

*BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY
FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT*



**The South Cadbury Environs Project
Field Report 1996**

B.U.F.A.U.



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SOUTH CADBURY ENVIRONS PROJECT

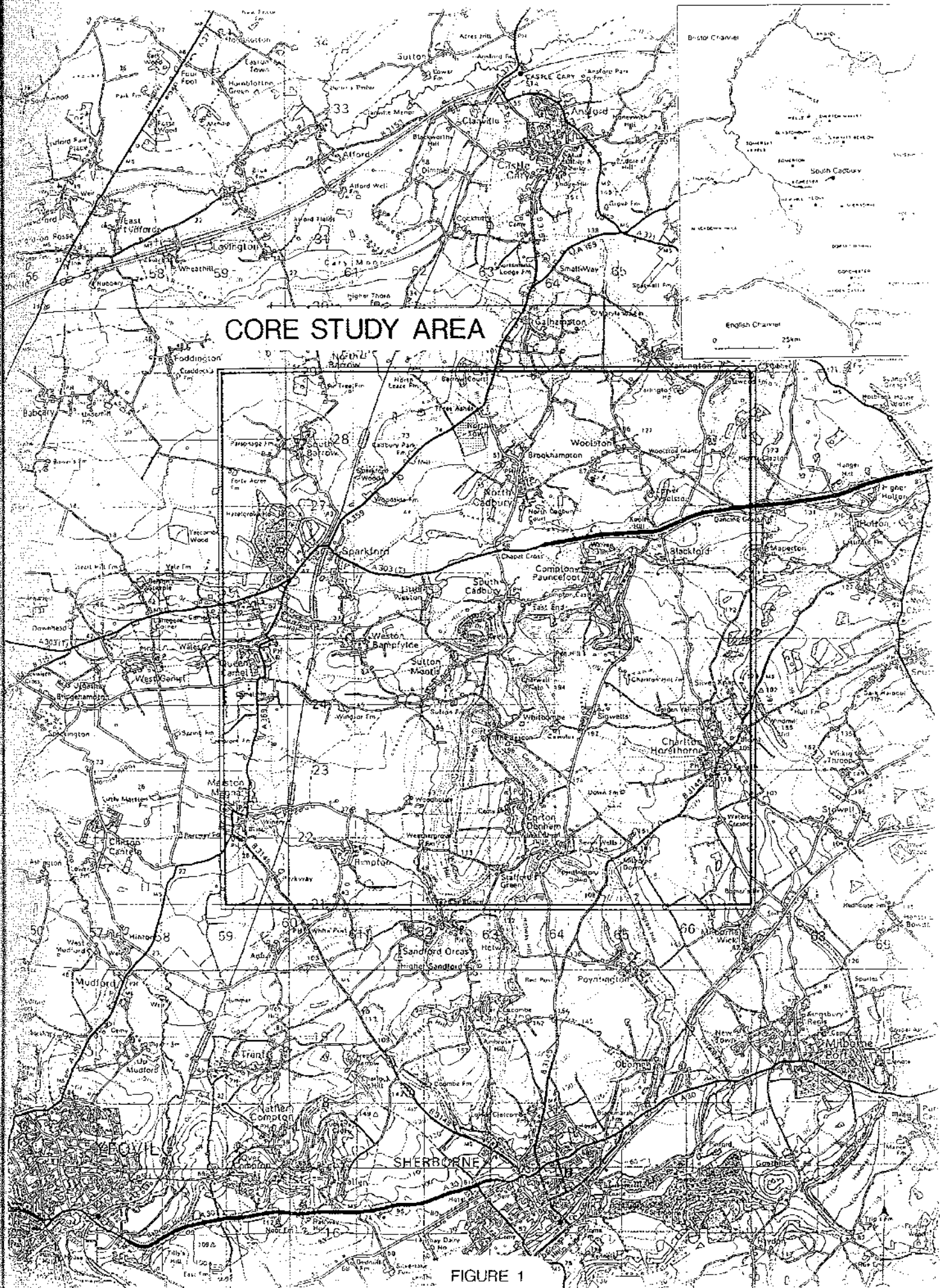


FIGURE 1

South Cadbury Environs Project

Fieldwork Report 1996

Introduction

Excavations at Cadbury Castle in Somerset by Leslie Alcock between 1966 and 1973 revealed one of the largest and most extensive material and chronological sequences for the Late Bronze Age/pre-Roman Iron Age in Britain (Alcock 1972, 1980). Additionally, there was important evidence of Neolithic settlement, and outstanding remains of post-Roman/Early Medieval occupation on the hill top (Alcock 1995). Preparation of the results for publication is now well advanced, through the corporate efforts of Professor Alcock and a range of specialist contributors coordinated through the Universities of Glasgow and Birmingham (Barrett, *et al.*, forthcoming).

Following upon the heels of this project, and the input of a distinguished local amateur tradition, campaigns of archaeological survey and excavation in the two decades since have focused particularly upon the Romano-British and Medieval periods in South East Somerset. Motivated both by academic research and the opportunities provided by the development and land use threats, project research has concentrated upon such topics as Romano-British settlement in the region (Leech 1977), the Roman and Medieval towns of Ilchester (Leach 1982 & 1994), urban settlements (Aston & Leech 1977), Medieval rural settlements (Ellison 1983) and, most recently, the Roman town and its hinterland at Shepton Mallet (Leach 1991 and forthcoming). In the same period have come the publications of excavations and research on several other major archaeological sites in the region, and of local historical and documentary research, including a Victoria County History volume. However, until recently very little attention had been paid to the immediate hinterland of Cadbury Castle itself.

Objectives

A new phase of research, building upon this legacy, seeks to characterise in more detail the cultural identity of a region centred upon the hillfort in later prehistory and through into the Romano-British period. Currently, the project involves members of the Universities of Birmingham and Glasgow - staff, research graduates and undergraduates, and the South East Somerset Archaeological and Historical Society. Specific objectives include investigation of settlement and landscape history in the study area, focusing upon its evolution from Mesolithic/Neolithic and Bronze Age foundations and through the 1st millennium BC, the Iron Age/Romano-British transition, and to the emergence of Early Medieval society. Through the application of the latest information technology to the collected data (e.g. Geographic Information Systems) hypotheses concerning social and economic relationships within successive societies can be explored, while strategies for longer term management of archaeological resources, combining academic research with policies for their protection and public presentation, will be developed.

The Study Region

Cadbury Castle lies within the region defined broadly by the Somerset Levels and Mendip Hills to the north, Bruton Forest and the Vale of Blackmore to the east, the Cretaceous outcrop of North Dorset to the south, and the upper valley of the Rivers Parrett and Yeo to the west. Within that region, detailed study is focused upon an 8 kilometre square core area centred upon the hillfort (ST 59002100 to 67002900, *Fig. 1*). A more extensive study area may be defined within an 18 km. square (ST 56001800 to 74003600), interlocking with hinterlands around such centres as Ilchester, Sherborne and Shepton Mallet.

Commencing with some preliminary assessment and fieldwork in 1993-4, a research design for the project was formulated in 1994 and a more concerted programme of work initiated. Stage 1 involves desktop survey to collate and assess all existing documented information, including County Sites and Monuments Records (SMRs.), map and photographic coverage, historic documentation, museum collections, published material, etc. Stage 2 involves field investigation and assessment by a variety of techniques, including remote sensing with geophysical prospection, fieldwalking, augering and test pitting, and excavation to evaluate or provide control samples at selected localities. Inevitably,

these stages overlap, and while the first is largely completed the second should continue for at least two more years. Full publication of Stage 1 and 2 results and an overall assessment will follow, preceded by interim reports in this format and summaries in the *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society*. A third stage should then follow which seeks to integrate the foregoing with comparable or more extensive regional studies, to expand or develop selected themes, and to promote better management of the archaeological resource and a wider dissemination of information relating to it.

Several specific landscape, period, artifact or functional research themes are emerging within the project, involving researchers at varying levels of commitment, from undergraduates to local amateur workers, postgraduate students and other academics. So far, field research has been concentrated upon the immediate environs of the hillfort and around Sigwells, some 2km to the south east (*Fig. 2*). The latter area has proved exceptionally favourable for both fieldwalking and remote sensing techniques, and has been a prime focus of activity during 1994 and 1995 (Leach & Tabor 1994, 1995); a major gradiometer survey was completed early in 1996 and the nature of further work there will be determined by detailed analysis of the results (Johnson & Tabor, in progress).

During the course of this year a shift of emphasis in the Project determined that more effort be focused on the immediate vicinity of Cadbury Castle. There was further fieldwalking using 10m² grids at Milsom's Corner, and 6 ha of that field have now been surveyed by gradiometer. A small auger survey was carried out by a local 'A' level student, James Gerrard, and there was a second season of excavation at Milsom's Corner.

Thanks to James, we made contact with Mr. Don Davies, a model aircraft expert with an interest in aerial photography; he undertook a short and successful reconnaissance of cropmarks showing this year at, Milsom's Corner.

Especially valuable has been a complete survey of all field names in the core study area (*Fig. 1*) by Mr. Giles Cooper. He has begun etymological research which may influence future project work.

In addition to the planned programme was a rescue excavation at Castle Farm, South Cadbury, an opportunity arising from the extension of an agricultural shed.

Milsom's Corner, 1996

Milsom's Corner, named after one of five fields, the boundaries of which have been removed to form one large arable unit, is centred on ST 62302520, within the parish of South Cadbury. It forms an arc from the south west to the north of Cadbury Castle, the lower slopes of which lie within the field, falling from 80m to around 60m OD, and representing the interface between the Inferior Oolitic uplands, of which the hillfort is an outlier, and the Jurassic clay lowlands fringing the upper Yeo and Parrett valleys to the west. A slightly undulating aspect is emphasised by a small knoll north of the field's centre, and by a short, narrow spur projecting from the west of the hillfort.

During the course of the year gradiometer survey, fieldwalking and excavation have continued, and additional work has included a small auger survey and a successful remote controlled model aircraft reconnaissance. This report describes only the excavation and geophysical work.

Excavation: The Site

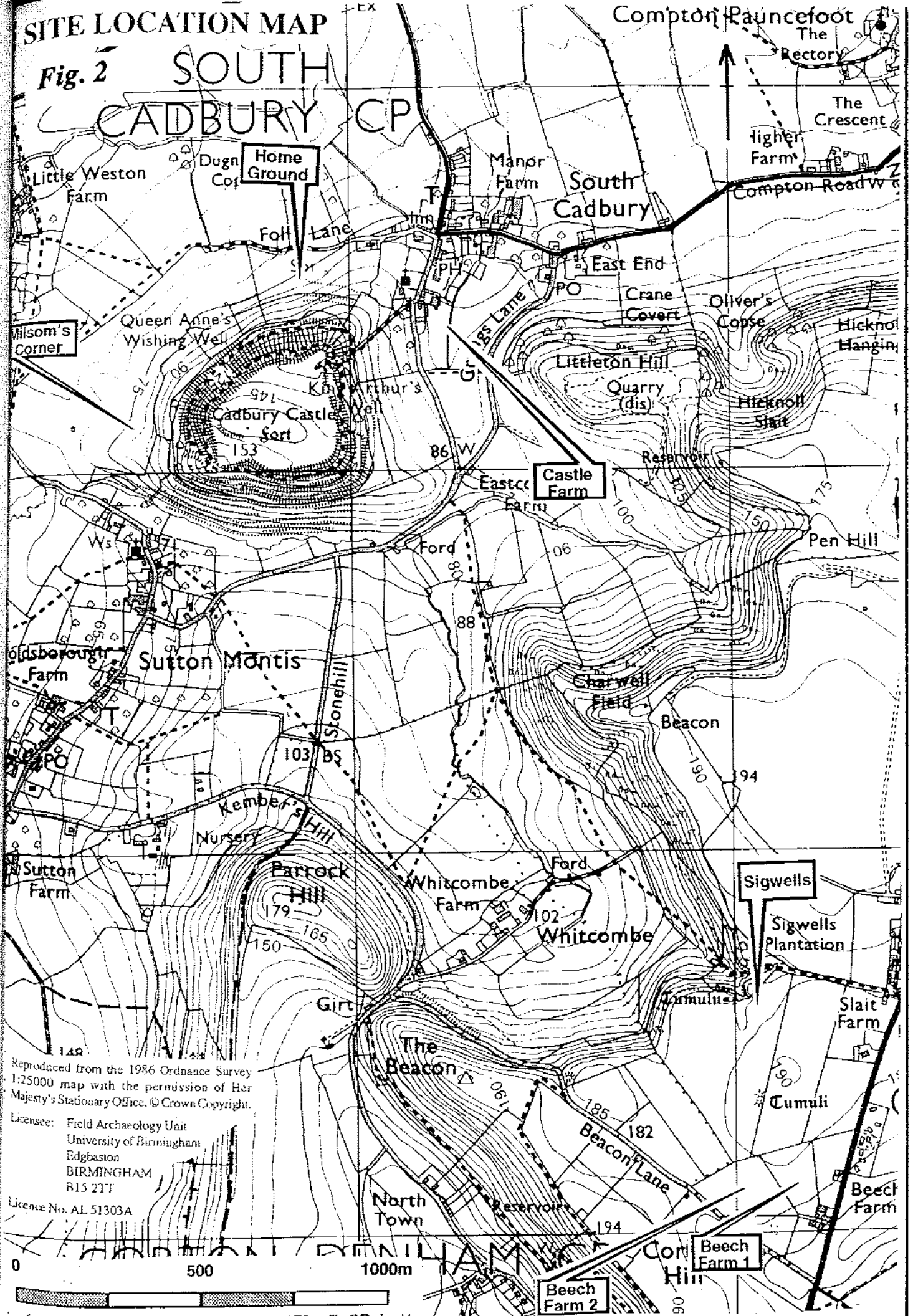
The site straddles the spine of a clay spur projecting from below the western access to the hillfort. Overlying the clay at the eastern end is a clayey red silt sealed by varying depths of browner, organically richer soils, in turn sealed by yellowish gravelly clay hillwash which tapers out to the west. Erosion, in recent years due to repeated ploughing, has removed the hillwash and some lower strata on the spine of the spur, but to the north and south of it archaeological deposits remain in good condition. The ploughsoil, generally heavy and manure rich, is approximately 0.2m deep.

Excavation: Method

In the summer of 1995 a single open plan trench was excavated in response to the occurrence of Iron Age pottery after ploughing, the results of subsequent trial trenching (February 1995), and geophysical survey (May 1995, Leach & Tabor 1995, *Fig. 7*). The latter method proved an accurate indicator of major negative linear, as well as of smaller, heat affected, features. Although the open plan approach uncovered evidence of Early Bronze Age activity and Late Bronze Age to Late Iron

SITE LOCATION MAP

Fig. 2 SOUTH CADBURY CP



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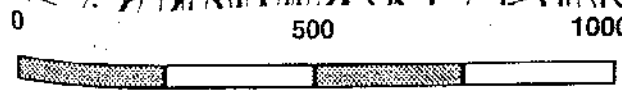


Fig. 3

Milsom's Corner '96 Excavation Plan



- Phase 1
- ▨ Phase 3
- ▩ Phase 3 - Burnt stones
- ▧ Phase 4
- ▦ Phase 5
- Phase 6

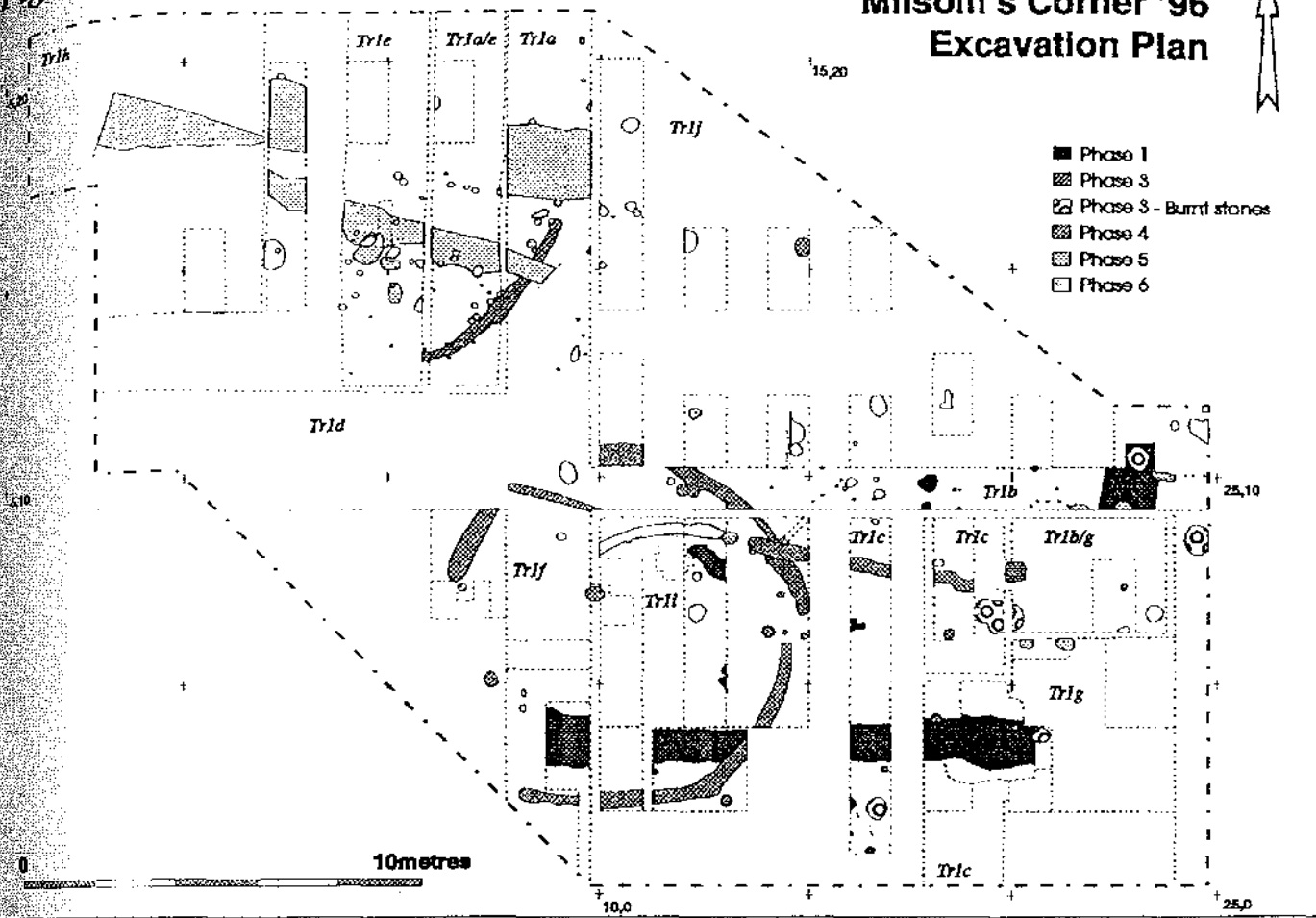
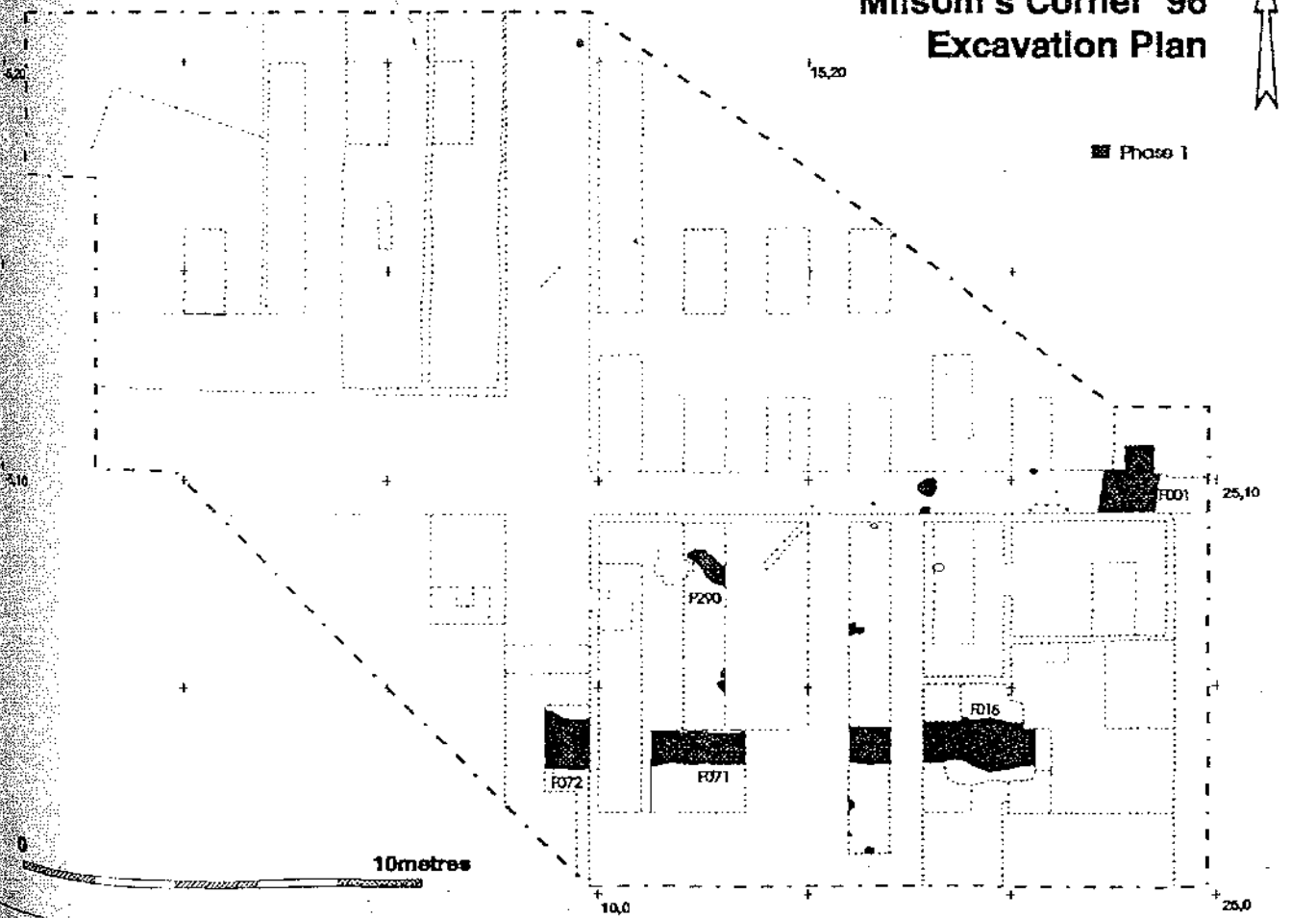


Fig. 3a

Milsom's Corner '96 Excavation Plan



- Phase 1



3b

Milsom's Corner '96 Excavation Plan



- Phase 3
- Phase 3 - Burrit stones
- Phase 4

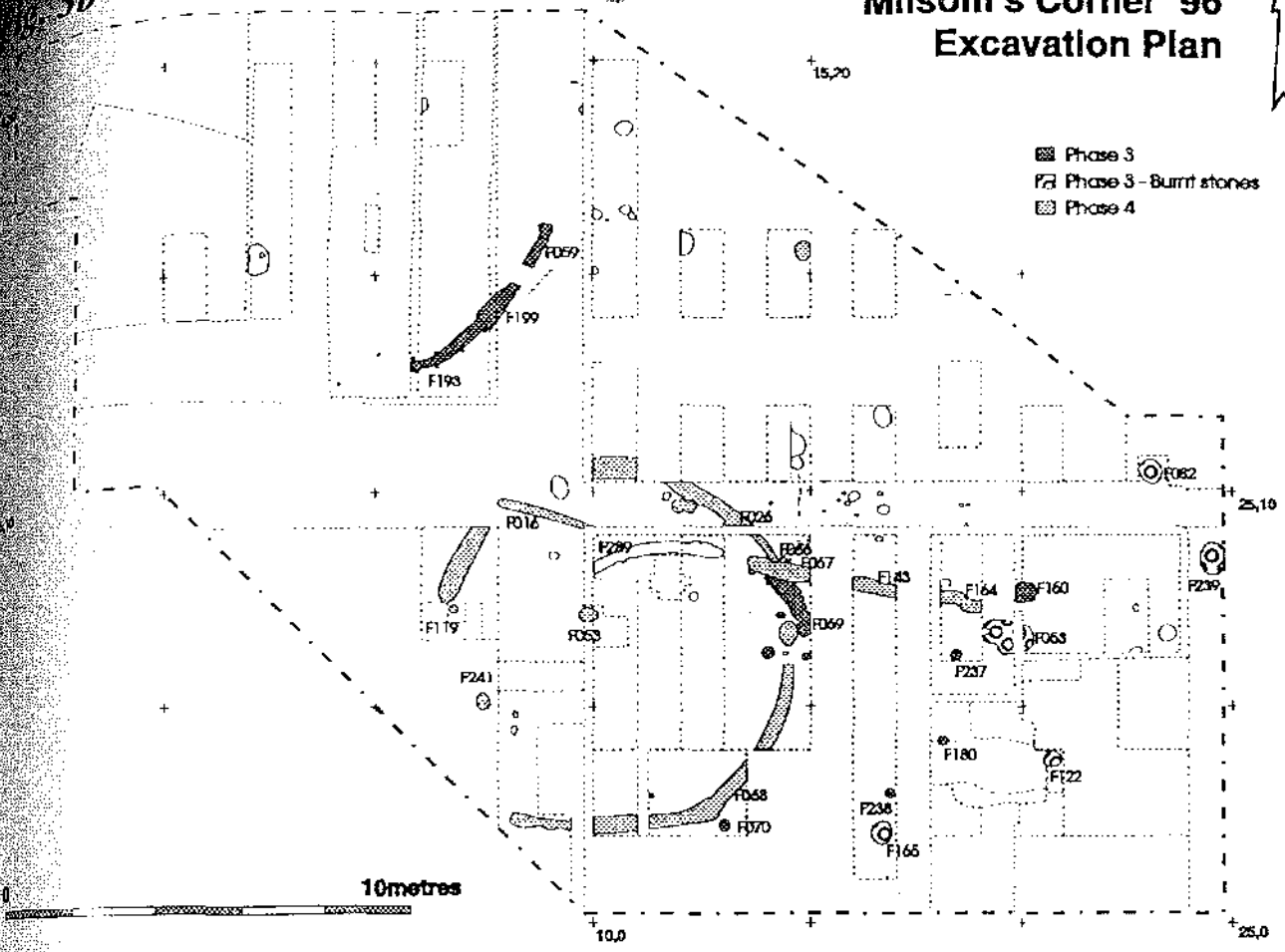
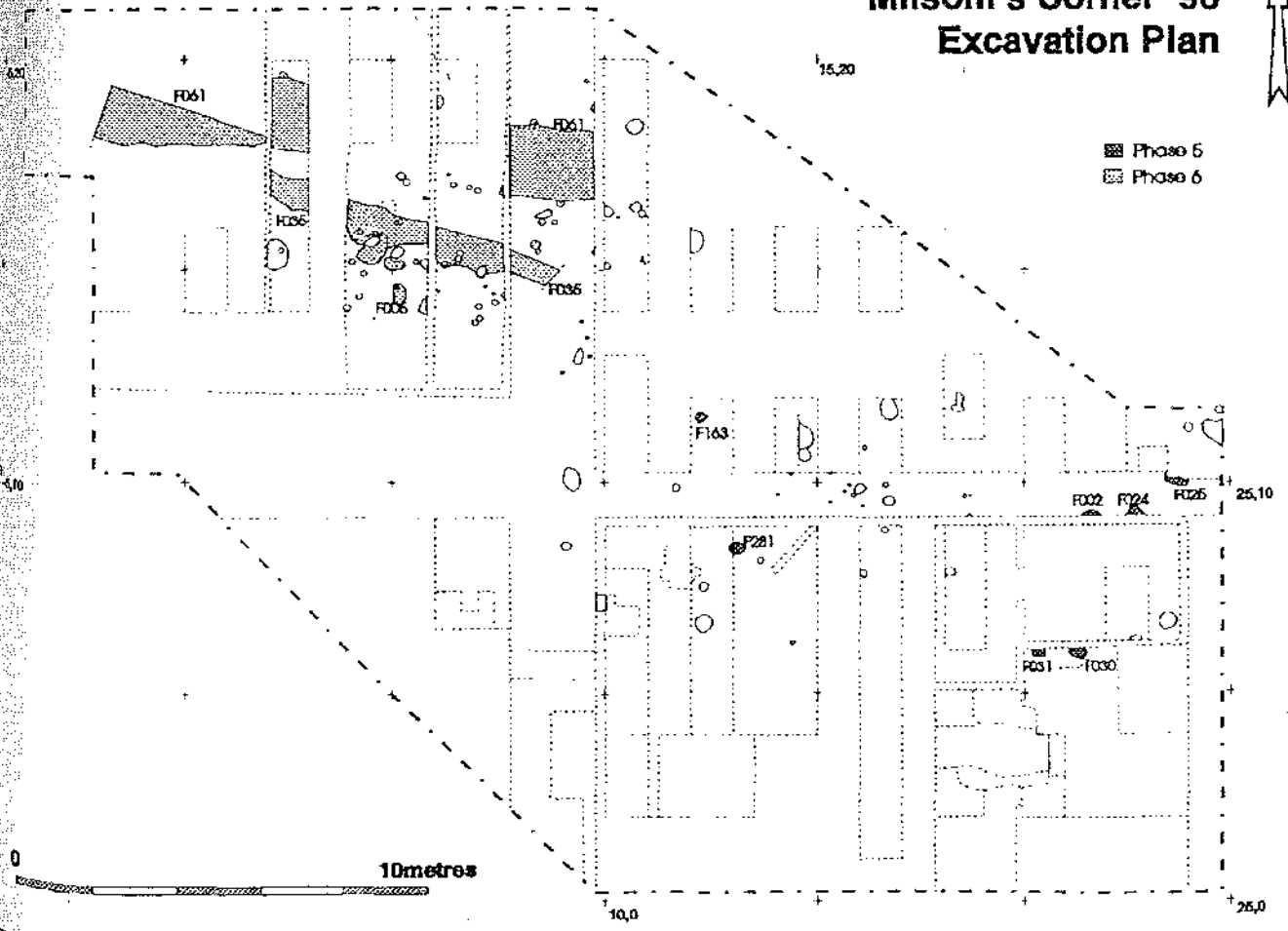


Fig. 3c

Milsom's Corner '96 Excavation Plan



- Phase 5
- Phase 6



Age settlement and industry the hot, dry conditions caused hard baking of the soil, slow progress and extreme visibility problems.

The complexity of the site required that the supervisors (postgraduate students of the University of Birmingham) familiarise themselves with it before being confronted with guiding inexperienced undergraduates. Therefore, a week long supervisors' training dig was held at Easter, when the moist soil conditions greatly enhanced visibility. The explicit archaeological aim was to elucidate the good stratigraphy of the eastern (Tr1B) and central southern (Tr1F; see Leach & Tabor 1995, *Fig. 7*) portions of the site, and to test whether or not the clay interfacing with the ploughsoil at the western end was truly natural.

On the basis of this exploratory phase a new general method was designed for the University of Birmingham's training excavation in the summer. Where the condition of the site allowed it, a single undergraduate was assigned responsibility for the digging and recording of a north-south aligned 2 x 1m box. In each case the southern 1m square was dug first, context by context, until natural was reached, or a discrete feature was recognised. In the latter case fills would be emptied before resuming the search for natural. In some circumstances a context was exposed in both south and north squares, otherwise the north square was excavated only after natural had been reached in the south square. Finds' collection units were defined in the horizontal plane by the south west corner of a 1m square, and in the vertical plane by the specific context.

When sufficient 2 x 1m boxes had been completed, selected baulks were removed to create long running sections. The deployment of the boxes allowed long sections in either east-west or north-south directions; in practice the latter direction was adopted nearly always, so facilitating the comparison of the box stratigraphy with that of the long Tr1B sections (*Fig. 4*).

The archaeological advantages of this method were:

- 1) a practicable method for the three dimensional recording of finds;
- 2) increased facility for calculating soil volumes and consequent gains for later statistical analysis;
- 3) mitigation of surface baking;
- 4) improvement in the quantity and quality of the drawn record;
- 5) enhanced association of finds with their appropriate contexts, due to visibility in section;
- 6) the minimising of damage to archaeological contexts by inexperienced diggers.

These advantages ought to be of benefit to undergraduates being trained to dig: the student will gain insight into the significance of stratigraphy and will have several opportunities to draw plans and sections. Optimally, they will be able to see the changing character of artefacts in sequence.

The distribution of features noted during 1995 allowed a thematic approach in 1996 based on chronology and geomorphology. The latter was particularly important in the south central and east portion of the site, where some evidence seemed contradictory, and the character of the natural was poorly understood.

Summary of results

Trench 1 H, E, A/E A and J (*Fig. 3*)

First opened in 1995, these sub trenches successfully bisected two substantial positive anomalies in the gradiometer data (Leach & Tabor 1995, *Fig. 7*) and uncovered an area of industrial activity in the south half of E. Further work in this area has uncovered more stake and postholes, some of which appeared to be associated with cess-like deposits.

The northern (F061; *Fig. 3c*) of the two linears is clearly the latest feature on the site, but has undergone at least two recuts, making it almost 3m wide and nearly 1m deep. It cuts a swathe through pre-Iron Age red silts on its north edge and truncates Iron Age postholes on both sides, some of which seem to have been aligned with the gully, their posts having been damaged or removed during a later recut.

The presence of small to medium/large sized gravels in a channel at the bottom of the southern linear (F035) appears to indicate a free flow of water, although whether this was a singular event or

over a longer period is not clear. No stratigraphic relationship yet shows whether this feature is earlier than, or contemporary with, F061, although the industrial event represented by F005 (*Fig. 3c*) appears to have occurred during its period of use.

A small gully (F059, *Fig. 3b*) thought to be associated with F035, proved to have been cut by the latter, and to continue in a south westerly arc. Late Iron Age sherds from postholes alongside it had suggested that the two features were contemporary. However, a nearly complete base (F199), and wall sherds of the same vessel from further along the gully (F193) have all the characteristics of Early Iron Age, Cadbury 5, pottery. Recent analysis of the finds from the gully shows that no later material has been recovered from it.

The intensity of work on other parts of Trench 1 precluded sustained activity in sub trench *J*, although boxes opened on this area confirmed the ubiquity of archaeological deposits indicated by the gradiometer survey; human remains (an articulated neonatal skeleton) were found in a shallow grave, accompanied by a single rim/wall sherd of a globular vessel of Late Middle Iron Age fabric (Cadbury 8).

Trench 1 B, B/G, G, C, I and F (*Fig. 3*)

Investigation of many of the deposits in the south and east parts of the site benefited from a more complete stratigraphy. The south-facing cross section of sub trench *B* (*Fig. 4*) illustrates a sequence from: the cutting of a group of post and stake holes, broadly contemporary with the Early Bronze Age ditch (F001, *Fig. 3a* - Phase 1); through the building up of a red silt (1065/1068 - Phase 2); the cutting of a pit into the silt to insert a large jar (F082, *Fig. 3b* - Phase 3) over which stones burnt to a blue hue were placed; the dispersal of fragments of gravelly blue stone (1111 - Phase 4); the cutting of a post pit (F025) through the blue gravel, slighting the large jar; to the sealing of the area beneath a charcoal flecked dark brown loam (Phase 5), in turn secured beneath a yellow, gravelly clay, hillwash (1001 - Phase 7).

This sequence is visible in most of the southern area of Trench 1; consequently it has been possible to assign broad contemporaneity to several features, from which structures may be derived. As yet there is insufficient data from the earliest phase to render a coherent account of it; however, there is good evidence of activity associated with the ditch F001/F015/F071/F072 which will inform further work (*Fig. 3a*). Debitage in the north of *A*, in red silt layers, offers proof of continued human activity in the otherwise invisible Phase 2.

A wide arc comprising four postholes of similar character (*Fig. 3b*, F070/F238/F180/F237) may be part of the earliest Phase 3 structure, although the features made up with, or including stones burnt to a blue hue (F239 - *Plate 1*/F082/F053/F122) and a red hue (F165 - *Plate 3*), all sealed by the blue gravel layer, are broadly contemporary. The pot from F082, previously assigned by form to Cadbury 4 (Late Bronze Age; Leach & Tabor 1995 - but see discussion below) has a fabric entirely consistent with Cadbury 5 (regarded as Early Iron Age, Alcock 1980; Woodward forthcoming), so that Phase 3 may have to be reassigned to the Early Iron Age, a shift which would have consequences for later features.

Excavation during Autumn 1995 in the north east corner of *I* demonstrated a complex series of events, the earliest discernible represented by a post trench (F069) cut by a stoney gully (F026/F068) and then sealed by a thin band of gravel (F067). A lias packed post hole (F066) incorporating a substantial wall sherd from a Cadbury 7 jar appeared to slight the stoney gully. Further digging has uncovered 60 to 70% of a circle, made up of the stoney gully, and a possible doorpost (F119 - *Fig. 3b*). A second *doorpost* of similar dimensions (F241) had, at its base, like F119, red stone degraded by intense heat to a very crumbly state; however, it is placed well inside the putative line of the stoney gully arc, so that the two are unlikely to be a pair. Several large jar sherds from F119 come from the same or a very similar vessel to that found in F066. There were no signs of the continuation of the gully immediately to the south of F241; despite a greater soil depth (exceeding 0.5m) the stoney gully had been reduced to a slight lip and a scatter of gravel in the southernmost part of *F*. This might suggest that the surface level must have been proportionately lower on the southern side of the spur than it is now. The subsequent formation of a positive lynchet can only have occurred if downslope soil movement has been obstructed.

by "later" sherds. However, as noted above, the vessel from F082 has strong formal kinship with the earlier Cadbury 4 phase (Alcock 1972, 116; Woodward forthcoming) and although no features can be tied to that phase, it is notable that small sherds with fabric characteristic of it (inclusion of platelets of fossil shell, calcite and sometimes sand), do occur in Cadbury 5 contexts. Apart from the typical jars, vessels belonging to the latter include two steep necked bowls. A rarity is a sherd with an Early All Cannings Cross geometric motif, similar in style to a tripartite vessel found on the hillfort, assigned variously to Cadbury 4 (Alcock 1980) and to Cadbury 5 (Woodward forthcoming); an exceptionally evenly fired, very flat, buff pink sherd, with closely set furrows on the exterior, of Cadbury 5 fabric, may derive from the same tradition (McOmish 1996).

The increased promiscuity of the relationships of features with finds, as the cumulative volume of site debris grew, requires detailed statistical analysis before the discreteness of later Cadbury fabrics can be tested. Until that analysis has been effected, it is sensible to proceed using Woodward's more generous parameters. The following table summarises the relationship of the Milsom's Corner phases to the Cadbury ceramic series:

Cadbury Castle ceramic phase	Milsom's Corner structural phase	Period	Associations
2	—	Late Neolithic	Pits on hillfort.
—	1	Early Bronze Age/ Beaker	Ditch
3	2	Middle Bronze Age	Forming of red silt (1065)
4(?)5	3	Late Bronze Age (?)/ Early Iron Age	Oven on hillfort; burnt mounds and two circular structures (F069 and F059/F199/F193) at Milsom's Corner.
6/7	4	Middle Iron Age	Pre- and early defensive banks on hillfort and growth of population; the F069 structure is replaced by the F026/F068 structure.
8	5	Late Middle Iron Age	Elaboration of south west gate on hillfort, continued development of defences, zenith of population; substantial packed posts and infant burial at Milsom's Corner.
9	6	Late Iron Age	Renewed activity on the hillforts defences; the digging and recutting of F061 and, possibly, F035. Industrial activity (F005). Forming of charcoal rich loamy silt (1004).
10 and later	7	Post Iron Age	Shrine on hillfort plateau succeeded by barracks; settlement activity has ceased at Milsom's Corner and the site is sealed by hillwash (1001) over a period of unknown duration.

The burnt stone features (Fig. 3b)

Four different categories can be drawn from the five burnt stone features at Milsom's Corner, all broadly contemporary with each other.

Category 1 F239 (Plate 1) is a low spread of medium sized limestones, burnt to a blue/white hue, of around 0.6m by 0.8m in area, overlying shallow scoops into the red silt, which were filled with dark, carbon flecked loamy silt. F051 appears to have been similar (but was in a poorer state of preservation), excepting that the underlying scoops contained much less carbon flecking.

Category 2 The vessel pit, F082, was overlaid with stones of a similar hue, some of which were later found to be in the vessel itself. The upper part of the feature had been disturbed, apparently by impact from the north west (a subsoil plough). Scraps of burnt bone occurred in amongst the upper stones, but none from within the jar.

Category 3 F122 comprised similarly treated stones, but they had been placed with some care into a small pit adjacent to a post. The height of the stone pile was approximately 0.2m. In none of these, three categories could burning be shown to have taken place *in situ*.

Category 4 In contrast, F165 (Plate 2) was a single layer of stones, burnt to an orangey red hue, of approximately 0.3m by 0.2m in area, set into a slight scoop. A small deposit of dark soil, rich in carbonised matter was set on the middle part of the stones. At the south end of the layer was a single large rim/wall sherd from a steep sided bowl next to a single burnt flint. Lying immediately to the south of the stones were two pieces of bovine (?) rib placed side by side, probably fragments from the same bone. There was slight parching of the underlying clayey silt, but probably not enough to indicate that stones had been burnt *in situ*; more plausible is that the soil was baked by the introduction of very hot stones.

There has been a growing debate concerning burnt mounds, in particular those where stone has been introduced to a context *after* being heated (Barfield 1991). The factor unifying the first three categories is the consistent blue/white hue of the stone. It would be useful to know at what temperature, and for how long, the stones were heated, and how further treatments, such as being immersed in/splashed by water would affect their hues. Barfield (1991, p 60) has noted the very close proximity of water to burnt mounds; those at Milsom's Corner appear to be an exception (although the grits and gravels of F016/F067/F143/F164 demonstrate that in at least one episode, however brief, water flowed in a rivulet along the spur). He has also speculated about their function (1991, p 62); the probable lack of ready water at Milsom's Corner suggests that cooking or heating are the most likely explanations - although steam bathing cannot be excluded.

In the case of the fourth category, the function is plainly ritualistic. The feature has been constructed with care, and four singular items arranged in association with each other: a small quantity of burnt material; a burnt flint; a bowl rim sherd; a single, but broken, bone. Each item has been acted upon in a deliberate manner, usually damaging and perhaps marking the passage from life. The occurrence of singular rim sherds may be significant. A slightly earlier example comes from a burnt deposit in a scoop into the uppermost fill of a barrow ring ditch at Sigwells (Tr. VI; Leach & Tabor 1994), along with a cylindrical loomweight. Although the ditch itself would scarcely have been visible at the time of deposition, the barrow, which retains a sharp profile, would have been a prominent feature.

At Milsom's Corner itself, the rim of a globular vessel, typical of Cadbury 8, has been deliberately deposited over the body of a human infant (F163). A rim is that part of the vessel over which the contents pass as they are emptied from it; an apt symbol for the passage of the spirit from the body.

The curvilinear structures (Fig. 3b)

A variety of construction methods have been employed on the spur, the best defined product of which is the stoney gully (F026/F068). The gully itself is almost certainly a drain, but pieces of baked clay, mostly occurring in its lowest, southern portion, suggest that it may have encircled a wattle and daub building, possibly supported by an inner ring of posts and stakes. If the post, F119, is rightly regarded as part of the structure, the large sherds of a Cadbury 7 jar, which may reasonably be interpreted as a founding deposit, place the building firmly in Phase 4. However, the presence of fragments from a similar, quite possibly the same, vessel in F066, a post hole cutting the outer edge

Northerly extension of a box to the east of centre of the area delimited by the stoney gully has resolved a problem posed by the presence of a Cadbury 5 jar base. Initially it had been thought that the vessel must be contemporary with the abandonment of the latest building in this area; the extension showed that the jar had been incorporated into, and sealed by, a redeposited clay surface. The base seems likely to be associated with a structure represented by the post trench (F069), further evidence for which has been elusive. However, a third arcing gully (F289, Fig. 3b), apparently predating the other two, has been found, cut by a post hole given a firm *terminus post quem* by a lug fragment from a Cadbury 8/9 vessel (JC3 type, Woodward forthcoming).

Before passing on to a discussion of the evidence after two seasons of excavation, a brief description of a long section of the east bank must be added. The 1 x 10m trench was completed on the final day of the season and so offered only a tantalising glimpse of a possible solution to the problem of the positive lynchet, apparently lying along the south edge of the spur. In the north half of the trench the descent noted elsewhere of brown soils, to dispersed blue gravel, to red silts, to grey green clay was again apparent; but in the southern half the upper brown loams are interspersed with successive gravelly and gritty deposits. Eventually the brown loams are replaced with ever sandier greenish lenses, some seemingly truncated, and the blue gravel fails to spread downslope. At a depth of nearly 2m below the present surface, at the extreme south of the cut, a group of medium to large stones occurred, retaining a clean limestone gravel. There were few finds, although just above the stones was a Middle Iron Age sherd.

Discussion

At the outset, a few general points may be made about the changing topography of the spur. The evidence from the east bank and F sections shows plainly that, subsequent to the abandonment of the Middle Iron Age building, a substantial lynchet increased the availability of level land. The Early Bronze Age ditch may well have run along the southern edge of the natural spur, and the Early Iron Age buildings had to compensate for a drop of over 0.5m from their north to south sides. However, there is no firm evidence for when the lynchet formation began.

The south-facing section from B (Fig. 4) demonstrates processes of aggradation and erosion. The longest stratigraphic sequence at the east end remains well preserved under a hillwash which necessarily post dates the abandonment of the Iron Age site. However, the hillwash tapers to nothing and already underlying archaeological deposits are being exposed to plough erosion at the extreme west end of the section. Work in D (Fig. 3) indicates that along the spine, at west end of the spur, the damage to the archaeological deposits is total; but on either side of the spine even quite shallow deposits, most notably those around F005 (Leach & Tabor 1995), are well preserved. Indeed, the proximity of red, pre-Iron Age, soils to the surface along the north edge of the site may well be due as much to late prehistoric activity as to the modern plough.

The first millennium ceramic sequence

The Cadbury Castle ceramic assemblage from the 1st millennium remains one of the most complete, as well as one of the most voluminous, from Britain and much of its range is reflected in the material recovered from Milsom's Corner. However, where Alcock (1980) has stressed the distinctive qualities visible in form and fabric, Woodward (forthcoming) has been careful to argue that these variations should not be treated as parts of a simple linear sequence. Thus, where Alcock diagnoses chronologically determinant phases, Cadbury 4 to 9, Woodward allows the coexistence of Cadbury 5 and 7, or Cadbury 6 and 8, style vessels.

The key to Alcock's paper was the rampart trench KX, excavated specifically for the purpose in 1973, three years after the main programme of field research had finished. He hoped to apply the resulting sequence to artifacts and those features of the interior in which they were deposited, where stratigraphy was often lacking. At Milsom's Corner we are fortunate in having a site with often very good stratigraphy, against which the discreteness of the link of a particular group of ceramics to a particular stratum can be measured.

Whilst a definite sequential distinction between Cadbury 6 and 7 has yet to be made at Milsom's Corner, the separateness of the most lavishly tempered fabric (fossil shell, calcite, quartz, flint grits and a distinctly micaceous sparkle), Cadbury 5, seems very marked. Although analysis is far from complete, no substantial sherds of this type, from below the blue gravel level, have been accompanied

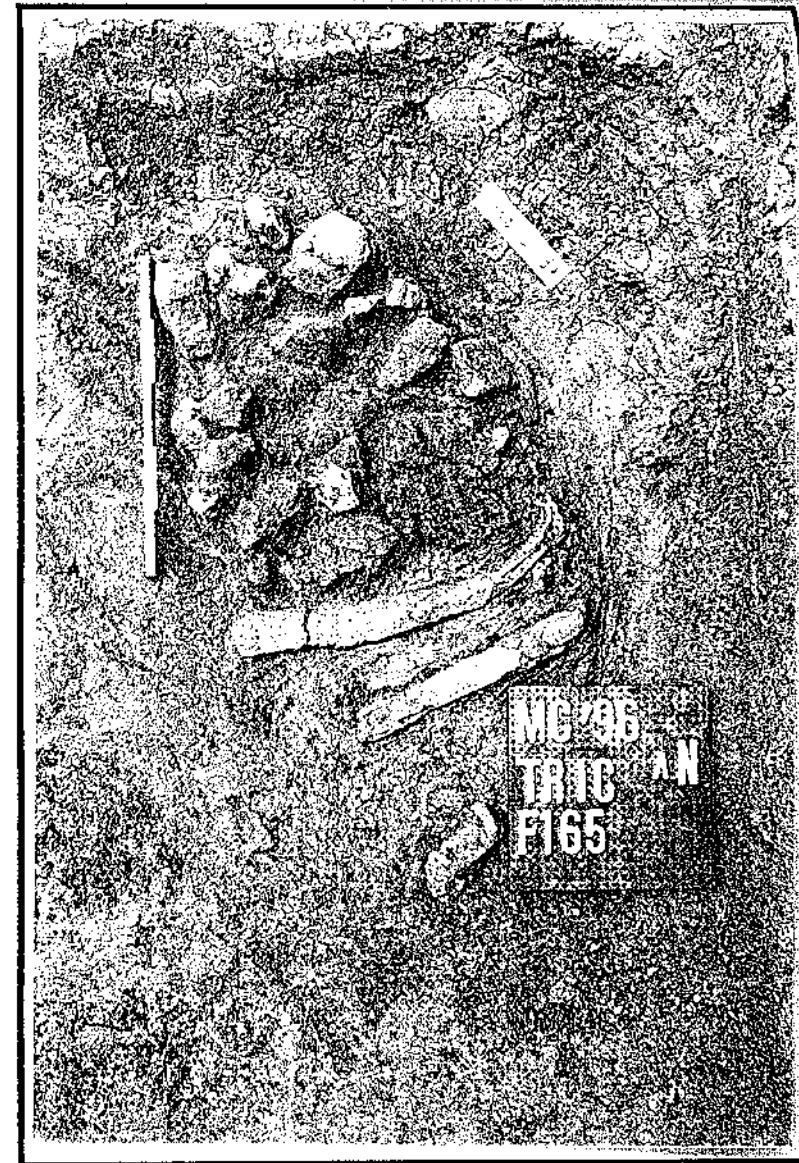
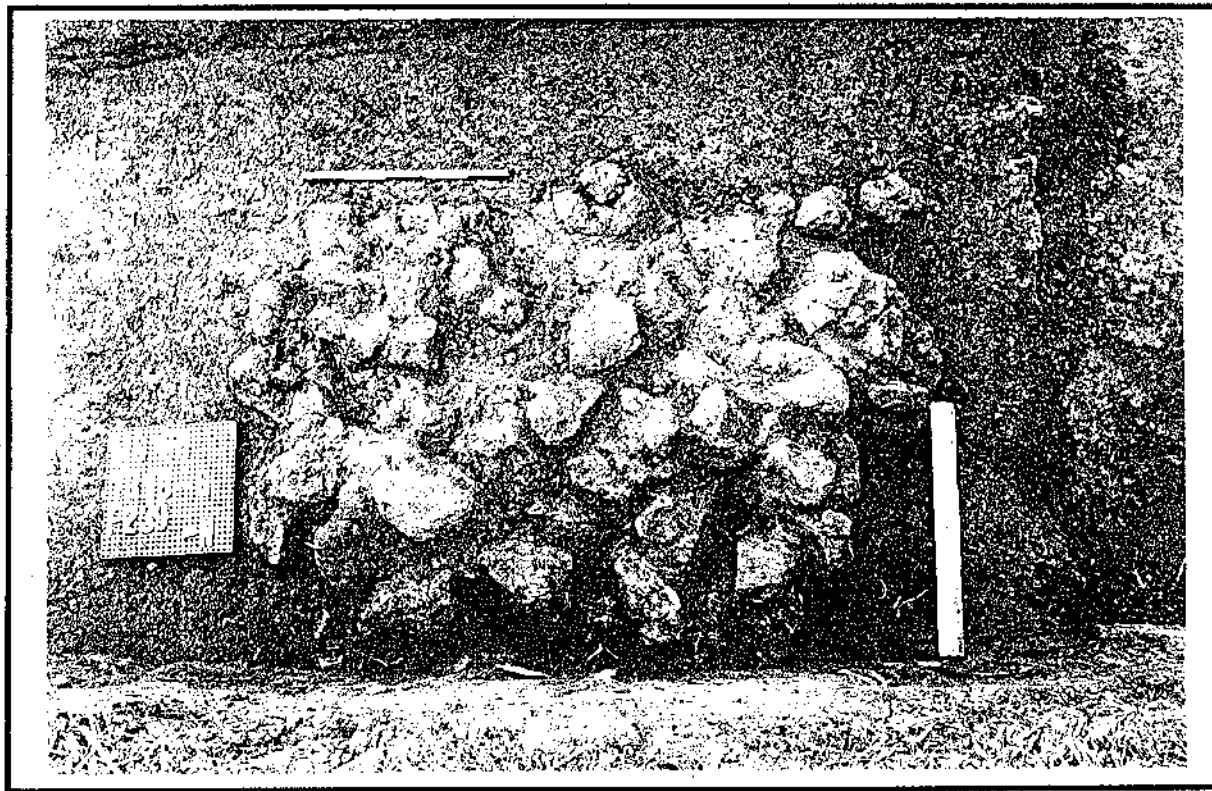


Plate 1 — Milsom's Corner F239 (above), a small mound of stones burnt to a consistently blue hue.

Plate 2 — Milsom's Corner F165 (right), a discrete single layered deposit of stones burnt to a consistently orangey red hue. Immediately to the north of the two pieces of rib is a rim/wall sherd from a plain open bowl of Cadbury 5 fabric type. Next to it is an isolated burnt flint. A small pile of very dark soil with charcoal set in the centre of the stones has already been removed.

These are two of a group of features, all of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date, associated with stones which have been deliberately deposited after being burnt elsewhere to a particular hue (see *Fig. 3b*).

of the gully and probably not associated with it, may indicate that F119 is part of yet another, later building. Clearly the building had been abandoned and its drain fully silted by the time a narrow water course (F067) ran across it, leaving a trail of gravel and grits, an event which is later than the dispersal of blue gravel (1111), but earlier than the post holes of phase 5.

One of two, roughly contemporary, Phase 3 buildings is recognised in the form of a gully with a series of stakes holes along its internal and external edges (F193/F199/F059), while the other carried posts set into pits, which cut into the gully base slightly. The second structure appears to have been the more substantial.

An arc comprising four very similar postholes (F070/F238/F180/F237) may date from the early part of this phase. If so, the structure does not appear to be associated with a gully. The quality of the post holes suggest that there ought to be no difficulty in defining more of the arc, should it continue.

Much more shadowy is F289, sealed and disturbed by the laying of clay surfaces within F026/F068.

Even from this outline discussion, it is obvious that the current phasing cannot represent in full detail the structural sequence. Greater detail will surely emerge with further excavation.

The late ditches (Fig. 3c)

The ditches lying on the north west part of the site seem to have coexisted for at least part of their lives. F061, for all its recutting, is easily construed as a boundary/drainage ditch, probably with a fence or rail along both sides. It is no longer possible to interpret it as a hollow way (Leach & Tabor 1995). By this view the grits in H (F062), previously interpreted as a relict hardstanding, represent an alluvial fan where the gully F035 opened onto, and was eventually (re)cut by F061.

By comparison with F061, F035 is a gentle "U"-profiled ditch of small scale which might act as a drain, but which would have been but a slight boundary marker. That water flowed along it with some force is indicated by a deeper, gravelly, channel cutting sharply through its floor; however, a cursory glance at the surrounding field, after ploughing and rain, illustrates how quickly such a channel can be carved. There is no reason to believe that the gully represents a sustained and regular water course. However, it may have been associated with the cess deposits which, in turn, may have had a role in the probably brief episode of industrial activity represented by the cluster of features around F005.

Conclusion

The scanty narratives offered above are no more than part of the framework for informing future work on the site; the story will not only be amplified but also substantively altered as the project progresses. We are a long way from knowing whether this occupied area was merely a satellite of the hillfort or, as might be suggested by the stoney bank, an area bounded within it during the Middle or Late Iron Age. We may surmise that it overlooked the access to the south west gate.

Crucial is the careful planning of future work. We are extremely fortunate to find a settlement with a long and *sometimes* visible stratigraphic record; but the bulk of excavation has taken place in the Summer, when the dry soil conditions make differentiation between contexts difficult. It may not be a coincidence that several key discoveries, in complex areas, have been made out of season.

One option not available is the leaving of the site for the attention of future archaeologists; even where stratification is good we have found the marks left by occasional intrusions from the subsoil plough, and the west of the spur is already a diminishing archaeological resource.

Gradiometer survey: Method

Concern that the clayey soils of the field might obscure magnetic anomalies led to a decision to sample at every 0.5m, along traverses set 1m apart in 20m² grids. To assess the efficacy of this scheme a 120 to 140m transect has been surveyed in the centre of the field, from the southern to the northern boundary (Fig. 5). The quality of data was sufficiently good to suggest that a full survey of the field would be worthwhile, a process which has begun.

The work was carried out by members of South East Somerset Archaeological and Historical Society and Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society, and by postgraduate students from

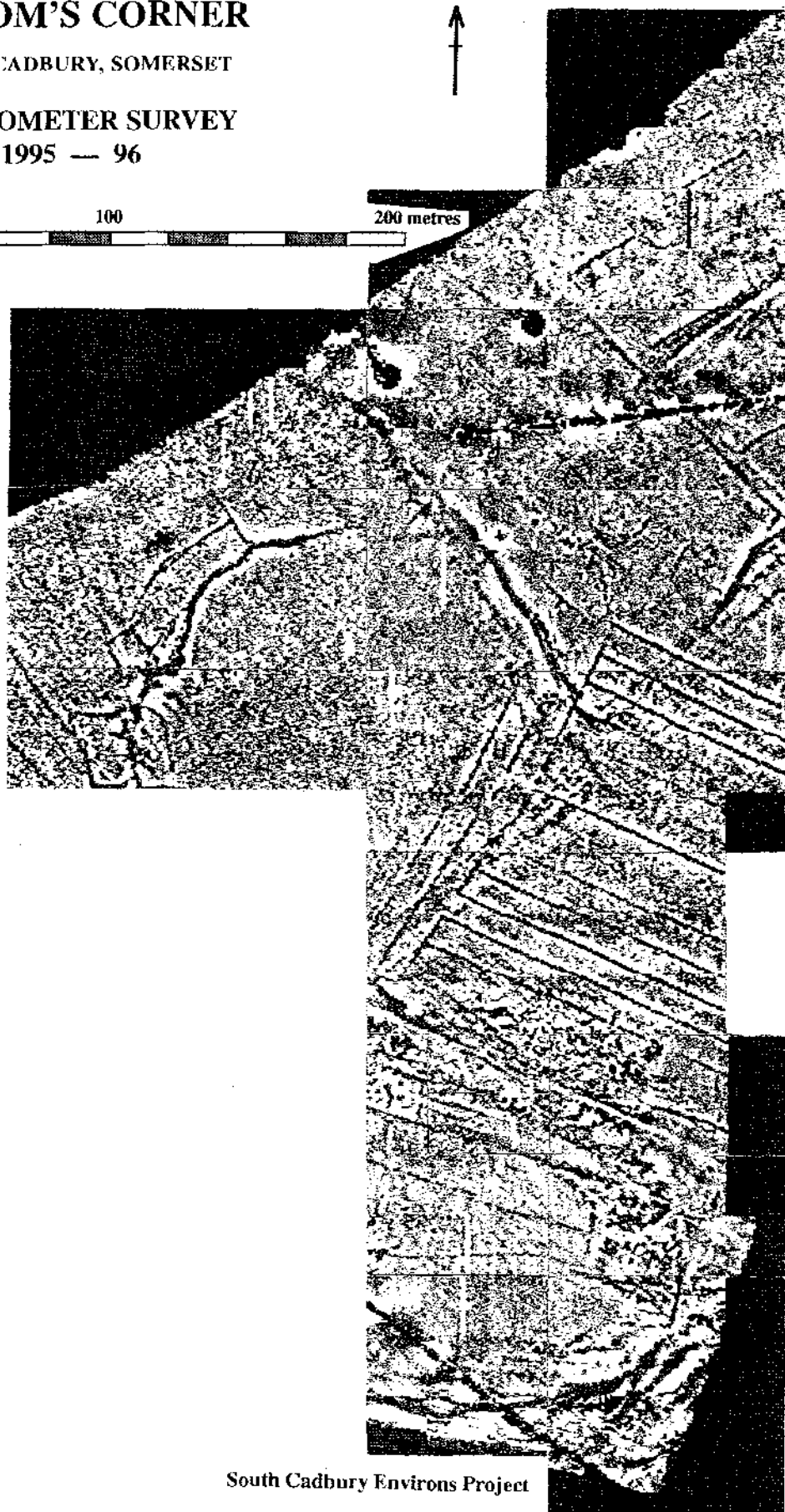
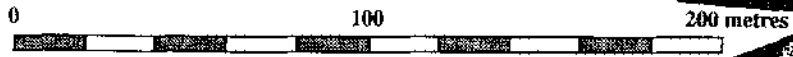
Fig. 5

MILSOM'S CORNER

SOUTH CADBURY, SOMERSET

GRADIOMETER SURVEY

1995 — 96



South Cadbury Environs Project

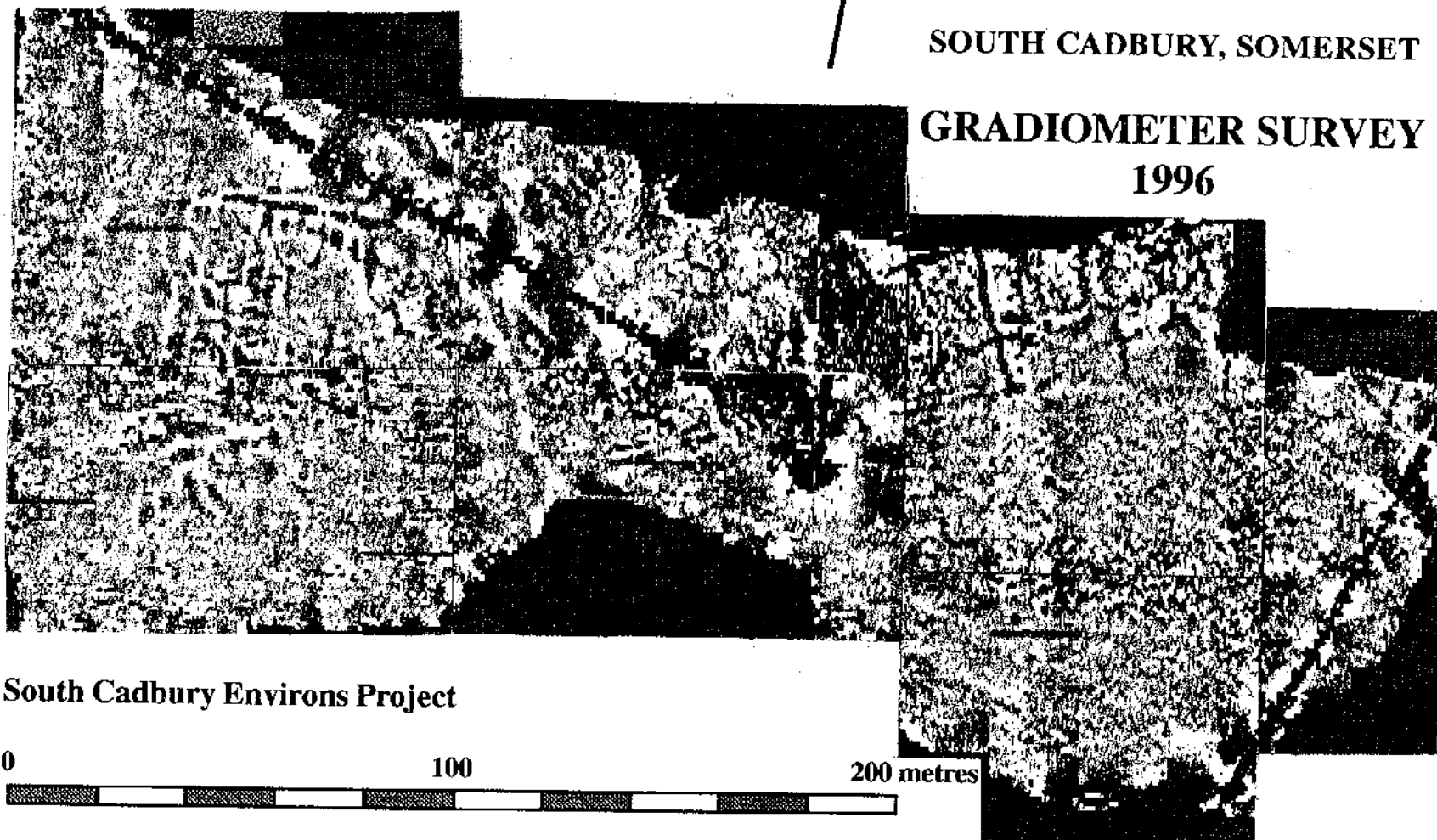


HOME GROUND

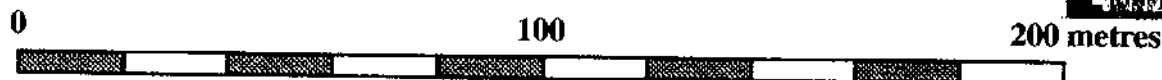
SOUTH CADBURY, SOMERSET

GRADIOMETER SURVEY

1996



South Cadbury Environs Project



the University of Birmingham.

Results

The initial survey in this field supported the first full season of excavation (Leach and Tabor, 1995, *Fig. 7*) and discussion of the features in that area appear above. The most prominent anomalies are parallel west north west-east south east linears which are undoubtedly modern field drains. They partially mask a south west-north east linear butted with a rectilinear negative anomaly.

To the north of this area, a variety of both straight and rough linears of varying positive intensity plainly represent more than one phase of activity. Part of a large, straight-sided, enclosure with rectilinear subdivisions would appear to be a development from, or an antecedent of, a less regular large ditched enclosure. Within the area bounded by them is a weakly positive circular anomaly.

It had been hoped that a small knoll on the north west edge of the central transect would offer good data after observations of a 1947 aerial photograph. Only towards the bottom of the north west and west slope were faint positive traces discernible, but at the bottom a strong positive irregular curvilinear arcs around the knoll, with subrectilinear positive anomalies appearing to develop along it.

Discussion

Although the frequency and quality of anomalies make poor comparison with those from Sigwells, the results have proved better than expected for clayey soils. It is too early to offer interpretation of the results, but they are encouraging enough for the project to resolve to survey a complete circumference of Cadbury Castle. As a consequence a field on the north side of the hillfort, Homeground (*Fig. 6*), was also covered.

Homeground

Homeground (ST 629 255) is a field presently alternating between arable and pastoral use lying along the south side of Folly Lane. A spring rises at its centre. Its south boundary forms an arc approximately 70m from the base of the outer north rampart of Cadbury Castle (*Fig. 2*). The soil is clayey silt.

Gradiometer survey: Method

The method adopted was that in use at Milsom's Corner. The survey was carried out by postgraduate and undergraduate students of Birmingham University.

Results

The data (*Fig. 6*) are marred by the presence of ferrous disturbance but in general are usefully informative. Negative anomaly stripes on the west of the field are almost certainly indicative of ridge and furrow which masks further positive and negative anomalies in that area.

There is a possible rectilinear anomaly south west of the field's centre. In the same area two irregular negative linear anomalies lie in north north west - south south east directions, one of which is in the lee of a positive lynchet in the field.

A double positive linear anomaly runs from the centre to the east of the field, terminating where a small group of subrectilinear positive anomalies lie along Folly lane. This is almost certainly a track leading to enclosures. Further processing may enhance the visibility of sketchy marks in the south east of the field.

No detailed discussion will be attempted here, but will be included in future publications devoted to the hillfort perimeter survey.

Castle Farm, 1996

Castle Farm (ST 6323 2540, *Fig. 2*) is set close to the bottom of the valley which divides the outlying knoll, Cadbury Castle, from Littleton Hill, on the eastern edge of the inferior oolitic limestone-capped ridge, which extends from the south to the north east of the study area. In the valley bottom, Yeovil Sands give way to an impermeable clay and silt mixture, but drainage improves rapidly on the slopes.

Fig. 6

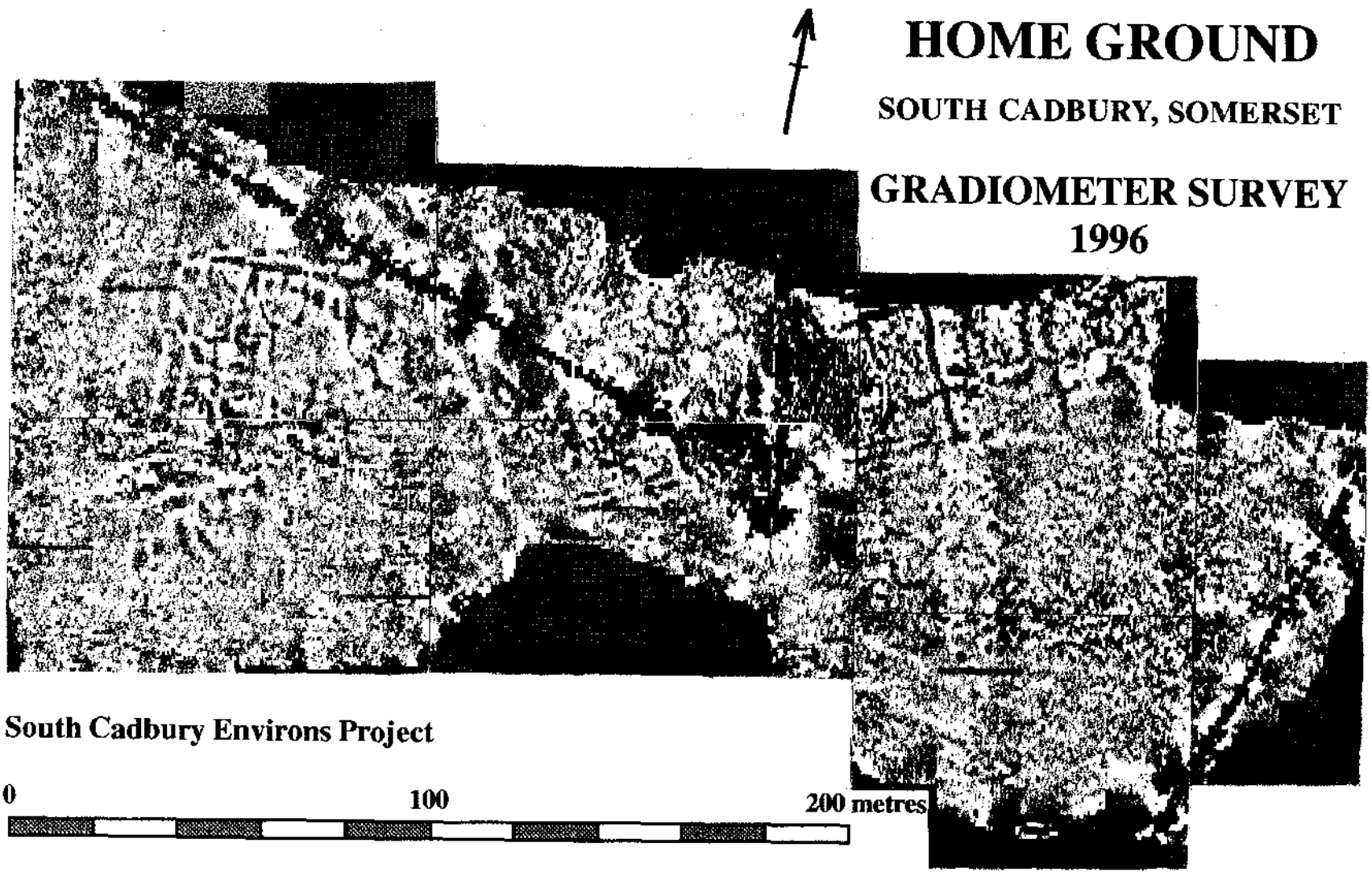
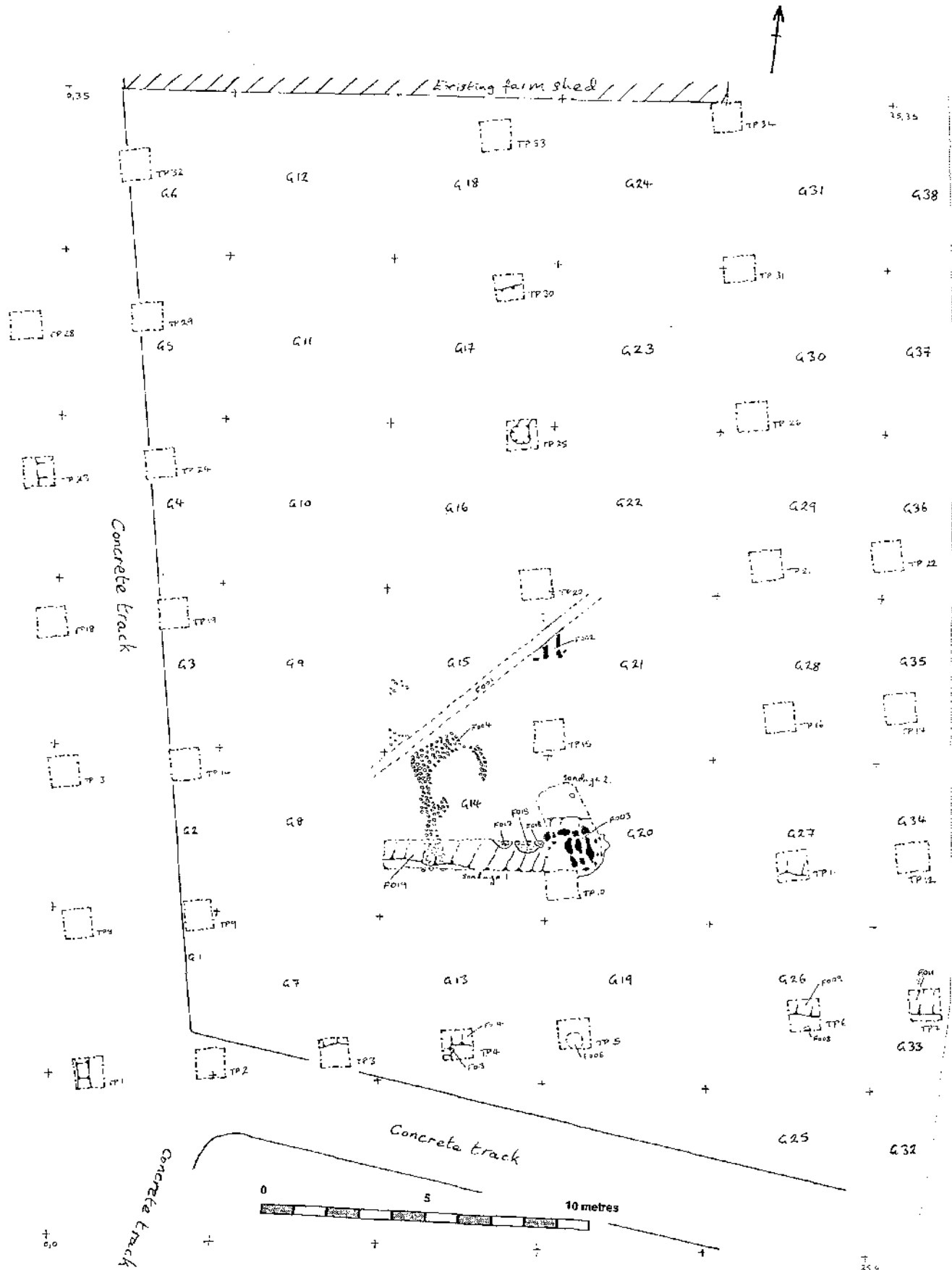


Fig. 7

Castle Farm

South Cadbury, Somerset

Site Plan, 1996



The west side of the development site incorporates a concrete track forming the eastern edge of a positive terrace on the west side of the valley. From the track is an eastward decline of more than 1m over 10m; thereafter a gentle slope continues for some 35m to a stream.

No previous work had been carried out on the site but its position within 100m of an area where Romano-British activity was discovered in 1966, under a housing plot, and within 80m of the main access to Cadbury Castle, ensured that it was designated as within an area of archaeological significance. Owing to their interest in, and goodwill towards, the Project, the landowners, J. A. and E. Montgomery Ltd., invited members of the South Cadbury Environs Project to carry out the requisite archaeological investigation in accordance with the terms of PPG 16.

Method

The main task was the excavation by hand of pits for 33 stanchions (900 x 900 x 750mm) supporting the extension of a covered yard over an area of approximately 750m², and of areas which would be threatened by the concrete and earthen flooring. The work was carried out by students from the universities of Glasgow and Liverpool, and by local volunteers, under the direction of Richard Tabor for Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit.

A watching brief was maintained during the preliminary machine levelling of the site, which removed between 5 and 25cm of turf and soil. A 5m² grid mesh (*Fig. 7*) was established and all artefacts and bone were collected from the surface. Subsequently, the stanchion pits and threatened surfaces were excavated. On their completion, two *sondages* were dug to gain sufficient contextual information for the interpretation of a particular stone feature (F003).

Results

Surface collection revealed a wealth of bone and Romano-British pottery, including amphorae, samian, micaceous greywares, early and late Black Burnished wares and late C3/C4 colour coats, such as New Forest and Oxfordshire wares. There was very little later or modern material, and that was very localised.

The two rows of test pits adjacent to the concrete track showed modern disturbance to depths varying from approximately 0.2m to 0.6m, whereas those within 4 to 12m of the track cut directly into sealed Romano-British deposits, which were at their deepest at the southern end, but which had been severely eroded and compacted at the northern end. The pits to the east showed alluvial silts of 0.1m to 0.4m depth before archaeological deposits were encountered.

Eleven pits produced cut features, mainly ditch segments, two postholes and unidentified scoops, whilst trowelling of the threatened surface in grids 14, 15, 20 and 21 revealed an area of cobbling (F004) and two substantial stone structures (F002 and F003), one of which had been badly damaged by a water pipe trench (F001).

A well preserved stratigraphic sequence from Sondage 1 (*Fig. 8*) and associated evidence from sondage 2 are discussed in the following section.

Preliminary analysis

Stratigraphy (based on Sondage 1, *Fig. 8*)

Although some half dozen Iron Age sherds have been identified no demonstrably pre-Roman features were found. A few sherds of micaceous, sand tempered pottery from the primary silts (1109; up to 0.4m deep) of a ditch (F019) are of BB1, dated to the late C1/early C2 A.D. Although a sherd of very micaceous grey fabric was recovered, it bore no relation to the very fine greyware samian imitations found at Saxon's Hill Bungalow. This, coupled with prominent incidence of decorated *War Cemetery* bowls at the latter site, and but a single undecorated sherd at Castle Farm, suggests that, although both areas were active in the latter half of C1 A.D., they had quite different functions and status. There is no burnt material in the silt and water seeps into the ditch where it cuts the water table.

At the eastern end of the sondage, the ditch silt is abutted by a lens of soil incorporating up to 50% reddish yellow baked clay (1108), overlain by charred material (1107). Once again finds were sparse, but of a similar character to those from the ditch silt. One sherd was decorated with closely set, very acute laticing and this was the lowest level at which *terra sigillata* occurred.

The burnt deposits were sealed by approximately 0.2m of slightly yellowish, dark greyish brown clayey silt, frequently flecked with charcoal (1100) but, in contrast to the layers sealing it, with few finds. The earliest of these strata (1095) is prolific with bone and pottery. The ceramic range is much more extensive; dominated by BB1, it includes large storage jars, some of Savernake ware, samian and a single very abraded, barbotine decorated, Nene Valley sherd. The assemblage is consistent with an early C2 to early C3 date.

An intermittent spread of stones, 1093, includes an amphora lip (*Dressel 20*) and an enigmatic mortaria rim sherd of a grey fabric, with a buff red surface; the rim has a horizontal, beaded, wedge profiled, drop flange.

The succeeding deposit (1020/1085/1084) includes much of the same fabric range, but with the laticing on BB1 vessels dominated by the later, obtuse style and with new wares including "parchment" from the New Forest, white slipped vessels of a type found frequently at Ilchester (Leach 1982) and buff orange Combe Hay ware.

A disturbed cobbled surface (1022) partially overlay these contexts, and was sealed by a very dark, almost black loam (1001), with bone and pottery from all phases, but particularly of C3/C4 date. Probably contemporary with the cobbling were the two stone structures, F002 and F003.

Priority was given to the investigation of F003 (*Plate 3*) because of its better preservation. Two rows (approximately 1.2m in length) of substantial stones defined a stone-floored channel of 0.2 to 0.3m width, filled with silt, burnt stone and daub fragments. Backing up to the rows of stone were clay, some of it baked, and smaller stones.

The north face of the structure, exposed by Sondage 2, proved to be set on a crudely pitched stone base and mortar, abutting context 1020.

Interpretation

The earliest discernible activity is represented by ditches aligned approximately east - west, apparently silting up in the late C1 or early C2 A.D. Only one ditch, F019, was investigated to a satisfactory degree. Its sharp 'V' profile cut through a yellowish brown sandy, clayey silt incorporating charcoal flecking, then Yeovil Sand and a clayey silt. The texture and colour of the early silts suggest that human activity in the immediate vicinity is limited, but a browner clayey silt, although carrying few finds, may indicate increasing intensity.

While the ditch was still as a distinct linear depression a substantial lens of baked clay was deposited, then sealed by a concentration of charcoal rich silt which became a thin band as it spread more widely. It would appear that this section of the ditch either housed an oven-like structure or received virtually uncontaminated debris from one situated very near by.

Following this episode a long midden sequence begins. Waste built to a height of up to 1m over a period from the early C2 to C4 A.D. The pattern was disrupted by the laying of a cobbled surface and the construction of at least two substantial (domestic?) ovens, associated with which are several scoops and deposits comprising charcoal-rich soils. Further waste seems to have covered the cobbles, although erosion of that surface makes firm conclusions impossible.

The midden's ceramic assemblage suggests that at least some of the population which generated it had access to the trappings of moderate affluence from the late C1 or early C2 onwards. In the early period this is best represented by imports: samian and southern Spanish amphorae, and later by British finewares. Other artefacts were: of bronze, a three lozenged enamelled brooch of a type dated to the 60s (A.D. Mackreth, D.F. in each Leach 1982, *Fig. 115*, no. 2), three coins and other fragments; of glass, half of a blue and white bead and small vessel fragments; of bone, a counter and a stylus; and of shale, a bracelet. Other objects included slag, quern fragments, and numerous nails, especially from the cobbled surface. The topography of the field adjoining the site from the south suggests that the midden extends for a further 70m into it, representing a very substantial body of waste accumulating over a period of three centuries or more. Bearing in mind Cadbury Castle's post Roman settlement, further work in the area might prove rewarding.

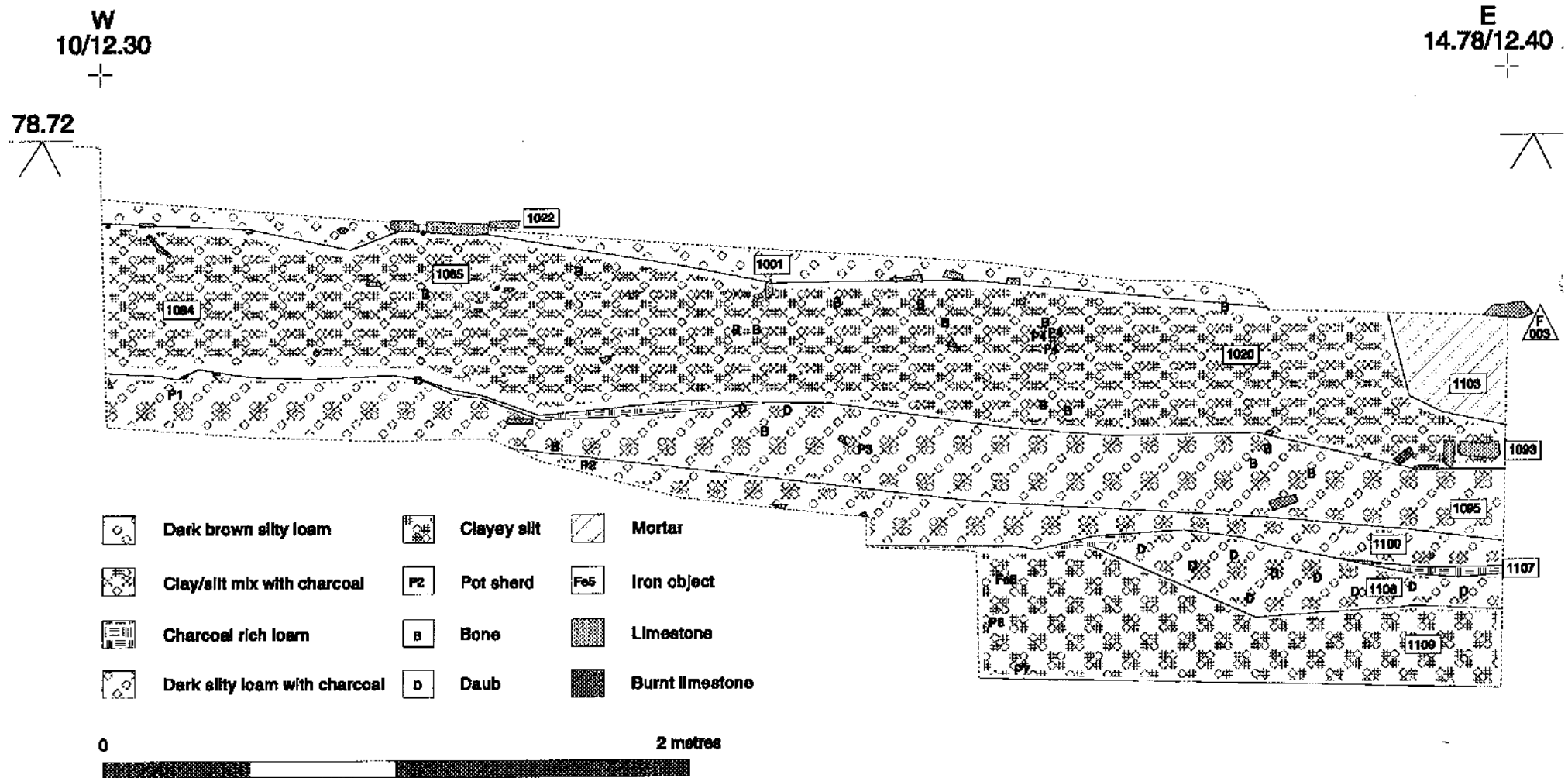
Conclusion

Castle Farm provides not merely a supplement to the data derived from excavations at Saxons Hill

Fig. 8

Castle Farm '96 - Sondage 1

South-facing section



Bungalow in 1966-67 but, more particularly, a sizeable ceramic assemblage from within an excellent stratigraphic sequence should expand considerably the Roman type series for the project as a whole.

Although the excavated area is now covered by a farm building, complementary work might usefully be carried out in the adjacent field, using methods predicated by research objectives and beyond the terms of PPG 16.

There is no present threat to this area of permanent pasture, which is unlikely to be the subject of development in the near future.

Detailed post excavation work will be carried out at BUFAU, and a final report will be prepared during 1998.

Sigwells, Charlton Horethorne

Gradiometer Survey

The progress of this survey of a field, approximately 17ha in area at Sigwells (ST 640234), approximately 2km south east of Cadbury Castle (*Fig. 2*), has depended on the availability of equipment and labour. Initial work had been targeted (Leach & Tabor 1995, *Fig. 4*), using a mesh of 20m² grids over areas where masonry, surface finds concentrations or upstanding monuments suggested the likely occurrence of subsoil features. Teams, variously comprising Birmingham University postgraduate students and, in the main, members of South East Somerset Archaeological and Historical Society, completed coverage of the field between the Autumn of 1995 and February 1996, with traverse and sampling intervals of 1m. Data were processed locally by Richard Tabor, using Geoplot 2.01, supplied by Geoscan Research, Bradford, and by Paul Johnson of Glasgow University on *Insite*.

A sharply defined "V" shaped gully extends roughly northwards into a steep sided ravine, which drops to the site of a deserted medieval village at Whitcombe Farm, dividing the north west quarter from the rest of the field. The survey demonstrates quite different anomaly patterns on either side of the gully (*Fig. 9*). Preliminary assessment has been based on perceived alignments of linear features and their relationship to a late Romano-British ditch and an earlier Romano-British ditch, excavated in 1994 and 1995 (Leach & Tabor 1995, *Fig. 6*). The early ditch runs from the north west corner of Trench III to its terminus at the south of Trench VIIIb; the southern terminus of the later ditch is visible in the north east corner of Trench III). After this "filter" has been applied there remain many other features not conforming to either pattern, some of which could be placed within a crude phasing on typological grounds, others of which appear to respect earlier features. The objective of this interpretation is not to achieve a final narrative, rather to provide a framework from which testable hypotheses may emerge.

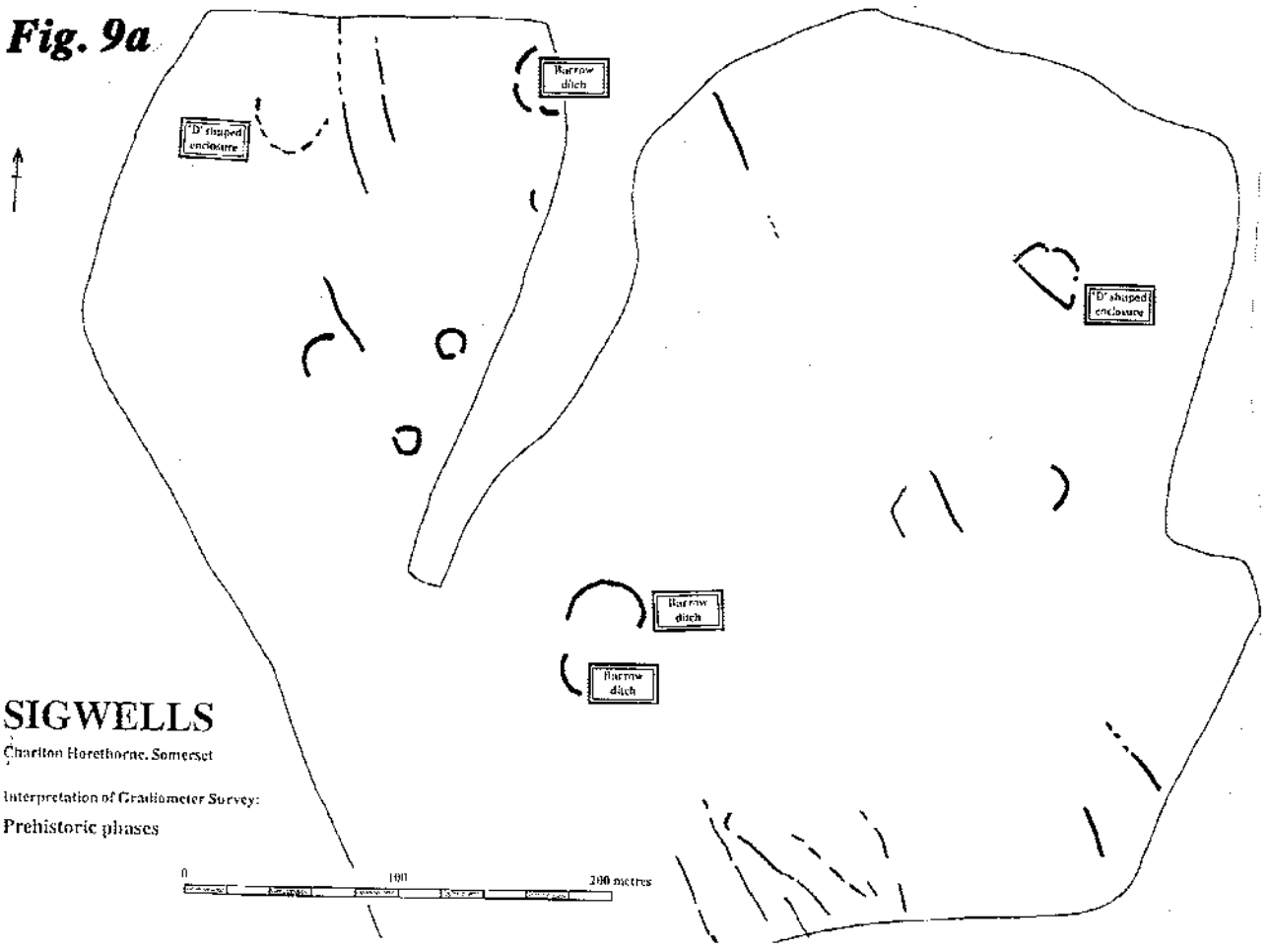
The earliest known prehistoric anomalies (*Fig. 9a*) are the ditches associated with three Early Bronze Age barrows. A number of linears are probably relict ditches, representing several phases of activity and two 'D' shapes may reasonably be assigned to the Iron Age, as might two penannular features. These latter present difficulties: their diameters are within the range for roundhouses, and are distinctly small for barrows. However, the width of the anomaly would have more in common with that of a barrow ditch! Alternatively, their shape and regularity raise the possibility that they are the remains of modern searchlight batteries; but there is nothing to suggest the incidence of ferrous magnetism which would be a likely consequence.

The formal division of the landscape is more apparent, and hence coherent, in an early Romano-British (*Fig. 9b*) phase, when settlement activity seems to have been focused on the east side of the field. Long east-west and north-south linears provide the basis for the parcelling of land in small rectilinear plots and strips, and access via double ditched tracks may have been introduced.

Two building complexes seem to have been fitted into this alignment, although the corner of a late C3 stone structure, found in 1994, was configured on a south south east - north north west axis, within the eastern complex (Trench II in Leach & Tabor 1994).

The later Romano-British phase (*Fig. 9c*) suggests a major restructuring of the landscape. The

Fig. 9a



SIGWELLS

Charlton Horethorne, Somerset

Interpretation of Gradiometer Survey:
Prehistoric phases

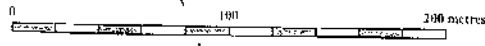
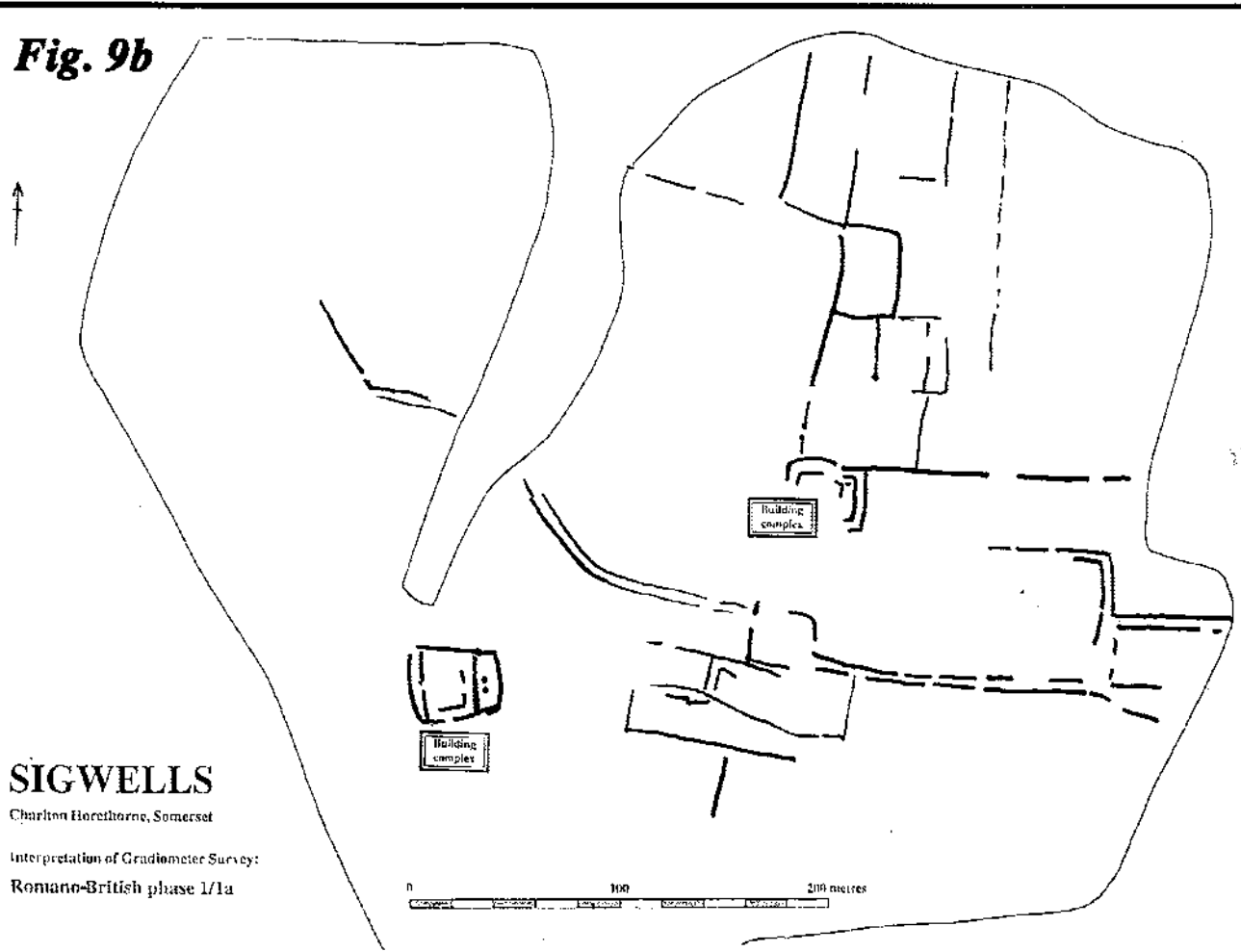


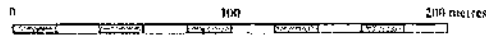
Fig. 9b



SIGWELLS

Charlton Horethorne, Somerset

Interpretation of Gradiometer Survey:
Romano-British phase 1/1a



layout, based on two, possibly three nearly parallel linears of approximately 500m length, and 90m apart, has been shifted by about 18°, giving an east north east - west south west alignment. *Building I* (Leach & Tabor 1994 and 1995) belongs to this phase, but the focus of settlement may well have shifted to west of the gully which divides the plateau. There, a street-like pattern terminates east, at the gully, where there is a more extensive building complex.

The impact of this phase on the landscape may well persist into the present. The dividing gully and modern road along the east of the field, are at roughly a rightangle to the general alignment, while the track running along the north west side of the field is parallel with it.

The earliest post-Roman (*Fig. 9d*) activity may be represented by an enclosure in the south east of the field, which appears to respect one of the later Romano-British long linears. The data suggest a complex south-facing gate. Respecting neither are faint traces of ridge and furrow. To the extreme north west of the field are weak linears which may represent formal land division. Immediately south, and of a sharply different alignment is a hollow way branching from the northern end of the dividing gully, which seems to become a broad, double-ditched (12m apart) way, flanked to the north by an area of strong but amorphous positive anomalies, at the west of which is a square enclosure. These features could belong to any phase from neolithic to medieval but there are no compelling criteria to specify which.

Fuller discussion of the survey results, and methods for testing the data, is being prepared for publication by Paul Johnson and Richard Tabor.

Review

The desktop based Stage 1 of the Project is nearing completion with the recording and analysis of field names within the core study area. The existing aerial photographic record (copies of a substantial part of which the South East Somerset Archaeological and Historical Society purchased, and has made available to the Project) has been used as a rough guide to landscape division and areas of archaeological interest, but only a small part has been properly transcribed to maps (Thomsen unpub.).

Stage 2, represented by fieldwork in the closer vicinity of Cadbury Castle, has produced very useful data from excavation and geophysical survey, but surface collection has been limited. The methods used for the latter are at present under review, as are control techniques such as shovel and test pitting. As these procedures develop, the need for a soil survey becomes more pressing.

In the coming year, further field work will be undertaken, but probably at a lower level of intensity. 1997 is likely to be a year of consolidation and planning in an effort to garner resources suited to the future needs and ambitions of the Project.

Acknowledgements

The Project is greatly indebted to Messrs. Archie and Jamie Montgomery, J.A. & E. Montgomery Ltd., and to Messrs. Brian and Geoffrey Green for access to their land and forbearance of our operations upon it. We are grateful to the many participants, too numerous to mention individually, who were involved in the different episodes of field and post excavation work during 1996, primarily graduate and undergraduate students from the Universities of Birmingham, Glasgow and Liverpool, and to members of the South East Somerset Archaeological and Historical Society. Practical arrangements and supervision were principally the responsibility of Mr. Ed Newton (BUFAU), Paul Johnson (University of Glasgow) and Dr. Michael Pallister (SESAS), ably assisted by Messrs. Fred Milton and Jim Eastaugh, and also by postgraduate research students, Julie Candy, Simona Losi, Andy Silver, Dan Slater, Sarah Watt and Elliot Wragg. Special thanks go to Frank Giocco and John Halstead for their continued practical support for the project, and to Martin Carruthers for repeatedly making expensive trips from Glasgow to work in the field, while whipping up enthusiasm for the project amongst his fellow undergraduates!

No less gratitude is due to Dr. Chris Pare (University of Birmingham) for his interest in and support for the Project, the Summer training excavation in particular, and for his continued forbearance, guidance and practical help as supervisor to Richard Tabor in his Ph. D. research. Once again, thanks go to Dr. Ann Woodward for her advice on the prehistoric pottery. Thanks are

due to the inhabitants of South Cadbury for their tolerance of our Summer occupation of their village, and we are especially grateful to Judith Levitt for so ably catering for staff and students during this period. The provision of rented accommodation, a campsite and access to agricultural buildings for storage and soil flotation in South Cadbury by J.A. & E. Montgomery Ltd. has been of enormous benefit to the project.

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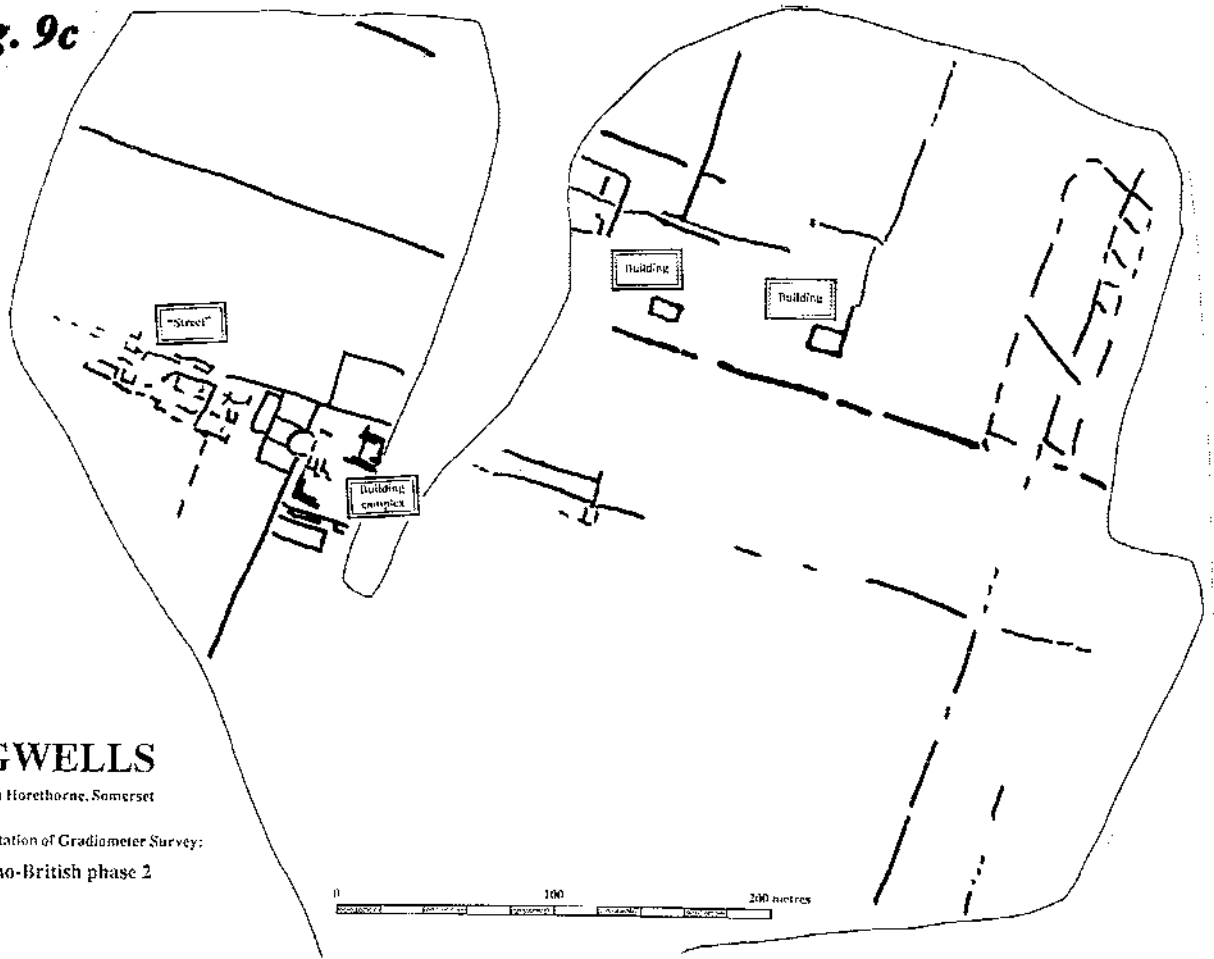
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Peter Leach and Richard Tabor, University of Birmingham, December 1996.



Plate 3 — Castle Farm F003, a late third or fourth century AD stone and clay oven set on foundations of mortar and pitched stone. At least one other oven of similar design was nearby.

Fig. 9c



SIGWELLS

Charlton Horethorne, Somerset

Interpretation of Gradiometer Survey:
Romano-British phase 2

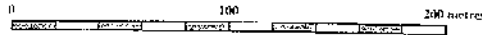
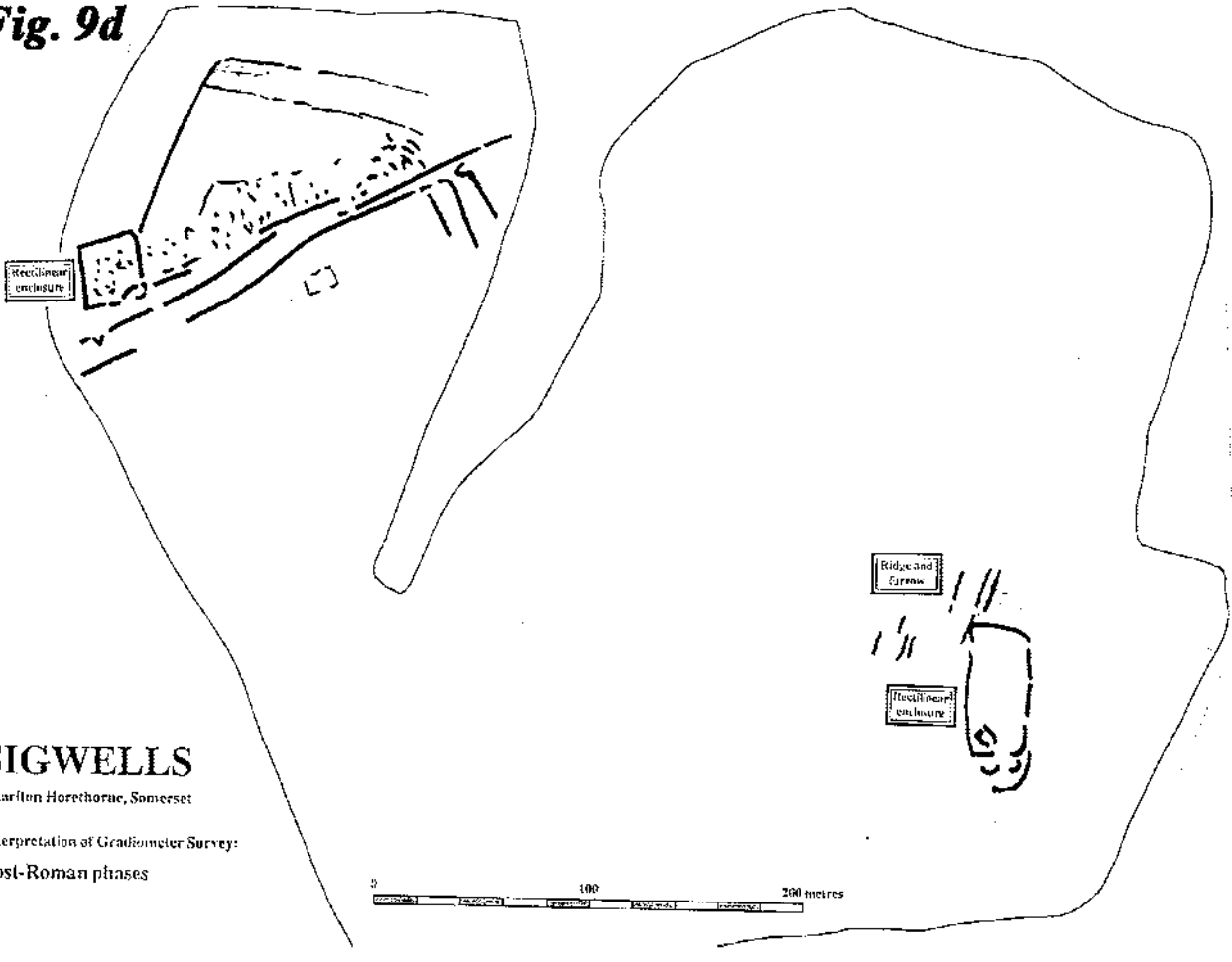


Fig. 9d



SIGWELLS

Charlton Horethorne, Somerset

Interpretation of Gradiometer Survey:
Post-Roman phases

