

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

*St Edmund's Church, Crickhowell, Powys*  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

CPAT Report No 51

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following archaeological evaluation was carried out in response to a planning application for a proposed vestry extension to St Edmund's Church, Crickhowell (Brecknockshire District Council planning application K12745). The proposed development lies along the north side of the church (Fig 1) within an area of the graveyard which is currently disused, and in part occupied by a tarmac path.
- 1.2 The church of St Edmund's was founded in 1303 when the land was given by Lady Sibyl Pauncefote. The church is large, built on a cruciform plan with central crossing tower and N and S aisles. Only the chancel remains in a relatively unaltered state (Haslam 1979, 312).

## 2 THE EVALUATION

- 2.1 The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was commissioned to undertake the evaluation, which was carried out between February 23rd and 25th 1993. In accordance with the evaluation brief (CPAT EVB 24), a single trial trench was excavated to determine the extent of the surviving archaeology and to evaluate the significance and likely dating of any features revealed (Fig 2). The trench was excavated entirely by hand. The results from the excavations were as follows:
- 2.2 **Trench A** (5.5 x 1m. Figs 3 and 4). Numbers in brackets refer to Figures 3 and 4.
- 2.2.1 The trench was located entirely within the area occupied by the tarmac path (1), and two layers of surfacing (2 and 3) were removed by hand. Beneath the path lay a layer of compacted dark red-brown sandy loam (4), which presumably formed either an earlier path or make-up for the existing one.
- 2.2.2 Removal of layer 4 revealed a layer of red-brown sandy loam (5) c.0.25m thick with frequent mortar flecks, which was clearly cut by three features. At the eastern end of the excavation further investigation revealed a narrow trench (11) c.0.30m wide containing a lead water pipe carrying the supply to the adjacent vestry. At the western end, a further trench (9) was identified running diagonally across the northwest corner of the excavation, containing a ceramic drainage pipe for rain and waste water from the vestry. This trench cut through the fill of a presumed grave (6) at least 0.70m wide, with only the southern edge lying within the excavated area. The fill contained fragments of roofing tile manufactured at Coalport in Shropshire, which presumably date from the reroofing of the church in 1897.
- 2.2.3 Beneath layer 5 lay a compacted layer of red-brown sandy loam (8) c.0.11m thick, cut by two probable graves. The larger of the two features (15) was 1.64m wide at the top with sloping sides. The width is greater than that which might be expected for a single grave, and may therefore have been dug to accommodate two burials. The other feature (19) was considerably narrower, being only 0.52m across. Both contained sherds of pottery of probable 18th century date.



- 2.2.4 Following the removal of layer 8, a further presumed grave (13) was identified partly cut away by 15. This contained a large stone 0.84m across within the fill. The northern edge of the feature had been cut through a layer of firm red sandy loam (21), which may be the undisturbed natural subsoil. At the southern end of the excavation layer 8 was removed to reveal a layer of soft re-brown sandy loam (20) at least 0.26m thick. The presence of mortar flecks within the layer indicate that the material had been redeposited, and it is possible that this represents the fills of unidentified graves rather than a single deposit.
- 2.2.5 During the removal of layer 20 a burial (17) was uncovered c.0.67m beneath the surface of the tarmac path. There was no indication of a cut visible in the section, although a possible southern edge could be identified in plan, while the northern side would have been removed by 19. The lower limbs of a skeleton were uncovered within the excavation, and were recorded but not disturbed. There were no associated finds to suggest the date of the burial.

### 3 THE FINDS

- 3.1 Only two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered, both of which were unstratified. A total of 16 sherds of post-medieval pottery of 18th or 19th century date were recovered from contexts 4, 8, and 15. Four fragments of roofing tile made at Coalport in Shropshire came from contexts 4 and 6, and presumably date from the reroofing of the church in 1897. Other finds included three iron nails, two fragments of clay pipe stem, and one fragment of post-medieval glass.

### 4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The results from the evaluation would suggest that the area contains at least five burials, the latest of which (context 6) could be 19th century in date. It is probable that further burials are located beneath the choir vestry. Any construction work, particularly to depths greater than 0.67m, would therefore be likely to disturb the burials within this area.
- 4.2 The excavations revealed no evidence of structural remains within the area investigated, and it would seem likely that the earlier phases of the church did not extend into this area.

### 5 REFERENCES

Haslam, R., 1979 The Buildings of Wales. Powys, 312-314.

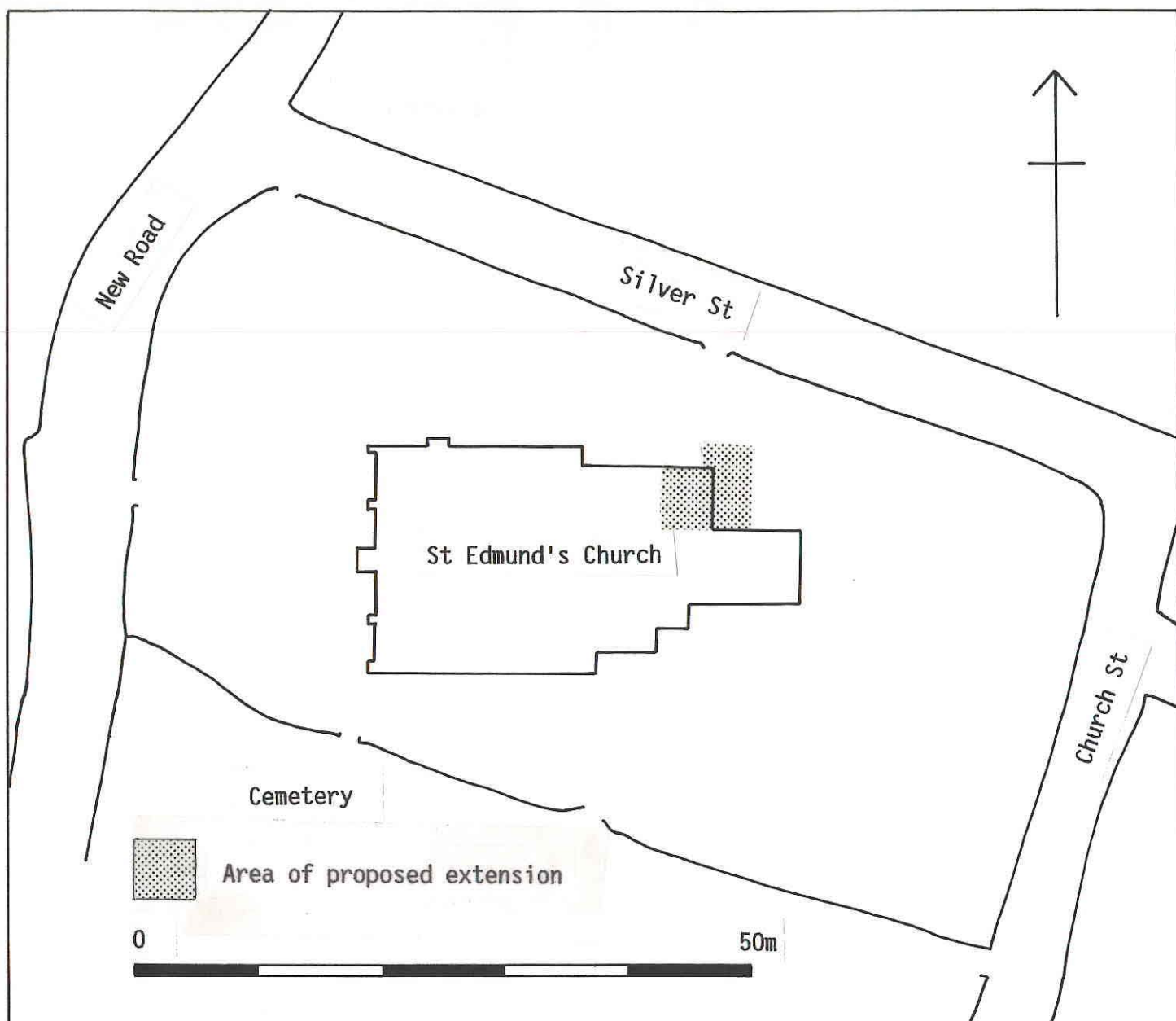


Fig 1: St Edmund's Church, Crickhowell, location.

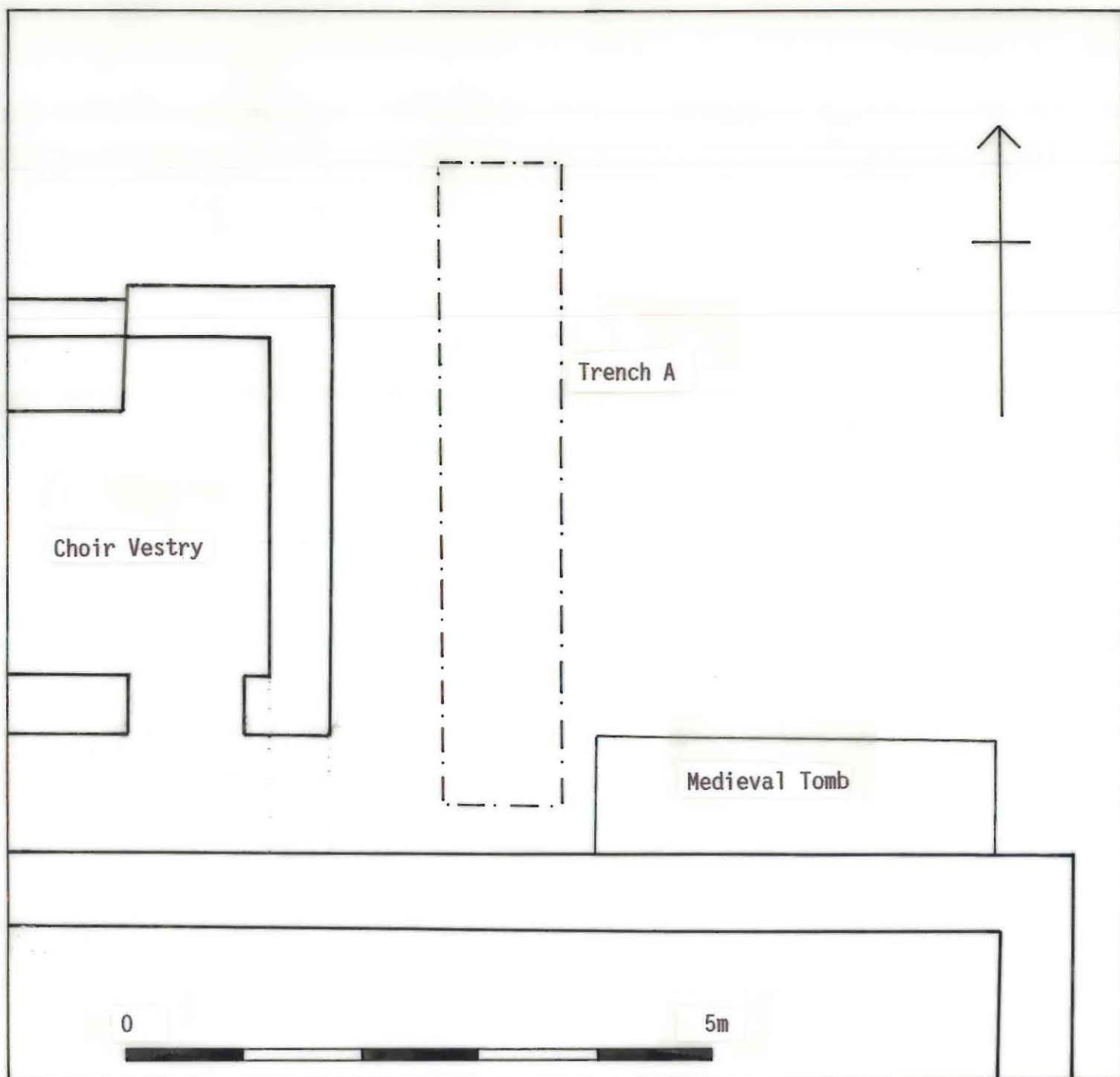


Fig 2: Trench A location

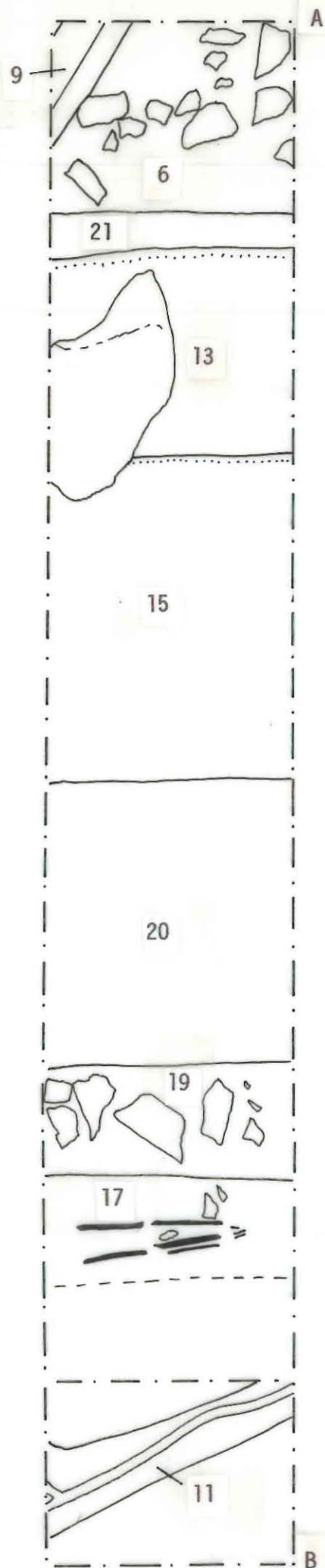


Fig 3: Trench A excavation plan



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2m

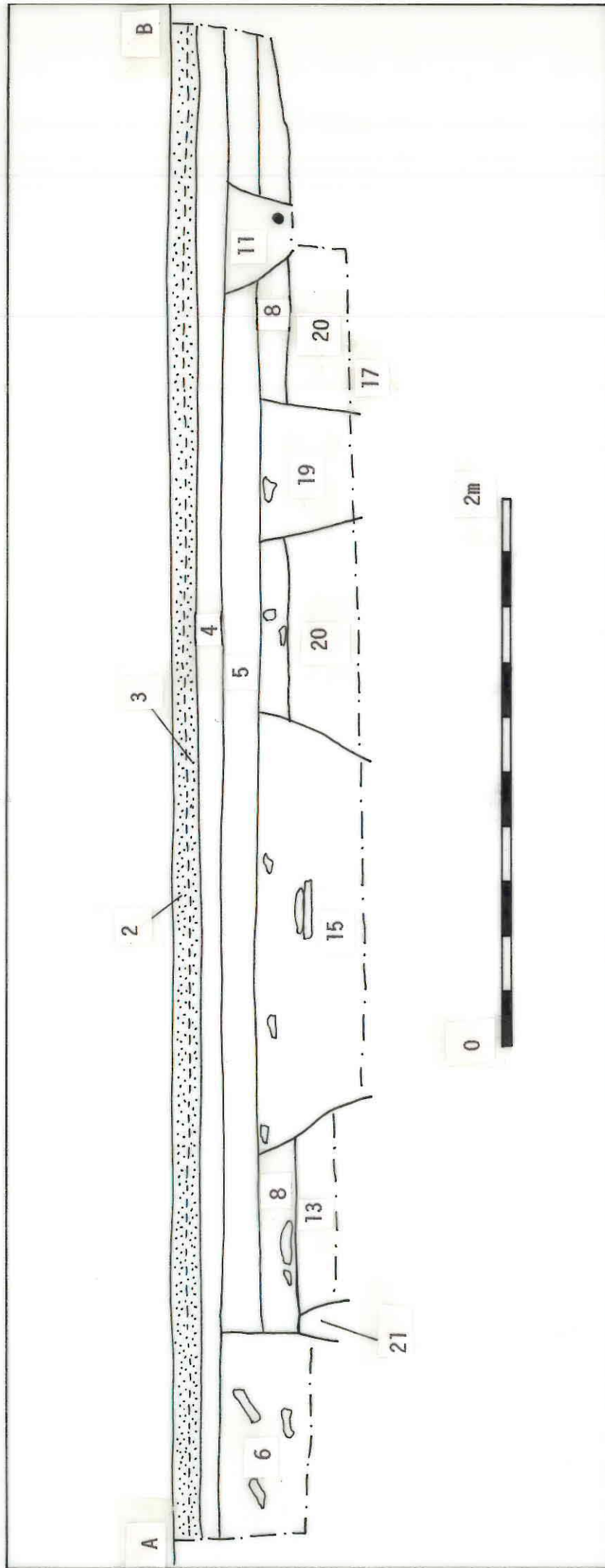


Fig 4: Trench A section A-B