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Excavations at the Perrott's Brook Dyke, Bagendon, 1983

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Notes

EXCAVATIONS AT THE PERROTT'S BROOK DYKE, BAGENDON, 1983

In October 1983 the Thames Water Authority excavated a main water pipeline from North Cerney to Baunton (FIG. 1), crossing the Perrott's Brook Dyke at SP 01540585. The dyke, part of the Bagendon Iron Age complex, is Scheduled Monument number 428 (Gloucestershire) and site number 12 on the County Council SMR. Scheduled Monument Consent was granted for machine-trenching and archaeological investigation in advance of the main laying, the first to have taken place on this monument. The work was funded by the Thames Water Authority and conducted by Western Archaeological Trust between 19th and 22nd October 1983. The co-operation of the landowner Mrs B.W. Robinson and the DOE Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Mr P. Gosling, is acknowledged, as is the assistance of volunteers K. Gold, A. Muggleton, W. Saunders, N. Tyndall, and B. Willoughby. Thanks are also due to Messrs R. Maggs, D.D. Robinson, and M. Stanley of Thames Water, Western Division. Alan Saville provided the flint identifications, and the illustrations were drawn by Susan Banks.

A trench was excavated primarily by machine at an approximate right angle to the axis of the linear earthwork, extending from the verge of Welsh Way to the field south of the Perrott's Brook Dyke copse, a length of 23.5 m.

At the point where the trench crossed the earthwork, the bank was 9 m wide, standing to a maximum height of 1 m, belying the more substantial size indicated by its visual impact. The bank had been constructed on an old ground surface (FIG. 2, F13) of orange/brown clayey soil varying between 0.1–0.3 m in thickness above the Great Oolite. No pre-bank turf line was discernible, and this original soil layer yielded no traces of occupation or disturbance prior to the construction of the bank (cf. Clifford 1961, 8).

The bank had been built of medium- and large-sized limestone rubble and slabs (F11) with an orange-brown soil matrix evidently deriving from the underlying soil layer. Part of the rubble on the northern side of the bank was set loosely in a matrix of yellow crumbled limestone dust (F12).

The largest limestone slabs had been spread over the base of the bank, the greater part of which had been made up with medium-sized rubble (c. 0.2 m length/diameter). A group of large slabs (F15) at the fore-part of the bank (i.e. the southern aspect) indicated the possibility of a rubble revetment or front retaining-wall. The lack of any regularity or coursing of the large slabs suggests that they may have served merely as a setting-out line for the bank. No corresponding pile of larger blocks had been laid along the inner (northern) side of the bank.

No internal structural features were observed within the bank. The rubble core of the bank (F11, F12) was trowelled at an arbitrary level of 0.38 m below ground surface and planned at this level, but no finds – other than the flints from the topsoil – were recovered, and the component dumps of the bank were ‘clean’. There were no signs of slighting, rebuilding, or firing, and the rampart at this point may be assumed to have been a single-phase structure.

The bank seems to have been of minimal use as a defence, since it is unlikely to have stood

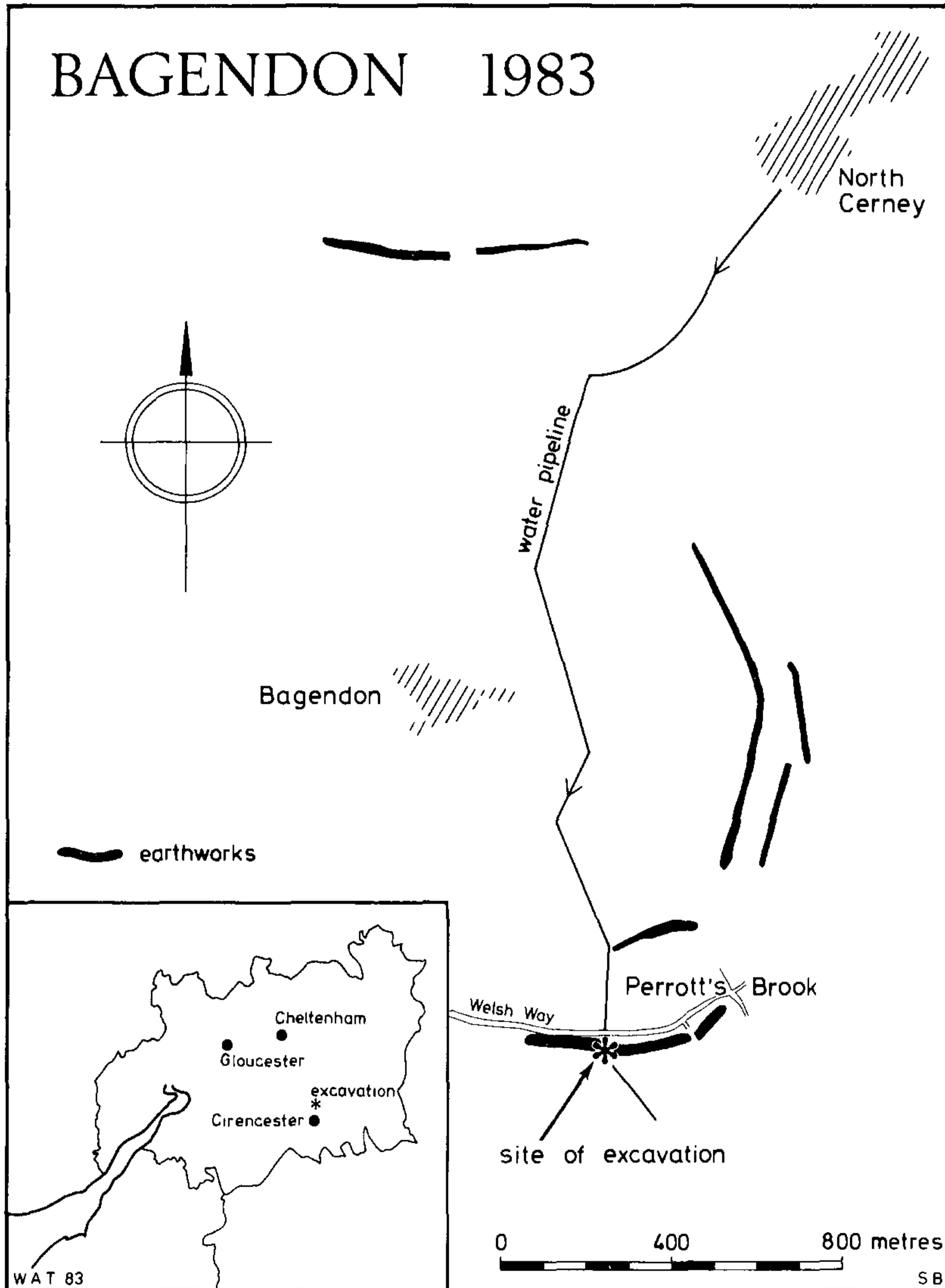
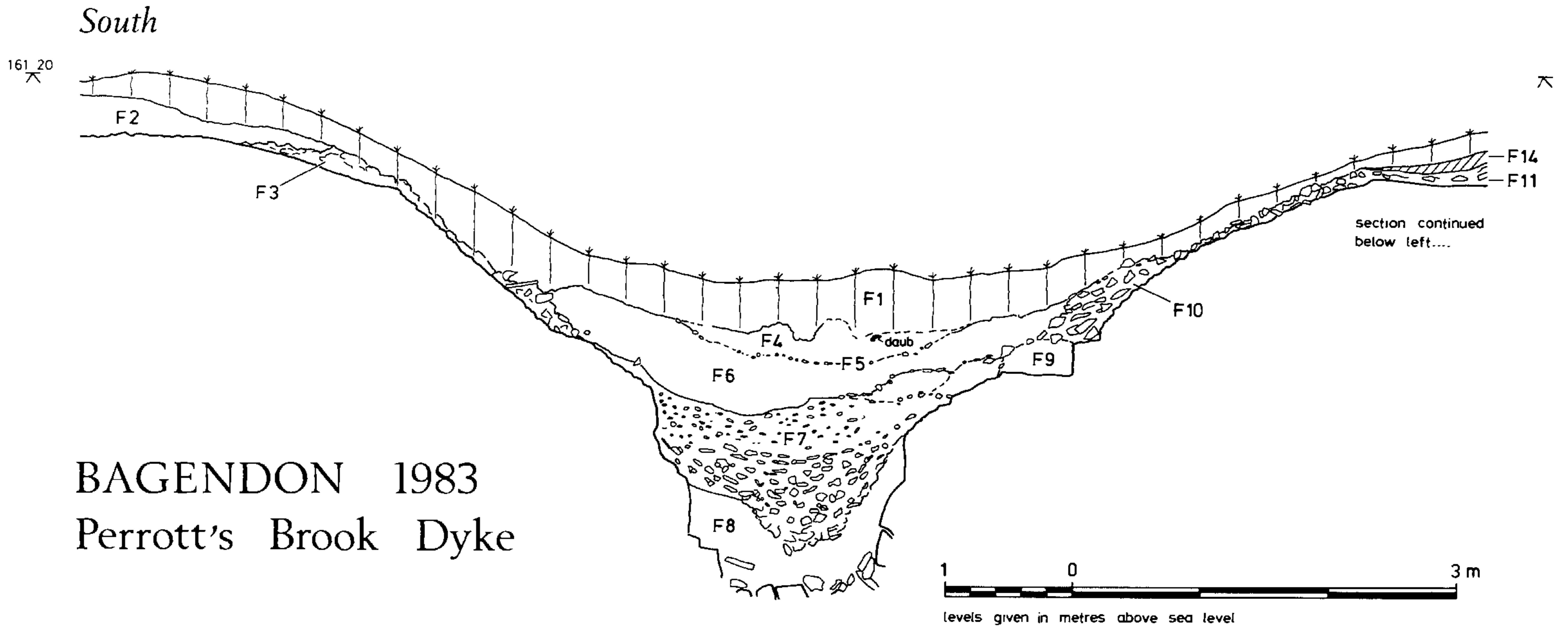


FIG. 1 Location map.



BAGENDON 1983
Perrott's Brook Dyke

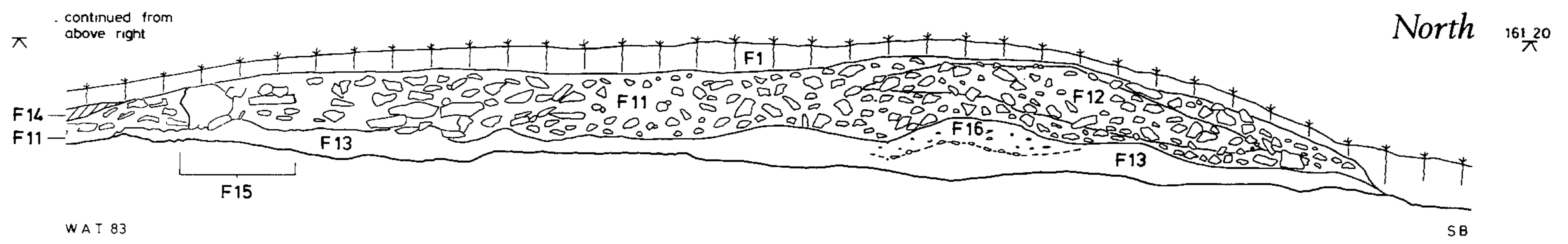


FIG. 2 Section through bank and ditch.

much higher than its present 1 m thickness of dumped rubble, a profile noted in the excavation of the Cutham Lane dyke (cf. Clifford 1961, 8). Little bank rubble had found its way into the ditch, and the collapsed 'tail' on its inner (northern) edge was negligible in breadth and bulk.

A wide berm of *c.* 5 m lay between the bank and the ditch. 1.5–2 m of this area consisted of a level belt on the south side of the putative front revetment of the bank; to the south of this the berm sloped at *c.* 45 degrees to the vertical cut of the lower part of the ditch. The slope was covered with a 0.1–0.3 m thick layer of small and medium-sized rubble scree (F10) from the bank.

The near-vertical sides of the lower ditch had been cut through the limestone in three steps to a possible bottom in jointed bedrock, at about 2.5 m below the top of the ditch-fill, and at about 3.5 m below the original ground level.

The ditch-fill resembled that found by Clifford at Cutham Lane (1961, Fig. 3) although the profiles differed. It cannot be stated with certainty that the present machine-dug trench plumbed the bottom of the ditch. The large basal blocks of limestone seemed to be weathered, fractured bedrock rather than tumble from the bank (cf. Clifford 1961, Fig. 3, Layer 4). The silt (Layer 5) found in the Cutham Lane ditch bottom had no equivalent in the present ditch-excavation.

The ditch-fill contained few of the large slabs found at the southern side of the bank, and was also notably free of the medium-sized bank rubble. The lower part of the ditch was filled with layers of washed and tumbled small stones in limestone soil. A considerable thickness of soil had accumulated in the upper part of the ditch.

No dating evidence was recovered from the excavations. Two unstratified flints were found on the surface of the northern slope of the bank. The darker of the two was a residual multi-platform core, and the other a damaged retouched flake. No finds were found in the ditch, other than faint traces of daub in the section (F4), and the Perrott's Brook Dyke seems to have been a one-period monument that was not subjected to later modification or disturbance of any kind.

Note

Copies of the site records of this watching brief are lodged with the Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record and the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission. The flints are deposited with the Corinium Museum, Cirencester.

Reference

Clifford, E.M. 1961. *Bagendon, a Belgic oppidum*. Cambridge.

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Publication of this note has been aided by a grant from English Heritage

OLD BOWLING GREEN SITE, TEWKESBURY: SALVAGE OBSERVATIONS, 1983

Salvage recording at the site of the Old Bowling Green, Tewkesbury, was carried out by Western Archaeological Trust with a grant from the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society during foundation trenching for a new housing development in July 1983. The site lies on the west side of Church Street, immediately to the south of the Library. It formerly lay within