

9513  
43131  
43675

# LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

FRANCIS HOUSE SILVER BIRCH PARK GREAT NORTHERN TERRACE LINCOLN LN5 8LG

TELEPHONE / FAX (01522) 544554

## **BILSBY VILLAGE WATERMAIN RELAY** Archaeological Watching Brief

(NGR: TF 4640 7677 - 4710 7663)  
LCNCC Museum Accession No 33.95

Report for

**ANGLIAN WATER SERVICES LTD**

March 1995

Source LI 10139  
LI 10140

Enest .46099

## CONTENTS

Summary	1
Introduction	1
Archaeological Background	2
The Watching Brief	2
Conclusion	3
Acknowledgements	3
References	4
Appendix 1 Lincolnshire County Sites and Monuments Record Survey	4

## List of Figures

- Fig. 1** Location of Bilsby (reproduced from the 1957 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 survey, Sheet TF 43, with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright; Licence No. AL 50424A)
- Fig. 2** The monitored watermain trench, with observation positions indicated (annotated on a reduced scale copy of Anglian Water Services' Drawing No. 3W/BILSBY E/1; based on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 survey, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright; Licence No. AL 50424A)
- Fig. 3** Bilsby 1891, showing the Alford and Sutton Tramway route and medieval earthworks near Bilsby Hall (reproduced at reduced scale from the Ordnance Survey 1891 1st edition 1:10,560 survey, Sheet 66NE with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright; Licence No. AL 50424A)
- Fig. 4** Bilsby 1906, with no tramway marked (reproduced at reduced scale from the Ordnance Survey 1906 2nd edition 1:2500 survey, Sheet 66/11 with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright; Licence No. AL 50424A)

## List of Plates

- Pl. 1** The grounds of Bilsby House with the raised Alford - Sutton on Sea road
- Pl. 2** Layers of gravel and chalk rubble raising the ground level close to Bilsby House, probably serving as levelling material for a 19th century tramway (scale divisions 0.2m)
- Pl. 3** Chalk rubble above sandy clay to the east of Holy Trinity Church, looking NW
- Pl. 4** Trench face close to Bilsby Church showing tarmac and chalk rubble above sandy clay subsoil

## **Bilsby Village Watermain Relay** **Archaeological Watching Brief**

(NGR: TF 4640 7677 - 4710 7663)  
LCNCC Museum Accession No. 33.95

### **Summary**

*Intermittent archaeological monitoring of a replacement watermain through Bilsby village located no finds or features of archaeological interest earlier than the post-medieval period. Successive layers of foundation and metalling for the Alford - Sutton on Sea road and a former tram route extended the depth of the trench for much of the observed length, although a buried land surface and subsoil was recorded at intervals.*

### **Introduction**

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by Anglian Water Services in November 1994 to conduct an archaeological watching brief during the installation of a replacement watermain along the A1111 Alford Road through the village of Bilsby, 1.5km NE of Alford, Lincs. The work was arranged in response to the County Archaeologist's indication that the trench excavation would affect the historic core of the village. No pipe-laying took place in Thurlby Road or Back Lane.

Monitoring commenced on 1st December 1994, slightly west of the designated length, and continued until 2nd February 1995 by which time the excavation had progressed beyond the eastern extent. The frequency of visits was determined in response to the trench conditions; the trench exposed thick post-medieval road construction layers offering minimal opportunity for recording earlier features and intermittent monitoring was restricted to 6 visits by G. Tann. The site code BMR 94 was assigned to this project.

The trench was cut below the northern edge of the existing road to a depth of about 1m, using a 0.5m wide bucket. The pipe diameter was 0.18m.

### **Archaeological Background**

A small number of archaeological artefacts have been reported from Bilsby and its immediate vicinity in the past (Appendix 1). The finds range from prehistoric stone axes to Romano-British and medieval pottery, but no finds have been made along the route of the pipe trench. Bilsby lies inland of the marine inundation during the Romano-British period, and archaeological sites have not been masked by the thick layer of silts left elsewhere.

The medieval core of Bilsby appears to have been to the west of Bilsby Hall, extending to an earthwork known as Bilsby Camp. Roman pottery and tessellated pavement fragments (implying the presence of a building of high status) have been reported from the site but this may have been an incorrect identification of medieval material. After archaeological monitoring of land

drains across the former Scheduled Ancient Monument area, the SAM designation was removed in 1989 as no features or finds of archaeological significance had been observed. The deserted village site may have included a church dedicated to St. Margaret. The present parish church (Holy Trinity) lies to the west of the modern village and is medieval in origin. There is a churchyard cross within the grounds but it is unclear on which site it was originally erected. The position of a second or later manorial complex is reflected in the present Manor Farm and Moat Farm (with earthworks) around which the A1111 road deflects; it is possible that part of the monitored stretch may be on a late medieval road bypassing the heart of the settlement.

A tramway was laid between Alford and Sutton on Sea in 1880, following approval of the 1879 Act (LAO Lind Dep 1/135). The 2ft 6" gauge tramway was laid along the road followed by the present trench, with a single pair of rails. Tramway 2 continued to Sutton, while Tramways 5 and 6 provided slight loops along the road in Bilsby, apparently for passing trams. At the time of laying the rails, gas mains had already been located below the road, and the tram company reserved the right to disrupt or alter the gas supply or the road during the course of tramway maintenance.

### **The Watching Brief**

**Observation 1** The first visit was made when trenching from East Street, Alford had reached the bend by Bilsby House (Pl. 1). Outside 'Newhaven' the combined thickness of tarmac surfaces and asphalt was 0.41m, above 0.2m of chalk mixed with a light brown loam and an underlying 0.03m of gravel with chalk (Pl. 2). A dark brown clay below this, 0.4m thick, seemed to represent post-glacial soils, above red boulder-clay which was present at the trench base.

**Observation 2** A very different stratigraphic sequence beside the church may have been affected by another service trench along the road edge. The 0.15m thick tarmac road surface overlay 0.18m of loam and chalk rubble, above 0.2m of large chalk lumps (Pls. 3 and 4). The soil below this make-up was a brown loam. This part of the road had apparently been widened onto adjacent open ground after the construction of the tramway.

**Observation 3** Close to 'Sunny Holme' the tarmac was thicker (0.35m) above a 0.1m thick gravel band. The gravel, which probably represented a post-medieval road surface, was based on 0.1m of chalk rubble above brown chalky clay. The chalky clay was only evident in patches, suggesting that it may have been contaminated with road material. Where the chalk was absent, the clay was distinguishable as a dark brown layer up to 0.4m thick above a lighter sandy layer. Animal bone fragments were seen in the dark layer, which was interpreted as a buried topsoil, perhaps of medieval date but not ceramic remains could be found.

**Observation 4** To the east of a service station, the trench section appeared so confused that it was probable another service trench had disturbed the stratigraphy; any pipe lay below or to the side of the present trench.

**Observation 5** The soil and clay was only observed in the trench face to a point 1m east of the junction with Thurlby Road. To the east, and past Manor Farm, a sewer trench had removed all material to below the present trench base.

### **Conclusion**

The positioning of the trench below an existing road linking two small towns meant that considerable thicknesses of road construction material were encountered. From the identification of a buried former topsoil below the gravel and chalk rubble, it is clear that the surface had been raised with imported rubble and that deposits below the post-medieval ground surface may survive intact. The trench cut into the buried soil and a former subsoil; animal bones were seen in the buried topsoil but not with any datable material.

The gravel layer below the chalk rubble could represent a medieval metalled road surface but in the absence of evidence it has been assumed that it was laid at a later date but prior to the construction of a tram course in 1880. The tram route required a level surface and evidence was seen in the trench faces of large-scale raising of the ground contours; there was no sign of levelling the route by cut-and-fill techniques within the monitored length. This can probably be explained by the tenacious nature of the underlying clay which would have made manual excavation laborious and the resultant surface a quagmire! The archaeology of the former tram route might have proved of interest but no associated features were identified.

The pipeline appeared to have passed through Bilsby without causing damage to any medieval or earlier structures or features such as banks and ditches.

### **Acknowledgements**

LAS thank Anglian Water Services, and especially the Project Engineer Matthew Vickers, for their co-operation. The replacement main was constructed by a contractors' team working for M. P. Burke plc, who reported that local people had spoken of a tramway.

Ian George (Assistant Archaeology Officer, Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section) and Mark Bennet (Sites and Monuments Record) provided useful assistance, as did the staff at Lincolnshire Archives.

Geoff Tann  
Lindsey Archaeological Services  
10th March 1995

## References

LAO Lind Dep 1/135 1879 *Alford and Sutton Tramways, Plans, Sections and Book of Reference* Printed pamphlet, Lincolnshire Archives.

OS 1891 *Ordnance Survey 1:10560* Sheet 66NE, 1st edition

OS 1906 *Ordnance Survey 1:2500* Sheet 66/11, 2nd edition, revised 1905

## APPENDIX 1

### Lincolnshire County Sites and Monuments Record Summary

<u>SMR code</u>	<u>NGR (TF)</u>	<u>Description</u>
41473 N	4700 7654	Edward I coin, found 1972
41474 P	471 766	Roman and medieval pottery, 1975
41475 P	" "	" "
41477 AJ	468 759	Romano-British pottery 1977
41480 G	4682 7623	Homestead moat (Bilsby Hall); large moat with adjacent
41481 "		fishponds. Present house 19th century; Roman tesserae and
41482 "		sculptured stones reported in 19th century.
41483 R	4666 7670	Base and shaft of churchyard cross
41484 "	"	Holy Trinity Church: Perpendicular style chancel, 3-bay
		Norman arcade, re-used Early English style moulding in
		porch; church much rebuilt 1841
41485 AB	4717 7648	Homestead moat around 16/17th century Moat House
41488 -	4698 7660	Site of post-medieval windmill
41489 F	468 765	Bilsby deserted medieval village site (Bilsby Camp), SAM18
		(descheduled 1989). Bilsby mentioned in 1086 Domesday
		Survey; Bilsbury St. Margaret's church (last recorded
		institution of priest 1560). Medieval pottery found 1929,
		Roman pottery from mound reported 1967
AF	no loc.	Rough stone axe from Bilsby, Ashmolean Museum 1921
41135 -	466 772	Romano-British pottery, Saleby with Thoresthorpe
42526 D	464 774	Romano-British pottery and cremations " " 1959

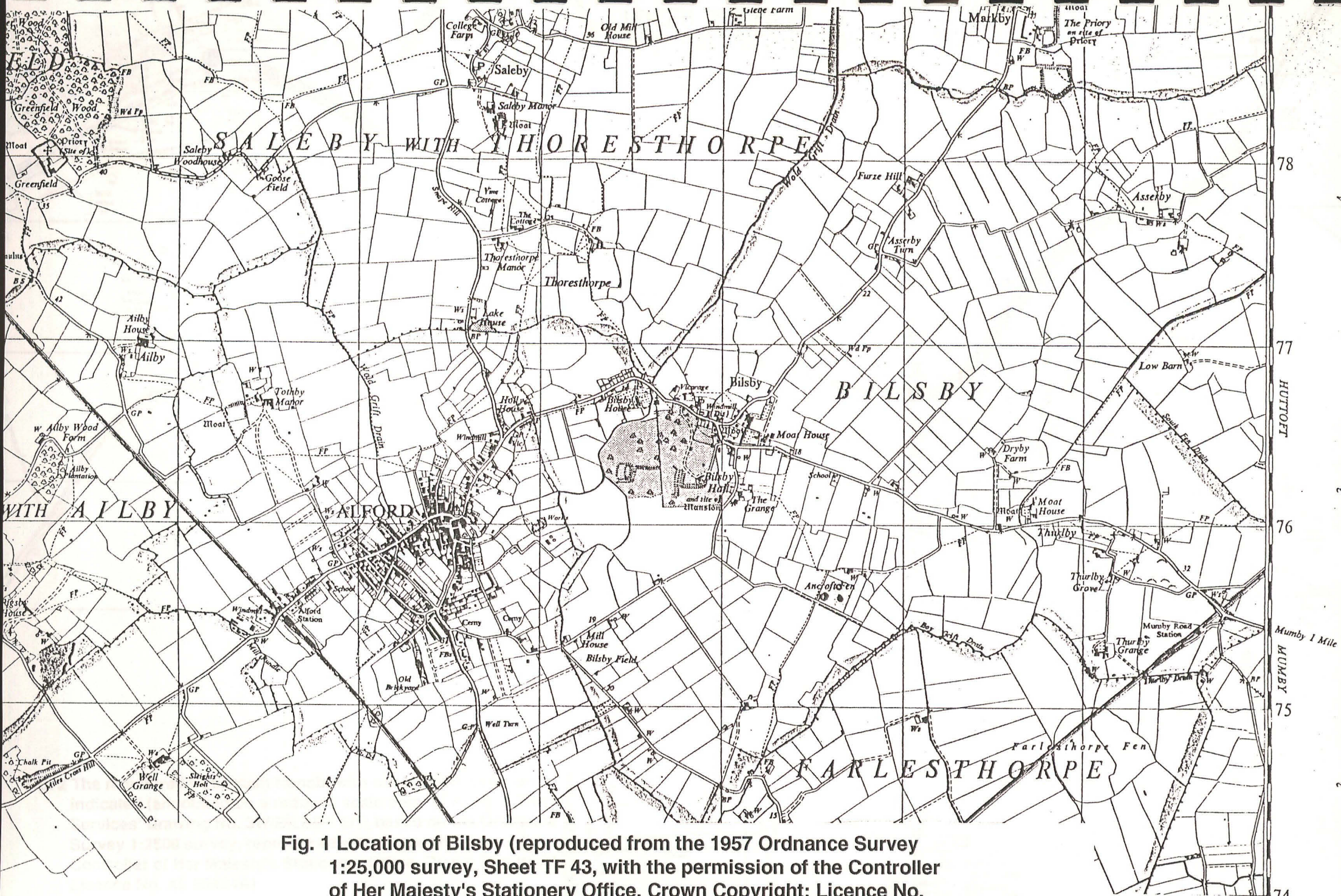


Fig. 1 Location of Bilsby (reproduced from the 1957 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 survey, Sheet TF 43, with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright; Licence No. AL 50424A)



# LENGTH OF PIPELINE REQUIRING WATCHING BRIEF

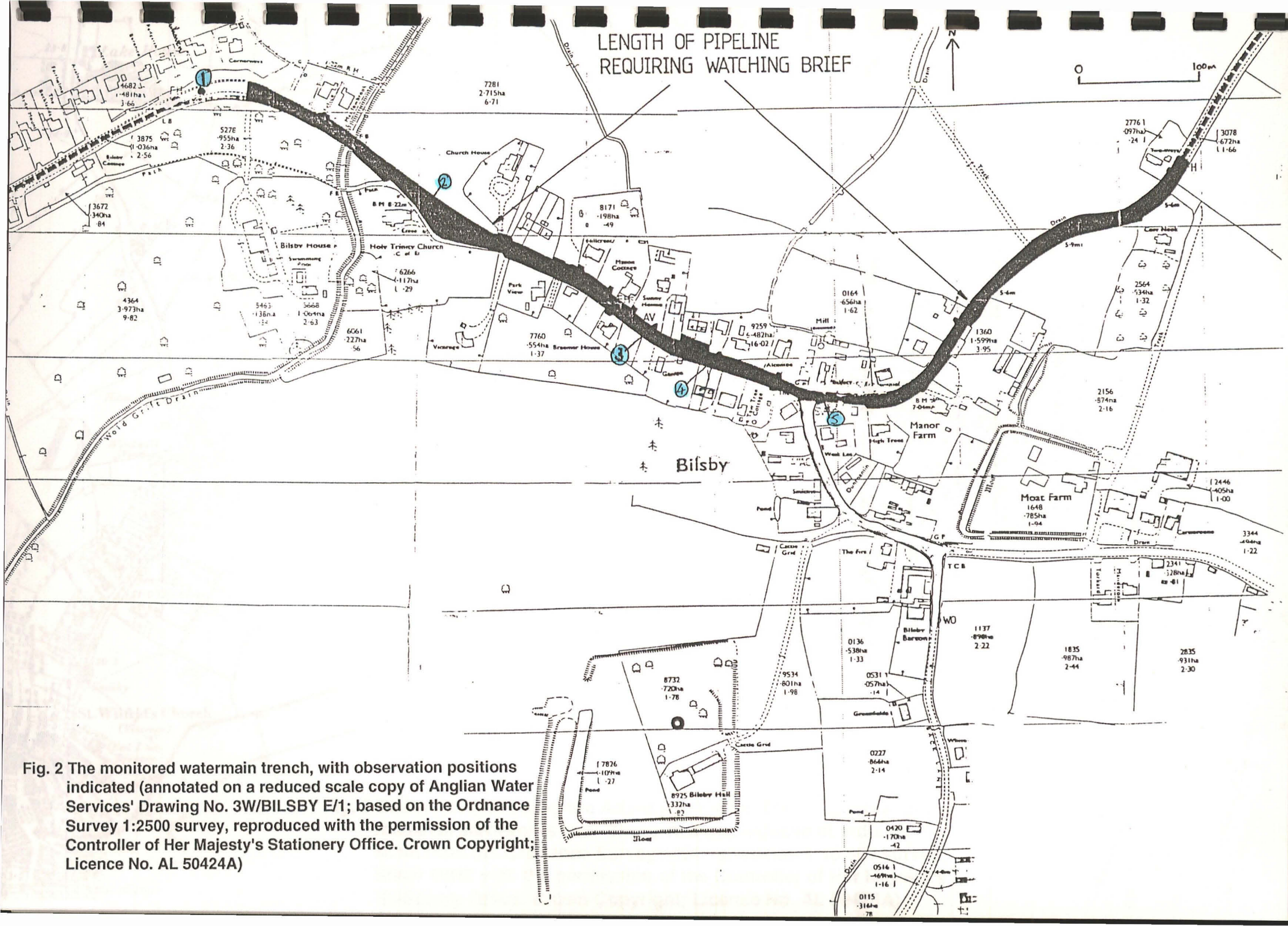


Fig. 2 The monitored watermain trench, with observation positions indicated (annotated on a reduced scale copy of Anglian Water Services' Drawing No. 3W/BILSBY E/1; based on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 survey, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright; Licence No. AL 50424A)

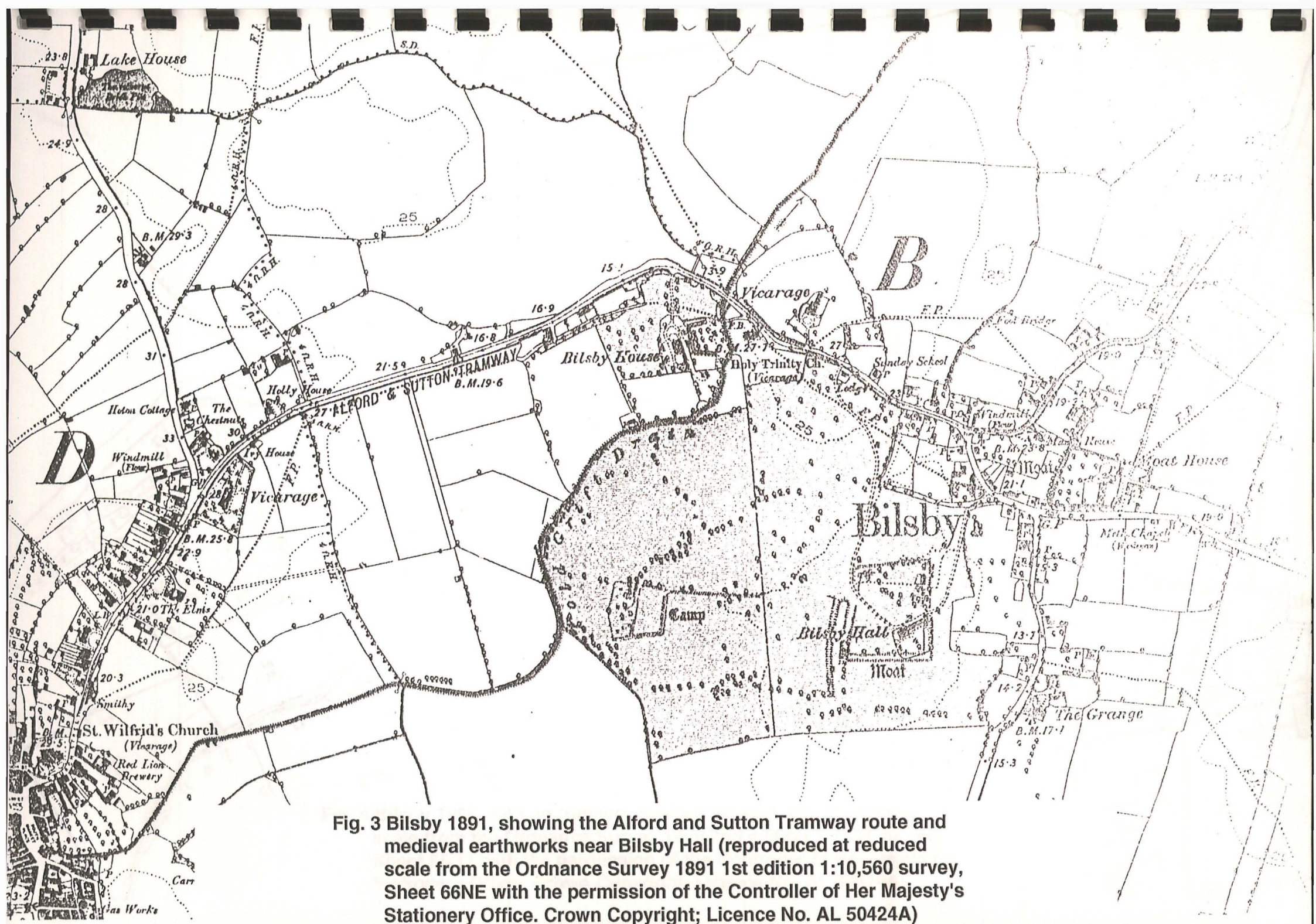


Fig. 3 Bilby 1891, showing the Alford and Sutton Tramway route and medieval earthworks near Bilby Hall (reproduced at reduced scale from the Ordnance Survey 1891 1st edition 1:10,560 survey, Sheet 66NE with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright; Licence No. AL 50424A)

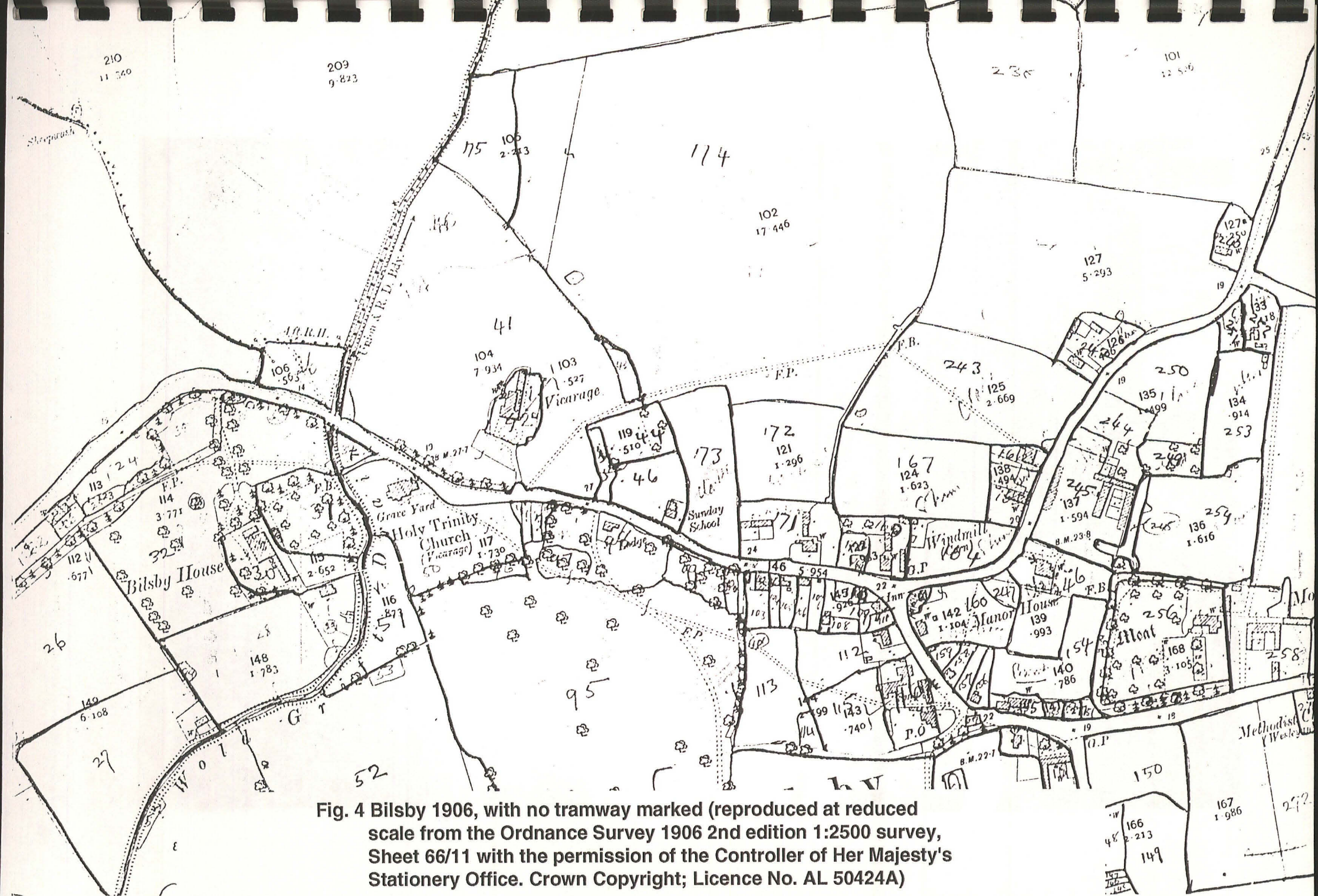
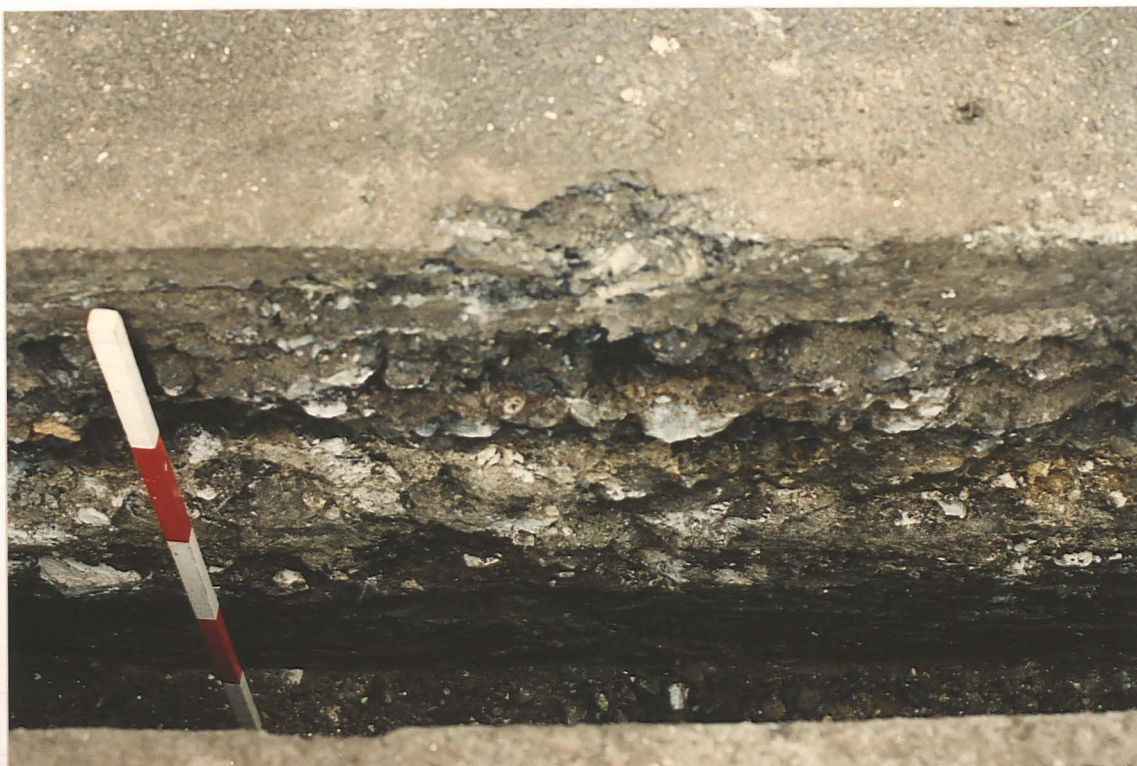


Fig. 4 Bilsey 1906, with no tramway marked (reproduced at reduced scale from the Ordnance Survey 1906 2nd edition 1:2500 survey, Sheet 66/11 with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright; Licence No. AL 50424A)



**Pl. 1 The grounds of Bilsby House with the raised Alford - Sutton on Sea road**

**Pl. 2 Layers of gravel and chalk rubble raising the ground level close to Bilsby House, probably serving as levelling material for a 19th century tramway (scale divisions 0.2m)**





**Pl. 3 Chalk rubble above sandy clay to the east of Holy Trinity Church, looking NW**

**Pl. 4 Trench face close to Bilsby Church showing tarmac and chalk rubble above sandy clay subsoil**

