

A64/TOP LANE JUNCTION, COPMANTHORPE, YORK

ROAD IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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1. INTRODUCTION

Between 6th - 17th April 1998 York Archaeological Trust (YAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation in York Field, Copmanthorpe, North Yorkshire (NGR : SE 573476) (Fig.1) on the western edge of York.

The site is located on the edge of a morainic ridge aligned roughly east-west; the underlying solid geology is of Bunter Sandstone (Geological Survey, 1973). The field under investigation slopes steadily from the north, west and south to form a large 'bowl' shaped depression centred on the main railway line that runs north-east/south-west along the eastern edge of the site.

The evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Horsman Woolley acting for the Highways Agency and followed a geophysical survey of a large part of York Field carried out by GeoQuest Associates for YAT. The results of that survey, which suggested the possible presence of linear archaeological features, are included in a separate report which is appended here.

The historical and archaeological background to this site has already been fully covered in the desk-top study of the area which was the first stage of investigation in advance of the road improvement scheme (YAT 1997 Field Report Number 17). Discussion with the farmer of the land identified that York Field had been used as a quarry or "borrow pit" for the extraction of embankment make-up during the construction of the A64 York southern bypass in 1973. The site records are currently stored by YAT under the YAT accession code YORAT:1997.7.

2. METHODOLOGY

Before the excavation commenced a geophysical survey was carried out to locate areas which might be of archaeological interest. The information provided by the survey was used to locate the trenches which were excavated.

The evaluation consisted of two trenches (Fig. 2), each measuring 5m x 1m and dug by hand, which were positioned to investigate two apparent ditch like anomalies detected during the geophysical survey (Fig. 3). All archaeological features and deposits were planned and drawn in section at a scale of 1: 20 and described on separate pro-forma record sheets. In addition to this a series of 35mm colour photographs were taken in each trench.

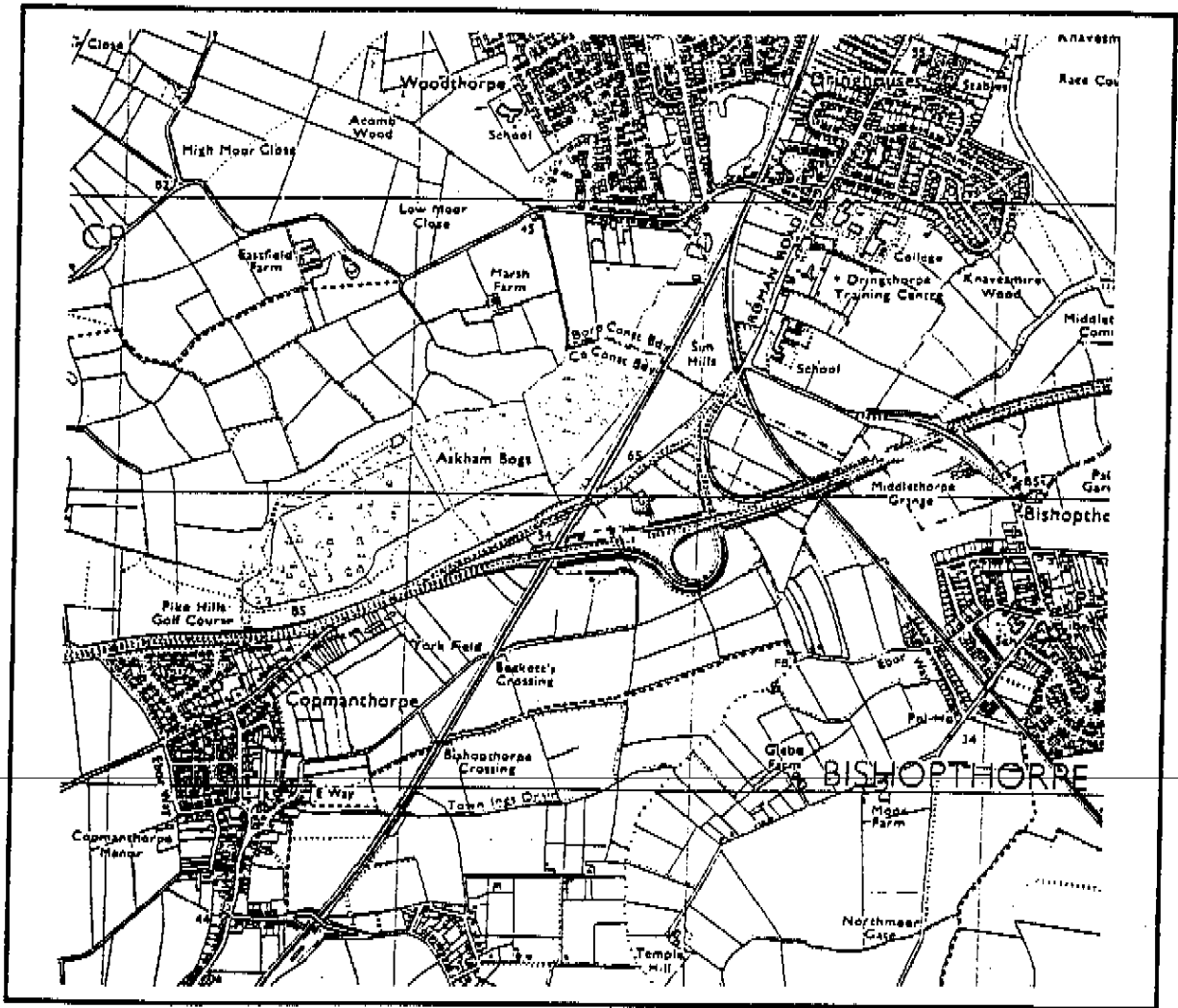


Figure 1 Site Location

Scale 1:25,000

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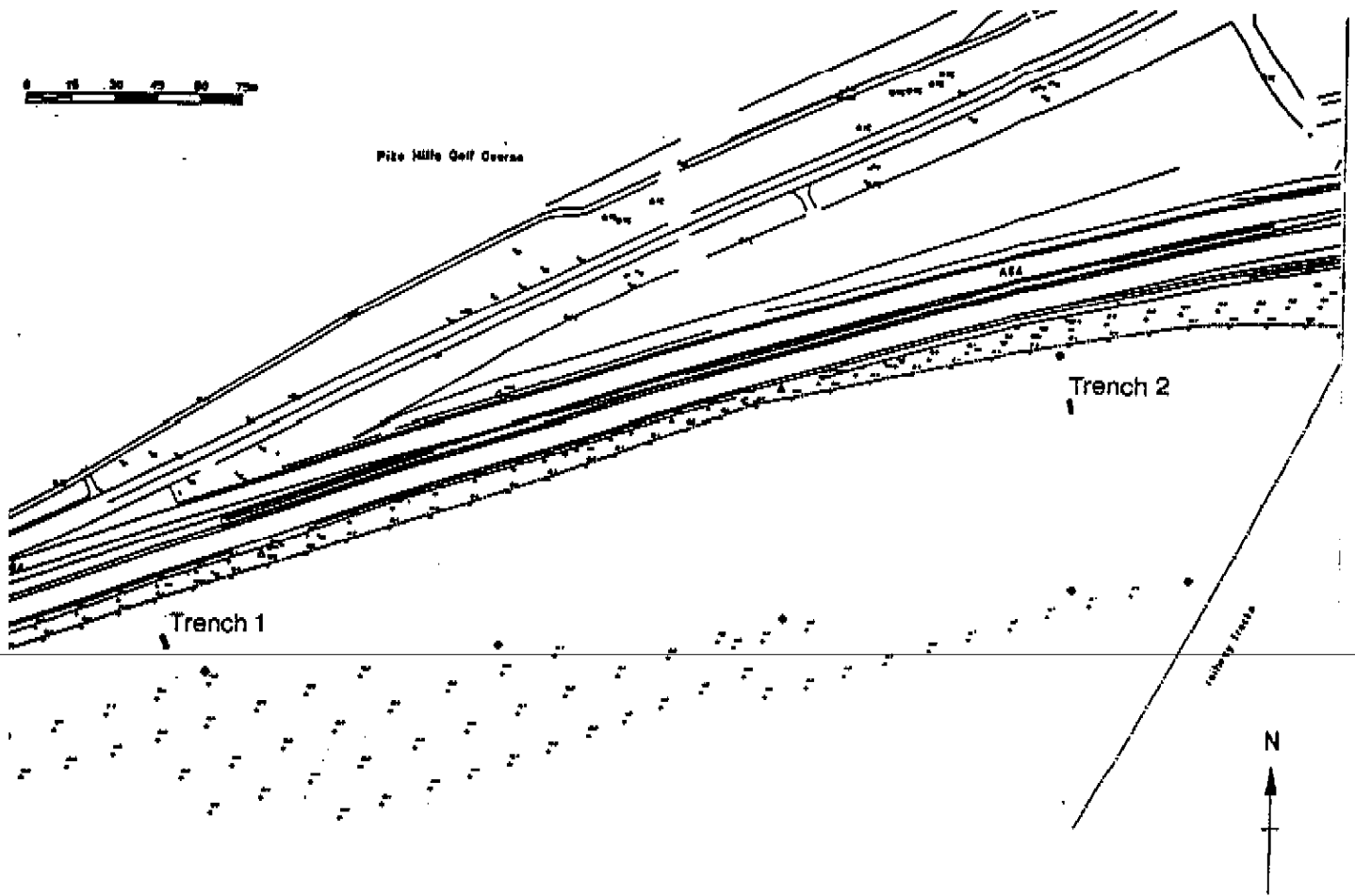


Figure 2 Location of Trenches

**LANE JUNCTION A64
NEAR COPMANTHORPE, YORK
Geophysical Interpretation**

1:1250
0 15 30 45 60 75m

KEY
 positive magnetic
 dipolar magnetic

survey by  for  YORK
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
TRUST

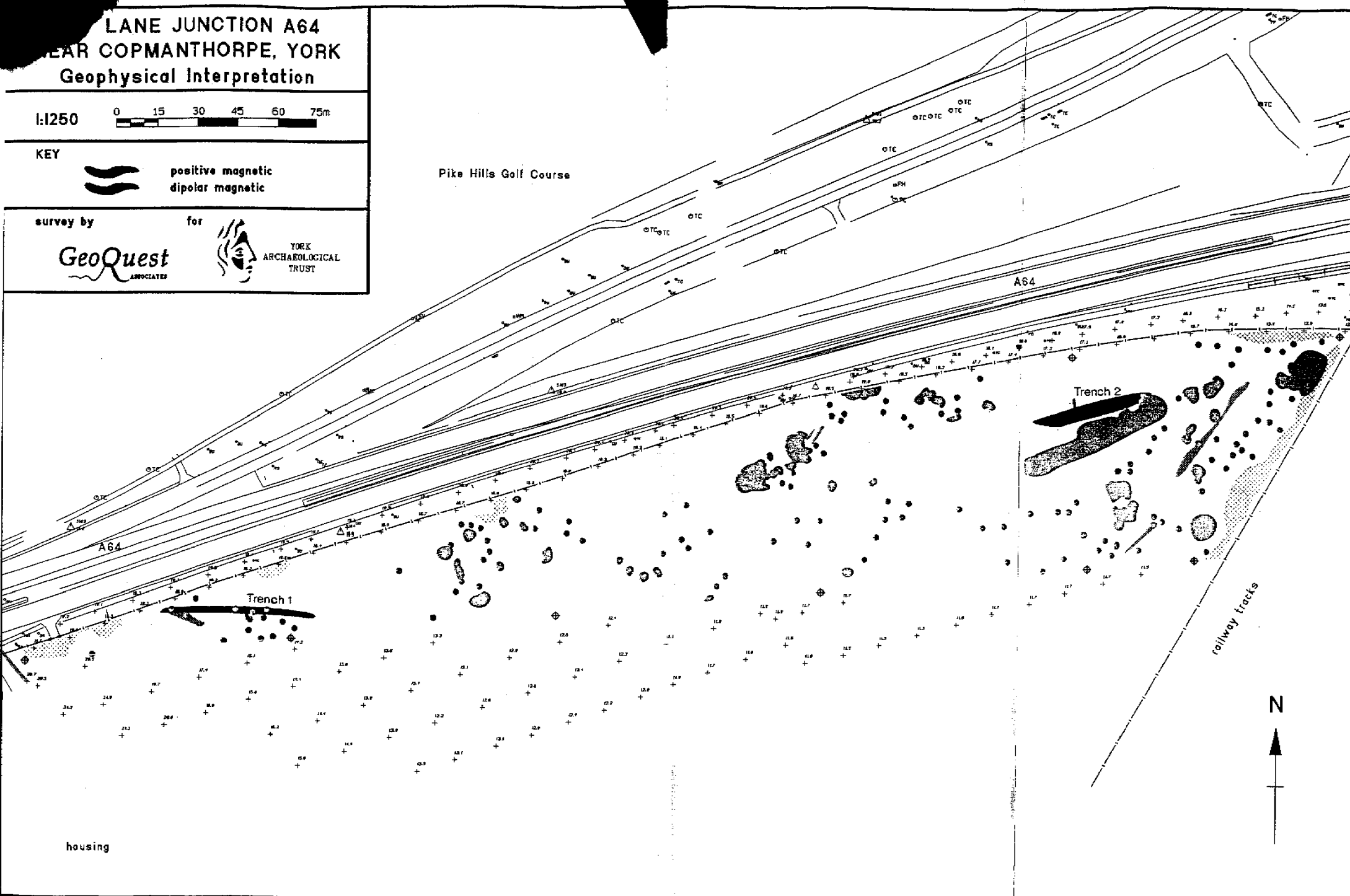


FIGURE 3

3. THE EXCAVATIONS

3.1 Trench 1. (Figs. 4 and 5)

The earliest deposit encountered in Trench 1 was a natural mid to dark brown sandy clay (1003) which was exposed over the full length of the trench. This was truncated by a large cut (1002) 1.24m deep which was aligned east-west and which fell gently from north to south in a series of steep sided steps along the northern edge. The fill consisted of a dark grey clay silt (1001) and included pieces of barbed wire, plastic and modern painted wood fragments. The cut and its fill were sealed by a pale grey sandy silty clay (1000) which constitutes the modern ploughsoil.

3.2 Trench 2. (Figs. 6 and 7)

The findings from Trench 2 were very similar to those in Trench 1. The earliest deposit encountered was a natural mid to dark brown sandy clay (2002) which was exposed over the full length of the trench. This was truncated by a large cut (2001), 0.84m deep which fell from north to south in a series of steep sided steps along the northern edge and continued beyond the southern edge of excavation. The cut contained a dark grey clay silt fill (2001), similar to context 1001 (but with out the inclusions of painted wood, barbed wire or plastic), which was also directly beneath the present day plough soil (2000).

4. CONCLUSIONS.

No archaeological features of significance were encountered during this evaluation. Cuts 1002 and 2002 appear to be the cause of the geophysical anomalies but are also clearly not features of any antiquity. They appear to represent the northern edge of the 'Borrow pit' excavated during the construction of the York southern bypass in the 1970's. Their respective fills (1001 and 2001), are the dumps of material brought in as land fill to reconstitute the field and return it to agricultural use. The modernity of this work was further emphasised by the fact that insufficient time had elapsed for sub-soil to form between the topsoil (1000 and 2000), and the natural deposits.

5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The evaluation showed that over the majority of the field deposits of archaeological interest had been removed during the excavation of a quarry or "borrow pit". There may be a slight chance that archaeological deposits survive along the northern edge of the field as less material appeared to have been removed from this area, leaving a gentle slope towards the edge of the "borrow pit". It is therefore recommended that any work in this area is initially monitored by means of a watching brief to ascertain whether any archaeological deposits actually remain in situ..

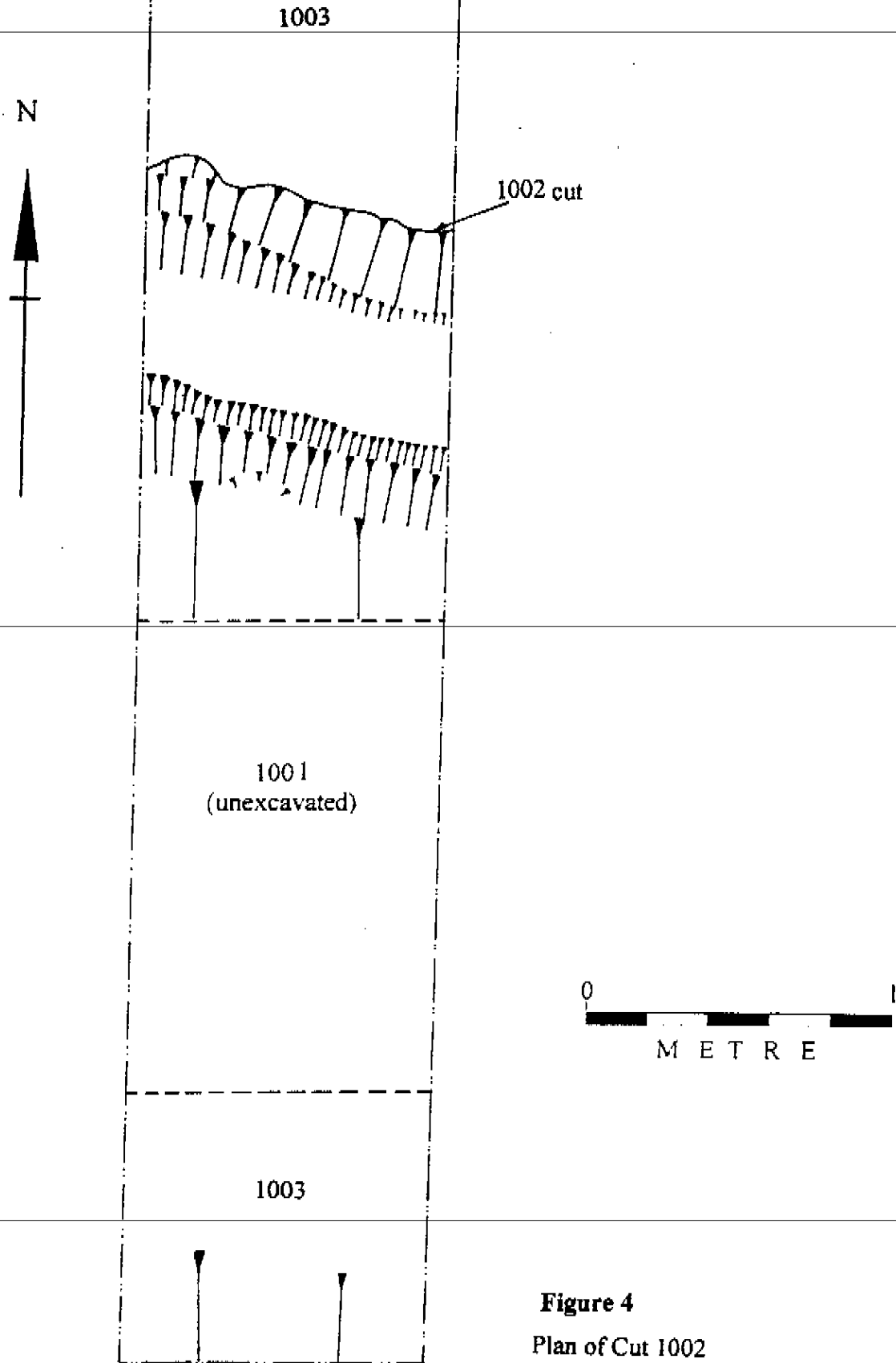
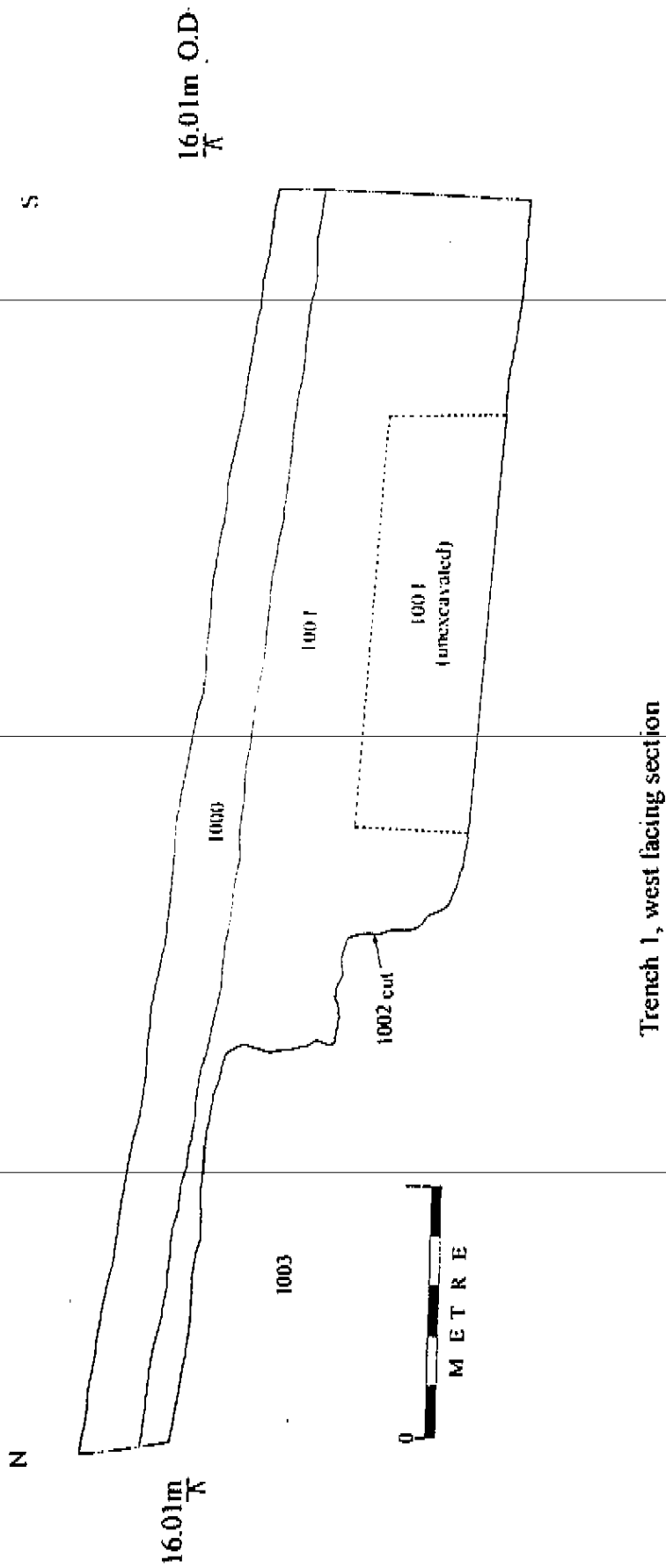


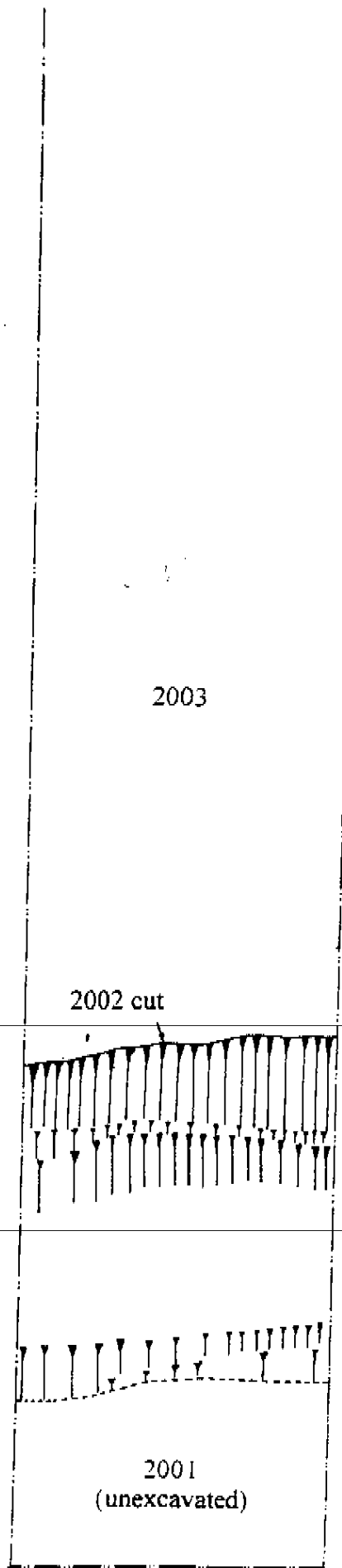
Figure 4
Plan of Cut 1002



Trench 1, west facing section

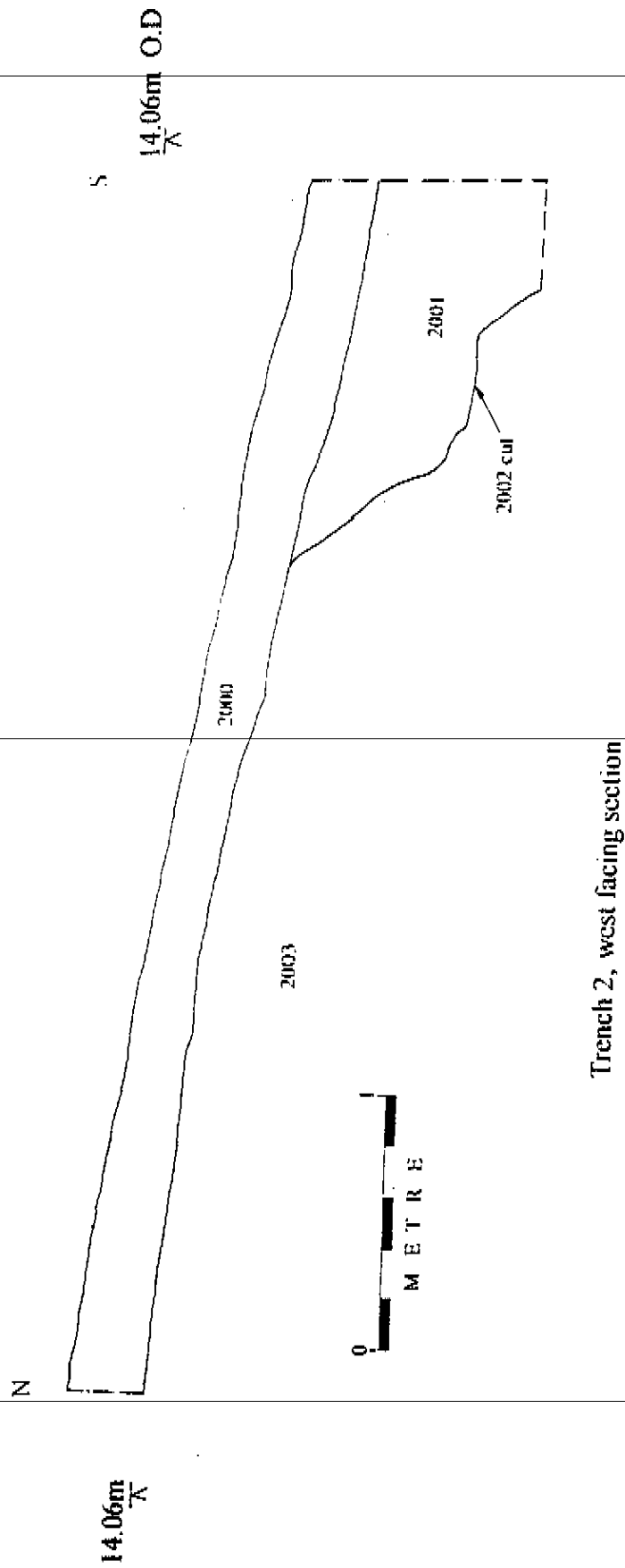
Figure 5

N



M E T R E

Figure 6
Plan of Cut 2002



Trench 2, west facing section

Figure 7

6. REFERENCES

Geological Survey (1973) Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales) Sheet 71.

York Archaeological Trust (1997) A64/Top Lane Junction, Copmanthorpe, Road Improvement Scheme, Desk top and Walkover Study, 1997 Field Report Number 14

7. LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Excavation team	Bryan Antoni, Mark Johnson, Russell Marwood
Report and drawings	Bryan Antoni
Editor	David Brinklow