

**Documentary report on  
Hurley Hall, Hurley,  
Warwickshire**

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit  
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**Documentary report on  
Hurley Hall, Hurley, Warwickshire**

by  
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## **Summary**

*A limited documentary search was undertaken at Hurley Hall, Hurley, Warwickshire (SP252 960) at the instruction of the owner Mr. P. Horton in June 2000. The purpose of the survey was to investigate possible garden features in a sloping field to the south of Hall and adjoining the property.*

*Evidence was found to confirm that the area was formerly a garden with a driveway entering the grounds at the top of the hill from a former roadway. Fishponds to the east of the Hall were the remains of a moat. A summer house was located in the same area.*

*The purpose of a building adjacent to the driveway cannot be confirmed and may not be contemporary with the gardens.*

## **1. Introduction**

A geophysical survey was undertaken at Hurley Hall, Hurley, Warwickshire (SP252 960) (Figure 1) at the instruction of the owner Mr. P. Horton (Fisher 2000). The purpose of the survey was to investigate possible garden features which show as slight earthworks in a field adjoining the property. A limited documentary search has been carried out in support of the survey. The results of this search are presented below.

Hurley Hall is a Georgian Manor House dating from 1727 which has been the subject of a restoration project for a number of years. An aerial photograph, dating from the early 1970s, in the possession of the owners showed crop marks in the adjoining field which appear to represent the remains of a formal garden. The purpose of the archaeological work was to assess the remains within the field and to examine the relationship of any possible pathways to the foundations of a small building, uncovered by the owner and to the remains of the garden.

## **2. The documentary search**

A limited documentary search was undertaken at Warwick Record Office. The records available consisted of three boxes of unlisted, unsorted material (CR 2982) and some map evidence. The contents of the boxes consisted mainly of draft Chancery documents and amendments to documents for legal proceedings on the division of the estate of William Willington in the eighteenth century. Two of these documents have produced descriptions of the grounds surrounding the house and are appended as Document A (1768) and Document B (with addendum 1837).

Document B repeats the information from Document A, but has an addendum confirming the description, which can therefore be taken as a probable description of the grounds around Hurley Hall.

However, it must be emphasised that these were not final documents but drafts and amendments. The Chancery case was complicated and lasted many years. One document suggested that, at the final partition, the estate of William Willington was

divided into ten parts, though clearly this would need to be confirmed by further documentation. There are no estate maps or plans available at Warwick Record Office, although some documents suggest that these must have been available at the hearings. With so many interested parties involved in the legal case it would take substantial research to trace all the remaining records which could produce no more definitive evidence than is currently available.

A number of maps have been examined and these will be considered along with the documentary evidence. The text below relates only to the surveyed field, rather than the whole estate, and the discussion is arranged chronologically.

Extract from the Draft of Deeds of Partition dividing the Estate of William Willington into Two Parts. 1768. (Document A below)

This document refers to a Close Croft, or Piece of Land, and Garden, adjoining the Hall called the Walk Close. This was planted with Elms and had a Summer House, as well as three fish ponds and two stews, and a walk around the same lying to the southeast and east side of the Close and near to the moat.

It also informs us that the Close and the fishponds were 'laid open', and that therefore the entire Piece of Land or Garden was surveyed together.

It also documents 'all that Eastern part of the Close piece or Parcel of Land and Garden situate on the North West side of ye Lane leading from the said Capital Messuage to Hurley Town ... adjoining on the South West to a piece of Land which now lies open and occupied therewith (the Division between them being marked out by Meer Stones across ye same) upon which piece of Land a House formerly stood called Harrisons House and Hemp Plott'.

The interpretation of this passage depends on the location of the road mentioned from the Hall to Hurley Town. It is difficult to interpret this as the present main road. Defining any of the area around the Hall as being to the north-west, but still having an eastern part containing a former house site which is open to a close to the south-west does not seem possible if the road is taken to be the present one.

If the road is taken to be the present public right of way along the field boundary, then the area to the north-west of that road would be the field under consideration in the present survey. This is defined as garden. The former house plot in the eastern section of that field is close to the location of the fish ponds mentioned above.

This document confirms the presence of gardens in the field under consideration and confirms an associated site of fishponds to the south-east of the Hall. It also enables us to verify that the earlier road (now a public right of way) was the road noted as leading from the Hall to Hurley Town

### Inclosure Ward Hurley Common 1822 (not shown)

The Inclosure Map shows the Hall continuous with the field to the south of the property. There are no indications of gardens, though it must be noted that the purpose of the map was to document changes to the land on Hurley Common. The field numbering suggests that at this time the Hall and its immediate surrounding were in separate possession to the surveyed field. This is not unexpected since, by this date, the property appeared to have been divided among the various interested parties.

Significantly, another moated site is shown to the south-east of the Hall. This corresponds to the position of the fishponds described in Document A.

The road from the Hall to Hurley Town is shown widening out at southernmost end of the field. It did not continue as a roadway but lead to a pathway across the river to the east of the Hall. It was the only vehicular access leads to Hurley Town and so complicates with the description in Document A above.

### Untitled document on letter paper dated 4<sup>th</sup> July 1795 at top but appended with addendum dated 24<sup>th</sup> November 1837 (Document B text appended)

The main part of this document is a repeat of Document A. The language has been 'modernised'.

It details the Close Croft, or Piece of Land adjoining the Hall, called the Walk Close, which had been planted with Elms, and a Garden on the south-east side of the Hall, now open to the Close Croft and having a Summer House erected on it. It also mentions the three fishponds and two stews with a Walk round them lying to the east south-east of the Hall. The fishponds and stews were fed by water arising in the moat. It also tells us that this area is all 'laid open' and measured together. It was therefore all part of the garden.

A little further on the document refers to an area in the eastern part of the 'Close Piece or parcel of Land and Garden' now divided from the rest of the area by stones on which stood Harrison's House. Analysis of the document shows this to be the moated site to the east of the Hall, depicted in the Inclosure Map of 1822.

Importantly, this document is attested to be a correct description through the addendum. It seems that the description of the position of Harrison's House and the location of Dog Kennel Pool Land match and that the writer of the addendum knew the area by the name of Dog Kennel Pool Land. This correlates with evidence from the Tithe Map (following).

### Tithe Map 1851 (Figure 2)

The surveyed field was listed in the Tithe Apportionment as 'Near Croft and Moat'. It would seem that, at this time, the Hall and the areas documented above were still surveyed as an entity.

There is clear evidence of the moated site to the south-east of the Hall. This was listed as Dog Kennel Croft and Pools Meadow.

It should be noted that Tithe Maps frequently repeated information from previous surveys. This may be likely here, since the area shown is not part of the award, and so the information contained here could predate the map. It should be noted, however, that the name Dog Kennel Pool Land (being similar to Dog Kennel Croft and Pool Meadow) does not appear in any other documentation until 1837.

#### Ordnance Survey First Edition 1887 6 inch to 1 mile (Figure 3)

The main evidence of this map was the reduction in size of the moat around the Hall. The footpaths at the end of the roadway are clearly labelled FP.

#### Ordnance Survey First Edition 1888 25 inch to 1 mile (Figure 4)

Where gardens were in place when this survey was undertaken they were mapped in detail at this scale, so we can be sure that no gardens were readily visible at this time. The hollowed-out area at the top of the field was also not shown, though an earthwork of that size should have been. This indicates that the hollowed-area post-dates 1888.

However, the moated site to the east of the Hall was shown clearly as a substantial earthwork with trees planted around it.

#### Ordnance Survey 1903 25 to 1 mile (Figure 5)

This map shows much the same information as the 1888 survey. There was still no evidence for the hollowed area at the top of the field. The inclusion of moated site earthwork but not the hollowed area suggests that the hollow is later than 1903 in origin.

### **3. Conclusions and recommendations**

Evidence from Documents A and B, together with evidence from available maps, confirms that: -

- The road to the south of the Close in front of the Hall, the present public right of way, was considered to be the road to Hurley Town. The widened area of road, which coincides with the present 'square' area at the southern-most end of the field, was originally part of that road, as there is no other purpose for this feature other than an access to the Hall grounds. If the roadway had been hedged, visitors would see their first view of the Hall from its most prestigious viewpoint, although it should be stressed that there is no evidence available with regard to hedging from the documents considered to date.

- Walk Close is the area later known as Dog Kennel Pool Land and eventually as Dog Kennel Croft and Pool Meadow. It was the remains of a moated site formerly occupied by Harrison's House. It is not uncommon in moated site research to find remains of moated sites represented as a series of fishponds. This is often the result of moat channels infilling naturally over time. There are also sites which have double moated enclosures and this may have been the case here. Confirmation of that possibility would require further research. Walk Close was planted with Elms and was the site of a Summer House.
- There is no description of the layout of the garden to the front of the Hall but the field is repeatedly referred to as a garden. With the main entrance to the property at the southern-most part of that field, there can be little doubt that this area was formerly gardens and not agricultural.
- There is no evidence for the use of the building, the footings of which are exposed, and which is situated next to the former entrance in the southern-most part of the field. It was not mentioned in any of the documents examined.
- The hollow area in the field to the south of the Hall does not appear on any of the surveys. It is of a sufficient size to have been shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey maps and is therefore unlikely to have existed before 1903. It cannot be regarded as part of the former garden and may therefore be the result of extraction.
- Whilst there is no doubt that the gardens existed at Hurley Hall during the occupation of Waldyve Willington, it seems unlikely that they survived the partition of land at William Willington's death (William Willington attained possession of the Hall at the age of 23yrs in 1744 and died in March 1752). However, the gardens cannot be discounted before William's death as they are mentioned in the Deed of Partition dated 1768. It should be noted that this document refers to the land as described by Waldyve Willington so a firm date for the demise of the gardens cannot be given. Map evidence from 1851 onwards suggested that the land was agricultural thereafter making it likely that the present earthworks are the remains of Waldyve Willington's gardens. The gardens would seem to have been short-lived.

Further documentary search could be undertaken. The Courts would have required plans and accounts for the Chancery case. These may have survived, though given the complicated nature of the case and the number of parties; these could take substantial research to locate.

Archaeologically, the most productive next step would be to carry out a topographical survey and further geophysical survey. This could define the extant earthworks, some of which have not shown up during geophysical survey, and assist with interpretation of those that have. This in turn would enable the garden remains to be compared with those at other properties where design information might be more readily available. This could be followed by excavation for a closer interpretation.



### **Acknowledgements**

Thanks are due to Mr. and Mrs. P Horton, the owners of Hurley Hall, for commissioning this survey, and their assistance throughout the project is gratefully acknowledged. Sylvia Fisher wrote this report and Steve Litherland edited the report and managed the overall project.

### **References**

Fisher, S. 2000 *Interim report on a geophysical survey at Hurley Hall, Warwickshire.*  
BUFAU report 669

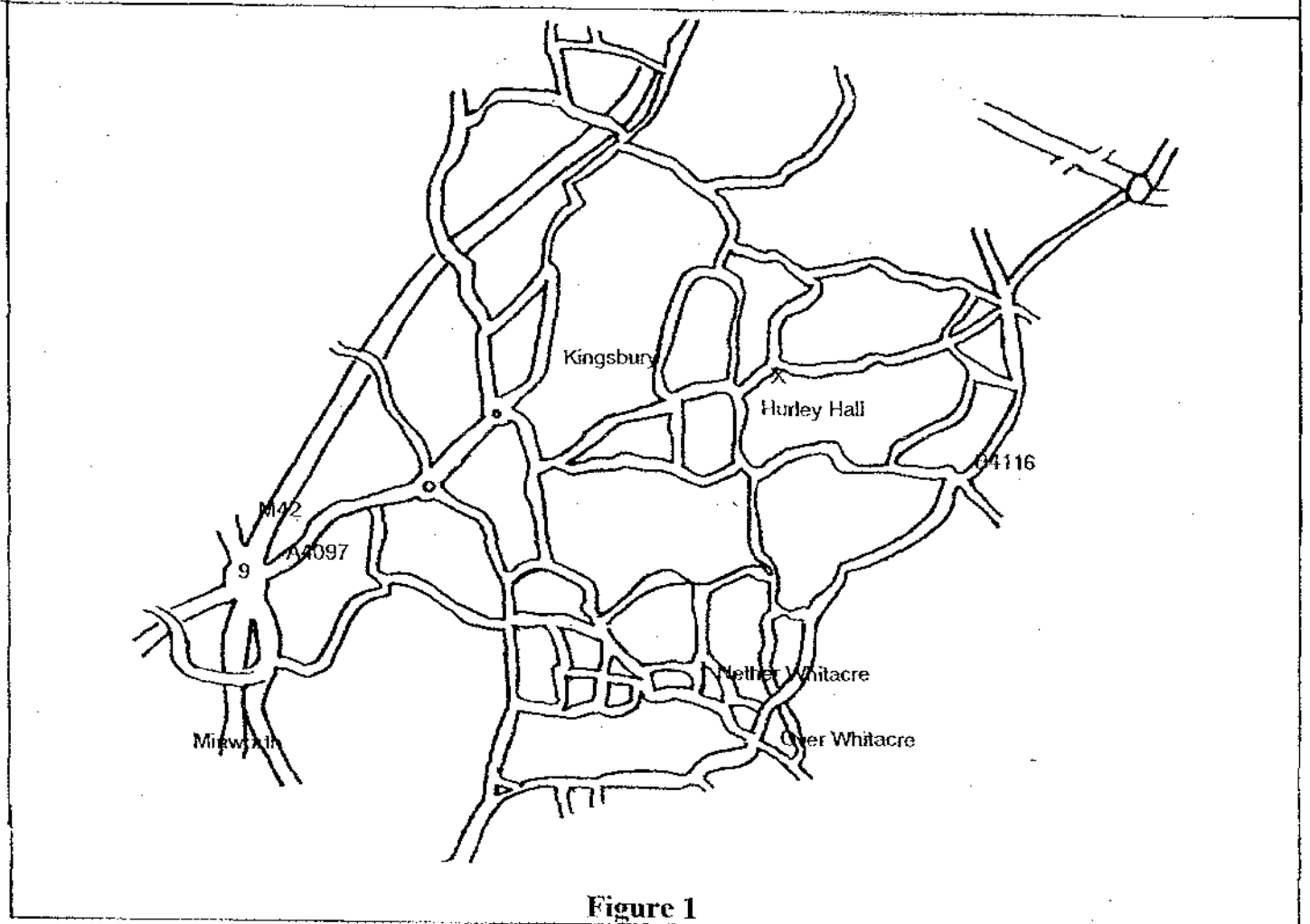
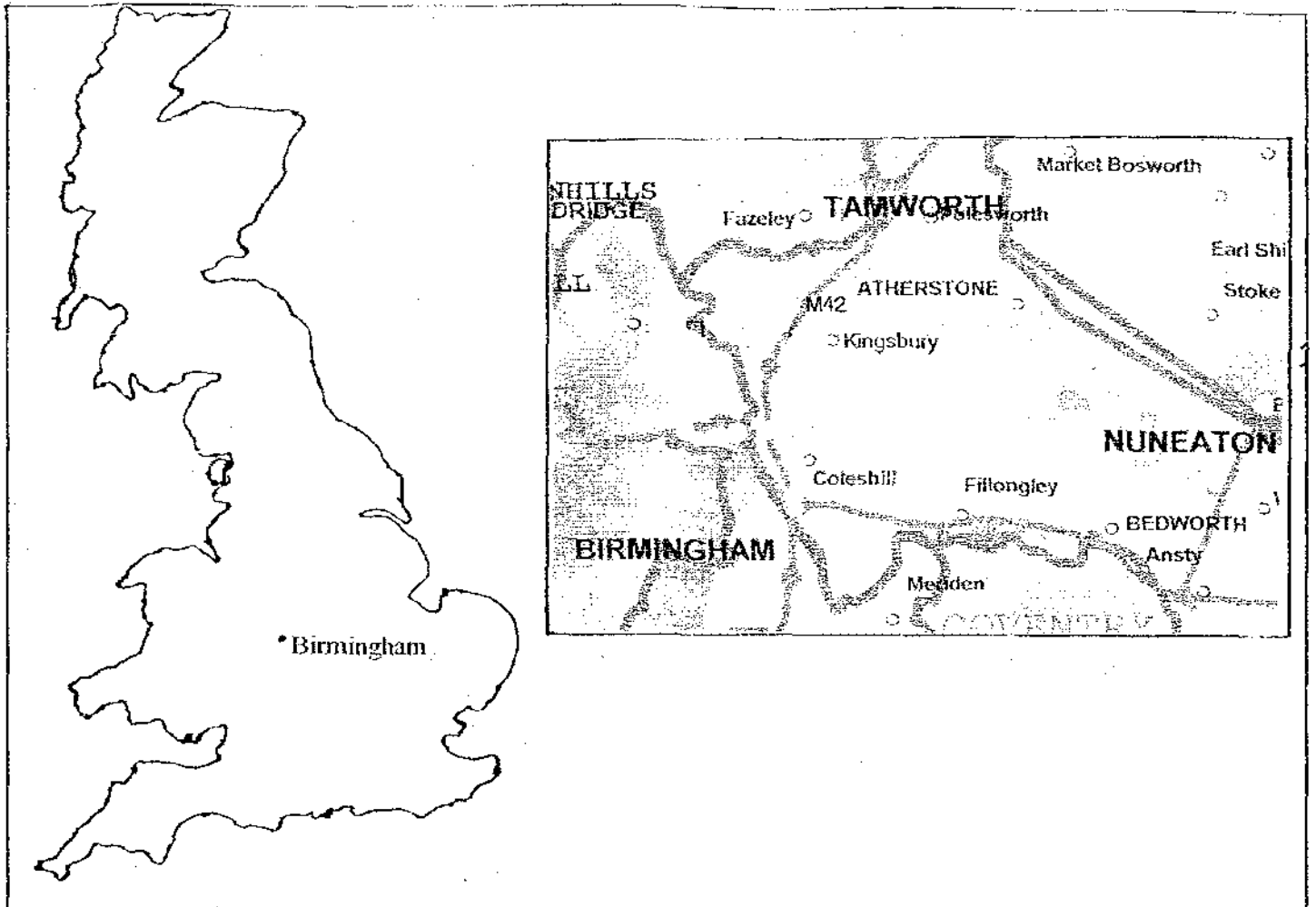
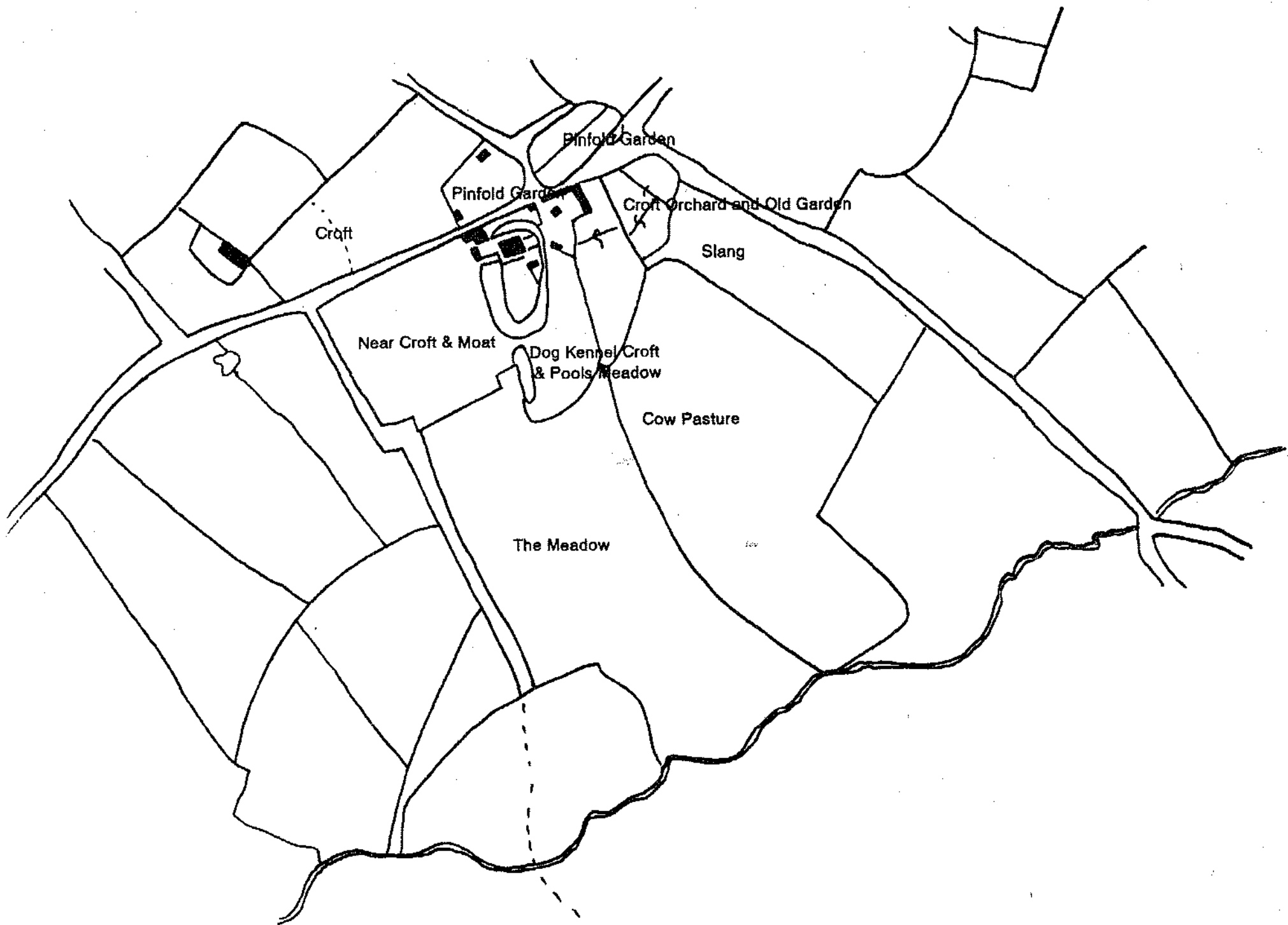


Figure 1



Hurley Hall Tithe Map 1851

Figure 2

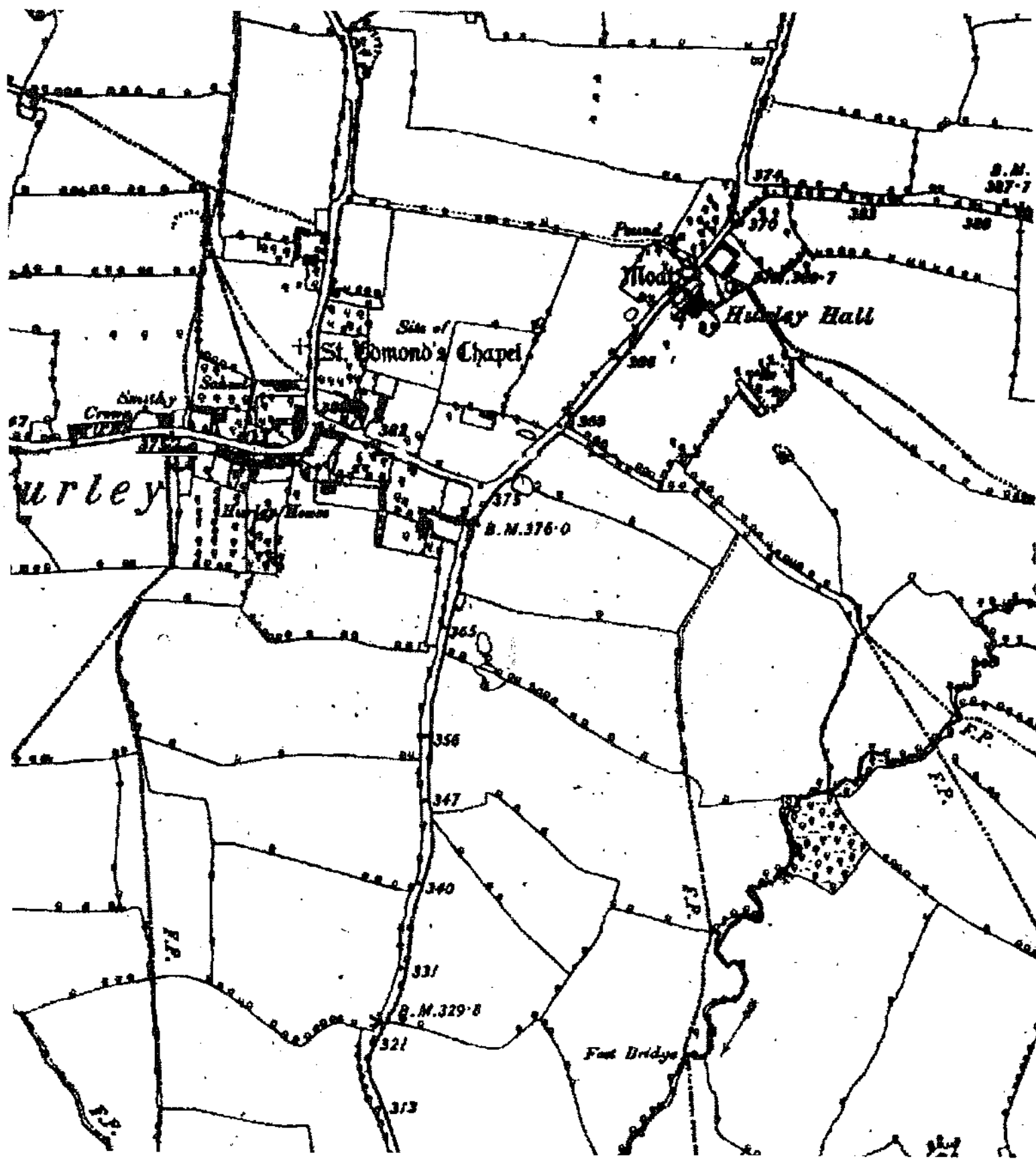


Figure 3

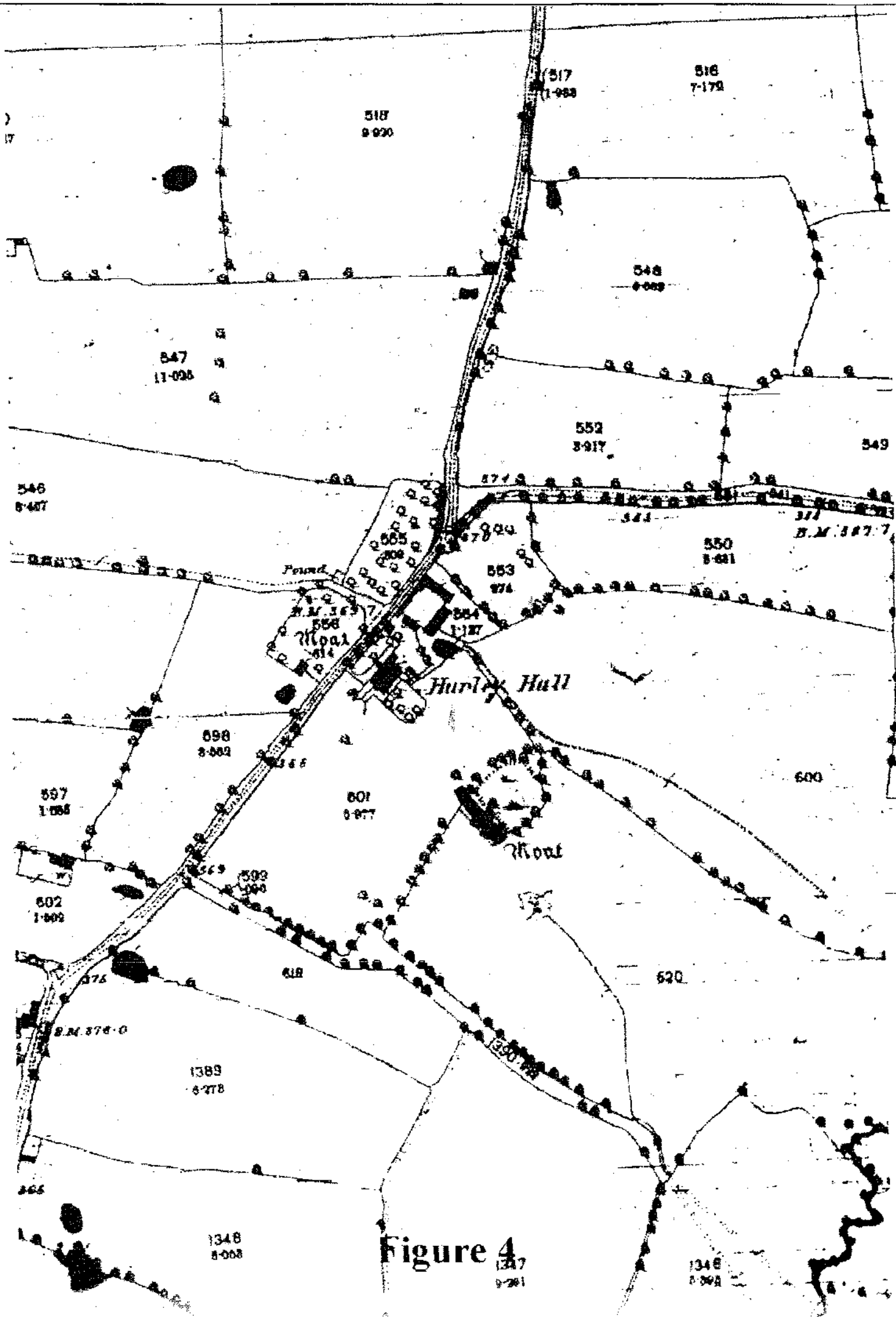
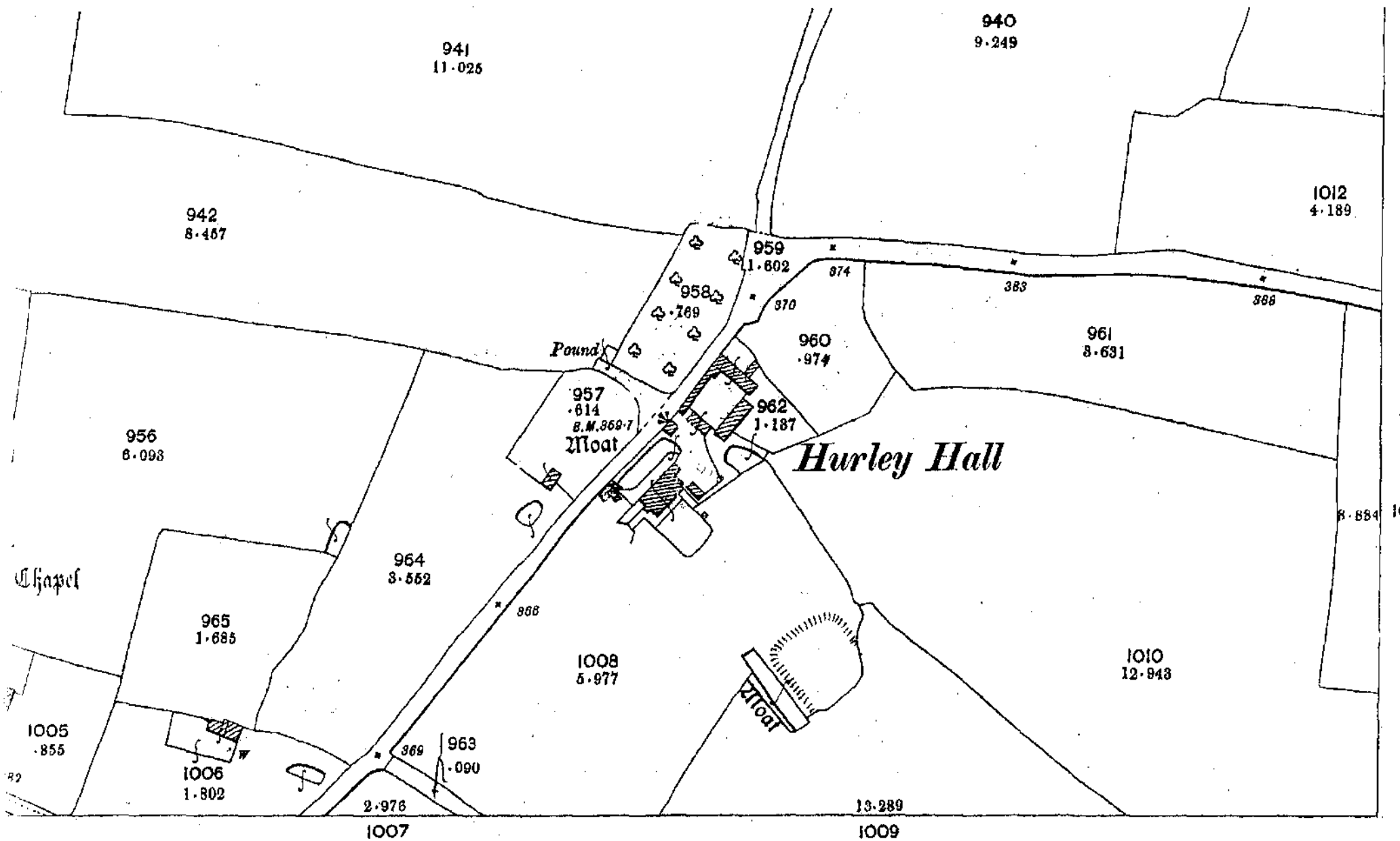
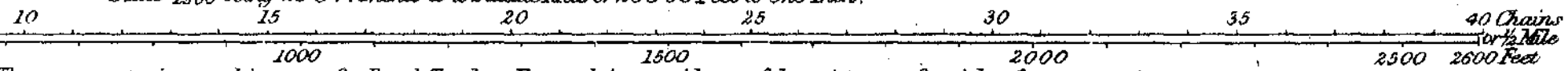


Figure 4  
1347  
9-281



PRICE 3/- NET.

Scale  $\frac{1}{2500}$  being 25.344 Inches to a Statute Mile or 208.33 Feet to One Inch.



The representation on this map of a Road, Track, or Footpath, is no evidence of the existence of a right of way.

Figure 5 1903

## Extract A

Notes from extract from Draft of Deeds of Partition (divides estate of William Willington into two parts)  
Nov. 4. 1768.

Warwick Record Office  
Accession no. CR 2982 Box 3

.....All that Capital Messuage or Mansion House commonly known by the name of Hurley Hall situate lying and being in the Parish of Kingsbury in the County of Warwick and also of & in all that Malthouse or tenement with ye Appurtenances thereto belonging situate being on the North side of ye said Capital Messuage of & in ye Garden adjoining thereto and Situate on the South East side of the said Capital Messuage And also of & in that moat extending round the said Capital Messuage & of & in the rights and appurtenances thereto belonging And also of & in all the Land or Ground that is within ye same Moat or is considered as part thereof (other than and except a Small Farmhouse or Tenement there which at ye time of ye making of the will of Waldive Willington's Will was Demised to John Parsons & was not occupied with ye Capital Messuage And also of & in All that Barn containing one bay & of & in a Stable lying to the North West of the said Capital Messuage adjoining to ye Road leading from the said Messuage to Hurley Town (other than & except a Chamber over ye Stable which was occupied with ye said farmhouse Demised to ye John Parsons as a farmstead ) And also of & in All that slip of Land adjoining to ye North West side of ye said Stable & lying between ye outside of ye said Moat & ye Wall adjoining to ye Lane leading to Hurley Town as aforesaid All which said premises contain together by estimation 3 Roods & 16 Perches or thereabouts be the same or more or less And also of & in All that Coach house and the Chamber over the same adjoining on both sides to the Barn which was demised to the said John Parsons at the time of death of the said Waldyve Willington And of & in All that Dove Coat standing in the field on the North Side of the said Capital Messuage and of and in a slip of Land surrounding the same Fenced in with rails and of and in a Close Croft or piece of Land adjoining to the said Capital Messuage called the Walk Close planted with Elms and of and in the Summer House thereon erected and of and in all those three Fish Ponds and Two Stews and a Walk around ye same lying to the East South and East side of ye said Close near ye said Moat and fed by Water rising in the said Moat which said Close Croft or Pieces of Land & Garden now laid open to the same and the Fish Pools containing together by Estimation 3 Acres 1 Rood and 1 Perch or thereabouts be the same more or less and which said Croft Garden & the said Fish Pools and Stews adjoining were in the Possession and Occupation of ye said Waldyve Willington at the making of Will and at the time of his Death and were afterwards in the Possession or Occupation of his Widow ye said Martha Willington pursuant to his Will and afterwards came to and were in the possession of the said William Willington to the time of his Death with free Ingress Egress & Regress to & for the said Richard Jackson his Heirs and Assignees and his and their Agents Servants Farmers and Tenants in common with the Owner of ye said last mentioned ..... And also of and in all that Eastern part of the Close piece or Parcel of Land and Garden situate on the North West side of ye Lane leading from the said Capital Messuage to Hurley Town abutted and bounded by ye Lanes of Richard lane on the North West and adjoining on the South West to a piece of Land which now lies open and occupied therewith (the Division between them being marked out by Meer Stones across ye same) upon which piece of Land a House formerly stood called Harrisons House and Hemp Plott at ye North East End to a Croft occupied by John Turnbull lying between the said Croft

and the Road leading from Hurley Hall to Hurley & of & in ye Stable now Erected & Standing thereupon which said piece or parcel of Land & the said Garden exclusive or Harrisons Croft contains together by Estimation 3 Acres and 1 Perch or thereabouts be the same more or less & which said Capital Messuage or Tenement & other the premises last herein before mentioned & described are ye same premises as were excepted in the said Waldyve Willington as aforesaid And also of all Houses and Outhouses Edifices Buildings Barns Stable Dove Coats Gardens Orchards Yards Backsides Trees Woods Underwood and the Ground and Soil thereof Mounds Fences Hedges Ditches Ways Water Courses Light Easement Libertys Priviledges profits Commodities Emoluments Heredities Appurtenances whatsoever to ye said Capital Messuage or Mansion House Lands Heredities .....



## Document B

An untitled document on blue letter paper with appended comments.

### Warwick Record Office Accession No CR 2982 Box 1

4th July 1975

All that undivided moiety or half part (the whole into two equal parts to be divided of and in All that Capital Messuage or Mansion House called or known as Hurley Hall situate in the Parish of Kingsbury, County Warwick And also of and in All that Malthouse or Tenement with the Appurtenances thereto belonging situate on the North side of the said Capital Messuage and of the Garden adjoining thereto situate on the South East side of the said Capital Messuage And also of and in All that Moat extending round the said Capital Messuage and of and in the rights and encumbers and appurtenances thereto belonging And also of and in All the Land or Ground that lies within the said Moat or is considered as part thereof other than and except a small Farm House or tenement there which was heretofore demised to one John Parsons and was not occupied with the Capital Messuage And also of and in All that Barn containing one Bay and of and in a Stable lying to the North West of the said Capital Messuage adjoining to the Road leading from the said messuage to Hurley Town (other than and except a chamber over the Stable which was occupied with the said Farm House demised to the said John Parsons as aforesaid) And also of and in All that one slip of Land adjoining to the North West side of the said Stable and lying between the outside of the said Moat and a wall adjoining to the Lane leading to Hurley Town as aforesaid All which said previously contained by estimation three roods and sixteen perches And also of and in All that Coachhouse and the Chamber over the same adjoining on both sides to the Barn which was demised to the said John Parsons at the time of the death of Waldive Willington And also of and in All that Dovecote standing in the fold on the North side of the said Capital Messuage and of and in a Slip of Land surrounding the same fenced in with Rails and of and in a Close Croft or piece of Land adjoining the said Capital Messuage called the Walk Close heretofore planted with Elms and of and in the Garden situate on the South East side thereof now laid open to the said Close and of and in the Summer House thereon erected And of and in All those three fish ponds and two stews and a Walk round the same lying to the East South East side of the said of the said Close near the said Moat and fed by water rising in the said Moat which said Close Croft or piece of Land and Garden now laid open to the same and the Fish Pools contain together by estimation three acres one rood and one perches And which said Croft Garden and the three fish pools and stews adjoining were heretofore in the possession of Waldive Willington and afterwards of his widow Martha Willington pursuant to his Will and afterwards came to and were in the possession of William Willington to the time of his death And also of and in All that Eastern part of the Close Piece or parcel of Land and Garden situate on the North West side of the Lane leading from the said Capital Messuage to Hurley Town aforesaid abutted and bounded by the Lands heretofore of Richard Lane and now of John Lane on the North West and adjoining on the South West to a piece of Land which now lies open and occupied therewith the division between them being marked out by Meer Stones across the same upon which piece of land a House formerly stood called Harrison's House and Hemp Plott at the North East and of a Croft heretofore occupied by John Turnbull and now by John Turnbull his son lying between the said Croft and the Road leading from Hurley Hall to

Hurley And of and in the Stable now erected and standing thereon which said piece of Land and the said Garden exclusive of Harrisons Croft contain together by estimation three acres and fourteen perches all which Premises were then in the occupation of Thomas Willington His undertenants Robert Collins and William Skellet.

24 Nov 1837 signature unreadable but in same hand as addendum

Addendum in a different hand to main document - my notes in brackets.

The above is an ach. description of the Hurley Hall Property as made on the division or partition of the Property in the Deed of Partition between Mrs. Floyer do<sup>m</sup> of the late Rev<sup>d</sup> Rich<sup>d</sup> Jackson. The Property I have served under seems to be left out of Mr. Levetty descriptions, The Dog Kennel Pool Land Walks round it, it is convinced did in part belong to Mr. Willington as there can be no other was of satisfying the North (questionable) 3 Fish Pools, besides Mr. W. always exercised a right to it by planting, fishing to round and in it. There is also round the Walk Close of this pond Timber .....(unreadable word) of very considerable value, notless perhaps the 70 or 80 £ worth. But to make an end of the matter and as Mr. Levetty has behaved so handsome, if he will give £600 the Deries (unclear name) will take it, as the best price that can be obtained, which are the Words of Mr. Willingtons Will. [There is a Carr and Drift Road reserved for Mr. Jackson & he whose Estate over Mr. Levetty Land thro'] 9deleted portion of text) The Foldyard at Hurley Hall to the new drudge & so through to the Turnpike Road leading from Atherstone to Solihull and one also for Mr. Levett as standing in the shoes of Mary Willington from her Lane to the Turnpike Road, Submit to Mr. Levett that if he buys the Hurley Hall this Road had better be done away with on both sides as far as possible.

signature  
Alex Hodson

signature  
Thomas Wakefield