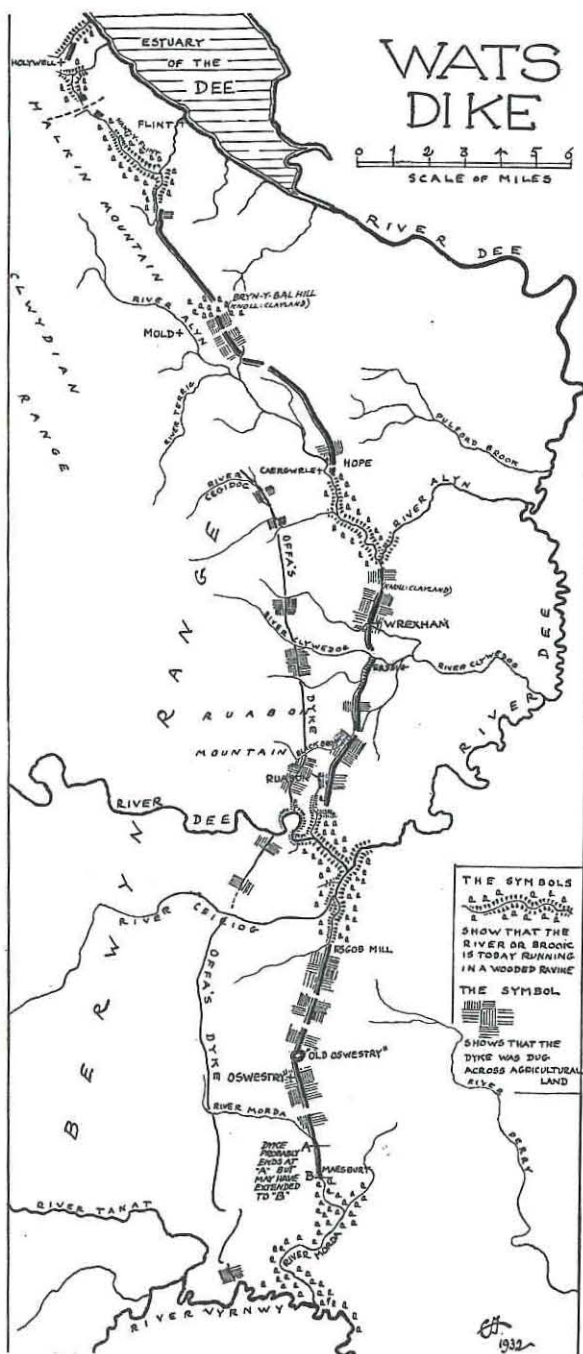


## 35 Pen-y-Bryn, Hope, Flintshire



*35 Pen-y-Bryn, Hope, Flintshire*  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

W.G.Owen  
February 1998

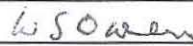


Report for Mrs J.A. Jones

## CPAT Report Record

### Report and status

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CPAT Project Name 35 Pen-y-Bryn, Hope	
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### Internal control

	name	signature	date
prepared by	W G Owen		18/02/98
checked by	N W Jones		26/02/98
approved by	A M Gibson		26/02/98

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no	date	made by	checked by	approved by

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## **CONTENTS**

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY
- 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND
- 4 THE WATCHING BRIEF
- 5 CONCLUSIONS
- 6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

## **LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

Fig 1 Location Scale 1:25000

Fig 2 Plan of Excavation Area Scale 1:20

Fig 3 Section A - B Scale 1:20

Fig 4 Tithe Map of 1851



## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On February 10th 1998, Mrs J.A.Jones of 35 Pen-y-Bryn, Hope, Flintshire contacted the Contracts Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (henceforth CPAT) to enquire whether it would be prepared to undertake a watching brief during the course of the excavation of foundation trenches for an extension to 35 Pen-y-Bryn, Hope, and to submit a quotation for carrying out the work. Because a part of the proposed extension was located within the scheduled area of Wat's Dyke: Section North of Bryn Estyn (F.118), a watching brief was considered necessary by Cadw/Welsh Historic Monuments as a condition for granting Scheduled Monument Consent for the proposed work.
- 1.2 The quotation submitted by CPAT was subsequently approved and the watching brief was carried out on February 18th 1998.

## 2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY (SJ 3096 5871; 102.27mOD).

- 2.1 The development area (Fig. 1) is located on a ridge aligned roughly NW-SE which overlooks the Alyn Valley to the west. This ridge also defines the geological drift boundary between glacially derived boulder clay to the east and glaciofluvial sands and gravels to the west (Rudeforth *et al.*). The drift geology underlying the development site itself is boulder clay.

## 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The development site lies immediately to the west of Wat's Dyke. At this point, the Dyke survives as a low but distinct bank approximately 1.3m high and 2.5m wide, which follows the line of the ridge referred to in Para 2.1 above. The eastern side of the dyke does not survive, having been removed in the past, presumably at the time of the construction of the roadway which is shown on the Tithe Map of 1851 (Fig. 4), and which is now the A550.
- 3.2 Wat's Dyke is a discontinuous linear earthwork which extends from Holywell to the north to Maesbury in Shropshire to the south, a distance of approximately 70 miles. It is thought to date to the reign of Athelbald (716-757AD) and to precede Offa's Dyke, which lies to the west, by no more than a generation. Both probably represent the westernmost extent of the territory of Mercia at different times (Fox 1955).
- 3.3 A limited excavation was carried out by CPAT in 1989 on a section of Wat's Dyke and its associated ditch some 45m to the north of the present development site, during the course of the construction of an access roadway and the excavation of sewer pipe-trench associated with the development of the housing estate by Bellway Homes Ltd (Jones & Brassil 1990). At that point, the dyke survived to a maximum height of only 0.8m. It was seen to consist of a basal layer of large stones above which was an eroded earthen bank. The ditch, which was on the western side of the Dyke, had been dug into boulder clay and its layers of fill consisted of gleyed clays with strong orange and yellow mottles above which was a stony layer which was interpreted as basal material supporting part of a well constructed but undated road surface above it.

## 4 THE WATCHING BRIEF (Figs 2 & 3)

- 4.1 The proposed extension and conservatory area was located at the rear of 35 Pen-y-Bryn and covered an area of approximately 20m<sup>2</sup>. To the east was a paved area which extended 4.6m to the presumed base of the Dyke which had been terraced and planted up with coniferous tree and shrub species and ground cover plants.
- 4.2 Prior to the commencement of the watching brief, paving slabs had been removed from the area and a shallow foundation trench for the northern side of the conservatory had been excavated. This was 2.60m long by 0.34m wide and max. 0.25m deep and was cut into modern rubble held in a loose loamy matrix. To the south of this, work had started on the deeper extension foundation trenches which were outside the scheduled area. These were then extended to the west during the course of the watching brief.



- 4.3 The northern trench C-D, 2.55m long x 0.50m wide, was aligned east-west. It followed the line of an earlier pipe-trench and a pit excavated to house an inspection chamber. Because of ceramic pipe (9) located at the base of the western half of the trench, excavation was limited to its depth at 0.60m. Excavated material was obviously of modern origin. Immediately adjacent to this trench a pit, 9.00m x 8.00m x 0.90m deep, was excavated to re-locate the existing inspection chamber. This cut through modern overburden c. 3.00m deep which overlay a greyish-brown soil layer which extended to the base of the pit. This had a very light stone content and lacked any stratigraphy.
- 4.4 The southern trench A-B, was 2.57m long x 0.66m wide and was also aligned east-west. Removal of modern overburden (1), exposed an amorphous, mid-brown coloured clayey loam (6), max.0.80m thick, which had a low stone content. It contained moderate quantities of charcoal throughout its depth. This overlay a mottled grey, compact clay (7), max 0.26m thick which contained slight traces of charcoal. Layers 6 and 7 were both cut by (3), a pipe-trench which contained a 5 inch ceramic pipe (5) at its base. To the west of this trench, layers 1 and 6 overlay a stiff, buff-yellow coloured very stiff clay (8) which was interpreted as the natural boulder clay. Further excavation to the west of the pipe-trench revealed that (8) continued at an increasingly steep downward slope, the angle of which suggested the edge of a ditch.
- 4.5 The north-south aligned section of foundation trench A-C, partly cut through the fill (4) of pipe-trench 3 and on its eastern side through soil layers identical to (6) and (7). Both overlay (8) which was also seen to slope downwards from west to east.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 It seems clear from the profile of layer 8 as depicted in Fig. 3 that trenches A-B and A-C were located on what can reasonably be interpreted as the western edge of the ditch associated with Wat's Dyke. Layers 6 and 7 are interpreted as layers of ditchfill although no dating evidence was recovered from them.
- 5.2 It was noted at the time of the 1989 excavation (*op.cit.*) that immediately to the north of the excavation area, the ditch was visible as a depression in the field some 6.5m wide. This dimension coincides very closely with the distance from the western edge of the ditch as excavated at 35 Pen-y-Bryn to the toe of the slope of the Dyke to the east.

## 6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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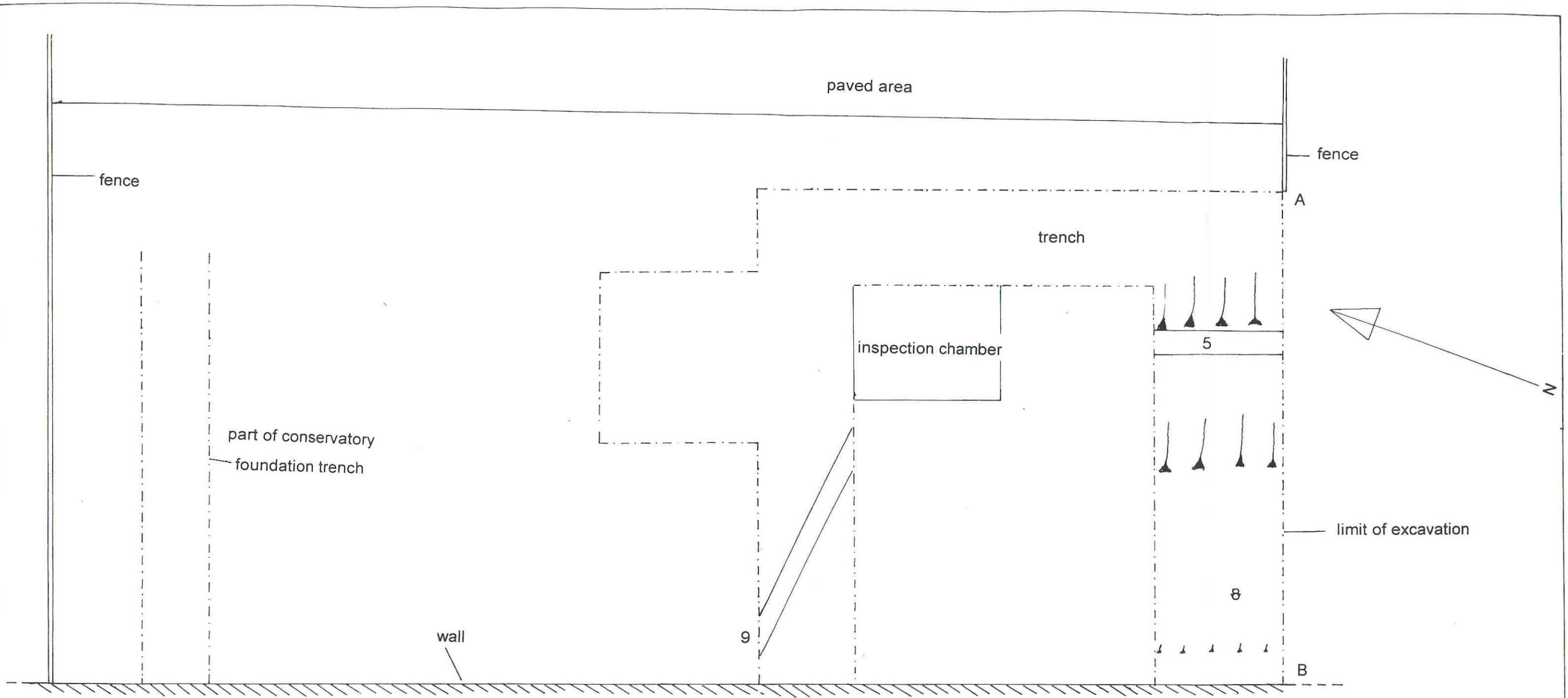


Fig 2: Plan of excavation area Scale 1:20

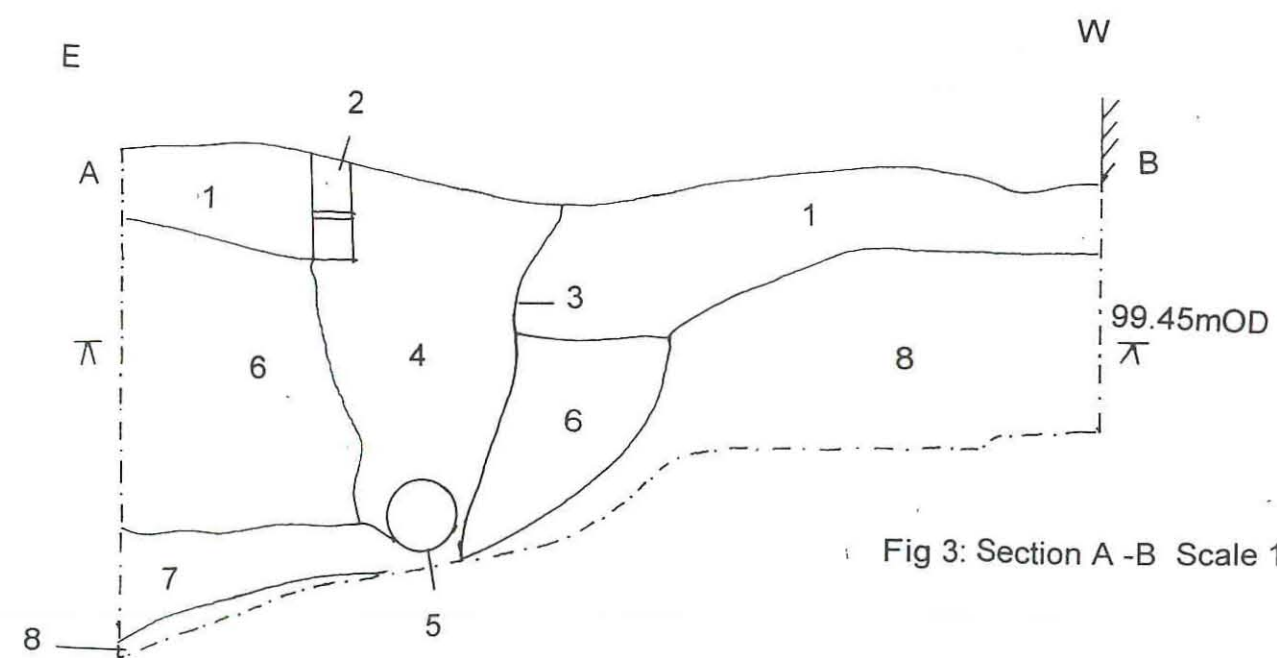
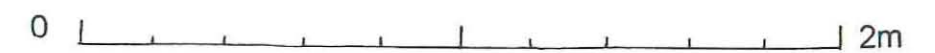


Fig 3: Section A-B Scale 1:20





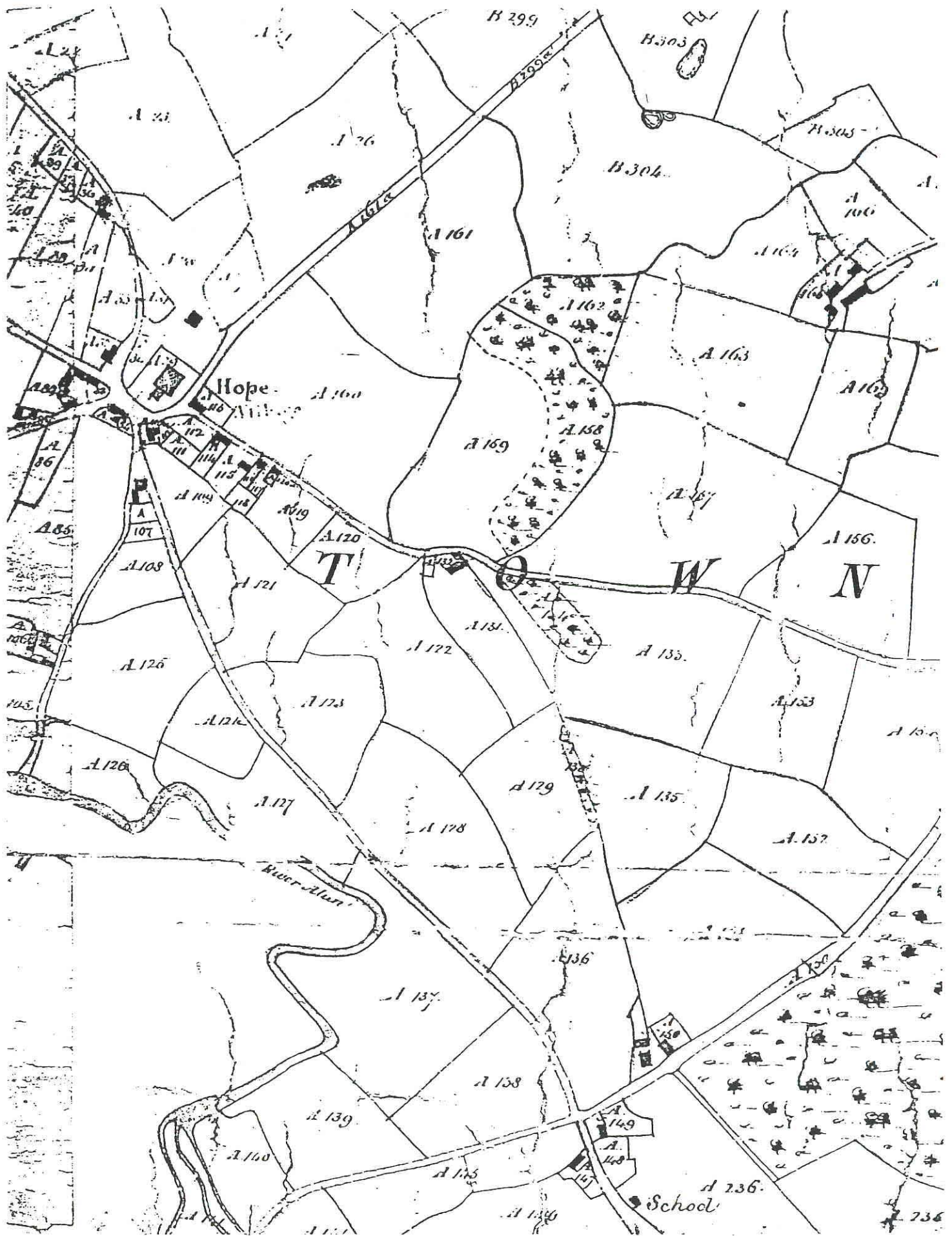


Fig 4: Tithe Map of 1851