

FIELDWALKLING AT THE  
CLEEVE PRIOR  
MILLENNIUM GREEN,  
WORCESTERSHIRE

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With a contribution on the flint by H Dalwood

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Table 1. Quantification of selected artefacts

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# Fieldwalking at the Cleeve Prior Millennium Green, Worcestershire

**J D Hurst**

## 1. Summary

*Fieldwalking was undertaken at Cleeve Prior (WSM 23281; NGR SP 084 491) as part of a project creating a Millennium Green. This revealed a scatter of finds of the prehistoric, Roman, medieval, and post-medieval periods. A former trackway possibly of medieval date was also identified across the site. The remains of a lime kiln and a small stone quarry represent post-medieval industrial activity in the vicinity of the site. The fieldwork was carried out by Derek Hurst (Worcestershire County Archaeological Service) in collaboration with local volunteers, and was funded through Rural Action for the Environment.*

## 2. Aims

The aim of the fieldwalking was to establish a base level of archaeological data for a large area on the south edge of the medieval village of Cleeve Prior, which is in the process of being converted from arable production to the site of a new village green as part of a Millennium Green project.

## 3. Topographical and archaeological background

The site of the fieldwalking is located at NGR SP 084 491, and to the south-west of Cleeve Prior parish church. The geology is Blue Lias (British Geological Survey 1:50,000 sheet 200), and soils belong to the Haselor soil series. The latter are not easily worked in the spring, but are suitable for winter cereals (Beard *et al* 1986).

## 4. Methods

In general the methods followed Service practice (County Archaeological Service 1995).

### 4.1 Documentary search

A preliminary search was carried out of the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), and of the County Record Office. The latter concentrated on the location of any useful cartographic material.

### 4.2 Fieldwork

#### 4.2.1 Fieldwork strategy

The fieldwalking area was marked out with a 20m wide grid, and along each grid-line 20m lengths were marked out (eg Fig 1). Finds were collected from within a 2-3m wide corridor centred on each grid line demarcated by a letter. Each line was walked from south to north. The field had been ploughed and harrowing had been undertaken about two weeks before the walk took place. The surface of the field was easily walkable (ie flat), and largely dry under foot. Generally, therefore, conditions could be classified as ideal for this type of fieldwork.

The fieldwalking was carried out by local volunteers, following a short introduction by the author to this type of fieldwork and the range of finds that might be recovered. None of the volunteers had carried out this type of fieldwork before.

## 4.3 Artefacts

### 4.3.1 Artefact recovery policy

All artefacts visible on the field surface were recovered. Finds were also recovered by metal detecting along one grid-line (G).

### 4.3.2 Method of analysis

The finds were scanned rapidly and all pottery except for 19th century and later sherds was recorded by count and weight. Other types of find that were recorded were worked flint. The presence of coal was also noted. Fabric identifications below are referenced to Hurst and Rees (1992).

## 5. Analysis

The results of the artefactual analysis are presented in Table 1, and as distribution plots (Figs 2 and 3). In the case of the distribution plots all the finds spots represent 1-3 sherds, the majority being single sherds.

### *Prehistoric (by H Dalwood)*

A total of twenty-five pieces of flint were recovered, but thirteen were definitely or probably naturally broken unworked pieces derived from glacial deposits. The remaining twelve pieces mostly consisted of waste flakes (debitage; 11 flakes). A single tool was identified, a broken and burnt fragment of a scraper (from G9). The worked flint assemblage is listed in Table 2. The generally small size of the flakes, and the absence of diagnostic earlier material, suggests a late Neolithic to Bronze Age date.

### *Roman*

There was a small assemblage of Roman pottery (24 sherds weighing 92g). This was all Severn Valley ware, and was in a very abraded condition. The average sherd size of 3.8g was also quite low.

The distribution was fairly general, but showed a bias towards the south-west corner of the site. In this corner the scatter attained a density of 0.2g of pottery/m<sup>2</sup> walked. This was far below a sherd density of 0.8-1.2g/m<sup>2</sup> which characterised the likely occupation areas of two Roman sites in central Worcestershire (Hurst 1998). Though the chronology of these sites is not known in detail, and so a more precise comparison is not possible, the likelihood is that the Roman finds from the Cleeve Prior Millennium Green do not represent an occupation area.

### *Medieval*

There was a small assemblage of medieval pottery (28 sherds weighing 188g). This consisted of various ware types, and was in a very degraded condition. The average sherd size was 6.7g, and the distribution was at a low level across the whole site.

The medieval pottery ranged in date from the 10th-mid 11th century to 15th-16th century. It included Malvernian ware (fabric 56), and buff ware (fabric 64.2). The earliest medieval pottery was a single sherd of Cotswolds oolitic ware (fabric 57; from B6).

### *Post-medieval*

The post-medieval period was by far the best represented period (198 sherds weighing 1.584kg). There was a small amount of 17th century pottery, and a large amount of 18th

century pottery. This material was in far better condition than pottery of previous periods. The average sherd size was 8g, and the distribution was general across the whole site with no concentrations in the vicinity of the lime kiln or the quarry. The provenance of most of this period is unknown in detail.

## 6. Discussion

The results of the fieldwork were broadly consistent with a background scatter representing farming activity in the Roman and later periods. The occupation associated with this activity would be located elsewhere, and in the case of the Roman period, it is suggested that this may be to the south-west of the present fieldwalked area. The artefactual material would have been moved into surrounding fields as a result of concentrating domestic rubbish in midden heaps, which are subsequently spread about the arable fields. This practice is authenticated historically for the medieval period (Astill and Grant 1988), and has been demonstrated for the Roman period by Gaffney and Tingle (1989).

A map dating to 1772 (WRO BA 1691/7) shows that the area about to be converted to a new village green, was still in the later 18<sup>th</sup> century divided into strips used and under ridge and furrow cultivation. The ridge and furrow is likely to have originated in the medieval period. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the area of the Millennium Green was, partly, in a field called *quarry furlong*, and, partly, in another field called *Braggingtons hedge*. A continuation of this strip pattern of cultivation still survives as earthworks to the south of the new Millennium Green area. Two east to west strips on this 18<sup>th</sup> century plan cross the fieldwalked area at the point where there is a modern entrance into the field. These strips are located in an area of north to south strips on both sides. Their position corresponds in the present-day field with a denser scatter of Lias stone than elsewhere in the field (Fig 3). This may be the route of a former metalled trackway, which had gone out of use by the later 18<sup>th</sup> century, and been ploughed over, and incorporated into the ridge and furrow system.

Both the small limestone quarry located in the south-east corner of the Millennium Green field, and the kiln to the north (WSM 7808), postdate the 1772 map.

## 7. The archive

The archive consists of:

- 2 Fieldwork progress records AS2
- 5 Fieldwalking finds records
- 1 Scale drawings
- 2 Boxes of finds
- 1 Computer disk

The project archive is intended to be placed at: Worcestershire County Museum, Hartlebury Castle, Hartlebury, Near Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY11 7XZ

Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416

## 8. Acknowledgements

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## 10. **Abbreviations**

WSM	Numbers prefixed with 'WSM' are the primary reference numbers used by the Worcestershire County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)
WRO	Worcestershire County Records Office.
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record.

**Table 1. Quantification of selected artefacts**

	no	weight (g)
Pottery		
Roman	24	92
Medieval	28	188
Post-medieval	198	1584
Flint	12	

**Table 2. Worked flint**

Grid co-ordinates	Description
A4	flake
C3	flake
C8	flake
D6	flake
F9	flake
F10	flake
F10	flake
G3	flake
G4	flake
G5	flake
G7	flake
G9	scraper (burnt and broken)



Figure 1. Distribution plot of Roman pottery

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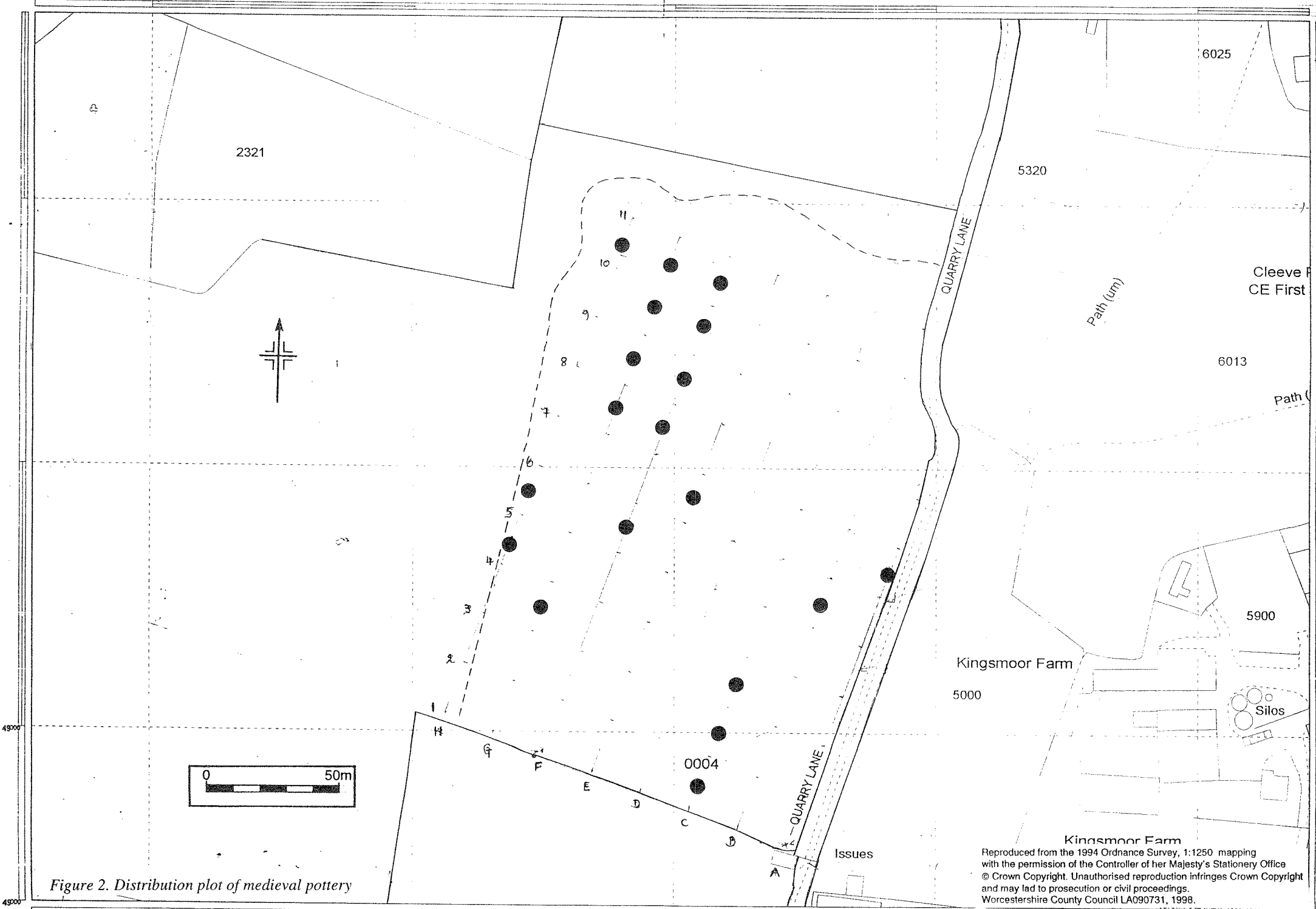


Figure 2. Distribution plot of medieval pottery

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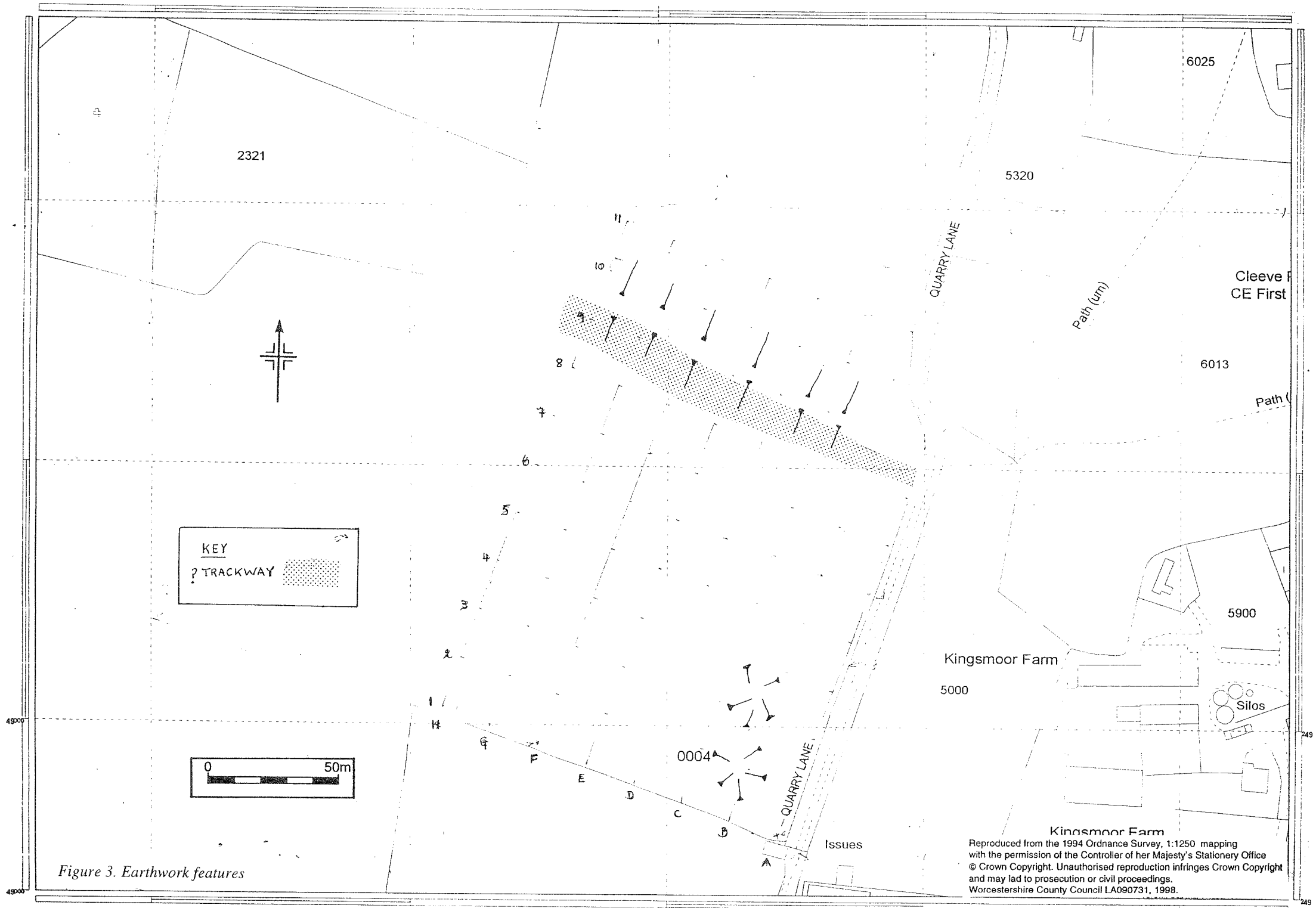


Figure 3. Earthwork features

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