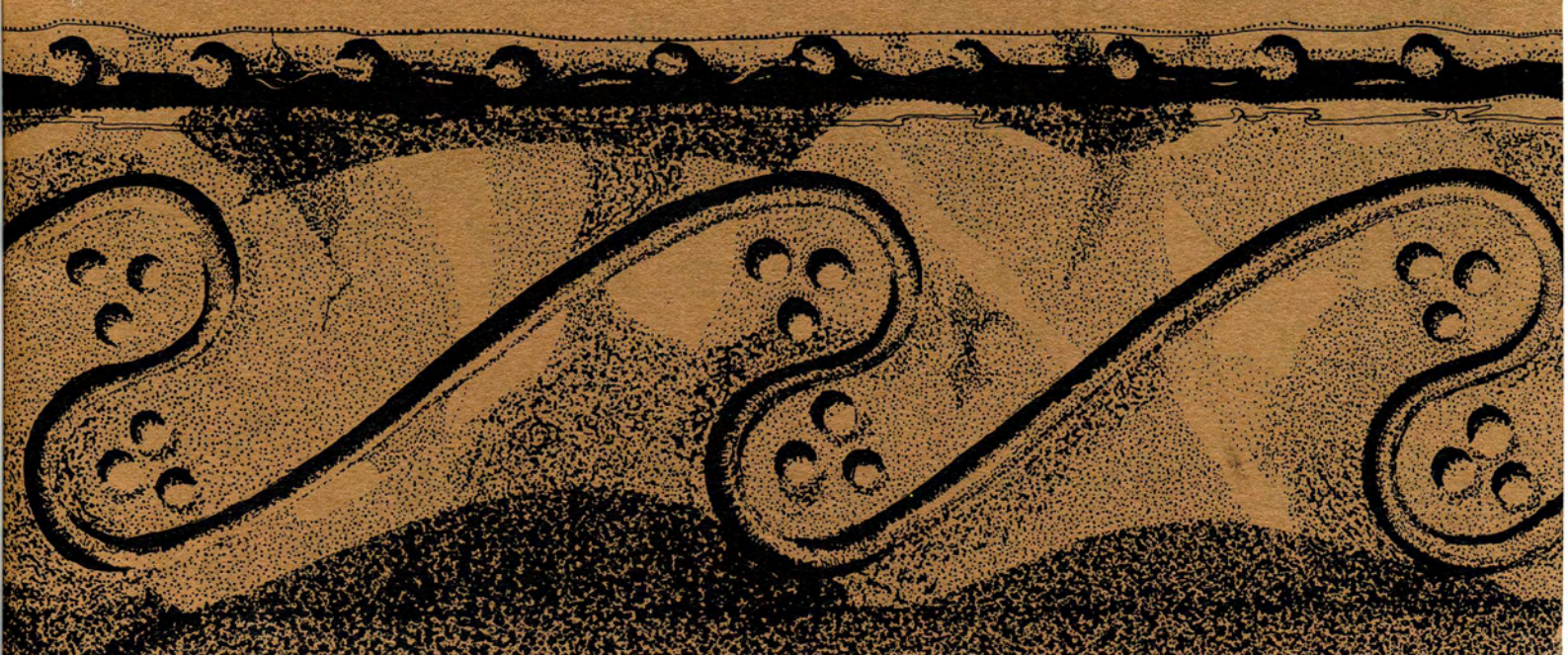
Two Iron Age Sites in Northampton



Two Iron Age Sites in Northampton

edited by J.H.Williams

Northampton Development Corporation Archaeological Monographs No.1

Northampton 1974

Contents

Acknowledgements

The excavations described in this volume and the reports themselves were financed by Northampton Development Corporation and the Department of the Environment. Site supervisors are acknowledged in the respective reports, but thanks must be given to all the volunteers who helped in the excavations and without whom the work could not have been undertaken. Many people have contributed to the report and specific aid is mentioned elsewhere. J. Small, M. Jones and P. Hoffman prepared the original drawings. The final drawings and the overall design of this publication were produced by R. McCann.

Throughout the excavation and afterwards many of the Development Corporation's staff assisted in a variety of ways and in particular Gordon Redfern's constant help and support for the excavations was much appreciated.

Foreword

A Develcpment Corporation by its very nature looks to the future in its endeavours to solve today's environmental problems, but it should also take into account and respect the present and the past – the expansion of yesteryear. Northampton has a rich and colourful archaeological and historical heritage. In early times the River Nene provided a ready access to the heart of the Midlands for immigrants from the continent and there was extensive prehistoric settlement in the area. Subsequently during the Roman period there was a considerable Roman population but Northampton reached its apogee as a flourishing mediaeval Borough.

Since 1970 the Development Corporation has had an archaeological team excavating and recording sites which will be affected by development. All the results will be published and the finds displayed in Northampton Museum. In this first volume are two Iron Age sites on the eastern outskirts of the town and it is hoped Volume 2 will cover the major excavation within the mediaeval town.

In all its work the Development Corporation has been well supported by the Department of the Environment to whom we are grateful. Northamptonians have shown considerable interest and I hope that these reports will also be enjoyed. When the town's expansion is complete I trust that we will also have developed our understanding of Northampton's past.

Sir William Hart C.M.G.
Chairman
Northampton Development Corporation

Two Iron Age Enclosures at Moulton Park

Two Iron Age enclosures on the eastern outskirts of Northampton were excavated in 1971 and 1972. Enclosure 1 was roughly circular with an internal diameter of approximately 55 metres and was surrounded by a single ditch with an entrance on the east side. Within the enclosure were at least 2 houses one associated with late pre-Belgic pottery and the other with Belgic pottery. Enclosure 2 located some 20 metres to the north and more rectilinear in shape was partially excavated and found to cover an area at least 85 by 40 metres. This enclosure was apparently surrounded by a ditch which had been recut and across which a causeway had been built. Within the enclosure were the remains of at least 3 houses and a further possible house lay outside. Pottery from the enclosure was of Belgic type.

The Excavations

by J. H. Williams and D. C. Mynard*

Introduction

The Moulton Park Employment Area stretches across approximately 300 acres of former parkland on the north east outskirts of Northampton. In October 1970, during the construction of Brickyard Spinney Road, one of the spine roads of the Area, several small gullies and a ditch containing one sherd of Belgic pottery were uncovered. The sites on either side of the road were destined for factory units and accordingly an exploratory excavation was mounted in April 1971. Trial trenches were cut by a JCB 3C using a back-actor unit with toothless bucket. Where features were encountered, as with houses 1 and 2 and with the main ditch of enclosure 1, the relevant areas between the trial trenches were stripped. During the road works for Pond Wood Close in the winter of 1971/72 further features were noted and recorded and a second excavation was undertaken in June 1972 in order to:

a) determine the westerly extremity of enclosure 1 and
b) ascertain the nature of the supposed settlement to the north of enclosure 1.

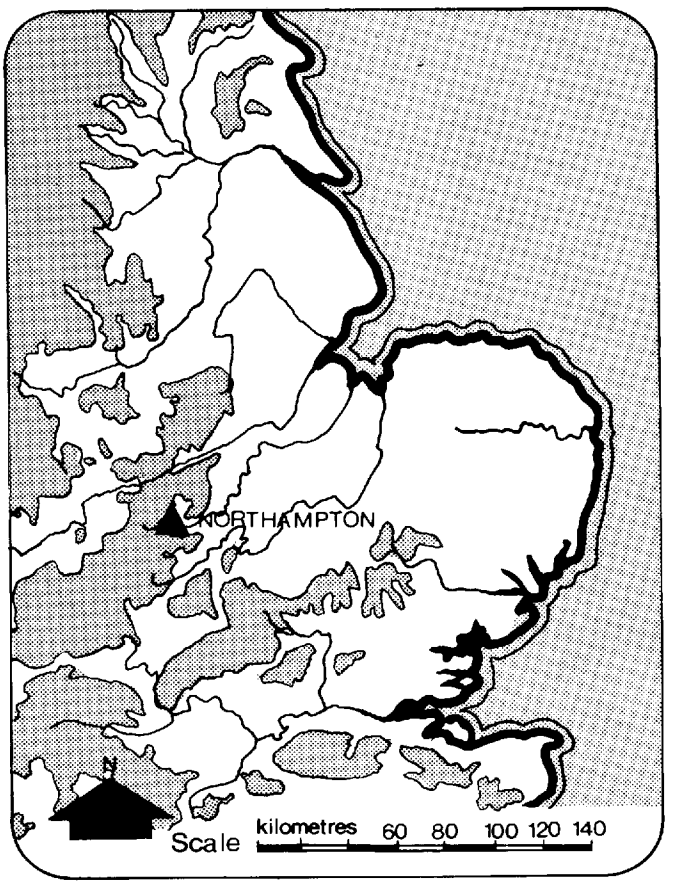
A JCB 6 with 5 ft wide ditching blade removed the clay topsoil which was then heaped by a drot. It was essential to machine right down to the required surface since the clay was so stiff as to make work by hand extremely slow. The basically flat surface produced was then cleaned with hoes and frequently sprayed with water to freshen up the features which tended to be obscured on drying. No features were excavated before the whole of the site had been cleaned and planned.

Enclosure 1 (Fig. 3)

Enclosure 1 is defined by a single roughly circular ditch with internal diameter varying from 52 to 58.50 metres and with an entrance on the east side. Within the enclosure were the remains of 2 circular houses and several other gullies.

* The site was located, and the 1971 excavations directed, by D. C. Mynard. The watching of the site during the winter of 1971/72 was mainly undertaken by A. Boddington to whom both writers are extremely grateful. The 1972 excavations were directed by J. H. Williams. M. R. McCarthy was assistant director in 1972. J. A. Small was surveyor in both seasons, J. Hedges, C. Harding and F. Williams were Supervisors in 1972.

Location of the two sites



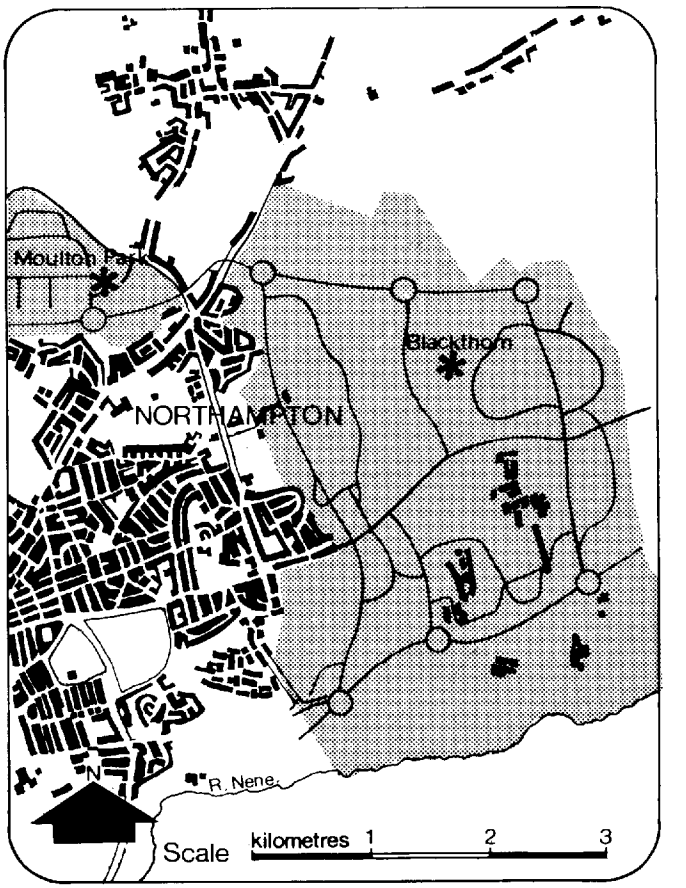


Fig. 1

Site Plan

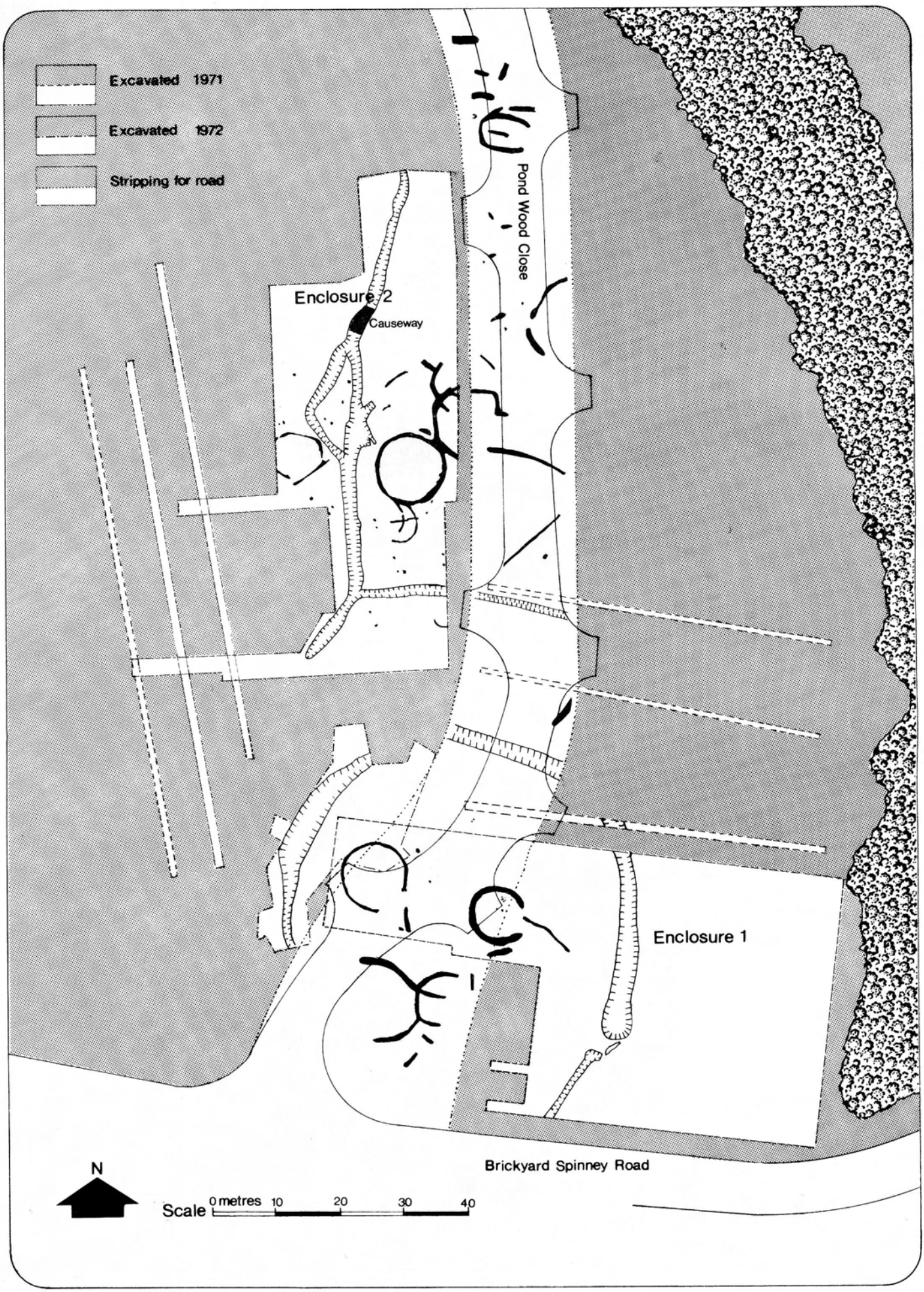


Fig. 2

Enclosure 1

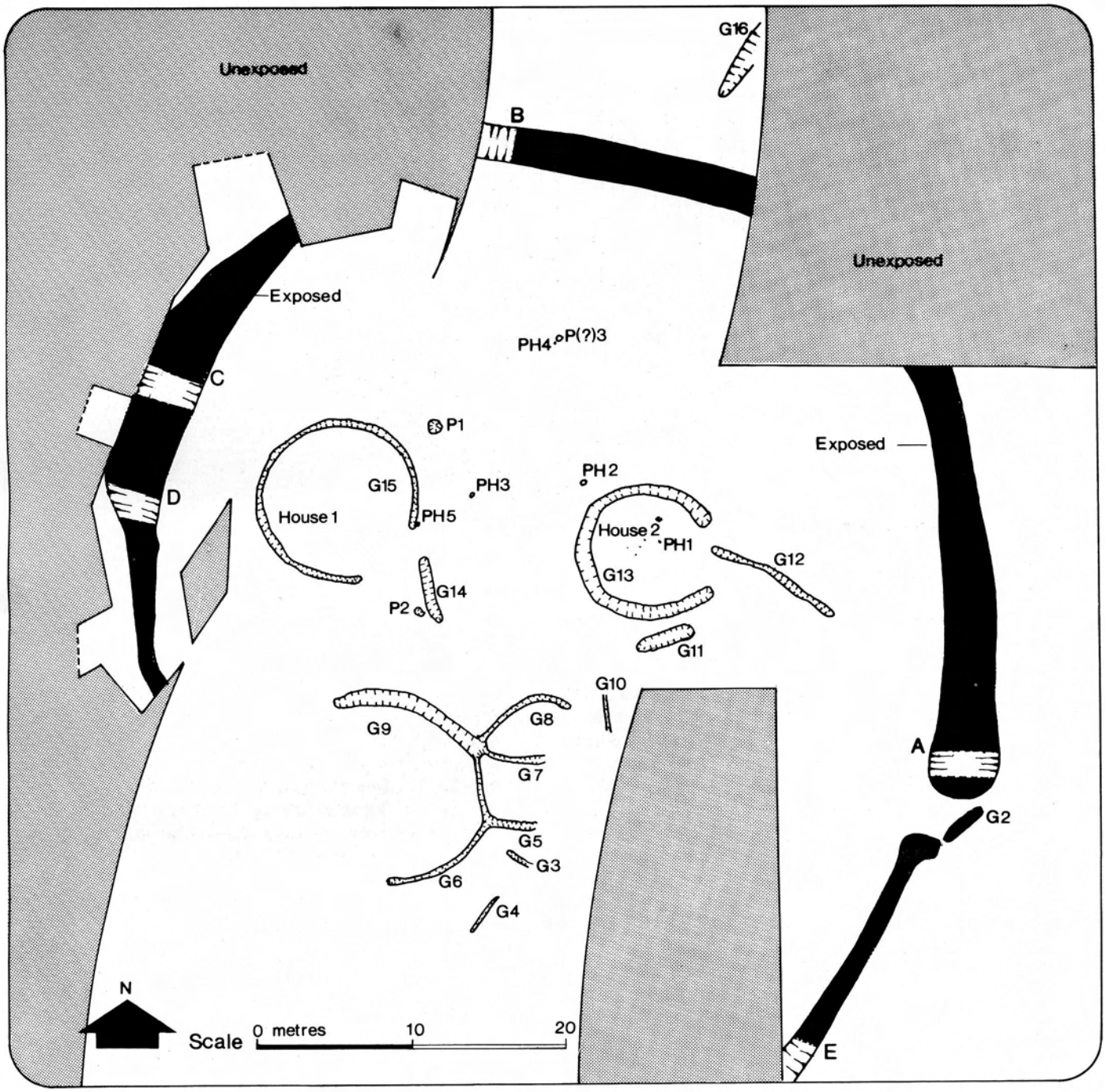


Fig.3

The Enclosure Ditch (Figs. 4 and 5.)

The eastern portion of the enclosure ditch (Ditch 1) was located in May 1971 together with the entrance. Sections were cut across the ditch to the north and south of the entrance. The north section (section A) showed the ditch to be c. 3 metres wide and at least 1.25 metres deep. The main fill of the ditch was light grey brown clay with small chalk flecks but the primary fill was darker and more silty. The southern section (section E) was rapidly excavated during a period of heavy rain. The ditch appeared only as a shallow depression c. 0.60 metres deep and c. 2.50 metres wide containing the same fill as section A. It was apparently sealed by a yellow clay layer with white chalk flecks c. 0.30 metres deep lying below the subsoil and as such varied from the other sections recorded. In view of the stratigraphy in the other sections excavated and also the conditions under which the section was excavated it is possible that the yellow clay was in fact part of the ditch infilling. During the 'road scraping' for Pond Wood Close in the winter of 1971/72 the northern limit of the enclosure was defined but no ditch was located to the south although it almost certainly existed and it is quite possible that because of the unfavourable soil conditions during scraping the similar characteristics of the ditch fill and the natural subsoil could not be differentiated. Work in summer 1972 concentrated, therefore, on defining the western limit of the enclosure. Two phases were here represented. Section D showed, in fact, two separate ditches both filled with a yellowish clay containing white chalk flecks and cut into a similar yellow/blue mottled clay. The eastern ditch 1B contained a rather dirty primary silt absent in the western ditch 1A. Moreover, whereas ditch 1B was visible on the surface as a faint light brown soil mark, ditch 1A merged with the natural soil and was only located in trying to define the western edge of ditch 1B. Ditch 1A was at least 1.75 metres wide by 1 metre deep; ditch 1B was 2.50 metres wide by 1.15 metres deep.

Enclosure 1 - Ditch

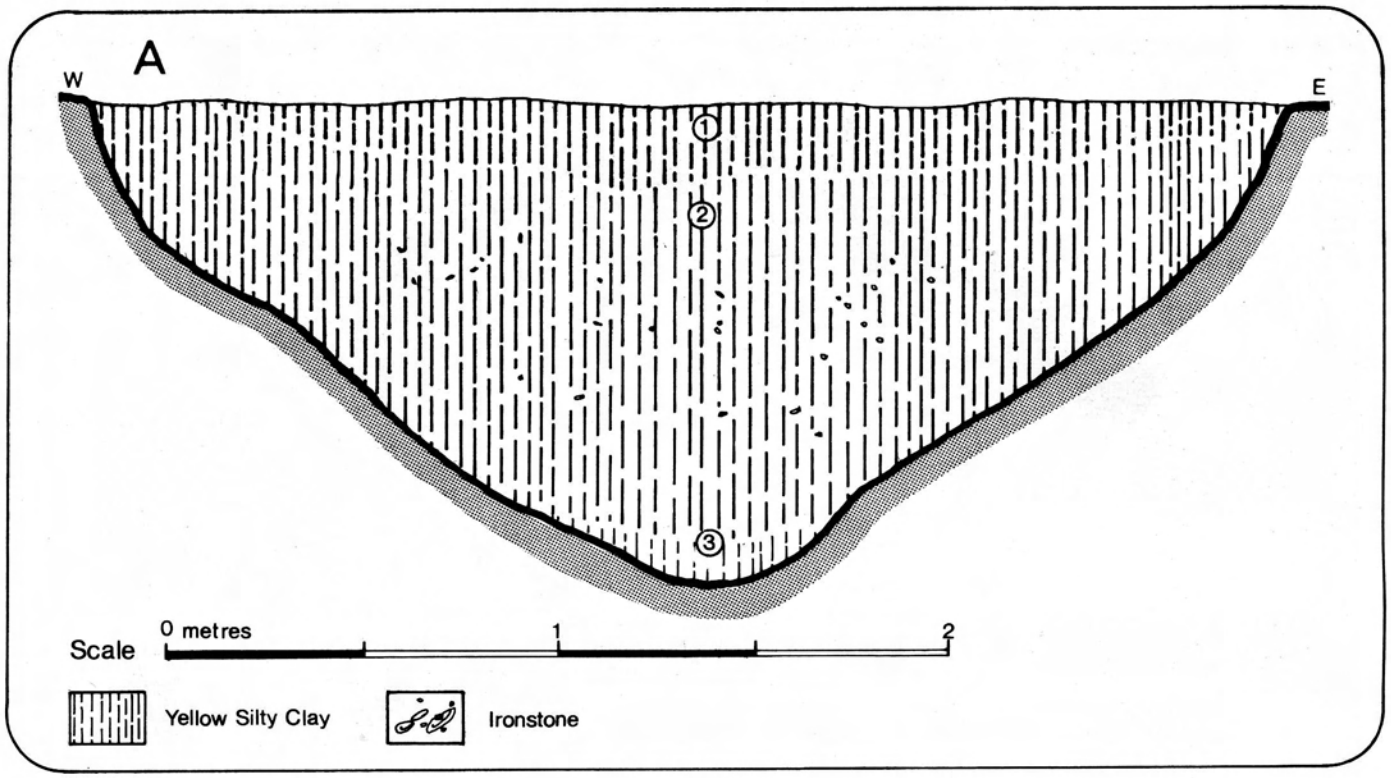


Fig.4

In section C the relationship between the two phases was more obvious. The fills of the ditches were the same as in section D and cut into the same yellow/blue natural. When the section weathered 1B could clearly be seen cutting through 1A. Ditch 1A was c. 2.75 metres wide and 1.40 metres deep and ditch 1B was 3.25 metres wide and 1.25 metres deep. As these recuts were only visible by very careful work allied with the weathering of the section it must be queried whether the recutting was purely a feature local to the western portions of the enclosure or whether the complete circuit of the ditch had two phases which could not be distinguished on the eastern side of the enclosure because of the unsuitable soil conditions. There were no traces of a bank or palisade on either side of the ditch although it is possible that these did exist. The pottery from the ditch was exclusively Belgic apart from a few scraps of hand made pottery in the fabric of the pre-Belgic phase.

The entrance on the east side was formed by a break in the ditch c. 3 metres long; the ditch terminals were here rather broader than the standard width of the ditch. A narrow gully 3.25 metres long by 0.60 metres wide and filled with soft dark soil ran across the outside of the entrance. This was presumably associated with some form of gate structure but no post holes were located.

The Interior

Within the interior were two probable house sites * and associated gullies with a further arrangement of gullies to the south.

House 1 (Fig. 6)

House 1 was defined by a penannular gully c. 10 metres internal diameter. The gully varied between 0.35 and 0.50 metres wide and between 0.20 and 0.30 metres deep and was filled with a soft dark brown soil. Tne gully was slightly deeper towards the terminals which produced the bulk of the pottery found. The entrance was formed by a break in the gully c. 4 metres long. There was a single post hole adjacent to the north ditch terminal but no further post holes were visible at the entrance in the gully or in the interior. Leading southwards from the entrance was a gully (G 14) c. 4.75 metres long by 1 metre wide containing the same brown soil as the house gully. The pottery from house 1 was entirely of Belgic character.

House 2 (Fig. 2)

House 2 was defined by a penannular gully c. 7.50 metres in diameter. The gully varied between 0.75 and 1 metre in width and 0.60 and 0.80 in depth being deepest near the gully terminals. The southern terminal had been recut. The gully was of V-shaped profile and contained the same soft dark brown soil as in house 1. There were a large number of stones towards both terminals and it was in this area that most of the pottery associated with the house was located. Within the house was a single post hole c. 0.40 metres in diameter together with 7 stakeholes irregularly placed and forming no obvious structural pattern. A patch of burnt stones in the north-east quadrant was probably a hearth. The entrance was defined by a break in the gully c. 4.50 metres long. Leading out from the entrance eastwards was a shallow gully (G 12) containing brown soil,stone and pottery. The pottery from house 2 and associated gullies was hand-made and probably predated the Belgic occupation.

To the south of house 1 was a complex of gullies (G 3-9). Gully 9 averaged c. 0.50 metres in depth but the other gullies were shallower and were graded down to gully 9 from a few centimetres at their other ends. Some form of surface drainage system with gully 9 as a sump is indicated. Perhaps gully 6 and gully 9 even define the site of a further house.

Enclosure 2 (Fig. 7; Plate 1)

To the north of enclosure 1 an area c. 80 metres by up to 30 metres was systematically excavated adjacent to the strip

* For a discussion on all the house sites see below page 18.

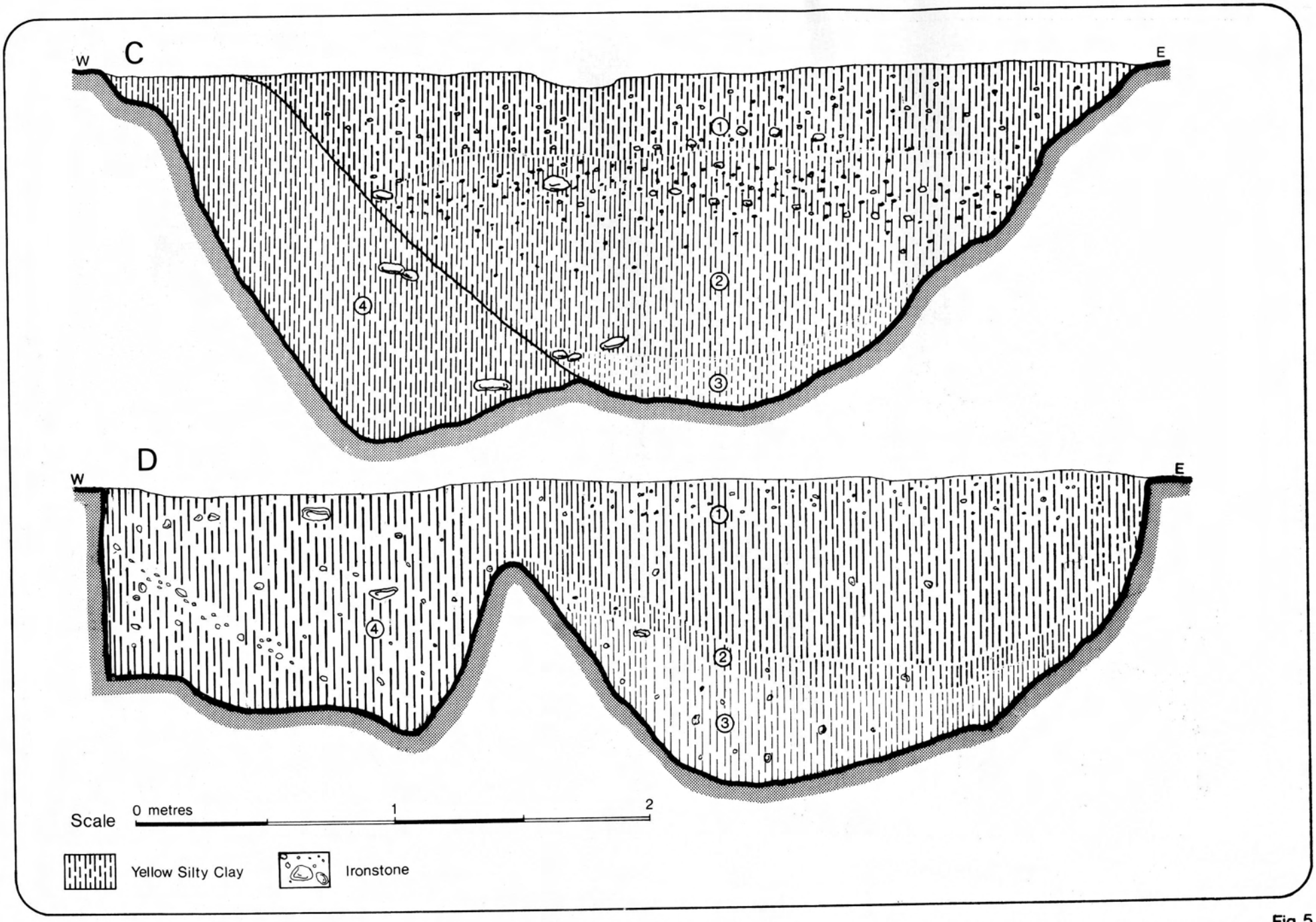


Fig.5

Enclosure 1 - Ditch 1

Enclosure 1 - Houses

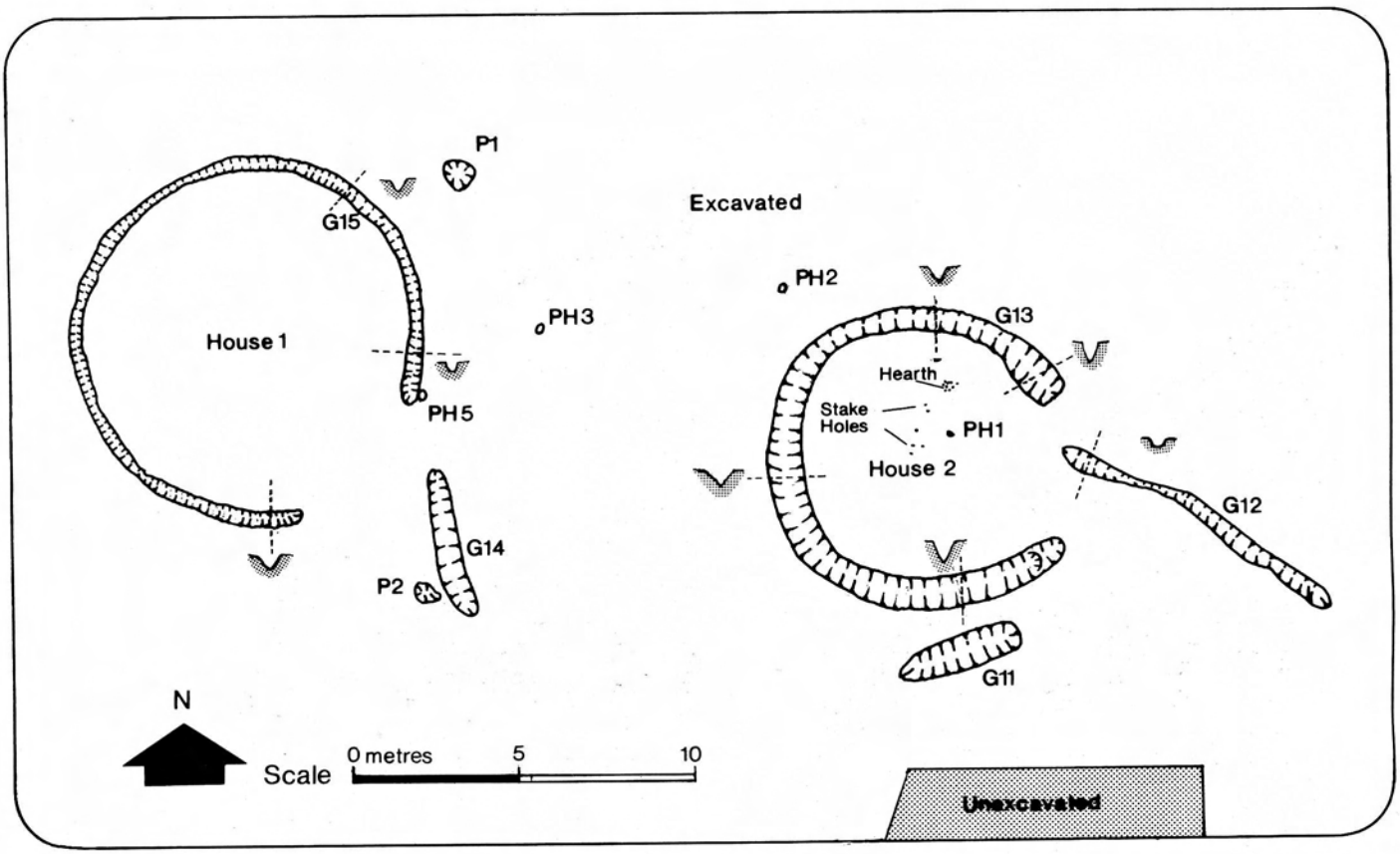


Fig.6

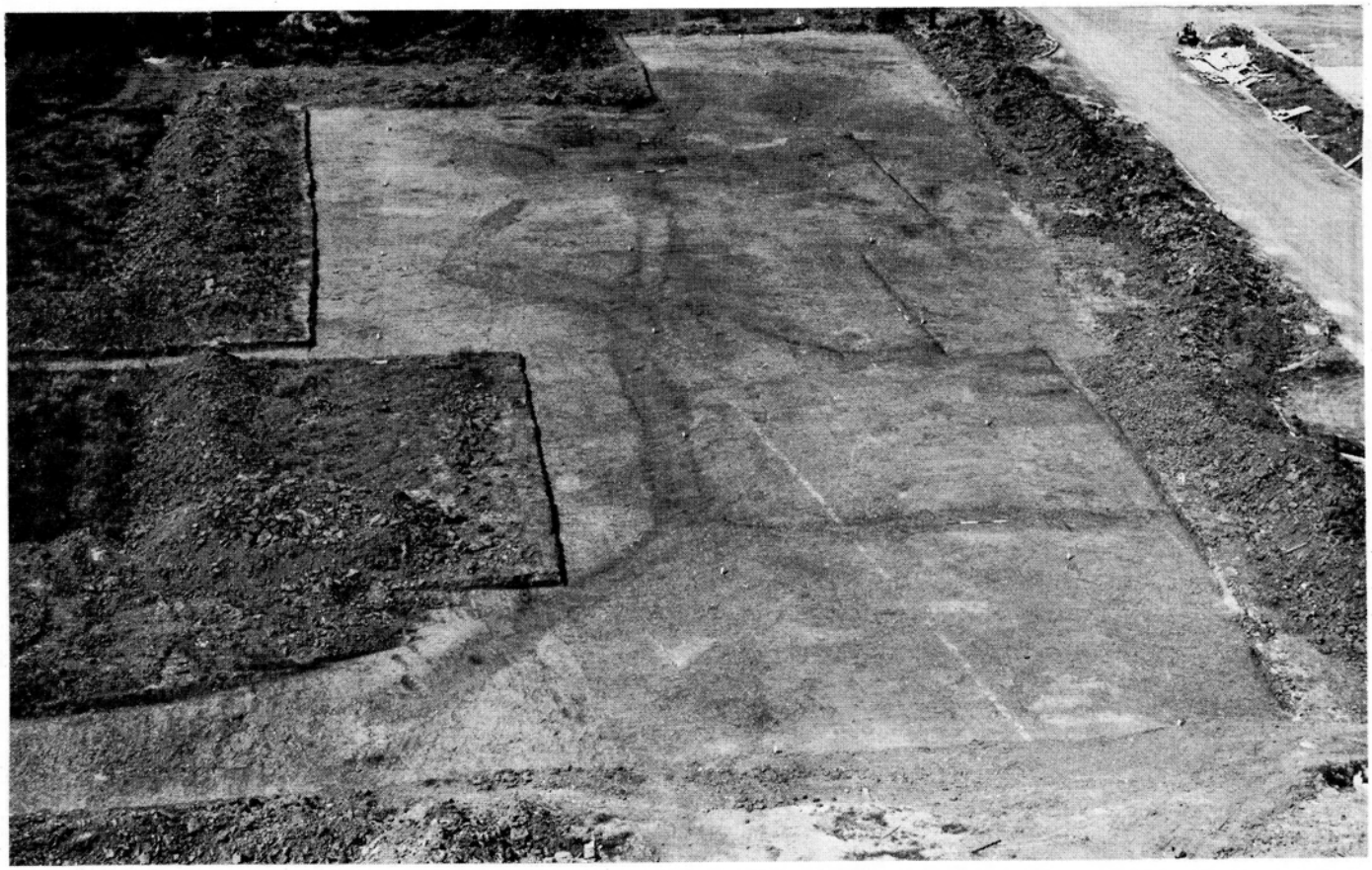


Plate 1 Moulton Park enclosure 2 from the south after the removal of topsoil and prior to the excavation of the features revealed.

Enclosure 2

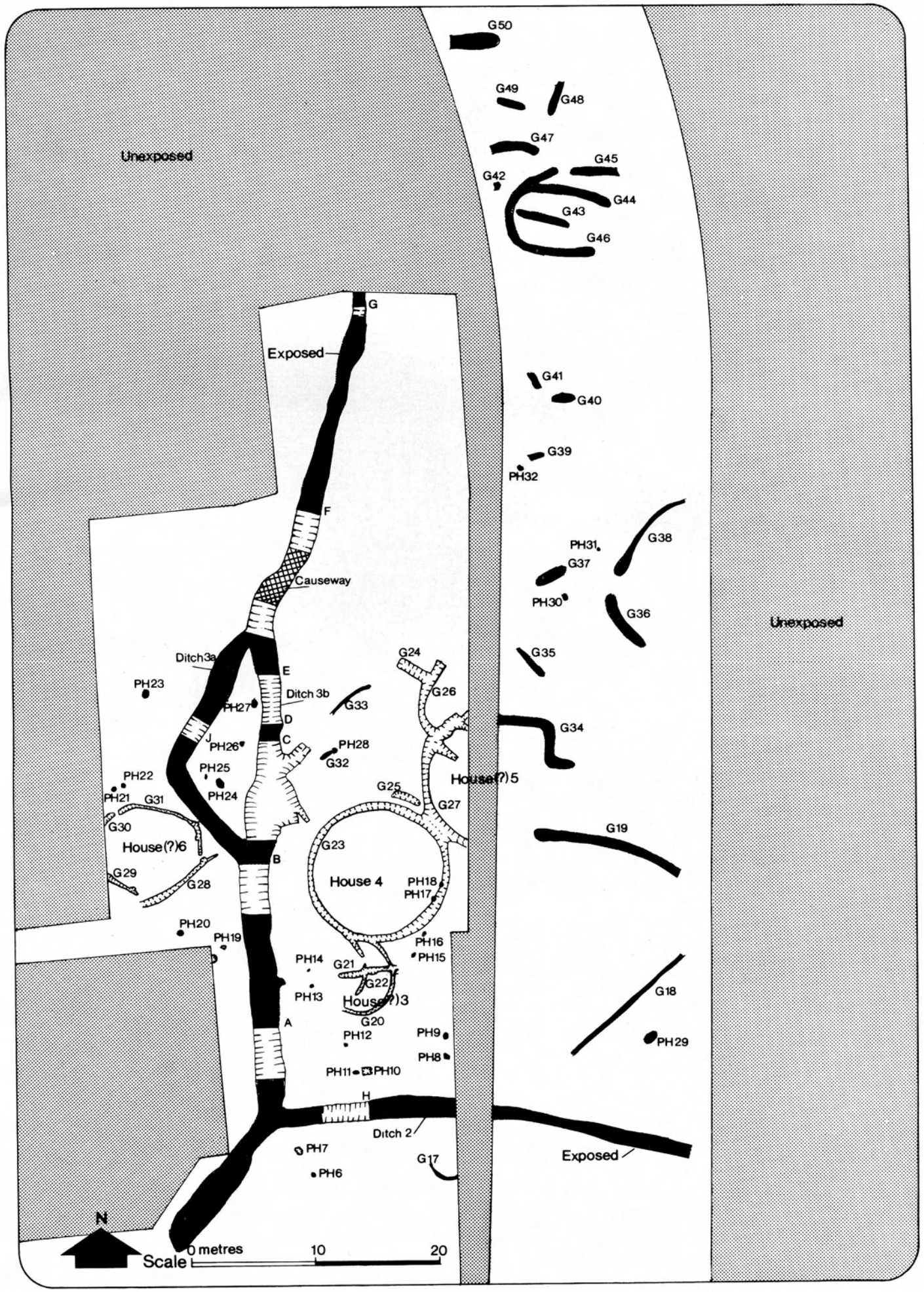
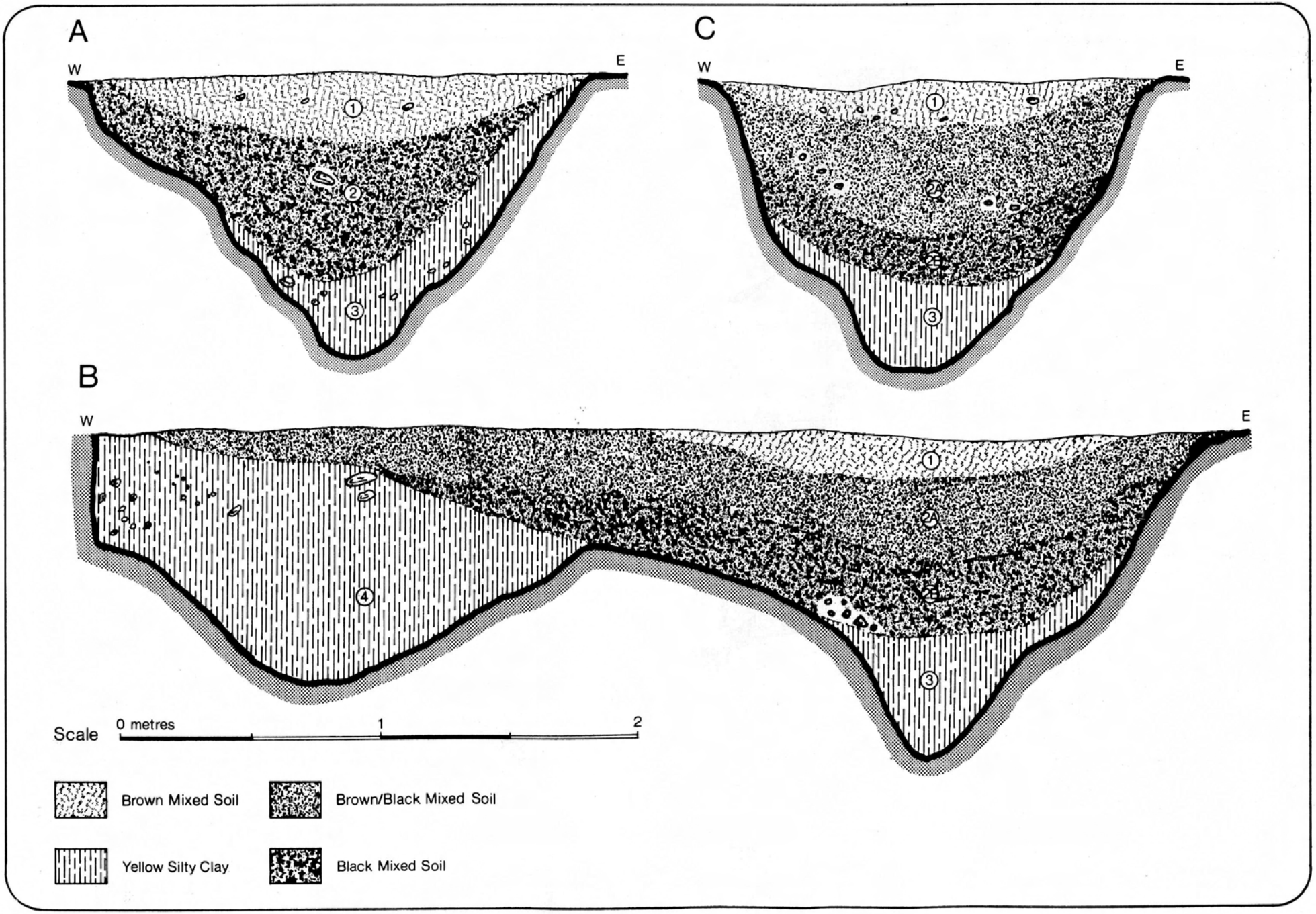


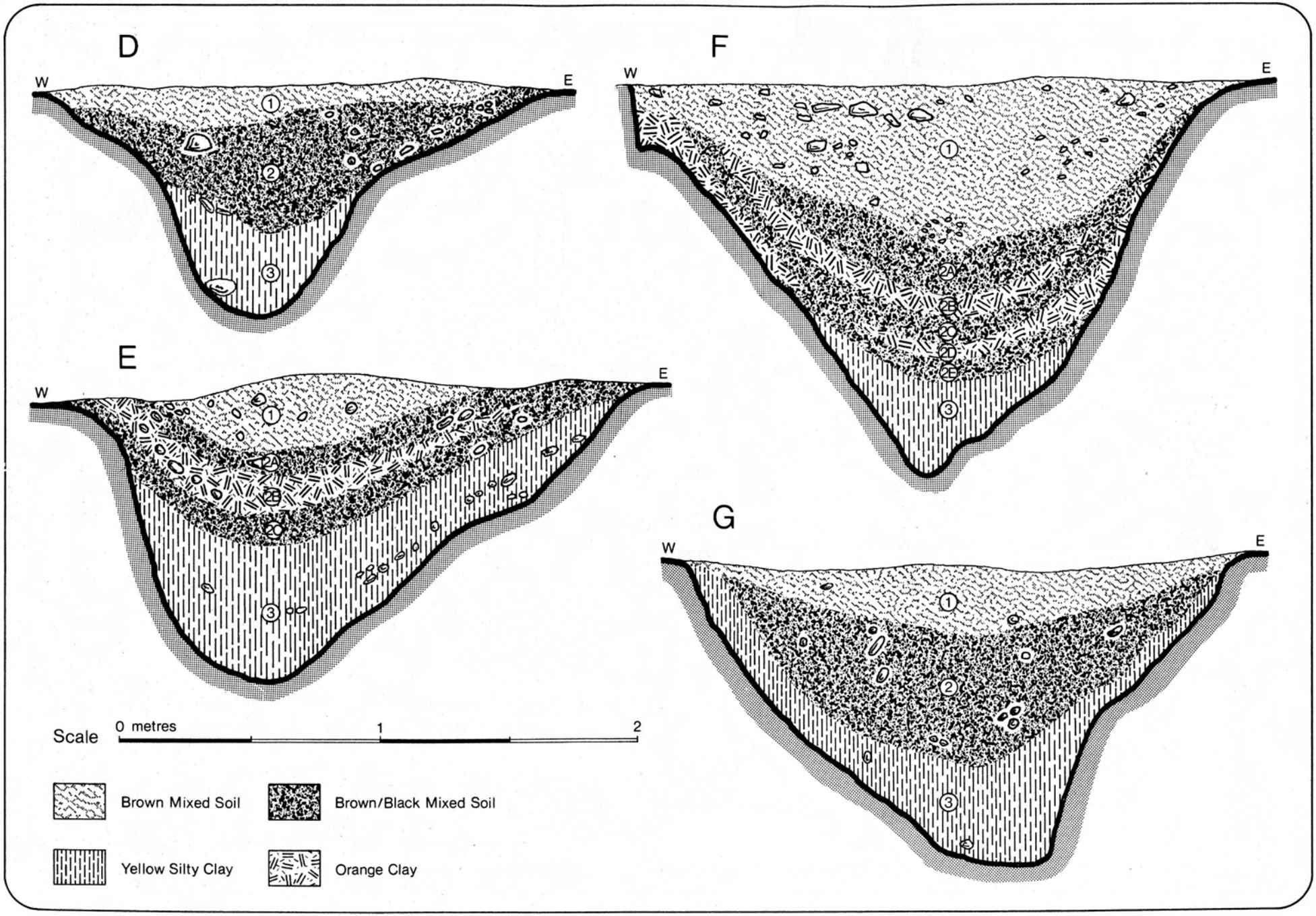
Fig.7

Page 11 Ditch 3B. Section D is where Section E is marked. Section E is the section to the south of the causeway. (In fig. 9 it is drawn in negative).



Enclosure 2 - Ditch 3

Fig.8



Enclosure 2 - Ditch 3

Fig. 9

Enclosure 2 - Ditch 2 and 3A

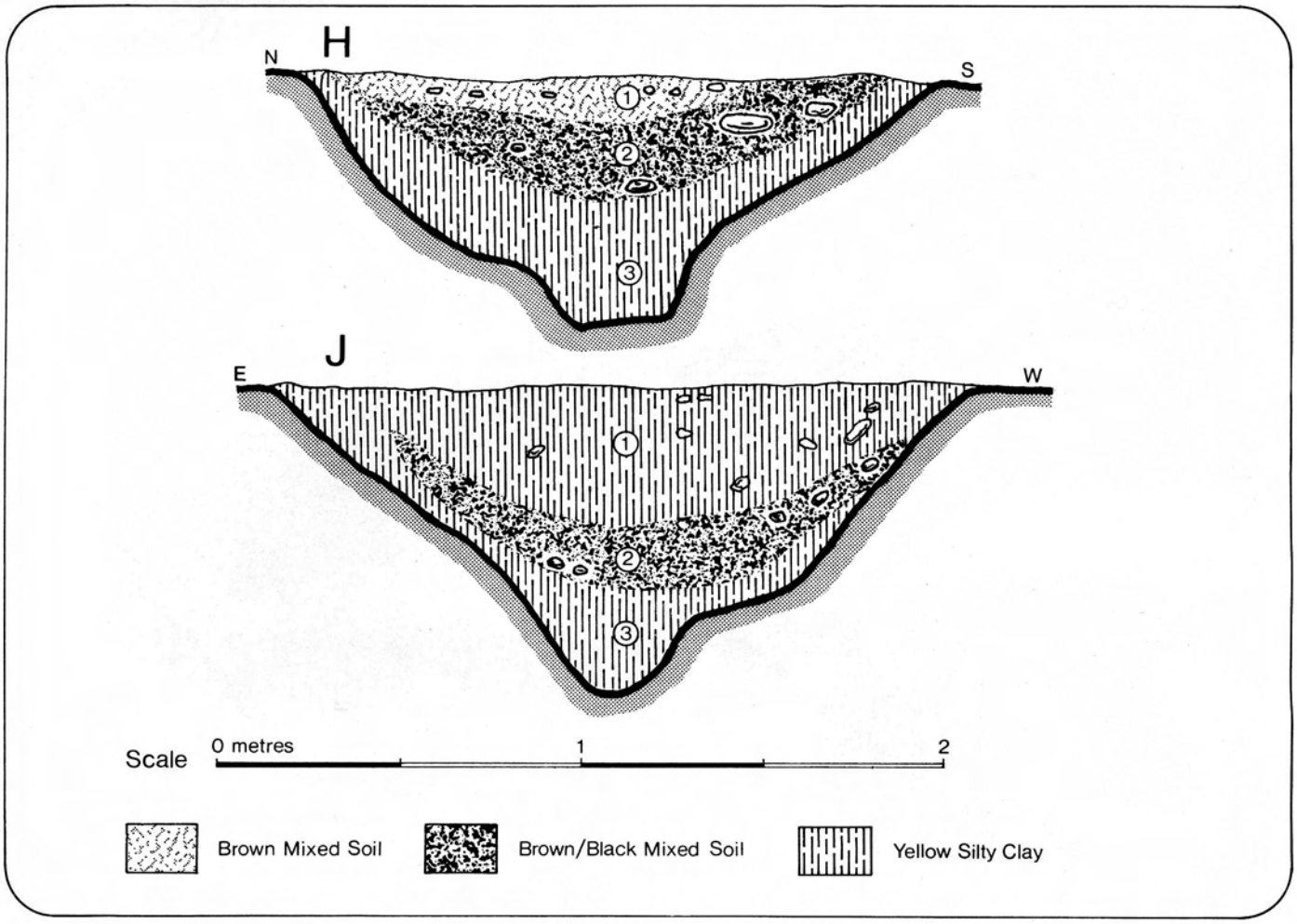


Fig.10

Plate 2 Enclosure 2, ditch 3, section B with the junction of ditches 3A and 3B in the foreground.

Enclosure 2 - Causeway

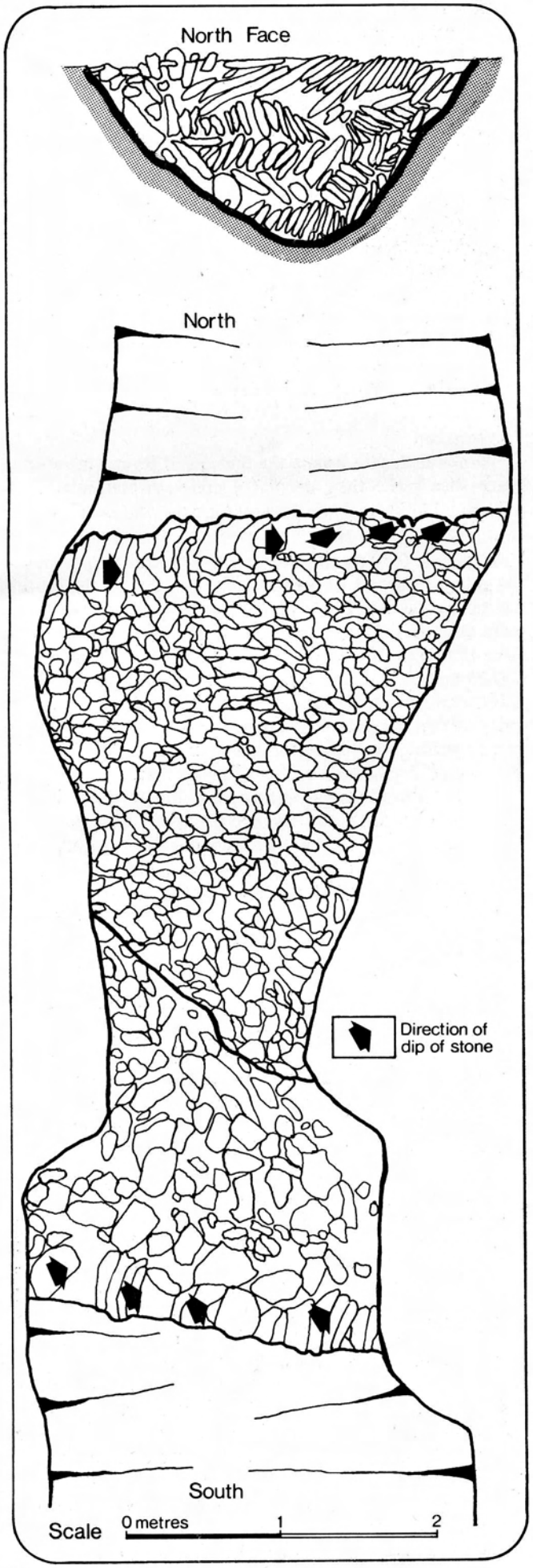


Fig.11

Enclosure 2 - Houses

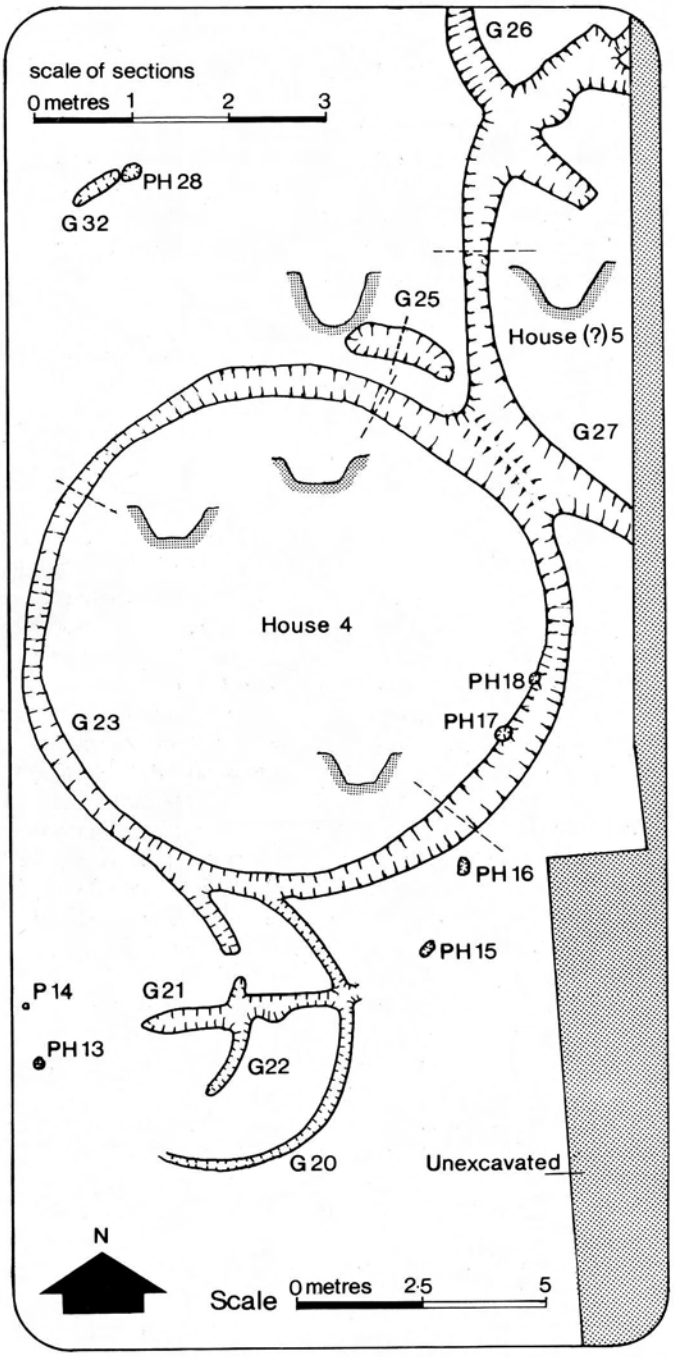


Fig.12

c. 15 metres wide which was observed during road construction. The north-south ditch (Ditch 3) and the east-west ditch (Ditch 2) probably defined the south west corner of an enclosure within which were located several smaller gullies and possible house sites. Only house 6 lay outside this area. The northern limit of the site was perhaps defined by gully 50 which was similar in character to ditch 3B and of which it was possibly a continuation. Certainly no features were located north of gully 50 during road scraping. The pottery from enclosure 2 was wholly Belgic. Both the features excavated in 1972 and those observed during road scraping are described below.

The Ditches (Figs. 8 - 10; Plate 2)

Ditch 2, of vague V-shaped profile, was slightly smaller than ditch 3 varying between 1.50 and 1.75 metres in width and approximately 0.75 metres deep (Fig. 10). Three layers of fill were distinguished. At the bottom of the ditch the

primary fill comprising a relatively clean yellow/grey stiff clay probably represented the natural silting of the ditch. Above was a band c. 0.50 metres thick of dark brown/black soil mixed with pottery charcoal and bone. The top of the ditch was a dark soil band again containing pottery and charcoal.

Ditch 3 is divided into 3A and 3B. Ditch 3B ran from the northern extremity of the site south to join ditch 2. Ditch 3A formed an angular spur to 3B midway along its length. The characteristics of the two portions of the ditch were notably different. Ditch 3A had a relatively clean fill. Above the primary yellow silty clay was a thin band of grey/brown clay mixed with charcoal and other burnt material and the top c. 0.50 metres of the ditch contained yellow/blue clay mixed with some pebbles (Fig. 10). A similar profile but without the middle burnt deposits was noted at the southern junction between ditches 3A and 3B (Fig. 8 section B; Plate 2).

A common stratigraphy could be recognised in all sections of ditch 3B (Figs. 8 and 9). A primary fill of grey/yellow silty clay underlay a thick deposit of dark brown/black soil mixed with pottery, charcoal, bone and burnt clay. Sealing this was a further dark deposit of brown soil etc. Whereas the upper and lower layers (layers 1 and 3) were completely consistent in all sections the middle layer (layer 2) showed a certain amount of variation. In all cases dark soil was mixed with heavy charcoal impregnation and contained much pottery, bone, etc. In sections B and C, however, a darker layer 2A merged into a slightly lighter level 2B. In section C several lenses of red burnt material were noticeable. On either side of the causeway (sections E and F) the various layers of black soil were separated by thin lenses of orange clay. These various lenses are to be treated as broadly contemporary for several instances have been noted of sherds of pot from successive lenses fitting together. The irregular eastern edge of ditch 3B approximately halfway along its length should be noted. No particular significance could be attached to this unless small drainage gullies feeding the ditch are indicated. There was no trace of a bank associated with any of the ditches.

Ditch 3A was earlier than the final alignment of ditch 3B although probably part of the same system initially. Its fill is noticeably different from ditches 2 and 3B and perhaps constituted a deliberate levelling. Ditches 2 and 3B display a consistent stratigraphy. In the bottom of the ditches was the primary silt layer 3. Layer 2 was more problematical. There was a fair depth of deposit with considerable quantities of pottery and burnt material, which obviously postdated the ditches primary functional use. The large quantity of burnt material possibly represented the destruction of the site but is perhaps less dramatically seen as a series of rubbish deposits. Layer 1 was probably formed during the levelling off of the site by ploughing subsequent to its abandonment.

The Causeway (Fig. 11; Plates 3 and 4)

Approximately 20 metres south of the northern extremity of the excavation a causeway c. 4.50 metres wide had been built across ditch 3B. The causeway was constructed of a series of layers of ironstone mixed with some limestone and set in a plastic clay matrix. Both faces were revetted with herringbone masonry of thin bedded ironstone and limestone. The northern face survived intact but the southern face had collapsed into the ditch. The average depth of the ditch underneath the causeway was less than that normal at either side. This would suggest either:

a) that the causeway was built when the ditch was originally dug but that a more solid means of crossing the ditch was required than by merely leaving a clay baulk and that the ditch was accordingly not excavated to its full depth.
b) that after the insertion of the causeway into the ditch either initially or in a secondary phase the ditch on either side had been recut to a greater depth.

The first alternative seems preferable.

The collapsed rubble from the southern face was clearly mixed with the heavy black soil of layer 2 and there can be no doubt that the filling of the ditch and the collapse of the causeway were contemporary. This relationship is important for herringbone masonry is generally regarded as a Roman innovation in this country and is particularly common in 3rd and 4th century contexts as foundations (Williams 1972, 115). The technique is basically a simple one giving greater rigidity to a wall than that obtained with horizontal coursing where the stones used are long and thin and not smoothed to an ashlar finish. So far as is known the technique is unparallelled in Britain at this period.

The Interior

Within enclosure 2 were the remains of several possible house sites * with their associated gullies, several isolated gullies and individual and apparent groups of postholes.

House (?) 3; (Fig. 12)

A gully c. 0.30 metres wide by 0.11 metres deep joined the gully of house 4 tangentially and inscribed to the south a semi-circular arc of c. 6 metres diameter. To the west the gully disappeared but if projected would have cut across or close to two postholes (PH 13 and PH 14) which were c. 0.35 metres in diameter by c. 0.10 metres deep and set 1.10 metres apart. No further post holes were detected either within the gully itself or within the interior but two further gullies, one semi-circular and one linear lay within the house (?) site - both were shallow but surface erosion may have reduced their length and also caused the main gully of the house (?) to be semi-circular in appearance although originally circular or penannular. It is tempting to accept this hypothesis with the two post holes to the west forming the entrance posts of the house, but it would be a rather small house and furthermore the entrance would be on the west side. The two post holes could be an isolated 2 post structure.

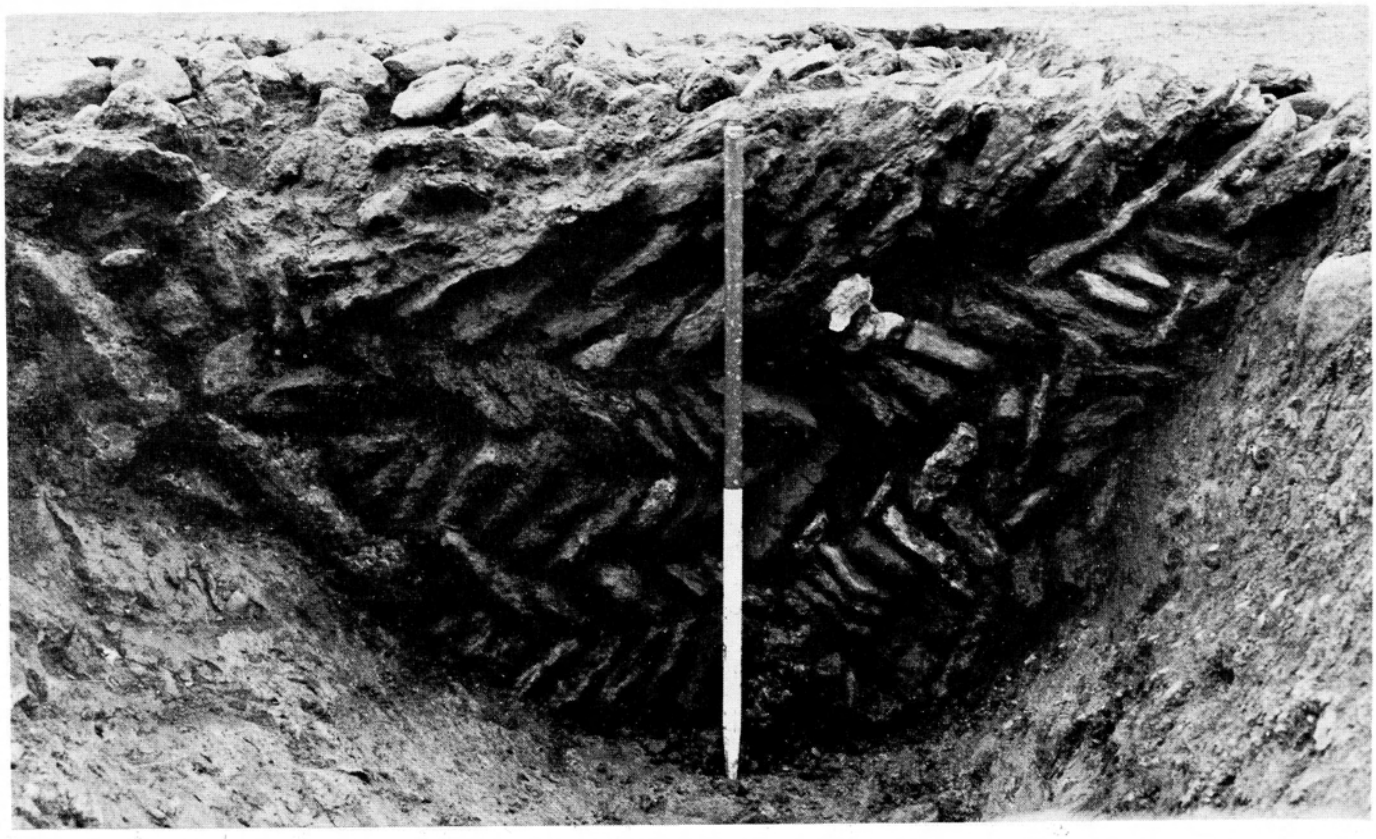
House 4; (Fig. 12)

House 4 was defined by a roughly circular gully c. 10 metres internal diameter. The gully was continuous with a rough shallow U-shaped profile. The fill of the gully, a dark brown soil containing charcoal many pottery fragments (167 sherds) and bone, contrasted with the natural yellow clay into which it was cut. The upper fill also contained a certain amount of burnt clay. For about 7 metres on the east side where the pottery and bone were most prolific there was a concentration of stone, including one quern, set in the same dark earth as the rest of the gully. Two possible post holes were located underneath cut into the inner lip of the gully. Post hole 17 was 0.25 metres deep by 0.33 metres in diameter and filled with dark soil. A stone 0.25 metres by 0.18 metres by 0.05 metres was laid flat in the bottom. Post hole 18 was 0.25 metres deep and 0.25 metres in diameter. No further post holes were visible in the gully which was completely excavated. The inside of the house was carefully cleaned and no features of any description were detected. About 0.75 metres to the north east of the house was a semi-circular gully c. 3 metres long, 0.75 metres wide and 0.50 metres deep filled with the same black soil as the house gully. The 2 post holes on the east side probably represent

* For a discussion on all the house sites see below page 18.

Plate 3
The causeway from the north.

Plate 4
Close up of the north face of the causeway showing the herringbone masonry.



the entrance posts of the house but further structural indications are lacking. The purpose of the semi-circular gully outside the house is uncertain.

House (?) 5; (Fig. 7)

To the north east of house 4 a semi-circular gully (G 27) of rough U-shaped profile and up to 0.50 metres in depth was excavated in 1972. This could be aligned with gully 34 observed during road scraping to enclose a roughly circular area with approximate diameter of 10 metres and with an entrance on the east side (cf. houses 2 and 4). As with houses 1 and 2 a drainage gully (G 19) would lead away from the entrance. The evidence as recovered is inconclusive.

House 6; (Fig. 7)

To the west of ditch 3A was a series of shallow gullies which enclosed a roughly elliptical area with axes approximately 7 metres and 8.50 metres long. The gullies of vague U-profile varied between 0.12 and 0.25 metres in width and 0.04 metres and 0.12 metres in depth and were filled with a mixed grey brown soil with some red flecks. No post holes were visible either within the gullies themselves or within the area enclosed by the gullies. Post holes within the interior may have disappeared through surface erosion, a fact which would also account for the shallowness of the gully. At the east side one of the gullies apparently cut through the filling of ditch 3A and was therefore later in date than this ditch. The evidence for postulating a house is purely the roughly circular arrangement of gullies. In the absence of any firm structural indications judgement must obviously be reserved.

Further possible house sites

Cutting house (?) 5 at its northern end a semi-circular gully (G 26) perhaps formed a circle with a further gully (G 35). A little to the north east two further gullies (G 36 and G 38) inscribed a further semi-circular arc. In both cases house sites could be argued for but the evidence is insubstantial.

Other features

Various gullies up to 0.50 metres deep and uniformly filled with a dark brown soil containing pottery and bone were randomly scattered over the site. No obvious pattern emerged and it is probable that they served purely to collect the surface water. It is not proposed to discuss these further.

Several post holes, generally averaging between 0.10 and 0.20 metres and up to a maximum 0.25 metres deep were excavated. These were apparently unrelated to any of the house structures but seemed mostly to be arranged in pairs (6 and 7, 8 and 9, 10 and 11, 15 and 16, 19 and 20, 21 and 22, 24 and 25, 26 and 27) and some form of 2 post structure, possibly drying racks, is most likely.

The Structure of the Houses

In recent years there has been considerable discussion on the possible reconstruction of prehistoric houses towards which Moulton Park can perhaps make some small contribution. Although 6 possible houses have been postulated only houses 1, 2 and 4, for which the evidence is clearest are considered below. Houses 1 and 2 are defined by a penannular gully with a break on the south-east side for the entrance while house 4 is surrounded by a continuous gully the entrance being represented by 2 post holes cut into the inner face of the gully, again on the east side presumably away from the prevailing winds. Such a preference for an entrance on the east side probably for similar reasons has been noted elsewhere (Guilbert 1973, 41; Drury 1973, 10).

There was a large quantity of pottery in all the gullies, that of house 2 being the most productive, and in all cases the pottery was most prolific at the entrance; moreover there was also an accumulation of stone at the entrance of houses 2 and 4. Pottery was noted in the gullies of the houses at Draughton (Grimes 1946, 28f.) and at Twywell, where D. Jackson noted that occupation debris was concentrated in gullies of 2 houses at their entrances *. It is clear that some relationship exists between the entrance of the houses and the concentration of rubbish in the gullies which cannot be explained as mere coincidence. The gullies must have been open during the life of the houses to act as a receptacle for rubbish and thus are not structural. Certainly houses sited on the heavy clay at Moulton Park required some form of protection from surface water seepage on to the floor of the houses and the gullies should thus be seen as storm water gullies. Gullies 11 and 25 at Moulton Park perhaps provided additional protection, a function performed by the overflow gullies at Draughton.

No post holes were recorded within house 1 and 4 and only a single post hole and a few randomly spaced stake holes were noted within house 2 in spite of careful examination of all interiors. The actual nature of the houses themselves is therefore purely conjectural but substantial constructions seem unlikely in the absence of any significant structural remains.

Conclusions

It is not possible to establish definitively the development of the site. The following scheme is offered as a possible interpretation although others may be equally valid.

Phase 1

A single house (House 2) was occupied at the southern end of the site. This may have been surrounded by a ditch (Ditch 1) but this is dependent on the date and extent of the original ditch noted in sections C and D (Fig. 5). This phase belongs to the late pre-Belgic Iron Age.

Phase 2

Further occupation occurred at the southern end of the site evidenced by the construction of house 1 and the digging of drainage gullies to the south west (G 3 - 9). These features were certainly enclosed by ditch 1 perhaps in recut form (see above) or alternatively both cuts of ditch 1 belong to this phase.

Phase 3

It is tempting to see a shifting of the site some 20 metres northwards but this is highly speculative and it is also possible that phases 2 and 3 were contemporary. 4 examples of carinated bowls (51, 52, 56 and 58) are different from the predominant style of carinated bowl in enclosure 2 but in all other respects the Belgic pottery from both enclosures is very similar. Enclosure 2 was somewhat larger than enclosure 1 and contained more features some of which could not be contemporary because of their interlocking nature; the main ditch was also realigned. The enclosure was apparently surrounded by a ditch much less substantial than the enclosure 1 ditch but only two sides were recorded. Above the primary silt of the ditch the fill was extremely black and contained a great deal of ash. It must be questioned whether this was purely domestic refuse or whether the deposits represent destruction levels from the burning of the site. Further evidence was not forthcoming as the original ground surface had disappeared. The black layer perhaps also supports the 3 phase sequence. If enclosure 1 and enclosure 2 were abandoned at the same time one could perhaps expect more uniformity between the infill of the respective ditches especially since deposits within the individual ditches were so consistent.

The site should be seen as a farmstead but little can be said of its economy. Enclosure 1 would appear to have

* Unpublished information from D. Jackson to whom we are grateful.

housed a single family at least in its earliest stage; if gullies 3 - 9 are seen to represent a house site this would make probably 2 houses in phase 2. The situation in enclosure 2, however, is more complex. Certainly some of the probable house gullies interlock and could not be contemporary but it is impossible to determine how many houses were in use at any one time.

The Pottery

By J. H. Williams*

The pottery is divided into two groups representing pre-Belgic and Belgic material. Each group is classified firstly by fabric and secondly by form but the catalogue for each group is arranged on the basis of the site's stratigraphy. Within the catalogue the colour of each sherd is described .. firstly the exterior secondly the break and thirdly the interior. Brown/red indicates that part of the surface is brown and part red whereas brown-red indicates a general brownish red colour over the whole of the surface. Notes on the fabric and decoration follow where relevant and an exact provenance is assigned to each sherd. In the main ditch of enclosure 2 although the drawn sections show several subdivisions these lenses did not extend the whole length of the cutting and it is impossible to be more precise than to give the general layer number to certain sherds from such deposits.

Group 1 Pottery

Group 1 comprises the pottery from house 2 and adjacent gullies (G 11–13). Apart from a few small body sherds randomly scattered as 'survival' over the rest of the site the group stands in isolation. The vessels are hand-made with globular jars predominating although other forms possibly occur.

The Fabric

Whereas a few fairly distinct fabrics can be isolated within the group 2 pottery the categorisation of fabric types within the group 1 pottery is far more difficult. Certain attributes are common to a large percentage of the pottery but in differing combinations and proportions. In many ways, therefore, although some sherds are heavily gritted and others fairly lacking in inclusions it would appear that a single fabric range may well be represented. The median fabric is hard with a compact grey core and without any recognisable filler. The texture is smooth rather than soapy or sandy although the surface treatment may range from highly burnished to rather rough. Filler is present to varying degrees and consists of either relatively small white limestone or shell grits (commonly 1-2mm. in diameter) or small red grog particles (c. 1mm. in diameter). The curvilinear decorated pottery while rather finer and softer than the median and with a highly burnished surface still falls within the basic fabric range. Each sherd therefore is individually described insofar as it varies from the median fabric.

The Forms

The primary division of the pottery is into curvilinear decorated and plain forms.

Two sizes of curvilinear decorated bowl are probably represented although a common shape is likely. No complete profile was recovered but the vessels appear to be globular with a slightly everted rim similar to examples from Hunsbury (Fell 1937, Fig. 6) but rather sharper than the upturned rims from Hardingstone (Woods 1969, Figs. 24 and 25) or the Upper Thames Region (Harding 1972, Plate 67). The decoration on 33 to 37 and 39 is closely parallelled by examples from Hunsbury (Fell 1937, D1,D4,D6) and Blackthorn (see below page 59) but is rather more finely executed than the Hardingstone examples. 38 is rather coarser than the other Moulton Park examples in keeping with its larger size (cf. Fell 1937, D3). The upper portion of the decoration echoes the movement of the returning spiral of 35. The interlocking swags immediately above the base are not directly parallelled although the concept is differently executed on a bowl from Hunsbury (Fell 1937, D11; cf. also Harding 1972, Plate 67F).

The coarse pottery cannot be easily categorised into a series of distinct types but rather falls within a basic range. Nearly all the vessels can be described as globular jars. At one end of the spectrum the jars are slack shouldered with slightly upturned rims either rounded (e.g. 15) or squared (e.g. 1 and 3) profile. This form merges into a shoulderless jar where the upturned rim is replaced by an incipient bead rim (e.g. 17, 18 and 19). Finally any upturning of the rim completely disappears producing a shoulderless jar with an inturned rim (e.g. 26, 27 and 28) although it can perhaps be argued that a completely different form such as a barrel jar is here represented. Although the bulk of the pottery is completely plain certain decorative features may be noted. The highly burnished surface, (e.g. 3 and 43) was obviously employed to enhance the vessel. Scratch mark decoration occurs on several vessels - (of some 570 sherds from small or medium vessels approximately 35% had scratch mark decorations) - the marking is irregular but generally vertical. Only one example (24) has been noted of finger tipping on the neck although finger nail impressions occur on the tops of 3 rims. In addition to the illustrated vessels there were probably a number of large storage jars represented purely by approximately 50 rather coarse and thick body sherds, some 80% with scratch mark decoration. No profile could be reconstructed.

Similar groups of coarse pottery have been recorded locally at Blackthorn (see below page 56ff.), Rushden, Hardingstone (Woods 1969, 66; 82ff.), Ravenstone (Mynard 1971, 406), Strixton and Bozeat (Hall and Nickerson 1969, 6ff.) and Upton (Jackson, Harding and Myres 1969, 219ff.) and the forms are to be found amongst the Hunsbury collection in Northampton Museum but curvilinear decorated examples are only present at Hunsbury, Blackthorn and Hardingstone and in the last instance only in the form of a rather coarse imitation.

Dating

No absolute chronology is currently available for the group although comparative material can be shown to precede Belgic material similar to group 2 pottery at Hardingstone, Rushden and Irchester. In all cases there is no real evidence to suggest discontinuity of occupation. On this basis the terminal date for group 1 pottery should be

* I wish to thank many people for the opportunity to examine pottery from comparative sites, in several cases prior to the publication of the excavation report. Northampton, Cambridge, Colchester, Verulamium and Leicester Museums provided access to their collections. R. Taylor showed me the pottery from Quinton and I. M. Stead and V. Rigby the pottery from Baldock. V. Rigby also provided many general helpful comments. The Rushden pottery with its associated brooches was particularly helpful and I am very grateful to P. J. Woods for his comments on it. D. Mynard, D. Jackson, R. Moore and A. Boddington have discussed several points.

related to the introduction of group 2 pottery and a date centred on 10 AD (∓ 20 years) is suggested (see below page 25). An initial date for group 1 pottery is more difficult. Harding argues a long date range for similar pottery in the Upper Thames region (Harding 1972, 115) and the relative absence of alternative and presumably earlier Iron Age forms in the Northampton area perhaps supports this idea although sparse settlement in earlier periods is possible. With reference to the Moulton Park site, however, it is not unreasonable to assume that the archaeological evidence indicates one continuous occupation perhaps with a change of ownership represented by the introduction of Belgic style pottery. The group 1 pottery can therefore be tentatively assigned to the late 1st century BC and the early 1st century AD.

Catalogue of Group 1 Pottery (Figs. 13 and 14)
House 2 and adjacent gullies (G 13 - nos. 1 - 40; G 12 - nos. 41 - 48; G 11 - nos. 47 - 48).

1. Red/grey; grey; red. Hard and well fired.
2. Grey; grey; red/grey. Hard.
3. Grey; grey; grey. Small amount of shell and red grog. Highly burnished surface.
4. Grey; grey; grey. Porous core. Rough surface with pitting. Possible scratch mark decoration.
5. Grey; grey; grey. Hard. Smooth possibly burnished surface.
6. Grey; grey; grey. Hard and compact fabric with no grits. Smooth surface
7. Grey; grey; fawn. Smooth surface possibly burnished.
8. Grey; grey; grey. Much surface pitting.
9. Grey/fawn; grey; fawn. Fairly soft fabric. Smooth possibly burnished surface.
10. Grey; grey; grey. Small amount of shell temper. Very rough surface finish.
11. Grey/fawn; grey; fawn. Hard and slightly sandy. Smooth surface.
12. Pink/grey; grey; grey. Rather porous core. Slightly pitted surface.
13. Grey; grey; grey. Hard and smooth.
14. Red/grey; grey; red/grey. Large amount of shell and red grog making core structure more fissile than normal. Evidence of coil building in fracture. Roughish finish.
15. Brown/red: grey; brown/red. Rather soft and friable core with much red grog. Rough soapy finish with vertical scratch marks.
16. Fawn; grey; grey.
17. Red; grey; red/grey. Very hard.
18. Grey; grey; red/grey. Hard and fine fabric. Nail marks on top of rim.
19. Grey; grey; grey.
20. Pink; grey; pink; Coarsish finish.
21. Grey; grey; grey.
22. Grey; grey; pink. Red grog and a few large grits. Hard. Finger nail marks on top of rim.
23. Grey; grey; red. Some red grog.
24. Fawn/grey; grey; pink/grey. Much red grog. Hard finish with roughish surface. Finger tipping on neck.

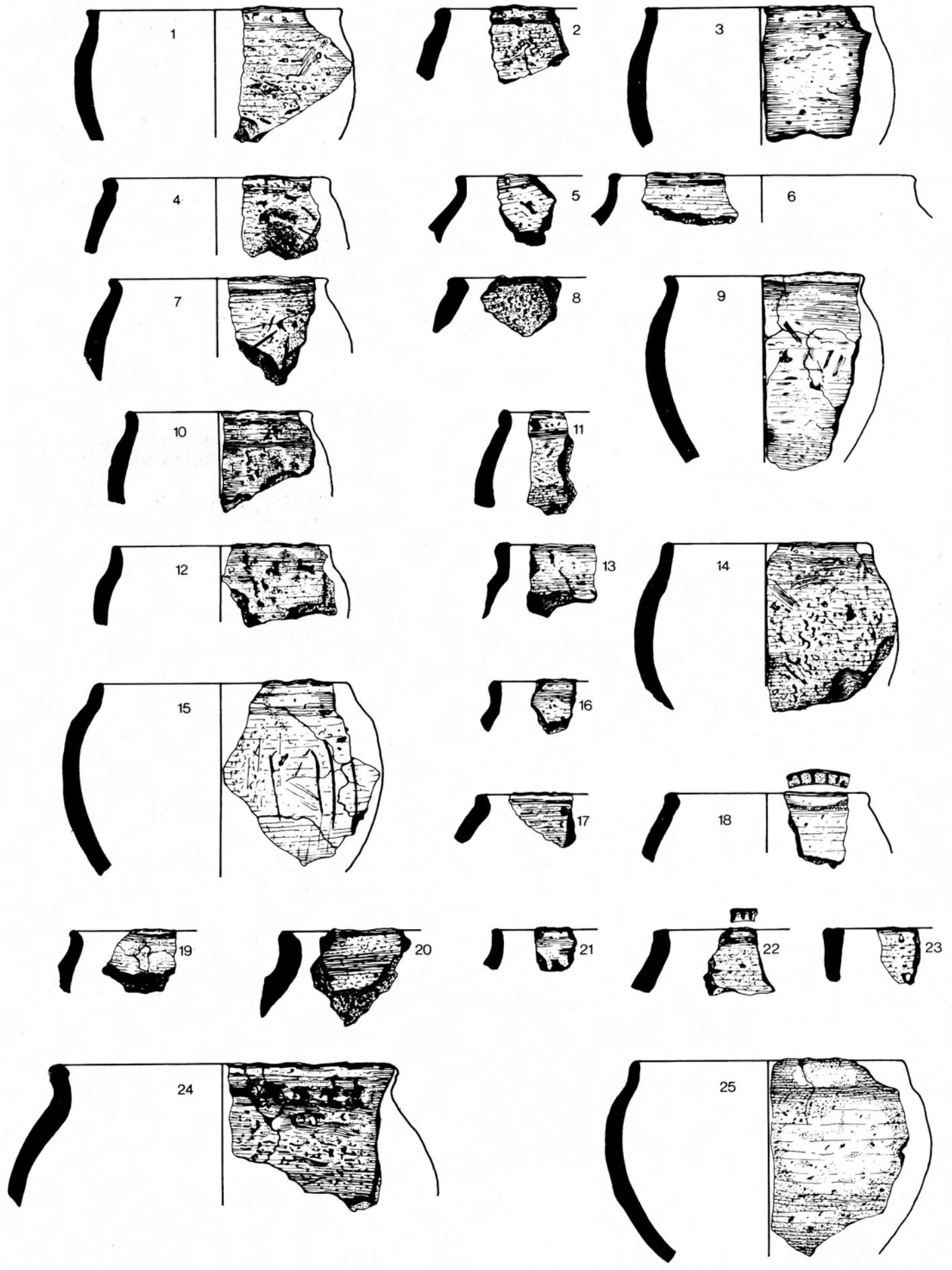


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Fig.13

25. Grey; grey; grey. Hard and sandy finish.

26. Pink/grey; fawn; pink/grey. Some shell and red grog. Hard.

27. Grey; grey; pink/grey. Red grog. Surface pitting.

28. Pink; grey; fawn. Very compact well fired core with a complete absence of grits.

29. Grey/fawn; grey. Hard smooth finish. One hole drilled (?) in base with possibly traces of another.

30. Grey/fawn; grey; grey/fawn. Very hard compact fabric. Smooth surface.

31. Fawn/grey; grey; fawn. Some red grog. Hard smooth surface.

32. Grey; grey; pink. Hard. Protrusion is probably the beginning of a handle.

33. Red/grey; grey; red/grey. Red grog. Burnished surface.

34. Red/grey; grey; red/grey. Red grog. Burnished surface.

35. Red/grey; grey; red/grey. Fairly soft and friable fabric with red grog. Burnished surface.

36. Red; grey; red. Red grog. Fairly soft. Burnished surface.

37. Grey; grey; grey. Burnished surface.

38. Grey; grey; grey. Burnished surface.

39. Red/grey; grey; red. Red grog. Burnished surface.

40. Grey; grey; grey. Red grog. Burnished surface. Part of base of pot.

41. Grey; grey; fawn. Red grog and some white grit. Smooth surface possibly burnished.

42. Grey; grey; pink. Sandyish. Slightly pitted surface with two vertical scorings.

43. Grey; grey; grey. Smooth highly burnished surface. Suggestions of the use of wheel, although lines of fracture possibly suggest coil building.

44. Grey; grey; grey.

45. Grey; grey; grey. Smooth hard finish.

46. Grey/pink; grey; grey/fawn. Hard finish with some scratch mark decorations.

47. Grey; grey; grey.

48. Grey; grey; grey. Red grog. Smooth finish.

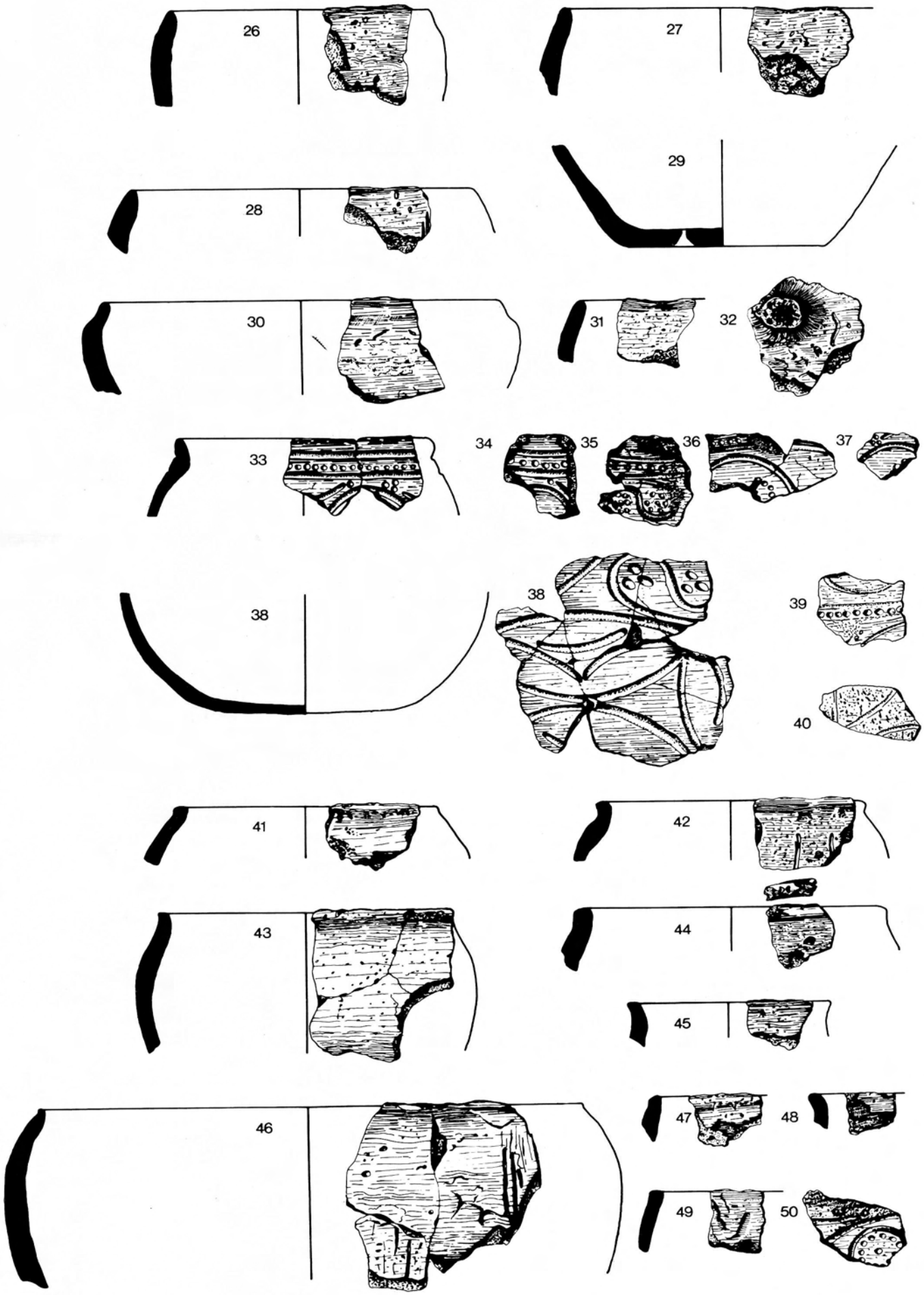

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Fig. 14

Scale 0 25 50 75 100
millimetres

49. Grey; grey; grey.

50. Red/grey; grey; red. Fairly soft core with some red grog. Burnished surface.

Group 2 Pottery

The whole of the pottery from enclosure 1 (excepting that from house 2 and its immediate environs) and enclosure 2 is regarded as a single group. Within the various layers basic forms reappear and no sequence based on fabric, typology or any other grounds could be identified even for the well defined stratigraphy of ditch 3.

The Fabric

Group 2 can be divided into 5 fairly standardised fabrics which show little variation and nothing would be gained by describing individual sherds. The general fabric types are described below and major variations noted in the catalogue.

Fabric 1A

Surface red-brown medium hard with slight soapiness ranging to grey hard; compact grey to blue core. Rounded quartz grains normally 0.25mm. rarely 0.50mm. diameter present perhaps as filler, sometimes producing very little surface pitting where abraded. Also occasional extremely finely ground limestone or shell as white or black specks against a predominantly light grey core.

Nos. 51-64, 76, 79-82, 85, 87, 89-91, 93, 94-102, 111, 112-150, 167, 168, 172-177, 184-186, 188-194, 199, 200-204, 206, 208, 209, 212.

Fabric 1B

Brown surfaces with grey core. Similar to 1A but less compact. Small limestone or shell grits set in a grey background. Quartz rarer than in 1A.

No. 207.

Fabric 1C

Brown surfaces with grey core. Coarser than 1A and 1B. Limestone and shell grits prominent with quartz virtually absent set in compact matrix.

Nos. 78, 88.

Fabric 2A

Pink or grey surfaces with grey core. Soft porous fabric and much pitting on the surface caused by the burning out during firing of part of the relatively coarse shell filler (see fabric 2B).

Nos. 68, 83, 84, 86, 103-109, 152-155, 158-163, 165, 169, 170, 178, 180-183, 187, 195, 198, 205, 211.

Fabric 2B

Pink or grey surfaces with generally grey core though underfired varieties are pink. Hard fabric of large angular shell or more rarely limestone grits up to 3 mm across set in a compact matrix. Fabrics 2A and 2B were originally regarded as completely distinct. Both fabrics however can be seen in a single vessel no. 187. The same clay and filler were probably employed and because of differing conditions either during firing or afterwards the fabric possibly hardened or alternatively the shell filler burnt out leaving a rather porous vessel.

Nos. 65, 66, 69-75, 77, 110, 151, 157, 164, 171, 179, 187.

Fabric 3

Red to grey surfaces with grey core. Limited pitting of surfaces and core through burning out of shell filler. Surface finish sandy with quartz grains up to 1.25mm. across.

Nos. 156, 166.

Fabric 4

Pink grey or fawn surface and core. A fairly hard fabric with occasional large shell fragments up to 6mm. across set in a very fine sandy core with no voids through filler being burnt out.

No. 92.

Fabric 5

Red to brown sandy surface with grey core. Abundant small rounded quartz grains 0.25mm. across set in a fairly compact grey matrix.

Nos. 67, 196, 210.

The Forms

The pottery of group 2 is restricted in the variety of its form and can be classified into six basic types. A seventh category discusses those pieces not covered by the preceding subdivisions.

1. Carinated bowls (e.g. 112-120)

Carinated bowls with external cordons are typically Belgic. While the examples from Moulton Park vary in size, they are notable for their consistency of form namely a gently curving wall with a single centrally placed cordon. Minor variations can be seen on three examples from ditch 1 (51, 52, 58) where the inner wall instead of its normally smooth face has an indentation corresponding with the external cordon and the cordon and carination of 56 are less angular than on other vessels. The simplicity and singularity of design of the Moulton Park bowls contrasts with the more elaborate and varied multicordoned forms from Camulodunum (Hawkes and Hull 1947, Forms 211 - 216) and Prae Wood (Wheeler 1936, Fig. 15). The fabric is thicker and less well fired and the general finish is slightly coarser. Similar vessels, however, have been found locally at Hardingstone (Woods 1969, Nos. 69 - 73), Irchester (Hall and Nickerson 1968, No. 33), Harrold (Hall and Nickerson 1969, Nos. 101 and 113) and Earls Barton (unpublished in Northampton Museum). Whether the relatively simple and less finely finished bowls are devolved copies from the areas of primary Belgic influence must remain conjectural.

2. Necked bowls

This form is characterised by a rounded shoulder and upstanding neck curving gently outwards and three subcategories may be distinguished:

a) a simple profile with no cordons (e.g. 63).
b) as a) but with a single cordon on the shoulder (e.g. 141, 142, 184).
c) a more elaborate neck and shoulder with one and two cordons respectively above and below a single corrugation (e.g. 144). Nos. 62 and 143 should be regarded as variations within this sub-category.

Local parallels for types a) and b) are noted at Hardingstone (Woods 1969, Nos. 77, 78, 83, 99) and Stoke Goldington (Mynard 1966, Nos. 12 - 14) and for type c) at Irchester (Hall and Nickerson 1967, No. 36). These are the most common Belgic types in the Upper Thames region where a late 1st century BC to mid 1st century AD date is postulated. Type c) is found in a group at Baldock provisionally dated by continental imports to between 20 and 50 AD.

3. Corrugated necked bowls

Bowls of this class should perhaps be grouped with form 2 in that they display a wide neck and rounded body but the use of corrugation gives a distinctive character to the vessel. Few examples can be noted at Moulton Park (e.g. 146 - 148) and no parallels are to be found at Hardingstone. The use of corrugation is common in areas of primary Belgic influence at an early date, for example on the coarse bowls from Wheathampstead (Wheeler 1936, Plates XLIX, L) and a few examples of this type of pottery have been discovered at Rushden. Corrugation, however, does not appear to be fully developed locally until the post-conquest period when far more elaborate forms in finer fabrics appear at Irchester (Hall and Nickerson 1968, nos. 53, 102, 105), Rushden and possibly Duston.

4. Slack cooking pots with squat rims (e.g. 151-155)
These vessels lack the smoothness and finish of forms 1 and 3. Most examples are probably wheel produced but an unevenness of surface is quite noticeable. The profile is characterised by a slack body with a short squat everted rim commonly grooved with one or more channels and often having slashing or cabling along its outer face. Various forms within this basic design are present and no typological development as suggested at Hardingstone (Woods 1969, 8) is noticeable, examples from Woods groups IIa and IIb being present in the same deposit. The presence of 'native' cooking pots of various types alongside finer Belgic wares has been noted at Verulamium (cf. Wheeler 1936, 166ff), Baldock, Bagendon (Clifford 1961, 243) and the Upper Thames region (Harding 1972, 121). The present form has a fairly local distribution. Examples have been found at Hardingstone (see above and Woods 1969, 68ff.), Brafield, Hackleton, Yardley Hastings (all unpublished in Northampton Museum), Stoke Goldington (Mynard 1966, nos. 1- 9, 30, 31) and Quinton. Further afield very close parallels have been found at Baldock in the group previously mentioned and dated to c. A. D. 20-50 and there are a few examples from Prae Wood (unpublished in Verulamium Museum).
5. Slack jars with inturned rims
The jars included in this category are similar in fabric and in general shape to those in group 4 but display a far more simple rim (e.g. 89, 161, 197, 210). 196 is very roughly made and perhaps should not be included in this group.
6. Storage jars
Few of these vessels survive much below the rim and it is difficult to reconstruct a complete profile apart from for 170. The rims themselves have a rounded profile which is rolled back from the neck. Combed decoration on the body with stab marks on the shoulder can be seen on 171 and 78.
7. Other forms
Few pots fall outside the above five classes. Nos. 88, 100, 102 are possibly native copies of butt beakers and, if so, would tend to place the group at least later than 1. A.D. It should be noted, however, that the two examples from ditch 3 are from the uppermost fill of the ditch. One possible example of a native butt-beaker from Hardingstone is published (Woods 1969, no.86) but its relationship to the bulk of the stratified material is indeterminate. An unusual hammerhead rim (no. 111) probably comes from a storage jar of uncertain form. Other vessels not classified include 105, 204, 205 and 207.

Dating

The Moulton Park group 2 assemblage has much in common with that from Hardingstone. In both cases however it is also perhaps worth noting pottery types not present. There are no Gallo-Belgic forms or native platters and apart from one scrap of Samian from Hardingstone no Roman imports to give a relatively precise date but it can be argued that this absence is not chronologically significant on modest settlements in a relative backwater of the country. The presence of native butt beakers, if accepted, argues for a date some time in the 1st century A.D. but this as dating evidence is rendered less valuable by the stratigraphical position of the relevant sherds.

Although it is dangerous to place any reliance on pure typology it should be noted that the fabric of the fine wares is less coarse and soapy than early Belgic material from Wheathampstead (Wheeler 1936, 149ff) and more locally from Irchester (Hall and Nickerson 1968, 80) and Rushden. At both these sites the coarser ware apparently predated finer wares and at Rushden a series of brooches perhaps offers more precise dating. The earlier coarser wares were associated with a brooch probably from the first quarter of the 1st century A.D. Several brooches found with the later finer wares suggest a date in the second quarter of the 1st century A.D. and probably immediately pre-Conquest. Moreover the Moulton Park material lacks that hard metallic finish of post-Conquest wares from Irchester, Camulodunum etc. But in any case when was 'Romanised' fabric introduced into the area? Webster (Webster 1973, 3) has recently suggested that even the pre-'metallic' Belgic pottery from Irchester is possibly post-Conquest perhaps introduced in the wake of the Roman army but this is perhaps stretching the argument.

Overall in view of the general lack of dating evidence from the area no precise chronology can be determined. Group 2 pottery would appear to be dated within the first half of the 1st century A.D. quite possibly after A.D. 25 but only further excavation and research will clarify the pre-Belgic/Belgic/Roman chronology in the area.

Catalogue of Group 2 Pottery (Figs. 15-25.)
Enclosure 1

Enclosure 1 ditch (Figs. 15 and 16)

51. Fabric 1A. Grey/brown-red; grey; red-brown. Section C.

52. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red–brown. Section C.

53. Fabric 1A. Light brown; grey; light brown. Section A.

54. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section B.

55. Fabric 1A. Fawn-grey; grey; fawn-grey. Section A.

56. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section C.

57. Fabric 1A. Grey; light grey; grey-fawn. Section C.

58. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; red-brown. Section C.

59. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey. Section A.

60. Fabric 1A. Grey-fawn; grey; grey/fawn. Section A.

61. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section A.

62. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey. Section D.

63. Fabric 1A. Fawn; grey; fawn. Section B.

64. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section B.

65. Fabric 2B. Grey; grey; pink/grey. Cabling on rim. Section C.

66. Fabric 2B. Grey; grey; pink/grey. Cabling on rim. Section C.

67. Fabric 5? Fawn; fawn; fawn. Section C.

68. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; grey. Possible traces of cabling on rim. Section C.

69. Fabric 2B. Grey; grey; pink. Rilling on exterior surface. Section C.

70. Fabric 2B. Grey; grey; fawn. Section C.

71. Fabric 2B. Grey; grey; pink. Cabling on rim. Section A.

72. Fabric 2B. Light brown; grey; light brown/grey. Section B.

73. Fabric 2B. Slightly sandier than usual. Red; red; red. Section C.

74. Fabric 2B. Pink; grey; grey. Section A.

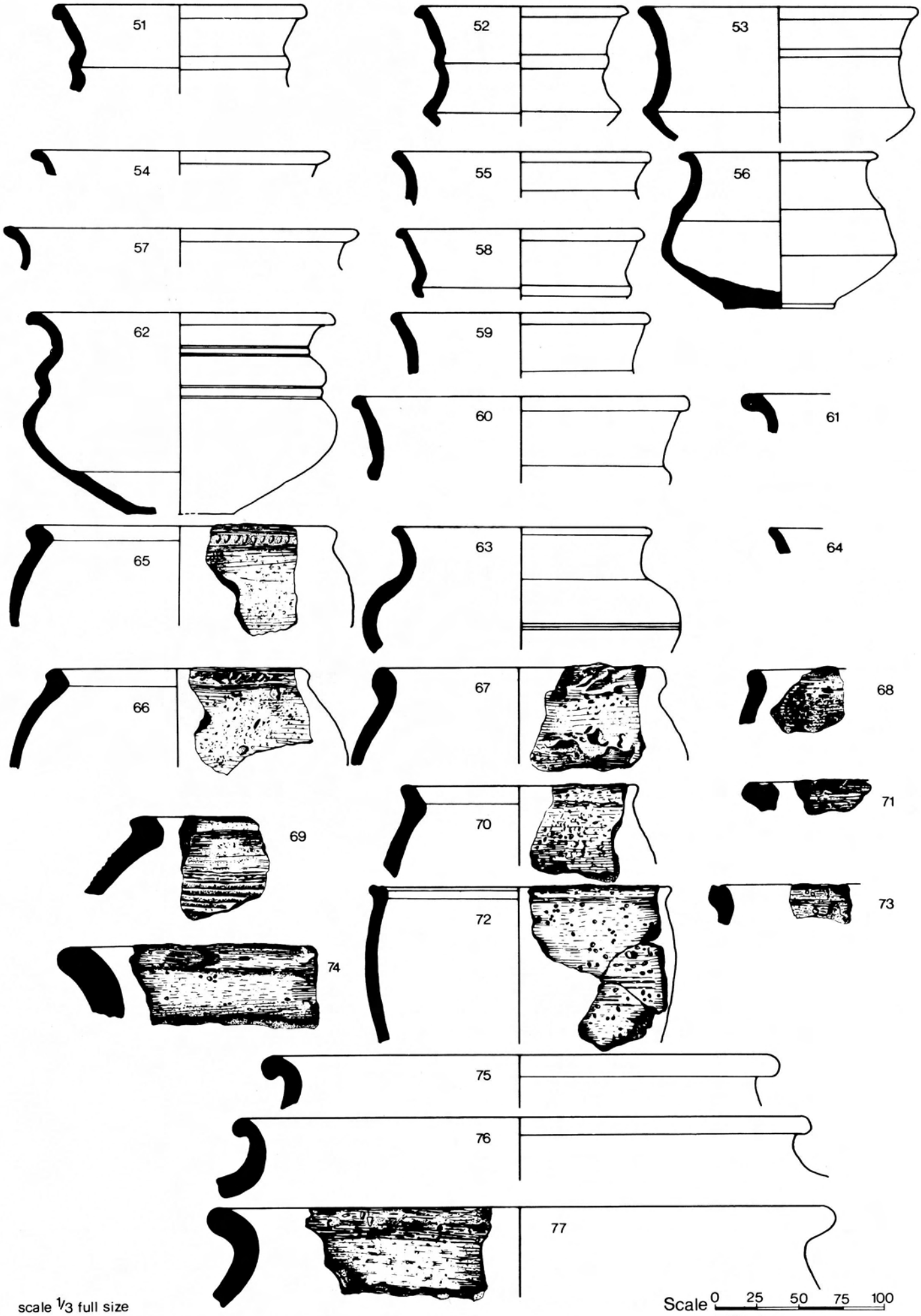

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Fig. 15

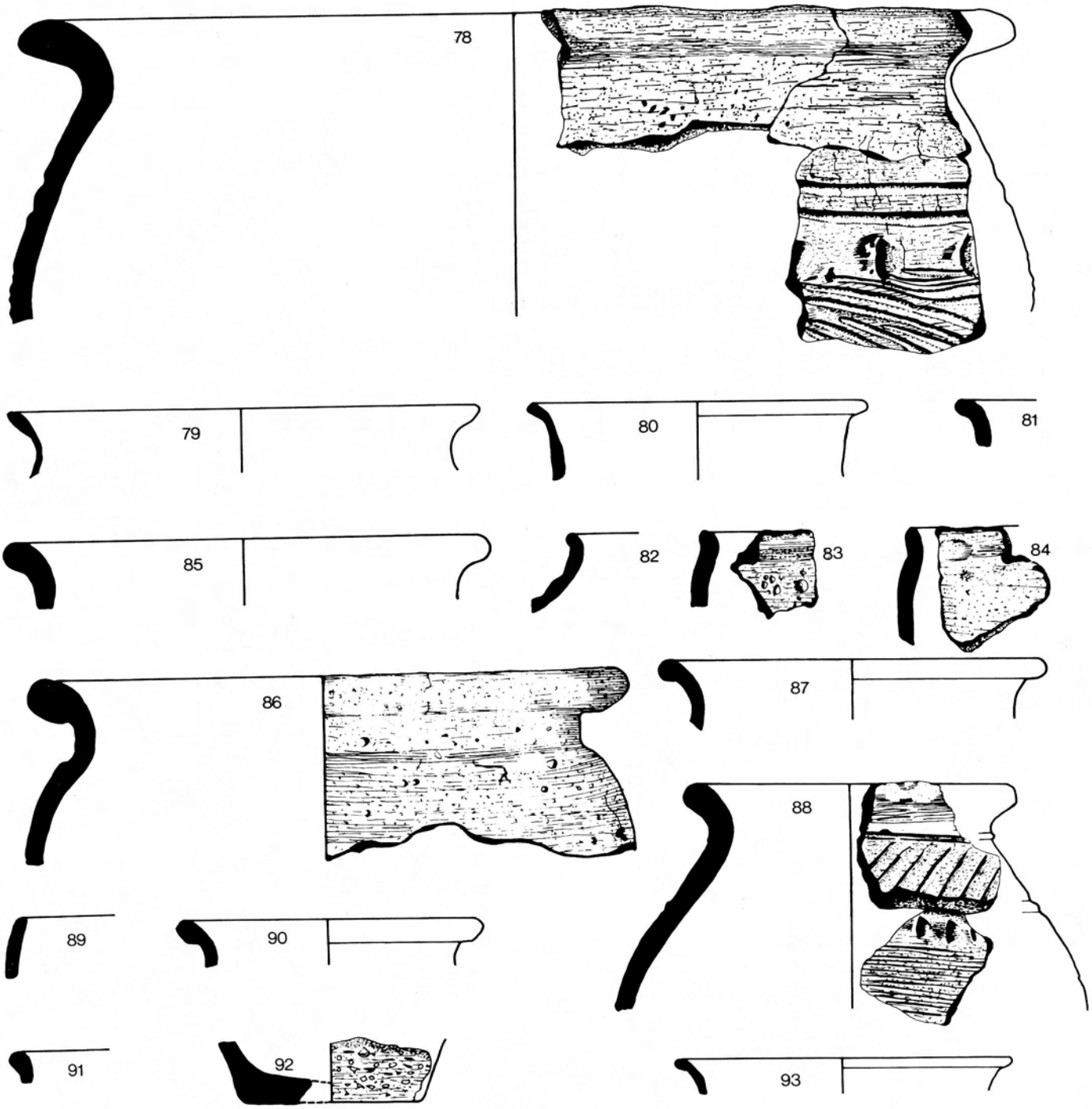

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Fig.16

75. Fabric 2B. Grey; grey; grey. Section A.

76. Fabric 1A. Brown-red; grey; brown-red. More small grits than usual. Section A.

77. Fabric 2B. Red; grey; fawn/red. Section C.

78. Fabric 1C. Red-brown/grey; grey; grey. Stab marks on the shoulder with diagonal combing beneath.

House 1 - Gully G 15 (Fig. 16)

79. Fabric 1A. Fawn/grey; grey; light fawn.

80. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown.

81. Fabric 1A. Brown/grey; grey; red-brown.

82 Fabric 1A. Fawn-grey; grey; fawn-grey.

83. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; pink/grey. Sandier than usual with pitting on the surface. Possible traces of cabling on rim.

84. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; grey. Very similar to 83 but with no cabling on rim.

Gully G 14 (Fig. 16)

85. Fabric 1A. Purple-brown; grey; purple-brown.

86. Fabric 2A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown.

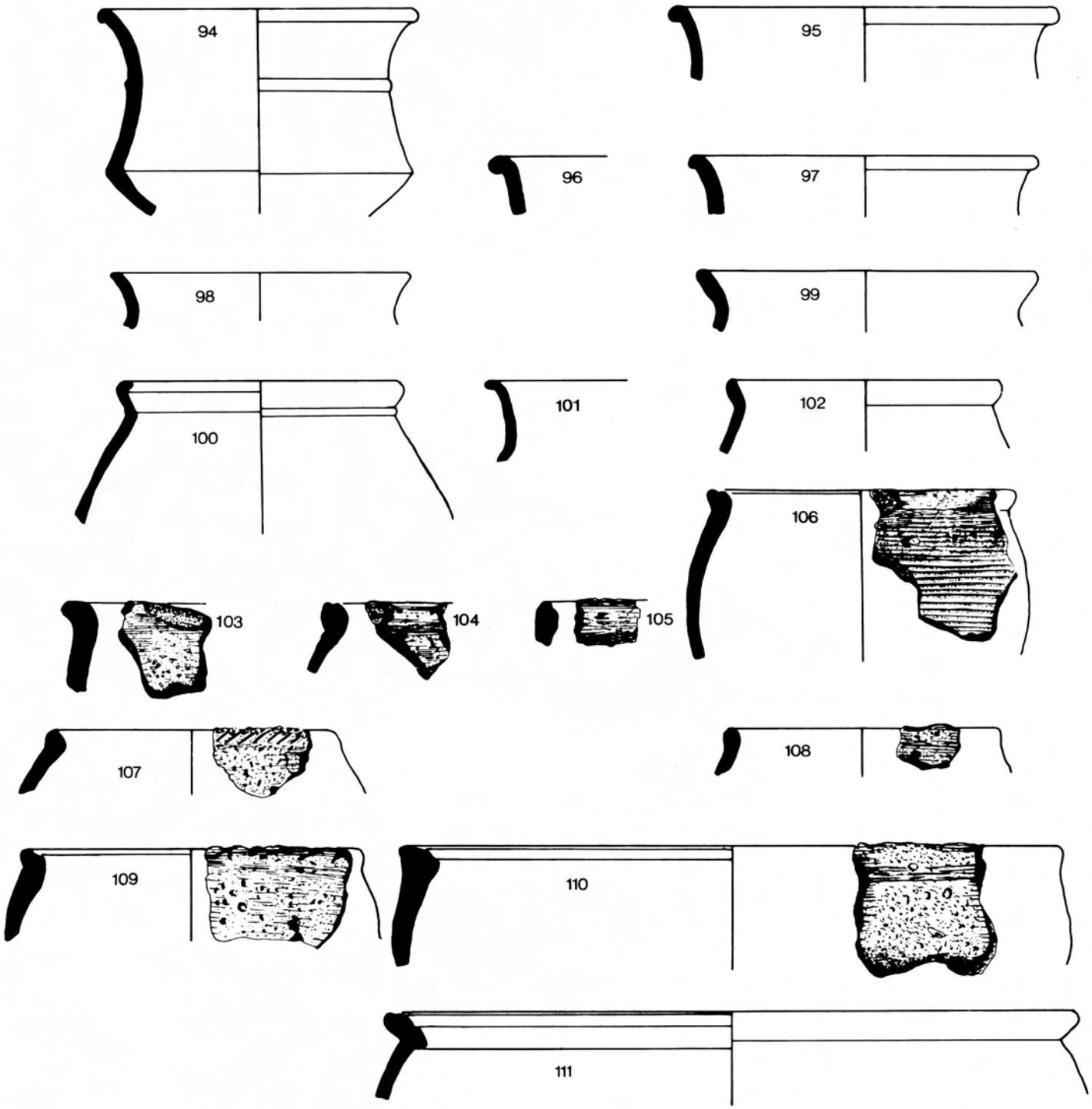

Fig.17

Horizontal fine striations on outside of body from use of potters wheel.

Gully G 3 (Fig.16)

87. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey.

Gully G 6 (Fig.16)

88. Fabric 1C. Red-brown; grey; grey. Diagonal scoring on neck, stab marks on shoulder plus horizontal grooves on body.

Gully G 9 (Fig. 16)

89. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey.

90. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey.

91. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown.

Pit P1 (Fig. 16)

92. Fabric 4. Fawn/red; grey; grey.

P.H.4 (Fig. 16)

93. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; red-brown.

Enclosure 2

Main ditch - top fill (Fig. 17)

94. Fabric 1A. Brown-red; grey; brown-red. Section 3E, 1.

95. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey. Section 3E, 1.

96. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey. Section 2H, 1.

97. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3F, 1.

98. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3G, 1.

99. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey. Section 3A, 1.

100. Fabric 1A. Purple-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3A, 1.

101. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3G, 1.

102. Fabric 1A, though finer than usual with an absence of grits on rather sandy surface. Orange-brown; grey; orange-brown. Section 3D, 1.

103. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; red-brown. Section 3A, 1.

104. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; grey. Section 3D, 1.

105. Fabric 2A. Black; black; black. Cabling on rim. Section 3B, 1.

106. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; grey. Fine rilling on body. Section 3A, 1.

107. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; fawn. Cabling on rim. Section 3A, 1.

108. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; grey. Section 3B. 1.

109. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; red. Cabling on rim. Section 3B, 1.

110. Fabric 2B. Red; grey; red. Section 3B, 1.

111. Fabric 1A. Red; grey; red. Section 3A, 1.

Main ditch - middle fill (Figs. 18 - 21)

112. Fabric 1A. Red-brown: grey; red-brown. Section 3F, 2A.

113. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3A, 2.

114. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3E, 2.

115. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3F, 2A.

116. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3C, 2B.

117. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey. Section 3F, 2.

118. Fabric 1A. Grey-brown; grey; fawn. Section 3A, 2.

119. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey. Section 3C, 2.

120. Fabric 1A. Purple-brown; grey; purple-brown. Section 3E, 2C.

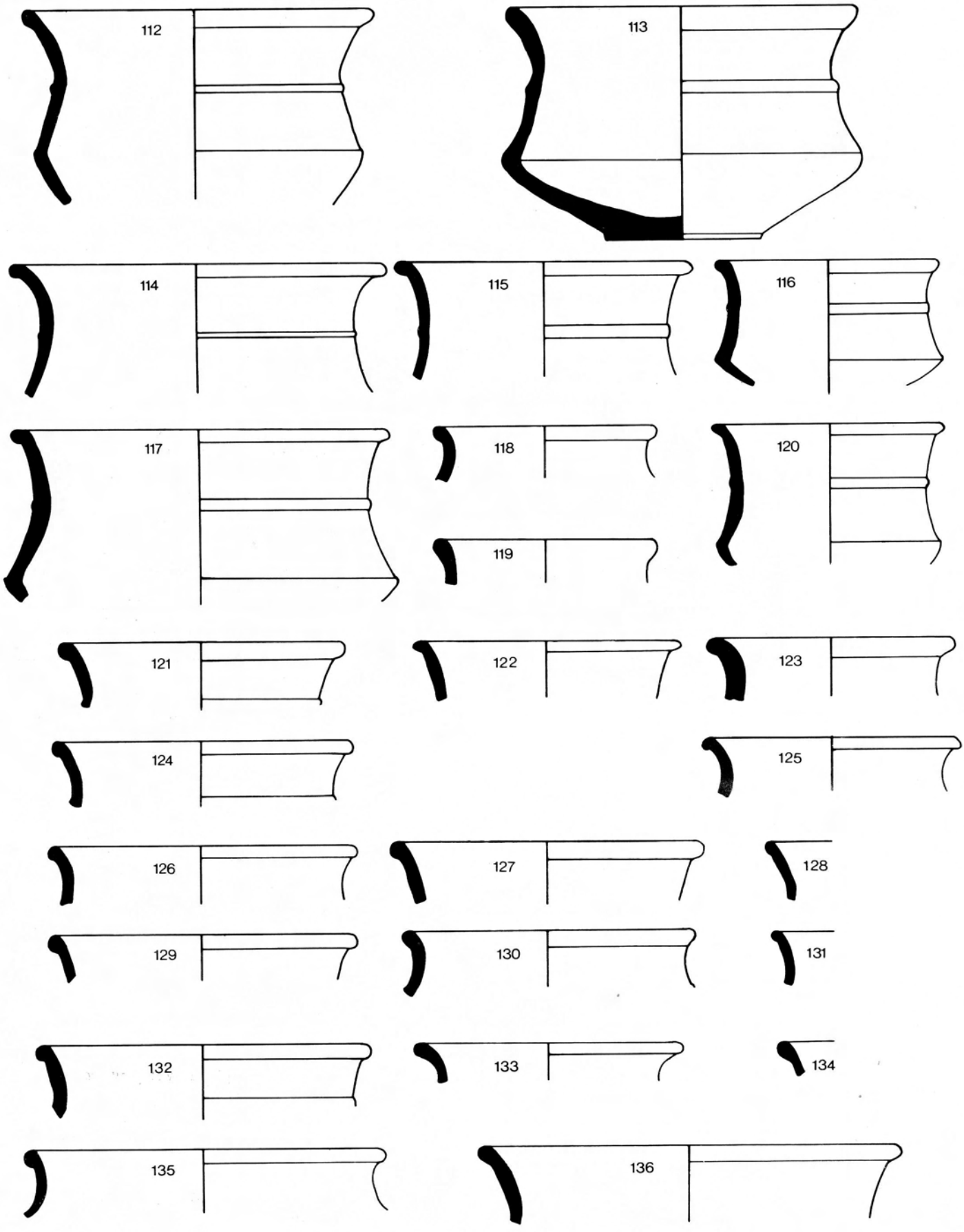

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Fig. 18

Scale 0 25 50 75 100
millimetres

121. Fabric 1A. Purple-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3C, 2.

122. Fabric 1A. Purple-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3F, 2A.

123. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey. Section 3E, 2C.

124. Fabric 1A. Purple-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3F, 2A.

125. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey. Section 2H, 2.

126. Fabric 1A, but similar to no. 102. Orange-brown; grey; orange-brown. Section 3D, 2.

127. Fabric 1A. Purple-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3C, 2B.

128. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3E, 2C.

129. Fabric 1A. Fawn-grey; grey; fawn-grey. Section 3D, 2C.

130. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3C, 2.

131. Fabric 1A. Grey-brown; grey; grey-brown. Section 3F, 2E.

132. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3F, 2A.

133. Fabric 1A. Purple-brown; grey; purple-brown. Section 3F, 2A.

134. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; purple-brown. Section 3F, 2A.

135. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3E, 2C.

136. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3F, 2A.

137. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey. Section 3F, 2E.

138. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey. Section 3F, 2.

139. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3F, 2C.

140. Fabric 1A. Purple-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3C, 2B.

141. Fabric 1A. Grey-fawn; grey; grey-fawn. Section 3E, 2C.

142. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3E, 2C.

143. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3D, 2.

144. Fabric 1A. Fawn; grey; fawn. Section 3B, 2A.

145. Fabric 1A, but sandier than normal. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3F, 2A.

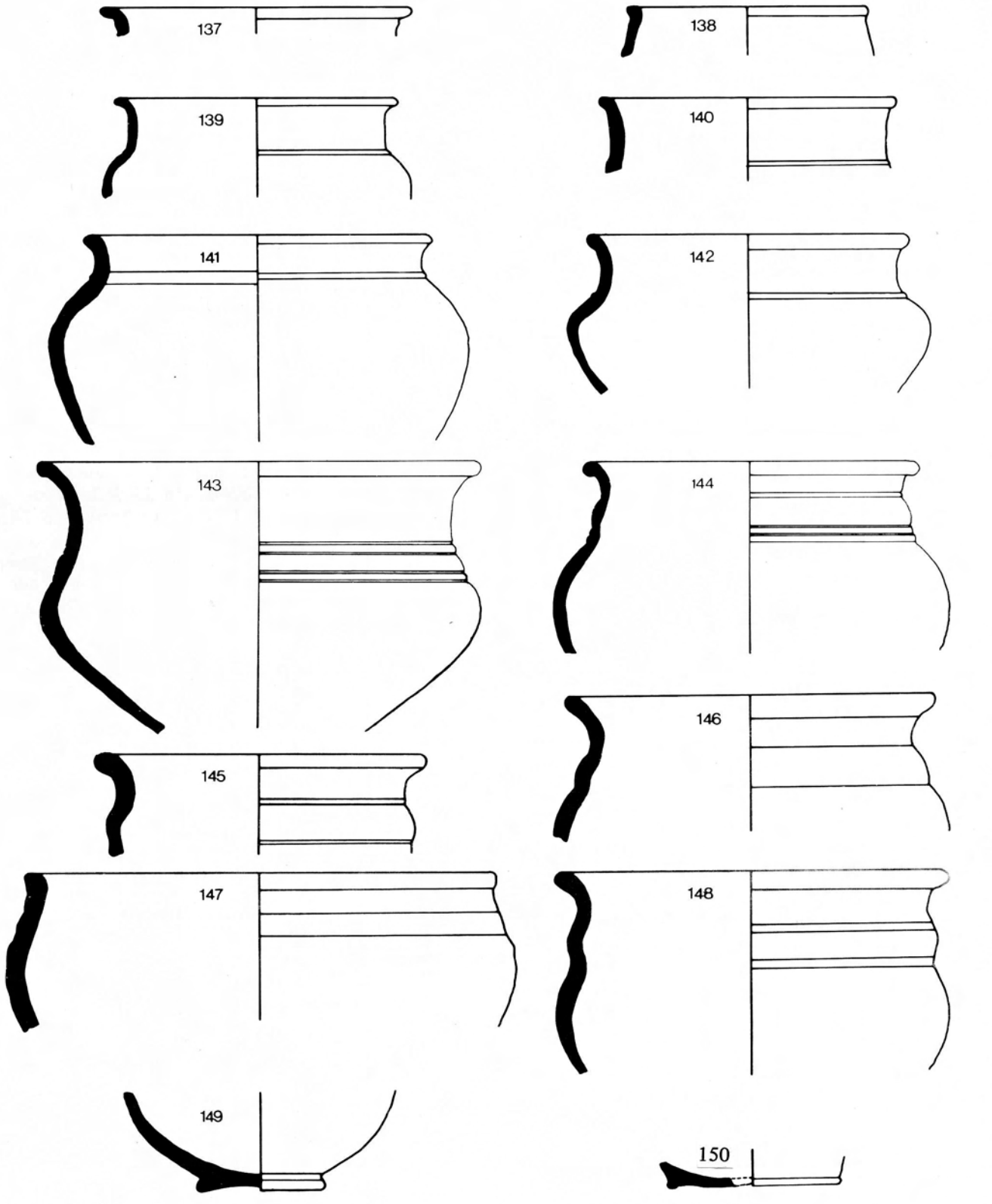

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Fig.19

146. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey. Section 2H, 2.

147. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey. Section 3D, 2.

148. Fabric 1A. Orange/grey; grey; grey. Section 3E, 2A.

149. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3F, 2A.

150. Fabric 1A. Orange/grey; grey; grey. Section 3C, 2.

151. Fabric 2B. Grey; grey; grey/red-brown. Cabling on rim. Section 3B, 2B.

152. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; fawn. Section 3F, 2E.

153. Fabric 2A. Pink; pink; pink. Cabling on rim. Section 3E, 2C.

154. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; grey. Section 3E, 2C.

155. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; grey. Cabling on rim. Section 3E, 2C.

156. Fabric 3. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3D, 2.

157. Fabric 2B. Black; grey; purple-brown. Section 3A, 2.

158. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; red. Section 3B, 2A.

159. Fabric 2A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Rilling on body. Section 3F, 2A.

160. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; red/grey. Section 3C, 2B.

161. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; grey. Section 3F, 2C.

162. Fabric 2A? but rather sandier than normal, some affinities with fabric 3. Brown; grey; brown. Cabling on rim. Section 3C, 2B.

163. Fabric 2A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Horizontal striations on outside of body demonstrate the use of the potters wheel. Section 3B, 2A.

164. Fabric 2B. Grey; grey; pink. Cabling on rim. Section 2H, 2.

165. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; fawn. Cabling on rim. Section 3F, 2E.

166. Fabric 3. Grey; grey; fawn. Section 3F, 2C.

167. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; grey. Section 3A, 2A.

168. Fabric 1A. Grey-brown; grey; grey. Horizontal combing on body. Section 3F, 2E.

169. Fabric 2A. Red-brown; grey; brown. Stab marks on neck. Section 3E, 2C.

170. Fabric 2A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3B, 2A.

171. Fabric 2B. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Stab marks on shoulder plus diagonal combing on body. Section 3B, 2A.

Main ditch - primary fill (Fig. 22)

172. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey. Section 3F, 3.

173. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; fawn. Section 3F, 3.

174. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey. Section 3D, 3.

175. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey/fawn. Section 3C, 3.

176. Fabric 1A. Purple-brown; grey; purple-brown. Section 3D, 3.

177. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3B, 3.

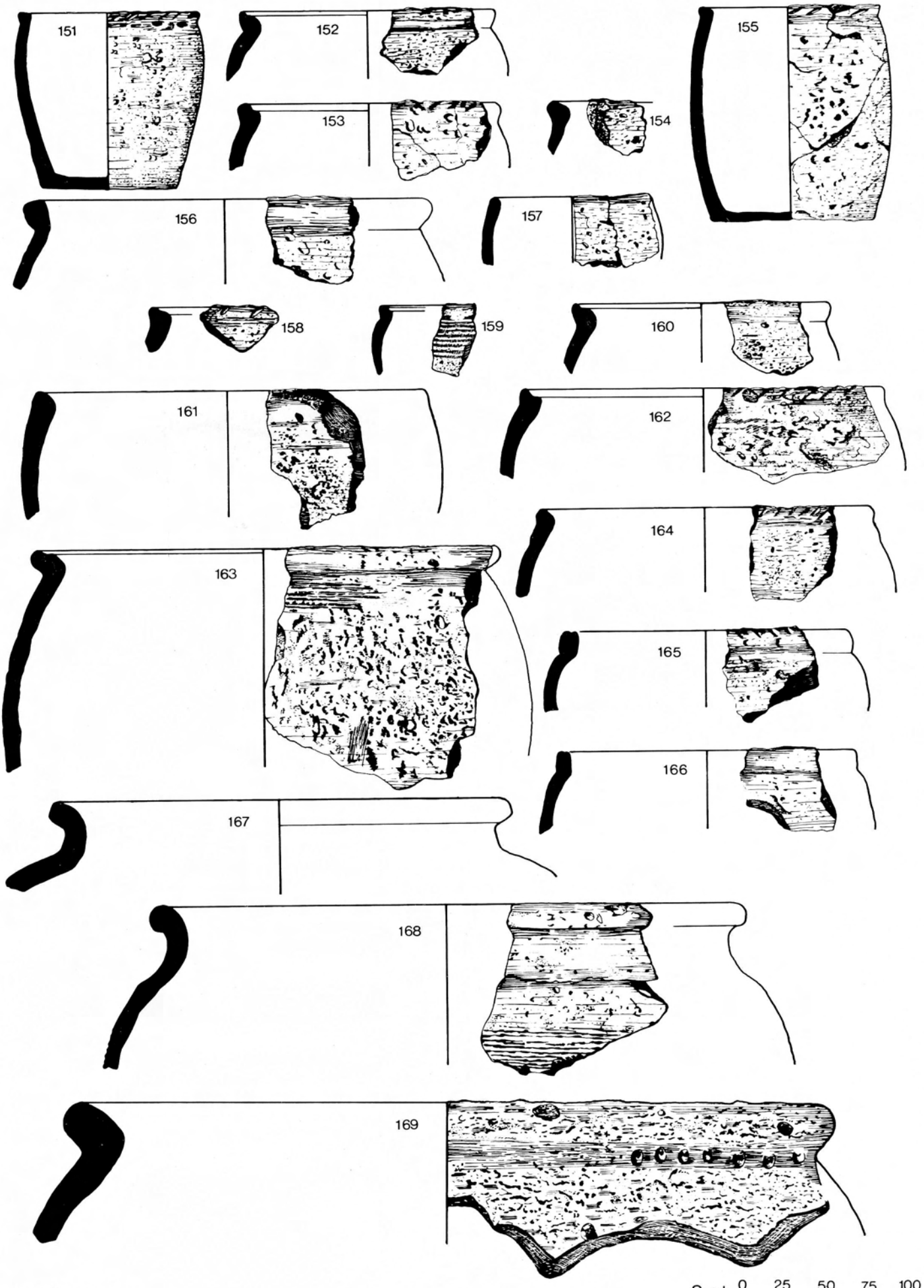

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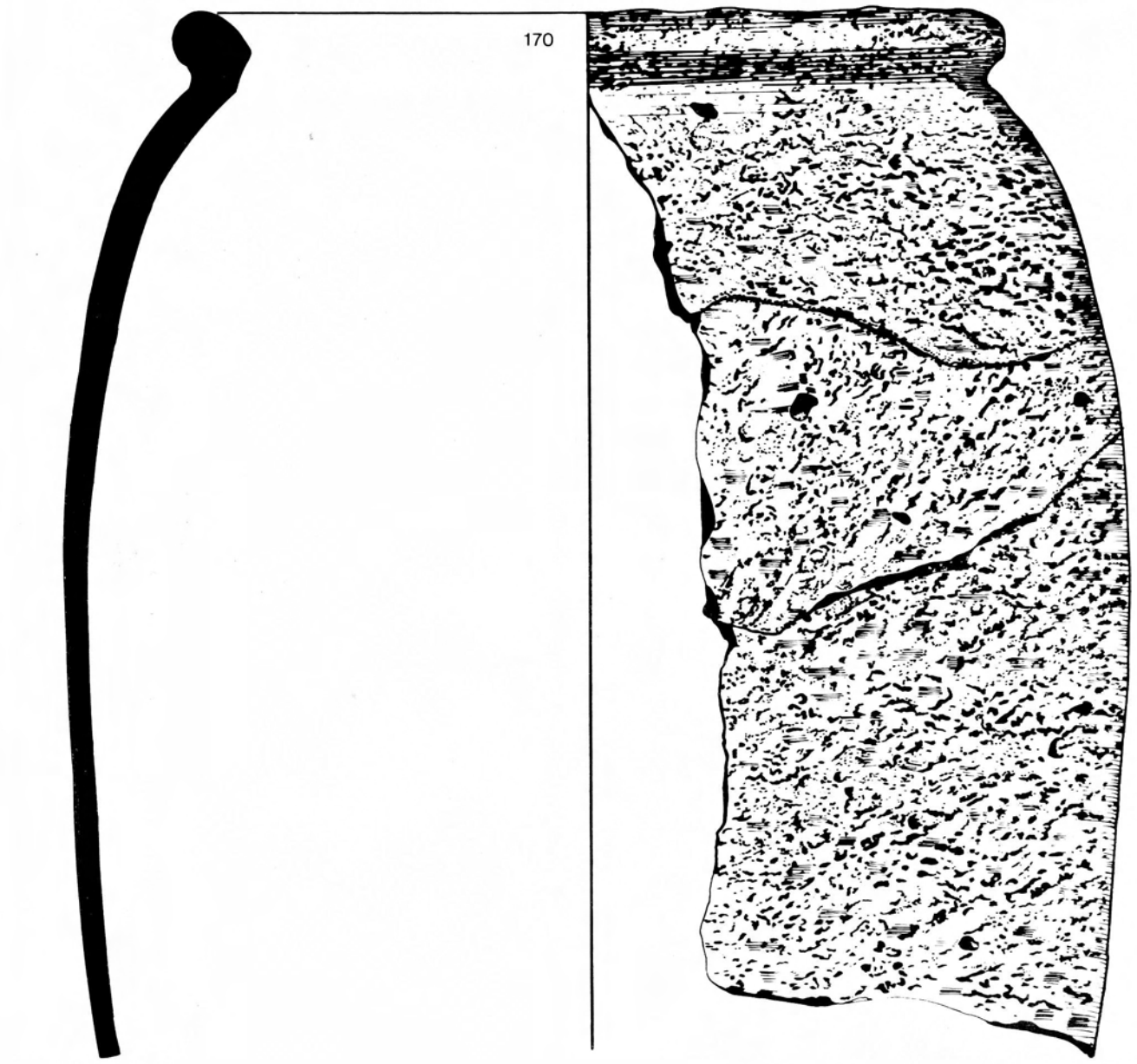
Fig. 20



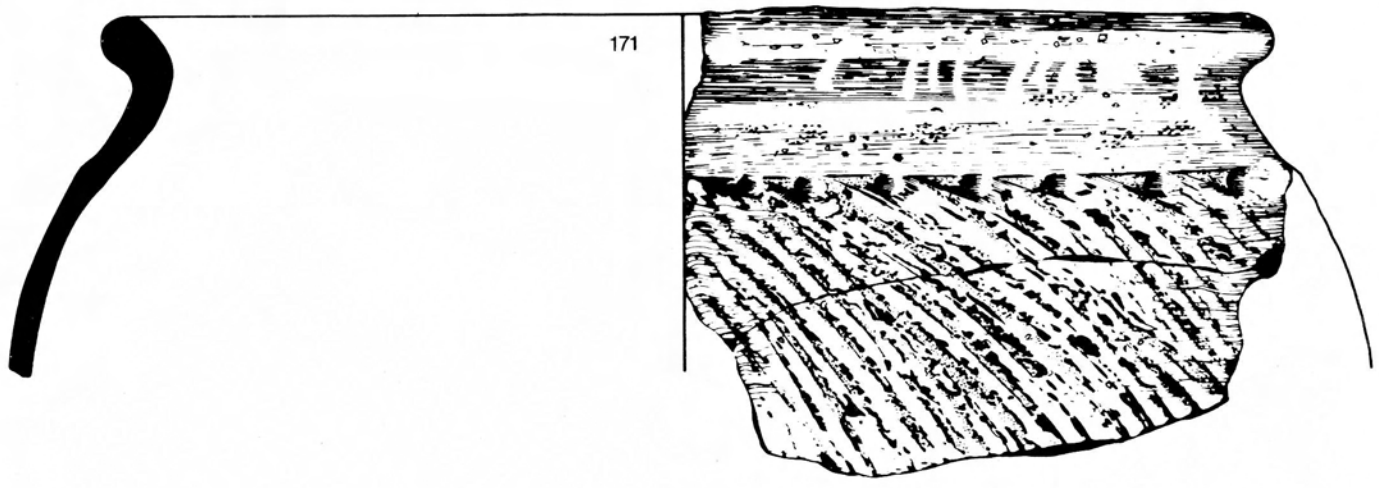


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Fig. 21

Scale 0 25 50 75 100
millimetres

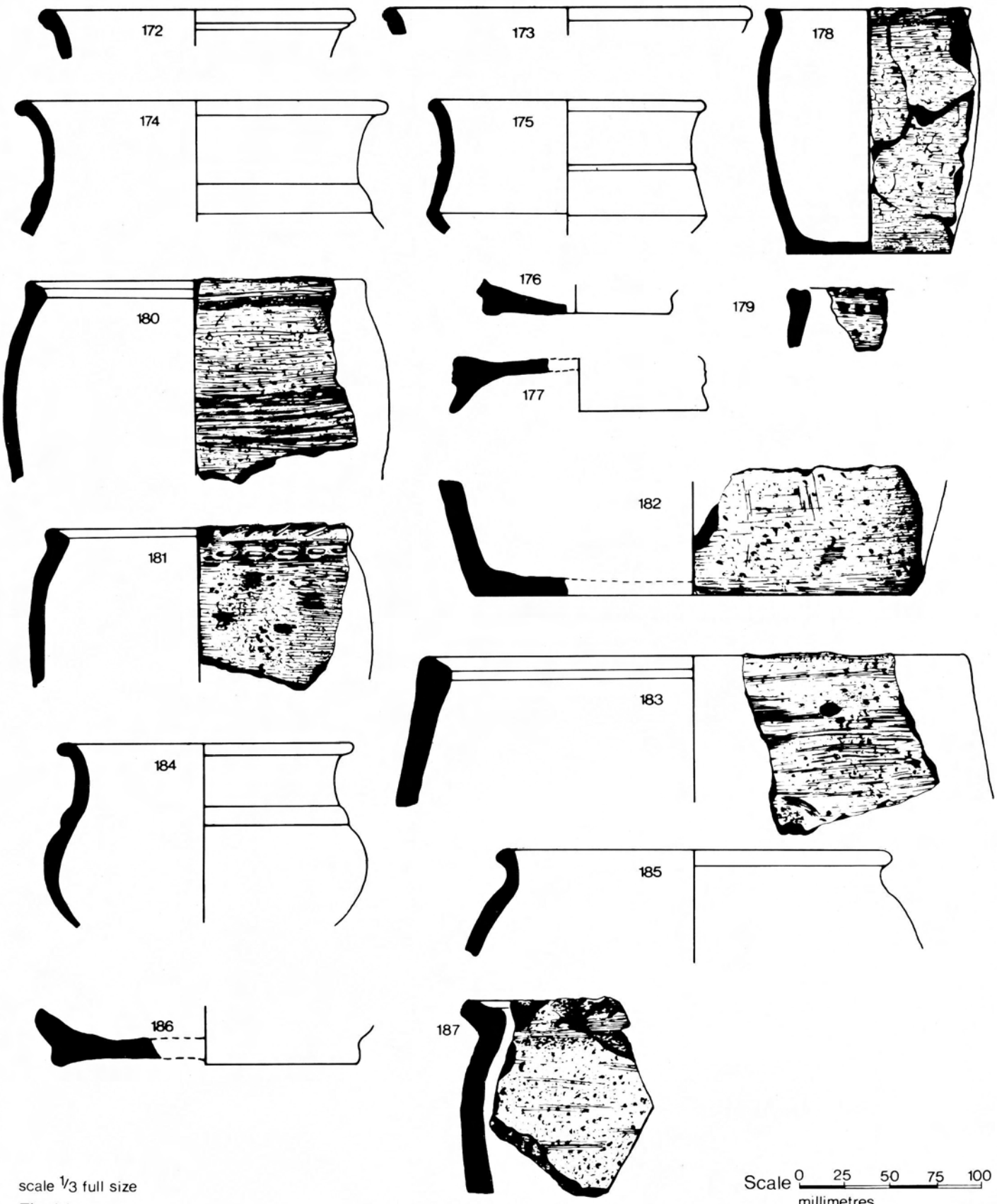

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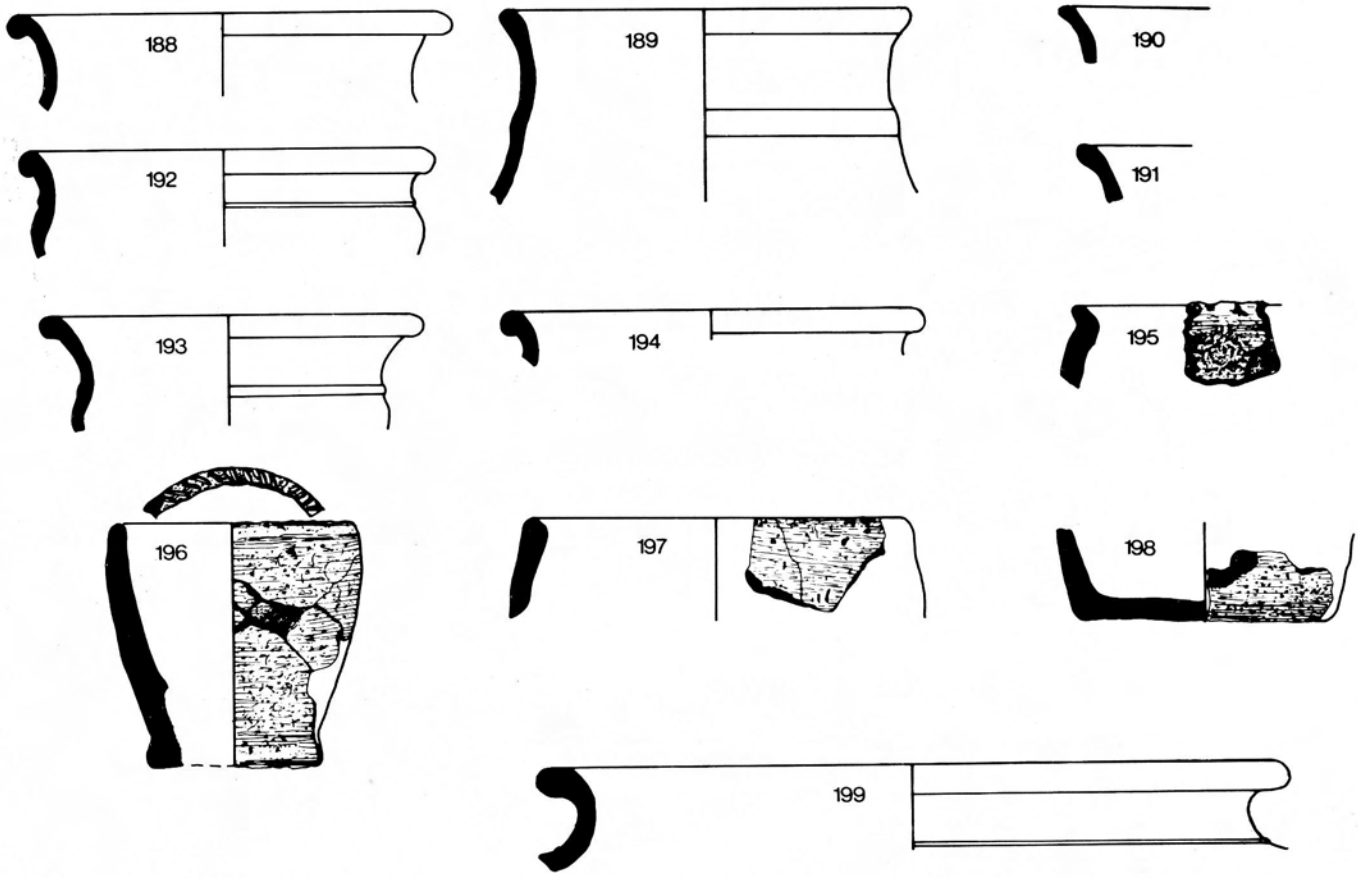
Fig.22



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Scale 0 25 50 75 100 millimetres

Fig.23

178. Fabric 2A. Grey; red-brown/grey; grey. Section 3G, 3.

179. Fabric 2B. Grey; grey; grey. Cabling on rim. Section 3A, 3.

180. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; red-brown. Horizontal striations on exterior suggest use of wheel. Section 3C, 3.

181. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; brown-red. Cabling on rim and stab marks on neck. Section 3C, 3.

182. Fabric 2A. Grey/brown; grey; red-brown. Section 3C, 3.

183. Fabric 2A. Pink; grey; pink. Section 3C, 3.

Main ditch - within causeway (Fig. 22)

184. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey.

185. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; grey.

186. Fabric 1A. Fawn-grey; grey; grey.

187. Fabric 2A and 2B. Grey; grey; red-brown. Cabling on rim.

House 4 (Fig. 23)

188. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey.

189. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown.

190. Fabric 1A. Red-brown; grey; red-brown.

191. Fabric 1A. Grey-brown; grey; grey-brown.

192. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey.

193. Fabric 1A. Grey-brown; grey; grey/grey-brown.

194. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey.

195. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; grey.

196. Fabric 5. Orange-brown; grey; orange-brown. Finger nail impressions on rim.

197. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; fawn.

198. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; grey/fawn.

199. Fabric 1A. Fawn; grey; fawn.

Gully G 27 (Fig. 24)

200. Fabric 1A. Grey-brown; grey; grey-brown.

201. Fabric 1A. Grey-fawn; grey; grey/fawn.

202. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey.

Gully G 24 (Fig. 24)

203. Fabric 1A. Grey-brown; grey; grey-brown.

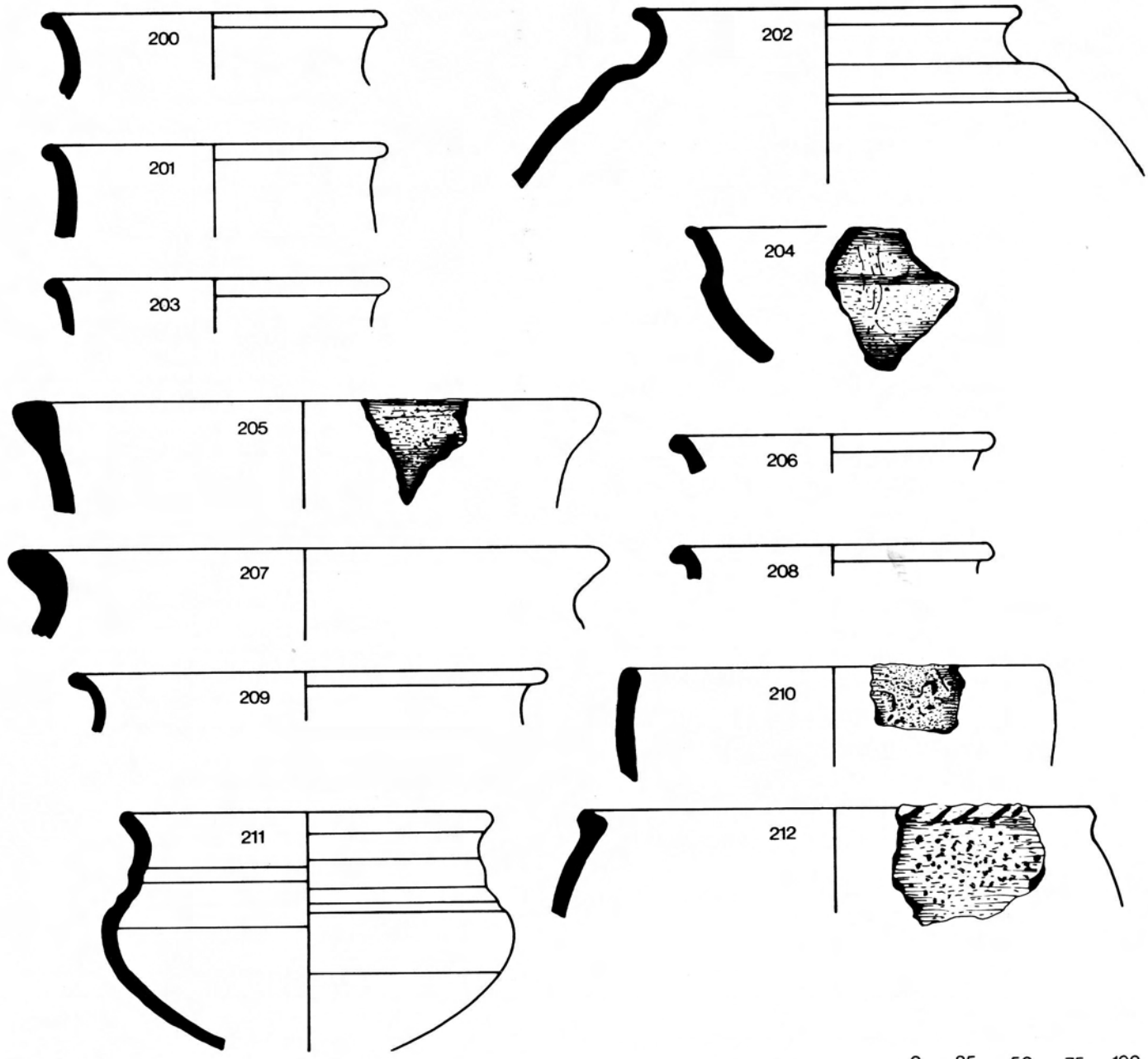

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Fig.24

204. Possibly fabric 1A, but apparently harder and with mica on surface. Grey; grey; grey.

Gully G 37 (Fig. 24)

205. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; grey.

206. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey.

Gully G 42 (Fig. 24)

207. Fabric 1B. Purple-brown; grey; purple-brown.

Gully G 46 (Fig. 24)

208. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey.

209. Fabric 1A. Grey; grey; grey.

210. Fabric 5. Red-brown; grey; red-brown.

211. Fabric 2A. Grey; grey; grey. Cabling on rim.

Post hole 27 (Fig. 24)

212 Fabric 1A Grey; grey; grey.

The Small Finds

By J. H. Williams with a report on the petrology of the armlet by J. Dangerfield and R. J. Merriman and the petrology of the quern by A. Mathieson.

Iron

Nos 213-219 are all possibly nails although only 218 is certain and that is not securely stratified. 219 is probably a nail having one pointed end. Although all examples were found in archaeological contexts it is possible for small objects of this size to be intrusive as a result of animal action etc.

213-6 Short lengths of iron. All from enclosure 1, G 14.

217. Short length of iron. Enclosure 2, main ditch, section 3A, 2.

218. Iron nail with squarish section and flat head. Lying on ground surface within house 4.

219. Short length of iron. Laying on ground surface within house 4.

220. Short flat length of iron, possibly part of a knife blade. House 2, G 13.

221. Short flat length of iron, possibly part of a knife blade. House 2, G 13.

222. Short length of iron possibly a tang from either 220 or 221 with which it was associated. House 2, G 13.

223. Short length of iron. A central core can be seen which is possibly the remains of the original iron surrounded by secondary corrosion. House 2, G 13.

224. Short length of iron with central core (cf. 223). House 2, G 13.

225. Short flat length of iron possibly the end of a knife blade. House 2, G 13.

Bronze

226. Small bronze pin of square section. Enclosure 2, main ditch, section 3A, 2.

Stone

227. Possible shale armlet, probably lathe turned. As there was a known shale armlet industry at Kimmeridge, Dorset, during the Iron Age and Roman periods (Calkin 1955, 45ff.) the armlet was submitted to the Institute of Geological Sciences for examination.
J. Dangerfield and R. J. Merriman report:

The armlet was compared with a specimen and thin section of Kimmeridge Shale (I.G.S. no. E1265) from Kimmeridge Coal Works and also with shale cores from near Kimmeridge (MR 4824;c.f. Calkin 1955, 58ff.) The armlet is of brown and somewhat weathered material so that colour comparison can be deceptive. The specimen from the Coal Works and all but one of the cores are dark grey or black. The other core is dark brown, darker than the armlet. The latter appears to be of less fissile and more compact material than the specimens from Kimmeridge although a flattened and smoothed surface of the shale from the Coal Works matches better in this respect. Quartz can be seen in the cores but not in the armlet while the latter seems to be slightly micaceous. In thin section the armlet and the shale (E 1265) are broadly similar. Both are carbonaceous shales, the armlet being considerably more dense than the shale specimen. The latter has somewhat more quartz and opaque flakes than the armlet. The major difference is the presence of a significant amount of carbonate in the section E 1265 whereas none is present in the section of the armlet, although the latter does have voids which could have contained carbonate. X-ray examination of the armlet was carried out on a Philips diffractometer using Cukα 40Kv, 30mA, slit system 1^{o}, 0.1, 1^{o}, scanning at $\frac{1}{2}^{o}$ 2θ minute. For comparison, a chip of Kimmeridge shale from specimen E1265 was flattened on one side and run under the same conditions. Because of the curvature of the armlet, the areas presented to the X-ray beam were not the same and no quantitative comparison can be made. The diffractometer trace (DX 979) of the armlet shows that clay-mica and kaolinite are the dominant minerals present, with subordinate quartz. Clay-mica and kaolinite are also the dominant minerals present in the shale (DX 980), but here calcite is present also (probably shell debris) and quartz forms no more than a few percent of the sample. The two specimens have one characteristic in common whereby the kaolinite peak at $3.57A^{o}$ is more intense than the peak at $7.15A^{o}$. This is a reversal of the usual state of affairs which may be due to partial replacement of aluminium in the kaolinite lattice. On the basis of the unusual kaolinite pattern, it is possible that the two specimens have a common origin.

Similarities exist between the armlet and the other specimens. The armlet certainly could have come from Kimmeridge but the possibility of another source on the evidence available should not be ruled out.

228. Piece of basalt. Four of the five sides are very smooth but the fifth side is rather rougher and may be the result of a fracture the object originally being four sided. The rather sharp junctions of the sides and base suggest the bottom of the stone was broken off. The top of the stone is rough but the junctions with the sides are slightly rounded. Basalt occurs in columnar form and the object may be of natural origin but there is no local source for basalt. Enclosure 2, main ditch, section 3E, 3.

Small Stone and Clay Weights

229. Small round baked clay object with central perforation possibly a spindle whorl. Enclosure 2, main ditch, Section 3F, 2C.

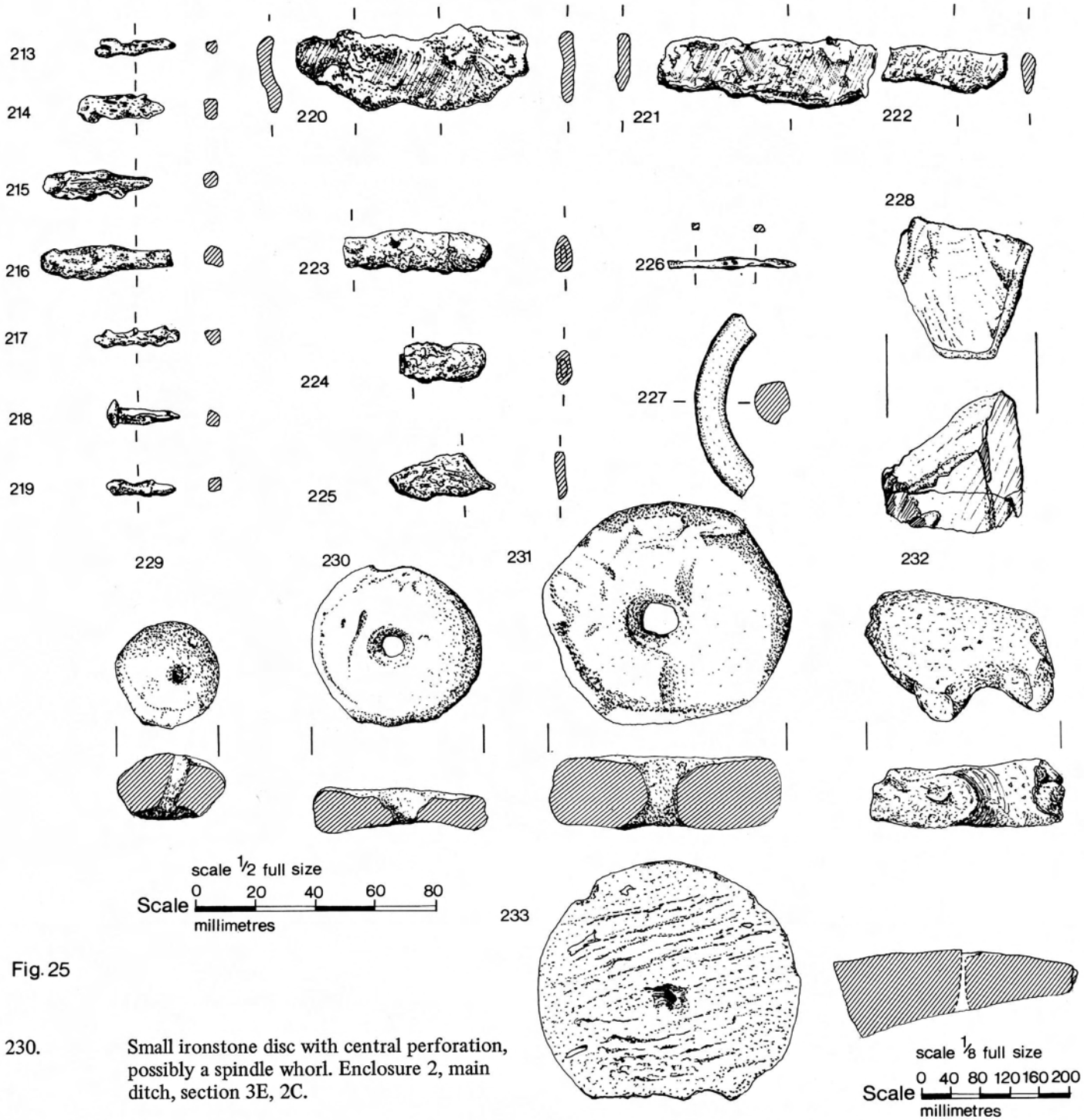

Fig. 25

230. Small ironstone disc with central perforation, possibly a spindle whorl. Enclosure 2, main ditch, section 3E, 2C.

231. Ironstone disc with central perforation, possibly a spindle whorl. Enclosure 2, main ditch, section 3J, 2.

232. Fragment of fired clay in a hard, grey, shelly fabric (cf. pottery fabric 2B, page 24). The sides are relatively smooth and the external edges bevelled. The object is fractured across a probable perforation and is possibly part of a spindle whorl. Enclosure 1, ditch section C.

Stone Quern

233. Probably base stone of a quern. The stone was examined in thin section by A. Mathieson who reports:

The sample is a grey, weathering brown-grey, fine grained glauconitic sandstone.

1) Detrital minerals:
Quartz - subrounded grains of similar size, ranging between approx. 0.01 and 0.04 mm., fairly loosely packed.
2) Glauconite - scattered subrounded grains of similar size to quartz, forming about 10% of detrital minerals.
3) Rock detritus - small number of grains of similar size and shape to quartz, apparently of fine-grained greywacke.
4) Felspars - a small amount of microcline and plagioclase felspar is present, of similar size and shape to quartz grains.
Accessory minerals:
A number of rounded opaque grains are present, evidently pyrite. The cement was not identified. No reaction was detected when the cut-off samples were tested with

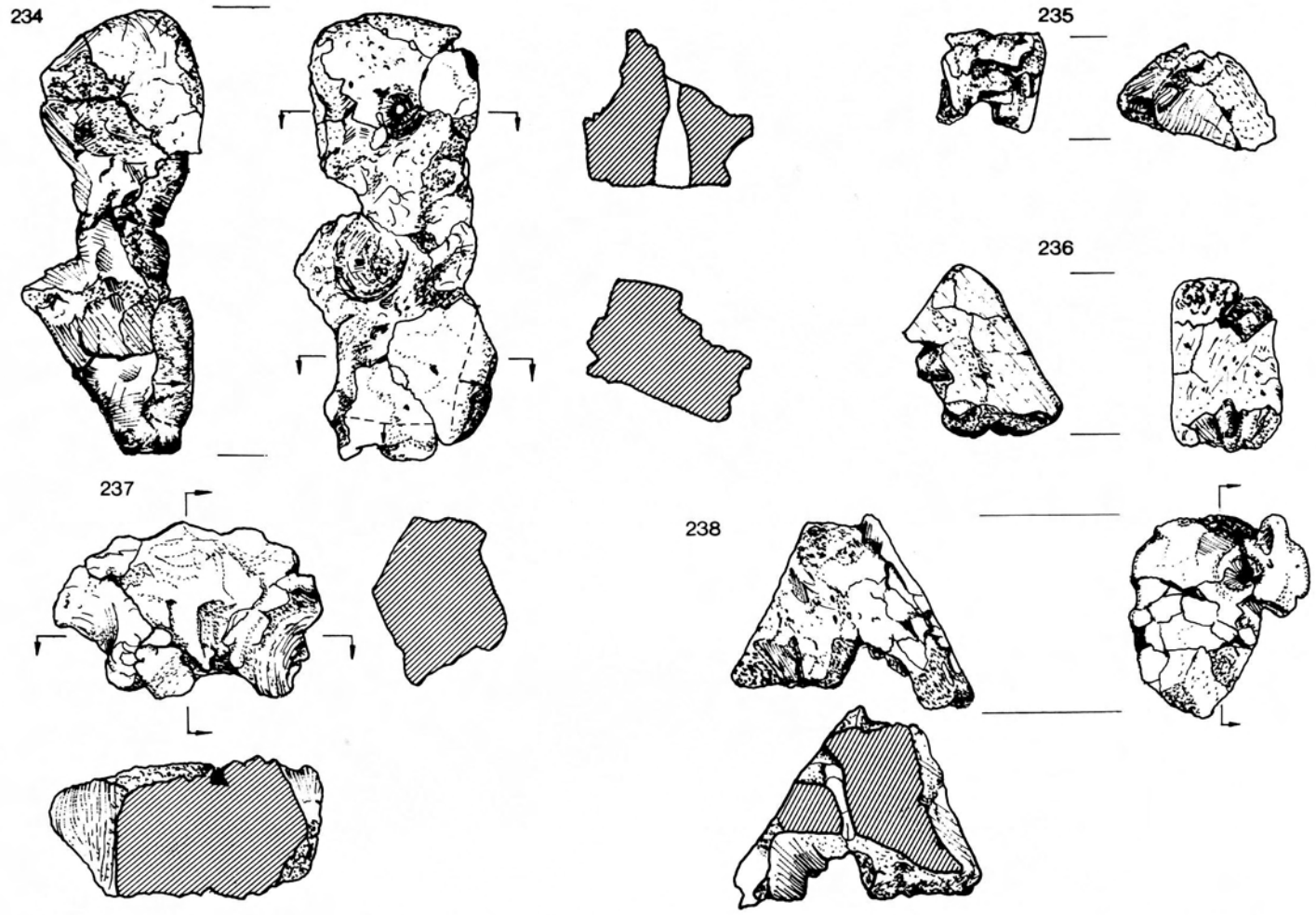

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Fig. 26

dilute HC1. Opaque accessory minerals are present in the cement and these are apparently mainly pyrite. Some areas of the cement are stained by limonite and these are mainly associated with glauconite.

Glauconitic sandstones are strongly developed in the Lower Cretaceous greensands of Britain and Europe, and there is some development in the Upper Cretaceous and Eocene of Britain. Assuming the source is one of these rocks, then they all occur in South-East Britain, except for an area of Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, and this presumably would be the area of source. House 4, Gully G 23.

Large Clay Weights (?)

Five substantial pieces of shaped clay plus numerous smaller fragments were found in enclosure 2. Three of the objects may well have been triangular in shape but the other two were more irregular. The original surfaces (except with 237) tended to be fairly smooth and all had at least one perforation presumably for passing a cord through. The objects should probably be regarded as some form of weight, perhaps loom weights or thatch weights but they are cruder than the triangular weights with perforations across each angle common throughout the Iron Age and represented locally by examples from Hunsbury, Draughton (in Northampton Museum) and Irchester (Hall and Nickerson 1968, 91).

234. Large irregular weight (?). Each end is roughly triangular in shape but an apparent twist in the centre disorientated the various faces. Perforated at one end. Poorly baked red/grey/brown clay. House 4, G 23.

235. Corner of a triangular weight (?) with remains of a single perforation across the corner typical of Iron Age weights (see above). Poorly baked grey brown clay. Enclosure 2, main ditch, section 3F, 3.

236. Corner of a triangular weight (?) with possible traces of a single perforation. Poorly baked red/grey/brown clay. Enclosure 2, main ditch, section 3E, 2C.

237. Fragment of a large weight (?) of uncertain size. At either end are the remains of perforations probably c. 35 mms. diam. The sides are very rough with slightly corrugated and folded surfaces made by squeezing the plastic clay between the fingers. Very friable light brown/orange clay. Unstratified.

238. Part of a triangular weight (?) with a single eccentrically placed perforation. Poorly baked red/grey/brown clay. House 4, G 23.

The Animal Bones

by Christine Orr

The animal bones were divided into 3 groups on the basis of provenance. Group 1 comprised the bones from house 2 and associated gullies (G 11 - 13) features apparently earlier than the rest of the site (cf. page 19ff.). Group 2 contained the bones from the remaining features of enclosure 1. All the bones from enclosure 2 are included in group 3. These groups are to some extent arbitrary but seem to form a reasonable basis for assessment.

Most of the bones were extremely fragmentary and no measurements were taken. Numbers of bones do not include teeth. Aging was assessed by teeth wear and eruption and fusion of ephiphyses.

In view of the comparatively small quantity of bone recovered the results must be treated with caution.

Group 1	Total No. of Bones	Minimum No. of Specimens		
Sheep	30	5	comprising	1 young 4 young adults
Cows	69	2		
Pigs	14	3	comprising	1 young 2 adults
Horse	15	1		1 very old
Dog	7	1		
Group 2 (Bones from G 14 showed a lot of chop marks)				
Sheep	77	6	comprising	1 at 1 year old 4 at 2 to 3 years old 1 old
Cows	132	7	comprising	5 at 2 to 3 years old 2 old
Pigs	17	4	comprising	1 very young 3 adults
Horses	13	3	comprising	1 adult 1 old 1 very old
Dogs	5	3		
Deer	6	1		
Group 3				
Sheep	85	6	comprising	1 new born 3 young adults 1 old 1 very old
Cows	163	6	comprising	1 at 1½ to 2 years 1 at 2½ to 3 years 1 old 1 very old
Pigs	48	4	comprising	1 at about 1½ years 1 at 2 to 3 years 1 old
Horses	8	2		1 old
Dogs	7	1		1 large dog
Deer	2	1		

A Double Ditched Enclosure at Blackthorn

A double ditched enclosure on the eastern outskirts of Northampton was completely stripped in 1972 and 1973. The enclosure was roughly square in shape with an entrance on the east side and covered an area of a quarter of an acre internally. The inner ditch was approximately 3 metres wide by 1.50 metres deep and the outer ditch 2 metres wide by 1 metre deep. No traces of an internal bank or palisade were found but there was evidence for a possible stone revetment at the entrance. Within the enclosure were the remains of a house site and 28 pits. The pottery found was generally typical of the late pre-Belgic Iron Age.

The Excavations

By J. H. Williams and M. R. McCarthy*

Introduction

The Blackthorn enclosure lies to the east of Northampton on land formerly used for arable farming and now being developed for housing. The site had been photographed from the air by Dr. J. K. St. Joseph (Plate 5) and Mr. R. Hollowell who had also gathered Iron Age and Roman pottery from the site. The air photographs showed at least three enclosures in the field but it was only possible to strip the one enclosure.

The enclosure is situated approximately 100 metres above sea level on the well drained Northampton Sands overlooking the Nene valley and it is perhaps significant that the heavier clays of the Estuarine Series, outcropping roughly 100 metres to the north, were avoided.

Excavations were begun in the late summer of 1972. The enclosure ditches were first located by a JCB 5 equipped with a 5 foot wide ditching blade after which the topsoil was removed by a JCB 110 loader, producing the final surface by 'back-blading'. The site was then cleaned with hoes and shovels and all soil marks were immediately recorded. In spite of this, because of the hot, sunny weather 'features' dried out very quickly and frequently became obscured below a thin deposit of blown sand. The work was postponed until late autumn when damper conditions ensured a greater stability of the sandy soil and decreased the possibility of features drying out. Additional problems in interpretation were caused by the great many changes in the micro-geology of the site and the disturbance caused by the large population of burrowing animals. Accordingly only prolonged and careful work could determine what was natural and what could be regarded as a feature. We feel fairly certain that all the larger features were located but it is possible that small post holes and stake holes could have escaped detection.

The site covered a quarter of an acre internally and approximated to a square. It was defined by two concentric ditches broken at the same point on the eastern side to form an entrance. Within the enclosure were traces of an oval house and 28 pits.

*The excavations were directed by J. H. Williams with M. R. McCarthy as assistant director. The report is a joint work. J. Small was draughtsman on site. We are grateful to J. Thomas, the owner of the land for permission to excavate.

Plate 5 The double ditched enclosure at Blackthorn from the south. A single ditched enclosure can also be seen in the foreground.

Photograph by courtesy of J. K. St. Joseph and the Committee for Aerial Photography, Cambridge.

Location Plan

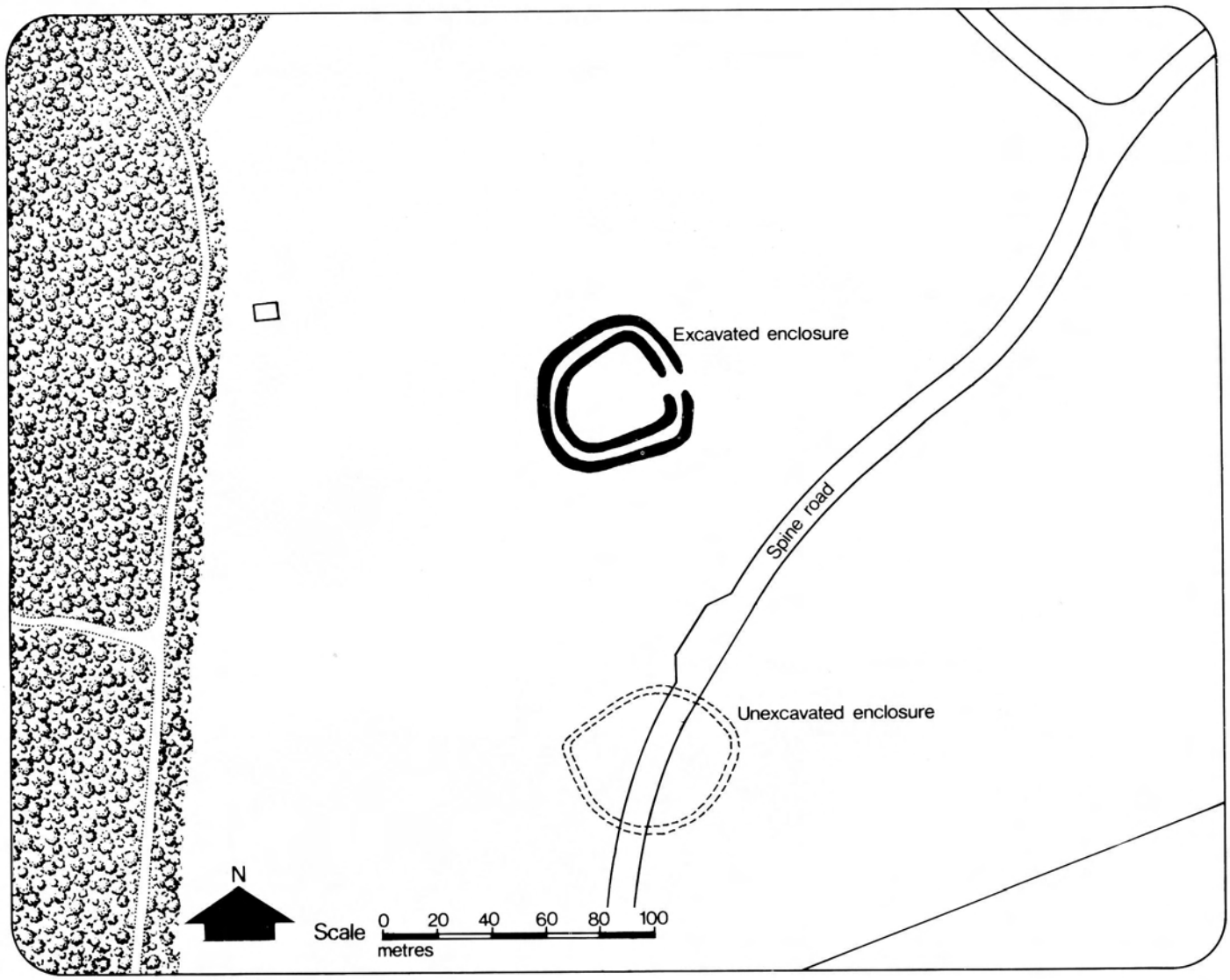


Fig. 27

The Ditches

The Outer Ditch (Fig. 29)

The excavations were limited to a complete examination of the terminals (section A and B) and a 6 metre length on the north-western side of the enclosure (section C). In sections A and B above the sterile, yellow-brown silty sand of the primary fill (3) was a dark , sandy soil containing occasional fragments of ironstone (2). This was below a slightly lighter brown, sandy soil (1). In section C the primary fill (3) was overlaid by many small ironstone fragments (1 and 2) probably derived from the sides of the ditch. No clear tip lines could be detected either during excavation or in the sections.

The Inner Ditch (Figs. 30 and 31; Plates 6 and 7)

The terminals were completely excavated (sections A and B) as well as three further sections (C, D and E)*. At all points on the circuit three main phases in the filling of the ditch could be distinguished. The primary fill consisted of a sterile, yellow, silty sand (3) overlain by a layer (2) of rubble which included burnt stones, a grey-brown sand and numerous voids. Above this was an accumulation of brown to dark brown sandy soil (1).

Whilst the character of the primary silt was constant in all of the excavated sections there were variations in the two succeeding layers. At the terminals the layer of rubble (2) consisted of large slabs of shelly limestone and sandstone forming a marked and continuous tip line from the inner lip of the ditch to the top of the primary fill (Plate 6); numerous air spaces and land snail shells were present between the stones. In sections C and D however the rubble was very much smaller with no voids but still many land snails. It should be noted that while the flat bedded limestone is obtainable from within half a mile of the site it does not outcrop within the enclosure. A layer of black and grey-brown soil was observed in all sections. At the terminals it seemed to be an integral part of the rubble (2) but in the other sections it formed a distinct lens between (2) and (3).

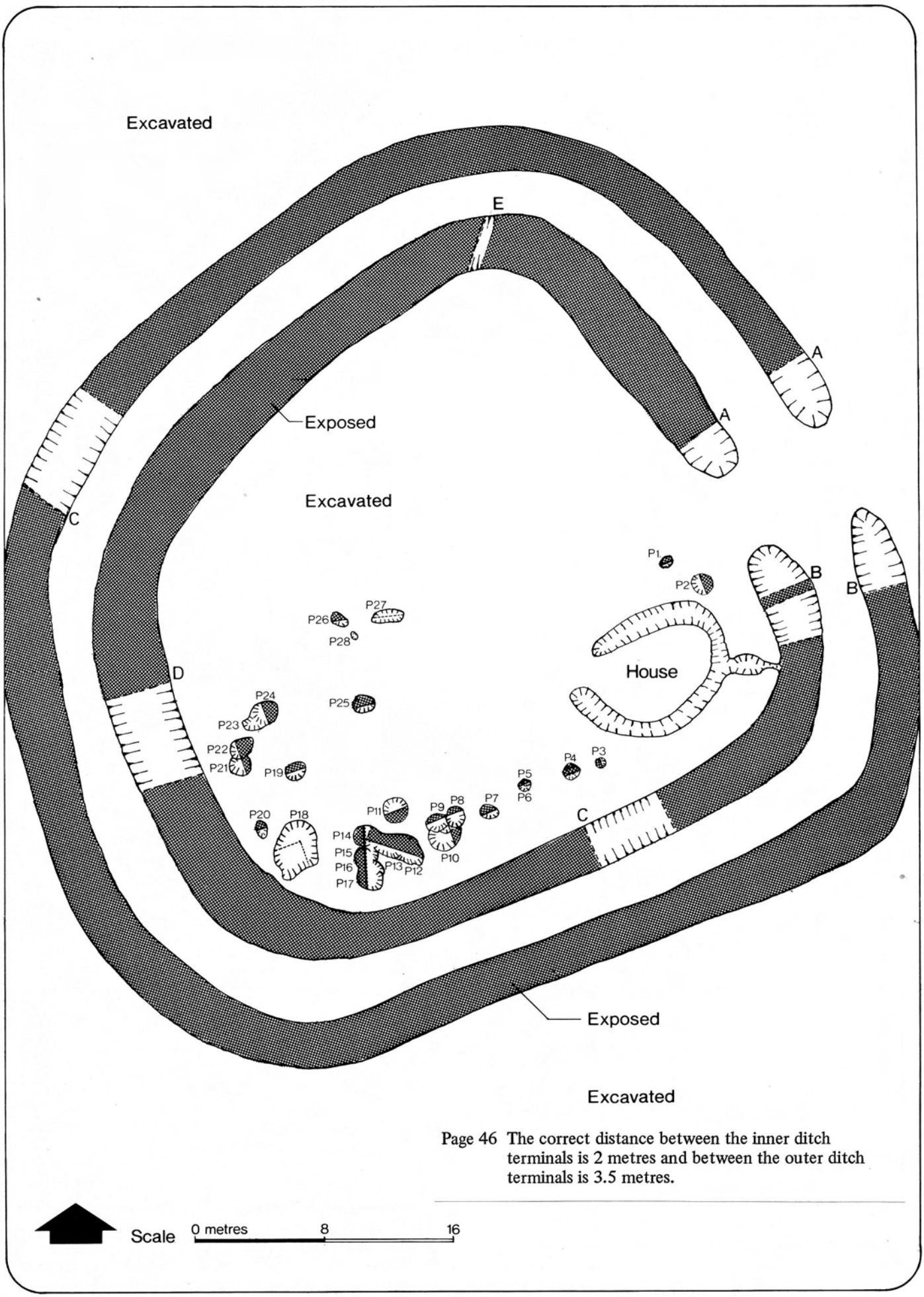
All the soil which accumulated over (2) is labelled as (1), the subdivisions relating to minor variations within the layer. A deposit of heavily burnt stones (1a), present in sections A and B appeared to have entered the terminals from the inner corner rather than from the sides of the ditch but made no obvious pattern. In section D a V-shaped accumulation of stones set in a soily matrix otherwise identical to (1b) was of indeterminate significance. In all sections the stratigraphy was distinct but the clearest tip lines seemed to be coming from within the enclosure.

The Entrance

Evidence for an entrance structure was inconclusive. The terminals of the outer ditch were linked by a dark brown soil stain 0.05 metres deep and approximately 1 metre

*Section E is not reproduced here. It was excavated mechanically and adds nothing to the published sections.

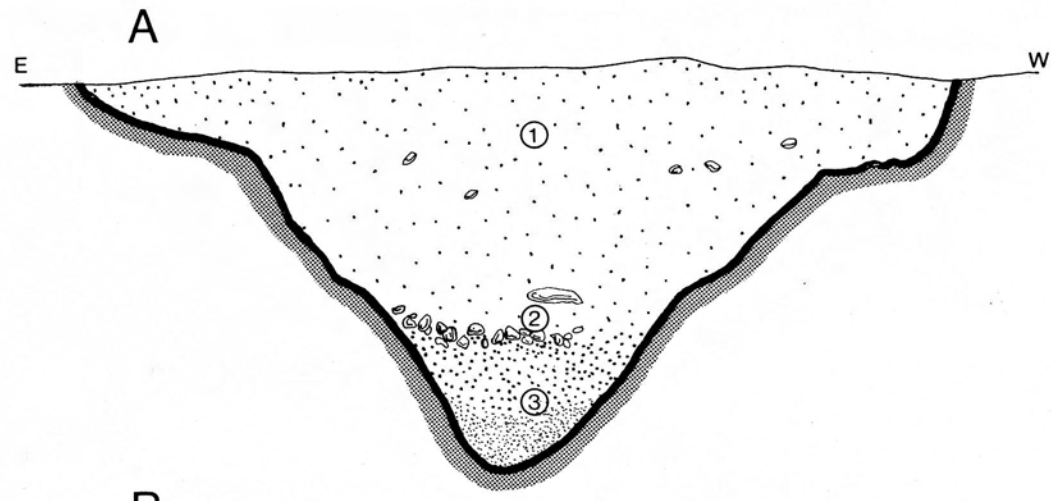
Plan of Interior

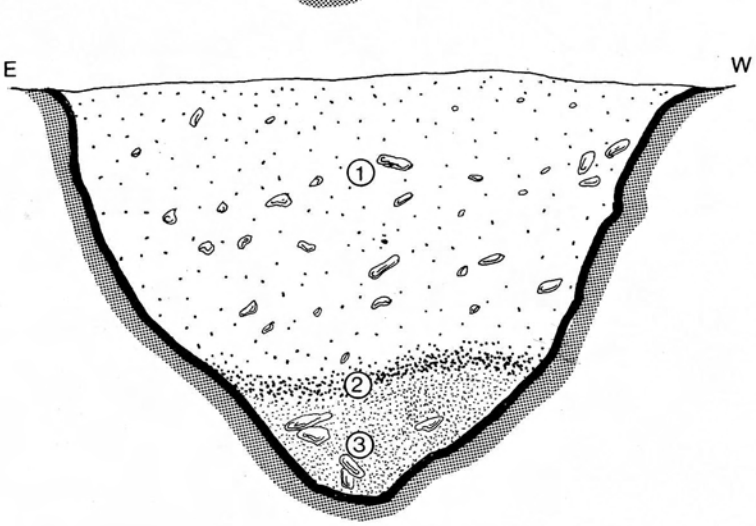


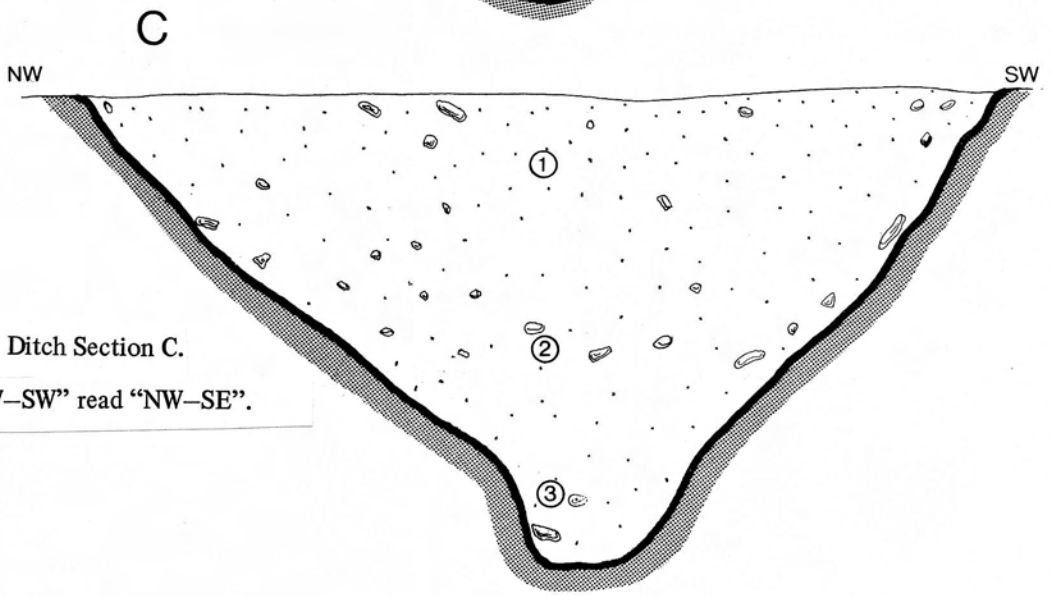
Page 46 The correct distance between the inner ditch terminals is 2 metres and between the outer ditch terminals is 3.5 metres.

Fig.28

Outer Ditch







Page 47 Ditch Section C.

For "NW–SW" read "NW–SE".

Scale 0 metres 1 2

Ironstone

Brown Sandy Soil

Black Sandy Soil

Yellow Silty Sand

Fig.29

wide; no comparable soil marks or post holes were found at the gap in the inner ditch which was only c. 2 metres wide but the possible stone revetment at the terminals mentioned above, may be connected with an entrance structure. 2 pits (1 and 2) west of the southern terminal and c. 2.50 metres apart could be considered as possible gate post holes but the gate would be very close to the wall of the house and furthermore the character of at least one of the pits is consistent with those elsewhere on the site which are not interpreted as being structural.

Interpretation of the bank and ditch system

The relationship of the two ditches could not be ascertained but in the absence of contrary evidence it is not unreasonable to assume that they were contemporary. Certainly the ephemeral nature of the internal occupation hardly justified two phases.

The presence of two concentric ditches implies a considerable quantity of spoil much of which, because of the nature of the geology, would only be suitable for re-laying on the farmyard, on the fields or for the core of a bank. There was no apparent evidence for a bank outside the outer ditch, or on the berm between the two ditches but the rubble tip line (2) in the inner ditch perhaps suggests an internal bank. Its size is, however, limited by the house which is only c. 2.50 metres from the ditch. The close proximity of the pits to the ditch is not so restricting as the pits could have been cut through the tail of a bank. An internal bank c. 1.50 metres high would be consistent with the confined space but further banks, both c. 0.50 metres high, between the two ditches and outside the outer ditch would be necessary to dispose of the remainder of the spoil from the ditch unless it was deposited elsewhere. No traces of post or stake holes were found around the perimeter of the enclosure but a fence, if it existed, may well have been embedded merely in a bank, thus leaving no trace in the subsoil.

An alternative explanation is that the rubble tip-line was derived solely from a collapsed wall although this is speculative in that nothing resembling a wall was found in situ. A single ditched enclosure, covering approximately 1/3 acre was excavated at Irchester in 1962/3 (Hall and Nickerson 1968, 68). Flat bedded limestone rubble was found on the inner side and bottom of the ditch, and around the north arm of the entrance 'a course of laid stone 14 inches thick and semicircular in plan survived in situ'. If the pits within the enclosure were contemporary with it there would have been no space for a bank.

While the limestone rubble was fairly extensive in the Irchester enclosure it was confined basically to the entrance at Blackthorn. Thus, although the presence of a stone wall along the inner circumference of the inner ditch at Blackthorn could help explain the proximity of the house to the ditch, the limited distribution of the stone rubble can only be used to support the thesis of a stone revetment at the entrance. Furthermore the problem of the spoil disposal previously mentioned would be increased.

The evidence as a whole is inconclusive and no solution is readily acceptable.

The Interior

Within the enclosure were 28 pits and a probable house site. The layout is interesting in that the pits and the house were grouped in the southern half of the site and in this respect it is comparable to that of Tollard Royal (Wainwright 1968, 110).* Such a grouping may indicate a division of function of the interior of the enclosure where one part was used for living, one for storage and one for general farming activities, perhaps the herding of animals.

The House (Fig. 32; Plates 8 and 9)

Aerial photographs showed a dark mark in the south east corner of the enclosure which on excavation proved to be a gully defining an oval area. The gully, approximately 1 metre wide and between 0.25 and 0.50 metres deep with steep sides and a flat bottom had been cut into the natural sandstone bedrock; an entrance was defined by a break in the gully c. 1.50 metres wide at the south west corner. The spoil had been deposited within the interior where it formed a thin metalled surface and the gully itself was filled with a clean red brown sandy soil with only occasional small stones. In the interior but principally in the eastern half a thick layer of occupation debris comprising pottery, bone, black soil and a large quantity of stones overlay the metalled surface and extended slightly over the clear fill of the gully.

The area is interpreted as a house with the interior probably defined by the spread of occupation debris. The wall of the house thus coincides with the gully which perhaps acted as a foundation trench for timber uprights. Four small stones arranged in a circle, 0.20 metres across in the southern gully terminal, and probably representing the packing for a post, tend to confirm this hypothesis. The house concept is perhaps strengthened by the presence of a probable drain, U-shaped and between 0.20 and 1 metre wide by 0.10 to 0.30 metres deep, leading out from the south-east quadrant of the house across the gully and into the ditch. A number of slabs of shelly limestone forming a V-shaped channel may have been the collapsed capstones of the drain. The structure is thus seen as an oval timber building 8.50 metres by 6 metres internally, a shape unusual in the British pre-Roman Iron Age.

The Pits

The 28 pits were all sectioned (Fig. 33) and their characteristics are tabulated below:

Group	Pit numbers	Characteristics
1	3, 4, 11, 24, 25	Deep, broad, vertical sides, flat bottomed. Sandy with ironstone fragments.
2	18	Very broad and fairly deep. Sandy with ironstone fragments.
3	1, 5–10, 12–17, 19–23, 26, 28	Shallow, with rounded basal corners. Homogeneous sand and ironstone fill.
4	2	Very stony with some carbon. Shallow.
5	27	Long, narrow, shallow and filled with stones and black soil.

There was no direct evidence for the function of any of the pits but 5 groups were distinguished. Pits of group 1 have certain similarities with the grain (?) storage pits of the Woodbury type economy but it should be noted that their depths are considerably less than some of those in the South for example at Little Woodbury (Bersu 1940, 48ff.), Maiden Castle (Wheeler 1943, 51ff.) or Gussage All Saints (Wainwright 1973, 113). Shallower pits are more common in the Upper Thames region where Harding suggests that the instability of the gravel subsoil may have been causal (Harding 1972, 39), and occur more locally at Upton

*Cf. also Enclosure D8 at Irchester (Hall and Nickerson 1968, 68) although no house site was located nor were the pits within the enclosure necessarily contemporary with the enclosure.

Plate 6 The southern terminal of the inner ditch showing the limestone and ironstone rubble fallen in from the inner lip of the ditch (layer 2).

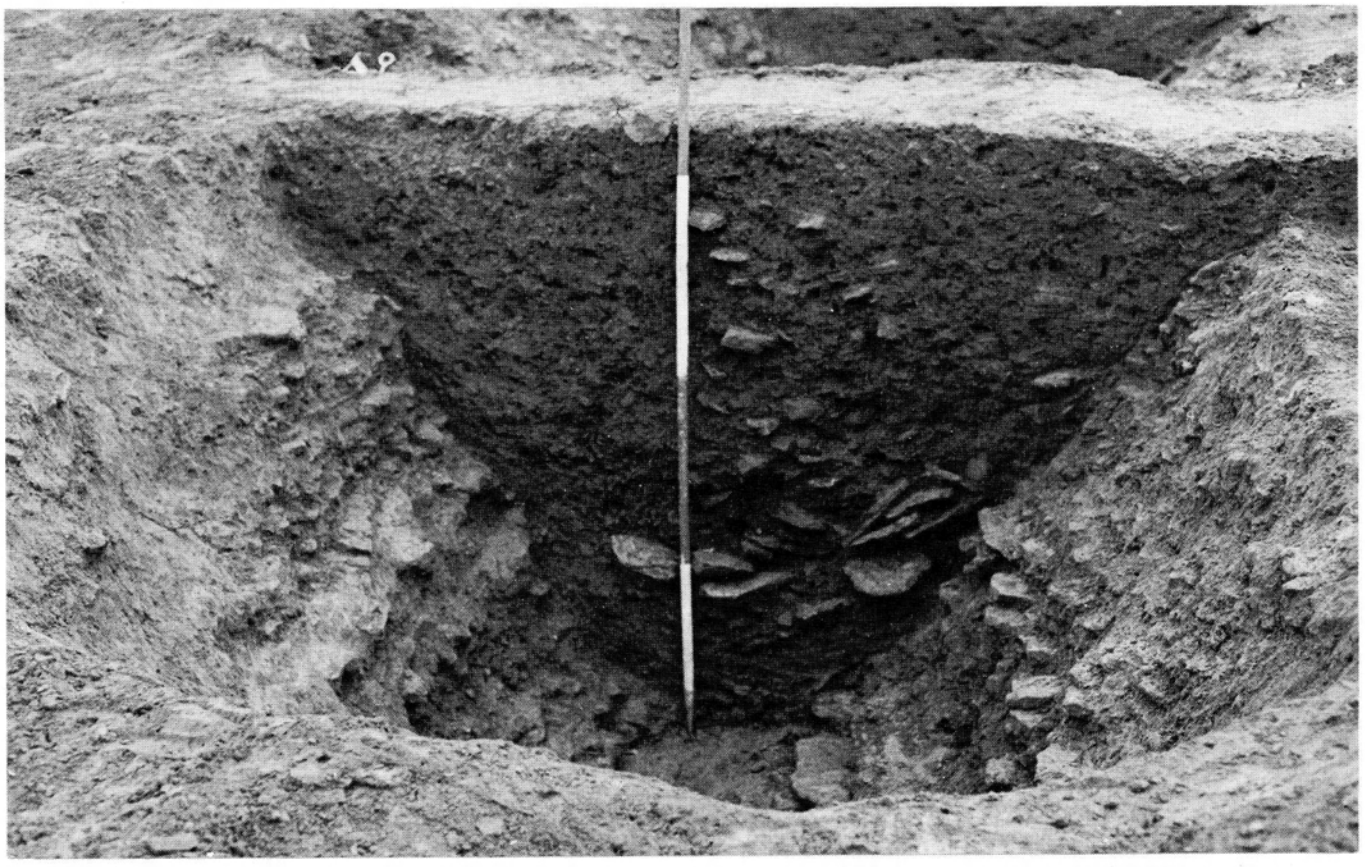


Plate 7 The southern terminal of the inner ditch completely excavated and looking south to section B.

Inner Ditch

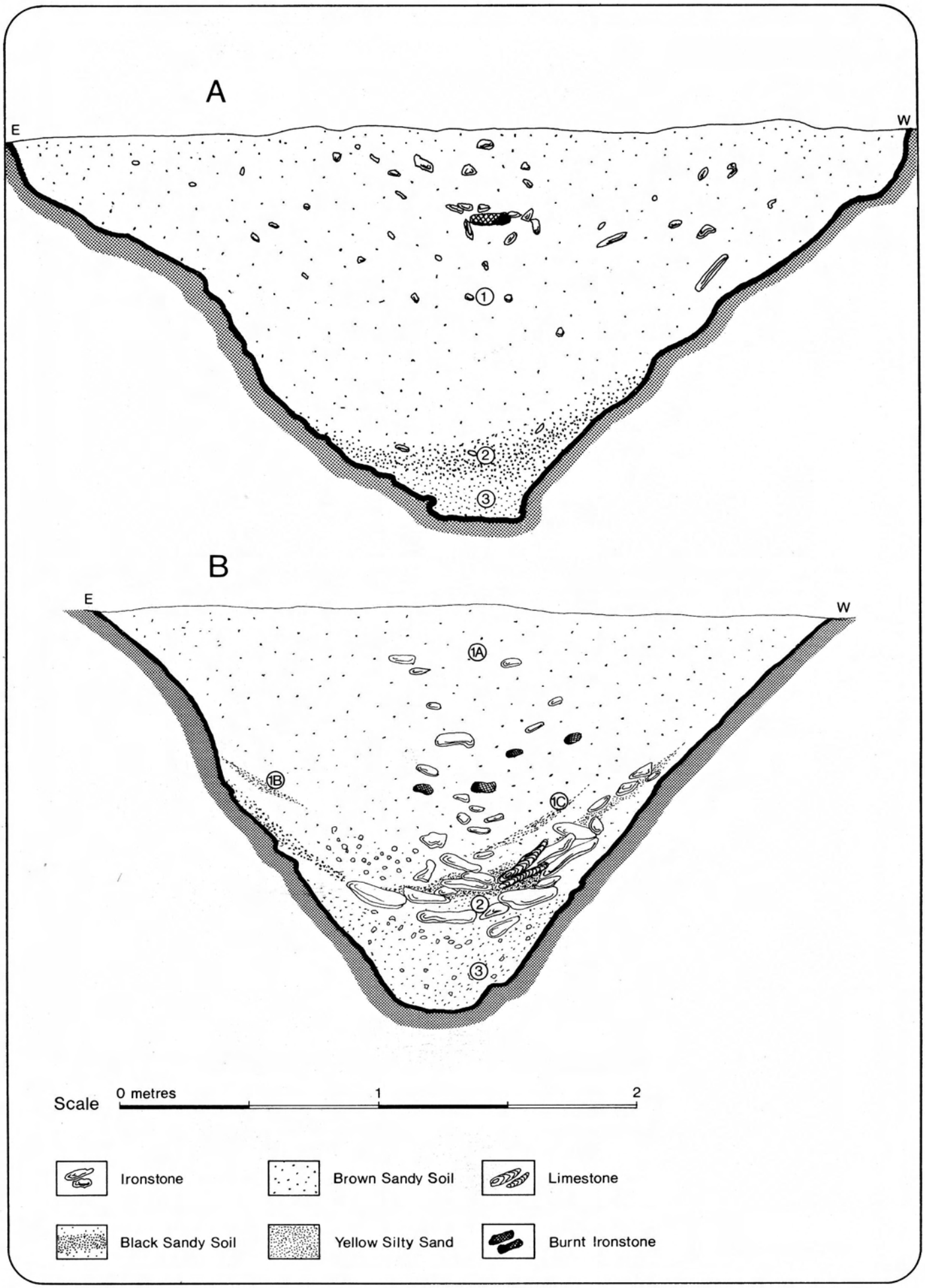


Fig.30

Inner Ditch

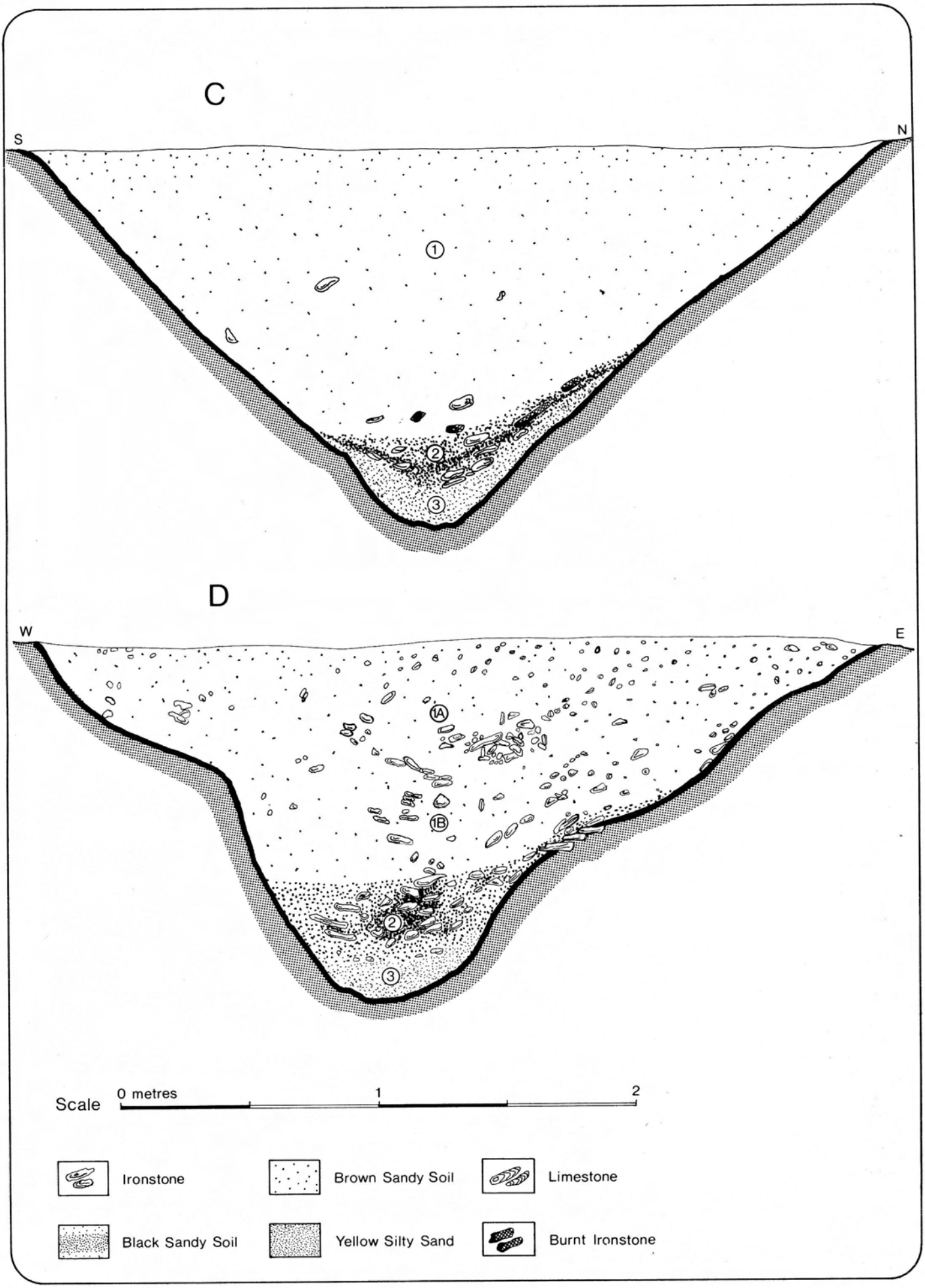


Fig. 31

(Jackson, Harding and Myres 1969, 202) and Twywell * but large pits, 1.75 to 3 metres in diameter and c.2 metres deep were recorded at Hunsbury (Fell 1937, 58). Pit 18 (group 2) may, in fact, have been a slightly larger version of the group 1 type.

Storage pits are not only usual but form a diagnostic feature of the Woodbury type economy with its mixed arable and pastoral farming (Piggott 1961, 5). Assuming group 1 pits are storage pits, and the presence of a rotary quern at least attests corn grinding, Blackthorn together with Hunsbury and Upton certainly has some affinities with sites of southern England. Moulton Park (see above page 5ff.) and Draughton (Grimes 1960, 21),however, sites fairly close to Blackthorn, and which on ceramic evidence are probably contemporary, have no pits. It should be noted, however, that while Blackthorn, Hunsbury and Upton have well drained subsoils Moulton Park and Draughton are sited on heavy clays. Perhaps the use of pits as social or economic indices has been overstated. While their presence may be of positive significance their absence is not so conclusive.

The pits of group 3 were by far the most numerous on the site. Wainwright following Bersu (Wainwright 1968, 116) suggested the use of shallow pits as water receptacles and Ellison and Drewett have more recently discussed alternative functions such as providing firm support for tubs, pots, baskets etc. (Ellison and Drewett 1971, 184). No pit linings or other evidence to bear out any of these theories was found. Pit 2 (group 4) was similar to those of group 3 but the heavy concentration of stone perhaps suggests an alternative use possibly as a post hole in connection with some form of gate structure.

Pit 27 (group 5) was filled with a large quantity of burnt soil, stone and pottery and it is quite possible that it was a cooking hollow.

Conclusions

The occupation at Blackthorn would appear to have been comparatively short lived. There was no evidence for the recutting of the ditches and only a single house was found, again apparently of single phase. There is no reason either to suspect that the two ditches were not contemporary. The comparative paucity of pits discovered contrasts strongly with the large numbers found at Little Woodbury and Gossage All Saints. Few though they were, however, the pits were not all contemporary as is demonstrated by the interlocking groups. The quantity of bone, pottery and other artefacts recovered was small although Robbins has recently demonstrated the low survival rate of artefacts on a Turkana settlement in Kenya (Robbins 1973, 209ff.). It is unlikely, however, that the substantial earthworks involving the digging of 2 ditches would have been undertaken for anticipated occupation of short duration.

The enclosure possibly contained a single family unit; certainly there is no evidence for more than one house. Moreover there is little evidence for the function of the enclosure apart from the rotary quern, the possible grain storage pits and the animal bones which suggest an agricultural economy in which arable farming probably played some part and in which some domestic animals were kept.

The pottery from the site was very similar to that from Moulton Park group 1 although there were a few stray Belgic and Roman sherds. Two curvilinear sherds were identical to ones from Moulton Park although the coarse pottery was perhaps slightly rougher. The pottery was certainly pre-Belgic but it is difficult to be more precise than to date the site to sometime in the 1st or 2nd century B.C.

*We are grateful to D. Jackson for information on the Twywell site in advance of publication.

Page 52 Para. 5, line 8. For Gossage read "Gussage".

House Plan

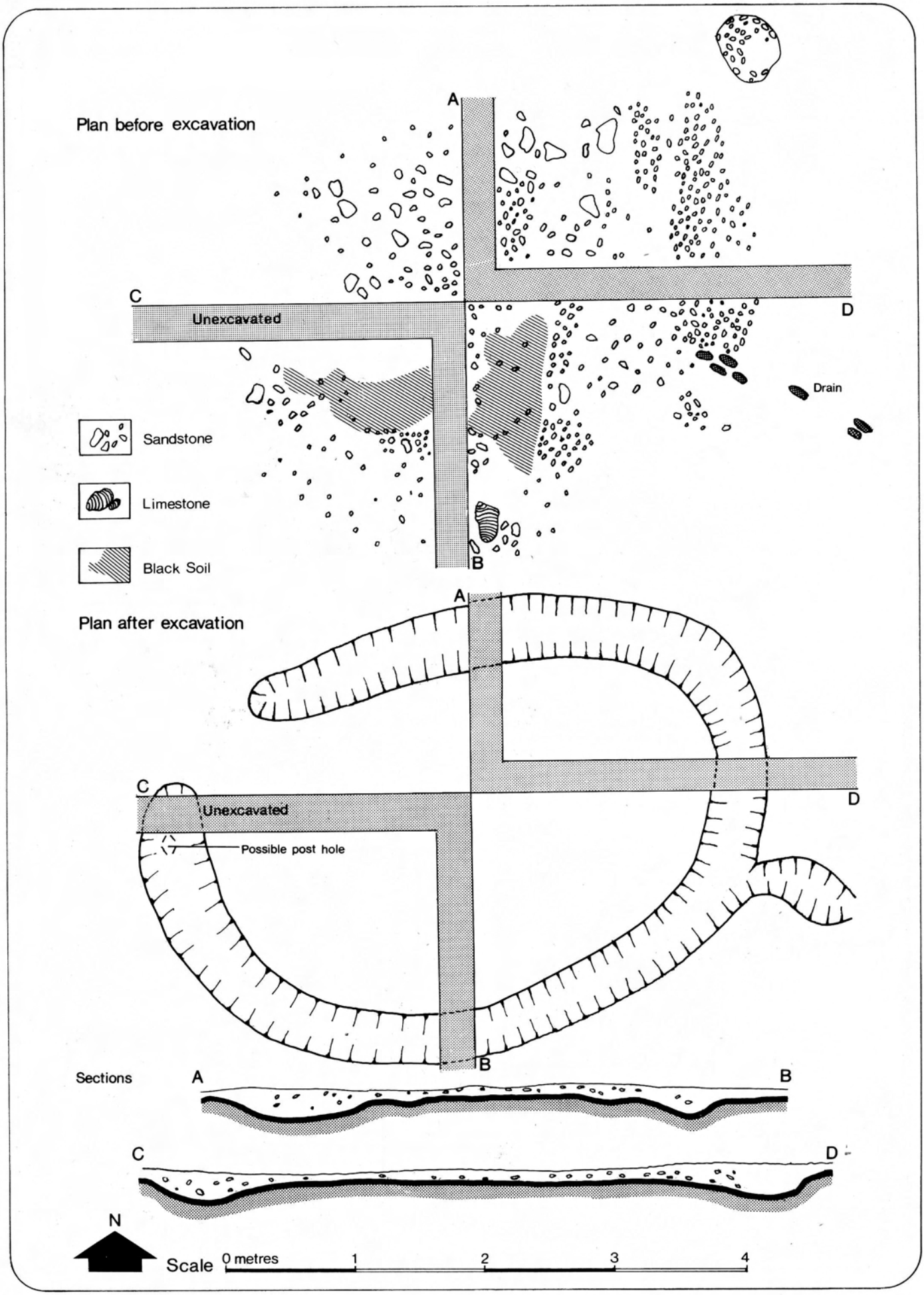


Fig.32

Page 53 Scale. For "1, 2, 3, 4 metres" read "2, 4, 6, 8 metres".

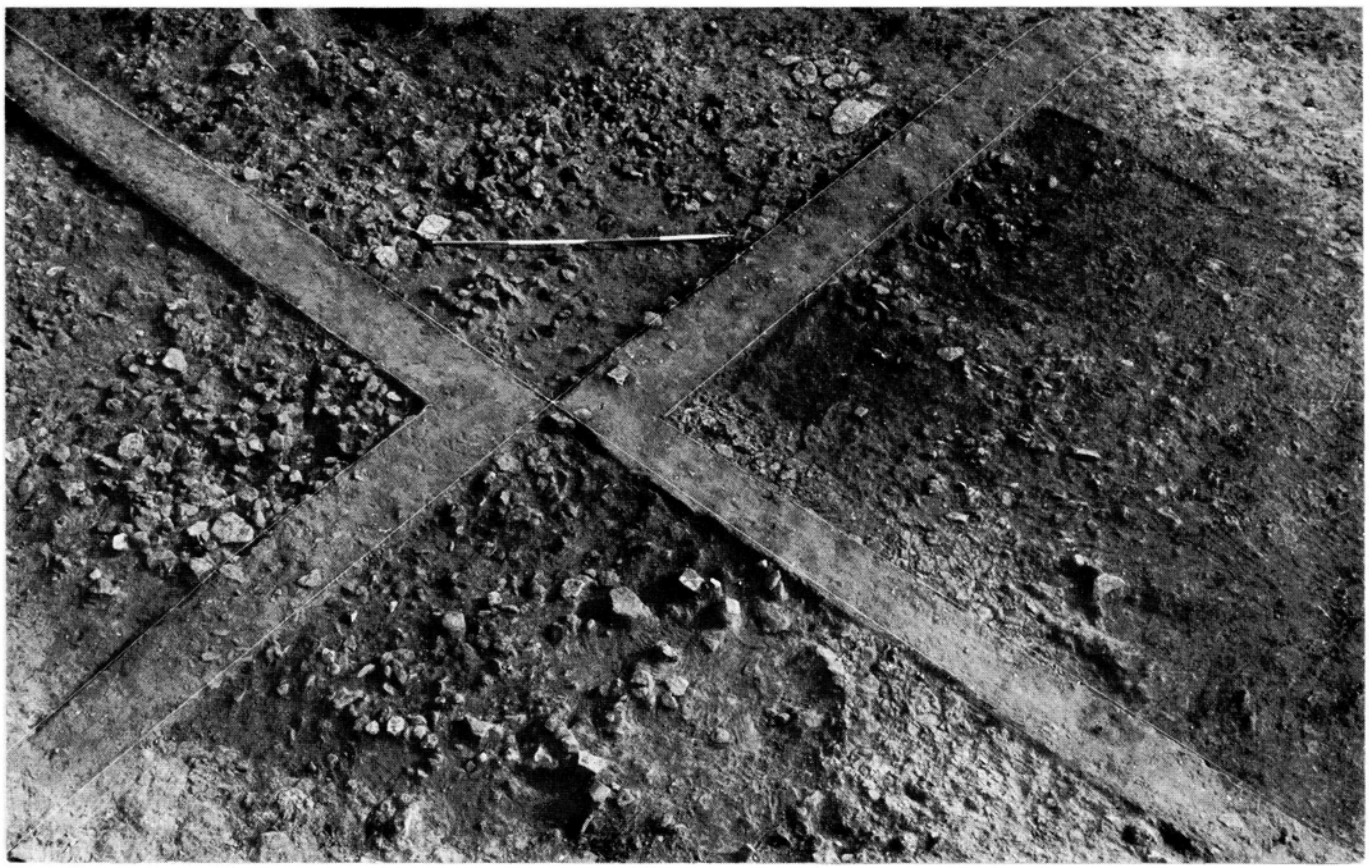
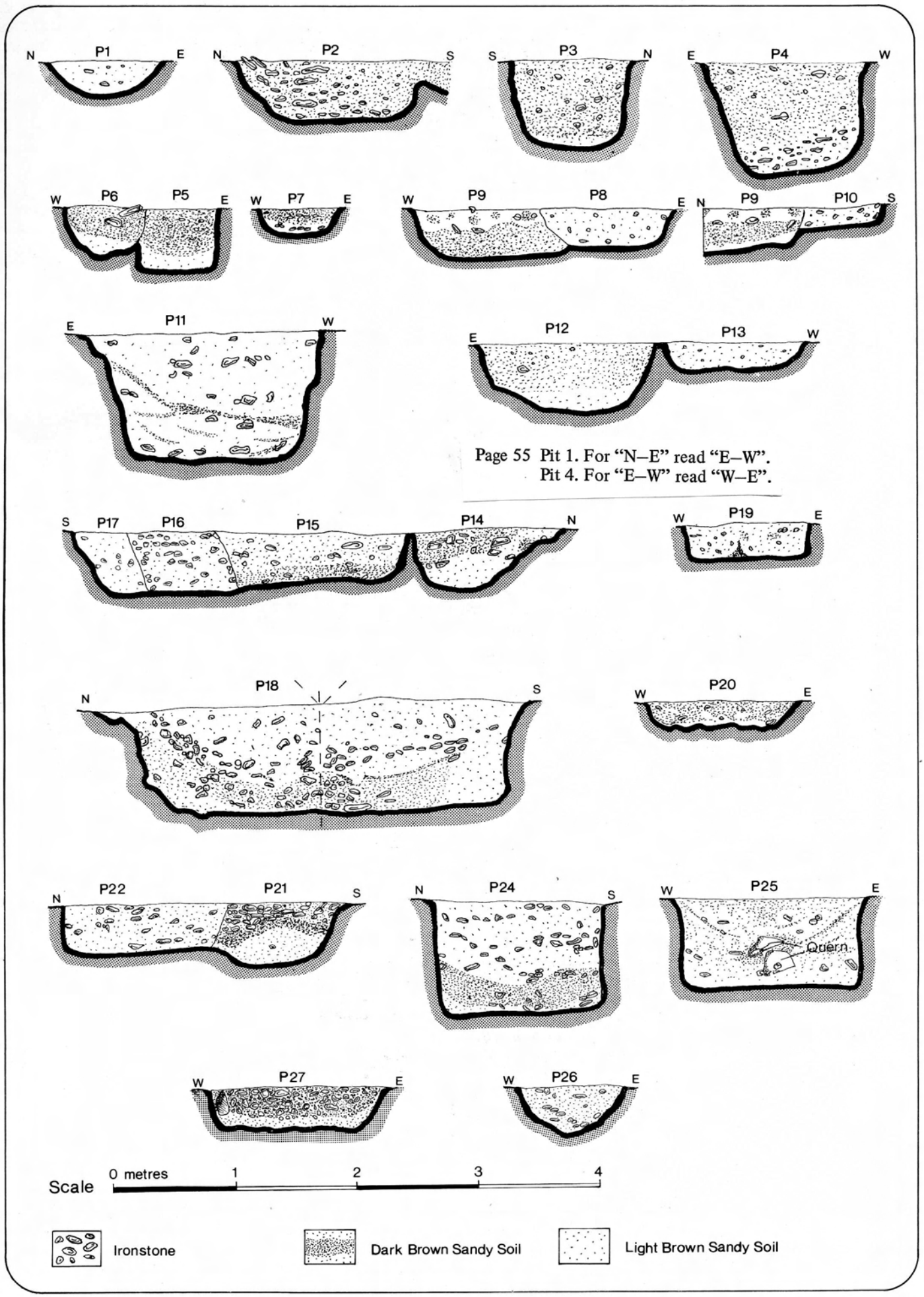


Plate 8 The house from the north west after removal of topsoil.

Plate 9 The house from the north after total excavation.

Page 54 Plate 9, For "from the north" read "from the west".

Pit Sections



Page 55 Pit 1. For "N–E" read "E–W".
Pit 4. For "E–W" read "W–E".

Fig.33

The Pottery

By J. H. Williams and M. R. McCarthy*

Apart from a few stray Roman and Belgic sherds (cf. no. 1) the pottery is entirely pre-Belgic. The assemblage is described and classified firstly by fabric and secondly by form but the catalogue is arranged on the basis of the site's stratigraphy. Within the catalogue the colour of each sherd is described – firstly the exterior, secondly the break and lastly the exterior. Brown/red indicates that part of the surface is brown and part red whereas brown-red indicates a general brownish red colour over the whole of the surface. Notes on the fabric and decoration follow where relevant and an exact provencance is assigned to each sherd.

The Fabric

The fabric is similar to that of Moulton Park group 1 being generally less well fired than that of the later, Belgic material but whereas the Moulton Park pottery is generally compact with a fair quantity of red grog as filler red grog is absent at Blackthorn apart from in limited quantities in the curvilinear pottery. The Blackthorn pottery should probably be divided into two groups on the basis of high or low shell content although the two extremes of a single spectrum are possibly represented. Where shell filler is absent the fabric tends to be fairly hard and compact but where there is a lot of shell the structure is laminated and rather friable; in many cases the shell has been burnt out making the pottery light and porous and producing a pitted surface. The surface of the pottery is sometimes only imperfectly smoothed or left rough but some pots have been burnished.

The Forms

Apart from the typically Belgic form (1) all the stratified pottery belongs to the pre-Belgic Iron Age. A primary division should be made into curvilinear decorated and other pottery. 38 is closely parallelled by examples from Hunsbury (Fell 1937, D1, D4, D6) and Moulton Park (see above page 23, nos. 33-35) and a further unstratified sherd of similar design was also recovered. 32, a crudely executed curvilinear imitation is more reminiscent of material from Hardingstone (cf. Woods 1969, 84f.) although there is no exact parallel.

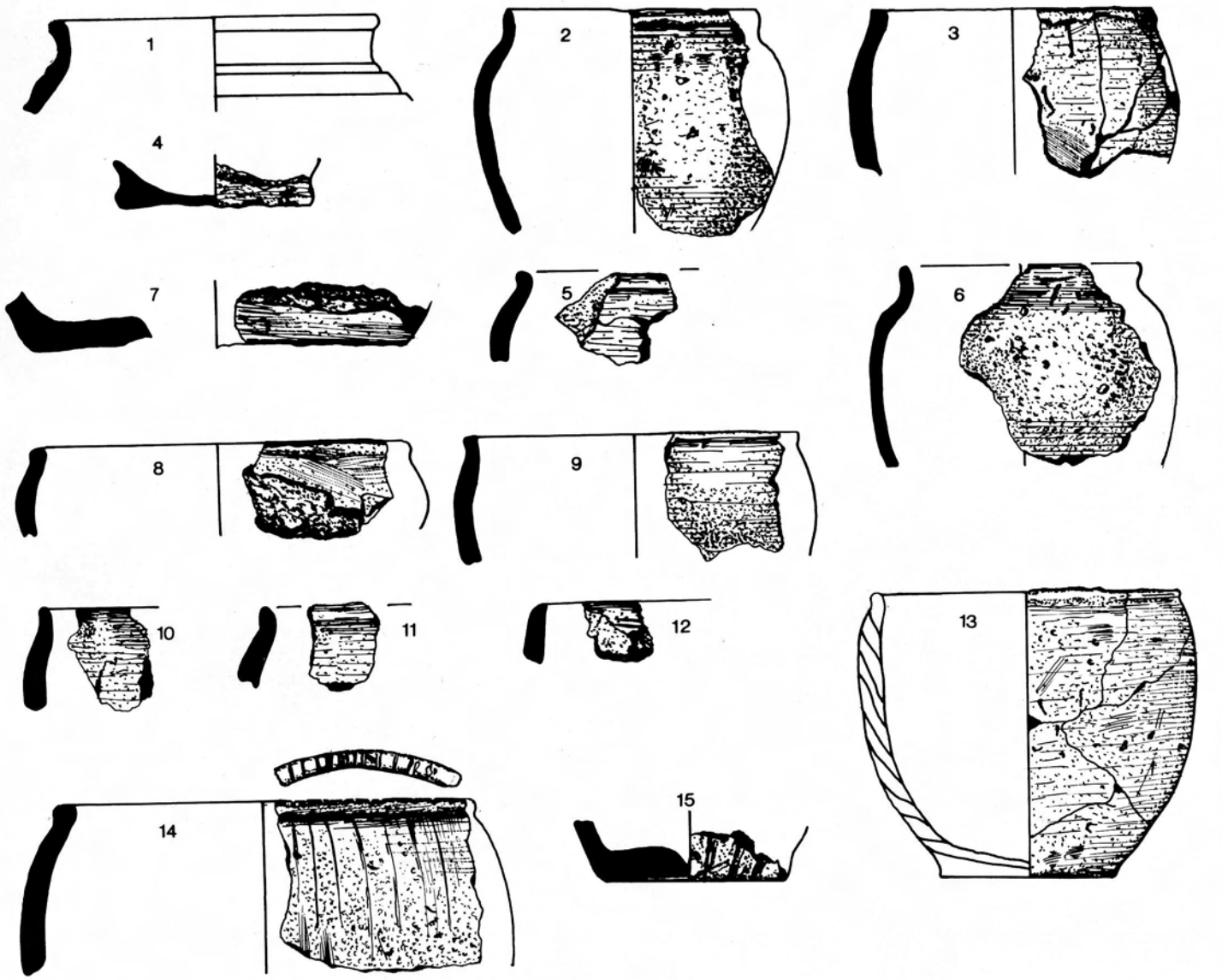
Among the coarse pottery the predominant form is the globular jar. As with the Moulton Park material the form varies from slack shouldered jars with upturned rims (e.g. 2 and 6) to shoulderless jars with an incipient bead rim (e.g. 5). Inturned rims are represented by 12 and 22. 14 and 27 while preserving their basic globular shape have squat squared rims. Larger storage vessels can be recognised in 20 and 30. Finger nail impressions occur on the tops of two rims 14 and 29. Scratch mark decoration is present on vessels of all sizes. Of some 220 sherds of small to medium vessels approximately 20% are decorated with scratch marks and of some 50 sherds of larger vessels again approximately 20% are decorated with scratch marks. Similar groups of coarse pottery have been recorded locally at Moulton Park (see above page 19ff.) Rushden, Hardingstone (Woods 1969, 66; 82ff.), Ravenstone (Mynard 1971, 406), Strixton and Bozeat (Hall and Nickerson 1969, 6ff.) and Upton (Jackson, Harding and Myres 1969, 218ff.) and the forms are represented in Northampton Museum.

Dating

As with the Moulton Park material dating is difficult and continuity cannot here be used as an argument. The curvilinear decorated bowl (28) is virtually identical to Moulton Park examples 33-35 but little precision is offered by the coarse pottery. Based on current knowledge one can only suggest that the group is probably typical of the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. and possibly the beginning of the 1st century A.D.

* We are grateful for discussion on several points to A. Boddington, D. Jackson, R. Moore, D. Mynard and P. Woods.

Page 56 Column 1, para. 1, line 7. For "lastly the exterior" read "lastly the interior".
Column 1, para. 3, line 4. For "38" read "28".



scale $\frac{1}{3}$ full size

Fig.34

Catalogue of the Pottery

The Ditches (Fig.34)

1. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Similar to fabric 1A of Moulton Park group 2 pottery (see above page 24). A stray Belgic sherd in the top of the inner ditch. Inner ditch section A1.

2. Fawn/grey; grey; grey. Large amount of shell filler. Smooth but uneven surface with some pitting. Inner ditch section A3.

3. Red-brown; grey; red-brown. Fairly compact but soft core with absence of shell. Smooth but uneven surface. Inner ditch section A3.

4. Fawn/grey; grey; grey. Laminated structure but filler apparently burnt out leaving voids. Inner ditch section B1a.

5. Brown; grey; brown. Compact but soft core. Smooth surface possibly burnished. Inner ditch section B1, immediately above 2.

6. Grey; grey; grey. Much shell filler burnt out leaving a rather porous fabric. Note comparative thinness of vessel. Surface uneven with much pitting. Inner ditch section B1a.

7. Red-brown; grey; grey. Hard compact fabric and smooth surface. Inner ditch section C2.

8. Red-brown/grey; grey; grey. Hard compact fabric. Smooth uneven surface. Outer ditch section B1.

The House (Fig. 34)

9. Grey; grey; grey. Laminated fabric but little apparent filler.

10. Grey; grey; grey. Compact core, smooth but uneven surface.

11. Grey; grey; grey. Compact but softish core. Smooth surface.

12. Brown/grey; grey; fawn. Hard compact core. Uneven surface.

13. Light brown/grey; grey; light brown/grey. Laminated core with much shell filler making fabric rather friable. The coil building technique can be seen in the break and is illustrated. Surface slightly sandy with a fair amount of pitting.

14. Red-brown/grey; grey; red-brown. Very hard compact fabric with some red grog visible. Surface pimpled. Decorated with vertical incised lines and finger nail impressions on the top of the rim.

15. Grey; grey; grey. Laminated structure with some shell. Scratch mark decoration.

16. Light brown/grey; grey; light brown. Laminated fabric with much shell; very friable. Rough and uneven surface with some pitting. At least 3 holes drilled (?) in base.

17. Red-brown; grey; grey. Laminated fabric with shell.

The Pits (Fig. 35)

18. Light brown/fawn; grey; fawn. Fairly compact. Hard smooth surface with grass mark (?) impressions. Pit 2.

19. Grey; grey; grey. Compact fabric. Smooth surface. Pit 10.

20. Red-brown; grey; grey. Very hard compact fabric. Smooth but uneven surface. Pit 10.

21. Fawn/grey; grey; fawn/grey. Laminated structure but shell largely burnt out. Slightly sandy but smooth surface with some pitting. Pit 11.

22. Fawn; grey; fawn/grey. Hard grey fabric with smooth surface but pitting both in core and on surface. Slightly sandy surface. Pit 11.

23. Brown/grey; grey; brown/grey. Compact core. Smooth but slightly sandy surface. Pit 14.

24. Grey; grey; grey. Laminated structure. Smooth but sandy surface with some pitting. Pit 14.

25. Red-brown/grey; grey; red-brown/grey. Hard laminated structure with shell filler, some burnt out. Smooth but slightly sandy surface with some pitting and rustication below shoulder. Pit 19.

26. Red-brown/grey; grey; fawn/grey. Hard laminated structure. Smooth slightly sandy surface with some pitting. Pit 19.

27. Grey/brown; grey; red/brown. Soft core with a little lamination. Smooth soapy surface. Pit 19.

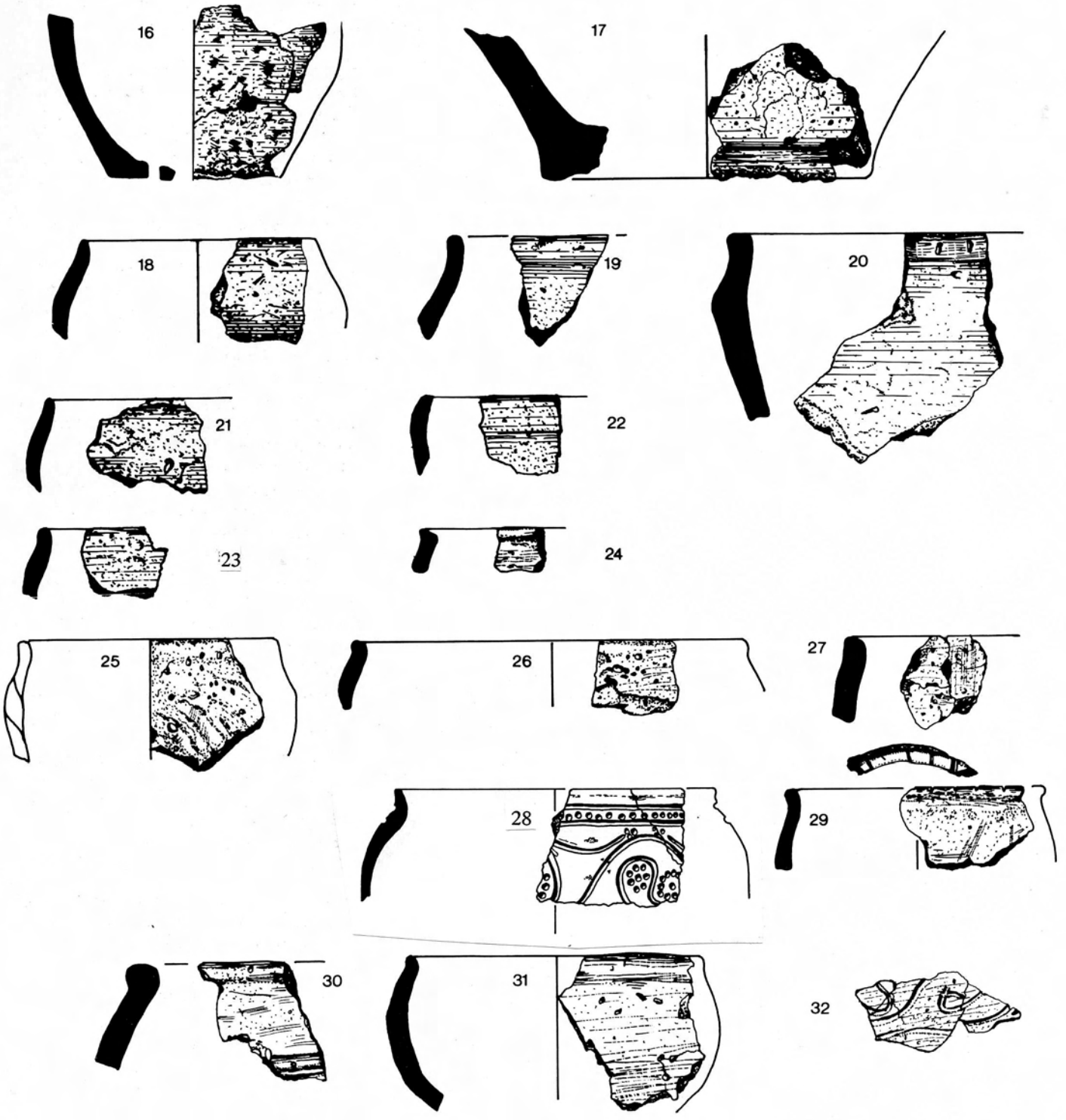


Fig. 35

28. Brown; grey; grey. Hard compact fabric. Outside completely, and inside above neck burnished. Cf. Moulton Park 33; Hunsbury (Fell 1937, D4). Pit 19.

29. Red/brown; grey; red/brown. Compact core. Surface smooth and rather sandy. Finger nail impressions on rim. Pit 24.

30. Red/brown; grey; fawn. Laminated section with some shell. Smooth surface. Pit 24.

31. Grey; grey; brown/grey. Laminated and friable section with much shell, some burnt out. Smooth probably burnished surface with some pitting. Pit 25.

32. Grey; grey; grey. Compact fabric, slightly soft with some red grog - cf. Moulton Park group 1 pottery. Burnished surface with crude imitations of curvilinear designs.

The Small Finds

By J. H. Williams and M. R. McCarthy with a report on the petrology of the querns by A. Mathieson

33 - 35 Upper and lower stones of a beehive rotary quern with iron spindle. The spindle was firmly bedded in the central hole of the lower stone and protruded upwards 0.04 metres. There are a great number of similar querns from Hunsbury in Northampton Museum.

A. Mathieson has examined both stones in thin section and reports:

The rock types are very similar, the only main difference being that the lower stone has more limonite. The description below is for both specimens. A grey-brown, weathering reddish-brown, coarse-grained felspathic sandstone.

Detrital minerals:

1) Quartz - subangular grains varying in size between approx. 0.01 and 0.10mm., some anomalous extinction.

2) Felspars - mostly pale-brown, of similar size and shape to the quartz mainly microcline with some plagioclase, about 10% of detrital minerals.

Accessory minerals:

Opaque grains, evidently pyrite, mainly in small sizes in the cement. Cement was not identified. No reaction with dilute HC1 was found for the cut-off samples, but this may have been prevented since these had been impregnated. Limonite was developed in the cement of both specimens, but especially in the lower stone.

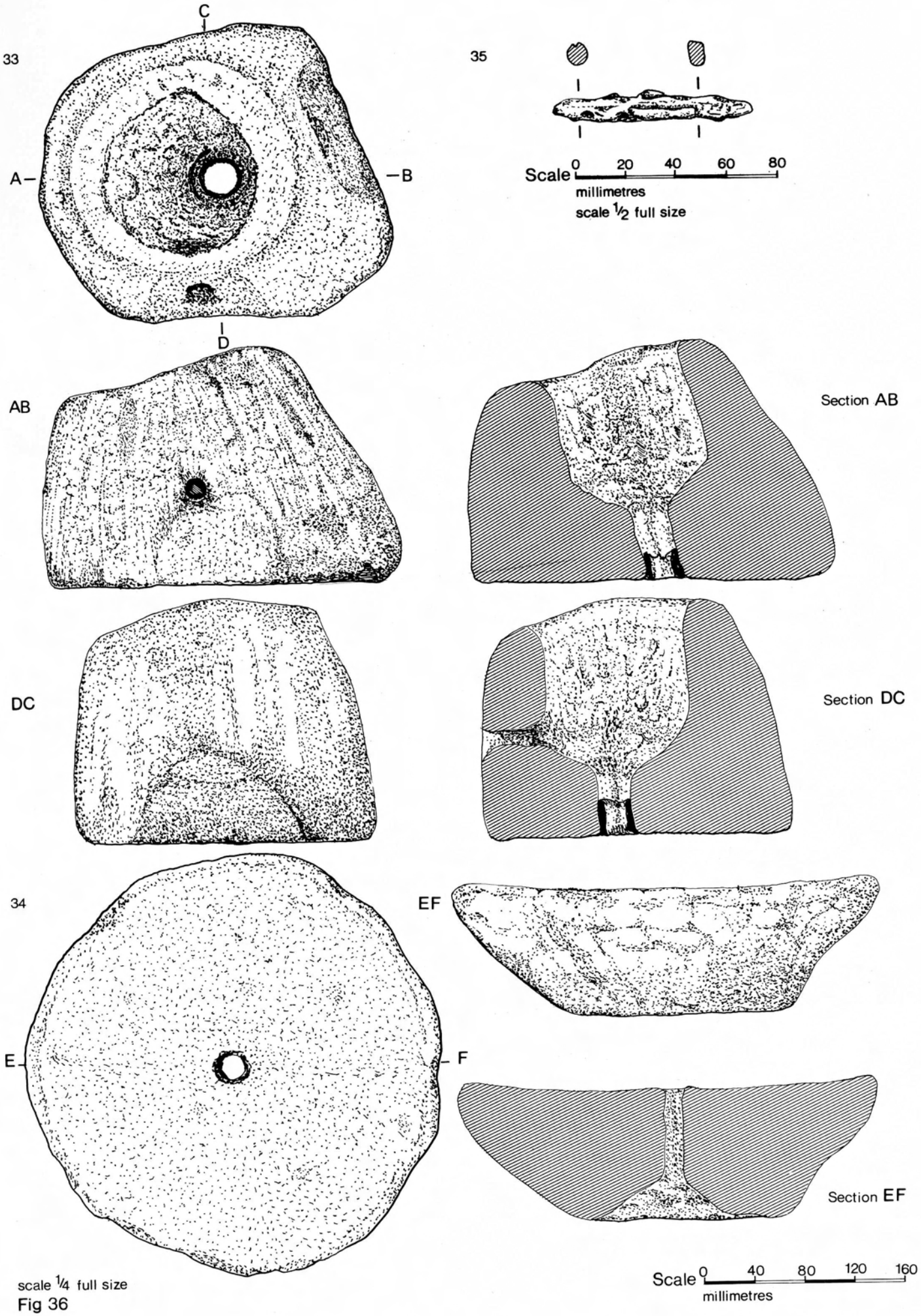
The samples offer little scope for suggesting a rock source or an area of source but possibilities are Carboniferous and Triassic sandstones, perhaps from the Midlands.

The two querns were found together in pit 24.

36. Small round baked clay object with central perforation. Probable spindle whorl. Inner ditch section C, top of 1.

37. Flint scraper. Unstratified.

38. Flint core. Unstratified.


33
C
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Scale 0 40 80 120 160
millimetres
scale 1/4 full size

Fig 36

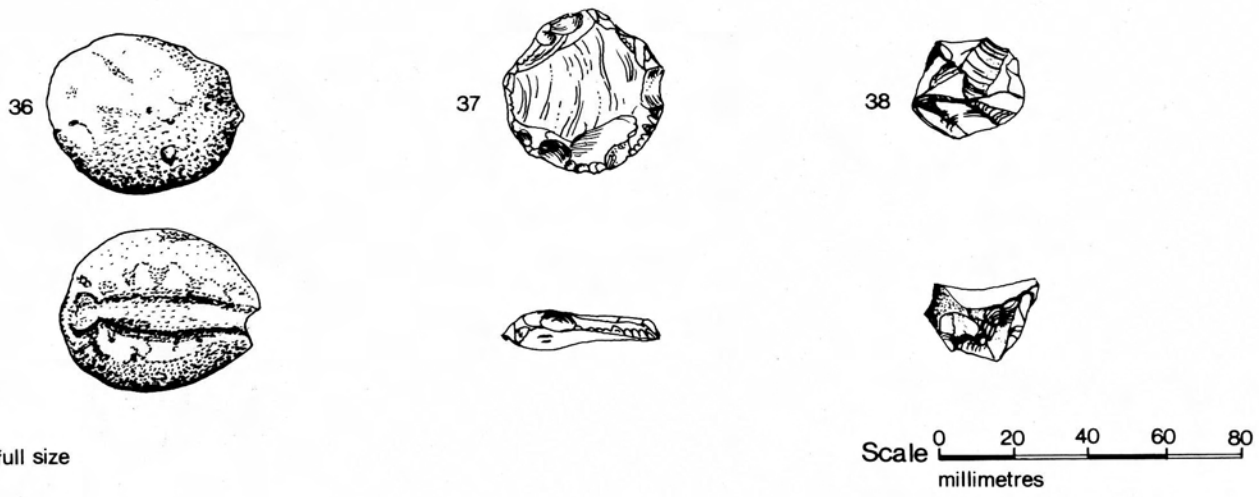

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Fig.37

The Animal Bones

by Christine Orr

The animal bones have all been grouped together. Most of the bones were extremely fragmentary and no measurements were taken. Numbers of bones do not include teeth. Aging was assessed by teeth wear and eruption and fusion of ephiphyses.

In view of the comparatively small quantity of bone recovered the results must be treated with caution.

	Total No. of Bones	Minimum No. of Specimens		
Sheep	74	4	comprising	1 very young 1 at 1½ years or under 1 at approx. 3 years 1 old
Cows	68	2 or 3	comprising	1 at 2 to 3 years 1 old 1 small size but adult
Horses	(7 to 10 teeth)	1		1 very old horse
Pigs	6	2	comprising	1 at 2 to 3 years 1 old

The Land Snails

By J. G. Evans

A soil sample and shells hand-picked during excavation were submitted for analysis. All came from the layer of "heavy rubble and soil" in the inner ditch layer 2 which consisted of loosely packed sandstone, ironstone and some limestone blocks in a matrix of brown, sandy loam. This rubble had fallen into the ditch probably from the inside of the enclosure, and contained numerous air spaces; nevertheless, and even though animal burrowing was considerable, the excavators felt that the snails were in their original context and did not represent a recent intrusion. This was born out by the analysis which yielded an ecologically uniform molluscan assemblage.

Snail analysis was done in an attempt to work out the environment during the deposition of the stone rubble. The shells hand-picked during excavation were all *Cepaea nemoralis* (with the exception of a single example of *Arianta arbustorum),* a total of 523 being recovered. *Cepaea nemoralis* is a polymorphic species, i.e. it occurs in a variety of forms, the main variation being in the number of spiral bands of dark colouring around the shell. This varies from none to five; in some cases fusion of two or more bands occurs and this is indicated by parentheses in the table below. The following is a breakdown of the forms (or morphs) present:

Cepaea nemoralis (Linné)	Band formula	Numbers
Unbanded	00000	52
Mid-banded	00300	97
Two-banded	00340	3
Four-banded	02345	30
Five-banded	12345	66
	(123)(45)	12
Juveniles		263
Arianta arbustorum (Linné)		1

The degree of banding in a population is controlled by visual selection through the predation of thrushes. Thus in woodland, unbanded shells are favoured as being less visible on the uniform background of the woodland floor. In grassland, the reverse is the case; here, banded morphs are favoured, the camouflage acting in the same way as that of the zebra or tiger. Thus in the Blackthorn population where banded morphs predominate (80%) a grassland environment is indicated.

The soil sample, weighing about 1.5 kg. (air-dry), yielded the following fauna:

Carychium tridentatum (Risso)	5
Succinea cf. putris (Linné)	5
Cochlicopa ? lubricella (Porro)	21
Vallonia costata (Müller)	18
Vallonia excentrica (Sterki)	169
Cecilioides acicula (Müller)	25
Cepaea nemoralis (Linné)	30
Hygromia liberta (Westerlund)	196
Helicella itala (Linné)	1
Punctum pygmaeum (Draparnaud)	11
Discus rotundatus (Müller)	1
Retinella radiatula (Alder)	46
Vitrina pellucida (Müller)	55
Agriolimax sp.	1
Microtus agrestis (Linné) - field vole	2 molars

This fauna reflects unequivocably an environment of dry grassland, unshaded by woody vegetation. The predominance of *Vallonia excentrica,* and the generally restricted nature of the fauna indicate this. In addition, it is probable that the virtual absence of shade-loving elements (e.g. *Discus* and *Carychium*) implies the absence of scrub and woodland in the area as a whole. The extrapolation from the environment implied by one specific sample to the surrounding landscape is always difficult (Evans 1972, 111), but experience suggests that we are dealing here with a fauna reflecting conditions which were devoid of trees and shrubs for at least some hundred metres around the point of the sample.

Recent work on the snail faunas of stone-rubble habitats (Evans 1972, 308; Evans and Jones 1973) supports this conclusion. Stone-rubble situations such as that at Blackthorn, in which air spaces are numerous, are usually colonised by species of land snail which prefer dank, shaded habitats and which are able to feed on animal detritus – the remains of mites, insects and earthworms – rather than the more normal, plant food of snails. Such species generally occur in shaded habitats (woodland, hedgerows, etc.), and, if present in the area at Blackthorn at all, would undoubtably have colonised the ditch, which, even apart from the rock-rubble habitat, would have provided a congenial, moist, environment – unless being kept clear by, for example, grazing animals. The fact that they did not indicates their total absence from the area as a whole, and strongly suggests an open landscape at this stage in the filling of the ditch.

An open-country fauna, though of rather different composition, was recorded from the ditch of the Iron Age site at Rainsborough (Evans in Avery et al. 1967, 300) where there was also a similar proportion of banded to unbanded morphs of *Cepaea nemoralis* (Cain in Avery et al. 1967, 305) to that at Blackthorn.

One anomalous feature of the Blackthorn fauna is the presence of five examples of the marsh form, *Succinea.* This is not really in keeping with the rest of the fauna, and the examples may well be derived from rushes brought to the site for bedding or flooring.

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