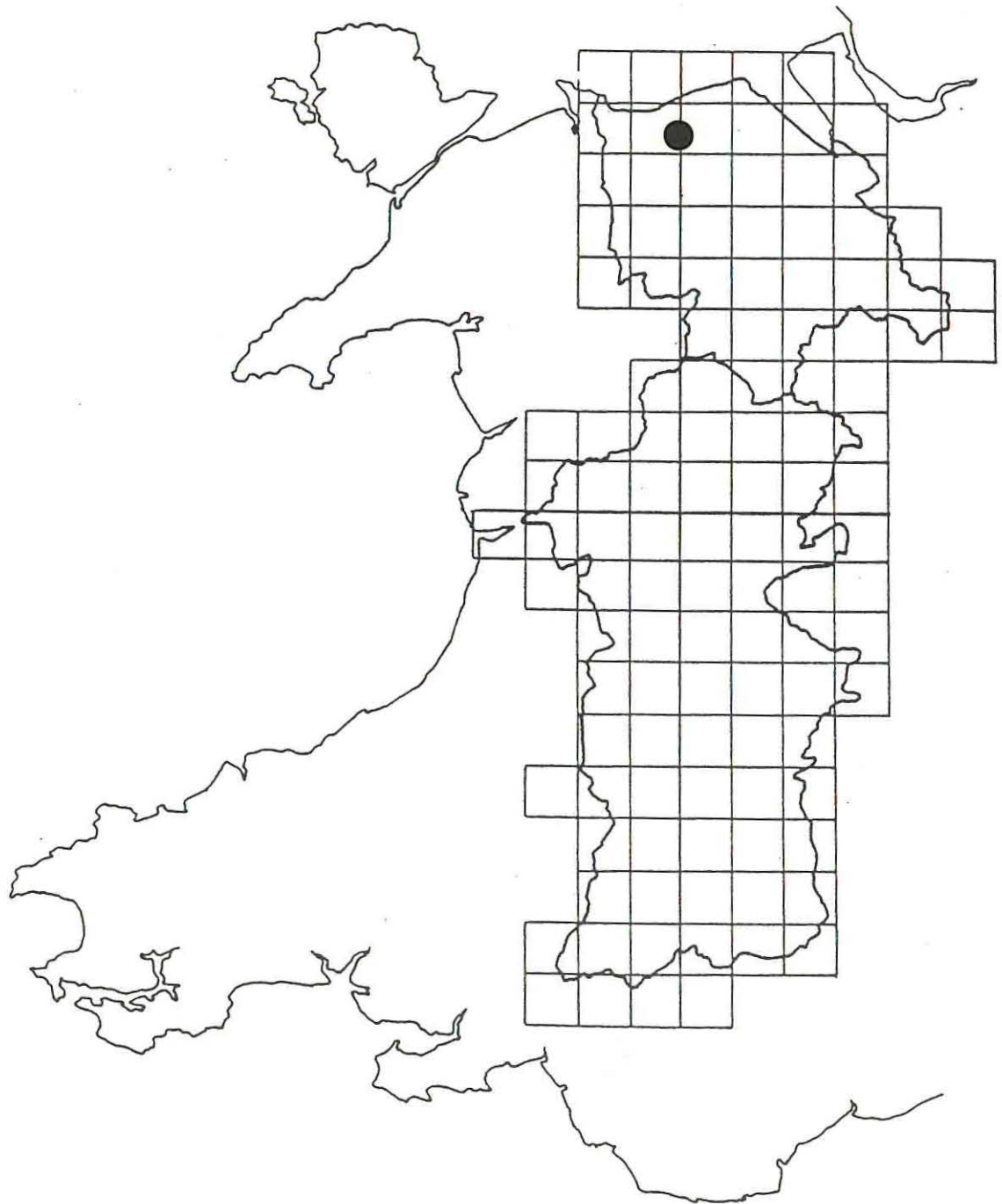


THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Glascoed to Kinnel Bay Water Main, Clwyd

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



CPAT Report No 67

Glascoed to Kinnel Bay Water Main, Clwyd

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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Report prepared for Dŵr Cymru / Welsh Water

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GLASCOED TO KINMEL BAY MAINS LAYING: WATCHING BRIEF

1 Introduction

1.1 Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was commissioned by Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water in April 1993 to maintain an archaeological watching brief during pipeline construction work in an area where a Roman road (CAR 1380) had been posited (Fig 2).

1.2 The line of the Roman road from Chester to Caernarfon has been considered by several authorities to have adopted a line now followed by the B5381 in the area where it would be crossed by the pipeline. At the present time the evidence on which this assumption is based is circumstantial, relying on modern alignments which are thought to mirror the Roman pattern. Consequently, the possibility of confirming the presence of the road in this locality is a matter of some archaeological interest.

1.3 In response to the request of the Development and Control Officer for Clwyd Archaeology Service (part of Clwyd County Council), CPAT was also commissioned in April 1993 to maintain an archaeological watching brief when the pipeline excavation proceeded through an 80m-long section of World War I practice trenches in the grounds of Bodelwyddan Castle some 500m to the north of the B5831.

2 The Watching Brief

2.1 The practice trench complex consists of a 70m-long, forward-position, fire trench with traverses, which is aligned approximately north-west/south-east. This is connected on the eastern side of the corridor by a linear communication trench to a 140m-long, support trench located 60m to the north. Within the complex there are also numerous shell craters and foxholes.

2.2 The pipe-trench cut both the fire trench and the support trench almost at right angles and also truncated a probable foxhole. An opportunity, therefore, arose to examine sections of these three features and to record below-ground structural detail that survived.

2.3 CPAT was briefed by Mr Ian Sanderson, of Clwyd Archaeology Service to record both photographically and by means of scale drawings, details of these three features as pipeline construction proceeded.

2.4 All visible surface features within the 80m-long section of the pipeline corridor were recorded in plan at a scale of 1:200. Included were the forward-position fire-trench, the support trench, the truncated foxhole and six shell craters (Fig. 3). Larger-scale plans, at 1:40 and 1:20 respectively were drawn of the fire-trench and the foxhole (Fig,4). A full photographic record was also made of these features.

2.5 Whilst the pipe-trench was being excavated through the area in early May a continuous watching brief was maintained. Where the trench cut through the features noted above, the sections revealed were examined, photographed and drawn.

2.6 The Support Trench (Fig 4)

2.6.1 This feature, partly infilled at its western end extended the full width of the pipeline corridor.

2.6.2 The section showed clear differentiation between the buff-brown coloured clayey loam of the trench fill and the stiffer reddish-brown sandy clay into which it had originally been cut. Weathering and collapse of the sides, that occurred after the abandonment of the site as a practice area, were reflected in the angle of the trench sides, and this made it impossible to evaluate the original profile of the trench. Similarly, weathering and subsequent truncation of the original ground surface gave no indication of whether the trench was originally embanked at ground level. The trench was 1.60m deep below the present ground surface and, at its base, was 0.80m wide. There were no traces of wooden revetment material and no finds were recovered.

2.7 The Foxhole (Figs 4 and 5)

2.7.1 The inner dimensions of this foxhole were approximately 3.50m x 2.50m. It had been truncated for about two-thirds of its length by topsoil removal but low weathered earth banks averaging 1.20m in width remained around the intact western end. As with three of the nearby shell craters, the interior had been infilled with brick in an earth matrix to a depth of 0.45m below the truncated surface. This overlay a 0.20m-thick, stony, brown coloured, clayey loam layer. The overall depth from the base to the line of the adjacent bank ridges was 0.84m. Again, its original depth and profile could not be evaluated owing to the effects of weathering and truncation.

2.8 The Forward-Position Fire Trench (Figs 4 and 5)

2.8.1 This partially infilled trench again extended the full width of the pipeline corridor with the best preserved part at the eastern side where the trench, including adjacent low, weathered banks, was over 1.00m deep below the modern ground surface. Short traverses aligned at an acute angle to the north-west/south-east line of the trench gave it a meandering pattern of construction which, originally, would have lessened the effects of both enfilade fire and the effect of explosion within the trench.

2.8.2 The pipeline trench truncated a section of the north-west/south-east trench at a point close to its western end which was sufficient to give some indication of its profile. As with the support trench, it appeared that the original profile had been lost due to the effects of weathering and infilling, although the base of the trench was quite clearly defined. This was 0.60m wide and 1.64m below the adjacent bank ridges. There were no traces of revetments and, again, no artefacts were recovered.

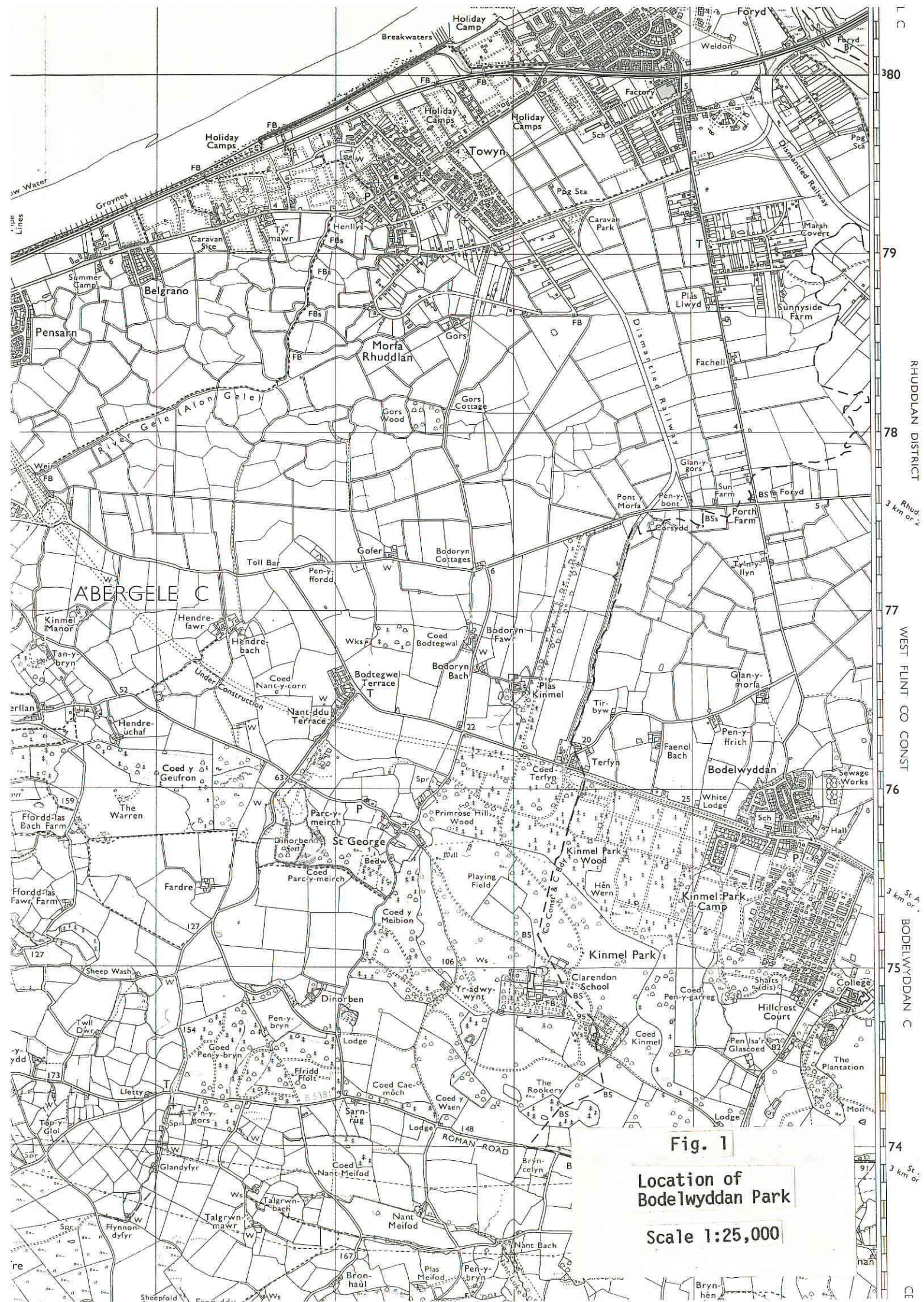
3 The Roman Road

3.1 A watching brief was maintained in late May during pipe-trench excavation in the vicinity of the B5831 road and the exposed sections were examined.

3.2 Those parts of the trench which had not been disturbed by the installation of other services only showed a layer of mixed reddish-brown clayey soil some 0.50m thick above the natural boulder clays. No evidence was found which related to an earlier road or its construction. This lack of evidence does little to further our knowledge of the supposed line of the Roman road as it is possible that the road was either removed during construction of the present road or that its course followed a different line. More evidence is needed to confirm or refute either of these hypotheses.

4 Acknowledgements

4.1 CPAT wishes to acknowledge the kind assistance given by Mr Dave Render and the construction team of Johnston Construction Ltd during the course of this watching brief.



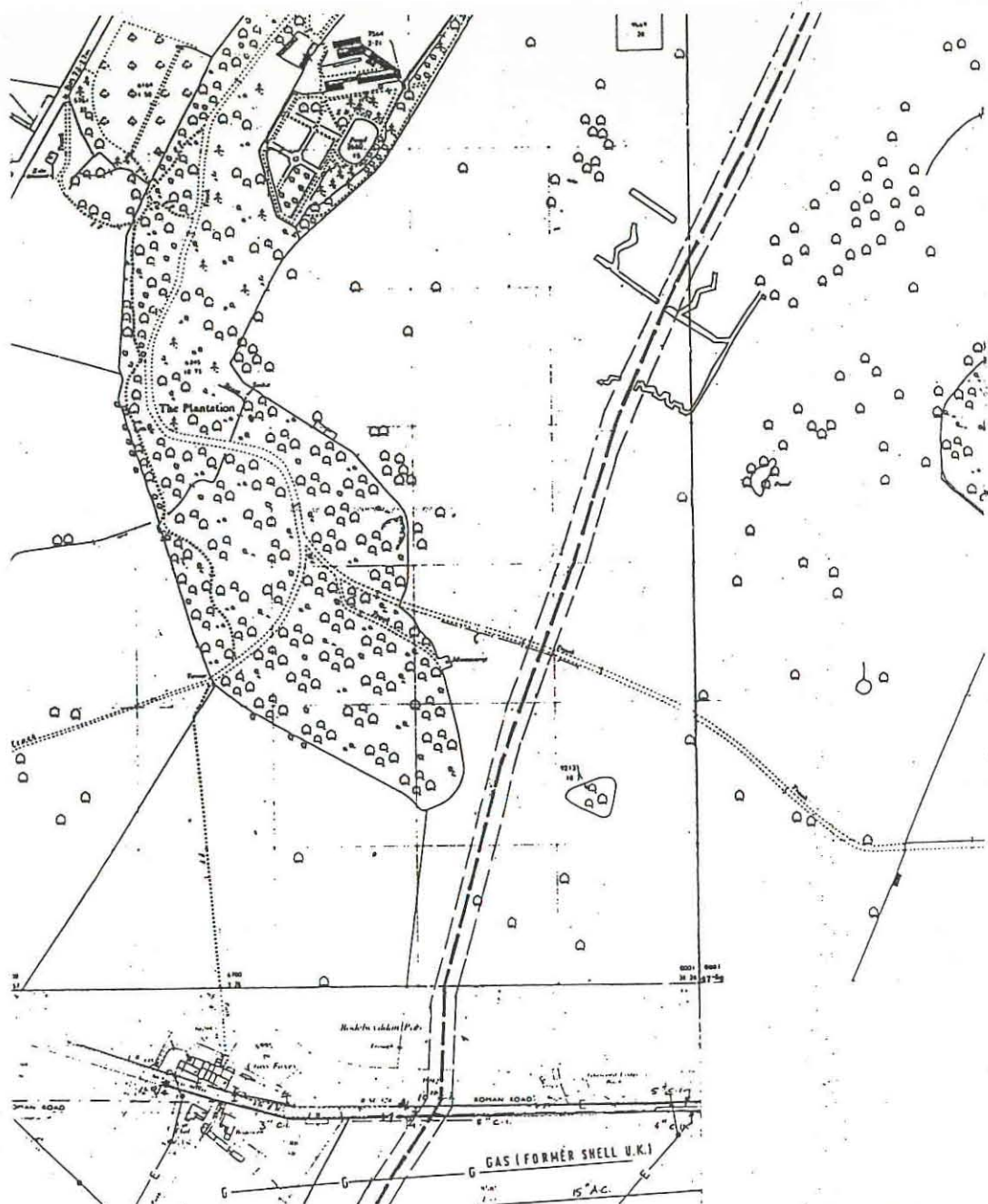


Fig. 2
Pipeline corridor
and trench complex
Scale 1:5000

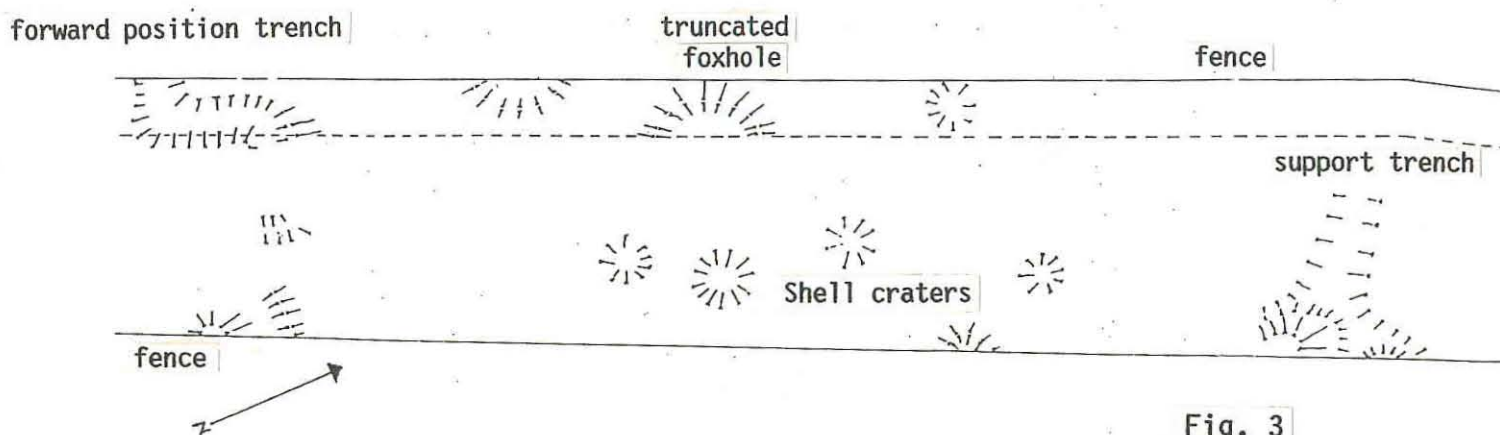


Fig. 3
Scale 1:400

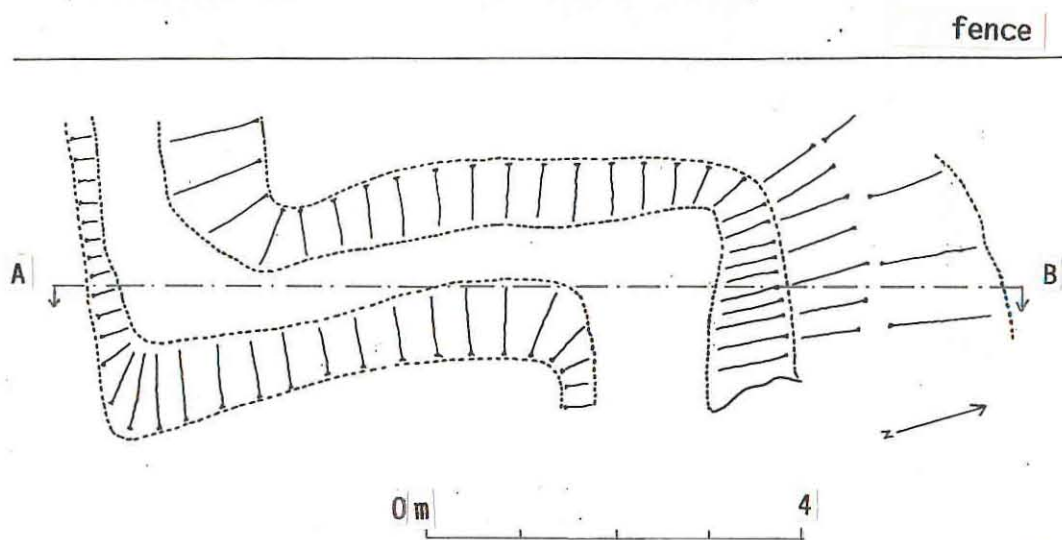


Fig. 4
forward position trench

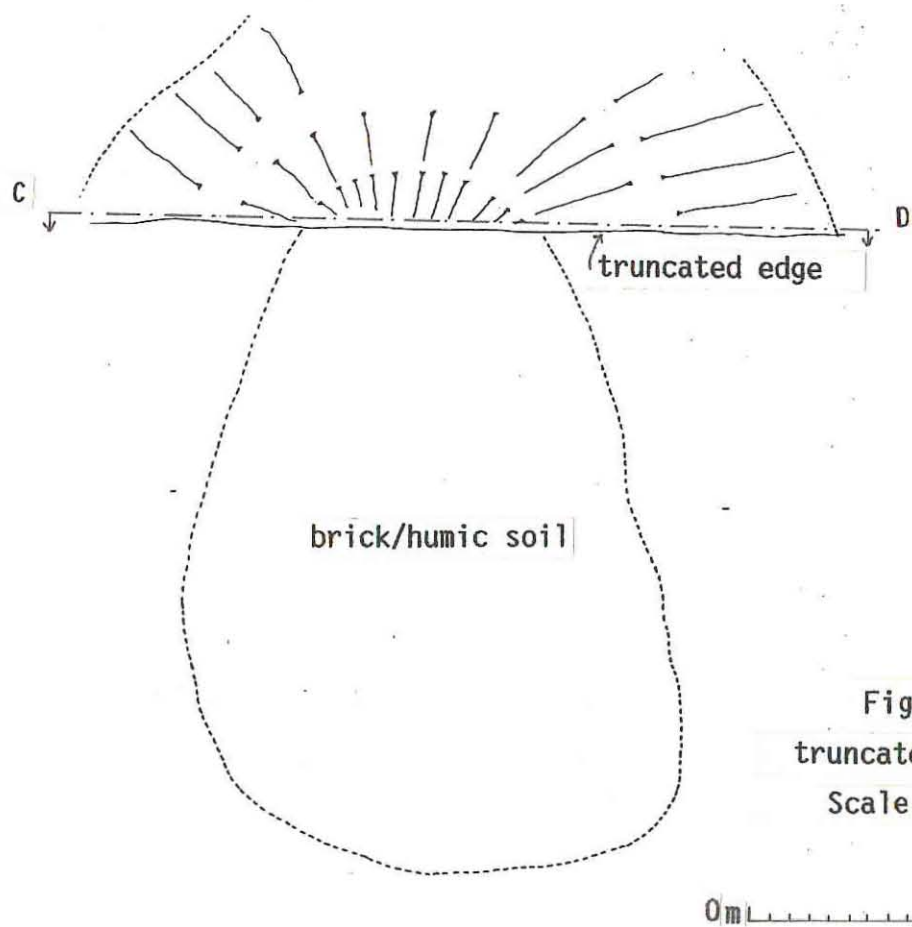


Fig. 5
truncated foxhole
Scale 1:40

A

B

CHALK

forward position trench
Section A-B

C

D

brick/soil layer

truncated foxhole
Section C-D

E

F

modern overburden

clayey-loam

Support Trench
Section E-F

