

DAM BANKS SOUTH SLUICE POND, MOOR POND WOODS,

PAPPLEWICK, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION



For: The Friends of Moor Pond Woods

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Summary

- The Friends of Moor Pond Wood, in partnership with Trent & Peak Archaeology, excavated 4 trenches situated at the southernmost point of a subsidiary pond near to Dam Banks South Sluice in order to establish the link between this pond and the trough spanning the width of the sluice and running in to the leat. The excavations were located within the Dam Banks area of Moor Pond Wood, Papplewick, 100m west of Moor Road, and 300m south of Linby Lane Centred at grid reference SK 54780 50758. The works were carried out between 2013 and 2015. The excavations at Dam Banks South Sluice are part of a larger Heritage Lottery Fund project to investigate and interpret the archaeology of the entire Moor Pond Wood area.
- The water system for the Robinson Mills was constructed between 1778 and 1830, although there may have been a mill (or mills) on this site before that. Evidence on the 1835 Sanderson map suggests that there was a holding pond and a subsidiary pond within the vicinity of the south sluice which may have acted as storage or an overflow during times of flooding.
- The main objective of the excavation was to establish the original topography of the subsidiary pond and its relationship with the trough that would have spanned the width of the south sluice
- Excavations revealed the even sloping base of the pond, and evidence for at least two attempts to build up the banks on either side of the pond. These construction events coincide with a build up of silt on the base of the pond, possibly due to a lack of use once the cotton mills went out of use in the 1830's when the mills were sold to the Hopper family. At this time some mills were retained as corn mills, and the site may have been maintained to prevent flooding problems.
- A potential ditch and a posthole were revealed in section, which might relate to the funnelling of water to a trough which spanned the width of the south sluice, however, this interpretation remains speculative.
- If work could be continued in this area, then a bore hole survey of the holding and subsidiary ponds to establish flood events, or rate of silt deposition, and targeted excavations to reveal more post holes or stonework relating to the trough would be recommended.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Since 2000, the Friends of Moor Pond Woods have been striving to establish the extent and the complexity of a water system and its associated cotton mills built by the Robinson family in the 1770's. With the help of a Local Heritage Initiative grant scheme, a number of areas have been investigated, recorded and conserved. In this latest phase of community oriented works funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Friends, in association with Trent & Peak Archaeology and a number of volunteers from the wider community, have investigated an area north of the Dam banks south sluice to establish the depth of a holding pond and how water was managed in this part of the system.
- 1.1.2 The work took place at intervals over three years between July 2012 and July 2015. The project was an opportunity to build capacity within the group by providing training in archaeological field techniques, surveying and recording.
- 1.1.3 The work comprised of 4 trenches in a single excavation area at the south end of a holding pond, north of the main Moor pond. The centre of the site is located at NGR SK 54780 50758 (Figures 1 and 2). The level of the site was between 71.87m ordnance datum (OD) at its lowest point and 74.59m OD at its highest, prior to excavation.

2 Project Background

2.1 Research context

- 2.1.1 In 1999, the Papplewick Parish Council's Millennium Committee decided to develop the Moor Pond Wood area as a 'valuable permanent recreational resource' by focussing on three themes:

'To improve access for all, especially elderly and disabled people;

To protect and improve the wildlife value of the woodland and water features;

To restore and interpret the archaeological features of the site.'

Friends of Moor Pond Woods (2014)

- 2.1.2 Over £100,000 has been raised and used to achieve these three themes in the past 15 years.
- 2.1.3 Trent & Peak Archaeology first became involved with the project in 2001 undertaking a desk based assessment (Sheppard, 2001). This led onto a complete site survey, which identified and recorded remaining features and identified areas for further investigation (Sheppard 2003). One of these areas identified is the southernmost part of the area known as 'Dam Banks'.

3 Site Topography and Geology

3.1 Topography

- 3.1.1 Centred at NGR SK 54780 50758, the site lay within the Dam Banks area of Moor Pond Wood, Papplewick, 100m west of Moor Road, and 300m south of Linby Lane (Figure 2). The Dam Banks area is about 2 acres in size and is defined by a series of irregular shaped banks and platforms a number of hollows and a curving gully towards the southeast end.

The earthworks, although irregular and variable, appear to mark a series of holding ponds running along the east side of the area.

3.2 Geology

- 3.2.1 The underlying bedrock is comprised of Edlington formation mudstone and sandstone, and the superficial deposits consist of Leen sand and gravel and alluvial clays and silts. (British Geological Survey 2015)

4 Historical and Archaeological Background

4.1 Historical

- 4.1.1 Papplewick is recorded as having two water mills and a mill dam in 1540 (Walker 1970, 231) and it is feasible that the latter was located above Wark Mill, part of which still remains today to the north of Papplewick Lane (SK 547 505). The area of the former Walk Mill Pond is still visible in the fields to the northwest of the Grange Cottage Woods.
- 4.1.2 George Robinson and sons took over the lease on the Walk Mill in the 1770s. In 1778, a new lease was made between the landowner Montagu and Robinson, allowing the latter to:

‘to make a Cut or Canal from the said Dam or River Leen to and for the use of a large building then erecting ... intended to be used or employed as a Mill for spinning of Cotton, Silk, Flax or Wool.’

This new mill was situated close to the present-day Grange Farm, south west of Grange Cottage Woods. Robinson's second mill, Top Mill, was built in 1782, along with Top Upper Dam and Upper Dam, close to the parish boundary with Linby (Figure 3). This building was Robinson's smallest mill and, being castellated, was also known as Castle Mill (Walker and Sheppard 2011). The Middle Mill was also built at this time and had a small pond which was probably fed by water transferred via the leat system from Top Upper Dam. Forge Mill, which had a pond fed by the river Leen, dates from 1787. A second Grange Mill was built in 1790. This became known as New Mill to differentiate it from the existing Old Mill at the Grange. This mill seems to have used the water from Top Upper Dam. The final mill to be developed, in 1794, was the Forest Mill at Bulwell (Walker, 2015).

- 4.1.3 What began as a simple water control and storage system in the 1770's appears to have quickly been altered and adjusted as additional demands were placed upon it. The system is estimated to have reached its maximum extent by 1830. It continued to supply water to Top Mill and Forge Mill but it is not known when specific areas of the system fell into disuse (Walker 2015).
- 4.1.4 The name 'Dam Banks' first appeared on the Second Edition 6 and 25 inch scale Ordnance Survey maps of 1900. It is possible that the area was used for the bleaching of linen. George Robinson was initially a bleacher and in 1771 he was still principally described as bleacher. Alternative possibilities include 'hemp pits,' which are recorded in the tithe award for Linby close to the River Leen. The potentially damp conditions within most of the Dam Banks could also have been used for growing of willows for spiling, the revetting of banks (such as canal banks) and steep slopes by using stakes with willow poles woven between them. The area may have served no other purpose than to act as a holding area for water when the leat or nearby Upper Dam threatened to overflow after heavy rains and affect Linby Lane. The supposed earthworks within Dam Banks may be the result of dumping of soils from either the initial digging of the adjacent leat, or from later dumping when housing spread along Linby Lane (Sheppard, 2011).

- 4.1.5 On Sanderson's map of 1835 (Figure 4) the subsidiary pond and holding pond still seem to hold water, although they look to be the same feature and the presence of a bank between the two is not very clear. However on the Ordnance Survey map of 1880 (Figure 5) the subsidiary pond seems to have dried up and the area has become a field, the holding pond is suggested to be an area of marshland

4.2 Archaeological

- 4.2.1 Since 2002 fieldwork has been carried out around Moor Pond by volunteers from the Friends of Moor Pond Woods, Scouts, Air Cadets and the Leen Valley Conservation Group.

- 4.2.2 In 2003, surveys were carried out in Dam Banks, to determine the profiles of the features within the area. Within Dam Banks, the main leat would have flowed into a triangular shaped holding pond with high banks surrounding it and a terrace within it. Openings and visible stonework at the east and south points of the triangle indicate former sluice-gates. The leat seems to have potentially fed into another irregular shaped subsidiary pond to the east of the holding pond, as suggested by a lack of banks at the north east of the triangular holding pond, which would have siphoned the water back into the main leat and into Moor pond, through a sluice gate and a trough.

- 4.2.3 Two phases of stonework were revealed at the south sluice, the second, a rougher drystone walling, was in part aligned on a former timber-lined trough that had transferred water from a possible overflow pond, across the sluice to the leat that followed the west side of Moor Pond; this suggests that this particular leat as a later addition. Remaining iron fixtures showed that the trough had been 2ft wide, 4ft high and 36ft long (0.6 x 1.2m x 11m). The curving wall on both sides of the central sluice blocks may suggest that water could be allowed to flow through the aperture in either direction, at different times. Another sluice in the east side of the holding pond was later uncovered and recorded by project volunteers working with the Sherwood Archaeology Team (Sheppard 2007).

4.2.4 Test Pits

- 4.2.4.1 Two test pits were excavated in the Dam Banks area in 2008. Test pit T1400 was located on the terrace within the triangle holding pond. The deposits excavated, were consistent with an interpretation that the terrace was periodically flooded, (rather than containing flowing water that would have been more likely to deposit coarse-grained material).

- 4.2.4.2 Test pit T1500 was situated on the north bank of the Moor pond (Figure 6). The deposits indicated that this was the site of a channel linking the possible subsidiary pond to the trough at the South Sluice. The stones may be remnants of a channel lining. Alternatively they may be remnants of a demolition phase, perhaps marking the site of a stone dump where useful material was stored and/ or sorted. The stones that were exposed were angular and showed no sign of being shaped to form parts of a wall. There was no mortar debris in the fill.

5 Aims and Objectives

- 5.1.1 The main aims of the works within the Dam banks south sluice area were:

To examine the area between the site of test pit T1500 and the bank of the smaller subsidiary pond north of Moor Pond, by means of a shallow trench, to establish whether there is more buried stone along this line of the trough, or launder, that crossed over the approach to the sluice-gate, and whether the walls revealed in the 2005 exploration of south sluice continue further toward the east.

To undertake a more detailed examination of the embankment lines, to attempt to make sense of the pattern.

To re-establish the lines of the embankment and original depth of the pond, and to construct a bridge over the top for viewing purposes and accessibility to the rest of the site

To provide the local community with opportunities to become involved with the project by offering training in excavation, recording and surveying techniques to volunteers and by interpreting the structures uncovered and making this information accessible to all.

6 Methodology

- 6.1.1 The work in Dam Banks was carried out between 2013 and 2015 by members of Trent and Peak Archaeology, the Friends of Moor Pond Wood, the Leen Valley Conservation Volunteers (LVCV) and volunteers from the wider community.
- 6.1.2 All work met with requirements and standards set out in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment Project Planning Note 3: Archaeological Excavation (MoRPHE PPN3) (English Heritage 2008), and the requirements and standards set by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) in their Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation (CIfA 2014a) Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological material (CIfA 2014b); Code of Conduct (CIfA 2014c) and Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives (CIfA, 2014d).
- 6.1.3 There were 4 trenches excavated, two of which became one trench as the area of excavation was extended. The trenches were entirely hand excavated using trowels and shovels. All features and deposits were recorded at an appropriate scale by measured drawing and photography. Sections of excavated features were recorded at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate. Spot heights were recorded relative to Ordnance Datum.
- 6.1.4 The excavation area was approximately 7m in length north-south and 11m in width east-west long in total, incorporating the east and the west bank of the pond edge at its narrowest point.
- 6.1.5 Any features would be located and levelled using either a Leica GSIS/CSIS GPS or EDM.
- 6.1.6 The location of any artefacts recovered in the subsoil or in features was recorded by context. All artefacts were treated in accordance with UKIC guidelines and First Aid for Finds (1998).

7 Results

7.1 Trench 1

- 7.1.1 Trench 1 was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.7m, to an approximate length of 8.4m east to west and width of 2m north to south. It incorporated part of the bank situated to the east of the subsidiary pond. A land drain was uncovered running through the north section of the trench and was left uncovered on a slight platform at a depth of 50-60cm. No other features were recorded in plan.
- 7.1.2 Plate 1 shows the north facing section of Trench 1. Below the deposits of alluvial build up and landscaping, there is a dramatic change in sediments within the section from a brown

grey silt sand (1004) to a pink sand and clay (1005). This is suggested to be the base of potential subsidiary pond [1017], with (1004) as the primary fill. The depth of the base is 73.67M OD at the west corner of the trench. This measurement is from the deepest point of the pond revealed in the trench, however it could be deeper towards the centre of the pond. The edges of the pond were even and gentle sloping but are not fully exposed within the section excavated.

- 7.1.3 A potential ditch feature was revealed in the east corner of the north facing section (Plate 2). A light grey brown clay sand deposit (1009) seemed to be cut into (1005) with an even sloping east edge, the base was flat [1018]. The west edge was not revealed. This feature could indicate an earlier phase of water management works in this area, linking this smaller pond to the leat or Moor pond itself prior to the trough being constructed as a method of controlled water transportation.
- 7.1.4 Sandy silty deposits (1006), (1010) and (1008) in figure 7 suggest multiple phases of deposition on the pond banks, possibly to raise the level of the banks to compensate for the rising pond floor level as the pond silted up through lack of use.

7.2 Trench 2 and 3

- 7.2.1 A second and third trench was opened south of trench 1, following the suggested route of a channel that would have led into the trough over the south sluice. Trench 2 began as 5m long east to west and 1.2m wide north to south before being extended to 2.8m wide. The maximum depth of the trench was 1m. A steep edged east-west cut was exposed [1011] through trench 2, filled with firm pink clay (1012). The clay deposit measured between 60 and 90cm wide and ran for c. 3.5m before continuing through the far east facing section below the embankment, toward the north side of the modern bridge spanning the leat (Plates 4 and 6). The maximum depth of this feature was 80cm. This feature was cut through the same alluvial deposits found in trench 1 and therefore is potentially a later feature, however its purpose is unknown.
- 7.2.2 The full profile of [1011] was fully exposed during the excavation of a test pit within trench 2 during the extensions which led to the amalgamation of the two trenches. The east facing section of this test pit was recorded and can be seen in figure 7. A post hole was also identified in this section, 26 cm wide and 41 cm deep, with steep straight edges and a rounded base. It was cut through by clay feature [1011] on its northern edge (Plate 5). The purpose and the date of this posthole are unknown but it is located near to the stone work remains found in test pit 1500 and therefore could have a relationship to the trough that connected the subsidiary pond to the leat.

7.3 Trench 4

- 7.3.1 Trench 4 was excavated at the top of the pond bank to establish whether the subsoil layers were the same as the layers identified in trench 2 (Plate 3).
- 7.3.2 Trench 4 measured 2m east to west long by 40cm wide north to south and a maximum of 60cm deep. Below the thin layer of topsoil (1000) a 25cm deep layer of mid brown yellow sand with sub rounded pebbles was observed, similar to (1010) in the North facing section. A mid grey silt subsoil (1003) was found below this but its depth was not fully excavated.
- 7.3.3 This trench suggests that the banks could have been built up at a later date when the pond was already beginning to silt up. They could relate to the period of time when the pond had become an area of marsh land, as suggested on the 1847 map, when they were raised up to prevent flooding.

7.4 Finds

- 7.4.1 There were fragments of slate and CBM within the clay feature [1011] however the excavation did not uncover finds from any of the other contexts.

8 Discussion

- 8.1.1 Trench 1 revealed the depth of the pond and the gentle slope of the pond edges, with numerous deposits suggesting that the banks were built up at least twice, possibly to compensate for the rise in pond floor level. The rise in pond floor level could have been due to the water management system falling out of use when the cotton spinning enterprise ended in 1831 with the sale of the cotton spinning equipment by the new owners, the Hoppers (Greatorex, 1986). Top Mill was converted into a corn mill so the site in general would have still needed to be maintained to prevent flooding. The silting up of the subsidiary pond would have been completed by the production of the Ordnance survey map of 1880, as the map shows the pond to be a dry field. However a bank was still in evidence, and the holding pond was suggested to be a marshland, therefore it is possible to say that the bank was protecting the new field from flooding from the holding pond. Trench 4 also revealed the material used to create the bank on the western edge of the trench.
- 8.1.2 There was no evidence of stonework found to indicate the continuing presence of walls associated with the south sluice, or to indicate the continuation of the trough that crossed over the south sluice. However there was the potential evidence for structure in the form of a shallow ditch within the base of the pond, a pink clay deposit and a narrow posthole, but the area will need to be thoroughly and carefully explored to establish the purpose of these features
- 8.1.3 More work will need to be undertaken to completely examine the embankment lines of the subsidiary pond, but the work that was completed was enough to re-establish the lines of the embankment and original depth of the pond in this area for it to be viewed as such by the public from a newly constructed bridge.

9 Conclusions

9.1 Additional work in the Dam Banks Area

- 9.1.1 Possible future work in this area now includes:
- 9.1.1.1 Carefully extending the exploratory excavations toward the trough and south sluice to expose any remains, including potential postholes, that have been so far missed.
 - 9.1.1.2 A bore hole survey could be completed to establish the maximum depth of the subsidiary pond and holding pond, and to establish whether the area was affected by flooding that would have caused the banks to have been built up.

9.2 Community engagement

- 9.2.1 Approximately 20 volunteers from the Friends of Moor Pond Wood and the Leen Valley Conservation Volunteers have been involved at some stage over the excavation, and have learned new skills, including excavation, finds processing and interpretation.
- 9.2.2 It is hoped that the reestablishment of the edge and base of the subsidiary pond will enable the public to ascertain a greater understanding of the south sluice area and the water management system of Moor Pond Woods as a whole.

10 Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to the Friends of Moor Pond Wood and the Leen Valley Conservation Volunteers, led by Lee Scudder, for their invaluable assistance with the excavation. Thanks are also extended to Stephen Walker for his support with the interpretation and evaluation of the site, and to Gareth Davies who managed the project.

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Plates



Plate 1: North facing section of trench 1 Looking south west (L. Binns 2015)



Plate 2: Western end of North facing section, showing potential ditch feature. Looking south (L. Binns 2015)



Plate 3: Trench 4 showing bank build up. Looking north east (L. Binns 2015)



Plate 4: South east facing section of trench 2, showing clay deposit [1011] continuing into the embankment. Trench 4 is visible at the top of the image. Looking north west (L. Binns 2015)



Plate 5: South east facing section in the middle of trench 2 showing clay deposit [1011] running east-west, and posthole [2015]. Looking north west (L. Binns 2015)



Plate 6: Continuation of clay deposit [1011] Looking north west (L. Binns 2015)

Plate 7: Trench 1. Looking north west (L. Binns 2015)



Figures

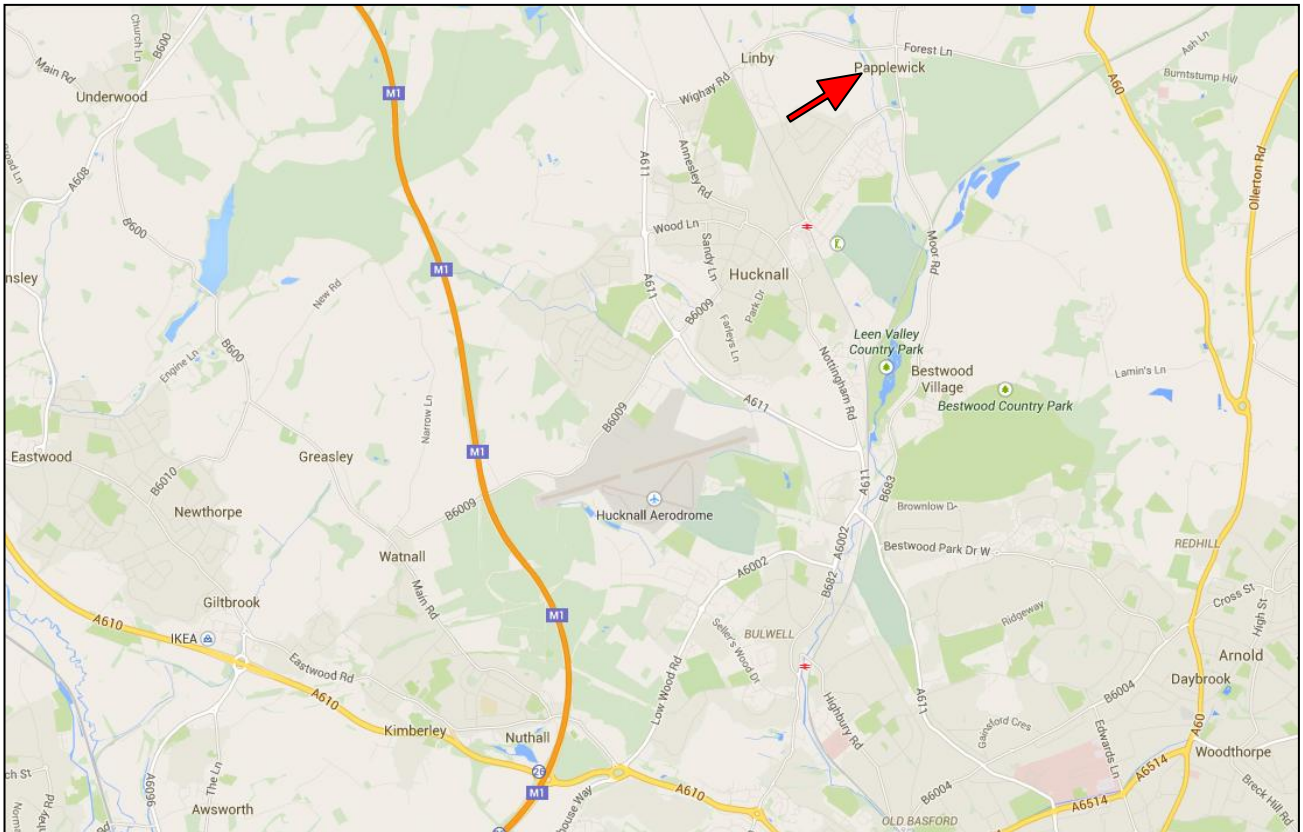


Figure 1: Location map of Dam Banks south sluice, Papplewick, Nottinghamshire. (Ordnance Survey map reproduced with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright License No. AL 100020618).



Figure 2: Location of the Dam Banks south sluice within the Moor Pond wood area (Ordnance Survey map reproduced with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright License No. AL 100020618).

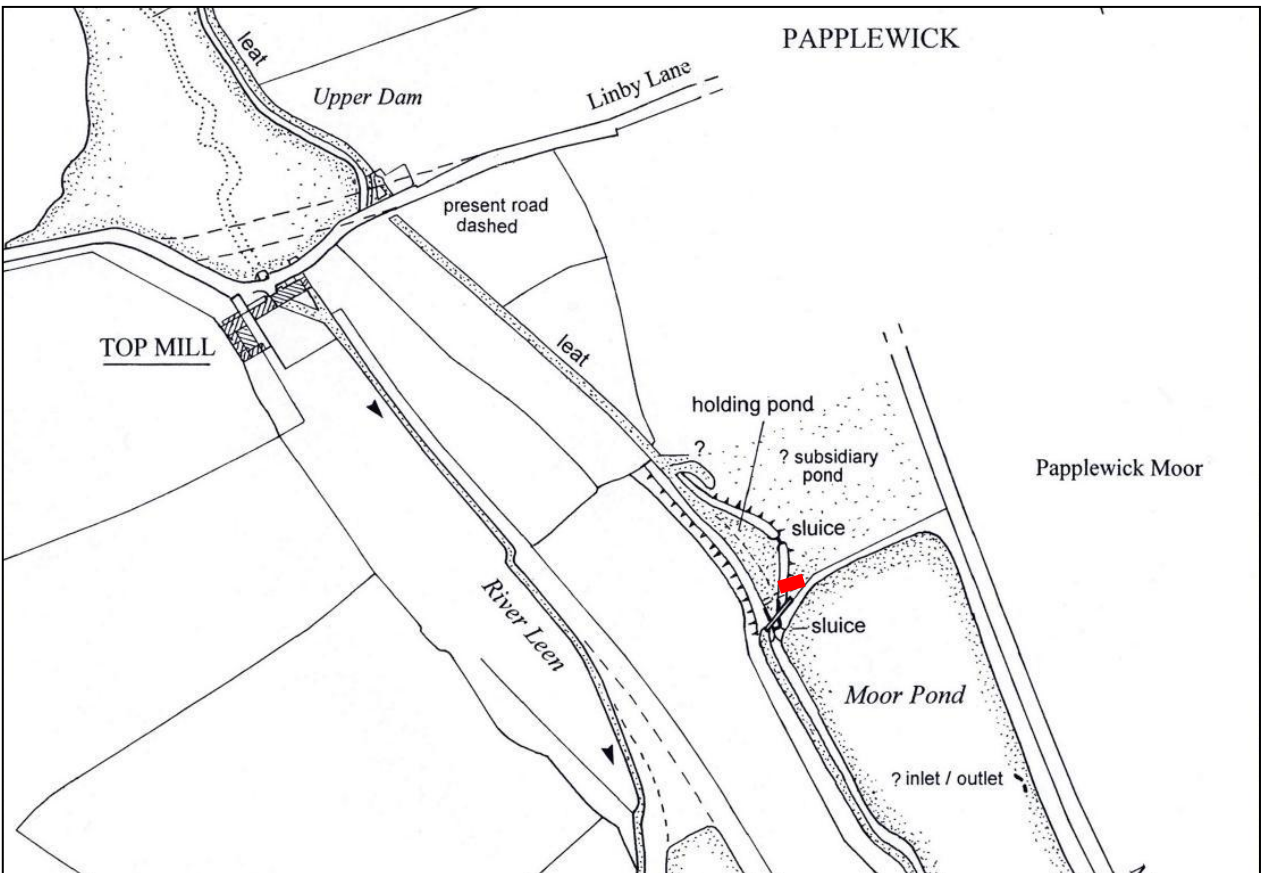


Figure 3: Dam Banks South sluice and subsidiary pond in relation to the mills and associated features in the area in the late 18th Century. The red box indicates the locations of trenches in Figure 8. Scale 1:4,000. (After Sheppard, 2011).

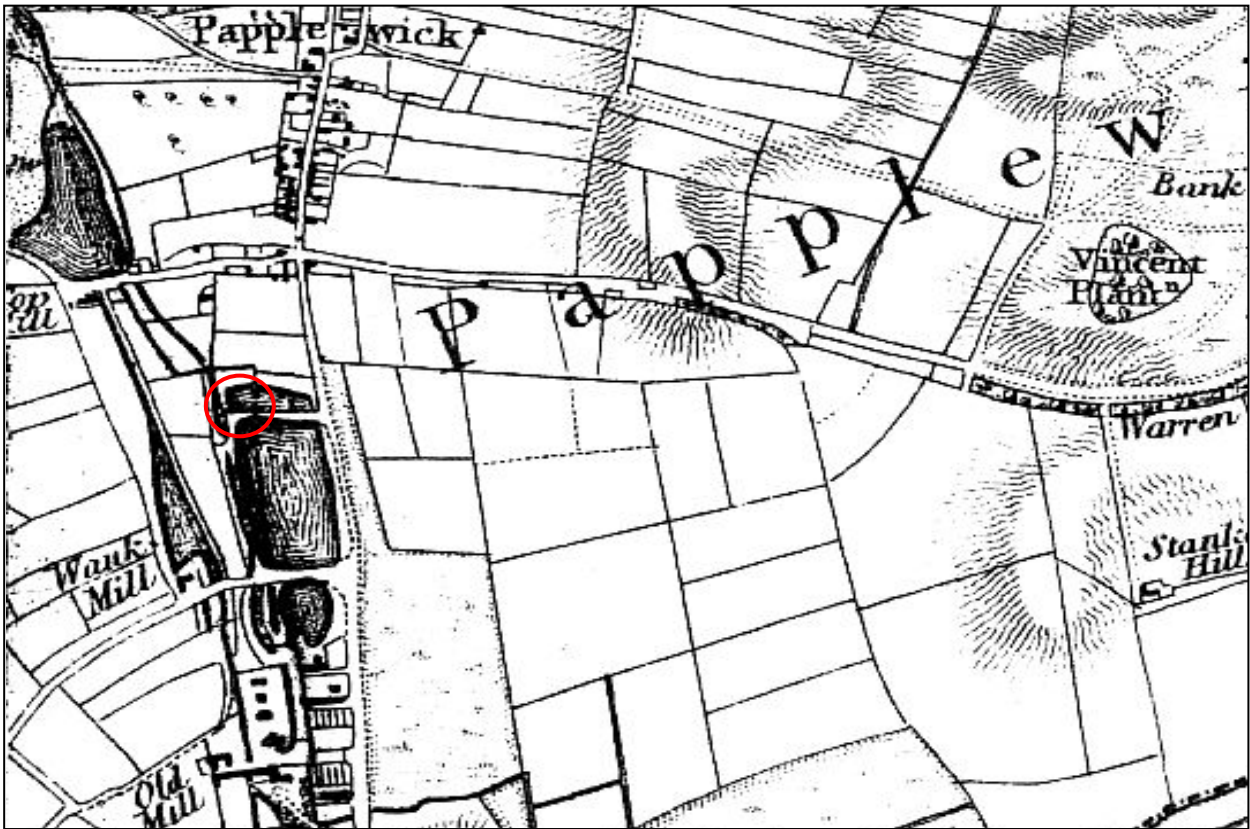


Figure 4: Sanderson's map of Nottingham 1835. The leat and subsidiary pond are clearly visible. Not to regular scale.



Figure 5: The holding pond and banks is still visible, although the area is suggested to be marshland. The subsidiary pond north of Moor Pond seems to have become a dry field area. Ordnance Survey 25 inch scale map of 1880-81. Scale 1:5000 (After Sheppard, 2001)

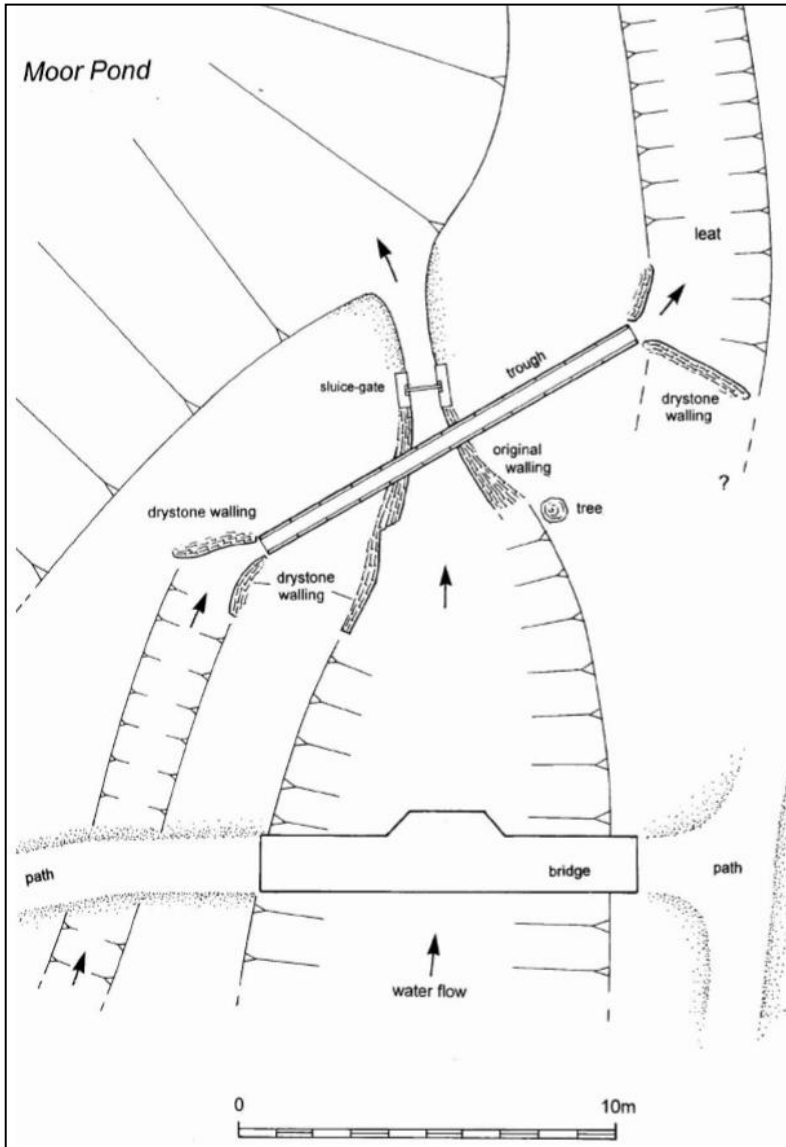


Figure 6: Plan of south sluice with trough or launder crossing over the stone wall approach to the gate. The plan does not show the full extent of the subsidiary pond on the left of the bridge, but it suggests the presence of dry stone walling in place to funnel the water from the pond into the trough and onto the leat. Looking south (From Sheppard, 2007)

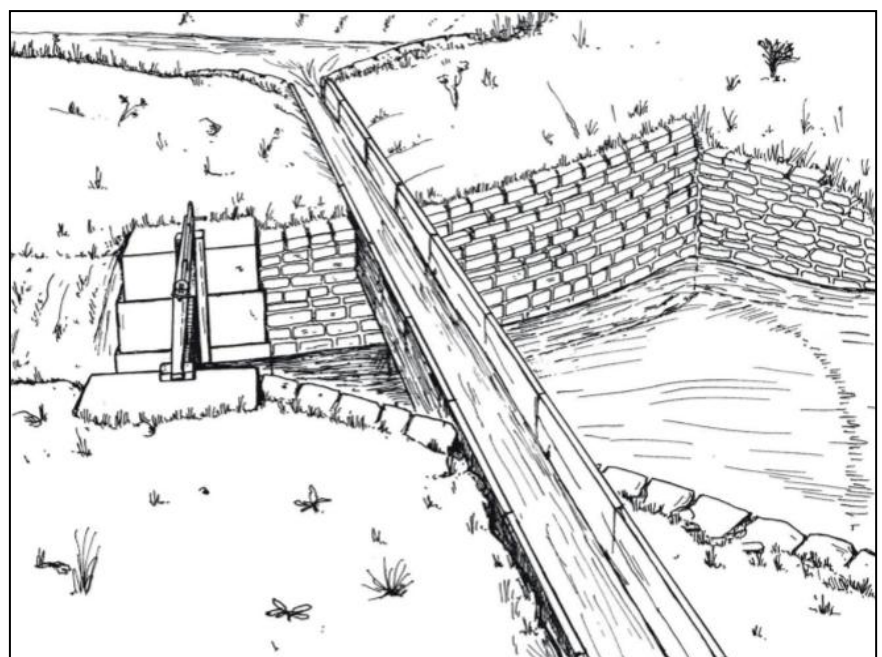
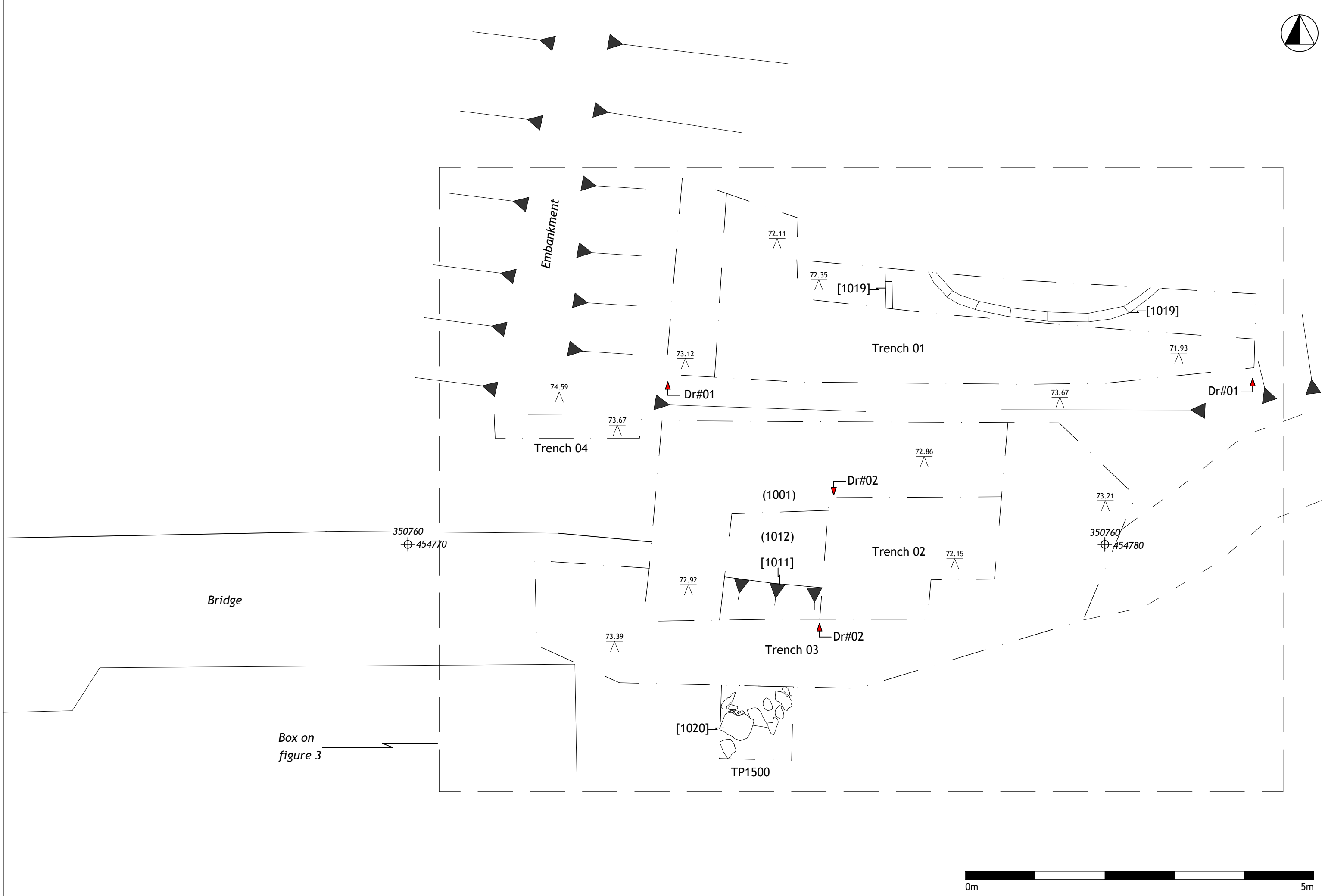
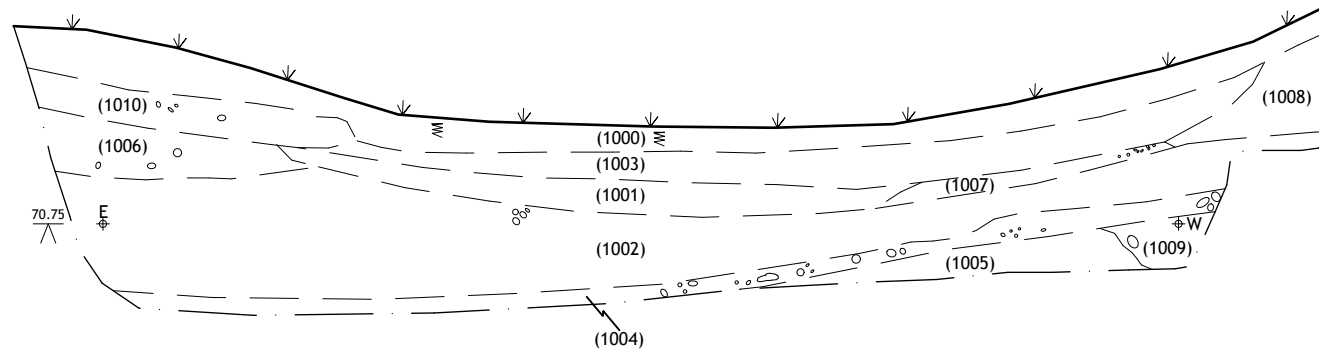


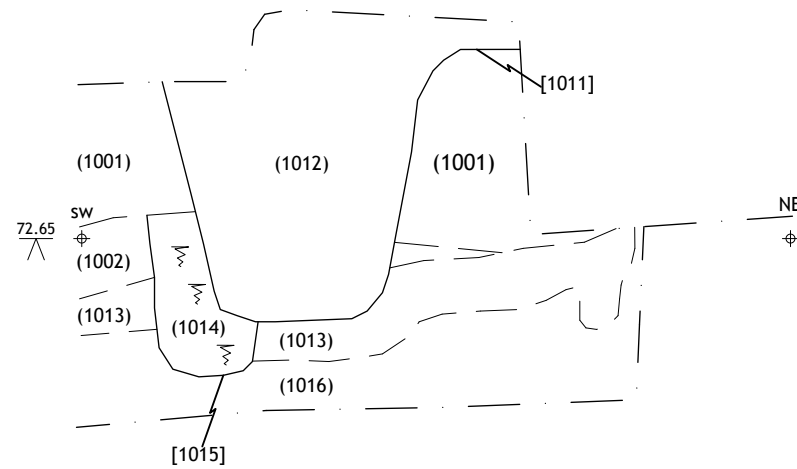
Figure 7: Reconstruction of the south sluice with trough or launder crossing over the stone wall approach to the gate (From Sheppard, 2007)



Dr 01
North Facing Section



Dr 02
East Facing Section of [1011] and [1015]



Appendix 1: Context list

Context	Category	Description
1000	Layer	Friable dark grey silt topsoil
1001	Layer	Friable mid yellow brown grey mottled silt sand
1002	Layer	Friable purple brown sand silt, <10% <65mm stones
1003	Layer	Friable mid grey silt subsoil
1004	Fill	Friable brown grey silt sand, <30% <65mm subrounded stones
1005	Layer	Friable orange pink clay with sand mottles
1006	Layer	Loose light yellow sand silt <5% <70mm subrounded pebbles
1007	Layer	Friable dark brown silt <40% iron oxide flecks, frequent pebble scatters
1008	Layer	Friable dark brown red sand silt with pink clay mottles
1009	Deposit	Loose light grey brown clay sand with rare large cobbles
1010	Layer	Loose clay sand <10% subrounded stones
1011	Cut	Steep yet even edged cut with rounded base
1012	Fill	Pink clay fill of 1011
1013	Layer	Loose yellow sand with iron oxide traces
1014	Fill	Friable mid brown clay silt fill of 1015
1015	Cut	Steep yet even edged cut with sharp rounded base – Posthole
1016	Layer	Friable dark blue grey silt clay
1017	Cut	Even and flat base of subsidiary pond, fill 1004
1018	Cut	Even slope and flat based cut, fill 1009
1019	Structure	Curved land drain in base of trench 1
1020	Structure	Stonework in the base of test pit 1500