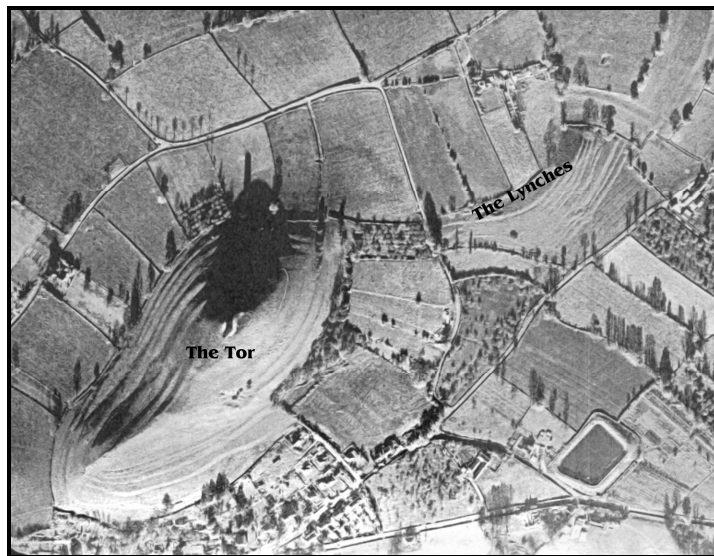


**An
Archaeological Watching Brief
at
Glastonbury Tor
during the
Entrances and Pathways
Enhancement**

GTOR01

Carried out for The National Trust



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Report number 312

<p>GLASTONBURY TOR Entrances and Pathways Enhancement Archaeological Watching Brief G TOR 01</p>

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SUMMARY

Refurbishment of the two public entrance gates, the resurfacing or repaving of some paths and the construction of new paths on Glastonbury Tor was subject to archaeological monitoring, providing opportunities to record the stratigraphy in those areas and also to test the popular theory of an ancient maze employing the principles of scientific method. Archaeological features revealed during the repaving included postholes, ditches and walls. The terraces were numbered and described as individual features for the first time and testing of the maze theory using scientific method suggests that the maze theory does not stand up to scrutiny. Recommendations for future archaeological requirements have been framed as a series of testable theories and hypothesis.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

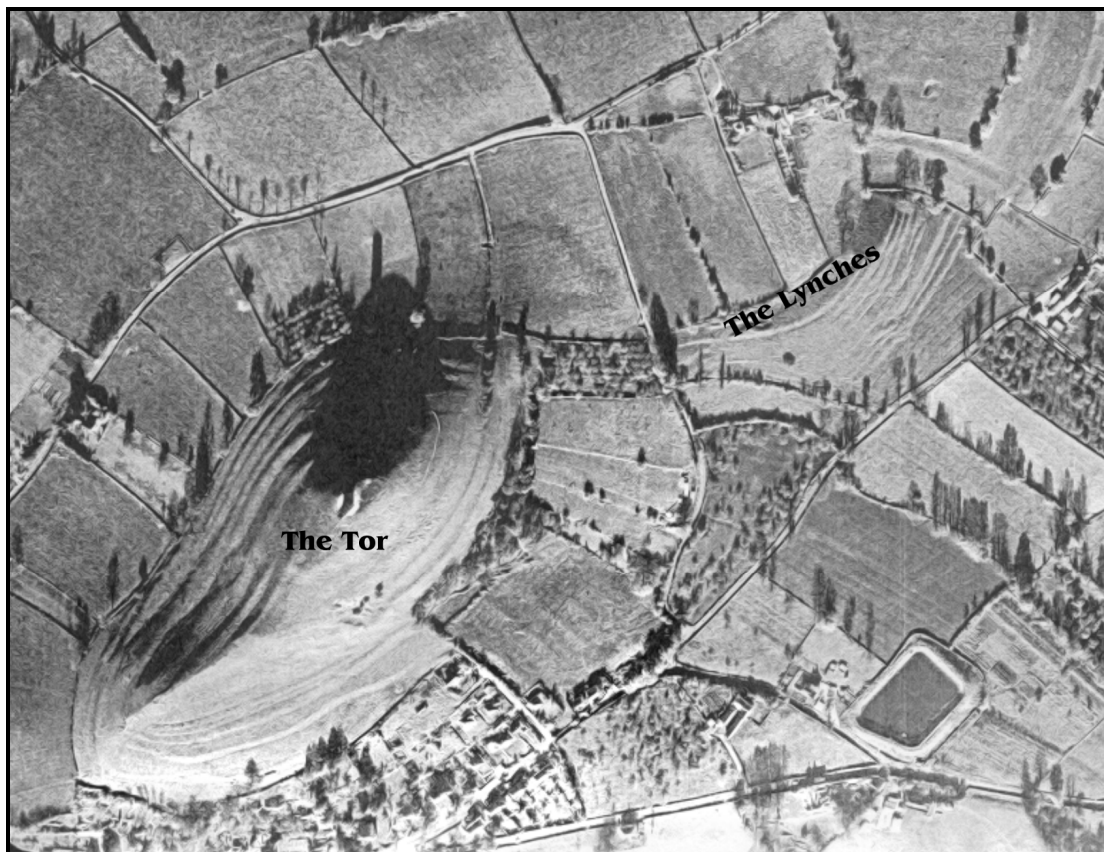


Figure 1. Aerial photograph of the Tor and the Lynchies¹

1.1 Glastonbury Tor, a steep, isolated hill encircled by roughly horizontal terraces and crowned by a medieval church tower, is an instantly recognizable

¹ Cambridge University Air Photographs 7/11/1975 121

landmark. Its image is used by both the county council and the district council for publicity, and as an advertisement for, *inter alia*, Taunton Cider and Clarke's shoes.

1.2 The parish of Glastonbury contains a variety of internationally important archaeological sites including the Iron Age Lake Village, Glastonbury Abbey and the Tor. The archaeological background of the Glastonbury Tor and of its immediate environs was the subject of a detailed report in 1997², summarized in chapter 2 below.

1.3 In recent years Glastonbury has become an increasingly popular tourist destination, with a climb to the summit of the Tor being deemed to be one of the highlights of the visit. The National Trust, owners and custodians of Tor Hill, have undertaken a programme of maintenance and improvements to the paths, gates, benches and stiles and they have engaged consultant archaeologists Charles and Nancy Hollinrake to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the remedial works by local builders C. J. Cribb and Sons. C. and N. Hollinrake have constructed the research design described below in order to obtain the maximum information from the watching brief.

As a precursor to the remedial works, a report on the stability of the slopes of Tor Hill was carried out by E. J. Wilson & Associates³. They concluded that the summit plateau, the steep slopes beneath the shoulder and the lower slopes all appear to be stable (although there is some local slumping and superficial sliding beneath the shoulder below the summit), that the medieval church was destroyed by an earthquake rather than through landslip and that the terracing is man-made, either agricultural terraces or defensive earthworks. They found no evidence for any serious instability of the Tor Hill.

1.4 The Tor is a focal point for 'alternative' or 'New Age' theories, especially the belief that the terracing forms a three dimensional maze, and it is hoped that the watching brief results will help to clarify the arguments for and against this theory.

² Hollinrake, C. & N., 1997.

³ Wilson, E. J., 1999.

2.0 BACKGROUND⁴

2.1 Several medieval documents including the 13th century, forged, 'Charter of St. Patrick' relate to the Tor. The 1243 charter of Henry III granted permission for the fair "at the monastery of St. Michael on the Tor" to be extended from two to five days.

2.2 The Tor belonged to Glastonbury Abbey and the summit was crowned by a church or chapel which was destroyed by an earthquake in 1275. The present tower is all that survives of the rebuilt 14th century church, the remainder of the building being destroyed in the 16th or 17th century after the Dissolution of the monastery in 1539.

2.3 Excavations on the summit of the Tor, undertaken between 1964 and 1966 by Philip Rahtz⁵, uncovered archaeological features and finds ranging from the prehistoric period onwards. Fragments of Roman pottery and tile finds were assumed to have been brought onto the site for re-use in the post-Roman period. The foundations of two churches were recorded, pottery sherds suggesting that the earlier church was probably late Saxon or Norman in date. Probably the most important results of the excavations were the recording of Dark Age (6th/7th century) features and the recovery of imported Byzantine Mediterranean pottery of that period, and the recording of late-Saxon buildings and cells, interpreted as part of a small monastic site.

The Dark Age finds and features are rare and important, resulting in the summit and tower (but not the remainder of the hill) being listed as a Scheduled Monument (SM no. 23603).

2.4 In the medieval period, the terraces and strip fields on the lower slopes became incorporated into Glastonbury's medieval open, arable fields; some strips being incorporated into 'Tor Field' and 'Stone Down' whilst others became a part of Coxwithy open field. These strips, and the ownership and tenancy arrangements associated with them, were still being cultivated as late as the 19th century where they were recorded on the 1821 parish Rates Map and the 1844 Tithe Map (see Figure 7).

⁴ Hollinrake, C. & N., 1997.

⁵ Rahtz, 1971.

2.5 In recent decades Glastonbury has become a centre for various concepts and philosophies, popularly known as 'New Age' theories, which have led to re-interpretation of the past by their promoters and followers. Theories regarding prehistoric religious practices and beliefs have been produced by many writers from Glastonbury and elsewhere with such industry that ley lines, zodiacs and various other landscape concepts (the most recent being crop circles) have received widespread public acceptance.

2.6 One of the most popular alternative theories is that of the Glastonbury Tor maze, first proposed by Geoffrey Russell in the 1970's. Briefly stated, the theory proposes that the terraces on the Tor are the remains of a large, three dimensional maze.

2.7 The maze theory was accepted as a possibility by Philip Rahtz who commented that ".If he [Russell] is right, such a major work could only be early prehistoric, of the Neolithic period, in the third or second millennia BC; engineering skill at this time is well attested by the great earth and stone moving operations of the henges such as Avebury. The maze would have been a major cultural and religious focus for the area, initiating the fame of Glastonbury in later times. It is at least more credible than the [Glastonbury] 'Zodiac'..."⁶

2.8 By common consent, huge construction projects creating large bank and ditch systems or enormous mounds (Durrington Walls, Avebury, Silbury Hill, The Dorset Cursus etc.), occurred in prehistory during the Neolithic or early-Bronze Age periods - broadly 3,500BC - 2,500BC - or, for hillforts and similar large defensive works, during the early to late-Iron Age - broadly 600BC - 40AD.

If the Tor maze is assumed to be a religious feature, then the terraces are usually believed to have been constructed in the Neolithic/Bronze Age. If the terraces were considered to be the remains of defensive banks and ditches, however, then an Iron Age date might be considered to be more likely, using the many Iron Age hillforts as analogies.

⁶ Rahtz and Watts, 2003, p. 68.

In either of these cases, terraces could have been planned and constructed as a 'prestige project' as might be appropriate for such a striking location.

2.9 This paper proposes, therefore, to take the Tor maze theory seriously by devising a research framework whereby the data relevant to the theory might be collected and considered in a systematic and rational manner employing scientific method.

3.0 THE TOR MAZE: DEFINITION OF TERMS

3.1 In order to fully discuss the evidence required to either confirm or refute the maze theory, it was necessary to clearly define the phenomenon being investigated before the investigation began. The various papers and publications written by the leading proponents of the maze theory have been studied and the key elements used by them to support their hypotheses are noted below.

3.2 The theory of the Tor maze was first propounded and popularized locally by Mr. Geoffrey Russell who commissioned a detailed contour survey of Tor Hill and produced a scaled model which was exhibited in Street Library in 1973.

3.3 Russell's theory was taken up, expanded and published by local author and Arthurian authority Mr. Geoffrey Ashe. His main points are as follows:⁷

3.3.1 The terraces constitute the remains of a maze constructed by human agency.

3.3.2 The maze is a 'long, twisting, devious approach to a centre', i.e.: one single path throughout its length.

3.3.3 The maze completely encircles Tor Hill seven times and ends at the summit. The terraces should be numbered I to VII, starting from the base.

Apparent gaps in this continuous pathway are the results of agricultural activities, erosion - either from agricultural or animal traffic - and/or slumping. For this reason it is difficult to see the complete route of the maze.

3.3.4 The maze was created in 'the remote past' for ritual use.

3.3.5 The maze on the Tor was copied from depictions of mazes on Greek coins. It is the pattern of the Cretan Labyrinth. Ancient mazes are also known from Etruscan vases of the C7thBC, a pillar at Pompeii and mazes scratched on rocks at Tintagel and in County Wicklow. It is a universal symbol and is known, for instance, by the Hopi Indians, who used it as a 'Mother Earth' symbol.

3.3.6 Ashe also proposed some alternative theories for the terraces (with reservations), viz:

⁷ Ashe 1979.

- Cattle tracks (too wide);
- Spiral route to get a horse and cart to the top (sections too steep);
- Agricultural features e.g. vineyards;
- Natural geology.

and he suggested that..."...the only useful procedure is to see whether the system has features which the maze theory accounts for and the others do not."

3.4 The Tor maze theory has also been popularized by local 'New Age' teacher Ms. Kathy Jones and the following points are presented on her website⁸ as follows:

- 3.4.1** The Tor carries seven levels of terracing, some easier to see than others, which are the remains of a maze.
- 3.4.2** The maze follows the same pattern as the Cretan Labyrinth. This pattern is also found on Cretan coins, at Tintagel and among the Hopi Indians as a symbol of Mother Earth.
- 3.4.3** The maze is a single pathway following the terraces from the bottom to the top. Walking along the pathway is a form of meditation, revealing 'our destiny in Herworld.'

3.5 The Maze has also been publicized on Mr. Sig Loengrin's website⁹ as follows:

- 3.5.1** The Cretan maze pattern with key pattern, or meander, has been dated to 15,000 to 18,000 BC.
- 3.5.2** Walking the maze demonstrates its reality.
- 3.6** All of the above writers are in agreement as to the course of the maze pathway. (See figure 2 below)

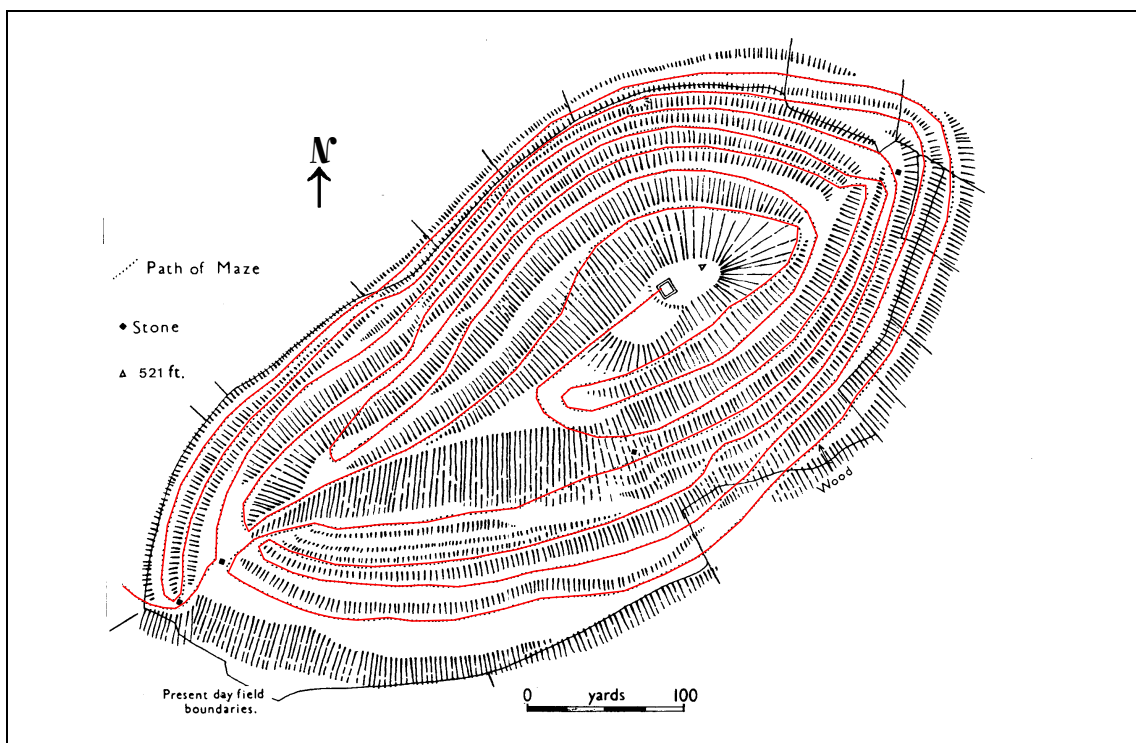


Figure 2, the route of the maze on the Tor, from Nick Mann, 1986.

⁸ www.isleofavalon.co.uk/local/features/torgoddess.html

⁹ www.geomancy.org/labyrinth/glastonbury/tor4.html

4.0 HYPOTHESES AND COROLLARIES

In this section, synthesis and analysis of the above theories is effected by converting them into a series of hypotheses numbered consecutively H1, H2, etc.. Each of these hypotheses engenders one or more corollaries, numbered C1, C2, etc., by which they might be tested with greater or less efficiency. Likewise, if the corollaries are found not to apply, the original hypothesis is refuted. By these means a series of what might appear to be insignificant or minor findings or observations can be channeled into confirmation or refutation of the overall maze hypothesis. The use of hypotheses and corollaries is also a way of giving appropriate significance to negative findings. This theoretical framework was constructed before the watching brief commenced.

4.1 H1: The terraces on the Tor are the remains of one large, complex structure.

4.1.1 C1 A structure is, and therefore the terraces are, artificial.

Comment If the terraces were a consequence of natural geology then they would result from different strata of differing hardness, weathering at differing rates.

The presence and distribution of disturbed soils should reveal the presence of artificial features (see Figures 3 - 5 below). and this would be especially marked on the terraces risers where the gradients are even more exaggerated than on the natural (?) slopes. If the terraces are artificial, the risers may have been reinforced or stabilized in some way, especially on the higher, steeper slopes.

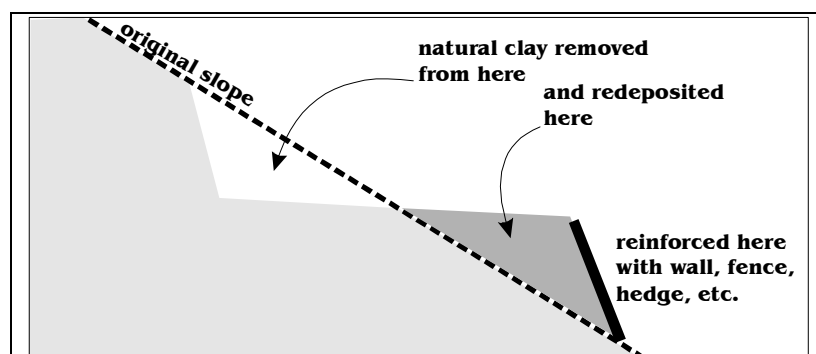


Figure 3. Schematic section through an artificial terrace

4.1.2 C2 If all of the terraces form part of a single structure, then all of the terraces must display uniformity in some way, e. g.: in either

- Structure;
- Appearance;
- and/or Date (see C7).

Comment: The construction of a maze could incorporate earlier features so differences in structure (between different individual terraces, for instance) may not necessarily be evidence that the maze does not exist. However, it would be impossible to argue that all of the terraces form part of one structure without some indication of some kind of uniformity. The existence and form of a path would constitute the best kind of positive evidence.

4.1.3 C3 If the terraces were originally constructed to carry a maze path, then every part of every terrace must be part of the maze.

Comment: If there are portions of terraces or entire terraces which do not form part of the proposed maze, this can only mean that some or all of the terraces were constructed for another purpose. If that is the case, then the hypothesis that the terraces were constructed in order to form the maze is disproved, although there could still be a maze that was constructed from pre-existing terraces.

4.1.4 C4 If the terraces were constructed to carry a maze, which by definition is meant to be walked along, then they must carry a pathway, designed for foot traffic.

Comment: It must be possible to walk on each terrace, for example...

- 1) they should display a wide enough berm for passage, and
- 2) they should display evidence that they have been walked on, either in the form of a hard, trampled, eroded surfaces or with some form of surface metalling.

Existing pathways which have not been protected with concrete could be considered to be a type of control model.

4.2 H2: The terraces carry a continuous pathway; any apparent discontinuity is the result of erosion. (see C5)

4.2.1 C5 For **H2** to be true, Tor Hill should show signs of erosion (and erosion on other steep slopes in the area should be studied for comparison.) Furthermore, traces of connecting pathways or features, e.g. steps, should appear immediately adjacent to the erosion.

Comment: This hypothesis deals with the issues concerning the stability of the Tor and erosion. The upper, steeper slopes on Wearyall Hill (c1.5km to the west) are presently actively eroding and slipping, partly due to the wet weather, and can be used as a control model. Areas of slumping similar to those on Wearyall Hill are not evident on either Tor Hill or on the lower slopes.

4.3 H3 The maze on the Tor is an ancient feature. (See C1)

4.3.1 C6 The terraces were created in antiquity.

4.3.2 C7 All of the terraces were constructed at the same time, demonstrating that they were all part of a single construct.

Comment: **H3** and its corollaries **C6** and **C7** are concerned with the two main issues surrounding the date of the alleged maze, the first suggestion being that the maze is ancient, a vague notion at best, and the second that all of the terraces are part of the maze (**C1** & **C3**) and must, therefore, have a similar construction date.

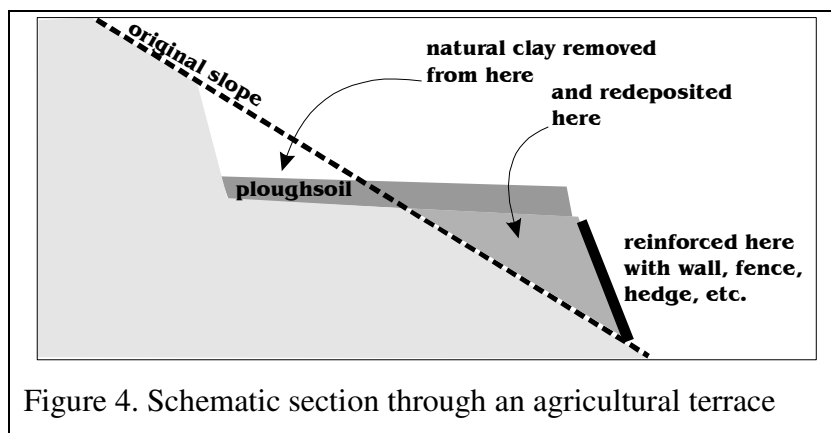
In the absence of dateable finds, evidence for antiquity, albeit imprecise, might be found in the folklore surrounding the Tor and/or its wider landscape.

4.4 H4 The terraces form seven circuits of the hill.

C8 It is acknowledged by Ashe and Loengrin that this does not appear to be the case. They both suggest that there were seven terraces originally but some of the terraces are difficult to see due to erosion.

4.5 H5 The terraces were constructed for agricultural purposes.

4.5.1 C9 The level surfaces of the terraces carry the remains of a ploughsoil or cultivated soil.



4.5.2 C10 Terraces on other steep slopes in the vicinity display signs of agriculture

4.5.3 C11: The terraces are suitable for agriculture and would have been considered so in the past.

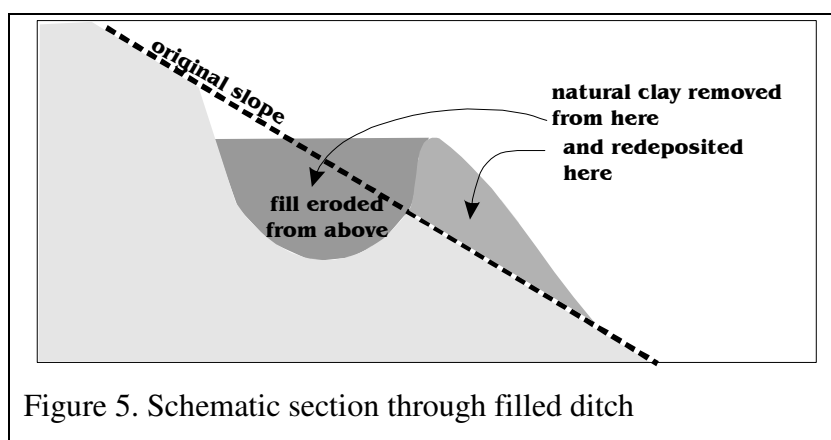
Comment: If a cultivated soil were detected on these upper terraces then that would be suggestive of agriculture; other signs of agriculture would be plough marks on the surface of the subsoil. The survival of pollen or plant macrofossils is unlikely given the exposed conditions.

4.6 The forgoing hypotheses and corollaries are derived from various papers and publications discussing the Tor and its terraces. This is an appropriate point to consider whether there are any other possible interpretations for the terraces that have not yet been discussed. Reference to other hills and hill slopes in Somerset displaying similar features indicates that there are only two possible explanations for a series of earthwork terraces. The first, and by far the most numerous, is that they are the remains of agricultural terraces; the second is that they originate as defensive features - banks and ditches - encircling prehistoric hill forts. There are many Iron Age hill forts in the county, and elsewhere, identified by one or more bank and ditch systems encircling more or less level summits. Some of the encircling features now resemble level terraces, for example at Dundon Beacon, a hillfort approximately 8kilometres to the south of Glastonbury.

Whilst the summit of the Tor would appear to be far too small to have functioned as a hillfort (although perfectly adequate for an observation post or beacon, for instance, which might equally be protected by earthworks), the possibility that some of the terraces on the Tor might be silted-up ditches must be a possibility. For the sake of completeness, therefore, the final hypothesis should read:

H6: The terraces on the Tor are the remains of defensive features, i.e. ditches.

C13 If ditches are cut into a steep slope they will collect and contain material eroded from higher levels. Given sufficient erosion, it is possible for these ditches to accumulate so much material that they take on the *appearance* of terraces.



4.7 To summarise, investigation of the Tor terraces falls within the following corollaries (keywords to each corollary have been underlined):

If the terraces form a maze:

H1: The terraces on the Tor are the remains of one large, complex structure.

H2: The terraces carry a continuous pathway; any apparent discontinuity is the result of erosion.

H3 The maze on the Tor is an ancient feature.

H4 The terraces form seven circuits of the hill.

C1 The terraces are artificial.

C2 One structure: All of the terraces must display uniformity in some way or other, either in...

- Structure;
- Appearance;
- or Date (see C7).

C3 One route: The areas between the ledges of the terraces, where the plans of the maze are shown to connect with each other, and where it is argued that the continuity of the pathway has been destroyed by erosion (see C6), should display some indications of an attempt to form a connection,

e.g. the path ceases, or the beginnings of a vertical course, possibly steps.

- C4** One structure: The terraces were constructed for the maze, therefore every part of every terrace is part of the maze.
- C5** The terraces carry a pathway, designed for foot traffic.
- C6** Tor Hill should show signs of erosion (and for comparison, erosion on other steep slopes in the area should be studied.) The traces of connecting pathways or features, e.g. steps, should appear immediately adjacent to the erosion.
- C7** The terraces were created in antiquity.
- C8** All of the terraces were created more or less contemporaneously, demonstrating that they were all part of a single construct.
- C9** The terraces form seven circuits of the hill.

If the terraces were agricultural strip lynchets:

- H5** The terraces were constructed for agricultural purposes.
 - C10** The level tops of the terraces carry the remains of a ploughsoil or a cultivated soil.
 - C11** There are signs of agriculture on the steep slopes in the vicinity.
 - C12** The terraces are suitable for agriculture or would have been considered so in the past.

If the terraces are defensive:

- H6:** The terraces on the Tor are the remains of defensive features.
 - C13** The features which appear to be terraces are actually ditches which have silted up to their rims.

4.8 It is unlikely that the current programme of path renewal will, of itself, provide all of the data required to produce a definitive answer to the question “Do the terraces on the Tor represent a large three dimensional maze?” What the watching brief should do, however, is

- produce some data relevant to the problem;
- highlight areas where further investigation might produce important data;
- provide the beginnings of an acceptable framework for future archaeological or historical investigations on the Tor.

5.0 METHODS STATEMENT

5.1 An attempt was made to undertake an examination of every terrace affected by the remedial works. The builders used the broken up old concrete paths as a base for the new paving, resulting in a constant deposition of old concrete upon the newly-exposed surface. It was therefore necessary to maintain a constant watch on the works as they passed over the terraces. Under no circumstances was any soil removed except when required for constructional purposes. The trench on Terrace 6 was actually the foundation for a new bench, excavated archaeologically rather than by the builders. The required depth was reached before natural was encountered and this marked the final phase of the excavation, barring a small (c30 x 30cm) sondage down to natural in one corner.

5.2 Measured sketch profiles of the exposed soils were routinely taken whether or not any features were observed. Notes, sketches and observations were entered into a day book and the works were also recorded photographically using colour transparency slides and colour and black-and-white prints. When archaeological features were exposed, measured sketch drawings would be taken of the plan and section where appropriate. In no case was anything excavated below the level necessary for the repaving and associated works. These drawings will be found in Appendix II. The lists of contexts and finds are contained in Appendix III.

5.3 The foundations for a new bench on Terrace 6 were excavated by hand to the required depth using the methods outlined in *General Specifications for Archaeological Works in Somerset* issued by the Heritage and Built Environment Department of Somerset County Council.

5.4 In order to form an intelligible and meaningful recording system, it was decided to use the terraces as the primary recording units. Each individual terrace was numbered consecutively, beginning with the highest terrace on the north side, continuing down the north side to the base, and then returning to the highest terrace on the south side with numbering continuing down the hill. The 1970's survey of the terraces used in the National Trust guide was used as a base map¹⁰.

¹⁰ Anon, n.d.

5.5 To make the resulting map easier to read, individual terraces were colour coded using the seven colours of the rainbow. This method was immune to either bias or personal subjectivity and created a map that was easy to follow. This method has the additional virtue of treating each terrace as an individual feature in its own right (See Figure 6.) The terraces were subsequently walked over and inspected to confirm, clarify or inform their respective attributes and relationships.

5.6 All of the fieldwork observations employed the terrace number as the initial number(s) of the record. For example, the context numbers begin with the number of the terrace (601, 602, etc. Terraces numbered in double digits are treated similarly, e.g. 2601, 2602, etc come from Terrace 26.) It is hoped that this recording system will continue being added to through time, as and when more data is collected and more terraces are identified.¹¹

5.7 The terraces were related to former land use by superimposing the tithe map onto the base map. (See Figure 7.)

5.8 The information gathered about each terrace has been recorded in a *pro forma* record sheet. These sheets will be found in Appendix I.

¹¹ Many more terraces await recording below the houses on Coursing Batch and across the Shepton Mallet road and down onto Coxwithy. At the moment it is difficult to say where the Tor stops on its southwest side.

Field-names from the tithe award book, 1844 (see Figure 7)

no.	name	owner	tenant	land use
1648...	Orchard	Richard Evades	James Masters	orchard
1649...	Fair Field.....	James Crocker.....	James Crocker	orchard
1650...	House & orchard	John Biggs Snr.....	himself	
1651...	Old Brickyard	John King.....	Thomas Ash	arable
1652...	Arable Field	William Lampard.....	Samuel Clare	arable
1653...	Tor Field	John Holman	himself.....	arable
1655...	Tor Field	John Swanton	himself.....	arable
1658...	Tor Field	William Bennett	himself.....	arable
1659...	Tor Field	Vicarial Glebe/ Thomas Fussell	Thomas Masters	arable
2160...	Stone Down.....	John Holman	himself.....	arable
2161...	Stone Down.....	John Holman	himself.....	arable
2162...	Stone Down.....	Richard Pearce	himself.....	arable
2163...	Tor Field	Robert Masters	himself.....	arable
2164...	Tor Field	Martin Jones & Martin Williams	themselves	arable
2165...	Stone Down.....	John Holman	himself.....	arable
2166...	Stone Down.....	John West.....	William Heal	arable
2167...	Tor Field	Thomas Fussell	Robert Anger	arable
2168...	The Tor Hill	Hon. & Rev. Geo. Neville Grenville ..	Job Emery.....	pasture
2169...	On Tor Hill	Salisbury School	James Masters	pasture
2171...	Tor Linches	James Masters	himself.....	pasture
2175...	Torfield	William Puddy	himself.....	arable
2176...	Tor Field	William Heale	himself.....	arable
2180...	Tor Field	Thomas Helliard Snr.	Thomas Helliard Jr. ...	arable
2181...	Tor Field	Salisbury School	Thomas Urch.....	arable
2182...	Tor Field	Benjamin Jacobs	John Heale.....	arable
2183...	Tor Field	Salisbury School	Thomas Urch.....	arable
2184...	Tor Field	Glebe/ Joseph Windmill.....	John Heale.....	arable
2185...	Coppice.....	Thomas Helliard Snr.....	Thomas Helliard Jr. ...	plantation
2186...	Outside Ashwell.	Thomas Helliard Snr.....	Thomas Helliard Jr. ...	meadow
2187...	Young Orchard ..	Thomas Helliard Snr.....	Thomas Helliard Jr. ...	orchard
2188...	Garden.....	Samuel Chamberlain.....	himself.....	garden
2189...	Ashwell Lane	Robert Tucker	John Henry Burgess	arable
2190...	Tor Field	Edgar Masters	himself.....	arable
2191...	Coxwithy.....	James Vincent.....	himself.....	arable
2192...	Coxwithy.....	Thomas Helliard Snr.....	James Vincent Snr. ...	arable
2193...	Sandacre.....	Thomas Helliard Snr.....	Thomas Helliard Jr. ...	arable
2194...	Tor Field	Henry Parsons	James Crocker	arable
2195...	Garden.....	Hon. & Rev. Neville Grenville	Job Emery.....	garden
2196...	Peckwell.....	Samuel Pratt.....	James Crocker	arable
2196a.	Peckwell.....	Hon. & Rev. Neville Grenville	Job Emery.....	arable
2197...	Garden.....	Hon. & Rev. Neville Grenville	Job Emery.....	arable
2198...	Tor Field	John Holman	John Edwards	arable
2199...	Peckwell.....	Glebe/ Samuel Pratt	James Crocker	arable

Table 1. Field-names from the Tithe award book, 1844.

6.0 OBSERVATIONS

6.1 The Terraces Once the terraces have been numbered and coloured a number of patterns and relationships became clearer.

i) The original access footpath (marked purple) - solid where it follows its original line and dotted on the part that has been diverted¹² - follows the south-west ridge or spine of Tor Hill up to the summit. This is a primary feature on the hill and in this area tends to form the dividing line between terraces. The north-eastern footpath (traced from the recent survey undertaken by the National Trust¹³) both follows and cuts across a number of terraces and is clearly a later feature, as verified by the tithe map (Figure 7). This map shows that in 1844 the path through field 2160 (now known as the Moneybox Field) continued along Terrace 13 (tithe map field 2169) to the sand pit or quarry, marked with a black "S" on the base map.

ii) Twenty nine terraces have been identified so far. A further 3 terraces were glimpsed through trees, bushes and houses on the southern side of the hill, but because of access problems it has not been possible to examine them, so although they have been included on Figure 6 they have not yet been numbered.

iii) The hachure to the north of Terrace 28 mark a depression which was noticed during the watching brief when it was rapidly recorded using measuring tapes. Although it resembles a ditch where it is crossed by the path, no archaeological feature was seen when the path there was renewed. The irregular plan suggests that it may not be one discrete feature and it may be that the southern line mirrors Terrace 28 and the northern ragged edge might be formed by the dumping of road metalling from Wellhouse Lane.

iv) Whilst terraces on the northern side often extend from the original access path all along the side of the hill to the north-eastern spine, terraces on the south side

¹² This part of the concrete path was laid in 1983 by Cribbs and Sons at the same time as the original access path was diverted to alleviate problems of erosion.

¹³ Anon., n.d.

are generally much shorter and appear to follow either the north-east or the south-west sides of the hill.

v) Many terraces merge with others on both sides of the hill, e.g.:

- Terrace 3 merges with Terrace 4 at its west end;
- Terrace 5 merges with Terrace 6 half way along the southern side;
- Terrace 7 merges with Terrace 6 at its west end;
- Terrace 14 merges with Terrace 7 at the north-east spine;
- Terrace 15 merges with Terrace 14 at its east end.
- Terrace 17 merges with Terrace 20 at its east end.



Figure 8. The north side of the Tor.

vi) Each identified terrace has been recorded on a *pro-forma* recording sheet. When viewed individually in this way, the terraces display a wide variety of lengths, widths and layouts. As a general rule, the terraces or parts of terraces on the eastern half of the hill display some degree of regularity, while those on the western side are more variable, as if a system of regular terraces partly circling the eastern half of the hill were linked by access spurs to the original access path on the west. This visual effect may, however, merely be due to the topography.

vii) The fieldwork observations have recovered very small quantities of data and, in the hope that this initial survey will prompt further investigation, many blank spaces have been left on the recording forms. Despite the limited nature of the watching brief a number of finds and features were recorded during the repaving.

6.2 Soils

Whenever the turf and topsoil were removed during repaving, the exposed soils revealed were numbered according to the terrace on which they occurred and described even if features were not apparent. (See Context List). The field drawings of these observations are presented in Appendix II.

6.2.1 Natural soils

Natural substrate was identified, with greater or lesser confidence, on Terraces 6, 7, 9, 11, 14, 18, 22 and 26. Broadly, three types of undisturbed natural substrate were identified:

no.	type	description	interpretation
609	deposit	mixed light blue and orange firm silty clay with fine roots at base of sondage	natural
702	deposit	hard clean grey lias clay	?natural
904	deposit	stiff, clumpy grey-brown silty clay, no visible inclusions	?natural
1103	deposit	powdery yellow silt	?weathered natural
1104	deposit	firm, clean yellow sandy clay with fragments of stone	?natural
1403	deposit	light yellow-brown silty clay with a band of small stones slanting through in one place	natural
1803	deposit	yellow-brown sandy clay with grey streaks	?natural
2202	deposit	stiff yellow clay	natural?
2604	deposit	homogenous clean yellow sandy clay	natural

Table 2. Descriptions of undisturbed natural deposits.

These soil descriptions mirror those of the geologists who identify three main strata on the hill:

- 1) Upper Lias Yeovil (formerly Midford) Sands, capping of fine to medium sands with rows of sandy limestone above
- 2) Junction Bed of brown and blue-grey Upper Lias clay, pale grey silt and Middle Lias marlstone above
- 3) fine yellow Middle Lias Pennard Sands and silts with occasional stones.¹⁴

The Yeovil Sands carry rough fossiliferous sandstone boulders known locally as Tor Burrs. Despite being impossible to dress due to the frequent fossils, the stones were quarried in several places, providing the reasons for the name to Stone Down, and may be seen in many stone walls throughout the parish. The higher terraces 11 and 14 appear to consist of Yeovil Sands.

¹⁴ Wilson, 1999.

Terraces 6, 7, 9 and 22 appeared to belong to the Junction Bed stratum.

Terrace 26 and the soils at the "moneybox gate", the northern entrance from Wellhouse Lane to the north of the summit, (see Drawing 28), form part of the Pennard sands beds. The strata appear to be sloping downward towards the east in this area.

6.2.2 Other deposits

Soils which accumulated above the natural clays would have arisen in a variety of ways:

1) When the subsoil resembles the natural geology, it is usually the result of weathering. Possible examples of this were seen on Terrace 11, the highest terrace on the south-east side (see Drawings 9 & 10), and Terrace 18 (Drawing 16) may be another example.

2) When the soils resting upon the natural clay differ from the natural, it usually indicates that other processes apart than natural weathering are responsible.

a) On steep slopes like the Tor material often moves downhill. Sheetwash from rain will bring small amounts of material down a hill clothed with vegetation; this normally contains a substantial quantity of organic matter, which shows itself in the dark or grey colour of the deposit. Disturbance of the vegetation cover can cause very large amounts of soil to move downhill, resulting in erosion and even visible gullying and creating poorly sorted, highly mineralised deposits. Deposits of this type are usually the result of human activity.

b) Human agency can create negative features such as postholes, pits and ditches which become filled with other materials. The rotten base of a wooden post filling a posthole is hardly ever removed, leaving the organic component of the feature in the ground and visible as a dark stain. Pits and, especially, ditches can remain open for some time, attracting vegetation and moisture which leave similar tell-tale marks in the soil.

c) Human agency can also cause the deliberate back-filling of earlier features. In these instances the deposits will be mineral-rich and poorly sorted. In many cases the material which was excavated to form the feature is redeposited within the feature and the deliberate back-fill can be very similar to the natural deposit from which it was originally excavated.

d) In watching briefs, when there is limited access to the soils, it can be either difficult or impossible to distinguish between these different activities. While the ability to define features and interpret soils is limited, however, human activity can still be discerned.

e) A good example of this was found on Terrace 7, where a natural grey clay deposit, context **702**, was overlain by yellow-brown silty clay with frequent lenses of grey clay **701**. The yellowish colour of **701** suggests that it was unlikely to have weathered out from the grey clay of **702**. Because the yellow silty Yeovil Sands overlie the grey Upper Lias clay it is likely that **701** originated from activity higher up the hill. That the activity was accompanied by significant disturbance of the vegetation cover is suggested by the relatively small organic component of the deposit. Lenses of grey clay show that the material is poorly sorted and therefore likely to have been deposited quickly. All of this information points toward human activity without specifying either the nature or the character of that activity.

f) The lower deposit on Terrace 9, a stiff, grey-brown silty clay, context **904**, is overlain by compact, yellow-brown sandy clay **901**. This particular profile was recorded on the line of the original access path, so there are obvious explanations here for the movement of higher soils down onto Terrace 9.

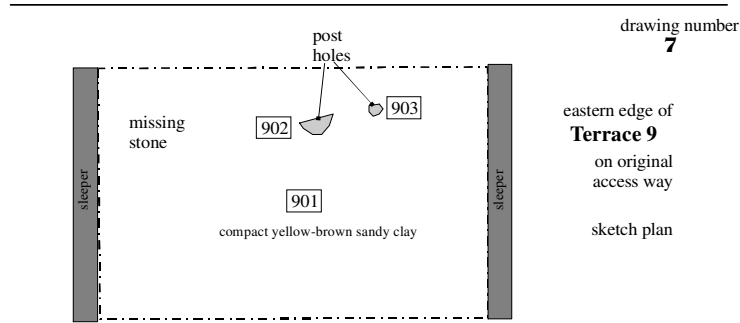
g) Despite the limited access, there are a few soils that are easier to interpret. Context **2601**, for example, was clearly a turf layer that had been sealed below a Tor Burr boulder. On another part of the hill, the excavation of the foundations for a new bench provided a larger area for examination, leading to the identification of a plough soil **601** on Terrace 6. The fragments of Doultling and Lias stone in **1101**, at the top of the slope, suggested that the deposit derived from construction of the medieval church on the summit.

Contexts **1402** and **1404** are organic-rich soils forming through natural processes in a small copse.

6.3 Archaeological Features (See drawings in Appendix II)

6.3.1 postholes

These were found on Terrace 9 (Drawing 7), Terrace 17 (Drawing 14), Terrace 22 (Drawing 21) and Terrace 26 (Drawing 23), where there were so many postholes in a small area that it was possible to arrange them into 3 separate phases.



	{	pottery	}	{	bldg materials	}	
context	qty	fabric & weight	surface	century	qty	type	miscellaneous
901	2	same pot; oxidised, 10g & 4g	khaki glaze inner	C17-18th			8x frags. animal bone; 81g
							1x grey slag frag.; 1g
							frags black slag; 3g
							1x flat blade, ?microlith; <1g

Table 3. Finds from context 901.

The finds in context **901** suggest a post-medieval date for the formation of this soil, indicating a similar post-medieval date for the postholes.

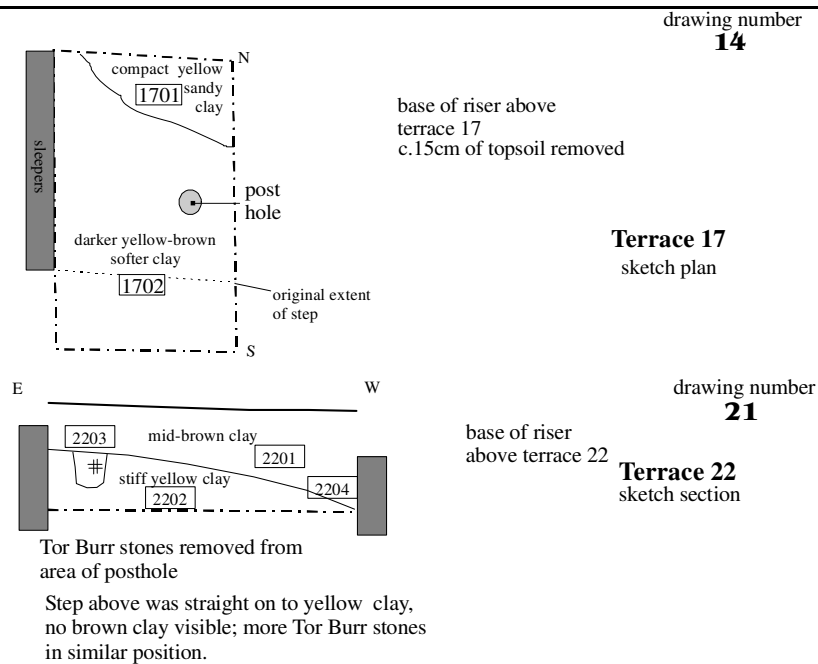


Figure 9. Drawings of postholes

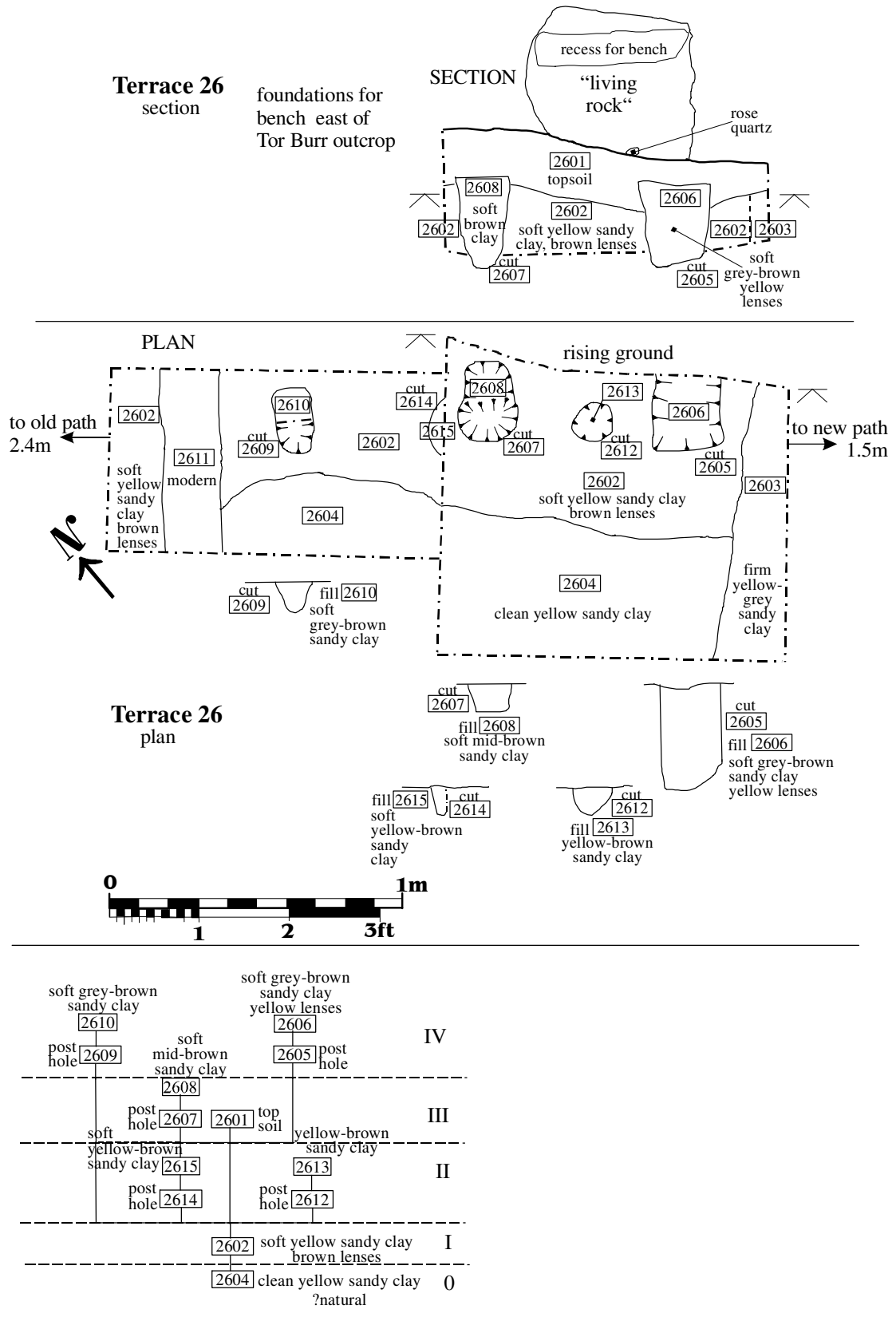


Figure 10. The postholes on Terrace 16.

The Terrace 26 excavation area (illustrated on the previous page) was opened so that the concrete base below an existing bench could be renewed. The only find was the piece of rose quartz placed below the Tor Burr boulder; presumably a votive deposit, which was left *in situ*.



Figure 11. Two views of the "Living Rock" and postholes.¹⁵ (scale in 50cm units)

¹⁵ The term "living rock" is a geologist's phrase signifying stone that is native, not mined or quarried. This term was probably mistakenly applied to the OS map from field notes. NH

All of these postholes were located at the inner edge of their respective terraces. Figure 4 above illustrates a hypothetical section of an artificial terrace with some form of stabilization barrier in a similar location. Postholes might equally represent fence lines defining property boundaries.

6.3.2 Walls

i) A rough Tor Burr stone wall was recorded at the base of the riser above Terrace 18.

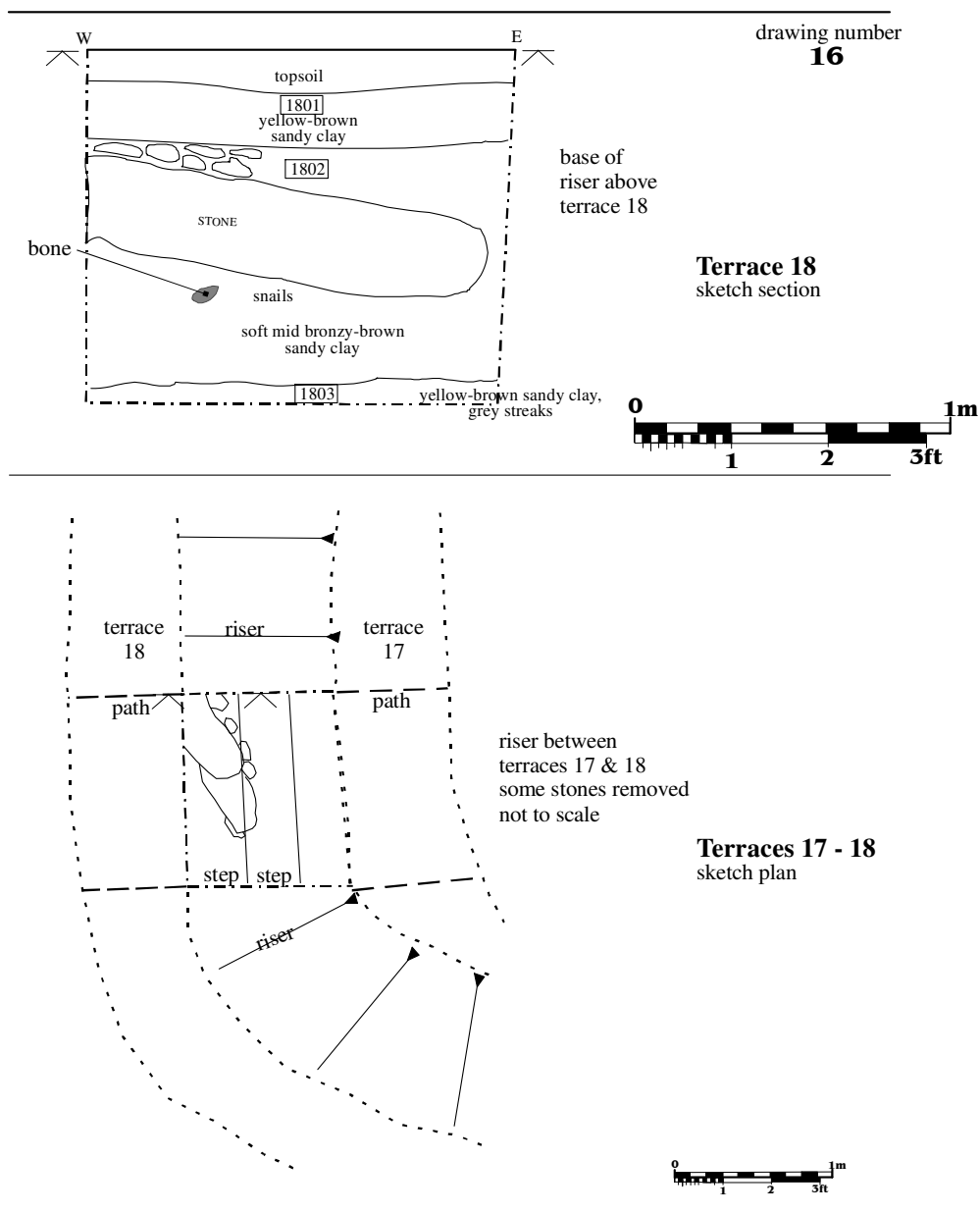


Figure 12. Drawings of the possible wall on Terrace 18.

Stones recorded around posthole **2203** (Drawing 21 above) may have been the remains of a similar wall.

ii) Wall 608 - Terrace 6 - new bench foundations (see Drawing 2, Appendix II)

The most clearly defined wall was found during the investigations of the new bench foundations and access path on the north-eastern end of Terrace 6: The foundations were excavated by hand as an archaeological trench. Contexts recorded during the excavation were continued during the watching brief on the foundations for the adjacent new path, revealing the following sequence:

Phase 0: natural geology

no.	type	description	interpretation
609	deposit	mixed light blue and orange firm silty clay with fine roots at base of sondage	natural

Table 4. Description of context 609.

This soil description corresponds to that of the Junction Bed strata (see 6.2.1 above) of the Upper Lias clays. This soil was only seen at the base of a small sondage c27cm deep that was cut through **603** expressly to locate natural. Context **603** was followed along the terrace beyond the excavation trench where it appeared to cover wall **608** (see Phase III below).



Figure 13. Sondage through base of new bench excavation on Terrace 6. (scale in 50cm)

Phase I: pre-wall ground

no.	type	description	interpretation
612	deposit	firm grey clay	

Table 5. Description of context 612.

At a maximum depth of 18cm below the base of the Phase II deposit, grey clay **612** appears to be too high to correspond with the natural **609**, an impression reinforced by the difference in the soil description. Further interpretation is impossible at this time.

Phase II: dry-stone wall

no.	type	description	interpretation
608	masonry	2 courses of unworked stone (?Tor Burr) bonded with clay	wall
610	layer	hard grey-yellow clay	footing, wall 608

Table 6. Descriptions of contexts relating to wall 608.

This carefully constructed wall, oriented nearly north-south, crossed the terrace obliquely (see Figure 6). No function or purpose for the wall could be construed from the small area seen, but its orientation mirrors a small triangular structure only recorded on the base map (See Figure 6) of which no trace now remains, which may simply represent the gateway into the field. Apparently, wall **608** would have diagonally crossed Terrace 6.

The only comment that may be made about the date of the trench is that it pre-dates the 18th-19th century Phase VI ploughsoil by several phases.

The wall was preserved by the workmen from Cribbs and Son when they first encountered it in 1983, and has been similarly conserved on this occasion. It lies below the hardcore base of the path and is not affected by the overlying concrete.

The workmen found a white quartzite water-worn pebble just to the east of the wall below the modern make-up for the path. Although this could possibly be a sling pebble it is probably too spherical to have been useful. Normally, sling stones were ovoid in shape.

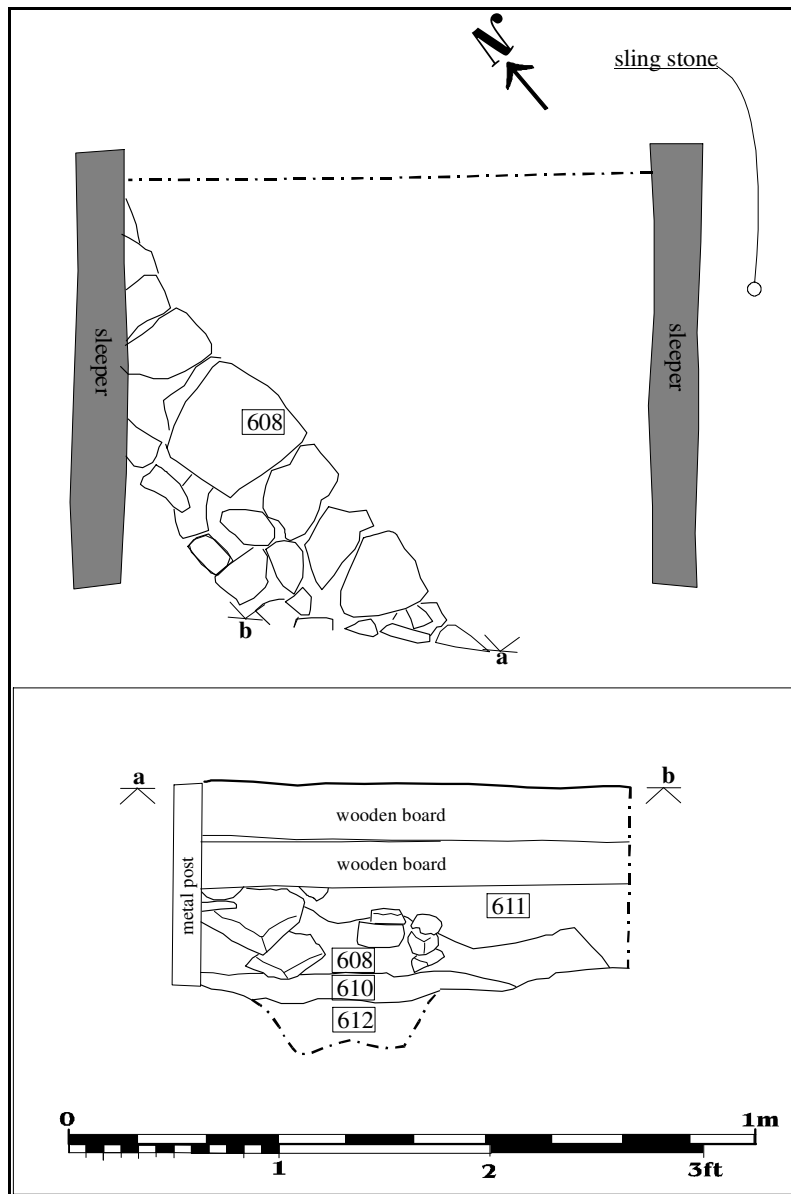


Figure 14. Plan and section of wall 608.



Figure 15. Two views of wall 608 (scales in 1.0m and 50cm units).

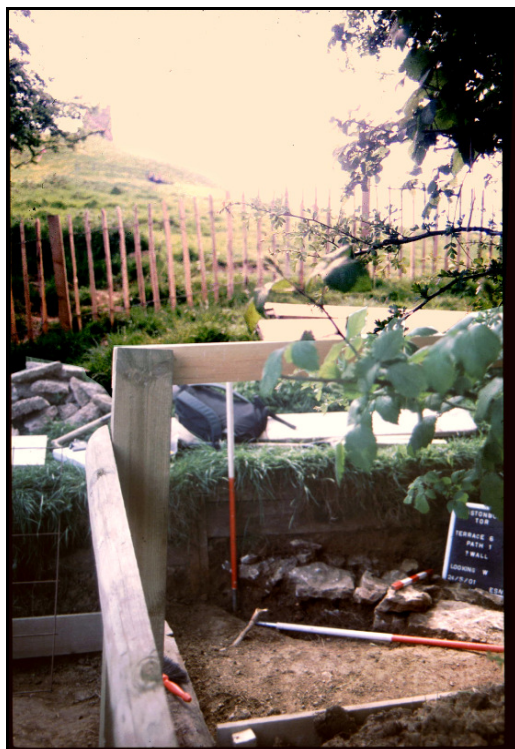


Figure 16. Wall 608 and Tor Hill.

Phase III: redeposited natural

no.	type	description	interpretation
603	deposit	clean yellow clay with small pieces of soft stone	redeposited natural
605	deposit	pale yellow-brown, friable, small frags. of degraded yellow stone	?redeposited natural
611	layer	yellow-brown silty clay	?same as 605

Table 7. Descriptions of redeposited natural deposits on Terrace 6.

The natural blue-grey and orange clay within the excavation trench - context **609**, was covered by a layer of clean yellow clay which appears to derive from soil disturbance higher up the slope in much the same way as discussed in **6.2.2** above. In the sondage, the only place where the full thickness of this deposit was seen, the deposit had accumulated to a thickness of some 27cm. Context **605**, forming the outer edge of Terrace 6, was confirmed as part of **603** as the excavation progressed. Context **611** was separated from **603** by one of the railway sleepers from the 1983 path, so the interpretation of the two as equivalent is not absolutely confirmed. The possibility exists that the dry-stone wall is later than this scheme of phasing would suggest. As no datable finds were recovered from the wall, this should remain an open question.

The depth of this deposit is probably due to a gradual accumulation of eroded soils on the surface of the terrace. Thorough removal of this layer to investigate the natural clay and the terrace structure was outside the scope of this excavation but would certainly repay the effort involved.

Phase IV: ditch/cultivation soil

no.	type	description	interpretation
604	cut	linear, steep sides, shallow, flat base, scalloped edges, follows the line of the terrace	?ditch/cultivation trench
606	fill	homogenous mid-brown silty clay, v. few charcoal flecks, in eastern part of trench	lower fill of cut 604
607	fill	homogenous pale light grey-brown sticky clay, few small stones, paler than 602 in western part of trench	lower fill of cut 604

Table 8. Descriptions of cultivation ditch and deposits on Terrace 6.

Cut into the redeposited natural contexts **603/5** was an irregular, shallow cut following the orientation of the terrace. The scalloped edges of the cut probably indicate a hand-dug trench. The trench held a charcoal flecked, brown, humic-rich fill suggesting that this is an horticultural soil.



Figure 17. Ditch 604.



Figure 18. Profile of ditch 604 (scale in 50cm units).

Phase V: soil accumulation

no.	type	description	interpretation
602	layer	slightly paler than 602, slightly more clay, rare small charcoal flecks	subsoil/ fill of 604

Table 9. Description of soil accumulation over cultivation deposits on Terrace 6.

A thick layer of soil accumulated over the horticultural activity.

Phase VI: ploughing

no.	type	description	interpretation
601	layer	mid to light brown, fairly soft homogenous clay with slight loam content, rare charcoal flecks, Fe nail & small frags. of post-medieval pot	ploughsoil

Table 10. Description of ploughsoil on Terrace 6.

The ploughsoil was identified by its high humic content and its homogenous structure. This was the only context which contained finds:

		{__ pottery __}			{__ bldg materials __}		
context	qty	fabric & weight	surface	century	qty	type	miscellaneous
601	1	pale, oxidised; <1g	dull, pale khaki glaze outer	C14-15th	2	roof tile frags., 61g; C18-19th; discarded	1x coal; 5g; discarded
	5	various oxidised; 43g	brown glaze	C18-19th	2	roof slate frags; 13g; discarded	1x small Fe buckle; 3g
							1x Fe nail, modern; 5g; discarded

Table 11. Finds from ploughsoil on Terrace 6.

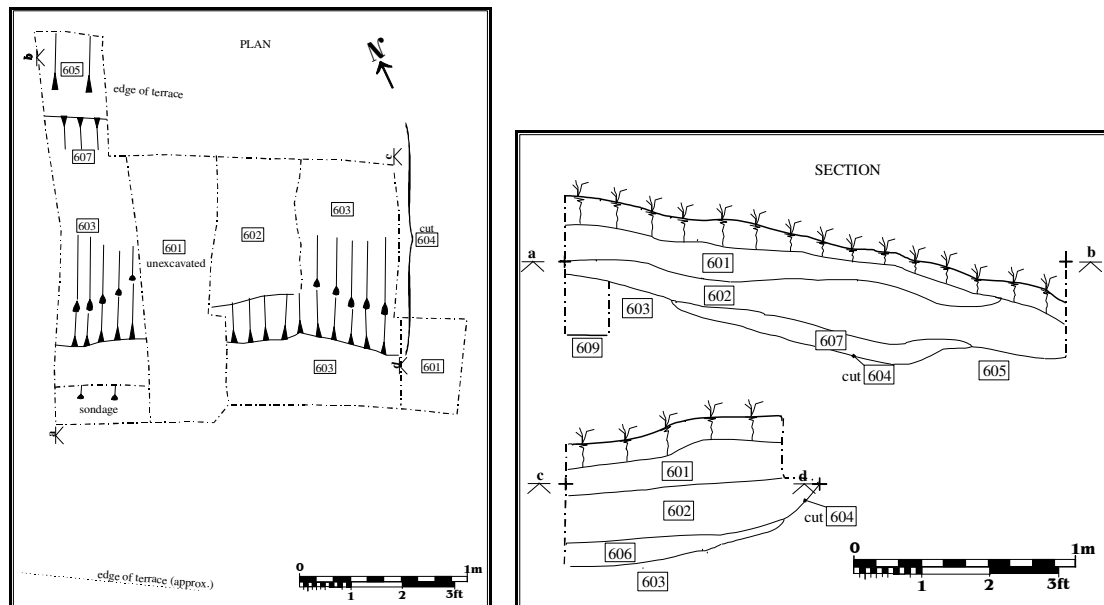


Figure 19. Plan and section of Terrace 6- bench foundation.

6.3.3 Ditches

A shallow ditch or gully - feature **604** - was recorded in the Terrace 6 excavation (see above). The watching brief remit prevented definition of the forms of the terraces, but superficial examination revealed soil patterns which suggested that silted-up ditches might be found on several other terraces:

On Terrace 26 the linear edge between contexts **2602** and **2604** could indicate a ditch running along the terrace (see Drawing 23 above). The inner edge of Terrace 22 consisted of a stiff yellow clay - **2202** - which contained a posthole - **2203** - just to the side of a marked downward slope, **2204**, that is unlikely to be natural. (Drawing 21). The mid-brown colour of context **2201** is consistent with it being the fill of a feature cut into **2202**. A profile taken in the middle of the terrace showed **2201** to be at least 30cm thick at that point.

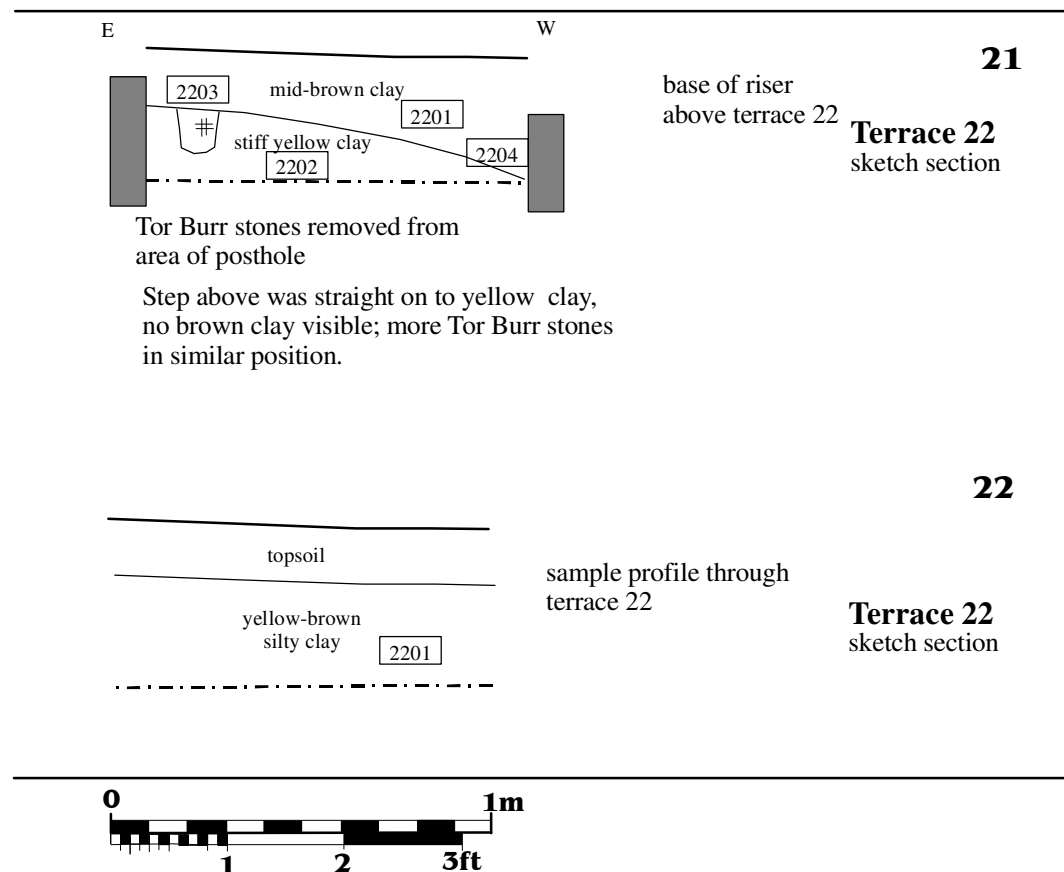


Figure 20. Profiles of Terrace 22.

The depth of redeposited natural **603/5** over natural on Terrace 6 (see above) is also consistent with it filling a ditch, but again this is speculation. More thorough excavation would establish whether any of these features is indeed a ditch.

6.4 Works on gateways

6.4.1 Moneybox gateway (see Drawing 28)



Figure 21. The new Moneybox gate and Portland stone stiles.

This gate to the north of the Tor was greatly enlarged and enhanced during the recent operations to afford wheelchair access. An area inside of the gate was hand-cleaned and examined when it was noticed that a worn stone spread terminated in an abrupt straight line, possibly as a result of ploughing as no features were seen to account for the straight edge.

The existing concrete path through this field was especially thick and much of it being left *in situ* as a hard base for the new concrete so that there was no opportunity to undertake any observations through the Moneybox Field. The path has been levelled out to fill up a marked dip which occurred at the spot marked by the two lines of hachure on Figure 2. These hachure indicate the lines of two slight lynchies crossing the field from east to west. As the northern lynch is rough and uneven while the southern is quite clean and regular, it is quite likely that they represent two different processes rather than that they are a single feature. The small areas of stratigraphy seen in the sides of the postholes showed no obvious archaeological features but did reveal stones large enough to be worth extracting close to the surface. As a probable quarry lies nearby, immediately north of Wellhouse Lane, it seems likely that the field-name Stone Down refers to former quarrying on this hill.¹⁶

Although the gateway was largely remodelled, one of a pair of Portland Stone stiles was left undisturbed in order to preserve the Ordnance Survey benchmark carved upon it. This benchmark has a value of 331.63 ft. (101.08m) o.d. The matching stile was moved sideways to the other side of the enlarged gateway.

¹⁶ The *down* element of the place-name probably dates to a time before this hill-top was converted from open grazing land (or down) to one of Glastonbury's medieval open fields.

The footings trench for four bike racks revealed ca. 8cm of topsoil above compact yellow-brown powdery soil containing frequent limestones and ammonite fossils to a depth of 20cm. These are the Pennard sands.

6.4.2 Original access path to the south-west

The original path was excavated by a mini-digger with a toothed bucket to a depth of 15-20cm. One archaeologist monitored the excavation while a second cleaned up the surface before the trench was backfilled with layers of limestone chippings and dry cement. A c.50cm square sondage dug along the path showed that the path had been cleaned down to natural by the digger. Only half of the trench was hand-cleaned. Modern finds including broken tile and brick and factory produced pottery were recovered from the spoil; few were kept. (see Finds List). Metal detector survey produced only a sixpence, an iron nail and a thimble. No features were recognized.

During the remedial works on the south-west gate, a Portland Stone stile similar to the one at the north-east entrance, was moved to provide space for wheelchair access. When this was moved, Lloyd Hannam transferred the benchmark to a temporary bench mark with a theodolite so that, although no longer in the original position, the benchmark still rests at the same level o.d.: 180.47 ft (55.00m).

The Lias slabs below the former gate were removed for re-use elsewhere, revealing a wet loamy layer formed by root action from adjacent gardens. This lay above a light yellow-brown sandy clay with a disturbed upper surface.

A manhole was revealed in the gateway consisting of a chamber lined with unmortared, dressed Lias blocks housing two 6" clay drain pipes; one leading uphill in line with the path and the other running down the track to Wellhouse Lane. The outlet pipe is blocked but water still flows into the chamber, as demonstrated by the dark, soggy soil at the base.

6.4.3 Kissing gate at top (east side) of Fairfield

Excavations of two new gateposts revealed either 30cm of topsoil or 15cm of cobbles above yellow clay to a depth of c90cm. The surface of the clay on the south - west side of the gate was burnt red. No other features were seen.

7.0 DISCUSSION

Having reviewed the data, it is appropriate to return to Chapter 4 above to see what tests may now be applied to the hypotheses and corollaries explaining the function of the terraces on the Tor. To recap:

H1: The terraces on the Tor are the remains of one large, complex structure.

H2: The terraces carry a continuous pathway; any apparent discontinuity is the result of erosion.

H3 The maze on the Tor is an ancient feature.

H4 The terraces form seven circuits of the hill.

C1 The terraces are artificial.

C2 One structure: All of the terraces must display uniformity in some way or other, either in...

- Structure;
- Appearance;
- or Date (see C7).

C3 One route: The areas between the ledges of the terraces, where the maze paths are shown to connect, and where it is argued that the continuity of the pathway has been destroyed by erosion (see C6), should display some indications of an attempt to form a connection, e.g. the path ceases, or the beginnings of a vertical course, possibly steps.

C4 One structure: The terraces were constructed for the maze, therefore every part of every terrace is part of the maze.

C5 The terraces carry a pathway, designed for foot traffic.

C6 Tor Hill should show signs of erosion (and for comparison, erosion on other steep slopes in the area should be studied.) The traces of connecting pathways or features, e.g. steps, should appear immediately adjacent to the erosion.

C7 The terraces were created in antiquity.

C8 All of the terraces were created more or less contemporaneously, demonstrating that they were all part of a single construct.

C9 The terraces form seven circuits of the hill.

The theory that the terraces are the remains of a maze fails on several fronts. Although the terraces are artificial, satisfying **C1**, numbering and colour-coding the terraces highlights their variability and, more importantly, their discontinuity (**C2**, **C3**) (See Figure 6, above).

Although several artificial or archaeological features were recorded, none of the observations during the watching brief detected any feature which might be interpreted as a path (**C5**). The way that several of the terraces merge invalidates the argument that erosion has obscured some parts of the continuous pathway (**C4**, **C5**, **C6**). The erosion argument (**C6**) is also undermined on general geological grounds, since Wilson has determined that the strata forming the Tor are relatively stable¹⁷.

¹⁷ Wilson, 1999.

Comparison of Figure 6 with Figure 2 highlights those terraces or portions of terraces not included in the maze plan. Whilst this does not in itself invalidate the maze theory, it does suggest that some of the terraces were constructed for different purposes, invalidating **C4**.

There is no evidence to date of any of the terraces, leaving **C7** and **C8** untested. With regard to **C9**, none of the 29 recorded terraces can be demonstrated to make even one complete circuit of the Tor.

If the terraces were constructed for agricultural purposes:

H5 The terraces were constructed for agricultural purposes.

C10 The level tops of the terraces carry the remains of a ploughsoil or a cultivated soil.

C11 There are several groups of agricultural terraces on the steep slopes in the vicinity of the Tor.

C12 The terraces are suitable for agriculture or would have been considered so in the past.

Glastonbury, in common with many other parishes in Somerset, contains hill slopes that have been terraced to form a series of agricultural strip lynchets, the nearest group, known as "The Lynchets", and also owned by the National Trust can be seen on the southern slopes of Stone Down immediately to the east of Tor Hill. These features are usually identified as a common type of agricultural fields known as *strip lynchets*. These are simply the medieval ploughing technique of ridge and furrow applied to the contours of sloping ground until they form what looks like grand staircases. There are usually small ramps leading from one lynch to the next, similar to those seen on the northwest slopes of the Tor between Terraces 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 (see Figure 8). The great majority of open field-strips, sometimes surviving as blocks of ridge and furrow earthworks, has been obliterated by modern farming techniques, but many strip lynchets still survive, either turned over to pasture or, in Glastonbury, hidden among housing estates, with terraces often forming the base of new roads. The steep slopes and inaccessible locations of many of these fields bear testimony to the overpopulation that drove land hunger in the Middle Ages. It is generally accepted that the dates of these strip lynchets would be reliable indications of episodes of land hunger if datable finds could be retrieved.¹⁸

As groups of strip lynchets are common in the immediate vicinity of the Tor, and as the fields surrounding the Tor were called Tor Field with many described as

¹⁸ Taylor, 1975, p. 88-93.

arable in the tithe award, the conditions satisfying **C11** and **C12** appear to be quite strong.

There are, however, some contradictory factors which should be mentioned. While Terrace 6, one of the lower terraces, did reveal two phases of soils that were interpreted as cultivation deposit (see para. 6.2 above), satisfying **C10**, these soils were found to be resting upon a 30cm thick layer of redeposited natural clay derived from higher up the hill, suggesting that more than simple agriculture appears to have been at work. Many terraces appear too narrow to have been used by even the most desperate cultivator, especially Terraces 26 and 27, but also Terraces 13, 14, 15, 19 and part of Terrace 4. Finally, all but the steepest slopes of the Tor carry terraces, even the most exposed slopes around the summit. It is difficult to believe that these terraces would yield enough to make them economically viable, even if it were possible to plough them.

An earlier report argues for the existence of a Romano-British temple on the summit of the Tor¹⁹. Any traces of pre-Roman, prehistoric activity which might have occurred on the summit would probably have been destroyed by the foundations of the medieval stone churches. Whether some of the terraces on the Tor might be the remains of defensive features guarding these or other, unknown, structures and activities on the summit is the last of the hypotheses to be tested.

If the terraces are defensive:

H6: The terraces on the Tor are the remains of defensive features.

C13 The features which appear to be terraces are actually silted up ditches.

The evidence for ditches is outlined in paragraph 6.2.3 above. If some of the features recorded during the watching brief are in fact ditches any of them may be a cultivation trench similar to that recorded in the excavation in Terrace 6. They may also be defensive features. Only further investigation can determine which is the case, until which time nothing can be ruled out. All that can be said is that defensive ditches would not be unexpected in such a location.

With regard to the maze theory, analysis of the terraces as individual features provides enough data to confirm that the terraces cannot form either a maze or the surviving fragments of a maze. The terraces are not continuous, and there is no

¹⁹ Hollinrake and Hollinrake, 2001.

evidence that a former continuity has been disrupted by erosion. Indeed, the new geological survey confirms the inherent stability of the slopes of the Tor.

If the Tor terraces are part of a large three dimensional maze it would be a unique feature as there are no other similar structures anywhere else in the world, let alone in Britain.. If the Tor terraces had formed such an important and unique monument then it might have been expected that some folk memory would have survived either from early monastic writings or in place names. A small (c100ft in diameter) maze in Beckington, Somerset, for example, was only recognized as a field-name on the tithe map²⁰. The accepted fact that the Tor maze was not mentioned before the 1960's is probably a good argument for a modern origin for the theory.

What the analysis does suggest is that the terraces are artificial and that each has its own distinctive characteristics and probably served a variety of different functions at different times.

The most important contribution that this watching brief has made to the study of the Tor is to put data collection and analysis onto a proper scientific framework: the terraces have been described as individual features for the first time and various theories for their functions have been framed into testable hypotheses. It is hoped that this framework will be employed and expanded in the future.

²⁰ Somerset Sites and Monuments Record no. 23127. The Mizmaze, SE of Beckington. An artificial mound/platform planted with ornamental trees. The name "the Mizmaze" on the tithe map seemingly applies to it. There is no local tradition of a maze. Clump of trees shown on 1904 OS 6" map.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite having collected enough data to be able to reject the maze theory, it is still not possible to offer any firm conclusions. There is still no dating evidence for the formation of even one of these features and none of them has been investigated thoroughly enough to discuss their original form or structure. However, the watching brief has collected enough data to suggest the course of further investigation, summarized below.

8.1 Due to the restricted nature of the archaeological works (see 5.1 above) only a small number of soil types and features were encountered. The observations and investigation areas were dictated by the routes of the new path and the gate locations, not by their archaeological interest or potential. Nevertheless, the watching brief uncovered a number of features:

- postholes (10) tending to be aligned along the inner edge of the terraces;
- stone walls (1 certain, 1 likely);
- ditches (1 certain, 2 possible);
- old ploughsoil (at least 1 layer on Terrace 6).

This list demonstrates that archaeological features do still survive on the terraces, enhancing their importance and highlighting the need to afford them all the protection possible. Foot traffic off the paved pathways should be discouraged and tree-planting should be avoided.

8.2 The function of all of the terraces remains unclear. There are a few key data which are necessary to an understanding of the phenomena:

- form - The structure of the terraces is still unknown; it is important not to assume that they are all of the same form;
- date - There is no dating evidence for the construction of any of the terraces; it is important not to assume that they are all contemporary.

With little information for a significant number of the terraces speculation about their function is open to misinterpretation.

8.3 No recent investigation has taken place on those flat areas of the spine identified as *shoulders 1*²¹ & 2 (see Figure 6) and very little investigation has taken place on the flatter fields at the base of the hill. The authors have put forward the theory that there may be the remains of a Romano-Celtic temple on the summit of the Tor²², while noting that the evidence is inconclusive. The reaction to this theory among other archaeologists is that, while there are convincing arguments why certain diagnostic finds usually associated with Romano-British temples are missing, the best strategy to provide convincing evidence for the temple in the absence of these finds is to find further evidence for Romano-British activity on the Tor.²³

8.4 To summarize the research undertaken on the Tor to date:

- Excavations on the summit and shoulder 1 by Philip Rahtz²⁴;
- desk-based survey of land surrounding the Tor by C. & N. Hollinrake²⁵;
- two geological surveys by E. J. Wilson²⁶ to test the stability of the hill and the tower, including a geophysical survey of the area around the tower by GSB Prospection;
- a condition report on the tower of St. Michael's church by Keith Garner²⁷;
- desk-based survey of the Tor itself, including a fabric survey of the tower by Jerry Sampson, as a preliminary to the recent renovations;²⁸
- this watching brief on the Pathways and Paving Renewal Scheme.

In order, therefore, to investigate the issues raised above a programme of further research on the Tor is recommended. The following programme of works is suggested as an outline:

1. Geophysical survey

This type of remote-sensing survey was undertaken on the summit to help with the investigation of the stability of the tower. The results suggest that this type of survey would produce usable results when applied to other parts of the Tor. Survey should be undertaken on:

²¹ Philip Rahtz excavated buildings interpreted as Saxon monastic cells on Shoulder 1. Rahtz, 1971.

²² Hollinrake C. & N. 2001.

²³ Warwick Rodwell, *pers. comm.*

²⁴ Rahtz, P.A., 1971.

²⁵ Hollinrake, C. & N., 1997.

²⁶ Wilson, E. J., 1999 & 2001.

²⁷ Garner, Keith, 1999.

²⁸ Hollinrake, C. & N., 2001.

- the terraces - a transect from the summit to the base would sample terraces from various parts of the hill and might demonstrate any differences in form and/or structure that exist; the base of the risers appear to be a focus for features;
- the shoulders - a survey of the entirety of each of these level areas might record the existence of unrecorded buildings and/or other features;
- the level fields at the base of the north side of the hill - sampling of these fields may demonstrate the location of unrecorded buildings, ditches and other archaeological features. Special attention should be paid to the sides of the original access path;
- the area around the wall on the east end of Terrace 6.

2. Excavation

The geophysical survey would produce two important bodies of information:

- the transect through the terraces would provide information on the original structures of the terraces and the degree of uniformity of the terraces;
- the surveys of the level areas would suggest areas of buildings and/or archaeological activity.

What geophysical survey would not produce would be finds and dateable artefacts. These could only be recovered through excavation, using the geophysical survey as a guide to the location of trenches in areas likely to produce the maximum data. The area around the summit, as the apparent focus of activity, seems to be one obvious area for investigation. Any artefacts falling from the summit would be more likely to come to rest on the higher terraces rather than moving to the base of the hill. Areas close to the original access path would also be more likely to produce finds.

Apart from the small-scale investigative work connected with this recent watching brief, the only archaeological excavations on the Tor have been confined to the summit and the highest shoulder. These were immensely valuable but left many questions unanswered, especially regarding the slopes and base of the hill and the date, formation and function of the terraces. The excavator, P.A. Rahtz, has himself recently advocated further examination of the terraces through a combination of remote sensing and excavation.²⁹

²⁹ Rahtz, 2002, p. 16.

There is great public interest in the entire Tor and this may be one of the best sites in the country to demonstrate the value of the contribution of archaeology to public debate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our gratitude to the workmen from Cribb & Son, the local building firm who have taken care of the Tor for most of the 20th century: Lloyd Hannam, the foreman, Don, Alan, Andrew, Aaron and Marcus Cribb, Gary Wheadon, Roy Matthews, John Reed and Jamie Rawson. They could not have been more helpful.

Thanks are also due to Martin Papworth, the National Trust archaeologist for the South West Region, who commissioned this watching brief, Keith Garner, the architect for the project, Jerry Sampson, who has undertaken the archaeological investigation and analysis of the repointing of the tower of St. Michael's church (subject of a separate report).

The fieldwork was carried out by Ben Eaton, Keith Faxon, Dr. Jodie Lewis and Charles and Nancy Hollinrake

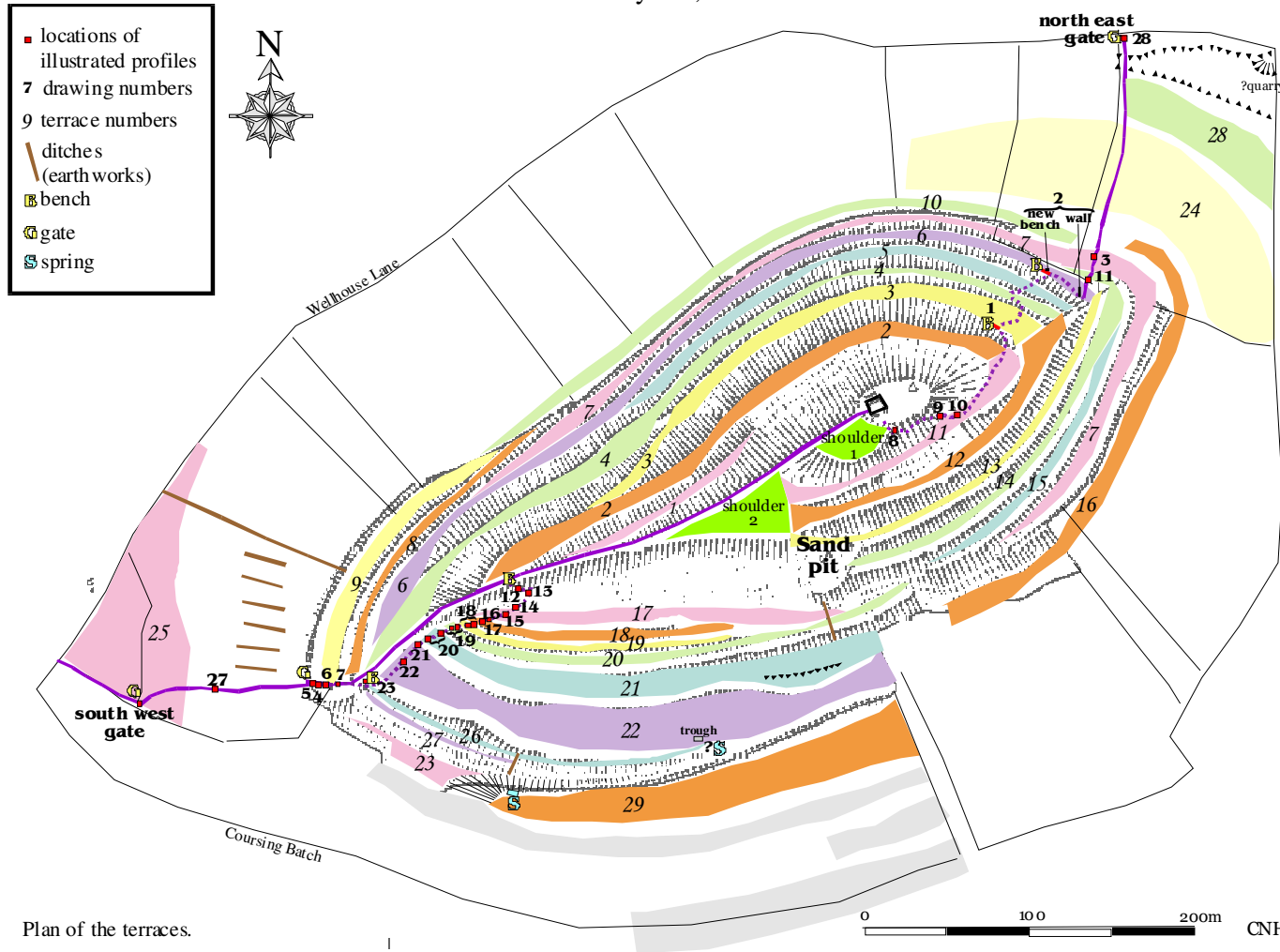
C. & N. Hollinrake
27th October 2003

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APPENDIX I: Terraces

Glastonbury Tor, Somerset



Plan of the terraces.

1

APPENDIX II Context List & Finds List

number	type	description	interpretation	phase
301	layer	yellow-brown silty clay	subsoil	
302	layer	yellow-brown silty clay with grey lenses	unknown	
601	layer	mid to light brown, fairly soft homogenous clay with slight loam content, rare charcoal flecks, Fe nail & small frags. of post-medieval pot	ploughsoil	VI
602	layer	slightly paler than 602, slightly more clay, rare small charcoal flecks	subsoil/ fill of 604	V
603	deposit	clean yellow clay with small pieces of soft stone	redeposited natural	III
604	cut	linear, steep sides, shallow, flat base, scalloped edges, follows the line of the terrace	?ditch/ cultivation trench	IV
605	deposit	pale yellow-brown, friable, small frags. of degraded yellow stone	?redeposited natural	III
606	fill	homogenous mid-brown silty clay, v. few charcoal flecks, in eastern part of trench	lower fill of cut 604	IV
607	fill	homogenous pale light grey-brown sticky clay, few small stones, paler than 602 in western part of trench	lower fill of cut 604	IV
608	masonry	2 courses of unworked stone (?Tor Burr) bonded with clay	wall	II
609	deposit	mixed light blue and orange firm silty clay with fine roots at base of sondage	natural	0
610	layer	hard grey-yellow clay	footing for wall 608	II
611	layer	yellow-brown silty clay	?same as 605	?III
612	deposit	firm grey clay		I
701	deposit	yellow-brown silty clay with frequent lenses of grey clay	?subsoil	
702	deposit	hard clean grey lias clay	?natural	

number	type	description	interpretation	phase
901	deposit	moderately compact yellow-brown sandy clay; occasional small angular stones & gingery smudges, frequent charcoal flecks	subsoil	C16-17 th pot
902	posthole & fill	mid-brown soft clay with some very tiny rounded stones in D-shaped cut, c11 x 6.5cm x c3cm deep; cuts 901	fence post	
903	stakehole & fill	mid-brown soft clay with some very tiny rounded stones in rounded cut, c6 x 4 x 2cm deep; cuts 901	fencing stake	
904	deposit	stiff, clumpy grey-brown silty clay, no visible inclusions, in step 1015 below 901	?natural	
1101	deposit	loose, soft, yellowish/light orange clayey sand with fragments of Doultling & Lias	construction debris mixed with 1102	
1102	deposit	loose, yellow-brown silty clay	subsoil	
1103	deposit	powdery yellow silt	?weathered natural	
1104	deposit	firm, clean yellow sandy clay with fragments of stone	?natural	
1401	layer	topsoil, cement, tarmac & stone	make-up layer	modern
1402	layer	light brown, friable, humic silty clay, much root disturbance, c25cm thick	subsoil in copse	
1403	deposit	light yellow-brown silty clay with a band of small stones slanting through in one place	natural	
1404	deposit	light brown friable silty soil	?hill wash	
1701	deposit	compact yellow sandy clay with occasional Tor Burr	natural	
1702	deposit	pale yellow-brown sandy clay; Tor Burr stone with 5x grooves at base	subsoil	
1801	deposit	yellow-brown sandy clay	subsoil	
1802	deposit around stones	soft mid bronzy-brown sandy clay around stones, 1x large below at least 6 smaller ones; contains snails and bone frag.	soil accumulated around possible wall	
1803	deposit	yellow-brown sandy clay with grey streaks	?natural	
1804	deposit	very yellow sandy clay	subsoil	
1901	deposit	yellow sandy clay	subsoil	

number	type	description	interpretation	phase
2001	deposit	yellow-brown silty clay, looser than on lower terraces	subsoil	
2101	deposit	yellow silty clay	subsoil	
2201	deposit	yellow-brown silty clay	subsoil	
2202	deposit	stiff yellow clay	natural?	
2203	cut & fill	posthole (c13cm diam x c15cm deep) with charcoal in fill cutting 2202, top associated with Tor Burr stones	posthole and stone settings ?wall	
2204	cut	at the base of the riser above terrace 22 the natural 2202 takes a fairly steep drop which may represent one edge of a ditch	?ditch	
2601	t & t	topsoil below stone "Living Rock", lower margin unclear	buried soil	III
2602		soft yellow sandy clay with frequent brown clayey sand pockets	disturbed by ?animals	II moder n glass on top
2603		firm yellow-grey sandy clay, slightly greasy		
2604		homogenous clean yellow sandy clay	natural	0
2605	cut	rounded square plan, slightly splayed sides becoming near vertical, gently curved base,	posthole	IV
2606	fill	soft grey-brown sandy clay with yellow sandy pockets	fill of posthole 2605	IV glass near base
2607	cut	oval plan, steep sides, splayed top, flat base, c9cm & c14cm deep (truncated); top of feature c45cm below top of section	double posthole	III
2608	fill	soft mid-brown sandy clay	fill of posthole 2607	III moder n glass, slag, concre te
2609	cut	rounded rectangle, steep sides, not bottomed (c10cm excavated); top of cut c35cm below top of section	posthole	IV
2610	fill	soft grey-brown sandy clay	fill of 2609	IV

number	type	description	interpretation	phase
2611	cut	modern slot for concrete base of bench		modern
2612	cut	round plan, steep sides, pointed base, c10cm deep; top of feature c 45cm below top of section	stakehole	II
2613	fill	yellow brown sandy clay	fill of stakehole 2612	II
2614	cut	rounded, c8cm deep (truncated); top of feature c.35cm below top of section	posthole	II
2615	fill	soft yellow-brown sandy clay	fill of posthole 2614	II
2616	cut	linear, E-W following riser above terrace, curving to S at W end, marked by edge between 2602 and 2604, E end truncated by 2603, only c2m seen, not excavated	?ditch	

	{__	pottery __	_____	_____}	{__	bldg materials__}	
context	qty	fabric & weight	surface	century	qty	type	miscellaneous
601	1	pale, oxidised;<1g	dull, pale khaki glaze outer	C14-15th	2	roof tile frags., 61g; C18-19th; discarded	1x coal; 5g; discarded
	5	various oxidised; 43g	brown glaze	C18-19th	2	roof slate frags; 13g; discarded	1x small Fe buckle; 3g
							1x Fe nail, modern; 5g; discarded
Terrace 6 U/S							1x oval quartz pebble; 108g
701							2x animal bone; 22g & 24g
							2x slag; 5g & 3g
							1x Fe nail
901	2	same pot; oxidised, 10g & 4g	khaki glaze inner	C17-18th			8x frags. animal bone; 81g
							1x grey slag frag.; 1g
							frags black slag; 3g
							1x flat blade, ?microlith; <1g
Terrace 11 U/S							1x animal bone with saw marks; 296g
1403/posthole 3	5	rim & body sherds, same pot; pale oxidised, red grits; 173g	lt. brown glaze inner, yellow band	C18-19th			
1802							1x animal bone; 5g
2101	1	oxidised; 2g	brown glaze outer, yellow scraffito decoration	C17-18			1x large animal vertebra; 164g
							1x animal bone; 9g
Northeast gate	1	pink/orange; 1g	shiny dark green glaze inside & out	C17-18th	2	brick/tile, 8g & 5g, discarded	2x belemnites, discarded
	1	oxidised; 6g	traces of white slip outer	C17-18th	1	frag. modern drain pipe, 15g, disc.	3x clear vessel glass, modern, disc. 3g
							Fe frag; 6g; discarded
							coin: GVIR 6d, 1946
							1x large glass marble, modern, disc.
Northeast gate/ bike rack 4							1x burnt bone; <1g; discarded
							2x burnt stone; 14g; discarded
							1x Fe slag; 6g; discarded

	{	pottery	}	{	bldg materials_}		
context	qty	fabric & weight	surface	century	qty	type	miscellaneous
Tor Field (kissing gate on Terrace 9)	1	oxidised; 2g		prob. C13-14th			1x frag. cortical flint, dark brown, 3g
	1	reduced, sandy; 13g	oxidized outer; khaki glaze inner	C16-17th			
	1	oxidised; 2g	shiny dark green glaze outer	C16-17th			
	4	oxidised; 12g, 9g, 3g & 3g	orange or yellow glazes	C17-18th			
Fairfield metal detecting bag 1							7x various Fe nails, discarded
							1x coin: 1971 1p
Fairfield metal detecting bag 2							2x Fe nails; 8g; discarded
							1x pen nib; <1g; discarded
Fairfield metal detecting bag 4							12x various Fe nail frags; 38g; discarded
Fairfield metal detecting bag 5							3x small, square-headed Fe nails; 10g; discarded
							1x Cu alloy thimble; 6g
Fairfield path metal detecting finds							1x Cu alloy thimble; 4g
							1x Fe buckle; 14g; discarded
							1x Fe nail; 3g; discarded
FF/CB1	5	oxidised; 45g	brown & khaki glazes	C18-19th	16	ceramic tile/brick; 233g; discarded	3x oyster shell frags 18g; discarded
	1	stoneware, grey; 6g	brown outer	C18-19th	5	roof slate frags; 11g; discarded	2x clay pipe stems; 4g; discarded
	3	white wares; 14g	discarded	C18-19th			2x animal bone frags; 220g & 6g

	{__	pottery	_____	_____}	{__	bldg materials_}	
context	qty	fabric & weight	surface	century	qty	type	miscellaneous
FF/CB2	6	various oxidised; 69g	abraded	n.d.	2	ceramic roof tile frags; 7g; discarded	1x animal bone, cut marks; 14g
	2	oxidised; 4g		n.d.	5	fired clay/tile; 34g	1x cortical flint; grey; 5g
	1	oxidised; 2g		C13-14th			
	1	white ware; 5g	discarded	C18-19th			
FF/CB3 /sondage	1	oxidised; 2g		n.d.	3	slate; 2g	2x black slag; 2g
	1	coarseware; <1g, oxidised	pale inner	C13-14th			various limestones, small frags.
	1	oxidised; 2g		C13-15th			1x burnt bone; <1g; discarded
	1	coarseware; 4g, sandy, brown, grey core		C14-15th			1x grey slag; 1g; discarded
	1	oxidised; 2g	creamy outer, reduced inner with clear glaze	C14-15th			
	1	reduced; 2g	oxidized outer margin, brown outer surface, khaki glaze inner	C14-16th			
	1	handle frag., 5g, oxidised, sandy		C15-17th			
	3	various oxidised; 11g	green & live glazes	C14-17th			
	1	oxidised; <1g	white slip	C17-18th			
	1	white ware; <1g; discarded		C18-20			
FF/CB4	14	small frags. oxidised/ 725g	orange, brown or green glazes; abraded	C16-18th	5	ceramic tile/brick frags; 35g; discarded	6x clay pipe stems; 11g; discarded
	5	various oxidised; 7g	abraded				1x flint frag., pale grey; 1g
	5	white & blue wares; 12g	discarded	C18-19th			2x frags. animal teeth; 26g
							1x oyster frag.; 1g; discarded
							1x black slag; 2g

	{	<u>pottery</u>	_____	_____}	{	<u>bldg materials</u>	_____}
context	qty	fabric & weight	surface	century	qty	type	miscellaneous
FF/CB5	18	small frags.; oxidised; 48g	abraded	C13-18	4	frags. ceramic roof tile; 20g; discarded	7x small frags. animal bone; 8g; discarded
	9	various; 78g	brown, orange & green glazes; abraded	C16-18th	1	frag. brick; 375g; discarded	3x small frags. oyster shell; 2g; discarded
	3	white & blue wares; 6g; discarded		C18-19th			1x small frag. green bottle glass; 2g; C18-20th; discarded
							2x clay pipe stems; discarded
							1x bottle top, pink, marked 'Flag Sauce'; 5g

Appendix III: Photographs

Terrace 6



Philip Rahtz, Lorna Watts and Nancy Hollinrake at the location of wall 608.



Bench footing location shots with Dr. Jodie Lewis.

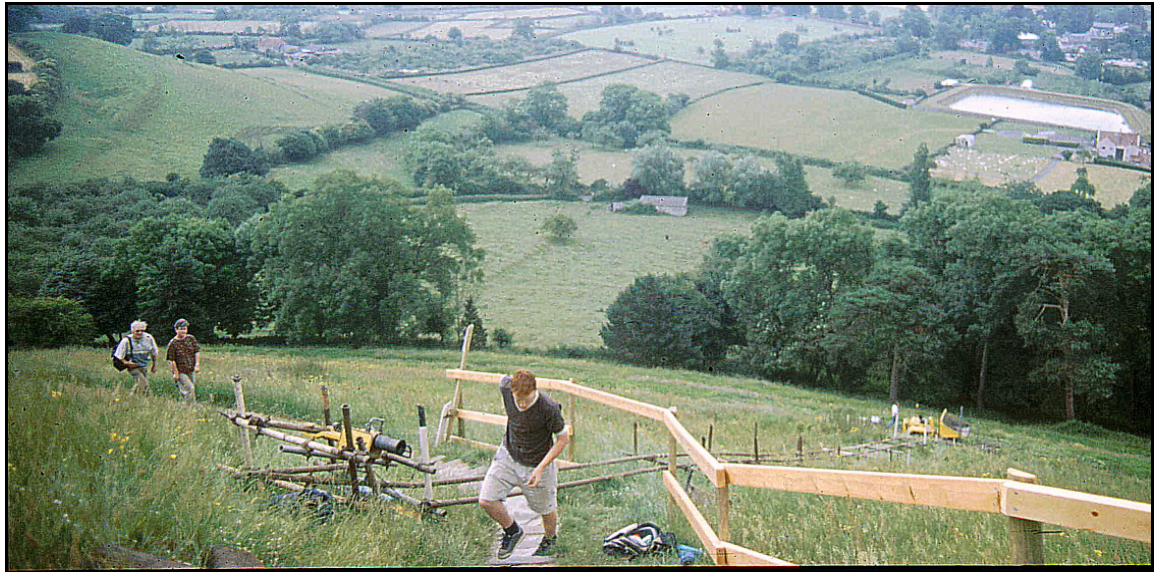


Detail of sondage into 603.



Sondage below wall 608.

Terrace 11



Aaron Cribb using the tramway to move materials to top of Tor.



Riser above Terrace 11; Drawing 8.



Detail of Terrace 11: lias chips

Terrace 17



Riser above Terrace 17; Drawing 13.

Terraces 21 & 22



Terrace 21 looking east; gate onto Terrace 22 on right.



Gary Wheadon driving a dumper truck on Terrace 21, Terrace 22 below.

Terrace 22



Terrace 22 looking east.

Terrace 23



Nancy recording Terrace

.Terrace 3



Lloyd Hannam

preparing the foundations for bench (see Drawing 1).

APPENDIX V

Historical Background of the "White Spring", Wellhouse Lane.

The Reservoir

At the base of the Tor, opposite the outflow of Chalice Well into Wellhouse Lane, is a Victorian reservoir which has been converted into a cafe. In 1871 an outbreak of scarlet fever which had lasted several years prompted "several influential inhabitants" to demand an official inquiry by the Home Department. One cottage described in that report lies at the base of the Tor:

A remarkably diminutive cottage in Scorsing Batch, - so small that the entrance door of ordinary size forms about half the front of the living-room, and which is occupied by a man and wife and four children. All the children had been attacked with scarlet fever, and one was lying ill at the time of my visit, another being barely convalescent from the disease. There is a small scullery in rear of this cottage, and against the wall of this scullery has been built a privy, with cesspit, common to the cottage and another. The excrement from the cesspit has soaked through the wall of the scullery, and at times ("particularly before rain") the cottage is permeated with a sickening stench from it. [Scorsing Batch is modern Coursing Batch].

J. Netten Radcliffe, the author of the report, described the water supply in 1871 as coming from

(a) five springs outside the town, to the north-east (three of these springs having been the source of supply for the ancient abbey³⁰), the water from which is brought to a covered reservoir at the head of High Street, having an estimated capacity of 31,5000 gallons, and thence distributed to five conduits placed in different parts of the town; (b) from a conduit in Wellhouse Lane ("Lions Head," popularly so-called from the configuration of the outlet), fed by a spring, at the foot of the Tor, on the outskirts of the town to the south-east; and (c) from four pumps...

The inquiry by Mr. J. Netten Radcliffe found that an inadequate water supply was the cause of the epidemic and instructed the Corporation to construct the reservoir and pipe the water into the public fountains in town: one on Lambrook Street and another at the Market Cross.³¹ The reservoir was built the following year, 1872. A subsequent inspection in 1885 found it to contain 37,700 gallons of water, the

³⁰ The spring house at Chalice Well marks this spring as one of those three.

³¹ Netten Radcliffe, 1871.

spring feeding it yielding 8,340 gallons a day³². This spring is called 'Wellhouse-lane spring' in the report, but field-names do not indicate a spring in this position.

Another spring at 'Tor House' yielding 2,300 gallons a day appears to have been diverted into the Edgarley reservoir by 1899³³.

Modern interpretation of this reservoir sees it as a pagan, prehistoric cult site focusing on the spring which feeds it. Map, documentary and field-name analysis fail to show a spring on this site and suggest that this interpretation is unfounded. However, a diary entry describes this area before the Reservoir was built:

One thing that clings to me was the beautiful Well House Lane of those days, before it had been spoilt by the erection of the Reservoir. There was a copse of small bushes on the right hand running up the hill, and through it could be, not seen, but heard, the rush of running water, which made itself visible as it poured into the lane. But the lane itself was beautiful, for the whole bank was a series of fairy dropping wells - little caverns clothed with moss and verdure, and each small twig and leaf was a medium for the water to flow, drop, drop, drop, into a small basin below. This water contained lime, and pieces of wood or leaves subject to this dropping became encrusted with a covering of lime. For a long time I tended these pretty caverns with affectionate care, and Well House Lane was an object of interest to all our visitors.³⁴

This area may, therefore, have acted as a site of veneration in the past; this liming effect no longer operates, however.

The running water pouring into the lane described by Wright may be the same as the "Lion Head" conduit described by Netten Radcliffe as leading from a spring at the foot of the Tor. On the nearby Tithe Map field 2196 is named 'Peckwell'; perhaps this is the true source of the water. Wherever the water springs from, it is still flowing into the reservoir, and is now being bottled and sold commercially.

³² Wells Journal, 1885.

³³ Wells Journal, 1899.

³⁴ Wright, G. W., 1890.