

**Chessvale Bowling Club,
East Street, Chesham,
Buckinghamshire:**

**an archaeological evaluation
2003**

Planning application: 01/2054

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
Project No. 987
February 2003

**Chessvale Bowling Club,
East Street, Chesham, Buckinghamshire:
an archaeological evaluation 2003**

By
Richard Cuttler

with contributions by Lynne Bevan, Marina Ciaraldi,
Annette Hancocks, Emma Hancox and Trina Huggins

Developer: Hightown Practorian Housing Association Ltd.
Archaeological Planning Consultant: Dr Peter Wardle
Archaeological Contractor: Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit.
Planning Application: 01/2054

For further information please contact:
Simon Buteux, Iain Ferris or Alex Jones (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
Web Address: <http://www.bufau.bham.ac.uk>

Contents

Summary	1
1.0 Introduction	2
2.0 Site location, geology and topography	2
3.0 Archaeological background.....	2
4.0 Methodology	3
5.0 Results	3
5.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 4).....	3
5.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 5).....	4
5.3 Trench 3 (Fig. 6).....	5
5.4 Test section.....	5
6.0 The Artefactual Evidence	6
6.1 The Flint by <i>Lynne Bevan</i>	6
<i>Summary</i>	6
<i>Discussion</i>	6
6.2 The pottery by <i>Annette Hancocks</i>	7
<i>Factual summary</i>	7
6.3 The animal bone by <i>Emma Hancox</i>	8
<i>Factual Data</i>	8
7.0 The Environmental Evidence	8
7.1 The charred plant remains by <i>Emma Hancox and Marina Ciaraldi</i>	9
7.2 Gastropod analysis by <i>Trena Huggins</i>	9
<i>Objectives</i>	9
<i>Methodology</i>	9
<i>Results and interpretation</i>	9
<i>Recommendations</i>	10
8.0 Discussion	11
9.0 Acknowledgements	12
10.0 References	12
Appendix 1 Summary of finds by <i>Annette Hancocks</i>	14
Appendix 2 Quantification of finds by <i>Annette Hancocks</i>	16

Tables

Table 1. Postholes within Trench 3

Table 2. List of the soil samples assessed for plant macroremains

Table 3. Gastropod species list and abundance weighting for the assessed samples.

Figures

Fig. 1. Location of site

Fig. 2. Location of site within Chesham

Fig. 3. Location of trenches and test section

Fig. 4. Trench 1. Plan and Sections

Fig. 5. Trench 2. Plan and Sections

Fig. 6. Trench 3. Plan and Sections

Plates

Plate 1. F101 and F102, south facing sections

Plate 2. F104, east facing section

Plate 3. F305, south facing section

Plate 4. F308, south facing section

Chessvale Bowling Club, East Street, Chesham, Buckinghamshire: an archaeological evaluation 2003

Developer: Hightown Praetorian Housing Association LTD.
Archaeological Planning Consultant: Dr Peter Wardle.
Archaeological Contractor: Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit.
Planning Application: 01/2054.

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken of land at Chessvale Bowling Club, East Street, Chesham, Buckinghamshire (NGR 496035 201582), in advance of a proposed residential development. The evaluation was commissioned by the Hightown Praetorian Housing Association and carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) in January 2003. A previous desk-based assessment by BUFAU showed that the site lies within an area of historical and archaeological interest. The site is located close to Stratford's Yard, East Street where earlier archaeological excavations revealed evidence of a possible Late Mesolithic working floor and also produced Neolithic/ Bronze Age material consisting of pottery and animal bone.

Three trial trenches were excavated across the site. In one trench two pits were recorded. One pit contained Middle Bronze Age pottery, and the other contained undated prehistoric pottery, although it seems likely that both pits are of a similar date. The fills of both pits contained flint and animal bone. The charred plant and animal bone assemblages demonstrated that the conditions on the site are favourable for the survival of environmental remains. Both assemblages, however, were relatively small.

A flint assemblage was recovered from a layer of colluvium. This contained a small amount of Mesolithic material, however, the bulk of the assemblage indicated later periods of flint manufacture during the later Neolithic or Bronze Age. Residual Roman pottery was recovered from later deposits. Evidence for the presence of temporary structures dating to the medieval period or later. Evidence for quarrying during the post-medieval period was also recorded.

*Mesolithic hunter-gather societies- 10,000 to 3,500 BC
Neolithic early agricultural societies- 3,500 to 2,200 BC
Bronze Age- 2,200 BC to 700 BC
Iron Age- 700 BC to 43 AD
Roman- 43 AD to 410 AD
Medieval- 1066 to 1500 AD
Post-medieval- 1500 AD to present*

1.0 Introduction

This report provides the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) at Chessvale Bowling Club, East Street, Chesham, (NGR 496035 201582, Fig. 1, hereafter referred to as the site) between 6th January and 24th January 2003. This work was carried out on behalf of Hightown Praetorian Housing Association. Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service required the work as part of a planning application (Ref. no. 01/2054) for a proposed residential development. The evaluation conforms to a design brief prepared by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (Kidd 2002), and a written scheme of investigation prepared by BUFAU (2002), in consultation with the Dr Domonique de Moulins, the English Heritage Regional Adviser in Archaeological Science.

2.0 Site location, geology and topography

The site, comprising Chessvale Bowling Club (NGR 496035 201582) is located to the east of Chesham High Street, between East Street and a railway line (Fig. 2). Chesham station is located to the northeast of the site, while adjacent properties forming the site boundary to the north and south of the site have been recently developed. The site is situated towards the bottom of the slope of the eastern side of the Dry valley and lies on the Middle Chalk layer, which extends down the side of the valley, with gravel and alluvium at the valley bottom. The western side of the site has been built up to provide a level playing surface for the bowling green.

3.0 Archaeological background

A summary of the relevant existing archaeological and historical information is given in the design brief (Kidd 2002) and the desk-based assessment (Blake 2002). It was thought that the site might contain remains of Mesolithic or Neolithic/ Bronze Age date, evidence for which had been found during archaeological investigations approximately 100m to the south at Stratford's Yard. An archaeological excavation undertaken at Stratford's Yard (SMR no. 1875) during 1969 revealed what was believed to be a late Mesolithic working floor. The finds assemblage also consisted of Neolithic/ Bronze Age material along with pottery and animal bone about 1m below the present ground level. The animal bone gave a radiocarbon date of 5890 ± 100 bp (3940 ± 100 BC) (Stainton, 1989 p.68). In 1982 further archaeological excavation was carried out when the site was to be developed, revealing further deposits relating to the Mesolithic and Neolithic/ Bronze Age occupation of this site.

Stratford's Yard is one element in a nationally significant concentration of Mesolithic sites in the valley of the Colne and its tributaries. The site lies in a similar topographical situation to Stratford's Yard, suggesting a significant potential for similar deposits.

4.0 Methodology

Three trial trenches 1.6m wide and aligned east-west were excavated (Fig. 3), providing for a total of 72m² of trenching. Excavation of overburden was carried out using a mini digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. This was undertaken in level spits to the top of the uppermost archaeological horizon. Subsequent cleaning and excavation was undertaken by hand. This methodology conformed to Section 4 (Methodology) of the written scheme of investigation (BUFAU 2002).

The specific evaluation aims were to:

- identify the presence of Mesolithic or Neolithic/ Bronze Age activity and to characterise the depositional sequence and the environmental potential of the site,
- establish the presence or absence of any buried soils, which might contain artefact scatters,
- establish the presence or absence of any deposits, which might provide an environmental sequence,
- establish the extent of truncation by later activity,
- establish the presence or absence of occupation associated with medieval Chesham,
- recover environmental information as to the economy, diet etc of the inhabitants of the area.

On completion of archaeological works a 'machine access' was constructed from East Street, over the area of Trench 3. This access utilised the existing overburden at the western end of Trench 3 to ensure that no archaeological deposits were disturbed.

5.0 Results

5.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 4)

12m long, excavated to a depth of 1.05m at the western end and 0.30m at the eastern end.

At the eastern end of the trench were two small oval pits (F101 and F102, Plate 1) cut into the natural chalk (1012), extending beyond the edge of excavation, both approximately 0.90m wide. The fills of both pits were sieved using a 5mm mesh to maximise artefact recovery. The southern pit (F102) measured 0.46m in depth and contained three fills (1013, 1010, and 1008). Pit F102 was fully excavated to maximise finds recovery. The fills of the pit contained pottery from approximately 50 percent of a single Middle Bronze Age pot. Fragments of flint, and animal bone were also recovered. Environmental samples taken from Pit F102 contained snail shell, hazelnut shells and a single cereal grain.

Fragments of tap slag were recovered from the environmental samples. A layer of tap slag was recorded in Trench 1 (1001) which would have facilitated drainage for the bowling green. Both pits F101 and F102 were located at the edges of the trench where it is possible that material from the trench section could have contaminated the samples. The tap slag recovered from Pit F102 is believed to be intrusive.

The northern pit (F101) was 0.38m deep and contained three fills (1009, 1016 and 1007). The fills of the pit contained fragments of unidentified prehistoric pottery, flint, animal bone (deer), and a canine tooth. Since the morphology of both pits (F101 and F102) is similar it seems likely that they are of a similar date. Environmental samples taken from Pit F101 contained snail shell.

A layer of light orange-brown clay with chalk fragments (1011) overlay the natural chalk 1012, at the western part of the trench. Layer 1011 had a maximum depth of 0.26m at the west end of the trench becoming shallower towards the east. Layer 1011 sloped down and became deeper to west, following the slope of the natural 1012. It was not present at the east end of the trench. A sondage measuring 0.50m in width was hand excavated through layer 1011 to the top of natural chalk 1012. Soil from this sondage was wet sieved through a 5mm mesh to facilitate artefact recovery. A later Mesolithic flint blade core fragment and undiagnostic flint flakes and chunks were recovered together with medieval pottery, 18th/ 19th century pottery, fragments of 18th/ 19th ceramic tile, glass and tap slag.

Two small pits (F103 and F104) were cut into the upper surface of layer 1011. Feature F104 (Plate 2) was approximately 0.50m wide and 0.30m deep. Feature F103 was 0.50m at least wide and 0.30m deep. The fill (1014) of F103 contained flint, possible Roman and medieval pottery, iron, shell and tile. The fill (1015) of F104 contained flint, possible Roman pottery, post-medieval tile and animal bone.

At the west end of the trench layer 1011 was cut by a north-south aligned linear feature (F105), which extended beyond the edge of excavation. F105 contained modern ceramics (not retained). Feature F105 was sealed by layers of modern origin.

5.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 5)

13m long and excavated to a depth of 1m at the western end, and 0.30m at the eastern end.

The natural chalk (2008) was only exposed at the east end of the trench and was overlain by a layer of light orange-brown clay with chalk fragments (2007), probably colluvium, which appeared to similar to layer 1011, Trench 1. Layer 2007 sloped down to west becoming deeper, following the slope of the natural 2008. A circular feature (F200), cut layer 2007, 0.55m in width and 0.16m in depth. It was filled with a brown silty clay (2006) containing flint, possible Roman pottery, and an iron nail.

At the west end of the trench layer 2007 was cut by a by a north-south aligned linear feature (F201), at least 2m wide and 0.25m deep, which extended beyond the edge of excavation. It was filled by mid-brown clay (2005).

The remainder of deposits within Trench 2 consisted of modern levelling deposits for the bowling green.

5.3 Trench 3 (Fig. 6)

20m in length and excavated to a depth of 1.7m at the west end, and 0.30m at the east end.

The natural chalk (3024) was only exposed at the east end of the trench. At the east end of the trench were three subcircular features (F302, F303 and F304) cut into the natural chalk. Feature F302 was 0.55m wide and 0.08m deep and its fill (3016) contained worked flint, tap slag and animal bone. Features F303 and F304 were each only 0.05m deep, and were probably heavily truncated.

The natural chalk 3024 was overlain by a layer of light orange-brown clay with chalk fragments (3011) containing flint, which appeared to be similar to layers 1011 and 2007. Layer 3011 had a maximum depth of 0.40m, and became shallower towards the east end of the trench. At the western end of the trench layers 3007 to 3009 may represent the western continuation of layer 3011.

Layer 3011 was cut by four postholes (F305 to F308), which are included in the tabulated results below. The fills of these features contained various residual finds including flint, Middle Bronze Age and medieval pottery and shell as well as post-medieval finds including 19th/ 20th century pottery.

Feature No.	Width	Depth	Fill	Comment
F302	0.55m	0.08m	3016	Heavily truncated, cut into natural chalk. Burnt stone in fill.
F303	0.33m	0.05m	3017	Heavily truncated
F304		0.05m	3018	Heavily truncated
F305	0.42m	0.36	3020	Large fragments of flint, possibly used as post packing
F306	0.75m	0.26m	3021	Large flint nodules in upper fill, possibly post packing
F307	0.50m	0.12m	3022	
F308	0.50m	0.38m	3023	Charcoal and large flint fragments

Table 1: summary of postholes, Trench 3

Layer 3011 was also cut by a large pit (F300), extending beyond the north edge of excavations. Pit F300 was approximately 6.2m wide and at least 2.5m deep (although this feature was not bottomed). Its fills (3004-3006 and 3012) contained fragments of post-medieval brick and tile (not retained).

The remainder of deposits within Trench 3 consisted of a service trench (F301) and modern levelling deposits associated with the construction of the bowling green.

5.4 Test section (Fig. 3)

The turf was removed from a west facing section of bank (Fig 3) , measuring 1.3m in length. The purpose of this was to determine the level of the natural chalk, and the potential for the survival of deposits to the east of the bowling green.

The natural chalk (4003) was revealed at a height of 107.08m AOD. This was overlain by a light brown clay and chalk (4002), 0.3m in depth. This was sealed by a mid brown clay

silt (4001), 0.28m in depth, similar to the colluvial layers 1011, 2007 and 3011. This was sealed by topsoil (4000), 0.26m in depth.

6.0 The Artefactual Evidence

6.1 The Flint *by Lynne Bevan*

Summary

The flint assemblage comprised a total of 364 items of humanly-struck flint, weighing 6,334 grams, of which the only datable artefact was a small fragment from a blade core from which very narrow blades had been detached (context 1011). This item was of Later Mesolithic date and made of a translucent brown flint of fairly good quality. The remainder of the assemblage included several large flake cores and core fragments (contexts 3003, 3020 and unstratified), one of which had been re-used as a hammerstone (context 3020) and un-retouched flakes and chunks, among which there was a high incidence of recortication and breakage. Only a few of the flakes, including one from 3008, were blade-like in their morphology. The rest tended to be broad and, in common with the flake cores, thus suggestive of a later prehistoric date.

Discussion

The raw material used was a pebble flint of unpredictable quality with a high incidence of cortical inclusions. Although the only datable item was the Later Mesolithic blade core fragment (Context 1011) and the other finds were of probable later prehistoric date, this small assemblage does reveal evidence of some form of human activity during the later Mesolithic and probably, later Neolithic or Bronze Age. This accords to some extent with the flint assemblages from the sites at Stratford's Yard and East Street nearby where there was evidence for occupation from the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods (Stainton 1989 and Collard 1990). Other Mesolithic sites have also been recorded along the rivers Chess, Colne and Misbourne (Stainton 1989, 72-73). Re-occupation is also a feature of more extensive archaeological sites in Buckinghamshire, such as Tingrith where occupation ranged from the Later Mesolithic and Neolithic periods through to the Bronze Age (Bevan and Candy forthcoming). However, the assemblages from these sites were larger, more chronologically diagnostic and more suggestive of longer-term activities than the much smaller assemblage recovered from this site. For example, the later Mesolithic component from Stratford's Yard indicated 'a flint-working area particularly geared to microlith manufacture' and there was also possible evidence for the erection of a structure (Stainton 1989, 72).

It was difficult to separate the Later Mesolithic and Early Neolithic assemblages from Stratford's Yard due to some degree of morphological similarity, although the presence of Neolithic pottery suggested that they had originated from entirely separate phases of occupation (Stainton 1989, 72). However, in the current assemblage, there was a great deal of difference between the small blade core fragment (Context 1011) which is of a fine quality brown flint and the other waste material. The latter tended to be much larger

and recorticated, although a few flakes from 1011 were of a similar brown flint to the core and might have originated from the same knapping episode.

While the flint debitage is indicative of prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site, it appears to be more representative of knapping episodes rather than settlement of any intensity or duration. However, it does not preclude the possibility of further flint assemblages in the vicinity of the site.

6.2 The pottery by Ann Woodward and Annette Hancocks

Factual summary

The ceramics were rapidly scanned and assigned an initial spot date. Upon completion of the initial processing of the pottery from the evaluation, it became clear that the overall ceramics were poor and further study would add nothing of particular note to the understanding of the site. However, one significant ceramic pottery group is worthy of further attention.

The vessel, recovered from pit F102 (1013), is a thin-walled globular urn of the Middle Bronze Age Deverel-Rimbury tradition. It comprises 153 sherds (515g). It possesses a slack globular profile, flattened rim and is decorated with a sharply incised horizontal herringbone pattern immediately below the rim. Approximately 50 percent of the rim of the vessel was present.

This urn belongs to the Lower Thames Group as defined by Ellison (1975), and the best parallels are the two globular urns from Ashford Common, Sunbury, Middlesex (Barrett 1973, fig 2, 15 and 16). The herringbone design is matched on vessel 16 from that site, while vessel 15 has some decoration (one incised line) just below the rim as well as a zone of more complex decoration in the more usual location on the belly. The Chessvale vessel has inclusions of flint and shell. Amongst the Lower Thames Group flint fabrics predominate, with a few sandy examples (Ellison 1975, Table IV).

Other Middle Bronze Age Deverel-Rimbury vessels from Buckinghamshire are listed by Barrett (1973, 131). However, all these are bucket urns, so the Chessvale vessel is a notable addition to the corpus of Middle Bronze Age ceramics from the county.

This vessel should be studied as part of any further work which may be undertaken and reconstruction of the vessel would be viable. This was the most significant ceramic find from the evaluation and remains in a good condition. Pit F101 contained 12 sherds (8g) of prehistoric pottery, which by association with Pit F102, may be Bronze Age in date. Small quantities of 18th-20th century pottery were also recovered (Appendix 1). This more than likely represented periods of manuring. This pottery was very often associated with fragments of 18th- 19th century brick and tile and warrants no further detailed analysis, as it will not enhance our understanding of the site.

The overall assemblage consists of 1 box of finds, which consist mainly of flint and ceramic material. Upon completion of the project the archive will be deposited with the appropriate museum.

6.3 The animal bone by *Emma Hancox*

Factual Data

A small amount of bone was hand collected from the excavation and recovered using a sieve with a 5mm-mesh size. The assemblage weighed a total of 282g. Bulk samples were taken for environmental analysis; tiny fragments of bone were recovered from some of these samples (1008/F102, 1010/F102, 1013/F102, 1009/F102). The hand-collected bone came from six contexts, (1008/F102, 1009/F101, 1010/F102, 1013/F102, 1015/F105 and 3016/F302).

Pit F102 was dated to the Middle Bronze Age by the associated pottery. This feature also contained fragments of charred bone (1013). The bone was extremely fragmented and in poor condition with exfoliation of the outer layers. Only one recordable bone was noted, a Red deer metacarpal (1009/F101). There was no evidence of pathology, gnawing or butchery within the assemblage.

7.0 The Environmental Evidence

7.1 The charred plant remains by *Emma Hancox and Marina Ciaraldi*

Three soil samples (Table 2) were processed and the charred plant remains assessed in order to establish:

- the level of organic preservation
- the potential to understand the site economy from the plant assemblage.
- the potential for reconstructing former environments

The samples examined were taken from two pits, F101 and F102. Pit F102 was dated to the Middle Bronze Age by the associated pottery and it is probable that pit F101 is of a similar date. The soil matrix consisted of a silty clay with a yellow/brown colour. Ten litres of soil were processed by manual flotation from each sample. The flots were recovered on 0.5 mesh. They were dried in the oven at 40^o degrees and later scanned under a microscope. The residue was recovered on a 1mm mesh but not sorted within the time-scale of this report.

The charred component of all the samples examined was very small. A single piece of hazelnut and a few charcoal fragments were found in F102/1008. Two pieces of hazelnut and a single grain of cereal were observed in sample F102/1013, along with some charcoal. No plant remains and very little charcoal were observed in F101/1009. All of

the samples contained large numbers of shells. Intrusive plant material was observed in all three samples.

On the basis of the samples examined it would seem that charring plant remains are not abundant in the archaeological deposits from this site. It is therefore recommended that future sampling strategies target charcoal-rich deposits and features of significant archaeological importance. The charcoal in F102/1013 and the fragments of hazelnut are suitable for radiocarbon dating if required. The shells recovered from the samples could be useful for the reconstruction of the local palaeoenvironment during the Bronze Age.

Sample No.	Feature	Context	Date range	Volume Processed (kgs.)	Description
1	F101	1009	BA?	10	Very small flot. Contained a very small amount of charcoal, lots of small shells.
2	F102	1013	MBA	10	Very small flot. Contained fragments of charcoal, 2 pieces of hazelnut, one cereal grain and lots of shells.
3	F102	1008	MBA	10	Very small flot. Contained some fragments of charcoal, 1 piece of hazelnut and lots of shells.

Table 2. List of the soil samples assessed for plant macroremains

Key: MBA Middle Bronze Age.

7.2 Gastropod analysis by Trena Huggins

Objectives

- 1) To establish the level of gastropod preservation
- 2) To determine the potential for environmental reconstruction

Methodology

Three samples (F101-1009, F102-1013 & 1008) were examined using a Zeiss microscope. Gastropod species were identified within each sample and were then given an abundance weighting as follows: 1=rare, 2=occasional, 3=frequent, 4=common and 5=abundant. The species identification key, and all nomenclature presented here, follows Cameron & Redfern (1976).

Results and interpretation

Table 3 displays the species list for the 3 samples and their respective abundance weightings.

- 1) Preservation was excellent within all three samples enabling identification to species level relatively easily.

- 2) *Cecilioides acicula* was found in abundant frequencies in each sample; this is indicative of calcareous soils, usually grasslands. This is however a subterranean species, which is noteworthy, especially in relation to data interpretation. The species *Vallonia costata* and *Pupilla muscorum*, present in all samples, are both dry habitat species favouring short, calcareous grasslands. The two species *Discus rotundatus* and *Cochlicopa lubrica* also present in all samples favour a wide range of habitats, except very dry conditions.

The samples after brief identification yield the same overall conclusions. Whilst some minor variation exists between the samples, it is due to the presence of a single example of a species, which tend to be abundant and common throughout the British Isles, across many ecological habitats. It is fair to conclude that the sample environments were that of fairly dry calcareous grassland.

Recommendations

Overall, in all the samples examined, the gastropods present are abundant, well preserved and allow a sound basis for the reconstruction of the local palaeo-environment during the Bronze Age. Whether further sampling and identification of gastropod remains would provide further insight is debatable and if pursued would need to reflect the overall research objectives. In general land snails, of which only 87 native and naturalised species exist in the British Isles, are characteristic to only 3 distinct habitats and whilst many intermediate zones exist; it is unlikely that a gastropod assemblage alone could be anymore specific.

Species	1009 F101	1013 F102	1008 F102
<i>Pomatias elegans</i>	3		
<i>Carychium tridentatum</i>	3		
<i>Cochlicopa lubrica</i>	3	2	2
<i>Pupilla muscorum</i>	2	1	1
<i>Acanthinula lamellata</i>	1		
<i>Vallonia costata</i>	3	2	2
<i>Vallonia exentrica</i>	3		2
<i>Cecilioides acicula</i>	5	4	4
<i>Discus rotundatus</i>	4	2	3
<i>Oxychilus sp.</i>	1		
<i>Vitrea sp.</i>		1	
Zonitidae indet.			2
<i>Candidula gigaxii</i>	4		3
<i>Cepaea sp.</i>	1		1
<i>Trichia hispida</i> group	1	3	3
Helicidae sp.		1	
<i>Cochlicella acuta</i>		1	

Abundance scale: 1=rare, 2=occasional, 3=frequent, 4=common, 5=abundant.

Table 3. gastropod species list and abundance weighting for the assessed samples.

8.0 Discussion

No deposits equivalent to the buried soil (Layers X, XI and XII) excavated at Stratfords Yard (Stainton 1989) were encountered. Although the site is located within approximately 100m of Stratfords Yard the sequence of deposits was not the same. The Chessvale Bowling Club site is located on a higher contour (approximately 106m) and clearly on part of the valley slope. Stratfords Yard is located on a lower height (100m) close to the base of the valley. It seems likely that the difference in deposits encountered on the two sites may be due to a difference in height between the two sites. If this is the case it seems possible that similar deposits to the Stratfords Yard site are more likely to have been present at a lower contour, to the west of East Street.

Two pits (F101 and F102) located within Trench 1 suggest that the site was the focus of settlement during the Middle Bronze Age. It would appear that this settlement might have utilised a gentle break in the slope. The relationship between features relating to this settlement and the light orange-brown clay (colluvium, Layers 1011, 2007 and 3011) could not be demonstrated within this evaluation due to terracing which had removed all evidence of Layer 1011 at the eastern extent of Trench 1. It seems possible, however, that this layer (encountered in all three trenches) may be similar to Layers 7 and 7a from the Stratford yards excavations, and described as 'hill wash'. The flint assemblage recovered from layer 1011 contained a small amount of Mesolithic material, however, the bulk of the assemblage, consisted of broad and large flakes, most of which indicate later periods of flint manufacture. This may suggest that the hillwash layer could date to the prehistoric period, perhaps of later Neolithic/ Bronze Age date. The 'hill wash' also contained fragments of medieval and 18th-20th century pottery and ceramic tile, which is probably intrusive.

It seems likely that the colluvium represents several phases of deposition, and has been disturbed to some extent during the post-medieval period. A number of post-holes were cut through the colluvial layers in all trenches. Some of these contained residual Roman pottery, while others contained pottery dated from the 13th/14th centuries through to the 20th century. This would suggest that some form of terrace predated the construction of the bowling club green, which was utilised, possibly from the 13th/14th centuries for temporary structures. The post-medieval activity also includes a large pit, evident at the western end of Trench 3, which is most probably the result of quarrying.

The survival of charred plant remains albeit in small amounts demonstrates the presence of conditions favourable to the survival of environmental remains. The animal bone assemblage was fragmented and small, however, a large proportion was from prehistoric contexts with a reasonable state of preservation. While an assemblage from this site may contribute to an understanding of the prehistoric economy, the potential of this material to inform us about the medieval economy seems limited.

The layers of 'hillwash' recorded within the trenches appeared to survive predominantly within the western and central areas of the bowling green, confirming the view that the eastern side of the site has been terraced down, while the western side of the site has been

levelled-up. The evaluation has demonstrated not only the presence of archaeological deposits within the site, but also that features from different phases are cut into both the 'hillwash' and the natural chalk. Properties to the north and south of the site have been recently developed by terracing down prior to construction.

9.0 Acknowledgements

The report was written by Richard Cuttler with contributions from Lynne Bevan, Marina Ciaraldi, Annette Hancocks, Emma Hancox, Treva Huggins and Ann Woodward. The figures were prepared by Nigel Dodds and the report was edited by Laurence Jones. Annette Hancocks was Finds Manager for the project. The project was supervised by Bob Burrows with the assistance of Erica Macey and John Halsted. Thanks to Mark Hanson who commissioned the report and to Dr Peter Wardle who monitored the site on behalf of Hightown Praetorian Housing Association. Thanks are also due to Sandy Kidd and David Radford who monitored the site on behalf of Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service.

10.0 References

- Barrett, J. C. 1973. Four Bronze Age cremation cemeteries from Middlesex. *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society*, **24**, 11-134.
- Bevan, I. and Candy, J. forthcoming. *The Tingrith Flint Assemblage*. Report for Network Archaeology.
- Blake, S. 2002 *Chessvale Bowling Club, Chesham, Buckinghamshire. An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. BUFAU PN. 987.
- BUFAU 2002. *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation at Chessvale Bowling Club, East Street, Chesham, Buckinghamshire*. BUFAU, issued 11/11/2002.
- Cameron, R.A.D., and Redfern, M. 1976. British Land Snails, Mollusca: Gastropoda – Keys and Notes for the Identification of Species. *Synopses of the British Fauna*, No. 6. The Linnean Society of London, Academic Press, London
- Collard, M. 1990. *East Street, Chesham*. Interim Report in South Midlands Archaeology No. 20, CBA Group 9, 18.
- Ellison, A. 1975. *Pottery and settlements of the later Bronze Age in southern England*. Phd thesis, University of Cambridge
- Kidd, A. S. 2002. *Brief for an Archaeological Field Evaluation (Trial Trenching)*. Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service, issued 12/4/2002.

Stainton, B. 1989. Excavation of an Early Prehistoric Site at Stratford's Yard, Chesham. *Records of Buckinghamshire* Volume 31, Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, 49-74.

Appendix 1

Summary of finds by *Annette Hancocks*

Context	Feature	Trench	Description	Qty/Weight (g)	Spot-date
1001	Topsoil	TR. 1	Flint 20 th cent. pottery	4 (35g) 1 (60g)	20 th century
1002		TR. 1	Tile 20 th cent. pottery	1 (60g) 3 (75g)	20 th century
1005	F105	TR. 1	Animal Bone Tile 18 th /19 th cent. pottery Clay Pipe Tap Slag	(33g) 3 (220g) 2 (11g) 1 (1g) (15g)	18 th /19 th century (trailed slipware)
1007 (sieving)	F101 (Pit)	TR. 1	Flint Snail shell Charcoal	40 (123g) 5 (5g) (2g)	
1008 (sieving)	F102 (Pit)	TR. 1	Animal Bone Flint Pottery (indet) Bronze Age pottery	(27g) 4 (46g) 5 (3g) 1 (2g)	?Middle Bronze Age
1009	F101 (Pit)	TR. 1	Animal Bone Flint Snail shell ? Iron Age pottery	(115g) 34 (221g) 3 (3g) 12 (8g)	prehistoric
1010 (sieving)	F102 (Pit)	TR. 1	Animal Bone Flint Snail shell Tap slag Charcoal ? Bronze Age pottery	(75g) 55 (296g) (3g) (<1g) (<1g) 3 (2g)	?Middle Bronze Age
1011 (sieving E half of sondage)		TR. 1	Flint Tile Medieval pottery 18 th /19 th cent. pottery Snail shell Tap slag Charcoal Red glass	38 (72g) 3 (2g) 1 (2g) 1 (1g) 2 (<1g) (8g) (1g) 1 (1g)	?Later Neolithic/ Bronze Age with residual Later Mesolithic flint and intrusive 18 th /19 th century finds
1011 (sieving W half of sondage)		TR. 1	Flint Snail shell Tap slag Tile	37 (306g) 1 (1g) (55g) 8 (94g)	?Later Neolithic/ Bronze Age with intrusive 18 th /19 th century finds (Post- medieval- tile with nail hole present)
1012		TR. 1	Tile	3 (3g)	
1013	F102 (Pit)	TR. 1	Animal Bone Flint Bronze Age pottery	(23g) 4 (6g) 18x rims (89g)** 7x flat base angle (38g) 128 body sherds (388g)	Middle Bronze Age from one vessel

1014	F103	TR. 1	Flint Tile ?Roman pottery Medieval pottery Oyster shell Misc. Iron	50 (640g) 5 (26g) 1 (2g) 1 (4g) 1 (4g) 4 (18g)	13 th /14 th century with residual /Roman pottery
1015	F104	TR. 1	Animal Bone Flint Modern tile ?Roman pottery	(2g) 1 (38g) 4 (21g) 1 (1g)	Modern with residual Roman
2006	F200	TR. 2	Flint ?Roman pottery Iron Nail Stone	8 (127g) 1 (1g) 1 (10g) 1 (6g)	?Roman possibly residual
Trench 2 U/S			Flint 19 th /20 th cent. pottery	38 (737g) 1 (9g)	19 th /20 th century
3003		TR. 3	Flint 19 th /20 th cent. pottery	28 (1311g) 2 (62g)	18 th /19 th century (yellow ware)
3008		TR. 3	Flint	1 (2g)	
3011	Layer	TR. 3	Flint	5 (85g)	
3016	F302	TR. 3	Animal Bone Flint Tap slag	(<1g) 16 (71g) (<1g)	
3018	F304	TR. 3	Flint Tile	1 (<1g) 1 (<1g)	
3020	F305 (Posthole)	TR. 3	Flint Tile Bronze Age pottery Medieval pottery Oyster shell Iron nail Misc. Iron Coal	29 (1084g) 8 (174g) 1 (<1g) 1 (4g) 1 (4g) 1 (6g) 1 (6g) 1 (<1g)	
3021	F306	TR.3	Flint Tile Brick Clay Pipe 19 th /20 th cent. pottery Oyster shell Tap slag	15 (47g) 6 (32g) 1 (1064g) 1 (1g) 1 (4g) 3 (2g) (42g)	19 th /20 th century
3022	F307	TR. 3	Flint Tile 19 th /20 th cent. pottery	10 (179g) 2 (40g) 2 (4g)	19 th /20 th century
3023	F308	TR. 3	Flint Tile 19 th /20 th cent. pottery Oyster shell	21 (114g) 5 (18g) 2 (7g) (<1g)	19 th /20 th century
Trench 3 U/S		TR. 3	Flint 19 th / 20 th cent. pottery Tile Animal Bone	4 (78g) 1 (11g) 1 (3g) (6g)	19 th /20 th century

Appendix 2

Quantification of finds by *Annette Hancocks*

Find type	Quantity
Pottery	
Bronze Age	163 sherds
Iron Age	12 sherds
?Roman	3 sherds
?Medieval	7 sherds
Post-medieval	15 sherds
Other finds	
Flint	364
Clay pipe	2
Tap Slag	123g
Snail shell	13g
Charcoal	4g
Animal Bone	276g
Ceramic Tile	52
Oyster shell	6
Misc. Iron	5
Iron Nail	2
Stone	1
Coal	<1g
Brick	1

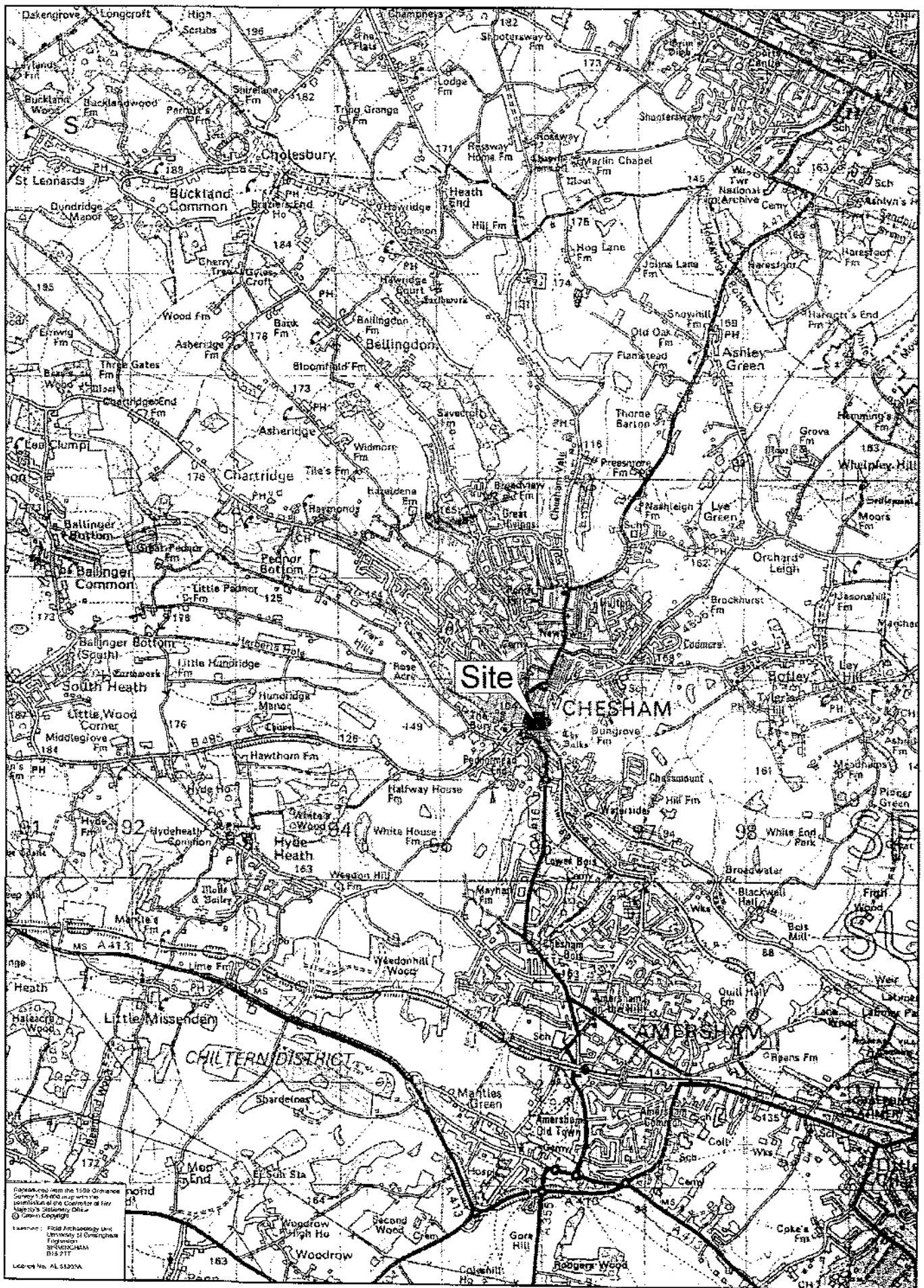


Fig.1

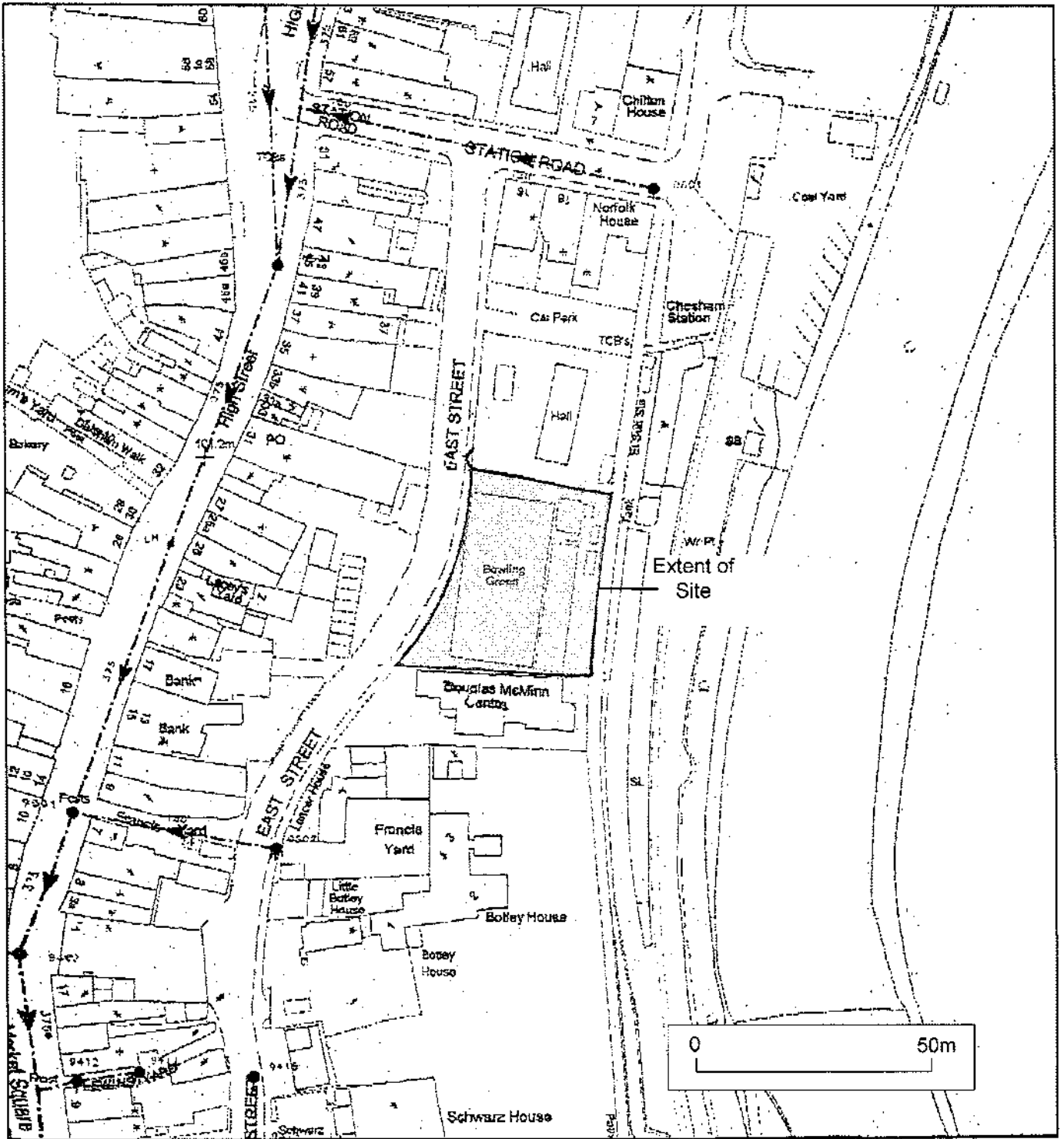


Fig.2

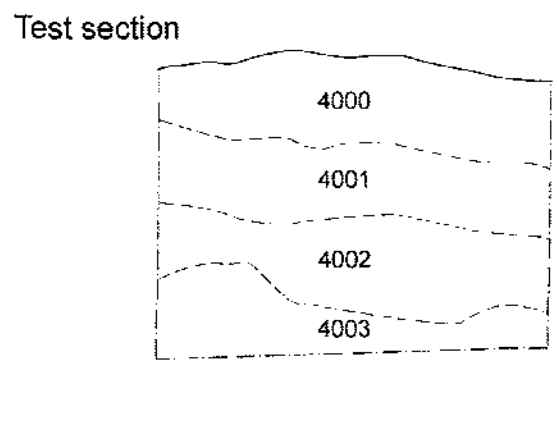
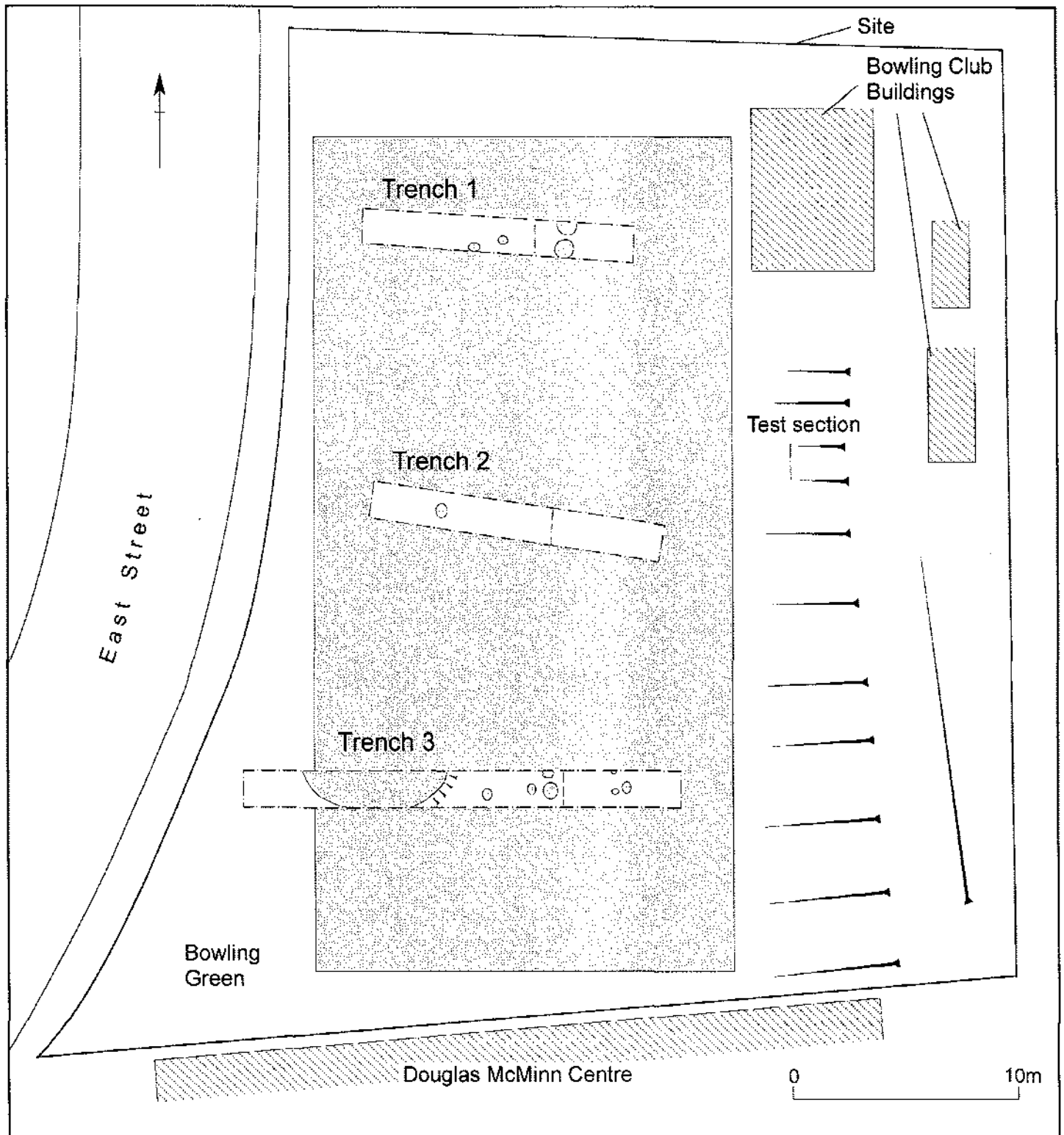


Fig.3

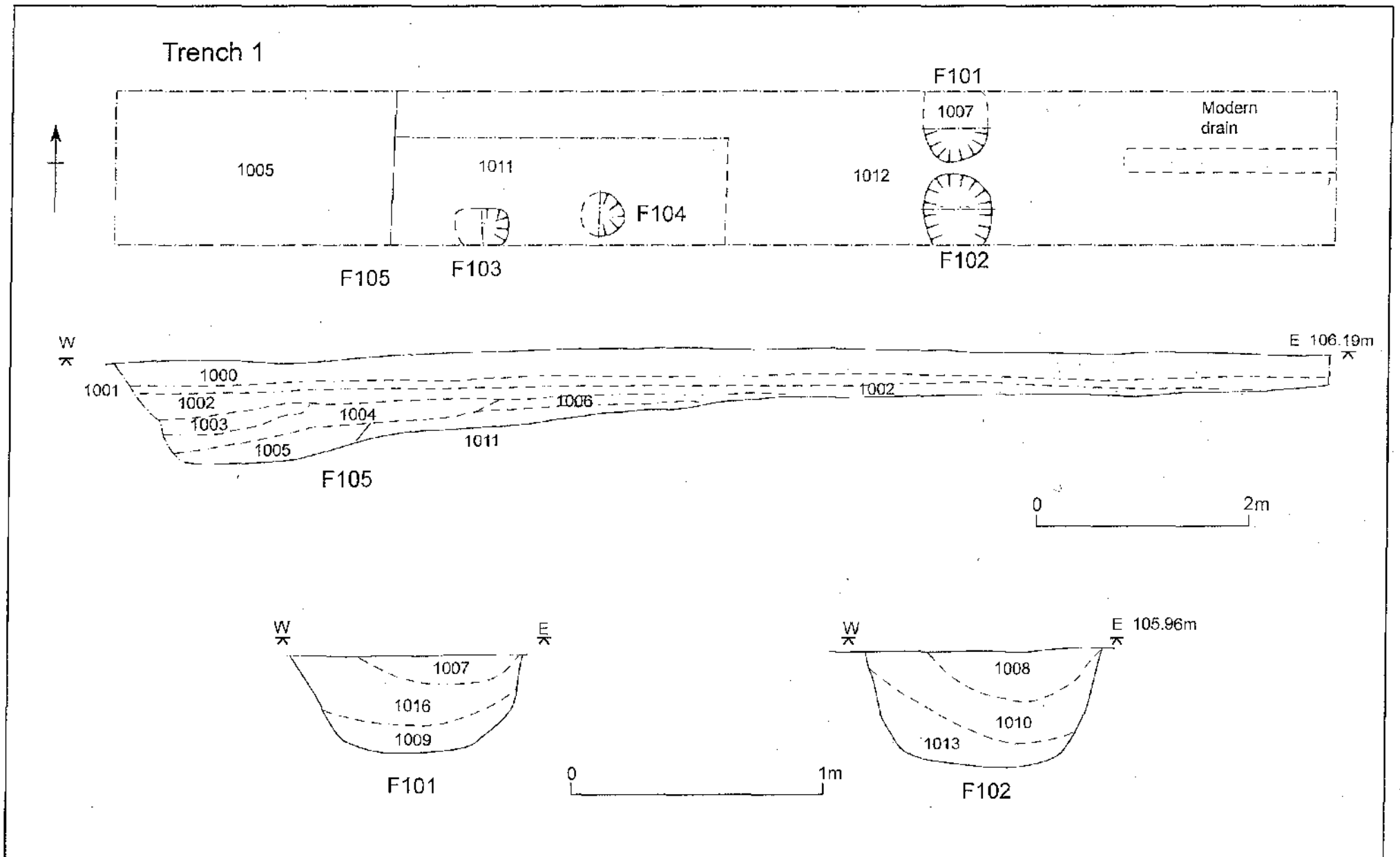


Fig.4

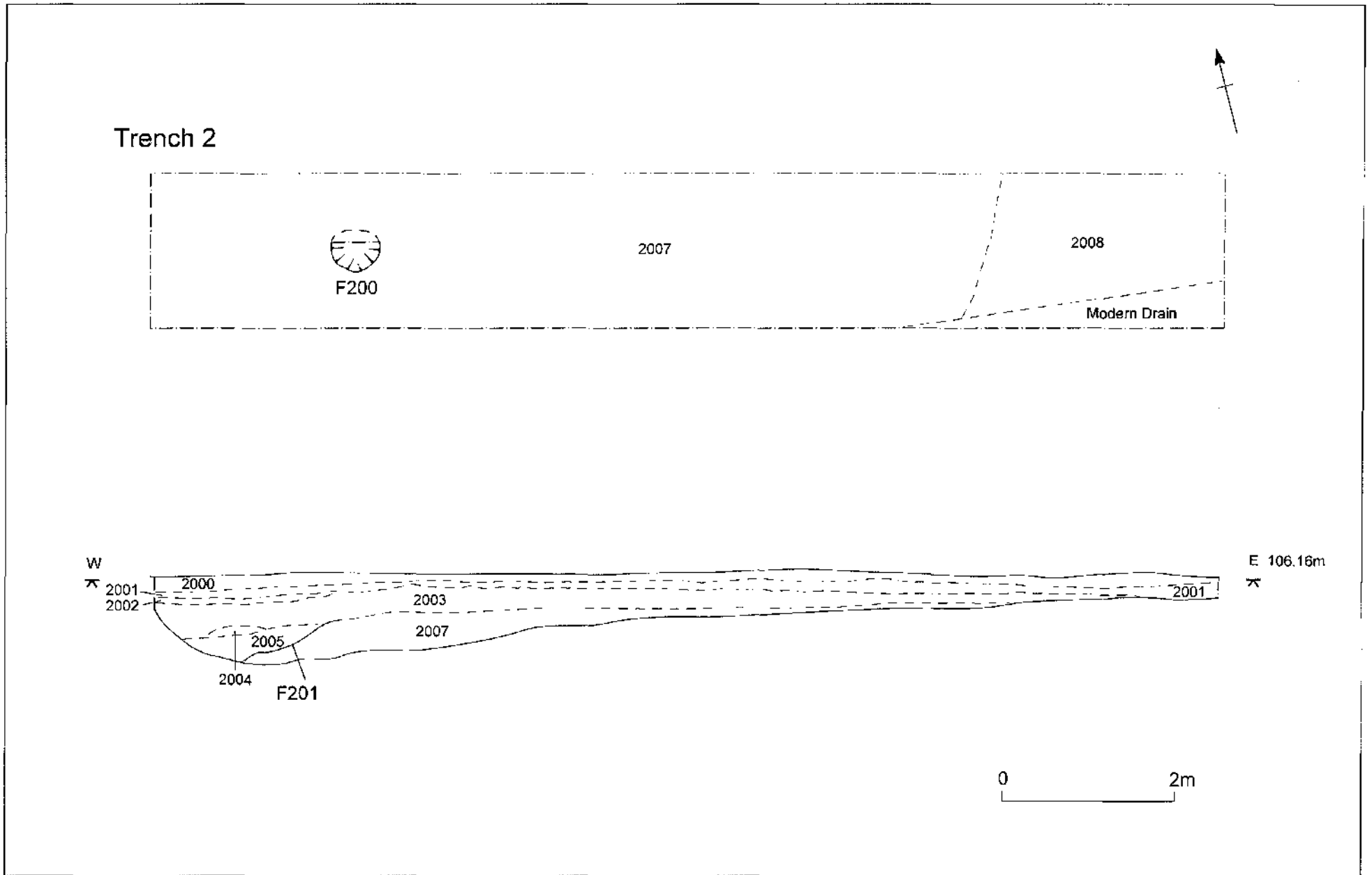


Fig.5

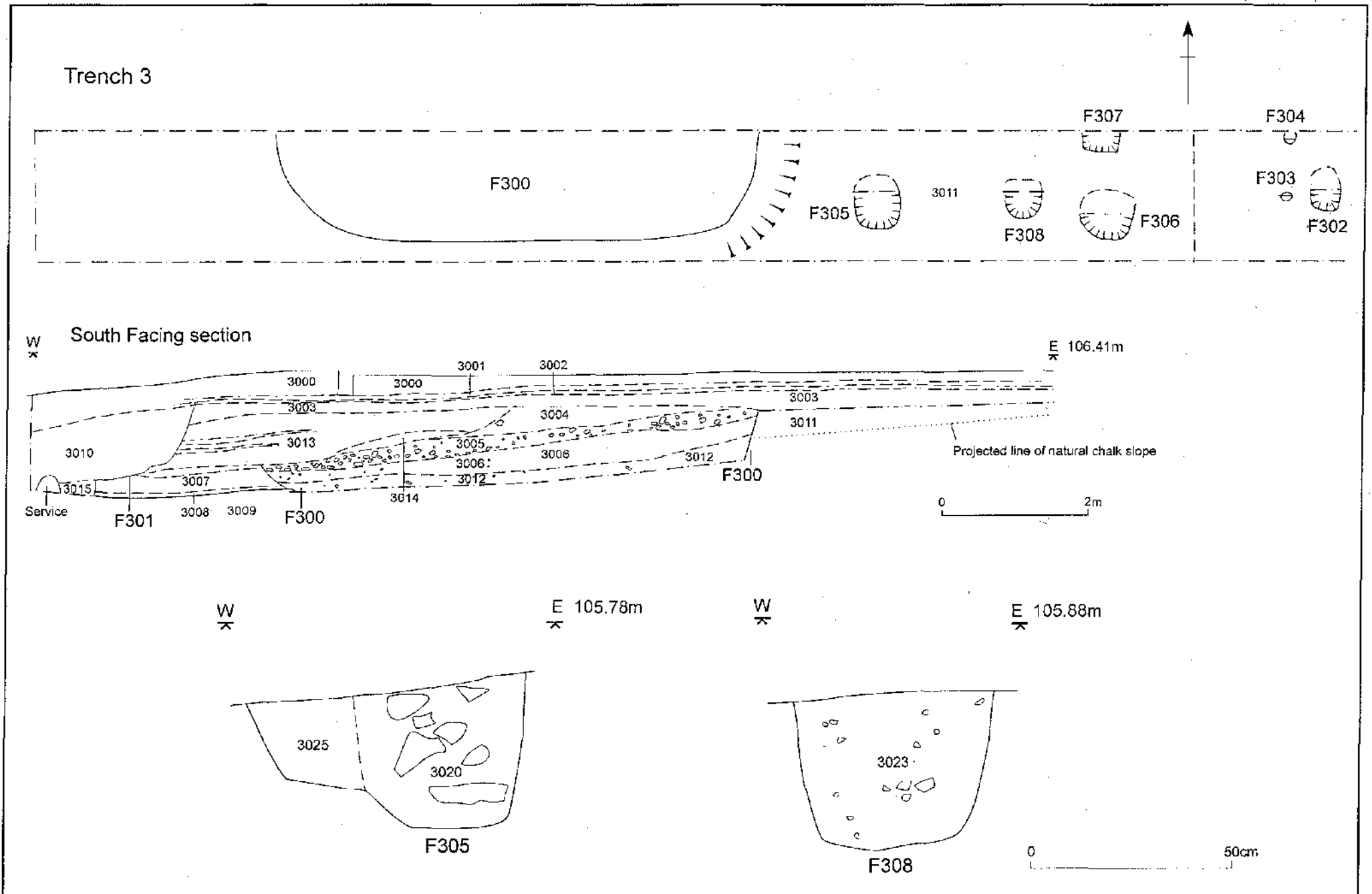


Fig.6

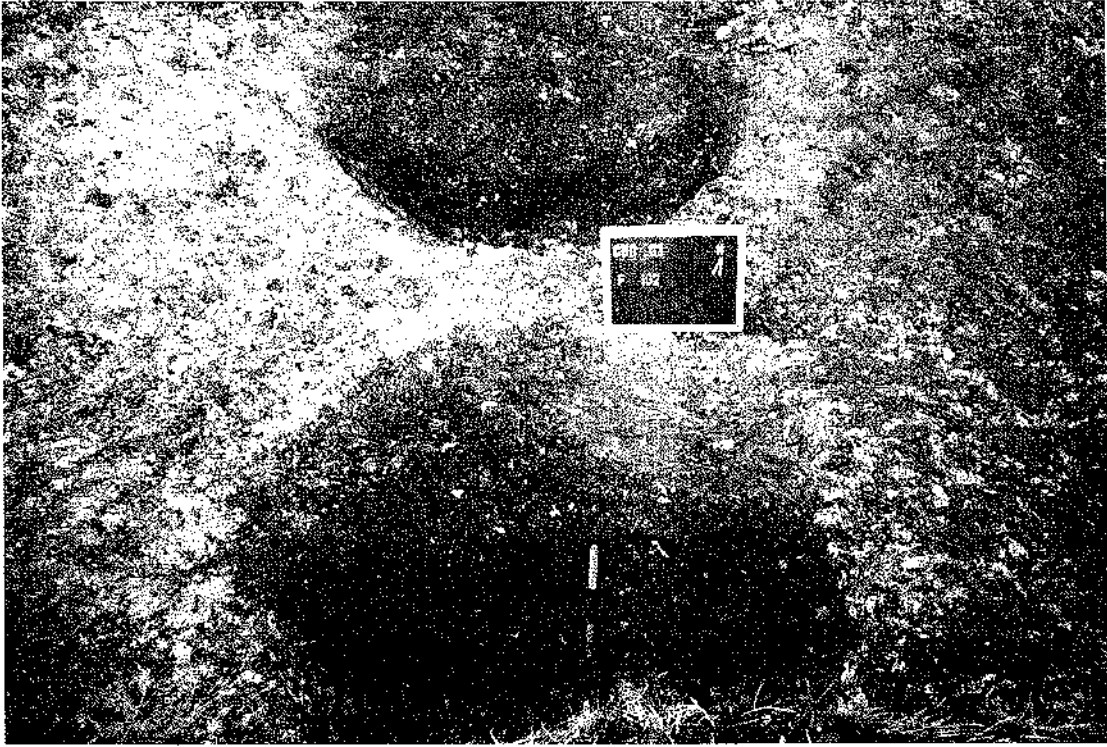


Plate 1



Plate 2

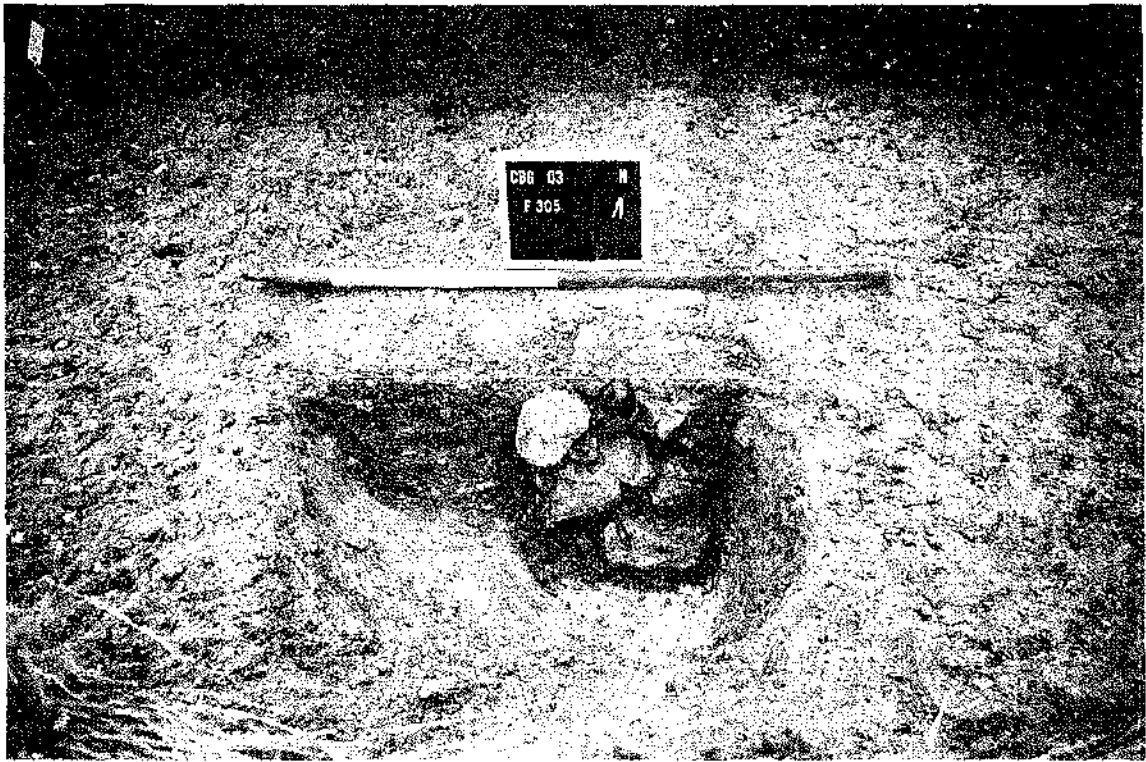


Plate 3



Plate 4