

A30 Bodmin to Indian Queens Improvements

Topographical Survey of Earthworks at Belowda

Site TS2

June 2002

Prepared on behalf of the Highways Agency by:
RPS in association with Parkman

September 2002

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Summary

- S.1 A survey of surviving topographical features in the area of the Belowda strip field system has been carried out by RPS Planning, Transport and Environment on behalf of Parkman Ltd and the Highways Agency as part of the assessment work for the Preferred Route of the A30 Bodmin to Indian Queens Improvement.
- S.2 The Belowda strip field system lies to the south of Belowda village and is thought to date to the medieval period. The system is characterised by relatively long narrow fields that run in a general north-south alignment down the slope of the ground. The field boundaries have slight sinuous curves and are defined by hedges on earth banks. Where visible, the lower parts of the earth banks are faced with granite stones. In stretches where a modern gas pipeline has been installed the boundaries are reconstructed with slate walls or earth banks faced with slate.
- S.3 The topographic survey recorded evidence for a former field boundary that had been removed and was thought to be contemporary with the extant field system. A track was recorded on the eastern boundary of the strip field system. Other features recorded included a naturally occurring bank, a modern pond and a circular feature of unknown date, none of which were of archaeological significance. No evidence for features associated with an earlier field system or any other earthworks of archaeological significance were identified.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 A topographical survey has been carried out in the area of the Belowda medieval field system as part of the assessment work for the Preferred Route (March 2001) of the A30 Bodmin to Indian Queens Improvement. RPS Planning, Transport and Environment undertook the work on behalf of Parkman Ltd and the Highways Agency.
- 1.2 The survey area (see Figure RPS 1) is centred on NGR SW 9680 6140 and comprises a number of fields along a 1.3km stretch of the Preferred Route to the south of the village of Belowda and north of the existing A30. The fields lie between 159m and 135m Ordnance Survey datum and slope gently towards the south. They are all currently under pasture with the exception of one field containing coppiced woodland.
- 1.3 The Belowda strip field system is characterised by relatively long narrow fields that run in a general north-south alignment down the slope of the ground (see Figure RPS 2). The boundaries of the fields have slight sinuous curves and are defined by hedges on earth banks. Where visible, the lower parts of the earth banks are faced with granite stones.
- 1.4 No other known archaeological sites have been identified within the survey area, although there are many in the vicinity (see Figure RPS 2). An extensive area of eluvial streamworking is located immediately to the south and south east of the area. There are a number of prehistoric features including Castle-an-Dinas, an Iron Age hill fort and Scheduled Monument just over 1.6km to the north west, and several barrows 0.8km to the south east and on Belowda beacon, just over 0.8km to the north above the village. Some possible ridge and furrow has been identified to the south of the area on the opposite side of the existing A30.
- 1.5 The topographical survey has been carried out with the aim of identifying visible archaeological features that may be at risk by the construction of this section of the A30 Bodmin to Indian Queens Improvement. The results of the survey will provide data to determine the appropriate level of mitigation work and will preserve any identified earthworks associated with the historic landscape by record prior to their destruction by the scheme. The fieldwork was carried out in June 2002. This report presents the results of the topographical survey.

2 Methodology

- 2.1 The survey area was initially walked over to determine the existence of any visible earthworks or other features of potential archaeological significance.
- 2.2 The extant field boundaries had been surveyed as part of a geodetic survey carried out by Merrett Survey Partnership for Parkman Ltd and the Highways Agency (dwg. 28017). Other visible features were measured in the field by hand to record their location and, where appropriate, their profiles. The identified features were allocated unique feature numbers and their location plotted onto the geodetic survey plans (see Figure RPS 3).
- 2.3 A general photographic survey was made of the survey area. These are produced as photographs 1 to 20. Their viewpoints cross-referenced with the appropriate photographic number are shown on Figure RPS 3.
- 2.4 The character of the field boundaries was noted. A section of a field boundary exposed by the Transco pipeline, which ran through part of the northern edge of the survey area was drawn (see Figure RPS 4).

3 Survey Results

- 3.1 Ground and weather conditions were good during the survey. The height of the grass cover on the pasture was low and surviving earthworks would have been clearly visible. The easement and spoil heap of the recently installed Transco pipeline ran through the north east corner of the survey area (see Figure RPS 3), and any visible earthworks that may have existed along this line would have been already destroyed.

Features

- 3.2 All the features described below are indicated on Figure RPS 3.
- 3.3 The eastern edge of the Belowda strip field system identified by previous surveys is defined by a track (F1) that runs on a NNE to SSW alignment. It is a sunken track bounded on both sides by earth banks and hedges (P18). The earth banks, where visible, are partly stone faced.
- 3.4 The contours lines of the geodetic survey carried out by Merrett Survey Partnership recorded a linear depression (F2) that ran north to south and followed the line of an existing boundary along the east side of the coppiced woodland. Although this linear feature was not evident by the topographic survey, disturbed ground and an absence of grass cover was noted at the site suggesting it had been infilled (P20). This infilled feature was interpreted as the line of a removed field boundary that was probably contemporary with the extant field system.
- 3.5 A pond (F3) present on the west side of the coppiced woodland is clearly modern and of no archaeological significance.
- 3.6 A low bank (F4) was recorded towards the central part of the survey area. This runs in a roughly NW to SE direction across one field, and follows the natural contours of the slope. The same line is followed by the adjacent field boundaries that lie immediately to the west and east. Although this bank could have delineated an earlier field boundary it appears more likely to be a natural topographical feature.
- 3.7 A circular feature (F5) was recorded in the centre of the survey area. This feature is approximately 18m in diameter and merges into the slope of the ground on its northern side. A slight sub-circular depression, approximately 2m in diameter exists in the centre (P1). The function of the feature is unclear. Although prehistoric round barrows are recorded in the area, given the nature and intensity of the land use since the prehistoric period it is unlikely this feature represents the remains of a ploughed out barrow. It is thought more likely to be post-medieval or modern in origin and of limited archaeological significance.
- 3.8 The line of a modern pipeline was visible as slight east to west aligned linear depressions on the southern part of the survey area. In some instances where the pipeline has crossed field

boundaries, the boundary had been reconstructed with slate walls or earth banks faced with slate.

- 3.9 No evidence was found for other earthwork features that may have been contemporary with the medieval field system and post-medieval agricultural activity including, for instance, remnants of ridge and furrow, headlands or hayrick platforms.
- 3.10 There was no evidence within the survey area for earthworks associated with industrial activity such as eluvial stream working known to exist to the south and east of the survey area.

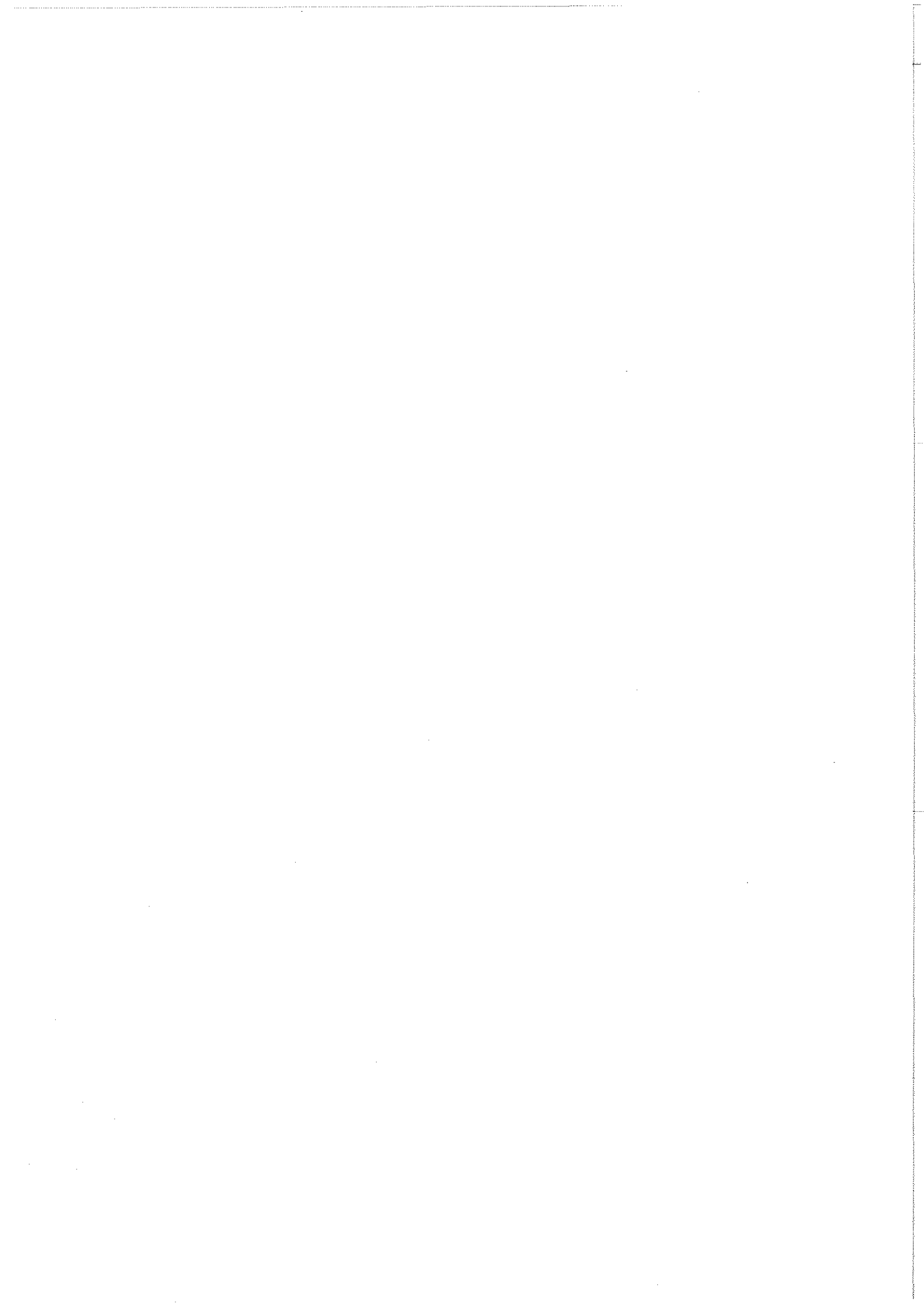
Field Boundaries

- 3.11 The field system within the survey area is characterised by relatively long narrow fields that run in a general north-south alignment down the slope of the ground (P4, P5 and P8). Those in the west of the survey area are regular and curve slightly to the east at the base of the slope. Those in the east are less regular but still conform to the general north-south alignment.
- 3.12 The north-south aligned field boundaries are longer and slightly sinuous, whilst the east-west boundaries are generally shorter and straight. In places, there are shallow ditches running adjacent to the east-west aligned boundaries (P11).
- 3.13 All the field boundaries within the survey area consist of earth banks (c. 1 to 1.5m in height and c. 2.5m in width) with hedges on top (P3, P13 and P17). Where visible, the bases of the banks appear to be stone faced with granite (see Figure RPS 4, P3, P6, P7, P9 and P14).
- 3.14 The condition of the field boundaries is good apart from occasional damage by cattle tracks (P6, P7 and P9). With the exception of Feature 2, no other evidence was identified for historic field boundaries that may have been removed.
- 3.15 No evidence was found for any field boundaries that may have been part of an earlier field system than that which remains visible now.



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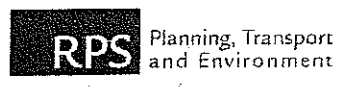
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Figures



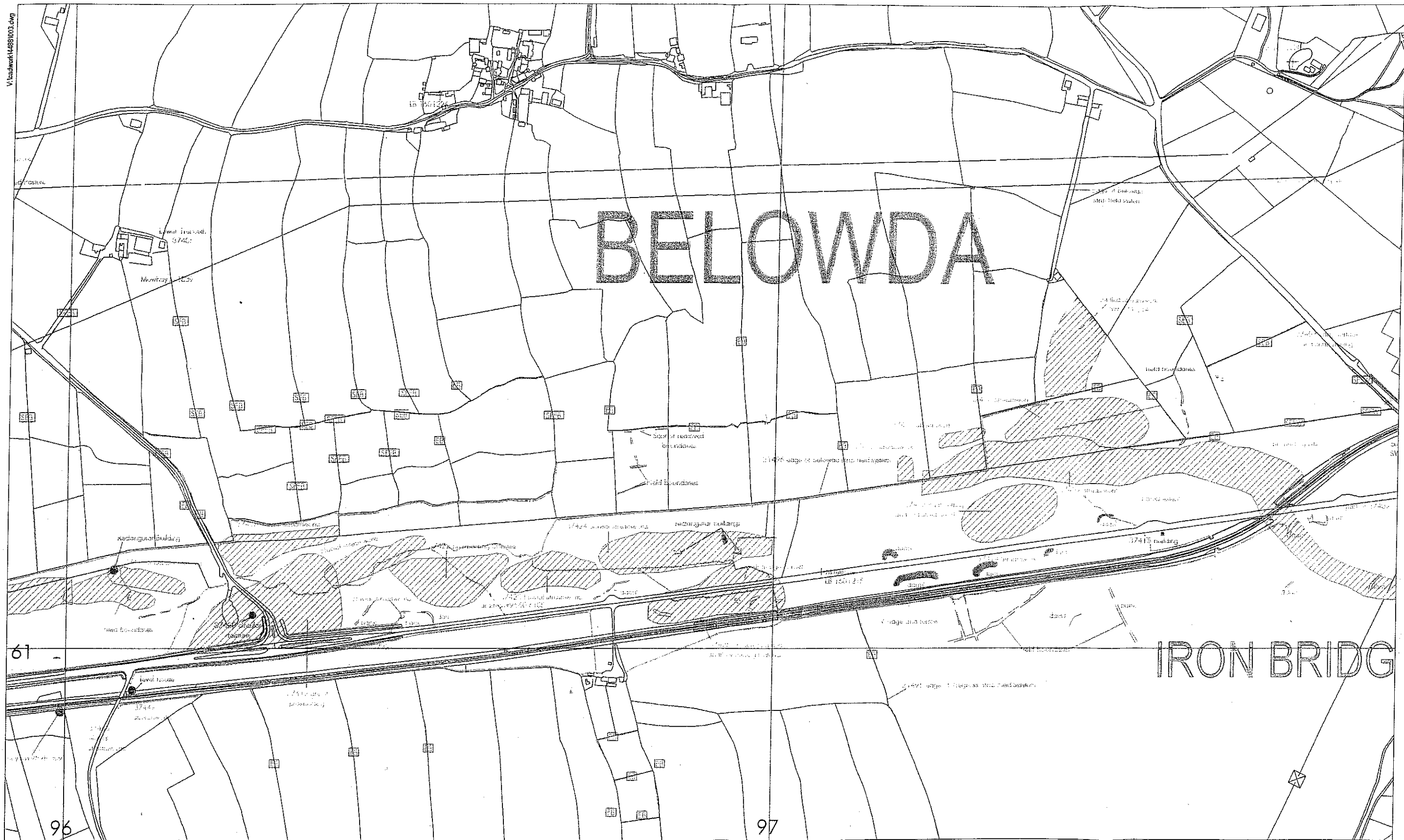


-  Preferred Route for A30
-  Location of Detail Plans and extent of Survey Area



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|--|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Project A30 Bodmin to Indian Queens Improvement | | | |
| Title Topographical Survey at Belowda: Location of Survey Site (TS2) | | | |
| Scale 1:5,000 | Drawn By AM | Checked By MC | Drawing No. RPS 1 |
| Project No. 4488 | Date July 2002 | Revision | |





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- Features
- Mining activities
- Field Boundaries
- General
- Survey Areas

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|---|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Project A30 Bodmin to Indian Queens Improvement | | | |
| Title Topographical Survey at Belowda: Archaeological Sites | | | |
| Scale 1:5,000 | Drawn By AM | Checked By MC | Drawing No. RPS 2 |
| Project No. 4468 | Date July 2002 | Revision A | |

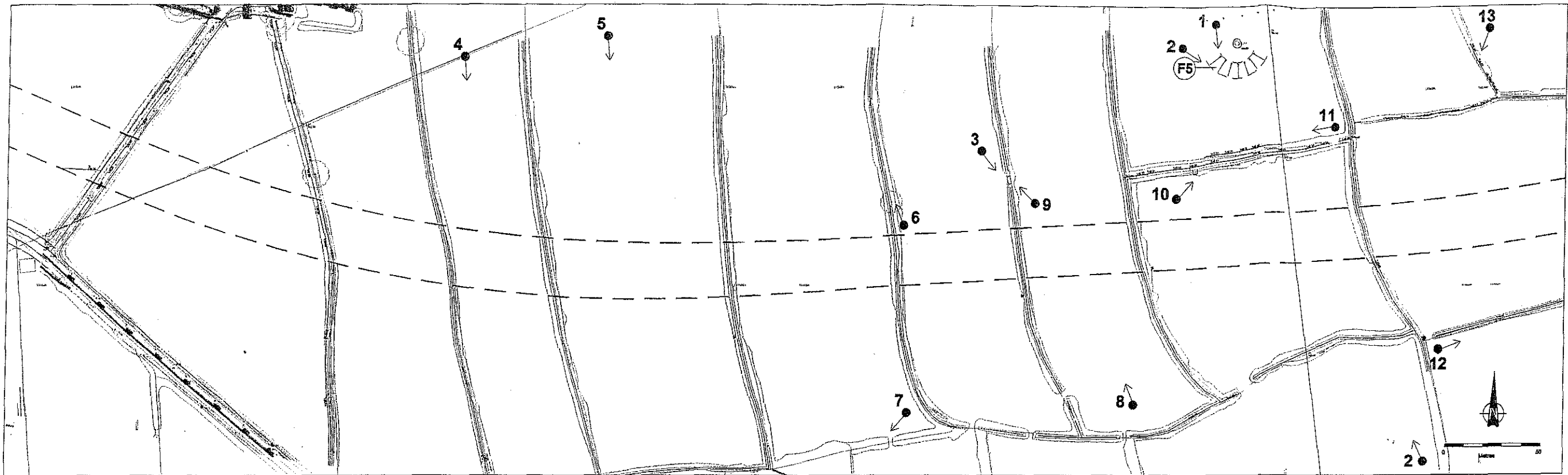


Figure 3A

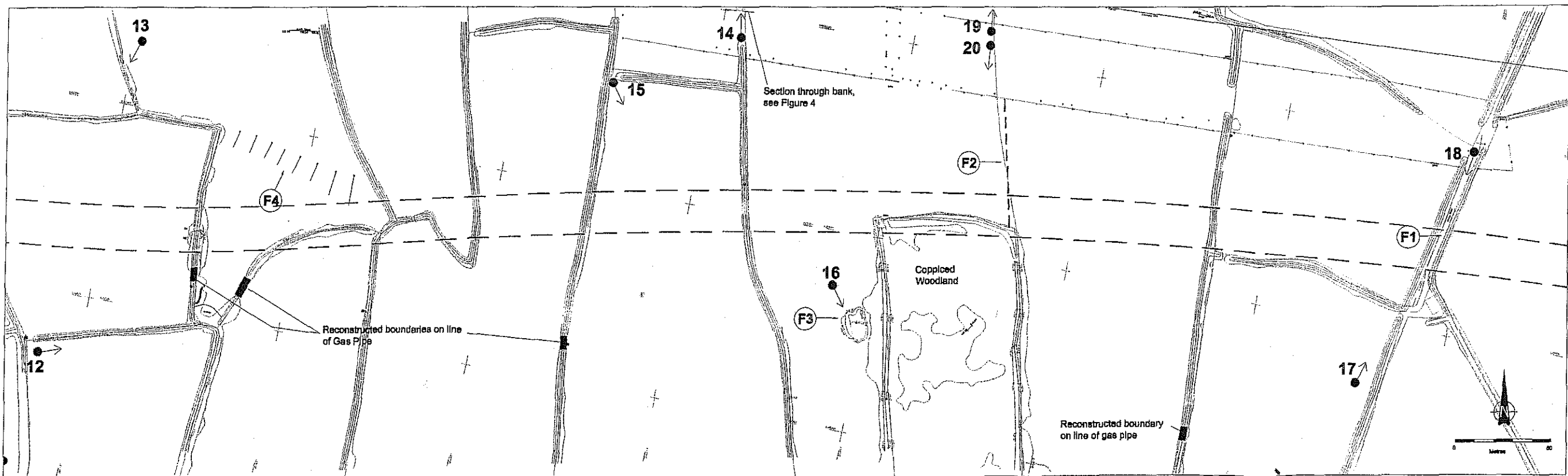


Figure 3B

4 → Photographic Viewpoints

(F2) Features

Line of Preferred Route (March 2001)
Indicative Earthworks

Line of Transco Pipe Easement

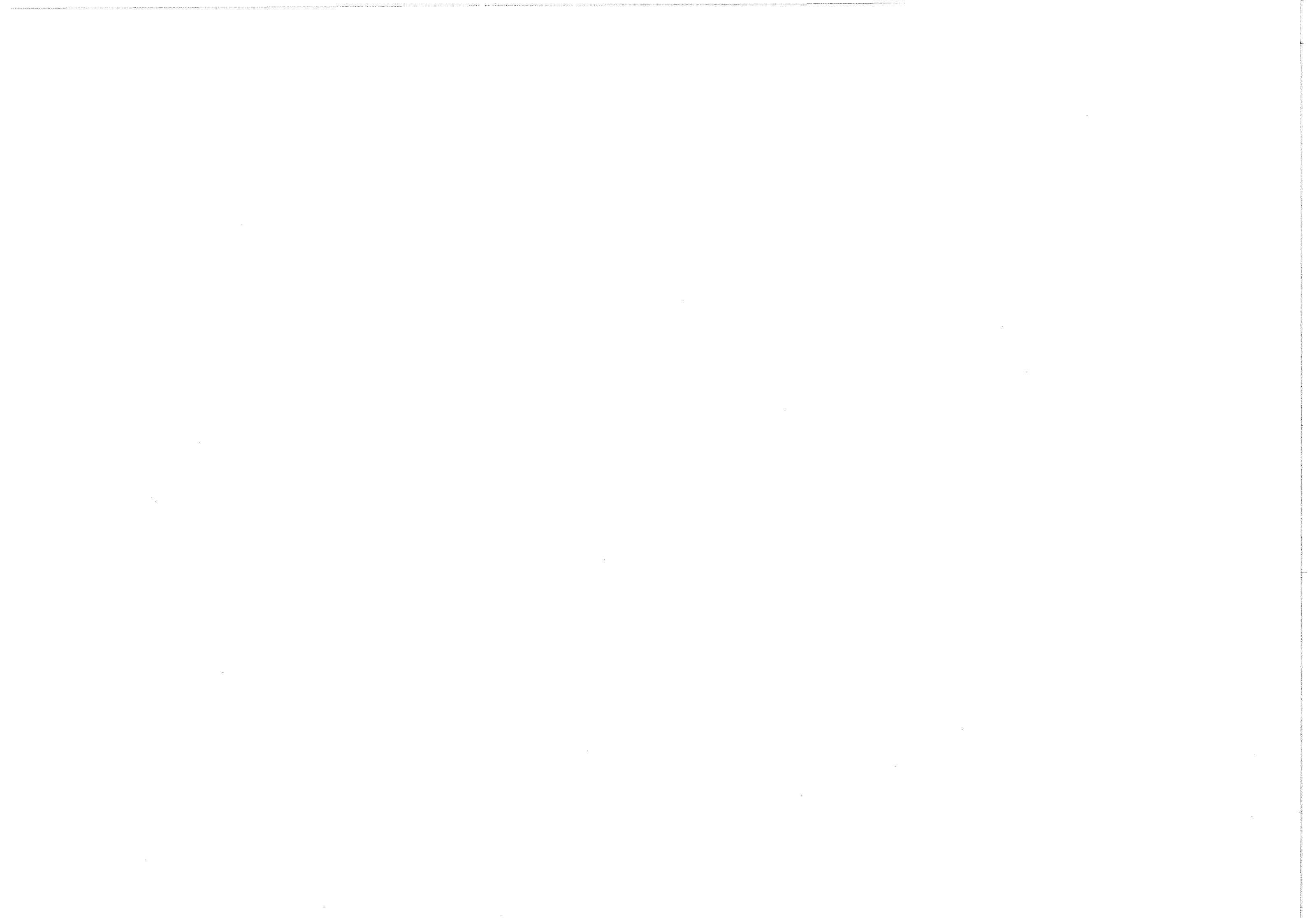
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Project
A30 Bodmin to Indian Queens Improvement

Title
Topographical Survey at Belowda:
Location of Features

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| Scale See bar scale | Drawn By AM | Checked By MC | Drawing No. RPS 3 |
| Project No. 4488 | Date July 2002 | Revision | |





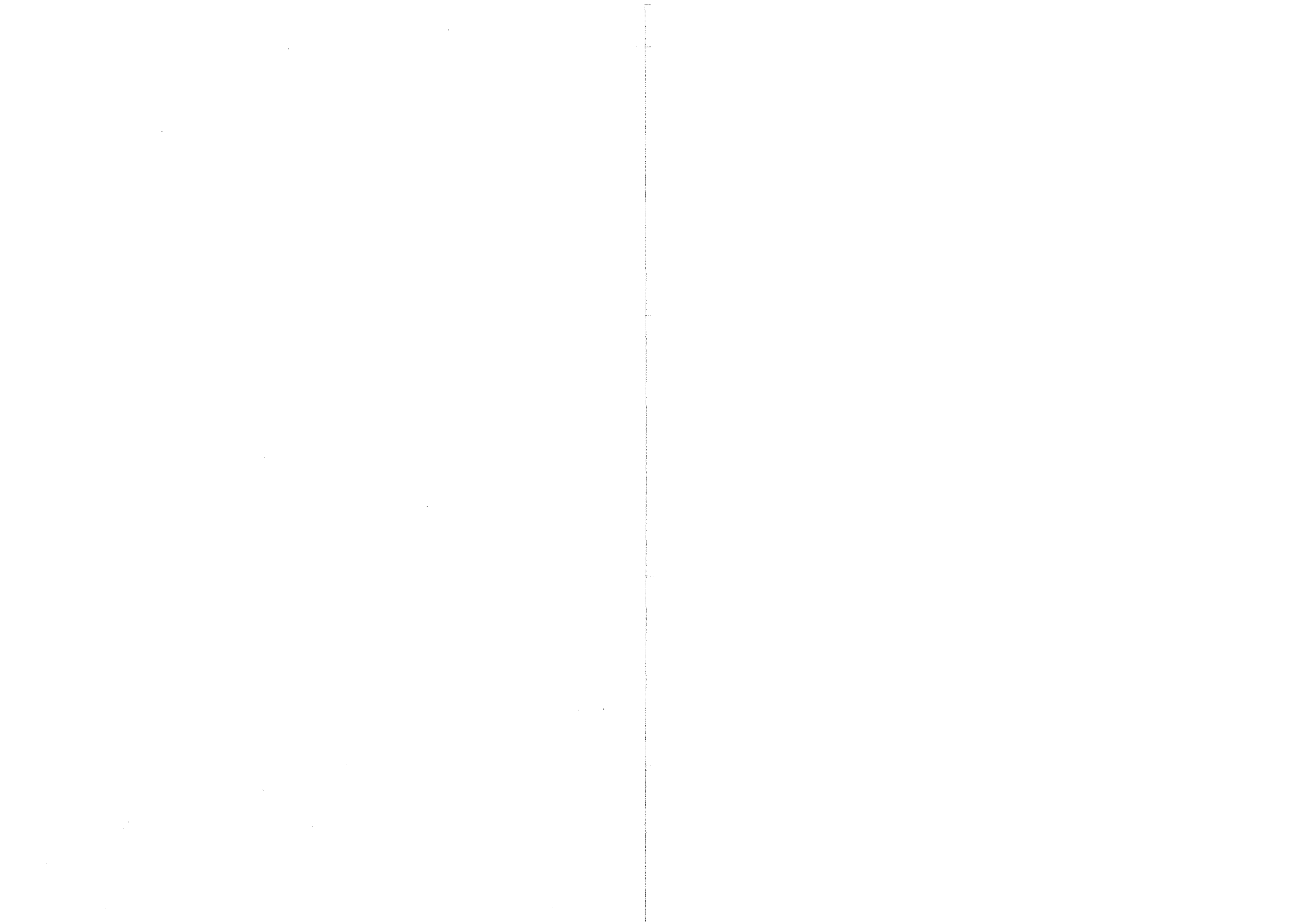
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Project
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A30 Bodmin to India Queens Improvement

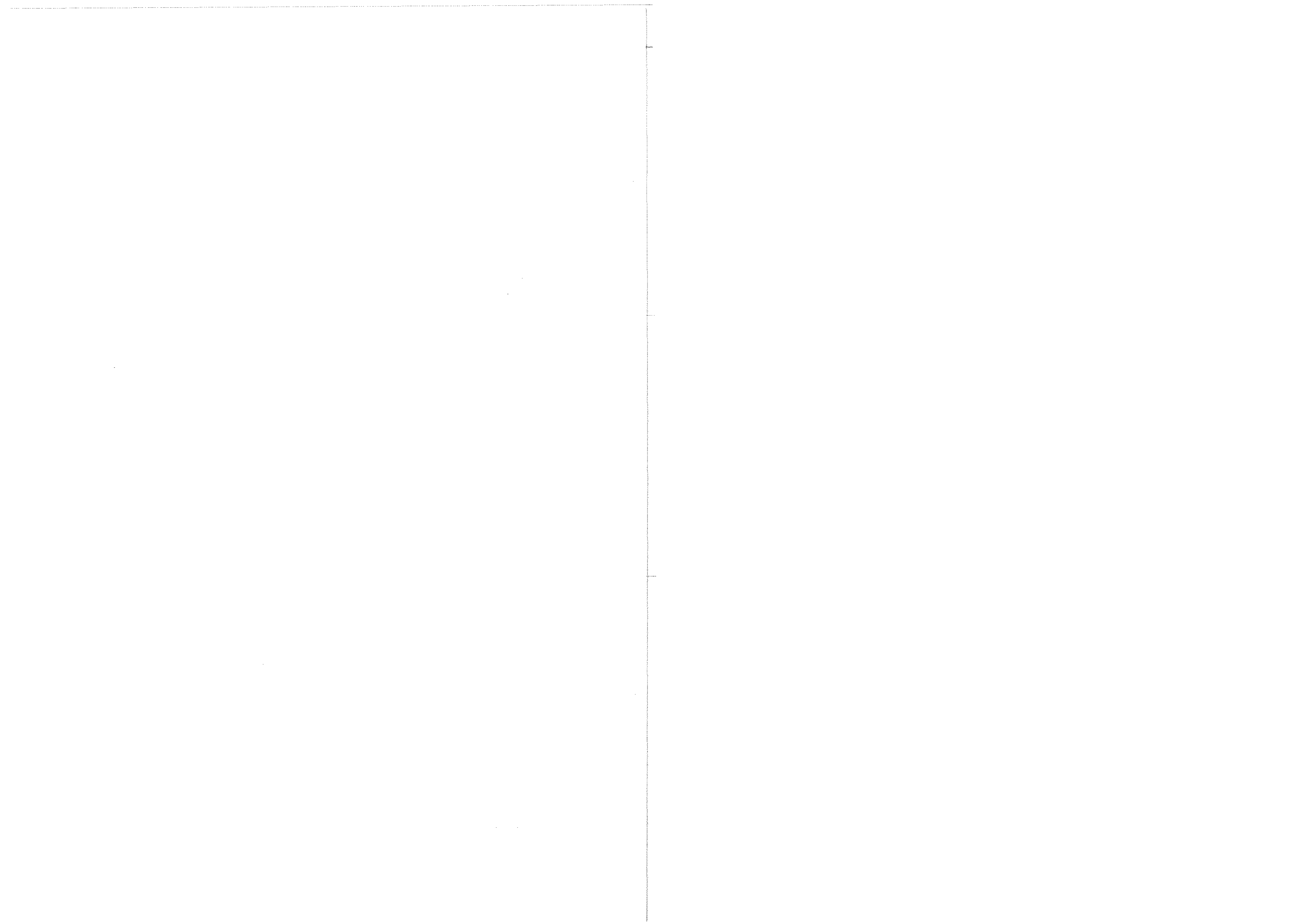
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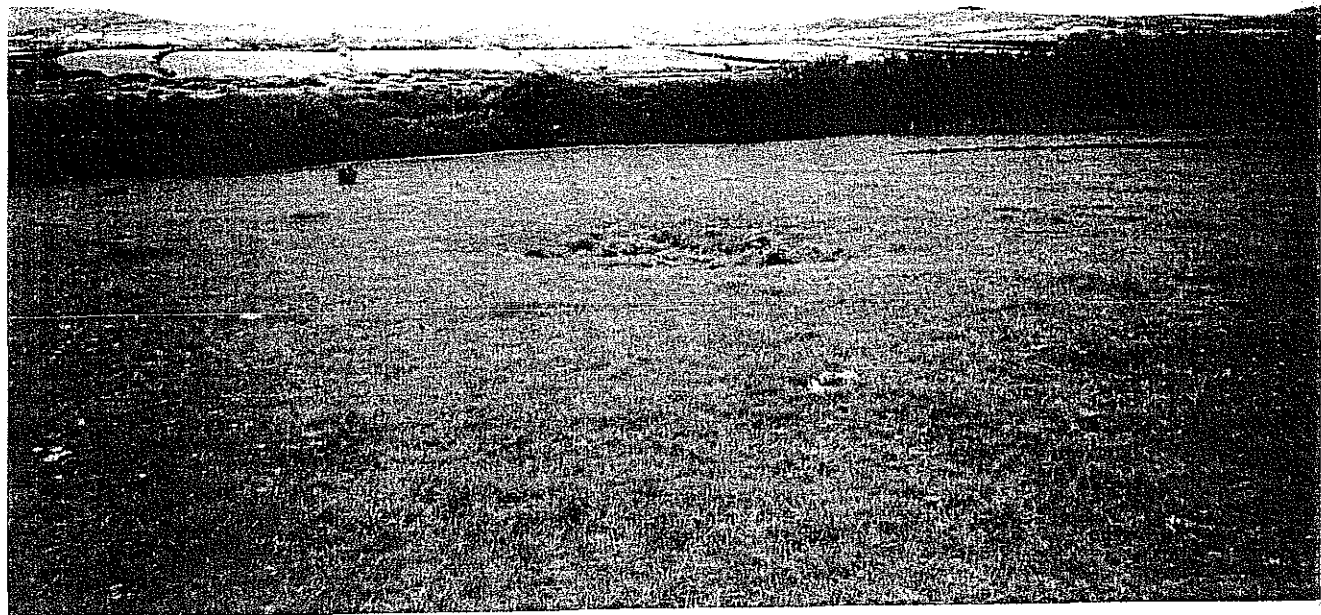
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| Project Number | Drawing Number |
| JR4488B | RPS 4 |

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| 1:20 | July 2002 |



Photographs

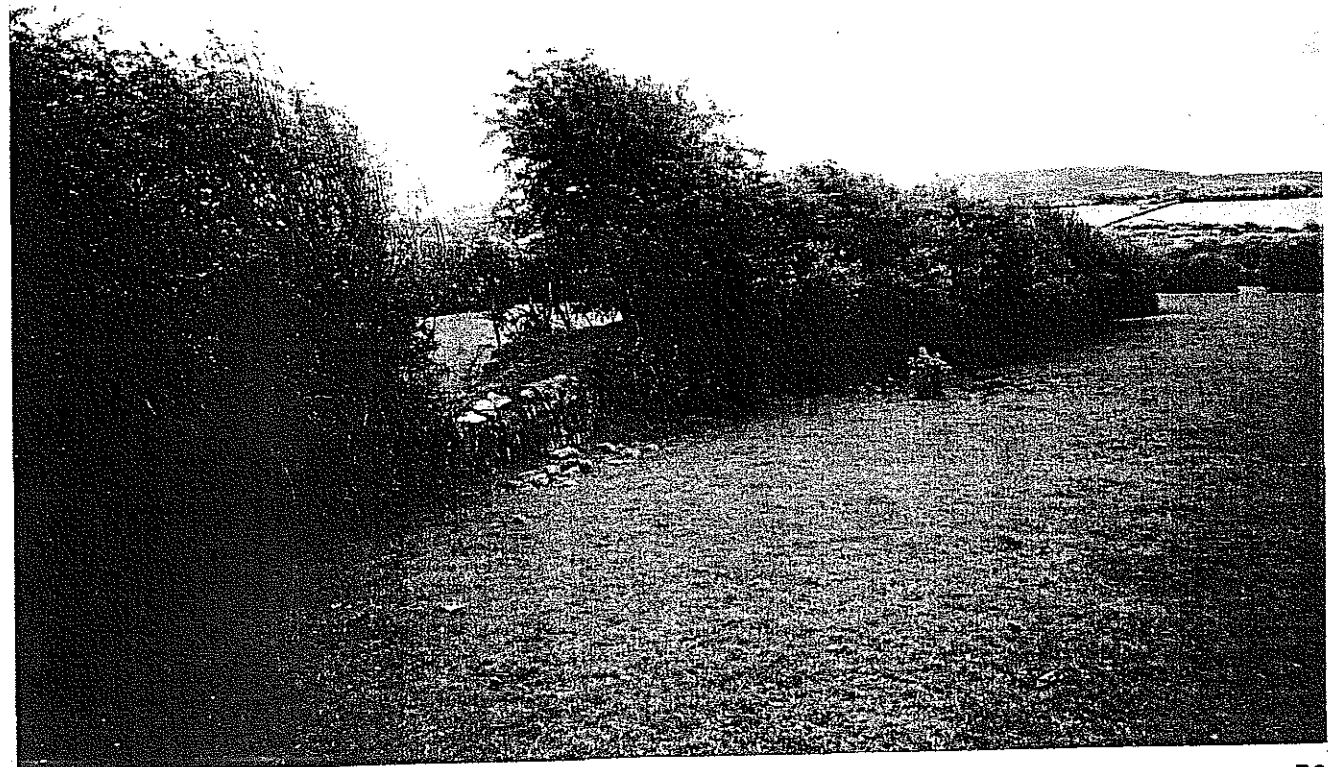




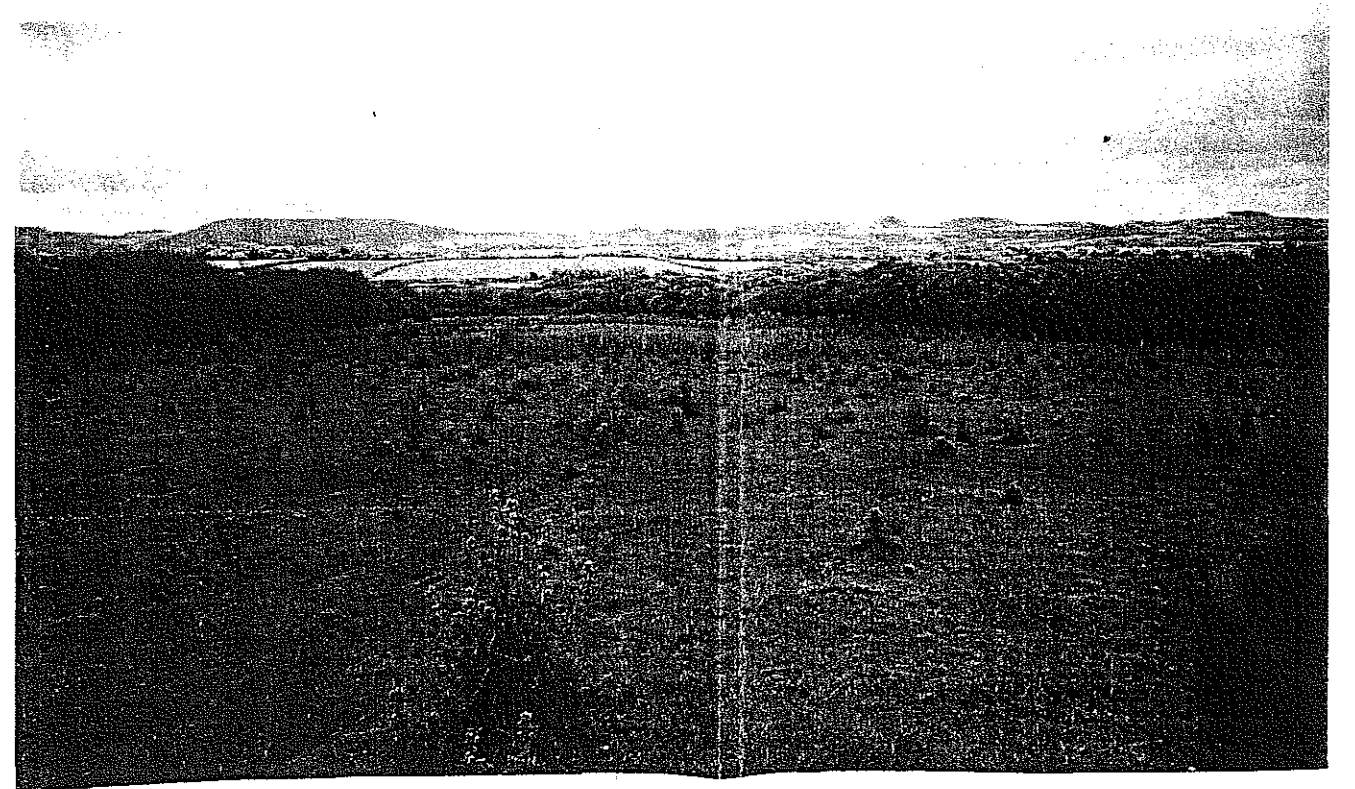
P1



P2



P3



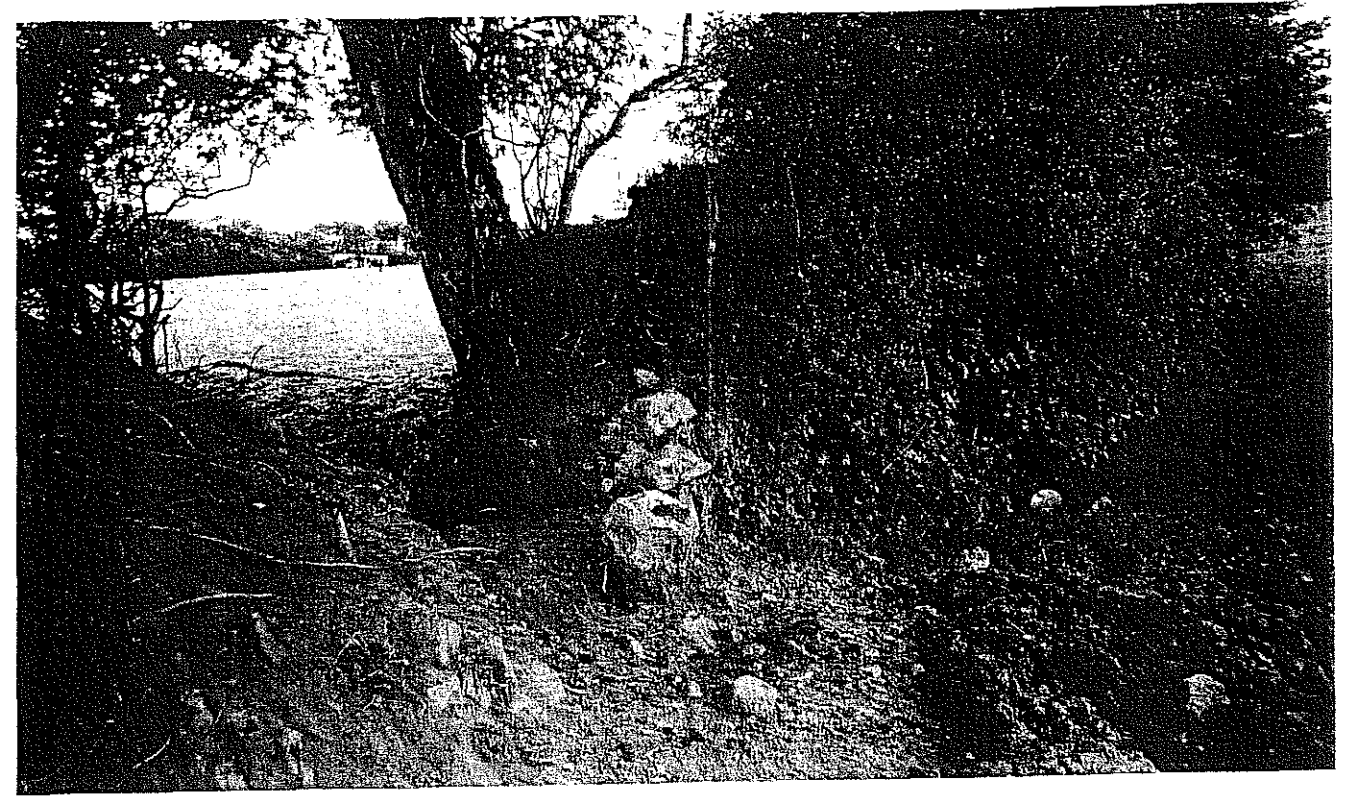
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Topographical Survey at Belowda, RPS June 2002:





P5



P6

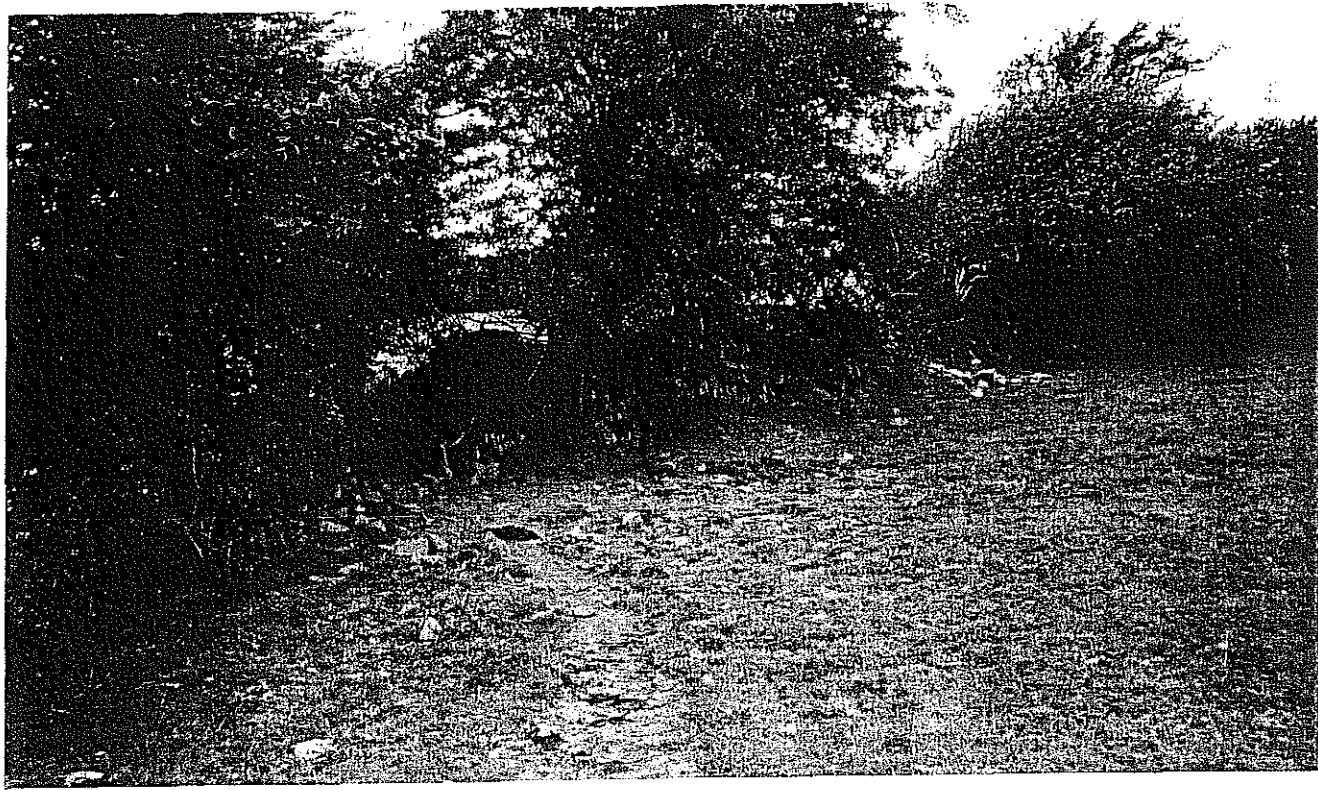


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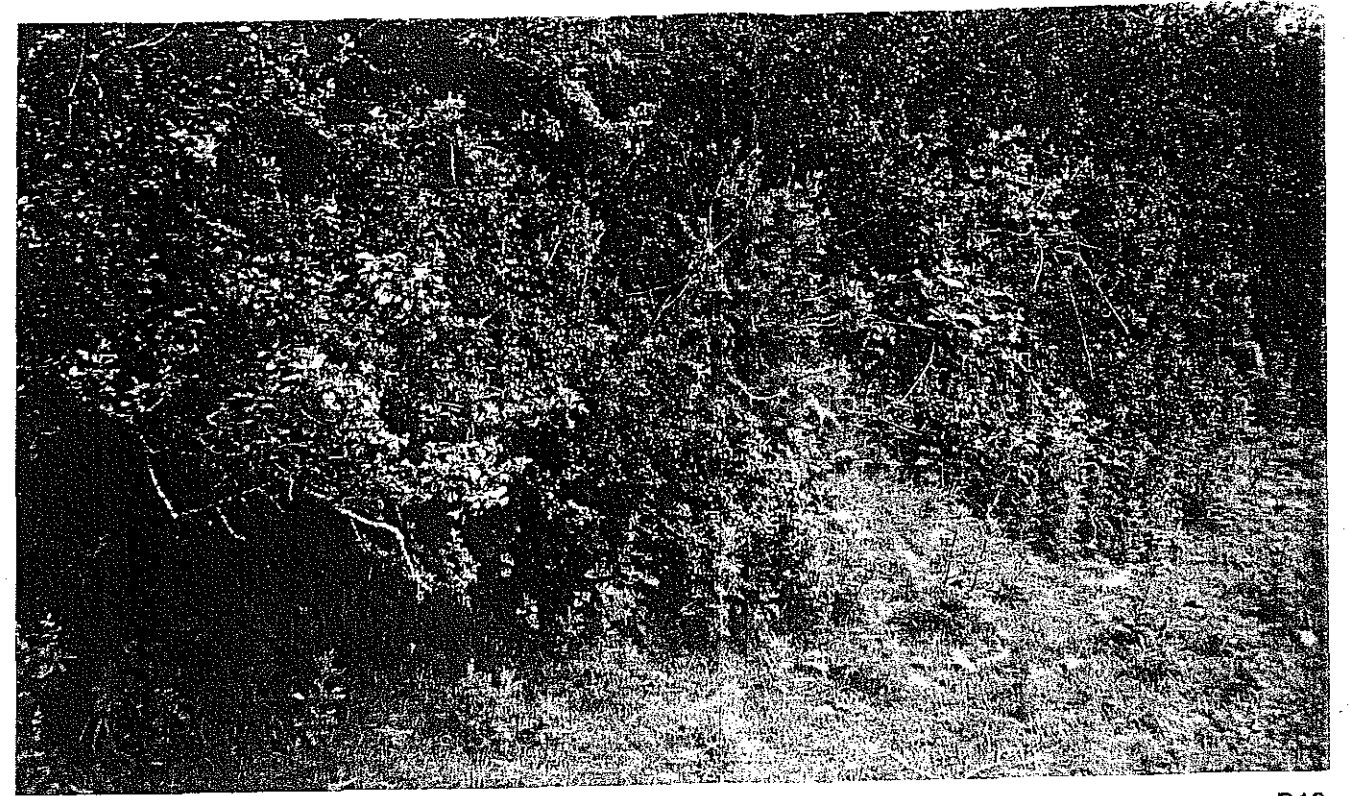


P8

Topographical Survey at Belowda, RPS June 2002:



P9



P10



P11



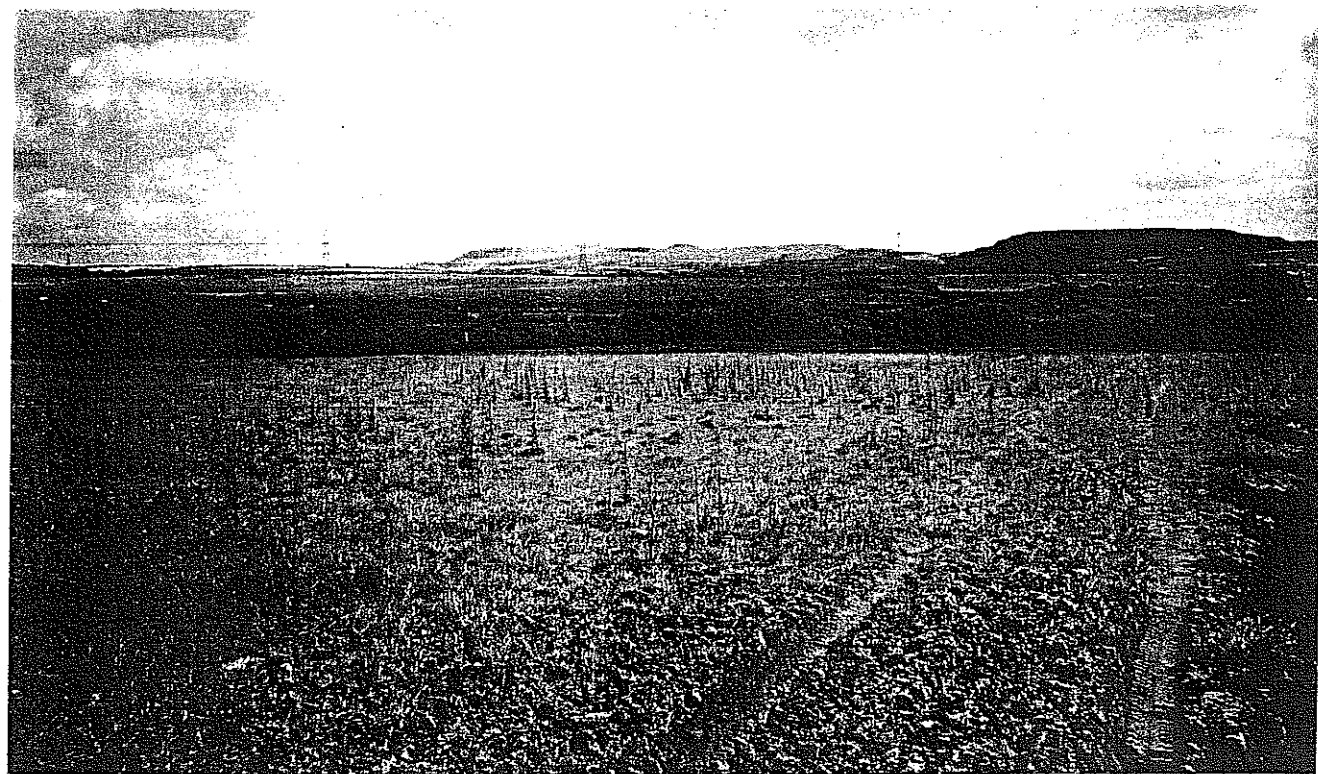
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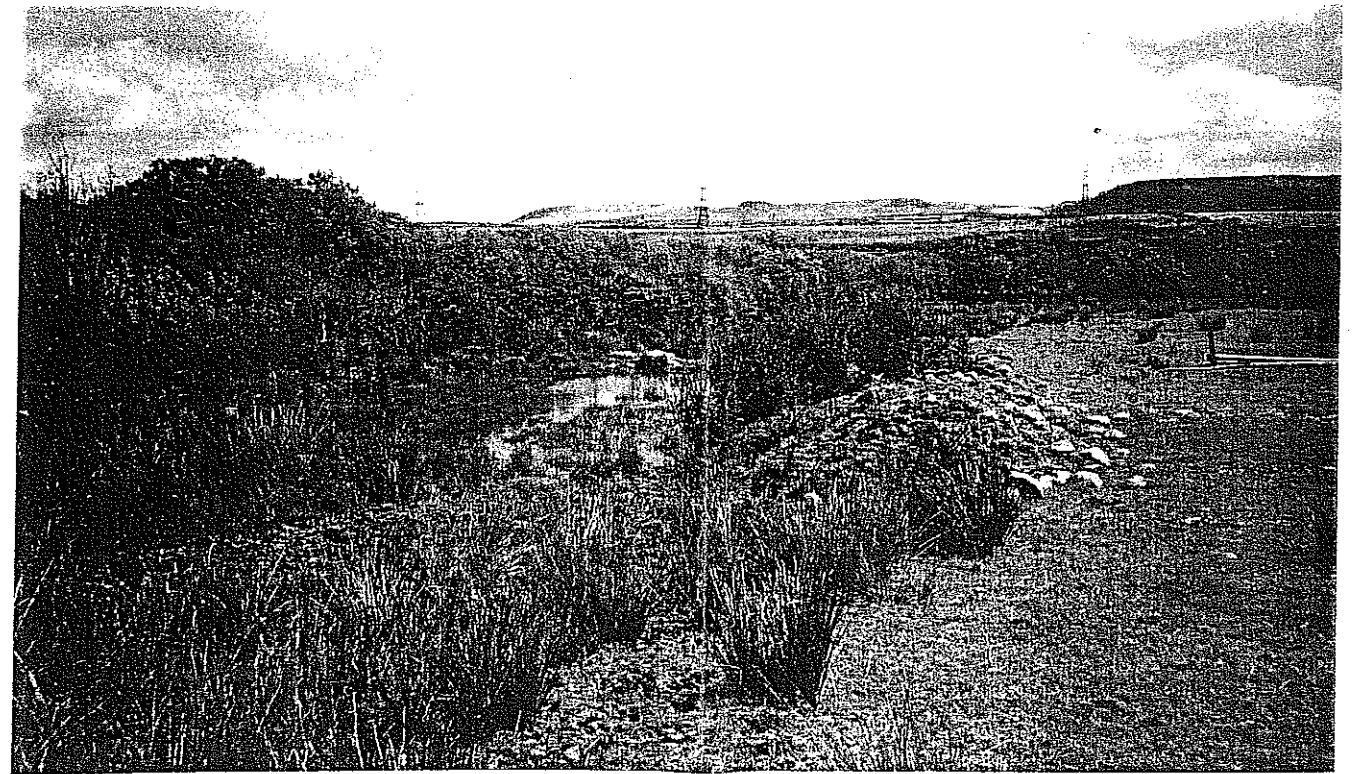
P13



P14



P15



P16





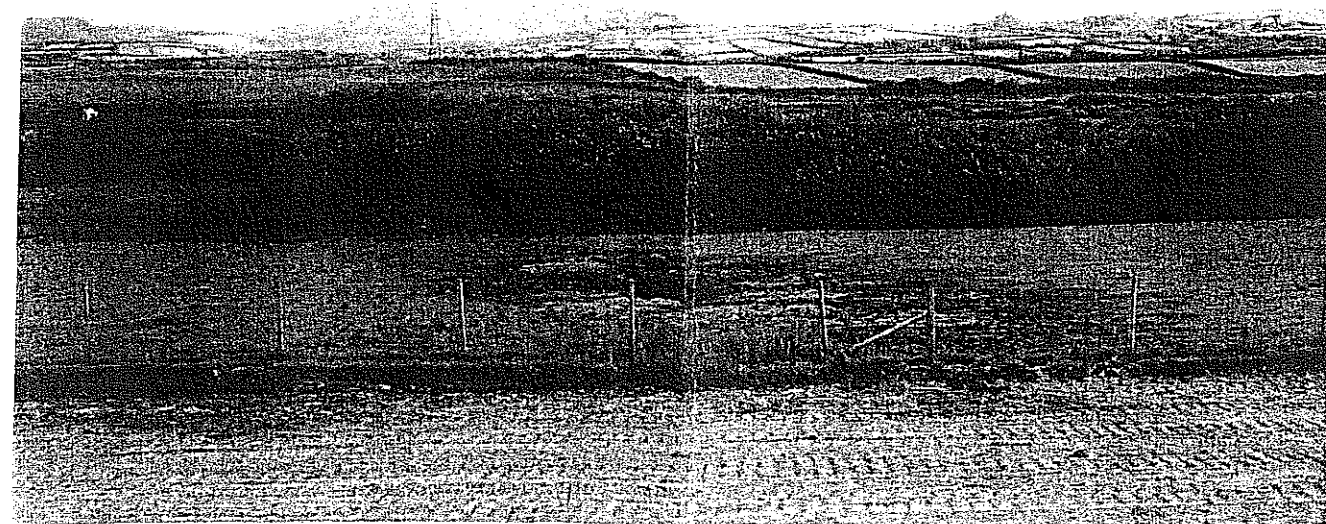
P17



P18



P19



P20

Topographical Survey at Belowda, RPS June 2002:

Photographs P17-P