

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Y Graig, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY



CPAT Report No 515

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Y Graig, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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March 2003

Report for Forest Enterprise

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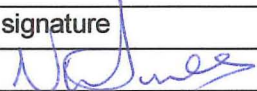
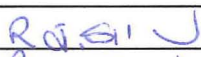
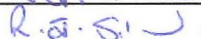
cover photo: PRN 5849 Graig Building XXVIII. Photo CPAT cs03-10-21

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In June 2002 the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was approached by Mr D. Rees, Forest Enterprise, to provide a tender for undertaking survey work within a 43ha portion of forestry at y Graig, Abergavenny, the archaeology of which is now protected as a scheduled ancient monument (SAM MM273(MON)). Although the original intention was to undertake a total station survey of the entire scheduled area, following a field visit by Mr N Jones, CPAT, accompanied by Mr K Lee, University of Wales College, Newport, it became clear that due to the topography and vegetation this would be impractical. An alternative methodology was proposed by CPAT (see below), which it was hoped would provide a sufficient level of detail and accuracy. This was duly accepted by Forest Enterprise, with an agreement being formalised in October 2002.
- 1.2 The significance of Y Graig first came to light as a result of the Welsh Heritage Assets Project. As part of that project, funded by Forest Enterprise, CPAT undertook digital mapping of the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 6" maps for the area, followed by limited fieldwork. The results revealed over 30 structures, forming a dispersed deserted settlement which is currently thought to have been occupied during the 18th and 19th centuries and may have been finally abandoned in the early 20th century. The various structures now lie within an area of regenerated broadleaf woodland and conifer plantation, the latter dating from the 1950s.
- 1.3 In 1999 Forest Enterprise approached the University of Wales College Newport, together with Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, with a proposal to undertake systematic recording of the component features within the scheduled area. This led to the initiation of Y Graig Project in 2000, co-ordinated by Karl Lee, who has been responsible for undertaking extensive fieldwork, the result of which has been the identification of numerous additional archaeological features within the area.

2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 Y Graig lies on a steep south-west facing slope on the southern edge of the Brecon Beacons, within the Brecon Beacons National Park. The hillside forms the north-east side of the Usk valley, lying between Crickhowell and Abergavenny, with the survey area occupying 43ha, centred on SO 255164.
- 2.2 The solid geology of the general area predominantly consists of Lower Old Red Sandstone (George 1970, 52-57), although local outcrops of limestone are indicated by the presence of small quarries and a lime kiln. Soils are generally well-drained, coarse loamy soils of the Eardiston 2 Association (Rudeforth *et al.* 1984, 135-8).

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The methodology proposed by CPAT consisted of two stages. Stage one comprised the digital mapping of all features portrayed on the Ordnance Survey 1st and 2nd edition 25" maps (Figs 1-2), with additional detail provided from the Tithe Survey (Fig. 3). Previous digital mapping, as part of the Welsh Heritage Assets project, was based on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 6" mapping only, and it was clear that the use of both the 1st and 2nd edition 25" sources would introduce considerably greater accuracy and significantly more detail.
- 3.2 Mapping was conducted using GIS-based on the Ordnance Survey National Grid, with separate GIS tables for each mapped source (see Appendix 2). Copies of the Ordnance Survey mapping were scanned and then registered against control points taken from modern editions of the Ordnance Survey to allow the digital transcription of the maps (Fig. 4). Information from the Tithe Survey was captured from paper mapping using digital rectification via AutoCAD13 to allow digital transcription of additional features not mapped by the above sources.
- 3.3 As a caveat it should be noted that the use of Ordnance Survey 25" mapping as a base for the survey has inevitably introduced a potential for minor errors in the metric accuracy of the results. It has been found by CPAT during other similar studies that the original mapping is itself only accurate to perhaps 2-5m and that, for example, the orientation of buildings can also be subject to some variation. The digital rectification process will also introduce a small degree of error, although every effort has been

made to reduce its effect on the overall results. Digital Ordnance Survey mapping was not available for the survey and it is likely that if the results are compared to this source there will be a degree of discrepancy. However, the Ordnance Survey digital mapping also has inherent inaccuracies resulting from both the original surveying and the digital transcription process.

- 3.4 Comparison with the digital mapping produced from the Ordnance Survey 6" sources, under the Welsh Heritage Assets project, has demonstrated a degree of variance and, as expected, the results from the present survey provide significantly greater accuracy and improved detail.
- 3.5 On completion of the digital mapping, the second stage comprised a field survey to assess and enhance the digitally mapped data with the addition of numerous features not recorded by either the Ordnance Survey or the Tithe Survey. Each mapped feature was examined on the ground to determine whether it had been acceptably mapped and located. Where possible, the mapping was enhanced to correct the baseline plan and include additional structures or features, as well as those veteran trees which may be identified in the course of the survey. Full use was made of existing records produced by Karl Lee, information from which has been integrated into the overall results.
- 3.6 Traditional surveying methods were employed using, for example, tape and offset and distance and bearing, rather than total station surveying. Every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of the survey given the limitations noted above. In general, distance measurements were taken using a hand-held laser tape measure, or Disto, with a clinometer used to adjust for slope distortion where appropriate. It should be noted that a number of features, particularly within the central area of Y Graig, proved inaccessible for surveying, and these areas are identified below.
- 3.7 Following the field survey, revisions were made to the digital data to provide an overall plan mapping each feature/structure as accurately as possible (Figs 6-8). Newly recorded sites were appended to the project database provided by Forest Enterprise, and further detail was also added for some of those sites which were already recorded, including corrected grid references and identifications. Previously recorded sites are identified by their Primary Record Numbers (PRN), while new sites have been given temporary Site Numbers, pending the allocation of PRNs at a later date. A gazetteer of sites is included in Appendix 3. A copy of the digital data (see Appendix 2) has been provided for Forest Enterprise.

4 SURVEY RESULTS (Figs 1-9)

- 4.1 The field survey was undertaken between January and March 2003, at a time when the undergrowth and leaf-cover was at a minimum. Unfortunately, it was not possible to survey and record features in the central area of Y Graig (see Fig. 9) due to the terrain, dense vegetation cover, and lack of available control points. At least one small structure has been identified in that area by Karl Lee and its location is uncertain. The remaining areas were thoroughly investigated, all known features were recorded and a significant number of previously unrecorded features were identified. Additional features noted by Karl Lee at the western end of Y Graig fell outside the Scheduled Area and therefore beyond the scope of the survey.
- 4.2 While it is not the purpose of this report to describe each feature in any detail, a number of general observations emerge from the survey. The detailed examination has demonstrated that the settlement pattern within Y Graig consists of around 20 houses, forming a rather dispersed settlement, although with small-scale aggregation forming a number of significant groupings, most notably at the eastern end of the area. In general, each house seems to be the centre of an individual smallholding, the extent of which can often be clearly identified by its surrounding enclosure, defined by what are often substantial dry-stone walls. The construction of these walls would have acted not only to form a boundary, but also as a convenient method of clearing surface stone to improve the land within. Each holding appears to have been associated with a series of levelled terraces, constructed to maximize the area available for agriculture. The majority of terraces retain evidence for dry-stone wall revetment, although some only survive as earthworks. A number of the holdings have one or more small ancillary buildings close to the house, as well as an area which appears to have functioned as a vegetable garden, sometimes with its own neatly-edged path. The ancillary structures include privies and two examples of pig cotes, one of which is particularly impressive, consisting of a rectangular dry-stone wall building (PRN 5841) with a single entrance, a separate drain, and an intact corbelled stone-tiled roof.

- 4.3 The surviving evidence suggests that each smallholding is likely to have been largely self-sufficient, with limited space for cultivation and grazing land available on the adjacent commonland. Evidence for animal husbandry is not only provided by the pig cotes, but also by a group of kid pens (Sites No. 14-16), indicating that at least some of the inhabitants kept goats for the production of milk. It would seem, however, that some resources may have been shared by the community as only a few of the houses have bread ovens, most notably that at the eastern end of Y Graig (PRN 5819).
- 4.4 Although one house (PRN 5839) has a date-stone, inscribed 1746, the date of the remaining structures is uncertain, although the form and construction suggests that most, if not all of the stone buildings are likely to be of similar date. Several buildings were evidently constructed in more than one phase, possibly suggesting a more protracted period of use.
- 4.5 It is interesting to note the number of potential building platforms which have now been identified within Y Graig. Their very nature suggests that they were constructed as a base for buildings constructed of timber rather than stone, possibly indicating an earlier origin.
- 4.6 An examination of the Ordnance Survey 1st edition maps (Figs 1 and 4) clearly shows the extent of deciduous and mixed woodland during the late 19th century, occupying large areas of Y Graig. What is interesting is the extent to which settlement in the north-western half of the area is shown as lying within the woodland. When these areas were investigated as part of the field survey it became apparent that the Ordnance Survey had recorded areas of settlement which had already been abandoned by the 1880s, with areas of former cultivation terraces having reverted to woodland. The field survey was able to add significant detail to the existing mapping for these areas, suggesting that the Ordnance Survey had only recorded the main structures and had not in general surveyed the revetment walls for the abandoned terraces, although frequently the terraces themselves appear on the Ordnance Survey maps as clearings within the woodland. Other areas of settlement appear to have been still occupied by the 1880s and were consequently recorded in greater detail by the Ordnance Survey.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The settlement at Y Graig provides an interesting insight into rural life during the 18th and 19th centuries. The small community seems to have developed on the edge of commonland, with a number of possibly inter-dependent smallholdings providing a level of self-sufficiency.
- 5.2 The survey has enabled the majority of structures to be accurately located and mapped in greater detail than that provided by the Ordnance Survey during the late 19th century. The results have greatly increased our understanding of the settlement, providing significant new detail, particularly relating to the system of cultivation terraces associated with each small-holding.
- 5.3 With the exception of the central area of Y Graig, the present survey has provided a comprehensive record of the various surviving features and structures. One area where further work might be considered, however, is with regard to the main buildings. A more detailed survey of individual structures comprising, for example, a ground plan, photographic record and possibly elevations, would not only provide an accurate record, but would also assist interpretation and management.
- 5.4 Small-scale trial excavation could also be considered as a means of providing further evidence for the dating and nature of a number of structures. The potential significance of the possible building platforms has already been alluded to, and only excavation can determine whether or not they represent the earliest phase of occupation identified to date.
- 5.5 Further studies into the history of Y Graig will undoubtedly reveal more about its history, but this should not necessarily be seen as the sole objective of any research. It would be interesting, for example, to compare the settlement and field patterns with those of the surrounding area to place Y Graig in a wider context.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1 The writer would like to thank the following for their assistance and co-operation: Bob Silvester, Ian Grant and Fiona Johnson, CPAT; Karl Lee and Ray Howell, University of Wales College, Newport; and David Rees and Mansel Jones, Forest Enterprise, Llanymddyffri Forest District.

7 REFERENCES

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Tithe Survey for Llanwenarth parish, 1842

Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25", Brecknockshire 42.9 and 10, surveyed 1878-80, published 1881

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25", Brecknockshire 42.9 and 10, surveyed 1878-80, revised 1899 and 1903, published 1904

APPENDIX 1 SPECIFICATION

MAPPING SURVEY OF Y GRAIG, ABERGAVENNY

- 1.1 In June 2002 the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was approached by David Rees, Forest Enterprise, to provide a tender for undertaking survey work within the scheduled area of y Graig, Abergavenny.
- 1.2 The deserted settlement of y Graig consists of over 30 structures, along with numerous terraces and trackways. The settlement is currently thought to have been occupied during the 18th and 19th centuries and may have been finally abandoned in the early 20th century. The various structures now lie within an area of regenerated broadleaf woodland and conifer plantation.
- 1.3 Following a site visit in the company of Karl Lee, it was determined that the proposed total station survey was not a viable option and an alternative methodology has therefore been proposed.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the survey are:
 - 2.1.1 to produce by means of a combination of digital mapping and field survey, a plan of archaeological features within the scheduled area in so far as these aims are possible;
 - 2.1.3 to prepare digital mapping and a summary report outlining the methodology of the survey, and incorporating recommendations for any future work.

3 Methods

- 3.1 Stage one of the survey will consist of the digital mapping of all features portrayed on the Ordnance Survey 1st and 2nd edition 25" maps, with possible additional detail provided from the Tithe Survey. Mapping will be conducted using GIS based on the Ordnance Survey National Grid, with separate GIS tables for each mapped source. No provision has been made for attaching attributes to the data, although this could be built into the project, following discussions with the client, if required. Previous mapping, as part of the Welsh Heritage Assets project, was based on the 6" mapping, which provided only basic data. The Ordnance Survey 25" mapping is generally taken to be accurate to a tolerance of within 5m and would provide a baseline plan of y Graig, including significant additional detail, with greater accuracy than the previous mapping.
- 3.2 Stage two will take the form of a field evaluation to assess the standard of the digitally mapped Ordnance Survey data. Each feature will be examined on the ground to determine whether it has been acceptably mapped and located. Where possible, the mapping will be enhanced to correct the baseline plan and include additional structures or features not mapped by the Ordnance Survey, as well as those veteran trees which may be identified in the course of the survey. Full use will be made of existing records produced by Karl Lee, information from which will be integrated into the overall results. At this stage any additional survey will be undertaken using conventional surveying, for example, based on tape and offset, or distance and bearing, rather than employing total station surveying. It should be noted that a number of features, particularly within the central area of y Graig, are likely to prove inaccessible for surveying, and these will be identified in the subsequent summary report. It is not proposed that a contour survey be produced of any areas at this stage.
- 3.3 Following the field evaluation, revisions will be made to the digital data to provide an overall plan which maps each feature/structure as accurately as possible, given the potential limitations of the Ordnance Survey mapping and terrain.
- 3.4 A summary report will be prepared detailing the project methodology and providing a brief introduction to the project and the nature of the archaeology within the study area, but not describing any of the structures in detail. Mapping will be presented in A3 format at a scale of 1:5,000. The digital data will be provided to Forest Enterprise in a format which is compatible with the Dolmen GIS

system. The report will clearly identify those areas which may require further survey work and, if required, could present proposals for undertaking such work.

- 3.5 No provision has been made for providing any further illustrative or interpretative material, although CPAT would be in a position to provide further assistance in this respect if required.

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1 The survey will be undertaken by a small team of skilled archaeologists under the overall supervision of Mr RJ Silvester, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist who conducted the survey.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the digital mapping will be completed within 6 days, the field evaluation will be completed within 20 days, and subsequent revisions and reporting will be completed within 10 days. The digital mapping could be undertaken by December 2002, while the field evaluation would be best undertaken between January and March 2003. It is anticipated that the results would be made available by the end of March 2003.
- 4.4 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.5 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance.

N.W. Jones
30th July 2002

APPENDIX 2 SITE ARCHIVE

Mapinfo 5.5

1stbuild	buildings depicted on OS 1st edition 1:2,500
1stconif	coniferous woodland depicted on OS 1st edition 1:2,500
1stdash	dashed lines depicted on OS 1st edition 1:2,500
1std decid	deciduous woodland depicted on OS 1st edition 1:2,500
1stedit	detail removed from 1stbuild etc following field survey with amended record added to survey.tab
1stline	lines depicted on OS 1st edition 1:2,500
1stmixed	mixed woodland depicted on OS 1st edition 1:2,500
1stquarry	quarries depicted on OS 1st edition 1:2,500
1sttrack	tracks depicted on OS 1st edition 1:2,500
1stwater	water courses depicted on OS 1st edition 1:2,500
2ndbuild	buildings depicted on OS 2nd edition 1:2,500
2nddash	dashed line depicted on OS 2nd edition 1:2,500
2ndline	lines depicted on OS 2nd edition 1:2,500
2ndquarry	quarries depicted on OS 2nd edition 1:2,500
2ndtrack	tracks depicted on OS 2nd edition 1:2,500
2ndwater	water courses depicted on OS 2nd edition 1:2,500
cpatsite	archaeological site data
vettree	veteran trees

Foxpro database

cpatsite.dbf project database, structure compatible with that used by Forest Enterprise

APPENDIX 3 GAZETTEER OF SITES

Primary Record Numbers (PRNs) are those already assigned to individual features by the Regional Sites and Monuments Record. Newly recorded sites have been given a temporary Site Number (1-39)

PRN/ Site No	Name	Type	Period	NGR
1	Graig building XXXV	Building	Post Medieval	SO2620016075
2	Graig building XXXVI	Building	Post Medieval	SO2607216242
3	Graig building XXXVII	Building ?	Post Medieval	SO2552816327
4	Graig building XXXVIII	Building	Post Medieval	SO2537516336
5	Graig building XXXIX	Building ?	Post Medieval	SO2504516655
6	Graig building XL	Building ?	Post Medieval	SO2506216608
7	Graig building XLI	Building ?	Post Medieval	SO2506716608
8	Graig well I	Well	Post Medieval	SO2575516164
9	Graig building XLII	Building	Post Medieval	SO2608215951
10	Graig building XLIII	Building	Post Medieval	SO2608015955
11	Graig well II	Well	Post Medieval	SO2618215964
12	Graig sheepfold I	Sheepfold	Post Medieval	SO2570916273
13	Graig shelter I	Shelter	Post Medieval	SO2569316270
14	Graig kid pen I	Kid pen	Post Medieval	SO2570316281
15	Graig kid pen II	Kid pen	Post Medieval	SO2570316287
16	Graig kid pen III	Kid pen	Post Medieval	SO2572616290
17	Graig quarry III	Quarry	Post Medieval	SO2588016140
18	Graig platform I	Platform ?	Post Medieval	SO2617816002
19	Graig spring	Spring	Post Medieval	SO2617216007
20	Graig building XXXIX	Building	Post Medieval	SO2609215942
21	Graig platform II	Platform	Post Medieval	SO2585816210
22	Graig sheepfold II	Sheepfold?	Post Medieval	SO2591116288
23	Graig platform III	Platform	Post Medieval	SO2593316284
24	Graig shelter II	Shelter	Post Medieval	SO2574816328
25	Graig structure	Structure	Post Medieval	SO2564816247
26	Graig platform IV	Platform	Post Medieval	SO2497316698
27	Graig platform V	Platform	Post Medieval	SO2492916795
28	Graig platform VI	Platform ?	Post Medieval	SO2588016445
29	Graig building XL	Building ?	Post Medieval	SO2514516497
30	Graig building XLI	Building	Post Medieval	SO2500316658
31	Graig building XLII	Building	Post Medieval	SO2509416615
32	Graig platform VII	Platform	Post Medieval	SO2502216683
33	Graig well III	Well	Post Medieval	SO2575416175
34	Graig well IV	Well	Post Medieval	SO2610516079
35	Graig well V	Well	Post Medieval	SO2617816065
36	Graig building XLIII	Structure	Post Medieval	SO2617816065
37	Graig building XLIV	Building	Post Medieval	SO2619416028
38	Graig building XLV	Building	Post Medieval	SO2625415981
39	Graig quarry IV	Quarry	Post Medieval	SO2617816013
5817	Graig building I	House	Post Medieval	SO2618516071
5818	Graig building II	House	Post Medieval	SO2613416085
5819	Graig building III	House	Post Medieval	SO2608916093
5820	Graig building IV	House	Post Medieval	SO2607516099
5821	Graig building V	House	Post Medieval	SO2611716056
5822	Graig building VI	House	Post Medieval	SO2610816055
5823	Graig building VII	House	Post Medieval	SO2610516079
5824	Graig privy	Latrine	Post Medieval	SO2605216115
5825	Graig building VIII	House	Post Medieval	SO2617916036
5826	Graig building IX	House	Post Medieval	SO2621815970
5827	Graig building X	Structure	Post Medieval	SO2625815977
5828	Graig building XI	Structure	Post Medieval	SO2625315867

5829	Graig building XII	House	Post Medieval	SO2610015937
5830	Graig building XIII	Structure	Post Medieval	SO2607815948
5833	Graig building XVI	Building	Post Medieval	SO2592916179
5834	Graig building XVII	House	Post Medieval	SO2580016274
5835	Graig building XVIII	House	Post Medieval	SO2585216306
5836	Graig quarry I	Quarry	Post Medieval	SO2589916206
5838	Graig building XX	Structure	Post Medieval	SO2571916168
5839	Graig building XIX	House	Post Medieval	SO2572416156
5840	Graig building XXI	House	Post Medieval	SO2570516200
5841	Graig conical pig cote	Pigsty	Post Medieval	SO2571216193
5842	Graig building XXII	House	Post Medieval	SO2566016199
5843	Graig building XXIII	House	Post Medieval	SO2555116286
5845	Graig building XXIV	House	Post Medieval	SO2552616291
5846	Graig building XXV	House	Post Medieval	SO2539516333
5847	Graig building XXVI	Structure	Post Medieval	SO2541516291
5848	Graig building XXVII	Structure	Post Medieval	SO2533516367
5849	Graig building XXVIII	House	Post Medieval	SO2513316513
5850	Graig building XXIX	House	Post Medieval	SO2512016598
5851	Graig building XXX	House	Post Medieval	SO2507516643
5852	Graig building XXXI	Structure	Post Medieval	SO2510416625
5853	Graig quarry II	Quarry	Post Medieval	SO2515716655
5854	Graig quarry limekiln	Kiln (lime)	Post Medieval	SO2514216655
5855	Graig building XXXII	House	Post Medieval	SO2499516678
5856	Graig building XXXIII	House	Post Medieval	SO2494116602

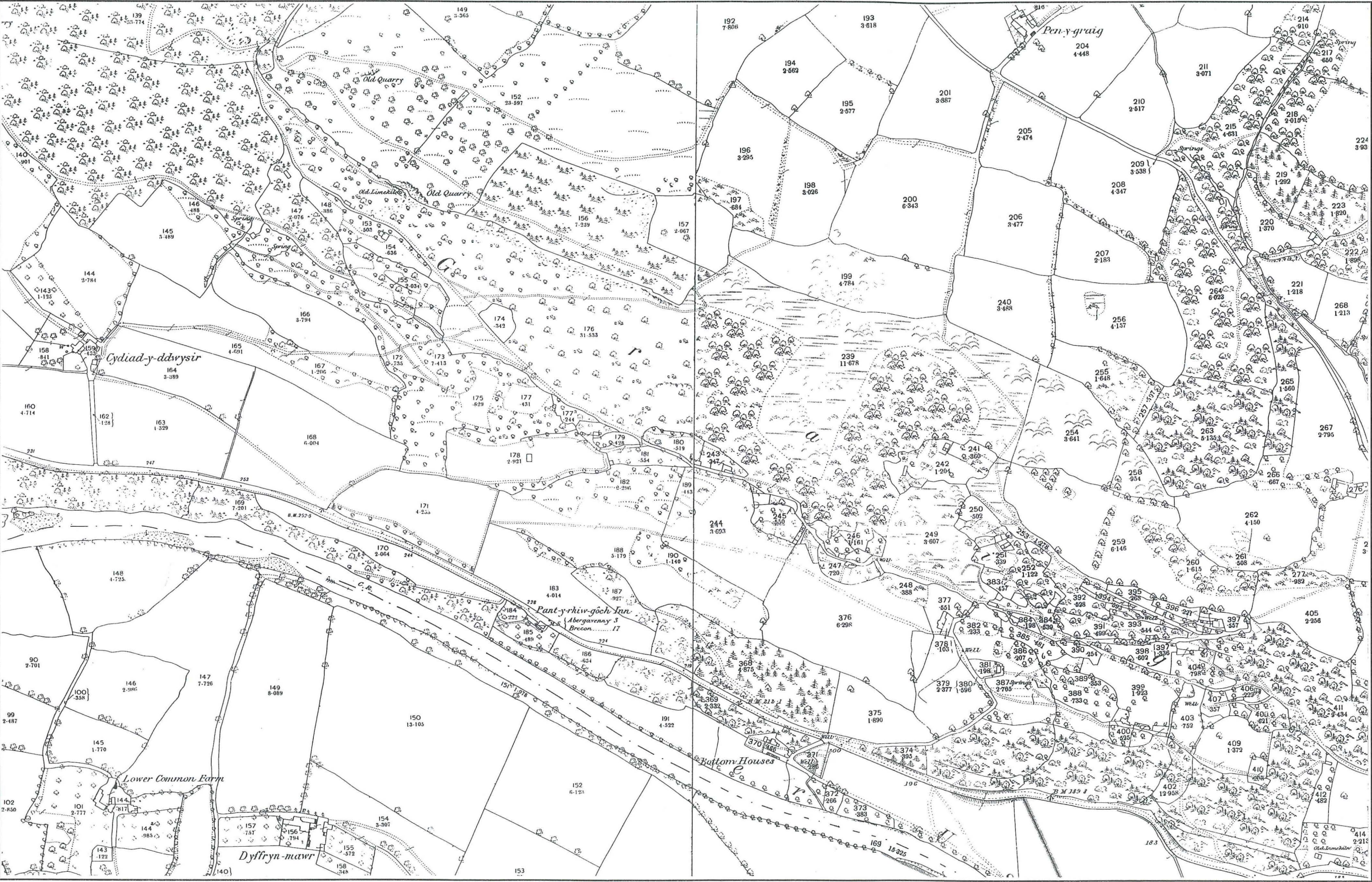


Fig. 1 Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1:2500, Brecknock 42.9 and 10, 1881

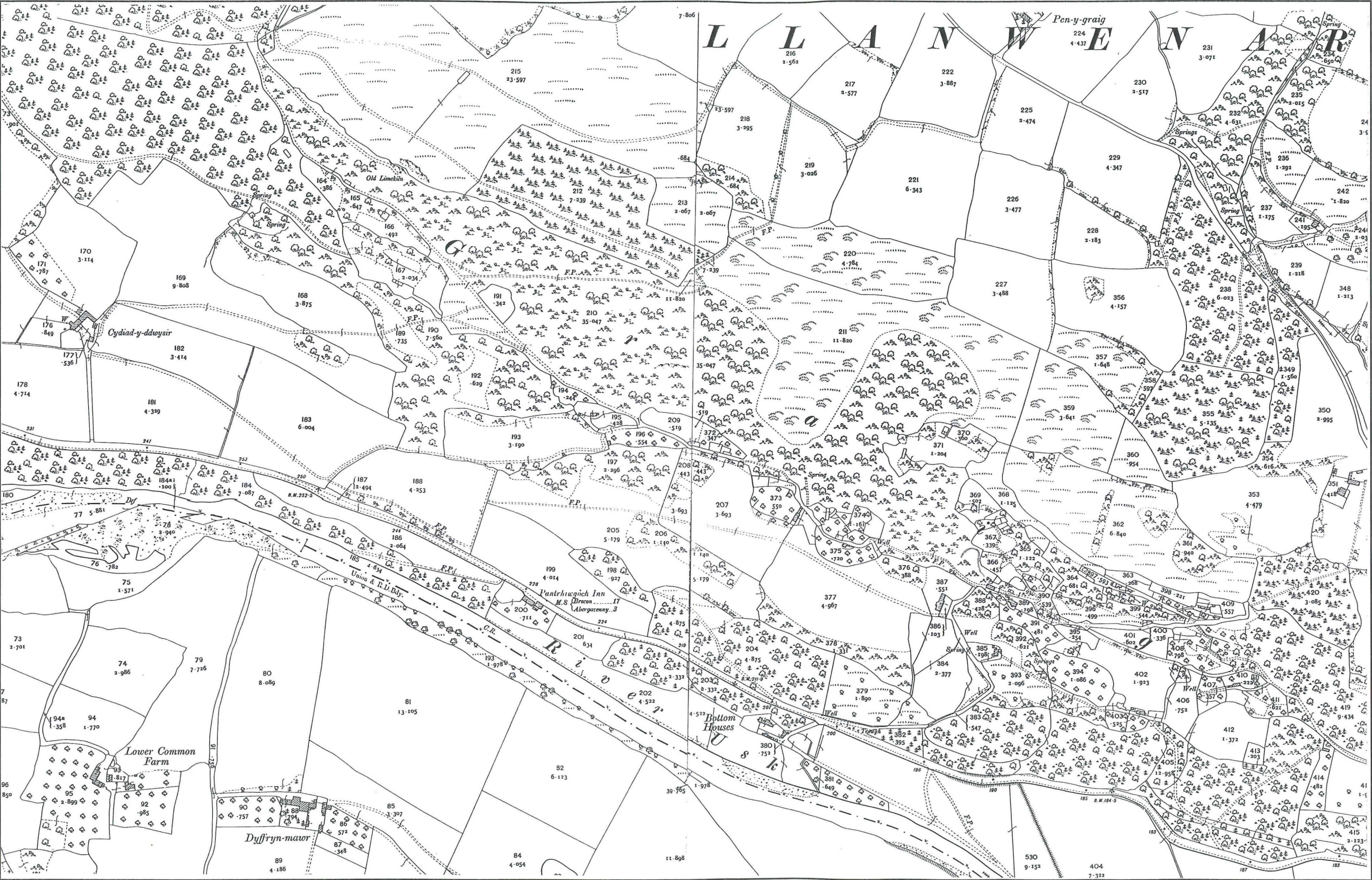


Fig. 2 Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 1:2500, Brecknock 42.9 and 10, 1904



Fig. 3 Tithe Survey for Llanwenarth Parish



Fig. 4 Digital mapping of Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1:2,500 map, reproduced at 1:5,000



Fig. 5 Comparison between the digital mapping of Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1:2,500 map (black) and additional survey data (red), reproduced at 1:5,000

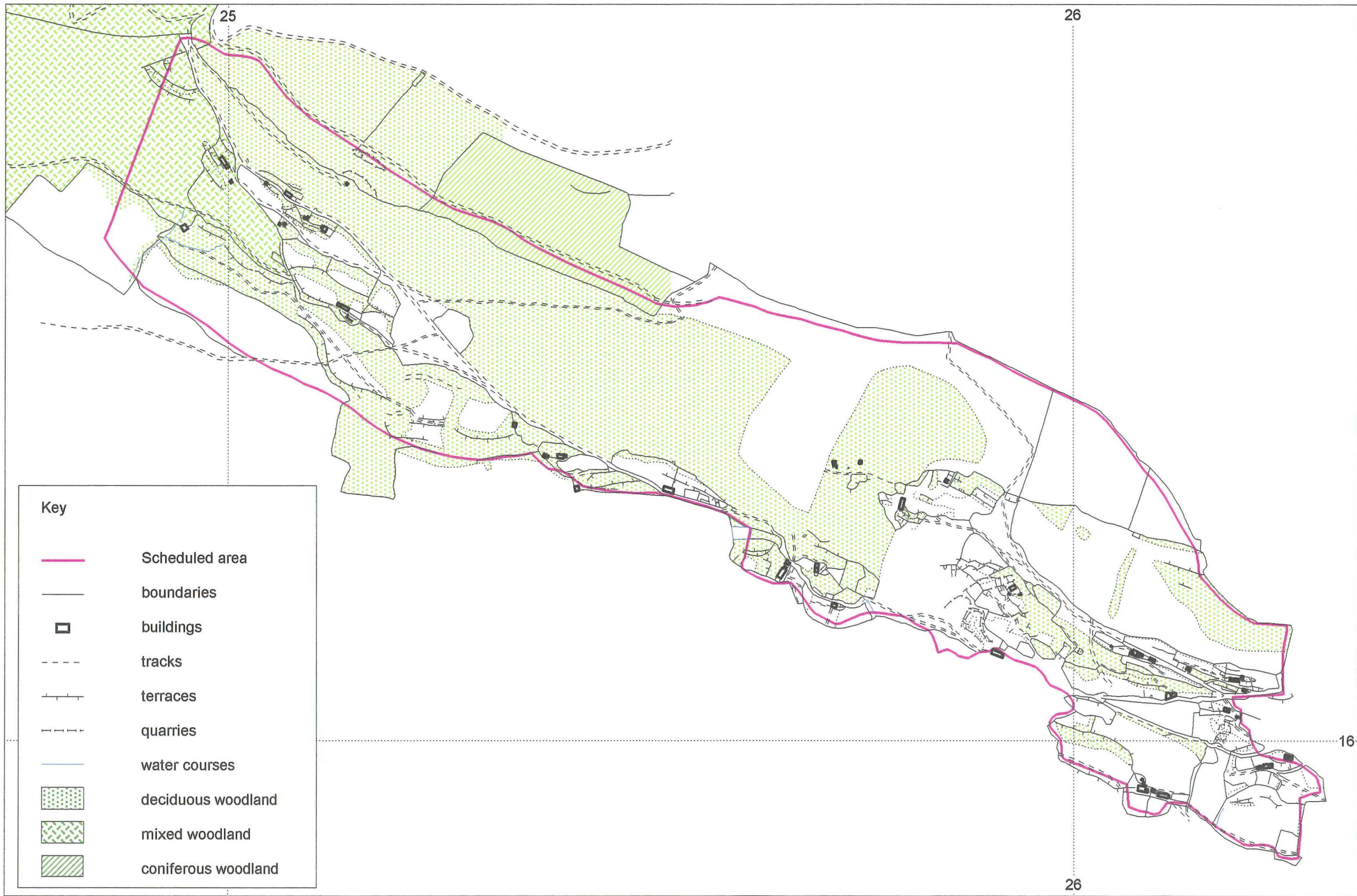


Fig. 6 Enhanced digital mapping resulting from field survey, based on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1:2,500 map, reproduced at 1:5,000

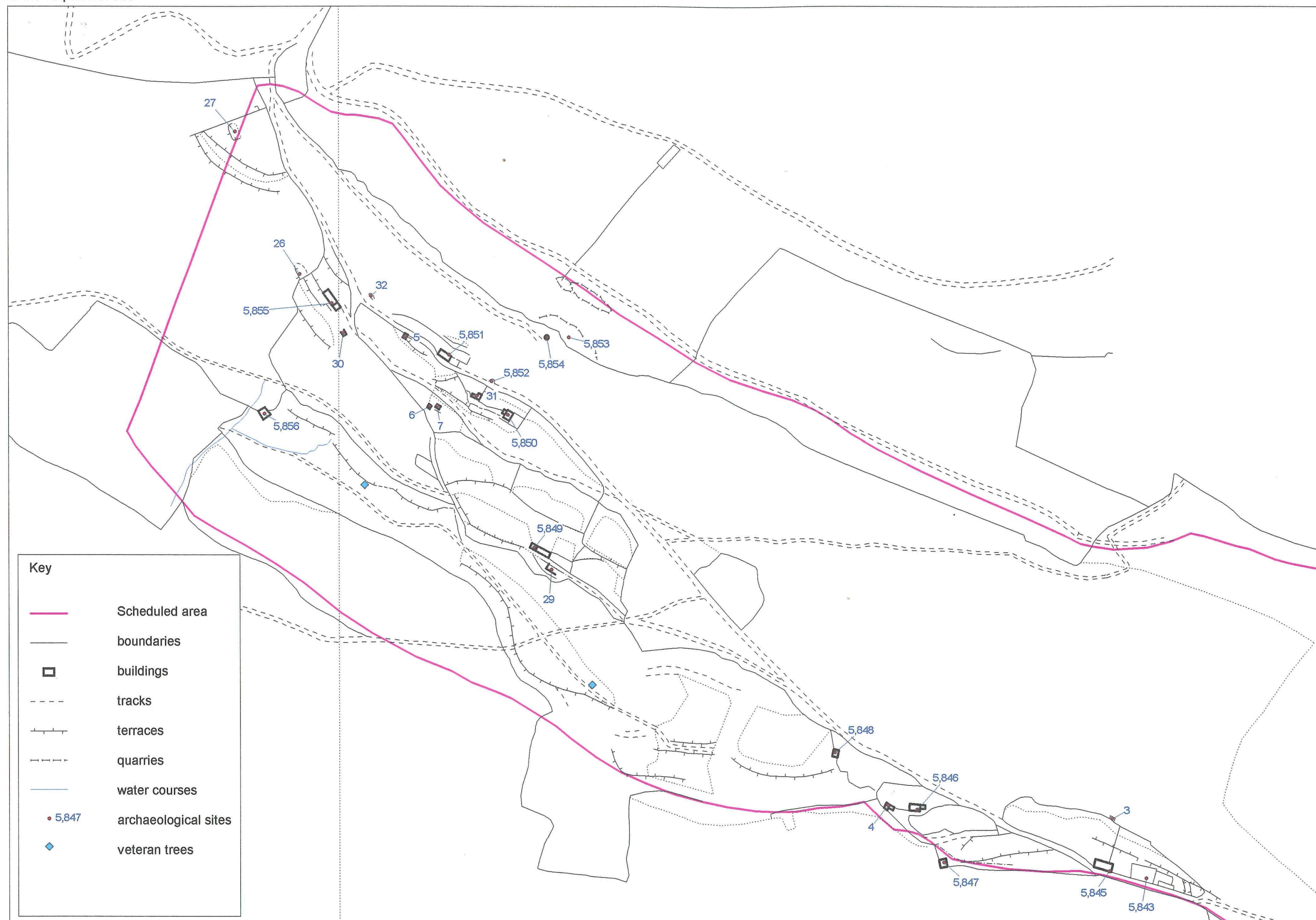


Fig. 7 Enhanced digital mapping of western area resulting from field survey, based on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1:2,500 map, reproduced at 1:2,500



Fig. 8 Enhanced digital mapping of eastern area resulting from field survey, based on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1:2,500 map, reproduced at 1:2,500

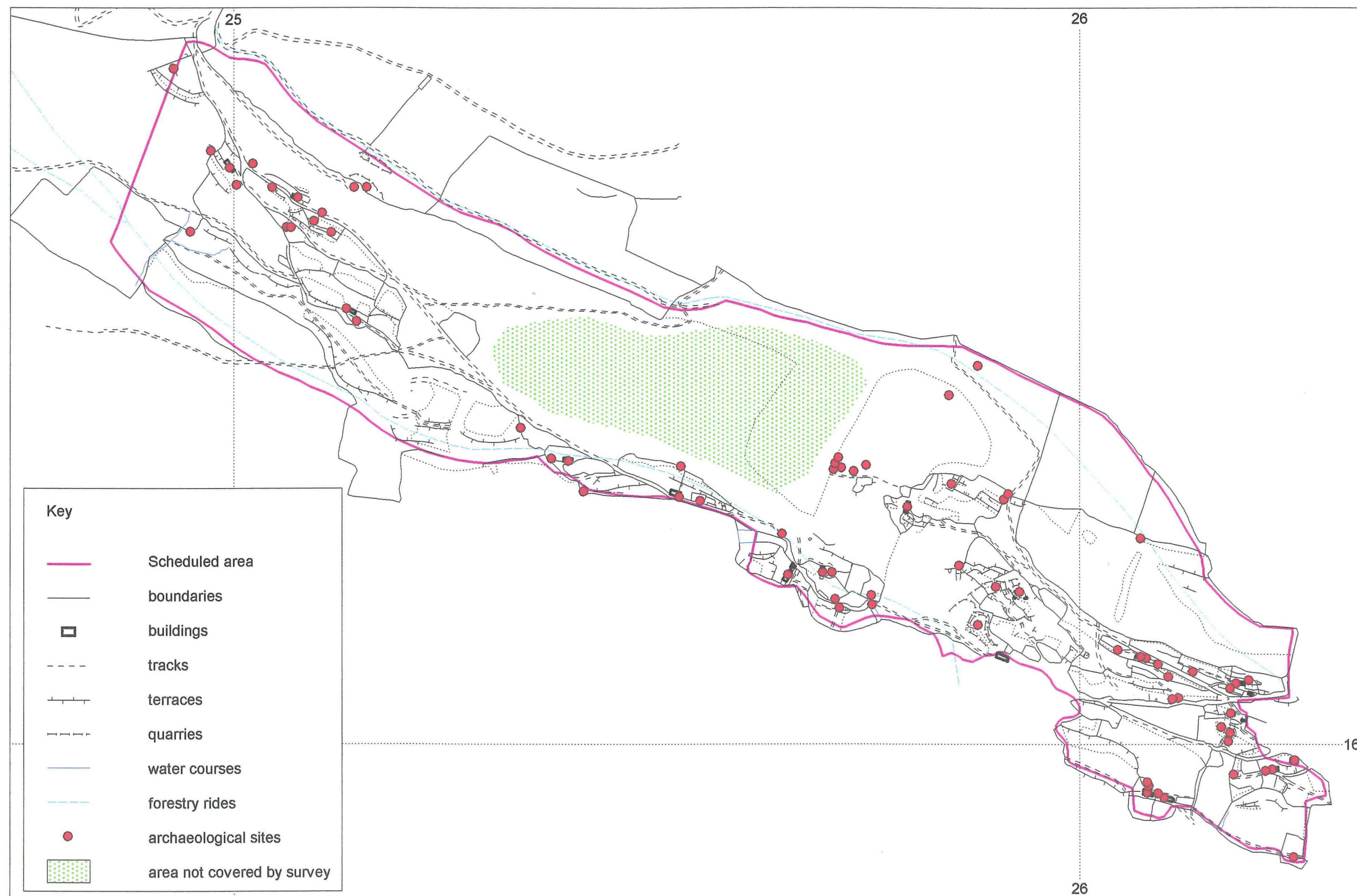


Fig. 9 Enhanced digital mapping resulting from field survey, including site data and forestry rides, based on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1:2,500 map, reproduced at 1:5,000