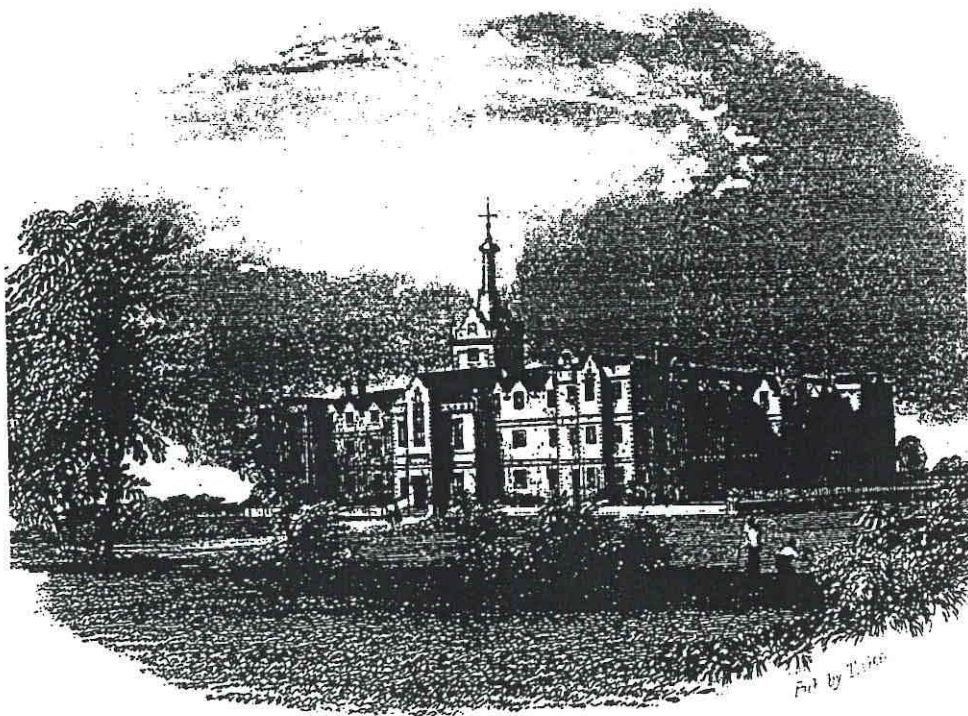


THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

*Land Adjacent to the former North
Wales Hospital, Denbigh*
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



*North Wales Hospital for the Insane,
Denbigh.*

CPAT Report No 272

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*Land Adjacent to the former North
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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March 1998

Report for Christopher Brummitt Architects.

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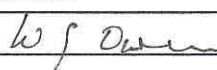

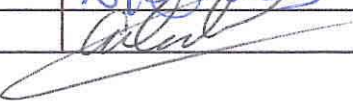
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CPAT Report Record

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On the 19th January 1998, the Contracting Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (hereafter CPAT Contracts) was asked to provide a quotation and specification for the excavation of two evaluation trenches on land adjacent to the former North Wales Hospital, Denbigh (SJ 049 655). The evaluation forms part of the planning process and was the subject of a brief prepared by Denbighshire Archaeology Service, acting as the archaeological curator, on behalf of Christopher Brummitt Architects.
- 1.2 The excavation trenches were intended to evaluate the nature and possible dating of a bank (PRN 19784), located in a field approximately 0.5km to the north of the main hospital site. The bank had been noted in an archaeological assessment of the proposed development (Frost 1997).
- 1.3 The CPAT Contracts quotation and specification were accepted by Christopher Brummitt Architects on the 5th March 1998. The excavation was carried at the end of March and this report written immediately thereafter.

2 GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The evaluation area is located immediately to the south of the town of Denbigh, approximately 0.4km to the north of the former North Wales Hospital (fig. 1). The land on which it lies is at approximately 120mOD with the narrow valley containing the River Ystrad situated 0.5km to the south and south-west.
- 2.2 The soils of the evaluation area are fine loamy and silty soils belonging to the East Keswick 3 Soil Association (Rudeforth *et al.* 1984). The solid geology underlying these soils is limestone of the Carboniferous period.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The bank (PRN 19784) which is the subject of this evaluation was referred to by Silvester (1995, 26). The function of the bank was not determined, but a possible Civil War date for its construction was suggested.
- 3.2 A subsequent desk-top study and walkover survey, which was undertaken to assess the archaeological resource of the area for the proposed development, revealed further information about the bank, which was noted as extending into the garden and field to the south-west; it appears to have been substantially landscaped in these additional areas. The nature of the earthwork led to the suggestion that the bank could be related to Gwaenynog Hall park (Frost 1997).

4 EXCAVATION

- 4.1 The evaluation trenches were located within the field designated N3 in the initial assessment (Frost 1997). Trench A was excavated at right-angles to the line of the bank towards its north-eastern end, while Trench B was excavated on the crest of the bank towards the south-western end (fig. 2). Both trenches were excavated by machine under archaeological supervision, with subsequent excavation and recording carried out manually. On the advice of the curator the excavations were limited in depth to reveal the upper surface of the bank only. Numbers in brackets refer to individual contexts recorded in the site archive.

Trench A (37m x 1.5m; fig. 3)

- 4.2 A layer of topsoil (1) 0.2m thick was removed by machine revealing the upper surface of the bank material (2 and 3). The depth of excavation was insufficient to reveal the base of the bank and no finds were recovered from the bank material. The only features noted within the excavation were three modern service trenches (4,7, 10) running along the length of the bank.

- 4.2 At the north-west end of the trench a stone layer (12) was revealed towards the tail of the bank, lying on top of the bank material. This layer, which consisted of small rounded stones in a stiff clay matrix, extended for c.3.0m to the end of the trench, and appeared to continue beyond it. Artefacts recovered from amongst the stones included a possible horseshoe nail and a sherd of post-medieval pottery. A similar layer (16) was also noted at the south-east end of the trench, also towards the tail of the bank, but only 0.9m wide. Both layers formed a fairly compact stone surface, but with no indication as to the likely function.
- 4.3 The profile of the bank at this point revealed it to be c.28m in width and up to 1.4m high, the slope being most pronounced on the south-east side, with an increasing depth of topsoil masking the side of the bank to the north-west. No evidence was revealed for a ditch on either side of the bank.

Trench B (36m x 1.5m)

- 4.4 A layer of topsoil (18) 0.2m thick was removed by machine revealing the upper surface of the bank material (19). The depth of the excavation was insufficient to reveal the base of the bank, although it was evident that some layering was present within the bank makeup, presumably indicating different dumps of material. No finds were recovered. The only features noted within the excavation were three modern service trenches (26, 28, 30) running along the length of the bank, presumably the same features identified in Trench A.
- 4.5 The profile of the bank at this point revealed it to be c. 27m in width and up to 1.5m high, the slope being most pronounced on the north-west side. No evidence was revealed for a ditch on either side of the bank.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The results from the evaluation have been inconclusive with regard to establishing a probable date and function for the bank. The evaluation has confirmed that the bank is man-made, but produced no artefactual evidence to provide further information. The stone surface revealed along the north-west side of the bank in Trench A is of uncertain function, although the appearance would suggest metalling for a track or hard standing.
- 5.2 It is probable that further information regarding the earthwork may be revealed should the proposed development involve the excavation of sections across the bank.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1 The writer would like to thank Fiona Gale of Denbighshire Archaeology Service.

7 REFERENCES

- Frost, P., 1997, *Land Adjacent to North Wales Hospital, Denbigh*, CPAT Report No 213.
- Rudeforth, C.C., Hartnup, R., Lea, J.W., Thompson, T.R.E., and Wright, P.C., 1984, *Soils and their Use in Wales*, Bulletin No 11. Harpenden: Soil Survey of England and Wales.
- Silvester, R.J., 1995, *Glyndwr District Historic Settlements*, CPAT Report No 131.

APPENDIX 1

SITE ARCHIVE

31 Context record forms

4 A1 site drawings

1 Black and white negative film, contacts and archive prints

1 Colour slide film

Photographic catalogue

Finds

1 ? horseshoe nail, context 12

1 sherd post-medieval pottery, context 12

APPENDIX 2

DENBIGH HOSPITAL: SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION BY CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The proposed development of a block of land at Denbigh Hospital involves the development of a leisure, residential and industrial complex on the site of and in the vicinity of the former N Wales Hospital (SJ049655).
- 1.2 This area lies close to the town walls and castle of Denbigh and may cover remains associated with the Castle's development. A substantial bank of unknown date and function has been identified in the development area.
- 1.3 The officers of Denbigh Archaeological Service in their capacity as advisers to the local planning authority have determined that a field evaluation is necessary to assess the implications of the proposed development on the archaeological resource. Accordingly a brief (dated January 1998) has been prepared by Denbigh Archaeological Service which describes the scheme of archaeological works required.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the evaluation are:
 - 2.1.1 to reveal by means of evaluation trenches, the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of the archaeology within the area of the proposed development in so far as these aims are possible;
 - 2.1.2 to record any archaeology revealed in the evaluation trenches;
 - 2.1.3 to prepare a report outlining the results of the field evaluation and incorporating sufficient information on the archaeological resource for a reasonable planning decision to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the area affected by the proposed development;

3 Methods

- 3.1 Stage one will take the form of two trenches, each 35m long by 1.5m wide. Where required these will be taken to a maximum depth of 1.2m below the existing ground surface. Consultation with the client and the curator will be necessary before this depth is exceeded.
- 3.2 The evaluation will be undertaken using standard evaluation procedures:
 - 3.2.1 removal of modern overburden by machine;
 - 3.2.2 evaluation of the archaeological deposits by hand trowelling to establish their importance and integrity, but avoiding any unnecessary disturbance of the deposits. All features encountered will be examined as fully as appropriate to fulfil the requirements of the evaluation and within the constraints imposed by time and safety considerations.
 - 3.2.3 all archaeological contexts recorded using the standard numbered context system employed by CPAT. All significant contexts to be planned and/or drawn in section at appropriate scales (as defined in the Curatorial Brief), and photographed in monochrome and colour. All drawn records will be related to control points depicted on modern maps.

- 3.2.4 all archaeological artefacts and environmental samples recorded and processed in a manner appropriate to the material involved. Those requiring conservation or other specialist treatment will be stored in a stable environment until such times as they can be examined by a specialist. All finds, except those deemed to be Treasure Trove, are the property of the landowner. It is anticipated that they will be donated to the appropriate local or regional museum, subject to agreement being reached with the landowner and the museum curator.
- 3.4 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared according to the principles laid out in the Curatorial Brief (p.5). This will be in A4 format and contain conventional sections on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Excavation; Conclusions and Recommendations and References, together with appropriate appendices on archives and finds.
- 3.5 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991).

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1 The evaluation will be undertaken by a small team of 2 skilled archaeologists under the direct supervision of an experienced field archaeologist, who will also be responsible for undertaking the desk-based assessment. Overall supervision will be by Dr A Gibson, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by the same field archaeologist who conducted the evaluation.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the assessment and evaluation will take no more than 5 days in all and that the subsequent report would be prepared immediately thereafter, dependent on the client's instructions and the arrangement of a suitable timetable. The date of commencement, at the time of writing, has yet to be agreed with the client, and will be dependent on the state of the site and access permissions obtained by the client. The archaeological curator will be informed of the detailed timetable and staffing levels when agreement has been reached with the client.
- 4.4 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.5 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance.

A.M. Gibson
Projects Manager

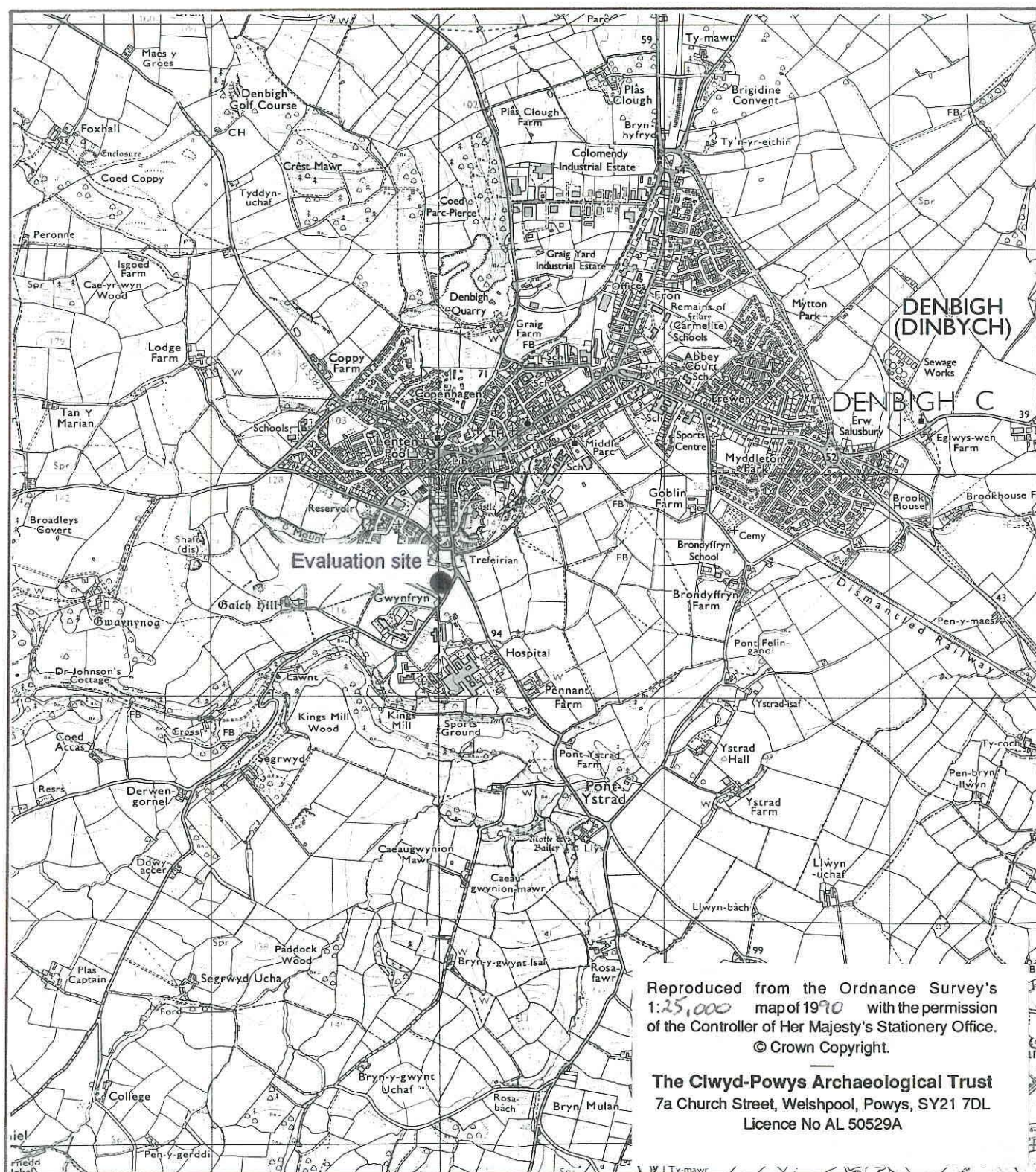


Fig. 1 Location scale 1:25,000



Fig. 2 Location of trenches scale 1:2,500

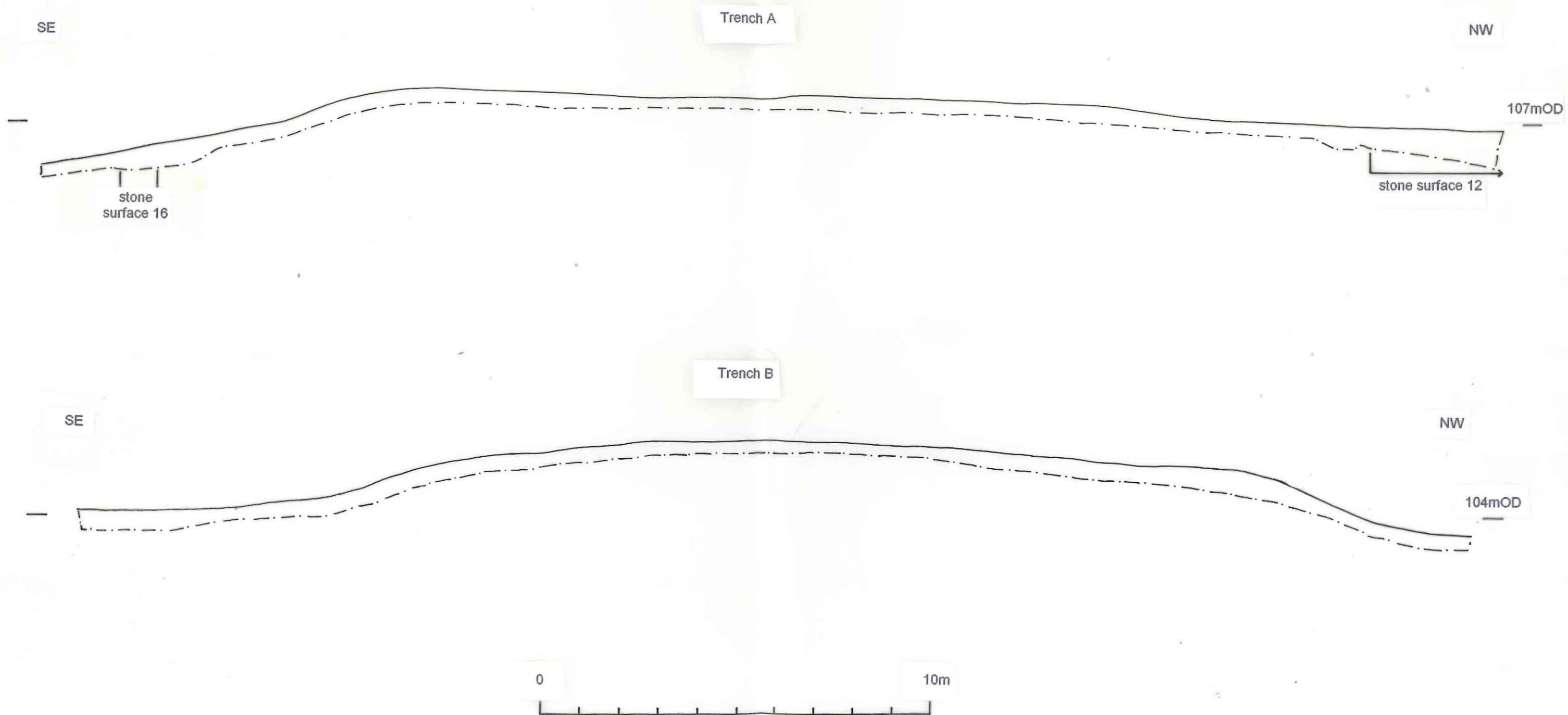


Fig. 3 Profiles of bank scale 1:100