

ANKERWYCKE PRIORY, WRAYSBURY BERKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

TQ 004727



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

March-April 1993

(Revised March 1994)

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Ankerwycke Priory lies on the N bank of the river Thames, 1 km S of the village of Wraysbury (Fig. 1). The site lies opposite to Runnymede field, and Magna Carta (or Charta) Island is immediately upstream from the Priory. Ankerwycke was in Buckinghamshire until 1974, when boundary changes took the site into Berkshire. The site is owned by Berkshire County Council.

The area is dominated by floodplain gravels, with extensive deposits of alluvium on the S bank. The Geological Survey of Great Britain (map 269), however, does not show alluvium on the N bank around Ankerwycke.

The priory was a Benedictine nunnery founded in the mid 12th century, probably not before 1160. The site is not mentioned in the Domesday Book. The house was dedicated to St Mary Magdalen. Its founders were Gilbert de Muntfichet, lord of Wraysbury (Wyrardisbury), and his son Richard. The nunnery always seems to have been poor, and in the early 16th century only the prioress and six or seven nuns were present. Ankerwycke was suppressed before 8 July 1536, when the last prioress, Magdalen Downes, received a pension of £5 a year.

The priory was originally endowed with the demesne of Ankerwycke and other small parcels of land in Wyrardisbury parish, along with other pieces at Egham, Greenford, Stanwell, Henley, Windsor and so on. The distribution of these properties is predominantly local, with most being within 5 km of the site. Henley, 24 km to the W, is the furthest afield. Greenford is less than 18 km to the NE. Very few new endowments appear to have occurred. The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* assessed the revenue from the properties at £22 0s 2d (VCH 1, 355-7). The priory also owned all fisheries and weirs in the Thames from Old Windsor to Ankerwycke Ferry (VCH 3, 324). The post-Dissolution history of the site is summarised in some detail below.

1.2 Site description

The priory site consists of an island bounded by the Thames to the W, and tributary channels to the N and E. The S end of the island is defined by a canalised channel running. The island is separated into two parts by a N-S linear feature. The land to the E is raised above the surrounding level and contains extensive earthworks, including a pair of fishponds. A fragment of masonry is all that survives of the priory buildings. The raised area also contains a famous yew tree, traditionally the site of a meeting between Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn (Lipscomb 1847, 600).

The land W of the linear earthwork contains a few slight earthworks, but is also crossed by E-W ridge-and furrow. It is notable that the latter crosses the linear earthwork.

1.3 Previous work

Little or no archaeological work had been undertaken at Ankerwycke Priory until 1992, when Berkshire County Council commissioned an earthwork survey from the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England (RCHME). The survey plan has been used as the basis for Figures 2 and 3. The principal earthworks are: the N-S linear feature; the fishponds; terracing to the W of the linear feature at the N end of the island; a pronounced platform which includes the surviving masonry and appears to contain other building platforms; and various amorphous features on the E half of the island.

Berkshire County Council also commissioned an evaluation of the surviving masonry and associated deposits. This was undertaken by Thames Valley Archaeological Services in January 1993. Three small trial trenches were excavated against the surviving wall faces. The results suggest that a large amount of overburden had been dumped on the area. The chalk block masonry continues for approximately 1 m below the current ground level. The tops of the foundations were exposed in all trenches, and a plain tiled floor was found in Trench B.

The Council also asked Professor Brian Kemp of Reading University to undertake an evaluation of the historical sources for the priory.

1.4 Reason for the project

Berkshire County Council, as owners of Ankerwycke Priory, intend to develop its potential as an archaeological/historical amenity resource. The possibility of recreating the fishpond environments has been specifically identified as a target. The Oxford Archaeological Unit was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation of the fishponds and other elements of the site by the County.

A brief for the work was provided by the County Archaeological Officer. This stipulated that the project should consist of three main elements: documentary research into the post-Dissolution history of the site; an auger survey of the N-S linear earthwork, the fishponds, and the channel on the E side of the island; and trial excavations of the channel and fishpond banks. The documentary research commenced at the beginning of March 1993, with the fieldwork starting immediately thereafter. This report presents and analyses the results of the project.

1.5 Methodology

The documentary research into the post-medieval site use was undertaken by Julian Munby of the OAU. Extensive searches were made in the Buckinghamshire Record Office, the Public Records Office and elsewhere, while collections relating to Wraysbury in Surrey and Dyfed were also researched.

Primary, secondary (ie printed books) and map sources were used. Information from the initial searches was used in determining elements of the fieldwork strategy.

The auger survey was undertaken by Bill Bevan and Jon Tilney of the Archaeological Research Consultancy at the University of Sheffield (ARCUS) from 10-12 March 1993. Thirty-five augers were taken in total (Fig. 2, and see 2.2). A Dutch screw auger was used on all solid ground positions, but a Russian gouge was used in the fishponds and channel where unconsolidated organic deposits were present. Levels were taken at the surface position of each auger, and the depth below that point was noted for all changes in the soil profile. The auger survey information was recorded in writing. Most augers could be recorded in detail, but that in the centre of the E-W fishpond had to be recorded rapidly because of the precarious nature of the sample location. The auger record was passed to the OAU at the end of the survey work.

Five trial trenches were excavated on the E half of the island, concentrating on the fishponds and channel (Figs 3-4). Approximate trench locations were agreed in advance by the County Archaeological Officer, but Trenches 1 and 2 had to be repositioned because of ground conditions. All excavation was by hand.

All deposits identified in the excavation trenches were given unique context numbers in a continuous sequence, using the OAU standard recording system (Wilkinson ed. 1992). Plans and sections were mostly drawn at 1:20; plan 4 was drawn at 1:50. Trenches, augers and level positions were surveyed in relation to fixed points and lines located on the RCHME survey plot; a 1:1000 version was supplied to the OAU for this purpose. Finds and soil samples were recorded by context. Black-and-white negative and colour slide photographs were taken of the excavations and auguring in progress, and of the site in general.

All levels, both for augers and in the excavations, were related to a benchmark of 16.82 m above Ordnance Datum (Newlyn) situated at the S end of the bridge which gives access to the island at its N end. A useful check of levels was provided by plans supplied by the National Rivers Authority showing bank levels along the Thames at intervals of between 25 m and 75 m. Levels taken by OAU and ARCUS conformed to those on the NRA plans, with only one exception (see Auger 29, below). A transect of levels was taken across the platform to the S of the surviving masonry up to the Thames. Levels were read at 10 m intervals. The position of the transect is shown on Figure 3.

2 RESULTS

2.1 The post-Dissolution history of the Priory

2.1.1 Introduction

The site of the Priory, by the River Thames in the parish of Wraysbury (also known as Wyrardisbury), was in Buckinghamshire until 1974, and consequently the study has been concentrated on sources for Buckinghamshire history. The history of the parish is well-recorded in printed sources, and there are useful representations on maps, though no early estate plans have been discovered. A number of relevant record deposits have been identified, though the title deeds of the property have not been located.

This part of the evaluation report presents an outline of the post-medieval history of the site. The archive contains a series of appendices which bring together some of the original and secondary sources on which it is based. The contents list below lists these appendices in full. The starred items are reproduced in full at the end of this report. References to the full appendices are included in the text below.

A. Printed materials

- A1** *VCH Buckinghamshire i*, ed. W. Page (19//), 355-7.
- A2** *VCH Buckinghamshire iii*, ed. W. Page (1925), 320-5.
- A3** D.& S. Lysons, *Magna Britannia* [Bucks] (1813), 681-2.
- A4** Burke's *Commoners of Great Britain* (1834-8) ii. 221-3.
- A5** G. Lipscomb, *History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham* (1847) iv, 586-620.
- A6** J.J. Sheahan, *History and Topography of Buckinghamshire* (1862), 876-7.
- A7** G.W.J. Gyll, *History of the Parish of Wraysbury, Ankerwycke Priory, and Magna Carta Island...* (1862), 46-57.
- A8** Kelly's *Directory of Buckinghamshire* (also *Berks, Bucks & Oxon.*)
- A9** *Buckinghamshire County Council Minutes and Reports* (1937-8)
- A10** Ankerwycke House sale particulars, 1855 [BRO D49/55]
- A11** Ankerwycke House sale particulars, 1863 [BRO D18/1/9]

B. Documentary sources

- * **B1** List and Index Soc
- * **B2** BRO Wraysbury Listings
- * **B3** BRO Ankerwycke papers (D49) list and notes
- B4** Ditto, copy of D49/19 (schedule)
- B5** Ditto, copy of D49/40 (rental)
- B6** Dyfed RO list
- B7** Surrey RO list

- C. Maps
- * (Fig. 5) C1 1800 Enclosure Map and Schedule (Bucks CRO)
 - * (Fig. 6) C2 1840 Deposited road plan (Bucks CRO QH 98)
 - * (Fig. 7) C3 1840 Tithe Map and Schedule (Bucks CRO)
 - * (Fig. 8) C4 1869 OS 1st edn 25" plan
 - * (Fig. 9) C5 c1900 OS 2nd edn 6" plan
 - * (Fig. 10) C6 1932 OS 3rd edn 25" plan
- D. Pictorial sources
- E. Bibliography (incorporated in main bibliography here)

2.1.2 Owners and occupiers of Ankerwycke

2.1.2.1 Manorial descent

Since there are four manors in Wraysbury with an interlinked history, the manorial descent given in the *Victoria County History* is rather confusing [App.A2], but by reference to Burke [App.A4], Lipscomb [App.A5], and later Directories [App.A8] it is possible to construct the following list of owners (where conflicting, the dates are from *VCH*):

Ankerwycke Priory

1536	John Norris
1538	Bisham Priory
1539	Lord Windsor
1542	The Crown
1550	Sir Thomas Smith [*Inventory]
1577	George Smith (brother of last)
1584	(Sir) William Smith (son of last)

Ankerwycke with the manor of Remenham

c.1626	(Sir William Smith acquires Remenham)
1626	Sir William Smith (son of last)
1631	Edward Smith (infant son of last, d.1651), whose mother remarried to Sir William Salter and continued to live at Ankerwycke
1651	Remenham sold by (Sir) Thomas Smith (uncle of last)

Ankerwycke

1652	John Lee I purchases Ankerwycke from Thomas Smith
1682	John Lee II (son of last)

Ankerwycke with the manor of Wyrardisbury

1685	(John Lee II acquires Wyrardisbury)
1704	Mary (widow of John Lee II)
1725	Philip Harcourt (grand-nephew of John Lee)
1759	John Harcourt (1708-1785) (brother of last)

1785	John Simon Harcourt (1772-1810) (son of last)
1805	John Blagrove acquires manor, and demolishes Ankerwycke house, building a new house (d.1824)
<i>Ankerwycke (as a reputed manor)</i>	
1829	George Simon Harcourt (1807-1871) (son of J.S. Harcourt) repurchases land in Ankerwycke
1871	John Simon Chandos Harcourt (1835-1890) (son of last)
1890	Guy Elliot Harcourt (son of last)
c.1924	Arthur Henry Benson purchases manor
c.1935	F.E.G. Stanford
1937	Buckinghamshire County Council purchases from Stanford
1974	Berkshire County Council acquires on Reorganisation

2.1.2.2 Family History

Pedigrees of the Smith and Harcourt Families are given by Lipscomb, who also records the inscriptions on many of the monuments in the church and churchyard [App.A5, 589-92, 598, 616-9]; a shorter pedigree of Harcourt is supplied by Burke [App.A4].

2.1.2.3 Occupiers of Ankerwycke

For much of its later history under the Harcourt family it would appear that Ankerwycke House was not occupied by the Harcourts, but let to individuals. There is an element of uncertainty in this, as Gyll [App.A7] refers to tenants of the Harcourts being in the adjacent house called Little Ankerwycke (built in about 1730), though after the demolition of Ankerwycke the new house that replaced it was certainly tenanted. G.S. Harcourt lived in the house for some years after 1829 (a child of his was born there in 1841), but later rented it out again (there were sales of the contents in 1855 and 1863 [App.A10-11]). The names of several tenants are given by Gyll [App.A7, 46-7]. For the period after 1862 the occupiers are named in Kelly's *Directory* [App.A8]. The last tenant, A.H. Benson, purchased the manor from Guy Harcourt in about 1924.

2.1.3 Sale to Bucks County Council

The site was purchased from F.E.G. Stanford by Bucks County Council in 1937 to preserve it as public open space under the Green Belt Scheme.¹ Since there was no statutory means of preserving land from development, the only way to secure its status was by purchase [App.A9]. In 1974 on Local Government

¹ Berks County Council deeds CL616, 29 Sept 1937 from F.E.G. Stanford (ex inf. D. Littler).

Reorganisation the land was transferred to Berkshire County Council, the present owners.

2.1.4 Title Deeds

Although Lipscomb refers to many deeds which seem to have been in possession of the Harcourt family, these do not seem to have passed to Buckinghamshire County Council, and are not preserved in the Harcourt papers in the Bucks Record Office. Berkshire County Council has no deeds earlier than that of 1937. It is possible that some papers may remain with of the Smith family of Hill Hall, Theydon Mount, Essex, or with the Harcourts of Stanton Harcourt, Oxon. The earlier grants in the PRO have yet to be checked for details, and there is some possibility of property descriptions in either the Inquisitions Post Mortem or any inventories accompanying wills in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) referred to in *VCH*. It appears, however, that Lipscomb often gives such information as could be found in the deeds that he saw, and he quotes in full Sir Thomas Smith's inventory of Ankerwycke House in 1569 [App.A5, 595-6].

2.1.5 Ankerwycke House

Lysons reported that there were no remains of the conventual buildings, but 'the hall remains' of the mansion built on the site of the priory [App. A3] Little is known of this house except for the inventory of 1569, a view of the house taken before its demolition in 1805 [App.A5, 599], and its representation on the Enclosure map of 1800 [App.C1]. The ruins of the nunnery, illustrated by Lipscomb [App.A5, 593], are specifically described by Gyll as being remnants of the Old Hall [App.A7, 46]. A separate house, known as Little Ankerwycke, was built nearby in about 1730 [App.A7, 46].

Several references in the inventory of Sir Thomas Smith (reprinted in Lipscomb 1847, App.A5, 595-6) are worthy of comment in this respect; all appear to date from 1549, although the inventory as a whole was drawn up in 1569. Firstly, there is a reference to "A boreskin chest, a quistion [elsewhere quishion, = cushion?] for the church in it of damaske"; which church is not stated, but see below. Secondly, "Without the Chamber in the corner to the Priory. An iron chimney Two Tente". Finally, "In the Chapel. Cupbord on Altar...Vestment & albe for a preist A byble A payer of virginalls". The chapel could have been a newly-built part of the house, but it is surely as likely to have been incorporated from the priory. The second reference at least indicates that some of the priory buildings had been retained.

The inventory otherwise refers to the following rooms: the maydes Chamber; my wiefes Closet; myne owne Chamber; the Chamberlayrs Chamber; half part to the Great Chamber; the great Gest Chamber; the Inner Chamber to the same, on the south syde; the North Inner Chamber; my Fathers Chamber; my Lordes Chamber; the South Servants Chamber; the North Servants Chamber; the High Gallery, called Cole's Chamber; the Kytchen; the litle Parler; the Hall; the great

Parlour; the Buttery; the Wardroppe; various outbuildings; and Ankerwycke and Farms. The inventory shows that the house was very comfortably furnished.

The new Ankerwycke House built by John Blagrove in 1805 lay to the north of the priory (probably on the site of 'Little Ankerwycke'), and is described as a 'stately but plain edifice' by Sheahan [App.A6], and 'commodious rather than elegant' by Gyll [App.A7, 46]. Following the departure of a tenant in 1855 a sale of the contents was held, from which it appears that the house was richly furnished [App.A10]. The interior is described by Gyll as it was in 1862 [App.A7, 47], and there was a further sale of 'modern and costly household furniture' and farming stock in 1863 [App.A11].

2.1.6 The park and gardens

Either Blagrove or G.S. Harcourt (after he repurchased the site in 1829) laid out the ornamental grounds and parkland, while the house was known as Ankerwycke Park at this time [App.A4]. The parkland is shown on the Tithe Map of 1840 [App.C3], and included specimen trees (a prodigious Yew, a cedar, several Planes and Willows), and a shrubbery. The grounds are described in detail by Gyll [App.A7, 47-50], and further details are given below in section 6. Associated with the grounds was Magna Carta Island on which King John is supposed to have sealed the Charter in 1215, and where a cottage was decked out with heraldic achievements and the stone on which the charter is supposed to have been sealed [App.A5, 601-2; A7, 50-4]. The park was opened on occasions for public entertainments and visits to the priory ruins, and was in 1853 the scene of spectacular military manoeuvres [App.A7, 54-5; *Records of Bucks* iv (1870, 393)].

2.1.7 Documentary sources

Of the papers in the Bucks Record Office indexed under Wraysbury, few seem likely to have much relevance to Ankerwycke [App.B2]. The Harcourt-Ankerwycke papers in the Bucks Record Office (D49) are rather disappointing for any information about the house and its grounds [App.B3]. In particular, the schedules of deeds made no mention of early deeds, and there was little estate correspondence of great value; in addition to the copy of the list of the deposit some notes on those items which were examined are appended [App.B3]. A schedule of land purchased by Harcourt indicated the extent to which the 'manor' of Ankerwycke had been built up through purchase [App.B4], and a rental demonstrates that the entire estate was rented out [App.B5]. Collections in other Record Offices, for which catalogues were seen in Bucks Record Office had little of relevance, even for those which contain material about Ankerwycke [App.B6-7]. The map of the Thames in Dyfed Record Office was seen in a full-scale photocopy at the Surrey Record Office, Kingston-Upon-Thames. The map deals exclusively with land S of the Thames; the bend of the river and the location of the Priory island are shown, but there is no detail at all of the island. The map is therefore of no use for this study.

2.1.8 Maps and land use

2.1.8.1 The enclosure map and award of 1800 [App.C1]

The enclosure of Wraysbury followed an Act of 1799, and the map accompanying the Award is dated 1800. Most of the land subject to enclosure lay in the centre of the parish, but the opportunity was taken to provide a general survey of the entire area of the parish, and a complete schedule is given at the back of the Award. Thus the environs of Ankerwycke are mapped, even though not subject to enclosure under the Act. The house and grounds belonged to J.S. Harcourt, intermixed with the holding of J. Harcourt Powell, though there seems to have been some exchange of land at around this date, and all may have been held by J.S. Harcourt [see App.C1]. The house itself was surrounded by gardens: a 'grass platt' or lawn in front of it, shrubberies behind and beside it, and a 'garden' (presumably a kitchen garden) behind to the north-west. Beyond the irregular outline of the gardens the remainder of Long or Ankerwycke Mead was meadow land, though an area at the south end by the river was marked as shrubbery. No details of the planting of any of these areas is known. Ankerwycke House lay on a clearly defined island surrounded by a watercourse; no fishponds are shown on the Enclosure map, though there were larger areas of water round the osier bed on a small eyot to the south. The regular course of the stream round Little Day Meadow may suggest an artificial creation here. The other Harcourt land was mostly meadow or orchard, though there were two areas of arable in Reddings Meadow and Upper and Lower Warren. No farm is clearly shown as such, though the 'homestead' (no. 50) by Little Ankerwycke may have been such.

2.1.8.2 Deposited road plan of 1840 [App.C2]

This plan, associated with the building of a new road round the village, is perhaps of no independent value from the Tithe Map, but shows slightly different details of the building of Ankerwycke House and Farm, and the altered access from the village road.

2.1.8.3 The Tithe map of 1840 [App.C3]

This map is again a complete survey, covering both tithable and non-tithable land. It shows the environs of Ankerwycke transformed by the building of the new house and laying out of the grounds. The new house is approached down a tree-lined drive from the north-east, past a new Kitchen Garden (no. 121). The old access road now leads to the new Farmstead (no. 123) and the service end of the house. Great Day and Reddings Meadow are now parkland (no. 111), with two small clumps of trees, while the osier bed on 'Ankerwycke Ayte' has become a wood (no. 112). The arable of Lower Warren is now grass, and run into Long Mead (no. 134). Being aligned north-south the house looked out on parkland or meadow, and the 'pleasure ground' comprising the site of the old house was now at some distance from the new house. It was approached down a tree-lined path between

the Park and Little Day Meadow, and a sinuous paths then led through the former shrubberies by the old house and at the south end by the river. These were much the same shape as had been shown on the Enclosure map, though the fishponds are now depicted, and from the descriptions it is clear that the shrubberies were now matured to woodland (nos. 113, 115). The site of the former house, its lawn and kitchen garden were now part of Ankerwycke Mead, and the fenceline surrounding them had been removed (no.116). A small portion of building is shown as standing at the east end of the old house. Thus it was that the old grounds had been preserved as a typical early Victorian landscape with an irregular path through woods and past the ivy-covered ruin, and the remainder had been converted to maximise the grassland.

2.1.8.4 OS 1st edition 25" plan of 1869 [App.C4]

There is little difference between 1840 and 1869, though trees have grown up in the Park and on Ankerwycke Mead, and those on Ankerwycke Ayte have been felled. The Ordnance plan depicts a mixture of coniferous and deciduous trees in the Pleasure Ground, and marks an earthwork that seems to delimit the former area of lawn.

2.1.8.5 OS 2nd edition 6" and 3rd edition 25" plans [App.C5-6]

The 2nd edition 6" plan (c.1900?) shows by stippling the full extent of parkland surrounding the house, and gives some indication of the extent of tree planting. On this, as on the 3rd edition 25" plan, the area of woodland at the southern end of the pleasure ground has been reduced, so that the path now went no further than the area of the fishponds.

2.1.9 Pictorial sources

No pictorial sources were found for the Priory outside of those in publications.

2.1.10 Conclusions

The lack of direct documentation for Ankerwycke in the post-medieval period is compensated for by the existence of printed histories for which such documentation was available. There does remain some scope for following up all possible leads in order to find further materials relating to the house and its owners. The evidence of maps has clearly shown the transformation of the landscape first by the provision of gardens round the old house, and then by the development of a Victorian pleasure ground. The existence of these pleasure grounds, the former lawn and kitchen garden, may suggest that existing earthworks may be the result of post-medieval landscaping as much as being survivals of the medieval landscape of the priory.

2.2 The auger survey (Fig. 2)

Augers 1-8: levels from 15.54 m (earthwork) - average 15.79 m - 16.04 at position 9. Thirteen augers were sunk along a transect across the linear earthwork at the N end of the W half of the island (Augers 1-9). Five augers had to be taken around location 8 because of the extreme difficulty of penetrating below the topsoil. A further sample was taken in the earthwork at the SE corner of the building platform adjacent to the surviving masonry (Auger 28). The topsoil was between 0.16 m - 0.27 m thick, overlying a deep deposit of clay grading into silty clay in all augers except 8 (see below). The latter contained occasional inclusions of flint pebbles and, much more rarely, chalk fragments. Shell fragments were occasionally present, but the corkscrew action of the auger precluded the retrieval of complete snails for identification. No sedimentary or organic layers were present in any auger, including those within the linear feature. Gravel was reached at variable depths from 14.49 m - 14.72 m, except in auger 1 where the gravel lay at 14.05 m. A lens of coarse sand less than 0.05 m thick was often found at the interface between the gravel and the overlying clayey material.

Five separate augers had to be sunk at position 8 because a compact level of brick rubble was encountered at 15.34 m - 15.54 m. Augering could not proceed beyond this point. The relative height of the rubble level (immediately below the topsoil) shows that it must be of a late date.

Gravel was not reached at position 9. Augering had to cease at a depth of 1.8 m (14.24 m) because of the pressure being applied to the apparatus. The soil profile was otherwise identical to that in 1-7.

Auger 28: level 14.92 m. The typical column of brown clays with occasional inclusions was found to continue to a depth of 1.1 m, where there was a distinct boundary with a lens of coarse sand. Gravel with coarse sand was encountered at 1.18 m.

The level of the top of this auger seems to have been incorrectly recorded. The field level on the W side of the island is typically c. 15.8 m, with a drop of little more than 0.3 m into the base of the linear feature. If the top level was approximately 15.5 m, the coarse sand would lie at 14.4 m with the gravel a further 0.08 m down.

Augers 10-14 (E-W pond): level 14.62 m (standing water). All augers encountered unconsolidated, waterlogged organic deposits which clearly represented leaf mould. The base of the pond lay at 13.65 m - 13.92 m, where gravel was encountered without. Consolidated silty matter was only located in auger 11, on the N side of the pond, where three thin lenses of grey silty material 0.09 m thick in total overlay a poorly consolidated layer of sandy mud. This was 0.2 m thick and lay on the base of the pond.

Augers 15-18 (N-S pond): level 14.66 m (standing water). All augers encountered

unconsolidated, waterlogged organic deposits which clearly represented leaf mould. The base of the pond lay at 12.95 - 13.34 m. The unconsolidated matter continued to a depth of 0.69 m - 0.81 m, whereupon silty muds were encountered, usually with some organic content. These continued to the base of the pond in augers 15 (13.22 m) and 18 (13.32 m). Augers 16 and 17, however, encountered silty deposits rich in organic matter and shells at depths of 1.4 m (0.31 m thick) and 0.98 m (0.26 m thick) respectively. A second auger was sunk at position 16 in order to take a sample of this deposit.

A 1 litre soil sample was taken from a repeat auger at position 16. The auger sampled primary deposits. The organic matrix comprised approximately 70% organic matter, with some coarse components such as gravel and wood fragments. Preservation of the organics was generally good. Half of the sample (200 g weight) was processed at the Environmental Archaeology Laboratory (University Museum, Oxford) by Gill Campbell, who identified the plant and snail species present.

Fresh water snails of the *Psidium* and *Bithynia* species were present. These are all indicative of fresh water. Caddis fly larvae and water flea eggs were also noted. Insects were present (not identified), but in low densities; it is likely that a very large sample would have to be taken to provide a viable group for study.

Plant remains were dominated by buds, bud scales, and moss. A few very small fragments of charcoal, and larger pieces of preserved wood were present. Remains of *Salix* (willow) and *Rumex* (dock) species were common. Other species included the herb *galium* sp. (goosefoot), *Sonchus asper* (milk thistle), oak (a 'failed' acorn cupule), a Hawthorn fruit, and white Water Lily (*Nymphaea alba*). The latter is common in lakes, ponds, and slow-flowing streams at depths of 0.5 m - 3 m with a pH value of five to eight. It is not tolerant of excessive wave action. The sample was generally typical of water surrounded by trees and scrub, with a small waste ground element, and little no evidence.

Augers 19-22 (channel): level 14.68 m (standing water). Auger 19 only penetrated to 0.2 m before encountering solid stone associated with a probable bridge to the island in the channel. Gravel was reached in augers 20-22 at 13.05 m - 13.18 m. Water and unconsolidated, waterlogged organic deposits of modern origin occupied the uppermost 0.31 m (auger 21) - 0.38 m (auger 20), but such deposits were 0.97 m thick in auger 22. Each auger then contained poorly consolidated silty muds, with and without organic material, to a depth of 1.19 m - 1.42 m below 14.68 m. The remainder of each auger contained more consolidated silty deposits including chalk and shell fragments.

Augers 23-25: level 15.55 m (Auger 23, from section 2 datum). An auger sample was taken through the base of Trench 3 to investigate deposits below standing water and to ascertain the level of the gravel. The clay layer (context 5) was found to continue to gravel, reached at 13.45 m. Further augers were sunk for comparison. Auger 24 (level 15.85 m), 1 m to the S of the trench, contained an identical sequence of deposits to those excavated. The gravel lens, 4, was penetrated relatively easily, and solid gravel was reached at 13.55 m. Auger 25 (level 15.85 m), 3 m S of the trench, was stopped on gravel at 14.85 m. This appeared to be a more solid deposit than context 4, but this could not be established with certainty.

Auger 26: level 14.67 m. This auger was sunk through the base of Trench 4 in order to ascertain the gravel level. The auger showed that the clay layer 24 continued to gravel, located at 13.27 m.

Auger 27: level 15.72 m. This auger was sunk in the arable field immediately E of the Priory island. Deposits appeared to be similar to the sequence in Trench 3, except that the gravel lens (4) was not present. Auguring ceased at a depth of 2.6 m (13.12 m) because the waterlogged clay was no longer penetrable. Gravel was not reached.

Auger 28: level 16.56 m. This auger was located centrally on the platform to the S of the surviving masonry. Its purpose was to examine the deposits below topsoil. The latter graded into a clayey matrix incorporating brick and chalk fragments from 0.3 m below ground level. At 1.05 m (15.51 m) the brick and chalk disappears from the matrix. The clay is then similar to the main deposit in Augers 1-7.

2.3 The trial trenches

2.3.1 Trench 1

Trench 1, 3.5 m x 1 m, was sited on the W bank of the channel 30 m ENE of the surviving masonry. The intention was to determine whether any timber or other structure could be found on the bank, and thereby to identify whether the channel had been artificially created or altered. The specific location was chosen because tile and brick fragments were visible in the side of the bank. Excavation ceased at a maximum depth of 1.16 m when the water level was reached.

The topsoil (6) overlay a sequence of dumped layers (7-9) containing 19th century pottery, clay pipe fragments, bottle glass, brick and tile. Two fragments of 14th/15th century Coarse Border ware were found in context 8. Layers 8 and 9 sealed a layer of silty clay (10) containing medieval pottery, tile (including a decorated floor tile) and chalk rubble. Layer 10 overlay a deposit of brownish grey clay (11) which sloped down steeply from 15.13 m into the channel. Animal and root disturbance was noted. No timbers were present.

Layer 11 is interpreted as the original medieval platform level and channel edge. Layer 10 probably represents a post-Dissolution demolition layer, as virtually all of the finds are late medieval. The two 19th century red earthenware sherds are likely to be intrusive. The deposit also follows the contour of layer 11, thereby pushing the bank further E. Layers 7-9 represent Victorian dumping of material on the platform and into the channel. This activity is probably associated with the use of the platform as a garden. The dumps of rubble were the limit of artificial alteration of the channel edge.

2.3.2 Trench 2

Trench 2, 3.5 m x 1.4 m, was sited on the W bank of the channel 80 m SE of Trench 1. The intention was to determine whether any timber or other structure could be found on the bank, and thereby to identify whether the channel had been artificially created or altered. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2 m.

The topsoil (13) overlay a sandy clay layer (14) containing tile, a single sherd of post-medieval bottle glass (probably 18th or 19th century), and occasional small chalk fragments. This sealed a grey-brown slightly sandy clay (15); this seemed to be the same as context 11 in Trench 1, but the gradient into the channel was not as marked. Gravel was reached at 14.51 m. Extensive root disturbance was evident in the trench.

The sequence is essentially the same as in Trench 1. Context 15 appears to be the primary ground level/bank, with a dumped layer (14) over it. The latter appears to be a late post-medieval deposit on the basis of the bottle glass fragment.

2.3.3 Trench 3

Trench 3, 3 m x 2.5 m, was located on the W bank of the channel 30 m S of Trench 2, where a pronounced hollow in the bank suggested that a leat might lead into the N-S fishpond. Trench 3 was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.36 m. Augering showed that gravel lay at 13.45 m, 2.3 m below the current ground level. Root disturbance was only notable in the top 0.25 m of the soil profile.

The topsoil (1) overlay a compact 0.04 m thick lens of gravel and flint pebbles (12). Two layers of sandy clay (2, 3) lay below this lens. Tile, brick and bottle glass was present in both layers. The interface between 2 and 3 was indistinct, but the latter had a lighter brown hue. The matrix was visually and texturally very similar to context 14 in Trench 2. Layer 3 sealed a 0.18 m thick layer of gravel at 14.8 m; a single fragment of tile was recovered from this layer, which appeared to be redeposited. It overlay silty clay layer (5) which occupied the remaining depth of the trench; auguring showed that this deposit continued down to gravel.

A 10 litre soil sample was taken from layer 5 because snail shells were visible in the matrix. A sub-sample of 500 g (weight) was processed at the Environmental Archaeology Laboratory (University Museum, Oxford) by Gill Campbell, who identified the snail species present. Plant remains were present, but were very poorly preserved and largely consisted of root material. No identification was attempted on this component of the sample.

Fresh water snails included *Psidium* sp. bivalves and *Acroloxus lacustris* (fresh water or lake limpet). The latter is especially found in slow-flowing water. *Cochlicopa lubrica* and *Oxychilus cellarius* were also present; the former is a common species which is found in moderately damp environments of all kinds, while the latter is found in damp shady places

of all kinds.

The assemblage is dominated by fresh-water snails with some land snails which inhabit damp places also present. The presence of *Acroloxus lacustris* would suggest either still or slowly flowing water.

The sequence in Trench 3 is very different from those in Trenches 1 and 2, and is difficult to interpret. The silty clay layer (5) appears to have been laid down in still or slow-moving water. It could therefore represent siltation of a leat, but it should be stressed that no structural features could be located. Auger 24 shows that the same profile is present for at least 4 m (N-S), but the evidence from auger 25 is ambiguous. Equally, however, layer 5 did not resemble alluvium. The capping of 5 by a layer of redeposited gravel (4) may be significant. Layers 2 and 3 are clay dumps, probably of Victorian date on the evidence of bottle glass. The dumping would appear to be equivalent to layers 7-9 in Trench 1. The gravel lens, 12, represents a path surface identifiable on the 1840 Tithe Map (Fig. 7).

2.3.4 Trench 4

Trench 4, 4 m x 2 m, was sited centrally in the S end of the N-S fishpond. The intention was to examine the construction of the pond bank, and to determine if possible whether a leat linking the two ponds was present. Excavation proceeded to a maximum depth of 0.8 m (14.66 m, water level) in the W half of the trench. An auger was sunk through the base of the excavation to determine the gravel level.

The topsoil (22) overlies a layer of grey-brown clay (23), visually identical to layer 2/3 in Trench 3. This sealed a grey-brown compact clay (24) at 14.85 m. Layer 24 contained some snail shells. Gravel lay at 13.27 m. No finds were recovered from Trench 4. Extensive root penetration was noted, especially in the upper part of the soil profile.

Layer 23 seems to be a late dump of clay, equivalent to context 2/3. Clay 24 is more difficult to interpret. It could be the remains of an original clay bank, but the depth at which gravel occurred makes this seem unlikely. Alternatively, the layer may result from siltation of a channel. Layer 24 was visually and texturally very similar to context 5; although a soil sample was not taken, the snails appeared to be of similar type.

2.3.5 Trench 5

Trench 5, 7 m x 2 m, was sited at the W end of the S side of the E-W fishpond. Its purpose was to examine the construction of the pond bank. Excavation proceeded to a maximum depth of 1.3 m in the NW quadrant of the trench. Very extensive root disturbance was noted in the upper 0.4 m of the soil profile.

The topsoil (17) overlies a layer of sandy clay (17) which was visually and

texturally very similar to contexts 2/3, 14, and 23. This sealed a 0.19 m thick layer of grey-brown clayey sand (18) at 15.1 m. Layer 18 contained a small amount of Bronze Age pottery and a few pieces of burnt flint. A second layer of clayey sand (19) underlay 18 and was differentiated by its orange-brown hue. Layer 19 was up to 0.2 m thick. It sealed a layer of gravel and clay (20) which resembled context 4 in Trench 3. Layer 20 was 0.21 m thick. A single sherd of later prehistoric pottery was recovered from layer 20. Finally, layer 21 consisted of gravel with a little sand. This was at least 0.2 m thick, and could not be penetrated by the auger. It lay at 14.63 m.

The gravel layer, 21, was very different from the redeposited gravel layer 20 (and its equivalent (4) in Trench 3), and is interpreted as a natural deposit. Layers 18-20 consist of redeposited material, incorporating prehistoric pottery, and probably represent the primary pond bank construction. No finds were recovered from layer 17, but it appears to be the Victorian dumping noted in most trenches.

2.3.6 The ceramics, by Cathy Underwood-Keevill

A total of 32 potsherds weighing 599 g was recovered, all from contexts in Trenches 1 and 5 (see table 1, below). The majority of the assemblage was from context 10 (13 sherds weighing 315 g). This contained Coarse Border ware dated to the 14th/15th century, a Kingston type jug rim dated to the late 14th century, an Aardenburg type sherd (possibly a local copy) dated to the 13th/14th century, and a London type jug sherd. A large reduced sandy ware handle, possibly from a curfew, was also present. Two red earthenware sherds dating to the 18th/19th century were also noted. These sherds are probably intrusive, and could be derived from an overlying context. Late 19th century material was also prevalent in context 8, together with two small, residual Coarse Border ware sherds.

Earlier material was present in contexts 18 and 20. Thick body sherds with coarse flint and fine shell temper were recovered from context 18. The fabric appears to be identical to type fabric H1, a coarse burnt flint fabric used to make bucket urns at Wraysbury (Astill and Lobb 1989, 99). These have been dated to the Bronze Age by comparison with the published material. A fine limestone and iron ore tempered sherd was found in context 20. This is probably an Iron Age fabric, but the wall sherd is not diagnostically datable.

The tile consisted mainly of roof tile, with double and single pegholes, some with traces of mortar and thick dark green glaze. There was no visible differentiation of fabric. One decorated floor tile with a corner fleur-de-lis pattern came from context 10, and could be the corner tile of a sixteen tile design (Eames 1980, fig 10, 177) similar to one from Chertsey Abbey dated to the late thirteenth century.

Table 1 Pottery

CONTEXT	FABRIC	NUMBER	WEIGHT g	COMMENTS
8	Border ware	1 Base	13	Slip and glazed interior
		1 Wall	5	
	WHSG	4 Rim and wall	69	
	GREW	1 Base	109	Pancheon
		1 Base	21	
	CREM	1 Rim	8	Moulded feather decorated
Total		9	225	
10	Border ware	3 Glazed	21	Fruited jug/pitcher, glaze under base
		2 Wall	23	
		1 Base	69	
	Kingston type ware	1 Rim and handle 1 Wall	32 7	Flat topped rim, probably from cylindrical neck of conical jug; strap handle with slashed and incised dot decoration
	Aardenburg type	1 Wall	4	Slip and glazed sherd
	London type	1 Glazed	29	Globular jug
	Reduced grey ware	1 Handle	57	Late medieval - Curfew or large vessel
	GREW	2 Glazed	73	
Total		13	315	
18	PRFS	5 Wall	1	Very fragmentary; Bronze Age Fine shell and coarse, angular flint (grey and white). Thick, friable fabric. Reduced interior, oxidised exterior
		4 Wall	40	
Total		9	41	
20	PRLI	1 Wall	18	Fine shelly limestone and red soft ironstone/iron ore (red/brown soft) medium sized (0.5 - 1 mm)
TOTAL		32	599	

Fabric codes: WHSG = white salt-glazed ware; GREW = glazed red earthenware; CREM = cream ware; PRFS = prehistoric flint and shell; PRLI = prehistoric limestone and iron ore

Table 2 Tile

CONTEXT	NUMBER	WEIGHT g	COMMENTS
2/3	8	440	Roof tile, including 1 x round peg hole, 1 x mortar traces
4	1	112	1 x roof tile
6	4	1859	1 x roof tile with square peg hole, 1 x thick tile, possible floor
7	8	1380	1 x brick, 1 x tile with mortar, 1 x glazed roof tile, 3 x peg hole, 2 x double peg hole
10	12	1611	roof tile including 1 glazed, 2 x peg hole, 2 x with mortar decorated floor tile with Fleur-de-Lis pattern, 11.5 cm long
	1	327	
13	6	219	2 x brick?
14	2	25	
15	1	49	
TOTAL	43	6022	

2.4 Level transect

Levels were taken along a 110 m transect across the platform S of the surviving masonry to the bank of the Thames. The purpose was to give a profile of the build-up of deposits on the platform. The levels also give a useful comparison for those taken at augers 1-9 and on the E half of the island. The levels are presented below in Table 3, with an equivalent level from the NRA maps for comparison.

Table 3 Levels

POSITION OF LEVEL	LEVEL OD NEWLYN
0 m	16.59 m
10 m	16.50 m
20 m	16.53 m
30 m	16.53 m
40 m	16.45 m
50 m	16.04 m
60 m	15.58 m
70 m	15.73 m
80 m	15.84 m
90 m	15.90 m
100 m	15.87 m
110 m	16.03 m
NRA level at equivalent to 100 m	15.89 m

3 DISCUSSION

3.1 Gravel levels and geology

The natural gravel level appears to be approximately 14.5 m, with slight local variations (see augers 1-7, Trenches 2 and 5). The channel on the E side of the island and the fishponds were cut deeply through this level. Problems of interpretation arise, however, with the gravel levels in Trenches 3 and 4, and associated augers 23-5, 26 and 27. It has been suggested above that the water-lain silty clays with snail shells (contexts 5 and 24) may represent infilling of channels associated with the fishponds. Alternatively, it is possible that they are geological deposits associated with subsurface level variations, perhaps associated with palaeochannels. It should be stressed, however, that rich organic deposits could not be identified in these trenches and augers.

The predominant clay matrix below topsoil noted in Augers 1-7, 9 and 29 (ie on the W side of the island) appears to be a natural deposit. This area is a flood meadow (see references to meadow land in the 1800 Enclosure and 1840 Tithe Awards, Appendices C1 and C3), and the clays were probably deposited by flood waters.

3.2 Prehistoric activity

Bronze Age and probable Iron Age pottery was recovered in small quantities from Trench 5, along with two pieces of burnt flint. The relevant contexts appear to be redeposited, which necessarily restricts the interpretative potential of the material. Nevertheless its presence is unsurprising given the evidence for later prehistoric settlement at Wraysbury (Astill and Lobb 1989) and Runnymede Bridge (Needham 1991). Ford notes that the few known Bronze Age settlement sites in the area lie on the Thames river gravels and associated alluvial deposits, and there is a clear concentration of sites between Windsor and Egham (Ford 1987, 69-70). Metalwork deposits are also strongly associated with the river (Ford 1987, 74-6). Iron Age material is much less well represented in the immediate locality, although a single early Iron Age spearhead comes from the Thames very close by (Ford 1987, Table 57, SMR no. 45). These distributions, however, may only reflect fieldwork biases.

3.3 The medieval use of the site

The medieval ground surface appears to have been considerably lower than the modern level. The top of the bank (context 11) in Trench 1 lay at 15.13 m. The top of context 15 in Trench 2 lay at 14.89 m. The redeposited clayey sand (18) lay at 15.1 m. Auger 28, sunk through rubble deposits on the platform S of the surviving masonry, showed that the medieval level lay at or below 15.51 m. The contemporary level on the W half and surrounding the island is difficult to determine because the clay layer found in Augers 1-7 may have been deposited

during the medieval and post-medieval periods. It is notable that the evaluation of the surviving masonry also demonstrated a substantial late build-up of deposits, with (presumably) medieval surfaces lying approximately 2 m below the rubble mounds in the area (Ford 1993, Trench B). The reasons for this are discussed below.

The fishponds are assumed to be original medieval features, although it should be noted that they do not appear on the 1800 Enclosure Map. The redeposition of clay, sand and gravel in Trench 5, however, should be interpreted as part of the construction of the ponds, and it has been noted that the upper surface of these deposits appears to represent the medieval ground level. It is inherently likely that such structures would have existed on a medieval monastic site, however, because of the importance of fish in the community's diet (Bond 1988, 70-2). It has been suggested that the theoretical quantity of fish required could rarely be provided by a monastery's own ponds (Currie 1988, 1989). It is worth noting Ankerwycke Priory's rights to all fisheries and weirs in the Thames from Old Windsor to Ankerwycke Ferry (VCH 3, 324) in this context.

Environmental samples from the N-S pond and Trench 3 show that fresh water was present, if only slow-flowing. Organic deposits only survive sporadically and at the lowest levels of the ponds. This is consistent with the regular cleaning of fishponds which is documented on numerous monastic sites (Bond 1988, 94-5).

The evidence for feeding the ponds with water is inconclusive. The environmental evidence from the N-S pond, Trench 3 and the analogous deposits in Trench 4 cannot be taken to prove that the channel fed the ponds, although this is certainly a possibility. Simple ground water ponds are well attested on monastic sites, although these could be seen as stores rather than farmed ponds (Bond 1988, 95-6). The conjunction of a pair of simple ponds is also quite common (Bond 1988, 96). It was notable that the water level in the two ponds and the channel was virtually identical while fieldwork was in progress, albeit at a low level because of dry weather.

3.3.1 The linear earthwork

The question of the nature of the linear earthwork was only partly resolved (see Augers 6-7 and 29). No organic deposits or silts were present, and it cannot therefore be considered as a relict watercourse. The line of the earthwork, however, is depicted as a fence on the 1800 Enclosure Map. The course of the fence exactly matches that of the earthwork. The 1840 Tithe Map has the boundary as a dotted line, less accurately mapped, and shown as "former line of fence". The fence runs onto the island from a bridge linking it to the next field to the N (31, Lower Warren, and 32, Long Mead in the Enclosure Award; 134, Lower Warren and Long Meadow, in the Tithe Award). The fence, therefore, may lie on the E side of a farm track. This could account for the hollowing-out of the earthwork.

3.4 Post-medieval activity

3.4.1 Artificial raising of the ground level

The modern ground level on the E half of the island is typically over 16 m; the platform S of the surviving masonry lies at 16.53 m. It is clear that 1 m of material (and more locally) has been dumped on the E half of the island since the Dissolution. It can be suggested that two phases of deposition are present. The primary phase may have happened soon after the Dissolution and seems to be restricted in extent; context 10 in Trench 1 and the lower levels in S Ford's evaluation appear to belong to this phase. No other deposits in the OAU evaluation could be dated to the 16th-17th centuries, although such deposits are likely to exist in the area of old Ankerwycke House (ie the priory site and platform).

The second phase occurred in the 19th century and relates to the landscaping of the site after the construction of the new Ankerwycke House. All trenches contained deposits which could be assigned to this phase. Equivalent deposits were identified in S Ford's evaluation of the surviving masonry (Ford 1993). The gravel lens (12) in Trench 3 probably represents the pathway E of the N-S fishpond shown on the 1840 Tithe Map (Fig. 7).

The source material for the dumped deposits consists of building rubble (brick and tile, stone, and chalk, the latter mostly in the earlier layers). The large quantities of building rubble included in the dumped material probably came not only from the old house/priory but also from the various other post-medieval buildings depicted on the 1800 Enclosure Map (Fig. 5). Traces of building platforms are still visible at the N end of the W side of the island (see the RCHME survey, Figs 2 and 3); this corresponds to the range of structures between plots 33 and 34 on the Enclosure Map. Rubble can also be seen in grubbed-out root boles roughly where buildings are shown in plot 37 on the Enclosure Map.

The building rubble was incorporated in a silty or sandy clay matrix. The latter (2/3, 7-9, 14, 17 and 23) were visually and texturally similar to the clays in augers 1-7. It is possible, therefore, that material from the flood meadows was deliberately mixed with the building rubble when the ground level was raised.

3.4.2 The Victorian garden

The documentary and map evidence clearly shows that the E half of the island was laid out as a picturesque garden in the 19th century after the demolition of old Ankerwycke House. The exact date at which this started is unclear, but extensive landscaping had clearly occurred by 1840 (Tithe Map and Award), when the site was entered from the new house by a tree-lined avenue approaching a bridge. It seems reasonable to conclude that the remodelling began at the same time as or very soon after the construction of new Ankerwycke House.

The Tithe Award refers to the SE corner of the island as a Pleasure Ground (Appendix C3, land number 115). The surviving masonry is clearly visible on the map, and it seems likely that a conscious decision had been taken from the start to leave this stub standing as a featured ruin. An engraving in Lipscomb (1847, 593) shows that much more was left than remains today; this is confirmed by early 20th century photographs held in the National Photographic Record. Clearly the latest rubble deposits in S Ford's trenches relate to the gradual dereliction of the masonry from the 1930s onward.

The Tithe Map also shows pathways running around the E half of the island, and the small island in the channel is linked to the main island. Several large stones lie in the channel here, and Auger 19 showed that more stones lie below the water. The path which encircles the E-W pond leads out of the SE corner of the evaluation area. A flight of steps still exists here, and a footbridge across the channel at the E end of the steps is shown on the 1869 OS map (Fig. 8). A further feature on the map appears to be a wall running NW-SE W of the main path into the island. Fragments of the N end of this wall still survive.

Archaeological evidence for the landscaping was found in all trenches excavated by OAU, as the ground level had been artificially raised. It was also notable that the N-S fishpond contained an irregular bulge at either end of the W (long) side. These bulges appear to consist of dumped building rubble. The date of these artificial platforms cannot be determined at this stage, but it seems likely that they belong to the Victorian landscaping. It is conceivable that they represent fishing platforms.

A further feature shown on the map, and still very evident on the ground, is the extent of plantation on the island, especially around the fishponds. This element of the park was specifically commented on in most of the Victorian printed sources. Particular reference was made to the great yew tree which still survives, and is said to have been the scene of a meeting between Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn (Lysons 1813, 681; Lipscomb 1847, 600; Sheehan 1862, 876; Gyll 1862, 48-9; it is perhaps worth noting that Lysons does not mention the story of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn).

Buckinghamshire County Council acquired the site in 1937 to safeguard it from development. Unfortunately little effort seems to have been made to manage the estate actively. The surviving masonry has since fallen into gradual dereliction, and the vegetation has taken its natural course.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Environmental considerations - general

The site is currently untended for most of the year. During the winter/spring months the general vegetation is not intrusive, and indeed in the spring months the E side of the island is most picturesque when snowdrops, daffodils etc are in flower. It is believed, however, that rank vegetation is a problem during the late spring, summer and autumn. Extensive areas of nettles are also present. Felled tree and sapling stubs would present a particular problem for visitors as the site now stands, and even during the winter/early spring some areas - especially to the SE of the fishponds - are only accessible with care because of overgrowth and fallen trees. The latter are a general problem, with the worst areas being the ponds and channel. It should be stressed, however, that clearance would need to be sensitively handled to preserve the ecological balance of the site. This would presumably also be affected by an increase (from virtually nothing) in visitor numbers. Consideration might be given to restricting access to certain areas of the site by means of a clearly waymarked guided path. Wildlife and bird habitats would also need to be considered.

4.2 Environmental considerations - the channel and fishponds

Both fishponds currently contain standing water, even after a prolonged period of predominantly dry weather. The ponds and channel are largely filled with unconsolidated deposits, most of which seem to consist of comparatively modern leaf mould. It would therefore be feasible to clean out the features, preferably in conjunction with a programme of limited clearance of trees and saplings from the banks. This would have the advantage of reducing the fall of leaves into the channel and ponds.

Care would be needed in the fishponds and the channel to ensure the preservation of environmentally rich deposits in the lower levels. These deposits are very restricted in the E-W pond, and even in the N-S pond they are not ubiquitous. The N-S pond is also substantially deeper than the E-W one, so that the lower deposits could be left in situ while still providing water 1 m or more deep.

It should be stressed that the auger survey was relatively minimalist, and a much more detailed programme would be needed for the provision of detailed deposit maps. It is unlikely that such work would be justifiable on archaeological grounds alone.

The water levels were virtually identical in the ponds and the channel when the fieldwork was in progress. Presumably the level would fluctuate seasonally, with a higher level in winter. It would be interesting to record the relative levels in wet weather to see if any variation occurred between the channel and pond levels. Clearance of vegetation, dead wood and leaf mould in the channel would

be advisable in its own right, but might also improve the flow of water. It is by no means clear, however, that the ponds could be fed from the channel without an artificial creation of a head of water by means of a weir.

4.3 The archaeological potential

4.3.1 The fishponds and channel

The organic deposits and silts within the ponds and channels clearly have some potential for reconstructing the medieval and post-medieval environment of the site. The usefulness of the information may be questionable, however, as the evaluation samples gave exactly the sort of information one would expect from a wet environment. It should also be stressed that dating the deposits would be difficult, and without a good sequence of deposits the results might be virtually meaningless. The possibility of specific, perhaps deliberate deposits should not be ignored, however, and there may have been secondary reuse of the ponds (eg for flax retting) in the medieval or post-medieval periods. Further environmental work should be carefully targeted on deep deposits if they exist, and any special deposits.

The ponds are of interest in their own right for structural and formal considerations. The construction is simple, consisting of pits dug into the natural gravel and lined with a clay/sand/gravel mix (eg contexts 18-20) or possibly just clay (context 24). The ponds are close together and arranged at right-angles. They are probably ground-water ponds, although it is possible that the channel was used as a feeder. Further study should include excavation below the current water level if the ponds are drained for clearance, and a careful examination of the ponds to determine whether any structural changes are evident. The Victorian or later additions to the W bank of the N-S pond should be examined. Finally, the possibility of leats from the channel needs to be resolved. It should be possible to do this when the ponds are drained.

4.3.2 The standing structure and platform

It is understood that a geophysical survey is likely to be done on the platform. Hopefully this would indicate the position of buildings. It should be borne in mind, however, that the extensive deposits of dumped material may seriously affect the potential of the site as some geophysical techniques offer limited ground penetration in terms of depth. The organisation undertaking the survey should be consulted in this respect.

Preferably more excavation should be undertaken on the platform. In particular, the slight earthworks identified by the RCHME survey W of the masonry should be evaluated to determine whether they are structural, and if so at what depth do structural remains lie? This is important in relation to the evidence for Victorian landscaping.

Ideally, trenches should also be excavated elsewhere on the platform. There are hints of building platforms on the RCHME survey, although it should be stressed that the relevant features are insubstantial. Furthermore the 1800 Enclosure Map (Fig. 5) shows the platform as a lawn. It is conceivable that the earthworks are garden features. Such features could offer useful evidence for reconstruction work, although it would be preferable for the platform itself to be left intact. If at all possible, buildings belonging to the priory should be identified and examined.

Clearance of overburden should be undertaken archaeologically if it is decided that the buried portions of the surviving masonry should be exposed. The context of rubble deposits and retrieval of dating evidence is extremely important. Furthermore there is obvious potential for recovering architectural fragments, both from the known features within the masonry which have collapsed since the 1930s, and in general. It would also be useful to compare volume of rubble with the extent of masonry visible on early 20th century photographs. Clearance might also expose the tile floor identified in Trench B of S Ford's evaluation (Ford 1993). Care would be necessary in landscaping the area around the masonry, however, as the bottom of the walls lies approximately 1 m below the general ground level. Excavation would need to be carefully timed with regard to consolidation work, as the newly-exposed chalk masonry would be vulnerable to weathering.

4.3.3 The Victorian landscaped garden

Little needs to be done in terms of restoring the Victorian landscaped garden. General ecological management should improve the vegetational situation, and little new landscaping is necessary, or indeed justifiable. The stone bridge to the small island in the channel should not be restored, but the steps and associated brickwork at the SE corner of the evaluation area requires attention. In general the site needs to be made safe for visitors.

4.4 Display

Ankerwycke is an extremely picturesque site, and is eminently worthy of display. Suitable further works would undoubtedly enhance the visible archaeological amenity in terms of the medieval and post-medieval use of the site. Display boards could be used to outline the history of the site, including the important fact that the priory buildings were subsumed into a private residence in the post-Dissolution period. The public perception of monastic sites is clearly dominated by famous ruins such as Tintern, Fountains and Rievaulx Abbeys, but the continuity of some sites as domestic/manorial centres is poorly understood.

Gardening is virtually a national pastime in Britain, and the growth of garden archaeology undoubtedly reflects this enthusiasm. Ankerwycke presents an ideal opportunity to display relatively small-scale landscaped gardens in their historical framework. A minimal amount of new work will be necessary beyond

clearance and safety precautions, and replanting in particular is hardly likely to be required. Indeed more attention will need to be targeted on preserving the ecological balance of the site from the inevitable pressure of visitor numbers. Sympathetic design and waymarking should alleviate this problem.

Oxford Archaeological Unit

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Appendix B1

List & Index Soc. ns III(i) *Lands of Dissolved Religious Houses*

Prints outline of earliest account (SC6/Hen VIII/234, of 27-8 Hen VIII c.1536):

Ankerwycke:

Rents and Farms in Wyrardesbury, Horton, Hardington, Heys, Staynes,
Parnishe in Egham parish [Surrey], Nova & Vet' Windesore, Bassingbourne
manor in Takely Co Essex, Canwykstreat & St Brides Flete Street London
Manors of Alderbourne, Greneford and Stanwell Park

Demesne Lands [few details given]

Perquisites of court

Appendix B2

Bucks Record Office, Aylesbury: Wraysbury Index Cards

1808 Auct Cat Ferry House	BAS 158/47
- W. Enclosure Act	-
1656 Agreement betw Lord of Manor and copyholder	D97/113/5
1851 Faculty for Vestry	AR/49/49
1656 Admission in manor of W. Rectory	AR/49/49
1629-1850 Various props, 27 items	BAS Colls
1850 Correspondence Harcourt-Constabulary Cttee	BAS 9/33
c1821 Agreement re vicarial tithe	BAS 12/33
1720 House at Hithend (lease)	BAS 27/41
1652 Site of manor of Parnishe (Surrey)	BAS 570/44
1629 Messuage called Doggins	BAS 18/45
1671 1 deed	D/TR
1611-1829 24 deeds	D97/110/1-2
1584-1634 14 copies	D97/110/3
1655 Manorial agreement (Sir A King & copyholder)	D97/113/5
1851 Faculty to rebuild church	D97/113/4
1803 List of men employed at W.	D86/31/19
1694 Poll Tax	D/W89/21
1698-9 Poll Tax	D/W90/39-42
1626 Subsidy assessment	BAS 491/29
C15-17 Manor of Remenham	D/X154
1812-85 Vine House, etc (Doulton Estate)	D72/52
1821 Messuage and orchards	D72/53
1844 Release of claim on estate in W.	D72/58
1829-1909 Ankerwycke House (Harcourt Estate)	D49
1832 Doggins Messuage	D49/3
1873 New School	D49/15
1850 Inventory at Laurel Cottage	D49/52
1843,48-9 Account book, Birds Farm	D49/72
1803 Inclosure Award	IR 111Q
1635 Copyhold messuage called Paynes	D/X380/1
1655,85 Copyhold in Old Field	D/X560/1-2
1779 2 Copyhold cottages	D/X560/3
1729 2 ac in Queens Mead (deed)	D/X600/10

Refs to other catalogues:

Archdeaconry; MSS held elsewhere; OS maps; Parish/Charity; Printed and Pictorial; Sale particulars; Photographs; Quarter Sessions.

Sale Catalogues

Ankerwycke Farm 1855	D18/2/6
Ankerwycke House 1863 [see App.A10]	D18/1/9
Ankerwycke Farm 1872	D18/2/24

MSS held elsewhere

Marquis of Downshire (to check)	Berks RO
Wraysbury Manor (see App. B7)	Surrey RO
Sussex Arch Soc (Downshire settlement, 1787)	Berks RO
Thames Power Users (W. paper mills)	Berks RO
Pollock Family (Deeds of Pollock Family of Hatton rel meadows)	GLC RO [=GLRO]
Harcourt Powell (see App. B6)	Dyfed RO

Appendix B3

Bucks Record Office, Aylesbury 24/3/1993

Examination of selected material in **D49 Ankerwycke House** collection. These notes are additional comments on information given in the list.

[Seen item nos: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 58, 59, 60, 61a, 61b, 62, 63, 65 - not very informative, but throw some light on acquisition of Ankerwycke estate, and emphasises that it was not occupied much by family]

1. GSH is acquiring land from the others named.
2. The manor is the Rectory Manor (Dean and Chapter of Windsor)
3. Doggins is No. 133 on inclosure award
4. Long, and possibly has few details of lands.
5. Bond is because deeds were lost; land is Little Moat Close/Chandlers Close 3ac 28 p
7. 1/8 ac, mess. and cotts.
10. RC had lent GSH £4,000
15. (i) and (ii) grant to (iii).
16. Solicitor's letter headed 'Harcourt Trust' advising that Cap. Harcourt is enfranchising 2 small copyholds, as allowed being tenant for life; 'JSC Harcourt of Wimbourne Minster, Dorset late Cap. in HM 30th Regt of Foot, tenant for life under settlement of Feb 1858' (GSH to JSCH).
17. Solicitor's letter headed 'Harcourt Sale'
18. as 19
19. Not an abstract going back very far, cites 21-22 June 1833 settlement (on marriage of GSH to Rolls) of estate to trustees for uses:
'All that manor or Lordship or reputed Manor or Lordship of Wyr- otherwise Wraisbury in Co. Bucks with the rights royalties members & appurts. thereto belonging; And all that Capital Messuage or Mansion House commonly called or known by the name of Ankerwycke House with the Coachhouse stables and outbuildings yards gardens shrubberies plantations & appurts...fisheries.. fields as in schedule.
• Schedule of property purchased of the Trustees of John Blagrove in 1829; of Mr Bucklands trustees in 1829; of Wm Taylor in 1832 [see xerox of schedule]
[I.e. as Lord of Manor he had repurchased lands which had been alienated, or not actually even been part of the manorial demesne in order to create the 'reputed manor' of A., consisting of house, land and park.]
33. No plan.
34. Brief schedule
35. Manor of Ankerwycke Parnish (in Egham, etc.)
37. Short; only C19 deeds, inc marriage settlement of GSH to Gertrude 1846 [his second, after death of first wife?]
38. Mostly small areas, 1-2 ac (freehold and copyhold), largest being 29 ac of arable of John Goodman; dates of purchase are 1833, 1834, 1836, 1839, 1840, 1842, 1843; total cost £3,550. [not very informative, but shows that he was continuing to consolidate his holding].

39. [Not seen - may include early documents - Where are Lake's deeds?]
40. Long schedule, as inclosure map, with single sums written against names for groups of parcels; much overwritten at later date. (J. Pryor tenant of A.)
[see xerox - NB shows that entire estate was rented out].
- 61a Letters from Harcourt at Newport Pagnall or St George's Square; many from his wife Gertrude. [*Little of any use, but hints of financial difficulties*]
- 61b Some on death of GSH in 1871-2; references to 'Ank. Sale', but not very clear indication of events.
65. Apparently does not discuss Ankerwycke.

Appendix C1.
1800 Enclosure Award (extract)

Bucks CRO: IR/111Q (award) & IR/111B (map); photostat (IR 23) says enrolled on recovery Roll (CP) 44 Geo III Trin Rot 2-29; Act is 39 Geo III = 1799]

Mostly in possession of J S Harcourt, and some John Harcourt Powell (but apparently recently transferred to JSH). House shown on Priory site, with smaller house on later site, and no farm or kitchen garden as in 1840.

'A Plan of the parish of Wraisbury in the County of Buckingham showing the allotments on the Common in the Common Fields as divided by Act of Parliament, in the Year 1800 by Thos. Bainbridge. (scale in chains).
See tracing and photographs of plan.

'Reference to the plan' is given at the back of the Award
(NB all enclosures are parcels numbered >90, most are >200)

<i>John Simon Harcourt</i>	<i>[Land use]</i>	<i>[A.R.P]</i>
25 Pattcrofts	Arable	8.0.22
Ayte next	Oziers	0.1.18
27 Ayte in Thames	Oziers	1.0.0
28 Upper Warren	Arable	18.1.27
29 House & Island	Pasture	1.0.0
30 Remainder of same	Pasture	1.3.34
31 Lower Warren	Arable	21.2.30
32 Long Mead	Meadow	10.3.1
33 Yards etc.	-	0.1.36
34 Garden	-	1.1.3
35 Shrubbery	-	1.1.6
36 Grass Platt	-	0.2.30
37 Shrubbery	-	0.3.26
38 ditto	-	3.1.6
39 Long Mead or Ankerwyke Mead		9.1.31 (Meadow)
40 Orchard	-	0.1.36
41 Great Day Meadow	Meadow	5.0.18
42 Shrubbery	-	1.2.14
43 Ayte	Oziers	2.1.20
44 Reddings Meadow	Arable	12.0.6
48 Little Day Meadow	Meadow	2.0.26
50 House (homestead etc)	Pasture	4.2.4
etc etc (52bc is Orchard)		

[A deletion in the Name column suggests an alteration; the following are mapped as John Harcourt Powell, but are not included under his entry, occurring at the end of John Simon Harcourt]

45	Meadow from Mr Powell	Meadow	7.3.37
46	Shrubbery	-	0.0.35
52 ^d	Garden	-	0.3.19
47	Coach House etc. taken in exchange from Mr Powell 0.0.20		
49	Mr Clarke's House, garden etc. (taken in exchange from Mr Powell)		

Appendix C3

1840 Wraysbury Tithe Award (extract)

(Bucks CRO: 448) see xerox and tracing

[Subject to tithe]

<i>George Simon Harcourt (Owner and Occupier)</i>			<i>[A.R.P.]</i>
111	The Park (part)	Grass	16.3.25
115	Pleasure Ground	Wood & Grass	4.1.12
		[building not mentioned]	
115a	Garden	-	0.1.0
116	Ankerwyke Meadow (part)	Grass	2.3.25

118 Canal; 119 Grove; 120 Ankerwyke House and grounds; 121 Kitchen Garden; 122 Home Orchard; 123 Farmery & premises; 124 Dairy & premises; 125 Dairy Orchard; 130 Willow Ground

[Tithe free lands]

<i>George Simon Harcourt (Owner and Occupier)</i>			<i>[A.R.P.]</i>
112	Ankerwyke Ayte	Wood	2.3.1
113	Wood part of A. Meadow	Wood	2.1.0
114	Meadow	Grass	3.1.35
116a	Part of A. Mead	Grass	5.3.24
117	Little Day Mead	Grass	2.2.7
134	Lower Warren+Long Meadow	Grass	31.0.15
136	Osier ground	Oziers	0.1.5
137	Fir plantation	Firs	0.1.6

Appendix D

Pictorial sources

ANKERWYCKE PRIORY

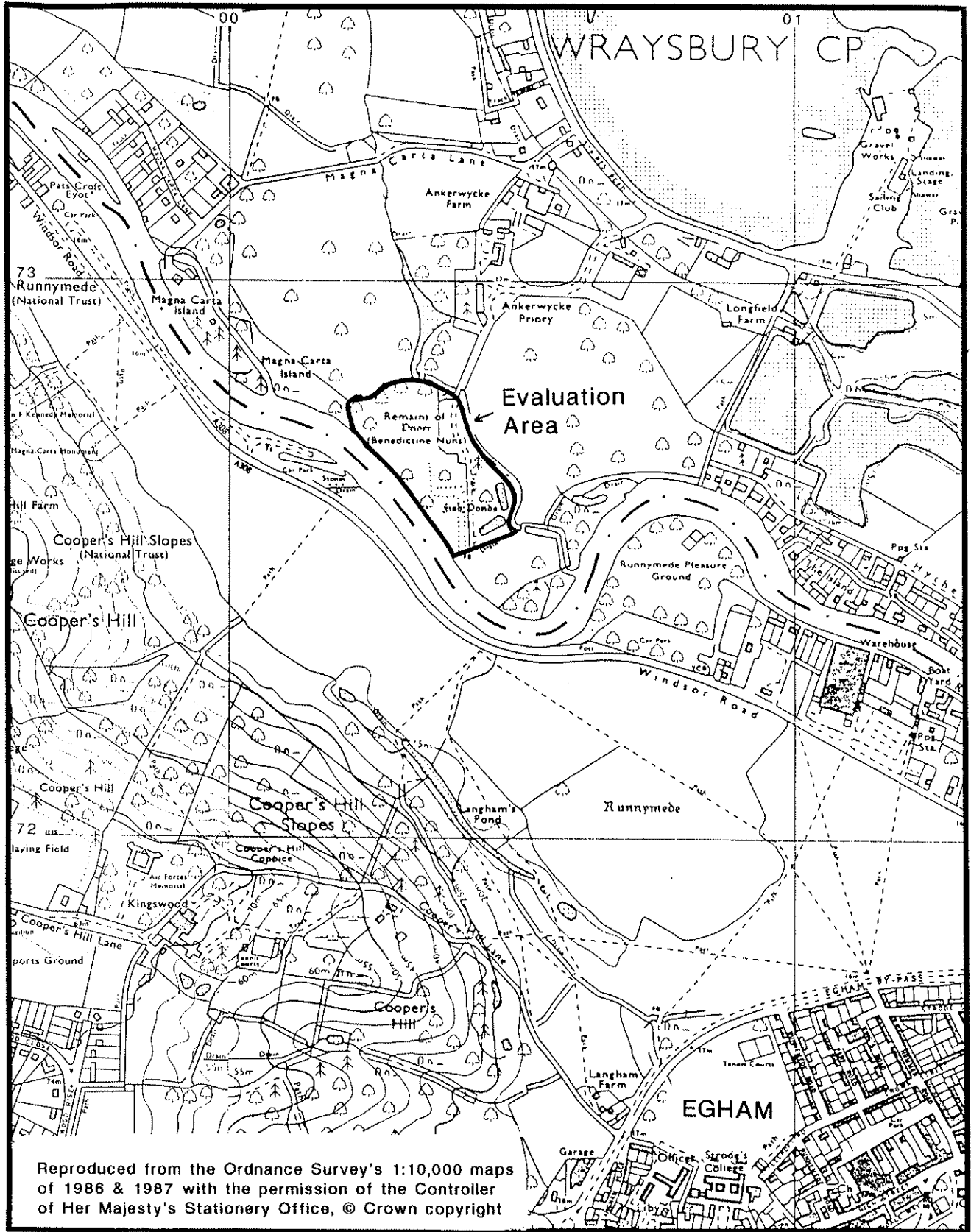


Fig.1 Site Location

ANKERWYCKE PRIORY

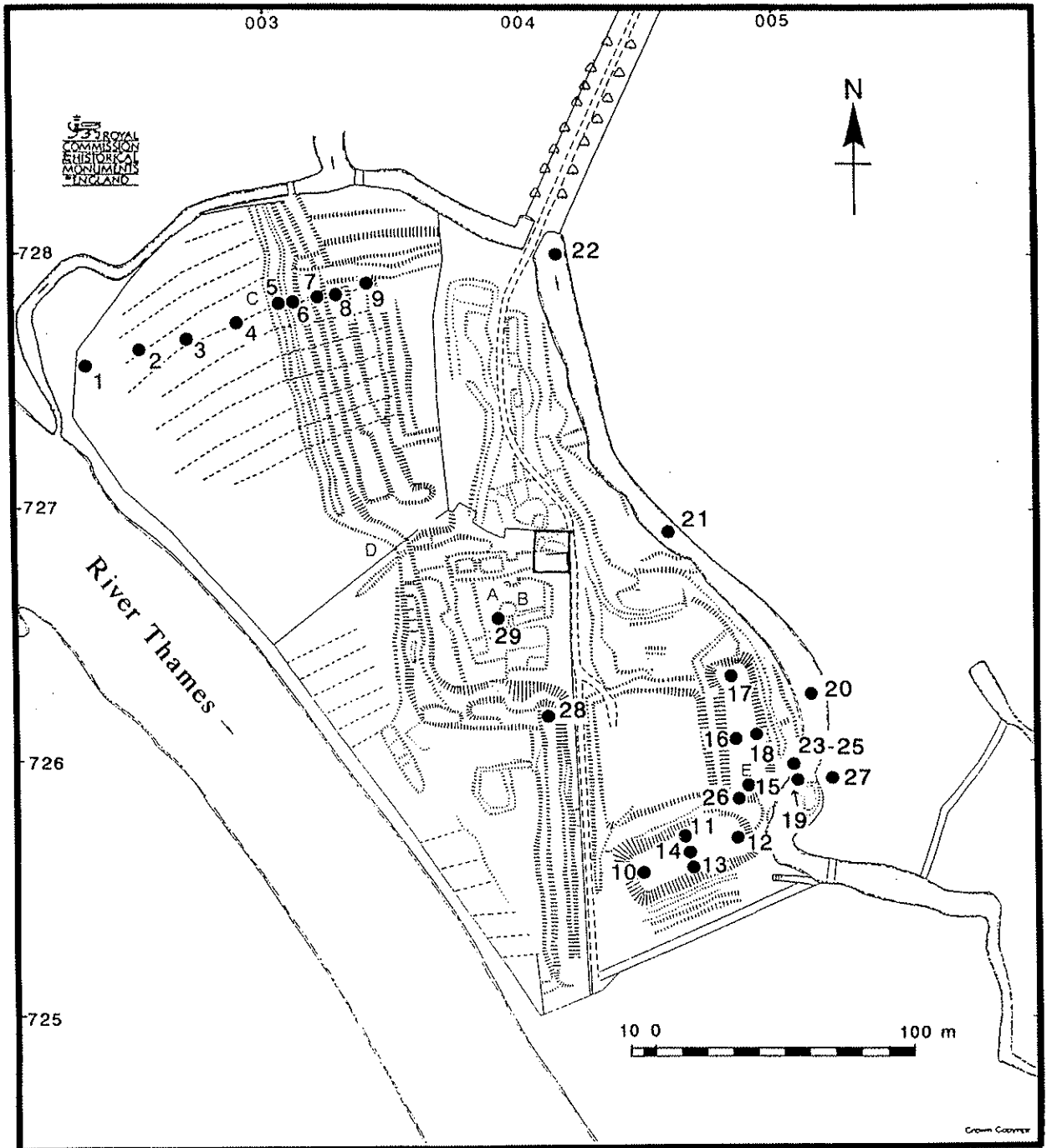


Fig.2 Location of auger samples

ANKERWYCKE PRIORY

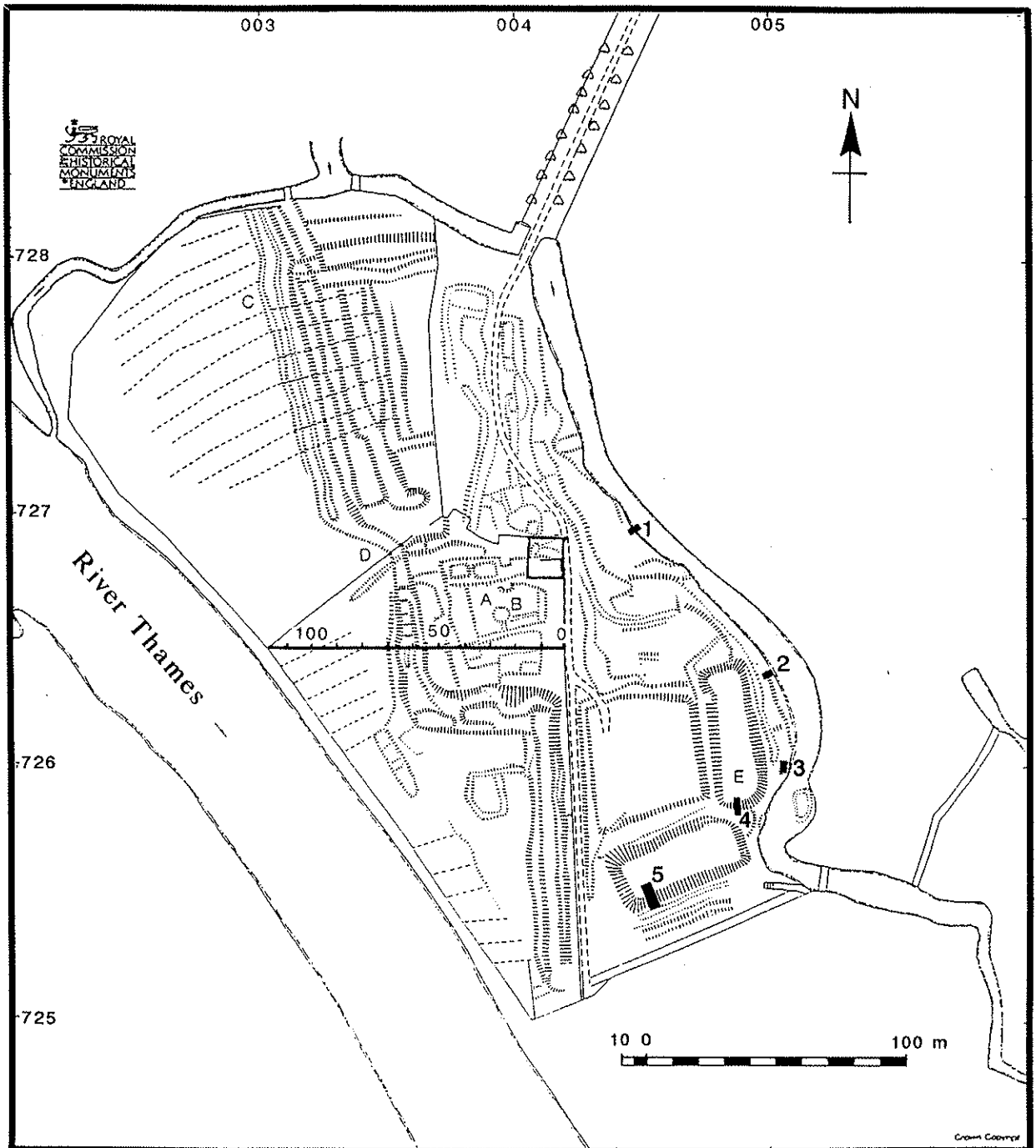


Fig.3 RCHM survey, including location of Trenches 1-5

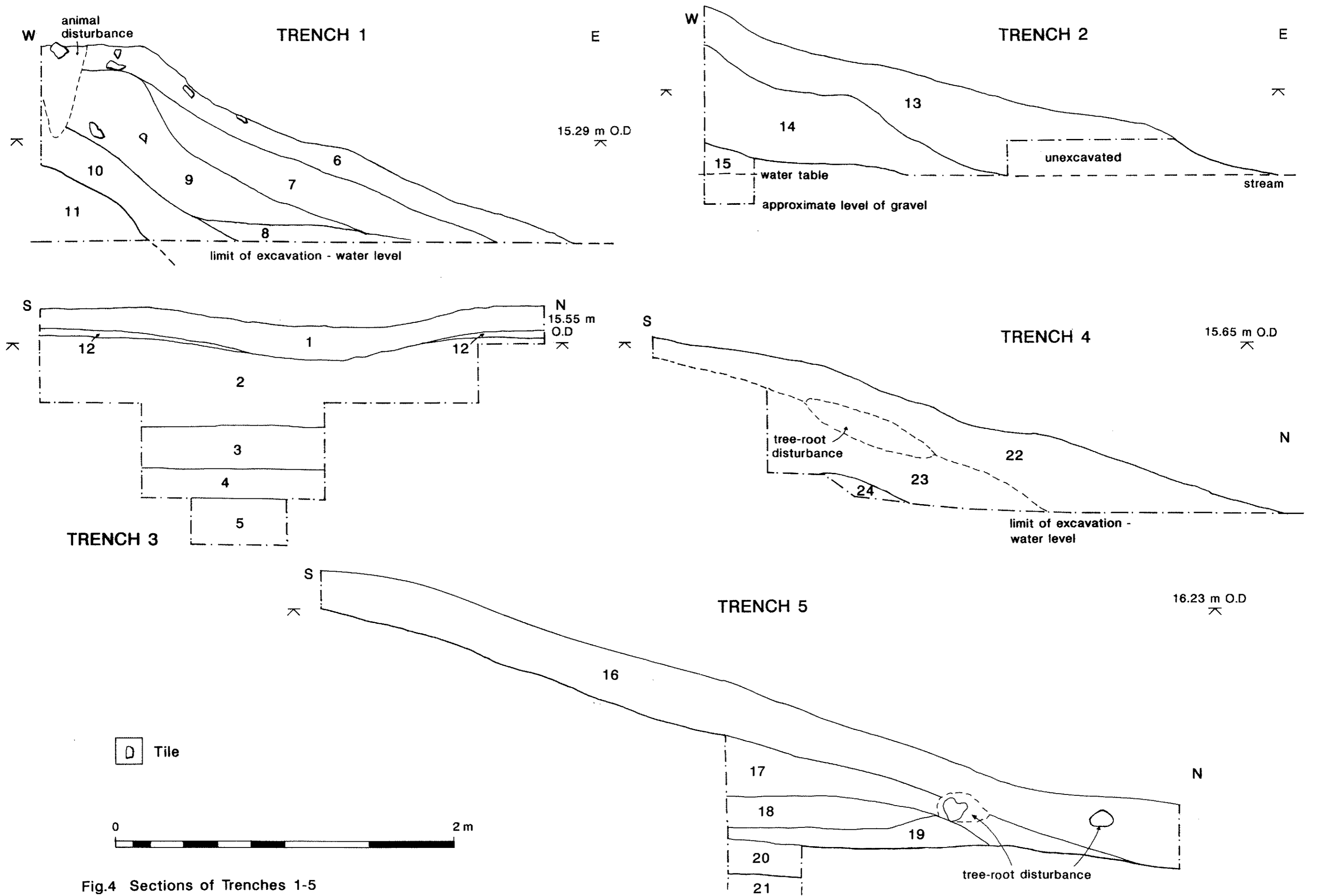
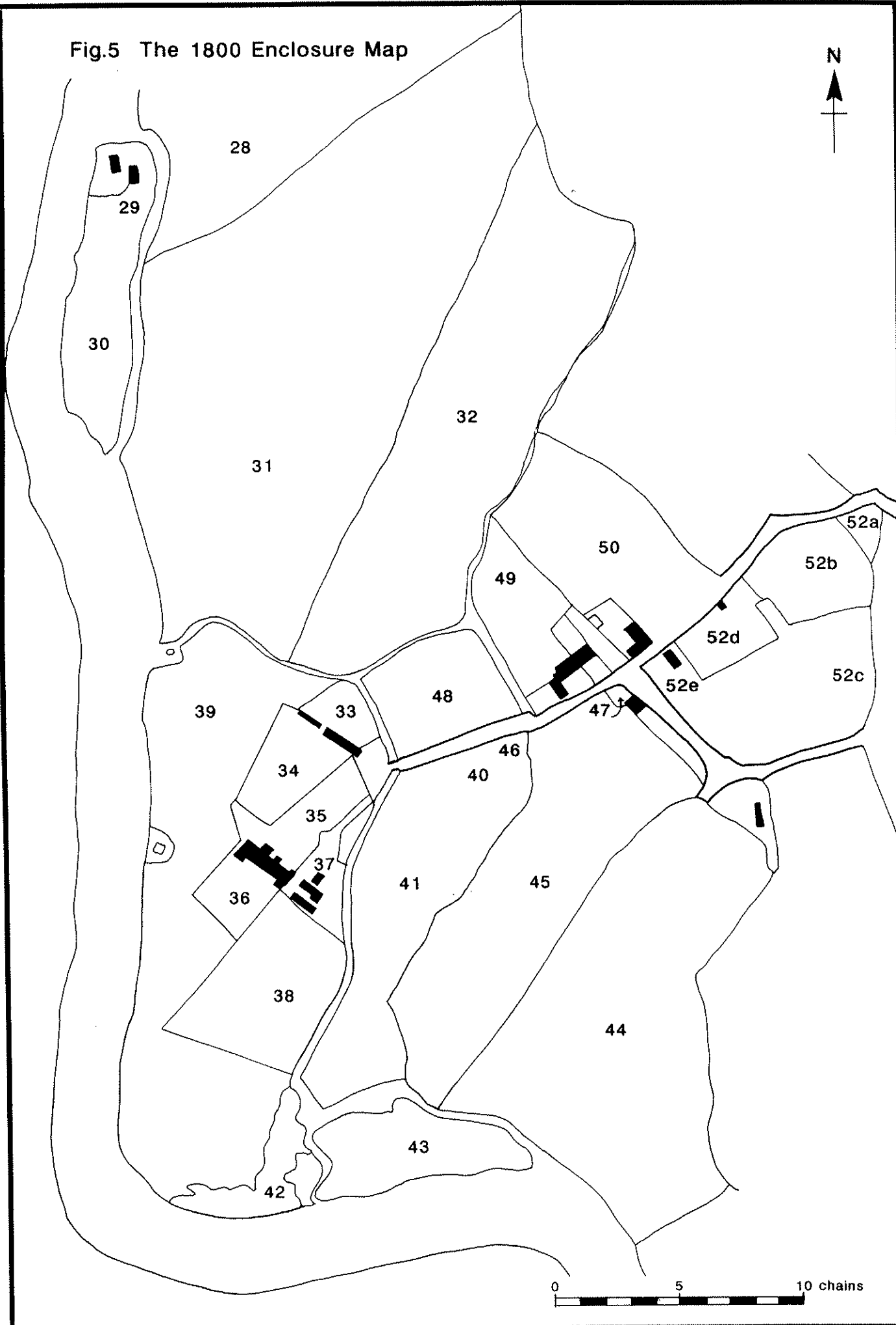


Fig.4 Sections of Trenches 1-5

Fig.5 The 1800 Enclosure Map



0 5 10 chains

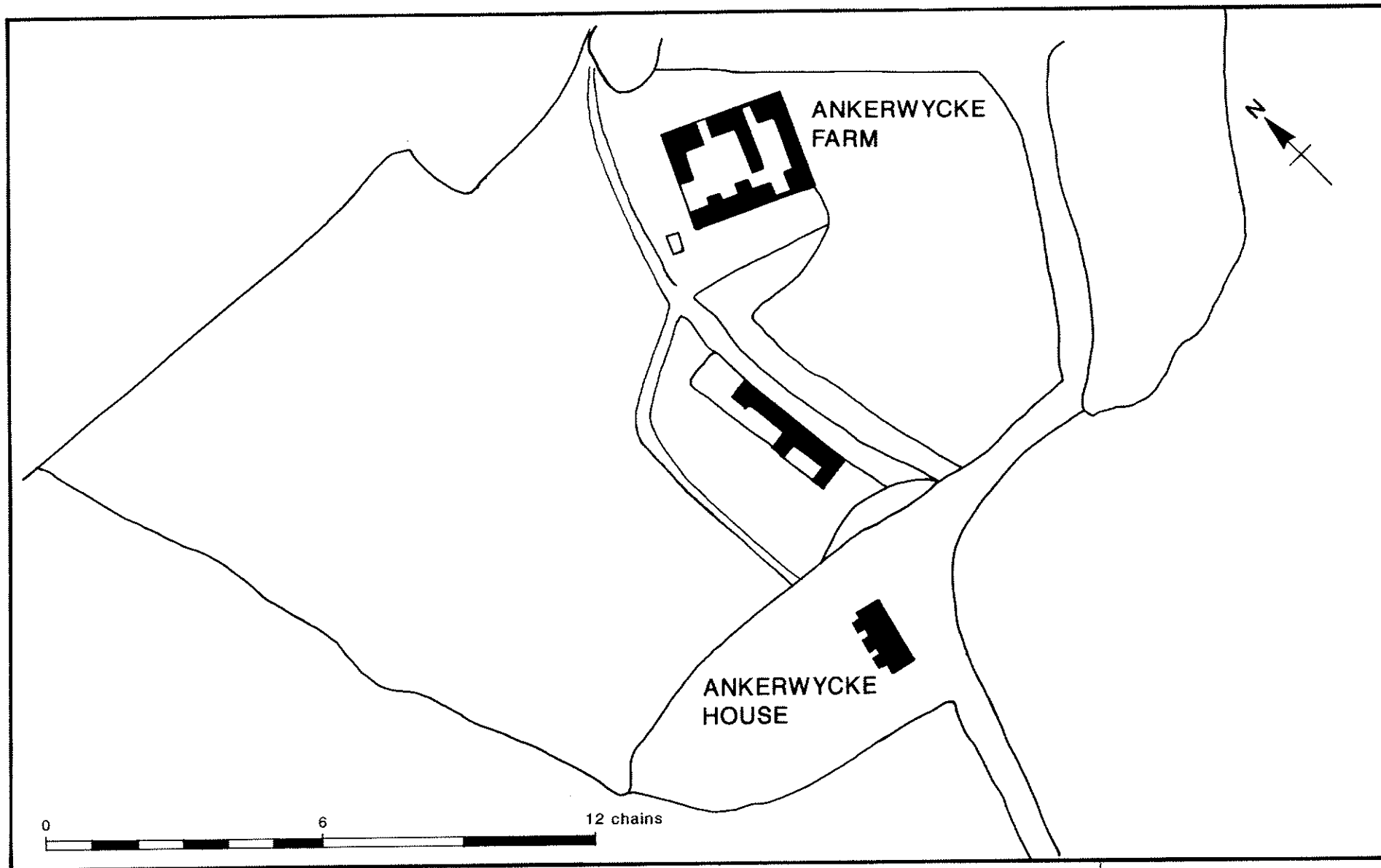


Fig 6 1840 Deposited road plan

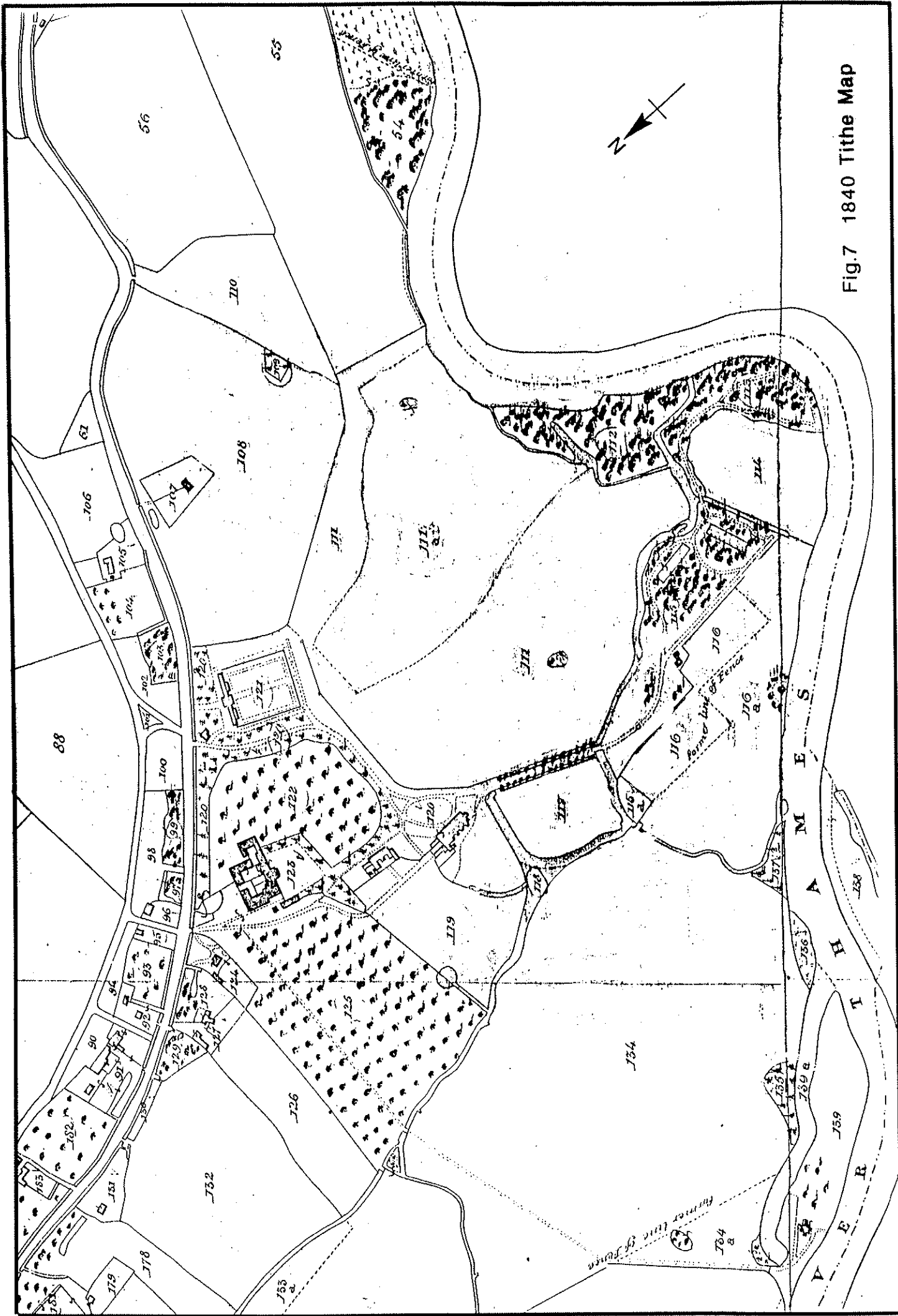


Fig.7 1840 Tithe Map

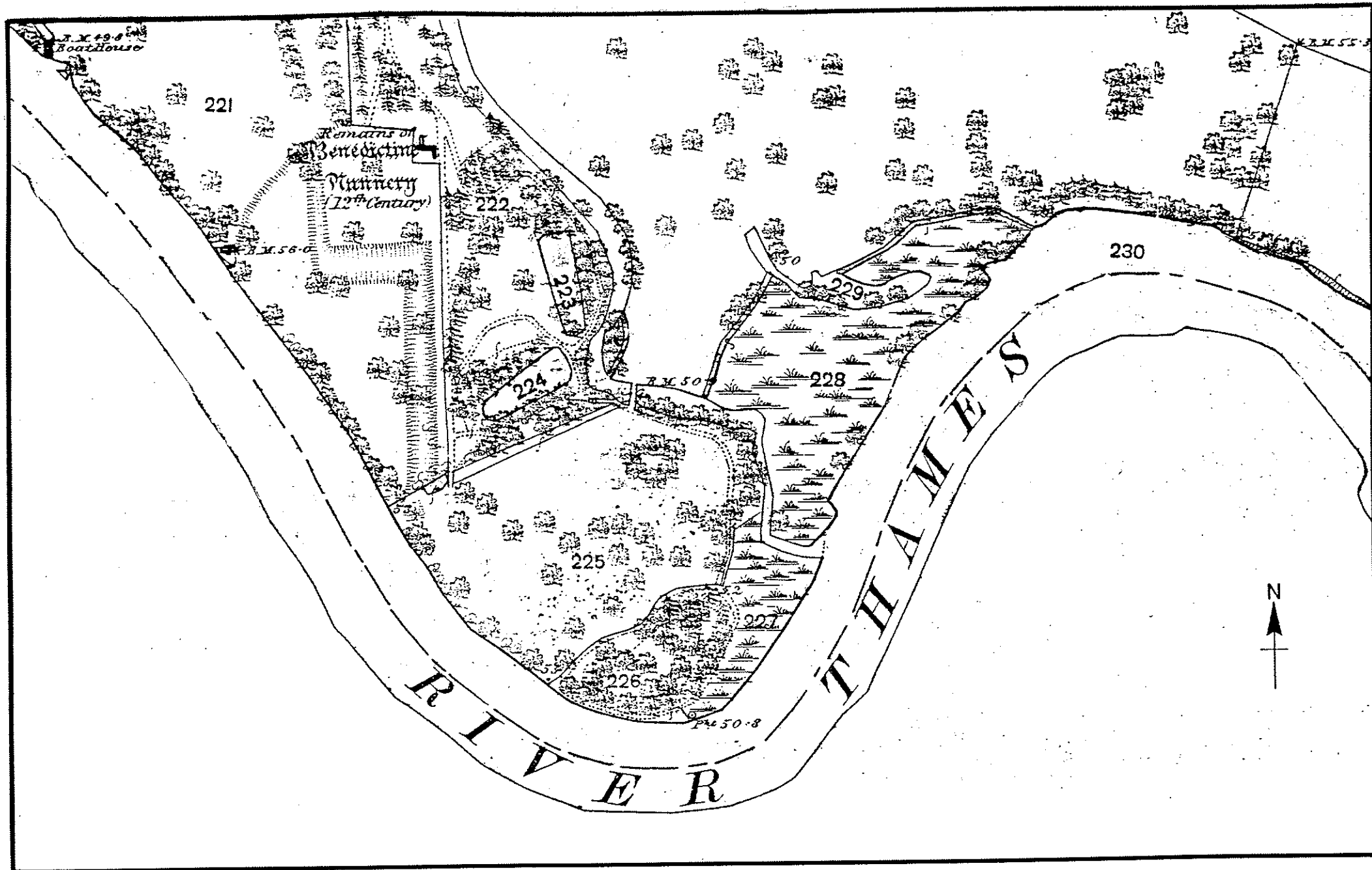


Fig.8 1869 OS 1st edn 25" plan

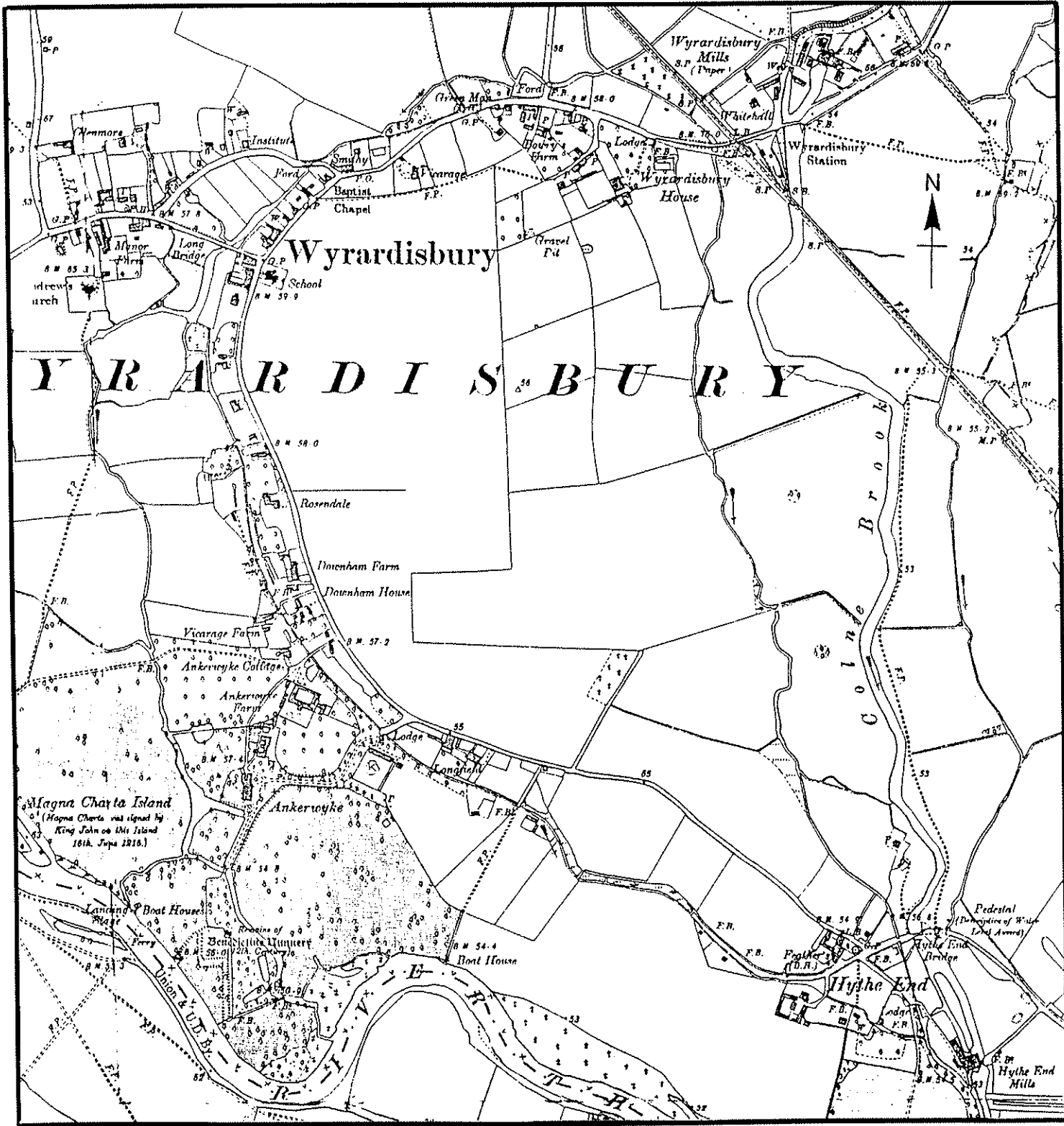


Fig.9 c1900 OS 2nd edn 6" plan

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