

ROBESTON WATHEN BYPASS : PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Preliminary Archaeological Assessment.

5/11/93

Introduction

In reply to a request from Wallace Evans on 7th July 1993 (LW/A1045/GEEA) to identify sites and areas of archaeological importance, also Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, as part of a consultation process to establish route options, the Curatorial section of Dyfed Archaeological Trust provided an annotated map of the route corridor. This was based on data held in the Trust's *Sites and Monuments Record* which was assessed in terms of its significance and as possible constraints on route options within a route corridor covering an area both north and south of Robeston Wathen.

On 25th October 1993 the Trust was requested to review the information submitted in the light of:

- a) a narrower route corridor on the south side of the A40.
- b) additional work recommended in the recently published DoT *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume II: Environmental Assessment*. These recommendations have been adopted by Wallace Evans for their work for Welsh Office Highways in Wales.

The Brief for the Archaeological Section of the Preliminary Environmental Assessment

This comprised work already wholly or partly carried out in response to the 7 July request and additional work, mainly in carrying out a walkover survey and an assessment of present land use. The assessments given in the initial response of 30th July 1993 have thus been refined and modified.

The **Appraisal** process was defined by Wallace Evans as follows:

- i) Collate data held in the Sites and Monuments Record for the identified area;
- ii) Review readily available vertical and oblique aerial photographic information;
- iii) A review of first edition OS Survey Maps and other readily available historic maps.
- iv) Undertake a field visit to determine the present condition of all known archaeological sites.
- v) Undertake a review of present land-use, soil and topographical conditions to show how these might suggest the location and density of as yet unknown archaeological remains.

Sources consulted to fulfill the requirements of the Appraisal are listed in Appendix 1.

The Structure of the Report

Wallace Evans required the Report to be organised under the following headings:

- i) A Map showing all designated sites and areas, and all areas where, based on a study of the SMR, there might potentially be

important remains.

ii) A Statement on the archaeological content of the study area and the archaeological constraints and where mitigation would be needed.

iii) Identify where additional survey work may be required, what these surveys should consist of and whether there would be any constraints affecting these.

iv) A Statement describing the constraints associated with historic buildings and sites and the significance of the impact of route corridors, taking into account the results of the walk-over survey.

THE REPORT

Map 1

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the Route Corridor area nor any archaeological sites registered on the Dyfed Archaeological Trust's *Sites and Monuments* record. There are no Listed Buildings, registered parks and gardens or conservation areas within the route corridor. However, no Listing Survey, such as that of 1988 for the neighbouring Community of Narberth under Section 54 of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1971 has been carried out for Robeston Wathen. The buildings within the revised route corridor: Woodford, Lands End and Green Grove would need to be assessed against the Listing Criteria. The first recorded mention of Woodford and Lands End is 18th century, Green Grove early 19th in Charles' Pembrokeshire Placename survey (see Appendix 1).

The revised route corridor contains Historic Landscape elements whose location and extent is indicated on Map 1.

Historic Landscape Assessment:

As noted in the preliminary comments made by the Trust in July the major features shaping the present day organisation of the landscape of the route corridor were the Anglo-Norman settlement of the area, displacing the native Welsh landowners, in the 12th century. The revised route corridor area contains, in relict form, evidence for the characteristic Anglo-Norman 'landscape package of the 12th and 13th centuries: nucleated settlement (Robeston Wathen, village, traces (in the form of field boundary alignments and field shapes) of a long lived system of 'open-field' medieval communal arable cultivation, low lying valley bottom areas still recorded as commons in the early 19th century, and areas of ancient woodland. These latter suggest that the individual farms at the western end of the route corridor may have been created by 'assarting' or clearance within the medieval Forest of Narberth.

Criteria for the assessment of Historic Landscapes in Wales are currently being developed through the joint Cadw/CCW funded *Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special historic Interest in Wales*. The appropriate working criteria have been selected from this project to assess the Historic Landscape elements in the revised route corridor area.

Ancient Tracks:

It is possible that **Woodford Lane** is the oldest, visible, man made element in the landscape of the revised route corridor area. It is a deep rock cut 'hollow way' descending the steep slope from Robeston Wathen down to Woodford at the crossing point of the Narberth Brook. It forms part of an early north-south route which may predate the Anglo-Norman open field system, relict traces of which survive on its eastern and western sides. Woodford lane may thus be evaluated as a coherent, intact historic landscape component which would be degraded by being cut across by a new East West road line.

By contrast, **Bog Lane**, another ancient track in the revised route corridor area, seems to have originated as a means of access to medieval open field strips. Its continued existence in the post medieval period was due to the scattered ownership of the individual enclosed strips. In recent years (since the 1964 edition of the OS 1:10560 map) most of the hedges enclosing former narrow curving open field strips have been removed. The western end of the lane from Woodford continues as a broad hollow way functioning as a farm track. Its course then narrows and the track is impassable. It has been removed and altered at its eastern end.

This relict feature thus survives only in a degraded and partial form, its use as a working component of the present day landscape is diminishing, a process likely to be completed by the construction of a new East West road on its northern side.

The third track in the area is also aligned north south, from Green Grove across the Narberth Brook to West Atheston, but this may be of more recent origin, linking farms perhaps not established as individual holdings until the early modern period. The footpath, marked on Map 1, (see registered Public Rights of way) OS SN01/11 1:25000 Pathfinder Series in addition to the tracks noted above would seem to have originated as a way across the open fields since its course and alignment follows that of the enclosed strip fields.

Field Boundaries.

The shape and hedgelines of most of the present day fields over the eastern half of the route corridor are relict traces of piecemeal enclosure and long persisting scattered ownership of individual shares in a medieval 'open-field' system of arable cultivation. Many of the field names recorded in 1840 are the same as names of strips recorded in a Survey of 1609. Due to the persistence of dispersed ownership the landuse evidence provided by the data of the 1841 Tithe Map can thus be used to reconstruct the medieval pattern. This is shown in map 2.

These relict traces within the route corridor area exist as working components of the present day farms. Considerable reorganisation of the fields have taken place to the south of the route corridor area. The assessment of the importance of these traces must therefore recognise that:

- 1) They exist only in a partial and eroded form.
- 2) More complete and better preserved examples exist in reasonable quantity elsewhere in South Pembrokeshire.

However it should also be recognised that since the predominant

alignment is a north-south one, modified by the topography of the valley slopes, any new East-West aligned road cutting across these areas of relict field system would force a subsequent reorganisation of fields either side of the route which would finally obliterate these relict traces and ancient pattern.

Mitigation Measures with regard to Historic Landscape Features:

Woodford lane: its course as a route to be maintained even if part is removed (flyover?).

Field Boundaries: preservation by record in terms of recording by section and plan the construction of the bank and by hedgerow species recording of its botanical components where total removal by road construction takes place. 07

Additional Survey and Identification of Buried Features:

Review of Present land use, soils and topography.

The present course of the A40 through the centre of Robeston Wathen rises to 82 m in the centre of the village and descends more gradually to the west down to the valley of the eastern Cleddau and Canaston Bridge. The ground also falls away steeply from north to south over the route corridor area down to the quite narrow but flat valley floor of the Narberth Brook. These slopes are dissected by steep sided narrow cwms formed by several small streams which rise close to the ridge of the hill just south of the A40. The most level areas of land are the relatively poorly drained fields above an area of (water rises) now drained into a small brook which enters the Narberth Brook at Woodford. In many of the fields over the western half of the route corridor area it is evident that only diversion of springs and streams into ditches surrounding the field banks and, more recently, modern techniques of field drainage, have allowed what was a much more extensive marshy area than at present to be used for farming.

The underlying solid geology of Ordovician shales and mudstones, the latter with alternating thin grit bands, causes some slight east-west ridging across the slopes south of the area between Land's End and Sunnyside. The soils of the Denbigh 1 series vary between loamy and silty soils with slowly permeable subsoils. There are drift deposits of boulder clay at the eastern end of the route corridor area. (See map 2 - Historic landuse)
The varied pattern of land use evident from the 1841 Tithe Map (see Map 2) has given way today to a wholly pastoral use. Not all fields are cut for silage however.

The predominance of semi-permanent grass land discriminates against the identification of buried archaeological sites from cropmarks visible in air photographs. Only in exceptional conditions do parch or cropmarks show in grass. The lack of any evidence in the air photographs scanned for this Assessment must be evaluated against this disadvantage.

Identification of Buried Features

The most likely area for the location of as yet unknown archaeological remains is the fairly level area at the eastern

end of the route corridor bisected by the B4314. Surface traces, of any prehistoric sites will have been obliterated by medieval cultivation. Drainage and subsoil conditions and also the microtopography are not favourable for geophysical prospecting over the greater part of the route corridor. Both factors justify a higher than normal sample percentage by geophysical prospecting of road line areas, since it must be concentrated at the eastern end of the route.

Appendix: Sources Consulted.

Sites and Monuments Record, Dyfed Archaeological Trust

Tithe Map & schedule 1841 Robeston Wathen

Manuscript Estate Maps and Schedules, 18th century National Library of Wales.

First Edition OS one inch Map 1832, Second Edition OS 1:25000, 1907.

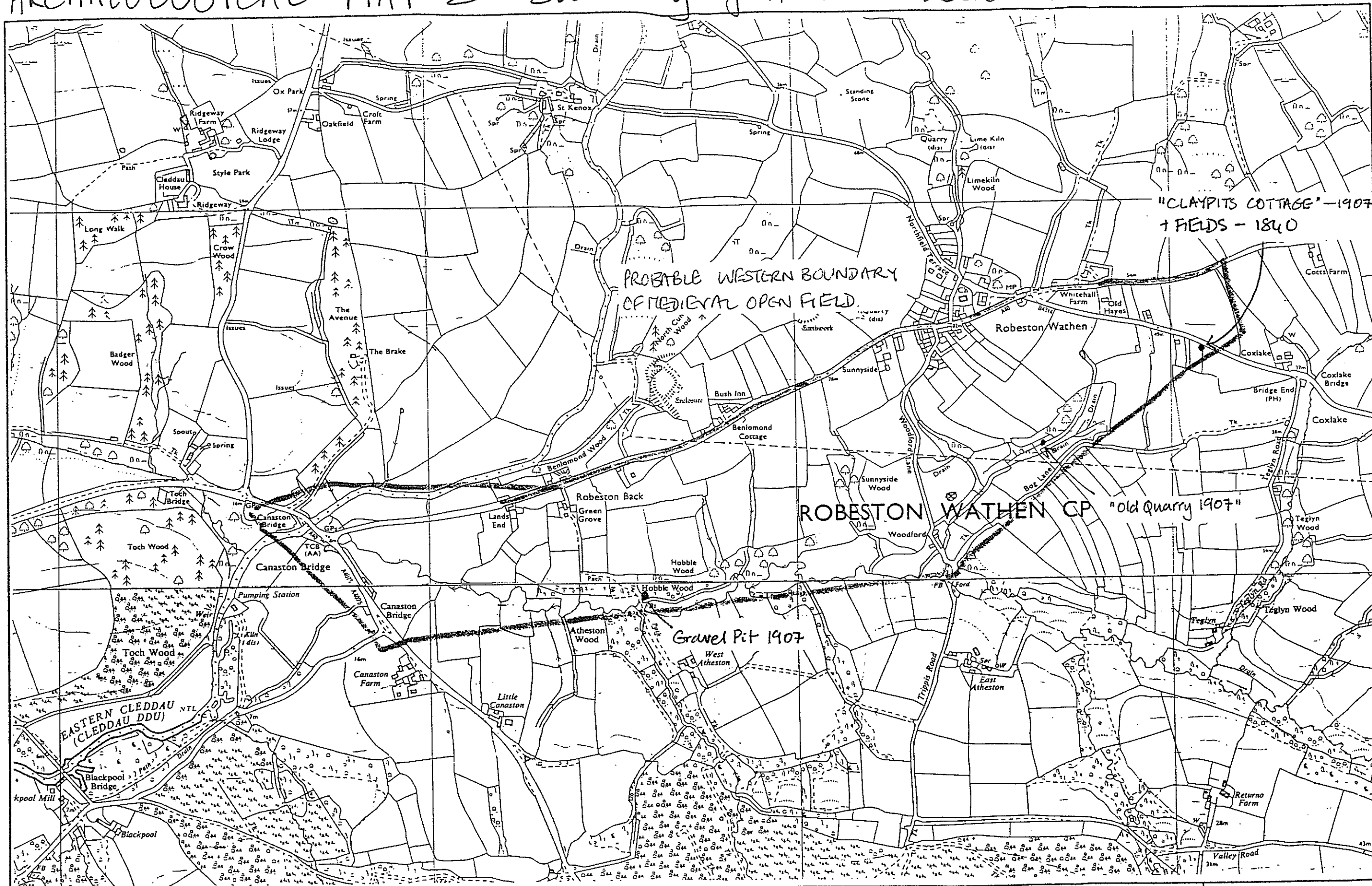
Soil Survey of England & Wales: 1: 250,000 Soil Map of England & Wales.

Geological Survey Map 228 Haverfordwest: Solid & Drift.

Memoirs of the Geological Survey: The Country around Haverfordwest.

Meridian Vertical Air Photographs, 1955 nos 27255, 27256, 27257

B. G. Charles, 1992, The Placenames of Pembrokeshire.



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Scheme:

ROBESTON - WATHEN
BYPASS

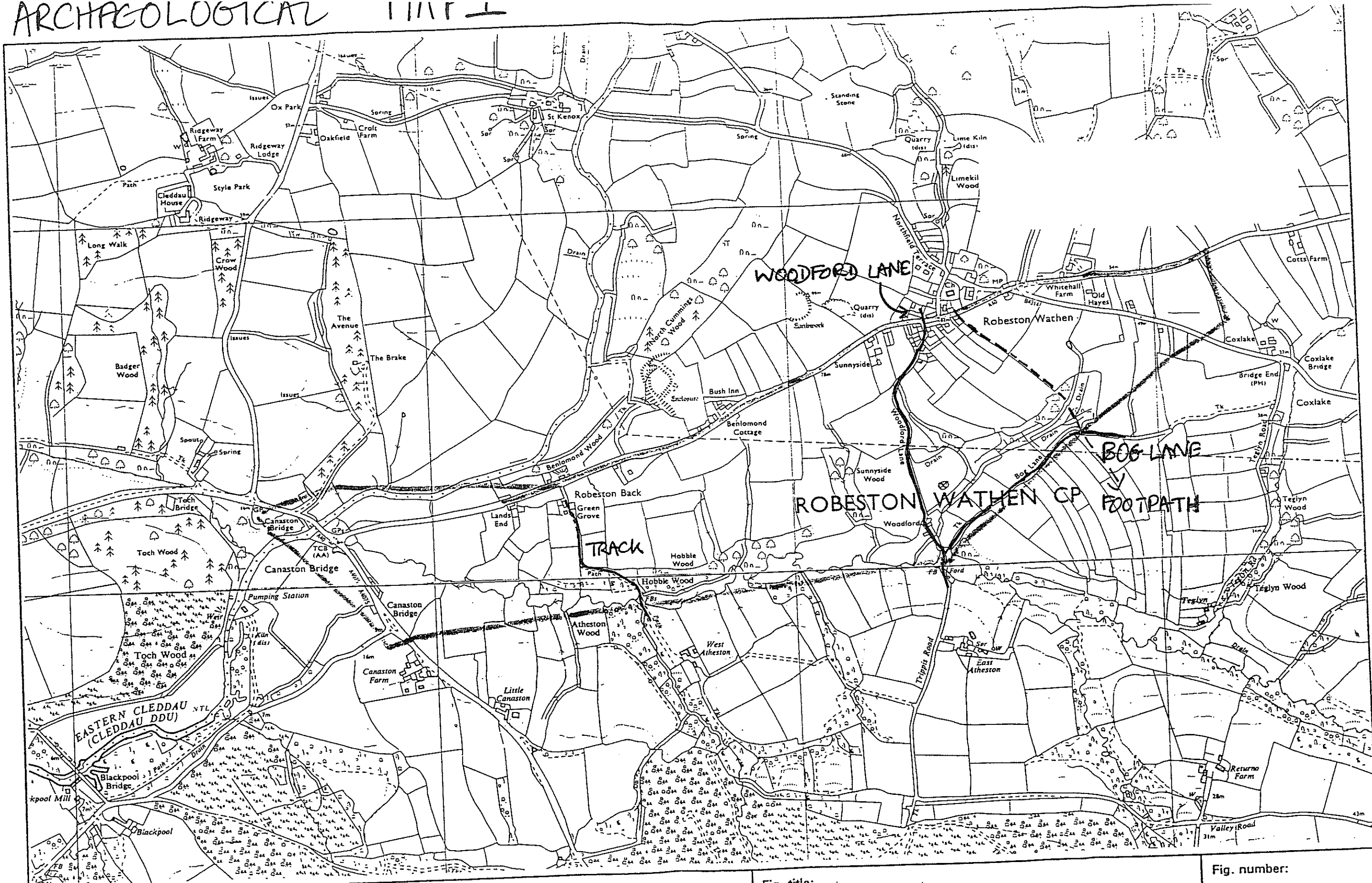
Fig. title:



AREA OF
INTEREST

Fig. number:

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MAP



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