

**An Archaeological Survey  
of  
Bushbury Green Wedge.**

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Instrument Survey  
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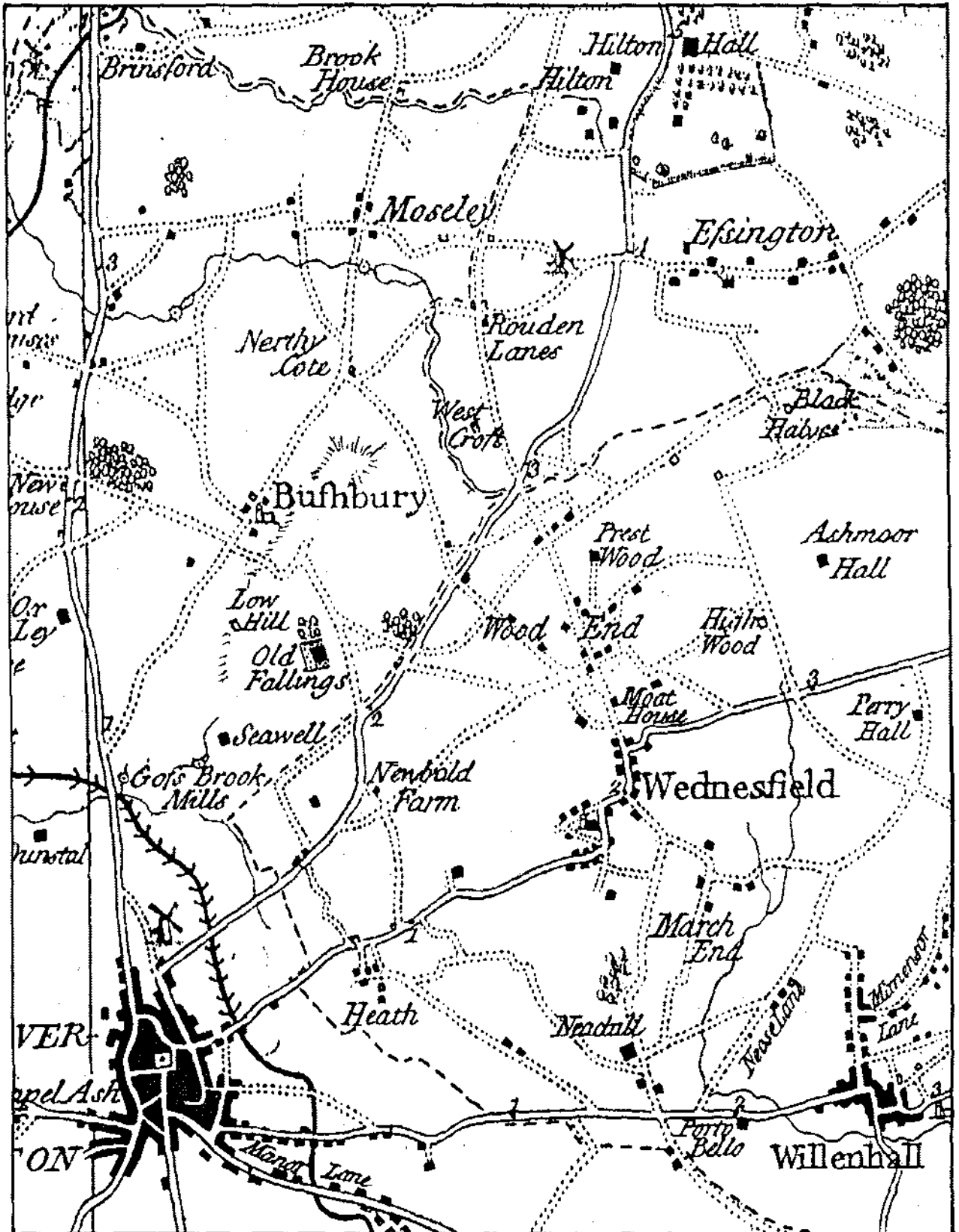
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Bushbury c.1770 (from map by Wm. Yates)

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Summary

In December 1989 Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit was commissioned by Wolverhampton Borough Council to undertake an archaeological survey of Bushbury Green Wedge, which is one of the few remaining significant areas of open space within the Borough of Wolverhampton. The purpose of this survey was to record and, if possible, interpret the surviving visible archaeological features, and trace the development of the landscape of the area from prehistory to the 20th century, using techniques of field survey and primary and secondary documentary research. Evidence from standing buildings, notably the parish church (which has medieval fragments within its fabric and the remains of a Saxon churchyard cross), Northycote Farm (a recently restored timber-framed building), and the 18th-century structures of Bushbury Hall and Moseley Hall, together with the known existence of several moated sites in the immediate area around the Green Wedge, would appear to indicate a rich and varied history.

Bushbury Green Wedge (centre: N.G.R. SJ 9303) is situated a few kilometres to the north-east of Wolverhampton town centre (fig 1); the A460 Wolverhampton to Cannock road runs close to the south, and joins the M54 motorway to the east. The Wedge itself is dissected by a number of routes, some of which have ancient origins, for example Northycote Lane, Moseley Road, and Underhill Lane, while other roads such as Legs Lane are recent additions serving the 20th-century suburban expansion of Wolverhampton into Bushbury, to the south and west of the open expanse of the Wedge.

Bushbury Green Wedge has an area of c.154 hectares (380 acres) and measures c.2km from north to south and c.1km from east to west. Present land use is varied but has a strong recreational emphasis. At the northernmost end of the Wedge is the farmland associated with Moseley Hall Farm (Field Numbers BS 25,31-43; fig.5), part of which was designated a conservation area in 1988 (S.I.N.C. designated BS 31,34 and 35). Then, proceeding southwards, is

Northcote Farm Country Park (BS 17,20,21,23,24,26-30), including the site of the former Moseley Court, which has a recreational function, while to the east of Bushbury Lane there is a playing field (BS 22). Bushbury Cemetery is located between the junction of Bushbury Lane and Underhill Lane in the centre of the Wedge (BS 18 and 19), south of which lies the Council owned Beeches Farm (BS 11-16), primarily a dairy farm. The land associated with Bushbury Hall is pasture for horses (BS 5 and 8-10). On top of Bushbury Hill are water reservoirs (BS 6 and 7), to the south of which is Bushbury Hill County School (BS 3). The parish church of St. Mary's is surrounded by a graveyard, some of the gravestones of which date back to the 18th century or earlier (BS 4). In the south-east corner of the Wedge are allotments and a modern covered swimming pool (BS 1 and 2).

Bushbury Hill dominates the topography of the Wedge rising to c.180m (c.590 feet), the land sloping away on all sides, down to the Berry Brook which has cut a valley on the north and east, and towards the urban centre of Bushbury to the west.

Most of the solid geology of the survey area consists of an expanse of Soft Triassic Sandstone with pebble beds, but just to the west a fault line running north-south defines the edge of an area of Bunter Sandstone and Upper Mottled Keuper Sandstone. However, the south-east corner of the survey area, around the southern end of Underhill Lane, consists of older Carboniferous Enville Beds. Further east lie the Middle Coal Measures, which dominate the solid geology of this part of the West Midlands, and a certain degree of subsidence occurs within the southern part of Bushbury Green Wedge, attributed to the settling of old mine workings. The drift geology differs little from the underlying strata, the whole area being overlain with Triassic pebble beds of pebbly red sandstone and conglomerate, although the valley of the Waterhead Brook, which runs out of the main lake at Moseley, has a boulder clay deposit.

## 1.2 Methods

The archaeological survey consisted of four main elements. The basic component was the landscape survey of the area comprising Bushbury Green Wedge. This field survey was intended to make a record of every visible man-made feature, from which specific features could then be chosen for closer study. All fields were given an individual number, prefixed BS, from a master plan of the entire area of study (fig. 5); each was described on a standardised record card, which was attached to an enlarged Ordnance Survey plan of the field, upon which sketches were made of any landscape features, natural or man-made. Any major man-made features that were encountered during the field survey were recorded on a separate feature record card, which was indexed by field number and usually either surveyed or photographed (for example BS 1/1).

### Instrument Survey (by Laurence Jones)

Most of the surface features in the survey area called for only fairly simple survey techniques involving tape measurements. This was due both to the scale and accuracy of plotting specified in the working brief, and to the uniform or linear nature of surface features. However, in two areas of the survey detailed plotting of features was necessary. Firstly, in the area to the north of, and adjacent to, Bushbury parish church (BS 8,9 and 10), specified in the survey brief to be recorded at a scale of 1:500. Secondly, in the area to the south of Moseley Hall Farm (BS 37), where the relatively complex nature of the surface features demanded detailed survey.

The area to the north of Bushbury parish church contained a fairly dense pattern of features, some being relatively slight in elevation. These features were plotted with the use of a Nikon theodolite and E.D.M. (electronic distance meter). The recorded data was then used to produce a 1:500 hachure plan of surface features, including spot heights in metres.

The area to the south of Moseley Hall Farm contained a number of surface features whose detailed nature again required the use of E.D.M. equipment,

the recorded data forming the basis of a 1:2500 scale hachure plan with spot heights in metres.

#### Standing buildings and documentary research

The standing buildings within the survey area contain numerous clues to the historical development of this part of Bushbury in their fabric and, as such, were recorded and photographed as separate features from the field-by-field survey.

While the project brief suggested that documentary research should be restricted to a review of the secondary sources, it was found during the course of research that, on the one hand, what secondary sources did exist for the area did not give sufficient detail to be able to talk meaningfully about the development of the landscape of Bushbury over time and, on the other hand, a great deal of primary information was readily accessible. Therefore, both primary and secondary written sources, and maps, drawings, photographs and aerial photographs were consulted (see section 3.3, below). The aerial photographs consulted were taken in 1977 as part of a survey of the West Midlands County, and are now held by the West Midlands Sites and Monuments Record (S.M.R.). These were 1:5000 high vertical photographs taken for planning and mapping purposes rather than for archaeology; however a set of oblique shots has recently been taken of the area around the churchyard, specifically in relation to this survey, although they do not pick up the features plotted in Field BS 8.

#### 1.3 Results

The results of the survey are presented on a series of maps with accompanying descriptive text, including a field-by-field description of the survey area with any surviving archaeological features noted. Apart from the northernmost part of the survey area around Moseley Hall Farm, where a number of identifiable archaeological features were encountered, it was found that the weight of interpretation had to be based upon documentary evidence, where it existed, if a satisfactory analysis was to

be made of the historical development of this part of Bushbury. Landscape evidence simply did not exist in sufficient quantity or detail to allow a complementary narrative to be developed, certainly before the mid-18th century.

There are certain limitations to a documentary-based narrative which should be recognised, particularly since only a few general historical studies have been made of Bushbury (Chatwin 1983, and the introduction to Staffordshire Records Society 1957). The existence and survival of primary documentary evidence is subject to the normal restrictions of this type of source (ie class-selectivity and period-selectivity); the pattern tends to reflect the power structure within particular communities, so parts of the history of Bushbury have a relatively dense documentary coverage while others have hardly any. In addition, before the appearance of detailed mapping in the late 18th century, it is very difficult to pinpoint the geographic location of various documentary references, such as in manorial records or in glebe terriers, in a landscape that has changed markedly over the years. Therefore, in order to even out some of the irregularities of the historical record, a general outline of the historical development of Bushbury Parish will be attempted, in order to place Bushbury within a wider regional context, before turning to a detailed discussion of the key themes in the landscape history of the survey area.

## 2. The Survey

### 2.1 History of Bushbury Parish

Bushbury Green Wedge represents only a small proportion of the total area of the ecclesiastical parish, which is approximately 8 km. long from east to west, and 5 km. wide from north to south. It is part of the Diocese of Lichfield, Archdeaconry of Stafford and Rural Deanery of Wolverhampton. The earliest surviving fabric of the parish church appears to be of 12th-century origin, and it has been argued that this is probably the time when the parish was established as a separate entity from the large and important parish of Wolverhampton, evidence for which can be found in the



pre-Conquest endowments of Wulfrun (Staffordshire Records Society 1957,6). The place-name evidence for Bushbury is inconclusive, and therefore will only be mentioned briefly. The earliest forms (10th and 11th centuries), are invariably 'Biscopbury' (Bishop's bury); however, there is insufficient evidence to ascertain whether or not this suggests an ecclesiastical connection or merely a personal name. Bury is a very common element in English place-names, with a variety of meanings, including 'hill-fort', 'manor-house', or even 'town'. However, it is likely that 'manor-house' is the probable meaning in this context (Gelling 1988, 143).

There is little direct evidence of prehistoric or Roman settlement in Bushbury. Evidence of prehistoric activity in the parish is limited to the chance discovery of two Bronze Age axes and the possible former existence of a barrow. In his 'Natural History of Staffordshire' Plot (1686,403) reports the discovery of a 'brass bolt head' (now lost), which from the accompanying description can be interpreted as an unlooped palstave. It was apparently found in a wood called 'Birchen Leasow' somewhere between the parish church and Fordhouses to the west (Stebbing Shaw 1801, appendix of additions and corrections,19). The second Bronze Age axe was found in 1980, in the back garden of a property on Keats Road, just to the east of the study area. It is a three-ribbed socketed-axe, broadly dated to the 9th-8th centuries B.C.; part of the wooden haft survived in the socket (Malam 1982). The placename 'Low Hill', just to the south of the study area, is suggestive of the site of a barrow.

In the Later Pre-Roman Iron Age the Bushbury area probably fell within the tribal territory of the Cornovii. The settlement pattern within the Cornovian territory appears to be dispersed, the majority of the population living in farmstead enclosures, revealed primarily as crop-marks along the gravel terraces of the River Severn to the west. Numerous hillforts provided the foci for this dispersed settlement; one, known only from Anglo-Saxon charter evidence (Hooke 1983,16), being sited in Hilton parish immediately to the north of Bushbury

In the Roman period Watling Street, the main Roman road from London to mid Wales, passed to the north of Bushbury. From Penkrige (Pennocrucium) on

Watling Street two roads ran southwards, one (Margary No.191) heading towards Greensforge and Droitwich, skirting along the eastern side of the later parish, the other (Margary No.190) taking a course across the parish towards Metchley Fort in Birmingham (Margary 1973,294-5).

In the Anglo-Saxon period Bushbury fell within the expanding territory of the Mercian Kingdom, which absorbed various sub-groups known largely from charter evidence, including the Pencersaetan, a name tentatively associated with Pennocrucium, the Roman settlement near Penkridge (Hooke 1973, 12).

There is no Anglo-Saxon Charter evidence specifically relating to Bushbury; this is because the compilers of the charters did not produce boundary clauses for those estates only partially owned by the church, of which there are a number around Wolverhampton, the administrative focal point of the region. The south-east boundary is referred to in the charter for Wednesbury, which describes it as following the 'penure', or 'Penn-way', which was probably the forerunner of the A460 Cannock road, and is therefore just outside the survey area (Hooke 1983,29 and 74). However, a number of roads in Bushbury Green Wedge appear to have fairly ancient origins, especially the sunken trackways of Moseley Road, Northycote Lane and the Ridgeway over Bushbury Hill, which together reputedly formed part of a major route from Stafford to Wolverhampton (Shaw 1801,181).

The Domesday Book of 1086 mentions both Bushbury and Moseley, but it should be noted that : 'Domesday is an unsatisfactory guide to both the distribution and character of settlements, and provides no information on the scale of nucleation' (Sawyer 1985,3). Two hides and two and a half virgates, which used to be held by Wulfric before the Norman Conquest, are mentioned in Bushbury, along with land for 5 ploughs, 3 villagers, 4 smallholders with 2 ploughs, and a meadow of 6 acres; and 1 virgate of land which was waste, which used to belong to Countess Godiva. She also used to own 1 hide in the manor of Moseley, which had 1 plough, a meadow of 1 acre, and woodland 2 furlongs long and 1 wide.. A hide was roughly equivalent to 120 acres, and a virgate to a quarter of a hide (Morris 1976). This indicates that to the north of the survey area a considerable quantity of woodland remained to be cleared in the 11th century. While it is difficult

to use the Domesday survey to discuss population size and nucleation, especially because rent-paying tenants are often excluded from the survey, it would appear that from an early stage Bushbury had a larger population than Moseley, although this does not imply that it was in any sense a nucleated settlement.

During the medieval period two inquisitions occurred in Bushbury. The first in 1287 concerned a dispute over 'a messuage, mill and a nook of land in Bissebury' which was owned by someone who had committed a felony, and the other, in 1342, concerned the enfeoffment of a parcel of land in 'Olde Fallyng' (Cal Misc.Inq No.1 entry 1399, and No.2 entry 1740). While it is possible that the mill mentioned in 1287 was a predecessor of the one in Moseley, it is unlikely, given that the mill did not appear in a 16th-century beating of the bounds of Bushbury, and mills were rarely omitted from such documents as they were of special local value. The Yates map of 1776 shows a mill to the west of Moseley, just outside the survey area, and it is possible that this may have been the site of the disputed mill.

If an aerial photograph could have been taken in the late 16th century, it would have captured in stasis the type of landscape that had been slowly evolving in Bushbury parish over most of the medieval period. This would probably have consisted of a pattern of large open fields grouped around small hamlets or manors, assarted from the woodland which survived in patches in between. Indeed, Moseley is a leah-type placename, one of a number in the region, indicative of a settlement in a woodland clearing. The open fields would be divided up into plots called furlongs, comprising strips of ploughed land with characteristic ridge-and-furrow, a surviving fragment of which can be seen in Field BS 37, near Moseley Hall Farm. A documentary example of the process of turning woodland into farmland is provided by a 15th-century copy of a grant of land describing 'two encroachments called le Grenefeldes in Bishebury which lie between the Brunnesforde and the royal road from Stafford to Warwick' (S.R.O. D.1790/A/12/7).

This model of fragmented rural settlement is reinforced by the fact that since medieval times the parish was divided into several manors. These

were Bushbury, Moseley, Elston, Showell, Oxley, Wobaston and Essington, each commonly centred around a moated house. In addition, there was a hamlet at Fordinghouses, and other groups of cottages or farms at Rowden Lanes, Northycote, Underhill and Brinsford. This type of development was the norm just to north of the Birmingham Plateau, where the agricultural land was far richer than the wastes and scrub of the south, where manorial influence was low (Frost 1974,15). It has been estimated that the population of the parish of Bushbury was no more than 300 in the mid 16th century (Chatwin 1983,5). Map evidence from the late 18th and early 19th centuries confirms that a diffuse pattern of settlement continued throughout the parish into the modern period (Yates 1776; First Edition OS 1", surveyed 1814-17).

Today the hamlet is regarded as one of the earliest forms of nucleated settlement from which villages might grow, possibly originating in the Saxon clearance of woodland (Aston 1975 and Hooke 1986). While the possibility of such a village developing around the parish church in Bushbury must be taken into consideration, the First Edition Ordnance Survey 6" map shows no more than a group of half a dozen cottages scattered along Bushbury Lane. These may have been the structures that an observer in 1906 noted were 'good half-timbered buildings near the village school' (Jones 1906 in Chatwin 1983, 5). These buildings are not visible on the 1937 edition of the Ordnance Survey 25" map, and were therefore probably demolished in the early 20th century.

It has been argued that during the 16th century the feudal system began to be dismantled in south Staffordshire as the larger landholders started to enclose the medieval open fields and common land (Thirsk 1961 and Frost 1974). This resulted in a period of population stagnation in the rich agricultural areas on the Staffordshire plain as rural labourers were displaced onto the wastes of the Birmingham Plateau. No evidence has been found to verify that this happened in Bushbury in the 16th century, but it is possible that the gradual process of enclosure of the medieval open-field systems through agreements between landowners in order to rationalise their estates might have begun before the first recorded enclosures appear in 17th-century documentation (see section 3.3). Enclosure was probably

protracted and piecemeal, for in the 18th century the Reverend Stebbing Shaw was still able to write of an open-field called 'Bushbury Great Field'. It is likely that this ancient open field was located to the north of Bushbury Hall, and probably covered the west facing slope of Bushbury Hill (Field Numbers BS 9,10,11,13,14 and 18; centre N.G.R. SJ927 027) because Stebbing Shaw said on the authority of John Corser, the tenant of Bushbury Hall, that: 'a well is situated on very high ground, near the top of Bushbury Great-Field' (Stebbing Shaw 1801,182). Certainly none of the fields in the Bushbury Green Wedge exhibit the square, precisely surveyed boundaries which are typical of the later Parliamentary Enclosures of the 18th and 19th centuries, and there are no records of this occurring in the area.

After the Reformation a number of families within the survey area continued to have catholic sympathies. The Whitgreaves of Moseley Old Hall were probably the most important; indeed Charles II sheltered in the Old Hall whilst making his escape from the country. Bushbury was the centre of a number of minor events during the Civil War, including various visits by Charles I who made Bushbury Hall his H.Q. for a while, and a minor skirmish between cavalry. This may have been because a number of the landowners in the area, both protestant and catholic, supported the king, while Birmingham was fiercely Parliamentary. After the Civil War, the Hearth Tax returns of 1666 lists 47 houses with a further 22 exempted, suggesting a population of around 350 (Chatwin 1983,11).

The position of Bushbury on the borders of the emergent industrial belt of the West Midlands in the 18th and 19th centuries was to become a crucial factor in the development of the parish. Initially, in the 18th century, Bushbury remained something of a rural backwater. The old road system proved totally inadequate for the transportation of the products from the industrial south, but the new road connections which were built to Stafford and Cannock left the the Green Wedge in splendid isolation. This is graphically illustrated by the section of Northycote Lane, abandoned in the 18th century, that is preserved as a sunken track, barely two metres wide, near Moseley Hall in the north of the survey area.

The road system was complemented by two canals. While a series of plans made in the late 18th century show a proposed extension to the lake at Moseley in order to provide a reservoir of water, this was never put into effect (S.R.O. D.3186/8/1/30/5b). Although Bushbury may appear to have missed the onset of industrialisation in the region, evidence of various building projects by the main landowning families of the parish suggests that this was a period of some agricultural prosperity. Old Fallings Hall was apparently rebuilt in the 1720s, Bushbury Hall was probably enlarged in the late 18th century, and Bushbury Hill Farm rebuilt, as was Moseley Hall. Perhaps the major building project in the area now covered by the Green Wedge was at Moseley Court, a house of some pretension surrounded by gardens and parkland, which was built in the early 19th century by the Whitgreave family, who formerly lived in Moseley Old Hall.

Nevertheless, towards the end of the 18th century various industrial activities, including the mining of coal, had begun to spread into parts of the parish, especially near Essington to the east, although the area comprising the Green Wedge remained relatively untouched. By the time of the first census in 1801 the population of Bushbury was just under 500, of which 420 were in receipt of poor relief. These figures confirm the relative stagnation in the development of the parish in comparison to the industrial areas to the south.

However, the impact of the railway was considerable on life in Bushbury, which became a major servicing point for the L.N.W.R. and later the G.W.R. The population of Bushbury began to rise dramatically during the course of the 19th century, such that by 1851 there were 988 people listed in the census returns, and by 1901 about 4000. Houses were built around Bushbury Lane in the 1880s to accommodate the population influx. This process of suburban expansion continued into the 20th century as the area of the Green Wedge began to be gradually defined by housing estates to the south, by the 1920s, and to the west, by the 1930s.

## 2.2 Building Survey

There are a number of standing buildings of historical interest within the survey area, which probably constitute the most tangible evidence of the rich and varied history of the Bushbury Green Wedge over a period of more than 700 years. Most of these have been catalogued in the Sites and Monuments Record (S.M.R.) of the West Midlands region, and the following descriptions of the buildings are derived from a synthesis of the S.M.R. record, basic photographic survey and field observation, with a brief outline of their history.

The Church of Saint Mary, Bushbury Lane. Grid Reference: SJ924 025.  
W.M.S.M.R.no: 404. Status: Listed Building II

Most of the fabric of the present church is the product of a mid-Victorian rebuild, although certain remnants of the earlier churches are still discernible. The remains of a plain Norman doorway are visible in a wall on the north side of the church between the tower and the nave, although it is now walled-up. The present chancel appears to be the oldest surviving part of the church, and may have been built by Hugh Bushbury, whose monument is in the church, in the 14th century (Potter 1848). Although much altered, most of the church is in the Decorated style, but the tower has a Perpendicular west window. The age of the font has been the subject of much speculation. The decoration around the top of the bowl has been tentatively attributed to the 16th century (Jeavons 1952), but this may possibly have been an alteration to an earlier late-Norman font. The rebuilding in the 1850s was only the latest of a series of alterations that had been made to the church. The greatest destruction of the medieval fabric appears to date from an earlier rebuilding operation, in the 1830s, to enlarge the seating capacity of the church, which only 20 years later was dismissed as tasteless. Fortunately, the condition of the church prior to these 19th-century alterations can be seen in an etching for Stebbing Shaw's 'History and Antiquities of Staffordshire', made at the turn of the century (fig.2).

Bushbury School and Library. Grid Reference: SJ924 024.

Just to the west of the church lies the building that is now the local library, but which used to be the village school. The earliest part of the building appears to date from 1835. The building is typical of the National Schools set up in the early Victorian period, and has separate boys and girls entrances and a later brick extension to accommodate the increasing population of the village in the 19th century.

Bushbury Hall and Farm. Grid Reference: SJ925 025.

W.M.S.M.R.no: 406. Status: Listed Building II

The present house appears to date from the late 18th century, although there are reputed to be parts of a 17th century structure to the rear of the building, where the roof tiling is older. It is a three-storeyed structure, built of whitened brick, and with a spread of five sash windows in broad frames with moulded wood pediments on consoles to the first and second storeys. However, the windows on the second storey have been replaced by modern wood casements. The front entrance is reached by steps; the doorcase is of moulded wood with a plain semi-circular fanlight and open pediment; the door itself has six panels. The eaves are plain, but there are gabled wings at the rear of the building.

This structure was probably built on the site of an earlier moated settlement. Stebbing Shaw maintained that the house originally belonged to the Bushbury family (Stebbing Shaw 1801,178). In the 17th century the property was owned by the Grosvenor family, but later passed to the Chandlers, a large landowning family who held property all over the country. In the 1770s the house was bought by a local family called Huskinson, who lived at Oxley manor to the west, and the front of the house may have been rebuilt at this time.

In 1790 the house and adjoining estate was sold, when it was described as: 'A most desirable farm, situate in Bushbury, within the said manor comprising an excellent modern built Mansion-house, called Bushbury Hall, situate on an eminence, commanding a most beautiful and extensive prospect



over the adjacent country, with all the necessary and sitable barns, stables and other out-offices, and an excellent walled garden, well stocked with the choicest fruit trees, with two small tenements and gardens, and about 254 acres of rich arable, meadow and pasture land; together with the tythes of corn and grain issuing out of and payable for the same, now in the occupation of Mr John Corser, which holds the lease for eleven years, which commenced on Lady Day last.'

(Wolverhampton Chronicle, August 14th 1790).

It was bought by the Hinckes family, who continued to rent out the property during the 19th century. Today a motor repair company occupies part of the farmyard.

Northycote Farm. Grid Reference: SJ929 032.

W.M.S.M.R.no: 539. Status: Listed Building II

The present timber-framed house was probably built around 1600. Since then the building has been altered frequently, but in the early 1980s it was carefully restored under the guidance of Mr F.W.B. Charles, a timber-framed buildings expert. Although the earliest parts of the present house are post medieval in date, a brief excavation undertaken by B.U.F.A.U. in 1983 prior to the restoration of the house found evidence of a medieval floor surface cut by numerous stake holes and several other features containing 12th-13th century pottery (Roe 1984, 87). The original portion of the building has a single gable with exposed timbers throughout, although the rest of the house now consists of 19th-century brick with some timber behind it. The house is two storeys high, there are five early-19th-century casement windows, a brick porch with a plain gable, and a chimney consisting of a central stack with original diagonal shafts built up with modern brick.

There is some controversy concerning the ownership of the house. Charles thought that the gatehouse was probably associated with the estate of the Whitgreave family at Moseley Old Hall, but Stebbing Shaw mentions that Northycote belonged to the Underhill family by descent, and this may correspond with the Hearth Tax return of 1660, which lists Thomas Underhill

as owning a house with five hearths, which Chatwin maintains was the original number at Northcote (Chatwin 1983,46). Certainly, the farm is listed as belonging to G.T. Whitgreave in the Tithe Award of 1848, although prior to the building of Moseley Court in the 1820s it may have belonged to the Underhill family.

Despite the uncertainty about ownership, the function of the property as a gatehouse seems clear (Charles 1979,2). Unlike the standard farmhouse plan, where service accommodation normally exceeds the 'private' accommodation, structural inspection of Northcote revealed no less than three structural bays of private accommodation, which is inconsistent with the arrangement of a farmhouse. Until recently a large timber-framed barn stood about 30 yards from the house, down Underhill Lane. It was recognisably of the same date as the house (Charles 1979,1), and probably served as a store for receiving the tithes of the estate tenants. At the same time that Moseley Court was completed Northcote House was probably converted into a farmhouse, and a new gatehouse built slightly to the north to replace it. Later, in the 19th century, the most impressive bay of the house, fronting onto the road, was rebuilt in brick. Charles maintained that this was either because the original function of the bay as a reception area and office had become obsolete, and therefore the structure had deteriorated, or that the timber-framed wing may have been removed to be rebuilt elsewhere and a structure more in keeping with the social standing of a farmer built in its place (Charles 1979,3).

Moseley Court Gatehouse. Grid reference SJ929 033.

This early 19th century brick building, now rendered, was probably built when Moseley Court was completed, and at the same time as Northcote House became a farm. It stands on the south west corner of the park surrounding the main house and is a small two-storeyed cottage structure.

Moseley Hall and Farm. Grid Reference: SJ931 040.

W.M.S.M.R.no: 484. Status: Listed Building IIS

Moseley Hall is an early 18th-century brick structure of two storeys and an attic. It has five renewed sash windows in a line across the second floor which have plain keyblocks, moulded stone plinths and stone quoins at the sides. There is a stuccoed moulded doorcase with consoles, rectangular tracery around the fanlight, and a six-panelled door. Under the roof there is a wooden modillion eaves cornice; three hipped dormers give light to the top floor; the roof is covered in old tiles. Inside there is a good original oak staircase, panelling in the major downstairs rooms, and two 'Adam' fireplaces. A later wing abuts the east side of the house, part of which has been demolished. Immediately adjacent is a fine coach house of two storeys, with a decorated gateway surmounted by a cupola, also early 18th century. A pair of rusticated brick gateposts, just to the west, mark the entrance to the hall from Moseley Lane, and have moulded stone cornice caps and large ball heads, which appear to be contemporary with the house. The Horton family and their predecessors the Moseleys were lords of this manor from medieval times. The present house is supposed to have been built in part over the site of a former moated settlement.

Moseley Hall Cottage. Grid Reference: SJ922 042.

W.M.S.M.R.no: 486. Status: Listed Building II

This small brick-clad cottage has remnants of a 17th-century timber frame concealed behind the brick facade, which is revealed internally. Although it is much altered, it was originally three separate dwellings. A three-windowed wing set back on the right-hand side has several blocked-up openings, sprocket eaves, and a mixture of old and new tiles.

Farm buildings.

There are three main sets of farm buildings in the survey area, at Moseley Hall Farm, Northycote Farm, and Bushbury Hall Farm. They are all built of red brick and are of 18th/19th-century appearance. Most of the farmbuildings are of one storey, although it is quite common to have a two

storeyed wing at the end of a range. All have tiled roofs. The farmbuildings at Bushbury Hall Farm are probably the earliest; a reference is made to them in an advertisement in 1790 when the estate was sold. Those at Northycote probably date from the opening of Moseley Court in the 1820s, while those at Moseley Hall Farm, incorporating dark engineering brick around the windows, appear later 19th century.

#### Buildings Now Demolished or in Decay

Bushbury Hill Farm. Grid Reference: SJ 926 022

This building was demolished in 1948. Chatwin refers to a date on the interior woodwork from the 1780s (Chatwin 1983,80); this is confirmed by Stebbing Shaw's observation that: 'Near the top of the hill by the church, on the south side, is the handsome modern-built house and offices of Richard Phillips' (Shaw 1801,181). It was the home of the Phillips family until the early 20th century. In the 1930s, when the Bushbury Hill School was built, it was the headquarters of the local 'Toc H' movement (fig 3). Since the Second World War the school buildings have expanded to colonise most of the area once occupied by Bushbury Hill Farm.

Moseley Court. Grid Reference: SJ 932 035.

This was a new house built in the Regency style by the Whitgreave family, who moved from the confines of Moseley Old Hall around 1821 (fig.3). Building began in 1815 when George Thomas Whitgreave wrote that 'I began to sink the well and make cellars for my new house': these are some of the few surviving features still visible on the site, the house being eventually demolished in the 1960s following the death of its last owner, Mr A.J. Wesson. Although the Whitgreave family had only moved to Moseley in the late 16th century, by the 18th century they were in the process of becoming the major landowners in the area, and continued to climb the social ladder throughout the period of the Napoleonic wars, presumably because of the success of their farming interests. Moseley Court was probably built to symbolise a break from provincial parochialism, a social pressure that a family with such pretensions might have felt acutely.

Moseley Mill. Grid Reference: SJ 930 038.

The remains of a corn mill are still visible behind the dam at the west side of Moseley Lake. Three sides of the mill are still standing to a height of c.3 m in places, although in general the building is extremely ruinous. There appears to be a number of builds within the remaining structure, although they are all in red brick. This is entirely consistent with mill structures, which by nature of their function tend to be rebuilt or strengthened periodically. A map of 1727 mentions a mill pond (now Moseley Lake), and so it is reasonable to suppose that a mill was functioning then, although it is not mentioned in a late 16th century beating of the bounds of Bushbury, which suggests a 17th-century origin (W.S.L. E0/39).

#### Moated Sites in Bushbury Parish

It has been argued that 'we should try to appreciate moated sites in the context of their physical and cultural environment, rather than as self-contained features existing in isolation' (Bond 1978). This type of approach is particularly suited to the format of the landscape survey. There is a significant cluster of known moated sites in and around the survey area (fig.4). Stebbing Shaw (1801,182,183) refers to the existence of moats at both Bushbury Hall and Moseley Hall before they were rebuilt in the 18th century. In addition, moated sites have been documented at Elston Hall (N.G.R.:SJ921 021); in the playing field to the west of Bushbury Crematorium (N.G.R.:SJ926 032); and about 60 yards west of the church (N.G.R.:SJ924 025). The only part of a moat which is still now visible lies just to the east of the survey area at Westcroft Farm (N.G.R.: SJ934 029).

This concentration is not surprising, for while Staffordshire has a large number of moated sites - a little under 200 out of a total of about 5500 in the country as a whole - it is known that at least 132 of these are clustered within the southern half of the county, particularly around Wolverhampton and Walsall (Larkham 1978 and 1984). The density of moated settlement around Bushbury may be explicable in terms of colonisation of

the area by the expanding population of Wolverhampton, in which case the probable origin of Bushbury parish as a separate entity from the larger parish of Wolverhampton in the 12th century may be significant, as between 1086 and 1300 the population of England rose by around three million from one and a half to about four and a half million. A further factor influencing the density of moated sites in Bushbury, over and above the good quality of the agricultural land, was that the parish was sandwiched between the town of Wolverhampton to the south and the fringes of Cannock Forest immediately to the north, where settlement was tightly regulated by the king until the 12th century, and Bushbury would therefore have represented an obvious area for colonisation (Greenslade and Kettle 1967,342).

It has been proposed that moated sites may be divided into two separate categories. These are, on the one hand, those associated with established manors and, on the other hand, those which are probably associated with the process of assarting (woodland clearance). Given that the practice of digging moats is presumed to have begun in earnest around 1150, and both Bushbury and Moseley are Domesday manors, the moats at these two sites belong to the first category. The other moated sites in the area, such as those at Westcroft Farm and Elston Hall, may belong to the second category and represent further colonisation of the remaining woodland, although the density of settlement in Bushbury was such that these sites were not isolated, as they are often found to be in other parts of the country.

### 2.3 Field Survey

The following field-by-field record of the area surveyed is a summary of the field record files held at B.U.F.A.U. There is a brief description of each field - including topography, present land use, significant boundaries and earthworks, and other man-made features - together with notes on any documentary evidence relating to the field. The survey proceeds from the south-west corner of the survey area, by the church, towards the north-east corner, by Moseley Hall Farm. (fig 5).

Field 1. A slight slope from east to west has been modified by some landscaping around a modern indoor swimming pool. Land use consists primarily of allotments around the pool.

Field 2. There is a pronounced westward slope in this field, but this landscape has been recently created by backfilling an old quarry. It is an open space, consisting of grass, trees and paths. The northern boundary has the remains of a bank and a few old trees, probably pre-19th century in date. Stebbing Shaw noted that there were new plantations and ancient yew trees on the summit of the hill, before the quarry began to supply the various road building projects in the area in the 19th century (Stebbing Shaw 1801,181).

Field 3. There is a gentle eastward slope to this field, although much levelled for the school buildings and associated playing fields. Bushbury Hill House and farm were situated in the south-west corner until their demolition in 1948.

Field 4.

Field 4 is the old graveyard around the parish church, but also includes a strip of housing land between the graveyard and Bushbury Lane, on which have been built the modern vicarage and community centre, and the Bushbury National School. The land slopes gently down to the west. Within the retaining walls to the north and west of the churchyard the ground level is raised by about a metre. There are various trees within the graveyard; however, none appears to be older than 150 years. The dates of the graves vary widely, but are mainly 20th century, although a number of 19th century graves surround the church and some 17th/18th century graves are clustered immediately adjacent to it. The churchyard appears to have been extended to the south in the 1940s, judging from the dates of the gravestones and the dogleg in the east wall.

The tombstones in the churchyard document several aspects of the social history of the parish. For example, the numbers of graves from certain centuries provide a crude index of population growth, the extent of infant mortality can be discerned, and the social pretensions of the Victorian middle-classes can be seen in some of the more monumental graves. One elaborate monument (BS 4/1; N.G.R. SJ925 025) is a fine example of the latter point, erected in remembrance of Thomas Bradburn, guardian of the poor board, and churchwarden from 1820 to 1850. Nevertheless, none of his five children survived beyond 17 years of age. In



addition, there are earlier gravestones featuring simple hand-carved inscriptions, a supposed Saxon cross base (BS4/2; N.G.R. SJ925 024), and what is possibly a much eroded medieval grave slab (BS4/3; N.G.R. SJ925 024).

Field 5.

This field is situated immediately to the east of Bushbury Hall and Farm. It has a steep undulating and hummocky slope from east to west, as the land falls away from the brow of Bushbury Hill. The field is currently used for grazing horses, and a recently erected fence divides the field into two roughly equal parts. There is a series of linear depressions running east-west in the north-west corner which may define a fairly recent building platform (BS 5/1; N.G.R. SJ926 026), associated with the adjacent farm buildings. The boundary to the north has a fairly substantial bank with hedgerow and one old tree, but has a northerly deviation near the farm. When viewed from Bushbury Lane to the west, this boundary, together with other associated ditches in adjoining fields which probably define its original line, exhibits the classic inverted S-shape so characteristic of medieval field boundaries, caused by the skewed action of early ploughing. The east end of the field abuts an old track which traverses Bushbury Hill and has a slight bank, and some old trees and stumps. The potential for survival of archaeological features in this field is good.

Fields 6 & 7.

These fields are occupied by Bushbury Hill Reservoirs, and have been extensively landscaped. Access was not possible, but it is unlikely that any residual features could have been discerned.

Field 8.

Field 8 lies immediately to the north of the churchyard. At present the field is grazed by horses, and to the north and east is fenced with modern 'corral-style' fencing, but to the south and west are the stone walls associated with the churchyard and its approaches, which appear to be 19th century in date.

This field was surveyed at a scale of 1:500 to ascertain the arrangement of a number of ridges and mounds (BS 8/1; centred on N.G.R. SJ925 026), visible against the gentle westward slope, suggestive of a possible deserted village. The results of this survey can be seen on Base Plan No.2, accompanying the report. Unfortunately the results were inconclusive, in as much as the resolution of the features is not sufficiently clear to indicate a specific function. However, it seems probable that the bank against the stone retaining wall to the west consists of material dumped when the wall was built and the ground surface by Bushbury Lane lowered. The group of three roughly rectangular mounds, the most easterly of which is the best defined, may be severely denuded building platforms pre-dating the re-routing of the road up to Bushbury Hall. This probably occurred in the 19th century because

the two mounds to the west appear to be cut by the road. A description of the property belonging to Bushbury Hall, made in 1790 prior to its sale, mentions two tenements and gardens near to the hall, and these may correspond with the eroded mounds.

Field 9.

This is a flattish field with a very slight slope from east to west, and like Field 8 is used for grazing horses. The possible outline of a land unit visible on the Tithe Map was identified, in the northern part of the field (BS 9/1; N.G.R. SJ925 027), together with the remains of a now obliterated field boundary, and the possible line of an old road that would have connected up with the track running to the rear of the parish church, eventually joining Bushbury Lane. Part of the eastern boundary of the field appears old, with one large oak tree, but although the northern boundary has an old beech tree this may have been a garden feature.

Field 10.

This is an L-shaped field adjacent to Bushbury Hall Farm. It has quite a steep slope towards the top of the field, and like Fields 8 and 9 is grazed by horses. In this field the line of the disused field boundary (BS 10/1; N.G.R. SJ928 025 - SJ924 026), also observed in Fields 5 and 9, is much more apparent, as is the disused road (BS 10/3; N.G.R. SJ925 025 - SJ924 025). In addition, two mounds were discernible, one (BS 10/2; N.G.R. SJ925 025), by the entrance to the field from the south, may simply be

backfilling to aid access into the field, while the other (BS 10/4; N.G.R. SJ926 025) might be the remains of a now demolished extension to the farm buildings. To the east of the field there is a massive banked boundary with trees and hedgerow which has an ancient appearance, although a substantial lynchet would rapidly form on such a steep slope as a result of ploughing.

Field 11.

This field slopes from east to west with a gentle depression in its centre. It has been subject to plough action and therefore erosion of surface archaeological features. The eastern edge of the field, which abuts the track over Bushbury Hill, appears to have been altered to accommodate the reservoirs, although the west boundary is a continuation of the high-banked boundary described in Field 10.

Field 12.

Field 12 is a steeply eastward sloping pasture field that has been recently subdivided across the centre with barbed wire. None of the boundaries appear to be particularly old, a bank approximately 2m high in the south-east corner is probably associated with the building of the nearby housing estate.

Field 13.

Adjacent to Bushbury Lane, this field has a pronounced but gentle rise towards the north-east corner. It is currently under grass, although the farmer stated that it had last been ploughed four years ago. There are periodic linear depressions running across

the field which are attributable to this ploughing. Only the east boundary appeared to be of any age, with a pronounced bank.

Field 14.

This is basically a subdivision of the previous field. However, the curving track by the cemetery is suggestive of an older boundary line, while the east boundary is a continuation of that in Field 13. The field is currently ploughed, although a brief fieldwalk did not reveal any significant material.

Field 15.

Field 15 has a pronounced slope towards its east corner, and is currently under grass. There is a small ridge across the field which probably indicates an earlier boundary. The east boundary is defined by a very steep bank which drops some 2-3m to the east.

Field 16.

Field 16 is a flattish field, east of Field 15, which shares the same bank and land use. There are two undulations in the middle of the field, possibly caused by subsidence.

Field 17.

Situated to the east of Underhill Lane, this flat field has been planted with young sapling trees in regular rows. It is bounded by the Berry Brook to the east, which defines the edge of the survey area. The northern boundary has a small bank and a ditch indicating that it has probably been ploughed at some time; all the other boundaries are of modern wood fencing.

Field 18,

Field 18 is the site of the new cemetery and crematorium which apparently dates from the 1950s. The whole area has been extensively landscaped, although the remains of an old quarry pit to the north of the crematorium building, and a possible field boundary given on the Tithe Map, immediately to the south of the building, are discernible. There are also a few fruit trees in the south west corner, which may be the remains of an orchard marked on the Tithe Map and the 1937 edition of the 25" Ordnance Survey Map.

Field 19.

Field 19 is also part of the crematorium, which seems to have been extended in the 1980's into this field. The track which used to run over Bushbury Hill to Northcote Farm has been extensively landscaped, but traces of it are still just discernible.

Field 20.

Field 20 is a flat area of waste ground, with extensive dumping into the remains of old ponds which are shown on the most recent Ordnance Survey Map. The north boundary has a bank and a ditch, which indicates that it might be quite mature.

Field 21.

This field, which slopes gradually down to the Berry Brook to the east, is currently under grass. The north boundary appears to be quite old, incorporating a number of old oak trees, hedgerow and a bank.

Field 22.

Field 22 is a playing field, landscaped to a flat surface by lowering the eastern side and raising the western side; all the boundaries

are modern. This playing field was probably built to serve the residents of the adjacent housing estate after the Second World War. On the west side of the field two sides of a rectangular shaped ditch can be seen, but it is unlikely that this ditch represents the surviving outline of the moat known to have been located in this approximate area.

Field 23.

Field 23 is a flat field with irregular undulations currently lying under grass. The east end of the north boundary appears to be quite mature, with old trees and hedgerow and traces of an inverted S-shape. In the north west corner there is a deep, partially backfilled ditch, which may be the remains of a pond.

Field 24.

This field slopes gently eastward down to the Berry Brook; it is lying under grass at the moment. There are numerous modern drains at the east of the field, and a pronounced drop down to the brook, where there are patches of thicket and old trees. To the north and south are other old field boundaries.

Field 25.

Field 25 is a flat field planted with beans, bounded to the east by old Northcote Lane and to the west Legs Lane. Ploughing appears to have obliterated any surface features of archaeological significance.

Field 26.

This flat field is located just to the south of Northcote Farm, and is currently under grass. To the east is a small ditch which is all that remains of the previous boundary

between this field and Field 27. There is a pond at the west end of the field, but this is partially obscured by recent dumping. A ditch that runs down the east side of the field is probably some form of recent drainage channel. The northern boundary is old, and has a very high bank, almost large enough to be a pale boundary, separating the field from the parkland of Moseley Court to the north.

Field 27.

Field 27 has a harsh eastward slope down to the Berry Brook, with a disused quarry in the middle. It is currently grassland. The substantial northern boundary, noted in Field 26, continues to run the length of this field, and to the south is another curving boundary of considerable antiquity.

Field 28.

Although this field is mainly flat, it has a slight slope down to the Berry Brook in the eastern corner. This field was part of the parkland surrounding Moseley Court, and used to be called 'the lawn'. Clumps of trees, and slight irregular undulations in the ground can be seen, which may be features associated with the park. In the eastern part of the field, where the ground begins to fall away, there is a land drain constructed from comparatively old bricks, possibly from the demolished Moseley Court. The northern boundary consists of a fence made of old iron railings: this type of fencing appears to have been used extensively around the park.



Field 29.

Field 29, which used to lie immediately in front of the now demolished Moseley Court, comprises the main area of parkland in the survey area. There are numerous trees, the most common species being oak and elm. The severe spring gales had blown a number of these trees down, and this allowed a rough measurement of their age to be made, which dated them approximately to the early 19th century, when the park was laid out. There is a small ditch in the south west corner of the field, perhaps indicating the original line of Northycote Lane, which was probably diverted when the park was built. There are iron-railing fences on the north, south and east sides of the park, and hedgerow and old trees by Northycote Lane.

Field 30.

This was the site of Moseley Court, which was demolished in the 1960s. The ground here mainly consists of an expanse of overgrown waste, but an area of planted woodland, principally populated by beech trees, remains to the north. Some of the ruins of the house are just visible in places, standing to a maximum height of about one metre. To the east of the ruins of the house, within the former walled garden, an overgrown orchard and cellars can be seen. On the west facing boundary of the field, which used to be the front of the house, are two banks, about 1m high which would have provided the house with fine views over the surrounding parkland. The plan of the house can be seen on the 1937 25" Ordnance Survey plan (fig 3).

Field 31.

This field slopes steeply northwards down towards Moseley Lake; half of it is newly ploughed, while the other half still lies under grass. This division in land use appears to reflect an earlier boundary marked on the Tithe Map, and may be caused by the increased gradient towards the east end of the field, which probably makes ploughing difficult. In this eastern half of the field there are a number of irregular hollows, probably the product of animal activity. On the other side of the field was a pronounced rectangular dip, aligned with the path of the original Moseley to Northcote road, which may have been the site of a building (BS 31/1; N.G.R.: SJ929 037). The northern boundary consists of cut hedgerow, while to the west lies the diverted trackway of Old Northcote Lane.

Field 32.

Field 32 is a small field which was probably created by subdivision of Field 31. There are many trees in this field, but they are not as mature as those around Moseley Court. A worked-sandstone gatepost was found at the west end of the field, which may indicate that there used to be an alternative entrance to the grounds of Moseley Court from the south-east.

Field 33.

This field slopes steeply northwards towards the Berry Brook as it emerges from the west side of Moseley Lake. It has been frequently ploughed and is currently cropped with beans. No archaeological features were visible.

Field 34.

Just north of Moseley Lake is an expanse of woodland which has developed over an area of undulating gravel mounds. The woodland nearest the lake is older than that to the north-east, the remains of another iron fence possibly signifying the original extent of the woodland. To the east are a group of large depressions, which appear to be the remains of carp ponds (BS 34/1; N.G.R. SJ934 037). These are mentioned in the estate books and diaries of the Whitgreave family in the late 18th century.

Field 35.

Field 35 is an area of overgrown woodland around the Berry Brook. The Tithe Map indicates that it used to be an Ozier Bed - that is, an area of carefully nurtured young willows, usually used for the making of baskets or matting as well as fencing. Many willow trees still remain.

Field 36.

Field 36 is a large field which slopes southwards down to the Berry Brook. It has been frequently ploughed, and is currently under a cereal crop. This plough action appears to have erased several boundary features that are known to have existed in the field in the early 19th century, which can be seen on the Tithe Map (fig 9). The north and east boundaries are ancient, following the line of Moseley Road and the track to Northcote respectively.

Field 37.

Today, this field covers a large area that was originally subdivided into a number of smaller fields. These subdivisions have been

followed here (see Base Plan No 1 at the back of the report for the location of the various features found in this area). To the east is a large flat open field, (Field 37a), which is currently grazed by horses. Here, there are a set of undulations that have been surveyed and interpreted as the earthworks of a substantial water system feeding what are now two dry ponds (BS 37/1; N.G.R. SJ933 038). In addition, there are traces of a severely eroded area of ridge-and-furrow in the north of the field (BS 37/3; N.G.R. SJ932 039). Both the north and east boundaries appear to be ancient, with oak trees and well established hedgerows. There is also a line of trees and a small ditch that probably indicate the location of a previous boundary to the west, which would have defined the boundary between this field and Field 37c. Another line of trees, near the feeder channel to the dry ponds, also corresponds with an earlier field boundary marked on the Tithe Map.

Field 37b is a small, flatish, rectangular field adjacent to Moseley Hall Farm, again grazed by horses. Well preserved ridge-and-furrow (BS 37/2; N.G.R. SJ932 041) covers most of the field, except to the west where it has been eroded by a track from the farm.

Field 37c is overlooked by the south face of Moseley Hall. It slopes steeply down into the lake, and, as such, presents a fine vista from the house. There is a marked contrast in the landscape to either side of a sunken

track along the west side of the field, which is the remains of the original road from Moseley to Northcote (BS 37/4; N.G.R. SJ930 039 - SJ930 038). To the east, the land is open and grazed by horses, with a hollow in the middle that looks like a set of foxholes. To the west, the land is colonised by overgrown scrub woodland, which is very similar to that in the adjacent Field 35. On the west bank of Moseley Lake are the remains of Moseley Mill (BS 37/5; N.G.R. SJ930 038; see Section 2.2). Most of the red-brick ruins appear to be 19th century in date, although a cursory examination revealed several phases of building. A mill is marked here on the Yates map of 1776, and one of the mill races, although much repaired, has squared stone in its build which is probably earlier in date than the present ruins of the mill.

Field 38.

Field 38 is a golf course which is bounded on the west side by the old Grand Junction Liverpool to Birmingham Railway. There were no discernible archaeological features in this field.

Field 39.

Field 39 is a small flat field of grass, the north and south boundaries have oak trees along the roadside.

Field 40.

Only the southern portion of this field falls within the survey area. No boundary can be seen today, but it appears to roughly follow the lines of fields extant in the early 18th century (see fig 6). The field is flat, and

has been ploughed to such an extent that no surviving archaeological features can be discerned.

Field 41.

Field 41 is a small enclosure of woodland, most of the trees appearing to be less than a century old.

Field 42.

Like Field 40, this land has been subject to substantial plough erosion, and no archaeological features could be seen.

Field 43.

Again, only the southern end of this field lies within the survey area, and it is here that most disturbance has occurred. There may be the remains of a raised platform in the south-west corner, but it has been severely eroded. A more substantial feature is a bank running north-south through the middle of the field. However, there is insufficient evidence to be able to offer any interpretation of this bank, and in any case it is located just to the north of the survey area.

The Berry Brook.

The Berry Brook is the stream which flows along the eastern side of the survey area, through Moseley Lake and then on to the west. While the stream is named as Waterhead Brook on the most recent Ordnance Survey maps, Berry Brook seems to have been the historic name. This stream was walked in order to ascertain whether or not any traces of burnt mounds or other archaeological features could be located, revealed through erosion of the stream banks. Although there were areas of

exposed, abraded pebbles, especially towards the southern end of the survey area, no evidence of burnt mounds was encountered.

### 3. Conclusions

#### 3.1 The Landscape Development of Bushbury Green Wedge

The rural air which today gives much of Bushbury Green Wedge its unique quality in relation to the suburban sprawl that has encroached up to its borders, might give rise to the mistaken impression that the area was always different in some way from the surrounding landscape. This was not the case. It was not until the late 19th century that any boundary between 'the country and the city' began to be defined here - before that the rural landscape of Bushbury Green Wedge would have merged without distinction into the rest of the countryside around. For example, Stebbing Shaw writing in the late 18th century, said: 'the village of Bushbury stands an eligible distance from the great road between Wolverhampton and Stafford, and still retains much of the same sequestered character as in Charles the First's time, being retired and pleasant, situated on a gravelly soil, and enjoying a dry and pure air' (Shaw 1801,181).

Certain important key themes have already emerged from the wider discussion of the history of the parish (Section 2.1). These are, briefly: routeways and communications; estate ownership; boundary development and enclosure; agriculture and industry. These themes will be discussed below in relation to the specific area of the Bushbury Green Wedge.

Although subject to some change over time (such as widening, straightening, or even disuse) the road system probably represents one of the most enduring man-made features in a landscape, and certainly constitutes the most noticeable division of the land into blocks or units (fig 7). It is from this position of relative clarity that the discussion of landscape development will begin, and then gradually work through to the more controversial remnants of previous landscape patterns.

The 'pen-ure', or Penn Way, is an ancient route which is mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Charters of the area. It roughly corresponds with the route of the present A460, and though just to the south of the survey area it must have acted as a focal point for the various routes through the Green Wedge.



Much later, in the 18th century, it was modernised and straightened, becoming a turnpike road. Although it is now scarcely visible, the route over Bushbury Hill is also reputedly ancient. Stebbing Shaw says that tradition had it that: 'a great road from Chester to London had its course formerly over Bushbury Hill, and from thence towards Wednesfield' and 'however that may be, certain it is that evident traces of a road yet remain in a field about half a mile north-west of the church, and which are still distinguished by the name of London Road' (Shaw 1801,181). While no such substantial traces of a road were encountered during the course of this survey, it is clear that a route of some sort existed over the brow of the Bushbury Hill.

Moseley Lane, to the north of the survey area, also appears to be an ancient thoroughfare, distinguishable by its high banks and meandering course around the boundaries of old fields. It probably connected up with the Penn Way just east of the present junction with the A460, where another even more deeply sunken road can be seen, which may be the original line of the Penn Way. During the Civil War crowds of defeated and wounded Scottish soldiers made their long and arduous way back north along Moseley Lane, according to contemporary observers (Stebbing Shaw 1798,79).

The sunken trackway of Northycote Lane is also of some antiquity, and probably formed the continuation of the route across Bushbury Hill. Although the line of this route has been modified, especially in the early 19th century after Moseley Court was built, it exhibits the classic, meandering, inverted S-shape probably derived from describing the boundaries of early open-fields. This is particularly noticeable in the curve to the west of Moseley Hall, clearly shown on the Tithe Map of 1848 (fig 7). Bushbury Lane, Underhill Lane and Legs Lane can be seen on the Yates map of 1776, although they all have now been widened and modified, and are the major thoroughfares for the population of the housing estates around the edges of the Green Wedge.

While patterns of ownership are not directly visible in the landscape, the imprints of countless decisions made by people on how to divide up their property can still be discerned in the remains of boundaries or other

features. These estates, or territories to use a more neutral term, are important units to attempt to define within the landscape. Unfortunately, the only complete picture of landownership for the survey area is given by the Tithe Map and Award of 1848 (fig 8). By this time the expanding estate of the Whitgreave family had already begun to mask many of the earlier patterns of landownership. However, it is possible to infer the probable boundaries of previous estates through comparison of the results of field survey with the available map and documentary evidence, especially a map of the Moseley Hall estate made in 1727 (W.S.L. 80/39).

The tendency for the road-system to mark the boundary between estates is immediately noticeable from Figure 8, and in the southern part of the survey area seems to confirm some status to the route over Bushbury Hill, which marks the boundary between the Hicknes and Escricke estates.

Although the property associated with Moseley Court has upset the pattern of ownership in the north of the survey area, the land belonging to Moseley Hall probably represents the clearest survival of an earlier manorial estate within the survey area. However, the southern boundaries of this estate are uncertain. While natural features such as the steep escarpment running down to Moseley Lake and the Berry Brook do, indeed, appear to be established land divisions, the proximity of a highly-banked old boundary further south, between Fields BS 28 and 26/27, which is also an electoral district boundary, raises a number of tantalising questions.

Although the bank is high enough to be a park boundary defining the edge of the Moseley Court estate, if it is of early 19th origin it represents an unusually late adoption of such a garden feature in an estate and parkland designed to reflect the modernity of its owners. In addition, it is right at the edge of the parkland, and unlike the set of banks immediately in front of the house would not have particularly enhanced the view from the house. Therefore, if this boundary does predate the parkland attached to Moseley Court, it must mark an important land division.

Since Domesday the manor of Moseley has been considered important enough to constitute a separate entity, unlike the other manors and hamlets in the

area. This may have been because, before the Norman Conquest, it had belonged to Countess Godiva, who did not own land in the rest of Bushbury, or because the settlement there was significantly larger than elsewhere. In the 17th century the Hearth Tax returns continued to classify Moseley as a separate 'constabulwick' (Stebbing Shaw 1801,184). Alternatively, the high bank which characterises this boundary may represent the remains of a sunken track, the southern bank of which has been destroyed by the ploughing of Fields BS 26 and 27. Certainly, it is known that a path following the line of the old boundary connected Northycote Farm with the Penn Way near the deserted settlement of Rowden Lanes, and it is possible that Northycote was an encroachment made just outside the established boundaries of the open field system in the 12th or 13th centuries.

Immediately to the south of this boundary are fields which are now part of Northycote Farm. In the mid 19th century they were owned by the Whitgreave family, but prior to the 18th century they probably comprised part of an estate owned by the Underhill family, whose house appears to have been just outside the survey area near Underhill Lane (Chatwin 1983,58). This estate may have extended westwards up to the route across Bushbury Hill, where part of it may have been bought by the Phillips family, who built Bushbury Hill Farm in the 18th century. This family later became the Escrickes, whose property can be seen on the Tithe Map and represents the remnants of the 18th century estate.

The estate around Bushbury Hall was the head or capital manor of the parish, and may have extended westwards from the route across Bushbury Hill, over what is now the Bushbury housing estate, between the lands of Elston Hall to the south and Homestead Moat to the north. In 1790 the estate covered 254 acres, including jurisdiction over land owned by Lincoln College, Oxford, on what is now Bushbury Cemetery. The inverted S-shaped boundary just to the north of Bushbury Hall is probably medieval, and may represent the boundary between the manor house and an open field to the north, any other remains of which have now been obliterated. Topographical information given by Stebbing Shaw may indicate that this field was in fact the Bushbury Great Field (Stebbing Shaw 1801,182). The southern boundary of the cemetery mirrors this boundary, and may represent a survival of a

subdivision of the open field into furlongs, and later separate fields, possibly when the land passed into the ownership of Lincoln College.

The Whitgreave family became increasingly important landowners within the area of the Green Wedge in the post medieval period. Their estate probably began to expand beyond the confines of Moseley Old Hall in the 18th century, eventually swallowing the land to the north-east of Underhill Lane and the land around Moseley Court in the early 19th century, such that by the mid 19th century this estate had become the most important within the survey area.

The development of the field pattern is intimately related to the pattern of ownership within the landscape. Unfortunately, the earliest record of field divisions covering the whole area is the Tithe Map of 1848, which is supplemented by the Ordnance Survey 6" and 25" maps of the late 19th century. However, these maps, combined with evidence gathered during the course of the survey, allow some estimation of earlier field patterns to be made.

The possibility of there once having been an open field to the north of Bushbury Hall has already been raised, and given the age of the road system is likely to have been located between Bushbury Lane, the top of Underhill Lane, and the route over Bushbury Hill. Subsequent subdivision, especially the creation of the cemetery to the north, and modern ploughing to the south, has largely obliterated any earlier patterns on the ground, although the north-south boundary running down the middle of the area has a high bank breaking the westerly slope of the land, and is certainly pre-19th century. The northernmost field is called Clay Pit Reeves on the Tithe Map, which probably refers to the quarry pit still visible in the cemetery. Documentary evidence (see Section 2.1 above and fig 9) suggests that the land comprising Bushbury Hall manor had been broken up into smaller farms by the 18th century, of which Beeches Farm is the only surviving example, other crofts or small land holdings being visible on the Tithe Map near Bushbury Lane and the church.

The land to the east of the route over Bushbury Hill contains fewer clues to the previous field pattern. Those fields to the north, towards the cemetery, closely resemble in shape and pattern the fields on the other side of Underhill Lane, and may have been produced through a rationalisation of farmland in the 18th or 19th century. However, some of the boundaries may be remnants of an earlier pattern incorporated into the present system, especially those to the north of Underhill Lane, running east-west, which closely follow the line of the high-banked boundary near Moseley Court, already mentioned (fig 7). There is field-name evidence to suggest quarrying activity on both sides of Underhill Lane; indeed, the remains of a quarry are still visible in Field BS 27. The name Underhill Croft may also indicate the presence of farmstead or cottage in Field BS 16. The fields shown on the Tithe Map in the area now occupied by Field BS 3 have a different morphology from those to the north. Given the complexity of ownership within this area, it is likely that this field pattern is older than that to the north, although it is not possible to suggest an age for this particular system. The track between Fields BS 3 and 6 marks the boundary of these two field patterns, and may even represent a continuation of the old field boundary running down the west side of Bushbury Hill.

The land comprising the Moseley Hall estate and Moseley manor contains the remains of medieval ridge-and-furrow in Field BS 37, and clearly, although enclosed by the time the Tithe Map was surveyed, was once part of the open field system of Moseley. Similarly, the fields to the north of Moseley Lane, to the east and west of the road to Moseley Old Hall, were probably also open fields of the manor, parts of Fields BS 40-42 being called 'furlong', indicating the subdivision of an open field. Parts of Fields BS 43, and BS 36 are called crofts in 1727, and may therefore have been the sites of cottages belonging to the manor of Moseley (W.S.L.80/39).

Land use is the most difficult part of the landscape history of the Green Wedge to reconstruct. Apart from the documentary evidence of the Tithe Awards, very little other evidence exists (fig 10). Circa 1840 it would appear that most of the southern part of the survey area was arable land, apart from the pasture around the churchyard. The land to the north of

Underhill Lane seems to have been mainly pasture, meadow and woodland, perhaps because the land was not as well drained then as it is now. Alternatively, the pattern of land use may simply reflect one year in the cycle of crop rotation. The patches of woodland probably reflect the residue of deforestation; the care of woodland was an important aspect of land management, wood products being far more widely used than they are today. For instance, it is recorded on the Tithe Map that Field BS 35 was an Ozier Bed, where small willow trees were grown in thickets to provide wattles for fencing and other purposes. Also, within the woodland to the north-east of Moseley, the remains of a series of carp ponds are still visible, the management of which is mentioned in the 18th-century diaries of the Whitgreave family (S.R.O. D[w] 1808/2/2-6; and D[w] 1808/2/10-13 addnl/2). The water system surveyed in Field BS 37a was probably associated with these carp ponds, and may have represented a similar exploitation of the natural resources of the area by the Horton family of Moseley Hall. In addition, orchards were planted to the rear of Moseley Court, in the south-west corner of what is now the cemetery, and the corner of the Playing Field BS 22 near Northcote Farm.

Although agricultural activities obviously dominated land use within the Green Wedge, it was not entirely unaffected by other forms of entrepreneurial practice. The main type of industrial activity that has left its mark on the landscape was the digging of gravel; there are numerous pits still visible in Fields BS 18, 20 and 27, although the largest pit, in Field BS 2, has now been backfilled.

### 3.2 Summary and Recommendations.

The standing buildings within Bushbury Green Wedge were found to exhibit the most tangible evidence on the ground of the history of the area, and indeed these have all been granted listed building status, with the exception of Moseley Mill and the National School buildings which have been much altered or are in ruins.

The various zones of archaeological survival or destruction are identified in Figure 11. Very few notable earthwork features were discovered during the course of the survey, and these are mainly concentrated in the north of the survey area around Moseley Hall Farm, and around the parish church in the south. Not surprisingly, surviving earthworks were only found in areas that have not been subject to modern ploughing, and indeed the quality of the agricultural land has probably contributed to the destruction of many of the vestiges of earlier landscapes. However, evidence from field boundaries in particular, backed up by the available map and documentary evidence, did allow some assessment of the development of the landscape in the Green Wedge to be made.

The pattern of diffuse, manor-orientated settlement that predominated in the area appears to be fairly common in regions with good agricultural land, where, consequently, manorial control has been strong since medieval times. This pattern was probably a general feature of the belt of the South Staffordshire Plain lying between the wastes of the Birmingham Plateau to the south and Cannock Chase to the north. Another important factor for the development of the Green Wedge was its proximity to the industrial belt of the West Midlands because, even before the encroachment of suburban housing to the south and west began in the late 19th century, the demand for agricultural products to feed the urban population would have underpinned the prosperity of the farmers of the area. However, since 1945 the demands of the urban population of the surrounding area has begun to exert its influence on the southern end of the Green Wedge in particular. This is manifested particularly by the cemeteries, but there are also the schools, library, allotments and swimming pool.

## Recommendations

Given that the important surviving archaeological features have now been surveyed at scales of either 1:500, or 1:2500, and in many cases documentary evidence concerning their function has been located, it is unlikely that any further archaeological work is required in this area, unless any of the features identified come under threat. A list of primary documentary evidence traced in the course of research for this report is included in the reference section below, and its detailed study would enhance our knowledge of the parish, although the returns may not fully justify the effort involved.

As a 'cultural resource', the greatest asset of the Green Wedge probably lies in the educational potential that the area offers for historical landscape studies, especially by local schools. The graveyard of the parish church has already been mentioned as a rich source for social history, particularly of the Victorian period. Perhaps an appropriate response to this potential would be the preparation of an educational pack designed to show how history can be read from the landscape and the buildings and monuments within it.

## 3.3 Acknowledgements and References

### Acknowledgements

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A Guide to the Primary Documentary Evidence for Bushbury

1. At the Staffordshire County Record Office (S.R.O):

Medieval.

D593 (the papers of the Sutherland family) /A/2/3/1-6 a set of deeds relating to land granted in Bushbury. G/6/12/18 lands in Bushbury belonging to Sir Richard Leveson.

D1790 various deeds mainly concerning the Vernon family, including descriptions of various encroachments on open fields, /A/12/- 6,7 and 27.

17th century

D593 F/1/8 Bushbury rough rentals and lists of tenants holdings.

D[W]1721/3/290 papers of John Huntbach and the Phillips family of Bushbury Hill

18th century

D 718/- The Whitgreave family papers, including letters concerning the estate /1/1-11 and 2/1-32, and a list of small tithes /10/1-2.

Also D[W] 1808/, Whitgreave papers, for estate memoranda, including diaries /2/2-6, and estate matters /2/10-13, and addnl/2.

Maps.

D351/M/B/168-170 roads in Bushbury in the early 19th century.

D3186/8/1/30/5b map of the proposed reservoir for a canal at Moseley Lake.

D593/H/3/189 plan of Moseley c1900.

2. There are also some collections of papers relating to Bushbury in the William Salt Library, Stafford (W.S.L.), including a set of notes for a history of Seisdon Hundred made in the late 17th century by John Huntbach, a kinsman of Dugdale; and a plan of the Moseley estate in 1727 ref: 80/39. In Wolverhampton Reference Library there are a series of Bushbury papers.

3. In Herefordshire County Record Office:

The Davenport Collection ref:B47

S2 Bushbury Manor papers mainly belonging to the Grosvenor family

S3 Deeds and surveys of the Wilkes family of Bushbury 15th-18th century.

S6 Grosvenor family papers including deeds and conveyances.

S9 and 10 Other Bushbury Manor papers, including a map of the manor in the 18th century.

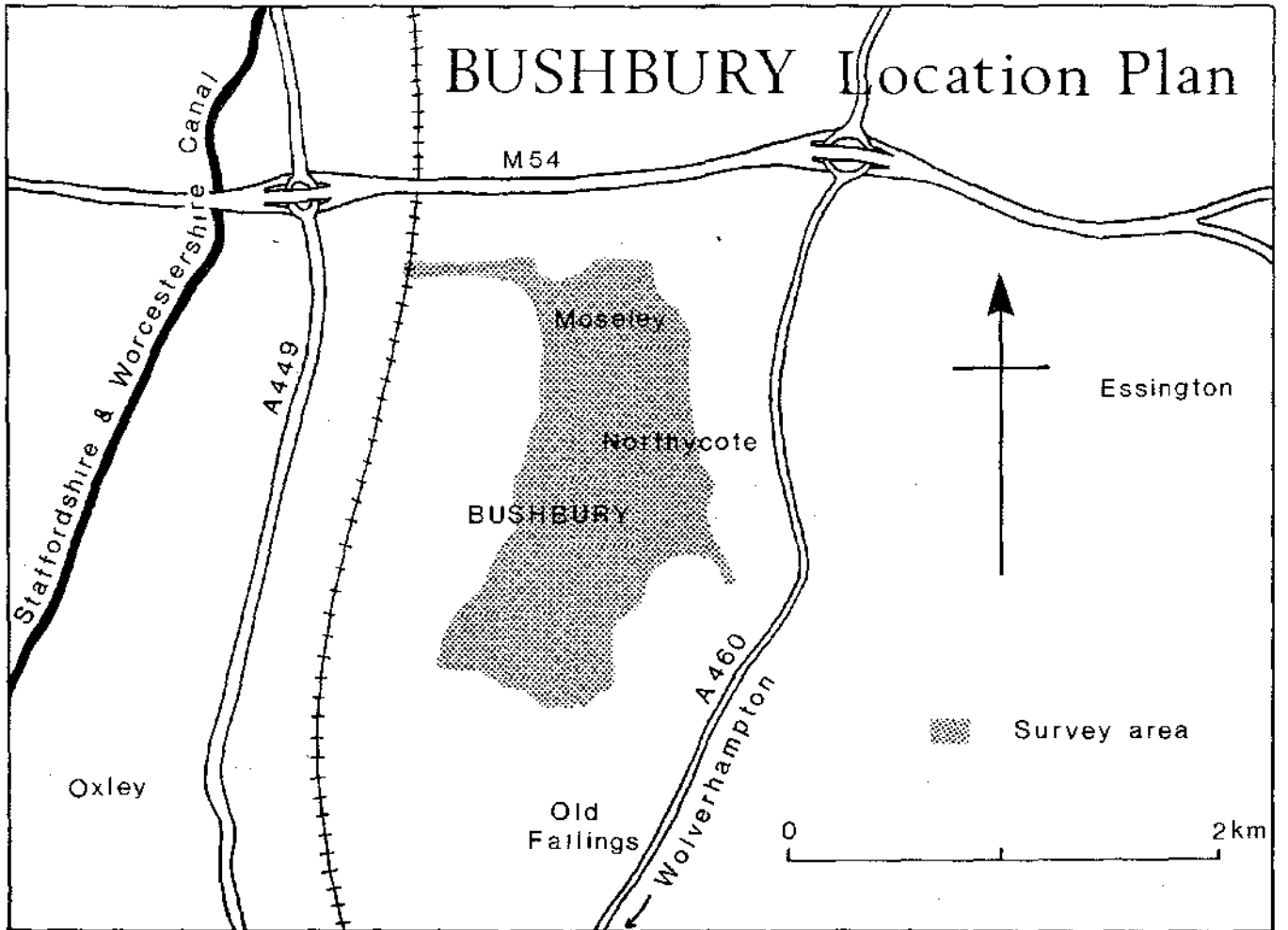
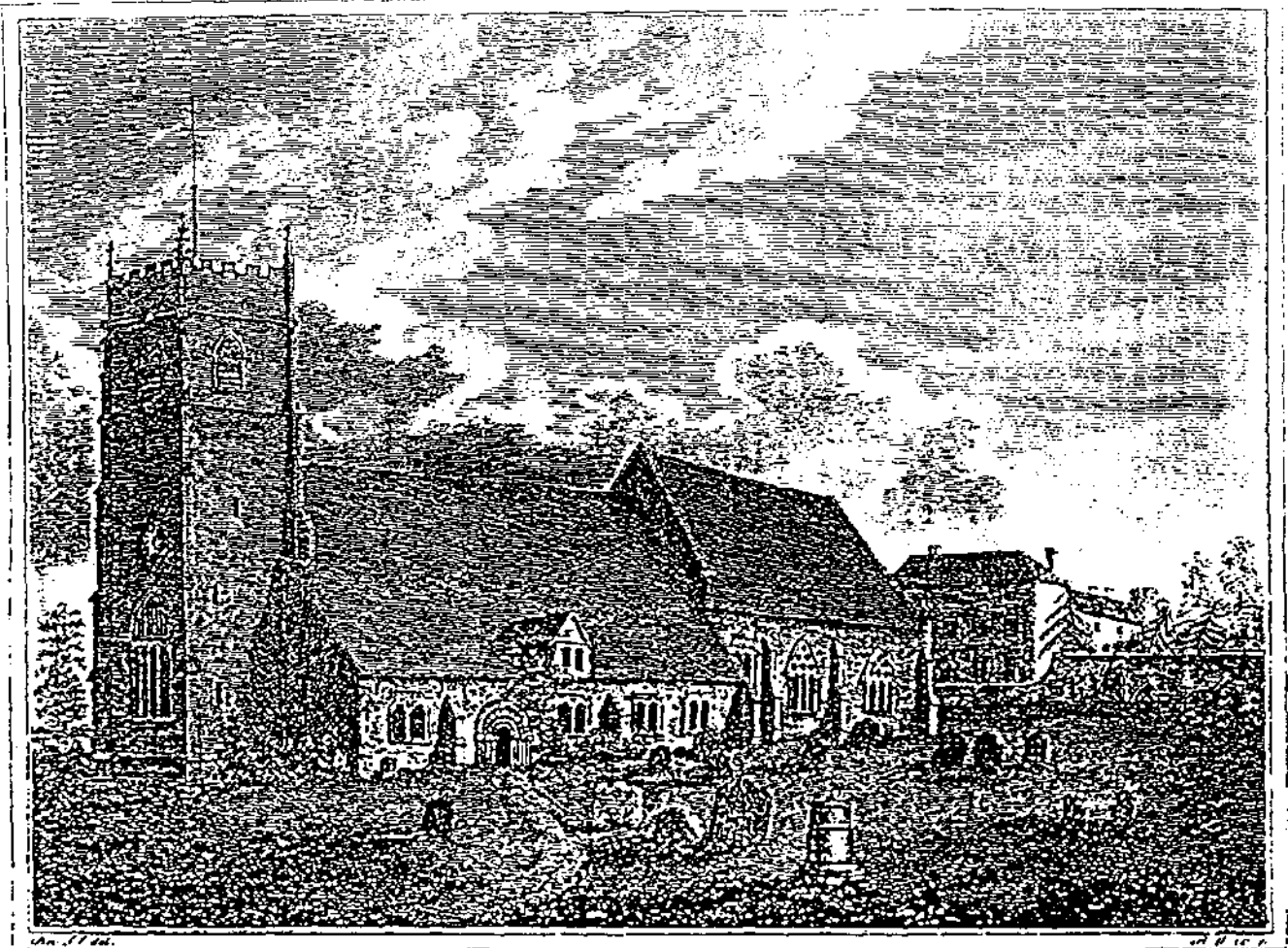


fig. 1

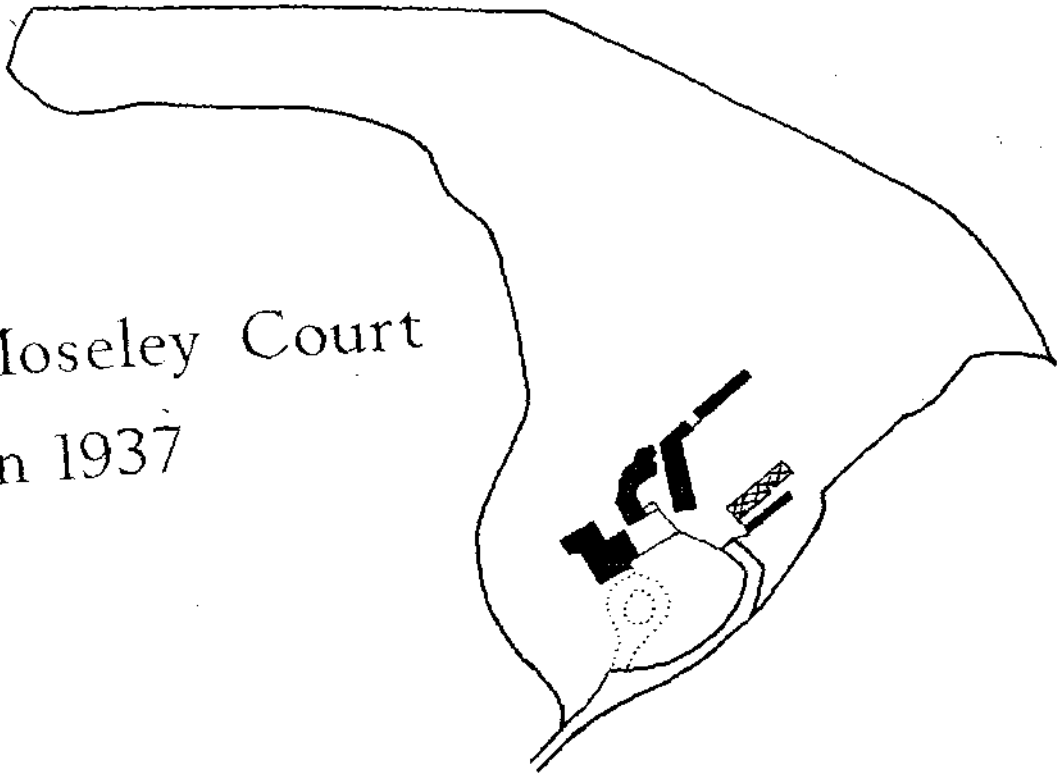


*South West View of Bysbury Church.*

fig. 2

a

Moseley Court  
in 1937



scale 1:2500

b

Bushbury Hill  
House and  
Farm

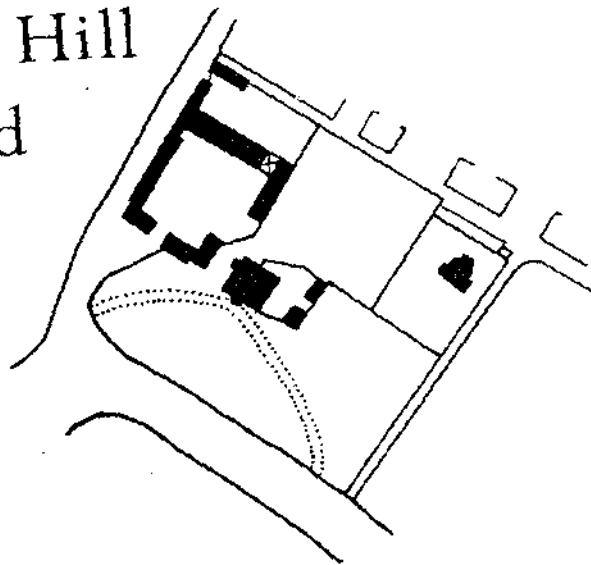
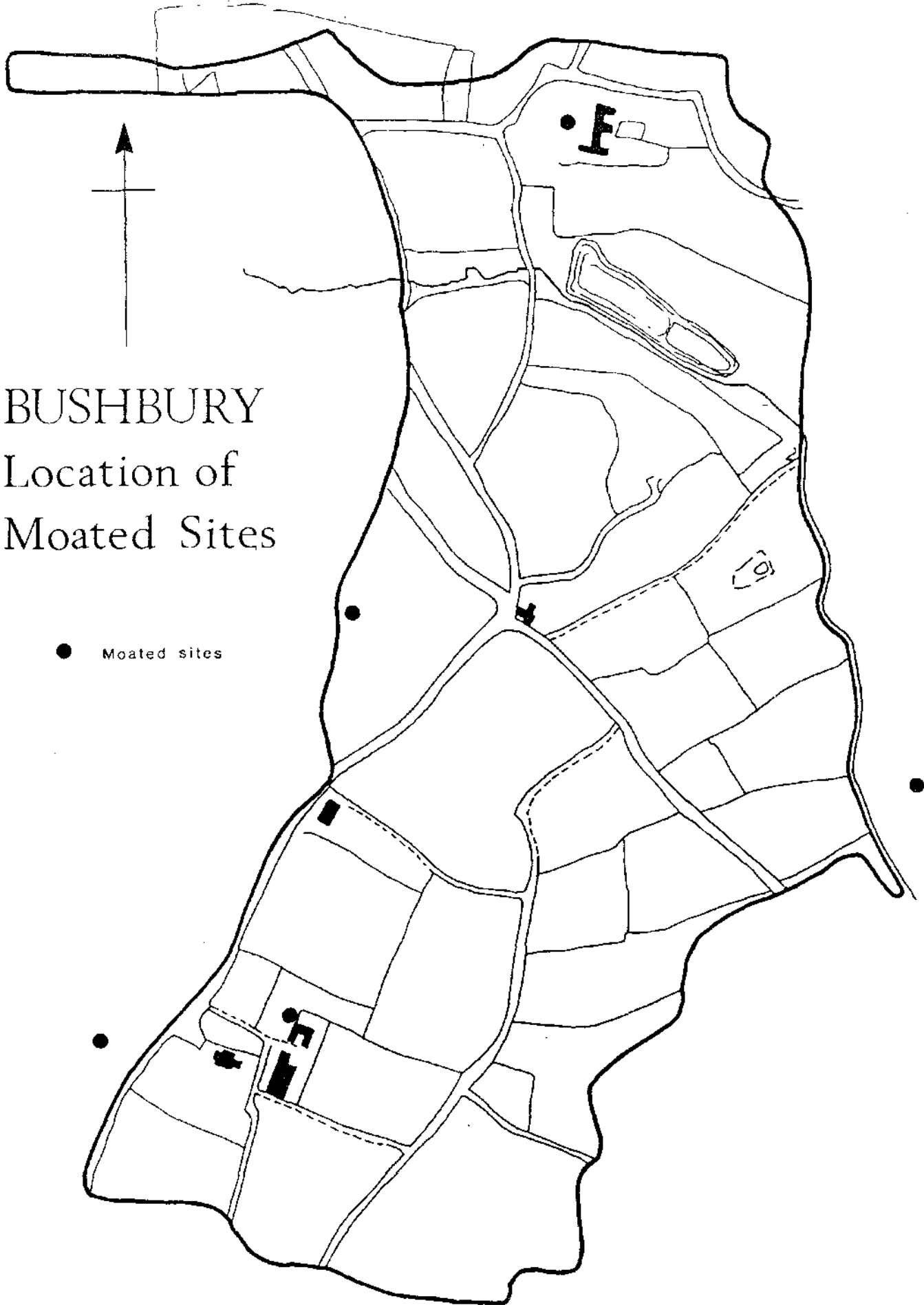


fig. 3



BUSHBURY  
Location of  
Moated Sites

● Moated sites

fig. 4



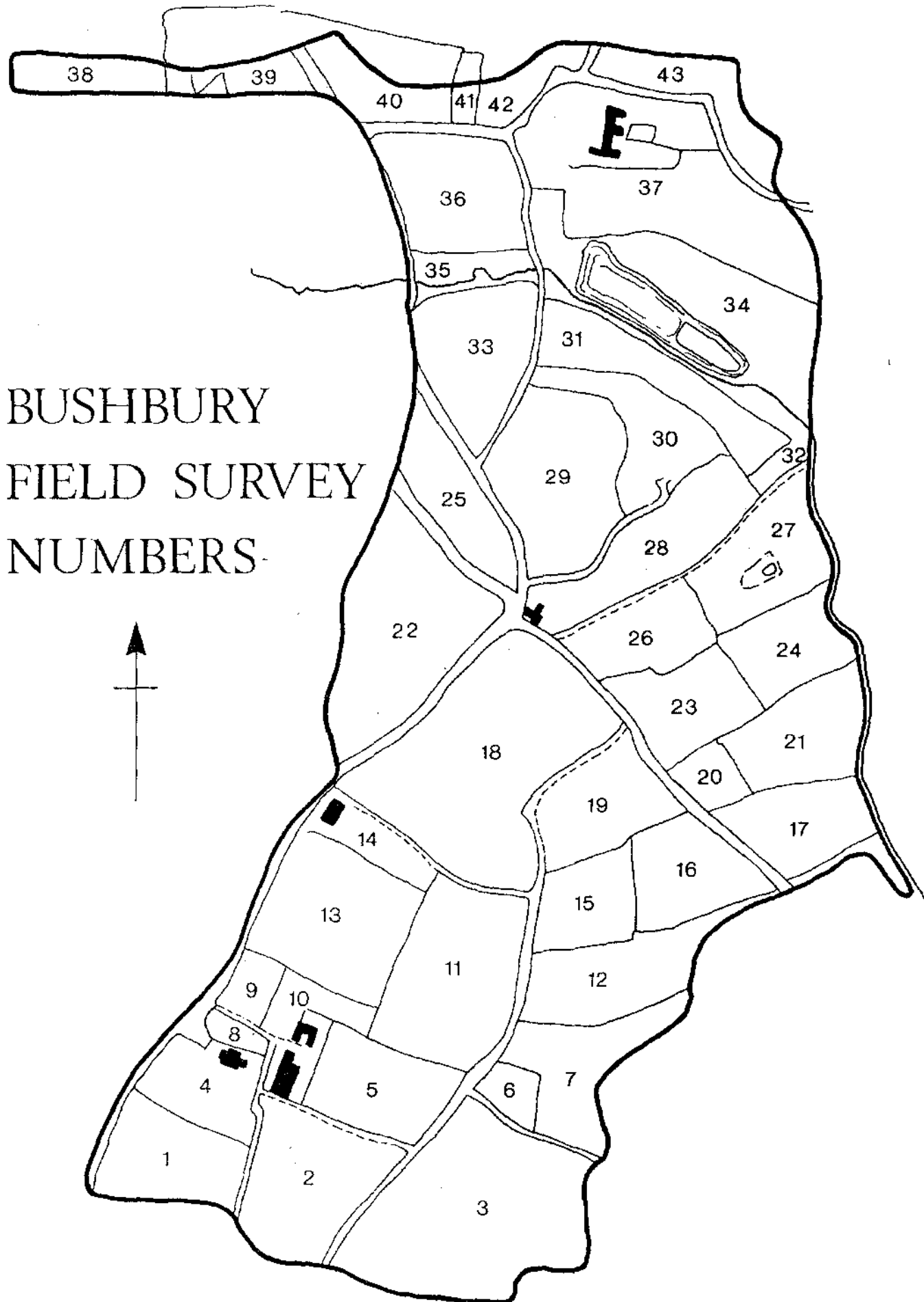


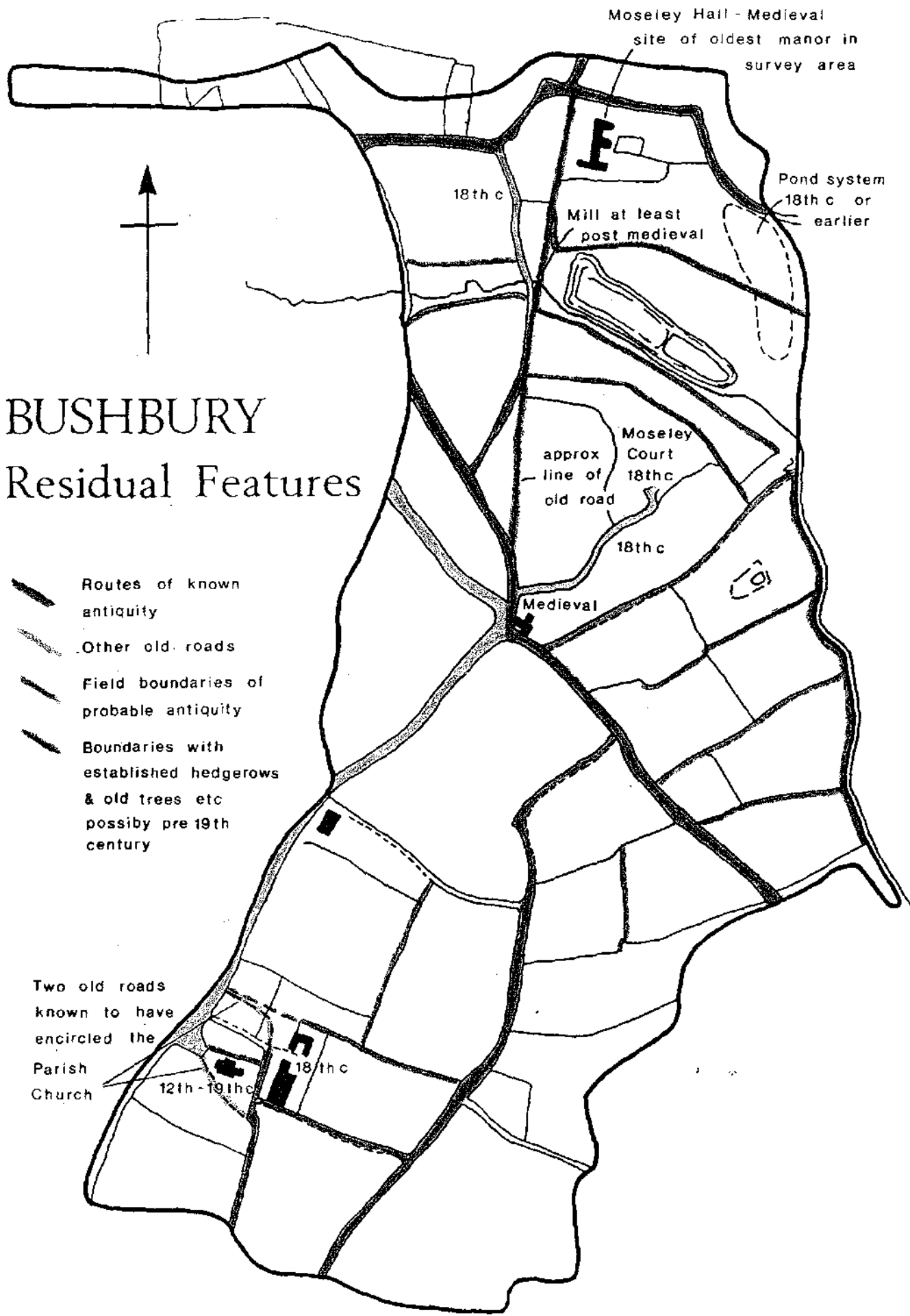
fig. 5

# Moseley Hall Estate in 1727



- 1 Lower Sand Furlong
- 2 New Piece
- 3 Prices Crofts
- 4 Upper Sand Furlong
- 5 Barn Crofts
- 6 The Brookhills
- 7 Mear Lake Meadow

fig. 6



# BUSHBURY

## Residual Features

fig. 7

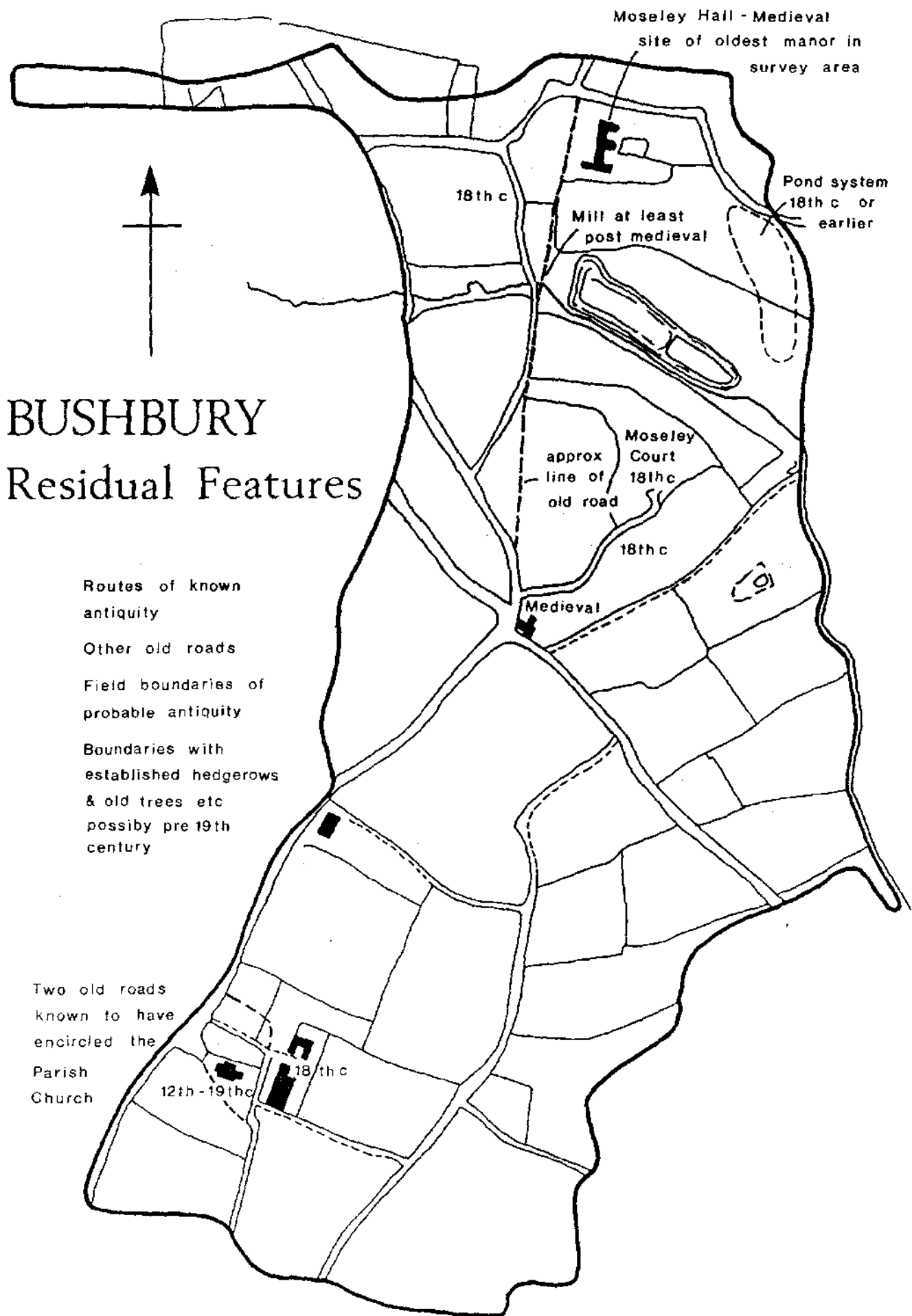
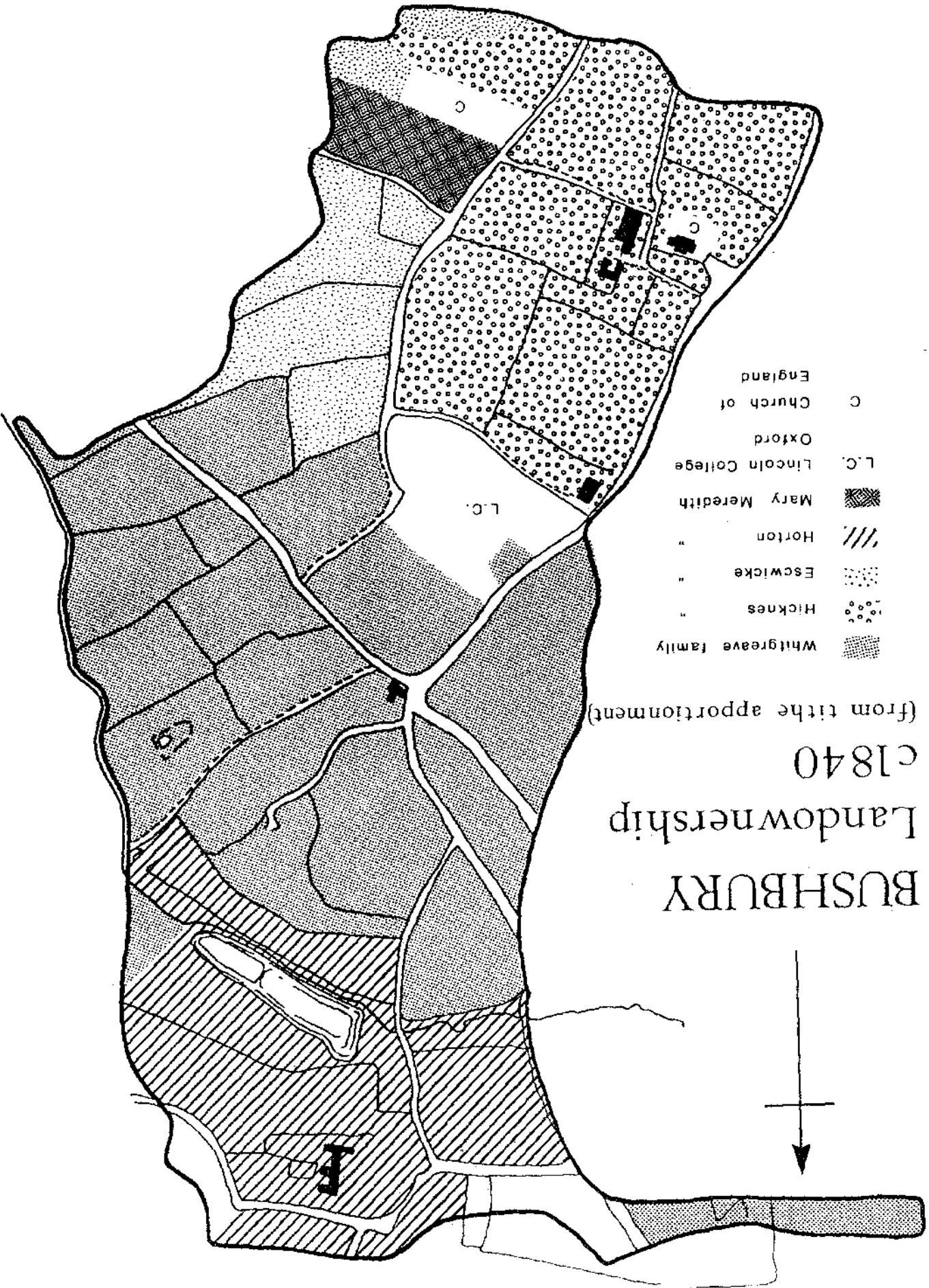


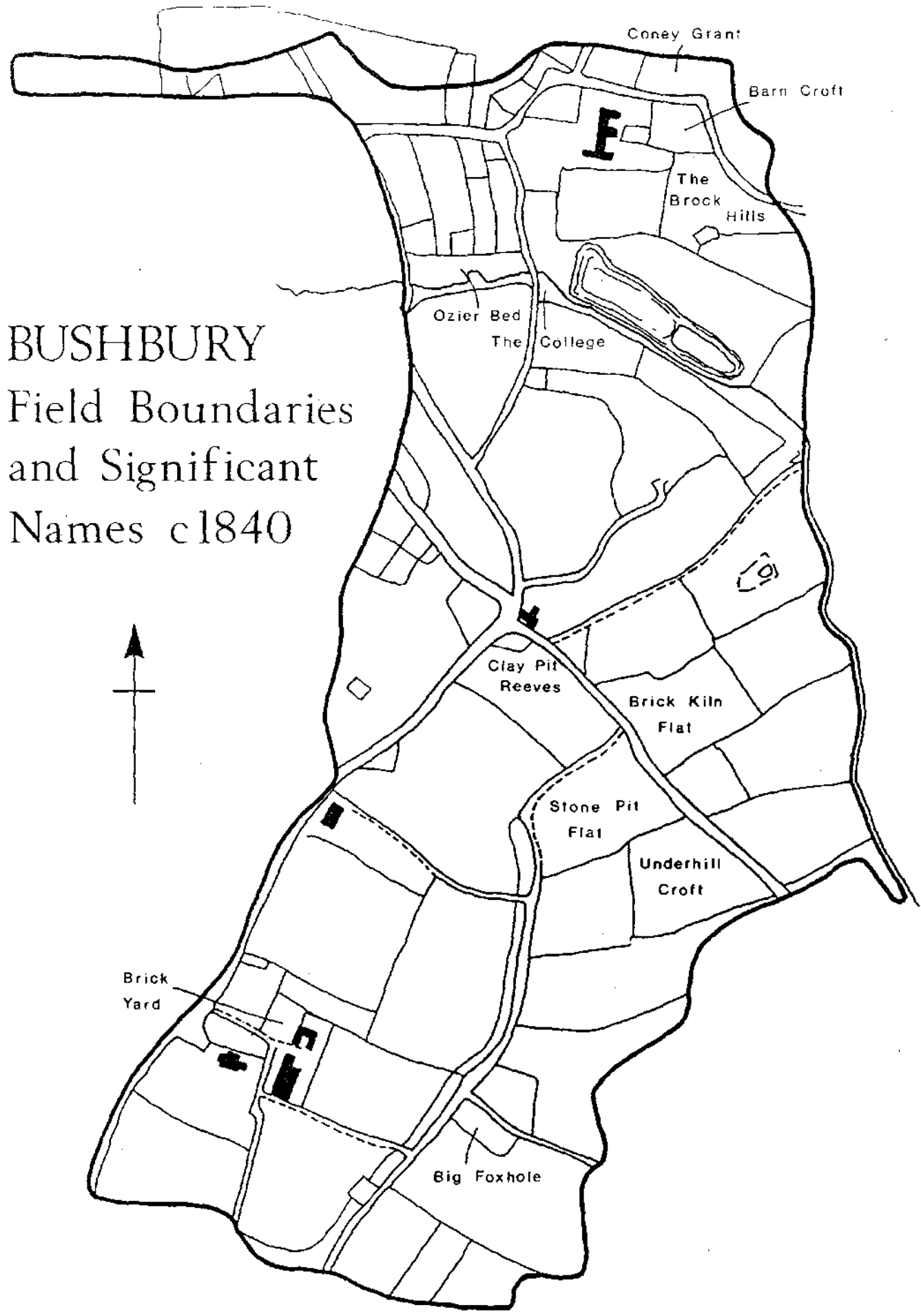
fig. 7



**BUSHBURY**  
 Landownership  
 c1840  
 (from tithe apportionment)

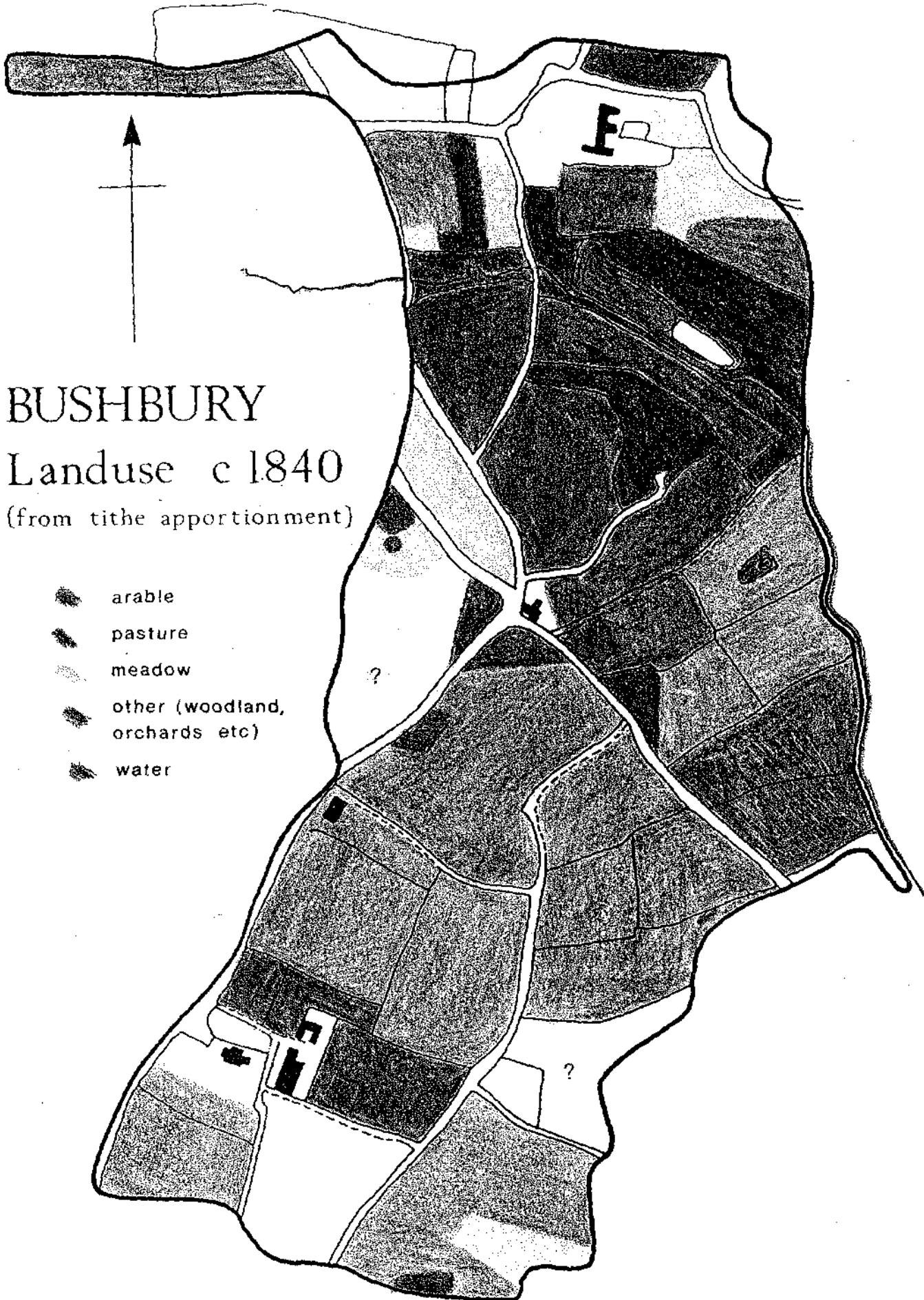
- Whitgreave family
- Hicknes
- Escwicke
- Horton
- Mary Meredith
- L.C. Lincoln College
- Oxford
- Church of England





BUSHBURY  
 Field Boundaries  
 and Significant  
 Names c1840

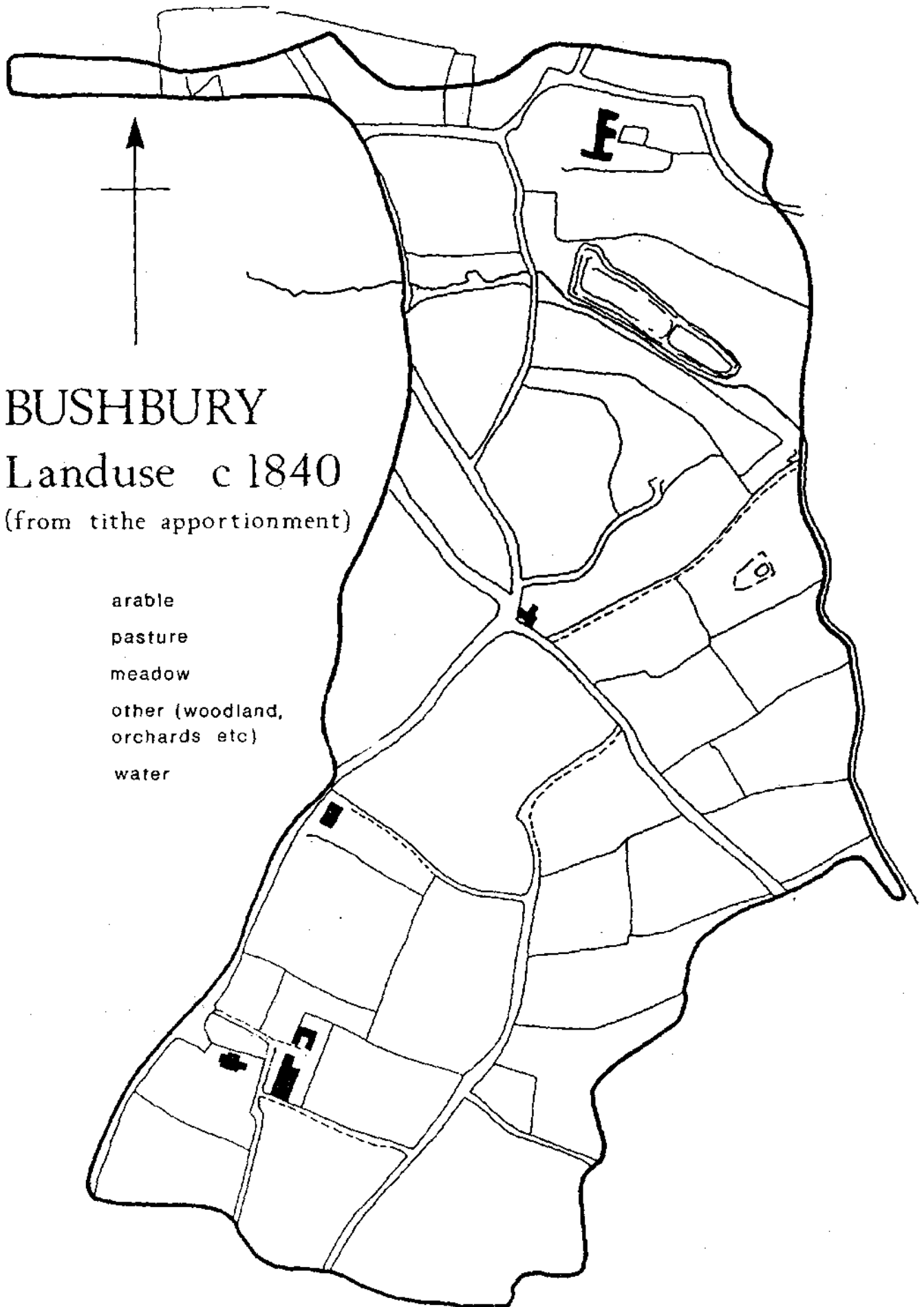
fig. 9



BUSHBURY  
 Landuse c 1840  
 (from tithes apportionment)

- arable
- ▨ pasture
- meadow
- ▩ other (woodland, orchards etc)
- water

fig. 10

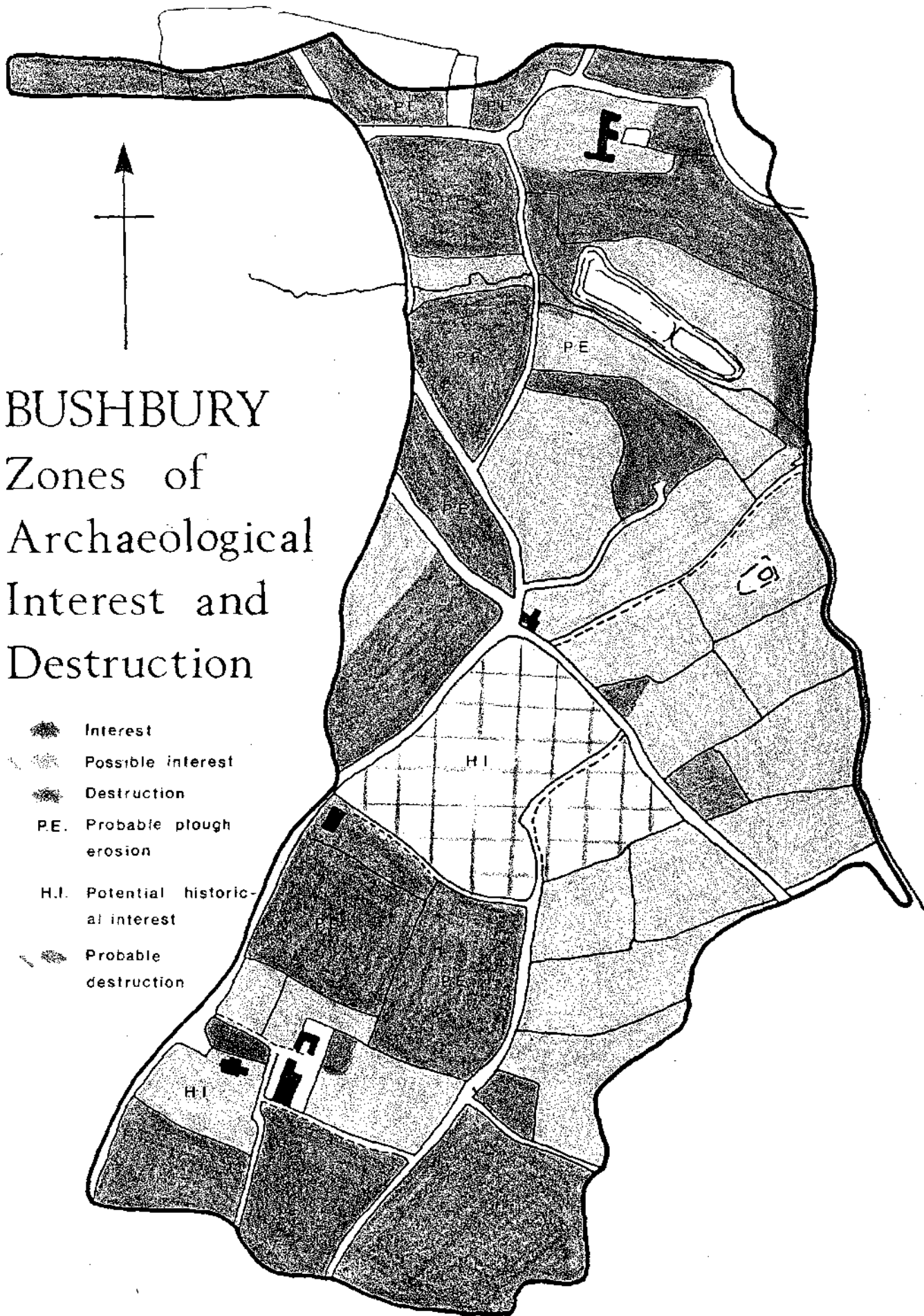


**BUSHBURY**  
Landuse c 1840  
(from tithe apportionment)

- arable
- pasture
- meadow
- other (woodland, orchards etc)
- water

fig. 10





BUSHBURY  
Zones of  
Archaeological  
Interest and  
Destruction







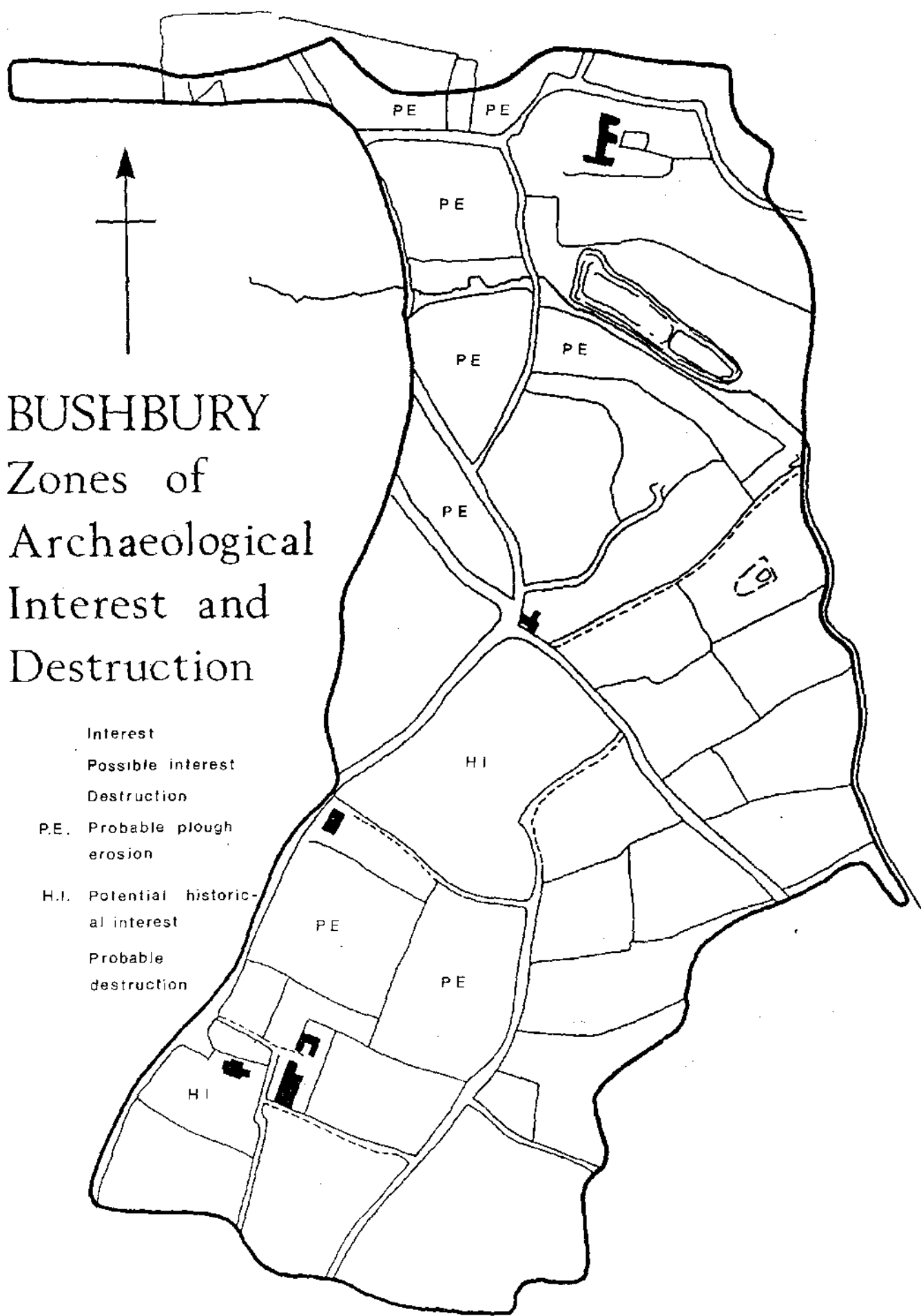
-  Interest
-  Possible interest
-  Destruction
-  P.E. Probable plough erosion
-  H.I. Potential historical interest
-  Probable destruction

fig. 11



# BUSHBURY

## Zones of Archaeological Interest and Destruction

- Interest
- Possible interest
- Destruction
- P.E. Probable plough erosion
- H.I. Potential historical interest
- Probable destruction

fig. 11