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**An archaeological evaluation on the site
of The Green, Forebridge,
Stafford**

by
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An archaeological evaluation on the site of The Green, Stafford, Staffordshire.

Summary

Archaeological trial trenching was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) on the proposed site for a retail development at The Green in Forebridge, Stafford (centred on NGR SJ 92370 22800) in January 2001. The work was commissioned by the Tyler-Parkes Partnership, following a desk-based assessment undertaken by BUFAU and in accordance with a detailed brief prepared by the Stafford Borough Council Development Department. These had established that the remains of Stafford's 14th-century Austin Friary may have been located on the site. In addition human remains, presumed to be associated with the friary's cemetery, had been reported from a geotechnical trial pit excavated on the site, although this was unconfirmed at the time of the evaluation. A series of nine trial trenches (A-I, J) were excavated to identify the location of the friary and examine the nature of the reported human bones.

Very few features of potential archaeological interest were recorded in the trial trenches. Trenches A, B, D, E & F had evidence of ditches, which were probably former field boundaries, as well as evidence of former agricultural activity. Some form of 18th-century refuse pit, containing horse and cattle bones, was discovered in Trench G, which accounted for the mis-reported human bones found in the geotechnical test pit. A large pit or back-filled quarry hole was discovered in Trench H, which contained masonry fragments that could have been part of friary buildings or precinct walls, but these were within a 19th-century deposit. Generally, the finds attest activity on the site from the 12th-century onwards, but there were no archaeological features to enable the nature of this activity to be characterised. There was also no direct evidence for the presence of the Austin Friary or associated burials on the site.

Introduction

The following report details the results of the trial trenching phase of an archaeological evaluation undertaken at The Green, in Forebridge, Stafford (centred on NGR SJ 92370 22800, Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by the Tyler-Parkes Partnership and was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit in January 2001. The trial trenching followed a desk-based assessment (Watt 2000) and was carried out prior to the submission of a planning application and in accordance with a Brief prepared by the Archaeologist for Stafford Borough Council Development Department (Wilkinson 2000).

The site: location and geology (Figs. 1 & 2)

The site is located across the River Sow to the south of the medieval town of Stafford, in the suburb of Forebridge. It is bordered by housing to the south, southeast, and southwest, and by industrial buildings to the northwest. Bailey Street forms the northeastern border, at its junction with the Wolverhampton Road (Fig. 2).

The Hopton Fault runs north-south two miles to the east of Stafford. Forebridge is on the 'downthrow' side of the fault, where there are deep deposits of marl of the Stafford Halite formation. In the area of the Wolverhampton Road there are thick beds of alluvial soil standing on the marl bedrock. Narrow mounds of alluvium exist from The Green towards St. Leonard's Avenue (Imm 1994).

Archaeological background

A full archaeological background can be found in the desk-based assessment (Watt 2000) and the brief (Wilkinson 2000). A brief summary is included here.

The desk-based assessment and brief identified that there was no recorded Prehistoric, Roman or Saxon activity on the site, although there was a Roman coin of Faustina, c. 175 A.D., found in Forebridge (SMR 2196).

Settlement around The Green developed from the 13th and 14th century onwards (Watt 2000, 4) with the Hospitals of St. John and St. Leonard, and the house of Austin Friars all situated in Forebridge, the latter believed to be within the development site (*ibid.*). The Austin Friary (SMR 777) was founded in 1344 outside the south walls in Forebridge on a piece of land donated by Lord Stafford. It was subsequently dissolved in 1539, with the land and buildings sold off. Foundations were still visible in the late 19th century and various records of possible medieval burials have been recorded in the vicinity of the site, although these may have been part of the Hospital burial grounds.

After the Civil War, in 1680, there is a record of 30 or 40 houses in the suburb and part of the former estate of the Austin Friary was used as cultivated land (*op.cit.*, 5). The area became subject to extensive drainage work in 1800, followed by extensive housing development from the 1840s onwards. A brewery occupied many of the buildings on the site from the late 19th century onwards (*ibid.*). The site became subject to a number of redevelopments during the 19th and 20th centuries.

More recently, a geotechnical test pit (Test Pit 4, Fig. 2), excavated by S.P.Associates in July 2000, recorded the presence of human bones, although this was not verified by either the coroner or Borough Archaeologist (Wilkinson 2000, 3).

Aims

The general objective of the programme of trial trenching was to attempt to establish the presence/absence, character, extent, state of preservation and date of any archaeological features or deposits within the study area.

Particular aims of the evaluation were to:

1. identify any activity associated with the 14th-century Austin Friary, including any structural evidence, and
2. identify the extent and nature of any human burials.

Method

A total of nine trenches (A to H and J) were excavated; all measured 2m in width, but varied in length. These provided a total sample of approximately 5% of the proposed development area (in excess of 1ha). The trench locations were agreed with the Archaeologist for the Stafford Borough Council prior to their excavation. The modern car-parking and floor surfaces were loosened with a J.C.B. mechanical excavator fitted with a hydraulic breaker. The modern overburden in the trenches was removed with the same machine, fitted with a 1.6m toothless ditching bucket, under archaeological supervision. The trenches were machined to the level where archaeological features were identifiable or the top of the natural subsoil horizon.

Where appropriate, the subsoil surface was hand cleaned. A representative sample of the features identified were hand excavated to provide information concerning the survival and complexity of feature fills, and to recover artefactual evidence. A detailed context record on individual pro-forma record cards was maintained and all feature and trenches were photographed using both colour and black and white film. Trench plans were drawn at a scale of 1:50 or 1:20 as necessary. Excavated sections of individual features were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20. All recovered artefactual evidence recovered from an archaeological context was recorded, cleaned, identified and retained for further investigation. These records comprise the site archive and are currently stored at Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit.

Trial trench results by Mary Duncan

Trench A (Fig.3)

Dimensions: 30m by 2m

The natural horizon was a brown sand (1047) encountered at a depth of between 0.8m and 1m throughout the trench. This was generally beneath a 0.4m-deep layer of buried ploughsoil (1046). The modern levelling layer (1045) of brick rubble sealed this ploughsoil, with the whole trench sealed by the existing surface of tarmac and concrete (1044).

Twentieth-century drainage pipes truncated most of the deposits in this trench, especially a shallow V-shaped ditch, F117. It had a north-east to south-west alignment and was estimated - as it was truncated on its southern edge - to be at least 3.2m wide. It was 1.4m deep. A light brown silt-sand (1043) filled the ditch. The pottery from this context was

dated to between the 13th and 14th centuries. The ditch was re-defined in the form of a smaller V-shaped ditch, F124, which was filled with a dark grey sand-silt deposit (1042).

Also cut through the natural were two features, F115 and F116. F115 was an irregular, sub-circular negative feature with a diameter of 2.3m and a depth of 0.3m. It was filled with a brown sandy silt (1040) which contained pockets of natural sand throughout. Pottery from 1040 was dated to the 18th century, although residual 12th- or 13th-century sherds were noted. F116 was possibly the terminal of a linear gully. Its profile was U-shaped, 0.45m wide and 0.2m deep. No dating evidence was recovered from this gully. Both F115 and F116 may have been the remains of garden features, with F117 and F124 forming a re-defined field boundary.

Trench B (Fig.3)

Dimensions: 28m by 2m

This trench was excavated to a depth of 1.5m down to the brown natural sand and gravel (1003). This was below a layer of buried garden soil (1015), which was between 0.25m and 0.8m deep and extended over the length of the trench. This garden soil was sealed by layers 1017, 1018 and 1019. 1017 was a layer of dark brown silty sand containing brick rubble throughout. It was 0.2m deep and extended over 13m of the northern end of the trench. 1016 was a mixed layer of dark grey sandy silt containing brick rubble. This was 0.3m deep and covered 8m of the southern end of the trench. These two layers (1016 and 1017) were below 1018, a 0.5m thick layer of dark brown sandy silt containing brick rubble. The upper most layer (1019) was the concrete carpark surface and hardcore foundation layer.

Below these horizontal layers and cut through the natural were two linear ditches (F100 and F101). F100 was a U-shaped ditch on an east-west alignment, 1.7m wide and 0.34m deep. The fill was a loose dark brown silty sand (1004), from which pottery sherds dating from the 13th to the 15th century were recovered. F101 was an asymmetric, U-shaped ditch, with a steeper northern edge. It was on a northeast-southwest alignment and was filled with a loose brown silty sand (1005). 1005 contained pottery sherds datable to the mid to late 13th century. These two ditches may have been earlier field boundaries and part of a medieval agricultural landscape.

Trench C (not illustrated)

Dimensions: 35m by 2m

This trench was excavated to a depth of 1.1m onto the top of natural brown sand (1076). Above this was a horizontal layer of brown silty sand (1077), mixed with brick rubble. This was between 0.7m and 0.8m deep and extended over the entire area of this trench. This was below a layer of 0.4m-thick concrete and tarmac (1078). The western half of the trench was truncated by 20th-century cellarage and a large back-filled well, both of which were modern. No archaeological deposits were recorded in this trench.

Trench D (Fig.4)

Dimensions: 35m by 2m

The natural sand and gravel (1003) were exposed over the majority of this trench at a depth of 1.5m. This was below a layer of dark grey silty sand (1032), which was 1m deep at the southern end of the trench, and decreased in depth until it disappeared from the section further north along the trench. Above this was a layer of brick rubble (1031) that spread along the extent of the trench. It was 1.25m deep at the northern end of the trench and thinned out to a depth of 0.25m towards the southern end. 1031 was below a layer of concrete (1030), 0.15m deep, that sealed the trench. The horizontal layers 1031 and 1032 were cut by a variety of modern pipes and sealed several negative features (F108-11), which were cut through the natural sand and gravel (1003).

F108 was a U-shaped ditch, 1m wide and 0.7m deep, on a east-west alignment near the southern end of the trench. It had two filling events; the upper fill a friable, dark grey silty sand (1028) and the primary fill a loose sand and gravel(1035), containing some silt lenses. F109, which was to the north and parallel to F108, was a U-shaped ditch 2.5m wide and 0.6m deep. The upper fill (1029) and the primary fill (1036) were very similar to the fills of F108. Both of these features (F108 and F109) were heavily truncated by modern drainage cuts and pipes (F113 and F114). Sealed below, or truncated by, the brick rubble layer (1031) were two negative features, F110 and F111, of indeterminate size and shape. F110 was sub-circular in plan and measured 1.1m wide by 4.2m. It was possibly a pit, with a bowl-shaped profile, and was found to extend to a depth of 2.05m below the modern ground surface. It was filled with a clean brown silty sand (1033). The pottery from 1033 dates to between the late 17th and early 18th centuries. F111 was also only partially visible in the trench, and was possibly a pit or part of a ditch cut into F110. It was excavated to a depth of 2.2m below the modern ground surface. The fill (1037) was a mixed deposit of gravel, sand, clinker and topsoil. The pottery from this context suggests that it dates to the 19th century.

Trench E (Fig. 6)

Dimensions: 35m by 2m

The natural sand and gravel (1003) was exposed in this trench at a depth of 1m. This was below a layer of brown sandy silt and a mixed ploughsoil (1069). This was 0.4m deep and extended over the whole length of the trench. In turn, this was below a 0.4m-thick layer of buried topsoil (1074). A modern layer of concrete and general building rubble (1072) sealed the entire trench. An area of concentrated brick rubble and re-inforced concrete cut the the last 11m of the north end of the trench.

Ditch F121 was sealed by the topsoil (1074) and cut 1069, a buried ploughsoil. It was a U-shaped ditch, 5m wide and 1.5m deep, on an east-west alignment and filled with a loose light brown silty sand (1068). Both F121 and 1069 contained residual pottery of mid-13th - to 14th-century date. F121 appeared to be a former field boundary.

Trench F (Fig. 5)

Dimensions: 50m by 2m

The natural horizon, orange sand and gravel (1003), was encountered at a depth of between 1m at the northern end of the trench and 1.35m at the southern end. This lay below a layer of dark grey, humic sandy silt (1011), which measured between 0.75m and 1m in depth. Overlying this was a 0.3m-thick layer of mixed building rubble and dark grey silts (1012). The entirety of the trench was sealed by a layer of concrete that made up the modern ground surface.

These layers were cut by a series of modern pipes. They were also cut by a back-filled well (F103), which was excavated to a depth of 1.8m and found to be filled with a capping layer (1013) above a brown sandy silt (1008). Also cutting the general horizontal stratigraphy was a probable linear ditch (F105), which was filled with a black cinder-rich sandy silt (1010). This had been re-cut by another ditch, F104, which had been filled with a dark sandy silt (1009). Both F104 and F105 contained artefacts datable to the 19th century.

Sealed below the horizontal layer, 1011, was a series of three east-west aligned ditches, F125, F106 and F107. The earliest ditch, F125, was not fully excavated due to safety concerns, but appeared to be filled with a series of silt-sands (1025-7) and on machine excavation appeared to be U-shaped and was recorded at a depth of 2.1m below the current ground surface. F107 and F106, both U-shaped ditches, were later re-cuts of F125. F125 was 5.5m wide. The fills of F106 and F107 (1021-24) consisted of slightly different silt-sand deposits. These deposits contained residual pottery which dated to between the 13th and 14th centuries. This series of ditches was probably a former field boundary that was periodically re-defined.

Also sealed below the horizontal layer 1011 was the edge of a possible U-shaped ditch (F102), which had a northeast-southwest alignment and was filled with a brown silty sand (1006) above a light brown silty sand (1007). 1006 contained pottery sherds which were datable to the 14th and 15th centuries, but were probably residual. This may have been another field boundary, although it was difficult to define as the feature was not completely visible in the trench.

Trench G (Fig. 6)

Dimensions: 5m by 2m

The natural orange sand and gravel (1079) was exposed at a depth of 1.6m below the modern ground surface. This lay below a layer of dark brown sandy silt (1078), which contained a large lens of re-deposited natural sand. 1078 was 0.6m deep at the west end and 1m deep at the east end. In turn, this layer was below a 0.25m-deep layer of brick rubble mixed in a dark grey silt (1077), a levelling deposit for the modern ground surface, the latter comprising a layer of hardcore and concrete (1076).

Sealed below 1077, cutting 1078 and 1079, was a steep-sided, flat-bottomed pit (F123), the bottom of which was 2.5m below the modern ground level. Only the southwest corner of F123 was exposed within the trench. It was filled with a bone-rich brown sandy silt (1071). Pottery sherds from this context were dated to the mid 18th century and the bones were identified as mainly horse and cattle. The pit fill, 1071, was below a brown sandy silt mixed with building rubble and cinders (1075). A recent geotechnical test pit (Test Pit 4) had been excavated through all of the deposits exposed in the trench. It is probable that the 'human bone' reported from the test pit was the animal bone recovered from pit F123.

Trench H (Fig. 6)

Dimensions: 10m by 2m

The natural orange and beige sand and gravel (1060) was encountered at a depth of 1.5m at the north end of this trench. This was beneath a 1m-thick layer of dark grey sandy silt (1059). This lay below a 0.3m-thick layer of mixed demolition rubble (1058). A reinforced concrete floor surface (1057) extended over the entire trench.

The majority of the excavated trench consisted of what appears to be a large negative feature (F120), which had a steep edge and was machine-excavated to a depth of 2.8m below the modern ground surface. The fills of this feature (1061-66) were a series of dark silt-sands, which were rich in bricks, building rubble and clinker. A fragment of residual pottery from fill 1066 was dated to between the 13th and 14th centuries. It was also noted that large fragments of architectural masonry were mixed within the general building rubble of fill 1061, which could have been associated with the medieval friary. F120 appeared to be a very large 19th- or 20th-century pit or a back-filled, small quarry hole.

Trench J (not illustrated)

Dimensions: 10m by 2m

This trench was dug to the interface with the natural brown sand (1056), at a depth of 1.6m below the modern floor surface. This was below a layer of brown silty sand (1054), 0.8m deep, which extended over the entire length of the trench. This in turn was below a 0.25m-thick layer which contained thin levelling deposits of sand, ash/clinker and crushed building rubble (1053). 1053 was below a layer of red brick rubble (1051), 0.25m deep. These were sealed by the concrete floor surface.

Sealed below layer 1054 and cut into the natural (1056) was a linear gully (F119). It was U-shaped with a depth of 0.3m and width of 0.7m. It was visible for a length of 5m within the trench, and had a north-south alignment. The fill was a brown silty sand (1055). Artefacts recovered from this trench were of a 20th-century date and were discarded.

The finds by Annette Hancock

Finds were recovered from twenty-one contexts, representing six of the nine evaluation trenches excavated. The material recovered is tabulated below.

Trench	Context/Feature	Medieval pot		Tile		Post-medieval pottery		Other	Spot date
		Ct	Wt	Ct	Wt	Ct	Wt		
B	1004 (F100)	1	53g	-	-	-	-	-	13 th -15 th century
	1005 (F101)	1	60g	2	189g	-	-	1x copper alloy, 1x iron nail	1250-13 th century (some earlier)
F	1006 (F102)	1	5g	-	-	-	-	-	14 th -15 th century
	1008 (F121)	-	-	19	1071g	-	-	-	-
	1009 (F104)	-	-	-	-	11	247g	12x iron, m3x slag, 7x glass, 98g animal bone, 1x shell	19 th century
	1010 (F105)	-	-	-	-	39	3247g	1x clay pipe, 8x iron, 25x glass, 258g animal bone	19 th century
F	1021 (F106)	2	6g	-	-	-	-	-	mid 13 th -14 th century
F	1022 (F106)	1	8g	5	54g	-	-	-	13 th -14 th century
F	1024 (F107)	1	10g	-	-	-	-	-	13 th century
D	1033 (F110)	-	-	-	-	2	103g	20g animal bone	late 17 th /18 th century
D	1037 (F111)	-	-	-	-	8	49g	1x clay pipe, 1x iron nail, 4x glass	19 th century
D	1039 (F111)	2	16g	-	-	3	7g	1x glass	19 th century with residual 13 th /14 th
A	1040 (F115)	5	69g	1	70g	1	6g	1x brick, 1x nail, 26g animal bone	18 th century with residual 12 th /13 th and later
A	1041 (F116)	-	-	-	-	-	-	Coal (discarded)	-
A	1042 (F117)	1	11g	2	194g	3	82g	1x architectural frag.	17 th century
A	1043 (F117)	3	36g	2	132g	-	-	-	13 th - 14 th century
A	1048 (F118)	-	-	5	982g	2	20g	2x glass, 4g animal bone	19 th century
H	1066 (F120)	2	30g	1	48g	-	-	1x brick, 1x plaster, 1x clay pipe, 2x glass, 15g animal bone, 1x architectural frag.	13 th - 14 th century
E	1068 (F121)	13	136g	46	3692g	-	-	1x nail, 2g animal bone, 1x stone	mid 13 th - 14 th century
E	1069 (F122)	7	119g	48	2774g	-	-	Animal bone 40g	mid 13 th - 14 th century
G	1071 (F123)	3	32g	27	1503g	13	150g	2x clay pipe, 1x iron, 1x glass, ** animal bone (horse skeleton)	1720-1770
TOTAL		43	591g	158	10709g	82	3911g		

Table 1: Finds recovered, by context

The majority of the finds recovered comprised pottery. This was spot-dated by Stephanie Ratkai and her comments are noted below.

Medieval and post-medieval pottery

Some forty-three sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the evaluation trenches. This material weighed 591g. Stephanie Ratkái noted that “most of the medieval pottery is found with roof tile. Roof tile is in use in London (at least) from the early 13th century, but most of the tile was probably used in the 14th century onwards. Most of the medieval pottery is residual, but attests to occupation from probably the 12th century onwards.”

In addition, eighty-two sherds of post-medieval pottery, weighing 3911g, were recovered. This material was predominately of 19th-century date and comprised trailed slipware, blackware, manganese ware and some stoneware. The base of one vessel from F105 (1010) still had a yellow residue surviving on its interior surface.

Animal bone by Emily Murray

Introduction

A small assemblage of hand-collected animal bones was recovered. The majority of these bones came from context 1071, the fill of a pit (F123) in Trench G, and they have been recorded in full. This context was spot-dated to between 1720 and 1770, although some residual medieval pottery was also present. Faunal material recovered from other contexts was given only a cursory examination.

Methods

A selection of anatomical elements was recorded following a modified version of a system devised by Davis (Davis 1992; Albarella & Davis 1994). Measurements were taken to the nearest tenth of a millimetre and follow von den Driesch (1976). The estimated withers (shoulder) heights (EWH) were calculated using the greatest length values of long bones and the multiplication factors of Vitt (1952).

The Horse Bone from Context 1071

The bones from 1071 were in a good state of preservation and were dominated by the remains of horse (Table 2). Four right-sided ischial sections of the pelvic girdle were recorded, indicating a minimum of four individuals. The excavators noted that some of the bones were in an articulated state but this was not recorded and the material was recovered and bagged collectively. It was not possible, therefore, to determine which of the disarticulated remains belonged to which skeleton. This was a restricted excavation and more horse remains may still be buried: there is a noticeable absence of ribs, only 1 blade and 7 rib-articulations.

A number of bones showed signs of gnawing damage, probably by dog, which suggests that the carcasses were either dumped or left exposed for some time prior to burial. The gnawed zones were the proximal epiphysis of humeri, calcaneum, tibia and femur, as well as a number of the vertebrae. These elements, vertebrae excepting, are well known to be favoured by dogs because they contain a high proportion of cancellous bone

(O'Connor 2000, 48). Two specimens, an acetabulum and an atlas, had minor deposits of extra bony growth (exotosis), which is usually an age-related condition. Knife-cuts were also noted on four bones. Three of these were located on innominate (pelvis) fragments from a minimum of two individuals, while the fourth comprised a series of parallel cuts located on a right-sided zygomatic arch (orbital). The superficial nature and location of these cuts are suggestive of skinning. No chop marks indicating dismemberment were observed. Horse bones displaying signs of butchery have also been recorded from post-medieval deposits at Witney Place, Oxfordshire (Wilson & Edwards 1993) and Dudley Castle, West Midlands (Thomas & Locock 2000), and in both cases the authors suggested that the horses may have been defleshed to feed hunting dogs.

No measurements were taken of the equid teeth but the shape of the enamel folds of the mandibular molars suggested that they were of horse (*Equus caballus* - after Davis 1980). Three pairs (right and left sides) of horse mandibles were recovered from context 1071. In all three the permanent molars had erupted and were in wear. In one case the teeth were very heavily worn and clearly came from an elderly individual. A number of loose maxillary or upper teeth were also recovered. These too were extensively worn with 'furred' roots, and probably came from the same animal. One mandible had a reduced canine or 'dog-tooth' *in situ* while three large loose canines were also present. Horse canines are often undeveloped or absent in mares (Hillson 1986, 87), thus the occurrence of the large canines would indicate the presence of at least one stallion.

The calculation of the withers heights from longbones gave a mean of 14 hands (Table 3). This equates with a large pony as opposed to a true horse (14.2 hands +) and is comparable with the stature of the 18th-century horses from Dudley and other post-medieval sites (see Thomas & Locock 2000, 88).

In summary, four adult horses, one of which was very elderly and at least one of which was a stallion, were represented by the assemblage from 1071. These were of pony stature and were probably animals that had reached the end of their useful working lives. Although there were no definite signs of slaughter, knife marks suggested that the skins and maybe flesh had been recovered from at least two individuals before they were disposed of.

Other species

A number of cattle bones were also recovered from 1071 (Table 2). These included half of an unfused porous atlas and a fused metacarpal that had been gnawed. The proximal epiphysis and shaft ('non-countable') of a dog tibia was also present.

A few identifiable fragments were also recovered from contexts 1009, 1010, 1040 and 1069. This material was given a cursory examination and included bones from pig and sheep/goat, some of which were from modern improved breeds, as well as bones from cattle, goose, chicken and cat.

Trench G context 1071	Horse	Cattle	Dog
upper (maxillary) molars & premolars	13	-	-
upper & lower (mandibular) incisors	11	-	-
upper & lower canines	3	-	-
Mandible	6	-	-
Cranium	1	-	-
Atlas	2	1	-
Axis	2	-	-
Cervical vert.	11	-	-
Thoracic vert.	6	-	-
Lumbar vert.	-	-	-
Sacrum	-	-	-
Scapula	3	-	-
Humerus dist.	4	1	-
Radius dist.	2	1	-
Ulna prox.	1	1	-
Carpal	1	1	-
Metacarpal dist.	1	1	-
Pelvis acetabulum	6	-	-
Femur dist.	3	-	-
Tibia dist.	4	-	*
Patella	1	-	-
Astragalus	1	-	-
Calcaneum	2	-	-
Scafocuboid (cuboid)	-	-	-
Metatarsal dist.	-	-	-
Phalanx 1 prox.	2	-	-
Phalanx 2 prox.	1	-	-
Phalanx 3 prox.	2	-	-
Total	89	6	*

Table 2: Context 1071, number of 'countable' fragments

(Mandibles and loose teeth have been counted separately and mandibles were counted where one or more teeth were *in situ*.)

Horse (1071)	GL	GLC	Bd	Bt	HTC	SD	GH	Bfd	LmT	SLC	EWB (cm)	EWB (hands)
Scapula	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	819	-	-
Scapula	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	628	-	-
Scapula	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	691	-	-
Humerus	3150	2985	-	808	422	422	-	-	-	-	149.04	14.3
Humerus	-	3080	-	903	469	479	-	-	-	-	-	-
Humerus	3030	-	-	682	461	456	-	-	-	-	143.36	14.0
Humerus	-	-	-	703	378	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Radius	-	-	c. 842	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Radius	3290	-	741	-	-	389	-	-	-	-	135.64	13.1
Metacarpal	2340	-	513	-	-	362	-	-	-	-	145.64	14.1
Femur	4360	-	-	-	-	536	-	-	-	-	150.51	14.3
Tibia	-	-	925	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tibia	-	-	904	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tibia	-	-	840	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tibia	3740	-	878	-	-	474	-	-	-	-	147.33	14.2
Calcaneus	1073	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Astragalus	-	-	-	-	-	-	687	624	719	-	-	-

Table 3: Context 1071, horse bone measurements to the nearest tenth of a millimetre

(The Estimated Withers Heights (EWH) are calculated using the greatest length measurements and the multiplication factors of Vitt (1952) and are given in centimeters and hands (1 hand = 10.16 cm)).

Other finds by Annette Hancocks

Ceramic roof tile – Some 158 fragments, weighing 10.71kg, were recovered. As noted above this material was commonly associated with medieval pottery of 13th – 14th century date. In some instances, the roof tiles demonstrated signs of accidental glaze dribble (S. Ratkái pers comm.).

Architectural fragments – Several large architectural sandstone fragments were recovered from pit F120 (1061). These were shown to Bob Mccson for comment. One piece was a large rectangular sandstone block, faced on one side with a chiseled out, square post-socket. It also had a chamfered edge. Although this suggests more than one possible use for the piece, it is still undatable in itself from the medieval period to the 19th century (Bob Mccson, pers. comm). One other fragment had evidence of chamfering, and there was a piece of a possible door or window jamb. The deposit (1061) appeared to date from the 19th century and contained a considerable amount of modern backfilled rubble. However, the pit also contained pottery sherds of 13th to 14th century date, although these were probably residual.

Vessel glass – 42 fragments of 19th-century vessel glass were recovered. Of this material two complete bottles were recovered from F105 (1010). These appear to have been medicine bottles.

Iron nails and objects – At least eight iron nails were recovered. These primarily derived from F104 (1009x 4), F101 (1005x 1); F111 (1037x 1); F115 (1040x 1) and F121 (1068x 1.) Further indeterminate iron fragments were also recognised.

Discussion

The evaluation trenches failed to find any substantial evidence of the 14th-century Austin Friary, which documentary research had suggested might lie within the bounds of the development. No *in situ* remains of any friary buildings were recovered, although sandstone blocks, from the backfill of a 19th century pit in Trench II, could date to the same period as the friary. Although these pieces are undiagnostic, they are the only archaeological evidence of any possible medieval structure on or close to the site. Pottery recovered from across the site attests activity from the 12th century onwards, although the evidence of ditches and cultivation soil indicates that the land was in some form of agricultural use. The reported human bones from geotechnical Test Pit 4 turned out to be animal bones, mainly horse, from an 18th-century pit. There were at least 4 horses along with some cattle bone. There was no further evidence of human burials. Many of the trenches also illustrated that there was a considerable degree of modern truncation across some areas of the site.

Recommendations

The trial trenching had a good distribution across the site and failed to find the expected Austin Friary or any associated burials. Negative archaeological features were identified, but appear to represent former field boundaries. The medieval pottery was largely residual, and main archaeological evidence for activity on the dates from the 18th century onwards, which is largely documented. It does remain possible that evidence for the friary could be preserved in unexamined areas of the site and it may be appropriate for a watching brief to be carried out during any intrusive foundation or service excavations. Consideration should also be given to any work that reduces existing ground levels, as further archaeological deposits may be preserved under the modern overburden. However, indications from the evaluation are that such deposits would not contribute significantly to our knowledge of this area of Stafford.

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Figures



Fig.1

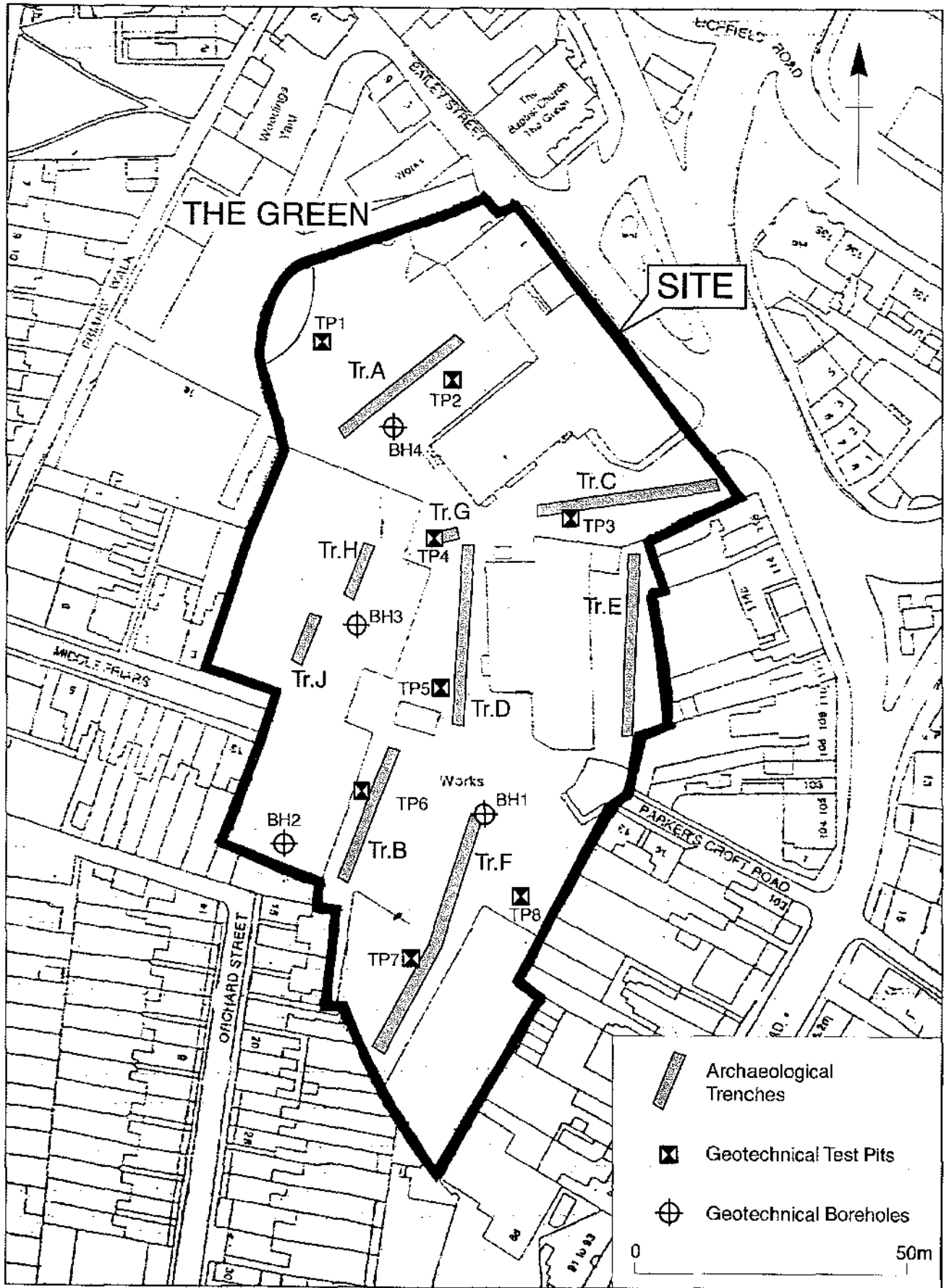
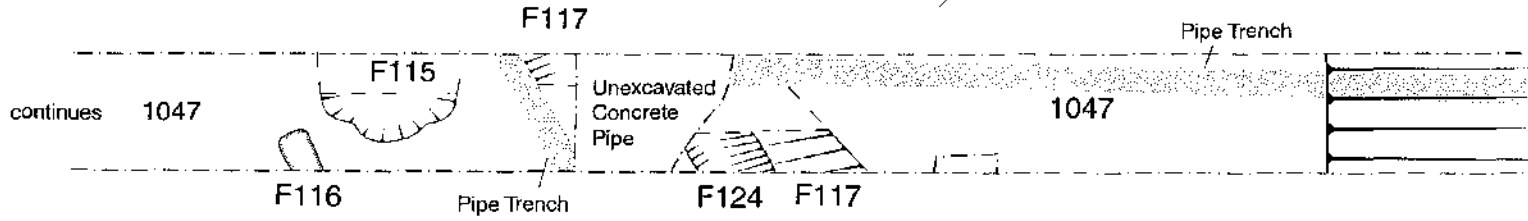
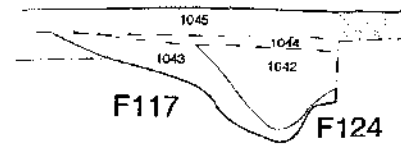


Fig.2

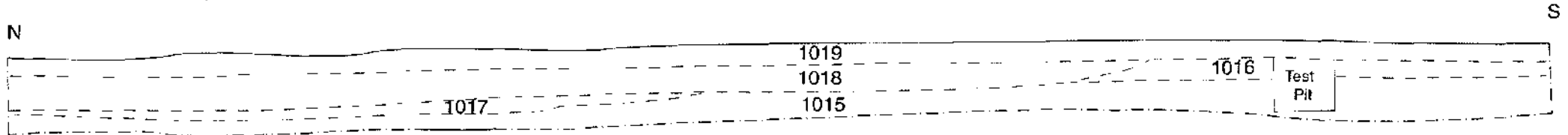
Trench A Plan



NE Trench A Section SW



Trench B Section



Trench B Plan

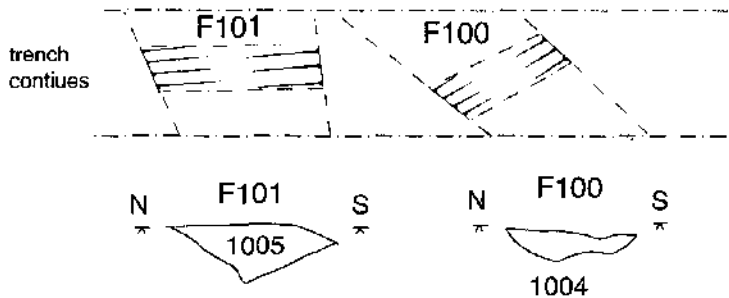
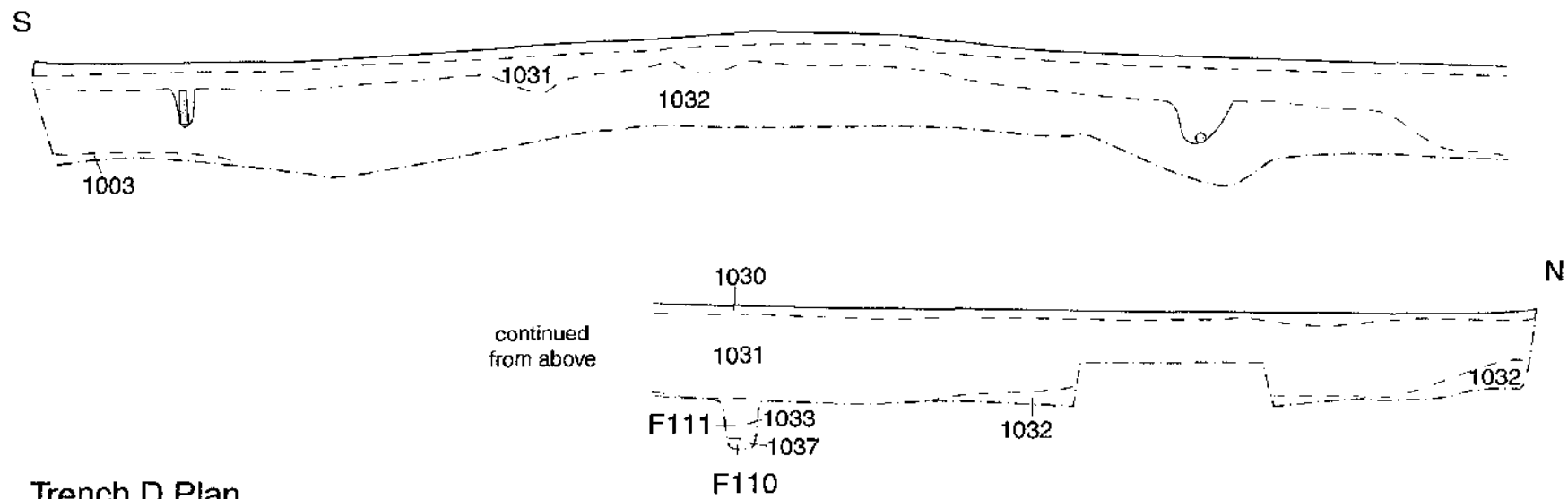


Fig.3

Trench D Section



Trench D Plan

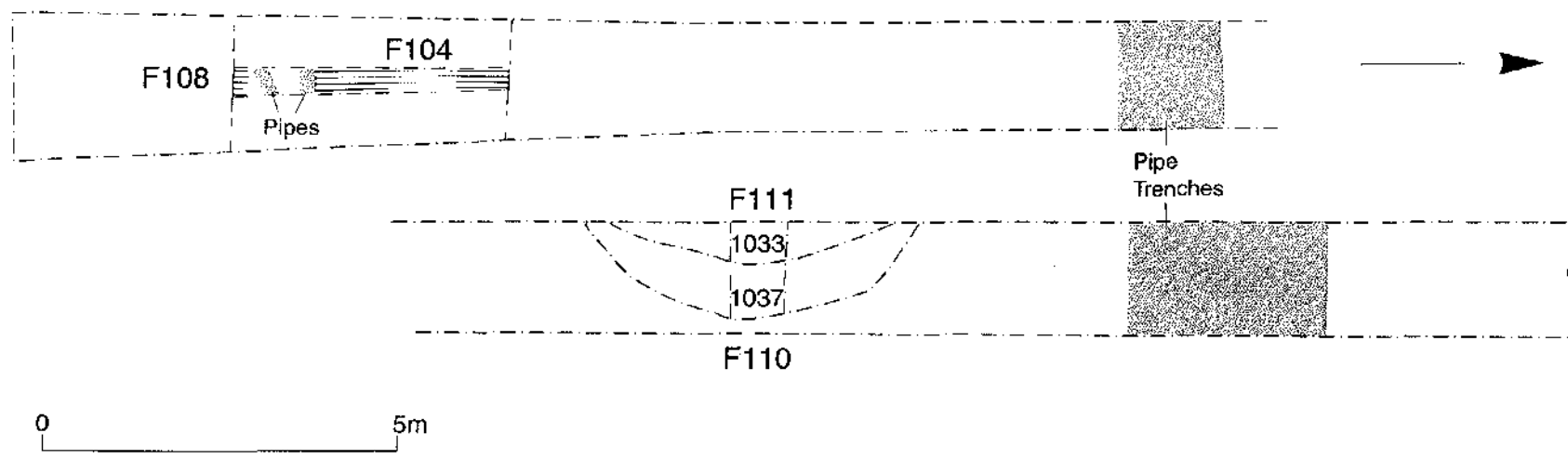
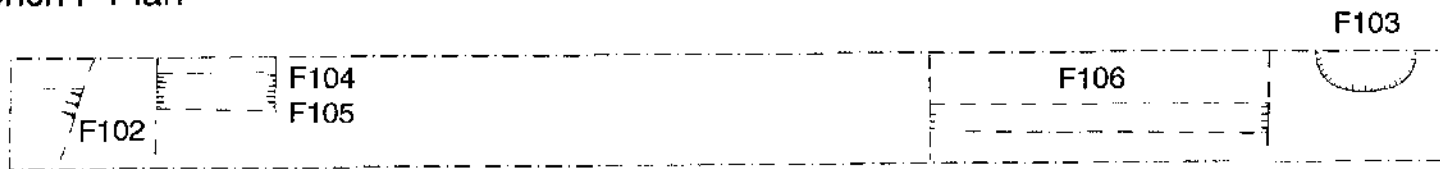
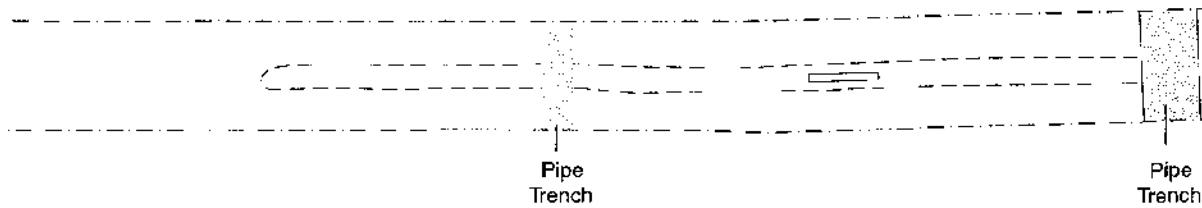


Fig.4

Trench F Plan



continued from above



Trench F Section

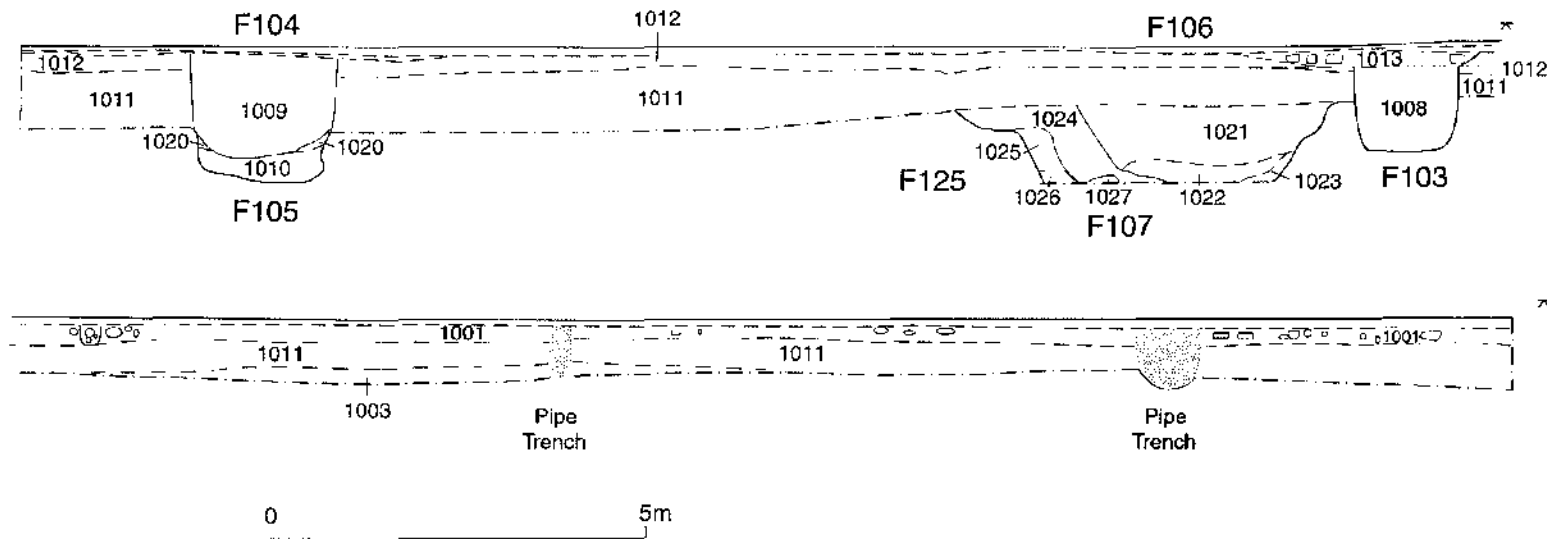


Fig.5

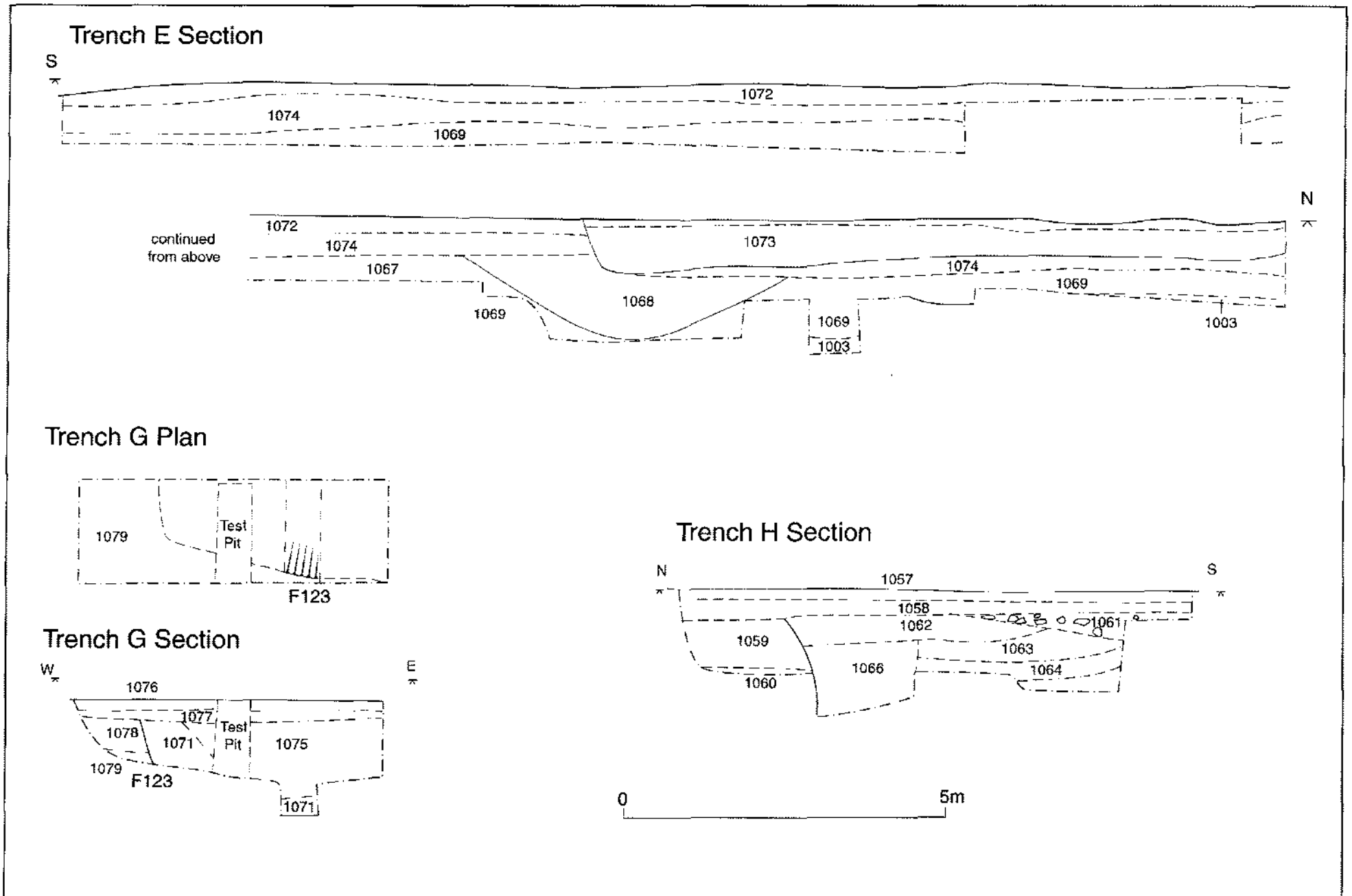


Fig.6

Plates



Plate 1.



Plate 2.