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The Traprain Law Environs Project

Fieldwork and Excavations 2000-2004

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Chapter 6

The evaluations at East Bearford, Foster Law and East Linton

COLIN HASELGROVE and DUNCAN HALE

Three other enclosures near Traprain Law were selected for more limited exploration during the TLEP, both to provide some comparative data for the principal excavations and to validate specific anomalies revealed by the geophysical surveys. The three sites were East Bearford, 2.5km west-south-west of Traprain Law; Foster Law, 8km to its west-north-west, and East Linton, 1.5km due north (Figure 1.3). All three evaluations proved useful, yielding absolute dates and other evidence to complement the main suite of excavations, by establishing the order of the two superimposed enclosures at Foster Law, and by demonstrating the complexity of boundary maintenance both there and at East Linton.

EAST BEARFORD (NT57SE 16)

This rectilinear enclosure is situated on a terrace, which breaks a gentle north-facing slope at about 55m OD to the east of the incised gully of the Bearford Burn. It was first placed on record by Maxwell (1970), who identified the site from vertical aerial photographs (RAF CPE/Scot/UK257: 3124-5, 12/08/1947), although it had also been photographed by CUCAP in 1964. There is a good record of the enclosure, which has been photographed repeatedly (1971, 1976, 1981, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1995).

The cropmarked evidence records a ditched rectilinear enclosure measuring 67m from east to west by about 60m transversely within a ditch that varies from 2.5m to 4.5m across (Figure 6.1). Allowing 2–3m for a bank (of which there is no trace on the photographs) inside the ditch, the internal area was about 0.32ha. There is an entrance in the east side, where the ditches are at their broadest, broken by a gap about 6m across, although this may have been narrowed by the internal banks. There may be a second entrance

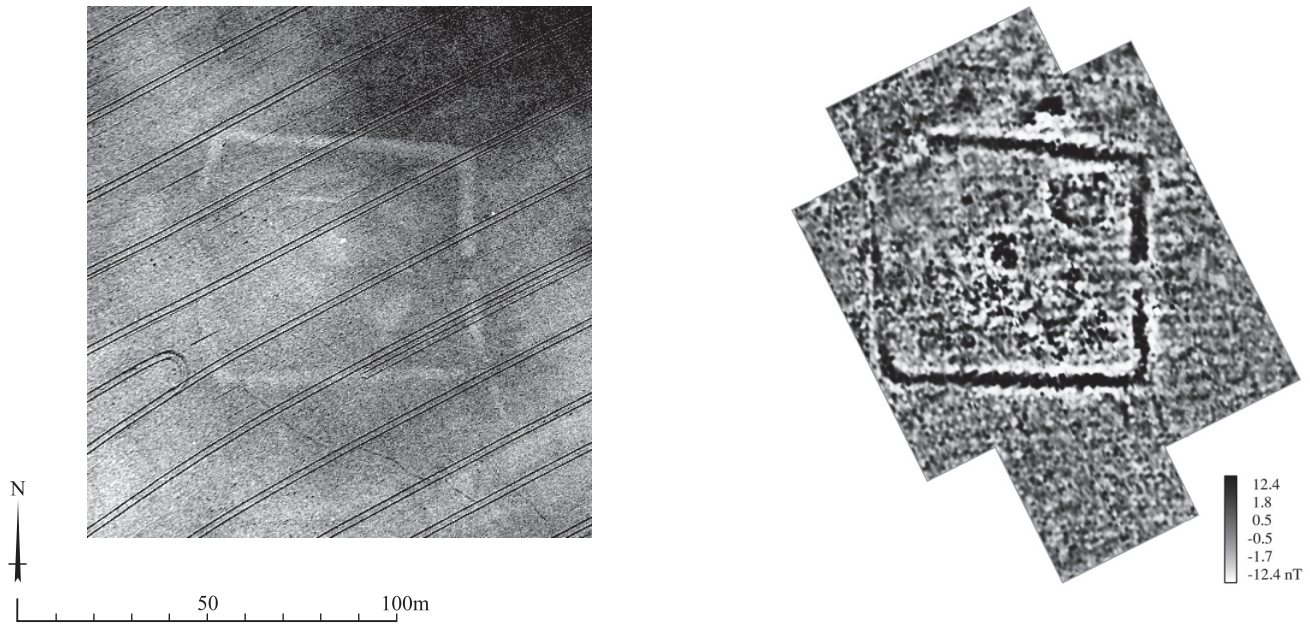

Figure 6.1
East Bearford (NT57SE 16): rectified aerial photograph (C1867) and TLEP geomagnetic survey (Crown Copyright: RCAHMS, GV004475)

towards the north end of the west side, coincident with a slight outward kink in the line of the ditch, which is markedly narrower here than on the east side. In the eastern half of the interior, three oval macular or 'blob-like' cropmarks presumably represent deeper soils marking the locations of scooped or dished areas, which given their size may be roundhouses. Outside the enclosure there are several linear cropmarks, including one roughly parallel to its north side and a short length of ditch, which springs from its south-east corner.

The geophysical survey confirmed the broad characterisation obtained from the aerial photography. Although the enclosure overlies igneous extrusive rock, in this case trachyte, the magnetic susceptibility contrasts between the materials within the enclosure ditch and the surrounding silty sands were sufficiently high to produce intense anomalies. The ditch is especially marked, probably reflecting organic-rich sediments or igneous rocks within the ditch fill, the majority of which comprised a stony deposit of grey-brown gritty clay, probably bank material (below). The parallel linear feature to the north shows clearly some 18m from the ditch, along with a hint of a right-angled turn towards the north-east corner of the enclosure, interpreted at the time as a possible annexe. In the interior, positive magnetic anomalies probably represent soil-filled features such as pits and gullies, while dipolar anomalies may mark the locations of hearths or ferrous/fired materials. A marked east–west grain on the survey plot is a product of ploughing pre-dating the modern field system, which is oriented south-west to north-east; a linear anomaly crossing the south-eastern corner of the enclosure on this axis may be an earlier field division or a drain.

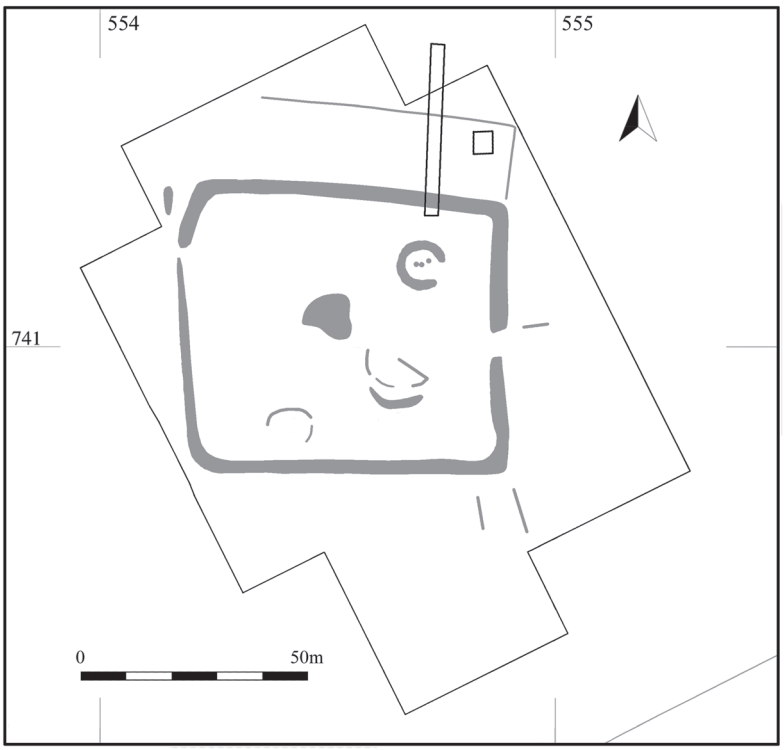

Figure 6.2
The enclosure at East Bearford, showing the principal subsurface anomalies and the location of the 2002 excavations

The excavation

The site was selected for evaluation in 2002 as a typical example of the rectilinear enclosures that are commonplace in and beyond the TLEP study area. The objectives were to investigate the enclosure ditch and the parallel linear feature to the north, and to sample the area inside and outside the possible annexe. A single north–south trench measuring *c.* 38 × 3m was placed across these features (Figure 6.2), no attempt being made to investigate the enclosure interior. A second trench was intended to examine the possible return of the anomaly, but in the event was misplaced; apart from field drains, the only feature revealed appeared to be of glacial origin.

The natural subsoil was an orange-brown silty sand of glacial origin, above which was 0.3m of ploughsoil. A Data Structure Report was submitted to Historic Scotland in March 2003 (ASUD 2003d). The site code is TEB02.

The enclosure ditch

The enclosure ditch (F22) was uncovered at the southern end of Trench 1. It was 4.5m wide and had a total depth of *c.* 1.5m, with a sharply sloping southern edge on the inside and a more gently sloping edge to the exterior,

with a flattish base (Figure 6.3). A deposit of yellow-grey silt [24], which seemed to be collapse, was present on the outer edge, after which the bottom of the ditch filled with a 0.5m thick deposit of black organic clay [23]. A waterlogged alder twig from this deposit was radiocarbon dated to 210–20 cal BC (SUERC-10626). The environmental evidence suggests the dumping of heather and bracken into the ditch, whilst water flea egg cases indicate that water was present in the ditch at least temporarily, although there was no evidence for standing water over any length of time (Chapter 8). In time, a layer of silty clay [26] formed over [23] and more of the ditch side collapsed in from the outer edge [25]. The ditch then filled up completely with a deposit of gritty clay [27], which might include bank material, but extended over the sides.

Other features

Also traversing the southern end of Trench 1 was a shallow gully with sloping sides (F3). This cut diagonally through the top of enclosure ditch and extended a further 3m to the north-west before butt-ending. A large rim sherd of Iron Age tradition pottery (sf 1) was recovered from the fill [2], possibly disturbed from the underlying ditch fill. To the north was a

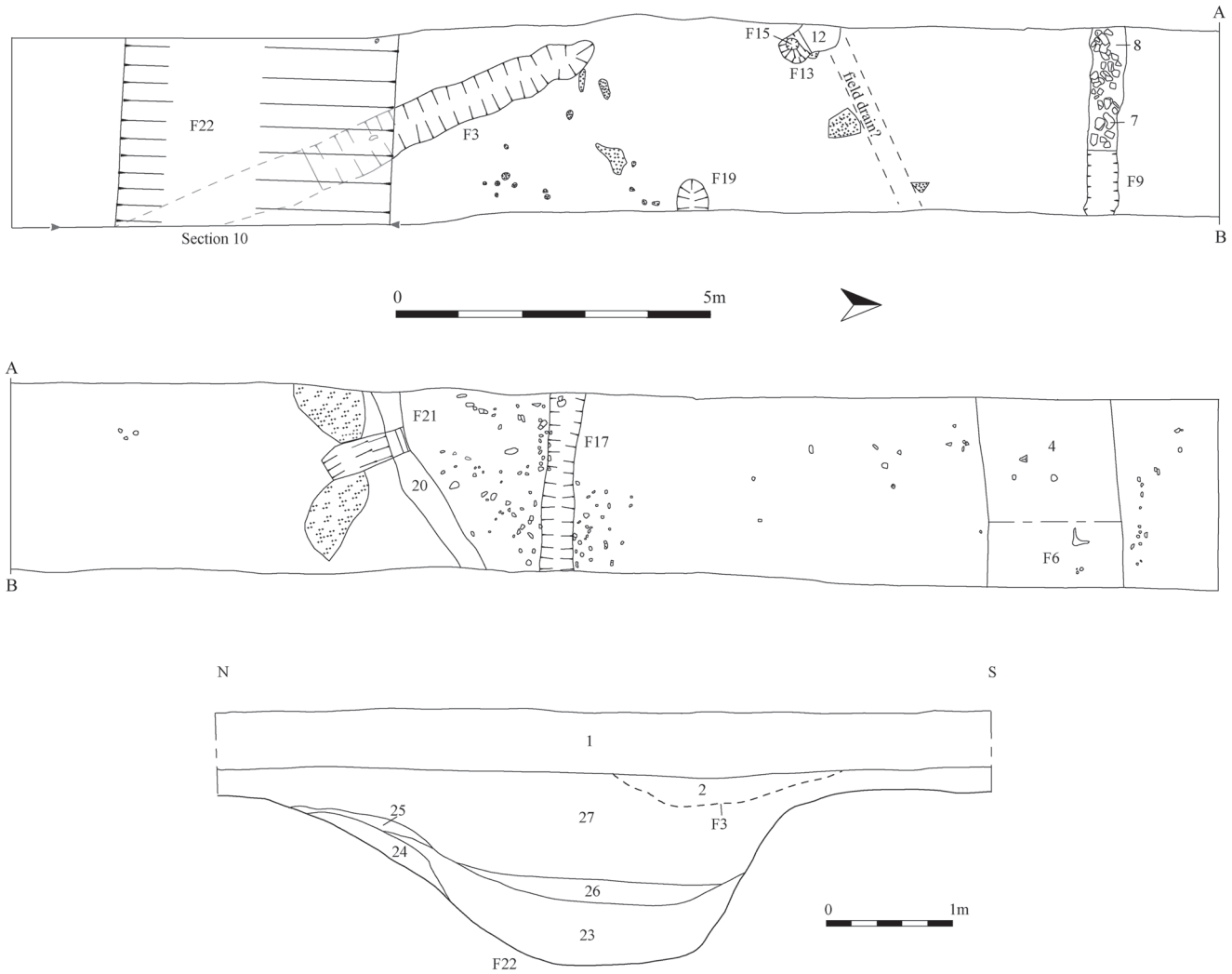

Figure 6.3
East Bearford: plan of Area 1 and section through enclosure ditch F22

Figure 6.4
View from The Chesters looking towards Foster Law on the edge of the ridge beyond (Photo D C Cowley)

shallow hollow (F19) filled with charcoal [18], possibly the remains of a fire, and a post-setting (F15). Finally, an east–west gully (F17, 0.3m deep) with some stones in the fill [16], was located 21m beyond the enclosure. From its alignment, F17 could be linked either to the enclosure or to the later east-west agricultural activity. It seems to lie a little too far north of the enclosure to be the linear anomaly detected by the geophysical survey, but the only other contender was an area of iron-panning running across the trench some 4m south of gully F17.

The remaining features in Trench 1 relate to agriculture. A wide shallow cut (F6) across the northern end of the trench seems to be a plough furrow, whilst a stone-filled field drain containing post-medieval pottery (F9) crossed the central part of the trench to reappear in Trench 2; both appear to be linked to the east–west agriculture apparent on the geophysics. Both trenches were traversed diagonally by clay field drains following the line of the modern ploughing.

Discussion

The single radiocarbon date obtained from the waterlogged material in the base of the ditch implies that the rectilinear enclosure at East Bearford, like its counterpart at Knowes, dates to the Later Iron Age, an interpretation which the Iron Age pot rim found in the shallow gully cutting through the top of the ditch does not gainsay. Equally the presence of this gully and of other features just beyond the enclosure ditch might also suggest that occupation continued after the circuit fell into disrepair, although they could of course be more recent. The survey evidence suggests that the enclosure referenced or was referenced by other linear features, as was also the case at Knowes (chapter 5), but unfortunately none of the other features found in Trench 1 can certainly be related to the enclosure and the evaluation failed to pinpoint the parallel anomaly apparent on the geophysical plot – although it might be the gully identified in the northern half of Trench 1. The remaining features all appear to be linked to later agricultural land use, first by ridge and furrow on a similar axis to the enclosure, and more recently, presumably post-improvement, at right angles to the road through the modern farm.

FOSTER LAW (NT57NW 41)

This roughly oval enclosure occupies a low rise at about 60m OD immediately to the north of 'The Chesters' (Figure 6.4) on a slightly elevated block of ground extending to the north of the Garleton Hills. Another enclosure lies 500m west-south-west at Sixpence Strip

(Appendix 1, no 16) and there are several pit alignments in the vicinity.

The Chesters has been repeatedly photographed by RCAHMS (1976, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1986, 1990, 1991, 1999, 2003). The aerial photographs (e.g. Figure 6.5) record two ditch circuits, each with a slightly different footprint, indicating at least two separate phases of enclosure – both of them roughly oval, the longer axis running from east-north-east to west-south-west. Quarrying has gradually encroached on the site since

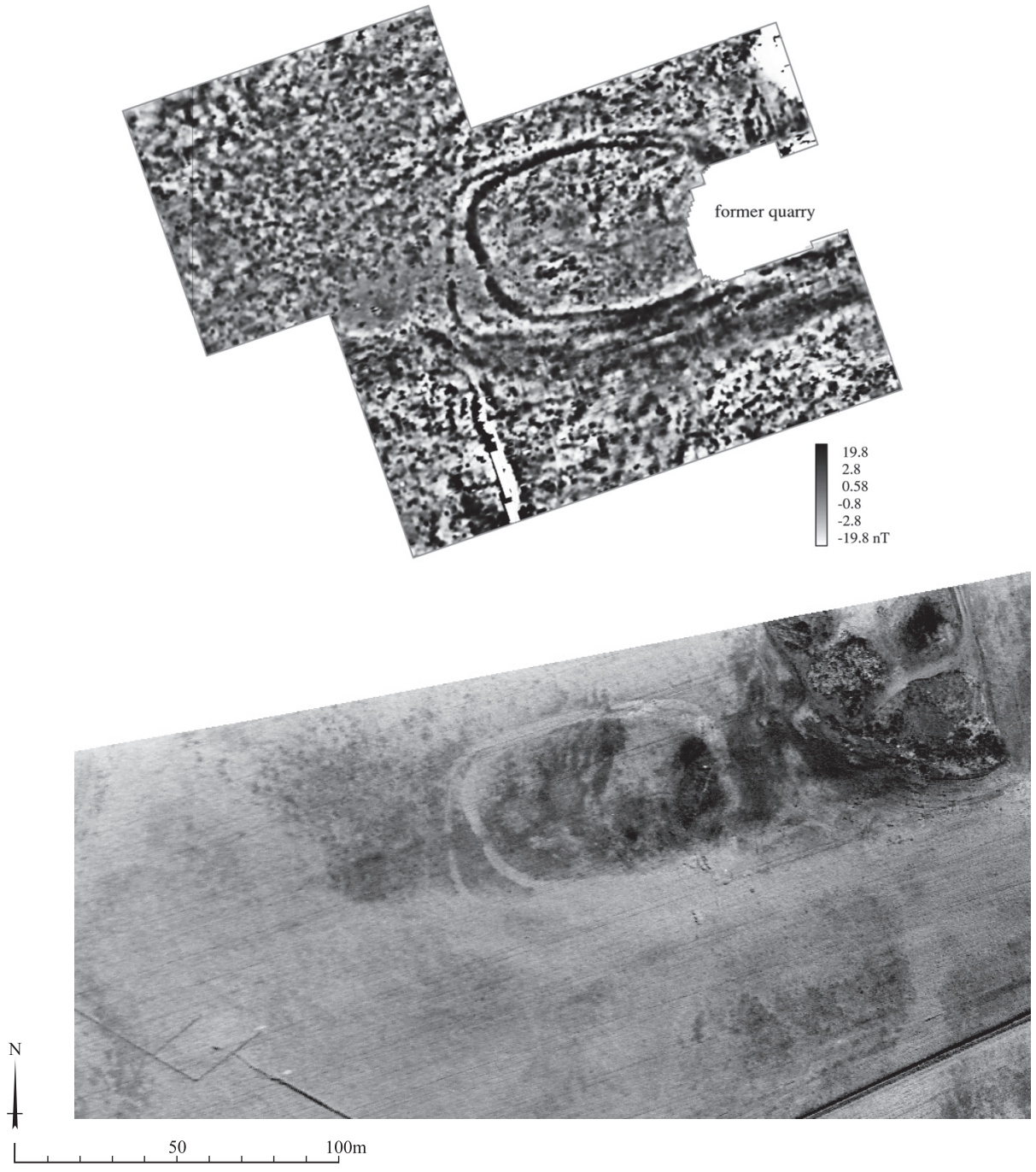

Figure 6.5
Foster Law (NT57NW 41): rectified aerial photograph (EL3990) and TLEP geomagnetic survey (Crown Copyright: RCAHMS, GV004476)

the nineteenth century, removing the ditches at the east end, but enough survives to project the circuit through the line of the quarry, which is now infilled with rubble. The inner enclosure measures about 75m by up to 50m transversely within a ditch about 4m across. Allowing for a bank or rampart between 3m and 4m thick, the internal area would have been about 0.25ha. There is an unambiguous entrance to the west-south-west, with a possibility of a roughly opposed entrance to the east-north-east.

The larger enclosure is clearest at the west, where it extends some 10m beyond the inner enclosure. Though the line of its ditch is not evident in the cropmarks on the south and is visible as a distinct line only intermittently elsewhere on its circuit, the enclosure probably measured about 85m × 56m within a ditch noticeably thinner than that of the inner enclosure, at about 2.6m across. The internal area would have been about 0.36ha. There is an entrance in the west side, offset slightly to the north of the gap in the inner ditch. There may be a small gap in the north, but this is in an area where the underlying extrusive trachyte muddies the cropmark and should be treated with caution. Assuming that an internal bank flanked the outer ditch, the arrangement of the enclosures suggests that the inner circuit post-dated the outer, a supposition confirmed by the excavation (below).

The geomagnetic survey produced a clear image of the ditch circuits, including the possible entrance on the northern side of the outer ditch as well as confirming the continuation of the southern circuit. Probable internal features are indicated by the geophysical survey, but these are difficult to interpret given the high level of background noise produced by igneous rocks in the topsoil.

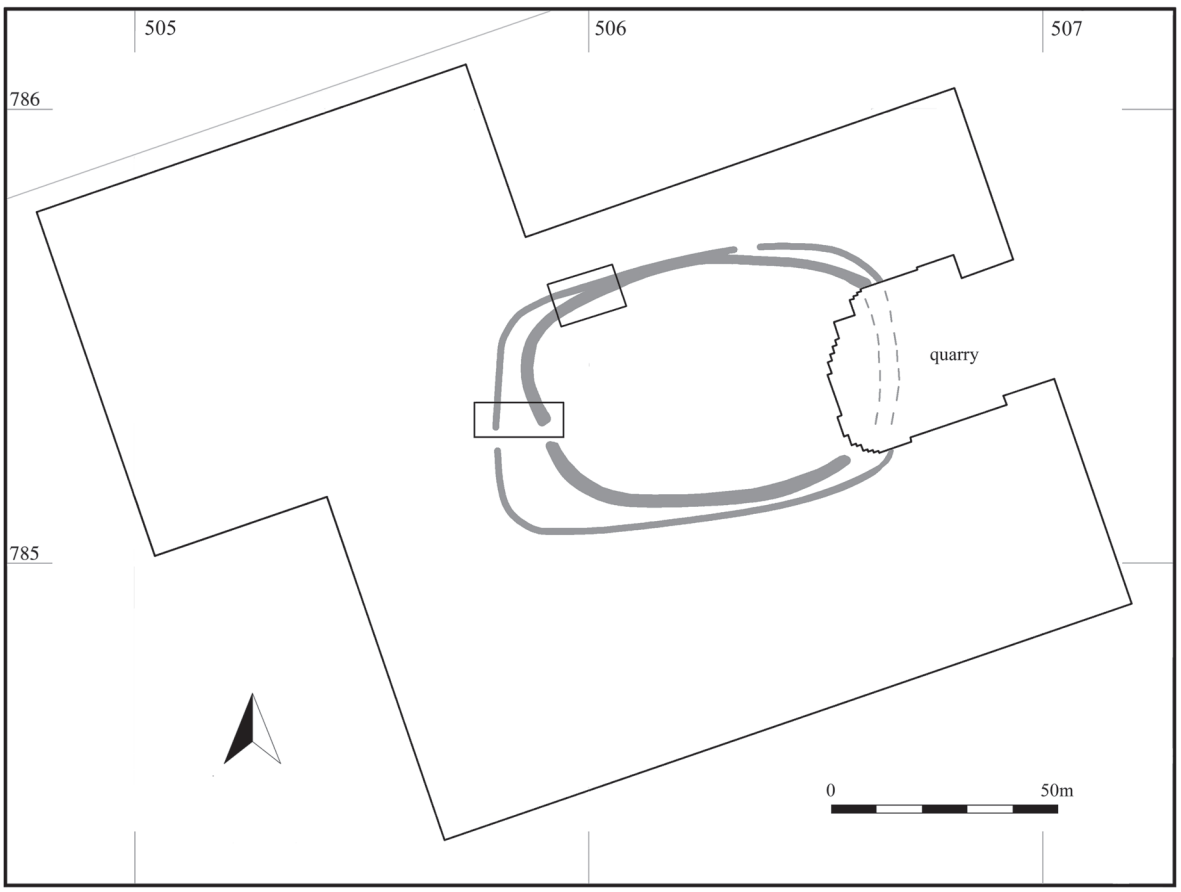

Figure 6.6
Foster Law: plan of the enclosure, showing the location of the 2003 excavations

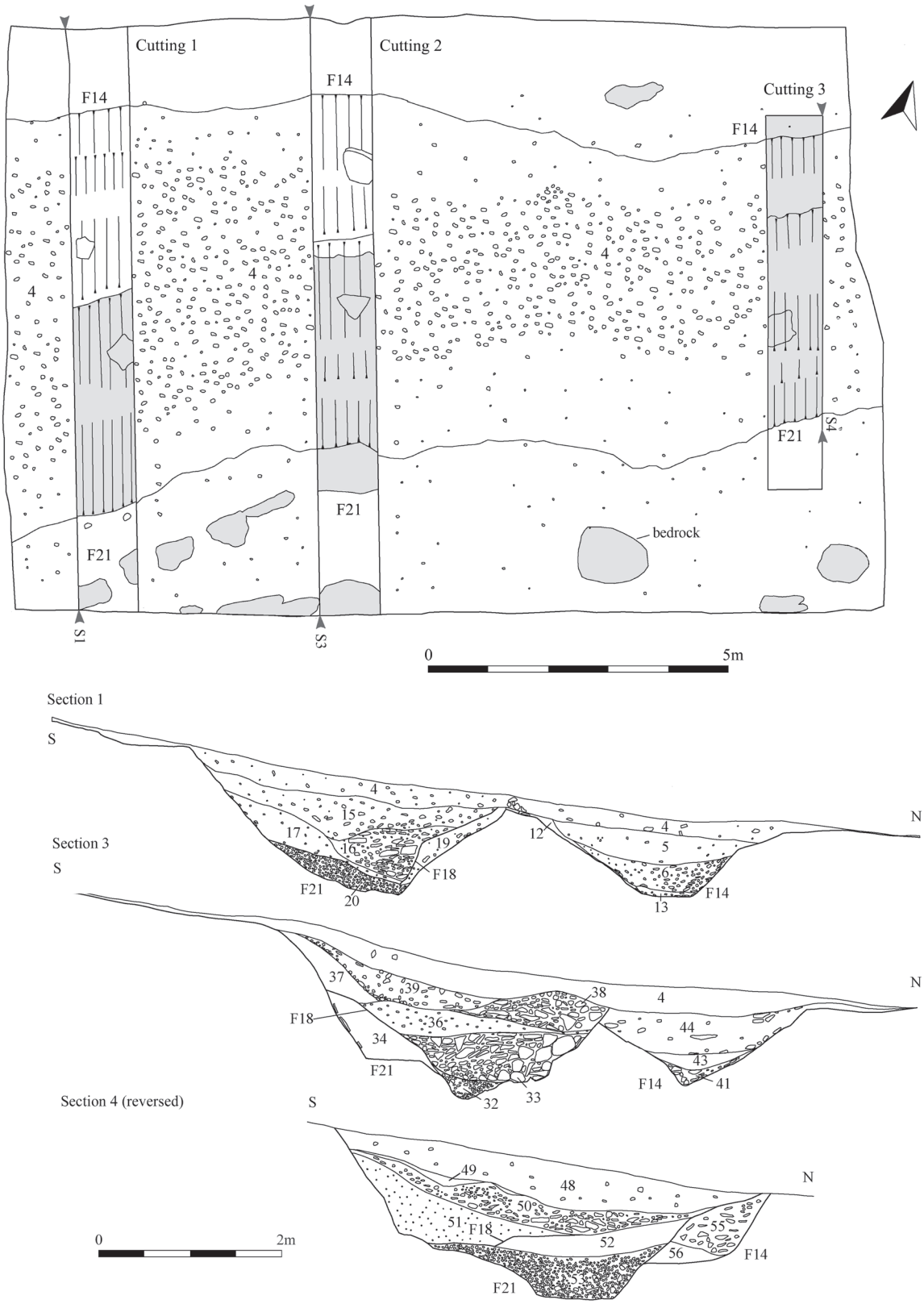

Figure 6.7
Foster Law: Area 1 plan and ditch sections

The excavation

Foster Law provided a rare opportunity to establish the relative sequence and date of two superimposed enclosures, with the added interest that while one of these was curvilinear in form, the other is somewhat more sub-rectangular in shape, albeit not as regular as, for example, East Bearford. Having been photographed regularly, Foster Law also provides a good opportunity to monitor the long-term effects of cultivation on such monuments and cropmark generation; the field was ploughed regularly until relatively recently, but is currently used for silage due to the amount of stone in the topsoil.

Two trenches were excavated in September 2003. The first was located to sample the enclosure ditches on the northern side of the site where the two circuits intersect (Area 1) (Figure 6.6). The second was located across the northern ditch terminals of the western entrances, where on analogy with other Iron Age sites, there was a possibility of recovering structured deposits (Area 2). In Area 2, the bedrock lay directly below topsoil, but in Area 1, it was overlain by compacted yellow brown silty sand. A data structure report was submitted to Historic Scotland in March 2004 (ASUD 2004c). The site code is TFL03.

The enclosure ditches

Within Area 1, three separate sections 1m wide were excavated through the ditches. Cutting 1 to the west was placed where the geophysical survey indicated two distinct ditches; Cutting 2 examined the two ditch circuits as they began to overlap one another; and Cutting 3 to the east was located where the two ditches overlapped to the point where the outer ditch had been almost completely removed by the inner ditch. Both ditches were covered by a broad band of stony loam [4], up to 0.3m in depth at the centre, which when removed, revealed the northern edge of the outer ditch cutting through the clay subsoil and the southern edge of the inner ditch cutting through the bedrock.

The outer ditch

The complete profile of the outer ditch was recovered only in Cutting 1 (F14) and at the entrance. It measured just under 3m in width, with sloping sides and a flat base, and was 0.85m deep (Figure 6.7). The primary fills comprised a thin deposit of sandy silt on the inner edge [12] and sticky clay with frequent stones in the base [13]. Above this was a thick tumble of angular stones concentrated on the outer edge and covered by clayey silt [6], half filling the ditch; together these could represent the remains of a bank. The rest of the ditch was infilled with clay silt [5].

In the adjacent Cutting 2, the partially truncated ditch was V-shaped, in profile, but of similar depth to before. Here, stone was mainly present in the base of the ditch [41], above which was layer of clay silt [43], and then a thicker deposit of clay silt with some stones [44] equivalent to [5]. In Cutting 3, the whole inner side of the ditch had been removed by the later inner ditch (F21), leaving the outer sloping edge and a flat base at least 0.8m broad, here cut directly into rock. Apart from some basal silt [56], the fill was very stony [55].

The inner ditch

The inner ditch (F21) was noticeably more substantial. For the most part, it had sloping sides, the inner side

Figure 6.8
Foster Law: Area 1, Cutting 2, looking north

being slightly steeper, and a broad fairly flat base up to 1m wide, the actual profiles varying slightly according to the presence of bedrock or boulder clay natural. As originally cut, the ditch was *c.* 3.7m wide and 1.3–1.5m deep. The relationship between the inner ditch and the earlier outer ditch was clearly visible in Cuttings 2 and 3.

In all three cuttings, the basal fill of the ditch was composed mainly of stones in more or less silty clay [20, 32; 53]. A hazelnut shell from [53] provided a date range of 760–400 cal BC (SUERC-10636). The ditch then infilled through a mixture of collapse and slumping of material from the edges and bank – evident on the outer edge of the ditch in Cutting 1 [19] and inner edge of the ditch in Cutting 2 [34] – and silting in Cutting 3 [52]. The only finds were cattle and horse teeth from [34].

After it had largely filled up, the ditch was recut to a broadly similar but somewhat shallower profile just over 1m deep (F18). This was clearest in Cuttings 1

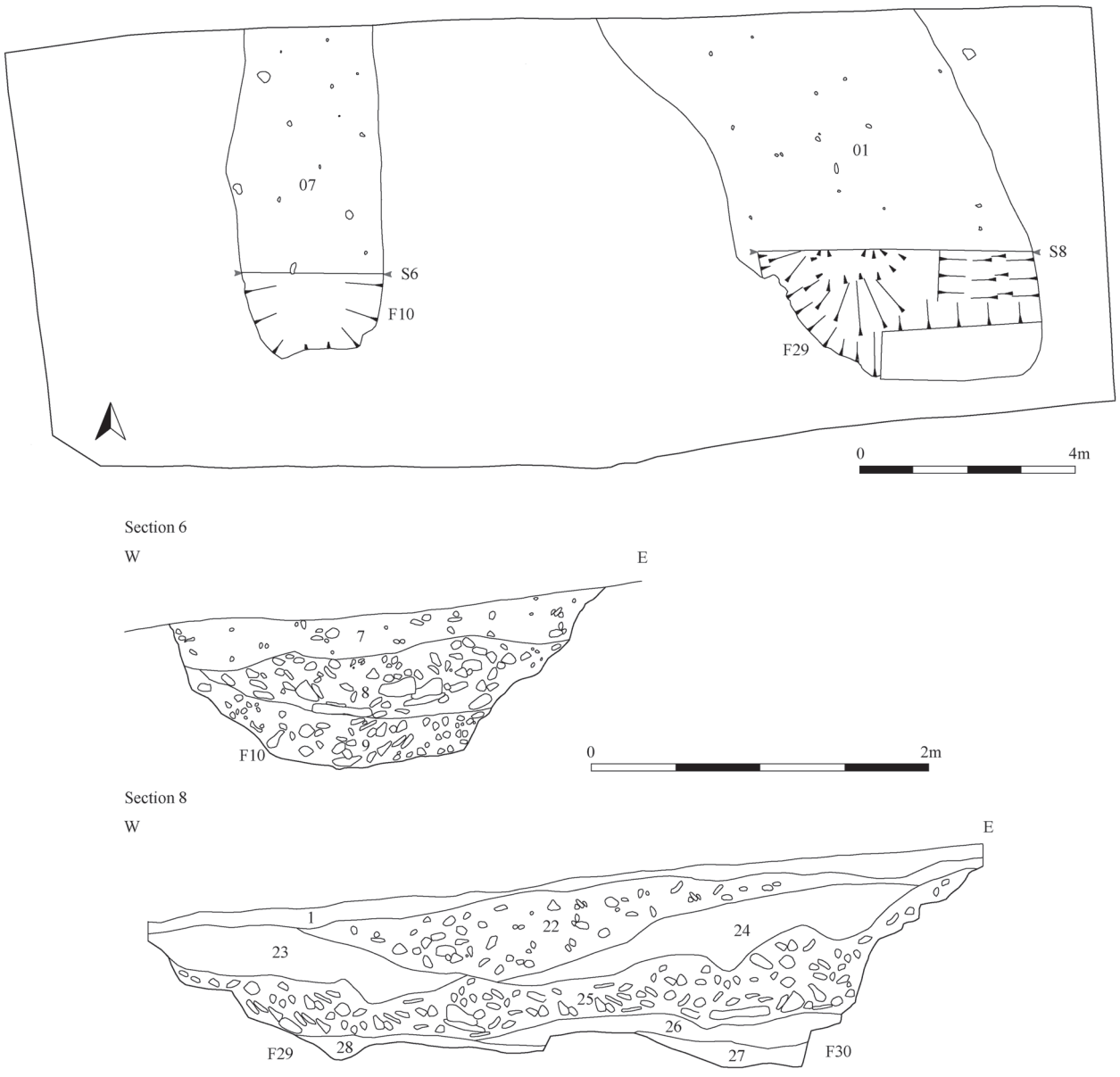

Figure 6.9
Foster Law: Area 2, plan and ditch sections

and 2. In Cutting 3, the recut lay a little to the north of the initial cut, suggesting that it did not always faithfully follow its predecessor. In Cuttings 1 and 3, the recut filled up first with silty deposits [17], gravelly clay silt and [51] with some stones, whilst in Cutting 2, there was a much greater concentration of rubble and shattered bedrock below the silt [33] (Figure 6.8). Further layers of silts and clays [15; 36; 37; 39; 49] and dense deposits of angular stones [16; 38; 50] filled up the ditch. Finally, the loose stony spread [4 = 48] already mentioned lay across the top of the ditch.

A charred twig from the basal fill of the recut [51] yielded a radiocarbon date of 360–50 cal BC (SUERC-10635), whilst sherds of two vessels of Iron Age tradition (sf 7; sf 9) and fuel ash were recovered from the higher fills [15; 50]. A staple-shaped iron object is too dense to be of any great antiquity and is probably intrusive, but its presence might suggest that the overlying stone spread [4] was deposited relatively recently, despite the fact that it too yielded Iron Age finds – part of a triangular-sectioned shale bracelet (sf 4) and an intact thumb pot (sf 6), disturbed either from the underlying ditch fill or from a nearby context, perhaps in the course of levelling the remains of the bank. Several more later prehistoric sherds were found cleaning the area, including a rim of a somewhat thinner walled vessel (sf 10).

The western entrance

Only the northern side of the entrance causeway was investigated (Area 2) (Figure 6.9). The outer ditch terminal was visible immediately beneath the topsoil, cutting the bedrock, whereas the inner terminal lay beneath a layer of topsoil and loose stones similar to layer [4] in Area 1. Whilst the two entrance causeways coincide, the outer ditch here runs north–south so that the entrance faces due west, whereas the inner ditch is aligned north-north-west to south-south-east and its terminals are also slightly offset from one another.

The outer ditch terminal

The butt end of the outer ditch (F10) was fairly square in plan, with sloping sides and a broad, flat base, giving it an overall profile very similar to the segment investigated in Cutting 3, 2.6m wide and 0.9m deep. Here too the fills were largely sub-angular stone [9; 8], apart from a covering of sandy silt [7] directly below the topsoil, which was only 0.1m deep. No artefacts were recovered.

The inner ditch terminal

As indicated, the entrance through the inner ditch (F29) faced more to the south-west. Again, the ditch had gradually sloping sides, with the inner face steeper than the outside, and a flat but uneven base. Here, the evidence of the recut was not definitive, but the width of the ditch at the terminal (up to *c.* 5m) might imply that the cuts had moved even further apart here than in Cutting 3 (above). The maximum depth of the primary cut was 1.2m, comparable to Area 1.

The deepest parts of the base had filled with sandy silt and areas of shattered bedrock [27; 28]. Above was a gravelly layer [26], then a thick deposit of shattered bedrock and silty sand [25]. The upper part of the ditch contained deposits of gravel on the inner side [24] and silty sand with fragments of stone [23] on the outer side, over which a thick layer of silty soil and stones had formed [22], then a thinner deposit of soil and stones analogous to [4] in Area 1. Charcoal from the basal fill [27] yielded a radiocarbon date of 760–410 cal BC (SUERC-10631), consistent with the date from the primary fill in Area 1. Other finds included animal teeth and bone from [25] and [23], and a sherd of coarse pottery from [23].

Discussion

The excavations established clearly that the smaller and shallower outer ditch was the earlier of the two circuits, but no dating evidence was recovered. It had largely filled up by the time the inner ditch was cut, but would presumably still have been visible as a slight earthwork, whilst the coincidence of the entrance causeways implies that the new circuit referenced the earlier one in some way and might not therefore be too far distant in time from it.

On the northern side of the site, the new larger ditch cut away the remains of its predecessor, perhaps to take full advantage of the natural fall in slope at this point. The two radiocarbon dates from its basal fill imply that this circuit was created during the Earlier Iron Age. This ditch was allowed to fill up too, but unlike its predecessor was eventually recut. A single radiocarbon date indicates that this recutting did not occur until the Later Iron Age, whilst the fact that the recut veers off line in places could well indicate that the enclosure was abandoned for a period rather than simply not maintained.

The moderate quantity of pottery recovered from the upper fills of the recut ditch would be consistent

with Late Iron Age occupation, since this is precisely when we see greater use of pottery and increased deposition. Unlike Knowes and other sites in the region, there was no definite evidence of continued occupation after the final ditch circuit had silted up, although this is clearly possible.

EAST LINTON (NT57NE 17)

This multivallate enclosure is sited on the north-west side of the steep-sided, narrow gorge of the River Tyne 2km from Traprain (Figure 6.10). Lying about 850m to the south-west of East Linton village at an elevation of 65–70m OD, the ground rises gently to the west and drops away gently to the north, towards the former A1 road (now the A199). Photographed from the air by CUCAP in 1955, the enclosure is also visible on earlier vertical imagery (RAF CPE/Scot/UK 257: 4119-20, 14 August 1947). Both sources were referred to by Maxwell (1970, 87) when he listed the site as a rectilinear enclosure, whilst admitting that it stood out from others in that class, in particular because of the three ditches. The site has been something of a magnet for aerial surveyors and has been repeatedly photographed by CUCAP and RCAHMS since the 1970s, most recently in 2006.

The cropmarked evidence (Figure 6.11) records a roughly rectilinear enclosure, the south-east side of which is formed by the steep slopes down to the River Tyne. Measuring about 140m from east-north-east to west-south-west by a maximum of 95m transversely (away from the valley edge), the circuit comprising three ditches and the narrow trench of a palisade. The internal area is about 0.87ha after allowance is made for an internal bank. The three ditches vary from 3–4.5m across, and the cropmarks give the impression that the inner and outer cuts are broader than the central one. The spacing between the ditches widens very slightly between the central circuit and the outer. The pencil-thin line of a palisade trench is visible between the inner and central ditches. All the circuits are broadly parallel to one another and are broken on the west side by aligned gaps, presumably an entrance, whilst there is a further gap in the inner ditch south of this entrance. In the eastern half of the enclosure, a narrow ditch extends north-westwards from the valley edge across the interior and might form an enclosure tucked into the (presumably earlier) multivallate circuit. Variations in the tone of the crops presumably reflect differing soil depth, but apart from a small U-shaped ditch to the north-west of the enclosure, no other features of anthropogenic origin were identified.

Figure 6.10
East Linton: view from the site towards Traprain Law

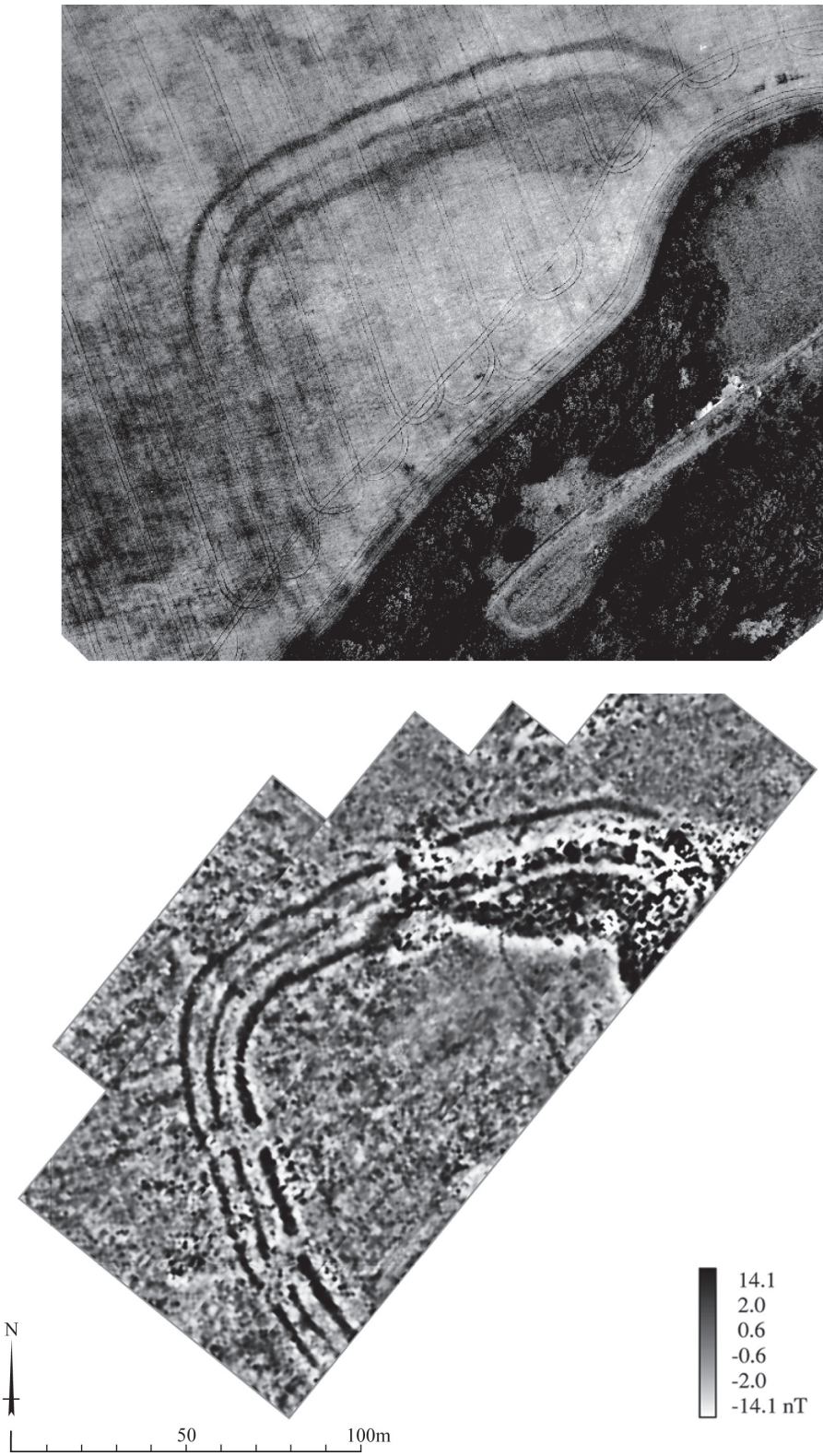

Figure 6.11
East Linton (NT57NE 17): rectified aerial photograph (B38291) and TLEP geomagnetic survey (Crown Copyright: RCAHMS, GV004477)

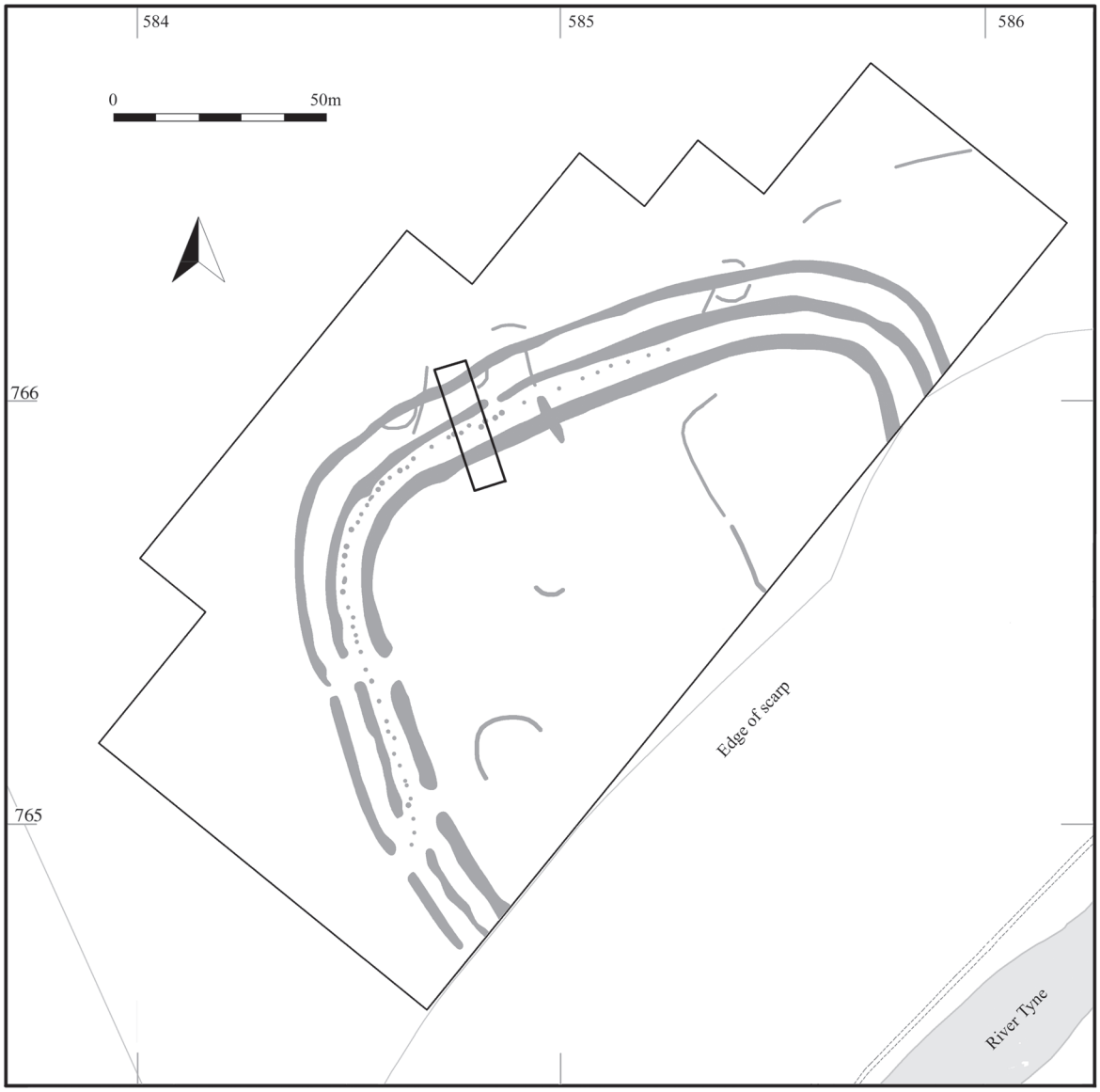

Figure 6.12
The enclosure at East Linton, showing principal subsurface anomalies and the location of the 2004 excavation

Despite concerns that the igneous bedrock would compromise the geophysical survey, good results were obtained, adding information to that derived from the cropmarks. The three ditches are clearly represented, and the entrance gaps in the west are much better defined than by the cropmarks, showing the middle entrance to be off-centre. The gap in the inner ditch to the south is also well-defined. To this feature, the geophysics adds two clear causeways in the central and outer ditches, both of which are staggered so that the entrance – if that is indeed what is represented here – takes a diagonal line through the ramparts, not that much different from the line of the terrace edge.

The palisade trench is also well-defined and can be seen to extend across the northern of the two western entrance causeways and to dog-leg outwards through the southern one, but gives the impression of having a discontinuous foundation. The geophysical survey also adds detail in the eastern half of the interior. The narrow south-east to north-west ditch visible in the

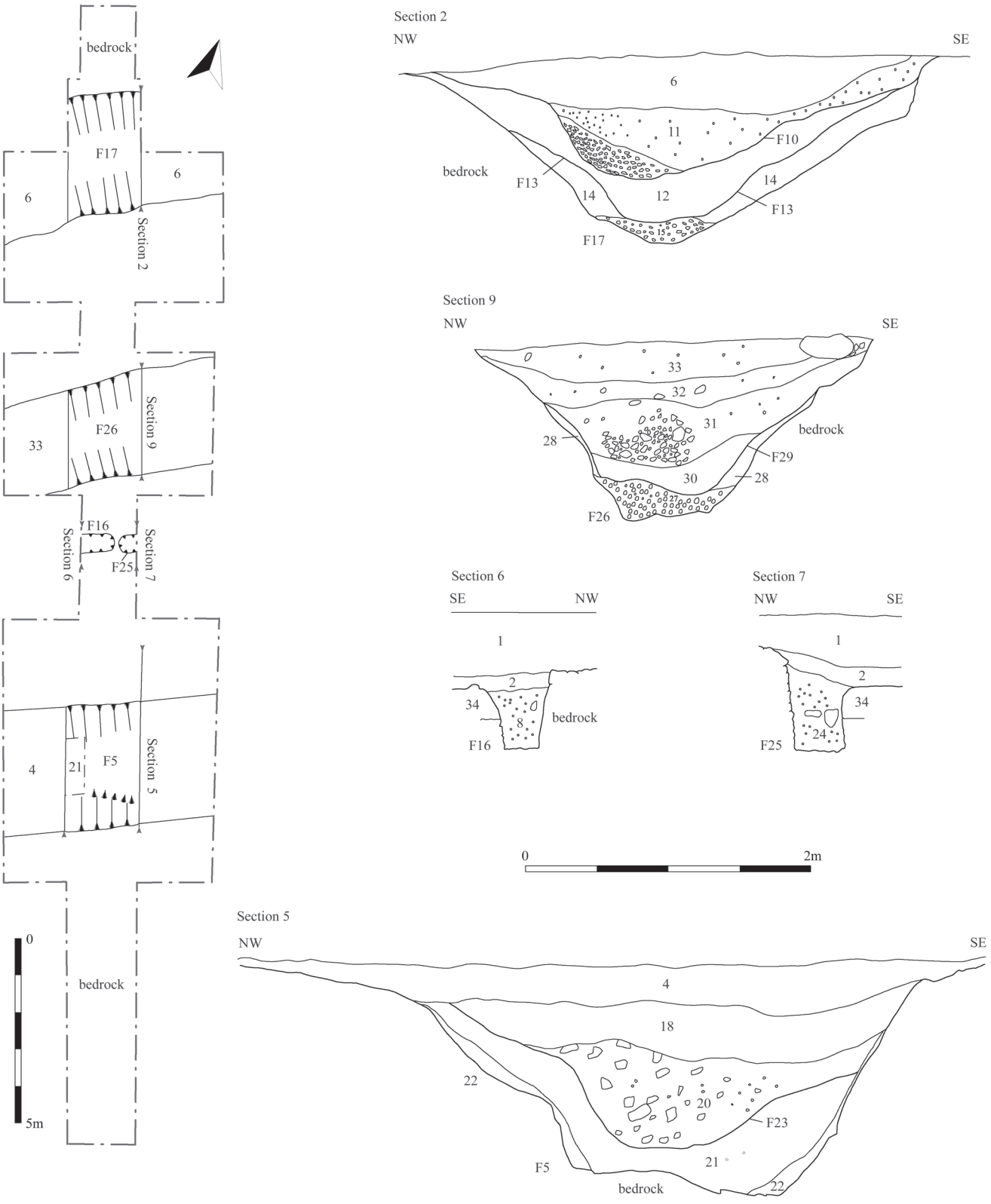

Figure 6.13
East Linton: plan and sections of the enclosure ditches and palisade

cropmarks can be seen to turn sharply to run towards the north-east and there is a hint in the geophysics that this continues to the east, outside the multivallate circuit, so its interpretation as a sub-enclosure is at best provisional. The interpretation of various small anomalies in the interior is more difficult, but they may include roundhouses. On analogy with sites like Broxmouth and Hownam, a number of curving anomalies on the line of the most northern ditch might mark the site of buildings established there after the circuit ceased to be maintained. Intense values in the north-east part of the site are probably geological in origin, while the south-south-east to north-north-west texture evident on the plot is a product of modern ploughing.

Taken together the survey data indicate that this site is likely to have several phases of remodeling and that the earthworks may have been re-used.

The enclosure boundaries

East Linton was chosen for examination as one of the larger and more complex enclosures in the Study Area, as well as one that if anything was sub-rectangular rather than curvilinear in form, with some indication of potentially later activity on the line of the ditches. Along with sampling the three ditches, the other main objective of the evaluation was to confirm the existence of the palisade. A single trench 25m long was excavated in October 2004 across the ditches on the northern side of the site close to the corner, as this was where there were indications of additional anomalies (Figure 6.12), although in the event no traces were found. Bedrock lay *c.* 0.35m below ground level, and was slightly raised towards the centre of the trench; pockets of eroded bedrock were present in places. Beneath the stony topsoil (0.3m deep), a discontinuous layer of clay silt [2] overlay the features, indicating that the modern plough has not always cut deep enough to threaten the underlying deposits.

A data structure report was submitted to Historic Scotland in March 2005 (ASUD 2005b). The site code is TEL04.

The inner ditch

The inner ditch (F5) cut through the bedrock to a depth of 1.6m (Figure 6.13). It had a maximum width of 3.5m, with sloping sides – the inner (southern) side steeper than the outer – leading to a broad roughly flat base around 1m across. A thin deposit of silt and loose stone [22] lined both edges, probably a combination of degraded or eroded bedrock and natural silting when the ditch was open. Above this, the ditch infilled with a sticky sandy silt [21] up to 0.5m deep. A wheat grain from [21] yielded a radiocarbon date of 1370–1050 cal BC (SUERC-10627).

A possible recut was observed cutting through this deposit, creating a boundary with a more U-shaped profile, 1.25m deep (F23). The recut contained a thick fill of sandy silt with frequent stones [20], perhaps the remains of a bank constructed when the ditch was first cut, which had eroded or been backfilled into the ditch. The upper part was filled with a thick deposit of silt with a few stones [18, 0.6m deep] and finally with 0.3–0.4m of sandy silt [4].

The central ditch

The central ditch (F26) was cut through the bedrock to a depth of 1.3m and, as the survey evidence had suggested, proved to be the least substantial overall. It was more V-shaped than the inner ditch, with a much narrower base containing a primary fill of sandy silt with many small stones [27]. A loose stone and silt lens [28] overlay both sides of the ditch, probably material washed into the open ditch. There were signs that the ditch had been re-cut through this deposit, creating a broadly similar but slightly shallower profile (F29). Its primary fill [30] was a sandy silt, 0.2m in depth, from which birch charcoal produced a date of 390–200 cal BC (SUERC-10629). The ditch then infilled with a thick layer of brown sandy silt [31, 0.5m deep] with a marked concentration of medium and larger stones in the outer half of the ditch, tailing off up the slope to the south, suggesting that this is material tumbled from an internal bank. Above the stones, more sandy silt formed [32, 0.3m in depth]. The upper fill [33] was slightly grittier sandy silt. A large boulder on the inner lip may be the remains of a collapsed revetment for the bank.

The outer ditch

The outer ditch (F17) was of similar width to the inner ditch, but comparable to the middle ditch in depth. In profile, it was a broad V-shape, cut through the bedrock to a depth of 1.2m. The primary fill [15] consisted of sticky sandy clay with many angular stones. Firm gritty silt accumulated down both sides [14], after which the ditch seems to have been redefined (F13). This cut had largely infilled with a thick deposit of soft clay silt [12], before again being re-defined – creating a smaller cut less than 1m deep, with a steep side to north, and a shallower

southern edge (F10). Its base contained much angular stone in sticky clay silt [9], lying mainly against the inner slope of the ditch, and thus likely to be bank material. Above this was a thick layer of gritty silt [11, 0.4m in depth], containing gravel lenses – implying deposition over a period of time. The uppermost fill was thick sandy silt [6], up to 0.6m deep and probably of agricultural origin.

Palisade slot

Between the inner and central ditches, *c.* 1.5m inside the latter, were two separate segments of palisade trench (Figure 6.14), confirming that the foundation was not continuous, although the gap was only 0.1m. The 0.4m wide slots were cut through a layer of decayed stone into the solid bedrock. They had vertical sides and a flat base, but the inner side was shallower than the outer side, presumably having been truncated perhaps at demolition or, more likely, through subsequent activity. In addition, the western slot (F16) was shallower (0.5m) than the eastern one (F25, 0.7m). Both were filled with red-brown gritty clay silt [8; 24] containing frequent large stones, but no settings were found. Birch charcoal from [24] yielded a radiocarbon date of 1260–1000 cal BC (SUERC-10628). Covering the palisade was the thin soil layer [2] already mentioned above.

The palisade is likely to have been freestanding. It is too far from the outer ditch and seems too close to the central one to have retained a bank (as at Standingstone, Chapter 4), whilst diverging from both circuits at the southern of the two entrances on the western side of the site. Equally it blocks the northern entrance which goes through all three ditches, which implies that it is not directly contemporary with the inner ditch either – although the radiocarbon dates suggest that they are not far removed in time.

Discussion

Like other multivallate sites in and beyond the region, East Linton clearly had a complex history of enclosure and boundary definition. All the ditches were re-cut at least once and, in the case of the outermost ditch, twice. It is entirely plausible that more than one circuit was in use contemporaneously. In the absence of finds and given the small number of radiocarbon dates, it is not possible to reconstruct the sequence, but some useful pointers were obtained. Both the base of the inner ditch and the palisade yielded charcoal of Late Bronze Age date, indicating that the site was enclosed at this period, although the two boundaries are unlikely to have functioned at exactly the same time. Perhaps the most likely scenario is that the palisade came first, with an entrance at the south, where the palisade kinks near the terrace edge. It was then replaced by the inner ditch and the second, more northerly entrance was created.

The central ditch is also probably later than the palisade, as the latter would have lain beneath the accompanying internal bank, but how much later is another matter. The central ditch seemingly respects the line of the palisade where it swings out at the southern entrance, which implies that they might not be far removed in time, but the recut is of Later Iron Age date, so it may just be the entrance causeway that the ditch respected. The outer ditch seems to curve around the end of the middle ditch at the southern entrance, which may imply that it was a later addition, but in its case no dating evidence was recovered. The outer circuit is the only one with evidence of a second recut, which might indicate that it was refurbished after the others ceased to be maintained.

Figure 6.14
East Linton: the late Bronze Age palisade

CONCLUSIONS

Among the points of interest to emerge from the evaluations was the evidence of Late Bronze Age enclosure at East Linton and Earlier Iron Age enclosure at Foster Law. Owing to the very limited scale of the work, we cannot be certain that the relevant features are of the same date as the burnt material recovered in them, but given the consistency of the relevant radiocarbon dates from each site and the parallel evidence from Whittingehame, Traprain and especially Standingstone, the clear implication is that enclosure was a far more widespread phenomenon in the region at the end of the second millennium BC and the start of the first millennium than we have hitherto appreciated.

All three evaluations yielded evidence of enclosure in the Later Iron Age. At East Linton and Foster Law the evidence took the form of recutting of earlier circuits, whereas the single date from the waterlogged basal fill of the rectilinear enclosure at East Bearford would be compatible with the view that, like Knowes, this was a new foundation in the late first millennium BC. The other interesting feature of the evaluations is the presence of artefacts in the top of the ditches at Foster Law and East Bearford suggesting that both these sites can be added to the growing list of settlements in the region where occupation continued for some time after the original enclosure ceased to be maintained.