

Land near Honey Hall, Carditch Drove, Congresbury, North Somerset

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment



on behalf of

TGC Renewables Limited

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Avon Archaeology Limited

Bristol: March 2014



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ABSTRACT

Avon Archaeology Limited was commissioned by TGC Renewables to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment of a site near Honey Hall, Carditch Drove, Congresbury, North Somerset. The site, on which the developer is proposing to establish a solar panel array, is centred on NGR ST 42706 61467. It lies immediately to the west of the small hamlet of Honey Hall, at the very southern edge of the large parish of Congresbury, about 2.3km to the south-south-west of Congresbury church. Today the site consists of six separate enclosures, together forming a block of land of roughly rectangular shape, with the long axis oriented north-west/south-east, and encompassing a total of just over 18ha. The maximum length of the site is about 625m, and maximum width 427m. Apart from a modern barn at the extreme north-eastern corner of the site, the area today consists of completely undeveloped agricultural land. There is a public footpath which runs right across the middle width of the site, from south-west to north-east, and the site is bounded on its southern side by Congresbury's parish boundary with Churchill.

The historic parish of Congresbury as a whole contains what amounts to a disproportionate number of sites that would be considered of archaeological or historic significance, and at least one, the iconic Iron Age hillfort of Cadbury-Congresbury, is of national importance, chiefly by virtue of its evidence for occupation and activity in the post-Roman period. Next to the hillfort, at Henley Wood, stood a late Romano-Celtic temple, with a small, associated cemetery with burials that appear to straddle the late Roman/early post-Roman periods. Close to the village of Congresbury itself, in the area of Venus Street and elsewhere, the sites of kilns producing Congresbury Grey Ware, a major regional fabric type in the Romano-British period, are known, and more have been located recently using geophysical survey. Some have been subjected to trial excavation. Work around the small manorial site at Iwood by a community archaeology group has, contrary to accepted orthodoxy, proven the efficacy of using geophysical survey in alluvial areas under certain circumstances. And in the early medieval period, Congresbury was the site of an important monastic foundation, perhaps with British antecedents. A piece of high-quality, late Anglo-Saxon stone sculpture almost certainly originated in an earlier, pre-Conquest church on the site of the present church of St Andrew.

The nearest occupation site to the study area, at Honey Hall, may be far earlier in date than the surviving early 19th century house might initially suggest, lying as it does at a classic resource interface between low-lying moor land, and dryer, higher ground. The area of the study site itself does not emerge into view until the early 18th century, when part of it appears on a map of Congresbury at that date, and by which time it seems clear that it had already been enclosed, and had probably long been used for agriculture. Throughout the 19th century and into the 20th, historic map evidence shows the site as completely undeveloped, with different parts of it alternating intermittently between arable and pasture ground. Although low-lying, and technically part of the North Somerset Levels, an extensive drainage scheme undertaken in both Congresbury and surrounding parishes in the 1820s, has been extremely effective since that date in preventing serious flooding.

A trawl of the North Somerset HER recovered no records from within the bounds of the study area itself, and only a single item within a 500m radius of its centre; but there are several records of interest very close to the site, most notably a number of separate finds of scatters of worked flint, indicating at least a level of human activity in this area prior to the Iron Age,

even if only intermittent and transient; however, an antiquarian discovery of a Roman coin hoard in the immediate vicinity of Honey Hall, has not, apparently, found its way onto the HER, and in view of discoveries elsewhere in the North Somerset Levels, and the existence of the nearby major villa at Wemberham in Yatton, some level of Romano-British activity in this area, especially on the higher ground, would be entirely expected. Examination of historic aerial photographs, map and field-name evidence indicates that the site contains at least one certain palaeochannel, the course of which is now marked by the line of a modern footpath through the site. Most crucially, it lies on estuarine alluvial deposits which elsewhere in the North Somerset Levels, and far beyond in the Severn Estuary littoral, have been shown both to contain and to seal intact archaeological features and deposits, and a wide range of important environmental evidence, which has been central to building up a picture of human use and occupation of the wetlands from all periods from the Mesolithic onwards.

Purely on the basis of the documentary and other evidence reviewed in this report, it is our professional judgement that the study site is considered to offer a low to moderate potential for the survival of buried archaeologically-significant deposits and structures.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Avon Archaeology Limited wishes to acknowledge the assistance given by the following in the production of this report: Tim Mourant and James Jamieson, of TGC Renewables; the staff of the Bristol Record Office; the staff of the Somerset Record Office at Taunton; the staff of the National Monuments Record at Swindon; the landowner, Mrs Stuckey; and Mr Peter Revington, the owner of Honey Hall, for both his help at the time of the site visit, and his hospitality thereafter. Special thanks go to Dick Broomhead, for kindly supplying a copy of his as yet unpublished archaeological parish survey of Congresbury, which provided a key and authoritative source for much of what follows here.

NOTES

Whereas Avon Archaeology Limited have taken all care to produce a comprehensive summary of the known and recorded archaeological evidence, no responsibility can be accepted for any omissions of fact or opinion, however caused.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAL	Avon Archaeology Limited
aOD	Above Ordnance Datum
NGR	National Grid Reference
NMR	National Monuments Record, Swindon
NSHER	North Somerset Historic Environment Record
OS	Ordnance Survey
SRO	Somerset Record Office



1 INTRODUCTION

Avon Archaeology Limited was commissioned by TGC Renewables Limited, to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment of a site near Honey Hall, Carditch Drove, Congresbury, North Somerset. The site, on which the developer is proposing to establish a solar panel array, is centred on NGR ST 42706 61467. It lies immediately to the west of the small hamlet of Honey Hall, at the very southern edge of the large parish of Congresbury, about 2.3km to the south-south-west of Congresbury church. Today the site consists of six separate enclosures, together forming a block of land of roughly rectangular shape, with the long axis oriented north-west/south-east, and encompassing a total of just over 18ha. The maximum length of the site is about 625m, and maximum width 427m. Apart from a modern barn at the extreme north-eastern corner of the site, fronting onto the southern side of Carditch Drove, the area today consists of completely undeveloped agricultural land, and indeed is surrounded on all sides except the west by other agricultural enclosures. Historically and into modern times the various fields seem to have been used for both arable and pasture, although the site's general lowness, and the somewhat claggy alluvial soils, would not naturally seem to fit it for ploughland (**Figures 1 and 2**).

The site is bounded on the north by the line of Carditch Drove, on the east by ordinary field boundaries, on the south by the Churchill Rhyne, which also marks the boundary between the parishes of Churchill and Congresbury, and on the west by the course of the former Cheddar Valley Railway, the so-called Strawberry Line. On the northern side of Carditch Drove, opposite the site, former agricultural land is now the home of the Mendip Spring Golf Club. There is a public footpath which runs right across the middle width of the site, from south-west to north-east, and which seems to be the successor to a much more substantial trackway in this position which is depicted on early OS maps. There are no statutory designations of any kind affecting the study area itself. The nearest Scheduled Ancient Monument is a medieval moated site at Nye Farm, just under 1km to the west of the site's north-west corner, and now, as indeed historically, lying in the parish of Winscombe; and the nearest listed building is Honey Hall itself, which lies only about 300m east of the site's eastern boundary. Neither are there any SSSIs anywhere near the site, the closest one being a bog at Yanal Farm, about 350m to the south-west.

2 METHODOLOGY

Searches were made of the indices of the collections of the Somerset Record Office, the Bristol Record Office, and the main Arts and Social Sciences Library of the University of Bristol. A variety of online bibliographic resources, most notably COPAC, BIAB, The Archaeology Data Service, and Google Scholar, were used to identify potentially useful sources of information, whether published or otherwise¹. In

¹www.copac.ac.uk; www.biab.ac.uk; <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/>; www.scholar.google.com



Figure 1



Location of the Study Area

Grid lines at 1 km intervals (extract from OS 1:25 000)

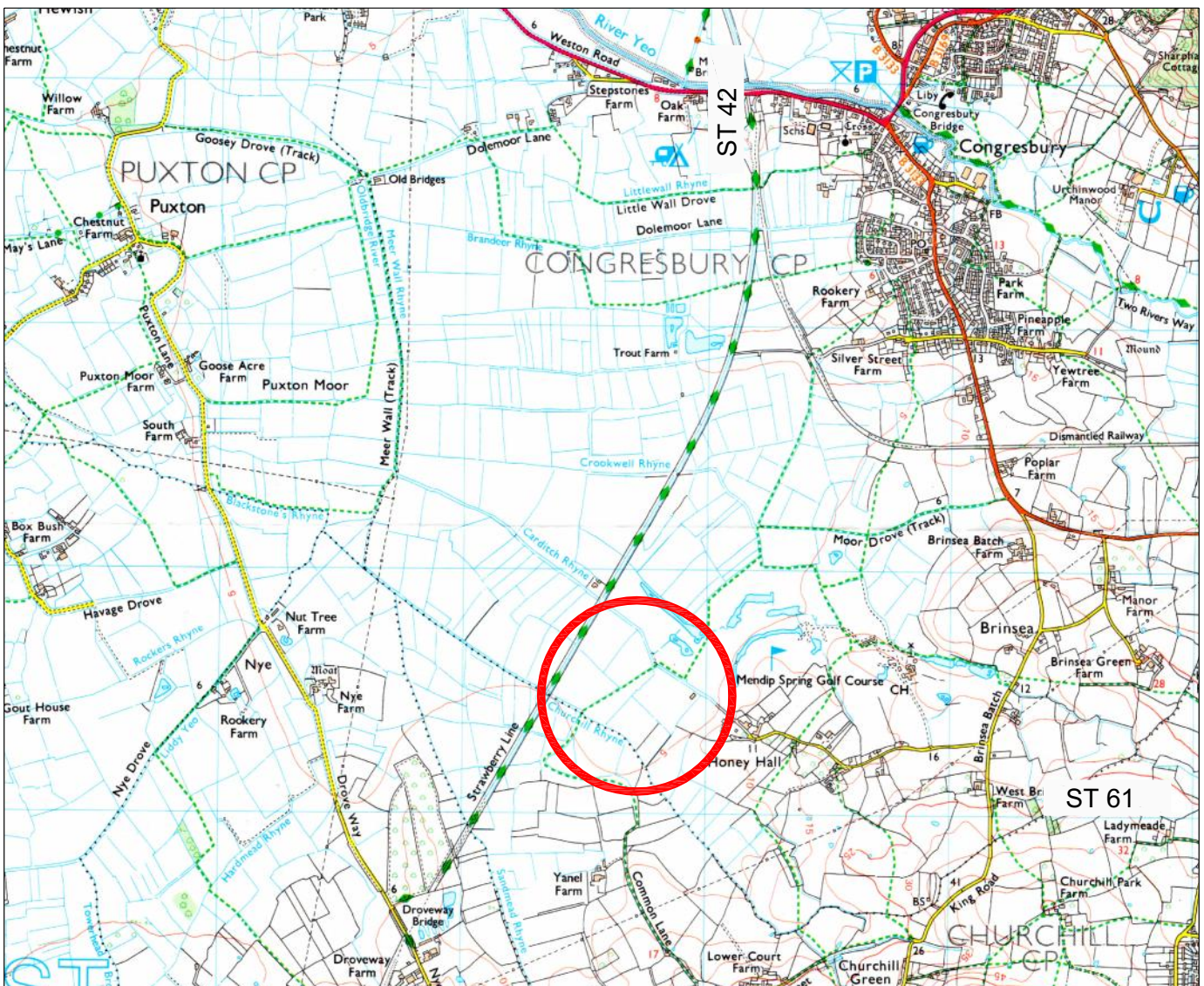
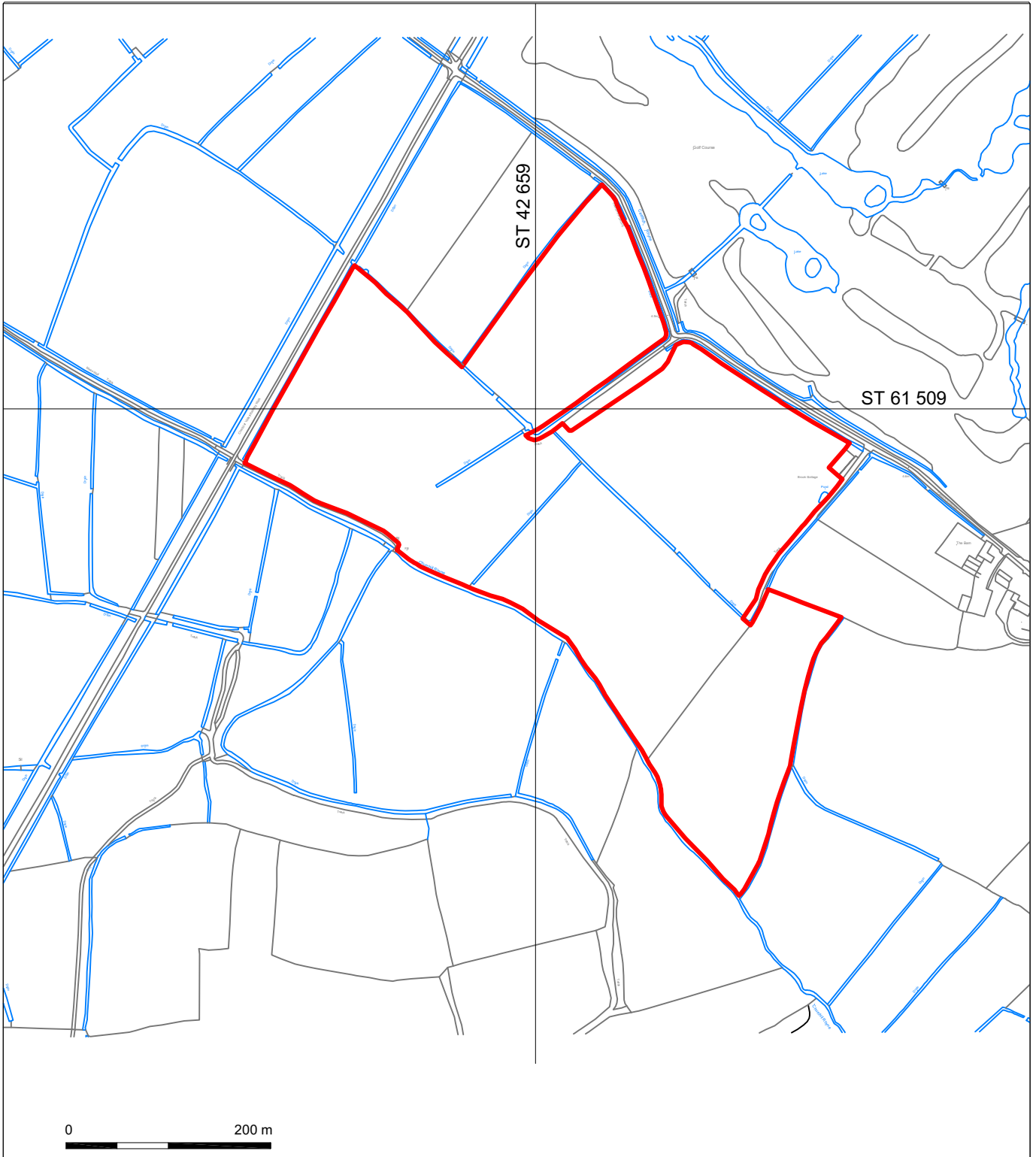


Figure 2



Location of the Study Area outlined in red.



addition, information was utilised from a trawl of the North Somerset Historic Environment Record, conducted on behalf of AAL by Dan Smith, HER Officer for that local authority; and by the author of this report using the local authority's own online version of its HER. A visit to the site was made by the author on Monday, 17th February, 2014, and a digital photographic record was made (**Cover** and **Plates 1 to 6**).

3 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

As might be expected of a site located squarely in the North Somerset Levels, although with (relatively) higher ground very nearby to the south and east, the area which is the subject of this report is to all intents and purposes dead level. A 5m contour curves round the outside of the site's south-eastern quadrant, to the south of the Churchill Rhyne and west of Honey Hall, the latter of which stands marginally above the 10m contour. To the south and east, towards Churchill, elevations continue steadily to rise, but nowhere within the site area does the elevation aOD exceed 4m, and the Environment Agency's online flood maps indicate that the entire area to the north-west of Honey Hall, lies in its Flood Zone 3 category, denoting a High Probability of flooding².

The underlying solid geology of the site is masked by an unknown depth of estuarine alluvium, but it is likely to consist of deposits of the Triassic Mercia Mudstone Group, which in many places in this area overlies, and laps up against higher ground which tends to be formed by Carboniferous Limestone and its associated lithologies (BGS). In this area, the topography exactly mirrors the relationship between the Mudstone and the Quaternary alluvium where the far more resistant Triassic deposits begin to outcrop, immediately to the north-west of Honey Hall, the ground rises, and not surprisingly, this marks a major, although by no means invariable, settlement boundary, with occupation sites straddling the line marking the first available non-floodable land above the marsh to the north-west (**Cover**). After many years of investigation at numerous locations within, and on both sides of, the Severn Estuary littoral, it is now recognised that these deposits represent a major archaeological resource in their own right, and so they are briefly dealt with separately below.

This area marks a classic *ecotone*, or resource interface, between marsh and fen to the north-west and higher ground to the south and east, and elsewhere in the Somerset Levels, for obvious reasons, such landscape boundaries have been shown to be extremely attractive for settlement, most notably, for example, where the northern flank of the Polden Hills meets the marshes and backfen of the Brue Valley. Occupation and activity sites of all periods here, from the Mesolithic onwards, attest to the recurrent potential that such interfaces present in terms of the exploitation of a wide range of useful resources (Brunning 2013).

² Indeed it is clear that the official flood map takes the 5m contour as its formal limit of potential flooding.



4 THE ALLUVIAL SEQUENCES: GENERAL BACKGROUND

As we have already noted, the overlying Quaternary drift geology of the site consists of estuarine alluvium, which in turn are identified with a number of distinct phases grouped under the collective term, the Wentlooge Series, from the location of its type-site immediately south-west of Newport, south Wales. The nature and thicknesses of these deposits in the North Somerset area are summarised by Rippon (2006, 33-37), but they consist essentially of a band of peat (the Middle Wentlooge Formation) 'sandwiched' between two much thicker layers of estuarine alluvium (the Lower and Upper Wentlooge Formations respectively). Although of varying date dependent on location, much of the Upper Formation is generally considered to represent a marine incursion of post-Roman date, and although at present uncertain, that is also, therefore, likely to be the case with the present study site as well. These deposits, or variations thereof, are pretty much ubiquitous throughout the low-lying coastal areas on both sides of the Upper Severn Estuary littoral. For example, in the Axe Valley, Somerset, below the southern flank of Mendip, a campaign of transect coring by Haslett revealed an estuarine depositional sequence which Haslett equates directly to the Wentlooge Series (Haslett *et al* 2001)³.

Archaeologically, these deposits are of crucial importance – it should be noted that a large body of accumulated evidence from fieldwork studies on both sides of the estuary, has identified numerous locations attesting to the fact that parts of the Upper Wentlooge Series *seal* not only prehistoric occupation and activity sites, but also entire Roman and post-Roman landscapes. The Middle and Lower Wentlooge Series also contain extensive evidence of occupation and activity from the Mesolithic through to the Bronze Age⁴. This evidence has, for example, very much informed Steve Rippon's narrative relating to the landscape evolution of the North Somerset Levels in the late prehistoric, Roman and post-Roman periods (Rippon 2006), but other examples of relevant studies include Young 2006, Yates *et al* 2001, Allen and Fulford 1993, and Barclay *et al* 2008⁵. For example at Worle in the area around St George's, which is only about 6km to the west of the study site, the Upper Wentlooge alluvial sequences there have yielded extensive evidence for saltmaking in the Romano-British period on a considerable scale (Cox and Holbrook, 2009). Rippon, in particular, publishes an extremely enlightening cross-sectional transect right through the North Somerset Levels, from south-west to north-east. He shows that in this area

³ The Axe Valley deposits are designated the Somerset Levels Formation by Haslett.

⁴ Some of this evidence is little short of spectacular – see for example the account of the alluvial preservation of Mesolithic human footprints in Aldhouse-Green *et al*, 1993. Many more similar discoveries have been made since that date.

⁵ The literature on the palaeoenvironment of the Severn Estuary littoral, and in particular the role of the various alluvial series as an archaeological resource of unsurpassed richness, is now voluminous, but much is conveniently brought together in the various Annual Reports of the Severn Estuary Levels Research Committee, beginning in 1993. However an important, and up to date overview survey of large parts of the estuary and its archaeological resource, can now also be found in Crowther and Dickson 2008.

at least, the Upper Wentlooge formation is about 4-5m in thickness, and beneath that the peat-dominated Middle Wentlooge is about half a metre thick. The Lower Wentlooge, where it has been tested all the way down to bedrock (most notably along the line of the M5 motorway), extends to a thickness of nearly 17m (Rippon 2006, 33, Fig. 3.1). Assuming that the study site itself also conforms to these basic parameters, at least as far as the Upper and Middle formations are concerned, it seems clear that any excavation up to 4-5m depth (which is anyway highly unlikely in the present case) would encounter *only* the Upper formation.

What chiefly emerges from a consideration of this corpus is that well-preserved sites, with a full range of artefactual and recoverable palaeoenvironmental evidence, can be buried both under and within *metres* of estuarine alluvium and so present no surface expression whatsoever to reveal their existence. This fact needs to be borne in mind as a material consideration when assessing the archaeological potential of any proposed development site lying in these coastal alluvial areas.

5 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There is as yet no volume of the *Victoria County History* for Somerset which covers the area in which the study site lies, although that lack is by no means terminal and it has been possible to present the following, brief account account based on a variety of other available sources, each of which is individually referenced at its appropriate place in the text. In particular, an unpublished survey by Dick Broomhead provides a relatively modern, and certainly highly authoritative source from both the historical and the archaeological perspectives, and one can only hope that it will eventually see the light of day in one form or another. Alex Cran's rather more popular account is certainly useful and thorough in its own way, but quite forgivably in view of its target audience, its utility is somewhat diminished through its total absence of textual references (Cran 1983). It should be noted from the outset that, in view of the study site's position at the periphery of its parish, the history of Congresbury itself will be dealt with only briefly here, and the main focus will then move to what little is known about the study area and its immediate environment.

Historically, the study site lay at the very southern extremity of the large parish of Congresbury, which in the mid-19th century, at the time of the tithe surveys, extended to some 4,400 acres (1,781ha), of which no less than 3,116 acres (1,261ha), or just under 71% of the parish area was meadow or pasture land – so that by that date at least, the agricultural basis of the estate was overwhelmingly pastoral (SRO D/D/Rt/A/317, Congresbury tithe award, 1839); no great surprise considering the low-lying nature of by far the greater part of the parish.

In the post-Conquest period, the parish was a part of the massive hundred of Winterstoke, which at its greatest extent, in the 14th to 19th centuries, extended all the way from Weston-super-Mare on the coast, inland to include Charterhouse-on-Mendip, and indeed even further to the east if one includes East Harptree, which was

detached from the main body of the hundred. However, in a recent, minutely meticulous deconstruction of the origins and nature of Winterstoke Hundred, Dr Thorn has reinforced earlier suggestions that for a short time in the 11th century, most notably in 1086, Congresbury lay at the centre of its own little hundred, probably as a result of its seizure and annexation, for his own personal use, by Harold Godwinson. He further suggests, however, that in the late 10th century, Congresbury had lain in a proto hundred of Winterstoke which in turn was one of a coherent group of three early hundreds, along with Cheddar and Bempstone, that were all administered from the major royal centre of Cheddar (Thorn 2011, esp. at 133-135; and Figs. 2, 3 and 4); and that even prior to formal hundredation, probably earlier in the 10th century, Congresbury had been part of a massive, 300-hide territory centred on Cheddar and which included both Glastonbury and Wells (*ibid*, 136-140; and Fig. 5).

If, however, strictly speaking, the starting point for an explicitly historical account is taken only at the point at which *written* records become available, then it is certainly possible to push Congresbury's narrative well back into the pre-Conquest period. At some point prior to the 9th century, Congresbury was the site of a monastic foundation, and although there is as yet no completely firm evidence for it, there is a widespread view among specialist historians and archaeologists of this period that the foundation which emerges into the documentary light only in the late 9th century, was in fact the successor to a far earlier, British monastery which may have occupied the former Iron Age hillfort of Cadbury-Congresbury in the 6th and 7th centuries, after its immediately post-Roman use as an elite military strong point (Rahtz 1992)⁶. The first certain mention of Congresbury, and the monastery there, together with another one at Banwell, comes in the account of the life Alfred the Great by his priest Asser, who describes how, probably at the very end of the year 886, the king bequeathed both establishments to him as a gift (Keynes and Lapidge 1983, 96-97, and fn. 192, 264). Frank Thorn notes the existence of shadowy references to Congresbury in the time of King Ine (reigned 688-726), probably emanating from the monastery at Sherborne and purporting to demonstrate that house's ownership of the monastery at Congresbury, and presumably also therefore its associated estate (Thorn 2011, fn. 151, 152). This is, though, problematic, and as recorded by Asser, the place-name is *Cungresbyri*, the final element clearly being Old English *-byrig*, the usual sense of which is a fortified place (Ekwall 1960, 120); with the Welsh/British personal name, Congar, as the first element, perhaps associated with a known 6th century Welsh saint of that name (Costen 2011, 181). This might suggest, as we have already noted, that the place-name and the known post-Roman archaeology of the hillfort are mutually reinforcing, and attest to the existence of a post-Roman monastic foundation within the hillfort defences. Contrary to some opinion, however, this is by no means established as beyond all reasonable doubt. Indeed, as Frank Thorn is at pains to point out,

⁶ The literature on the Congresbury monastery, its origins, context and development, is extensive, but scattered, and all that can be done here is to cite some of the more prominent, and more recent and authoritative sources.

It is not certain where [the Congresbury] *monasterium* was. It might have been in the (deserted?) hillfort of Cadbury Congresbury, or elsewhere.....if *burh* means fortification, then the reference might be to the hillfort of Cadbury Congresbury.....the present church-site is in the village of Congresbury, below the hillfort in a rectilinearly planned area south of the River Wring (Yeo) (*ibid*).

Matters are somewhat complicated by the possibility that in certain specific contexts, banks and ditches around the precincts of early monastic sites could also give rise to the use of *-byrig*, and this sense developed so that the word came to have the alternative, and explicit meaning of a monastic site (Costen 2011, 181; Draper 2010). At the church of St Andrew at Congresbury, what appears to be an antecedent, rectilinear precinct area surrounds both the church and its churchyard, and it has been suggested that this does indeed represent the precinct of an earlier, and far larger, monastic site. Michael Costen has suggested that the monastery was (re)established on this site in the late 7th or early 8th century, and a political context for such a move, assuming that the putative original, late 5th/early 6th-century monastery was indeed within Cadbury-Congresbury hillfort, has been provided by Teresa Hall. She has suggested that, as matter of deliberate policy, the Anglo-Saxons, when they arrived in what was later to become the territory of western Wessex, imposed a deliberate break with the antecedent British church, and its monastic framework, by refounding monasteries on different sites, not far from their predecessors but often in lower, flatter areas with room to plan extensive new, regular precincts. This may well be what happened at Congresbury (Hall 2003; and more recently Hall 2009)⁷.

By the time of Domesday Book, Congresbury had passed into the hands of the king, and was a large estate of 20 hides, although its assessment of land available for 50 ploughs suggests very strongly that it was considered to have a potential for agricultural expansion amounting to over double its formally recorded hidage. This ownership, however, was almost certainly a relatively recent development; since at least the early 10th century, Congresbury seems to have bounced back and forth between the crown and the church, and it seems that early in the 1060s, King Harold had in effect seized Congresbury from the church. A remnant half hide attached to the church in 1086 is a very good indication of its former minster status. A further mark of the importance of the church of Congresbury by the late Anglo-Saxon period was the chance modern discovery, within the village, of an extremely fine, figured carving, probably from a shrine dedicated to St Congar and most likely of early 11th century date. It was presumably located in a place of high honour within an antecedent church on the same site as the present building (Oakes and Costen 2003). In any event, it looks as though the estate was not formally restored to the church, in the form of the See of Wells, until the early 13th century (Collinson 1791, III, 585)⁸. It has been suggested by Steve Rippon that

⁷ The possible early monastic enclosure around St Andrew's church at Congresbury, or at least, two sides of it, is recorded on the North Somerset HER. See 40024.

⁸ The story of Congresbury's ownership between the time of Asser and its seizure by Harold, is a complex one and not entirely relevant for present purposes. However, its basis can be traced in the

The 20-hide royal estate of Congresbury encompassed the later parishes of Congresbury, Puxton and Wick St Lawrence, along with Hewish, and....detached parts of Kewstoke in Puxton (Rippon 2006, 135)⁹.

The question of exactly where settlement lay in Congresbury in the late 11th century is problematic, although as well as the main settlement itself, it seems clear that there were a number of subsidiary hamlets and farmsteads, and Iwood and Brinsea are known to have functioned, effectively, as small manors in their own right in the medieval period. Broomhead, however, remarks that

An absence of archaeological evidence prevents the precise identification of any Domesday occupation site and despite pre-Conquest pottery being identifiable close to the assumed foci of several of the virgate holdings, there is no direct evidence to suggest that the visible distribution is based on a pre-existing pattern of earlier settlement. Only the assumption that the Saxon settlement pattern comprised one of dispersed farmsteads and hamlets may indicate that the broad pattern of post-Conquest settlement remained generally unchanged, but secondary settlement expanded rapidly in the years following the Conquest (Broomhead, u.d.).

It may seem, therefore, that the case for the antiquity of sites such as Honey Hall, remains to be proven; however, it is also worth noting that the latter *has* produced what Broomhead describes as limited finds of pre-Conquest pottery, specifically at Lower Honey Hall, immediately to the east of the present Honey Hall house (see further below, **Archaeological Background**). The post-Conquest ownership of the manor of Congresbury with Wick St Lawrence is also traced in outline by Rippon (*ibid*, 139-140), but here it is enough to note that in the mid-16th century, the manor was seized back into secular hands from the See of Wells, and eventually passed, towards the end of that century, to a charitable benefactor who used it, and other landed gifts, to endow a hospital for poor children in Bristol, to be known as Queen Elizabeth's Hospital. Early in the 19th century, these lands passed to a successor body, the Bristol Municipal Charities, and it is the archives of that organisation in the Bristol Record Office that hold some of the surviving documentary material relating to Congresbury.

Congresbury certainly had arable land in the medieval period, but its extent and nature are problematic; and the existence there of an extensive, classic midland-type open field system, operated on a communal basis, has yet to be proven. It is of course possible that early-established open-field arable was simply withdrawn from the system relatively early, by consolidation and enclosure. Dick Broomhead, however, takes the view that

The distribution and organisation of [the Domesday].....arable is.....uncertain. Field shape gives some indication of its maximum extent at the height of the medieval period, but this was almost certainly an increase on that cultivated in 1086. Although demesne

brief accounts given by Costen 2011, 193-194; Thorn 2011, fns. 151-153, and 157; and Keynes and Lapidge 1983, fn. 192, 264.

⁹ However for a slightly different perspective, see Thorn 2011, 133-135.



lands comprised extensive consolidated blocks in 1567, much of the arable held by tenants was severally enclosed and frequently lay adjacent to their tenements. The observable extension of demesne farming between 1084 and 1086 implies an expansion of arable cultivation, but by what method is unclear. A similar expansion of cultivation by tenants may have been achieved by the intake of less intensively farmed land surrounding their tenements. Although such a process may have initially produced an apparently open landscape, there is no indication that such a system was regulated to the extent that a true common field system developed. Indeed, with excessive amounts of pasture available, the necessity for regulation was diminished and may never have truly existed (Broomhead, u.d.).

The same writer has also suggested that nigh on a third of the manorial area in 1086 consisted of woodland, much of which had been removed by the 16th century, its former presence attested only by field names, especially on the low-lying moor ground. And as might be expected from the topography, there is a great deal of this type of terrain, which is potentially floodable, in the parish, which could not effectively be used for arable without a great deal of work in terms of drainage, but which, conversely, made excellent pasture ground; and it is no coincidence, as we have already noted, that by the mid-19th century, some 70% of the parish area was devoted to some form or other of pastoral land. Much of this land, both arable and pasture, would have been attached to anciently-established customary tenements, and Dick Broomhead has been able to demonstrate the remarkable stability of a great many of these holdings, by showing that the land assigned to men of villein status in 1086, can be traced, intact, all the way through to the late 16th century in the form of yardland tenements (Broomhead, Table 1)¹⁰.

Woodland clearance, moorland drainage and reclamation, and the progressive fragmentation of customary tenant holdings, continued at Congresbury throughout the medieval, and into the early modern and modern periods. As already noted, the site is bounded on the north by Carditch Drove and Rhyne, and on the south by the Churchill Rhyne, the latter, as the name suggests, also marking the parish boundary with Churchill; and it seems as though both of these watercourses, tied in to the Oldbridge River system, were in existence by the 14th century at the latest (Rippon 2006, 88, Figure 6.2; and 90-94). However, it is not known exactly when the fields which now comprise the study site actually came into existence, presumably enclosed out of Carditch Moor, in which they lie. Dick Broomhead notes that

It is clear from the survey of 1567 that the bulk of the landscape, with the possible exception of the fields surrounding Honey Hall Lane, was fully enclosed by this date. However, no chronology of this process has yet been determined and it remains uncertain whether the extent of this enclosure was an early feature of the landscape or a late development (Broomhead u.d.)

¹⁰ By the high middle ages, the hide as a customary measure had become pretty much fixed as four virgates, or yardlands, with each *usually* equating to 30 acres of land. This is why it is often (but incorrectly) said that a hide extended to 120 acres, but this formula absolutely does *not* apply in the Anglo-Saxon period. In fact for Congresbury, Broomhead has also suggested, from an analysis of a detailed survey of 1567, that local arrangements were such that each yardland/virgate amounted to no fewer than 80 acres.

The study area was, though, certainly enclosed by the early 18th century, which is the first time it appears on a map, albeit only partially (see below, **Historic Map Evidence**). Major landscape developments occurred in the 19th century, firstly with a Parliamentary Enclosure, which after a laborious passage through local consultations was finally implemented in 1816. The enclosure affected just over 6000 acres (2428ha) of land, but it was spread throughout Congresbury, Puxton and Wick St Lawrence (Tate 1948). In Congresbury parish itself,

The full extent of the award involved only 820 acres [332ha] of which less than 200 [81ha] acres were subject to physical partition. Yet, in the final abolition of the Old Auster tenement, the award marked the end of an agricultural system that had conditioned the course of landscape development for over 800 years (*ibid*).

The area of the study site was not involved in the enclosure, having already long been divided up into individual fields at some unknown date¹¹.

Secondly, a scheme was put in place in the 1820s to improve drainage generally, and thus, it was hoped, to increase both land values and productivity, within lands on either side of the Congresbury Yeo, by a radical plan developed by one of the leading engineers of the day, John Rennie. The scheme involved the making of two major new cuts, a new sluice, and the widening and deepening of numerous existing rhynes. The detail of these developments is given by Michael Williams (1970, 165-167), but the upshot, following implementation of the plan after 1826, was that

success was immediate and lasting; as late as 1851 it could still be said that a great improvement had been achieved and that the benefit had been very great. The success of the scheme was a standing reproach to those responsible for the neglect of the Kenn, Nailsea and Tickenham peat moors to the north, which were still flooded regularly and deeply throughout the remainder of the century (Williams 1970, 166).

As land improvement developed apace, however, so also does it seem that tenements and holdings were progressively abandoned, and the system of yardland holdings attached to old austers were already in decline well before the enclosure of 1816. In the area around Brinsea, which included the study site, land sales in the early 17th century

and the subsequent consolidation of.....holdings under new ownership, was probably the most significant factor leading to the abandonment of a number of tenements in Brinsea between 1567 and 1840. However general decay and economic decline also played their part.....The desertion of houses between 1700 and 1840 was however complimented by the construction of others on waste, allotted and awarded [in 1816] by the Enclosure Act of 1814. For the five tenements abandoned between these two dates, six new dwelling houses were constructed on the former waste adjacent to Honey Hall Lane and Brinsey Batch (Broomhead u.d.).

¹¹ The areas affected by the enclosure are conveniently mapped at a small scale by Rippon 2006, 94, Fig. 6.5. The land was almost entirely low-lying moor ground, and the act was essentially a mopping-up exercise to enclose those remaining areas of sometimes commonable land that had remained unenclosed up to that point.

The origins of the present Honey Hall itself, as already noted, lie in the late 18th/early 19th century, and seem relatively clear. The present listed building is, however, a relative latecomer, and is not the original occupation site for the estate which was farmed from this part of Brinsea, and from which also it seems very likely that, although it is not the case now, the land encompassed by the study site was originally farmed. Broomhead recites documentary evidence showing that an original capital messuage or mansion house that changed ownership at the very end of the 16th century, can probably be identified with the immediate predecessor to Honey Hall, although frustratingly, nowhere in the surviving documentary record does it seem to be identified by name. It may, of course, never have had one, and Honey Hall may be entirely an 18th/19th century invention. This earlier building, which stood on a site not far from the modern Honey Hall, was clearly a house of some pretension, since in the mid-17th century it was apparently assessed for the hearth tax as having twelve working hearths, and a further six blocked up (*ibid*). A total of eighteen hearths is no small figure, and this, together with its later description as a capital messuage, might suggest that we are dealing with a small manorial centre, perhaps standing on a site of medieval or even earlier origin, since the original house must have been at least 16th century in date¹².

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The strict remit of this study is to consider the *known* evidence for archaeological survival in the vicinity of the study site, based on current knowledge as expressed in both the North Somerset HER. The sheer richness and diversity of Congresbury's known archaeological resource elevates it to a rather special place within Somerset as a whole in that respect. We have, for example, already noted the particular potential of the alluvial deposits of which the study site itself is made up, but other survivals within the parish are of national importance, most notably the hillfort of Cadbury-Congresbury (NSHER 00389), and the late Romano-Celtic temple and associated late/post-Roman cemetery at Henley Wood, immediately to the north-east of the hillfort (NSHER 00316; Watts and Leach 1996). Also of national importance, but effectively invisible are far less well known outside specialist circles, are the sites of kilns of Romano-British date which were involved in the production of the so-called Congresbury Grey Ware, which is now suspected to have had a province-wide circulation (*pers comm*, Vince Russett). The known kiln sites appear to cluster around sites in Venus Street (see for example NSHER 00398; 42391 and 42392). It is rare enough to be able to associate Romano-British pottery fabrics directly and causally with the kilns which produced them, and to be able to do so locally marks out the Congresbury ware as extremely significant. What is suspected to be the site of a kiln, to the north of Venus Street, has actually been excavated, although the

¹² It seems that the original house stood on a site not far to the west of the present Honey Hall, on the south side of Honey Hall Lane. The house was apparently still extant at the time of World War II, but having by then become just a farm building (Bedingfield 1986). It no longer stands, but the site is noted on the North Somerset HER (see below, **Archaeological Background**).



results have been published in only a very summary form (Usher and Lilly 1964)¹³. In recent years, the Congresbury kiln sites have been the particular focus of work by a splendid local community archaeology group (YCCCART), involving both extensive geophysical surveys and one trial excavation¹⁴. The results are reported on the group's website, and have involved the discovery of several potential new and previously unknown kiln sites in various fields and paddocks around the eastern end of Venus Street¹⁵. YCCCART has also carried out geophysical work around the small manorial centre of Iwood, which lies about 2km to the south-east of Congresbury church. This latter work has direct implications in the present context, because it demonstrated quite clearly that, contrary to some received orthodoxy, geophysics *can* be made to yield meaningful and insightful results in alluvial environments (reference as for fn. 14).

To come to the area of the study site itself, and the results of the formal trawl carried out on behalf of AAL by the HER Officer for North Somerset Council. The search encompassed a radius of some 500m from the centre of the site, and recovered no records at all from within the site boundary itself. Within the wider trawl area, only a single record was recovered. This was NSHER 07203, which lies just outside the north-eastern boundary of the site, and refers to a small scatter of flint material thought to be of Neolithic and/or Bronze Age date. Interestingly, other such scatters, of varying size, are also noted by the HER in this general area, notably 07201 and 07202. All of these finds were from various locations at the very edge of the floodable land at its junction with the higher ground on which Honey Hall stands. These are the only prehistoric surface finds that are known to have come from the area of the study site. For the Romano-British period, there appears to be something of a gap in the HER, for it marks nothing in the vicinity. However, in the early 19th century, Revd. Skinner reported the discovery, apparently at an unidentified site close to Honey Hall, of a coin hoard, described by Broomhead as

133 coins of the younger Constantinus, Constans and Magnentius.....all of the mid fourth century, the latter being dated to AD 350-353 (Broomhead, u.d.)

¹³ The grid reference given by Usher and Lilly refers to a point to the north of the eastern terminus of Venus Street, close to a north-south field boundary. The NSHER does not mark any record at *this* spot; it does, however, indicate a cluster of kiln sites, both actual and potential, with the record numbers already given (above), on the southern side of Venus Street, about 300m to the west of the Usher and Lilly site. Also, the work by Usher and Lilly did *not*, apparently, result in the recovery of an actual kiln *itself*, that is, the physical remains of a furnace. Rather, a great deal of waster material was found, leading to the quite reasonable *inference* by the excavators that a kiln must have existed in the immediate vicinity.

¹⁴ Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team; although it should also be said that the results of the trial excavation on the putative kiln site, were rather inconclusive. The report on the work is at

http://www.ycccart.co.uk/index_htm_files/Final%20ROSSITERS%20PAD%20EXCAVATION%20Y10%20.pdf

¹⁵ The reports on this work can be found at

<http://www.ycccart.co.uk/congresbury%20site%20reports.htm>



The discovery was recorded much later, albeit with little detail, by Preb. Scarth (1878, 74), and subsequently repeated, again with scant detail, by Francis Haverfield in the first volume of the *Somerset VCH* (1906, 361). Alex Cran (1983, 8), adds the information that the hoard is said to have come from a field called The Park. There was indeed a large field with this name, immediately to the north of Honey Hall, and numbered 894 on the Congresbury tithe map (but *not* shown on **Figure 7**). The area of this former field is now part of the Mendip Springs Golf Course and so has been lost to archaeology, but again, even the general find spot is not recorded by the HER. In addition, Broomhead reports the results of fieldwalking in the general vicinity of Honey Hall, such that

On.....two sites, at Honey Hall and Iwood Lane.....pottery of the first century [was] identifiable. Both produced limited numbers of sherds from the first century kilns at Shepton Mallet and small quantities of Samian imported from Gaul (Broomhead u.d.).

This being so, it will be extremely interesting to see what transpires when, as one hopes will eventually happen, YCCART turns its attention to the area around Honey Hall, as a target for geophysical survey. Certainly, as we have already noted, the results from Iwood have been highly revealing, with at least one new building of probable Romano-British date having been discovered there (reports as for fn.15).

Other records retrieved from the HER trawl in the vicinity of the study site relate chiefly to the area of occupation at Honey Hall itself. NSHER 07206 refers to putative medieval settlement at what was probably the antecedent manorial site, known as Honey Hall Lodge, to which we have already referred, and which lay to the west of the present Honey Hall. 07207 records indications of medieval activity on the site of the Hall itself, and 43098 groups this area into a bounded spatial entity which is considered to represent a coherent Archaeological Area. 07208 and 07209 refer to the site of Lower Honey Hall, immediately to the east of Honey Hall itself, and from whence there are indications of medieval activity, possibly amounting to occupation, which might include pre-Conquest settlement. The HER also regards Lower Honey Hall as a small but coherent Archaeological Area (43097). Slightly further to the east again along Honey Hall Lane, 07210 and 07211 relate to medieval occupation at, and just the west of, Ivy House Farm, with 07212 being possibly a related hollow way leading south-west from the farm complex. Ivy House represents a further Archaeological Area (Core Settlement) on the HER (43096). It remains only to note that the course of the Cheddar Valley Railway, originally part of the Bristol and Exeter Railway, and the section of which from Yatton to Cheddar was opened in 1869. The line was closed in 1963 and the trackbed, forming the north-western boundary of the site, has been turned over to amenity use as a medium-distance footpath and cycleway (NSHER 08920). The site boundary itself marches with the railway only for a distance of some 430m, but due to the low-lying nature of the terrain here, the site may be visible to users of the cycleway and footpath for some distance beyond, to both south-west and north-east.

Although the archaeological evidence can at present be described, at best, only as strongly circumstantial, taken as a whole there seems little doubt that the area of

Honey Hall was indeed an occupation site in the medieval period, and most likely by the late pre-Conquest period as well; and it seems to have been a small, loose hamlet cluster rather than merely a single, isolated farmstead. The prehistoric flint scatters, thin though they are, also suggest at least a level of activity in this area, but its nature and extent are completely problematic, as, indeed, it is for the Romano-British period; although in our opinion it bears repeating that Honey Hall stands at a clear ecotone that would have been attractive for settlement, or activity of whatever nature, or to whatever degree, at *all* periods for which archaeology can provide some level of record.

Although strictly outside the area of the formal HER trawl, it seems worthwhile finally, and briefly, to look at three items from the HER which relate to sites which are, nonetheless, not at all far from our study area. 5607 represents a group of enclosures about 250m to the south-east of the extreme south-eastern corner of the study site, and within the Congresbury parish boundary, which historically had the name 'Coney'. There are today no obvious signs of anything on the ground which might have given rise to these names; but we should note that it is now well established that warrens and 'coneygarths' are associated with very distinct and characteristic types of archaeological features, and at least the possibility of such survivals in this general area needs to be borne in mind (Williamson 2007). A little further to the west, about 300m to the west of the study site's south-western boundary, over the Churchill Rhyne and in Churchill parish, are two HER items which may well be related. 42439 represents a 'huish' fieldname, which, as Michael Costen has so effectively shown, may refer to a late Anglo-Saxon ringfence farmstead of a size to support a single family (Costen 1992). A little distance to its north, a fieldname of 'Durney' is said by the HER (42438) possibly to represent 'middle' Saxon settlement, whatever this may mean in chronological terms in this part of the country – where there simply *is* no 'Anglo-Saxon' phase before the mid-7th century at the earliest. This latter is especially interesting, though, as it is associated with a group of enclosures which together appear to form a single, highly regular and coherent unit, rectangular in shape with its long axis running east-west, but with two gentle but distinct curvilinear 'lobes' protruding from each of its northern corners. This feature sits exactly at the interface between low-lying moor ground to the north, and the higher, non-floodable land to its south. Steve Rippon has demonstrated that throughout the Somerset Levels in the post-Roman period, primary phase, early medieval reclamation enclosures tend to have at least some curvilinear elements about them, and some do display a rather lobed appearance (Rippon 1994). One wonders, therefore, whether the Durney and Huish names here may represent, together, such a primary enclosure, and whether both systematic fieldwalking and geophysical survey would cast some much-needed light on what looks on the face of it like a remarkable landscape feature, at a location very close to the site which is the subject of this report¹⁶.

¹⁶ We may also wonder whether the origin of the second element of both 'Honey' (as in Honey Hall), and 'Durney', is in fact to be found in the Old English word, *eg* or *ieg*, 'an island'. As might be expected, this word occurs with great frequency in the marshland environment of the Somerset



7 HISTORIC MAP EVIDENCE

Researchers in Congresbury are extremely fortunate in that there survives a series of maps made for the trustees of Queen Elizabeth's Hospital in Bristol, which are remarkable both for their early date and their detail. They were produced in the early 18th century by Jacob de Wilstar, and an extract from one of them is presented here as **Figure 3**. We can immediately see that at least by the date of this map (1739), the charity did not, with a single small exception, own any of the land which was later to be encompassed by the study site boundary, but it is at least clear that the north-western part of the site was fully enclosed by that date, and there is no reason to think that the same was not true of the rest of it. And those field boundaries which we can see in place by the early 18th century prove to be remarkably stable throughout subsequent maps. A small triangular field fronting onto Carditch drove, in the middle of the site (labelled Z xxi on the map), did, though, belong to the Hospital; it no longer exists, but in 1739 it was described as by the Upper Pill, the 3 Corner Paddock, and extended to 1 acre, 1 rood and 24 perches (0.51ha) in area (see below, fn. 17). This latter name is extremely interesting, for it suggests the former existence here of a small creek, perhaps by the early 18th century either silted up or deliberately backfilled; and indeed, at least part of its course can be traced on the map through the names Upper, Middle and Lower Pill, with its south-western end crossing over the Churchill Rhyne and perhaps traceable in the form of a rather meandering hedgeline which further south forms the eastern boundary of the rectangular, lobed enclosure the existence of which in this part of Churchill parish we have already noted. The surveyor de Wilstar appears to have made a slight mistake in describing the small enclosure Z xxi as by the Upper Pill, because it is quite palpably not according to his own map it is by the *Lower* Pill. Notwithstanding this, it seems pretty clear that the course of the modern footpath through the middle width of the site is following at least a part of the line of a palaeochannel, silted up and/or backfilled by the early 18th century and used as agricultural land, but of which the name Pill represents a remnant memory.

The next map in chronological order is that which arose from the Congresbury, Wick and Puxton parliamentary enclosure, and is dated 1816 (extract shown as **Figure 4**). The overwhelming majority of the study area was not involved in the enclosure process and therefore appears completely blank on the map, but we can at least see that, where we can make a direct comparison, in the north-western half of the site, the field boundaries had not changed since 1739. Like the earlier map, the only enclosure for which we have an accompanying description is the small triangular field earlier called 3 Corner Paddock, and by this date numbered 1230 but not identified by name, with a small field belonging to the Dean and Chapter of Wells abutting it on its north-western side. In the Enclosure Award we are told only that this parcel had been allocated to the Representatives of Thomas Greenwood, and size, which was marginally less than that given in the earlier de Wilstar survey. The cluster of

Levels, and in both cases here it would seem reasonable to suggest that the first element may be a personal name; Gelling and Cole 2000, 36-44.

buildings on the eastern side of the figure represents Honey Hall Lodge. And from this map we learn for the first time with certainty that the modern footpath which crosses the middle width of the site from south-west to north-east, follows exactly the line of a former trackway, probably in the form of a green lane cross-linking Carditch Drove and Rhyne with the Churchill Rhyne.

Only four years later, in 1820, another survey for Queen Elizabeth s Hospital (**Figure 5**) shows the study site, but in outline only since the charity did not actually own any of the land in the vicinity of Honey Hall, so the map is of very limited use. Not even the internal field boundaries are depicted. Of far more use, only six years later, is the survey drawn up for the implementation of the ambitious drainage scheme designed by John Rennie (see above, **Historical Background**), and to pay for which a local rate was levied on landowners in Congresbury, Puxton, Winscombe, Banwell, Churchill, Kewstoke, Wick St Lawrence and Yatton, necessitating in turn the production of a map; and an extract from it is reproduced here as **Figure 6**. Again, the field pattern has not changed at all since 1816 (**Figure 4**); but the map reinforces the site s position very close to the boundary of the low-lying moor ground to the north and west, and the higher, non-floodable land to the south and east, because only that land which it was considered would derive direct benefit from the drainage scheme was, presumably, shown on the map. The accompanying schedule is not reproduced here, but we may note that since 1739, the small triangular enclosure at the northern side of the site, numbered 379 on the map, has undergone a name change, and by 1826 was known as Wash Paddock, perhaps with the implication that some kind of facility for cleaning farm vehicles had been established there. Interestingly as well, enclosure 376 had also retained its earlier name of Pill , although by this date only the stretch of what had formerly been, in 1739, the Lower Pill, retained a separate identity. Rather further to the north, the other former parts of the putative palaeochannel, Middle Pill and Upper Pill, had become subsumed within the general field layout. Nonetheless, the course of the palaeochannel on its course south-westwards, on the southern side of the Churchill Rhyne in into Churchill parish, remains strikingly clear.

Exactly a century after de Wilstar s survey and map, in 1839-1840, the tithe commissioners for Congresbury produced their own survey and map for the parish, which we have already briefly noted in the Historical Background, and an extract from which showing the area of the study site is presented here as **Figure 7**; **Table 1** presents information from the accompanying tithe award relating to the size, ownership, occupation and nature of the enclosures contained within the boundaries of the study site. The ownership details *per se* are probably of little direct interest for present purposes. The small triangular field Wash Paddock (796), first noted by de Wilstar under a different name, continues to survive at this date. Note especially, however, the appearance again of enclosures with names containing Pill or Pills , two inside (795 and 901), and one outside the study site (to the north - 789). It is also very surprising that in a group of closes the land use of which was almost exclusively pastoral, the sole arable field in this area should be one which was part of the putative palaeochannel (901). It is impossible to know without far more detailed

research whether this was nothing more than a very brief arable interlude coincidentally at just about the time that the tithe survey was in progress; but drainage arrangements must have attained at least a certain level of efficacy by this date for any owner or occupier even to consider ploughing and taking crops off such low-lying, and *potentially* still floodable land.

Table 1: Extract from Congresbury Tithe Award, 1839 (SRO D/D/Rt/A/317)

A acres; R Roods; P - perches¹⁷

Landowner	Occupier	No.	Name & Description	Land Use	A	R	P
Samuel Perry	Samuel Palmer	784	The Twenty Acres	Pasture	15	1	18
Samuel Perry	Samuel Palmer	789	Matthews Pill	Pasture	2	0	34
Francis Simmons, Lessee under the D & C of Wells	John Button	790	Part of Simmons Twenty acres	Pasture	7	0	20
Francis Simmons, Lessee under the D & C of Wells	John Button	790	Part of Simmons Twenty acres	Pasture	6	3	2
D & C of Wells STUDY SITE	Robt Gough	792	Oxleaze	Pasture	4	2	36
George Say STUDY SITE	John Say	793	The Four Acres	Pasture	4	1	30
John Parsons STUDY SITE	John Say	794	The Further Four Acres	Pasture	3	2	3
Samuel Perry STUDY SITE	Samuel Palmer	795	Harris Pills	Pasture	2	1	25
Thomas Evered Poole STUDY SITE	John Badman	796	Wash Paddock	Pasture	1	1	32
Robt Gough STUDY SITE	Robt Gough	900	Gup Ground	Pasture	9	0	34
Samuel Perry STUDY SITE	Samuel Palmer	901	Harris Pills or Briddey Paddock	Arable	2	1	38
Dean & Chapter of Wells STUDY SITE	Robert Gough	902	Brinzey Mead	Pasture	5	3	29
John Harris STUDY SITE	John Harris	902a	Brinzey Mead	Pasture	2	2	24
Robt Gough STUDY SITE	Robt Gough	903	Brinzey Mead	Pasture	6	2	13
Robt Gough	Robt Gough	904	Gup Ground Orchard	Orchard	2	0	22
Robt Gough	Robt Gough	905	Orchard	Orchard & Pasture	0	3	2
Robt Gough	Robt Gough	906	Orchard	Orchard & Pasture	2	3	34
Robt Gough	Robt Gough	907	Farm buildings, bartons etc		0	2	24
Robt Gough	Robt Gough	910	Great Field	Pasture	15	1	14
Robt Gough	Robt Gough	911	Coney Mead	Pasture	3	0	5
Robt Gough	Robt Gough	912	Coney Mead	Pasture	2	1	36

The First Edition OS 6 map (**Figure 8**) was surveyed in 1883-84, and published in 1887. There are of course no field names, but the meandering, south-westward course of the suggested palaeochannel across the Churchill Rhyne is very clear on

¹⁷ There were traditionally 4 roods to the acre, and 40 perches to the rood. An acre is the equivalent of 0.405ha (or just over 4,000m²), and this therefore makes a rood about 1012m², and a perch just over 25m².



this map. There have been, though, no alterations of the field pattern in the intervening period of just over forty years since the time of the tithe survey, with the sole exception of the appearance of two new long, narrow plots at the north-western end of the site, arising from the truncation by the railway line of the large enclosure numbered 784 on the tithe map. Indeed, the major change documented by this map is the appearance of the Cheddar Valley section of the Bristol and Exeter Railway, opened in 1869, and which cut a north-east/south-west swathe through the North Somerset Levels on its way to Cheddar from Yatton. It now marks the north-western boundary of the site.

Some twenty or so years later, in 1903, the Second Edition OS 25 map was published (**Figure 9**). Again, there has been no change in either the internal boundaries, or the external site boundary, in the intervening period. De Wilstar's 3 Corner Paddock, latterly the Wash Paddock, remains a dogged survivor at the north-eastern side of the site. Later maps, and historic satellite imagery, accessed online, reveal the general thrust of subsequent developments (Old Maps and Google Earth). The field pattern within the strict bounds of the study site remained stable up to the early 1980s. Since that date though, but before 1999, the two very long, narrow plots at the north-western end of the site, abutting the south-eastern side of the former railway line, have been removed; and in the same period, the old 3 Corner Paddock also finally succumbed to agrarian rationalisation and its single internal boundary was removed to increase the size of the field immediately to its north-west. At the north-west side of the site, a straight boundary running north-west/south-east (on **Figure 9**, between fields 1257 and 1259), was removed, and likewise at the south-eastern end of the site, another straight boundary running south-west/north-east (between OS field numbers 1317 and 1318, **Figure 9**), has gone. The field barn which now fronts onto Carditch Drove, at the north-eastern corner of OS field number 1267, was also a product of this roughly 20 year period.

8 SITE VISIT

The **Cover**, and **Plates 1 to 6** represent part of a photographic record made by the author during a site visit conducted on Monday, 17th February, 2014, during, it must be said, somewhat inclement weather. It can be stated straight away that no upstanding features, earthworks or buildings of archaeological or historic interest, were identified in the course of the site walkover, but prior examination of historic aerial photographic evidence (see further below) meant that this outcome was not unexpected. It is worth emphasising though that from the low ground of the study site, on its eastern side, looking back eastwards towards the higher ground on which Honey Hall stands, gave a very striking impression of an island-like natural feature, and greatly reinforced the thought that the final element of the place-name Honey may well indeed be Old English *e(i)g*, an island.

9 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

For the purposes of this review, a trawl of all the available aerial photographic material held at the National Monuments Record, Swindon, was carried out on behalf of AAL by staff at the NMR; and the results of the entire trawl are given in **Appendix 1. Figure 10**, dating to late in 1946, represents part of an early run of RAF vertical images of the site in the collections of the NMR, and is reproduced here as an example, to emphasise this point (NMR/RAF/CPE/UK/1869, Frame 3277). We can immediately see that many of the enclosures are characterised by dead straight furrows, which were spade-dug – these are the so-called 'gripes' designed to assist surface drainage (see for example Rippon 2006, 24, Fig. 2.4). The course of the putative 'Pill' palaeochannel is again very obvious here, and indeed is picked up by Rippon who characterises it as belonging to his landscape category of 'roads and former commons' (*ibid*, 93, Fig. 6.5, Map C). Within the strict bounds of the study site there do not seem to be any obvious palaeochannels surviving as soilmarks, although such indications *are* visible in enclosures to the north of, and outside the boundary of the site. Immediately outside the north-eastern side of the site, on the southern side of Carditch Drove and immediately to the west of Honey Hall Lodge, what is *apparently* ridge and furrow can be seen in the large rectangular enclosure containing an orchard; this ground may have been high enough to have been ploughed, but the identification is rather problematic, and it is equally possible that this, too, is also just a gripe system.

10 NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

Planning policies both national and local which have direct implications for the site under consideration here, cascade down in the following order of primacy:

- National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, Dept of Communities and Local Government. See especially Section 12, Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, 30-32.
- North Somerset unitary authority, Replacement Local Plan Written Statement, adopted March 2007. Matters relating to archaeology are dealt with as part of Chapter 5, *Environment and Cultural Heritage*, Paras. 5.19 to 5.28. The local authority's rationale in regard to the protection of archaeology within the district is outlined in Policy ECH/6, as follows:

Development will not be permitted where it would involve significant alteration or cause damage to nationally-important archaeological remains (whether Scheduled or not), or would have a significant impact on the setting of such remains.

It should also be noted, very importantly, that North Somerset Council has very recently issued explicit policy guidance relating to the establishment of photovoltaic arrays on greenfield sites within its local authority area (North Somerset SPD, 2013). This new planning document has a section which deals specifically with the potential impact of such developments on heritage assets, including below ground archaeology, as follows:

3.23

Historic, cultural and landscape sensitive assets should be avoided. These include conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments, areas of archaeological importance, registered and other historic parks and gardens. These site designations can be viewed on a North Somerset interactive map by selecting the environment and cultural heritage legend.

3.24

Below ground archaeology must not be compromised by solar PV installation and where potential archaeological interest is identified, the impact of the development on the site must be evaluated.

3.25

Heritage assets could be affected by a solar PV development, either by causing direct physical change or by a change in their setting and therefore altering people's experience of it. Any proposed development will need to assess the nature, extent and importance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting will need to be taken into consideration. Where relevant to an application, proposals should not have an unacceptable impact on heritage assets or their setting (*ibid.* 15-16).

11 CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing review has found that the historic parish of Congresbury as a whole contains a disproportionate number of sites that would be considered of archaeological or historic significance, and at least one, the Iron Age hillfort of Cadbury-Congresbury, is of national importance, chiefly by virtue of its evidence for occupation and activity in the post-Roman period. Next to the hillfort, at Henley Wood, stood a late Romano-Celtic temple, with a small, associated cemetery with burials that appear to straddle the late Roman/early post-Roman periods. Close to the village of Congresbury itself, in the area of Venus Street and elsewhere, the sites of kilns producing Congresbury Grey Ware, a major regional fabric type in the Romano-British period, are known, and more have been located recently using geophysical survey. Some have been subjected to trial excavation. Work around the small manorial site at Iwood by a community archaeology group has, contrary to accepted orthodoxy, proven the efficacy of using geophysical survey in alluvial areas under certain circumstances. And in the early medieval period, Congresbury was the site of an important monastic foundation, perhaps with British antecedents. A piece of high-quality, late Anglo-Saxon stone sculpture almost certainly originated in an

earlier, pre-Conquest church on the site of the present church of St Andrew.

The nearest occupation site to the study area, at Honey Hall, may be far earlier in date than the surviving early 19th century house might initially suggest, lying as it does at a classic resource interface between low-lying moor land, and dryer, higher ground. The area of the study site itself does not emerge into view until the early 18th century, when part of it appears on a map of Congresbury at that date, and by which time it seems clear that it had already been enclosed, and had probably long been used for agriculture. Throughout the 19th century and into the 20th, historic map evidence shows the site as completely undeveloped, with different parts of it alternating intermittently between arable and pasture ground. Although low-lying, and technically part of the North Somerset Levels, an extensive drainage scheme undertaken in both Congresbury and surrounding parishes in the 1820s, has been extremely effective since that date in preventing serious flooding.

A trawl of the North Somerset HER recovered no records from within the bounds of the study area itself, and only a single item within a 500m radius of its centre; but there are several records of interest very close to the site, most notably a number of separate finds of scatters of worked flint, indicating at least a level of human activity in this area prior to the Iron Age, even if only intermittent and transient; however, an antiquarian discovery of a Roman coin hoard in the immediate vicinity of Honey Hall, has not, apparently, found its way onto the HER, and in view of discoveries elsewhere in the North Somerset Levels, and the existence of the nearby major villa at Wemberham in Yatton, some level of Romano-British activity in this area, especially on the higher ground, would be entirely expected. Examination of historic aerial photographs, map and field-name evidence indicates that the site contains at least one certain palaeochannel, the course of which is now marked by the line of a modern footpath through the site. Most crucially, it lies on estuarine alluvial deposits which elsewhere in the North Somerset Levels, and far beyond in the Severn Estuary littoral generally, have been shown both to contain and to seal intact archaeological features and deposits, and a wide range of important environmental evidence, which has been central to building up a picture of human use and occupation of the wetlands from all periods from the Mesolithic onwards.

Purely on the basis of the documentary and other evidence reviewed in this report, it is our professional judgement that the study site is considered to offer a low to moderate potential for the survival of buried archaeologically-significant deposits and structures.

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1946

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APPENDIX 1

ENGLISH HERITAGE Air Photographs

Full single listing - Verticals, Standard order

Customer enquiry reference: 84692

Sortie number	Library number	Camera position	Frame number	Held	Centre point	Run	Date	Sortie quality	Scale 1:	Focal length (in inches)	Film details (in inches)	Film held by
RAF/CPE/UK/1869	526	RP	3277	P	ST 432 614	13	04 DEC 1946	AB	9840	20	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NMR
RAF/CPE/UK/1869	526	RS	4272	P	ST 428 603	30	04 DEC 1946	AB	9840	20	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NMR
RAF/CPE/UK/1869	526	RS	4273	P	ST 421 603	30	04 DEC 1946	AB	9840	20	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NMR
RAF/CPE/UK/2472	788	RS	4038	P	ST 431 619	12	09 MAR 1948	A	10000	20	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NAW
RAF/CPE/UK/2472	788	RS	4039	P	ST 426 616	12	09 MAR 1948	A	10000	20	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NAW
RAF/CPE/UK/2472	788	RS	4040	P	ST 422 612	12	09 MAR 1948	A	10000	20	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NAW
RAF/541/527	1069	RP	3234	P	ST 421 624	2	14 MAY 1950	A	10000	20	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NMR
RAF/540/479	1205	RP	3037	P	ST 419 609	2	22 APR 1951	A	9960	20	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	MOD
RAF/58/1421	1583	F22	7	P	ST 432 617	8	22 APR 1954	AB	10000	36	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NAW
RAF/58/1421	1583	F22	8	P	ST 428 623	8	22 APR 1954	AB	10000	36	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NAW
RAF/58/1354	2364	F21	55	P	ST 429 626	3	23 FEB 1954	AC	10000	20	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NMR
RAF/58/1354	2364	F21	56	P	ST 432 621	3	23 FEB 1954	AC	10000	20	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NMR
RAF/58/1354	2364	F22	56	P	ST 420 614	6	23 FEB 1954	AC	10000	20	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NMR
RAF/58/1354	2364	F22	57	P	ST 423 609	6	23 FEB 1954	AC	10000	20	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NMR
RAF/3G/TUD/UK/21	2859	V	5105	P	ST 423 614	2	13 JAN 1946	A	5200	12	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NMR
RAF/3G/TUD/UK/21	2859	V	5106	P	ST 426 614	2	13 JAN 1946	A	5200	12	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NMR
RAF/3G/TUD/UK/21	2859	V	5107	P	ST 429 614	2	13 JAN 1946	A	5200	12	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NMR
OS/71101	10198	V	302	P	ST 429 618	2	01 MAY 1971	A	7050	12	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR



Sortie number	Library number	Camera position	Frame number	Held	Centre point	Run	Date	Sortie quality	Scale 1:	Focal length (in inches)	Film details (in inches)	Film held by
OS/71101	10198	V	303	P	ST 429 612	2	01 MAY 1971	A	7050	12	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR
OS/85062	10708	V	87	P	ST 427 613	6	29 MAY 1985	A	8000	12	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR
OS/85062	10708	V	88	P	ST 426 619	6	29 MAY 1985	A	8000	12	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR
OS/89092	13445	V	870	P	ST 428 617	3	28 APR 1989	A	8200	12	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR
OS/89092	13445	V	871	P	ST 421 617	3	28 APR 1989	A	8200	12	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR
OS/89092	13445	V	899	P	ST 420 607	4	28 APR 1989	A	8200	12	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR
OS/89092	13445	V	900	P	ST 427 607	4	28 APR 1989	A	8200	12	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR
OS/95030	14646	V	194	P	ST 432 617	6	13 MAR 1995	A	7800	12	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR
OS/95030	14646	V	195	P	ST 425 617	6	13 MAR 1995	A	7800	12	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR
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OS/00018	15710	V	7	P	ST 432 606	1	15 MAR 2000	A	8600	6	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR
OS/00018	15710	V	68	P	ST 425 618	3	15 MAR 2000	A	8600	6	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR
OS/00018	15710	V	69	P	ST 432 618	3	15 MAR 2000	A	8600	6	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR

Total Sorties 12

Total Frames 31



Figure 3

Extract from "A Survey of the Lands of the Manor of Congresbury belonging to Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Bristol", by Jacob de Wilstar, 1739. BRO 33041/BMC/4/PL 1/2. Study site outlined in red.



Figure 4

Extract from enclosure map for Congresbury, Wick St Lawrence and Puxton, 1816.
SRO D/P/con/20/1/1. Study site outlined in red.

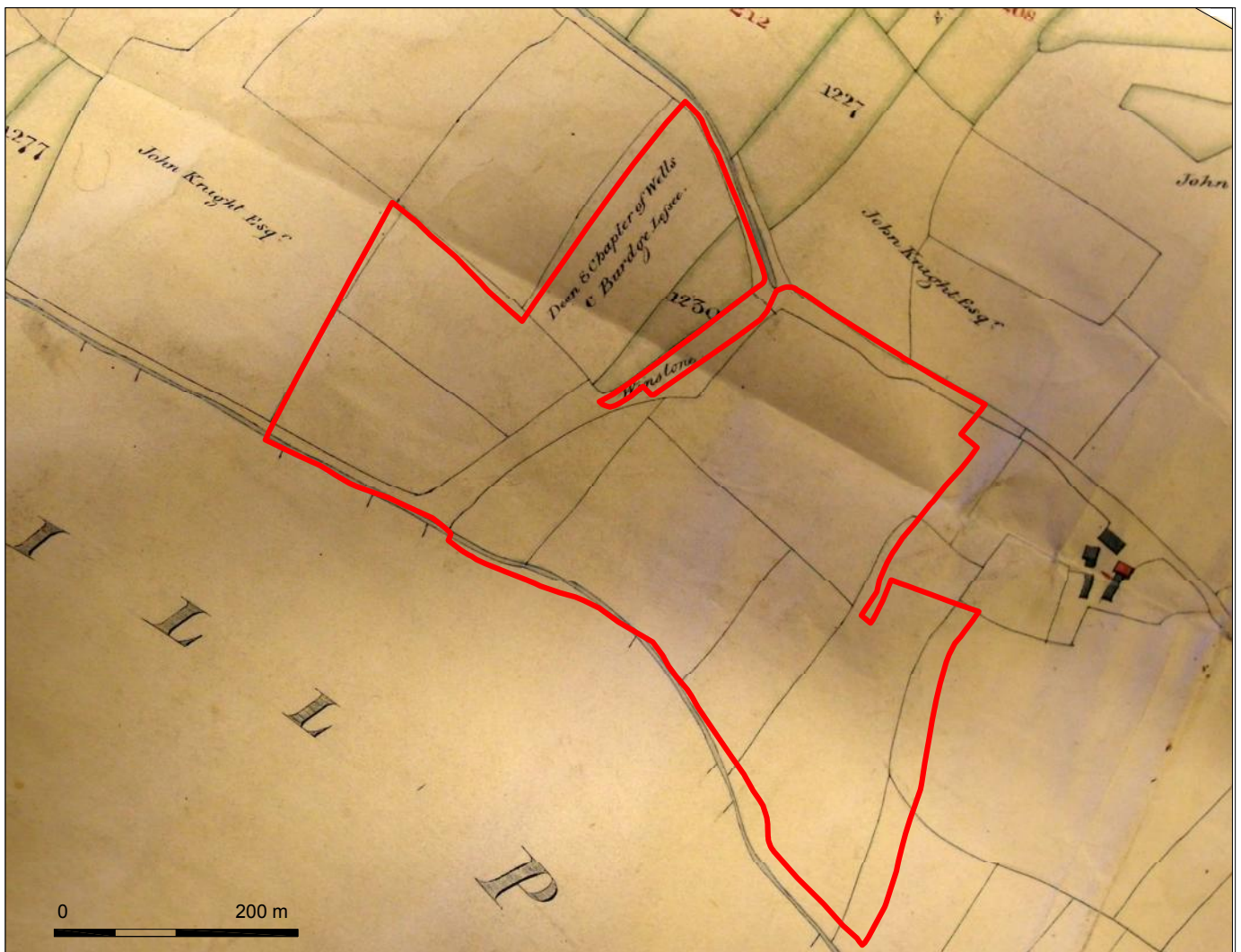


Figure 5

Extract from survey of Congresbury for Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Bristol, 1820.
BRO 33041/BMC/4/22. Study site outlined in red.

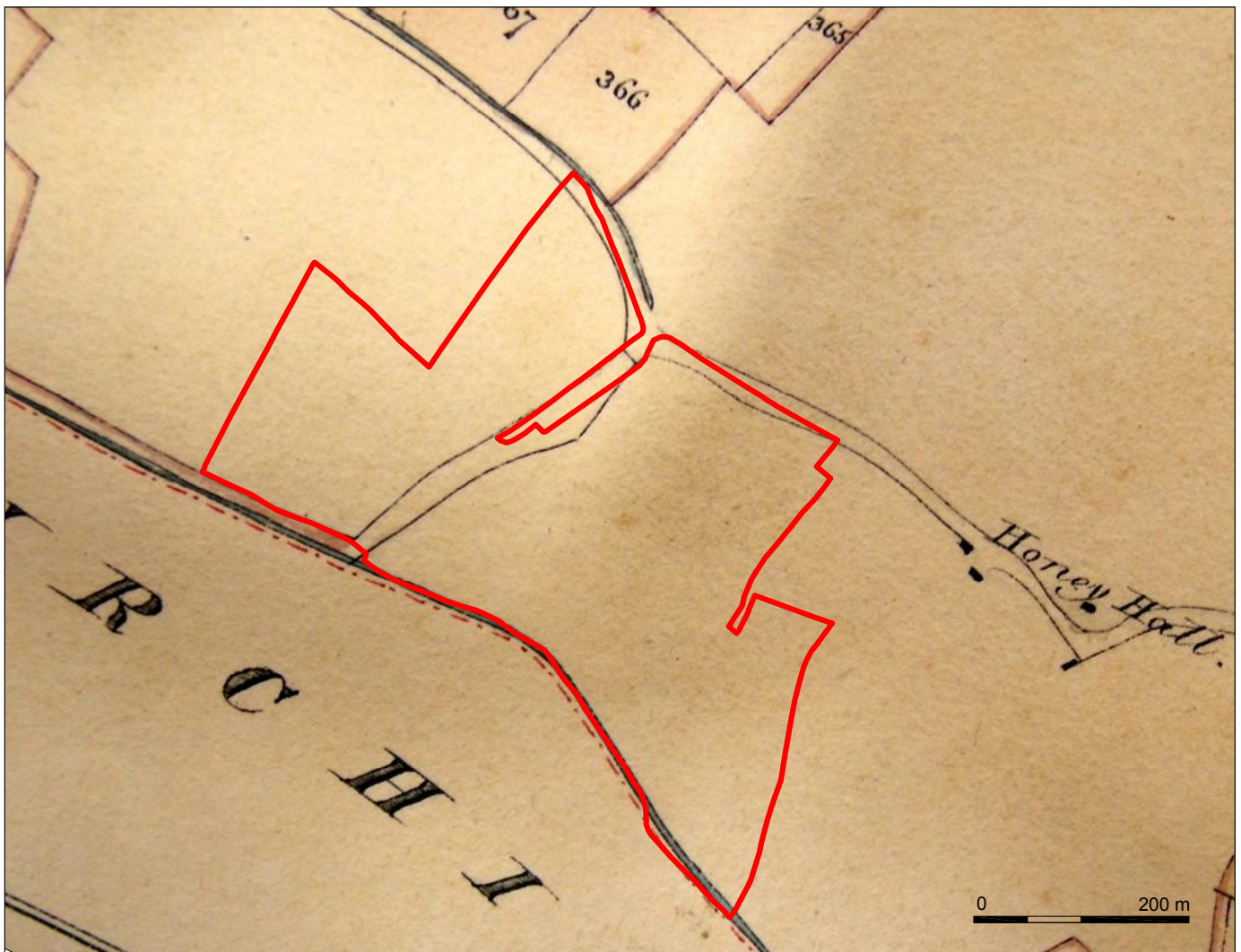


Figure 6

Extract from map of Congresbury Drainage Award, 1826. SRO Q/RDe/139. Study site outlined in red.



Figure 7

Extract from Congresbury tithe map, 1840. SRO D/D/Rt/M/317. Study site outlined in red.

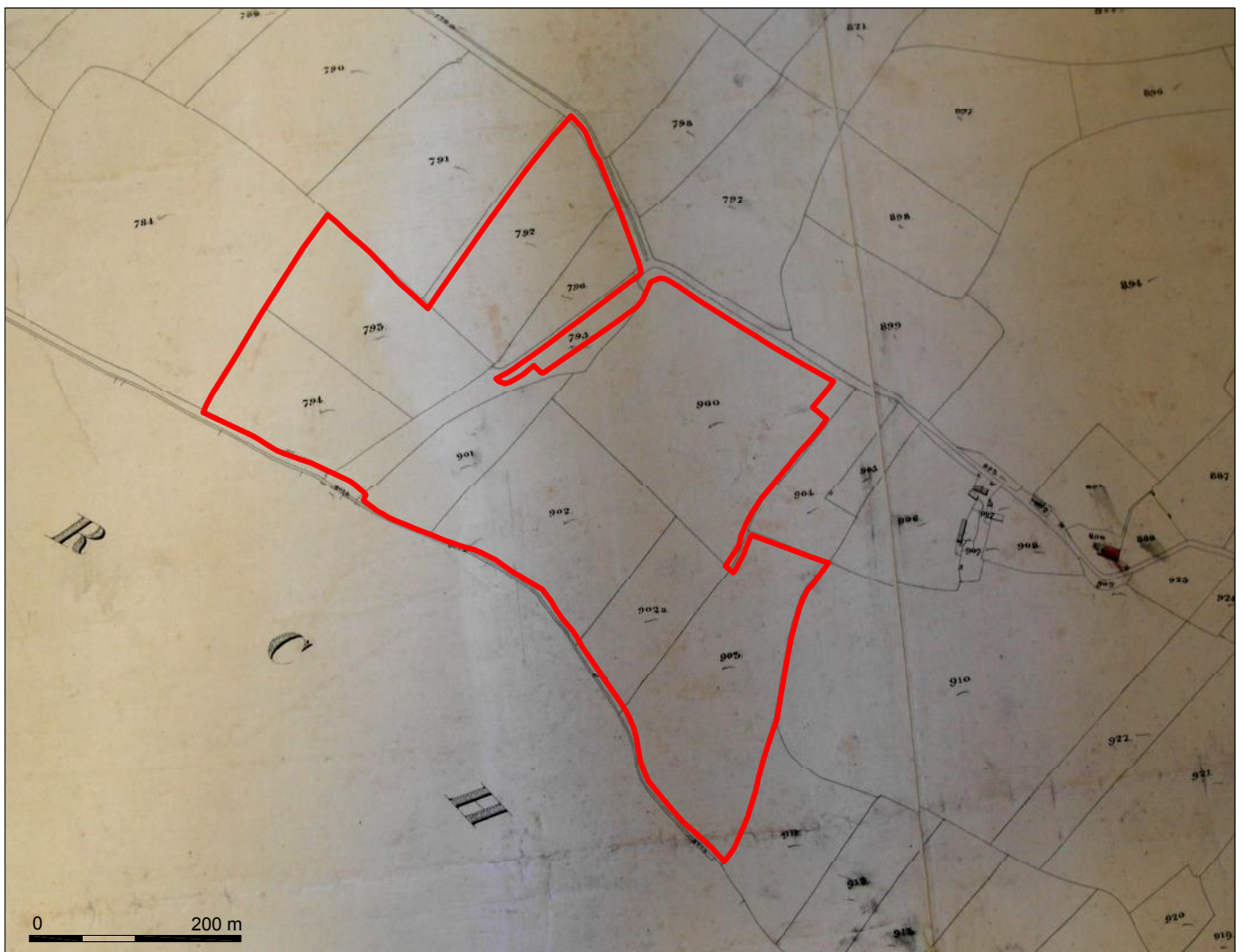


Figure 8

Extract from OS First Edition 6" map, Somerset Sheet 10SE. Surveyed 1883-84, published 1887. SRO. Study site outlined in red.

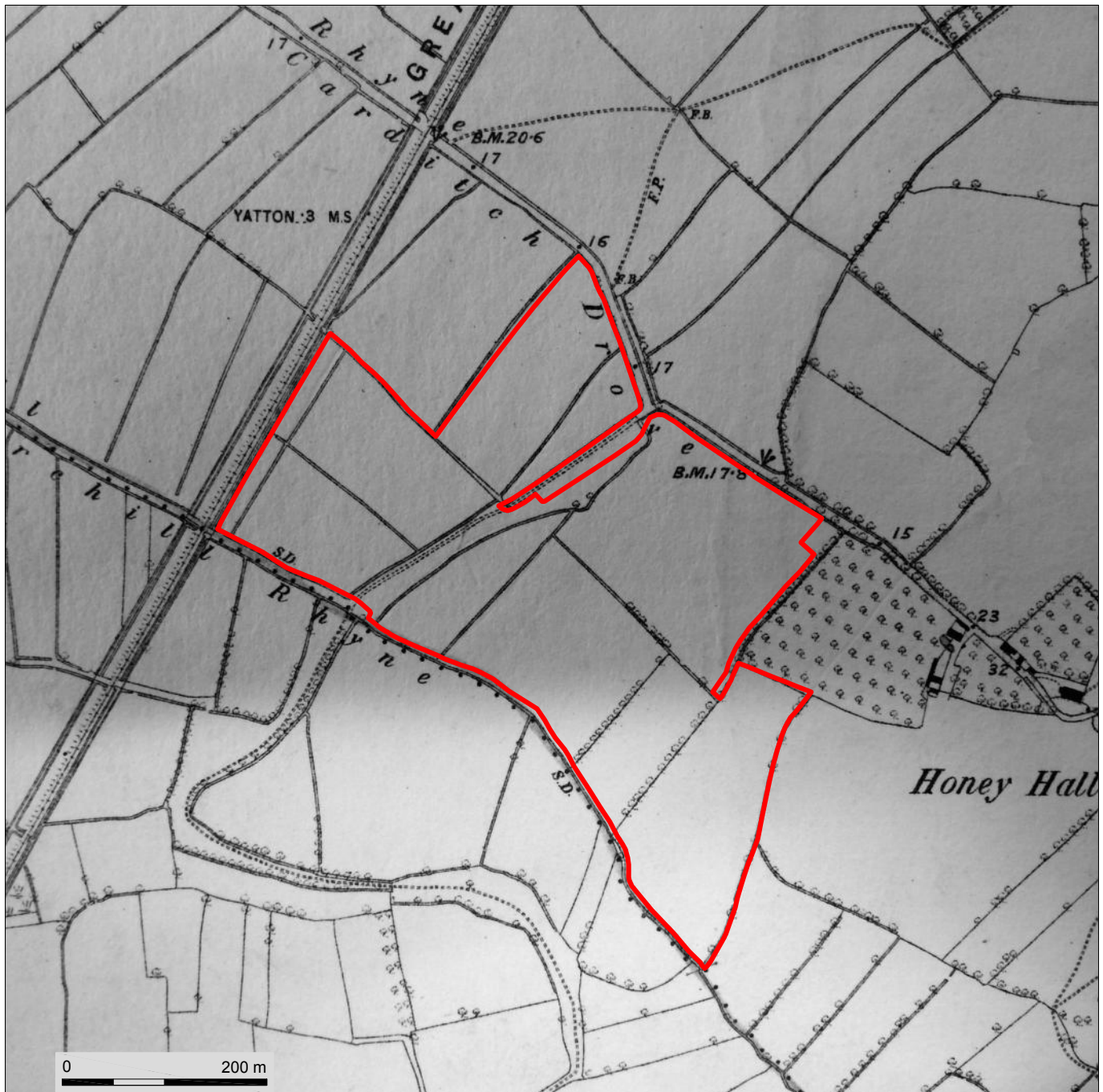


Figure 9

Extract from OS Second Edition 25" map, Somerset Sheet 10.16. Revised 1902, published 1903. SRO. Study site outlined in red.

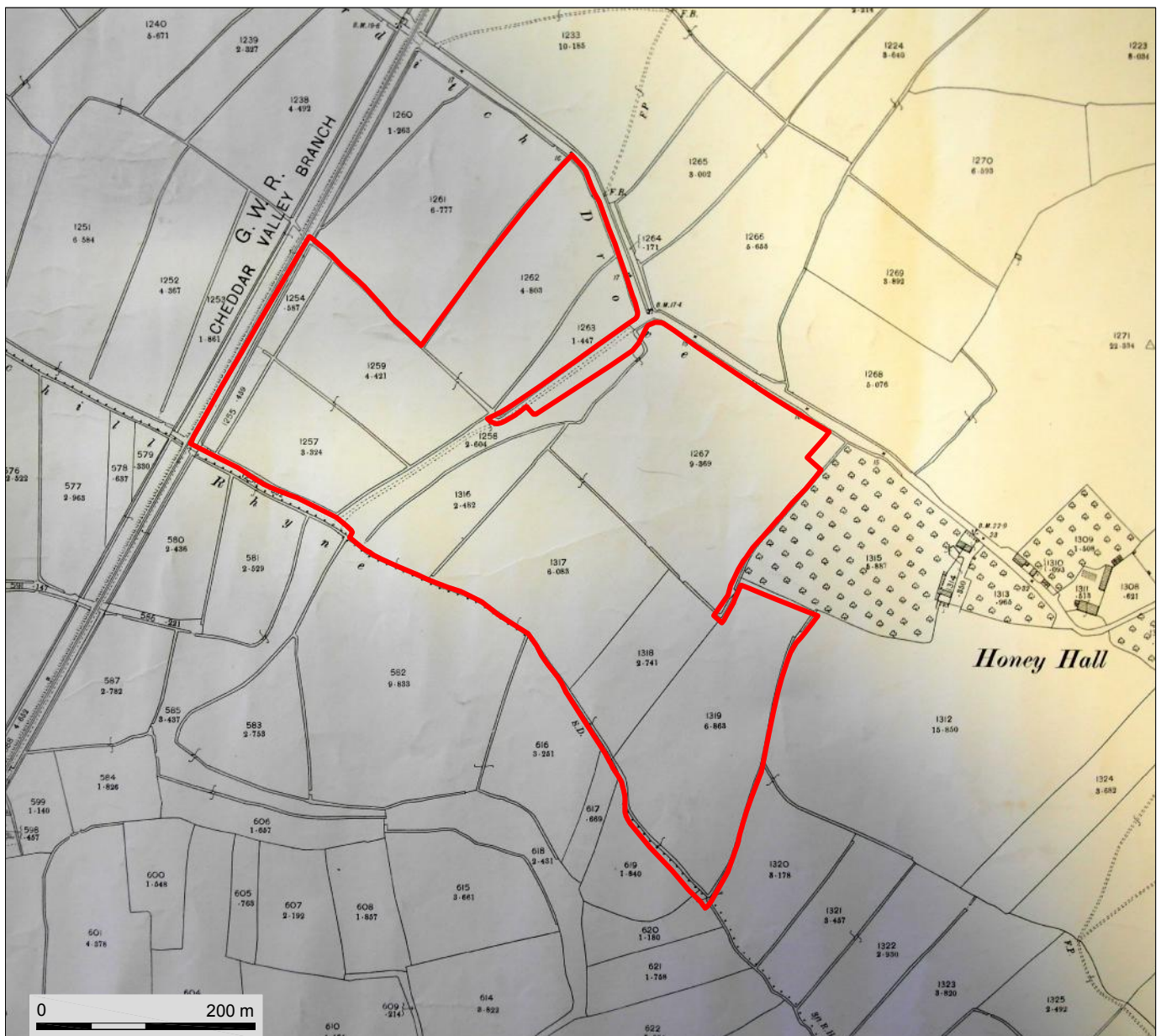


Figure 10

Extract from historic aerial photograph, 4th December, 1946. NMR RAF/
CPE/UK/1869, Frame 3277. Study site outlined in red.



Plates



1. Composite panoramic view of site from its extreme north-eastern corner, close to the modern field barn fronting onto Carditch Drove. The view pans round from south-west on the left-hand side of the frame, to north-west on the right-hand side.



2. Composite panoramic view of site from NGR ST 42859 61330, in its south-eastern quadrant. The view pans round from south-west on the left-hand side of the frame, to north-west on the right-hand side.



3. Composite panoramic view of site from NGR ST 42758 61196. The view pans round from north-west on the left-hand side of the frame, to north-east on the right-hand side. This point is on the site's south-western boundary, and the Churchill Rhyne appears on the left-hand side.



4. Composite panoramic view of site from NGR ST 42590 61359. The view pans round from north-west on the left-hand side of the frame, to north-east on the right-hand side. This point is also on the site's south-western boundary, but further to the north-west than Plate 3. The Churchill Rhyne again appears on the left-hand side.



5. Composite panoramic view of site from NGR ST 42373 61480. The view pans round from north-east on the left-hand side of the frame, to south-east on the right-hand side. This point represents the site's extreme western corner.



6. Composite panoramic view of site from NGR ST 42478 61668. The view pans round from north-east on the left-hand side of the frame, to south-east on the right-hand side. This point is exactly mid way along the site's north-western boundary.