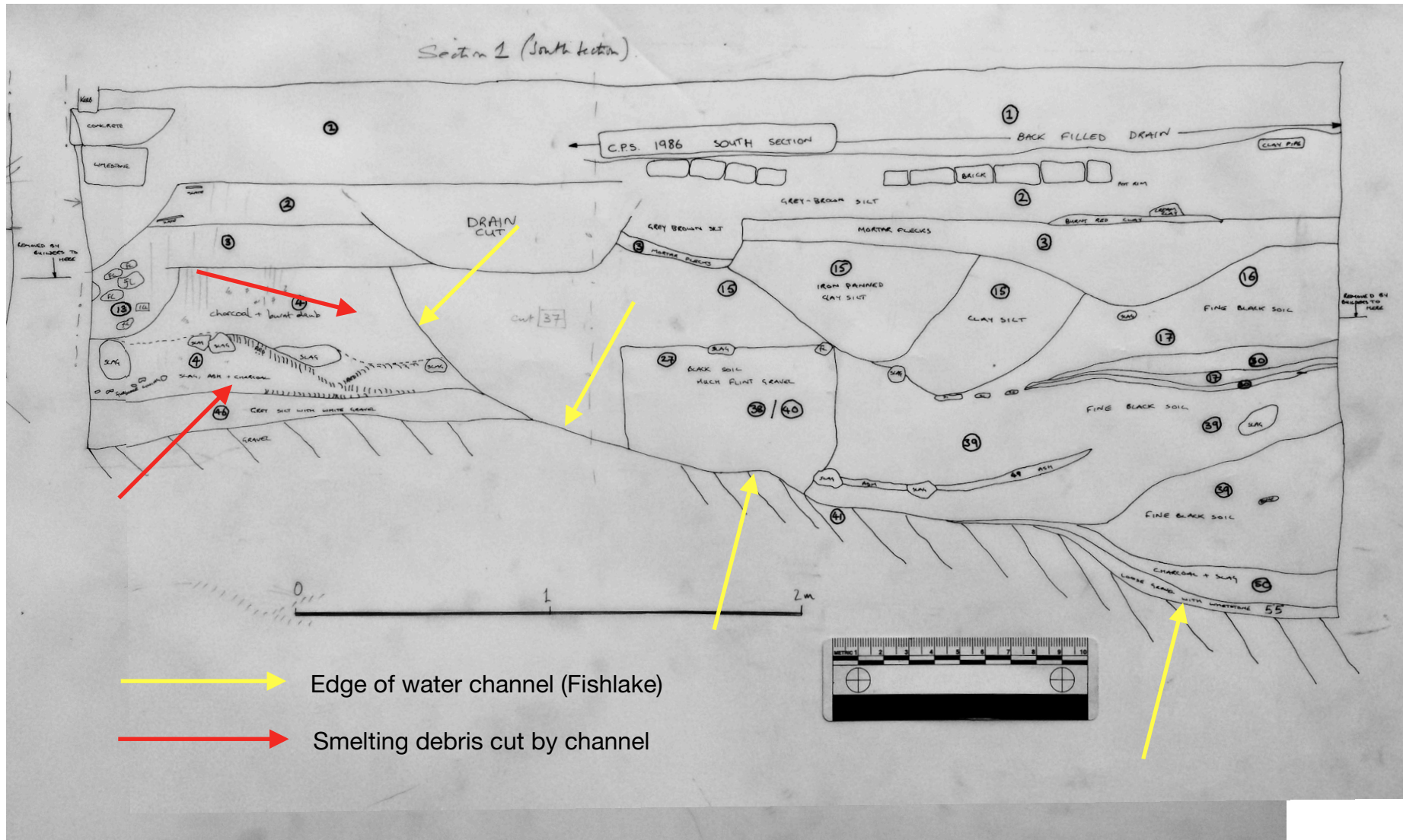


Creatures Pet Shop, south section

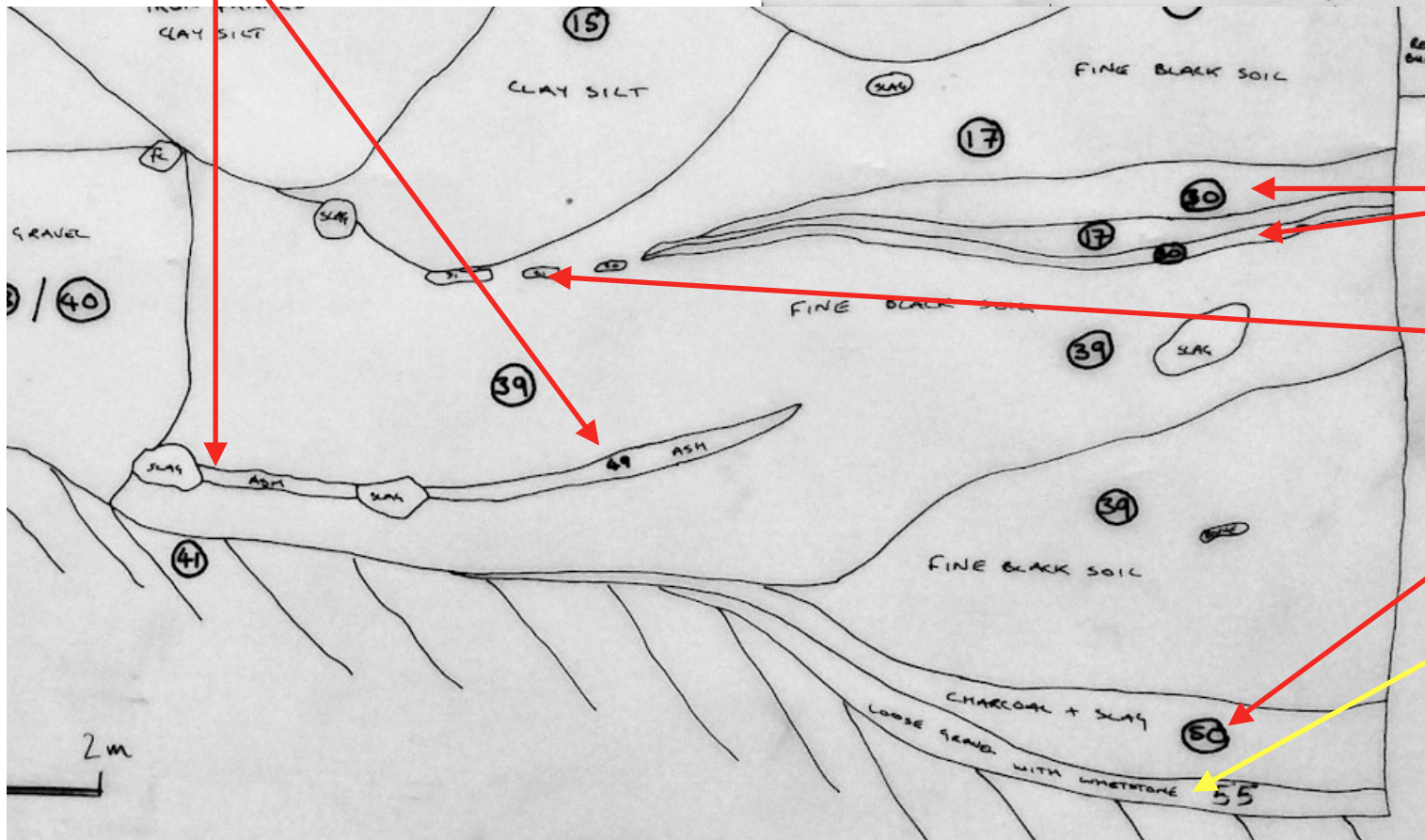
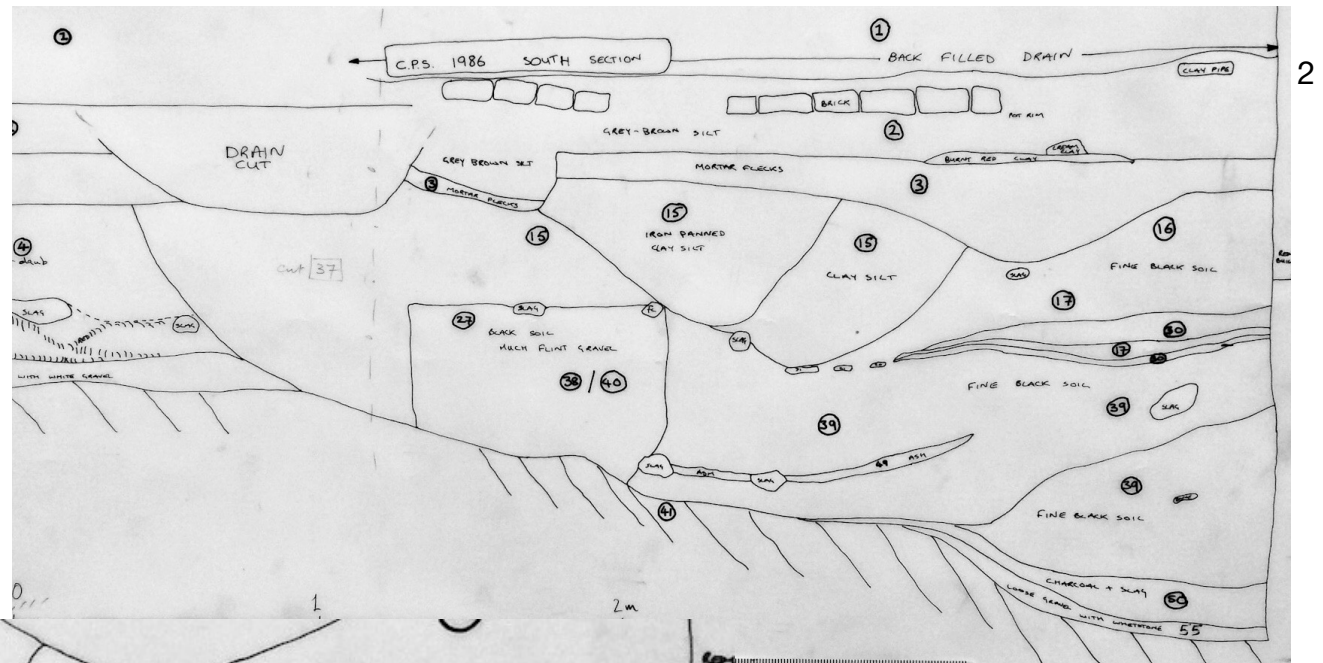
The excavation identified an infilled water channel, the eastern half of which lay within the trench. It continues the line of the Fishlake where it is visible at the north end of Church Street. This probably represents the original course of the Fishlake before it was diverted to run west along Abbey Water. The channel cut through an earlier deposit of iron smelting debris. The latest date for pottery within the fill of the channel is Saxo-Norman.



Smelting debris in channel fill.

The lenses of iron smelting debris were created by the repeated disposal of small quantities of material into the disused channel. It is clear evidence that smelting was being carried out nearby in the late Anglo-Saxon period.

49: Lens of ash, slag and unsmelted iron ore.



30: Two lenses containing slag. Described as possible tips of furnace material.

31: Continuation of line of 30. Roasted iron ore and slag.

50: Slag and charcoal.

55: Loose gravel. Water laid deposits in bottom of channel. Finds - bone and whetstone

Below is a section drawing of a pit I excavated at the Iron Age settlement at Gussage All Saints, Dorset in 1972. The pit contained debris from a nearby metal working area where iron smelting and bronze casting were being carried out. Through careful excavation I was able to identify individual lenses of tipped material. Note the similarity between these and the lenses in the fill of the Creatures channel. I spent a month in the pit. My flip-flopped feet were black. Iron smelting would have been a sooty business.

The bronze workers were casting chariot fittings. The clay moulds, bone modelling tools and crucibles are displayed in the British Museum.

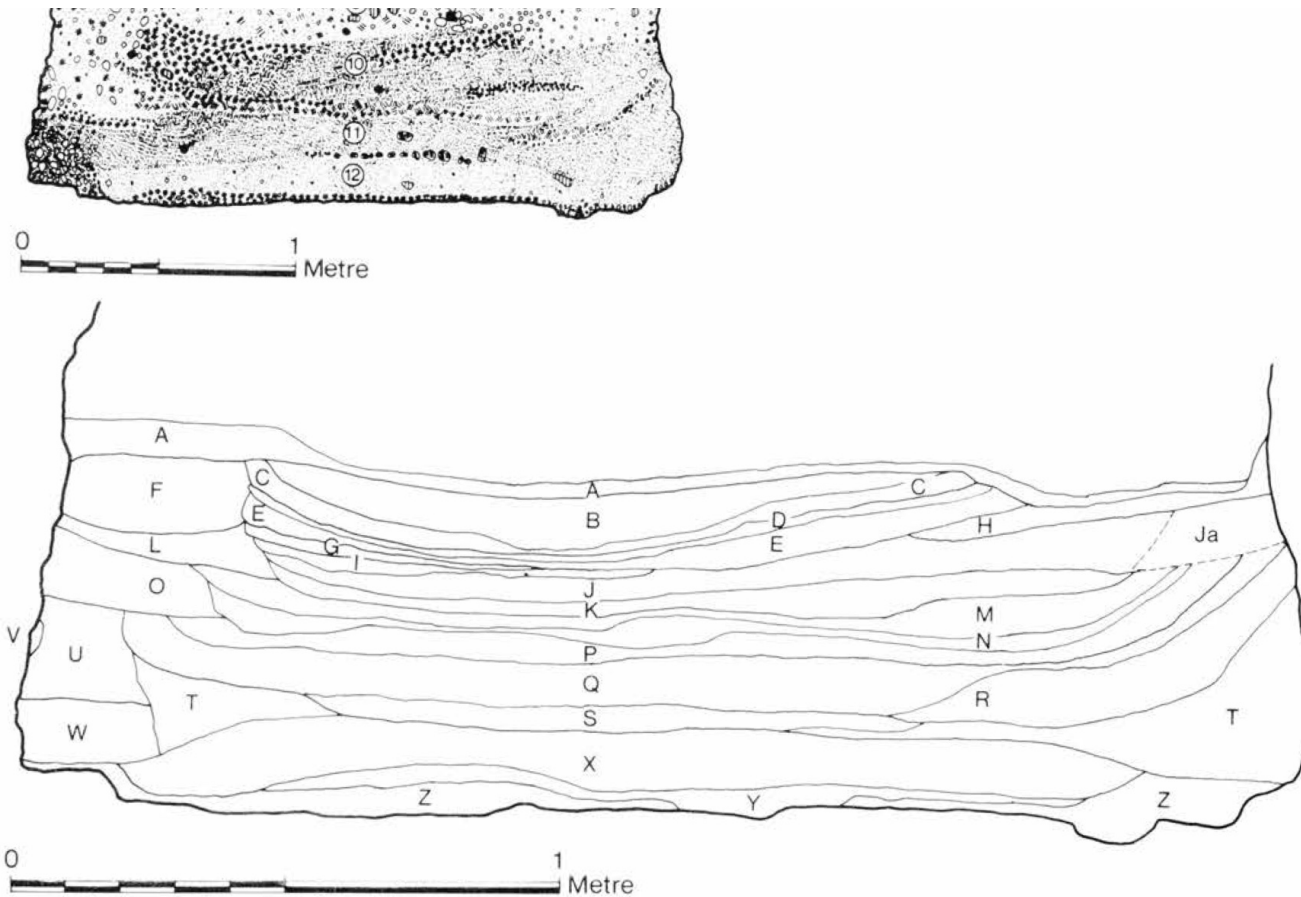


Figure 96 Section of Pit 209

- of the artefactual material. The twenty-six layers were lettered from A to Z, starting from the top (Figure 96). In general terms, A to M and O correspond to layer (10) of the southern half, N and P to layer (11), and X to Z to layer (12). However, the picture is actually more complicated than this, and is summarised in Table XVI. Layers A to Z were described as follows in the excavation-notebook:
- A Not an actual lens: top of (10).
 - B Charcoal and ash occurring in indefinite bands; probably represents tips although these could not be defined exactly; includes small sterile lens to left of section.
 - C Charcoal.
 - D Grey ash with small clay lumps.
 - E Charcoal.
 - F Rubble with brown soil and some charcoal; extends approximately 80cm from section decreasing to a thickness of 5cm.
 - G Light grey ash.
 - H Light grey ash.
 - I Ash and charcoal; separated from G by a lens of charcoal 0.5cm thick.
 - J Ash and charcoal. This lens was not clearly defined at the right side of the section and probably does not cut the underlying lenses as shown in the diagram. The finds from this were kept separate from the other finds from J and probably belong to M, P and Q. (The descriptor JA has since been given to this uncertainly bounded area of the deposit, and the finds correspondingly marked).
 - K Light grey ash with small chalk lumps.
 - L Brown soil with some chalk rubble; separated from F by thin band of grey soil; extends half-way around edge of northern half of pit.
 - M Charcoal with some ash; includes lens of light, sandy ash containing several pieces of slag at the right side of the section.
 - N Clay and ash.
 - O Clay mixed with small chalk lumps and chalk rubble; extends half-way around edge of northern half of pit.
 - P Dark grey ash and charcoal; divided into alternate lenses of charcoal and ash each approximately 1cm thick to right of section; probably represents four or five tips.
 - Q Light grey ash and charcoal; includes small lens of brown soil and small chalk lumps to left of section which contained several pieces of slag; above clay lens of R, charcoal and ash lenses were present as in P.
 - R Lens of chalk and clay below Q, containing several pieces of slag and one large lump of bronze (the billet); underlying this are two lenses of black ash separated by a thin lens of lighter ash—this deposit was distinctly separate from Q.
 - S Dark ash with some clay.
 - T Alternate lenses of very fine light and dark ash; four lenses were present at the left side of the section (light—dark—light—dark) and at least three at the right—and contained much burnt flint.
 - U Grey soil and medium chalk rubble; extends 70cm from section. Hearth blocks from southern half of pit in this lens.
 - V Clay and small chalk lumps; not present in section; extends from U for 80cm, 30 to 35cm in width; partially overlies T.
 - W Rubble with ash and charcoal; extends 90cm from section.
 - X Grey brown soil with ash, clay and some small chalk lumps; includes fairly continuous lens of light ash 1cm or less in thickness approximately in middle of X—two

bone tools were found in this ash.

- Y Charcoal with some soil and clay.
- Z Small dome of chalk rubble, small chalk lumps and brown soil left of centre of section, in which there were no finds; chalk rubble and grey soil around edge of pit. Some metallurgical debris was also discovered in layer (9), above layer (10); this layer was described as 'small chalk rubble/brown clayey soil', and also included bone and ceramic domestic refuse.

The bulk of the deposit from layers (10) to (12) and A to Z was charcoal and wood ash—with some ash-fluxed, vitrified clay—and in it were many fragments of tuyeres and other parts of fired hearth material (referred to in our research as IHM, or Industrial Hearth Matrix), some unused, unfired lumps of specially prepared clay, iron-working slag, bronze and iron scrap, hammer scale, a billet of tin bronze, nearly 600 fragments of crucibles, thousands of fragments of fired clay investment moulds made in one piece by the *cire perdue* (lost wax) technique for casting bronzes, and four fine bone tools for modelling the patterns around which the moulds would have been invested, as well as much waste material not yet precisely identified and numerous burnt, heat-fractured flint nodules and flakes. Over 7,000 mould-fragments have been counted, but this figure excludes a category of fragments which have been over-fired (referred to in our research as S-H (super heated) moulds) and are very difficult to identify since the fabric has softened and moved into shapes that have lost much of their original form: the total tally of mould-fragments is likely to run well into five figures.

The importance of this material lies not simply in its quantity and variety, but also in the fact that none of it is weathered, even in fracture, and that all of it is in an extremely fine state of preservation—a fact which has enabled a long-term programme of reconstruction to be launched. The freshness indicates quite clearly that the debris was thrown into the pit immediately (or shortly) after it was created, and further that the workshop from which it came lay in the immediate vicinity of the pit; no trace of the workshop itself was found in excavation and it is likely to have been destroyed some time ago by the action of the plough on the site. In this connection, it is apposite to observe that the later, mid-first century AD iron-smelting furnace should have been located only a short distance away from pit 209 in feature 2 (p. 32), the large hollow close to the main entrance into the settlement. This strongly suggests that this part of the settlement was reserved for metalworking over a long period. In terms of the arrangement of activities within the settlement, the location of the workshop in this area rather than elsewhere makes good sense: the potential fire-hazard to other structures (houses, barns, etc.) would have been minimised by its location close to the perimeter; moreover, any unpleasant fumes would have been blown away from the main area of domestic activity by the prevailing south-westerly winds which come from beyond the other side of the settlement. The concentration of unweathered, freshly broken debris from features in the area to the north of the entrance-thoroughfare (1M, 292, 437—8, 442, 601, 751) indicates that at certain times metalworking was carried out there rather than (or as well as) to the south of the thoroughfare where features 1Ka, 2, 209 and 857 are located (Table XV). The presence of bone-working debris in pit 209 indicates that this activity was also carried out in the same vicinity. The occurrence of bronze-working debris in deposits of all

