

EXCAVATIONS AT ROCKY CLUMP, STANMER, BRIGHTON.
BRIGHTON AND HOVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
INTERIM REPORT 1994-1995

by

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Note

This report was scanned from a Photocopied version of the report, it was not possible to reliably OCR the text. The diagrams are "as is", with some minor digital "cleaning".

A report on the excavations carried out at Rocky Clump, Stanmer,
by the Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society during 1995.

Introduction

The excavations at Rocky Clump during 1995 were of a very limited nature. The land management of Brighton Borough lands moved from Strutt and Parker at Lewes, to Cluttons in London. This change caused considerable problems with regard setting up links of communication between the land agents, the Borough officer and the Society. The situation was finally resolved in September when permission was granted for us to continue our various projects. The Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society now direct enquiries through Mr Geoffrey Bennett, Brighton Senior Planning Officer (Conservation). The area beneath the existing spoil heaps were investigated and a further 40 square metre extension to the north allocated. Geophysical studies were conducted on the area about to be stripped of plough soil. It is intended to observe the results of the geophysics to the features found beneath. The area covered was 800 square metres, and has already been the subject of a previous resistivity study. A comparison will be made of the two sets of results. The squares examined were numbers 7 and 8 in the field to the north of the trees, in trench J. During the very hot summer parch marks were noted and with the assistance of Brighton police helicopter a number of aerial photographs were taken. Although some linear features could be observed in the field the photographs produced no evidence of definable features at Rocky Clump. However, the lynchet feature noted during field walking the west field produced a possible enclosure feature or

trackway. Ref TQ326103. Mr Jim Driver who lives at the north Upper Lodge cottage and was a former woodsman at Stanmer has already mentioned about Medieval pottery eroding out of the valley bottom in the next field Ref TQ325105, the photographs may show a trackway between this house, farm and Patchway? Further limitations were also placed on the Brighton and Hove Archaeological Field Unit when rescue excavations at Chailey and Shinewater, Eastbourne diverted members to more pressing excavations. The Chailey dig was of two third century pottery kilns, the excavations at Shinewater included sectioning part of a Late Bronze Age trackway, similar to the Somerset Levels.

Trench L within the trees was backfilled. The large pit context 14 was finally fully excavated and a section of trench A opened up. Trench J was extended on the west side contexts 132, 133, 134 and 135. These two metre square sections produced no features and very few finds. A trench was extended to the east of trench J, contexts 120, 121, 122, 123 and 124, again no features were found and finds were few. The trench cut within area A revealed part of the surrounding ditch. The area uncovered incorporated part of a previously area excavated by Mr Clive Skeggs. The spoil heap was observed in the section sides and the variation in texture of the chalk natural, the previous excavated area produced a smooth chalk surface. No previous examination of the ditch feature, context 143, could be noted. The fill of the ditch in this area is considerably different to that on the north side of the trees. The fill in 143 is of a light loamy matrix whereas the north ditch section was thick clay. Neither ditch section produced finds of any significance. A limited field walking exercise was

carried out from trench J in a northerly direction, again to try and determine the extent of the archaeology, very few finds were collected.

The trench cut in area A was to try and locate the position of a large pit excavated in the 1950's. A photograph in the possession of Mrs Edna Gorton, the widow of the leader of the previous excavation, plainly shows the photographer looking in a northerly direction with the copse of trees called 'Flint Heap' in the background. The pit is within the trees and is of considerable depth, a gantry in the picture is to assist the lifting of the spoil buckets. The finds included large quantities of bone. The pit was back filled but never located on the plan.

The Features

Feature 14

This large pit, probably initially a grain storage pit later a rubbish pit was finally excavated. The last section had the finds recorded stratigraphically with a measured distance added to the context to accurately locate the depth of the items. The final dimensions of the pit are 2.6 metres long, 1.44 metres in width and 1.38 metres in depth. The pit is almost square ended at the east side with a little more rounding at the west. The base of the pit does show some tool marks. On the north west side of the pit is a step hole. This feature, context 139, was originally considered to be a solution pipe, however the cut is not soft

textured as a solution pipe. It may equally be considered a post hole, a similar post hole cut the pit/post hole to the east of this one at feature 07. The pit will remain open until the autumn of 1996 when it will be backfilled. The location of this pit has been added to the site plan.

Feature 143

This feature is part of the ditch surrounding the trees. No features were found cutting the ditch or alternatively the ditch cut no new features. The fill of the ditch is of loamy grey white soft soil. The sides of the ditch have chalk rubble fills both sides. The sides of the ditch are steep sided. However the north (outer) side is more perpendicular than the south side. The ditch has a flat bottom. The ditch width at this section is 1.10 metres and the depth is 0.7 metres. The fills produced mainly twentieth century items and an odd sherd of Roman pottery. The upper layer contained a large fragment of sarsen stone. The feature or trench had cut into the section of an earlier section and this was visible in the view of the trench face. The depth of trench drops dramatically as it moves north? This suggests a possible hollow? Another photograph belonging to Mrs Gorton does appear to show a trench cut on the outskirts of the trees with a similar drop? The ditch was sectioned and drawn and photographed. A section was also cut horizontally along the trench to try and accurately determine where both sections joined, this proved inconclusive. The ditch is noticeably deeper and wider here than in the north section. It is possible and there is evidence for an earlier fence line and this may answer the question of the sudden drop in elevation

that erosion of the land north of Rocky Clump is because of this other fence line and that ploughing took place south of the existing fence.

Contexts 149-157

Once permission had been received to extend the excavations by a further 40 square metres a plan was formulated. The quantities of rich Roman pottery and small finds, including the stud and key, had been retrieved from the plough soil layers. It was decided to excavate the new area in a grid fashion to determine the spatial disposition of finds in the plough soil. The new area in trench J was broken up into 2 metre squares each with its own context number, 149-157, and the finds were stored in these contexts. The plough soil was removed to about 50 millimetres above the natural. Several features were noted; these include contexts 141, 147, 148 and 158 which are possible post holes or pits.

As the year was drawing to a close and the weather becoming more and more inclement it was decided to cease operations until the spring. This cessation also allowed the field team to move to Shinewater at Eastbourne to assist S.E.A.S. in their operations at the Late Bronze Age site.

Small Finds

Coin- Constantius I 305-306A.D. context 129- plough soil.

Conclusions

The limited nature of this years excavations still provided new information and greater perspective of the site at Rocky Clump. The finds to the west of trench J would tend to suggest the the extent of the site in this direction has been reached. The location of the hearth/oven pit feature 57/70 would be expected to lie on the outside zone of any settlement area due to the fire risk involved. However, Roman pottery found within the trees at the west end of Rocky Clump, from rabbit diggings, would suggest possible features in that area?

The cutting from trench J to the east is more perplexing, the quantity of finds were limited and no features were found. From the previous excavations in 1994 a small post hole was found to the north, context 61. Again it is difficult to draw any hard conclusion as to whether the east end of the site has been reached. The geophysical survey conducted in this area does produce confused readings indicating possible archaeological features. The north section of trench J does contain further features. The configuration of the post holes or fence lines continues towards the north. Further work in 1996 may prove whether the post holes are a fence line or a timber frame building. It is hoped that the post hole configuration will turn to the east and contain the cobbled area, context 69. The small field walking exercise conducted on the north side of trench J does suggest that the site is reaching its northern perimeter. The hill does begin to drop more dramatically within the next ten to twenty metres north. The geophysics here is very stable.

The ditch feature running south to north, context 53, has been ploughed out in the area to the north. No traces were found in either context 130 or 131. However, a veneer of small chalk nodules does persist in the plough soil in this area suggesting that the feature did continue northwards. Questions must be raised about the nature of these ditches, the site plan of 1988 actually shows the ditches, numbers I, II and III terminating within the Clump area. While it is known that the parish boundary continues to the north are perhaps these ditch cuts indicative of other features relating to the Roman period? (Gilkes forthcoming) It could be suggested that the chalk footing found in trench J, context 95 may relate to the ditch feature 53.

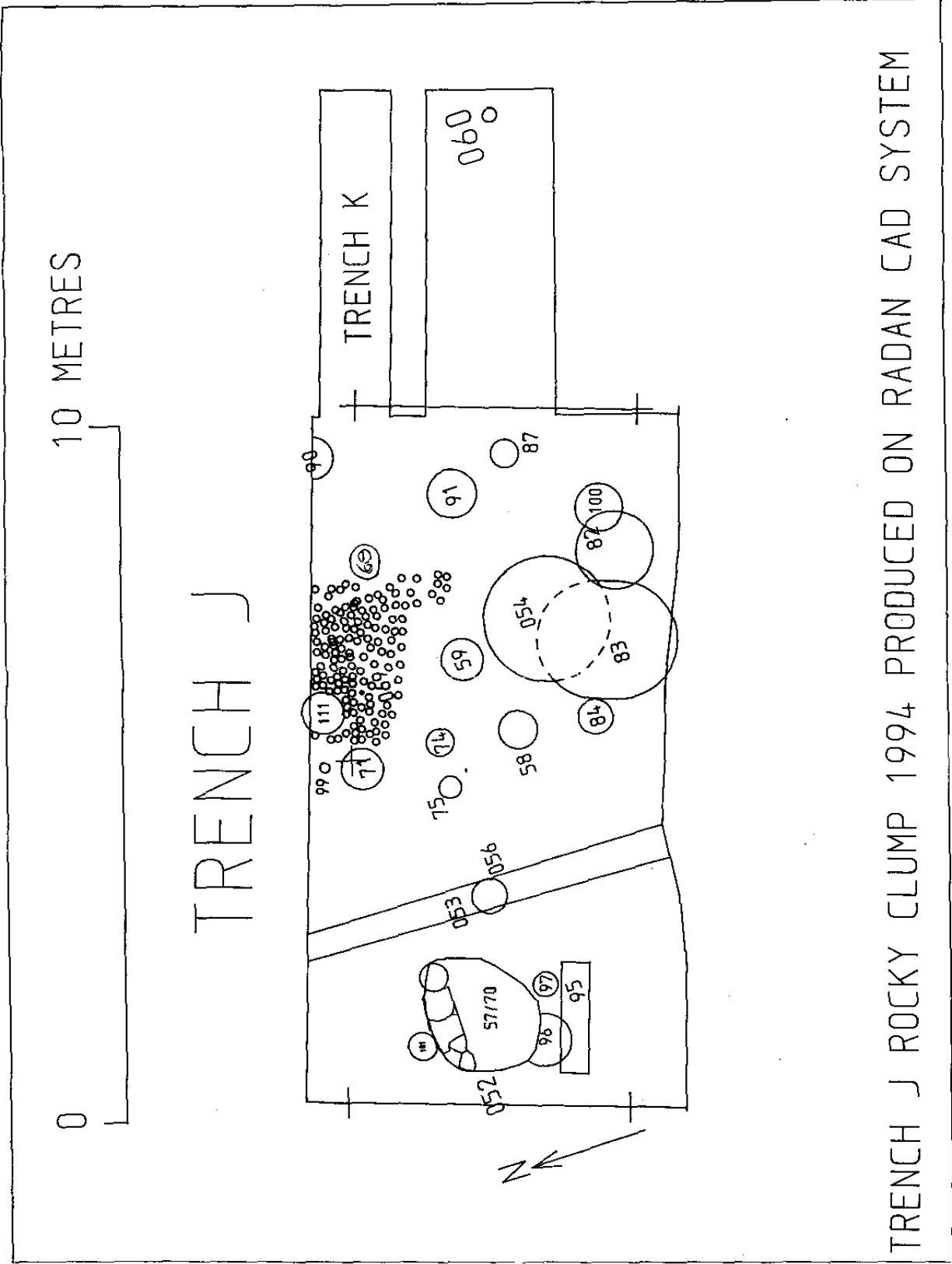
The report of the earlier excavations suggests that the line of ditch I was orientated to meet the east sarsen stone, but was terminated when it encroached on ancient burials. From the plan it can be observed that the ditch does in fact terminate before it reaches the burials, GIV and GIII on original plan. It is the re-directed ditch, number III that actually cuts through one of the graves GVII. It has been noted on other medieval sites that reverence is not generally attributed to earlier burials. A monastic site at Lewes, a friary, had internments cut into earlier internments with the bones of the previous thrown carelessly back into the new grave cut. The skull of the previous occupier lay next to the skull of the new recipient.

These reflections provide possible material for consideration. The site at Rocky Clump is still enigmatic and only further field work will provide the answers to the many questions posed.

The Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society will be seeking permission from both Mr G. Bennett of Brighton Borough Council and Mr David West, the farmer to continue with the excavations at Rocky Clump. It is hoped that during 1996 trench J will produce more evidence for a timber framed enclosure or yard. The trench in area A will be extended within the trees to try and determine whether the large post holes continue to the east. A small trench will be opened south of the sarsen stone in an area close to the burials where another is thought possible? Geophysics in the south field are also planned with results plotted into computer technology. All finds once processed will be deposited at Brighton Museum.

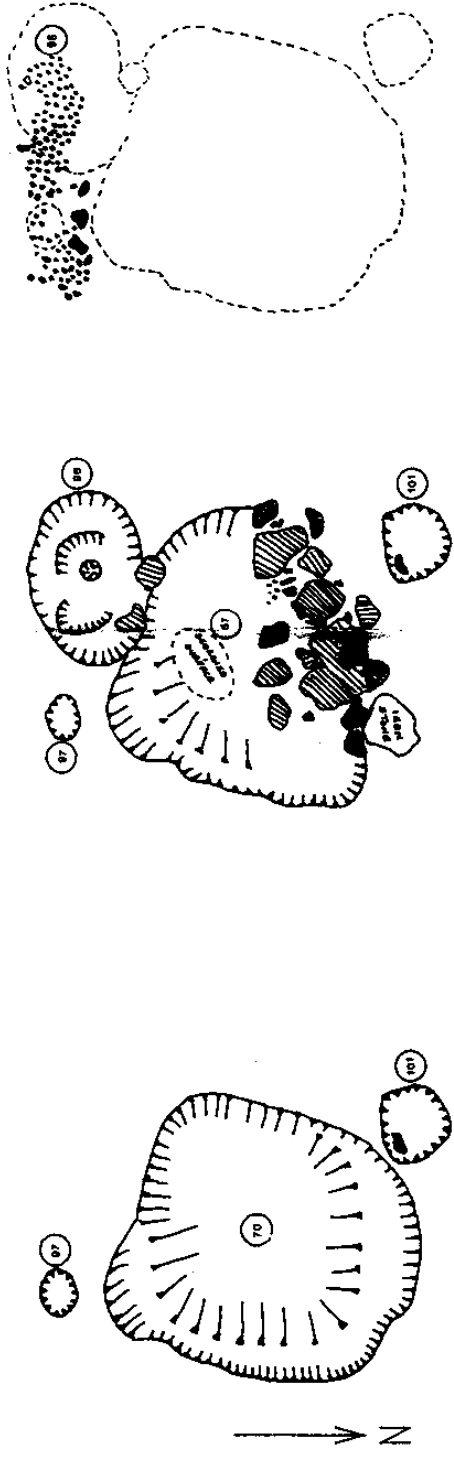
The Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society would like to thank Mr Geoff Bennett Senior Planning Officer (Conservation) and Mr David West the farmer for allowing us access to the lands. We would also like to thank Mr David Rudling and Mr Andrew Woodcock for allowing us to use their resistivity equipment. Mr David Rudling and Mr Bill Santer for examining the Roman coin and finally to all the members of the Brighton and Hove Archaeological Field Unit for their help and support during the excavations.

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Sussex, BN1 9AS.



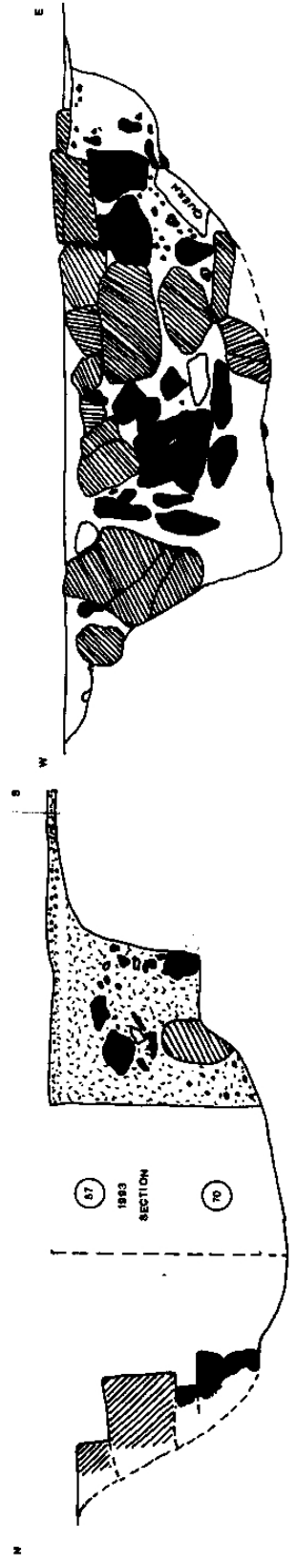
TRENCH J ROCKY CLUMP 1994 PRODUCED ON RADAN CAD SYSTEM

With February Report 1994-5



FIRST PHASE SECOND PHASE FINAL PHASE

PROPOSED CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE FOR PIT 57/70

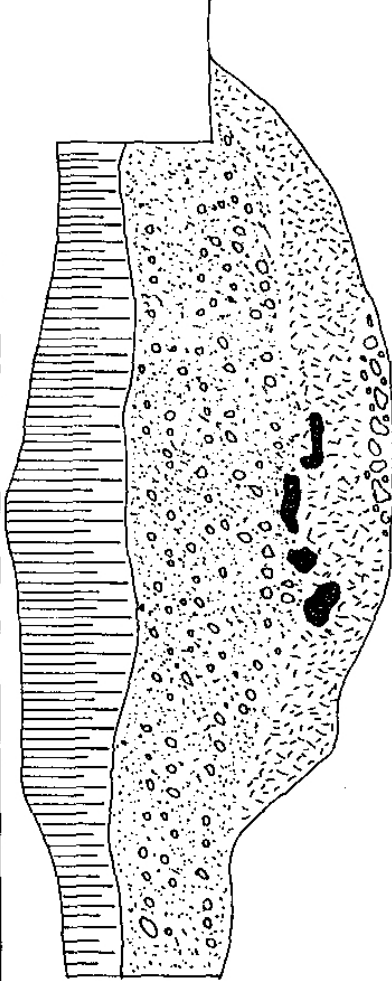


PROFILE OF 57/70 PIT FACING WEST
PRIOR TO SARSEN STONE REMOVAL

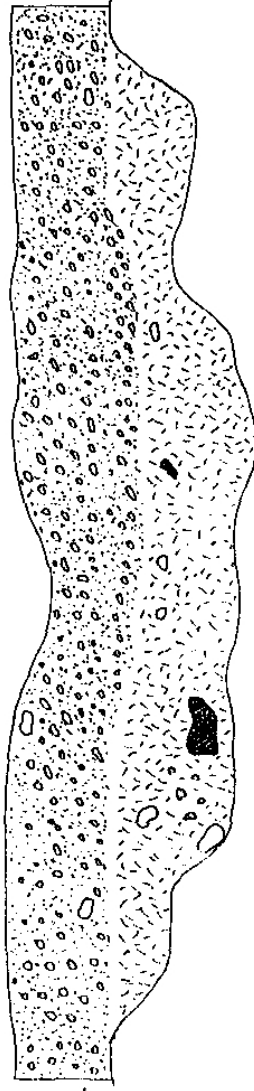
VIEW ON SARSEN STONES FACING SOUTH
FEATURE 57/70



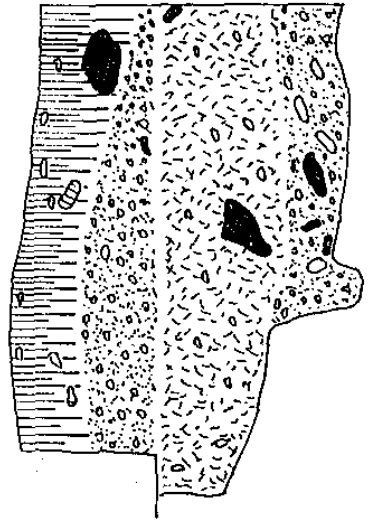
ROCKY CLUMP 1994 DETAILS OF PIT 57/70



SECTION OF FEATURE 77
FACING NORTH



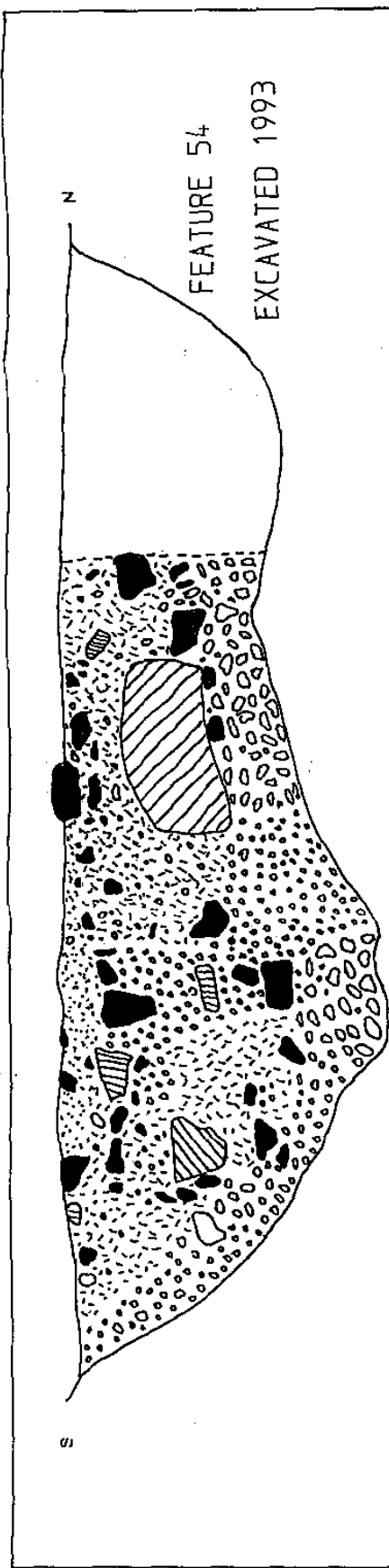
SECTION OF FEATURE 77
FACING SOUTH



SECTION OF FEATURE 78
SOUTH FACING

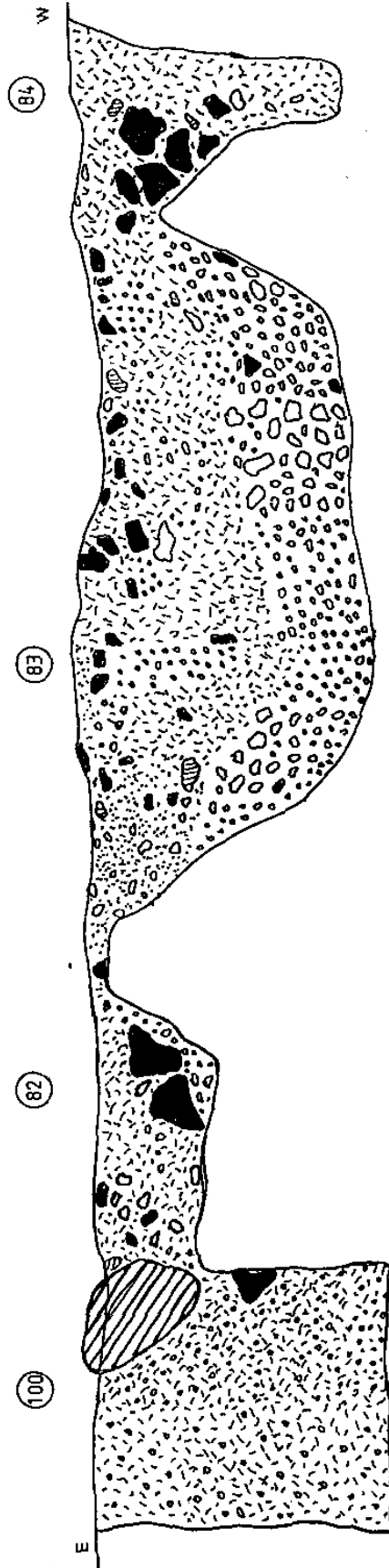
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SCALE 1-10

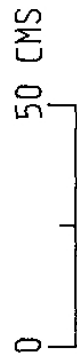


FEATURE 54
EXCAVATED 1993

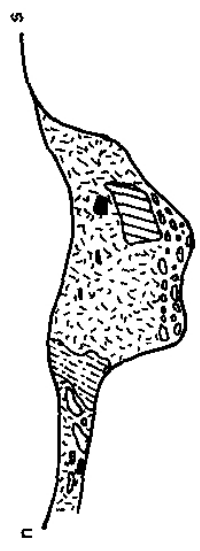
SECTION THROUGH FEATURE 83 AND 54 FACING EAST/WEST



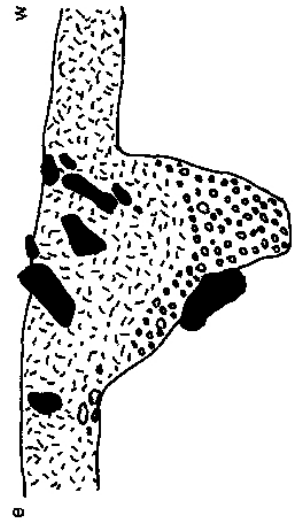
SECTION THROUGH FEATURES 100/82/83 AND 84 FACING NORTH SOUTH



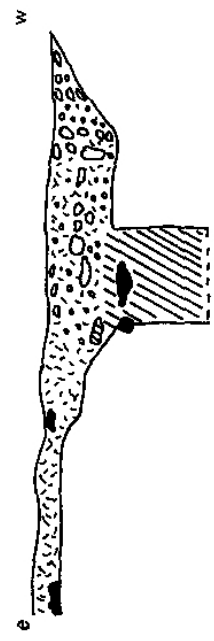
ROCKY CLUMP 1994



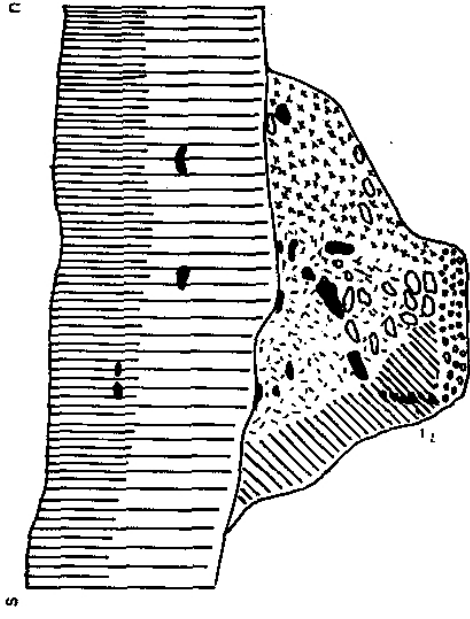
SECTION 71



SECTION 74



SECTION 75



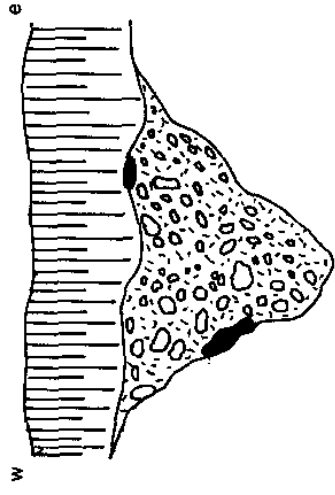
SECTION 48



SECTION 87

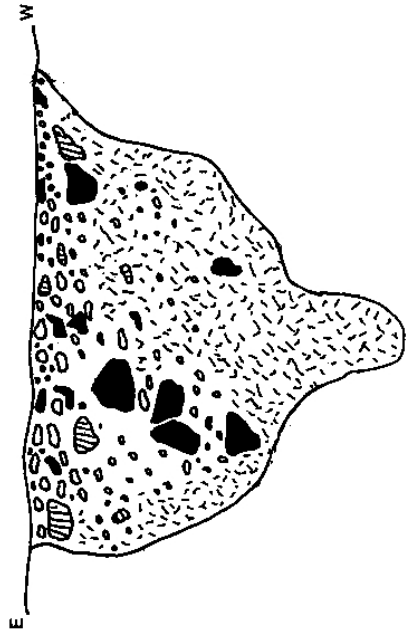


SECTION 91

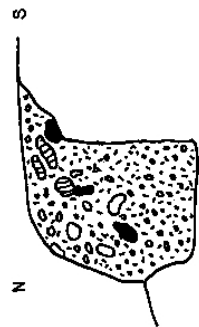


SECTION 90

ROCKY CLUMP 1994 FEATURE SECTIONS



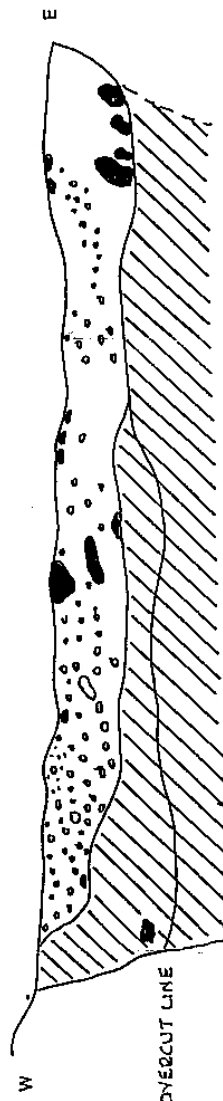
SECTION 95



SECTION 96



SECTION 97



SECTION 69 WEST/EAST

SECTION 98



SECTION 101

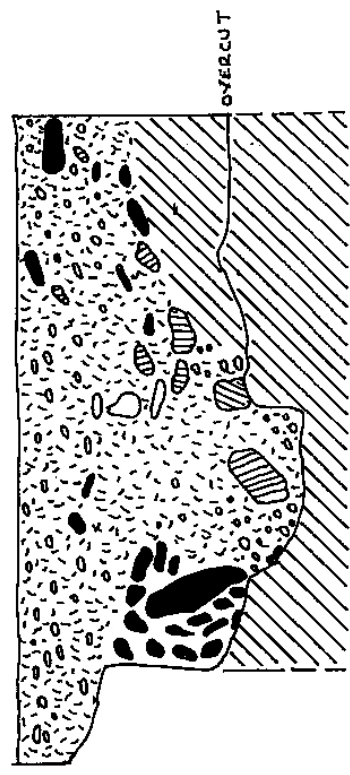
SECTION 69 NORTH/SOUTH

SCALE 1-10

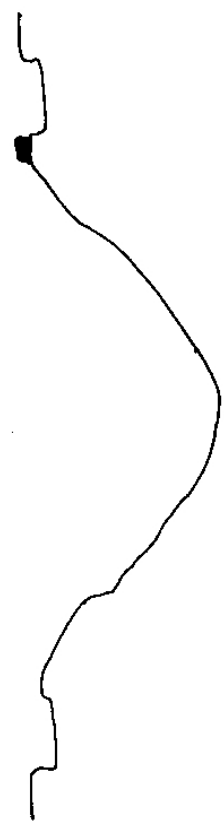
ROCKY CLUMP 1994



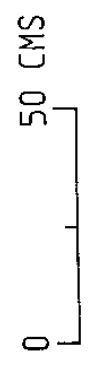
FEATURE 111



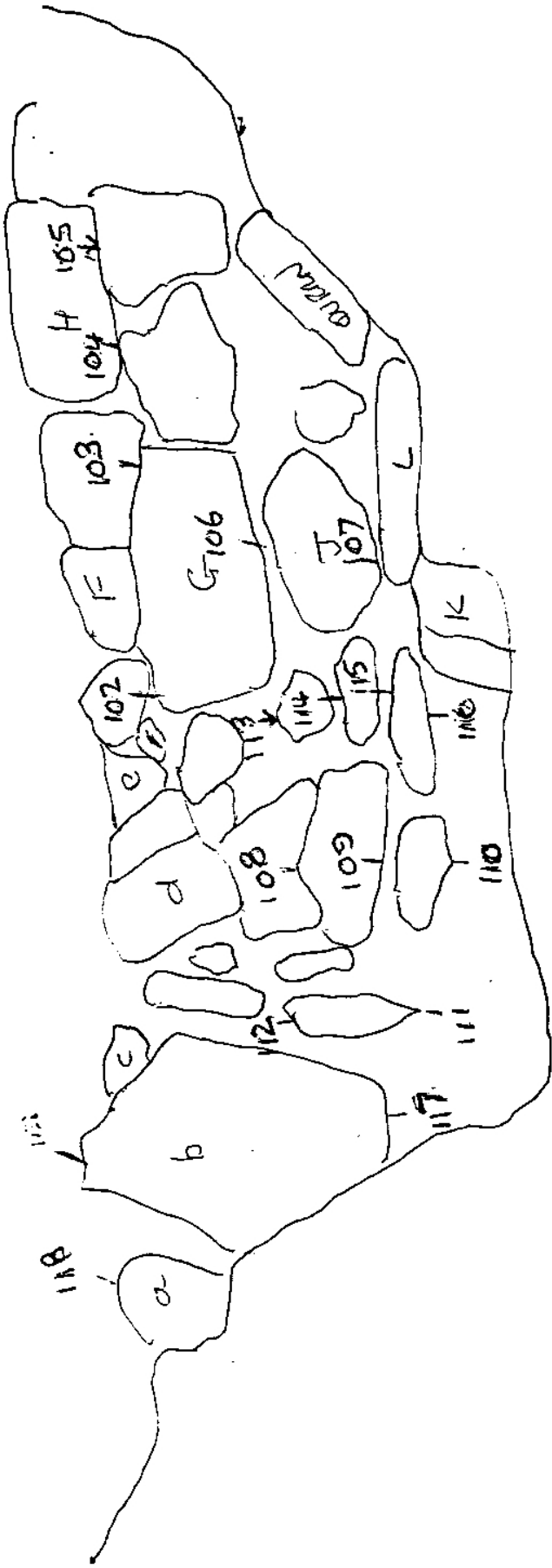
FEATURE 111 AND 69



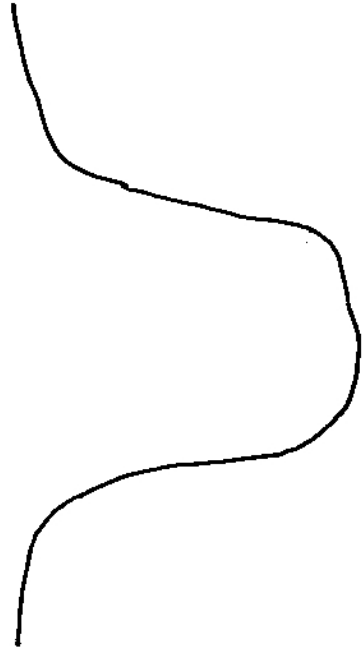
PROFILE OF 110, 57 AND 97
AFTER WALL REMOVAL



ROCKY CLUMP SECTIONS AND PROFILES 1994



POSITION OF READINGS ON
 SURVEY OF 13/11/24 IN P.I.T
 FEATURE (57)/(70)

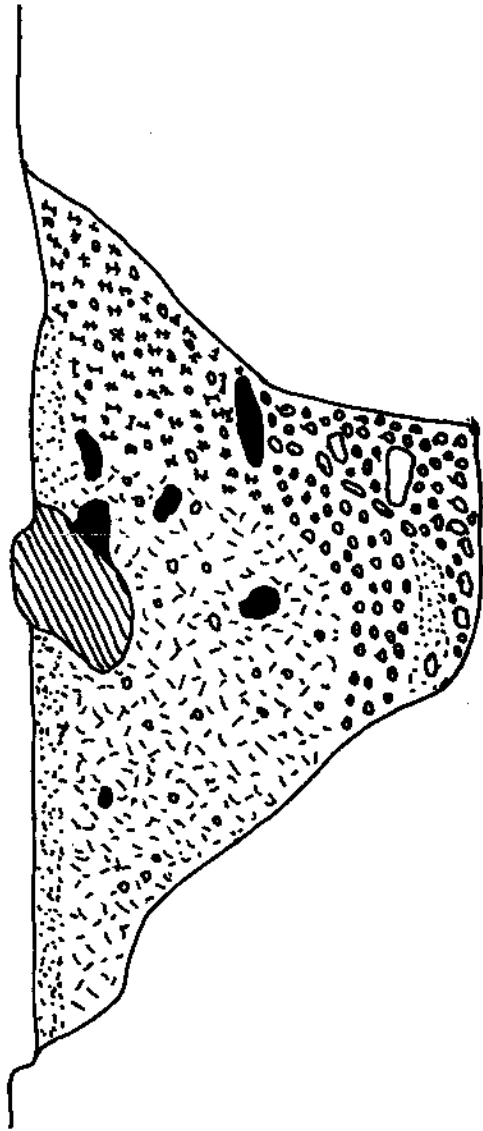


PROFILE OF POST HOLE CONTEXT 139

SECTION A-A

SCALE 1-10

ROCKY CLUMP



SECTION OF DITCH CONTEXT 143

FACING SOUTH EAST

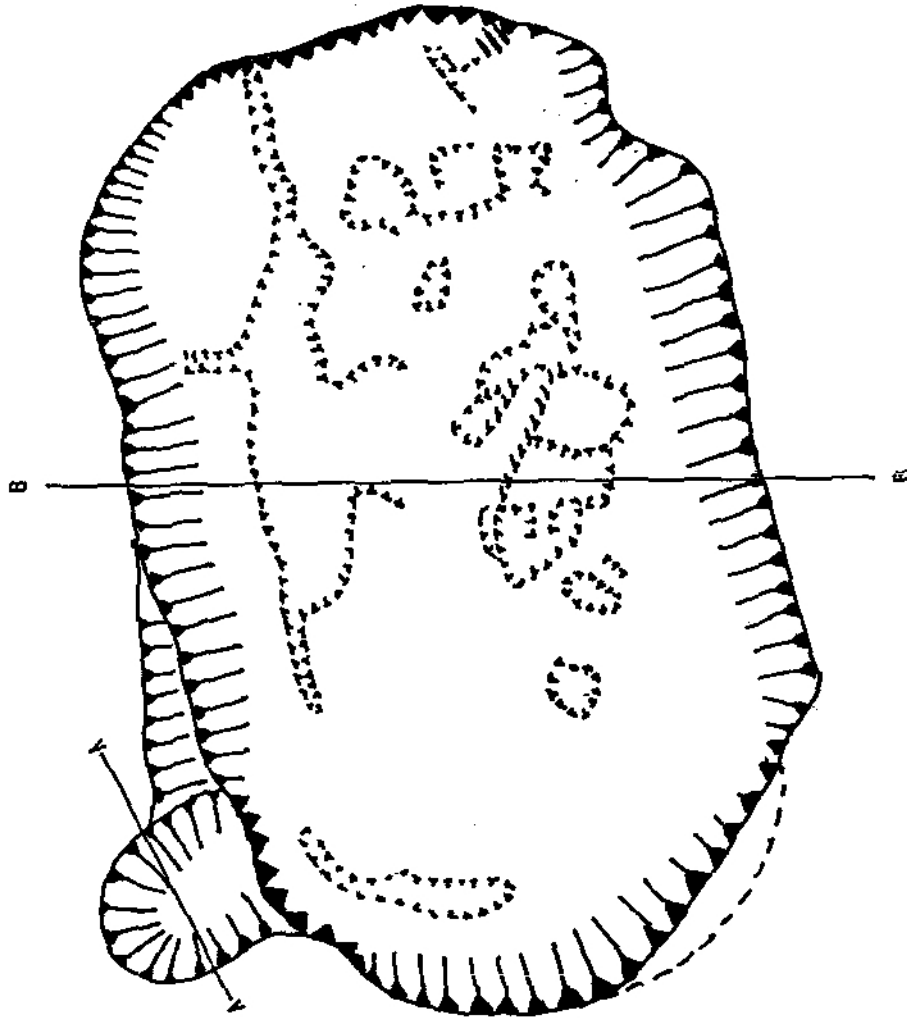
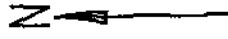
ROCKY CLUMP

SECTION C-C

SCALE 1-10

CONTEXT 139

N



SCALE 1-50

PLAN OF CONTEXT 14

ROCKY CLUMP