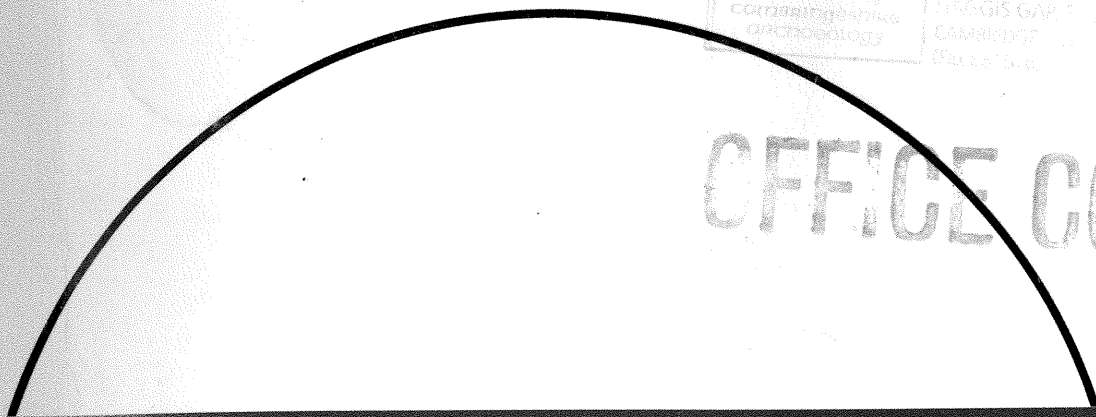


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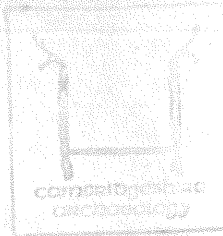
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**Proposed Waste Disposal Site at Milton
An Archaeological Survey**



 Cambridgeshire
County Council
Rural Strategy



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**PROPOSED WASTE DISPOSAL SITE AT MILTON
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY**

TL46306280

November-December 1990

J. M. Oetgen

Archaeology Office
Rural Management Section
Department of Property
Cambridgeshire County Council
Shire Hall, Castle Hill
Cambridge CB3 0AP



Mere Way, Milton

Cambridgeshire
archaeology

MILTON PITS EXTENSION

Archaeological Survey, November-December 1990

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

An area of 47.5 hectares, located at the western boundary of the parish of Milton, was systematically fieldwalked. The artefactual assemblage recovered contained a small quantity of finds dating to Prehistoric, Roman, Medieval, and post-Medieval periods but not in sufficient concentration to suggest sites of occupation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Survey team:- Simon Bray, Gary Evans, John Ette, Stephanie Leith, Jeremy Oetgen, Ben Robinson, Merek Ziebart, and Skip.

Historical research, and diagrams used in this report by G. Evans

Pottery report by Chris Going.

INTRODUCTION

The survey was undertaken by a team of archaeologists, employed by Cambridgeshire County Council, in advance of the proposed use of the site for gravel extraction and waste disposal. The work was funded by the Department of Transportation and took place between 26th. November and 4th. December, 1990. The aim of the survey was to identify any areas of archaeological interest, as part of an Environmental Assessment.

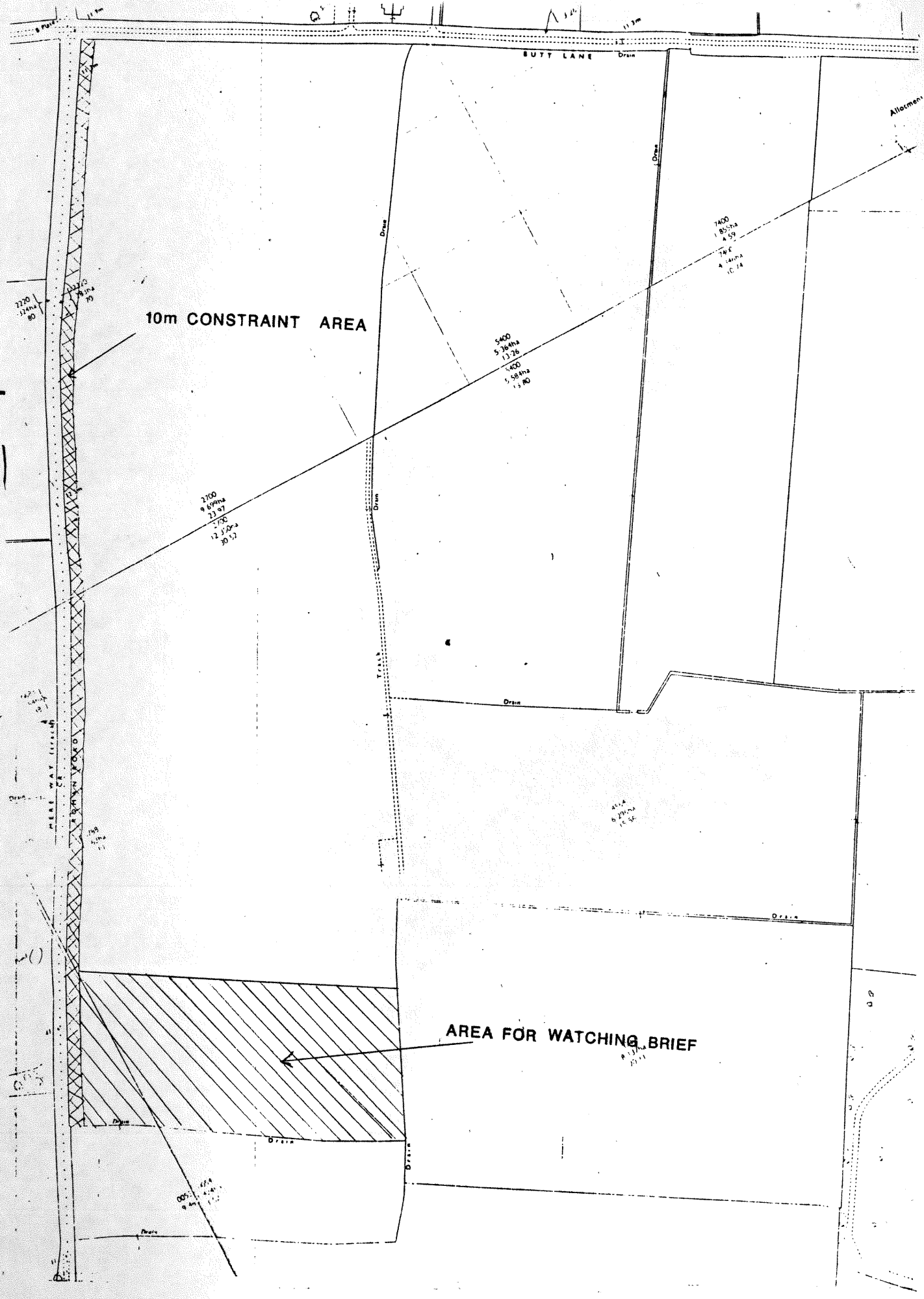
THE SETTING

Location of the Site

Milton parish is situated about 5 miles to the North of Cambridge. The survey site was comprised of four large fields, totalling 47.5 ha., which were located against the boundary with the parish of Impington at the west of Milton. This boundary runs down the centre of a green lane known as Mere Way. The site was bounded to the North by the Milton to Impington road (Butt Lane) and, to the East, by the Thirteenth Public Drain. The site extended for some 850m South of Butt Lane. See figure 1.

Topography and Geology

The ground is generally level, at a height of around 11m O.D. (based on O.S. spot heights on Butt Lane and Mere Way, which are a little higher than the adjacent fields), and lies over gravels and alluvium, on top of Gault clay, (Soil Survey of Great Britain, 1963).



10m CONSTRAINT AREA

AREA FOR WATCHING BRIEF

BUTT LANE Drain

Allotment

2700
8.69ha
13.97
1.06
12.52ha
30.57

5400
5.36ha
13.76
1.60
5.58ha
13.80

7400
1.85ha
4.59
1.16
A. 1.87ha
4.74

4014
6.20ha
15.52

0014
9.41ha
23.52

2720
11.14ha
30.15

HERE WAY LEAD
TO
TOWN YARD

113

0.2

0011
1.11ha
2.81

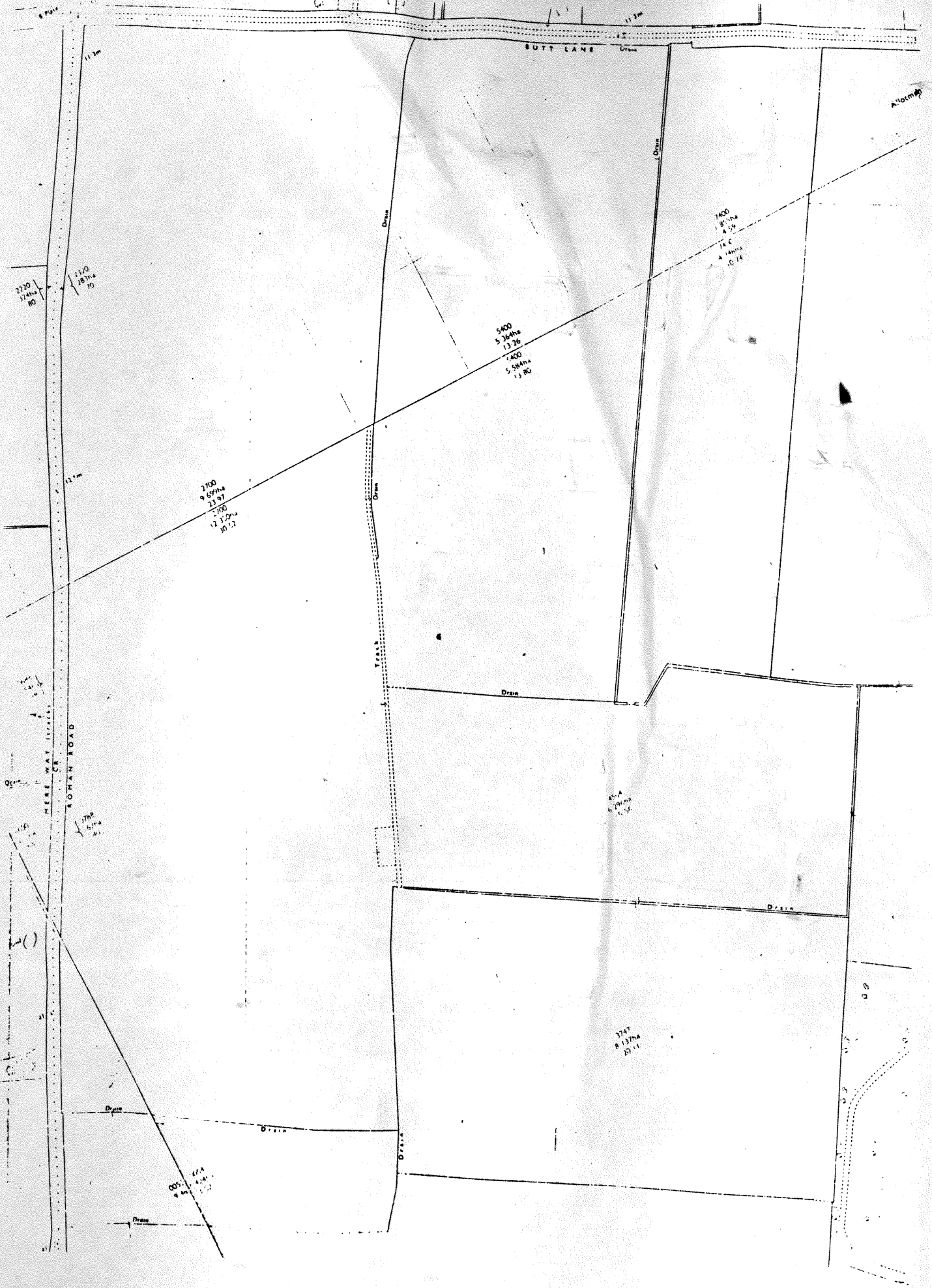


Figure 1:- Site Location Map

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Parish Boundary Changes

The area of Milton parish was doubled in 1912, when 1622 a. (657 ha.) were transferred from the parish of Chesterton, which lies to the South. Before 1912 the parish boundary ran through the middle of the present survey area, perpendicular to Mere Way, (cf. figures 1 & 2).

Land Use and Tenure

Up until 1800, the Milton was farmed in three open fields:- North, Middle, and South Field. The northern part of the site was formerly part of South Field. The land was arable from at least the 16th. c., (V.C.H., IX, 163). The Inclosure map of 1802 shows the land given over to allotments held by Edward Mason (figure 2, field no. 160) and Elizabeth Taylor (figure 2, field no. 161).

From 1900, much of the land to the West of Milton was used for market gardening, (V.C.H., IX, 177).

The part of the site which was part of Chesterton, occupied the north-western corner of the East Field of that parish. The inclosure map of 1840 lists the allotments of William Collins and John Wilson.

The O.S. maps surveyed in 1954 (figure 3) show the land lying between the site and the former Cambridge to Huntingdon Railway as extensive marshalling yards and large sheds, which are no longer extant. These are identified as a Second World War tank depot, (see Previous Fieldwork, below).

The Roads

Mere Way is a Roman road, surviving as a green lane and defining the parish boundary. It is part of the route known as Akeman Street, which runs from Cambridge to the Fens, partly following the A10. In the 16th. c. the lane is recorded as "Street Way", (V.C.H. IX, 178).

It is suspected that a minor Roman road may have existed to link Mere way with the known Roman potteries at the East of Milton and in Horningsea. Research has failed to find evidence for such a road. The road between Milton and Impington, Butt Lane, was laid out at Inclosure, (V.C.H. IX, 178).

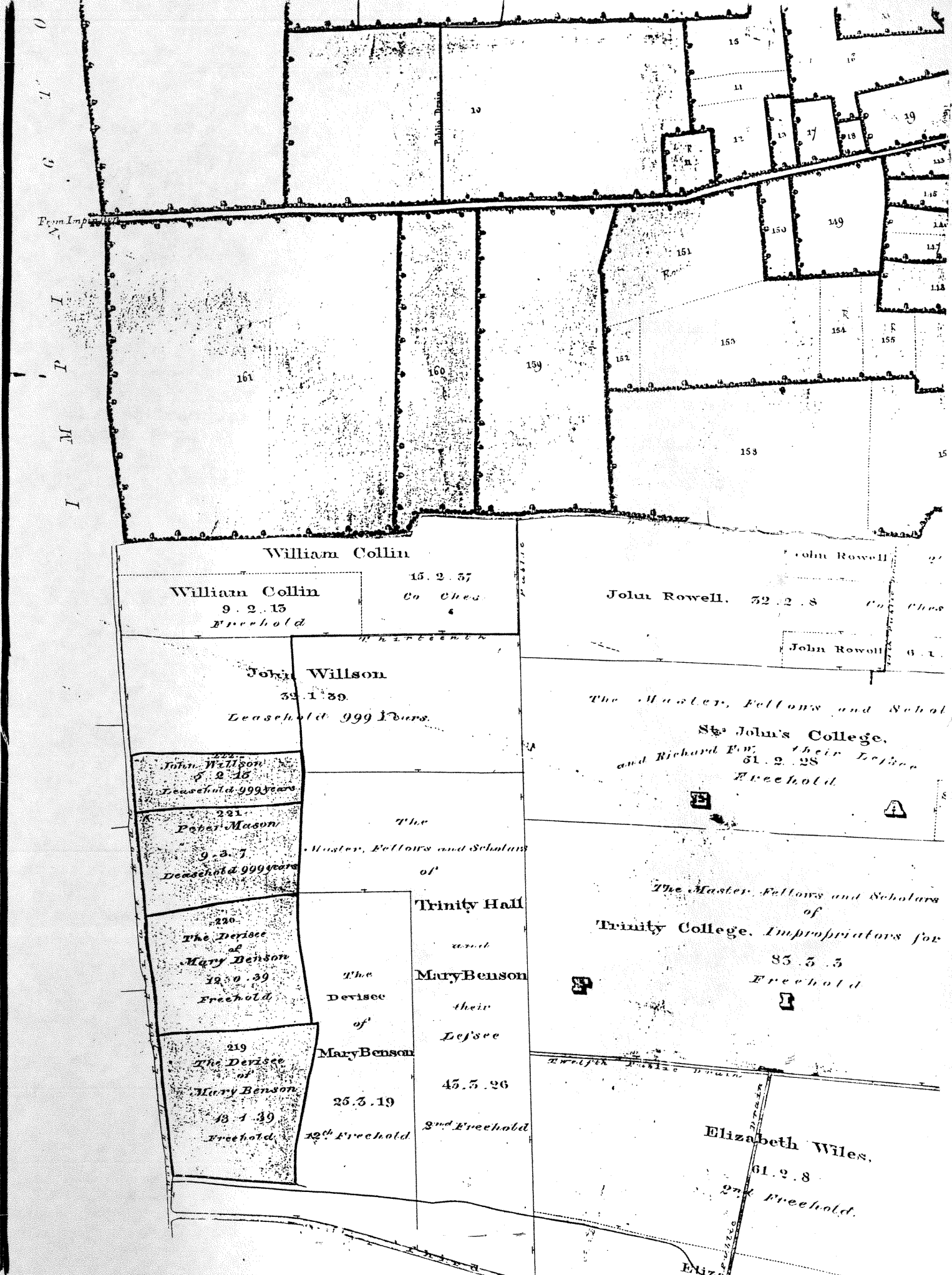


Figure 2:- Composite of Inclosure Maps for Parishes of Milton and Chesterton, (dated 1802 and 1840 respectively)

REFERENCES IN THE SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD (S.M.R.)

The S.M.R. lists no references pertaining to the site itself. There are, however, several finds retrieved by fieldwalking or by metal detecting in the field adjacent to Mere Way and North of Butt Lane. These finds include mesolithic worked flint, Roman and medieval pottery, and Roman coins. A series of undated cropmarks, possibly part of an enclosure, were recorded on aerial photographs, at TL/469-/629-. (See Appendix i.).

PREVIOUS FIELDWORK

In May and June, 1990, an excavation was undertaken by C.C.C., at Kings Hedges Farm, (TL/457-/620-). A single Roman cremation burial was found, close to Mere Way. The ancient earthworks, depicted on 19th. c. maps, were not located and are presumed to have been destroyed by the intensive modern activity in the area, relating to a Second World War tank depot. (Ette, 1991)

STRATEGY FOR INVESTIGATION

In view of the absence of known archaeology within the threatened area, it was proposed that the site should be systematically walked, to recover surface finds and plot their distribution, to locate concentrations which might indicate areas with archaeological potential.

The site was line-walked, on transects 25m apart, with finds located over 25m intervals. Seven archaeologists were employed, working in teams of between two and five people.

A baseline and principle points were set out using a theodolite and 50m. fibre measuring tapes. The fields were walked under moderately favourable conditions, over well washed ground which had been recently ploughed or with newly sprouting crops.

THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

Explanation of Figures 3-7

The distribution of intrinsically dateable archaeological artefacts are illustrated, according to category, in figures 4-9. The provenance of the artefacts is indicated by means of a bar which represents the 25m. transect division on which they were collected. The number of finds per division is denoted by the figure below each bar

The Distribution of Finds Not Illustrated.

Post-medieval artefacts and intrinsically undated objects (bone, shell, iron, etc.) are not shown.

Post-medieval pottery and building materials were present in moderate quantities over most of the area.

A few fragments of animal bone and oyster shells were noted in a general site-wide scatter.

Surface Features

A number of slight, linear undulations were observed on the site. They were not clearly defined and were not accurately surveyed.

DISCUSSION OF THE EVIDENCE

Evidence for all periods prior to the 16th. c. was very sparse.

Prehistoric

A fair scattering of worked and fire-cracked flints implies some form of activity on the site in early prehistory, but the lack of concentrations of worked flint does not help to locate the seat of this activity within the survey area.

Fire-cracked flints are indicative of intense fires at some time in the past. There is a reasonable concentration of these at the south of the site which might suggest prehistoric cooking fires existed in that area, but this interpretation is not confirmed by associated concentrations of artefacts.

Only one sherd of possibly Late Bronze- or Early Iron-Age pottery was found, located at TL/4630/2696.

Roman

The paucity of the Roman pottery assemblage is remarkable, given the proximity of a supposedly major Roman road (Mere Way/Akeman Street) and nearby areas of intense Roman settlement at Arbury,

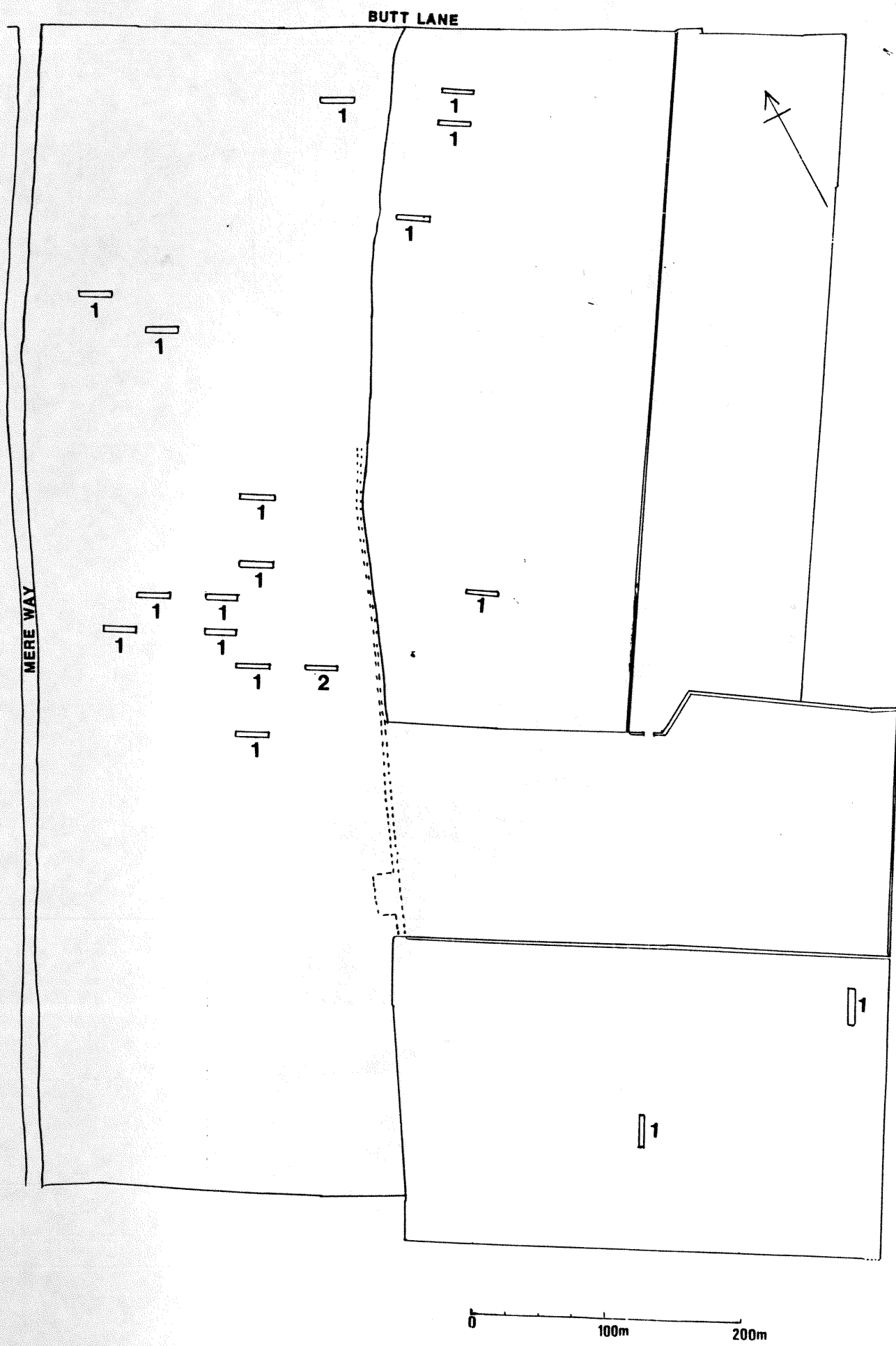


Figure 3:- Distribution of Worked Flint

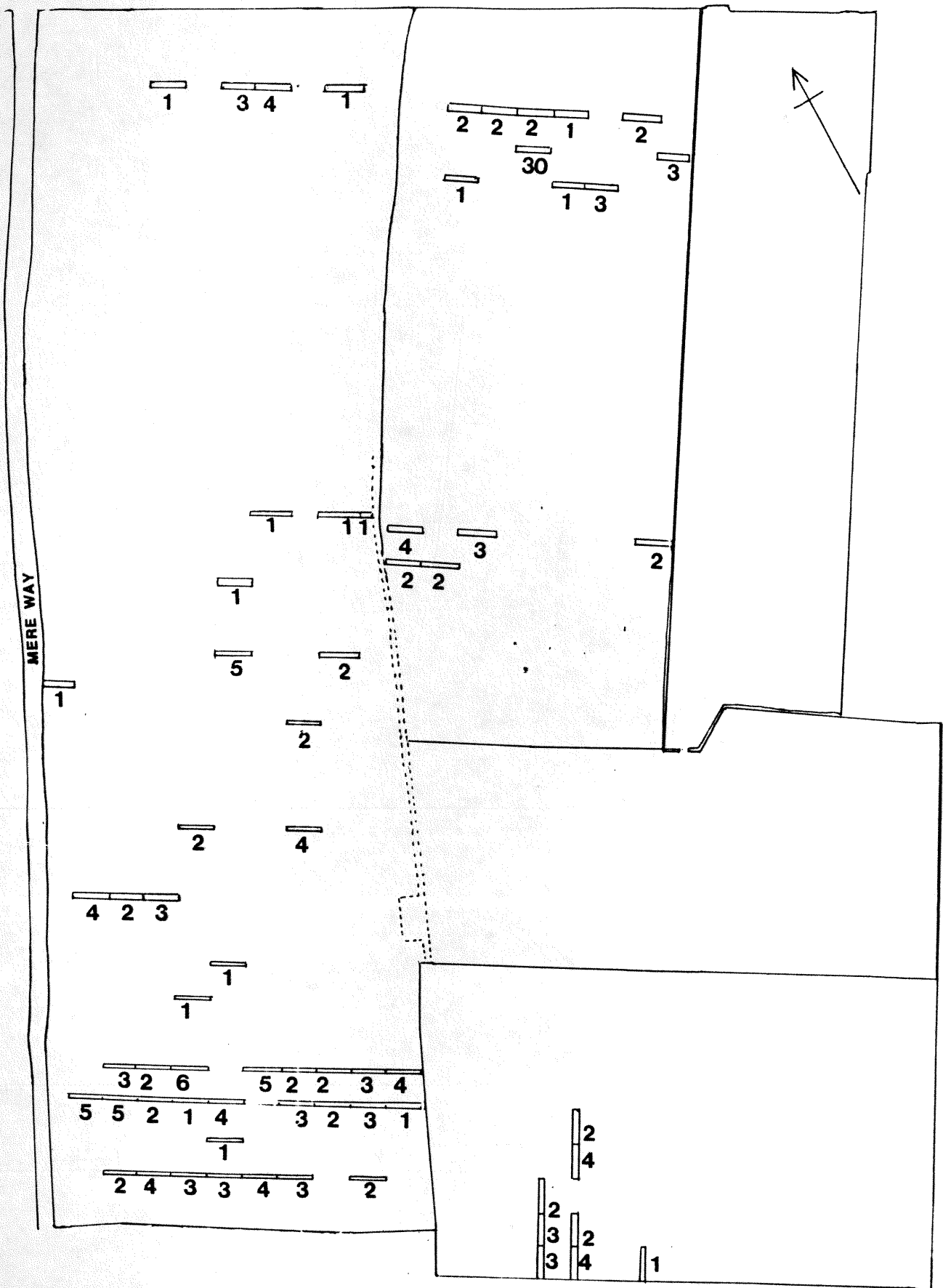


Figure 4:- Distribution of Fire-cracked Flint

0 100m 200m

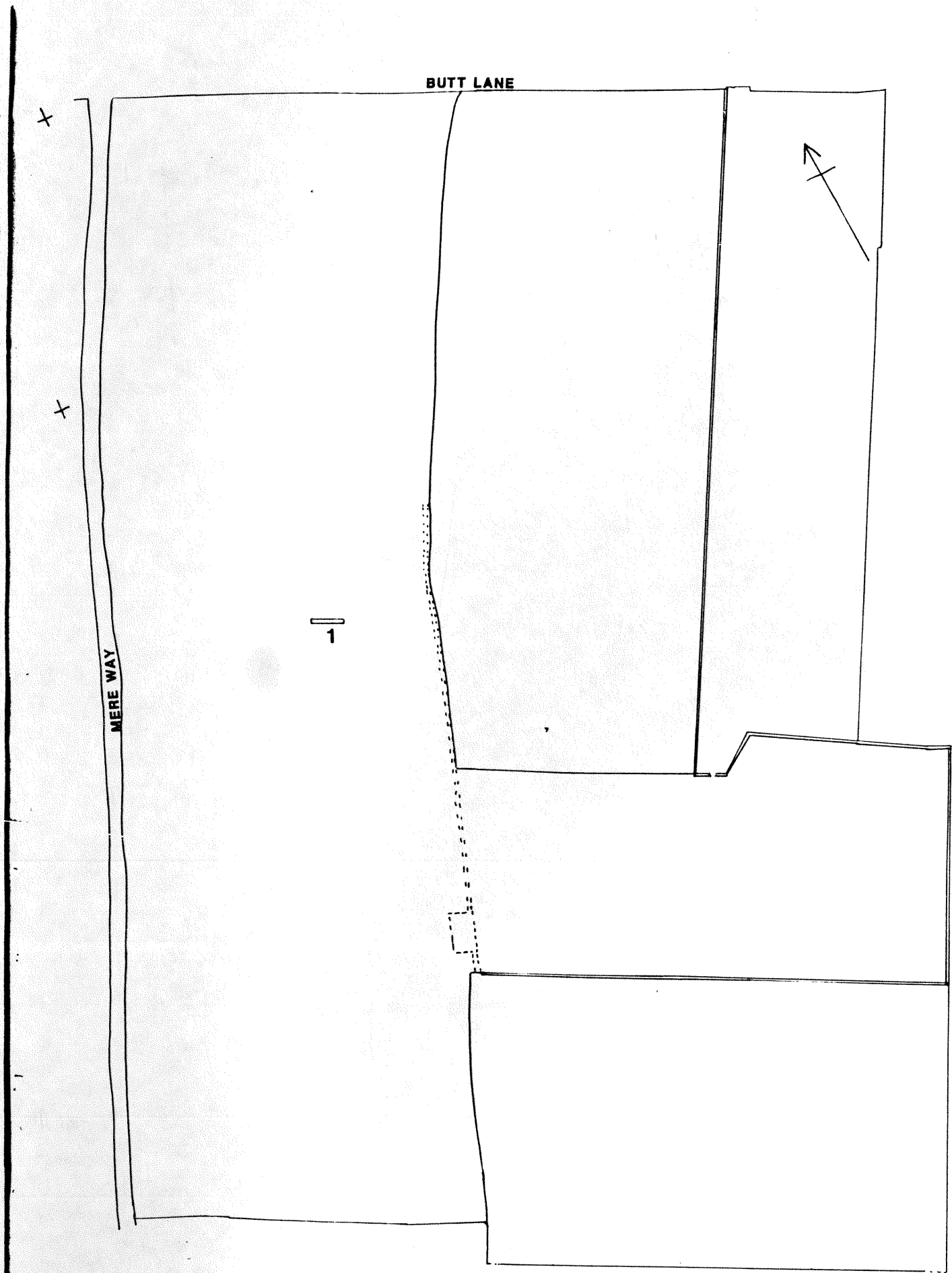


Figure 5:- Distribution of Prehistoric Pottery

0 100m 200m

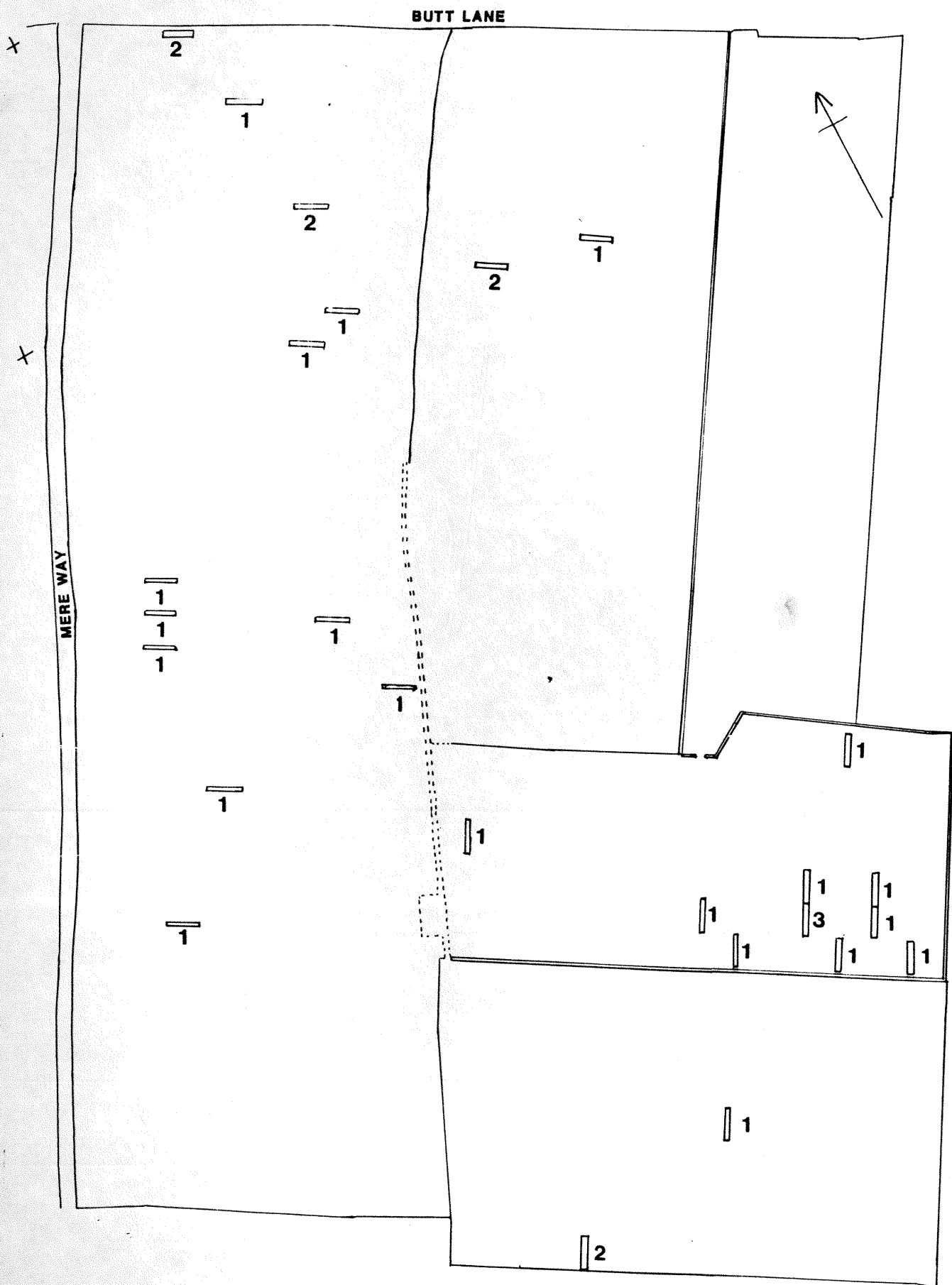


Figure 6:- Distribution of Roman Pottery



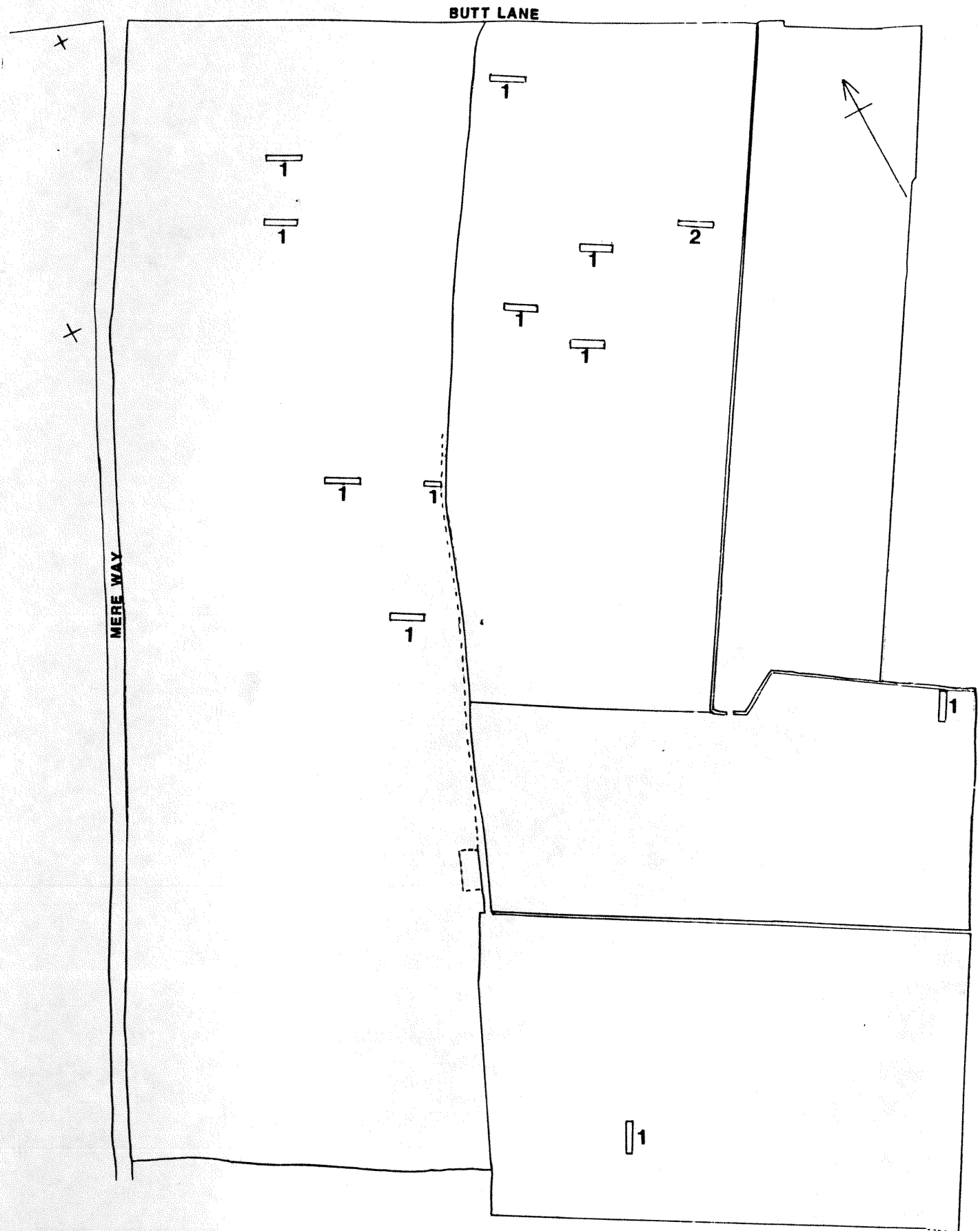


Figure 7:- Distribution of Medieval Pottery

0 100m 200m

Milton and Horningsea. It is assumed that traffic on the road would have resulted in a litter of potsherds along the route, which would be expected to show as a concentration of finds at the western edge of the site. No such distribution was identified and the only cluster of Roman material was located at the East, around grid reference TL/4652/6252. Lack of pottery from the roadside may mean that traffic at this point was fairly light.

It is likely that the land was held under cultivation and the pottery is the result of domestic refuse incorporated in manuring material, (see note on the Pottery, appended).

Medieval

Evidence for Medieval occupation on the site is even more scarce than that for the Roman period. The land was probably under cultivation and lay quite away from settlement areas.

Surface Features

Slight linear undulations observed are most likely to be drainage features, or possibly early enclosures similar to those observed as a cropmarks on aerial photographs at TL/469-/629-.

RECOMMENDATIONS

No sites were discovered where excavation or preservation is recommended, but the following should be considered in any environmental assessment:-

- 1) Adequate protection ought to be given to Mere Way, to ensure the survival of the green lane and also any associated side ditches. The lane is particularly attractive and its setting ought to be preserved as much as possible, for landscape reasons.
- 2) Burials are commonly found alongside Roman roads and a cremation was found earlier in 1990 at Kings Hedges Farm. The presence of human remains of Roman date close to Mere Way is likely.
- 3) There may be surviving evidence of early field systems which would be more clearly visible when any topsoil is removed from the site. These should be surveyed if necessary.
- 4) There is some likelihood of prehistoric occupation to the south of the site.

Recommended Constraints

The following should be observed:-

- 1) There should be no excavation within 10m of Mere Way.

This is a minimum width and a constraint of 25m would be desirable. The wider constraint would not only preserve any traces of roadside ditches to the road, but should eliminate the chance of disturbing human remains.

- 2) There should be provision for a watching brief by an archaeologist on site during any soil-stripping near Mere Way due to the possibility of Roman burials, and also in the area marked at the south of the site where concentrations of fire-cracked flints were observed.

REFERENCES

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Soil Survey of Great Britain, 3rd Edition, Sheet no. 188 for Cambridge, 1963

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Milton Field Survey

Pottery report.

Some 49 sherds were found in the survey region - a meagre total for the size of the survey zone (30 ha.). The precise location of various 25m blocks was not known to the writer when this report was written, and thus it cannot be stated here whether or not this material represents detritus from a site, or just the faint penumbra of sherds which might be expected wherever Roman or later arable farmland is fieldwalked. It is, however, likely that the pottery was all deposited in the survey area as detritus during manuring of arable. The presence of Roman sherds, however, suggests that arable land existed here in the Roman period. There was only one certain prehistoric sherd (a flint-tempered body sherd of LBA-EPRIA date).

Roman material

The bulk of the pottery was of Romano-British origin, or later. Most of it appeared to be featureless body sherds from closed forms of one kind or another, but there were a few sherds worth comment. There was some first century material, including a shell tempered sherd from a high shouldered jar (XX 0), a sherd of a footring bowl, probably loosely based on the Samian f.18/31, in an oxidised fabric. Other sherds worth noting was a sherd of a bag shaped beaker, probably a Nene valley product of the later second century, a sherd of a bead rimmed dish, probably of later Antonine or later date. Later material was fairly rare. Among the typologically latest material were two rim sherds from two flange rimmed bowls (Cam 305B), probably datable to the later third or fourth centuries. There was conspicuously no sherds of later Nene valley thick white ware, Oxfordshire red ware, or late shell-tempered ware. But there were also no traces of fine wares such as Samian, or any other imports. If this material is representative of the ceramics on the sites when it came, they were fairly impoverished.

Post Roman material

Again, there was no indication of a site. There were no traces of material datable to the Saxon or Saxo-Norman periods. The bulk of the post Roman sherds are datable to the 14-16th centuries, mostly characteristic of the Essex fabric 40. Only one diagnostic rim was found, a flat topped type characteristic of the 13-14th centuries. Very little later mediaeval or post mediaeval material was noted, and no glazed sherds were observed.