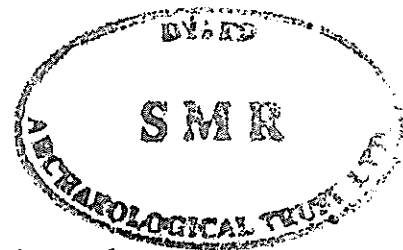


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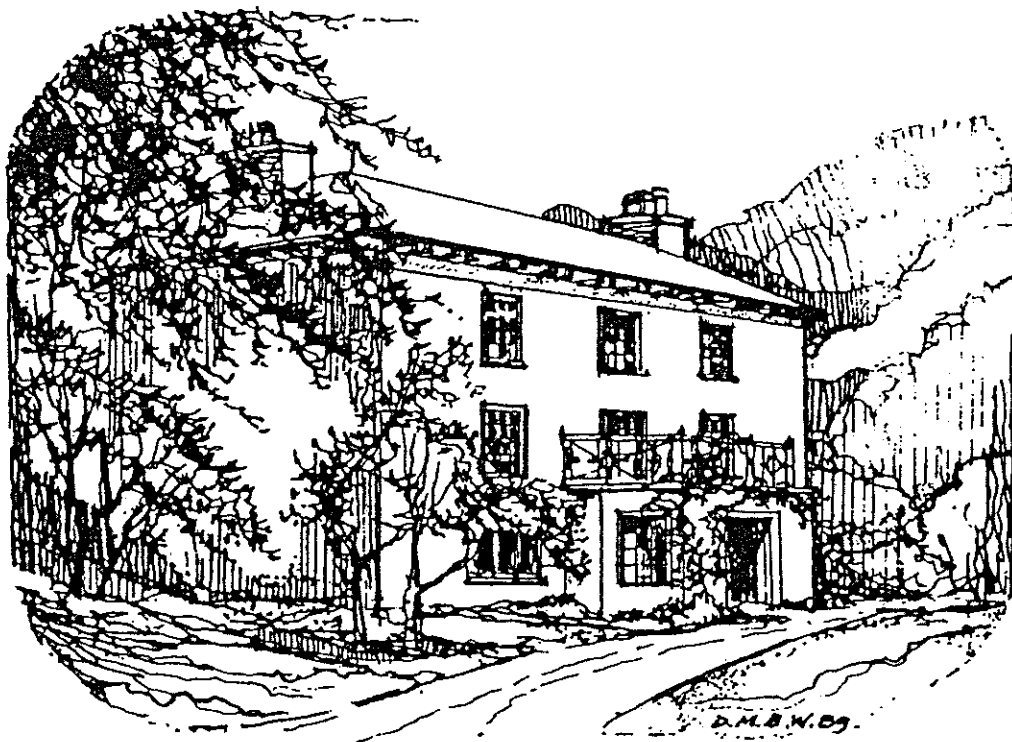
## PORTHCLEW

Settlement morphology, topography & archaeology

01/11/1999

*to accompany*  
**CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENTS**

prepared by Heather James BA FSA MIFA  
for Pembrokeshire Coast National Park  
as part of a service level agreement with Cambria Archaeology



A R C H A E O L O G

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Cover Illustration: Drawing of Porthclew House by D. White  
reproduced from Francis Jones *Historic Houses of Pembrokeshire & their Families*  
Brawdy Books, 1996..

Cambria Archaeology SMR Project Number: 38753  
Submitted to PCNP November 1999.

### *Name and Tenurial History*

This is an example of an 'area' place-name being adopted by a particular location. Even today the place-name is shared by 3 properties and one ruin - Little Portclew and Portclew Chapel, Upper Portclew and Portclew House. The latter two are within the Conservation Area. B. G. Charles interprets the name as two elements, the common *porth*, meaning inlet or bay and *lliw*, the Welsh name of the stream which flows into Freshwater East Bay; a common stream name meaning 'clear (i.e. fresh?) water'. Our first record of Freshwater is 16th century, on Saxton's map of 1578. The southern boundary of Upper Portclew's farm fields in 1841 lies along this stream as it flows into Freshwater Bay. The earliest reference is *Porthllu* of 1326, from the 'Black Book of the Bishops of St Davids's', a medieval survey of the Bishop's lands, when it was part of the possessions of his manor of Lamphey.

Although a Thomas Walter of Porthllu is recorded as holding a bovaté of land it is from 'The Sanctuary' - possibly a territorial unit centring on Portclew Chapel. Other Black Book references speak of 'all the tenants of Porthllu'. The total rents of the 'Farmers of Porthllu' were 68s 3d and of the sanctuary Land - 69s 5d - large elements in the overall returns from Lamphey in 1326. So it is likely that the name still indicates an area, rather than the site of Portclew House itself. Even so, there may have been a focus of settlement as a small hamlet on the later House site. Even in the 16th century we have *Estporthlywe* and *Westerporthlywe*. By the late 16th century however the present Portclew House site was the gentry seat held by Lewis Bishop, the family remaining there until 1771. But it was not shown on Saxton's map of 1578 nor Bowen's of 1729. The Bishops were succeeded by the Parrys through the marriage of John Parry with Margaret daughter and heiress of Thomas Bishop. In 1830 the estate again passed by marriage to the Leach family of Corston. William Edward Parry is recorded as owner and occupier in 1841 of Upper Portclew and one Thomas Wedgewood of Lower Portclew (now Portclew House) who is not mentioned by F. Jones. Ownership of 'The Burrows' (the site of the Freshwater East holiday complex) was split in 1841 between Thomas Wedgewood and Charles Mathias. Until 1978 the Mathias family lived at Lamphey Court; 1911, Kelly's Directory records Charles R. Mathias as Lord of the Manor. In 1894, Francis Jones says there were 4 properties to the estate: Portclew, Portclew Burrows; Upper Portclew and Little Portclew, but his account is unclear. .

### *Economic History.*

Both Upper Portclew and Lower Portclew (now Portclew House) were and are working farms. The Lamphey Tithe Map shows two compact, but not overlarge holdings.

### *Location & Topography.*

Portclew lies within the parish of Lamphey, about 2 km. south of Lamphey village. It is sited on high ground overlooking Freshwater West Bay to the south east and to the south west the steep sided valley drained by the stream *lliw*. An early 19th century perception of its siting (Lewis's Topographical Dictionary of Wales, 1833, under Lamphey) emphasises both views and the newly fashionable pursuit of sea-bathing:



*Portclew, a modern mansion, the residence of Thomas Parry, Esq., is beautifully situated on an eminence commanding a fine view of the sea, and having at its base some fine smooth and firm sands, well-adapted for sea-bathing, and affording a delightful walk.*

In terms of communications the totality of the historic pattern must be reconstructed from what are now footpaths, as well as minor roads. The principal line of communication in this part of south Pembrokeshire was the Ridgeway between Tenby and Pembroke of ancient origins, later augmented by a turnpiked east-west road, the present A4139.

Communications to settlements south of the Ridgeway and down to the coast and bays was thus by roads and tracks leading southwards from the Ridgeway. Beyond that other minor roads and footpaths are essentially racks linking farms - part of the pattern of dispersed settlement between nucleated medieval settlements like Lamphey and Hodgaston. It is possible that the footpath north from Porthclew to Lamphey via Westhill Farm is the original link to Lamphey rather than the B4584.

#### *Settlement Plan Form.*

If Porthclew had its origins in an early medieval hamlet, all traces of this are now lost. Enclosure of any surviving open field cultivation around the settlement is likely to have been completed by the late 16th to early 17th century when Porthclew was a gentry residence and farm. The range of buildings now to the west of Porthclew House - stabling and former farmhouse are the earliest complex on the site. It is possible that the poorly surviving two ponds to the north of Porthclew House with their breached dams belong to this 17th/18th century phase although further work is needed to establish whether they were purely functional or contained ornamental elements.

The house was remodelled in 1827 but the the two walled gardens to the north east of the mansion were constructed later. They do not appear on the 2" Ordnance Surveyors survey drawing of 1809-1810 and even by the time of the Tithe Survey of 1841, although two enclosed land parcels are shown the southernmost is not square. But the walled gardens were established by the time of the first edition OS 1st edn. 25 inch map of 1868. Further details of garden earthworks and planting are also shown in front of the house, notably a raised oblong area. A marked break of slope is still visible in the now lawned area in front of the house. This may be part of earlier, pre-1827, garden features.

#### *Conclusions - Archaeological Importance.*

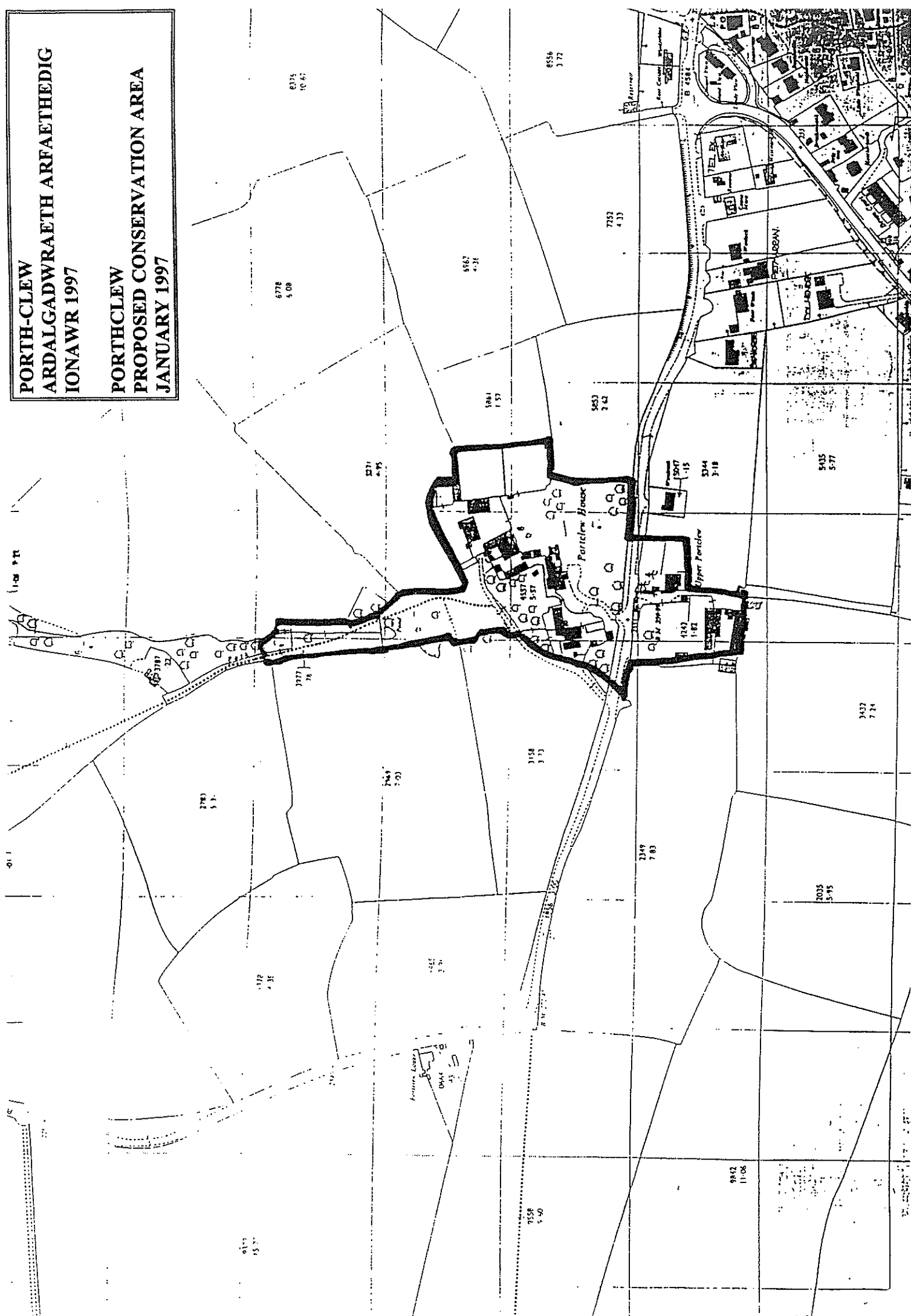
This short account should be read in conjunction with R. Scourfield's description in the Proposed Conservation Area designation report (nd). More research is clearly needed and information on Portclew is hard to come by. However, in addition to the earlier buildings pre-dating the 1827 remodelling of Portclew House it is also likely that there is considerable archaeological potential for earlier gardens and landscaping of the site. Any further changes affecting the landform should be the subject of consultation.

H. J. James,  
August 2000.



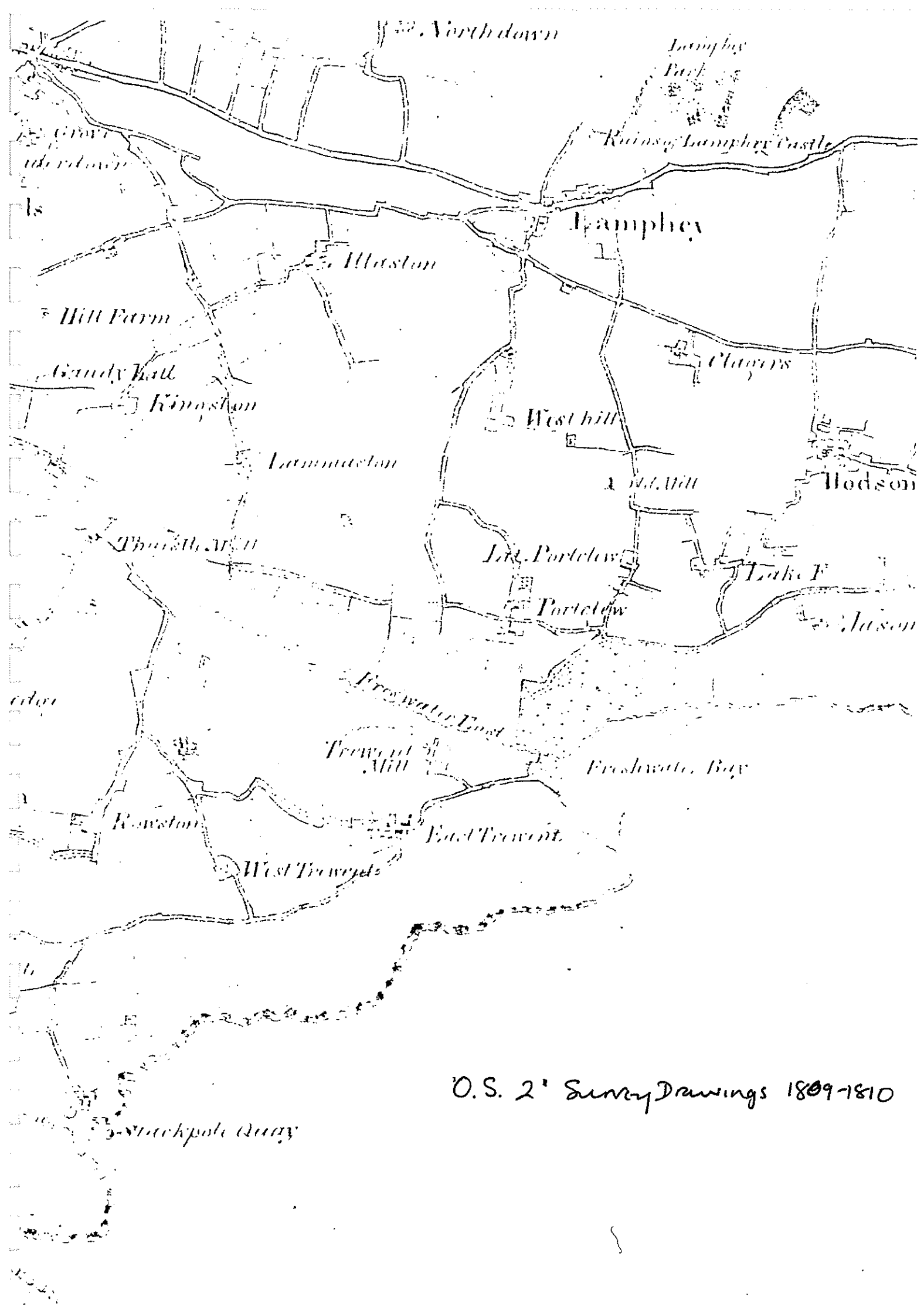
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JANUARY 1997



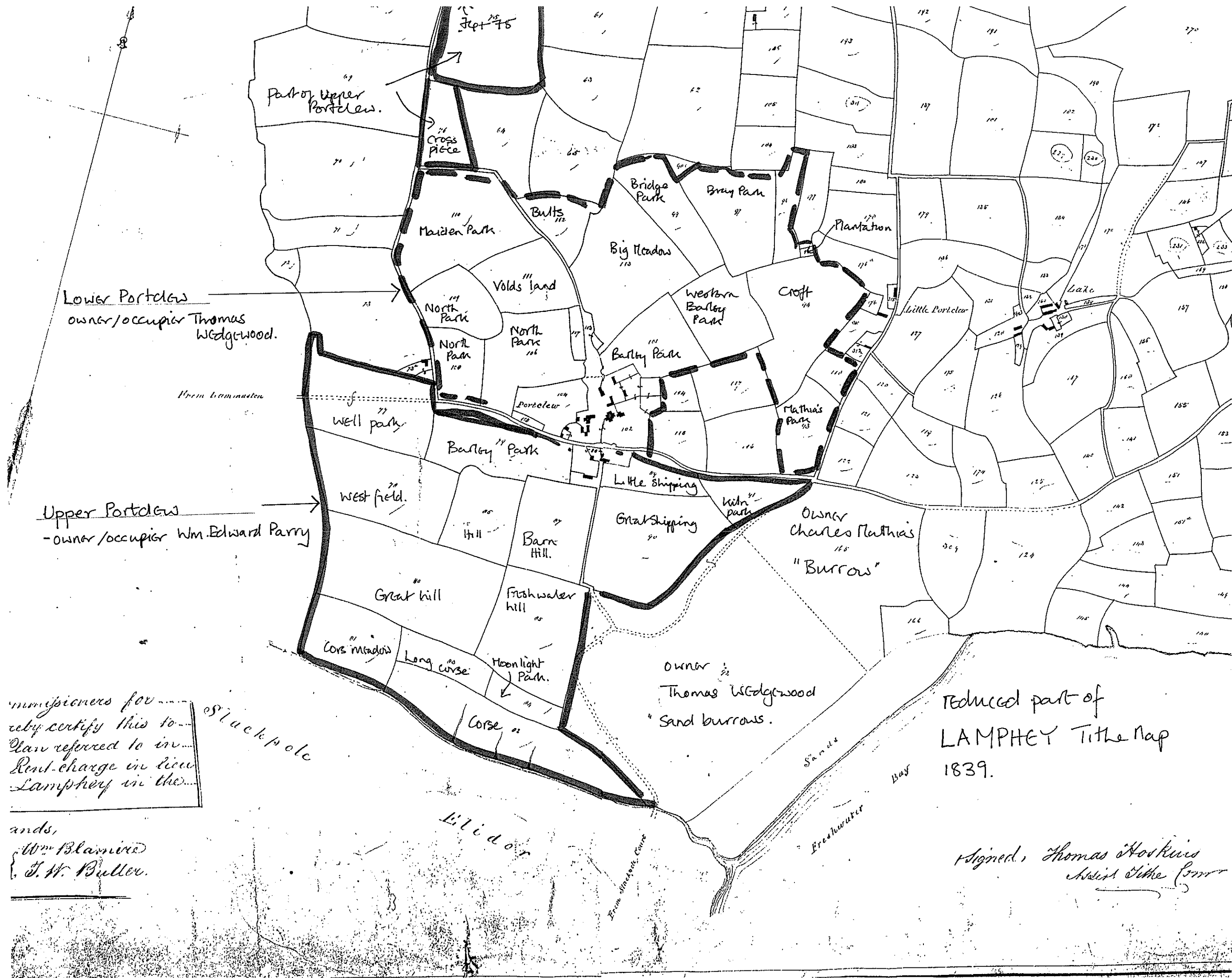






O.S. 2' Survey Drawings 1809-1810





Lower Portclaw  
owner/occupier Thomas Wedgwood.

Upper Portclaw  
- owner/occupier Wm. Edward Parry

Owner  
Charles Mathias  
"Burrow"

owner  
Thomas Wedgwood  
"Sand burrows."

Reduced part of  
LAMPHEY Tithe Map  
1839.

Signed, Thomas Hoskins  
Assistant Tithe Commr

commissioners for  
to certify this to  
Plan referred to in  
Rent charge in lieu  
Lamphey in the

ands,  
Wm. Blamire  
J. W. Buller.



Acres  
1984 739

1st edition  
O.S.

6" Map.

1869.

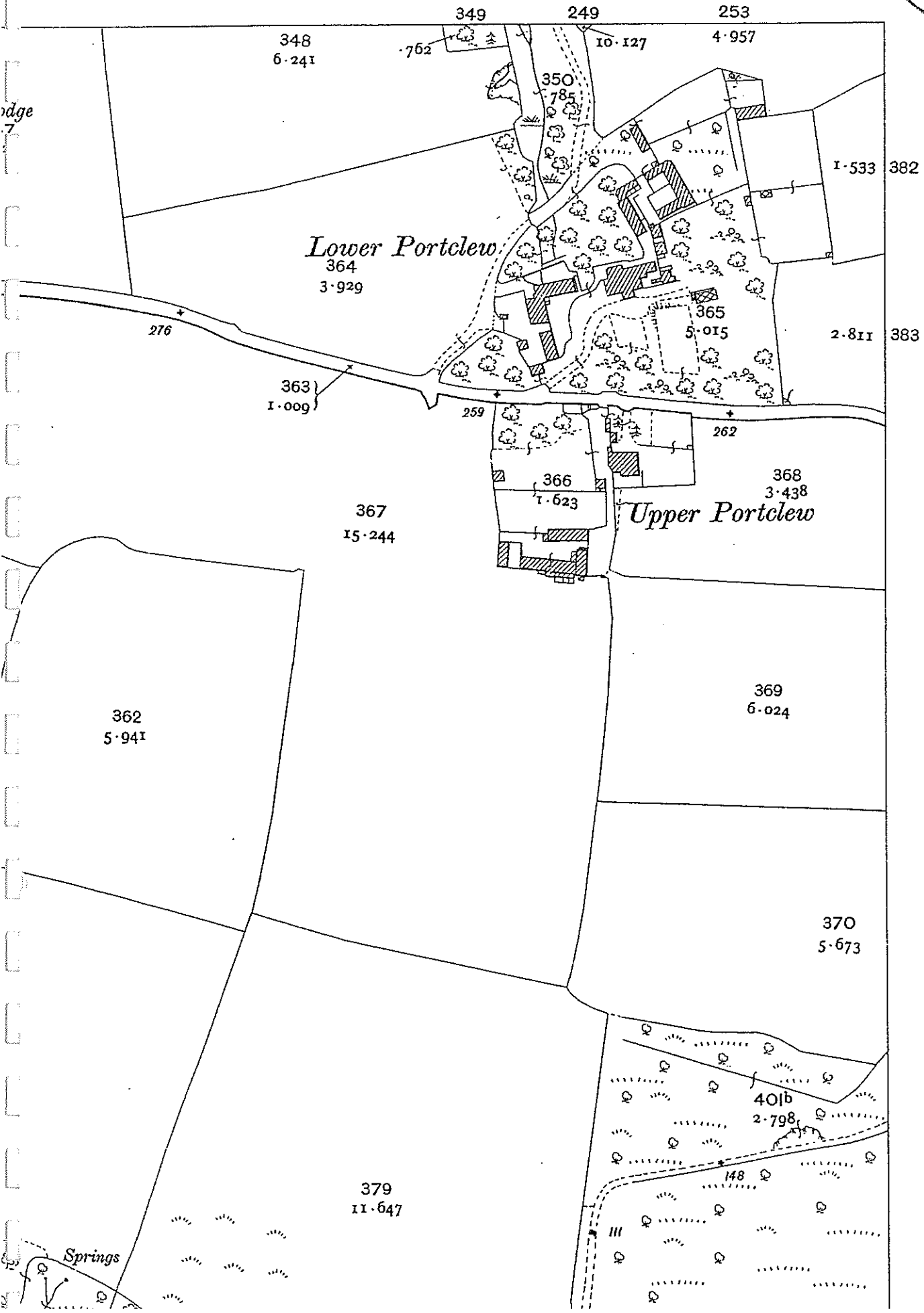




O.S. 25" - 2nd edn 1908 - orig. survey 1863.

PEMBROKESHIRE SHEET XLIII.2.

RECORD  
MAP



LAMPHEY PH.

