

BISHOP'S WALTHAM DIKES

By G. P. HEWLETT and JANE HASSELL

1. THE PARK AT BISHOP'S WALTHAM

THE seventeenth century maps of Hampshire by John Speed (*c.* 1610) and Christopher Saxton (corrected by P. Lea, 1686) mark a large, roughly circular park lying between the villages of Upham and Bishop's Waltham. A similar feature but less regular in shape was marked on such eighteenth century maps of the county as those published by Kitchen (1770) and Harrison (1788). It does not occur on any edition of the one-inch Ordnance Survey maps. However, six-inch Ordnance maps of the Upham-Bishop's Waltham area mark a wooded, linear feature, enclosing about 1,000 acres on the western side of the road from Winchester to Wickham, which is in part followed by the parish boundaries of Upham, Durley and Bishop's Waltham. Known as the Park Lug (fig. 14), this is a substantial landscape feature today, consisting for much of its western section of a bank, thickly overgrown with trees and shrubs, and lined along its eastern and southern sides by a discontinuous shallow ditch. The name clearly suggests that the bank was one of the boundaries of the earlier park, a view taken by W. Houghton at the end of the last century (1892). In the north the Lug continues in an easterly direction beyond the Winchester-Wickham road, suggesting that part of the original park lay in that vicinity and that, while the whole may have had the roughly circular shape depicted on early maps, it may have extended further east than these maps indicate. This paper outlines an attempt to establish the eastern boundary of the park, to date the boundary and to trace the evolution of the enclosed area.

The basic method employed in this study was the analysis of hedgerows, a technique originally described by Hoskins (1967) and elaborated in Kent by Hewlett (1969). Analysis involves the counting of woody species in a standard sample length of hedge, set at 30 yards on each side of the hedge by Hoskins but extended on the basis of experience in Kent to 100 yards on one side by the present writer. Species are counted on that side of the hedge which has the most southerly aspect since full numerical development of species may be inhibited on the shady northern side. Such a count for a set of hedges is believed by Hoskins and the present writer to allow the establishment of a relative chronology for that particular set, since it appears that, in generally favourable ecological conditions, the number of woody species in a hedgerow will naturally increase over the centuries following its initial establishment. Thus, it seems that a hedgerow where 12 species can be counted in a sample length will be considerably older than one where only two are found. Having established a relative chronology for a set of hedgerows, it may then be possible to assign an absolute date to one of the hedges on the basis of documentary evidence. Other hedgerows in the area with a similar number of species may then be reasonably referred to approximately the same period of origin.

In Bishop's Waltham the starting point for analysis was the Park Lug itself. The trees and shrubs on the bank form an unkempt hedge the line of which, occupying a

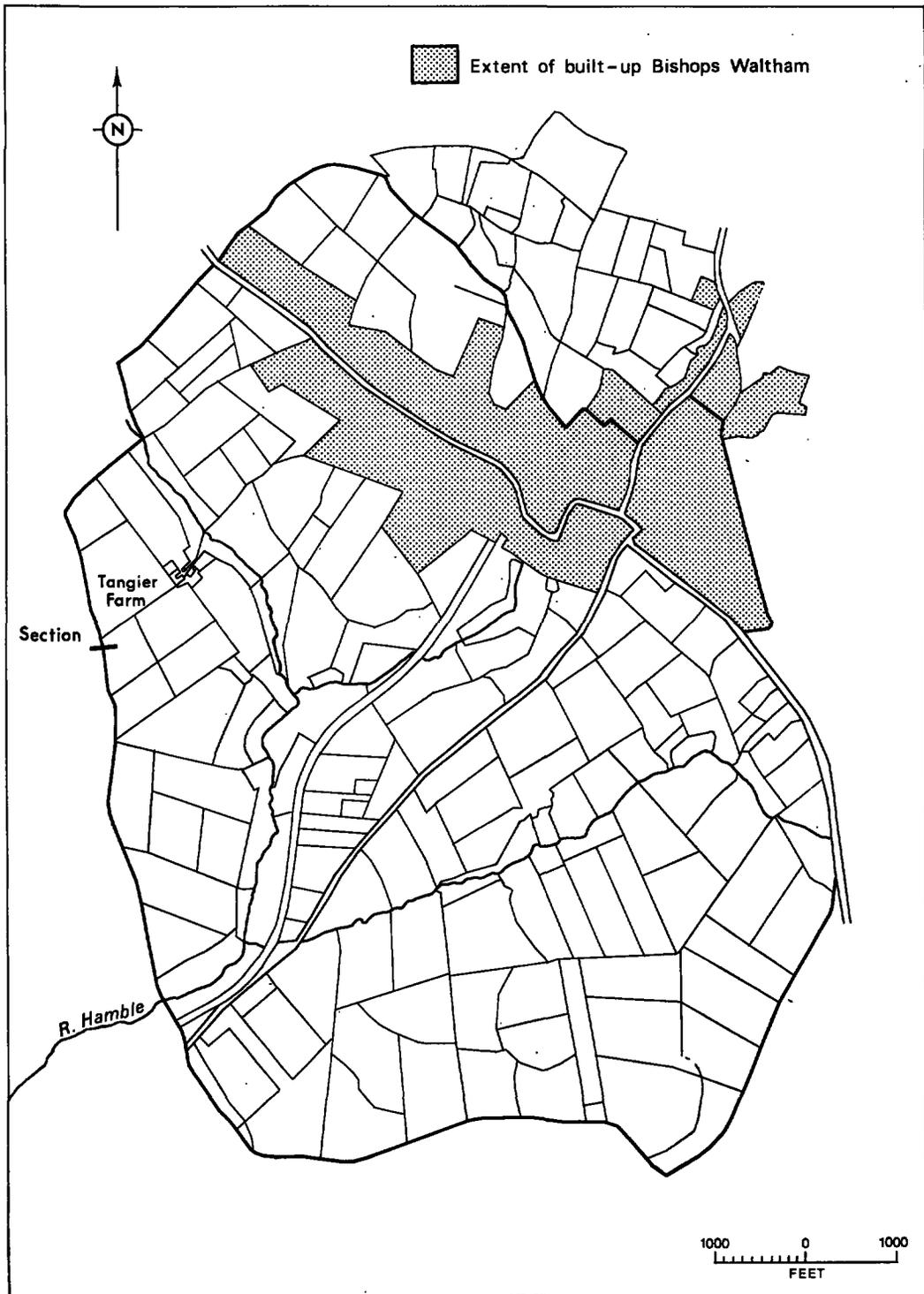


Fig. 14. The area surrounded by the 'Park Lug', Bishop's Waltham.
(Based on the O.S. Map, Crown Copyright Reserved.)

broad semicircle across the country, contrasts sharply with the regular pattern of generally straight hedgerows enclosed within it. The woody species of those internal hedges abutting on to the Park Lug, as well as those of the Lug itself, were sampled. Sampling was also extended to the eastern side of the Winchester-Wickham road in an attempt to locate the park boundary in that direction. Altogether, samples were taken from 66 hedges, with results shown in fig. 15a. Two distinct sets may be recognised, a large one with mode of six species and a smaller one with a mode of 10.5. Hedges with a higher species count were clearly associated with the bank of the Park Lug but were also recognised as continuing beyond the Winchester-Wickham road. In the north-east they carried the known section of the Lug to a point near Bishop's Waltham Pond, just past Pondsides Farm (fig. 16). In the south-east, a high species hedge runs along Green Lane and is apparently linked to the southern end of the Park Lug by the edge of the water in the marshy area known as The Moors and to Bishop's Waltham pond by a road named, perhaps significantly, Bank Street (fig. 16). This almost continuous line seems to mark the boundary of the original park.

Species counts from hedges lying inside the park were graphed separately (fig. 15b). Two subsets emerge quite clearly, the larger one with a mode of six species and the smaller a mode of eight. The two sets overlap in respect of species but the small set may be differentiated by its association with distinct banks averaging about three feet in height, generally lower than the bank of the Park Lug. These intermediate hedges are mostly aligned with the western wall of the bishop's palace or lie to the east of this line (fig. 16). They thus separate the palace, Bishop's Waltham itself and the smaller eastern section of the park from the park's larger eastern section. A small part of the north-western section of the Park Lug itself, which is formed by a very ill-defined bank, also has hedges belonging to the intermediate set.

So far, hedgerow analysis by itself suggests the existence of a main enclosure, the park itself, and two unequal subdivisions. Work in the Darent Gap in Kent has shown fairly conclusively that hedges with a count of over 10 species are associated with enclosures dating from before the Norman Conquest (Hewlett 1969). Assuming ecological conditions in Hampshire to be broadly similar, the boundary of the park would appear to be of Saxon date, the smaller area within it, bounded by hedgerows of intermediate species counts, being somewhat older than the enclosure indicated by the straight hedges of the larger subdivision.

Documentary evidence allows a more exact chronology to be advanced. The earliest document referring to Bishop's Waltham is a charter of A.D. 904. By this Edward the Elder obtained Portchester from the Bishop of Winchester in exchange for 38 hides (*manentes*) of land at Waltham (Birch, C. S., 1887). It seems very likely that the bishop's newly acquired property coincided with the later park. Not only does the species count appear to confirm this but the fact that a long section of the boundary follows the bank of the Park Lug is also significant. A section cut through this bank above Tangier Farm clearly showed it to be artificial (see p. 36). Such banks are often associated with Saxon property boundaries (Hoskins 1967). The small part of the north-western boundary with a poor bank and marked by intermediate hedges may be explained by postulating later modification to the original boundary here, possibly as a result of some expansion of the cultivated area centred on Trullingham,

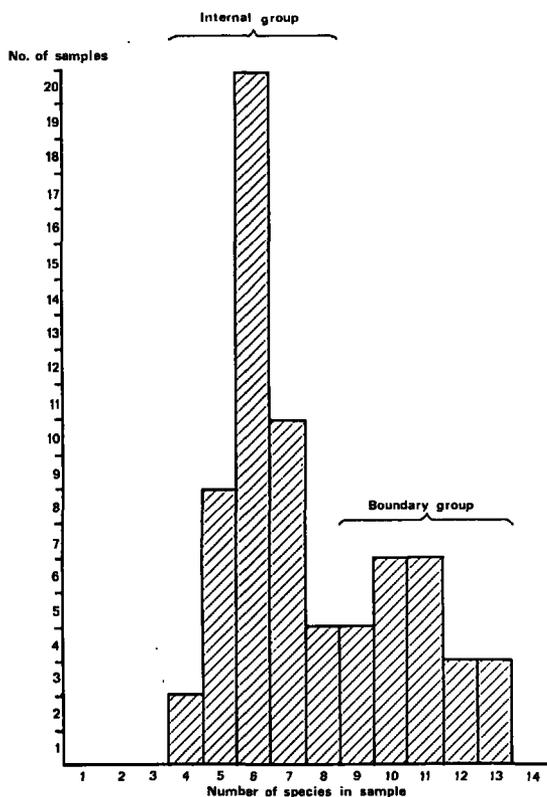


Fig. 15a.

Fig. 15. (a) Hedges in Bishop's Waltham Park; (b) Sets of hedges in and around the park.

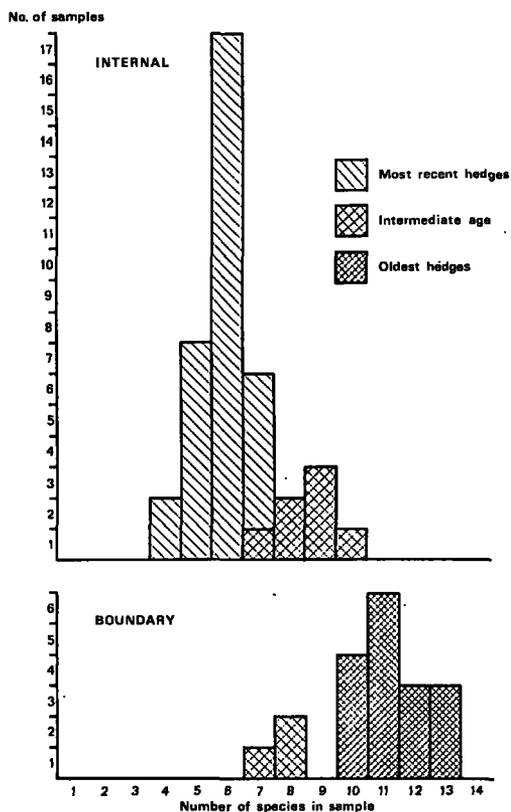
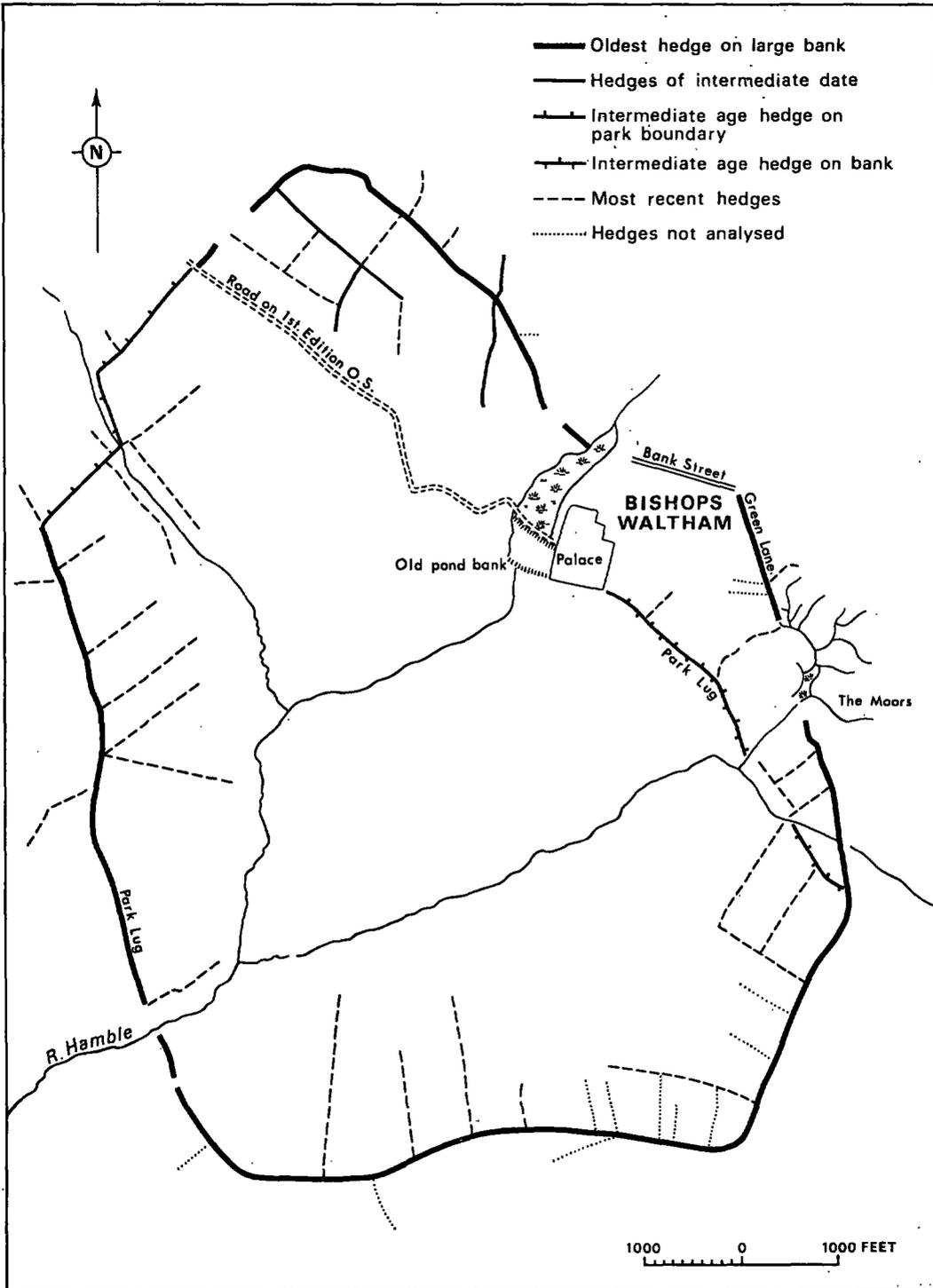


Fig. 15b.

perhaps in the thirteenth century. With this exception the boundary of the park appears to be of tenth century date. If this is the case, it is notable that the present church of Bishop's Waltham lies outside the boundary of the Saxon estate, but that there was some form of settlement within it, adjacent to the site of the later palace (Selkirk 1968).

The use of the park at this early date is far from clear, but by 1086 it had become a hunting park for in Domesday Book a 'park for beasts (of the chase)' was recorded at Waltham (*V.C.H.* vol. 1). Later documents indicate that hunting continued in the park during medieval times. From 1241 to 1243, when the see of Winchester was in royal hands, Henry III authorised the taking of deer from the park (*Liberate Rolls, H.III*, vol. 2). The survival of this function until perhaps the seventeenth century may be related to the damp conditions, discouraging to agricultural development, caused by the underlying London Clay (fig. 17), and the springs which form the headwaters of the River Hamble. Hunting, however, was not the only use of the park. In the twelfth century Bishop Henry de Blois, one of the most powerful men in England in his day, caused a palace to be built in one section of it (*V.C.H.* vol. 3), whilst adjacent to it the apparently planned settlement of Bishop's Waltham (Beresford 1959) was laid out

BISHOP'S WALTHAM DIKES



G

Fig. 16. Map showing hedges analysed by numbers of woody species.

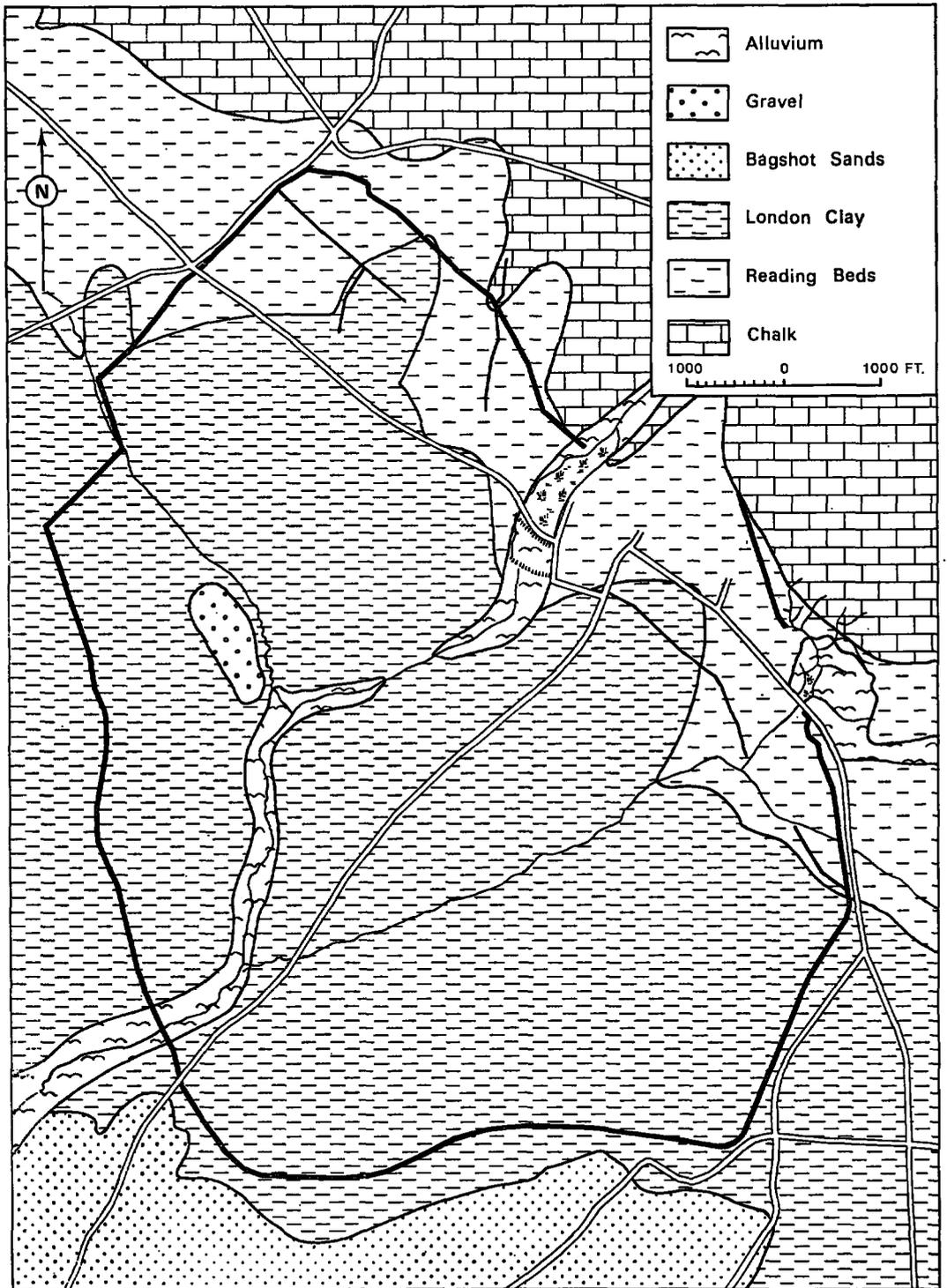


Fig. 17. The geology of the Bishop's Waltham area.
 (Based on the Geological Survey Map, Crown Copyright Reserved.)

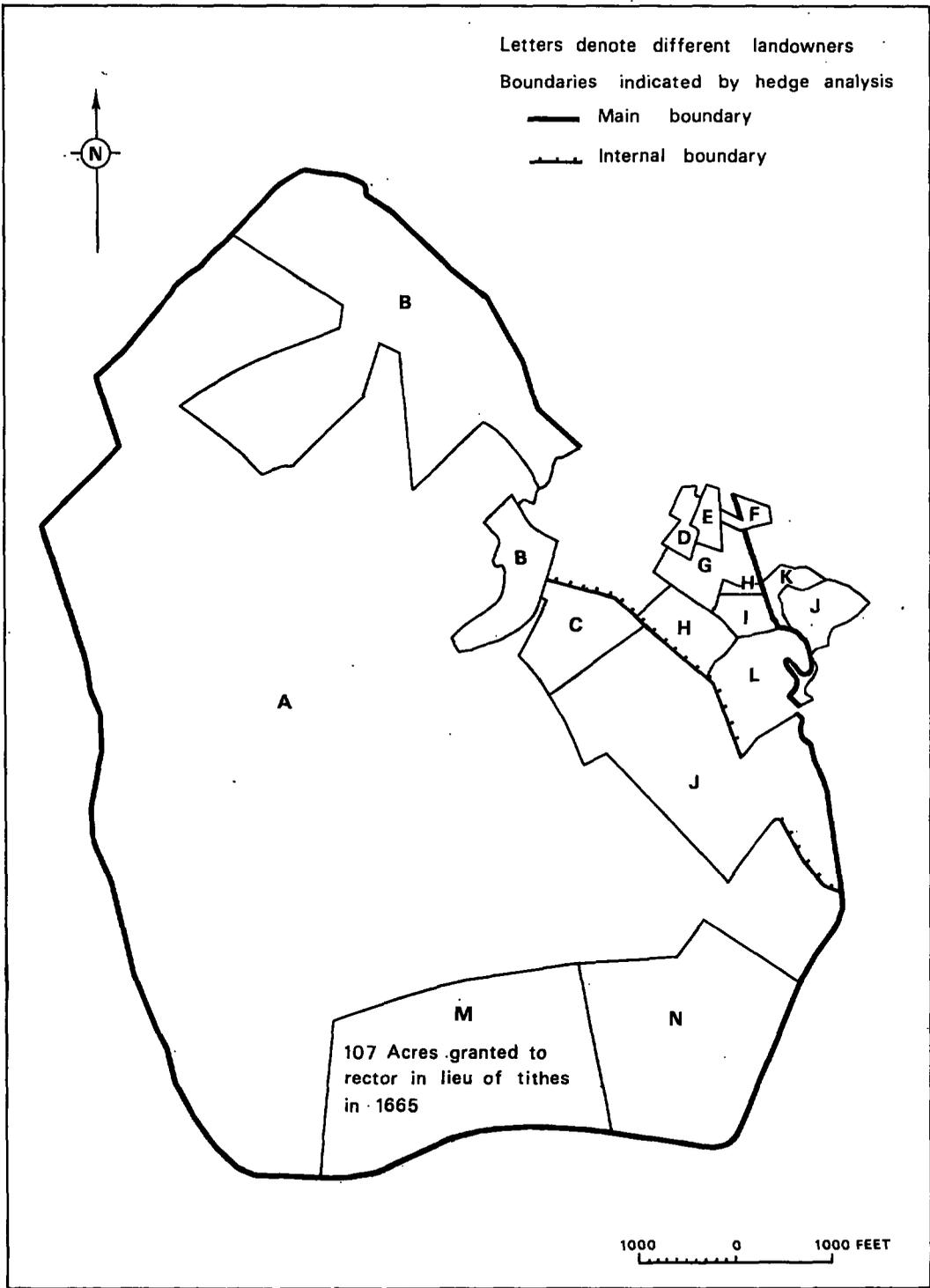


Fig. 18. Bishop's Waltham, Hampshire: the relationship of old park boundaries to landholdings in 1841.

either at the same date or, like other planned settlements belonging to the bishops, in the thirteenth century. These changes may have been associated with enclosure in the eastern section of the park, where hedgerows with intermediate species counts were found, made perhaps for extra grain with which to feed the palace household or possibly in response to an expanded village population. If cultivation was the object, it is perhaps significant that the area concerned largely corresponds with the only outcrop of Reading Beds found in the park. Although still heavy, the soil developed on these beds is more workable and better drained than that on the London Clay. A hint of a possible thirteenth century date for enclosure here is contained in a writ of 1261 which mentioned as part of villeinage service 'fencing in Waltham park at need' (Cal. Inq. Misc. 1261), though the reference may equally well be to a constant need to repair the park pale.

The rest of the park does not appear to have changed until the seventeenth century. During the Civil War the palace was rendered useless for defence and habitation and the park itself seems to have been taken over by squatters who ploughed it (House of Lords, R.O.). After the Restoration, the new bishop was forced to accept the situation and in 1663 took out an act to lease out 'the two parkes and other demesnes at Bishop's Waltham'. 'Two parkes' seems a strange phrase to use unless it recognised the existence of a division between the medieval enclosures and the rest of the park. There can be little doubt, however, that the large set of hedges with six to seven species represents the Restoration enclosure, in which case the name Tangier Farm becomes significant, for the north African port was part of the dowry brought by Charles II's Portuguese queen. The original area of the pre-Restoration park, and its relationship to the medieval enclosure, is confirmed by the Tithe Map of 1841 (fig. 18). This shows not only that all the farm boundaries fit in exactly with the original park boundary but also that in the north-east, where the earliest subdivision took place, there is a pattern of smaller holdings such as might well have resulted from piecemeal medieval enclosure.

2. AN EXCAVATION ON THE PARK LUG AT TANGIER FARM, BISHOP'S WALTHAM

The excavation was undertaken by staff and students from the Departments of Archaeology and Geography of the University of Southampton in an attempt to provide material with which to date the construction of the Park Lug bank and thus establish its relationship with the Saxon land grant of A.D. 904. A section was dug at a point about a quarter mile from Tangier Farm, Bishop's Waltham (SU 169537), across part of the Lug which forms the present boundary between the parishes of Durley and Bishop's Waltham (fig. 19).

The bank of the Park Lug in the area chosen for excavation runs across the natural slope of the ground and varies slightly in breadth, but on the whole it is about 16 feet wide, a width which, as Page (V.C.H., vol. 3) points out is about 'an average deer leap'. The height of the bank also varies but is never more than about 6 feet, and its height at the site of excavation was not more than 3 feet. The Lug was planted with

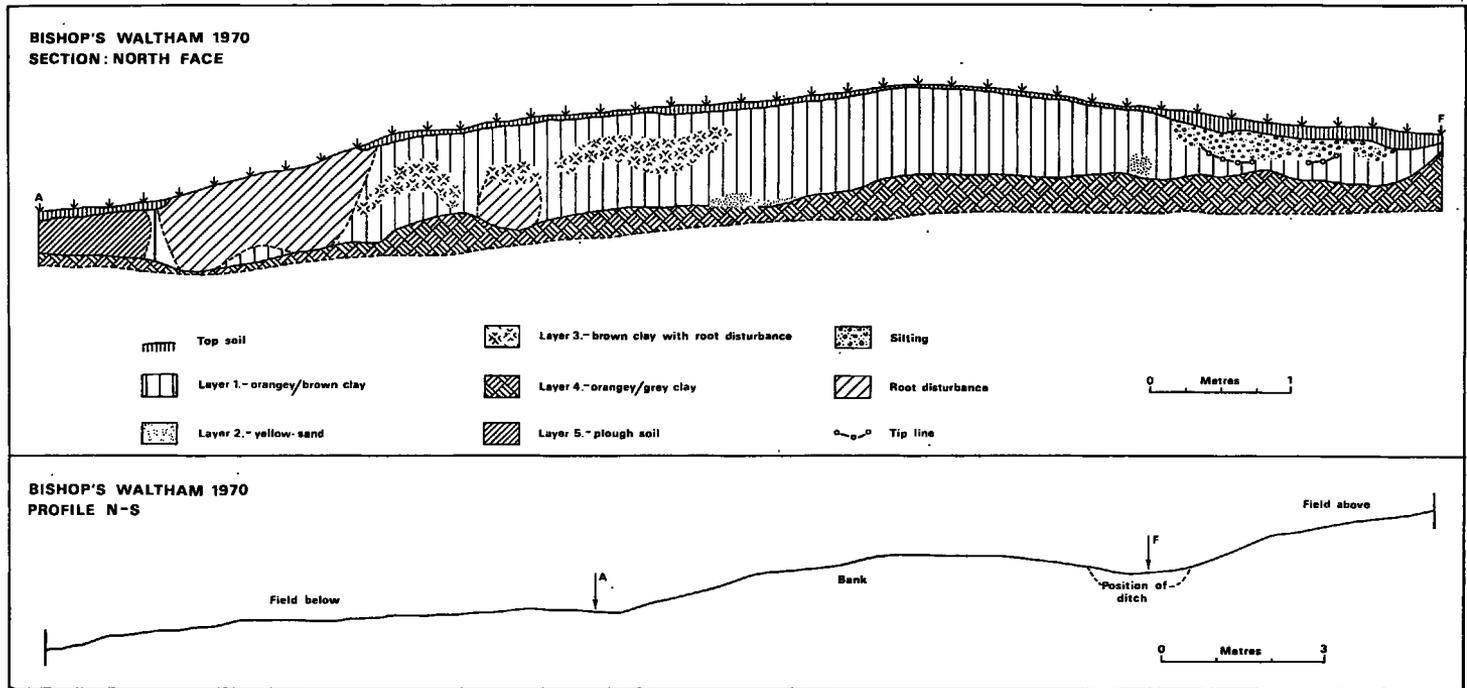


Fig. 19. Excavated section and profile across the 'Park Lug', Tangier Farm, Bishop's Waltham, Hampshire.

trees and an area had to be cleared before a trench 2 x 10 metres could be cut. The site was some 150 feet above sea level.

The Excavation: 1. The Bank

The earth was removed in horizontal spits and the topsoil was seen to be nowhere more than a few centimetres thick. Below this the bank consisted of a fairly uniform orange-coloured clay, in horizons closely related to the London Clay subsoil. As can be seen in the section (fig. 19) there was little stratigraphical differentiation. The orange/brown clay of layer one was not altogether consistent in texture and contained a few flints. Parts had a higher sand content than others but on the whole the bank had a more or less similar structure, any differences being the result of a slight patchiness in moisture content. Layer four was taken to be the *natural* here and, as time did not permit an extension of the trench into the field below, an auger test was carried out some 10 metres from the foot of the trench. It revealed that the orange/grey clay was indeed the material underlying the plough soil of the field.

Layer two consisted of two small patches of yellow sand within layer one, but upon which no constructional interpretation could be based.

The section also shows patches of root disturbance which caused discoloration, producing small areas of brown clay soil, layer three. There was a considerable amount of root disturbance, coupled with erosion caused by animal burrows, at the east end of the section. The wooded nature of the bank easily explains the presence of roots as well as the loss of topsoil at this point. At this end, the bank can be seen to dip down slowly to meet the plough soil of the field below, layer five.

No artifacts, other than some modern iron objects and a pre-historic flint blade from the topsoil, were found within the bank.

2. The Ditch

Since the bank was clearly not constructed of turf, a ditch was expected to lie in the vicinity of the excavation for the necessary building material had to come from somewhere. Although traces of this may be seen at various points along the inside of the Lug, particularly south from the area excavated, there was no trace of it at the east end of the section. This was to be expected at this particular point for the existence of a slope must have meant that it was easier to throw material downhill into a bank rather than lift it upwards. At the west and higher end of the section, evidence for a ditch was fairly conclusive. Root disturbance had affected the area but a depression was seen to exist in the section. The soil at this point consisted of slightly finer particles, indicative of silting. A tip line of small flints also appeared in the section showing the position of the ditch.

A long profile was drawn to project the line of the excavation for some 10 metres into the field below and 6 metres into the one above. The ditch appears quite clearly on this (fig. 19).

Discussion

It is most probable that silting has obscured the ditch along parts of the Park Lug. Recent experimental work at Overton Down in Wiltshire has shown how rapidly a

BISHOP'S WALTHAM DIKES

ditch left open to the elements can become infilled with loose material (Jewell and Dimbleby, 1966) and this probably happened at Bishop's Waltham.

Excavation of the bank did not reveal any evidence for a buried soil surface beneath it. This may suggest that the land was stripped of turf before the bank was thrown up. If clearance did take place, the turf must have been used for some purpose but there was no evidence that this was connected with the bank itself. However, it is possible that an embankment or facing of turf was made along the eastern side of the bank perhaps to prevent it slipping downslope, and that this has been removed by subsequent erosion.

The excavation, then, revealed the structure of the bank but gave no evidence to date its construction. There appear to be no published examples of excavations of park boundaries such as this one, and so no comparative material is available. There is thus no archaeological evidence to suggest a date for the creation of the Park Lug at Bishop's Waltham.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to acknowledge the assistance of Mr. P. V. Addyman, Mr. R. D. Carr and Mr. D. Hill of the Department of Archaeology, Southampton University; Mr. R. J. Casseldon, Mr. J. M. Wagstaff and the Cartographic Section of the Geography Department, the Ordnance Survey; and Mr. T. J. Gregory, who gave permission to excavate.

REFERENCES

ORIGINAL SOURCES

a. *Maps*

Hampshire County Record Office, *Tithe Map for Bishop's Waltham, 1841*.

Harrison, J. (1788). *A Map of Hampshire*.

Kitchen, T. (1770) *A New Improved Map of Hampshire*.

Saxton, C. (ed. Philip Lea, 1687). *Hampshire*.

Speed, J. (1610). *Hantsire Described and Divided*.

b. *Documents*

Birch, W. de G. (1887). *Cartularium Saxonicum*, vol. 3, p. 411, no. 1157.

House of Lords Record Office. 15 Car. II. Short description in *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. 5, p. 512, no. 4.

Public Record Office (1916). *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous (Chancery)*, vol. 1, 1219-1307, p. 91, no. 260.

Public Record Office (1930). *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls, Henry III*, vol. 2, A.D. 1240-1245, pp. 95, 142, 175, 204.

Public Record Office (1951). *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls*, vol. 5, 1260-1267, p. 18.

OTHER REFERENCES

Beresford, M. (1959). The Six New Towns of the Bishops of Winchester, 1200-55, *Medieval Archaeology*, vol. 3, pp. 187-215.

PROCEEDINGS FOR THE YEAR 1971

- Hewlett, G. P. (1969). *Field and Documentary Analysis: A Method in Historical Geography Applied to the Darent Gap* (Unpublished Undergraduate Dissertation, Department of Geography, University of Southampton).
- Hoskins, W. G. (1967). *Fieldwork in Local History*, pp. 40, 117-126.
- Houghton, W. (1892). *Hampshire Notes and Queries*, vol. 6, p. 65.
- Jewell, P. A., and Dimbleby, G. W. (1966). The Experimental Earthwork on Overton Down, Wilts., *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, N.S., vol. 32, pp. 313-342.
- Selkirk, A. and W. (1969). Bishop's Waltham, *Current Archaeology*. no. 10, pp. 274-276.
- Victoria County History, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*, vol. 1, p. 461; vol. 3, pp. 276-282.