

From the *Transactions* of the
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

Earthworks at Bishton Farm, Tidenham

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1984, Vol. 102, 204-205

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EARTHWORK SURVEYS OF THREE SITES IN AVON

A Ringwork at Hillesley

An earthwork site at Hillesley (ST 767896) was cut by a sewerage pipe trench in 1977 (FIG. 1). The site was levelled in 1979 and a salvage excavation was undertaken by a team from Bristol City Museum under Bruce Williams. The results of the 1977 watching brief, together with the historical research by John Ainslie, will be published with the results of the 1979 excavation in due course. The purpose of the present note is to place on record the plan of the earthwork site, which probably represented a ringwork. An earlier phase with stone ramparts was noted in the excavation.

I am grateful to John Ainslie for assisting with the planning of the site, and to Dr Roger Leech for his advice.

Earthworks at Hempton Lane, Almondsbury

In 1977 a survey was made of an area of land (ST 603828) prior to development in the parishes of Almondsbury and Patchway (FIG. 2). The area was bounded on the north-west by the M5, on the east by the A38 road, and on the south by the London-Cardiff railway. A medieval settlement at the T-junction of Hempton Lane and along its north and south arms was indicated by the survey. At the north end of Hempton Lane is Upper Hempton Farm, a 17th-century building recorded by Hall (1983, 123) and at the south end was Hempton Court Farm, now demolished, which has not been recorded. At A (FIG. 2) was a possible moated site consisting of two rectangular closes cut by the field boundary to the west, and divided by a track or ditch. On the east and north sides were the remains of the possible moat. At B, earthwork platforms indicated buildings and the hollow at C probably indicated a quarry. Ponds and a dam were recorded at D, and tracks were noted at E and F. Building remains were recorded at G.

The settlement is on marl, and the land slopes from north-west to south-east. Documentary evidence for a medieval settlement at Hempton is limited. An unidentified *vill* of Swineshead hundred in Domesday Book may refer to Hempton (Rudder 1779, 224), the name itself first occurring in 1248 (Smith 1964, 107). In medieval documentary accounts Hempton is linked with Patchway.

I am grateful to John Ainslie for historical research during 1977 on Hempton Lane, to Linda Hall for her comments on the standing buildings, and to Luigi Thompson for assisting with the planning of the site.

The Moated Site at Barr's Court, Oldland

In 1977 a survey of the moated site of Barr's Court (ST 658720) and its surrounding earthworks was carried out in advance of a housing development planned to surround the moated site (FIG. 3). In 1979 a watching brief was undertaken during the development. The moated site occupies ground sloping from west to east. The remains consist of a water-filled moat, filled in at the east angle and built on in the 18th century. The moat enclosed a largely undifferentiated area, approximately 120 m by 90 m in size, with a slightly raised area (40 × 40 m) in the north corner. A contractor's geological assessment trench in the western angle revealed an occupation level at a depth of 1 m sealed by layers of rubble. To the north-east of the moat are indications of tracks probably associated with the 18th-century buildings. The south angle of the moat crosses a valley which was dammed to the east in two places, suggesting former fishponds. The south-east side of

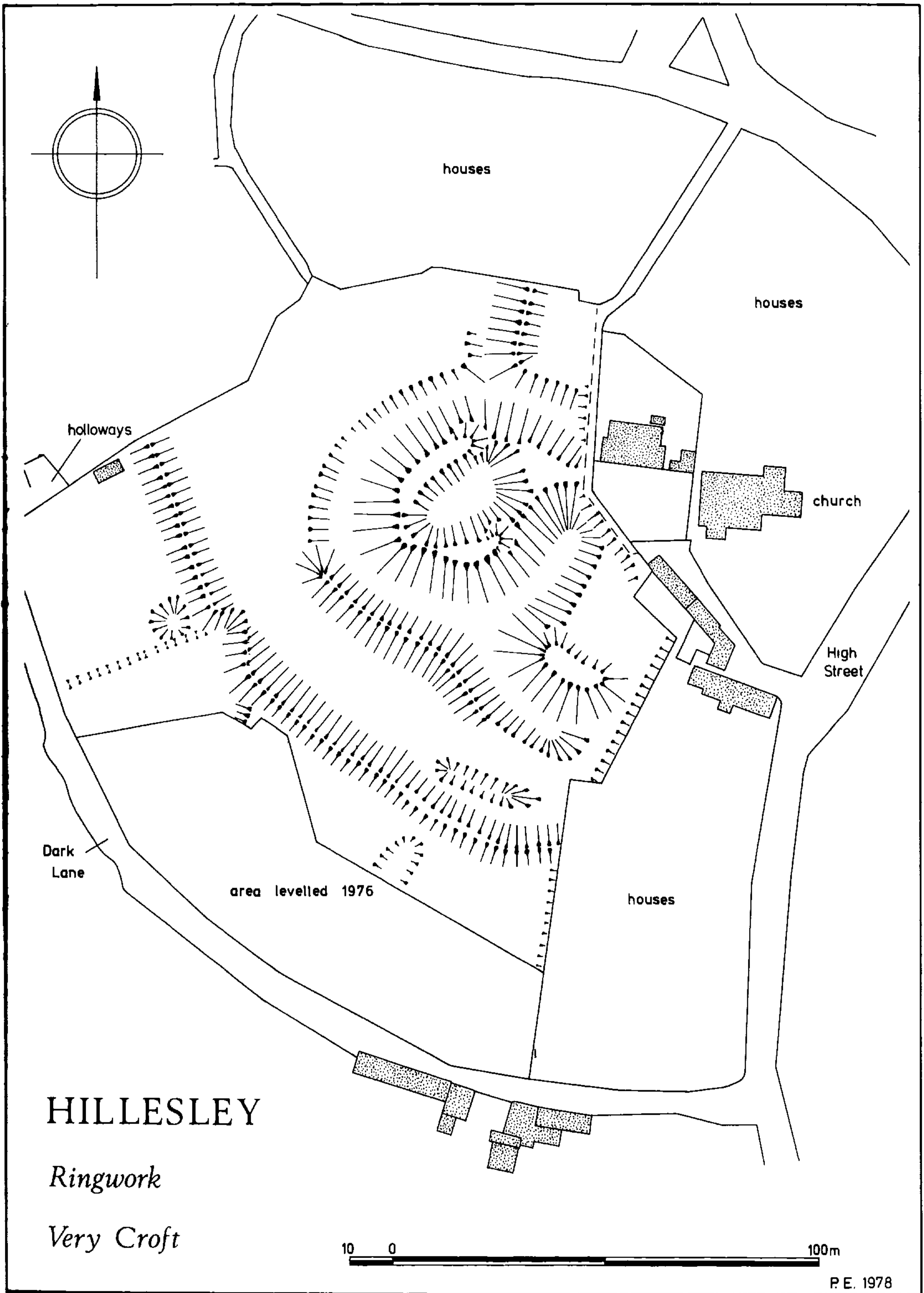


FIG. 1 Ringwork at Very Croft, Hillesley.

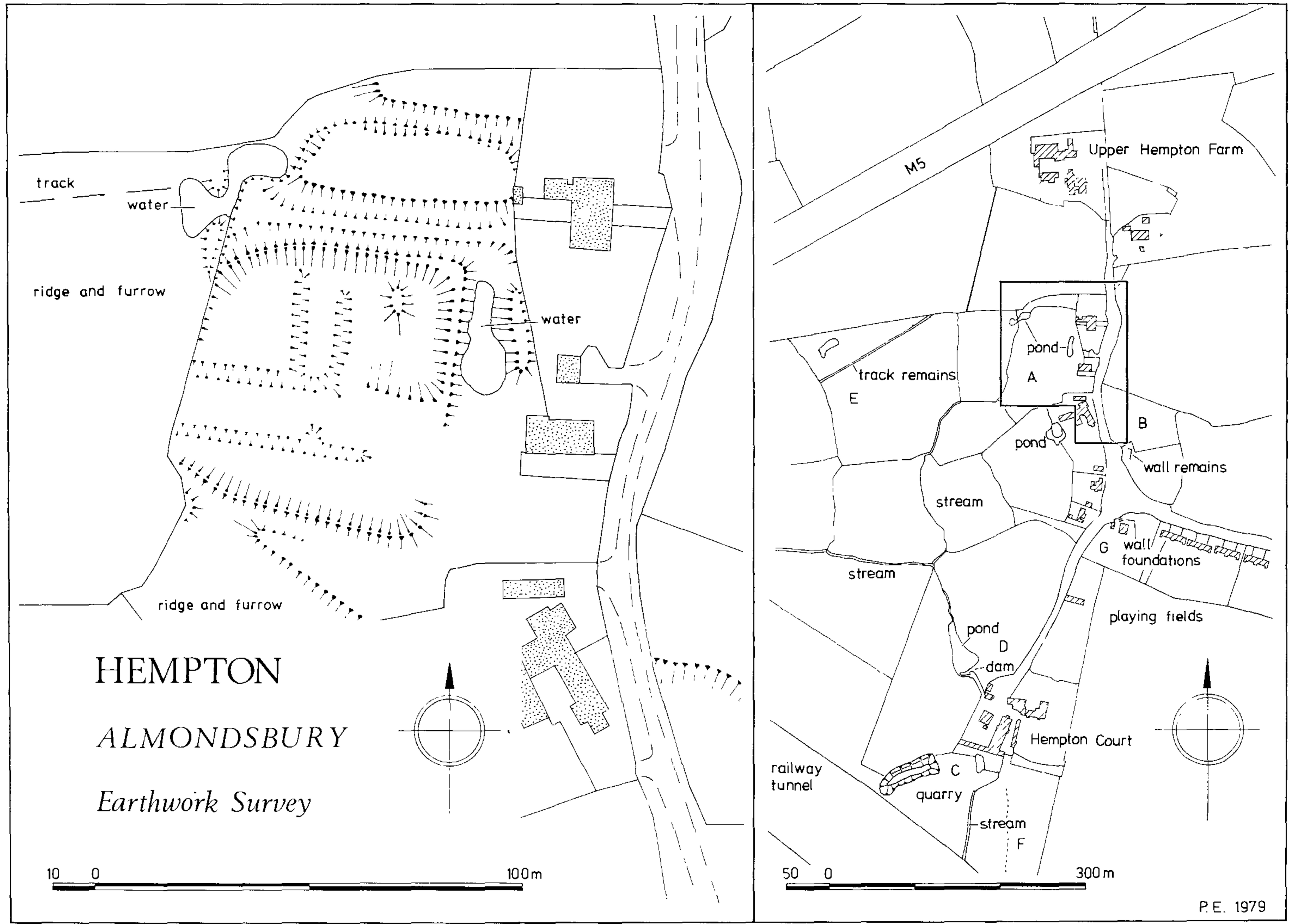


FIG. 2 Earthworks at Hempton Lane, Almondsbury.

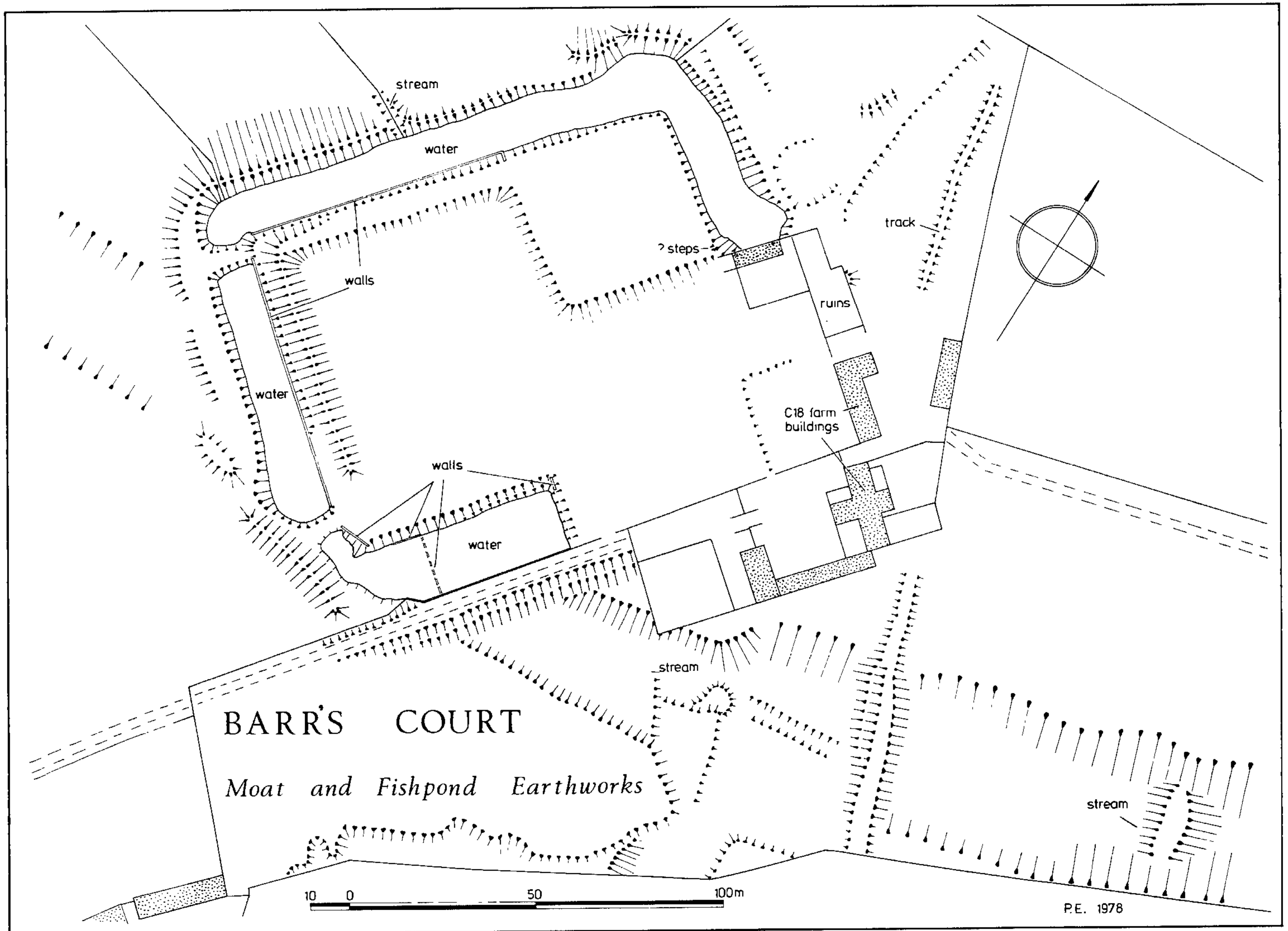


FIG. 3 Moat and fishpond earthworks at Barr's Court.

the moat is contained by a bank running obliquely across the valley. During the watching brief a 14th-century pottery finial was recovered from the bank. The evidence suggests that the fishponds belong to an earlier phase of occupation than the moat. Barr's Court has now been scheduled as an ancient monument.

References

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October 1982

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Publication of this note has been aided by a grant from English Heritage

THE MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT AT HULLASEY, COATES

Tree-felling on the scheduled site of Hullasey (ST 973992) gave an opportunity in 1981 and 1982 for a survey to be made of the earthwork banks and building remains of the deserted medieval settlement (FIG. 1). The central area was under half-grown conifers and the remainder of the site had been replanted with young conifers at 2 m intervals.

Earthwork banks (FIG. 1,b), some over a metre high, may represent the lynchets of a prehistoric field system. Despite ploughing, some of these banks were visible in the fields around the settlement. Some of the medieval house sites were cut into the banks. The medieval settlement is laid out along a track running north-south, with another track running to the east. Where they exit from the settlement the tracks do not appear to relate to the surrounding villages of Tarlton, Coates, and Kemble; they may belong in origin to the Romano-British settlement pattern in the area. Pottery and building debris from a Romano-British site were noted 200 m to the south of Hullasey. Thirty medieval house sites were identified in the survey, and a further five sites (FIG. 1 h) were possible house sites. Seven of the houses (2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 18, and 22) were excavated in 1907 by W. St Clair Baddeley (1910) together with a chapel further to the west, of which the north-west corner is still visible on the ground in the modern farmyard. The modern boundary bank on the west side does not mark the original limit of the settlement, since, despite ploughing, the remains of the banks and closes are still visible in the field to the west. Pottery scatters were also noted. The stone spread (FIG. 1 p) was drawn as a bank by Baddeley in 1907. Three of the house plans were probably of the longhouse type with opposed entrances (4, 10, and 11); four of the smaller houses also appeared to have opposed entrances (14, 16, 23, and 25). The complex comprising houses 2, 3, 4, and 5 resembles a small farm, perhaps with 4 post-dating 3 in construction. Phasing of the site is suggested by the indications on the plan that the north-south track may have continued between 14 and 15 in a straight line to the north-east, and that 23 and 24 appear to be built across the track running to the east. A detailed record of the building remains exists in the archive of Western Archaeological Trust deposited with the Gloucester Record Office.

I am grateful to Lord Bathurst for allowing access to the site, to David and Linda Viner and Mick Aston for their advice and help, and to Angela Wickenden, Dora Reeve, and Patricia O'Connor for helping with the planning.