

CAWSTON HEATH

(Part)

Archaeological Earthwork Rapid Identification Survey

Norfolk Historic Environment Service Ref ENF133679

For The Norfolk Wildlife Trust

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1 Introduction

This survey was undertaken under an Environmental Stewardship Scheme (Higher Level Stewardship) which is to involve some tree felling and ground disturbance, covering the whole heath. The area surveyed was the northern 23.24 hectares, the southern section having been arable land until recently.

A brief was provided by the Norfolk Historic Environment Service (HES), not requiring all that area to be inspected, but in agreement with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, it was agreed to inspect all of the northern area. A method statement from the contractor was agreed with the HES. Both these documents are held by all parties, but the main points of methodology are noted below.

“The area to be systematically inspected using c.50m transects, vegetation and topography allowing. Features considered of archaeological interest would be identified, located on a 1:10,000 map provided, and given a brief analytical description. Hand held GPS equipment would assist in the siting of features. Archive maps at the Norfolk Record Office and early published maps would be inspected and suitable references included in the text.”

Faden’s Map of 1797 shows the whole area as being within a much more extensive Cawston Heath and Warren, with tracks crossing the area. Bryant’s Map of Norfolk of 1826 and the Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1” Map also show various tracks.

The Enclosure Award Map of 1801 shows the existing boundaries, except for 20thC changes in the west. The most significant later cartographical interest comes with the Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 6” map of 1883 which shows a rifle range, whilst an RAF Air photograph of 1946 shows a later rifle range with some elements of the former one existing. A later NCC Air Photograph of 1988 shows only the later range, the earlier one now mostly gone and under arable cultivation.

These Rifle Ranges are the only record existing on the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (HER) for the area, as Site 53138. Additional detail for this is noted in the report.

2 Summary

The major features noted are those associated with the rifle range. The large bank forming the butts of the earlier range is now that of the more recent, with its associated extraction pits. The firing points from 50 to 500 yards are noted along with the target structure. A likely observation platform as part of a linear mound is also noted.

Other features include various sand and/or gravel extraction pits, particularly in the northern, more wooded area, some adjacent to what appear to be substantial natural depressions, reminiscent of features associated with glacial deposition related to the Cromer Ridge moraine, and within these there are still two areas of standing water, shown on the 1883 OS map. A few fragments of long unused tracks are noted, in part almost certainly those on earlier maps. Three probable military slit trenches are noted, with a scatter of small sub-circular depressions of unknown provenance. Only the more significant of these are recorded. The boundary banks and ditches to north and east would appear to be of Enclosure period and are not given specific entries.

3 Results, Ref to Fig 1

HER 53138

The rifle ranges are described on the current archaeological record from their early cartographic and air photograph depictions, as noted above. The extant individual features within the ranges are below given specific numbers as part of the overall listing of sites in the inspected area.

Site 1 TG16592360 (centre)

A substantial linear mound, c.60m N-S and c.18m wide, approximately 7m high. This was the butts of the earlier of the two ranges noted in 1883, and when this was removed prior to 1946, it became the butts for the new range as seen in 1946. It is obviously slightly off-alignment with the newer range, being almost N-S, whereas the newer range features are at c.5-185 degrees. To its east is an extensive extraction pit providing the spoil for the mound, c.5m deep. Further extraction pits are noted immediately north of the main one, with another c.40m north at TG16582368.

An L-shaped scarp lies immediately to its west at the northern end. This has a c.14m N-S arm and a c. 20m E-W arm, up to 0.4m high, facing to north and east. This seems to be aligned more to the earlier rifle range.

Site 2 TG16542361 (centre)

A 45m long mound, 4m wide, with its eastern edge a 2m high brick wall. At the southern end a 6m by 5m brick building, at the northern end a 2m sq building, both to the east of the wall. This was the site of the targets which would have had a pulley-type mechanism for raising and lowering the targets abutting the wall. 20 m to the north, a 15m by 10m extraction pit, accessed from the south.

Site 3 TG16492362 (centre)

A slight ridge, c.3m wide and up to 0.3m high and c.15m long. A similar length feature continues to its south as a 3m wide ditch, up to 0.8m deep, with the spoil to the west. These are the remnants of the 50m firing point, the ditch obviously a later extraction.

Site 4 TG16442363 (centre)

A 3m wide concrete strip, c.33m in length, slightly raised above land to its west, is the location of the 100 yard firing point.

Site 5 TG16402364 (centre)

A slight ridge, c.3m wide and c.0.3m high and c.30m long corresponds to the 150 yard firing point.

Site 6 TG16362365 (centre)

A 33m long ridge, c. 5m wide with a steep 1m high slope to the east, shallower to its west. Corresponds to the 200 yard firing point.

Site 7 TG16312366 (centre)

A slight ridge as Site 5, corresponds to the 250 yard firing point.

Site 8 TG16272366 (centre)

Similar ridge to Site 6, corresponds to the 300 yard firing point.

Site 9 TG16182367 (centre)

Similar ridge to Site 6, corresponds to the 400 yard firing point.

Site 10 TG16092369 (centre)

Similar ridge to Site 6, corresponds to the 500 yard firing point.

Site 11 TG16032372 (centre)

A linear mound, c.36m long, 8m wide and 2m high, with surrounding extraction depressions, c 6m wide, except at its northern end. Centrally there is a 6m by 3m, 2m high concrete structure, the interior only partially infilled and roofless. This is interpreted as an observation platform for the management of the range.

Site 12 TG16152371 (centre)

An irregular E-W ridge, c.35m long and 5m wide, and up to 1.5m high, on the northern edge of the range, parallel to the firing direction. Function unclear, possibly some form of observation area, or is it spoil from the central area allowing sighting to the targets?

Site 13 TG16212370 (centre)

Similar description and analysis to Site12, but with a 5m northward extension at its east end.

Site 14 TG15962373

A c.15m by 5m mound up to 2m high, too irregular to be a convincing archaeological feature, possibly dumped spoil. On its northern edge is a 5m by 1m rectangular depression c. 0.4m deep, and with spoil to its north. This may be a military slit trench.

Non-earthwork features within HER 53138.

In between Sites 3 & 4 are two upstanding metal structures associated with a modern clay-pigeon gun club. Between sites 2 & 3 at TG16522362, is a partially buried iron box, 2.5m by 2m and 1m high, with a bottom-hinged locked door on its north side, presumably a storage function, undated. 11m to the south of this is a group of 5, 0.6m square paving slabs in a gentle north-facing arc, of unexplained provenance.

The remaining new sites are outside the designated rifle range limits.

Site 15 TG15562391

An irregular extraction pit maximum dimensions 70m by 30m., up to 1.5m deep.

Site 16 TG15572394 to TG15962388

A series of slight linear banks and shallow depressions up to 4m wide at the eastern end, before converging and being subsumed into an existing track which is slightly sunken. It diverges after c.200m to head south-east as a slightly ditched trackway, before petering out in woodland. The whole is interpreted as the probable line of a former track shown on Faden and some later published maps of the 19thC.

Site 17 TG15752387

A group of at least 6 small sub-circular depressions, 0.3m deep and 3m to 5m in diameter. Spread over an area of c.30m by 30m. Unclear origins, possibly former tree stump removal locations, or small extraction pits, or small explosion craters (cf. Marsham Heath to the east). Little surrounding spoil.

Site 18 TG15792383 to TG15902387

At its southern end, a c.7m wide ditched causeway up to 0.3m high. Heading north-eastwards it gradually loses form becoming a very slight feature and linking with another slight linear depression at right angles heading south-eastwards. Interpreted as fragments of former tracks, not convincingly noted on earlier maps.

Site 19 TG15872382

A sub-circular depression of 4m diameter and 0.3m deep. Similar to those of Site 17.

Site 20 TG15912392

A 5m by 3m depression, 0.6m deep, immediately south of Site 16, and with a spoil mound to its south. Probable extraction, but its extant spoil could mean a military origin.

Site 21 TG 61602385 (centre)

A c.60m length of E-W bank, 0.3m high and of 3m spread. A possible fragment of the side of a track, probably not modern.

Site 22 TG16142389

A series of extraction pits partly cut into the southern side of an irregular natural depression, see Summary, at the heath boundary. The natural feature has some standing water. At the extreme eastern end, TG16192389, is a 2m by 1m, 0.6m deep depression with some timber revetting at its western end. This is considered a likely military slit trench.

Site 23 TG16252387

Two extraction pits of c.40m by 30m at the northern end of a c.150m long NW-SE aligned depression with standing water as on the 1883 map. The depth and its profile indicates a natural feature, see Summary.

Site 24 TG16382373

On the high ground at the extreme SE end of the large natural feature noted in Site 23, a 6m by 2m, 1m deep slit trench, with some much less defined possible trenches to its NW.

Site 25 TG16422385

A group of three substantial extraction pits up to 5m deep.

Site 26 TG16572383

A c.40m length of linear depression, 3m wide and 0.3m deep suggests a fragment of a former trackway, possibly that shown on Faden, Bryant and the 1st Edition OS 1" Map.

4 Conclusions

The major features are those of the rifle range, which are mostly well preserved. A few trenches are probably related to this. The extraction pits are varied and extensive in the wooded area and may well be of 19thC and earlier, as there is no convincing evidence of more modern disturbance. Several are obviously related, as noted above, to the range features. The trackway fragments are again probably of variable date, some possibly pre-Enclosure, others may be related to the nearby military activity. The small sub-circular depressions are of ambiguous provenance.

5 Bibliography

Faden's Map of Norfolk, published 1797, reprinted with an introduction by J C Barringer, by The Larks Press, 1989.

Cawston Enclosure Award Map, 1800. NRO C Sca 2, 68.

Bryant's Map of Norfolk, published in 1826, reprinted with an introduction by J C Barringer by The Larks Press 1998.

Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 1" Map, Sheet 38, originally published c.1838, but reprinted with later additions by David & Charles 1968.

Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 6" Map 1883. (S2 on HER)

1946 RAF Air Photograph. Norfolk Historic Maps Website. (S3 on HER)

1988 NCC Air Photograph. Norfolk Historic Maps Website.

Brief for RIS, Norfolk Historic Environment Service 2013

6 Acknowledgements

To The Norfolk Wildlife Trust for supplying the appropriate 1:10,000 mapping, and to The Norfolk Historic Environment Service for providing the existing archaeological information.

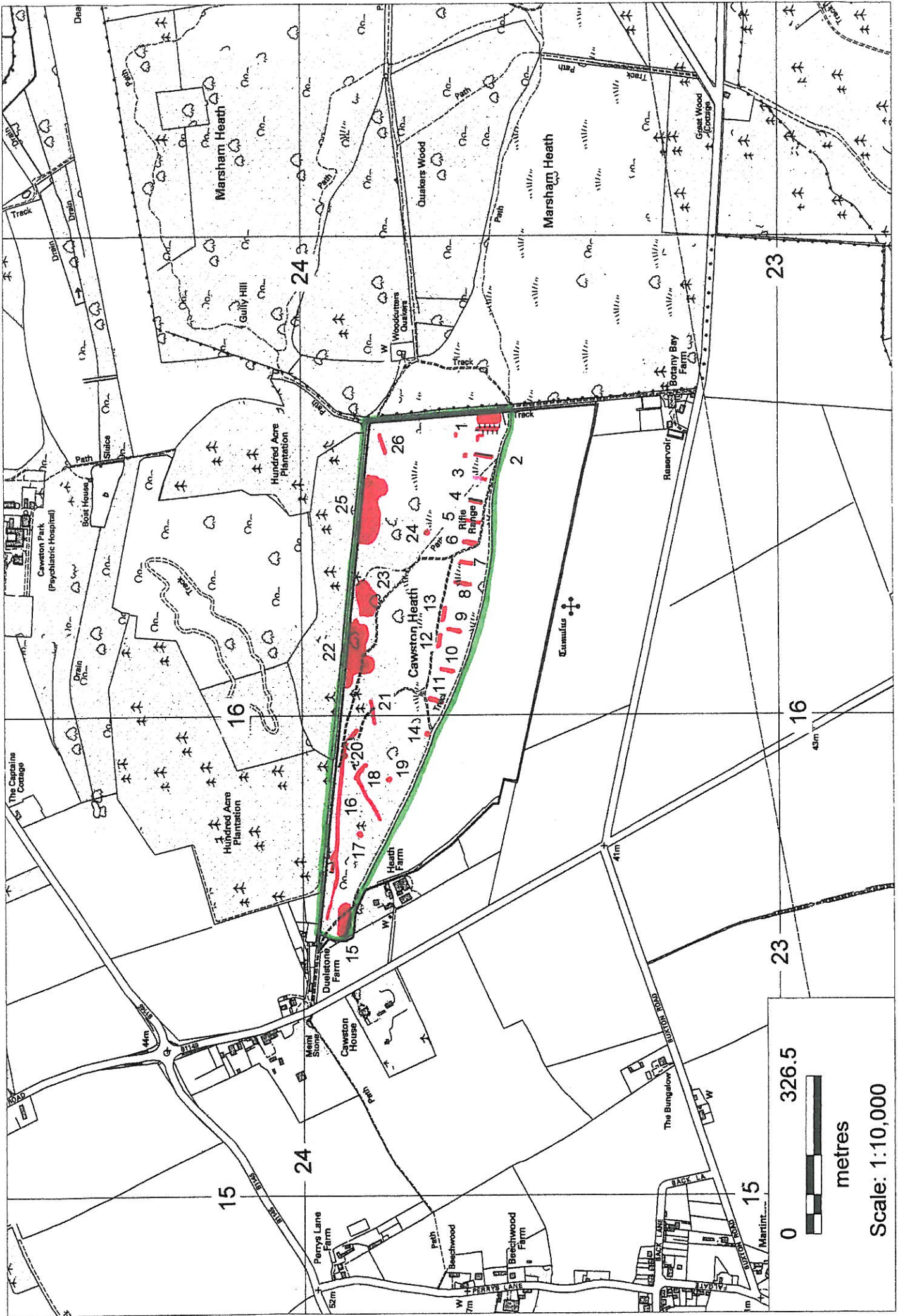
7 Appendices

- A NHER Map of Archaeological data.
- B Extract of 1883 OS 6" Map. Scale approx 1:5333.
- C Extract of 1946 RAF Air Photograph. Scale approx 1:5333
- D Extract of 1988 NCC Air Photograph, Scale approx 1:5333.

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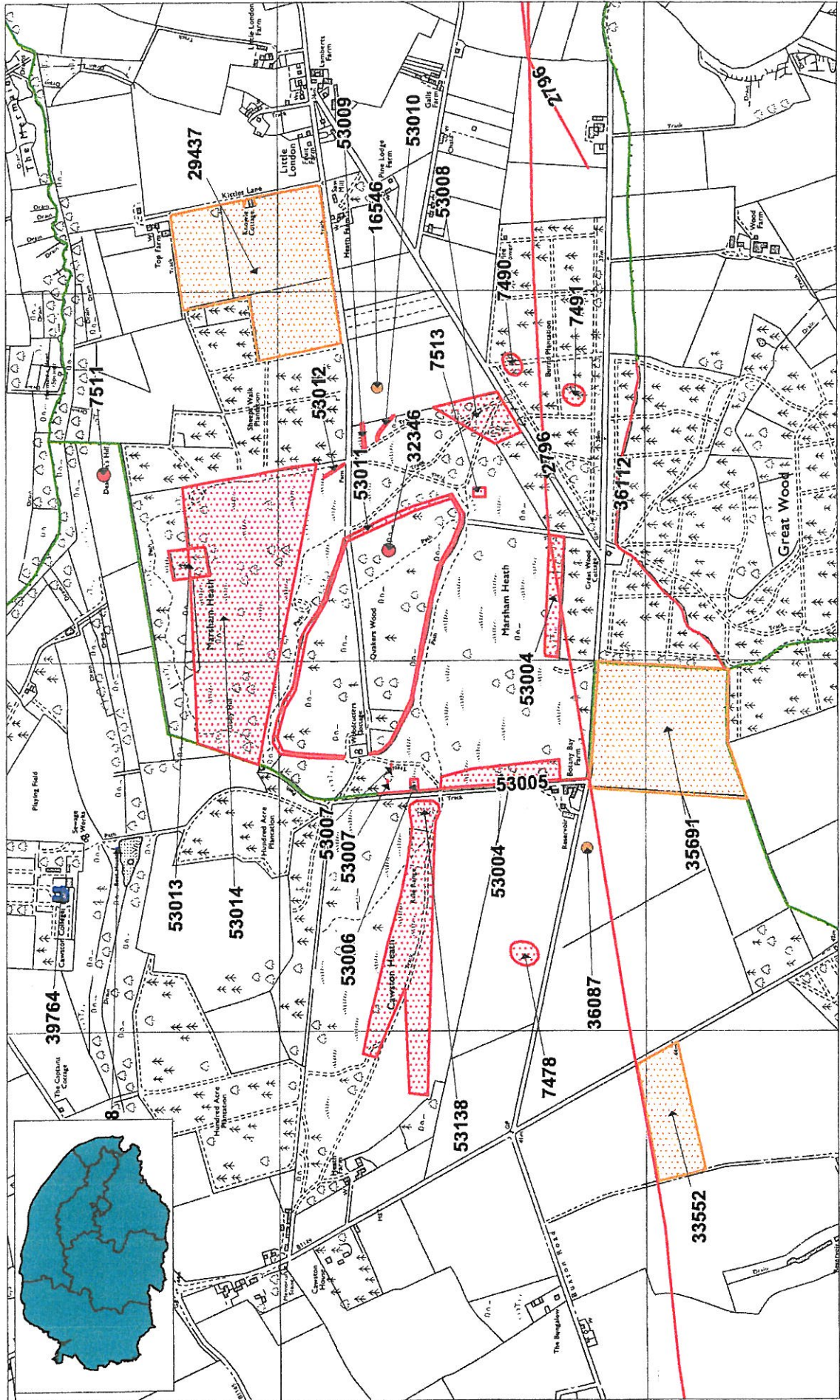
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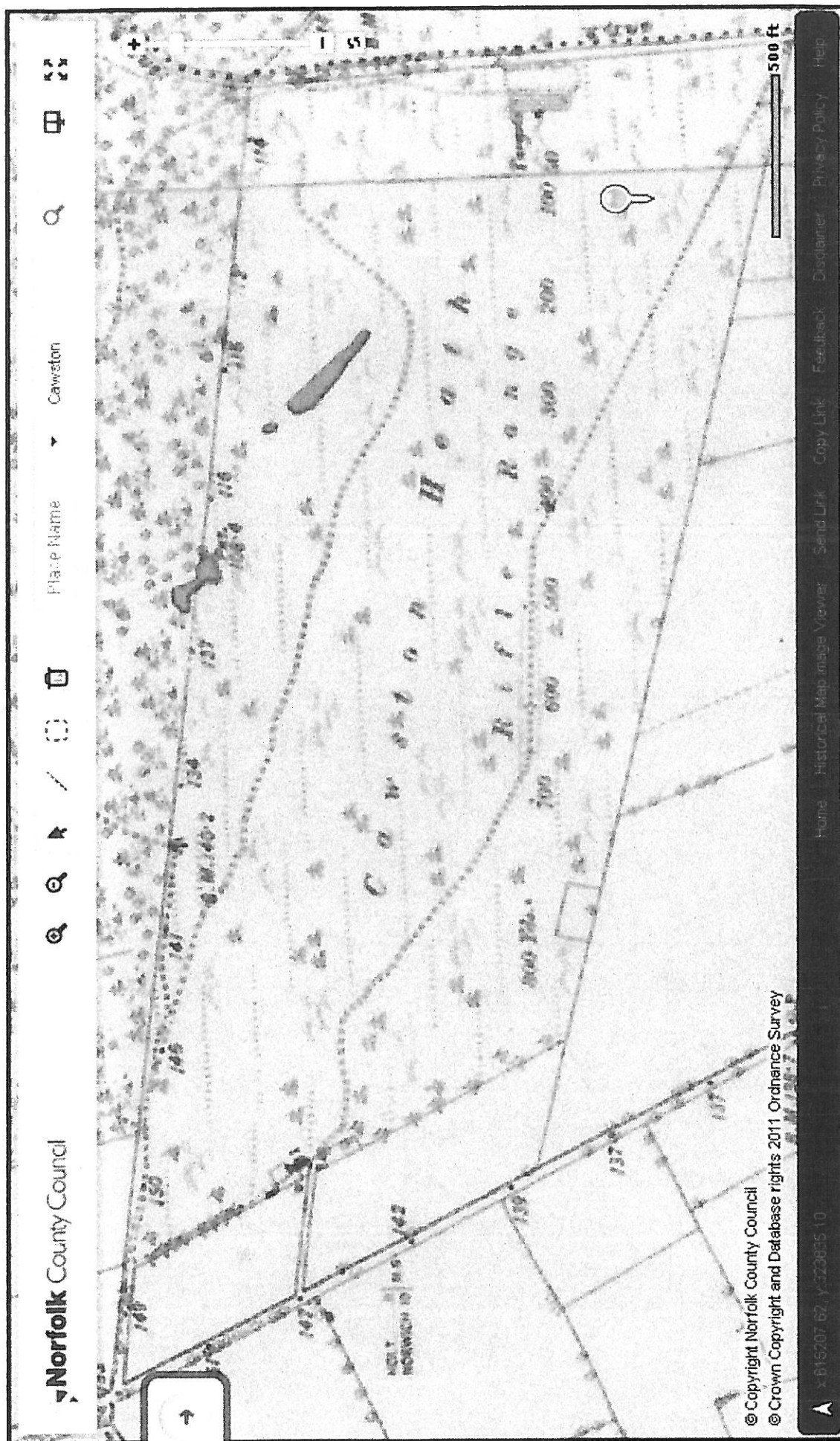
Fig 1



Scale 1:14770

Compiled by H. Hamilton on 21 March 2014





Appendix C



