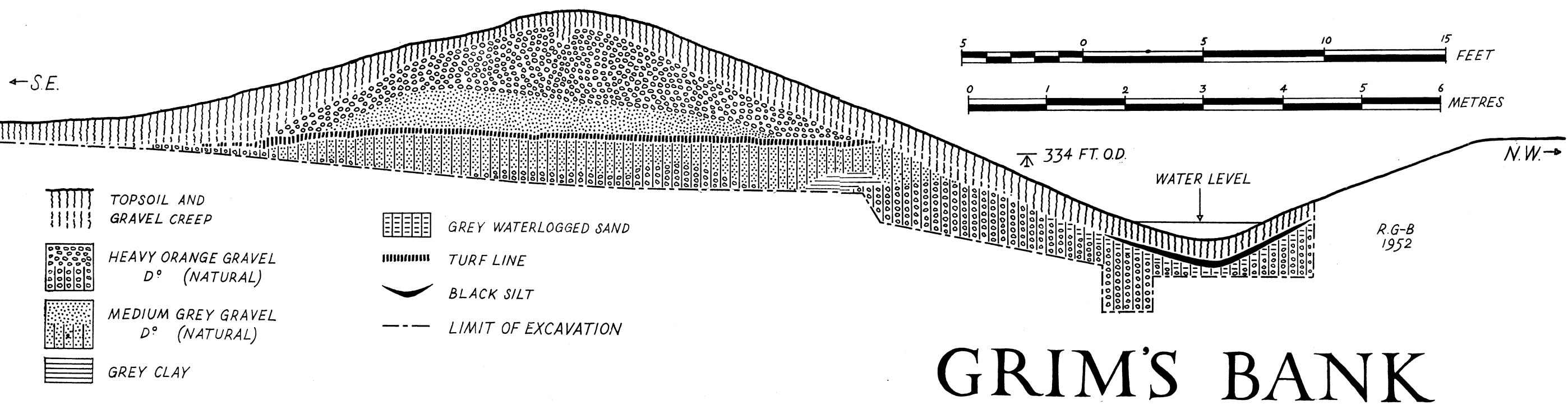


Fig. 4 Grim's Bank, Little Heath: section. See pp. 56-7