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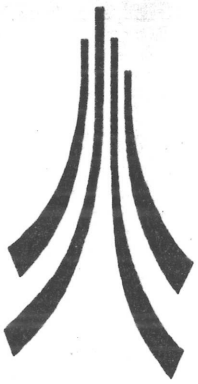

May 1996

WAITBY
CUMBRIA

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Commissioned and funded by:

Pipeline Constructors (Northern) Ltd

Waitby
Kirkby Stephen
Cumbria

Archaeological Watching Brief

Checked by Project Manager. ..... Date
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The author is also grateful to Dr Brian Roberts of Durham University for allowing use of his survey plan of the fields around Waitby.

This Watching Brief was undertaken by Peter Redmayne (Project Supervisor) who also wrote the report. This report was edited Jamie Quartermaine (Project Manager). Rachel Newman (Assistant Director) acted as line manager, and Richard Danks prepared the illustrations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) at Waitby, Cumbria during the laying of a North West Water Ltd pipe trench (NY 078747 to 071762); the work was undertaken between 18/3/96 and 30/3/96.

Following discussions with the English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments, the line of the trench was deviated around two Romano-British settlements (designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments), but elsewhere crossed areas of a medieval early upland cultivation containing features such as lynchets, banks, areas of ridge furrow, and trackways. A Watching Brief was required by the Cumbria County Archaeologist to identify any sub-surface features affected by the pipe and to monitor the impact of the pipe on the earthwork remains.

No below ground archaeological features were recorded during the watching brief, although the trench crossed a number of upstanding earthworks. Where the line of the pipe crossed sensitive landscape features care was taken to ensure that vehicles used as narrow a corridor as possible to reduce damage to the earthworks.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

A watching brief was undertaken by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) near Waitby, Cumbria (Fig 1) during the excavation of a North West Water Ltd water pipe trench between 18/3/96 and 30/3/96. The pipe was being laid to connect two reservoirs, one within Waitby Intake (NY 078747), and the second within Kirkby Stephen Intake (NY 071762). The original proposal for the pipeline crossed two upland settlements, both of which are designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (Cumbria 218). Subsequent to discussions between Ken Rendall (Pipeline Constructors Northern Ltd), Gerry Friell (English Heritage) and Rachel Newman (LUAU), a new line was agreed that avoided the settlement sites. Although the avoidance of the Scheduled Ancient Monuments satisfied the requirements of English Heritage, a programme of archaeological recording was required by Mr Mike Daniells the County Archaeologist, to mitigate the impact of the pipeline on prominent medieval earthworks and to investigate any sub-surface remains. A Project Design for a watching brief was produced by LUAU (Appendix 1) in response to a verbal brief provided by the Cumbria County Archaeologist.

Part of the south-eastern section of the pipe-line had previously been subject to mitigative survey and evaluation by LUAU (1995) in advance of the proposed A685 Kirkby Stephen Bypass and a survey had been undertaken by Roberts (1993) of the agricultural earthworks around Waitby. As most of the earthworks had in part been recorded and as the pipeline would only affect a limited corridor through the agricultural earthworks there was no requirement by the County Archaeologist for a preliminary survey of these features. However, it was agreed, in consultation with the County Archaeologist, that the working corridor be limited to a maximum 5m width, where the pipeline crossed the earthworks.

Initially the intention was that the pipe trench be excavated starting from the reservoir in Waitby Intake using a single contractor. However, shortly after works commenced a second team was employed to excavate the section of trench from the reservoir within Kirkby Stephen Intake to the eastern boundary of the field containing the settlement. Unfortunately, the first part of this section of the trench had already been excavated and backfilled by the time LUAU were informed of the situation. It was therefore only possible to make a visual inspection of the upper surface of the backfill material.

A total of five man days was spent on site during the watching brief. A full archive has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with current English Heritage (1991) guidelines.

1.2 Historical Background

The Kirkby Stephen and Waitby study area are situated on a low ridge to the west of the River Eden. To the east limestone hills rise beyond Nateby to the watershed with Swaledale, and to the north-west of the town is the broadened Eden valley. Medieval fields lie immediately west of Kirkby Stephen, while to the south are the intakes which mark the transition between the enclosed former arable fields and the upland commons. The area around Waitby has one of the highest densities of archaeological sites in Cumbria, and is particularly rich in probably later prehistoric or Romano-British settlements, many showing as earthworks (Fig 2).

1.2.1 Prehistoric activity

Many examples of prehistoric settlements and field systems have been identified on the limestone uplands to the north and west of Kirkby Stephen. The earliest activity in the area was perhaps the establishment of a prehistoric trade route, first used in the Neolithic period to transport stone axes from Langdale to the east of England.

1.2.2 Roman period

The Roman presence in the area is testified by a series of road alignments, which have been suggested in the area, perhaps joining the forts at Brough-under-Stainmore and Brough-by-Bainbridge, although this is uncorroborated by evidence from excavations. Two Romano-British settlements (Fig 3) are within the area crossed by the pipeline and are described (RCHM(E) 1936) as follows:

> 'The settlements consist of two separate villages, possibly connected by the walls of a field system. The south part of the south eastern village has been largely destroyed by the railway. It was about 11.25 acres in extent and consisted of the usual irregular enclosures. There is a possible entrance on the east side. Towards the north are traces indicating walls 5.5-6ft thick. The north-western village is unusually rectangular in form and is probably of a later date. The walls are of about the same thickness as those of the first village and the huts seem to have all been built against the enclosure walls. The entrance on the west side has traces of curving in of the wall on the south side. This entrance opens into an enclosure, perhaps a later addition. The area is just over 1 acre. Condition of south-eastern village poor; of north-western village fairly good'

In 1967 an excavation (Webster 1972) was undertaken on part of the north-western settlement which showed that the boundary wall was constructed of two parallel lines of stones with a rubble infill; the width of the wall varied between 1.2m to 1.6m. The coursing was of large blocks laid horizontally to create vertical exterior faces, the height of the surviving section of wall was generally 0.45m. It was estimated from the amount of collapsed stone rubble that the original height of the wall was *c* 1m.

Evidence for only one period of construction was recorded. A small quantity of coarse calcite-gritted pottery was found within the tumble of the outer wall, as well as bones and teeth from sheep, pigs, horses and deer. The pottery was of a type known as Huntcliff Ware, which dates from the late fourth century AD.

1.2.3 Medieval period

Local place-names provide evidence of both Anglian and Norse settlement in the area. Notable Anglian sites and finds include Winton (*winn-tun*, the 'grazing farm') which has features typical of a nucleated village, while fragments of Anglian crosses have been found in Kirkby Stephen's churchyard. The Vikings christened the settlement Kirkby, the 'settlement with a church', and carved stones indicate its continuing use by the Norse settlers.

During the medieval period, the town must have been under constant threat from the Scots, the defensive nature of its street plan bearing witness to this, as does the construction, in the fourteenth century, of Hartley Castle and Wharton Hall, both of which have been subsequently destroyed.

After some decline in settlement in the medieval period, perhaps connected with both Scottish raiding and the Black Death, the area appears to have had a peaceful return to prosperity, as the town became a market centre, and later a staging post on the route between Kendal and Newcastle.

The medieval agricultural landscape in the area of Waitby is particularly well preserved and comprises lynchets, ridge and furrow and field systems which extend out from the village. This is a remarkable survival of a medieval open field system, that has been preserved by the marginal nature of the terrain, which has restricted subsequent cultivation in the area.

2. THE WATCHING BRIEF

2.1 Methodology

The pipe trench was generally 1.2m deep, and 0.5m wide, and was dug using a large tracked mechanical excavator using a toothed ditching bucket by Pipeline Constructors (Northern) Ltd. Topsoil and turf were stripped off (generally in sections of *c* 20m) followed by excavation to the final trench depth. After stripping of turf the ground surface was inspected for features, and the spoil checked for artefacts.

The stratigraphy and archaeological features were recorded using methods employed by LUAU in accordance with those recommended by English Heritage's Central Archaeology Service (CAS). Recording was in the form of *pro forma* trench sheets, and where necessary individual context sheets. Accurate scale drawings (plans at 1:20 and sections at both 1:10 and 1:20) were made where appropriate, and photographs (black and white prints and colour transparencies) were taken as necessary. On-site assessment of the deposits suggested it was not necessary to take environmental samples. Any finds were handled and stored according to standard practice (following current Institute of Field Archaeologists guidelines) in order to minimise deterioration.

2.2 Watching Brief Results

2.2.1 Section 1: Waitby Reservoir - Waitby Road

The first section of the pipe trench to be excavated commenced in the field containing the reservoir near Waitby, and extended to the eastern boundary of the field adjacent to Waitby road. This field contained a series of five well-preserved lynchets (Fig 2) on a north-east/south-west alignment. There was one lynchet at the top of the break of slope, two on the slope itself and one at the base, with the fifth close to the eastern boundary of the field.

As agreed with the County Archaeologist a narrow corridor 5m wide was taped off over the lynchets to prevent ancillary damage by vehicles driving up and down the slope. The chosen line of the pipe followed what appeared to be an access track which crossed and post-dated the lynchets; a large upstanding stone in the easternmost lynchet may indicate the position of the original access point into the medieval strip fields.

Most of the lynchets had small tree stumps (probably hawthorn) protruding, and also occasional larger stumps of felled ash trees; some large limestone blocks were also exposed. At the northern end of the field are two parallel banks running up the slope, both of which have mature ash and hawthorn trees growing in them. The evidence would suggest that the lynchets were used as field boundaries; there is no evidence of revetment walls within the bans and it is possible that the boundary was at one stage marked by hedges.

The trench section generally showed 0.3m-0.4m of orangey/brown topsoil overlying bedrock. Where the trench cut the lynchets the section showed a greater

depth of topsoil usually including some loose stone. Towards the eastern edge of the field the trench cut a dry stream bed which had been backfilled with limestone, concrete, and other building rubble. The only artefact recovered from this part of the trench was a modern iron horseshoe.

2.2.2 Section 2: Waitby Road - Intake Gill

Excavation of the pipe trench continued on the eastern side of the Waitby road. The section showed 0.25m-0.32m of turf/clayey loam topsoil, above 0.2m-0.27m of sticky orange clay overlying bedrock; excavation stopped at the start of Intake Gill (Fig 2) where the bedrock was identified just below the ground surface. The base of the gully was raised by depositing excavated material from other parts of the pipe trench, to reduce the amount of cutting into the bedrock required. For this reason it was not considered necessary to monitor the excavation of the trench within the dry bed of the gully.

No buried features were recorded in this part of the trench, the only surface feature cut by the trench being a linear bank (Fig 2. Dyke G), 0.65m wide, roughly 100m to the east of the road. To the south of the point where this bank was cut by the trench it had been eroded and the core was exposed; it could be seen to consist of two parallel lines of medium to large stones with an infill of smaller stones in the centre. The bank continued to the southern end of the field and beyond the railway cutting. To the north of the trench it continued across the fields, towards the road from Waitby to Kirkby Stephen, before turning east and passing *c*100m to the north of Waitby Castle.

2.2.3 Section 3: Settlement field

The field containing the settlement had obviously been improved more recently than others in the area, which reduced the possibility of finding extant archaeological deposits. The revised line of the trench followed the northern field boundary in order to avoid the Scheduled settlements. The topsoil/turf was thinnest at the eastern end of the field (0.07m) where it overlay a layer of bright orange clayey loam, 0.04m deep, above the bedrock. The topsoil and loam layers gradually increased in depth to the west, reaching maximum depths of 0.16m and 0.21m respectively at the western field boundary. Despite careful checking of the spoil and topsoil only two small potsherds (see below) were recovered from this section of the trench, and no buried features were recorded.

2.2.4 Section 4: Settlement field - Wiseber Hill

The section of the pipe trench from the eastern side of the boundary of the settlement field to the bottom of the hill on which the eastern reservoir is built was inspected on an intermittent basis. The section showed between 0.08m and 0.14m of turf and mid to dark brown clayey loam; in some areas this layer directly overlay limestone outcrops, and in others it overlay a sticky grey/purple clay covering the outcrops.

The section from the bottom of the hill to the reservoir was not monitored due to a change in the proposed works scheme (see above: 1.1). A visual inspection of the backfilled trench was made but no artefacts were recovered, and it was not possible to establish whether there were any buried features. Three trenches had been excavated in this area during an evaluation carried out by LUAU (1995) for

the proposed Kirkby Stephen bypass, and these had not revealed any buried features, but did demonstrate a similar stratigraphy to that recorded in the pipe trench. Two holloways (S212 and 213: LUAU 1995) were identified by the earlier LUAU survey in this area; both appear to merge on an area of adjacent flat ground. One of these extends beneath a field boundary wall and clearly pre-dates it.

2.2.2 Finds

The two small potsherds from the settlement field are probably medieval, approximately twelfth to thirteenth century in date. One is a rim fragment, possibly from a jug, with oxidised outer surfaces, a dark grey core, and traces of glaze; the fabric is quite fine with small grit particles. The second fragment is a body sherd in a coarse gritty fabric with a black surface on one side and orange on the other (Howard-Davis pers. comm.).

3. DISCUSSION

The pipeline has crossed a relatively well-preserved medieval and post-medieval agricultural landscape, notably the surviving remnants of an open field system to the south of Waitby. A field (Fig. 2 (250)) to the north-west of Waitby Reservoir contains two exceptionally well preserved examples of lynchets. These comprise an earth and stone bank *c* 1m in height with mature ash trees and hawthorn bushes growing in the top. It is probable that the more degraded lynchets crossed by the line of the pipe were originally similar to these and the hawthorn and ash would have been laid and trimmed to provide stock proof boundaries to the narrow strip fields.

The damage to the lynchets adjacent to the western reservoir was minimised by defining an alignment of the pipe trench along areas of disturbed ground and by narrowing the working corridor to a five metre width across the earthworks. The alignment and strategy was discussed on site with the client and was agreed with the County Archaeologist. It is understood that considerable care will be taken during the reinstatement of the pipeline and there should be little surface evidence of the trench when the grass has re-grown.

The watching brief demonstrated typically shallow stratigraphy, and little evidence of below ground remains. As has been found in other similar projects (LUAU 1995), the presence of significant upland agricultural earthworks does not necessarily indicate the existence of associated sub-surface features. The largely negative results of the watching brief can to a large extent be attributed to the policy of deliberate avoidance, where possible, of the sensitive areas, particularly in the field containing Scheduled Ancient Monument Cumbria 218.

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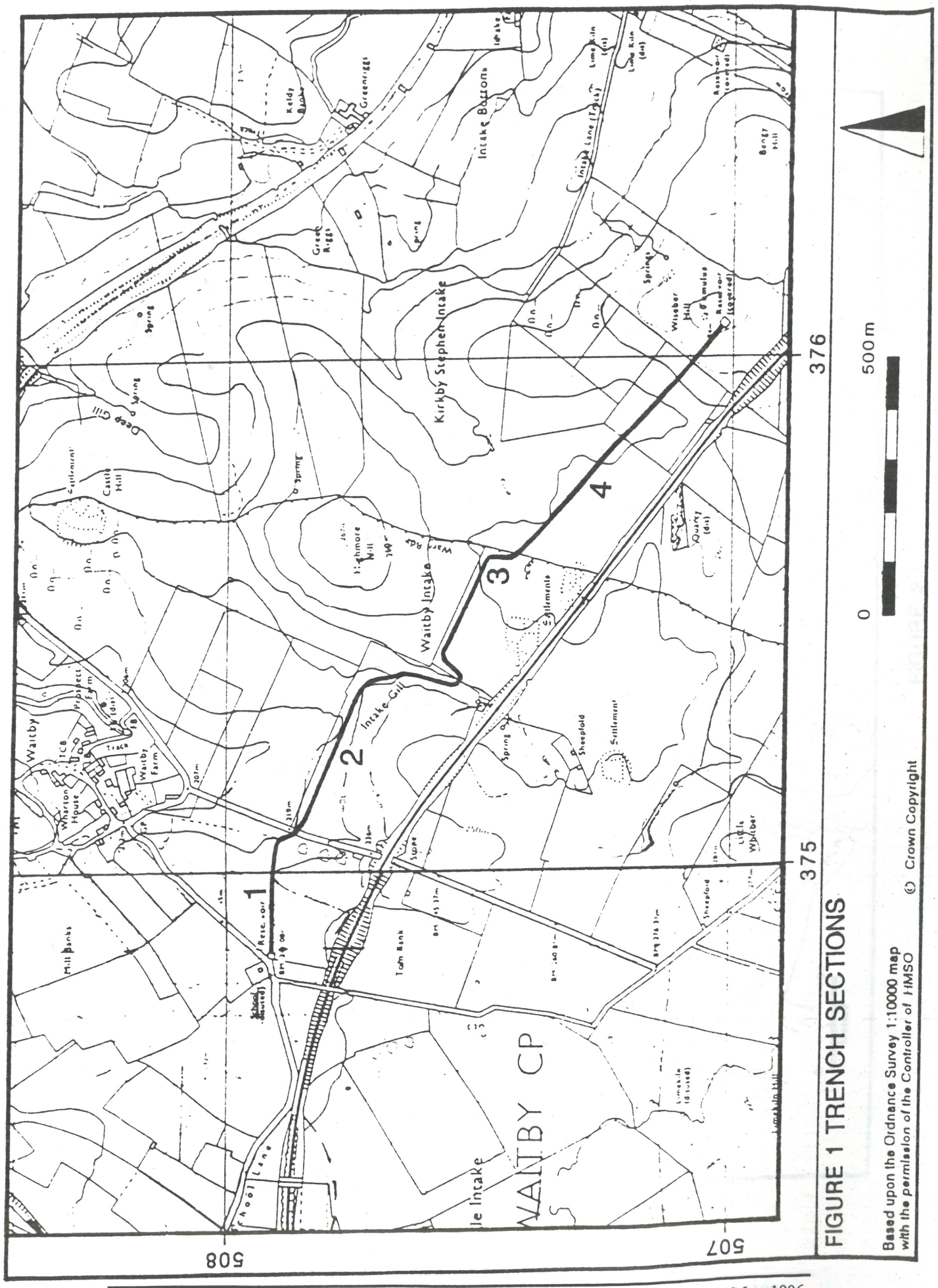
ILLUSTRATIONS

List of figures



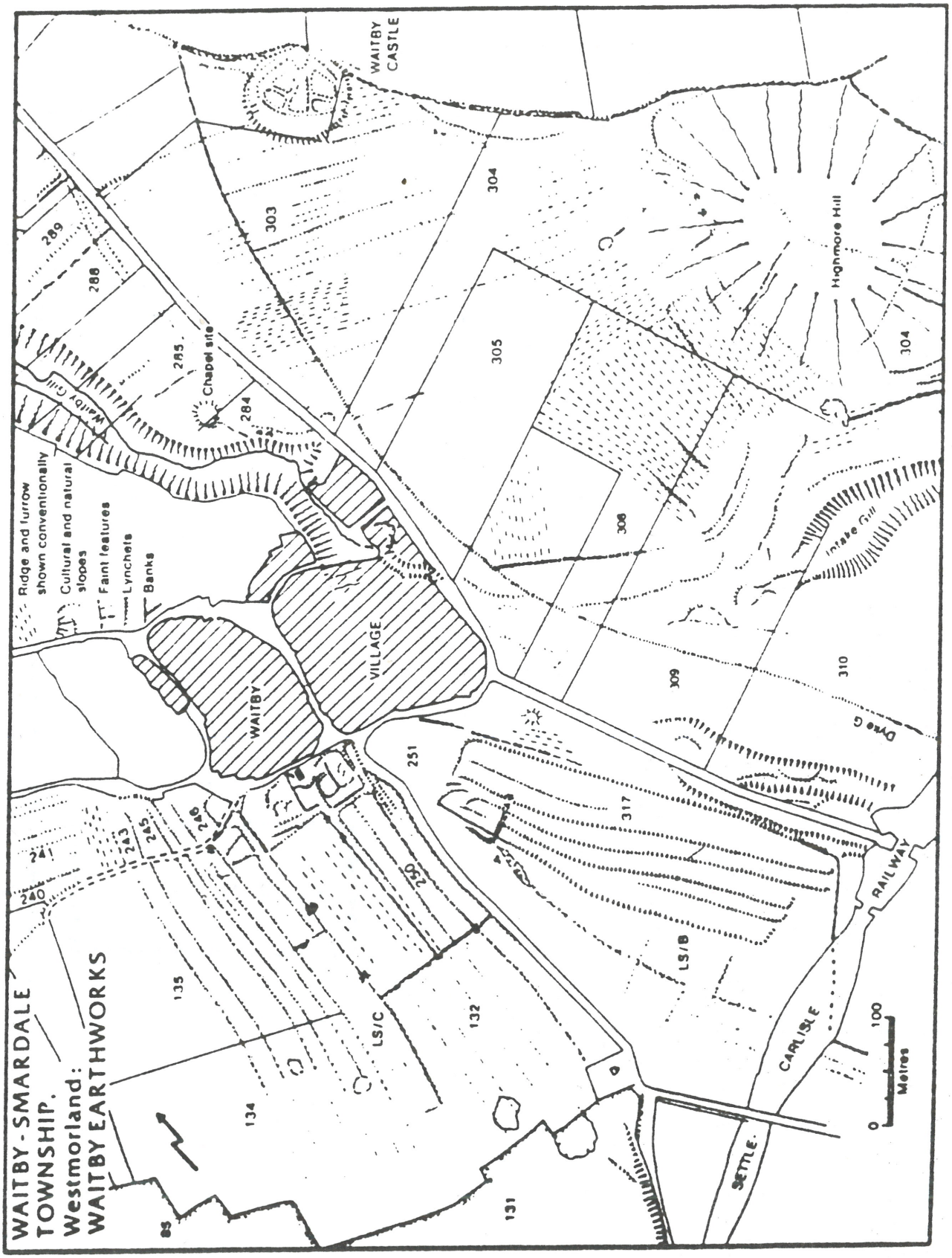


FIGURE 2

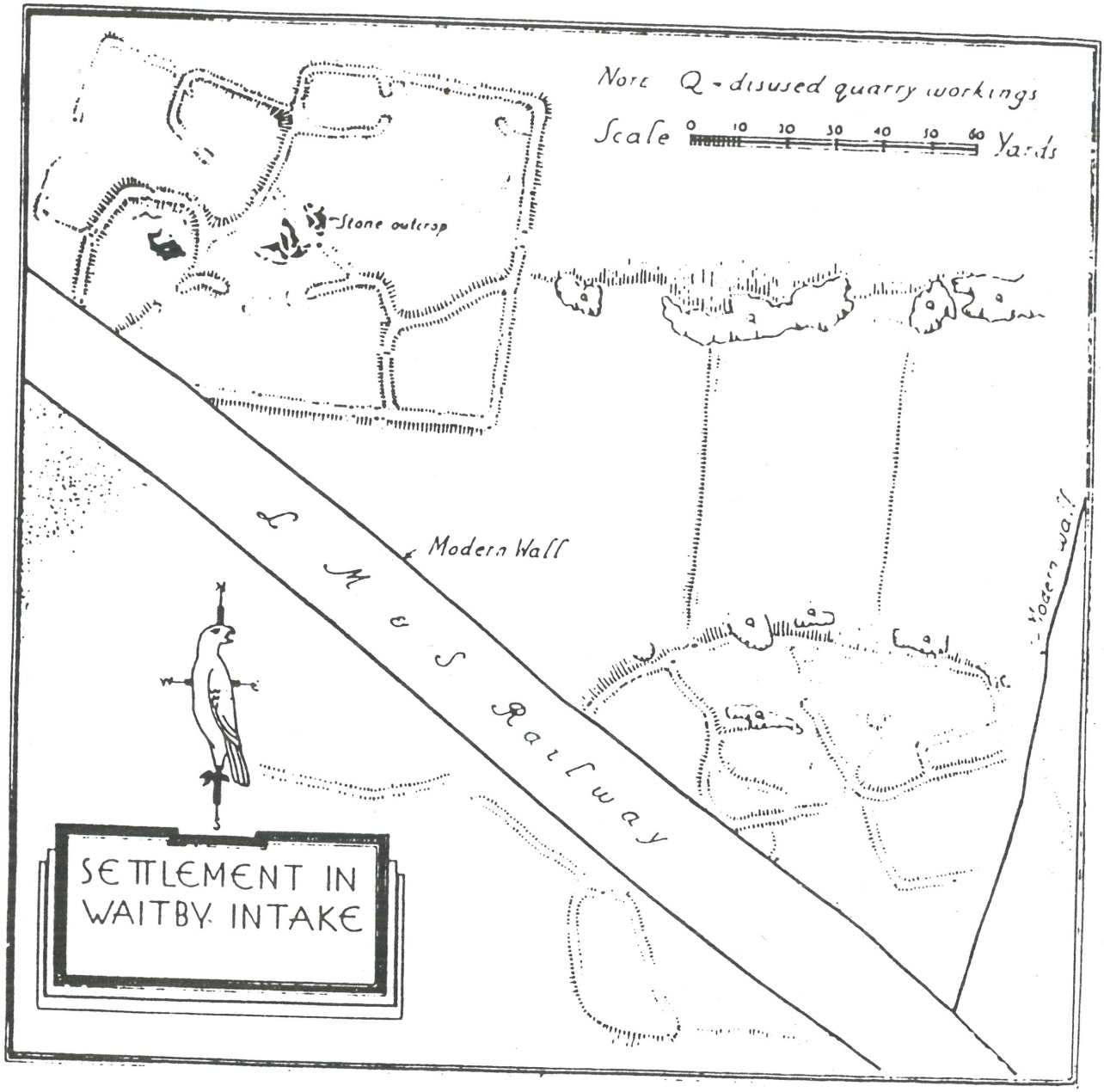


FIGURE 3