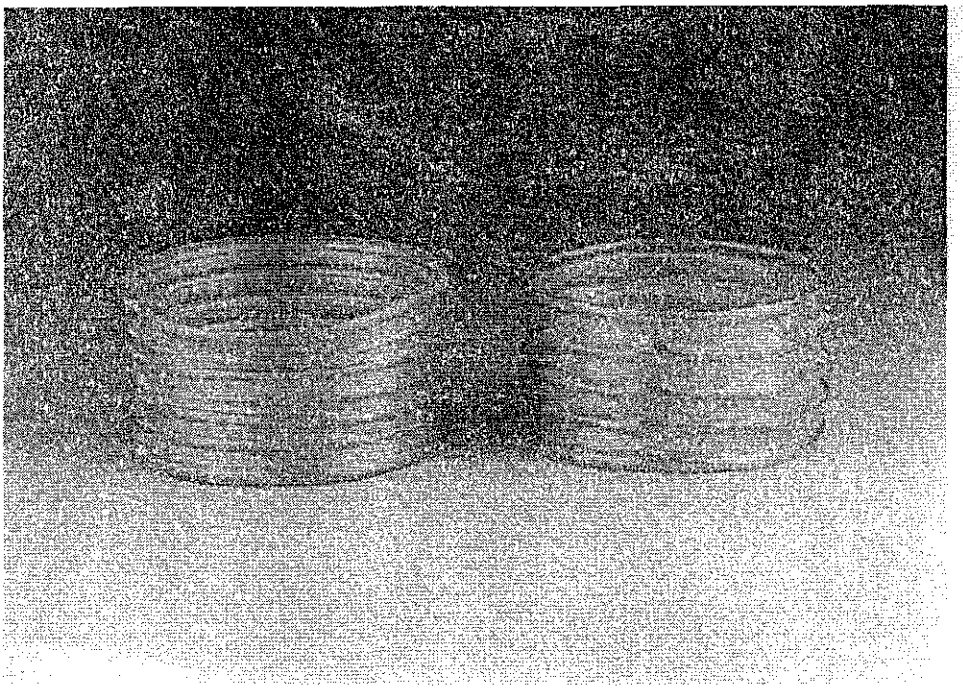
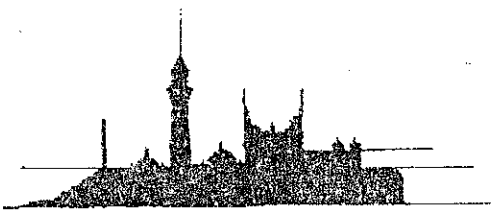
BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY
FIELD
ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT



Archaeological excavations in advance of the A564(T) Derby Southern Bypass, 1994: Contract 2

Site Narratives

B.U.F.A.U.



Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit

Report No. 320.4

January 1995

Archaeological excavations in advance of the A564(T) Derby Southern Bypass, 1994; Contract 2

Site Narratives

by

Gwilym Hughes
With a contribution by Steve Litherland

For further information please contact:
Simon Buteux, Iain Ferris or Peter Leach (Directors)
Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
Tel: 0121 414 5513
Fax: 0121 414 5516

Archaeological excavations in advance of the A564(T) Derby Southern Bypass, 1994; Contract 2

Site narratives

By Gwilym Hughes
with contribution by Steve Litherland

Summary

Three archaeological excavations were carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit between August and November 1994 in advance of the construction of the A564 (T) Derby Southern Bypass. These included the total excavation of the remains of an Early Bronze Age barrow at Lockington, northwest Leicestershire (SK466290) and small areas of two cropmark complexes at Foxcovert Farm (SK417305) and Buckford Bridge (SK314297) in southern Derbyshire.

The complexity and quality of preservation of the barrow at Lockington was exceptional for a site located in a river valley context. It is thought that the barrow mound may have had two phases of construction. Its core overlay the remnants of a buried land surface cut by a shallow irregular-shaped scoop. This was associated with a deposit of charcoal, flecks of cremated bone and fragments of decorated pottery, probably Early Bronze Age in date (Ann Woodward pers comm). The surrounding ring ditch was 33m in diameter and also appeared to indicate two phases of activity.

By far the most spectacular find was a remarkable deposit of artefacts in a shallow scoop immediately outside the ditch of the barrow on its northern side. This deposit comprised two incomplete pottery vessels, one inside the other, inverted over a gold bracelet. A second gold bracelet and a dagger of copper or bronze were placed in the scoop beside the pots. The group belongs to the Early Bronze Age and the goldwork is amongst the earliest from the British Isles.

At Foxcovert Farm, the objective was to examine the threatened, northern edge of a cropmark complex, the majority of which is situated on a slight rise to the south of the proposed road corridor. Numerous, shallow linear features, containing fragments of pottery, provisionally dated to the Middle to Late Iron Age (Ann Woodward pers comm), were identified. It seems likely that many of these features were related to peripheral drainage on the northern edge of a probable settlement.

At Buckford bridge, three areas within the proposed road corridor were examined in an attempt to date and characterise a number of archaeological features in the area of the development, including both pit-alignments and linear ditches. However, the archaeological results were disappointing. Numerous small pit-like features and linear features were examined and all proved to be either of recent date or of natural origin.

Introduction

This report provides a preliminary statement on the results of three excavations undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit along the route of the proposed A564(T) Derby Southern Bypass. The work was commissioned by Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick (Consulting Engineers) on behalf of the Highways Agency and was undertaken between August and November 1994.

The excavations followed an assessment and evaluation of the route of the proposed road by the Trent and Peak Archaeological Trust between June 1992 and April 1993 (T&PAT 1992 and 1993). The work carried out by BUFAU focused on three sites which were identified in the evaluation report as requiring further archaeological investigation prior to the start of road construction. The work conformed to a brief prepared by Nottingham University Consultants Limited (NUCL 1994).

The three sites investigated were areas of the Lockington-Hemmington barrow cemetery in northwest Leicestershire (SK466290), including the total excavation of the remains of an upstanding barrow, and small areas of two cropmark complexes at Foxcovert Farm (SK417305) and Buckford Bridge (SK314297) in southern Derbyshire. This preliminary report outlines the principal results of the excavations and provides a brief quantitative assessment of the archive and finds.

The Lockington Hemington Barrow Cemetery (Site O)

Background

The site at Lockington comprises a group of cropmark ring ditches, thought to be the remains of a Bronze Age barrow cemetery, on an area of gravel within the Trent floodplain. The site lies approximately 1km to the northeast of the village of Lockington in northwestern Leicestershire (Fig. 1). Traces of seven possible ring ditches have been suggested (Fig. 2), one of which (Ring ditch I, to the south of the present A6), was partially excavated in 1954 (Posnansky 1955). Traces of a cremation associated with a small bronze dagger, two flint knives and possible beaker pottery were recovered from under the central area of the truncated remains of a low earth mound. The proposed road corridor threatened the whole of ring ditch VI in the eastern area of the field along with parts of associated linear and curvilinear cropmark features.

The evaluation of the area included fieldwalking, geophysical survey and two trial trenches (T&PAT 1993, 21). The fieldwalking indicated a background scatter of material of prehistoric and medieval date and the geophysical survey accurately located the positions of ring ditches II and VI on the ground (Stratoscan 1993). A trial trench across the northwestern side of ring ditch VI suggested the survival of a slight mound and a number of struck flint flakes were recovered.

Objectives

The evaluation report recommended the full excavation of ring ditch VI and the adjacent features with particular reference to investigating the potential for understanding landscape development (TPAT 1993, 25). It also recommended the sampling of other areas within the road corridor with regard to the possibility of further burials relating to the barrow cemetery and other archaeological remains that might be masked by alluvial deposits.

The specific objectives of the excavation (NUCL 1994, 8) were:-

To record the mode and form of construction of the barrow, and any associated burials, and to record any earlier or later activity on and around the site of the ring ditch.

The recovery of evidence for the date and nature of any settlement or funerary activity associated with the barrow cemetery.

To characterise the alluvial deposits on the site and to establish the nature of the underlying surface and whether any archaeological deposits were present.

To recover palaeoenvironmental samples from each stage of the excavation programme.

Method

A contour survey of the area of ring ditch VI was undertaken prior to the commencement of the excavation. Two one metre wide transects were then laid out crossing just to the northwest of the estimated central point of the barrow. The modern ploughsoil (1000) from these transects was removed by hand in order to establish the depth of the undisturbed archaeological deposits. This also allowed some indication of the density of artefacts present within the ploughsoil. The ploughsoil proved to be 0.25m deep and overlay up to 0.3m of surviving barrow

mound material. The remaining modern ploughsoil in this area was carefully removed by machine leaving two 1m wide baulks across the centre of the barrow adjacent to the original hand excavated transects (Fig. 3). The barrow mound, in each of the resulting quadrants, was excavated as a series of three horizontal spits, each 0.1m thick. The central portions of the baulks were subsequently recorded and removed in order to record and excavate the pre-barrow deposits in plan. The surrounding ring ditch was excavated in a series of eight segments separated by 1.5m wide baulks. These baulks were subsequently recorded and mechanically excavated at the end of the excavation. All finds from the barrow and ring ditch fills were individually numbered and their locations plotted on the appropriate plans.

Beyond the outer edge of the ring ditch, the modern ploughsoil overlay a gravelly loam (1001), up to 0.3m deep, which contained occasional fragments of medieval and post medieval pottery and tile. This was interpreted as a medieval and post-medieval ploughsoil and was also removed by machine to expose the surface of the underlying natural sands and gravels. The surface of these gravels was cleaned in order to define potential archaeological features. These were then half-sectioned. If they proved to be archaeological they were subsequently fully excavated. In total, an area of approximately 4000 square metres (Fig. 2, Trench A) was opened around the surviving trace of the barrow.

A total of 13 other trenches were excavated within the area threatened by the proposed road construction (Fig. 2, Trenches B-O). Trenches B-F were designed to test for the presence of archaeological features on the periphery of the barrow cemetery which were not identified from the aerial photographs. Trenches G and H were intended to sample areas in the vicinity of ring ditch II which appeared to be masked by alluvium. Similarly, there was a suggestion of masking alluvium deposits in the areas to the east and south of the barrow cemetery. These areas were tested by Trenches I-O. In all cases the plough soil horizons were removed by machine. Where alluvium deposits were encountered, they were sampled down to the level of the underlying gravels.

Results

The pre--barrow deposits

Within the area of the barrow platform, the sand and gravel natural (1009) was overlain by up to 0.2m of brown silty sand and gravel (1046). Within the central part of this area, this was in turn overlain by a thinner deposit of stone free silty sand (1088/1097) up to 0.5m deep and covering an area 15m in diameter. The central area of this silty sand, approximately 11m in diameter, was stained yellow/ red (1044). This was cut by a large, shallow irregular scoop (F23), between 6m and 7m across and up to 0.2m deep. This scoop was filled with a brown silty sand with red/brown iron staining and pale brown mottles (1043) and was overlain by a thin spread of charcoal with an occasional fleck of cremated bone (1041). A number of pieces of worked flint and fragments of prehistoric pottery were recovered from these pre-barrow deposits. These included several rim fragments with ribbed decoration, recovered from different contexts but possibly from a single vessel and probably Early Bronze Age in date (Ann Woodward pers comm).

The only other archaeological feature that was clearly identified on the barrow platform was a small pit (F65) cutting the sand and gravel (1046) to the north of the central scoop. This contained a deposit of charcoal, burnt pebbles, flecks of cremated bone and a single sherd of prehistoric pottery.

The barrow

The core of the barrow comprised a deposit of strong brown silty sand (1033) with patches and streaks of yellow/red iron staining and darker possibly 'organic' material giving a mixed, mottled appearance. This deposit covered the central area of the barrow platform, including the stained area (1044) and the charcoal spread (1041) and was approximately 10m in diameter. It was surrounded by a narrow, concentric band of dark brown silty sand (1034), approximately 1m wide, with higher concentrations of iron and organic staining. This in turn, was overlain and surrounded by a wider band of dark brown silty sand with little or no staining (1035). Finally, the edges of the mound were defined by a thin 'capping' of small rounded stones (1004/1036), in some places extending down to the inner edge of the ring ditch. In section these various deposits could be seen as a series of, truncated, overlapping layers with a maximum depth of 0.25m. The outer 2-3m of the mound, which had survived plough truncation, gave some indication of the original profile of the barrow. A general scatter of flint and prehistoric pottery was recovered from the various components of the mound.

The ring ditch

The outer edge of the primary cut of the ring ditch (F8) was 33.5m in diameter, between 2.5m and 3m wide, and up to 1.1m deep. It had an inverted bell-shaped profile with a fairly broad, flat-bottomed basal slot up to 0.4m wide. It was filled with a coarse deposit of sand and gravel (1015). A recut (F1) could be identified around the whole circumference of the ditch. It had a similar bell-shaped profile but was generally less substantial, up to 0.8m deep with a narrower basal slot up to 0.3m wide. The primary fill of the recut comprised a coarse sand and gravel (1014). This was overlain by fill of pale brown sandy silt (1013) with occasional lenses of dark grey brown silt and charcoal. The upper fill of the recut comprised a yellow brown sandy silt (1010). Very few finds were recovered from the primary fills of the ring ditch. However, a number of pieces of struck flint and a few fragments of both prehistoric and post-prehistoric pottery were recovered from the upper fill (1010).

The upper fill and edges of the ring ditch and the base of the barrow mound were sealed by a deposit of yellow brown sandy silt(1005) up to 0.35m thick, forming a band up to 8m wide. This contained a small, mixed assemblage of prehistoric, Romano-British, medieval and post-medieval pottery and numerous pieces of worked flint. This deposit merged with the lower ploughsoil horizon (1001) beyond the outer edge of the ring ditch and it seems likely that it represents material removed by medieval ploughing from the top of the mound and redeposited over the top of the ditch.

The outer gully

Outside the ring ditch was a narrow, concentric gully (F2), 0.3m wide and up to 0.2m deep. This was located approximately 3m from the outer edge of the ring ditch on its western side and converged with the ring ditch on its eastern side, suggesting that it was laid out from a slightly different central point. Almost certainly the ring ditch is the later feature. The gully appeared as a discontinuous feature on its northern and western sides with occasional evidence for post impressions. It had a more regular square-shaped profile on the southern and southeastern side. The only finds were occasional worked flints and the remains of several cattle teeth, the majority of which were recovered from the southeastern section.

The gold burial

The most significant feature to be excavated was a small pit (F5) on the northern side of the barrow which contained a spectacular group of artefacts. These included two inverted and incomplete pottery vessels, one inside the other, partially covering a gold armlet. A second gold armlet and a bronze dagger had been placed immediately beside the pots. The pit itself was little more than a shallow oval scoop, 0.7m long 0.5m wide and up to 0.15m deep, close to the outer edge of the ring ditch. It was cut into the natural gravel and sealed by the medieval ploughsoil (1005).

Both armlets were made of thin sheet gold. The one lying next to the pots was decorated with three bands of linked 'lenticular bosses' outlined with pointillé decoration. Close parallels can be drawn with examples in sheet bronze from a dagger burial at Masterton, Fife (Henshall and Wallace 1963) and a gold example (drawn but now lost) found with a ?food vessel burial under a cairn at Whitfield, near Waterford, Ireland, in about 1725 (Herity 1969, 10-11; Plate x). A preliminary identification suggests that the triangular, flat bladed dagger is an Amorico-British A type (Gerloff 1975, 70-73). Particularly noteworthy is a languette (or tang) situated in the middle of the heal, its large size (330mm long), and the partial survival of the organic sheath.

A group of this kind would normally be expected to accompany a burial. However, no trace of either a cremation or inhumation could be identified during the excavation of the feature, although it is unlikely that any unburnt bone would survive in the sandy soils. However, the feature would appear to have been too small to have contained anything but the inhumation of an infant and no trace of any body stain was identified.

The peripheral features

Numerous other features were recorded and excavated in the area around the barrow. The majority proved to be sub-circular or irregular shaped pits containing no finds or any other evidence of having an archaeological origin. It seems likely that the majority were tree root boles perhaps relating to an episode of vegetation clearance.

Several sections were excavated through a curvilinear feature (F4) to the north of the barrow. This feature was originally identified from aerial photographs on which it appeared to skirt around the northern side of the ring ditch. It proved to have a U-shaped profile and was up to 1m wide and 0.5m deep. No finds were recovered from either the silty sand and gravel lower fill or the sandy clay upper fill.

A second linear feature (F3) cut through silt fills of the ring ditch and the southern edge of the barrow. Only the lower part of its bell-shaped profile had survived in the area away from the barrow, perhaps as a result of plough truncation. The best preserved section, where it cut the ring ditch, was up to 1.8m wide and 0.85m deep. There was, again, very little trace of the feature where it cut through the edge of the barrow. This perhaps suggests that it maintained a constant depth as it rose over the former mound and has subsequently been eroded away. The only finds were several flint flakes all of which were recovered from the area where it cut the barrow and ring ditch.

Discussion

At this stage the nature of the pre-barrow deposits are difficult to interpret. It seems possible that the silty sand and gravel (1046) overlying the natural gravels represents the remains of the B-horizon of a pre-barrow soil and that the overlying,

finer, stone-free, deposit (1088/1097/1044) represents the remnants of an A-horizon. The use of this overlying material as the basis for the core of the barrow mound could explain its absence on the edges of the barrow platform. The origin of the yellow/red staining (1044) in the central area of this deposit is uncertain, although it has been speculated that it could be either the indirect side effects of a burning episode or of decaying organic matter. It is hoped that analysis of the soil micro-morphology samples may assist in the interpretation of these deposits.

The large, shallow central scoop (F23) is also difficult to interpret. It seems possible that it represents a preparation for an *in situ* funerary pyre or for the deposition of the remains from a funerary pyre. The absence any clear evidence for intense scorching in the area around the scoop, apart from the stained soil (1044), suggests that an *in situ* funerary pyre is unlikely. However, the flecks of cremated bone recovered from the charcoal spread (1041) overlying the scoop, suggests that this may have been the remains of redeposited pyre material. A similar conclusion was reached for the charcoal deposit recorded under the mound of Barrow I (Posnansky 1955, 19). Deposits of charcoal and burnt bone, spread over a pre-barrow ground surface, have also been recorded elsewhere, such as at Barrow 10, Bromfield, Shropshire (Stanford in press). This form of deposition may explain the absence of any central feature at a number of ring ditch sites which have been subjected to greater erosion, such as at Foston, Derbyshire (Hughes and Jones in press). The only other archaeological feature identified under the mound at Lockington was a small pit containing a similar deposit of charcoal and bone (F65).

It is possible that the mound itself was constructed in two distinct episodes. As suggested above, it seems likely that the core of the mound (1033) is composed of material derived from the upper part of the old ground surface (1088/1044). This would explain the absence of this material from the peripheral areas of the barrow platform and the mottled and stained, stone free composition of the mound core. The deposition of additional material (1035) and the gravel capping (1002/1036) may represent a subsequent enlargement of the barrow. There was no indication of the time which may have elapsed between these two episodes. However, the enlargement of the barrow may relate to the redefinition of the ring ditch represented by the recut (F1). The original cut for the ring ditch (F8) had been allowed to almost fully silt up before this redefinition suggesting the passing of a considerable period of time.

The sandy silt (1005) overlying the upper fill of the ditch recut (1010) almost certainly represents material removed from the top of the mound and redeposited over the top of the ditch by medieval ploughing. The large number of flint flakes and cores from this deposit (approximately 50% of the total assemblage from the site) presumably also originated from the upper part of the mound. This might suggest the deliberate deposition of flint material on the surface or within the mound or previous flint working activity at its site.

It seems likely that the surrounding gully (F2) represents the foundation trench for some form of lightly built palisade, pre-dating the construction of the ring ditch and the barrow. This may have defined the area of the original mortuary activity represented by the charcoal spread (1041) under the mound and may provide some context for the interpretation of similar gullies associated with ring ditches in the Midlands area, such as at Tucklesholme, Staffordshire (Hughes 1991) and Foston, Derbyshire (Hughes and Jones in press).

Both the linear features (F3 and F4) to the north and south of the barrow, appear to be later features. Although no conclusive dating evidence was obtained from their fills, it seems likely that they represent field boundaries dating to the later prehistoric or Romano-British periods. The presence of activity dating to these periods is attested by the occasional finds of Iron Age and Romano-British pottery from the medieval ploughsoil (1001/1005).

In summary five principal phases of activity are provisionally suggested. It is expected that this interpretation will be refined or even substantially revised following the full analysis of the data and finds recovered during the excavation.

Phase 1 - The excavation of a shallow scoop in the pre-barrow ground surface and the deposition of a spread of charcoal and cremated bone. This material was associated with the scattered fragments from a pottery vessel with ribbed decoration, probably of Early Bronze Age date, and were probably derived from an off-site pyre. This was accompanied by the, possibly secondary, deposition of further fragments from a cremation in a small pit to the north of the charcoal spread. This activity was surrounded by a, possibly discontinuous, palisade.

Phase 2 - The establishment of a low, earthen mound over the top of these deposits, using material derived from the surrounding land surface and possibly incorporating decaying vegetation. This may have been accompanied by the excavation of the first phase of the ring ditch.

Phase 3 - The enlargement of the mound including the addition of a gravel capping. This may have been accompanied by the redefinition of the ring ditch, which had by then become largely silted-up. Although no stratigraphic context for the gold burial could be established, it seems possible that it relates to this phase of barrow enlargement. Any primary deposits associated with this phase may have been inserted into the top of the existing mound and subsequently destroyed by ploughing.

Phase 4 - The superimposition of a late prehistoric/Romano-British field system over the Early Bronze Age barrow cemetery. Barrow VI appears to have been incorporated into one of these field boundaries. It is possible that the numerous small pits, interpreted as tree root boles, may have derived from the clearance of natural vegetation during this period. However, it is equally likely that at least some of this field clearance may have been undertaken during the Early Bronze Age.

Phase 5 - The truncation and gradual removal of the barrow by medieval and modern agricultural activity and the redeposition of mound material over the top of the silted-up ditch. It was clear that this process was still occurring immediately prior to the excavation.

Foxcovert Farm (Site M)

Background

The site is located on a low ridge overlooking the confluence of the Rivers Trent and Derwent, approximately 1km to the north of Aston-on-Trent in south Derbyshire (Fig. 1). The excavation was undertaken in the northern area of a cropmark complex on the lower, gravel part of the ridge, close to its interface with the alluvium of the flood plain (Fig. 4). The cropmarks comprise a series of rectilinear enclosures and a ring ditch. It seems likely that the features generating the cropmarks continue under the alluvium to the east. During the evaluation it was thought that the cropmarks were likely to be of Iron Age or Romano-British date (T&PAT 1993).

Only the northernmost extreme of this complex was threatened by the proposed road corridor. A resistivity survey, carried out during the evaluation in this threatened area, produced a series of east-west anomalies, probably ploughed-out medieval ridge and furrow, but failed to locate the recorded cropmark features (Stratoscan 1993).

Objectives

To clarify the extent, date and character of the archaeological deposits within the threatened area and form a record of the morphological development of the past landscape. The excavation also offered the potential for investigating the relationship between the archaeological remains and alluvial deposits (NUCL 1994, 9).

Method

A single L-shaped trench was excavated within the threatened area. The eastern arm of this trench measured 35 x 5m and the northern arm 45m x 2m. The location of this trench was designed to examine northernmost part of a cropmark feature which extended into the threatened area. This feature appeared to 'disappear' under the alluvium to the east.

The ploughsoil (1000) within this area was removed by machine and the underlying deposits were manually cleaned in order to define any archaeological features or deposits which might be present. However, it soon became clear that a considerable masking deposit of what appeared to be colluvium (1001/1002) in the western part of the trench and alluvium (1023) in the eastern part was obscuring any potential archaeology. Consequently, further machining was undertaken to a depth of between 0.8 and 0.9m. At this level, numerous archaeological features were identified and sample excavated. A small extension on the northern side of the eastern arm was subsequently excavated in order to clarify the extent of several of these features.

Results

The majority of the features took the form of narrow and shallow linear features in the central part of the eastern arm of the trench (Fig. 5). These included four north-south features (F4, F5, F10 and F12) and two east-west features (F6 and F7). The north-south features tended to be wider with broad U-shaped profiles, between 0.15 and 0.22m deep, and were filled by a reddish brown clayey sand. The two east-west

features were narrower with squarer profiles, up to 0.25m deep, and filled with a reddish brown silty sand. The relative chronological sequence of these features was not entirely clear due to the similarity in the fills, especially in the central area of the trench. However, the westernmost of the north-south features (F10) was clearly later than the two east-west features. A number of other smaller, irregular shaped features were also recorded (F8, F9, F11 and F13).

A number of fragments of coarse pottery, provisionally dated to the Middle to Late Iron Age (Ann Woodward pers comm), and flint were recovered from the fills of these various features. In addition a fragment of quernstone was recovered from one of the irregular shaped features (F8).

Discussion

The excavation results have successfully helped clarify the character and date of the archaeological deposits at Foxcovert Farm. However, it seems likely that they are located away from the main focus of activity, possibly a small Iron Age settlement. The cropmarks suggest that this is located slightly upslope to the southeast. They have also provided some indication of the relationship between the archaeology and the subsequent deposits of alluvium and colluvium.

The individual features excavated at the site are difficult to interpret. However, it seems possible that the four north-south features are naturally formed drainage gullies originating from the main core of the archaeological activity. The squarer profiles of the two east-west features suggest that they may have held structures and it is tempting to suggest that they were the foundation trenches for palisades or fences, possibly demarkating the northern limits of a settlement. None of the features appeared to correspond precisely with the position of the cropmark on the aerial photograph, although this might have been created by one of the north-south gullies.

Buckford Bridge (Site G)

Background

The site is located on a gravel terrace to the north of the River Trent approximately 1km southeast of Findern in southern Derbyshire (Fig. 1). The excavation was undertaken on the southwestern edge of a cropmark complex comprising two intersecting pit-alignments and several linear features, some possibly forming elements of rectilinear enclosures (Fig. 6). Several of these features lay immediately adjacent to an area to be affected by the construction of a surface water drain. A resistivity survey, carried out during the evaluation, indicated a number of anomalies, possibly of archaeological origin, within this threatened area (Stratoscan 1993, Figs. 9-12).

Objectives

To recover evidence for the date and character of the geophysical anomalies noted by the evaluation and to produce a record of the morphological development of the past landscape. It was hoped that an examination of archaeological features within the threatened area might offer some potential to date and characterise different categories of landscape feature (NUCL 1994, 8).

Method

Three areas were examined during the excavation. Trench A, 90m x 2m, was located along the southwestern edge of the threatened area and extended northwest from the western corner of Trench B. Trench B, 35m x 25m, was designed to examine the geophysical anomalies in the central part of the area surveyed and to examine any evidence for the extension of a group of linear features located immediately to the northeast of the threatened area. Trench C, 60m x 5m, was designed to examine the evidence for a linear cropmark feature, possibly part of a rectilinear enclosure, that appeared to encroach on the southwestern edge of the threatened corridor. The ploughsoil was removed by machine under archaeological supervision and the underlying natural sands and gravels were cleaned using hoes and shovels in order to define potential archaeological features. Potential features were subsequently half-sectioned or sample excavated. If it was thought that they might be archaeological in origin they were subsequently fully excavated. A number of paleoenvironmental samples were collected from a variety of features.

Results by Steve Litherland

A thin mantle of ploughsoil between 0.3m and 0.4m in depth overlay the yellowish brown subsoil with 3% iron mottling and discrete gleyed silty patches. The matrix consisted of 15% rounded stones 10mm to 80mm in size, and was more than 60% sand and 15% clay. The water table was high and excavated features deeper than 44.50m A.O.D. filled with water.

While numerous small pit-like features and linear features were examined the results, abstracted in Figure 6, were disappointing. With one possible exception a ?gulley (F215/F300), recognisable features were demonstrably either of recent date or natural origin.

Recovery of artefactual evidence was confined to various linear features associated with grubbed up regular field boundaries and associated drainage systems, of probable late 18th/early 19th century date. Two large red clay and gravel filled pits (F226 and F303) were also cut from the plough soil.

Thirty two irregular and shallow peat filled depressions were examined, mainly from Trench B, and an environmental sample taken from the largest (F237). The peat filled features probably formed from decaying waterlogged vegetation in a cold 'tundra-type' climate.

An indistinct linear feature (F215/F300) appeared to run northwest/southeast through adjacent corners of Trenches B and C. Excavation of the brown clay fill revealed a shallow irregular ?gulley, 0.1m deep and c.1m wide. No dating evidence was recovered from it. However, similarities between F215/F300 and the pit alignments to the northeast of the excavations, together with the stratigraphic evidence for this ?gulley predating the Enclosure landscape suggest an archaeological origin, even if the evidence does not support any conclusions concerning form or function.

Discussion

Whilst the archaeological results at Buckford Bridge were sparse, the limited aims of the excavation were fulfilled and it has been established that the proposed development corridor is unlikely to adversely affect any significant archaeological features or deposits which may have lain between the cropmark features and enclosures immediately to the north and south of the corridor.

With the exception of ?gulley F215/F300 archaeological features were contemporary with or later than the Enclosed landscape of the late 18th/early 19th century. While there was no precise correlation between the evidence of the geophysical survey and the excavations, several of the geophysical anomalies may be attributable to the patchy nature of the clay and gravel subsoil.

Acknowledgements

The excavations at Lockington and at Foxcovert Farm were directed by Gwilym Hughes and those at Buckford Bridge by Steve Litherland. The principal members of the field teams were, K. Allen, M. Allen, A. Bennet, R. Burrows, S. Barfield, R. Cutler, H. Fawbert, M. Hewson, L. Jones, D. Moscrop, E. Newton, K, Nicholl, E. Ramsay, M. Ridgeway, B. Robinson, R. Roseff, L. Salmon, and J. Sterenberg. Thanks to K. Challis, J. Walker (Nottingham University Consultants Limited), G. Goodman (Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick), T. Rogers (Highways Agency), A. Brown, P. Wilson (English Heritage), P. Leach, S. Buteux (Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit) and numerous other helpers.

References

Gerloff, S, 1975 *The early Bronze Age daggers in Great Britain and a reconsideration of the Wessex Culture*, Prahistorische Bronzefunde Abteilung VI Band 2.

Henshall, A S and Wallace, J C 1963 'A Bronze Age cist burial at Masterton, Pitreavie, Fife', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot 96,* 145-54.

Herity, M 1969, 'Early finds of Irish antiquities from the minute-books of the Society of Antiquaries of London', *The Antiquaries Journal* 49 Part 1, 1-21.

Hughes G 1991, *The excavation of a ring ditch at Tucklesholme Farm, Staffordshire,* BUFAU.

Hughes G and Jones, L, in press, 'The excavation of a ring ditch at Foston in the Dove Valley', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal.*

NUCL 1994, *A 564 (T) Derby Southern Bypass: archaeological brief.*

Stanford, S C, in press 'Barrow B10', in Hughes, G, Leach, P and Stanford, S C, in press 'Excavations at Bromfield, 1981-1991', *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society* 70.

Posnansky, M, 1955, 'The excavation of a Bronze-Age round barrow at Lockington', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 31.

Stratoscan, 1993 *A report for Trent and Peak Archaeological Trust on a geophysical Survey - Derby Southern Bypass.*

T&PAT 1992 *Archaeology of the Derby Southern Bypass. Implications of the construction of the bypass between Hilton and the M1*, T&PAT.

T&PAT 1993 *Derby Southern Bypass archaeological evaluations. Report on site investigations,* T&PAT.

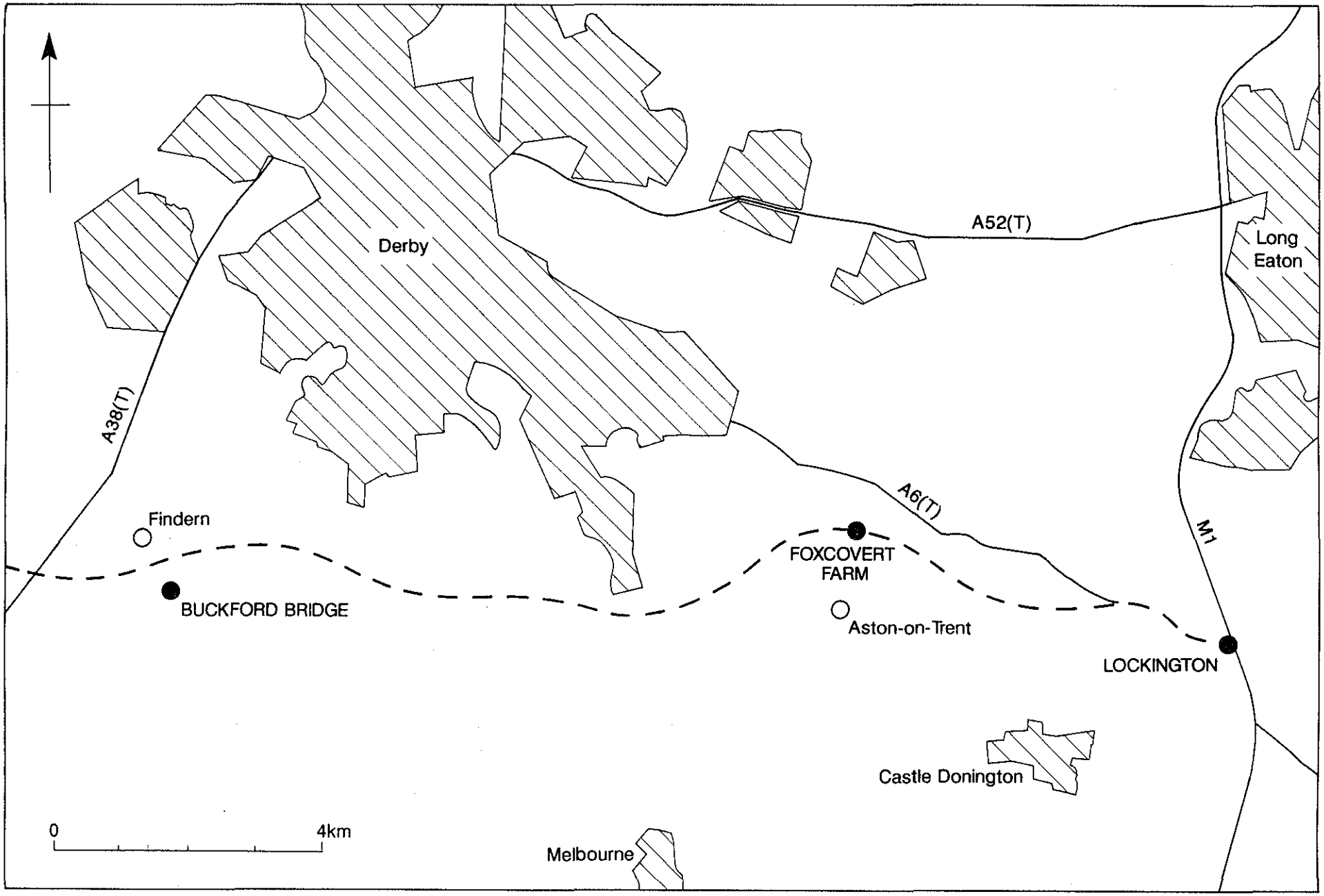


Fig. 1 Site Locations

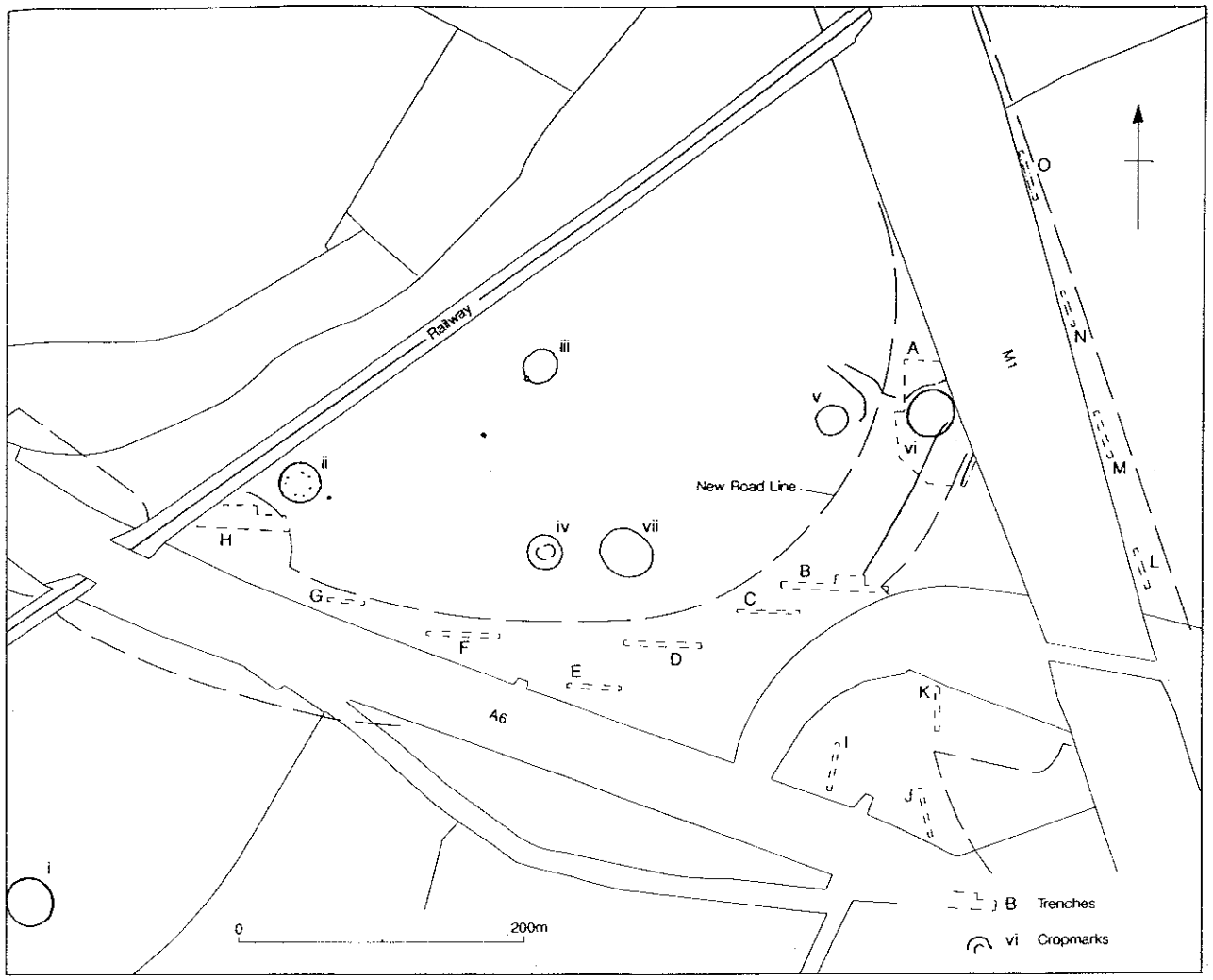


Fig. 2 Lockington - Site Location

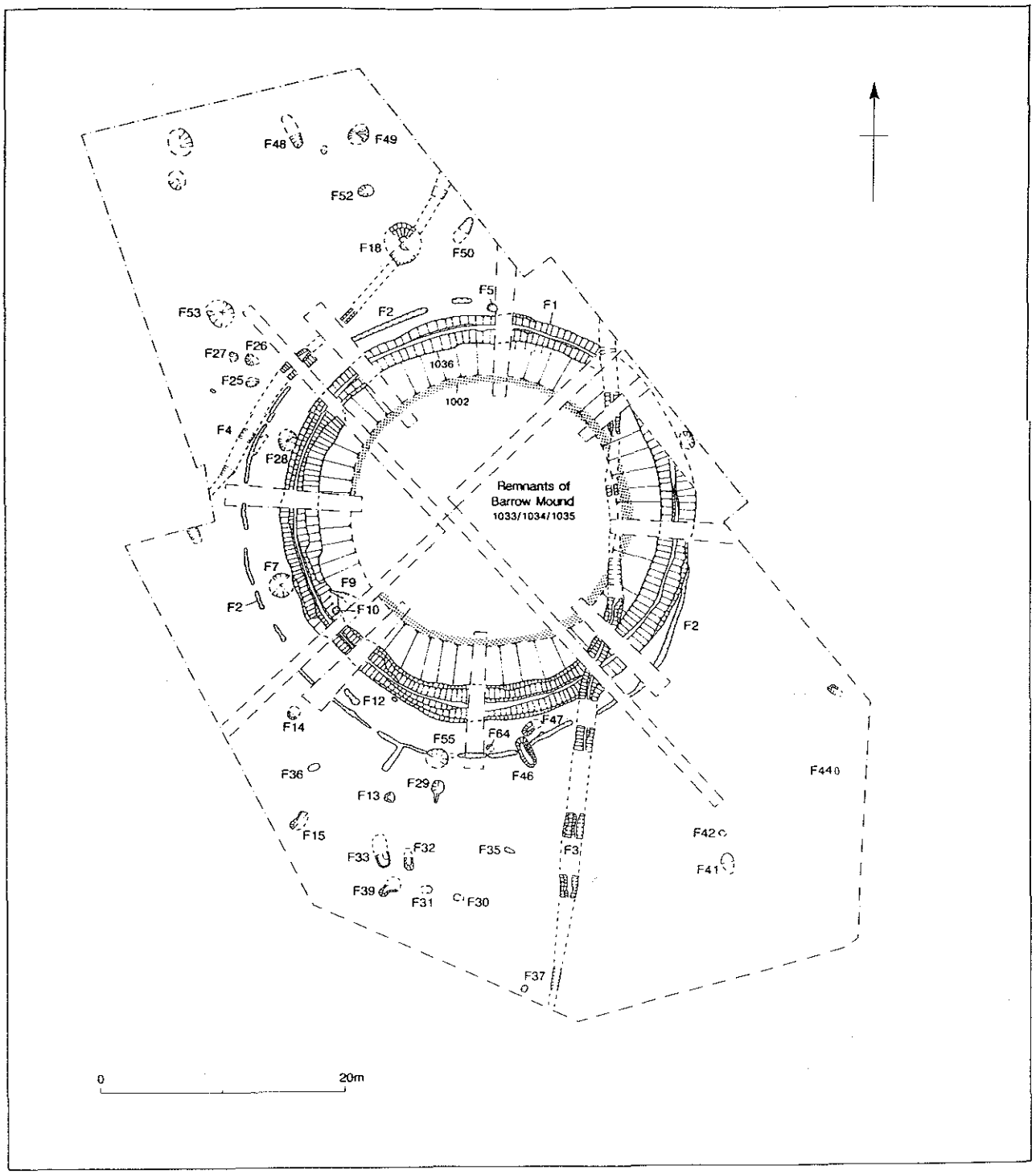


Fig. 3 Lockington - Plan of Trench A

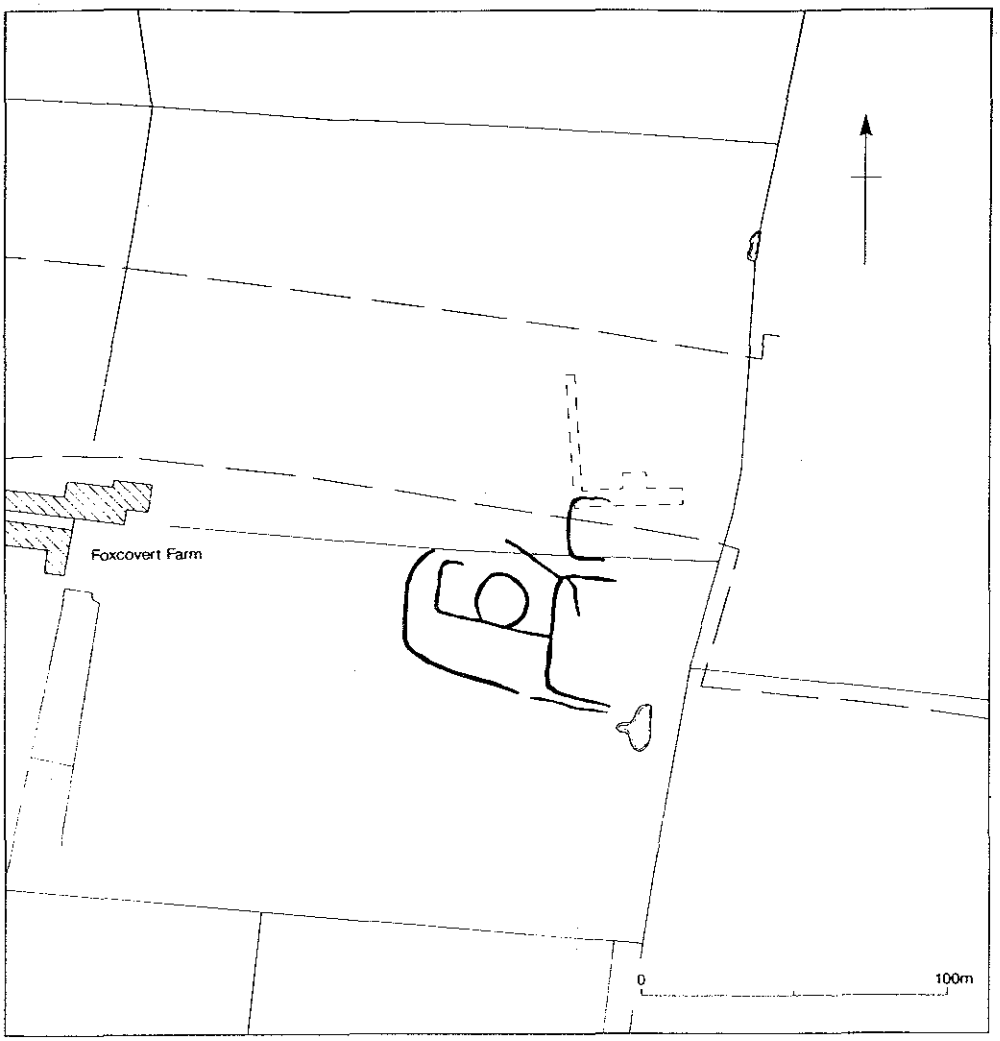


Fig. 4 Foxcovert Farm - Site Location

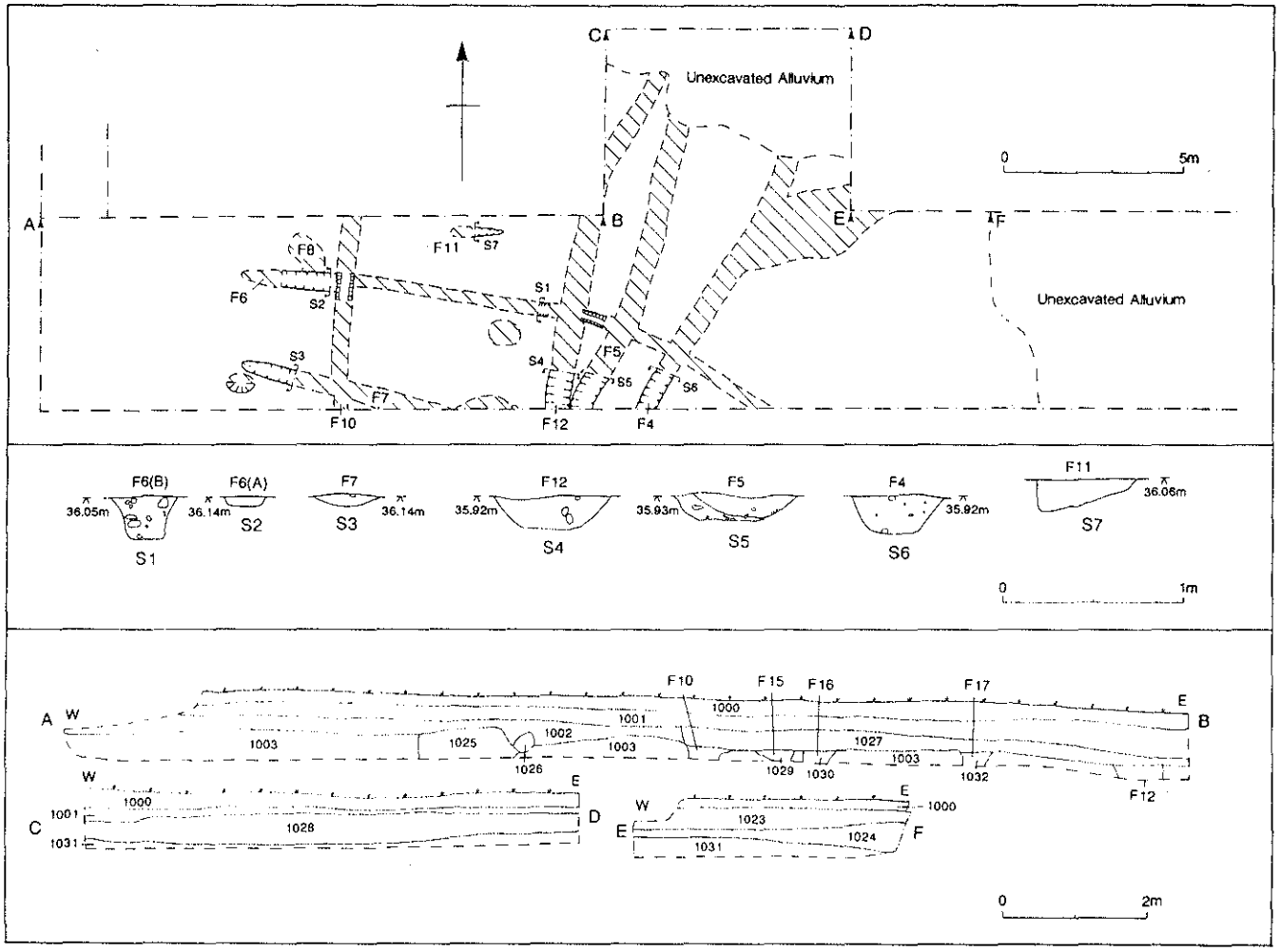


Fig. 5 Foxcovert Farm - Plan and Sections of Eastern Arm of Trench

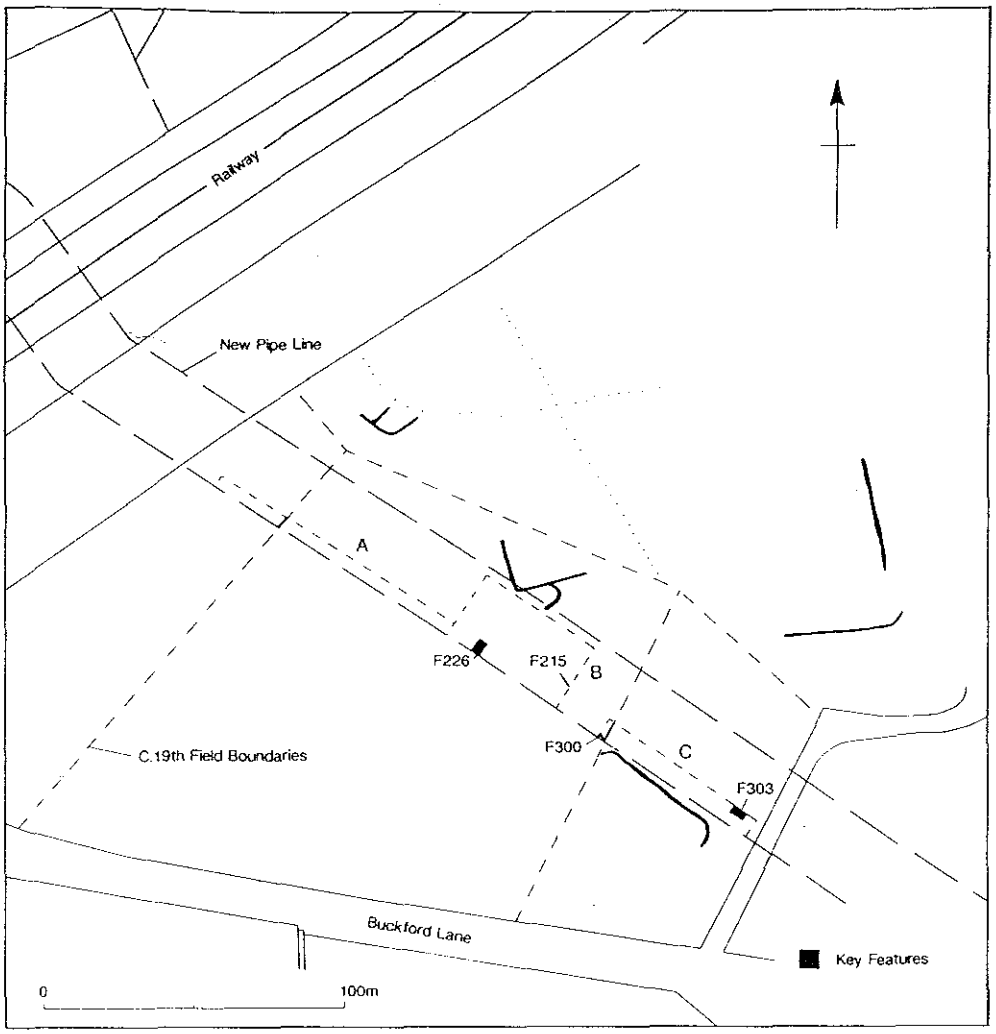


Fig. 6 Buckford Bridge - Site Location

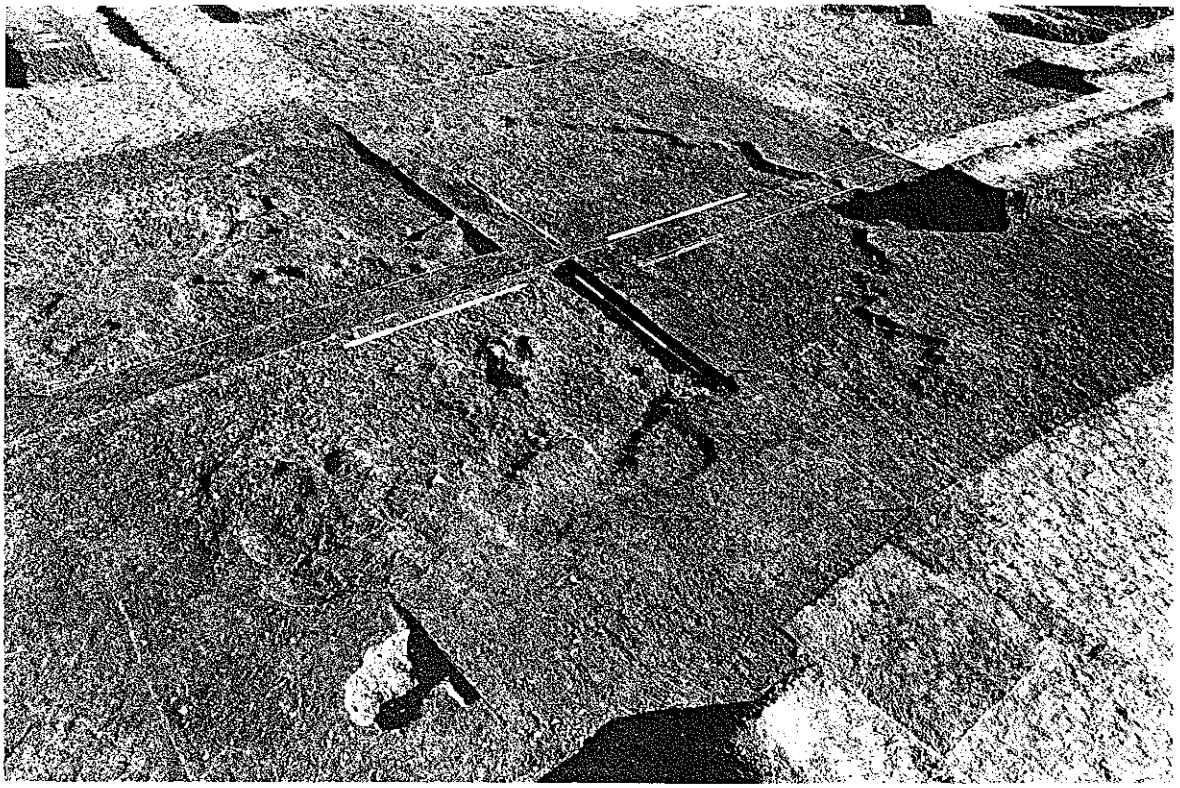


Plate 1 - Lockington - Pre-barrow scoop (F23)

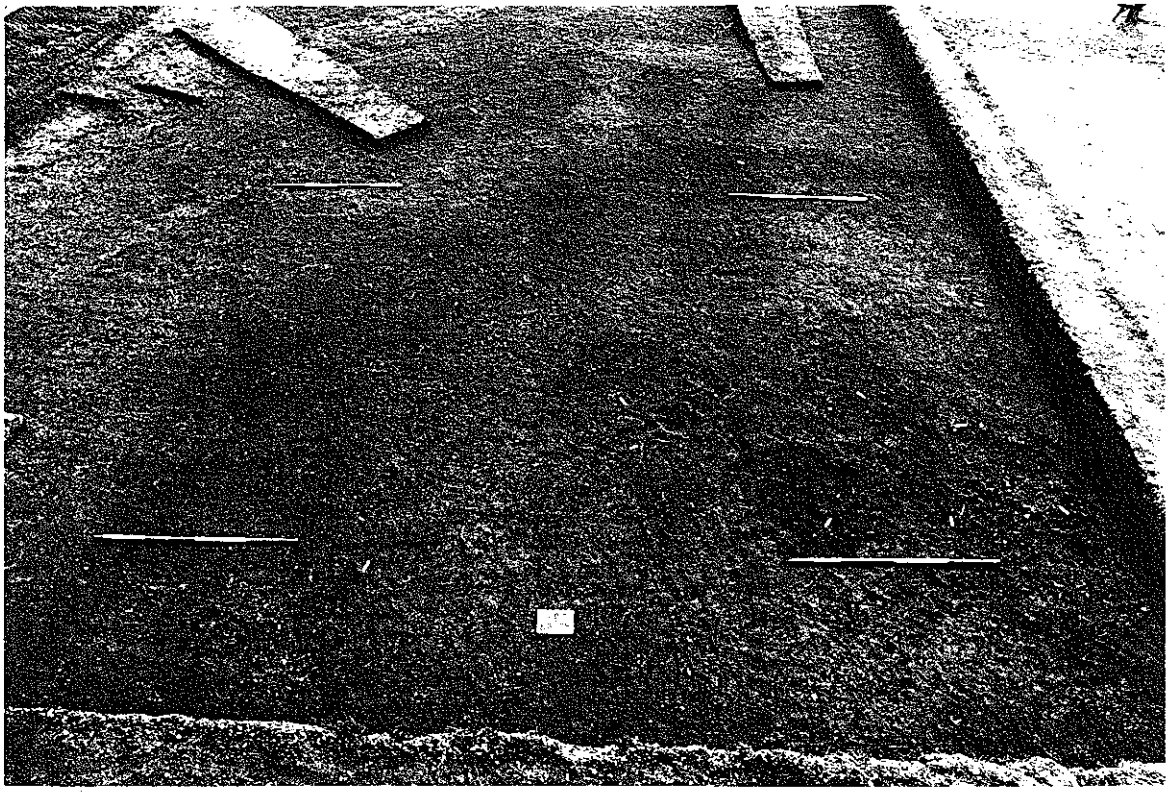


Plate 2 - Lockington - The barrow core

Plate 3 - Lockington - The excavated ring ditch

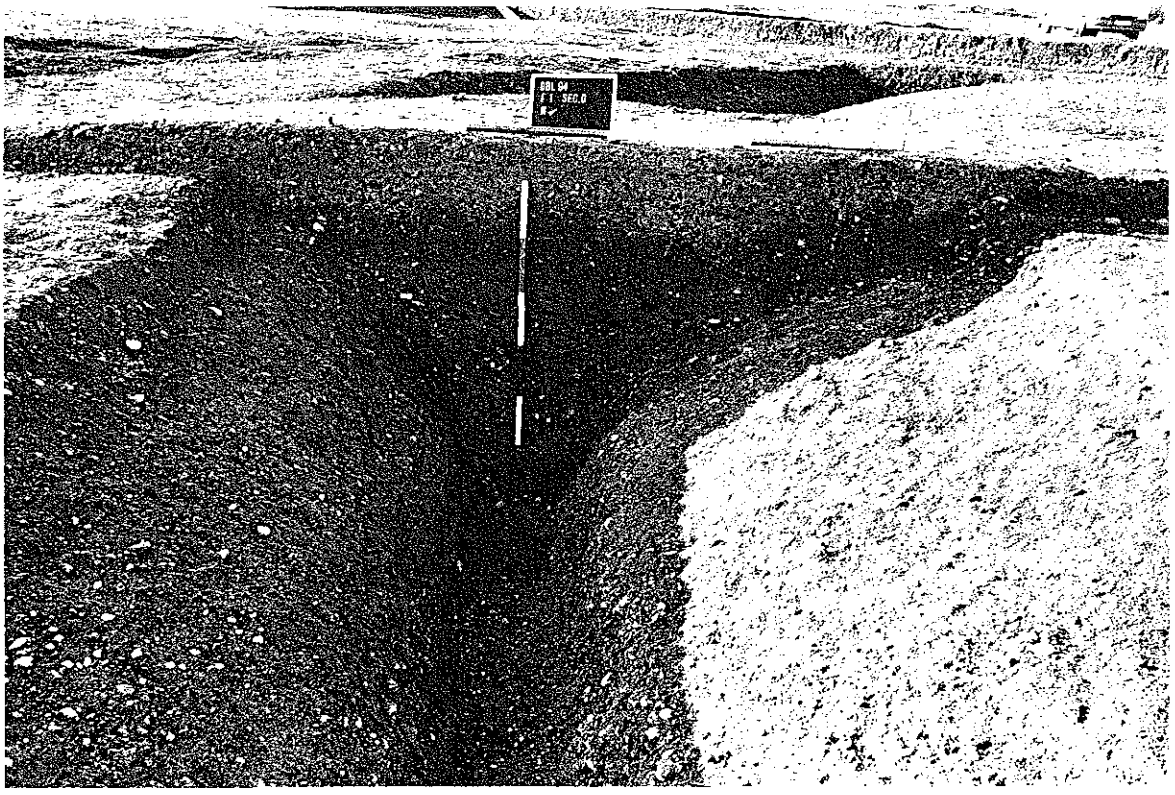


Plate 4 - Lockington - Section through the ring ditch recut (F1)

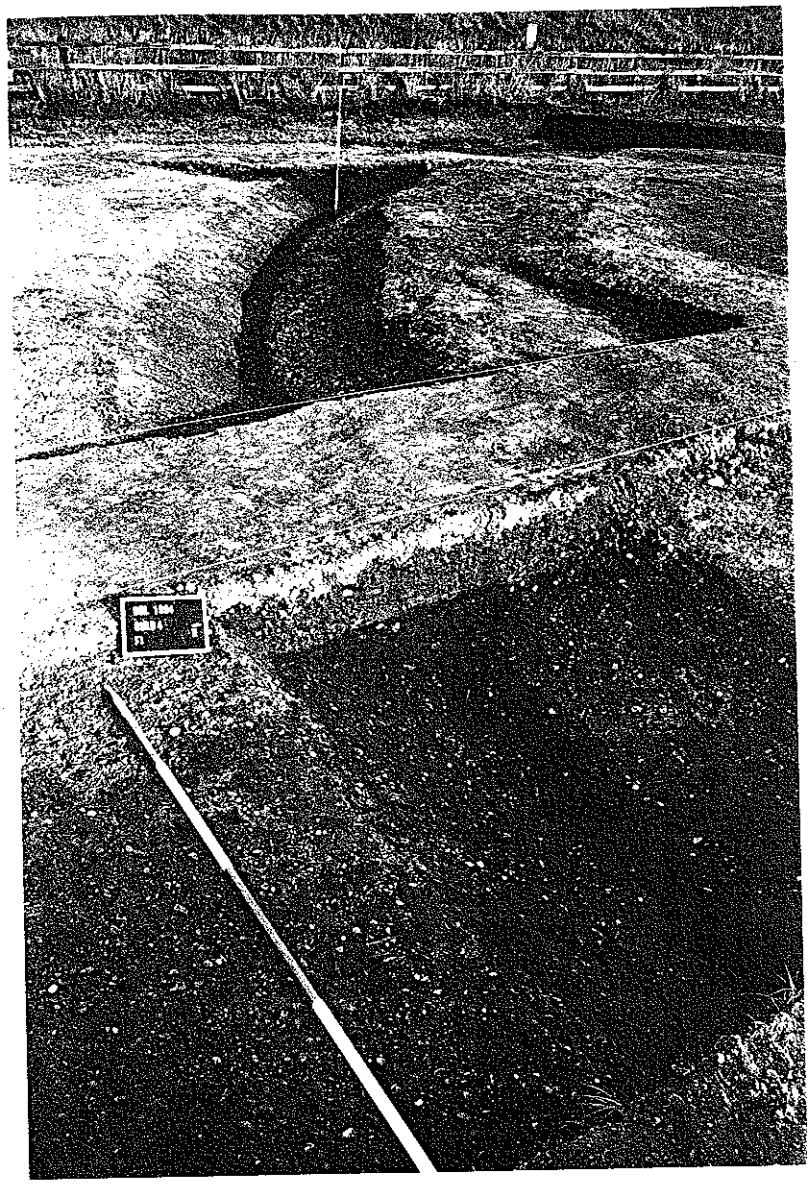


Plate 5 - Lockinton - The ring ditch recut (F1)

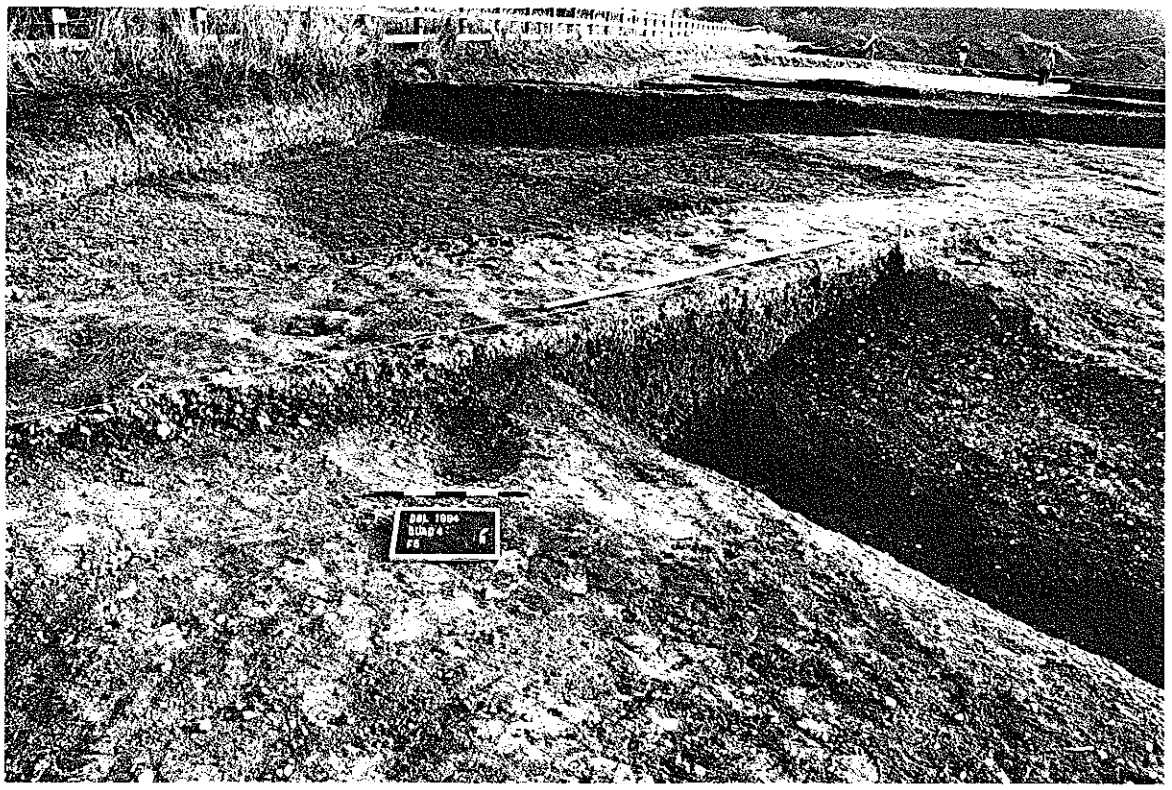


Plate 6 - Lockington - Location of the gold burial (F5)

Plate 7 - Lockington - The gold burial during excavation

Plate 8 - Lockington - The artefacts from the gold burial

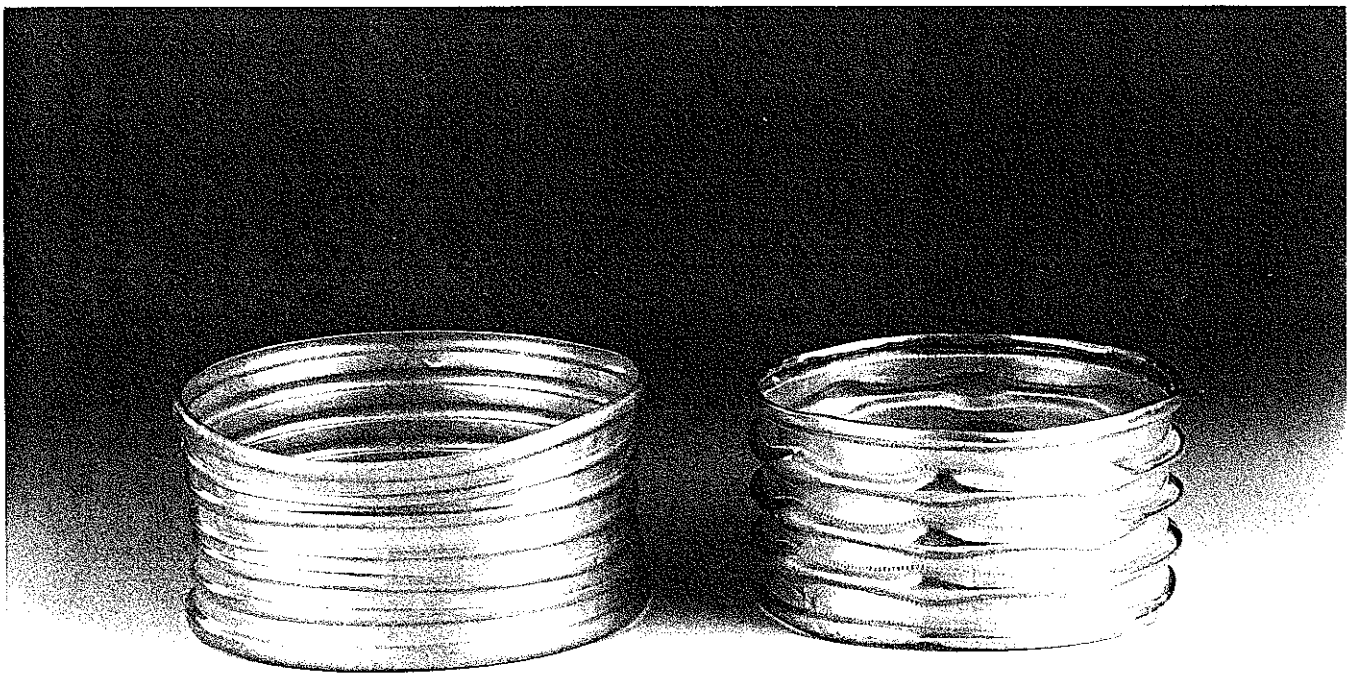


Plate 9 - Lockington - The gold armlets

Plate 10 - Foxcovert Farm - After secondary machining