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**Croft Castle Estate:
An Archaeological Survey
2001-2**

Herefordshire Archaeology Report No 49.

Report prepared by
Keith Ray and Tim Hoverd

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Croft Castle Estate: An Archaeological Survey 2001-2

Herefordshire Archaeology Report No.49, Keith Ray and Tim Hoverd,
June 2003.

Summary:

This report describes the conduct and findings of an archaeological survey of the Croft Castle Estate north of Leominster in February 2001 and in the period February to March 2002 at the invitation of and in partnership with The National Trust. During that period, a total of 454 record entries were created for sites and features of archaeological significance that exist within the now 720ha of the Croft Estate. These sites range in date from the later prehistoric period (earthwork settlement sites and field systems) through to the structures associated with the more recent use of the mansion, and some specific events during the twentieth century. Besides documenting these features, the aim of the survey was to provide a basis for better management of the historic estate represented by these cultural assets.

Among the more important sites surveyed were the complex Iron Age hillfort at Croft Ambrey, and the remains of historic formal gardens in close proximity to Croft Castle itself. Besides the relict prehistoric farmed landscape traced at various places within the property, several enclosed settlements were noted as surviving earthworks. Other traces of former settlement located in the survey included the deserted medieval village by Croft Church, possible transhumance platforms in two of the steeply downcut valleys, and the remains of former common-edge farmsteads at Bircher Common. Extensive evidence for the development both of the formal gardens near the mansion, and of parkland and ornamental features elsewhere was recorded.

The Report includes an extensive commentary on the 'headline' results of the survey, and a detailed Inventory of sites and features noted. Besides making an assessment of overall site significance, the Report also provides suggestions and options for management of this nationally important archaeological resource.

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**Croft Castle Estate:
An Archaeological Survey 2001-2
Herefordshire Archaeology Report No.49**
Keith Ray and Tim Hoverd, Herefordshire Archaeology, June 2003.

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INTRODUCTION

The 2001-2 survey and report in context

The Croft Castle Estate is a National Trust property that has been in its ownership since 1957. The archaeology of the Croft Estate is famed beyond Herefordshire for the complex and prominent Iron Age hillfort of Croft Ambrey, that occupies the highest ground locally, on a bluff that rises to 1005' (308m) above sea level. John Aubrey was the first historian or antiquary to describe Croft Ambrey in print, in his *Monumenta Britannica* (unpublished MS c.1690). The fort is still famed both for the complexity of its field remains, and for the extensive and fully published investigations of Dr. S. Stanford in the 1960s (Stanford, 1974).

More locally, the Croft Castle Estate is known for its fine castellated mansion and parkland, but perhaps most of all for its veteran trees including planted rows of fine Spanish Chestnut trees. Special features of the Estate include one of the largest and certainly among the most dramatic of Herefordshire commons, Bircher Common, and the deeply incised Fishpool Valley with its string of small ornamental lakes.

Two previous extensive historical and archaeological surveys have been carried out at Croft. The first was essentially an historical and ecological survey of the parkland undertaken in the 1980s (Fretwell, et al, n.d.- 1987). The second was a whole estate identification survey carried out by staff of the former Hereford and Worcester County Archaeological Service (Dalwood and Waller, 1992). This survey gave some idea of the extent and quality of the field remains across the estate, and for the first time included observations from Bircher Common and adjacent areas.

The Croft Castle Estate archaeological survey of 2001-2002 was carried out as a partnership project between *Herefordshire Archaeology* and The National Trust. It was designed to provide an extensive record of the features that could be identified and recorded during a survey of relatively short duration. It was also designed to provide management information and suggestions within the framework of management areas delineated at the outset by National Trust countryside staff.

Staff time amounting to twenty-four person days in the field, and at least sixty-two person days in database, archive and report preparation was devoted to the study. The survey was interrupted early in 2001 by the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease. This outbreak affected Herefordshire badly, among several other parts of Britain. The survey was therefore put on hold, and was then continued through to completion in the field early in 2002. Both Keith Ray and Tim Hoverd were responsible for survey recording (see survey narrative, below). The database was compiled and the present Report produced, between October 2002 and June 2003. Keith Ray drafted the main text of the Report, and Tim Hoverd compiled the Site Inventory. Paul White assisted Tim Hoverd in the preparation of the included illustrations.

This Report brings to a close the first element of a planned three part archaeological study of the Croft Estate. The first element has comprised the Estate Survey. This followed upon initial reconnaissance work on Bircher Common and in the close environs of the mansion, preparatory to a series of historic landscape walks requested by the National Trust House Manager, David Atkins, in 1999. The second element is a project involving both survey and site investigations, aimed at improving an understanding of the sequence of development of settlement and structures in the immediate vicinity of the mansion. The third element is a planned project to re-investigate Croft Ambrey hillfort and examine aspects of its local late prehistoric landscape.

Aims and objectives of the survey and report

A Project Design for the archaeological survey of the Croft Castle Estate was prepared for Caroline Thackray, National Trust Archaeological Adviser, in January 2001. This five-page document prepared by Keith Ray set out the background, purpose, methodology, and component survey elements of the proposed project. It outlined the then proposed format for the Project Report, and specified the likely content of each of six sections, or chapters. The Project Design also specified the proposed programme (only fourteen person-days were then regarded as needed), and set out the terms of costings and partnership. It identified next steps to be taken to action the survey, and described the intended form of the archive and publication.

Although it was not set out in exactly these terms in the Project Design, the aims of the survey were to:

- Provide an up to date appraisal of the nature and disposition of features of archaeological significance across the National Trust property.
- Assess the significance of these features, and provide guidance on their future management.
- Report on these features and their management in a way that is both comprehensive and accessible, relating the account of the survey to coherent and agreed management areas.
- Review the findings of two previous surveys, and in particular the whole estate survey undertaken in 1992, and augment their account and site entries.

A series of more specific objectives defined for the survey in further discussion primarily concerned organisation and implementation. They included to:

- Devise a recording system for logging results in the field
- Agree the allocation of survey site or feature numbers in common between The National Trust and Herefordshire county Sites and Monuments Records
- Further develop the use of Global Positioning by Satellite for archaeological survey in areas of woodland, common and parkland.
- Conduct the survey in a systematic manner from east to west across the Estate, organising the recording and documentation in reference to a series of management areas.

The survey Report was to:

- Make a full summary of the archaeology of the Estate, and an assessment of its significance, in light of the survey;
- Organise archaeological information and management recommendations in the report according to the areas defined for estate management purposes

The Report would then be used, together with other relevant (for example, historic buildings) studies, to assist the development of a framework for future management of the historic assets.

BACKGROUND

The Croft Castle Estate

Area and location:

The Croft Castle Estate (hereafter, for simplicity's sake, 'Croft Estate') covers around 720ha. It is located four miles (7km) north-west of Leominster. The present property extends across 5km of the upper slopes of a south-facing hillside, from Bircher Coppice in the east to the River Lugg at Aymestrey in the west. Within its bounds, the estate includes areas of woodland, modern plantation forestry, heathland and grazed commons, arable, pasture and parkland spread. From all these slopes there are wide views over the lands of north Herefordshire through which the rivers Lugg and Arrow flow and form their confluence.

The Croft Estate currently straddles the civil parishes of Aymestrey, Lucton, and Croft with Yarpole. Parts of Ladyacre Plantation on Yatton Hill lie within the Yatton area of Aymestrey parish. The massive Iron Age hillfort of Croft Ambrey currently stands within Aymestrey parish, but previously this area formed part of Leinthall Common within the parish of Leinthall Earls. Apart from these areas within Aymestrey parish, all of the western part of the property lies within Lucton parish. The historical Croft parish was a compact area located to the north-east of Lucton, and mostly comprised lands to the west of Fishpool Valley. Yarpole parish took in Bircher township and Bircher Common.

Both that part of the historical Croft parish and of the historical Croft Estate that lay to the south of the Mortimer's Cross to Ludlow road (the B4362) is excluded from the present-day Croft Estate. The southern boundary to the National Trust estate of Croft Castle is therefore historically both artificial and arbitrary.

Tenure and tenancy:

The Croft Estate was transferred into the keeping of The National Trust in 1957. This was the result of a settlement that involved the purchase of the house and grounds by the Government, the raising of an endowment fund by the Croft family and also a public appeal (Uhlmann, 1979, 12). Members of the Croft family retain some rights of residence.

Further complications arise due to the ambiguous status of Bircher Common. This is land that lay historically at various times within the Croft Estate lands, but that has extensive commoners rights shared chiefly among residents of the Bircher Common settlement. The origins of this land both as assarts and as commons are obscure. 'The assart of Birchour' is mentioned in a lease issued by Abbot Simon of Reading to 'Richard de Crofte' c.1220, but it is by no means certain that this assart can be identified as Bircher Common (*contra* Croft, 1949, 15). It is not impossible that the rights conferred upon the Bircher Common settlers were conveyed to them in part as compensation for their removal from the historical Croft village, but as yet this cannot be proven (see below, p. 10; p.31).

Geology and soils:

The solid geology comprises limestones and siltstones of the Silurian series (Earp and Hains, 1971). There are localised colluvial deposits in the dry combes and stream-fed valleys. The bedding planes of the often highly friable rock are evident in the numerous quarries existing on the property and recorded in this survey. The soils are of the coarse silts of the Munslow Association (Ragg et al, 1984). Excavations in the vicinity of Croft Castle in 2001 and 2002 demonstrated both the thinness of soil cover over bedrock in many locations, and the gleyed nature of some of the colluvial deposits in the valleys.

Topography:

Much of the northern boundary of the Croft Estate comprises the crest of a high limestone ridge, and this is the most prominent topographical feature of the property. Most of the lands of the Estate are themselves located on the south facing slopes south of this ridge. The topography of this ridge is complex, since its crest slopes upwards, eastwards from the defile through which the river Lugg flows at Aymestrey. The crest of the ridge is bounded to the north by a simple if precipitous scarp where it forms the northern boundary of Croft Wood. Along this course the ridge is oriented south-west to north-east.

The crest of the ridge then becomes broader, and it extends northwards to form a prominent north-facing spur at the highest point of the property. It is on the northern summit of this spur that the Iron Age hillfort of Croft Ambrey is located. The ridge then continues on its west-east alignment, still with a precipitous north-facing scarp, now overlooking Gatley Park. The boundary of the property then follows the watershed eastwards from Whiteway Head, and then descends a valley that runs south-eastwards towards Orleton.

Three further southwards draining valleys lie within the south-facing sloping estate lands. Most prominent is Fishpool Valley, which bisects the property and divides the lands around the mansion and its parkland from Bircher Common. Southwards from the ridge defining the northern limits of the property, and just to the west of the Croft Castle mansion, there is a now dry valley oriented east-west until it reaches a point south of the mansion. From this point it swings southwards down towards the Mortimer's Cross- Orleton road (which it continues also southwards from, towards Yarpole).

Outline history:

The name Croft is Old English meaning 'the enclosure' (Eckwall, 1960, 131). Aubrey's *Monumenta Britannica* (c1690) was a largely haphazard compilation of antiquarian notes, but we know that he visited Herefordshire on several occasions, since he owned land in the county. His comment that: "At Crofts-parke is a large Campe with two great Ditches, called the Ambry: from whence (there) is a lovely Prospect" is no doubt based on first-hand observation, since he is known to have sold his estate at Stretford to Bishop Herbert Croft in 1663 (Barber, 1975, 20). As such, Aubrey's mention of the *double* bank and ditch at Croft Ambrey is one of the first published records of an 'archaeological' observation in the county.

In Old English, the word 'Ambrey, Aumbry, or Ambury' refers to a look-out or vantage-point. It is of some potential interest here that Bryant's map of Herefordshire of 1835 (Figure 10) marks the ridge to the *west* of the hillfort as 'Croft Ambry', and the fort itself as 'Croft Ambry Camp'. Be that as it may, it is likely that the name for the parish derives from the fort, despite the latter actually being sited in the adjacent parish. The importance of the commanding location to the incoming Anglo-Saxons is perhaps the reason why, though the neighbouring settlement of Leinthall retains a British place-name component, any pre-English name for Croft has vanished.

The origins of the Croft family are obscure, but it has been suggested (Croft, 1949, 4) that, since the names of the first recorded Crofts (Bernard, Gilbert, Hugh) are Norman, the family itself must have been so. In this case it would have taken the name Croft after the location. Alternatively, it could have been a Saxon lordly family that adopted Norman French first names in order to assimilate itself into the new order.

Croft was rendered 'Crofta' at Domesday, and appears then to have been a relatively small settlement (one plough in lordship, 2 ploughs, and six household heads) in keeping with the compact size of the later parish. Bernard held the land from William of Ecouis, and Edwin was said to have held it in the time of King Edward the Confessor (see Thorn and Thorn, 1983: 14, 5).

Very little is well documented about the medieval Croft family, or its estates. Sir Hugh de Croft was named in the list at the tournament at Dunstable in 1308, and was present at the parliament at York in September 1314 (Croft, 1949, 22). Co-incidentally, the first reference to a property at Croft was the Inquisition Post Mortem for Sir Hugh in 1317/18 (Goodbury, 2000, 6.2). William of Croft was Sheriff of Herefordshire in 1425 (Croft, 1949, 36). Sir Richard Croft was Sheriff in 1470-1, 1476 and 1485, and in the latter year (1485) was also Receiver in the King's household (ibid, 40). The family was closely allied both to the Mortimers of Wigmore and Ludlow and to the house of York. Croft Castle is first mentioned as such among a list of Herefordshire castles in William of Worcester's *Itineraries*, in 1479 (Goodbury, 2000, 6.3).

The most illustrious family head was Sir James Croft, who, among other appointments, was Comptroller of the Queen's Household in 1570 (Croft, 1949, 56). It was during his lifetime, in 1536, that John Leland mentioned seeing the fortified manor at Croft from a distance, from the Luston direction (from the south-east, a mile away). This is presumably the same building as depicted on Saxton's Map of Herefordshire, 1577 (see extract, Figure 18). The Inventory of the property of Sir James Croft produced at the time of his death in 1590 identifies a number of the rooms, again presumably in the building documented in 1536 and 1577. This possessed a hall, a chapel, a gallery, at least one and possibly two gatehouses, and numerous other private apartments (Goodbury, 2000, 2002).

Sir William Croft was a prominent Royalist in the early seventeenth century. He was one of the few of the Herefordshire gentry, and the only head of a major household, to have been killed during the Civil War. He was killed in a skirmish at Stokesay in 1645. His younger brother Herbert Croft became Bishop of Hereford in 1661, having gained a reputation for loyalty to the Royalist cause, for personal bravery and for outspokenness during the years of the Commonwealth.

The Croft family heavily mortgaged the estate in the early years of the eighteenth century. Eventually, the mortgagees came into possession of both mansion and estate. During the remainder of that century, the Knight and Johnes families were in ownership and occupation. This was at the peak of the fashion for Gothick architecture and the Picturesque in landscape. In 1799, Somerset Davies purchased the house, having already acquired significant parts of the estate lands. The Davies and later Kevill-Davies family remained in ownership and mostly in occupation throughout the nineteenth century, eventually selling both in 1923 to Sir James Croft, the 11th Baronet (Goodbury, 2000).

Statutory and non-Statutory constraints:

The principal statutorily defined and protected area of the site from the historic environment standpoint is the Scheduled Ancient Monument, Croft Ambrey hillfort (SAM Herefordshire 76). The area thus protected is extensive, encompassing all the areas within the outer ramparts of the fort, both north and south of the ridge and scarp edge at its highest point. Most operations that might damage or otherwise adversely affect the monument are subject to a requirement for prior Scheduled Monument Consent (Part I, Sections 2 and 3 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological areas Act, 1979) from the relevant Secretary of State.

The mansion and St. Michael's church are Listed (Grade I) as Buildings of Architectural and Historic Interest. The C18th stables block around a courtyard and the Gothick Wall are also Listed (Grade II). These structures are all subject to a requirement for Listed Building Consent (Herefordshire Council) for any works that might affect their special character.

The remaining historic environment designation is the inclusion of Croft Castle in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The park is described as "A landscape park with notable survivals of sweet chestnut plantings of probable C17 date associated with a country house". The Register reference is GD1875. The park is graded II*.

Although not designated as such, most if not all of the hedgerows on the Estate are deemed protected under the Hedgerow Regulations (1997), unless it can be demonstrated that they were not present at the time of the Tithe Award (1839/40). A notification procedure is again in place, and is also administered by Herefordshire Council. The central part of Fishpool Valley is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The designation (in 1984, under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981) is primarily due to the flora and fauna associated with the steep-sided valley, its woodland and pools. Any works affecting the condition or nature of the Site therefore need to be notified to English Nature. The River Lugg was designated as an SSSI in 1995, and small parts of the lower area of Pokeshouse Wood lie within the designated area. In addition, a significant number of the trees on the Croft Estate are protected as veteran or specimen trees via Tree Preservation Orders, administered by Herefordshire Council as the statutory Local Authority.

The non-Statutory constraints also refer to both the historic and natural environment. For the historic environment, the identification of sites or monuments within the county SMR means that they will be regarded as a material consideration in the planning process. In particular, sites classified as Nationally Important but Unscheduled will in planning procedural terms be treated as if Scheduled. There is as yet no formalised list of such sites, but their existence within the Estate is noted in the management section of this report, below. Local Plan Policies affecting Croft were adopted as part of the Leominster District Local Plan adopted by Herefordshire Council on 6th November 1998 (see especially Policy A.11 on 'Parks and Gardens and other Historical Landscape Features', Policy A.22 on 'Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites'). The Unitary Development Plan for Herefordshire (until 2011) is in its consultation stages, and should be adopted by 2006.

The nature of the archaeology of the Croft Estate

The archaeology of the Croft Estate is varied both temporally, and in terms of the forms of monument and feature represented here. It is characterised by a very large number of visible earthwork monuments, but investigations in the environs of the castle have indicated something of the richness also, of the buried archaeological resource.

Croft Ambrey is one of the most complex (and is perhaps *the* most complex) Iron Age fortified enclosure site in the whole of the Welsh Marches. That this is not as well appreciated as it might be stems from the way that its surface field archaeology has been understood within the past forty years (see below).

What is also not widely appreciated about the archaeology of the Croft Estate is the extent of the visible remains specifically of past settlements and field systems. These include substantial traces of no fewer than four earthwork enclosures on Bircher Common, that may be as early as late prehistoric in date. During the survey, the earthwork remains of six isolated farmsteads, two possible transhumance stances, and two hamlets were found, in addition to indications of the site of the tofts of the deserted medieval village near the church at Croft itself. Field system traces take the form of slight squared lynchets, continuous transverse lynchets, and (in different areas) 'fossilised' ridge and furrow demarcating furlongs with associated headlands.

Numerically the majority of the visible field remains comprise former parkland, ornamental or formal garden features (including carriageways of various kinds), woodland management remains, and features relating to estate management. These latter range from artificial rabbit warren structures to brickyards to quarries. Not surprisingly, the field remains also comprise existing and former boundary features, including woodland banks and a single surviving stretch of deer-park pale.

There is a complex 'layering' of many of these elements in the landscape, despite the damage and obliteration caused by the advent of semi-industrialised coniferous planting in the C20th. The superimposed inter-relation of linear features especially has enabled some of the chronological nuances of boundary shifts and land-use changes to be abstracted from the field evidence. A case in point is on the eastern flank of Fishpool Valley, where the relation of carriage rides to industrial quarries facilitates a clear appreciation of the way in which the rides went out of use, and industrial activities superseded them in a location that was in other terms understood as a designed 'wildscape'

Previous and contributory historical and archaeological research

O. G. S. Croft wrote a history of the Croft family (*The House of Croft of Croft Castle*, E.J.Thurston press, Hereford, 1949). This included mention of documentary references to the castle and estate, and notes by George Marshall on Croft Church (pp. 129-35). Elizabeth Inglis-Jones published an account of the ownership and occupation of Croft Castle by the Knight and Johnes families (in *Peacocks in Paradise*, Faber, 1950). Diana Uhlmann (late sister of the late Lord Croft) wrote the current property Guidebook, although it included a description of Croft Ambrey by S. C. Stanford. It was first published in 1979, with subsequent revisions in 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988 and 1990.

Dr. Stanford published privately a report on the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club sponsored research excavations at Croft Ambrey between 1960 and 1966 (Stanford, 1974). Advisory staff of The National Trust reported upon the archaeological and biological conservation issues affecting Croft Ambrey in the mid-1980s (Alexander, Claris and Lutley, 1985).

D.M. Young and K.A. Fretwell published historical research on the castle and estate in a volume that arose from a Manpower Services Commission Community Programme project in the mid-1980s. The report, *Croft Castle Park and Garden Survey, 1986-87* (Fretwell, Knox and Young, n.d., pp.143) encompassed a detailed description of the Estate, and a full botanical survey. It also included an account of 'archaeological features' in the historical chapter, and this account concentrated entirely on the areas of parkland surrounding the mansion. The report also included a full list of the historical source material available at the County Record Office in Hereford (pp. 96-100). Of especial usefulness was the reproduction of extracts (covering the Croft area) from seven historic county maps, and four more local maps, as well as an extract from an earlier edition of the 6" to one mile Ordnance Survey map. These are discussed more fully in terms of their contribution to an understanding of landscape history below.

H. Dalwood and R. Waller produced a draft report on an archaeological survey of the whole Estate, at least as it existed in the early 1990s (Dalwood and Waller, 1992, pp.94). The survey was commissioned by The National Trust to produce specific management recommendations to be incorporated into an overall management plan. The survey was defined as at the level of an identification survey, and involved a search for earthworks through systematic visiting of every land parcel on foot (ibid, p.9).

The *Croft Castle Estate: survey and archaeological management recommendations* draft report that described this survey work noted 188 monuments recorded (p.15). These were listed in a Site Inventory, as an Appendix. The survey recorded the form of three enclosures on Bircher Common that had previously been identified by Ordnance Survey Archaeology Division surveyors. However, it was only in the 1992 survey that the identity of these earthworks as likely late prehistoric farmstead enclosures was first fully recognised.

More recently, National Trust staff have commissioned a series of further studies. These have been undertaken primarily in connection with refurbishment works for the mansion itself that began in 2000 and continued into 2002. They include limited historical research (Goodbury, 2000, 2002) and study of the built fabric both before and during the site works (Morris, 2001). Small-scale archaeological watching briefs have also been carried out in recent years by Worcestershire County Archaeological Service (refurbishment of the Carpenter's Shop as a tea-room) and also by Marches Archaeology (the laying of new water supply cabling for stock troughs in the eastern and western parkland).

Landscape history

The reconstruction of the landscape history of the Croft Estate is of course partly the subject of the archaeological survey work reported herein. However, there are various documentary and cartographic sources that can be drawn upon to develop a picture of the changes that have taken place at least in the relatively recent past.

Map regression

A study of the easily accessible maps of the Estate was included as part of the first landscape study of the Estate noted above (Fretwell, Knox and Young, n.d.). This map sequence was checked as part of the background research for the present report. The sources noted in the Fretwell report were also checked, and new copies of some of the maps were obtained and scanned. Some different editions were located, and scanned (See Figures 4 to 18).

The latest map in the studied sequence (Figure 4, below) is an extract from the Second Edition of the 1:10,560 (6-inch) scale map produced by the Ordnance Survey. This is most important for the continuities and changes in land-use that it highlights. For example, most of what is now Croft Wood, across the entire flank of the hill south of Croft Ambrey, was wood pasture. In addition it shows clearly that even as late as this, only the northern half of what is now Bircher Coppice was tree-covered.

The next latest map (Fretwell et al, 128; Figure 5, below) is an abstract from Jakeman and Carver's *Directory of Herefordshire* (1902). The scale is approximately four miles to the inch. It is interesting primarily for its rendering of the earthworks of Croft Ambrey, and for the name 'Deadwall' placed in the area of the south drive south of the Mortimer's Cross to Orleton road. However, it also provides a 'maximal' definition of the extent of the Croft Estate parkland, that takes in both Croft Ambrey as well as the 'new' parkland southwards to the Mortimer's Cross to Orleton road.

The next latest is another abstract (Fretwell et al, 129; Figure 6) from one of the map sheets of the First Edition of the Ordnance Survey 6" to the mile (1:10,560) series (1883). This is useful for a number of subtle but important differences in mapping from the Second Edition map discussed above. So, for instance, it indicates very clearly the plantation status of Oaker Coppice, Highwood Bank and School Wood, Lucton at this time. It also indicates clearly the survival of parkland and wood-pasture trees within areas that had been taken in as pasture.

The abstract from *The British Gazetteer* of 1852 (Fretwell et al, 128; Figure 7) may have been based upon earlier maps, without reference to later mapping. This is because it indicates as bounded areas 'Croft Ambrey and Park' and 'The Paddock' which appear on eighteenth century maps, but not those of the first half of the nineteenth (see below).

The Tithe Map for Croft parish (1839; Fretwell et al, 123; Figure 8. Gwatkin version, Figure 9) is fascinating for the detail it provides about the existing pattern of planted trees, and the layout of major tracks. It gives intriguing place-name information, such as the name 'The Whyberry' for the field adjacent to the Cock Gate entrance, and 'Walwen Field' to the south

of the then west drive, adjacent to the parish boundary with Lucton. In the same area, field names such as 'Upper Paddock' and 'Quarry Paddock' are useful indicators of the extent of a feature shown at a much larger scale on early county maps (see below).

Other names point to features that could remain as archaeological sites. An example is 'Fold Park' to the north-east of the Gothick wall, the southern limit of which is today (as it was then) represented by the surviving stretch of the deer-park boundary. Another example is the name given to an enclosure apparently taken out of the wood pasture to the south-east of Croft Ambrey and known in 1839 as 'Dog Pit Piece' or 'Dog Pit Plain'. Sadly, the extent of afforestation in this area may mean that the likely baiting pit here is now lost or filled in (although a more intensive search for it might produce a candidate location or two). The reference to 'Warren Hill' is interesting both for the apparent absence of pillow-mounds in this area, and in reference to the possible existence of such mounds within Fold Park nearby.

Two fields outside the present property boundary, to the south of the Mortimer's Cross-Orleton road are annotated as 'Part of Old Park', while another is termed 'Park Meadow'. These names possibly retain the distant memory of a yet earlier park in this area, possibly the (detached) medieval park. This may also be reflected in the place-name 'Deadwall' in this area (see below, p.34-5).

The Tithe Maps for Aymestrey, Lucton and Yarpole were not reproduced for the Fretwell et al study. However, each of these has interesting light to throw on the landscape of the Croft estate almost two centuries ago. For instance, the Lucton map of 1840 indicates the large number of smallholdings that once lined School Lane, Lucton, and shows also something of the former extent of Lucton Common, now absorbed within School Wood.

The abstract from Bryant's (approx. 1:30,000) map of Herefordshire of 1835 (Fretwell et al, 127; Figure 10) identifies the parkland area east of the mansion as 'New Park'. This is of interest because fields recorded on the Tithe Map here are described as 'Upper East Park' and 'Lower East Park'. The subdivision of the parkland into fields presumably dates therefore to the 1830s. The name of Bircher Common is rendered on this map as 'Bircher Highwood Common', and that of Fishpool Valley as 'Fishpool Dingle'.

The Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 First Edition map of 1832 (Figure 11) is especially useful for display of the network of roads and carriage-ways. It shows the bridge over Lucton Lane, and nearby, the existence of a long-vanished Keeper's Cottage. Its depiction of road across Bircher Common passing between Oaker Coppice and Bircher Coppice helps explain the complexity of linear embanked features and the re-cutting of hollows in that area.

A plan at scale 1:1600 produced to accompany a Highway Alteration Application in 1825 (Fretwell et al, 122; HRO Q/SRL/1825; Figure 12) is most useful for the light it casts upon a crucial episode in the history of the near environs of the mansion. This was when the Gothick Wall and related features were created, and the Home Farm appears to have been moved to its present site. The fact that the map was produced to support an intention to place the road from Leominster towards Wigmore via Yatton outside the Gothick Wall, suggests that the latter had only recently been built.

The next earliest map is the earliest known detailed map of the estate, but is unfortunately undated. This is 'A Map of the Croft Castle Demesne' at a scale of 1:3800 (redrawn in Fretwell et al, 121; HRO 098/LC/5506; the original map is reproduced here as Figure 13). This was apparently drawn up at the time that Somerset Davies was in residence between 1787 and 1817, and perhaps at around the time that he purchased the property in 1799 (Fretwell et al, 103). Hereford Record Office staff identified this map in the mid-1980s as possibly dating to 1798/99 (ibid, 99).

This estate map is most important for the light it throws upon the configuration of boundaries and buildings before the changes of the early nineteenth century that saw the creation of the Gothick Wall enclosing the new site of the home farm, and of the bastioned terrace around the mansion itself. It shows very clearly the newly created flight of eight fishponds in Fishpool Valley, and marks the position of a limekiln and conduit above these pools. More important still, it indicates the exact extent of the deer-park boundary as then existing, and labels this area as 'Park'. The 'New Park', although not indicated as such, is shown as featuring parkland planting. The formal elements of the parkland landscape are marked only vaguely, with the exception of a double avenue leading south from the former formal gardens.

A series of maps of Herefordshire dating to the late C18th provide very simplified plans of the Estate. Harrison's map of 1789 (Figure 14) for instance registers little more than the mere existence of Croft Park with its paling present. Meanwhile, versions in 1801 and 1793 of John Cary's map of 1787 (Fretwell et al, 126; Figure 15: 1793 version) show 'Croft Ambrey and Park' to the north of the mansion and add in an elongated oval or (in the 1801 version, apparently copied from Taylor, see below) D-shaped enclosure titled 'The Paddock' to the west of the mansion.

Emmanuel Bowen's map of Herefordshire (Figure 16: 1775 version of 1762 original; Fretwell et al, 125) meanwhile adds little to what had already been illustrated in the more detailed Isaac Taylor map of 1754 (Figure 17: Fretwell et al, 125). The latter shows the relation between deer-park and 'Paddock' just as clearly as does the 1799 'Demesne map', with the paddock attached to the southern limit of the park, west of the mansion. However, all four of these C18th maps show 'The Paddock' attached to the park in this way.

Finally, the two earliest known maps of Herefordshire are pictorial. The first of these, dated 1610 and produced by John Speed appears to be a straightforward copy of an earlier map. This latter is Saxton's map of the county, of 1577 (Figure 18). This features a schematic representation of a castle at Croft in line, for instance, with those shown also at Stapleton and at Brampton Bryan. Moreover, it specifically labels this pictogram 'Croft cast', and can therefore reasonably be taken as further evidence for the existence of the medieval structure that in 1536 Leland described (albeit briefly) in words, as walled and ditched.

Historic depictions

There are very few known historic depictions of the Croft Estate before the widespread practice of photography. A project could usefully be put together, using volunteer assistance, that sought (with the help also of the Croft family and others), to compile an archive precisely of both photographs and early depictions, that could be studied to follow up leads established through the present survey.

A few depictions have informed the current survey and programme of site investigations at Croft Castle. One of the most useful is the aquatint depicting the view from the south side of the pool below the mansion, up to the south front c.1790. This illustration appeared (among others of Croft environs) in J. Baker's *Picturesque Guide to Wales and the Marches*. Attribution of this work is contradictory, since in one publication (Uhlmann 1979/2000) it is described as by 'J. Ross delin et sculp', while in another it is attributed to John Bluck (Fretwell et al, n.d., 138). It is reproduced as the frontispiece to the property guidebook.

Another useful illustration that has been consulted is an unsigned drawing of 1826 in the possession of Mrs Caroline Compton (Mrs Uhlmann's daughter) showing the western elevation of the castle. A further pair of illustrations has been located among sketches in a book of around the same date on the techniques of drawing. These depict views of the east drive and of Fishpool Valley, respectively (Goodbury, pers comm).

Photographs

A considerable number of photographs are known to exist from the early years of the twentieth century. Two of these are reproduced in the property guidebook, and depict the South and the East Fronts of the mansion respectively sometime before 1913. That showing the South Front is particularly useful, since it shows the west drive still in use. Four further photographs, of the gardens and drives, were reproduced for the parkland report of the 1980s (Fretwell et al, n.d., 141, 142, and 143). An undated and un-attributed oblique aerial photograph hanging in the house was shown by Diana Uhlmann to successive survey teams when she was alive. The photograph shows a dark ring marking a circular ditched feature of large diameter, which is too large for the ditch around a prehistoric circular burial mound. It is perhaps best interpreted as the location of a ditched tree clump, but just conceivably the mark could represent a ditch around an earthwork castle mound. The location was inspected as part of the present study, but on the ground no features were visible.

SURVEY NARRATIVE

The 2001 season

The survey was begun early in February 2001. Initial reconnaissance and recording took place in Bircher Coppice, along the extreme eastern boundary area of the Estate. It soon became evident that significant areas here had not been traversed in the 1992 survey. The survey then proceeded across Bircher Common, and in Oaker Coppice. Since the survey areas had been defined for management purposes, the paradox was encountered that the best-preserved sites belonging to the historic Coppice lay within an area grazed now as part of the Common.

The survey of the Common produced further paradoxes. A systematic series of straight linear hollows soon resolved themselves interpretatively as having resulted from wartime ploughing attested from oral testimony locally (Bircher Common graziers). The same source identified some linear banks near to the south-western corner of the Common as mounds remaining over the burial pits of animals slaughtered during the 1967 Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak (ironically, this information was received less than a week before the 2001 outbreak). These features appear to have been interpreted in 1992 as elements of a prehistoric field system.

A further likely enclosure in addition to the three identified previously on the Common was then noted during the 2001 season. A prominent lynchet running obliquely across the whole slope of the hill between Oaker Coppice and Highwood Bank to the west could be interpreted as an early field lynchet. However, it is now thought to be a geological feature. Certainly, it is different in orientation and character from those field lynchets demonstrably attaching to or associated with two of the four settlement enclosures. The most surprising discovery, however, was the extent of earthwork remains of various kinds lying within the bracken areas on the Common, and hitherto unreported. They included former woodland boundary banks, considerable numbers of saw-pits, and several earthen bank structures representing farmstead buildings, barns and folds. Time did not permit the kind of intensive search that would have identified every feature that may exist in these extensive areas, since both bracken and in places gorse cover was quite dense. However, since none of these features were recorded in the 1992 survey, it was adduced that these areas were also not searched then.

The last days of the 2001 survey season involved identification and rapid recording of sites at Highbank Wood, Lyngham Vallet, and Croft Wood. Some reconnaissance work extended to Croft Ambrey and Fishpool Valley, as well as the further parkland environs of Croft Castle itself, before the survey was halted at the end of the penultimate week of February 2001.

The 2002 season

The survey re-commenced in February 2002. Recording work began at Croft Ambrey hillfort, and by this time it had been realised that field time could be saved by use of a portable dictaphone followed by office-based transcription. Reconnaissance work then took place across the whole remaining area for survey, and this included discovery of two major complexes of brickfield in woodland that had not previously been located. The survey areas included the newly acquired land at The Moors. Detailed survey recording then subsequently took place in these areas. (The dates shown on the survey entries of the detailed Site Inventory reflect the record date). Survey and recording then took place in all remaining parts of the western areas of the estate. Work on the transcriptions took place in the summer of 2002, and work on the database began in September. All further database, report drafting and illustrations work (including historic map sourcing) took place from November 2002.

SURVEY RESULTS

Introduction: survey areas and record numbering

The definition of the survey areas

The primary aim of the survey was to make available information regarding archaeologically significant archaeological sites and features specifically to assist good management of the historic estate. It was therefore decided before the survey began, to list and describe the sites, and to advise on management options, in reference to a series of areas under distinct management regimes. David Hughes (in 2001-2 the Countryside Manager for the Estate) therefore first defined six primary management areas, defined according to land-uses and tenure, and these were outlined in colour on a base-map (Memo to Keith Ray, dated 18/01/01). Using these boundaries, ten survey areas were then specified, that differentiated Pokeshouse Wood, the close environs of the Castle, Oaker Coppice and Bircher Coppice. In 2002, an eleventh area was added following agreement to purchase 'The Moors' at Lucton.

Survey area location and management

A	Bircher Coppice	North-east area	Forest Enterprise management
B	Bircher Common	Eastern area	Common grazing
C	Oaker Coppice	Eastern area	Forest Enterprise management
D	Croft Wood	North-central area	Forest Enterprise management
E	Croft Ambrey	North-central area	SAM; Tenanted
F	Fishpool Valley	Central area	SSSI
G	House parkland	Central area	Tenanted
GA	House environs	Central area	Tenanted; visitor facilities
H	School Wood	Western area	National Trust management
I	Pokeshouse Wood	Western area	National Trust management
J	The Moors	Western area	Under transfer in 2002

The landscape and vegetation characteristics of the survey areas

A	Bircher Coppice	An area mostly planted with conifer, with modern access ways. More lightly wooded areas contain birch and oak.
B	Bircher Common	The upper areas of the common comprise rough grazed grasslands that extend entirely around Oaker Coppice. To the south and south-east of Oaker Coppice there are extensive bracken areas that descend to the limits of the property.
C	Oaker Coppice	An area wholly planted with conifer, with modern access ways. At the time of the survey, significant areas had been clear-felled and featured haphazard regrowth.

D	Croft Wood	This area takes in Highwood Bank (topographically a westwards extension of Bircher Common, east of Fishpool Valley), Lyngham Vallet and Lady Wood (on ground rising to the main ridge north of the main cleft of Fishpool Valley), and Croft Wood and Ladyacre Plantation (on the upper slopes below the main ridge, north-west of Fishpool Valley). The area is almost entirely planted with conifer, often in extremely dense stands.
E	Croft Ambrey	The area comprises mixed deciduous woodland, and areas of lightly managed former wood-pasture that include several impressive veteran oaks. The southern slopes of the fort in particular possess extensive areas of bracken and grassland.
F	Fishpool Valley	Extensive areas of the valley are characterised by mature mixed deciduous woodland. There are some areas of conifer and ornamental trees. Patches of lighter woodland cover exist, containing veteran oaks and remnants of wood-pasture.
G	House parkland	The parkland area comprises much of the land north of the Mortimer's Cross- Orleton road that was once part of the C18th landscape park. The area is today either arable fields or (mostly improved) rough pasture.
GA	House environs	This was the area noted as 'Pleasure Grounds' on some early maps. It is bounded by the ha-ha and comprises the area immediately surrounding the mansion.
H	School Wood	This woodland area is almost entirely conifer plantation. It covers the former Lucton Common to the north, and extends down to the Mortimer's Cross-Orleton road.
I	Pokehouse Wood	Conifer plantation covers the steep slopes down to the Lugg. The woodland marks the western boundary to the Estate.
J	The Moors	This area is a mix of pasture and woodland to the north-east of the south-west lodge former entrance to the Estate. It lies to the west of Lucton Lane.

Sites and Monuments Record Number references

SMR Primary Record Numbers are the primary reference to site inventory numbers, noted below. The Herefordshire county SMR number prefix is 'HSM'. The National Trust SMR number prefix is 'NTSMR'. *Please note that the former (HSM) is used as short-hand throughout this report.*

The record entries

It should not be assumed that all 454 SMR numbers that appear in this Report and its accompanying databases represent 'sites', or even individual landscape features. The Inventory captures, rather, 'points of observation' that often refer to such discrete entities (such as 'Saw pit'), but they may also refer to individual points on such features, or locations that contain more than one such entity. Which is the case in each instance should be clear from the full record entry in the detailed Inventory in Volume 2.

Area A – Bircher Coppice

The recorded sites are listed in full in the Site Inventory in Volume 2 of this Report, wherein Figure 35 marks their location. Besides a number of charcoal burning platforms (hereafter, CBPs), the most significant features located were a series of trackways, a probable deserted farmstead site (HSM/NTSMR 76014 – Note: this is the ‘full’ reference, but henceforward in this report, the prefix ‘HSM’ is used as shorthand), and a putative late military site (HSM 76025).

Of particular interest is the disposition of charcoal burning platforms (hereafter CBPs) within the present-day Coppice. These appear to cluster in the southern area of the plantation, and beyond the southern margin of the wood as shown for instance on Bryant’s map of 1835 and the Tithe Map of 1839. The pattern of woodland boundary banks on that part of Bircher Common immediately adjacent to the Coppice is of interest here, because it hints at a western limit to a former wooded area well to the west of the present boundary, across the deeply downcut stream. The former wood banks on the north-eastern part of the Common adjacent to the Coppice at the top of the hill likewise indicate some changes in the wooded area from a maximum extent well beyond the 1835 limits.

The deserted farmstead site, if such it is, could represent simply the furthest north in this part of the estate, of the post-medieval common-edge settlements noted within the bracken areas along the southern margins of Bircher Common (see below). However, with a levelled area and a rectangular building stance adjacent, it more closely resembles the putative deserted medieval settlement at Cock Gate (but at this Bircher Coppice site without traces of ridge and furrow close by).

The ‘late military site’ comprises a substantial earthwork close to the southern boundary of the wood. It comprises a central deep hollow surrounded by very substantial earth banks in a rough horseshoe shape with an apparent entrance into the hollow facing west. Its purpose is unknown, but it has more the appearance of a bunker than a former quarry or delve.

Area B – Bircher Common

The recorded sites are listed in full in the Site Inventory in Volume 2 of this Report, wherein Figure 36 marks their location.

In the area of the Common within the head of Fishpool Valley south of Causeway Head, the most significant discovery was of a roughly square small earthen platform (HSM 76089). This was possibly the site of a shepherd’s hut used for upland summer grazing. Some prominent former woodland boundary banks are located in the area north of Bircher Coppice, on the north-facing slope north-west of the Coppice. The crest of the hill north of Oaker Coppice now comprising rough grassland has been affected by former ploughing and contains no significant archaeological features.

The south facing slopes of the Common west and south of Oaker Coppice comprise grassland above the line now dominated by bracken growth. This area is crossed both down and along the slope by deep scars from 1939-45 wartime ploughing, and this has damaged archaeological features here also. These damaged features include a former settlement site (HSM 76042; Figures 23 and 24). This is a presumed early farmstead defined by earthen banks (now very spread) forming a sub-rectangular enclosure, and these banks are in turn surrounded by a now shallow ditch. What appear to be two associated field enclosures extend successively to the south-west (HSM 76067 and 76069), and their south-western angles are marked by subtle lynchets.

In general in the Bircher Common grassland, sites are better preserved where they lie on the margins of the grassed area. This is the case with a second elongated sub-rectangular settlement enclosure (HSM 76064; although this could be medieval in date). This stands also partly within Highwood Bank. A prominent bank with an external ditch provides the main enclosing element, and there are traces of a further line of bank and ditch beyond this, to the south and west. The earthworks are sufficiently well preserved to feature definable levelled areas in the interior (HSM 76065).

Another, more fragmentary, enclosure lies to the south-east of Oaker Coppice, and partly within it. A curving bank (HSM 76090) forms the western and southern sides of this enclosure, but its eastern and northern sides are less well defined. Shallow circular hollows (HSM 76100-2) north of the curving bank may represent the sites of domestic structures.

The unfenced former inner margins of Oaker Coppice form a de facto extension of the Common grassland into an area that was until recently definable as woodland within Oaker Coppice. Given the intensity of coniferous planting and replanting within the modern Coppice boundary, the southern loop of these margins in particular provides a zone with unusually good continued preservation of archaeological features. Besides the coppice woodland boundary bank itself, there are the hollows of former meandering trackways, and several extremely well-preserved charcoal burning platforms.

There are extensive bracken areas on the Common, both south and east of Oaker Coppice. A fourth settlement enclosure (HSM 76040) that is well-preserved within one of these areas of bracken, lies also within a former curving woodland or coppice boundary (HSM 76098) overlooking a stream to the east, near the present western boundary of Bircher Coppice. This enclosure also features circular hollows in its interior and also appears to have fields (the southern boundaries of which are marked by lynchets) attached to it to the west. The plan shape and form of these enclosures, the presence of (sometimes circular) platforms within them, and their association with former fields all point to the likelihood that they are attributable to the Iron Age or Romano-British periods.

On the lower slopes within the bracken, and to the south of Oaker Coppice, there are several localised complexes of earthworks that mark the enclosed yards, barns and houses of deserted farmsteads. One of the best preserved of these complexes comprises a series of attached enclosures, one of which features the remains of garden horticulture in the form of fossilised lazy beds (HSM 76063). Around these complexes there are the sites of numerous saw-pits, several of which were recorded in the survey. The enclosures are similar to the farmstead intakes from the Common that still contain homesteads today, and it seems most likely that these represent post-medieval settlement here that was more extensive than today.

A deeply incised stream course along the southern margins of Bircher Coppice, exists within the bracken area, and besides quarries, very small platforms were noted in this area. These again could mark the sites of huts used for upland summer grazing to accommodate shepherds (HSM 76081-2).

Finally, there are several unfenced pasture areas on the southern margins of the Common, among enclosures containing continuing common-side farmsteads. Such areas featured ponds and quarries, and areas of disturbed ground arising from relatively recent settlement-related groundworks.

Area C – Oaker Coppice

The recorded sites are listed in full in the Site Inventory in Volume 2 of this Report. Figure 37 marks their location within this defined management area. The sites listed are those that are at present located within the Forest Enterprise fencing. It is important to appreciate, however, that the area concerned is therefore defined by the modern forestry fence, and as such has an artificial boundary with respect to the historic coppice. A significant area for the survival of historic features pertaining to Oaker Coppice is, in management terms, part of Bircher Common, as noted above.

The course of various trackways, and the sites of some charcoal burning platforms were the principal sites identified as being of archaeological importance within the survey. The extent of damage to such structures through the present management arrangements is such that, apart from survival of parts of former trackways in non-planted areas such as some access routes, the remaining importance of such sites is small. A single major exception is an area in the south-eastern sector of the Coppice, where there exists a complex of earthworks relating to the fourth Bircher Common early enclosure.

Area D – Croft Wood

The recorded sites are listed in full in the Site Inventory in Volume 2 of this Report. Figure 38 marks their location within this defined area. The Figure accompanying this account contains number annotations that show different areas of the woodland referred to in the text.

In the area of Highwood Bank, to the east of Fishpool Valley, and to the south of Causeway Head, very few features survive due to the intensity of coniferous planting. The extreme south-western area does however comprise relatively long-standing beech woodland, and here on the slopes above Fishpool Valley there is a narrow 'belt' of very good preservation. Not only early delves (HSM 76121) and C19th stone quarries (HSM 76115), but also terraced former carriage-rides (HSM 76116, 76122) and charcoal-burning platforms (for instance, HSM 76118) were recorded here. In the extreme south-eastern corner of the wooded area, the western side of the earthwork enclosure (HSM/NTSMR 76064) located at the western edge of Bircher Coppice is well-preserved despite the close presence of coniferous plantation that has removed all traces of other features.

A further area of woodland to the north of Fishpool Valley, and west of Causeway Head includes Lyngham Vallets, and an area once termed Ladywood Bank. In the north-western sector of this area where the parish boundary between Croft and Leinthall crosses to the east of Croft Ambrey were recorded west-facing lynchets (HSM 76128, 76129) and other features surviving in dense coniferous plantation. The lynchets appeared to be cut by a hollow way aligned along the course of the parish boundary

The remainder of this area comprises the northern and western areas of Croft Wood, to the north and west of Fishpool Valley. This area extends to the west as far as School Wood, Lucton, and includes the former Ladyacre Plantation. At a point where two carriage drives meet (near the edge of steep slopes overlooking Fishpool Valley from the north), a complex of earthworks was noted that was interpreted as an abandoned farmstead or as the site of former estate buildings. The interest of this complex was in part due to its stratigraphic superposition over a former junction between two carriage-rides. No significant remains were traced in any other part of Croft Wood.

Area E – Croft Ambrey

The recorded sites are listed in full in the Site Inventory in Volume 2 of this Report wherein Figure 39 marks their location (NB Figures 17, 19 and 28 of this Volume of the Report show interpretative plots of Croft Ambrey features, by inferred period).

The archaeological survey of Croft Ambrey carried out as part of the Croft Estate Survey in 2001-2 has involved a radical rethinking both of the form and the development of the site, and deserves to be the subject of a separate report (Ray, forthcoming). It should be noted that in the 1992 survey apparently no attempt was made to record individual features of the hillfort, and only features that could be recorded as likely to have been later in date - that is, as medieval or post-medieval artificial rabbit warrens - were separately recorded.

What follows is simply a provisional summary of the findings of the 2001-2 survey. In terms of headlines, these results can be taken as indicating that:

- The earliest traceable form of the hillfort is as a univallate enclosure of extended D-shape in plan (HSM 76147), with the 'flat' side being the western line of the circuit. Only one length of the bank and ditch of this enclosure is now visible (HSM 76162), and this is isolated as a relict feature between the inner and outer later multivallate bank and ditch circuits. This early bank extends all the way between the two multivallate circuits, and has a ditch only to the west. The ditch was clearly formerly a substantial feature, and the small counterscarp bank of the outer ditch of the 'main' enclosure is clearly placed over its northwards extremity. Its course northwards and inside the later inner enclosure was picked up in Stanford's excavations. In both Stanford's survey and the 1992 survey, this sole surviving visible length of early defences was nonetheless wrongly identified as a pillow-mound. From this earliest phase onwards, it is now moreover clear that the north-facing slopes were an integral part of the area enclosed within the ramparts (*pace*, RCHME, 1934; *contra* Stanford, 1974).
- The hillfort was developed in at least one but most likely in at least two further stages. Firstly, for much of its course the perimeter appears to have been strengthened by a further (second) bank and ditch. To the west, two new arcs of bank and ditch extended the fort in a bow-shape. Secondly, a new and massive arc of multivallate defences appears to have been inserted across the centre of the enclosure from east to west, and facing southwards. This was regarded by Stanford as continuing to define the southern perimeter of the 'main enclosure', but more strongly than hitherto. We in contrast would maintain that such a view confuses the real sequence of development, denying the primacy of enclosure of the lower southern slopes, and relegating this lower area to the status of an 'annexe'.
- The whole of the north-facing slope within a clearly discernible double bank and ditch (the presence of which was denied by Stanford) comprises a complex series of quarried terraces sometimes linked by narrow terraced paths (HSM 76190 to 76214). These terraces were presumably created as stances for buildings, and their associated outdoor living areas. This is consonant with the findings from recent English Heritage surveys of hillforts on the Malvern Hills ridge. Some of the upper terraces at Croft Ambrey approximate circular platforms for individual structures, of larger or smaller diameter.
- The final pre-abandonment phase of the principal west gate comprises a remarkable series of earthworks (HSM 76148 to 76155), and yet this complex does not appear to have been noted by Stanford at all (despite his excavation of the 'south-west gate' just beyond this complex downslope to the west). The discernible features comprise, firstly,

at least five square or rectangular level platforms in a linked series. This series twice crosses the curving holloway entrance passage, in what appear formerly to have been straight sections: oriented east to west, then north to south, and then east to west again (HSM 76148 to 76151). A further three such platforms overlook the passage from the edge of the scarp (on the line of the early phase western defences) above the entrance holloway from the east (HSM 76152 to 76155). The excavated 'south-west gate' is located at the lowest point of the holloway, at the point at which it begins to approximate a sloping entrance ramp.

- The interpretation of a series of earthworks sited along the inner edge of the internal quarry for the high inner rampart of the inserted arc of multivallate defences also needs to be reconsidered. These features were interpreted both by Stanford (1974, 27) and in the 1992 survey, as artificial rabbit-warrens. If they were indeed pillow-mounds and circular coney-buries, they would be of extremely eccentric – moreover unique - form. On these grounds alone, such identification is here considered most unlikely.
- Moreover, there is an alternative interpretation that is altogether more intriguing. This is the possibility that they can instead be regarded as analogous to the mound excavated by Stanford lower down the hillside to the south, and which he interpreted as a Romano-British 'sanctuary'. A series of nine features of varying form can be identified as having been deliberately sited along the edge of the scarp above the former quarry-ditch, and overlooked from the south by the massive inner rampart of the inserted arc of multivallate defences (HSM 76171-6, 76182-8). This overlooking is despite the fact that the massive bank is sited considerably downhill from the quarry-ditch scarp.

It was suggested in the 1992 survey report (Halwood and Waller, 1992, 33) that the 'sanctuary' investigated by Stanford was in reality an artificial rabbit warren, and that the extensive Romano-British finds were residual within it. This is a very doubtful re-interpretation, given the published evidence. It seems likely that this 1992 re-interpretation of the mound is however why further features were interpreted then also as pillow mounds. These were a smaller circular ditched mound and three elongated mounded features noted along the edge of the quarry ditch, together with a fourth mound located in the base of the quarry ditch itself.

However, yet other features were mapped here in Stanford's survey (1974, Figure 1). These features comprised a complex rectangular embanked feature (HSM 76182), an elongated straight-sided mound crossing down the slope of the quarry-ditch obliquely and with flanking ditches (HSM 76185), and two further circular hollowed terraces (HSM 76186-7). In the 2001-2 survey, yet more features were noted here, located in between those recorded by Stanford. They comprised three level rectangular platforms with their southern (long) sides set obliquely to the edge of the former quarry-ditch (HSM 76172, 76175, and 76183). In the upcast from molehills on one of these platforms, very reduced fragments of both tile and mortar were noted. These could be from the Victorian summer-house known to have been built somewhere upon the Ambrey, but they might equally be from a Romano-British structure. At the base of the circular mound some fragments of cremated bone were retrieved from another molehill. A further complex of embanked earthworks was noted in the 2001-2 survey in the western part of the site, to the north of the main west gateway (HSM 76189; this was also recorded in Stanford's survey).

What this re-appraisal of these features suggests is that they can be regarded as the likely location of former shrines. Such an interpretation potentially transforms our understanding of the post-abandonment nature of the hillfort. Stanford thought that during this period, there were occasional visits for ceremonies to a single location within the hillfort 'annexe'. Then the Hereford and Worcester county archaeological survey team

thought that there was Romano-British occupation of the 'annexe', and that the finds of this period within Stanford's 'sanctuary' were in fact residual. In their view, therefore, the finds resulted from settlement activity, and the mound was one of the wider suite of rabbit warren features.

The 'new' interpretation envisages the whole of the hillfort becoming 'sacralised' following its abandonment as a settlement, and as being a place of veneration during the centuries between 100BC and c.600AD. The multiple shrines could have represented the multiple tribal divisions that previously occupied the fort, at least intermittently. No doubt future more detailed survey of the site would develop the discussion, and add further detail to the emerging picture.

- The 2001-2 survey, then, has contradicted the former identification of the 'quarry-ditch scarp' features as coney-burials. Nonetheless, the evidence for warrening on the site is more extensive than has hitherto been realised. There are three rectangular elongated ditched mounds sited perpendicularly down the slope in the southern (formerly denoted 'annexe') area of the hillfort (HSM 76163 to 76165). These can with absolute confidence be interpreted as pillow-mounds. In 2001-2 a further (and hitherto unrecorded) pillow-mound was discovered occupying an extraordinary position, on a 1 in 2 slope and sited perpendicular to (and running between) two of the rampart circuits on the western side of the fort (HSM 76170). Moreover, the remains of a warrener's lodge on a large rectangular platform and in its own embanked enclosure are located just beyond the south entrance to the hillfort (HSM 76212).
- There are, moreover, further archaeological features that have not previously been recognised within the hillfort, and still more may be revealed through more intensive survey. One example is the subtle dish-like circular hollows that have been noted within the 'annexe' area (HSM 76159-60). The similarity of these features to those noted both within and outside the putatively early 'farmstead' enclosures on Bircher Common suggests that they may approximate the locations of former circular houses.
- Another example is saw-pits, one of which was noted cut into the spread inner bank of the southernmost arc of double bank and ditch defences (HSM 76169). This was associated with a late trackway cut through the defences, and is clearly one product of the long phase of use of the site as wood-pasture, with harvesting of timber.

Area F – Fishpool Valley

The recorded sites are listed in full in the Site Inventory in Volume 2 of this Report, wherein Figure 40 marks their location. The most obvious sites are those associated with the fishpools, such as their dams. These have all been previously recorded and were not re-recorded during this survey. The built structures belonging to the Picturesque development of the valley were however recorded, including the Gothick pump-house, and the grotto (HSM 76261 and 76244). Various other features were noted, including a former lime-kiln (HSM 76256).

One discrete site of archaeological interest that was newly discovered in the 2001-2 survey was a further but isolated pillow-mound (HSM 76266) sited on the brow of a slope overlooking the lower part of the valley from the north-east. Other early features included wood-banks of likely medieval date (for example, HSM 76218), in areas that in historically-recent times were managed as wood-pasture, and possible field lynchets (eg HSM 76230).

Something of the full complexity of the terraced carriage-rides sited along the sides of the valley was recorded in the survey (HSM 76233, 76234, 76236, 76241, 76243, 76245, 76247, 76254, 76257-8, 76260, 76262). The routes of these were noted deliberately sited at multiple

elevations along the steep valley-sides, and the side valleys were used to create loops, short-cuts and deviations in the pattern of possible alternative routes. What the 2001-2 observations have permitted is the creation of a picture of landscape development from landscape park to C20th wilderness (see below).

The remaining features of archaeological interest relate more to general estate management in the C19th especially. These features include a farmstead or woodland management complex (HSM 76221), numerous charcoal-burning platforms (eg HSM 76235) and extensive quarries (see for instance HSM 76239). The stratigraphic relation of all these features shows in particular their relation as later features than the carriage-rides. Possible exceptions are the quarries that conform more to the nature of delves, that could be of any date from the medieval period onwards. They are located primarily on the western margins of Highwood Bank, but within the Fishpool Valley management area.

Area G– Croft Parkland

The recorded sites are listed in full in the Site Inventory in Volume 2 of this Report, wherein Figure 41 marks their location (Figure 42 is an inset of an area of the eastern parkland). The principal sites and features recorded in the survey are noted here from east to west across the parkland.

A group of features was noted to the north of the east drive in pasture immediately west of the Cock Gate entrance to the estate. These included a series of terraces on a north-facing slope overlooking the stream outlet from Fishpool Valley (HSM 76285 to 76287). These features include areas defined by north-south banks and are interpreted as the earthwork traces of a deserted hamlet. The fields associated with this former settlement include both headlands and areas of ridge and furrow upslope to the south-west (e.g. HSM 76291).

Further to the south-west an area of woodland was found to contain the remains of roughly square clay extraction pits, and, to the east and south-east of this areas in which brick debris marks the location of field kilns (HSM 76292-8). The form of the bricks noted here is similar to that of bricks dated to the C18th in standing buildings and from excavations around the mansion complex to the west. Further west from this point, and closer to the east drive, a rectangular area of woodland conceals a small pool (HSM 76299), which was a feature of the mid-C18th landscaping. To the west of this lake, further clay extraction pits were noted (HSM 76301-2), while to the east of the pool further kiln waste was noted, including both broken bricks and tiles (HSM 76303).

Upslope to the west from this wood, the robbed foundations of a rectangular structure were noted, oriented east-west (HSM 76281), and crossed by a modern north-south fence line. A wall footing (possibly formerly attached to this lost structure) was discovered during a *Marches Archaeology* watching brief on a trench for a water trough supply pipeline in 2000. The structure itself is provisionally interpreted as a landscape park 'eye-catcher'.

To the south of this, former trackways were recorded, along with a series of south-facing former field lynchets that extend across the parkland westwards (HSM 76275 to 76279). Associated with traces of ridge and furrow, these lynchets are thought to represent the headlands of the medieval field system that extends from Cock Gate to the site of Croft deserted medieval village (in Area GA: HSM 76368-70) south of St. Michael's church.

Within this system, further traces of landscaping belonging to the landscape park were noted. Prominent among these is a deliberately scarped earthwork semi-circle facing southwards: a simple version of a classical auditorium (HSM 76277). Further south-eastwards from the mansion, a substantial earthwork platform marks the site of a former elongated rectangular

structure, oriented west by north-west to south by south-east so that its west gable would have faced towards the mansion (HSM 76281). This is provisionally interpreted as a deer shed.

To the north-east of the Gothick wall, a further series of earthworks include the best surviving stretch of former deer-park boundary (HSM 76272). This comprises in profile a south-facing gentle slope to a ditch with a steep-north-facing scarp to an earthen bank that then tails off southwards. Such a profile demonstrates that the historic deer park that the earthwork bounded was situated to the north: and this correlates straightforwardly with the park shown on early C18th maps that stretched north to (and enclosed) Croft Ambrey. Towards its eastern end this bank is cut by a former roadway (shown on C19th maps) linking to the east drive. North of this deer park boundary, the features noted include a number of tree-boles from the planting for a former grove, one or two of the chestnuts and oaks of which are still standing - perhaps some 350 years after their original planting. In this area also, there are both tracks and two possible former pillow-mounds, much mutilated (HSM 76269 and 76270). There are also hints of ridge and furrow oriented north-east to south-west (HSM 76271).

In the areas of parkland to the north of the mansion and the home farm, a number of former landscape features were noted. These included a prominent woodland boundary bank (HSM 76267) and a north-south boundary bank (HSM 76268) to the south of the Keeper's Lodge. Former field boundaries and other farmed landscape features were noted to the north of the Home Farm complex. Several areas of parkland, enclosed by 1885, were converted to arable by 1940, and have remained so - despite the presence of parkland trees - until the present day.

The area of parkland extending to the west of the castle environs into this area of arable may retain the rectangular shape of the feature marked as 'The Paddock' on Isaac Taylor's map of 1754 and subsequent maps. The feature is marked as at present on Bryant's map of 1835. The earliest features present in this area appear to be the traces of ridge and furrow on a north-west to south-east alignment (HSM 76340). Further boundary banks exist in this area (HSM 76345-6) that demarcate enclosures for instance at the western end, and an area of former woodland, the eastern limit of which was truncated when the ha-ha (HSM 76367) was created. Various planting features survive, including the banks demarcating a former vista (HSM 76339), areas of disturbed ground from the location of former specimen trees, and the boles of a former grove, of which about a dozen now veteran trees still survive.

The parkland to the south of the mansion is again reduced by conversion to arable. Nonetheless, traces of ridge and furrow and its associated headland survive in improved grassland to the south-west of the castle. This area also features tree-boles that are part of a former planting of a line of trees approaching the mansion area from the south-west, and of which no trees now survive. Directly south of the dam between the two former ornamental ponds, linear earthen banks (HSM 76359) define the east and west sides of the former vista. The line of this to the south was picked up by double-row tree planting south of the Mortimer's Cross to Orleton road, as shown on the estate map of 1799. Eastwards of this, landscaping works have largely obliterated the lower among a series of former fishponds, and it is possible that earthworks here mark the location of further ornamental water features (for instance HSM 76360, a possible 'suspended' pool). To the west, there is a substantial quarry (HSM 76354) immediately south of the projected course of the former west drive.

In an arable field in this area beyond the ha-ha to the south of the mansion, a feature was noted in the 1992 survey as visible in an undated oblique aerial photo, a copy of which used to hang in the mansion. The feature, a circular ditch, was interpreted as the ditch surrounding a Bronze Age round barrow that by the time of the photo had been ploughed flat. The visible circumference of the ditch on the photo makes that reading unlikely, but the feature is not visible on the ground so was not recorded in this survey. It could represent the circular ditch defining the bounds of a planted clump of trees, or could even mark the site of the motte of an early Norman earth and timber castle.

Area GA – Croft Castle environs: gardens and farm area

The recorded sites are listed in full in the Site Inventory in Volume 2 of this Report, wherein Figure 43 marks their location. The likely earliest visible features in this area are a series of levelled areas of different sizes in the south-east area, that may represent the location of tofts of the former medieval village of Croft (HSM 76368-70). There is a marked change in the nature of these features north of a curving bank representing a former prospect walk (HSM 76371), where they become more subtle. The better-preserved features are nonetheless cut by modern drains, and by at least one landscaping feature – the robbed-out former course of the ha-ha (HSM 76367). The latter feature can be dated as originally built c.1750, but its course had clearly been reconfigured by 1825. The location of the former village had clearly been intruded upon by the east garden of the former formal garden series, provisionally dated to 1700-10, and represented on the ground by a north-south bank and south-facing lynchet marking its south-eastern corner.

To the west of this a marked south-facing lynchet with a divided (or splayed) stair or ramp at its centre (HSM 76375) marks the southern limit of a series of former formal garden terraces descending the slope directly south of the mansion. A further lynchet to the north, with a semi-circular stair or ramp (HSM 76378) at its centre (and with the other ramp, oriented directly on the former south door of the mansion), marks the southern end of an upper sloping garden.

Two further earthworks complete this series. The first is a levelled area forming an extended terrace (HSM 76380) on which the present bastioned terrace stands. The second represents the earthwork remains of the former west drive (HSM 76364-5) comprising a cambered drive with (in places) slight flanking ditches. This was established sometime between 1799 and 1835, and had been abandoned by 1914. Other features noted in the parkland in the near vicinity of the mansion were noted to the west of the mansion. One of these was a subtle east-facing lynchet (HSM 76382-4) that may mark the site of a further formal garden to the west.

Area H – Common Wood and School Wood, Lucton

The recorded sites are listed in full in the Site Inventory, below, wherein Figure 44 marks their location. Visibility was generally low in this area due to recent timber planting and regrowth. Nonetheless, the features noted included a former woodbank (HSM 76387), possible farming lynchets (HSM 76391, HSM 76397), and the course of the west drive (HSM 76400).

Area I – Pokeshouse Wood

The recorded sites are listed in full in the Site Inventory, below, wherein Figure 44 marks their location. Most of the area comprises precipitous slopes above the east bank of the river Lugg, and is densely planted with conifers. In a former quarry (HSM 76412) there survives the substantial remains of a limekiln noted in the previous survey (HSM 76411).

Area J – The Moors, Lucton

The recorded sites are listed in full in the Site Inventory, below, wherein Figure 44 marks their location. The likely earliest features comprise a series of subtle lynchets and banks denoting a former (and possibly early) field system (HSM 76414 to 76430). To the north-east of the former south west lodge of the estate there are traces of ridge and furrow some way from any historically definable community (HSM 76432). Nonetheless, on the slopes above

this area there are substantial platforms and hollow-ways (HSM 76422 to 76424) that mark the site of a small deserted settlement or hamlet.

Close-by to the east is an extensive area of quarrying (HSM 76433-5) that extends to the western side of the course of the west drive, here followed by a forestry track. To the east of the drive, and immediately west of Lucton Lane, a further series of quarries (HSM 76443) and a large spoil-tip bank configured in a long arc (HSM 76445) constitute a substantial former folly. This is in essence a mock earthwork castle. The deliberate nature of this configuration of earthworks is confirmed by the presence here of the bridge that formerly conducted the west drive over Lucton Lane (HSM 76454). This is in the form of a stone bastioned gateway, now comprising the remains of a pair of mock-medieval bastions facing up and down the hill.

Conclusion: the landscape history of the Croft Estate from archaeological survey

This is not the place for a 'final' summary narrative of the development of the Croft Estate landscape from archaeological field studies. Versions of such a narrative will hopefully appear in articles and a monograph publication later in the present decade (as intended, c. 2006: see 'further publication' section, towards the end of this Report).

Nonetheless, it is worth summarising the key insights gained from the 2001-2 archaeological field survey:

1. Croft Ambrey Iron Age hillfort has been shown to be even more complex than has hitherto been realised, and its field remains include survival of a key feature (a length of single bank and ditch) belonging to its earliest phase. There is also now a developed awareness of the likely pattern of occupation and building within the site.
2. Romano-British activity at Croft Ambrey may have bequeathed more extensive traces of shrine-based ritual activity than has previously been recognised, and if so this is an extremely rare feature, and one of European significance.
3. Besides the earthwork remains of as many as four late prehistoric/Romano-British farmstead settlements surviving on Bircher Common, traces of contemporary field systems have been located in as many as six different locations. As such, it is clear that traces of a whole landscape of early settlement survive across the Estate.
4. Indications of elusive temporary seasonal transhumance stations have been noted at two locations at the eastern and western extremities of Bircher Common. This is the first time that such features have been noted in extensive field survey in the county, and suggests that such patterns of 'marginal' activity may be observed elsewhere.
5. House platforms and levelled areas belonging to three separate settlements likely to be of medieval date have been discovered (by Croft church, near Cock Gate, and at The Moors, Lucton). In all three cases these are clearly associated with earthwork ridge and furrow traces, marking the former location of medieval arable.
6. The earthen embanked enclosures and foundation outlines of rectangular buildings belonging to post-medieval common-edge farmsteads have been traced in several locations within the southern areas of Bircher Common. This considerably enhances our understanding of the former extent of the informal settlement that exists on the lower slopes of the Common through to the present day.
7. A former deer-park boundary, woodland boundaries and traces of warrening activity (pillow-mounds and warrener's house enclosure) have been noted across the Estate, and this sheds important light on the early management of the Estate.
8. Evidence for designed parkland features, carriage rides, and former tree-planting locations has been noted. These remains provide important clues about the organisation of landscaping and leisure activities from the 16th to the 20th centuries.
9. Industrial and woodland industry features have been noted in numbers, whether quarries, brickfields, saw-pits or charcoal-burning platforms. These provide insights

into the organisation of exploitation of non-agricultural Estate resources at Croft from the 17th into the 20th century.

It is also worth suggesting something of the outlines of a landscape history narrative:

1. In prehistory, a scatter of finds from the excavations at Croft Ambrey hillfort hint at the likelihood of activity pre-dating the start of the first millennium BC. It may transpire that the hilltop was the site of an enclosed settlement dating from the Bronze Age or earlier.
2. By the middle of the first millennium BC, not only was Croft Ambrey fort in occupation, but the surrounding landscape featured both farmsteads and fields. The visible elements of the fort and the excavated evidence indicate a first large enclosure surrounded by a single bank and ditch. This gradually became more elaborate until a major modification occurred that saw the creation of a huge double rampart bisecting the enclosure. The possible reasons for this action are discussed below.
3. While Croft Ambrey was likely to have been abandoned by the time of the Roman conquest (c.60AD), the farms and fields probably continued in use. The variable form of the upstanding Bircher Common enclosures indicates that it may be possible to separate them from one another chronologically. Meanwhile, the fort was apparently 'sacralised' by the building of numbers of shrines that were visited throughout the Romano-British period by people living beyond the confines of the fort but presumably continuing to have a spiritual attachment to it.
4. A Saxon settlement was founded at Croft, and this place most likely took its name from the massive hilltop enclosure at Croft Ambrey. Excavation is likely to be the only possible means by which we may learn anything more about this settlement.
5. In the 11th century, after the Norman Conquest, an earthwork castle may have been built at Croft, but if so no traces of the mound for its timber tower (its motte, if it had one) or attached enclosure have so far been traced as earthworks on the Estate. It should of course be noted that one candidate site at least exists for the former location of a motte. Elsewhere in Herefordshire, we have traced palisade ditches marking the position of a defensible timber stockade around a late Saxon and Norman period manorial complex. This exists now for Croft also, as an alternative to the more familiar 'motte and bailey' configuration.
6. Given the documentary evidence for the existence of a church at Croft well before the end of the 12th century, it is likely that there was a village on the site from at least the same period.
7. This settlement, which from earthwork evidence extends down the slope to the south of the church for at least 200m, appears to have been the focal, but not the only, settlement in the parish of Croft. A satellite settlement existed north of Cock Gate, and others may well also have existed. A satellite settlement at The Moors presumably also existed as an out-station of the still occupied settlement by the parish church at Lucton (where a ditched feature north-west of the church might be the remains of an earthwork castle).
8. The Domesday settlement appears to have expanded somewhat, since a considerable part of the southern area of the parish appears to contain traces of former ridge and furrow denoting extensive arable ploughlands.
9. A castle (fortified manorial complex) was clearly in place to the north-west of the parish church at Croft by the end of the 14th century. Excavations in 2002 located and in 2003 are due to explore the site, which is currently situated to the west of the present-day castellated mansion. The immediate landscape included not only the village and church, but also fishponds, one of which was located during excavations of the formal gardens in 2001, in the valley to the south of the castle.
10. The use of Croft Ambrey and areas to east and west of Fishpool Valley as a warren for rabbits possibly began during the medieval period. This was sufficiently well-

organised to feature the provision of a warrener's house and yard, which today in field archaeological terms is a rare survival.

11. In the immediate post-medieval period, the first elements of a designed landscape emerged. The castle was adapted to include a small but rich mansion (in part revealed in the excavations of 2002). In turn, a terrace was created to contain a level formal garden or suite of such. Beyond this there appears to have been a deliberate programme of planting oaks and Spanish chestnuts in rows and in groves. At around the same time, the deer-park was probably created that was overlooked by the castle from the south. This deer-park features a pendant holding-area to the east of the castle, and took in Croft Ambrey and at least the western side of Fishpool Valley. It may have been at this time that the Domesday settlement at Croft was removed from the near vicinity of the church, and relocated elsewhere (perhaps to the southern margins of Bircher Common).
12. The brickfields which have been located well to the east of the mansion complex, started c.1580 to produce both bricks and tiles for the earlier mansion. At least one further brickfield was created to the east again.
13. The castle was rebuilt as a mansion, constructed at least in part across the earlier garden terraces, probably c.1663. Formal gardens were laid out to the south of the new mansion. These latter were expanded at least by c.1700 to include areas to the south of the church and to the west of the mansion, across the site of the former (16th century) mansion.
14. At around the same time, coppices were created to supply the demand for timber and charcoal to feed the iron forges in the Bringewood area west of Ludlow. The earliest sawpits and charcoal-burning platforms will date from this time.
15. In the mid-18th century, the formal gardens were swept away, and a landscape park was created. These were further elaborated according to changing tastes and the impact of the Picturesque movement upon the Croft Estate. The fashion for mock-Gothickry in the period 1790 to 1820 left Croft with its enduring monuments to the neo-Gothic. Some elaborations recorded in this survey had not previously been fully understood as such – for instance the mock earthwork castle and its pseudo-gateway masquerading as a carriage drive bridge across Lucton Lane. A more detailed outline of the development of the Croft deer-parks and designed landscapes is provided in the following, Assessment, section of the Report.

RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

Introduction: assessing significance

The assessment of the archaeological significance of individual features, individual sites, site complexes and historic landscapes can be undertaken from a variety of standpoints. As with management advice (see below), there can never be a 'once-for-all' judgement made as to the relative value of an archaeological site. Among the reasons why this is so, is the fact that it is rarely possible to have a clear knowledge of what lies beneath the surface, until it is sampled or otherwise disturbed through archaeological excavation.

The dimensions of value that can be identified for an individual site or monument include the likely research potential, its apparent degree of preservation, its contribution to local distinctiveness, and how it is valued for the social amenity or visitor attraction benefits it brings. The latter two are attributes whose estimation is not confined to the judgement of professional archaeologists. For the purposes of this summary, it is therefore best to limit comment to those aspects that are more strictly those of professional archaeologists on matters other than aesthetics or attachment.

The assessment of individual sites or monuments has become a specialised activity within professional archaeology in recent years. The criteria used for the statutory definition of 'archaeological importance' have been set out formerly by the Secretary of State as a means of clarifying procedures for the selection of sites for designation as of 'National Importance'. The 'monument discrimination' stage of assessment as carried out by English Heritage staff applies eight criteria: survival, potential, diversity (features), amenity value, documentation (archaeological), documentation (historical), group value (association), and group value (clustering). The 'class characterisation' stage applies a further four criteria: period (currency), rarity, diversity (form), and period (representativeness). While these are used as a formal basis for comparison, and each criteria is scored from 1 to 3 (good, average, poor) for each site assessed, in practice professional judgement is applied at all stages of the process (for details, see Startin, 1993).

In policy terms, for instance in reference to local planning policies, very broad degrees of importance can be defined. Besides Scheduled Ancient Monuments, there are the 'other nationally important, but unscheduled' sites. As a group, the earthwork enclosures on Bircher Common would fit comfortably within such a category. The Monuments Protection Programme of English Heritage was designed to review the current numbers and extent of Scheduled sites, and to make recommendations for additions. This work started in the 1990s, and for some counties (such as Herefordshire), it is still at a very preliminary stage. In the meantime, the identification of such sites will be a matter of professional judgement, and a view of the significance of the Croft Estate sites in this light is given below.

Then it might be possible to define a site or complex as being of regional significance, and then of more local significance. Again in practice these are difficult judgements to make meaningfully. It is better, perhaps, to consider different dimensions of importance (for instance, 'exceptionally good/well preserved example of its type'), or for the light the site might throw upon a key event or period.

In this report, the significance, potential and condition of individual features and sites is noted in the individual entries of the Site Inventory. In this section, the assessment is more general. It aims to set out, by period, both an overview of what has been interpreted of general site and landscape development, and then to make an assessment of the importance of the constituent remains.

Assessment overview

The Croft Castle estate can be evaluated archaeologically in the following terms:

- In reference to the massive and complex earthwork enclosure of Croft Ambrey.
Apart from its complexity of structure and development, this site has undoubted status not only as a site of national importance (recognised in its early protection as a Scheduled Ancient Monument), but also as a pre-eminent example of a 'developed hillfort'. The presence of a possible series of shrines within the fort and dating from late Iron Age and Romano-British times potentially renders the site as being of truly European significance.
- In reference to a prehistoric landscape containing fields and farmstead enclosures.
On Bircher Common, at and around the 200m contour and separated by a regular distance of 500m there is the series of four earthwork enclosures previously noted, and presumed to be of late prehistoric or Romano-British origin. In at least two instances, field enclosures are attached to their western sides. Possible artificial farming terraces of similar date have also been noted in Croft Wood and at The Moors. This group has particular value for its relation to the nearby hillfort.
- In reference to the settlement complex surrounding St Michael's Church at Croft.
This complex has many elements, and as a result of the ongoing site investigation, the components are known to include below ground remains. The complex together has considerable group and landscape value. Included within the group are:
 - the site of the medieval castle, and a series of contemporary fishponds;
 - traces of the deserted medieval village of Croft, along with its church;
 - the C16th/17th mansion, traces of the dismantled formal gardens contemporary with it, and any remains of the early mansion created by Sir James Croft;
 - the sites of brickfields for major building phases of the mansion;
 - below ground remains of a variety of vanished ancillary structures including the home farm abandoned in the early C19th, and a neo classical fronted C18th reception hall/plant house.
- In reference to the multiple-phase neo-Gothic mansion of C17th origin.
Croft Castle is now recognised as one of a group of early neo-Gothic mock castles, the fashion for building of which extended from the 1580s to the mid-C17th. Moreover, the likely involvement of Thomas Farnolls Pritchard in the 're-Gothicisation' of the building in the middle years of the C18th marks it out as unusual in this ongoing process of deliberate antiquarianism.

Note: The evidence from dendrochronology obtained in 2002 appears to point to the possibility that this was a very late, Restoration, example dating to 1662-3. As such, its importance is the greater, for two reasons. Firstly, as a late example of the type. And secondly, because this would mean that it was deliberately built by Herbert Croft, Bishop of Hereford, immediately after his enthronement, and as a country residence – in effect, a rural Bishop's Palace.
- In reference to the C17th designed landscape, and later landscape park.
Equally of more than local significance is the archaeological evidence for the designed landscape that was created along with the mansion. This produced a complex of formal gardens, ornamental planting, and deer-park, that may have been added to even in the C17th by the first creation of the Fishpool Valley fishponds (see below). The landscape park created in the mid-C18th is likely to have added designed elements that were subsequently at least subdued within the Picturesque reworking of the landscape later in that century and early in the C19th. This sequence is probably quite rare nationally.

Prehistoric and early settlement

Perhaps surprisingly for so large an area featuring such good preservation of archaeological features, not a single feature that can with confidence be assigned a pre-Iron Age date was found in the survey. For instance, despite the comprehensive survey coverage by area, not a single feature that can be interpreted as a round barrow or similar sepulchral monument has been traced.

The principal prehistoric site on the estate is of course Croft Ambrey. This is one of the most complex Iron Age hillforts in the Welsh Marches – or indeed in Britain. The field remains located within this area are the most extensive and the best preserved archaeological features anywhere on the Croft Estate. This is due largely to the fact that this area was thankfully excluded from forestry planting in the twentieth century, and thereafter was isolated from the rest of the estate lands, such that no part of it was subject to arable cultivation or otherwise intensive land-use.

The survey has demonstrated how elements of site development at Croft Ambrey are evident even in the visible surface field remains. The area enclosed within a double rampart is as illustrated in the RCHME survey of 1934, and the area occupied by platforms for round houses is seen to include massive terracing on the steep north-facing slopes. Even greater complexity than has hitherto been suggested can be inferred for the south-west gateway into the inner enclosure. It seems at least possible that, following abandonment of the site c.100BC (based on new study of the brooch chronologies – Haselgrove, 1997), the fort remained as a focus for religious activity down at least to the end of the Romano-British period, and perhaps longer. A series of ten possible shrine sites/structures was located in the survey, to add to the two previously defined and examined.

The importance of Croft Ambrey is further underlined in terms of its location as the centre of a wider settlement complex. For some time, this was known to include the smaller hillfort known as Pyon Wood Camp only 1km to the north-west of Croft Ambrey itself. Although sited at a considerably lower elevation. The significance of the plan of Pyon Wood Camp, located upon a conical-shaped hill immediately north of the ‘Aymestry gap’ in the limestone hills through which the Lugg flows southwards, has become evident as a direct result of the present survey. This is that, with a straight western side, its plan form compares directly with the early phase plan form of Croft Ambrey.

Within the Croft estate, however, Croft Ambrey is complemented by small defended enclosures of possible late prehistoric farmsteads on Bircher Common. That these were part of an organised settlement system is hinted at by similarities of plan form, by their evenly spaced location at a closely similar elevation, and by the apparent appending of similarly shaped fields to the western side of at least two of them. The ‘farmstead’ enclosures are in all cases defended by at least an earthen bank, and in at least three cases the surrounding ditch is also much in evidence. In two cases an extra arc of ditch is also present on at least one side. All four appear to contain platforms designed to support structures, and both circular and rectangular examples are present. In the case of the enclosure partly within the Oaker Coppice, the circular scoops read here as possible platforms for circular huts occur also beyond the apparent limit of the enclosure, to the east. This suggests that during at least one phase, there was an open (undefended) settlement here.

Nor are the field lynchets appended to two of the settlements the only such traces of likely early field systems present. Traces of lynchets defining small rectangular field enclosures extend over the whole area of the estate from the western margins of Bircher Coppice in the east, to the new western estate boundary at The Moors to the west. This is a distance of over

four kilometres, and is the broadest area across which such field remains have yet been traced in Herefordshire.

However, some of the lynchets noted as crossing the broadly east-west slope of the south-facing hillside right across the Estate may be natural features related to the dip of the underlying limestone bedrock, while others may have been formed as the headlands of medieval strip cultivation. This latter is obviously more likely where, as in the parkland environs of the castle, the lynchets are in extended linear formation and co-exist with ridge and furrow aligned upon them. Meanwhile, even on Bircher Common in the vicinity of the plough-damaged enclosure, former wood-banks of likely medieval date appear to have been aligned onto such a feature, which presumably therefore pre-existed the woodland enclosure. Nonetheless, this still does not permit us to distinguish between a human prehistoric origin and a geomorphological one, and the possibility of phasing *within* the medieval period equally cannot be discounted.

The above, then, points to the co-existence of probably the most elaborate hillfort in the Welsh Marches (either side of the historic and present day political boundary between England and Wales), with a series of relatively well-preserved and likely broadly contemporary farmstead enclosures, and with extensive traces of associated field systems. **This makes the late prehistoric settlement complex at Croft one of the most important such complexes in Britain.** Due to the degree of likely linkage between these features, and their evident level of preservation, the complex is a valuable research resource for an understanding of the form and dynamics of Iron Age and subsequent settlement nationally. As such, it merits further archaeological investigation and recording. Together with the richness of the structural and artefactual record recovered in Stanford's excavations (that nonetheless clearly now were focussed on perhaps only one third of the site), this has led to calls for the re-examination of the site (see below).

This is not to say that the combination of well-preserved later prehistoric farmstead-scale settlements and field systems is unique within either Herefordshire or the wider Marches. In Herefordshire, the complex can be placed in context in reference to earthwork farmstead enclosures known for some time in the south of the county at for instance Great Howle, Walford, Lord's Ring, Whitchurch (Taylor, 1997), and on the southern flank of the summit of Garway Hill. In recent survey work by *Herefordshire Archaeology* in woodlands, further such enclosures have been traced at Wigmore Rolls and at Park Wood, Foxley (the latter in association with the earthwork remains of another field system). Meanwhile, field systems have been located in association with the hillfort at Cherry Hill, Fownhope, and a possible early 'open' settlement comprising platforms within a field system have been recorded at Frith Wood, Ledbury. However, it is the apparent association between all three elements that is so far unique in the county.

Medieval activity

The traces of medieval activity noted at Croft are by no means especially well-preserved or unusual within the county. However, in addition to the series of earthworks that are thought to represent the deserted village of Croft, there are also earthworks present from at least two further out-settlements, one within Croft parish and the other within Lucton. While this again is not unique or even especially unusual, there is a certain significance in the fact that all these features currently exist within the ownership of The National Trust and are (or will be) publicly accessible.

Since the date of the rabbit warrens is uncertain, they will be treated in another section (below, p.37). This leaves the remains of the field lynchets (possible headlands) and the ridge and furrow traces, as the only other likely medieval features that are currently visible within

the estate (although the site of the fishponds below the castle has been interpolated from excavation and field traces). In national terms, the field system remains are of very low significance. However, within Herefordshire such survival is nowhere near common.

The mansion and ancillary structures

This is not the place to rehearse the likely date and development of the Croft Castle mansion in detail. The survey work reported here did involve some limited re-assessment of the date of the mansion. This pointed, as noted above, towards a late C16th or early C17th date for the surviving structure, with perhaps a late C17th date for the demolished service wing. This was based upon examination of the fabric of the walls, and the style of the openings. Following inspection of the basements, it was felt that there was no evidence at all for the survival of any standing medieval fabric. Such a conclusion was very much in line with that reached independently by Jeffrey Howarth, the National Trust regional historic buildings adviser, and was amplified by the survey carried out in the early stages of the 2001-3 refurbishment project, by Richard Morriss (Morriss, 2002).

Some observations pertinent to the earlier form of the mansion and castle were made during the survey. For instance, a break in the build in the western elevation had not been satisfactorily explained. However, an early C19th drawing in the possession of Caroline Compton clearly shows the former existence here of a small square single-roomed projecting tower near the centre of the elevation. This was of narrower proportions than the otherwise closely similar one projecting from the centre of the north elevation. Its curious proportions were in part due to the addition of a storey to match the artificial third storey added to the whole elevation in the C18th. It is not known why it was subsequently removed.

The re-interpretation of the mansion as an entirely post-medieval construction curiously makes the mansion more rather than less significant, at least in terms of architectural history. This is because it can now be seen to belong to a tradition of building somewhat fanciful neo-Gothic mock castles by late Elizabethan and early Jacobean grandees. The significance of Croft is further underlined by the subsequent 're-inscription' of Gothick features by Thomas Farnolls Pritchard (1723-77) and others in the C18th, together with the addition of further 'Gothick' structures including the stable-block (in place by 1799), and the entrance curtain wall, towers and gateway (present by 1825).

Note: The 2002 season results of dendrochronological study by Ian Tyers of Sheffield University, and excavations by *Herefordshire Archaeology* have substantially revised at least the present authors' interpretation of the building. The earliest timbers in the structure are now dated to 1662-3. Meanwhile the former existence of the medieval castle has been proven, on a site partly beneath and to the west of the present mansion. Moreover, there is unequivocal evidence for the reconfiguration of the castle into a small mansion in the late C16th, and the subsequent partial destruction by fire and subsequent dismantling of both builds. Together, these twin sources of evidence appear to push the date of construction of the present house forward into the Restoration era.

Industrial and woodland features, and post-medieval activity

The most common industrial features noted were quarries. These are of interest because of the diversity of their forms, and for what further study may tell us about the way that the lithic resources of the estate were managed through time. There is clearly, more instance, a difference between the simple delves noted to the east of Fishpool Valley, and the careful sawing of rock faces in evidence both in the adjacent quarry that is cut through the course of one of the C18th carriage-rides. Such carefully cut faces are also in evidence in quarries to the extreme east and the far west of the property.

Perhaps the most surprising industrial features recorded were the two complexes of former brickfields. Such complexes most commonly survive purely as place-names on tithe-maps. The two groups at Croft have clearly survived at Croft due to their 'submergence' within the parkland landscaping of the mid-C18th, and subsequent planting. The significance of the two brickfields however is not limited to the accident of their survival. It is reinforced by their likely association with particular construction phases of the mansion. This will not be made clear without at least sample excavation of their sites, but it would seem likely that the more westerly complex is contemporary with the initial building of the mansion in the late C16th. The process for such building is recorded at Kyre Park, just over the county border in Worcestershire north of Bromyard. There, in the 1580s, a master brickmaker was brought in to rebuild a mansion formerly in the ownership of a branch of the Croft family, and produced over 100,000 bricks (Airs, 1995).

Both bricks and tiles were produced in the clamps of the more westerly of the Croft complexes. The more easterly one seems more likely to have been in operation in the C18th, to judge from the form of the bricks present. A current Sheffield University undergraduate dissertation comprises a study comparing the brick in standing structures at Croft with excavated samples, and samples retrieved from the 2002 excavations. The results of this study will be integrated with the final report of the excavations.

The production of lime for cultivation purposes and probably also for producing mortar for buildings is attested by the surviving limekilns on the estate. Those recorded in this and in previous surveys are located in Fishpool Valley and in the quarry in Pokeshouse Wood.

A mill is shown on Lucton Common on Isaac Taylor's map of 1754, and in this elevated position, it is presumed that this was a windmill. However, no trace of its location was found in the survey. Likewise, no definite traces of any watermills were located.

The woodland features recorded in the survey include several woodbanks defining the limits of former woodland areas. These are of especial interest where, as on the eastern margins of Bircher Common, they indicate areas that have evidently for some time been deforested. Partly for this reason, and partly in at least one case (north-west of Fishpool Valley and east of Keeper's Cottage) because of their sinuous character, some of these woodland boundaries are thought likely to be of medieval origin.

Of somewhat different interest are the large numbers and the distribution of charcoal burning platforms recorded. These, together with the numbers and location of saw-pits, are informative of the pattern of exploitation of woodlands across the area now covered by the estate between c.1650 and c.1850. These dates bracket the zenith of activity at the Bringwood Furnace west of Ludlow, which created massive demand for charcoal during the early post-medieval period. The survey area is typical of the wider area in this respect, but the size of the area sampled is large.

The indications of warrening activity are concentrated within and next to Croft Ambrey hillfort, and the margins of Fishpool Valley. The memory of these activities recorded in the Croft Tithe Award indicates clearly that although they were by then but a memory, they were in use well within the reach of oral tradition. They are likely therefore to be of early post-medieval date. The importance of the group on the Croft Estate is imparted by good preservation of pillow-mounds within Croft Ambrey fort, but also by the presence there of the probable warrener's cottage in its own enclosure. The proximity of the Keeper's Cottage extends the game management tradition here through into the twentieth century.

Finally, there are important though by no means unique settlement traces, whether of isolated farmsteads as seems likely in Bircher Coppice, or of a whole series of enclosed settlements as on the southern margins of Bircher Common. These latter are important not only for their

group value, but for two other reasons. One is that they may have resulted directly from the desertion of Croft village, probably when Sir James Croft built his mansion and first formal gardens c.1580. Another is that they contain earthwork traces such as 'lazy beds' that may be informative of early post-medieval horticultural and subsistence practices.

Parkland, ornamental and garden features

The most important features of the gardens and parkland were identified in Paul Stamper's account of 1998 (produced, 1999). Before reviewing the significance of the designed landscape at Croft, it may be worth outlining a possible sequence of historical development of both parkland and gardens.

Parkland

The medieval park. The first park is presumed to have been of medieval date (to fit into the likely construction history of the main complex, this is likely to have been of late medieval origin). Its location is uncertain, but some clues can be gained from the cartographic evidence already discussed (above, p. 34). Firstly, the Tithe Map mentions fields south of the Mortimer's Cross – Orleton road as 'Part of Old Park'. Since the southern boundary of the park actually shown on C18th and later maps terminates north of the Castle, it seems likely that this 'old park' was distinct from the post-medieval park. The term 'Deadwall' that appears on Jakeman and Carver's Directory map of 1902 could just possibly refer to a former park pale in this area, that is nonetheless now well to the south of the southern boundary of the National Trust property.

The later deer-park. This is the park that appears on the C18th maps to take in all the ground north of the mansion, up to and including Croft Ambrey. The fact that it could be overseen from the mansion north windows suggests that it is of C16th or early C17th origin. It could well be the case that later woodland boundary and enclosure banks around the margins of Lyngham Vallets may follow the course of the pale. However, at no point are the original dimensions of the park pale, nor even the arrangement of pale ditches, any longer in evidence (contra Halwood and Waller, 1992, 14) in this northern area. In contrast, part of the southern park pale earthwork survives outstandingly well, west of Fishpool Valley and east of the point where the Gothick curtain wall cuts north-south across its (east-west) course. The former course of this southern boundary is traceable in the line of a modern field hedge west of the Home Farm.

The Paddock. This has been interpreted as a possible holding area for livestock in the Welsh trade that the Johnes' were known to have been engaged in (Fretwell et al, n.d., 38-9). An enclosure here might well have been used for this purpose, but it is more likely that the elongated rectangular enclosure oriented east-west was designed integrally with the later deer-park, perhaps as a deer-keep. Such an arrangement has been observed elsewhere in Herefordshire, as at Moccas.

Designed planting. The ensemble of formal gardens, deer park and associated enclosure was complemented, at least from the later C17th, by formal planting of trees in the landscape both north of the mansion (within the deer-park) and also south and westwards. Remnants of that planting famously survive as features of the landscape today. This planting has often been referred to as comprising 'avenues', particularly of sweet chestnuts. The 2001-2 survey has led to a re-assessment of these groupings of planted trees.

This is a feature of such general and public interest at Croft, that it is worth providing some detailed exploration here. Firstly, although a double row of trees is marked as lining the vista south of the Mortimer's Cross to Orleton road on the 1799 estate map, *there are no avenues*

as such deriving from the earliest designed landscape period at Croft. Rather, there are planted rows occurring either singly or multiply. The survival of these rows has been partial, such that a multiple row to the north of the castle now for instance survives now in part as an 'avenue'. In at least one case (that of the row in part now coinciding with the west drive) in places a further row (or even two extra rows) has subsequently been added, to produce the appearance of an avenue. The survey located one former row to the south-west of the mansion across the valley with the pools, that is now represented only by tree boles.

Secondly, *there were groves as well as rows planted at this time*, including both chestnuts and oaks. Three such groves (oval in shape, rather than circular, as with later designed landscape 'clumps') survive in part today. One survives (albeit added to by specimen tree planting of C19th date) to the south-west of the former formal gardens. A scatter of trees survives from another grove within the north-east corner of 'The Paddock', and the former extent is traceable in tree-boles. A third grove to the north-east of the mansion within the deer-park and adjacent to Fishpool Valley has almost disappeared, but has a scatter of remaining trees at its southern end with, again, something of the former extent traceable in surviving boles.

Thirdly, the rows were not planted to formally radiate from the house. Instead, *the rows were planted to approach the mansion obliquely*. Why this should be so is unclear, especially where the multiple rows would perhaps have given the impression of an undifferentiated wood as seen from the house, rather than rows. The various rows and lines of trees, especially of chestnuts, have been explained as arising from Vanbrugh-style 'military' planting (cf. Williams, 2000; Williamson, 2000). As yet, there is no available documentary corroboration for this idea. In the meantime, a mid-C19th source, presumably reflecting family tradition, suggested that it was Bishop Herbert Croft who was responsible for the trees: 'Like his contemporary the equally loyal Man of Ross, he was fond of planting, and the chestnut avenues that are among the beauties of Croft and Aymestry still survive to testify to his taste' (Robinson, 1869, 44).

Note: One possibility, that has arisen as a result of the excavations in 2002, is that the rows of trees were aligned instead upon the medieval castle and late C16th mansion, which it has now been demonstrated stood to the west of the present castle. In this case, the chestnuts and oaks planted in this way would be traceable back a century further than Bishop Croft's day, to c.1580.

Fishpool Valley. Three contrasting views are possible, of the origins of the designed landscape represented by the pools and features of Fishpool Valley. One sees the ponds as in origin medieval fishponds, subsequently landscaped (cf. Dalwood and Waller, 1992). A contrasting view is that they were an integral feature of the C18th landscape park. An alternative view is that, as created, they complemented the formal planting, and were created originally in the late C17th. If this latter was the case, part at least of the valley was then incorporated within the landscape park (see below).

There can be little doubt that the series of terraced tracks that exist there was created as a network of recreational carriage-rides at a time (presumably in the C18th) when the unity of the valley in landscape terms was fully appreciated, as was its essentially open character. The wildness of the setting could have been seen to have contradicted the formality of the pools and rides by the time that the Picturesque came into vogue in the later C18th, although the grotto could have been added at any point in that century.

The 2001-2 survey has produced evidence for the abandonment of the carriage-rides by the C19th. This is most dramatically demonstrated by the cutting of quarries across the course of rides (for example, HSM 76115 across 76116). It is also marked by the siting of charcoal-burning platforms actually upon the former ride terrace (for example, HSM 76117). It is likely to have been during the early years of the C19th that the Gothick features such as the

pump-house were added, and specimen tree planting then began in earnest around the middle of the century.

The landscape park. The 'C16th' deer-park was succeeded by the landscape park still in evidence today, and this latter was presumably created early in the second half of the C18th. The parkland clearly surrounded the house by 1799, and the Tithe Map of 1839 makes it clear that it spread across well segregated (and presumably pasture) fields. The map labels two of those fields Upper East Park and Lower East Park respectively, while on Bryant's map of 1835 all of the parkland east and south of the mansion is termed 'New Park'.

Significantly, the 'East Park' area is not only shown in 1835 as undivided, but also as extending across the lower part of Fishpool Valley to Bircher Common. This clearly indicates that at least the southern end of that valley was always regarded as an integral part of the landscape park (it was only with the construction of the east drive c.1820 that a pale was erected to divide off the valley from the parkland). This latter, and other features, may be traceable more from surviving depictions than from the field archaeology.

Gardens

The sequence of garden construction was first elucidated through survey, and then was dated through a combination of excavation and stylistic evidence. The level terrace directly in front of the south front of the mansion (and subsequently in part covered by the bastioned terrace of c.1820) was apparently the first element in place. This is presumed to have been contemporary with the mansion, or at least as having been laid out by the early C17th (but see note below).

The next phase of garden development appears to have involved the creation of the upper of the two terrace-fronted sloping gardens, arranged symmetrically with its axis aligned onto the south door of the mansion. Excavation has led to the suggestion that a wall of unknown height once surrounded this garden, and that the garden is likely to have contained formal planting beds. The creation of this garden was shown by excavation to have involved the partial demolition of the retaining wall that marked the southern limit of the first terrace, and the use of demolition material from a late C16th building(s) as a foundation for the landscaping required to create it. It is thought most likely that this garden belonged to the Restoration period (based upon its elongated form and the style of the semi-circular stair: ex inf. David Jacques – comments during site visit, September 2001), and that it therefore dates c.1660-70. Its present reduced form is the result of landscaping following the erasure of the formal gardens, presumably in the mid-C18th.

A third phase of development is indicated by the addition of another terrace-fronted sloping garden to the south of the first, and still oriented on the south door of the mansion, but with different proportions. This has been demonstrated by excavation to have been an entirely earthwork creation, presumably bordered by planting. As such, its present form is as created, minus the planting and any garden features such as fountains or ornaments. The divided stair (more properly now, 'ramp') has been taken as the stylistic clue to a date c.1700-10 for this garden (David Jacques).

A further long and narrow garden was appended to the east of this. This also had a terrace-front of more modest proportions than the southern of the two sloping gardens, while it extended northwards up the slope in unbroken ascent to the southern boundary of the churchyard. To the east of this east garden was laid out a curving bank following the contour of the hill north-eastwards. This could well have carried a prospect walk, and judging from its seamless junction with the east garden (where it is assumed there must have been an entrance gate into the garden), it was clearly an integral element of the formal gardens.

To the west of the mansion, a further earthwork terrace, subtle differences in levels, and parchmark evidence indicate the former existence of a further series of formal gardens. The terrace exists at some distance from the mansion, and is marked by a terrace edge facing east and then south. It is arranged in alignment upon the west front of the mansion. In the lower ground between it and the mansion there are indications of the former existence of walls defining two gardens, one aligned on the west front of the mansion, and that to the south of this extending southwards to the early terrace edge.

Note. Again, this interpretive scheme has been amended in the light of the results of excavation in 2002. The upper terrace is now demonstrated to have been most likely constructed c.1580, contemporary with the mansion that was adapted from the medieval castle (and not the current mansion of c.1663). As such, this 'first' garden terrace was sited to the south and east of the castle-mansion. Meanwhile, the gardens to the west of the present mansion were most likely laid out contemporary with the dramatic extension of the south formal gardens, c.1700-10.

Kitchen Garden. The early C19th walled kitchen garden was extended southwards in 1914. It is significant now mostly for the fact of its restoration in the second half of the C20th. Quantities of demolition debris, including from the former Home Farm, underlie this garden and some pieces have been moved to form elements of the modern hard landscaping.

Again, this view has been amended in the light of the results of excavation in 2002. Foundations of an earlier wall to the kitchen garden were traced that marked a pronounced break of slope to the south of the present limit of the main garden, but parallel with the 1914 extension. The eastern end of this earlier south boundary wall to the kitchen garden would have directly abutted the northern limit of the bastioned terrace.

Designed Landscape Significance

For Croft, to a large extent this has already been assessed (Stamper, 1999): 'The most notable elements of the park are the avenues of ancient sweet chestnut trees which radiate north and west of the castle'. This captures not only the most visually remarkable feature of the park, but also a surviving feature of the earliest landscape treatment, contemporary with the floruit of the formal gardens and the extensive deer-park (although see above, comments on the idea that these plantings constitute 'avenues').

It is appropriate here also to sound a note of caution over the drawing of too great a distinction between the early deer-park and the surrounding land. For instance, it is clearly the case that some land surrounding mansions and associated with *but outside the formal boundaries of deer-parks* could also have appeared visually indistinguishable from the parkland within them. That this was the case was clearly illustrated in Thomas (or Jan) Wyck's 1670s painting of Winterslow House, Wiltshire. This shows deer cavorting (and being hunted) outside the carefully-featured deer-park pale as well as grazing within it.

Arguably, it is the co-existence of the remains of these three C17th elements that lends Croft its greatest significance as a park, historically. However, this is further enhanced by the formal and Picturesque landscaping, and in particular by the creation of Fishpool Valley. If the latter was indeed a creation of the late C17th or very early C18th, the importance of the early designed landscape ensemble at Croft is yet further emphasised.

It is not for the design (for which it seems likely that there is no easily recoverable surviving documentation) but for this 'layering' of designed landscape features that the Croft Estate parkland should perhaps most be treasured. As such, it is quite inappropriate to think of the possibility of meaningful designed landscape 'restoration'. Rather, a careful approach that respects and retains the texture and rhythm of the present-day surviving parkland is advocated here (and see below, relevant management recommendation sections).

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction: advice, suggestions and options

This part of the Report is designed to provide a perspective on the management of the historic environment resource and archaeology of the Croft Estate, deriving from the results of the 2001-2 survey. This perspective provides an indication of the possible courses of action, in the form of both generic (that is, circumstance-specific) and in some cases site-specific advice. Suggestions are made concerning for some areas and circumstances, how best to conserve the archaeological sites and features recorded during the survey, In a few other instances, a series of management options are suggested.

Archaeological site and resource management cannot proceed by 'recipe', and it is inappropriate (and seldom productive) to offer generic prescriptions for optimal treatment of individual sites or areas. Having said there, there now exist a variety of documents that explain the context for, and case-studies of, successful conservation. An early example of the genre explained the context of management of ancient monuments in the wider countryside (Darvill, 1987). This study approached the subject thematically, according to the different environments in which monuments are located (heathlands, coastlands, and so on). In each setting, the archaeological importance of the remains located in such places was explained, together with the history and distribution of such environments. The kinds of archaeological remains located therein was then identified, the chief conservation threats were noted, and suggestions for appropriate management made. A more recent publication gives an example of a county-wide approach to the development of management agreements for monuments based upon Section 17 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979 (Paterson and Wade-Martins, 1999).

In most cases, it is wisest to consult a professional archaeologist for advice concerning particular courses of action. For National Trust properties, managers can consult either a National Trust archaeological adviser, or one of the advisory staff of the county archaeological service concerned (for Croft and other properties in the county, this is *Herefordshire Archaeology*, the service operated by the Unitary Authority, Herefordshire Council). Within this service, and specifically for the Croft Estate, the County Archaeologist, the Countryside Advisor (Archaeology), or the Archaeological Projects Officer are able to offer advice whenever an archaeological issue is identified.

In this section of the Report, some indicative advice and guidance is provided by survey area and by theme. Examples of the latter are 'archaeological sites in grazed and bracken areas' (p. 46), and 'site interpretation, facilities and their location' (p. X). Under these 'themes' sections, several general issues and opportunities are identified. For each of the survey areas, the section begins with a statement on the general condition of archaeological features.

'Management prescriptions' are in effect strong recommendations to do, or desist from doing, certain operations. 'Management suggestions' are just that: namely, ideas for what might occur, if this fits in with wider management planning. For each of the specific management areas a series of specific local 'management options' is outlined. The numbered 'Recommendations' that end these sections are either for specific management actions for these areas, or for further archaeological work. 'Notes' that follow these recommendations provide an indication of how the recommended actions might be effected.

Management overview

As previously noted the 'group value' of the heritage assets at Croft Castle is considerable, and this has ramifications beyond the local. Within Herefordshire, Croft deserves to be the flagship property of The National Trust both for its size and its diversity. As no doubt other surveys have concluded, Croft can absorb relatively large numbers of visitors without appearing to become overcrowded. Nonetheless, as the popularity of the property for visits increases through improved information and publicity, steps should be taken to minimise their impact on fragile areas. Archaeology and the historic landscape are important to this process, not least in providing new 'destinations' for visits within the estate.

There are several 'key issues' that have been identified following reflection upon the results of the archaeological survey. These can be grouped (albeit in no particular order) into strictly archaeological issues, historic landscape issues, and visitor/interpretation issues.

Archaeological issues

- Better measures for the management of bracken (particularly at Croft Ambrey and on parts of Bircher Common).
- A Conservation Plan for Croft Ambrey.
- Further archaeological studies, research and recording works.

Historic landscape issues

- Action in reference to the current condition and future management of the existing parkland.
- Restoration of at least some areas of existing arable to parkland, and preparation of a Park Restoration Plan (or Conservation Management Plan).
- Examination of the potential for the re-introduction of wood-pasture in some areas.
- Consideration of options for the future management of Fishpool Valley, in particular in reference to the restoration of key built features, the future appearance of the landscape, and the nature of the 'visitor experience'.

Visitor/interpretation issues

- The desirability of provision of a substantial interpretative and visitor facility, which among other functions should seek to encourage visits both east and west from the centre of the estate (the immediate Croft Castle complex).
- The need, relatedly, to consider how access might be improved from the centre of the estate to the further areas to the east (to and beyond Bircher Common), and to the west (to School Wood, Lucton, to The Moors, and to the river Lugg).

As noted above, in the following sections of this Report, these issues are highlighted under either themes or areas.

Area A: Bircher Coppice

Parts of the coppice are lightly wooded (particularly in the north-central area, north of the main forestry access road). The management of the area by the Forestry Commission has so far involved intensive coniferous planting, especially in the southern areas of the woodland.

Condition of archaeological features:

- In the lightly wooded areas, there is reasonably good preservation of archaeological features.
- In the more intensively planted areas, for instance close to the southern margins, some features such as charcoal-burning features are sometimes just decipherable at present. However, they are unlikely to survive a further planting episode.

Management options:

- (a) Provide advice and guidance to Forestry Commission regarding the preservation of identified trackways, the 'military' feature, and the possible farmstead site.
- (b) Conduct further (more intensive) archaeological survey of the area. In particular there is scope both here and in the adjacent area of Bircher Common to the east, to map closely the former lines of woodland boundary banks, with a view to reconstructing the local woodland history.
- (c) Attempt to influence Forest Enterprise management of the woodlands to reduce the coniferous area, and perhaps also to reintroduce both birch woodland and coppiced compartments.

Recommendation 1:

Conduct a survey of woodland boundaries in Bircher Coppice and in the bracken areas of the adjacent part of Bircher Common.

Note: This would be a relatively simple exercise. The degree of preservation of remains, particularly on Bircher Common, would permit some reconstruction of former woodland extents. Elsewhere in the county (for instance in recent *Herefordshire Archaeology* survey at Brampton Bryan Park) it has been possible to date particular woodland boundaries (close-set bank and ditch features often with a meandering course) in reference to later features, to the medieval period. The mapping at Bircher Coppice/Common would be an especially interesting exercise given the existence of the documentary reference of c.1220 to the 'assarts of Birchour' (see section of 'tenure and tenancy' in the Background section of this report, p.8, above).

Archaeological sites in woodland

Traditionally managed woodlands are a significant preserve of archaeological features. Such features testify both to non-woodlands landscape and settlement history, and to the historic use and management of the woodlands themselves. Very considerable areas of former wood-pasture and woodland within the Croft Estate have been replaced by intensively planted coniferous forest. In the process, it is likely that numbers of archaeologically significant features have been erased. Although below ground elements such as ditches may in part survive, the earthwork elements are no longer visible.

The presence of a variety of features surviving within the Croft Estate woodlands has been recorded in this survey. Meanwhile, their exact form and extent has not been mapped. In many cases, this is not a significant problem, because sites such as for instance charcoal-burning platforms and saw-pits vary but little in their morphology. However, some features would merit closer recording. On the one hand, earthwork complexes such as those noted in Bircher Coppice, Lyngham Vallets, and The Moors woodland could be better understood and

documented through such a process. On the other hand, the recording of linear features is important to an understanding of former landscape organisation.

One example is the existence and disposition of what are termed 'carriage rides' in this report. These are preserved within woodland at various points within the estate, but are most extensive and best preserved within Fishpool Valley. Even in the heavily coniferous planted areas to the north of the valley, they are still just traceable.

Another example of a 'linear' kind of feature existing within woodland is the boundary bank. It is important to recognise that just as former woodland boundaries can be located in areas that are now part of commons or fields, so too can former field boundaries exist in areas now (and for some time past) used as woodland. Simple bank and ditch features can represent former field boundaries (in some cases doubling as major land division structures), or woodland boundaries, or compartment divisions. It is not always easy to tell which is which in every case. However, there should be no excuse for an archaeological surveyor to fail to recognise the sinuous nature and narrow build of an early woodland boundary, nor to confuse such a distinctive monument with a later field boundary, or, worse still, with the upcast of modern forestry road construction.

Management prescriptions:

- (a) In woodland, as far as practicable, extraction routes should follow existing access roads or tracks.
- (b) Heavy wheeled or tracked vehicles should avoid crossing sections of linear earthwork or other earthwork monuments, and should only use former terraced tracks where these have been re-used in recent times.

Management suggestions:

- (a) Within the Croft Estate, it would serve the interests of archaeology and the historic landscape well, only to permit further coniferous planting in areas that have already experienced intensive planting and the attendant considerable damage to formerly visible remains.
- (b) It would be worthwhile to explore the possibility of restoring to a pattern of wood-pasture vegetation those areas of Croft Wood that can be demonstrated to have been characterised by such a pattern up until the early decades of the C20th.

Area B: Bircher Common

The management of the area by The National Trust and the Bircher Common Graziers group involves maintenance of the upper northern and western areas as rough grazing, and the remainder as birch scrub and bracken areas. A significant but largely hidden area of scrub grassland is included as part of the common in the upper reaches of Fishpool Valley close to Causeway Head.

Condition of archaeological features:

- In the margins of the grazed areas (in upper Fishpool valley, the valleys bordering Bircher Coppice, and the southern loop of the former extent of Oaker Coppice south of the Forest Enterprise fence) there is reasonably good or very good preservation.
- Within the areas ploughed in the mid C20th, there has been a general levelling of such features, but they are now stable under permanent grass, with no visible consequences of over-grazing.
- In those areas under bracken or gorse cover, preservation is mostly good, but there is some localised erosion due to surface run-off and visitor and stock pressure on paths. However, there is likely extensive rhizome damage to below-ground archaeological deposits. This should be carefully assessed for key monuments, and action taken.

Management options:

- (a) Provide advice and guidance to users of the Common regarding the impact on vulnerable earthworks of vehicle use when feeding/tending stock.
- (b) Conduct further and more localised archaeological survey within bracken areas, to establish the full extent and distribution of settlement features.
- (c) Conduct some limited field investigation of key features, to assess the nature and extent of possible rhizome damage to below-ground archaeological deposits.
- (d) In parallel, carry out positive management of bracken cover in the vicinity of selected archaeological sites and features.
- (e) Conduct more intensive archaeological survey and recording of the identified prehistoric enclosures and associated features.
- (f) Consider permitting selective excavation of these sites within the context of a co-ordinated research project linked to re-examination of Croft Ambrey hillfort.
- (g) Develop a local community-based heritage project to map and closely survey the remains of abandoned Bircher Common farmsteads surviving within the bracken areas.
- (h) Create visitor information about the archaeological sites on the Common, to include provision of information not only about the prehistoric and later farmsteads, but also about the field systems, possible transhumance settlements, trackways, and former woodland boundaries, charcoal-burning platforms and saw-pits.

Recommendation 2:

Explore mechanisms whereby further archaeological survey, recording and investigation works might proceed, to gain further information about, and improve conservation management of, the remarkably well-preserved features on the Common.

Note: There are a number of possible such mechanisms. Some of these are hinted at in the 'options' section here.

Archaeological sites in grazed and bracken areas

Under optimal circumstances, the survival of historic sites and features as earthworks of various kinds in pasture is highly sustainable. Moreover, in grazed grassland the features are clearly visible and comprehensible to the visiting public. Vigilance is nonetheless necessary in an age where stock managers routinely drive across their grazed areas, where stocking levels often place stress upon the grassland resources, and

Management prescriptions:

- (a) In grassland, as far as practicable, stocking should be maintained at levels that do not encourage excessive trampling or poaching of ground.
- (b) Heavy wheeled or tracked vehicles should avoid crossing sections of linear earthwork or other earthwork monuments, and this should include four-wheeled-drive vehicles.

Management suggestions:

- (a) While some bracken clearance has been effected by machine in recent years, better measures for the management of bracken (particularly at Croft Ambrey and on parts of Bircher Common) need to be explored.
- (b) Careful consideration should be given whenever the provision of water for stock is being reviewed (and particularly at times of new tenancy arrangements). In 2000, the correct procedure was followed when new water supply lines to troughs were inserted across the parkland, and an archaeological watching brief was organised.
- (c) A careful watch needs to be kept upon the incidence and effects of burrowing animals in reference to archaeologically significant earthworks, particularly at Croft Ambrey.

Area C: Oaker Coppice

Only a very few areas of the coppice are lightly wooded with deciduous trees such as beeches (these areas are mostly at the margins and in limited areas either side of modern paths and tracks). The management of the area by the Forestry Commission has so far involved intensive coniferous planting, and this has had a pronounced effect upon the historic environment features. Clear-felling, stumping and replanting of several compartments during the mid 1990s rendered some of the features recorded close to tracks in the 1992 survey almost impossible to re-locate in 2001.

Condition of archaeological features:

- In the lightly wooded areas, there is reasonably good preservation of archaeological features such as trackways.
- In the more intensively planted areas, for instance close to the southern margins, some features such as charcoal-burning features are sometimes just decipherable among the replanting debris at present. However, they are unlikely to survive a further growth and cropping episode.

Management options:

- (a) Provide advice and guidance to Forestry Commission regarding the preservation of identified trackways, charcoal burning platforms, and the possible early enclosed farmstead site.
- (b) Maintain existing rides and periodically clear vegetation to facilitate continued visibility of former meandering trackways.
- (c) Clear the prominent lynchet in the south-eastern corner of the fenced area, so that its relationship to the putative early farmstead site visible in the adjoining area of Bircher Common is more readily understood than at present.

Area D: Croft Wood, Lyngham Vallets, and Highwood Bank

Parts of these extensive woodlands are lightly wooded. Of especial note is the area immediately west of Highwood Bank, north of the main forestry access road, with its dramatically-sited beech wood. Other areas on the margins of Fishpool Valley retain vestiges of the former wood-pasture still evident on C19th maps. The management of the area by the Forestry Commission has so far involved intensive coniferous planting that has dramatically altered the character of all three principal woodland areas.

Condition of archaeological features:

- In the lightly wooded areas, there is reasonably good preservation of archaeological features. In this way, the beech wood west of Highwood Bank preserves areas of former delves, as well as the lines of carriage rides and later woodland management features. In the area immediately north of Fishpool Valley where numerous veteran trees survive, survival of features such as early sinuous woodland boundary banks is good.
- As soon as the coniferous planted areas are entered, survival is negligible. In the more intensively planted areas, for instance within Lyngham Vallet, some robust features such as hollow-ways are just decipherable at present. However, these and certainly more subtle features are unlikely to survive a further planting episode.

Management options:

- (a) Maintain existing areas of light woodland to retain also the archaeological features that have so far survived intact
- (b) Provide advice and guidance to Forestry Commission regarding the preservation of identified features, and to consider improvements to the management of specific areas

with a relatively high density of survival of recognisable features (such as the north-western area of Lyngham Vallets).

- (c) Maintain existing rides and periodically clear vegetation to facilitate continued visibility of features such as the former meandering trackway that runs parallel with the path to Croft Ambrey from Croft Castle.
- (d) Negotiate improvements to the areas where veteran trees survive on the northern margins of Fishpool Valley.

Recommendation 3:

Consider the possibility of negotiating the re-instatement of the area of former wood pasture between Croft Ambrey and the Croft parkland, and extending down to the north-western margins of Fishpool Valley.

Note: This re-instatement could be linked to the re-definition of the boundaries of the Fishpool Valley SSSI. The site of Croft Ambrey contains the best surviving area of former wood-pasture on the property. However, at present it is detached in landscape terms from the parkland to the south, and from Fishpool Valley. Clearance of conifer from the slopes south of Croft Ambrey would re-unite the area visually, and would also support the survival of the veteran trees and small area of more open ground and deciduous woodland now isolated to the north of Fishpool Valley eastwards of the Keeper's Cottage.

Former wood pasture areas

On the Croft Estate, wood pasture survives only in unmanaged form, and even then only over Croft Ambrey hillfort. Such relict 'devolved' wood pasture is itself a rare survival in Herefordshire, even though historically, it accounted for a significant (if not yet systematically calibrated) percentage of the area once under woodland. It would in principle be possible to roughly estimate this area from C19th editions of the 6" to the mile Ordnance survey maps. These maps enable us to see that for the Croft Estate, there are extensive areas of what is now Croft Wood immediately south of Croft Ambrey that were until the C20th managed as wood pasture (Figures 4 and 6). The archaeological survey work in 2001-2 and veteran tree survey work enables further definition of former wood pasture areas to be made. So it is that areas that still feature veteran oaks that self-seeded while the wood-pasture system was still maintained can be defined north-east of School Wood, Lucton, and north-west of Fishpool Valley.

Management prescriptions:

- (a) Although many of the surviving veteran oaks may seem to have died, they should not be removed or subjected to further damage.
- (b) Heavy wheeled or tracked vehicles should avoid crossing sections of linear earthwork or other earthwork monuments that survive in these former wood pasture areas, and this should include four-wheeled-drive vehicles.

Management suggestions:

- (a) As an interim measure, the conifer cover might be cut back where such trees have been planted very close to veteran trees. This will open up the areas around the veteran trees to enable regrowth of the oaks themselves where possible, and for any dormant vegetation species to begin to recolonise.
- (b) On a longer term basis, a plan could be created to re-establish most or all of the former wood-pasture areas, and to begin to manage them again utilising an adapted form of the traditional practice.

Former coppices and plantations

In some areas of existing woodland now managed by the Forestry Commission, fragments of former coppice compartments still survive in the form of living but out-grown stems and stools. Elsewhere, such as within Fishpool Valley, and the eastern part of The Moors, former managed woodland has run wild, and areas of former coppice are featured by out-grown and often moss-covered stools and stems. Other than the compartment banks themselves, these trees are the final existing link back to traditional systems of woodland management on the estate. If a return is to be made to more carefully managed woodland, these fragments need to be recognised, mapped and then made subject to a re-instated management regime.

Management prescriptions:

- (a) Again, it would be helpful if these fragments were both recognised and retained. Certainly, no more earthworks should be lost due to thoughtless removal of traditional woodland and individual trees.

Management suggestions:

- (a) Unlike the veteran trees, it is most unlikely that these out-grown stools have been mapped in any way. A necessary preliminary to any enhanced management of this inheritance would therefore be the survey of their location, together with a characterisation of species and likely former compartment extent.
- (b) Decisions need to be made about the future management and development of woodland on the estate. Therefore, any planting plan drawn up in future for the estate needs to feature a strategy for woodland maintenance. This of course will need to take into account the need for archaeological earthwork features to be undamaged.

Area E: Croft Ambrey

The importance of the hillfort from a variety of standpoints has already been noted at length in this Report. That the site is important for historic landscape and historical ecology as well as archaeological reasons was clearly recognised in a conservation survey treating the site as a separate entity (Alexander, Claris and Luntley, 1895, 2). The principal new information recovered during the 2001-2 survey concerns the extent of the site and the sequence of its development. Broadly, the north-facing slope is an integral part of the fort, and the principal two south-facing ditches were inserted within – and bisected – a fort originally established as a large univallate enclosure.

Condition of archaeological features:

- Although there is a certain amount of visitor erosion where paths cross the monument (and especially the higher banks), the general condition of the archaeological features is good.
- Burrowing animals are causing some localised damage to earthworks. This needs to be addressed where the remains are particularly sensitive and the damage considerable.
- A significant impact on buried archaeology that has only recently been recognised is the effect of bracken rhizomes. These form a 'mat' at a certain depth and in studies on Dartmoor, it has been shown that the root action can destroy archaeological deposits to some depth. This process has become more damaging in recent years as bracken has invaded wider areas. No studies has been carried out in Wales or the Marches to assess the effects here, but clearly there is a significant amount of bracken cover both on the Ambrey and over large parts of Bircher Common.

- The celebrity of the site in the Welsh Marches has led to occasional forays by metal detectorists, noted from ‘divots’ dug into some of the more exposed areas of the site in recent years.

Management options:

- (a) Given the importance of the monument, it would be appropriate to develop a Conservation Management Plan that specifically defined its significance and identified a strategy for its management.
- (b) Some enabling works, including a new detailed survey of the site, would need to be carried out prior to or as an integral part of the preparation of such a Plan.
- (c) Given the nature and extent of the new discoveries, and the enhanced understanding of its landscape setting, it would be appropriate to embrace an opportunity to conduct research archaeological investigations at the site and in its closer and wider environs.
- (d) None of the above obviates the need for immediate management action in respect of the erosion factors identified.
- (e) It would be useful to make an aim of any new site investigations, the experimental conduct of studies of the impact of bracken rhizomes on the buried archaeological deposits. This should include scientific studies of soil processes and chemistry.
- (f) Some works for improved management of the vegetation cover on the monument could begin in the short-term. Bracken cover could be kept down by cutting and rolling, and some areas subject to blackberry and other overgrowth could be cleared. The nature conservation interest should be re-assessed before implementing a comprehensive vegetation management scheme, and surveys (for instance of arboreal lichen on the north-facing slopes) should be undertaken.
- (g) The scale and effects of unauthorised metal detecting activity should be monitored, and appropriate signage considered.
- (h) Site interpretation is dealt with below. Any strategy for provision of on-site facilities should include a new interpretation panel near the main entrance to the site.

Recommendation 4:

Devise and implement a management programme for the care and further study of Croft Ambrey hillfort over the next decade. This should include a vegetation and visitor management plan as an integral element of a site-specific Conservation Management Plan.

Note: The good sense of re-uniting Croft Ambrey, which contains the best surviving area of former wood-pasture on the property, to a restored area of such cover to the south has already been noted. The benefits in landscape terms for the fort itself are considerable, since views up towards the monument as well as down from it would be re-established.

<i>Monument management</i>

Even when they are in relatively ‘stable’ environmental contexts, field monuments are subject to a variety of pressures, including natural and visitor erosion. For Scheduled Monuments, advice is at hand from the local English Heritage Field Monument Warden. These Wardens make a visit to each Monument every two to three years, and report upon any damage or accelerated erosion that has occurred since their last visit.

Management prescriptions:

- (a) It is now widely recognised that, for major monuments, it is appropriate not only to draw up management agreements between a responsible authority (English Heritage or the local Council) and the owners (or their agents or tenants), but also to prepare site-specific Conservation Management Plans. These set out clearly the particular significance of the monument, and discuss areas of vulnerability to erosion, and so on. They also set out in more detail prescriptions for effective management.

Management suggestions:

- (a) In preparing a property management plan, a first step in respect of the historic environment and archaeology should be the identification of individual monuments for which it would be appropriate to prepare individual conservation management plans. At the Croft Estate, this should be the case not only for Croft Ambrey, but also for at least two of the Bircher Common prehistoric earthwork enclosures.
- (b) It would be unrealistic to expect that the periodic visits of Field Monument Wardens would provide adequate monitoring of the condition of field monuments on the estate. Consideration should therefore be given to the possibility that National Trust wardens receive some training in routine management and maintenance for archaeological field monuments, and carry out yearly site checks on important monuments and areas in the course of their normal landscape duties.

Future prehistoric landscape and settlement research

The value of a new study of Croft Ambrey fort, including closely targeted excavation, has already been noted. The recognition of the potential date and importance of the upstanding earthwork remains of early farmstead enclosures on Bircher Common was an important outcome of the 1992 survey, as was the noting of likely associated field systems. These observations were amplified in the 2001-2 survey. This has underlined the potential for and value of integrated prehistoric landscape and settlement research within and in the immediate surroundings of the Croft Estate.

Management prescriptions:

- (a) 'You cannot manage what you do not understand' is a familiar environmental adage, and this is a primary justification for engaging in further research into the nationally important early landscape and settlement features now known to be present, and in remarkably good states of preservation, within the Croft Estate. The scope of such research will need to be adjusted to the possibilities of identifying individual and institutional research interest, and of raising adequate funding.
- (b) At the least the settlement sites recorded (Croft Ambrey and the four early farmstead enclosures on Bircher Common) merit detailed earthwork surveys to record their more subtle features. While Figure 23 illustrates some of their basic features, many subtleties were noted in the field (internal levelled areas and building platforms, for instance) that need to be recorded in detail to provide both further information on the organisation and layout of the settlements; but also to provide a conservation baseline. Croft Ambrey merits a new and very detailed survey to the best modern standards by English Heritage Survey Division staff.

Management suggestions:

- (a) The settlement sites and field systems identified should be mapped. The field systems and lynchets in particular need close delineation and analysis in order to reach some conclusions about their chronology and organisation.
- (b) A major prehistoric research project should be organised to re-examine Croft Ambrey and to gain a better understanding of its contemporary environs. This would require both a research and investigatory partnership, and a funding consortium to be put together. If developed 'maximally', such a research project would need to be focused both on the Croft Ambrey site and also on its wider environment, extending beyond the limits of The National Trust Estate. It should include especially, some study and investigation of Pyon Wood Camp, a hillfort approximating the size (and shape) of the earliest phase of Croft Ambrey, and crowning a much lower hilltop at Aymestrey.

Area F: Fishpool Valley

Although it is very likely the case that the genesis of the fishponds in Fishpool Valley has been misunderstood, in landscape history terms the history of the site is nonetheless of considerable importance. As noted above, it is most likely that the southern part of the valley was envisaged as an integral element of the C18th landscape park. However, the location assumed a much greater significance in relation to the burgeoning fashion for the Picturesque, and the residence of leading proponents of the aesthetic nearby, with direct contacts to the site owners and occupiers.

What is more difficult to be clear about is the impact upon the 'hard landscape', of the application of Picturesque principles to this particular location. The fashion for the construction of follies doubtless contributed to the appearance of 'Gothick/Romantic features, but what other 'adjustments' were made within the landscape is as yet uncertain.

What is more certain is that the planting of exotic specimen trees from at least the mid-C19th has altered the overall character of the valley, if subtly. Moreover, the imposition of conifer plantations across the margins (and even directly within the valley in some locations), and a general lack of care and maintenance through the C20th, has resulted in a general degradation of the visual effect. While in many respects this has ensured also that the archaeology has remained well-preserved, forestry operations including haul routes have had a negative impact locally.

Condition of archaeological/historic features:

- In the lightly wooded areas, there is reasonably good preservation of archaeological features. In the more intensively planted areas, for instance close to the northern margins, some features such as carriageways are still decipherable at present. However, they are unlikely to survive further planting episodes, and moreover should now form a key element in a more co-ordinated approach to the management (and indeed restoration) of the valley (see below).
- The built structures, including the dams have fared variably. Some conservation work has for instance been carried out on structures such as the Gothick pump-house (HSM 76261). However, the lime-kilns (which may have had a dual functional and aesthetic role), and more especially the grotto, are in a poor state - at least in part.

Management options:

- (a) There is again scope to devise a site-specific Conservation Management Plan specifically for Fishpool Valley.
- (b) Some enabling works, including a new detailed survey of the valley, to include at a minimum, mapping of the extent and condition of the carriage-rides, would need to be carried out prior to or as an integral part of the preparation of such a Plan.
- (c) The Plan for the valley could of course be prepared as part of a wider parkland restoration or conservation plan. As such, it should envisage the achieving of a specific role for the valley within the 'visitor experience' of Croft, as well as in the ongoing maintenance of the valley within the context of estate management.
- (d) The 'ingredients' of a plan for the restoration and visitor development of the valley will be several, and complex. They should however include some key elements. One will no doubt involve the careful survey and study of the built ornamental structures and features, followed by appropriate conservation action. Another might involve the opening up of view-points, and the clearance for walking, of paths along the former carriage-rides. Another should be careful consideration of the amount of necessary vegetation clearance and (albeit limited) new planting.

- (e) The 'development' of the valley as a visitor experience should nonetheless be low-key, and certainly should not overload the location with signage and interpretation. It should be remembered that the 'intended' experience of the valley in the late C18th and early C19th was as a deliberately but 'invisibly' contrived 'wildscape'. As such the visitor should see 'the hand of nature' as being uppermost in determining the character of the landscape here. Conversely, the 'hand of management' should be concealed as far as is compatible with health and safety and access considerations.

Recommendation 5:

Fishpool Valley should be recognised as having a high visitor appeal beyond its current usage. This should provide justification for the preparation of a conservation management plan (perhaps as part of a wider parkland restoration/conservation plan). This in turn should provide a platform for the devising of a specific restoration/development project.

Note: Such a project should be regarded as an investment for the property. Given the lack of access to nearby Downton Castle (the creation of Richard Payne Knight), both Croft Castle itself and Fishpool Valley could be a prime location for the explanation and 'experience' of the theory and practice of the Picturesque in designed historic landscapes. This would be a major 'draw' for visits to the property.

Landscape restoration

This survey has reinforced an initial impression that although the landscape park is the most striking visual feature, because of the existence of veteran trees from earlier planting and specimen trees from later, Croft appears in landscape terms to be a palimpsest rather than a unified creation. As such, it may well not be feasible to 'restore' the parkland according to a single scheme. Moreover, the remit of 'landscape restoration' should be envisaged in wider terms than for the parkland alone (which is also treated in a separate section below). It has already been noted how it would be beneficial in landscape terms to re-instate wood-pasture – initially on a modest localised scale. Wood-pasture and common were once much more extensive on the Croft Estate, and this included Lucton Common that has now disappeared and is indistinguishable within the Croft Wood/School Wood landscape. There is good scope to consider re-instatement of these elements of the historic pattern – not just for historic veracity, but also to diversify the amenity represented by different habitats and views, and for bio-diversity reasons (see below in sections on School Wood and Pokeshouse Wood).

Management prescriptions:

- (a) In the preparation of management plans for the property, there needs to be a 'vision' for the estate landscape in, say, fifty years time. This does not mean that the pragmatics of immediate management should be neglected. However, a 'destination' should be given for the cumulative effects of small-scale change across decades.

Management suggestions:

- (a) 'Restoration' is probably not the most appropriate term for planning for a return to a richer, more diverse and more locally distinctive landscape. To achieve the latter, a commitment needs to be made to create localised 'environments' reflecting more closely the history of individual locales.
- (b) The component elements of a 'returned' more diverse environment at the Croft Estate should perhaps (in no particular order) be: landscape park, Picturesque landscape (Fishpool Valley), open grazed common (Lucton as well as Bircher), wood-pasture (perhaps three or four distinct but linked area), and woodland (new coppice as well as deciduous woodland and conifer plantation).
- (c) Two distinct but very local planted vegetation features with definite historical origins are the beech hangar west of Highwood Bank and the planted Scots pines on the ridge west of Croft Ambrey. Thought needs to be given as to how these features can be sustained, and their former landscape setting restored.

Carriage rides and former parkland

What are termed 'carriage rides' in this report were described more neutrally as 'terrace-ways' in the 1992 report. They comprise narrow tracks that are most visible where they are terraced into slopes. Most importantly, they form a network of rides from which the landscape could be appreciated (see section on assessment of Fishpool Valley, above, p.39). As also noted above (in the 'results' sections on Fishpool Valley and Croft Wood), at certain key locations, stratigraphic relationships exist with other features, that provide a rough indication of both use- and abandonment- dates of the carriage-rides.

The 2001-2 survey recorded how in Fishpool Valley these carriage rides were constructed on parallel courses at different elevations, and how deviations were built into the system. At Croft Ambrey, a particularly vertiginous route was scarped across the line of the northern defences in such a way as to partially obscure the course of the latter at one particular location. As an integral feature of the planned parkland of the C18th, these features are of considerable importance.

Management prescriptions:

- (a) Care needs to be taken not to cut tracks for forestry or other operations that will further obliterate the course of these rides. This is particularly the case where, as in Lyngham Vallets, their course and linkage to the viewpoints by Croft Ambrey is as yet uncertain.

Management suggestions:

- (a) It would be useful to conduct a survey of the course and form of carriage rides across the whole extent of the former landscape park of the C18th. This would facilitate identification not only of the routes followed, but also the gradients involved. As such, it would provide some interesting insights into how it was in the C18th anticipated that the landscape might best be appreciated.
- (b) Once the network is traced in its full complexity, and especially within Fishpool Valley, it would be possible to select certain parts of the route for 'reinstatement'. (But perhaps not re-enactment, since driving light single-horse carriages around such a landscape of steep slopes must have at times been quite a dangerous venture).

Former quarries

The quarries that exist in various parts of the estate represent episodes of industrial activity sometimes widely separated in time. For instance, some of the delves may well be medieval in origin. There is clearly a change in the scale and manner of quarries in the C19th, when on-site rock-sawing plant became available. This accounts for the smooth vertical faces of some of the larger quarries. In management terms former quarries represent both a hazard and an opportunity – both for resource and visitor reasons.

Management prescriptions:

- (a) No former quarries should be the subject of alteration or be dumped within, without there first being an assessment of their nature conservation and historic interest.

Management suggestions:

- (a) The natural environmental value of some quarries is no doubt considerable, but perhaps needs closer assessment. There is an historic environment dimension to this, since the ecological value of individual quarries may affect the future extraction potential. This latter is for localised re-opening of quarries as sources of materials for the restoration of estate buildings.

- (b) The geology of the estate is relatively simple, so the potential of quarries for illustrative purposes for visitors is generally low. Nonetheless, their locations are sometimes dramatic, and the story they tell about an aspect of the historical development of the estate is an interesting one. Visitors to the Castle frequently ask about the provenance of the mudstone and sandstone (both rocks are 'foreign' to the estate) used in its principal elevations. It might be useful therefore to see if it is possible to match some of the visible limestone building materials used in Croft buildings, to individual estate quarries.

Area G: The Croft Castle parkland

The present Croft Castle parkland can be regarded as having resulted originally from the decision to locate the early post-medieval deer-park close to the northern side of the mansion, and then from the decision to create a designed landscape park as an envelope for the setting of the building itself (but see also p. 41, above) It is, notably, one area of the landscape at the Croft Estate that all visitors experience, since they have to drive through it to get to and from the house.

Due to the disposition of the main building complex in relation to Fishpool Valley, the north and east parkland are largely separated from one another. The south and west areas of parkland also exist as distinct areas. This is due to practical working arrangements, such as the presence of the Home Farm and resulting access restrictions. It is also due to the presence of the ha-ha, thereby creating the 'GA' area of former 'pleasure grounds' in the near environs of the house. This disposition creates the paradox that, although the designed landscape is experienced visually as a unified whole when seen from the castle/mansion itself, it is less easy to comprehend when actually walking around it.

Condition of archaeological features:

- This is variable both within and between the different areas of parkland. Even within small compass, for instance in the area by the east drive, the condition of features such as ridge and furrow can vary dramatically.
- Some complexes such as the brick and tile kilns in the east park can survive remarkably well due to their absorption within areas of scrub or woodland.

Management options:

- (a) The east drive provides an affective and very distinctive approach to the property, and perhaps the temptation to alter it in any significant way should be resisted.
- (b) Several areas of existing arable merit consideration for reversion to arable. The furthest field north-west from the castle still features surviving parkland trees, while those to the south-east and south are very prominent in the landscape and for the approach to the property by road.
- (c) It is nonetheless desirable to find ways to integrate Fishpool Valley better with the rest of the parkland. There exists therefore a suite of options to provide points of access further up the valley from the drive, and also from the valley across the drive just west of the Cock Gate entrance, and into the east park.
- (d) The east park is currently not an area into which public access is encouraged. As the property becomes a more popular destination, this perhaps needs to change. While at least one public footpath provides access through the former 'Paddock' area to the west of the house, it is so far not possible to appreciate the setting of the castle from a distance to the south, or to the east. To the north, meanwhile, there is currently no ready access to arguably the best grouping of veteran trees anywhere on the property.
- (e) There is a need to consider whether potentially a lighter stocking regime might be more beneficial to the continued survival of earthworks in the east park.

- (f) Since the earthworks bordering the former south drive still survive, there is considerable scope for re-instating the access and planting, and for recreating the vista that once provided a dramatic approach to the house from this direction.
- (g) A survey of tree-boles within the parkland would help to flesh out the observation made during this survey, that the original planting was designed to complement the formal gardens by extending sight-lines and planted features out into the surrounding landscape. It was noted above (p. 40) that these planted features of rows and groves may have existed within a parkland landscape, and it is a viable option in restoring areas of the parkland (for instance by arable conversion – see below) to consider re-instating also, some of these early-phase tree groupings.

Recommendation 6:

A Parkland Restoration Plan or a Conservation Management Plan should be developed for the Croft Estate and this should properly place its main focus upon the area of parkland that provides the immediate setting for the house. Such a plan needs to be informed by more detailed survey and designed landscape analysis than has been possible in the present survey.

Note: Any such Plan will clearly need to draw upon the results of this survey, and it would be well for anyone charged with preparing such a Plan to address the issues raised and suggestions made in this management section of the present Report.

Parkland and pasture drainage and related stock management issues

Overstocking and overgrazing is a considerable problem on many areas of historic grassland in Herefordshire. While this is not a major problem at Croft, there has in recent winters especially, been some considerable localised damage of earthworks due to trampling.

Management prescriptions:

- (a) Steps need to be taken (in the form of management and tenancy agreements) to ensure that the over concentration of stock within certain areas is avoided, and especially where poaching of earthworks can result.
- (b) In key areas such as the parkland where earthwork remains abound, the cutting of new drainage, and even the maintenance of existing drains needs to be subject to consultation and, where appropriate, archaeological recording action.

Management suggestions:

- (a) There needs to be an identification of areas of the Croft Estate parkland (in particular) where danger from poaching is considerable, and where this has occurred detrimentally in recent times.
- (b) Options need to be identified for positive planning of stocking type and level appropriate to the sensitive management of the parkland as an historic landscape.
- (c) Some consideration might be given to the development of a 'drainage plan' for the parkland areas of the Estate (and indeed, given the experience of the recent archaeological excavations, also for the other utilities). This would enable new drainage to be planned in such a way as to avoid further damage to surviving (but sometimes buried) features of archaeological significance.

Arable land

Modern farming of arable land can result in a number of undesirable impacts upon buried archaeological remains. In the context of parkland, arable farming is inimical to the survival both of the character and fabric of historic parkland and its designed landscape. Individual trees become isolated and are progressively eliminated, and built features and landscaping that once were part of a unified scheme become degraded.

At Croft, the process of loss of parkland to arable began in the nineteenth century. However, as can be seen from a reading of the historic maps (abstracts of which are included with this report), the extent of parkland remained stable at least up to the mid-C20th, when the rate of loss speeded up again.

Management prescriptions:

- (a) There is clearly pressure on the Croft Estate arable to provide sufficient winter feed for the stock, so it may be unrealistic to pursue a full arable reversion programme.

Management suggestions:

- (a) Nonetheless, there will be some scope for this, and some thought should also be given to how the hedgerows between arable fields can best be maintained.

Parkland and ornamental trees, and tree-planting

It is not an option to regard the arboreal dimension of the Croft landscape as unchanging. Each year, the individual trees and planted groups that lend the estate so much of its character suffer damage from the elements. Hotter summer days and more violent storms in the current climatic cycle are placing the more exposed trees, both veteran and ornamental, under severe stress. Change has to be managed, however, and besides simply coping with losses, some planned thought needs to be given to replacement planting.

Management prescriptions:

- (a) Besides for aesthetic reasons, new tree-planting needs to take account of both historic sight-lines and the existence and location of features of archaeological importance.
- (b) No new planting should occur on historic earthworks, unless a specific case can be made to justify such planting.

Management suggestions:

- (a) Any tree-planting scheme or plan produced as part of any future proposals for managing the historic parkland (for instance) should be subject to extensive consultation concerning impact. Ideally, it should include an interim impact assessment, looking at a wide range of possible implications.
- (b) If the palimpsest effect of the evolved parkland at Croft is to be maintained, then specimen trees need to be planted to replace those that are being damaged and lost.
- (c) Some new planting could be countenanced that would nonetheless have a dramatic impact on the present approach and setting of the mansion. An example is the south drive, where it may be possible to re-create the effect of the vista presumably created here as part of the final phase of the formal gardens. This is because the surviving earthworks on the east side of the former drive appear to indicate the former existence here of a belt of trees. These trees on either side would have provided the flanking frame for the broad ride that the drive would have been located centrally within.

Ponds and water management

Ponds, of whatever origin or historic purpose, need active maintenance both for historic landscape and for nature conservation reasons. The most obvious location where this obtains on the Croft estate is Fishpool Valley, where the different pools in the existing flight down the central section of the valley floor here are interdependent.

Management prescriptions:

- (a) Systems for water management must be actively maintained, and this includes drainage channels, overflow leats, weirs and sluices. Once these once functioning features have been restored, appropriate water levels need to be defined for each pool.

Management suggestions:

- (a) It would be useful to develop a water management plan for the estate, that would identify a strategy for dealing with surface water and the creation of watery habitats in a way that would work with (rather than cross-cut) the grain of the historic water management systems. Such a plan would for instance define the manner in which each of the pools should be managed, and how they should relate to one another.
- (b) The creation of such a plan should work in parallel with plans for the restoration of parkland features, so that water management implications are a key consideration in such restoration planning, and the newly restored pools and parkland are worked into the maintenance schedules for the water management system overall.

Roads, access and surfacing

The Croft Estate is a working environment, and as such requires access and maintenance works to facilitate movement within and across the site. However, the planning of such works as are necessary, including associated drainage and surfacing, needs to be carefully undertaken and with due consideration to impact and materials. This is especially so when attempting to manage visitor activities, and in particular arrangements for parking. There will be a natural tendency to look for immediate solutions, for instance in respect to visitor pressure, to accommodate overspill parking.

Management prescriptions:

- (a) The provision of hard-standing and surfacing should not be undertaken on an ad hoc basis. Especial care should be taken not only not to damage earthworks, but also not to adversely affect their setting.
- (b) 'Subtractive' works should be avoided in areas where the immediate landscape has specific and noted historic significance.

Management suggestions:

- (a) Decisions need to be made about the future management and development of transport across the estate, and in particular arrangements for parking.
- (b) Such planning needs clearly to take account of the historic pattern, both of access routes, and of buildings location and disposition
- (c) Care should also be taken to establish which kinds of surfacing are most appropriate to which locations, and indeed also, what materials are to be used. Again, crushed limestone from the estate quarries may well have been used for some surfacing. (However, it is of interest to note that the only excavated section of carriageway, examined in 2001, was surfaced with imported gravel).

Parkland landscape and features restoration

It has been acknowledged that 'restoration' may not be an appropriate term to use for the future management of the designed landscape at Croft, given the lack of evidence for a complete formally designed landscape park here. However, there is no reason why at least the extent and form of the landscaping and planting as mapped in the middle years of the C19th cannot be recreated. What is more definitely important (as also noted above) is that a planting programme is embarked upon that will make good future losses.

Management prescriptions:

- (a) It should not be considered an option at Croft to make major changes to the near setting of the house, especially to the east, that will substantially alter the intimate landscape character that has developed in the past two centuries.
- (b) At the same time a positive approach needs to be adopted for the carefully-considered replacement of trees that are being lost to natural processes.

Management suggestions:

- (a) When view-sheds and vistas are defined analytically for the Croft historic parkland, particular attention should be given to the preservation of views out from the site.
- (b) Apart from one group on the east lawn and the planting against the wall flanking the northern side of the drive west of the Gothick wall, shrubs are not a feature of the Croft parkland, and should not therefore be encouraged.
- (c) Some thought needs to be given to the restoration of some of the designed hard-landscaping features. Most notable, perhaps, is the possible eye-catcher noted in survey in the east park. This certainly merits some further research, and possibly also limited exploratory archaeological site investigation.
- (d) Some research is also merited to attempt to define the ways in which the Picturesque landscaping and structures were added to subtly alter the character of the landscape park during the later C18th and early C19th.

Area GA: Croft Castle close environs

This area has been cut off from the rest of the parkland, probably since the mid-C18th. On C19th maps it appears as 'pleasure grounds'. It now provides the immediate setting for the mansion and is managed as grazed parkland. In the C19th, when the walled gardens will have been used exclusively for horticulture, there were extensive garden planted areas here. These areas were delimited (and protected from grazing stock) by formal iron fencing.

Condition of archaeological features:

- This area contains earthworks that are now known to have originated with fishponds for the medieval castle, a series of formal gardens from the C16th to early C18th and probably also from the tofts and platforms of the deserted medieval village of Croft.
- Their immediate form has resulted from extensive levelling operations to the west of the mansion, and at least one episode of careful landscaping when, in the middle years of the C18th, the surface structures of the formal gardens were removed.
- From the point at which the landscaping occurred, the condition of the 'archaeological' features has remained stable, apart from the cutting of drains across them. Some features are both important and also fragile. The finely sculpted earthworks of the lower of the two sloping formal gardens are a case in point.

Management options:

- (a) Works that might permanently degrade elements of the extant and visible remains of the formal gardens should not be permitted.
- (b) As with the parkland surrounding this area, stocking levels should be consistent with the continued existence of sometimes quite subtle earthwork features
- (c) There could well be suggestions made in the coming years either to reinstate elements of the formal gardens, or to replace the two garden areas created to the west of the mansion in the C19th. Such suggestions should be resisted, because what is now visible is the creation of a particular period when the landscape park was created, with the addition of a few specimen trees. As such, it provides a particular setting not only for the house but more especially also for the house together with the bastioned terrace added to the ensemble c.1820.
- (d) What there is perhaps scope for is better access, both physically and intellectually, to the near environs of the house, and outwards to the wider Estate.

Recommendation 7:

A location is found and funding sought for a dedicated Visitor Centre sited in this area. This could perhaps best be sited close to the main entrance by the Gothick Wall, and should complement other (developed) visitor facilities (see below, under Interpretation).

Formal gardens research

The current series of archaeological research excavations in the close environs of the mansion are producing many new insights into the layout and development of the formal gardens, and it is worth reflecting upon what will be the eventual result. Certainly it will be possible to specify the sequence of garden construction, and to define the limits of different garden areas at different points in time. It will also be possible to some degree to characterise the treatment of these limits (former walls, terraces, planted boundaries, and so on). Some further features will have been delimited, and especially those

However, the formal gardens were deliberately erased. This was a very thorough process, and there are therefore many details of the build and content of the gardens that remain uncertain.

Management prescriptions:

- (a) It will be quite possible to give an account of the origins and development of the formal gardens entirely from the archaeological work that will have been carried out in the period 2001-2004. There is therefore no 'prescription' that for management reasons it is vital to carry out further research into their character and history.

Management suggestions:

- (a) It is however suggested that some further gardens history research is carried out, for two purposes. The first of these is to learn more about the on-site characteristics of the gardens, in their configurations of c.1590, c.1670, and c.1710. This would require specific research in repositories of record that could pertain to the individual family members who are thought most likely to have created each permutation.
- (b) The second of these purposes for research is to set the gardens within a wider context of the development of formal gardens in England and Wales. To some extent, this will be undertaken for the publication of the eventual report on the archaeological fieldwork in the close environs of the mansion. However, it would be useful to see research commissioned from a gardens history specialist that would provide a range of comparisons with similar configurations recorded (and hopefully better documented) elsewhere.

Site interpretation, facilities and their location

The question of access to the Croft Estate, and to the central complex itself, is one that is central to any consideration of how the Estate is managed for visits. As the story and the environment of the Croft Estate achieve greater celebrity in the coming decades, so too will pressure increase for access and information. The response will hopefully involve the development of a co-ordinated approach to information provision (see below), and some initiatives concerning the planning and development of facilities.

Management prescriptions:

- (a) It is going to be important to develop a strategy specifically concerning how the castle and Estate are interpreted, and what facilities are provided to assist this.

Management suggestions:

- (a) The primary suggestion is that a dedicated Visitor Centre is created in a location close to where visitors now access the close environs of the house.
- (b) Such a Centre could be formed by the adaptation of an existing building. However, there may well be scope for constructing a new building of some design quality, but in a relatively low-impact setting. One possibility (that would need however to satisfy strict criteria regarding minimisation of impact upon a Listed structure) would be to

site such a centre immediately to the west of the Gothick wall, close to the present tea-room.

- (c) The content of any such Visitor Centre would need to be given careful attention. It should however attempt to encompass interpretation of both the house and the Estate, and in regard to the latter it should act as a springboard for explorations on foot into the landscape eastwards, northwards and westwards. The interpretation could and perhaps should include the display of items (some of which are extremely fine) from the excavations in the near environs of the house, and an exposition of the results of that project.
- (d) Site interpretation facilities in the landscape itself include paths and trails, walkways, signage and on-site panels. The latter should be kept to as minimum, and are warranted, if at all, at Croft Ambrey and at Fishpool Valley. The question of the visitor experience to the Valley has been discussed above, but it may also be worth looking at how trails can be provided out across (and around the different areas of) Bircher Common, and away down to the west both to the river Lugg and to The Moors and Lucton.

Estate routeways and approaches

Up until the early C19th, the two primary approaches to the formal gardens were from the south and from the east. Something of the inferred historic disposition of the southern drive and its landscaped vista was discussed above. From c.1820 these two approaches were modified such that the two primary approaches to the castle were from the south-west along the west drive, and from the north-east along the east drive. The formal gardens thenceforth ceased to exist, but less formal garden areas were created close to the castle, to the north of the west drive and to the south of the east drive within the Gothick wall.

In recent years, gardens have been created, somewhat anachronistically, across the former house service area to the north of the mansion, and within the walled gardens. The one remaining approach to a garden area on the site is therefore that which approaches the Gothick wall along the east drive – that is, along the main entranceway to the property.

Management prescriptions:

- (a) With the siting of visitor facilities and the public entrance to the site to the north-west of the Gothick wall in recent years, there is a perception that the formality of the main gateway entrance is compromised. However the approach is dealt with, the temptation to create any new openings in the Gothick wall should be resisted.
- (b) It is perhaps worth re-iterating at this juncture the view that the east drive provides an affective and very distinctive approach to the property, and the temptation to alter it in any significant way should also be resisted

Management suggestions:

- (a) One positive suggestion that can be made is that the western end of the west drive might be re-instated, at least as a walk-way. In view of its landscape setting and its forming part of a mock-castle complex, it must be counted as a considerable loss that the bridge across School Lane at Lucton has been partially destroyed. It might be possible to re-open this for pedestrian traffic (to enable the passage of tall vehicles beneath it) now that the land on both sides is in National Trust hands.
- (b) Some re-instatement of the former south-drive, again at least as a walk can and perhaps should be considered, as was noted on p. 56, above.

Area H: Common Wood and School Wood, Lucton

School Wood has been managed as woodland since the C19th, but formerly Common Wood was contained within Lucton Common. The woodland in both areas is much overgrown today, and in need of positive management. Some of the area has been planted with conifer. Within the Estate as a whole, this has to be reckoned as one of the more neglected areas in terms of its landscape and visitor potential.

Condition of archaeological features:

- In the lightly wooded areas, there is reasonably good preservation of archaeological features such as trackways.
- In the more intensively planted areas, for instance close to the southern margins, some features such as charcoal-burning features are sometimes just decipherable among the replanting debris at present. However, they are unlikely to survive a further growth and cropping episode.

Management options:

- (a) Provide guidance regarding the preservation of identified features such as the carriage ride, but also woodland boundary banks, charcoal burning platforms, and the series of house platforms and areas of rubble (for example, HSM 76399, HSM 76395) marking the location of farmstead sites along School Lane and elsewhere.
- (b) Clear vegetation to re-instate the visibility of the former west drive, and carry out drainage and ground-works to make its route usable as a path.
- (c) Develop a strategy for the gradual opening up of Common Wood with a view to re-creating the open common or heathland that once characterised Lucton Common. This would result in the opening up of views northwards and westwards, and path links could be made to the former west drive.
- (d) Carry out further and more intensive archaeological field survey, in much the same way as recommended for the bracken areas of Bircher Common, to recover more information about the likely post-medieval settlements represented by the platforms recorded in the present survey.
- (e) School Wood might be an area in which some coppice creation and management along traditional lines might be introduced.

Recommendation 8:

Develop an approach to the School Wood/Common Wood area of the Estate that puts at the forefront consideration of the possibility of active 'landscape restoration' and active management to create a sustainable and diverse local environment, and one that is also attractive to visitors.

Note: This need not be an expensive option, but it is certainly one that requires an active approach to landscape management. There is surely some scope also here, and for The Moors, for some collaboration with Lucton School that might maximise the educational opportunity afforded by a fresh look at the management of both areas.

Area I: Pokeshouse Wood

Again, with its dramatic location overlooking the river Lugg and Aymestry, this is a part of the Croft Estate landscape that perhaps deserves more attention than it so far appears to have received. Having stated this, there are clearly a number of constraints from a safety point of view that will probably always inhibit the degree to which visits to this part of the Estate can actively be encouraged. At present also, its physical dis-location from the rest of the Croft Estate is bound to inhibit the possibilities for recreation.

Condition of archaeological features:

- Some of the features noted in the areas just above the river have survived well, even though they are sometimes located in areas of dense vegetation cover.
- However, the C19th industrial remains, and especially the lime-kiln, are in need of some conservation action.

Management options:

- (a) The management options for this area are at present limited, and the effects of natural erosion from the river Lugg cannot realistically be countered in any way.
- (b) A medium-term objective could be the purchase of land to the east of the wood, to consolidate the National Trust holdings in this area.
- (c) Conservation of the industrial remains in the quarry area.
- (d) In the medium to long term, open up a viewing point in a safe location overlooking the river Lugg and Aymestery church.
- (e) Even with consolidation of land-holdings, this is likely to be an area that is intrinsically difficult of access. It is therefore perhaps appropriate to consider regarding this area as a specific area for restricted access for nature conservation purposes – an idea that would sit well with the SSSI designation here.

Recommendation 9:

Purchase land between the current Pokeshouse Wood holding, and both Lucton Wood and The Moors. This would consolidate the former Estate lands east of the River Lugg, and would facilitate access throughout the western part of the Estate.

Note: This was clearly a concern of David Hughes when the possibility of purchasing The Moors area arose. There could perhaps be some exploration of the possibilities for further land acquisition in the three or so remaining locations (fields and woodland) that separate Pokeshouse Wood from the other areas.

Area J: The Moors, Lucton

This area, especially with its parkland and woodland, requires both careful conservation and the encouragement of visits by the public (as and how these can be compatible). The former lodge is not in National Trust ownership.

Condition of archaeological features:

- In the wooded areas, there is reasonably good preservation of archaeological features.
- In the southern parkland, there is extremely good preservation.
- In the improved pasture areas, survival of earthwork features is poor.

Management options:

- (a) Open up access into this area by creating new paths.
- (b) Restore the bridge across School Lane, Lucton, both for a path on the route of the former carriageway of the west drive, and to re-create a feature worthy of appreciation in its own right.
- (c) Continue to manage as grazing for livestock, the park grassland in the south-western part of the area.
- (d) Begin again to manage the woodland in the eastern part of the area, possibly as coppice.
- (e) Clear vegetation from the area of the earthwork 'mock castle' near School Lane.

Recommendation 10:

Open up access to the rest of the Estate, if at all possible by re-instatement of the bridge across School Lane, Lucton, and otherwise simply by the clearance of vegetation on the course of the west drive carriageway on both sides of the lane.

Information, guiding and publications

The amount of information currently available for visitors to the Croft Estate is very limited. The present property Guide (Uhlmann, 1979) provides an introduction to the history of the Croft family, and a description of the principal rooms open to view, and of their contents. For the wider Estate, there is a very brief description of the park and Fishpool Valley, and a brief entry about Croft Ambrey, contributed by Stan Stanford. What this means is that there is little for the visitor that sets the house in context. Moreover, the current refurbishment works will produce a need to explain the structural development of the mansion, as well as producing a new visitor experience, as different rooms are open to view, with different furnishing.

It does need now to be acknowledged that, in the last four years, an enormous amount more information about both the development of the site that the house stands upon, and the landscape history of the wider Estate has been gathered through field research. It would be extraordinarily unfortunate if this new information were not to be made widely available, and at a series of different levels of detail, to the visiting and interested public.

Clearly, the way in which house and landscape will be experienced in the future will need to influence the nature of what information is provided, how visitors are guided through the building and across the Estate landscape (or, perhaps more correctly, how they are encouraged to explore it for themselves), and what publications are produced to assist this process. A strategy for information provision therefore needs to be developed, that has three components: a short-term element (perhaps the period up to 2005), a medium-term element (?2005-10), and a longer-term view.

Management prescriptions:

- (a) At a site like Croft, a balance needs to be struck in order to ensure that there is enough information available to enable the visiting public to get the most out of their visit, while at the same time not overwhelming them with detail.

Management suggestions:

- (a) For the short-term it is suggested that the planned leaflet-guide to visiting the house is complemented by a guide to the historic landscape and archaeology of the Estate. This could integrate within it a summary of the interim conclusions of the archaeological investigations in the near environs of the house.
- (b) For the medium term one option would be to devise a series of leaflets that explained different themed aspects of the environment of the Estate (for instance, landscape, prehistory, ecology, landscape park development, trees, formal gardens, medieval settlement, and so on). A further series of such leaflets could then act as guides to particular locations (Fishpool Valley, Croft Ambrey, Bircher Common, and so on).
- (c) For the medium term also, the production of a full property guide should be a goal. Ideally, this should focus upon the Estate as much as upon the mansion. While such a Guide might best cover all aspects of the Estate environment, it should perhaps be recognised that it is the diversity of environments, and their landscape history, that makes the property so distinctive. This should perhaps tip the emphasis in the Guide towards the historic environment.
- (f) The medium term could also be the primary planning phase for re-thinking both the Estate landscape and visitor facilities. New access routes around the Estate should be opened up, especially into new areas (such as in the west towards the river Lugg and down to Lucton and Mortimer's Cross). Creation of new walking trails will have a big impact on how the Croft landscape is understood and experienced by visitors.
- (g) For the longer-term, consideration should perhaps be given to how the Croft landscape could be experienced as the subject for residential visits, and particularly for 'educational' leisure activities and study-tours.

SITE INVENTORY (SUMMARY)

Notes: 1. This summary database is an abbreviated version of the Excel database developed for the survey results. The latter contains several further columns. The purpose of this shortened form of the entries is to serve as a rapid reference.

2. Condition assessments in the final column are graded on a gradient from 'good' through 'fair' to 'moderate' (not too well preserved) to 'damaged' (destroyed in part), to 'poor' (frequently used in reference to built structures, and features located within improved pasture).

AREA	SMR NO	EAST	NORTH	FEATURE/SITE TYPE- DESCRIPTION	PERIOD	CONDITION
A	76003	346613	267311	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
A	76004	346622	267258	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	POOR
A	76005	346648	267228	SHEEPFOLD	POST-MED	FAIR
A	76006	346652	267293	FIELD SYSTEM DITCH	POST-MED	POOR
A	76007	346766	267291	POND	MODERN	N/A
A	76008	346806	267369	FIELD BOUNDARY BANK	POST-MED	MODERATE
A	76009	346768	267402	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
A	76010	346725	267426	DISUSED BADGER SETT	MODERN	DISUSED
A	76011	346505	267528	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
A	76012	346498	267472	TRACKWAY	N/K	GOOD
A	76013	346485	267555	LEVELLED YARD + SETTLEMENT	MEDIEVAL	GOOD
A	76014	346332	267591	SMALL-SCALE STONE QUARRYING	POST-MED	GOOD
A	76015	346393	267440	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	V. GOOD
A	76016	346455	267438	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	FAIR
A	76017	346974	267045	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	FAIR
A	76018	346955	267086	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
A	76019	346966	267111	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	DAMAGED
A	76020	346904	267128	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
A	76021	346845	267216	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	FAIR
A	76022	346831	267244	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	POOR
A	76023	346783	267167	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	FAIR
A	76024	346752	267209	2 WWII INSTALLATIONS	MODERN	V. GOOD
A	76025	346738	267195	TRACKWAY	N/K	GOOD
A	76026	346665	267211	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	FAIR
A	76027	346648	267212	FIELD BOUNDARY DITCH	LATE MED	FAIR
A	76028	346655	267215	TRACKWAY	N/K	FAIR
A	76029	346643	267240	DITCH	N/K	FAIR
A	76030	346580	267290	DITCH	N/K	FAIR
A	76031	346592	267299	DITCH :UNKNOWN PURPOSE	N/K	FAIR
A	76032	346594	267313	DITCH + BANK - DYKE	N/K	FAIR
A	76033	346418	267374	TRACKWAY	N/K	FAIR
B	76034	346339	267365	WOODLAND BOUNDARY BANK	N/K	GOOD
B	76035	346410	267200	2 BOUNDARY DITCHES	N/K	VARIABLE
B	76036	346221	267478	WOODLAND BOUNDARY BANK	MEDIEVAL	FAIR
B	76037	346263	267645	BOUNDARY DYKE	POST-MED	GOOD
B	76038	346242	267555	TRACKWAY	N/K	GOOD
B	76039	346633	267067	PREHISTORIC RECT. ENCLOSURE	PREHIST.	FAIR
B	76040	346650	267110	PREHISTORIC ENCLOSURE	PREHIST.	GOOD
B	76041	345830	266121	HUT PLATFORM	PREHIST.	GOOD
B	76042	346860	266430	PREHISTORIC RECT.ENCLOSURE	PREHIST	POOR
B	76043	346512	267192	FIELD LYNCHET	N/K	FAIR
B	76044	345689	267464	WOODLAND BOUNDARY BANK	N/K	FAIR

B	76045	346343	266738	MODERN PLOUGHING DISRUPTION	WWII	POOR
B	76046	346139	266614	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	DAMAGED
B	76047	346132	266628	TRACKWAY	N/K	GOOD
B	76048	346198	266676	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
B	76049	346820	266959	SAW-PIT	POST-MED	GOOD
B	76050	346822	266944	POS. MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT	MEDIEVAL	FAIR
B	76051	346777	266958	SAW-PIT (UNUSUALLY LARGE)	POST-MED	GOOD
B	76052	346769	266991	HUT SITE	N/K	GOOD
B	76053	346782	266993	LYNCHET TERRACE + POS ENCLOSURE	N/K	FAIR
B	76054	346933	266971	QUARRY, NO EXPOSED FACES	POST-MED	GOOD
B	76055	346343	266792	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
B	76056	346367	266856	FIELD LYNCHET	N/K	FAIR
B	76057	346372	266886	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
B	76058	346424	266957	CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
B	76059	346406	266954	FIELD LYNCHET	N/K	FAIR
B	76060	346338	266778	TRACKWAY	N/K	FAIR
B	76061	346331	266772	TRACKWAY	N/K	FAIR
B	76062	346378	266646	BUILDING PLATFORM	N/K	FAIR
B	76063	346430	266427	FARMSTEAD?	PREHIST?	GOOD
B	76064	345456	266136	PREHISTORIS OR MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT ENCLOSURE	PREHIST?	GOOD
B	76065	345457	268151	BUILDING PLATFORM	N/K	FAIR
B	76066	345536	266140	EARTH BANK - FMD 1967 BURIAL PITS	MODERN	FAIR
B	76067	345630	266248	FIELD LYNCHET POS. PREHISTORIC	PREHIST?	FAIR
B	76068	345681	266287	FIELD LYNCHET	PREHIST?	FAIR
B	76069	345681	266287	FIELD LYNCHET	PREHIST?	FAIR
B	76070	345860	266418	FIELD LYNCHET	PREHIST?	POOR
B	76071	345872	266420	FIELD LYNCHET OR TERRACE	PREHIST?	POOR
B	76072	345870	266462	HOUSE PLATFORM	POST-MED	FAIR
B	76073	346254	266445	QUARRYING AREA	MEDIEVAL?	GOOD
B	76074	346139	266226	FARMSTEAD - MED / POST-MED	MEDIEVAL?	GOOD
B	76075	346139	266245	LYNCHET OR BUILDING PLATFORM	N/K	FAIR
B	76076	346100	266219	FARMSTEAD BUILDING	N/K	GOOD
B	76077	346029	266198	SAW-PIT	POST-MED	GOOD
B	76078	346006	266166	SAW-PIT	POST-MED	GOOD
B	76079	345669	265998	FARMSTEAD BUILDING	POST-MED	FAIR
B	76080	346862	267039	HOUSE PLATFORM - MEDIEVAL	MEDIEVAL?	GOOD
B	76081	346906	267013	HOUSE PLATFORM	MEDIEVAL?	FAIR
B	76082	346921	267012	TERRACE/ BUILDING PLATFORM	MEDIEVAL?	FAIR
B	76083	346941	266988	DISUSED TRACKWAY TO 79 + 80	MEDIEVAL?	GOOD
B	76084	347031	267001	POST-MEDIEVAL QUARRY	POST-MED	GOOD
B	76085	347118	266916	RESERVOIR	N/K	GOOD
B	76086	346593	266717	POST MEDIEVAL QUARRY	POST-MED	GOOD
B	76087	346480	266310	QUARRY	POST-MED	GOOD
B	76088	346400	266080	QUARRY PITS	MEDIEVAL?	GOOD
B	76089	345445	266696	BUILDING PLATFORM	MEDIEVAL?	GOOD
B	76090	346362	266740	OVAL MOUND	N/K	POOR
B	76091	346533	267104	SAW PIT	POST-MED	GOOD
B	76092	346508	267186	SAW PIT	POST-MED	GOOD
B	76093	346525	267213	WOODLAND BOUNDARY BANK	MEDIEVAL	GOOD
B	76094	346524	267212	LYNCHET RUNNING WEST	PREHIST?	FAIR
B	76095	346537	267132	CHARCOAL BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
B	76096	346544	267140	CIRCULAR PLATFORM	N/K	FAIR
B	76097	346523	267106	WOODLAND BOUNDARY BANK	MEDIEVAL?	FAIR

B	76098	346561	267081 WOODLAND BOUNDARY BANKS	MEDIEVAL?	FAIR
B	76099	346644	267034 WOODLAND BOUNDARY BANKS	MEDIEVAL?	GOOD
B	76100	346440	266820 SUNKEN PLATFORM	N/K	FAIR
B	76101	346450	266830 SUNKEN PLATFORM	N/K	FAIR
B	76102	346472	266854 SUNKEN PLATFORM	N/K	FAIR
C	76103	346174	267411 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	POOR
C	76104	346155	267072 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	FAIR
C	76105	346222	267064 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	FAIR
C	76106	346369	267081 TRACKWAY	N/K	GOOD
C	76107	346331	267132 FIELD LYNCHET	PREHIST?	POOR
C	76108	346154	266706 TRACKWAY	N/K	POOR
C	76109	346134	266769 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	FAIR
C	76110	345933	266870 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	POOR
C	76111	346061	266918 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	POOR
C	76112	346166	266936 TRACKWAY	N/K	POOR
C	76113	346207	266701 TRACKWAY	N/K	FAIR
C	76114	346198	267386 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	POOR
D	76115	345138	266365 POST-MED./ VICTORIAN QUARRY	POST-MED	V. GOOD
D	76116	345138	266365 18thC ? CARRIAGEWAY	POST-MED	GOOD
D	76117	345190	266457 POST 18thC C-B PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
D	76118	345217	266545 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	POOR
D	76119	345346	266505 WOODLAND BOUNDARY BANK	N/K	POOR
D	76120	345407	266515 WOODLAND BOUNDARY BANK	MEDIEVAL?	FAIR
D	76121	345254	266287 QUARRY	N/K	GOOD
D	76122	344997	266424 CARRIAGE RIDE	N/K	VARIABLE
D	76123	345010	266493 FIELD LYNCHET OR BOUNDARY BANK	N/K	POOR
D	76124	345061	266569 QUARRY	N/K	DAMAGED
D	76125	345029	266775 TRACKWAY	N/K	VARIABLE
D	76126	344524	266287 TRACKWAY	N/K	POOR
D	76127	344939	267078 TRACKWAY	N/K	DAMAGED
D	76128	344928	267063 FIELD LYNCHET	N/K	FAIR
D	76129	344923	267041 LYNCHET (POS. FIELD SYSTEM)	N/K	POOR
D	76130	344908	267048 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	FAIR
D	76131	344928	267068 TRACKWAY	N/K	POOR
D	76132	344951	267048 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	POOR
D	76133	345026	267206 WOODLAND BOUNDARY BANK	N/K	GOOD
D	76134	345658	267355 TRACKWAY	N/K	GOOD
D	76135	345654	267361 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	FAIR
D	76136	345418	267083 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	DAMAGED
D	76137	345363	266968 FIELD LYNCHET	N/K	POOR
D	76138	345104	266838 FIELD LYNCHET	N/K	FAIR
D	76139	345157	266713 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	DAMAGED
D	76140	345152	266783 FIELD LYNCHET / TERRACE/ NATURAL	N/K	DAMAGED
D	76141	345075	266815 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	DAMAGED
D	76142	344726	266712 MEDIEVAL HOLLOWAY	MEDIEVAL	POOR
D	76143	344897	267051 FIELD LYNCHET	N/K	FAIR
D	76144	344252	265962 WOODLAND BOUNDARY BANK	N/K	FAIR
D	76145	343912	265713 PLATFORM POSSIBLY MODERN	MODERN	FAIR
D	76146	343883	265538 SAW-PIT	POST-MED	GOOD
E	76147	344450	266800 CROFT AMBREY HILLFORT	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76148	344234	266766 WEST GUARD CHAMBER	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76149	344243	266773 HOLLOWAY/ENTRANCE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76150	344249	266772 EAST GUARD CHAMBER	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76151	344260	266762 POS. GUARD CHAMBER	IRON AGE	GOOD

E	76152	344259	266776 POS. GUARD CHAMBER	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76153	344255	266784 BUILDING PLATFORM	N/K	GOOD
E	76154	344243	266791 BUILDING TERRACE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76155	344263	266780 W. DEFENCES OF ENCLOSURE BANKS	IRON AGE	DAMAGED
E	76156	344224	266842 POS. GUARD CHAMBER	IRON AGE	FAIR
E	76157	344224	266843 WESTERN ENTRANCE TO FORT	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76158	344227	266845 POS. GUARD CHAMBER	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76159	344434	266701 HUT CIRCLE?	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76160	344427	266717 HUT CIRCLE?	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76161	344381	266696 BANK DIVIDING HILLFORT ENCLOSURE	IMEDIEVAL?	FAIR
E	76162	344327	266673 HILLFORT DYKE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76163	344357	266647 PILLOW MOUND	MEDIEVAL	V. GOOD
E	76164	344455	266744 PILLOW MOUND	MEDIEVAL	FAIR
E	76165	344520	266770 PILLOW MOUND	MEDIEVAL	GOOD
E	76166	344669	266825 SAW-PIT	POST-MED	V. GOOD
E	76167	344693	266849 TRACKWAY INTO FORT - POST-MED.?	POST-MED	GOOD
E	76168	344706	266860 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
E	76169	344724	266907 SAW-PIT	POST-MED	GOOD
E	76170	344142	266818 PILLOW MOUND	MEDIEVAL	V. GOOD
E	76171	344500	266861 POS. 'SHRINE' PLATFORM	R/B	GOOD
E	76172	344494	266862 BUILDING PLATFORM	N/K	FAIR
E	76173	344494	266851 PILLOW MOUND OR SHRINE	R/B	GOOD
E	76174	344477	266841 'SHRINE' ?	R/B	GOOD
E	76175	344469	266834 UNKNOWN PLATFORM AREA	N/K	GOOD
E	76176	344464	266824 SE CORNER SHRINE ENCLOSURE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76177	344582	266785 SHRINE	R/B	GOOD
E	76178	344582	266807 QUARRY SCOOP	R/B	GOOD
E	76179	344561	266789 BUILDING PLATFORM	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76180	344552	266816 BUILDING PLATFORM	IRON AGE	FAIR
E	76181	344454	266782 SHRINE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76182	344459	266805 SHRINE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76183	344429	266819 BUILDING PLATFORM	R/B OR C18	GOOD
E	76184	344486	266813 SHRINE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76185	344394	266804 SHRINE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76186	344391	266808 SHRINE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76187	344377	266797 SHRINE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76188	344347	266786 SHRINE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76189	344229	266808 SHRINE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76190	344164	266864 TERRACE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76191	344188	266864 BUILDING PLATFORM	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76192	344211	266876 TERRACE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76193	344240	266877 BUILDING PLATFORM	IRON AGE	FAIR
E	76194	344323	266896 TERRACE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76195	344380	266885 BUILDING PLATFORM	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76196	344452	266890 TERRACE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76197	344424	266890 TERRACE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76198	344397	266880 TERRACE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76199	344373	266875 TERRACE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76200	344363	266867 BUILDING PLATFORM	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76201	344343	266875 TERRACE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76202	344330	266879 BUILDING PLATFORM	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76203	344319	266877 BUILDING PLATFORM	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76204	344315	266876 TERRACE	IRON AGE	GOOD

E	76205	344225	266866 BUILDING PLATFORM	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76206	344224	266908 TERRACE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76207	344504	266926 TERRACE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76208	344396	266922 TERRACE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76209	344462	266928 TERRACE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76210	344483	266942 BUILDING PLATFORM	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76211	344513	266923 TERRACE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76212	344483	266942 BUILDING PLATFORM	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76213	344526	266931 TERRACE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76214	344528	266927 TERRACE	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76215	344705	267029 BANK	IRON AGE	GOOD
E	76216	344694	267019 BANK	IRON AGE	GOOD
F	76217	344773	266334 WWII PRACTICE TRENCHES	WWII	POOR
F	76218	344814	266353 WOODLAND BOUNDARY BANK	POST-MED	POOR
F	76219	344791	266500 1907 GRAVE OF CAPT. JAMES CROFT	MODERN	DAMAGED
F	76220	344988	266398 CARRIAGE RIDE	POST-MED	FAIR
F	76221	345002	266445 HOUSE PLATFORM + TERRACED YARD	MODERN?	FAIR
F	76222	345019	266435 BUILDING PLATFORM - BARN?	POST-MED	FAIR
F	76223	345027	266464 BUILDING PLATFORM	POST-MED	FAIR
F	76224	345774	265639 BANK + DITCH	POST-MED	GOOD
F	76225	345820	265631 QUARRY	POST-MED	GOOD
F	76226	345863	265670 STONE ARCHED DRAIN FOR POOL	18 TH /19 TH C	FAIR
F	76227	345835	265730 BRICK BUILT SEMICIRCULAR TANK	19 TH /20 TH C	POOR
F	76228	345830	265682 BOUNDARY BANK + DITCH	MEDIEVAL/	FAIR
F	76229	345802	265740 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
F	76230	345710	265773 FIELD LYNCHET OR CARRIAGEWAY	N/K	FAIR
F	76231	345670	265741 STONE DRAIN FOR POOL	POST-MED	POOR
F	76232	345652	265727 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
F	76233	345621	265748 CARRIAGE RIDE	18 TH C	FAIR
F	76234	345576	265768 CARRIAGE RIDE	18 TH C	GOOD
F	76235	345395	265848 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
F	76236	345226	265953 CARRIAGE RIDE	18 TH C	GOOD
F	76237	345149	266014 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
F	76238	345145	266077 SAW-PIT	POST-MED	FAIR
F	76239	345126	266085 LINEAR QUARRY	POST-MED	GOOD
F	76240	345154	266113 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
F	76241	345161	266111 CARRIAGE RIDE	18 TH /19 TH C	GOOD
F	76242	345153	266168 UNKNOWN PLATFORM, (VIEWING)	18 TH /19 TH C	GOOD
F	76243	345143	266266 CARRIAGE RIDE BRANCHES IN 2	18 TH C	GOOD
F	76244	345065	266300 GROTTTO	18 TH /19 TH C	POOR
F	76245	345100	266331 CARRIAGE RIDE	18 TH C	GOOD
F	76246	345118	266404 CARRIAGE RIDE	18 TH C	GOOD
F	76247	345213	266600 CARRIAGE RIDE	18 TH C	GOOD
F	76248	345091	266451 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
F	76249	345091	266447 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	GOOD
F	76250	345082	266440 CARRIAGE RIDE	18 TH C	GOOD
F	76251	345030	266401 QUARRY + BRICK BUILDING	POST-MED	GOOD
F	76252	345000	266317 BRICK, TILE + CERAMIC KILN	POST-MED	GOOD
F	76253	344982	266347 UNKNOWN PLATFORM	N/K	GOOD
F	76254	345070	266305 CARRIAGE RIDE	18 TH C	GOOD
F	76255	345057	266285 QUARRY	POST-MED	GOOD
F	76256	345041	266100 LIME KILN STONE FACED TUNNEL	POST-MED	V. POOR
F	76257	345030	266158 CARRIAGE RIDE	18 TH C	GOOD
F	76258	345023	266130 CARRIAGEWAY ENDS	18 TH C	GOOD

F	76259	345051	265990 FIELD LYNCHET	N/K	GOOD
F	76260	345092	265999 CARRIAGE RIDE	18 TH C	GOOD
F	76261	345152	265987 PUMPHOUSE	19 TH C	GOOD
F	76262	345218	265837 3 CARRIAGE RIDES	18 TH C	GOOD
F	76263	345269	265847 BANK + DITCH	N/K	FAIR
F	76264	345343	265789 QUARRY 10M DIAMETER	N/K	GOOD
F	76265	345480	265642 LIME KILN	18 TH /19 TH C	POOR
F	76266	345454	265960 PILLOW MOUND	MEDIEVAL?	FAIR
G	76267	344530	266070 WOODLAND BOUNDARY BANK	N/K	GOOD
G	76268	344580	266030 BANK RUNNING SOUTH	N/K	FAIR
G	76269	345113	265827 PILLOW MOUND	MEDIEVAL?	POOR
G	76270	345094	265841 PILLOW MOUND	MEDIEVAL?	POOR
G	76271	345016	265780 RIDGE AND FURROW	MEDIEVAL	POOR
G	76272	345214	265698 PARK PALE	MEDIEVAL	GOOD
G	76273	345323	265672 CARRIAGE RIDE	18 TH C	FAIR
G	76274	345116	265524 LOW BANK	N/K	POOR
G	76275	345220	265514 LYNCHET + PLATFORM	MEDIEVAL	FAIR
G	76276	345237	265520 LYNCHET + PLATFORM	N/K	FAIR
G	76277	345270	265537 LYNCHET	MEDIEVAL	FAIR
G	76278	345385	265530 LYNCHET + RIDGE + FURROW	MEDIEVAL	POOR
G	76279	345412	265501 LYNCHET	N/K	FAIR
G	76280	345456	265500 TRACKWAY FOLLOWING LYNCHET	N/K	GOOD
G	76281	345480	265561 BUILDING PLATFORM 12X8M	18 TH /19 TH C	GOOD
G	76282	345493	265479 BANK	POST-MED	GOOD
G	76283	345523	265419 DITCH 2M WIDE	POST-MED	GOOD
G	76284	346090	265584 ENCLOSURE BANK	MEDIEVAL	FAIR
G	76285	346043	265615 LYNCHET	MEDIEVAL	FAIR
G	76286	346043	265601 LYNCHET	MEDIEVAL	GOOD
G	76287	345988	265610 LYNCHET	MEDIEVAL	FAIR
G	76288	346015	265631 BUILDING PLATFORM	MEDIEVAL	GOOD
G	76289	345990	265623 TRIANGULAR ENCLOSURE	MEDIEVAL	GOOD
G	76290	345959	265626 BUILDING PLATFORM	MEDIEVAL	GOOD
G	76291	345852	265580 HEADLAND BANK	MEDIEVAL	GOOD
G	76292	345721	265509 KILN BASE	POST-MED	FAIR
G	76293	345722	265517 KILN BASE	POST-MED	FAIR
G	76294	345739	265514 KILN BASE	POST-MED	FAIR
G	76295	345728	265497 KILN BASE + BRICK / TILE WASTE	POST-MED	FAIR
G	76296	345751	265519 KILN BASE	POST-MED	FAIR
G	76297	345744	265530 KILN BASE	POST-MED	FAIR
G	76298	345733	265539 KILN BASE	POST-MED	FAIR
G	76299	345700	265525 POOL	POST-MED	GOOD
G	76300	345729	265533 STONE MASONS YARD?	POST-MED	FAIR
G	76301	345686	265528 RECTANGULAR PIT CLAY QUARRYING	N/K	FAIR
G	76302	345693	265521 RECTANGULAR CLAY PIT	N/K	FAIR
G	76303	345686	265529 KILN WASTE, UPGRADE	POST-MED	FAIR
G	76304	345719	265565 HEADLAND BANK	MEDIEVAL	POOR
G	76305	345616	265584 RIDGE + FURROW	MEDIEVAL	POOR
G	76306	345654	265487 TRACKWAY	N/K	FAIR
G	76307	345544	265395 HEADLAND BANK	MEDIEVAL	GOOD
G	76308	345647	265482 QUARRY + SPRING	POST-MED	GOOD
G	76309	345632	265488 HEADLAND BANK	MEDIEVAL	POOR
G	76310	345674	265469 LYNCHET	MEDIEVAL	POOR
G	76311	345698	265393 LYNCHET	MEDIEVAL	POOR
G	76312	345666	265456 BRICK WASTE	POST-MED	FAIR

G	76313	345692	265476 SMALL LYNCHET	MEDIEVAL	FAIR
G	76314	345738	265455 LARGE LYNCHET	MEDIEVAL	FAIR
G	76315	345792	265396 CHARCOAL-BURNING PLATFORM	POST-MED	FAIR
G	76316	345628	265288 UPCAST FROM DE-SILTING PONDS	MODERN	FAIR
G	76317	345596	265273 BANKED ENCLOSURE	N/K	POOR
G	76318	345619	265245 BANK	MEDIEVAL	POOR
G	76319	345929	265357 STONE BRIDGE	18 TH /19 TH C	GOOD
G	76320	345961	265368 BANK + DITCH	N/K	GOOD
G	76321	345953	265392 'D' ENCLOSURE + DITCH AROUND KILN	POST-MED	GOOD
G	76322	345953	265427 5 AREAS OF SQUARE DEPRESSION	N/K	FAIR
G	76323	345926	265456 DISTURBED AREA	N/K	FAIR
G	76324	345916	265468 DRAINAGE DITCH	N/K	GOOD
G	76325	345970	265243 DITCH CUT LINKED TO HEDGE BANK	N/K	GOOD
G	76326	345451	265419 BUILDING PLATFORM	N/K	FAIR
G	76327	345430	265420 CARRIAGEWAY	18 TH /19 TH C	GOOD
G	76328	345335	265425 DRAINAGE DITCH	MODERN?	GOOD
G	76329	345278	265399 DRAINAGE DITCH	MODERN?	GOOD
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G	76335	345131	265473 BANK	MEDIEVAL?	FAIR
G	76336	345181	265541 BANK	MEDIEVAL?	FAIR
G	76337	345117	265538 LOCALISED AREA OF BRICK / MORTAR	POST-MED	POOR
G	76338	345150	265524 BANK/LYNCHET	MEDIEVAL	FAIR
G	76339	344761	265477 BANK AND DITCH	POST-MED	FAIR
G	76340	344666	265478 LARGE AREA OF RIDGE & FURROW ne/sw	MEDIEVAL	GOOD
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G	76343	344504	265501 CULVERT	19 TH /20 TH C	GOOD
G	76344	344502	265504 POSSIBLE PARK PALE	POST-MED	FAIR
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J	76426	343149	264339 LYNCHET	MEDIEVAL	GOOD
J	76427	343113	264324 LYNCHET	MEDIEVAL	GOOD
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J	76454	343409	264631 GOTHIC BRIDGE	18 TH /19 TH C	FAIR

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ARCHIVE

The project archive comprises the following:

Site record sheets	215
Survey audio cassette tapes	6
Transcripts file (audio tapes), MS Word file	1
Excel database file	1
MapInfo data file	1
Copies of historic maps (photocopies)	20
Correspondence and background data file	1
This report (2 volumes)	1

In the short term, these materials will be held at Herefordshire Archaeology offices at the Town Hall, Hereford. Security copies will be made (with the likely exception of the survey tapes) and will be provided both to The National Trust and to Hereford Record Office.

GLOSSARY

Brickfields

Areas where the kiln clamps for making bricks and tiles were located.

Carriage Drive

A carriage-way or carriage drive is a comparatively major track that once led traffic around the estate, and refers mostly to the main drives to and from the house.

Carriage Ride

This is a deliberately prepared route for the driving of light two-wheeled carriages from which prospects of the landscape could be gained. The rides are sometimes scarped into the hillsides along artificial terrace-ways that rise and fall along hill-slopes (and in fact rarely follow the contours).

Charcoal burning platform

A level, usually circular area, detectable on a slope usually through a half-circular scarp back into a hill-side, and a lynchet (q.v.) built out in a semi-circle on the down-slope side. The level area was used for the controlled slow burning of timber within a clamp, to make charcoal. Such platforms were often created at woodland edges where a draught could be accessed and the charcoal easily removed. They can date anytime between 1550 and 1900.

Colluvial deposit

A deposit formed by the movement of soil down slope by natural agencies (as opposed to alluvial deposits formed by river action).

DMV

A Deserted Medieval Village (or Settlement) is an archaeological site marked by the earthworks of abandoned houses and yards (tofts). The period and causes of desertion are varied, but to qualify as a 'DMV', the settlement must have been occupied sometime during the period 1060-1530.

Global Positioning by Satellite

The location of a point on the ground by triangulation from a series of satellites orbiting the planet. Increases in point location accuracy using hand-held instruments has led to its use in archaeology to fix points in otherwise poorly differentiated terrain, such as on coasts, in deserts, on moorland and in woodland.

HSM

'Herefordshire Sites and Monuments' (Record) number. This is the prefix used for Primary Record Numbers (PRN) in the Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).

Hillfort

This refers to the location of circuits of ramparts and ditches on hilltops, usually surrounding settlements, and usually dating from the Iron Age (although Neolithic and Bronze Age examples are known).

Hollow-way

A linear hollow created by the passage of traffic over many years along a trackway that is descending or crossing a hill-slope.

Iron Age

In England and Wales, the period from 600BC to the Roman conquest.

Lynchet

An interruption to a slope. When used in archaeology, it denotes an artificial break in slope formed by a linear terrace along a contour. 'Field lynchet': a bank is deliberately formed to make the scarp, and a level area then builds up against the bank as a result of the down-slope movement of soil through ploughing.

Map regression

The activity of assembling a series of successively earlier maps, from the latest relevant to the earliest known. This series is then studied carefully to detect changes and note features of historic significance and meaning

Medieval

'Early Medieval' is used for the period covering the latter half of the first millennium AD, while 'Medieval' refers to the period up to c.1550.

NTSMR

National Trust Sites and Monuments Record'. Used as a prefix for National Trust record numbers.

Pillow-mound

An artificial rabbit-warren, most often comprising a long straight rectangular bank completely surrounded by ditches. Within the mound, artificial burrows were constructed. The mounds date to the period during which rabbits were farmed, in part to facilitate their adaptation to the British climate following their introduction into these islands in the late Medieval period.

PRN

Primary Record Number (in Sites and Monuments Records) refers to the unique number reference for individual records, usually drawn from a running number sequence. The allocation of PRNs is among the duties of SMR Officers.

Quarry-ditch

A hollow or broad ditch scooped out to construct a rampart within an Iron Age hill-fort

Ridge and furrow

The fossilised remains of the strips belonging to medieval open fields. Narrow ridging can also be characteristic of garden plot horticulture, usually of the post-Medieval period

Romano-British

The period during which Britain was administered as part of the Roman Empire (43-410 AD)

Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).

Local registers of records of the historic environment for particular areas, including for National Trust land-holdings. It is important to note that the records are not all of individual 'sites' or 'monuments' (and as such are not true 'inventories'), but to records that can refer to 'recording events' or to features within monuments, and to some people the name is therefore misleading. This is one reason why the term 'Historic Environment Record' (HER) is beginning to be used for such registers

Trackway

A path or route-way worn into the land such that it has become a discernible way

Transhumance.

This is the practice of moving stock seasonally up to summer pastures on higher ground. The settlements of light huts used in the summer in this way are termed 'llest' in Wales and 'shielings' in Scotland.

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FURTHER PUBLICATION

It is intended that a series of further publications will follow production of this Report.

An interim account of the work at Croft Castle and the Croft Estate has appeared as:

Ray, K., 2003 'A re-discovered landscape: archaeology and new interpretation at Croft Castle, Herefordshire', 7-11 in C. Thackray (ed) *National Trust Annual Archaeological Review* No 10, 2001-2002. Cirencester: The National Trust.

Interim Reports on the Croft Castle environs project are appearing as:

Ray, K., 2003 *Gardens Archaeology at Croft Castle in 2001*. Herefordshire Archaeology Report No 42.

Ray, K., 2003 *Croft Castle Environs: Excavations in 2002*. Herefordshire Archaeology Report No 66.

It is intended that further interim reports, on the excavations of the castle site in 2003 (2004) and of the deserted medieval settlement in 2004 (2005) respectively, will be prepared.

It is proposed to produce a popular guide to the archaeology and landscape history of the Estate in partnership with The National Trust archaeology division in 2004.

It is intended to produce an article on the landscape archaeology of the Croft Estate, drawing upon the results of the present survey, for a refereed landscape history journal in 2004.

The final reporting on the Croft Castle environs project will take the following forms:

An article about the medieval castle and village at Croft will be prepared during 2005-6 for publication in a refereed journal.

An article about the post-medieval mansions and formal gardens at Croft will be prepared during 2005-6 for publication in a refereed journal.

A short monograph publication will outline the aims and results of the Croft Castle environs project, 2001-5. This will be published during 2006 in association with The National Trust.

A proposed internet publication will make available more widely, the series of detailed reports and documentation not published in the above ways. This will serve as a gateway into the site archive.

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Validation

Herefordshire Archaeology operates a validation system for its reports, to provide quality assurance and to comply with Best Value procedures.

This report has been checked for accuracy and clarity of statements of procedure and results.

Julian Cotton, B.A., A.I.F.A. Archaeological Advisor.



Date: 29/7/03

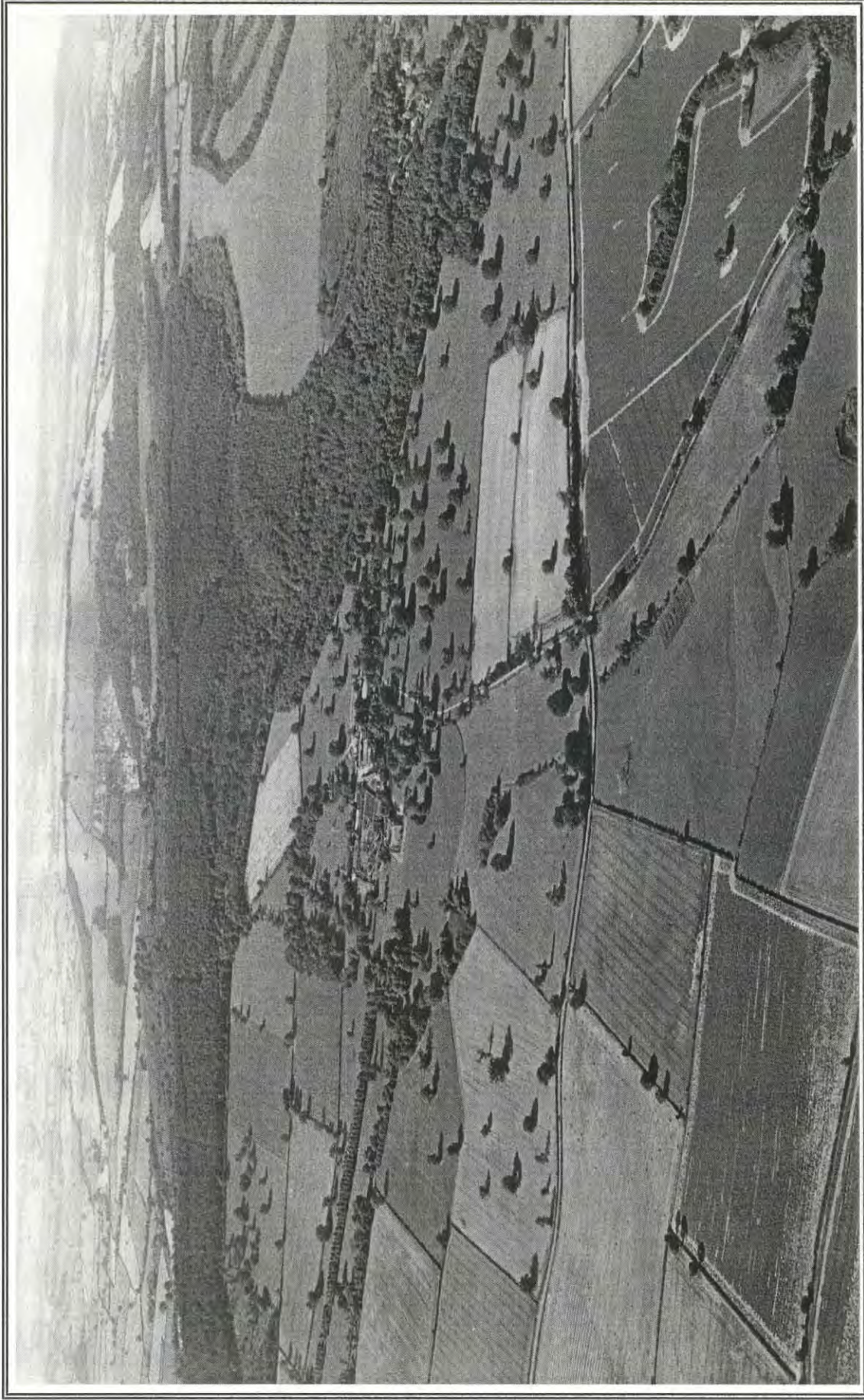


Figure 2 Aerial photograph of the central area of the Croft Estate, from the south, 27th July 1999
(Ref 99-MB-0644; copyright C. Musson/ Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club)

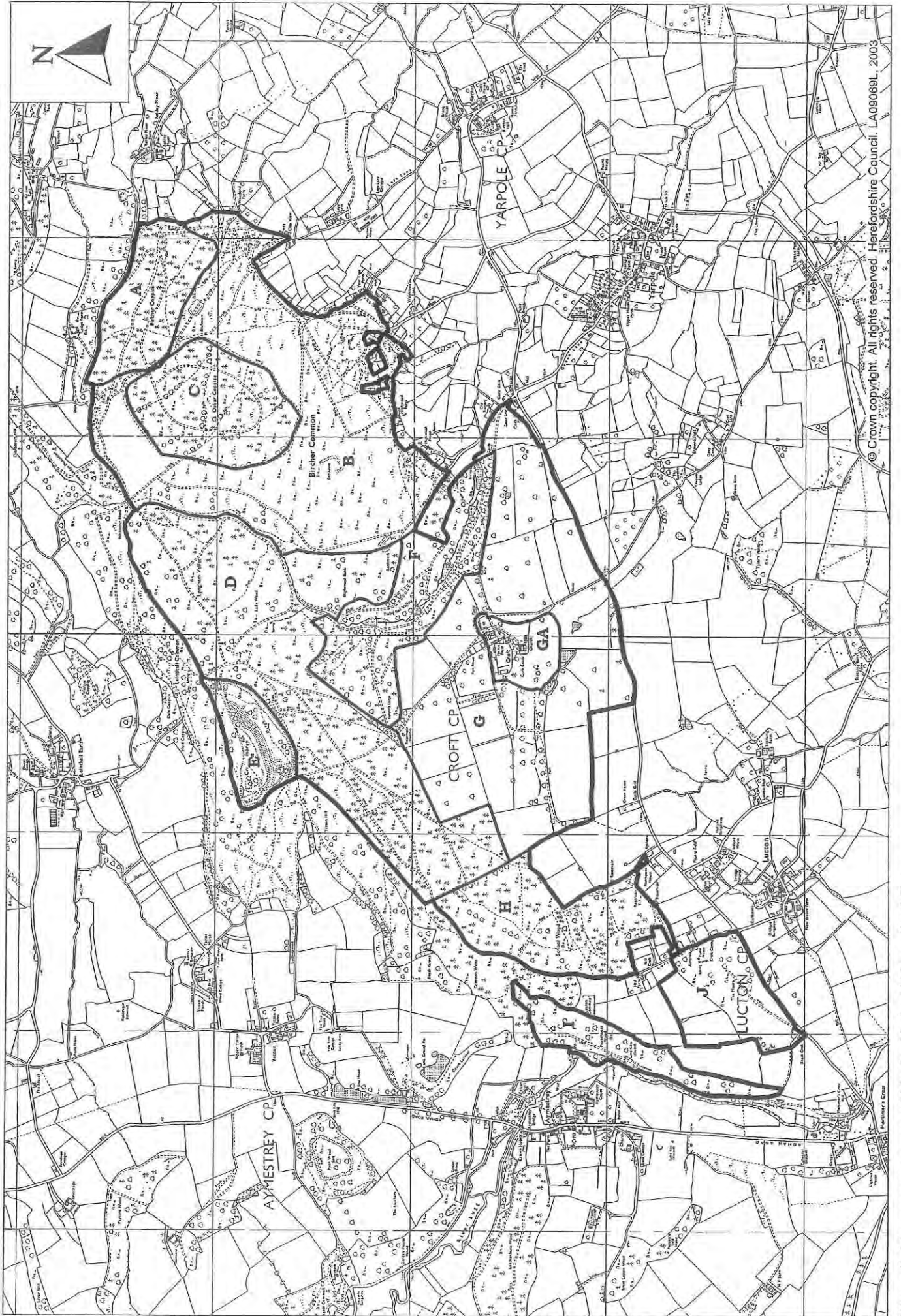


Figure 3 Management areas within the National Trust Croft Estate

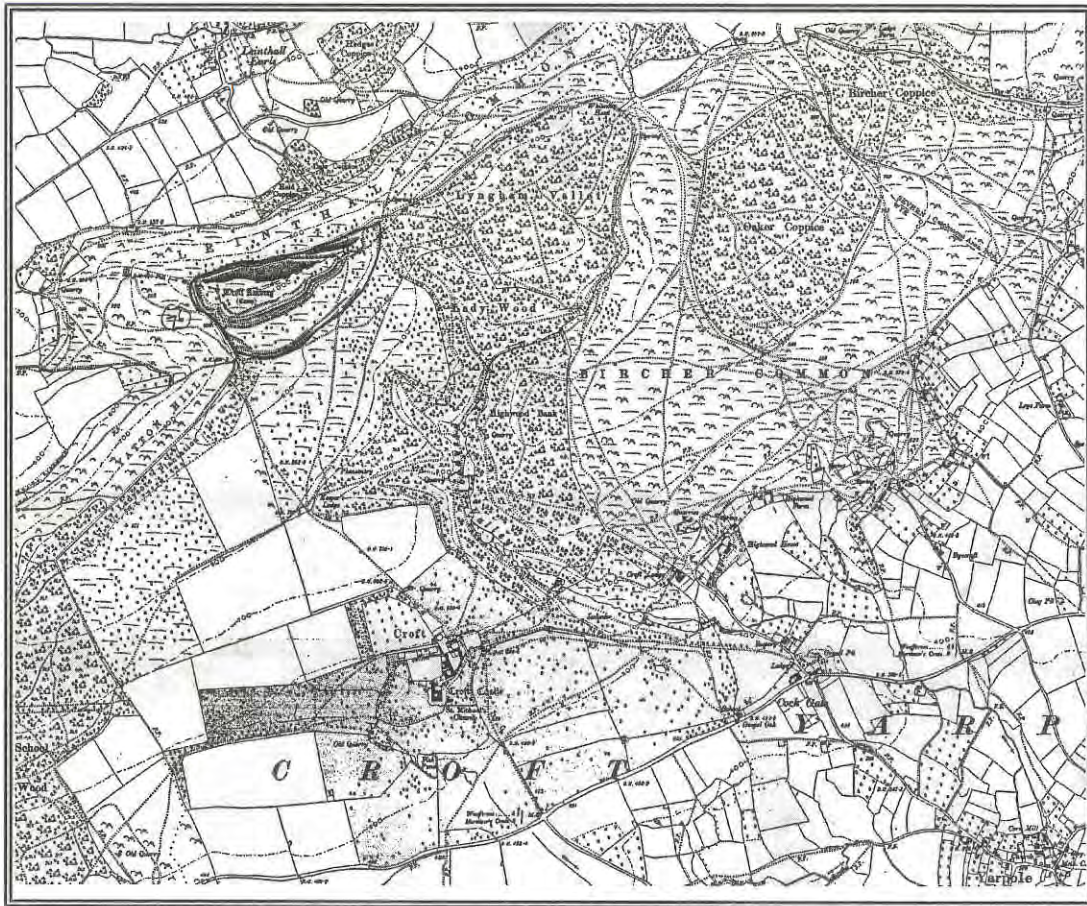


Figure 4 Extract from the 2nd edition of the Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 (1904)

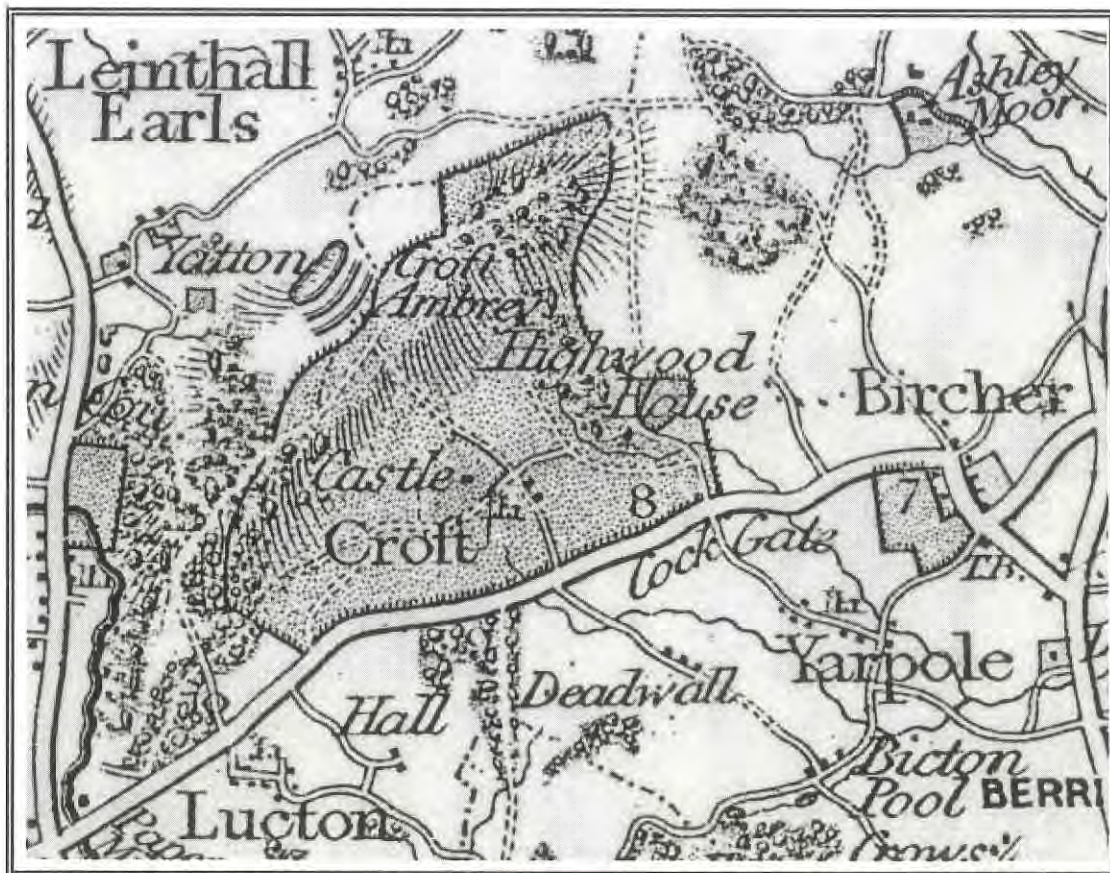


Figure 5: Extract from Jakeman and Carver's Directory of Herefordshire 1:130,000 (1902)

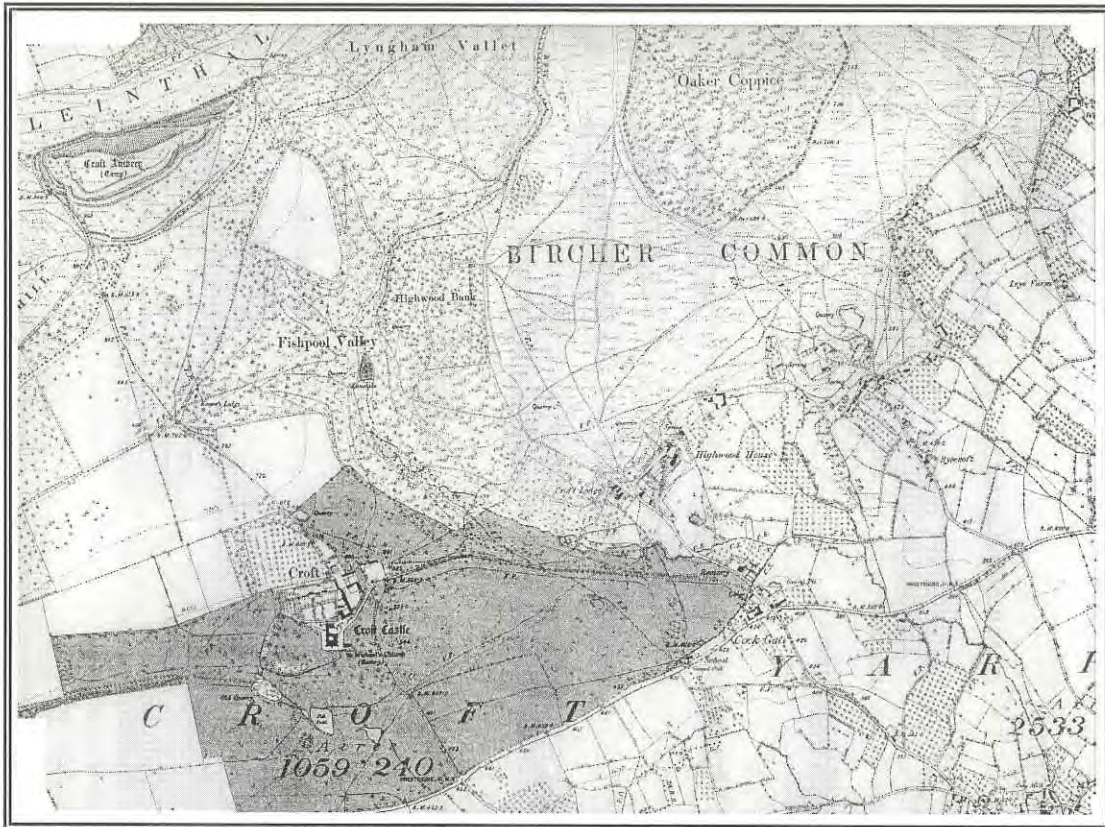


Figure 6 Extract from the first edition of the Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 (1891)

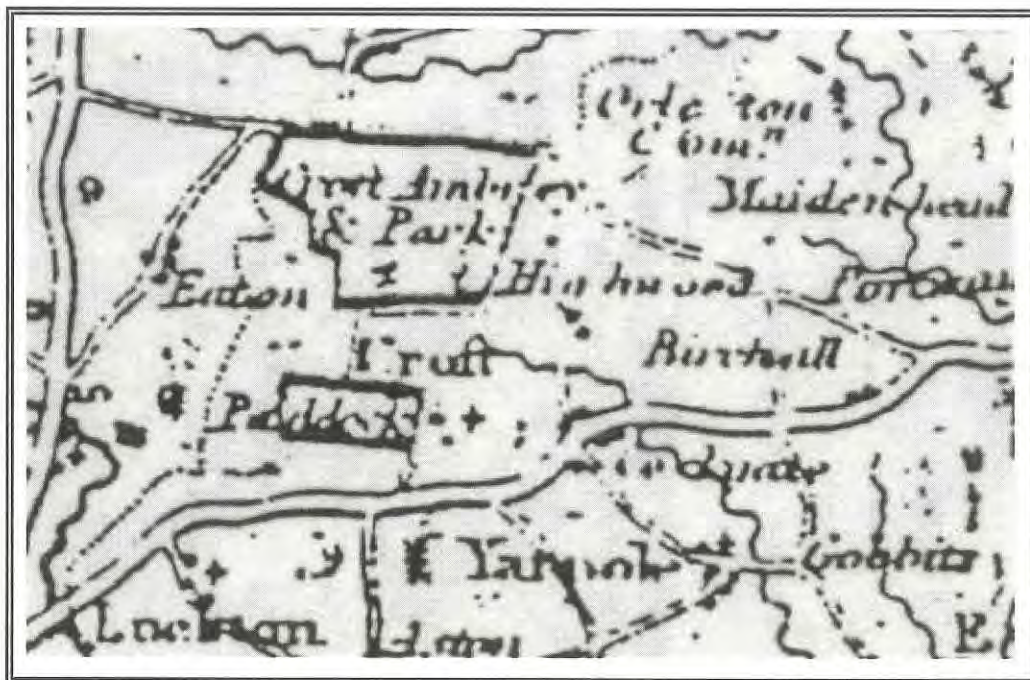


Figure 7 Extract from map in British Gazetteer Directory of Herefordshire 1:160,000 (1852)

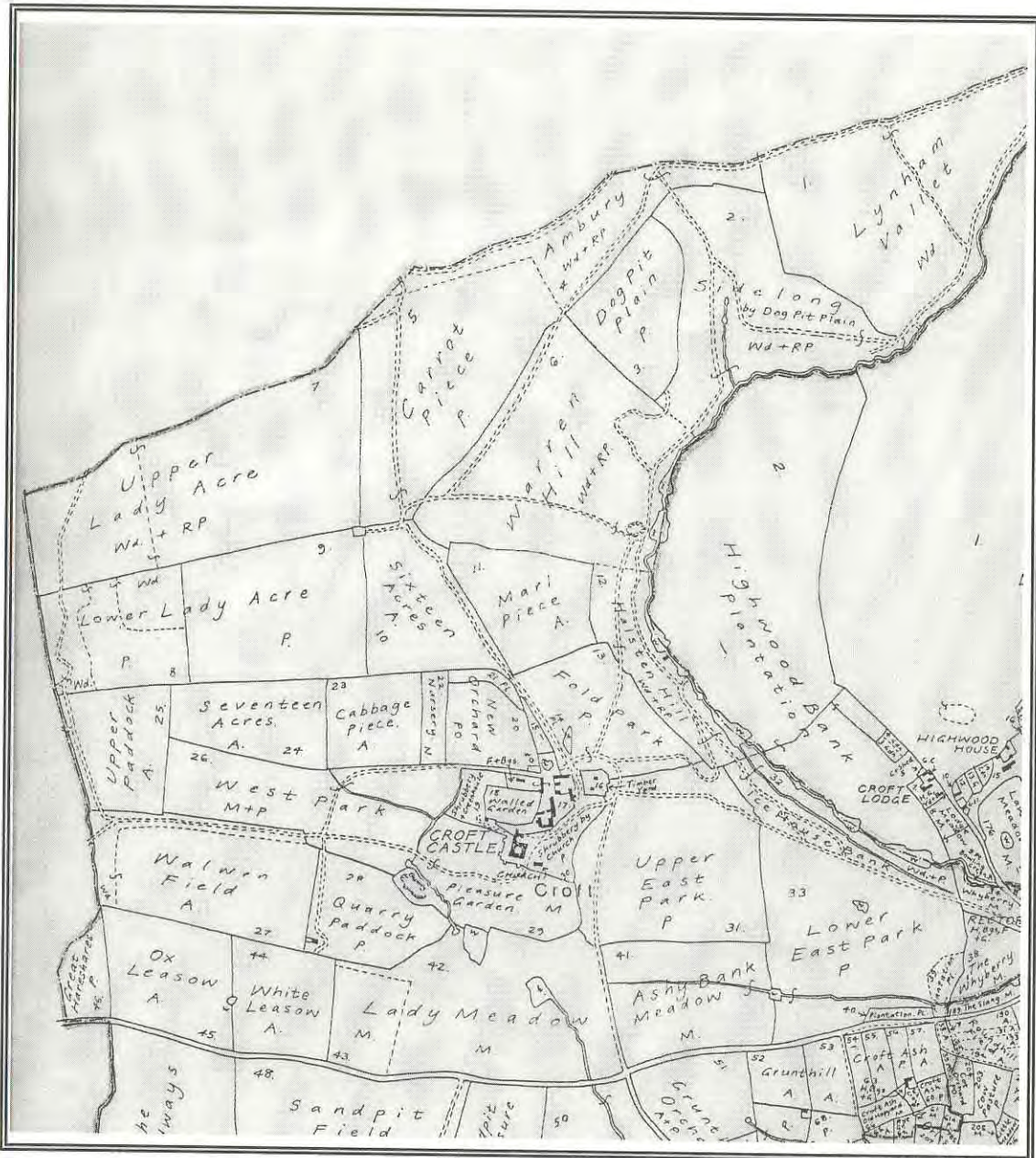


Figure 9 Extract from G. Gwatkin interpolation of the 1839 title map for Croft

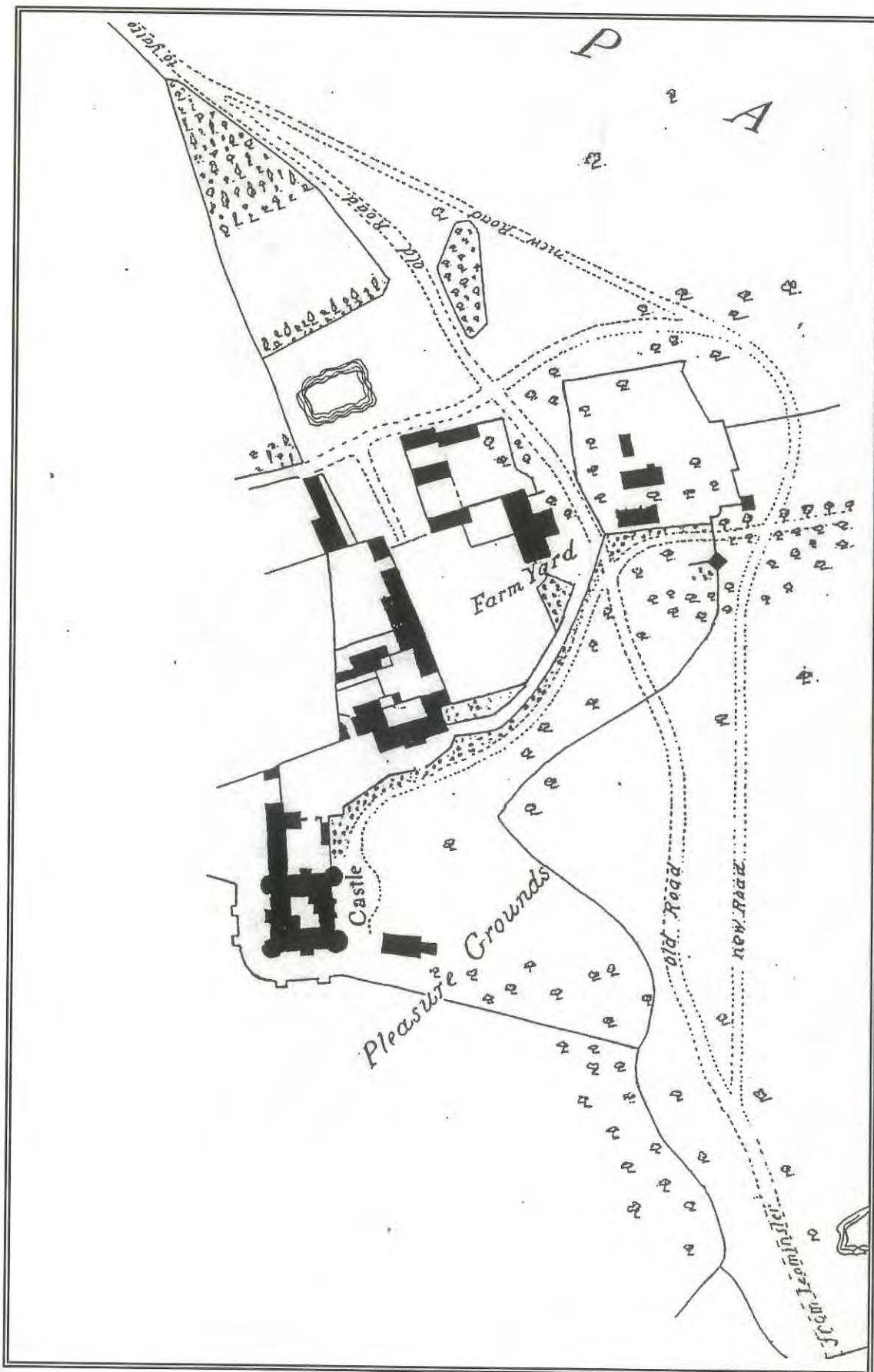


Figure 12 Map accompanying the Croft Highway Alteration Application (1825)
copied from Fretwell et al, 1987

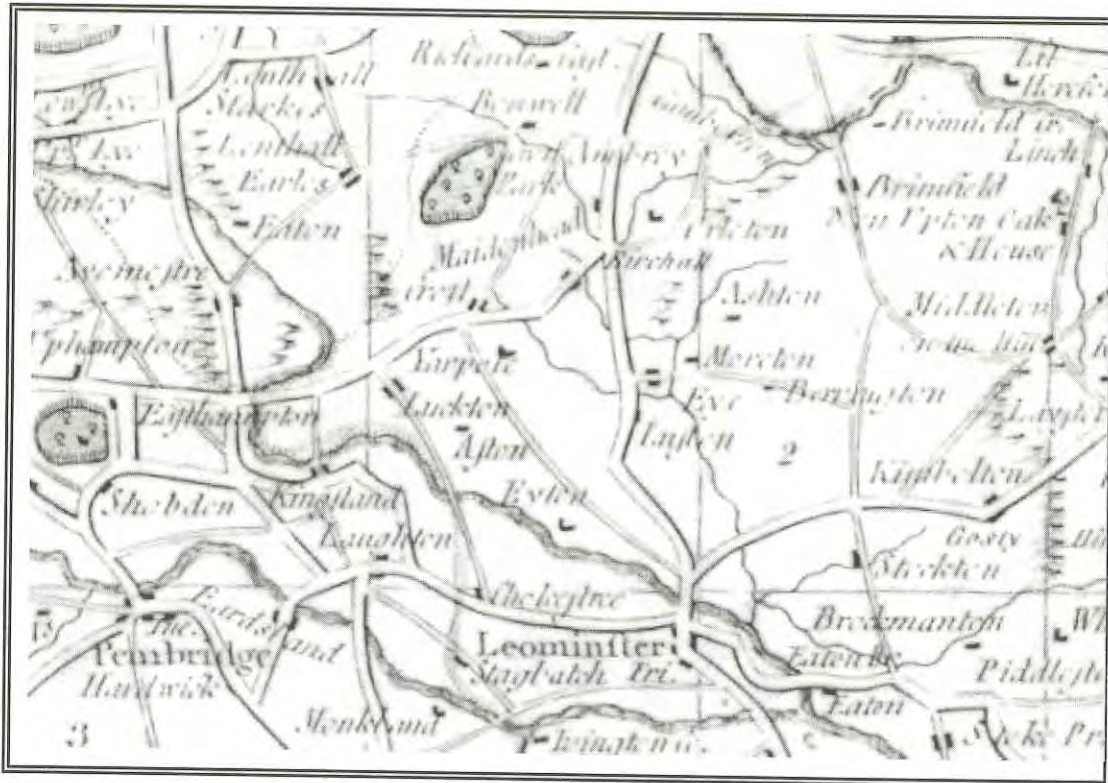


Figure 14 Extract from Harrison's map of Herefordshire (1789)

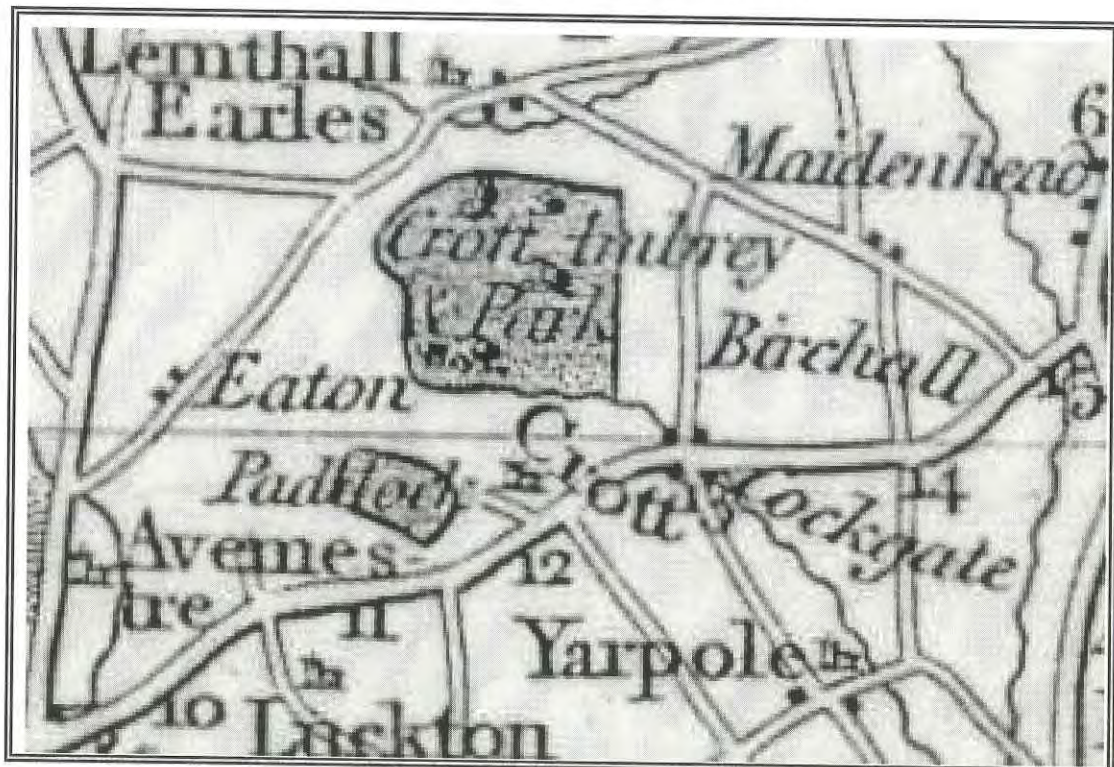


Figure 15 Extract from John Cary's map of Herefordshire (1793 version of 1787 map)

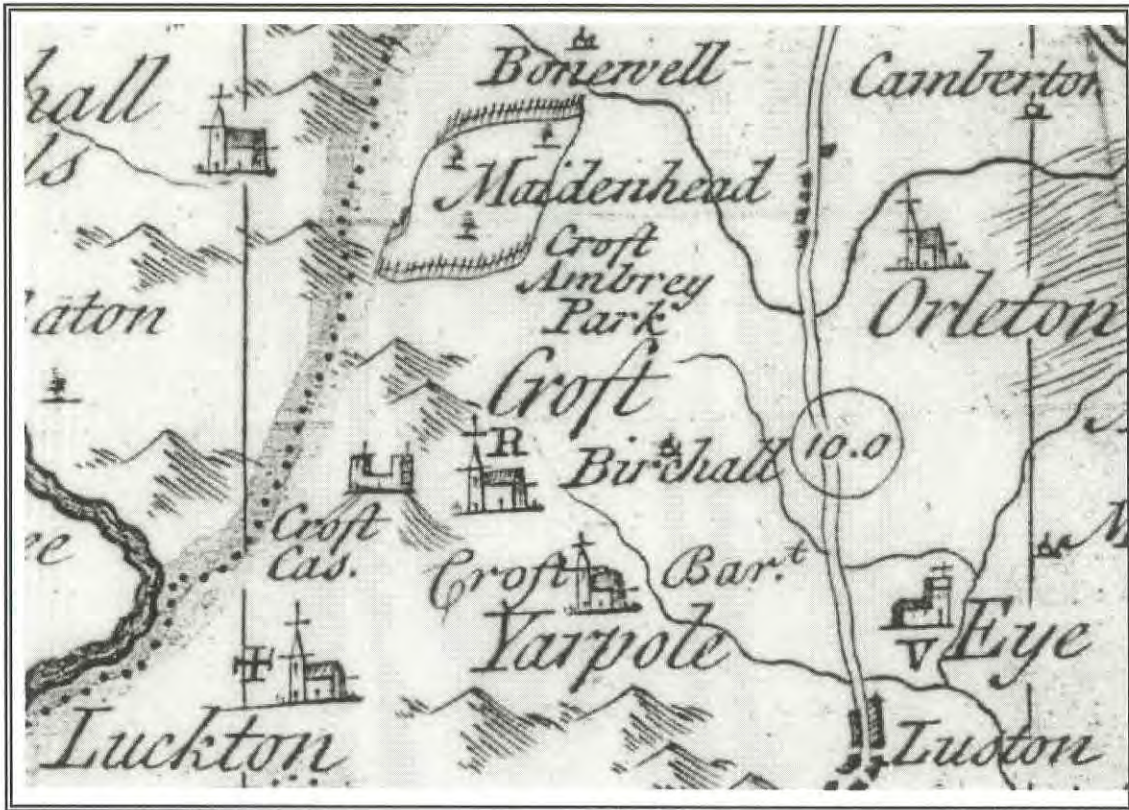


Figure 16 Extract from Emmanuel Bowen's map of Herefordshire (1775; version of 1762 map)

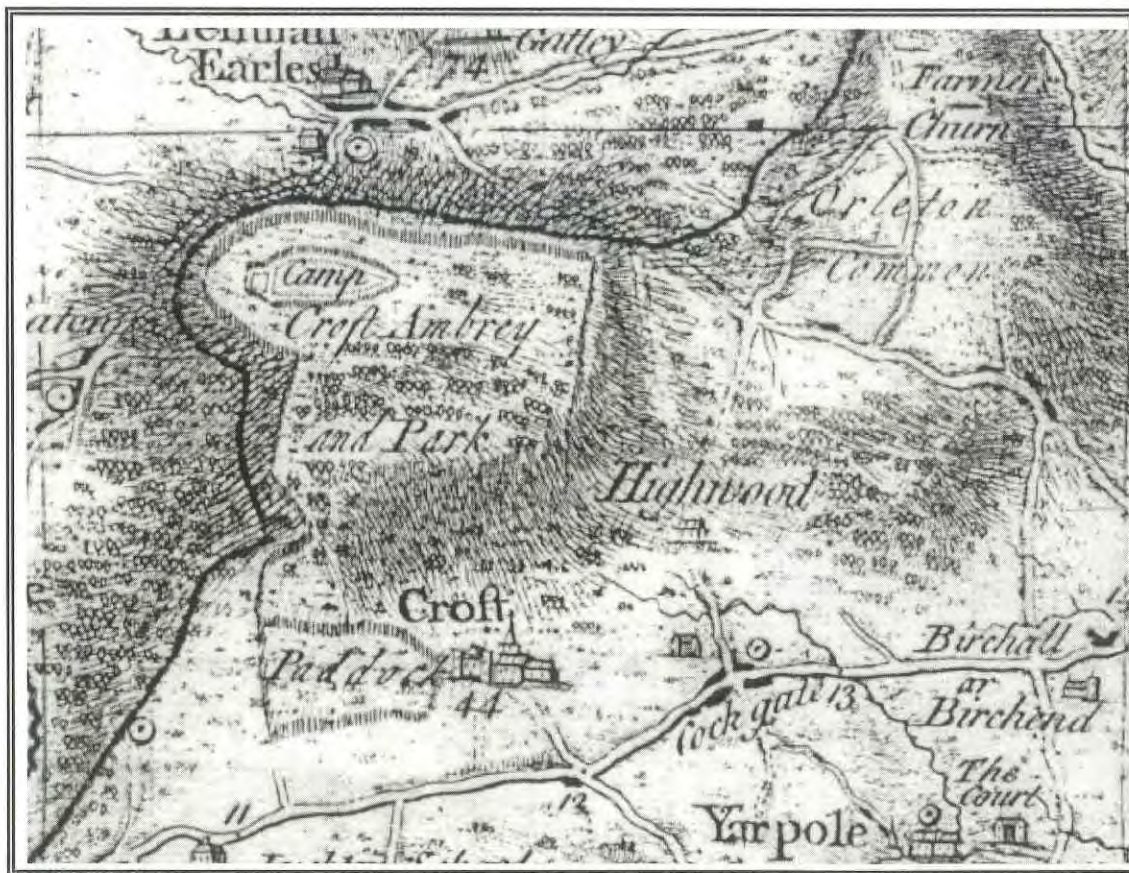


Figure 17 Extract from Issac Taylor's map of Herefordshire (1754)



Figure 18 Extract from Saxton's map of Herefordshire (1577)

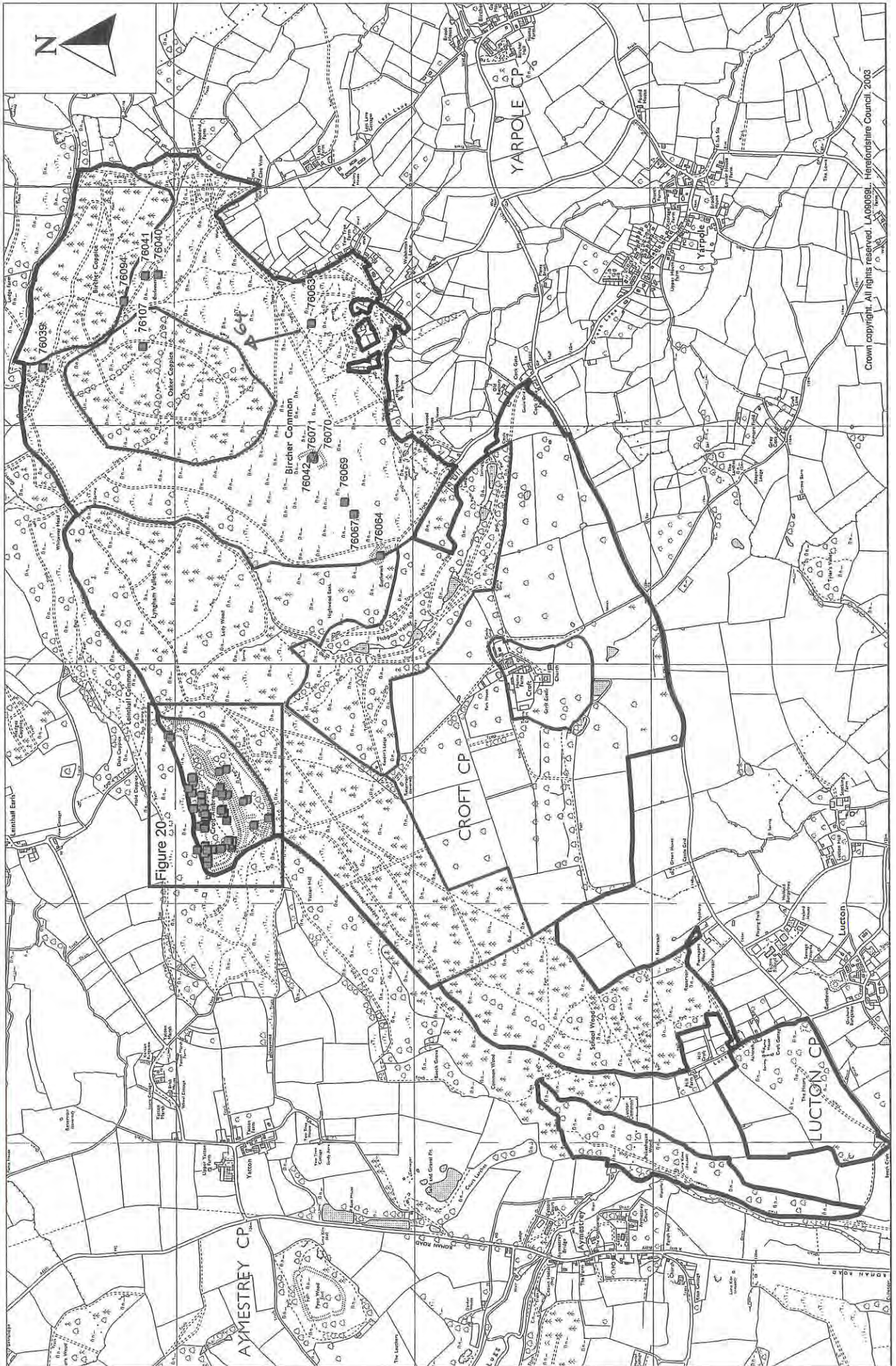
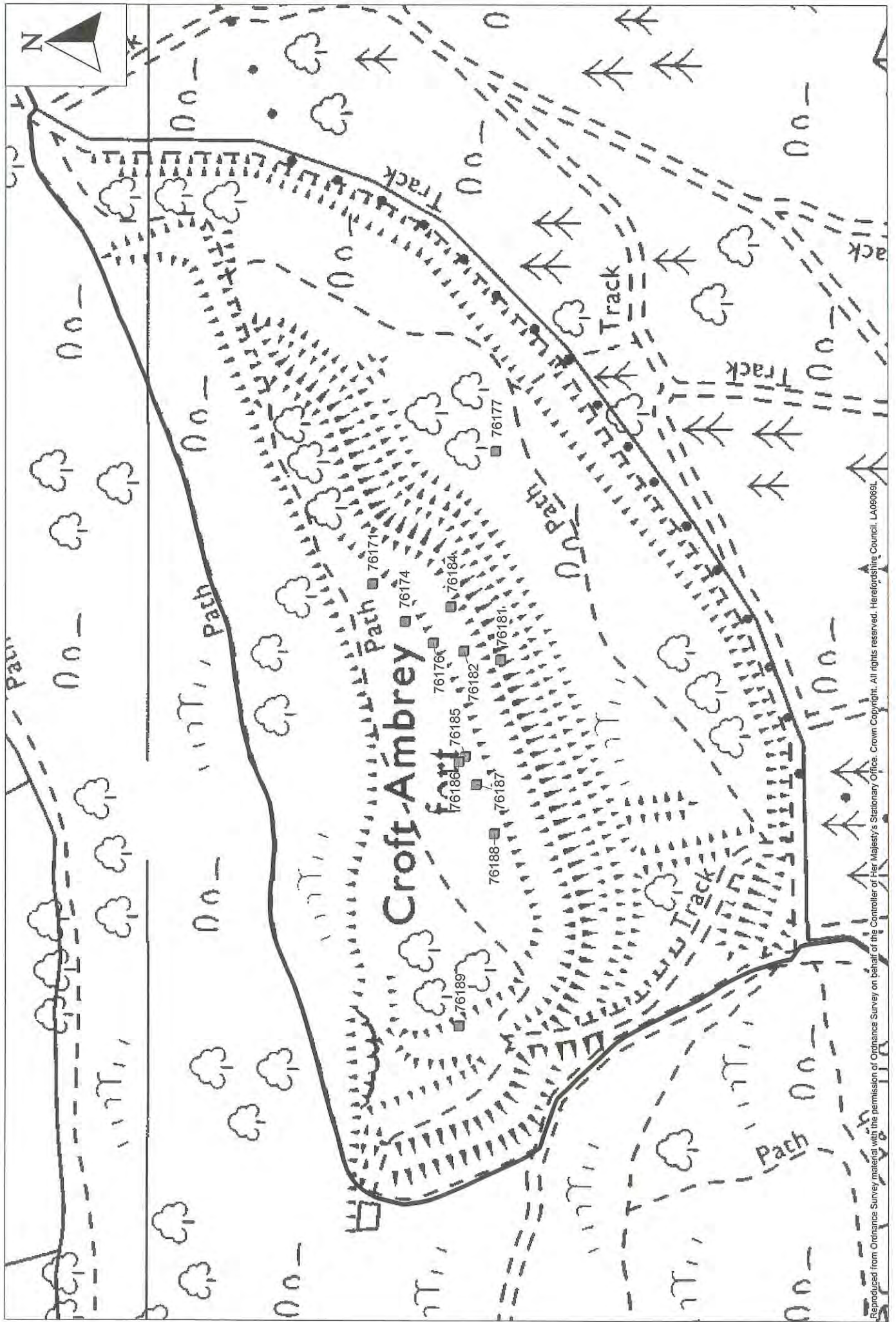


Figure 19 Map of early (possibly prehistoric) features across the Croft Estate, 2001-2

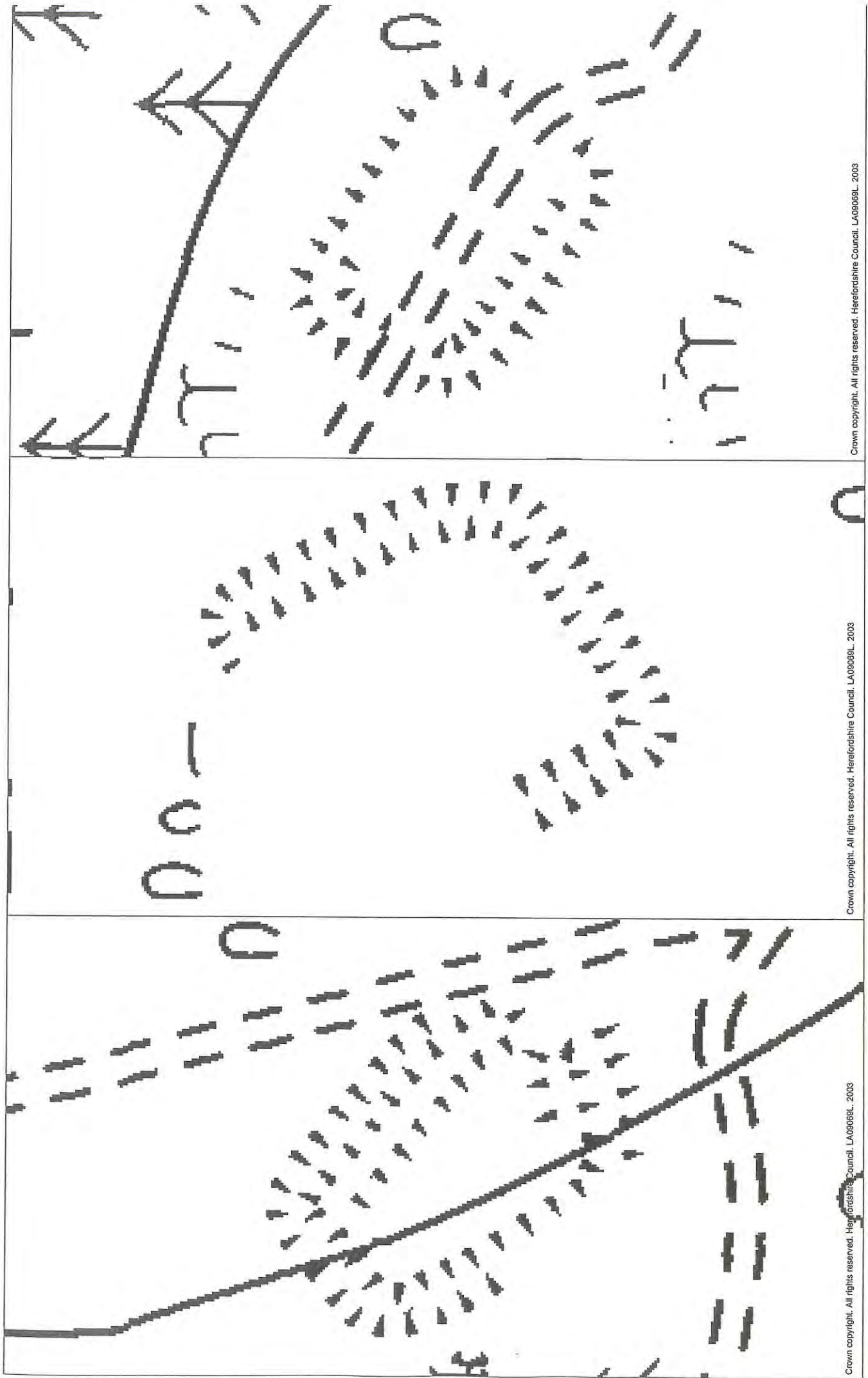


Figure 21 Aerial view of Croft Ambrey hillfort, from west, 26th July 1999
(Ref 99-MB-0499; copyright C. Musson/ Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club)



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Figure 22 Map of Croft Ambrey hillfort: Romano-British features recorded in 2001-2



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Figure 23 Outline plans of earthwork enclosures on Bircher Common, from OS at 1:2500

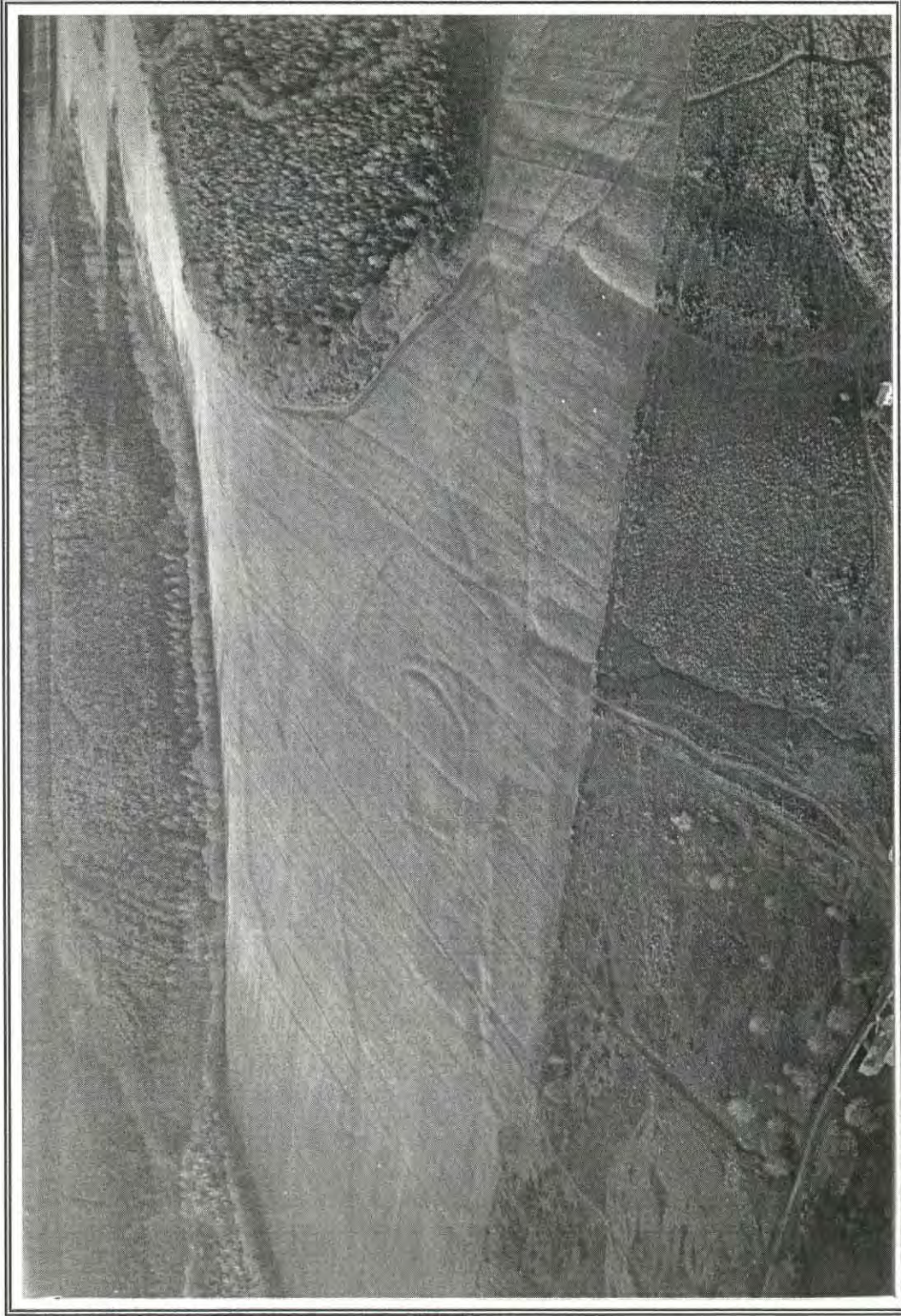


Figure 24 Aerial view of the western area of Bircher Common, showing HSM 76042, February 1989
(Ref 89-MB-103; copyright C. Musson)

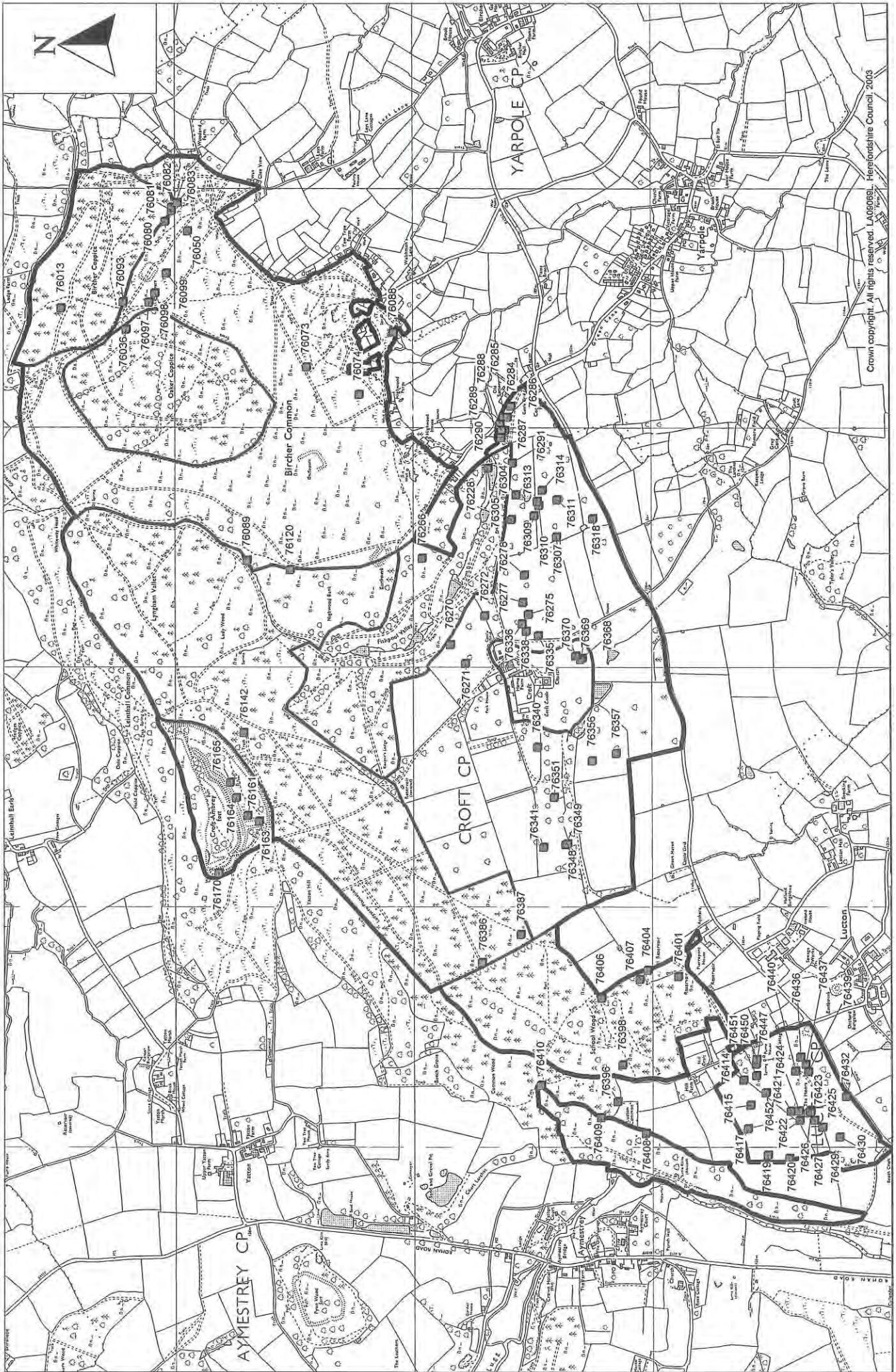
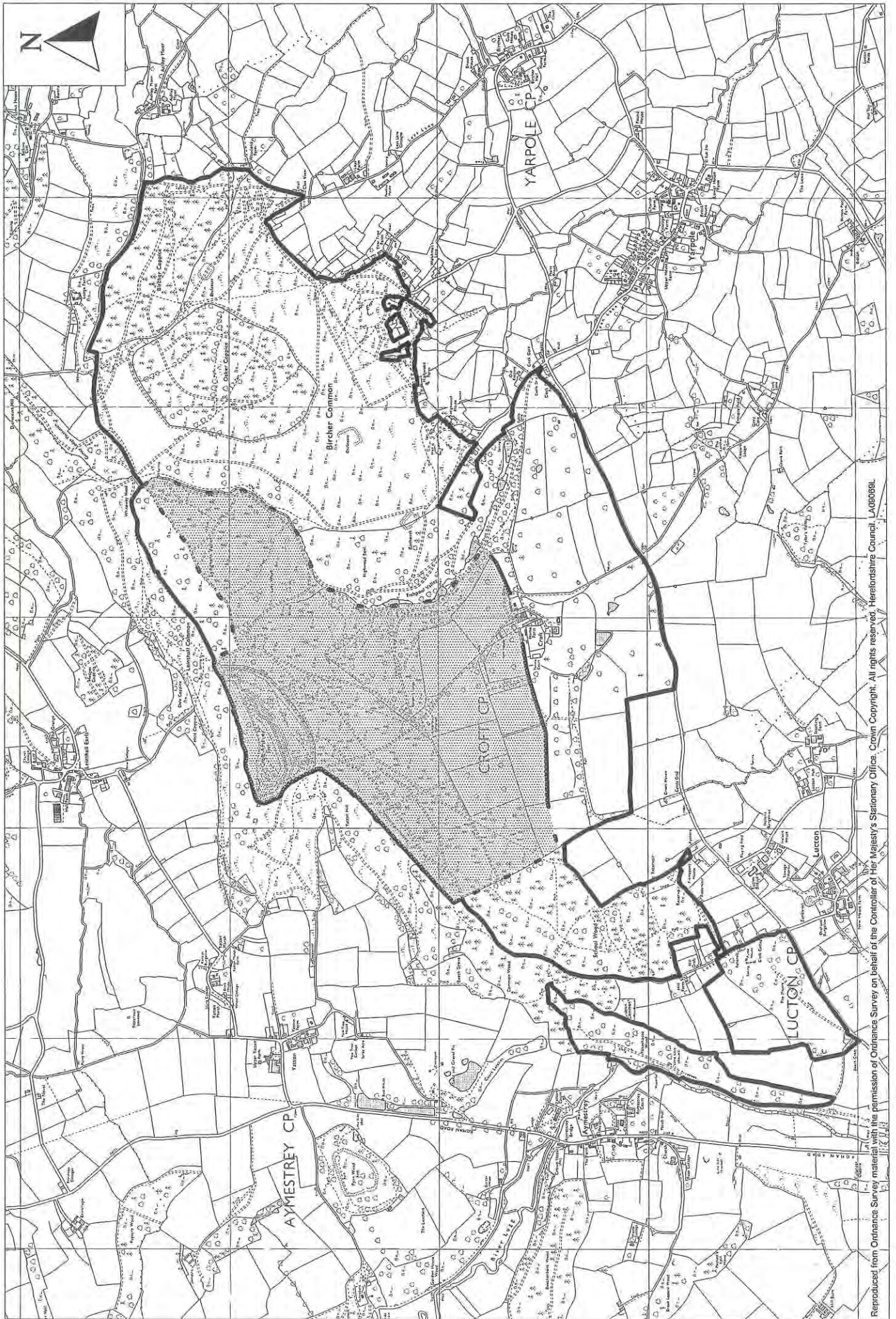


Figure 25 Location of likely medieval features across the Croft Estate, 2001-2



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Figure 26 Location of the early post-medieval deer-park, from the 2001-2 survey

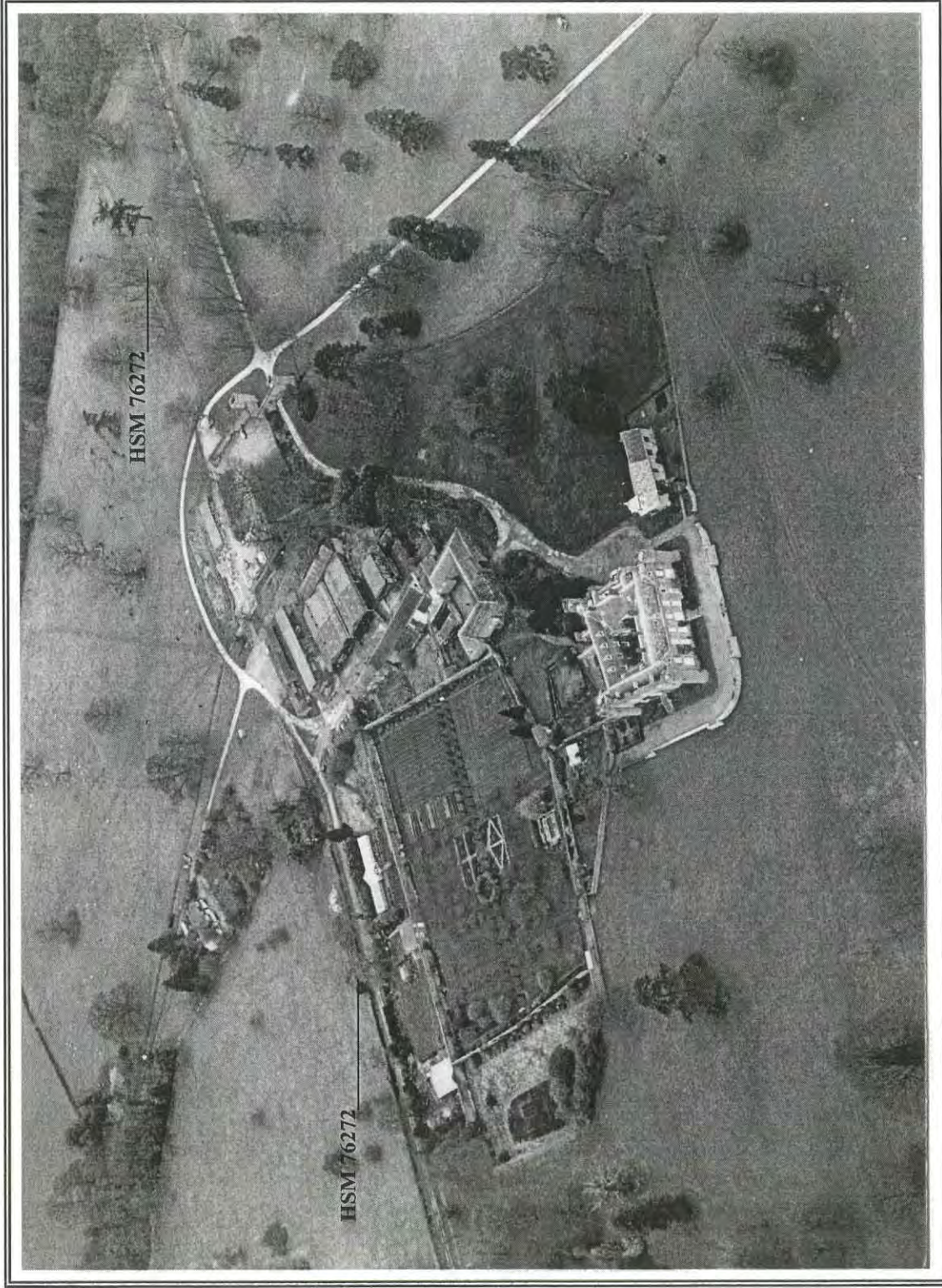


Figure 27 Aerial photograph showing Croft Castle environs and park pale remnant, HSM 76272, from south-west, 14th March 1999
(Ref 99-MB-0219; copyright C. Musson/ Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club)

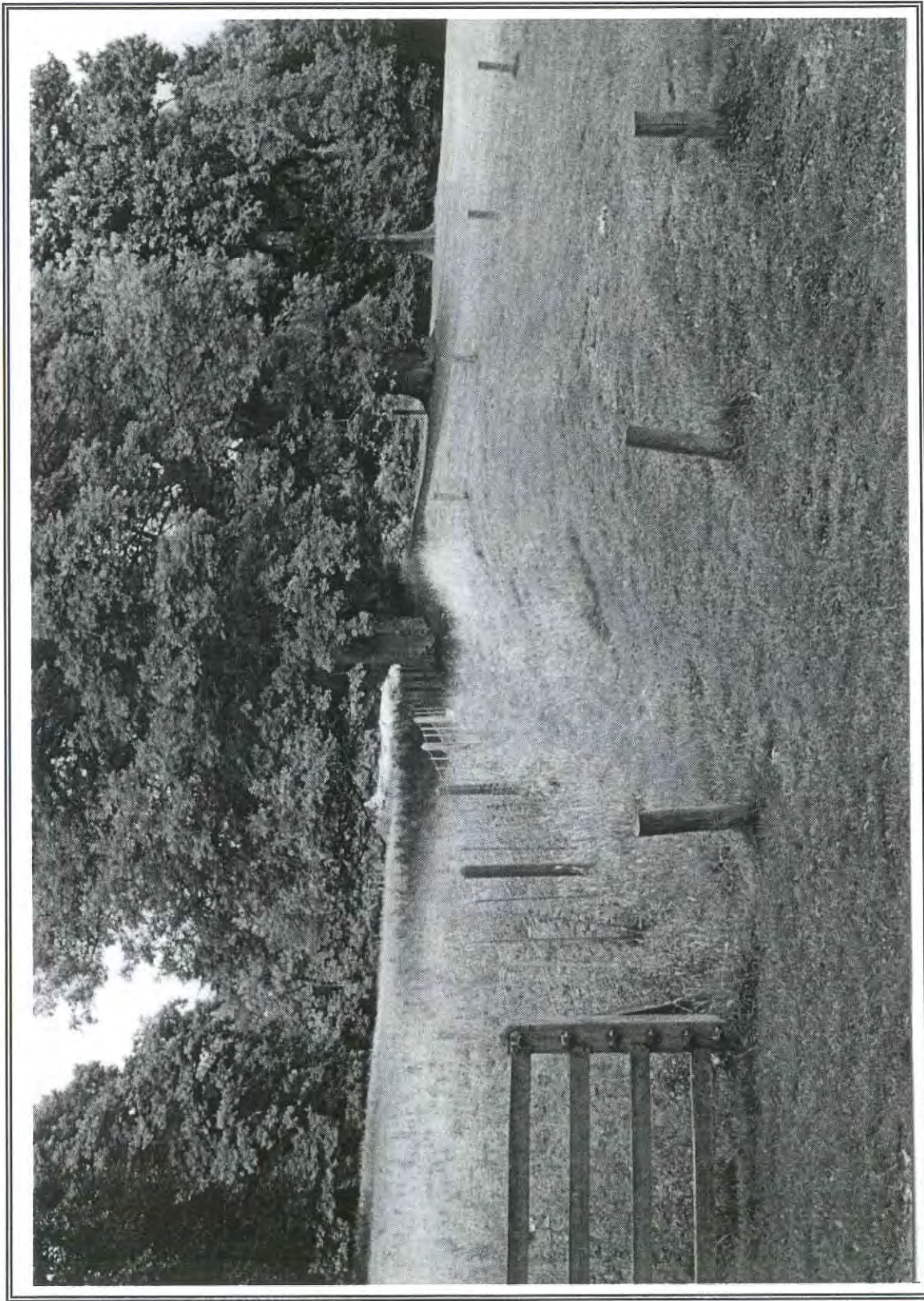
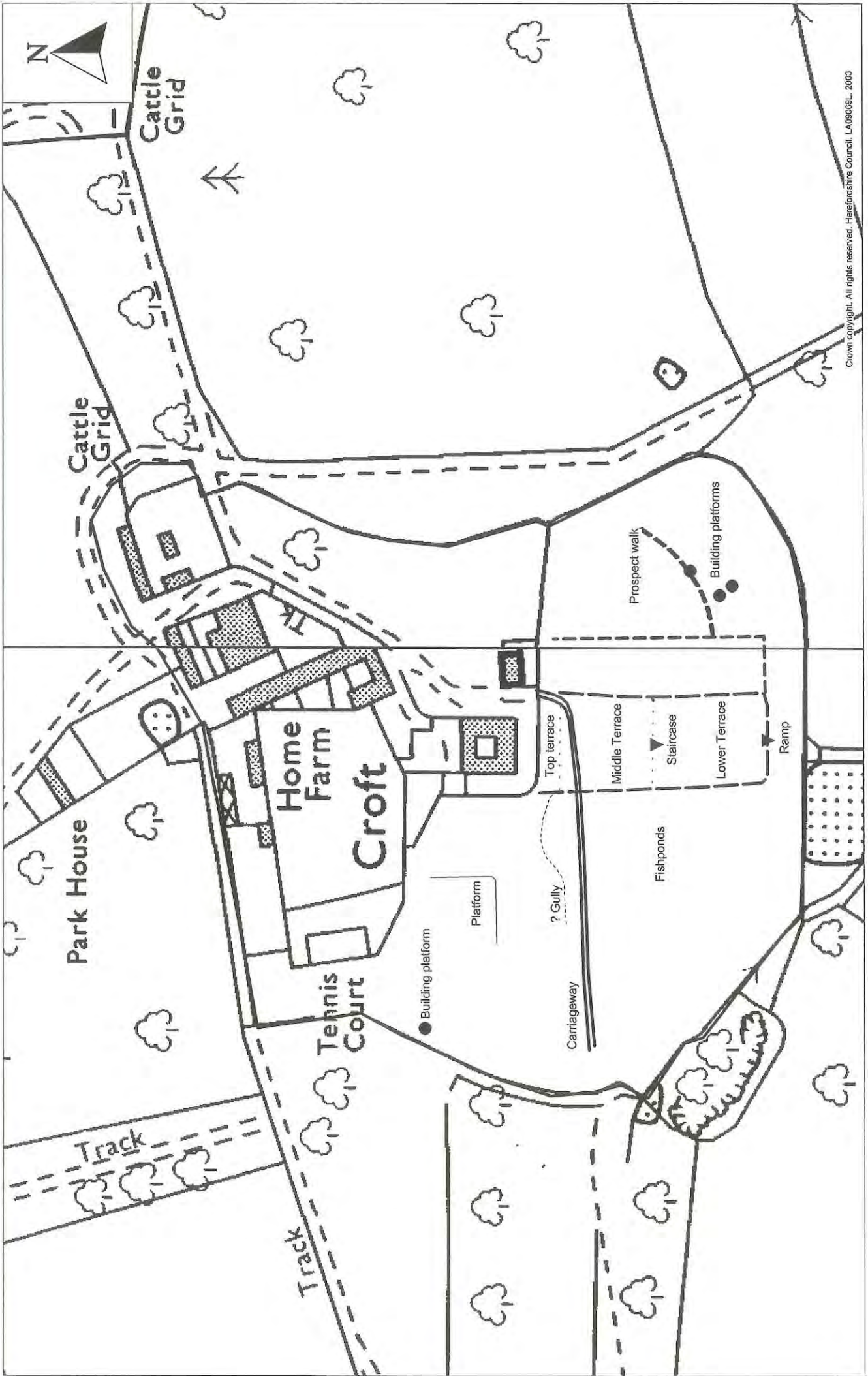
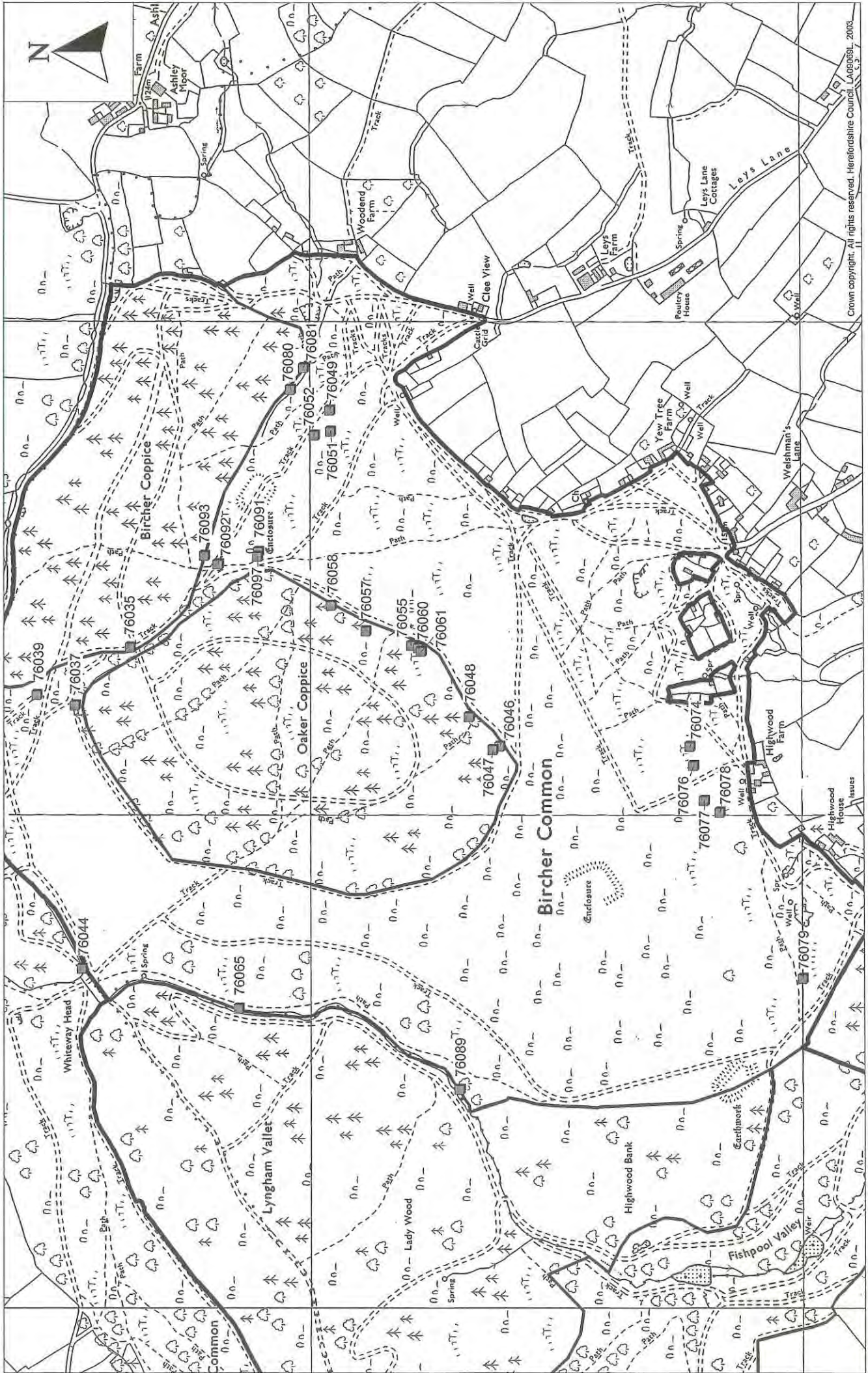


Figure 28 Photograph showing park pale remnant, HSM 76272; from the west



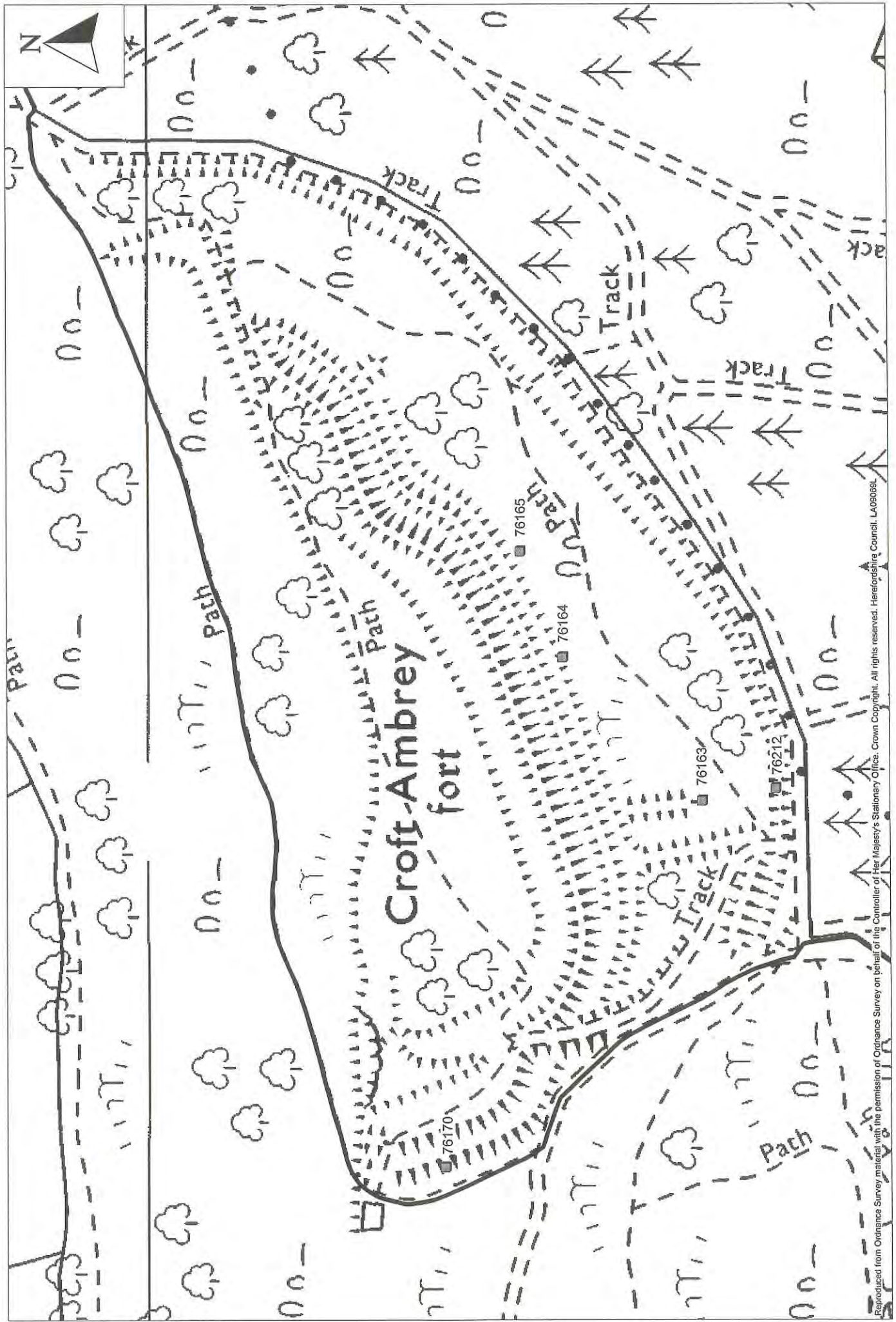
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Figure 29 Outline plan of formal garden remains in area GA



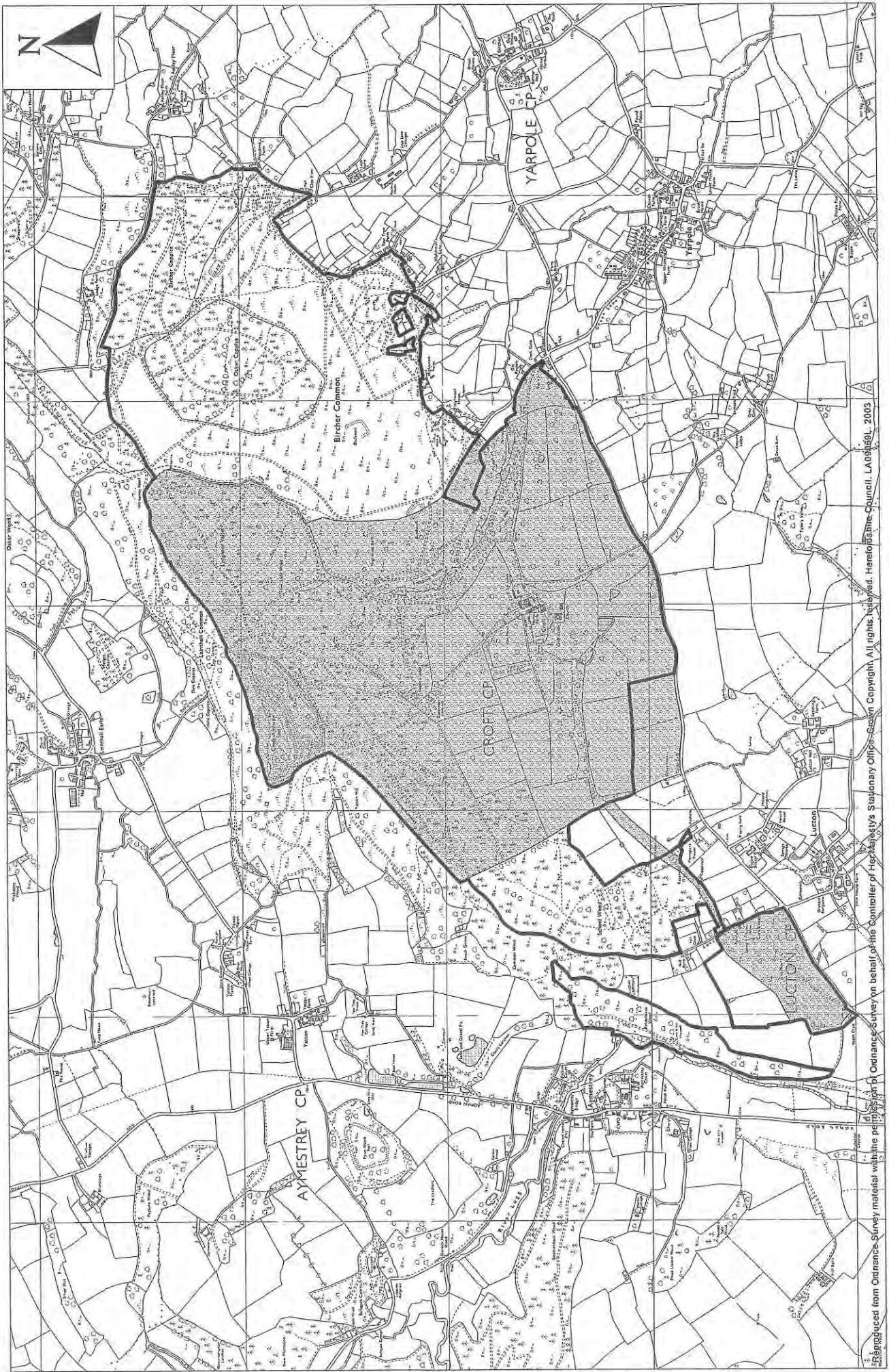
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Figure 30 Post-medieval settlement features on Bircher Common



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Figure 31 Map of Croft Ambrey hillfort, showing warrening features noted in 2001-2



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Figure 32 The post-medieval landscape park

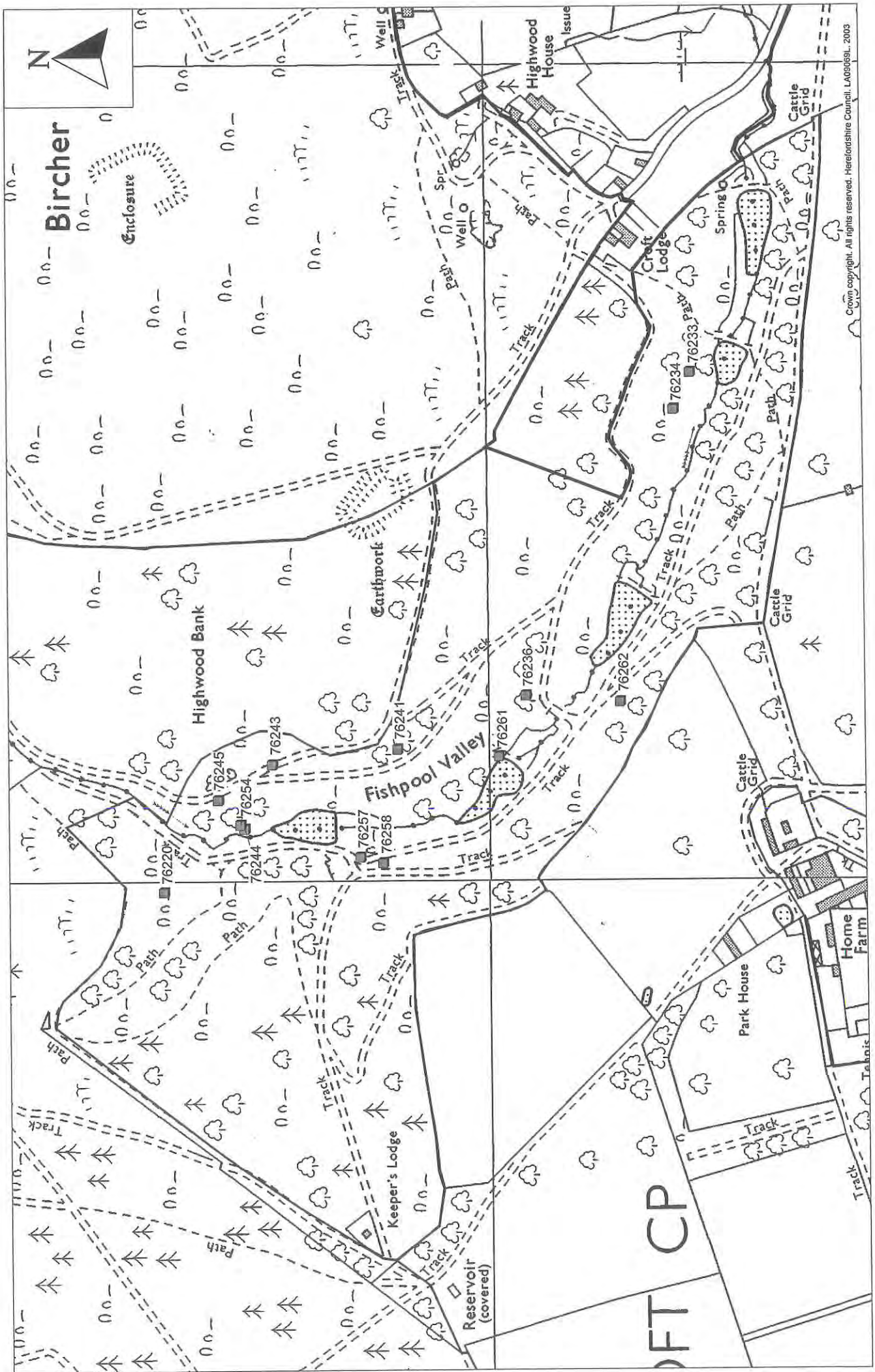
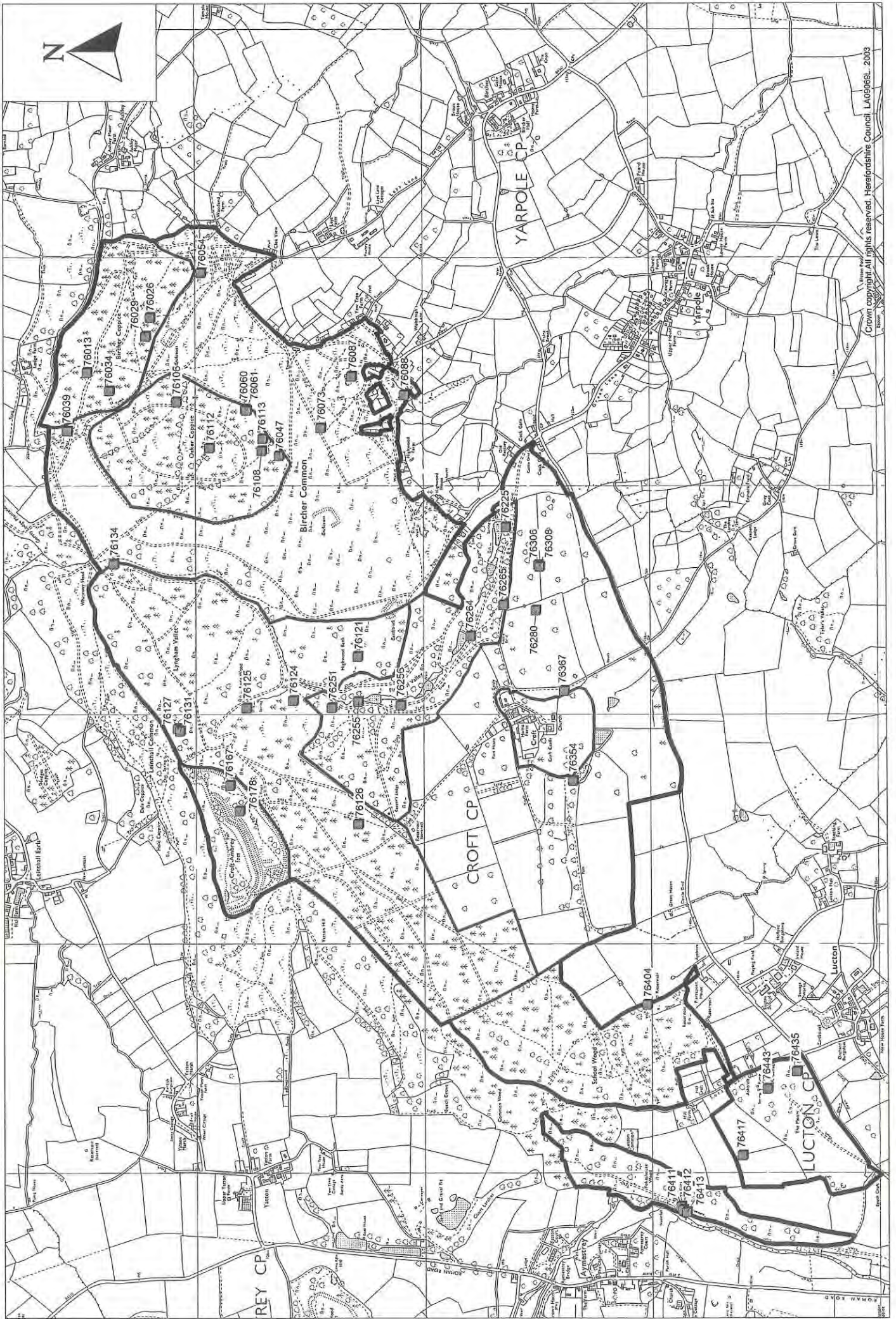
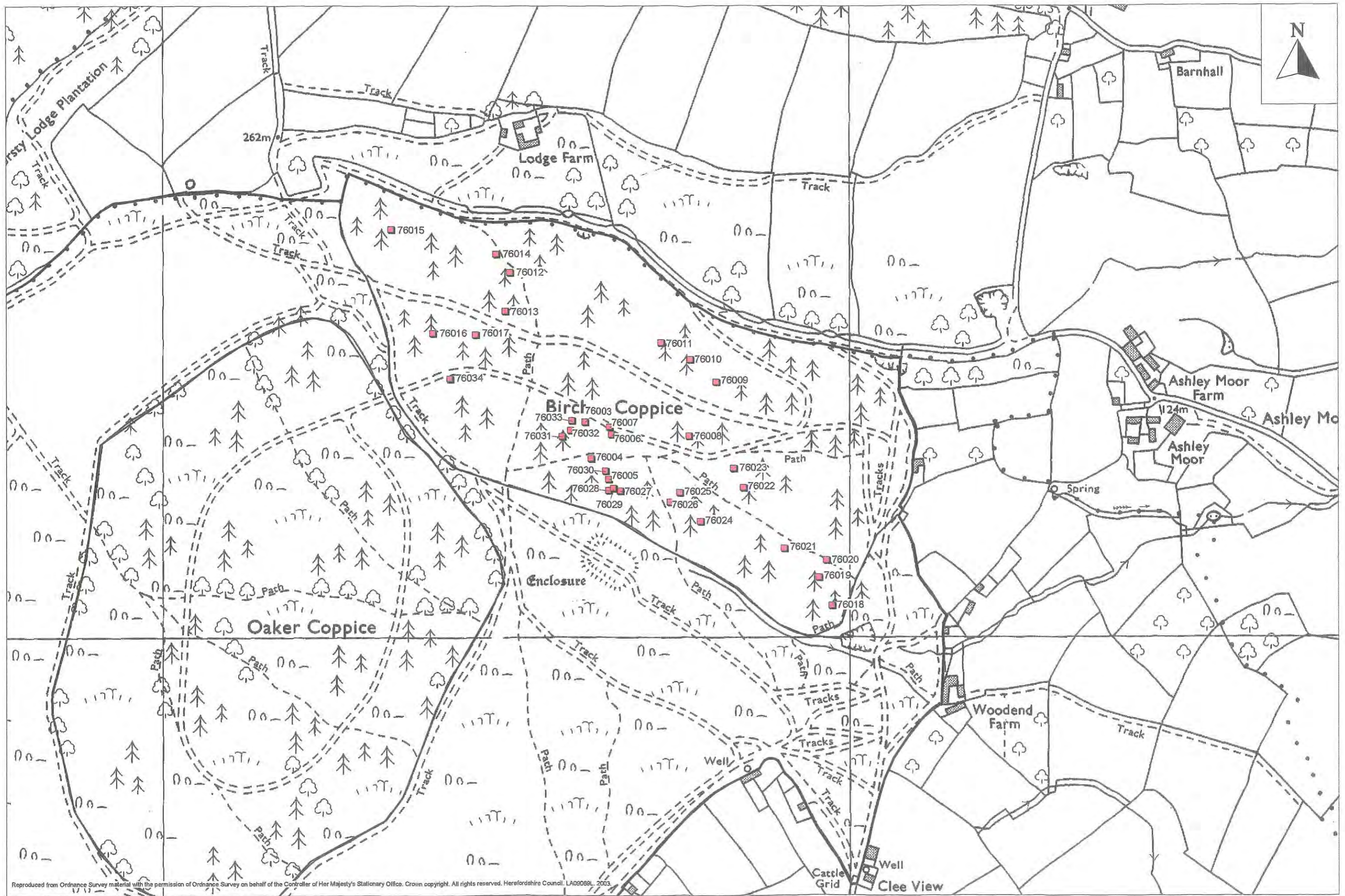


Figure 33 Fishpool Valley: carriage rides and ornamental features



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Figure 34 Estate management features recorded in 2001-2



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Figure 35 Inventory Plan: Survey Area A: Bircher Coppice

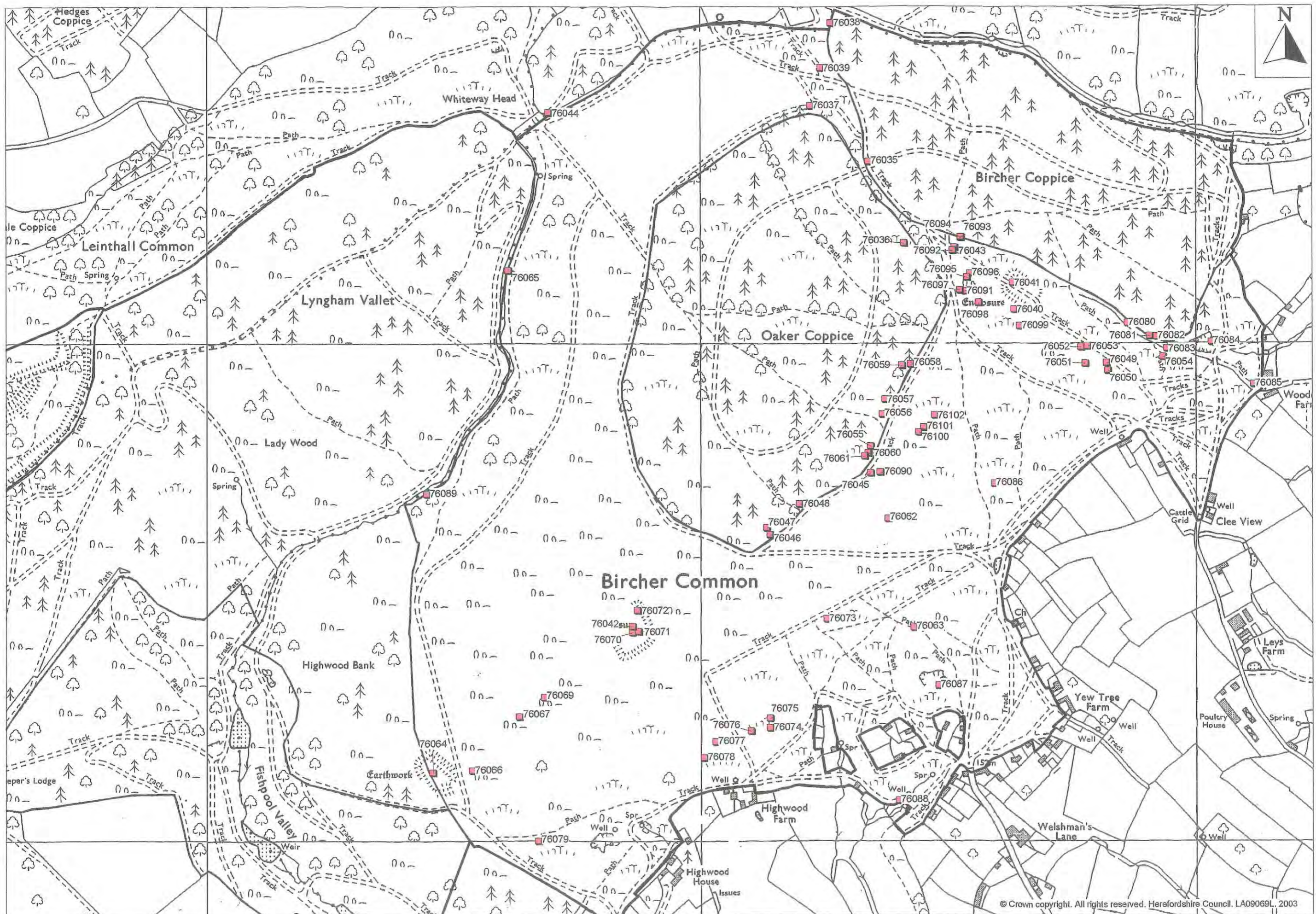


Figure 36 Inventory Plan: Survey Area B: Bircher Common

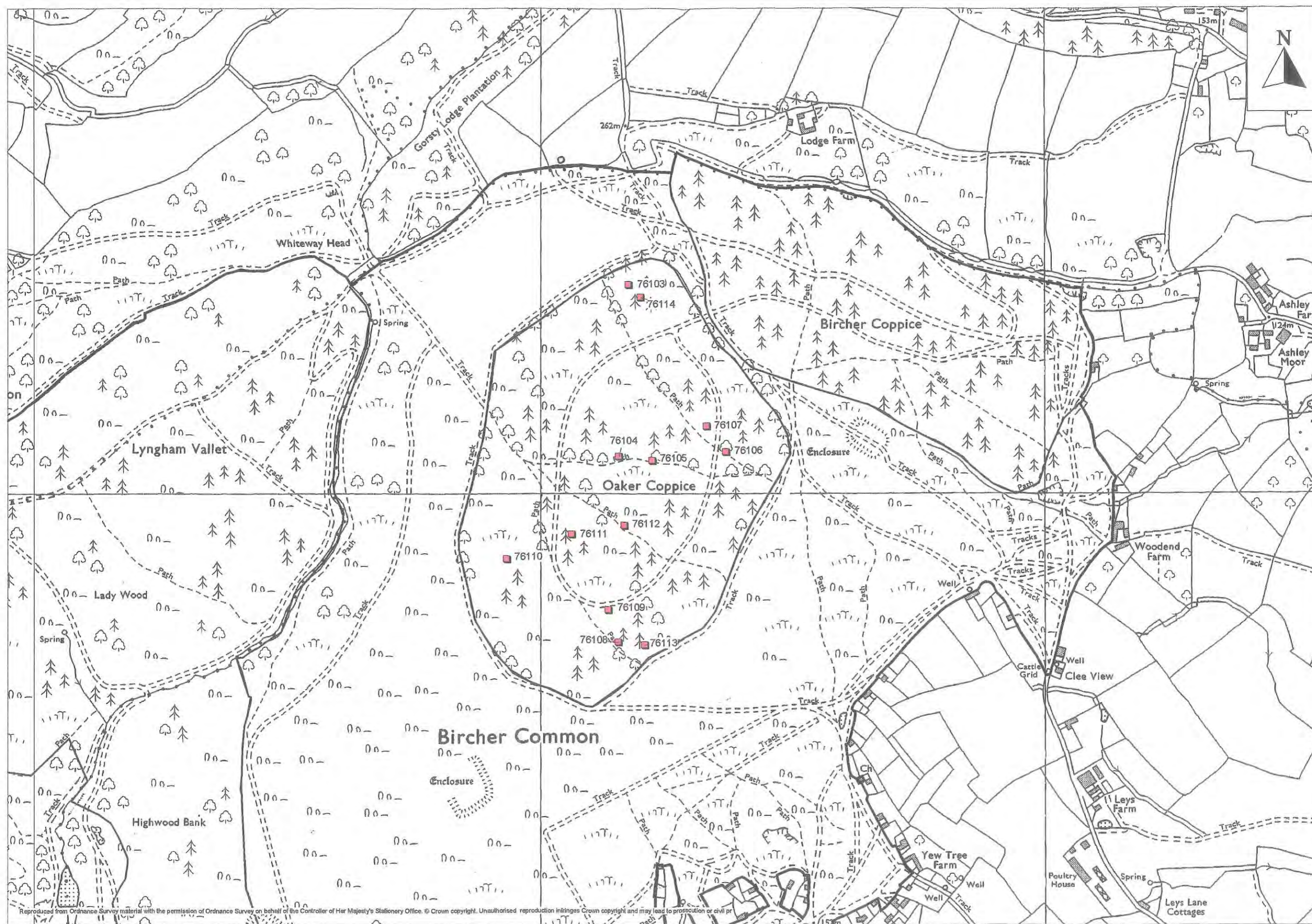


Figure 37 Inventory Plan: Survey C: Oaker Coppice

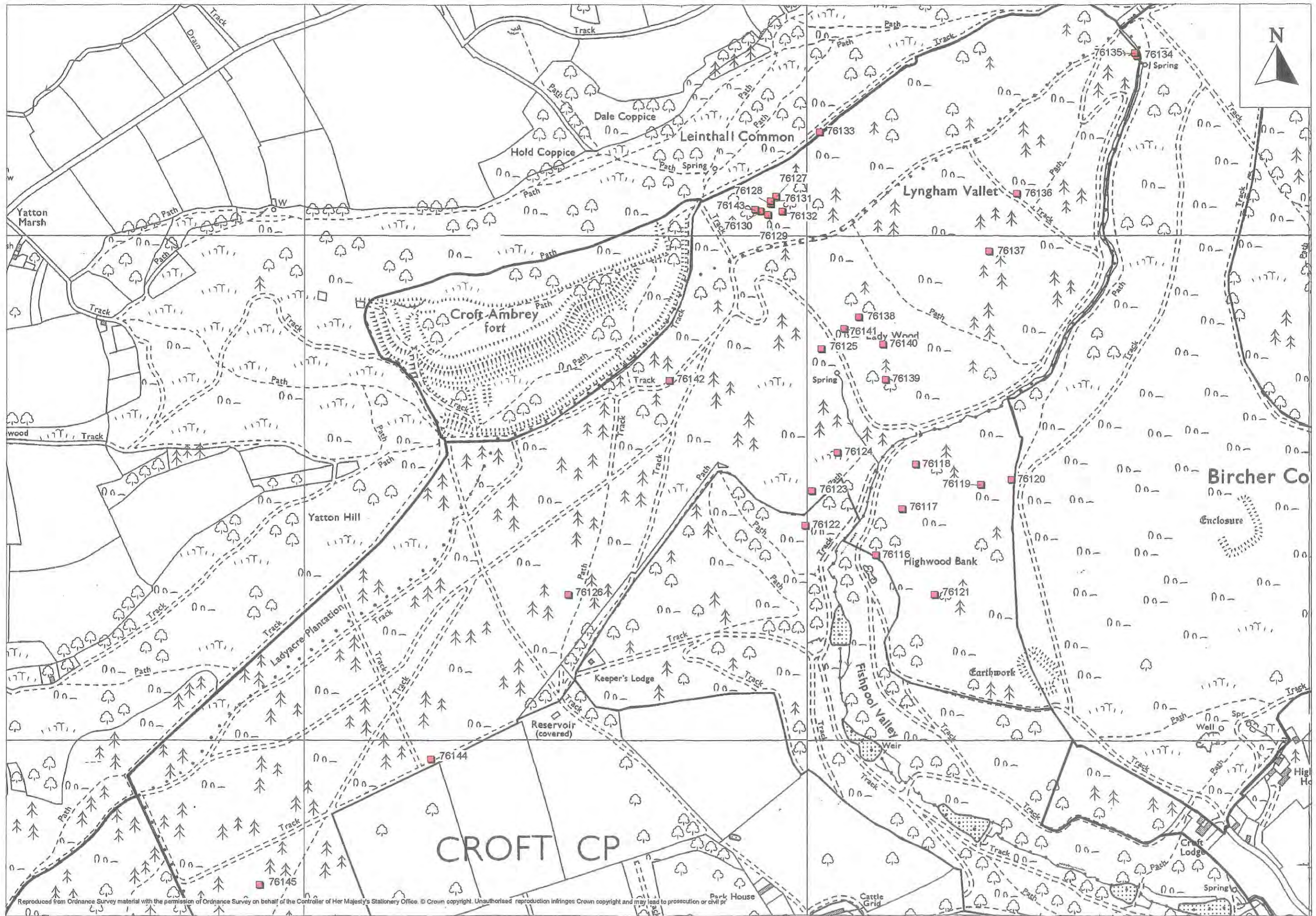


Figure 38 Inventory Plan: Survey Area D: Croft Wood

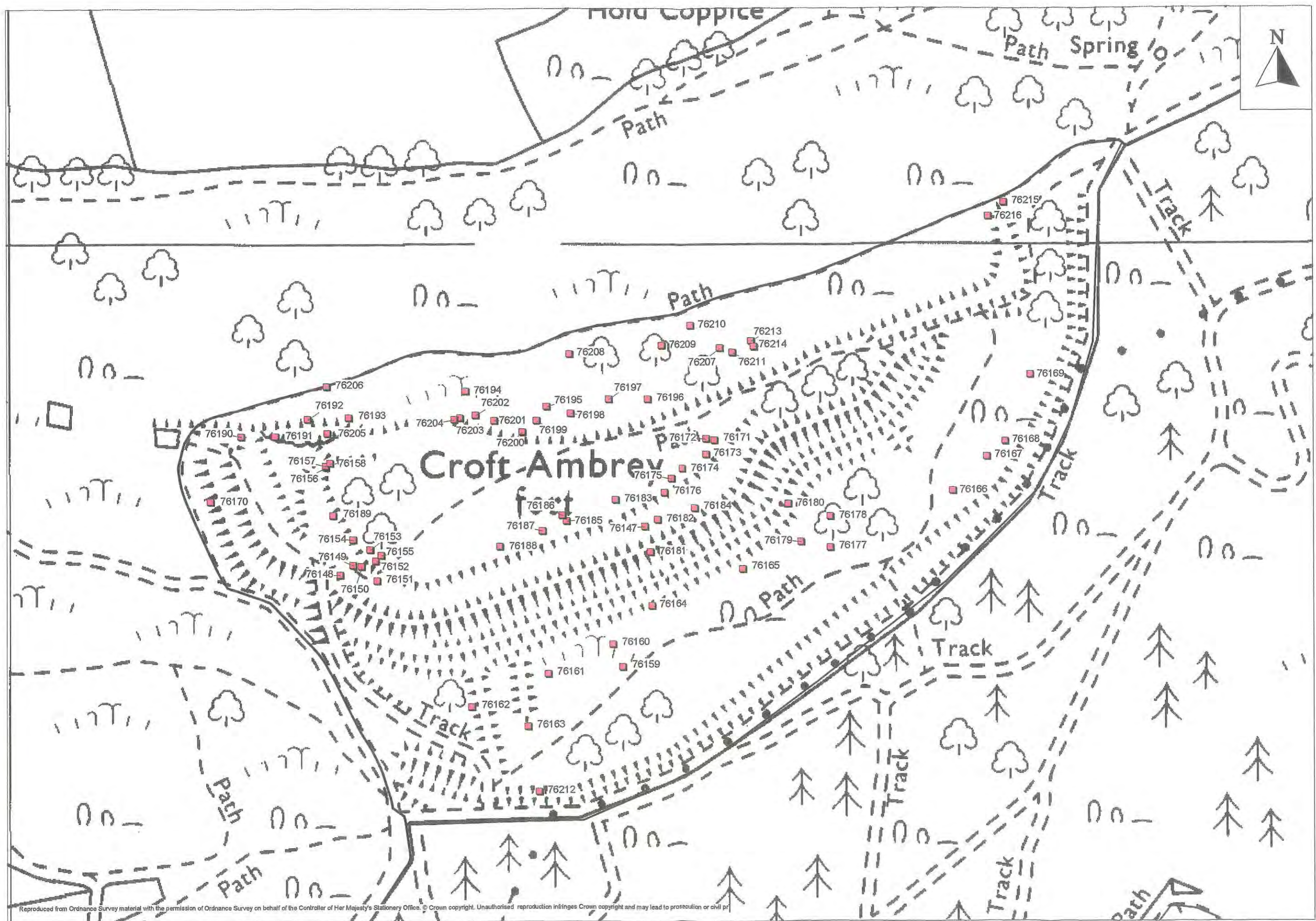
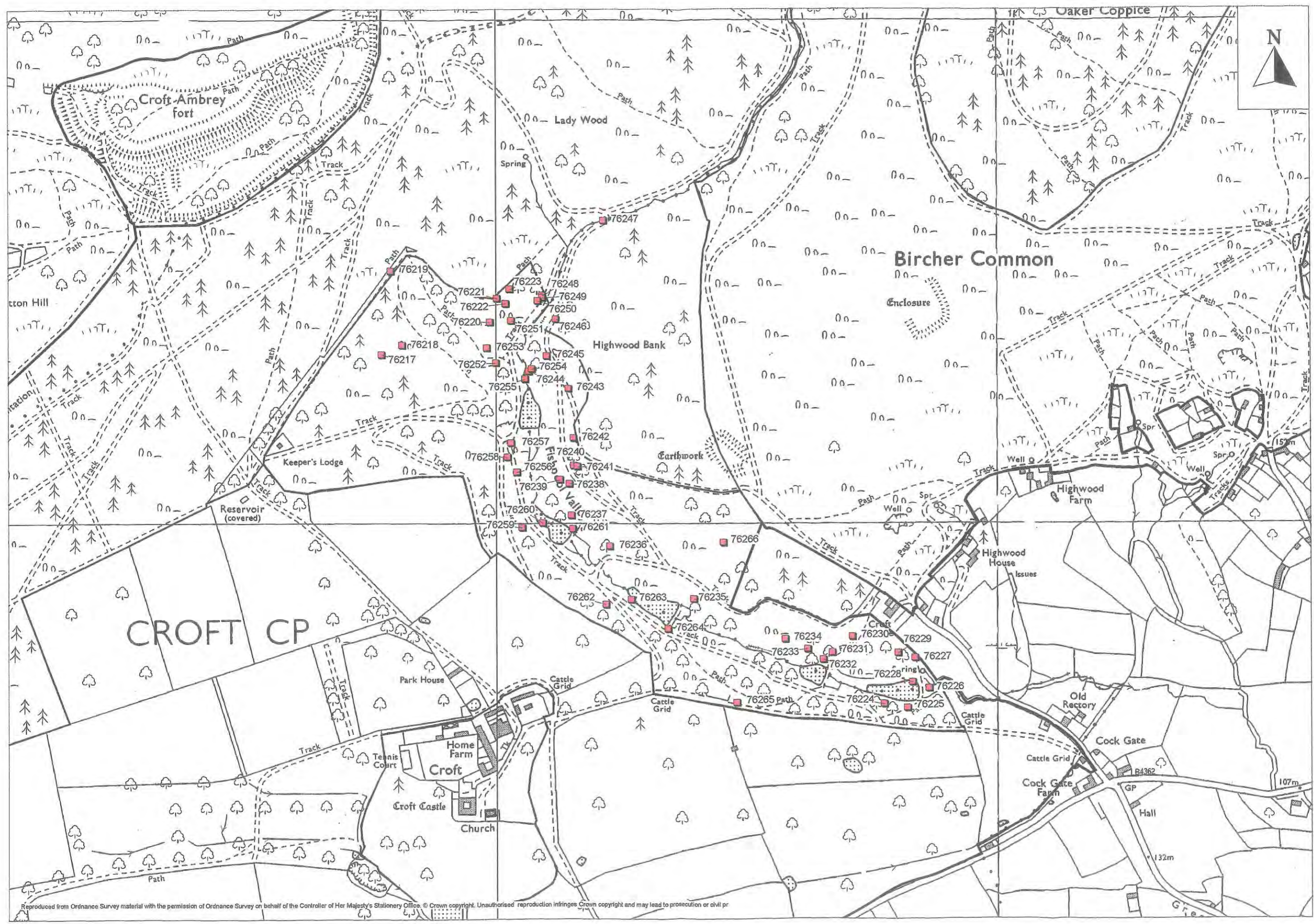
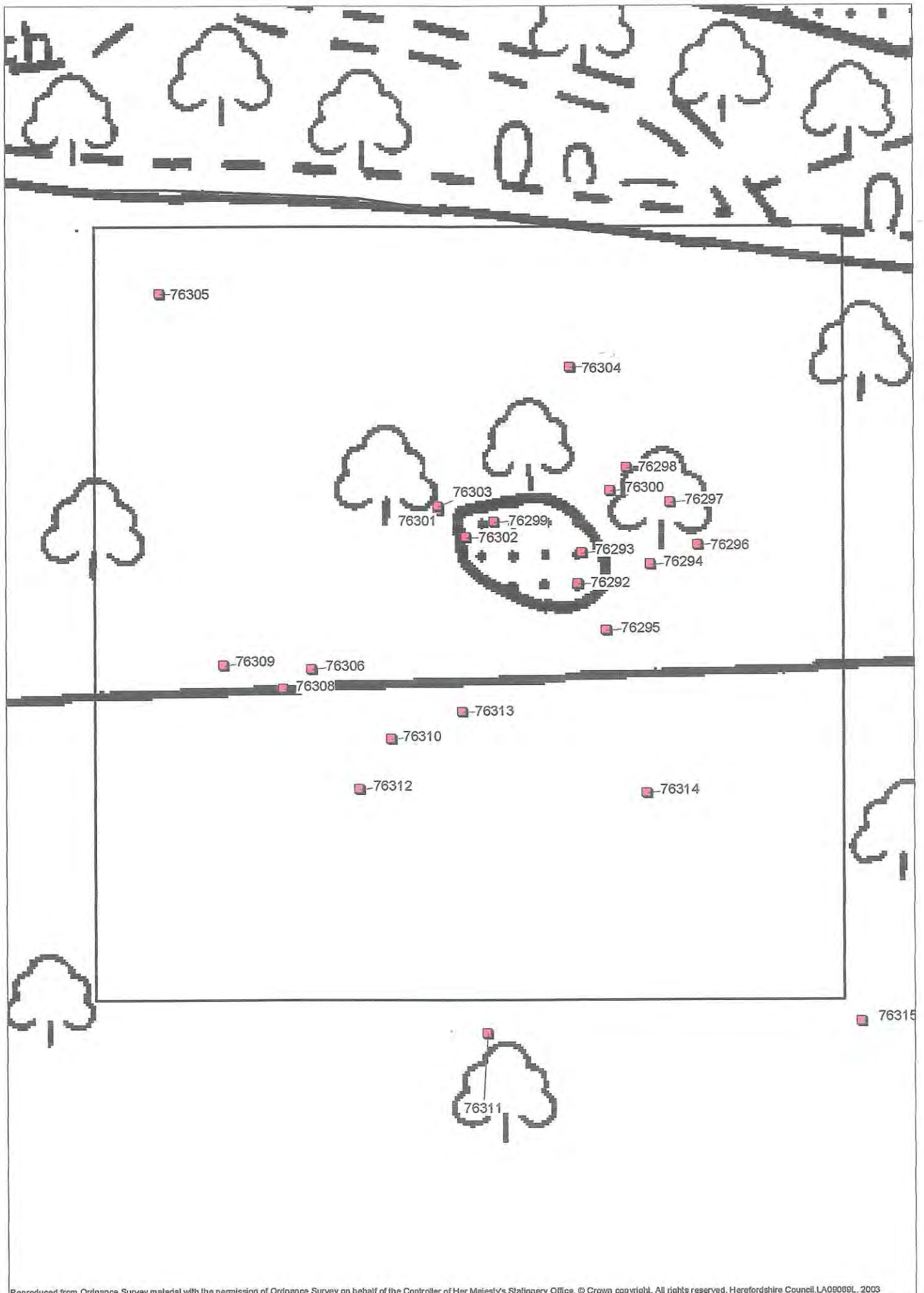


Figure 39 Inventory Plan: Survey Area E: Croft Ambrey



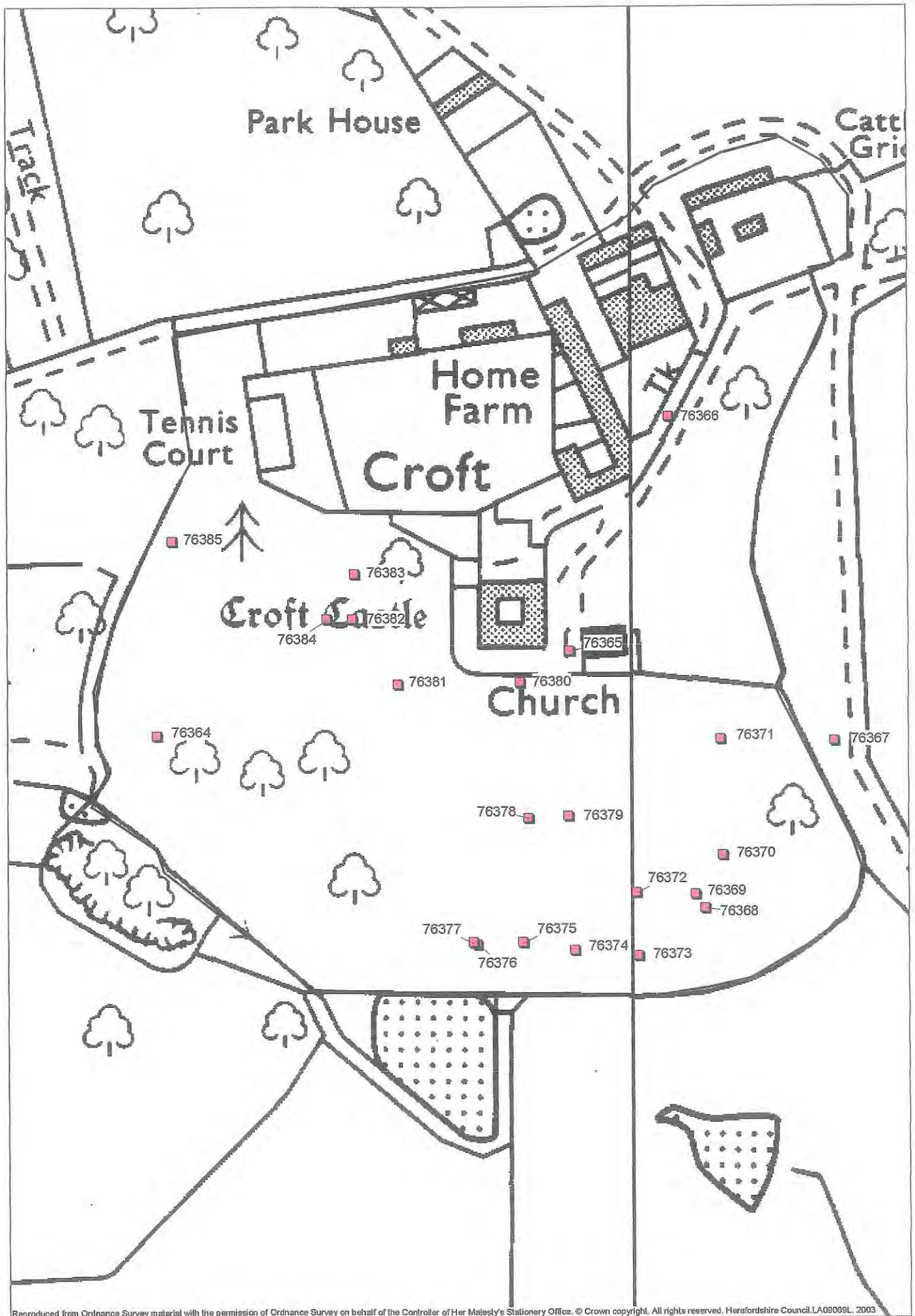
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Figure 40 Inventory Plan: Survey Area F: Fishpool Valley



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Figure 42 Inventory Plan: Survey Area G: Croft Parkland (Inset)



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Figure 43 Inventory Plan: Survey Area GA: Croft Castle environs

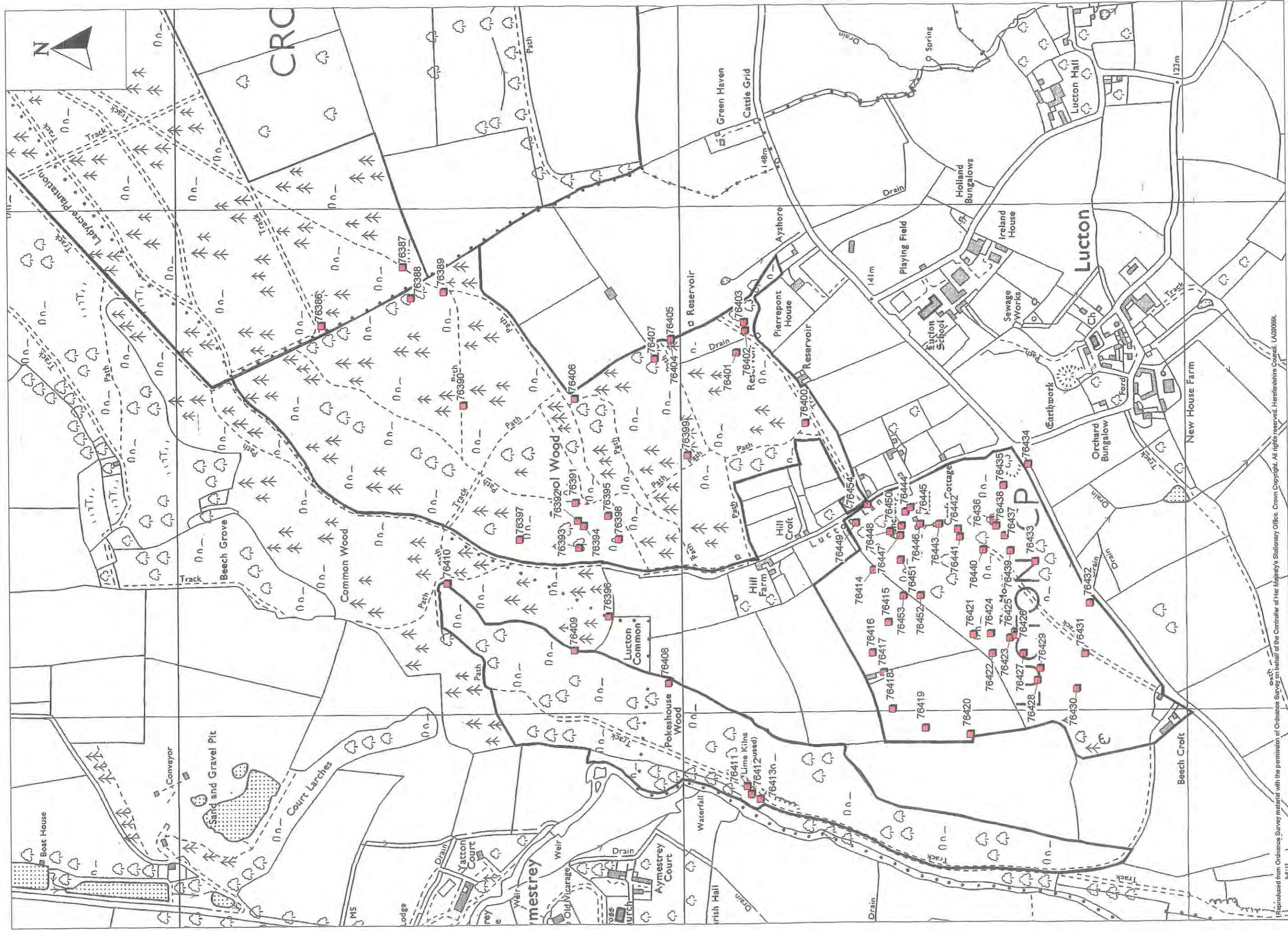


Figure 44 Inventory Plan. Survey Areas H.I.J.: Western areas