



Bristol and Region
Archaeological
Services

Archaeological Watching Brief
**BERRYMEAD BARN, HALL LANE,
LOWER HAMSWELL, COLD ASHTON,
SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE.**

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FAME
Federation of Archaeological Managers & Employers



Archaeological Watching Brief
at
**BERRYMEAD BARN, HALL LANE, LOWER HAMSWELL,
COLD ASHTON, SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE.**

Centred on NGR ST 7299 7104

Prepared for **Mr Paul Smith**

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Adopted Chronology

Prehistoric	Before AD43
Roman	AD43-410
Anglo Saxon/Early Medieval	AD410-1066
Medieval	AD1066-1540
Post-medieval	AD1540-present

Abbreviations

AD	Anno Domini	km	Kilometre
aOD	Above Ordnance Datum	m	Metre
BaRAS	Bristol & Region Archaeological Services	NGR	National Grid Reference
BC	Before Christ	OS	Ordnance Survey
c	Circa	SGHER	South Glos. Historic Environment Record
EHA	English Heritage Archive		

NOTE

Notwithstanding that Bristol and Region Archaeological Services have taken reasonable 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.

May, 2013

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of soakaways and trenches for sewage treatment, in advance of the conversion of a former agricultural building into holiday lets at Berrymead Barn, Hall Lane, Lower Hamswell, South Gloucestershire.

No significant archaeological finds or features were uncovered during the watching brief.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) at Berrymead Barn, Hall Lane, Lower Hamswell, Cold Ashton, South Gloucestershire, BA1 9DE.
- 1.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by Richard Pedlar Architects, on behalf of Paul Smith in order to comply with Planning Permission No. PK11/0737/F.
- 1.3 The watching brief took place on the 8th and 9th of April 2013.
- 1.4 The project archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery under an Accession Number yet to be confirmed and a copy of the report will be made available to the English Heritage Archive at Swindon. The project has been entered in the South Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record as SGHER 20287 and in the OASIS Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations as: bristola1-146382.

2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The site (centred on grid reference ST 7299 7104) is located on the south side of Hall Lane, approximately 700m south-east of Freezing Hill and 1km to the north-east of the site of the Battle of Lansdown (as marked on OS maps) and is part of a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It occupies the north-western part of a small field recently in use as rough pasture, which slopes downwards from the lane to the north towards a stream to the south. Aerial photography from 1999 indicates the field was originally part of a larger field, extending to the west, but was subsequently split into two in the recent past. It stands at a height of approximately 120m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) on ground that dips to the south an east within the steep-sided valley of the Lam Brook, which cuts into the southern edge of the Cotswold Hills.
- 2.2 According to the British Geological Survey (2012) the solid geology of the site comprises Jurassic mudstone of the Charmouth Mudstone Formation; no superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2013).

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As far as is known, the site has not been the subject of any previous archaeological work.
- 3.2 There is no evidence for prehistoric or Romano-British activity on the site.
- 3.3 The South Gloucestershire HER has one listing for the site itself: a Hollow way, running E/W, beginning at the road and leading to Lilliput Farm and believed to be medieval in date (SGHER 6069). The reference indicates a bank in the field on the opposite side of the track running north-north-east / south-south-west. The original reference for this listing is not clear however, and no indication of a hollow way was found during the watching brief. The HER also records the land north of Hall Lane and the site (SGHER15048) as being possible parkland during the mediaeval period as an entry in the Tithe Apportionments list the field name as 'Parkfield'. A similar listing is to be found to the south-west of the site (SGHER 6135). To the north-east of Hall Lane a further entry notes a post-medieval fishpond (SGHER 2867), with St. Ann's Well, a medieval or post-medieval well, situated further to the north and associated with the medieval manor of Hamswell House.
- 3.4 Eighteenth-century maps such as Thorpe (1742) (**Fig. 3**) and Donn (1769) (**Fig. 4**) show no features of interest in the immediate area, although the former does record what is probably Lilliput Farm to the east. There seems to be agreement that in 1643 the Royalist army was camped on the edge of Freezing Hill, to the west-north-west of the present site. No archaeological features are shown on the various historic OS maps and plans, and the present agricultural buildings do not seem to pre-date the 1960s (**Figs. 5 – 7**). Lower Hamswell lies within the ancient parish of Cold Ashton.
- 3.5 In the summer of 1643 the Bath area was controlled by Parliamentary forces under the command of Sir William Waller. Royalist troops, led by Sir Ralph Hopton, approached the area on 4th July, but Waller had already occupied the strategic hilltop of Lansdown, which overlooks the city. This forced the Royalists to temporarily withdrawal towards the north. They returned the following day, but were again forced to withdraw, pursued by some of Waller's horse, before a further attack gained them a foothold at one end of the summit. The Royalist Sir Bevil Grenville was killed during this attack. The battle ended when both sides were too exhausted for further attacks and a stalemate ensued. Waller withdrew to Bath shortly after midnight, and the Royalists pulled back to Marshfield at dawn. The area is now a Registered Battlefield site, extending from the northern end of Lansdown generally northwards to the A420 road at the summit of Tog Hill, its eastern extent lies a few hundred metres to the west of Berrymead Barn.

4. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the methodology outlined in the *BaRAS Site Manual* (2005) and complied with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IfA 2008). The aim of the archaeological work was to record any archaeological features or deposits revealed during the course of construction work.
- 4.2 The watching brief involved monitoring of the mechanical excavation trenches and pits in advance of a small sewerage treatment plant together with soakaways and connecting pipework. This will involved an area of about 50m north-south and no more than 10m east-west, directly south of the existing barn.
- 4.3 All groundworks were dug using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothed bucket.
- 4.4 A photographic record of the trenches was made using digital colour photographs and a plan was produced of the trench locations.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1 The excavation work revealed no archaeological features within the length of the trench.
- 5.2 The solid natural geology of the site, comprised of Charmouth Mudstone Formation, was not uncovered within the trenches although the degraded top of natural may have been observed in the deeper soakaway pits.
- 5.3 The earliest deposit exposed was the possible top of the natural geology, recorded in both of the soakaway pits at Trench 1 and Trench 2, as well as in the northern half of Trench 3, which joined T1 and T2 to run southwards down the slope towards the stream. A mottled, light yellow-grey, un-oxidised clay, this deposit became 'greyer' the deeper it got, with large fragments of natural lias rubble recorded near the base of the 2m-deep soakaways (103), (203) and (303). The maximum recorded depth of this deposit was 0.80m deep but it was not fully excavated (**Plate 1; Fig. 2**).
- Overlying this was a mid yellow-brown silt-clay, which graduated into a lighter silt-clay the deeper it went (102), (202) and (302). This deposit also became 'stiffer' and had a higher clay concentration as it neared the natural clay below and had a variable depth, being deeper at the northern end of the site in the soakaways at 1.05m deep, than at the southern end in Trench 3 where it was only excavated to a depth of 0.40m. It was identified as hill wash from the slope to the north of the site and was very 'clean' with no inclusions noted (**Plate 2**).
- In all three trenches, topsoil overlay this hill wash deposit, with a depth of 0.25m on average (101), (201) and (301). This was a heavily bio-turbated, mid yellow-brown clay-silt, probably a combination of hill wash and colluvium, with very few inclusions (**Plate 3**). Charcoal flecks were noted as being rare within the deposit and three sherds of pottery were found in the topsoil from the southern end of Trench 3 (301); one small body sherd of Romano-British Oxfordshire Colour coated ware, one base sherd of Romano-British local ware and one small rim sherd, thought to be of a local Medieval ware, probably from a cooking pot.
- 5.4 Although a search was made for the possible hollow way recorded in the South Gloucestershire HER, no evidence of its existence could be found either in the trenches or as an earthwork in the field. Indeed a walk-over of the field as a whole showed it to be bounded on the northern, eastern and southern sides by deep stream channels, up to 3m deep in places (**Plate 4**). The existence of these channels, if they were present in the medieval period, would have severely hampered any attempt to cross the field from the west and so make the existence of a hollow way at that point highly unlikely. An examination of a 1999 aerial photograph (as mentioned in the SGHER) does show a linear negative earthwork in the field to the east of the site, which looks to be running towards the stream channel to the east of the barns, in line with the HER listed hollow way. On closer inspection it seems that the earthwork in the eastern field is probably a grubbed out hedgerow or old stream, while the apparent continuation to the south of the barns is a fence line, which was subsequently removed (**Plate 5**).
- 5.5 During the study of the 1999 aerial photograph a cropmark was noted in the same field to the east of the barn as the linear feature, which appears to be a large rectangular ditched enclosure. It does not appear in later aerial photographs however, so any interpretation has to remain questionable, but there is a chance this is either a post medieval decorative fishpond or a 'moated' site. There is no indication of a structure in that location on any of the mapping studied, though it is possible that this was a 20th century temporary building. A building does appear on the OS maps from 1882 until the later 20th century, now demolished, but this was smaller and situated further to the south in a different field.
- 5.6 Machine clearance of scrub and undergrowth around the base of the barns revealed no further information regarding the site and only uncovered Victorian and 20th-century domestic and agricultural rubbish such as pottery, iron nails, machine parts, a stoneware hot water bottle with the name 'Caters Bath' on it and a variety of other discarded items, most of which are likely to have been dumped on the site from the farmhouse on the north side of Hall Lane.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The archaeological work uncovered no features of any date and only three fragments of pottery, one being medieval, the other two Romano-British. Of these the medieval sherd and one of the Romano-British fragments were heavily abraded and likely to have been either transported to the site via natural process (i.e. hill wash) or were part of a background scatter from activity in the surrounding areas. The larger Romano-British base sherd is less abraded and may have been the result of loss or dumping in the area of the site, although there was no other evidence for occupation of any date within the trenches.
- 6.2 A walkover was carried out in order to locate the hollow way recorded in the South Gloucestershire HER but no evidence of this was found in either landscape or trench. Given this, the position of the stream channels and the re-interpretation of the 1999 aerial photograph, it seems highly unlikely a hollow way was ever in existence on the site.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES CONSULTED

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- 1881 First Edition Ordnance Survey plan (1:2500) surveyed 1881, published 1890
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<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/battlefields/battle-of-lansdown-hill>

Google Earth historic viewer

<http://googleearth.com>

South Gloucestershire HER on the Heritage Gateway:

<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/>

UK Battlefields Resource Centre, Battlefields Trust.

<http://www.battlefieldstrust.com/resource-centre/civil-war/battleview.asp?BattleFieldId=21>

8. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 8.1 BaRAS would like to thank Paul Smith, Robert Sparks, and David Greening of Richard Pedlar Architects for their assistance. We would also like to thank Paul Driscoll (Senior Archaeological Officer, SGC) for his advice.
- 8.2 The archaeological watching brief was carried out by Ian Powlesland (Project Officer). The report was collated and written by Tracey Smith (Project Officer). Plans, figures and plates in this report were prepared by Ann Linge (Design and Production Officer, BaRAS).

APPENDIX 1: Policy Statement

This report is the result of work carried out in the light of national and local-authority policies.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY (ENGLAND)

The *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) for England published by the UK Government in March 2012 states that the historic environment, which includes designated and non-designated heritage assets, is an irreplaceable resource and, as such, should be taken into account by Local Planning Authorities when considering and determining planning applications. This is taken to form part of a positive strategy set out in the respective Local Plan (i.e. *Bristol Core Strategy*) to ensure the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. The assigned significance of heritage assets will be key factor in terms of their conservation.

Given their irreplaceable nature, any harm to, or loss of, a heritage asset, or heritage assets, should be clearly and convincingly justified as part of a planning application. As part of this, applicants are required to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting. Where a heritage asset, or assets, are to be harmed or lost as the result of a proposal, the applicant will be required to record and advance the understanding of the significance of that asset or assets, to include making the evidence arising publicly accessible, but this will be in proportion to the significance of the asset/assets in question.

While the NPPF takes into account the historic environment as a whole, additional protection is afforded to designated heritage assets under current English Law. Any proposal that would result in harm or loss of a designated heritage asset is also required to be justified by the applicant in meeting strict criteria set out in the NPPF.

LOCAL POLICY

South Gloucestershire's Local Plan (adopted January 2006) states:

Archaeology L11

Development which would not physically preserve sites of national archaeological importance, whether scheduled or not, or would have a significant impact on the setting of visible remains, will not be permitted.

Planning permission will not be granted for development on sites or landscapes of archaeological interest or of high archaeological potential without an archaeological assessment and if necessary a field evaluation.

Where the assessment indicates that the proposed development would harm a site, structure or landscape of archaeological or historic importance or its setting, development will not be permitted unless applicants can demonstrate a satisfactory scheme indicating how the impact of the proposal on the archaeological resource can be mitigated. The council will negotiate agreements to preserve and manage archaeological remains.

APPENDIX 2: Context Descriptions

Context No.	Type	Description	Stratigraphic relationships	Date	Location
101	Deposit	Topsoil. Mid yellow-brown silt-clay-loam. Bioturbated, with <5% charcoal fragments.	Overlies (102)	Post Med	Trench 1
102	Deposit	Subsoil, hill wash. Mid – light yellow-brown, silt-clay. No inclusions.	Underlies (101) Overlies (103)	Natural subsoil	Trench 1
103	Deposit	Natural clay with lias rubble near base of trench. Light yellow-grey, becoming greyer near the bottom of the excavation.	Underlies (102)	Geology	Trench 1
201	Deposit	Same as (101)	Overlies (202)	Post Med	Trench 2
202	Deposit	Same as (102)	Underlies (201) Overlies (203)	Natural subsoil	Trench 2
203	Deposit	Same as (103)	Underlies (202)	Geology	Trench 2
301	Deposit	Same as (101). x3 fragments of pottery found.	Overlies (302)	Post Med	Trench 3
302	Deposit	Same as (102)	Underlies (301) Overlies (303)	Natural subsoil	Trench 3
303	Deposit	Same as (103)	Underlies (302)	Geology	Trench 3

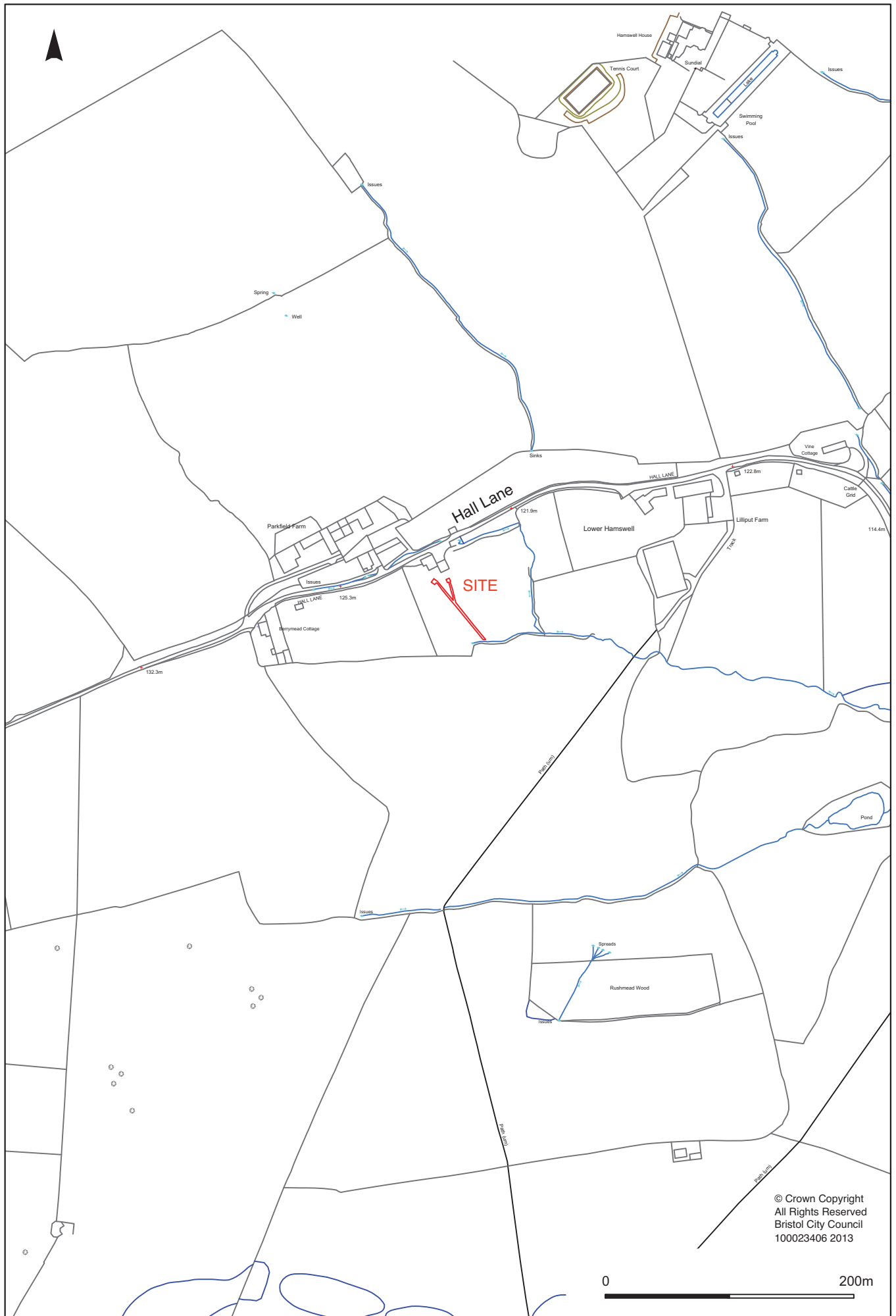


Fig.1 Site location plan, scale 1:4000

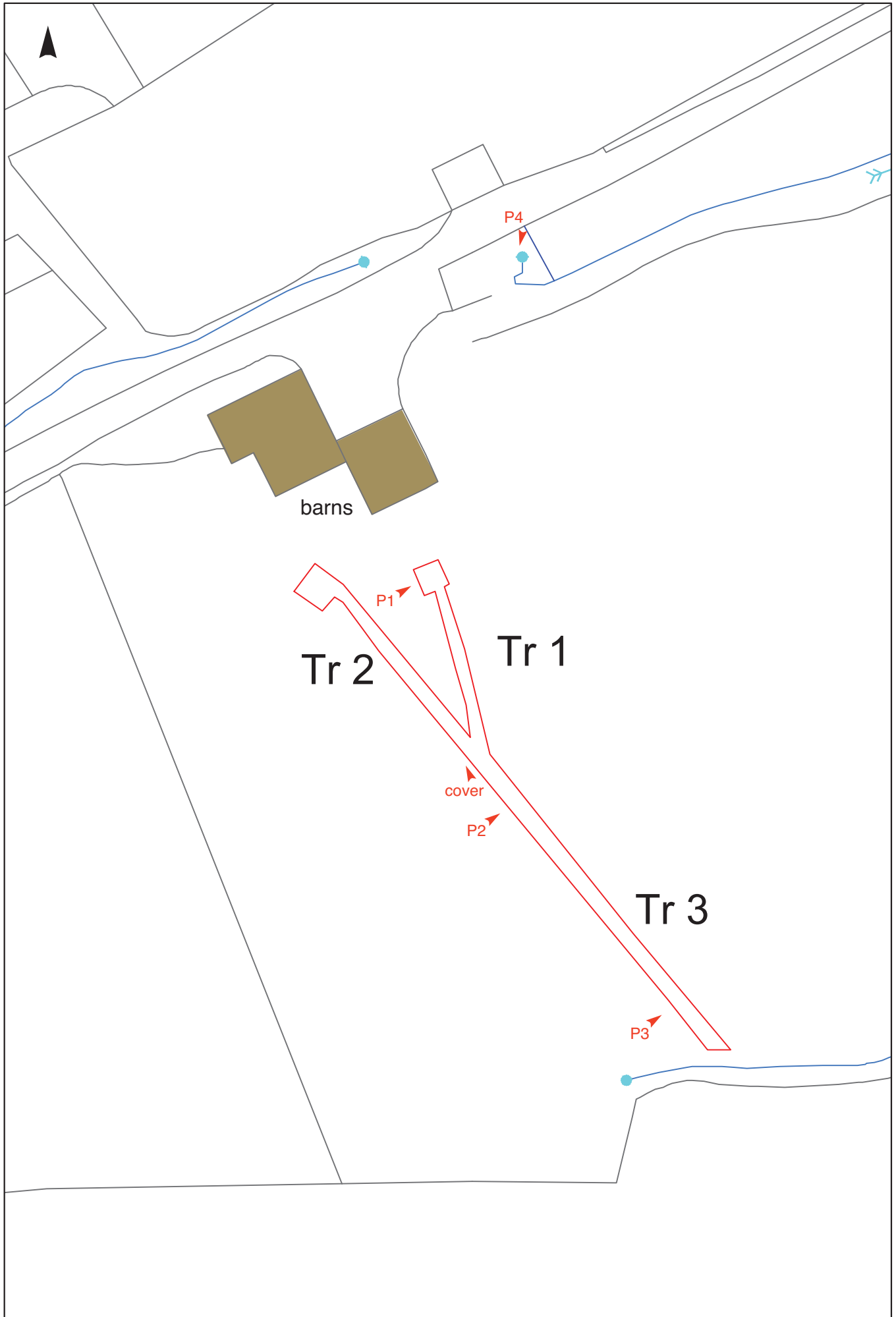


Fig.2 Site plan showing location of the trenches and plate directions, scale 1:500

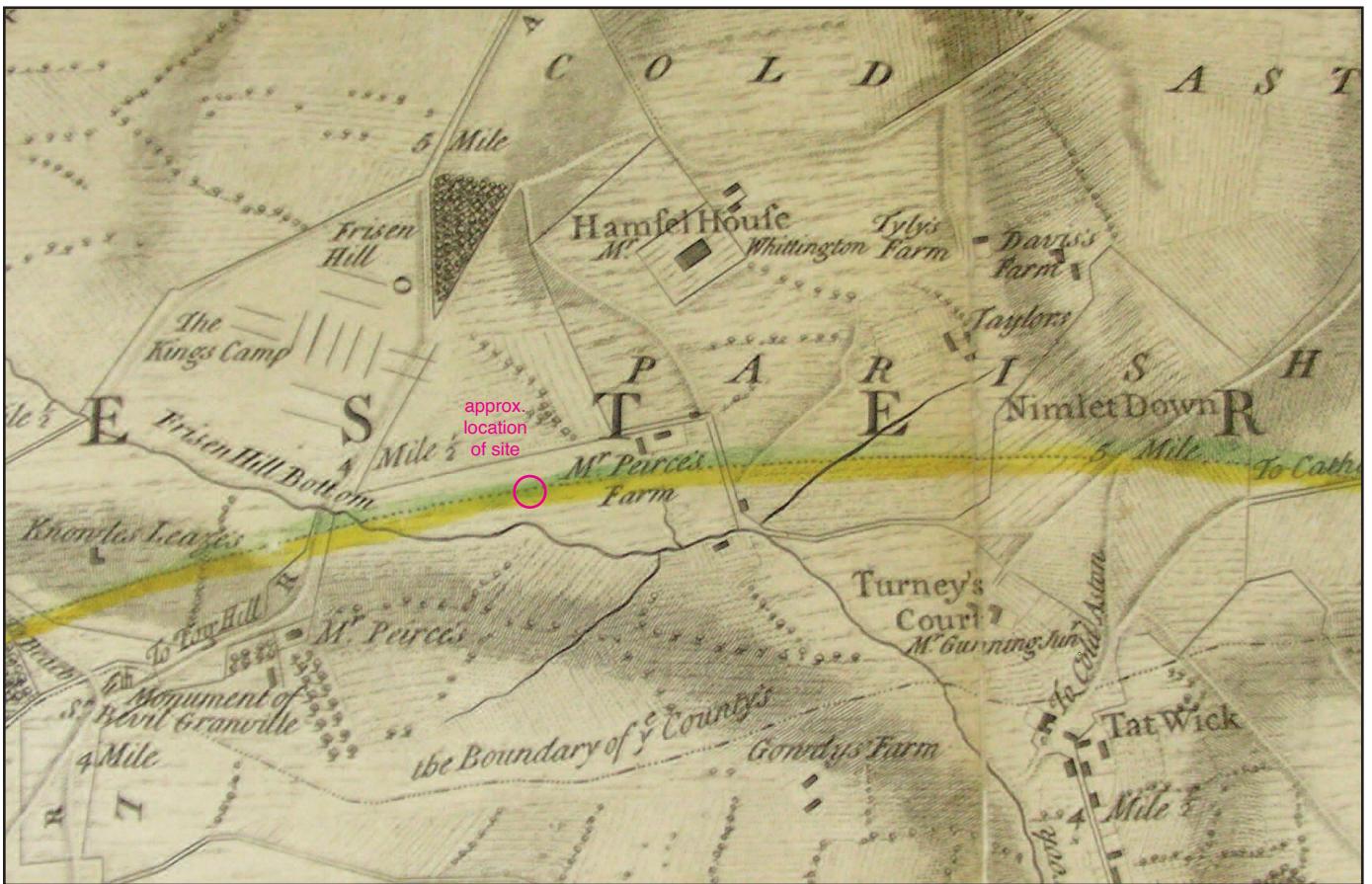


Fig.3 Thorpe's An Actual Survey of the City of Bath in the County of Somerset and of Five Miles Round, 1769 (Bath Record Office)



Fig.4 Donn the Elder, This map of the Country 11 Miles Around the City of Bristol. 1742 (Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery)

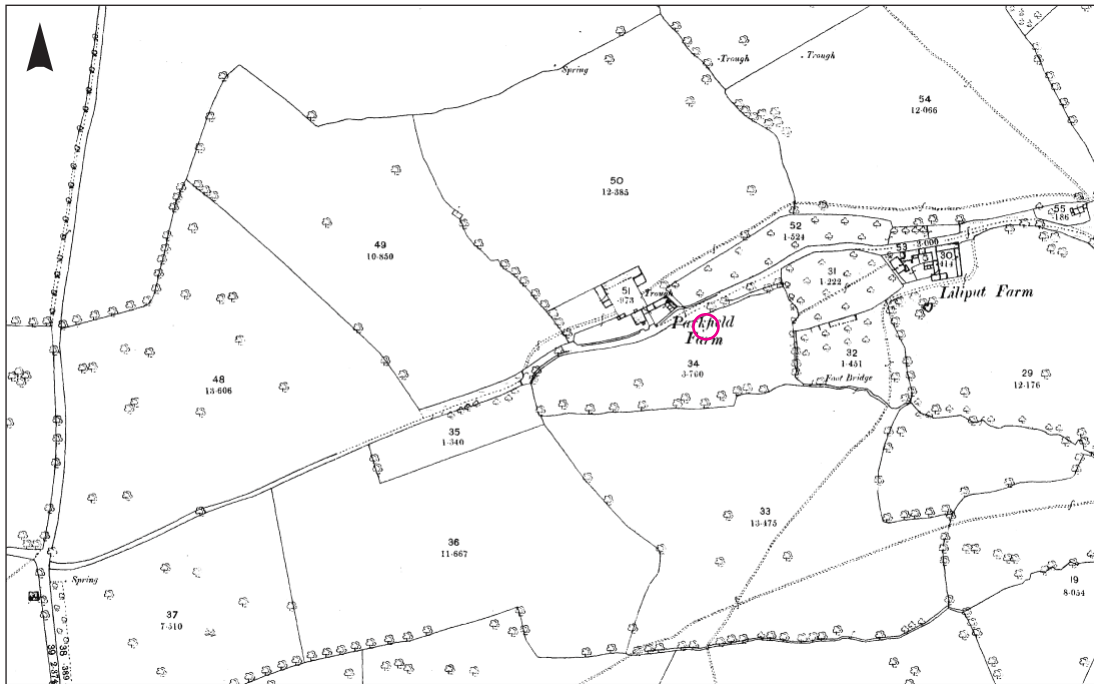


Fig.5 First Edition Ordnance Survey plan (1:2500) surveyed 1881, published 1890

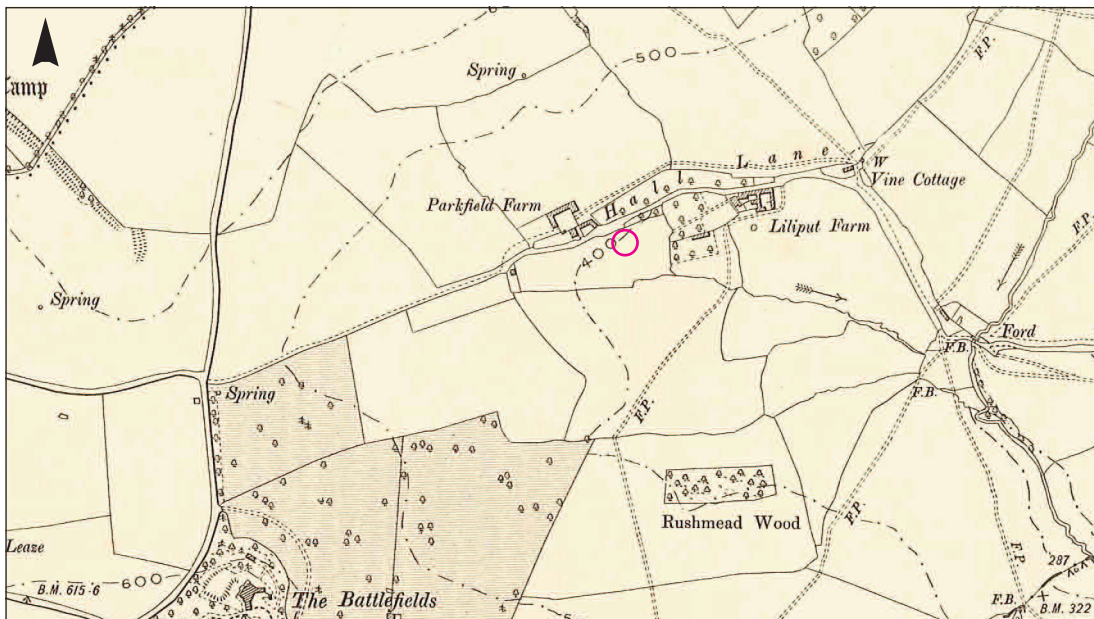


Fig.6 Ordnance Survey (1:2500) second edition, published 1904



Fig.7 Ordnance Survey (1:2500), published 1971 - 1972



Plate 1
Trench 1 soakaway,
west-facing section,
looking east. 1m scale



Plate 2
West-facing section at
the northern end of
Trench 3, looking east.
1m scale



Plate 3
West-facing section at
the southern end of
Trench 3, looking east.
1m scale



Plate 4 The stream to the east of the barns at the side of Hall Lane running south, looking south-west



Plate 5 1999 aerial photograph of the site. Note features in the field to the east of Berrymead Barns, as well as the fence line within the Berrymead Barn field