

*BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY  
FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT*

**Land to the north of Manor Farm, Yaxley,  
Cambridgeshire:**

**an archaeological evaluation**

*B.U.F.A.U.*



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**Land to the north of Manor Farm, Yaxley, Cambridgeshire:  
an archaeological evaluation**

by  
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**LAND TO THE NORTH OF  
MANOR FARM, YAXLEY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

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**Land to the north of Manor Farm, Yaxley, Cambridgeshire:**  
**an archaeological evaluation**

**Summary**

Following an earlier aerial photographic assessment and desk-based assessment, archaeological evaluation was undertaken of land to the north of Manor Farm at Yaxley, Cambridgeshire in October 1998. An earthwork survey recorded a series of linear earthwork features including banks and ditches. Twenty test-pits were excavated across the site to assess the artefact content of the topsoil, with largely negative results. A series of twelve trial trenches were then excavated, located in the main to test the earthwork features.

A small group of possible 2nd-century AD Romano-British pottery was recovered from a ditch-type feature in the southern part of the study area and a single sherd of abraded Roman Samian ware was recovered from the central part of the study area. Although these finds may be in residual contexts, they do suggest background Roman activity in the area.

There was little or no evidence for domestic occupation on the site and the results suggested that the earthworks were associated with a medieval and/or post-medieval field system. These may have been associated with Manor Farm to the south. Several of the features recorded in the southern part of the site produced small quantities of medieval pottery. Preliminary dating suggests that this does not form a cohesive group, but rather covers a wide time span from the 10th to 14th centuries. Very little post-medieval pottery was recovered from the site suggesting that the fields may have been pasture for some considerable time. Narrow linear stone footings recorded in the southeast part of the study area may have been associated with a dovecote marked on early OS maps.

**Introduction**

The following report details the results of an archaeological evaluation in advance of proposed development of an area of 5.8 hectares of pasture at Yaxley, Cambridgeshire (centred on NGR TL 177921, Fig. 1). Manor Farm is located to the south of the site and the remaining three sides are bounded by residential development. The work was commissioned by Parry Dunstall Planning Consultants and undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit in October 1998. The evaluation follows an aerial photographic assessment prepared by Air Photo Services (1998) and a desk-based assessment prepared by BUFAU (1998a) and it conforms to a specification also prepared by BUFAU (1998b). Prior to the evaluation, it was thought that site might contain remains or artefacts dating to the prehistoric, Romano-British or medieval periods.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological background is described in detail in the desk-based assessment and in the aerial photographic assessment.

A pit containing worked flints of early prehistoric date was identified during excavation to the south of the site. Roman coins and pottery (SMR No. 01409) were recovered from within the site earlier this century, and further find-spots of Romano-British artefacts have been made in the surrounding area (SMR No. 01353, 01636, 00996, 01628, 01418, 11686 and 01390).

The study area is located within the historic settlement focus of Yaxley village, adjacent to Manor Farm. Evidence for an associated moated manorial enclosure was suggested by an evaluation to the east of Manor Farm in 1991 (French 1991). However, more extensive excavation in early 1998 indicated that these features were part of an extensive series of ponds, possibly for fish (Regan 1998). No evidence for the original Manor House was recorded during this excavation. Instead, it was suggested that the remains of this manorial settlement may lie to the north, in the area of the current evaluation (Regan 1998, 12). However, traces of Roman activity and several ditches containing 12th- to 14th-century pottery were recorded.

The current study area lies to the north of this excavated area and contains visible traces of earthwork banks, ditches and ridge and furrow. The aerial photographic survey provided further details of these visible earthwork features (Fig. 2), and other possible features suggested by cropmarks.

## **Aims**

The objectives of the archaeological evaluation were:

- (a) to define the nature, extent and significance of archaeological remains within the area proposed for development and to permit the formulation of a mitigation strategy, if appropriate
- (b) In particular it was intended to provide information concerning the potential of the site to contain (i) evidence of Romano-British settlement and activity, and (ii) earthworks or below-ground remains associated with the medieval village.

## **Method**

The evaluation was undertaken in two stages:

### *Stage 1 - Earthwork survey and test pitting*

A hachure survey of visible earthworks (mainly comprising linear banks and ditches) was undertaken using a Total Station EDM and a digital mapping programme

(‘Fastmap’). The results are illustrated in Figure 3. They supplement information obtained during a site inspection which was made in January 1998 during the desk-based assessment. However, the vegetation cover had grown considerably in the intervening period making it more difficult to define some of the slighter features, such as ridge and furrow. The lettering of the areas and features on Figure 3 corresponds with the lettering allocated during the aerial photographic survey and the desk-based assessment. A detailed description of the various features appears in the desk-based assessment (BUFAU 1998a, 8-10). The following is a brief summary of the principal features.

Area A - a group of linear earthworks, orientated east-west and associated with an area of ridge and furrow to the north.

Area B - irregular depressions and linear features possibly corresponding with a former watercourse and ponds.

Area C - two low, ill-defined earthworks. Early OS maps also indicate the location of a former dovecote in this area.

Feature D - a prominent bank crossing the western part of the study area.

Feature E - a slight ditch in the eastern part of the study area. During the aerial photographic assessment this feature was recorded as two parallel ditches (Fig. 2).

Area F - an area of ridge and furrow. These low earthworks were better defined during the aerial photographic assessment (Fig. 2).

Feature G - a linear earthwork recorded during the aerial photographic assessment (Fig. 2) but no longer visible on the ground.

Feature H - a prominent bank corresponding with the northeastern boundary of the study area.

Feature J - a shallow, indistinct, linear depression.

Feature K - a bank and possible ditch in the western part of the study area.

A total of 20 test-pits were excavated at 50m centres using a JCB with a toothless ditching bucket working under archaeological control. The objective was to assess the artefact content of the topsoil, and to identify any particular concentrations of finds which might have assisted in the selection of the locations for the trial-trenches. Each of the test pits measured at least 1.6m by 1.6m and in each case the natural subsoil horizon was exposed. This comprised a yellowish brown silty clay with fragments of chalk and flint. This subsoil was overlain by up to 0.4m of silty clay, interpreted as a medieval/post-medieval ploughsoil, and up to 0.2m of topsoil. A sample of the topsoil from each test-pit was hand-sieved. In the event only a small number of post-medieval or modern fragments of tile and pottery were recovered.

### *Stage 2 - Trial-trenching*

A total of twelve trenches were excavated, each measuring approximately 50m by 1.8m. These provided a total sample of approximately 2% of the proposed development area. Due to the largely negative results of the test pitting the rationale for each the trench locations was principally based on the results of the aerial photographic assessment and the earthwork survey (see appendix).

A JCB excavator was used to remove the topsoil and medieval/post-medieval ploughsoil, under archaeological supervision. Where appropriate, the subsoil surface was hand cleaned. A representative sample of the features present were hand-excavated to provide information concerning the survival and complexity of feature fills, and to recover artefactual and ecofactual samples for analysis. 20 litre soil samples were collected from a representative sample of datable features for the recovery of charred plant remains.

### **Summary of results of trial trenching**

Detailed results of the trial trenching, including the objectives of each trench location and descriptions of features and stratigraphy, are provided in the appendix. The following is a brief summary describing the principal features recorded.

**Area A** - a group of linear earthworks, orientated east-west were tested by Trench 5 (Fig. 6). They were found to consist of two banks separated by a ditch and a slightly raised area with a slight depression corresponding to a watercourse identified during the aerial photographic assessment. The banks were 0.40m and 0.70m high and the ditch was 1.05m deep and contained medieval and early post-medieval pottery. The slightly raised area consisted of a build up of yellowish brown silty clay against the south side of the highest bank. The depression was a surface feature filled with topsoil. The area to the north of these earthworks, containing ridge and furrow, was tested by trench 6. A single sherd of early post-medieval pottery was recovered from one of the furrows.

**Area B** - a linear feature identified as a possible watercourse by the aerial photographic assessment was examined by the western half of Trench 1 (Fig. 4), but no clear evidence of this was identified.

**Area C** - two low, ill-defined earthworks and a possible former watercourse were investigated by Trench 2 (Fig. 5). The most westerly of the mounds was 0.15m high and the other was 0.45m high. The lower of the two mounds sealed a ditch containing medieval pottery. The other, higher, mound was composed of two layers. A single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from the upper layer. The lower layer had a group of small ditches, gullies and a post-hole cut into it; some of these features contained medieval pottery. The pottery recovered from the features covered a long time span and consequently the precise date of the features is uncertain.

A narrow foundation trench containing possible wall footings and post-medieval tile, associated with a shallow possible robber trench was located at the west end of Trench 2. This feature appeared to correspond with a slight linear depression in the ground at this point. A modern brick drainage feature, possibly a culvert, appears to correspond to the former watercourse identified during the aerial photographic assessment.

**Feature D** - a wide bank and ditch were examined by Trench 1 (Fig. 4) The original bank was 0.40m high and 7.5m wide, but appeared larger before excavation due to a build up silty clay over the top. The ditch was 4.60m wide and 1.60m deep. No datable finds were recovered.

**Feature E** - a slight ditch, within a possible enclosure formed by Features D and H, in the eastern part of the study area. During the aerial photographic assessment this feature was recorded as two parallel ditches. These ditches were tested by Trenches 9 and 11. No evidence of these features was recognised, apart from a very slight depression in the ground surface in Trench 11. A small north-south aligned ditch in Trench 9 contained Roman pottery.

**Area F** - an area of ridge and furrow within a possible enclosure formed by Features D and H. These low earthworks were better defined during the aerial photographic assessment. This area was examined by Trenches 7 and 8. No significant archaeological features were identified here apart from possible traces of the ridge and furrow.

**Feature G** - a linear earthwork recorded during the aerial photographic assessment (Fig. 2) but no longer visible on the ground. This feature was investigated by Trench 12. No evidence of this feature was identified.

**Feature H** - a prominent bank corresponding with the northeastern boundary of the study area. This was examined by Trench 12. The bank was more than 5m wide and 1m high with a ditch on its west side 1.70m wide and 0.50m deep. No datable finds were recovered.

**Feature J** - a shallow, indistinct, linear depression which corresponded to a field boundary seen on fairly recent OS maps. This feature was not examined.

**Feature K** - a bank and possible ditch in the western part of the study area. This feature was tested by Trench 4. The bank was 8m wide and 0.60m high. No finds were recovered. The ditch to the west was 1.60m wide and was filled with modern rubble.

**Preliminary pottery dating** (based on comments provided by Stephanie Ratkai and Annette Hancock)

Trench	Feature	Context	No. of sherds	Provisional spot dating
1	F101	1011	1	Medieval - 13th-14th century
2	F200	2003	8	Medieval - 10th-13th century
2	F201	2002	1	Possible medieval
2	F204	2007	7	Medieval - 13th-14th century
3	F300	3003	17	Roman - 2nd century
5	F500	5003	2	Post-medieval - Mid 16th-17th century
5	F500	5008	1	11th-12th century
6	F600	6002	1	Post-medieval - ?16th-17th century
9	F900	9003	1	Roman - 2nd century
9	F900	9003	1	Roman -?2nd century

*Roman pottery* - this included several fragments of shell tempered ware (?Bourne-Greetham) of possible 2nd-century date from Trench 3 (F300) and a single fragment of abraded Samian ware, possibly Dr.37 of 2nd century date from Trench 9 (F900).

*Medieval and post-medieval pottery* - The medieval pottery from the site did not form a cohesive group but comprised a range of fabric types (including local sandy



and calcareous wares, calcareous wares, Grimstone ware, Bourne ware, Stamford ware and possibly Thetford ware) covering a wide time span. Of note is the material from F200 which includes pre-conquest material. Although this is a small sample of material, there appears to be a noticeable gap with no material of the 15th or early 16th century represented. The rarity of post-medieval material might suggest that the area had reverted to pasture by this time.

## **Discussion**

There was no evidence for any prehistoric activity in the study area. The only finds of Romano-British date were the abraded Samian sherd from Trench 9 and the small group of possible 2nd-century shell tempered ware from Trench 3. Although these finds may be in residual contexts, they do suggest background Roman activity in the study area.

The majority, if not all, the earthwork features appear to be of medieval or later date. Unfortunately, very few provided any definitive dating evidence. The exception was the small group of medieval pottery recovered from various features in the southern part of the site. This material covers a wide time span from the 10th century (pre-conquest) to the 14th century. Similar features, containing pottery of 12th- to 14th-century date, were recovered during the excavation immediately to the south (Regan 1998). These were thought to relate to field boundaries forming part of the wider manorial complex.

The most prominent of the earthworks examined during the evaluation were Features D and H. It seems likely that these two banks formed the eastern and western sides of an enclosure, possibly defined to the north by Grove Lane (now Broadway). Feature H appears to correspond with a feature marked on a map of Yaxley dated to c 1800 (Fig. 7). The apparent break in Bank D in the southern part of the study area is suggestive of an entrance. Further components of this enclosure appear to have been recorded during an evaluation to the southeast of the study area in 1993 (Begg 1993).

None of the evaluation trenches in the interior of this putative enclosure produced any evidence for structures or other domestic activity. In particular, this area contained no trace of the elusive manorial buildings, despite the suggestion made in the report on the excavation to the east of Manor Farm (Regan 1998, 12). The traces of ridge and furrow, recorded during the aerial photographic assessment, all appear to respect the alignment of the banks. Furthermore, a slight change in the orientation of this ridge and furrow is marked by the double ditched feature (Feature E) recorded during the aerial photographic assessment. This suggests that the banks effectively enclosed two agricultural fields separated by a former land division (Feature E).

The linear earthworks in the western part of the evaluation (Area A and Feature K) appear to represent a smaller enclosed area post-dating the main enclosure. These features also correspond with boundaries indicated on the c.1800 map (Fig. 7). The irregular depressions within this smaller enclosure (Area B) may represent feeder

ponds associated with the larger features recorded during the excavation to the south. These latter were interpreted as fish ponds (Regan 1998).

The date for these enclosed fields is suggested by the small group of medieval pottery recovered from the features in the southern part of the study area and from a sherd of late medieval pottery recovered from a section through Feature D during the 1993 evaluation (Begg 1993). The absence of post-medieval material might suggest that the area had reverted to pasture by this time.

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The illustrations were prepared by John Halstead and the report was edited by Simon Buteux.

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## Appendix

### Detailed results of Trial Trenching

#### Trench 1 (Fig.4)

*Aim:* to examine linear bank and ditch earthworks (Fig. 3, Feature D).

*Method:* machine excavated trench 1.80m wide and 53m long.

*Stratigraphy:* The natural subsoil (1005) was encountered at a depth of up to 0.55m. It comprised a yellowish brown clay containing chalk and flint nodules. A sondage dug to test the depth of this layer contacted blueish grey boulder clay and chalk (1007) at a depth of 1.90m. The natural subsoil was overlain by between 0.20 and 0.35m of yellowish brown silty clay (1002) which in turn was overlain by 0.2m of topsoil (1000).

*Features:*

F100 - linear bank made of a brown silty clay (1003) containing a large amount of chalk fragments, aligned NW-SE, 0.40m high and 7.50m wide.

F101 - modern pipe trench, 1.10m wide and 0.60m deep, filled with a greyish brown silty clay (1011) and containing a ceramic pipe and residual medieval pottery.

F102 - large ditch with steep sides and a rounded base, 4.60m wide and 1.70m deep, orientated NW-SE. Filled with brown silty clays (1004, 1008-1010) and a grey clayey silt (1006).

*Interpretation:* The large earthwork ditch and bank appear to form the west side of an enclosure. The date of these features is uncertain, due to a lack of datable pottery. The layer sealing these features may be a ploughsoil associated with earlier ridge and furrow cultivation noted in the aerial photographic assessment and earthwork survey. A slightly raised area recorded by the earthwork survey appears to be a slightly deeper area of this ploughsoil.

#### Trench 2 (Fig. 5)

*Aim:* to examine two earthwork mounds or banks (Fig., Area C ), a linear depression and a possible watercourse identified by the aerial photographic assessment.

*Method:* machine excavated trench 1.80m wide and 50m long.

*Stratigraphy:* The natural yellowish brown clay containing chalk and flint nodules was encountered at a depth of up to 0.65m. This was overlain at the east end of the trench by a bank or mound (F201) composed of yellowish brown silty clay (2013), 0.20m thick and 15m wide, which was cut by archaeological features. Sealing 2013 was a dark brown silty clay (2002), 0.25m thick and 15m wide, which contained a single sherd of medieval pottery. Overlying the natural further to the west was a dark brown silty clay (2011), 0.15m thick and 7m wide and sealing an archaeological feature. This was overlain by topsoil (2000) 0.2m deep.

*Features:*

F200 - ditch with steep sides and a flat base, 1.14m wide and 0.24m wide, aligned NW-SE. Filled with a grey brown silty clay (2003) containing medieval pottery, slag and bone.

F201 - bank or mound, 0.45m high and 15m wide, made of yellowish brown silty clay (2013), 0.20m thick, which was cut by archaeological features. Above 2013 was a dark brown silty clay (2002), 0.25m thick and 15m wide, which contained a single sherd of medieval pottery.

F202 - gully with steep sides and a rounded base, 0.35m wide and 0.15m deep, aligned NE-SW. Filled with a grey brown silty clay (2004).

F203 - circular post-hole with steep sides and a rounded base, 0.45m in diameter and 0.15m deep filled with a greyish brown silty clay (2005).

F204 - ditch with 'V' - shaped profile, 1.20m wide and 0.60m deep, orientated NW-SE. Filled with a brownish grey clay silt (2012), 0.15m deep, containing fired clay and animal bone and a greyish brown silty clay (2007) containing medieval pottery and animal bone, 0.35m deep. A single 20 litre sample of the fill 2007 from this feature was wet sieved to retrieve any charred plant remains and was found to be sterile.

F205 - gully with steep sides and a rounded base, 0.40m wide and 0.25m deep, aligned NE-SW. Filled with limestone fragments, probably the remains of wall footings, within a brown sandy clay matrix (2008) and containing post-medieval tile.

F206 - gully cutting F200 with steep sides and a rounded base, 0.50m wide and 0.38m deep, aligned NE -SW and filled with a grey silty clay (2009).

F207 - shallow ditch with gently sloping sides and a rounded base, 1m wide and 0.20m deep. aligned NE-SW, abutts F205. Filled with a dark brown sandy silty clay (2010) and post medieval tile.

F208 - modern brick (2006) drainage feature.

*Interpretation:* The wall footings at the end of the trench could be associated with a dovecote shown on early OS maps. The shallow ditch abutting it may be a robber trench. Features containing medieval pottery did not provide adequate dating evidence apart from F204, which appeared to be of 13-14th century date.

### **Trench 3 (Fig. 5)**

*Aim:* speculative trench

*Method:* machine excavated trench 1.80m wide and 50m long.

*Stratigraphy:* natural subsoil consisting of a yellowish brown silty clay with chalk and flint nodules was encountered at 0.65m. Sealing the natural was a yellowish brown silty clay, 0.45m deep. Above this was 0.2m of topsoil.

*Features:*

F300 - ditch with steep sides and a slightly rounded base, 0.71m wide and 0.56m deep, aligned NE-SW. Filled with a greyish brown silty clay (3003) containing Romano-British pottery. A single 20 litre sample of fill 3003 from this feature was wet sieved to retrieve any charred plant remains and found to contain only a few flecks of charcoal.

*Interpretation:* the linear ditch may be of Romano-British date.

### **Trench 4 (Not illustrated)**

*Aim:* to examine a linear bank and ditch earthwork (Fig. 3, Feature K).

*Method:* machine excavated trench 1.80m wide and 50m long.

*Stratigraphy:* natural subsoil consisting of a yellowish brown silty clay with chalk and flint nodules was encountered at up to 0.80m in depth. At the west end of the trench this was overlain by a bank (F403) composed of yellowish brown silty clay containing large amounts of chalk. In the rest of the

trench the natural was sealed by a yellowish brown silty clay, 0.25m deep. Above this was 0.2m of topsoil.

*Features:*

F400 - ditch, 1.6m wide, aligned NW-SE, filled with modern bricks and rubble. Not excavated.

F401 - natural feature.

F402 - linear gully, 0.64m wide and 0.13m deep, aligned NW-SE filled with a grey clay silt.

F403 - bank with rounded profile, 0.60m thick and 8m wide, aligned NW-SE, made of a chalky yellowish brown clay.

*Interpretation:* The date of the earthwork bank was not determined due to lack of datable finds. The ditch appeared to be of modern origin or disturbed by recent dumping.

### **Trench 5 (Fig. 6)**

*Aim:* to investigate several earthwork features including two linear banks and a ditch (Fig. 3, Area A).

*Method:* machine excavated trench 1.80m wide and 50m long.

*Stratigraphy:* natural subsoil consisting of a yellowish brown silty clay with chalk and flint nodules was encountered at up to 0.90m. At the central part of the trench this was overlain by two banks. The most northerly of these (F502) was composed of yellowish brown silty clay (5004), 0.40m thick. The bank to the south of this (F501) was made of a brown silty clay (5005), 0.30m thick, below a yellowish brown silty clay (5006) containing large amounts of chalk fragments, 0.4m thick. In the rest of the trench the natural was sealed by a yellowish brown silty clay, up to 0.60m deep. Above this was 0.2m of topsoil.

*Features:*

F500 - linear ditch with steep sides and a flat base, 1.05m deep and 4.90m wide, aligned east-west. It was filled with a greyish brown silty clay (5008) containing medieval and post-medieval pottery and animal bone and a greyish brown silty sandy clay (5003) containing early post-medieval pottery.

F501 - bank with steeply sloping sides and a flat top, 0.40m high and 4.60m wide, aligned east west. It was made of a brown silty clay (5005), 0.30m thick, below a yellowish brown silty clay (5006) containing large amounts of chalk fragments, 0.40m thick.

F502 - bank with a rounded profile, 0.70m high, aligned E-W. It was made of a brown silty clay, 0.30m thick, below a yellowish brown silty clay containing large amounts of chalk fragments, 0.40m thick.

*Interpretation:*

It was not possible to date the banks due to the lack of datable pottery, but the associated ditch may date to the medieval or early post-medieval period and may represent an enclosure or field boundary.

### **Trench 6 (not illustrated)**

*Aim:* to examine a series of banks and ditches (Fig.3, Area A) recorded by earthwork survey and the aerial photographic assessment, and thought to be ridge and furrow earthworks.

*Method:* machine excavated trench 1.80m wide and 50m long.

*Stratigraphy:* natural subsoil consisting of a yellowish brown silty clay with chalk and flint nodules was encountered at a depth of up to 0.65m. Sealing the natural was a yellowish brown silty clay, up

to 0.45m deep, which formed three N-S aligned banks or ridges spaced 7-8m apart. Above this was 0.2m of topsoil.

*Features:*

F600 - furrow with gently sloping sides and a rounded profile, 3m wide, and 0.25m deep, filled with a dark brown loam (6002) containing a large fragment of early post-medieval pottery.

F601 - negative feature, similar width and fill as F600.

F602 - negative feature, similar width and fill as F600.

*Interpretation:* the three linear earthwork ridges and three furrows recorded in this trench corresponded with the earthworks recorded by the earthwork survey and aerial photographic assessment. These features may be part of a ridge and furrow field system dating from the medieval or early post-medieval period.

**Trench 7 (not illustrated)**

*Aim:* to investigate the interior of a postulated enclosure which may have been formed by two linear earthwork features (Fig. 3, Features D and H) recorded by earthwork survey and the aerial photographic assessment.

*Method:* machine excavated trench 1.80m wide and 50m long.

*Stratigraphy:* natural subsoil consisting of a yellowish brown silty clay with chalk and flint nodules was encountered at a depth of 0.6m. Shallow bands of slightly more silty clay were also recorded. Sealing the natural was a yellowish brown silty clay, 0.40m deep. Above this was 0.2m of topsoil.

*Features:*

F700 - amorphous shallow tree bowl, 0.15m deep, filled with grey silty clay.

*Interpretation:* The shallow bands of slightly more silty clay may represent the bases of furrows associated with the ridge and furrow recorded previously. No trace of the ridges were recorded in this trench, and no other archaeological features were recorded.

**Trench 8 (not illustrated)**

*Aim:* to investigate the interior of a postulated enclosure which may have been formed by two linear earthwork features (Fig. 3, Features D and H) recorded by earthwork survey and the aerial photographic assessment.

*Method:* machine excavated trench 1.8m wide and 50m long.

*Stratigraphy:* natural subsoil consisting of a yellowish brown silty clay with chalk and flint nodules was encountered at a depth of 0.6m. Shallow bands of slightly more silty clay were recorded. Sealing the natural was a yellowish brown silty clay, 0.4m deep. Above this was 0.2m of topsoil.

*Features:*

No archaeological features recorded.

*Interpretation:* The shallow bands of slightly more silty clay may represent the bases of furrows associated with the ridge and furrow recorded previously. No trace of the ridges were recorded in this trench and no other archaeological features were recorded.

### **Trench 9 (Fig. 5)**

*Aim:* to investigate the interior of a postulated enclosure which may have been formed by two linear ditches (Fig. 3, Features D and H) recorded by earthwork survey and the aerial photographic assessment, and to examine two parallel linear ditches (Fig. 2 and 3, Feature B) recorded by aerial photographic assessment.

*Method:* machine excavated trench 1.80m wide and 50m long.

*Stratigraphy:* natural subsoil consisting of a yellowish brown silty clay with chalk and flint nodules was encountered at a depth of 0.5m. Sealing the natural was a yellowish brown silty clay, 0.30m deep. Above this was 0.2m of topsoil.

#### *Features:*

F900 - small ditch or gully with steep sides and a flat base, 0.73m wide and 0.21m deep, orientated N-S. It was filled with a yellowish brown silty clay (9003) containing two sherds of Roman pottery.

F901 - shallow pit with gently sloping sides and a flat base, 0.85m wide and 0.10m deep, filled with a yellowish brown sandy clay (9004) containing fragments of charcoal.

F902 - small gully, 0.40m wide and 0.14m deep, aligned NE-SW, with a 'bowl' - shaped profile filled with a reddish brown clay (9005).

*Interpretation:* The linear gully (F900) may date to the Romano-British period. It was not possible to date the other features due to the lack of datable pottery. None of the features recorded corresponded with the ditches recorded during the aerial photographic assessment. These latter features appear to be topsoil-filled features which did not cut the layers beneath the topsoil.

### **Trench 10 (not illustrated)**

*Aim:* speculative trench

*Method:* machine excavated trench 1.80m wide and 50m long.

*Stratigraphy:* natural subsoil consisting of a yellowish brown silty clay with chalk and flint nodules was encountered at a depth of 0.6m. Sealing the natural was a yellowish brown silty clay, 0.4m deep. Above this was 0.2m of topsoil.

#### *Features:*

F910 - tree bowl, 0.76m wide 0.10m deep, filled with a yellowish brown silty clay.

*Interpretation:* No archaeological features present.

### **Trench 11 (not illustrated)**

*Aim:* to investigate the interior of a postulated enclosure which may have been formed by two linear ditches (Fig. 3, Features D and H) recorded by earthwork survey and the aerial photographic assessment and to examine two parallel linear ditches (Figs. 2 and 3, Feature E) recorded by aerial photographic assessment, one of which was also recorded by the earthwork survey.

*Method:* machine excavated trench 1.80m wide and 50m long.

*Stratigraphy:* natural subsoil consisting of a yellowish brown silty clay with chalk and flint nodules was encountered at a depth of 0.5m. Sealing the natural was a yellowish brown silty clay, 0.3m deep. Above this was 0.2m of topsoil.

*Features:*

No archaeological features present.

*Interpretation:* the two parallel linear ditches recorded by aerial photographic assessment, one of which was recorded during the earthwork survey appear to be topsoil filled features which did not cut the layers beneath the topsoil.

**Trench 12 (not illustrated)**

*Aim:* to examine linear bank and ditch earthwork (Fig. 3, Feature H).

*Method:* machine excavated trench 1.80m wide and 53m long.

*Stratigraphy:* The natural subsoil was encountered at a depth of up to 1.20m. It comprised a yellowish brown clay containing chalk and flint nodules. This subsoil was overlain by 0.25m of yellowish brown silty clay in most of the trench. At the NE end of the trench the natural was overlain by a bank at least 5m wide and 1.0m high. This was in turn overlain by 0.2m of topsoil.

*Features:*

F920 - linear bank with a rounded profile, at least 5m wide extending beyond the trench and 1.0m thick, aligned NW- SE. It was composed of three contexts: a yellow brown sandy silty clay 0.50m thick, sealed by a brown sandy clay 0.30m thick and overlain by a dark brown silty clay 0.20m thick.

F921 - linear ditch with steep sides and a rounded base, 1.70m wide and 0.50m deep, aligned NW-SE and filled with a brown clayey silty sand.

*Interpretation:* The date of the ditch and bank is uncertain due to the lack of datable pottery.



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## **List of Figures**

Fig. 1 - Location of site

Fig. 2 - Aerial photographic assessment

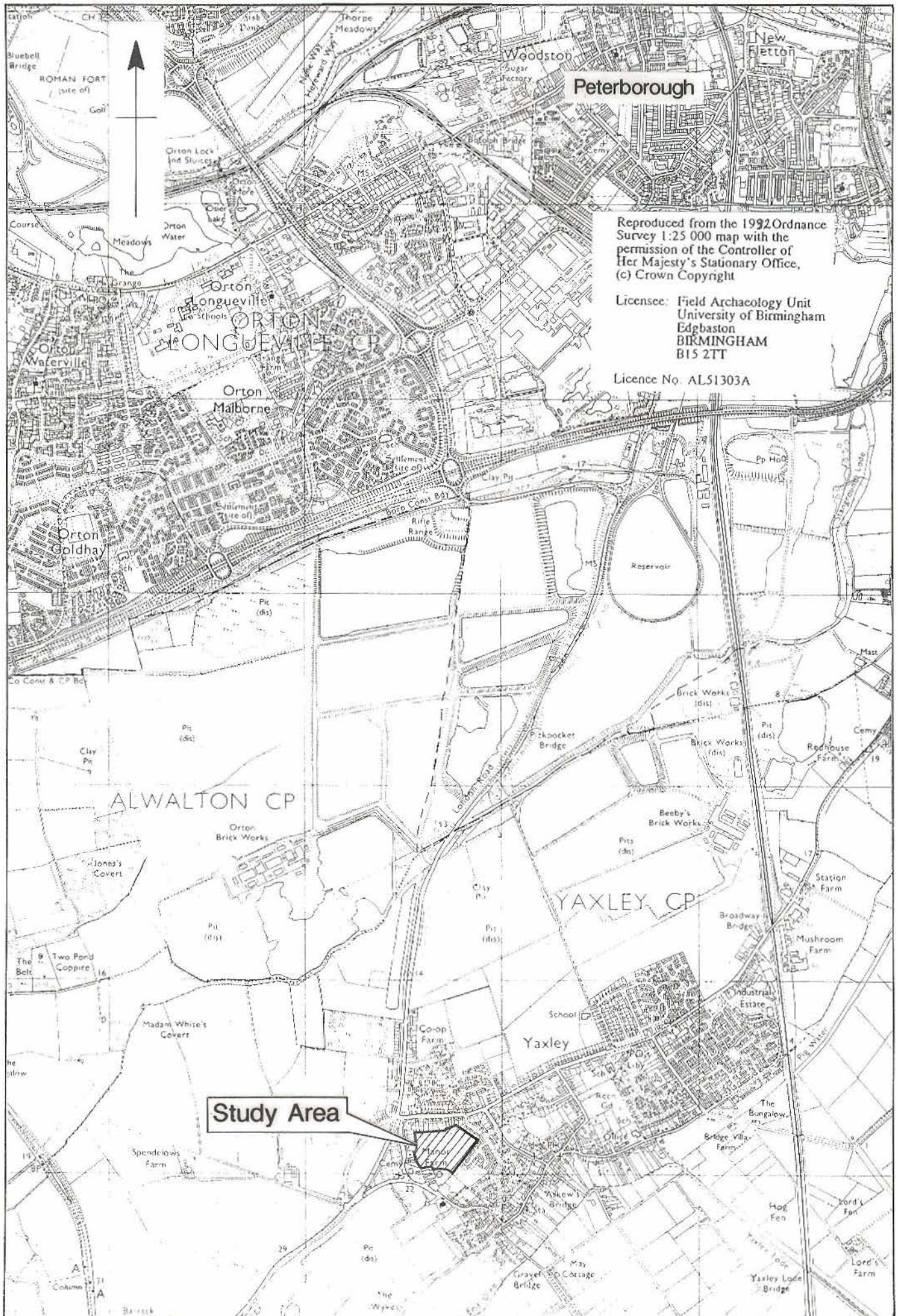
Fig. 3 - Earthwork survey showing location of test pits and trial trenches

Fig. 4 - Plan and sections of Trench 1

Fig. 5 - Plan and sections of Trenches 2, 3 and 9

Fig. 6 - Plan and section of Trench 5

Fig. 7 - Plan of northern part of Parish of Yaxley (dated c. 1800)



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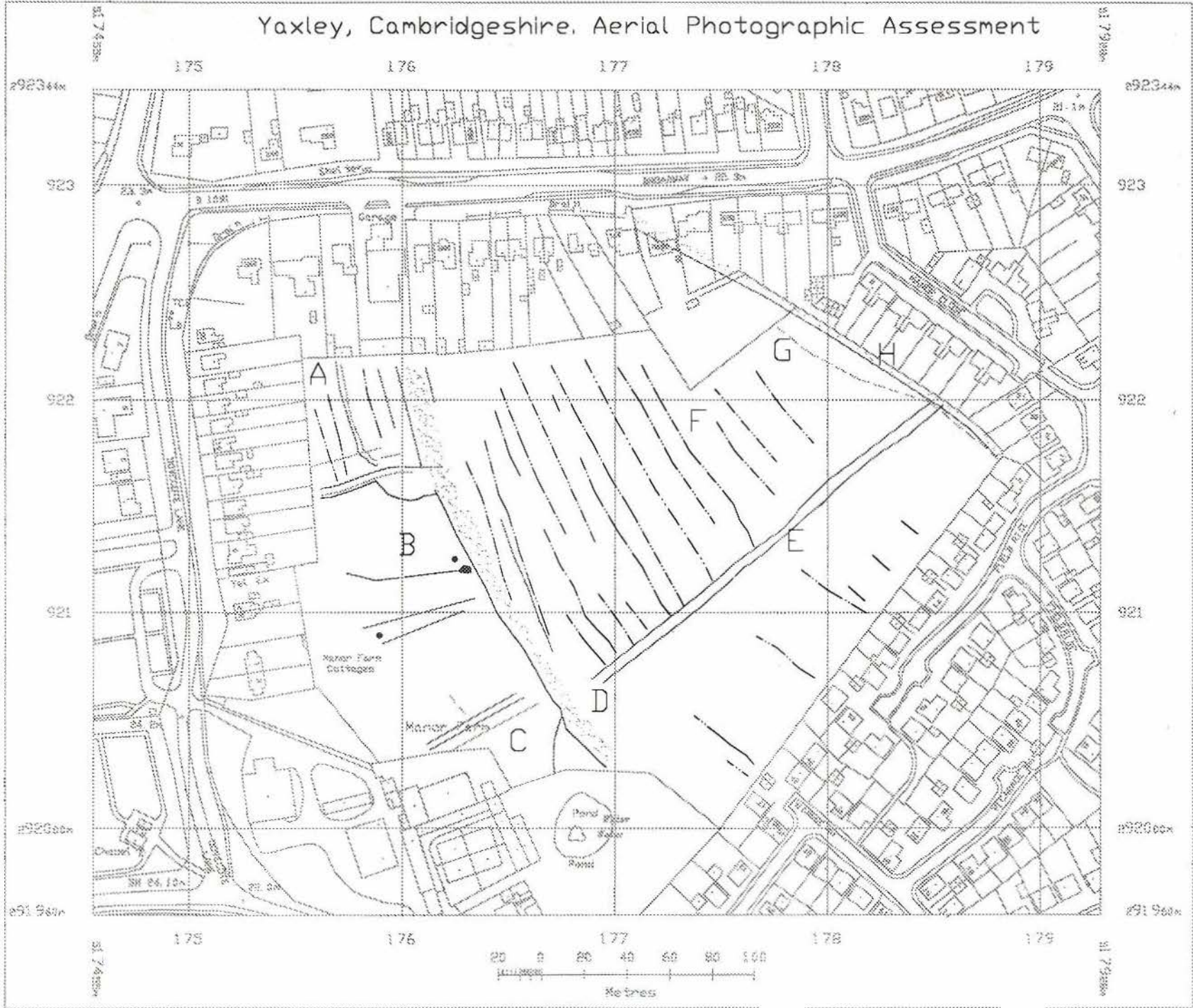
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University of Birmingham  
Edgbaston  
**BIRMINGHAM**  
B15 2TT







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**Study Area**

**Fig.1**

# Yaxley, Cambridgeshire. Aerial Photographic Assessment



-  Ditch
-  Bank
-  Possible water course or ditch
-  Pond
-  Possible bank
-  Ridge and furrow

Air Photo Services Ltd. 01249

**Fig.2**

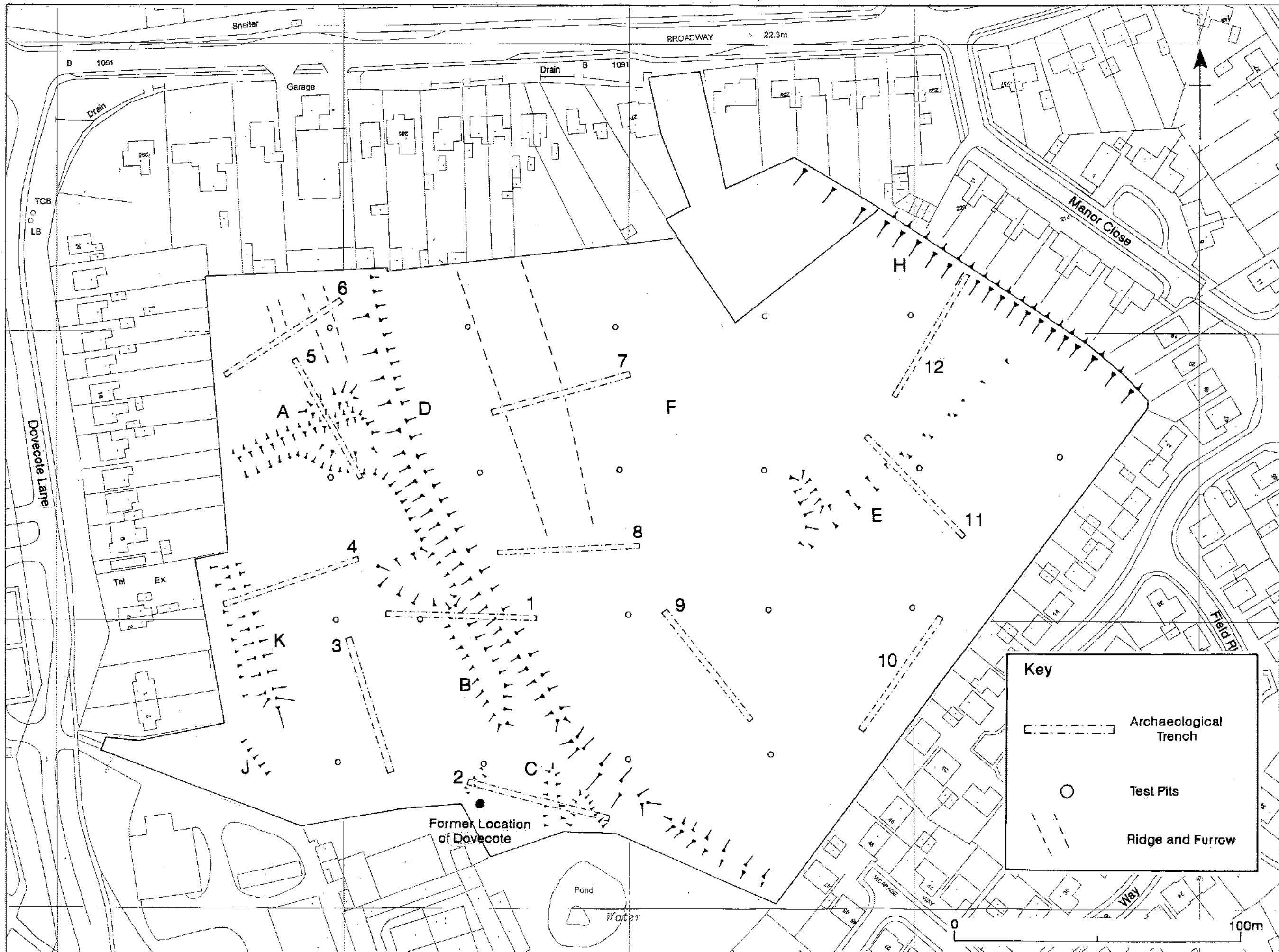


Fig.3

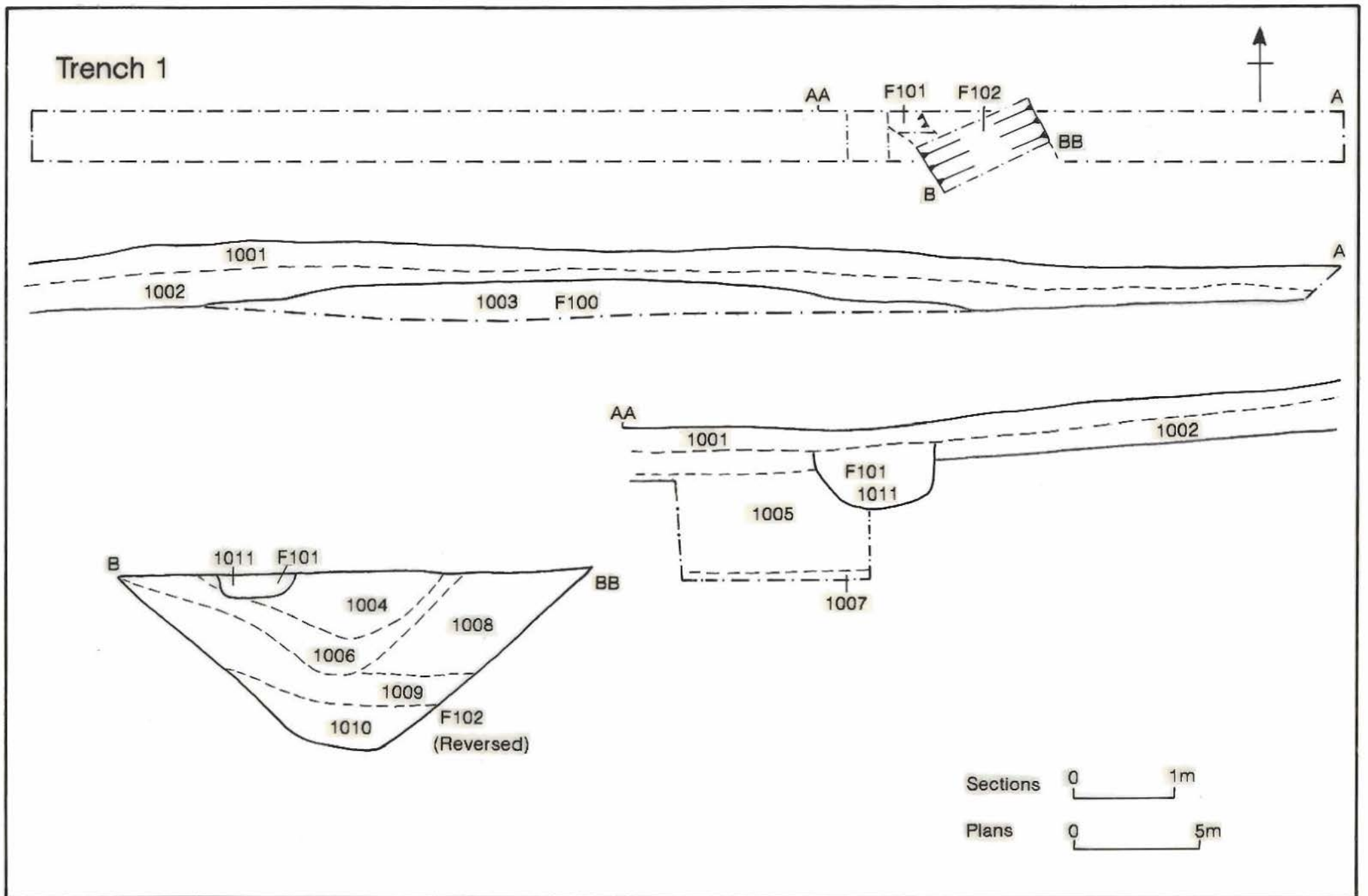


Fig.4

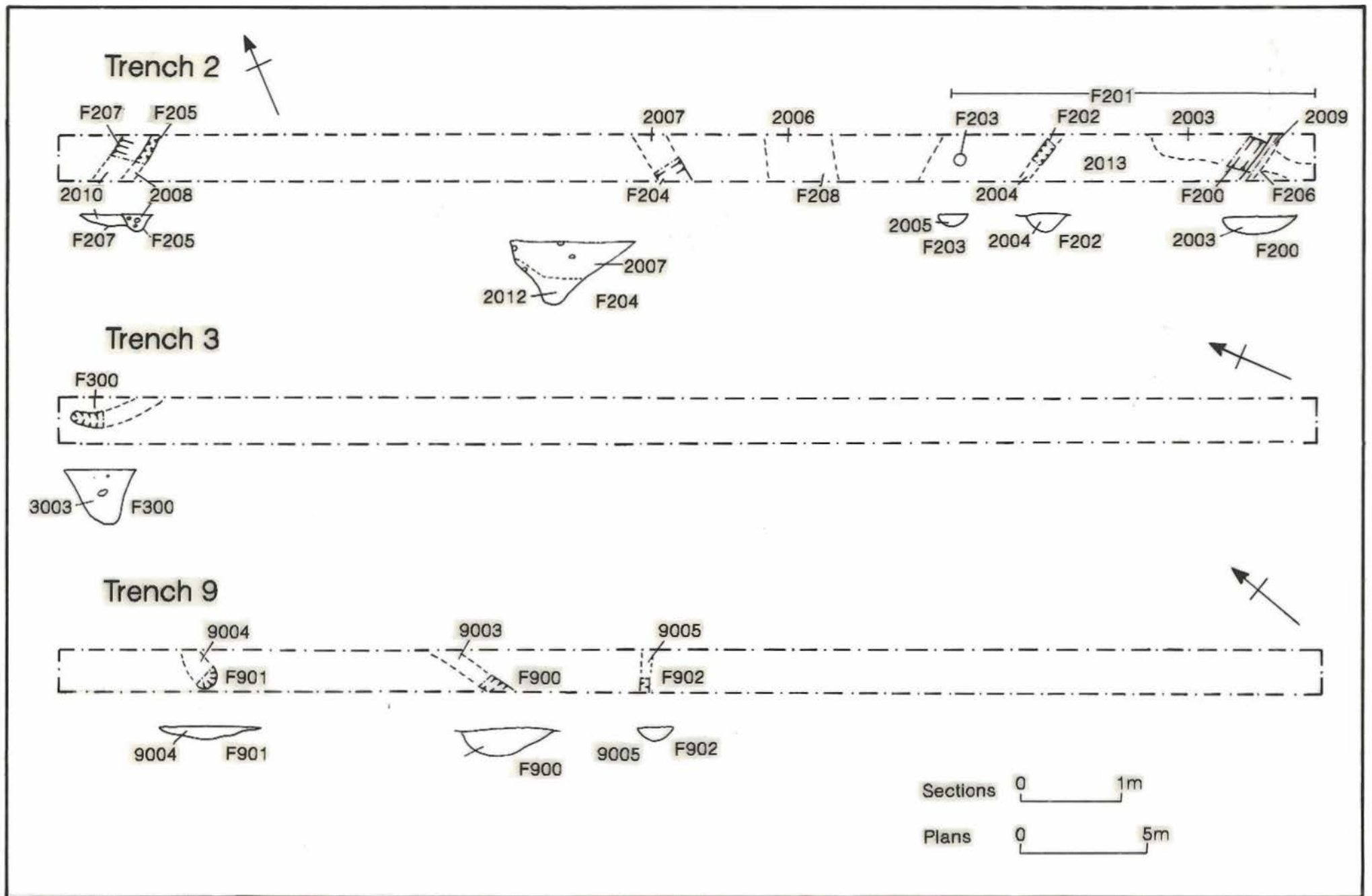


Fig.5

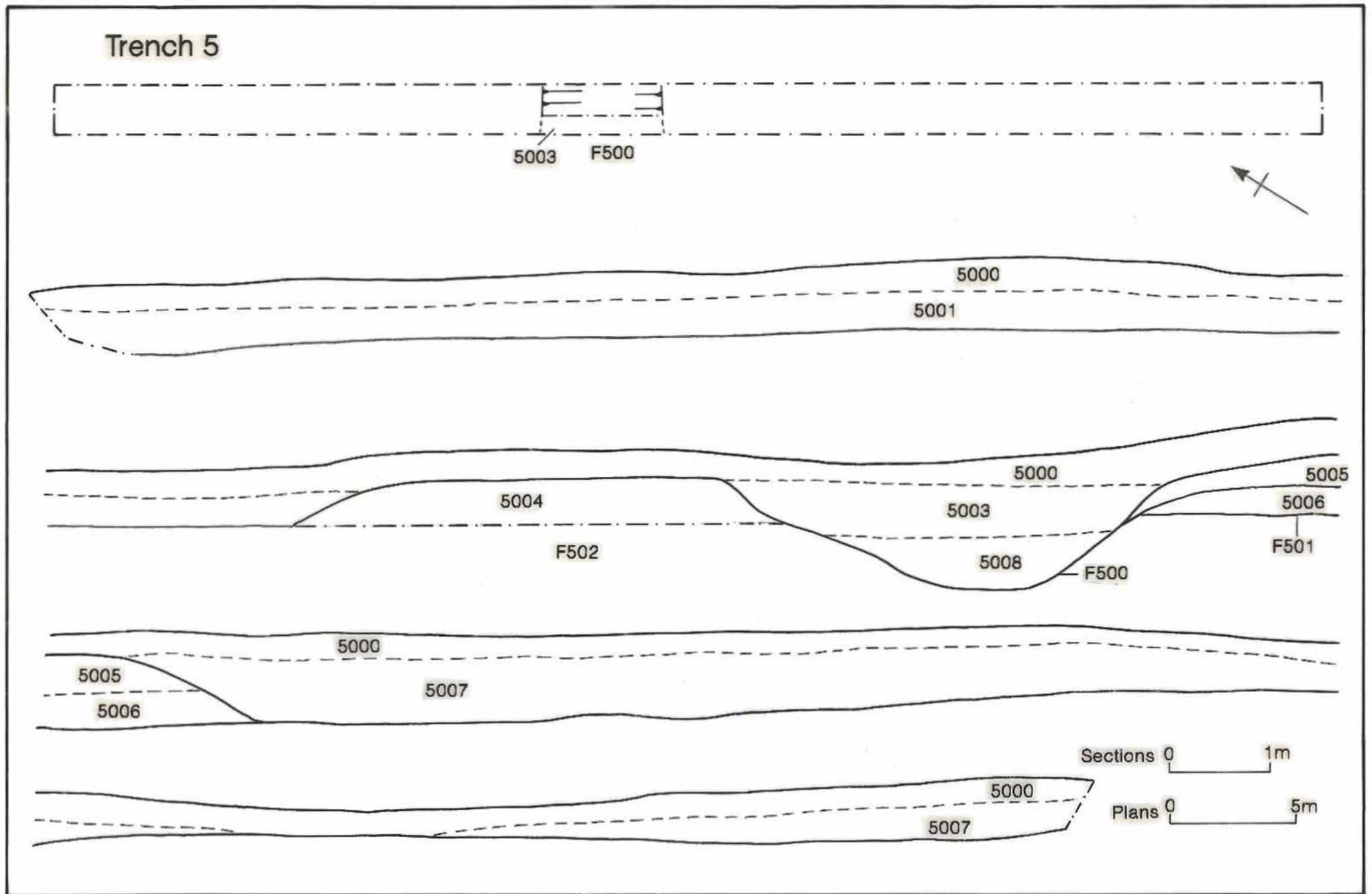
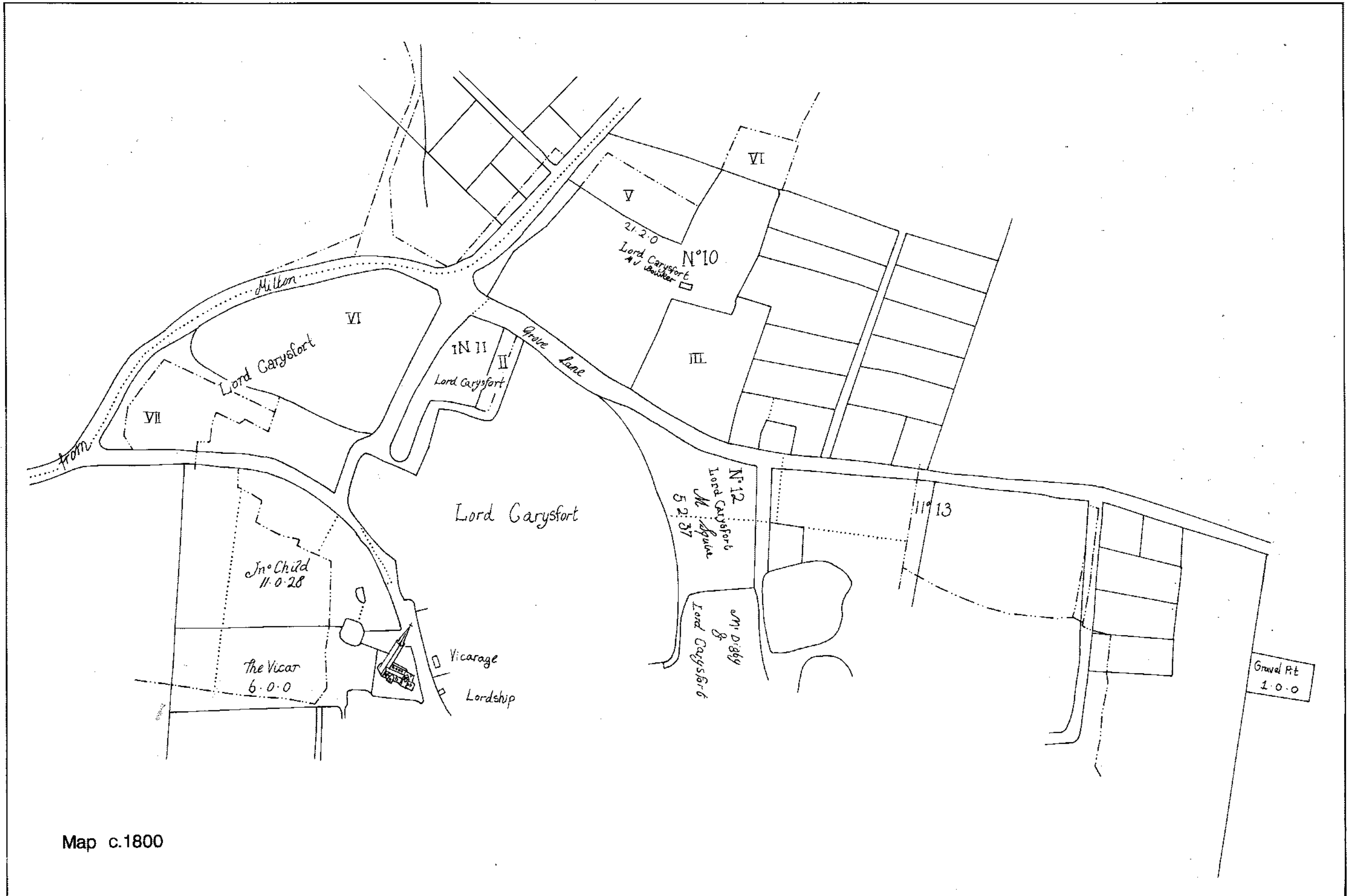


Fig.6





Map c.1800

Fig.7