

*BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY  
FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT*

**LONGBRIDGE, WARWICKSHIRE**

**An Archaeological Assessment 1996**

*B.U.F.A.U.*



Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit  
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by

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit

*For further information please contact:*  
Simon Buteux, Iain Ferris or Peter Leach (Directors)  
Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit  
The University of Birmingham  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham B15 2TT  
Tel: 0121 414 5513  
Fax: 0121 414 5516  
E-Mail: [BUFAU@bham.ac.uk](mailto:BUFAU@bham.ac.uk)  
Web Address: <http://www.bham.ac.uk/BUFAU/>

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# LONGBRIDGE, WARWICKSHIRE

## An Archaeological Assessment 1996

### 1.0: SUMMARY

This report provides an archaeological assessment of approximately 105 hectares of land, located to the south of the M40 motorway at Longbridge, Warwickshire. The sources consulted for this assessment include air photographs, the Warwickshire County Record Office, the Warwickshire Sites and Monuments Record, and published archaeological reports and synthetic works. There are two principal cropmarked complexes within the study area, both of which have been scheduled as ancient monuments of national importance. The first complex principally comprises a probable 'cursus monument' and associated features believed to date to the neolithic and early Bronze Age periods, together with an enclosure and trackway thought to date to the Iron Age. The second complex comprises settlement enclosures, trackways and boundaries of probable Iron Age and Roman date. There are fewer cropmarked features outside the scheduled areas. However, the assessment concludes that the whole of the study area is of potential archaeological importance. The archaeology of the study area is discussed in the context of the development of the landscape in the central Warwickshire Avon valley, and outline suggestions for further, field-based, archaeological evaluation are presented.

### 2.0: INTRODUCTION

#### 2.1: The report

This report provides an archaeological assessment of approximately 105 hectares of land located between Longbridge, Sherbourne and Barford in central Warwickshire (hereinafter called the study area: centred on NGR. SP 273 615, Fig. 1). Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit was commissioned by Douglas Concrete and Aggregates Ltd to undertake this assessment in advance of proposals for gravel extraction. The aim of this report is to provide an assessment of the archaeological potential of the study area and follows the methodology provided by a brief prepared by BUFAU (Jones 1996). This assessment was undertaken in accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994).

Numerous cropmarks have been recorded on aerial photographs taken of the study area suggesting the survival of a significant buried archaeological landscape. Two of these complexes of cropmarked archaeological features have been scheduled as Ancient Monuments (SAM 141/142 and SAM 140). These are described in detail in the aerial photographic assessment below.

## **2.2: Aims**

The aims of this archaeological assessment were to provide sufficient information to permit the planning authority to consider the archaeological implications of a possible future planning application for gravel extraction within the study area.

## **2.3: Method**

*Aerial photographic assessment* - Modern and archival aerial photographs were used to deduce the nature and extent of visible archaeological evidence covering the study area, within the recognised limitations of aerial photographic evidence. Photographic interpretation was carried out according to the methodology outlined in Palmer and Cox (1993). These interpretations were rectified and presented as a 1:2500 scale map. A full description of the methodology is provided below (Section 3.2). This assessment was undertaken by Air Photo Services Ltd.

*Documentary research* - Maps and other available documentary sources available in the Warwickshire County Record Office were examined. The primary cartographic sources consulted included antiquarian and estate maps, enclosure maps, and early editions of Ordnance Survey maps. Secondary historical sources consulted include the relevant volumes of the Victoria County History. Other secondary sources, including published excavation reports and synthetic works were also consulted.

The Warwickshire Museum Sites and Monuments Record was consulted for detailed information on sites within the study area and in the surrounding area. The SMR contains an up-to-date record of all reported archaeological sites, and the reported find-spots of individual artefacts. This information derives from discoveries made during archaeological fieldwork, during construction, or from the reports of amateur fieldworkers, and is supplemented from published archaeological reports. For the purposes of establishing the regional context of the study area the records for all sites within an area measuring 6km x 4km (Fig. 2) were consulted and summarised (see Appendix).

*Site inspection* - The study area was also briefly visited, to determine the present land use, and to note any above-ground earthworks of archaeological interest, or scatters of artefacts in the ploughsoil. No artefacts were collected.

## **2.4: The study area and its setting**

The study area lies on the west bank of the River Avon approximately 7km to the southwest of Warwick. It is bounded by the M40 to the north, the River Avon to the south and east and the A429 to the west. The Longbridge Brook flows north to south through the western part of the study area. This brook forms the boundary between the parishes of Sherbourne and St. Mary's Warwick.

This part of the Avon Valley is characterised by a low undulating relief, formed by the Triassic Mercian Mudstone group (formerly known as the Keuper Marl). Quaternary drift deposits cover much of the area, the most extensive being the terrace gravels of the River Avon. Four terraces have been distinguished, of which the second is the most widespread. This terrace is deemed to be of Mid-Devensian date (approximately 30,000 BP) and is mainly comprised of flint and Triassic rocks with local material from the White Lias and Jurassic formations (Old 1984). The majority of the known cropmarked archaeological sites are located on this second terrace, which forms an almost level surface, 40-45m O.D., from Barford to the south of Charlecote.

The study area comprises land on the second gravel terrace (54lr Wick 1 soil association). A spread of alluvium (813b Fladbury I soil association) extends north and west across the gravels from the river (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983). The land rises gently away from the river to the northwest out of the second gravel terrace. The land use is generally arable with areas of pasture or rough grassland on the heavier alluvial soils. For the purposes of the assessment the fields within the study area have been numbered from 1-30 (Fig. 3).

### **3.0 THE ASSESSMENT**

#### **3.1 Historical assessment**

There are three main rural settlements within the immediate environs of the study area, Barford, Longbridge and Sherbourne (Fig. 1). The hamlet of Longbridge lies within the parish of St. Mary's Warwick, which includes that part of the study area which lies to the east of the Longbridge Brook. To the west of the brook is the parish of Sherbourne, which has its village nucleus to the west of the study area. Some adjustment of the boundary between the parishes of Sherbourne and St. Mary's, Warwick has occurred. The following account outlines the principal features of these two settlements and their influence on the study area. The village of Barford lies to the southeast of the study area, and its northern parish boundary follows the centreline of the River Avon.

#### **Longbridge**

This hamlet, centred to the northwest of the study area, was first mentioned in a document of 1123 (VCH 1965, 423), which described 2 carucates of land being 'next to Longbridge'. The historic core of the hamlet lay at the junction of roads leading to Warwick, Stratford and Barford (Fig. 2). The hamlet remained comparatively small in size, with only 8 dwellings being recorded in 1730.

Most agricultural land surrounding Longbridge remained unenclosed in the 17th century, as was the case with other agricultural land in the area surrounding Warwick (VCH 1965, 435). The northeastern part of the study area (Fields 23-29) formed part of one of these open fields. The Stanton (or Stainton) family were the dominant local

landowners, who held land from 1460. Tithe payments from Longbridge hamlet (parish of St. Mary's, Warwick) were granted to the Corporation of Warwick who recorded receipts of £3 6s 8d for tithes of corn and hay, and £1 in tithes for wool and lamb in 1580 (VCH 1965, 523).

The meadows in the south of the study area (Fields 15-21) formed part of the estate of Warwick Castle in 1315 (VCH 1965, 471). The Victoria County History (1965, 485) suggests that these meadows were probably not common land in 1315-16, as the value then assigned to the meadows was the sale value of pasture whilst fallow. These meadows were re-named Barford Meadow (later called Longbridge Meadow) (Fields 15-19 and Field 21), Brode Hale Meadow (Field 20) and Ley Meadow by 1531, and were included in a lease dated 1554 from the Crown to Thomas Fuller. Brode Hale Meadow and other land continued to form part of the lands of the Manor of Warwick, and were not reunited with the Castle estate until 1742. Part of Longbridge Meadow (53 acres) is recorded as being free of tithe payments, in exchange for a single payment of £305, although the Crown, as owner, retained the right to use 5 acres of this meadowland (VCH 1965, 523).

W. Eden's map of 1811 (Fig. 4), which post-dates the enclosure of the agricultural land around Longbridge, indicates the former presence of a building in the western part of Field 24. This building is also marked on the OS 1886 map (Fig. 6). Eden's map also depicts a road marked as 'Disputed Road' running north-south, along the eastern edge of Fields 4 and 5 and then across Longbridge Meadow (Field 19) to a ford over the River Avon in Field 16. This ford formerly led to Barford Mill, on the south bank of the river, demolished in the 1930s (SMR 702). The 'Disputed Road' survives as a track, in the northern part of the study area. 'Longbridge Meadow' and 'Broad Hail Meadow' alongside the River Avon are clearly marked.

These meadows are marked as pasture on the Tithe map of 1849 (Fig. 5) as well as Field 28 ('Rush Meadow') and Field 29, both of which are alongside a small brook. Most of the remainder of the area was under arable cultivation. Both Eden's map and the Tithe map indicate the position of former field boundaries sub-dividing some of the larger fields (for example Fields 4 and 5). These former field boundaries can also be seen on the aerial photographs. However, in general, the pattern of field boundaries on both these maps is similar to that of today. The Tithe map indicates a cottage in the northeastern part of Field 5 (marked as Old Barn Cottage on recent maps) and the former presence of a cottage in the western part of Field 12 ('Cottage Ground'), marked as Longbridge Cottage on the 1886 OS map (Fig. 6). The northeast quarter of Field 24 was called 'Pit Close' which could suggest the small-scale excavation of pits for gravel extraction.

In 1875, several skeletons were uncovered during gravel digging about 1km to the north of the study area between Longbridge and Warwick (SMR 1982). These graves were associated with a number of Anglo-Saxon artefacts including weapons, brooches and

other ornaments. The supposed site was examined prior to redevelopment. However, no further burials were found and the exact position of the site remains uncertain.

### **Sherbourne**

The historic nucleus of the village of Sherbourne lies to the west of the Warwick-Stratford road. The sites of two churches, both rebuilt, are recorded in Sherbourne village, to the west of the study area. The Church of All Saints (SMR 5125) was of 14th-century date, with alterations of 18th- and 19th-century date. The church was demolished c.1864, but a cross of 14-15th century date (SMR 976) survives in the churchyard. The present church was built around 1864, to a design by Sir George Gilbert Scott. Also in Sherbourne is the church of St. Peter, built in 1826 (SMR 5124), on the site of a medieval church. The Domesday Book records a priest at Sherbourne in 1086. The church was granted to the Templars, and afterwards to the Hospitallers, until the Dissolution. A mill at Sherbourne is referred to in a document dated 1185 (VCH 1965, 165).

The village was largely rebuilt in a mock Elizabethan style by a local landowner during the mid 19th century, but a few timber-framed houses survive, including Sherbourne House, dating to approximately 1700, and a farmhouse to the northwest of the church.

The parish was enclosed by an Act of parliament dated 1799. Before enclosure the parish land comprised 7 open fields, with meadowland adjoining the River Avon, and common land to the west of the village. The Map of Sherbourne Parish by Rev. Elias Webb (1808), indicates that the western zone of the study area (Fields 2-11), to the west of the brook, formed a single field in the early 19th century. This is also depicted as a single field on the map by Eden in 1811 (Fig. 4). However, a building marked as 'Boot Inn' is indicated on Eden's map. On recent maps this is simply indicated as 'The Cottage'. Field 13, in the southern part of the study area, contains a pond (Figs. 3 and 6), formerly a fishpond (SMR 7285). This pond was recorded as stocked with fish in 1785-87.

To the west of Sherbourne village is an arched stone bridge with stone balls (SMR 979), dated 1800, crossing the Sherbourne Brook. A boat house (SMR 7281) was located on the north bank of the River Avon, to the southwest of the study area (Fig. 2), and to the west of Barford Bridge.

Documentary sources refer to an abandoned hamlet called 'La Lee' next to Warwick (VCH 1965, 423), which probably refers to an unknown location in Barford parish, outside the study area.



## **3.2 Aerial Photographic Assessment (adapted from report by Air Photo Services)**

### **Introduction**

Detailed archaeological interpretation of contemporary and historical aerial photographs allows the accurate mapping of archaeological sites recorded as cropmarks (caused by the differential growth of crops over buried features (Wilson 1979; 1982)), soilmarks (caused by differences in soil colour over ploughed features (Wilson 1982)) and as shadows cast by upstanding earthworks. Aerial photographic evidence is, however, limited by seasonal, agricultural, meteorological and environmental factors which affect the extent to which either buried or upstanding archaeological sites can be detected under a given set of environmental conditions (Riley 1987, 17-40).

Previous aerial photographic interpretation and mapping had been undertaken by Warwickshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and by Webster and Hobley in 1965 at 1: 10000 scale. These maps were of good quality, but did not include all the cut features showing as cropmarks, nor the alluvium, deeper soil or patterned ground, which may mask archaeological evidence over parts of the study area. Re-mapping of the area also included features identified from aerial photographs taken subsequent to these assessments.

### **Method**

Photographs taken between 1946 and 1994 were examined. The sources consulted comprise the Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photographs (CUCAP: oblique and vertical photographs), the National Library of Aerial Photographs (NLAP: oblique and vertical photographs), Warwickshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record (oblique and vertical photographs), and the Warwickshire County Record Office (CRO: one vertical photograph). A list of the air photographic sources consulted is set down in the air photograph assessment report (Air Photo Services 1996).

All available aerial photographs were interpreted to identify archaeological and relevant non-archaeological information. The latter included alluvial deposits, soil depth changes and any recent sub-surface disturbances which may affect the integrity and understanding of features evaluated in the field. Photograph interpretation aimed to qualify reasons for the visibility of archaeological evidence and to explain, as necessary, any gaps in the aerial record. The searches also extended slightly beyond the boundary of the study area to determine whether any archaeological features were likely to continue from their sources into the study area. All visible archaeological features (from prehistoric through to the National Monuments Record terminal date of 1945), were mapped in detail to an accuracy compatible to the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale. Standing buildings were not recorded.

Photographic interpretation, rectification and mapping was carried out following procedures defined by Palmer and Cox (1993). All photographs were closely examined,

under 1.5x and 4x magnification, and viewed stereoscopically, where appropriate. Transparent interpretative overlays were prepared, from which archaeological and associated relevant information was digitised. Interpreted features were rectified, where appropriate, by computer using the Bradford aerial photographic rectification software AERIAL 4.20 (Haigh 1993). AERIAL 4.20 calculates values for the closeness of control-point match, and, using an initial plane surface rectification, the mean control point positioning error in all cases which was under +/- 3.0m.

### **Detailed assessment of results (Fig. 7)**

#### Fields 1, 4 and 5

*Aerial photographic coverage* - A good quantity and reasonable quality of prints were available for most of this area. Fields 1 and 4 were relatively under-represented, and most of the available photography pre-dated the construction of the M40, producing problems with control in this area. Locational inaccuracies may have occurred in the mapping of this area as the relevant control was taken from a 1:10000 scale map. However, control was sufficient for the accurate positioning of features to the south of the modern field boundary between Fields 4 and 5.

*Description* - This area is dominated by two large rectilinear, ditched enclosures; an elongated enclosure (SMR 1921) and a sub-square enclosure (SMR 5515). The elongated enclosure is aligned approximately north-south, and measures approximately 280m by 32m. The SMR records that there are no visible surface indications of this feature, and no surface finds. The sub-square enclosure has rounded corners and traces of an internal, interrupted ditch along its western side. A gap in the western side of the enclosure appears to be further defined by pits at either ditch terminus.

Numerous smaller features are associated with these two enclosures. Within the elongated enclosure are two curvilinear features, possibly small and incomplete circular enclosures, and three sides of a small rectilinear enclosure. At the northern end of the elongated enclosure is a group of randomly-distributed pits and lying to the west of the southern end of the enclosure are a pair of poorly-defined ditches. The western side of the sub-square enclosure appears to cut, or be cut by, a penannular enclosure. Other, poorly-defined circular features, possibly pit-defined, are located within the interior of the sub-square enclosure.

To the east of the rectilinear enclosures is a double-ditched linear feature (SMR 5516), which is aligned approximately north-south. A similar feature (SMR 4685) is located in Fields 24 and 26, to the east (see below). In the southeastern corner of Field 5, and extending into Field 22, is a rectangular depression measuring 20m by 18m.

Three sides of a rectilinear enclosure (SMR 6426) are located in the northwest corner of Field 4; the fourth side is probably concealed by alluvium. Other linear ditched features

in the north of this field (SMR 6425: not illustrated on Fig. 7) were difficult to interpret and accurately position because of the paucity of photography in this area.

*Interpretation* - The morphology of the elongated rectilinear enclosure suggests that it may be interpreted as a cursus, a ritual monument of Neolithic date. The size and shape of the monument is very similar to the cursus excavated at Barford to the east in 1972 (Loveday 1989). The rectilinear enclosure internal to the possible cursus has the same alignment, although there is no evidence that the two features are contemporary. The two poorly-defined ditches to the west of the southern end of the cursus are tentatively interpreted as the plough-levelled remains of a Neolithic long barrow. The positioning of these features is insecure due to poor photographic control.

Much of the area surrounding the pit group at the northern end of the possible cursus has been subject to natural pitting, but these slightly larger and better-defined pits may be anthropogenic in origin. They occur both externally and internally to the cursus ditches, but have no clear spatial relationship with the monument.

The four-sided enclosure to the east of the possible cursus is comparable in size and plan to excavated settlement enclosures dated to the Iron Age (Hingley 1989, Fig 9.9). The gap in the western side of the enclosure (SMR 5515) may be interpreted as an entrance.

The various circular or part-circular features may be either the ploughed-out remains of burial or ritual monuments associated with the possible cursus, or traces of hut circles associated with the possible later prehistoric settlement. A close association between ring ditches and cursus monuments has been recorded on a number of other sites; for example at Aston Upon Trent in Derbyshire (Gibson and Loveday 1989) and Springfield, Essex (Hedges and Buckley 1981). However, if the circular features are hut circles, the juxtaposition of at least one with the possible settlement enclosure ditch suggests an earlier, or later, phase of unenclosed settlement.

The double-ditched linear feature (SMR 5516) may be interpreted as a droveway. In the northeast of Field 4 the droveway appears to turn slightly westwards, although its precise orientation is unknown as this area has been taken by the M40 corridor. As the trackway approaches the location of the sub-square enclosure (SMR 5515), it appears to turn slightly to the east, crossing the northeast corner of the enclosure. This superimposition could suggest that the droveway was constructed either before the use of the enclosure, or, alternatively, after its abandonment. The droveway also continues south into Field 22.

The depression located in the extreme southeast of Field 5 may be interpreted as a hand-dug quarry, although it is cut close to an adjoining stream, and would have probably been subject to flooding.

The ditch aligned northwest-southeast, which crosses the cursus and the settlement is probably a post-medieval field boundary, recorded as a field boundary on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map, dated 1886 (Fig. 6).

*Status* - The eastern half of Fields 4 and 5 are included in one of the scheduled areas (Warwickshire SAM 140: Fig. 3). The scheduled area includes the driveway (SMR 5516), the elongated enclosure (SMR 1921), and the sub-square enclosure (SMR 5515), and the features enclosed by the latter two sites. Field 1, the western half of Fields 4 and 5, including the rectilinear enclosure (SMR No. 6426), and the areas including and adjoining Old Barn Cottage are not within the scheduled area.

### Fields 2-3

*Aerial photographic coverage* - The paucity of visible archaeological features (compared with other fields), probably explains the limited coverage of this field. Photographic control for this area was sufficient for the accurate positioning of identified features.

*Description* - A long linear ditch (SMR 5517), in the southern part of Field 3 extends southeastwards into Field 8 and northwestwards into Field 32 (see below). Other poorly-defined features, including a ditch cut perpendicular to the long linear ditch, and a curvilinear feature, are also recorded in Fields 2-3. Crop-marked medieval/post-medieval ridge and furrow is visible over much of Fields 2-3.

*Interpretation* - The long linear ditch may define the boundary of the group of possible settlement features in Field 8 to the south and west. A similar territorial boundary was excavated at Wasperton (Hughes and Crawford 1995). Although not visible as a single continuous feature from the air, it is possible that the ditch may be unbroken from the A429 road into Field 8. The short length of ditch running perpendicular to the ditch in the south of Field 3 may be a contemporary field boundary, again associated with the Field 8 settlement. The identification and interpretation of the remaining features is hindered by the spreads of alluvium across the area.

*Status* - Not Scheduled.

### Fields 6-11

*Aerial photographic coverage* - A good quantity and quality of prints were available for most of this area, although the southern part was relatively under represented by the coverage. Control was sufficient for the accurate positioning of identified features. There was no information for the smaller fields 6, 7 and 9. Field 10 mainly comprises a large pool.

*Description* - Just to the south of the centre of Field 8 is a large, polygonal, ditched enclosure, with six sides enclosing an area measuring approximately 60m by 50m. An

interruption in the ditch on the southeast side may be a simple entrance. Although there is no evidence for internal features, these may be masked or disturbed by later activity. This enclosure appears to be overlain by several interlocking rectilinear enclosures, pits and a double ditched linear feature, (SMR 966, 967 and 5159 respectively). The latter continues to the west, into Field 31. Several pits or large post-holes have been recorded within and around these features which are probably archaeological in origin. The long linear ditch (SMR 5517) runs towards the eastern part of the Field 8 feature complex, from Field 32, and through Field 3. The SMR (No. 966) notes that patches of red/brown soil in Field 8 may indicate occupation areas.

*Interpretation* - The complex of features recorded in Field 8 suggests a number of phases of activity. It seems likely that the large polygonal enclosure pre-dates the interlocking rectilinear enclosures. Like the four-sided enclosure in Field 5, it is similar in size and plan to enclosures that have been dated to the later prehistoric period elsewhere in the area (Hingley 1989, Fig 9.9).

The polygonal enclosure appears to be cut by a double-ditched linear feature (SMR 5159) which may be a trackway or droveway. Similar features are recorded to the east in Fields 4/5, and Fields 24/26. Several of the interlocking rectilinear enclosures appear to respect this trackway suggesting a linear settlement laid out along a 'street'. However, some of the enclosures appear to pre- or post date the trackway as they do not appear to respect the area between the two ditches. The temporal relationship between the settlement features is difficult to surmise from the aerial photographic evidence alone, but where enclosure and trackway ditches coincide, the cropmark response of the enclosure ditches was recorded as much weaker on several different sets of photographs. This suggests that the earlier enclosure ditches were cut by the trackway ditches, infilled and prepared as a road surface and compacted through use of the trackway. A very similar complex of interlocking rectilinear enclosures has been excavated at Wasperton (Crawford 1981-1985 and Hughes and Crawford 1995) where they have been dated to the Romano-British period.

The pits recorded are difficult to interpret. Some may be structural, possibly associated with timber-framed buildings. One group appears to form a circular structure. Other pits may have been used for rubbish disposal or storage.

The superimposition of the polygonal enclosure, trackway ditches, and other enclosures could suggest at least three phases of activity, possibly extending through the later prehistoric period and into the Romano-British period, although fieldwork would be required to test this suggested sequence.

The precise relationship between the settlement and the linear territorial boundary ditch (SMR 5517) is unclear, since the area of possible convergence is concealed by alluvium and lies under the pond in Field 10. Located to the south of the settlement in Field 11 there are large dark patches, identified as hand-dug gravel quarries. There may be a

direct relationship between the small-scale gravel extraction here, and in Field 32, which may have provided gravel for the construction of roads or houses in the locality.

*Status* - Field 8 and the northeastern corner of Field 11 are included within the scheduled areas (Warwickshire SAM 141 and 142: Fig. 3). The scheduled area includes the droveway (SMR 5159), and the multi-phase settlement of late prehistoric and possibly Roman date (SMR 966 and 967).

### Fields 12 and 22

*Aerial photographic coverage* - A reasonable quantity and quality of prints were available for most of this area. Control was sufficient for the accurate positioning of identified features.

*Description* - The southern half of the depression described above (Field 5) is barely visible in Field 22. The parallel linear ditches (SMR 5516) continue from Field 5 into Field 22. They may terminate at the feature group described below, although any possible continuation to the south, into Field 21, would probably be masked by alluvial deposits. A small circular enclosure is located between the parallel linear ditches in the centre of Field 22.

At the southernmost visible limit of the parallel linear ditches are a number of features which are difficult to interpret. These appear to comprise a series of five, broad, irregular ditches, each measuring no more than 5m in length. To the southwest of this group is a triangular, ditched enclosure, with an internal pit. This adjoins a trapezoidal ditched enclosure. The latter is partly superimposed over a gently arcing double-ditched feature, which may comprise three separate lengths of ditch, positioned to appear as a continuous feature. A possible isolated pit cluster is visible in the centre of Field 12.

Crop-marked medieval/post-medieval ridge and furrow, running roughly parallel to the modern field boundary is recorded in the northern part of Fields 12 and 22.

*Interpretation* - This complex of features is difficult to interpret without excavation. However, it is possible that the various ditches and enclosures are related to stock control at the apparent terminus of the droveway. The droveway was presumably constructed to provide access across arable land to the meadowland bordering the Avon, and the complex features may relate to the arrangements for herding stock back into the droveway.

*Status* - Field 22 is included in a scheduled area (Warwickshire SAM 140). Field 12 is not scheduled.

### Fields 13-21, 23 and 30

*Aerial photographic coverage* - This area was poorly represented in the aerial photographic record, probably because of the paucity of crop-marked features in this heavily alluviated area. Control was sufficient for the accurate positioning of identified features.

*Description and interpretation* - This area is recorded on 1886 Ordnance Survey map as "liable to floods". Given the tendency for alluvial deposits to mask archaeological features, the paucity of features recorded in this area should not be taken as a true representation of its archaeological potential.

The linear ditches identified are probably no earlier than post-medieval in date and relate to the drainage of the area, probably for meadow. All mapped features were recorded by the Ordnance Survey in 1886. All such features were recorded as out of use on the 1946 vertical photographs.

*Status* - Not scheduled.

### Fields 24-29

*Aerial photographic coverage* - These fields were less well represented than the other 'busier' fields. Control was sufficient for the accurate positioning of most of the identified features.

*Description* - A double-ditched linear feature (SMR 4685), aligned north-south, is located approximately 150-200m to the east of the similar feature identified in Fields 4/5 and 22. A small circular enclosure is located between the linear ditches in Field 24. Further north is a line of pits, running perpendicular to, and apparently respecting the line of, the double-ditched linear feature. Two zones containing pits straddle the northern end of the double ditched feature in Field 26.

In the central area of Field 24 three sides of a rectilinear enclosure are visible. The fourth side is probably masked by the modern boundary and trackway. A second, smaller, more indistinct enclosure lies to the north of this enclosure.

In the northeast corner of Field 24, in an area of deep alluvium, a differentiation in growth in a young crop was noted on a CUCAP oblique (ABR50). These crop-marks may indicate underlying archaeological features, which appear to define a polygonal ditched enclosure. This feature was positioned by network, rather than digitally rectified, due to a lack of corresponding aerial photographic and map control.

A large collection of flint artefacts, including tools and debitage was recovered from the northeast zone of Field 24 (SMR 6377). Although this material has not been studied in detail, it is probably datable to the Neolithic-Bronze Age.

*Interpretation* - The double ditched feature in Field 24/26, interpreted as a trackway or droveway, appears to turn slightly to the west at its southernmost limit, suggesting possible convergence with the Field 4/5 droveway. If the two droveways were so joined a ford or bridge over the intervening stream would have been required. It seems possible that this trackway also terminated in the group of linear features and enclosures recorded in Field 22, supporting the suggestion that these may have been used for stock control. The small circular enclosure located between the droveway ditches is similar to the circular feature recorded at the southern end of the trackway in Field 22.

The northernmost pit concentration may be interpreted as a well-defined pit-cluster, whilst those lying to the south are more diffuse. If these are indeed archaeological in origin they could indicate nearby settlement or activity not otherwise visible from the aerial photographs. The pit-clusters have no obvious relationship with the droveway.

The line of pits aligned perpendicular to the droveway may be interpreted as a pit-alignment, a form of prehistoric land division. The relationship between the droveway and the pit-alignment is unknown. The pit-alignment coincides with an interrupted linear ditch.

The well-defined linear ditches in Field 24 to the southeast of the double-ditched linear feature may be post-medieval field boundaries; the southernmost, aligned parallel with the River Avon, may define the limit of arable land, and may also mark the limits of the deepest alluvium. Patches of shallower alluvium in the south and east of this field have allowed buried, pit-like features, possibly archaeological in origin, to produce visible crop responses. These pits are elongated and are set on different alignments. It may be stretching the limits of interpretative aerial archaeology to describe the pit-like features recorded in alluviated areas in the south and east of Field 24 as possible graves, although it may be noted that the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Wasperton was situated in a similar landscape context, i.e. internal to a river meander within 400m of a Bronze Age barrow (now within the M40 corridor).

*Status* - Not scheduled.

#### Area to north of Study Area

*Aerial photographic coverage* - Some of the features in this field will have been destroyed in the M40 corridor. Reasonable quality prints, taken prior to motorway construction, were available for this field.

*Description* - Located within the line of the road corridor was a substantial, but incomplete sub-circular enclosure with nearby pits. Along the banks of the Avon to the north of the M40 are upstanding features - linear ditches and ridge and furrow, probably post-medieval in date.



*Interpretation* - The enclosure recorded within the road corridor may be interpreted as a plough-levelled Bronze Age round barrow, with an unknown relationship to the nearby pit group.

*Status* - Not scheduled (now destroyed).

#### Area to the west of the Study Area (Field 31)

*Aerial photographic coverage* - Reasonable photographic coverage was available for this field, although landscape changes to Sherbourne Park have produced problems with control. Control was only sufficient to approximate the position of the identified features in relation to the study area.

*Description* - A large, incomplete, rectilinear ditched enclosure with notably rounded corners was identified in the approximate centre of this field. Its southwestern side cuts a small, sub-circular, crop-marked feature. A double-ditched feature aligned east-west (SMR 5159) runs from Field 8 into Field 31, apparently intersecting the incomplete enclosure. A large rectangular enclosure abuts the northern ditch of the double-ditched feature.

Medieval/post-medieval crop-marked ridge and furrow and plough headlands are visible across most of this field.

*Interpretation* - the double ditched feature is a continuation of the droveway/trackway recorded in Field 8 to the east. The two enclosures recorded are morphologically similar to features in Field 8 (see above), and may be interpreted as enclosures of possible late prehistoric or Romano-British date. The large enclosure either pre- or post-dates the trackway and may be contemporary with the polygonal enclosure in Field 8. The other appears to respect the trackway and may be part of the linear settlement identified in Field 8. The sub-circular feature may either be interpreted as a hut circle, either pre- or post-dating the enclosure or possibly as an early Bronze Age ring ditch.

*Status* - Not scheduled.

#### Area to the northwest of the Study Area (Field 32)

*Aerial photographic coverage* - A reasonable quantity and quality of prints were available with control sufficient for this field, which lies beyond the western boundary of the study area.

*Description* - A long linear ditch (SMR 5517) runs northwest-southeast, across this field, and into Fields 3 and 8. A short length of a ditch runs to this feature at a 45 degree angle, to the west of the modern A429 road. The long linear ditch appears to be interrupted by two large cut areas. The westernmost area is a fairly well defined rectilinear cut feature; the other area is more amorphous in shape.

A curving ditch and a possible curvilinear enclosure, located to the north of the long linear ditch were only recorded in the middle distance of the aerial photographs at best. The positioning and morphology of these features is not clear.

Crop-marked medieval/post-medieval ridge and furrow is visible over the southern and western parts of this field. A linear feature, aligned approximately north-south in the north of this field may be interpreted as a ditch, defined by banks, probably forming a post-medieval field boundary.

*Interpretation* - The long linear ditch (SMR 5517) is a continuation of the ditch already described in Fields 3 and 8 and thought to be a territorial boundary. The relationship between this feature and the ditch which runs into it at a 45 degree angle is unclear. The two large cut areas may be interpreted as backfilled hand-dug gravel quarries, which post-date the boundary ditch. Although difficult to support from aerial photographic evidence alone, it appears that the ridge and furrow overlies (and thus post-dates) this quarrying. This would suggest that the quarry workings were fairly shallow, or that they were deliberately backfilled to permit unimpeded ploughing. The west-east aligned ditch appears to define the southern limit of the easternmost quarry.

*Status* - Not scheduled.

### Natural Features

Inspection of the comprehensive air photo sources suggests a complex pattern of alluviation in the area. Aside from deposition from the flow of the River Avon, it is apparent that the various lesser waterways flowing across this area have contributed to the pattern of alluvial deposition. The effect on the archaeology of the assessment area is two-fold. Firstly, the ancient drainage system is of relevance to the archaeology itself in terms of the land management strategies that may have been employed for farming, settlement and communications in the area. Secondly, in terms of archaeological investigations from the air, the alluvial spreads effectively mask or conceal buried archaeological features. Hence, the absence of crop-marked features must not be interpreted as absence of archaeological features where alluvial deposition is apparent.

Possibly relating to the distribution of alluvium is the occurrence of pitting, presumed to be natural. This has complicated the interpretation of archaeological pits, particularly in Fields 4 and 5. The positive interpretation of pits as archaeological has been based on morphology, distribution (definite clusters or alignments) and relationship to other archaeological features (internal or close to other features). Of course this interpretation cannot be a definitive basis for identification of archaeological pits and only fieldwork can reveal the full nature and extent of these features.

## 4.0: DISCUSSION

The following account attempts to put the cropmarked features of the Longbridge-Sherbourne complex into a regional and chronological perspective based on morphological similarities with excavated and other features elsewhere in the central Avon Valley. It also attempts to place the documentary and cartographic sources in the context of the overall landscape evolution of the broader region.

Although few upstanding earthworks have survived in central Warwickshire, the Avon Valley is very rich in cropmarked sites and contains a particularly large concentration of apparently prehistoric sites (Fig. 8). Many of these cropmarks were identified following aerial surveys conducted by Arnold Baker and James Pickering during the late 1950's and early 1960s, and were plotted by Brian Hobley (Webster and Hobley 1965). Subsequent aerial reconnaissance has tended to increase our knowledge of the size and complexity of these cropmark sites rather than to add to their number. Large scale excavations have been carried out at a number of these sites in advance of gravel extraction and road construction. The most notable of these have been at the cropmarked complexes at Barford (Oswald (ed.) 1969; Loveday 1989) and Charlecote (Ford 1969, 1971a and 1971b) by the Avon-Severn Valley Research Committee; at Wasperton by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (Crawford 1981-1985; Hughes and Crawford 1995 and Hughes *et al* forthcoming); and at Park Farm, Barford by the Warwickshire Museum in advance of the construction of the M40 motorway (Cracknell and Hingley 1994). All have produced evidence for human activity dating from the Neolithic to the Roman period and beyond.

### 4.1: Neolithic and Early Bronze Age

On morphological grounds it seems likely that many of the cropmarked features identified as part of the Longbridge - Sherbourne complex are associated with ritual or funerary monuments dating to the Neolithic or early Bronze Age.

The elongated rectilinear enclosure at Longbridge (SMR 1921) is thought to be an example of a Neolithic cursus, a class of monument dating to the late 4th and early 3rd Millennium BC, and comprising a pair of linear ditches with internal banks and closed ends. The name cursus is derived from an 18th-century suggestion that they may have been used for prehistoric horse or chariot racing. A more recent, and rather more likely, interpretation is that they were used as processional or ceremonial ways. The majority of known cursus monuments are located in the south of England. Amongst the best known examples are the Springfield cursus (Hedges and Buckley 1981) which is 700m long and 40m wide, the Stonehenge cursus (Richards 1990) which is over 2.8km long and 100m wide and the Dorset cursus (Barrett *et al* 1991) which is the longest of all (nearly 10km long and 90m wide). The Longbridge enclosure is considerably smaller (280m long and 30-35m wide). However, this is similar to other known cursus monuments on the gravel terraces of the Midlands, most notably at Barford just 1.8km to the northeast (185m long and 35-50m wide). An even smaller 'long enclosure' (120m

long and 20m wide) has been excavated at West Cotton in Northamptonshire (Windell 1989).

The southern half of the cursus at Barford was excavated in 1972 prior to gravel extraction (Loveday 1989, Site I). Apart from the similarity in size, the Barford cursus and the Longbridge cursus also have a similar orientation (the Barford cursus is aligned northeast - southwest; the Longbridge enclosure is aligned north-northeast - south-southwest). For the most part, the ditch of the Barford cursus was 1-1.5m wide and up to 1m deep. Although only a small area of the interior was excavated there was little evidence for internal features. By contrast, the aerial photographic evidence indicates a number of features within the Longbridge cursus: a pit cluster, three sides of a rectilinear enclosure and two incomplete circular features. It is of course possible that some or all of these features are earlier or later in date than the cursus. However, the association of cursus monuments and groups of other ritual or funerary monuments is not uncommon. For example, the three-sided enclosure has a parallel at Barford, although in this case the smaller enclosure appears to be attached to the southern end of the cursus. Similar enclosures include the three-sided enclosure at North Stoke (Case 1982) and the four-sided mortuary enclosures at Normanton Down and Charlecote (Ford 1969). Where there is an absence of any functional evidence for such features Loveday suggests that the term 'short oblong ditch' is a suitable neutral descriptive term (Loveday 1989, 64).

There is a strong possibility that the incomplete circular features both inside the possible cursus ditches at Longbridge and immediately to the east are ring ditches, the ploughed-out remains of late Neolithic or early Bronze Age round barrows. If this is the case, these burial mounds appear to have been deliberately located on or near to a pre-existing monument. The close association of round barrows with cursus monuments or Neolithic long enclosures is an extremely common phenomenon. The Barford cursus was associated with at least two ring ditches and the West Cotton long enclosure was associated with at least eight ring ditches or barrows. In fact many cursus monuments are associated with extremely complex groups of features which might also include henges, stone circles and long mounds (e.g. Loveday 1989, 71-77). Such clusters of successive ritual monuments cannot be coincidental and it has been suggested that they represent attempts by successive groups of monument builders to redefine and reinterpret the landscape (Bradley 1993, 102).

#### **4.2: Late prehistoric**

Many of the cropmarks in the Avon Valley reflect later prehistoric activity (later Bronze Age and Iron Age). It seems that the well-drained soils of the gravel terraces encouraged the development of later prehistoric settlement. These include enclosures and field systems at Grove Field Farm, Barford, Barford Sheds, Park Farm, Wasperton and Hampton Lucy.

Three small enclosures containing Iron Age material have been excavated at Barford; two at Site E (Bottomley 1965), and one at Site G (Wardle and Brown 1965). These contained little evidence for settlement activity but might provide parallels for many of the smaller rectilinear cropmarked enclosures within the Longbridge/Sherbourne complex such as those in Fields 4 and 24. By contrast, the Iron Age enclosures excavated at Park Farm (Cracknell and Hingley 1994), Ryton-on-Dunsmore (Bateman 1978) and Wasperton (Crawford 1981-1985 and Hughes and Crawford 1995) produced considerable evidence for long periods of occupation with internal hut circles and multiple phases of activity indicated by recut ditches. These larger enclosures provide better parallels for the larger cropmarked enclosures within the study area; in particular those with rounded corners in Fields 5, 8 and 31. The variation in the sizes of these various enclosures may be related to the variation in the size of the resident groups. Alternatively they may reflect differences in the use of the enclosure. The relative absence of evidence for domestic occupation within the small enclosures at Barford suggests that they may have been used for stockading animals.

These enclosures are either isolated, single sites, such as Park Farm, or multiple sites with evidence for economic integration such as Wasperton, where at least six discrete settlements were recorded. The Longbridge-Sherbourne complex appears to be another example. These multiple sites may be a consequence of the replication of the basic settlement unit either as contemporary or successive occupations (Hingley 1989, 136). Each enclosure may represent a nucleated family each occupying a homestead and together forming a communal farming group.

Of the three larger enclosures within the Longbridge-Sherbourne complex only the sub-square enclosure in Field 5 has clear evidence for internal features. However, the size of the internal circular features (15 to 20m in diameter) suggests that these are more likely to be earlier funerary monuments (see above) than contemporary round-houses. In fact one of these circular features intersects with the enclosure ditch suggesting that it is unlikely to be of the same date. Similarly, a circular feature intersects with the ditch of the large enclosure in Field 31. However, the absence of any convincing evidence for round-houses on the aerial photographs does not necessarily mean that all trace of such structures has gone. At Wasperton, Park Farm and elsewhere, numerous features, including palisade gullies, have been recorded during excavation despite not appearing on aerial photographs.

A number of the other features within the Longbridge-Sherbourne complex might also belong to this later prehistoric phase of activity. Of particular interest are the double-ditched linear features in Fields 4/5/22 and Fields 26/29 and the linear ditch in Fields 32/3/8. However, in the absence of dating evidence these may alternatively be later in date. In fact, in Field 5 one of the double-ditched linear features intersects with the sub-square enclosure indicating that they cannot be contemporary. However, similar features, thought to be trackways or droveways dating to the late Bronze Age or Iron Age, have been recorded elsewhere (e.g. at Wasperton in the western part of the Iron Age settlement complex). The suggestion that these features may be for directing and

controlling stock is supported by the complex of enclosures and ditches in Field 22 at the southern end of the two double-ditched features. The linear ditch in Fields 32/3/8 resembles the territorial boundary recorded at Wasperton where it pre-dates features of Romano-British date.

#### **4.3: Roman**

The complex of rectilinear enclosures apparently aligned along an east-west double-ditched trackway in Fields 8/31 closely resembles the Romano-British settlement complex excavated at Wasperton. At both sites the features are characterised by numerous interlocking linear ditches and enclosures sharing common alignments and generally regular, right-angled corners. These contrast with the less regular enclosures with rounded corners which are thought to be earlier in date (see above). The suggested Romano-British complex appears to overlie two of these earlier enclosures in Fields 8 and 31.

At Wasperton, evidence was obtained for a long and intensive phase of activity dating to between the 1st and 4th centuries AD which included domestic occupation, agricultural features and an inhumation cemetery. The settlement was associated with wells, ovens, pits and post holes. The Sherbourne complex might also contain a similar range of features in addition to those identified on the aerial photographs.

Further evidence for Romano-British occupation in the area is provided by the excavations at Tiddington, east of Stratford-upon-Avon (Palmer 1981), and the recently discovered villa sites along the Dene Valley around Kington, six kilometres to the south (McKay 1985). Eight kilometres to the east is the Roman military camp at Chesterton on the Fosse Way.

#### **4.4: Medieval and post-medieval**

Perhaps the most significant post-Roman archaeological site in the vicinity of the study area is the Anglo-Saxon cemetery to the north of Longbridge (SMR 1982). However, it is some way to the north of the study area its precise location is uncertain. This part of the Avon valley appears to have been an important focus for Anglo-Saxon burial (Gelling 1992, 30) with cemeteries at Bidford, Alveston, Bagington, Stretton and Wasperton. Both Anglo-Saxon and Romano-British burials were recorded at Wasperton (Wise 1991) including at least 137 graves that were definitely Anglo-Saxon. However, most of the cemeteries in the area were relatively small. Ford suggests that cemeteries with fewer than 60 burials are unlikely to represent more than a single household in occupation at any one time (Ford 1976, 274). Although the limits of the Longbridge cemetery are not certain, only a small number of graves were recorded, and it is likely to have served a very small community. Nevertheless, its presence could indicate an unidentified settlement in the vicinity of the study area.

The main foci of medieval and post-medieval activity lie outside the study area at Sherbourne, Longbridge and Barford. Both Sherbourne and Barford contain important medieval and post-medieval features. However, there is little evidence for significant sites within the study area. The main influence of these settlements within the study area has been on the changing patterns of land ownership. The area appears to have been mainly used for agricultural purposes, although both field name and cropmark evidence suggests that small scale gravel extraction may have been carried out.

#### **4.5: Landscape Evolution**

The various strands of evidence considered hitherto may be brought together to provide an interpretative model of the evolution of the overall landscape of the study area from prehistory to the present.

Although now largely embanked and controlled, the Warwickshire Avon was formerly braided and, during the Palaeolithic period (500,000 - 8,000 BC), provided a variety of habitats for animals such as wild horse and cattle, deer, elephant and rhinoceros, which were drawn to the river valley for water. The presence of such animals is indicated by faunal remains recovered from the gravel terraces during quarrying, and the varying composition of the faunal assemblages reflects the climatic changes of the Ice Age. The fauna of the No. 2 terrace, on which the study area is situated, suggests a cold climate (Tomlinson 1935). An early human (hominid) presence is indicated by the recovery of flint tools, such as handaxes, likewise from the gravel terraces. Just to the east of the study area, in Barford parish, a Lower Palaeolithic handaxe of Acheulian type, probably dating to before 200,000 BC and to be associated with *Homo heidelbergensis* or 'archaic' *Homo Sapiens*, was found in a gravel pit (SMR 703; Jack 1922).

The Mesolithic period (8,000 - 4,000 BC), which corresponds with the warming of the climate at the end of the Ice Age, is poorly represented in the Avon Valley, but there are records of a couple of finds of Mesolithic flints from Barford Parish (SMR 4687 & 6045). It is not until the appearance of agricultural communities, in the Neolithic and early Bronze Age (4,000 - 1,500 BC), that evidence of settlement in the Avon Valley becomes substantial and a continuous evolution of the landscape can be traced. The light gravely soils of the Avon and its tributaries are considered to have been more attractive to early agricultural settlement than the surrounding heavier clay soils, while the Arden, to the north and west of the Avon, remained primarily woodland until well into the Middle Ages.

Neolithic and early Bronze Age settlement along the Avon may be largely defined through the recognition of a series of 'ritual complexes' at intervals along the river valley. These ritual complexes may comprise a number of elements, not necessarily contemporary, such as cursus monuments, long barrows, henges and round barrows, and each complex was perhaps the focus of a particular community over many centuries. The Longbridge cursus appears to be the central element of one such ritual complex, while others may be identified at Barford to the northeast and Charlecote to the south.

In the Avon valley, as elsewhere, settlements of this period, as opposed to ritual monuments, are elusive, and may indeed have been largely ephemeral. The flint scatter recorded in the northeast corner of Field 24 (SMR 6377) may however indicate the location of one such settlement.

In the course of the later Bronze Age a major social transformation took place throughout Britain and indeed much of western Europe. The ritual complexes fell largely out of use, although they may have retained some significance, and the archaeological record is dominated by a range of settlement types, from isolated farmsteads through villages to major centres such as hillforts. There is much evidence from this period, the late Bronze and Iron Age (1,000 BC - AD 50), for formal land division, in the form of major territorial boundaries and field systems, as well as for an increased emphasis on warfare and defence, all of which points to a significant growth in population.

At least two substantial settlement enclosures probably belonging to this period can be identified within the study area, one in Field 5 and one in Field 8, with a further example just to the west of the Study Area in Field 31. They are rectilinear in form with rounded corners and, on analogy with excavated examples, probably contain one or more circular timber houses and grain storage pits. As noted above, smaller enclosures, such as the polygonal enclosure in Field 24, may be either for settlement or the penning of stock, and unenclosed settlements, not easily detectable by aerial photography, are also to be anticipated. The overall pattern is likely to be closely similar to that at Wasperton to the south, where at least six settlement foci were revealed by excavation, although not all contemporary. The excavations at Wasperton likewise offers an analogy for the major territorial boundary (SMR 5517) and ditched droveways/trackways (SMR 5159, 5516 & 4685) revealed by aerial photography. While the date of such features is uncertain, and the territorial units defined unclear, all are testimony to an organised and carefully managed landscape.

In its essentials, the landscape organisation which emerged in this period was probably that which has survived through to the medieval period and in part to the present day. The light soils of the gravel terrace were presumably devoted to arable farming, with the alluviated band adjacent to the river providing winter grazing and meadowland. Rough summer pasture, and a range of woodland resources, would have been available in the Forest of Arden, to the north and west, perhaps linked by a series of drove roads through the arable lands. Historically, a number of parishes in the Avon valley, such as Wasperton, were linked to holdings in Arden, perhaps reflecting an ancient pattern of transhumance (Ford 1976, 280).

If Wasperton provides an adequate model, there was a degree of settlement nucleation in the Romano-British period (AD 50 - AD 410), with a single hamlet or small village replacing the more dispersed farmstead settlements of the Iron Age. The complex cluster of enclosures loosely grouped around the trackway traversing Fields 8 and 31,



which finds many parallels with the excavated Roman settlement at Wasperton, probably represents the principal Roman settlement in the study area. At Wasperton the area of the late Roman settlement continued to be a focus of settlement into the pagan Anglo-Saxon period, as indicated by the continuity of the late Roman and Anglo-Saxon graves in the associated cemetery, and such continuity is certainly a possibility in the study area. The recorded Anglo-Saxon cemetery to the north of Longbridge (SMR 1982) appears to have been small, and probably relates to a different settlement entirely.

The origins of the medieval and modern settlements surrounding the study area - Longbridge, Sherbourne and Barford - are uncertain. In the Avon valley south of Warwick it is most likely that the majority of the medieval villages, together with the open-field system of farming, came into existence in the 10th century, and represent a further episode of settlement nucleation replacing the more numerous hamlets of the Roman and Early Saxon periods (Gelling 1992, 172-79). Population growth in the Late Saxon period, and consequent land pressure and a need to regulate farming, is generally seen as the main underlying cause of both settlement nucleation and open-field farming.

While the open-field system is now believed to be much less prevalent than was once believed, the study area lies within a classic zone of open-field farming in the Warwickshire Avon valley and Feldon, and traces of ridge-and-furrow, the surviving signature of the pattern of ploughing within the open fields, are visible within many of the fields in the study area. These remains are most apparent in the part of the study area which lies to the west of the Longbridge Brook, and which formed part of the open fields belonging to Sherbourne, although more scattered traces are also apparent across the whole of the study area, with the exception of the meadowland alongside the Avon (Fig. 7).

Thus from the Late Saxon period onward the general character of the settlement pattern and landuse in and around the study area is both reasonably clear and relatively stable. Sherbourne, which is mentioned in the Domesday Book (Section 3.1, above), appears to have been a more-or-less typical medieval village of the Avon valley, surrounded by its open fields and with meadowland, for hay and early pasture, along the banks of the river. The history and status of Longbridge is somewhat more complicated due to its proximity to Warwick and incorporation in the parish of St. Mary's, Warwick. The town of Warwick itself has its origins at least as early as 914, when it was established as a burgh by Ethelflaeda, but Longbridge does not receive historical mention until the early 12th century, and seems always to have been a small hamlet dependent on Warwick. The open-fields and meadowland associated with the hamlet at Longbridge occupied the bulk of the study area, to the east of the Longbridge brook.

The open fields around Sherbourne and Longbridge were enclosed by the end of 18th century. The parish of Sherbourne was enclosed by an Act of Parliament of 1799 (Section 3.1 above), although more piecemeal enclosure is likely in the study area before this date. The differential survival of ridge-and-furrow, for example, is at least in

part to be explained by changes in landuse, with areas turned over early to grass tending to better preservation of the ridge-and-furrow.

The ending of the open-field system and enclosure is frequently accompanied by some dispersal of settlement and the establishment of many of the 'isolated' farms which are a feature of the modern rural landscape; various cottages and farm buildings appear in the study area on the post-enclosure maps of 1811, 1849 and 1886 (Figs. 4, 5 & 6), most of which have now disappeared. Also a feature of the post-enclosure landscape are a number of small quarries and lime pits, the presence of which is revealed both by aerial photography (Fig. 7) and field names (Fig. 5). The antiquity of the two ponds, in Fields 10 and 13, is unclear, but they are probably both post-enclosure features.

The layout of the fields established after enclosure has largely survived to the present day, although in recent years a number of field boundaries have been removed to create larger fields. This is again part of a broader trend; the disused field boundaries are visible on aerial photographs, for example in Fields 4 and 5.

## **5.0: ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Preserved within the study area are elements of a prehistoric, Roman and, possibly, Early Medieval landscape of national importance. The assessment has not identified monuments or features of later periods of comparable significance.

Two focal areas containing monuments of high archaeological significance and potential can be identified, both of which have been accorded the status of Scheduled Ancient Monuments (Fig. 3). The area designated as SAM 140 contains a probable cursus monument and associated features of neolithic date, together with an enclosure, trackway and associated features of probable Late Bronze Age to Iron Age date.

Although increasingly recognised through aerial photography, cursus are rare monuments, and the potential importance of the Longbridge example is enhanced both by the apparent survival of associated features, forming a possible 'ritual complex', and by the identification of this ritual complex as an element of a larger pattern of ritual complexes in the valley of the Warwickshire Avon (Section 4, above).

The second scheduled area (SAM 141, SAM 142) contains a palimpsest of features which are interpreted as comprising settlement enclosures of Iron Age date succeeded by a more complex settlement of Romano-British date laid out alongside a track or droveway. These features do not have the rarity value of the probable cursus, but derive their value primarily from being important elements of an apparently well-preserved ancient landscape.

The scheduled ancient monuments within the study area are afforded statutory protection, and there is a strong presumption in favour of their preservation *in situ*.

Outside the scheduled areas the evidence of archaeological monuments and features is more sparsely distributed, but these zones nevertheless contain important components of the ancient landscape. In the northeast of the study area, for example, in Fields 24-27, aerial photography has identified probable ancient trackways and enclosures forming part of the late prehistoric/Roman landscape, while a scatter of flints (SMR 6377) may indicate a settlement contemporary with the scheduled cursus monument.

Further elements of the late prehistoric/Roman landscape surviving outside the scheduled areas can be identified in Field 3 (a possible territorial boundary) and in Field 4 (a possible enclosure [SMR No. 6426]). Immediately to the west of the probable cursus, and outside the scheduled area, a pair of curving ditches has been tentatively identified as the quarry ditches of a neolithic long barrow. If correctly identified, this would indicate not only the site of a monument of importance in itself, but also of an important element of the putative 'ritual complex'.

The only major zone of the study area which is largely devoid of probable traces of ancient features revealed by aerial photography is the alluviated band alongside the Avon. This may simply be due to the obscuring effect of the alluvium, however, and at least one significant feature, the polygonal enclosure in Field 24 has been identified in this zone. Alternatively, this zone, which is liable to flooding, may have been used primarily for meadow and pasture rather than settlement in the prehistoric and Roman periods as in more recent times.

In conclusion, the results of the assessment indicate that the whole of the study area should be considered to be of potential archaeological importance. However, the detailed assessment has also tended to reinforce a contrast between those parts of the study area which have been scheduled as ancient monuments, where the archaeological significance of the remains is most clearly evident, and the other parts of the study area, where both the significance and density of archaeological features is less well established. Gravel extraction may be possible in parts of the study area without detriment to archaeological features and monuments worthy of preservation *in situ*, but a further programme of field-based evaluation would be necessary to assess this possibility.

## **6.0: OUTLINE SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER EVALUATION**

Further field-based evaluation would comprise a programme of surface survey, geophysical survey and trial excavations. The details of the required scope of such a programme would be provided in a brief prepared by Warwickshire County Council, with input also from English Heritage if the areas of the scheduled ancient monuments were to be included.

Given that the desk-based assessment has indicated the potential archaeological importance of the whole of the study area, the aim of the field-based evaluation would be to provide further information on which to base a decision with regard to the granting of permission for gravel extraction. Such field-based evaluation would therefore have to be carried out prior to decision making, without presumption as to the outcome. If the evaluation were to encompass the scheduled areas, scheduled monument consent (SMC) would be required for any below ground interventions (e.g. trial excavations) and a licence would be required to carry out geophysical survey.

The broad purpose of the evaluation would be both to further determine, in so far as possible, the date, preservation, extent and importance of monuments and features already recorded by aerial photography and other means, and to determine the presence, date, preservation and importance of monuments and features which may survive but which have not been detected by such means.

It should be noted that the presumption will be in favour of preservation *in situ* of significant archaeological remains, with 'preservation by record' (i.e. excavation) being considered an appropriate response only for remains deemed to be of lesser importance. The monuments and features encompassed within the scheduled areas are already deemed to be of national significance.

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#### Map sources

1808. Map of the Manor and Parish of Sherbourne in the County of Warwick.
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1849. Tithe Award and Map for Parishes of St. Mary and St. Nicholas.
1886. Ordnance Survey First Edition Map.

## Appendix

### Warwickshire Museum Sites and Monuments Record

#### Summary of SMR data for sites within study area

SMR No	NGR	Parish	Type	Period	Comment
966	SP267615	Sherbourne	Cropmark (settlement)	Undated	SAM 141
967	SP264615	Sherbourne	Cropmark (enclosures etc)	Undated	SAM 142
1921	SP270621 - SP269618	Warwick	Cropmark (?cursus)	?Neolithic	SAM 140
4685	SP273620	Warwick	Cropmark (trackway etc)	Undated	SAM 140
5515	SP270619	Warwick	Cropmark (enclosure)	?Iron Age	SAM 140
5516	SP270622 - SP270619	Warwick	Cropmark (trackway)	Undated	
5517	SP263622 - SP266618	Sherbourne	Cropmark (linear)	Undated	
6377	SP273618	Warwick	Flint scatter	Neolithic/Bronze Age	
6425	SP269626	Warwick	Cropmark (linear etc)	Undated	
6426	SP267621	Warwick	Cropmark (enclosure)	Undated	

#### Summary of SMR data for in the vicinity of the study area

SMR No	NGR	Parish	Type	Period	Comment
701	SP268606	Barford	Cropmark (settlement)	?Romano-British	R-B pottery found
702	SP272611	Barford	Water mill	Med/Post-med	Demolished 1930s
703	SP281618	Barford	Flint handaxe	Palaeolithic	
704	SP277617	Barford	Site of ice house	Post-medieval	
705	SP285288	Barford	Cropmark (pit alignment)	Prehistoric	Partly excavated 1972
706	SP275611	Barford	Ice house	19th century	In gardens of Watchbury house
708	SP272609	Barford	Church	Med/19th century	LB II*
718	SP284621	Barford	Cropmark (?henge)	Neo/Bronze Age	Excavated 1965 (Oswald 1966)
719	SP288624	Barford	Cropmark (cursus)	Neolithic	Excavated 1972 (Loveday 1989)
732	SP290634	Bishops Tach	Water mill	Med/post-med	Demolished 1788
834	SP251607	Fulbrook	Deserted settlement	Medieval	
835	SP251603	Fulbrook	Castle	Med/post-med	SAM 21553
836	SP249605	Fulbrook	Water mill	Medieval	Survives as earthwork



837	SP254605	Fulbrook	Fishpond	Medieval	Earthworks of a dam
838	SP252605	Fulbrook	Fishpond	Med/post-med	Earthworks
839	SP251608	Fulbrook	Fishpond	Mcd/post-med	Earthwork
840	SP254608	Fulbrook	Pottery	Romano-British	
842	SP252608	Fulbrook	Moat	Mcd/post-med	Earthwork
843	SP251606	Fulbrook	Lead object	Medieval	Steelyard weight
845	SP253607	Fulbrook	Site of church	Medieval	
848	SP252607	Fulbrook	Site of gatehouse	Medieval	
849	SP253600	Fulbrook	Site of lodge	Medieval	
953	SP243598	Fulbrook	Cropmark (ring ditch)	?Neo/Bronze Age	
957	SP 264595	Hampton Lucy	Cropmark (settlement)	Undated	Part excavated
963	SP270597	Hampton Lucy	Site of ford	Undated	
970	SP253606	Fulbrook	Gravestone	Medieval	
976	SP262612	Sherbourne	Cross	Medieval	in Sherbourne churchyard
978	SP261612	Sherbourne	Fishpond	Undated	Earthwork
979	SP261616	Sherbourne	Bridge	19th century	Built 1800
1111	SP2758	Charlecote	Bronze token	Medieval	
1116	SP271583	Charlecote	Thelsford Priory	Medieval	SAM 134, part excavated
1142	SP273585	Charlecote	Cropmark (enclosure)	Undated	
1247	SP2661	Sherbourne	Bronze brooch	Romano-British	
1845	SP261581	Wasperton	Cropmark (settlement)	Prehist/Romano-British	Excavated
1964	SP273631	Warwick	Toll gate	Post med/19th C	
1978	SP78631	Warwick	Earthworks	Medieval	
1982	SP275632	Warwick	Cemetery	Anglo-Saxon	
2202	SP263590	Wasperton	Site of water mill	Medieval	
2203	SP265588	Wasperton	Church	Post-med	LB II
2204	SP264588	Wasperton	Manor house	Mcd/post-med	LB II*
2205	SP265589	Wasperton	Village hall	19th century	
2209	SP266588	Wasperton	Site of dovecote	Post-med	Demolished 1969
2211	SP263577 - SP273603	Wasperton	Site of road	Undated	
2753	SP260604	Barford	Pottery	Romano-British	
3493	SP2560	Sherborne	Pendant	Medieval	
3686	SP272609	Barford	Site of grange	Medieval	
4068	SP275634	Warwick	Coin/token	19th century	
4069	SP278639	Warwick	Coin	Romano-British	
4071	SP278639	Warwick	Finds	18th and 19th century	
4091	SP287626	Bishops Tach	Flint scatter	Neolithic	
4092	SP273604	Barford	Coin/jetton	Post-medieval	
4518	SP274636	Warwick	Lead balc scal	Post-medieval	

4556	SP275636	Warwick	2 Coins	Medieval	
4615	SP286643 - SP293630	Warwick	Site of road	Med/post med	
4619	SP289629	Bishops Tach	Cropmark (linear)	Undated	
4620	SP261605	Barford	Cropmark (enclosure)	Undated	
4621	SP265609	Barford	Cropmark (settlement)	Undated	
4622	SP251609	Fulbrook	Cropmark (trackway)	Undated	
4637	SP247609	Fulbrook	Cropmark (linear)	Undated	
4652	SP270585	Wasperton	Cropmark (circular enclosure)	Nco/Bronze Age	Part excavated
4686	SP285626	Barford	Cropmark (enclosure)	Undated	
4687	SP283621	Barford	Flint	?Mesolithic	
4688	SP282621	Barford	Cropmark (?settlement)	Neolithic	Excavated (Oswald 1965)
4689	SP282620	Barford	Cropmark (ring ditch)	Neo/Bronze Age	Excavated (Oswald 1965)
4690	SP281619	Barford	Cropmark (settlement)	Neo/Iron Age	Excavated (Oswald 1965)
4691	SP281620	Barford	Cropmark (pits)	Undated	Excavated (Oswald 1965)
4692	SP281620	Barford	Cropmark (settlement)	Iron Age	Excavated (Oswald 1965)
4693	SP281621	Barford	Cropmark (pits)	?Neolithic	Excavated (Oswald 1965)
4696	SP284622	Barford	Cropmark (field system)	Romano-British	Excavated (Oswald 1965)
4698	SP280617	Barford	Cropmark (ditch)	Bronze Age	Excavated (Oswald 1965)
4700	SP286622	Barford	Cropmark (settlement)	Iron Age	Excavated (Loveday 1989)
4814	SP270623 - SP372459	Warwick	Turnpike road	18th century	
4890	SP283619	Barford	Cropmark (complex)	Neo/BA/IA/R-B	Excavated (Oswald 1965)
4950	SP259593	Hampton Lucy	Cropmark (enclosure)	Undated	
5124	SP262612	Sherbourne	Church	19th century	
5125	SP262619	Sherbourne	Site of church	Medieval/post-med	
5153	SP252608	Fulbrook	Site of manor house	Medieval	
5155	SP264592	Hampton Lucy	Pottery and tile	Romano-British	
5159	SP263615	Sherbourne	Cropmark (trackway)	Undated	SAM 141/142
5173	SP271583	Charlecote	Ditch	Post-med	Excavated - Thelsford Priory
5313	SP260604	Barford	Pottery	Medieval	
5314	SP260604	Barford	Flint	Neo/Bronze Age	
5481	SP272609	Barford	Site of manor house	Post-medieval	
5499	SP261581	Wasperton	Cropmark (ring ditches)	Neo/Bronze Age	Excavated (Hughes et al 1995)
5500	SP261581	Wasperton	Cropmark (boundary)	Iron Age	Excavated (Hughes et al 1995)
5501	SP261581	Wasperton	Cropmark (settlement)	Iron Age	Excavated (Hughes et al 1995)
5502	SP261581	Wasperton	Cropmark (settlement)	Romano-British	Excavated (Hughes et al 1995)
5503	SP261581	Wasperton	Cropmark (cemetery)	R-B/Anglo Saxon	Excavated (Hughes et al 1995)
5558	SP286622	Barford	Cropmark (ring ditch)	Neo/Bronze Age	Excavated (Loveday 1989)
5582	SP275636	Warwick	Coin	Post-medieval	
5588	SP281619	Barford	Cropmark (settlement)	Iron Age	Excavated (Oswald 1965)

5868	SP266585	Wasperton	Finds	Romano-British	
5869	SP266585	Wasperton	Bronze brooch	Anglo-Saxon	
6045	SP283621	Barford	Flint	Mesolithic	
6058	(see 1845)				
6060	SP265584	Wasperton	Stone object	Neolithic	
6069	SP283621	Barford	Pit cluster	Neolithic	Excavated (Oswald 1965)
6070	SP281619	Barford	Pit	Neolithic	Excavated (Oswald 1965)
6087	(see 718)				
6202	SP287623	Barford	Cropmark (settlement)	Iron Age	Part excavated
6274	(see 1116)				
6277	(see 1116)				
6278	(see 1116)				
6279	(see 1116)				
6382	SP253603	Fulbrook	Cropmark (enclosure)	Undated	
6753	SP253596	Hampton Lucy	Cropmark (linear)	Undated	
6759	SP274587	Wasperton	Cropmark (enclosure)	Undated	
6760	SP273587	Wasperton	Cropmark (complex)	Undated	
6761	SP271586	Wasperton	Cropmark (ring ditch)	?prehistoric	
6762	SP291626	Barford	Cropmark (enclosure)	Undated	
6956	SP2864	Wawick	Historic park	Post-med	
7124	SP279638	Warwick	4 Coins	Romano-British	
7137	SP273634	Warwick	Coin	Medieval	
7185	SP263595	Hampton Lucy	Flints	Prehistoric	
7252	SP252607	Fulbrook	Ridge and furrow	Medieval	
7281	SP265611	Sherbourne	Site of boat house	19th century	
7282	SP267609	Barford	Site of gravel pit	18th-19th century	
7285	SP267612	Sherbourne	Fishpond	Post-mod.	
7286	SP264609	Barford	Fishpond	18th-19th century	
7288	SP266606	Barford	Flint scatter	Prehistoric	
7308	SP267257	Barford	Flint scatter	Prehistoric	
7452	SP267640	Warwick	Flint	Prehistoric	
7466	SP264595	Hampton Lucy	Carved stone	Medieval	

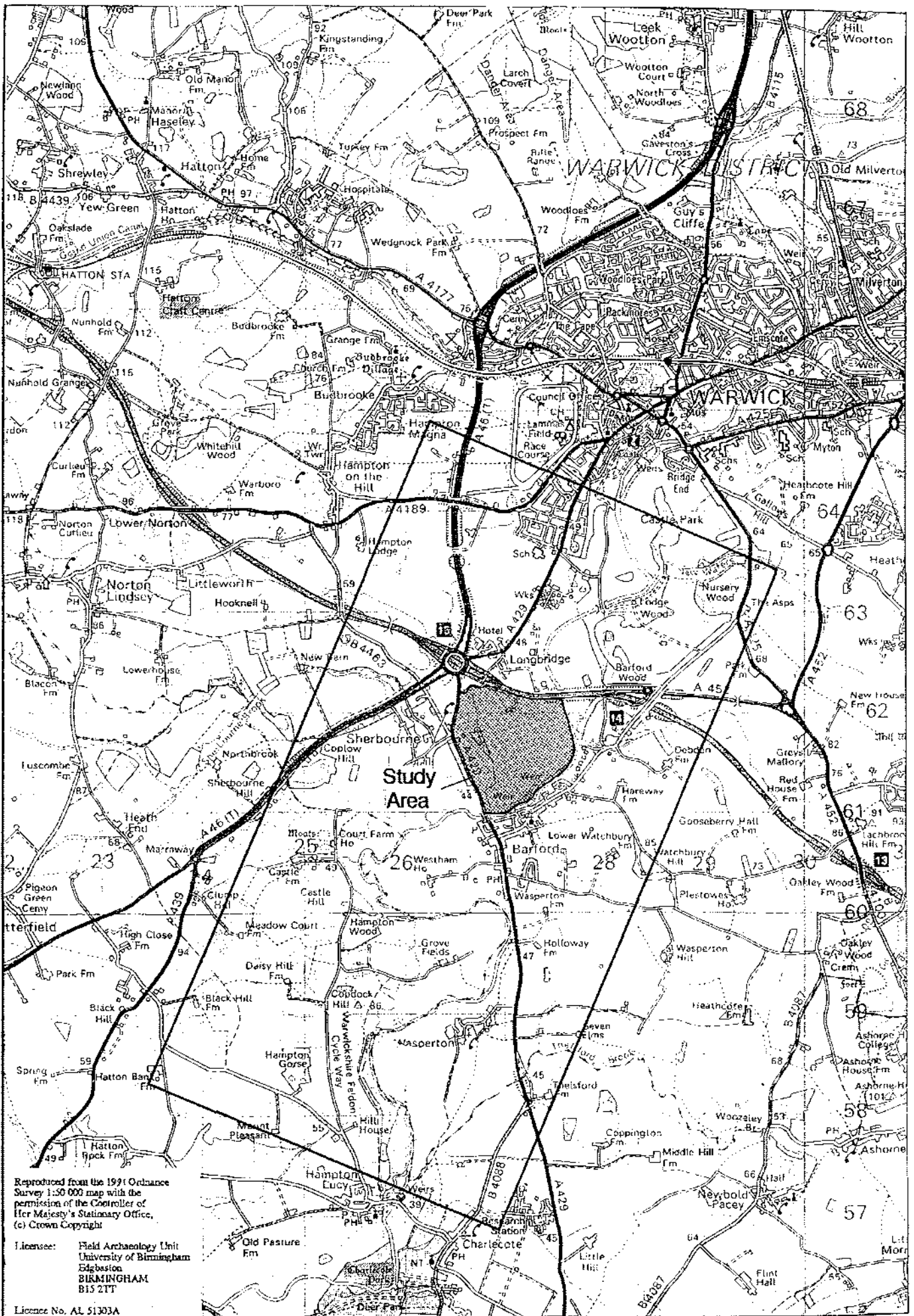
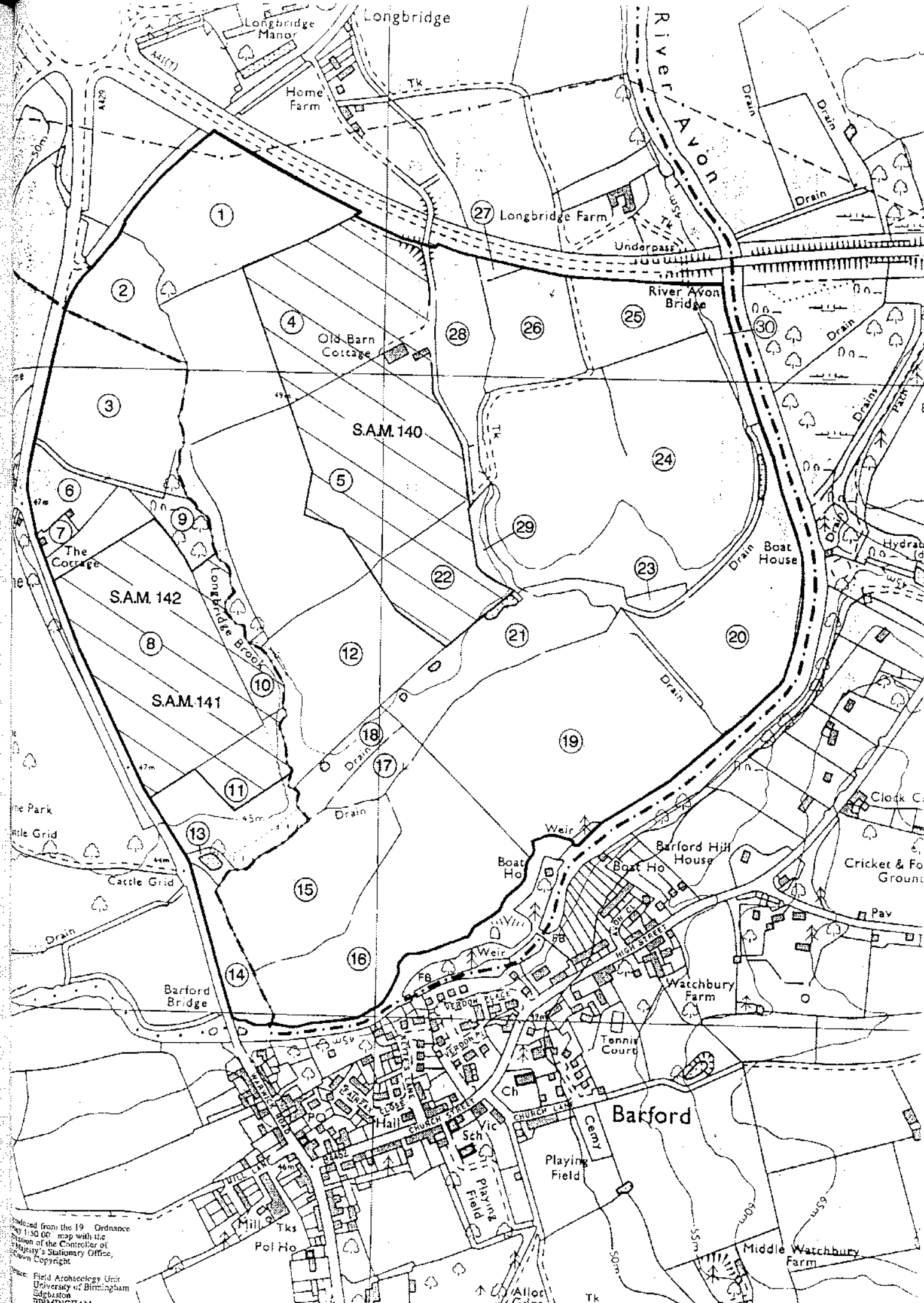


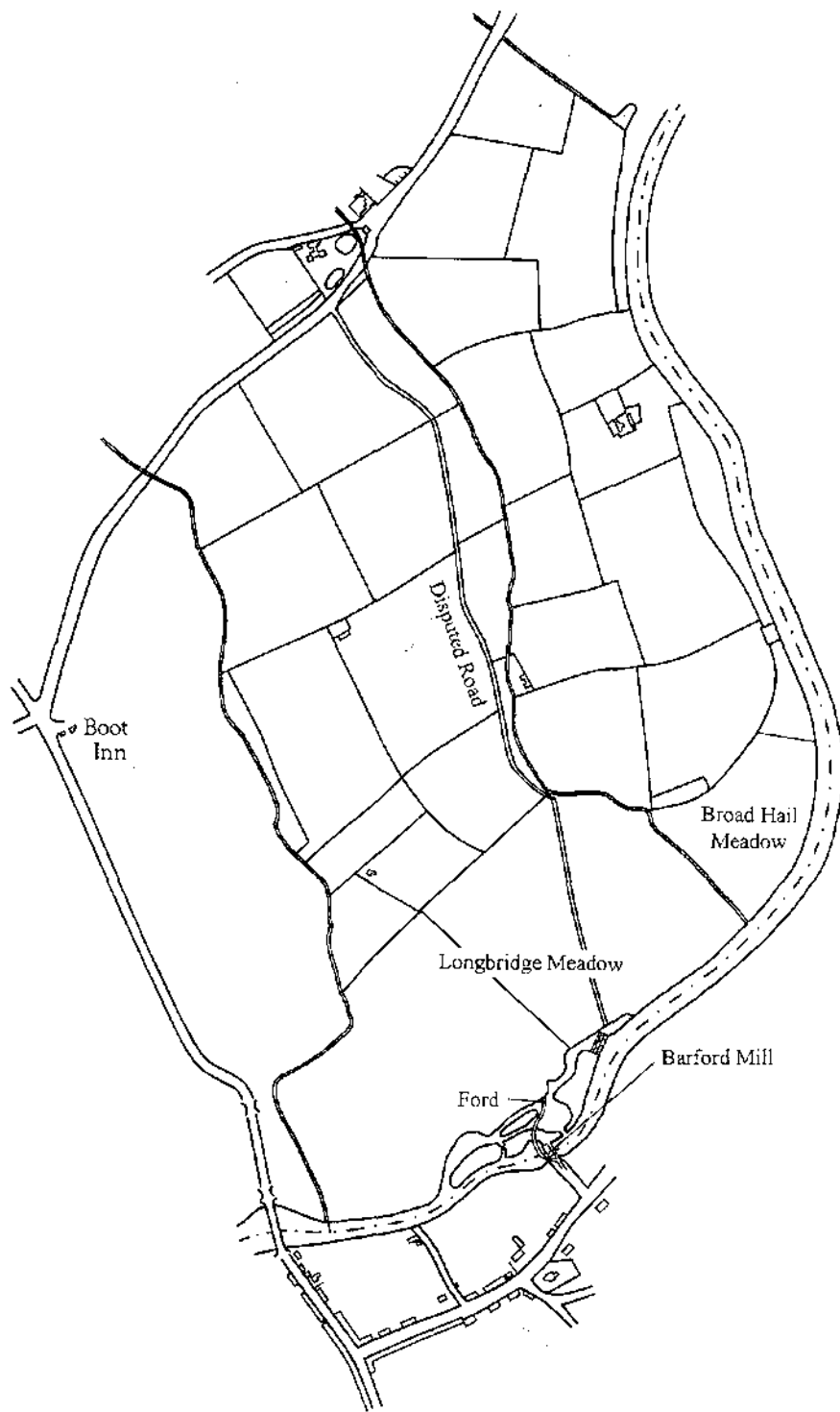
Fig. 1





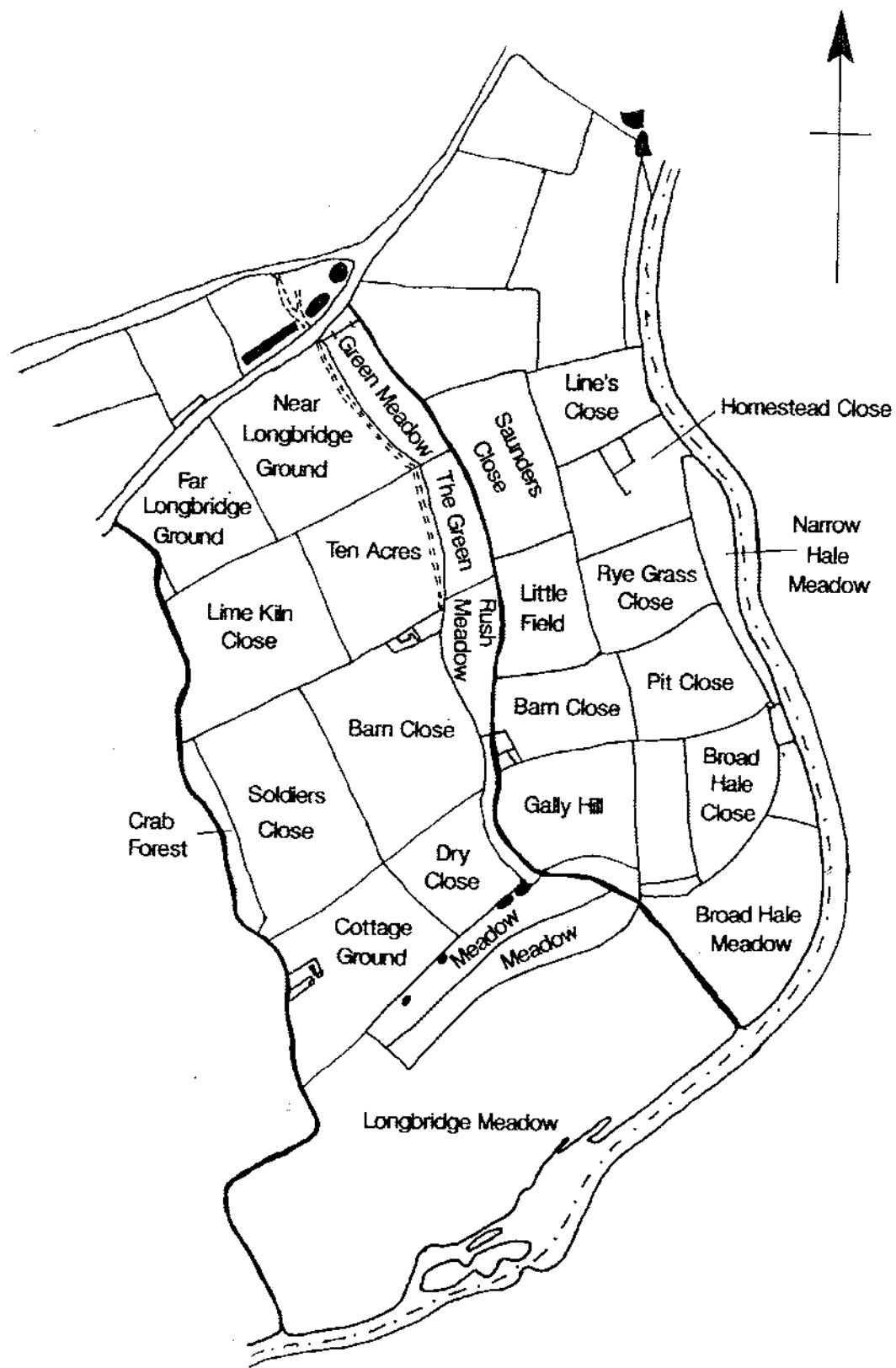
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Figure 3



BASED ON W. EDEN'S MAP OF 1811

Fig. 4



BASED ON THE TITHE MAP OF 1849

Fig 5



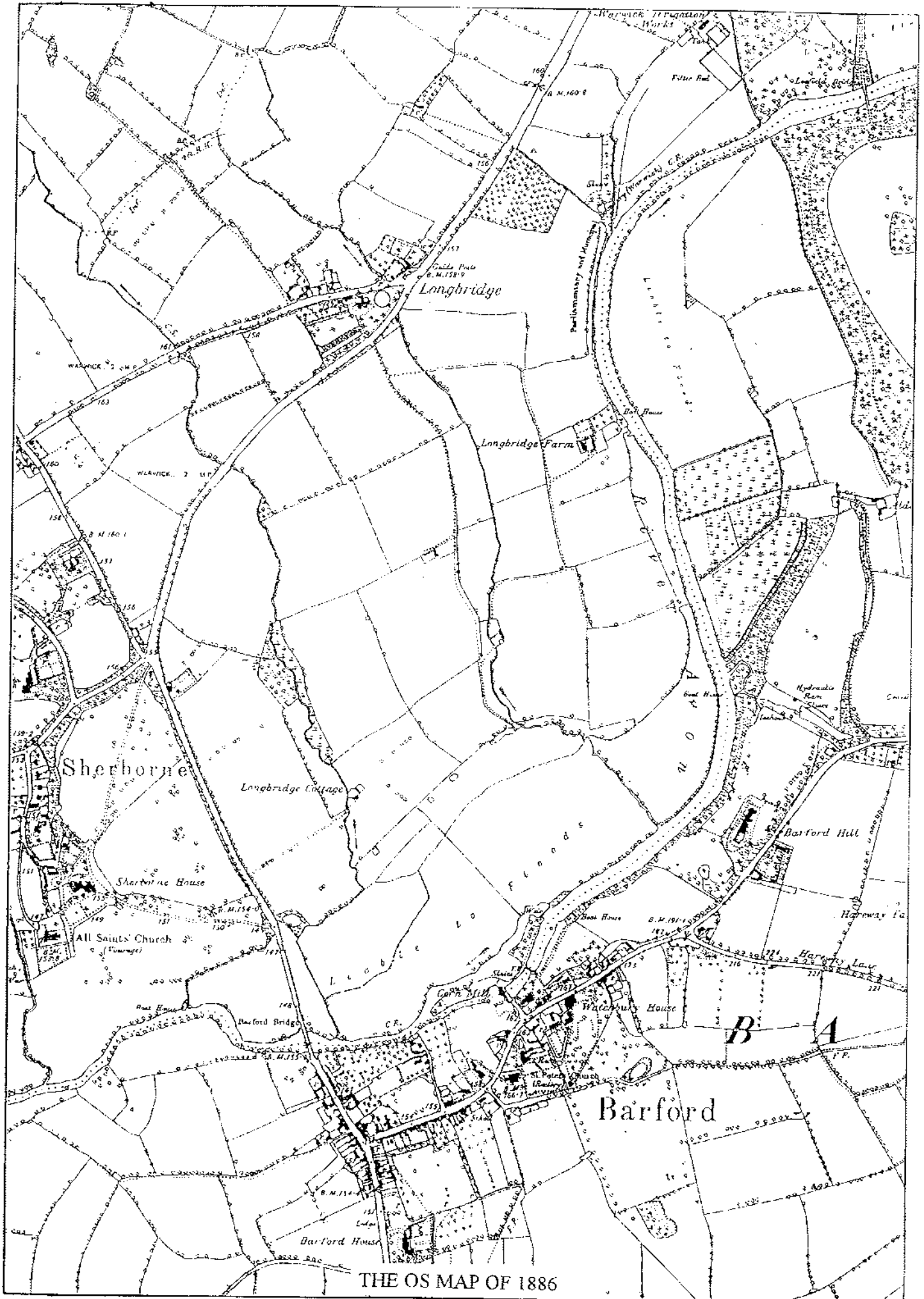
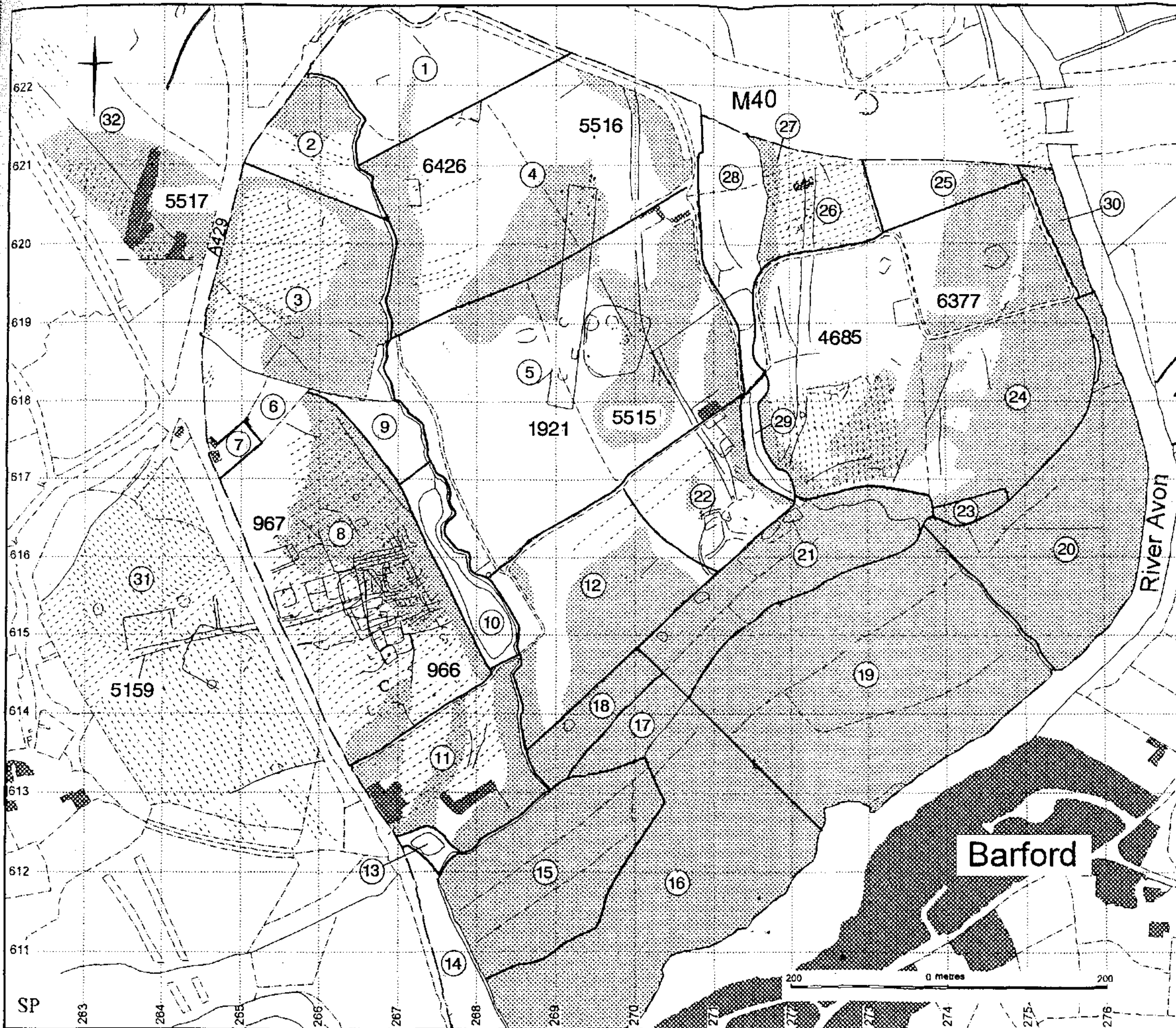


Fig. 6



**AIR PHOTO SERVICES**  
 76 The Green Lyneham Wiltshire  
 01249 891411

*Aerial Photographic interpretation*  
 SOURCE: NLAP, CUAP Warwickshire SMR & CRO  
 SCALE: 1:5000

- field unit boundary
- 5159** SMR numbers
- ①-③②** field numbers
- outline of study area
- modern boundaries
- waterways
- disused boundaries
- buildings/built up areas
- archaeological ditch
- indistinct archaeological ditch
- hand quarrying
- schematic pit clusters
- pits (storage, post, graves?)
- pit-defined structures
- pit alignment
- banks/foundations
- schematic ridge and furrow
- deep soil/alluvium

© Air Photo Services 1996

Fig. 7

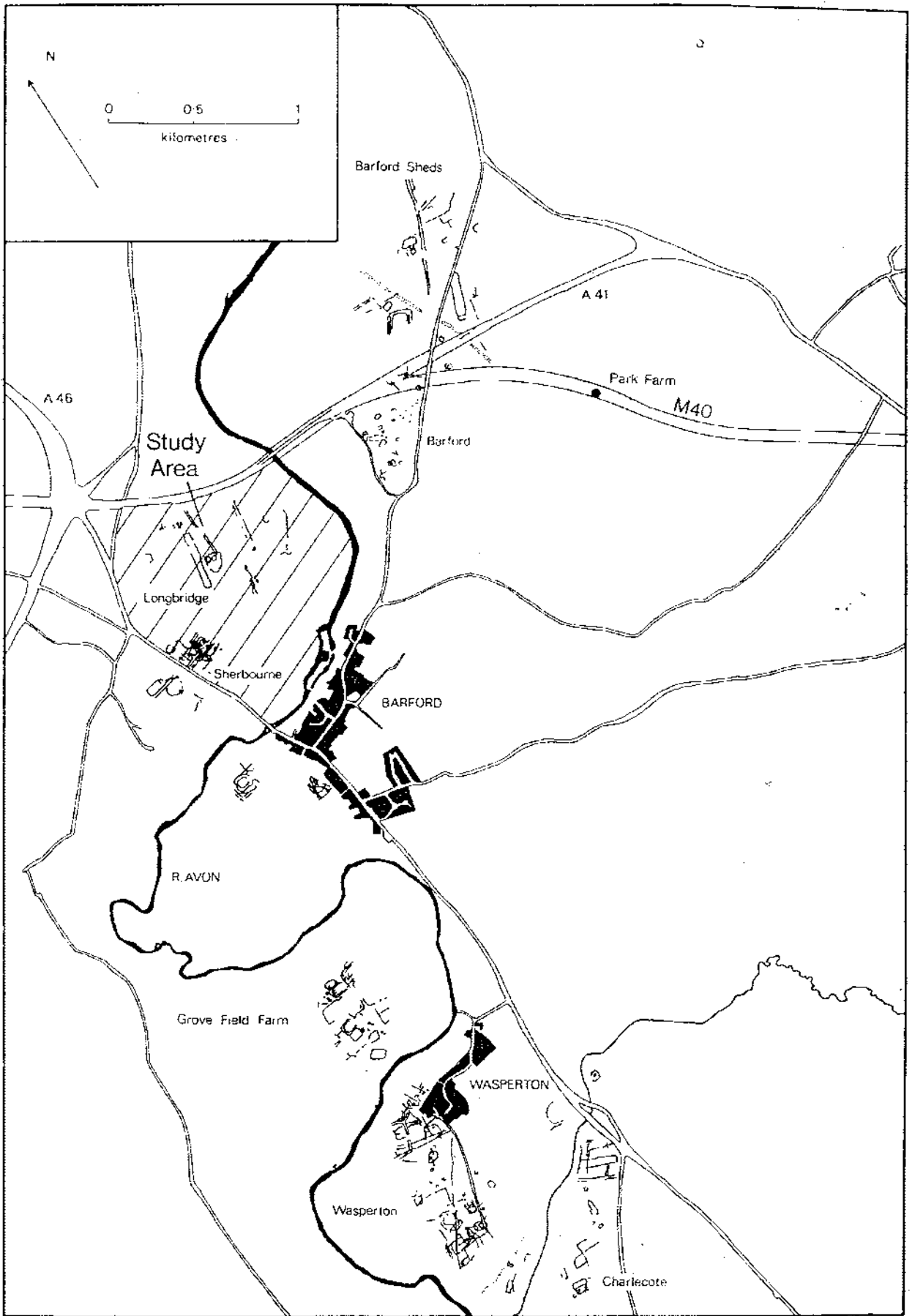


Fig. 8