

**The Atlas of Hillforts of Britain and Ireland Hillfort survey (v2 October 2013)**

**Important information:**

**This form must be used with the accompanying Notes for Guidance which are downloadable from the Project website (<http://www.arch.ox.ac.uk/hillforts-atlas.html>). Please read the notes before attempting to fill in this form.**

**Once completed this form can be either posted or emailed to us, alternatively you can transcribe the information into the web-based form and submit electronically – see the Notes for details.**

**Access to sites and Health and Safety:**

**The project and its host Institutions bear no responsibility for any access or health and safety issues that may arise during your participation in this project.**

**Disclaimer:**

**The Co-directors of this project and their institutions are not responsible for issues of access to sites and health and safety of participants in the survey. By taking part in this survey you are acknowledging that access and health and safety are your responsibility.**

**Section 1.**

**Introductory comments**

Thank you for taking part in this survey, by doing so you are agreeing that all information provided can be used and published by the project. You will remain anonymous unless you indicate here that you want to be named on the project website:

1.1. YES – Name to be used: C.L.A.S.P.  
(This site surveyed by J.A. Aveling and N. Garnett)

**Basic information about you**

1.2. Your name: Community Landscape Archaeology Survey Project (CLASP)

1.3. Contact phone number: c/o G.W. Hatton, 01788 822411

1.4. email address: c/o ghatton@toucansurf.com

1.5. Did you visit this site as part of an archaeological society/group, if so which one:  
See answers to 1.1 and 1.2 above

## Section 2.

### Basic information about the site

2.1. Name of the site:	Thrapston ringwork
2.2. Alternative name of the site:	--
2.3. National Grid Reference:	TL 0039 7815
2.4. Any known reference numbers:	MNN 135289, MNN7844, HER No. 244.31.10
2.5. Current county/Unitary authority:	Northamptonshire
2.6. When did you visit the site (month/year):	03 February 2015

### Landscape setting of the site

2.7. Altitude (metres):	c61m OD
2.8. Topographic position: [you can tick more than 1]	
HILL TOP	X
COASTAL PROMONTORY	.
INLAND PROMONTORY	.
VALLEY BOTTOM	.
KNOLL/HILLOCK	.
OUTCROP	.
RIDGE	.
PLATEAU/CLIFF-EDGE	X
HILLSLOPE	.
LOWLAND (E.G. MARSH)	.
OTHER	.
Comments on topographic position:	Although this is a low-level hilltop, its viewshed gives excellent coverage, see details below.
ASPECT (if slope)	.

2.9. Maximum visibility/view:	
NE: [tick 1 only]	
LONG	.
MEDIUM	4km (estimated, see note below)
SHORT	.
SE: [tick 1 only]	
LONG	.
MEDIUM	4km (estimated, see note below)
SHORT	.
SW: [tick 1 only]	
LONG	.
MEDIUM	5km (estimated, see note below)
SHORT	.
NW: [tick 1 only]	
LONG	.
MEDIUM	4km (estimated, see note below)
SHORT	.
Comments:	The viewshed estimates given above were calculated using a

software mapping programme (Fugawi) loaded with 1:50000 OS map and contour data.

As at nearby Crow Hill (qv), the particular relevance of this site is the excellent surveillance that it would have afforded over the nearby major water-transport route (R.Nene).

2.10. Water source inside: [you can tick more than 1]

SPRING	.
STREAM	.
POOL	.
CISTERN	.
OTHER (details):	There is no indication of any internal water source on the earliest available (1884) OS 6 inch map.

2.11. Water source nearby: The River Nene is within about 500-600m, and may have been slightly closer in the past.

2.12. Current land category (over whole site footprint) (you can tick more than 1)

WOODLAND	
COMMERCIAL FORESTRY PLANTATION	.
PARKLAND	.
PASTURE (GRAZED)	X
ARABLE	.
SCRUB/BRACKEN	X
ROCKY OUTCROPS	.
HEATHER/MOORLAND	.
HEATH	.
BUILT-UP	X

Comments: The northern segment of the ringwork is covered in houses. Part of the east sector lies in the grounds of a motel/garage complex. The remainder of the ringwork lies under a level pasture; but detailed archaeology was carried out prior to the latest development construction (see G. Hull, 2001 'A late Bronze Age ringwork, pits and later features at Thrapston, Northamptonshire'. NA 29, p73-91).

2.13. Pre-hillfort activity:

Late Bronze Age ringwork, then appears to have been deserted until Late Iron Age.

2.14. Post-hillfort activity:

According to Hull's report (qv), Roman artefactual evidence was minimal and the Saxon period was not represented. Medieval activity appeared to be confined to ridge and furrow that overlay the Iron Age deposits. Modern activity was represented by quarrying and an animal burial pit to the north and west of the enclosure ditch

## Surface morphology of the site

Note (see the Notes for guidance document): from this section onwards we are assuming that you are working with a plan of the site. If it is a published plan then we do not expect you to record every item, only those which are different/additional to the plan you are working with. If you are drawing your own plan you can annotate details on it.

2.15. Which plan are you using: HER MapInfo data

2.16. Have you used any other sources of information (tick any that apply):

HER	HER MapInfo data, which describes this as: “ENCLOSED SETTLEMENT (Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age - 1000 BC to 401 BC); RINGWORK (Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age - 1000 BC to 401 BC); HILLFORT? (Late Bronze Age to Late Iron Age - 1000 BC to 42 AD)”.
NMR	.
PUBLISHED SOURCE (details):	G. Hull’s report in 2001, see referenced above.
OTHER (details):	A (Sandy) Kidd, in his report for the East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework (p4, para 2.1)

2.17. Is there an annex (see diagram in Notes for Guidance):

YES	.
NO	X

**Note: Sections 3 and 5 are for every site, section 4 only applies to sites with an annex.**

### Section 3. Enclosed area

3.1 General overall shape of enclosed area: [you can tick more than 1]

CIRCULAR	.
SUB-CIRCULAR/OVAL	X
RECTANGULAR	.
SUB-RECTANGULAR	.
POLYGONAL	.
IRREGULAR	.
COMPLEX (MORE THAN ONE ENCLOSURE)	.
Comments:	.

3.2. Maximum dimensions of internal area (see diagram in Notes for Guidance):

1.	.
2.	.

Comments: “The ditch at Thrapston is likely to be between 110m and 120m in diameter, and the depth of the ditch, at about 1.8m, is consistent with other sites of the period and region.” [Hull, op. cit].

3.3. Maximum dimensions of whole site footprint (see diagram in Notes for Guidance):

1. .
  2. .
- Comments: .

### Entrances

3.4. Number of breaks/entrances through the rampart by position: [give a number for each]

N .  
NE .  
E .  
SE .  
S .  
SW .  
W .  
NW .

Comments: .

3.5. How many are apparently secondary breaks: [give a number for each]

N .  
NE .  
E .  
SE .  
S .  
SW .  
W .  
NW .

Comments: .

3.6. (see diagram in Notes for Guidance):

For each entrance that is not a simple gap, is it most like any of the following (e.g. in-turned), if so record which position it is in:

IN-TURNED: [you can tick more than 1]

N .  
NE .  
E .  
SE .  
S .  
SW .  
W .  
NW .

OUT-TURNED: [you can tick more than 1]

N .  
NE .  
E .  
SE .  
S .  
SW .  
W .

NW .

BOTH (IN- AND OUT-TURNED): [you can tick more than 1]

N .

NE .

E .

SE .

S .

SW .

W .

NW .

HORNWORK: [you can tick more than 1]

N .

NE .

E .

SE .

S .

SW .

W .

NW .

OVER-LAPPING: [you can tick more than 1]

N .

NE .

E .

SE .

S .

SW .

W .

NW .

OUTWORKS: [you can tick more than 1]

N .

NE .

E .

SE .

S .

SW .

W .

NW .

Comments: .

OTHER FORMS:

Comments: .

### Enclosing works - ramparts/banks/walls and ditches

#### 3.7. Number of ramparts/banks/walls per quadrant:

NE: .  
SE: .  
SW: .  
NW: .  
Comments: .

#### 3.8. Number of DITCHES per quadrant:

NE: .  
SE: .  
SW: .  
NW: .  
Comments: .

#### 3.9. Form of rampart/bank/wall

Same all the way around:

Y .  
N .

If yes: [tick one only]

EARTHEN BANK .  
STONE WALL .  
BOTH .  
PALISADING .  
VITRIFICATION .  
OTHER BURNING .  
Comments: .

If NO then by quadrant:

NE: [you can tick more than 1]

EARTHEN BANK .  
STONE WALL .  
BOTH .  
PALISADING .  
VITRIFICATION .  
OTHER BURNING .  
Comments: .

SE: [you can tick more than 1]

EARTHEN BANK .  
STONE WALL .  
BOTH .  
PALISADING .  
VITRIFICATION .  
OTHER BURNING .  
Comments: .

SW: [you can tick more than 1]

EARTHEN BANK .  
STONE WALL .

BOTH	.
PALISADING	.
VITRIFICATION	.
OTHER BURNING	.
Comments:	.

NW: [you can tick more than 1]

EARTHEN BANK	.
STONE WALL	.
BOTH	.
PALISADING	.
VITRIFICATION	.
OTHER BURNING	.
Comments:	.

3.10. For each quadrant how many of each of the bank/wall/ditch combinations are there (see diagram in Notes for Guidance):

NE:

BANK/WALL (NO DITCH)	.
BANK/DITCH	.
BANK/DITCH/BANK	.
OTHER	.
Comments:	.

SE:

BANK/WALL (NO DITCH)	.
BANK/DITCH	.
BANK/DITCH/BANK	.
OTHER	.
Comments:	.

SW:

BANK/WALL (NO DITCH)	.
BANK/DITCH	.
BANK/DITCH/BANK	.
OTHER	.
Comments:	.

NW:

BANK/WALL (NO DITCH)	.
BANK/DITCH	.
BANK/DITCH/BANK	.
OTHER	.
Comments:	.

3.11. Chevaux de Frise (tick if YES, you can tick more than 1]

NE	.
SE	.
SW	.
NW	.
Comments:	.

**Interior features**

3.12. Tick all that are present, mark where on the plan and send to us: [you can tick more than 1]

NO APPARENT FEATURES .  
STONE STRUCTURES .  
PLATFORMS .  
QUARRY HOLLOWS .  
PITS .  
OTHER .  
Comments: .

**Section 4.**

If the site has an annex (see notes for definition of an annex), continue here with information about the annex, otherwise go to section 5 below:

4.1. Shape of the annex [tick only 1]

LOBATE .  
CONCENTRIC .  
CIRCULAR .  
SUB-CIRCULAR .  
RECTANGULAR .  
SUB-RECTANGULAR .  
POLYGONAL .  
IRREGULAR .  
OTHER .

4.2. Number of annex ramparts: .

4.3. Number of annex ditches: .

4.4. Number of annex entrances: .

4.5. Comments on the annex:

## Section 5.

5.1. Any general comments (including comments on erosion/damage, especially if recent):

Sandy Kidd's report for the East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework, states (p4, para 2.1):

*"The recently excavated 'ringfort' at Thrapston is so far unique in Northamptonshire in preserving a possible stratigraphic sequence from plain to decorated PDR wares"*

And again, on p5 of the same document:

*"The earliest defended sites [in Northamptonshire] are a 100m diameter circular enclosure at Thrapston (Hull, 1998) and, probably, the 54 hectare contour hillfort on Borough Hill, Daventry"*

Hull's report finally appeared as Hull, G 2001 'A late Bronze Age ringwork, pits and later features at Thrapston, Northamptonshire'. NA 29, p73–91. The introductory summary of this document states:

*"An excavation by Thames Valley Archaeological Services on land to the south of Huntingdon Road, Thrapston, examined part of a late Bronze Age circular enclosure ditch with some evidence of an internal bank. Radiocarbon dating indicates that the ditch was dug during the first quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC. The feature has been interpreted as a mini-hillfort or elite residence of a type particular to eastern England. The largest pottery collection in the county for this period was recovered, together with an important assemblage of animal bone. Late Bronze Age and late Iron Age pits were found both inside and outside the circuit of the ditch and a number of late Iron Age working hollows were also discovered. Medieval ridge and furrow overlay the Prehistoric deposits and some modern quarrying and pit digging had disturbed parts of the site."*

The conclusions of the report commence with the statement:

*"Two main phases of activity were identified on the site, late Bronze Age and late Iron Age. There was no evidence of middle Iron Age occupation although a single linear feature, probably a gully, predated the enclosure ditch. Roman artefactual evidence was minimal and the Saxon period was not represented. Medieval activity appeared to be confined to ridge and furrow that overlay the Iron Age deposits. Modern activity was represented by quarrying and an animal burial pit to the north and west of the enclosure ditch."*

The three elevated sites at Thrapston (LBA/LIA ringwork), Raunds (EIA/MIA defended enclosure) and Crow Hill Irthlingborough (EIA/MIA hillslope fort) are all clearly related to the course of the R. Nene, and are probably close enough to each other that they should be considered collectively.

This site, and that at Borough Hill Daventry, are the oldest known Bronze Age enclosures in Northamptonshire, and has been recognised as part of an eastern England regional monument group. Also, the largest pottery collection for this period in Northamptonshire was recovered from this site, together with an important assemblage of animal bone.

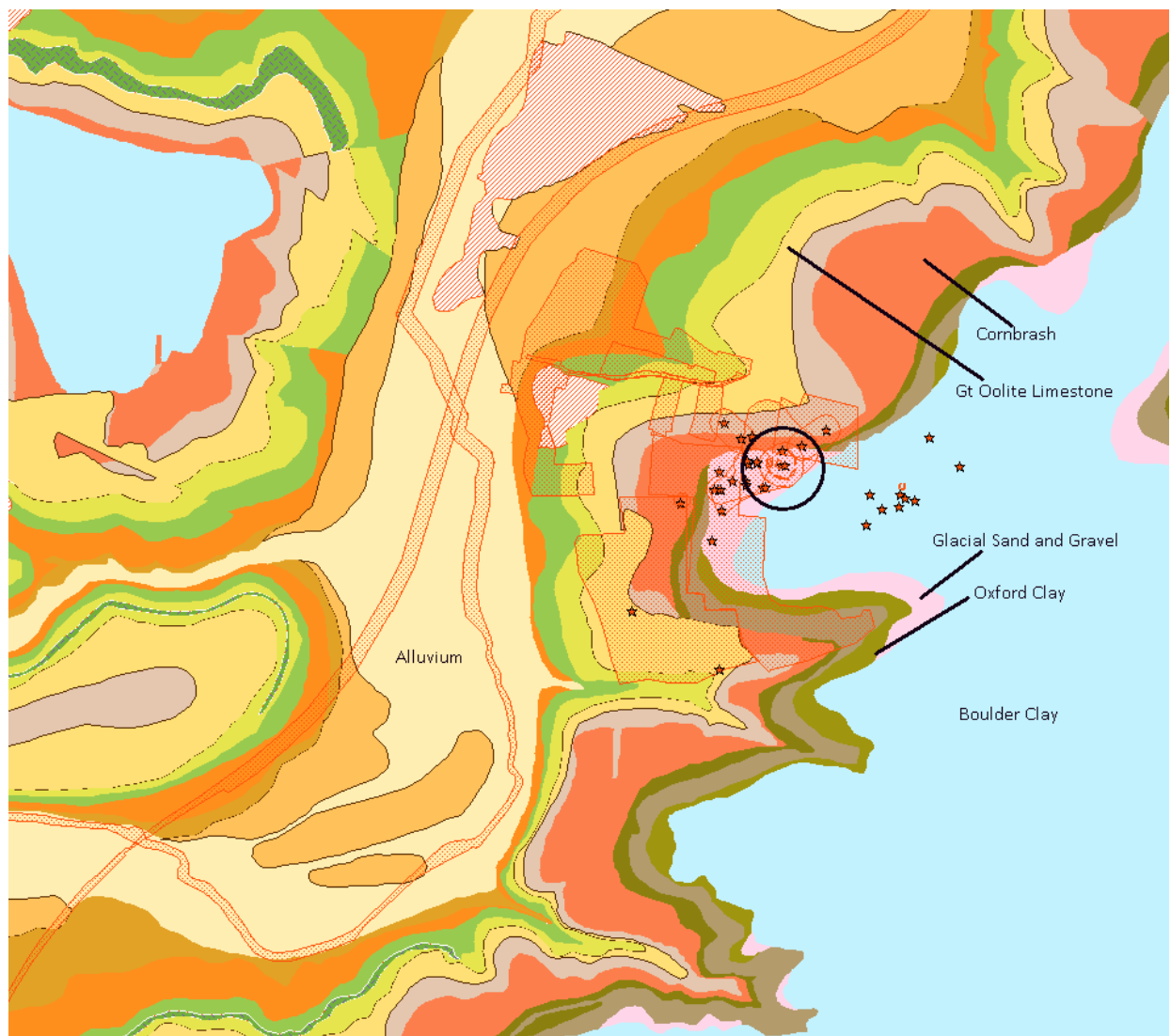
Regarding this specific survey visit:

The site was visited on a day when snow covered the monument and the pasture field presented us with a level expanse of white. Expecting to be able to pick out any unusual lumps and bumps, we were disappointed. There was no trace of the ditch or of any banks. It seems as though the medieval ploughmen had done all too thorough a job. Their work has now been levelled and the field is quite smooth.

In the field to the NE of the ringwork there are substantial ridges and furrows and an obvious headland runs E-W and disappears in a westerly direction beneath the hedge on the eastern side of the housing development as there is a distinct ridge bearing the hedge upon it.

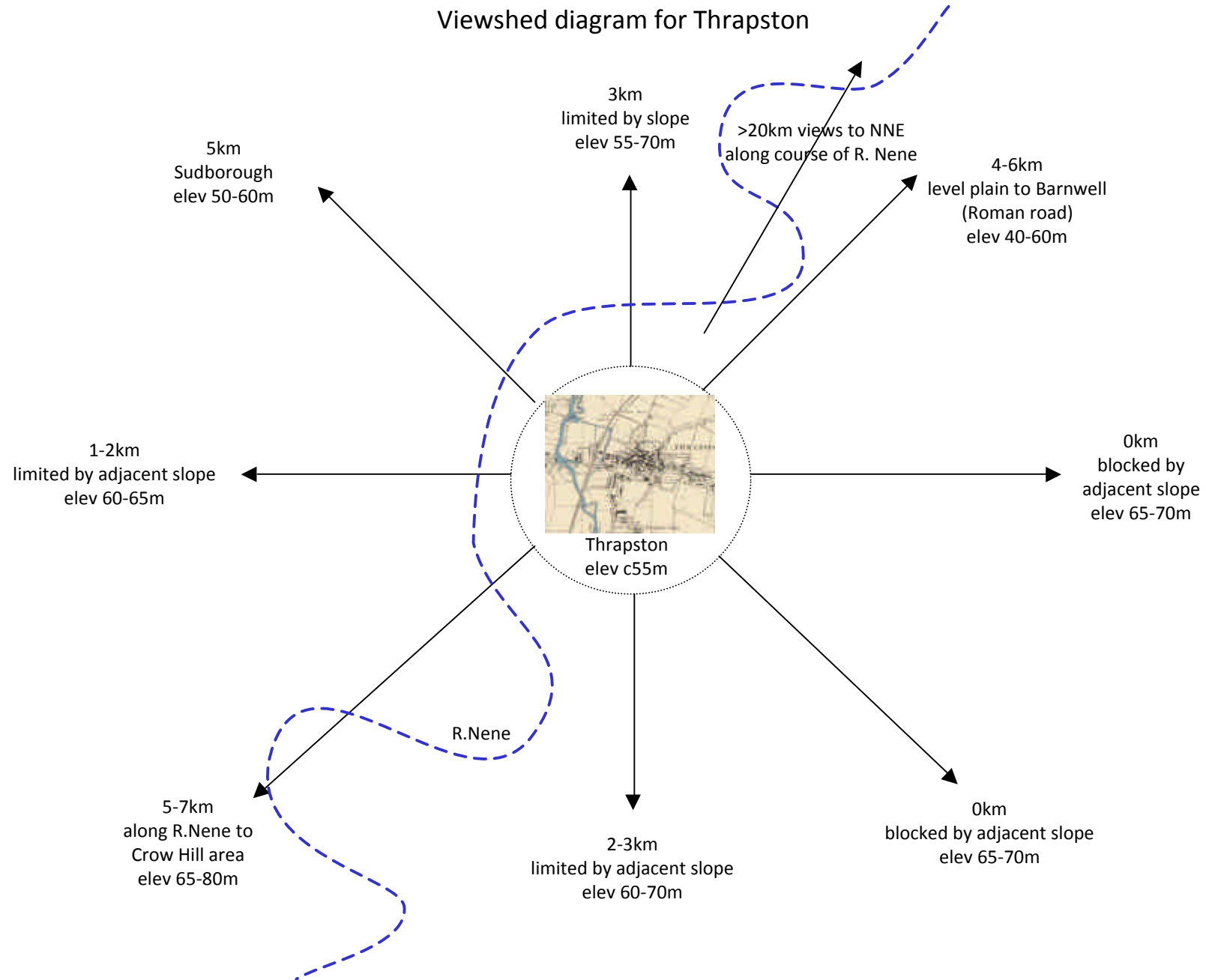


Extract from 1884 OS 6" map of the area



The geology of Thrapston Ringwork

# Viewshed diagram for Thrapston



## 6. Photographs



1. Thrapston Ringwork looking from south to north. The excavated area is behind the hedge.



2. Thrapston Ringwork looking from W to E along the modern building line. The land to the left of the hedge has been excavated. In this pasture field lies the greater part of the Ringwork.



3. Thrapston Ringwork. A west-to-east view of the edge of the excavated area.



4. Thrapston Ringwork. View towards the SW and the longest viewshed on the monument.