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INFO OF ANY KIND -

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Work undertaken by the
FARNDON ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE
A Desktop Assessment of the
PARISH OF ST PETER FARNDON
and an Archaeological Evaluation of
THE MASON PROJECT FARNDON-98
near
NEWARK-ON-TRENT
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.
MPF-98
by
René Mouraille HND (Lincoln)
November 1998
FARI REPORT NO 1/98

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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological investigation was carried out on land referred, to as Mason field, at the north end of Marsh Lane, Farndon near Newark-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire.

Prior to this, no archaeological work had been conducted on the site.

During the late 1960s Romano-British pottery was recovered from the riverbank slightly to the north of Mason Field. Further fragments of pottery vessels were found in the field adjacent to the River Trent following land drainage works in November 1984.

Aerial photography carried out by Cambridge University over the past 30 years has revealed substantial cropmarks on the Mason Project site. Enhanced computer imaging carried out by the Institute indicates several enclosures with evidence of structural remains. No pottery however, other than early 19th century surface fragments had been recovered from the topsoil which could be related to the crop marks within the Mason field.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

On the weekend between October 31st and November 1st 1998 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken within the Mason Field in the Kirk's Bay area at Farndon near Newark-on-Trent Nottinghamshire. **Fig 1**

The work was of a voluntary nature initiated by the recently formed FARI (Farndon Archaeological Research Institute).

As little is known of the village area prior to the Norman Conquest, the Institute was initiated to locate and record as many sites within the parish before they are destroyed or severely damaged by encroaching modern development.

2.2 Site Location

The village of Farndon is situated approximately 2.5km Southwest of Newark-on-Trent in east Nottinghamshire. **Fig 2**

The Mason Project Site is situated to the Northeast of the village and very close to the disused "Strays Windmill Tower" of 1821.

Slightly to the north of the site the waters of the river Trent meanders northeast eventually ending at the Humber Estuary.

The Parish of Farndon lies between two rivers that of the Trent and the smaller River Devon located a kilometre to the south.

2.3 Topography and Geology

The present day Village is situated and extended along a natural sandbank ridge formed toward the end of the last glaciation. The sandbank is of the same association as that to the Southwest, which Stoke Church is located and also Newark Castle, to the Northeast. Melting ice and floodwaters following the end of the Devensian glaciation also formed the gravel terraces.

These beds were extensively quarried during World War 11 the materials of which were used in the construction of Winthorpe Airfield. The gravel pits were reopened for a few years and extended in the late 60s.

The present site is at the height of 12m above sea level and the southwest corner of the field can be found at grid reference SK 778.06/526.18.

2.4 Place Names

Farndon, is first mentioned as Farendune in the Domesday register of 1086; and Ferendon in 1175; It is then mentioned in 1280 as Farindon; Farndon 1316; Farnhendon 1335; Faryndon Forth 1391; Farnton 1525; Fernedon 1539 Farundon 1543; Faryngton 1567 Farnton 1604; Farrindon 1614

The name Farndon is derived from Anglo-Saxon "Fern covered dune". The dune is most likely to refer to the sandbank ridge upon which the present day village is founded.

2.5 Documentary Evidence

The first mention of Farndon, however may come from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, In which an account written in 924 AD mentions that "King Edward passed away, in Mercia at Farndon". Over the years, there has been intense argument by scholars as to which Farndon this represents. Cornelius Brown stated it was Farndon in Northamptonshire, however, no place of that name exists today? Others believe it refers to Farndon in Cheshire, again, here the borders of Mercia are debatable. There is even a mention of Farndon on Dee?

Edward the Elder who was the son of Alfred the Great was in the area between 922-924AD having fortified Nottingham and other parts of the County from the new and intensified Danish/Viking incursions nobody has suggested that his death may have been here.

Newark is also believed to have originated as a new burh at this time perhaps an indication that it replaced Farndon as the principle settlement. Unlike the previous Roman administration, which had financial and military power to defend large areas. The large sector of Farndon during the Anglo-Danish period would have been less financially adapted to defend against Viking attack!

As previously mentioned the village is later ascribed as Farendune in the Domesday Book, however the account may be classed as obscure as Balderton is also mentioned within the same entry.

At the early stages of the Civil War the village of Farndon remained un-fortified. It served as a Royalist outpost under the command of a cavalry officer, Sir Robert Dallison of Greetwell Lincolnshire.

Around the 15th of November 1644 a Grantham based force of Parliamentarians attacked Farndon and subsequently Stoke.

The Roundhead force is believed to have been lead by Oliver Cromwell, and captured four Officers and eighty-five of their troopers along with four gentlemen.

Despite the success of the raid the village was not held and did not fall into Parliamentary control until a year later.

Colonel-General Sydenam Poyntz garrisoned his men here. His soldiers came from Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

Poyntz occasionally resided at the old village of Stoke.

Farndon was not to far from Poyntz's main field headquarters, which was located on the Farndon side of the river Devon adjacent to the Royalist "Queens Sconce". It was from this field H.Q. that the 3rd siege of Newark was directed.

On January 5th 1645, a Royalist force comprising 800 cavalry and 300 infantry carried out a daring raid. They attacked the villages of Farndon and Stoke. The Roundhead Garrison was taken completely by surprise.

Poyntz who was sleeping at Stoke managed to escape from the raid, but having fled, had forgotten to take his footwear and money... leaving them in his quarter. These items were found to be missing on his return.

Most likely as a result of this raid Poyntz had Farndon fortified in March 1646. Some of these fortifications can still be seen today, sadly some are being systematically buried despite having survived 350 years.

The fortifications at Farndon are unlikely to have been involved in any action.

The Parliamentarians also built a bridge across the river Trent at Farndon Ferry.

2.6 Archaeological Setting.

In the fields to the south of Strays mill and the Fosse road, several large scatters of Neolithic and Bronze Age flint artifacts represent prehistoric activity. The Wessex Archaeology Unit carried out an excavation in 1995.

Fine flint objects such as arrow heads and a small polished hand axe were recovered by a local historian who was walking the fields some time shortly after and the archaeological investigation, **Plate 1**

The A46 (fosse road) is also located at the southern edge of the modern urban area. This road was originally constructed during the 1st Century AD and formed what is believed to be the 1st Roman frontier in Britain.

Romano-British pottery fragments are regularly found in the back gardens of houses adjacent to Marsh Lane. Sandhill road and the Meadows are also potential sites. Pottery has also been recovered from the Kirk's bay area and in fields to the south of the Village and fosse way. **Plate 2**

A km southwest of Farndon, is the site of a Romano-British auxiliary fort and proceeding settlement/Depot believed to be that of "Ad-Pontem". The site may be found between the Parish boundaries of Thorpe and Farndon.

The fort was originally constructed by the 9th Legion for the defense of the Fosse way. It was one of many fortifications placed at intervals along the route. The small fort itself replaced the site of an Iron Age settlement.

Although excavation occurred here on several occasions, no evidence was found of a river crossing at this point!

An interesting feature within the parish of Farndon is that of a large channel adjacent to Wyke lane that is located towards the southeast of the village.

Long believed to be an old riverbed it predates the Trent Navigation Company and may be seen on Clampes plan of civil war earthworks of 1646. **Fig 3**

This feature does not follow the alignment of other riverine-formed depressions in the fields adjacent, and is therefore unlikely to be a natural feature. It was one of two such channels the other was situated outside the old Romano British Settlement of Ad Pontem and before reclamation was referred to as the "Wharf".

The Farndon channel is of almost identical width as the Car Dyke, which connects Torksey and Lincoln

Most of the Wyke was either reclaimed around 1769 at the period when the village underwent agricultural reform or shortly after as a result of the redistribution of materials following dredging by the Trent Navigation Company.

The Church.

The Parish and Church of Farndon are dedicated to St Peter. The exact age is unknown. Undoubtedly an earlier Saxon church existed as part of the north wall remains, as does a fine Saxon doorway. **Plate 3**

St Peters, Farndon is believed to be one of several churches mentioned in the Domesday register.

To the West Side of the exterior Saxon doorway a section of render has been deliberately omitted from the stonework and herringbone bond is visible. **Plate 4**

This style of masonry is usually seen in the foundations dating to the late Saxon and early Norman period. It is thought that herringbone bond was designed to use up smaller pieces of stone, which would otherwise remain unused!

The three-bayed naïve comprises short 13th Century columns with the clerestory added in the 14th century. The insertion of a western window was carried out a century later along with the two windows and plain porch in the south aisle.

A stone plaque set into the west facing elevation of the tower, describes how the Tower was repaired in 1598 (10 years after the defeat of the Spanish Armada). Further alterations were carried out in 1891. During this period of renovation a stone coffin was unearthed, within the sarcophagus lay a skeleton with an iron Viking sword and a single key. The sword was removed and donated to the British Museum. Unfortunately, it has since disintegrated. **Plate 5**

The belfry contains four bells, three of which bare the following dates: 1589; 1710; 1774 the fourth bell does not bare a date of manufacture but retains an inscription 'God save our Church'.

During the late Victorian period the Chancel including the arch, the south chapel, organ Chamber and vestry were added and general repairs carried out.

The entire church was rendered, theoretically to protect the stone fabric from the elements. This has proved to be effective in keeping out the weather, unfortunately we have no visual record of what the fabric appears beneath the render.

Until the year 1864 Farndon and Balderton were part of the same parish. Forty-two years earlier the ecclesiastical duties of the Vicar of Farndon were extended and he also became the Rector of Thorpe.

The Vicarage was originally sited to the rear of the Chancel. The Street name of Prebendry Close indicates where this building was located. It was most likely comprised a tithe barn and stables.

The demise of such buildings and church land probably came in 1768-9 shortly after the village was enclosed and the overall agricultural system revised.

The Church graveyard is a mere fraction of the original size. Interments are known to be located under Church Lane and in various surrounding back gardens to the south of the church.

A peculiar anomaly may be found outside the main portico. A small headstone positioned on the northern edge of a raised triangular piece of grass bares an ancient inscription; it is thought to be written in old English.

There are several legends regarding the feature some people believe it is the burial place of Cromwellian soldiers and their horses. Another version suggests it is the burial place of a horse belonging to a Standard bearer of Henry 7th. The latter, relates how the horse was mortally wounded in the ensuing battle for Stoke field in 1487, however, nothing is mentioned of why or how, the horse should be brought to Farndon for burial.

The English Civil War.

Within the Parish there are several earthworks dating to 1646 when Parliamentarian forces fortified the village. In a field formerly occupied by the Farndon Cricket Club to the Southwest of the village a line of defence can clearly be seen. This includes Gun emplacements for the positioning of ordnance. Sadly the defences between School Lane and Main Street are at present being systematically buried despite having survived a period of over 300 years.

3. Aims

It is the aim of the Institute to record and recover as much archaeological data as possible in advance of encroaching modern rural development.

The objective of the Mason Project investigation was to recover dating evidence from the site and evaluate its archaeological resource.

It was thought necessary to satisfy a series of objectives, these being:

- a. To excavate a small sample in a lesser important part of the site located over an obscure linear feature.
- b. To investigate and record archaeological deposits identified within the sample
- c. To recover artefacts in order to construct a chronological framework of the site
- d. To disseminate the results of the investigation and site assessment.

5.2 THE ARTEFACTS

Romano-British Pottery recovered from context 003 consist three different fabrics:

Plate 8

5.2.1 Samian table ware.

This wheel thrown fragment of fine tableware has a base colour of light reddish brown. A dark reddish-brown slip overlies the base fabric but much of it has eroded from the vessel.

Only part of the foot ring and base of the vessel, which is rather crude and heavy, remain. The bowl side of the base has a faint stamp but is not legible. The place of origin and date for this vessel is uncertain.

5.2.2 Course ware

A thin course grey body fragment with a single impressed ring decoration. The body is very rough to touch containing grains of sand, which has been mixed with the clay

5.2.3 Other Course ware fabrics

A dark brown wheel thrown fragment represents the remains of another vessel, which is slightly carinated beneath the rim. Inclusions are of possible pieces of grit and perhaps mica.

The rim is indicative 2nd Century AD pers-com Dr J Samuel's

Modern 18th- 19th Century

Combed or marble ware

Two pieces of this type of pottery referred to as marbledware were retrieved from the topsoil this slip marbling was carried out on modelled earthenware. Although it is thought to date to the 16th Century, it was recorded in Burslem 1677. Slip marbling continued almost until the end of the 18th Century.

Several other pieces of unrecognised blue and white delftware type designed fragments were also recovered from the topsoil along with several pieces of brick, and two fragments of 19th century glass.

6. SITE POTENTIAL

Like most urban sites, the potential for recording long stratigraphic sequences is intensive and in the Mason field, potentially complicated. In the sequence of re-cut ditches moderately long strands occur in matrix.

The potential that this site may well be superimposed by several other earlier/later fortifications may well serve to perplex stratigraphic relationships.

These remains represent settlement and are recognised as vitally important for the development of any coherent view of landscape archaeology.

The Mason Field Project has been found to contain a fine example of potential early Roman fortification within the Trent Valley and clearly associated with dated settlement. Suggestion of potential structural evidence permits the field was used in a military capacity and may well enhance future research into the pacification of the Trent Valley in the early Romano-British period.

7. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

It is considered appropriate that some comment is made on the perceived significance and potential of the site subjected to evaluation.

The archaeology of the Mason Project land is considered as would be for the criteria used for assessing the importance of ancient monuments in Archaeology and Planning, DOE Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 issued November 1990.

a) Period

Ceramic dating evidence recovered from the evaluation suggests that some archaeology in the Mason field be of Romano-British origin dating to at least the late 1st-2nd centuries AD.

Pottery shards found in fields adjacent to the River Trent and slightly to the north of the Mason Project are of the same time scale. Fig 8

b) Rarity

As little archaeology has been excavated on the site it is difficult to assess its rarity. The aerial photography reveals a series of enclosures of varying sizes and a substantial amount of rectilinear crop marks bordering the Mason field perimeters, perhaps an indication that this site underwent intense occupational activity at some stage in the past. Plate 9

A unique opportunity is available not only to enhance our knowledge of Celtic communities, but also that of Romano-British settlement and rural practices within the confines of both parish and the region of the Trent Valley.

c) Source Stimulus

There is an acute lack of archaeological or historic documentation for this particular piece of land, and further research is required here.

Early cartography has been especially beneficial. On Clampes plan of the Newark siegeworks the area is marked as waste land, however in the middle of the river opposite and to the north of the site there would appear to be a small island. Fig 6

In 1769 the enclosure map by W Fillingham records no such island, however it does mention the property as belonging to Thomas Heron Esq.

d. Group value

The group value for the existence of Romano-British activity on the site at the Mason field is of particular importance.

If this location is found to retain elements of fortification it may serve to display a much different and indeed greater spacial occupation area now encompassed by the modern day boundaries of the parish.

The Romano-British features appear to be associated with a crossing point. If this can be proved by further research, it may indeed throw doubt upon the site at Thorpe. Ad-Pontem is most probably far greater in size becoming a large vicus by the 2nd Century. New light may also be shed on the name Newark (New-Work)!

This presence of fortification at Mason field, would signify that the area between Farndon and Thorpe formed a much greater role in Romano-British times than previously anticipated, having fortifications at either end of the stretch of river.

If further work on the Mason Project does reveal the most probable existence of a riverside fort (bridgehead), we could therefore expect to see further fortification on the Farndon side opposite the former PowerStation site at Staythorpe? Fortification at this point would be of strategic importance to defend the stretch of water that forms a tributary of the river at this point.

Aerial photography carried out in 1971 (RC8-Z-165) by Cambridge University would appear to display faint traces of a playing card shape feature of substantial size, plus several other obscure features of a military style and appearance. Plate 10

Speculation regarding the various pottery scatters, which may be found in numerous places along the length of the sand ridge on which the spine of the village is situated, may merely signify agricultural use. Further investigation however, may serve to reveal previous ribbon type settlement.

e) Survival/condition

The potential for the retrieval of archaeological evidence in the Mason field is good. The area despite being ploughed since the late 1760s has sustained light ploughing and is now kept fallow indicating anything below 0.30cm in depth would escape relatively unharmed.

The type of features retained within the boundaries of the site is thought to be deep and therefore undisturbed.

f) Fragility/vulnerability

At present the site is fairly secure from further development although the surrounding landscape is in an area set for modern development.

It is quite feasible that the area within the direct vicinity of the Mason field is a potential archaeological hotspot, and should be treated accordingly.

g) Diversity

At present, the potential diversities remain unclear, however, a referral to the aerial photography along with evidence retrieved from the field, would indicate a time span ranging from perhaps the Iron-Age to that of the Romano-British period. Further investigation would determine this.

H) Potential

This site may well hold great insight as to our understanding of how agrarianism and Urbanisation developed in the immediate area during the 1st-2nd Century AD.

Important clues as to why the village area was settled and accordingly the understanding of how the land was managed, the diversity of crops grown, of how these crops were stored and transported. More importantly, the reason for settlement growth and its connection with military advances to the north and east.

Further assessment is required to determine the status and full significance of this site and the full extent to which it was developed during the Romano-British Period.

8. Effectiveness and techniques

Prior to investigation, the 3m x 1m evaluation strip were swept for metals and again following the removal of the topsoil. No metals were recovered.

The techniques used for the method of detection for this site. i.e. that of aerial photography combined with dowsing has proved to be effective.

The Mason Project was designed and carried out on a voluntary scale over a succession of weekends by personnel from The Farndon Archaeological Research Institute. The project is hoped to be ongoing. The result, following the excavation of trench 1, has been the positive identification of a Romano-British feature, which has produced sufficient dating evidence.

Information recovered suggests the continuing and perhaps rapid reorganisation of the local landscape during the Romano-British period.

The investigation so far has produced invaluable evidence, which can be added to existing data.

9. Conclusion.

For many years local historians have suspected the presence of Romano-British activity at Farndon, however the whereabouts of the possible settlement site remained elusive.

The evaluation carried out on the Mason Project is a small significant step toward a fuller understanding of how and why settlement originated at Farndon.

It is perhaps the first time within the Parish that Romano-British features have been discovered, followed by detailed excavation.

The dates for the pottery found on the Mason Project suggest Romano-British activity in Farndon commenced perhaps as little as 50 years following the invasion of Britain by Claudius's Legions.

The location of the site is also significant in respect of its close proximity to the River Trent. Despite the fact little is known about the Trent's original course, it may be indicative of the emphasis put on logistics from river borne transport.

Computer enhanced copies of the aerial photograph may imply there may have been a river crossing point commencing in the field to the north of the site of The Mason Field Project. Coincidentally a close inspection of Richard Clampes Siege plan of 1646 indicates what appears to be a small sandbank or island in the middle of the river at approximately this point. Often islands of this nature have originated as piled pier foundations for a bridge supports.

Unquestionably, further research will reveal more information.

Aerial photography carried out by Cambridge University over the passing decades along with computer enhancement has proved to be an invaluable tool. The pinpointing of various sites has been achieved. The determining of why certain features such as the Wyke, which, most likely originated as a Romano-British wharfage facility, appears on the landscape.

It is not beyond reason that the various sites, such as perhaps, three non contemporary forts at the Kirk's bay area and archaeological disturbance to the south and west of the area. The probability of several fortifications to the northwest of the village in the former marsh land area; the numerous finds along the sandbank ridge stretching from Kirk's bay to at least the Meadows. The probable wharfage facility around the area of Wyke lane and the other fort/depot at what is at present referred to as Ad-Pontem; the curve in the river giving natural protection from three sides; finished off with the Fosse Road to the south is strong enough evidence to forward the notion of a large settlement of substantial nature. A late entry must be added to this report, regarding an observation made by Gavin Kinsley.

On studying an aerial photograph of the Settlement area at Thorpe he noticed a road alignment from this point to that of the road seen on the aerial of Mason Field. It is an alignment which was partially still intact during the Civil War (1642-1646). This is now thought to have branched off the main Fosse Road near the present day Service Station. Fig 7

The proving of Romano-British wharfage facilities would be invaluable in determining whether the area originated as a massive supply depot during the late 1st-2nd Centuries AD.

Subsequent evaluation on and around the vicinity of the Mason Field will display the extent and type of settlement, the date for its occurrence and its status within the local landscape.

10. Storage and Curation

It is proposed that on completion of all necessary study and analysis the complete sites archive be deposited for long term storage and Curation at the appropriate repository.

The project archive shall comprise all site and post excavation records along with all artifactual and environmental material other than that disposed of by the relevant specialists. In the interim, the Project archive will be collated and marked with relevant identification codes, suitably packaged and maintained in appropriate storage at the *Farndon Archaeological Research Institute*

11. Acknowledgements

The Institute wishes to thank Mr Kevin Mason of No1 Lawrence Street, Newark, for his interest and permission to allow the investigation to commence. Kirk and Bills who supplied the Institute with drawing boards. Our sincere thanks extend to Lindsey Archaeological Services who loaned surveying equipment and Dr John Samuel's of John Samuel's Archaeological Consultancy, for the Romano-British pottery analysis. The Reverend John Quarrel gave interesting information for the church architecture, St Peters Farndon. Gavin Kinsley of Trent and Peak Archaeological Trust, and Colin Palmer-Brown of Pre-Construct Archaeology have supplied valuable information that has been added to the existing Data. Mouraille Archaeological/Conservation Services supplied Stationary, computer facilities, cameras and work tools. Fiona Leask and Rene Mouraille supplied Film.

12. Personnel

Project Co-ordinator: R Mouraille
 Field Supervisor: R Mouraille
 Field Personnel: F Leask
 Field Draughtsperson: F Leask
 Metals Detection: A Rushby
 Finds Processing: F Leask
 Post Excavation Analyst: R Mouraille
 Computer Enhancement: R Mouraille

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Aerial Photographs:

RC8-Z-165, 3-7-1971 Cambridge University
 RC8-GK-274 30-5-84 Cambridge University

Appendices

Appendix 1: Evaluation Proposal

Appendix 2: Plates

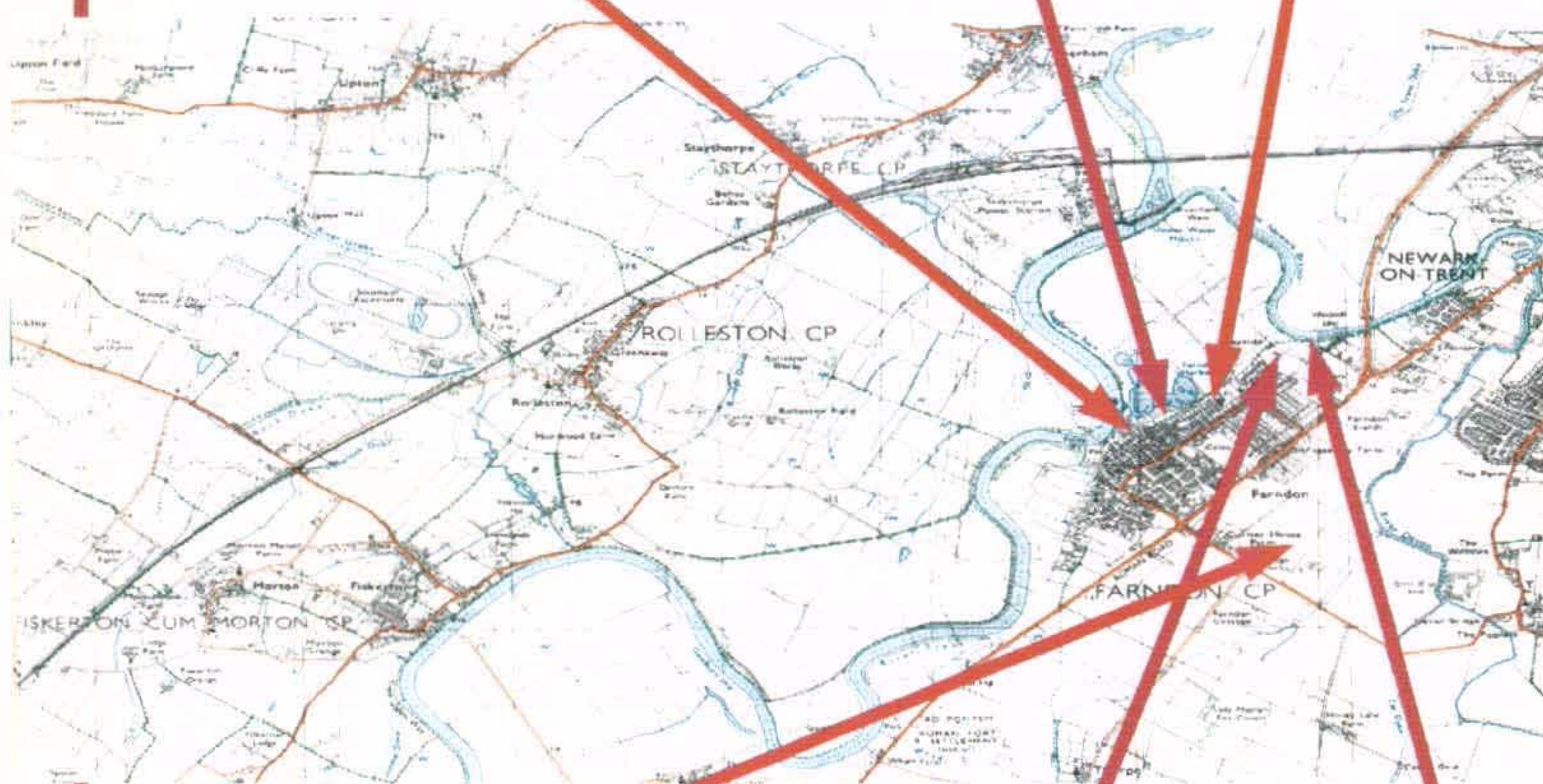
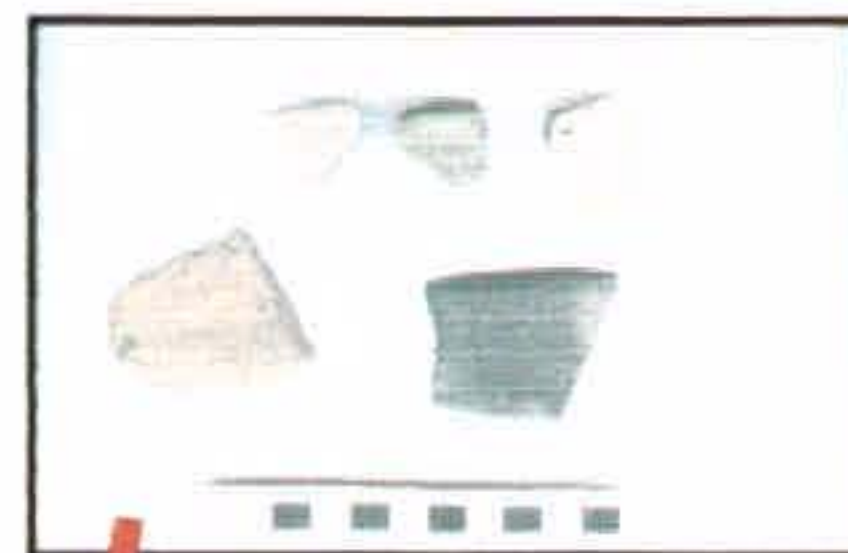
Plate 1 Polished Hand Axe (Rushby)
 Plate 2 Romano-British Pottery scatters within the Parish of Farndon.
 Plate 3 Saxon north facing doorway
 Plate 4 Herringbone bonding slightly west of Saxon doorway
 Plate 5 Viking Sword found within Church
 Plate 6 Working shot of evaluation site
 Plate 7 Section photograph
 Plate 8 Site pottery collection
 Plate 9 Aerial view of Masons Field
 Plate 10 Location of Probable northern forts.

Appendix 3: Figures

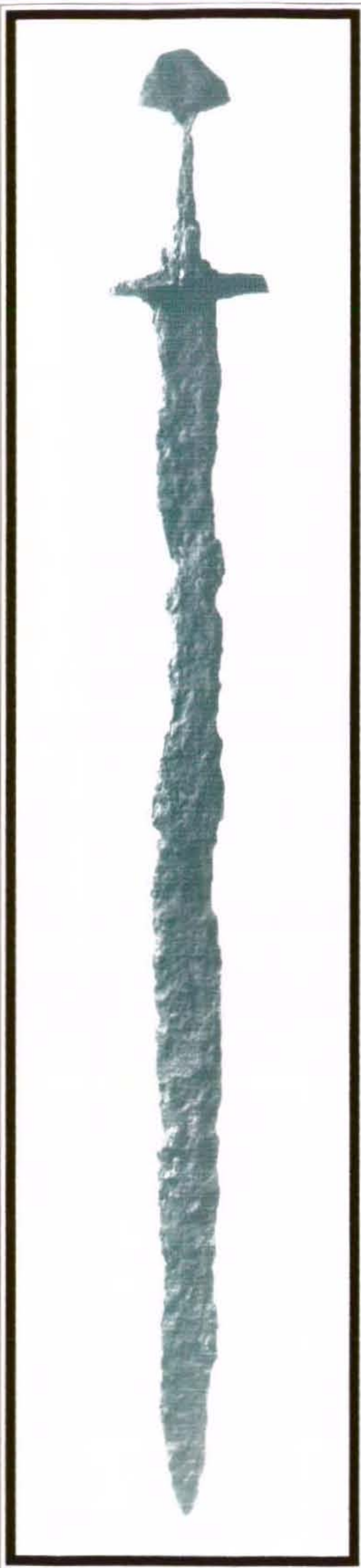
Figure 1 Location of Masons field
 Figure 2 Farndon Location
 Figure 3 Clampes Plan of 1646
 Figure 4 Section drawing of feature
 Figure 5 Plan of feature
 Figure 6 Small Island seen on Clampes Plan 1646
 Figure 7 Diagram of Romano-British Branch road in relation to present day village.

Appendix 4: Matrix

Plate 2



Romano-British pottery collections found in the vicinity of Farndon



**Plate 3. North facing Saxon Doorway
at St Peters Church Farndon.**



**Plate 4 Herringbone stone bonding slightly west
of doorwax**

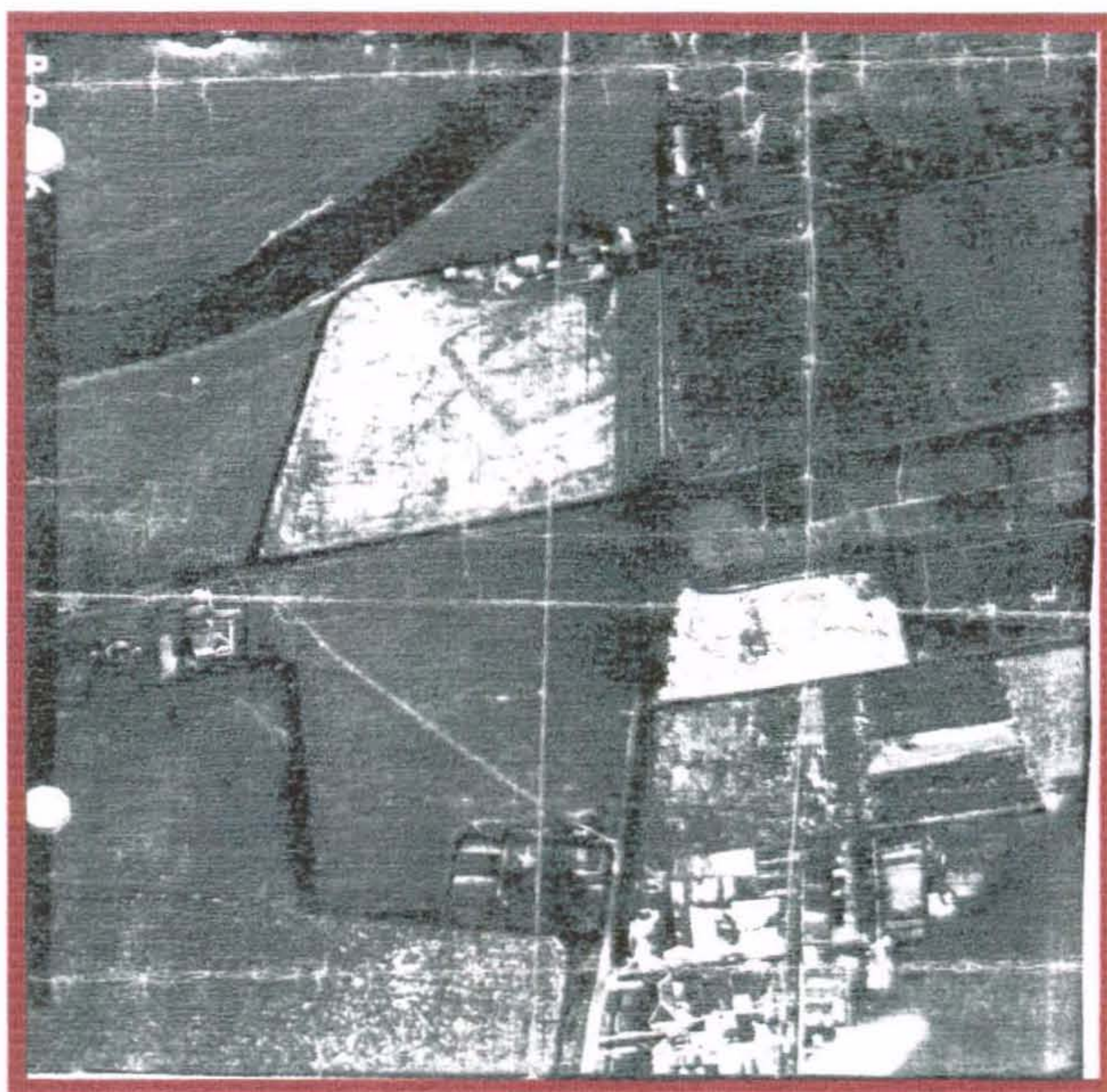
**Plate 5. Viking sword found by workmen in
1891. It was presented to the British Museum but
has since disintegrated.**

Plate 8.



**Romano-British and Gallic Pottery collection from the Mason Field
Project 98**

Plate 9



Aerial shot of Mason Field from the south.

Plate 10.



Figure 2.

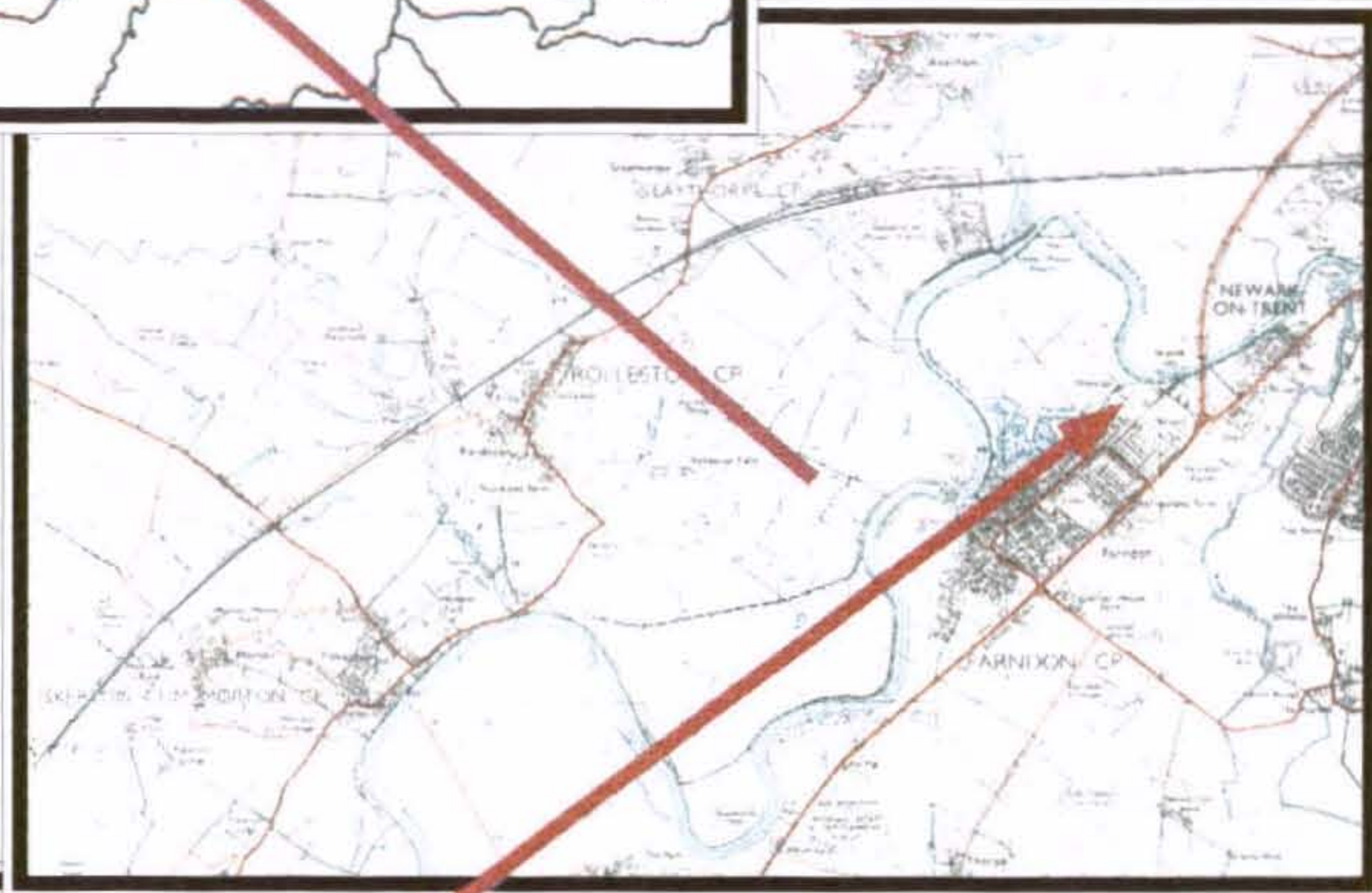
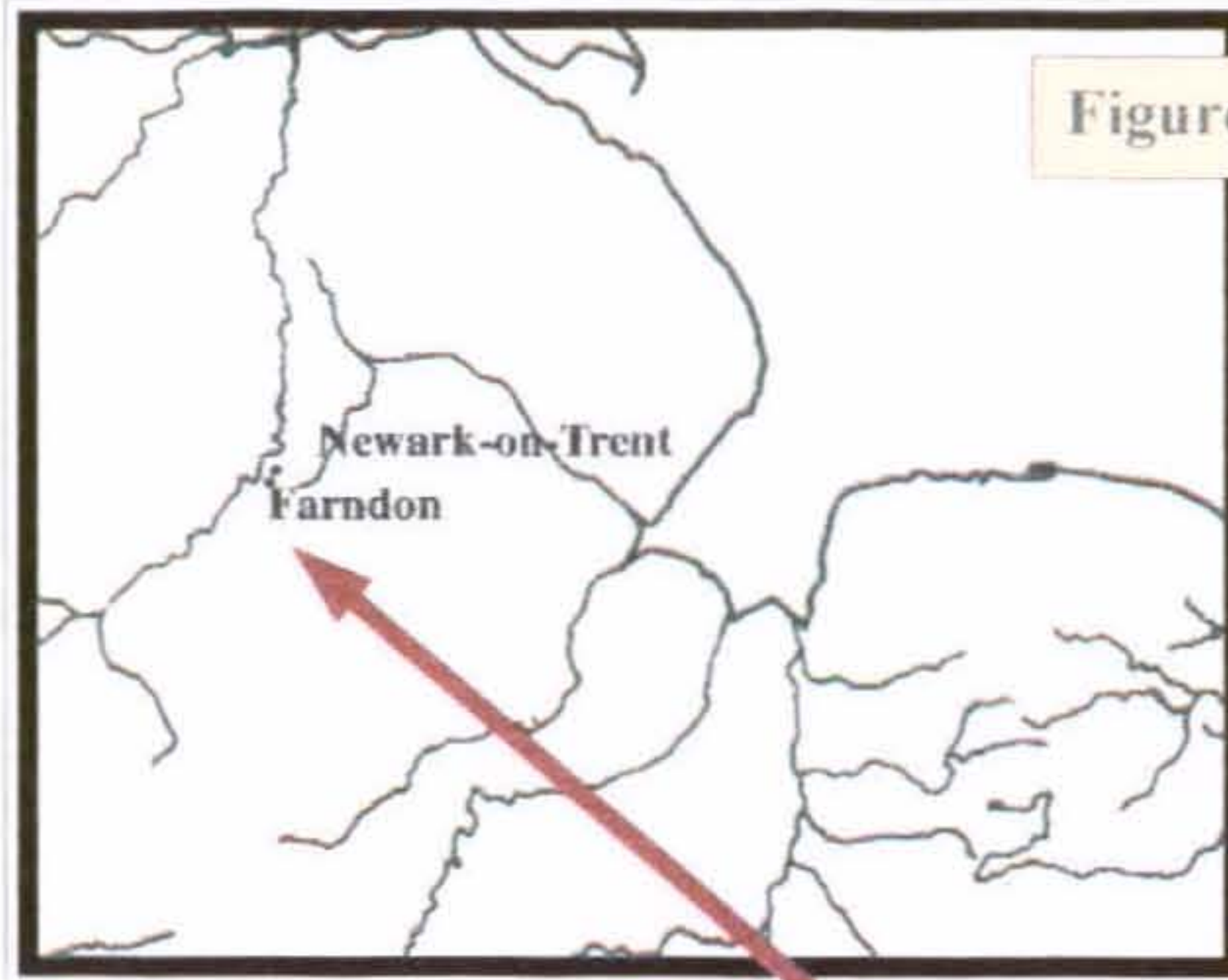
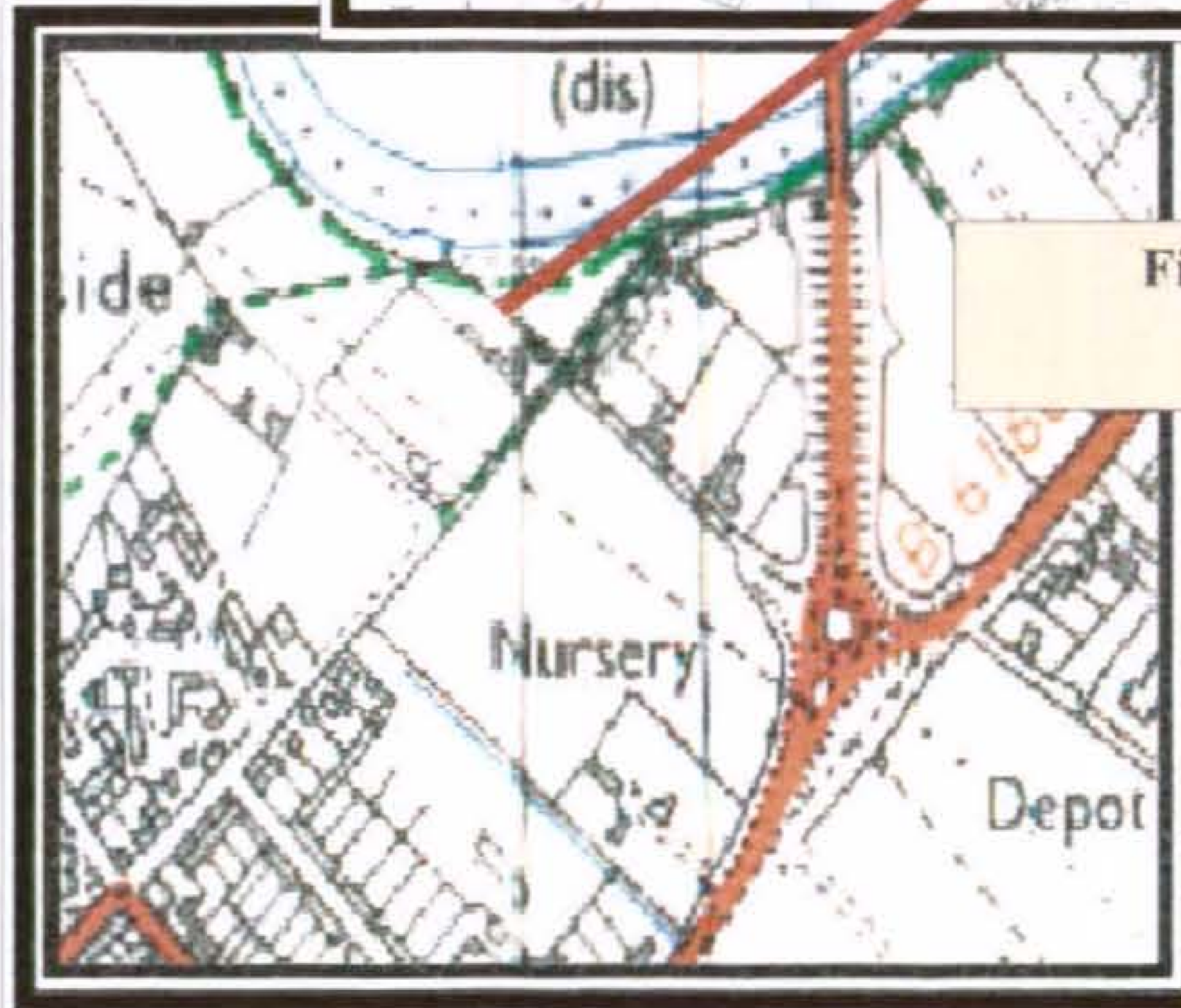


Figure 1.



The Arrow shows the Location of the Mason Field in relation to the southwest end of the Newark-on-Trent bypass.

Figure 3.

Clampes Plan gives clear indication of an open channel (adjacent to Wykes lane) at Farndon

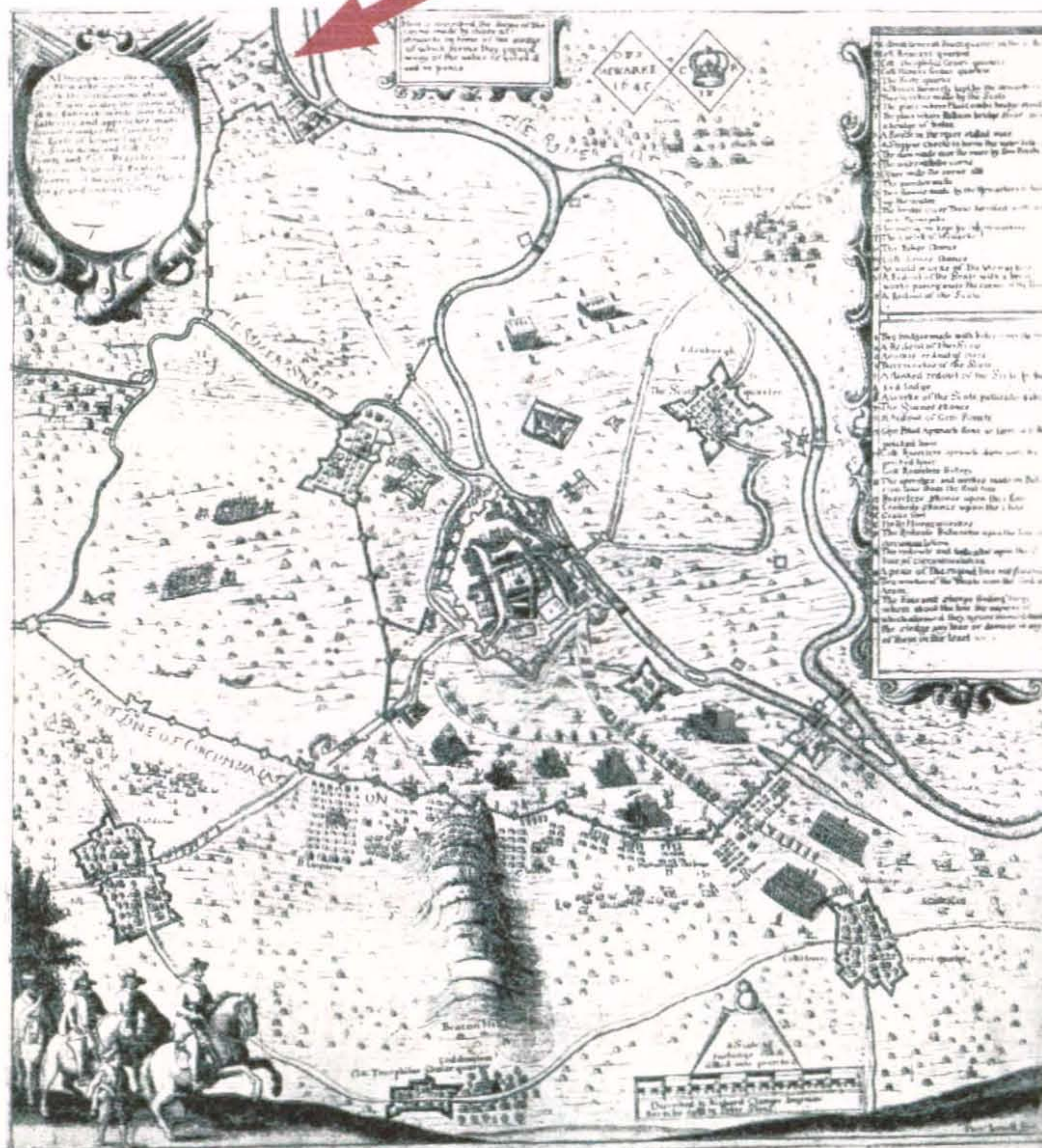
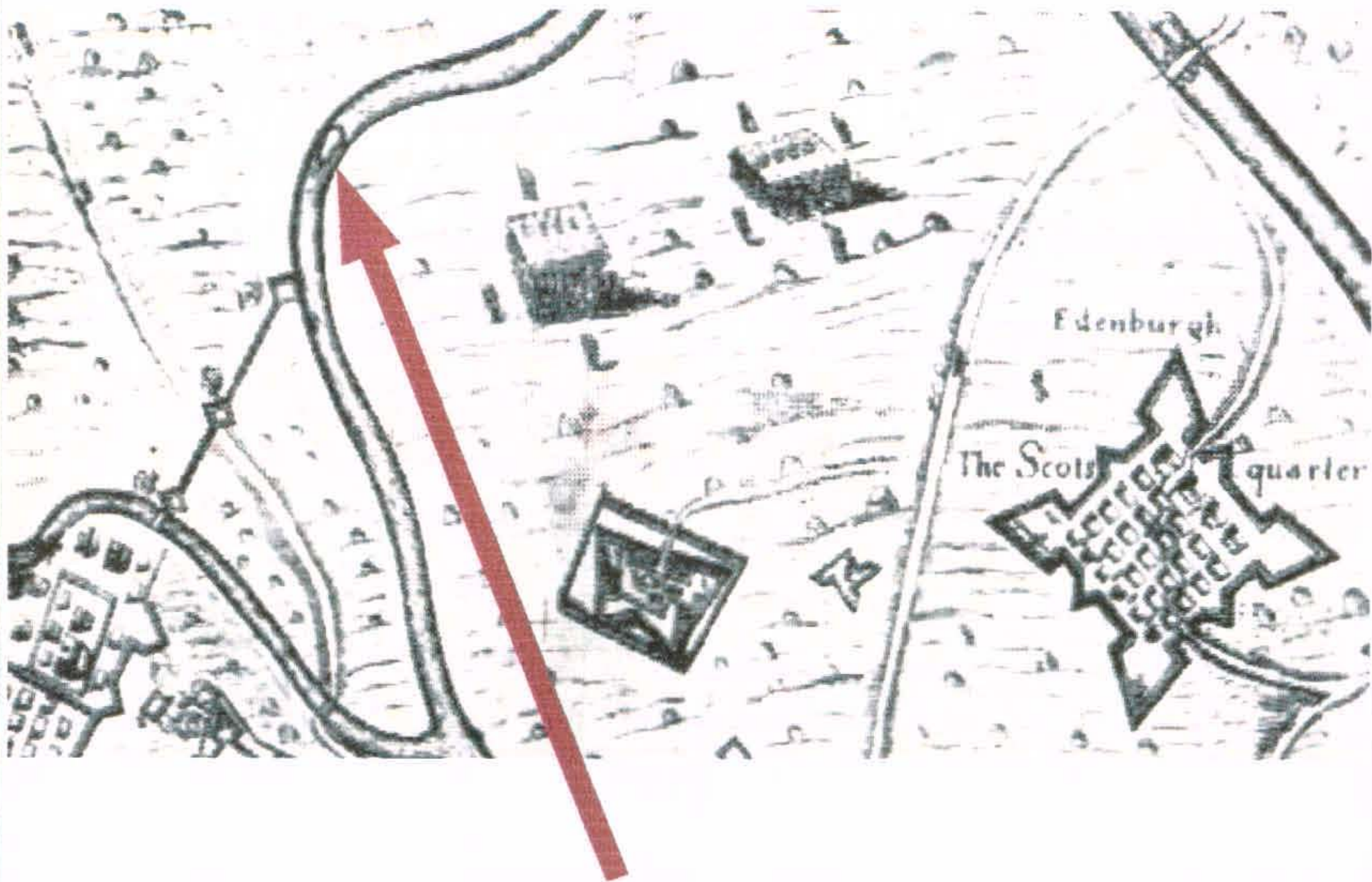
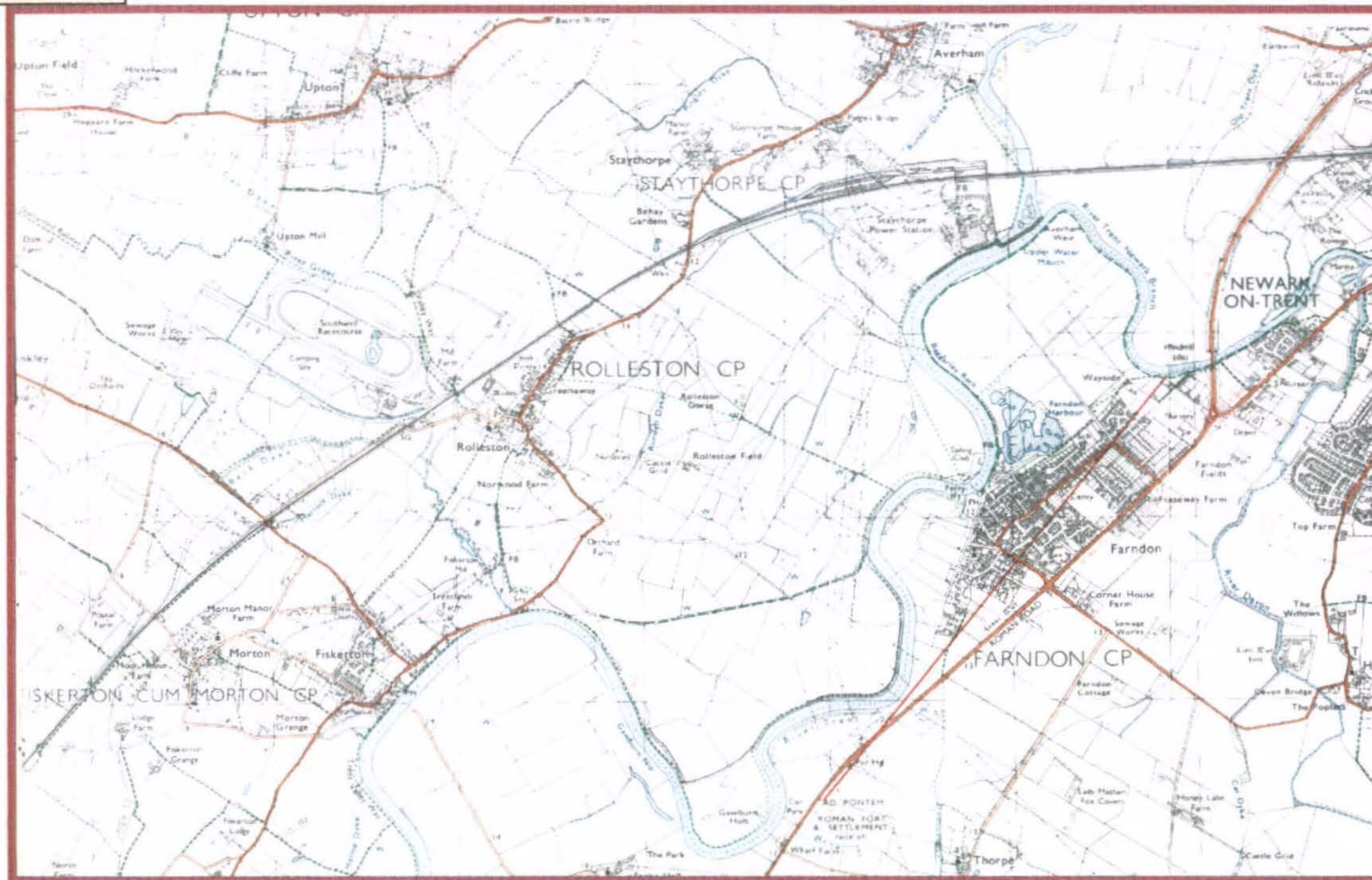


Figure 6



Small river islands such as that shown on Clampes Plan of 1646 often started out as piers for bridges. With the passing of time silt accumulation disguises their original form

Figure 7



Possible Romano-British Road alignment from Ad-Pontem Thorpe to Mason Field (Kirk's Bay) Farndon