

*BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY
FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT*

**An archaeological assessment
of
land off Curr Lane, Bentley, Redditch
1998**

(HWCM 26357)

B.U.F.A.U.



Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
Project No. 459.02
January 1998

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by
Catharine Mould

with illustrations by Nigel Dodds

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
Web Address: <http://www.bham.ac.uk/BUFAU/>

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1.0 Summary

A Stage 1 archaeological assessment, comprising a walkover survey of land off Curr Lane, Bentley, Redditch (hereinafter 'the site'; HWCM 26357) was carried out on 13th January 1998. A documentary study and consultation of the County Sites and Monuments Record was also carried out. The walkover survey identified a former pond in the northwestern corner of the site and slight traces of ridge and furrow within the northeastern quarter. An earlier evaluation of land to the east (HWCM 21776) dated ridge and furrow there to the post-medieval period, rather than to the medieval period (Mould 1997a, 1997b). Surviving earthworks within the site could, therefore, be interpreted as the possible remains of a post-medieval rural landscape associated with the development of Boxnott Farm.

2.0 Introduction

This report describes the results of a Stage 1 archaeological assessment of land off Curr Lane, Bentley, Redditch. The work was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of David Wilson Homes to provide further archaeological information in advance of proposed development of the site, comprising the construction of a sewer outfall and ecological water treatment ponds. The archaeological assessment was conducted in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standard and guidance for desk-based assessments* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994) and *Standard and guidance for field evaluation* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994), a brief prepared by Hereford and Worcester County Council (Atkin 1997) and a specification prepared by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (Nichol 1997). This assessment followed the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Department of Environment 1991).

3.0 The site and its location (Figures 1 and 2)

The site comprises a pasture field (HWCM 26357), approximately 1.25 hectares in extent, which is located to the southwest of Boxnott Farm, on the southwestern outskirts of Redditch (NGR SP 010 666). The underlying geology comprises a mixture of Jurassic red-brown mudstone and Quaternary till/boulder clay (Atkin 1997). The site lies within a rural medieval and post-medieval landscape.

4.0 Objective

The objective of this archaeological assessment was to help establish the presence and significance of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be affected by the proposed development, and to determine whether further archaeological investigation of the site is necessary.

5.0 Method

A walkover survey of the site was carried out and earthworks thought to be of potential archaeological interest were planned and recorded. These are shown on Figure 2. The underlying stratigraphy could not be examined as there were no recently cut field ditches or geological test-pits. The County Sites and Monuments Record was consulted, as were the St. Helen's Record Office and the County Record Office in Worcester.

6.0 Desk-based Assessment (Maps 1 - 3, Table 1)

A summary of information held on the Sites and Monuments Record is presented in Table 1. However, no additional archaeological information has become available since the evaluation of land at Pumphouse Farm (Mould 1997a and 1997b) and at Church Road, Norgrove (Cook 1995). Details contained within those reports represent an up-to-date study of the archaeological context for this site.

Tithe Map 1772

The site boundaries were the same as present-day ones. No internal divisions were represented, however, a pond-like feature was mapped in the northwest corner of the site. Details within an apportionment book which accompanied the map, named the field as 'Big Meadow'.

Ordnance Survey 1883 (Map 1)

The site boundaries are unchanged from the Tithe map. The pond-like feature is again mapped at the northwest corner of the site, and a number of trees are mapped along the site boundaries.

Ordnance Survey 1930 (Map 2)

The site boundaries remain unchanged. The pond-like feature in the northwestern corner is mapped, and a contour within the site is also shown (see 7.0 below).

Ordnance Survey 1992 (Map 3)

The site boundaries remain unchanged. Contours within the site are mapped, however the pond-like feature previously mapped in the northwestern corner of the field is no longer shown.

7.0 Walkover Survey (Figure 2)

The site consisted of a single pasture field. Natural contours divided the site into two uneven parts. Within the northern two-thirds of the site the ground sloped down from north to south, whilst in the southern one-third it sloped down from south to north, forming a V-shaped profile. A shallow linear depression, aligned roughly east-west, followed this natural contour and carried water at the eastern and western boundaries of the field. Ditched boundaries for fields immediately to the west and east of the site were also located along the line of the natural contour.

Slight traces of north-south aligned, widely-spaced, ridge and furrow were recorded within the northeastern quarter of the field. The ridge and furrow may have respected an earlier boundary, now marked only by two 'kinks' in the northern and southern boundaries of the field. Part of a former pond, now dry, was located at the northwestern corner and extended into the adjacent field. A second, irregular, pond was located immediately to the east of the site, and was fed by a modern land-drain.

No other earthworks were identified.

8.0 Discussion and Assessment of the archaeological results

No secure dating is available for the ridge and furrow earthworks and pond-like feature mapped within the site by the desk-based assessment and recorded by the walkover survey. Ridge and furrow earthworks are, typically, dated to the medieval period. However, evaluation by trial-trenching within an area to the southeast of the site dated similar ridge and furrow earthworks and pond-features to the post-medieval, rather than medieval period (Mould 1997b). It is likely that earthworks within the site also form part of this post-medieval rural landscape, associated with the development of Boxnott Farm.

10.0 Implications

This Stage 1 assessment has identified agricultural earthworks within the site which may be dated to the post-medieval period. Evaluation of similar earthworks at Pumphouse Farm revealed no earlier features or deposits relating to an earlier settlement sealed beneath the ridge and furrow (Mould 1997b). The possible, relatively recent date of surviving earthworks, combined with their ephemeral form, may not merit further archaeological investigation and, following this assessment, archaeological implications for the proposed development of the site would appear to be minimal.

11.0 References

- Atkin, M. 1997 *Brief for an archaeological evaluation at land off Curr Lane, Bentley, Hereford and Worcester*. IIWCM 26357.
- Cook, M. 1995 *Evaluation at Norgrove, Church Road, Redditch* (Stage 1). Hereford and Worcester County Archaeology Service Internal Report 286.

Mould, C.A. 1997a *An archaeological assessment of land adjacent to Pumphouse Lane, Webheath, Redditch, 1997*. BUFAU Report No. 459.

Mould, C.A. 1997b *An archaeological evaluation of land adjacent to Pumphouse Lane, Webheath, Redditch, 1997*. BUFAU Report No. 459.01.

Nichol, K. 1997 *Archaeological Works at Land off Curr Lane, Webheath, Redditch (HWCM 26357). Methods Statement*. BUFAU.

12.0 Acknowledgements

The project was sponsored by David Wilson Homes, and we are grateful to Ian Dubber and Phil Roper for their assistance. Thanks also to Duncan Brown, County Sites and Monuments Record, staff at the St. Helen's Record Office, the County Record Office, Worcester, and at Hereford and Worcester County Archaeology Service. The walkover survey and desk-based assessment were undertaken by Catharine Mould. This report was edited by Gwilym Hughes.

Table 1: Summary of Sites and Monuments Record Information

HWCM	Grid Reference	Date	Description
00020	SP 0151 6675	19thC	St. Phillip's Church, Webheath.
00029	SP 0083 6673	Undated	Hennals Mill, Bentley.
00031	SP 0051 6631	Undated	Hennals Mill, mill pond, dry earthwork.
09856	SP 0090 6700	Medieval	Ridge and Furrow, west of Springhill Farm, Bentley.
09872	SP 0104 6714	Undated	Crop-marked enclosures, west of Fox Lydiate, Bentley.
21666	SP 015 665	Undated	Land off Church Road, Norgrove.
21766	SP 0140 6620	Medieval	Earth dam and lynchet, 'Pool Meadow', Norgrove.
21767	SP 0120 6620	Undated	Earth dam and channel, Church Road, Norgrove.
21768	SP 0110 6610	Undated	Earthwork trackway, Church Road, Norgrove.
21769	SP 0130 6620	Undated	Earthwork, 'Holborn' field, Norgrove.
21770	SP 0150 6640	Undated	'Heatley Close' field, Church Road, Norgrove.
21771	SP 0140 6630	Medieval	Ridge and Furrow, 'Greensword Hill' field, Church Road, Norgrove.
21773	SP 0140 6620	Undated	'Greensword Hill' field, Church Road, Norgrove.
21776	SP 0130 6650	Post-Med	Ridge and Furrow, 'Sandy Flat' field, Church Road, Norgrove.
21777	SP 0140 6650	Undated	Pumphouse and Meadow, Norgrove.
21778	SP 0120 6670	Undated	'Barn Hill' field, Church Road, Norgrove.
21779	SP 0140 6670	Undated	Pond, 'Moor Meadow', Church Road, Norgrove.

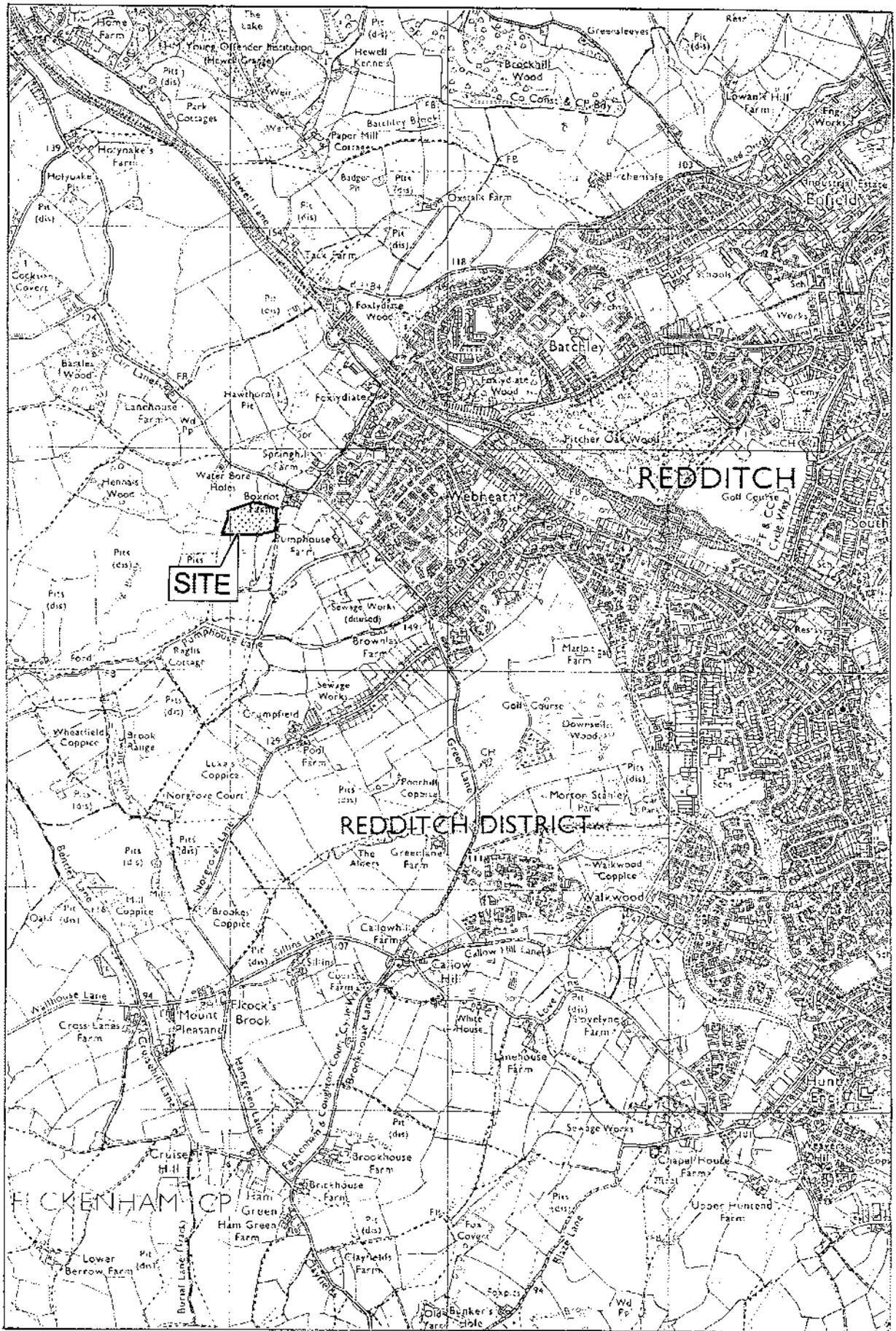


Fig 1

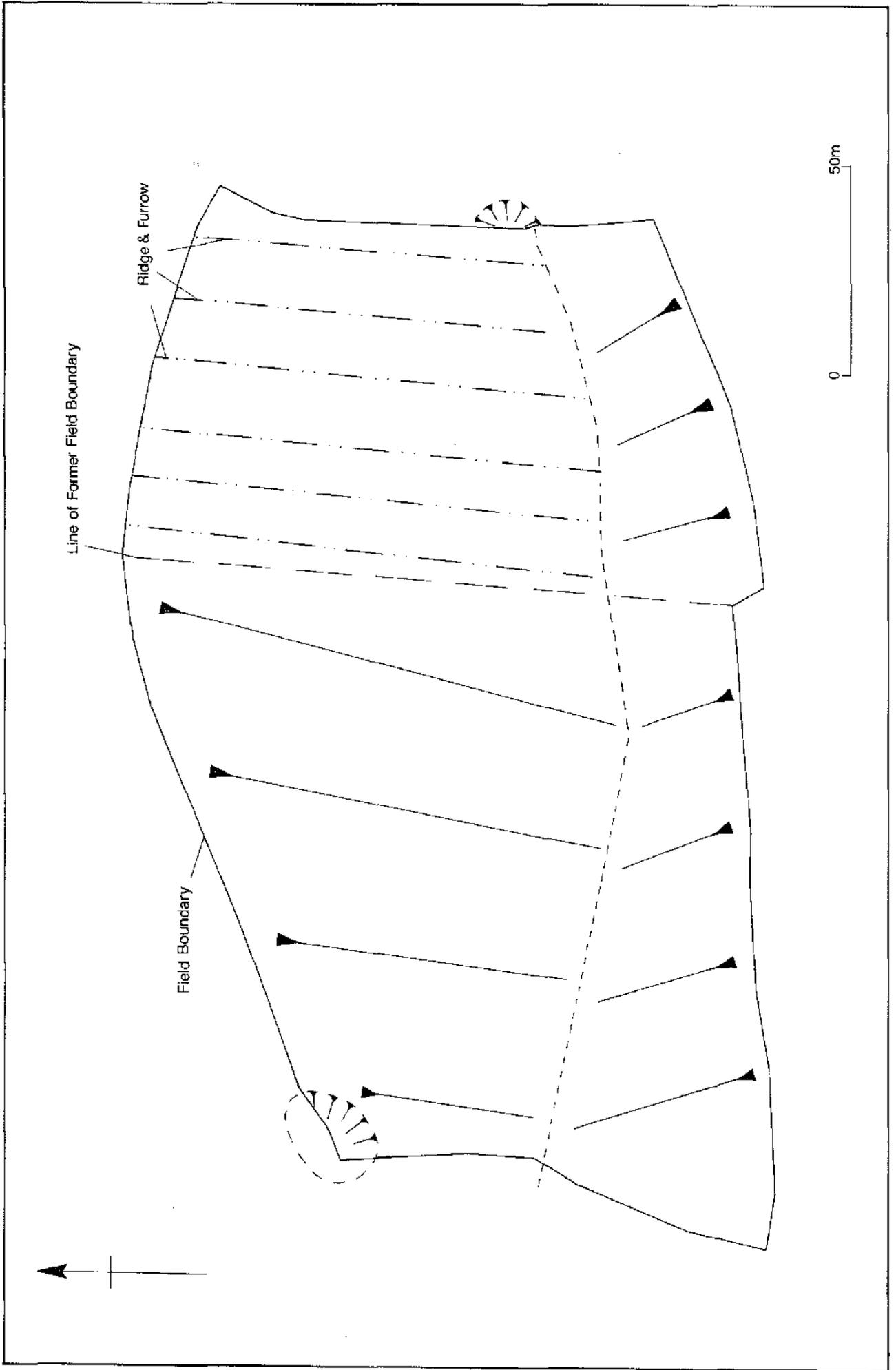
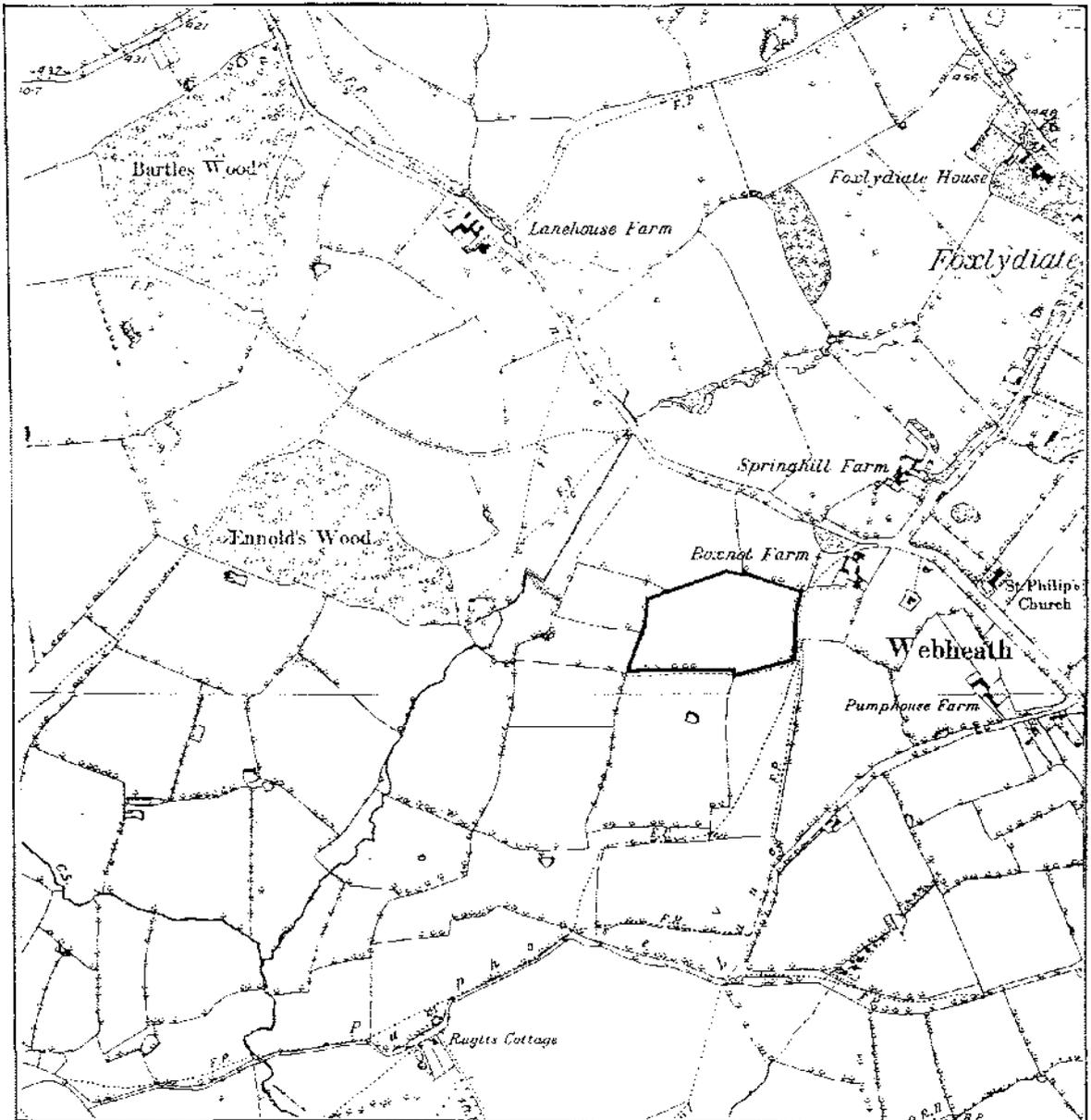
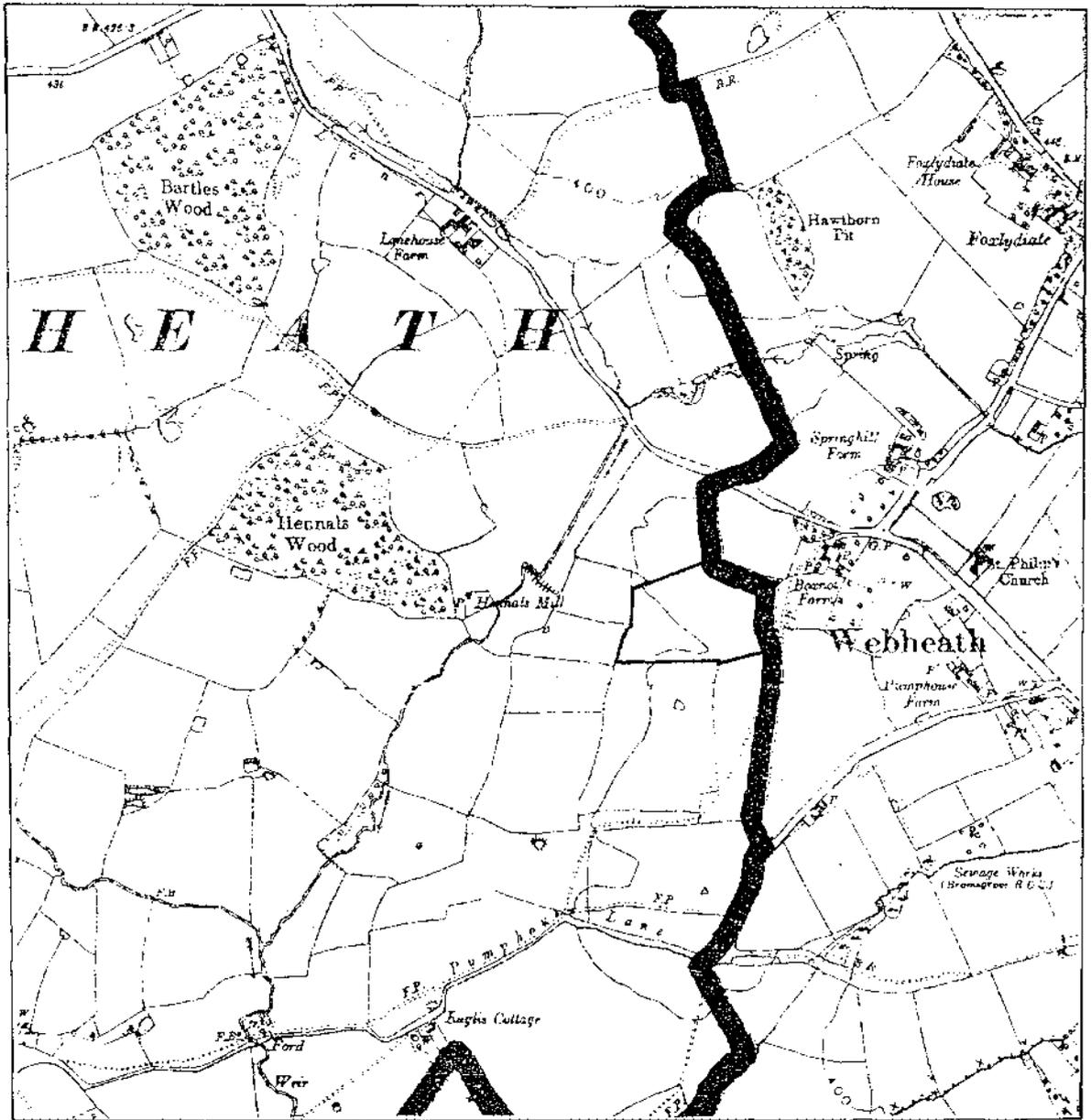


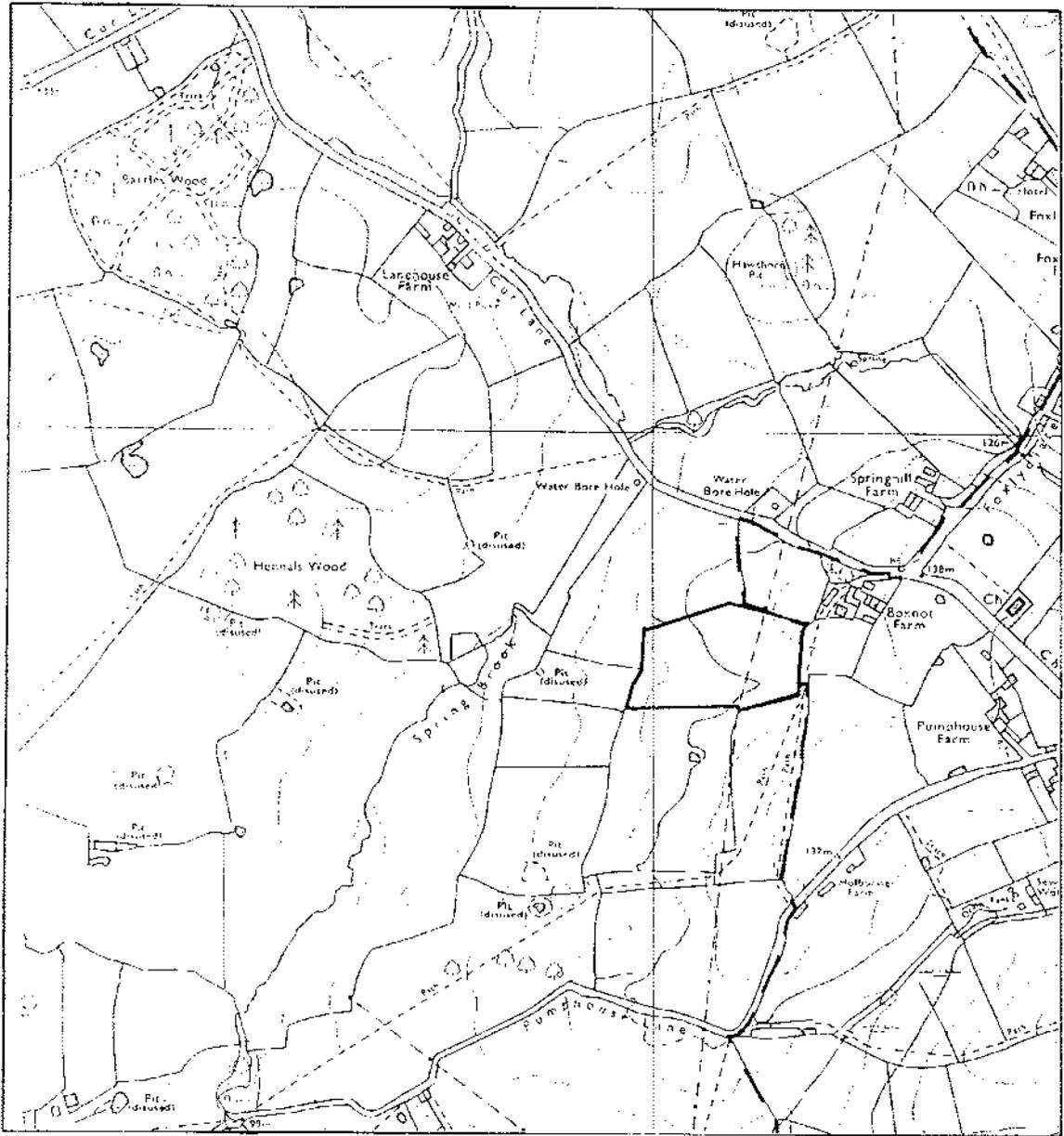
Fig.2



Map 1



Map 2



Map 3