

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. 1.1. YES – Name to be used: Community Landscape Archaeology Survey Project (CLASP)
(surveyors of this site, D. Hayward, T. Kesten)

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: Salcey Forest sites '1', '2' and '3'
2.2. Alternative names of the site: Eggrings '1', '2' and '3', Hartwell '1','2' and '3'
2.3. National Grid Reference: SP 80200 50200
2.4. Any known reference numbers: HER = 5414/1/1
2.5. Current county/Unitary authority: Northamptonshire County Council/
South Northamptonshire District Council
2.6. When did you visit the site (month/year): May and July 2014

Landscape setting of the site

- 2.7. Altitude (metres):

Site '1'	Site '2'	Site '3'
130m OD	138m OD	125m OD

- 2.8. Topographic position: [you can tick more than 1]

HILL TOP	.
COASTAL PROMONTORY	.
INLAND PROMONTORY	.
VALLEY BOTTOM	.
KNOLL/HILLOCK	.
OUTCROP	.
RIDGE	X
PLATEAU/CLIFF-EDGE	.
HILLSLOPE	.
LOWLAND (E.G. MARSH)	.
OTHER	.

Comments on topographic position:

ASPECT (if slope)

- 2.9. Maximum visibility/view: (for details, see Viewshed Diagram in Appendices)

NE: [tick 1 only]

LONG	X (>20km)
MEDIUM	.
SHORT	.

SE: [tick 1 only]

LONG	X (>15km)
MEDIUM	.
SHORT	.

SW: [tick 1 only]

LONG	X (>10km)
MEDIUM	.
SHORT	.

NW: [tick 1 only]

LONG	.
MEDIUM	.
SHORT	X (masked by slope)

Comments: The above viewshed details are given as an average for all 3 sites.

The 8-point viewshed diagram (see Appendices) shows excellent long-distance views from due north all the way round clockwise to the south-west. The view to the north-west is restricted by the upper part of the slope, but a short walk would have been sufficient to overcome this nearby obstacle.

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

SPRING
STREAM
POOL
CISTERN
OTHER (details):

2.11. Water source nearby:

Owing to dense planting over this whole area in recent decades, it is very difficult to identify any original routes of watercourses in the vicinity of these sites. Currently there is no evidence of natural water sources within the sites. However, modern maps do reveal three watercourses within 100m of them. In terms of static water, a map lodged at The House of Lords in 1790 records "Rollis Mere Spinney" and "Sour Mere Quarter"; and recent maps record a "Sour Mere Pond" at GR: SP 8035 5103 to the north of the sites. The origins and sizes of these two ponds are unknown – however Sour Mere Pond was 25m x 40m before it was significantly reduced by back-filling in 1940 (Hall 1996 pp16).

The surveyors noted that surface water gathers very readily at times of significant rain. It was noted that multiple new drainage channels have been excavated across the whole area. These are clearly recent additions to the area and have adversely affected the structure of the features under study. This is discussed further in para 2.14 below.

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

WOODLAND	X
COMMERCIAL FORESTRY PLANTATION	.
PARKLAND	.
PASTURE (GRAZED)	.
ARABLE	.
SCRUB/BRACKEN	X
ROCKY OUTCROPS	.
HEATHER/MOORLAND	.
HEATH	.
BUILT-UP	.
Comments:	See para 2.14 below

2.13. Pre-hill-fort activity:

Site 1 – Nothing recorded or physically visible or identifiable on Lidar image
Site 2 – Nothing recorded or physically visible but see Section 5 below

2.14. Post-hill-fort activity:

The Royal Forest of Salcey is ancient woodland dating back 500 years or more. The present forest is a remnant of the medieval royal hunting forest, and some sections (including the Eggrings site) have been replanted in evergreen and deciduous coppice.

Currently the site of the Eggrings is managed by the Forestry Commission, but routine forestry work in the area of the hill-fort has been restricted in recent years. This has resulted in a spread of relatively dense secondary scrub across the area. Coupled with the primary

tree growth, this has rendered access to parts of the sites virtually impossible, and line-of-sight visibility within the sites is also exceptionally restricted.

Recent site drainage measures have involved construction of linear ditches both across the interior areas of the sites and in the wider external area of the forest. However, care has apparently been taken in some instances where these modern drains exit the sites. At Site 1, a modern gap seems to have been created in the SE corner to allow the passage of the drain(s) from the central area of the site. However, at Site 2 the drains have been constructed to pass through what appears to have been the single original entrance to the site. It was physically difficult to penetrate this area, so recourse was made to a Lidar image (kindly provided by the Forestry Commission), and close examination of this image indicates that the drain may have just 'clipped' the northerly bank terminus here, damaging a possible out-turn of the bank at this point.

Some drains have been constructed so as to drain water from the Iron Age ditches.

These drains and other features are annotated on a copy of the Lidar image for this site, included in the Appendices.

Site 3 does not appear to be affected by drainage ditches, but one side appears to have been almost totally subsumed by a forest way (commented on in Hall 1996, Para 4.1{b})

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:

RCHME SW Northamptonshire (Hartwell)

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

HER ☒ X (MapInfo database)

NMR ☐

PUBLISHED SOURCE (details): "The Egg Rings: A Defended Enclosure in Salcey Forest" – © Northamptonshire Archaeology, Vol.15, 1980 – (see Appendices)
"Salcey Forest Northamptonshire – Archaeological Interpretation Survey 1996" - © Forest Enterprise & Northamptonshire Heritage May 1996 - (see Appendices)

OTHER (details): Lidar image - © Forest Research, based on data from the Unit for Landscape Modelling and Forestry Commission Data (see Appendices)

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

YES ☐

NO ☒ No annex to any site identified.

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)	X

Comments: Site 1 – Best described as a protracted oval on a roughly N–S alignment with a slightly contracted waist.
Site 2 – Sub-circular
Site 3 – Possibly trapezium

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

See comment in Para 3.3

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

	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3
1.	225m	100m	n/k
2.	100m	90m	n/k

Comments:

Owing to lack of evidence of structure no measurements can be construed for Site 3. Considering the difficulty of physical access to the whole area containing these three sites, it was impossible to make physical 'on the ground' measurements. Measurements were therefore taken from the Lidar results. This method made it difficult to distinguish accurately between internal and external measurements; the best possible external measurements are therefore provided.

Entrances

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

	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3
N	0	0	0
NE	0	0	0
E	1	1	0
SE	1	0	0
S	0	0	n/k
SW	0	0	n/k
W	0	1	n/k
NW	0	1	n/k

Comments:

Owing to the lack of evidence of structure for the majority of Site 3, where appropriate the results are stated as n/k (not known). Previous sources have disputed the authenticity of the SW entrance for Site 1 being original (RCHM Northants Vol. 4). The 1980 NAS report takes the view that this is an original entrance; having now had opportunity to examine the Lidar image in detail under magnification, the surveyor concurs with this view, for similar reasons as stated in the NAS report. The only issue here that cannot be resolved 'beyond all reasonable doubt' is the nature of the ditch external to this entrance.

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

	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3
N			
NE			
E			
SE			
S			
SW			
W		1	
NW		1	
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]

	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3
N			
NE			
E	1		
SE	1		
S			
SW			
W			
NW			

Comments:

The 'in-turns' on the SE secondary entrance are far more pronounced than those for the E entrance, however the northerly in-turn does appear to be partly truncated by a later drainage ditch. The reason for the lack of definition of the 'in-turns' of the E entrance is not clear.

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

	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3
N			
NE			
E		1	
SE			
S			
SW			
W			
NW			

Comments:

The southerly 'out-turn' appears to be virtually intact, whereas the northerly example has evidence of damage or erosion that has reduced its length.

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

Comments:

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:

	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3
NE:	1	1	1
SE:	1	1	1
SW:	1	1	1
NW:	1	1	n/k
Comments:			

3.8. Number of DITCHES per quadrant:

	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3
NE	1	1	0
SE:	1	1	0
SW:	1	1	0
NW:	1	1	n/k
Comments:			

3.9. Form of rampart/bank/wall

Same all the way around:

	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3
Y	Yes	Yes	(Yes? see comment)
N			

Comment:

The actual existence of a rampart around 100% of Site 3 cannot be proved; therefore the 'Yes' answer under this site must be qualified to that extent

If yes: [tick one only]

	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3
EARTHEN BANK	X	X	X
STONE WALL			
BOTH			
PALISADING			
VITRIFICATION			
OTHER BURNING			

Comments:

Although the whole site could not be examined owing to foliage cover, on consideration of previous reports and Lidar examination, there is no cause to doubt above classification.

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]

	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3
NO APPARENT FEATURES	None		None
STONE STRUCTURES			
PLATFORMS		See comments in 5.1 below	
QUARRY HOLLOWS			
PITS			
OTHER		See comments in 5.1 below	
Comments:	See 5.1 below		

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:

Site two has not been considered as an annex but a second substantive site at the same location.

Section 5.

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

Note the comments above (para 2.14) regarding damage caused by recent forestry activity. The current state of the sites is similar for both sites; for detailed comments on the extent of tree and undergrowth coverage, see para 2.14 above.

Generally speaking, the sites are relatively well preserved by comparison with many similar sites in Northamptonshire and elsewhere, since they have been protected from plough action and/or urban development as a result of the long-term forest cover.

However, Hall's report (1996, sect 7.1) called for "... preservation as a scheduled Ancient Monument, with clearance of trees and undergrowth as soon as possible with minimum damage to the banks and interiors ... etc", and no such work has been either sanctioned or carried out.

Possible Internal Features

Site 1

None visible

Site 2

Magnification of the Lidar image shows what appear to be two possible features:

- a) To the SE of the centre point of this feature the examination reveals the southerly arc of a possible circular feature. Whilst the precise age of this sub-feature cannot be defined, for the purpose of this report it is classified as "earlier than the later drainage ditches".
- b) To the immediate west of this second feature, there appear to be two parallel straight linear features on a west-east alignment. There are however no apparent north-south linear features to complete a rectangle with these features. These lines also are cut by a NW-SE drainage ditch, which clearly post-dates them. Further detailed research into these features may help to date them and the whole site (see Appendix B).

Site 3

None visible.

Site 3 – Discussion

This site was included into this report chiefly because David Hall (1996 paper, para 4.1b) examined in physically and identified it as a probable enclosure. His views are corroborated in this report by examination of the magnified Lidar image. The most prominent feature is the NE bank, which clearly shows up on the Lidar and was also identified by Hall in his paper. Hall states that the course of the bank to the SE is utilised by a forest path. Close examination of this path on the Lidar image reveals some differences from otherwise similar nearby paths. There is a curve, forming an alignment with the east end of the bank referred to above, and another less obvious bank towards the south. This southerly bank is mentioned by Hall, and again shows up on the Lidar as a short stub towards the west, appearing to be a direct continuation of the curve in the path mentioned above.

Further along the projected course of this 'stub' the Lidar reveals what might be construed as a corner between this alignment and another heading towards the NW end of the first mentioned embankment above. This is very much a stand alone sub-feature. The Lidar appears to indicate some excavation at this 'corner' as opposed to embankment only.

One factor that cannot be easily explained is this where the construction material for the embankment of this feature originated from? There is no obvious evidence of quarrying in the immediate area.

The question must be posed is this a feature that was never completed; Lidar clearly indicates that there is no evidence of any activity in the logical alignment that the 'missing' embankments should follow if the overall feature was to be completed.

Other relevant factors – Discussion

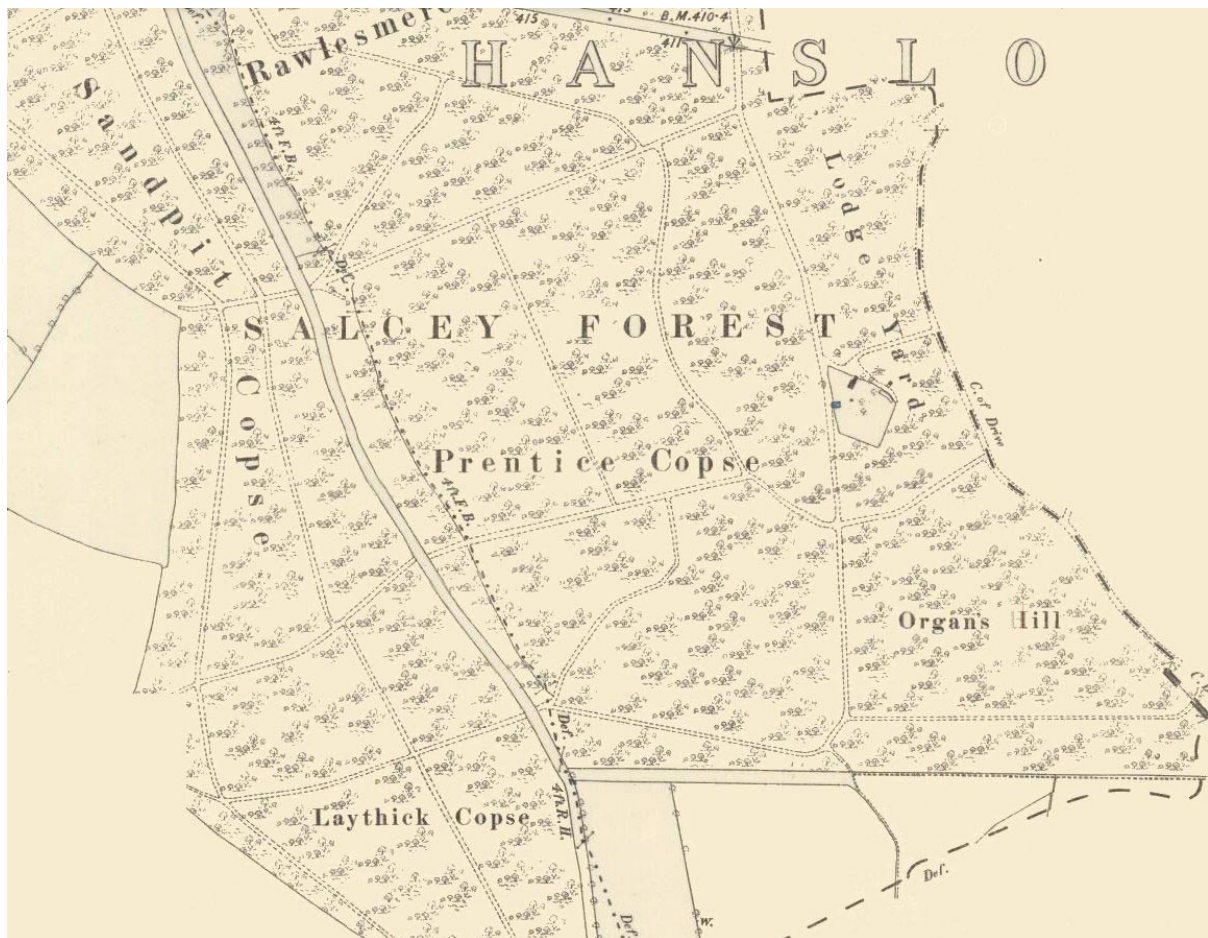
- a) D.N. Hall, in para 4.3 of his 1996 paper, records nearby in the forest at Rush Coppice SP7955 5155 to the north of the Eggrings sites, a slightly marked curving ditch that appears to form three sides of a 40m irregular shaped enclosure, with a 1.5m curving ditch. He suggests that it is “of Iron Age or Roman origins”. Nearby there is what seems to be an Iron Age field system. Two kilometres further north of these features is the large Romano-British villa complex at Piddington. The possibility is currently being considered that Piddington may have been a vexillation fortress.
- b) References quoted in the NAS 1980 paper refer to other possibly similar 'hill-forts' in the vicinity. The closest site mentioned is a C10 Norman motte 7.2km to the south-west at Alderton, the view being taken that this may have been built upon an earlier IA fort (see Grimes, W.F. In 'Problems of the Iron Age in Southern Britain' ed. S.S. Frere, Fig 5 & note). Alderton appears to be situated on a south-facing ridge at an elevation of 105m above OD. A further 4.4km south-west of Alderton, another (now vanished) hill-fort is reported at Old Tun Copse near Paulerspury (Wolverton and District Archaeological Society News Letter No.6, p6, see Appendices). This latter site is situated on a tongue of land protruding to the south, maximum height 137m above OD.
- c) Northamptonshire RCHME, Vol4, Hartwell I, mentions a possible similarity between Salcey Site 1 and a hill-fort at Tarrant Gunville in Dorset. The RCHME entry for Tarrant Gunville shows several Iron Age sites in that parish – and the most likely comparator is the hill-fort at Bussey Stool Park. However, there are significant differences between the two sites, including configuration, position of entrances, and the fact that Bussey has out-turns whereas Salcey Eggrings Site 1 has in-turns (though Salcey Site 2 does have out-turns). The overall configuration of the Tarrant Gunville site also differs from the characteristic kidney shape of Salcey Site 1. Among the sites described at Tarrant Gunville, interestingly, the Main Down site does appear kidney-shaped. In addition to these specifics, several other features in the archaeological landscapes of both sites tend to corroborate the views taken in the Northamptonshire RCHME.
- d) Several of the above points, plus others, are currently being researched by CLASP in connection with other projects, and will be discussed in a later research paper by CLASP.
- e) Brief mention should also be made of what may be an ancient nodal centre just north of Site 2. The centre appears to focus at a forest feature identified in 1790 as 'Nine Oaks Tongue' Quarter. The principal ancient routes involved are:
 - A north-south Portway running from a possible Roman-period port on the River Ouse near Haversham (or from further south). This route probably runs to the north, with a NE branch along a documented route known as the Stone-way.
 - An ancient Salt-Way from Droitwich enters the forest from the NW.
 - Another route enters from the west and may link the Salcey sites to the above-mentioned sites at Alderton and Old Tun Copse. It is possible that this route may be a long-distance route running back via Alchester to Dorchester-on-Thames.
 - A fourth route leads SE from the above-mentioned focus.

CLASP is carrying out long-term research into these and other early communication routes that pass through Northamptonshire, and detailed justification for each route will be provided in a later research paper by CLASP.

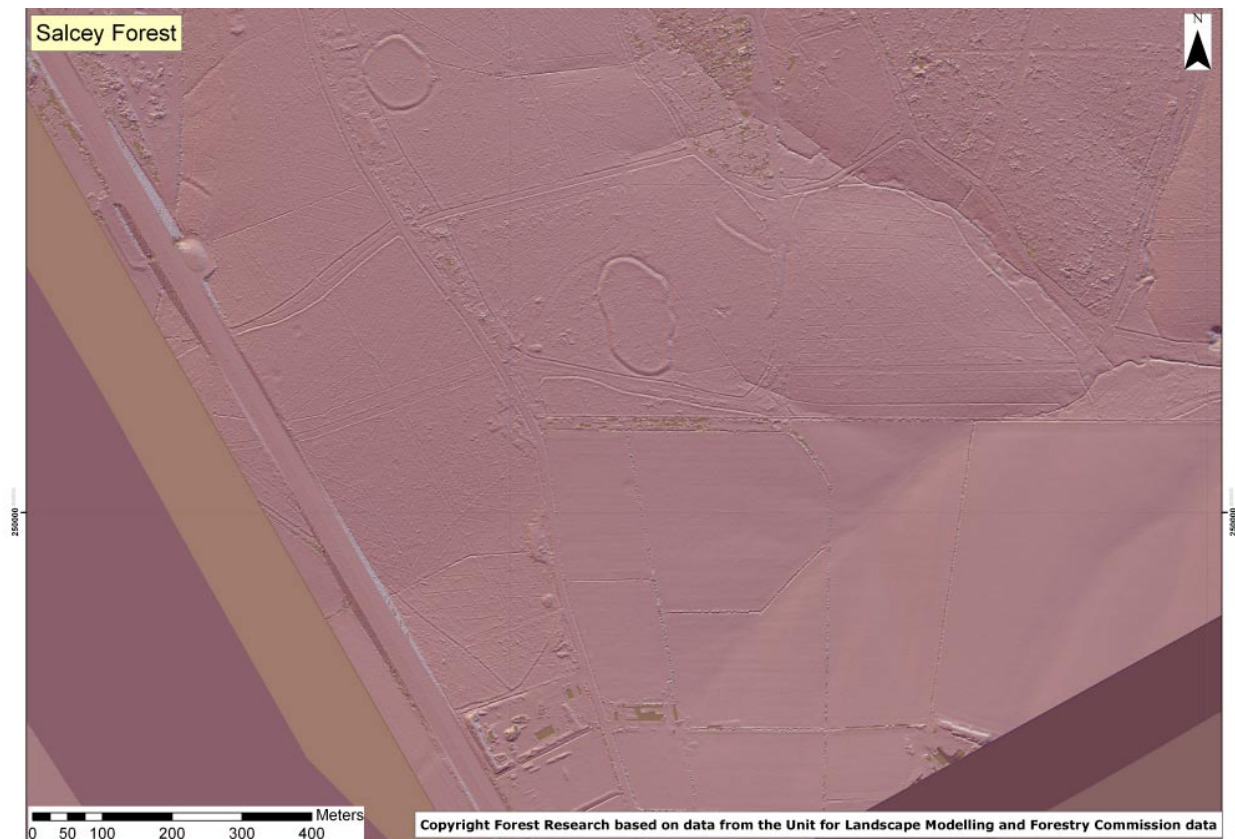
Appendices

1. 1884 O.S. 6" map of the general location
2. Lidar image (courtesy of Forestry Commission) showing locations of Sites 1, 2 & 3
3. Viewshed diagram for the Salcey Eggrings sites
4. Annotated Lidar image, highlighting all relevant features
5. Lidar image marked up to indicate photograph locations
6. Photographs during the present site survey
7. NAS 1980 paper on Salcey Eggrings
8. D.N. Hall's 1996 paper on Salcey Eggrings
9. 1790 Coppicing Enclosure Map, Salcey Forest (courtesy of House of Lords Archive)
10. Relevant pages of Wolverton & District Arch. Soc. newsletter No.6

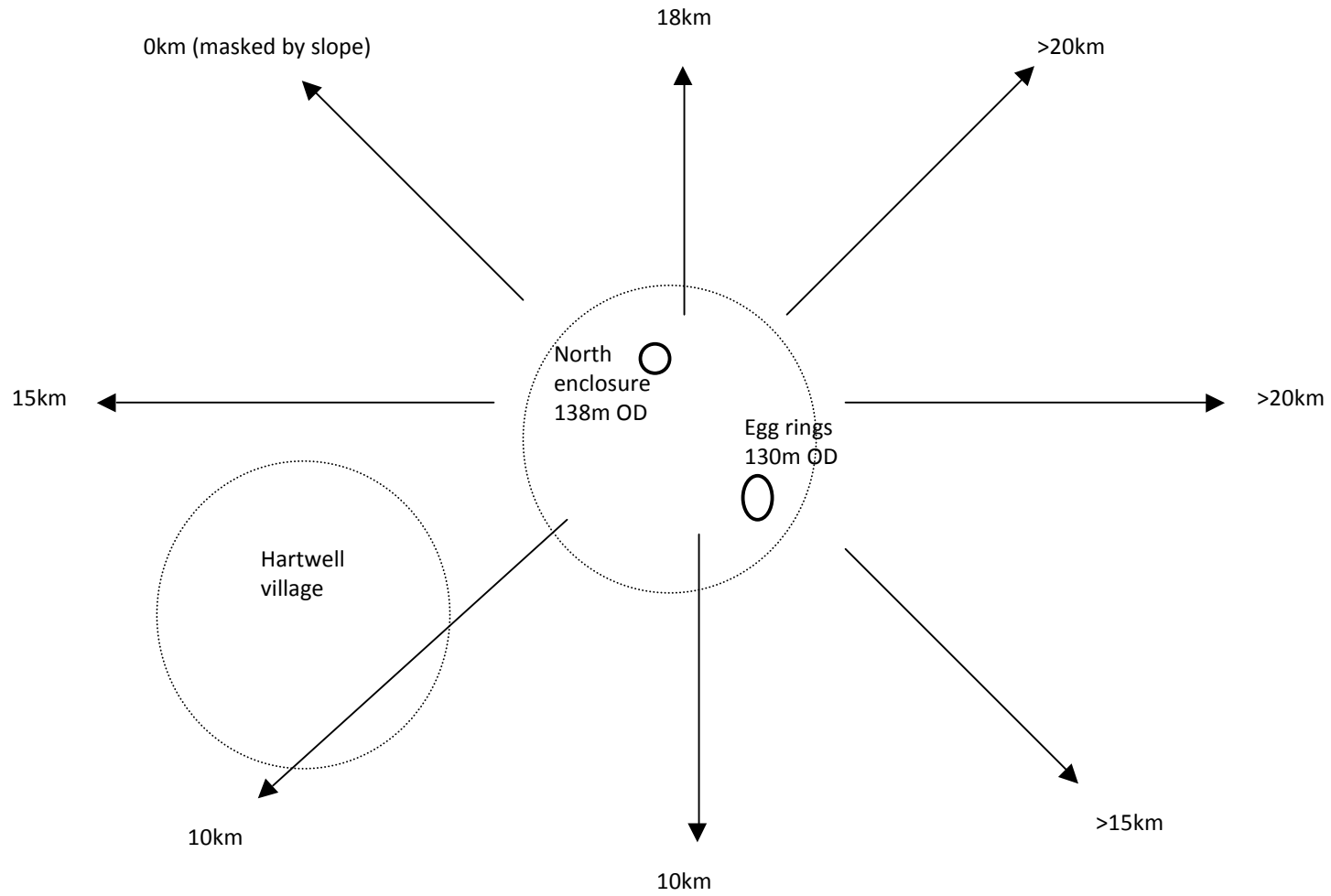
1. 1883/4 O.S. 6" map of the general location



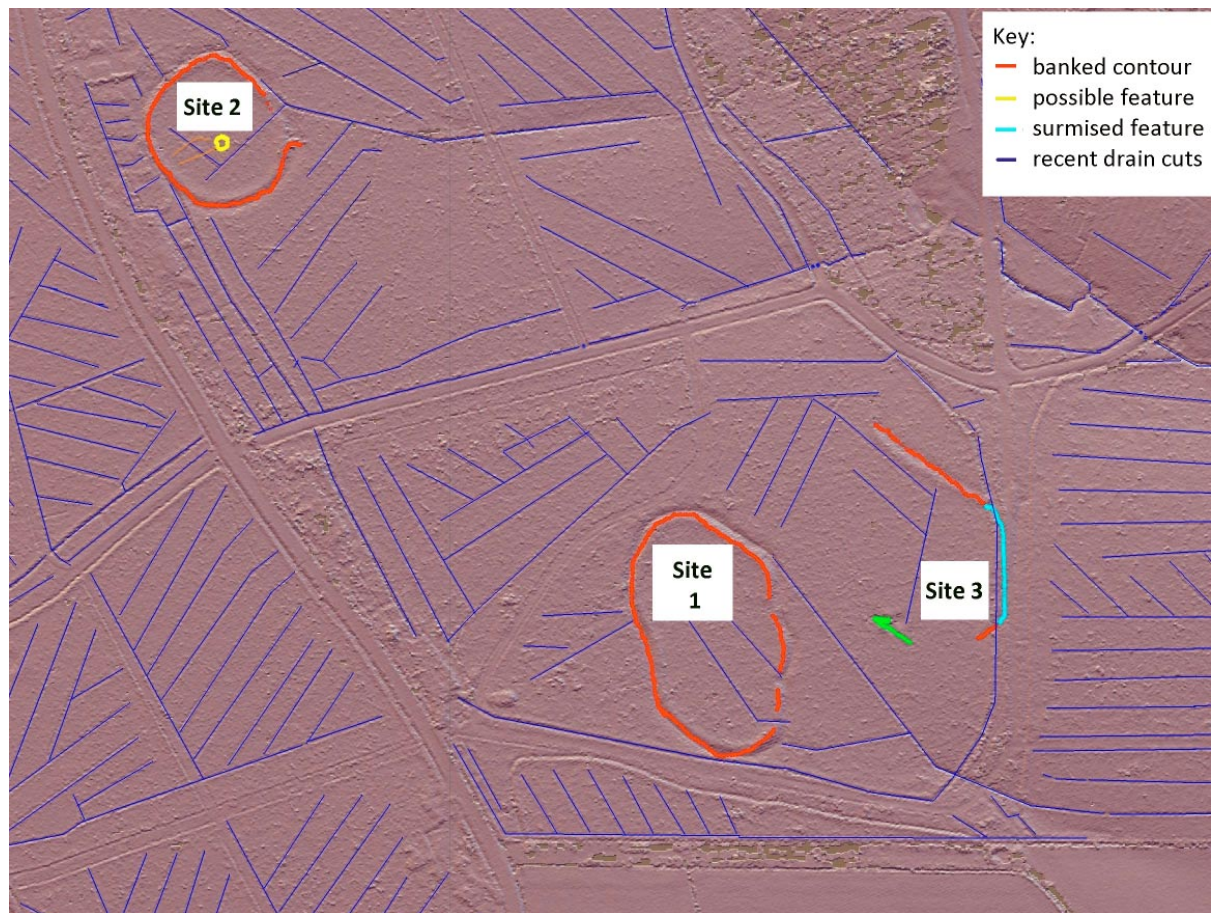
2. Lidar image (courtesy of Forestry Commission) showing locations of Sites 1, 2 & 3



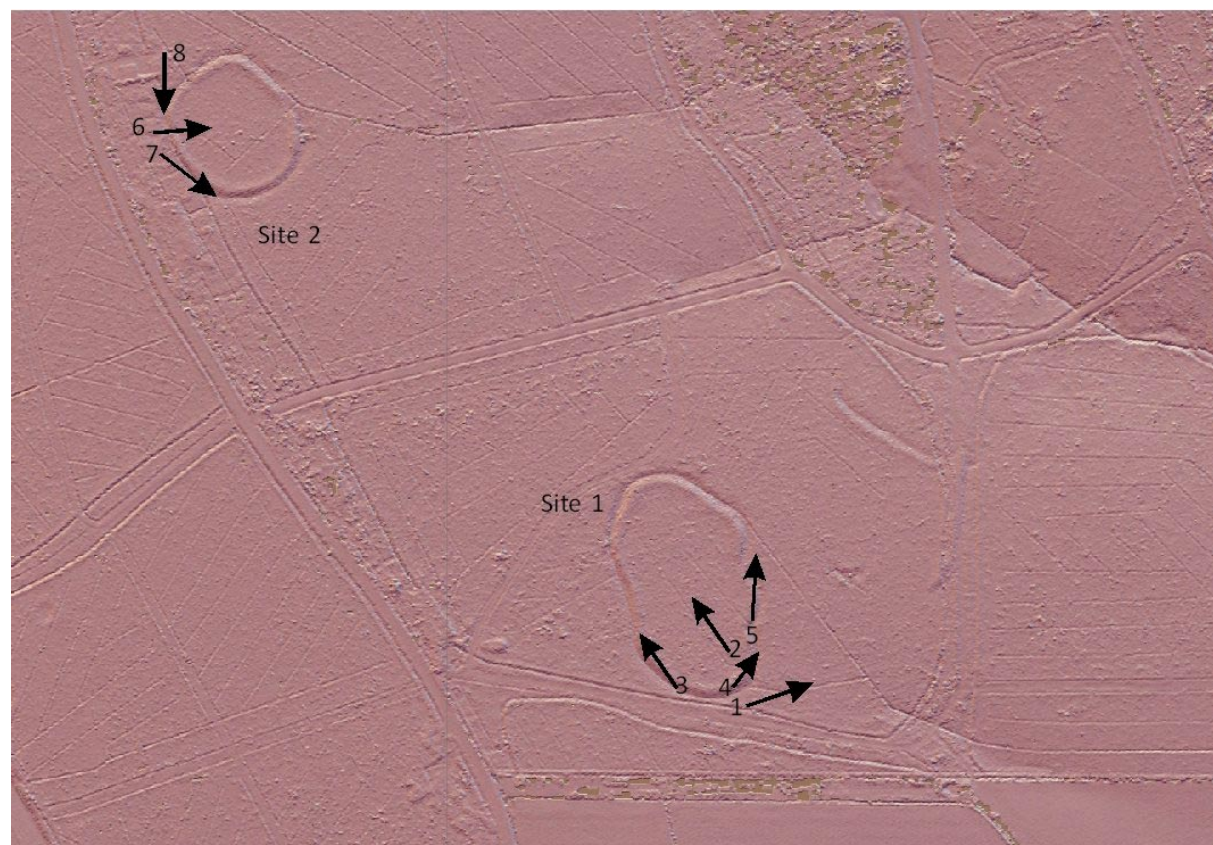
Viewshed diagram for the Hartwell/Salcey enclosures



4. Annotated Lidar image, highlighting all relevant features



5. Lidar image marked up to indicate photograph locations



6. Photographs during the present site survey



6.1 Illustrating the general density of vegetation cover and limited line-of-sight visibility



6.2 Interior of Site 1, showing a later drainage ditch that cuts across the site

6.3 View into Site 1 from south, showing typical vegetation and part of the bank



6.4 Site 1, view along top of southern bank as it starts to turn NE



6.5 Site 1, east bank trailing to ditch on the right



6.6 Interior view of Site 2



6.7 Site 2, west side original ditch



6.8 Site 2, later drainage ditch from north joining west side ditch



7. NAS 1980 paper on Salcey Eggrings

Notes

THE EGG RINGS: A DEFENDED ENCLOSURE IN SALCEY FOREST (FIG1)

The existence of a defended enclosure at SP802502 in Prentice Copse, a southern limb of Salcey Forest in the parish of Hartwell, Northants, was first referred to by Whetton in 1849¹, and has from time to time been visited by fieldworkers², notably Miss J N Morris and W B Hatherley in 1948, but the lack of a proper survey has prevented it from becoming better known³. The earthwork, which is remarkably upstanding, has apparently been saved from levelling by being contained within the forest which was established at least as early as the 13th century and has been little disturbed since. Today the whole of the earthwork is planted with larch and administered by the Forestry Commission, and no more than a dozen yards can be seen in any direction at any one time.

The earthwork occupies gravel subsoiled land gently dipping to the east, at approximately 390 ft above sea level. It comprises a single bank and ditch enclosing a roughly kidney shaped area of 1.185 ha (2.45 acres), the total aggregate width of bank and ditch being some 20m (66ft). At its maximum the crest of the bank is approximately 1.2m above the silted ditch bottom. The circuit is interrupted at two points on its eastern, downhill, side, the more northerly gap being considered in this survey as being an original entrance on the basis that the bank steepens and inturns at this point, and the external ditch is, for a short stretch, wholly absent, providing continuity of level between the interior and exterior of the enclosure. Some 54m to the south of this entrance there is a further break in the defences, narrower than the other and retaining some slight indication of a ditch, thus rather less convincing as an original feature. However the fact that the bank inturns distinctly at this point also makes it difficult to explain this feature in terms other than that it represents a secondary entrance, the external depression probably being formed by natural drainage.

Elsewhere on the circuit the defence line is continuous except where breached by modern forestry ditches attempting to drain, with only partial success, the surface water impounded by the earthwork. Despite an intensive search no other significant features could be discerned either internally or externally. The only find recorded from the area is, significantly, a Hunsbury type rotary quern from Organ's Hill, a neighbouring section of the forest. Without further evidence, the date of construction of the Egg Rings cannot be confirmed, but its size and location on an eminent ridge

suggest that it is a monument from the earthwork enclosed smaller hill fort type, attributable to the 3rd to 1st centuries AD.⁴

Only four hillforts are at present acknowledged in Northamptonshire all being confined to the uplands of the west of the county. There is, however, considerable accumulated evidence that the whole county was settled in the Iron Ages. Assuming there was no marked cultural difference between Iron Age peoples living in hilly country of the midlands, and those of less hilly parts, the question of what equivalent provision was made in the absence of suitable hills remains unanswered, and it is quite possible that the earthworks of the Prentice Copse type, which could quite easily be obliterated by medieval and later arable practice, were more widespread than has hitherto been accepted. In the south Northamptonshire area, a similar earthwork, for instance, seems to have existed also protected by forestry until recently but now cleared and ploughed out, at Old Tun Copse, Paulerspury (SP720434)⁶, another at Foscote in the Ouse Valley in neighbouring Buckinghamshire (SP725 347)⁷, and the ringwork at Alderton may well have Iron Age precedent'. These smaller fortified enclosures,

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IIIIU11auausau

Site Plan

Section A-E

A B
IL I
lim
M
C

1 185iha

2.45 is

Fig. 1 The Egg Rings, Salcey Forest, Northamptonshire

40 m
d

Northamptonshire Archaeology 15, 1980

like Draughton in mid Northants⁹, but which are better represented in Wessex, should perhaps be distinguished from, on one hand, the hill forts of 4-7 enclosed acres, which includes all the Northamptonshire examples (omitting the extension to Borough Hill) and which must represent the efforts for security of an organised community, and on the other hand, the ditched enclosures of up to 3/ acre in extent, such as Aldwinckle¹⁰, Twywell", Wakerley¹², and Briar Hill¹³, which, arguably, need not contain more than an extended family group.

The survey of the Egg Rings was carried out in the winter of 1978-9 by C and P Woodfield and R and D Friendship-Taylor as part of a research programme on earthworks. Information on past records was kindly provided by Mr Robert Moore.

C T P WOODFIELD

NOTES

1. Whetton: Guide Book to Northampton and Environs (1849) 203-4. Whetton was accurate in his measurement of the enclosed area.

2. In his field survey of Hartwell parish, CBA 9 Bulletin, 5,

8, David Hall noted an adjacent earthwork which was first reported by Paul Scrimshaw of the Forestry Commission in 1960. The existence of two defended enclosures within some 500m of each other is a fact of some significance, and may relate to other groups of ditched Iron Age enclosures. See note 11.

3. The Egg Rings have been surveyed by the RCHM for inclusion in their forthcoming inventory, for southern Northamptonshire (Vol 14, Hartwell 1). C C Taylor, who prepared the Inventory notes only accepts one entrance as original, and likens the earthwork to one at Tarrant Gunville, Dorset. This seems too great a distance from which to draw meaningful parallels.

4. Cunliffe, B, *Iron Age Communities in Britain*, 1975, 156-7.

5. Evidence reported in BNFAS and Northamptonshire Archaeol, Vols 1-14.

6. Newsletter Of the Wolverton Archaeological Society, 6, 1-5. There are verbal reports of upstanding banks forming an enclosure of similar size, but little can now be discerned on the ground. The writer thanks Dennis Mynard for this information.

7. Earthworks were visible about 1973 but recent mechanised agriculture has reduced the banks to almost nothing.

8. The enclosed area at Alderton is approximately 2 acres. The Castle was owned by Thomas le Sauvage in the mid-13th century. The scale and shape of the earthworks could well be those of an Iron Age fort remodelled in the early medieval period. Grimes, W F, in *Problems Of the Iron Age in Southern Britain* (ed S S Frere), Fig 5 and note.

10. Northamptonshire Archaeol, 12, 1978, 13

11. Northamptonshire Archaeol, 10, 1975, 75

12. Northamptonshire Archaeol, 9, 1974, 85

13. Northamptonshire Archaeol, 14, 1979, 102

8. D.N. Hall's 1996 paper on Salcey Eggrings

SALCEY FOREST
Northamptonshire

Archaeological
Interpretation Survey
1996

D N Hall
with mapping on GIS by Northamptonshire Heritage

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May 1996

Cover

A view of the Great Oak in Salcey Forest, May 1794

From 'A Description of the Great Oak in Salcey Forest in the County of Northampton' by H Rooke,
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Salcey Forest, Northamptonshire

Archaeological Interpretation Survey

Summary

An archaeological fieldwork survey of Salcey Forest was conducted in April 1996. Previous information from archaeological records and documentary sources was checked, and all the woodland compartments were searched for earthworks. A summary of the history of the Forest and its management is followed by a list of the sites discovered and visited. Ringworks (of probable prehistoric date) and an early system of enclosures were mapped. The medieval coppice-boundary banks are almost perfectly preserved. The significance of all the earthworks is discussed and a series of recommendations made for further research and for practical management of the remarkable series of archaeological remains present in Salcey Forest.

1 Introduction

Salcey Forest is one of the three ancient woodland regions of Northamptonshire (Fig. 1). In the Middle Ages it consisted of a series of woods, chases and assarts lying on the southern Northamptonshire boundary stretching from Hartwell in the west to Bozeat in the east. By the late 17th century all of the eastern woods had been sold or removed from the crown's forest jurisdiction, leaving the core wood lying between the M1 and the B526, which still retains the ancient name 'Salcey Forest'. Almost all of this wood (excluding Salcey Lawn) became the property of the Forest Commission in 1924 and is now in the care of Forest Enterprise. The south-eastern part is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (English Nature 1993, WCS/247), which extends to 135ha.

The survey here reported was commissioned by Forest Enterprise in February 1996 on the advice of Northamptonshire Heritage to provide information for the preparation of a management plan for Salcey Forest. Northamptonshire Heritage contributed further resources to enable completion of the work. The specific purpose of the survey was to identify and map archaeological earthworks of all periods lying within Salcey Forest that may require protection by scheduling, or would benefit from sympathetic forest management. In common with other ancient woodlands in the county, the Forest has the potential of preserving archaeological remains in excellent condition, being one of the few areas of Northamptonshire undisturbed by modern agriculture or by medieval ridge and furrow ploughing.

There has never previously been a systematic archaeological survey of Salcey Forest. However, features of potential archaeological interest have been recorded in the Northamptonshire Heritage Sites and Monuments Record, as listed below in *Part 4*. In addition, an Orienteering Map produced by Northamptonshire Orienteering Society, with the support of Forest Enterprise, shows various earthworks, ditches and other features lying within the Forest that required investigation and interpretation.

2 Methodology

2.1 Preparation

In advance of the fieldwork stage, indexes of historical records held at Northamptonshire Record Office (NRO) were rapidly reviewed. In particular early maps were sought that might show significant features. Medieval forests were used as a timber resource, which, in the later period, was often managed by a coppicing system (see below). Each coppice was defined by banks that were used to support fences for keeping out deer in the early stages of woodland regeneration after felling. Any map of these would help the ground survey.

A draft enclosure map of 1825 (NRO Map 2912) shows all the coppices before the present roads and ridings were laid out. It is at a scale of 3 chains to the inch (1:2376) and more likely to be more accurate than a similar map of 1787 held at the Public Record Office. The map was traced, digitized by Northamptonshire Heritage, and printed here at 1:20,000 (Fig. 2). Some error was probably introduced during tracing and the digitization process is likely to be within ± 2 metres.

The current Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 scale map was used for fieldwork plotting, and the older 1:10,560 Ordnance map and the Orienteering Map (both also reproduced at the 1:10,000 scale) were taken into the field for reference.

2.2 Fieldwork methodology

Each compartment of the Forest, as defined by existing ridings, was walked in lines about 50m apart as far as possible, ensuring that all ground was viewed within about 30m. Line spacing was at times dictated by tree-planting lines, undergrowth and the shape of the compartment. This technique would be expected to reveal all significant features except where there was thick ground vegetation cover.

A qualitative record of the tree and vegetation cover of each compartment was made (Fig. 3). The mauve areas indicate where undergrowth was so thick that walking was impossible, and the other shadings represent 'good', 'fair' and 'poor'. The last two categories were used for regions where there was natural ground cover or thick loppings sufficient to obscure low relief features. Banks of the size of the coppice boundaries or larger would not have been missed in any of the categories. Even in the areas not walked large scale linear features would be identified where they emerged into clearer ground.

Most compartments were in adequate viewing condition in terms of shrub undergrowth (35 'good', 16 'fair'). Another 7 compartments had sufficient rough ground cover ('poor') to obscure low profile features, such as the slight ditches lying in Rush Coppice (Fig. 4, site 3). Significant proportions of 17 compartments were too thick to be walked.

The present ridings, medieval coppice banks and all other earthworks were followed and checked throughout the Forest. All ditches and earthworks marked on the Orienteering Map were visited. Every line on the 1825 map was checked, many were found to be

coppice banks and some others were ditches. Other lines relate to divisions of the map made to determine a valuation (called the 'quality') during the enclosure process of 1825-6, and never had any physical reality

3 Summary of documentary evidence

Salcey Forest is first recorded by name in 1206 (Gover et al 1933, 1). Many of the component woods and assarts were held by adjacent manors. They were mentioned without identification in the Domesday survey of 1086 and later are named from time to time (eg Horne Wood (in Easton Maudit) in 1220 and Yardley Chase in 1277 (Gover et al, 190 & 154)). The earliest account of the whole is the description of the 'metes and bounds' of 1298, which refers to woods lying between Ashton and Bozeat; woods belonging to Chadstone, Whiston (Whiston Pike near Denton), Horton and Courteenhall are identifiable. The survey described the woods in blocks rather than being a 'perambulation', which finished at the starting point (copies NRO Bru.O vii.8 and XYZ 1939, Appendix 1)

The enlarged boundary of forest jurisdiction created by Charles I in 1638 ran from Northampton along the River Nene to Wellingborough, then south along the A509, along the boundary with Buckinghamshire to the River Ouse and up the River Tove to Towcester and then to the A43 back to Northampton. The woodland had never covered anything like all of this area, but in the early Middle Ages it had been larger than the 1298 extent. Much inroad was made during the 12th and 13th centuries by assarting, and a crown rent roll of 1337 lists 31 assarts in Salcey Forest totalling 445 acres (NRO XYZ 438), but these were only a small part of all the assarts. Some of the 1337 assarts (eg Bozeat Woods and Cogenhoe Brand next to Horton Wood) still paid rent to the crown in the early 17th century (NRO FH 3471)

The general management of Northamptonshire forests in the 17th century and their importance to the crown as a source of income, with many references to Salcey, is given by Pettit (1968). Various surveys describe the detailed acreages and the age of growth in each coppice. In 1676 (NRO ZB 707/2) the ages ranged from 1 to 28 years. Coppices of 7 years and under were enclosed, although Hartwell Clear Coppice had been 'taken by the deer'. Sometimes coppices were left uncut for longer periods.

The present core wood called Salcey was managed as 24 blocks called coppices, fully named and described in various surveys from 1558-1825 (Pettit 1968, Appendix 1 (1558), 1676 (NRO ZB 707/2; 1787 (NRO XYZ 1939). The names are marked on Figure 2; the name 'Stony Coppice' is probably a mistake for 'Stoneway Coppice', which is used now as it was in the 16th and 17th centuries. Rollis Mere Coppice of Figure 2 is now called Rawlesmere Coppice. The coppices were grouped into three blocks or 'walks' called Hartwell, Piddington and Hanslope Walks (1,122 acres of wood). There were ridings and large spaces between some coppices called plains (later called 'quarters', Fig. 2, 471 acres). The open areas were also assigned to one of the three walks. The walks consisted of the following coppices:

Piddington Walk

Clubs Coppice, Wakes Coppice, Madirons Coppice, Crabtree Thick Coppice, Hazel Coppice, Atterbury Coppice, Limebed Coppice, Little Straits Coppice and Shrubby Coppice (north half)

Hanslope Walk

Rawlesmere Coppice, Prentice Coppice, Deanway Coppice, Organs Hill Coppice, Hanslope Hollows Coppice, Great Straits Coppice, Knightons Coppice, Rose Coppice and Deans Coppice

Hartwell Walk

Quinton Tongue Coppice, Shrubby Coppice (south half), Rush Coppice, Hartwell Clear Coppice, Sand Pits Coppice and Lye-thick Coppice

A clear account of the management and structure is provided by the 1792 report of the state of Salcey Forest (NRO XYZ 1939). Hanslope Walk lay at the south-east and was partly in Hanslope parish and partly extra-parochial. It contained 9 coppices, Hanslope Lodge and Lodge Yard (the present 'Lodge Yard'), and the Page-keeper's lodge (south of Rose Coppice). Piddington Walk lay on the north in Piddington parish and contained 8 coppices and half of Shrubby Coppice as well as Piddington Lodge. Hartwell Walk lay on the west in Hartwell, Ashton and Piddington parishes, and was also partly extra-parochial. There were 6 coppices, the remainder of Shrubby Coppice, a lodge yard and Hartwell Lodge. A fourth 'walk' was called the Deputy rangers walk. It lay in the middle of the Forest, partly in Piddington parish and partly extra-parochial. There were no coppices, only the Rangers Lodge and two enclosed lawns. The plains and ridings were also assigned to each of the three main walks

The Forest was in the charge of a warden or ranger. This office had been granted to George Montagu and his heirs in 1660 and belonged to the Rt Hon Frederick Montagu in 1787. The ranger had a deputy and appointed a keeper for each of the three walks and there was a page-keeper (presumably a deputy or trainee). Each keeper lived in the lodge assigned to a particular walk. There were also two verderers and one woodward.

As well as the plains, there were four lawns or open spaces consisting of the Great Lawn 124 acres with Little Lawn 23 acres, Hanslope Lawn or Lodge Yard 23 acres and Hartwell Lawn or Lodge yard 33 acres. Lawns and pasture attached to the lodges accounted for 255 acres, making the total Forest 1847 acres. Common cattle were at all times excluded from the lawns by a railed fence and only deer and cattle belonging to the ranger or keepers admitted.

The coppices were cut in rotation after 21 years growth, then enclosed with a strong hedge and ditch for 7 years to keep out common cattle and deer. Deer leaps were made for 2 years and in the tenth year the hedge was taken away to allow the cattle to enter. This shows that the 'hedge' was a 'dead hedge' made up of loppings and other timber, as

was used for deer parks. Standard trees were left after coppicing and allowed to mature for timber. In 1787 there were 1200 bucks and does, of which about 90 were killed annually.

Owners of lands in Hartwell, Ashton, Quinton, Piddington and Hackleton in Northamptonshire, and Hanslope in Bucks, claimed common of pasture in the forest from old May day to 23rd November, for as many horses and cows as they were allowed to keep on their lands in winter. Draught Horses and milch cows were taken out from 20 June to 20 July. No swine were ever allowed to common. Cattle over the limit were impounded and fined 6/8d per head by foresters. The common cattle could feed with deer in the open plains and ridings and in coppices when open.

Later estate management details are given in the account book of George Morland, agent or deputy ranger to the warden, the Hon. George Montagu, 1776-9. There is reference to a great oak of 16 yards circumference, payments for men cutting hay, cutting wood, and fagotting ash and oak browse (on Figure 2 tree-mapped in 1825 are marked with a T, the bottom of the 'T' marking the location). Letters refer to bucks sold, problems with poachers and the expenses of a surgeon attending a keeper and subsequent funeral expenses 'for keeper'. A Lodge (presumably the one in Salcey Lawn rather than a keeper's lodge) had much work done and there are bills for the work of carpenters and glaziers (NRO ML114).

The rights of various owners, lessees, officers and the commoning rights of neighbouring villages were so complex that the crown decided not to use Salcey for timber in 1792 (which could have been moved the via the Oxford canal from Aynho Wharf). It was enclosed in 1825-6 (NRO Bill G 4080/5, Award YZ18) and many papers dealing with the process were preserved by the Duke of Grafton's agent (NRO G 3910, 4142/3, 4102, 4164, 4165). The enclosure settled plots on the interested parties as private freeholds. Large areas of the north and south were grubbed up and converted to arable.

4 Identified Site List

The fieldwork results are listed below. Sites and features of all periods are marked on Figure 4, grouped together chronologically by colours.

- 4.1 (a) SP 8023 5027, SMR 5414/1/1. In the south of Prentice Coppice lies an enclosure of 1.19ha called the Egg Rings (Fig. 4, 1a in green). It is marked by a bank and ditch 20m wide and was first recorded in 1849 and has been fully described by Woodfield (1980) and RCHM (Northants iv 1982, 74-5). An Iron Age date is possible, c 800-45AD. Its current state and suggestions for future management have been discussed recently by Cadman (1996).
- 4.1 (b) SP 8040 5030. Linear banks 11m wide, lie 150m east of the Egg Rings (Fig. 4, 1b in green). A north-south stretch has been utilised by the riding between Prentice and Organs Hill Coppices. At the south the bank peters out after turning a corner. The north-east corner is marked by a length of bank for about 90m that cannot be

farther followed because of dense undergrowth. The banks seem to form an enclosure added on the eastern side of the Egg Rings.

- 4.2 SP 7985 5061, SMR 4688/0/1. Also in Prentice Coppice, lying 500m north-west of the Egg Rings is another enclosure, roughly circular, 80m diameter (Fig. 4, 2 in green). It was first reported in 1960 by a forestry officer (Woodfield 1980, 158 fn 2) and mapped in 1974 (Hall 1975). It has an exactly similar ditch and rampart construction as the Egg Rings, and is likely to be contemporary with them, possibly of Iron Age date.
- 4.3 SP 7955 5155. In Rush Coppice there is a slightly marked curving ditch 1.5m wide with internal banks. Ditches at the north and south of it become slowly less marked in a south-easterly direction, but appear to represent three sides of an irregular enclosure about 40m diameter (Fig. 4, 3 in green). An Iron Age or Roman date is possible.
- 4.4 Ancient enclosures west of Salcey Lawn, western centre SP 7940 5210

- 4.4 (a) West of Salcey Lawn lies a network of large banks (Fig. 4, 4a in green) that predate the coppices as mapped in 1787 and 1825. The banks are 11m wide and up to 1m high. They link up to form a complex of enclosures without ridings between them. Part of the complex included the north-western part of the present Salcey Lawn. Some banks are partly marked on the Orienteering Map and some have adjacent ditches marked on both the Orienteering and the 1825 maps. These ditches are not necessarily contemporary but were cut because the early banks formed obstacles to the natural drainage on the nearly flat terrain. It is never-the-less likely that the soil came from adjacent contemporary ditches now no longer obvious.

A block of four enclosures (assuming completion of the north-west and south-east corners) makes an approximate rectangle of 800 by 400 metres. Two of the enclosures are small and include a pond in Stoneway Coppice that may be contemporary. To the north and east linear banks extend out beyond the present Forest. The eastern one (Fig. 4, 4b) includes an arm now the riding between Great and Little Straights Coppices and the northern one (Fig. 4, 4c) underlies the riding east of Stoneway Coppice.

Aerial photographs held by Northamptonshire Heritage show cropmarks in Salcey Lawn that complete the south-east corner of the main block, and also continue east across the Lawn joining the bank in the riding between Great and Little Straights Coppice. At the north the arm continues along its course as a riding mapped in 1825, in the area now arable land, and becomes mixed up with other cropmarks of unknown date. In the Lawn another linear cropmark is aligned with the present riding across Blackmoor (Hill) Quarter that once went to Piddington Lodge, but in the wood no earthwork was noticed. The cropmarks appear as double ditches which were probably the sources of earth for the banks, or ditches could have been added later if the banks were used as tracks. The northern and eastern arms would seem to be marking off a large area of early forest and plains at the south of Piddington and Horton parishes.

4.5 *Coppice boundaries (Figure 4, red)*

All the coppices marked on the 1825 map have substantial earthworks c.3m wide 1.5m high with a ditch 1.4m wide on the outside. They are well preserved except where slightly damaged by being used as modern riding boundaries (eg the west side of Rush Coppice). The relative chronology is clear where they are cut by new riding ditches of 1825-6, Pound Riding (between Shrubby and Rawlesmere Coppices) just cuts the south-east of Rush Coppice, and the south-east end of the present riding through the north part of Rush Coppice cuts an angle of the coppice ditch.

4.6 *Other enclosure banks*

The edges of Salcey Lawn are marked with slight ditches that are undoubtedly old, made for hedges and fences contemporary with the coppices. Lodge Yard (between Prentice and Knightons Coppices) was not a coppice but a lawn enclosed with hedges. It too has (hedge) banks slighter than those of the coppices.

4.7 *The page-keepers lodge, site 5, SP 8130 5022*

The page-keeper's lodge and yard lay south of Rose Coppice in the south east. It is the only surviving ancient lodge without modern buildings. Unfortunately gravel pits made in the 18th and 19th century have caused much mutilation. Some of the mounds visible at the location may be buildings marked on the 1825 map rather than quarries. The lodge is important because it is likely to have below ground remains of the earliest stage that will help date the origin of the Salcey coppice system, assuming that the whole system of coppices and lodges was created at the same time.

4.8 *Ponds*

Nearly all the ponds marked on the 1825 map were identified. Not all of them are marked on current Ordnance maps. They are likely to be part of the coppice system made to provide water for animals in the summer. The largest, now partly filled, is Sour Mere, north of Lodge Yard (Fig. 4, site 6).

4.9 *19th-century ditches, Figure 4, blue*

The present ridings, most of which were completely new creations of 1825-6, or were made by narrowing some of the old coppice ridings, are marked with slight ditches and banks and shown on Figure 4. Generally they are about 1.5m wide and 1m deep, but are more substantial either side of Pound Riding (between Rush and Rawlesmere Coppices) and the ridings between Deans Coppice and Great Straights and in the riding going through Lodge Yard. Some modern ridings used a coppice ditch as a boundary. On Figure 4 the width of the modern ridings is slightly exaggerated; the true widths are as shown by the dotted parallel lines except for the riding from the reservoir running north-east through Stoneway Coppice, which has recently been widened to 19m.

Innumerable woodland management ditches lie throughout the modern compartments,

both in the coppices, plains, and in the ridings of pre-1825. They have not been mapped. The ditches cutting across the pre-1825 ridings are certainly connected with the enclosed woodland created in 1825-6. Nearly all other similar ditches are likely to be 19th-century; they fit logically into the new riding system and run across the contours. Typically they are about 1.5m wide and 1m deep with very slight or no banks.

4.10 *Earthworks of 1939-45, Figure 4, yellow*

The Hartwell and Hanslope Roads have a series of concrete bases used to store machinery parts during the Second World War. Nearly all are marked on the Ordnance Survey base map. A few of them are now obscured with a shallow spread of earth or buried by soil heaps. All the sites are associated with amorphous piles of earth, usually placed either side, that probably came from the footings and was bulldozed aside. Large dumps are flat topped (as in the north of Rawlesmere Coppice). The large pond called Sour Mere marked on the 1825 map has been partly filled with soil dumped from an adjacent concrete hardstanding.

Some of the stores had air-raid shelters in front or nearby. These were simple corridor structures with entrances placed at right angles in the middle giving an overall T-shaped plan. In a few cases there is surviving brickwork, marked with an asterisk (*) on Figure 4.

4.11 *Other sites*

The Northamptonshire Heritage SMR records several other archaeological items as follows:

SMR 1606/0/0 SP 812 515 'Iron Age pottery' found just outside the Forest, north-east of Great Straights Coppice. No earthworks were found in the wood, other than the coppice banks.

SMR 3486-7 SP 7920 5210 'Undated earthwork mounds' -interpreted SP 7980 5110 as wartime soil dumps, see Fig. 4.

SMR 4730/1/2 SP 7245 5265 'Soilmark, 1982' - northern extension of Stoneway Coppice eastern riding, see Fig. 4.

SP c.805 503 'Quernstone found in Organs Hill' - the coppice revealed no earthworks that might be attributed to a Roman settlement, but slight remains would not be visible in the current state of undergrowth.

4.12 *Botanical note*

A substantial bed of common twayblades (*Listera Ovata*) lies in the north of Stoneway Coppice at SP 7930 5255. This should be avoided by machinery and it may worth transplanting some to the SSSI (if not botanically unethical).

5 Interpretation and dating of the earthworks

Figure 5 shows the archaeological data separated into chronological phases.

5.1 *Prentice Coppice ringworks*

The ringworks (Fig. 4, 1, 2) are similar in size to known enclosures of Iron Age date (c 800-45AD). The occurrence of two similar adjacent enclosures is paralleled on the east of the medieval Forest at Easton Maudit and Bozeat (Hall 1971). Excavation and field walking at these sites confirmed they were of Iron Age date.

There is a slight possibility that the Salcey enclosures are medieval pounds or cattle folds. They do not lie near any of the ancient lodges, as might be expected and, although located suitably for impounding Hartwell and Hanslope animals, they would be inconvenient for those of Piddington. The ramparts are more substantial than those of an enclosure c.100m diameter in the woods of Harringworth, in Rockingham Forest, that seems to be one of two large pounds recorded in 1273 (Hall 1995, 15). A radiocarbon date of the 10th century was obtained (Jackson 1980, 158-60).

Evidence for medieval usage of the Salcey enclosures is that the Egg Rings seem to be associated with linear banks to the east, which are similar in nature to the complex of banks described below and believed to be early medieval (4.4). If complete, these banks would make an enclosure c 150m by 170m linked to the Egg Rings. The ditch of the smaller circular enclosure (4.2) runs smoothly into the western ditch and bank of Prentice Coppice, suggesting they are contemporary. In both cases medieval usage of the enclosures could be incorporation of genuine ancient earthworks as part of something new.

5.2 *Ancient enclosures west of Salcey Lawn*

These enclosures are older than the coppices, as is clear at the south-east of Stoneway Coppice where a coppice ditch cuts through an ancient bank. Stoneway Coppice pond lies in the north-east corner of a small enclosure, looking to be contemporary with it. The pattern does not resemble any known Roman enclosure or field system being much too extensive and massive. The creators of the coppices, although they ignored most of the early banks, were aware of them. The modern ridings between Stoneway and Crabtree Coppices, and between Great and Little Straights Coppices, were used as ridings with coppice banks following either side of the older banks which became used as a raised causeway.

The enclosures are probably to be interpreted as clearings reserved for deer, being in effect an earlier form of Salcey Lawn. There may be an early lodge site within the complex, although this has so far eluded identification. A date in the late Saxon or early Norman period, say 11th or 12th century is possible. Woodland was already used for hunting by 1066, - the Domesday Survey of 1086 recorded Alwin the Hunter as owner of land at Pytchley in 1066. The banks extending beyond the enclosures, and out of the present woodland, would seem to belong to an earlier and more extensive state of the

Forest, such as would be expected to occur in the 10th or 11th centuries.

Historical records will provide relevant dating information; Shrubby Copse was created in the middle of the earlier system and any reference to this coppice in medieval records will act as important marker for the date of the coppice system as well as giving a *terminus ante quem* for the early enclosures. Stoneway and Hazel Coppices also overlie part of the early system.

5.3 *The coppice banks*

The coppices were in existence by 1568, as shown by various surveys of that date and later. Other records mention specific coppices, Wakes Coppice is named in accounts of wood sold by the crown in 1571 (NRO Brudenell O xxix misc 2) and Prentice Coppice (Prentys copp) is mentioned in c. 1550 (Gover et al, 1933, 100 from PRO E 315/399 (or /403, /430)). Elsewhere in the county coppice names occur at various dates. A survey of Yardley Hastings woods in 1565 refers to all coppices mapped in 1765. A coppice of Whittlewood is recorded in 1367 (*loggecype* Gover et al, 1933, 60).

The coppice layout is a deliberate and carefully planned method of managing the forest for both deer hunting and timber growth. The ridings and wide plains between the coppices are suitable for chasing and hunting deer leaving the coppices as timber production reserves, each provided with a rampart that could be used to exclude deer in the early stages of regrowth. Thus both timber production and hunting could be successfully accommodated in the same forest. Increase in medieval population caused extension of arable land by assarting, as well as increasing demand for building timber and fuel. The use of woods solely for deer with uncontrolled browsing of young trees and pollards became an inefficient method of exploiting them as their size was reduced. A 13th-century date is therefore likely for the creation of the coppices, when the medieval population approached its maximum.

6 **Priorities for further research**

Below are listed survey priorities for further archaeological and historical research that would give an improved understanding of many of the features. Some aspects would be suitable for a university based project, but any actions involving possible damage or earthmoving of will be of interest and should be subject to consultation with Northamptonshire Heritage.

- 6.1 The circular earthwork (Fig. 4, 2) requires a detailed plan with profiles of the bank and ditch. When clear of trees a geophysical survey would probably clarify its use and date - an internal ring ditch might be an Iron Age house.
- 6.2 The small ditch (Fig. 4, 3) also requires a large scale survey. When there is less ground vegetation its full extent may be apparent.
- 6.3 Profiles of the old bank system (Fig. 4, 4) need measuring. The arable fields in Salcey

Lawn and those beyond the forest in the areas of the linear cropmarks need field walking to identify soilmarks and collect dating artefacts

- 6.4 Profiles of the copse banks in undisturbed areas should be taken.

- 6.5 Stoneway Coppice (SP 7940 5212)

The area of complex ditch intersections east of Stoneway Coppice should be surveyed and planned in some detail, partly to record the interesting chronological relationships and partly to see if there are any traces of an early lodge.

- 6.6 Page Keeper's Lodge (note 4.7, *Fig. 5* SP 8130 5022)

The page-keeper's lodge, lying south of Rose Coppice in the south east, is the only ancient lodge without modern buildings. Although gravel extraction has caused much damage in the area, a more detailed study should establish if some of the mounds are remains of buildings rather than quarries.

- 6.7 Documentary record

It would be relatively simple to produce a short history of all Northamptonshire forests, with emphasis on the archaeological, landscape and conservation aspects. Most of the records are either held locally in family collections at NRO, or are kept in official national records at the PRO. Most of the medieval records are held by the PRO where the county is often dealt with as an entity so that all three forests can be studied together.

The historical work will be important where it leads to an improved understanding or definition of features that impinges upon their management.

7 Recommendations

The following suggestions are made from an archaeological point of view. It is realised that some would take time to achieve in the course of timber production cycles and management. Others may be incompatible with intended forestry practise but working compromises can probably be achieved in most cases.

7.1 Ringworks

The two ringworks (*Fig. 4, 1 and 2*) should be preserved as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It does not matter whether they are Iron Age or medieval in date since their state of preservation is so remarkable. They both need clearing of trees and undergrowth as soon as possible with minimum damage to the banks and interiors. General guidelines for dealing with archaeological sites in forests have recently been published (Forestry Commission 1995), referring to control of rabbit populations and removal of trees vulnerable to windblow. At the felling stage there should be care in choice of extraction routes and monuments should not be used as stacking areas. The use of brush matting and

dry conditions will reduce damage to a minimum. There should be no restocking of the monuments.

Cadman (1996) has discussed the appropriate action and referred to working when the ground is dry. In terms of permanent preservation, the subsurface ground needs to be kept damp and wet and not specifically drained. One of the important features of the earthworks is that filled ditches will have waterlogged deposits containing palaeo-environmental remains. These remains can be used to determine date of the enclosures and the activities that occurred within them. The contemporary environment can establish whether the monuments were surrounded by trees, or were lying in pasture or arable land.

7.2 *Rush Coppice ditch*

The ditch (Fig. 4, 3) should be cleared of trees and undergrowth and further assessed. It should be treated with the same care as the identified monuments.

7.3 *Early enclosures in Stoneway Coppice*

The early banks (Fig. 4, 4) should be preserved as completely as possible and not damaged in any way. There should be no restocking on them, as with all the early banks. Many access points into the modern compartments already exist via the present ridings without the need to run over the old earthworks with heavy machinery. Especially important is the area near Stoneway Coppice pond where there are intersections and clear chronological relations between ditches of all periods. This vulnerable area (about 150 by 200m with the pond near the north-west corner) should be approached by machinery with great care.

7.4 *Coppice banks*

As far as possible all the coppice boundaries should be preserved. They are nearly all intact, though having suffered some damage when the present compartments were made in 1825-6, and during the construction of the war-time concrete storage bases. Recent damage has occurred with creation of the Quinton Road Car Park. Siting the park slightly farther north would have prevented this. The hard core standing on the east of Knightons Coppice has breached a bank and the widening of the riding from the reservoir through Stoneway Coppice has caused levelling of part of the bank there. This last work could have been used to make an archaeological section of the bank and ditch.

7.5 *Page-keeper's lodge*

The earthworks at the lodge site should be kept free of trees and be avoided by machinery.

7.6 *Re-creation of early forest landscapes*

(a) *Coppice ridings*

There is much potential for opening up some areas to expose early features. Many

coppice ridings were fairly narrow and modern rides could be opened up to the width of the coppice banks with very little loss of potential tree-planting acreage. This has already been done by Forest Enterprise between parts of Prentice and Organs Hill Coppices, and along the western ride of Hazel Coppice. At the latter, mature trees left as a central avenue marking the 1826 riding are very effective.

(b) Coppice plains

It would be attractive to open up one of the plains to show how there were wide spaces for deer hunting lying between the coppices. This need not necessarily be done by having no trees at all, but by use of differential planting and felling times and by using species in the plains different to the coppice interiors. The spaces could be enhanced by maintaining a low level of ground cover.

An area where a case might be suggested for actual clearance is the plain at Hollow Quarter and Bridge Quarter (Fig. 2) north of the public car park. This is the part most visited by the public and its clearance would show significant areas parts of the older enclosure system as well. If it is considered that the public should not be encouraged to visit the Stoneway Coppice complex then Oak Quarter Plain south of the car park would be suitable.

(c) The coppices

It would be attractive to manage each historic coppice as a whole in terms of felling and restocking. Thus Rawlesmere, lying either side of the Hartwell Road would have exactly the same tree cover with a change occurring at the western coppice boundary, before the Quinton-Hanslope cross roads was reached.

(d) Sour Mere Pond (SP 8035 5103)

The pond called Sourmere was a significant feature of the plain lying south of Salcey Lawn. It was originally 25 by 40 metres, and would benefit by having the 1940 filling removed to restore the original size, taking care to leave the original eastern side intact. The land around it to the south of the present road could be opened up to the 1825 Lodge Yard northern boundary. This could be an attractive public area (but may not suit the residents of the cottages opposite).

7.7 Conclusions

The archaeological survey has identified several significant and interesting ancient earthworks some of which are clearly of national importance warranting active conservation. This report provides data for Forest Enterprise and Northamptonshire Heritage to devise a suitable interpretation management scheme. There is appreciable scope to present selected monuments and woodland landscapes to the public. In some cases, monuments will be best preserved by not having too many visitors causing erosion. Northamptonshire Heritage will be able to advise on this and on any management action that involves disturbance of the ground.

Abbreviations

PRO Public Record Office

NRO Northamptonshire Record Office, Wootton Hall, Northampton

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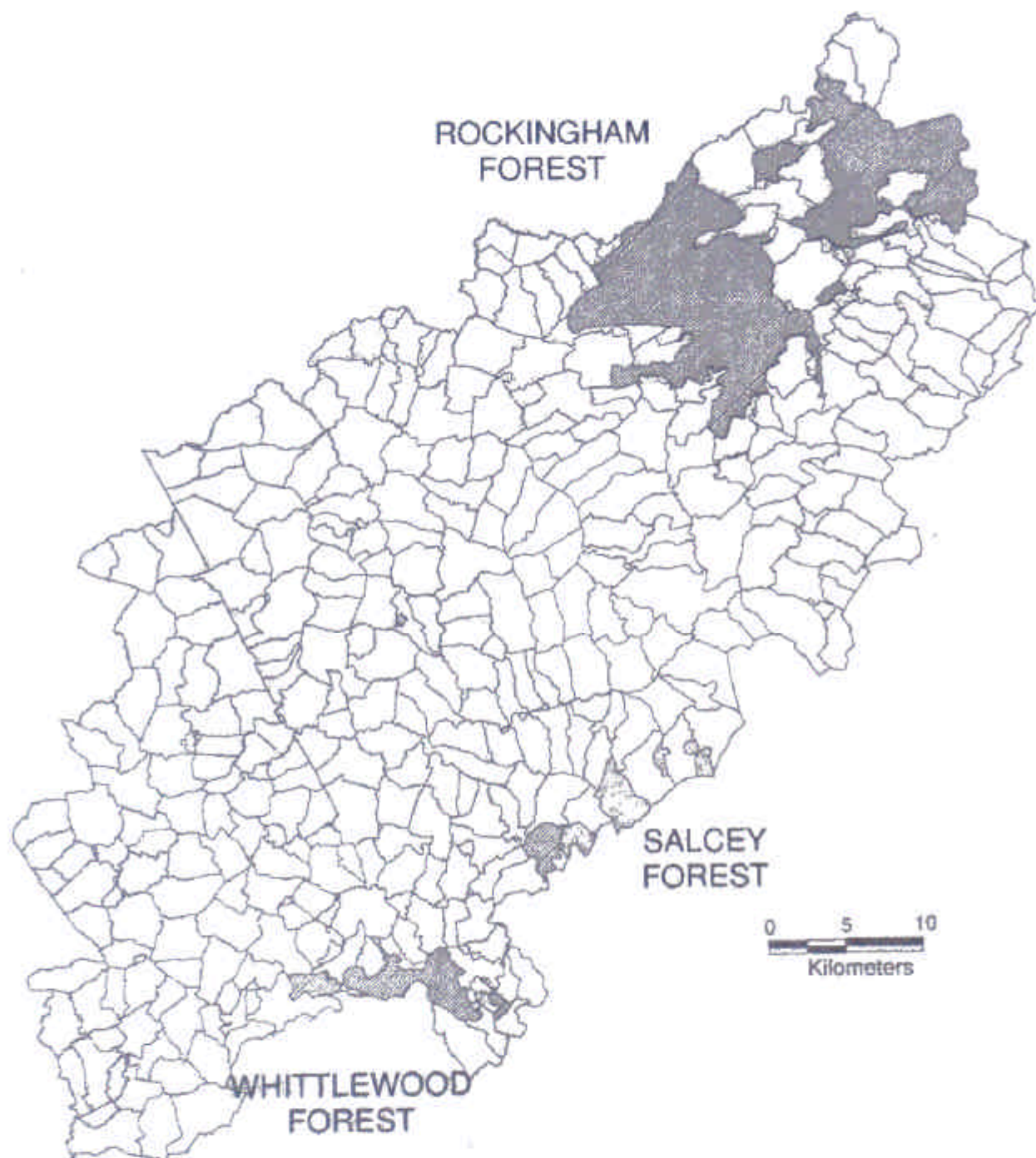
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Fig 1: Northamptonshire: Location of Medieval Forests.



Scale 1-20000

Fig. 3. Sakey Forest, visibility of ground surface, April 1996.

Scale 1:25000



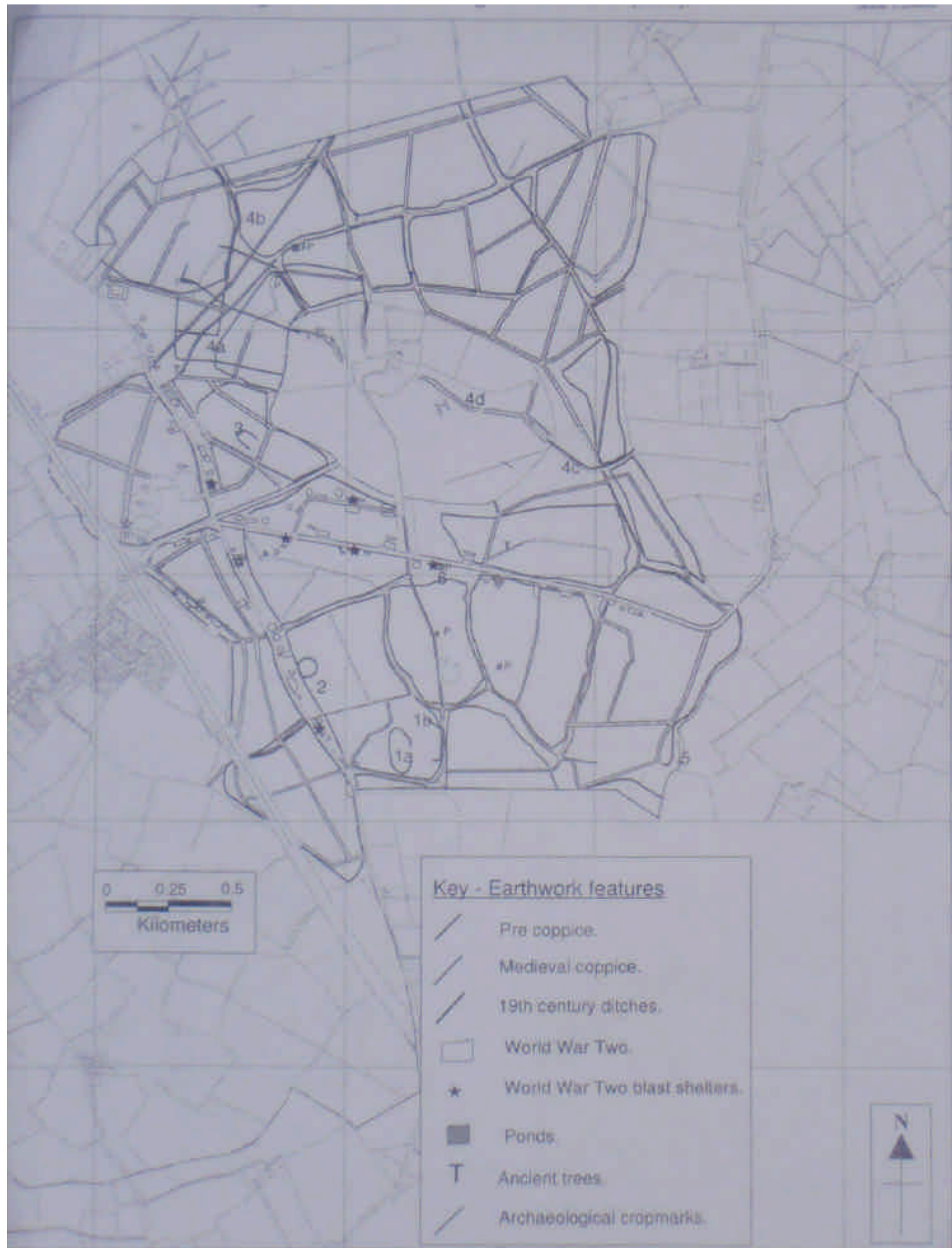


Fig 5: Archaeological earthworks - main chronological phases



5a: Pre Coppice features



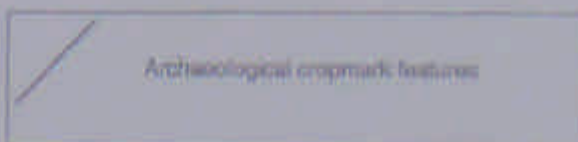
5b: Medieval coppice features



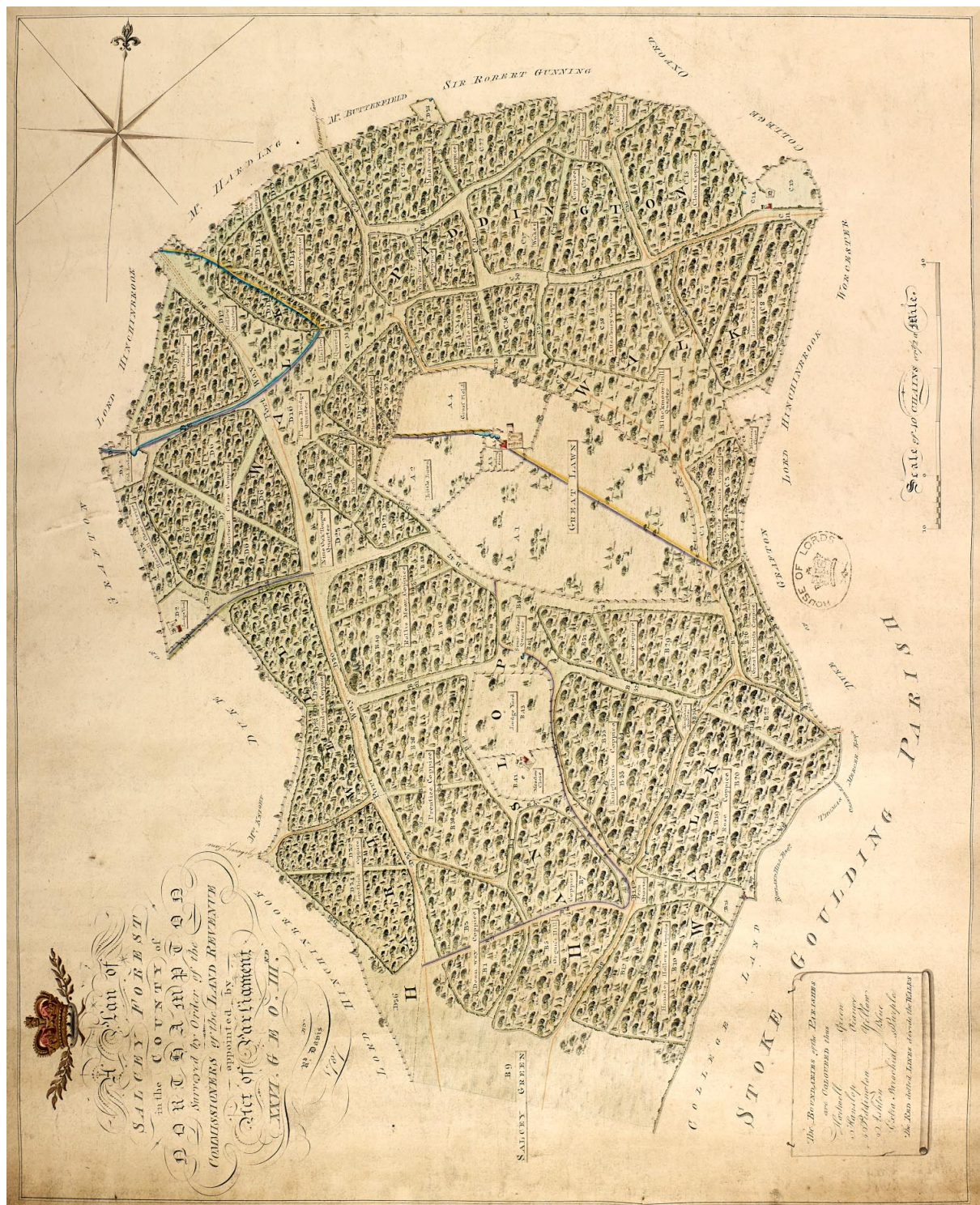
5c: 19th century ditches



5d: World War Two remains



9. 1790 Coppicing Enclosure Map, Salcey Forest (courtesy of House of Lords Archive)



(Note: this is a low-resolution image, like most of the images in this report. High-resolution copies of all the images in this report are available, but are not included here in order to limit the filesize to what can easily be emailed.)

10. Relevant extract from Wolverton & District Arch.Soc. newsletter, Vol 6

Old Tun Copse

Timber clearing during 1956 exposed stone floors examined at the time by Mr. Alan Warhurst of Northampton. From the evidence of numerous sherd he judged them to be of Iron Age B. Northampton Museum hold some pottery. The ground has reverted to cultivation, and nothing is now to be seen. With the trees felled one is astonished at the extent of the view, linking the site by vision with the far distant Iron Age hill forts of Danesborough on Brickhill and Narbury on Whaddon Chase.