

**Excavations at 45-47 Swan  
Lane, Evesham,  
Worcestershire 2003**

**Project No. 1025**

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with contributions by  
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# Excavations at 45-47 Swan Lane, Evesham, Worcestershire 2003

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## Summary

An archaeological evaluation and area excavation at 45-47 Swan Lane, Evesham, Worcestershire (NGR SP 0400 4400, tenement plot WSM 20753) was commissioned by KingsOak in advance of proposed redevelopment of the site for residential housing. A desk-based assessment was carried out on the site in December 2002 and, following this, Birmingham Archaeology (formerly Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit) was commissioned to undertake an evaluation in January 2003 followed by an area excavation in February 2003.

A sequence of occupation and activity stretching from the medieval period onwards was recorded and six broad phases of activity were identified. Phase 0, covered the Roman and Saxon periods. The former was represented only by the presence of a small assemblage of pottery suggesting little more than activity in the vicinity of the site. The latter was represented by a north-south aligned ditch which contained a single sherd of Mid-Saxon pottery. Phase 1, dated to the medieval period, and was subdivided into three sub-phases of activity. Phase 1a, dating to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, was characterised by a series of north-south and east-west aligned ditches. These appeared to represent an early period of settlement on Swan Lane, pre-dating its official layout in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Phase 1b, dated to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, was characterised by two north-south aligned ditches (one of which re-cut an earlier Phase 1a ditch), that followed the line of a cobbled surface running north-south across the site, perpendicular to Swan Lane. It is likely that this period of activity witnessed the official laying out of Swan Lane, as part of the planned medieval town, and the cobbled surface may have been an extension of Cowl Street northwards. Phase 1c, dated to the latter part of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, saw the re-cutting of the two Phase 1b north-south ditches and the erection of a structure on the cobbled surface. This phase probably saw the final period of activity on the Swan Lane site before it was abandoned as a result of a general contraction of population in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Phase 2, dated to the early post-medieval period, was represented by small-scale agricultural activity and cultivation, evidence for ploughing was noted in the northern part of the site. Phase 3, dated to the seventeenth century, was characterised by the presence of a very large, northwest-southeast aligned, V-shaped ditch which truncated the medieval and early post-medieval features and deposits. This large ditch, cutting diagonally across the site, was dated to the Civil War period. A second ditch, on a northeast-southwest alignment, that appeared to be contemporary with the large ditch, was partially exposed in the northern half of the site. It has been interpreted as possible evidence for an external bastion or ravelin, similar to those observed on other Civil War defences. Phase 4, dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, saw the construction of a 19<sup>th</sup> century building in the western part of the site which had caused some truncation of the archaeological deposits here. Phase 5, dating to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, saw the earlier building converted into a warehouse and the construction of a

second warehouse in the eastern part of the site. The latter had resulted in considerable truncation to archaeological deposits.

### Background to the Project

This report describes the results of an evaluation and open area excavation at 45-47 Swan Lane, Evesham, Worcestershire (situated at NGR SP 0400 4400, WSM 20753, Fig. 1).

The site was located on the west bank of the River Avon, to the northeast of Evesham town centre. It was bounded to the south by Swan Lane, to the north and east by Rynal Place and to the west by a 19<sup>th</sup>-century building. The site was latterly occupied by a 19<sup>th</sup>-century building and a 20<sup>th</sup>-century warehouse. The soil type on the western bank of the Avon belongs to the clayey alluvial soils of the Uffington Series and, further east, stagnogleyic argillic brown earths of the Bishampton Series have been recorded. The underlying geology consists of solid deposits of Lower Lias of the Jurassic Age.

The excavation was carried out in accordance with the guidelines set down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Department of the Environment 1990) and followed a planning application for residential housing made by KingsOak which led to a staged archaeological response. A desk-based assessment was carried out by Birmingham Archaeology (Martin, 2002) which subsequently led to an evaluation, comprising the excavation of five trenches (Fig. 2). The evaluation revealed the presence of medieval boundary ditches and cobbled surfaces, possibly associated with structures, as well as the presence of a very large ditch of uncertain date. The results of the evaluation led to further excavation, targeted particularly at the large ditch in the northern half of the site (Fig. 2). The results of both the evaluation and the excavation have been conflated in the following report.

## **Introduction**

### Historical and Archaeological Background to the Site

There is only limited evidence for the early occupation of Evesham. A single residual piece of flint excavated during an evaluation in Mill Street was identified as being Mesolithic or Neolithic in date. Other excavations have yielded artefacts of Iron Age and Roman date, however the evidence is not definitive (Dalwood 1996, 2). The construction of the Minster church of Evesham in 700 AD may have taken place on the site of an older church which was described in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century by William of Malmesbury as being 'the work of the Britons' (*ibid*).

Although the town owes its origins to the foundation of the abbey by Ecgwine, the Bishop of Worcester in AD 700, Evesham did not begin to develop as a settlement until the 11<sup>th</sup> century. In 1055, the town was granted a port and market, which is assumed to be located at Merstow Green at the main gate of the Abbey (VCH Worc. Vol II, 372). By the 12<sup>th</sup> century the character of the settlement had developed its urban form. A documentary source of the late 12<sup>th</sup> century divided the town into four parts *Evesham*, *Ruinhulle*, *Berton* and *Novus Burgus* (VCH Worc. Vol II, 823) and recorded a total of 234 tenants. By the mid 14<sup>th</sup> -century the main thoroughfares of the town had been established. The focus had shifted northwards from the abbey and was centred on the funnel shaped Market place (the High Street) and grid-like pattern

of streets, which included Bewdley Street, Bridge Street, Oat Street and Cowl Street (Dalwood 1996, 3).

The prosperity of Evesham grew between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries with the manufacture of cloth and textiles providing its economic base. A weekly market and three annual fairs were held, and in the early -14<sup>th</sup> century Evesham had a role in the export of wool to Flanders and Florence (VCH Worc. Vol II, 381). In 1540, Evesham became crown property and the abbey church and claustral range were demolished. However, in 1605 a royal charter established the government of the borough. The economy of the town continued to flourish and was facilitated by work on the River Avon to make it navigable between Tewkesbury and Stratford-upon-Avon. Wharves were constructed on either side of the bridge in order to cope with the increase of river traffic. Agricultural produce, silk, and, increasingly, the manufacture of leather goods became mainstays of the 18<sup>th</sup> -century economy (Dalwood 1996, 3-4). Many of Evesham's traditional industries were in decline by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although a survival in market gardening and the production of cloth, bone manure, and linseed oil is recorded (VCH Worc. Vol II, 382). The construction of the railway in 1850 did much to boost the profile of the town.

The site was located near to a number of other sites recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record, and was close to a number of previous archaeological investigations within the historic centre of Evesham. There is documentary evidence for a mill at Evesham from the 11<sup>th</sup> century (HWCM 4571, Dalwood 1996, 10) and this is believed to have been located north of the bridge (to the east of the current site). There are also documentary references to other medieval mills in Evesham and Bengeworth which are unlocated (Dalwood 1996, 10). At least one mill was still in use in Evesham in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is depicted by the bridge on a plan of 1827. This structure is referred to as Avon Mill (corn) on the First Edition OS Map (1885). Trial trenching in the vicinity revealed that although much of the site had been subject to deep disturbance, archaeological deposits survived in the eastern part of the site, probably relating to the post-medieval mill (though its origins were known to be medieval).

Archaeological evidence relating to the medieval and the post-medieval periods has been uncovered during a number of excavations within the historic centre of the town. Of particular importance to this excavation was an evaluation undertaken at 1 Swan Lane (WSM 30295) which resulted in the discovery of a large, circular pit of medieval date which contained layers of ash and other dumped material that had resulted from domestic activities. At the junction of the High Street and Swan Lane, investigation revealed that a building there (HWCM 5244) had stone fragments from the demolition of the abbey incorporated into its cellar and walls. Excavation also revealed a pit containing 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> -century pottery. An evaluation carried out at 19 Cowl Street, to the south of the site, uncovered pits that contained medieval and post-medieval cess, as well as domestic and industrial waste, which indicated substantial occupation. At 26 Cowl Street, deposits, features and structures of medieval and post-medieval date, including walls, foundations and postholes were found. At 23-25 Mill Street, deposits of 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> -century date related to the subdivision of medieval burgages were recovered.

## **The Excavated Sequence**

### Project Aims

The aims of the excavation were to provide evidence relating to:

- the date of the occupation and layout of Swan Lane and the associated backplot areas within the medieval context of Evesham as a planned town.
- phases of activity which may have predated this.
- the economic and social background related to the development of the Swan Lane site in the medieval and ensuing post-medieval periods.
- activities which may have been carried out on the site during the medieval and post-medieval periods, e.g. industrial, commercial or agricultural.
- the nature, extent, and date of the large ditch identified during trial trenching.
- the nature, extent, and date of any archaeological deposits associated with the ditch.

### Excavation and Recording Method

The removal of overburden was undertaken by JCB, with a toothless ditching bucket, under direct archaeological supervision. The site was then cleaned by hand and a base plan produced. Sampling by hand excavation comprised not less than 50% of discrete features. Sampling for environmental analysis was targeted on those contexts which were considered most likely to contain plant and faunal remains, principally the lower fill of the large ditch.

Recording was by means of pre-printed *pro-formas* for contexts and features, supplemented by plans (at 1:20 and 1:50), sections (at 1:10, 1:20 and 1:50), monochrome and colour print, and colour slide photography. Contexts were given individual numbers from a continuous sequence commencing at 6000. Negative and positive features, identifiable by the prefix 'F', had a sequence commencing at F600. It is intended to deposit the paper archive and finds archive at Worcester City Museum and Art Gallery.

### Summary of the Stratigraphic Sequence

No direct evidence of Roman occupation was encountered during the excavation. However, a small quantity of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>-century AD Roman pottery recovered from a number of the excavated features (see Rátkai below) suggests that there was activity in the vicinity of the site during this period. A north-south aligned ditch at the western edge of the site produced a single sherd of Early to Middle Saxon pottery (see Rátkai below). This may indicate that the ditch belonged to the later Saxon period, hence the absence of any medieval pottery from the ditch.

A sequence of continuous occupation and activity on the site from at least the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards was recorded. The earliest deposits (Phase 1a) appear to relate to 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>-century occupation which was followed by the official establishment of Swan Lane in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Phase 1b, Glyde pers. comm.) as part of the planned layout of the town. There was evidence that the site was still occupied (Phase 1c) in the latter part of the 14<sup>th</sup> century before its abandonment during the late medieval period. This was followed by early post-medieval (Phase 2) activity which saw the site revert to agricultural use. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Phase 3), a large V-shaped ditch,



which was most likely to have been a part of the Civil War defences of Evesham, was cut through the site on a northwest-southeast alignment. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and for much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Phase 4), the site once again reverted to open ground and was under orchard. In the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a building was erected in the southwestern corner of the site and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Phase 5) a large warehouse was constructed on the eastern side of the site.

## Results

### Phasing

The value of phasing the site by ceramic spot dating was diminished to a great extent by a high degree of residual material in the features excavated (see Rátkai below). Six broad phases of activity were identified based essentially on the layout of the site and the principles of archaeological stratigraphy. Phase 1 has been divided into three sub-phases which have been created on the basis of stratigraphy and on the sequence of activity on the site from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. The underlying natural subsoil was composed of bands of sand and clay, it was overlain and cut by:

Phase 0: Roman and Saxon

Phase 1: Medieval (12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century)

*Phase 1a (12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century property boundaries)*

*Phase 1b (14<sup>th</sup> century layout of Swan Lane and extension of Cowl Street)*

*Phase 1c (later 14<sup>th</sup> century abandonment of Swan Lane)*

Phase 2: Early post-medieval (15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century)

Phase 3: 17<sup>th</sup> century (Civil War 1642-1651)

Phase 4: 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century

Phase 5: 20<sup>th</sup> century

### Phase 0: Roman and Saxon

Although there were no features that could be securely dated to the Roman period, the presence of a small number of sherds from a Phase 1c ditch (F603) and from the large Phase 3, V-shaped ditch (F600), attests to some activity in the vicinity during this period.

Along the western edge of the site was a north-south aligned ditch (F616, Fig. 3), which measured approximately 0.4m wide and 0.7m deep. It was V-shaped in profile and contained a single fill of dark brown sandy silty-clay (6035, Fig. 4) which contained one sherd of possible Early to Middle Saxon pottery (Rátkai below). Given the levels of residuality across the site, the occurrence of only a single sherd of Saxon pottery within the ditch fill suggests that it pre-dated medieval activity on the site. The only other finds recovered from this feature was a substantial, in terms of the overall assemblage, quantity of animal bone that included horse, dog, bird bone (galliform), goat horncores and sheep and pig.

### Phase 1: Medieval (12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century)

Phase 1 activity was characterised by a number of north-south and east-west aligned ditches, in addition to a cobbled surface.

### *Phase 1a (12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century property boundaries)*

#### The Ditches

Along the northern edge of the site, two east-west aligned ditches (F602 and F620) were excavated. The earliest of the ditches (F602, Fig. 5), was only partially exposed during excavation. It measured 0.25m deep and contained a single fill of mid-brown sandy silty-clay with stones and charcoal flecking throughout (6040), and four fragments of tile. A re-cut of this ditch (F620) was U-shaped in profile, measured 0.5m wide and 0.27m deep. It was filled with an orange-brown clay-rich silt (6042). Along the western edge of excavation was a north-south aligned ditch (F604, Figs. 3 and 4), which measured approximately 1m wide and 0.3m deep. It was filled by a brown sandy silt (6025) with pebbles and stones throughout and contained tile and animal bone which showed evidence of chop marks.

#### Interpretation

All three ditches probably represented 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century property boundaries. Interestingly, ditch F604 follows the line of the Late Saxon ditch (F616) which suggests some continuity of property divisions from the Saxon into the medieval period.

### *Phase 1b (14<sup>th</sup> century layout of Swan Lane and extension of Cowl Street)*

#### The Cobbled Surface

Two areas of cobbles on the same alignment were identified during the excavation (Fig. 3), the first was situated directly on the Swan Lane frontage (F400). This was rectilinear in plan but had been truncated on its eastern and southern edges. It was constructed from medium sized rounded pebbles, interspersed with occasional pieces of stone and flint (4011). The lower level of cobbles had been bedded into a layer of disturbed natural sand (4014).

Further to the north was what appeared to be the continuation of this surface (F617, Fig. 3, Plate 1) which covered much of the northwestern part of the site. The surface was aligned roughly north-south and measured at least 12m in length and 6.5m wide with a depth of cobbles of up to 0.15m. The cobbles consisted of medium sized, rounded pebbles bedded into a matrix of brown silty-clay (6038). This deposit contained a single fragment of medieval pottery, tile, a small quantity of animal bone and the rim of a small thin walled glass bottle.

#### The Ditches

To either side of the surface were two north-south aligned ditches (F615 and F601). Ditch F615 cut the Phase 1a ditch F604 along its eastern edge and the Phase 0 ditch F616 on its west. It measured approximately 1.4m wide and 0.8m deep, and had a V-shaped profile, and contained a brown-grey, clay-rich silt mixed with redeposited natural (6034, Fig. 4 and 6046, 6047). Artefacts recovered from this feature include medieval pottery, a nail, a small amount of animal bone from which one piece displayed chop marks, and fragments of tile.

Parallel to this was a second north-south aligned ditch (F601, Fig. 3, Plate 2), which was U-shaped in profile, and measured approximately 0.65m in width and 0.3m in depth. It contained mid-brown silty-clay (6001) with small rounded stones and charcoal flecks, and contained medieval pottery, tile and a small amount of animal bone. The continuation of this ditch was also identified on the trench on the frontage

of Swan Lane. Ditch F405 (Fig. 7) measured approximately 0.35m in width by 0.08m in depth. It contained mid-brown silty-clay (4007) with charcoal flecking.

To the north of these ditches, along the northern edge of excavation, was a third ditch orientated east-west (F619, Fig. 3). This ditch had a terminal, and was U-shaped, it was approximately 0.75m wide, with a depth of 0.25m. The fill was orange-brown, sandy silty-clay with abundant stones and charcoal flecking (6041).

#### Pits

A shallow sub-oval pit (F610, Fig. 3), which had a bowl-shaped profile and measured 0.37m in width by 0.5m in length with a depth of 0.10m, was located in the northeastern quarter of the site. The fill was a red-brown silty-clay with charcoal flecking throughout (6010) and contained two sherds of medieval pottery.

#### Interpretation

It is possible that the cobbled surface in the southern half of the site (F400) may have been associated with a structure fronting onto Swan Lane. Likewise, the cobbled surface in the northern half of the site (F617) may have been used as a yard surface in the backplot area of the burgage. However, together they could have formed what might have been a service lane or track-way, giving access to the Swan Lane backplots. The ditches running along either side of the cobbles (F405, F601 and F604) would, therefore, have served the dual purpose of providing drainage and of marking the boundary between the service lane and burgages.

The east-west ditch (F619) located in the northeastern area of the site, just clipped one of the Phase 1a ditches (F620) and, is therefore likely to have resulted from activity in Phase 1b. Also, the discovery of a terminus for the ditch, immediately east of ditch F601 suggests that they may be contemporary. Immediately to the south of the terminal was a shallow pit (F610) that may indicate backplot activity, such as rubbish disposal. However, there was very little evidence for occupation recovered from this part of the site, and more indicative of the presence of vegetable gardens or paddocks adjoining a burgage plot on the outskirts of the town.

#### *Phase 1c (later 14<sup>th</sup> century occupation and abandonment of Swan Lane)*

##### The Ditches

The north-south ditches were re-cut during this period, perhaps in an attempt to redefine burgages. Along the western side of the site was a north-south aligned ditch (F407/F603), which had cut the Phase 1b ditch. Along the frontage (F407) it measured up to 0.6m wide and 0.4m deep. It contained a single fill of mid-green-brown clay-silt (4013) with a concentration of medium sized pebbles against its eastern edge. This fill contained a quantity of medieval pottery, a very small amount of slag, a single fragment of tile, animal bone and snail shells. Further into the backplot area it had a more pronounced V-shaped profile (F603, Fig. 4), and measured approximately 1.2m wide and 0.5m deep. It contained two fills, the earliest of which was brown clay-rich silt with charcoal flecking (6027, 6032, 6044, 6062) that contained a quantity of medieval pottery, brick and tile, animal bone, as well as oyster shell. The upper fill was compact, light brown, clay-rich silt (6026, 6033, 6046, 6063) and contained medieval pottery and tile, a nail, and animal bone.

Parallel to this, and also cutting the Phase 1b ditch was a second north-south aligned ditch (F404/F612, Figs. 3 and 7), which had a U-shaped profile. Towards the frontage

of Swan Lane the ditch (F404), contained a compact, green-brown silty-clay (4006) with pebbles and charcoal flecking throughout, it contained several unidentified iron fragments, animal bone, and snail shells. Towards the rear of the plot F612 had a more V-shaped profile, and was filled by a mid grey-brown silty-clay (6012, 6014) containing pebbles, medieval pottery, tile, a nail, a small quantity of animal bone and snail shells.

#### *Postholes and postpads (Fig.3)*

Both of the phase 1c ditches had been further defined by fences during this period. A series of three postholes (F626, F627 and F628), together forming a north-south alignment, were located along the eastern edge of ditch F603. They were U-shaped in profile, measuring up to 0.2m in diameter and 0.15m in depth, and all contained a grey-brown sandy clay-silt with quantities of degraded wood (6057, 6058 and 6059). Posthole F628 contained a single sherd of medieval pottery. Similarly, on the eastern side of F612 was a small post-hole (F613), also filled with degraded wood (6020).

The disturbed remains of post-pads (F630, F631, F632, F633), in the form of concentrations of small pieces of flat stone (6064, 6065, 6066, 6067), were located towards the central part of the cobbled surface.

#### *Interpretation*

During this phase, the two Phase 1b north-south aligned ditches on either side of the cobbles were re-cut (F603/F407 and F612/F404) and defined further by fences along their eastern sides. It thus seems likely that the cobbled surface was still in use at this point, however, the presence the possible post-pads (F630, F631, F632, and F633), suggests that structure was erected on the cobbles. It seems likely then that the surface was no longer being used as a routeway, at least towards the rear of the backplot, prior to its abandonment in the latter part of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

#### *Discussion*

The official layout of Swan Lane is believed to have taken place in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and appears to have involved the re-cutting of earlier 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century boundary ditches. The presence of 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century pottery certainly indicates that there was occupation on the site pre-dating the official establishment of this end of Swan Lane. It thus seems likely that the 14<sup>th</sup>-century planned layout regularised a less formal and more piecemeal style of occupation inherited from the preceding centuries. This appears to have entailed extending the backplots of the 14<sup>th</sup> century burgages beyond the northern extent of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century east-west aligned boundary ditches. This regularisation may also have involved the creation of new burgage plots further east than previously seen, this may be evidenced by the cutting of new north-south aligned ditch and the laying of the cobbled surface.

This 14<sup>th</sup>-century redevelopment of Swan Lane may also be seen as an extension of Cowl Street northwards, in the form of a cobbled trackway. Pertinent to this, was the alignment of the cobbled surfaces with Cowl Street implying that the track may have formed the continuation of the medieval street. In addition, the newly cut 14<sup>th</sup>-century ditch, running along the eastern edge of the cobbles, lined up with the eastern side of Cowl Street, again suggesting a continuation of the street northwards. This probably marked the final phase of medieval expansion of the town towards the east, and, if this was the case, then the lane would have skirted the easternmost limit of the 14<sup>th</sup>-century planned town. This may be the reason why there was a marked absence of

archaeological deposits in the eastern half of the site, where adjoining gardens or fields were possibly located.

At some time in the latter half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, a structure resting on post-pads was erected on the rear cobbled surface, and the north-south aligned ditches on either side of the cobbles were re-cut. Fences also appear to have been erected along the boundary ditches. This seems to have been carried out during the last phase of medieval activity on the site when the cobbled lane was no longer in use. The latter may have been symptomatic of a general decline in the fortunes of the town as a result of a falling population in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The building of a structure and the re-definition of the boundaries suggests that the strip of land was once again being used for some form of occupation, perhaps of a fairly makeshift nature, rather than as a thoroughfare. This was likely to have represented the last burst of activity on the Swan Lane site before its final abandonment.

#### Phase 2: Early post-medieval (15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century) (Fig. 3)

In the northwestern part of the site a number of narrow, north-south aligned furrows (F605 for example) had been ploughed through the northern part of the Phase 1 cobbled surface (Plate 4). The furrows, which were closely spaced and measured up to 0.45m in width and 0.2m in depth, were filled with a brown silty-clay (6024) which contained large numbers of pebbles, frequent charcoal flecks and animal bone. Artefacts from the furrows included a very small, abraded sherd of medieval pottery, and a small post-medieval sherd, tile and brick, a fragment of copper alloy buckle, and a piece of corroded iron. A loose, brown silty layer (6037) with pebbles throughout sealed the furrows, this contained two pieces of iron and a small quantity of animal bone. In the southern half of the site the Phase 1 features had been sealed by a buried soil (up to 0.8m deep) of dark brown silty clay (4001). It contained quantities of snail shells, animal bone, a piece of slag, fired clay, three iron nails, a sherd of window glass, and medieval pottery.

#### *Discussion*

The deep deposit of dark silt (4001) contained substantial amounts of snail shell and had all the characteristics of a buried soil. This level of build up suggests that this end of Swan Lane was open ground during the early post-medieval period. Although the site was unoccupied there is evidence for the site being used for small-scale agriculture. This is attested to by the presence of furrows being ploughed through the cobbled surface. The deep buried soil closer to the frontage would also have accumulated from cultivation on the site. Indeed, the site would have been an ideal location for market gardening and cultivation. The early post-medieval period was one which saw the town begin to prosper again following the economic decline and fall in population which had characterised the later medieval period in Evesham. It is possible that a growing population during this period stimulated demand for the production of more foodstuffs and, in consequence, the site was brought back into use during this period with the emphasis on cultivation and market gardening.

#### Phase 3: 17<sup>th</sup> century (Civil War 1642-1651)

Running diagonally across the area of excavation, on a northwest-southeast alignment was a very large ditch (F600, Fig. 3). The ditch was approximately 5m wide, up to 2m in depth, and had a V-shaped profile (Plate 2). It contained a number of fills, the earliest of which was a grey-blue silty sand-clay (6031, Fig. 6) packed with large stones and with abundant charcoal flecking throughout (Plate 3). Artefacts recovered

from this deposit included medieval and early post-medieval pottery, tile, a small amount of animal bone and a nail. This deposit had been sealed by a thin band of red silty-sand (6043) which probably represented weathering off the bank and lay against the southwestern edge of the ditch. A single sherd of early post-medieval pottery was recovered from it. A thick deposit of green-grey silty-clay (6022) with pebbles throughout sealed this layer, it contained medieval pottery, and a single sherd of early post-medieval date, as well as fired clay and tile fragments, a small piece of slag and animal bone. This had, in turn, been overlain by a thin deposit of dark grey-brown silty-clay (6030) which had the same range of artefacts types as 6022. Layer 6030 had been sealed by a green-grey silty-clay (6017) which lay against the northeastern edge of the ditch, it contained medieval and early post-medieval pottery, and a small amount of animal bone. This was overlain by a narrow band of dark grey-brown silty-clay (6023) which contained pockets of redeposited natural. Above this was green-grey silty-clay (6018), containing medieval pottery, stone, charcoal, tile, fired clay, animal bone and a fragment of clay pipe. This was itself overlain by a dark grey-brown silty-clay (6016) mixed with redeposited natural, which also contained medieval and early post-medieval pottery, both ceramic and stone tile, nails, and several unidentifiable pieces of iron. Other finds from the ditch from other sections that were excavated along its length included three fragments of honestone, a broken quern stone, and a jetton which had been struck in Germany between 1586 and 1635. The ditch was cut through the medieval and early post-medieval boundary ditches and the furrowed cobbled surface. The ditch had been severely truncated by later cutting down of the ground level in the eastern half of the site where it was directly sealed by modern overburden (3003).

A second northeast-southwest aligned ditch (F624), of unknown dimensions, was partially exposed in the northwestern area of the site, where it appeared to be contemporary with ditch F600. The upper fill was a grey-brown silty clay (6054) containing re-deposited natural, a fragment of tile, and animal bone. A thick layer, up to 0.4m in depth, of green-brown silty clay (6069) sealed the ditches.

### *Discussion*

Ditch F600 was very substantial, its dimensions, in addition to its steep V-shaped profile, suggest that its purpose was defensive. In the post-medieval period the only recorded large-scale construction of defences in Evesham took place during the Civil War when a ditch and rampart were constructed to form a defensive line to the north of the town where it lacked the natural protection of the loop of the River Avon.

Although surface evidence of a rampart was not detected along the edge of the ditch, the tip line of the primary fill of the ditch (Fig. 6) suggested evidence for erosion and slippage from a bank along its southwestern edge. Further evidence for an internal bank is found in the sequence of fills throughout the ditch. The upper layers in particular contained quantities of redeposited natural subsoil which suggests that it was deliberately backfilled with material from a bank, rather than silting up over a period of time. Also, the tip lines of the deposits indicate that this process probably involved throwing material into the ditch from the top of the bank first. The fills of the ditch were also noticeably free of the sort of extraneous material one would expect if the ditch had filled up more gradually. As Evesham's role in the Civil War ended in 1651 with the final triumph of the Parliamentarians, the defences were likely to have been levelled soon afterwards.

The second, ditch, aligned northeast-southwest, was only partially exposed along the northern edge of excavation. However, this was sufficient to indicate that this ditch was also substantial in size. The sequence of deposition in the second ditch was very similar to that encountered in the first and suggests that they were contemporary. If this was the case then both ditches may have formed part of an integrated system of defences which, perhaps, incorporated salients and earthworks along the outer edge of the main ditch. This, of course, carries implications concerning the layout and design of the Evesham defences which are only briefly described in the documentary sources of the period (Atkin 2003, 6).

The thick layer of green-brown silty-clay which sealed the ditches only extended over the northern part of the site where the ditches were located. This, combined with its similarity in texture and colour to the upper fills of the ditches, may also be evidence for the ditch having a bank. It may represent surplus material from the rampart which was spread out and levelled over the area once the backfilling of the ditches was complete.

#### Phase 4: 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 3)

The Phase 3 levelling layer (6069) was cut by two sub-oval pits (F606 and F607). Pit F606 measured approximately 0.8m in width, 2.5m in length and up to 0.4m in depth. It had a bowl-shaped profile, a flat base, and contained a mid-brown sandy silty-clay (6006) that included a high proportion of large stones. It was truncated along its western edge by a modern foundation trench. Pit F607, which measured approximately 1.2m in width by 1.6m in length and 0.15m in depth, had a flat base and shallow profile, it contained a single fill of orange-brown sandy silt-clay (6007) from which a fragment of tile was recovered.

On the frontage of the site a green-brown clay layer (4009) which contained irregular patches of black, industrial material including fragments of slag and clinker was revealed. It sealed the Phase 1 disturbed natural layer 4014. Layer 4009 had been cut by the base of a north-south aligned wall (F406) that had been constructed using fragments of unworked stone, with occasional pieces of slag and burnt clay. It was bedded into a matrix of pale brown mortar (4010) and was 0.9m wide. This part of the trench was sealed by a thick layer of modern rubble (4000).

#### *Discussion*

By this period the Civil War defences had been completely levelled, and two pits had been cut into the backfilled ditch. The cartographic evidence shows that at some time during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a building was erected on the site (Fig. 8), and the majority of the land on site was being used for orchards (Martin 2002). Much of the land in the vicinity of the site and beyond appears to have been cultivated, reflecting the 18<sup>th</sup> century market gardening for which Evesham was well known.

The presence of slag and clinker in the southeastern corner of the site may indicate some form of industrial activity, though this was likely to have been small-scale based on the amounts of slag and clinker recovered. The base of the wall, constructed of unworked pieces of stone, suggested an ephemeral structure and did not appear substantial enough to indicate the presence of a building. Any layers which had originally sealed the wall had been removed by later activity and it was directly sealed by modern rubble.

### Phase 5: 20<sup>th</sup> century

The erection of a 20<sup>th</sup> century warehouse had resulted in severe truncation to some of the archaeological deposits, in particular those in the southeastern part of the site. The large V-shaped ditch had also been severely truncated along its course by concrete foundations and pillars.

## **The Pottery** by Stephanie Rátkai

### Method

All the medieval pottery was examined under x20 magnification and matched where possible to the county type series. A total of 131 sherds, weighing 863g were recovered, giving an average sherd weight of c.6.5g. As the average sherd weight suggests, the pottery appeared to be largely residual and mostly consisted of very small (sometimes weighing less than a gramme) abraded sherds. There were virtually no form sherds. For these reasons no pottery is illustrated. All information about the sherds was entered onto a database and each context spot dated.

### Results

A small number of Roman sherds were also identified. These comprised; a Severn Valley ware sherd from F600 (6019), two white slipped flagon sherds, a greyware sherd and a Severn Valley sherd from F603.2 (6032). The range of fabrics, although small suggests Roman activity in the first or second centuries AD. Oxidised sherds from F404 (4006), F602 (6002) and F600.01 (6028) could also have been Roman but the sherds were so small that precise identification was not possible.

A sherd, weighing 5g, from the fill (6045) of linear ditch F616.02 was of unknown date. The sherd had a pale brown external surface and margin, the remainder of the sherd being mid-grey. The sherd was abraded and no internal surface remained. The sherd could be scratched with the thumb nail. Inclusions consisted of sparse rounded quartz, c. 0.25-0.5mm, sparse organics and rare limestone and shell. The sherd is too sandy to be prehistoric or Roman (J. Evans and A. Hancock's pers. comm.) but did not resemble medieval pottery either. It is possible that the sherd may be Early-Middle Saxon but this is by no means certain. The presence of a shell platelet in the sherd may suggest that it originated further east, perhaps in southern Warwickshire.

The medieval fabrics comprised:

Worcester unglazed ware	(fabric 55)
Malvernian unglazed ware	(fabric 56)
Cotswold unglazed ware	(fabric 57)
Sandy limestone tempered ware	(fabric 58)
Droitend ware	(fabric 62)
Brill-Boarstall ware	(fabric 63)
Worcester glazed ware	(fabric 64.1)
Oxidised glazed Malvernian ware	(fabric 69)
Tudor Green type ware	(fabric 70)
Cistercian ware	(fabric 72?)



Context	Roman/Roman?	Saxon?	Alcester type ware	Brill-Boarstall ware	Cistercian ware	Cotswold unglazed ware	Deritend ware	Sandy oxidised wares	Malvernian unglazed	Malvernian glazed	Sandy Limestone tempered ware	Tudor green	Worcester glazed ware	Worcester unglazed ware	Blackware	Yellow ware	Coarseware	Creamware	Flowerpot	Total
1000				1				2												3
1001													1							1
2004					1					2										3
2005			1								1									2
4001								1						2						3
4009										3										3
4013	1										3									4
4048	1									1										2
5002								1												1
5055												1								1
6000	1			1					4	6					5		1			18
6002	4																			4
6010								1				1								2
6012										3										3
6013									1											1
6016										2					1	1		1		5
6017											2			1	1					4
6018										2										2
6019	1									1	1						1			4
6021										1										1
6022						1	1	1			2				1					6
6024											2				1					3
6025				1							3						2		1	7
6027											1									1
6028	1					1								1			1			4
6030										2							2			4
6031									1		3			1	1					6
6032	7			1				3		2					2					15
6033									1		1									2
6038											1									1
6039															1					1
6041														1						1
6043															1					1
6044				2					1	2					1		2			8
6045		1																		1
6046											1									1
6059																			1	1
6060																	1			1
TOTAL	16	1	1	6	1	2	1	9	3	24	30	1	1	11	10	2	9	1	2	131

Table 1 Pottery quantification by sherd count and context

Two sherds were unlike the usual cooking pot fabrics and could be paralleled by Alcester cooking pot ware (Cracknell and Jones 1986). A single sherd in the same fabric was found at Brick Kiln Lane, Evesham. In addition, there were a number of sandy oxidised sherds, some of which may have been late medieval but were unlike the normal repertoire of fabrics found in Worcestershire. Again there were parallels for this material found at the Brick Kiln Lane site.

The medieval pottery dated from the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> centuries up to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The most common fabric was Malvernian glazed ware, closely followed by sandy limestone tempered ware, which was almost certainly made locally. The state and condition of the medieval pottery is consistent with it coming from the furthest reaches of a backplot and must have originally been part of a general surface scatter (along with the Roman material) which was incorporated into feature fills.

### Discussion

The presence of non-local pottery from Warwickshire on at least two sites in Evesham suggests that there must have been some economic ties. There is no documentary evidence for links between Evesham Abbey and Warwickshire which suggests that any links that there were may have been small scale and personal. Personal links, shown by tracing records of debts or debtors among people living in Alcester, can be seen to follow the rivers Aine and Arrow (C. Dyer pers. comm.), as these drain into the Avon, perhaps Evesham too was linked into this network. Such a network might also explain the presence of Deritend ware on the site since this could also have come *via* Alcester where it is a frequent component of medieval assemblages.

The post-medieval pottery consisted of coarseware, yellow ware and blackware and a single creamware sherd. Post-medieval pottery was found in the fills of the large ditch F600, ditch F603, linear feature F604, furrow F605, postholes F628 and F629 and feature F615. Given the high residuality and the broad date ranges of the post-medieval pottery, it is difficult to date any of these features with any certainty. However, the presence of blackware and yellow ware within the fills of the large ditch F600 is not inconsistent with it being a Civil War feature. The most striking thing about the fills of the ditch was that they contained relatively little pottery most of which was made up of very small residual sherds.

### **The Small Finds** by Erica Macey

A small quantity of finds (excluding pottery and animal bone) was recovered from the site. The assemblage was composed mainly of ceramic tile and brick, but also included charcoal, clay pipe, coal, fired clay, flint, glass, mortar, shell, slag and stone.

The finds were quantified by count and weight, and the ceramic tile and brick was sorted macroscopically for the purposes of fabric identification. The general condition of the assemblage was quite fragmentary, although most individual pieces were relatively unabraded.

### Tile

The ceramic tile assemblage consisted of 180 fragments of tile of probable medieval date (S. Rátkai pers. comm.) weighing 2326g. The assemblage was very fragmentary, with few diagnostic pieces recovered. The tile was sorted macroscopically into three distinct fabrics, these are described below:

#### *Fabric One*

Sandy fabric with pale orange to buff margins and core. Well levigated with occasional small sub-rounded stone inclusions.

#### *Fabric Two*

Sandy fabric, orange margins and core. Darker in colour with a more compact fabric than Fabric One. Some examples have a reduced dark grey core.

#### *Fabric Three*

Coarse dark red fabric. Well levigated and evenly coloured throughout. Occasional small sub-rounded stone inclusions.

The tile was evenly distributed across the site, with no significant concentrations of any fabric. A cluster of tile was noted in the largest feature on site; the large V-shaped ditch F600, where all of the deposits produced small quantities of tile (6000 x 21, 6016 x 22, 6018 x 10, 6019 x 11, 6021 x 2, 6022 x 6, 6028 x 4, 6030 x 4, 6031 x 1). The fact that there was more tile present in the upper fills of the ditch (6000, 6016, 6018, 6019) seems to be indicative of the deliberate backfilling of this feature.

A small amount of glazed floor and roof tile was also recovered from the site (F404 x 1, 5004 x 1, 6007 x 3, 6036 x 1, 6046 x 2). These fragments were medieval in date (S. Rátkai pers. comm.), all were too fragmentary to be of any real diagnostic value.

#### Stone Tile

Two fragments of stone tile were recovered from the site (6004 x 1, 6016 x 1). These both appear, from their thickness of 15mm, to be fragments of roof tile. Both tiles are made from a coarse shelly stone of local origin.

#### Brick

The brick assemblage consisted of 15 fragments of brick, weighing 670g. As with the tile, the fabrics were sorted macroscopically. The assemblage was in a more fragmentary condition than the tile and no diagnostic examples were recovered. Three distinct fabrics were noted, these are described below:

#### *Fabric One*

Coarse fabric with orange surfaces and dark red core. Similar in appearance to Tile Fabric One, but less densely-fired.

#### *Fabric Two*

Coarse, poorly-levigated pale orange to buff fabric with occasional large stone inclusions.

#### *Fabric Three*

Coarse orange-red shelly fabric. Well-levigated with occasional small stone inclusions.

The brick was evenly distributed across the site, with no significant concentrations of quantity or fabric. The small size of the fragments suggests that they were not from primary deposits.

### Fired Clay

Eleven pieces of fired clay were recovered from the site (1000 x 1, 4001 x 3, 6000 x 1, 6018 x 2, 6021 x 1, 6022 x 2, 6024 x 1). All showed similarities with one or other of the tile or brick fabrics. It seems probable that, given the fragmentary nature of the tile and brick assemblages, the fragments of fired clay are actually very degraded and abraded tile and brick fragments.

### Iron Objects

The iron assemblage consisted of thirteen nails (4001 x 3, 4009 x 1, 6000 x 3, 6004 x 1, 6012 x 1, 6016 x 2, 6031 x 1, 6046 x 1) and a large number of heavily corroded, unidentifiable chunks of iron (4006 x 5, 4009 x 1, 5055 x 3, 6007 x 2, 6012 x 1, 6016 x 8, 6019 x 2, 6021 x 1, 6024 x 1, 6028 x 1, 6036 x 2, 6039 x 4). Several pieces (4006 x 4, 6039 x 2) may be fragments of broken blades.

### Copper Alloy Objects

The site produced three copper alloy objects. One of these, was a *jetton* (Plate 5), which came from one of the lower fills of the large V-shaped Civil War ditch (6021). *Jettons* were used during the medieval and early post-medieval periods as reckoning counters and in later periods as gaming counters. On typological grounds the *jetton* was dated to the period 1586 to 1635 and is known to have been struck by Hans Krauwinkel 11 in Nuremberg (Dr R. White pers. comm.) The other items recovered from the site were a beaten strip of copper alloy (6016), of uncertain function, and a buckle fragment (6024).

### Slag

Six small pieces of tap slag, weighing 29g, were recovered from the site (4001 x 1, 4013 x 1, 6000 x 2, 6022 x 1, 6030 x 1). This small amount does not indicate that any significant amount of metalworking was taking place on the site.

### Stone

Three fragments of honestone (Plate 6) were recovered from the large V-shaped ditch F600 (6000, 6016, 6030). One had a slightly concave face and there is some evidence of striations (Plate 7). An incomplete quernstone (Plate 8) was also recovered from the Civil War ditch. This fragment was roughly triangular in shape with a shallow semi-circular depression along one edge which formed part of the grinding platform (Plate 8).

### Shell

Snail shells occurred frequently across the site (4001 x 3, 4006 x 4, 4013 x 4, 4048 x 6, F404 x 1, 5002 x 4, 6000 x 15, 6010 x 1, 6012 x 5, 6013 x 11, 6028 x 1, 6031 x 3, 6045 x 1). A small quantity of un-worked oyster shell was also recovered (6000 x 3, 6016 x 1, 6019 x 1, 6032 x 1, 6044 x 1). This small quantity suggests that, while oysters may have occasionally been consumed on the site, they were certainly not a staple food of the occupants.

### Clay Pipe

A complete clay pipe bowl and a stem with a small part of a bowl attached were recovered from the site. The bowl, which had a rouletted edge and a flat heel, dates to between 1640 and 1660 (Atkin pers. comm.). The fragment of bowl attached to a stem appeared to be of similar date. No maker's marks or stamps were present.

### Flint

Two worked and two un-worked flints were recovered from the site. All the flint came from ditch fills (F600, 6031; F603.3, 6044) and appears to be residual.

### Glass

A small quantity of glass was recovered from the site. The glass was very fragmentary and in poor condition, exhibiting a high degree of iridescence. This suggests a degree of waterlogging in the layers and features containing glass (1000, 4001, 6000, 6038 x 2). The fragments were too small to be of real diagnostic value, although one fragment (6038) may possibly be a rim fragment from a thin-walled, straight-sided vessel.

### Other Finds

Other finds from the site include pieces of coal (4009); a piece of mortar with frequent small stone inclusions (4009) and two pieces of charcoal (6000).

## **The Animal Bone** by Emma Hancox

### Summary

A small assemblage of hand collected animal bone was recovered from the site. A number of bulk samples were taken but no bone was recovered. The bone was mostly in poor to fair condition with exfoliation of the outer layers. Much of the material was fragmented, however, some contexts produced fairly complete bones.

The bone derived from 39 contexts, the majority of the contexts were dated to the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century, the 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century and late 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century. Out of the 15 contexts dated to the late 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century, ten related to the possible Civil War ditch.

### Method

The faunal assemblage was recorded on standard *pro forma* Birmingham University Zooarchaeological Unit recording form which follows a modified version of a system used by Davis (Davis 1992; Albarella and Davis 1994). This involves considering certain elements as countable e.g. distal femur, whilst also noting the presence of non-countable elements such as horncores, antlers, evidence of butchery or pathology and any unusual species. Measurable bones and teeth were noted. Only lower teeth of known position are considered measurable. Bone measurements mostly follow Von Den Driesch (1976). Mandibles are considered ageable when at least two teeth are present with recordable wear stages. No attempt was made to distinguish between the galliforms (chicken/guinea fowl/pheasant) or sheep and goat. All the contexts were examined in detail.

### Range and Variety

From the six contexts dated to the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century, only two cow bones, two sheep bones, two hare and one pig bone were recovered. Chop marks were noted in one context (6033), burnt and calcified bone was also noted in this context. None of the bones and teeth were measurable.

Five contexts dated to the 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Five cow and six sheep bones were noted, along with one bird bone (galliform). Three of the bones were measurable.

More bone was found in the contexts dated to 16<sup>th</sup>-early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Fifteen contexts produced eighteen cow bones, twenty-four sheep bones, three pig and one dog bone. Only two of these bones were measurable. Three contexts showed evidence of chop marks. A wide variety of elements was present.

Context 6035 also produced a horse tibia, a dog radius, two bird bones (galliform) and two goat horncores as well as sheep and pig bones.

### Discussion

The assemblage is small and appears to relate to domestic waste from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The presence of predominately cow, sheep and pig is typical of domestic assemblages such as this, and chop and cut marks, burning, and the presence of a variety of elements also suggest that the faunal material relates to domestic waste. The presence of two cow and two goat horncores could suggest the working of horn on or near the site.

### **Discussion**

The history and development of the Swan Lane site has largely been reconstructed on the basis of site morphology and stratigraphy, set against the wider historical and archaeological background of Evesham. In this case pottery was of little value for the dating of features and, therefore, for building a secure chronological framework for the site. The presence of orchards on the site and the effects of root action during the 19<sup>th</sup> century almost certainly contributed to the intrusive material found in deposits across the site. However, the overall quantities of medieval and post-medieval pottery retrieved from the excavation were of some use in reflecting the nature and intensity of occupation on the site during different periods. Medieval pottery made up the majority of the total sherd count, with only a very small amount of post-medieval pottery being recovered in comparison. Thus, it would appear that following medieval occupation of the site, there was an episode of abandonment. Similarly, Civil War activity, the digging and manning of defences, would not have resulted in a large pottery assemblage. The abraded nature of the medieval pottery might also be accounted for by ploughing.

Although no direct evidence of Roman occupation was recovered from the site at Swan Lane, the presence of pottery from this period can be set against a wider archaeological background in Evesham. Roman pottery, roof tiles and coins have been recovered during excavations in the abbey precinct to the south of the site, and it has been suggested that the abbey may be the site of a Roman 'estate church', the "old work of the Britons" referred to by William of Malmesbury in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, which may indicate that Evesham is on the site of a villa (Dalwood 1996, 2). There is another possible Roman settlement at Twyford Bridge, but the exact location and extent of Roman settlement in Evesham is at present uncertain (*ibid*). Although the presence of Roman pottery at the Swan Lane site does not contribute significantly to the questions regarding Roman settlement in the town, it does attest to possible associated activities. The small, abraded nature of the sherds could indicate manuring in fields attached to a Roman settlement.

Evidence for Early Saxon occupation has been recovered from the Hampton/Fairfield area to the southwest of the town, on the west bank of the river, and a Saxon minster church is known to have been established in 700 AD in the later Saxon period (*ibid*).

The presence of a single sherd of Early to Middle Saxon pottery in one of the ditches on the Swan Lane site, may signify activity on, or around, Swan Lane during this period. Alternatively, it may signify later Saxon activity when a gradual process of nucleation resulted in many Early and Middle Saxon settlements being abandoned in favour of larger, more organised settlements.

By the late 11<sup>th</sup> - early 12<sup>th</sup> century Evesham had become more urban in character and the old pre-conquest market place at Merstow Green, to the west of the abbey, had been largely superseded by one to the north, formed by Market Place and High Street. It was during this period that the planned town, focussed on the market place, began to take form. Bridge Street and Cowl Street existed by the 13<sup>th</sup> century and Oat Street by the early 14<sup>th</sup> century (Dalwood 1996, 3). Swan Lane was established in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, possibly due to the market place stimulating expansion of the town towards the north. Pottery of 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century date attests to occupation in the area of Swan Lane during these periods. However, the laying out of Swan Lane as part of the planned town in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, appears to have involved a re-organisation of the preceding pattern of occupation, perhaps to accommodate the new street. This later redevelopment involved the establishment of a more formal layout of existing plots of land, and may have led to the creation of additional burgages along the street in order to achieve maximum usage of the Swan Lane frontage.

The excavated sequence suggests that existing plots of land were extended towards the north and earlier north-south boundary ditches were re-cut. This phase of 14<sup>th</sup> expansion of the town, may also have witnessed the extension of the line of Cowl Street northwards. The proximity of Swan Lane to the market place, and to one of the main routes into Evesham from the north, meant that it was well situated to take advantage of the commercial opportunities its location afforded. Under these circumstances, it seems reasonable to envisage an official interest in taking full advantage of the location by adding Swan Lane to the existing town plan, with a much more formal and planned layout taking place, albeit not too dissimilar from the pre-existing arrangements.

The evidence from the Swan Lane excavation indicated that by the 15<sup>th</sup> century the site had undergone a change in use. No structural evidence, and very little evidence of occupation, was recovered and the indications are that the site was being used for cultivation. This seems at odds with the history of the town in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries when the prosperity of the town had begun to flourish once more. Leland described the town at this time as being "reasonably large with quite good timber buildings with a fine, large market place, and several attractive streets". In 1560 Evesham was said to be 'the best occupied weekly market and the greatest thoroughfare in the county of Worcester or in any part of this realm' (Dalwood 1996, 4). In a number of areas occupation intensified, this included encroachment into the market place, and the conversion of some of the old abbey buildings into dwellings (Dalwood 1996, 4). In the face of this apparent expansion it seems strange that the site at Swan Lane should not have been re-occupied. However, this may be explained by its location on the edge of the historic town. The excavated evidence suggests that the site remained open into the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and this probably also explains why the large Civil War ditch was cut across it. The cartographic evidence shows that the site remained largely open ground and orchard up to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Although the discovery of the Civil War ditches fits well with the known historical background of Evesham during this period, their presence on the Swan Lane site has

raised a number of questions concerning not only the alignment of the defences but also their appearance. The documentary sources simply described the defences as 'being large' (Atkin 2001, 6) and, as Evesham played a crucial role during the Civil War, the need for substantial defences was paramount. The town had a key Royalist garrison aimed at ensuring domination of East Worcestershire and the surrounding area. The garrison protected what were regarded as a crucial river crossing across the Avon, as well as the strategically important route linking munitions centres in the west midlands to Oxford and the King. Evesham also controlled a main route through to Wales, which was one of the main bastions of Royalist support as well as one of their principal recruiting grounds (Atkin 2001, 5). Defences in Evesham began to be constructed in 1643 (Atkin 2001, 6) a large ditch and an earthen bank topped with a timber palisade linked the Avon to the north of the town, thus completing its defensive circuit (*ibid*). The excavated evidence from Swan Lane attests not only to the substantial size of the ditch, but probably also to the presence of an earthen bank. Moreover, the discovery of a second contemporary ditch, at angles to the main, raises the possibility that the defences also included bastions and perhaps had gun platforms along the outer face.

The discovery of the ditch at Swan Lane demands more consideration. Previously, as discussed above, it was believed that the ditch lay to the north of the town on a true east - west alignment (*ibid*). This was based on topographic evidence and the interpretation of a holloway, Old Sawmills Lane to the west side of the High Street, and the line of Inches Lane, on the east side (Atkin 1996, 6), as being the surviving ditch on the ground. However, in light of the recent findings, further suggestions may be proffered. Firstly, if the ditch is interpreted as being part of the main defensive line north of the town then it is clear from its location and orientation that the ditch turned southeast at some point along its length. The most likely point for this to have occurred is at some point on the western side of the High Street. Strategically, this would have carried the line of the defences down towards the crucial bridging point across the Avon, and the wharves which were used to receive riverborne supplies.

Interestingly, the cartographic appears to support this interpretation. The 1827 Enclosure Map depicts a road marked Side Lane which is also on a northwest-southeast orientation, and which is roughly in line with the Swan Lane ditch (Fig. 9). It is thus tempting to see the southern end of Side Lane as echoing an earlier defensive line. Further to this, a field named Causeway Head is also marked on the 1827 Enclosure Map at the junction of Side Lane and the principal route into Evesham from the north. It therefore seems likely that it identifies the location of a causewayed entrance on the line of the ditch, which would have given command of approach along the main routes into and out of Evesham. This may also be significant as the lane branches off the main thoroughfare at this point and takes a more direct route northwest towards Worcester which was another strategically important town during the Civil War. It may be possible, therefore, that the defences were extended towards the northwest to safeguard access to this route. The importance of this route would have been paramount if access to the main road to Worcester (north out of Evesham) was cut off. It is also worth remembering that at the battle of Evesham in 1265, the slaughter of Simon de Montfort's army was largely due to the fact he allowed himself to become trapped in the loop of the Avon with no means of escape, a lesson which would not have been lost on those fighting on either side during the Civil War.

A second interpretation of the ditch, raised by its location and alignment, is that it represented a secondary line of defence. The main ditch may indeed have followed



an east-west line, to the north of the town. The ditch which was located on Swan Lane may have been a secondary line, arching around behind the main defensive line to defend the important wharves and Mill on the Avon. The ditch would also have had the effect of creating a bottle neck for the attacking troops who would have become trapped between the line of the ditch and the course of the Avon if they managed to breach the primary defensive line. Only further excavation along the projected line of the ditch may provide answers these questions.

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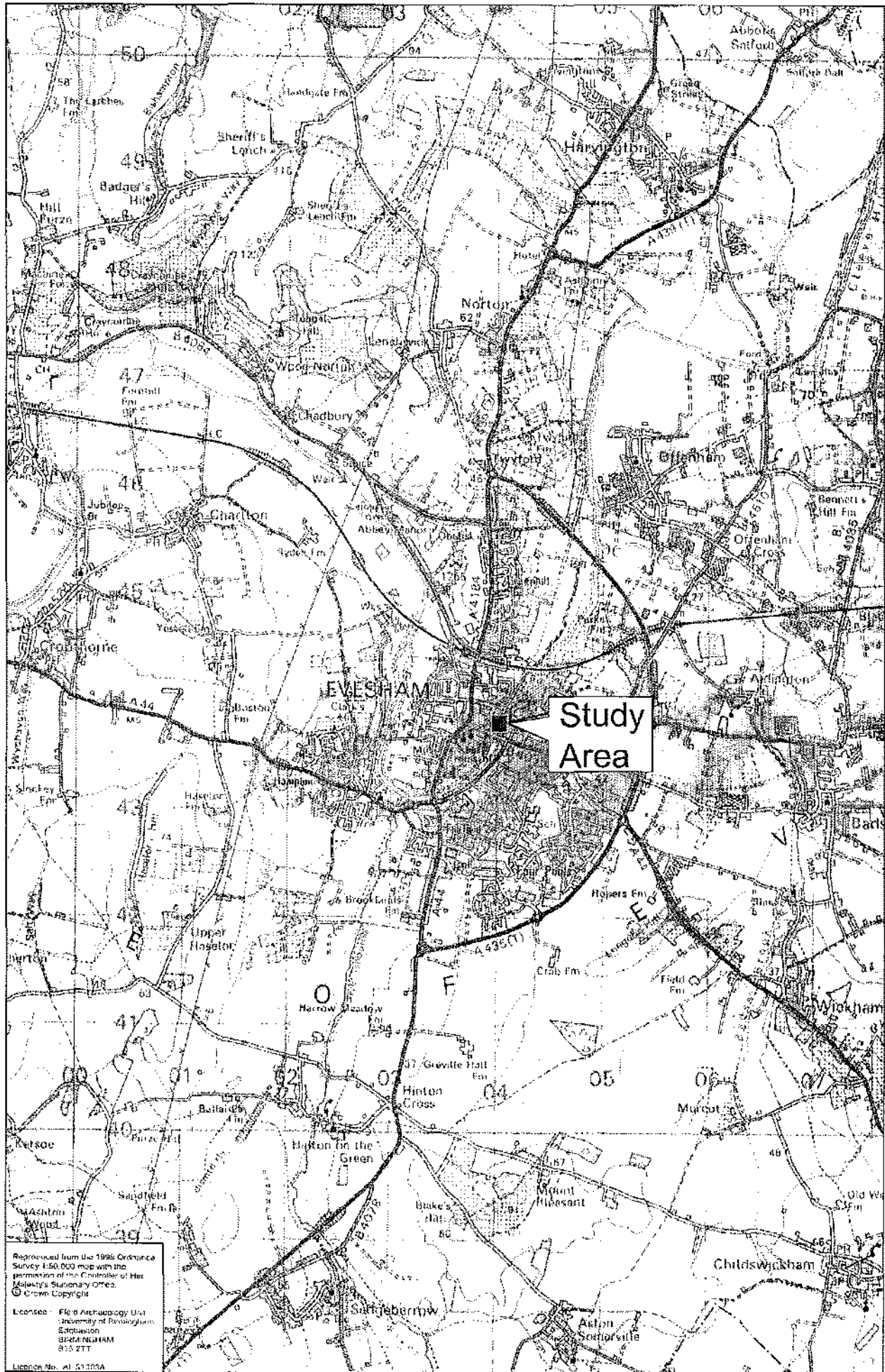
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Fig.1

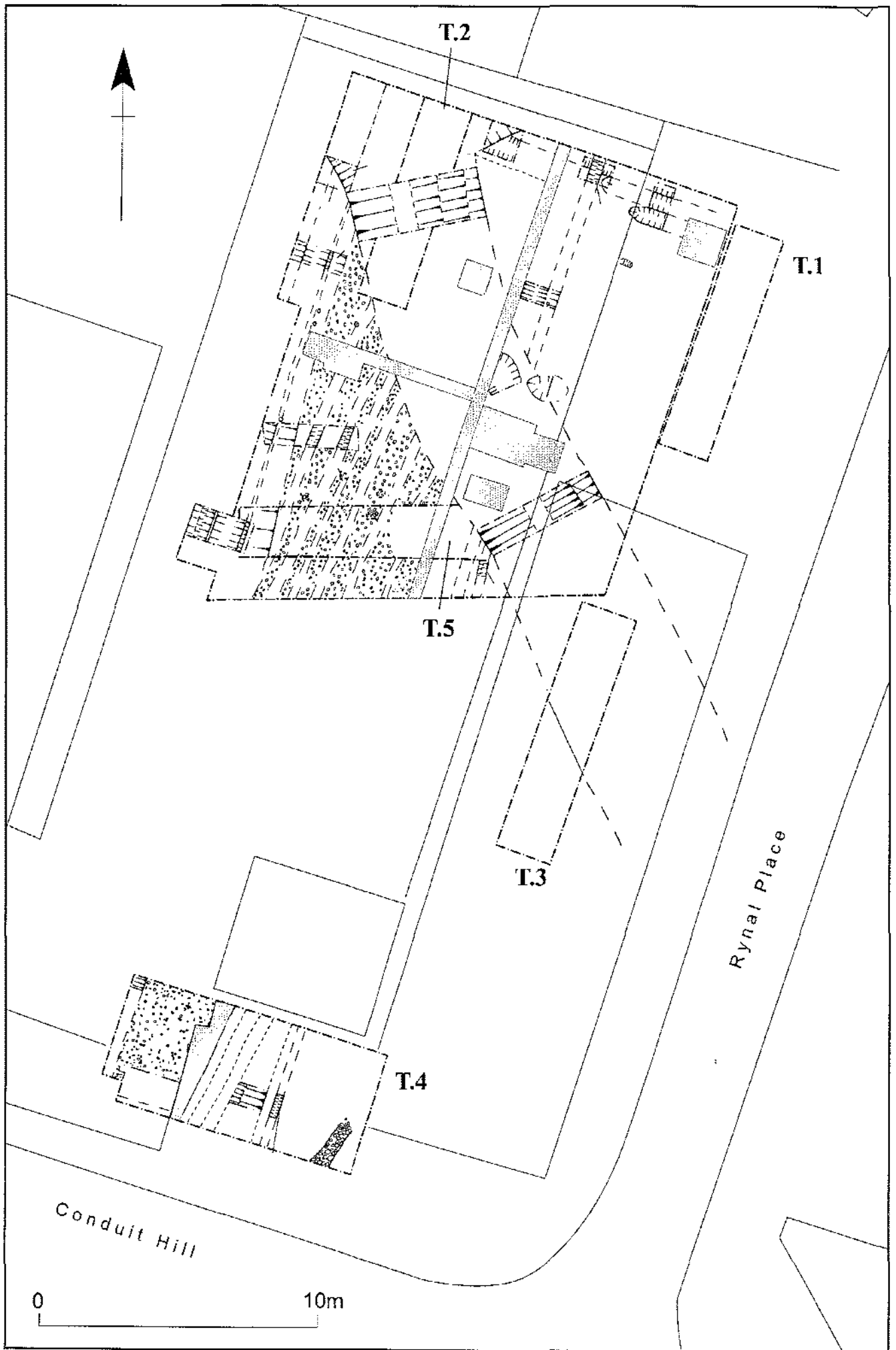


Fig.2

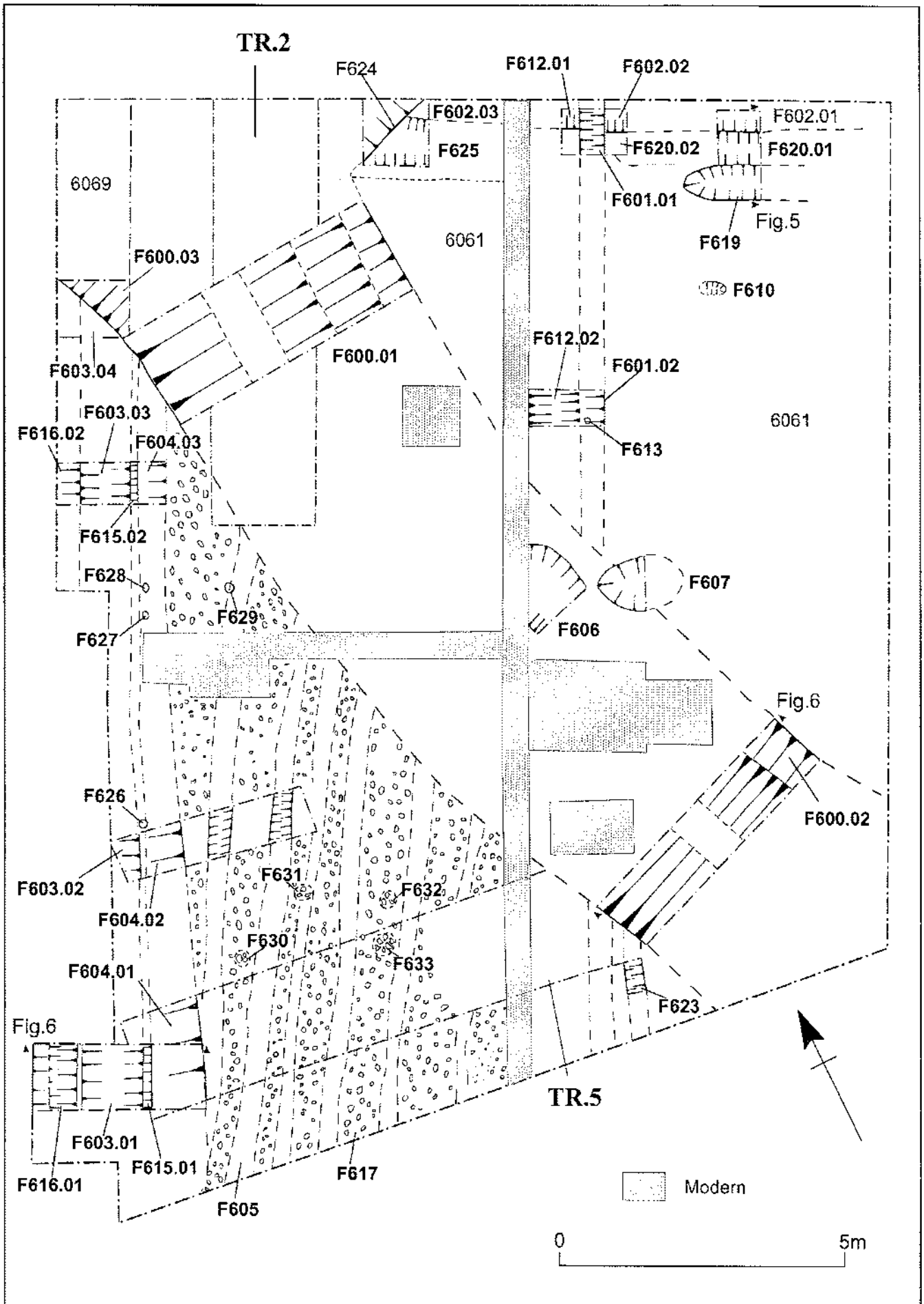


Fig.3

Fig.4

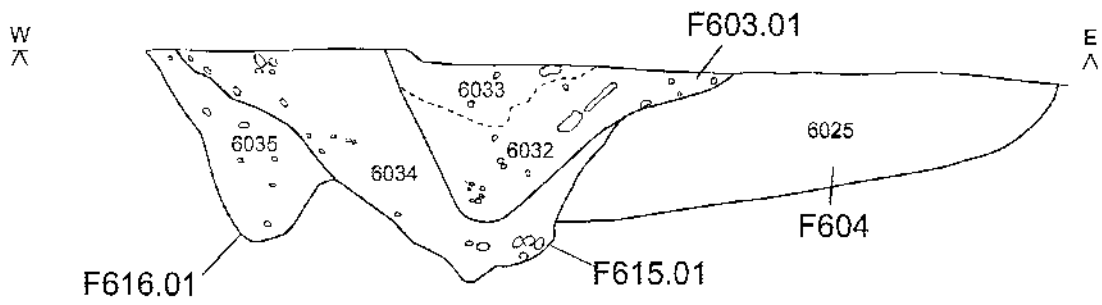


Fig.5

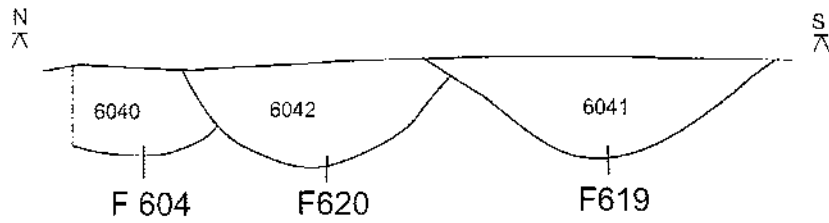
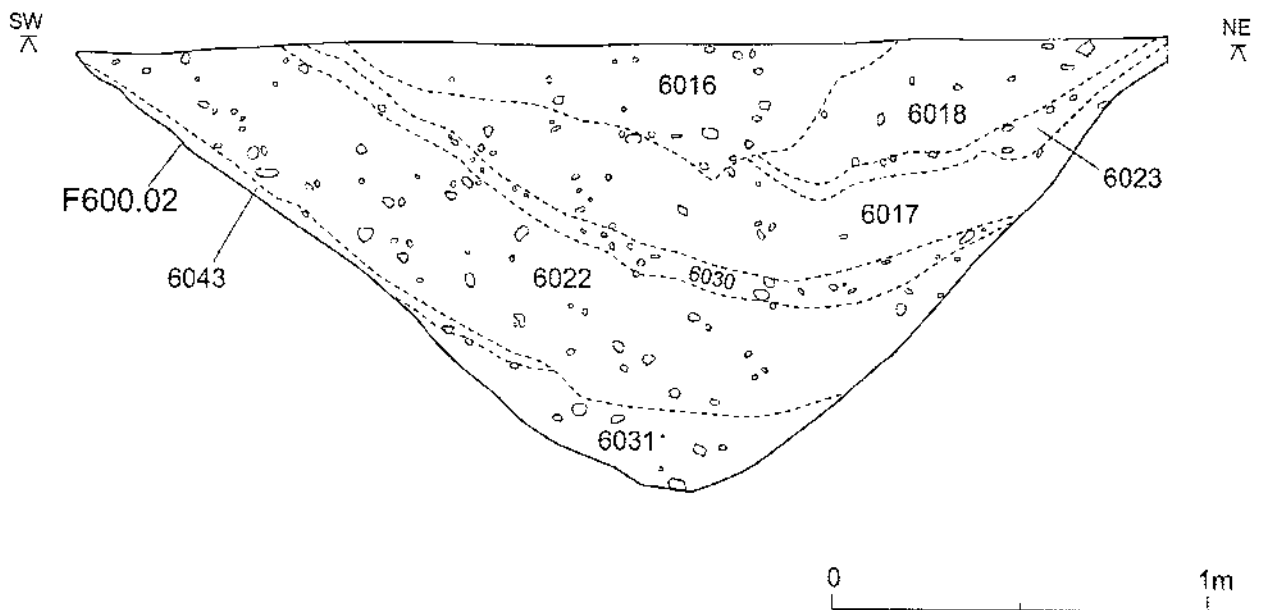


Fig.6



# Trench 4

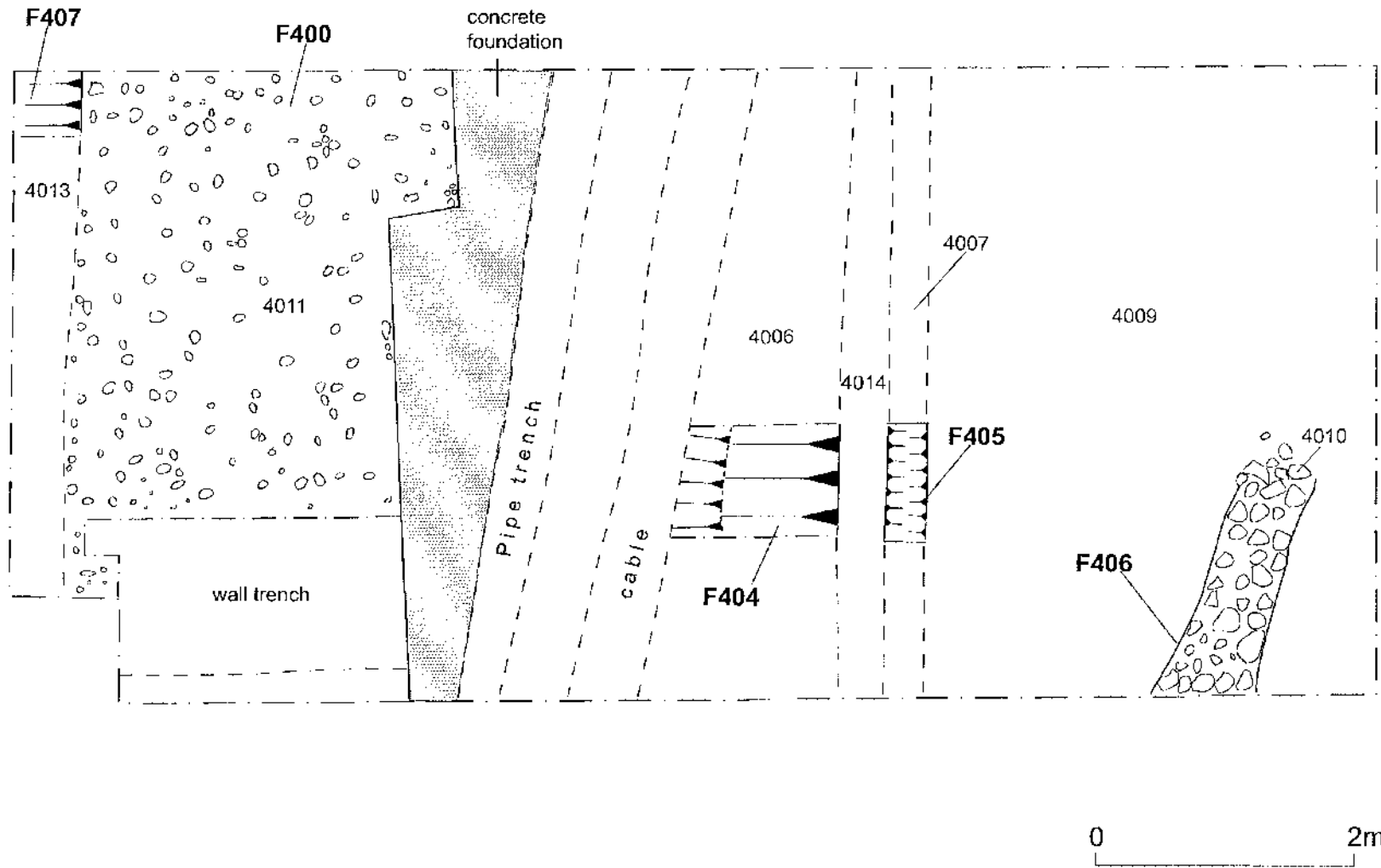


Fig.7

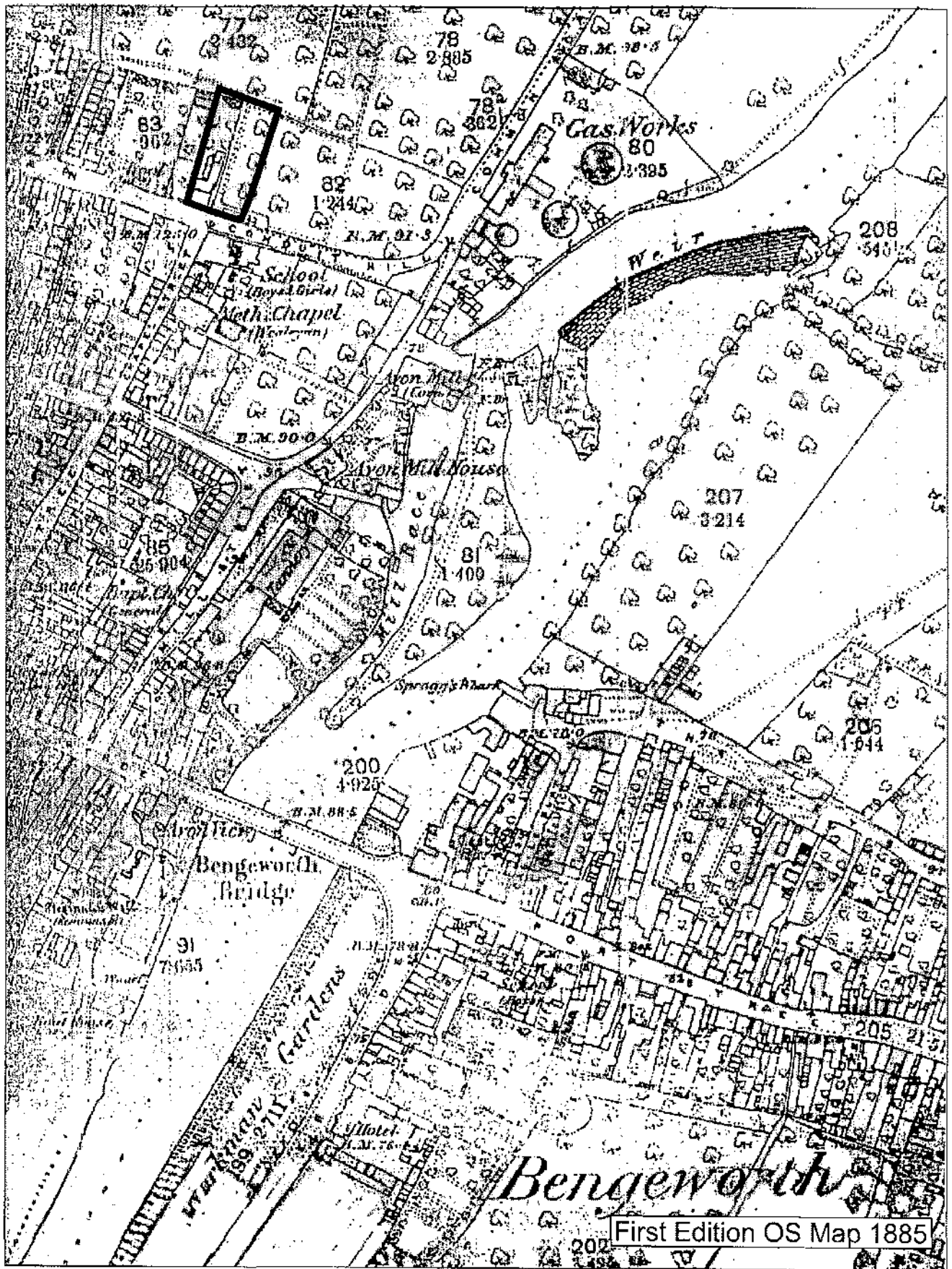


Fig.8







Plate 1

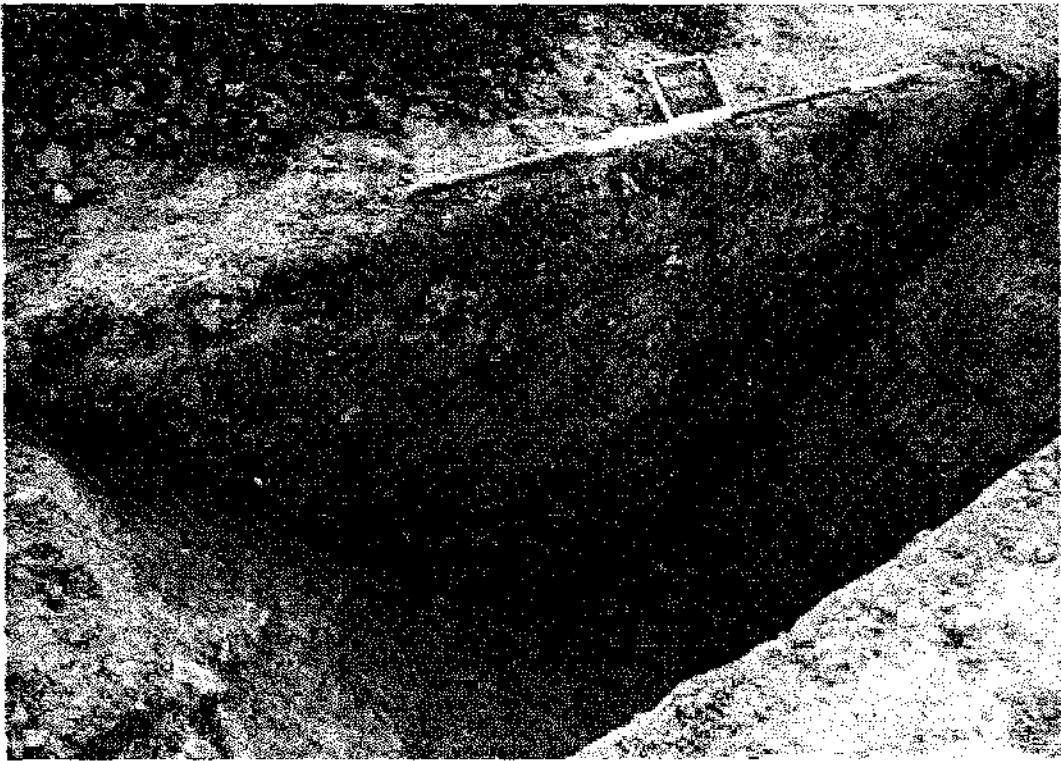


Plate 2



Plate 3

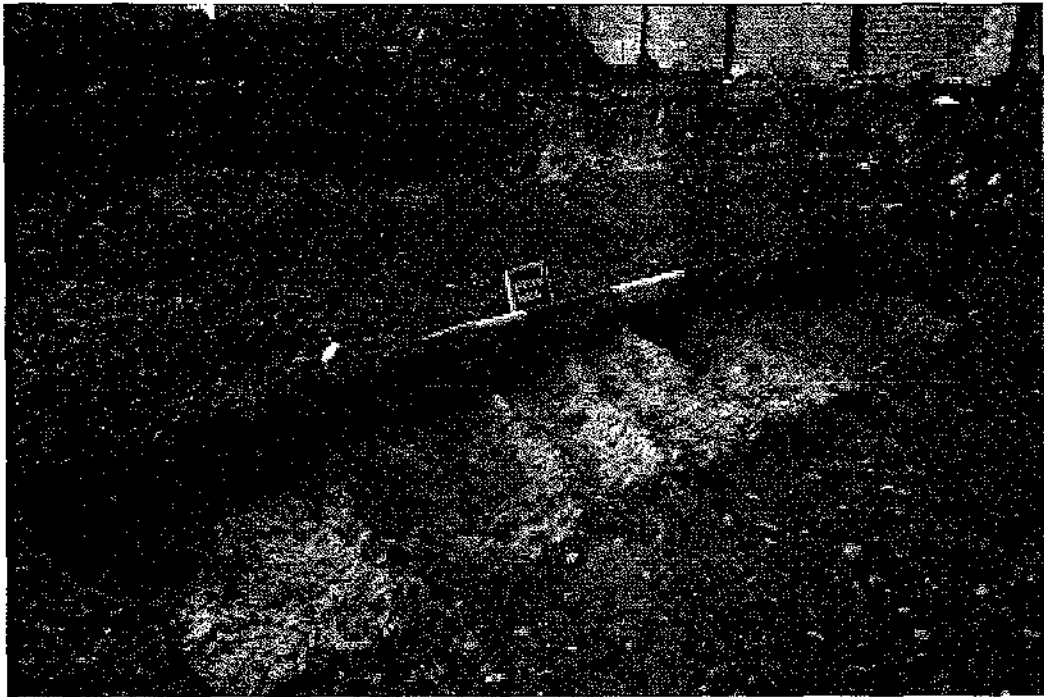


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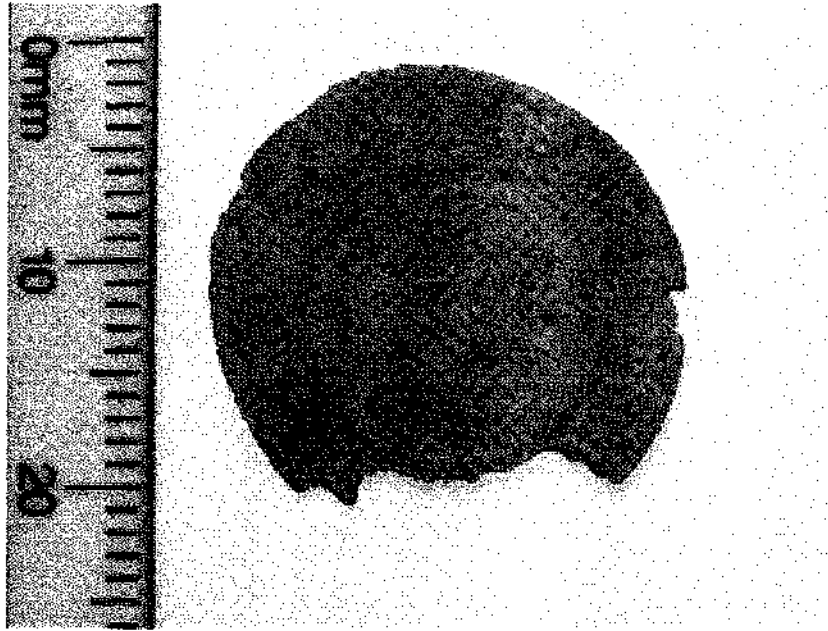
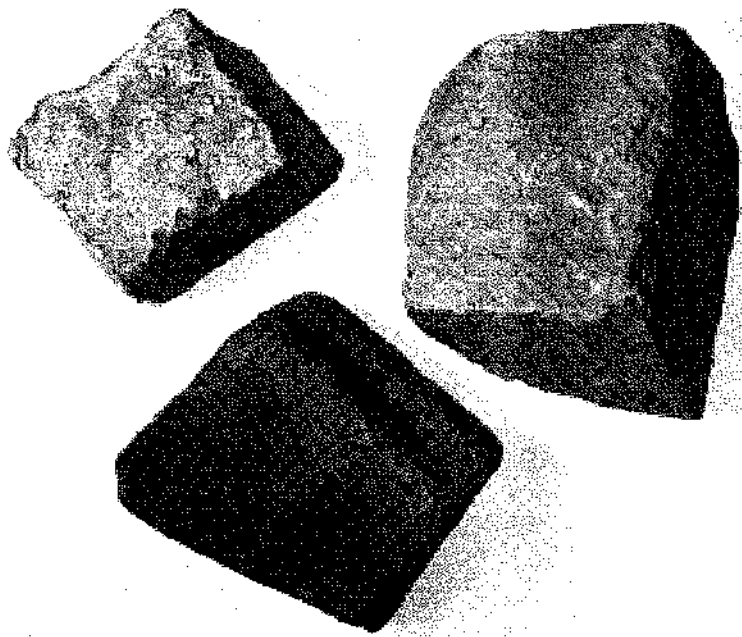


Plate 5



0 4cm

Plate 6



0 2cm

Plate 7

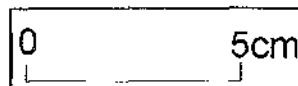
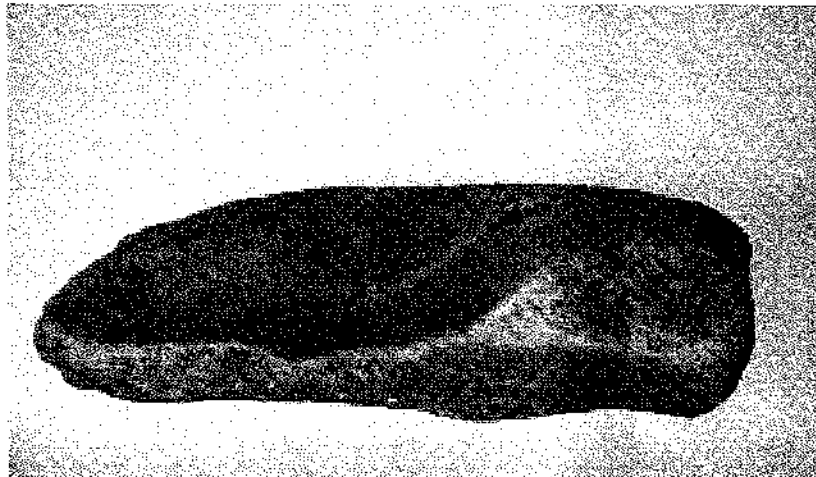


Plate 8