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Evidence from Archaeological Excavations in Romsey

There have been a number of excavations carried out in Romsey that have provided evidence that could assist in our study of the Anglo-Saxons. Unfortunately, many of these excavations have not been written up or published. Archaeology is a discipline that is constantly advancing, re-interpreting its findings as new evidence becomes available. With this in mind, we need to reconsider the conclusions recorded in the excavation documents and try to reassess the currently available evidence as a whole. As a first step to this process, I have collected together location maps, plans and section drawings for those sites that are relevant for our project. I have also summarised the written evidence for each excavation. Many of the site summaries are based on Scott's unpublished 1993 report. This is also the source of most of the illustrations. I have added information on the dating of pottery finds from reports provided by Ben Jervis. Short excavation notes written for TVAT and filed in our archives provided additional details. My own comments are headed Notes.

There are a number of aspects of Anglo-Saxon Romsey that we should consider. First we need to be able to understand the natural environment in which the settlement developed. Archaeologists have been very aware that the Fishlake has been man-managed, that it does not now flow on a natural course through the town. It is clear that excavators working south of the Market Place have been expecting to find its original course. A number of stream channels have been identified in excavations in this area, but there is a curious lack of ditches in this part of town. The underlying geology of a river terrace consists of the braided channels of an ancient river. Our terrace dates back 11,500 years, to the end of the Ice Age. It would have emerged gradually from the former floodplain. We need to be able to differentiate between archaeology and geology, between river terrace and floodplain deposits.

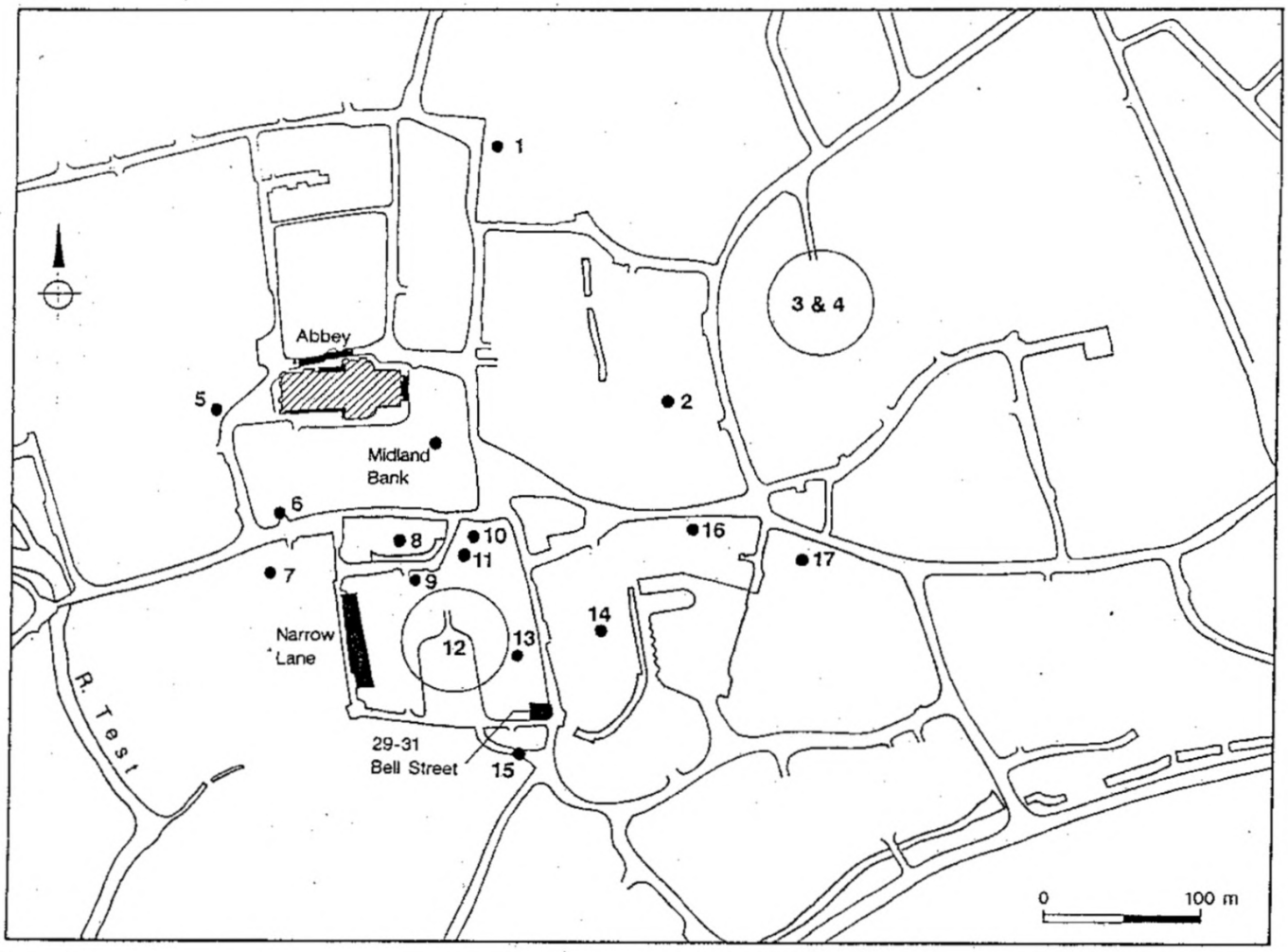
The extensive iron smelting debris marks out Romsey as an important Anglo-Saxon settlement. We need to use the available evidence to map its distribution and consider its date. Was the industry contemporary with the construction of the Fishlake? Romsey is also notable as the probable location of an early minster. The stylus was found in the excavation at Narrow Lane in a context from the iron smelting phase. What was the relationship between the ecclesiastical settlement and the iron smelting industry? Scott's observation that the cemetery in Abbey Water was free from iron slag is interesting. Was the cemetery established before iron production started? He described the linear feature south of the burials as a mill leat, now positioned further south and known as Abbey Water. I think it was part of the enclosure ditch, not a water channel. It probably pre-dates the construction of the Fishlake, so there would not have been water involved. I do not think that the cemetery extended beyond Abbey Water.

The recognition that the Fishlake is man-made requires a re-think of the development of Romsey. Its construction was a major undertaking. Tracing its course and identifying channels leading from it will help us understand its date and purpose, and to assess its impact on the town. It would have provided a water supply and a system of waste disposal. Did it power any of the Domesday mills and, if so, where were they located? I think that the east branch was built as a mill leat, possibly pre-Conquest. The west branch could have served as a canal carrying building materials for the Saxon and Norman abbeys.

The various excavations should be accurately mapped. By mapping the sites in QGIS we will be able to relate the features to the topography and geology of the town. We will also be able to consider changes to property boundaries.

These notes were originally prepared in 2017 as five separate files. Excavations that did not uncover any Anglo-Saxon archaeology were not included.

Site location map - Scott 1993



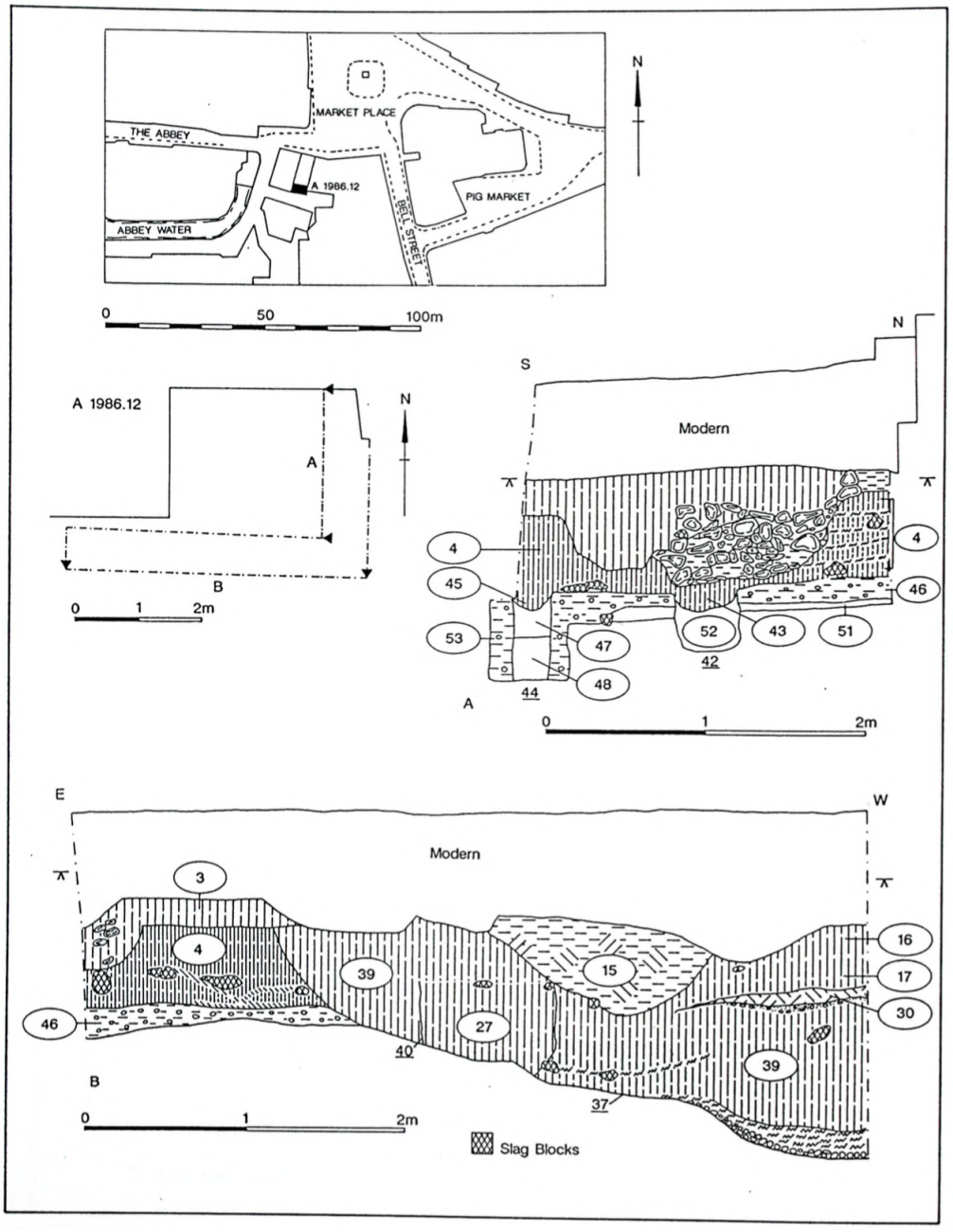
1. Whitbread Brewery (A 1986.8)
2. Latimer Street Car Park
3. Orchard House (A 1985.25)
4. Orchard House Car Park (A 1990.3)
5. Abbey West, 1988 (A 1988.6) (including Abbey Green Soakaway)
6. 21-23, The Abbey (A 1990.4)
7. La Sagesse Convent (A 1988.31)
8. Abbey United Reformed Church (A 1989.14)
9. 10, Abbey Water (A 1986.7)
10. 4, Market Place ("Creatures") (A 1986.12)
11. Town Hall Car Park
12. Newton Lane Car Park
13. Angel Hotel, Bell Street (A 1984.4)
14. Baptist Chapel, Bell Street (A 1992.27)
15. Newton Lane Link (A 1989.16)
16. 11, The Hundred (A 1988.4)
17. 35, The Hundred ("Waitrose" extension) (A 1988.15)

Creatures Pet Shop, 4, The Market Place

(Scott 1993) The excavation at Creatures pet shop (currently an ice cream parlour) in the Market Place uncovered a feature, numbered 37 in the section drawing, described as a possible stream channel. It cut through a layer containing iron smelting debris and mid to late Saxon pottery. Fills contained Saxon pottery comparable to late Hamwic. The report says: ‘If this channel was a Saxon creation, it will have been late in date, and may possibly be connected with the creation of the mill leet Abbey water. The line of the Fishlake/ Shitlake may have been altered during this work.’ The ditch cut Context 4 which contained large quantities of smelting slag and furnace or hearth lining. The N-S section shows a deposit of flint rubble, labelled in Steve's file as possibly from a bridge or building.

Jervis identified four phases on the site:

Phase 1: Romano-British - Sherds mainly from Roman features.
Phase 2: Mid-Saxon - Context 4 was a layer of dark soil containing iron smelting slag. A Mid-Saxon sherd along with later Anglo-Saxon/Saxo-Norman wares suggests the possibility that iron smelting continued beyond the Mid-Saxon period. However, the later sherds could be intrusive.
Phase 3a: Channel 37 - Apart from 3 residual Roman sherds, all the pottery from the feature was Saxo-Norman.
Phase 3b: Features cutting channel 37 - No pottery recovered.
Phase 3c: Medieval layers - Pottery is noticeably later than 3a, including some of late 14th century date.
Phase 4: Post-Medieval



Additional information was recorded in a TVAT paper dated 1987 on excavations, in the ring file. This is the full description of the site:

Market Place, Romsey:

Excavations, by Dr A D Russel for TVAT, took place in advance of building work. The premises, Creatures, is on the south side of the Market Place, and just to the east of the Abbey precinct.

Phase 1 consisted of deposits and postholes with pottery dated to the second half of the 4th century.

Phase 2 consisted of the dumping of a layer of iron slag, crushed iron ore, burnt and vitrified daub and charcoal some 0.54m thick. This layer contained handmade pottery tempered with vegetable matter and flint and a sherd of Winchester-type ware.

In phase 3 a large feature, possibly a water channel associated with the founding of the Abbey (c.907) cut through the slag layer and was in turn filled with slag-rich deposits in Phase 4 marked by chalk-tempered pottery.

Phase 5 was marked by the digging of a number of postholes packed with slag, and the construction of two lengths of flint walling in 0.40m deep construction trenches. The walls were bonded with soil containing late Roman pottery. The collapse of the flint walls was associated with a pit containing flint-tempered pottery tentatively ascribed a late Saxon date and sealing a layer containing much mortar. This in turn was sealed by a layer with scratched ware.

This sequence parallels that found in the Narrow Lane 1979 excavations 100m to the south and recently reinterpreted as being evidence of middle/late Saxon rather than late Roman iron smelting. The smelting is unlikely to have been carried out such a short distance from the Romsey nunnery with its princely inhabitants and is thought to date from between 700 and 900.

Notes: The channel runs north-south and is very likely to be the outflow of the Fishlake, perhaps the original course of the western branch. It cuts through a thick layer of iron smelting debris, suggesting that the Fishlake is later than the period of the iron working. The TVAT paper provides far more information on the extent of iron smelting evidence than the notes prepared by Scott. Slag was used as packing in postholes that are of a later phase than the channel, and slag was found in the infill along with Saxo-Norman pottery. The slag could have been residual, or there could have been a later phase of smelting beyond the Mid-Saxon period.

We need to the find site plans and field notes. How do the postholes and flint walls relate to the channel?

Town Hall Car Park

1988

The observation of a soakaway trench just south of the Creatures Pet Shop excavation revealed a black soil horizon with iron slag. This was sealed by a compacted layer of iron slag. There were no datable finds. Similar deposits of deep, black soil containing slag and charcoal were found further south in Newton Lane Car Park and Tee Court. It did not extend as far south as the Newton Lane Link Road.

3, Bell Street (Wells Butchers)

Southampton City Council Archaeology Unit 2002

This summary is taken from a paper by Andy Russel.

The site was located to the rear of 3, Bell Street, south of the Town Hall. Most of the finds were from a large pit. It was perhaps dug to obtain gravel and was then apparently used to dispose of waste from iron working, probably from the immediate vicinity. Evidence of iron smelting including a large number of small fragments of crushed iron ore and clay fragments, possibly remains of furnace shafts. Iron working was indicated by concavo-convex hearth bottoms formed in the centre of a blacksmith's forge. Slag spheres are 'typical products of the hammering of iron to produce iron blooms or artifacts. Evidence of iron working as opposed to iron smelting is not common in Romsey.'

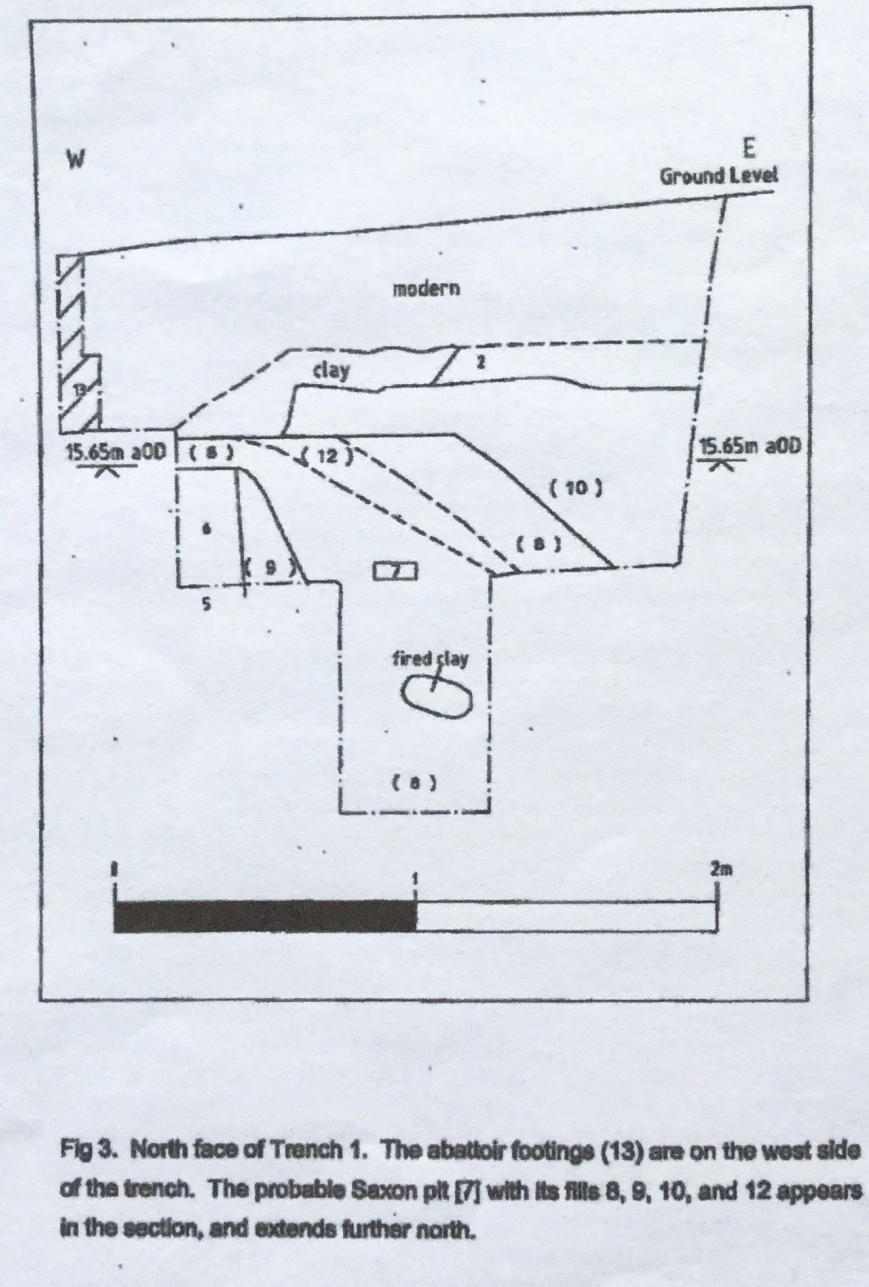


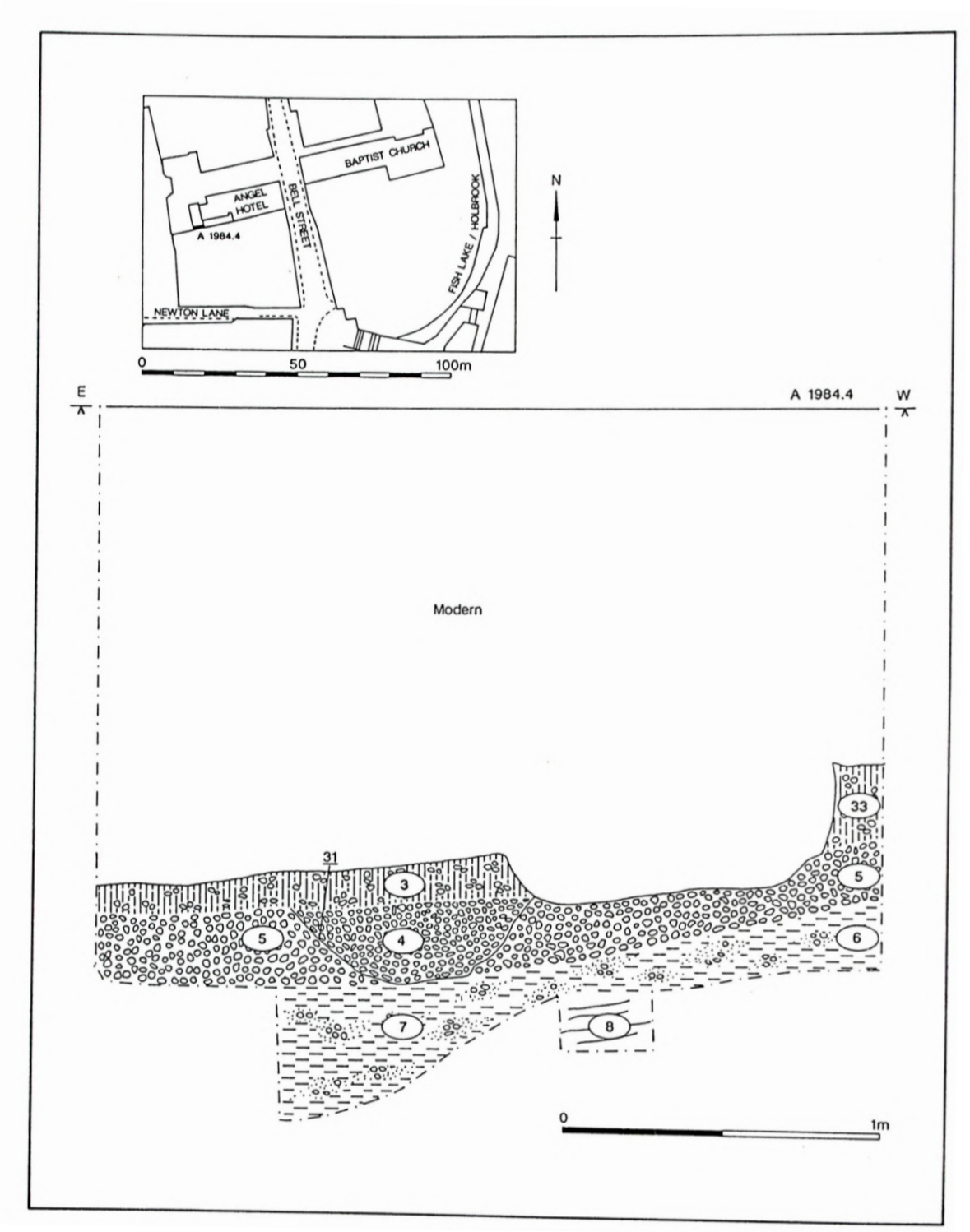
Fig 3. North face of Trench 1. The abattoir footings (13) are on the west side of the trench. The probable Saxon pit [7] with its fills 8, 9, 10, and 12 appears in the section, and extends further north.

Left: Section drawing from Steve's file.

Abstract from site record on ADS by Andy Russel: A soil investigation borehole and an archaeological test-pit prodiuced a deep pit with iron smelting and iron working waste, probably Saxon in date, overlain by 2m of made ground. Residual Roman pottery was also recovered. Unusual finds were many fragments from a large number of greensand querns.

Angel Hotel, Bell Street

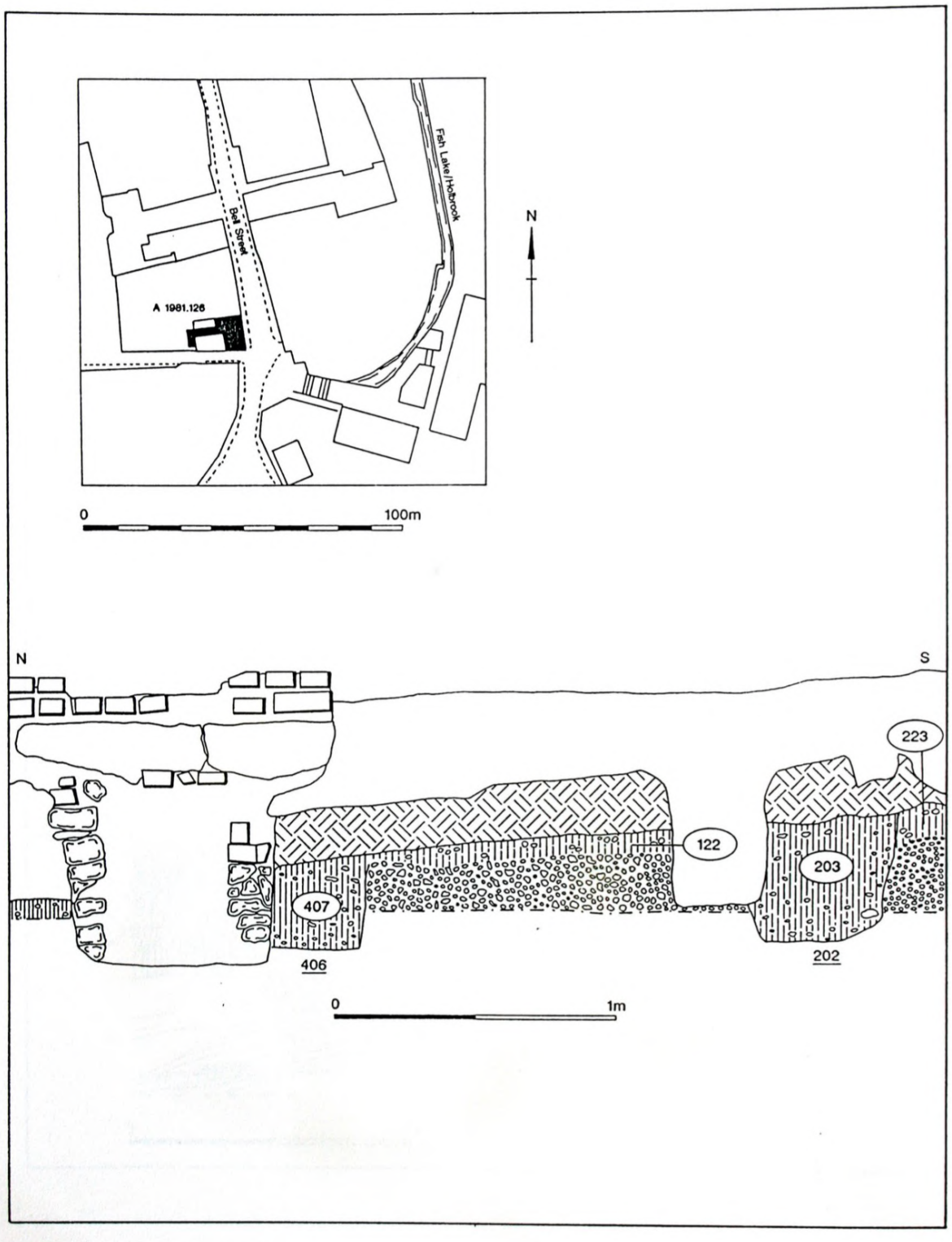
A small scale salvage excavation to the rear of the hotel, now La Parisienne, revealed the upper fills of an early stream channel. Layers 3, 4, 5 & 6=7 contained later Roman pottery. A piece of a shale bangle or bracelet was found in layer 5.



29, Bell Street

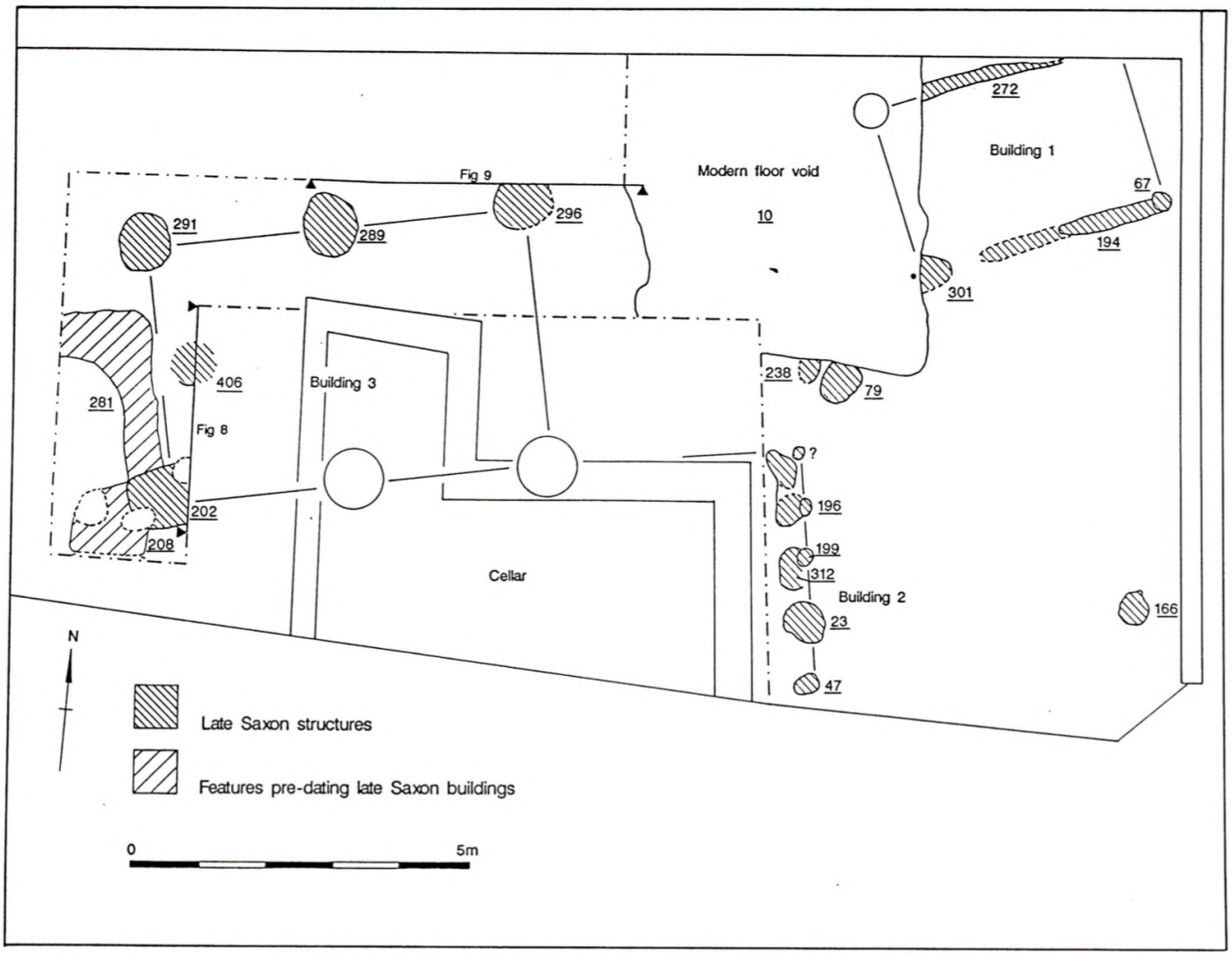
The excavation followed the demolition of a timber framed structure at the corner of Bell Street and Newton Lane. The site was effectively cut in two by more recent features, and the stratigraphy in each of the two parts was quite different.

Notes: An additional section drawing is included at the end of this paper under the heading Bell Street. It is compared with a section from an HFC article.



29, Bell Street buildings

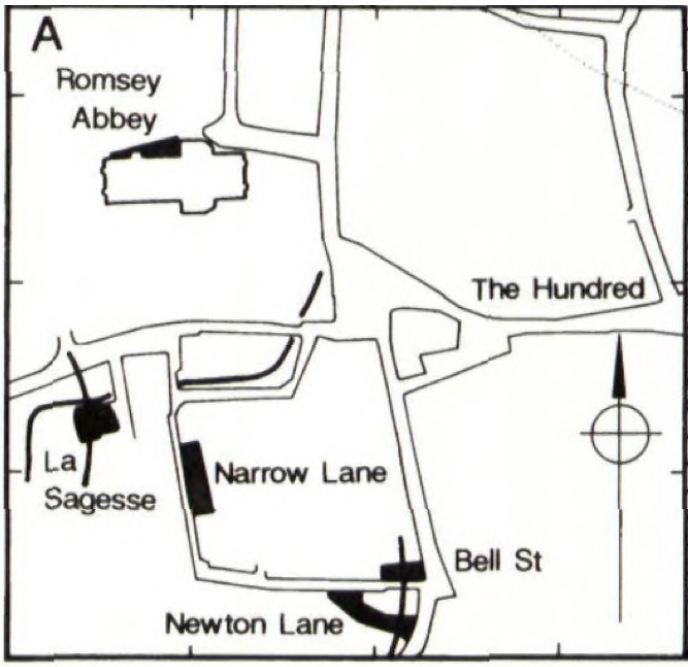
There were traces of two possible buildings on the eastern part of the site, fronting Bell Street. Three buildings, described as Late Saxon, were found on the western side. These are described in some detail. Building 1 is on a different orientation from the other buildings and might be earlier. One posthole in Building 3 was packed with large blocks of iron slag.



In a discussion with Frank Green, he described the building as an aisled barn similar to one at Portchester. He interpreted a layer overlying the area as material deposited underneath a raised wooden floor.

Bell Street

This is based on an article in HFC, Vol. 49, 1993, 19-46, Helen Rees, 'Later Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Settlement in the Lower Test Valley'. The partial section drawing in that paper is compared to the drawing in Scott's unpublished report.



Left: HFC Vol. 49
Location map with existing watercourses and excavated 'stream channels' mapped as linear features.

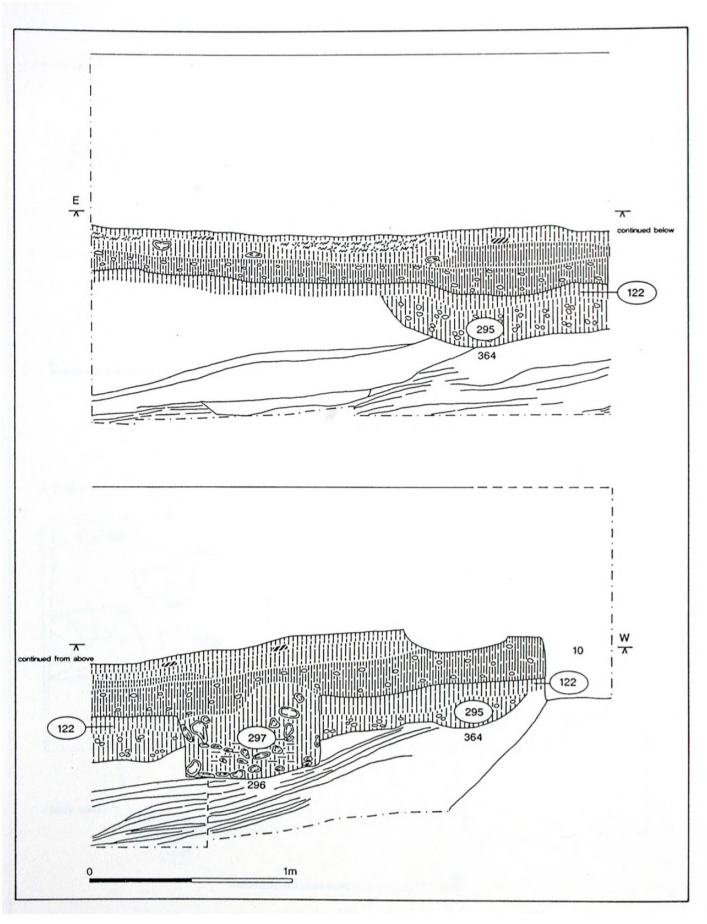
Below left: Scott 1993, Fig. 9, Bell Street section.

Below right: HFC Vol. 49
The stratigraphically earliest levels on this site comprised tufaceous gravels, interpreted as the fill of an abandoned stream channel.

327 White tufaceous gravel
365 grey brown silt, with charcoal and peat
320 fine grey soil with flint gravel
321 tufaceous marl

Pottery of later Bronze Age date, a relatively large flint assemblage and animal bones were found in fine soil and gravel layer 320. The bones included domesticated horse, cattle and pig along with a fragment of red deer bone and the ulna of a beaver. Pottery and some animal bone was also recovered from layer 327.

TVAT 1993 Fieldwork (ring file): Site to rear of 29 and 31 was largely occupied by a wide stream channel. Overlying the silted stream was a thin, dirty gravel layer cut by postholes, pits and gullies, possibly late Saxon to Medieval. East of these was a broadly contemporary second, smaller silted stream containing Romano-British and early medieval pottery.



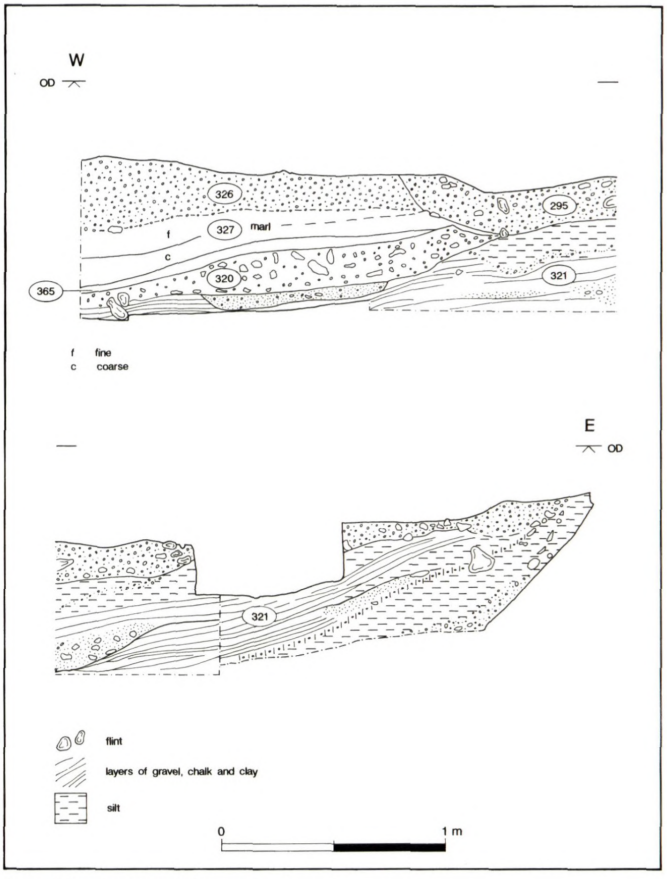


Fig 5. Bell Street: Section through the stream channel.

Abbey United Reform Church

TVAT 1989

The following is taken from a TVAT paper in the ring file written by Ian Scott with the addition of details about the graves from Scott 1993.

The excavation took place in the Abbey Manse in advance of the building of an extension to the Church Hall. The site was approximately 70m south of the Abbey, just to the north of Abbey Water which it is thought formed the southern boundary of the precinct of the medieval nunnery. The excavation revealed part of a medieval cemetery, and the original north bank of Abbey Water, which lies about 10m north of the present stream.

The cemetery had been badly disturbed in recent times. Nine possible graves were observed, six of which were excavated. One of these was a charcoal burial, possibly 9th century. In addition there were a number of groups of bones which had been partly sorted with long bones bundled together. These could represent the reburial of disturbed inhumations. 'The cemetery was clearly in use over a long period.'

Scott suggested that the cemetery related to an earlier ecclesiastical establishment separate from the Abbey. He noted that there was no iron smelting debris from the site which was found in deposits up to 1m thick to the east, west and northwest, and south of the site. 'This suggests that the cemetery site was occupied for some purpose other than industrial use by the Middle Saxon period when the iron smelting operation began.'

Scott, 1996, Romsey Abbey:

The site is discussed along with a plan and a section drawing. Context 31 is described as the edge of the Abbey mill leat, 10m north of its current location. It cut the edge of grave 43.

Notes: Abbey Water is fed by the Fishlake. Was the 'original' stream an earlier outflow channel of the Fishlake or a boundary ditch for the church precinct?

Charcoal burials represent a late Saxon ritual. They have been dated as early as the 9th century, but mostly to the 10th to 12th centuries. They are probably high status individuals.

Burials were noted in the 1930s during sewerage works near the arch on the access road to Narrow Lane (comment by Frank Green).

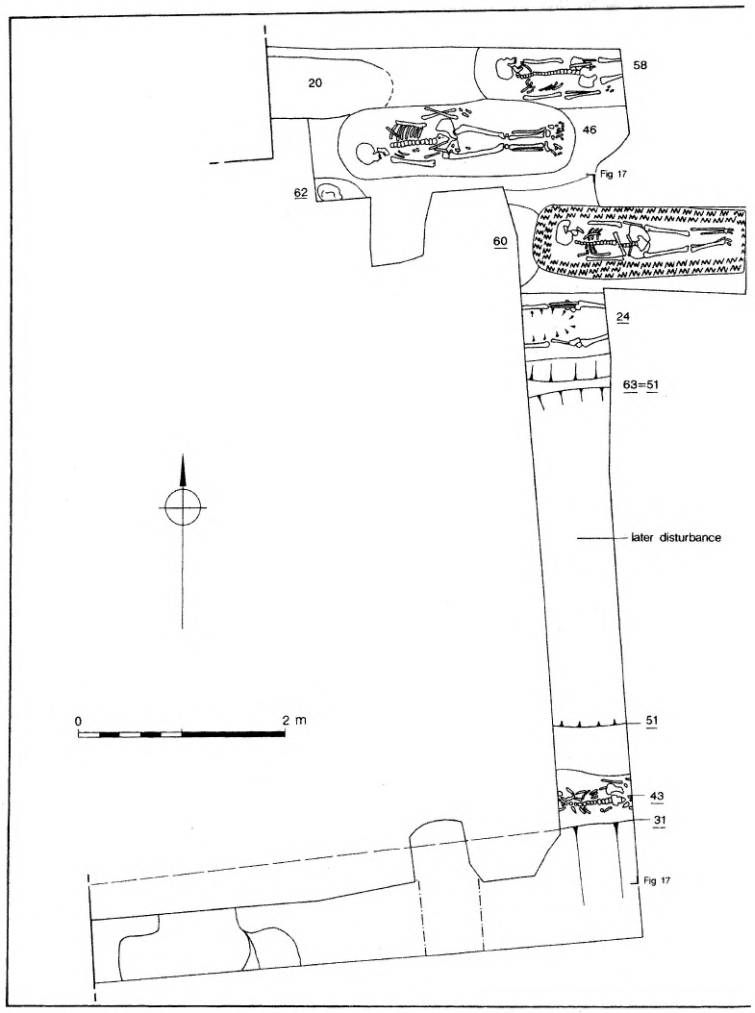


Fig 17 A 1989.14, United Reformed Church: Plan of the graves.

The plan shows intersecting grave cuts in the northern part of the trench and the edge of the channel, 31, at the southern end. The graves in the central area had been completely destroyed by later activities. In his discussion of the skeletal remains on page 146, he refers to contexts 22, 26 and 30 (not shown on the illustrations) as evidence for the disturbance and re-burial of remains, probably occurring following the suppression of the nunnery.

Scott assigned graves 20, 58 and 60 to his Phase 7, pre-dating the Late Saxon Abbey (p. 27). Grave 43 might belong to this phase. Graves 42, 46 and 56 were contemporary with the late Saxon Abbey, Phase 8.

Grave 42, the skeleton of an adult male, was a charcoal burial 'and presumably contemporary with the other charcoal burials on the site' (page 41). Scott comments that it is unusual to find a charcoal burial so far from a church. Charcoal burials were found in excavations undertaken in 1975 and 1979 near the Abbey (page 24). These are probably the other burials referred to.

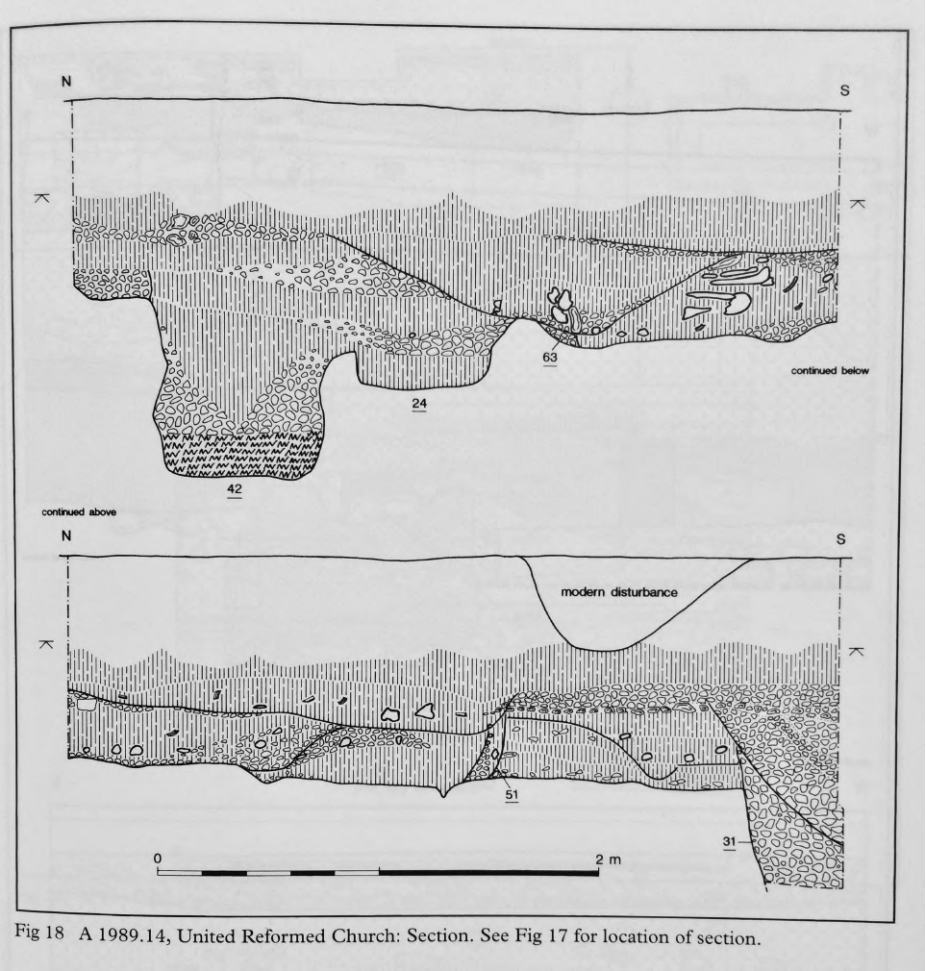


Fig 18 A 1989.14, United Reformed Church: Section. See Fig 17 for location of section.

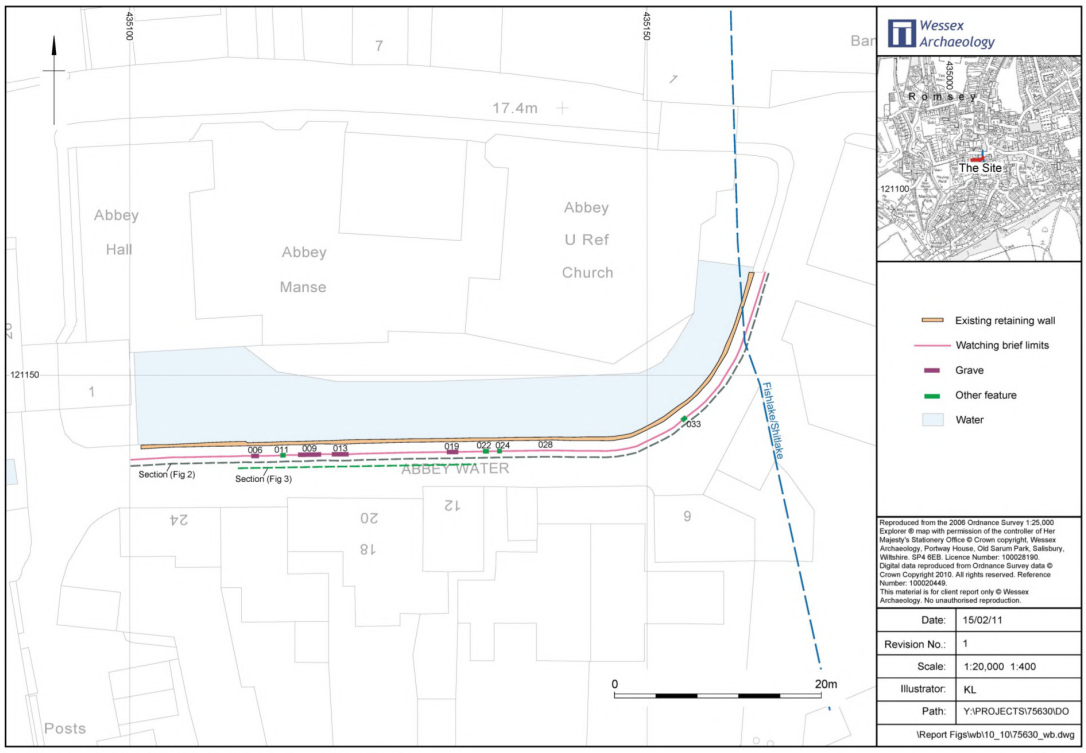
Notes: The section shows that the grave containing the charcoal burial was dug to a greater depth than the other graves, perhaps another indication of the individual's higher status. This grave appears on the plan above to be at a slightly different orientation to the other graves.

The ditch at the south end of the trench appears to have been recut. This could explain the disturbance of the burial on its edge.

A watching brief identified three probable graves, features 006, 009 and 019, all with fragments of human bones. None of the remains were recovered. A possible fourth grave, 013, was visible in the trench section. No bones were found within it. The graves might be associated with burials on the United Reform Church site or represent an otherwise previously unknown cemetery south of Abbey Water.

A possible channel, indicated by the presence of alluvial deposits, was noted towards the eastern end of the trench, c. 5m west of the point at which the existing course of Abbey Water turns to run east-west.

Note: The URC burials were aligned west-east, as would be expected for Christian burials. The section recorded here should have cut burials on this alignment lengthways. The features illustrated are too narrow - they must be oriented north-south. This would indicate earlier, pagan burials rather than a continuation of the URC cemetery. The grave cuts are sealed by layer 004 which contained post-medieval pottery. The ground level had been lowered to this surface leaving only the bases of the graves and fragments of human bone.



Location plan, showing Abbey Water and approximate feature locations

Figure 1

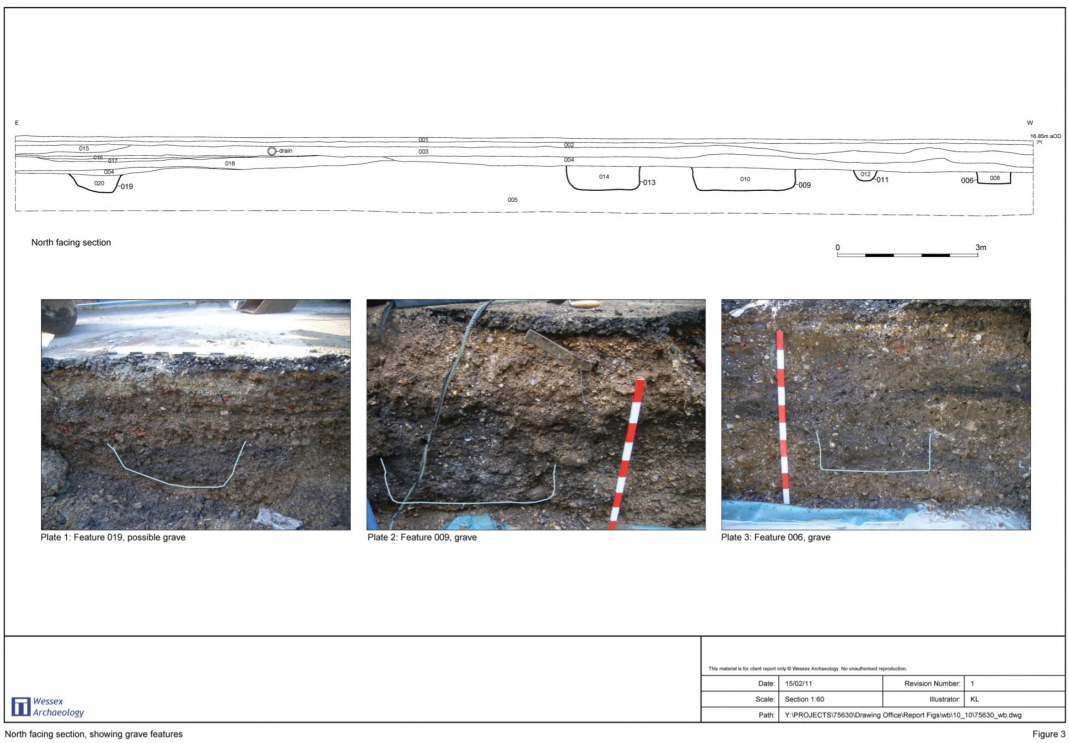


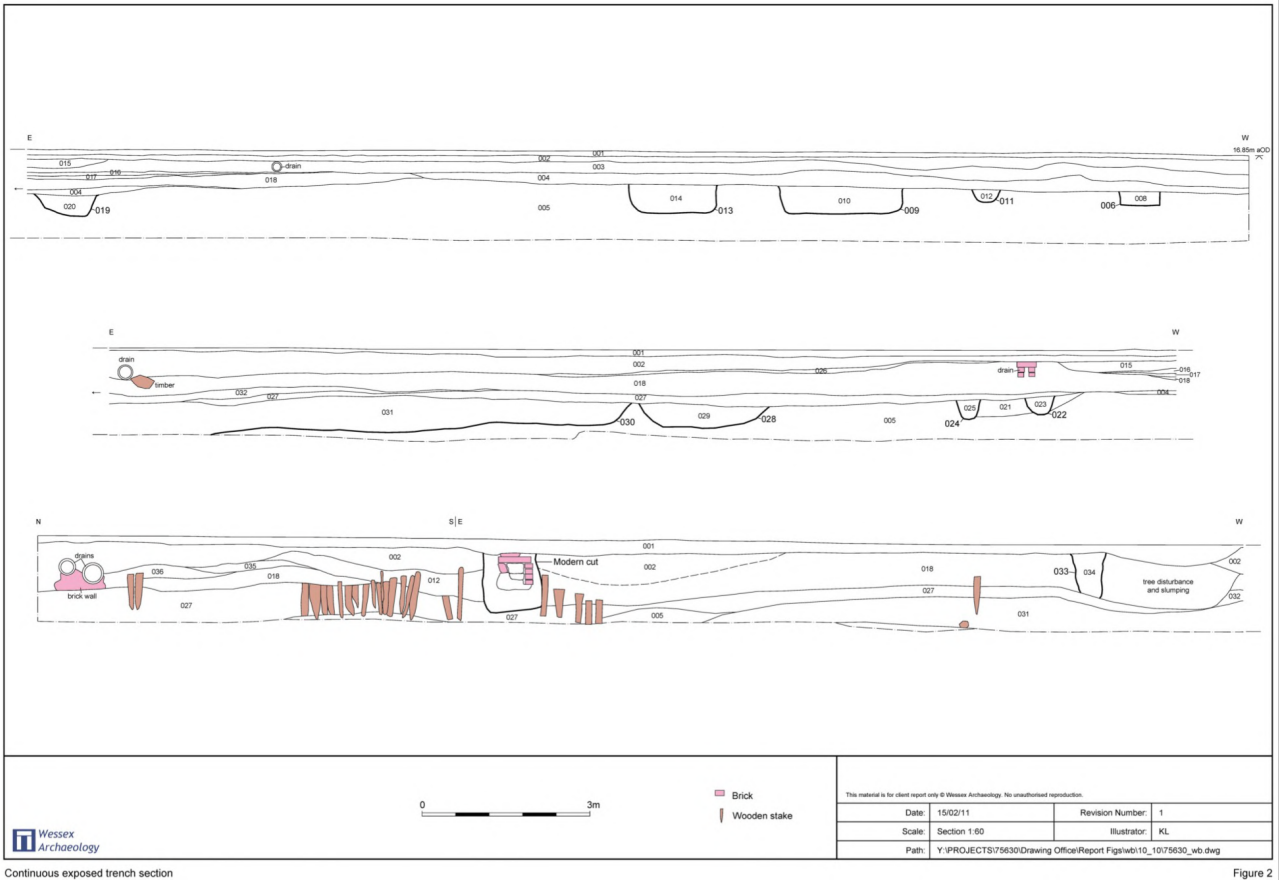
Plate 1: Feature 019, possible grave

Plate 2: Feature 009, grave

Plate 3: Feature 006, grave

North facing section, showing grave features

Figure 3



Continuous exposed trench section

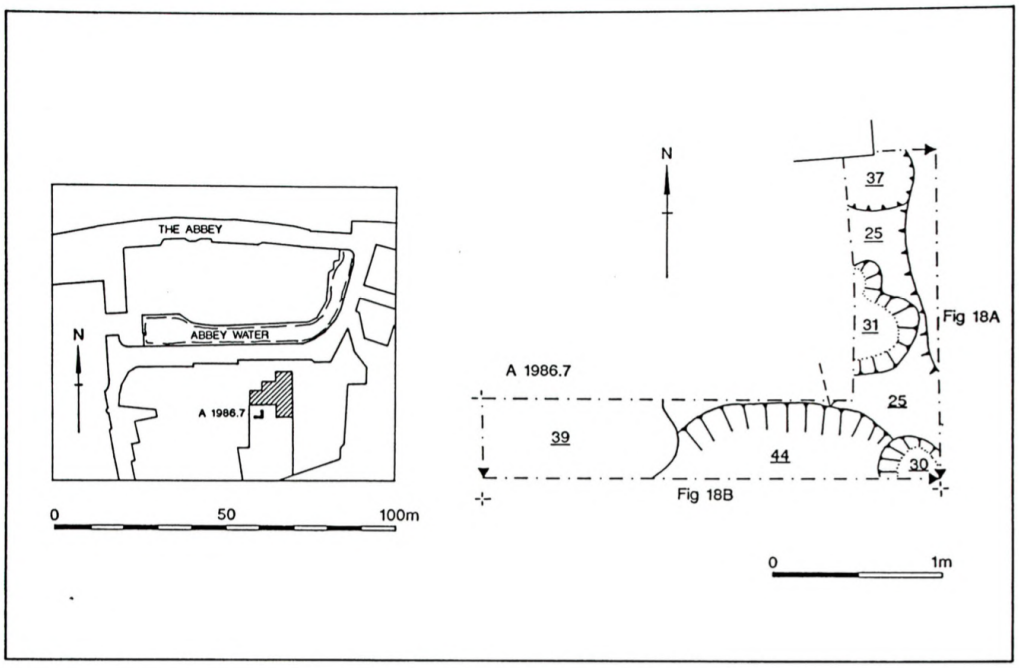
Figure 2

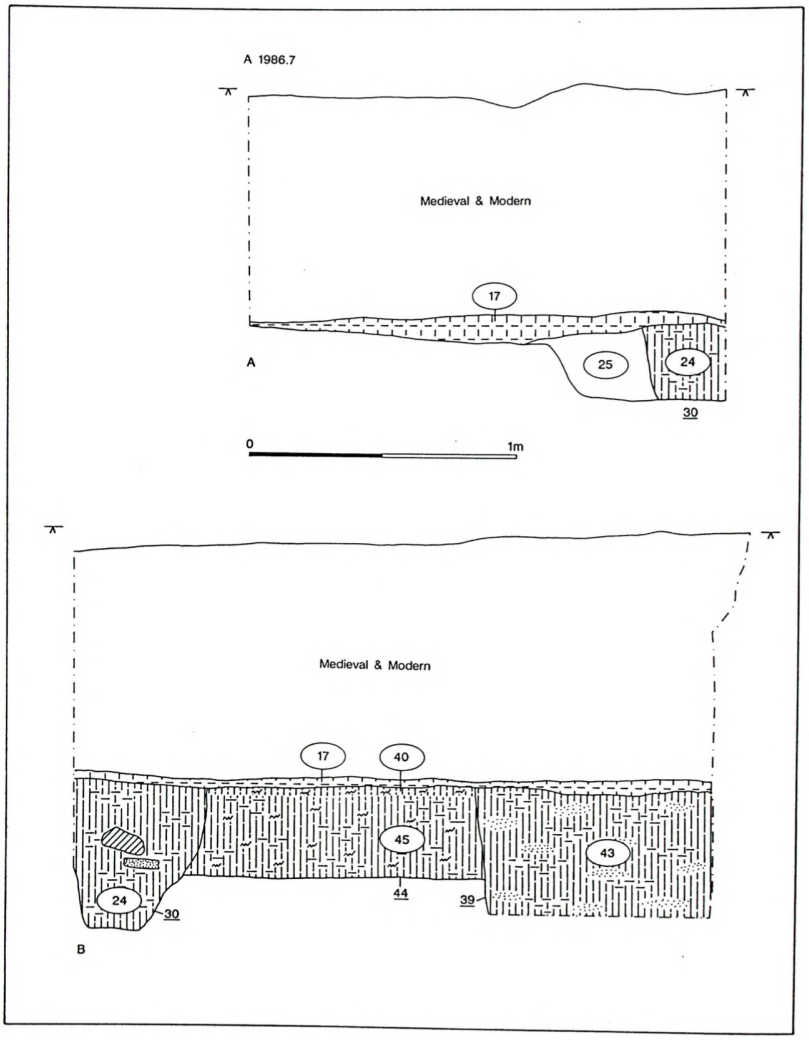
Above is a drawing of the complete section. It faces north. The wooden stakes were interpreted as driven piles forming part of the retaining wall built in c.1905. A replacement concrete-based wall was built in c. 1950.

10, Abbey Water

The excavation found pits and postholes containing early Medieval pottery beneath a layer (17) containing early Medieval to 19th century pottery.

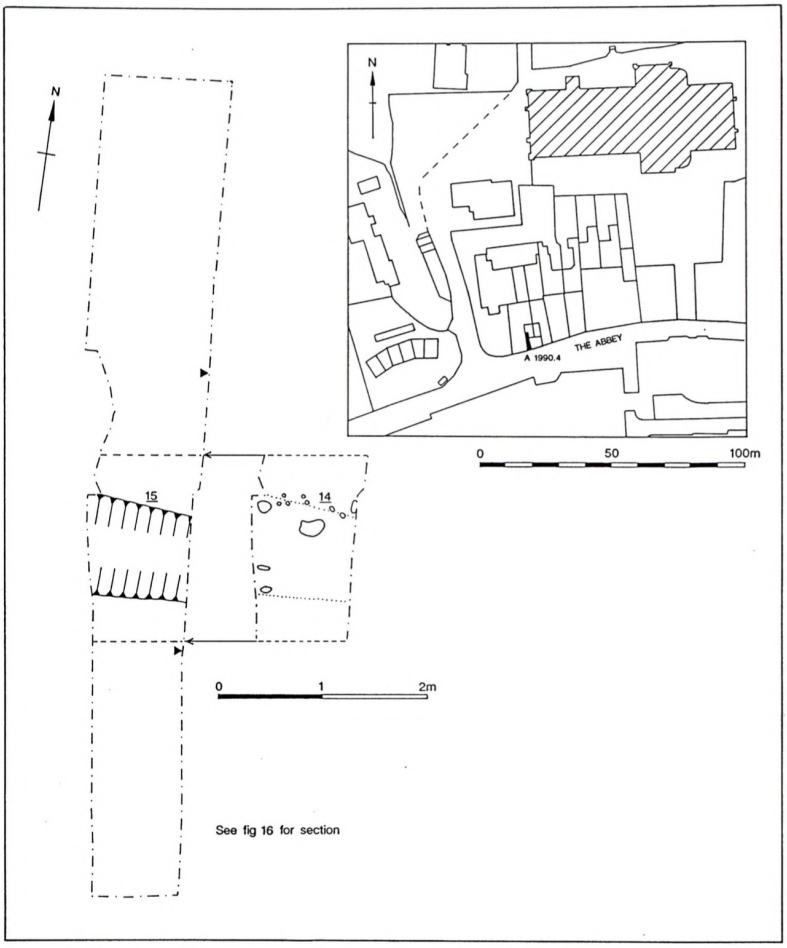
A TVAT paper on Excavations dated 1987 adds the following information:
Beneath 0.9m of post-medieval features was found a pit being cut by the foundations of a building of trench and posthole construction. These features contained early medieval and Roman pottery together with iron slag, iron ore, daub and limestone.

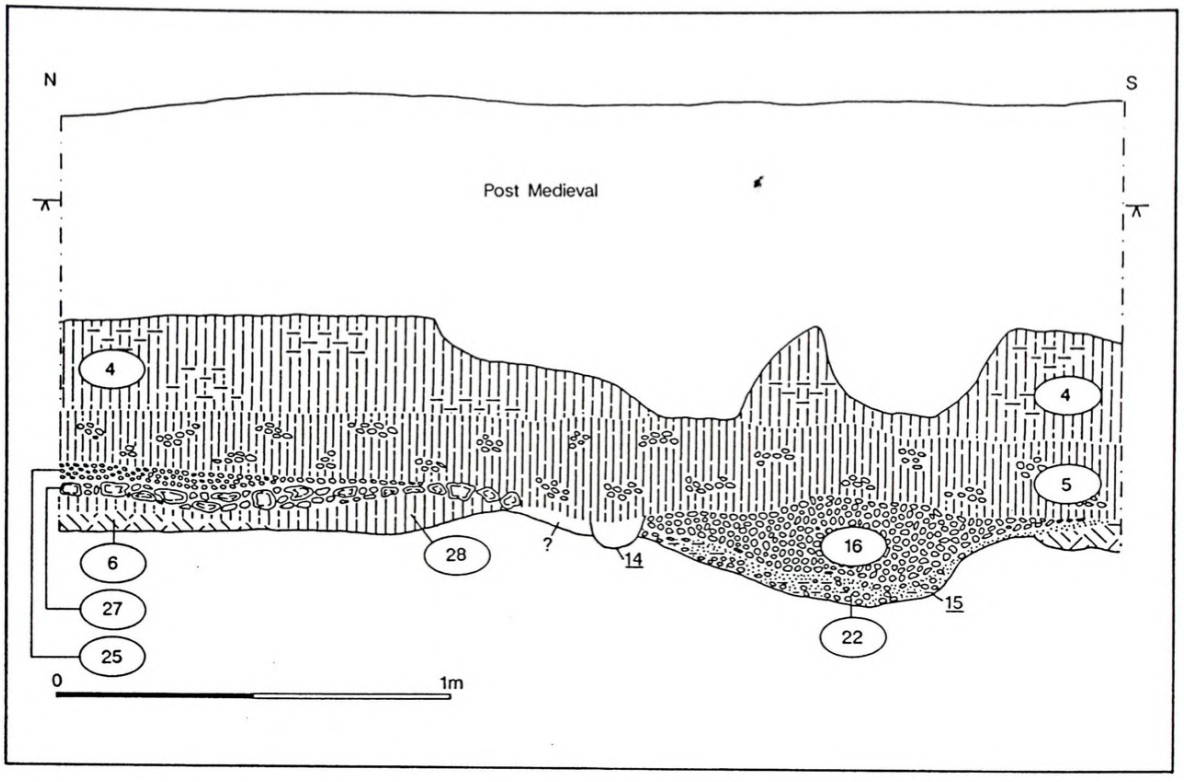




21-23, The Abbey

Two small pits or postholes were sealed beneath a layer of silt and clay (6) containing small quantities of oyster shell, burnt flint and iron slag. A shallow ditch (15) between 0.8 and 0.95m wide and 0.25m deep (at least 1.3m below the modern surface) cut layer 6. It might have marked a boundary. There was a later line of stakeholes (14) on the same alignment. Stratigraphically, the ditch could be as early as late Saxon





Narrow Lane

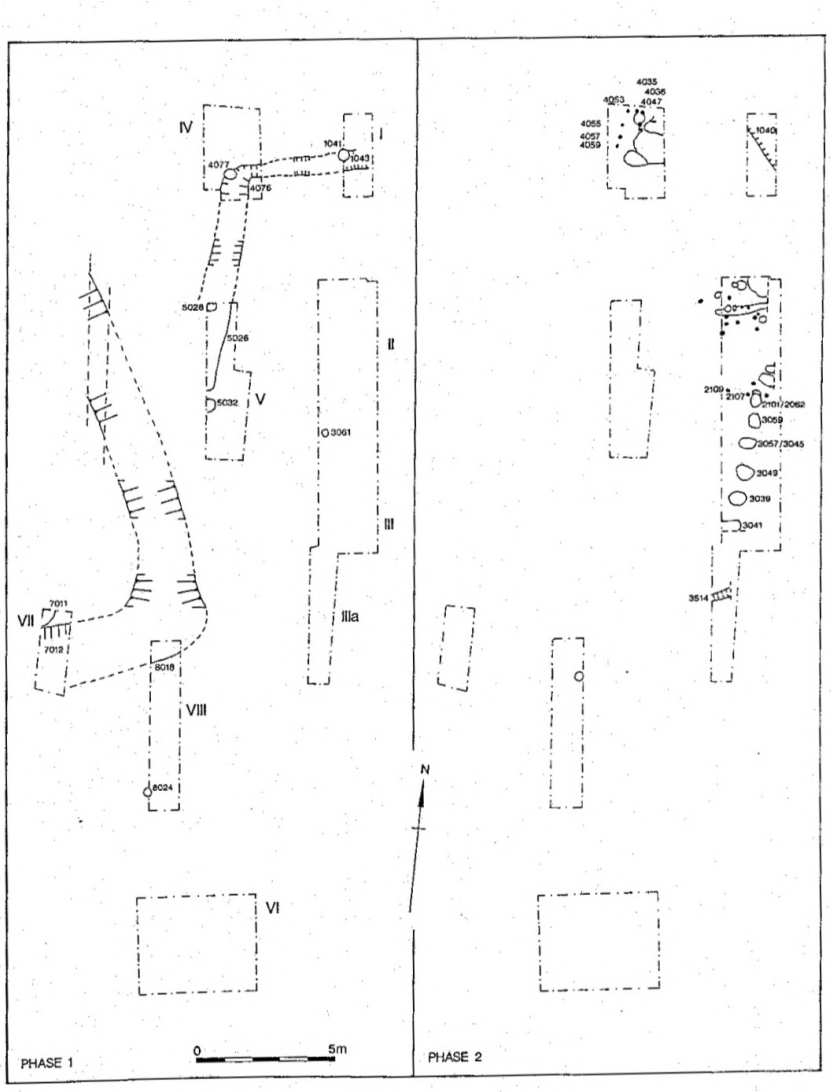
The site was excavated and observed during 1979, 1981 and 1983. It lies on the east side of Narrow Lane extending north-south for 60m with a width of between 14m and 16m. At its northern end it is 19m south of Abbey Water. Only 8 small trenches were excavated. The re-working of the black soil and iron smelting debris made it difficult to differentiate features. The identification of spatially related features between trenches was limited to a few groups of features.

Jervis (AR 10) analysed the assemblage of pottery from the site. He noted that gardening activity had resulted in the presence of intrusive material in earlier features. Although the iron working layer contained both Roman and later Medieval and post-Medieval pottery, the larger sherds of Saxon pottery dated it to the Anglo-Saxon period. The types of wares demonstrate that it accumulated from, perhaps, the 7th/8th - 10th/11th centuries.

Narrow Lane phases 1 and 2

The dating of features assigned to Phase 1 is uncertain. There were small quantities of Iron Age and Romano-British pottery in the ditches, but middle to late Saxon pottery in the fill of a pit cut by a ditch. The limited number of features suggests that the main centre of occupation during this phase was away from the excavated area.

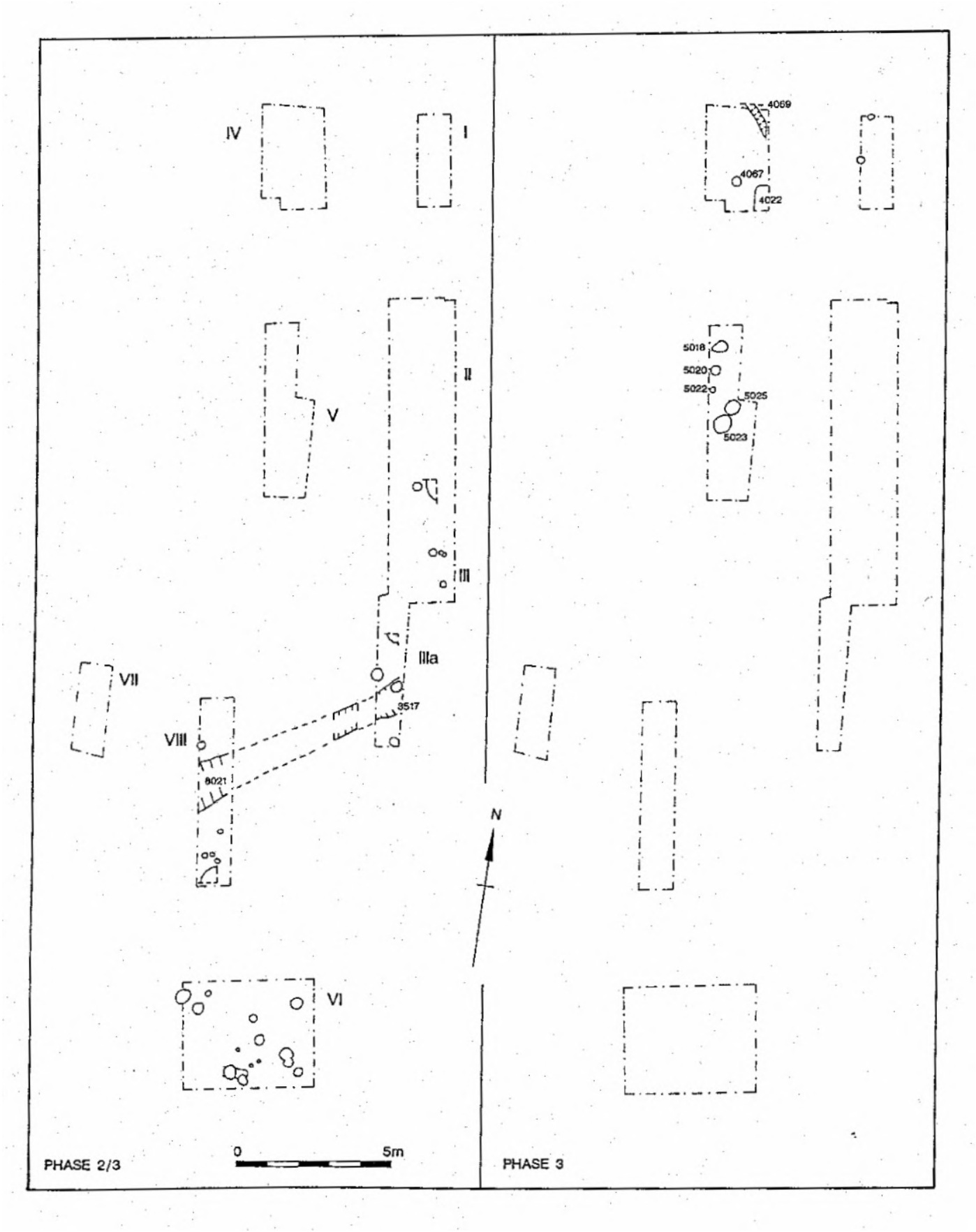
More than one period of occupation may be represented by the features assigned to Phase 2. The cluster of small postholes in trench IV are likely to be the result of some activity concentrated in this area rather than a structure. The line of postholes in trench II/III is likely to have formed one side of a building. Evidence for the replacement of posts suggests it was used over an extended period. Post construction has parallels with buildings of the Romano-British period. However, dating of the phase is problematic.



Narrow Lane phases 2/3 and 3

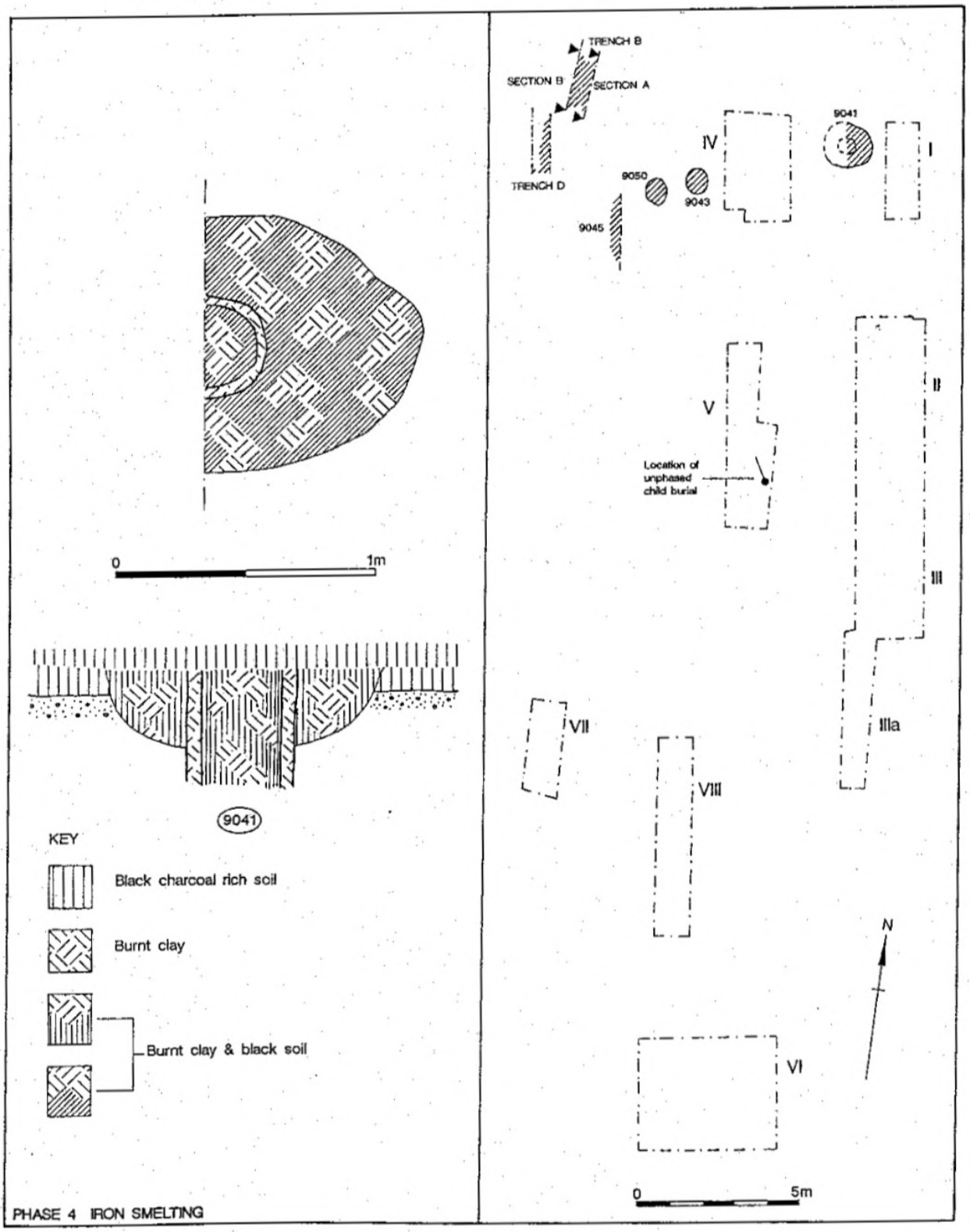
The composite phase consists of features that cannot be assigned to either phase on stratigraphic grounds. There is no clear pattern to the features and it is likely that the associated settlement was centred away from the excavated area.

There are only a small number of Phase 3 features. Some may belong to the later iron smelting phase, 4.

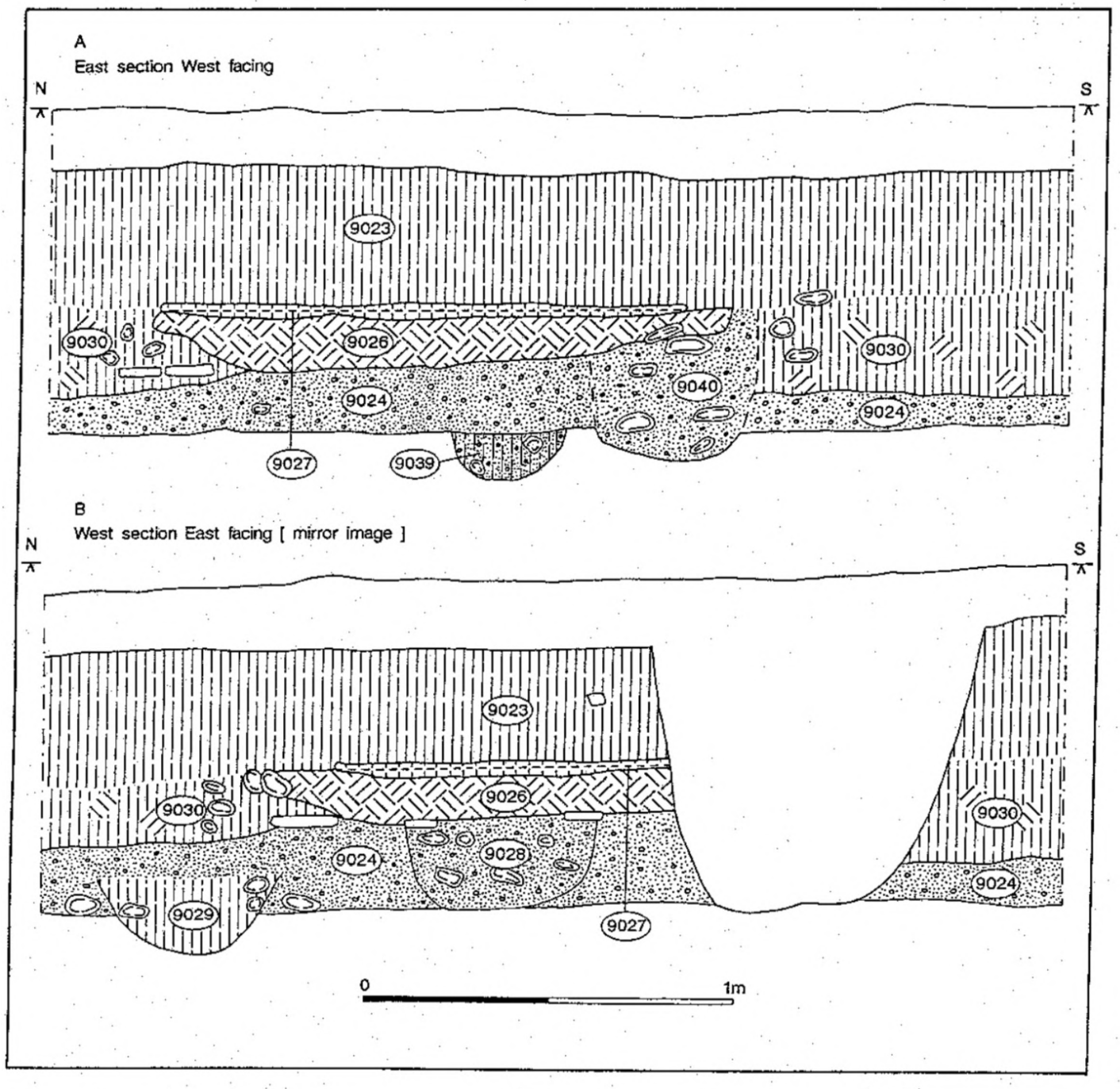


Narrow Lane - features associated with iron smelting

Phase 4 is represented by a thick, black, charcoal-rich soil generally 0.6m, but up to 0.9m deep. Within it were blocks of slag and concentrations of charcoal. Cut features were difficult to identify and would have been disturbed by later gardening activity. Some features were noted in foundation and service trenches during the development of the site. Feature 9026 in trench B is a large platform or hearth base of fired clay laid over smelting debris. Layer 9027 above was described as 'crushed mortar' in observation notes. The platform was at least 1.4m wide in the recorded section, but its east-west extent was not established. Another platform 9045 was observed in trench A. They could represent working areas where hot metal was handled. At least three hearths or furnaces (9041, 9043 and 9050) were observed. Feature 9041 consisted of a shaft dug into natural gravel and lined with coils of clay. The uppermost coil had been pierced by upright sticks. There is no record of a slag block within the clay tube. This feature is likely to be a slag pit furnace.



Narrow Lane - section of trench B



Narrow Lane - unphased features

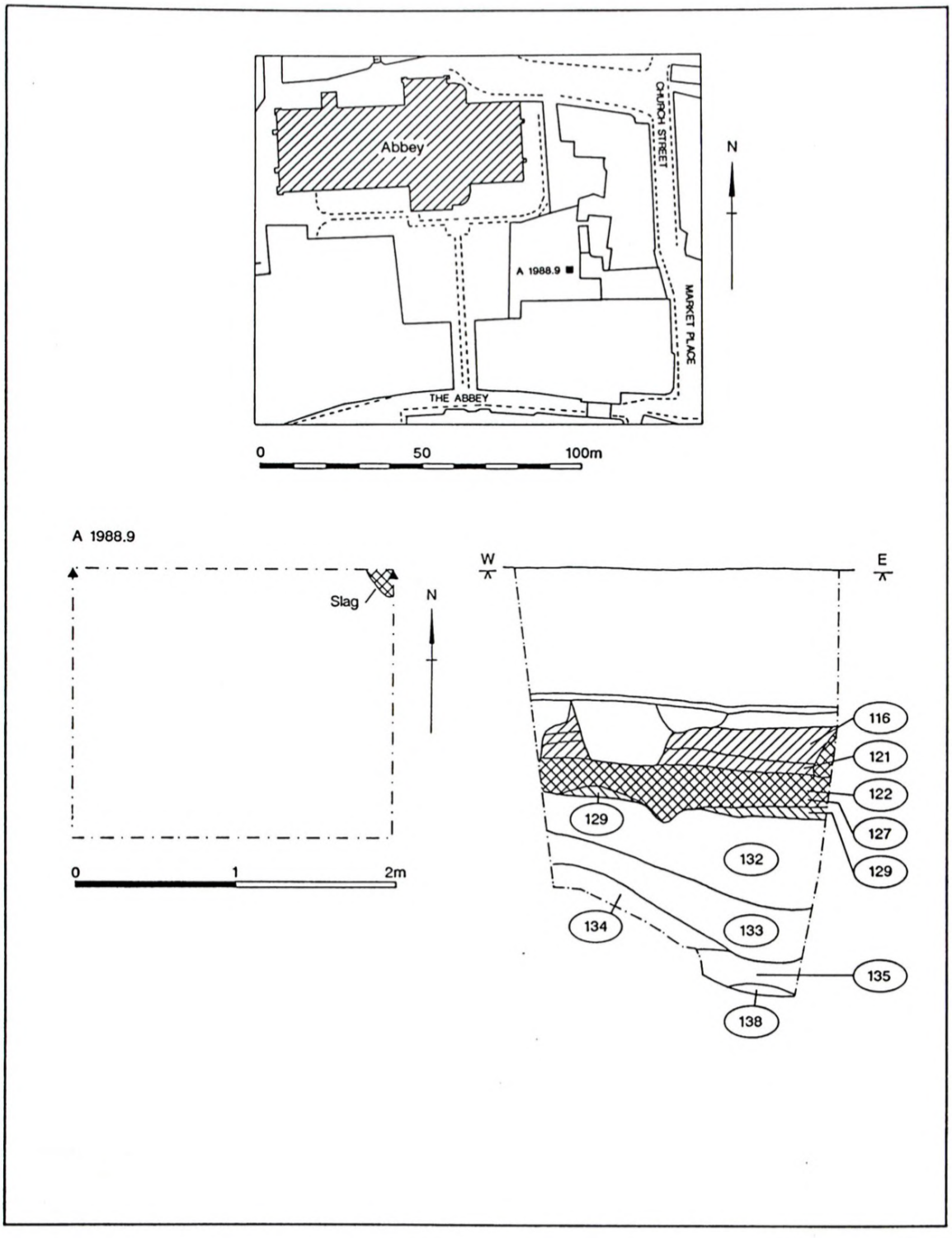
The burial of a child was found in trench V. It was not recorded in the site notebook. Press reports indicate that the excavators thought it was of an early date. A further child or baby burial was found, but its location is not recorded.

Midland Bank

TVAT 1988

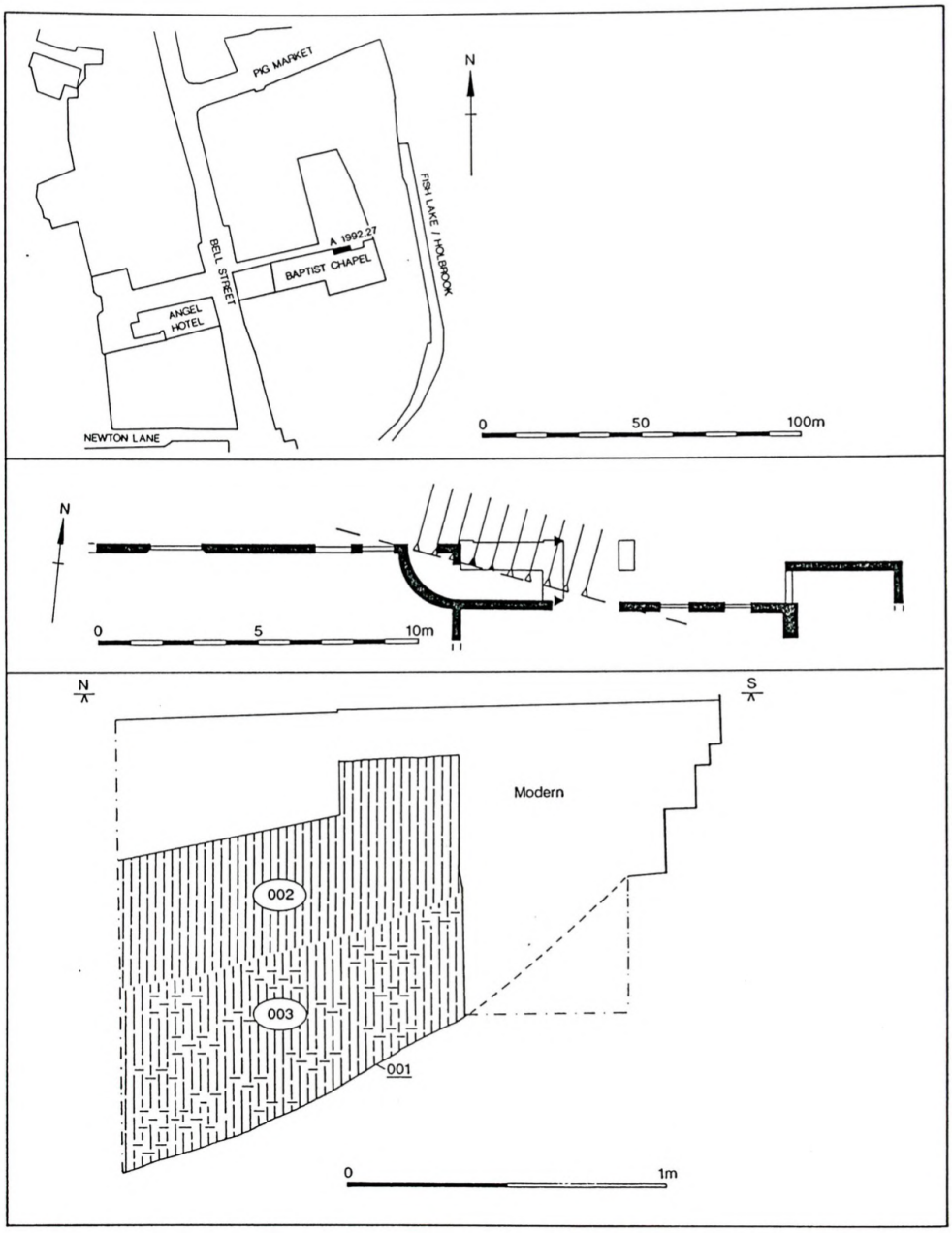
The site was a soakaway trench behind the then Midland and, until recently, HSBC bank. The excavation revealed a series of gravel and silt fills within a dry stream bed at a depth of between 2m and 2.5m below the modern surface. Above these were a number of dirty gravel layers (132, 133 and 134) which produced some very small fragments of probably late prehistoric pottery. Sealing these horizons were layers with concentrations of animal bones. Layers 122 and 127 contained iron slag and animal bones. The overlying layers 116 and 121 also contained slag. No pottery was found. Radiocarbon dating of the bones indicated a mid-Saxon date.

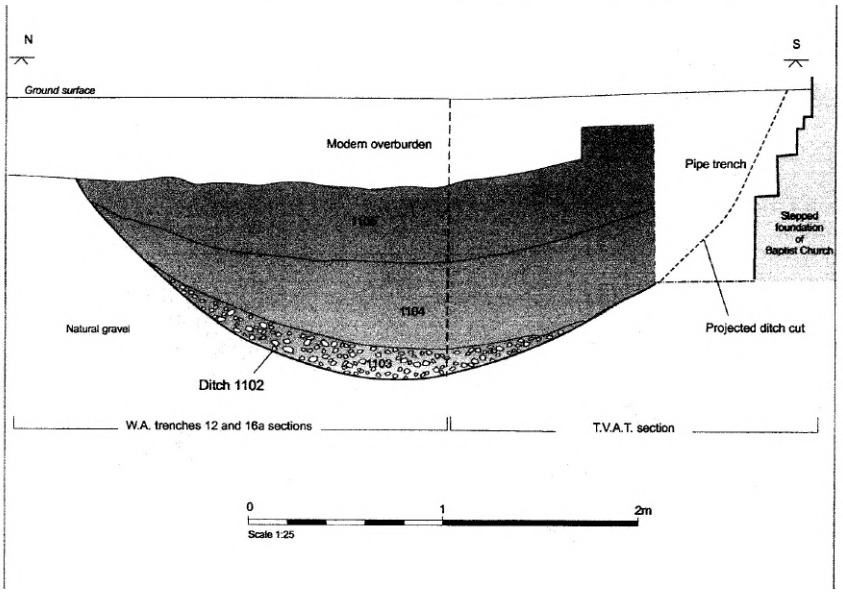
The bone assemblage indicates a high status diet. The main food species were represented by bones of younger animals with more tender meat. There was a wide range of species including poultry and fish. Also present were bones of roe deer, a luxury food. Bones of at least four individual deer were found in layer 122.



Baptist Chapel, Bell Street

A ditch 3-3.5 m wide and 1.4m deep was excavated in the alleyway between Bradbeers and the Baptist church. It ran at an angle to the current property boundaries. The fill contained late Saxon pottery and animal bone.





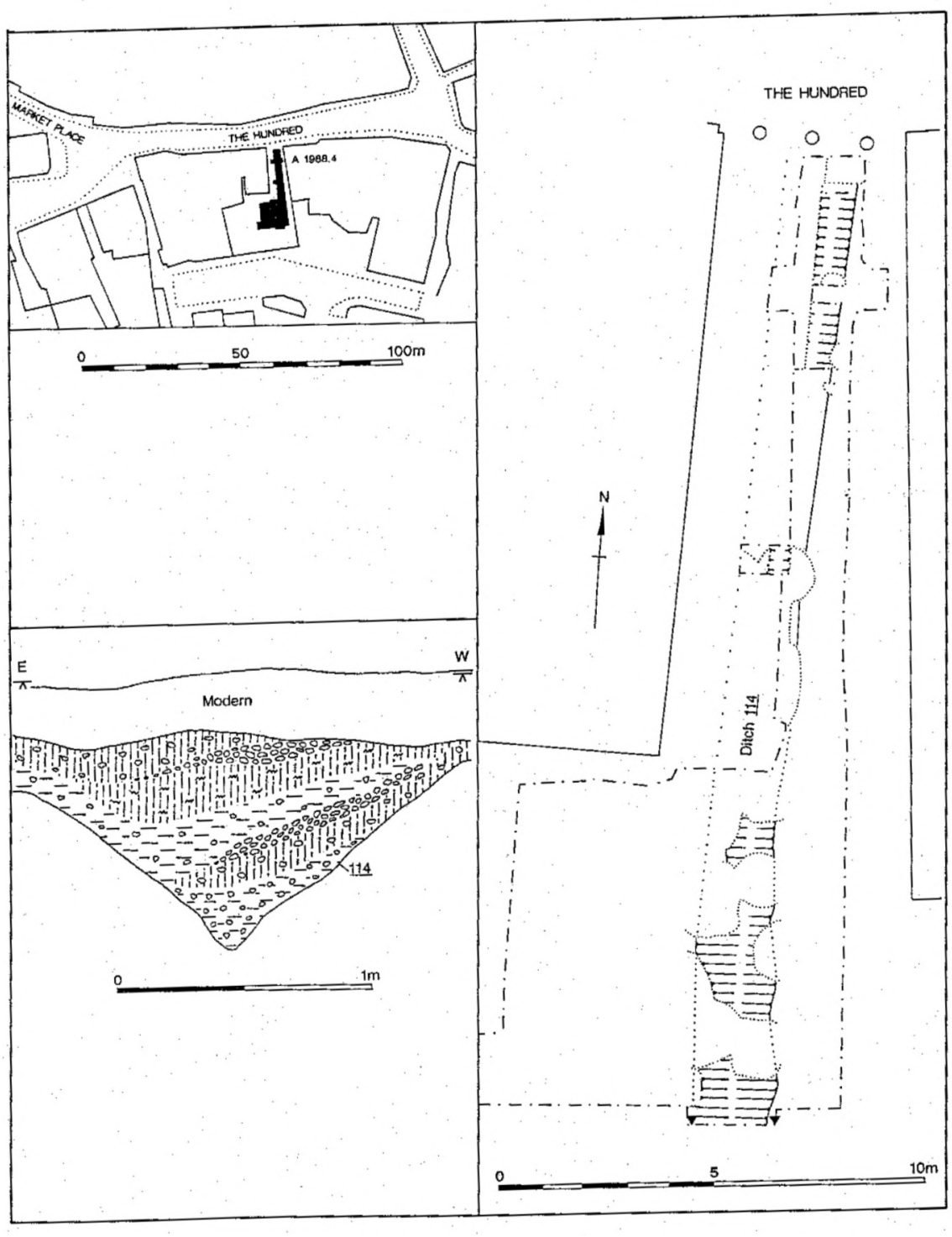
11 The Hundred

TVAT 1988

The main feature on the site was a V-shaped ditch,1.7m wide and 0.8m deep. It was on a north-south alignment running the length of excavation. No terminus was identified at its northern end. Its relationship with the street could not be determined, and it is not known whether it continued to the north of the street. It was probably a boundary ditch.

Jervis, AR6, dates the occupation of the site from the 8th/9th centuries onwards, following on from an earlier Roman presence. The absence of organic tempered wares suggests that there was no intense mid-Saxon (pre 8th century) occupation. The ditch was dug in the early to mid-Saxon period. The fill contains Saxo-Norman pottery.

Notes: The section shows a gradual silting up of the ditch rather than back-filling. The coarser in-fill on the west side suggests that a bank lay along that edge.



15 The Hundred

TVAT 1990

This site is not included in Scott's report. Jervis, AR6, dates a ditch to the Anglo-Saxon period. Postholes running alongside the ditch might be contemporary, but contained later, 13th-14th century, sherds in their fill.

Duke's Mill, Broadwater Road

SCCAU 2006

A mid-Saxon ditch was found during an archaeological evaluation. It was probably a field or property boundary, but could have served as a drainage ditch.

Latimer Street car park

A ditch of possible Saxon date was recorded running from slightly south of west to slightly north of east. It might have served as a boundary ditch.

There is a brief discussion of the site in a TVAT paper in the ring file written by Frank Green in 1988:
The excavation revealed the more recent history of the Holbrook. It seems it was regularly cleared out throughout its earlier life, so clean that no archaeological material was allowed to accumulate in it until the later 16th century. This probably resulted from the Abbey's control over such matters until the Dissolution, and that probably from the 1540s, the owner of the Town Mill became responsible. From the 17th century the stream had to be regularly cleaned out because of refuse disposal. At the same time, large pits for the extraction of gravel were excavated up to the water's edge.

Love Lane

TVAT 1989

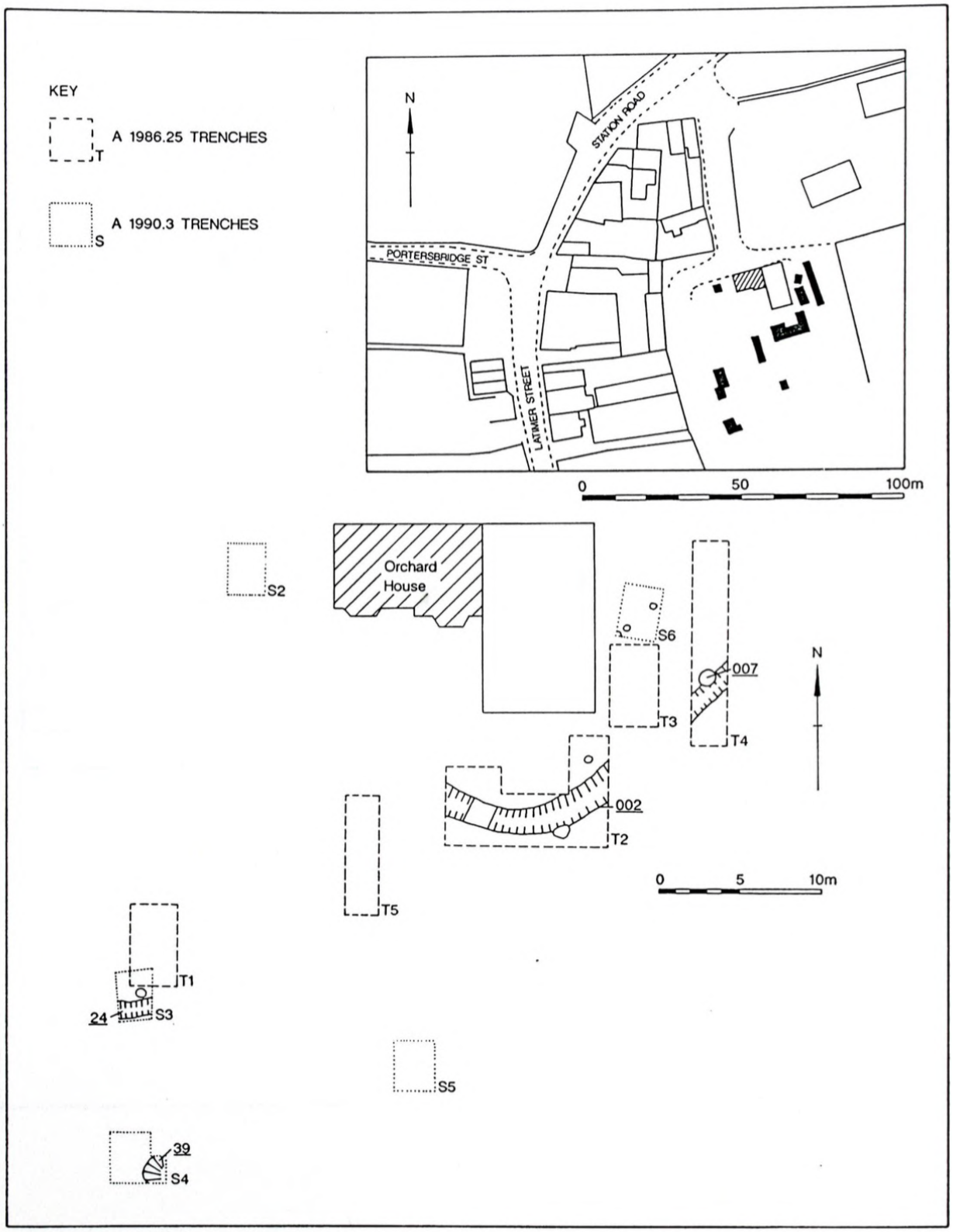
Jervis (AR12) identified a small number of Anglo-Saxon sherds. The earliest is organic tempered ware similar to pieces found with smelting slag in Narrow Lane. He dates this sherd to the 7th - 8th century. Coarse flint tempered ware is similar to 9th - 10th century types from Southampton. Chalk tempered ware could also be Anglo-Saxon. The 2 sherds of wheelthrown fine sandy ware are similar to Michelmersh ware and probably late Saxon.

Orchard House and Car Park

TVAT 1986, 1990

The 1986 excavation located a curving ditch (002) of probable Iron Age date. A TVAT paper in the ring file written by Frank Green in 1988 says that the high quantities of late Saxon and medieval pottery found at Orchard House clearly originated from night soil used as manure. It also mentions possible lat Saxon postholes.

Trenches excavated in 1990 uncovered a pit (S4, 39) with a small quantity of possible earlier Saxon pottery. An east-west ditch (S3) with a V-shaped profile similar to the one at 11, The Hundred might be a Saxon boundary ditch.



Church Street Car Park

TVAT 1984

This is taken from a paper by Frank Green in the ring file headed Test Valley Archaeological Committee and dated 1984.

The current work produced evidence from the late Saxon period onwards, including shallow slots for timber buildings. It was possible to excavate this trench across one of the major property boundaries and to establish continuity from at least the 14th century onwards. The site is reasonably well documented having been acquired by Richard III as part of his endowment of St George's College Windsor. The fact that all the building structures and property boundaries located are aligned to the adjacent Holbrook rather than the Church Street frontage has enabled this artificial water channel, the borough, and hundred boundary to be assigned a date pre-Late 11th century.

Church Street

TVAT 1989

A paper by Jervis, AR13, discusses pottery finds from the 1989 excavations. All of the pottery types were post-Conquest, the earliest being 11th century Saxo-Norman wares. He did not cover earlier excavations.

The Printing Works, Church Road

Hampshire Archaeology 1993

The report by Jervis, AR12, lists all of the pottery types as post-Conquest.

Portersbridge Street: SU 352214

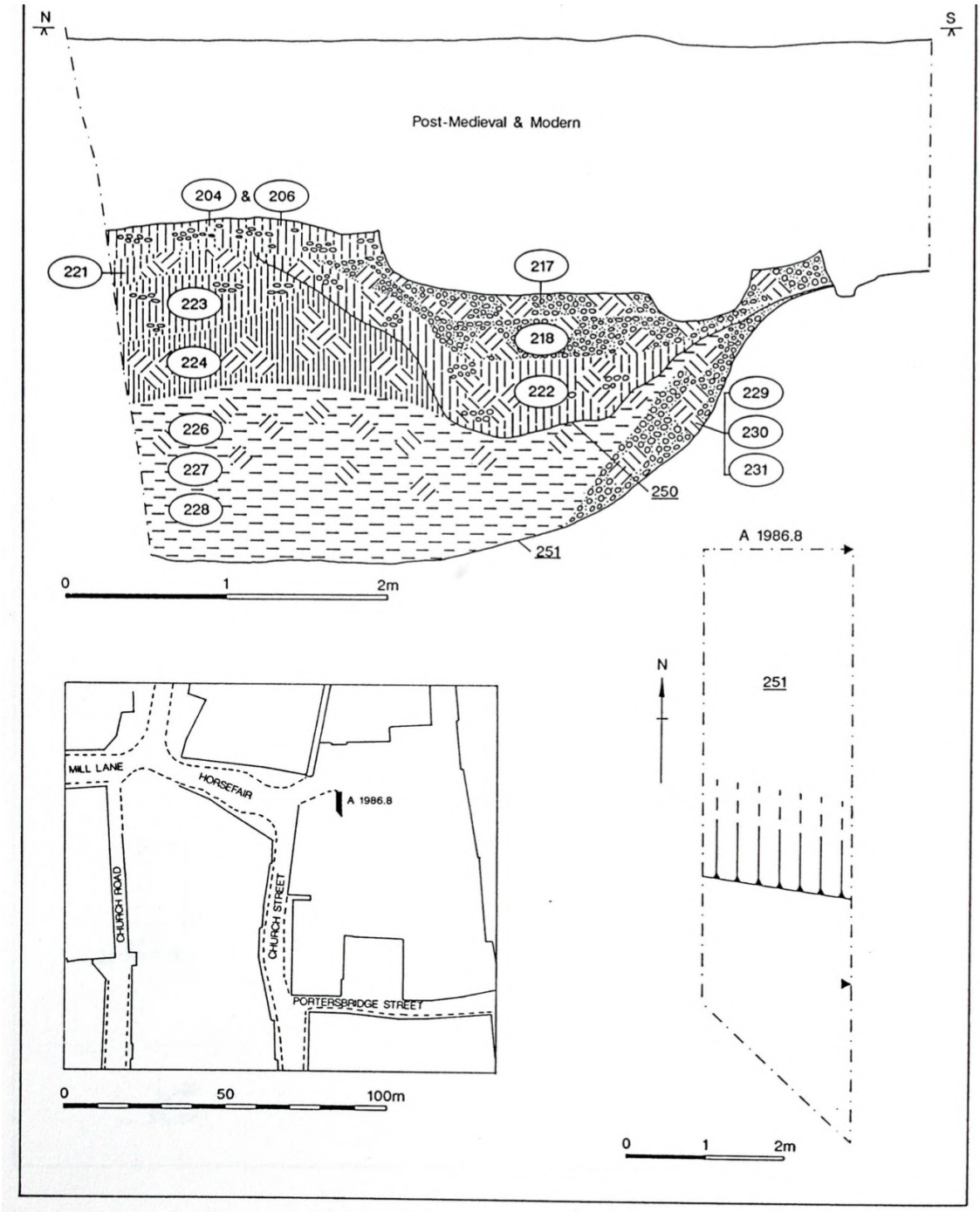
This is taken from a paper by Frank Green in the ring file headed Test Valley Archaeological Committee and dated 1984.

A trench 2m x 20m, at right angles to the street frontage, revealed a sequence of deposits from the late Saxon period onwards. The site was unusually (for Romsey) bounded on the south by a boundary ditch running parallel to the street.

Whitbread Brewery, Horsefair

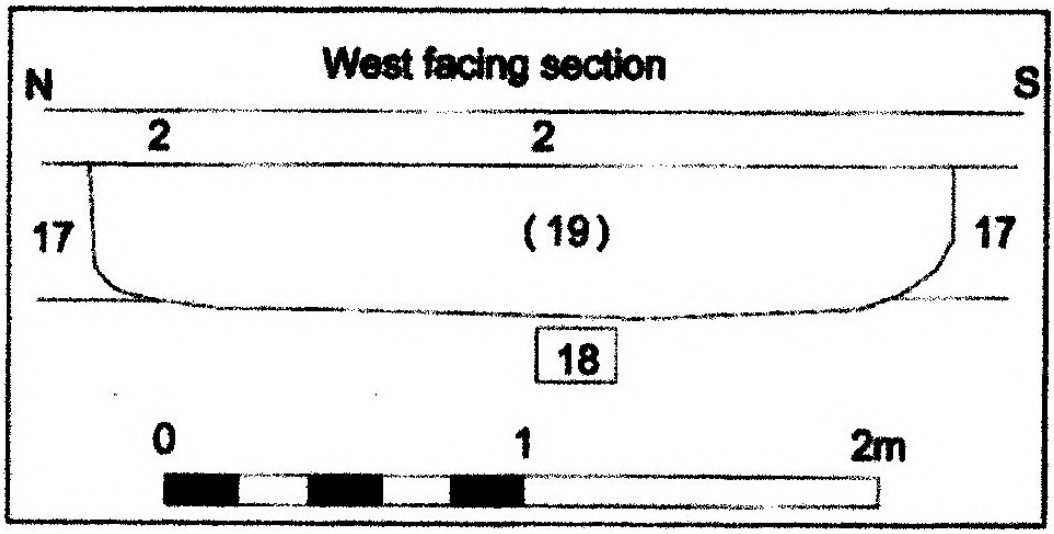
A broad, flat bottomed ditch, 1.1m deep, running on an east-west alignment contained late Saxon pottery in its upper fill. The smaller, re-cut boundary ditch was post-Conquest.

A TVAT paper in the ring file written by Frank Green in 1988 describes the ditch as a deep, filled-in water channel and suggests that it was a major east-west boundary to the Saxon settlement.



White Horse yard

The section drawing is from Steve's file. It shows a shallow, flat-bottomed ditch on an east-west alignment. It is labelled mid/late Saxon.



Mottisfont Abbey

TVAT 1994

The CBA Wessex Newsletter for April 1995 has a summary by Charlotte Matthews of work undertaken by TVAT. This included excavation, watching brief and building recording work at Mottisfont Abbey. A number of east-west burials were excavated in the nave of the priory church. Three copper alloy belt buckles were found in two adult inhumations.

Notes: What date were the buckles? Their presence suggests clothed burials.

Romsey Abbey

TVAT 1996

A brief note in the CBA Wessex Newsletter, October 1996 reports the excavation of several trenches on the south side of the Abbey. Several foundations walls were found abutting the extant south transept wall. There was evidence of iron smelting which predates the existing Abbey.

La Sagesse Convent

TVAT 1988

A TVAT paper in the ring file headed The Presbytery, La Sagesse Convent, written by Neil Campling, gives a brief summary of the excavation. The prehistoric stream bed was filled with chalk brash. (A shorter paragraph on another sheet refers to this as a silted up river course.) A large quantity of Late Bronze Age/ Early Iron Age pottery was found in the layers of brash along with animal bones. There was also some human skeletal material, most obviously skulls. None of the material was eroded, and therefore lay where it was discarded. The deposit has something of the character of a midden, although there was little or no evidence of materials other than bone and ceramics. It would seem that this was refuse from a settlement situated to the east on the island of Romsey.

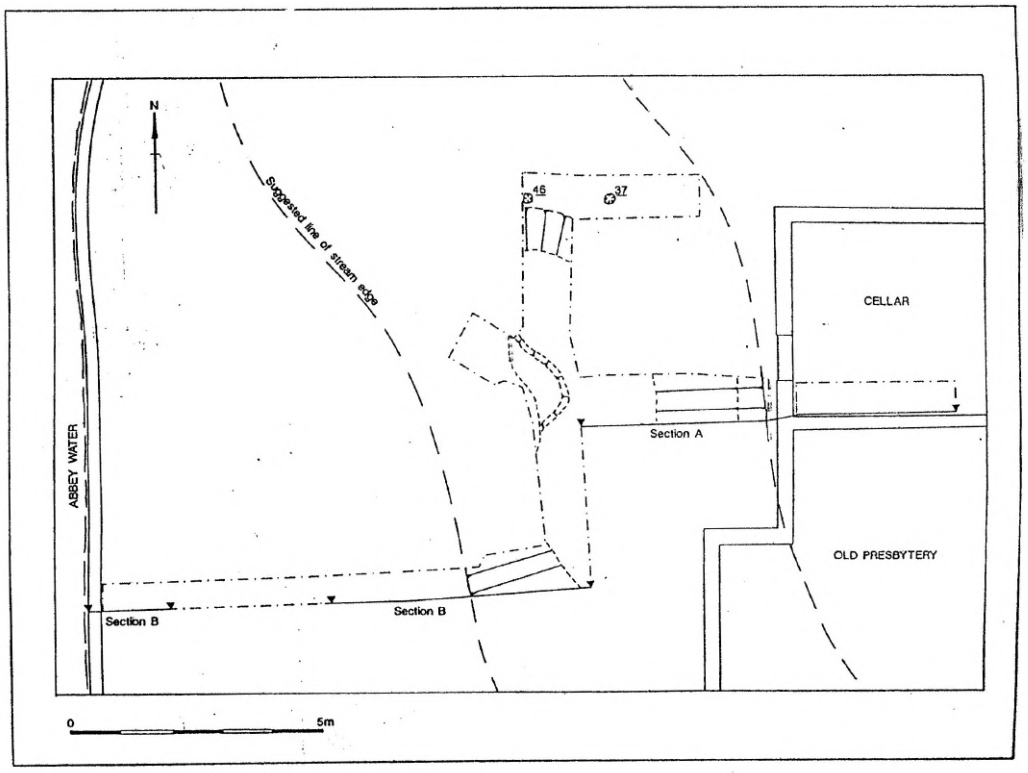
Frank Green, 'Early Iron Age Stream Deposits, Romsey, Hampshire', TVAT paper, undated. This paper summaries the excavation report which includes specialist sections on the pottery and other ceramic finds, bones, and an environmental analysis.

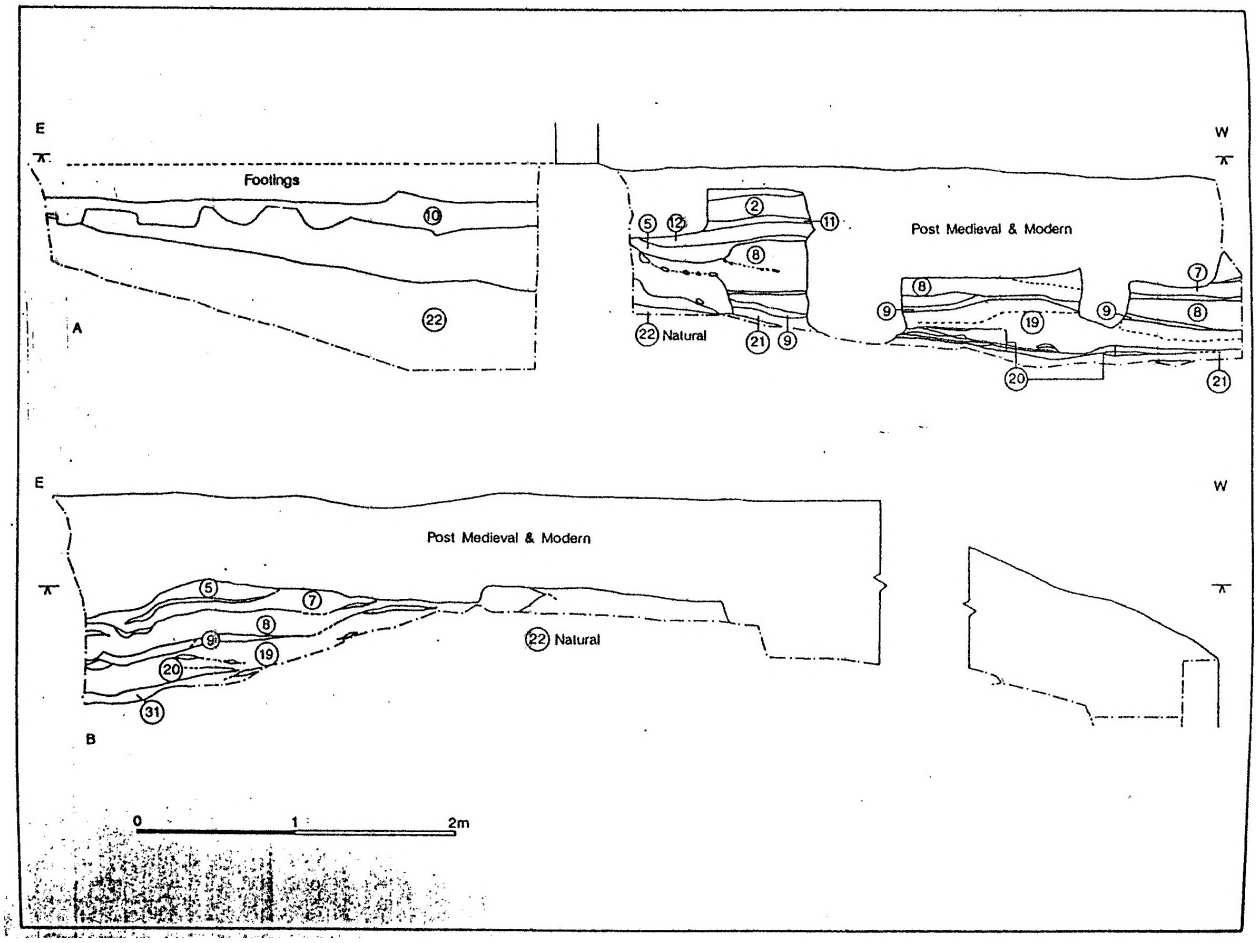
Post medieval terracing as part of the Abbey mill complex had removed all post Roman deposits. Animal bones and Iron Age pottery were found in a feature described as a former stream bed or paleo-channel located on the floodplain. The fill was a poorly cemented tufaceous deposit. Finds within it were coated in a thick calcareous concretion. Bones of domestic animals were found along with those of deer and wild pig. There were a number of high quality Iron Age vessels in a variety of forms. Loom weights suggest that weaving was a significant activity in the settlement. Artefacts included 'fictile material associated with smelting', iron slag and a possible tuyere from the lower levels of the stream channel.

A longer version of the site report, a paper by Frank Green et al. dated 1992, exists as a PDF. This is an unfinished version with unnumbered figures. There is a long report on the pottery, plus a couple of pages on other ceramic objects - loom weights and a 'large tuyere'. These objects are not illustrated. This section does not mention any other ceramic material relevant to iron smelting.

Notes: The environmental report by M. J. Allen notes that the pottery and bones were unabraded. He suggests that the material had eroded from a midden adjacent to a stream. The discussion of the finds states that 'many artefacts were found to straddle the interfaces between layers, and much of the material was found contained within small silty lenses, which may represent natural drag lines within the stream bed.' I don't think this description or the section drawing fits the suggestion that the feature was a stream flowing with sufficient energy to erode its bank. The infill layers do not form the profiles of a gradually silting channel. The maximum north-south extent of the feature is under 5m. Could this be a depression filled in by sediment washed in by rainwater from the terrace or floodwater from the Test rather than a stream bed?

The tuyere has been cited as evidence for iron smelting in Romsey during the Iron Age. The specialist report on ceramics states that it was found in context 8. At the beginning of the paper, the description of context 8 says that it was contaminated by machine clearance and that contexts 7 and 8 had been extensively reworked. This is contradicted on page 45. Here it says that smelting and smithing debris were found along with the tuyere in a sealed context with no indication of possible contamination of the deposits.


N
Suggested line of stream edge
46
37
CELLAR
Section A
ABBEY WATER
OLD PRESBYTERY
Section B
Section B
0
5m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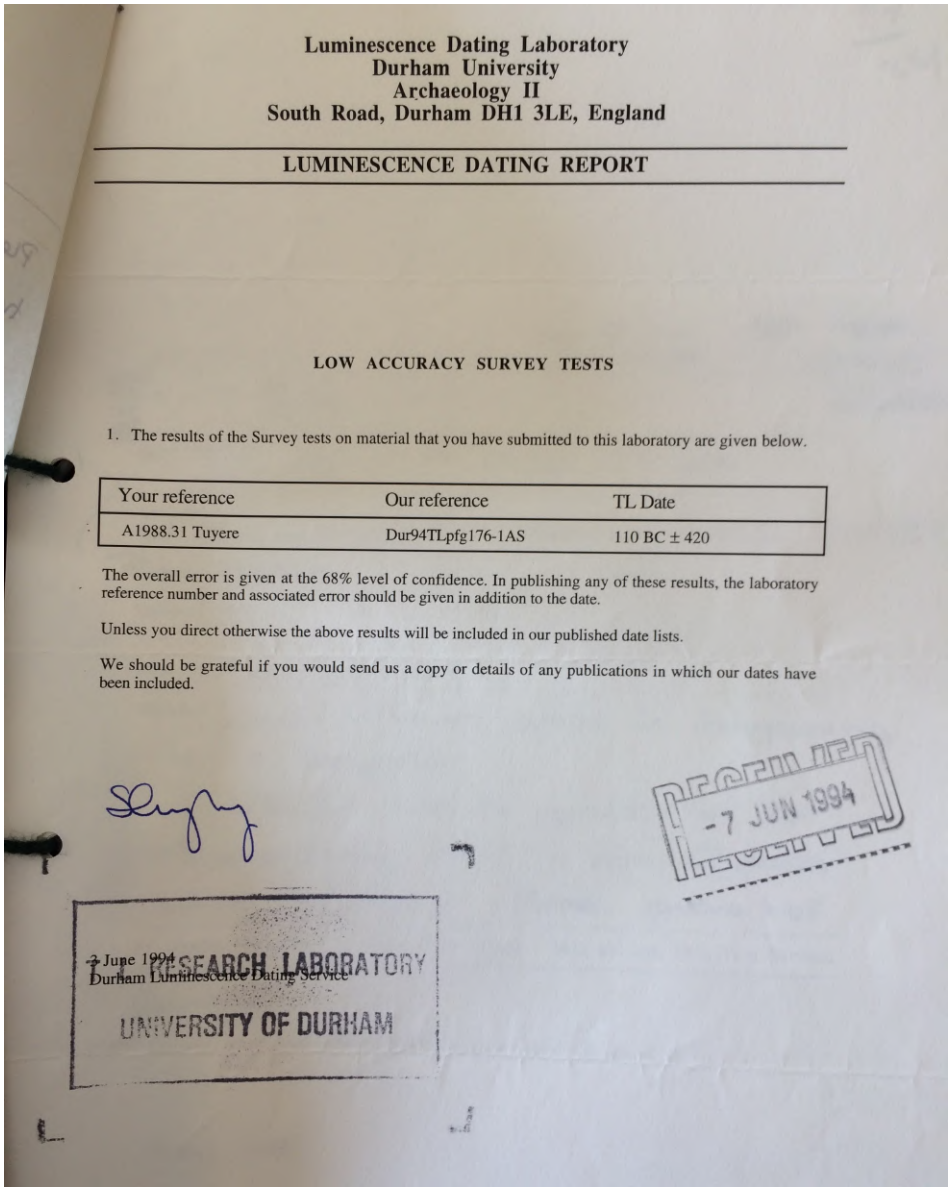
Below is a letter giving the results of the thermoluminescence dating of the tuyere from the La Sagesse excavation. Frank Green has suggested that it could have been used for bronze rather than iron smelting.

The letter was found in a file of excavation documents in Chilcomb House. We have not been able to find any photos or drawings of the object.



Luminescence Dating Laboratory
Durham University
Archaeology II
South Road, Durham DH1 3LE, England

LUMINESCENCE DATING REPORT

LOW ACCURACY SURVEY TESTS

1. The results of the Survey tests on material that you have submitted to this laboratory are given below.

Your reference	Our reference	TL Date
A1988.31 Tuyere	Dur94TLpfg176-1AS	110 BC ± 420

The overall error is given at the 68% level of confidence. In publishing any of these results, the laboratory reference number and associated error should be given in addition to the date.

Unless you direct otherwise the above results will be included in our published date lists.

We should be grateful if you would send us a copy or details of any publications in which our dates have been included.

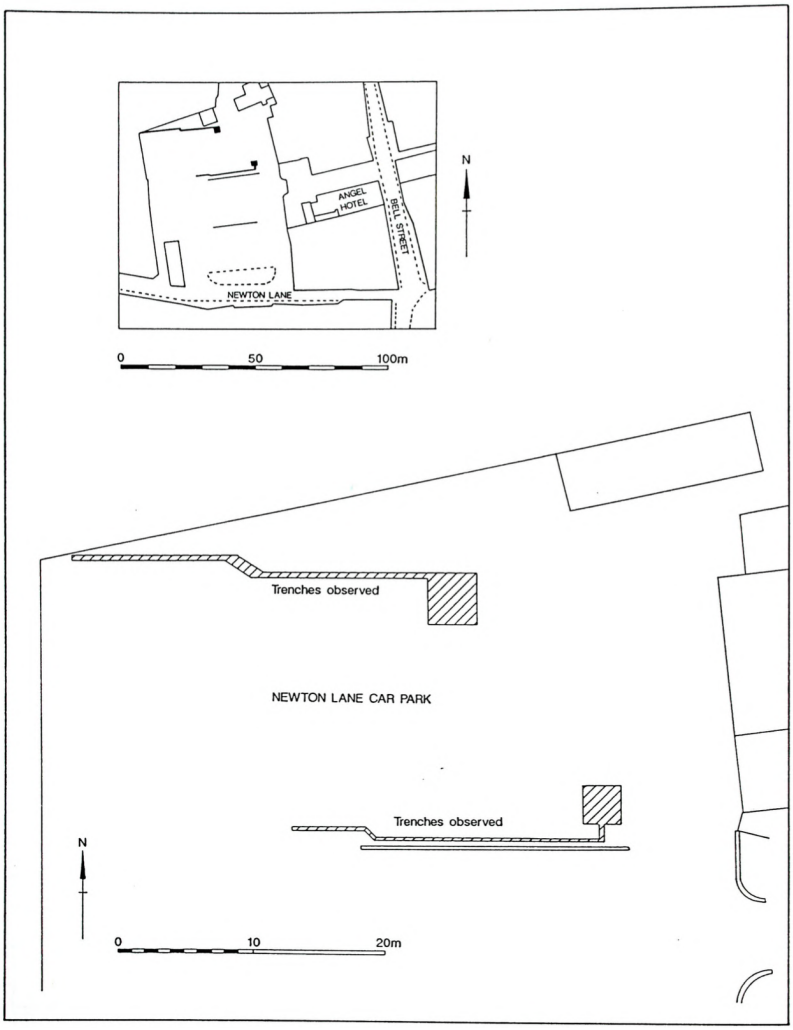
RECEIVED -7 JUN 1994

7 June 1994
Durham Luminescence Dating Service

TL RESEARCH LABORATORY
UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

Newton Lane car park and Tee Court observations

Limited observations in 1982 revealed that the whole site was covered by a very dark or black soil deposit up to 0.9m deep lying about 0.6m below the modern surface. This is probably the slag and charcoal-rich soil observed in Narrow Lane and elsewhere. Slag was present. No features were recorded.



Newton Lane Link Road

Site south of 29, Bell Street excavated prior to the construction of the Newton Lane Link road. A few truncated layers with Roman pottery. No evidence for Saxon occupation.

A TVAT paper in the ring file written by Graham O'Hare gives a fuller description than that provided by Scott. The site was excavated between late November 1989 and the end of February 1990. The material from the site could be divided into five main phases. The earliest recognisable material included late Bronze Age pottery, and animal bones and a fragment of human skull from a tufaceous gravel within an ancient stream bed at the east of the site adjacent to Middlebridge Street.

Late Iron Age / Roman activity was represented by an isolated layer containing pottery, and by a Roman phase in the canalisation of the stream which later became the Shitlake. This contained Roman coarse ware and a sherd of Samian.

At the eastern end of the site, beaten earth floors from two medieval houses were found. These had been demolished in the 1930s. Beneath the floors postholes and stakeholes from earlier medieval structures were found. The Shitlake, a natural stream utilised as a sewer, ran from north to south across the site. The medieval layers within it were badly disturbed by the construction of a late 18th/ early 19th century brick culvert, and by the laying of sewer pipes and inspection hatches in the 20th century.

In the post-medieval period, the central part of the site appears to have been used for the storage and preparation of building materials.

Notes: Two 'stream beds' were found crossing the site. The one alongside Bell Street contained prehistoric finds in a tufaceous gravel. A similar depositional environment has been noted further north in Bell Street and at La Sagesse on a site that appears to have been on the edge of the terrace. Tufa, a precipitate of calcium carbonate, occurs widely in the Test valley as well as in valleys of the Avon and Itchen. Does its presence in Bell Street indicate that the river terrace had not yet fully formed by the end of the Bronze Age and that sites with these deposits were located on the floodplain? We need to ask a geologist about this.

The second channel could be the outflow of the Fishlake. The Roman pottery could have come from deposits cut through by the channel. There was no natural stream here to canalise. We need to look at the field notes and drawings for this site.

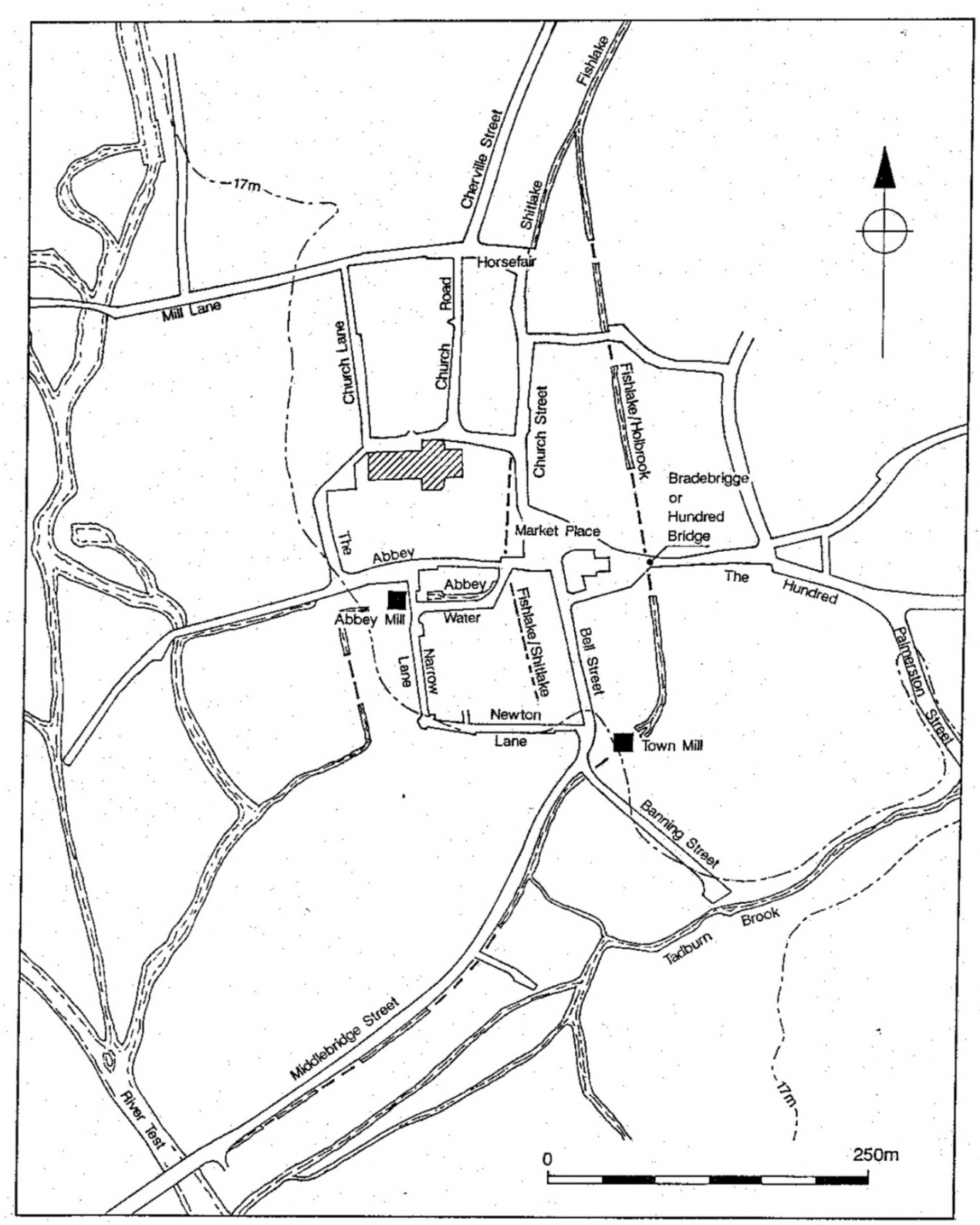
Below are Scott's comments on the Fishlake (p. 57). I think that the Fishlake pre-dated Church Street, but agree with its original course up to the Market Place. We need to map the courses of both branches in relation to the archaeology.

The western arm of the Fishlake, which now runs under Church Street, in the early Medieval period seems to have flowed down its east side. Excavations there in 1989 revealed the edge of a probable stream fronting the early Medieval tenements (Newman in prep). Church Street must have crossed the stream in order to enter the Market Place. The stream flows along the western edge of the Market Place. At the south-west corner of the Market, just beyond the Abbey gateway it splits, one part to flow west to serve the Abbey Mill, another to flow parallel to Bell Street. The latter stream is also known as the "Shitlake", and has been canalised on different courses over the centuries as was revealed in the Newton Lane Link excavations (A 1989.16). Its precise route in the Saxon period is unclear. No trace of a stream was observed during the Town Hall Car Park salvage work, but a possible stream course cut through the iron smelting deposits on the "Creatures" site. If, as is possible, this was a Saxon stream, it was later in date than the iron smelting industry, and represented a change in the course of the stream. Possibly this change can be linked with the creation of the mill leet Abbey Water. It is probable that in the early Medieval period the Fishlake/Shitlake stream flowed down the backs of properties on the west side of Bell Street. The Saxon Shitlake may have continued parallel to Middlebridge Street until it rejoined the Test. The branch which served the Abbey Mill flowed west to the mill before turning sharply south and then west again to rejoin the Test upstream of Middlebridge.

Newton Lane

HFC 1993: A deposit (Contexts 303 = 376 & 380) similar to that found on the Bell Street site. A much truncated stream channel was excavated here. Amongst the finds was a pot of the late Bronze Age to early Iron Age.

Notes: Below is a map from Scott 1993 showing central Romsey with the addition of the 17m contour. This contour seems to correspond, for at least part of its length, to the boundary between the floodplain and the edge of the terrace. Peat is found in boreholes at the northern ends of Middlebridge and Banning Streets. This peat developed on the floodplain. The contour outlines the eroded channel of the Tadburn. The relatively low level of Palmerston Street probably represents a hollow way that developed along the route leading down to the stream.



Below is the central part of a fold-out map illustrating an article on 'The Old Water Courses and Mills of Romsey' by Edward Bucknell (HFC Vol. 4, 1898-1903, pp. 165-170). The author considered the Fishlake to be in part or wholly artificial. 'The lower portion is undoubtedly artificial; the upper part is perhaps unusually winding for an artificial cutting.' He thought it dated to the reign of King Edgar or earlier.

both purposes. Lower down, running from the back of Mr. Curtis's house in Church Street, through the Abbey precincts, is an old ditch connected with the Abbey mill branch of the Fishlake, and capable of being flushed from that stream; this no doubt formed part of the sanitary system of the Abbey in old times. Another somewhat similar ditch runs from just above the mill at the top of Narrow Lane. After passing a little way at the back of the houses in Middlebridge Street this turns round and empties into one of the larger branches of the Test about one hundred yards below the spot where the mill-stream joins it. We do not know whether this was an ancient ditch or not.

Porters

On the map above watercourses are represented by a dot-dash line. The two ditches mentioned in the text are labelled A and B. The northern part of ditch B parallel with Bell Street could represent the original course of the Fishlake. It seems to line up with the channel behind Creatures.

7-9 The Hundred

AOC Archaeology 2005, evaluation report by Chris Thatcher available to download on ADS

Grid Reference: 435300, 121154

Abstract: Three trenches were excavated which showed that although there had been some modern disturbance, especially immediately south of the property, a sequence of medieval and post medieval archaeology had been preserved. Several boundary features were observed that shed light on the nature and scale of occupation of the site during these periods.

Note: The abstract for another report on the site by Les Capon adds: Also recorded were a number of structural features, that preceded the existing structure, whose positions to the south of the shop front indicated that The Hundred may have been wider or lay on a different alignment than at present.

The earliest feature in trench 1 was a shallow, round-bottomed ditch. Its primary fill contained sherds of hand-built Saxo-Norman pottery dating to 1050-1250. It is possible that the ditch represented a pre-existing boundary which deviated from the alignment later imposed by the construction of The Hundred. A secondary fill of the ditch was a light brown silty clay with no cultural inclusions, suggesting this fill was a rapid event.

The filled ditch was cut by two postholes. Both contained fragments of medieval peg-tile. Overlying these features was a possible floor surface with three associated postholes. Two postholes contained a sherd of Saxo-Norman pottery, one of which also included two large lumps of slag in the fill. The slag was probably brought in from somewhere else.

All four sherds from trench 1 were from hand-built coarsewares. There were no distinctive inclusions in the fabric.

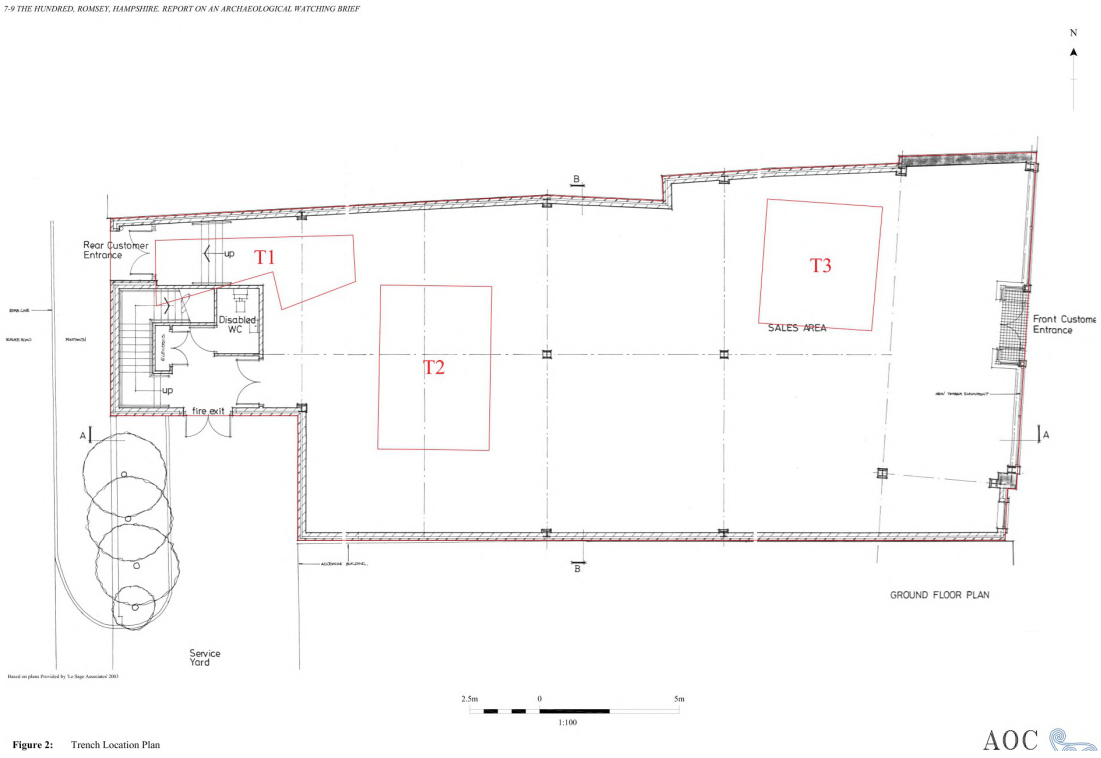
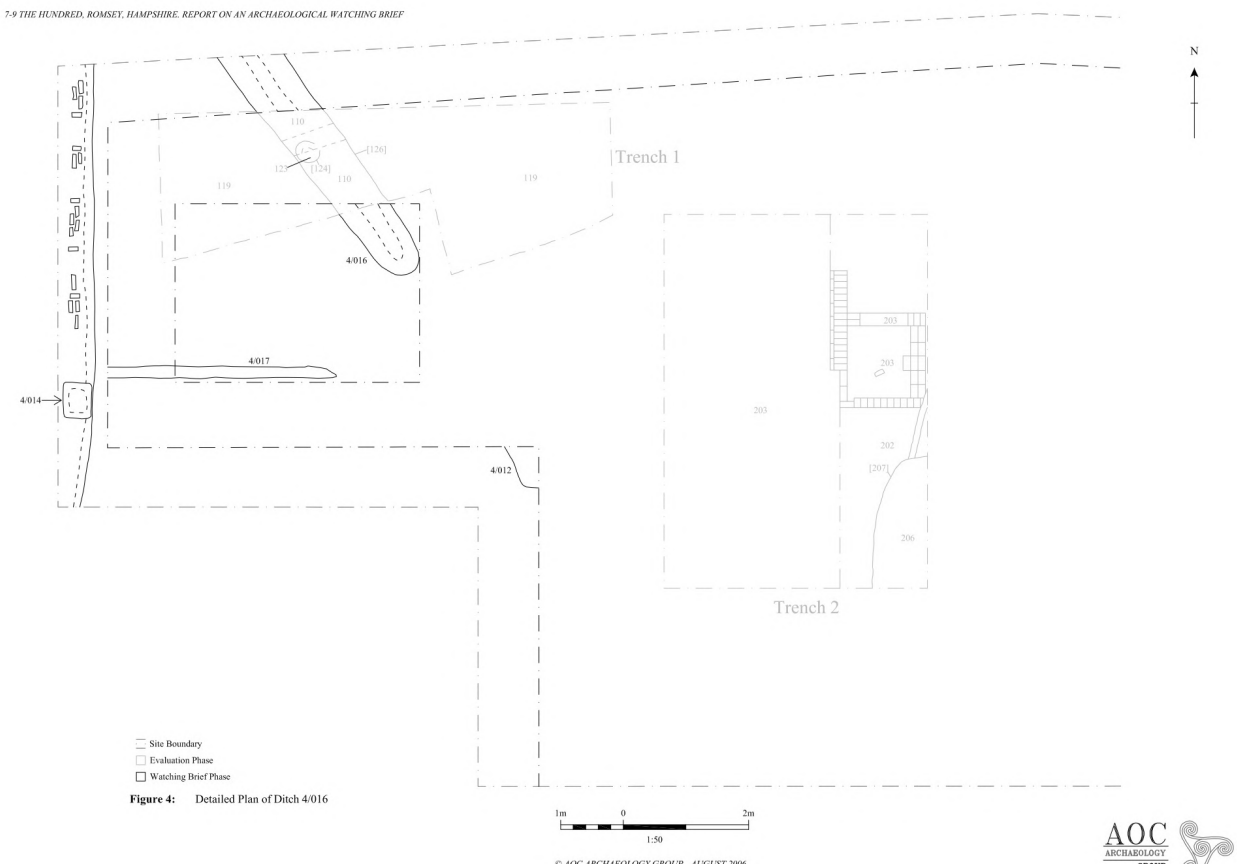


Figure 2: Trench Location Plan



Baptist Church, Bell Street

TVAT 1992, ILD Morrison

Abstract: Excavation of foundation trenches for the extension of a Baptist church uncovered remains of a Saxon ditch and post-medieval ditches. The artefacts recovered were mostly Saxon and included pottery, tile and animal bone. The pottery suggested a date of 900-1050 AD.

Land rear of 29-31 Bell Street, watching brief

Hampshire Archaeology 1993, B Davis, IR Scott

Abstract: A watching brief and salvage excavation were carried out during the excavation of footing trenches for a small development. The earliest evidence from the site was Iron Age and consisted of a debased silver coin and associated pottery from the river gravels. Features which cut these gravels included a gully and a number of post holes, it is possible that they dated to the Romano-British period but is more likely that they were Middle to Late Saxon.

Bartletts Almshouses, The Meads, watching brief

Wessex Archaeology 2001, Nicholas A Wells

Note: I have included this site for its mention of 'water-worn braids in the floodplain'. This presumably refers to paleochannels. A record on the site two years previously said: The evaluation identified a pair of parallel linear features, cut into the valley gravels, and a post-medieval pit. It was possible that the two parallel features may have represented a water management system.

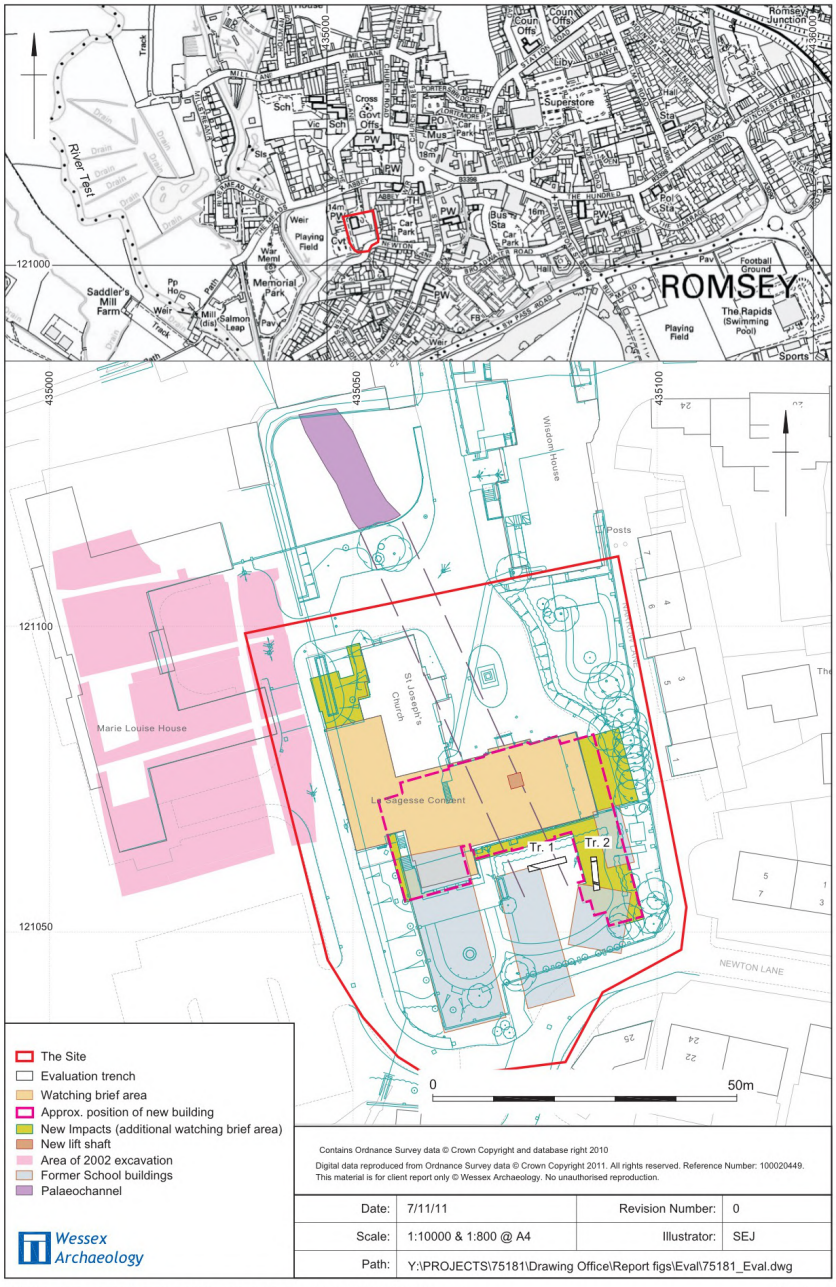
Abstract: During the watching brief two deposits which contained 20th century pottery and ceramic building material were encountered. An undated feature, which had previously been identified during an evaluation, was noted and was thought to represent water-worn braids in the floodplain rather than a man-made water management system. The only cut feature observed was a planting pit cut from the topsoil. Two post-medieval features that had been identified during the evaluation were not observed during the watching brief.

Note: I have included this site for the description of the geology of the area.

Abstract: The evaluation, consisting of nine trial trenches, was undertaken following the granting of outline planning permission for residential development. Although no significant archaeological features were identified, five sherds of medieval pottery were recovered. Two came from an alluvial deposit in Trench 5. This layer probably represented overbank flooding of the River Test in the medieval period which may have been enhanced by dumping. The other three sherds were residual in a post-medieval land drain. A large piece of iron slag within the topsoil of one of the trenches was interesting since evidence of extensive mainly Saxon iron working had been found in the area.

The evaluation results were supplemented by the results of two geotechnical surveys. These showed that Valley Gravel formed the base of the present flood plain of the River Test and underlay alluvial and peat deposits across the site, except in the south-east corner where they rose steeply to form the bluff of the terrace edge. It was probable that the gravels were deposited during the Last (Devensian) Ice Age. The overlying peat deposits, although strictly undated, were clearly post-glacial and probably related to Atlantic or Sub-Boreal epochs (Late Mesolithic-Early Bronze Age) rather than Boreal (Early Mesolithic) or Sub-Atlantic (Late Bronze Age onwards). The alluvial deposits overlying the peat were the result of floodplain accumulations probably of prehistoric or later date.

Note: Another record (S Flaherty, S Reynolds, 2012) for Abbey House, La Sagesse (NGR 435073 121077) includes this: Alluvial deposits were recorded at the base of trench 3 at its south western end, which may



Site location showing evaluation trenches and watching brief areas Figure 1

Archaeological Evaluation at Romsey Abbey Primary School, Church Lane, Romsey

SCCAU 2006, JI Russel

Note: I have included this site because of the reference to a possible paleochannel.

Abstract: Three trenches and a test pit were excavated prior to a proposed development. A possible palaeochannel was found, with a mineralised sheep bone in its upper fill. A later, possibly prehistoric deposit of material included bone fragments and a flint tool. A quarry feature, probably post-medieval in date, produced 17th to early 20th century finds.

Radiocarbon dates: from Archaeometry, 33, 1991, 286

Romsey, Hants

Samples of bone and charred plant remains from a number of sites excavated by the Test Valley Archaeological Trust in advance of development in Romsey, Hants. Submitted 1989 by F. J. Green, Test Valley Archaeological Trust, Romsey, Hants. The sites include Waitrose (NGR SU 35402112), Midland Bank (NGR SU 35142122), and Church Street (NGR SU 35212132).

OxA-2312 Waitrose, A.1988.15, 107 117 (150), charred rye grains, $\delta^{13}C = -24.2‰$	860 ± 70
OxA-2313 Midland Bank, A.1988.9 (128), pig bone, $\delta^{13}C = -21.7‰$	1215 ± 80
OxA-2314 Midland Bank, A.1988.9 (122), cow rib, $\delta^{13}C = -23.4‰$	1355 ± 80
OxA-2316 Church Street, A.1985.10 (210) 67, charred rye grains, $\delta^{13}C = -21.4‰$	740 ± 70
OxA-2317 Church Street, A.1985.10 (218) 70, charred rye grains, $\delta^{13}C = -22.5‰$	790 ± 70

Comment (F. J. G.): OxA-2312 is on charred *Secale cereale* seeds from a buried ploughsoil containing much Saxo-Norman pottery. Rye occurs in relatively higher quantities in Romsey than on other sites in Wessex. This is believed to be the result of a single episode of activity during the late Saxon or early Medieval period. The radiocarbon date is consistent with this interpretation (see also OxA-2316 & -2317).

OxA-2313 came from a layer containing quantities of both food waste (animal bones) and iron-smelting debris. The layer was aceramic, but the smelting debris was derived from a Middle to Late Saxon smelting site, and the animal bone is of Middle Saxon date. The layers containing iron smelting debris are stratigraphically later than those containing just animal bone. OxA-2314 derives from one of the stratigraphically earlier layers without iron smelting debris and fits in best with a Middle Saxon setting.

OxA-2316 is on charred *Secale cereale* seeds from a 16–17th century AD context. The radiocarbon date is consistent with the interpretation that the rye is associated with a much earlier episode of activity on the site, and the seeds are therefore residual. OxA-2317 is also on rye but from a 12–13th century AD context. The result is consistent with the pottery dating of the context, and also with the suggestion already mentioned that cultivation of rye took place in Romsey during the late Saxon to early Medieval period.

HBMC Series

Romsey Abbey, Hants

Samples of cattle bone from Romsey Abbey, Test Valley, Hants (NGR SU 35062127). Submitted 1989 via HBMC by F. J. Green, Test Valley Archaeological Trust, Romsey, Hants.

OxA-2318 bone, A.1988.7 (25), $\delta^{13}C = -23.3‰$	330 ± 70
OxA-2319 bone, A.1988.7 (30), $\delta^{13}C = -23.1‰$	1125 ± 80

Comment (F. J. G.): OxA-2318 came from the third of a series of four gravel surfaces on the north side of the Abbey. The earliest surface sealed a charcoal layer and a pre-Conquest clay floor (context 29) and was probably laid down after the start of the construction of the present Norman Abbey in the early 12th century AD. Stratigraphically a late medieval to post-medieval date for the third surface is quite acceptable.

OxA-2319 came from a soil horizon which was sealed beneath the pre-Conquest clay floor (context 29). Context 30 contained no ceramics, but a sizeable group of animal bone, which would not be out of place in a Middle to Late Saxon context. The horizon had been provisionally dated to the same periods on stratigraphic grounds. This dating matches with the results of the radiocarbon assay.