

*BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY
FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT*

**LITTLE PAXTON
QUARRY,
DIDDINGTON,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
FIELD 6 (SOUTH)
FIELDWALKING 1998**

B.U.F.A.U.



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**Little Paxton Quarry, Diddington,
Cambridgeshire
Field 6 (South) Fieldwalking 1998**

by
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1.0: SUMMARY

This report describes the results of fieldwalking of an area (Field 6, South) of approximately 2.2ha. within Little Paxton Quarry, Diddington, Cambridgeshire. Fieldwalking yielded a total of 27 humanly struck flint items, including three scrapers, five retouched flakes, a core, 15 flakes and three more substantial struck pieces. The other material collected by fieldwalking, comprising mainly post-medieval tile fragments, probably derives from manuring scatters.

2.0: INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of the fieldwalking and test-pitting of an area of approximately 2.2ha. comprising Field 6, South (centred on NGR. TL 20386582) of the Phase 3 area at Little Paxton Quarry, Diddington, Cambridgeshire. It was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of Bardon Aggregates Limited. The methodology adopted follows a Specification prepared by BUFAU (Jones 1998).

The aims of the fieldwalking were to attempt to define the extent of settlement and activity within this field, based on relative artifact density on the ploughsoil surface, and to date this activity from analysis of the artifact assemblages. Of particular interest was the definition of evidence for Bronze Age and earlier activity. The information contributed by the fieldwalking is intended to assist in the formulation of a strategy for subsequent excavation of this area.

This fieldwork forms part of a large-scale archaeological project (see Jones forthcoming for a summary of the results to date), begun in 1992, which aims to provide a landscape-based analysis of changes in settlement forms and economy within the quarry concession, and to relate these changes to the evolving river valley environment. The Field 6 (South) investigations formed the first stage in the evaluation of the Phase 3 area. The southern half of the adjoining Field 5 has been evaluated (Dingwall and Jones 1998), and subsequent archaeological mitigation, comprising salvage recording has been completed. The Field 6 (South) fieldwalking follows the replotting of the air photograph data (Air Photo Services 1998, see Fig. 2)

No previous archaeological fieldwork had been undertaken in the Field 6 (South) area. The plotted cropmarks in the area fieldwalked include a group of pits towards the southwest of the field, and possible ditched enclosures in the centre of the field.

3.0: METHODOLOGY

Following ploughing, and weathering of the field surface, the area was walked, with collection of all artifacts, by 25m square grids (Fig. 3), based upon the National Grid. Artifacts were collected and bagged by a team of fieldwalkers walking at approximately 3m intervals. A small area in the extreme southwestern corner of the field was not available for fieldwalking.

4.0: FIELDWALKING RESULTS by Lynne Bevan

4.1: Flint Finds (Fig. 4)

A total of 27 items of humanly-struck flint was recovered, of which seven originated from grid square E5 (Fig. 4). The total assemblage consisted of three scrapers, five retouched flakes, 15 flakes and three more substantial struck pieces. The distribution and artifactual composition of the assemblage is shown on Figure 4. The raw material used was a good quality dark grey flint with traces of the thin, compacted cortex indicative of a local pebble source.

It is significant that the largest amount of items were collected from one grid square (E5), including the core, all three scrapers, and three of the four retouched flakes. In contrast to the remaining material, which occurred either singly or in groups of up to three items, with a random distribution across the field, this small tool concentration is suggestive of early prehistoric settlement or other activity.

Since none of the items are chronologically diagnostic, a Neolithic to Bronze Age date seems most likely, and would accord with previous work in Fields 1 and 2 within the Phase 2 area of the quarry (Bevan 1996 and 1997).

4.2: Non-flint finds (distribution not illustrated: see Fig. 3 for grid)

The non-flint finds collected are listed in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: NON-FLINT FINDS

<i>Grid</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Material</i>
A1	2	Post-medieval tile
A4	1	Post-medieval tile
B1	1	Black post-medieval tile
B2	1	Iron nail
C1	1	Black post-medieval tile
C4	1	Fragment of Midlands Purple Pottery
C6	2	Post-medieval tile
D8	1	Tooth fragment (animal)
E4	1	Post-medieval pottery

No particular concentration of this material was noted, and it is possible that it derives from manuring scatters.

The absence of Iron Age pottery within the ploughsoil from Field 6 (South), and elsewhere at Little Paxton quarry (e.g. Fields 1 and 2 to the south, Bevan 1996 and 1997) may be due its fragility.

5.0: DISCUSSION

Only a relatively small collection comprising 27 flint items was recovered from Field 6 (South). Comparison with the results of fieldwalking in the adjoining Field 5 (11 ha. and 260 flint items) conducted under identical conditions, highlights the small quantity of material from Field 6 (South).

Of interest is the concentration in grid square E5 which may define a focus of Neolithic/Bronze Age activity, in the area of several possible superimposed rectilinear cropmark enclosures. Groups of pits, either single or in groups of two or three examples, of Neolithic/Bronze Age date were investigated during 1998 in the adjoining Field 5 to the west. The cropmark evidence (Fig. 2) suggests a similar cluster of pits may be located towards the southwest of the area fieldwalked. The other finds recovered probably derive from post-medieval manuring scatters.

6.0: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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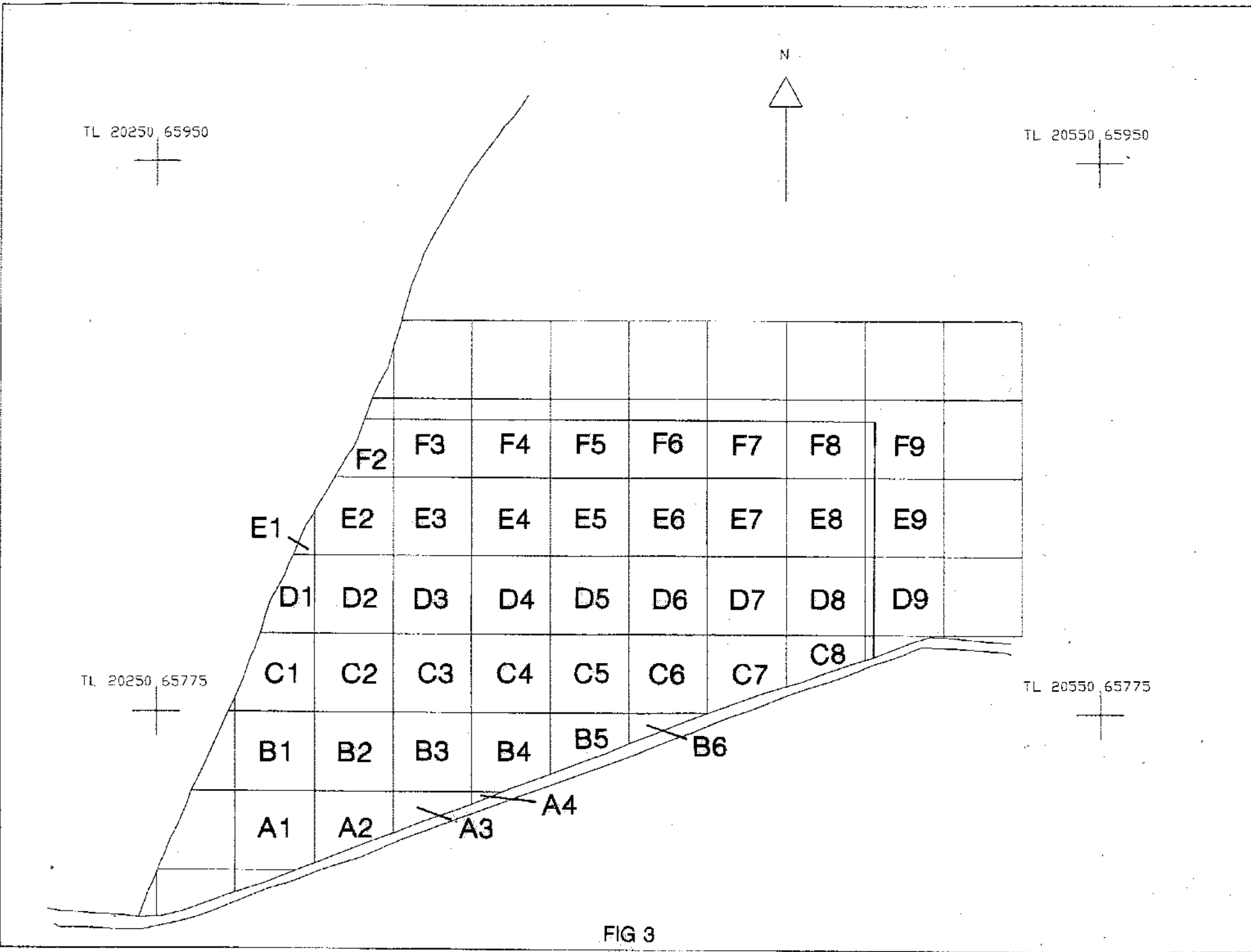


FIG 3

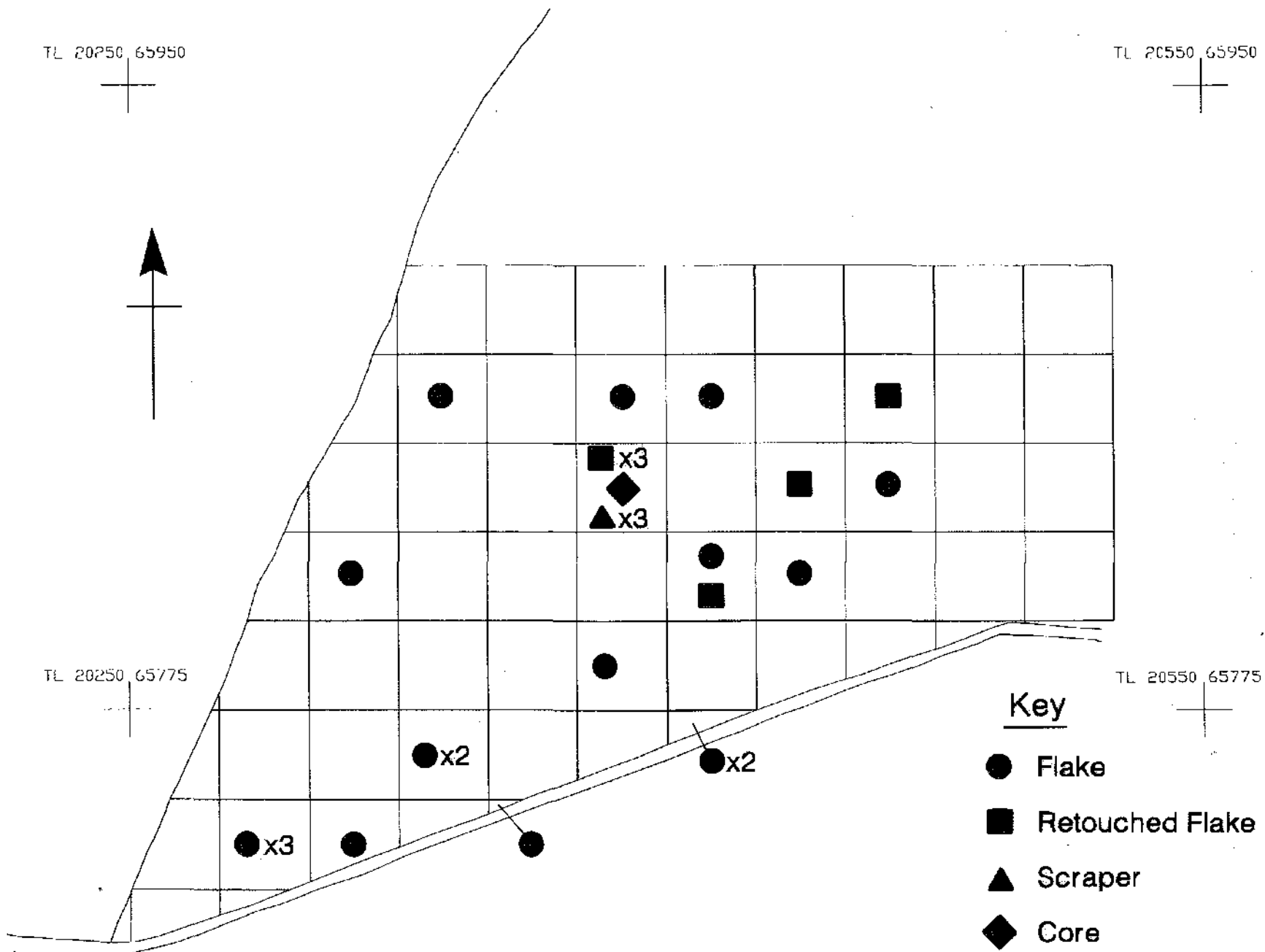
TL 20250 65950

TL 20550 65950



TL 20250 65775

TL 20550 65775



Key

- Flake
- Retouched Flake
- ▲ Scraper
- ◆ Core

FIG 4

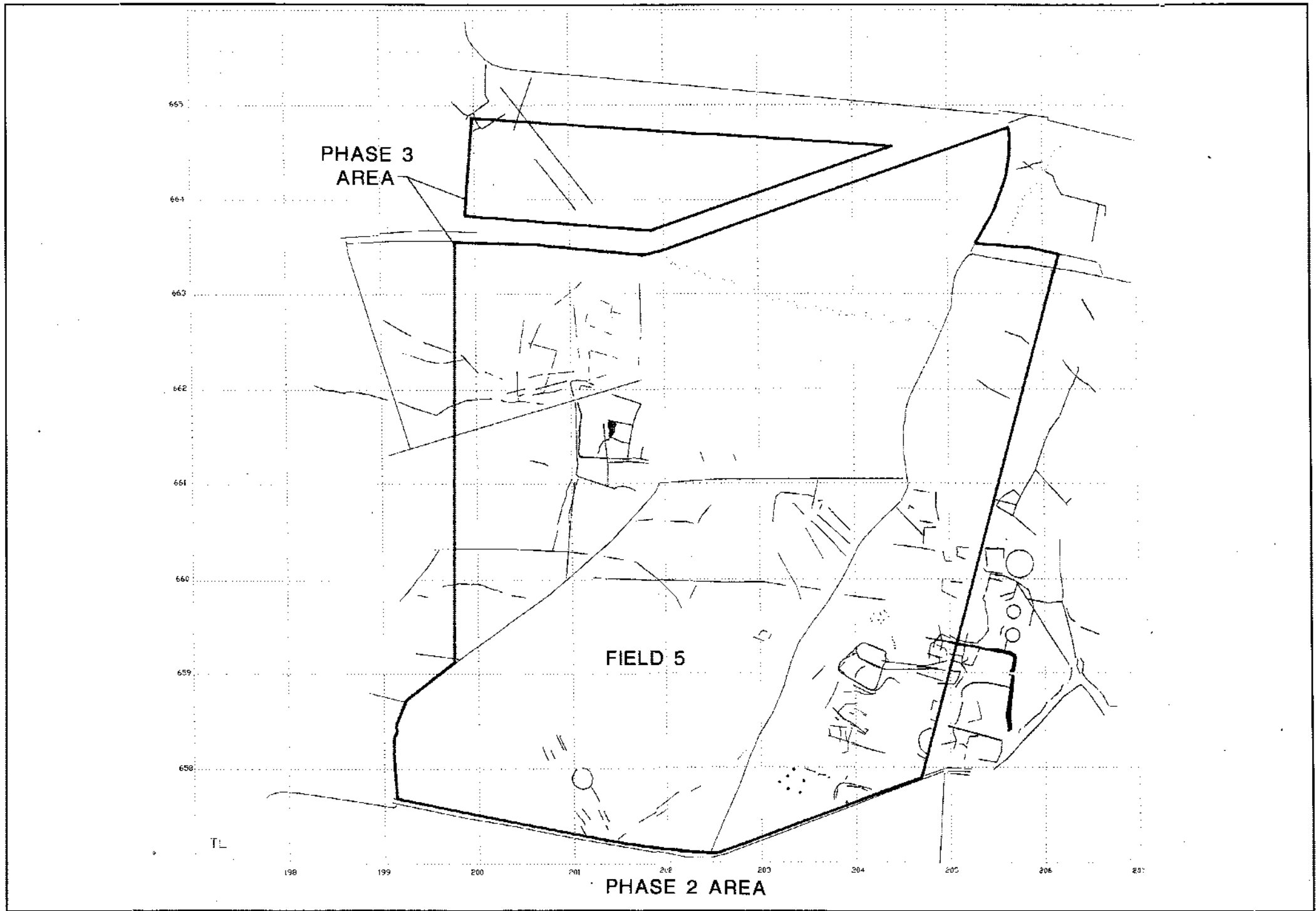


FIG.2