

**An Archaeological  
Excavation at  
Eversley Quarry,  
Eversley,  
Hampshire  
2002**

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit  
**Project No. 954**  
October 2002

**An Archaeological Excavation at Eversley Quarry,  
Eversley, Hampshire 2002**

by  
Mary Duncan

with contributions by  
Marina Ciaraldi, Maurice Hopper and Stephanie Rátkai

*For further information please contact:*  
Simon Buteux or Iain Ferris (Directors)  
Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit  
The University of Birmingham  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham B15 2TT  
Tel: 0121 414 5513  
Fax: 0121 414 5516  
E-Mail: [BUFAU@bham.ac.uk](mailto:BUFAU@bham.ac.uk)  
Web Address: <http://www.bufau.bham.ac.uk>

## Contents

	<b>Page</b>
Summary	1
<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.0 Location and Description</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4.0 Aims</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>5.0 Method</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>6.0 Results</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>6.1 Mound A</i>	3
<i>6.2 Mound B</i>	3
<b>7.0 Finds</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>7.2 The Pottery</i>	4
<i>7.1 The Plant Remains</i>	4
<b>8.0 Discussion</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>9.0 Recommendations</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>10.0 Acknowledgements</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>11.0 Bibliography</b>	<b>7</b>

### List of Figures

- Fig 1 Site location plan
- Fig 2 Mound location plan
- Fig 3 Mound A
- Fig 4 Mound B

### List of Plates

- Plate 1 Mound A pre-excavation
- Plate 2 Mound A post-excavation
- Plate 3 Mound B underlying trackway
- Plate 4 Mound B underlying trackway
- Plate 5 Mound B pre-excavation
- Plate 6 Mound B post-excavation

### List of Tables

- Table 1 List of the soil sample assessed for plant macroremains.

## **An Archaeological Excavation at Eversley Quarry, Eversley, Hampshire 2002**

### **Summary**

*An archaeological excavation at Eversley Quarry, Hampshire (NGR SU 7905 5875) was commissioned by Phoenix Consulting Archaeology Ltd, on behalf of Lafarge Aggregates Ltd. Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) carried out an archaeological excavation on two tumuli identified in the area of the proposed extension to the quarry. The mounds had previously been identified and assessed through archaeological field survey and evaluation. However, further clarification as to their date and function was required prior to gravel extraction taking place.*

*Two mounds with ring ditches were visible as earthworks near the southern boundary of the quarry extension. Opposing quadrants were excavated by hand, revealing that the mounds and outer ditches measured c.8m in diameter and were a maximum of 0.7m high. The mounds were constructed using the upcast from the cutting of the ditches. One of the mounds (Mound B) was constructed over, a rutted cart track. The only dating evidence was a few fragments of early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century pottery. However, on current evidence, the most likely interpretation for the mounds is that they relate to military manoeuvres that took place in the area in 1792, but this could not be wholly confirmed by the results of this excavation. Similar tumuli are known in the surrounding area, and it is possible that with further archaeological investigation of these earthworks that the broader picture concerning the distribution and exact function of these monuments may come to light.*

### **1.0 Introduction**

Lafarge Aggregates Ltd has planning permission for an extension of the quarry at Eversley, Hampshire (NGR SU 7905 5875) (HDC/10270 Application No.: 98/10134/EMA). In order to mitigate for the destruction of archaeological features identified within the application area, and to comply with a condition of planning consent (98/00633/CMA), Phoenix Consulting Ltd, on behalf of Lafarge Aggregates Ltd commissioned an archaeological excavation at Eversley Quarry. The excavation was undertaken by BUFAU in August 2002 and was monitored on behalf of Hampshire County Council by Ian Wikes.

Excavation was undertaken on two mounds, identified during field survey, which had been the subject of an earlier evaluation. Although the function and date were undetermined it had been speculated that the tumuli were either Bronze Age barrows or 18<sup>th</sup> century military field kitchens. The purpose of the excavation was to define the true nature of the archaeology present at Eversley Quarry.

In accordance with the guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990), the Hampshire County Council Archaeological Officer made a recommendation for a programme of archaeological work prior to gravel extraction. The archaeological work complied with a Written Scheme of Investigation

(Richmond 2002). The excavation was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (1994).

## **2.0 Location and Description**

Eversley Quarry is located in north Hampshire, close to the Berkshire border, in an area formally known as Eversley Common (Fig. 1). The village of Eversley is located 3km to the north of the quarry. The quarry proper was located to the north, the A30 to the south and the A327 bordered the site to the west, Blackbushe Airport lay to the east.

The site was located on an area of high level terrace deposits, this, and the topography, has given rise to poor soil development in this area (Richmond 2002). The site, at the time of excavation, was within a coniferous plantation, although the trees in the immediate vicinity of the site had been cleared. The ground cover was mainly leaf mould with some bracken and heather.

## **3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

Evidence of flint scatters from the Mesolithic suggests an early utilisation of the landscape in the locality (Howlett 2001). Mounds to the north of this site (HCC: SU75NE/26 and HCC: SU75NE/20) have been classified as Bronze Age funerary monuments, as have the two mounds on this site (Fig. 2). However, the results from the evaluation could not confirm this interpretation (UMAU 1997b). There are elements within the Eversley Quarry landscape that suggests human activity on the site has been present, but sparse, from an early period.

The landscape within the quarry has been assessed using various non intrusive archaeological techniques, these include a desk-based assessment by Phoenix Consulting Archaeology Ltd (Howlett 2001), field survey by the University of Manchester Archaeological Unit (UMAU 1997a), and a woodland survey undertaken by Oxford Archaeotechnics (OA 1998). Evaluation of the mounds was also undertaken by the University of Manchester Archaeological Unit (UMAU 1997b). However, the results proved inconclusive in terms of dating the mounds, and understanding their function. Past interpretations of this type of mound are wide ranging, and have included charcoal burning kilns, 18<sup>th</sup>-century field kitchens, ornamental earthworks, platforms for both military and civilian structures, and Bronze Age funerary monuments.

## **4.0 Aims**

The primary aims of the excavation were to preserve archaeological deposits by record, contributing to an understanding of the form and function of the mounds and, if possible, to date them (Richmond 2002, 10). Further to this, it was hoped that an assessment of the archaeobotanical remains would also help to interpret the function of these earthworks.

## 5.0 Method

Excavation of the mounds was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (Richmond 2002). The mounds were cleared of surface leaf litter by hand in order to identify the location of the trial trenches. The mounds were then quadranted by hand. All archaeological deposits encountered were recorded on *pro-forma* record cards supplemented by scale plans, section drawings and photographs. Finds were retained by context and suitably qualified staff carried out final analysis and conservation.

The paper records, together with the finds, comprise the site archive. The archive has been prepared according to the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of the *Management of Archaeology Projects* (English Heritage, 1991), the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage* (UKIC, 1990), and *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museum and Art Galleries Commission, 1992). The archive will be deposited with the relevant repository with the prior notification and agreement of the museum, within a reasonable time after the completion of the excavation, subject to approval by the landowner.

## 6.0 Results

### 6.1 Mound A

Mound A (Fig. 3) was the more southerly of the two mounds the northwester and southeastern quadrants were excavated. The tumulus consisted of a circular ditch (F100) and mound (F101) which were visible as earthworks prior to excavation (Plates 1 and 2). The ditch (F100) had an outside diameter of 8.2m, a U-shaped profile and was 1m wide and 0.4m deep. The primary fill of the ditch was a narrow layer of grey silt and sand with charcoal flecking (1009). This was overlain by a layer of yellow sand and silt (1008). The mound itself (F101) had a diameter of 6m and a height of 0.6m, and was constructed using the upcast from the ditch. This was a relatively clean, compact, dark grey silt (1002), which was also present in the upper fill of the ditch, probably wash from the mound. The ditch was c.1m wide and 0.4m deep. Overlying the centre of the mound was a 0.1m deep layer of friable yellow sand with grey silt lenses (1001). Overlying the mound and ditch was a 0.1m thick layer of leaf mould (1000). All of the stratigraphy excavated in this mound showed considerable root action.

### 6.2 Mound B

Mound B (Fig. 4) was situated c.20m to the north of Mound A. The northern and the southern quadrants were excavated. The mound was found to seal a series of linear negative features, F202, F203, F204, F205, F206, F207 and F208, all aligned northeast-southwest, (Fig. 4). The ring ditch of the mound cut these linear features (Plates 3 and 4), and the mound both sealed and filled them. The earthwork consisted of a circular ditch (F200), and upstanding mound (F201), which was again visible as an earthwork prior to excavation (Plates 5 and 6). The ditch (F200) had an outside diameter of 8.2m, a U-shaped profile, and was 1m wide and 0.4m deep. The primary fill of the ditch (2002) was a relatively clean, compact, dark grey silt. Pottery dating from 1820-1830 was retrieved from this context revealing that the mound and ditch were constructed earlier. This deposit was the same as the primary construction

material of the mound, and was presumably wash from the mound. The mound (F201) had a diameter of 6m and a height of 0.7m. The primary mound construction material (2002) was overlain by a spread (0.1m deep) of friable yellow sand with some grey silt lenses (2001). A layer of leaf mould (2000) covered the area of the mound and ditch. All of the stratigraphy excavated in this mound showed considerable intrusive root action.

The up-cast from the digging of the ring ditch was used to form the mounds. Thus, the core of the mound is made up from a mixture of topsoil that was already present on the site, with the addition of what was excavated from the ditch. The sandy caps on each of the mounds was the natural subsoil dug out of the ditch, it was very friable material and weathered from the sides of the mound, back into the ditch.

## **7.0 Finds**

### *7.1 The Pottery by Stephanie Rátkai*

The pottery assemblage from the site was very small, consisting of only eight sherds. Two vessels with blue transfer decoration were represented. Three fragments of a blue shell-edged plate dating to 1820-1830 were recovered, and six sherds from a bowl with a pedestal base of the same date range. The transfer on the bowl had been badly applied, and did not appear to have been designed for the vessel that it had been applied to.

### *7.2 The Plant Remains by Marina Ciaraldi and Maurice Hopper*

Soil samples were taken from both of the mounds and their surrounding ditches, according to BUFAU guidelines (*On-site Guide to Environmental Sampling and Processing*, BUFAU, Procedure No.2). The sampling strategy took into consideration the recommendations of the written scheme of investigation (Richmond 2002). It was hoped that the charred plant remains would help to establish the function of the mounds by providing information concerning human activity on the site, as well as having the potential for reconstructing the palaeoenvironment of the area.

#### Method

Two samples from Mound A were chosen for assessment; one from the mound itself (1004), and one from the primary fill of the ring ditch (1009). The samples were floated with a York flotation machine. The flots (light fraction) were recovered on a 0.5mm sieve and the residue (heavy fraction) on a 1mm mesh. The residue was sorted by eye, while the flot was scanned under a low-power stereomicroscope.

#### Results

The samples examined were heavily contaminated by modern organic material including rootlets, seeds, leaves and twigs. Small amounts of charcoal fragments were observed in sample 1004, whereas sample 1009 was charcoal-rich. However, due to the presence of large quantities of modern intrusive material it is impossible to draw any conclusions as to the origin of the charcoal.

Mound	Context	Type of context	Vol. processed (lt.)	Flot. vol. (ml.)	Description
A	1004	Mound	5	1000	Very large flot (1 lt.), only 50% scanned. It consists entirely of modern organic material. No seeds were observed. Charcoal fragments present in the residue
A	1009	Ditch	10	500	Large flot. It consists mainly of modern material. No seeds were observed but the residue contained numerous charcoal fragments

**Table 1** List of the soil sample assessed for plant macroremains.

### Recommendations

The presence of modern organic material suggests that these were very disturbed or modern deposits. No charred plant remains were identified from the samples. The charcoal present in the samples was very fragmented and not suitable for identification of radiocarbon dating. No further sampling of these mounds is recommended during the watching brief.

### **8.0 Discussion**

The existence of a rutted trackway below Mound B means that the interpretation of the earthworks being Bronze Age barrows can be discarded. The general form and morphology of the two mounds is very similar, and it seems likely that they were contemporary with each other. The excavated sequence suggests that the mounds and ditches were constructed rapidly, and were not designed with any degree of permanence in mind. The dating evidence from mound B would suggest that they pre-date 1820.

The closest parallel for this type of mound comes from a site at Crowthorne, 10 kilometres to the east of the site (Manning undated). A ditch and mound, one in a series of 34, was excavated in 1963, by this date most of the 34 mounds had been bulldozed prior to tree planting. The mound was similar in size, form and construction to those at Eversley. However, there were a series of burnt pits against the inner edge of the ditch which are not evident in those excavated here. The mounds at Crowthorne are thought to relate to a series of military earthworks associated with manoeuvres that took place on the Easthampstead Plain in 1792 (Smith 1995).

With the defeat of the British in the American War of Independence in 1783 and the political unrest in France at this time, which later led to the Napoleonic wars in 1793, there was an urgent need to improve military procedure and training (Babtie and Berkshire County Council 1994). For the first time a handbook of military operation was produced and in order to put these new procedures into practice a series of military manoeuvres was staged for a period of two weeks in the summer of 1792. This involved moving infantry, cavalry and artillery to Crowthorne (*ibid*). On 28<sup>th</sup> July 1792 the army units, along with 300 wagons, moved from Wickham Bushes near Crowthorne (c.10km to the northeast of the site) to Hartfordbridge, c.2km to the



southwest of the site (*ibid*). These mounds are located on an almost direct path between these two camps and the track marks below Mound B are also aligned between these two camps. It may be noted here that the camp at Hartfordbridge was flooded by torrential rain after the arrival of the troops (*ibid*). If this site is related to these manoeuvres, it could be possible that these mounds were constructed in order to keep military provisions dry, following the new encampment of troops in the area.

The mounds at Crowthorne have been identified as field kitchens, mainly due to the presence of burning. However, they do not entirely conform to the textbook version of field kitchen of that era, for instance there was no evidence of a chimney, radial kettle-boiling trenches or stone slabs (Margary 1965). The environmental samples collected from the Eversley mounds suggest some form of burning was taking place in the vicinity of the mound when the ditch was first opened. However, this seems to have been short lived, and there is no evidence of direct heat or scorching in any of the deposits encountered on the site.

Although it is possible that the mounds at Eversley are related to the grand review of 1792, it is possible that they are later in date. Land in the area has been used for military exercises by the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, (*c.7km* to the east of the site) since its establishment in 1812, and the pottery found in the ring ditch of Mound B does date to the period following its establishment. Military manoeuvres were later moved to Salisbury plain (Babtie and Berkshire County Council 1994).

## **9.0 Recommendations**

Whilst further excavation of the mounds themselves is not recommended it may be pertinent for a watching brief to be undertaken in the vicinity of the mounds during the woodland and topsoil strip. This would help to identify any other features that may have been associated with the mounds, and may provide further key dating evidence. It may also provide more information regarding the relationship of the mounds with the earlier cart way, which may have been linked with the 18<sup>th</sup> century troop manoeuvres. Analysis of the charred plant remains has shown that the samples were heavily contaminated with modern rootlets, and it is not recommended that any more of the mound or ditch deposits be sampled. However, should good, undisturbed, charcoal rich deposits be encountered, then further sampling may be advised.

## **10.0 Acknowledgements**

The project was commissioned by Pheonix Consulting Archaeology Ltd on behalf of Lafarge Aggregates. Thanks are due to Ian Wikes who monitored the project for Hampshire County Council, and Andy Richmond, Phoenix Consulting Archaeology Ltd, who monitored the project for the sponsor. Thanks also go to the staff at Eversley Quarry for their help. Work on site was carried out by Mary Duncan, Keith Hinton and Maurice Hopper. Specialists to whom thanks are due are Marina Ciaraldi, Maurice Hopper, and Stephanie Rátkai. Mary Duncan produced the written report, which was illustrated by Nigel Dodds and edited by Kirsty Nichol, who also monitored the project for BUFAU.

## 11.0 Bibliography

- Babtie and Berkshire County Council 1994 *Bastions of Berkshire: Eighteenth Century Redoubts in Crowthorne Woods*.
- DoE (Department of the Environment) 1990. *Planning Policy and Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning*.
- Howlett, C.E. 2001 *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment 'Busta Triangle' Eversley, Hampshire (Application no. 1132/01)* Phoenix Consulting Archaeology Limited P168A.
- IFA (Institute of Field Archaeologists) 1994 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation*.
- Manning, W.H. undated *The Excavation of a mound near Caesar's Camp, Easthampstead*, offprint from Hampshire County Council.
- Margary, I.D. 1965 'Military Field Kitchens of the Eighteenth Century' *Sussex Archaeological Collections* Vol. 103, 59-66.
- OA (Oxford Archaeotechnics) 1998 *Elvetham Estate, Bramshill, Hampshire: Archaeological Woodland Survey* Ref: 1500489/BRH/HAL (Commissioned by Hall Aggregates (South East) Limited (RMC Group)).
- Richmond, A. 2002 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Excavation Eversley Quarry Eversley Hampshire* Phoenix consulting Archaeology Limited P106A.
- Smith, N. 1995 'Military Training Earthworks in Crowthorne Wood, Berkshire: A Survey by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England' *Archaeological Journal* Vol. 152, 422-440.
- UMAU (University of Manchester Archaeological Unit) 1997a *Eversley Quarry: Field Survey* (Unpublished report) October 1997 (36).
- UMAU (University of Manchester Archaeological Unit) 1997b *Eversley Common, Hampshire: An archaeological evaluation of two circular earthworks* (Unpublished report) October 1997 (36).

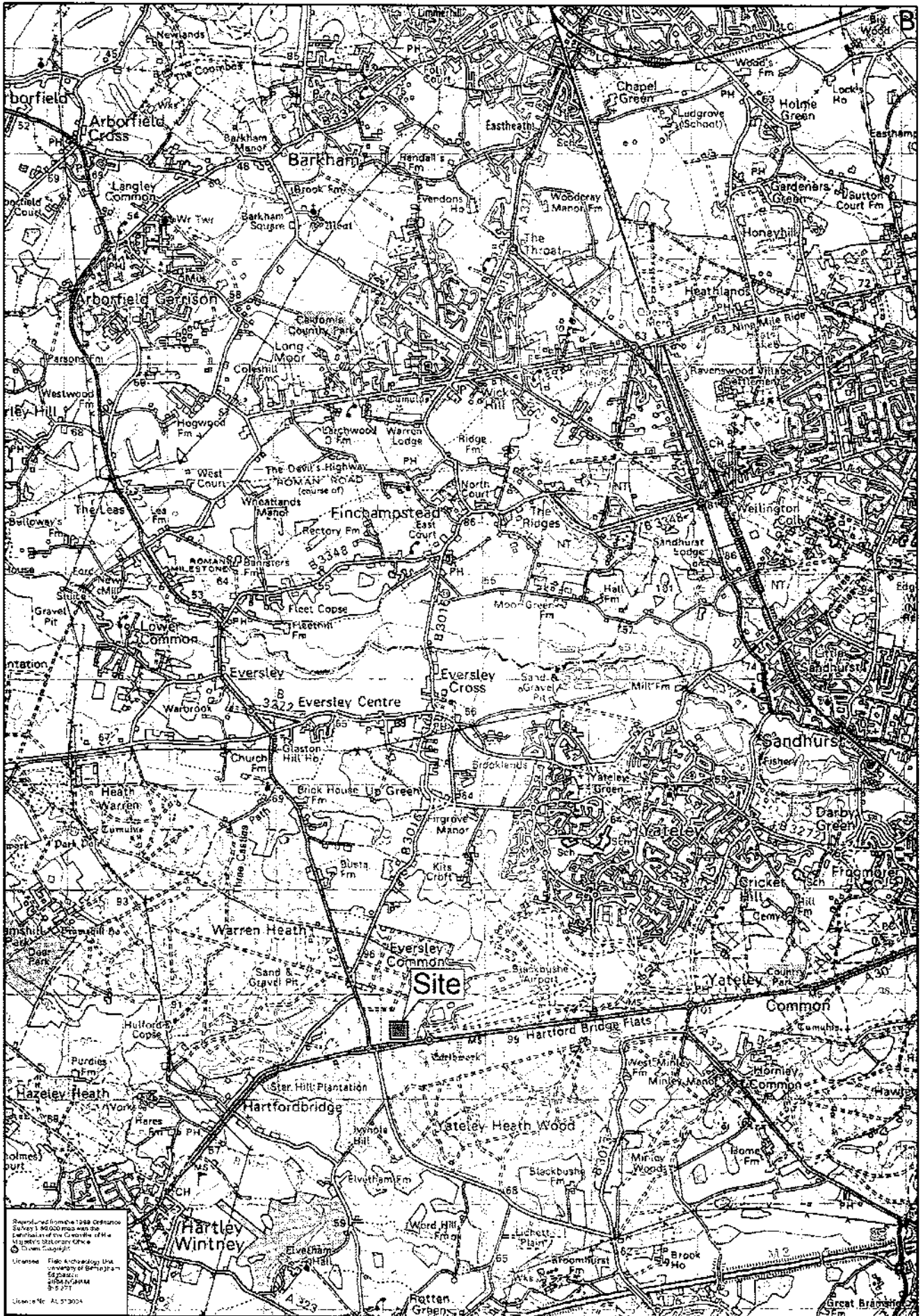
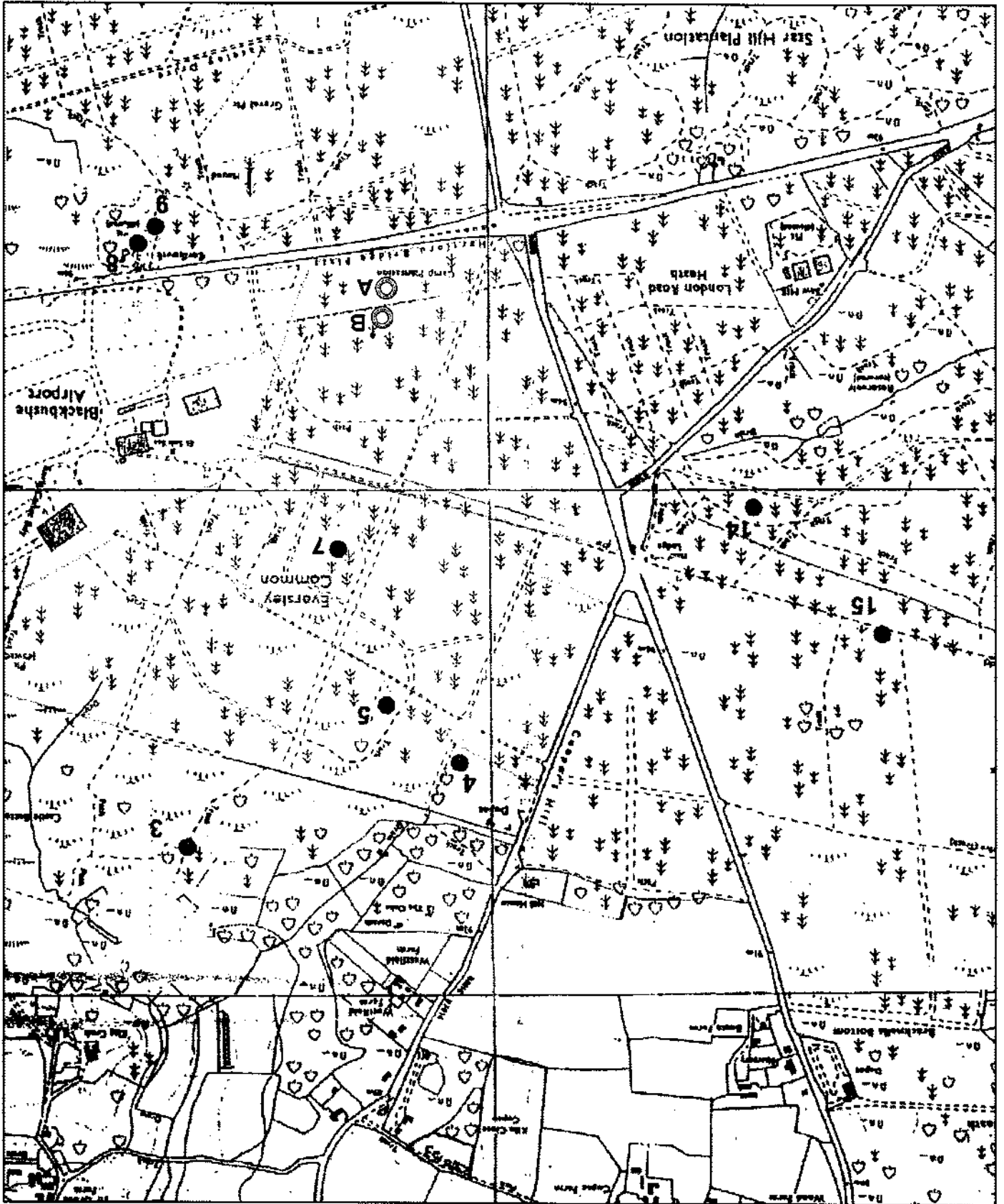


Fig.1

Fig. 2



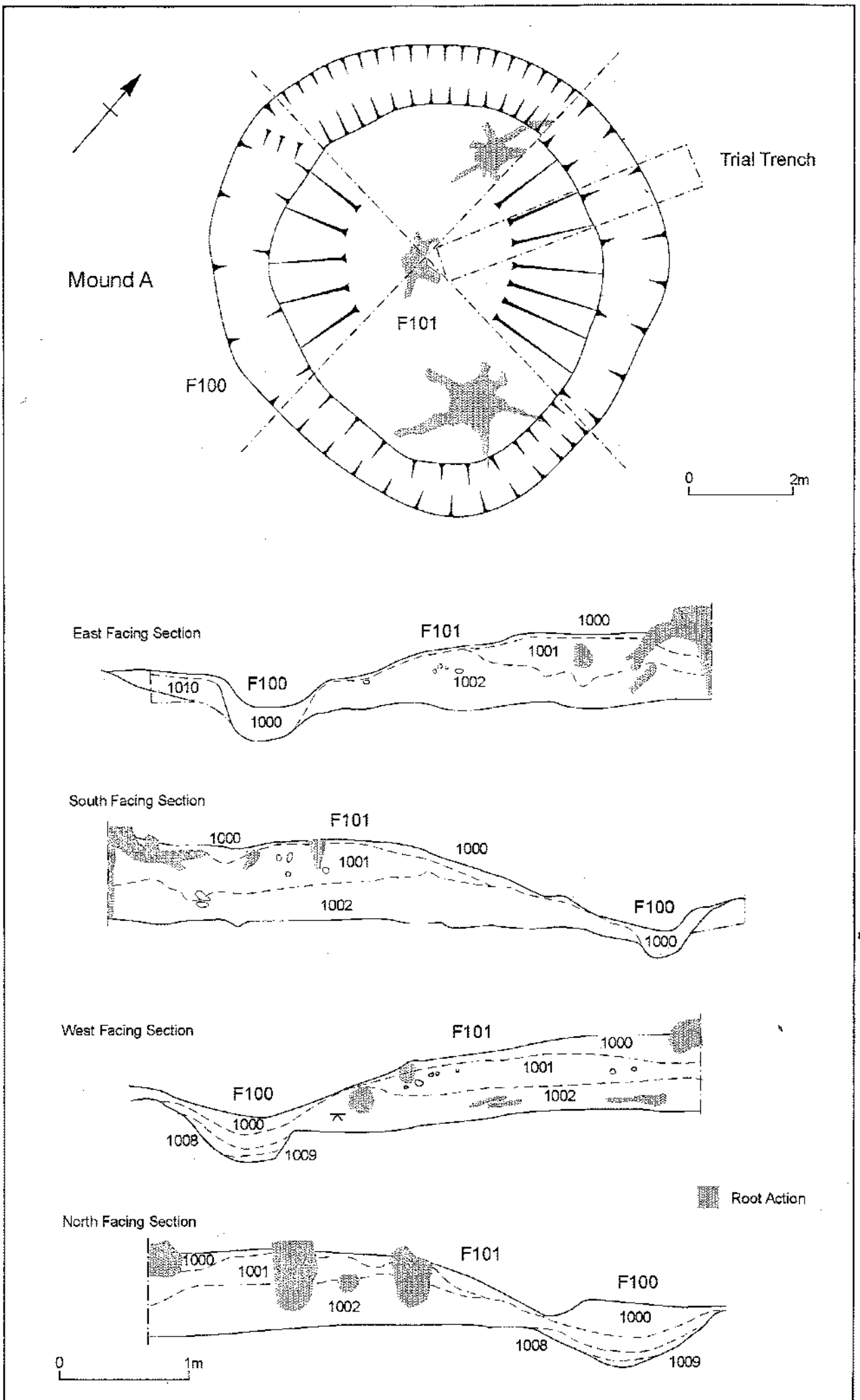


Fig.3

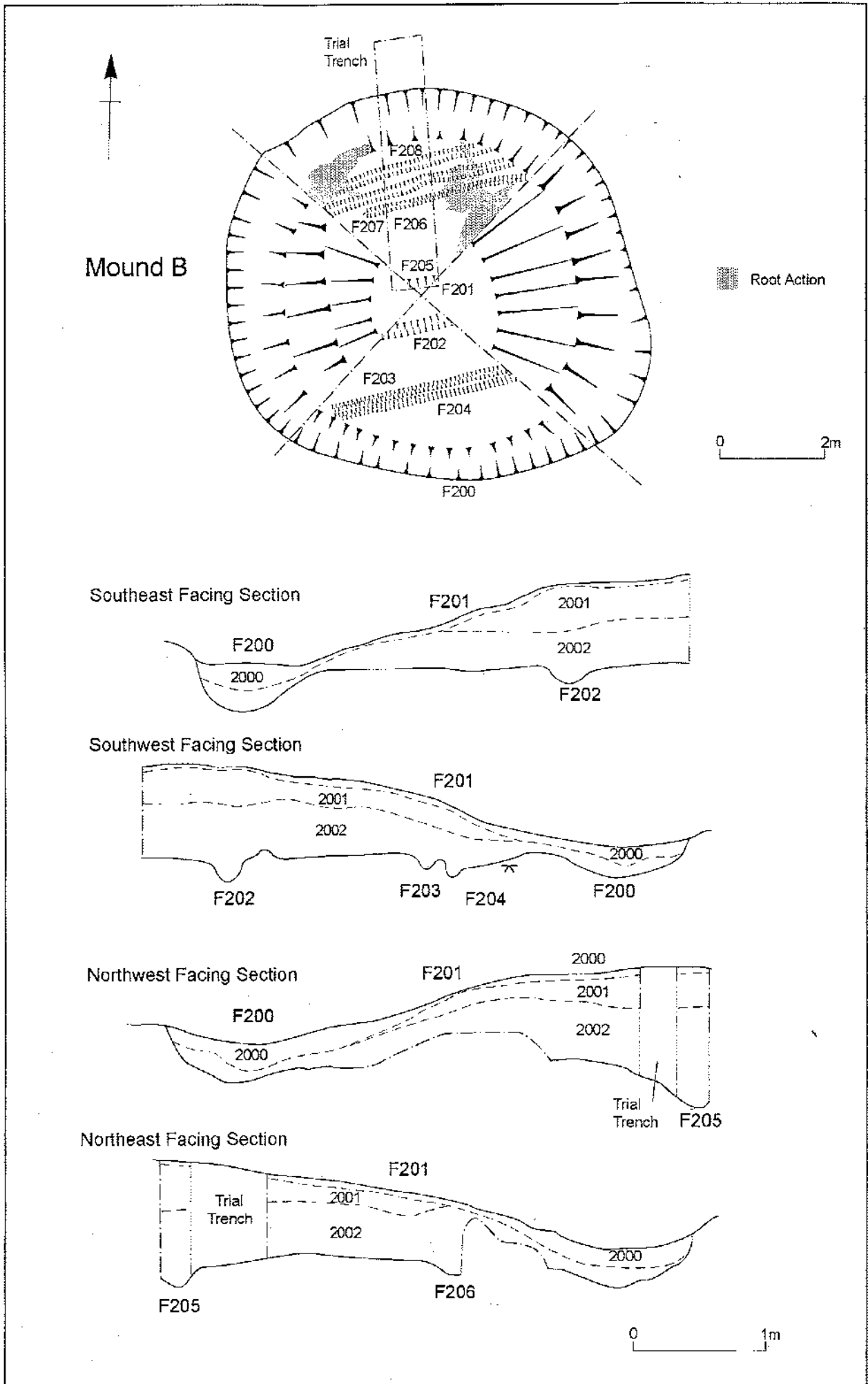


Fig.4



Plate 1.

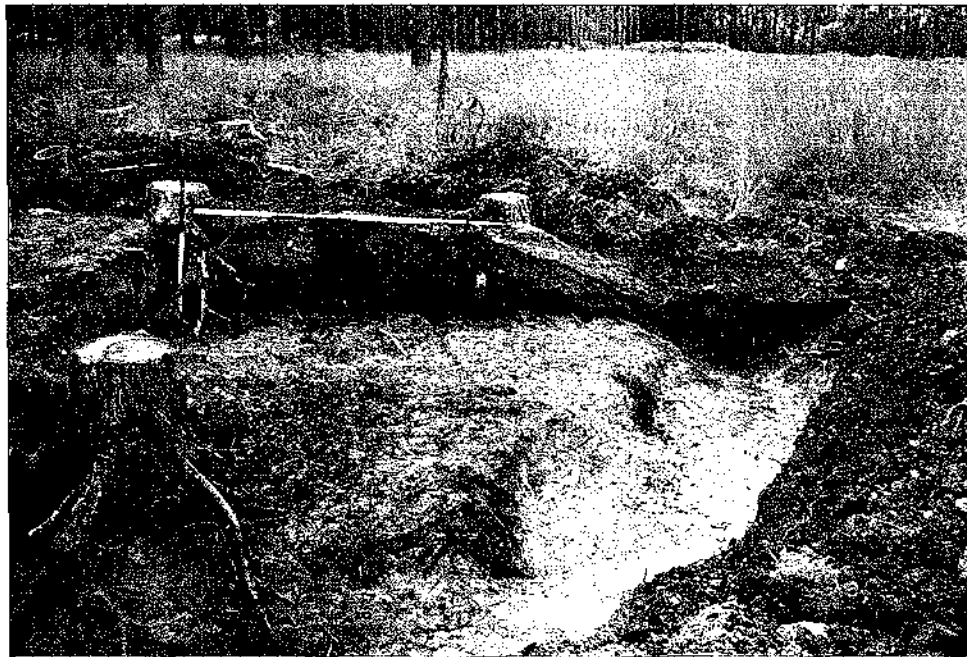


Plate 2.



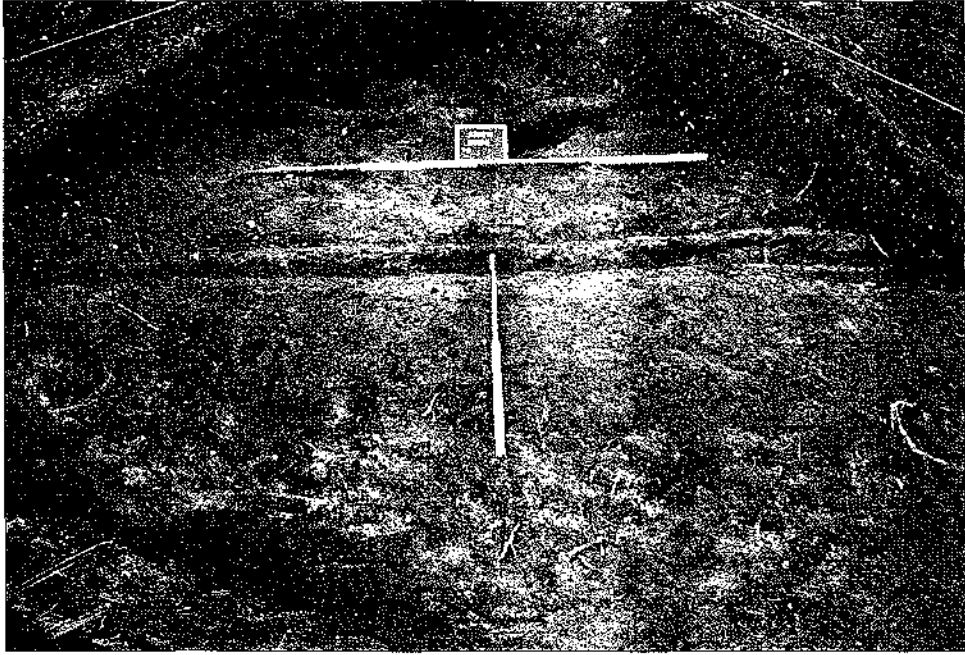


Plate 3.



Plate 4.





Plate 5.

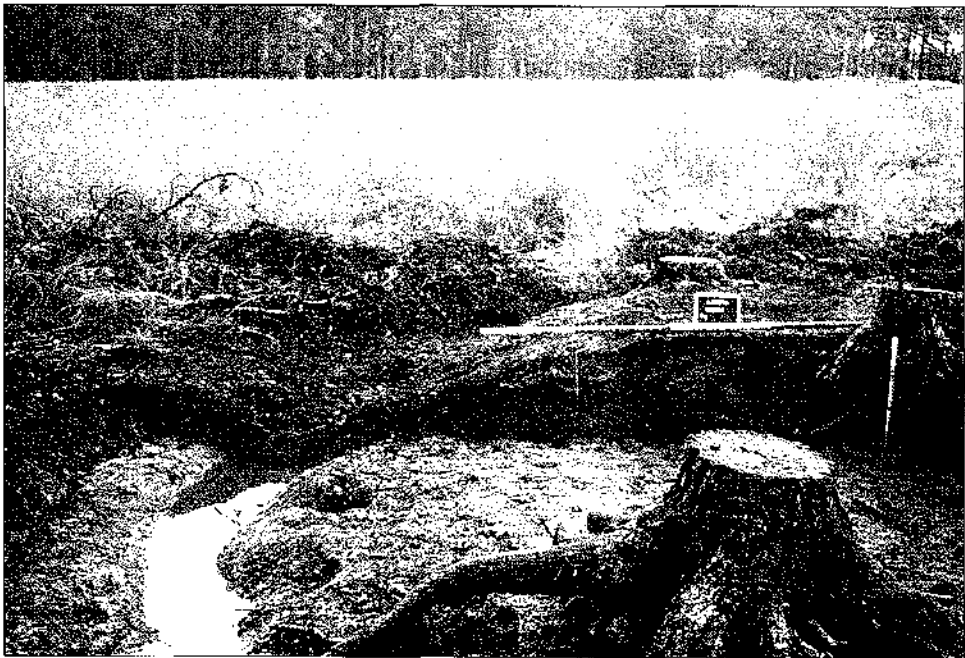


Plate 6.