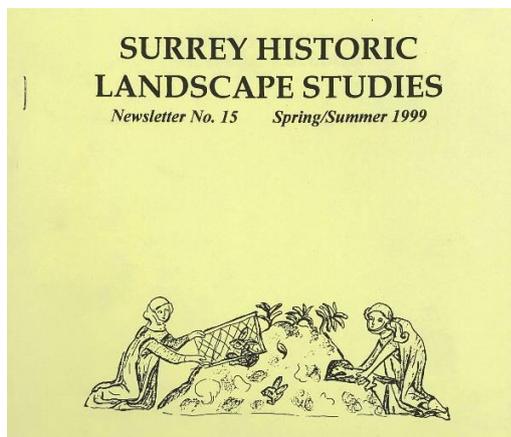


**LANDSCAPE SURVEY OF COMBE BOTTOM, SHERE, Netley Plantation**  
by Judie English and Steve Dyer,  
Surrey Historic Landscape Studies Newsletter 15, Spring/Summer 1999

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**LANDSCAPE SURVEY OF COMBE BOTTOM, SHERE (PART 3)**  
**Netley Plantation**

**Judie English**  
**Steve Dyer**

The third area within the Combe Bottom property, Netley Plantation, was part of the demesne lands of Gomshall Netley manor. The manor house lay south of the old Dorking/Guildford road – the present Netley House was built by Edward Shallet Lomax c. 1780. Originally a crown property, Gomshall Netley took its name from its grant by Henry III in 1239 to his new abbey at Netley near Southampton.

The property lies on the steep upper part of the scarp slope of the North Downs and is covered with rough scrub and woodland. Much of the northern part is a mass of chalk quarries (area TQ 074487) which are used by four-wheel drive enthusiasts and scramble bikers. The extent of disturbance is such that no surface archaeology could be identified.

The results of the earthwork survey are shown in Figure 1. The field boundaries which remain correlate with those shown on a map of Netley Farm drawn in 1724 (Figure 2).

London Lane can be seen at the top left of the map clearly cutting diagonally across a rectangular field system. The southern end of the lane originates in the centre of Shere village and starts its climb up the Downs as a deep holloway. As the slope steepens the track divides – the western route climbs straight up to Hollister Farm (see later) whilst the route eases the gradient by cutting across the slope. The relationship of these two tracks with the field system suggests that the western route is the earlier and that the gentle gradient was adopted for use as a carriage road. The entrances to the main chalk quarries are from this eastern route – horse drawn carts heavily laden with chalk would have found a track straight down the potentially slippery slope dangerous.

The name Chalk Pit Field indicates that quarrying here had started before 1724 and the Furze Field farther north may have been the source of fuel for lime production. The manorial edict already noted (see Part 2 – Newsletter 14) conserving heath for lime production in 1625 is an indication of a shortage felt throughout the Tillingbourne Valley where extensive industrial interests had failed to manage woodland as a renewable resource. The remains of a limekiln set beside London Lane presumably post-date the development of that route. Externally the walls are of dressed greensand blocks lined with bricks, the inner surface of which has been burnt to a hard glaze, "the burnt stock capable of resisting the continual force of the fire" (VCH, 1905).

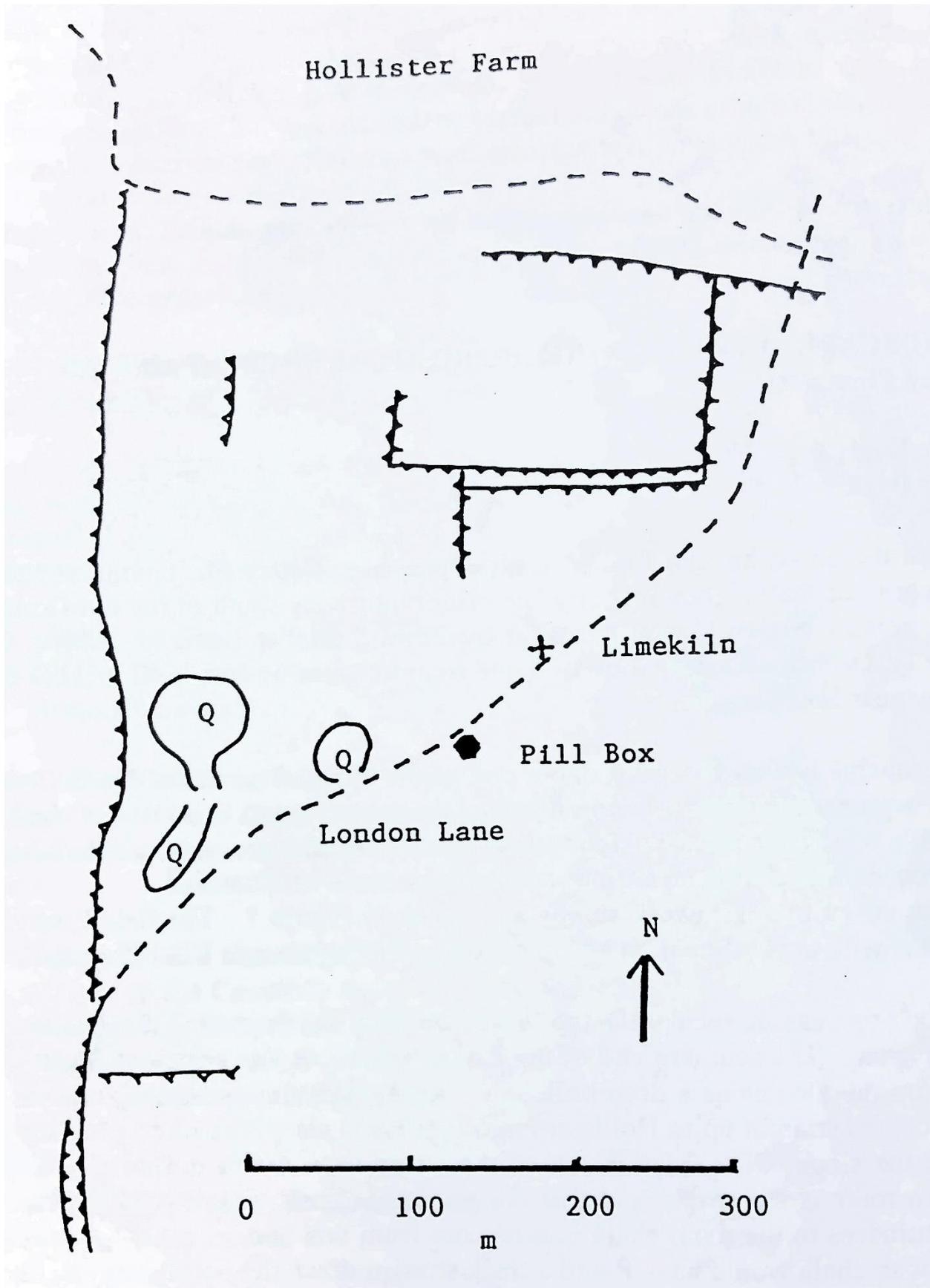


Figure 1. Earthwork survey of Netley Plantation,  
Combe Bottom

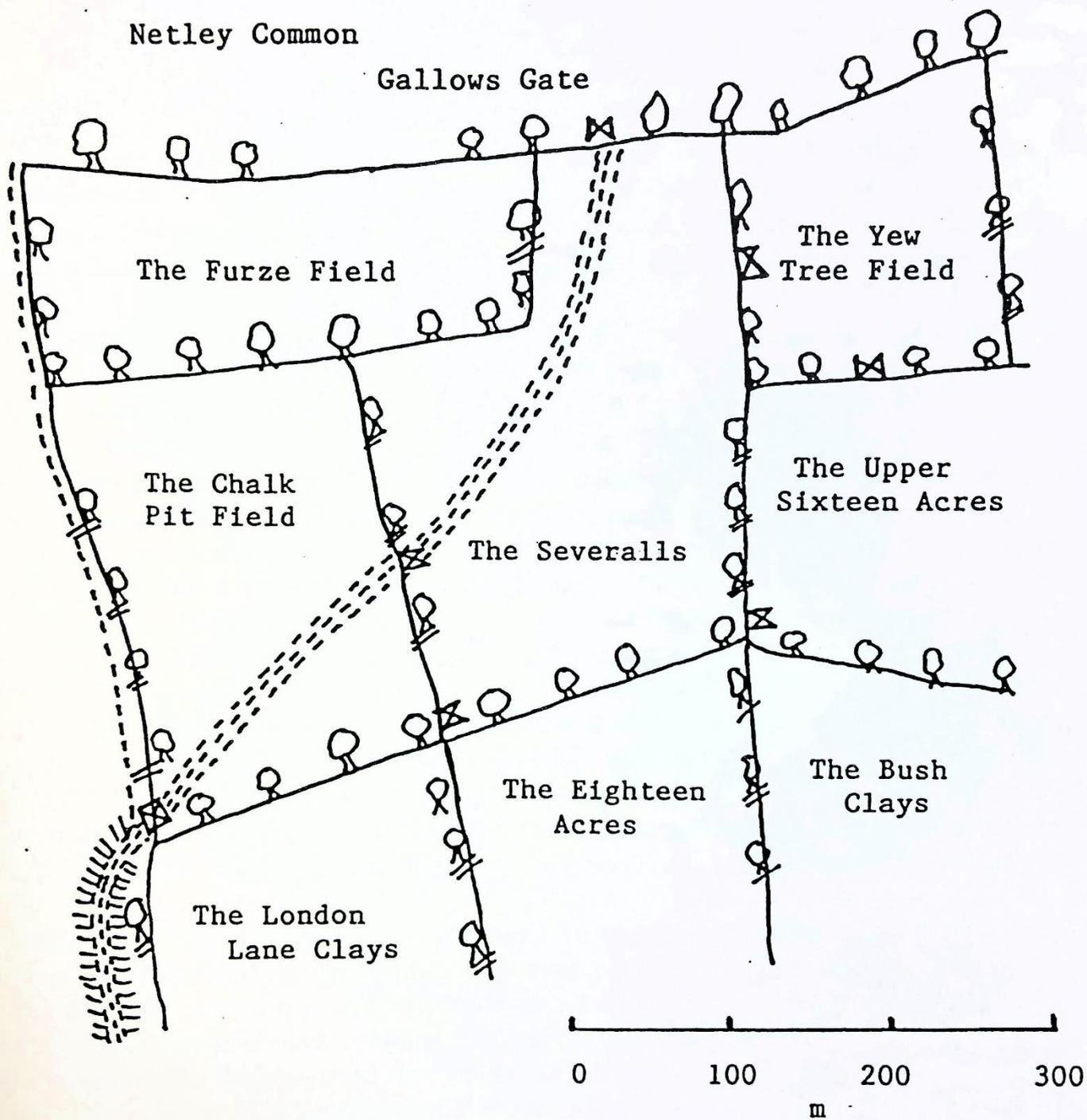


Figure 2. Part of Netley Farm in 1724