

EXCAVATIONS IN CARDIGAN : VOLK'S BAKERY, 1975

In early April 1975, demolition work began at Nos. 1 and 2 High Street, prior to road improvements. A rescue excavation was organised and took place on the site for a week during the Easter period, followed by a further weekend's work. The site lies in the centre of the medieval borough, on a bluff overlooking the River Teifi, composed of yellow sandy gravel and clay of glacial origin.

Trench I showed that the construction trench of the south wall of Volk's Bakery cut through a series of deposits (A-a) filling a shallow depression. This deepened towards the east, up to 0.35 metres below the disturbed demolition layer, while in the machine cut trench for the new kerb edge of the road, the hastily recorded section showed that the feature was at least 1 metre deep. It appeared to be a depression, possibly of natural origin, deliberately filled with a series of layers of clay and organic material. In layer 19, there were the remains of fly pupae, suggesting the warm, moist conditions of rotting vegetation. Two phases of filling seem to be indicated: the first, including 20 and the organic layer 19, followed by silting, 28. The second phase of filling ended with the deposition of a large amount of charcoal, in plan, running diagonally across the trench, perhaps indicating the wooden upright of a structure immediately to the north. Unfortunately, the excavation could not be extended in this direction due to the presence of the main road and a concrete floor. This destruction was followed by further silting, composed of charcoal fragments, 36, washed down from the demolition layer. Further layers above this appear to have been destroyed in the construction of Volk's Bakery.

To the west trench 2 found traces of a pit c. 0.7 metres (B-b) deep, and at least 2.5 by 1.5 metres wide. Time did not allow the full extent of the pit to be determined. It was filled with a simple series of strata, beginning with 44, a primary silt of dark grey soil with the remains of ferns or bracken, covered by a deliberate fill of sandy grey to yellow gravel similar to the natural gravel subsoil. 42 was a dark brown organically rich layer, containing many potsherds and animal bones, subsequently covered by another layer of gravel, lying under a layer of organic material similar to 42, above this was a layer of light brown clay.

Being on the present street frontage, it should be expected that the site would have had more intensive use, the features excavated are more in keeping with the rear of a building plot, possibly indicating a street system later rearranged to the present one.

I am indebted to Mr. M. Clark of the Roads Division of the Welsh Office for permission to excavate and the Friends of the Pembrokeshire Museums for providing equipment. The work could not have been

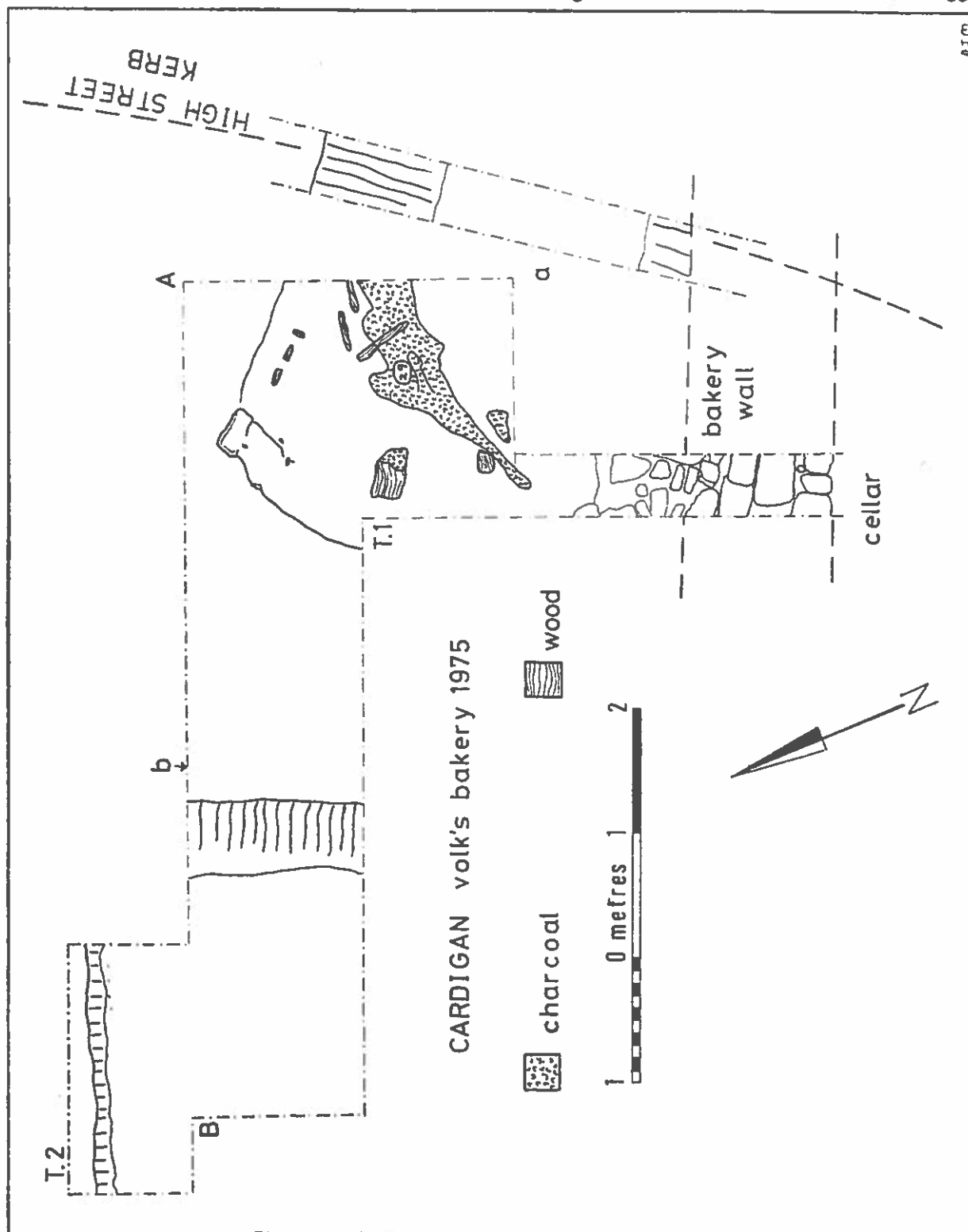
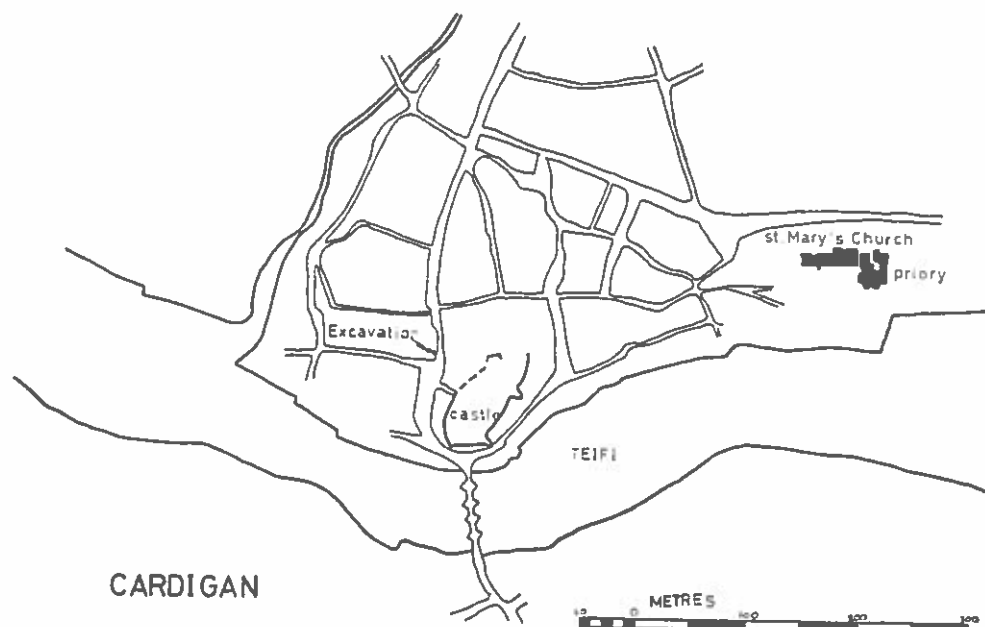
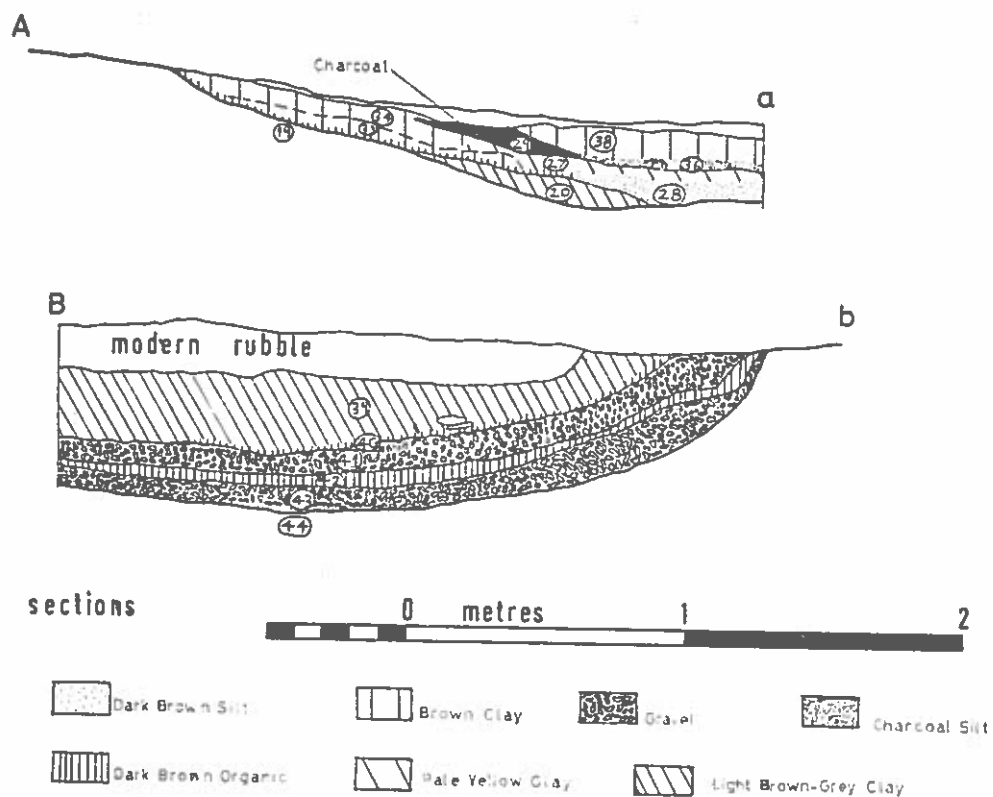


Fig. VII 10

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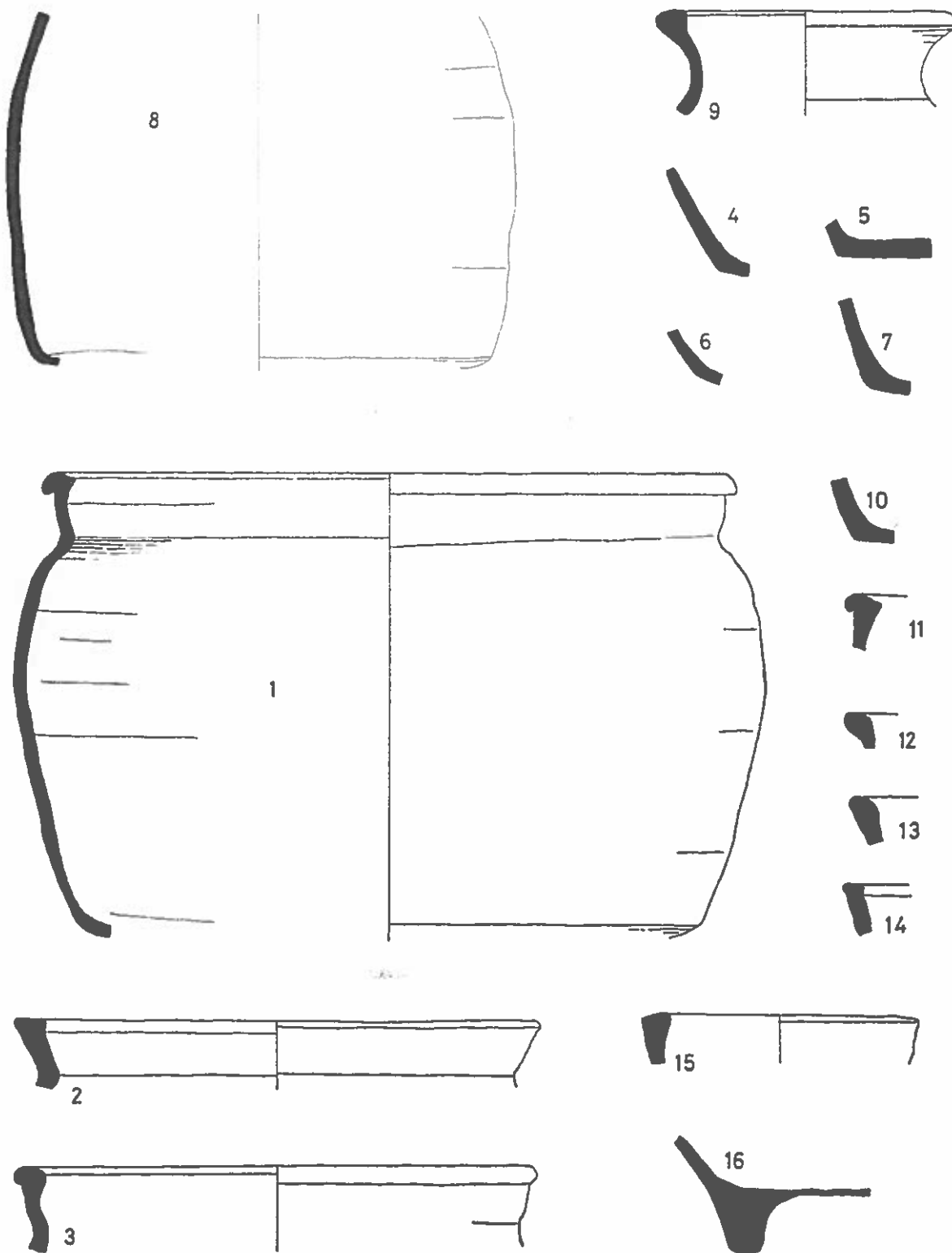


Fig. VII 13

carried out without the aid of the volunteers both locally and from further away. I am also grateful for the advice given by R. A. Kennedy and M. D. Freeman of Haverfordwest Museum, and C. H. Houlder of R.C.A.M.

Finds were common in all layers and included medieval pottery and bones, mainly of sheep and pigs. The pottery was all of a similar unglazed, buff to orange fabric with large grits. The rim forms are everted with rather straight sided shoulders and sagging bases. It is difficult to place a date on the group due to the dearth of similar material from south west Wales. The group differs in both form and fabric from the products of the kiln at Newport¹ and the pottery from St. Dogmaels Abbey,² both late medieval; and they also differ from the early medieval pottery found at Tan-y-castell, Aberystwyth.³ So the group would seem to be a more locally produced ware with a small area of distribution. Typologically, the group might be late, as No. 1 is a rather sophisticated rim form, but the remainder are simpler. In any case it is doubtful if typology would produce a date as once utilitarian forms were introduced they would have had a long life.

1. cooking pot, hard buff to orange fabric with grits up to 5 mm. long, giving granulated surface. T. 42 T.2 42
2. cooking pot, similar ware as last, but rather softer. T.2 42
3. Cooking pot, similar to 1, but surface is less orange in colour. T.2 unstratified, either 40 or 43 42.
4. Cooking pot, sagging base, similar to 1. T.2 42
5. Cooking pot, sagging base, hard brown grey ware very gritty, light brown interior, greyish brown exterior. T. 2 42.
6. Cooking pot, sagging base, similar ware to 1. T.2 42.
7. cooking pot, sagging base, similar to 1. T.2.42.
8. Cooking pot, orange gritty ware, buff interior, with surfaces of grits flush with surface, dark brown exterior surface. T.2.40.
9. Jug, hard orange, gritty ware. T.2.40.
10. Cooking pot, sagging base, hard gritty orange core, interior surface light brown. T.1.
11. Cooking pot, orange ware, relatively few grits, T.1.
12. Jug, buff ware, grit-free. T.1.
13. Cooking pot, hard, light buff fabric with large grits. T.1.
14. Jug, grey, gritted ware with orange surfaces, T.1.
15. Jug, similar to 12. T.1.
16. Tripod pitcher foot, hard orange gritty ware. T.1. 38.

Cardigan.

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NOTES

¹E. Talbot, *Post-Medieval Archaeology* 2 (1968), 119-39.

²J. K. Knight, *Arch. Camb.* 1970 125-30.

³Excavated by C. H. Houlder I am grateful to him for allowing me to see the material.