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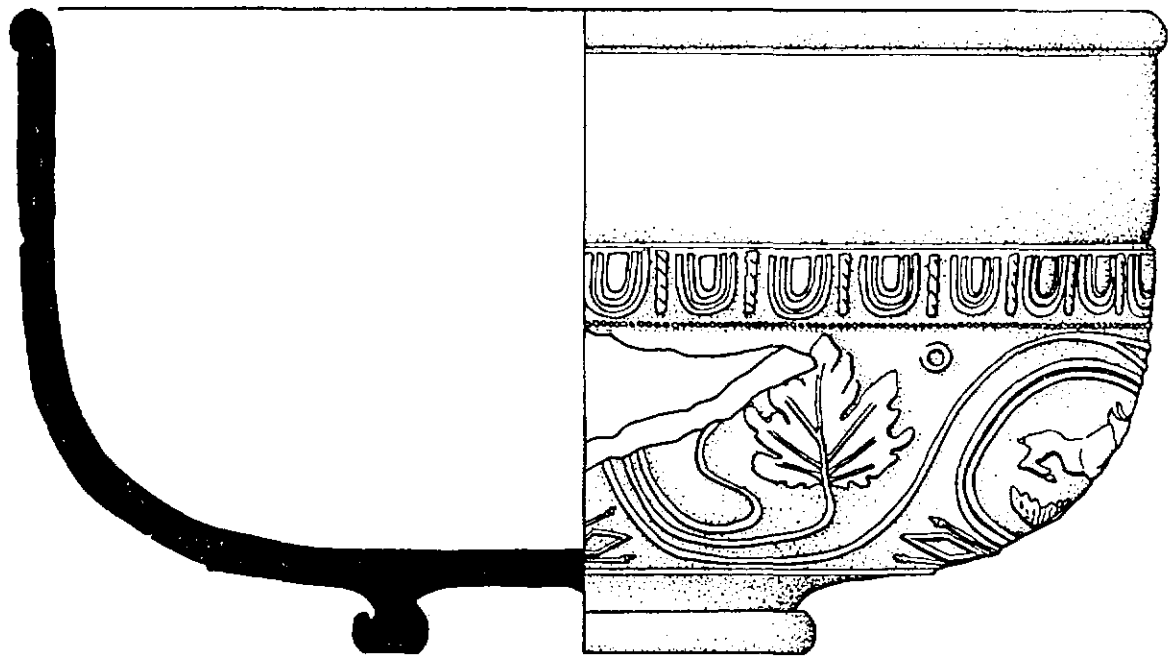
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# A5/A49 SHREWSBURY BYPASS ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT 1989-1990



SITE NARRATIVES AND POST EXCAVATION  
RESEARCH DESIGN

B.U.F.A.U.



**A5/A49 SHREWSBURY BYPASS ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT  
1989–1990**

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**SITE NARRATIVES AND POST EXCAVATION RESEARCH DESIGN**

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**1.0: INTRODUCTION**

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# THE A5/A49 SHREWSBURY BYPASS ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT 1989-1990

## SITE NARRATIVES AND POST EXCAVATION RESEARCH DESIGN

### 1.0: INTRODUCTION by P. Ellis.

This paper is the most recent in a sequence relating to archaeological work in advance of construction of the A5/A49 Shrewsbury bypass. Previous papers comprise:

- a) a study of the Wroxeter hinterland forming a research design for archaeological work on the A5 roadline (Watson 1989)
- b) a report on preliminary evaluation work with recommendations for further work (Cane 1989)
- c) a research design for further work at Meole Brace (Site SA 2).

It is intended here to fulfil a number of aims within the guidelines set out by English Heritage in *The Management of Archaeology Projects* (1989). The principal aims are:

i) to present the preliminary results of excavation work undertaken by BUFAU on four A5 sites (Figure 1A and Figure 1B),

ii) to summarise the excavation archives and assess their potential information value,

iii) to propose a post excavation programme which will carry the project to completion in the form of an appropriate published account and a usable research archive.

The excavation results from four sites, Meole Brace (SA 2), Preston Farm (SA 20), Duncote Farm (SA 46), and Preston Montford (SA 4237), are presented in Sections 2 to 5 below. Section 6 summarises the archive data, and after tabulating the paper archive assesses the stratigraphic value of the sites and the information to be gained from analysis of the finds. Section 7 presents a new research design to encompass post excavation work and defines the academic objectives behind a post excavation programme which is presented in Section 8. A provisional costing for the proposed post excavation programme is presented in Section 9.

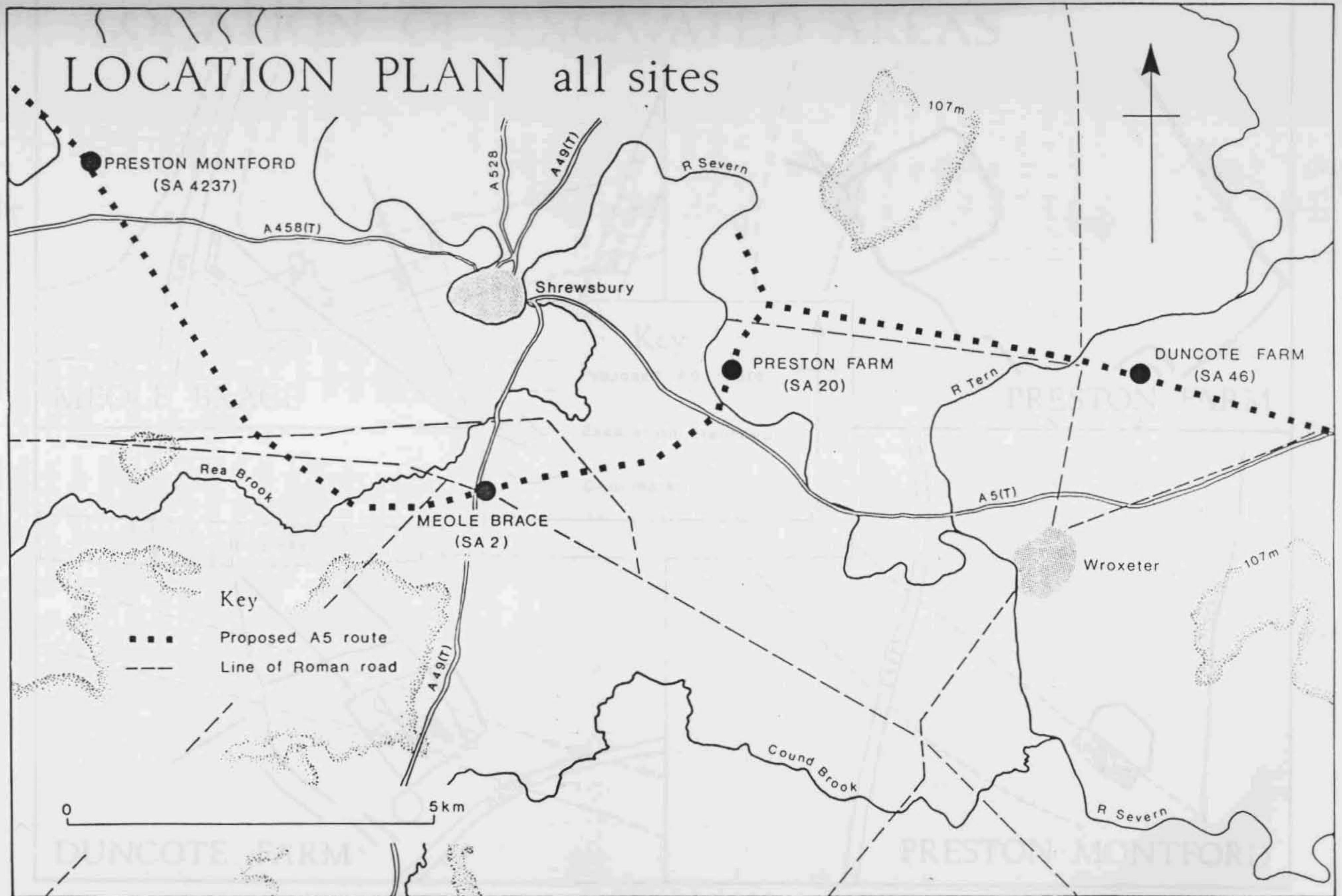
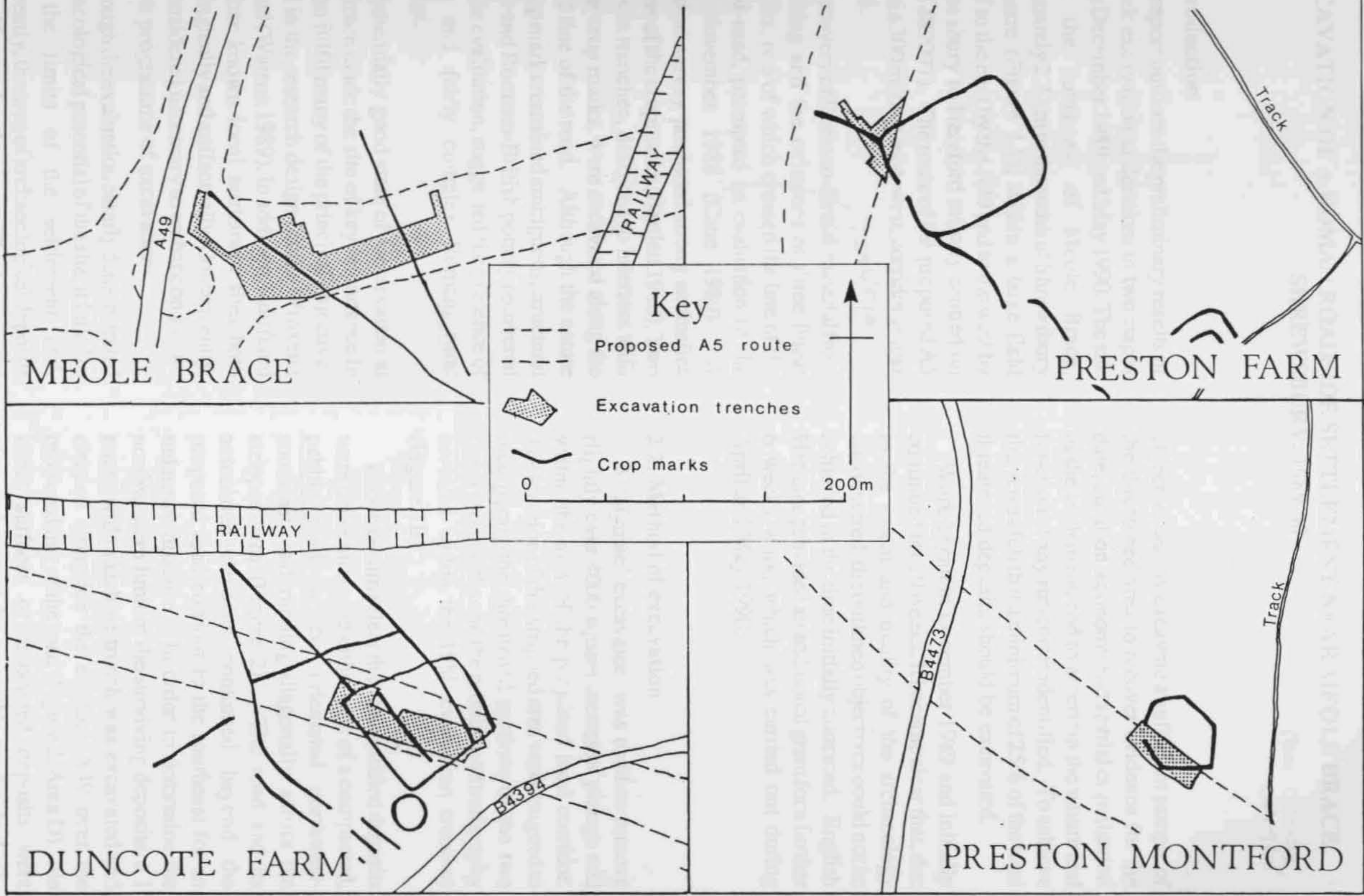


Figure 1A

# LOCATION OF EXCAVATED AREAS

EVSA4184

EVSA 4192



EVSA 4214

EVSA 3218

Figure 1B

5.6 ——— 1.9.

## 2.0: MEOLE BRACE (SA 2) By E.G.Hughes.

EXCAVATION OF A ROMAN ROADSIDE SETTLEMENT NEAR MEOLE BRACE,  
SHREWSBURY, 1989-90Paw 00002,  
08096'

## 2.1: Introduction

This report outlines the preliminary results of a 16 week excavation undertaken in two stages between December 1989 and May 1990. The site lies to the southeast of Meole Brace, approximately 2.5 km to the south of Shrewsbury town centre (Figure 1A), within a large field bounded to the east by the A49 and to the west by the Shrewsbury to Hereford railway centred on NGR.SJ 489097). The route of the proposed A5 threatens a 300 m long, east-west, corridor across this field.

The recovery of Romano-British material from fieldwalking and the existence of three linear crop marks, two of which crossed the line of the proposed road, prompted an evaluation of the site in November 1988 (Cane 1989). A geophysical survey produced strong anomalies on the line of the cropmarks (Bartlett 1988). Two 1.5 m wide trenches, designed to intersect with the linear crop marks, were excavated along the proposed line of the road. Although the nature of the crop marks remained ambiguous, structural evidence and Romano-British pottery recovered during the evaluation, suggested the presence of a large and fairly complex Roman, rural settlement.

The potentially good state of preservation at Meole Brace made the site of key importance in helping to fulfil many of the principal objectives outlined in the research design for the Wroxeter hinterland (Watson 1989). In addition, it differed from other known local settlement sites both morphologically and artifactually. Consequently, it was considered necessary to embark on a more extensive programme of excavations.

Although the evaluation clearly demonstrated the archaeological potential of the site, it failed to define the limits of the settlement and, consequently, the area of archaeological deposits threatened by the development. This became the initial objective of the excavation. The second

objective was to excavate a sufficient sample of the threatened area to recover evidence for the date, duration, economy and spatial organisation of the settlement, and to ascertain the nature and function of any structures identified. To achieve this it was felt that a minimum of 25% of the total threatened deposits should be excavated.

Work began in December 1989 and initially continued for 10 weeks. It became clear that, due to the extent and quality of the archaeology encountered, the outlined objectives could not be achieved in the time initially allocated. English Heritage provided an additional grant for a further 6 weeks work, which was carried out during April and May 1990.

## 2.2: Method of excavation.

A 'Hymac' excavator was used to remove slightly over 4000 square metres of plough soil within the area of the proposed road corridor. The location of this stripped area was designed to incorporate the threatened sections of the two linear crop marks and the promising stratigraphy revealed within the 1988 evaluation trenches (Figure 1B).

It soon became clear that the stratified deposits were concentrated to either side of a compacted, pebble road surface, orientated northwest-southeast, and running diagonally across the stripped area (Figure 2). The road and its associated deposits continued beyond the proposed road corridor to the southeast for an unknown distance. In order to determine the northwestern limit of the surviving deposits, a 1 metre wide machine trench was excavated and cleaned alongside the existing A49 over the projected line of the road (Figure 2, Area D). No intact surfaces or associated deposits were observed, except for a possible road-side ditch. Virtually no pottery was recovered from this

MEOLE BRACE (SA 2) 1989-90  
Plan of Excavated Areas

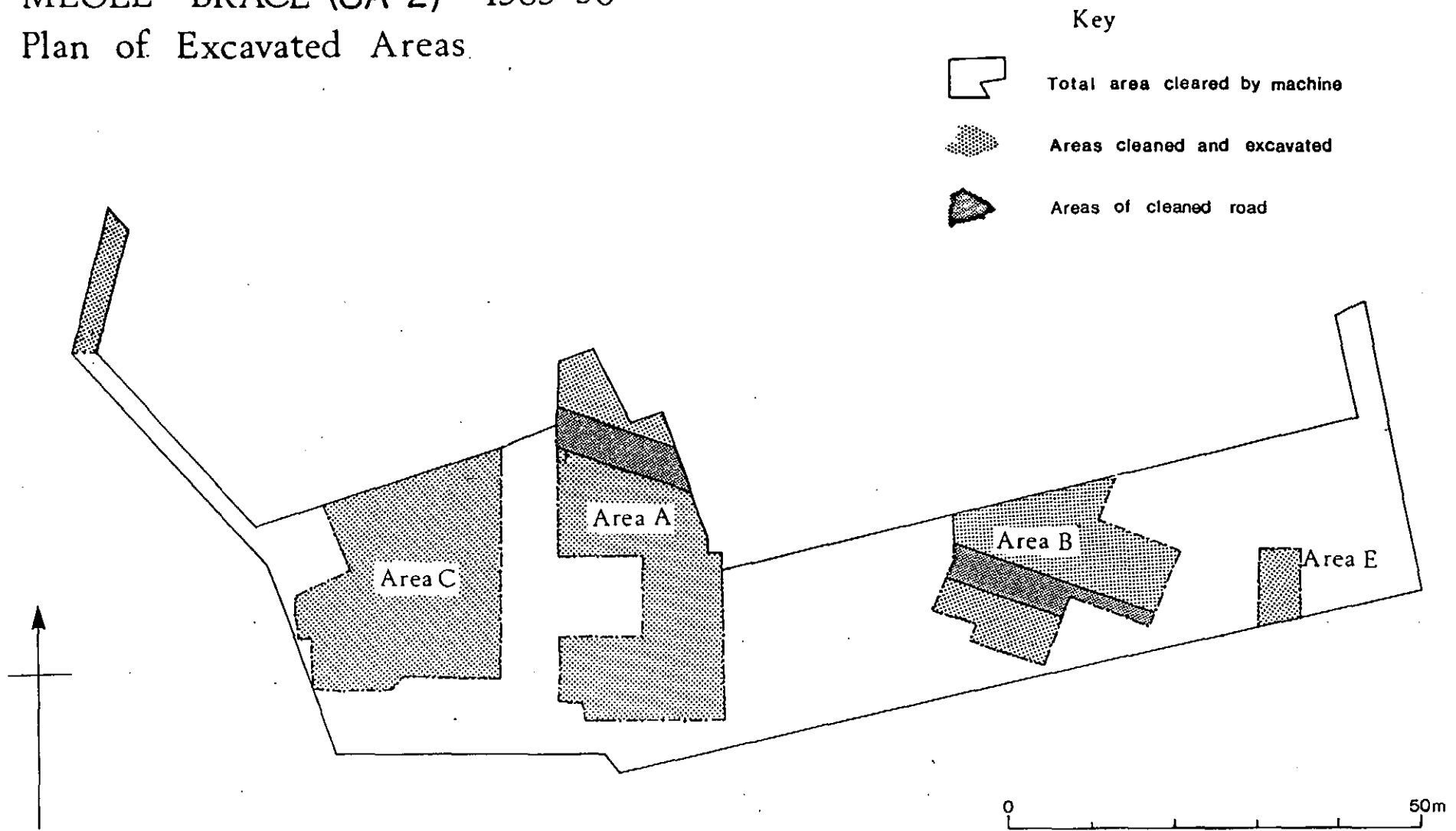


Figure 2



area. Therefore, the maximum length of the threatened settlement area could be defined as the edge of the proposed road corridor to the southeast and Area D to the northwest, a distance of 150 m. In order to achieve the remaining objectives, four additional areas were selected for detailed recording and excavation (Figure 2, Areas A, B, C, and E).

00002

Area A incorporated a length of the Roman road and approximately 250 square metres of well-preserved, stratified, roadside deposits alongside its southern edge. Although the upper deposits were fully recorded and excavated, time allowed for only the partial excavation of the earlier levels. Further south in Area A, an additional 300 square metres were cleaned to reveal a series of pits and post holes cut into the natural gravels. These were half sectioned or, in some cases, fully excavated.

Area B measured approximately 450 square metres and incorporated stratified deposits to both the north and south of the road. It was hoped that excavation here would recover complementary information to that gathered from Area A, and also provide a comparison between the archaeology on the north and south sides of the road.

Area C comprised approximately 550 square metres to the rear of the structures fronting onto the southern edge of the road. This incorporated an area of associated stratigraphy which was recorded but not fully excavated. In the south of this area numerous 'negative' features, cutting the natural gravels, were half-sectioned.

Area E, close to the southeastern limit of the stripped area, examined a small area to the north of the road which had produced small quantities of iron slag during machining, suggesting some form of industrial activity.

The following narrative presents a preliminary phasing of the site based on an initial examination of the stratigraphic relationships encountered during the excavation (Figure 3). It is not meant to be a definitive account and may be subject to considerable revision following a full analysis of the data.

## 2.3: The Archaeological Results

### 2.3.1: Phase I

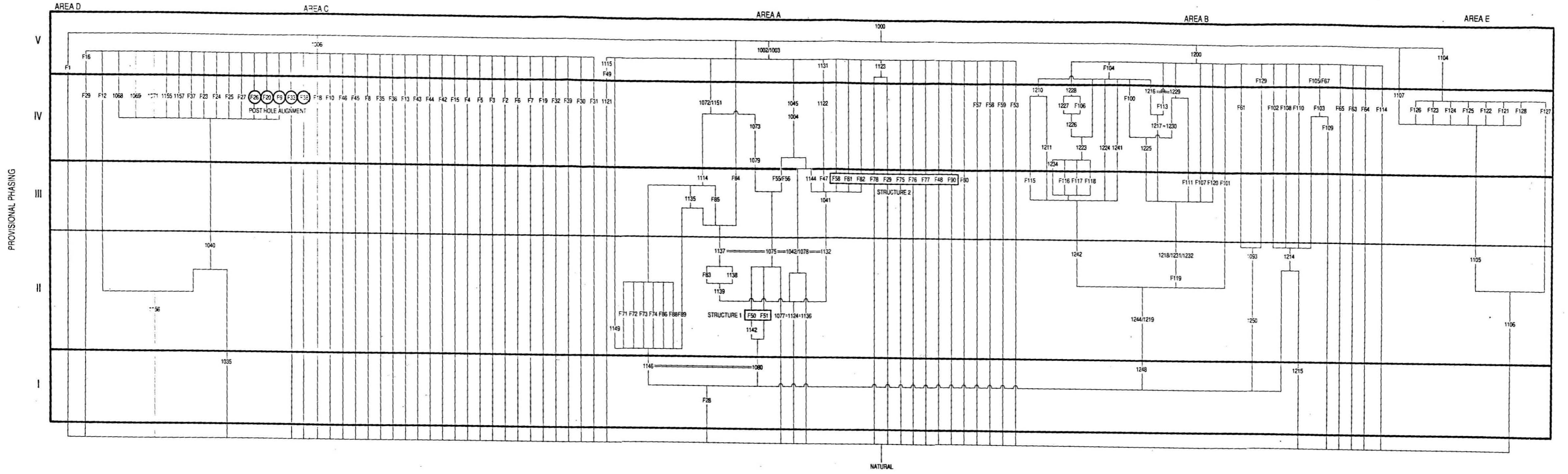
The earliest stratified archaeological feature or deposit identified was the road itself (F28). Where the road was sectioned in Areas A and B no earlier deposits were observed. It is possible that one or more of the features which cut the natural gravels and were sealed by ploughsoil in areas A and C may be of an earlier date although nothing from their fills suggests that this was the case. It seems unlikely that any pre-Roman activity is represented within the cleared area.

Stretches of the road were cleaned, examined and sectioned in Areas A and B (Figure 4 and Figure 5). In both areas the road was constructed of a series of thin, compacted pebble surfaces, alternating with layers of relatively stone-free compacted silt. It was unclear whether the successive pebble layers represented resurfacing or were elements of a single construction. The net result was the production of a distinct camber with a maximum surviving height of 0.35m. The upper surface of the road in area A did not appear to have been appreciably plough damaged and comprised a layer of tightly packed, worn, rounded pebbles, between 10 and 50mm in diameter. The very shallow traces of a series of possible wheel ruts were apparent after careful cleaning. In Area B the top of the road appeared to have been truncated by the plough.

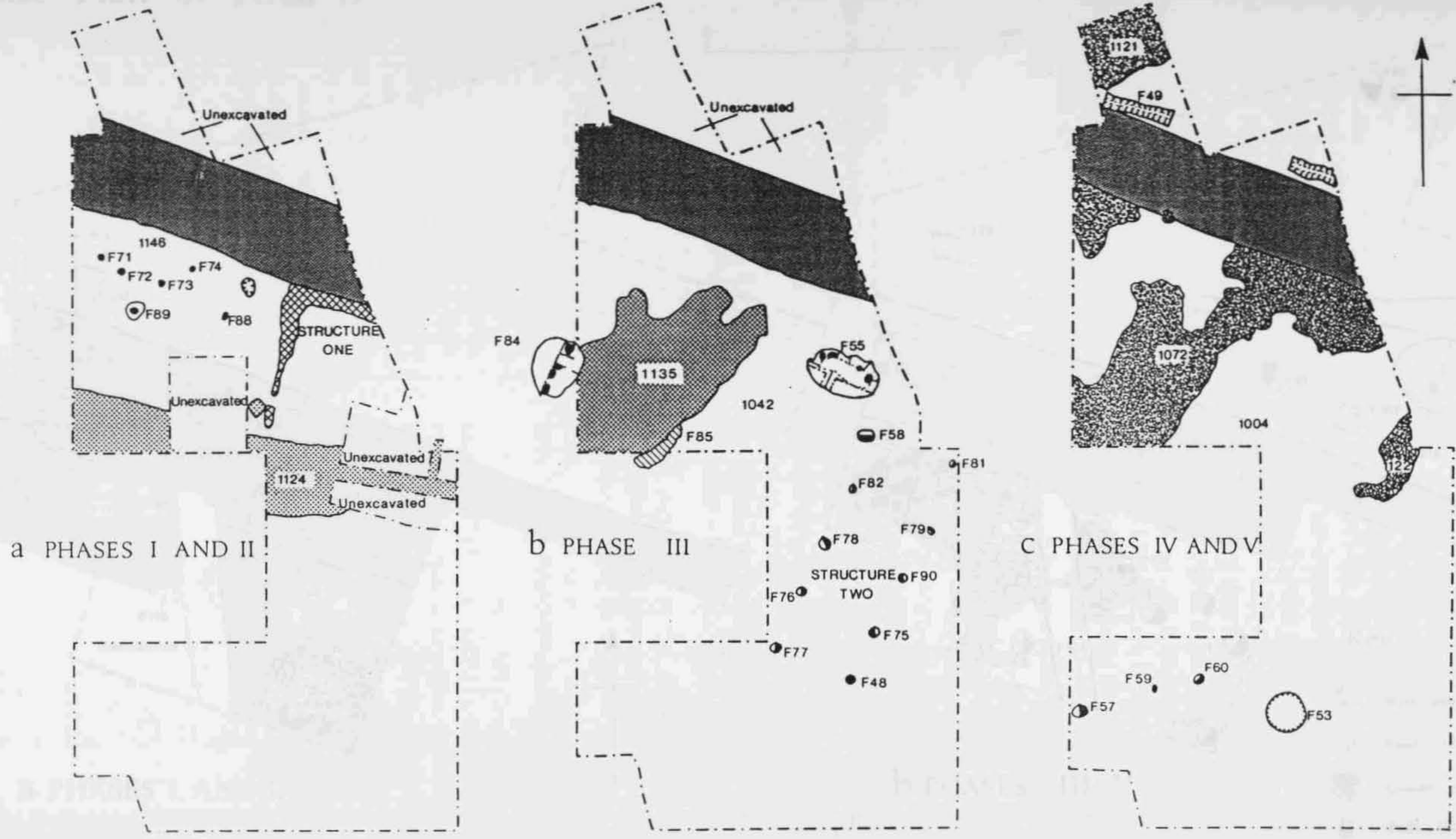
The maximum width of the road was 4.8m in Area A and 5m in Area B. In both areas this became noticeably reduced following the encroachment of roadside structures and surfaces. No drainage gullies were apparent on either side of the road, which presumably relied upon its camber and the naturally well-drained gravels for water runoff.

In Area A the southern edge of the road was sealed by a band of stone free silt (up to 0.2m thick) which contained insignificant amounts of occupational debris (1080, 1146). This possibly equates with a somewhat thinner layer of silt overlying the southern edge of the road in Area B (1248), and appears to relate to a period between the road construction and the earliest roadside activity.

FIG 3. STRATIGRAPHIC DIAGRAM SHOWING PROVISIONAL PHASING



0 10m



a PHASES I AND II

b PHASE III

c PHASES IV AND V

Key

- Post holes
- Worn pebble surface
- Worn cobble surface
- ▬ Road (F28)
- ▨ Angular sandstone
- ▧ Sandstone wall footings
- Uneven cobbles

Figure 4

MEOLE BRACE 1989-90  
Phase Plan of Area B

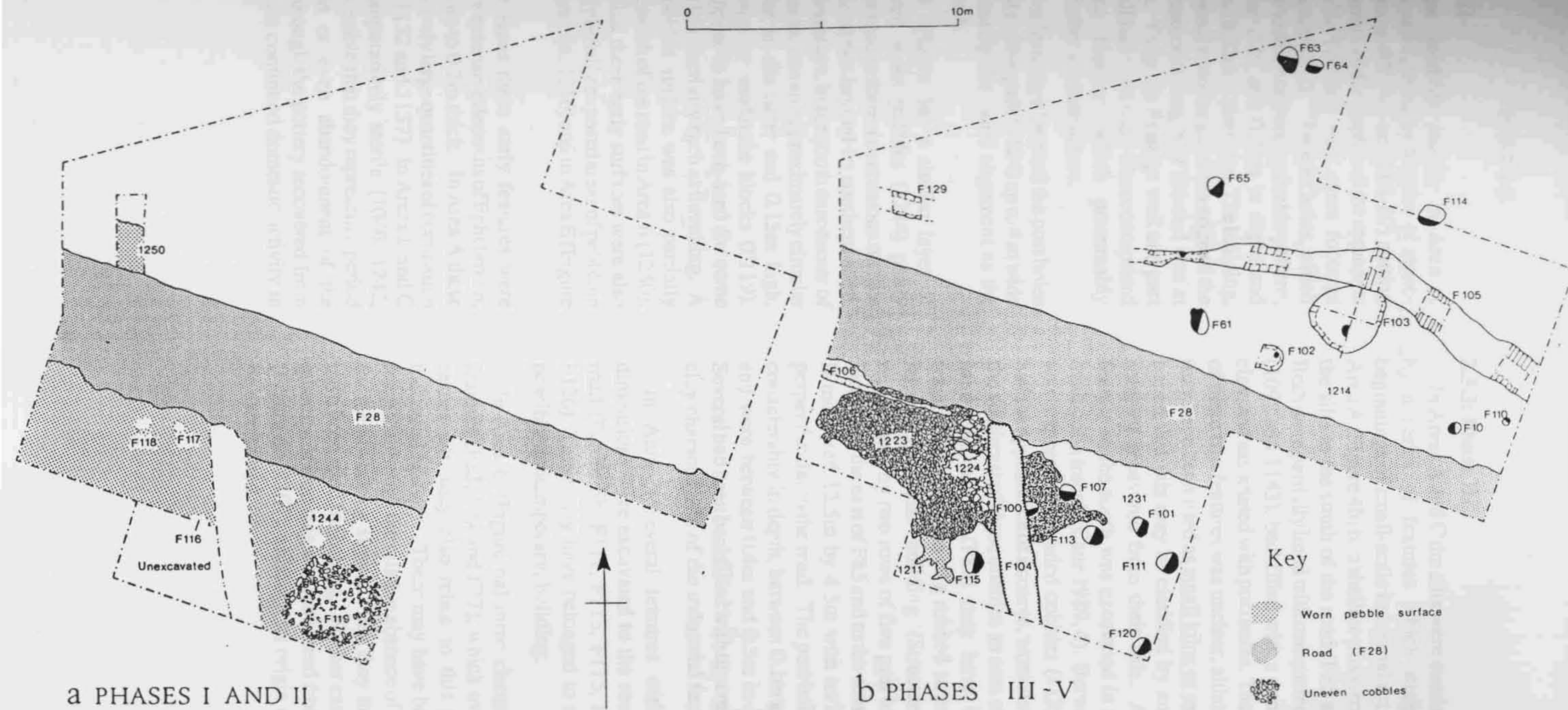


Figure 5

### 2.3.2: Phase II

The earliest roadside activity in Area A (Figure 4a) is represented by a series of stone-packed post holes (F71-74 and F88-89) cutting the silt to the south of the road, and the remnants of a rectangular building with stone footings (F50-51, Structure One). The post holes, which did not appear to form any recognisable pattern, varied between 0.12 and 0.33m in depth and between 0.2 and 0.32m in diameter. The building, which also fronted onto the southern edge of the road, had a maximum length of 8m and was at least 5m wide. Only the frontage wall and part of the west wall had survived. These comprised low sandstone footings which presumably supported a timber superstructure.

To the rear of Structure One and the post holes was a well-laid pebble path (1124) up to 4 m wide with approximately the same alignment as the road to the north.

In Area B (Figure 5a) a similar layer of compacted well worn pebbles (1244) partly overlapped the road to form a continuous surface extending at least 6m beyond its southern edge. Overlying this surface, in the south east corner of the excavated area, was an approximately circular platform, 3.5m in diameter and 0.15m high, ringed with angular sandstone blocks (F119). This would appear to have been used for some form of specialised activity such as threshing. A fragment of pebble surface was also partially exposed to the north of the road in Area B (1250). It is possible that these early surfaces were also represented by partially exposed areas of pebbling in Area C (Figure 6a, 1156) and in Area E (Figure 6b, 1106).

In all four areas these early features were sealed by fairly extensive deposits of light brown, stone-free silt up to 0.2m thick. In Area A these contained relatively large quantities of occupation debris (1042, 1132 and 1137). In Areas B and C they were comparatively sterile (1040, 1242, 1231). It is possible that they represent a period of contraction or even abandonment of the settlement, although the pottery recovered from Area A suggests continued domestic activity in the vicinity.

### 2.3.3: Phase III

In Areas A and C the silts were overlain or cut by a series of features which suggests the beginnings of small-scale industrial activity. In Area A (Figure 4b) two shallow pits were cut into the silts to the south of the road (F55 and F84). Both were partially lined with compacted pebbles (1092 and 1143), backfilled with a compact red clay, and associated with post holes. The function of these two features was unclear, although they may have been used as small kilns or ovens. It is hoped that this may be clarified by analysis of samples recovered from their fills. A similar feature to the south was excavated in the 1988 evaluation trench (Cane 1989, 4). Between them was a spread of rounded cobbles (1135) which had the appearance of a coarse, worn surface. To the southeast of these cobbles an area of angular sandstone blocks (F85) may have been the fragmentary remains of a robbed structure. A large rectangular building (Structure Two), represented by two rows of five post holes, was located to the east of F85 and to the south of F55. It measured 12.5m by 4.5m with its long axis perpendicular to the road. The post holes varied considerably in depth, between 0.1m and 0.7m, and were between 0.4m and 0.5m in diameter. Several had been backfilled with the compact red clay characteristic of the industrial features.

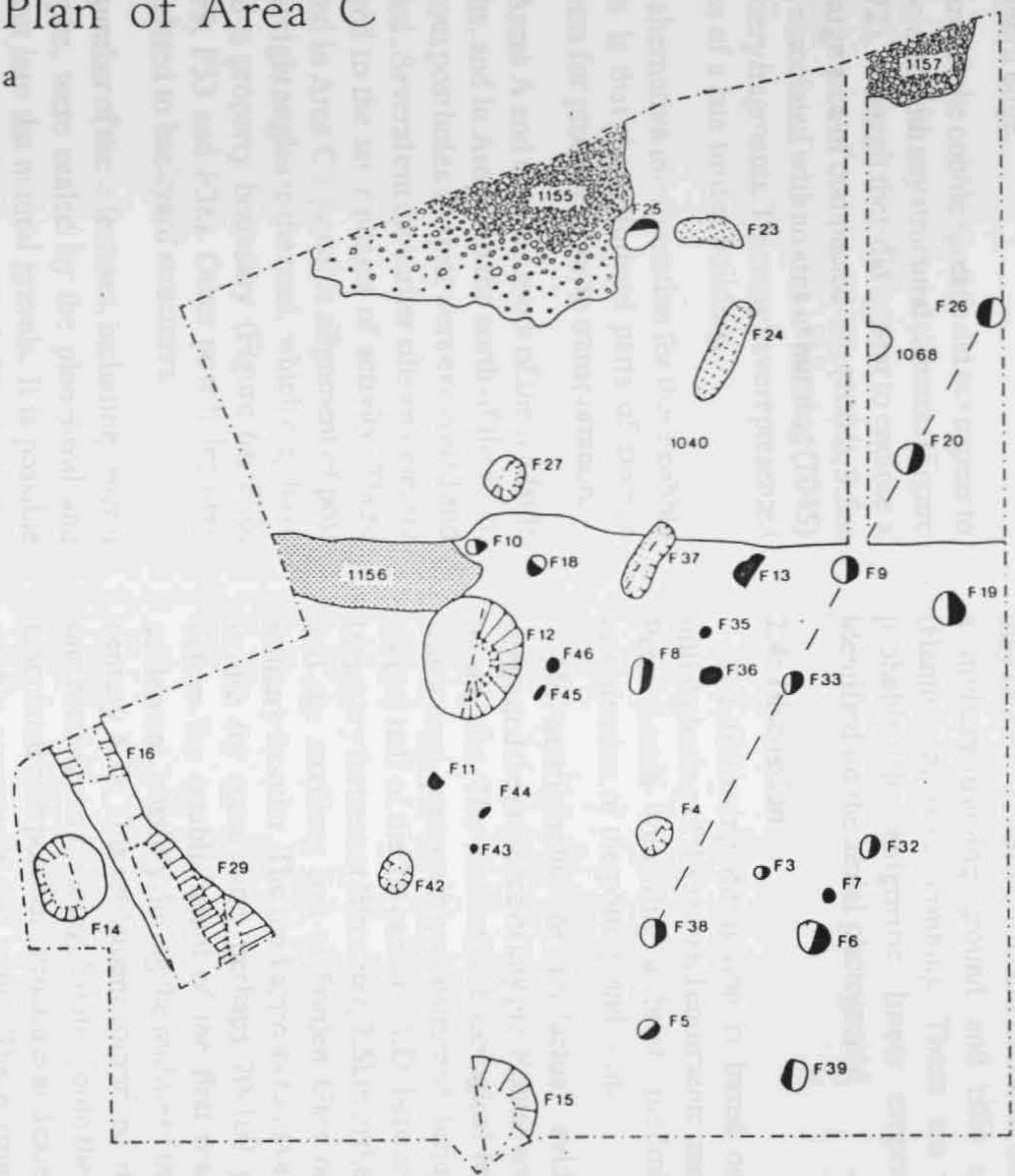
In Area B several features with similar dimensions were excavated to the south of the road (Figure 5b, F111, F113, F115, F116 and F120). These may have belonged to a similar, possibly contemporary, building.

In Area C (Figure 6a) three elongated clay features (F23, F24 and F37), which overlay the earlier silt, may also relate to this phase of industrial activity. These may have been small forges, although the relative absence of evidence for metalworking suggests that they may rather have been used for baking. Further east, a small quantity of iron slag was recovered from Area E (Figure 6b, 1107), although its origin could not be ascertained.

# MEOLE BRACE 1989-90

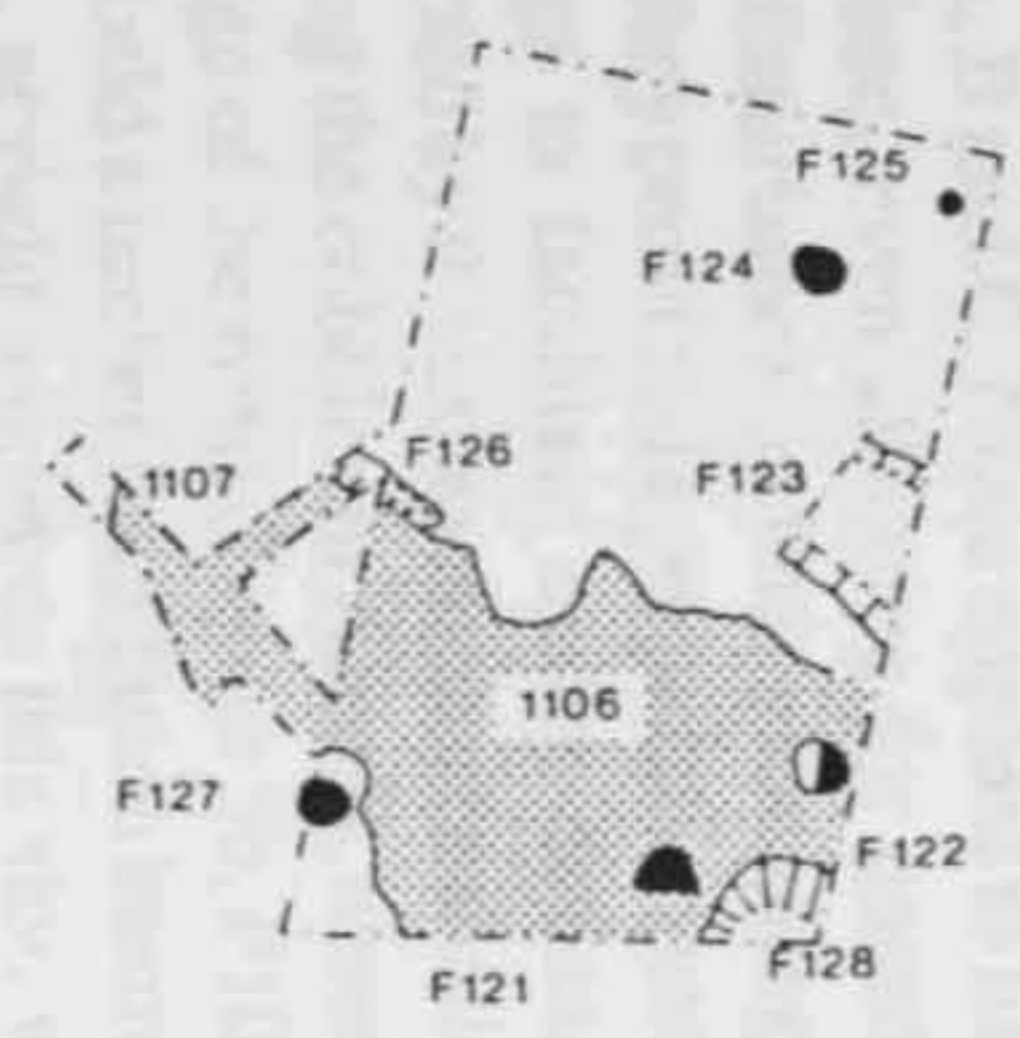
## Plan of Area C

a



## Plan of Area E

b



### Key

- Uneven cobbles
- Worn pebble surface
- Post holes
- Possible alignment
- Burnt clay



Figure 6

### 2.3.4: Phase IV

The final phase of Roman activity appears to have been characterised by extensive spreads of fairly large, rounded cobbles fronting onto the road in Areas A, B and C. None appears to have provided a surface, even allowing for possible truncation and disturbance by later ploughing. It is possible that they provided a preparation under timber buildings to facilitate easier drainage. This was supported by the excavation of a shallow linear slot cutting the cobbles in Area B, close to the southern edge of the road (Figure 5b, F106). This may have held a timber foundation beam. A possible return, at right angles to this slot, was suggested by a distinction between the rounded cobbles (1223) and an area of flat sandstone slabs (1224). The latter may have provided an area of paving outside the building. A fragmentary pebble surface was recorded to the south of the cobbles (1211). No comparable features were recorded to the north of the road in Area B, suggesting that, in this area, the later structures were confined to its southern edge.

In Area A the cobble spreads did not appear to be associated with any structural elements (Figure 4c, 1072), although they did appear to enclose a fairly large area of compacted silt (1004), 9.5m by 7m, associated with an area of burning (1045) and pottery fragments. This may have represented the area of a late timber building.

An alternative interpretation for these cobble spreads is that they formed parts of storage platforms for produce prior to transportation.

In Areas A and C to the south of the roadside deposits, and in Area B to the north of the road, numerous post holes and pits were excavated and recorded. Several cut the earlier silts and clearly belonged to the later phases of activity. These included in Area C a possible alignment of post holes at right angles to the road, which may have formed a property boundary (Figure 6a, F26, F20, F9, F33 and F38). Other post holes may have related to backyard structures.

A number of these features, including several large pits, were sealed by the ploughsoil and were cut into the natural gravels. It is possible that a closer examination of their fills, including analysis of environmental samples and pottery

assemblages recovered from them, may assist in determining their function, and their place in the chronological sequence.

### 2.3.5: Phase V

The final phase of activity is represented in Area A by a steep-sided ditch (Figure 4c, F49), 1.2m wide and 0.6m deep, which appears to respect the northern edge of the road. A similar feature in Area B (Figure 5b, F105/F129) was also located to the north of the road and may be a continuation of the same ditch to the southeast. Both features contained small, mixed assemblages of Roman and post-medieval material. It is possible that they may relate to a comparatively recent field boundary or even to a post-medieval use of the road as a trackway.

In Area B, a vertical-sided trench (Figure 5b, F104), to the south of the road, contained modern bottle glass and a copper plaque. Together with a similar feature in Area C (Figure 6a, F16), this may relate to a relatively recent use of the field as a military training ground and rifle range (Hannaford, pers. comm.). These are very probably the enigmatic linear cropmarks identified on the aerial photograph!

## 2.4: Discussion

The following discussion is based on the initial phasing of the site and comments made by Peter Leach following a brief, preliminary examination of the pottery and coins.

No stratigraphic or artifactual evidence suggested the presence of any pre-Roman activity on the site. The earliest archaeological feature was a road, presumably constructed during the second half of the 1st century A.D. between the legionary fortress at Wroxeter, 7.5km to the east, and the auxiliary fort at Forden Gaer on the military frontier. The road appears to have been in use for some time, perhaps 70-100 years, before the establishment of the first roadside settlement, possibly during the middle of the 2nd century A.D. This settlement comprised at least one rectangular building, fronting onto the road, associated with post hole structures and extensive pebble courtyards and paths. These structures appear to have formed elements of a linear

ie  
SA  
98  
(08096)

roadside development. At least one of the pits to the rear of the structures appears to relate to this phase of activity.

The emergence of the settlement may be contemporary with the establishment of Wroxeter as a *Civitas* capital, and suggests an increasing Romanisation of its hinterland. This may have involved a drift from nearby defended native settlements to roadside villages such as Meole Brace, which had easier access to the Roman infrastructure.

An apparent contraction, or even abandonment, of the settlement during the mid 3rd century is perhaps represented by the accumulation of silt deposits over its structures and surfaces. Much of the pottery from these silts is very worn, and probably represents residual material from the earlier occupation. The reasons for this contraction or abandonment are at this stage unclear, although the road itself may well have continued in use.

The later phases appear to indicate a change in emphasis from domestic to industrial and possibly agricultural activity. Small industrial features, a large aisled building (possibly a storage barn, Structure 2), and coarse cobble spreads were associated with relatively small amounts of late-3rd-century and 4th-century pottery and coinage. Coins from an unstratified assemblage collected from the ploughsoil appear to be predominantly 2nd - early 3rd century with few later types. This tends to support the hypothesis of an initial residential occupation followed by activity of a less domestic nature.

Post-Roman activity on the site is represented by a somewhat erratic post-medieval ditch which, nevertheless, appears to respect the northern edge of the road. This suggests the possible continuing use of the road as a trackway until comparatively recent times. Two additional trenches possibly relate to a relatively recent use of the field as a military training ground.



### 3.1: Introduction.

A six-week excavation in November and December 1989 examined the northwest angle of a rectilinear, round-cornered, cropmark enclosure, measuring 90m by 80m, first identified by aerial photography, and investigated by geophysical survey and trial excavation in 1988 (Cane 1989). The enclosure occupies a low-lying plateau, 0.3km east of the River Severn, 3km south east of Shrewsbury (Figure 1A).

A roughly triangular area, totalling approximately 900 square metres (centred on NGR. SJ 522114), was opened inside the eastern margin of the proposed road corridor (Figure 1B), roughly corresponding in extent to the angle of the enclosure threatened by the road corridor (approximately 5% of the total area of the enclosure). The excavated area was later extended around the outside of the enclosure ditch, to investigate the possible continuation of an entrance trackway, and a putative linear ditch represented by a cropmark extending from the northwest corner of the enclosure. Up to 0.2m of modern overburden was removed by machine under archaeological control, and from this horizon archaeological features and deposits were excavated systematically by hand.

The excavation aimed to achieve an understanding of the sequence of fills within the enclosure ditch by excavating a 25% sample, and to investigate the interior of the enclosure for evidence of occupation suggested by anomalies recorded during the magnetometer survey (Bartlett 1988). In the event a 70% sample of the ditch fills was excavated and baulks were retained for the drawing of sections. Other features were examined in half-section, or fully excavated. The ditch fills were sampled for environmental remains.

### 3.2: The archaeological results. (Figure 7)

Following initial appraisal of the excavation results, it is possible to define elements of three major periods of activity. Further analysis and the input from specialist reports will permit the

refinement of this provisional sequence which is based on the recorded stratigraphy. A preliminary assessment has been made of the results of environmental sampling.

#### 3.2.1: Period 1; The first enclosure

The earliest identifiable event was the excavation of an enclosure ditch (F1) into the natural, well-drained, bright orange sandy-gravel subsoil. In plan the excavated angle of the enclosure comprised two curved sides joining at a rounded corner, angled at approximately 120 degrees. The western arm was interrupted by an entrance 3.2m wide, just inside the eastern edge of the excavated area. Slight misalignment of the outside edge of the northern terminal may be caused by later recutting of the ditch. The ditch (Figure 8, F1) was steep sided in profile with a basal cleaning slot, tapering to a round-ended terminal on both sides of the entrance. North of the entrance the dimensions of the ditch varied (possibly as a result of a different subsoil), tapering from 2.5m wide (2.2m deep) to 1.5m wide beyond the corner. The change in dimensions is reflected in the ditch profile, which became increasingly V-shaped towards the corner, and less steep-sided to the west.

It was not possible to obtain a full profile of the ditch south of the entrance (F2) as it lay mostly beyond the threatened area, but F2 appeared to be similar in profile to F1.

The entrance was further defined by an arrangement of post holes flanking both sides of the ditch terminals and probably contemporary with the first enclosure. On the south side of the entrance were two well-defined, stone-packed post settings (F4, F5), 0.5m and 0.4m deep. Two well-defined post holes (F6, F7), 0.5m and 0.4m deep, were also located to the north. A third feature may have been clipped by the 1988 evaluation trench and dug away. These post holes may relate to an entrance complex consisting of timber uprights (measuring 0.15 - 0.2 m across), possibly extending outside the

# PRESTON FARM (SA 20) 1989

## Main Features

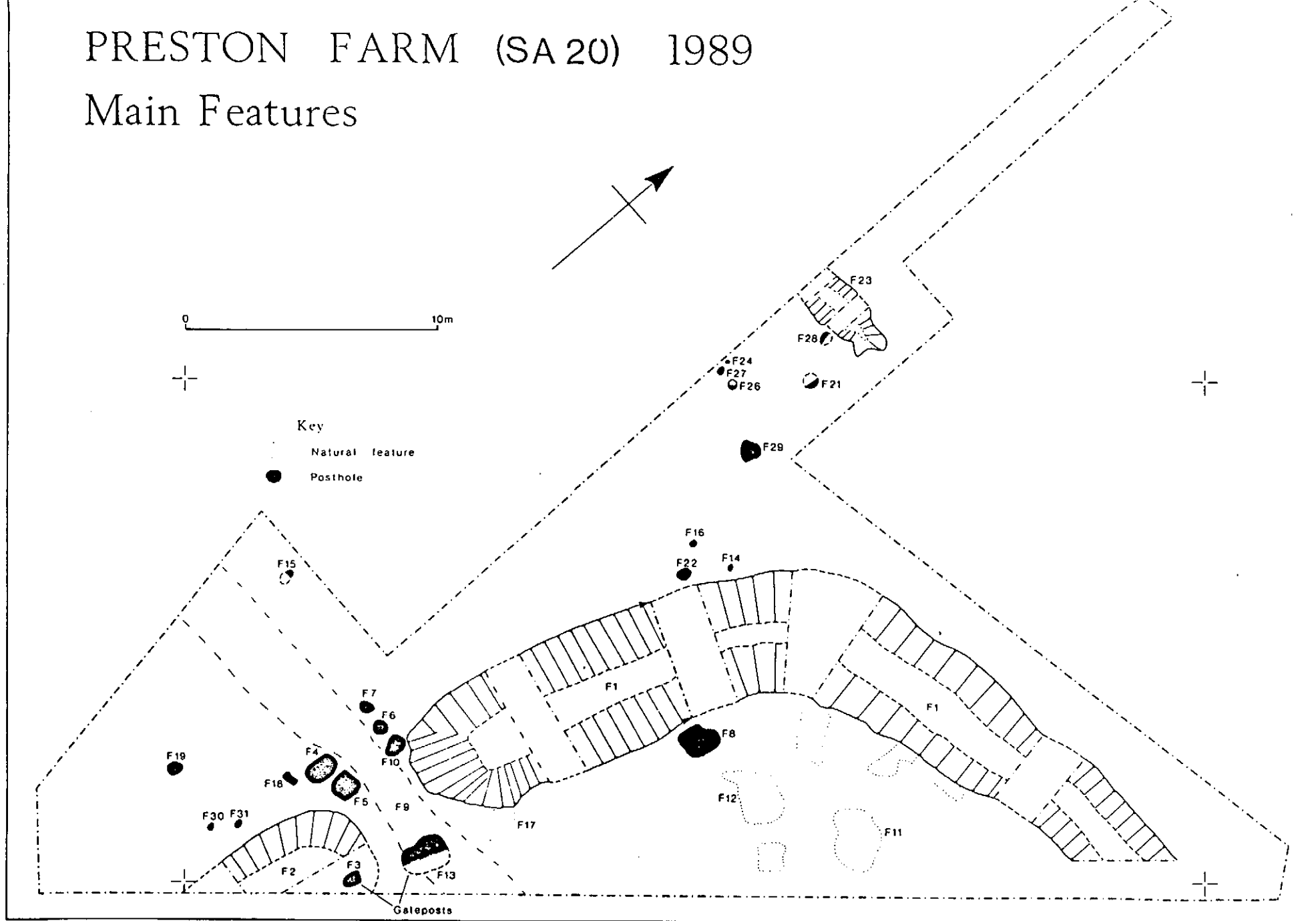


Figure 7

# PRESTON FARM Section

W  
 X 0.56m below TBM

E

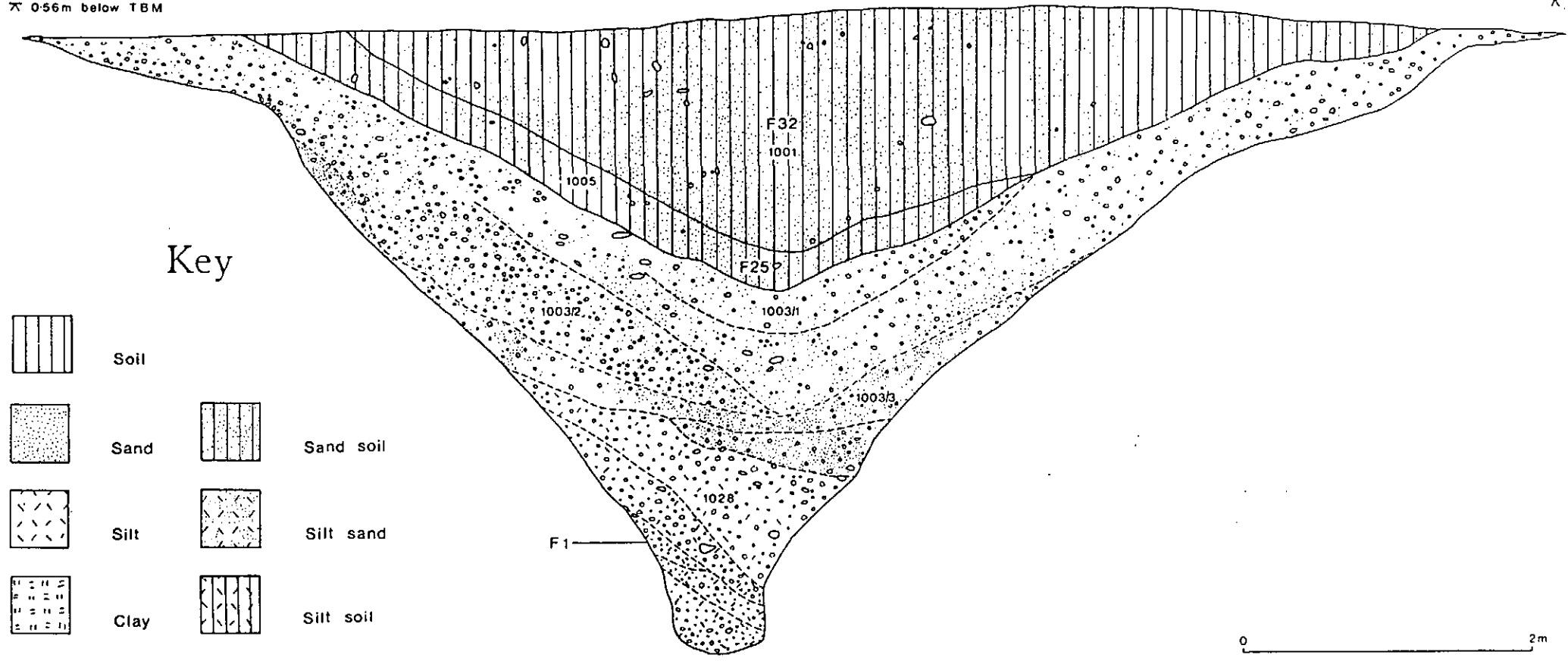


Figure 8

enclosure to include F15, 6m west of F7. A large, stone-packed post hole for a gate post (F13), inside the southern lip of the entrance, may be contemporary with this group.

Inside the enclosure only one feature, an irregular scoop (F8), could be defined with any certainty. Other features investigated probably derive from root or animal disturbance, or are glacial ice-wedges.

A scatter of small, mostly well-defined post holes (F30, F31, F19) along the outer edge of the south ditch terminal cannot be related to any structural arrangement, but may belong to this period and relate to the enclosure complex.

The lowest fills of the enclosure ditches (F1, F2) comprised successive lenses of silt sand and gravel (1028 and 1004/4) tipping into the cleaning slot. These primary fills were sealed by a clean, orange, gravelly sand (1003/3 and 1004/3) derived from weathering of the ditch sides. Above was a sandy gravel, interleaved with lenses of coarser gravel (1003/2), possibly derived from the slighting of an internal rampart: but no evidence for a rampart was contacted in the interior of the enclosure.

### 3.2.2: Periods 2 and 3: the second and third enclosures.

Following the partial obliteration of the ditch by silting and infill, it was recut (F25 in F1 (Figure 8), F33 in F2) to a roughly V-shaped profile, slightly off-centre from its original line, and the entrance was restated to the north. The northern terminal encroached slightly onto the former entrance area, and the southern terminal was cut inside the fills of the Period 1 ditch. This recut was filled with dark brown sandy soil (1005).

The commencement of Period 3 is evidenced by a second recut (F32) of the ditch F25, following its line (Figure 8). This event could not be recorded in ditch F2 because of the limits placed on excavation here.

During Period 2 or 3 a narrow trackway (F9), composed of flat, worn, quartz pebbles set in a dark brown sandy soil (1012), was laid over elements of the Period 1 entrance structure. F9

was a very shallow feature, approximately 2m wide, narrowing to 1.5m at the entrance. Despite disturbance by the plough it survived patchily for a distance of 10m beyond the entrance. The excavation of an entrance post (F3) into the fills of the Period 1 ditch, 2m south of the Period 1 gate-post (F13), re-emphasised the southwards displacement of the entrance in Periods 2/3. A small but well-defined post hole (F18) south of F4/F5 may also belong to this period.

The final recut (F32) was filled with a dark brown, pebbly, sandy clay-soil up to 1m deep, (1001/1002), which contained quantities of Iron Age pottery, burnt clay and charcoal. A similar material filled the remaining hollow of the final recut of the southern ditch profile (F33, 1004/1).

### 3.2.3: Other features.

A group of features, predominantly post holes, clustered northeast of the enclosure, cannot be related to the main sequence. The butt-end of a drainage ditch (F23) aligned east-west was contacted for a length of 2m inside the northern extension. This feature may be associated with a group of mostly well-defined post holes (F29, F21, F24, F26, F27), some possibly representing a fence between the drainage ditch and the corner of the enclosure. This structural arrangement may include three well-defined post holes outside the enclosure (F14, F16, F22).

Recent disturbance of the area is limited to the excavation of a shallow field drain, in the extreme southern corner of the excavated area (F20: not illustrated).

### 3.3: Discussion.

Despite the evident truncation of the archaeology by agriculture, the excavation has demonstrated the survival of elements relating to multi-period use of the enclosure, and provides an important opportunity to study the chronological changes from the structural, artifactual and environmental evidence.

The Period 1 enclosure incorporated a narrow entrance, hitherto unsuspected, complementing a wider opening located by aerial photography in the centre of the western side. The position of the

excavated entrance was broadly respected during later periods. A substantial structure formed of timber uprights bounded the entrance, possibly framing a gate (F13). Despite the lack of direct dating evidence for Period 1, it may be attributed to the Iron Age on stratigraphic and morphological grounds.

Its subsequent reuse, in Periods 2 and 3, possibly after earlier abandonment, is evidenced by repeated recutting of the original ditch, the laying out of a pebble trackway and the restatement of the entrance, including the erection of a new gate-post (F3). The elements of continuity in structural arrangements over Periods 1-3 may belie an underlying change apparent in the artifactual evidence. Period 1 is characterised by a lack of artifacts from the contemporary fills of F1 and F2, suggesting distant or an aceramic

settlement. Periods 2 and 3 are by contrast richer in occupation debris, and a quantity of Iron Age pottery, burnt clay, daub, slag and charcoal has been recovered from the contemporary ditch fills. This evidence hints at an occupation of the enclosure, perhaps for the first time.

Most of the limited area inside the enclosure available for excavation would have been sealed beneath a bank or rampart, and the failure to contact any major structure here is not surprising.

The clusters of post holes located outside the enclosure cannot be directly related to the stratigraphic sequence, and many may be related to the ditch (F23) contacted to the north.

A preliminary study of the environmental samples suggests the potential for important information from the deposits of Periods 1-3 relating to the economy of the site.

## 4.0: DUNCOTE FARM (SA 46) 1990 By A.E. Jones.

P200046-  
00095

## 4.1: Introduction.

A five-week excavation in March and April 1990 investigated part of the south side of a rectilinear cropmark enclosure, measuring 55m by 60m, first identified by aerial photography, and evaluated by selective excavation and magnetometer survey in 1988 (Cane 1989). This enclosure may be associated with a field system to the west and a small ring-ditch to the south. Topographically, the enclosure occupies the top and south-facing slope of a plateau, 8km east of Shrewsbury and 2.5km northeast of Wroxeter (Figure 1A).

Area A, totalling approximately 1000 square metres (centred on NGR. SJ 578113) was opened inside the southern edge of the proposed road corridor, corresponding in extent to approximately half of the enclosure threatened by road construction (Figure 1B). Two further trenches (B and C: not illustrated) to the west of Area A, totalling 200 square metres, were opened to examine elements of the putative field system within the proposed road corridor. In each area, up to 0.2m of modern overburden was removed by machine under archaeological control, and from this horizon archaeological features were excavated systematically by hand. A minimum of 25% of each feature was excavated. The aims of the fieldwork were to achieve an understanding of the archaeological sequence, the spatial distribution of features within each period and their respective functions.

Definition of features was good against the natural subsoil in Area A, which varied from a fine sand to a sandy gravel. To the west, features were blanketed under a deeper ploughsoil, and preservation was better. However the majority of features here belonged to the latter part of the archaeological sequence, which was less truncated. Excavation in Areas B and C was hampered by the poor definition of features against the natural stony gravel.

## 4.2: The archaeological results. (Figures 9 and 10)

Following initial appraisal of the excavation results it is possible to define elements of five distinct phases of activity. Further in-depth analysis of the records, and input from specialist reports, will permit the refinement of this provisional sequence, which is defined as follows:

Period 1: Iron Age field system

Period 2: Romano-British field system

Period 3(?): Later field system

Period 4: The enclosure

Period 5: Post-enclosure activity

It has been possible to complement this stratigraphic sequence by selective spot-dating of the pottery. A preliminary assessment has been made of the results of environmental sampling.

## 4.2.1: Period 1. Iron Age field system.

The earliest period of activity is represented by shallow, linear and slightly curvilinear gullies (F38, F48, F3) cut into the subsoil, difficult to define on excavation. These features, roughly U-shaped in profile and 0.2m - 1m wide, probably represented field boundary ditches, heavily truncated by later activity, and survived to a depth of only c.0.2m. They were irregularly arranged, and did not follow a common orientation. No stratigraphic relationships could be observed between these features. Other features, F31 (Figure 11a) and F5, may be ascribed to this period on morphological grounds. This early field system may be represented to the west by F5 and F47, both cut by Period 2 ditches.

# DUNCOTE FARM (SA 46) 1990 Simplified Plan of Main Features

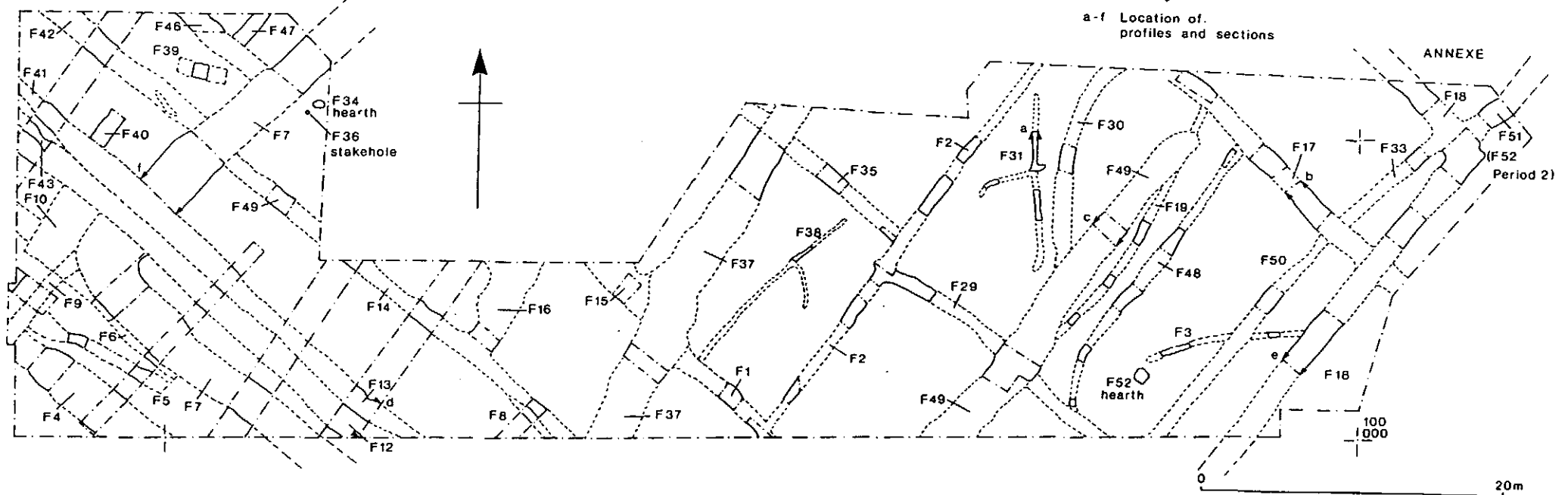


Figure 9

# DUNCOTE FARM (SA 46) 1990

## Main Features Periods 1-5

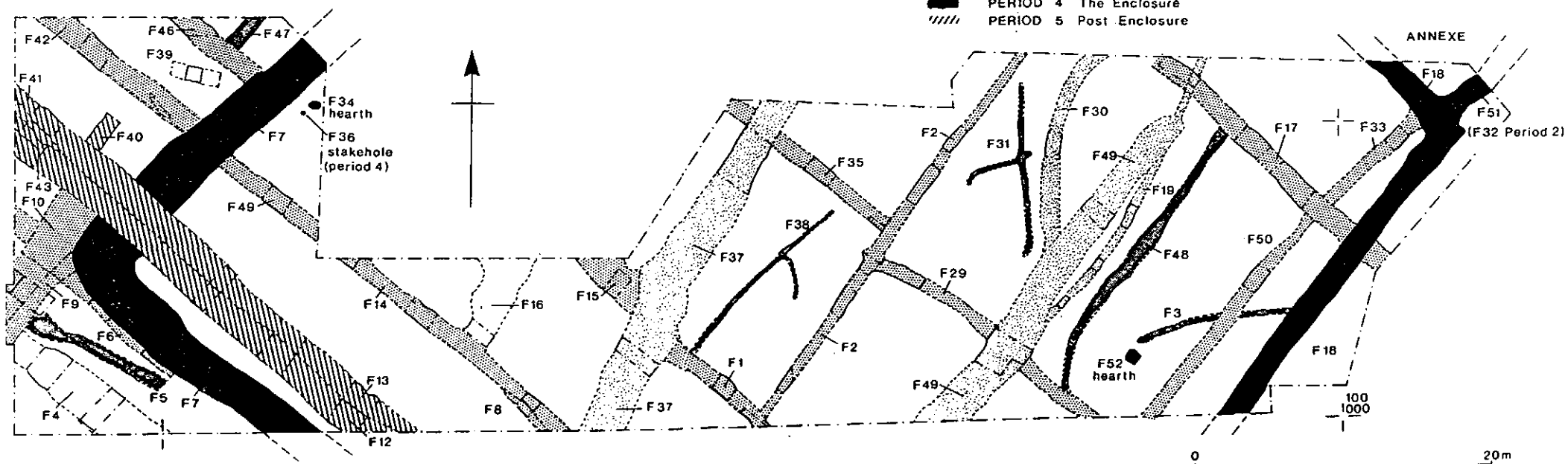


Figure 10



# DUNCOTE FARM Profiles & Sections

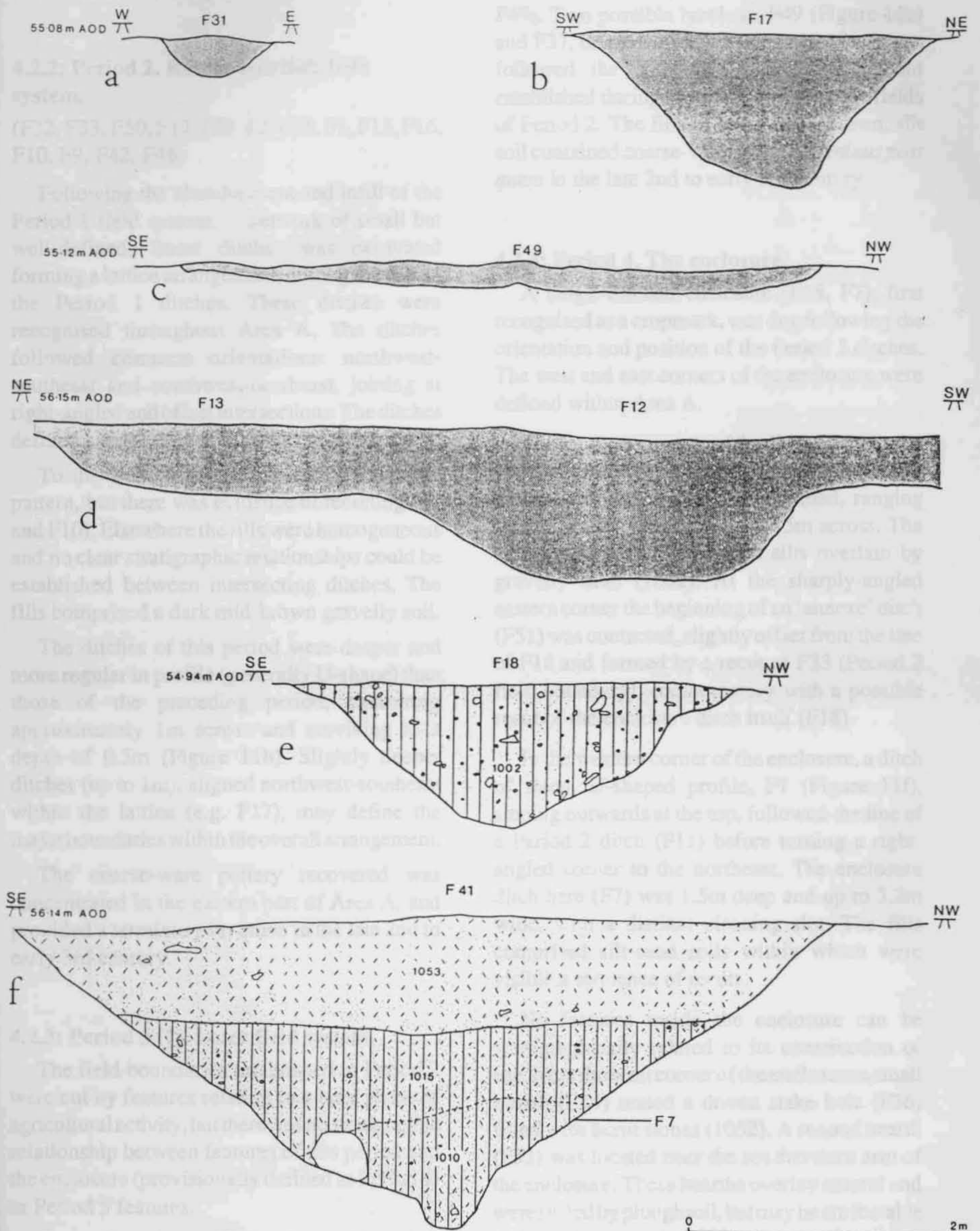


Figure 11

These features were filled with a dark orange-brown sandy soil. No artifacts were recovered from features of this period.

#### 4.2.2: Period 2. Romano-British field system.

(F32, F33, F50, F17, F29, F2, F35, F1, F15, F16, F10, F9, F42, F46)

Following the abandonment and infill of the Period 1 field system, a network of small but well-defined, linear ditches was excavated forming a lattice arrangement, cutting the fills of the Period 1 ditches. These ditches were recognised throughout Area A. The ditches followed common orientations: northwest-southeast and southwest-northeast, joining at right-angled and offset intersections. The ditches defined small fields of 200-400 square metres.

To the west, later disturbance obscures the pattern, but there was evidence of recutting (F9 and F10). Elsewhere the fills were homogeneous and no clear stratigraphic relationships could be established between intersecting ditches. The fills comprised a dark mid-brown gravelly soil.

The ditches of this period were deeper and more regular in profile (generally U-shape) than those of the preceding period, measuring approximately 1m across and surviving to a depth of 0.5m (Figure 11b). Slightly deeper ditches (up to 1m), aligned northwest-southeast within the lattice (e.g. F17), may define the major boundaries within the overall arrangement.

The coarse-ware pottery recovered was concentrated in the eastern part of Area A, and provided a *terminus post quem* in the late 2nd to early 3rd century.

#### 4.2.3: Period 3 (?). Later field system.

The field boundaries established in Period 2 were cut by features relating to a later phase of agricultural activity, but there was no stratigraphic relationship between features of this period and the enclosure (provisionally defined as Period 4) or Period 5 features.

The earliest features belonging to this period

were two slightly curviform, shallow, flat-bottomed ditches, 0.15m deep and up to 1m wide (F30, F19), the latter cutting F17 (and cut by F49). Two possible lynchets, F49 (Figure 11c) and F37, 0.1m deep, 4.8m wide and 18m apart, followed the southwest-northeast alignment established during Period 2, bisecting the fields of Period 2. The fills of stony, dark brown, silt soil contained coarse-wares with a *terminus post quem* in the late 2nd to early 3rd century.

#### 4.2.4: Period 4. The enclosure.

A single-ditched enclosure (F18, F7), first recognised as a cropmark, was dug following the orientation and position of the Period 2 ditches. The west and east corners of the enclosure were defined within Area A.

The southeastern arm of the ditch, F18 (Figure 11e), was the most severely truncated: in profile it was steep-sided and flat bottomed, ranging from 0.5m to 0.8m deep, and 1.5m across. The cleaning slot was filled with silts overlain by gravelly sand (1002). At the sharply-angled eastern corner the beginning of an 'annexe' ditch (F51) was contacted, slightly offset from the line of F18 and formed by a recut of F33 (Period 2 field boundary), contemporary with a possible recut of the enclosure ditch itself (F18).

In the western corner of the enclosure, a ditch of steep, U-shaped profile, F7 (Figure 11f), sloping outwards at the top, followed the line of a Period 2 ditch (F11) before turning a right-angled corner to the northeast. The enclosure ditch here (F7) was 1.5m deep and up to 3.2m wide, with a distinct cleaning slot. The fills comprised silt-sand soils within which were visible a sequence of recuts.

No features inside the enclosure can be stratigraphically related to its construction or use. Near the west corner of the enclosure a small hearth (F34) sealed a driven stake hole (F36) filled with burnt stones (1052). A second hearth (F52) was located near the southeastern arm of the enclosure. These hearths overlay natural and were sealed by ploughsoil, but may be attributable to the enclosure period on the grounds of function.

#### 4.2.5: Period 5. Post-enclosure activity.

Following the disuse and silting-up of the enclosure ditches, a series of parallel, intercutting, shallow ditches with flat bases were excavated cutting the enclosure to the west (Figure 11d, F12 and F13), probably marking the repeated restatement of a field boundary. These features contain predominantly Severn Valley Wares (probably residual) with a *terminus post quem* of late 2nd to early 3rd Century. Despite the conformity of their alignment, these features cannot definitely be ascribed to the Roman period.

#### 4.2.6: Other features.

A few shallow, heavily-truncated and mostly ill-defined ditches cut into the stony gravel subsoil were excavated in Areas B and C (F20-F27: not illustrated) but no artifacts were recovered. Other features recognised here may be ice-wedges.

Some of the features excavated in Area A cannot be related to the stratigraphic sequence (F4, F8, F28, F39, F45).

#### 4.3: Discussion.

Despite the undoubted truncation of the archaeology by agriculture, the excavation has demonstrated the preservation of a rich archaeological resource set within an important multi-period landscape. The main area of the enclosure was not itself a focus for settlement during the Iron Age or Roman period. Such a focus to the east is hinted at by the increased quantity of pottery found towards that area both in the evaluation and the excavation. Later, settlement may have concentrated in the northern annexe of the enclosure.

The majority of ditches may be interpreted as field or property boundaries throughout the archaeological sequence: little aid to drainage would be required in such a free-draining sandy medium.

The Period 1 evidence may be attributed on stratigraphic and morphological grounds to the Iron Age. No datable pottery was recovered from features of this period but a limited quantity of residual Iron Age material was obtained from

later contexts. Despite the heavily truncated and disparate nature of the evidence, it is clear that this field system represented a farming tradition sharply contrasting with the evidence from Period 2.

Period 2 is represented by the superimposition of field boundaries on new alignments, probably laid out as one event, established in the late 2nd or early 3rd century, and respected until the end of the archaeological sequence. The size of the individual 'plots' seem too small for traditional arable fields. Given the close proximity of Wroxeter (2.5km), it is tempting to suggest that these small units represented individual market-garden plots, or possibly pens for small animals reared for market. The eastern ditches within this system received a considerable quantity of rubbish from the presumed contemporary settlement to the east, including coarse-ware pottery and hobnails from shoes.

Despite the inability to relate Period 3 chronologically to the enclosure (Period 4), it is clear that it represents a change in character of activity from that represented in Period 2, but one which might have occurred after abandonment of the enclosure. The main evidence for the period is two possible lynchets. Disuse of the smaller plots may suggest an abandonment of 'market gardening' in favour of larger-scale crop production.

In Period 4 a single-ditched enclosure was constructed following the Period 2 alignments. The ditch was better preserved to the west where successive recutting was evident. No entrances were located by excavation (none are visible on the air photographs), and there was no trace of an internal bank or rampart.

Of particular interest is the waster group recovered from the fills of ditch F18 in the southeast corner of the enclosure during the evaluation. This material represents a dump from a kiln predominantly geared to the production of Severn Valley Ware, identical in appearance and form to excavated fabrics from Wroxeter (Chadderton 1989, 12-13)

Two hearths were located just inside the line of the enclosure, possibly contemporary with Period 4 on grounds of function: other internal

features may have been completely truncated.

After the cutting of the enclosure, a northern <sup>eastern</sup> annexe was formed by the re-excavation (F51) of an earlier field boundary (F32), contemporary with a recut of the enclosure ditch (F18). This event may mark a shift in the focus of settlement from the area to the east of the enclosure into the annexe, the larger enclosure remaining in use as a stock pen. It is difficult to see the enclosure itself as a continuation of the earlier agrarian tradition. The pottery broadly dates the enclosure to the later 2nd or early 3rd century. The apparent absence of 4th-century material is negative evidence for the abandonment of the enclosure by the end of the 3rd century, if not before.

The final, post-enclosure period (Period 5) is represented by a resumption of agrarian activity. The existence of larger field units in this period may be suggested by the fewer number of boundaries contacted in Area A. The comparative lack of pottery may indicate the abandonment of nearby settlement before this period. It is possible that Period 5 is post-Roman.

A 0.5 cubic metre sample was taken from each feature for environmental analysis by flotation. Preliminary analysis of the results suggests the recovery of small, but potentially illuminating assemblages of carbonised seed, grain and husk from more than half of the features,

and from all of the periods of activity defined. This suggests a considerable potential for full analysis to facilitate a proper understanding of the changing cycle of agrarian practice suggested by the archaeological record.

#### 4.4: Conclusion.

The excavation has illustrated an important sequence of changes in agrarian practice and settlement, which is not only very informative in itself, but also has major implications for the study of economic patterning in the Wroxeter hinterland, both spatially and chronologically. The imposition of a 'Romanised' field pattern over the native Iron Age tradition perhaps mirrors the increasing Romanisation of Wroxeter's hinterland in the mid-2nd century, as evidenced, for example, by the probable establishment of the roadside settlement at Meole Brace at this time. Major changes in farming layout during the comparatively short span of occupation, possibly ending during the 3rd century, hint at a flexible local response to the demands of a changing market place. Detailed analysis of the records, finds (including the waster dump), and the results of environmental sampling will provide valuable material for the creation and testing of models of economic interaction between Wroxeter and its hinterland.

**5.0: PRESTON MONTFORD (SA 4237) 1990** By A.E. Jones.

P01 04237

**5.1: Introduction.**

A four-week excavation in March and April 1990 investigated the southwest angle of an irregular-sided, hexagonal, single-ditched cropmark enclosure measuring c.40m by 35m. First identified by aerial photography, it had not hitherto been evaluated by trial excavation or geophysical survey. The enclosure is located 5km northwest of Shrewsbury (Figure 1A), and 300m north of Calcott Farm, Bicton.

A roughly rectangular area measuring 15m by 45m (centred on NGR. SJ 437143) was opened inside the northern margin of the proposed road corridor, approximately corresponding in extent to the corner of the enclosure threatened by road construction (Figure 1B). Up to 0.2m of modern overburden was removed by machine under archaeological control, and from this horizon archaeological features were excavated systematically by hand. Excavation and archaeological cleaning were confined to the ditch and the interior of the enclosure and little investigation was possible outside this area.

In the event, it was possible to excavate approximately a 40% sample of the ditch fills, and other features were examined in half-section. The enclosure ditch was excavated by means of six separate trenches cut across its line (1-6), and the fills were sampled for environmental evidence.

**5.2: The archaeological results. (Figure 12)**

Following initial appraisal of the excavation results it is possible to define elements of four distinct phases of activity. Further in-depth analysis of the records and input from specialist reports will allow the refinement of this provisional sequence.

**5.2.1: Period 1: The first enclosure.**

The earliest recognisable event was the excavation of an enclosure ditch (F3) into the natural clay subsoil. In plan, the excavated corner of the enclosure comprised two roughly linear

sides joining at an angle of approximately 120 degrees. To the northwest the ditch was interrupted by an entrance, 6m across. The southern ditch terminal was slightly inturned and flat-ended with rounded corners; the northern terminal (F16) (only partly within the excavated area) was also flat-ended. The enclosure ditch varied in profile: to the south (Figure 13) the ditch was roughly U-shaped, flaring outwards at the top, with a shallow basal cleaning slot (not present in Trench 5). Beyond the corner the ditch was more irregular in profile, becoming V-shaped towards the ditch terminals. The first enclosure ditch was c.1.3m deep, and c.3m wide, broadening to 4.5m at the corner.

The lowest fill of F3 was a red sand (1013/1) derived from weathering of the sides, overlain by a compact blue-grey clay (1009), sealed by deep silts and capped by topsoil (Trenches 1-4).

**5.2.2: Period 2: The second enclosure.**

A second distinct phase of activity is marked by the partial recutting (F2) of the earlier ditch (F3), respecting the line of the southern arm of F3. This recut could only be defined in Trenches 5 and 6 (Figure 13). The recut ditch was of regular, steep-sided, V-shaped profile, 4m across and surviving to a depth of 1.1m.

The primary fill, a red sand (1013/2), was sealed by sand-silts and clay-silts (1005, 1004, 1002) and capped by topsoil (1000).

**5.2.3: Period 3: Further activity.**

Following the abandonment and partial obliteration of the recut by silting, a group of straight-sided post holes (F12, F14, F15), 0.1m across, were cut into the upper fill of the recut (1002). The features were arranged in a triangle, spaced 0.2m apart and contained no artifacts.

**5.2.4: Period 4: Modern.**

A series of deep, modern, vertical-sided field drains (F1) (not fully illustrated) cut the initial enclosure ditch (F3).

# PRESTON MONTFORD (SA 4237) 1990

## Main Features

0 10m

Key

- Possible natural feature
- Posthole

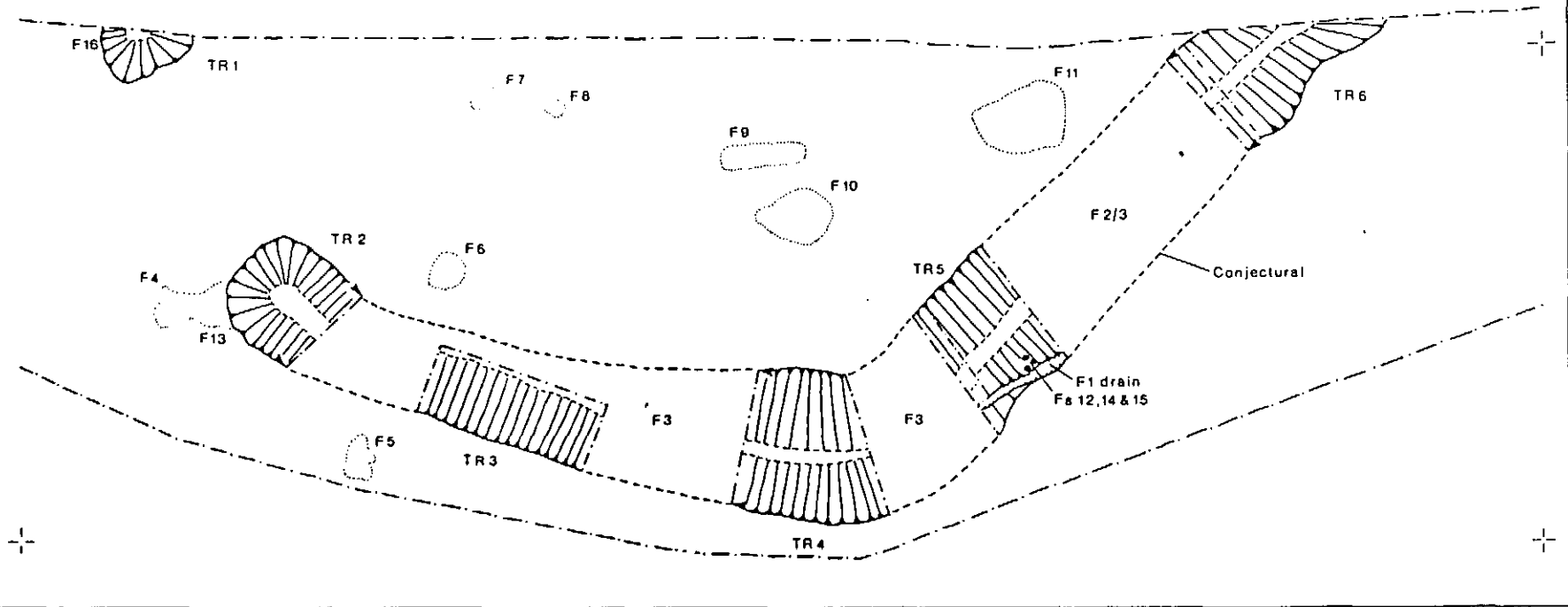


Figure 12

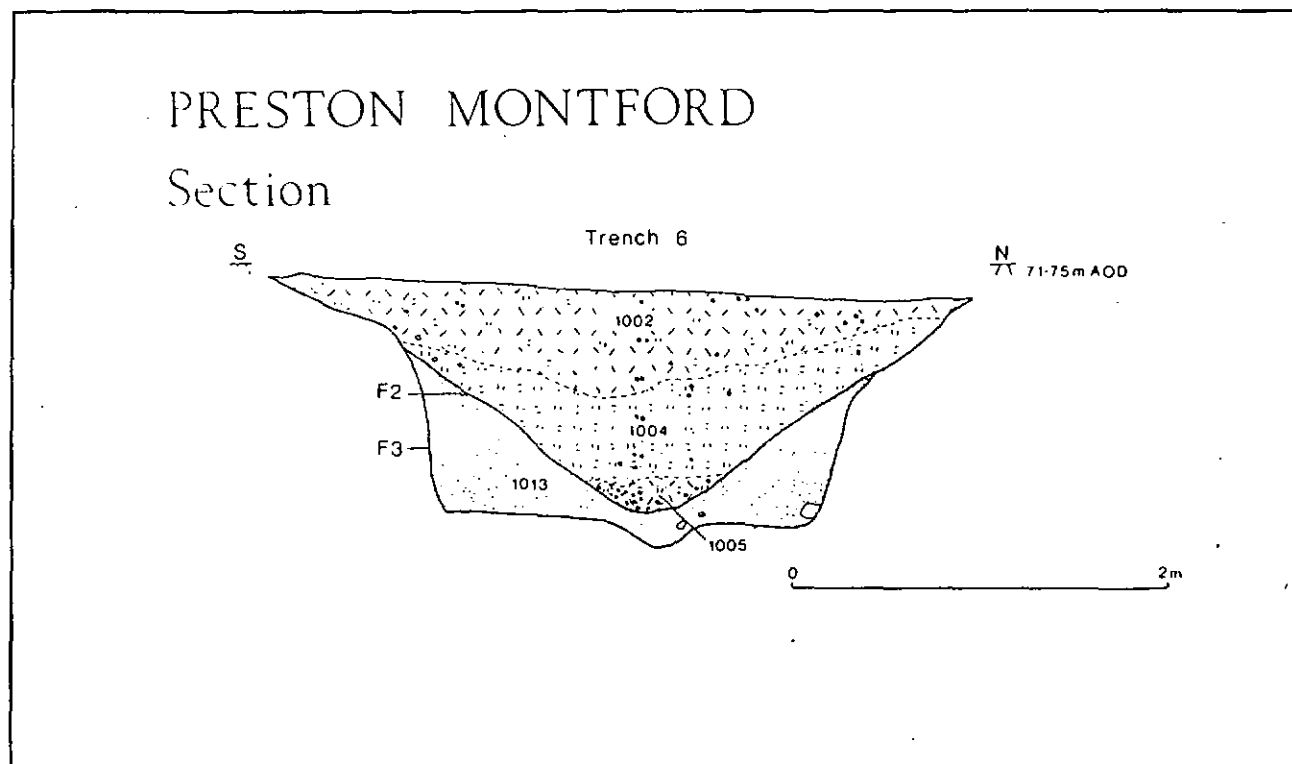


Figure 13

### 5.2.5: Other features.

A number of shallow and mostly ill-defined negative features (F4-F11 and F13), between 0.1 and 0.3m deep, were also excavated, the majority within the enclosure. These flat-bottomed scoops were cut into natural clay, filled with light grey mottled clay (1014) and sealed by topsoil (1000); they had no discernible relationship with any major feature, but were cut by the modern field drains (F1). Of the group located outside the enclosure (F4, F5, F13), F4 contained an abraded sherd of Severn Valley Ware. Most of these small features may be tree root holes.

There was no evidence of an inner bank or rampart.

### 5.3: Discussion.

This excavation has defined the character of the southwest corner of the primary ditched enclosure, and located a contemporary entrance. Despite the lack of datable artifacts from primary contexts F3 may possibly be dated on morphological grounds to the Iron Age.

A bonus was the definition of a second major period of activity, represented by the partial

recutting of F3. The limited extent of the recut may suggest that F2 had a wider entrance than its precursor, broadly respecting the earlier position. A protracted period of abandonment is suspected before re-use.

The three small post holes cut into the upper fill of the recut during Period 3 cannot be related to any structural arrangement.

A disappointment was the inability to relate the smaller negative features to the main structural sequence, and many, if not most, of these may be attributable to root or animal disturbance.

Sampling of well-stratified deposits for environmental evidence has yielded few plant remains. This negative evidence may suggest that the Period 1 and 2 enclosures may not have been intimately connected with arable farming.

Despite the evident truncation of the archaeology by agriculture, the enclosure ditches are relatively well preserved, and historically informative. Other smaller features may have been truncated beyond recognition.

Until more detailed analysis of the records is undertaken, further speculation is not worthwhile.

## 6.0: ARCHIVE AND FINDS ASSESSMENT By P. Ellis

### 6.1: The paper archive

Each of the four excavated sites was recorded according to a standard format. The site archives comprise files containing a standard BUFAU pro-forma for contexts and features; field drawings; photographs (both black and white and colour); data relating to the finds; and records of the preliminary evaluation and survey phases. A rough indication of the relative size of these archives is given by the number of contexts and features individually recorded (Table 1). It will be seen that the Meole Brace and Duncote Farm records are comparatively complex by contrast with those for Preston Farm and Preston Montford.

Table 1 A5 project: paper archives  
(excluding records from 1988 evaluation and 1990 watching briefs)

Site	features	numbers of		
		contexts	plans & sections	photographs
Meole Brace	119	210	124	1,020
Preston Farm	24	30	44	140
Duncote Farm	52	70	94	330
Preston Montford	16	16	18	100

### 6.2: Assessment of the stratigraphic value of the sites

All the excavated sites have been subjected to plough damage. The greatest degree of damage had been experienced at Preston Farm and Preston Montford, where effectively no overall archaeological layers survived, and the surviving deposits were located solely within features cut into the natural subsoil. At Duncote Farm, similarly, overall layers were absent but a far greater degree of survival of features was clear.

The evidence at Meole Brace, on the other hand, came from well-stratified and well-defined strata, perhaps reflecting a degree of protection afforded by the road itself, and/or by the suggested recent hedgeline.

The limits of none of the sites were clearly defined. A focus of occupation was suggested at Duncote Farm to lie beyond the excavation limits, while at Preston Farm and Preston Montford only a segment of the enclosures was examined, although the aerial photographic evidence suggested that the enclosures represented the principal features at both sites. By contrast, at Meole Brace the excavation may have centred on the focal point of the roadside settlement, and this will allow the site function to be more reliably assessed from the excavated sample.

As with other rural sites these enjoyed the advantage over their urban counterparts of archaeological sequences very largely undamaged by later intrusions.

### 6.3: The finds: quantity and value for further study

The quantity of finds from the four sites was small; only at Meole Brace was there a reasonably wide range of pottery and artifacts (Table 2). Pottery finds comprised Romano-British material from Meole Brace and Duncote Farm and about 30 sherds of Iron Age pottery from Preston Farm. A handful of Roman coins came from Meole Brace which also produced a small assemblage of quernstones and whetstones. Metal finds, (of copper alloy, lead and iron), were limited to Meole Brace and Duncote Farm. A small amount of slag was also collected from three of the sites. Environmental samples were taken at all the sites, and samples were recovered from the industrial features at Meole Brace for analysis of possible metallic or other residues.



Table 2 A5 project: quantity of finds

Principal finds categories	Site			
	Meole Brace	Preston Farm	Duncote Farm	Preston Montford
Pottery	7 boxes	30 sherds	2 boxes	2 sherds
Amphorae	5 boxes	-	5 sherds	-
Brick and tile	2 boxes	-	1 box	-
Quernstone	5 frags.	-	-	-
Miscellaneous stone	1 box	-	-	-
Small iron	1 box	2 items	7 items	-
Coins	33	-	-	-
Glass	22 frags.	-	-	-
Slag	1 box	15 lumps	3 lumps	-
Other finds	1 box	12	6	-
Environmental samples	23	11	45	13
Industrial samples	21	-	-	-

Animal bone (presumably once present) had not survived the soil conditions, excepting a few teeth from Meole Brace

In the original research design (Watson 1989) the main objectives of work in the Wroxeter hinterland focused on two areas: the question of the extent and nature of Iron Age settlement, and the degree of Romanisation of the countryside around Wroxeter in the Roman period. Preliminary appraisal of the environmental samples, pottery and other finds indicates that detailed analysis will shed considerable light on these questions.

Pottery: Iron Age pottery finds were disappointingly rare but the small assemblage from Preston Farm will repay close study and detailed comparison with the assemblages from Sharpstones Hill and the Berth (Morris, forthcoming a and b). The Romano-British assemblages from Duncote Farm and Meole Brace represent the first substantial, well-stratified groups from the environs of Wroxeter and again should repay a close study and detailed comparison with the contemporary urban Wroxeter pottery, particularly in the light of the discovery of a probable Severn Valley waster

dump at Duncote Farm. Preliminary assessment appears to place the entire Meole Brace and Duncote Farm assemblages in the late 2nd/3rd centuries. Clarifying the chronology and changes of site use at Meole Brace and Duncote Farm will have implications for the broader understanding of the Wroxeter hinterland in the Roman period.

Other finds: Coins, small finds, and stone objects were found in small number. They also require detailed study and presentation, particularly with reference to the comparative material from Wroxeter.

Environmental samples: Preliminary work on the environmental samples suggests that a range of information will be forthcoming for all of the sites and for both the prehistoric and the Roman periods. The changing site functions at Duncote Farm and Meole Brace in particular may well be illuminated by the final results. Equally the function of the Preston Farm and Preston Montford enclosures should be clarified, if only through the absence of the ecofactual characteristics of an agrarian environment.

## 7.0: POST EXCAVATION RESEARCH DESIGN By P. Ellis

### 7.1: Summary of results

These are presented in sections 2.0 - 5.0 above. Their wider significance is considered here.

The two enclosure excavations (Preston Farm and Preston Montford) have illuminated data which has hitherto been largely confined to aerial photographic evidence. Despite plough damage, a limited sample, the absence of complex stratigraphy, and the paucity of dating evidence, these two excavations promise to add greatly to our understanding of rural enclosures in the Wroxeter hinterland.

Both excavations demonstrated complexity of occupation. The ditches had been redefined after initial silting and infilling. This, and the maintenance of entrances suggests that the main enclosure definition was represented by an inner bank. The Period 2 and 3 occupation at Preston Farm was marked by occupation material perhaps indicating a quite different use of the enclosure. The complex treatment of the minor entranceway located here is of considerable interest.

The chronological position of Preston Farm will only be illuminated by assessment of the Iron Age pottery in relation to other assemblages from lowland Shropshire.

At Meole Brace, excavation demonstrated an informative sequence at a small roadside settlement dated to the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. The initial settlement might represent a collection point for produce delivered from farms nearby, or one for an estate. It seems possible that roadside settlements such as these might have housed Provincial officials supervising shipments and imposing taxes. There was some evidence of agricultural activities other than storage and these may suggest a degree of centralised organisation of farming. The provisional dating for the establishment of the settlement suggests a possible relationship with the abandonment of Sharpstones Hill. Phase III activity with its small-scale industrial working seems to mark a re-use of the

site, following a period of abandonment, for a less official function. The Phase IV evidence, perhaps, marks a return to a site used for storage and transport.

Although Duncote Farm is difficult to understand in detail (it is especially hard to find parallels for the small fields or plots of Period 2), two general points emerge from the excavations. One is the probable continuation of agricultural activity between the Iron Age Period 1 and the Romano-British Period 2, and the second is the surprising abandonment of the field layout in favour of the Period 4 enclosure.

The excavation results offer both site-specific detail of great interest and more general data which will allow wide-ranging discussion of Iron Age and Romano-British land use in the Wrekin and Wroxeter hinterland. Watching briefs, by H.R. Hannaford, at these and other sites during the construction of the new road should provide additional information. This will be integrated into the final reports.

Turning to the original research design (Watson 1989), for the Iron Age period the excavations offer a) an important, if small, assemblage of Iron Age pottery, b) evidence for longevity, c) a suggestion (from the Preston Farm entranceway) of maintained defences, and d) potential data on the agrarian function of the enclosures. For the Romano-British period they offer a) a suggestion (at Meole Brace) of an organised produce collection and taxing point, b) evidence for a fairly narrow occupation chronology in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, c) evidence at Duncote Farm of both continuity from the Iron Age, and of a major change of site use in the 2nd or 3rd century, d) the possibility of artifact study to clarify patterns of town/countryside trade and production, and e) ecofactual data which will potentially illuminate the impact of Romanisation on agricultural practice.

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