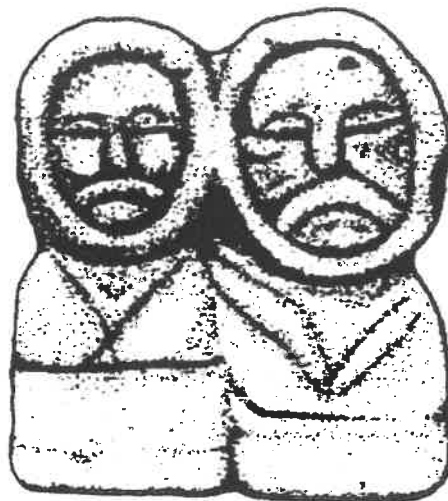
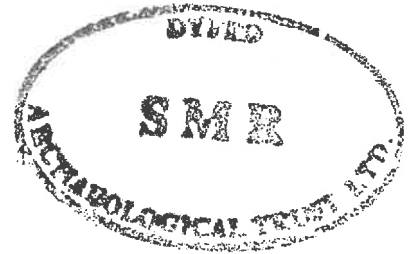


CAMBRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECTS

Bishop's Palace, St Davids:

Archaeological Evaluation

By Ian Grant MIFA



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**Prepared for:
Cadw**

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1 June 2000

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The excavations were undertaken at the request of Rick Turner on behalf of Cadw, prior to public access development at Bishop's Palace, St Davids.
- 1.2 The development proposal is to extend the existing gravel walkway inside the gateway, across the courtyard, to the foot of the Great Hall porch steps.
- 1.3 Rick Turner had identified four areas for excavation on the line of the proposed path (Fig.1). Three of the trenches were 1m wide, varying between 3m and 3.6m in length, and were located along the length of the Bishops Hall. The fourth trench, 4.5m x 6m, was located next to the Great Hall porch steps, encompassing an area where there was no longer any grass cover.
- 1.4 The excavations were undertaken 22-24 February 2000 with three members of Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd, under the direction of Kevin Blockley. This report and the illustrations were prepared in March 2000.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The primary objective of the assessment was to establish the depths of the subsoil's and to record potential archaeological remains which exist in the line of the development area at these levels.

3 Excavation Methodology

- 3.1 All of the trenches were de-turfed by hand and subsequent topsoil and overburden removed also by hand. Where it was possible, the trenches were excavated to the surface of the subsoil and archaeological features recorded at that level. However, this practice was somewhat restricted by the extent and depth of archaeological makeup deposits.
- 3.2 The deposits within the trenches were excavated using standard accepted archaeological techniques. Each excavation area was cleaned and recorded. Recording of these areas was in three formats:
 - ◆ Photographic record shots were taken in 35mm, colour slide and black and white prints.
 - ◆ Drawn records, plans and sections, were produced at scales of 1:10 or 1:20 on drafting film.
 - ◆ Written records were produced using a continuous numbering sequence for all contexts. Excavation of selected features was undertaken in order to ascertain their date, depth, preservation, extent, function and relationship to other features.
- 3.3 On completion of excavation, trenches 1, 2 and 3 were carefully backfilled and the turf was replaced. Trench 4 was left open so that the gravelled area by the Great Hall porch could be extended. The spoil was removed and dumped by the site foreman
- 3.4 There was a reasonable quantity of finds from the trenches, including a small number of ceramics of a medieval date. All finds were kept and are summarised in Appendix 2.
- 3.5 Public access to the two staircases, one leading to the Great Hall porch, the other leading to the Bishop's Hall porch, was retained throughout the excavation.

- 3.6 The numbers in brackets in this report refer to context numbers assigned to the various archaeological features and deposits uncovered during the excavation work.

4 Results of the Archaeological Excavation

Trench 1 (Fig 2)

- 4.1 Trench 1 (approximately 3m x 1m) was excavated between the Bishop's Hall porch steps and the visible remains of a foundation wall within the Courtyard. The overburden was shallow, comprising a mixture of topsoil and gravel sand (14), 15-20cm thick. Below this level was a layer of fairly compact chippings of 'Upper Pebidian tuff' (15), intermixed with abraded mortar, sands and gritstone. At the northern end of the trench the deposit had been truncated by a cut (18), 60 cm in width, running east to west. This contained two modern service pipes (16) and (17), that were concluded to be the same services traversing all four of the excavated trenches. At the southern extent of the trench there was a deposit of uneven stone (20), overlying the layer (15). On further excavation the deposit was found to be sitting in a cut (21), 41cm in width and visible across the entire width of the trench. It was concluded that the stone deposit was possibly the remains of a foundation for the lowest tier of steps leading up to the porch of the Bishop's Hall.
- 4.2 The green coloured stone deposit (20) is a local natural described as 'Lower Pebidian tuff' (a Precambrian igneous extrusive rock) and is to be found incorporated as a building material used throughout Bishop's Palace.
- 4.3 The layer (15) was originally thought to be a subsoil and was consequently left in situ. However further excavations through similar deposits in trenches 3 and 4 revealed the context to be either a makeup layer or working surface of possible medieval origin.

Trench 2 (Fig 3)

- 4.4 Trench 2 (approximately 3.6m x 1m) was excavated 8.6m east of Trench 1 and approximately 7m north of the Bishop's Hall. As in Trench 1, the overburden comprised a mixture of topsoil and gravel sand. (22), 10-18cm thick overlying a mix of stone rubble and sandy soil (27), 5-24cm thick. At the southern edge of Trench 2 the combined overall depth was 38cm, illustrating the gradual incline from north to south east of the underlying deposits. On removal of these layers again it was evident that the deposits below had been heavily disturbed in the northern extent of the trench by the laying of a service pipe (23) and also a gully cut (26), containing a modern service pipe (24).
- 4.5 Central to the trench was a deposit (30) containing the remains of building debris, abraded mortar, 'Upper Pebidian tuff' fragments and purple sandstone chippings. The sandstone chippings are of Caerbwdy stones and represent masonry waste. This layer gave way to a pale brown sand and mortar layer (31) to the south, and fairly compact yellowy brown sand (29) to the north. The latter had been cut by the modern services.
- 4.6 At the northern edge of the trench, underlying a fairly shallow layer of topsoil and rubble and appearing at a depth of 10cm, there was compact layer (28) of fractured 'Upper Pebidian tuff' mixed with sand and grit. Although the layer was observed at such a shallow depth, it predates the layer (29) and at point 30cm from the edge of the trench the layer dives below (29). The components of the deposit are the same as layer (15), observed in Trench 1, and one can conclude that this is the makeup layer of working surface that extends across the site.

Trench 3 (Fig 4)

- 4.7 Trench 3 (3.3m x 1m) was excavated 7.4m east of Trench 2 and approximately 8m north of the Bishop's Hall. The overburden comprised a mixture of topsoil of clay/sand (01), and stone rubble (02). The depth in the northern extent of the trench was 12cm, gradually increasing to 27cm at the south eastern end. The intermixing of the layers in the northern extent of the trench was again due to the laying of a service pipe (03) and also a gully cut, 30cm in width, containing a modern service pipe (04).
- 4.8 Once the overburden had been removed and the underlying deposits cleaned, a number of features were evident. Stratigraphically, the latest feature was a well defined linear (06), running the length of the east side of the trench. It had been truncated by the modern service (04) at its northern extent. The linear contained a singular fill (05), a dark brown friable silt that contained a number of post-med finds, and revealed in section (Fig.5) concave sides breaking onto an irregular base of 'Upper Pebidian tuff' chippings and sand (10). The visible width of the linear was 17cm, and it was concluded that this feature was probably a post-med drainage gully.
- 4.9 Traversing diagonally across the centre of the trench, north to south, was an irregular shaped linear (08) that had been truncated at its northern extent by the linear (06). It contained a singular fill (07), a mid grey soil devoid of dateable finds. It was revealed in section (fig.6) that the linear, at its broadest 11cm in width with shallow concave edges, had heavily truncated an underlying pit feature (13). This was found to contain post medieval ceramics, thus establishing a similar later phase for the linear drainage features. Both linear features had cut through a deposit of light brown sand and gravel (09), that covered the extent of the trench. The deposit contained a localized amount of fragmented lime mortared wall plaster, the facing of which had been washed brick red in colour. The plaster would appear to be late medieval in date although it had been redeposited within a post medieval context.
- 4.9.1 Below the layer (09) was a layer of fragments of 'Upper Pebidian tuff' mixed with a light brown sand and grit (10). The trench was cleaned down to this level, a depth of 44cm from the ground surface. It was concluded that this layer was part of the makeup layer or working surface extending across the site, similar to layer (15) in Trench 1. On removal, the layer was found to be 8cm in depth. One piece of ceramic was recovered of possible medieval date. Underlying layer (10), and covering the extent of the trench, a dark grey/brown clay soil (11) was revealed. It contained an even distribution of charcoal flecks and a quantity of stone rubble. Recovered from this deposit was a single fragment of burnt stone (natural tuff), fused with a deposit of slag. The layer, a depth of 52cm from the ground surface, could possibly be a fill for a large feature, the extent of which lies beyond the perimeter of the excavation.

Trench 4 (fig 7)

- 4.9.2 Trench 4 (4.5m x 6m) was located next to the Great Hall porch steps, 5.8m south west of Trench 1. The overburden comprised a mixture of topsoil of dark brown clay/sand (32), and small stone rubble and sand (33). The depth was between 16-20cm overall. Two modern service pipes within cuts 40cm apart, (34,35) and (36,37), traversed the trench diagonally north to south causing considerable disturbance to the underlying layers. A heavily corroded iron service pipe (38), had caused similar disturbance in the upper left hand section of the trench. Running east to west, 90cm in from the northern perimeter, lay a post medieval drain (40). This was 25cm in width (Fig 8), and had been truncated in the western extent by the iron pipe (38). A small pit (42) (Fig 9) 60 cm in diameter and containing a singular fill of dark brown sandy soil, had also been truncated by the service pipe (38). A number of post medieval ceramics and a quantity of limpet shells were recovered from the pit fill (41).

- 4.9.3 A band of light brown clay (43), pre-dating the pit (42), was apparent at the northern most edge of the trench. The deposit, 10cm in depth, was overlying a layer of fairly compact 'Upper Pebidian tuff' fragments (45), intermixed with abraded mortar, sands and gritstone.
- 4.9.4 Accumulating centrally and south easterly in the trench, there was a wide deposit of compacted purple sandstone (Caerbwdy) chippings intermixed with abraded mortar and slate (44). The slight banking of the deposit displayed a localized process., probably relating to the masonry works within that area, dating to the mid fourteenth century. This deposit gave way to another layer (46) a combination of fragmented 'Upper Pebidian tuff' and purple sandstone chippings that butted the foundations of the passageway in the south eastern range. The layer was approximately 5cm in depth and formed an interface between the chippings and the underlying 'Upper Pebidian tuff' fragments (45).
- 4.9.5 In order to establish the depth and nature of the deposits below the 'Upper Pebidian tuff' fragments (45), a sondage (1m x 80cm) was excavated approximately 70cm from the northern perimeter against the western edge (Fig.7 & 8). In section this revealed that the 'Upper Pebidian tuff' fragments (45) continued to a depth of 37cm from the ground surface. Underlying this existed another layer (47), a compact brown buff clay containing a small percentage of charcoal throughout. A few fragments of animal bone and medieval ceramic were recovered from this deposit. Below this layer were two natural deposits, a mid grey sand (48), 19cm in depth, overlying a waterlogged grey clay (49), 22cm in depth. At a depth of 96cm, the green coloured pebidian ? natural deposit (50) was encountered.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The combined dating evidence recovered during cleaning and excavation of all four trenches, and interpretation of the sequence as observed from sections, produced the following phasing:
- ◆ Phase 1: Natural rock (50)-96cm below ground level, with a build up of natural grey sand (48).
 - ◆ Phase 2: Early 14th century occupation layer (47), (Trench 4), with possible associated feature (11), (Trench 3).
 - ◆ Phase 3: Middle 14th century, levelling of the area with 'Upper Pebidian tuff' deposit (10/15/28/45), establishing a building raft foundation for the Bishop's Hall and later structures. Associated building activity deposits include the purple sandstone chippings (44) and the probable working surface (46), as evident in Trench 4.
 - ◆ Phase 4: Build up of disturbance layer due to post medieval market gardening 18th-19th century, accounting for redepositing of late medieval fabrics and debris. Such examples are the debris deposit (30), central to Trench 2 and the layer (09) containing fragments of wall plaster, recovered from Trench 3. Subsequent landscape levelling within the courtyard in the 20th century has contributed to the general disturbance.

6 Acknowledgements

Thanks to Rick Turner and the Cadw staff at St Davids Bishop's Palace. Kevin Blockley and Ian Halfpenny for their help and advice during the compilation of this report; George Luke for his assistance with the fieldwork and Attila Csaba for undertaking the illustration work.

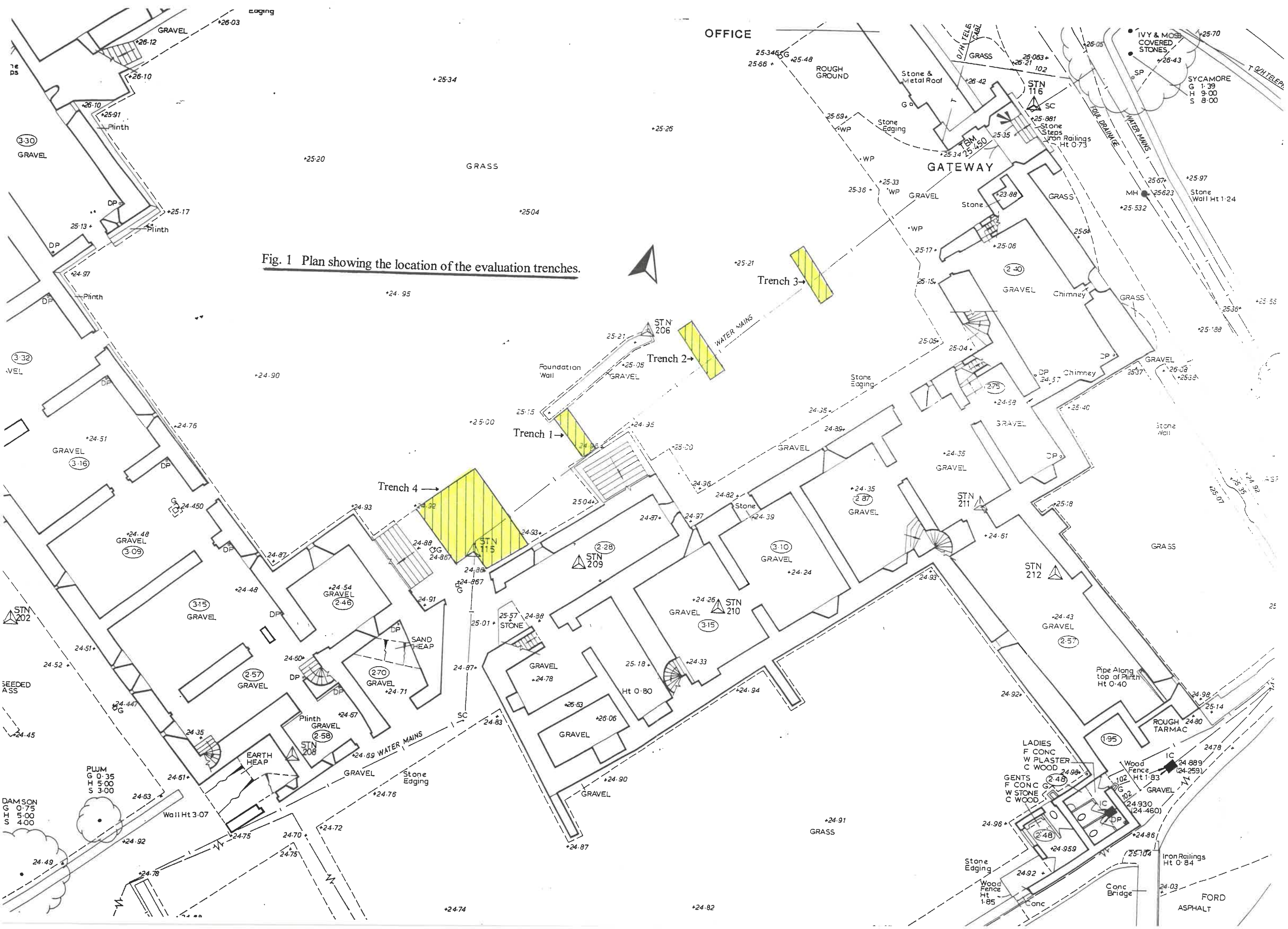


Fig. 1 Plan showing the location of the evaluation trenches.

Fig. 2 Plan of Trench 1.

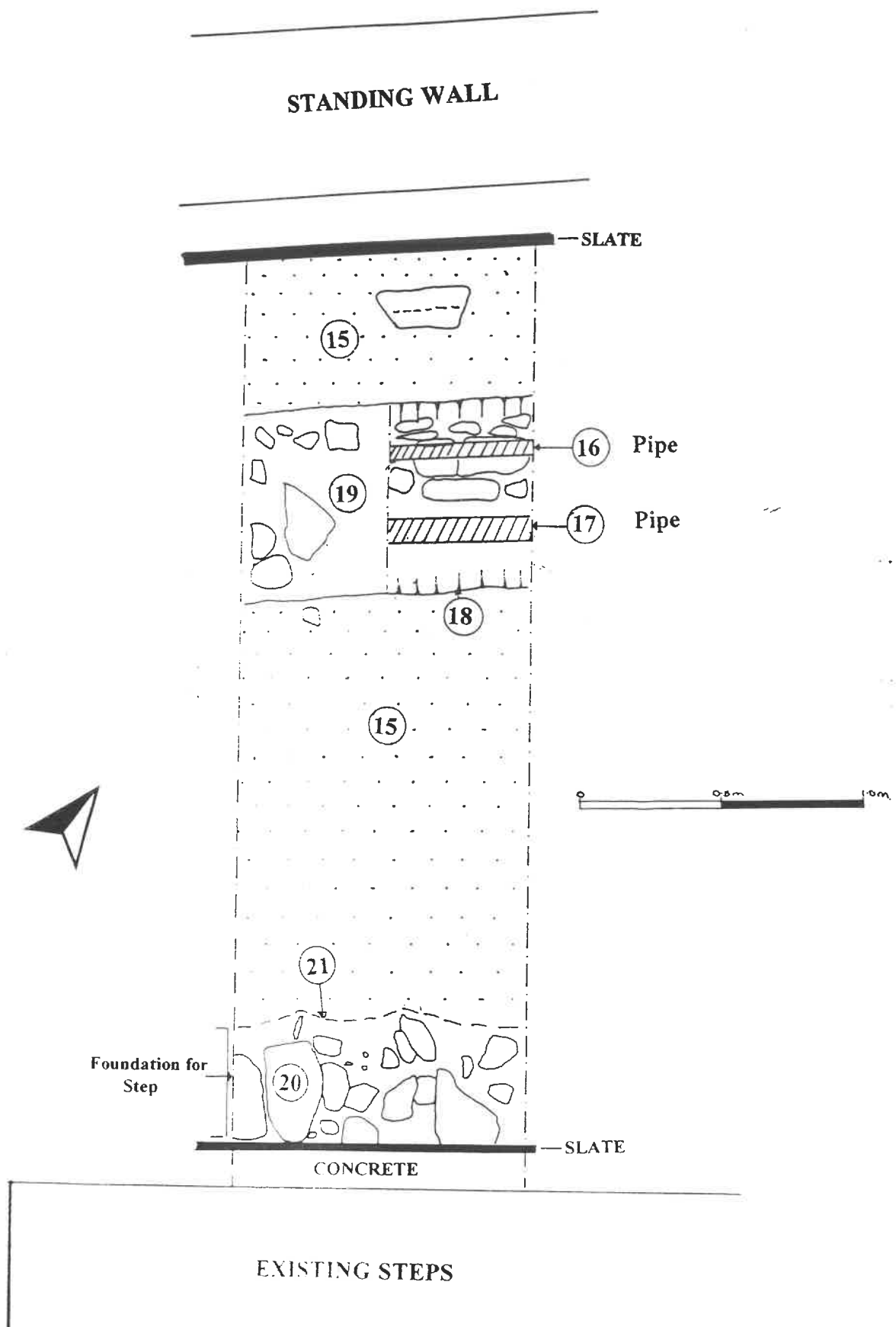


Fig. 3 Plan of Trench 2.

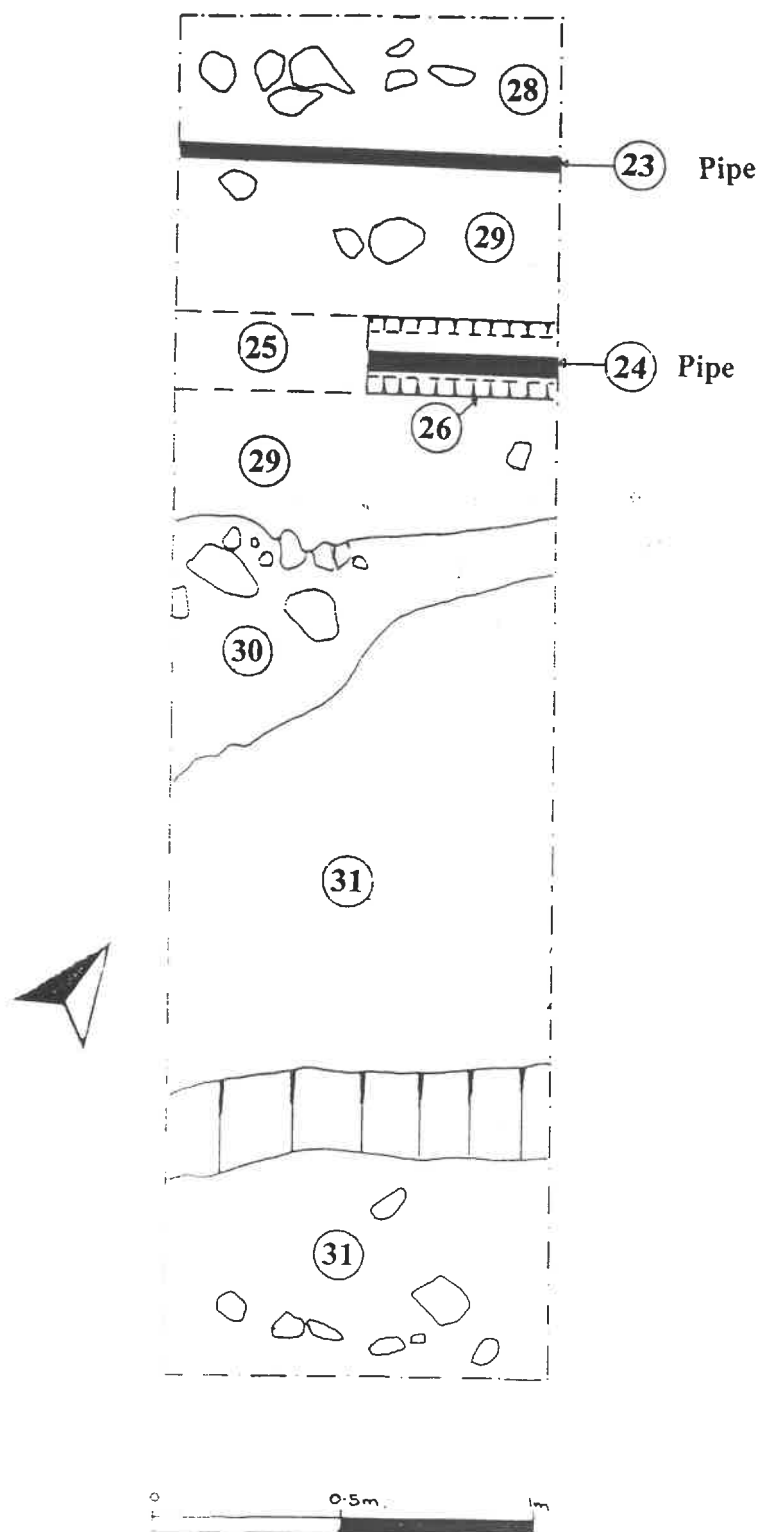
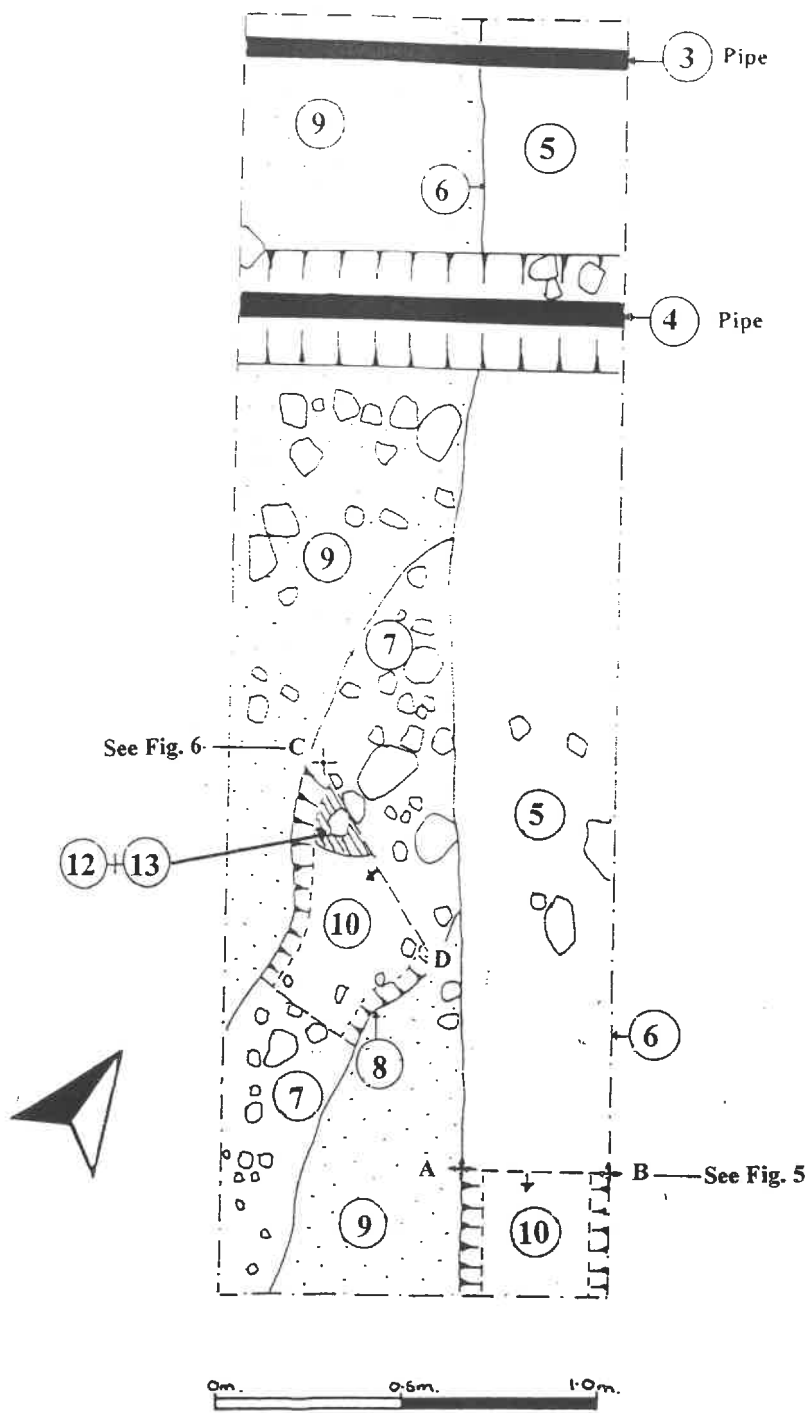


Fig. 4 Plan of Trench 3.



Section drawings for features in Trench 3.

Fig. 5 South East Facing section A-B, Cut 6.

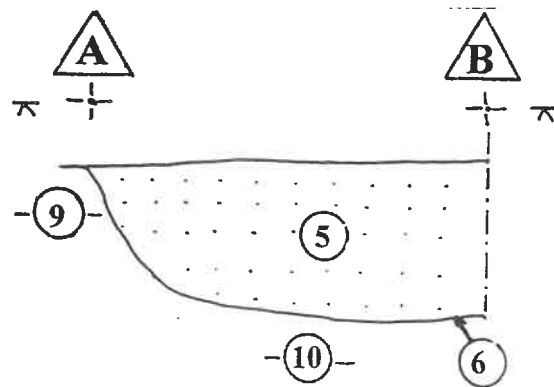


Fig. 6 South Facing section C-D, Cut 8.

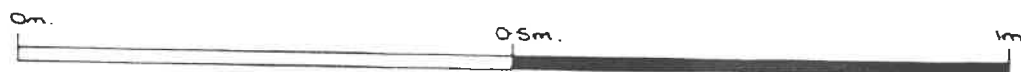
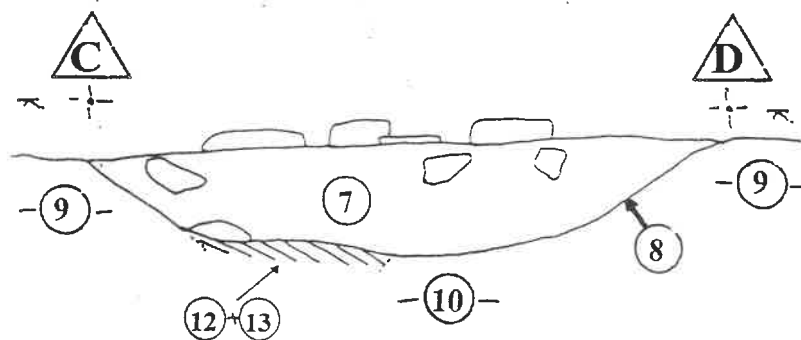


Fig. 7 Plan of Trench 4

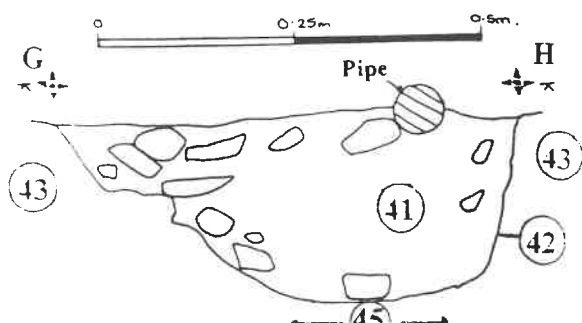
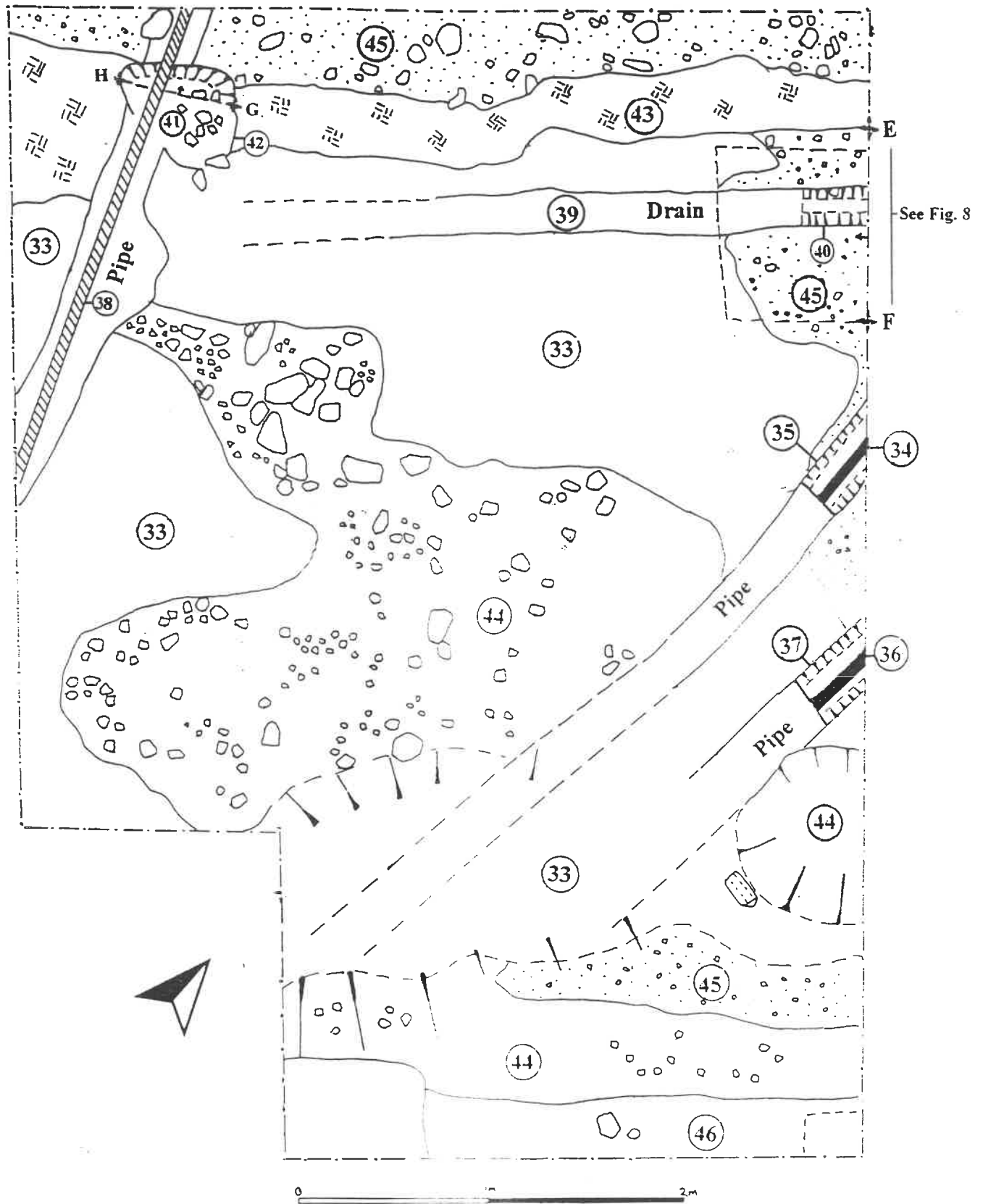
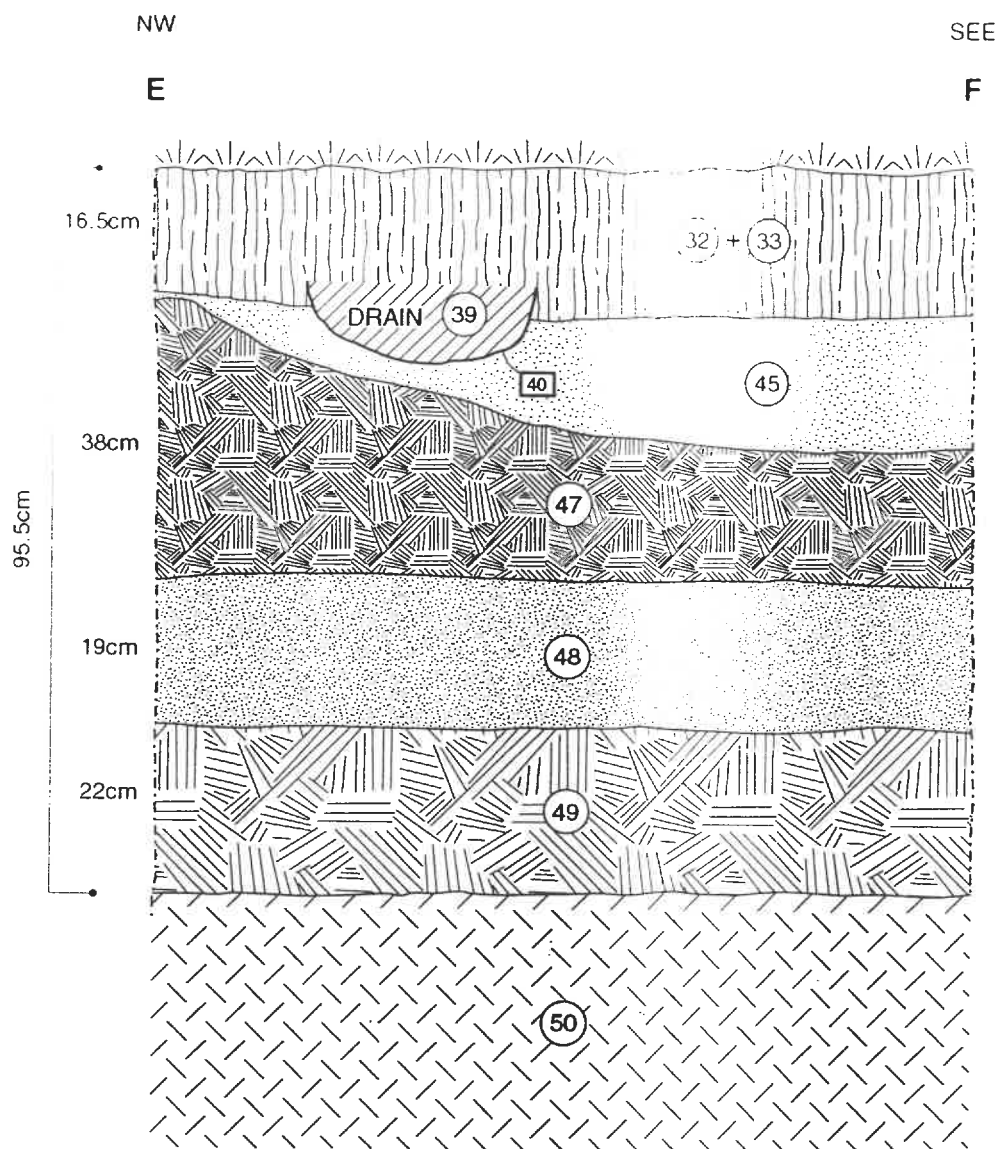


Fig. 9 Section drawing G-H, Cut 42, Trench 4

FIG 8 Section Drawing of Sondage (E - F) Through Trench 4



KEY

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Topsoil | Yellow / Grit - Sand |
| Brown / Buff Clay & Charcoal Flecks | Mid Grey Sand Layer |
| Light Grey Waterlogged Clay | Natural Igneous Rock |



APPENDIX 1: Summary of excavated contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Trench</i>
1	Topsoil	3
2	Overburden—rubble & soil mix	3
3	Black p.v.c service pipe	3
4	Yellow p.v.c service pipe	3
5	Fill of linear 6, dark brown silt	3
6	Cut (linear)	3
7	Fill of linear 7, clay/sand mix	3
8	Cut (linear)	3
9	Layer—light brown gravel/sand	3
10	Layer—fragments of 'Upper Pebidian tuff'	3
11	Layer (fill?)—dark grey clay/sand	3
12	Fill of pit 13, greasy grey clay, rubble	3
13	Cut (pit)	3
14	Topsoil and Gravel	1
15	Layer—mortar and 'Upper Pebidian tuff' chippings	1
16	Black p.v.c service pipe	1
17	Yellow p.v.c service pipe	1
18	Cut (service gully for 16, 17)	1
19	Fill of 18, brown gritty sand/clay	1
20	Deposit—greenstone (tuff)	1
21	Cut—foundation for steps (inc 20)	1
22	Topsoil	2
23	Black p.v.c service pipe	2
24	Yellow p.v.c service pipe	2
25	Fill of 26, backfill for 24	2
26	Cut (service gully for 24)	2
27	Overburden—rubble & soil mix	2
28	Layer—mortar, 'Upper Pebidian tuff' chippings	2
29	Layer—yellow/brown sandy silt	2
30	Layer—building debris	2
31	Layer—light brown sand and mortar	2
32	Topsoil	4
33	Overburden—rubble & soil mix	4
34	Black p.v.c service pipe	4
35	Cut (service gully for 36)	4
36	Yellow p.v.c service pipe	4
37	Cut (service gully for 36)	4
38	Iron pipe	4
39	Fill of 42, dark brown drainage silt	4
40	Cut—drainage gully (inc 39)	4
41	Fill of pit/posthole 42	4
42	Cut for 41—pit/posthole 42	4
43	Layer—light brown clay	4
44	Layer—Caerbwly stone chips/slate	4
45	Layer—yellow 'Upper Pebidian tuff' chips/sand	4
46	Layer—Interface between 44 & 45	4
47	Layer—brown buff clay and charcoal	4
48	Layer—mid grey sand (natural)	4
49	Layer—light grey clay	4
50	Pebidian—natural	4

APPENDIX 2: Artefact summary

By Paul Courtney

Medieval Fabrics

White ware jugs

Med A (3 sherds). Jugs in white firing fabric with fine quartz temper, probably a S. Wales Coal Measures source

Dyfed Siltstone wares - all glazed

Med B1 (6 sherds). Jugs, oxidised throughout or with reduced cores, splashed and/or pitted glazes. Fine sand temper and occasional siltstone fragment. Also an oxidised lid from context 12 with traces of worn brown glaze. SW Wales origin

Med B2 (1 sherd). Jug in high-fired reduced fabric with rare siltstone fragments and thick green glaze. SW Welsh source.

Med B3 (2 sherds). Fabric similar to Med B but thicker walled and with internal glazing. Ext. sooting on one sherd. Possibly pipkins or late med/transitional pancheons. SW Welsh origin

Pot quantified by sherd numbers

Topsoil

Industrial wares (Late C18-C20)

Creamware 3sh

Pearlware 2sh

Developed whiteware 2sh

English Brown stoneware (C19/early C20) 2sh

Staffordshire Yellow Ware (C19) 1sh

Staffordshire Refined Redware (Late C18/C19) 1sh

Flowerpot (unglazed red earthenware) 3sh

C17/early C18 wares

North Devon post-med wares 48sh (inc. 1 slipped -?sgraffito- jug)

Westerwald stoneware mug 1sh

Coal Measure Redware, black glazed (NW Eng/Buckley and, or Staffs/Shrops) 13sh

Pb glazed red earthenware (? SE Wales or W. England) 1sh

Miscellaneous

Green bottle glass 1

Clay pipe stems 4

Clay pipe stamp (illeg) 1

Medieval

Med A 3sh (jugs)

Med B1 3sh (jugs)

Med B3 2sh (int. glazed vessels)

Context 41

North Devon (post-med) 5sh

Context 47

Med B1 1sh (jug)

Context 12

Med B2 1sh (jug)

Med B1 1sh (glazed lid)

Context 10

Med B1 1sh (slashed handle)

Discussion

The small assemblage is typical of SW Wales with locally produced medieval jugs (with Dyfed siltstone inclusions) predominating, though no cooking pot sherds were found. This may reflect the small assemblage and tendency to use metal cooking vessels in monastic establishments. An unusual form was the glazed lid from context 12. The internally glazed wares may reflect the uptake of new forms by the local potting industries in the late Middle Ages. By the 16th century local potting had probably died out and all the post-medieval wares were imported from some distance via the coasting trade. North Devon wares predominate in the C17 and early C18. Coal Measure red wares with black glazes could come from both the Buckley (Flints)/ Preston (Lancs) kilns and the West Midlands.