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SNY	11968
ENY	4180
CNY	
Parish	5063
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St. John's Terrace,

Skipton Castle,

Skipton

An Archaeological

Watching Brief

for

Wales, Wales & Rawson

Alison Clarke

June 1996

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT ST. JOHN'S TERRACE, SKIPTON CASTLE

SITE DESCRIPTION AND INTRODUCTION

The site (Plan 1), on the western edge of the grounds of Skipton Castle, is a roughly triangular piece of ground outside the main outer wall of the medieval castle. It is bounded by this wall to the east, and overlooks the Springs Canal and Mill Dam to the north and west. To the south it overlooks the eastern edge of the town and the church of the Holy Trinity (Plans 1 & 2). The ground within the terrace is relatively level, but drops away steeply to the north, west and south.

It was proposed in the autumn of 1995 to clear the area of the rubbish and builders rubble which had accumulated on it (Plate 3), and enclose it within a new perimeter wall on the edge of the escarpment, in order to create a picnic area for visitors to the castle. Because of the proximity of the site to the medieval castle, an archaeological watching brief was required to oversee the works and record any archaeological remains.

THE WATCHING BRIEF

The watching brief took place in two phases. The first was in October 1995, when trial trenches were machine excavated across the edge of the scarp slope on the south-west and north-west sides of the terrace, to a maximum depth of 120 cm. The second phase, which took place after a retaining wall was built around the edge of the terrace, was conducted in February 1996, when the ground levels within the terrace area were lowered by a maximum of 15 cm.

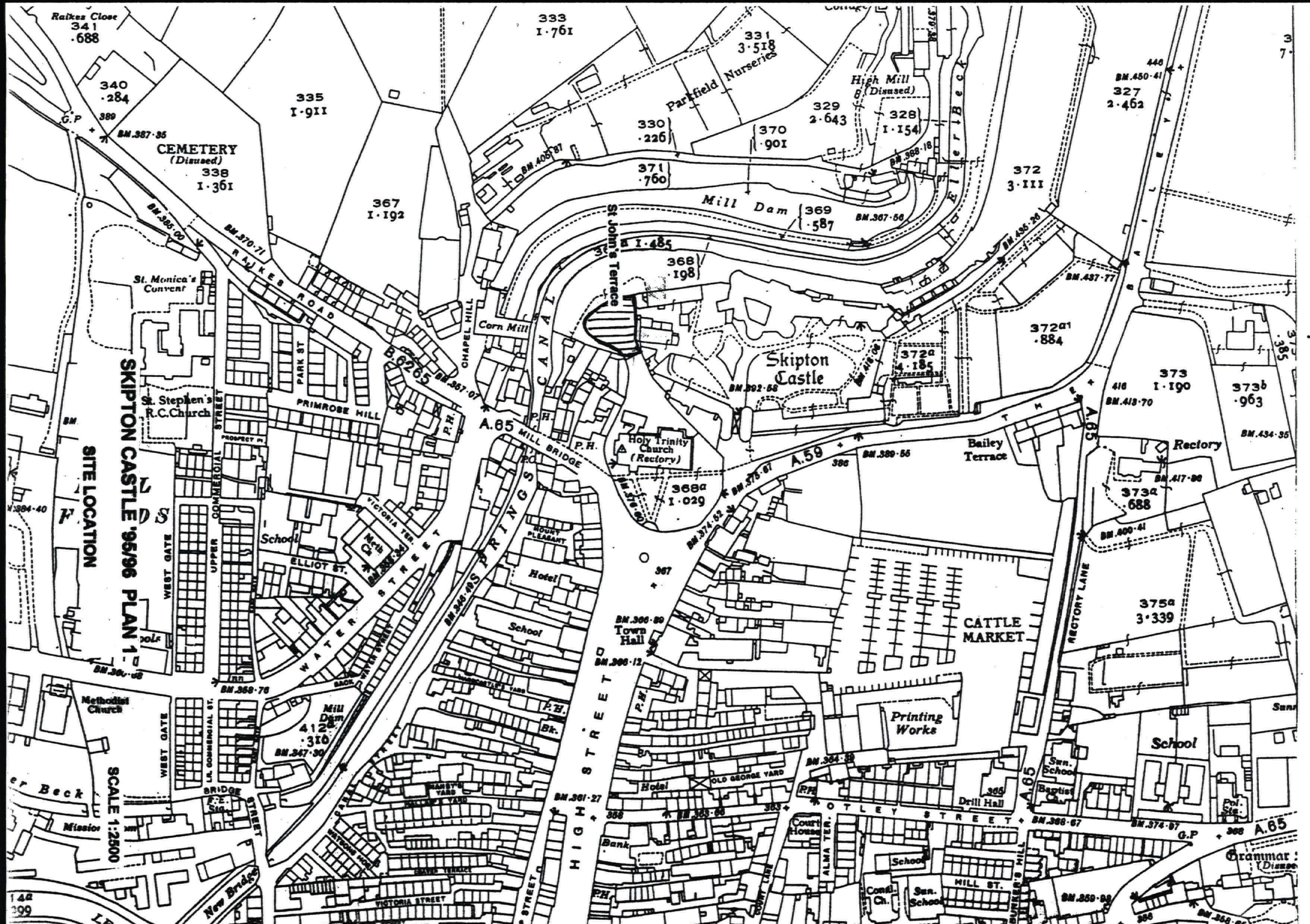
Trench A, on the south-west side of the scarp (Plan 2, Plate 1), was 320 cm. long and 75 cm. wide, with a maximum depth of 110 cm. Beneath approximately 20 cm. of topsoil was a thick layer of stones and rubble containing some dressed stone, along with brick, glass, ash and lime mortar. Towards the outer edge of the trench, this layer overlaid brown clay which appeared to be the natural ground surface at a depth of approximately 85 cm.

Trench B, on the north-west side of the scarp (Plan 2, Plate 2), was 310 cm. long, 80 cm. wide and a maximum of 120 cm. deep. Here the topsoil overlay 30 cm. of grey rubble filled soil with pieces of tarmac and brick within it. Below this was a narrow (8 cm.) band of loose orange sandy clay which in turn covered a further layer of brown loamy soil with rubble, which reached to a depth of 100 cm. A fragment of clay pipe was recovered from near the bottom of this layer. From the bottom of this layer to the base of the trench the subsoil was a hard brown clay containing limestone fragments and traces of mortar. The stones were spread across the clay surface.

The reduction of the ground levels within the terrace area (Plates 3 & 4) also revealed modern builders rubble and spoil beneath the uneven surface of the terrace. Rubble and builders waste, including a layer of lime mortar, was interspersed between sandy loam buried topsoil layers.

CONCLUSIONS

All the layers above the hard brown clay, between 85 and 100 cm. below the existing ground surface, were obviously of recent origin, arising from the use of the area as a dumping ground for unwanted rubbish which



Raikes Close
341
688

333
1-761

331
3-518

340
284

335
1-911

330
226

370
901

329
2-643

328
1-154

440
BN.450-41
327
2-462

BN.387-85
CEMETERY
(Disused)
338
1-361

367
1-192

371
760

Mill Dam
369
587

372
3-III

St. Monica's
Convent

St John's Terrace
368
198

372a1
884

SKIPTON CASTLE '95/96 PLAN 1

PRIMROSE HILL

Skipton Castle

373
1-190

373b
963

St. Stephen's
R.C. Church

Holy Trinity Church
(Rectory)
368a
1-029

Bailey Terrace

Rectory

UPPER COMMERCIAL STREET

A.65

A.59

373a
688

School

Hotel

CATTLE MARKET

375a
3-339

WEST GATE

ELLIOT ST.

School

Printing Works

School

Methodist Church

BRIDGE

Mill Dam
4128
316

Hotel

BN.306-89
Town Hall

Drill Hall

Sun. School

Baptist Church

SCALE 1:2500

WEST GATE

BRIDGE

BN.347-30

Hotel

BN.306-12

BN.304-88

Drill Hall

Sun. School

Baptist Church

New Bridge

VICTORIA STREET

Hotel

BN.301-27

BN.304-88

Drill Hall

Sun. School

Baptist Church

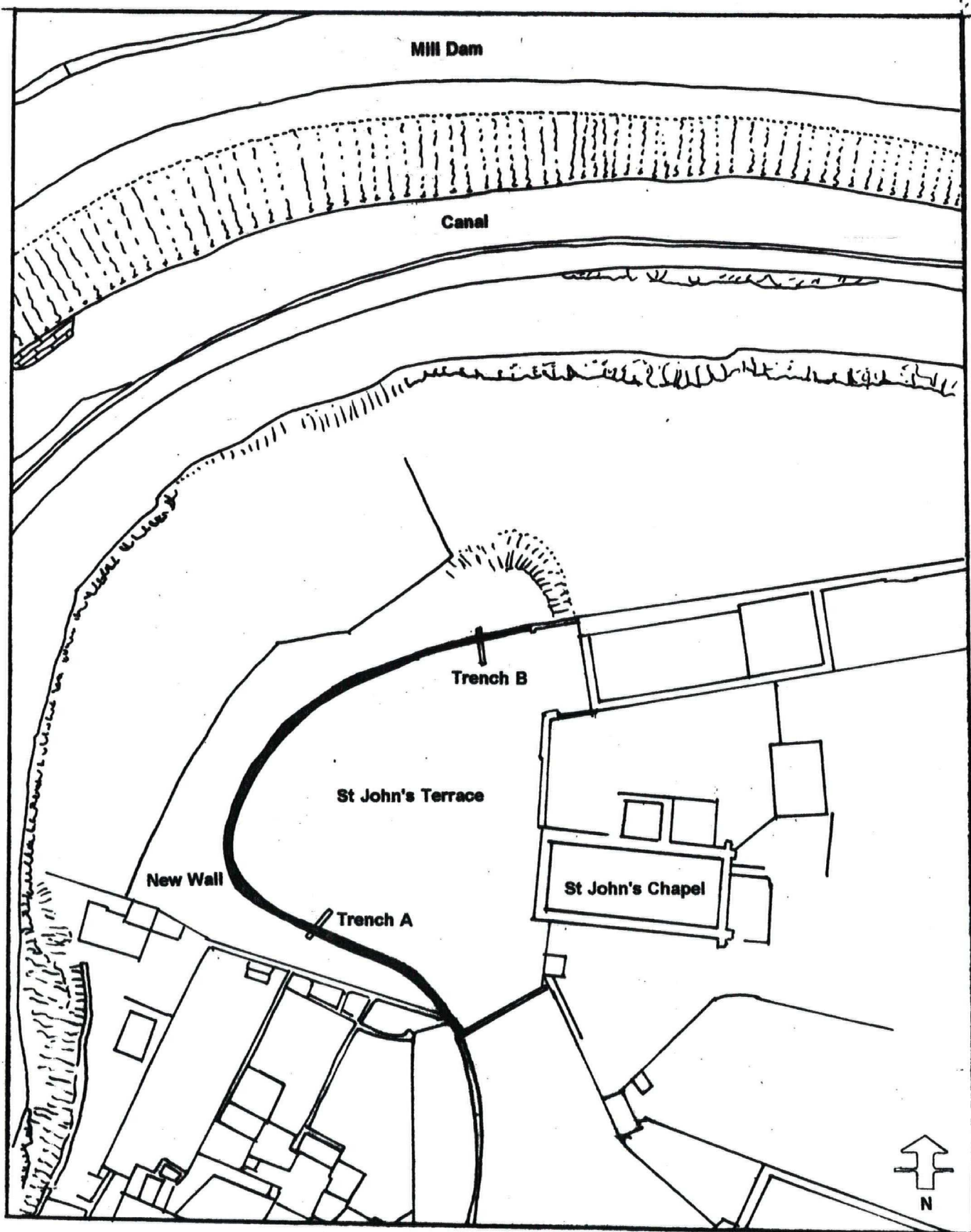
Grammar (Disused)

has gradually accumulated over the last two centuries. The limestone fragments embedded in the brown clay in Trench B could represent an attempt to provide a hard surface at the edge of the steep drop to the river at a time before the main build up of rubbish on the site. In the absence of dating material from this layer, it is only possible to say that it occurred in or before the nineteenth century.

No other archaeological features or finds were observed during work on the site.

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June 1996



SCALE 1:500

SKIPTON CASTLE '95/96 PLAN 2

SITE PLAN



PLATE 1 ST. JOHN'S TERRACE, TRENCH A



PLATE 2 ST. JOHN'S TERRACE, TRENCH B



PLATE 3 ST. JOHN'S TERRACE,LOOKING EAST, BUILDERS RUBBLE



PLATE 4 ST. JOHN'S TERRACE, GROUND LEVELLING