

Archaeological Excavation
of land at
**CHURCH FARM, CHURCH ROAD,
CALDICOT, GWENT.**
for
Crest Homes (South West) Ltd



Report No.454/1998



Bristol and Region Archaeological Services

Archaeological Excavation
of land at
**CHURCH FARM, CHURCH ROAD,
CALDICOT, GWENT.**

centred on
N.G.R. ST 4835 8892

Client: Crest Homes (South West) Ltd

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November, 1998.

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INTRODUCTION

In the light of a planning application for a housing development at Church Farm, Caldicot (NGR ST 4835 8892), Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by Crest Homes to carry out an archaeological excavation on a Romano-British farmstead. The planning application area covers c.7.5 hectares of Church Farm (See **Fig.1**) divided into four areas A - D. The fieldwork took place between 28 July and 10 October 1997 supervised by Pete Insole. The site had been identified during an archaeological evaluation of the application area, also undertaken by BaRAS earlier in the summer (BaRAS 1998). Prior to the fieldwork of 1997 the former landowner, Mr. H. Heavens, had contracted Oxford Archaeological Associates (OAA) to undertake a desk-based assessment and a geophysical survey of the area. This work had suggested that there was little chance of finding significant archaeology on the site despite the area being considered as of medium to high archaeological potential. Two areas were identified by the evaluation to be of archaeological significance; an area in the farm yard containing medieval material associated with the original Church Farm and a strip of Romano-British material at the extreme north of the site (**Fig.2**), which is the subject of this report.

THE SITE

The site lies within the northern part of an open field (Area A) on a small hillock of Triassic rock (at approximately 30m OD). This hillock provides a good view over the Nedern Brook to the east and Caldicot Castle and the Severn Estuary to the south. To the north the site is bordered by a modern field boundary, beyond which lies a further open field that is not affected by the development and will remain as agricultural land. The site is bordered to the west by the existing Church Road that runs between Caldicot and Caerwent.

The underlying Triassic geology varies slightly across the site. In the western half Mercian Mudstone overlies sandstone in the east it is Tea Green Marl overlying sandstone.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Caldicot lies within an area rich in archaeological remains and its position close to the Severn, the Forest of Dean and its industry has contributed to this becoming a highly significant area historically. The Nedern Valley is known to have attracted human activity at least as early as the Bronze Age while Caerwent and Caldicot Castle stand as testimony for the continuation of human activity in the area throughout history up to the present day.

Bronze Age Activity in the Caldicot Area

Excavations on the flood plain of the Nedern at the Caldicot Castle lake site (ST 481 883), c.900m from the southern boundary of the excavation area, recovered the organic remains of human activity preserved by waterlogging. Eight phases of river channels were recorded as well as wooden structures that included a plank from a sewn boat and a possible bridge. The material recovered from this site dates to a period between the early Bronze Age and the Iron Age (Nayling and Caseldine 1997).

Other Bronze Age finds are known from the area, an evaluation at Crick Lane, Portskewett (ST 495 884) produced flints and pottery of possibly Bronze Age date (Newns 1993) while a single flint arrowhead was found at ST 4732 8805 (SMR 4307). The only other prehistoric finds within the vicinity of the evaluation mentioned by the sites and monuments record are five flint flakes and one flint tool found at ST 4944 8840 (SMR 4313).

The Iron Age and Romano-British Period (Fig.3)

Very little evidence of Iron Age activity is known from the vicinity of the site although the presence of substantial hillforts, such as Llanmelin Wood Camp (SMR 1026, ST 4610 9257) and Wilcrick Hill Camp (SMR 474, ST 411 878) on higher ground to the north and west suggests a significant agricultural economy prior to the Roman invasion.

Approximately 900m to the west of the excavation an Iron Age settlement that continued into the Romano-British period was excavated at ST 473 893 (Vyner and Allen 1988). This settlement has been interpreted as being a low status farmstead during the Romano-British period using Caerwent as a market centre. The interpretation of this settlement is typical of the type of cultural evidence for the south eastern area of Wales with relatively low status, agricultural sites and little or no villas as opposed to the Vale of Glamorgan to the west and the Cotswold area of England to the east.

The abundance of Romano-British evidence is helping to build up a detailed picture of the Caerwent/Caldicot area in the Roman period. There appears to have been a dispersed settlement pattern to the south of Caerwent spread along a fertile strip close to and along the fen edge and including reclaimed land on the Caldicot levels (Rippon 1996, 32-35). This pattern is illustrated in Figure 3 that shows how the topography and possibly cultural stimuli affected settlement distribution and land use. The land to the north of Caerwent beyond the Nedern Valley is semi upland unsuitable for arable use and the abandonment of the hillforts to the north, Llanmelin and Wilcrick Hill, at the end of the Iron Age may suggest that the Romans discouraged occupation of the more 'defensible' areas or that occupation may have become uneconomic. It is possible that prior to the Roman conquest Llanmelin hillfort may

have been the tribal centre for the area and that Caerwent effectively replaced it. The Romano-British *Civitas Capital* of the native tribe the Silures (*Venta Silurum* or Caerwent) lies c.1km to the north west of the excavation and would presumably have been the market centre for the small agricultural and industrial activities in the area.

Romano-British farmsteads in the Caldicot area appear to be located on the low hills to the north of the levels usually at a height of 30-40m OD as if they are based on an Iron Age principle of occupying a 'defensible' location. Certainly those shown on Figure 3 that have been excavated such as Thornwell (SMR 4441) and Caldicot (SMR 2169) originated in the Iron Age and were occupied until the mid 4th century AD. These farmsteads during the Romano-British period may well have been agricultural units within a larger villa controlled estate as suggested by Richard Hingley (Hingley 1989, 105-110). If an estate of this type existed in the Caldicot/Caerwent area than the possible villa on Portskewett Hill (SMR 495) or another possibly high status site located by air photography at ST 483 874 (SMR 482) may have been the base of the estate's overseer. An evaluation at Crick Road (St 4950 8840) produced further evidence of Romano-British agricultural activity in the form of possible boundary ditches (Newns 1993).

Adjacent to the levels there appears to have been an industrial fringe in the Caldicot area indicated by the kilns and iron ore mine. This may be an extension of the industrial activity in the Forest of Dean.

Six pottery kilns were excavated in 1965-66 (Barnett, Stanley, Trett, and Webster 1990) at ST 474 878 (SMR 2356-60) all producing pottery in the late 3rd to early 4th centuries with indirect evidence for the production of pottery in the earlier 3rd century. There is also a possible Romano-British iron ore mine on the lower slopes of Portskewett hill (SMR 504, ST 4997 8840) (Wheeler 1925).

Numerous spot finds of Roman date are known from across the area; silver coin (SMR 3997), silver coin (SMR 4025), Domitian coin (SMR 1058), five 4th century coins (SMR 485), and a fibula (SMR 4030).

Three Romano-British inhumations are also noted on the sites and monuments record in the vicinity of the site, all appear to have been buried in the Roman tradition of roadside burial along the roads leading from Caerwent; SMR 498, from which the alignment of a Roman road from the South Gate of Caerwent is postulated (**Fig.3**), SMR 4362, close to the Roman road east of Caerwent, and SMR 1053, close to the road west of Caerwent.

The Medieval and Post-Medieval Period

There is a great deal of evidence for the importance of the Caldicot area during the medieval period. The town is first mentioned in a charter of c.895, the book of Llandaff, being referred to as Castel Conscuit (OAA 1993). A sizeable earthwork at Portskewett has been attributed to Harold's hunting lodge that is mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as being built in 1065 (Garmondsway 1953, 190-1) before being destroyed by Caradoc, son of Gruffydd, the King of South Wales (OAA 1993).

There are two motte and bailey castles in the vicinity of the site, The Berries and Caldicot Castle, both are Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The Berries castle to the east of the Nedern

has not been excavated, although the local name for the earthwork of Bullan has been associated with a family holding land in the area in the late 11th century (OAA 1993).

Caldicot Castle was probably constructed early in the 13th century, although as with many medieval castles the main buildings have been constantly adapted especially in the last century.

Church Farm is likely to have a medieval origin as the original farm buildings that still survive on the opposite side of Church Road to Caldicot Castle appear to be early post-medieval in date (SMR 3162). There are also substantial lynchets on the slopes going down to the Nedern which are possibly the result of continual ploughing in the medieval period, although an earlier date cannot be discounted. These lynchets and the original river channels of the Nedern show up clearly in some of the air photographs, such as the RAF photographs of 1946, although no other earthworks are visible within the evaluated area.

Finally there are two lime kilns shown close to the site on the map of c.1800 one of which survives as a shallow hollow to the north east of the site at approximately ST 4825 8935.

A study of all the relevant maps, plans and air photographs has shown that the majority of the site has remained open land throughout documented history and that the field boundaries have survived largely unchanged since the first edition OS map of 1885. The earliest map to show the field boundaries of the area comes from John Foord's Mar Book c.1800 (**Fig.4**) which shows some variation in the field boundaries most notably the kink in the northern field boundary discussed below.

THE GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

Prior to the field evaluation a geophysical survey was undertaken by Oxford Archaeotechnics Limited. This survey comprised topsoil magnetic susceptibility mapping and in four areas (A-D) that showed significant magnetic enhancement. A gradiometer survey was also undertaken.

The topsoil magnetic susceptibility survey in the northern area of the site showed several strong foci of topsoil magnetic enhancement indicating human activity amplifying the magnetic contrast with the background geology. Three of these foci were located around the present gateways to the fields where hard core has been deposited. Two isolated circular foci in Area B were interpreted as possibly being lime kilns, although gradiometer surveying in this area proved inconclusive. The strongest readings were located in the north western part of Area A and extended across the top of the field towards Area B. Gradiometer surveying in this north western area (Area A, **Fig.3**) revealed several linear features, probably field drains, and two near parallel curvilinear features.

The survey in the southern area produced more subtle readings than those in areas A and B. The foci of topsoil magnetic enhancement were confined to an area close to the modern farm buildings (Area C, **Fig.3**) and an area close to the field boundary with Church Road. These anomalies were interpreted as being either associated with modern farm activity or were natural in origin. The gradiometer survey in these areas again proved inconclusive.

The results of the geophysical survey, particularly the location of the curvilinear features in Area A and the possible lime kiln in Area B, dictated the positioning of some of the evaluation trenches. None of the features associated with the farmstead revealed by the evaluation, such as banks and ditches, were shown by the geophysical survey. This may have been caused by a 'masking' of this area resulting from the large quantity of modern farm waste including ferrous and plastic material mixed in to the top-soil.

THE EXCAVATION

Methodology

A 20m wide and 130m long strip was excavated by mechanical excavator close to, and parallel with, the northern field boundary (**Fig.1**). This revealed the southern corner of a 'defended' enclosure comprising of various banks and ditches, internal cobbling and a possible 'cobbled causeway'. It was recommended by Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) that a preservation *in situ* strategy should be followed. This strategy resulted in only a limited examination of the monument with partial excavation of the inner ditch on the eastern side and four hand-dug sections through the outer ditch. The post Roman material such as earlier field boundary features were removed and a small sondage was excavated through the internal cobbles in an attempt to retrieve dating evidence for the earliest phase of activity.

Phasing

After excavation the various features could be grouped into five broad phases:-

- Phase 1 - pre enclosure features beneath the rampart (057 and 058/9) and material recovered from the internal sondage (100).
- Phase 2 - enclosure construction; in filling of pre enclosure ditch (056), bank features (025, 026, 027, 043, 060, 061), ditch cuts (053, 016, 063, 068, 077, 079, 080) and cobbled areas (040, 041, 049, 050, 051, 052).
- Phase 3 - ditch in-filling (010, 011, 017, 020, 021, 022, 023, 028, 029, 039, 046, 047, 048, 062) and sealing of banks and cobbles (052).
- Phase 4 - linear features, possibly not contemporary and thus divided into phase 4A drystone linear features (042, 054, 055) and phase 4B gully features (008, 014).
- Phase 5 - topsoil (001) and clearance after machining (002, 003, 006, 007, 018, 019, 031)

Because of the nature of the work this is obviously a very basic phasing; any or all of these phases could be further divided with additional fieldwork. It is highly likely that the construction of the site took place over several years, decades or even centuries. Also, it is highly unlikely that construction of all the 'defensive' features took place during any one period and that the farmstead probably evolved over time. The evidence from section C (see below) suggests that there may have been three construction phases; the pre enclosure ditch (057) succeeded by the outer bank (025) and then the later addition of the outer ditch (068). We have only been able to date the final phase of the enclosure with any accuracy, such as the in-filling of the ditches and the sealing of the banks and cobbles. Therefore, many of the conclusions in the text are purely hypothetical and the description of certain elements of the 'defences', particularly the inner ditch may not truly capture the nature of these features.

Note on the text

These types of site are commonly referred to as 'defended' enclosures because share some characteristics with hillforts. However, the surrounding banks and ditches are usually not substantial enough to form an impenetrable enclosure.

Description of Features

Phase 1

Very little phase 1 material was recovered by the excavation because of the limited nature of the sampling. A small sondage excavated through the internal cobbled area in the centre of the site revealed a make-up deposit (100) beneath the cobbles and directly overlay natural mudstone. Four small fragments of pottery from a single 1st century bead rim jar were recovered from the bottom of context 100 at the horizon with the natural. The location of this pottery close to the natural and beneath the cobbles may suggest a possible late Iron Age or early Romano-British date for the origin of the site.

The only other phase 1 features were revealed by excavation of Section C (see **Fig.8, Plate1**). Here the outer ditch (068) was found to be cutting an earlier deeper ditch (057). This underlay the stone bank (025) and appeared to follow the same alignment as the later bank and ditch. However, further sections excavated through the outer ditch in the eastern area of the site (Sections B and D) did not locate this earlier ditch. Ditch 057 was found to be 1m wide and 0.8m deep cut into the natural sandstone. Excavation of this ditch revealed that in the north east corner of the section there was a vertical cut (059) into the sandstone, approximately 0.5m deep, aligned perpendicular to the ditch cut (**Plate 1**). The feature had a flat base and a width of 0.25m although the feature continued east into the section and could not be observed. Contained within cut 059 were two slabs of limestone lying flat one behind the other approximately 0.25m above the base of the cut. Beneath these slabs the cut was filled with a grey brown silty clay (058) with occasional inclusions of charcoal flecks. The function and date of this feature is unknown, it is possibly a timber or beam slot for a wooden palisade, the slabs being some type of packing that have since subsided. The fact that charcoal flecks were evident within the clay beneath the slabs could support the hypothesis that the cut contained timber. Sealing this timber slot was the fill of ditch 057 (056) a mid brown clay silt with occasional flecks of charcoal and sub angular blocks of limestone. This deposit marks a transition between phase 1 and the construction of the outer bank (phase 2). The fact that context 056 was of similar consistency throughout and that it contained blocks of limestone similar to the bank material suggests that ditch 057 was deliberately back filled immediately prior to the construction of the outer bank.

Although these features could not be dated, they were ascribed to Phase 1 on the basis of their stratigraphic relationships. It has been assumed that context 058/9 is contemporary with or possibly slightly later than the construction of ditch 057.

Phases 2 - 3

Overlying the phase 1 features were the main structural elements of the enclosure broadly grouped together as a construction phase, however, as mentioned above construction may have taken place over a number of periods. Certainly, the differences in the profiles of the inner and outer ditches suggest that phase 2 could be sub-divided, although no evidence was found to support this theory.

On the eastern side of the excavation there was an internal ditch (080), measuring c.3m wide and 0.5m deep, that crossed the site in a north east - south west direction from near the north eastern corner of the excavation (**Figs.5-6**). After following this alignment for approximately 14m the ditch began to curve to follow a ese - wnw direction until terminating at the 'causeway' (051), a strip of rough cobbling aligned south west-north east, measuring c.15m

in length and c.3m wide. The suggestion that this area of cobbling was some form of entrance feature was inferred from the gap in the defences at this point, although there is some doubt to this interpretation. A second similar internal ditch (079) continued along the same alignment to the west beyond the causeway. The ditch 080 was revetted on its inner face with sub angular and angular blocks of limestone. This revetting appeared to continue into the bottom of the ditch, although here the stonework consisted of rounded sandstone cobbles. The outer face of the ditch was also lined with similar limestone blocks that rose up to form the outer bank (025). The ditch was filled with dark brown silty humic material (010, 020 - 023) containing large blocks of limestone and sandstone. This dark fill was very similar to the material cleaned from between the stones of the outer bank (025) (see below) suggesting that the inner ditch had been back filled with bank material. Investigation of the inner ditch fill revealed that there was only one deposit, although a very similar lower fill (010) was encountered at the north eastern end of the ditch. Pottery recovered from the lower fill (010) suggests a 2nd to 3rd century date for its deposition whereas the pottery from the upper fills (020 - 023) suggest a late 3rd or early 4th century AD date (see below). Over this fill at the corner of 080 there was a spread of limestone (024) that tapered towards the outer bank. This suggested that the material originated from the northern side of the inner ditch, possibly from an internal 'defensive' bank. The presence of a bank to the north of 080 is inferred from :-

1. the type of in-filling material
2. the rubble spread (024) emanating from the inner face of 080
3. the lack of features between the ditch and the internal cobbling 040 (Figs.5-6).

In the area between ditch and cobbles the subsoil was cleaned down on to natural Tea Green Marl. This gap in the stonework (060) between 080 and 040 lay all around the inner edge of the internal ditch suggesting that some form of 'defensive' feature existed in this area. There were no post holes or timber slots to indicate a wooden palisade, but the quantity of stone work within the inner ditch suggests that a low internal bank similar to 025 ran around the enclosure.

Similar stonework to the inner revetment formed the low outer bank (025) that had a clear rounded terminus at its southern end (Fig.5-6). This terminus was marked by five large limestone boulders that had been deliberately placed in a straight line from north west-south east (Plate 2). The bank measured approximately 2m wide increasing to 4m wide at the southern terminus and 25m in length, although the bank continues northwards beyond the excavation trench.

The outer ditch (016) was 1.5m wide and 0.9m deep becoming more shallow towards the causeway. This ditch had a steep sided profile with a flattish base cut into the sandstone bedrock.

Adjacent to the west side of the causeway was a drainage gully (077) that measured c.0.5m wide. To the west of the causeway the outer ditch was not present, however, a short strip of stonework (061) has been interpreted as the remains of the outer bank. This feature terminated to the west at a ditch (028) running parallel with the causeway measuring 2.5m wide and 0.9m deep. This ditch shallowed and tapered towards the southern trench section suggesting that it was terminating either through design or through later ploughing.

The only evidence of timber structures associated with the defences were a timber slot (035/6), measuring 2.2m long and 0.42m wide, and post hole (033/4), approximately 0.2m in diameter, to the west of the enclosure close to the inner ditch, the timber slot running parallel with the ditch. These features lay very close to the northern boundary of the site and

it is likely that further elements of the structure lie to the north beyond the limits of the excavation. These features were undated but their position and alignment close to the inner ditch would suggest that this structure was contemporary with the site's occupation.

All the sections excavated through the outer ditch produced Romano-British pottery as well as occasional, residual Iron Age material. Section A contained three deposits (Fig.7); an initial silting deposit (047), a layer of slag and charcoal fragments (046) and an upper mid-brown sandy silt deposit (028). The slag and charcoal layer (046) produced a fragment of an upper rotary quern stone of pennant sandstone (SF32, Fig.9.5). The upper fill 028 produced a hoard of 24 copper alloy coins dated to 337 - 361 AD (see below). Sections B and C revealed similar deposits although not as rich in artefacts. Bulk samples were taken for palaeoenvironmental analysis from all the ditch sections and produced limited evidence of arable farming with the presence of wheat, barley and oat macrofossils as well as weeds associated with disturbed ground (see below).

Other significant finds from elsewhere on the site included the disarticulated remains of a horse lying directly on top of the cobbled causeway and the fragmentary remains of a near complete Romano-British pot from a deposit outside the enclosure to the west.

Phase 4A

Overlying ditch 028 was a curvilinear stone feature (054), consisting of pitched and packed angular limestones in a shallow cut approximately 0.4m wide. This has been interpreted as some form of post Roman field boundary, precise dating of the feature was not possible. Two shorter dry-stone linear features were found to be overlying or truncating Romano-British features. A north-south aligned dry-stone wall measuring 0.4m wide and approximately 6m in length (042) was found to be overlying the causeway and an east-west aligned dry-stone wall (055) measuring 0.4m wide and approximately 1m in length was found overlying ditch fill 028. As with context 054 these features presumably relate to post-Roman field divisions of unknown date.

Similar dry-stone linear features were encountered by the evaluation and are likely to be the cause of the curvilinear features encountered by the geophysical survey.

Phase 4B

This phase relates to later field boundary features, possibly later in date than Phase 4A, although there was no stratigraphic relationship between these groups of features. Two Phase 4B features were encountered both of which were linear and gully-like (contexts 008 and 014). Context 008 measured 0.3m wide, c.30m in length and was aligned west-north-west to east-south-east. This feature approximately followed and truncated the inner ditch (079 and 080) from the northern trench boundary, terminating approximately where the Romano-British ditch turns to a more northerly direction. Context 014 measured 0.3m wide, c.15m in length and was aligned approximately north-south truncating the outer bank (025) and the outer ditch (016) in the north-western area of the trench, although this second gully did not follow the Romano-British defensive features as closely as context 008. Both these linear features contained reddish to light brown mixed silty sands and produced Romano-British material of 3rd-4th century date. However, their stratigraphic relationship to the Romano-British features and the fact that these gullies match the position of the earlier northern field boundary shown on the early to mid-19th century plans (see below) suggests a later date, possibly medieval.

DISCUSSION

No internal features were revealed by the excavation work, these will lie with the majority of the enclosure to the north of the excavation in open fields outside the application area. Despite this, the many close parallels such as Thornwell (Hughes 1996), Biglis (Parkhouse 1988), Whitton (Jarrett and Wrathmell 1981) and another site at Caldicot, just 900m away to the west, (Vyner and Allen 1988) allow us to make broad conclusions about the site.

The Church Farm site is a typical example of a Romano-British farmstead in South Wales occupying the top of a small hillock and enclosed by bank and ditch features. The site was probably originally a home farm for a small group or family although this function may have altered in the Romano-British period (see below). The presence of timber framed structures within the enclosure is inferred from the presence of Type 1A nails (from Manning's classification (Manning 1985, 134-136)), that are synonymous with timber framed structures, and ceramic roof tile fragments. A timber slot (035/6) and post-hole (033/4) close to the western side of the enclosure would also indicate the existence of timber structures on the site. The date and function of these features is unknown, although it is possible that associated timber slots would lie the beyond the excavation to the north to form the plan of a timber structure.

The stonework that constitutes the bank material is heavily weathered Carboniferous limestone that originated either in the Cotswolds or from Barry Island (information courtesy of Roger Clarke, Bristol Museum). Either of these sources would require a journey in excess of 25 miles, 50 miles round trip, an unusual exercise for a low status farmstead when stonework of similar quality was available within the vicinity of the site. It is possible that the stones were re-used from a site closer to the farmstead, possibly indicated by their weathering, otherwise the reasons for the use of this particular stone are unknown.

The total size of the enclosure is unknown although the 'defences' appear to follow the 30m contour which, should they continue on this alignment, would produce a north-south enclosure diameter of c.200m, much larger than other enclosures of similar type which commonly have diameters of less than 100m. This theory for a possible size is supported by a faint crop mark in a field to the north east of the site visible on an air photograph taken in 1971 (BKS frame 167021). This may be indicative of the 'defences' continuing around the east side of the hill. Inspection of this field during the course of the excavation found stonework similar to the material that comprises the bank of the enclosure revealed by erosion of the gateway into this field. Associated with this stonework were fragments of ceramic roof tile of possible Romano-British date. Should the enclosure prove to be as large as these facts suggest then it is possible that the western 'defences' have been removed or at least truncated by the road to Caerwent to the west and possible by the small housing estate constructed since 1971 adjacent to the west side of this road.

Other Romano-British farmsteads in South Wales, such as those mentioned above are similarly located and enclosed. This is opposed to the nearest English examples on the southeast side of the Severn such as Crook's Marsh (Everton and Everton 1981) and Lawrence Weston (Parker 1984) where the farmstead is often enclosed by wall, bank or ditch but occupies a topographically lower non-defensive position. Evidence from the excavated examples of Romano-British farmsteads has suggested that they generally originate in the late Iron-age, certainly the South Walean sites exhibit Iron-age trends in location and 'defences',

having the appearance of small scale hillforts. This would suggest that in the late Iron-age to early Romano-British period there was a need on the Welsh side of the Severn to occupy 'defensible' sites whereas on the English side the social climate was more stable allowing a less exposed siting for farms. Alternatively these farms may be evidence of cultural differences. Certainly the Welsh farmsteads exhibit a continuation of culture from the Iron Age into the Romano-British period and suggest that when the Romans conquered Wales little in the way of social and economic life was altered.

It is interesting to have two relatively similar sites within close proximity to each other with the Caldicot (quarry) site within a kilometre to the west of the Church Farm site. Both Caldicot sites appear to have their origins in the Late Iron Age and were abandoned in the mid-fourth century. They probably formed part of a larger estate using Caerwent as a market centre and were possibly governed from a villa establishment such as that on Portskewett Hill. Despite the limited amount of material recovered from the Church Farm site there are significant differences in the assemblages of these two sites to suggest that these sites performed different functions. The Caldicot (quarry) site produced a moderate quantity of samian pottery as well as personal decorative items such as brooches and a shale bracelet while the Church Farm site produced very little Samian and no decorative items except for a possible brooch fragment recovered from the evaluation. This may suggest a variation in status, however, combined with this the Church Farm site produced a relative abundance of iron slag from the ditch fills and may suggest that the Church Farm farmstead was primarily used for industrial purposes. The bulk of the pottery sherds recovered were from kitchen wares originating locally from the Caldicot kilns. This type of pottery suggests domestic use, although the majority of this material came from the ditch fills of the abandonment phase of the site and may not accurately represent site usage.

Few conclusions can be drawn from the small quantity of bone recovered from the site and assessed by Geraldine Barber. The majority of the animal bone assemblage consisted of the skeletal fragments from two horses or ponies, one partially articulated found lying on the causeway, the other horse bones were found scattered through eight Phase 3 contexts but seeming to come from a second individual. The first animal appears to have been placed on the cobbles whole, as fragments of all limbs, spine and skull were identified. Post-depositional disturbance has then caused the movement of some body parts. This animal was assessed to be pony rather than horse, based on the measurements of the metapodials (Driesch and Boessneck 1974), and aged around 8 years suggested by the level of attrition on the incisor teeth (Silver 1969). No cut or gnawing marks were found on any of the bones indicating that the animal was not killed and used for food or for its hide. There may be several natural reasons why this pony was found lying on the entrance way into the farmstead but its deposition in a Phase 3 deposit is indicative of the sites abandonment. The second animal scattered through Phase 3 deposits was also possibly pony sized, although no long bones were recovered for measurement. This pony was slightly older than the first, being over 9 years old (Silver 1969). Other animals represented in the small bone assemblage recovered from the ditch sections, were cow, sheed or goat, pig, roe deer and red deer, the majority of these fragments being loose teeth. This suggests that the material is a secondary deposit, where it has been dumped as rubbish in the ditch after use.

In addition to the animal bone a single fragment of human maxilla containing three teeth was recovered from the Phase 3 deposits within the ditch. The bone comes from an adult of indeterminable sex aged 17-25 years. It is not unusual to find isolated fragments of human bone in ditch deposits and it has most likely come from a nearby burial that has been

disturbed. That there is a possibility of human burials in the vicinity of the site is a point for consideration in any future work in or around the area of the farmstead.

The palaeo-environmental analysis of the bulk samples from the ditch sections carried out by Julie Jones at the University of Bristol produced evidence of arable and pastural farming. Nomenclature and habitat information follows Stace (1991) and grain and chaff determinations are based on Jacomet (1987). The bulk samples from Section A produced a limited assemblage of cereal grains including; wheat, barley, oat and a glume base of *Triticum spelta* confirming the presence of spelt wheat. The majority of the Upper fill (028) and secondary fill (046) of Section A consisted of slag and charcoal. A bulk sample from an upper charcoal band (039) in Section B produced approximately 40 charcoal fragment and no charred macrofossils. The upper fill of Section C (029) produced a rich assemblage of cereal grain, chaff and weed seeds. Grains characteristic to spelt wheat and the free-threshing bread wheats (*Triticum aestivum* types) were present as was hulled barley grains with accompanying rachis internodes and internode bases. A single floret base of domesticated oat (*Avena fatua*) possibly suggesting a cultivated crop of oats, although oats were also known to be persistent weeds. Many of the weed seeds present such as; fat-hen (*Chenopodium album*), black bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus*), redshank (*Polygonum maculosa*) and corncockle (*Agrostemma githago*) are typical of disturbed ground such as arable land and may have been growing with the cereals and collected with them at harvest. Other weeds indicative of grassy areas are also present such as; the vetches (*Lathyrus/Vicia*), clover/medick (*Trifolium/Medicago*) and lesser trefoil (*Trifolium dubium*). These weeds may represent material gathered as hay for animal fodder, although the numbers of these seeds are low suggesting that arable farming was the basic economy.

Both Caldicot sites appear to have been abandoned in the mid-4th century a characteristic of this type of site in south Wales whereas the evidence from higher status sites such as Caerwent and the villas on the opposite side of the Severn suggest a continuation of occupation into the second half of the fourth century or later (Branigan 1972). The reasons for these trends is open to conjecture. The combination of all the facts from the mid fourth century suggests that it was a period of social, political and economic instability. The towers at Caerwent were constructed c.350 AD (Casey 1983) coinciding with the rebellion of Magnentius 350-353AD during which a large number of troops from Britain were withdrawn to the continent (Frere 1967, 338-9). The construction of the towers at Caerwent may well have been to enable the defence of the town with a smaller garrison with the use of ballista stationed on such positions. The general reduction of a military presence probably increased the threat of piracy in the Severn estuary during the fourth century. It is likely that this increased threat inspired a relocation of these farmsteads, whose banks and ditches were not substantial enough to repel would be attackers, to a position closer to the protection of the Caerwent garrison. The fact that Caerwent continued to be occupied into the fifth century suggests that the surrounding estates did not meet a catastrophic end and that the agricultural economy survived.

Of the later linear features of the post-Roman phases little can be said. The curvilinear features are of unknown date and function but may have been used for cattle penning or field divisions. The linear gully (008/9 and 014/5) features that traverse the site, truncating the Roman 'defences', correspond to the northern field boundary shown on the earliest map of the field boundaries of the area in John Ford's Map Book c.1800 (Fig.4). This field boundary, probably dating to the later medieval period, would suggest that earthworks of the farmstead 'defences' were still evident at this time and affected the positioning of the field division. Later 19th century maps such as the 1858 Caldicot Tithe Award map, show the

Unfortunately more detailed conclusions cannot be drawn from the limited work carried out at Church Farm and those that have been made are open to much conjecture. At present the full extent and function of the enclosure is unknown, although the site gives further evidence for the Romano-British landscape of the Caldicot/Caerwent area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Bristol and Region Archaeological Services would like to thank; Crest Homes and Lawrence Clark, Peter King (Crosbie Contracts), Harvey Heavens, Julie Jones (palaeoenvironmental analysis), Geraldine Barber (animal bone), Rod Burchill (pottery), Rosie Clarke (coins), Roger Clarke (geology), the staff of the Gwent Record Office, the staff at the Newport Reference Library, the staff at the Welsh Office: Central Register of Air Photography for Wales and those who worked on the excavations including; Reg Jackson (evaluation director), Caroline Barker, Gary Burgess, Tony Cummings, Georgina Finn, Matthew Ford, Tim Hallam, Jayne Pilkington, Jim Snee, John Turner, Patrick Watson, Tara Woodham and John Boon (volunteer).

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Maps

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- 1858 Copy of the Caldicot Tithe Award Map (Gwent Record Office D/Pa4.24)
- 1859 Caldicot Enclosure Map (Gwent Record Office Q/Inc Aw 14)
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Vertical Air Photographs (viewed at the Welsh Office)

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1966 OS 66 043, frame 131 (WO Lib No. 6617)
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THE POTTERY

by Rod Burchill

Introduction

For the purposes of this report the pottery has been assigned to five stratigraphic groups as defined in the site report and a single context not directly related to the main excavated phases. The pottery from these groups was considered in detail in order to relate individual contexts to the Phase groups and to attempt to provide a chronology for the excavated features.

In general the condition of the pottery is poor; the material is very fragmented with many small sherds and badly abraded/eroded surfaces. Only one complete or near complete vessel was found (from Context 102) and sherds of identifiable form were few in number. The lack of identifiable forms provides only for the most broad of date ranges. However, when the full range of ceramic material, including residual material, is considered a possible chronology for human activity on the site can be suggested.

The Phase Groups

Phase 1: Pre-enclosure

A single Phase 1 context (100) produced 4 sherds of pottery, all fragments of a small bead rim jar in a coarse vesicular calcite gritted fabric with (?) wiped external surfaces (Fabric 19). Similar fabrics found during excavations at Biglis, South Glamorgan were compared by Webster (1988) to Glastonbury type ware, however, the Biglis forms and decoration were somewhat cruder than those found at the Lake Villages and Webster considered that the Biglis vessels had been derived from Glastonbury types, although he did not rule out an importation from southwest England. These calcite gritted fabrics are dated either side of the Conquest in Wales in the 1st century AD.

Phase 2: construction of the ditch and bank.

Of the 14 Phase 2 contexts only one Context 043 produced pottery: a single sherd of a mortaria in a pinky orange fabric containing sparse grey grog and iron ores and clear and coloured quartz trituration grits, probably an Oxford product one of Young's White Ware group (Young 1977, Type M): later 2nd/3rd century; one sherd in a micaceous grey ware and two sherds in a fabric similar to the Caldicot kiln material.

Phase 3: the infilling of the ditch.

Nine Phase 3 contexts produced pottery, the largest Context 028 containing 67 sherds including 18 sherds of BB1 (Fabric 1) of mostly 3rd century date along with a small number of vessels in the Severn Valley tradition. Some 26 sherds were in a sandy grey-ware that can be attributed to the local Caldicot kilns and dated to the later 3rd or early 4th century. The small number of micaceous greywares are presently unsourced.

Context 017 produced a single body sherd in a grey-brown sandy fabric (Fabric 15) this is probably a local fabric but not necessarily from the Caldicot kilns.

Context 020 included a single sherd of Caldicot greyware (Fabric 6) along with single sherds of an Oxford Colour Coated mortaria (Fabric 26) and a vessel in a buff-orange fabric with a grey core and traces of a chocolate brown slip or colour coat (Fabric 29) this is similar to Ilchester fabric CCii attributed by Leach (1982) to south or southwest England , 2nd or 3rd century.

The next context 021 contained just 6 sherds and can be dated by the presence of a BB1 flanged and beaded rim bowl of late 3rd or possibly early 4th century date. Context 022 contained 5 sherds none of which could be dated with any accuracy except for a single sherd of Caldicot greyware which is probably of later 3rd or 4th century date.

Context 011 produced a limited range of pottery mostly Black Burnished wares including two jars of probable 3rd century date, and Caldicot greywares including two constricted necked jars (similar to Barnett 1990 6/8), along with other Southeast Wales greyware and Severn Valley wares.

Context 029 can be dated by the presence of a everted rim jar in Fabric 6 (Caldicot kiln material) and a white-ware mortarium (Fabric 31) probably Young Type M (Young 1977) dating between 240 and 400AD.

Context 047 is dated by the presence of Caldicot kiln material to the mid/late 3rd or early 4th century.

Context 100 contained a wide range of pottery including a single sherd of 1st century date (Fabric 36), 2nd century Severn Valley wares, BB1 types and Southeast Wales greyware including products of the local Caldicot kilns.

The pottery from Context 101 included a South Midlands shell gritted jar, a Sanders Type 2 with square cut rim (Tyers 1996). This vessel cannot be earlier than the 4th century AD.

Phase 4: a group of linear features.

Three Phase 4 contexts produced pottery: Context 008 - a linear gully; Context 010 - inner ditch fill; Context 014 - linear gully.

Amongst the pottery from context 008 were 9 sherds of Black Burnished Ware including a bead rim dish and flanged rim bowl with rising flange and lattice decoration. The latter probably mid-2nd century. Seven sherds in Fabric 6, the Caldicot kiln material, including the rim of a flanged bowl or dish similar to Webster 1988 Fig.17.212, an everted rim jar and a wide mouth bowl similar to Spencer 1988 Fig.46.20 all can be dated to the later 3rd or 4th century.

Context 010 contained only 8 sherds of pottery but can probably be dated to the 2nd or 3rd century based on the presence of Severn Valley Ware including a tankard. There were single body sherds of BB1 and a micaceous grey ware (Fabric 9).

Context 014 produced 4 sherds of Caldicot kiln fabric and 2 sherds of Severn Valley Ware. The Caldicot fabric would suggest a date in the later 3rd or early 4th century for this context.

Phase 5: top soil and initial site cleaning.

This group of seven contexts produced mostly Romano-British pottery but also included sherds of medieval and modern date in Contexts 003, 006 and 019.

Pottery from Context 002 included a narrow necked jar in a sandy but micaceous fabric (9) of probable later 3rd or early 4th century date.

Context 007 included calcite gritted wares of 1st century date along with later Black Burnished ware, Severn Valley and local Southeast Wales grey-wares. Vessels of particular note included a BB1 flanged rim bowl of the early-3rd century and a flanged and bead rim bowl of mid to late-3rd century date. In Fabric 6 a flanged and bead rim bowl copies the BB1 form and probably dates to the very late-3rd or early 4th century, also in Fabric 6 is an everted rim wide mouth jar with an internal groove to the rim. This group also included a tankard with fine external grooves in a Severn Valley fabric (7): the form suggests a 3rd century type similar to Webster's (1976) No.43, although that vessel lacks the bead rim.

Only twelve sherds of pottery was recovered from Context 018, however, these included three sherds of Oxford mortaria dated after 240 AD, a BB1 flagon and a wide mouth everted rim bowl in the local Caldicot fabric.

Context 031 produced pottery dating from the 1st to possibly the early 5th century. The group included a bead rim jar in the calcitic Fabric 19, a bead rim jar in Fabric 9 - a BB1 copy, an everted rim jar in Fabric 17 similar forms were recorded in late-3rd/4th century at Caldicot (Spencer 1988), and a flanged rim bowl in an Oxford fabric a Young type C51 (Young 1977) and dated c.240-400 AD.

Context 102: an unrelated context - a pit fill found outside the enclosure.

Pottery from this context, 294 sherds was originally thought to have come from a single vessel, however, an attempt to reconstruct the vessel showed that the sherds had probably derived from two separate but similar vessels, one a BB1 narrow necked jar with simple flanged rim and grooved neck with lattice decoration below, the other a vessel of uncertain form with incised wavy line decoration (?)below/between grooves.

Conclusions

The bulk of the pottery from Church Farm, Caldicot consisted of body sherds of unidentifiable form this has meant that much of the pottery could only be dated in rather broad terms.

The earliest pottery a calcite gritted fabric was recovered from a context stratigraphically predating the construction of the bank and ditch. Similar fabrics were found at Biglis (Webster 1988a) and Llandough (Webster 1988b) where they were attributed to the 1st century AD. Calcareous "Native Ware" fabrics also occurred at Caldicot (quarry site). Spencer (1988) was reluctant to attribute these to pre-Roman occupation on the basis that the material is usually found associated with early Romano-British fabrics. However, Spencer thought that two sherds with incised chevron decoration might have been indicative of pre-Roman activity in Caldicot.

The date for the construction of the ditch and bank is problematical. Only eight sherds of pottery was recovered from this phase. Whilst Context 043 contained a single sherd of mortaria dating from the 2nd or 3rd century the presence of material produced at the nearby Caldicot kilns would suggest a later 3rd or early 4th century date for this phase. However, this would give the enclosure a relatively short life span and the possibility that this pottery is intrusive cannot be ruled out.

It is impossible to separate Phase 3 and 4 chronologically on the basis of the ceramics. The presence of some 2nd/early-3rd century vessels notwithstanding the dominance of the local grey-wares suggest that the major periods of activity on the site occurred during the later-3rd and 4th century.

The pottery recovered from Church Farm consisted almost entirely of kitchen wares, mostly supplied by the local grey-ware and the Dorset Black Burnished ware industries, with few fine wares being present. Only six small fragments of Samian was found none of which could be identified and Amphora were conspicuous by their absence.

It is difficult to decide how representative is the pottery of the site as a whole as only the outer banks and ditch were available for excavation. However, based on the evidence available a tentative chronology for the construction and eventual abandonment of the bank and ditch can be proposed. The pottery suggests that the bank and its associated ditch was constructed sometime in the late 2nd or more likely the early 3rd century, during the early 4th century the ditch was infilled and this part of the site abandoned probably by the middle of the century.

Roman Pottery: fabric descriptions

All descriptions are at x30 magnification. Generally fabrics were hard but in most cases scratching with a thumb-nail left a faint mark.

Fabric 1: South Dorset Black Burnished Ware - BB1 types

Fabric 2: Hard, smooth, mortaria fabric. Pinky orange throughout with sparse grey grog, iron ores in a matrix of very fine quartz sand. Clear and coloured quartz trituration grits. Probably an Oxford product (Youngs Type M [1977]).

Fabric 3: Moderately hard smooth orange fabric with moderate red and grey grog, iron ores and rare quartz. Micaceous surfaces. Severn Valley.

Fabric 4: Moderately hard, slightly sandy orange fabric with a grey core. Moderate orange and buff grog, rare iron ores and quartzite. Micaceous surface sparkle. Severn Valley.

Fabric 5: Hard, slightly sandy, orange buff fabric with a grey core. Common grey (?)grog, moderate iron ores, rare quartz. (?) orange grog visible on surfaces. Fabric contains frequent voids. Similar to Thornwell fabric 002 - Severn Valley.

Fabric 6: Moderate to hard grey sandy fabric. Abundant quartz and quartzite, rare to sparse black grits. Caldicot kiln fabric (Barnett 1990).

Fabric 7: Hard, sandy, buff-brown fabric with grey core. Common quartz, moderate iron ores and occasionally some sparse grog. Severn Valley.

Fabric 8: Hard slightly sandy grey fabric with abundant quartz, rare to sparse quartzite and moderate iron ores. Southeast Wales greyware.

Fabric 9: Hard, sandy light grey fabric with dark grey core. Common quartz, rare iron ores and creamy white non-calcareous grits. Frequent voids (?organics), micaceous surfaces. Unsourced.

Fabric 10: Hard smooth grey fabric with pale-grey core. Abundant quartz, moderate iron ores., possibly some very fine mica. Some scattered voids. Similar to Thornwell fabrics 11 and 13 (Evans 1996).

Fabric 11: Hard sandy pale grey fabric with dark/pale/dark-grey sandwich core. Moderate to common quartz, rare iron ores. Some surface sparkle - probably crushed quartz. Rather coarse somewhat laminar fabric with frequent voids.

Fabric 12: Hard gritty fabric with brown inner and buff-brown external surfaces and dark grey-brown core. Coarse open fabric with abundant quartz and very rare calcite and iron ores. A native ware probably 1st century.

Fabric 13: Samian from whichever source.

Fabric 14: Hard smooth mid-grey fabric with dark-grey core. Abundant fine to medium quartz and rare iron ores. Some surface sparkle to fine to identify.

Fabric 15: Hard slightly sandy fabric. with abundant quartz sand, rare to sparse (?)iron ores. Grey-brown to red-brown surfaces with grey, buff or brown core. Probably local but not Caldicot kilns.

Fabric 16: Moderately soft slightly sandy grey to grey-buff fabric with a grey core. Abundant fine quartz sand and moderate to common ?iron ores. Rare to sparse Mica on surfaces. Type sherd has strong throw lines.

Fabric 17: Hard sandy orange brown fabric with light brown internal surface and grey core. Abundant quartz, moderate quartzite and rare iron ores. Coarse open fabric with heavy surface protrusion and severe spalling of external surfaces.

Fabric 18: Hard sandy brown fabric with brown to dark-brown core. Common quartz, sparse iron ores, rare limestone and rare ?Dolomite. Smoothed external surfaces.

Fabric 19: Hard smooth vesicular black/brown fabric. Common very coarse calcite and sparse iron ores. External surfaces wiped. Similar fabrics at Biglis and Llandough (Webster 1988a &b). 1st Century AD.

Fabric 20: Hard sandy brown fabric with dark grey brown core. Abundant medium to coarse quartz, rare quartzite and iron ores , sparse to moderate fossiliferous shell. External surfaces wiped.

Fabric 21: Hard sandy dark grey fabric with brown external surface. Abundant quartz, moderate iron ores and rare fine white grits. Spalling of the internal surfaces.

Fabric 22: Medium hard greasy very dark grey fabric with abundant shell, rare iron ores and very rare quartz. Frequent voids. South Midlands shell tempered ware.

Fabric 23: Hard gritty orange buff fabric with common coarse to very coarse quartz, moderate iron ores, sparse quartzite and moderate fine mica. Very rough fabric - the single sherd in this fabric is devoid of surfaces.

Fabric 24: Moderately hard smooth mortaria fabric. Orange with a grey core. Abundant fine quartz sand, moderate to common iron ores, rare fine white grits and sparse mica. Clear and coloured quartz trituration grits. Traces of external white slip.

Fabric 25: Oxford Colour Coated ware (Young 1977. Type C).

Fabric 26: Moderately hard smooth orange mortaria fabric with a red-orange colour coat ad quartz, quartzite and sandstone trituration grits.

Fabric 27: Soft smooth pink-buff/buff fabric with rare iron ores, rare red grog, rare mica and very rare quartz. Micaceous surfaces. Probably Severn Valley.

Fabric 28: Hard smooth orange buff fabric with a grey core and a red-brown all over colour. coat. No inclusions visible in the hand specimen but very fine quartz sand, iron ore and ?quartzite at x30mag.

Fabric 29: Hard smooth buff to orange buff fabric with a grey buff core. Rare fine to medium quartz, sparse iron ores, rare red grog. Traces of ?chocolate brown colour coat. Similar to Ilchester fabric CCii (Leach 1982).

Fabric 30: Hard smooth orange to red orange mortaria fabric with rare iron ores, grog and mica. Well spaced quartzite trituration grits.

Fabric 31: Parchment ware (Young 1977. Type P).

Fabric 32: Hard gritty brown fabric with dark grey core. Common clear and coloured quartz, rare quartzite, iron ores and grey grog and mica dusted surfaces. An open rather laminar fabric. Possibly Severn valley.

Fabric 33: Hard sandy orange fabric sometimes with a grey-brown core. Common quartz, moderate iron ores and micaceous surfaces.

Fabric 34: Hard slightly sandy grey to black fabric containing abundant quartz and sparse black grits. The fabric is open and rather coarse.

Fabric 35: Hard sandy grey-brown fabric with abundant quartz and rare black grits. Similar to Fabric 34 but with less and smaller black grits - probably from the same source.

Fabric 36: Hard, vesicular, slightly sandy brown fabric with a pale-brown core. Moderate calcite, rare quartz. External surfaces are wiped. Pre/early Roman native ware (see Fabric 19 *supra*).

Fabric 37: Hard slightly sandy vesicular grey fabric with pale grey core. Very abundant fine clear and coloured quartz and common iron ores.

Fabric 38: Hard rather silty grey-brown fabric with sparse inclusions of quartz, quartzite, calcite and iron ores. Rather crude fabric with badly spalled surfaces.

Fabric 39: Hard, smooth, open black fabric with wiped or burnished surfaces. Common calcite, sparse shell and iron ore and rare quartz. Sparse voids probably vegetable in origin. A native ware.

Fabric 40: Hard sandy grey brown fabric with abundant quartz and rare to sparse black iron ores.

Fabric 41: Hard sandy grey-brown fabric with red-brown sometimes grey core. Common quartz, rare quartzite and rare iron ores.

Catalogue of illustrated pottery

Phase 3

1. Everted rim of a wide mouth jar in an unsourced micaceous grey fabric.
Fabric 9 Context 021
2. Everted rim. Probably from a wide mouth jar.
Fabric 9 Context 021
3. Everted rim of a small jar.
Fabric 9 Context 028
4. Fragment of everted rim jar.
Fabric 9 Context 011
5. Jar with square-cut rim Probably South Midlands (Sanders Type 2). 4th century.
Fabric 22 Context 101
6. Constricted neck jar. Caldicot kilns.
Fabric 6 Context 011
7. Constricted neck jar. Caldicot kilns.
Fabric 6 Context 011
8. Everted rim bowl. Sandy grey fabric with orange margins and grey/brown surfaces.
Probably a Caldicot variant.
Fabric 6 Context 029 Flange and bead rim Black
9. Mortarium rim. Probably Youngs type P but lacks any evidence of painted decoration.
Fabric 31 Context 029
10. Flanged and bead rim bowl. Copies BB1 form.
Fabric 20 Context 047
11. Black Burnished ware bowl with simple rising flange rim.
Fabric 1 Context 028
12. Everted rim. BB1 jar. Probably 3rd century.

36. Rim with internal chamfer. 1st century.
Fabric 39 Context 007
37. Everted rim jar similar to BB1 forms of the later 3rd/4th century. The rim has been
burnished internally.
Fabric 17 Context 031
38. Narrow strap handle with plug fixing, possibly from a tankard. Severn Valley ware.
Fabric 32 Context 006
39. Flange rim bowl. similar to Young's type C51. Oxford c.240-400 AD
Fabric 25 Context 031

Miscellaneous Group

40. Rim of narrow necked jar with twin groove decoration to base of neck. BB1.
Fabric 1 Context 102
41. Body sherd with crude wavy comb and groove decoration. BB1.
Fabric 1 Context 102

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THE IRON OBJECTS

by Pete Insole

The nails were classified according to the system outlined by Manning (1985) for the catalogue of the British Museum collection of Romano-British ironwork. This is a very small assemblage of material owing to the limited nature of the excavation, the most significant finds being the 45 Type 10 hobnails (SF 26) from the outer ditch fill of section D (see below) that make up more than half the total number of nails.

Classification of Romano-British nails (bent nails in brackets).

Types	1a	1b	3	10	unidentifiable	Total
Quantity	6(3)	15(6)	1	46	15(2)	83(11)

Type 1a nails are large heavy nails commonly associated with timber structures. The quantity of this type recovered from the Church Farm site is too small to draw any meaningful conclusions, although it is noteworthy that five of the 1a examples were recovered from the upper fills of the outer ditch. This deposition of nails during the abandonment phase of the site would suggest the demolition of timber buildings for which no other evidence was recovered from the excavation.

Type 1b nails are smaller versions of the 1a nails and were probably not structural fixings but small carpenters nails. The examples from the Church Farm site were recovered from the lower ditch fills and the sealing deposits over the outer bank and internal cobbles.

Of the Type 10 nails or hobnails recovered from the site 1 example was found within the sealing deposit over the outer bank, the other 45 fragments were discovered during excavation of section D concentrated within a very small area of the upper fill of the outer ditch. Although no regular pattern was noticed in their deposition the concentration within a 20cm area would suggest that when deposited in the ditch the nails formed part of a leather shoe or sandal. Of the 45 hobnails recovered 33 were complete nails, or identifiable heads, measuring 1.5cm in length with a head diameter of 1.2cm. The remaining 12 pieces of nails were fragments of heads or stems. A typical adult's Romano-British hobnail shoe would contain at least 40 nails on the sole such as the example in the London Museum (Manning 1985, R104, 136) that contains 43 hobnails. This would suggest that the Church Farm hobnails came from the sole of one shoe.

The only other identifiable iron objects were the fragments of two unstratified horse shoes recovered from sealing deposits in the eastern area of the site.

THE COINS

by Rosie Clarke

A total of 27 coins dating to the period AD 284-361 were found, which included a hoard of 24 from the upper fill of the NE-SW outer ditch cut (053). These were all the common *Constantinopolis*, *Gloria Exercitus*, *Sarmatia* and *Urbs Roma* types, with the addition of a commemorative coin of Helena, (SF 30X) dated to the same period. Sixteen coins from this hoard are assigned to the mint at Trier, which provided almost 60% of the small change circulating in Britain between AD 318-364 (Kent, 1981, 91).

The hoard has a *terminus post quem* of AD 337, and the coins are all in good condition. As low value coins are clearly more likely to have been used in a larger number of transactions than high value coins, resulting in greater wear, they would have circulated more frequently. Therefore it is likely that the coins were of very recent date when they were deposited. Although some hoards were probably deposited in the face of an immediate threat, and it seems tempting to attribute this hoard to Magnentius's revolt in AD 350 (Frere, 1967), there is no evidence that this is the case.

The copper follis of Diocletian (SF 19), which was found in an unstratified context in Area C and is in poor condition, only shows that there was occupation in or around the site in the late 3rd/early 4th century.

The barbarous copy of one of the commemorative issues of AD 330-346, (SF 29) was found in the sealing deposit over the area of ditch 053, and is of no real significance. During this period there was a general lack of small change which led to many copies being produced. In fact, half the coins from any site in Britain after AD 260 can be expected to be copies (Reece & James, 1986, 36).

The AE 3/4 commemorative issue (SF 25), which was found in the sealing deposit over the rubble bank, is dated to the same period as the hoard.

A similar hoard in the area was one of twenty-one coins found on the excavation of the north-west corner tower at Caerwent in 1971 which contained coins of the period 330-348 AD. (Casey 1983, 57-62). There is also a note in the National Museum of Wales which records a hoard of at least 5,000 pieces including some of the *Gloria Exercitus* type, which was found at Felinrhyd in 1855 (Boon, 1975, 240). Coins from a scattered hoard were found in a crevice in a cave at Glyntawe, Brecon and included the *Urbs Roma*, *Constantinopolis* and *Gloria Exercitus* types (Boon, 1978, 631-2).

Catalogue

The hoard: SF 30 Context 028

- A) Commemorative issue of AD 330-346. AE 3/4. CONSTANTI NOPOLIS. Helmeted bust of Constantinopolis I., wearing imperial mantle and holding sceptre. R. No legend. Victory stg. I., r. foot on prow, holding sceptre and leaning on shield; in ex., •TRS (Trier). *RIC* VIII/92. Wt. 2gms.
- B) Constantius II AD 337-61. AE 3/4. FL . IVL . CONSTANTIVS . NOB . C . Laur., dr. and cuir. bust of Constantine r. R. GLORIA EXERCITVS. Two soldiers stg. either side of two standards; ex. illeg. Wt. 2.02gms.
- C) Constantine II AD 337-40. AE 3. CONSTANTINVS IVN NOB C Laur. bust r. R. CAESARVM NOSTRORVM. Laurel wreath around VOT X, in ex., PLON (London). *RIC* VII/292. Wt. 3.22gms.
- D) Commemorative issue of AD 330-346. AE 3/4. VRBS ROMA. Helmeted bust of Roma I., wearing imperial mantle. R. No legend. She-wolf stg. I., suckling Romulus and Remus; in ex., TR•P (Trier). *RIC* VII/542. Wt. 2.51gms.
- E) Constantine I as Augustus AD 309-337. AE Follis. CONSTAN TINVS AUG. Laur. bust r. R. SARMATIA DEVICTA. Victory advancing r., captive at feet; in ex., •PLG[~] (Lyons). *RIC* VII/212. Wt. 3.14gms.
- F) Constantine I as Augustus AD 309-337. AE 3/4. CONSTANT INVS MAX AVG. Laur. bust r. R. GLO RIA EXERC ITVS. Two soldiers stg. either side of two standards; in ex., TRS• (Trier). *RIC* VII/544. Wt. 1.72gms.
- G) Commemorative issue of AD 330-346. AE 3/4. VRBS ROMA. Helmeted bust of Roma I., wearing imperial mantle. R. No legend. She-wolf stg. I., suckling Romulus and Remus; in ex., TRS*. (Trier). *RIC* VII/547 Wt. 2.14gms.
- H) Commemorative issue of AD 330-346. AE 3/4. CONSTANTI NOPOLIS. Helmeted bust of Constantinopolis I., wearing imperial mantle and holding sceptre. R. No legend. Victory stg. I., r. foot on prow, holding sceptre and leaning on shield; ex., illeg. Wt. 1.41gms.
- I) Commemorative issue of AD 330-346. AE 3/4. CONSTAN TINOPOLIS. Helmeted bust of Constantinopolis I., wearing imperial mantle and holding sceptre. R. No legend. Victory stg. I., r. foot on prow, holding sceptre and leaning on shield; in ex., TRS (Trier). *RIC* VII/523. Wt. 2.29gms.
- J) Constantine II AD 337-340 AE 3/4. CONSTANTINVS IVN NOB C. Laur. bust r. R. GLORIA EXERC ITVS. Two soldiers stg. either side of two standards; in ex., [~]PLG (Lyons). *RIC* VII/254. Wt. 1.98gms.
- K) Constantius II AD 337-361 AE 3/4. FL IVL CONSTANTIVS NOB C. Laur. dr. and cuir. bust r. R. GLOR IA EXERC ITVS. Two soldiers stg. either side of two standards. Ex illeg. Wt. 1.47gms.

- L) Commemorative issue of AD 330-346. AE 3/4. VRBS ROMA. Helmeted bust of Roma l., wearing imperial mantle. R. No legend. She-wolf stg. l., suckling Romulus and Remus; in ex., TR•S (Trier). *RIC* VII/542. Wt. 1.92gms.
- M) Constantine I as Augustus AD 309-337. AE 3/4. CONSTANTI NVS MAX AVG. Laur. dr. and cuir. bust r. R. GLORIA EXERCITVS. Two soldiers stg. either side of two standards. In ex. ASIS* (Siscia). *RIC* VIII/235. Wt. 1.66gms.
- N) Commemorative issue of AD 330-346. AE 3/4. VRBS ROMA. Helmeted bust of Roma l., wearing imperial mantle. R. No legend. She-wolf stg. l., suckling Romulus and Remus; in ex., TRS* (Trier). *RIC* VII/547. Wt. 1.71gms.
- P) Commemorative issue of AD 330-346. AE 3/4. CONSTAN TINOPOLIS. Helmeted bust of Constantinopolis l., wearing imperial mantle and holding sceptre. R. No legend. Victory stg. l., r. foot on prow, holding sceptre and leaning on shield; in ex., TR•P (Trier). *RIC* VIII/92. Wt. 2.58gms.
- Q) Constantine I as Augustus AD 309-337. AE 3/4. CONSTANTI NVS MAX AVG. Laur. bust r. R. GLORIA EXERCITVS. Two soldiers stg. either side of two standards; in ex., TR•S (Trier). *RIC* VII/537. Wt. 2.10gms.
- R) Constantine II AD 337-340 AE 3/4. CONSTANTINVS IVN NOB C. Laur. bust r. R. GLORIA EXERCITVS. Two soldiers stg. either side of two standards; in ex., TRP• (Trier). *RIC* VII/545. Wt. 1.71gms.
- S) Commemorative issue of AD 330-346. AE 3/4. CONSTAN TINOPOLIS. Helmeted bust of Constantinopolis l., wearing imperial mantle and holding sceptre. R. No legend. Victory stg. l., r. foot on prow, holding sceptre and leaning on shield; in ex., TR•P (Trier). *RIC* VIII/92. Wt. 2.56gms.
- T) Commemorative issue of AD 330-346. AE 3/4. VRBS ROMA. Helmeted bust of Roma l., wearing imperial mantle. R. No legend. She-wolf stg. l., suckling Romulus and Remus; in ex., TRS (Trier). *RIC* VII/547. Wt. 1.81gms.
- U) Commemorative issue of AD 330-346. AE 3/4. VRBS ROMA. Helmeted bust of Roma l., wearing imperial mantle. R. No legend. She-wolf stg. l., suckling Romulus and Remus; in ex., TRP (Trier). *RIC* VII/522. Wt. 1.91gms.
- V) Commemorative issue of AD 330-346. AE 3/4. VRBS ROMA. Helmeted bust of Roma l., wearing imperial mantle. R. No legend. She-wolf stg. l., suckling Romulus and Remus; ex. illeg. Wt. 1.92gms.
- W) Constantius II AD 337-361. AE 3/4. (FL IVL CON)STANTIVS NOB C. Laur. and cuir. bust r. R. GLORIA EXERCITVS. Two soldiers stg. either side of two standards; in ex. TRP• (Trier). *RIC* VII/521. Wt. 1.86gms.
- X) Helena (mother of Constantine I) commemorative AE 4, struck AD 337-340 after her death. FL HELENA AVGVSTA. Diad. and dr. bust, r. SECVRITAS PVBLICE. Securitas stg. l. holding branch pointing down in l. hand, raising pallium with r. in ex. STR. (Trier). *RIC* VII/465. Wt. 2.43gms.

- Y) Commemorative issue of AD 330-346. AE 3/4. VRBS ROMA. Helmeted bust of Roma l., wearing imperial mantle. R. No legend. She-wolf stg. l., suckling Romulus and Remus; in ex. TRS* (Trier). *RIC* VII/547. Wt. 2.41gms.

Other coins

SF 29 Context 018

Barbarous copy of commemorative issue of AD 330-346. Bust r. no legend. Rev. Victory stg. l. Wt. 1.00gms.

SF 19 Unstratified

Diocletian AD 284-304 AE Follis. --IOCL--. Radiate bust r. Rev. illeg. Wt. 1.34gms.

SF 25 Context 006

Commemorative issue of AD 330-346. AE 3/4. Obv. illeg. Helmeted bust of Constantinopolis l., wearing imperial mantle and holding sceptre. R. No legend. Victory stg. l., r. foot on prow, holding sceptre and leaning on shield, in ex., ?PLG. (Lyons). Wt. 1.59gms.

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Appendix 1: Policy Statement

This report is the result of work carried out in the light of national and local authority policies.

NATIONAL POLICIES

Statutory protection for archaeology is enshrined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), amended by the National Heritage Act, 1983. Nationally important sites are listed in the Schedule of Ancient Monuments (SAM). Scheduled Monument consent is required for any work which would affect a SAM.

DOE PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

The Planning Policy Guidance of Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16) consolidates advice to planning authorities. The Guidance stresses the non-renewable nature of the archaeological resource, details the role of the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), encourages early consultation with county and district archaeological officers and sets out the requirement for developers to provide sufficient information on the archaeological impact of development to enable a reasonable planning decision to be made.

PPG 16 also indicates the circumstances where further work would be necessary and outlines the use of agreements and conditions to protect the archaeological resource.

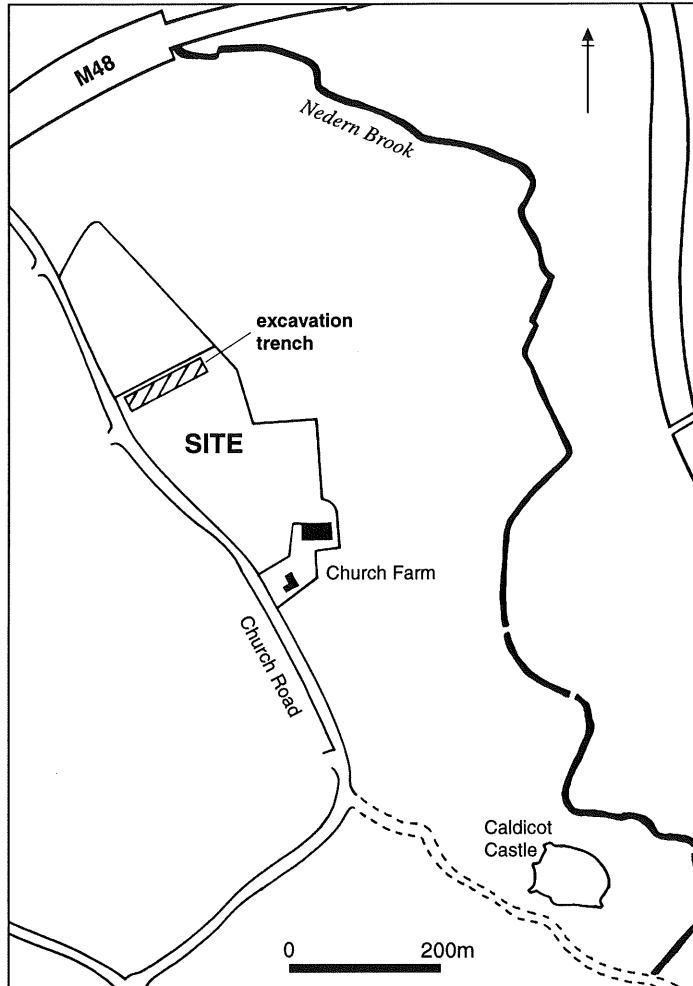
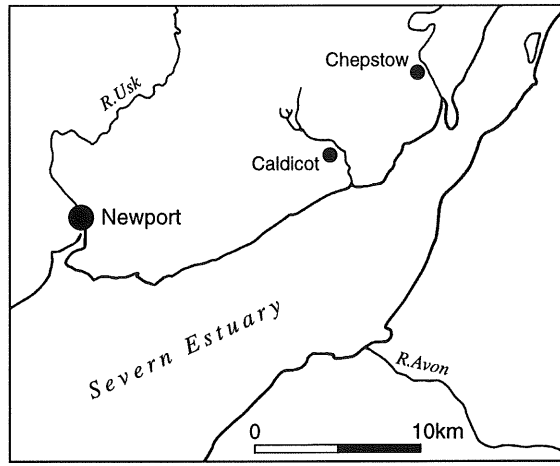


Fig.1 Site and trench location plans

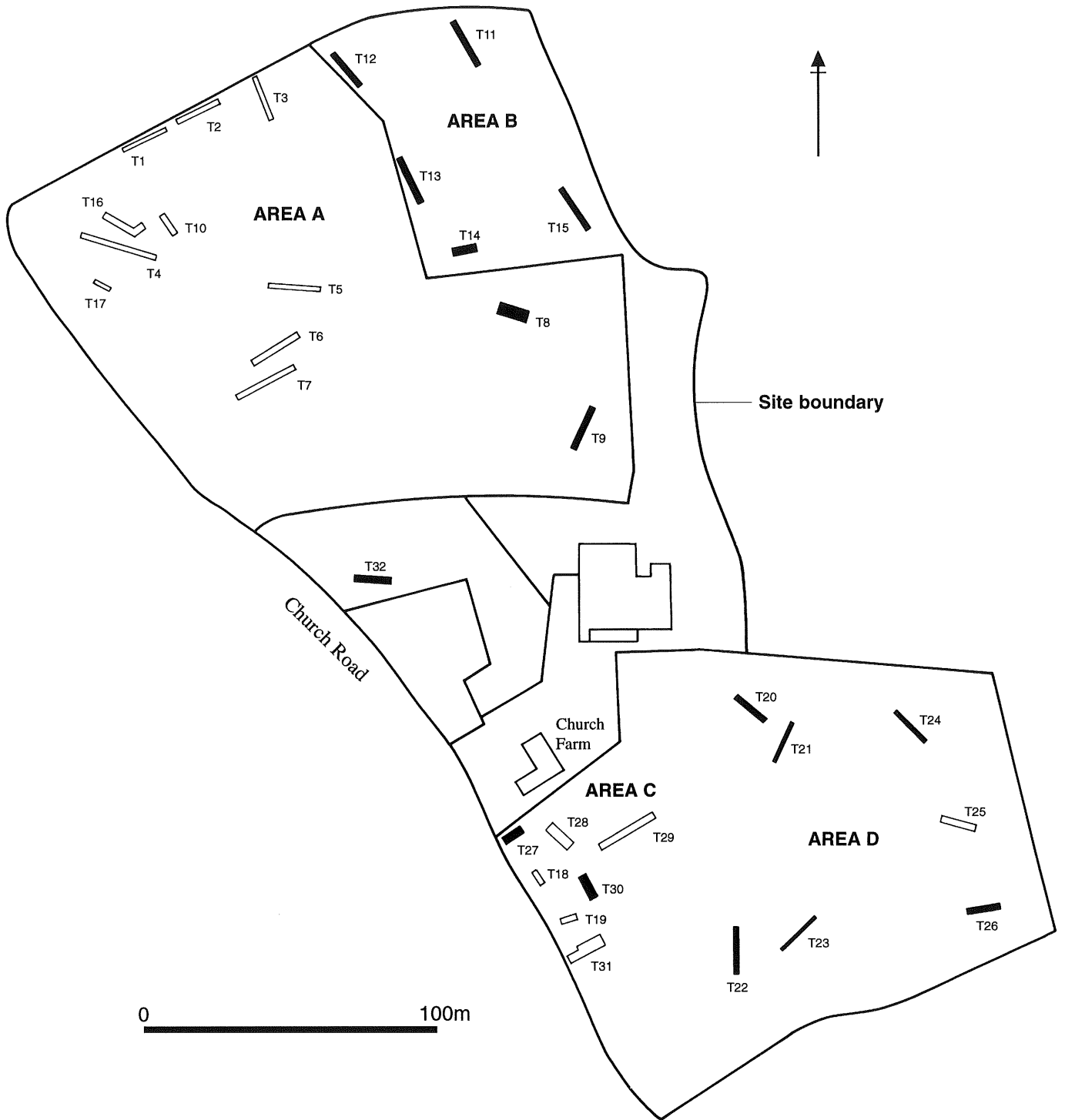


Fig.2 Location of evaluation trenches

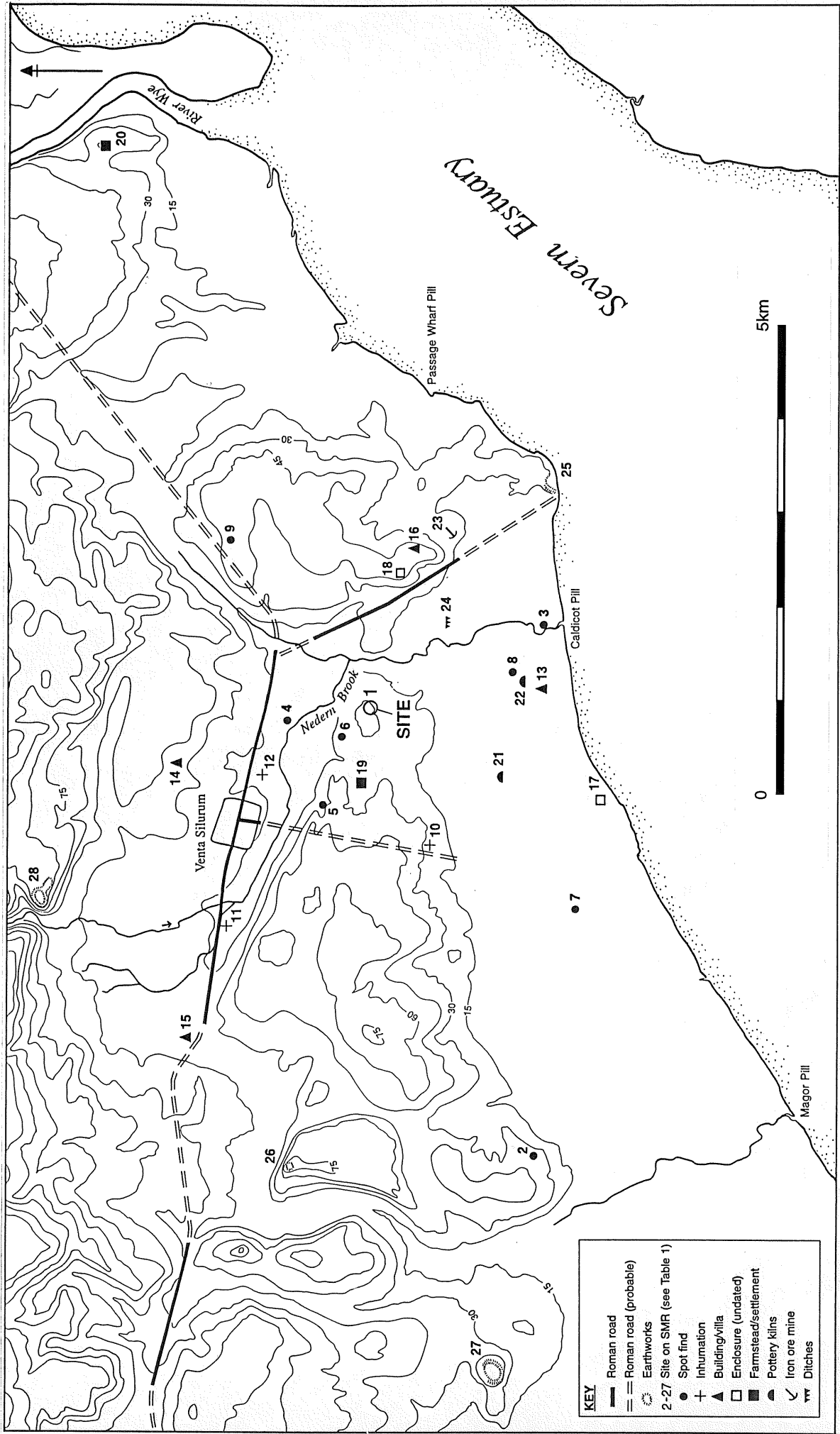


Fig.3 The Caerwent area: Contours and Roman roads (see Table 1)

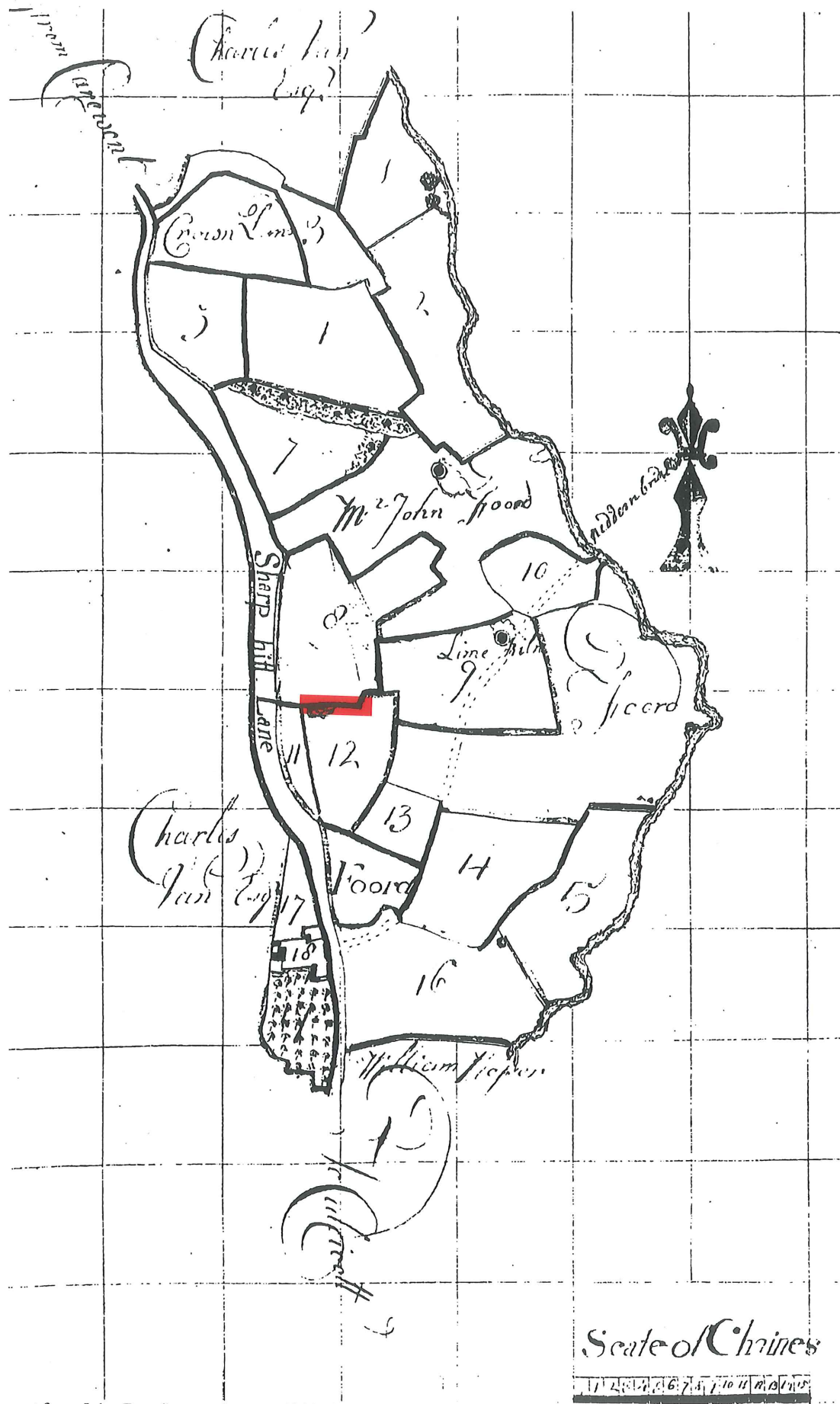


Fig.4 John Foord's pre-enclosure map of the commonable fields in the manor of Caldicot, c.1800



Fig.5 Site plan, main features

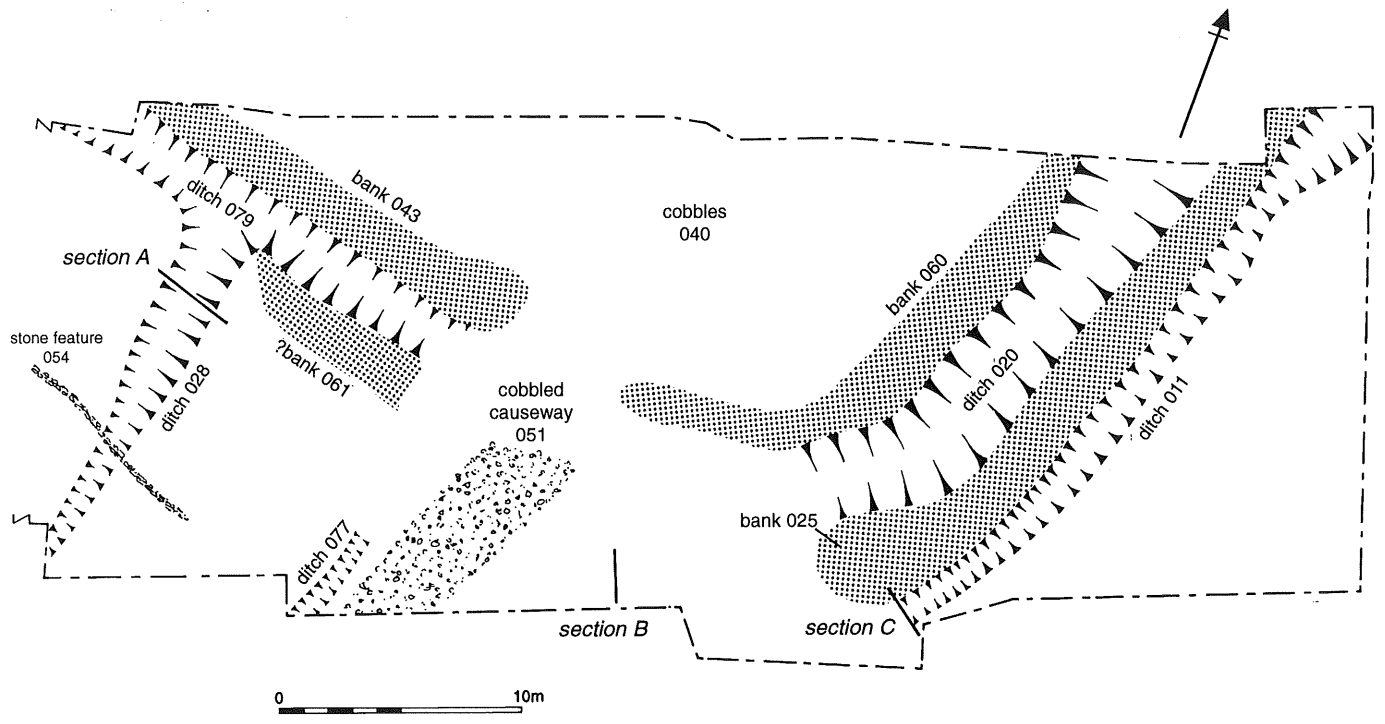


Fig.6 Interpreted site plan

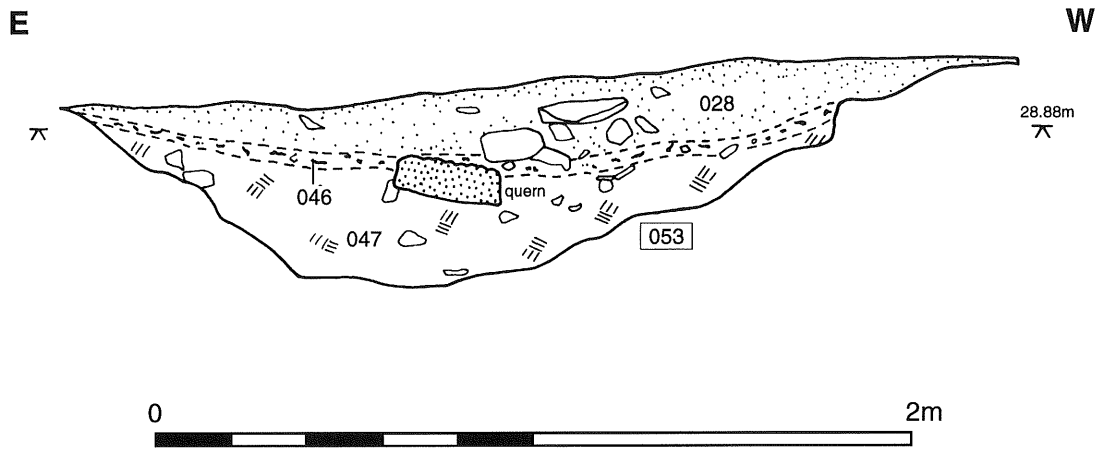


Fig.7 Section A

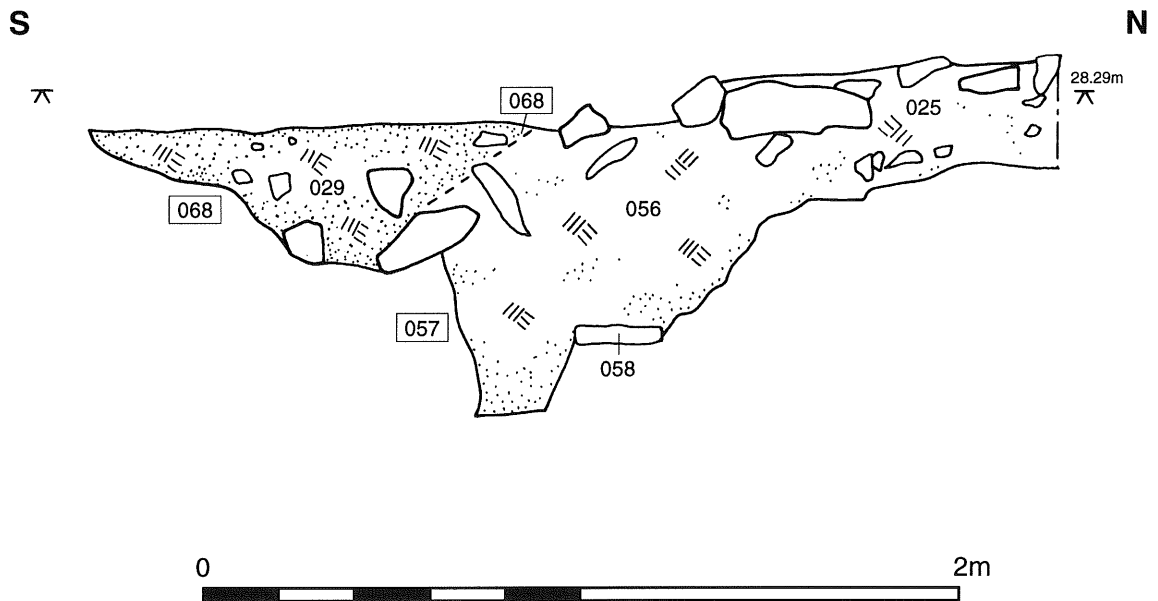


Fig.8 Section C

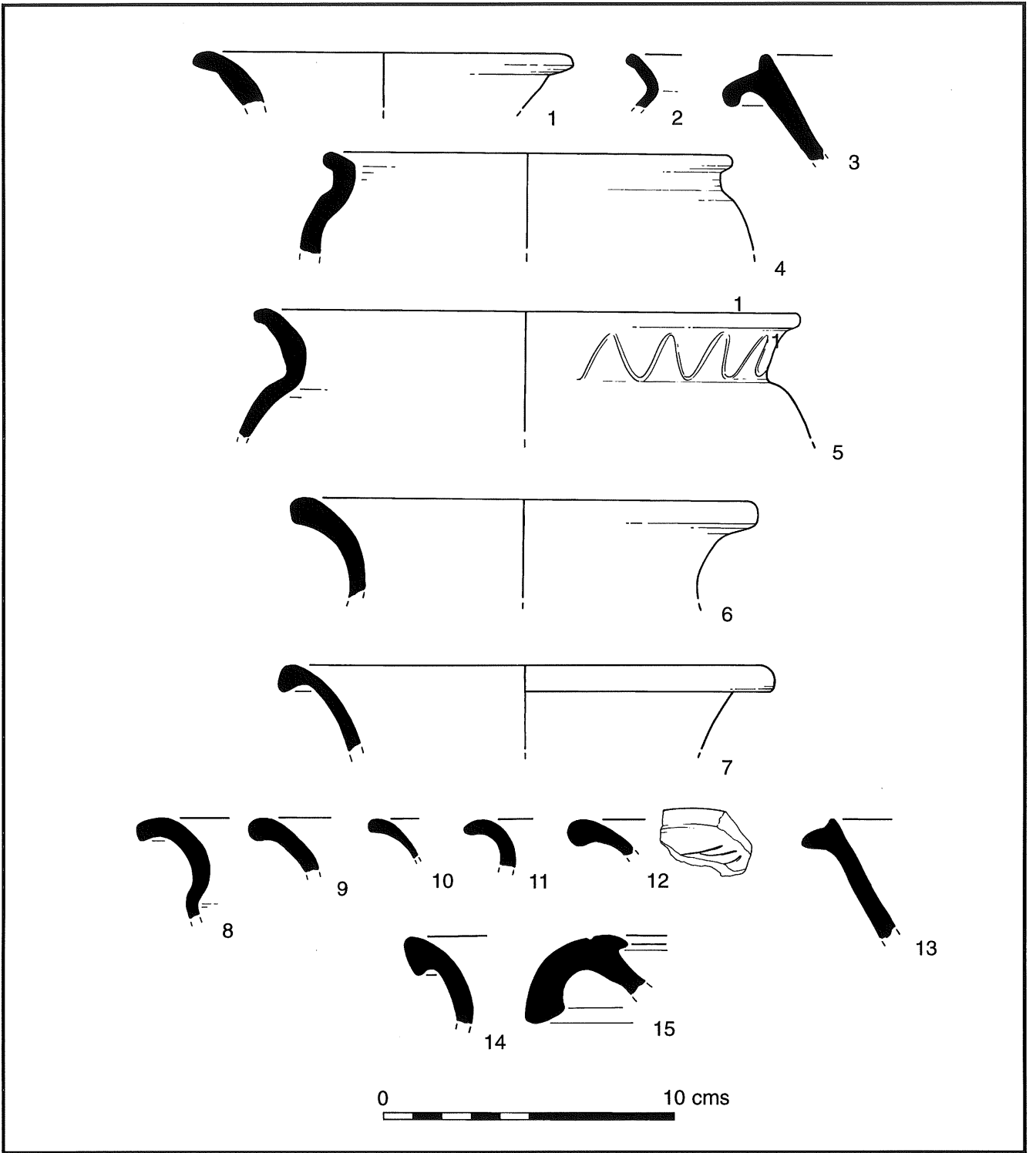


Fig.9.1

Phase 3 pottery

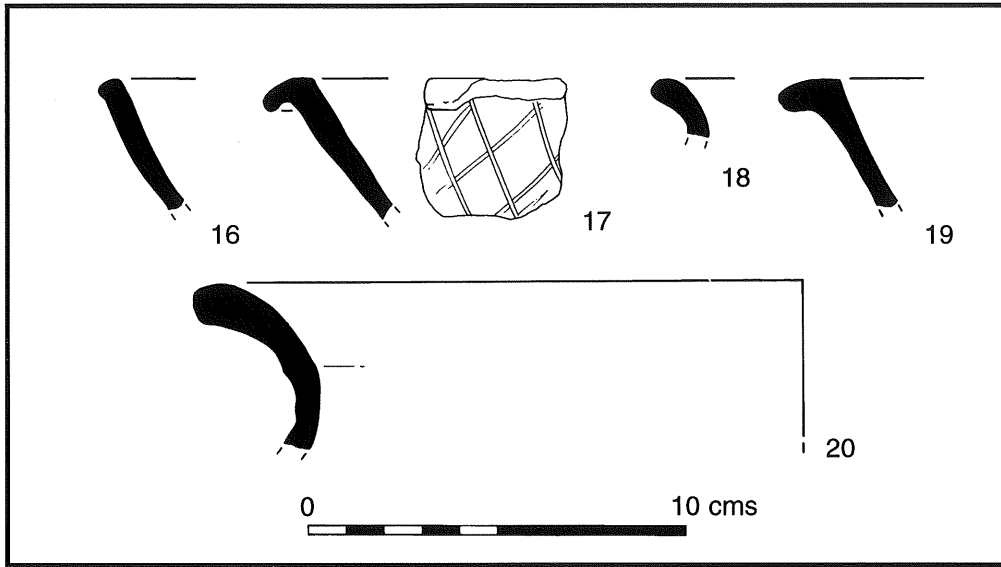


Fig.9.2 Phase 4 pottery

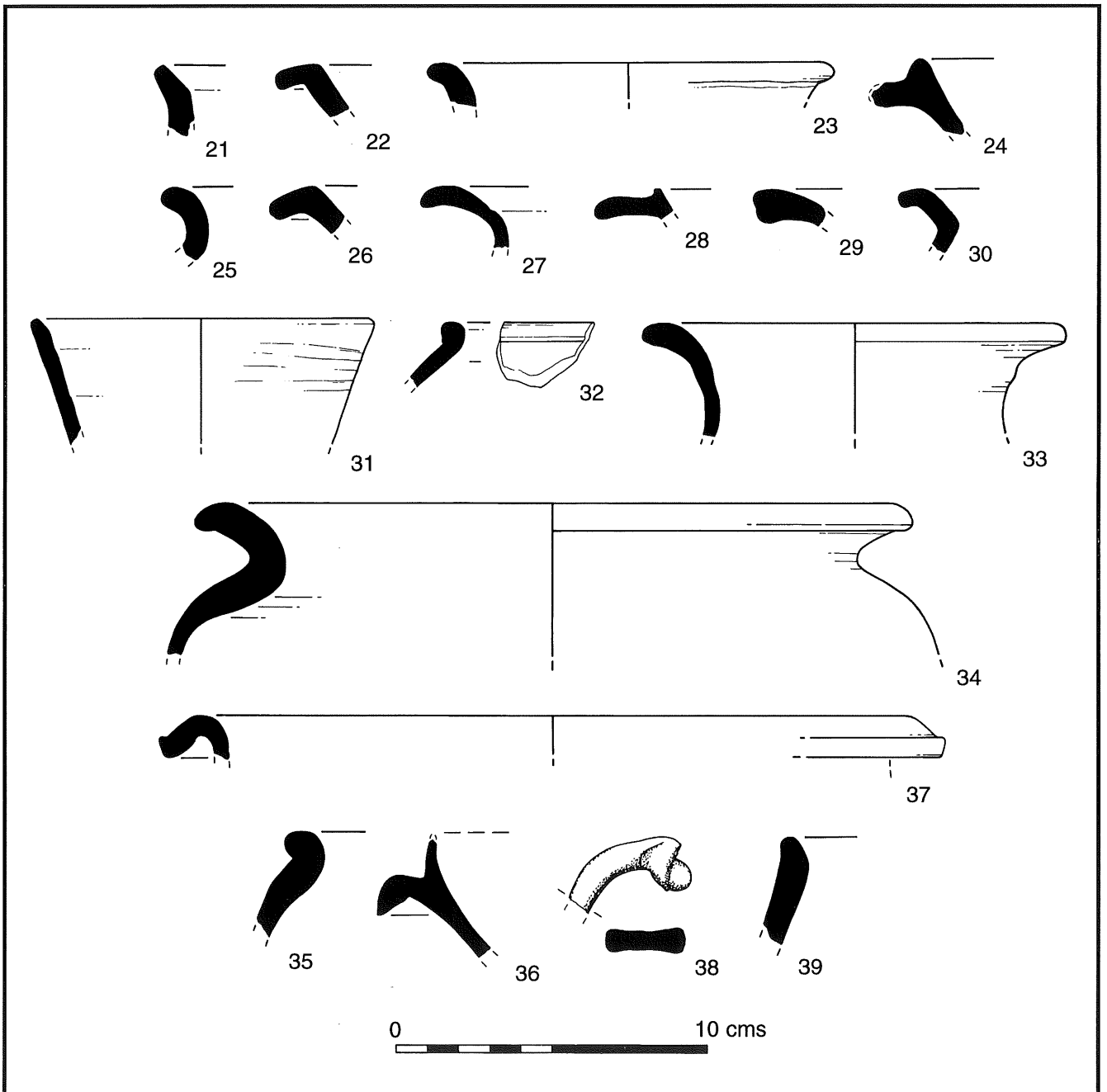


Fig.9.3 Phase 5 pottery

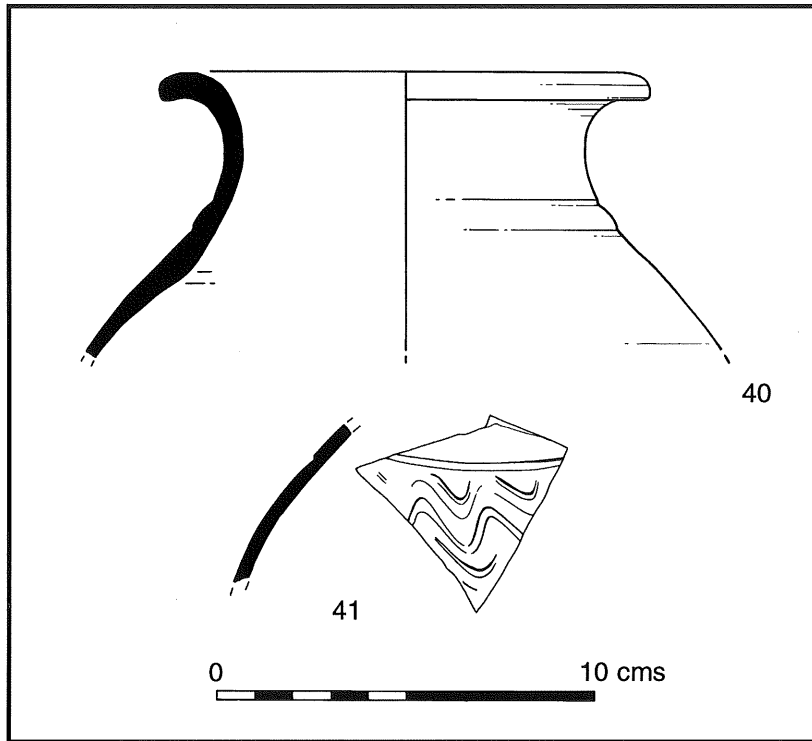


Fig.9.4 Miscellaneous pottery

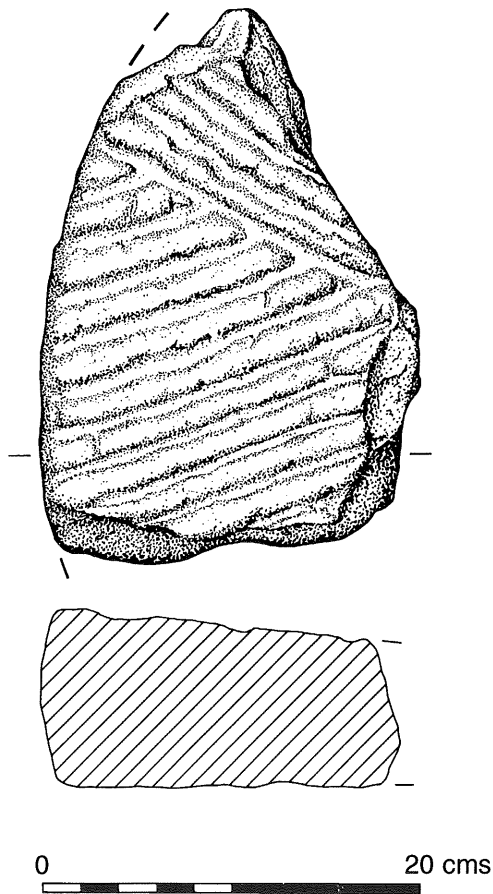


Fig.9.5 Quern stone (SF 32)



Plate 1 Section C viewed from the south-east, showing the Phase 1 features 059 and ditch 057, and the Phase 2 shallower, outer ditch 068 (foreground)



Plate 2 Large boulders at the terminus of bank 025, viewed from the south