

First Survey, 19-20 Feb.



Ancient Monuments Laboratory, Geophysics Section

Combretovium, Baylham, Suffolk, 1973

A preliminary survey of the part of the scheduled area to be affected by the A140 road scheme was carried out on 19th-20th February, 1973. Traverses were made in a zig-zag pattern with the fluxgate gradiometer across the road line and were followed by tests of likely anomalies with a hand corer.

The actual enclosed area of the settlement ~~at~~ at Combretovium is thought to lie to the SW of the road line around Baylham House and Baylham Mill and is probably not itself affected. There is a bank across field 5182 and along the fence line between fields 4762 and 6575 as marked on the 25" plan which might mark the NE boundary, and a difference in ground^{level} suggests that Mill Lane may mark the NW boundary.

If this is the case it would be consistent with the findings from rapid gradiometer scans which showed no sign of any features in field 5182 to the NE of this bank, but occasional anomalies to the SW of it. In field 4762 some of the magnetic anomalies were shown by augering to correspond to areas of disturbed and darkened subsoil.

Although it may lie outside the main settlement the route of the new road is crossed by two Roman roads and is not without archaeological significance.

These roads are numbered 34b and 3d by Margary (Roman Roads in Britain, Vol I. 1955). Of these 34b is the Baylham to Peasenhall road which he says is only definitely traceable N of Coddenham. In fact if the known section as marked on the 1" O.S. map is projected back to Baylham the line may be seen to coincide with a track through Shrubland Park and the boundary between fields 6575 and 8070, which was not included in the survey.

Scanning with the magnetometer revealed a number of features in the threatened area near to this field boundary and augering produced characteristic pit fillings containing blackened soil and flecks of burnt clay. This suggests that if the road took this direct route there was extra-mural occupation or industrial activity associated with it in field 6575 and no doubt also in field 8070.

Continued magnetic scanning through the fields to the NW as far as field 0939 showed nothing of interest. In field 0939 itself there was a magnetic anomaly at the SE end which on augering was found to indicate a layer of burnt soil, but the major feature in the field was the second Roman road, 3d. There was a line of scattered stone on the ploughed surface and the magnetometer showed the presence of a ditch about 8m E of the centre line. No ditch was detected on the W side. The measured position of the ditch agrees well with Margary's description, crossing the present A140 not far from the milestone.



A careful search for occupation was made alongside this stretch of Roman road, without result. This contrasts with the findings beside the other road, and tends to confirm that the main settlement lies closer to this latter position.

Conclusions

The road ditch discovered alongside road 3d should be crucial in indicating the alignment of the uncertain stretch to the north. The ditch could be precisely plotted by formal magnetic survey or excavation.

More detailed planning of the occupation beside road 34b could also be achieved by magnetic survey; but here the road may not have a detectable ditch and might only yield to excavation.

A.J. Clark

A.D.H. Bartlett

26th February, 1973

The following maps are appended to this survey:

1. 25" plan of road scheme annotated with results of geophysical scan.
2. Part of 6" map of area similarly annotated, and showing also the limits of the searched area and the probable line of Roman road 34b to Coudenham.



Ancient Monuments Laboratory, Geophysics Section

Combreteviium, Second Survey, 21-22 March, 1973

On this return visit to Combreteviium sites 1 and 2 as marked on the 6" plan were inspected and some further geophysical work was done to locate features for the excavator working at site 3.

There was nothing of apparently major significance at either site 1 or site 2 but such finds as were made are described below.

Site 1

This section of the route of the proposed road was scanned by making a series of zig-zag traverses with the gradiometer in a manner similar to that employed for site 3 in the previous survey.

The scanning produced little evidence for magnetic activity. There were a few scattered weak anomalies (less than 5 gamma) and some of these were tested with the auger. This showed 30cm of topsoil and then a subsoil that was mainly gravelly clay with flints but with occasional sandy pockets. There was nowhere any sign of possible archaeological disturbance.

Site 2

Gradiometer scans were made in the fields on the NE side of Kettle Lane to each side of the ditch.

On the N side of the ditch a small number of magnetic anomalies were located. One of these contained what were possibly specks of burnt clay, but they were found only at one place and other auger borings nearby showed natural clayey granules in the subsoil.

In the field S of the ditch there were again several anomalies, two of which gave definite indications when augered that they corresponded to pit fillings. There were specks of charcoal and burnt clay in the soil at position 1 as shown on the 1:200 plan and disturbed and darkened soil with charcoal at position 2.

A 30m square which included these anomalies was then surveyed in detail but there was no sign of extensive disturbance in the results. For a few metres above and below the point that was augered at 1 the traverses show slight positive anomalies which indicate a ditch, but the feature could also be accounted for by the furrows that were visible on the surface at this point. There is also a faint line of anomalies which might suggest the presence of a ditch marking part of an enclosure.

Conclusion

There is no immediately noticeable evidence for the existence of any extensive remains of former occupation at site 1. There are signs that there might have been activity in the region of site 2 but it is unlikely that any substantial remains survive within the area surveyed.

Combetovium

Geophysical Surveys Feb - March 1973



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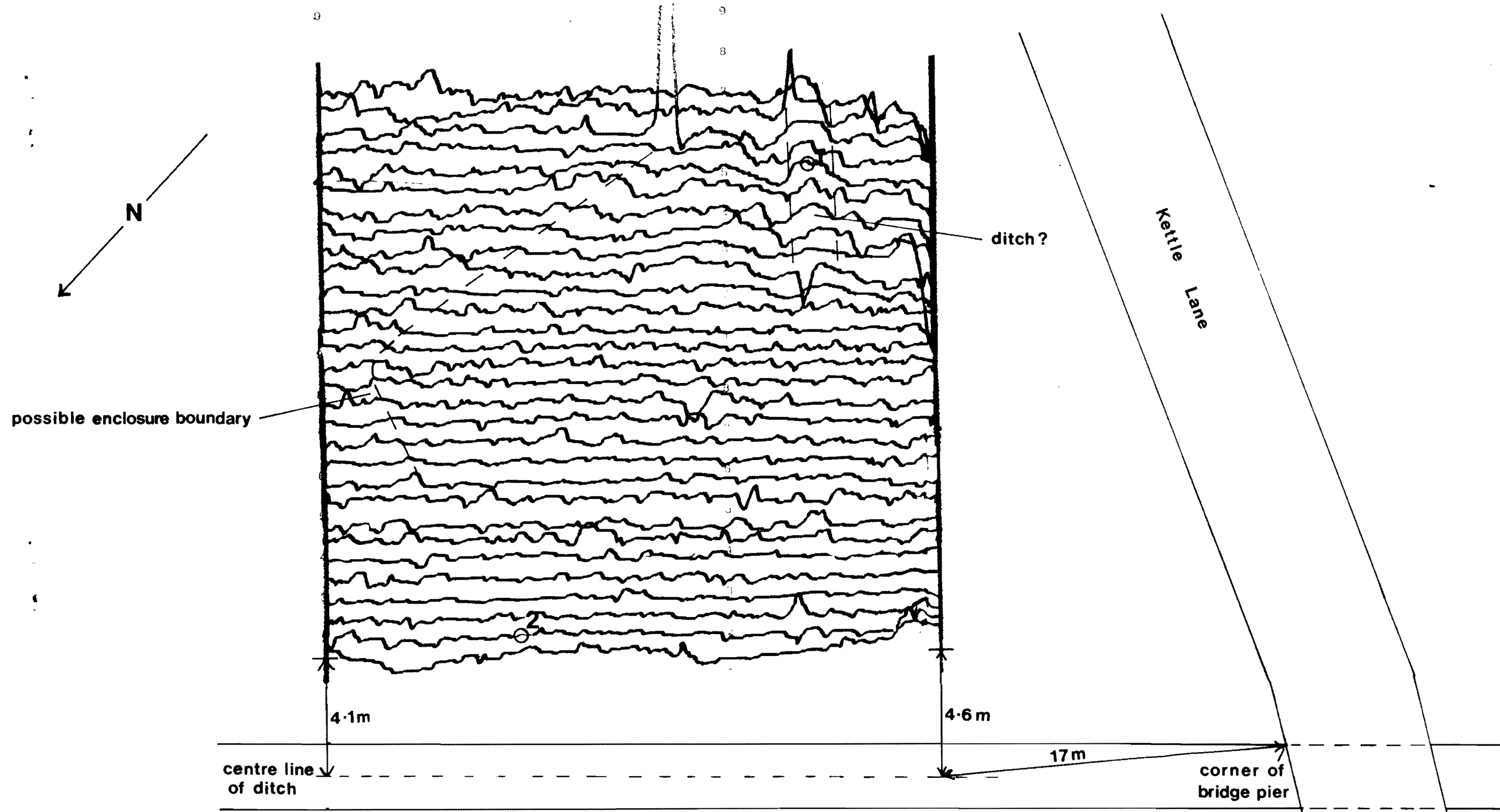
areas scanned
with magnetometer

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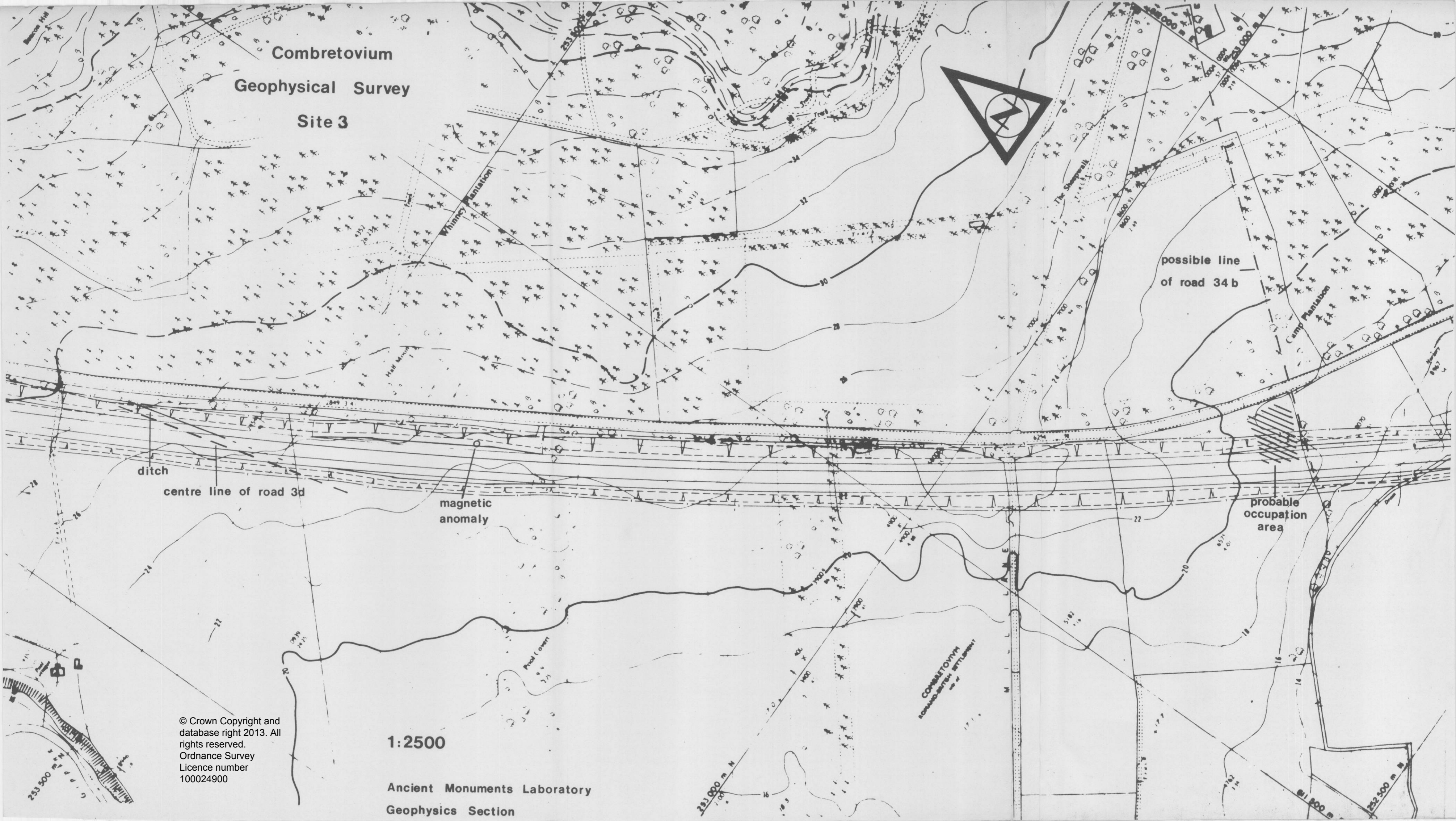
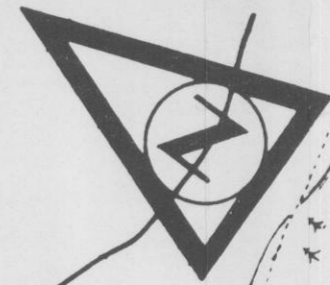
Combretovium

Site 2

1:200



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Site 3



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