

METRIC SURVEY IN THE ENVIRONS OF PINKERY
FARM, EXMOOR FOREST
Exmoor Mires Project EDF13

PROJECT REPORT

By Hazel Riley



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Hazel Riley BA (Hons), AIFA, FSA
Consultant in Landscape History, Management and Conservation Grazing
The Furley Herd of Dexter Cattle
New House Cottage
Furley
Axminster
Devon
EX13 7TR
01404 881330
hazelfurleydexter@btinternet.com

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OASIS PROJECT NO 167577

ABBREVIATIONS

EH English Heritage

EMP Exmoor Mires Project

ENPA Exmoor National Park Authority

GPS Global Positioning System

NMP National Mapping Programme

NMR National Monuments Record

OSGB36 Ordnance Survey National grid

OSTN02 Ordnance Survey transformation parameters for conversion of WGS84 coordinates to the Ordnance Survey National Grid coordinates

RCHME Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England

RICS Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

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ABSTRACT

A large scale metric survey of an area of earthworks on a SW facing spur between Pinkery Farm and Short Combe in Exmoor National Park was undertaken for the Exmoor Mires Project. The earthworks are interpreted as a complex of drainage channels. At least two phases of drainage can be seen and both phases probably date from the latter part of the 19th century when the area was part of Pinkery Farm, one of the newly established farms on the Knights' Exmoor Forest Estate.

INTRODUCTION

This survey of the spur between Pinkery Farm and Short Combe was undertaken for the Exmoor Mires Project (EMP) on behalf of the Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA). The principal aim of the work was to carry out a walkover and metric survey of the area to identify, accurately locate, record and interpret extant archaeological features in the area which will be affected by mire restoration work, carried out by EMP, in the environs of Pinkery Farm (ENPA 2013). The report consists of two sections: the archaeological features and their historic landscape context are outlined and interpreted in the first section. The second section contains the evidence base for this in the form of a Site Gazetteer which presents the detailed results of the survey work.

Location, topography and geology

The survey area lies on the SW edge of the Chains, between the Knight Farms of Pinkery and Driver, on a SW facing spur between an un-named tributary stream of the River Barle east of Pinkery Farm and west of Short Combe (SS 2725 1410) (Figs 1 and 2). The survey area lies between 400-420m OD; to the south the spur slopes gently down towards the River Barle; to the west the land drops sharply to the tributary stream of the River Barle.

Site numbering

Each archaeological feature has been given a unique number with the prefix EDF13, and these numbers are used throughout this report: EDF13(1) to EDF13(10). The features are recorded under the Exmoor HER number 10133.

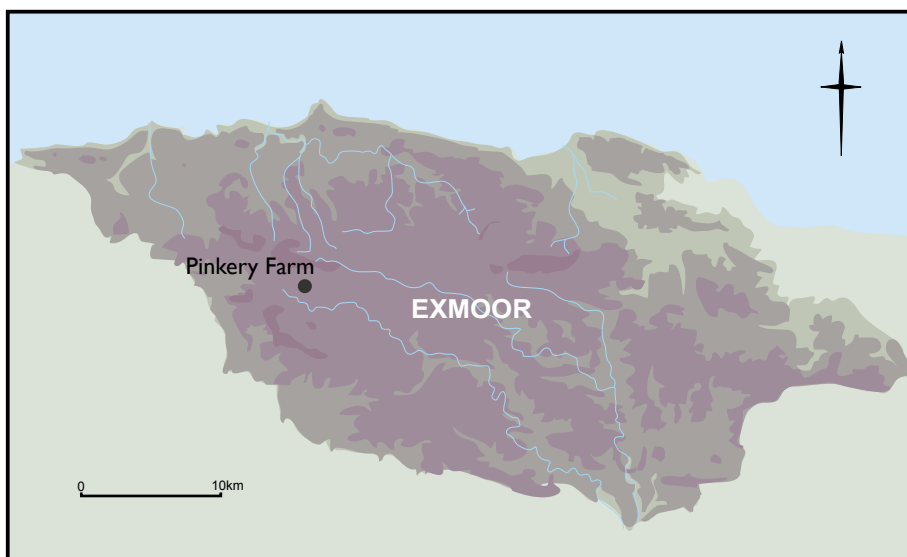


Fig 1 Location map

PREVIOUS WORK

The RCHME carried out archaeological fieldwork across the area in the early 1990s (Riley and Wilson-North 2001; EH NMR records) and the EH NMP project for Exmoor mapped the archaeological and historic landscape features of the whole of the National Park from air photographs (Hegarty and Toms 2009). The NMP transcription recorded in detail the complex drainage system to the east of the survey area, at the head of Short Combe, and three ditches in the survey area (EH NMR I470355).

The survey area was included in an archaeological survey of the ENPA Pinkworthy Estate in 1995 and the earthworks were located, described, and interpreted as a probable prehistoric field system with an associated cairn (Exmoor HER 10133). The area was included in a walkover survey in advance of mire restoration work.

THE SURVEY

The fieldwork was carried out during November 2013. All of the features recorded in the Exmoor HER were located, photographed and recorded. Several new features were located during the course of the survey and these were recorded in the same way. These detailed descriptions and photographs make up the Site Gazetteer. All of the extant archaeological features were surveyed at a scale of 1:500 using survey grade differential GPS. A profile was surveyed across the two features EDF13(1) and EDF13(2). Spot heights were taken across the survey area to obtain contours at 2m intervals. The GPS-derived geodetic WGS84 coordinates were transformed to the Ordnance Survey National Grid (OSGB36) using the Ordnance Survey's grid transformation (OSTN02) in Leica's GPS post-processing software. Observation times were based on those recommended by the OS and the RICS in order to obtain accurate heighting information (OS 2010; RICS 2010). Figure 3 reproduces the reduced survey plan and profile and shows the surveyed features with their EDF13 numbers.

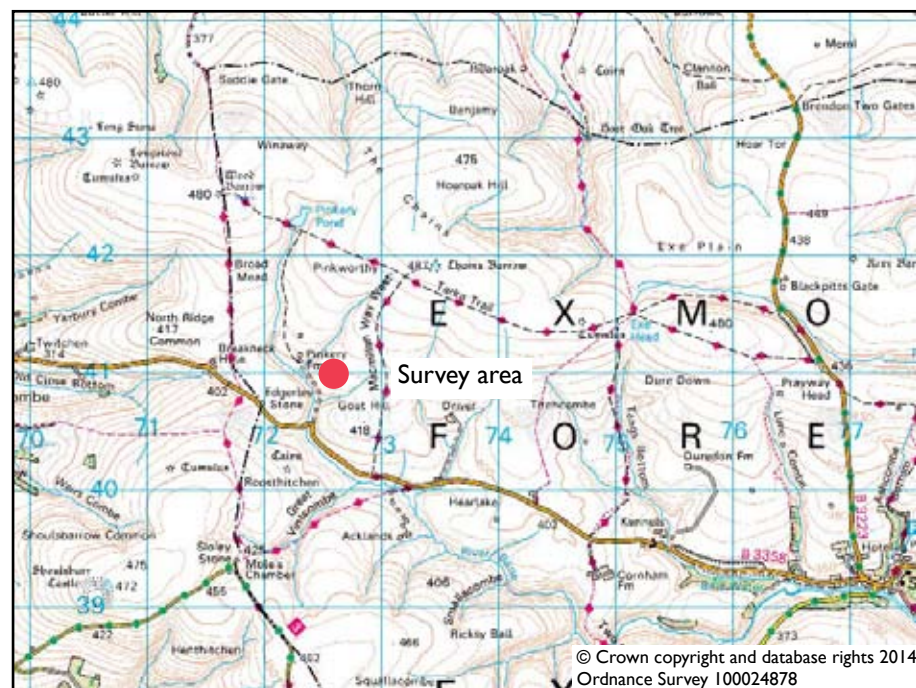


Fig 2 Survey area location and topography

DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE EARTHWORK FEATURES

Post-medieval drainage features

Five broad, spread banks with silted up channels on their NE (upslope) sides run across the hillside, oriented SE/NW and parallel to each other. The banks measure between 1-1.6m, 0.25-0.6m high and the channels are 0.3-0.4m wide and 0.2m deep (Fig 4). The two longest banks and channels run from a very wet area at the head of Short Combe, NW for a distance of 250-280m (Fig 5). One of the banks, EDF13(4) is fragmented; this is caused by wet areas and vehicle access (Fig 6). These are the remains of drainage ditches, with the banks formed from the spoil and clearance of the channels. A small mound, EDF13(6), previously interpreted as a prehistoric cairn (Front cover) is associated with these drains. The drainage ditches run towards, or terminate at, a drainage system on the west side of the survey area, where the hillside drops steeply down to a tributary stream of the River Barle. This drainage system, EDF13(7), comprises a channel, 0.9m wide, 0.7m deep and 70m long, with an intermittent bank, 0.9m wide, 0.6m high, on its downslope side. Five further drainage channels are associated with this system (Fig 7).

The drainage ditches EDF13(1,2,4,5) are overlain by a boundary bank EDF13(10) and the drainage ditch EDF13(2) is cut by five parallel drainage ditches (Fig 8). These have been cut to drain the very wet area between the features EDF13(1) and EDF13(2); the eastern ditch runs into the drainage system at the head of Short Combe (HER 2151).



Fig 4 Looking NW along the drainage channel EDF13(2) showing the spread bank and silted channel (1m scale on edge of channel) (Hazel Riley)



Fig 5 The SE end of EDF13(1) at the end of Short Combe (Hazel Riley)

Fig 6 Vehicle tracks cutting through the bank and channel EDF13(4) (Hazel Riley)



Fig 7 Drainage channel EDF13(7) at the west end of the survey area (Hazel Riley)



Fig 8 Part of the drainage system EDF13(9) cuts across the drainage ditch EDF13(2) (Hazel Riley)



The survey has clearly shown that there are two phases of drainage within the survey area, together with a phase of enclosure. The earliest known maps of the area show that there were no buildings or enclosures in or in the environs of the survey area before John Knight began reclamation work on his Exmoor Forest Estates in the 1820s (Figs 9, 10, 11). The 1st edition OS map (1889) shows the buildings at Pinkery Farm and the enclosures in place at the end of the 19th century. None of the drainage ditches recorded during the course of this survey are depicted (Fig 12).

A hand-drawn map of a rural landscape. The map is oriented with North at the top. It features several labels: "Woodharrow" at the top left, "Ext. Head Hill" at the top center, "Dure Down" at the top right, "Ashcroft" on the far right, "Pongway" in the center right, "Mole's Hamlet" in the center left, and "Wymonds" at the bottom right. The map shows a network of roads and fields, with a prominent road running horizontally across the middle. There are also some smaller roads and paths branching off. The drawing is done in a simple, sketchy style with light lines.

Pinkery Farm

The name Goat Hill Farm and the fact that George Groves lived at Driver Cott suggests that he was farming the area of Goat Hill and Short Combe; he may have dug the first phase of drainage ditches west of Short Combe and east of Pinkery Farm during his short tenancy (1849-50). The second phase of drainage probably occurred about 10 years later, when Pinkery Farm was enclosed and the buildings erected during the course of Richard Ridd's tenancy (begun in 1859).

These two phases of drainage at Short Combe are part of a larger drainage system around Pinkery and Driver Farms. The features, together with extensive areas of disused turf pits and 19th century-enclosures, show up very well on the Lidar images of the area (Fig 13). Pinkery Pond, recently interpreted as a reservoir constructed by John Knight to provide water power to the Knight Farms, and its associated leat, the Pinkery Canal, are at the heart of this complex landscape (Riley 2012).

The absolute chronology of these surface drainage systems is difficult to establish. Orwin mentions that both John and Frederic Knight cut many miles of surface drains on Great and Little Buscombe, Trout Hill, East and West Pinford and the Chains (Orwin 1929, 33). The estate accounts record that Richard Bale cut 8½ miles of surface drains on the Chains, and 7¾ miles of gutters were cut on Ashcombe, in 1836 (Burton 1989, 72).

It does seem most likely that the drainage ditches recorded here were constructed in the 19th century, after John Knight bought the Forest. George Groves, living at Driver Cott, and farming part of Pinkery in 1849-50, may well have been responsible for the first phase of drainage ditches cut on Short Combe. When Pinkery Farm was let again in 1859 to Richard Ridd it seems that, in tandem with enclosure, extensive areas of surface drains were cut, including those at the head of Short Combe, east of the survey area.

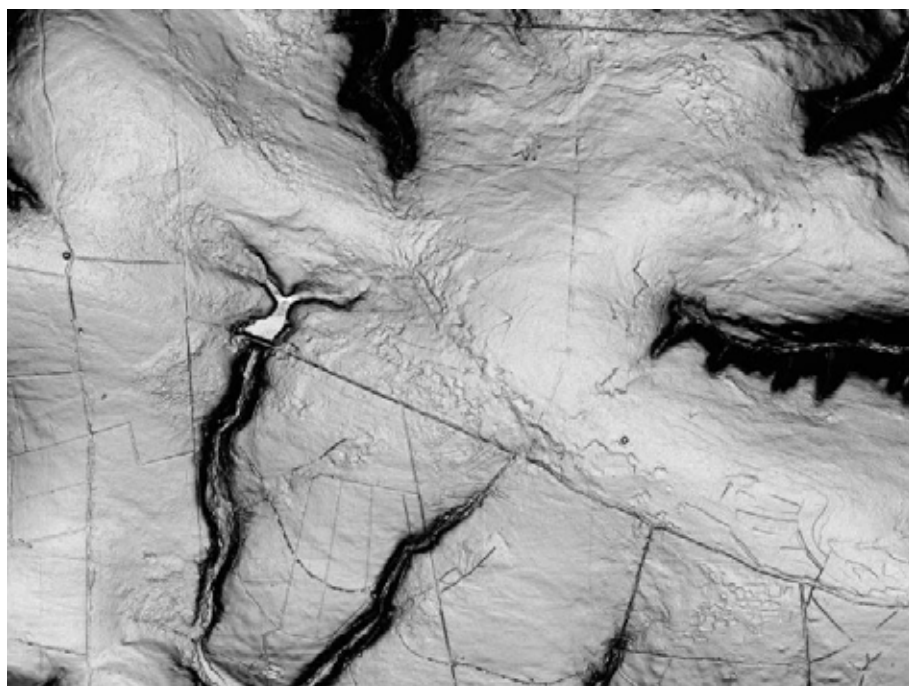


Fig 13 Extract from Lidar DTM image showing the remains of disused turf pits, enclosures and drainage systems north of Pinkery and Driver Farms (based on data supplied by South West Water) (© Geomatics)

EDF13 SITE GAZETTEER

EDF13(1)

Location: NGR 272718 140961 to 272495 141071

Type: DRAINAGE DITCH

Period: 19th century (1800-1899 AD)

Description and interpretation: A broad, spread bank, 1.4m wide and 0.6m high, with a silted channel on the NE (upslope) side, runs for 250m SE/NW across the spur between Short Combe and Pinkery Farm. This is a silted up drainage ditch, one of five which drain the spur by channelling water into a drainage system on the steep slope to the west [EDF13(7)]. A small bank, 1m wide, 0.3m high, just the north of the west end of the channel (NGR 272517 141067), is part of a silted up drainage ditch. The features are earlier than the enclosure banks [EDF13(10)] and probably dates from 1849-50 when George Groves farmed part of Pinkery from Driver Cott (Burton 1986, 87-8; Orwin *et al* 1997, 289).

References: EDF13(1a)_E_13NOV13_HRILEY; EDF13(1a)_W_13NOV13_HRILEY

EDF13(2)

Location: NGR 272714 140940 to 272460 141059

Type: DRAINAGE DITCH

Period: 19th century (1800-1899 AD)

Description and interpretation: A broad, spread bank, 1m wide and 0.5m high, with a silted channel on the NE (upslope) side, runs for 280m SE/NW across the spur between Short Combe and Pinkery Farm. This is a silted up drainage ditch, one of five which drain the spur by channelling water into a series of drainage ditches on the steep slope to the west [EDF13(7)]. It is earlier than the enclosure banks [EDF13(10)] and probably dates from 1849-50 when George Groves farmed part of Pinkery from Driver Cott (Burton 1986, 87-8; Orwin *et al* 1997, 289).

References: EDF13(2)_W_13NOV13_HRILEY

EDF13(3)

Location: NGR 272491 141002

Type: DRAINAGE DITCH

Period: 19th century (1800-1899 AD)

Description and interpretation: A broad, spread bank, 1m wide and 0.25m high, with a silted channel on the NE (upslope) side, runs for 45m SE/NW across the spur between Short Combe and Pinkery Farm. This is a silted up drainage ditch, one of five which drain the spur by channelling water into a series of drainage ditches on the steep slope to the west [EDF13(7)]. It is earlier than the enclosure banks [EDF13(10)] and probably dates from 1849-50 when George Groves farmed part of Pinkery from Driver Cott (Burton 1986, 87-8; Orwin *et al* 1997, 289).

References: EDF13(3)_W_13NOV13_HRILEY

EDF13(4)

Location: NGR 272542 141063

Type: DRAINAGE DITCH

Period: 19th century (1800-1899 AD)

Description and interpretation: Two banks and three slight scarps run SE/NW across

the spur between Short Combe and Pinkery Farm. These are the remains of a silted up drainage ditch, one of five which drain the spur by channelling water into a series of drainage ditches on the steep slope to the west [EDF13(7)]. The feature has been disturbed and damaged by vehicle tracks. It is earlier than the enclosure banks [EDF13(10)] and probably dates from 1849-50 when George Groves farmed part of Pinkery from Driver Cott (Burton 1986, 87-8; Orwin *et al* 1997, 289).

References: EDF13(4)_W_13NOV13_HRILEY

EDF13(5)

Location: NGR 272559 141068 to 272502 141107

Type: DRAINAGE DITCH

Period: 19th century (1800-1899 AD)

Description and interpretation: A bank, 1-2m wide, 0.5m high with a silted up channel on the NE (upslope side), runs for 70m SE/NW across the spur between Short Combe and Pinkery Farm. These are the remains of a silted up drainage ditch, one of five which drain the spur by channelling water into a series of drainage ditches on the steep slope to the west [EDF13(7)]. The feature has been disturbed and damaged by vehicle tracks. It is earlier than the enclosure banks [EDF13(10)] and probably dates from 1849-50 when George Groves farmed part of Pinkery from Driver Cott (Burton 1986, 87-8; Orwin *et al* 1997, 289).

References: EDF13(5)_W_13NOV13_HRILEY

EDF13(6)

Location: NGR 272517 141022

Type: MOUND

Period: 19th century (1800-1899 AD)

Description and interpretation: An irregular, ovoid mound, covered in grass and reeds, lies 6m south of the drainage ditch EDF13(2). The mound is peaty and measures 7.5m N/S, 6.4m E/W and 0.3-0.6m high. It was interpreted a probable prehistoric burial mound within a contemporary field system (Exmoor HER 10133) but this is far more likely to be the result of the use of the spur in the 19th and 20th centuries for agriculture.

References: EDF13(6)_N_15NOV13_HRILEY

EDF13(7)

Location: NGR 272468 141078

Type: DRAINAGE SYSTEM

Period: 19th century (1800-1899 AD)

Description and interpretation: A channel, 0.9m wide, 0.7 m deep with an intermittent bank, 0.9m wide, 0.6m high, on the downslope side runs NE/SW for 70m at the west end of the silted up drainage ditches EDF13(1-5). It turns sharply at the SW end to run for a further 20m. A silted up drainage ditch runs N/S for 50m to the south of this and a second silted up drainage ditch runs NE/SW across the NW side of the main channel. These channels took the water from the long, SW/NE drains EDF13(1-5) and channelled it away from the spur into the Barle and its tributary stream. It may be contemporary with these drainage ditches and date from 1849-50 when George Groves farmed part of Pinkery from Driver Cott (Burton 1986, 87-8; Orwin *et al* 1997,

289).

References: EDF13(7a)_N_13NOV13_HRILEY; EDF13(7b)_E_13NOV13_HRILEY

EDF13(8)

Location: NGR 272537 141103

Type: DRAINAGE DITCH

Period: 19th century (1800-1899 AD)

Description and interpretation: A ditch, 1m wide, 0.7-0.9m deep, runs SE/NW for 30m. It is a silted up drainage ditch, taking water into the drain EDF13(5) and is probably contemporary with this ditch, dating from 1849-50 when George Groves farmed part of Pinkery from Driver Cott (Burton 1986, 87-8; Orwin *et al* 1997, 289).

References: EDF13(8)_W_13NOV13_HRILEY

EDF13(9)

Location: NGR 272579 140995

Type: DRAINAGE SYSTEM

Period: 19th century (1800-1899 AD)

Description and interpretation: Five silted up channels which cut through the drainage ditch EDF13(2) are drainage ditches which have been dug to drain a very wet area between the ditches EDF13(1) and EDF13(2). The easternmost ditch runs into the extensive drainage system at the head of Short Combe (Exmoor HER 2151). These ditches are later than the long, SE/NW running ditches EDF13(1-5) and probably date from the 1860s when Pinkery Farm was let to Richard Ridd or from the late 19th century when the area was managed as part of the Pinkery Herding (Orwin 1929, 53; Burton 1986, 269)

References: EDF13(9)_NW_13NOV13_HRILEY

EDF13(10)

Location: NGR 272596 141034

Type: BOUNDARY BANK

Period: 19th century (1800-1899 AD)

Description and interpretation: Substantial banks, 1m wide, 1-1.2m high, with stone facing, which overlie the long, SE/NW running ditches EDF13(1-5). These are part of the enclosures for Pinkery Farm, laid out in the 1860s when Pinkery Farm was let to Richard Ridd (Orwin 1929, 53)

References: EDF13(10a)_N_13NOV13_HRILEY; EDF13(10b)_NW_13NOV13_HRILEY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Lee Bray organised access and provided background material.

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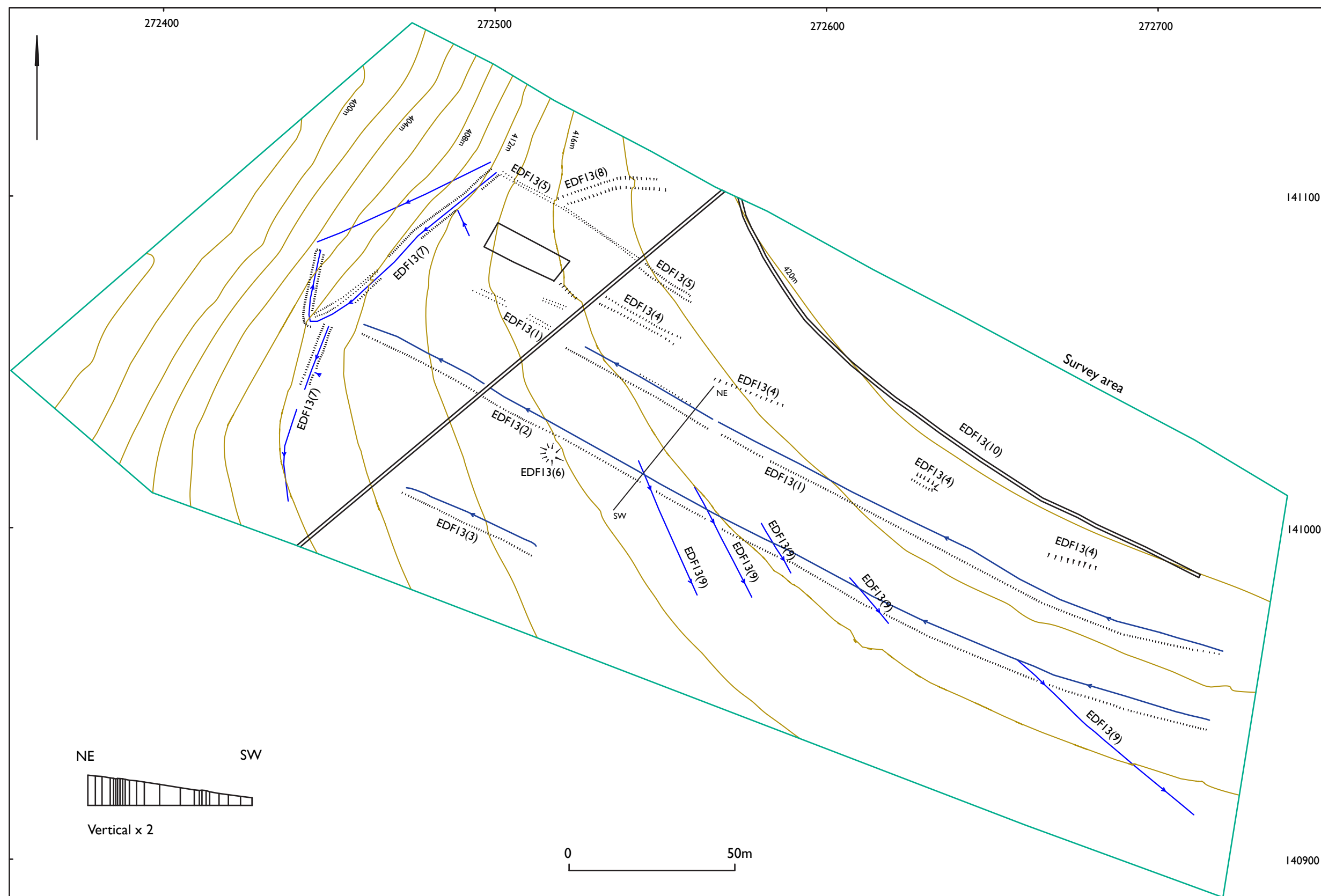


Fig 3 Survey plan and profile showing site reference numbers (reduced)

