Archaeological Services
University of Durham

The Traprain Law Environs Project, East Lothian, Scotland: Phase 2

Evaluation at East Linton Fort (TEL04) Data Structure Report

on behalf of
Historic Scotland
Dickinson College
University of Durham

ASUD Report 1213
February 2005

Archaeological Services
University of Durham
South Road
Durham DH1 3LE
Tel: 0191 334 1121
Fax: 0191 334 1126
archaeological.services@durham.ac.uk
www.durham.ac.uk/archaeologicalservices

The Traprain Law Environs Project, East Lothian, Scotland: Phase 2

Evaluation at East Linton (TEL04) Data structure report

ASUD Report 1213
February 2005

Archaeological Services University of Durham

on behalf of

Historic Scotland
Dickinson College
University of Durham

Contents

1. Summary 1
2. Project background 2
3. The evaluation 4
4. Excavated features 4
5. Conclusions 6
6. References 7
Appendix 1: Context register 8
Appendix 2: Sample register 9
Appendix 3: Plans and section register . 9
Appendix 4: Photographic register . . 9
Appendix 5: Stratigraphic matrix . . 11

1. Summary

The project

1.1 This report presents the results of an evaluation of East Linton Fort, East Lothian. The evaluation formed part of Phase 2 of the wider Traprain Law Environs Project.

1.2 The aims of this evaluation were to investigate a large three-ditched circular enclosure visible on aerial photographs and geophysical survey.

1.3 The works were funded by Historic Scotland.

Results

1.4 The evaluation confirmed the presence of three enclosure ditches. Between the inner and central enclosure ditches, a palisade was also recorded: the geomagnetic survey indicates that it continues around the enclosure circuit. The preservation of all the features was good. This was because they had been cut through bedrock, which had limited the degree of truncation from modern ploughing. All of the enclosure circuits are likely to have been in use contemporaneously. Re-cuts were recorded in each ditch section. No finds were recovered: samples of all deposits are retained however for sieving, flotation and further environmental analysis.

Recommendations

1.5 The site contains well-preserved archaeological deposits and is well protected. The site has a high information potential, with the capacity to significantly enhance research into the archaeology of the region. The results will be published as part of the Traprain Law Environs Project.

2. Project background

The Traprain Law Environs Project

2.1 The overarching aim of the Traprain Law Environs Project (TLEP) is to investigate aspects of the archaeological landscape around Traprain Law in order to produce an analysis and synthesis of economy and society during the 1st millennia BC and AD. The first phase of the project involved the geophysical investigation of 30 cropmark sites within the vicinity of Traprain Law, comprising 2 multi-vallate, 12 rectilinear and 13 curvilinear enclosures, as well as 2 ring ditches and 1 possible building cropmark (Hale *et al*. 2001; 2003). Phase 2 of the project, comprising a programme of excavation and evaluation of a sample of these sites, began in 2002. The evaluation at East Linton formed the final part of this phase. The TLEP is directed by Professor Colin Haselgrove (University of Durham) and Professor Leon Fitts (Dickinson College).

2.2 Intrusive investigations undertaken to date as part of the Phase 2 works comprise evaluations of the enclosures at Standingstone, Whittingehame Tower, Knowes, East Bearford and Foster Law (ASUD 2003a/b/c/d & 2004a) and open-area excavations at Whittingehame Tower, Standingstone, and Knowes (ASUD 2003b, 2004b & ASUD 2005).

Site description and status (Figures 1-3)

2.3 East Linton Fort is an enclosure of presumed Iron Age date, one of a number of such sites near Traprain Law.

2.4 The site is located at NGR: NT 5851 7655 (Figure 1) and comprises a curvilinear cropmark enclosure of *c*.0.25 ha. The enclosure occupies an elevated site on the edge of a steep escarpment above the River Tyne *c*.65-70m AOD. The underlying solid geology comprises Calciferous Sandstone Measures of the Carboniferous era.

2.5 During the last fifty years the site has been recorded on numerous aerial photographs by various bodies, including the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS). Figure 2 shows a rectified aerial photograph and interpretation of the site, supplied courtesy of RCAHMS.

2.6 The first phase of investigation undertaken as part of this project was a geomagnetic survey (Figure 3), which confirmed the location of the curvilinear enclosure, of maximum dimensions 185m by 100m (Hale *et al.* 2003; 2004). In addition to the main enclosure ditches, the geophysical survey identified a number of internal and external features, perhaps indicating more than one phase of activity at the site.

2.7 The site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 4169).

Objectives

2.9 The overarching academic aim for the TLEP excavations is:

To investigate the changing character of settlement types in the region during the 1st millennia BC and AD, thus contributing to wider research on:

- the development of society and economy in southern Scotland during the Iron Age
- the Roman impact in the northern frontier region and the indigenous responses
- the extent to which cropmark and geomagnetic evidence is representative of surviving remains in an area of highly variable geology

2.10 The specific objectives for the 2004 evaluation at East Linton were:

- to confirm the existence of the enclosure feature apparent on aerial photographs and geophysical survey
- to obtain information about subsoil conditions and preservation
- to sample the deposits to ascertain their character and sequence
- to retrieve material culture and environmental remains which could provide information about the date and nature of the activities represented
- to provide information on the structure and phasing of the enclosure circuit
- to assess the potential of the site for larger scale excavation
- to assist with the future management of the monument

Dates

2.11 The evaluation was conducted in October 2004. This report was prepared in November 2004-February 2005.

Personnel

2.12 Fieldwork was conducted by Amanda Brend, Matt Claydon (supervisor) and James Roberts. This report was prepared by Matt Claydon and Peter Carne with illustrations by Linda Bosveld. The Project Manager was Duncan Hale.

Acknowledgements

2.13 Funding for the project was generously provided by Historic Scotland, with help in kind from Archaeological Services University of Durham. We are grateful to Mr William Hamilton for permission to excavate, and to Olwyn Owen and Patrick Ashmore (Historic Scotland), Bridget Simpson (East Lothian Council) and staff at RCAHMS for advice and assistance with the project.

Archive

2.14 The site code is **TEL04**, for **T**raprain, **E**ast **L**inton 20**04**. On completion of the overall project, the archive will be deposited with Historic Scotland for transfer to the Finds Disposal Panel and the National Monuments Record for Scotland (NMRS).

3. The evaluation

Standards

3.1 The evaluation and reporting has been conducted in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologist's *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (revised 2001) and in accordance with Scheduled Monument Consent granted by Historic Scotland (dated 13th August 2004) under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

Excavation methods

3.2 A single trench measuring 25m by a maximum of 5m was excavated across three parallel, curvilinear ditches recorded on the geophysical survey (Figure 2). The ploughsoil was removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless blade under archaeological supervision. All further work was carried out by hand.

3.3 The excavation was recorded in accordance with the ASUD Field Procedures Manual (v4.3 2004). All excavated areas were cleaned and the sections drawn at 1:10; trench plans were drawn at 1:20. Photography was by colour transparency and monochrome 35mm stills. Environmental samples were taken from all suitable contexts.

3.4 On completion of the excavation, the trench was backfilled, compacted and reinstated as agricultural land.

4. Excavation description (Figures 3 - 8)

4.1 Natural bedrock [3] was present *c.*0.35m below ground level. Bedrock was slightly raised towards the centre of the trench. Pockets of eroded bedrock [34] were present in places.

Inner ditch

4.2 At the southern end of the trench the inner ditch [F5] of the enclosure cut through the bedrock to a depth of 1.6m (Figures 4 & 5). The ditch had a maximum width of 3.7m, narrowing to 1.7m at the bottom. The ditch crossed the trench on a northeast-southwest alignment. The southern (inner) side of the ditch had a significantly steeper slope than the northern side, a shape which is common in enclosure ditches of this type. A loose stone and silt lens [22] overlay the bedrock down both sides of the ditch. This is probably a consequence of degraded or eroded bedrock mixing with the silt soil while the ditch was open. This lens was overlain by a fill of sticky, mid-orange/brown sandy silt with occasional small stone inclusions [21]. Through this deposit the ditch had been re-cut [F23]. The re-cut ditch contained a primary fill of friable mid-brown sandy silt with very frequent inclusions of angular and sub-angular stones of small and medium size [20]. It is probable that this material contained fragments of the bedrock removed when the ditch was originally cut, which had initially been used to create a bank adjacent to the ditch, and had subsequently been used as backfill. A secondary fill of friable mid-brown silt [18: 0.6m in depth] contained occasional small sub-angular and sub-rounded stone inclusions. This fill was overlain by an upper fill of friable

brown sandy silt [4: 0.4m in depth] with occasional small and medium sized sub-angular and sub-rounded stone inclusions.

Central ditch

4.3 Parallel with this ditch was the central enclosure ditch [F26, Figures 4 & 6]. The ditch was step-sided and cut through the bedrock [3] to a depth of 1.3m. The base of the ditch had been cut to a near-vertical sided channel, of which the primary fill [27] was a grey-pink-brown sandy silt with very frequent sub-angular small stone inclusions. A loose stone and silt lens [28] overlay the bedrock down either side of the ditch. This lens probably represents material washed into the trench while the trench was open: similar material was present in the inner ditch [F5, context 22]. The ditch had been re-cut through this deposit [F29]. The re-cut ditch has similarly sloping sides than the original [F26] with a flatter base. The primary fill [30: 0.18m in depth] comprised a grey-pink-brown sandy silt with frequent small sub-angular and occasional medium stone inclusions. This was overlain by a secondary fill [31: 0.5m in depth] of friable mid-brown sandy silt with frequent medium, and occasionally large, sub-angular and sub-rounded stone inclusions. Their distribution, with a concentration on the north-western side of the ditch and tailing off to the south (section 8), suggests they originated as bank material, and that the bank was positioned on the southern (internal) side of the ditch. This fill was overlain by a mid-brown sandy silt [32: 0.28m in depth] containing occasional small sub-angular stones. The ditch had an upper fill [33: 0.3m in depth] of friable mid-brown sandy silt with very occasional small sub-angular stone inclusions.

Outer ditch

4.4 At the north-western end of the trench ran the outer ditch [F17, Figures 4 & 7]. The ditch was cut through the bedrock [3] to a depth of 1.3m. The northern side of the ditch sloped down at an angle of *c*.45 degrees on the north-west side, and the southern side sloped more gently. The ditch contained a primary fill [15: 0.16m in depth] of sticky yellow-brown sandy clay with frequent angular and sub-angular medium sized stone inclusions. Down both sides of the ditch was a firm pink-brown gritty silt [14]: this deposit was a mix of eroded bedrock and silt from the sides of the ditch, similar to that noted in the other ditch sections. The ditch was re-cut [F13] through this deposit [14]. This re-cut was of a similar profile to the original ditch cut. The fill of the re-cut was a thick deposit of soft, gritty mid-yellow-brown clay silt [12: 1.15m in depth]. The ditch was again re-cut [F10] through this deposit [12]. The re-cut contained a primary fill of sticky mid-brown clay silt [9] with very frequent angular and sub-angular small-medium stone inclusions. This deposit was distributed against the north-west slope of the ditch, and is likely to have originated as bank material. It is possible that a further re-cut took place through this material. Overlying this [9] was a thick deposit of loose grey-brown gritty silt [11: 0.44m in depth]. The deposit contained gravel lenses of small angular and sub-angular stone. The upper fill of the ditch consisted of a thick deposit of friable red-brown sandy silt [6: 0.59m in depth].

Palisade

4.5 Located between the inner and central ditches, *c.*1.7m south-east of the centre ditch [F26], were two rectangular palisade slots (Figures 4 & 8). These were part of a row of slots visible on the geophysics plot running parallel with the ditch. The slots cut through bedrock and a layer of decayed bedrock [34: 0.2m in depth]. Slot [F16] extended 0.8m from the western edge of excavation, with a width of 0.4m and a depth of 0.42m. The slot had near vertical sides and a flat base and was filled with a red-brown gritty clay silt [8] containing frequent large angular stones. Immediately to the east of the slot was a similar feature extending 0.5m from the north-east edge of excavation [F25]. This slot was 0.4m wide and had a depth of 0.57m. The slot had vertical sides and a flat base and was filled with a red-brown gritty clay silt [24] with frequent small sub-angular stone inclusions.

4.6 An undulating lens of red-brown clay silt [2:0.1-0.2m in depth] overlay the features. This in turn was covered by a layer of stony brown sandy silt topsoil [1: 0.3m in depth].

5. Conclusions

5.1 The evaluation confirmed the presence of the enclosure features visible on the aerial photographs and geophysical plot.

5.2 The evaluation has indicated that the site is in an excellent state of preservation. None of the features excavated exhibit evidence for any significant truncation as a result of modern ploughing. This is largely because the bedrock is close to the surface, and has protected features cut into it from the plough. A thin discontinuous layer of subsoil over the archaeaological features and below the topsoil also survives, indicating that the plough has not always cut deep enough to threaten the deposits.

5.3 Three substantial parallel curvilinear ditches were identified, with a segmented palisade trench positioned to the interior of the central ditch. This palisade is visible on the geophysical plot continuing around the majority of the enclosure circuit. On this basis, it is probable that similar anomalies visible on the plot are caused by similar archaeological features.

5.4 It is anticipated that samples retained from these features will enable a range of absolute dates to be obtained, together with significant palaeoenvironmental data.

5.5 The evidence indicates that each of the enclosure circuits may have been in use contemporaneously. Each of the ditches has been re-cut at some stage.

5.6 The site is suitable for large scale excavation, which would be productive in terms of research into the archaeology of the region in this period. This is because it has a high information potential, particularly as features are likely to survive throughout the interior.

5.7 The site is presently a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The evaluation has indicated that this is a suitable form of protection for a monument of this type, although its condition is likely to eventually deteriorate as a result of modern ploughing.

6. References

ASUD (2003a) *The Traprain Law Environs Project, East Lothian, Scotland: Phase 2, Evaluation at Standingstone (TST02) Data Structure Report*. ASUD Report 956, Archaeological Services University of Durham.

ASUD (2003b) *The Traprain Law Environs Project, East Lothian, Scotland: Phase 2, Excavations at Whittingehame Tower 2002 Data Structure Report*. ASUD Report 949, Archaeological Services University of Durham.

ASUD (2003c) *The Traprain Law Environs Project, East Lothian, Scotland: Phase 2, Evaluation at Knowes (TKN02) Data Structure Report*. ASUD Report 965, Archaeological Services University of Durham.

ASUD (2003d) *The Traprain Law Environs Project, East Lothian, Scotland: Phase 2, Evaluation at East Bearford (TEB02) Data Structure Report*. ASUD Report 966, Archaeological Services University of Durham.

ASUD (2004a) *The Traprain Law Environs Project, East Lothian, Scotland: Phase 2, Evaluation at Foster Law (TFL03) Data Structure Report*. ASUD Report 1046, Archaeological Services University of Durham.

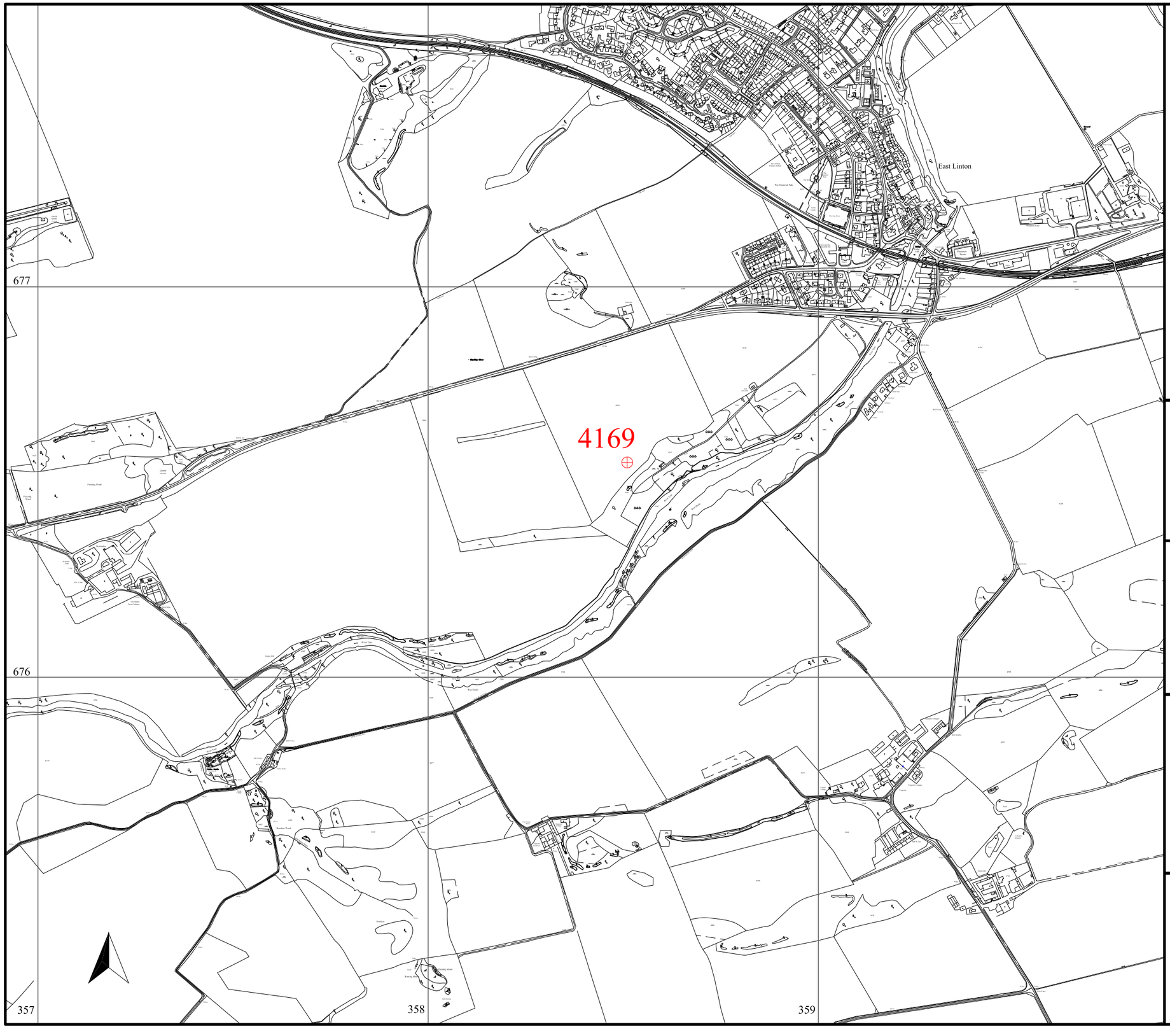
ASUD (2004b) *The Traprain Law Environs Project, East Lothian, Scotland: Phase 2, Excavation at Standingstone (TST03) Data Structure Report*. ASUD Report 1077, Archaeological Services University of Durham.

ASUD (2005) *The Traprain Law Environs Project, East Lothian, Scotland: Phase 2, Excavation at Knowes Farm (TKN04) Data Structure Report*. ASUD Report 1235, Archaeological Services University of Durham.

Hale, DN, Haselgrove, CC, & Fitts, L (2001) Geophysical survey on enclosure cropmarks in the environs of Traprain Law, East Lothian. *University of Durham and University of Newcastle upon Tyne Archaeological Reports 1999/2000* vol.23, pp.65-70.

Hale, DN, Haselgrove, CC, & Fitts, L (2003) Geophysical survey on enclosure cropmarks in the environs of Traprain Law, East Lothian – Part II. *University of Durham and University of Newcastle upon Tyne Archaeological Reports 2001/2002* vol.24, pp.33-41.

Hale, DN, Haselgrove, CC, & Fitts, L (2004, in press) Geomagnetic surveys over cropmarks in the environs of Traprain Law, East Lothian. In *Going Over Old Ground: Perspectives on Archaeological, Geophysical and Geochemical Survey in Scotland* conference proceedings, University of Glasgow 2003.



Archaeological Services
University of Durham

The Traprain Law Environs Project
Phase 2

East Linton evaluation 2004

Figure 1

Location of the East Linton site

on behalf of
Historic Scotland
Dickinson College
University of Durham

0 500m

scale 1:10 000 - for A3 plot

4169 East Linton

Archaeological Services
University of Durham

on behalf of
Historic Scotland
Dickinson College
University of Durham

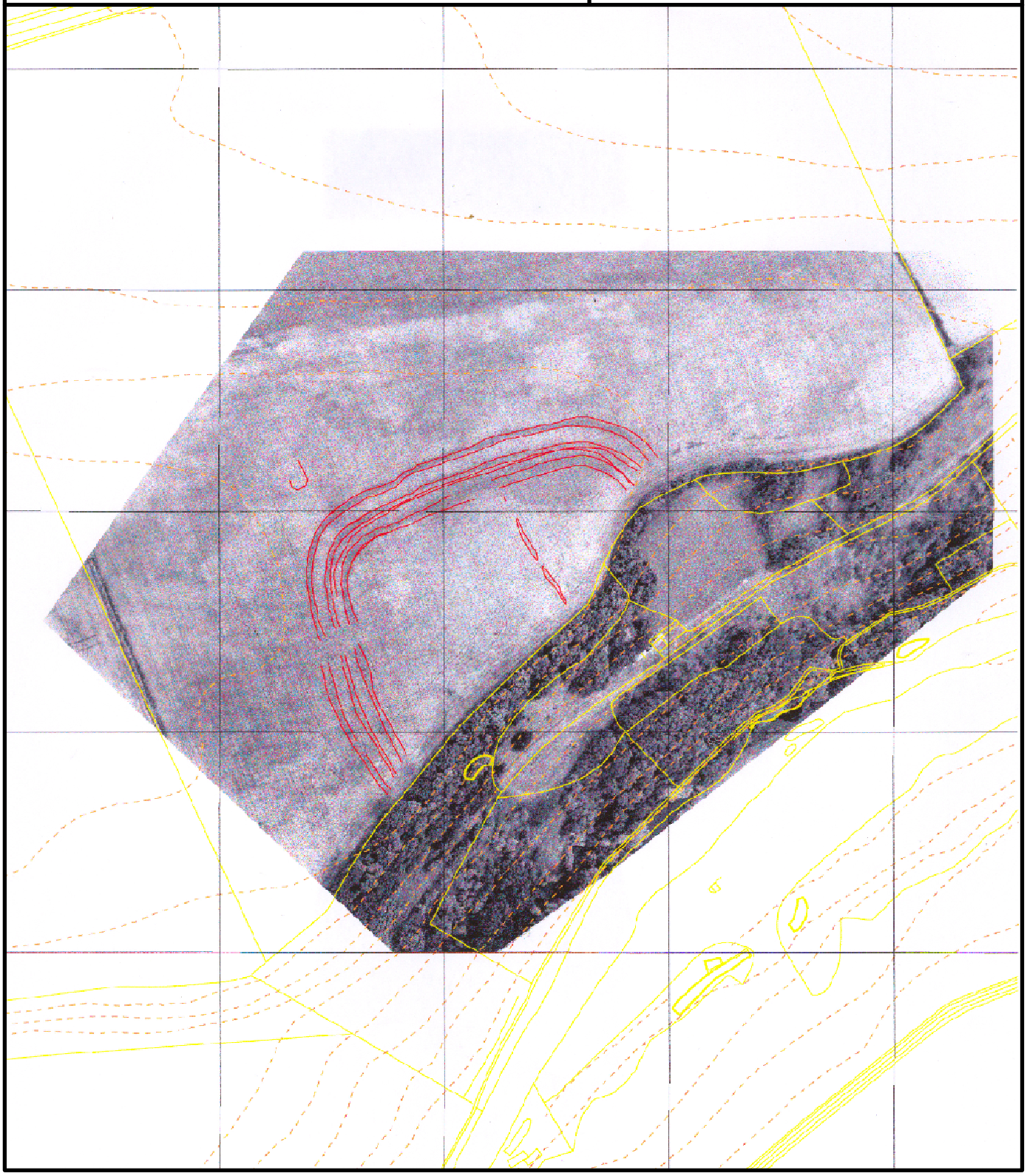
Traprain Law Environs Project Phase 2
East Linton evaluation 2004

Figure 2
Rectified aerial photograph

Computer plot from aerial photographs.
Use only with caution.

John Sinclair House
16 Bernard Terrace
Edinburgh EH8 9NX

Plot origin **358300 676300**
AP Neg. No. **B38291, EL5182**
Mapsheet **NT57NE**
Site **East Linton**
Region **Lothian**
District **East**
Scale **1:2500**
Date **13.6.02**
SGS PTO **K.H.J. Macleod**



Archaeological Services
University of Durham

The Traprain Law Environs Project
Phase 2

East Linton evaluation 2004

Figure 3

Location of the trench and the geophysical survey

on behalf of
Historic Scotland
Dickinson College
University of Durham

0 50m

scale 1:1000 - for A3 plot

evaluation trench

Archaeological Services
University of Durham

on behalf of
Historic Scotland
Dickinson College
University of Durham

0 5m

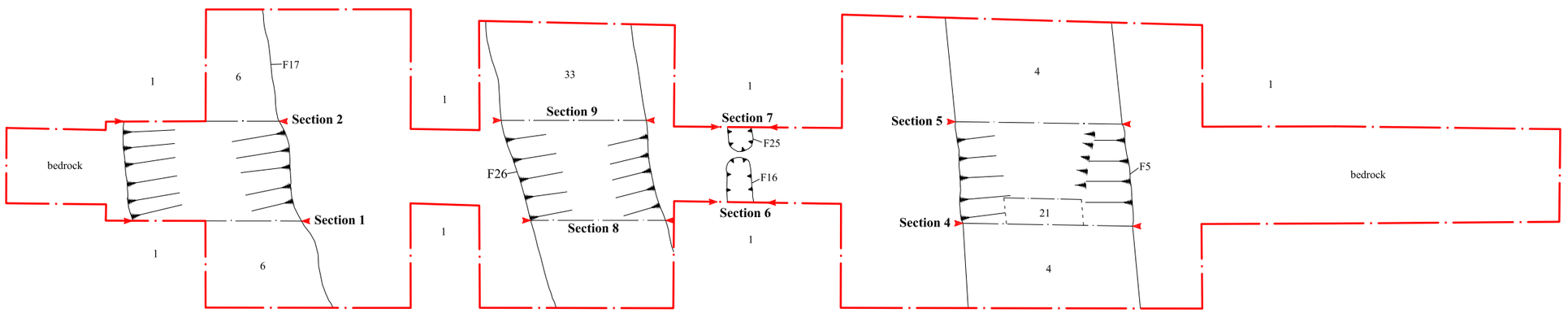
scale 1:100 - for A3 plot

The Traprain Law Environs Project
Phase 2

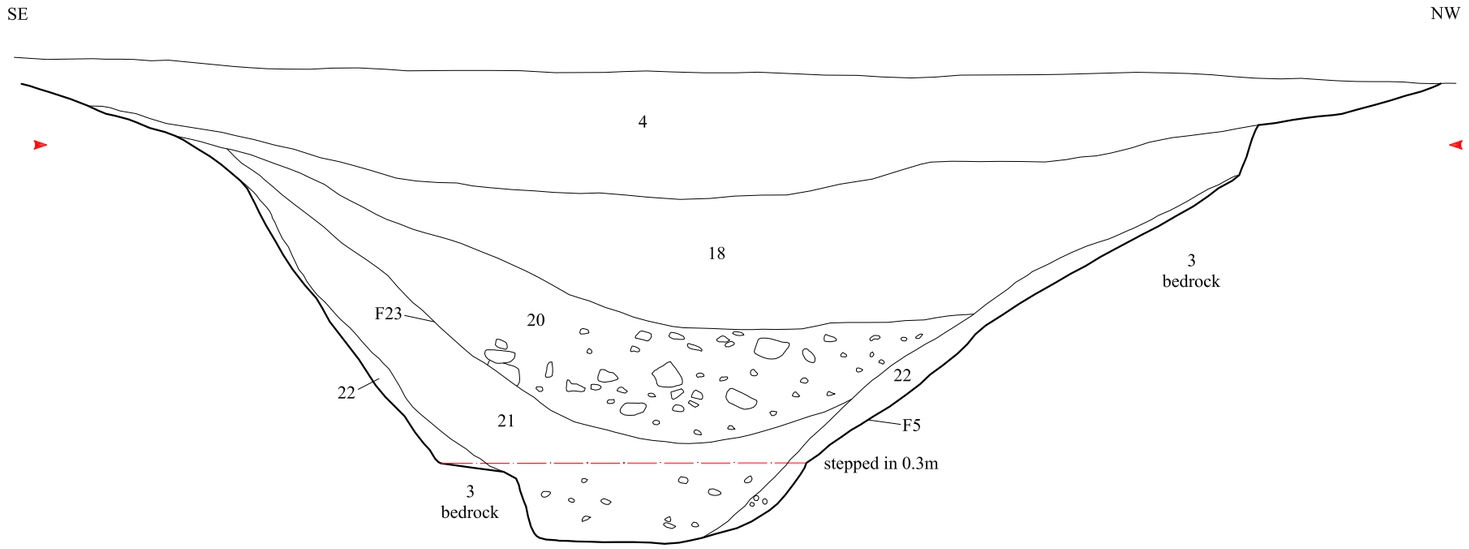
East Linton evaluation 2004

Figure 4

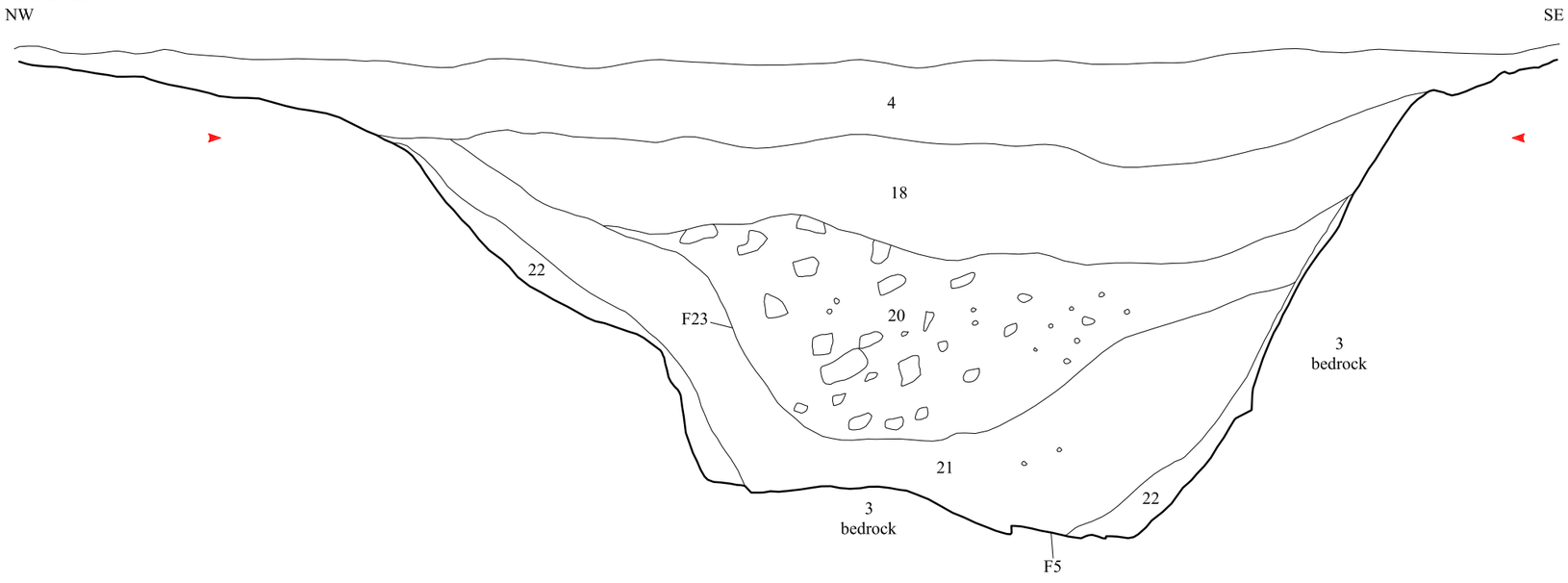
Plan of the trench



Section 4



Section 5



Archaeological Services
University of Durham

The Traprain Law Environs Project
Phase 2

East Linton evaluation 2004

Figure 5

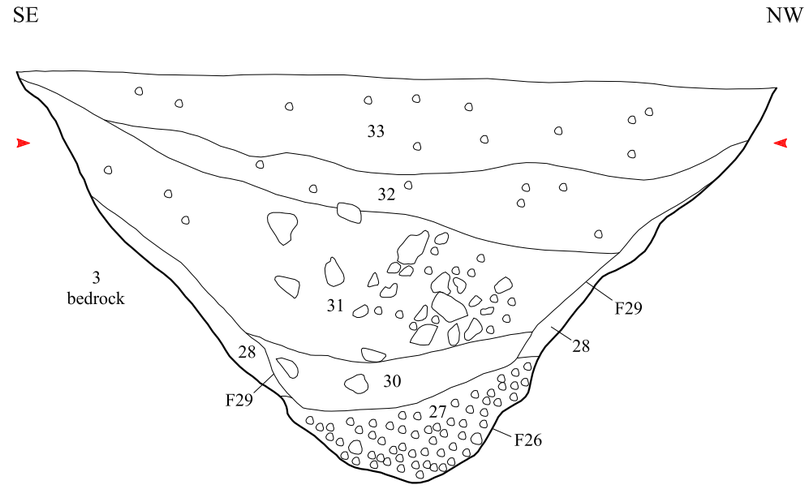
Sections 4 and 5

on behalf of
Historic Scotland
Dickinson College
University of Durham

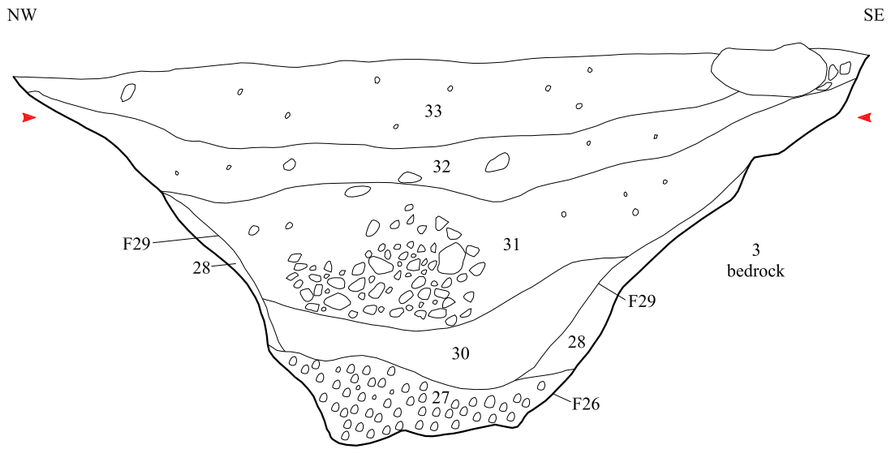
0 1m

scale 1:20 - for A3 plot

Section 8



Section 9



Archaeological Services
University of Durham

The Traprain Law Environs Project
Phase 2

East Linton evaluation 2004

Figure 6

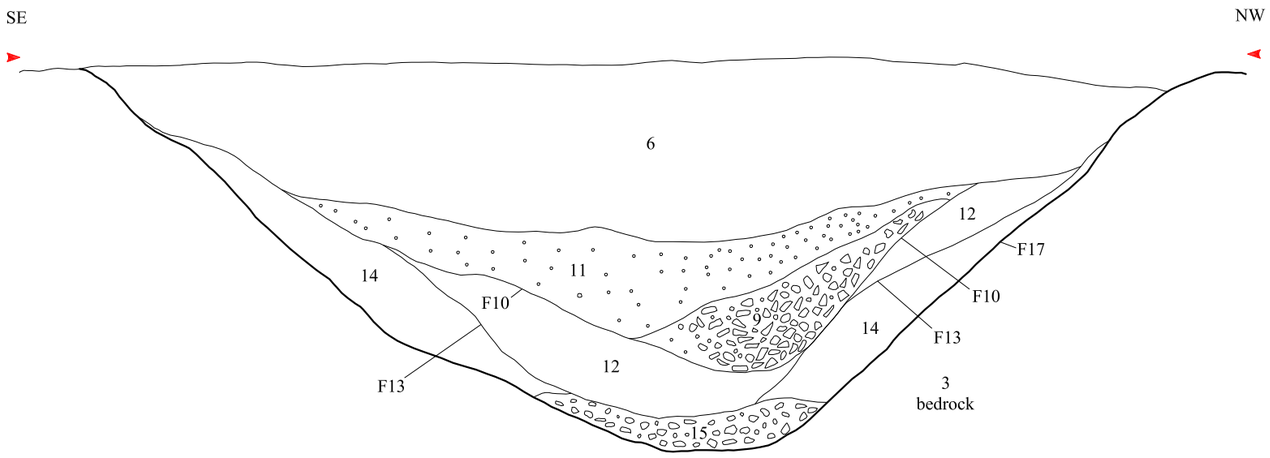
Sections 8 and 9

on behalf of
Historic Scotland
Dickinson College
University of Durham

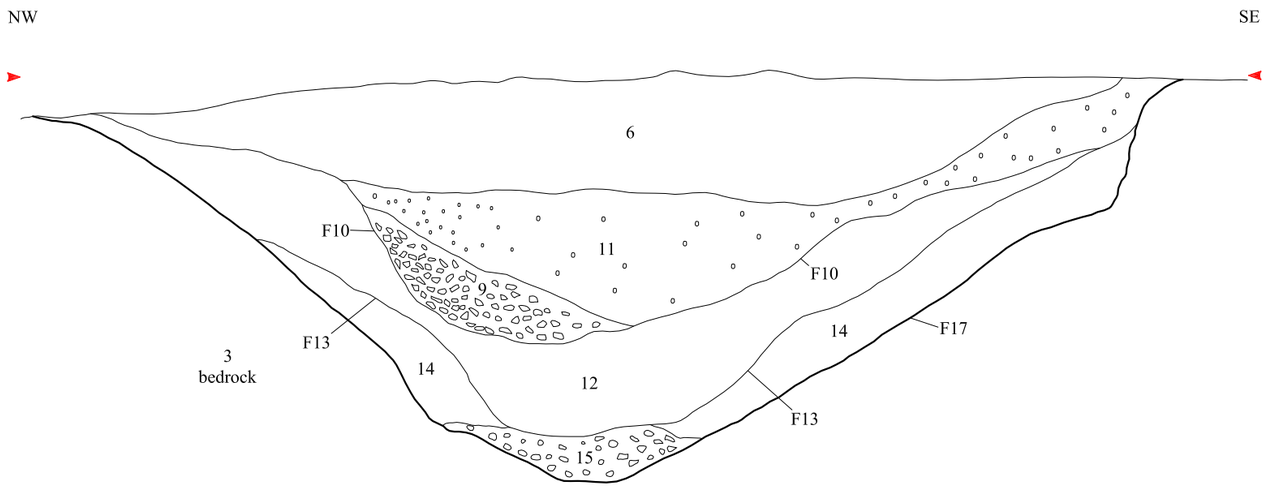
0 1m

scale 1:20 - for A3 plot

Section 1



Section 2



Archaeological Services
University of Durham

The Traprain Law Environs Project
Phase 2

East Linton evaluation 2004

Figure 7

Sections 1 and 2

on behalf of
Historic Scotland
Dickinson College
University of Durham

0 1m

scale 1:20 - for A3 plot

Archaeological Services
University of Durham

on behalf of
Historic Scotland
Dickinson College
University of Durham

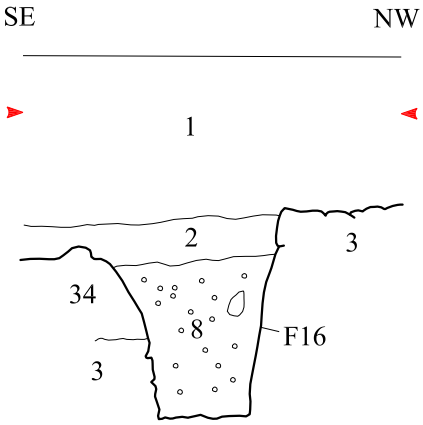
The Traprain Law Environs Project Phase 2
East Linton evaluation 2004

Figure 8
Sections 6 and 7

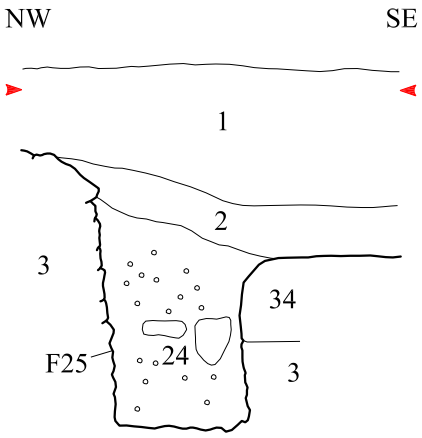
0 1m

scale 1:20 - for A4 plot

Section 6



Section 7



Appendix 1: Context register

No	Description
[1]	Topsoil
[2]	Loose silt subsoil
[3]	Bedrock
[4]	Upper fill of ditch F5
[F5]	Cut for inner ditch
[6]	Upper fill of ditch F10
[7]	Void
[8]	Fill of palisade slot F16
[9]	Fill of F10
[10]	Re-cut of outer ditch
[11]	Fill of Ditch F10
[12]	Primary deposit of ditch re-cut F13
[F13]	Re-cut of outer ditch
[14]	Fill of F17
[15]	Primary fill of F17
[F16]	Cut for palisade slot
[F17]	Cut for outer ditch
[18]	Upper fill of ditch F5
[19]	Void
[20]	Fill of F5
[21]	Lower fill of ditch F5
[22]	Lower fill of ditch F5
[F23]	Re-cut of ditch F5
[24]	Fill of palisade slot F25
[F25]	Cut for palisade slot
[F26]	Cut for central ditch
[27]	Primary fill of central ditch F26
[28]	Fill of F26
[F29]	Re-cut of central ditch F26
[30]	Fill of F29
[31]	Fill of F29
[32]	Fill of F29
[33]	Fill of F29
[34]	Gritty silt over bedrock

Appendix 2: Sample register

Sample No.	Context No.	Description of Material	Reason for Sampling	No. of tubs
1	4	Ditch fill	Bulk environmental	2
2	18	Ditch fill	Bulk environmental	2
3	20	Ditch fill	Bulk environmental	2
4	21	Ditch fill	Bulk environmental	2
5	22	Ditch fill	Bulk environmental	2
6	8	Fill of palisade slot	Bulk environmental	2
7	24	Fill of palisade slot	Bulk environmental	2
8	27	Ditch fill	Bulk environmental	2
9	28	Ditch fill	Bulk environmental	2
10	30	Ditch fill	Bulk environmental	2
11	31	Ditch fill	Bulk environmental	2
12	32	Ditch fill	Bulk environmental	2
13	33	Ditch fill	Bulk environmental	2
14	6	Ditch fill	Bulk environmental	2
15	9	Ditch fill	Bulk environmental	2
16	11	Ditch fill	Bulk environmental	2
17	12	Ditch fill	Bulk environmental	2
18	14	Ditch fill	Bulk environmental	2
19	15	Ditch fill	Bulk environmental	2

Appendix 3: Plans and sections register

No.	Scale	Description
1	1:10	Section through ditch F[10]
2	1:10	Plan of trench
3	1:20	Section through ditch F[10]
4	1:10	Section through ditch F[5]
5	1:10	Section through ditch F[5]
6	1:10	Section through palisade slot F[16]
7	1:10	Section through palisade slot F[25]
8	1:10	Section through ditch F[26]
9	1:10	Section through ditch F[26]

Appendix 4: Photographic register

Colour slide: film 1

Frame no.	Context/plan/section	Looking N S E W
1-3	Section through ditch F[5]	NE
4-6	Section through ditch F[10]	SW
7-9	Section 1 through ditch F[10]	W
10-12	Section 2 ditch F[10]	NE
13-15	Section 2, oblique, ditch F[10]	E
16-19	Section through ditch F[5]	SW
20-22	Section through ditch F[5]	NE
23-25	Section through ditch F[26]	E

26-28	Section through ditch F[26]	W
29-31	Section through ditch F[26], oblique	NW
32-34	Section through ditch F[26], oblique	SW
35-36	Section through ditch F[26], oblique	SE

Colour slide: film 2

Frame no.	Context/plan/section	Looking N S E W
1-3	Section through ditch F[26], oblique	SE
4-6	Section through ditch F[26], oblique	NE
7-9	Section 6 of palisade slot F[25]	SW
10-12	Palisade slot in plan F[25]	NW
13-15	Section 7 of palisade slot F[25]	NE
16-18	Palisade slots F[16] and F[25]	SE
19-36	General shots	

B/W: film 1

Frame no.	Context/plan/section	Looking N S E W
1-3	Section through ditch F[5]	NE
4-6	Section through ditch F[10]	SW
7-9	Section 1 through ditch F[10]	W
10-12	Section 2 ditch F[10]	NE
13-15	Section 2, oblique, ditch F[10]	E
16-19	Section through ditch F[5]	SW
20-22	Section through ditch F[5]	NE
23-25	Section through ditch F[26]	E
26-28	Section through ditch F[26]	W
29-31	Section through ditch F[26], oblique	NW
32-36	Section through ditch F[26], oblique	SW
37	Section through ditch F[26], oblique	SE

B/W: film 2

Frame no.	Context/plan/section	Looking N S E W
1-3	Section through ditch F[26], oblique	SE
4-6	Section through ditch F[26], oblique	NE
7-9	Section 6 of palisade slot F[25]	SW
10-12	Palisade slot in plan F[25]	NW
13-15	Section 7 of palisade slot F[25]	NE
16-18	Palisade slots F[16] and F[25]	SE
19-36	General shots	

Appendix 5: Stratigraphic matrix