

Crowback Tumulus Castlemartin Pembrokeshire



Archaeological Survey and Repair



Oxford Archaeology

April 2005



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Delivering Estate Solutions to Defence Needs

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Issue N^o: 1

OA Job N^o: 2636

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Date: 26th April 2005

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Date: 27th April 2005

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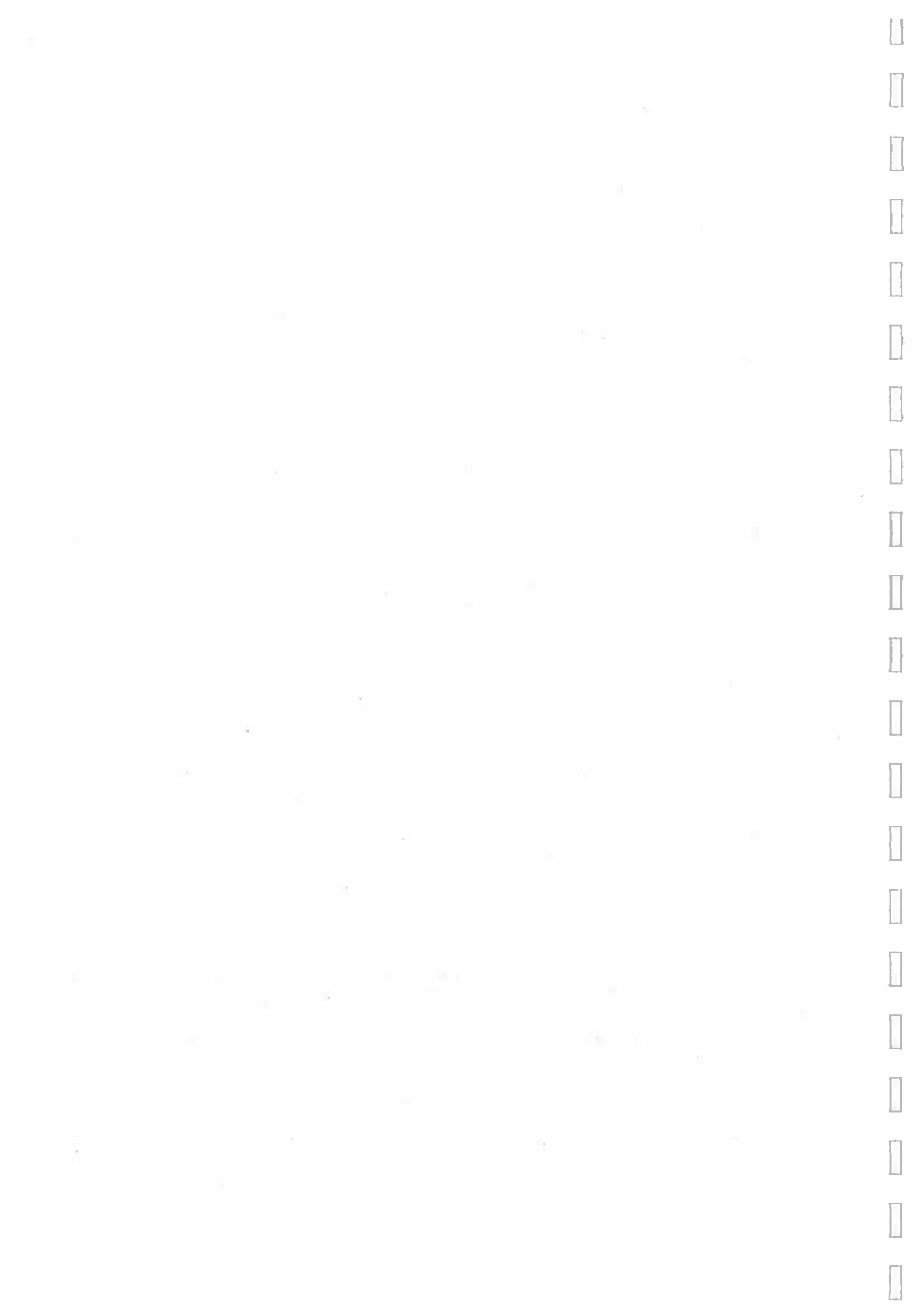
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Crowback Tumulus, Castlemartin, Pembrokeshire

NGR: SR 8895 9749

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND REPAIR

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SUMMARY

Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out archaeological recording and repair at Crowback Tumulus, Castlemartin, Pembrokeshire, on behalf of Defence Estates. Recording of a section exposed by erosion revealed details of the stratigraphy of the barrow. In particular, the probable turf line of the original barrow surface was observed. No finds were recovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In February 2005 OA carried out archaeological repair and recording at Crowback Tumulus, Castlemartin, Pembrokeshire (SR 8895 9749), on behalf of Defence Estates. The work was carried out in accordance with a brief set by the Archaeological Adviser to the clients, and a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the Archaeologist for Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. The barrow is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, as defined under the Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (Scheduled Monument number Pemb.467), and also lies within an SSSI.

1.1.2 The work was prompted by the observation of an erosion scar on the seaward (north-western) side of the tumulus. An area of disturbance could be seen adjacent to the erosion scar, including old timbers dug into the ground, possibly the result of past military training activity. The brief called for a repair to the barrow, combined with work to record the exposed stratigraphy.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies at 18m above OD within an area of sand dunes known as Linney Burrows, fringing a west-facing stretch of coastline (figs. 1 & 2). The mean high water mark lies 40m to the north-west of the barrow. The area is currently used for livestock grazing. The site has formed part of the Castlemartin Training Area since the Second World War, and is employed primarily in tank training.

1.3 Archaeological background

1.3.1 The Crowback Tumulus is one of several round barrows of presumed Bronze Age date within the Castlemartin Training Area. The National Monuments Record for Wales records that the barrow was excavated in 1880, producing one or two burials within a stone cist, accompanied by bones, shells and pottery.

1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 Thanks are due to Polly Groom (Pembrokeshire National Park Archaeologist), Martin Brown (Defence Estates Archaeologist), Nicky Rogers (Defence Estates Administrator), Colonel Barclay (Castlemartin Range Officer), Mark Storey (Supervisor), Tim Haines, Robin Latour, Jane Phimester and Dan Bashford (OA site

staff). Leo Webley wrote this report and Robin Latour prepared the illustrations. The OA Project Manager was Stuart Foreman.

2 AIMS

- 2.1.1 To repair the erosion and disturbance to the barrow.
- 2.1.2 To undertake limited recording of the exposed stratigraphy of the barrow.
- 2.1.3 To undertake a condition survey of the monument.
- 2.1.4 To make available the results of the recording work.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Earthwork survey

- 3.1.1 The earthwork survey was carried out by members of OA's Geomatics Department. All survey was done using a Leica 1230 GPS rover and base unit. A static station was established at the summit of the barrow. This was followed by a walked contour survey of the monument and its environs. A spot height was recorded every 1m. The area of erosion was also surveyed prior to the repair work, as was the area authorised for soil removal (the 'borrow pit').
- 3.1.2 The condition survey results are presented in the report as a 3D contour model of the barrow (fig. 3).

3.2 Recording and repair

- 3.2.1 The turf was stripped from the disturbed area and kept, ready for re-use. The timbers were removed and disposed of, and the loose sand was removed and retained. The exposed section of the erosion scar was cleaned by hand, photographed and drawn.
- 3.2.2 The exposed sand area (including the vertical erosion scar) was then covered with a "Terram" geotextile membrane in order to separate the underlying archaeological horizons from the fill. The geotextile was weighted down (with stones collected from the beach) and pinned in place on the vertical slope so that it finished flush with the slope profile. No textile protruded above ground level. The disturbed sand was then replaced on top of the geotextile.
- 3.2.3 In order to provide additional in-fill material and turf, a small borrow pit was dug 50m to the south-east of the barrow (fig. 2). The turf from this pit was carefully stripped and retained for use. The pit was dug into the sand level, removing the mixed sand which was used to infill the scar in the barrow, smoothing out the profile of the mound.
- 3.2.4 Finally, the turf was re-laid across the repaired area. In order to encourage the vegetation to re-establish, the repaired area was overlaid with a biodegradable layer of Geojute (fig. 5).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Description of deposits

- 4.1.1 The cleaned section was 14.75m long and up to 1.00m deep (fig. 4). The southern part of the section showed a sequence of naturally-deposited yellow sand layers separated by thin lenses of darker sand (5). These probably represent wind-blown layers, with thin turf lines becoming established between episodes of deposition. The sand deposits were overlain by a dark brown, organic-rich layer, up to 0.30m thick (10). This could well represent the turf line of the original barrow surface, suggesting that the barrow was constructed above the wind blown sand deposits. However, no horizon could be observed between the sand of the barrow 'core' and the natural sand layers beneath. The barrow turf line was overlain by three further naturally-deposited layers of sand (11-13), each up to 0.35m thick. The uppermost of these deposits lay directly beneath the modern topsoil (14).

4.2 Finds

- 4.2.1 No archaeological finds were recovered during the recording or repair work.

5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1.1 The recorded section has revealed evidence for the probable turf line of the original barrow surface. It also showed that the monument was constructed above a sequence of natural wind-blown sand layers. As no finds were recovered, the work did not provide any further evidence as to the date of the monument.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Defence Estates 2005 *Brief for Archaeological Recording and Repair: Crowback Tumulus, Castlemartin Army Training Estate, Pembrokeshire.*

OA 2005 *Crowback Tumulus, Castlemartin Army Training Estate, Pembrokeshire: A Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Repair and Recording*

APPENDIX 2 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Crowback Tumulus, Castlemartin

Site code: CACRO 05

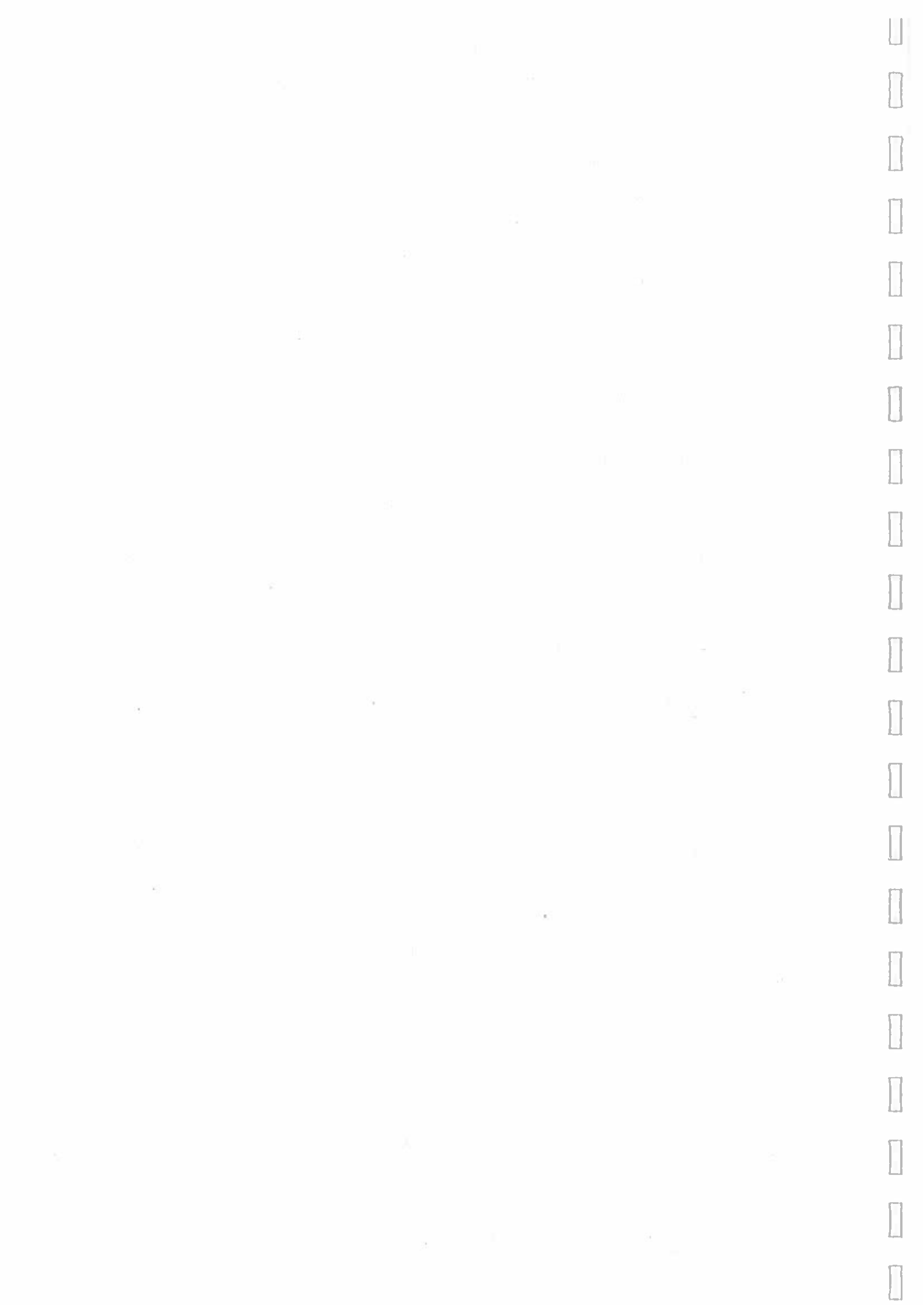
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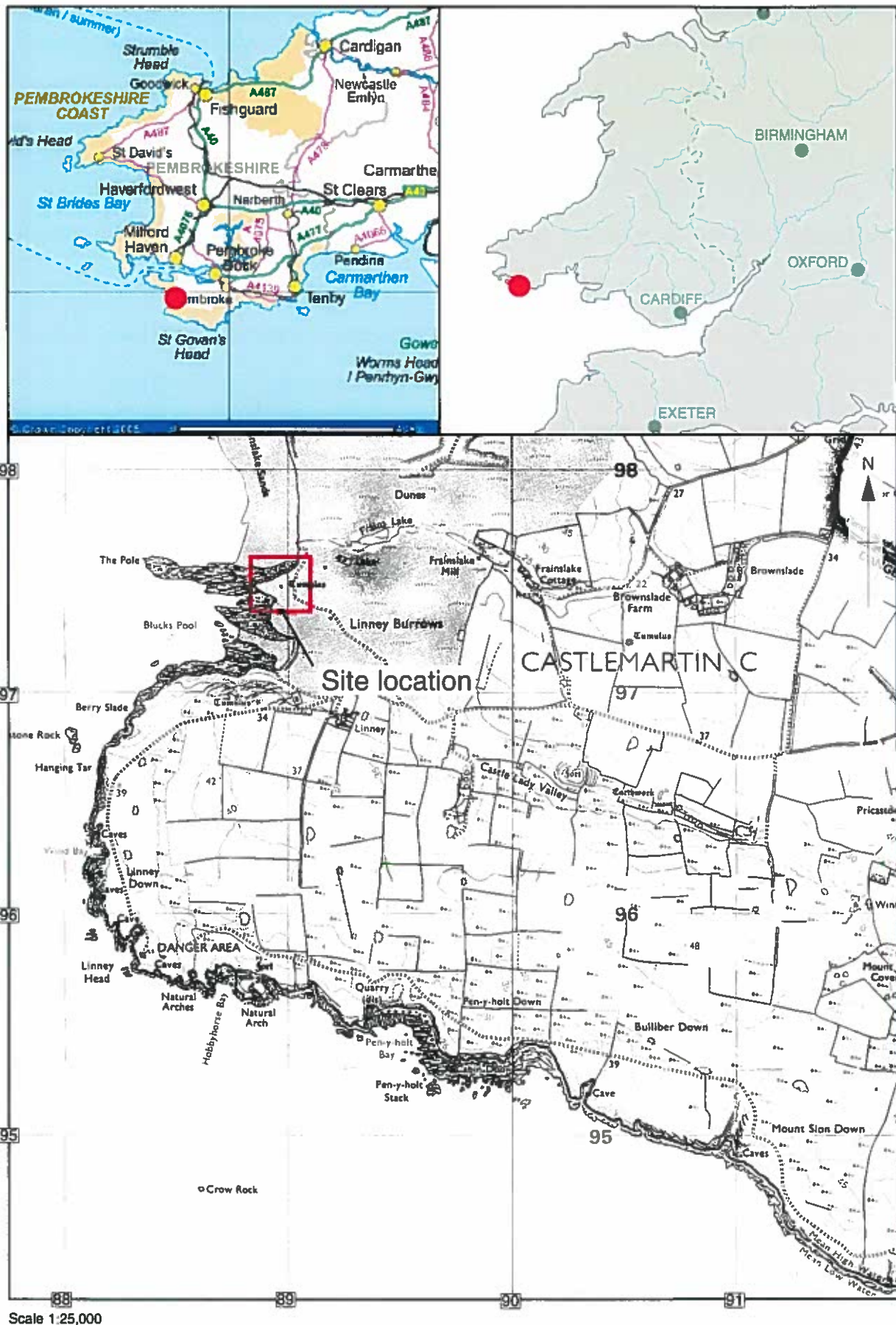
Type of evaluation: Archaeological recording and repair

Date and duration of project: 26th-27th February 2005

Summary of results: Recording of a section exposed by erosion revealed details of the stratigraphy of the barrow. In particular, the probable turf line of the original barrow surface was observed. No finds were recovered.

Location of archive: The archive will be deposited permanently at Herefordshire County Museum under Accession Code 2005-35





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Figure 1: Site location

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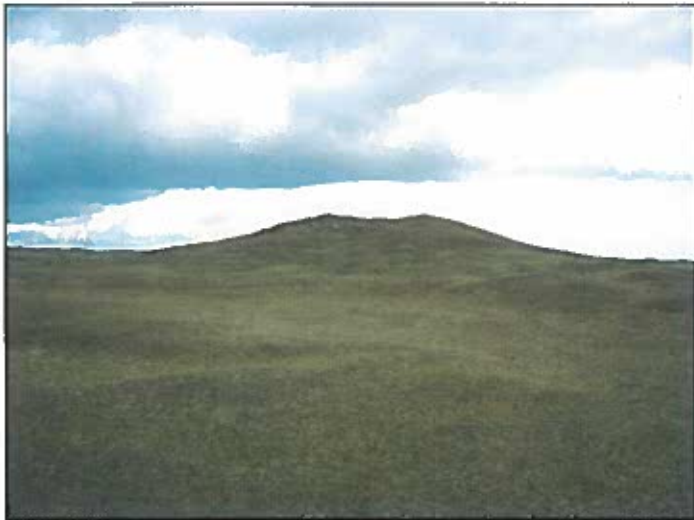
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Crowback tumulus, view to the west



Crowback tumulus and erosion scar, view to the east



Crowback tumulus and full erosion scar, view to southwest

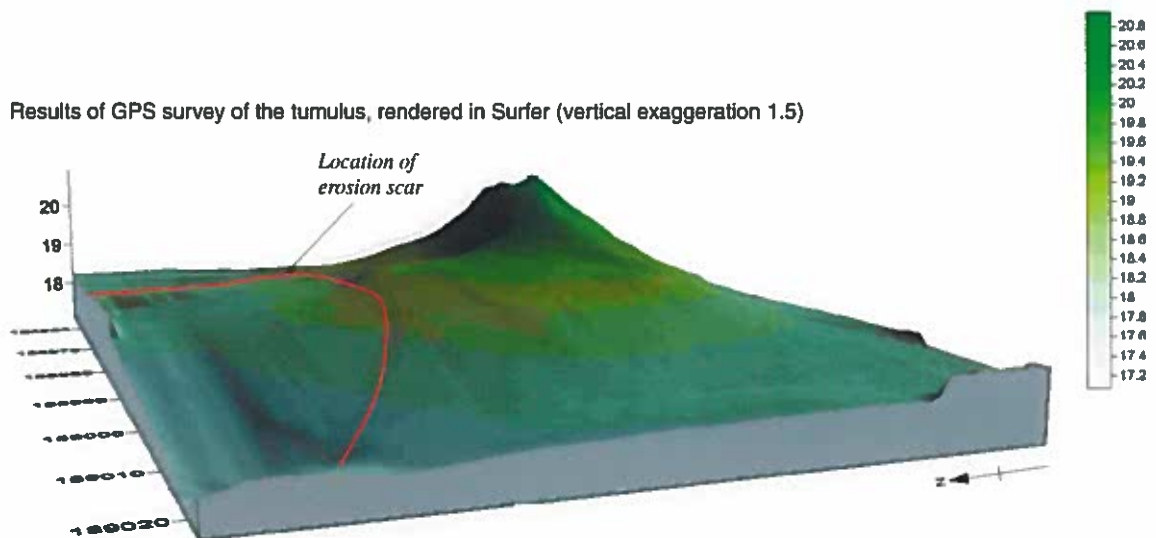
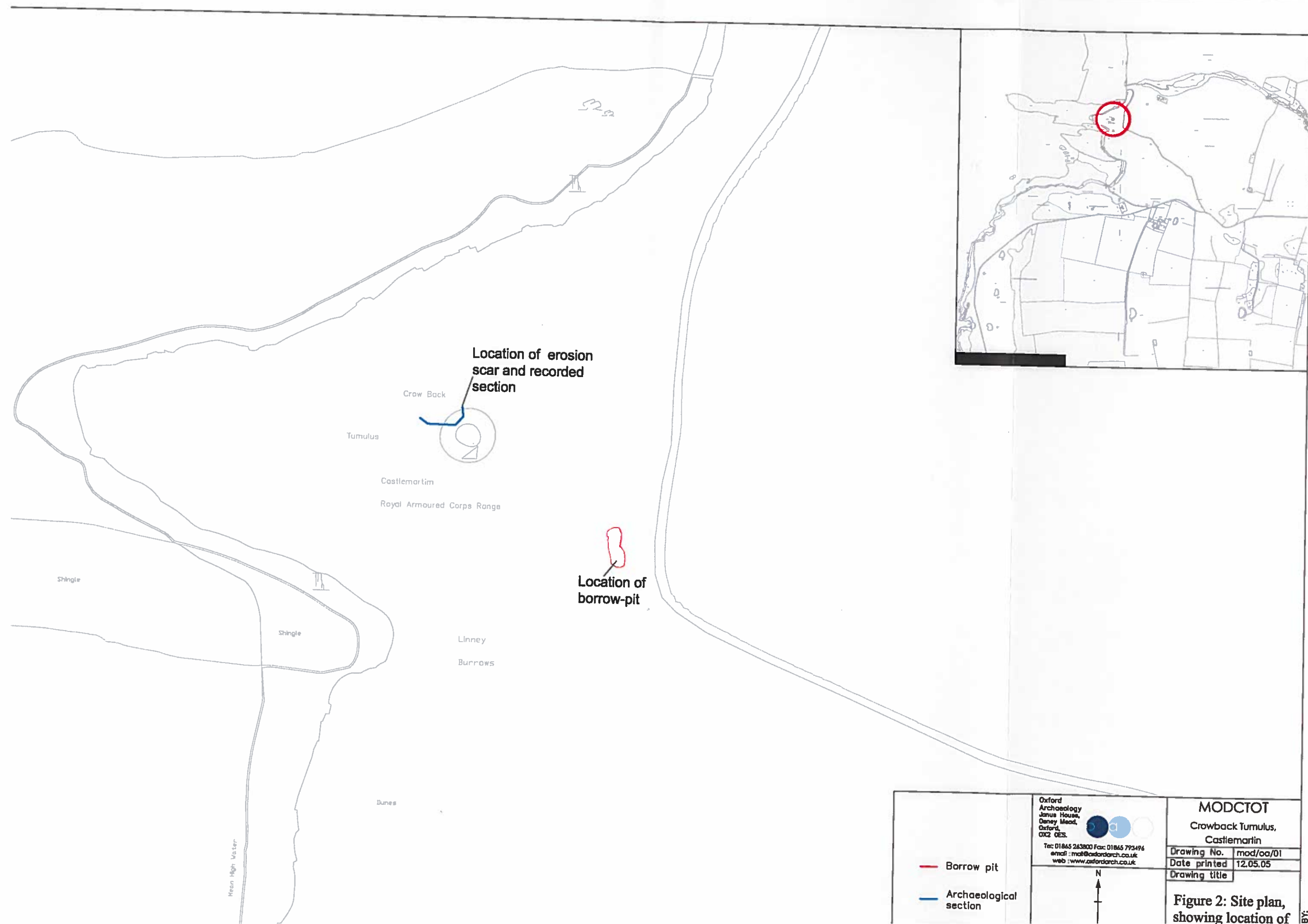


Figure 3: Crowback tumulus - general site views, showing the location of the erosion scar and the 3D survey of the site



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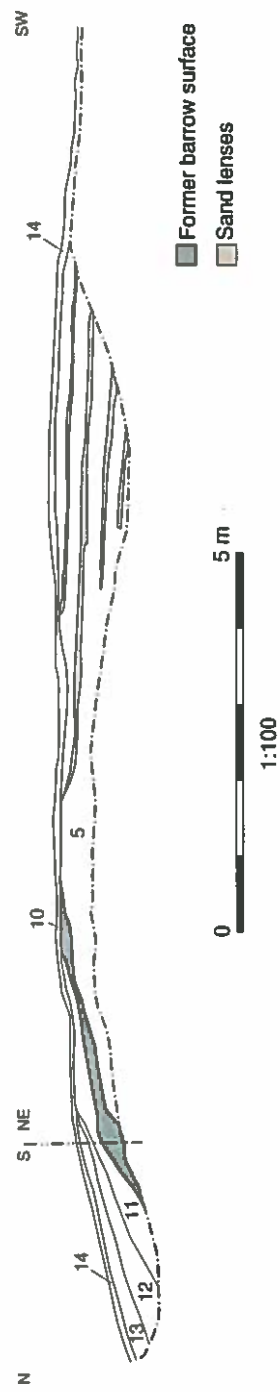


Figure 4: Eroded section, cut back and cleaned

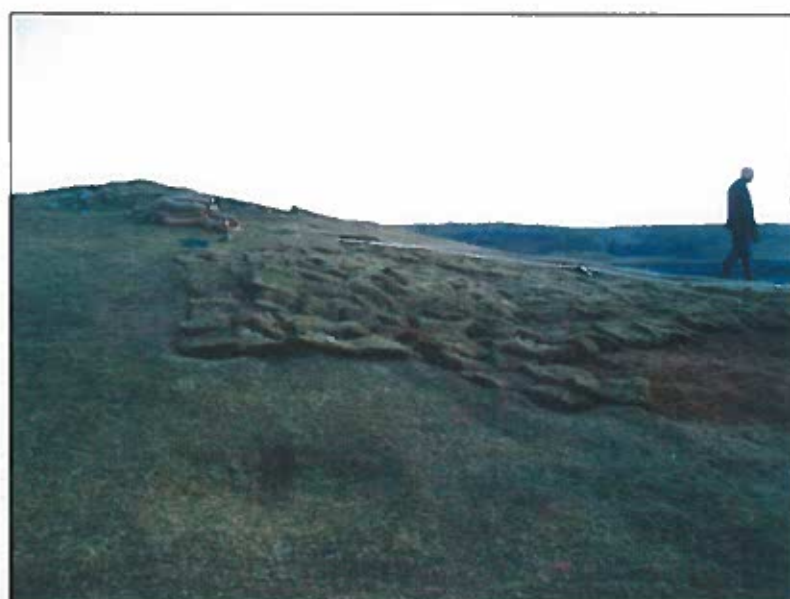




Repairs in progress - view to the east



Repairs in progress - view to southeast



Repair completed - view to south

Figure 5: The repair of Crowback tumulus

