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HOLME BRIDGE, BAKEWELL, AND SHEEPWASH BRIDGE, ASHFORD-IN-THE-WATER, 2003

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HOLME BRIDGE, BAKEWELL, AND SHEEPWASH BRIDGE, ASHFORD-IN-THE-WATER, DERBYSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, 2003

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1.0 SUMMARY

Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned to undertake an archaeological watching brief in October 2002/March 2003, on two Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Derbyshire, Holme Bridge (NGR SK 2155 6899), Bakewell and Sheepwash Bridge (NGR SK 1943 6961), Ashford-in-the-Water. The work was commissioned by W.S. Atkins plc on behalf of the Environment Agency in advance of the Bakewell Flood Defence Scheme. A total of twenty test pits were hand excavated during geo-technical investigations adjacent to both structures. The archaeological work was carried out to determine the nature of the foundations of both bridges, to establish the presence or absence of remains associated with earlier structures, and also to establish the nature of the material infilling Holme Bridge. A further aim was to determine the potential for the recovery of dateable environmental deposits.

The foundations at Holme Bridge were built directly onto the silty sand and gravel river bed, and comprised a stone plinth capped by a course of chamfered stone. Internally the bridge consisted of limestone rubble overlain by sand, which provided a level platform for the flag stones of the bridge deck.

The foundations of the northern part of Sheepwash Bridge were of variable builds. It was not possible to examine the foundations on the bridge's southern side because substantial concrete supports had been inserted against the base of the bridge. The bridge foundations, and concrete supports, were abutted by a layer of silty sand and coarse gravel, which contained pottery dating to the 19th century. This layer may have been imported to raise the level of the river bed in order to protect the bridge foundations. This was overlain by a thin layer of concrete, possibly as a further protective measure.

The geo-technical investigations produced no evidence of any earlier structures. Due to constant scouring by the river, and the depth of the trial pits, no deposits with the potential for further environmental analysis were identified.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The following report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit in October 2002/March 2003. The watching brief was commissioned by WS Atkins plc as part of preliminary investigations, for the Environment Agency, into the viability of a Flood Defence Scheme at Bakewell, Derbyshire (Fig. 1). The work undertaken involved the monitoring and recording of geo-technical investigations into the structural remains of two Scheduled Ancient Monuments, the Grade I listed Holme Bridge, Bakewell (NGR SK 2155 6899, Fig. 2), and the Grade II* listed Sheepwash Bridge (NGR SK 1943 6961, Fig. 3) at Ashford-in-

the-Water. Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent was required and was approved subject to a watching brief.

The watching brief was undertaken in order to monitor and record the nature and character of any buried architectural features associated with the existing structure. It was also conducted in order to identify and record any remains pre-dating the present bridges, and where appropriate, recover environmental information preserved in riverine deposits. The watching brief was conducted in accordance with a specification prepared by BUFAU which adhered to the conditions set down for Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent, and was based on a brief prepared by the Peak National Park. It was also carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Watching Briefs*, and the IFA's *'Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation'* (1999).

3.0 SITE LOCATION (Fig. 1)

Both sites, Holme Bridge and Sheepwash Bridge, lie on the River Wye, which rises at Axe Edge to the west of Buxton and runs south-east through Derbyshire's White Peak joining the River Derwent at Rowsley Bridge. Holme Bridge (NGR SK 2155 6899) is located on the north western edge of Bakewell, Derbyshire, and spans the River Wye between the A6 Buxton Road and Holme Lane. Sheepwash Bridge (NGR SK 1943 6961) is located further upstream where it is located to the immediate south of Ashford-in-the-Water, Derbyshire, and crosses the River Wye between Fennel Street and the Duke's Drive, a continuation of the A6 Buxton Road north of Bakewell.

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The Peak District lies within the heart of the English northern midlands, and prehistoric remains from Neolithic henges, Bronze Age burial mounds and Iron Age earthworks are still visible throughout the region. The valley of the River Wye, which traverses much of this region, has formed a focus for human activity throughout prehistory, and both Ashford and Bakewell have for many hundreds of years been important crossing points.

Holme Bridge is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and is Grade 1 listed, it is also among the best-known surviving examples of a packhorse bridge in the Peak District. A number of possible construction dates have been proposed for the bridge (1684 and 1714), however the most widely accepted appears to be 1664. Archival sources also suggest that in 1562 an earlier bridge was located on this site (R. May & S. Bell, 2002). The bridge itself is narrow and composed of 5 segmental arches with 4 (original) piers each of which incorporates a cutwater on either side which rise to form pedestrian retreats. The bridge was built out of large deeply-coursed ashlar blocks, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century following heavy flooding was modified to incorporate two round storm arches on its southern side (R. May & S. Bell, 2002).

Sheepwash Bridge is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument and is Grade II* listed. The bridge itself is originally believed to date from the 16th century and has a contemporary

sheepwash attached to it on the southern bank. The bridge is constructed from coursed limestone rubble and is composed of three shallow segmental arches with rubble voussoirs. On either side of the two central piers, cutwaters rise into V-shaped recesses in the parapet walls, and to either side of the bridge at each end the walls splay outwards. On the south bank, on the east side of the bridge, a wall completes a continuous circuit to form a pen with an opening to the river for sheep dipping.

Previous evaluation work undertaken on Sheepwash Bridge (K. Aitchison 2000) examined the survival of archaeological deposits beneath the road surface during the laying of an electricity cable. This exposed the upper surfaces of the bridge arches and an area of a compacted earth surface towards the southern end of the bridge. This examination suggested that the bridge pre-dated the construction of the Bakewell-Buxton turnpike which passes immediately to the south of the bridge. Sheepwash appears to have been a narrow packhorse bridge like Holme Bridge and may have been widened at some point during the course of the 18th century. It is also possible that it was widened to 5.5m in order to take carriage traffic when the turnpike was constructed in the second decade of the 19th century.

5.0 OBJECTIVES

The archaeological watching brief objectives were to ensure that features exposed during the geo-technical investigations on or adjacent to the bridges were recorded and interpreted in order to establish the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of archaeological deposits encountered during geo-technical test-pitting.

The specific aims were to identify, record and recover:

- any evidence of buried architectural features associated with the present bridges, and in particular to establish the foundation characteristics of the bridge piers and abutments.
- evidence associated with structures or features pre-dating the bridges, i.e. any former structures.
- any dateable environmental deposits associated with the bridges and the fluvial deposits.
- establish the nature and condition of the material used to 'in-fill' Holme Bridge.

6.0 METHOD

In order to achieve these objectives a series of test pits were excavated at points around the base of each bridge, and at Holme Bridge through the bridge decking. The pits were to be excavated 'dry' and consequently it was necessary to temporarily divert the course of river around the area of investigation. This was achieved using a stank constructed from sand bags, which was drained of water using hydraulic pumps. Due to the time of year (October 2002/March 2003) and resulting depth and speed of the flow of river water however, it proved impossible to excavate the trial pits in totally dry conditions. Once

the stank was constructed the test pits were excavated by hand under archaeological supervision. Drilling equipment was used where necessary alongside hand excavation during the explorations at Sheepwash Bridge. Where possible, trial trenches were excavated to the base of the bridge foundations, and artefacts recovered by context.

The stratigraphic sequence was recorded on BUFAU *pro-forma* sheets and by scale drawings; plans (at a scale of 1:20) and sections (at a scale of 1:20). This record was supplemented with black and white; colour slide and colour print photographs. These, together with recovered artefacts, form the site archive, presently held at BUFAU until appropriate arrangements can be made for their final deposition. Once each test pit was fully recorded the excavated material was reinstated to prevent scouring by river water on the base of the bridges.

7.0 RESULTS

Holme Bridge *by Andrew Rudge*

A total of twelve test pits were excavated at Holme Bridge (Fig. 4). Ten were located at the base of the bridge itself, against either the piers/arch abutments (P5, P11, P7 and P12), the base of the cutwaters (P2, P3, P4, and P5), or the body of the main bridge abutments (P1 and P6). Two trial pits (P8 and P9) were excavated into the superstructure of the bridge itself.

TEST PIT P1

Test Pit P1 (Fig. 5) was excavated to a depth of 0.50m below the level of the river bed. The earliest material encountered, at the base of the trench, was a grey-brown sandy silt and gravel (1100), which produced fragments of 18th and 19th century stonewares. The foundations of the bridge (1101), which appeared to rest on this deposit, were 0.30m in depth, and consisted of a single course of large, roughly-cut, gritstone blocks. These projected beyond the face of the pier. The pier (1102) was composed of three courses of ashlar blocks.

TEST PIT P2

Test Pit P2 (Fig. 5) was excavated to a depth of c.0.30m below the base of the river. The earliest deposit, was a grey-brown silty sand and gravel (2100). Adjacent to the bridge foundations this deposit contained several large, flat stones. The bridge foundations consisted of a single course of gritstone, blocks resting directly on the river gravel. These were overlain by a course of chamfered stone (2101). The lower superstructure of the bridge cutwater consisted of two courses of gritstone, blocks(2102).

TEST PIT P3

Test Pit P3 (Fig. 5) was excavated to a depth of 0.45m below the level of the river bed. The earliest context was a grey-brown silty sand and gravel (3100) which produced fragments of 19th century pottery. The bridge foundations (3101) were 0.55m in depth, and consisted of a course of gritstone blocks, overlain by a course of chamfered stone.

The lower superstructure of the cutwater (3102) consisted of two courses of gritstone blocks.

TEST PIT P4

Test Pit P4 (Fig. 5) was excavated to a depth of 0.30m below the level of the river bed. The earliest deposit was a grey-brown silty sand and gravel (4100). The bridge foundations (4101) were 0.40m deep, and consisted of a single course of stonework, overlain by a course of chamfered stone. The lower superstructure of the bridge (4102) consisted of two courses of gritstone blocks.

TEST PIT P5

Test Pit P5 (Fig. 5) was excavated to a depth of 0.50m below the level of the river bed. The earliest deposits consisted of a few roughly placed stone blocks (5100), overlain by two courses of narrow, gritstone blocks, overlain by a course of chamfered stone foundation plinth (5101). The exposed foundations measured 0.40m in depth, and were overlain by the lower bridge superstructure which consisted of two courses of gritstone, blocks(5102),.

TEST PIT P6

Test Pit P6 (not illustrated) was excavated to a depth of 0.20m below the level of the river bed. It was completely submerged at the time of recording, and did not appear to have reached the base of the bridge stone work.

TEST PIT P7

Test Pit P7 (Fig. 5) was excavated to a depth of c.0.40m below the level of the river bed. The earliest deposit was a grey- brown silty sand and gravel (7000). The bridge foundations (7101), over lying this, were 0.50m in depth, and consisted of 3 courses of stone work. The lowest course projected 0.20m from the pier base, while the remaining two courses were composed of ashlar blocks and a course of chamfered stone. The lower superstructure of the bridge (7102) comprised two courses of gritstone blocks.

TEST PIT P8

Test Pit P8 (Fig. 5) was located over one of the bridge arches, and was excavated to a depth of 0.35m into the superstructure. The earliest deposit comprised un-cut gritstone bedded into a lime mortar (8103), which formed a core overlying the ashlar stone work of the arch. This deposit was overlain by a 0.10m deep layer of grey-brown, silty sand, which contained some small stone clasts (8102). This was in turn overlain by a grey-brown sand (8101), 0.10m in depth. This was sealed by a large flagstone, 0.08m thick.

TEST PIT P9

Test Pit P9 (Fig. 5) was sited over the southern arch abutment, between the recesses formed by the cutwaters, and was excavated to a depth of 0.60m into the superstructure. The earliest deposit was a layer of gritstone and sandstone blocks embedded in lime mortar (9103) 0.20m in depth, which formed the rubble core of the bridge. This was overlain by a grey-brown silty sand (9102) 0.10m in depth. This was overlain in turn by

a light grey sand (9101), 0.06m in depth. These deposits were sealed by large flagstone (9100), which measured 0.08m thick.

TEST PIT P10

Test Pit P10 (Fig. 6) was excavated to a depth of 1.0m below the level of the river bed. The earliest deposit was a dark-grey silty sand and gravel (10101), which was preserved in anaerobic conditions at a depth of 0.36m below the river bed. This deposit produced a possible 16th century terracotta plaque. Overlying this material was a grey-brown, silty sand and gravel (10100), which produced fragments of 18th and 19th century stonewares. Two, large, roughly-worked, and possibly deliberately positioned blocks of stone were also identified adjacent to the bridge abutment.

The foundations of the bridge (10102), were cut into context 10101. They were 1.0m deep, and consisted of five courses of stone work. The lower two courses projected out 0.13m from the later courses, which consisted of two courses of larger stone blocks, overlain by a course of chamfered stone. The foundations were overlain by the lower superstructure of the bridge (10103), which was composed of two courses of gritstone, blocks.

TEST PIT P11

Test Pit P11 (Fig. 6) was sited on the opposing abutment to P10, and was partly submerged before recording could be completed. It was excavated to a depth of 0.35m below the level of the river bed. The lowest deposit identified, was a grey-brown silty sand and gravel (11100). Overlying this, were the bridge foundations (11101), which consisted of a single course of large, ashlar blocks, overlain by a course of chamfered stone. The foundations were overlain by the lower superstructure of the bridge (11102), which comprised two courses of stone work.

TEST PIT P12

Test Pit P12 (Fig. 6) was excavated to a depth of 0.50m below the river bed (1.05m below the base of the bridge arch). The lowest material encountered, at the base of the trench, was a dark-grey silty sand and gravel (12100), which produced fragments of 19th century pottery. Overlying this, were the foundations of the bridge (12101), which consisted of three courses of stonework. The lower course comprised a very large, flat, piece of gritstone, which projected 0.54m out from the base of the bridge. The second course was also stepped out (0.10m) from the main body of the bridge, and was capped by a course of chamfered stone. The foundations were overlain by the lower superstructure of the bridge (12102).

Sheepwash Bridge *by Derek Moscrop*

The excavations at Sheepwash Bridge (Fig 7) had to be carried out in two phases due to problems encountered with the depth of water and speed of river flow. Two test pits were excavated in October 2002 (S1 and S4), and a further six were dug in March 2003 (S2,S3,S5-S8). Half of the pits (S3, S4, S6 and S7) were positioned to examine the foundations on the northern side of the bridge, and the remainder (S1, S2, S5 and S8) were located to investigate those on its southern side.

TEST PIT S1

Test Pit S1 (Not illustrated) was located against the south-western bridge abutment. No actual excavation was carried out in the area of the proposed test pit. A thin layer of sediment was removed around the area of the abutment, which revealed a layer of concrete (1000) overlying the river bed, and against the footings of the bridge. The upper courses of the foundations (1001) were visible above this layer. There was no distinct boundary between the stone work of the foundations and the superstructure (1002), which consisted of courses of dressed limestone rubble.

TEST PIT S2

Test Pit S2 (Fig. 8) was situated approximately 0.60m to the north of the south-eastern bridge abutment. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.55m below the level of the river bed (133.68m AOD - 2.95m below the top of the bridge). The earliest layer encountered, at the base of the trench, was a grey-brown sandy silt and fine gravel (2002). This deposit was overlain by a light grey-brown silty sand and coarse gravel (2001), which was 0.30m in depth. The uppermost deposit consisted of a layer of concrete coated with cement blinding (2000), which had a maximum depth of 0.20m. A sheer-sided 0.55m deep deposit of concrete (2003) was aligned along the southern edge of the trench and abutted the foundations of the bridge (2004). This concrete (2003) obscured the lower foundations of the bridge. The foundations, above the concrete, under the arch, consisted of a single, stepped, course of limestone blocks (coated in concrete/blinding), and three courses of large limestone blocks (2004). These were overlain by the coursed limestone rubble superstructure of the bridge abutment (2005).

TEST PIT S3

Test Pit S3 (Fig 9) was located immediately adjacent to the northern pier/cutwater on the western side of the bridge (Fig. 7). It was excavated to a depth of 1.0m below the level of the river bed (133.65m AOD). The earliest deposit encountered, at the base of the trench, was a light grey-brown sandy silt and fine gravel (3002). The foundations for the pier/cutwater (3003) were resting on this deposit. They were 1.10m deep, and consisted of nine, stepped courses, of large, dressed, limestone blocks, which projected out 0.50m from the base of the pier/cutwater. Resting immediately over the pier foundations, under the arch, were three courses of limestone blocks (3004), c.0.30m in depth. Overlying the cutwater foundations, was a buttress-like feature, with a height of 1.60m, consisting of 12 courses of undressed limestone blocks (3005). Above this, was the remaining superstructure of the bridge pier, which was made of smaller, undressed, limestone blocks (3006).

The pier/cutwater foundations were abutted by a light-brown silty sand and coarse gravel (3001). This deposit was 0.60m in depth and contained abundant pottery sherds which consisted of 18th and 19th century stonewares. This was sealed by a layer of concrete (3000) coated with a thin layer of cement blinding, which had a variable depth of between 0.25m to 0.40m. The upper four courses of the pier foundations were visible, above the concrete layer, within the 'dry area' under the arch.

TEST PIT S4

Test Pit S4 (Fig. 10) was located at the north-eastern end of the bridge. It was excavated through a grey-brown sandy silt and gravel (4000) to a depth of 0.25m below the level of the river bed (2.60m below the top of the bridge). The test pit exposed 0.50m of limestone rubble foundation (4001). The foundations extended beyond the face of the overlying superstructure (4002), forming a small ledge. The superstructure consisted of coursed, roughly-dressed, limestone rubble.

TEST PIT S5

Test Pit S5 (Fig. 11) was located 0.50m to the south of the southern pier/cutwater on the eastern side of the bridge. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.70m below the level of the river bed (133.75m AOD). The earliest deposit was a grey-brown sandy silt and fine gravel (5005). This material was overlain by a light grey-brown sandy silt and coarse gravel (5001), which was 0.55m deep. The uppermost layer in the test pit consisted of a layer of concrete coated with cement blinding (5000), which was 0.15m in depth. A sheer-sided, 0.60m deep, deposit of concrete (5002), was identified at the northern edge of the trench. The concrete abutted the foundations of the pier/cutwater, which obscured the lower foundations. The foundations that were visible above the concrete (5002) consisted of three courses of large, undressed, limestone blocks (5003). These were overlain by the coursed limestone rubble constituting the bridge superstructure (5004).

TEST PIT S6

Test Pit S6 (Fig. 10) was situated immediately adjacent to the north-eastern bridge abutment (Fig. 7). The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.30m below the level of the river bed (133.60m AOD). The earliest deposit was a dark grey-brown sandy silt and fine gravel (6004). The foundations of the bridge abutment (6002) were 1.10m in depth and were resting on context 6004. They consisted of stepped courses of cut limestone blocks, which were of variable size, and consisted of large stones at the base of the footings.

The foundations were overlain by the coursed limestone rubble superstructure of the bridge abutment (6003). A 0.30m deep deposit of light grey-brown silty sand and coarse gravel (6001) abutted the foundations. This was sealed by a layer of concrete coated with a thin layer of cement blinding (6000), 0.10m in depth.

TEST PIT S7

Test Pit S7 (Fig. 10) was located immediately adjacent to the north-western bridge abutment. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.40m below the level of the river bed (133.65m). The earliest deposit, was a dark grey-brown sandy silt and fine gravel (7002). The foundations of the bridge abutment (7003) were 0.70m in depth and rested on this deposit. They consisted of four courses of limestone blocks, the lower two courses of which were slightly stepped out. As well as supporting the superstructure of the bridge, which consisted of coursed limestone rubble (7004), the foundation masonry was providing support for a small buttress-like feature made of limestone blocks (7005), 0.60m in height, which rested against the bridge abutment. This feature was fairly insubstantial and it was unlikely this provided any degree of support for this part of the bridge.

A deposit of light grey-brown silty sand and coarse gravel (7001), 0.20m in depth, abutted the pier/cutwater foundations. The uppermost deposit encountered in the trench was a layer of concrete/cement blinding (7000), which abutted the bridge foundations, and was between 0.10m and 0.20m in depth.

TEST PIT S8

Test Pit S8 (Fig. 11) was located 0.70m to the south of the southern pier/cutwater on the western side of the bridge. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.50m below the level of the river bed (133.64m AOD). The earliest layer encountered, at the base of the trench, was a grey-brown sandy silt and fine gravel (8002). This material was overlain by a 0.35m deep deposit of light grey-brown sandy silt and coarse gravel (8001). The uppermost deposit within the trench consisted of a layer of concrete/cement blinding (8000), 0.15m in depth.

A sheer-sided, 0.50m deep, deposit of concrete (8003), was exposed at the northern edge of the trench. This concrete abutted the foundations of the pier/cutwater and obscured the lower foundations of the bridge. The pier/cutwater foundations (8004) above the concrete were covered with moss, but appeared to consist of three courses of large limestone blocks. These were overlain by the lower superstructure of the bridge, which consisted of courses of large limestone blocks (8005). Above this the superstructure was made from smaller blocks of limestone rubble (8006, not illustrated). An obvious break in build between the earlier and later phases of the bridge was visible under the arch, 2.30m to the east of the junction between the pier and the cutwater. This coincided with a possible break in build in the foundation masonry a further 0.20m to the east of this point.

8.0 THE FINDS *by Erica Macey*

Holme Bridge

Finds recovered during the investigations included pottery, iron, copper alloy, glass, animal bone, shell, leather and clay pipe. The assemblage was fragmentary, although individual fragments were generally well-preserved.

POTTERY *by Stephanie Rátkai*

The pottery was all of post-medieval date, and included 19th century transfer-printed wares (P3, 3100 x 1; P5/6, u/s x 2; P6, u/s x 1; P11, 11100 x 2; P9, u/s x 5; S4, u/s x 1) and 18th and 19th century stonewares (P1, 1100 x 1; P5/6, u/s x 1; P9, u/s x 3; P10, u/s x 1, 10100 x 2; S4, u/s x 8). As with the pottery assemblage from Sheepwash Bridge, nothing of pre 18th century date was recovered.

TERRACOTTA PLAQUE

A rectangular terracotta plaque was recovered from P10, context 10101. The plaque featured foliate and acorn motifs enclosed within a rope-work border, beneath which are four incomplete stamped roundels on the bevelled lower edge. This appears to have become detached from a larger panel. The panel would have been made in a wooden

mould and the roundels subsequently stamped into the clay while it was still soft. A reddish slip was applied prior to firing. There is some surface pitting and cracking, which must have occurred during the firing process. The finger prints of the artisan who produced the plaque were preserved on the rear.

The style of this plaque is entirely in keeping with a 16th- century date, especially when compared with contemporary crewelwork embroidery and tapestry designs, which featured foliate and acorn motifs. Such plaques were likely to have been used to decorate plastered and fire surrounds in high status dwellings. It is likely that this piece came from such a building in the vicinity or is a discarded waster from local manufacturing.

METALWORK

The metalwork assemblage consisted mainly of unidentifiable scraps of iron and copper alloy. The few identifiable items in the assemblage included two broken teaspoons (3100 x 2), a possible metal punch (P6, u/s) and a thimble (P90, u/s). A possible coin, slightly larger than a George V penny, was also recovered (P12, 12100), although both surfaces of this item were heavily worn, and no pattern or writing could be detected to confirm the identity of this item.

GLASS

A small quantity of 19th or early 20th century glass was also recovered. This group consisted mainly of bottle fragments, including a partial base (P9, u/s) with the incomplete name "n & Co" and a shoulder fragment (P9, 10100) with the incomplete name or phrase "HOME B." A complete clear glass square phial (P9, 10100) with "June" on the shoulder and "5" on the base was also recovered, as was a small fragment of yellow and white vessel glass (P9, 10000) and two sections of hollow glass tubing of uncertain function (P1, 1000; P3, 3000). The only potentially earlier fragment was a partial neck from a dark green wine bottle (P9, 10100), which displayed the iridescent patina that is characteristic of aged glass.

The remainder of the assemblage consisted of a broken clay pipe bowl dating to around 1860 – 1890 (Ayto, 1999, 7) and a single mollusc shell (P9, u/s).

Sheepwash Bridge

Finds from this site included pottery, glass, stone, animal bone and metal items. As with the finds from Holme Bridge, individual fragments exhibited a very low degree of abrasion, although the only unbroken piece in the group was a small glass bottle.

POTTERY *by Stephanie Rátkai*

The bulk of the assemblage was composed of pottery (S2, 2001 x 6; S3, 3001 x 29; S6, 6001 x 5; S7, 7001 x 1; S8, 8001 x 5; North Arch x 6). All of the pottery was Post-Medieval in date (S. Rátkai, pers. comm.). The earliest fragments were 18th century brown stoneware and coarseware (S3, 3001). The remainder of the assemblage was of 19th century date, and included a fragment of a blue shell-edged plate of early 19th century date (S3, 3001). Utilitarian whitewares, industrial slipwares, stonewares, Chinese transfer-printed wares and refined-bodied earthernwares were also present across

the assemblage. Other sherds, which could be more closely dated, were a near-complete tea cup (S3, 3001) dating to 1830-1840 and a late 19th century transfer-printed teapot (S3, 3001).

GLASS

A scan of the riverbed to the west of the bridge produced a small rounded clear glass bottle, probably of late 19th or early 20th century date, with a hexagonal shape on the base. This shape was divided into three by a horizontal line running the width of the shape and by a vertical line which bisected the top half of the shape. The name "Y C Co" could be seen in the cells created by these lines. The only other glass recovered was a small fragment from the neck of a brown glass bottle (S6, 6001), although this fragment was too small to be of any diagnostic use. As with one of the fragments of glass from Holme Bridge, this piece was covered with the iridescent patina of aged glass.

OTHER FINDS

Five circular fragments of stone were recovered from one of the Test Pits (S3, 3001 x 1; S4, u/s x 4). These fragments had a series of regular circular grooves on one surface, whilst the other surface was rough and jagged, as if it had been broken off from a larger piece. Three of the fragments were flat, whilst the other had been hollowed out to create a smooth-edged bowl with a few raised circles in the centre. The function of these items is unclear, but they appear to be machine-worked, and may be debris from an industrial process. A small rectangular piece of stone was also recovered (P11, 11000), but this was too small to be of any diagnostic use.

One of the Test Pits (S3, 3001) produced five clay pipe stems and a partial pipe bowl of probable 18th century date (S. Rátkai, pers. comm.). A child's leather shoe, probably of similar date, was also recovered from this Test Pit.

Finds from the area of the northern arch of the bridge included a partial stone base from a small circular pedestal and a metal candle-holder of uncertain date. The remainder of the assemblage consisted of an iron handle (S6, 6001), possibly from a window catch or door, two animal teeth (S7, 7001), and a clay marble was also recovered from the riverbed to the west of the bridge.

9.0 DISCUSSION

The geo-technical investigations produced no evidence of any *insitu* remains associated with either Holme Bridge or Sheepwash Bridge. There was considerable variation between the nature of the bridge foundations examined at both sites.

Holme Bridge

The foundations of Holme Bridge were laid directly onto the silty sand and gravel river bed. They were of variable depth, and consisted of a stone plinth capped by a course of chamfered stone. The deepest foundations identified were those on the southern side of the northernmost bridge pier (P10), which were 1.0m deep. Overall, however, the

footings of Holme Bridge appear to be fairly insubstantial, being between 0.30m to 0.60m in depth across most of the span of the bridge.

The footings on the eastern side of the bridge consisted of a single course of large stone blocks overlain by chamfered capping stones (P2, P3, P4 and P12). The foundations on the side consisted of two courses of smaller stone blocks overlain by chamfered capping stones (P5, P7). The deeper foundations exposed in P10 however, consisted of a total of five courses of large stone blocks.

In a few instances the lower course of the foundations was stepped out from the base of the bridge (P1, P7, P10, P11). This was generally for a short distance of between 0.15m to 0.20m, with the exception of the foundations in P11, where the lowest stone course comprised a very large piece of gritstone, which projected out 0.55m from the base of the bridge.

While the superstructure of the bridge is consistent in design and construction, these investigations have suggested that the foundations are not consistant. This may be due to the fact that the foundations would not be visible, and therefore would have no effect on the aesthetic appearance of the structure. Alternatively, the variety of foundation types encountered may be the result of ongoing repair and replacement.

The internal superstructure of the span of the bridge was composed of limestone rubble, which was sealed by limestone mortar. Sand was then used to provided a level surface for the flag stones of the bridge.

Sheepwash Bridge

The foundations at Sheepwash Bridge were built on a grey-brown silty sand and fine gravel deposit. On the northern side of the bridge the foundations were generally between 0.7 to 1.1m in depth, stepped, and constructed of limestone blocks of varying sizes. The foundations of the northern pier/cutwater, on its western side (S3), stepped out for a distance of 0.60m from the bridge, and consisted mostly of large limestone blocks. There were also an additional three courses of stonework above the step underneath the arch.

These footings are clearly more substantial than those of Holme Bridge, and the need for such substantial footings might be explained by the location of the cutwater/pier on the upstream side of the bridge. This is an area where water flow is particularly fast. The presence of a buttress against the cutwater above its foundations indicates that this part of the bridge was in need of support at some time in the past, and these features may relate to when the bridge was widened during the course of the 18th or 19th centuries.

It was not possible to inspect the lower footings on the southern side of Sheepwash Bridge, due to the presence of large blocks of concrete inserted against the base of the bridge (S2, S5 and S8). The concrete blocks were between 0.50m and 0.70m deep, and projected out for a distance of 0.50m to 0.70m from the bridge foundations. The concrete was probably inserted to protect the bridge foundations, which suggests that they have previously suffered from erosion. It was also notable that the accumulation of silt on the

southern side of the river was less than on the northern side, indicating a faster water flow under this part of the bridge.

The gravel abutting the foundations consisted of sub-angular and angular stones, rather than rounded pebbles. This suggests that they had not been subject to any significant degree of water erosion. It is possible that this material, rather than representing the remains of the former river bed, may have been imported from a local source and laid to prevent the foundations of the bridge from being 'scoured out'. This deposit also produced mainly 18th century brown stoneware and coarsewares, suggesting a single deposition. This was particularly notable for Test Pit S3 where parts of the same vessel were found at different depths within the same layer (3001).

In all test pits the coarse gravel deposits were sealed by a layer of concrete, generally between 0.10m and 0.20m in depth. The concrete formed a continuous layer extending for a distance of 2.40m to the east, and 2.20m to the west of the bridge. If the coarse gravel was used to prevent 'scouring out', the concrete may be contemporary in order to prevent further erosion of the bridge foundations. The upper surface of the concrete was coated with a thin layer of cement or 'blinding', which may have been applied for purely aesthetic reasons to resemble the limestone outcrops of the region. The concrete was identical in matrix to the concrete supports inserted against the footings on the southern side of the bridge.

The underside of the bridge arches showed two distinct structural phases, although there were no obvious clues as to which of these was the original 16th century packhorse bridge, and which represented the widening of the bridge to take carriage traffic during the 18th/early19th century. A possible break in build was identified in the foundation masonry on the southern side of the southern bridge pier, which coincided roughly with the meeting point of the two structural phases. Also, there were indications that there may be considerable variation between the pier foundations associated with the earlier and later phases of the bridge. The footings of the northern pier were stepped on its western side (S3), and the edge of the concrete support for the southern pier on the western side of the bridge (S8) extended further out from the bridge than the one on the eastern side of the same pier (S5), suggesting that the foundations on the western side of this part of the bridge may be stepped, like those of northern pier (S3).

Deposits with potential for environmental analysis were identified at both sites (P10/10101 and S7/7002). It was, however, impossible to obtain a clean sample because the test pits were continually waterlogged. The test pits at Holme Bridge also did not disturb deposits that could be considered beyond seasonal scouring and deposition. Under the appropriate conditions, however, there may be the potential to recover undisturbed material of environmental significance, especially at Sheepwash Bridge where the concrete layer protects the underlying layers from seasonal erosion and deposition. An alternative to this may be to augur the course of the river for environmental samples between the two sites.

The fact that measures that have been taken to protect the footings of Sheepwash Bridge suggests that the foundations may not have been particularly stable, especially on its southern side. Therefore, any excavations involving the removal of protective materials may result in short term or long term damage to the bridge footings.

10.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Sheepwash Bridge
Holme Bridge
Calver
Longstone Moor
Rowland
Hassop
Great Longstone
Little Longstone
Bubnell
Baslow
Pilsley
Chatsworth
Edensor
Ashford
BAKEWELL
Rowsley
Beeley
Over Haddon
NETHER HADDON
Youlgreave
Middleton
Alport
Stanton in Peak
STANTON
HARTHILL
Birchover
Darley Bridge
Wensley
CRATON
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Fig 1

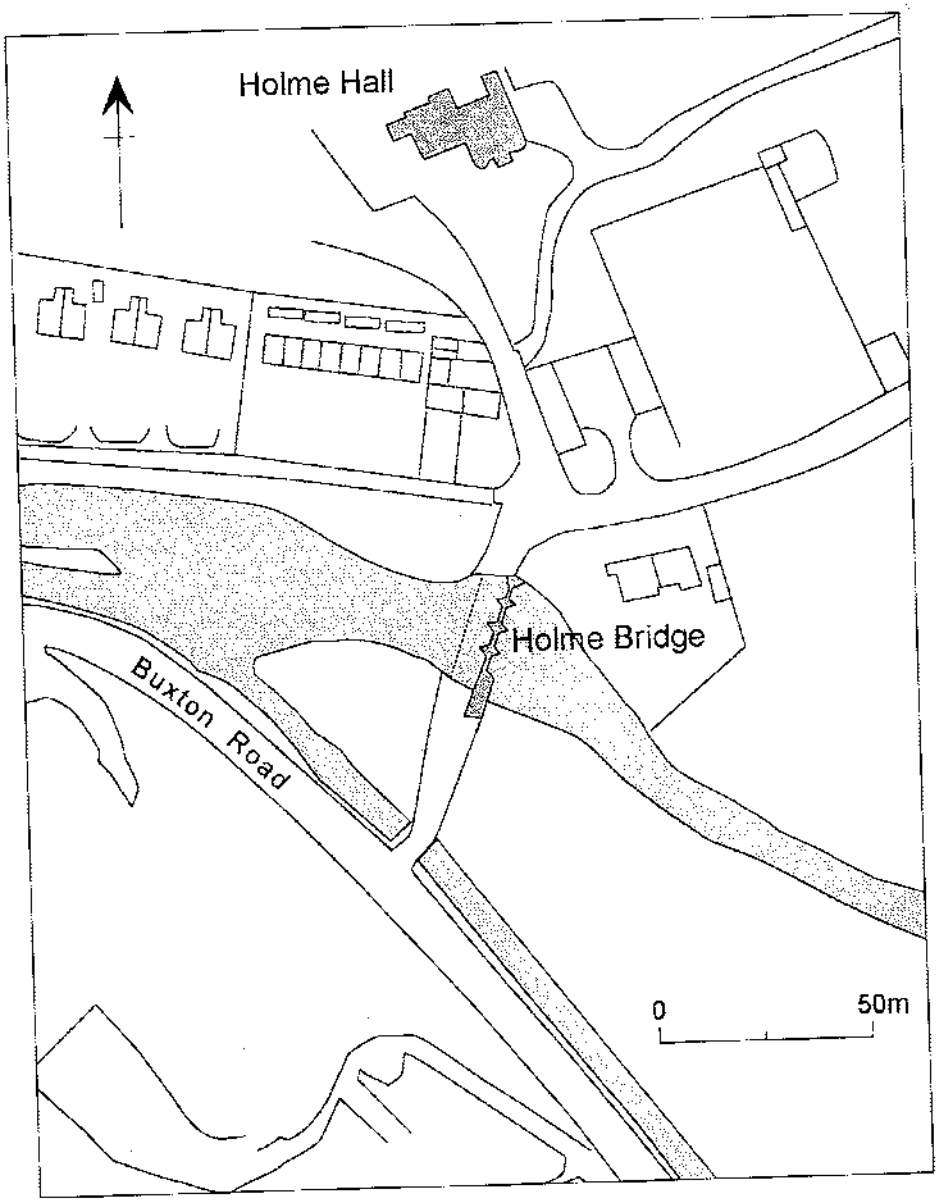
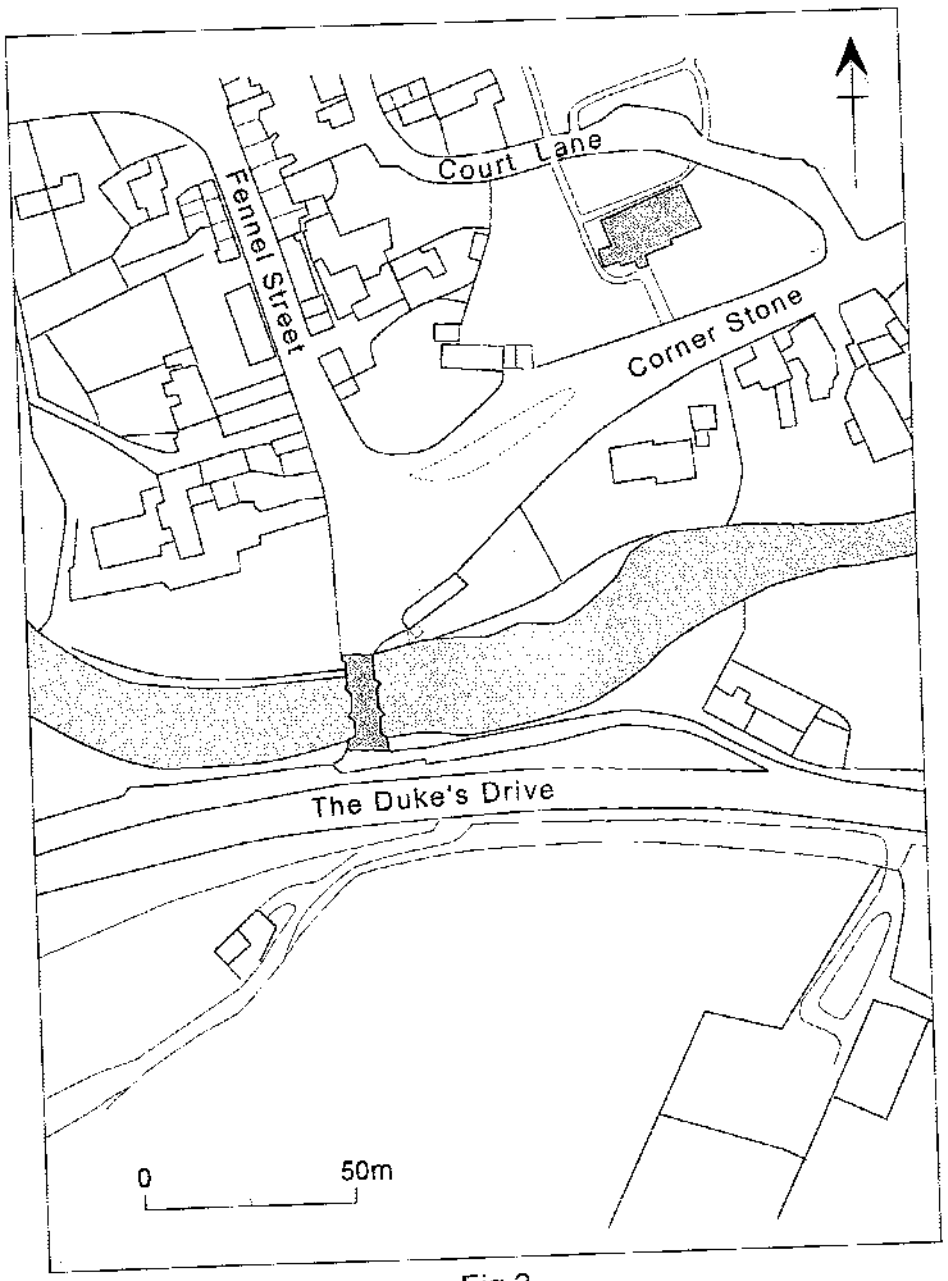


Fig.2



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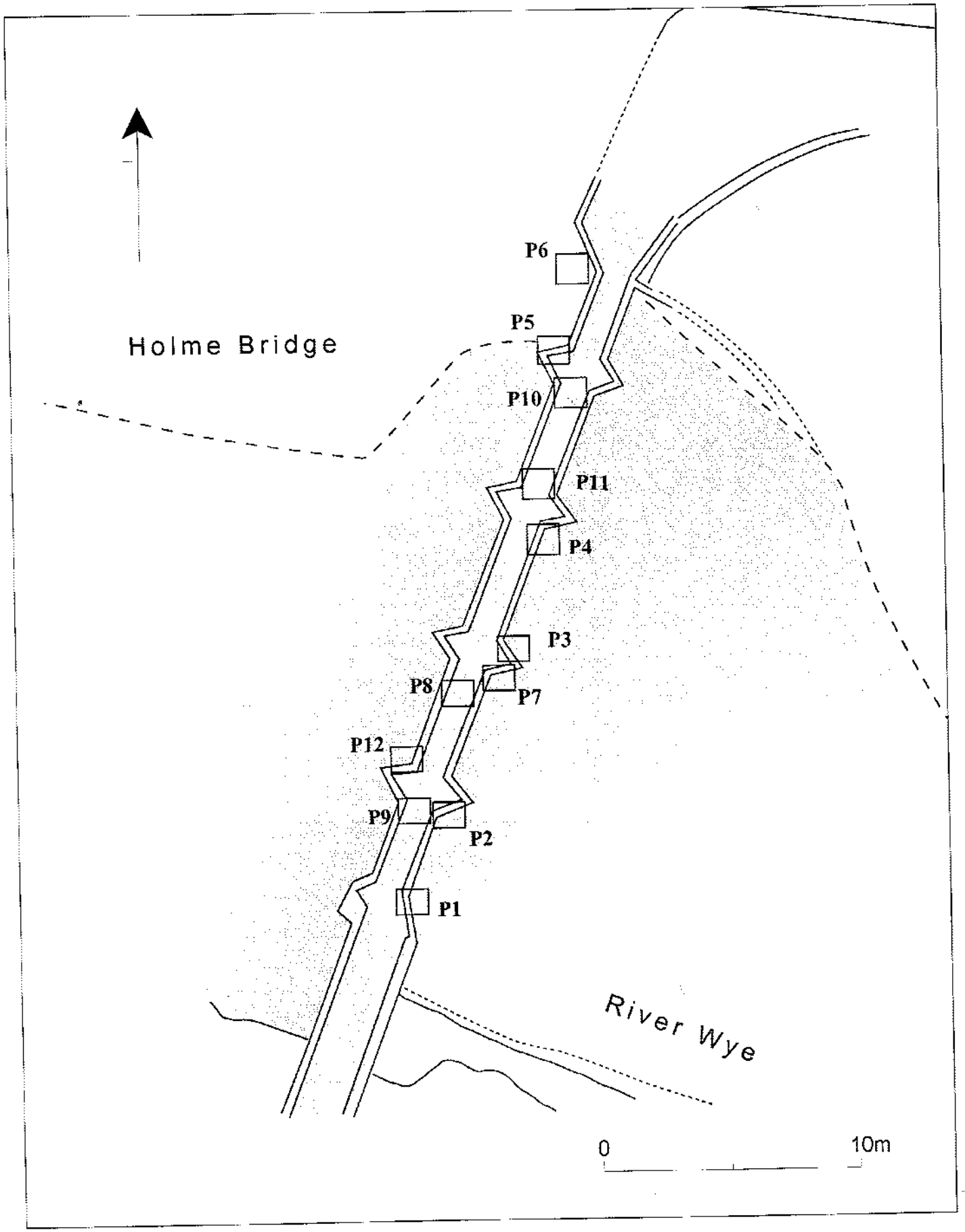

Holme Bridge
P6
P5
P10
P11
P4
P3
P8
P7
P12
P9
P2
P1
River Wye
0
10m

Fig.4

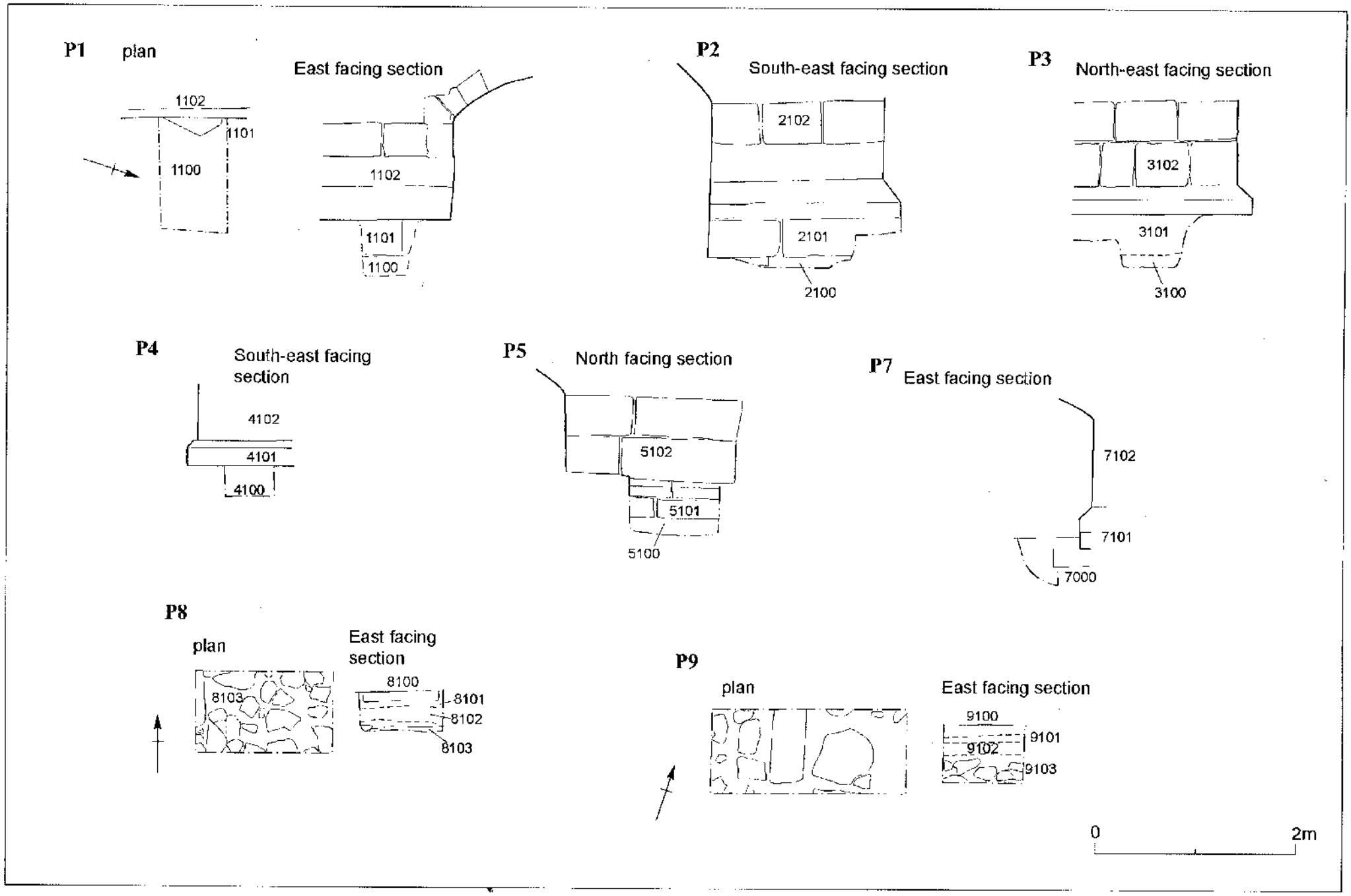

P1
plan
1102
1101
1100
East facing section
1102
1101
1100
P2
South-east facing section
2102
2101
2100
P3
North-east facing section
3102
3101
3100
P4
South-east facing section
4102
4101
4100
P5
North facing section
5102
5101
5100
P7
East facing section
7102
7101
7000
P8
plan
8103
East facing section
8100
8101
8102
8103
P9
plan
East facing section
9100
9101
9102
9103
0
2m

Fig.5

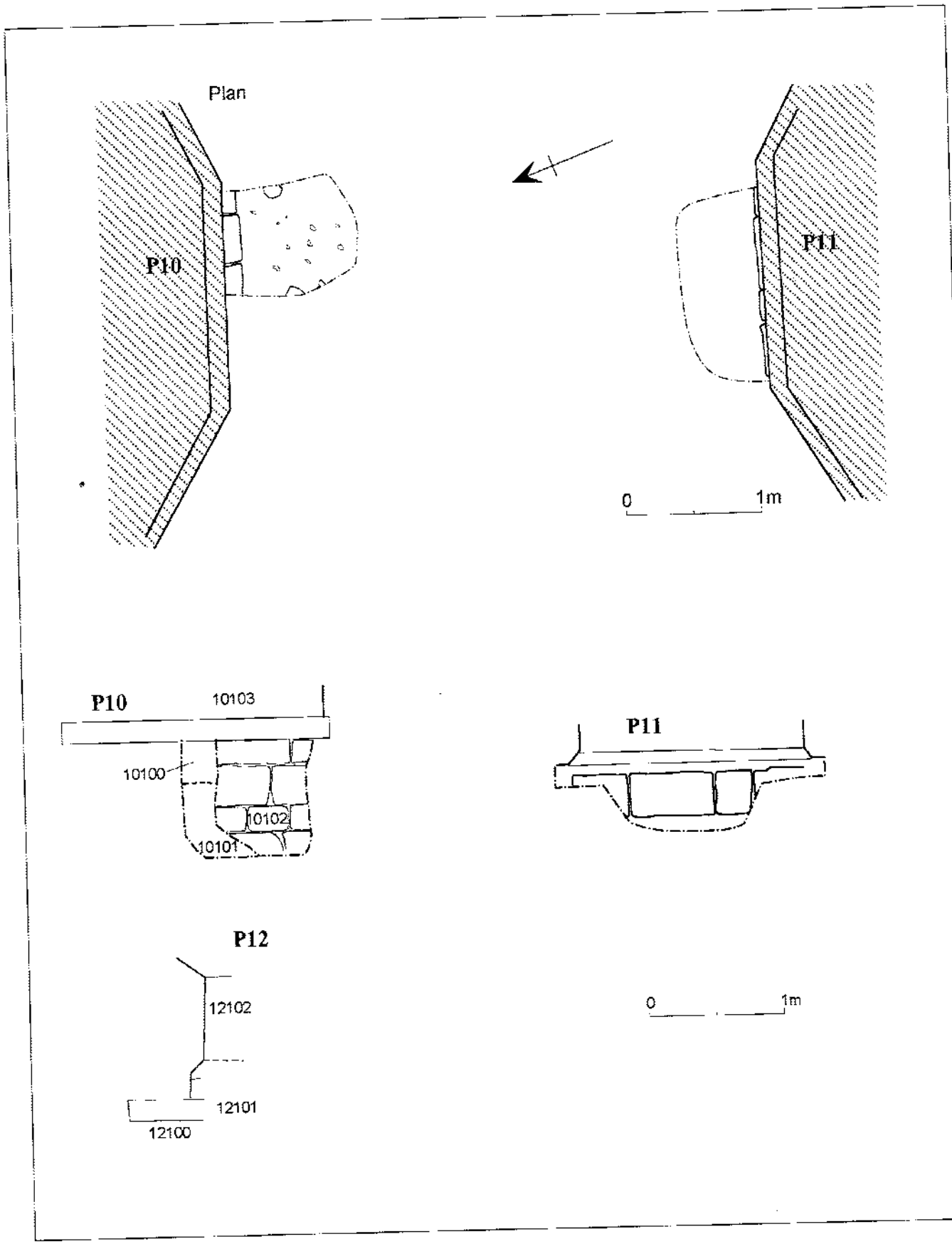

Plan
P10
P11
0
1m
P10
10103
10100
10102
10101
P11
P12
12102
12101
12100
0
1m

Fig.6

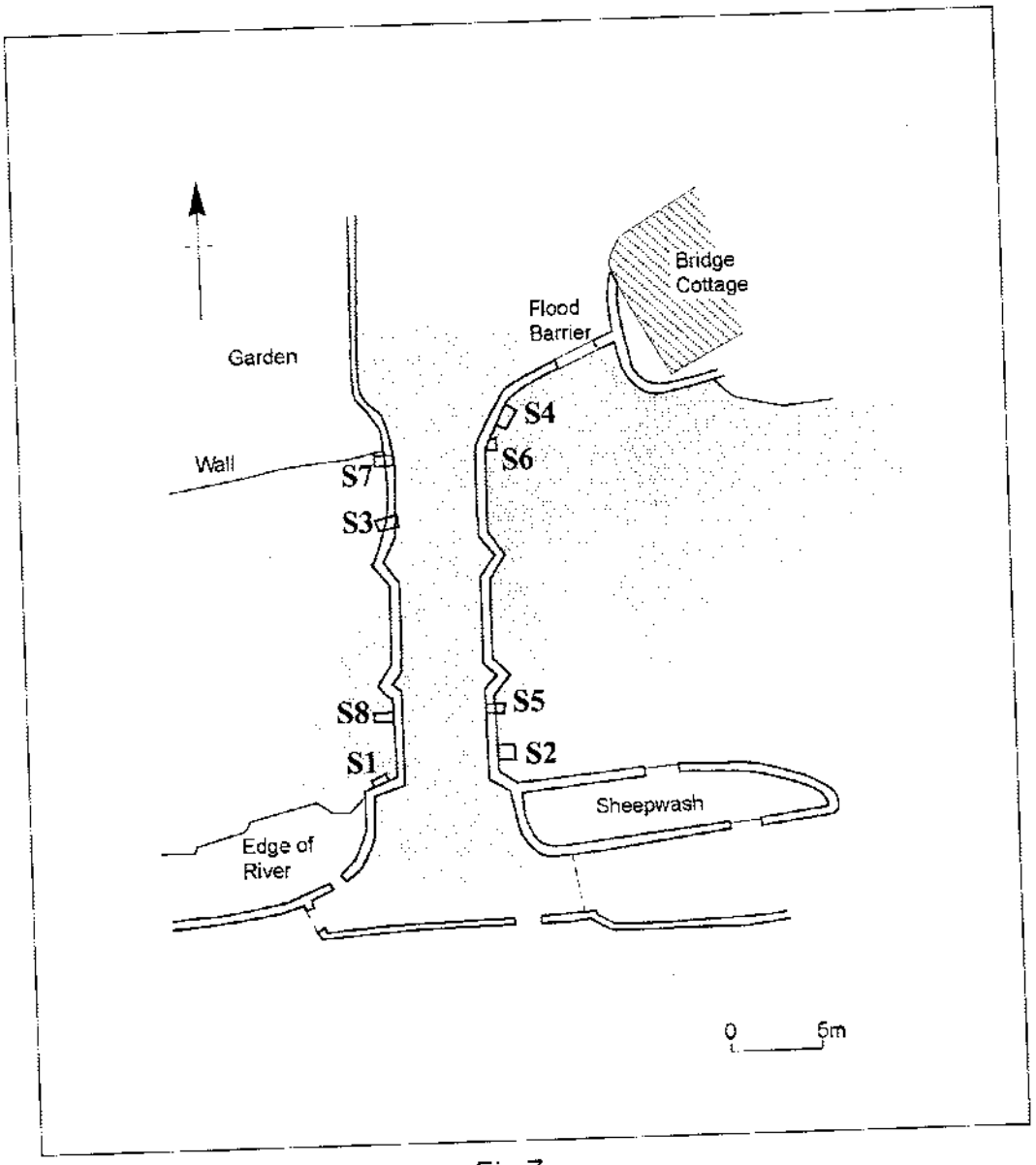

Bridge
Cottage
Flood
Barrier
Garden
Wall
S4
S6
S7
S3
S8
S5
S1
S2
Sheepwash
Edge of
River
0
5m

Fig.7

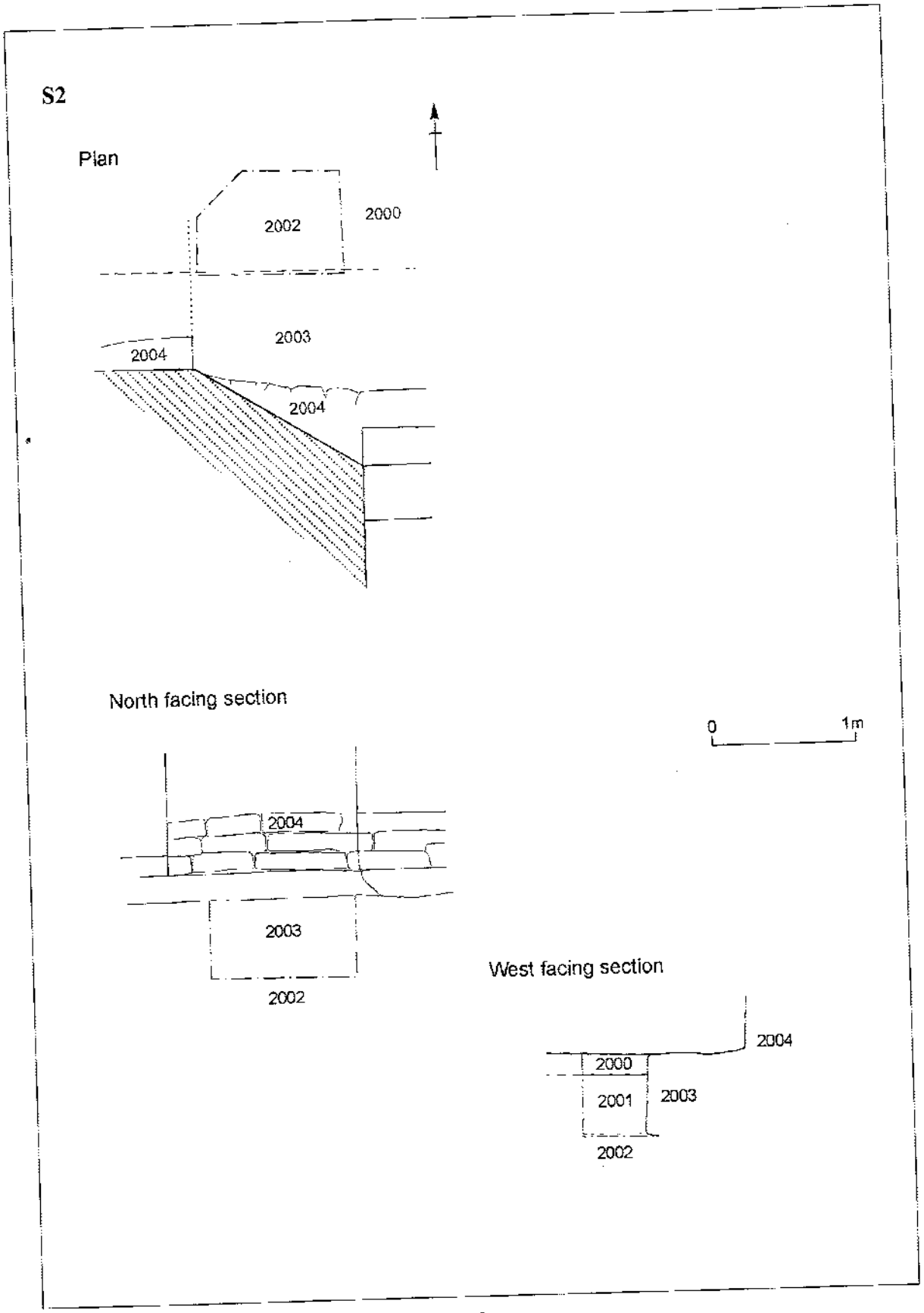

S2
Plan
2002
2000
2003
2004
2004
North facing section
0
1m
2004
2003
2002
West facing section
2004
2000
2001
2003
2002

Fig.8

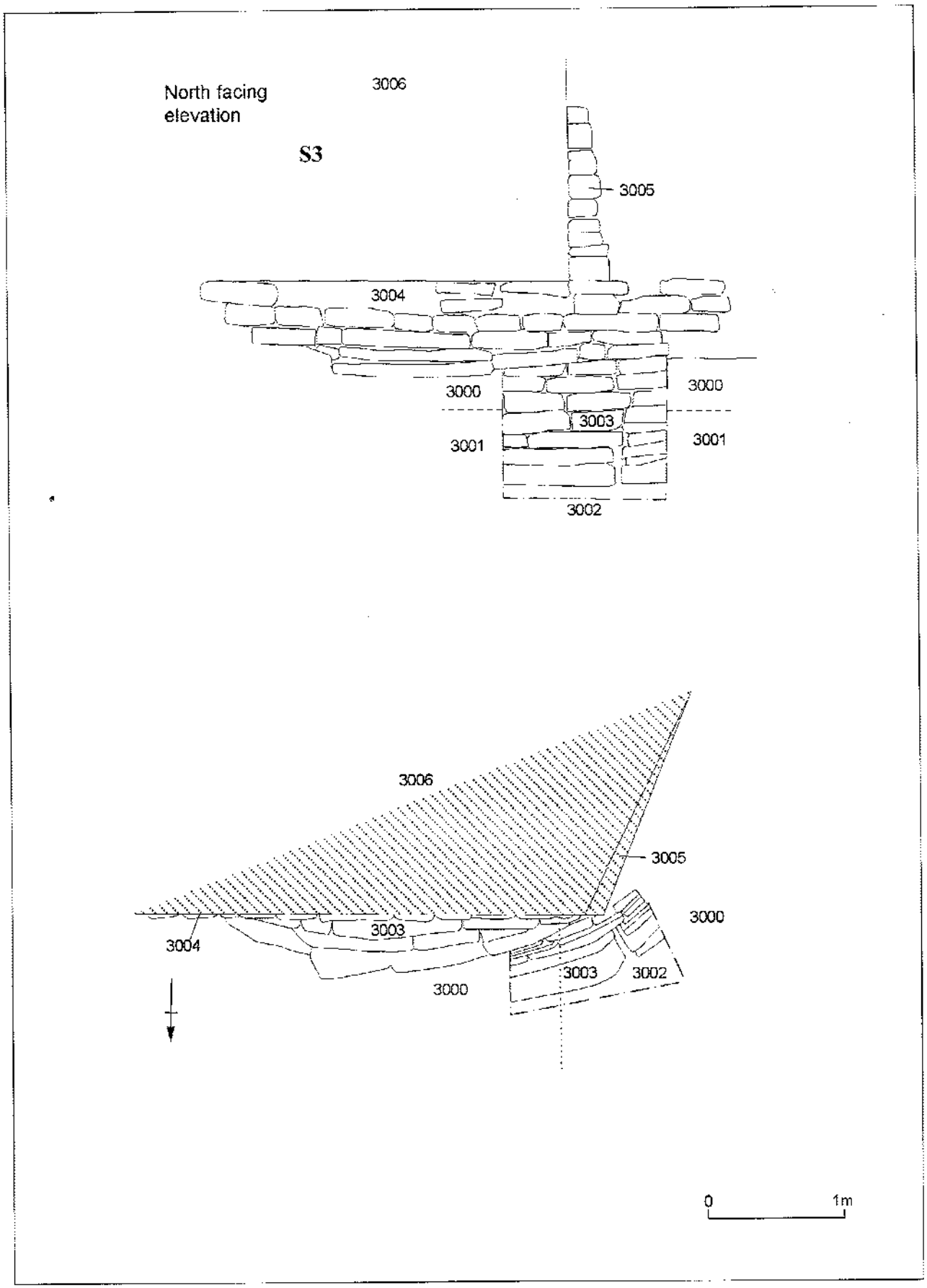
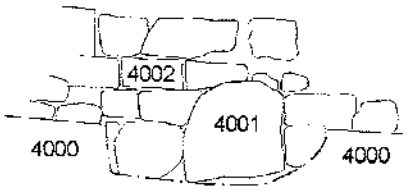

North facing
elevation
S3
3006
3005
3004
3000
3000
3003
3001
3001
3002
3006
3005
3000
3003
3004
3003
3002
3000
0
1m

Fig.9

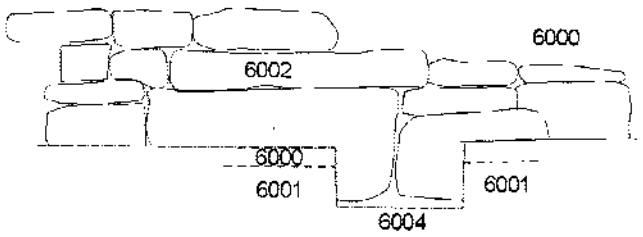
S4

South-east facing section

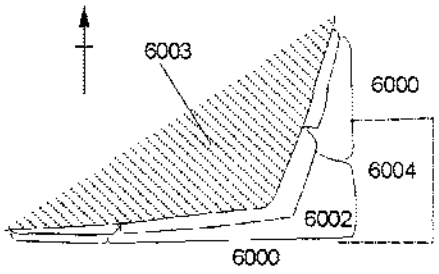


S6

East facing section

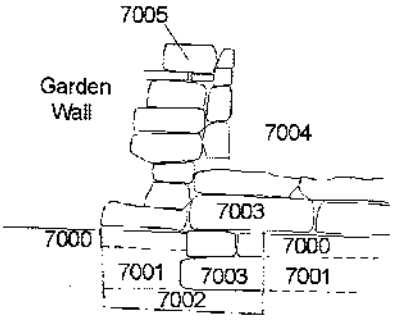


Plan



S7

South facing section



Plan

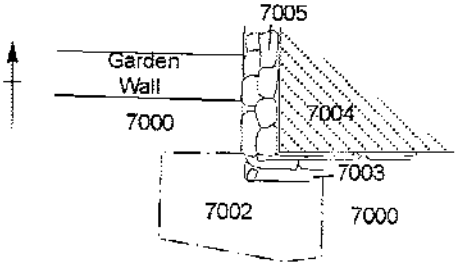


Fig.10

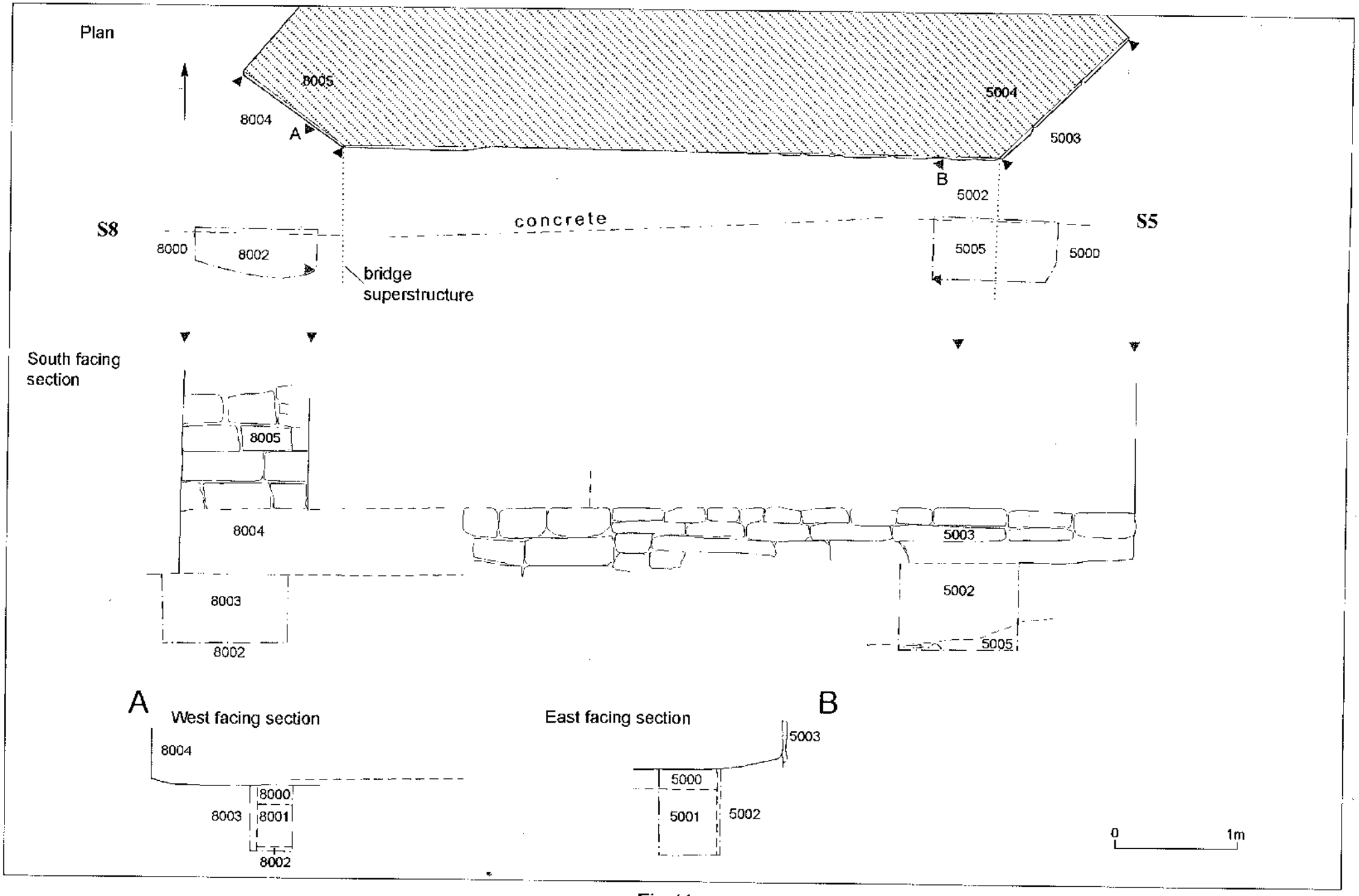

Plan
8005
8004
A
5004
5003
B
5002
S8
concrete
S5
8000
8002
5005
5000
bridge
superstructure
South facing
section
8005
8004
5003
8003
5002
8002
5005
A
West facing section
B
East facing section
8004
8000
8003
8001
8002
5003
5000
5001
5002
0
1m

Fig.11