

98/16



LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

**Stenigot Reservoir Extension, Donington-on-Bain**  
**Archaeological Monitoring**

NGR: TF 2585 8280  
Site Code: SDR 97  
LCNCC Museum Accn. No. 276.97

Report prepared for Anglian Water Services

Lincolnshire County Council  
Local Archaeology Section

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EVENT 43698  
SOURCES 418356 418357  
43693 Roman  
44520 4183526 undated.

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## Stenigot Reservoir Extension, Donington-on-Bain Archaeological Monitoring

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### Summary

*A watching brief during topsoil stripping identified archaeological features of unknown date and function. Some of these are thought to represent ditches and pits contemporary with the Late Iron Age/Romano-British occupation site identified by the previous evaluation and excavation.*

### Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned by Anglian Water Services in December 1997 to conduct a watching brief during topsoil stripping of the site of a reservoir extension and associated groundworks. The site is located between the existing Stenigot Reservoir and Bluestone Heath Road, both within the parish of Donington-on-Bain (Fig. 1). Archaeological monitoring had been requested by Lincolnshire County Archaeology Section as the final phase of archaeological input for the scheme.

The archaeological background to this project and this location has been described in detail in previous reports (Coupland and Field 1992; Tann 1996; Johnson 1997; Armour-Chelu 1997; Tann 1997).

### The Watching Brief (Figs. 2 and 3)

The first inspection visit, by the author, was made on 9th December 1997. Further visits were made by G. Tann and M. Williams until 13th January 1998 when monitoring was concluded; four visits were made in total.

### The Reservoir Extension

Almost all the area of the new reservoir, adjacent to the eastern side of the existing reservoir compound, had been examined by archaeological evaluation trenching and excavation in advance of the contractors arrival on site. The watching brief in this area was intended to recover further dating material and ensure that any previously uninvestigated features were recorded.

Ground conditions within this area were not ideal during the watching brief: contractors' site cabins were positioned on the stripped surface and a temporary topsoil heap occupied part of the area (Pl. 1). Preparation and consolidation of the surface immediately after topsoil removal obliterated or removed fill of previously identified ditches and no further artefacts could be collected (Pl. 2). Vehicles transporting topsoil crossed the stripped surface and restricted the available opportunity to inspect the subsoil horizon where features were visible.

A Late Iron Age enclosure ditch **0208** had been recorded during the previous excavation (Armour-Chelu 1997). During the watching brief its dark fill was readily identifiable but ground conditions were unsuitable to recover useful

further information (Pl. 3). The topsoil stripping extended slightly further west than the excavation area and the ditch continued at least as far as the existing compound fence.

The western end of an ovoid pit or ditch section was revealed immediately north of the enclosure ditch beside the compound fence (Fig. 4). The pit had been recorded as **0005** in the excavation but its length had not been determined. Monitoring allowed the full extent of the feature (9.8m west-east) to be established.

Towards the southern side of the stripped area, north of the pipeline easement monitored earlier in 1997, several small soil-filled anomalies were seen in the undisturbed chalk. Although these may have been of archaeological origin, no finds were visible and the features were not investigated. Natural small pockets of mid-brown material are present in the chalk surface and may represent animal or root disturbances in antiquity.

### **Re-alignment of the Farm Track**

The reservoir extension occupied land previously crossed by a metalled farm track leading NW to Welldale Farm. Anglian Water repositioned the affected part of this track around the eastern end of the new compound, removing topsoil and subsoil from a 4m wide trench approximately 200m long extending from the Donington-on-Bain to Withcall road.

Machining started close to the road and worked NW, with a large dump truck reversing over the stripped ground to be loaded with topsoil. Only a small section of the stripped surface could be inspected before it was crossed by tyre marks. Despite this, several undated ditches and other features were identified and their positions rapidly recorded (Fig. 3). Context numbers from 9000 were assigned for recording purposes, in order to avoid confusion with numbers assigned during previous work.

Context **9000** was a linear or curvilinear feature about 2.5m wide, 125m NW of the hedge (Pl. 5). **9001**, a 3m wide north-south aligned ditch or gully lay 26m to the NW (Pl. 6). It was filled with light brown clay loam and its base was at least 0.6m below the field surface. Similar loam thought to be filling several small intercutting pits **9002** was seen 30m further to the NW on the NE side of the new track. At the NW end of the new track, part of a 1.5m wide curving ditch **9003** crossed the trench; two sherds of locally produced Romano-British pottery were recovered from the surface of this feature (Pl. 7).

### **Topsoil Storage Site**

During the evaluation trenching and excavation phase of preceding archaeological work, a 0.4ha. area of land alongside Bluestone Heath Road at the eastern edge of the field was investigated by machine trenching. This area was expected to be the site of the contractors' temporary site offices and a temporary topsoil storage heap. Trenches 5 to 8 located only naturally produced features (Armour-Chelu 1997). In practice, this area was not stripped of topsoil before soil from the stripped reservoir and farm track areas was imported and stored.

### **Temporary Haul Track**

Archaeological provision for the groundworks associated with the reservoir extension had not included the line of a 5m wide temporary haul track linking the reservoir extension area with the topsoil storage site. The route passed to the north of the Stenigot - Kenwick pipeline easement and south of a known burial mound (SAM 27879) (Pl. 8). Monitoring of the adjacent pipeline easement had identified a ring-ditch containing Beaker pottery surrounding a flattened unknown burial mound, and ditches interpreted as part of a Late Neolithic field system. Geophysical survey had located linear features between the easement and both the extant burial mound and the reservoir extension area (Johnson 1997). As the haul track crossed these features it was anticipated that damage to uninvestigated archaeological features would occur and the sensitivity of this section was explained to the contractors.

In practice, soil was transported over the field surface along the line of the haul track without archaeological monitoring. When the surface became rutted, the ruts were planed by machine; eventually most of the topsoil cover had been removed and extensive ruts marked the position of deeper soil, presumably filling archaeological features (Pls. 9 and 10).

### **Conclusion**

The final stage of archaeological input to this development failed to provide further detail of the complex archaeological landscape west of Bluestone Heath Road. Additional features were glimpsed but conditions were unsuitable for finds recovery or accurate recording. The ditches recognised along the re-aligned farm road may be associated with the Iron Age and Romano-British occupation site examined in 1997.

The most positive result was the confirmation that the multi-period palimpsest extends further to the NW beyond the various disturbances associated with Anglian Water's reservoirs and pipelines. Given the importance of the archaeological features already identified by survey or excavation, this hill-top location (at the Wolds' edge and beside a possible prehistoric trackway) deserves closer attention in the future.

### **Acknowledgements**

The sustained co-operation received from Anglian Water Services (especially Gary Wentworth) throughout all the phases of fieldwork on this site was appreciated. Curatorial advice was provided by Jim Bonnor (Assistant Archaeology Officer, Lincolnshire County Archaeology Section).

The report was written with assistance from Mark Williams and Naomi Field, and was collated and produced by Jane Frost.

Geoff Tann  
Lindsey Archaeological Services  
12th June 1998

### **References**

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- Tann, G. 1997 *Stenigot Reservoir to Kenwick Pumping Station: Archaeological Watching Brief along the Water Trunk Main*. LAS Report No. 251 (for Anglian Water Services).

### **Archive Summary**

Annotated developer's plans  
Sketch plans  
Photographs:  
colour prints (LAS Film Nos. 97/86/25-34; 97/89/22-37; 98/17/2-6)  
Correspondence  
Pottery: 2 sherds



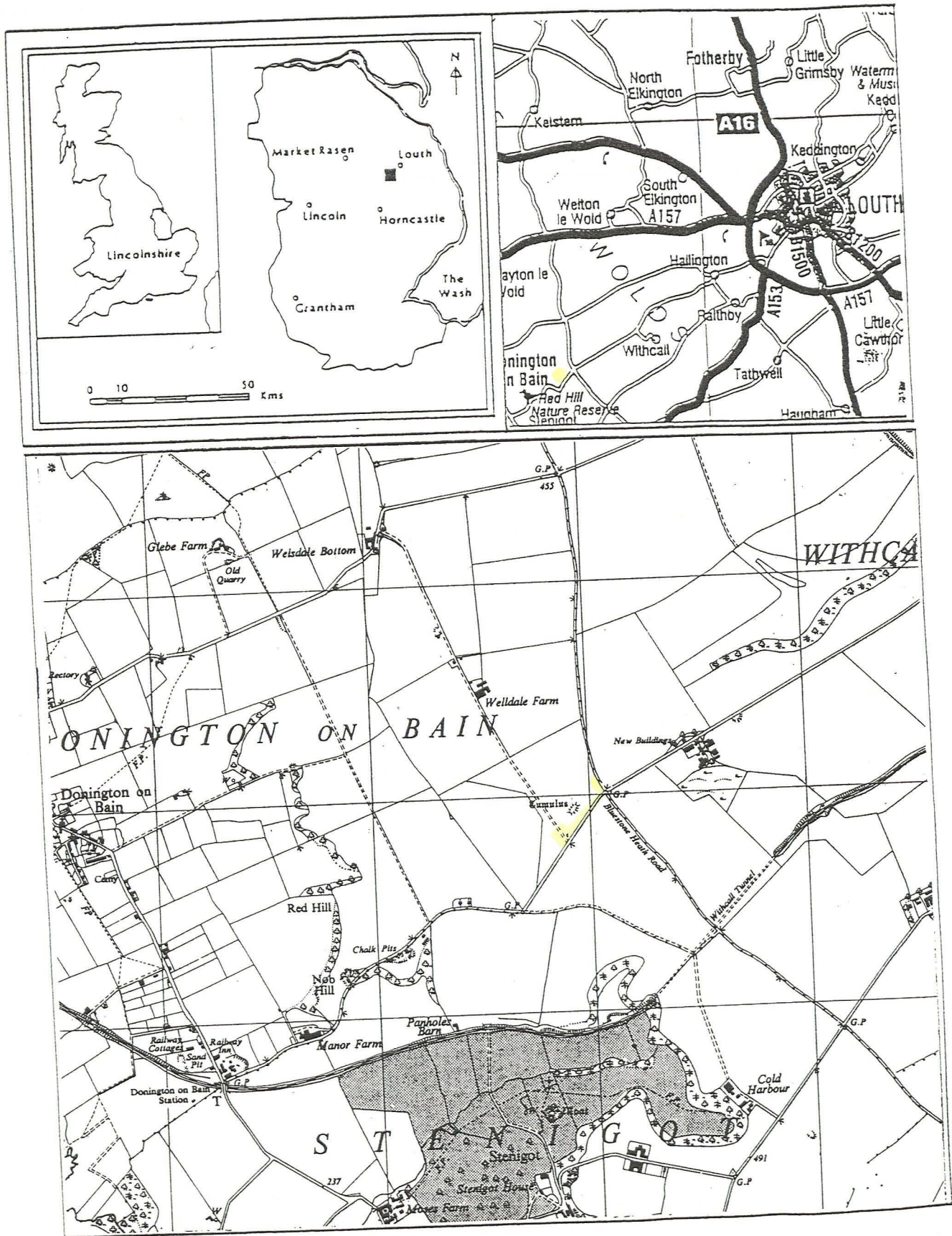


Fig. 1 Location of Stenigot Reservoir (based on the 1953 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map Sheet TF 28. Crown Copyright; reproduced with permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).

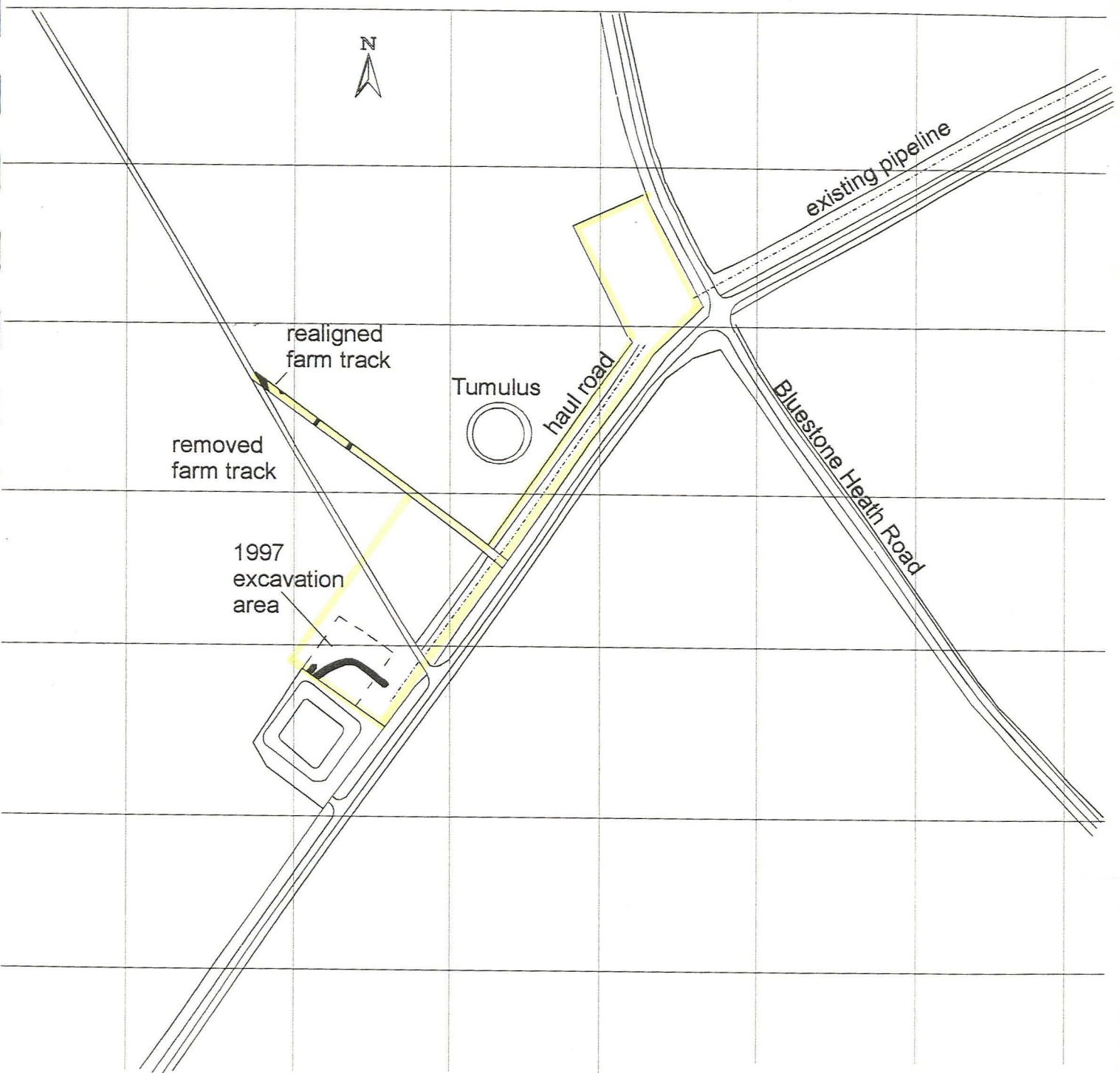


Fig. 2 Position of the areas monitored (Williams, based on a plan by Mott MacDonald, Dwg. No. 39993/WSD/011).

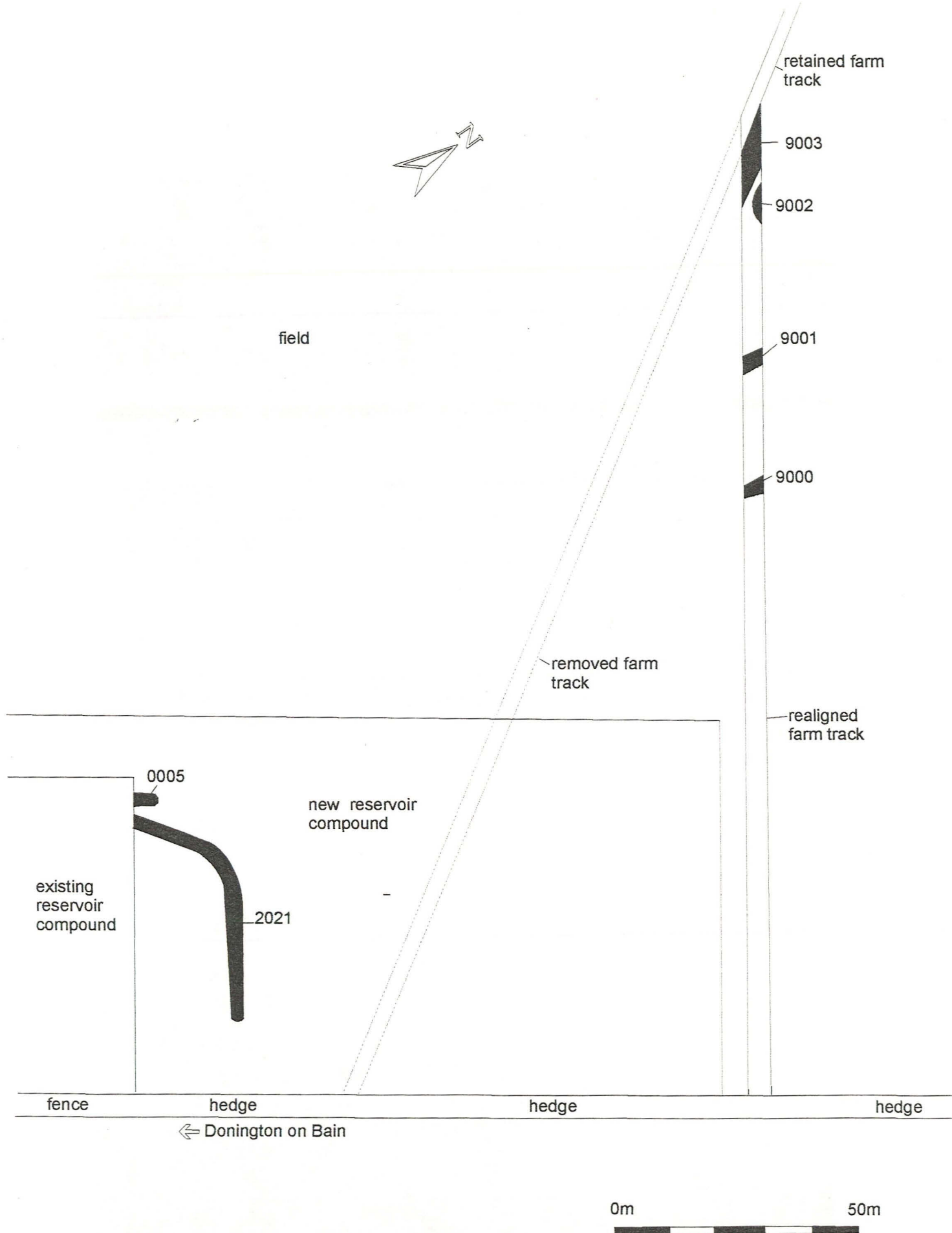


Fig. 3 Archaeological features revealed during groundworks for the farm track realignment (Williams after Tann).



**PI. 1** Surface conditions during topsoil stripping for the reservoir extension (looking west to the existing reservoir compound).

**PI. 2** Vehicle trample obscured the stripped surface although soil-filled ditches remained visible (looking west to the existing reservoir compound).





**Pl. 3** Dark soil filling the NE segment of Late Iron Age enclosure ditch 0208 (looking west to the existing reservoir compound).

**Pl. 4** Late Iron Age enclosure ditch 0208 (below 2m scale) and adjacent pit 0005 (looking west at the edge of the existing reservoir compound).





Pl. 5 Dark clay loam fill of ditch 9000 visible cutting chalk bedrock at base of the farm track realignment trench; widest surviving extent marked by red lines.

Pl. 6 Ditch 9001 visible as broad brown loam crossing track trench (centre). Looking NW towards dismantled radar site.





Pl. 7 Light brown fill of ditch 9003 beside existing farm track (looking SE).

Pl. 8 Prehistoric burial mound (SAM 27879) under cultivation, as seen from the farm track realignment trench. Looking SE, Bluestone Heath Road top left.





PI. 9 Ground conditions on the temporary haul track (looking NE).

PI. 10 Vehicle ruts in temporary haul road, probably marking positions of archaeological features. Looking SW to new reservoir construction site.

