



THE UNIVERSITY  
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**A5 (T) Nesscliffe Bypass,  
Shropshire:  
An Archaeological  
Watching Brief 2002**

*Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit*



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**A5 (T) Nesscliffe Bypass, Shropshire**  
**An Archaeological Watching Brief 2002**

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## **A5 (T) Nescliffe Bypass, Shropshire: An Archaeological Watching Brief 2002**

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caused by re-cutting or weathering (Martin 2002). The aerial photograph assessment identified a double-ditched enclosure (SMR SA2433) in the same field. Trial-trenching failed to identify any trace of the enclosure (BUFAU 1993, 3).

The topsoil and subsoil within Fields 6-7 to the north of Kinton lane (Field 6 (Plate 3) and Field 7) were similar in composition to the subsoil and topsoil recorded at Wolfshead Farm. To the south of Kinton Lane the watching brief was maintained in an attempt to identify any archaeological features associated with the excavated cropmarked pit alignment, outside the excavated area, although in the event, none were found. Within the excavation the features were identified below the b-horizon soil which was not fully removed by machining outside the area archaeologically-excavated. In Fields 8-9 (Plate 4) the subsoil exposed by machine excavation had a notably higher clay content.

No archaeological, or possible archaeological features were identified in these fields, and no finds were collected.

#### **Broomhill Bank and Wilcott Lane (Fields 10-18)**

Field 12 contained a semi-circular cropmarked feature measuring approximately 50m in diameter. Trial-trenching (BUFAU 1993) suggested that this feature was either of geological origin, or that it had been ploughed-out. Fieldwalking within Field 18 recovered only artifacts of post-medieval date. Marker stones of unknown date were found during the walkover survey in Field 17.

This area was again characterised by quite shallow topsoil, approximately 0.25m deep, overlying a greyish-yellow mixed clayey subsoil. The gradient of the road corridor begins to increase dramatically up to Wilcott Lane (Plate 2). Part of the area at the bottom of this slope (Field 16) on the western edge is currently a pond, approximately 30m south of chainage 2750, with a drainage pipe flowing into it. On the eastern side the soil is very dark in colour and has a much greater organic content than that within the rest of the road corridor. This area was also quite wet. On the less low-lying land the subsoil had a high sand content. The watching brief specifically targetted the area of a cropmarked feature. The topsoil in this area measured approximately 0.3m in depth, and the subsoil was a brownish orange sand. Field 18 is illustrated on Plates 5-6.

No archaeological, or possibly archaeological features or deposits were identified during the archaeological watching brief in Fields 10-18.

#### **Land immediately south of Wilcott Lane (Fields 18-20)**

During the initial walkover survey traces of disused field boundaries were found in Field 20.

The subsoil in these fields comprised a brown-orange sand overlying a slightly darker, more compact clay-sand layer. The topsoil here measured an average of 0.35m in depth.

No features or archaeological, or possible archaeological interest could be identified. The only finds recovered were undated clay pipe stems, recovered from the topsoil.

#### **Felton Butler (Fields 21-26)**

During the initial walkover survey traces of disused field boundaries were found in Field 22. Fieldwalking within Fields 22 and 24 produced no artifacts of any description.

In this part of the route the natural topography was less undulating. The subsoil had a higher clay content. Several modern land drains and irrigation pipes were noted during machine excavation within these fields. The topsoil within Fields 21-26 measured between 0.25-0.4m in depth. Field 23 is illustrated on Plate 7.

No archaeological, or possible archaeological features were identified within Fields 21-26, nor were any finds collected.

#### **Find**

The only noteworthy find was a heavily corroded copper alloy token recovered from Field 3. No decoration or inscription was visible, and no precise dating can be attempted.

### **6.0: DISCUSSION**

The road surface revealed at Wolfshead Island is likely to belong to Telford's original construction, or a later re-build. There are no known Roman roads in the near vicinity (Margary 1973).

The stripping of topsoil over the whole bypass revealed an orange sandy subsoil, while a more clayey subsoil was found towards the southern end of the road corridor. Within the more low-lying areas of the Bypass, the sand content of the subsoil appeared to be higher overall. Both the topsoil and the subsoil were relatively sterile, very few stones or pieces of modern debris were observed. A post-medieval well was observed near the centre of the strip within Field 4, and traces of a road of possible 19<sup>th</sup> century date were found in Fields 2-3.

None of the areas exposed during the topsoil strip yielded any other features of archaeological interest. None of the possible cropmarked features were identified. Given that the machined surface was cleared by a bulldozer, conditions for the identification of archaeological features were not ideal. Since archaeological features were anticipated at the interface between the natural subsoil and the overlying b-horizon subsoil, which was not always fully removed, some archaeological features within the Bypass corridor may not have been exposed by the process of machining.

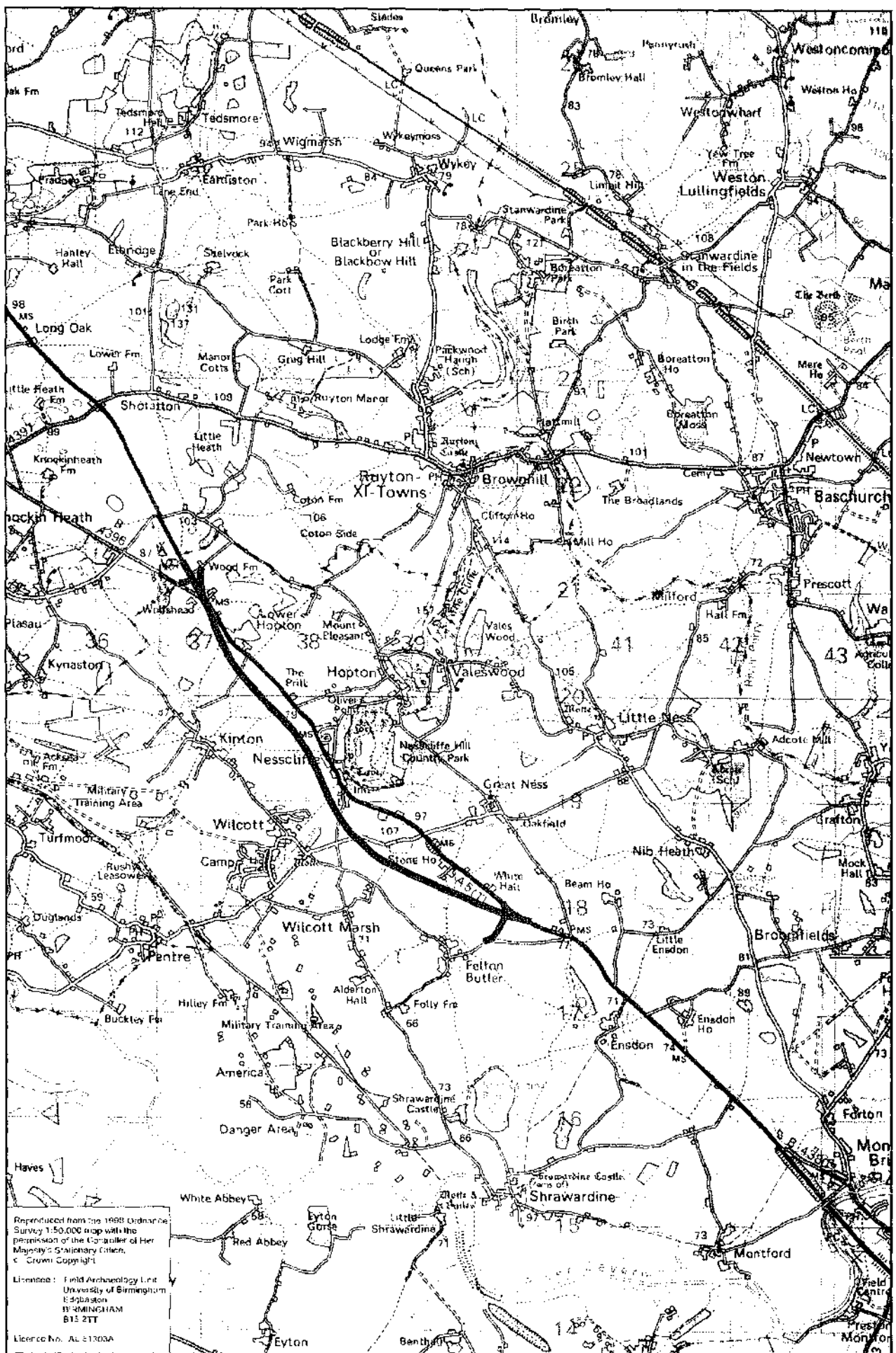


Fig.1

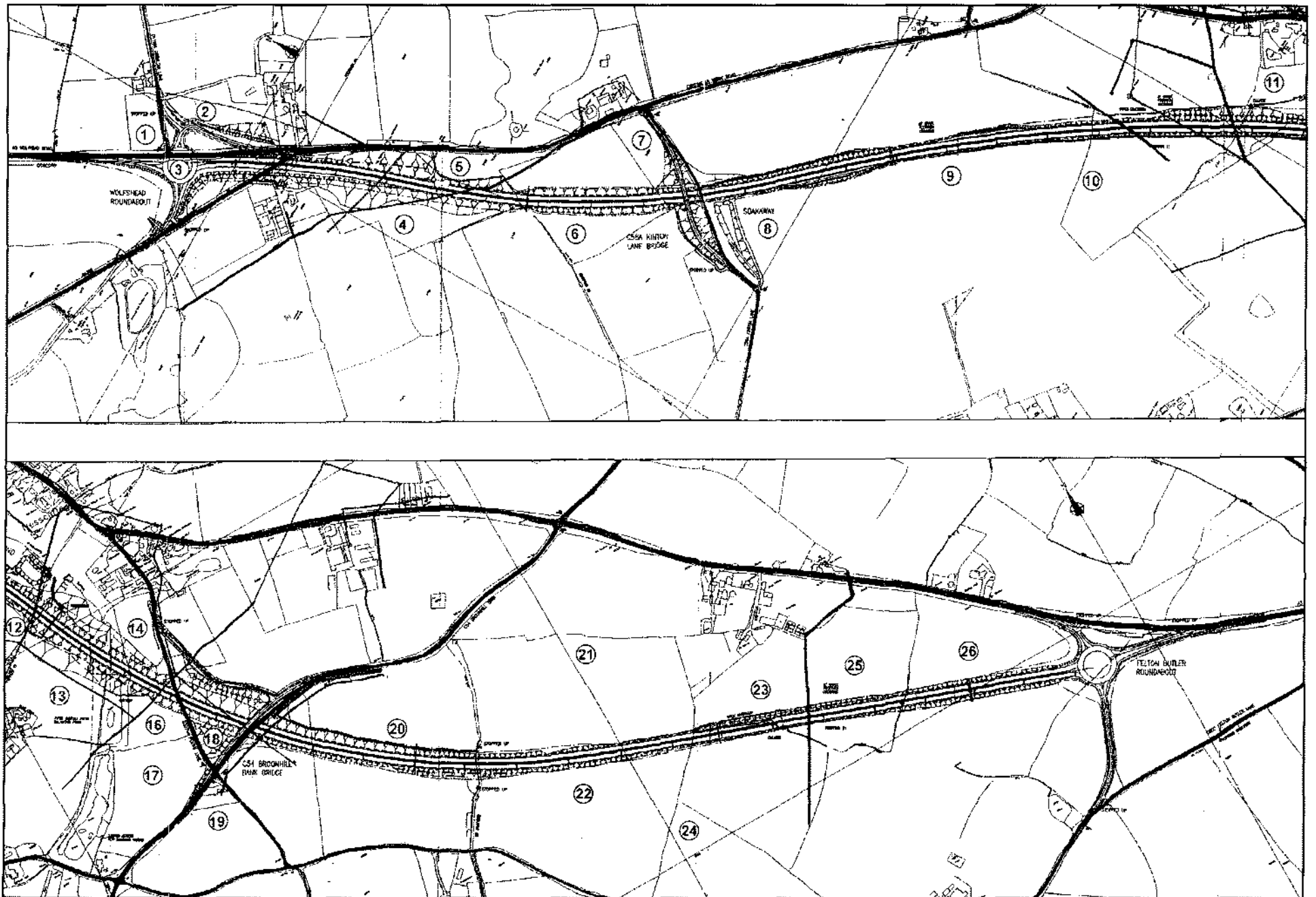


Fig.2



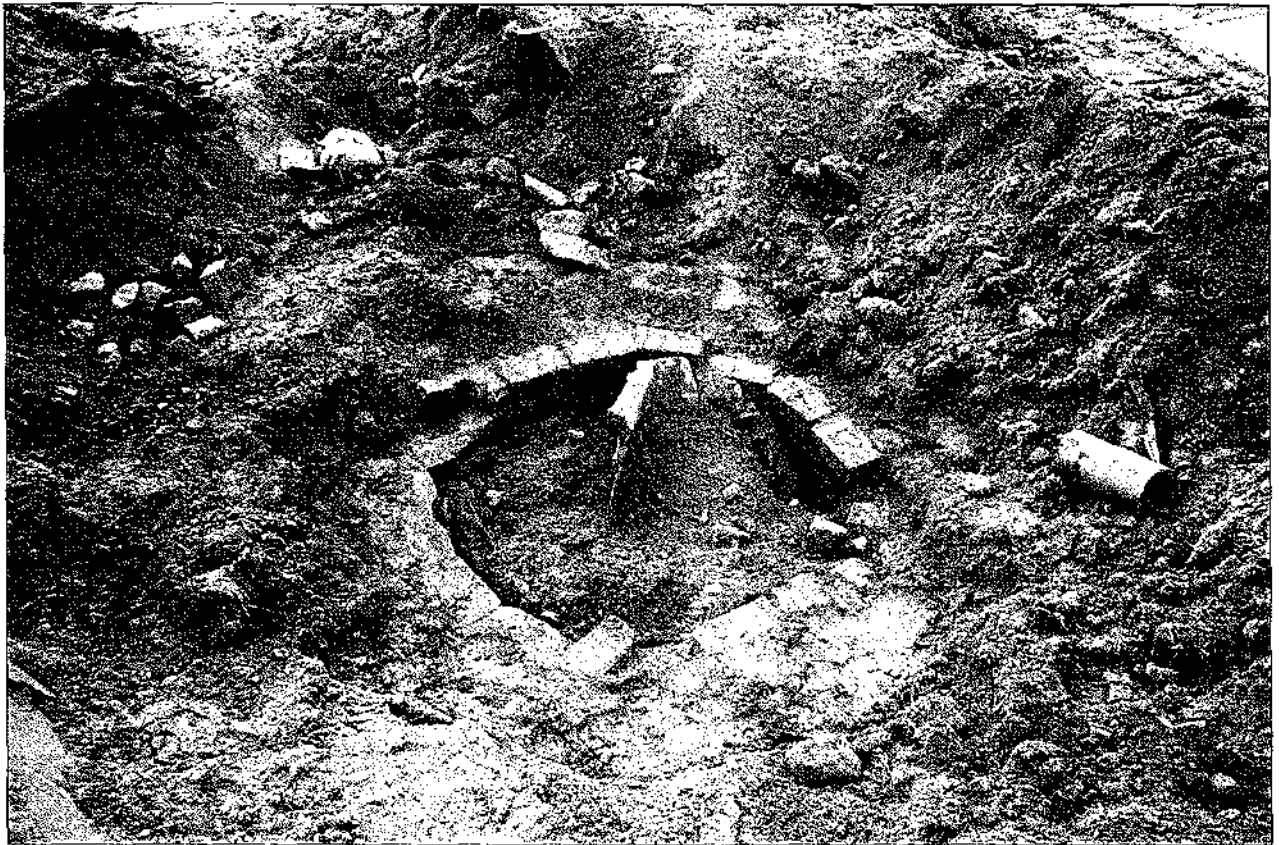


Plate 1



Plate 2





Plate 3

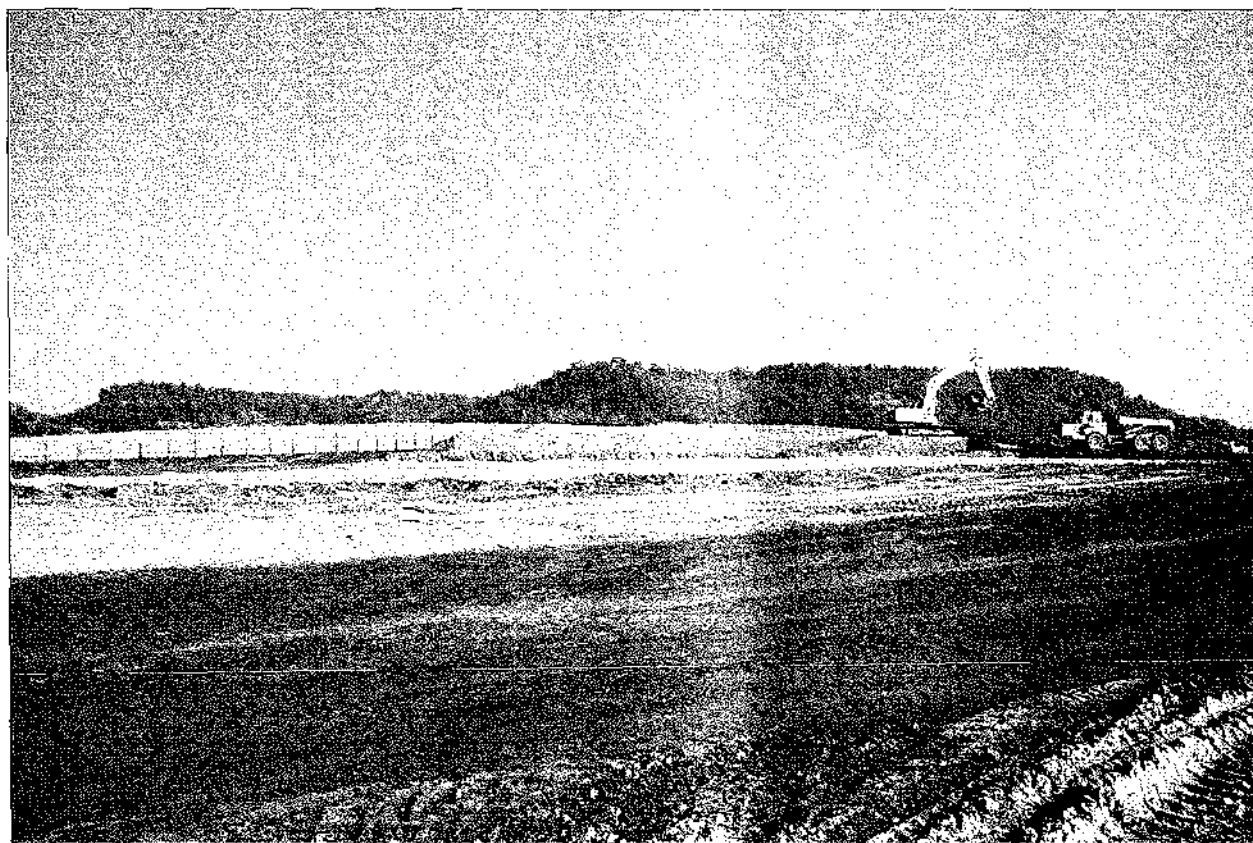


Plate 4



Plate 5



Plate 6

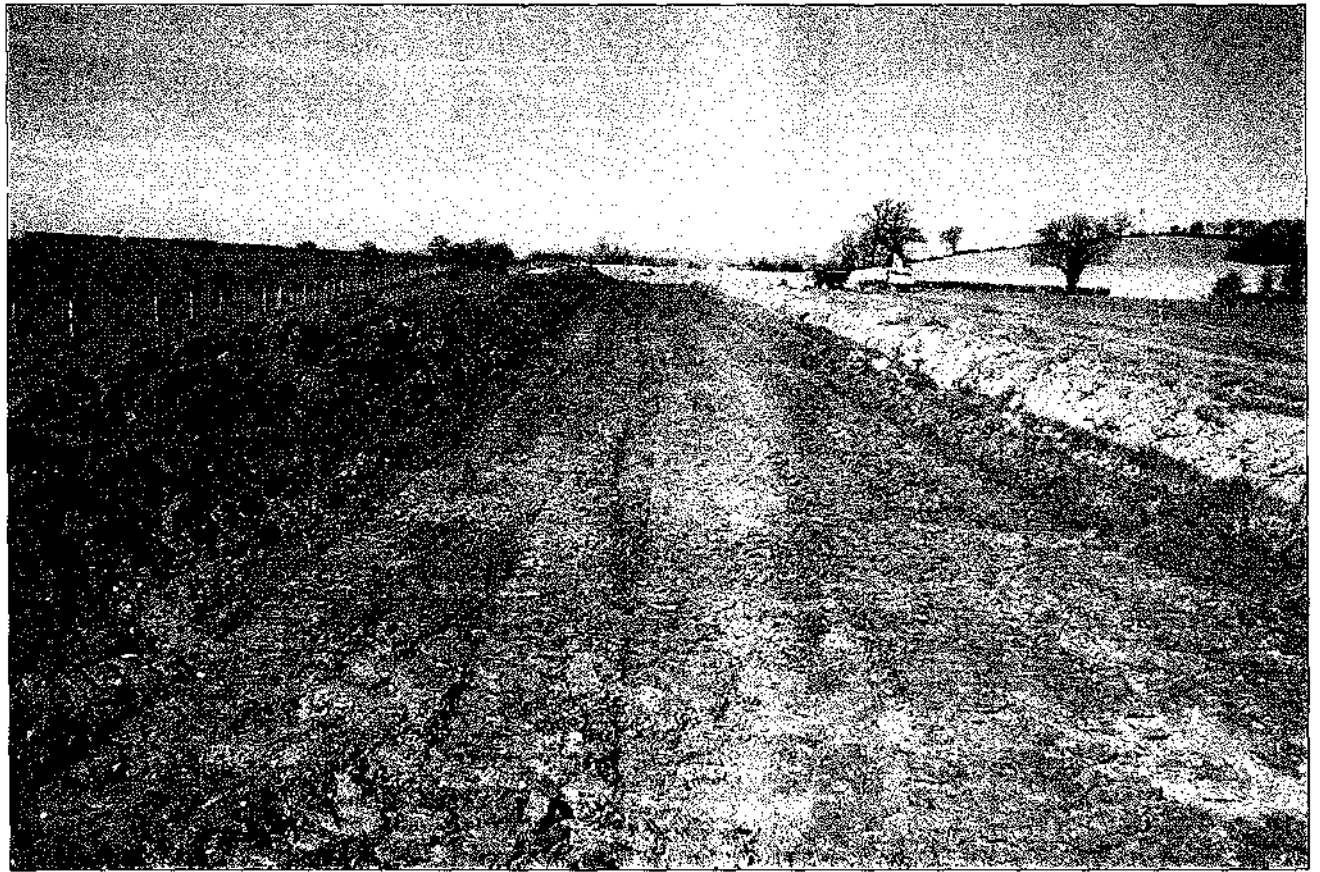


Plate 7

