

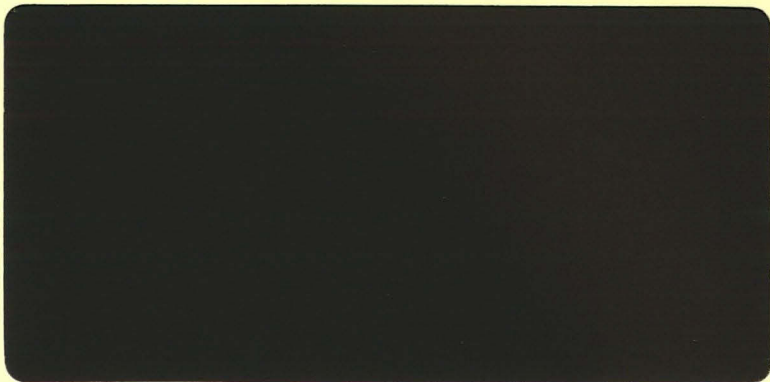
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**FOREST ENTERPRISE WOODLANDS
IN LINCOLNSHIRE**

**BRACEBOROUGH WOOD
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY**



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October 2001

Report Compiled by
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A.P.S. Report No. 59/01



Forest Enterprise



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FOREST ENTERPRISE WOODLANDS IN SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE

Braceborough Wood Archaeological Survey

April 2001

1. INTRODUCTION

As part of a programme of archaeological survey within Forest Enterprise Woodland in South Lincolnshire, Braceborough Wood was investigated for archaeological remains in February 2001. The wood covers an area of 43 hectares and is situated 7km northeast of Stamford and centred on National Grid Reference TF 067 135. The woodland overlies a solid geology of Jurassic Oxford Clay and Kellaways Sands with Cornbrash outcropping along the northern boundary (BGS 1978).

The wood has not undergone any previous archaeological surveys, and is classed as plantation (SMR 34339 and 34340).

This report has been prepared to provide information to ensure that any monuments discovered are managed for the future. The fieldwork and report were undertaken as part of the Forest Commission Ancient Woodland Project.

2. HISTORICAL NOTES

Woodland was present in the parish of Braceborough in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086, where 55 acres of underwood are recorded as belonging to Robert of Stafford (Foster and Longley 1976, 59/5,6). The acreage recorded at Domesday accords well with the 21 hectares (52 acres) of the northern part of Braceborough Wood, referred to on the maps as Braceborough Great Wood. However, an adjacent small woodland is referred to as Stocking Holt, derived from the Old English *stoc* meaning the trunk of a tree (Ekwall 1974, 443) and possibly indicating a former eastern extension of the wood.

The earliest available map of Braceborough Wood is the Ordnance Survey 2" survey drawing of 1815. This depicts two areas of woodland, Braceborough Great Wood and Little Wood, with a single open field between the two. The external boundaries of these two separate woods are unchanged and quite easily traced. This arrangement of woods is still apparent in 1828 when Bryant's '*Map of the County of Lincoln*' (Fig. 3). However, by the following year, Greenwood's 1829 map of Lincolnshire depicts the wood as a single entity, with the field separating the Great Wood and Little Wood planted with trees. Subsequent maps, including the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey plan of 1904 (Fig. 4) call this New Plantation. Ordnance Survey plans from the 1950s onwards indicate a later plantation of trees along a narrow belt extending to the east. No maps of Braceborough were available in the Lincolnshire Archives Office.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology follows that previously used for the Northamptonshire woodlands. This was devised by David Hall (*e.g.* Hall 2000) and outlined in the project brief prepared by G. Cadman (Northamptonshire Heritage) and approved by G. Foard (County Archaeological Officer, Northamptonshire County Council) and Dr. B. Lott (Asst. County Archaeologist, Lincolnshire County Council). Current Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 scale maps were used for plotting with 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey maps of either the 1st or 2nd edition were used for reference. Each woodland compartment, i.e. the area separated by ridings, was walked at 50m intervals by two fieldworkers which ensured that all the ground was viewed within 30m of each fieldworker.

A record of the visibility of each compartment was produced (Fig. 1). Details of the visibility are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Detail of visibility and ground cover

| Visibility | Colour on Figure 1 | Details |
|------------|--------------------|--|
| Good | Red | Clear visibility |
| Fair | Blue | Some ground cover, low relief features may be missed |
| Poor | Green | Moderate ground cover, substantial linear features possibly traced |
| Very poor | Purple | Not walked due to extensive ground cover |

A handheld GPS (Global Positioning by Satellite) receiver was taken to provide National Grid References for features found. Depending on satellite coverage, a degree of accuracy of approximately plus or minus 5m can be obtained using this system, which was regarded as sufficient for dense woodland where no line of sight, necessary for standard surveying techniques, is generally available and pacing is unsuitable.

4. CURRENT CONDITION

Areas not walked comprised two recently felled compartments at the north and west of the wood that had developed tall grass cover and were also fenced off. Poor visibility was also noted in the northeast corner where bramble growth restricted visibility. The remainder of the wood was fair to good visibility.

5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

5.1 Features Recorded (Fig. 2)

Site 1, TF 0686 1359

Located central to the woodland is a small earthen dam constructed across a narrow valley. This is not depicted on early maps and may date from when the New Plantation was founded as it is shown on the 1st edition six inch Ordnance Survey map. The purpose of creating a pond may have been to attract game to the wood. The drains to and leading from the dam are probably canalised courses of natural streams.

Ridge and furrow

The southern area of Braceborough Wood referred to as Little Wood contained traces of east-west aligned ridge and furrow. The SMR entry for Little Wood designates that this is plantation over possible ancient woodland. However, the presence of ridge and furrow makes this unlikely. No trace of medieval cultivation was visible within New Plantation.

Banks and ditches

The woodland is ditched all round with very little trace of an internal bank. However, a short length of bank was located that would have marked the southwest corner of Braceborough Great Wood. This stretch of bank survived to no more than 0.75m high.

5.2 Comments on the remains

Map evidence and the archaeological remains indicate that Braceborough Wood has been enlarged since the medieval period. The original extent of the wood (Braceborough Great Wood) appears to have formerly been banked, although only a short length of this survives.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Two significant areas within the wood were not suitable for survey and should be walked in the future when the areas are suitable for archaeological survey. The single bank within the wood is well preserved and currently free of planting and should be marked out to prevent any future damage. The boundary ditches are currently still maintained for drainage.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations

BGS British Geological Survey

SMR Sites and Monuments Record

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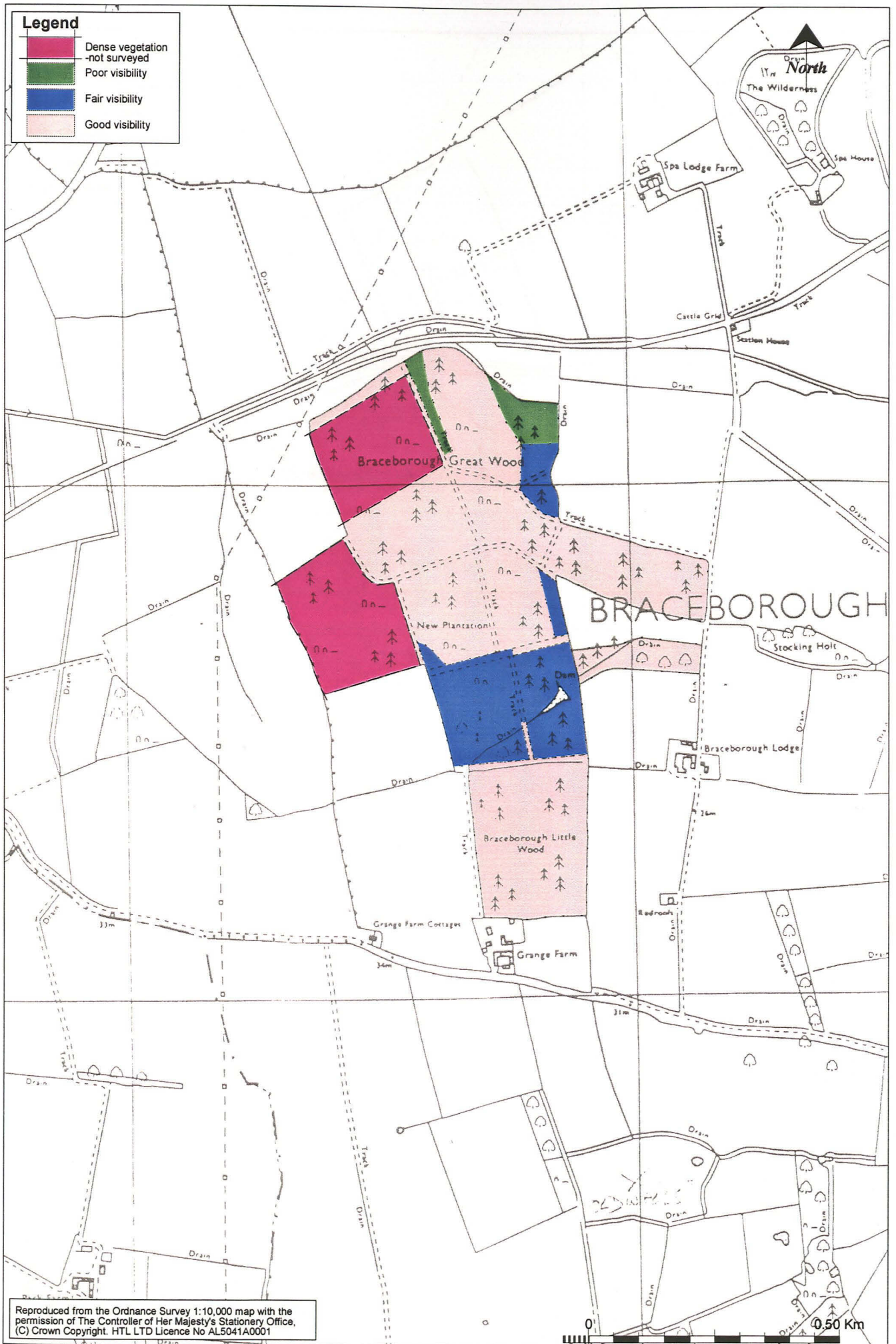
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8. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Archaeological Project Services would like to thank Mr K.G. Stannard of Forest Enterprise who commissioned this assessment and survey. The work was coordinated and edited by Tom Lane. Dr. Beryl Lott, of the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council, kindly provided information and maps from the County Sites and Monuments Record. Information was also gained from parish files maintained by Gail Smith, the South Kesteven Community Archaeologist, and the library of Heritage Lincolnshire.

Special thanks go to David Hall for his assistance and expertise throughout this project.



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Figure 1 Braceborough Great and Little Woods visibility

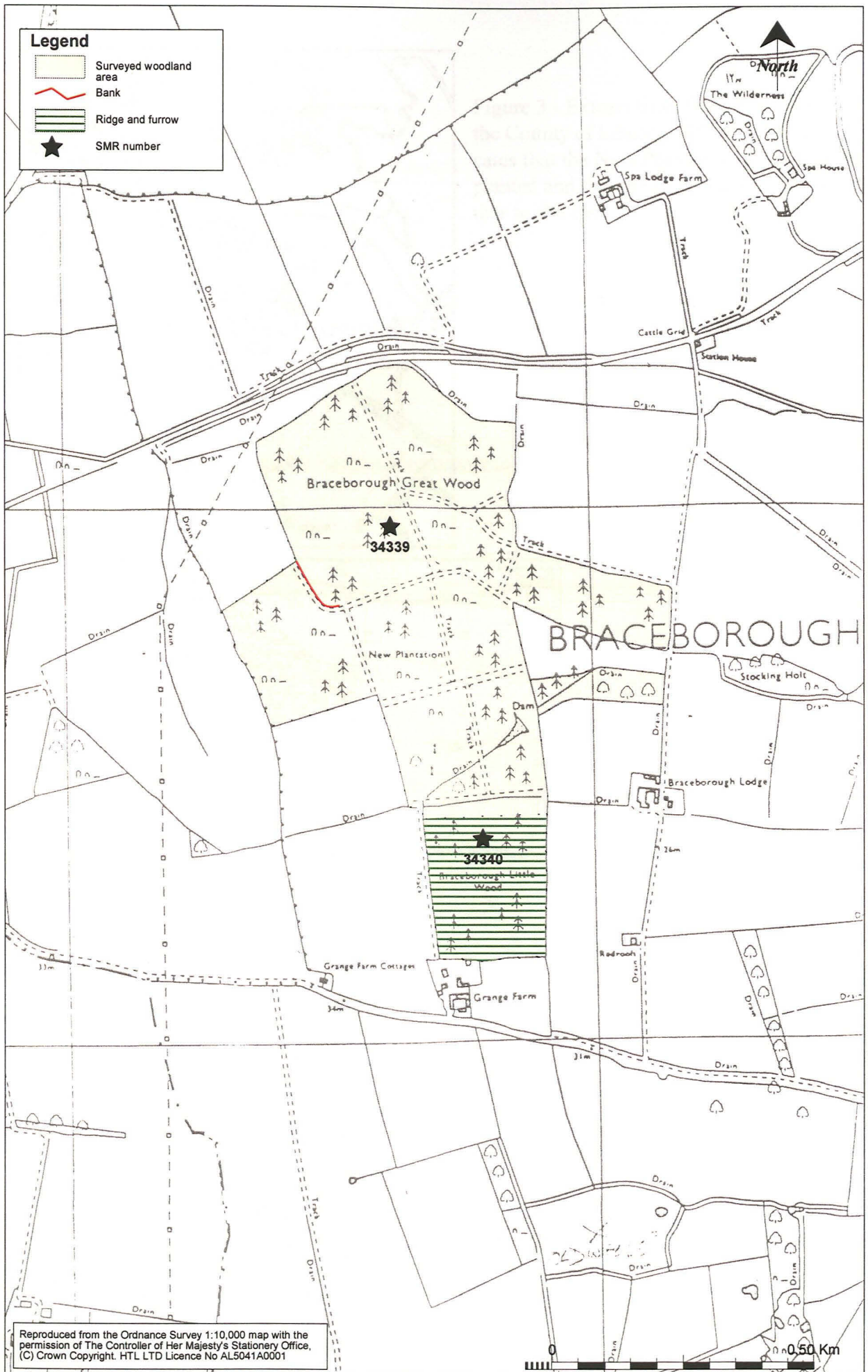


Figure 2 Archaeological remains in Braceborough Wood

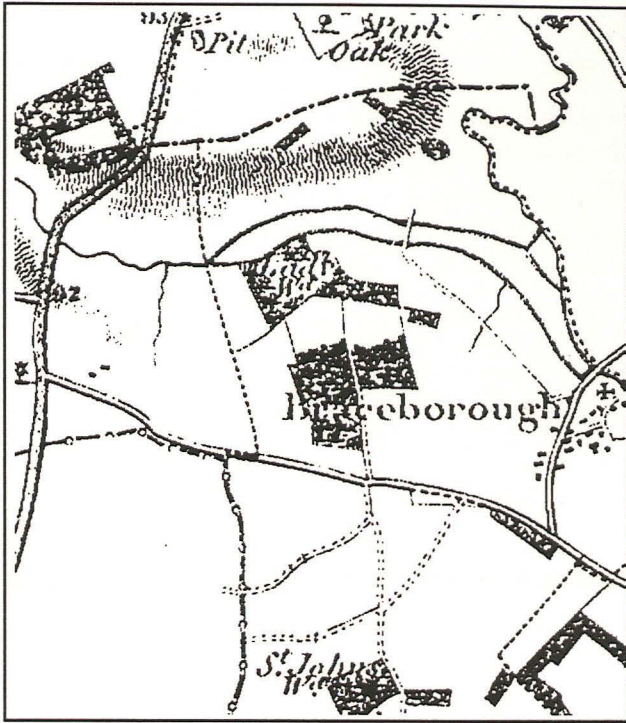


Figure 3 - Extract from Bryant's 'Map of the County of Lincoln', 1828. This indicates that the New Plantation had not been planted and that the wood extended further to the east.

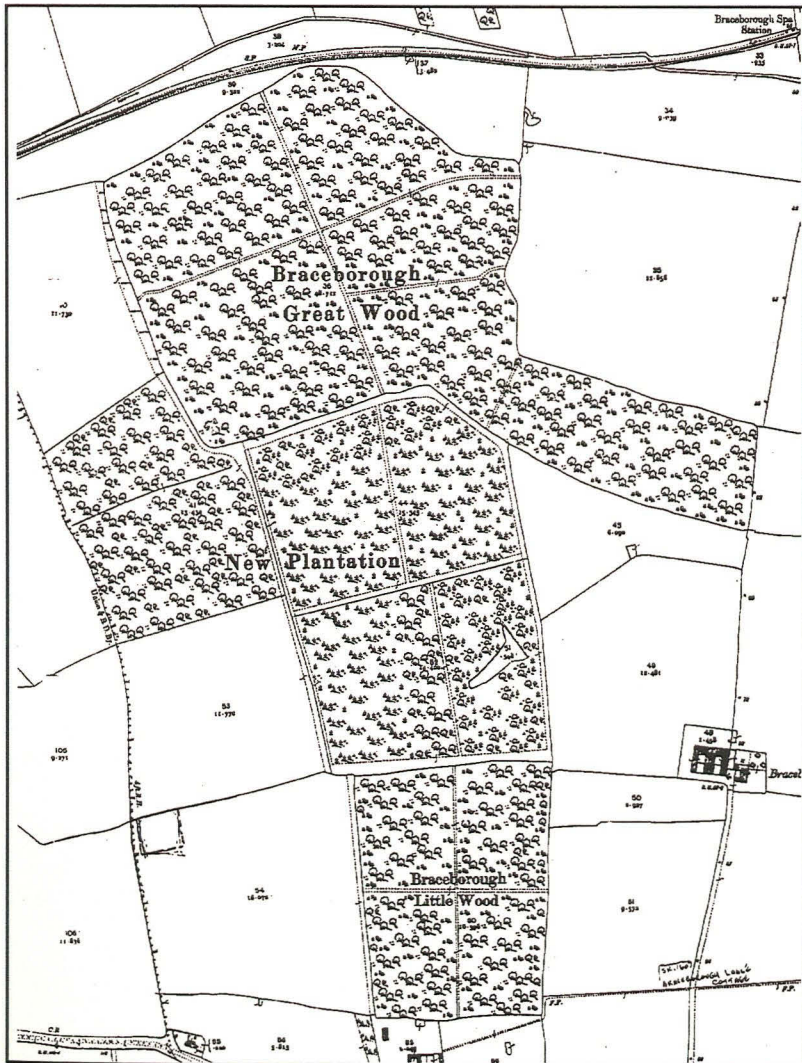


Figure 4 - Braceborough Wood in 1904. The New Plantation was now established with a pond and dam (Site 1).