

**FENCING WORKS, BRATTON CAMP, WESTBURY,  
WILTSHIRE**  
**Archaeological Observations and Recording**



**Report No. 53313/3/1**

**July 2010**



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WILTSHIRE**

**Archaeological Observations and Recording, June 2010**

**Prepared for:**

English Heritage  
5 Marlborough Court  
Manaton Close  
Exeter  
EX2 8PF

**Report written by:**

Mike Trevarthen BA (Hons) AlFA

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Front cover: *View of fencing works (post holes 5 and 6) looking north from the ramparts of Bratton Camp*



# **FENCING WORKS, BRATTON CAMP, WESTBURY, WILTSHIRE**

## **Archaeological Observations & Recording, June 2010**

### **SUMMARY**

*An archaeological watching was carried out by Terrain Archaeology in June 2010, during the installation of new posts for post and wire fencing, two gates and a kissing gate, either side of the Portway, on the northeast side of Bratton Camp. No features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by English Heritage to undertake a programme of archaeological observations and recording during excavations associated with the installation of new fence posts either side of the Portway, on the north east fringe of Bratton camp, Wiltshire (Figures 1 and 2).

The works were centred on NGR ST90305177 and involved manual excavation of ten post holes (Figure 3, plates 1-5), to accommodate wooden gate-posts and strain-bearing fence posts. The remainder of the fence posts were percussion-driven, with no requirement for manual excavation.

Archaeological Observations and Recording, also known as an archaeological watching brief, is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as “*a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons, within a specified area or site where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed.*”

The fieldwork was carried out on the 28th and 30th June 2010 by Mike Trevarthen BA (Hons), AlfA.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the help and cooperation of Chris Bally (English Heritage), Shane Gould (English Heritage) and Parsons contractors during this project.

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The site lies within Scheduled Monument No. 26708, comprising a Neolithic long barrow, Bronze Age round barrows, Bratton Camp Iron Age hillfort, sunken trackways and the 18th century Westbury White Horse. The following summary is taken from the scheduling description.

The Neolithic long barrow lies within the interior of the later hillfort and has been partially excavated on at least three occasions; by Whitaker in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (without recorded results), by Cunnington, who carried out two investigations in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, revealing three skeletons, pottery, animal bone and a bead, and finally by Thurnham in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, revealing a primary cremation platform for one or two adults.

Two bronze Age round barrows lay within the hillfort. One is situated between the inner rampart and the out-turned rampart to the east of the southern entrance of the hillfort. The other is no longer visible on the ground. Both were excavated in 1802 without recorded results.

Bratton Camp itself is a multivallate Iron Age Hillfort enclosing an area of approximately 9.3 hectares, with a single clearly defined entrance on the south side and another possibly original

entrance at the northeast corner. The west and north sides occupy the crest of steep natural escarpment slopes whilst the south and east sides cross Bratton Down. Whitaker excavated the hillfort in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and discovered some querns and some possible sling stones.

Abutting the western rampart of the hillfort is the Westbury White Horse, created in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. Originally facing south, the original horse was destroyed and replaced by the present horse in 1778. The horse was redefined using concrete in 1936.

A complex system of sunken trackways, lying parallel to the Portway to the northeast of the hillfort, are probably of medieval date, although they could also relate to an original hillfort entrance.

Recent investigations at Bratton Camp (Bath Archaeological Trust 2004, Foundations Archaeology 2005, Terrain Archaeology 2007) have not revealed any features or deposits of archaeological significance.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The objective of the archaeological observations was to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

The archaeological works aimed to observe and record all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the groundworks to an appropriate professional standard.

## **METHODS**

The work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Terrain Archaeology 2010, Document No. 3310/0/1) and with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Code of Conduct and Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (1994, as revised).

All observed post holes (numbered 1-10) were manually excavated by the groundworks contractors, and the spoil visually scanned for artefacts. All deposits exposed, regardless of their perceived date and archaeological significance, were recorded using components of the Terrain Archaeology's system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records. These have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current UKIC guidelines and the requirements of the receiving museum.

## **RESULTS**

No archaeologically significant remains or artefacts were discovered. One small lump of undiagnostic post-medieval or modern brick was noted in spoil at the far southwestern end of the trench, but was not retained.

### **North of the Portway**

#### *Post hole 1*

Post hole 1 (plate 1) was situated about two metres NNW of the existing post and wire fence flanking an agricultural access spur off the Portway. It was rectangular, 0.5 m x 0.3 m across, and about 0.8 m deep. The exposed soil profile comprised 0.35 m of turf and friable mid-light brownish-grey loamy silt with occasional small chalk and flint pieces over clean, bedded chalk bedrock.



### *Post hole 2*

Post hole 2 was situated about 72 m NNW of the existing post and wire fence (see above), almost precisely on the upper lip of the escarpment slope. It was circular with a diameter of 0.3 m, and was about 0.5 m deep. The exposed soil profile comprised 0.2 m of turf and friable mid-light brownish-grey loamy silt with occasional small chalk and flint pieces over clean, bedded chalk bedrock.

### *Post hole 3*

Post hole 3 (Plates 2 & 3) was situated about 70 m NNW of the existing post and wire fence (see above), some two metres SSE of Hole 2. It was square, 0.4 m x 0.4 m across, and about 0.8 m deep. The exposed soil profile comprised 0.2 m of turf and friable mid-light brownish-grey loamy silt with occasional small chalk and flint pieces over clean, bedded chalk bedrock.

### *Post hole 4*

Post hole 4 was situated about 67 m NNW of the existing post and wire fence (see above), some three metres SSE of Hole 3. It was rectangular, 0.5 m x 0.4 m across, and about 0.8 m deep. The exposed soil profile comprised 0.25 m of turf and friable mid-light brownish-grey loamy silt with occasional small chalk and flint pieces over clean, bedded chalk bedrock.

### *Post hole 5*

Post hole 5 was situated NNW of Hole 2, part-way down the natural escarpment slope, adjacent to the inner edge of a level 'bench'. It was circular with a diameter of 0.4 m, and was about 0.6 m deep (the post was partly percussion-driven). The exposed soil profile comprised 0.2 m of turf dark humic loamy silt over 0.2 m of dark humic loamy silt containing common 'pellety' chalk. Below 0.4m below ground level was denser fragmented chalk: It is unclear whether or not this represents a natural deposit.

### *Post hole 6*

Post hole 6 was situated about two metres NNW of Hole 5, against the existing post and wire fence along the centre of the escarpment bench (see above). It was circular with a diameter of 0.4 m, and was about 0.6 m deep (the post was partially percussion driven). As with Hole 5, the exposed soil profile comprised about 0.2 m of turf dark humic loamy silt over about 0.2 m of dark humic loamy silt containing common 'pellety' chalk. Below about 0.4 m below ground level was denser fragmented chalk: It is unclear whether or not this represents a natural deposit.

## **South of the Portway**

### *Post hole 7*

Post hole 7 was situated about 2.5 m SSE of the existing post and wire fence flanking the Portway. It was situated near the base of the upper rampart scarp and was rectangular, measuring 0.7 m x 0.3 m, and about 0.8 m deep. The exposed soil profile comprised 0.6 m of turf and friable mid-light brownish-grey loamy silt with occasional small chalk and flint pieces over similar soil containing more frequent (c. 30%) fragmented chalk. Natural chalk was not seen.

### *Post hole 8*

Post hole 8 (Plate 4) was situated about five metres NNW of the existing post and wire fence (see above), 2.5 m SSE of Hole 7. It was also sited on the lower slope of the rampart scarp. It was rectangular, measuring 0.6 m x 0.3 m, and about 0.8 m deep. The exposed soil profile comprised 0.4 m of turf and friable mid-light brownish-grey loamy silt with occasional small chalk and flint

pieces over similar soil containing more frequent (c. 30%) fragmented chalk. Natural chalk was not seen.

#### *Post hole 9*

Post hole 9 (Plate 5) see Figure 3 for location) was situated on the steep scarp slope forming the hillfort rampart, about two metres from its upper lip. It was circular with a diameter of 0.3 m, and was about 0.8 m deep. The exposed soil profile comprised 0.4 m of turf and friable mid-light brownish-grey loamy silt with occasional small chalk and flint pieces over similar soil containing more frequent (c. 30%) fragmented chalk. Natural chalk was not seen.

#### *Post hole 10*

Post hole 10 (see Figure 3 for location) was also situated on the steep scarp slope forming the hillfort rampart, about two metres from its upper lip. It was circular with a diameter of 0.3 m, and was about 0.8 m deep. The exposed soil profile comprised 0.45 m of turf and friable mid-light brownish-grey loamy silt with occasional small chalk and flint pieces over similar soil containing more frequent (c. 30%) fragmented chalk. Natural chalk was not seen.

### **Finds**

No finds were recovered from this watching brief.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The character and small scale of the groundworks means that the scope for undertaking any more than a simple description of the findings was extremely limited. None of the post holes produced any recognisable evidence for *in situ* buried archaeological features or deposits and no finds were recovered.

## **REFERENCES**

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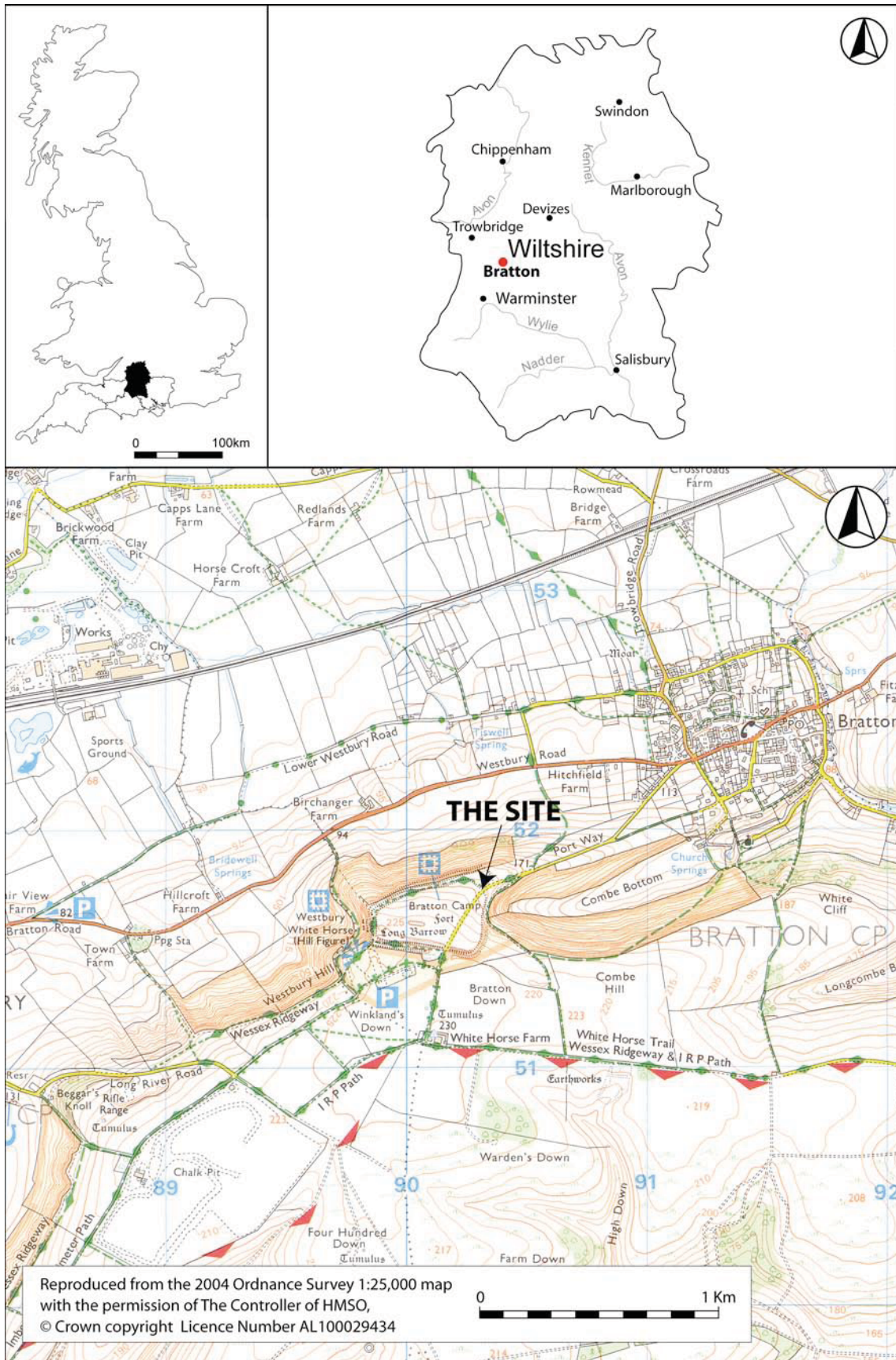


Figure 1: Location map.

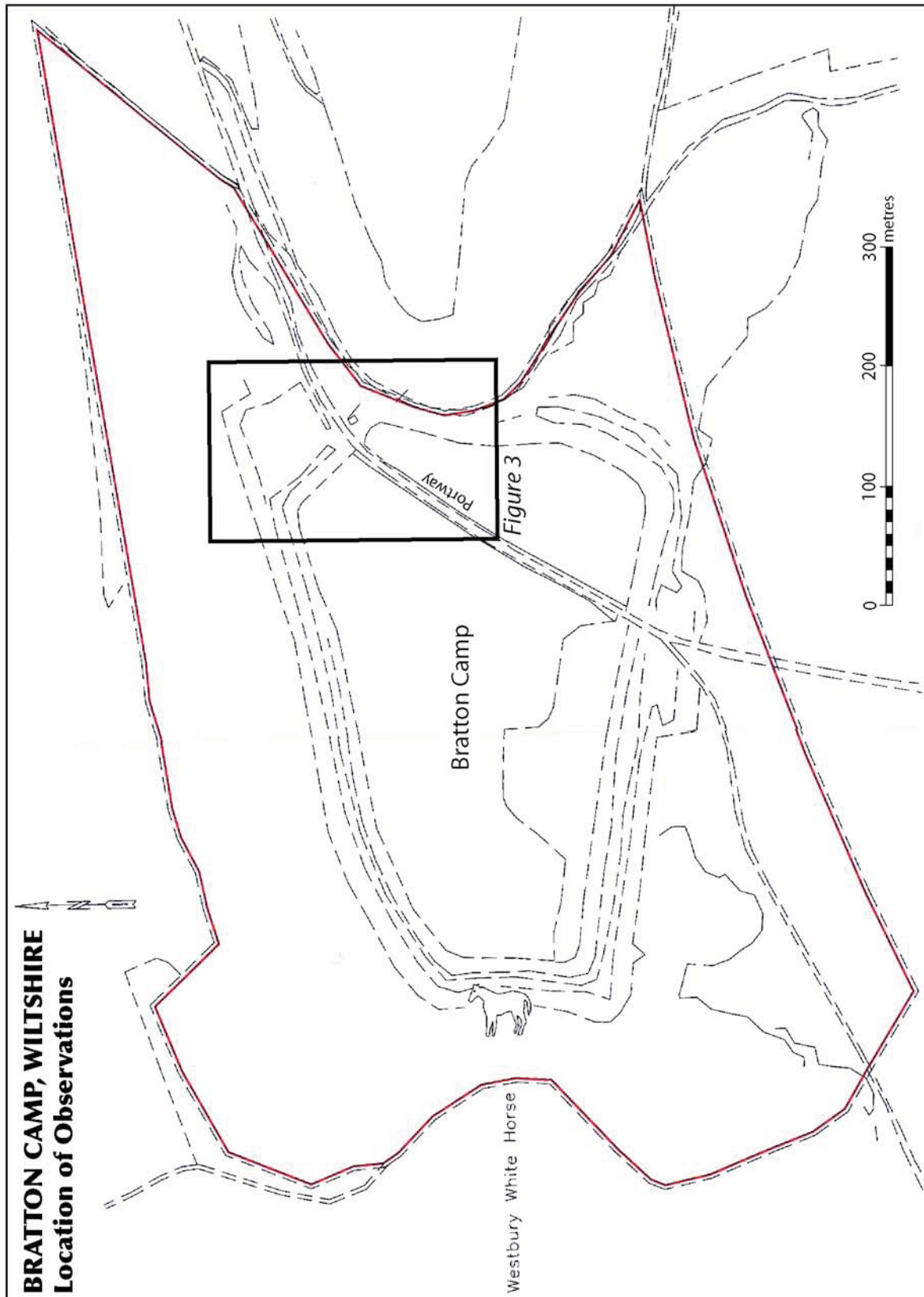


Figure 2: Location of observations on Bratton Camp

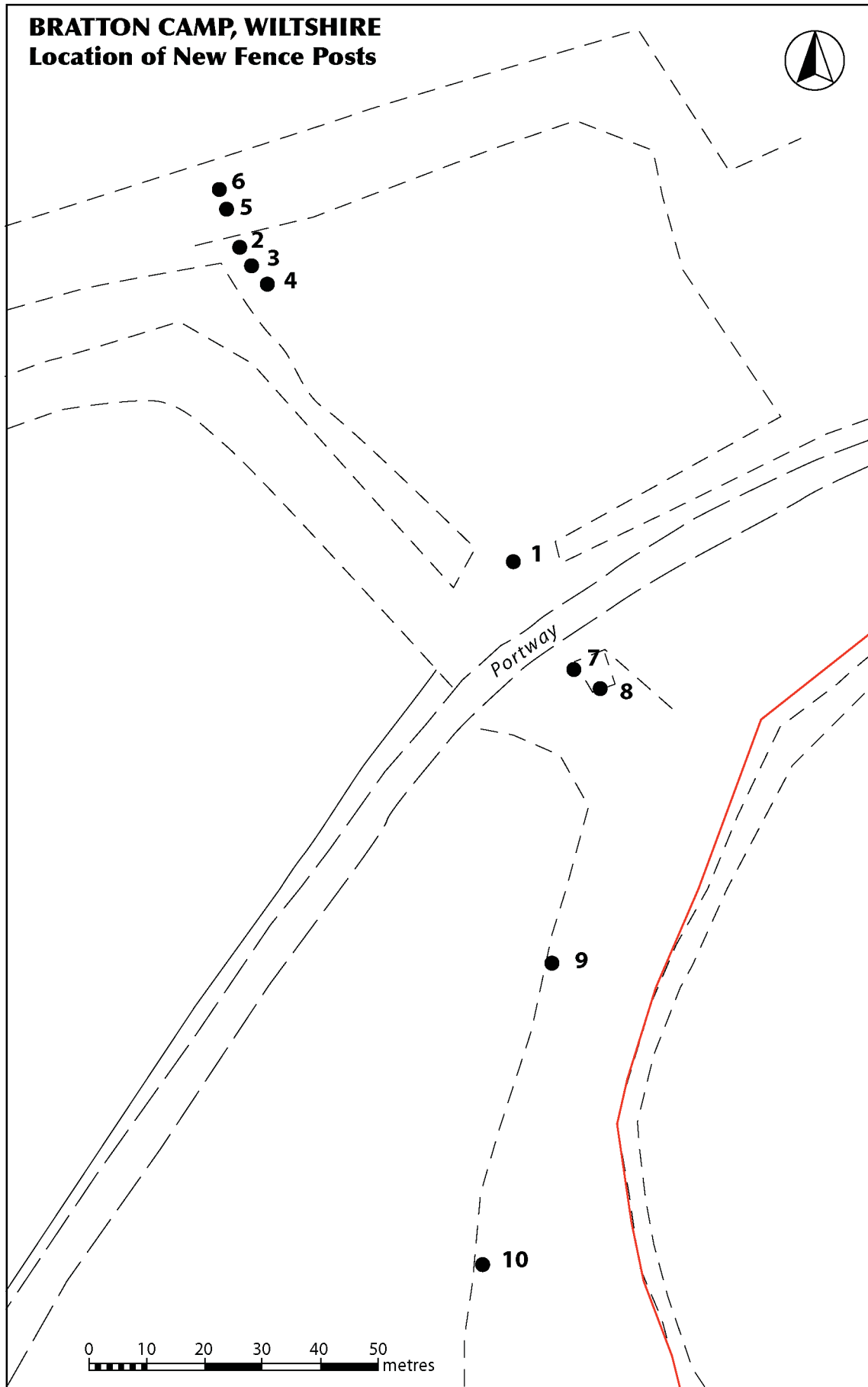


Figure 3: Location plan of new fence posts.



Plate 1: Detail of post hole 1 (0.5m scale).



Plate 2: Detail of post hole 3 (0.5m scale).



Plate 3: Location of post holes 2 and 3, position of post hole 4 marked in the foreground.



*Plate 4: Post hole 8 with new gate post marking location of post hole 7.*



*Plate 5: Detail of post hole 9 (0.5m scale).*