CHAPTER 6: EXCAVATIONS AT HORNISH POINT

H F James & R P J McCullagh

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Hornish Point lies on the north-west of South Uist at NF 758 472 (Figure 37). The site lies on a low rocky headland at the north-east end of North Bay, which has Ardivacher Point at its south-west end. To the east of Hornish Point is Bagh nam Faoilean, the shallow stretch of water which divides South Uist from Benbecula. A sand bar (Gualan) has accumulated across this opening, leaving a narrow water channel at its north end. Behind Hornish Point the machair landscape is gently undulating below the 8 m contour. There are two lochs within 300 m of the site, Loch an Duin Bhig to the south-east and Loch an Duin Mhoir to the south. The extensive Loch Bee lies *circa* 1 km to the south-west.

The site of the excavation is a sand hill on the west side of Hornish Point, grid reference NF 758 470, called Cnoc Mor which means 'big hillock'. Its undulating surface extends up to 3 m above the surrounding machair surface. It extends north-south for 70 m and 65 m back from the coast. Its west side had been eroded to a vertical face 1 m high with gentler slopes of collapsed sand and grass beneath. At the foot of the slope lies the narrow storm beach of large pebbles and stones and beyond this is the sandy beach.

The machair sand on Hornish Point is generally grass covered except for the reeds along the borders of the lochs.

6.1.1 Archaeological features

The midden in the exposed west face of Cnoc Mor extended for 50 m north/south, was 0.5 m deep and was covered by up to 2 m of clean sand. In two areas the sand covering has been removed for a distance of 3 and 5 m, leaving the midden exposed on the surface. On the top of the hill a circular depression with a radius of *circa* 7 m was noted.

6.1.2 Site history

In the early nineteenth century Hornish Point was part of the Balgarva estate belonging to MacDonald Clanranald. On the map of the estates, dated 1805, the point is called Ru Cuinafenagh. The small lochs behind the site appear to be more extensive than at present. The first edition OS map of 1882 shows a structure and enclosing wall to the north-east of the Cnoc Mor summit and also a trackway running east-west from Balgarva to the coast. The Admiralty chart of 1909 records Ru Hornish and shows an extensive tapering area of shallow water extending westwards from the point.

In 1980 an Iron Age midden was recorded at NF7583 4720 about 170 m north of the summit of Cnoc Mor. This included a substantial deposit of midden exposed in the sand dunes at the edge of the beach. Finds included Iron Age sherds, a bone fish gorge, animal bone (mainly teeth), shells and a small decorated sherd.

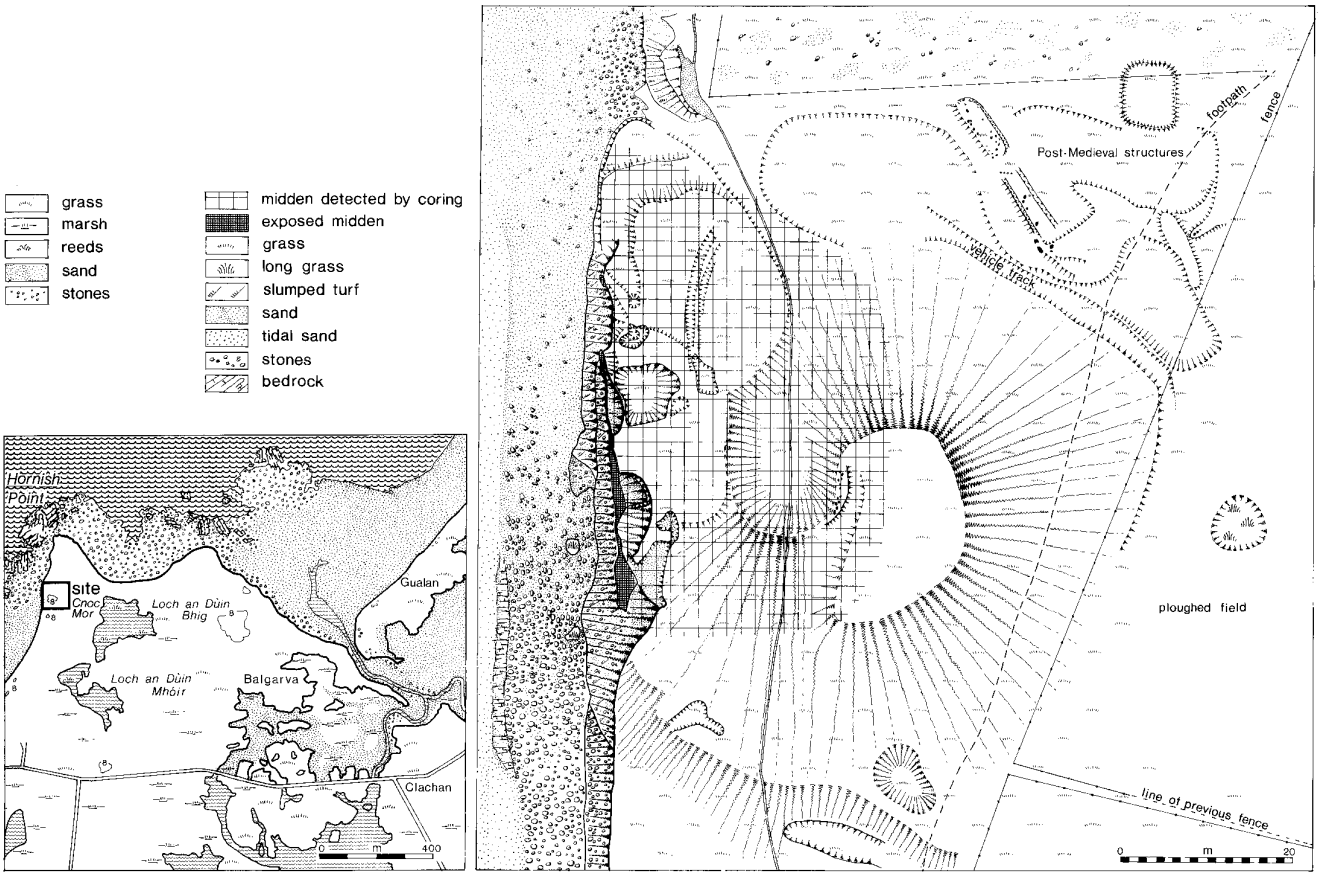


Figure 37. Hornish Pt: site location and survey

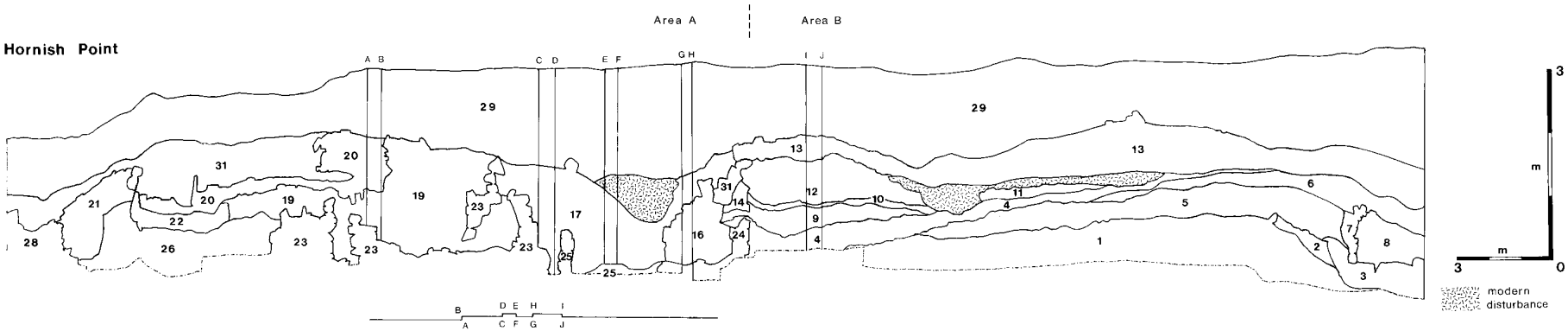


Figure 38. Hornish Pt: main section showing Blocks

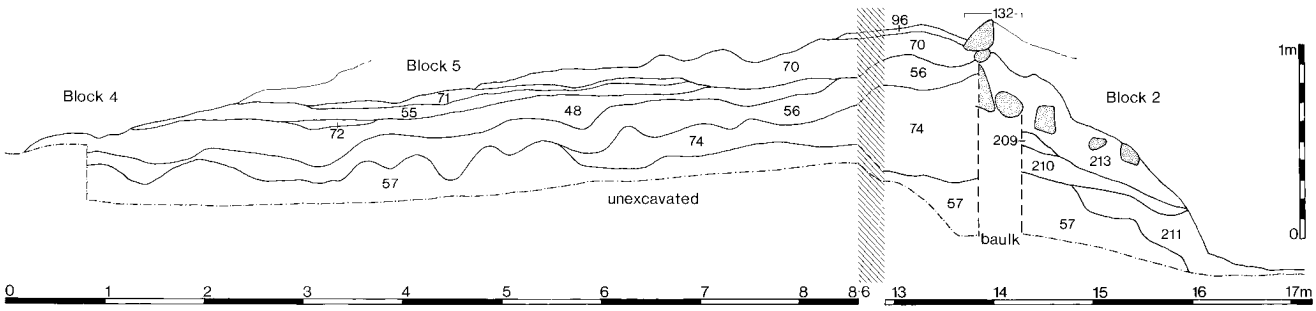


Figure 39. Block 1

6.1.3 Local sites

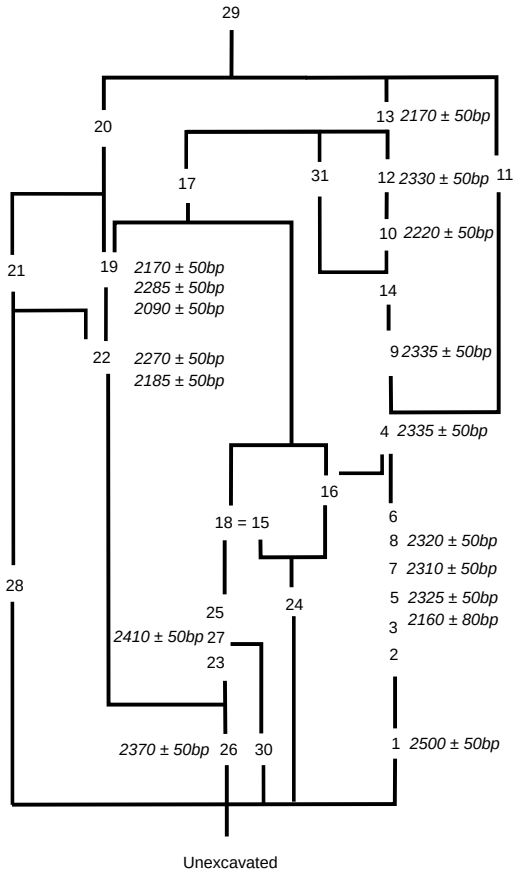
Only 350 m to the south of Hornish, there is the site of a dun in Loch an Duin Mhor. Further east at Eocher lies a probable broch, Dun Buidhe (RCAHMS 1928, 373), and a cairn. Along the west coast of South Uist, lying in the machair, there are several wheelhouses or aisled house sites, some of which were excavated in the 1950's by the then Ministry of Works in advance of the construction of the Ministry of Defence guided missile range.

There is a possible Viking settlement at the north end of Hornish Point, consisting of roughly rectangular wall foundations appearing through the grass cover (Godden & Godden 1980).

6.1.4 Summary of Blocks (see Figure 38)

Block No	Final interpretation
1	Cultivated deposit
2	Cultivated deposit
3	Windblown sand
4	Cultivated deposit
5	Midden-site deposit
6	Cultivated soil and midden deposits
7	Revetment wall
8	Midden-site deposit
9	Midden-site deposit
10	Cultivated deposit
11	Midden-site deposit
12	Midden-site deposit
13	Midden-site deposit
14	Masonry
15	Structure 5 – partially preserved structure
16	Structural debris
17	Rubble and midden-site deposits
18	Structure 5 – wall arc with radial piers and post pits
19	Dumped deposits
20	Structure 7 – post-medieval black house
21	Dumped deposits
22	Structure 6 – fragment
23	Structure 1 – wheelhouse
24	Structure 3 – fragment
25	Structure 4 – fragment
26	Cultivated deposit
27	Structure 2 – masonry and floor deposits
28–31	Uninterpretable

The site was divided into two elements; the southern half of the excavated section (Area A) consisted of deep stratified layers while the northern half (Area B) was characterised by masonry structures.



6.2 BLOCK 1 – CULTIVATED DEPOSIT

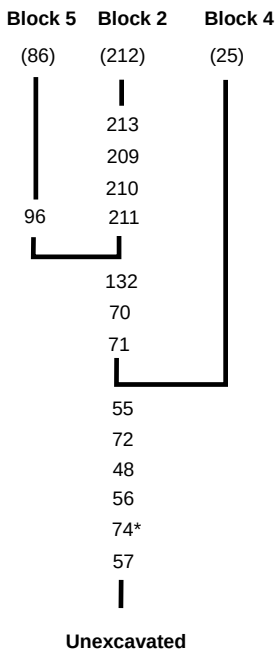
See tables p.302, 302

* ^{14}C date 2500 ± 50 bp (GU-2020) from layer [74] (Periwinkle).

Block 1 lay near the base of Area A beneath Blocks 2, 4 and 5 (Figure 38). The base of the Block was not reached so the maximum depth recorded at its southern limit was 1 m. The depth gradually decreased northwards to 0.20 m. It was exposed over a length of 14 m, but its northern limit was not

Plate 21. A general view of excavation in progress at Hornish Point shows how the site divided into complex masonry remains at the north end and deep, finely stratified cultivated deposit s, Blocks 2–13, at the south end

revealed. It consisted of thirteen layers and a revetment of stones (Figure 39). Only four of these layers, [57], [56], [70] and [74], were extensive. The other contexts in the Block consisted of thin layers and lenses. In general the contexts became shallower and more undulating towards the north They ranged in colour from light grey to dark brown and in texture from sand to sandy loam. [74] contained a discrete lens of seashells. Towards the southern end of Block 1 several of the layers were revetted by a stone wall, [132], which consisted of a course of upright slabs overlain by sub-angular stones (see fig. 00). It is possible that originally only [74] was cut through and revetted by upright slabs. The overlying stones may have been added as the other contexts of Block 1, ie [56] and [70], accumulated. In plan the revetment was seen to curve southwards. Abutting this revetment to the south were further layers which sloped gently to the south for a maximum of 2 m at which point they were truncated by another revetment (Block 3).



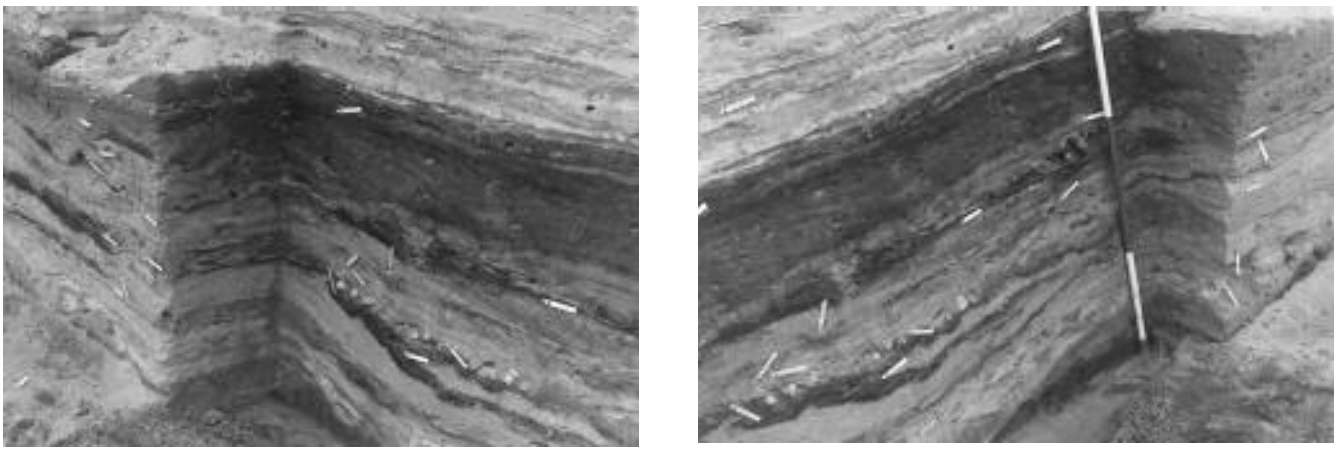


Plate 22. Hornish Point. Section through the finely stratified deposits of Blocks 2 – 13

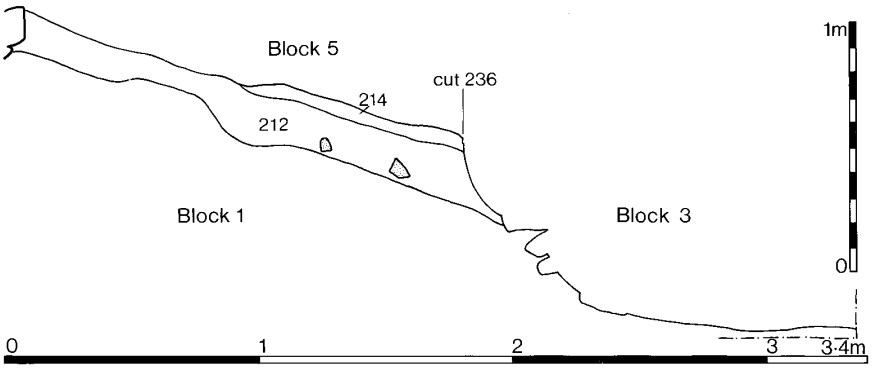


Figure 40. Block 2

Field interpretation

This Block was interpreted as a deepened cultivated deposit because of its extent, the presence of wavy boundaries and the dark colour of some of the constituent layers. The wall, especially its upper courses, may have been heightened intermittently as the Block deepened. The Block mean IHI was calculated at 17,500, representing a range of from 350 to 119,000. The upper limit is due to the very small volume of [71]. The lower values are caused by low retrieval rates from relatively large contexts (eg [70]). The IHI represents a relatively wide range of materials present in small quantities. Between < 5% and 30% of the stone in a total of four contexts was burnt. Of the forty-five potsherds in the Block, 31 were examined and these range in size-class from 1 to 3, all but four of them being smaller than the site mean. The pH values recorded for this Block range from 7.0 to 7.5 with a modal value of 7.4. Phosphate values ranged from 3 to 5, 3 being the most common value. The soil colours are recorded as ranging from light grey to dark brown and the soil textures from sands to sandy loams. Layer boundaries were predominantly clear, with irregularities of form ranging from wavy to broken.

Archaeological interpretation

The extensive layers of this Block certainly seem to have been cultivated but the smaller, thin strata could not have survived ploughing. The heterogeneity of the anthropogenic component of these strata also militates against their interpretation as a cultivated deposit. On balance it seems that these layers were cultivated deposits with some input of midden-site material. Cultivation was probably intermittent.

Specialist contribution

Bones of sheep, cattle, pig and fish bones of hake, cod and pollock were identified.

Conclusions

This Block formed during a period of shell-sand accretion with varying quantities of anthropogenic material added intermittently. The deposits were cultivated from time to time.

6.3 BLOCKS 2 TO 12

See table p.303

This group of blocks consists of the deposits at the southern end of the site above Block 1 and beneath Block 13 (Figure 38; Plates 21 & 22). They are grouped together because, despite their disparate sedimentary mechanisms, they were continuously cultivated over a relatively short period of time.

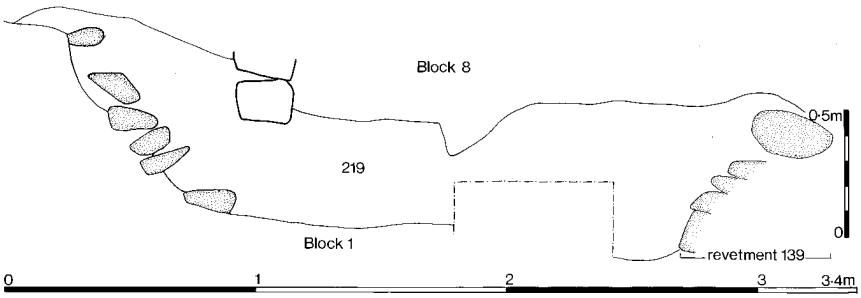


Figure 41. Block 3

The stratigraphy and field interpretation of the different blocks in this group are discussed separately below while the finds, archaeological interpretation and conclusions are presented below for the group as a whole.

6.4 BLOCK 2 – CULTIVATED DEPOSITS

See table p.305

Block 2 lay at the southern end of Area A, near to the base of the section face. It was 2.5 m in length and up to 0.30 m deep and consisted of two layers the surfaces of which sloped to the south (Figure 40). These layers were cut through on the southern side, and the exposed face revetted by the stones of a wall of Block 3. The layers ranged in colour from dark greyish brown to dark brown and in texture from silty, loamy sand to sandy loam.

Field interpretation

This Block was interpreted as a cultivated deposit because of the texture and colour of its layers. The southerly slope of the contexts in this Block suggests that it did not extend much further in that direction. However their truncation and the insertion of the stone wall makes it impossible to estimate their original extent.

Specialist contribution

Bones of sheep, cattle and pig. Hake bones and a crab chela were also identified.

Block 3

(236)

214

212

(213)

Block 1

6.5 BLOCK 3 – WINDBLOWN SAND

See table p.305

Block 3 lay at the southern end of Area A (Figure 38) and consisted of a single infilling layer, lying between a revetment, [134], on the north and a second revetment, [139], on the south (Figure 41). Its maximum length was 3.2 m and its depth was 0.80 m. It overlay the two lowest layers of Block 1 and was under Blocks 5, 7 and 8.The infilling layer consisted of an homogeneous light grey sand, [219]. This material overlay the uppermost stones of the north revetment. The deposits beyond the south revetment, [139], were not investigated.

Block 5

(94)

219

139

134

236

(211)

Block 1

Field interpretation

Block 3 is interpreted as the result of infilling by windblown sand of a revetted space cut into the deposits of Block 2.

Specialist contribution

Sheep, cattle and pig bones were recovered.

6.6 BLOCK 4 – CULTIVATED DEPOSIT

See table p.305

* ^{14}C date 2335 ± bp (GU-2017) from layer [24] (Periwinkle).

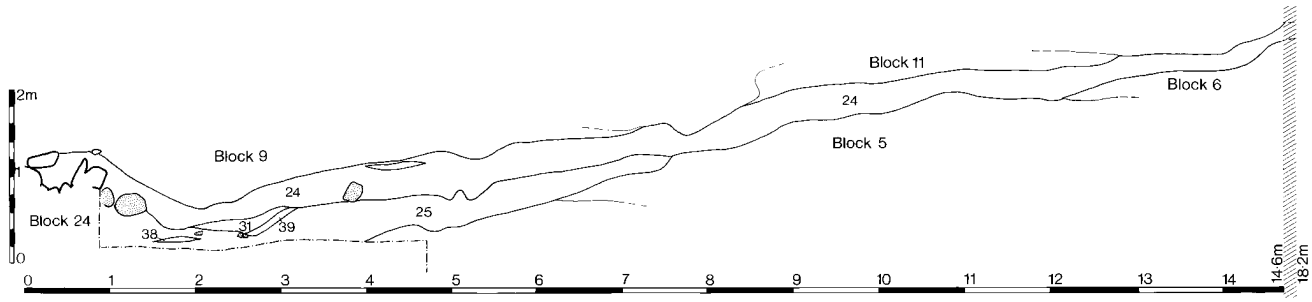
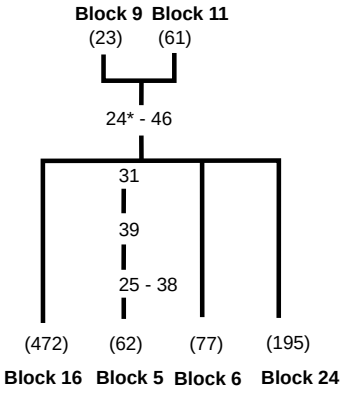


Figure 42. Block 4

Block 4 extended for a distance of 19.3 m in Area A (Figure 38). It lay over Blocks 1, 5, 6, and 24 and lay beneath Blocks 9 and 11. At its southern end the Block consisted of a shallow deposit which sloped downward to the north and deepened to a maximum of 0.5 m (Figure 42). It consisted of two extensive layers, [24] and [25], and four lenses, [31], [38], [39] and [46]. The deposits range in colour from a yellowish brown to pale brown and in texture from loamy sand to sand. At the northern end of the Block, layer [25] abutted a drystone wall ([195], Block 24) which was then sealed by layer [24].



Field interpretation

This Block was interpreted as a cultivated deposit because of its extent, homogeneous texture and colour. The dark lenses were interpreted as remnants of some form of organic input.

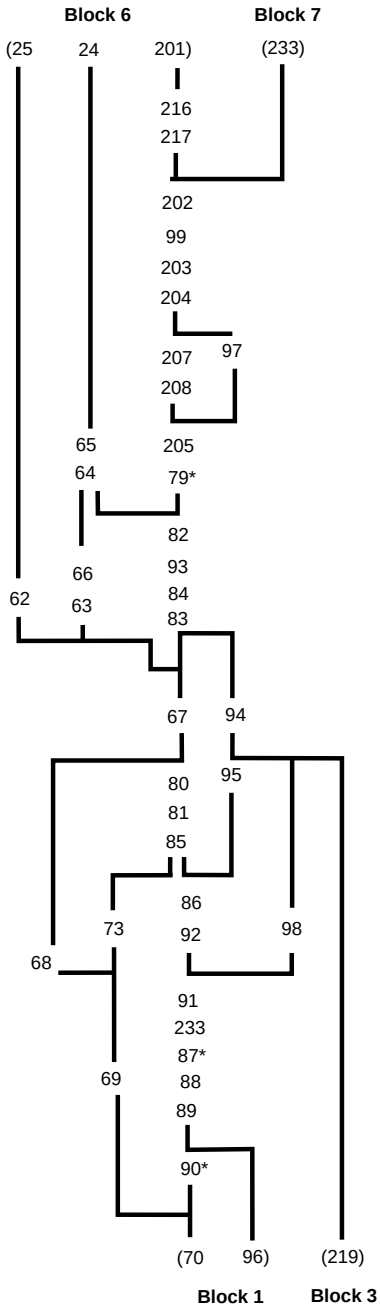
Specialist contribution

Sheep, cattle and pig bones were recovered.

6.7 BLOCK 5 – MIDDEN-SITE DEPOSIT

See table p.306

* ^{14}C date 2325 ± 50 bp (GU-2021) from layer [87] (Limpet).
* ^{14}C date 2160 ± 80 bp (GU-2550) from Contexts [79], [87], [90], [203], [217], [204], [69], [64], [207], [63], [68], [208] & [65] (carbonised seed).



Block 5 lay in Area A above Blocks 1, 2 and 3 (Figure 38). It lay beneath Blocks 4, 6 and 7. It was 14 m long and formed as light dome with a maximum depth of 0.6 m in the south, tapering to the north. This Block consisted of thirty-eight contexts which included both extensive layers

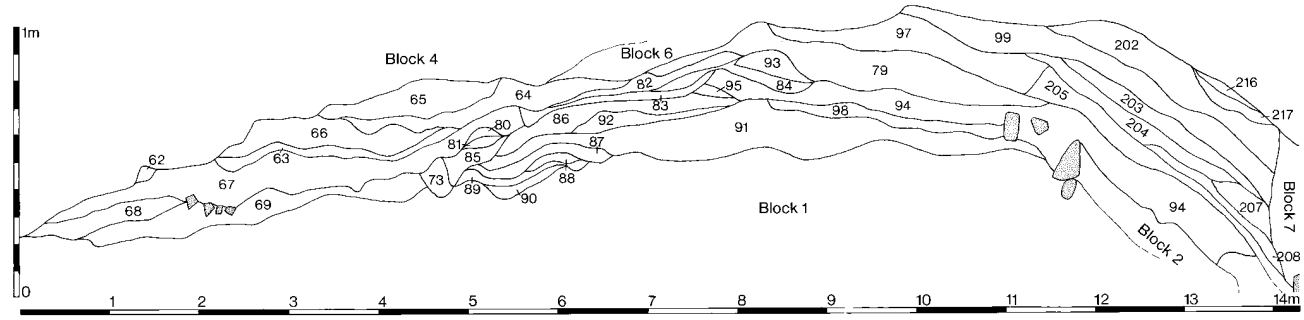


Figure 43. Block 5

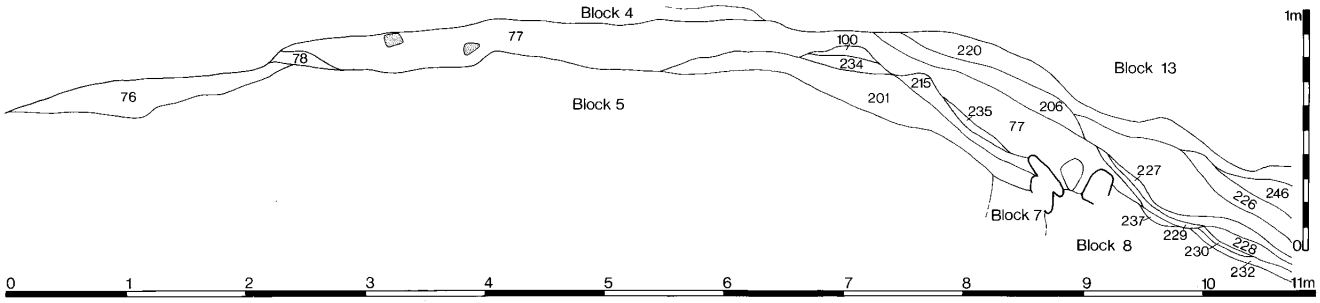


Figure 44. Block 6

and small lenses (Figure 43). Many of the uppermost layers in the Block appear to have been truncated. The contexts ranged in colour from white to very dark greyish brown and in texture from sand to silty sandy loams. Many of the dark coloured lenses occurred in discrete clusters. The Block is truncated at its southern end by the insertion of a revetment (Block 7).

Field interpretation

This Block was interpreted as midden-site deposits because of the variability of its constituent contexts. The nature of the upper surface of the Block suggests that it had been truncated.

Specialist contribution

Bones of sheep, cattle, pig, red deer and raven were identified. Saithe and unidentifiable fish bones were also recovered from this Block.

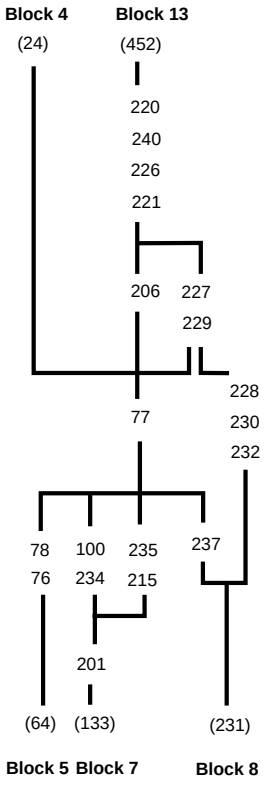
6.8 BLOCK 6 – CULTIVATED SOILS AND MIDDEN DEPOSITS

See table p.307

Block 6 lay in the southern part of Area A (Figure 38). It extended from the south end of the excavated section for a distance of 10.7 m with a maximum depth of 0.5 m. It lay over Blocks 5, 7 and 8 and beneath Blocks 4 and 13. It was slightly domed. It consisted of nineteen contexts including both extensive layers and small lenses (Figure 44). These contexts ranged in colour from light grey to very dark brown, and in texture from sand to silty sandy loam. [77] ran almost the entire length of the Block and contained a discrete lens of razor shells. The lowest two layers, [201] and [215] abutted the upper courses of a revetment (Block 7).

Field interpretation

This Block appeared to have been formed by two separate but successive processes. The extensive layers were inter-



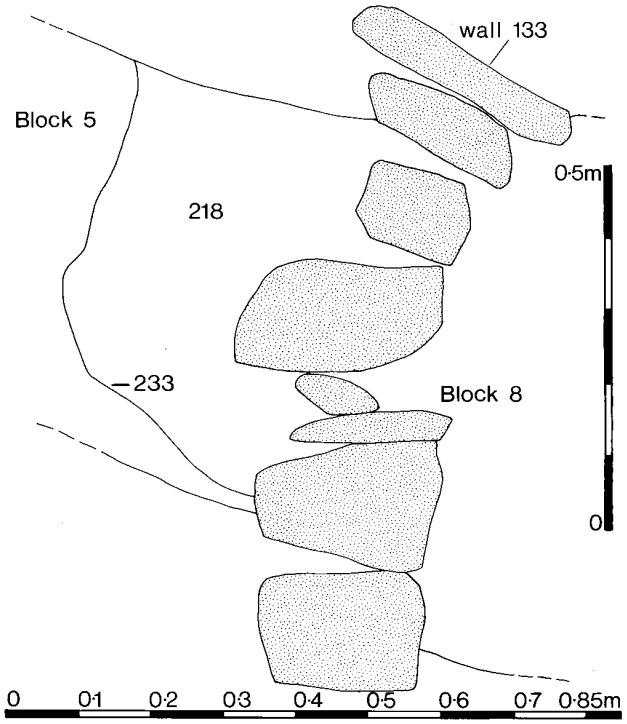


Figure 45. Block 7

preted in the field as cultivated deposits because of the extent of the dark layers and their loamy content. The presence of the lenses, however, indicated the presence of dumped midden deposits at the southern edge of the cultivated area.

Specialist contribution

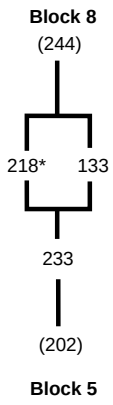
Bones of sheep, cattle, pig, cod, pollock, ling were recovered together with other unidentifiable fish and bird bones.

6.9 BLOCK 7 – REVETMENT WALL

See table p.307

* ^{14}C date 2310 ± 50 bp (GU-2022) from layer [218] (Limpet).

Block 7 lay at the southern end of Area A (Figure 38). It consisted of a revetment wall, [133], of tabular stones of varied sizes and backfill, [218], within the cut [233] (Figure 45). The wall was eight courses high and measured up to 0.98 m.



Three stones seen in section within Block 6 and 8 appear to have collapsed forward from the wall line. The backfill consisted of grey deposits with darker lenses.

Field interpretation

Block 7 was a revetment wall constructed to face Block 5 and to restrict deposition in the area subsequently occupied by Block 8. The presence of the darker, organic lenses within [218] suggests that the wall may have been built of stone and turves.

Specialist contribution

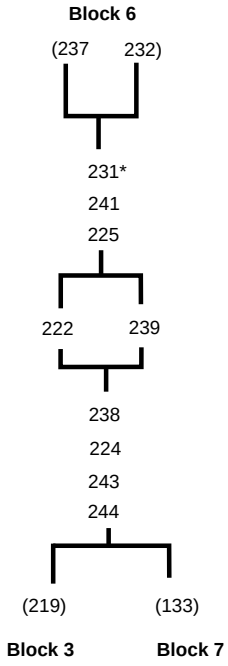
Cattle and pig bones were identified from this Block.

6.10 BLOCK 8 – MIDDEN-SITE DEPOSITS

See table p.308

* ^{14}C date 2320 ± 50 bp (GU-2023) from [231] (Periwinkle).

Block 8 lay at the southern edge of Area A (Figure 38). It had accumulated against the revetment wall in Block 7, lay above Block 3 and was sealed by Block 6. It extended to the edge of the excavated area, a distance of only 2 m. Its maximum depth was 0.8 m and its nine layers ranged in colour from white to dark greyish brown and in texture from sand to loamy sand (Figure 46). There were several large sub-angular stones within these layers, the uppermost two of which represent collapse of wall [133] (Block 7). A V-shaped feature cut through the basal layer [244] into the underlying Block. [225] consisted of the fill of a depression, although it was not certain if the feature was man-made.



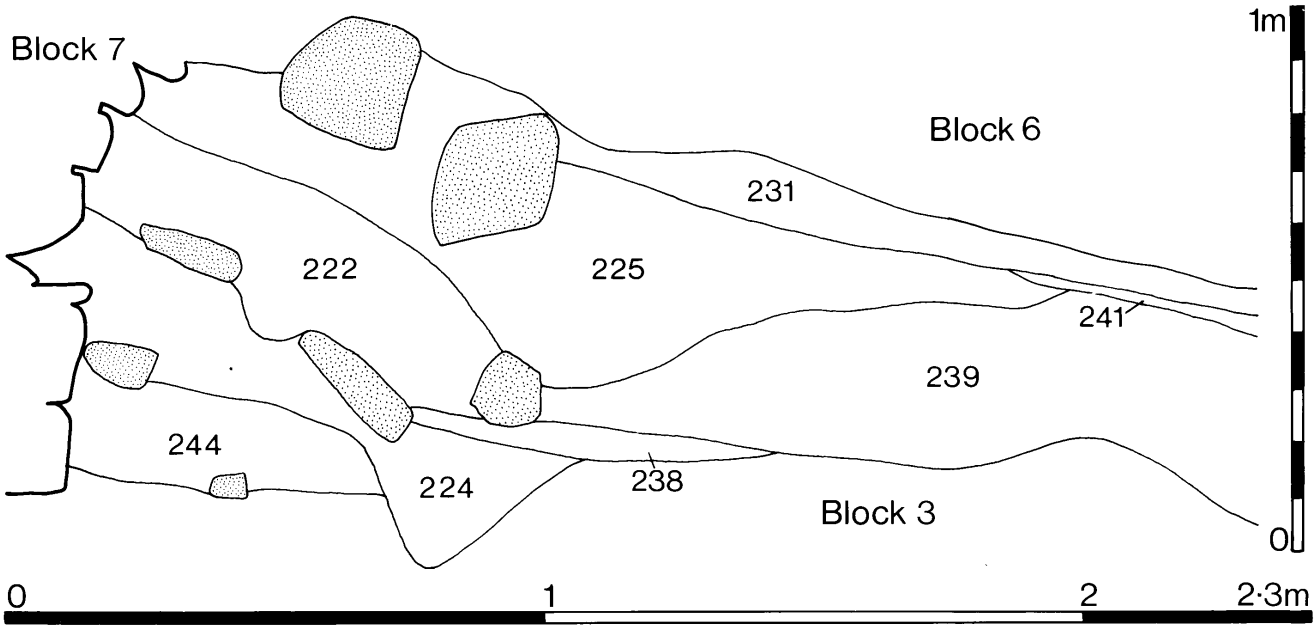
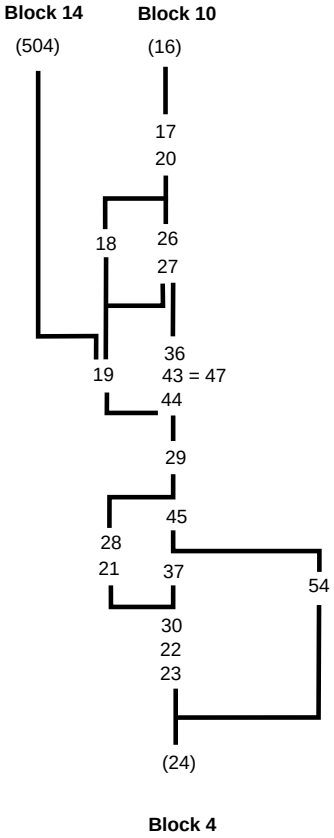


Figure 46. Block 8



Field interpretation

The contexts of Block 8 were interpreted as cultivated deposits because of their dark colour, despite their generally sandy texture. This material had accumulated to the south of the revetment wall of Block 7.

Specialist contribution

Sheep and cattle bones were identified from this Block.

6.11 BLOCK 9 – MIDDEN-SITE DEPOSITS

See table p.308

* ^{14}C date 2345 ± 50 bp (GU-2019) from [37] (Periwinkle).

Block 9 lay in the northern part of Area A, over the sloping surface of Block 4 and below Blocks 10 and 14 (Figure 38). It extended for 14 m and had a maximum depth of 0.45 m. Layer [19] underlay Block 14, while two other layers, [17] and [18], abutted the basal stone of the masonry [505] in Block 14 (Figure 47). At the junction of these layers and the masonry of Block 14, a vertical zone of discoloration, 0.05 m wide, was noted. The nineteen contexts within Block 9 were thin layers and lenses, 0.02 – 0.11 m deep. They varied in colour from very pale brown to brown dark brown and in texture from sand to loamy sand.

Field interpretation

This Block was interpreted as a midden-site deposit because the constituent layers were shallow while the variations in colour and texture were distinct. It seems probable that the masonry of Block 14 was cut into Block 9.

Specialist contribution

Sheep, pig and the bones of a manx shearwater were identified.

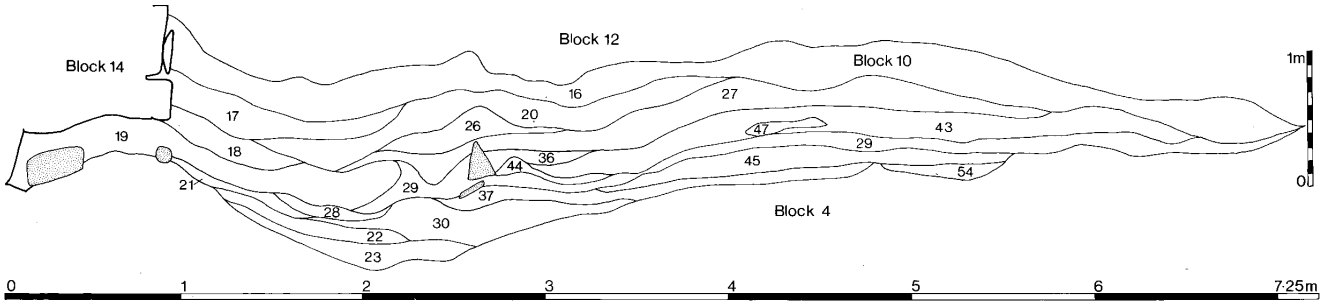


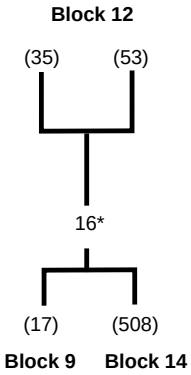
Figure 47. Block 9

6.12 BLOCK 10 – CULTIVATED DEPOSIT

See table p.309

* ^{14}C date 2220 ± 50 bp (GU-2016) from [16] (Periwinkle).

This Block lay in the northern part of Area A (Figure 38). It consisted of a single extensive layer, [16]. It overlay Block 9, abutted Block 14 and underlay Blocks 12 and 29. Its maximum depth was 0.1 m and it extended for 6 m. A vertical zone of discoloration, similar to that noted in Block 9, was observed at the junction of [16] and Block 14. [16] was a uniform, dark yellow-brown, sandy loam.



Field interpretation

This Block was interpreted as a cultivated deposit because of its loamy texture, its extent and homogeneity.

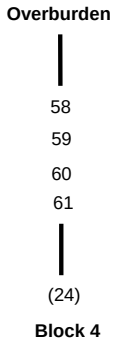
Specialist contribution

Sheep and cattle bones were identified.

6.13 BLOCK 11 – MIDDEN-SITE DEPOSIT

See table p.309

This Block lay in the southern part of Area A, above Block 4 and beneath the site overburden (Figure 38). The Block was 4.1 m long with a maximum thickness of 0.18 m and consisted of four layers (Figure 48). They ranged in colour from dark yellowish brown to dark brown and were loamy sand in texture.



Field interpretation

The contexts in this Block were interpreted as midden-site deposits because of their high organic content and their heterogeneous nature. They resembled the deposits of Block 12 which was separated from the present Block by a modern erosion hollow.

Specialist contribution

Sheep and pig bones were identified.

6.14 BLOCK 12 – MIDDEN-SITE DEPOSIT

See table p.310

* ^{14}C date 2330 ± 50 bp from layer [33] (Periwinkle).

This Block lay in the northern part of Area A (Figure 38). It lay above Block 10, abutted Block 14 and lay beneath Blocks 13 and 29. It extended for 6 m to the south of Block 14 with a maximum depth of 0.8 m. It consisted of thirty-one contexts which were generally extensive but shallow layers and also contained a few lenses (Figure 49). They ranged in colour from white to very dark brown and in texture from sand to sandy loam.

Field interpretation

The extent and general heterogeneous nature of the contexts, coupled with their loamy texture and generally high organic content, suggests that the Block was a midden-site deposit.

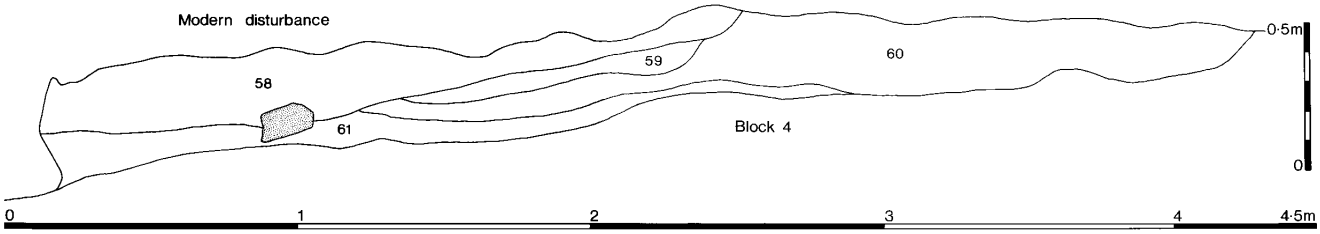


Figure 48. Block 11

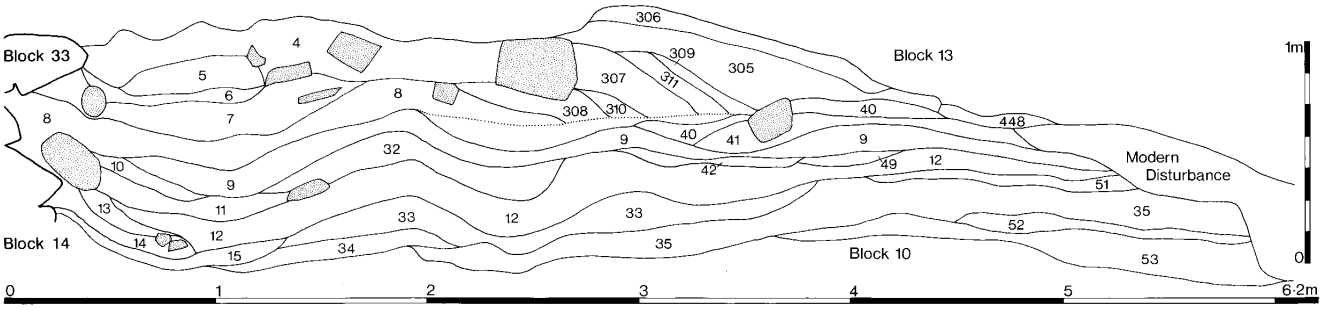
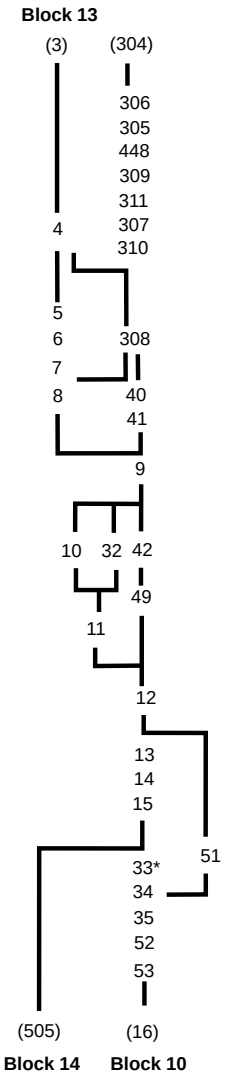


Figure 49. Block 12



Specialist contribution

Sheep, cattle and pig bones were identified. Hake bones and those of the great auk were also recovered, the latter with butchery marks (Chapter 11.4.2).

6.15 BLOCKS 2 TO 12 – POST-EXCAVATION ANALYSES

There are 136 contexts in this group of blocks, the field interpretations of which included wind blown sand (Block 3), cultivated deposits (Blocks 2, 4 & 10), midden-site deposits (Blocks 5, 8, 9, 11 & 12) and a revetment wall (Block 7). Block 6 was interpreted as cultivated and midden-site deposits. The cultivated deposits were identified on the basis of the presence of ard marks, wavy boundaries and evidence of organic input, ie manuring. The midden-site deposits had variable soil characteristics, were less extensive than the cultivated deposits and appeared to be high in anthropic material. The mean IHI for the group was based on seventy contexts. It was calculated as 8,500 with values ranging from 4 ([86]) to 70,000 ([37]). This represents a wide range of material present in variable quantities. Burnt stone was present in forty-five contexts in quantities ranging from < 5 to 80% (the latter being [99] in Block 5). Of the 223 potsherds recovered from this Block, 207 were examined and they range from 1 to 9 in class size, with those in classes 1 to 3 predominating. The pH values ranged from 6.8 to 8.2 with a modal value of 7.4. Phosphate values ranged from 1 to 5, with 3 being the most common. The soil colours ranged from very pale brown to very dark brown and in texture ranged from silty sandy loam to sand. The layer boundaries were predominantly clear and smooth or wavy.

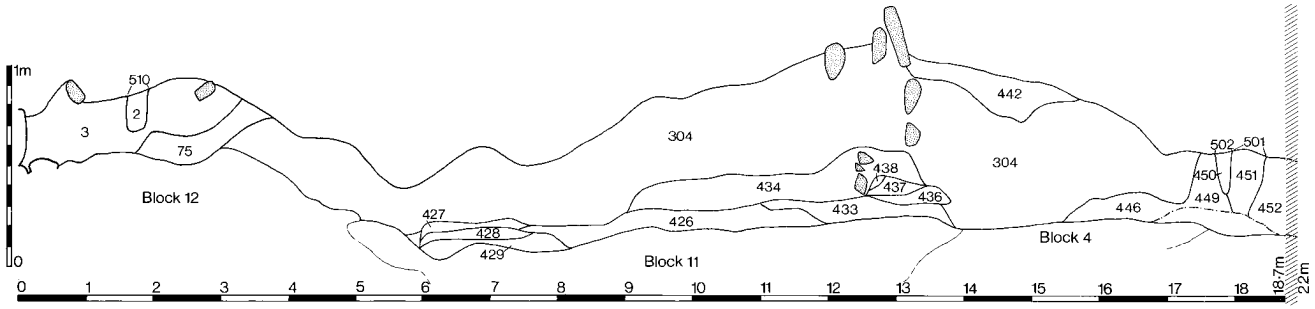


Figure 50. Block 13

Archaeological interpretation

Block 3 was interpreted as a revetted space infilled with wind-blown sand. The soil characteristics support this field interpretation, but the presence of bone, snail and sea shell, macroplant debris and stone suggests a more complex accumulation process. Block 7 was interpreted as a revetment wall and the backfill behind it. The materials contained in the latter are redeposited and most probably derived from the deposits of Block 5. Consequently the radiocarbon date may not date the context. Blocks 2, 4, 10 and part of Block 6 were interpreted as cultivated deposits. The evidence presented above is consistent with the field interpretations. The survival of discrete lenses within Block 4 seems anomalous and suggests that, like Block 2, this Block may have originated as midden-site, or even dumped deposits, which were subsequently and intermittently cultivated. Blocks 5, 8, 9, 11, and 12 were interpreted in the field as midden-site deposits. The extreme heterogeneity of the deposits in Block 5 fully supports the field interpretation. However, it is possible that the variability of the deposits is, to a certain extent, due to the grouping together of deposits which could probably be legitimately sub-divided. Along with Block 6, these deposits may be midden-site deposits, intermittently cultivated. Both the high IHI values and the variability of the soil characteristics in Block 8, support the field interpretation that these are midden-site deposits. The soil textures, however, are mainly sands and this to some extent contradicts this interpretation. On balance, it seems likely that these deposits were formed by an overspill of material from Block 5 with the addition of some windblown sand. interpretation of the Block as 'derived' midden-site deposits would explain the apparent contradictory evidence. The variety, range of colours and loamy textures implying the presence of organic matter clearly indicate that Blocks 9, 11 and 12 are groups of midden-site deposits.

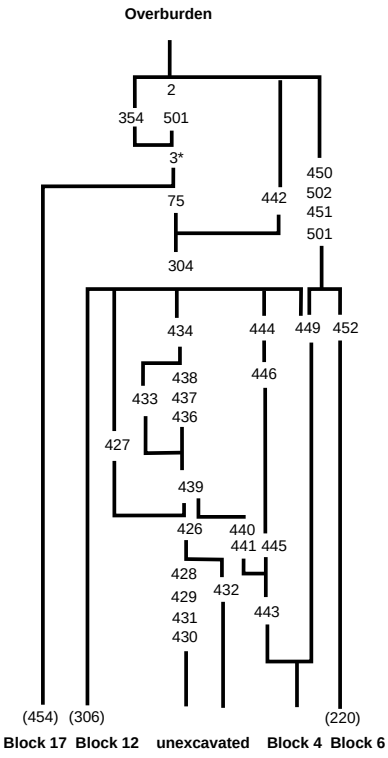
Conclusions

The field interpretation of these blocks identify them variously, as midden-site deposits or cultivated deposits. Subsequently the snail evidence suggests that these deposits vary only in their rates of accumulation and the degree to which they include fresh organic material. While the snail evidence may be somewhat overworked here, it is nonetheless clear that the terminology used in the interpretations is inadequate. This problem is considered at some length in Chapter 14. It must be concluded that these deposits formed in conditions of continuous, if variable, accretion of sand with intermittent inclusion of anthropogenic materials and occasional inclusion of fresh organic material. Where the rate of deposition of anthropogenic and organic material exceeds that of sand accumulation the layers appear to be midden-site deposits; where these materials are attenuated, by an increase in the rate of sand deposition, the layers appear to have been cultivated. The inclusion of discrete clods of organic material also points to the physical re-working of the deposits. In conclusion then it seems that these blocks are midden-site deposits, diluted in places by an increase in (natural) sand accumulation and altered, in places by cultivation. Blocks 5 to 9 have produced five radiocarbon dates which are not significantly different from each other, suggesting that the rates of deposition were, indeed, high.

6.16 BLOCK 13 – MIDDEN-SITE DEPOSIT

See tables p.310

* ^{14}C date 2170 ± 50 bp (GU-2015) from layer [3] (Periwinkle).



Block 13 spanned the entire length of Area A where it lay above the group of Blocks 2–12, 14 and 16, and extended into Area B where it lay over Block 17 (Figure 38). It was sealed only by the site's overburden of windblown sand, Block 29. The lowest layers of the Block do not appear in the drawn section because of the stepped nature of the section at this level. The Block extended for a distance of 24 m and varied in depth from 0.25 m to 1 m. It consisted of three deep and extensive layers, [3], [304] and [452], three small pits or gulleys, [510], [501] and [502], and numerous shallow layers (Figure 50). The layers ranged in colour from white to dark greyish brown and in texture from sand to sandy loam. The three pits or gulley features penetrated the Block from its upper surface, their fills barely distinguishable from the layers into which they intruded. Many of the lower, shallow layers were truncated. Midway along the Block a concentration of sub-angular and rounded stones were observed. These lay in [304] over an apparent line of truncation of six underlying layers, [434], [438], [437], [436], [433] and [426] (see fig. 50).

Field interpretation

Block 13 was interpreted as a deepened, cultivated deposit because of the colour and texture of the extensive layers. The lower layers were more variable in colour and texture and represented eroded midden-site deposits. The coincidence of the alignment of stones, near the centre of the Block and the underlying plane of truncation suggests that a wall may have existed at this point.

The Block mean IHI, based on only two values, was calculated at 4,500, representing a range from 1,500 to 7,500. The lower value represents a moderate amount of material produced from a relatively large volume and the higher value represents a moderate quantity of material from a somewhat smaller volume. The IHI represents a restricted range of materials present in moderate amounts. 20% of the stone from [75] was burnt. Thirty-three of the thirty-five potsherds recovered from this Block were examined and they range in size-class from 1 to 3. The pH values recorded for this Block range from 7.0 to 8.2 with a modal value of 7.5. Phosphate values ranged from 1 to 4. The soil colours are pale to dark greyish brown and the soil textures from sand to sandy loams. Layer boundaries were predominantly abrupt to sharp and irregular to wavy.

Archaeological interpretation

Like many of the Blocks in Area A, Block 13 seems to have consisted of midden-site deposits which were subsequently cultivated.

Specialist contribution

Sheep, cattle, pig and great auk, as well as unidentifiable bird and fish bones were recovered.

Plate 23. Hornish Point. The interface between the masonry to the north and the sediments to the south consists of Block 24 at the bottom of the profile separated from Block 14 at the top by the sediment layers of Block 9

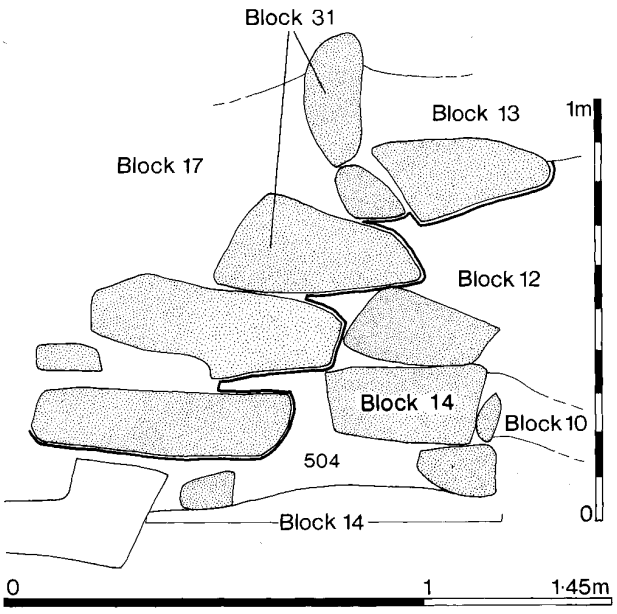


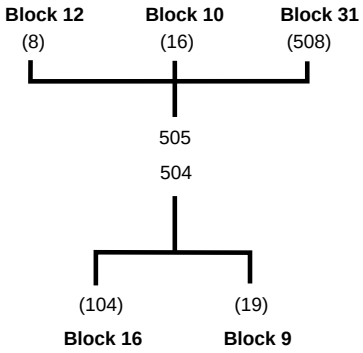
Figure 51. Block 14

Conclusion

While it is probable that the deposits of this Block are midden-site deposits, subsequently cultivated, it is not impossible that this is, in part, a conflation horizon marking an hiatus in the site's occupation and that it represents pedogenic rather than anthropogenic developments.

6.17 BLOCK 14 – MASONRY

This Block lay at the north end of Area B (Figure 38 & Plate 23). It consisted, in section, of four vertically set, angular stones and a single deposit of sand beneath and to the north of them (Figure 51). The Block was cut into, and overlay Block 9 through Block 10 and through the lower layers of Block 12. The upper part of Block 12 seemed to have accumulated after the wall was built (see Block 12). Block 14 was subsequently overlain by the masonry of Block 33. The masonry of Block 14 measured 0.40 m high and a maximum of 0.40 m wide. Observed in plan it was revealed as a drystone wall with a north-west/south-east alignment. The soil within the wall consisted of a light brown sand, [504].



Field and Archaeological interpretation

This Block was interpreted as a wall, faced to the south.

Specialist contribution

Sheep, cattle and pig were identified.

Conclusion

This revetment wall seems to have been built against the truncated face of Blocks 9, 10 and the lower layers of Block 12. A light brown sand deposit had accumulated against its face but this was largely removed by the insertion of Block 33. Its function can only be revealed by further excavation.

6.18 BLOCK 15 – STRUCTURE 5 – PARTIALLY PRESERVED STRUCTURE

See table p.312

This Block does not appear in the section drawing. It was located to the west of the section face at the southern end of Area B and was excavated horizontally. As the features did not extend as far eastwards as the section face the stratigraphical relationships between the two were not always clear. The structure survived as a horse-shoe shaped setting, corbelled to a height of almost 2 m at the rear (Figure 54 & Plate 24). It probably includes earlier masonry, especially at the rear, and its northern arc was re-used in Block 18. Across the front of the horse-shoe a low, rectilinear wall, [154], had been built. Uncoursed rounded stones [103] lay behind Structure 5, in the space between it and the recorded section face. The space enclosed within the cell had infilled with a series of deposits. Beneath the corbelling, these had survived to a height of 1.2 m while in the rest of the enclosed area only the lowest layers survived. The lowest layers, [192], [191] and [190], lay beneath the front wall. Features [192] and [191] were sandy layers and [190] was a layer of peat ash. Dark sand layers [166] and [149] abutted the wall [102] and were covered with a layer of clean sand, [148]. These layers were cut by an oval pit, [485], which measured 1.6 m by 1.2 m and had gently sloping sides. Its full depth could not be excavated, for reasons of safety, but its upper fill was a pale grey sand, [168]. A further dark sand layer covered the pit and fill, [147]. This was penetrated by a stake hole [486] which measured 0.1 m in diameter and was filled with grey brown sand. This, in turn, was sealed by a layer of orange peat ash [155]

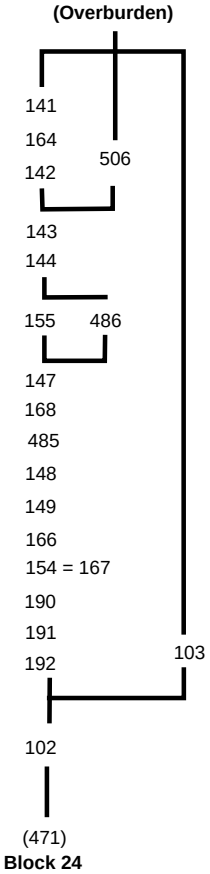


Plate 24. Hornish Point. The horse-shoe shaped setting and the sediments it contained comprises Block 15. The curving wall on the north side (left in the photograph) may have been part of an earlier structure and its upper parts were rebuilt as part of Block 18. The tabular blocks along the front may similarly have been re-used in Block 18 (qv)

and a layer of dark mottled sand [144] which survived over almost the whole of the enclosed area. Above the mottled sand lay a pile of rubble, [506], which seems to constitute the first post-abandonment deposit within the structure. Further layers survived beneath the corbelled rear of the structure. These consisted of sand and sea-shell deposits, [143], [142], [164] and [141].

Field interpretation

This Block was interpreted as a fragment of a circular drystone, partially corbelled structure. The southern arc of walling was probably the outer wall and the front and northern element of wall [102] were internal partitions. Within the surviving structure, shallow organic layers may have represented successive occupation deposits. Subsequently a large pit and a posthole had been cut into these deposits. After its abandonment, some masonry, [508], collapsed and shell-rich sand layers accumulated within the cell to the height of the surviving corbelling.

[155], a layer of peat ash, contained stone, of which some 5% was burnt. Some nine of the ten potsherds recovered were examined and range in size-class from 2 to 6. These were all from the lower, probable occupation layers. The pH values recorded for this Block range from 7.1 to 7.5 with a modal value of 7.3. Phosphate values ranged from 2 to 5, 2 being the commonest value. The soil colours are recorded as dark to pale grey and in texture were sand, they also included two layers of peat ash.

Archaeological interpretation

The field interpretation that this Block, along with Block 18, formed part of a wheelhouse cannot be tested by the post-excavation analyses.

Specialist contribution

Sheep, cattle, pig, unidentifiable fish bones and bones of a mallard were recovered.

Conclusion

This Block forms part of a wheelhouse with associated deposits. The evidence of the snail shells suggests that the lower deposits (up to and including [155]) were associated with settlement in the wheelhouse; the central deposits ([144] to [142] inclusive) indicate a period of use of the abandoned

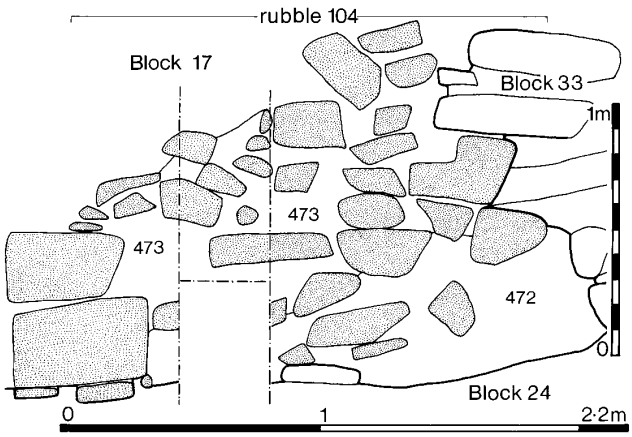


Figure 52. Block 16

structures as dumps; the upper deposits are largely windblown sand and possibly post-date the abandonment of the site.

6.19 BLOCK 16 – STRUCTURAL DEBRIS

Block 16 lay at the southern end of Area A (Figure 38). It overlay Block 24 and was beneath Blocks 4, 31 and 17. It extended for 2 m in length, and was 1.3 m high and consisted of numerous large angular stones and slabs, [104], within a matrix of dark brown sandy loam, [473], and a stub of walling, [152] (Figure 52). It overlay a deposit of brown sandy loam, [472]. The rubble of Block 16, revealed immediately to the east of Block 15, appeared to be a continuation of the stones observed behind the corbelled end of Block 15.

Field and archaeological interpretation

It is probable that it represents structural debris probably from a house lying behind the excavated profile.

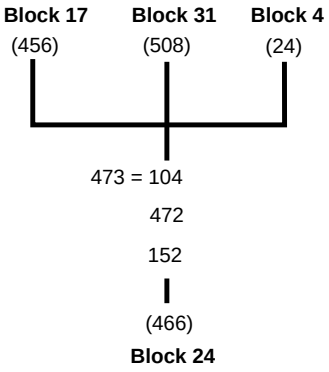
Specialist contribution

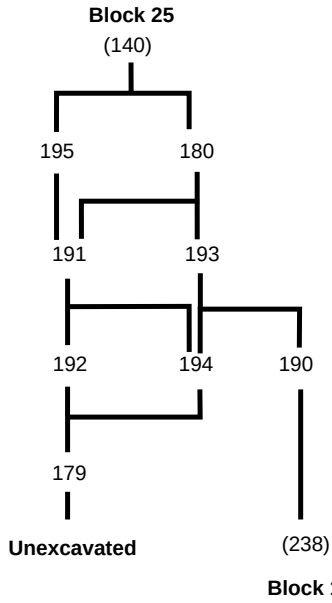
Sheep, cattle and pig bones were recovered.

6.20 BLOCK 17 – RUBBLE AND MIDDEN-SITE DEPOSITS

See table p.312

This Block lay at the southern end of Area A (Figure 38). It consisted of a series of deposits between Blocks 23 (Structure 1), 24 (Structure 3) and 16. These deposits contained numerous large angular stones and slabs, [484] and [194], which were concentrated in the centre of the Block (Figure 53). The





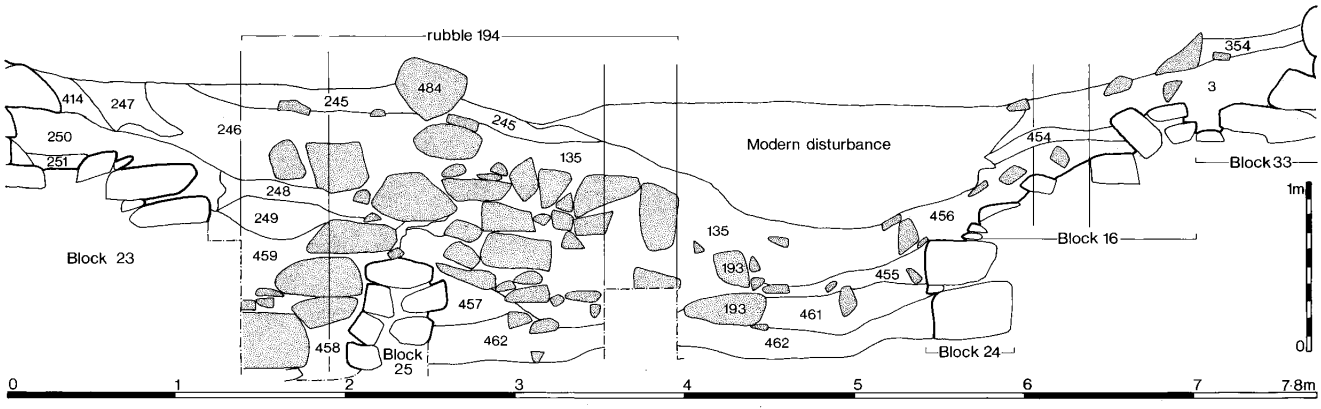


Figure 53. Block 17

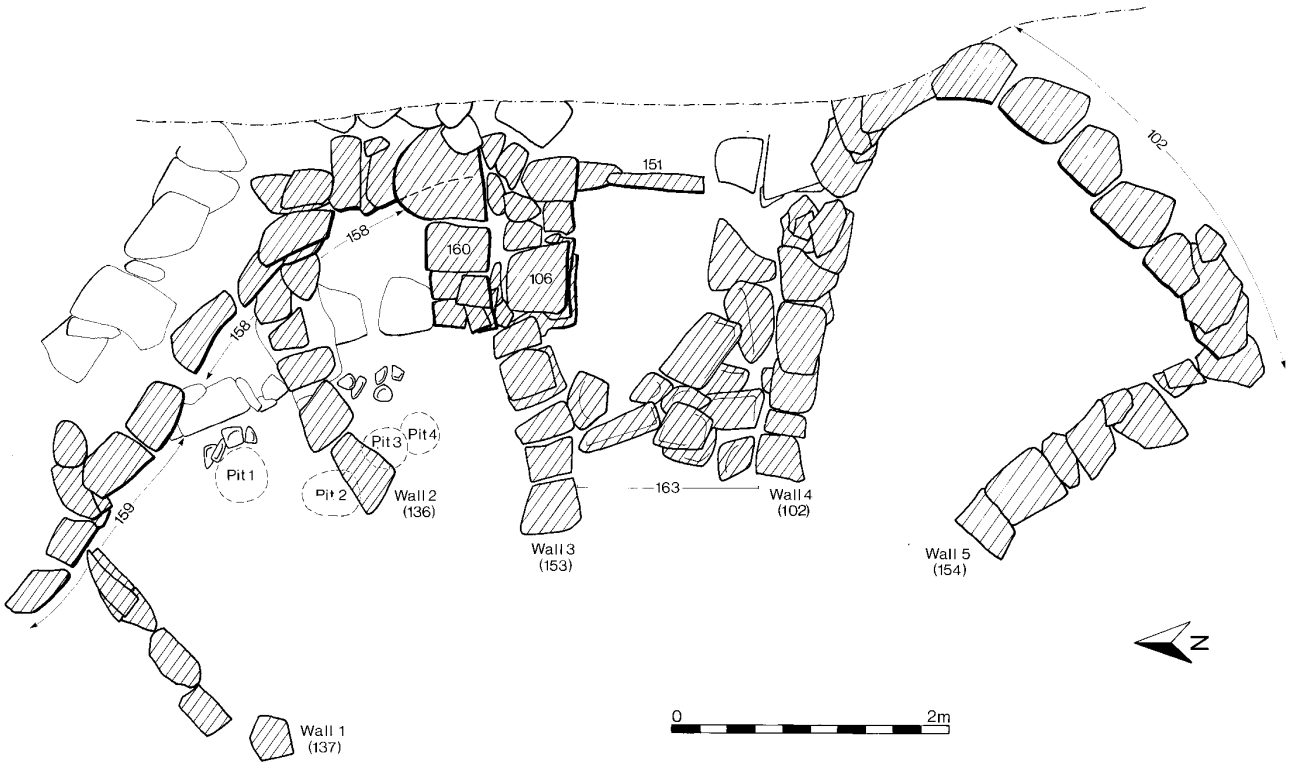


Figure 54. Blocks 15 & 18

sand layers ranged in colour from pale brown to dark brown and in texture from loamy sand to sandy loam and they sloped down from the north.

Field interpretation

The field interpretation was that this Block consisted of midden-site deposits and rubble. This interpretation was based upon the colour and texture of the layers. Although finds were retrieved from the layers in this Block, no IHI has been calculated because the volumes of soil excavated were not recorded. A moderate range of finds were present in variable quantities. Burnt stone was found in quantities ranging from 5% to 30% in 4 contexts. Of the ninety-five potsherds recovered from this Block eighty-two were examined and they range in size-class from 1 to 8. The distribution is markedly skewed to the lower end and is almost Poisson in form. The pH values recorded for this Block range from 7.6 to 8.2 with a modal value of 7.6. Phosphate values ranged from 2 to 4, 3 being the most common value. The soil colours are recorded as ranging from pale brown to dark brown and the soil textures range from loamy sand to sandy loam. Layer boundaries were predominantly either clear or sharp and wavy.

Archaeological interpretation

The variability of the deposits, in both their soil characteristics and anthropogenic components support the view that these are midden-site deposits. The regularity of the layers militates against their interpretation as dumped deposits infilling the structures over which they lie. This, and the smooth, clear to sharp, boundaries also suggest that the sedimentation rate was relatively high. On balance, the archaeological interpretation is that these are midden-site deposits, but the source of the rubble which they contain could not be discerned from the recorded profile.

Specialist contribution

Sheep, cattle and pig and the bones of a saithe and a rook/crow were recovered.

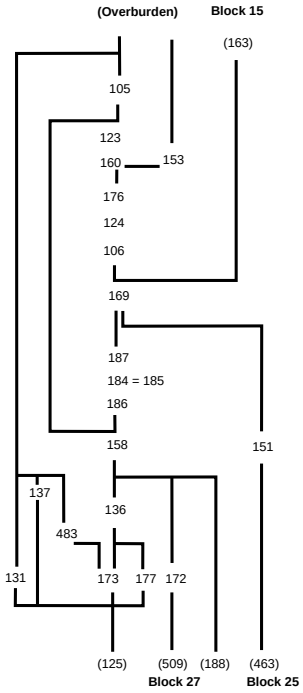
Conclusion

This Block consists of midden-site deposits which accumulated rapidly in the vicinity of occupied houses. They may not, on the evidence of the snail study, have developed a sward at any time and the rubble deposits may derive from abandonment of the related houses.

6.21 BLOCK 18 – STRUCTURE 5 – WALL ARC WITH RADIAL PIERS AND POST PITS

See table p.313

This Block does not appear in the section drawing because it lay to the west of the main section line. It consisted of the northern part of Structure 5 (the rest of which comprises Block 15), an arc of drystone wall and three radial buttresses (Figure 54). The Block also contained four large pits (Figure 54) and numerous layers.



Pits

At the base of this Block four circular pits were noted. They averaged 0.4 m in diameter and 0.8 m deep. The pit fills were all similar, consisting in their lowest levels of about 0.5 m of light brown sand, covered by a layer of shattered and compacted bones. Pit 1 also contained four vertically set stones on its east side at this level. The uppermost fills were of dark sand. Their sections revealed evidence of recutting. These pits contained a divided human burial, discussed below and reported upon elsewhere (Barber *et al* 1989; and see Chapter 11.1.2). At least three further pits were noted about 3 m to the north, clustered around radial Wall 3 (see below) but they were not recorded.

Masonry

A west facing arc of dry stone wall, [158], and radial Wall 2, were constructed after the pits were filled. The arc of wall consisted of a maximum of six courses of large angular stones with small stones within the joints. The face of this wall was slightly corbelled and measured 5.2 m long. Some of the stones of the wallface, [158], appeared to be keyed into those of [107] (Block 23). Radial Wall 1, [137], consisted of a line of large slabs which abutted the wall face, [158]. Radial Wall 2, [136], consisted of thin slabs of which only the lower two courses survived. This line of stones was 1.8 m long and 0.4 m wide. The slabs at its east end were keyed in to the drain, [171], of Block 23. At the west end of this wall the stones were large and tabular. Radial Wall 3, from the excavated evidence, appears to have been stratigraphically later than the other two walls. It consisted of three masonry elements, [106], [160] and [153]. [106] consisted of four courses of a freestanding drystone wall constructed of large slabs and blocks. Its northwards thickening, [160], was also constructed of large slabs. [106] was separated stratigraphically from [160] by the layers [124] and [176] which underlay [106] and abutted [160]. A line of slabs two courses thick, [153], extended the alignment of [106] from its west end. The total length of the composite Radial Wall 3 was 2.3 m. Within the upper three courses of the arcing wall, mid-way between the Radial Walls 1 and 2, was a gap which measured *circa* 0.5 m wide and 0.35 m deep, set into the back of the wall [107]. This was filled with layers collectively called [170] and included dished deposits of white, orange and dark brown sand.

Layers

The lower layers included in this Block were laminated light and dark grey-brown sands, except for a black sand, [187] and a deposit of bright orange peat-ash, [184]. The uppermost layers in this Block included loose, soft-textured brown loam, [123], and rubble, [105], which lay over the arcing wallface, [158], from the back of the wall [107] as far as the radial wall 3.

Field interpretation

The field interpretation of the Block, like Block 15, was that it comprised the remains of a circular structure with some residual floor deposits. This structure overlay four pits filled with human and animal bone.

Burnt stone was found in quantities of less than 5% in one context. Of the seventy-five potsherds recovered from this Block fifty-nine were examined and they range in size-class from 1 to 5. The distribution is Poisson in form. Human bones consisting of the remains of a single individual, were retrieved from the four pits (Chapter 11.1.2). The pH values recorded for this Block range from 7.1 to 7.8 with a modal value of 7.6. Phosphate values ranged from 2 to 4. The soil colours, excluding those of the pit fills, are recorded as ranging from pale brown to very dark grey brown and in texture from sand to loamy sand. Layer boundaries were clear and wavy. The pit fills were light to dark brown in colour and sandy in texture.

Archaeological interpretation

The masonry which constitutes the main part of this Block seems to be part of a wheelhouse. Inside this wheelhouse were a series of deposits including some located within the stones of the walls.

Specialist contribution

Three of the four pits containing the remains of a juvenile human also contained animal bones. Pit 1 held substantial parts of the skeleton of a juvenile bovid *(circa* 18–30 months old, sex unknown). Pit 2 produced substantial parts of two female sheep (>3years and *circa* 18-30 months old at death). Pit 4 contained much of a second juvenile bovid (slightly older, with sex again unknown). These three pits offer an interesting example of 'structured deposition', because the four carcasses had been thoroughly processed before burial. Both

cattle bear cut marks indicative of skinning, dismembering and filleting, while their long bones were deliberately broken for marrow extraction. One bone had been heavily chewed by a dog. Both sheep show signs of dismembering and filleting. The fact that the two cattle in Pits 1 and 4 have apparently not been mixed, either with each other or with the sheep in Pit 2, may simply be because the pits were dug and filled at different times. Nonetheless, the fact that these bones, including some quite small splinters, were collected and buried, rather than being combined with other domestic refuse is unusual. Taken in conjunction with the physical anthropological and stratigraphic evidence, it suggests the remains of feasts associated with extended funerary rites. The importance attached to these feasts is further underlined by the particular choice of animals for slaughter. Both the two cattle and the younger sheep were, unusually for prehistoric Hornish Point and Baleshare, killed in their second or third year, ie at an age when they offered plentiful meat. As the pits were not preserved in their entirety, no significance should be attached to the absence of particular body parts.

Pit 1

Body parts represented are;
Head: included both maxillae and both mandibles
Trunk: included axis, 1 other cervical and 3 thoracic vertebrae, fragments of ribs
Left forelimb: included radius, ulna and metacarpal
Left hindlimb: included pelvis, tibia, astragalus, calcaneum, navicular-cuboid and metatarsal
Right hindlimb: included pelvis and femur
Toes: 5 first, 3 second and 4 third phalanges representing both fore and hind feet.

All these elements were apparently derived from one carcass, the maxillae and mandibles are perfect pairs, the left distal tibia, astragalus, navicular-cuboid and proximal metatarsal articulate correctly and the states of fusion of first and second phalanges are uniform.

This carcass had been subject to the following processes;

Skinning; transverse knife marks on left metatarsal (posterior face of distal shaft – cf Binford 1981, 140 Table 4.04 'MTd-2'), on 4 first phalanges (on plantar face of 3, on plantar, lateral and volar faces of 4th) and 2 second phalanges (planter face of proximal articulation – cf Binford 1981, 103; von den Driesch & Boessneck 1975, 20; Parkin, Rowley-Conwy & Serjeantson 1986).

Dismembering; knife marks on right mandible (lateral face of ramus – cf Binford 1981, 136 Table 4.04 'M-2'; von den Driesch & Boessneck 1975, 7 fig. 1), left astragalus (cf Binford 1981, 120 Fig.4.27 'TA-1' and 'TA-2'), right pelvis (cf Binford 1981, 113 fig. 4.22 'Ps-8' and 'Ps-9'; also acetabulum chopped at junction of ilium and ischium), right femur (cf Binford 1981, 117 fig. 4.25 'Fp-1'), cervical vertebra (posterior articular process) and ? also 1 thoracic vertebra (dorsal spine – cf Binford 1981, 111 – 'segmentation of the spinal column').

Filleting (?); knife marks on 1 thoracic vertebra (cf Binford 1981, 112 Fig. 4.21 'TV-2'), right femur (cf Binford 1981, 131 Fig. 4.37 'Fp-9') and left tibia (medial face of mid-shaft).

Marrow extraction; characteristic impact scars and splintering of shaft of all represented long bones (*viz* left radius, left metacarpal, left tibia, left metatarsal and right femur - cf Binford 1981, 155, fig. 4.48 and 160 Fig. 4.53).

Gnawing; probably by dog, of left calcaneum.

Age at death: mandibular M2s have wear on both cusps, mandibular M3s are visible incrypt/beginning to erupt - circa 18-30 months. Maxillary M3s are visible in crypt. Second phalanges are in the process of fusing.

Pit 2

Body parts represented are;
Head: a few cranial fragments
Trunk: 2 atlas (1 larger, 1 smaller), 2 axis (1 larger with fused and one smaller with unfused epiphysis), 9 other cervical vertebrae (4 large with fused/fusing epiphyses, 5 small with unfused epiphyses), 21 thoracic vertebrae (10 large with fused epiphyses, 11 smaller with unfused epiphyses), 14 lumbar vertebrae (5 fused, 5 fusing and 4 unfused epiphyses), 1 sacrum (with fused epiphyses), 13 ribs
Left forelimb: scapula (fused), proximal humerus (fused), radius (proximal and distal fused) and matching ulna (proximal fused)
Right forelimb: humerus (proximal unfused, distal fused and articulates well with proximal radius and ulna), radius (proximal fused, distal unfused, shorter than left radius) and matching ulna (proximal unfused)
Left hindlimb: pelvis (acetabulum fused, female), femur (proximal and distal unfused), tibia (proximal unfused, distal just fused), calcaneum (tuber unfused)
Right hindlimb: pelvis (acetabulum fused, female, smaller than left pelvis), tibia (probable pair with left tibia), calcaneum (pair with left calcaneum)

On the evidence of state of fusion, size, matching pairs and quality of articulation between adjacent elements, at least two (and probably no more than two) individuals are indicated. The first, a larger, older individual was represented by most of the vertebral column, most of the left forelimb (scapula, proximal humerus, radius, ulna) and part of the left hindlimb (pelvis); a smaller, younger individual was represented by most of the vertebral column. The second individual, was represented by most of the right forelimb (humerus, radius, ulna) and parts of both hindlimbs (right pelvis, left femur, left and right tibiae, left and right calcanea).

The carcass of the older individual had been subject to the following processes:
Dismembering; chop marks on atlas (cf Binford 1981, 111 Fig. 4.20 'CV-1'); dorsal articular processes chopped off between fifth and sixth cervical vertebrae (cf Binford 1981, 110); dorsal spines of 3 lumbar vertebrae chopped or cut (cf Binford 1981, 112 Fig. 4.21); transverse knife marks on scapula (cranial margin of neck - cf Binford 1981, 122 Fig. 4.29 'S-2'), left radius (cf. Binford 1981, 125 Fig. 4.32 'RCp-5'), left pelvis (cf. Binford 1981, 113 Fig. 4.22 'PS-7' and 'PS-8').

Filleting; knife marks across transverse processes of 2 lumbar vertebrae (cf Binford 1981, 113).

The carcass of the younger individual had been subject to the same processes:
Dismembering; dorsal spines of 2 lumbar vertebrae chopped or cut (cf Binford 1981, 112 Fig. 4.21); transverse knife marks on right humerus (cf Binford 1981, 123 Fig. 4.30 'Hd-2'), right radius (cf Binford 1981, 125 Fig. 4.32 'RCp-5'), right pelvis (cf Binford 1981, 113 Fig. 4.22 'PS-7'), left femur (cf Binford 1981, 117 Fig. 4.25 'Fp-1', 'Fp-2' and 'Fd-1') and right calcaneum (cf Binford 1981, 120 Fig. 4.27 'TC-3').
Filleting; knife marks into dorsal spine of 1 and across transverse processes of another lumbar vertebra (cf Binford 1981, 113); transverse or diagonal knife marks on right humerus (posterior and medial faces of mid-shaft), right pelvis (cf Binford 1981, 130 Fig. 4.36 'PS-6') left femur (posterior face of mid-shaft, medial face of distal shaft), left tibia (cf Binford 1981, 132 Fig. 4.38 'Td-4' and medial face of mid-shaft) and right tibia (cf Binford 1981, 131 Fig. 4.37 'Tp-4' and lateral face of mid-shaft).

Age at death. On the basis of the state of epiphyseal fusion, the older female was > 3 years old (proximal humerus and distal radius fused), while the younger female died in her late second/early third year (distal tibiae just fused, proximal ulna unfused).

Pit 4

Body parts represented are;
Head: included 1 loose maxillary tooth
Trunk: atlas, axis, 3 other cervical vertebrae, fragments of ribs
Left forelimb: humerus and metacarpal
Right forelimb: metacarpal
Left hindlimb: femur, distal tibia and astragalus
Right hindlimb: pelvis, distal femur, calcaneum, navicular-cuboid and metatarsal
Toes: 5 first, 3 second and 2 third phalanges representing both fore and hind feet.

All these elements were apparently derived from one carcass, the left distal tibia articulates well with astragalus, as does the right navicular-cuboid with proximal metatarsal. The states of fusion of first and second phalanges are uniform.

This carcass had been subject to the following processes:
Skinning; transverse knife marks on 3 first phalanges (plantar face).
Dismembering; knife marks on right calcaneum (cf Binford 1981, 120 Fig. 4.27 'TC-1'), right navicular-cuboid (cf Binford 1981, 122 Fig. 4.28 'TNC-1') and (?) right metatarsal (longitudinal on distal articulation).
Marrow extraction; characteristic impact scars and splintering of shaft of all represented long bones (viz. left humerus, left metacarpal, right metacarpal, left femur, left tibia, right metatarsal and perhaps right femur – cf Binford 1981, 155 Fig. 4.48 and 160 Fig. 4.53). Transverse knife marks on posterior face of left metacarpal (proximal and distal shaft) and right metacarpal (distal shaft), suggestive of filleting, may reflect cleaning of bone prior to marrow cracking (Binford 1981, 134).

Age at death: loose left maxillary M3 just coming into wear and second phalanges in process of fusing suggest slightly older than bovine in pit 1 - *circa* >30 months.

Red deer, dog bones and cod bones were also identified from this Block.

Conclusion

While it is clear that Blocks 15 and 18 functioned together as a single wheelhouse it is equally clear that they are not of one build. Indeed, Block 18 almost certainly includes some earlier elements in its masonry (notably walls [158] and [151]) while Pier 3 is of at least two and probably three separate builds. Similarly, the four pits containing human and animal bone clearly predate Pier 2 and may predate the entire structure. Marine erosion had reduced the internal deposits in this structure and effectively removed any chance of relating them to the period(s) of occupation and use. The evidence from the snail-shell assemblages suggests that these deposits may have consisted largely of windblown sand but small amounts of stone, bone, pottery and macroplant remains indicate some anthropic contribution to the deposits formation. Whether this was as 'primary' *in situ* debris or 'secondary' dumping cannot now be ascertained.

6.22 BLOCK 19 – DUMPED DEPOSITS

See tables p.315, 318

* ^{14}C date 2170±50 bp (GU-2024) from layer [257] (Periwinkle).
* ^{14}C date 2285±50 bp (GU-2025) from layer [272] (Periwinkle).
* ^{14}C date 2090±50 bp (GU-2549) from layers [260], [259], [264], [265], [267], [268], [295], [269], [270], [373], [300], [299], [252], [253], [254], [255], [272], [273], [274], [372] and [356] (Carbonised seeds).

Block 19 lay in Area B, above Structure 5 (Block 23) and Block 26, and below Blocks 20 and 17 (Figure 38). It extended for 9 m and was up to 1.9 m in depth. It consisted of numerous layers which infilled Structure 5, and continued over the wall of Structure 5 as far as the stone slabs of Structure 7, Block 22 (Figure 55). The layers within this Block were generally shallow, ranging from 0.05 m to 0.15 m in depth and sloped steeply to the north. Beneath the lintel stone of Structure 5 deposits were generally deeper, up to 0.5 m in depth. The layers within this Block ranged from light brownish grey to very dark greyish brown in colour and from sand to sandy loam. In particular, [265] contained carbonised peat and peat ash. [372] and [268] were rich in seeds and [264] contained many shells. Part of a cetacean vertebra was found in [301].

Field interpretation

This Block was interpreted as dumped layers deposited from the south into the space within the inner facade of Structure

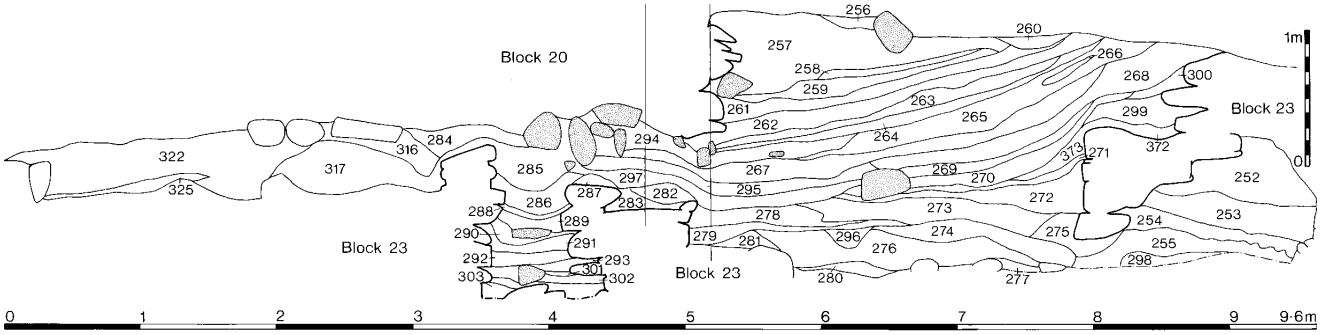
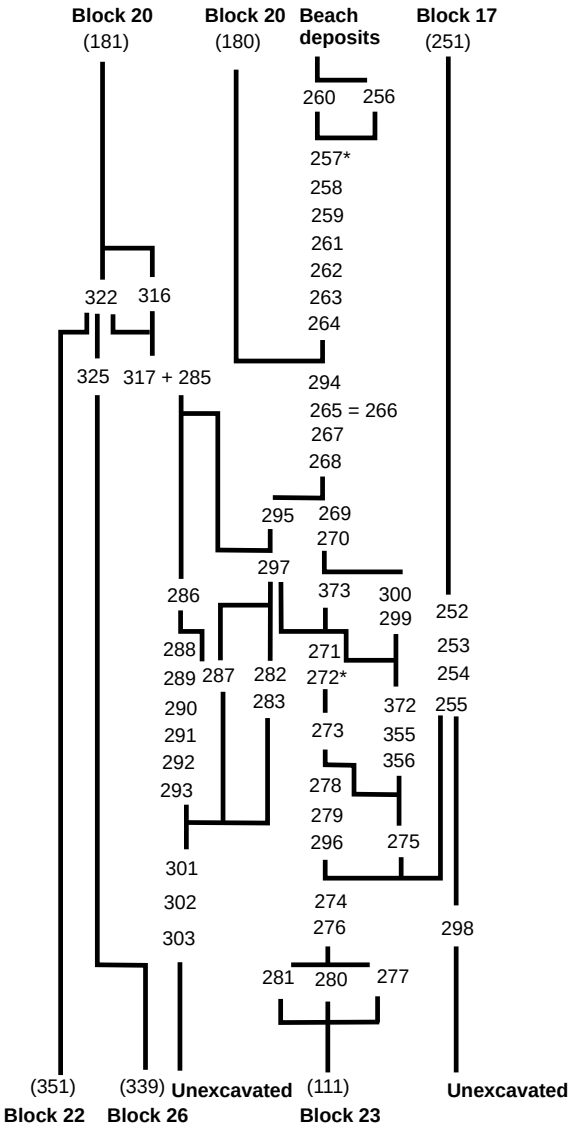


Figure 55. Block 19



1, Block 23. The lack of windblown sand within the dump suggests that deposition was rapid.

Burnt stone was found in quantities ranging from <5% to 10% in twelve contexts. Of the ninety potsherds recovered from this Block seventy-two were examined and they range in size-class from 1 to 6. The distribution is markedly skewed to the smaller end. The pH values recorded for this Block range from 7.5 to 8.1 with a modal value of 7.7. Phosphate values ranged from 1 to 5, 2 being the commonest value. The soil colours are recorded as ranging from light brownish grey to very dark grey brown and the soil textures ranged from sand to sandy loam. Layer boundaries were predominantly abrupt to clear, and smooth to wavy.

Archaeological interpretation

The variability of these deposits, the clarity of their boundaries and the variability of their anthropogenic component suggest that these may be midden-site deposits. The size and regularity of the individual layers militate against their interpretation as primary refuse deposits.

Specialist contribution

Sheep, cattle, pig, red deer and dog bones were identified, as were bones from a number of fish species including saithe, cod and ling. Bones of great auk were also recovered.

Conclusion

Identified in the field as dumped deposits and subsequently as midden-site deposits these deposits have something of the character of both types. Within the abandoned structure of Block 23 windblown sand was trapped and domestic refuse was dumped to create a series of heterogeneous layers which, on the snail-shell evidence, accumulated at varying rates in varying degrees of dryness and with varying amounts of fresh organic matter. It is clear from the radiocarbon dates that the entire Block was deposited quite rapidly (Chapter 18.8.6). Perhaps the deposits with greatest anthropic inclusions were formed of reworked dumped deposits, in which case, their identification as such remains literally true.

6.23 BLOCK 20 – STRUCTURE 7

See tables p.316, 317

Block 20 lay in the northern part of the site over Blocks 19 and 22 (Figure 38). It consisted of a drystone structure (Figures 56 & 57). The section was drawn in two parts because the upper part, ie the east section of masonry, [121], was in reality set back *circa* 1 m from the underlying drawn layers, hence the lack of clarity of the boundaries. The masonry

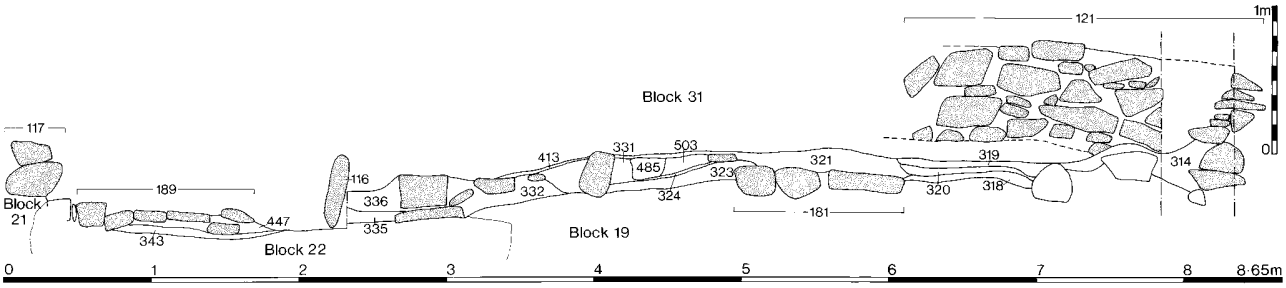


Figure 56. Block 20: section

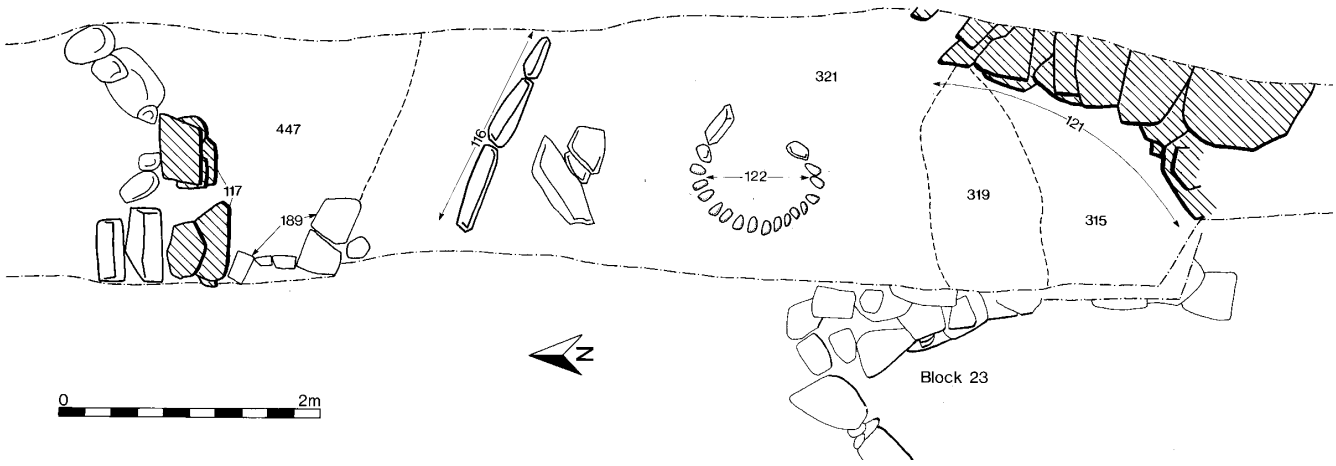
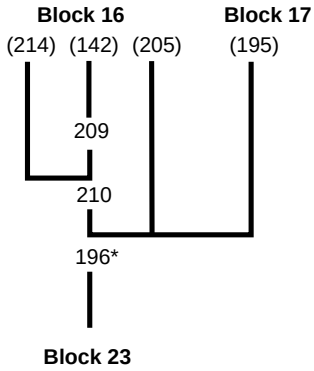


Figure 57. Block 20: plan



formed a rounded corner set into the midden layers of Block 19. It was constructed of large irregularly shaped, uncoursed boulders with smaller stones between and faced on its inner side. This wall was up to 0.9 m high. The eastern arm was revealed for a distance of about 2.5 m before it disappeared into the section. At a distance of 6 m to the north of [121] lay three vertically set slabs, [116] (Figure 57). These were on an alignment perpendicular to the line of the east wall of [121]. Some 2 m to the north of these was a revetment of large blocks, [117] which was faced to the south. This lay on an alignment which diverged from that of the slabs [116]. Contained within the structure were a number of layers, within the uppermost surface of which was a circle of burnt cobbles, [122] (Figure 57). This was about 3.5 m to the north of the south section of [121]. On the east side these were of irregular shaped slabs set vertically into the ground. The rest of the circuit constituted rounded pebbles each about 0.1 m long and set radially to the circuit. This feature measured 0.8 m in diameter externally. Lying between the masonry, [117] and [116], were five slabs, [189]. The northernmost slab abutted the wall [120] (Block 22). The slabs extended for 1.2 m from [120] but did not quite reach [116]. Further south, set into layer [322] (Block 19) were three flat topped boulders, [181]. These extended for 1.1 m midway between [116] and [121]. More irregularly shaped boulders, [180], appeared in the section just to the north of the wall [121] and were set into layer [294]. The layers within this Block were generally thin and not very extensive. They ranged widely in colour and texture from white sand ([323] & [343]) to a black silty loam ([413]) while the rest were light to dark brown grey sands. Just to the north of the stones [181] was a U-shaped cut 0.15 m deep, [503], which was filled with carbonised peat, [435].

Field interpretation

This Block was interpreted as the remains of a roughly rectangular, drystone built structure divided into two parts by a line of slabs. The southern part was the larger and contained a circular hearth. The northern part was slightly sunken and has been interpreted as a byre. The skewed alignment of the northern end was thought to be evidence of the sites' collapse. Very little displaced stone was found within the structure suggesting that it had been de-roofed prior to it infilling with deep shell sand deposits (Block 29).

Less than 5% of the stone from one context was burnt. Of the twenty potsherds recovered from this Block sixteen were examined and they range in size-class from 1 to 9, with

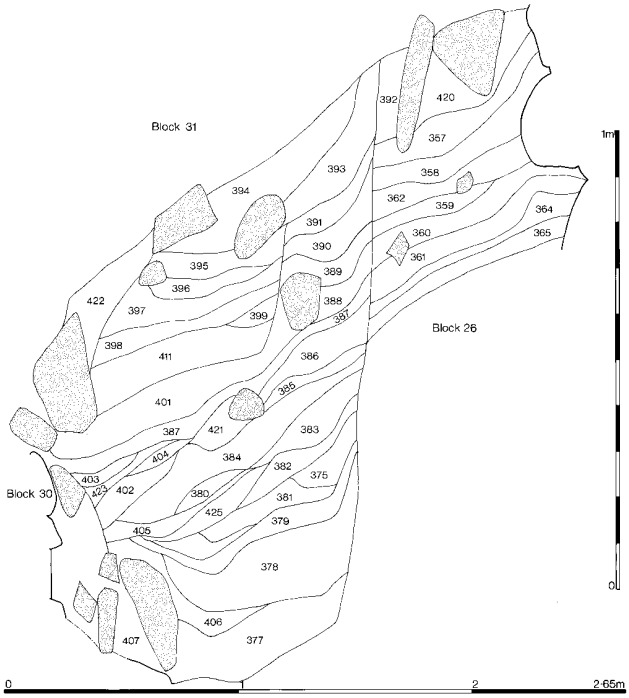


Figure 58. Block 21

14 sherds smaller than the site average. The pH values recorded for this Block range from 7.4 to 7.8 with a modal value of 7.6. Phosphate values ranged from 2 to 4, 3 being the most common value. The soil colours were pale brown to very dark brown and the textures varied from sand to silty sandy loam. Layer boundaries were predominantly clear to abrupt and smooth to wavy.

Archaeological interpretation

The field interpretation of the structure takes primacy over any observations based on the information presented here. This seems to have been a relatively recent 'black house' and the hearth structure and division of the floor, into residence and byre, are typical of such structures.

Specialist contribution

Two contexts contained faunal material of particular note. *[314];* This context contained the remains of at least two (and probably only two) neo-natal lambs, represented by the following body parts:
Left forelimb: 1 humerus, 1 radius and one metacarpal.
Left hindlimb: 1 pelvis, 1 femur, 1 tibia and 2 metatarsals
right hindlimb: 1 pelvis, 2 tibiae, and 1 metatarsal.
Toes: 4 first, 4 second and 4 third phalanges.

A probable single sheep was represented by a complete cranium and parts of all four feet, ie left metacarpal, left and right metatarsal, 8 first, 3 second and 2 third phalanges. This combination of body parts is suggestive of primary butchery waste. Cut marks on the occipital condoyles of the cranium could have been caused when the head was severed from the body (cf Binford 1981, 102 Fig. 4.11b 'S-1'). Both the post-cranial evidence, all epiphyses fused and dental evidence, all permanent maxillary teeth in wear, indicates that this sheep was fully adult. With the exception of a right metatarsal, representing a second sheep, none of the animal bone in this context had been gnawed by carnivores. *[413];* In addition to a few fragmentary specimens, this context contained the following complete bones; right metatarsal, left metatarsal (distal epiphysis only), 3 first, 2 second and 3 third phalanges. These bones could all be derived from the hind feet of one individual, a juvenile of less than 2 years age, on the evidence of epiphyseal fusion, and again may represent primary butchery waste. Gnawing was only evident on two further right metatarsals, representing two additional individuals.

A wing of a mallard with cut marks was also recovered (Chapter 11.4.2).

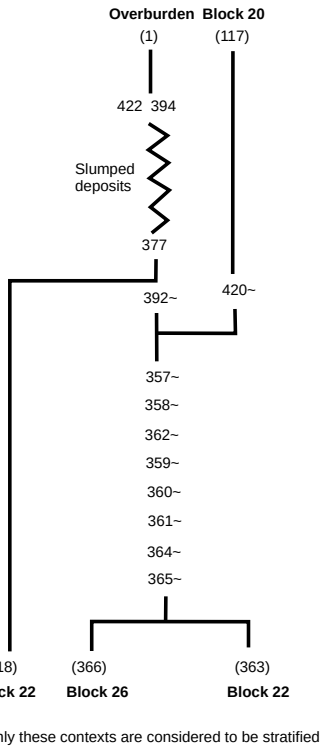
Conclusion

This structure represents a post-medieval 'Blackhouse' which at sometime, possibly after its abandonment, was used for butchering sheep and lambs.

6.24 BLOCK 21 – DUMPED DEPOSITS

See table p.318

This Block lay in the extreme northern end of the site (Figure 38). It was up to 1.1 m deep and 2.5 m long. It consisted of several thin layers which have suffered at least two periods of slumping (Figure 58). The displaced layers were not considered further. The eleven layers that remain slope gently up to the south, for a distance of 0.9 m with a maximum depth of 0.6 m. The layers are generally thin, between 0.03 m and 0.15 m, and have distinct boundaries. They



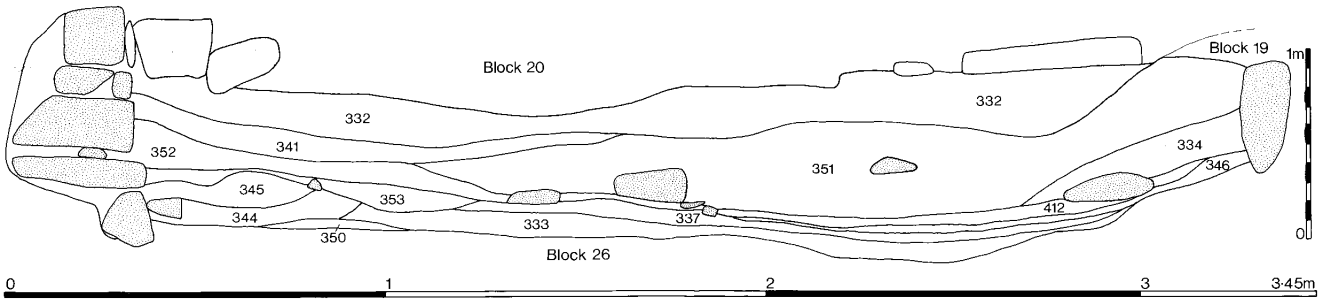


Figure 59. Block 22

range in texture from sand to a silty sandy loam and in colour from very pale brown to very dark greyish brown. Some of the displaced layers to the north could be visually matched with those described above. They also include layers which have presumably slumped from a higher level than [392]. These include two layers, [393] and [397], which were particularly rich in shells.

Field interpretation

This Block was interpreted as a series of deposits dumped over the masonry of Block 28. They have suffered the effects of storm damage at the north end of the site. The structure in Block 20 was cut into these deposits on their southern side.

All four bodysherds returned from this Block were examined, and they range in size-class from 2 to 3. The pH values recorded for this Block range from 7.2 to 7.8 with a modal value of 7.6. Phosphate values ranged from 1 to 5, 3 being the most common value. The soil colours range from pale brown to very dark greyish brown and the soil textures from sand to silty sandy loam. Layer boundaries were predominantly sharp and wavy.

Archaeological interpretation

The variability of the soil characteristics and the anthropogenic component of these deposits together with the clarity of the layer boundaries all support the field interpretation of this Block as a set of dumped deposits. The slumped deposits to the north suggest that the continuation of the site in that direction is largely destructured and also that the midden, at least at this northern end, was considerably higher in the past.

Specialist contribution

Sheep, cattle and pig were identified.

Conclusion

The deposits of this Block are dumped deposits derived from settlement structures which, on the snail-shell evidence, lay in the immediate vicinity.

6.25 BLOCK 22 – STRUCTURE 6 – FRAGMENT

See table p.319

* ^{14}C date 2270 ± 50 bp (GU-2028) from layer [351] (Periwinkle).
* ^{14}C date 2185 ± 50 bp (GU-2026) from layer [332] (Periwinkle).

Block 22 lay at the northern end of Area B, beneath Structure 7, Block 20 (Figure 38). It extended over 3.3 m and had a maximum depth of 0.6 m (Figure 59). On the north side the masonry, [120], had five courses of stone blocks and was faced to the south. It had been cut into the material of Block 26 and the space behind the masonry filled with a dark brown loamy sand, [363]. The second course of stone was reddened in colour where it was in contact with layer [345] (see below). In plan this masonry continued out from the section face with an upright slab and disturbed stones seen within the beach sand; these curved slightly towards the south. At a distance of 2.85 m from the face of [120] a single slab, [129], appeared in the section. Its base was at the same level as that of [121] and it measured 0.3 m high. Abutting this masonry were several layers and lenses with a maximum depth of 0.50 m. The layers that abutted [120] were each up to 0.1 m deep. They included a domed layer of orange peat ash, [345], which, along with the black, sandy silty loam beneath, [344], was bordered by an arc of vertically set stones. To the south were thin layers which were slightly sunken below the base of the slab [129]. These were 0.02 m to 0.05 m deep and were either dark or very dark grey brown in colour

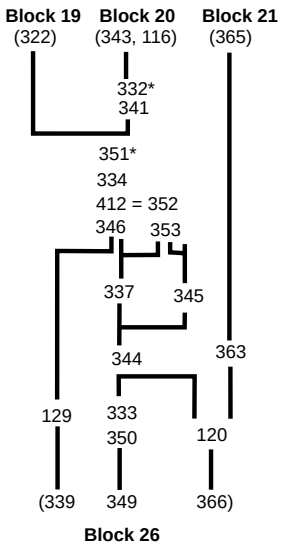


Plate 25. Hornish Point. Structure 1 – fragment of wheelhouse. The aisled space between the pier and the outer wall is just visible. Abutting it to the right, and keyed into its outer wall, is Structure 2, the drain through which can be seen

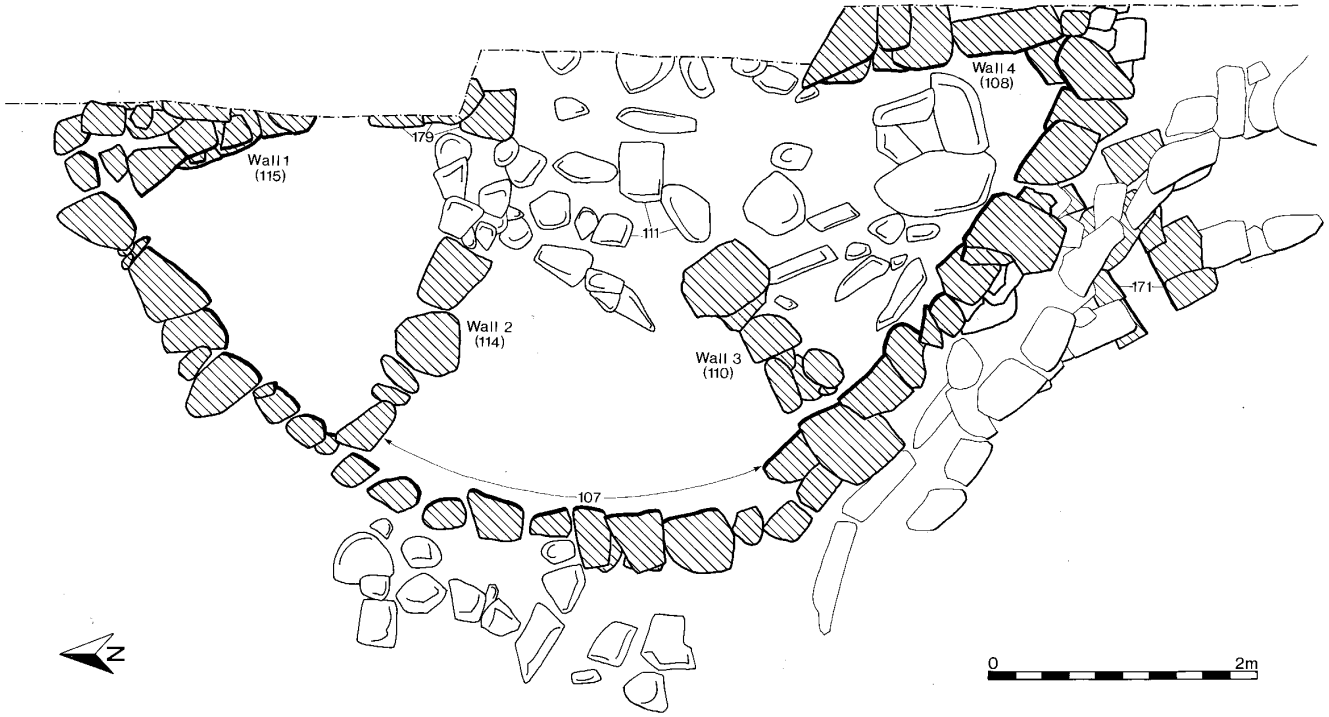


Figure 60. Block 23: plan

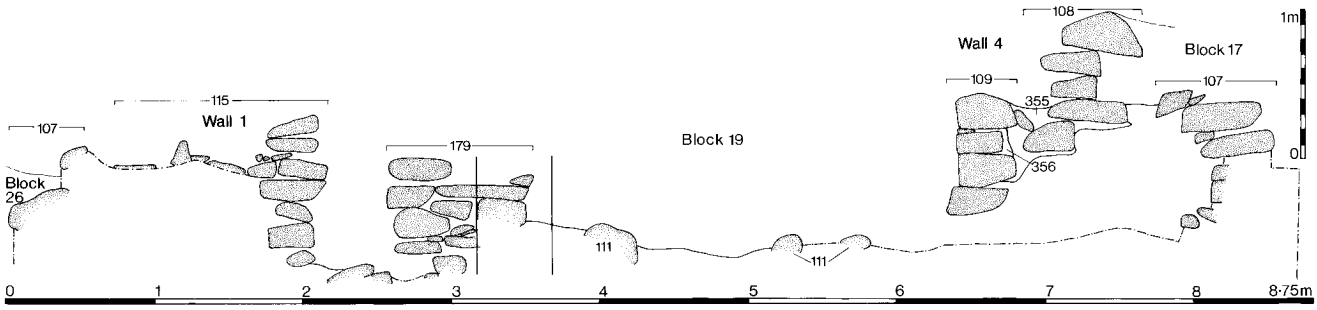


Figure 61. Block 23: section

but included carbonised peat, [337], loamy sand or sandy loam. These layers were sealed by deeper layers of dark brown sandy loam, [351] and [341], and a dark grey-brown loamy sand, [332].

Field interpretation

Block 22 was interpreted the remains of a circular structure. It contained a possible hearth and layers rich in organic matter. Its internal diameter would have been over 3 m.

Some 5% of the stone found in one context was burnt. Some thirty-nine of the forty potsherds in the Block were examined and they range in size-class from 1 to 7. The pH values recorded for this Block range from 7.3 to 8.2 with a modal value of 7.6. Phosphate values ranged from 2 to 4, 7 being the most common value. The soil colours range from very pale brown to black and the soil textures from sand to sandy silty loam. Layer boundaries were predominantly sharp and smooth to wavy.

Archaeological interpretation

The interpretation of the structural elements of this Block must remain that based on the field observations. The deposits contained within it are not inconsistent with this interpretation, but would not be inconsistent with their interpretation as midden-site deposits either.

Specialist contribution

Sheep, cattle, pig and cod bones were identified.

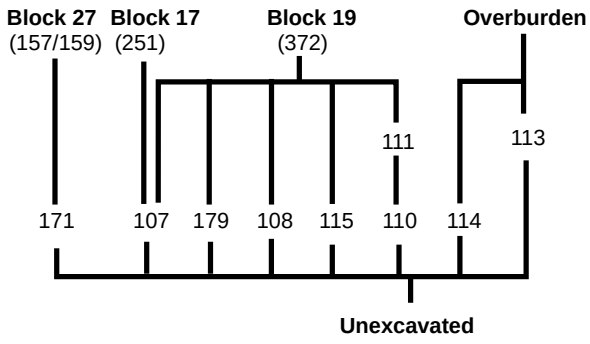
Conclusion

This apparently simple structure seems to contain a series of post-abandonment deposits of rapidly accumulated windblown sand.

6.26 BLOCK 23 - STRUCTURE 1 – WHEELHOUSE

See table p.319

Block 23 lay in Area B, beneath Block 19 (Figure 38). It consisted of a semi-circular arc of masonry with four internal radial piers (Figures 60 & 61). It measured 8.5 m in length and in plan it extended approximately 4 m out from the section face. The outer wall, [107], was one stone thick, faced on the inside. In the section face it measured up to 1 m in height in the south and 0.5 m in the north. It was constructed of large slabs which were slightly corbelled, and a few rounded stones. The wall had been reduced in height out from the section to a single course at its outermost. Within this arc were four radial walls; Walls 1, 2 and 3 abutted the inner face of [107] and the fourth was of the aisled type. Wall 1, [115], in the north of the wheelhouse, measured 1 m high and 1.4 m long. Wall 2, [114] was 1.7 m long and was revealed as a single line of stones. However, a sondage subsequently revealed the presence of several underlying courses. Wall 3, [110], was 1.3 m long and consisted of a single course of slabs except at the end where the slab was surmounted by a large boulder. Further masonry within the wheelhouse was bisected by the section. The masonry, [179], lay about 0.5 m to the south of Wall 1 towards the centre of the wheelhouse. It measured 0.8 m high and 1 m long. About the same distance north of the outer wall in the south was the masonry, [108] and [109]. This was revealed to be two faces of a masonry Block which had tilted westwards intruding through the deposits of Block 19. Together they measured 1.4 m high and 1.2 m in width. After the section was drawn this masonry was found to be joined to the outer wall, [107], with a lintel stone. A drain feature, [171], was revealed outside the wall line, [107], beneath the structure formed by Block 18. It consisted of two facing lines of wall at a distance of 0.35 m apart. The inner edge of this feature was not revealed as the layers within the wheelhouse, known to exist from a sondage, were not investigated.



Field interpretation

This Block was interpreted as the remains of a wheelhouse (Plate 25). Its internal diameter was about 7.5 m. It had three radial walls which abutted the outer wall face and the fourth was aisled. The inner ends of these radial walls were more massive than those used in their general construction. The single aisled wall was separated from the outer wall at its base but connected to it with a lintel stone at a higher level. Three bays of slightly different sizes were formed by the radial walls, with a clear area left at the centre of the house, except for some rubble seen at the level of the section base. The floor surfaces associated with the occupation of the wheelhouse were shown to exist beneath the windblown sand but were not excavated.

Archaeological interpretation

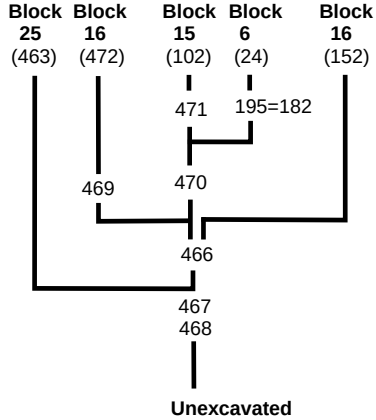
The archaeological interpretation of this Block must be that based on the field observations, ie that this is a remnant of a wheelhouse. There was no post-excavation analysis undertaken due to the lack of material. The conclusion, therefore, does not differ from the Archaeological interpretation.

Specialist contribution

Sheep, cattle and pig bones and two unidentifiable bird bones were identified.

6.27 BLOCK 24 – STRUCTURE 3

This Block lay at the south end of Area A, at the base of the section (Figure 38). It consisted of the masonry, [195], and several soil layers (Figure 62). [195] only became visible after Block 15 had been removed. It was constructed of large stone blocks and measured 0.65 m high and was about 0.6 m wide. Its north face was continued out from the section by a line of slabs, [467]. These were 0.25 m to 0.4 m in length. They curved northwards back into the section running under the wall, [152] (Block 16). The four layers included in Block 24 lay within the arc of slabs, [467], and abutted the wall, [195]. They were saucer-shaped, up to 0.3 m in depth, and dipped back into the section. They ranged from very pale brown sand to brown/dark brown loamy sand.



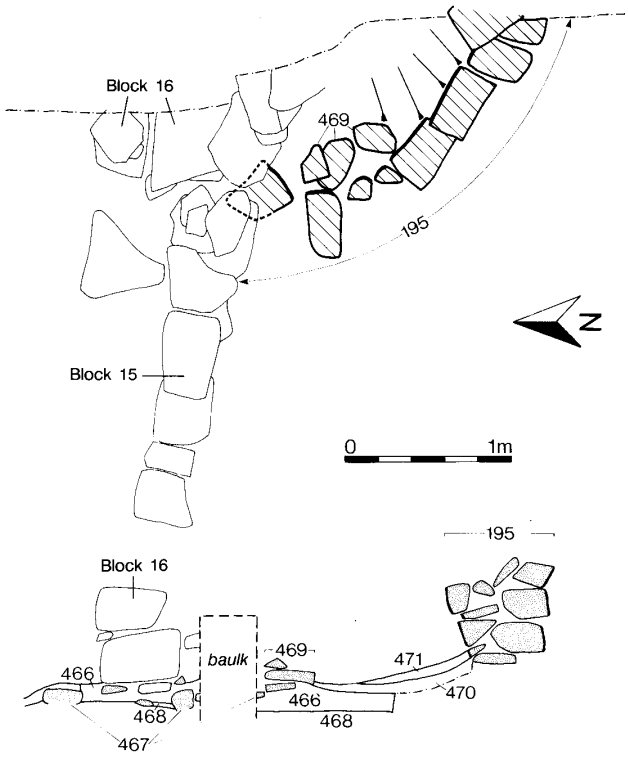


Figure 62. Block 24

Field interpretation

This Block was interpreted as the surviving fragments of one or more structures of unknown dimensions. It consisted of an arc of slabs, a wall and a series of layers contained within them. These latter lay over a pale brown sand which was not excavated.

The two pH values recorded for this Block are 7.6 and 7.7. The soil colours are recorded as very pale brown to brown dark brown and in texture from sand to loamy sand. Layer boundaries were predominantly sharp and wavy.

Specialist contribution

Sheep, cattle and pig were identified.

Archaeological interpretation

The archaeological interpretation of these deposits must be based on the field observation and cannot, in this case augment it. It is possible that the soil contexts included here are midden-site deposits, but the absence of any finds militates against this interpretation. Consequently, this Block cannot be interpreted.

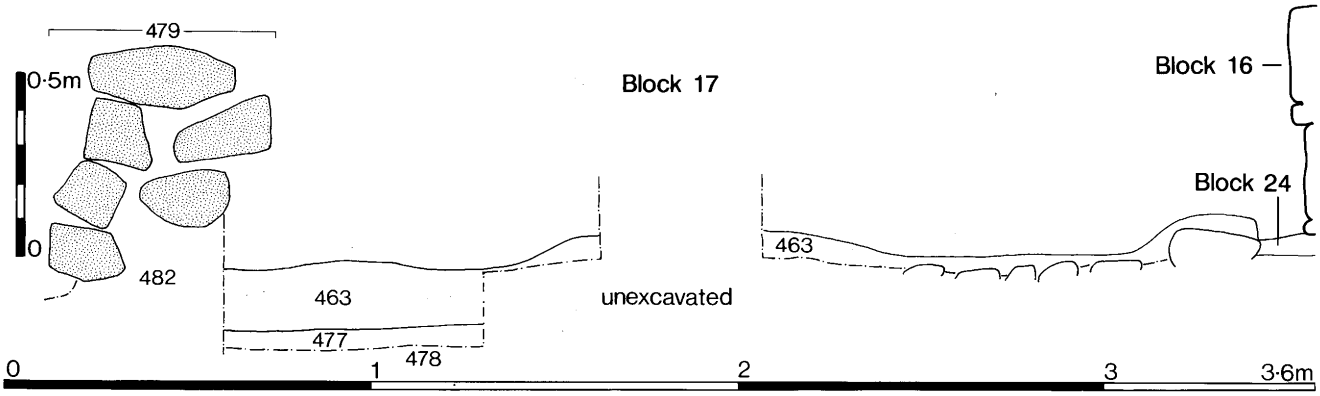


Figure 63. Block 25: section

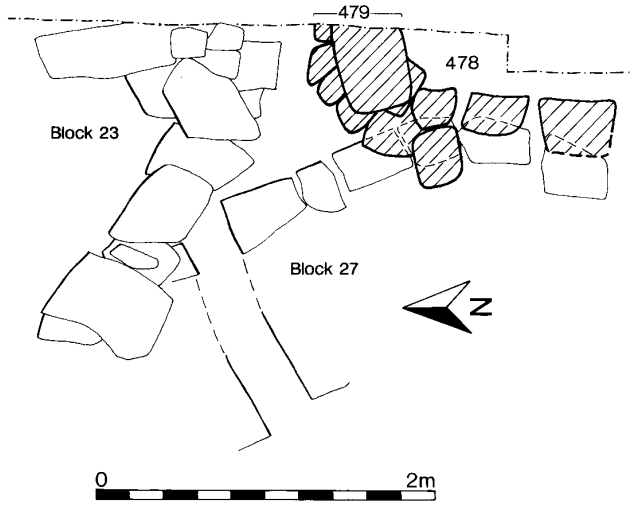
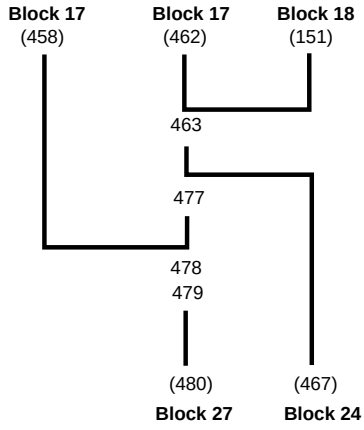


Figure 64. Block 25: plan

6.28 BLOCK 25 – STRUCTURE 4

Block 25 lay in the centre of the site at the base of the section under Block 17 (Figure 38). Its full depth and extent were not determined but its layers were revealed in the section for a depth of 0.25 m and for a distance of 4.5 m (Figure 63). This Block included a wall, [479], seen beneath the sloping stones of Block 17. It was 0.6 m high and 0.5 m wide and constructed of rounded stones. Excavation revealed that



[479] was a wall face, one stone thick, which projected forward from the section face for approximately 0.5 m before turning south to run parallel with the section for a distance of 1.2 m (Figure 64). It was not possible to record the layers within this Block for safety reasons. However, the uppermost layer in this Block, [463],was seen to abut the masonry [479], and was of pale brown sand. It was thought that the layers beneath also abutted [479] but this was difficult to establish. Layer [477] was a dark brown sand while the others were all light brown sands.

Field interpretation

This Block was interpreted as a fragment of a structure represented by a single wall [479] and possible floor surface [477].

Archaeological interpretation

The associated strata were revealed over too small an area to be interpretable and so the archaeological interpretation must be that this Block consists of a structure of unknown association and function.

Specialist contribution

Sheep, cattle and pig were identified.

6.29 BLOCK 26 – CULTIVATED DEPOSIT

See tables p.320

* ^{14}C date 2370±50 bp (GU-2027) from layer [339] (Periwinkle).

Block 26 lay in the northern part of the site (Figure 38). It abutted Block 23 and extended for 6.2 m to the north. Its was not excavated to its full depth but was revealed for a total depth of 1 m. It consisted of layers and lenses which sloped downwards to the north (Figure 65). Some layers, notably [338] and [339], appeared to have been truncated at their northern ends, with subsequent redeposition of material, [348] and [349]. The layers ranged in colour from light yellow-brown to dark greyish brown and in texture from

Plate 26. Hornish Point. The masonry wall to the right of the drain [172] has been removed, revealing the side-set slabs [161]

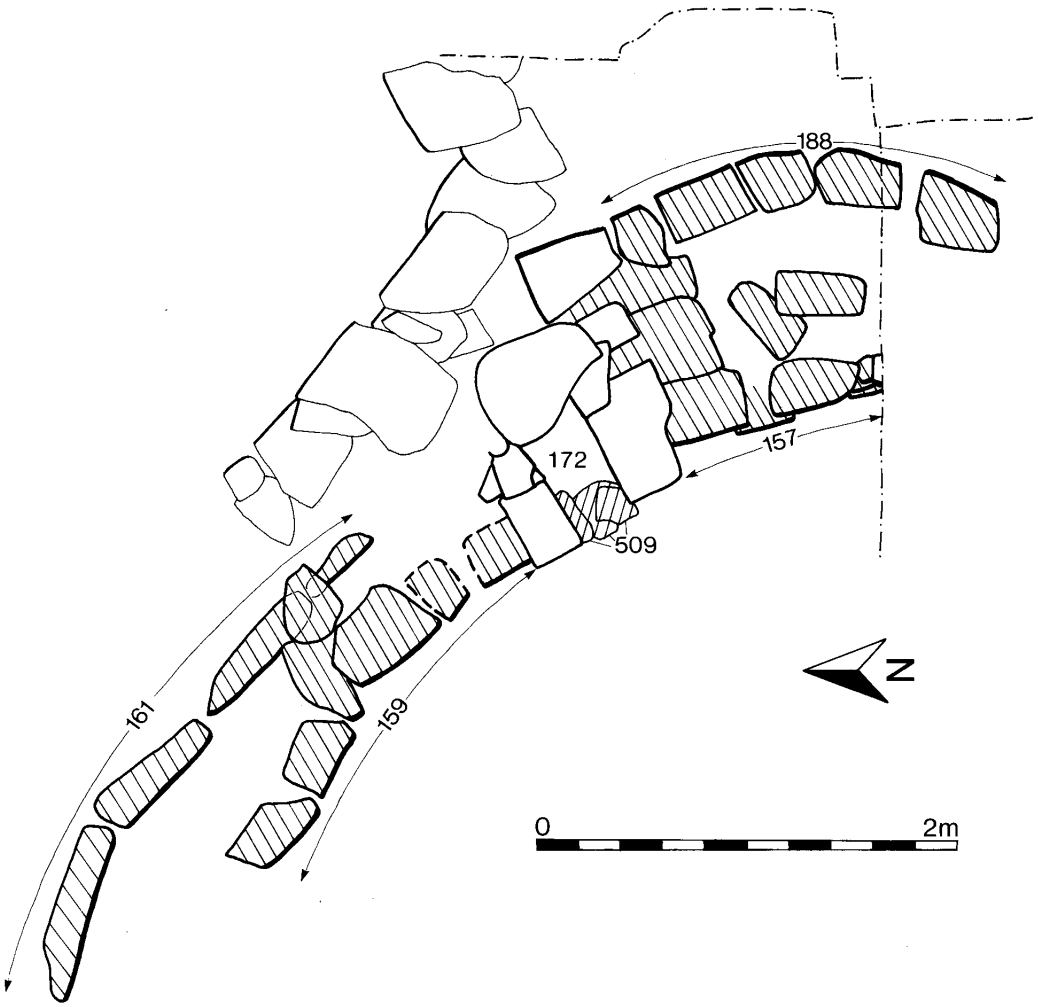


Figure 66. Block 27

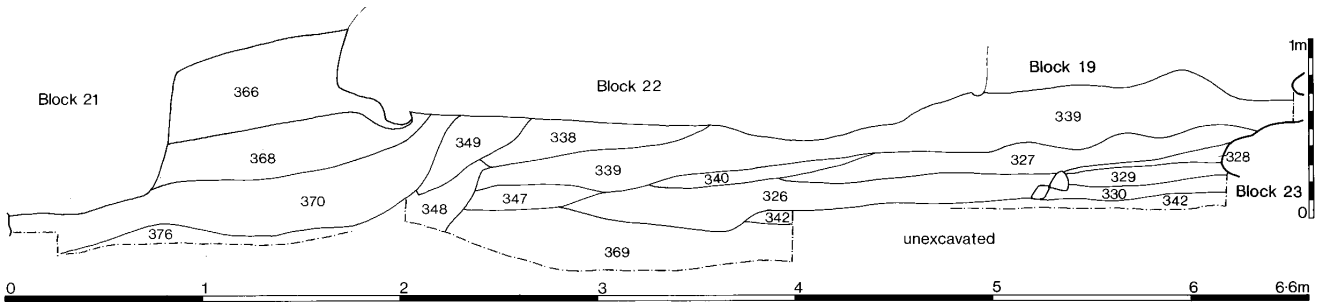
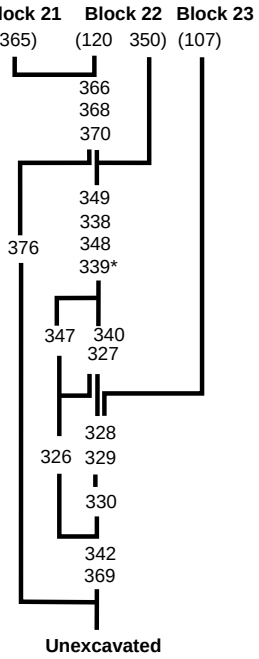


Figure 65. Block 26



loamy sand to sand. The boundaries were often clear and wavy. Within 2–3 m of the south end of the Block a trelliswork of fine brown-stained filaments was noted throughout its depth of the Block. These appeared to have been the result of ground-water fluctuations. The Block was truncated by the structure in Block 22.

Field interpretation

This Block was interpreted as a cultivated deposit because of its depth, extent and content. Structure 1 (Block 23) had been inserted into this deposit.

No IHI has been calculated for this Block but material from nine contexts was retrieved in variable, but mostly small, amounts representing a restricted range of types. All ten potsherds returned from this Block were examined. They range in size-class from 2 to 5 and are mainly small. The pH values recorded for this Block range from 7.3 to 8.0 with a modal value of 7.5. Phosphate values ranged from 2 to 4, 4 being the most common value. The soil colours are recorded as ranging from light yellow brown to dark greyish brown and in texture from sand to loamy Layer boundaries were predominantly abrupt to clear and wavy to smooth.

Archaeological interpretation

The information recorded above is consistent with the interpretation of this Block as a set of cultivated deposits. The relative paucity of anthropic materials suggests that the Block was at some distance from the contemporaneous structures or that the cultivation was of short duration. The pot sherd size distribution for the Block tends to support the latter hypothesis.

Specialist contribution

Sheep, cattle and pig were identified.

Conclusion

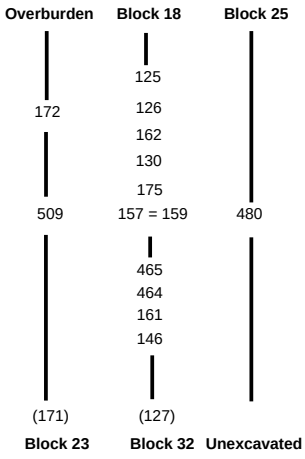
This Block consists of a set of deposits which were, probably, intermittently cultivated.

6.30 BLOCK 27 – STRUCTURE 2 – MASONRY AND FLOOR SURFACES

See table p.321

* ^{14}C date 2410 ± 50 bp (GU-2161) from layers [79, 464 & 465] (Periwinkle & limpet).

This Block does not appear in the section drawing as it lay to the west of the section face. It lay beneath Block 18 and to the south-west of Structure 1 (Block 23). Block 27 consisted of a curving drystone wall face built to either side



of the drain associated with Structure 1 (Figure 66 & Plate 25). The wall face was constructed of up to four courses of large stone slabs and measured 0.6 m high. It was exposed in plan for a distance of 4 m (Plate 26). The outer face of this wall was keyed into the rear of the Structure 5 wallface, where the two curves conjoined. The drain feature was filled initially with brown sand layers and then several irregularly shaped stones, [509], had been placed in line with the wall face which effectively blocked it. Behind and above this blocking were a sequence of sand layers, grouped under the context number [172]. These consisted of mainly light coloured sand except for occasional thin layers of dark brown sand. Behind the wall face at its north end, were four vertically set slabs, [161] (Plate 26). These were roughly concentric with the inner wallface, 0.3 m back from it and stood about 0.6 m high. Small stones were packed around their bases. Two deposits were seen between these and the inner wallface. These were a laminated sand deposit and a light brown sandy loam, [464] and [465], respectively. Beneath the slabs was a light brown sand. Abutting the wallface were four layers, seen in the area of the pits (Block 18). They consisted of alternately light coloured sand, [130] and [125], and dark coloured sand, [175] and [126]. A group of small slabs, [162], were set vertically into the surface of layer [130] about 0.2 m to the west of the wall face.

Field interpretation

This Block was interpreted as a fragment of a curved structure, which was faced on both sides. Part of this construction included the blocking up of an earlier drain, emerging from a wheelhouse, Block 23. The vertical slabs, [161], were thought to be a constructional element of the wallface [157]. The dark coloured sand layers which abut the wallface may have been the floor surfaces of this structure separated by layers of clean sand.

It was not possible to calculate the IHI values for this Block but anthropogenic materials were present in variable quantities in six contexts, representing relatively restricted ranges of material types. Less than 5% of the stone from one context was burnt. Of the twenty-five potsherds from this Block seventeen were examined and they range in size-class from 1 to 14. The two pH values recorded for this Block range were both 7.3. Phosphate values were both 5. The soil colours were light brown to dark brown and the textures were sand to loamy sand. The single recorded layer boundary was abrupt and wavy.

Archaeological interpretation

The field observation of the masonry structure remains untested by the information listed here. The characteristics of the putative floor levels are consistent with their interpretation as floor levels. The presence of nineteen of the twenty-five potsherds from this Block in an apparently sterile sand layer between the floor deposits is worthy of note.

Specialist contribution

[465] contained, in addition to a fragmentary metatarsal of indeterminate side, the following complete bones of sheep: 1 left metatarsal, 2 first, 1 second and 2 third phalanges. All these bones could be derived from the left hind foot of a single juvenile sheep (less than 2 years old, on the evidence of epiphyseal fusion) and may well represent primary butchery waste.

Bones of flatfish were also found.

Conclusion

This Block represents a fragment of an early structure surviving beneath and partly incorporated into Blocks 18 and 15.

6.31 BLOCKS 28 TO 31

See table p.321

Blocks 28, 29 and 31 are shown in Figure 38. Block 30 was exposed in a machine trench to the west of the section face and therefore does not appear in the illustration. Insufficient evidence was available to facilitate interpretation of these Blocks. The overburden of windblown sand (Block 30) was between 1 and 2.5 m deep over them, making it unsafe to excavate or even to survey them properly.