

94.08

94.08 LUCKY LANE 1980  
(Roman military)

**EXCAVATIONS AT LUCKY LANE,  
EXETER, 1980  
PART1: ROMAN MILITARY**

by

**J.B. Bedford and J.P. Salvatore**



**EXETER MUSEUMS ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD UNIT**

**Report No. 94.08**



*One Community, One Voice*

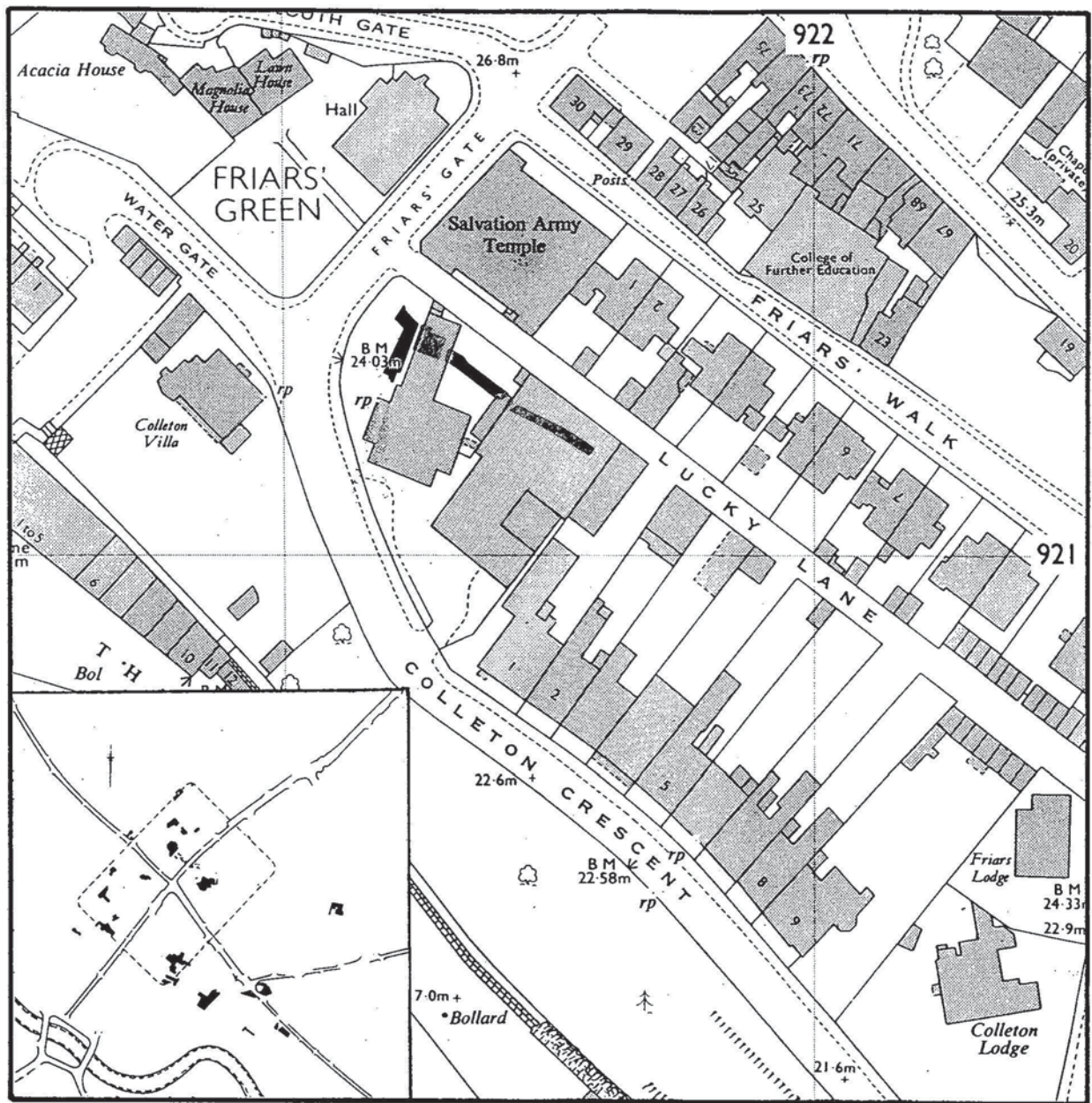


Fig. 1 The location of the Lucky Lane excavations Exeter 1980. The inset shows the approximate position of the site outside the fortress defences.



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## SECTION 1

### 1 Introduction

From February to May 1980 excavations took place in an area enclosed by Lucky Lane, Friars Gate, and Colleton Crescent. This area was undergoing redevelopment of the grounds of the listed Magnolia House which was itself undergoing reconstruction. The excavations were conducted by the Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit (EMAFU) under the directorship of C.G. Henderson. Site supervisors were J. Pamment (now J.P. Salvatore) and P.J. Weddell.

The post-excavation work for this research archive was carried out by J.B. Bedford and J.P. Salvatore. Original post-excavation work was undertaken by P.J. Weddell and this work has provided the basis for this report.

#### 1.1 The organisation of this report

Section 1 contains a site narrative for the Roman military period. This narrative is an interpretive account based upon the discussion of the evidence detailed in Sections 2 and 3.

Section 2 contains the detailed archaeological evidence for those features found on the site which were thought to date to the Roman military period.

Section 3 contains a finds inventory which includes summary dating evidence provided by the pottery.

#### 1.2 The site (Fig.1)

The site was situated about 150m south of the South Gate of the City Wall at SX 9214/9213 and was outside the Roman legionary fortress about 230m south-east of the south-east corner of the defences. The archaeological investigation comprised a series of machine-dug trenches c. 1.5m wide cut on a NW/SE alignment, over a distance of 44m, on the south-eastern side of the site. At the north-western end of this series two separate but closely adjacent excavation areas were dug by hand; that to the south-east was roughly square about 5m x 5m, that to the north-west was rectangular and L-shaped, about 10m by 2.5m.

#### 1.3 Method of excavation

The nature of the investigation was restricted to observations in the trench series plus some open-area excavation conducted in the two larger trenches detailed above; accompanying sections were drawn.

#### 1.4 Excavation summary

Remains of the post-medieval, the medieval and the Roman civil periods were recorded overlying features of the Roman military period. This period at Exeter is dated from c.AD 55/60 - c.75/80. Roman military levels were first encountered at about 22.6m O.D. Only a few features of Roman military date were in fact recorded; the bulk of the features on site related to the remains

of buildings associated with the 13th century Friary (Youngs and Clark 1981, 187-88; 1982, 177).

#### 1.5 Post-excavation applications and site records

A site report, matrices, and other collated post-excavation material had been compiled by P.J. Weddell to whom the present authors are most grateful. The site records, comprising context sheets, field-plans, and plans on permatrace, are stored at the EMAFU offices, Gandy Street, Exeter under project number 74.

#### 1.6 Site narrative: Roman military

Found on the site were six pits. Four of these were likely, from an examination of the pottery from their backfill, to have been Roman military in date. The four pits in question were 6, 7, 147, and 158 (see Fig. 3 in Section 2). Pit 147 was particularly productive and included a medallion from a South Gaulish samian vessel of Dragendorff 29 type probably dated to the pre-Flavian period. A further two pits (206-7) may also have belonged within the same period but these were not investigated in any detail. Two post-holes (160-61) found on the site were suggested at the time of excavation to have been Roman but it is uncertain whether they were military.

#### 1.7 Discussion

The excavations at Lucky Lane have demonstrated the presence of Roman military activity well beyond the immediate environs of the fortress. This activity probably took place within, or perhaps just outside, the military enclosure of pre-Flavian date which was bounded to the north-east by a palisade trench running parallel to the line of the military road. This road, which may have led to a military establishment at the head of the Exe estuary (see Bidwell 1980, 44), ran in a south-easterly direction from the *porta principalis sinistra* of the fortress (see Fig. 2). No sign of a continuation of the palisade trench or other linear feature which may have enclosed the pits was noted although the circumstances were not very favourable for its discovery. The grouping of the pits may be significant. Further pits of Roman military date were found at Friars Walk some 90m due east of the Lucky Lane site (Bedford and Salvatore 1994).

The relationship of the site to the fortress as a whole will be discussed in a future Exeter Archaeological Report (Salvatore and Henderson forthcoming).

#### Acknowledgements

The plans were drawn by various members of the EMAFU and were photographed for reduction by G. Young. Section 2 was typed by A.G. Collings. Pottery

# EXETER : ROMAN MILITARY SITES S.E. OF THE FORTRESS

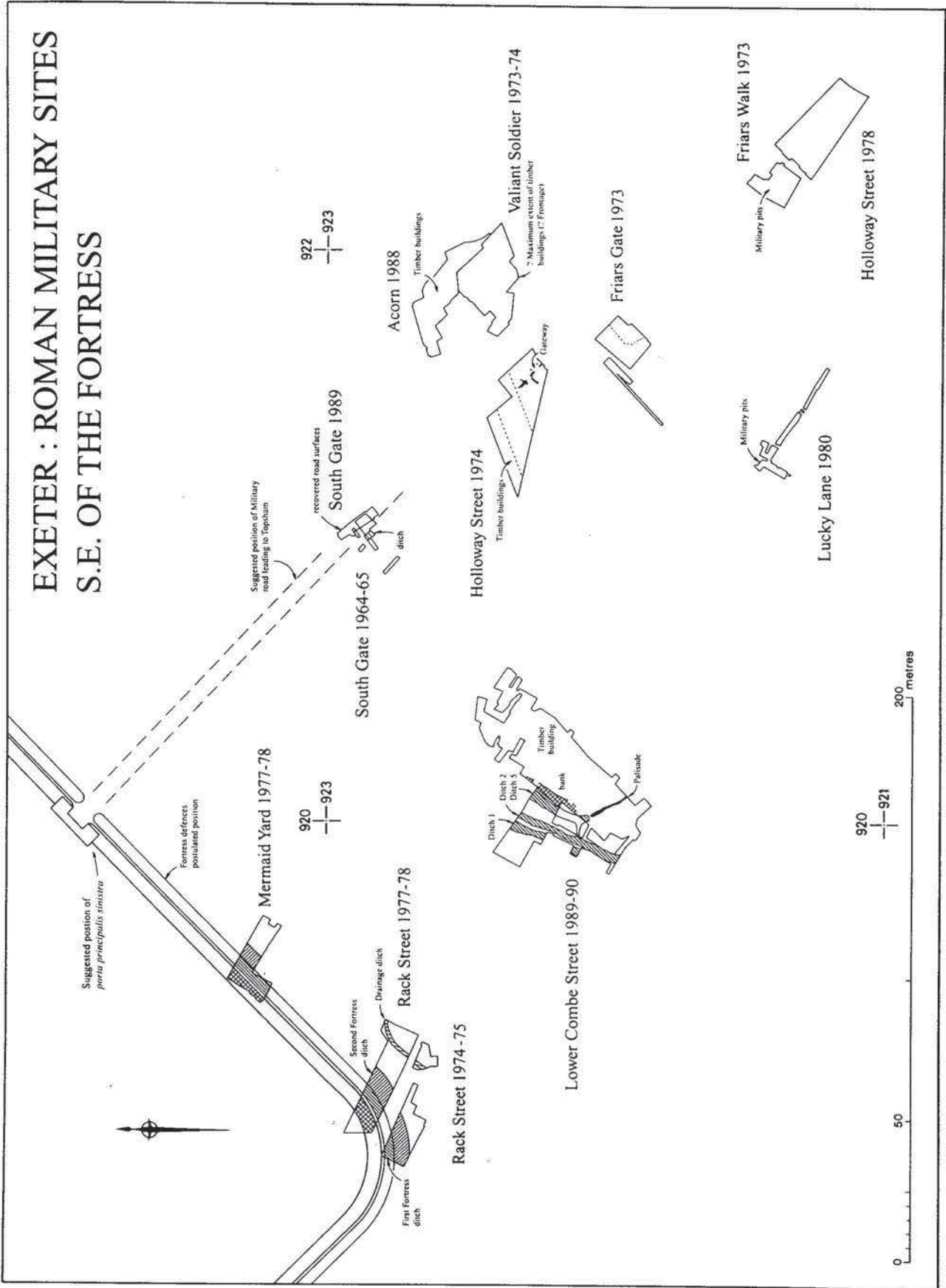


Fig. 2 The Lucky Lane site in relation to other Roman military sites outside the fortress. Scale 1:2000.



listings were provided by G. Langman.

### Bibliography

- Bedford J.B. and Salvatore J.P. 1994 *Excavations at Friars Walk, Exeter, 1974. Part 1: Roman military*, report of the EMAFU: 94.09.
- Bidwell, P.T. 1980 *Roman Exeter: Fortress and Town*.
- Grew F.O. 1981 'Roman Britain in 1980: Sites explored,' *Britannia* 12, 358.
- Holbrook N. and Bidwell P.T. 1992 *Roman Pottery From Exeter 1980-1990*, report of the EMAFU: 92.30.
- Salvatore J.P. and Henderson C.G. forthcoming *The Roman Legionary Fortress at Exeter*, Exeter Archaeological Reports.
- Youngs S.M. and Clark J. 1981 'Medieval Britain in 1980,' *Medieval Archaeology*, 25.
- Youngs S.M. and Clark J. 1982 'Medieval Britain in 1981,' *Medieval Archaeology*, 26.

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## SECTION 2

### 2 Introduction

This section of the report contains a record of the detailed archaeological evidence upon which the narrative produced in Section 1 is based. The lack of a clear stratigraphic sequence for the Roman military levels on the site has resulted in no matrix diagrams having been produced although the features have been grouped and individual contexts are described in a standardised form in numerical order.

#### 2.1 Group identification

The contexts suspected to be of Roman military date on the Lucky Lane site have been dealt with as a single group due to the lack of stratification.

#### 2.2 Context information

Information about individual contexts is provided by the general context index. This index employs an abbreviated 'type' description (e.g. C/F = Cut/Fill). Secondly, a standardised summary description of each context in numerical order is included in the report.

#### 2.3 The group discussions

##### Group 1

This group concerns the Roman military activity on the site. Four pits were located in the excavated areas and a further two were noted during construction work. The pits were clustered in one area on the north-east side of the site. Two of the pits (6 and 7) were fairly large and rectangular. Both contained a fairly clean clay fill, pit 6 also provided much debris in the form of brick

and tile. Two smaller pits were excavated, the more significant one being 147 which contained a reasonable group of pottery in its secondary fill. The other (158), lay partly outside the excavation, and had a very clean sandy fill. Little can be said of the other two pits (206, 207), although they appeared to be rectangular, their full extent could not be established. Another small feature, possibly of Roman date, was noted in the south-west area of the site (218), but no conclusions about its nature can be drawn. Two small features cut into the natural subsoil (160, 161) may also have been Roman, but not necessarily military. They appeared to be sealed by medieval soil and they are best interpreted as post-holes.

Contains contexts: 6, 7, 131, 147, 158, 160, 161, 206, 207, 218.

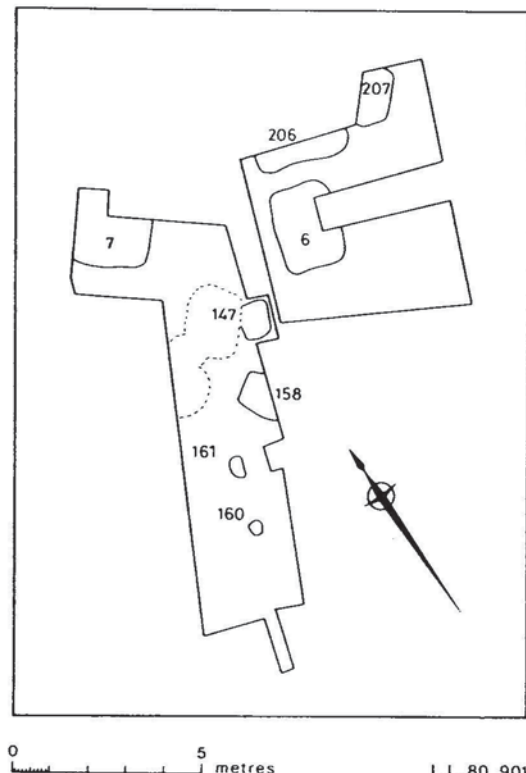


Fig. 3. Simplified plan of Group 1 showing the suspected Roman military features. Scale 1:200.

## 2.4 The context descriptions and main indices

## List of abbreviations (for contexts)

Depth	D	North	N
Diameter	Diam	Occasional	occ
East	E	South	S
Fragment	frag	Volcanic	volc
Frequent	freq	Waterworn	ww
Height	H	West	W
Length	Le	Width	Wth
Maximum	Max		

## CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

- 6 Pit, rectangular; fill of very light brown clay loam, soft, with small slate fragments, charcoal flecks, some small crushed mortar lumps. Le = 2.15m, Wth = 1.15m, D = 1.37m.
- 7 Pit, probably rectangular; fill of light red-brown gravelly clay loam, fairly compact, very clean. Dimensions given, but not fully excavated: Le = 2.0m, Wth = 1.9m, D = unrecorded.
- 131 Layer within pit 6, around the edge of the pit, yellowish firm clay with tile and brick. D = unrecorded.
- 147 Pit, four fills: 1) light reddish brown clayey loam, compact, stony, small stones, gravel inclusions, many ww pebbles; 2) very pebbly clay loam, mid-brown, sandstone flecks, tile flecks; 3) yellow brown clay loam, angular stones, tile, charcoal, pottery, glass; 4) light brown clay loam, charcoal. Le = 0.95m, Wth = 0.80m, D = 0.90m.
- 158 Pit, flat-bottomed, rectangular; fill of firm reddish brown clay, water-worn pebbles, tile, charcoal flecks, small stones, iron. Le = 1.2m, Wth = 0.95m, D = 0.88m.
- 160 Post-hole, fill of light brown clay loam, small pebbles, stones. Diam = 0.40m, D = unrecorded.
- 161 Post-hole, one of a pair with 160, reddish brown clay loam; fill with small stones, pebbles. Diam = 0.50m, D = 0.19m.
- 206 Pit, fill of grey-brown clay loam. Le = 2.5m, Width (as excavated) = 0.5m, D = unrecorded.
- 207 Pit, fill of grey-brown clay loam. Le = 1.4m, Width = 0.80m, D = unrecorded.
- 218 ?Gully, possibly aligned NE/SW, no stratigraphic relationships other than cut natural, sealed by a medieval soil. Dimensions unrecorded.

## GENERAL CONTEXT INDEX

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Plan</i>
6	C/F	801
7	C/F	801
131	F	801
147	C/F	801
158	C/F	801
160	C/F	801
161	C/F	801
206	C/F	801
207	C/F	801
218	C	-

## ARCHIVE SECTION INDEX

<i>Context</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Sheet</i>	<i>Location</i>
6	6, 16	-	-
7	3, 14	-	-
131	-	-	-
147	9	801	801
158	12	801	801
160	-	-	-
161	-	-	-
206	-	-	-
207	-	-	-
218	-	-	-



# EXETER : LUCKY LANE 1980

801

## Roman

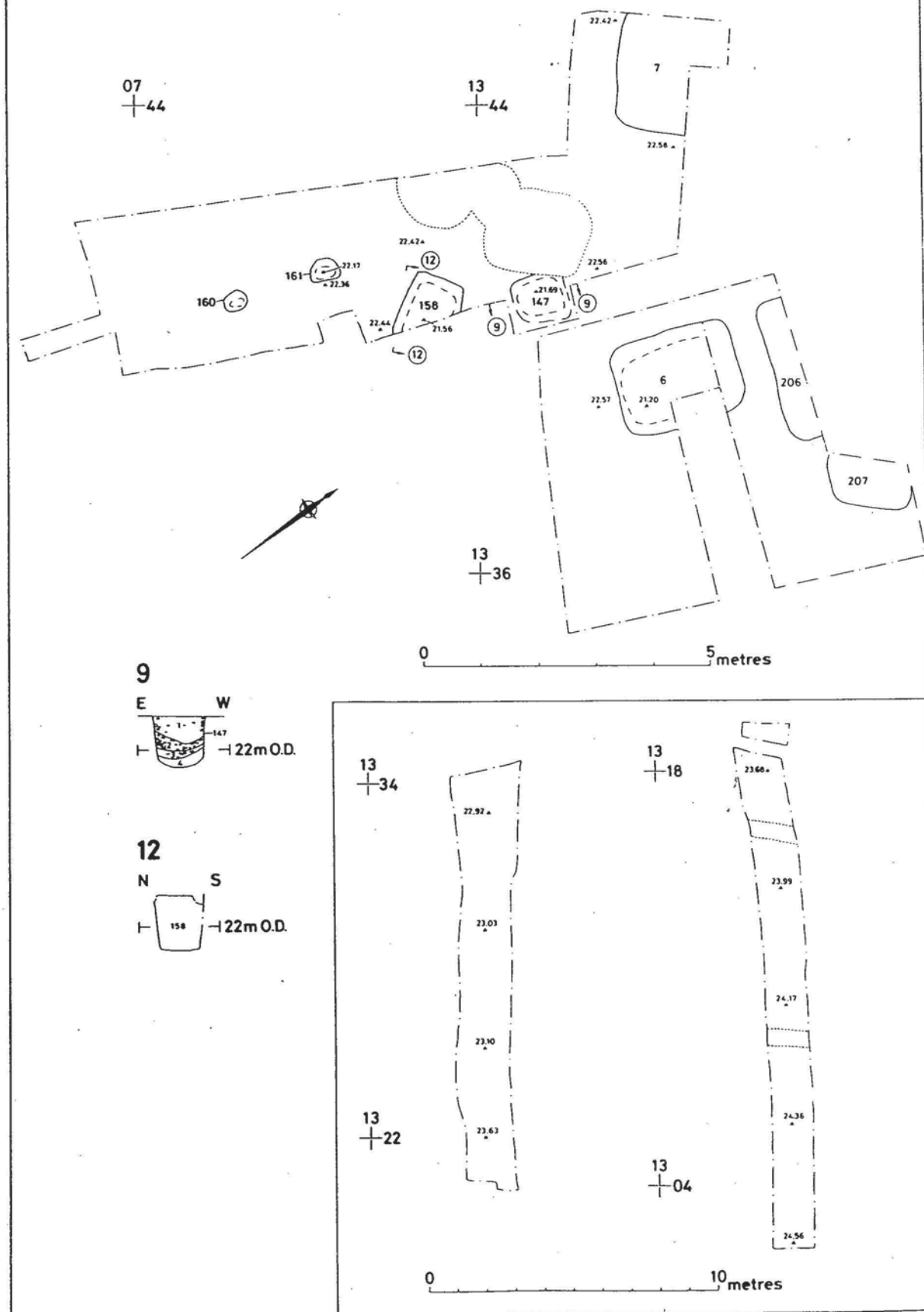


Fig. 4 Plan and sections of the Roman military remains (801). Scales 1:100/1:200

## SECTION 3

## 3 Introduction

Found below are details of the pottery finds including some notes on the dating of individual shards and other information where relevant. Figure references (eg. Fig. 13/25 refer to illustrations in Holbrook and Bidwell 1992). Pottery from the site is stored at the RAM Museum, Queen Street, Exeter under site code LL80.

## 3.1 The finds listings and other indices

## Glossary of abbreviations for finds inventory

<i>Fabric No.</i>	<i>Type</i>
3	?Local coarseware fabric
31*	South-East Dorset Black-Burnished Ware
40*	South-Western Black-Burnished Ware
151*	Exeter Sandy Grey Ware
190*	Fortress Ware B
406*	Flagon fabric
435*	Flagon fabric
500	Samian-South Gaulish Type
503	Lyon Ware (Pre-Flavian)
600	Dressel 20 (Peacock & Williams 1986, Class 25), amphora
604	South Spanish
612	Unspecified/Unassigned, amphora

(\* = Fabric Number Used In EAR 4)

For descriptions and discussions of fabric and types mentioned see Holbrook and Bidwell (1991).

*Type abbreviations*

999	Unspecified Type
BRJ	Bead Rim Jar
CP	Cooking Pot
Dr.	Dragendorff (Samian type)

*Miscellaneous*

MNV	Minimum number of vessels
Qty	Quantity
Wt	Weight in grams

## FINDS INVENTORY

*Pottery*

6

Fabric	31	
Fabric	40	
Fabric	190	
Fabric	435	(base)

7

Fabric	?3	
Fabric	151	
Type	34	(Fig.13/25)
Fabric	?604	Wt 50
Fabric	612	Wt 75

147

Fabric	31	
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Type	CP	
		(unusual looped decoration on body)
Fabric	40	
Type	CP	
Type	BRJ	
Fabric	151	
Fabric	190	
Type	12	
Fabric	406	
Type	1	
Fabric	500	
Type	Dr.29	Wt 8
		(c. 50-770 AD, Dec Fig.1/11)
Type	Dr.?30	Wt 75
Fabric	503	
Fabric	600	Wt 800
Fabric	?604	Wt 25
Fabric	612	Wt 75

158

Fabric	406
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## BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR FINDS INVENTORY

- Holbrook N. and Bidwell P.T. 1991 *Roman Finds From Exeter*, Exeter Archaeological Reports: 4.  
 Holbrook N. and Bidwell P.T. 1992 *Roman Pottery From Exeter*, EMAFU report: 92.30.  
 Peacock D.P.S. and Williams D 1986 *Amphorae and the Roman economy*.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX

<i>Context</i>	<i>B/W</i>	<i>Slide</i>
147	707/5,6	74.29,33,34
158	707/5	74.33,34



Plate 1 Pit grouping showing pit 147 cut by a later pit. Pit 158 in background to left. Looking S/W.