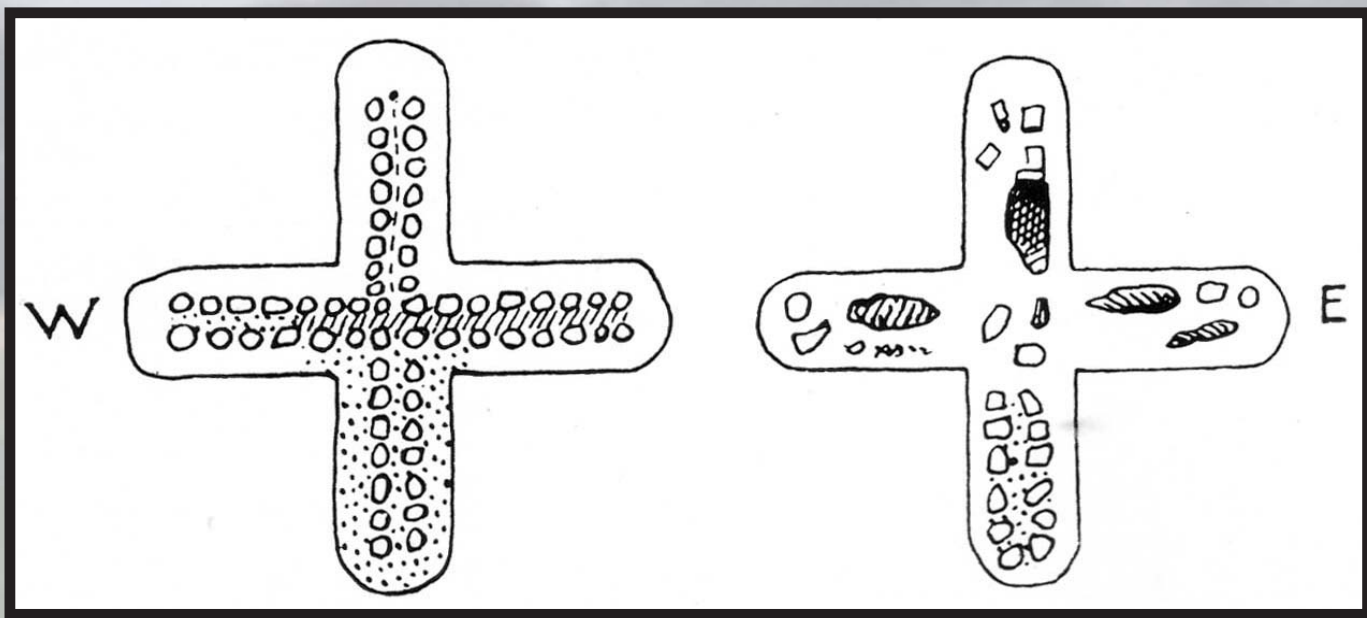


# FIMBER : unravelling the past in home territory

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Text, Illustrations and Design by Stephen Harrison,  
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## Anglo-Saxon cemetery

Although not excavated by Mortimer, he records the 1863 discovery of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery 'about 80 yards south-east of the church' when workmen were 'making the foundations for a cottage adjoining the Wesleyan chapel' (Mortimer, *Forty Years' Researches*, p.192).

## Other cemeteries

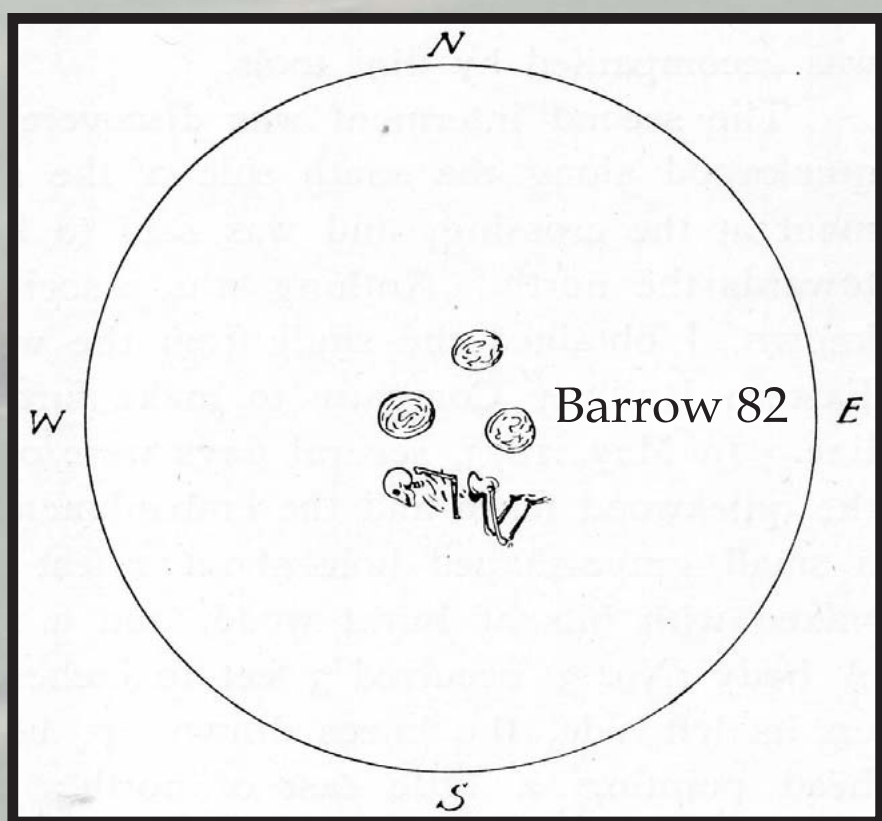
"Human remains and weapons have been found near the village of Fimber. I remember being greatly impressed, when a boy, by my grandfather bringing home the lower jaws belonging to bodies which had been exhumed when quarrying chalk to repair the roads, at a point where the entrenchments are cut by the road to Sledmere, about 400 yards eastwards from the cross-roads near to Fimber station".

Mortimer, *Forty Years' Researches*, pp.192-93

And:

"An old labourer named Lockwood, once living at Fimber, who was for many years servant with my grandfather, remembers human bones and what he describes as an iron sword having been found many years since, where the road to Malton cuts the same entrenchments, about 300 yards northwards from Fimber station".

Mortimer, *Forty Years' Researches*, p.193



## M182: round barrow

Excavated: 13-15 June 1875.

"We discovered three dish-shaped holes scooped into the natural chalk gravel beneath the 10 to 12 inches of earth forming the mound. These excavations measured about 3 feet in diameter and 14 inches in depth, and contained soily matter, in which were found many small pieces of burnt wood, bits of dark-coloured pot, and a shell of a hazel nut; no trace of bone was observed.

About 5 feet to the south of the three holes, and 9 inches from the tilled surface, were the disturbed bones of a young individual, on the right side, head to the west, and legs flexed. No relic accompanied them, but a few handstruck splinters of flint were picked from the mound".

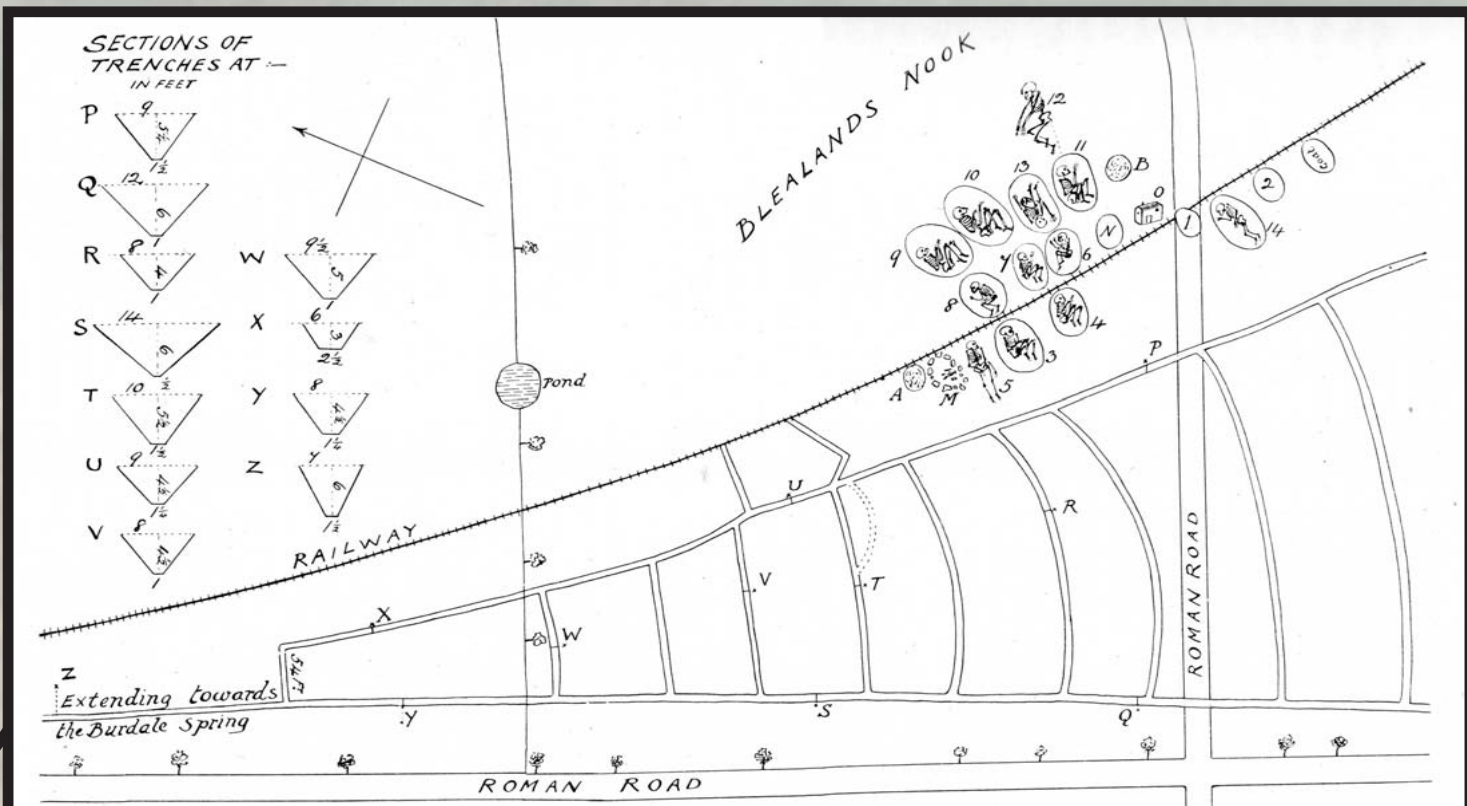
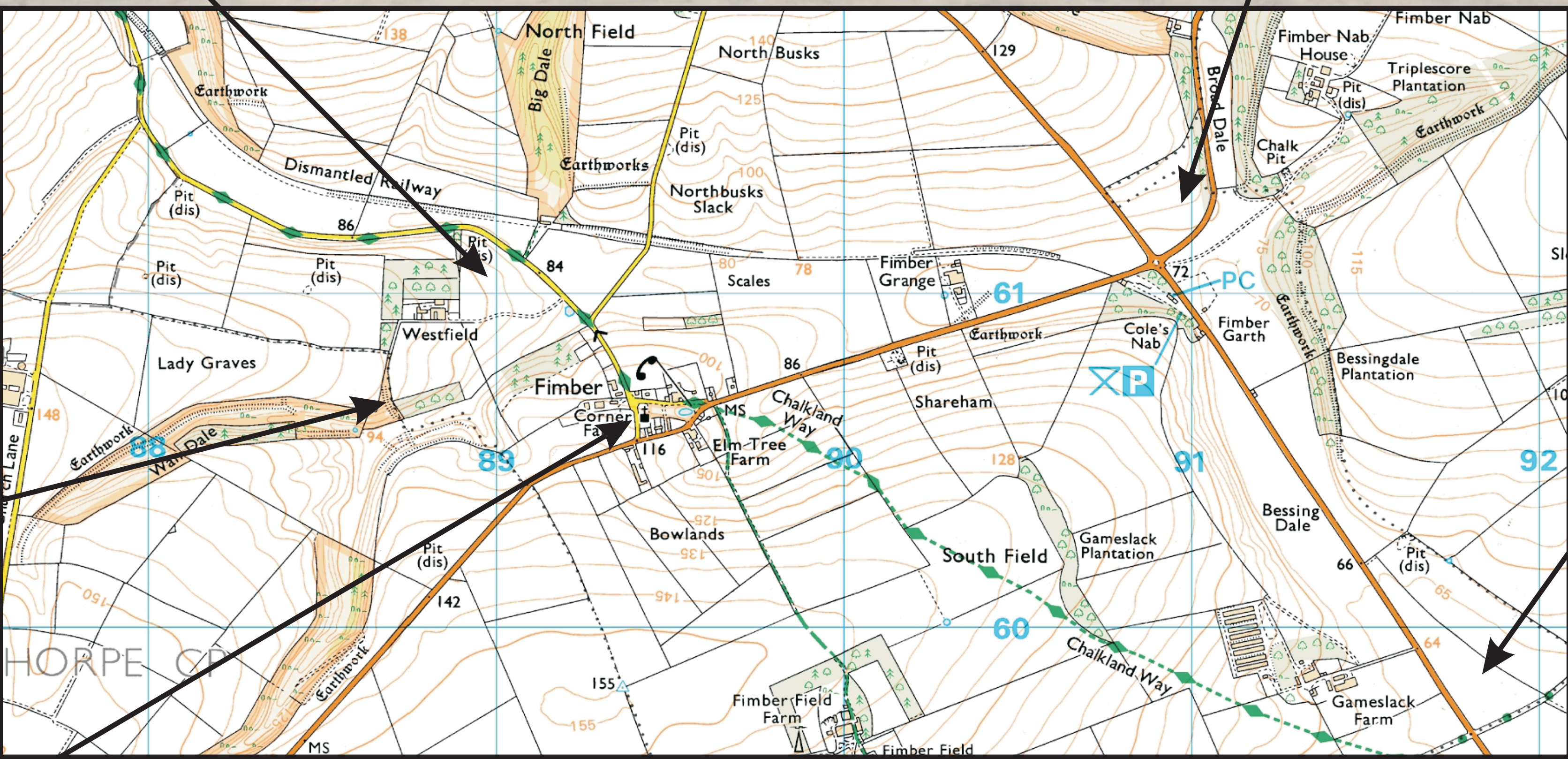
Mortimer, *Forty Years' Researches*, p.193

## M5 Mill Hill: site of medieval windmill (thought by Mortimer to be a prehistoric round barrow)

Excavated: 1863 and 1870.

"At a considerable depth a well-defined excavation ... was noticed extending towards the centre of the barrow. Following this ... it was observed to branch to the east and west, and also towards the north, thus forming a complete cruciform excavation with equal arms ... Down the centre of the cruciform excavation, at a depth of 4½ feet, was a walled cross, composed of two and in some places three courses of thin stones, filled in the middle with chalk gravel and a little clay obtained from a distance. Each arm of the walled cross was about 8½ feet long, 16 inches in width, and from 8 to 10 inches high. The stones comprising it were mainly of chalk, some of which had been slightly tooled; and there were also pieces of undressed liassic and oolitic stones. Below this the excavation extended, and was also filled with gravel, discoloured with soily matter ... The excavation reached to a depth of 9 feet, and at the bottom each arm measured 10½ feet from the centre of the cruciform excavation, and nearly 4 feet in width. On the bottom, which consisted of undisturbed angular chalk gravel, was a second walled cross, unfinished or partly destroyed, also mainly composed of rough pieces of chalk stone, with occasional fragments of liassic and oolitic rocks interspersed with clay, which seemed to have been used as mortar. This structure measured 18 inches wide and 8 inches high where it had not been injured, and the arms were a little longer than those of the more perfect cross, situated 4½ feet perpendicularly above it".

Mortimer, *Forty Years' Researches*, pp.187-88



## Blealands Nook Iron Age or Romano-British period field system and cemetery

In 1873 and 1874 Mortimer investigated a number of human burials found by railway worker planting hedges alongside the Driffield-Malton railway. At the same time he drew attention to the existence of an adjacent prehistoric field system:

"... a series of filled-in trenches, arranged somewhat in the shape of a gridiron near the south-west side of the graveyard. These trenches, like the graves, are quite invisible on the surface, but being mainly charged with rich soil, they are in a dry season indicated by green ribbon-like lines or strips in the growing corn".

Mortimer, *Forty Years' Researches*, p.197

During the summer of 1874 Mortimer excavated a number of sections across these ditches:

"They differ a little in width and depth (which may be due to the slight variations in the surface level of the land, and from the makers endeavouring to keep the bottom of the trenches level), and averaged about 5 feet in depth and varied in width at the tops from 6 to 14 feet, and at the bottom from 1 foot to 2½ feet.

The trenches ... were filled with dark soil, containing many animal bones and much broken Roman pottery, showing that this spot was occupied in Roman times".

Mortimer, *Forty Years' Researches*, pp.197-98

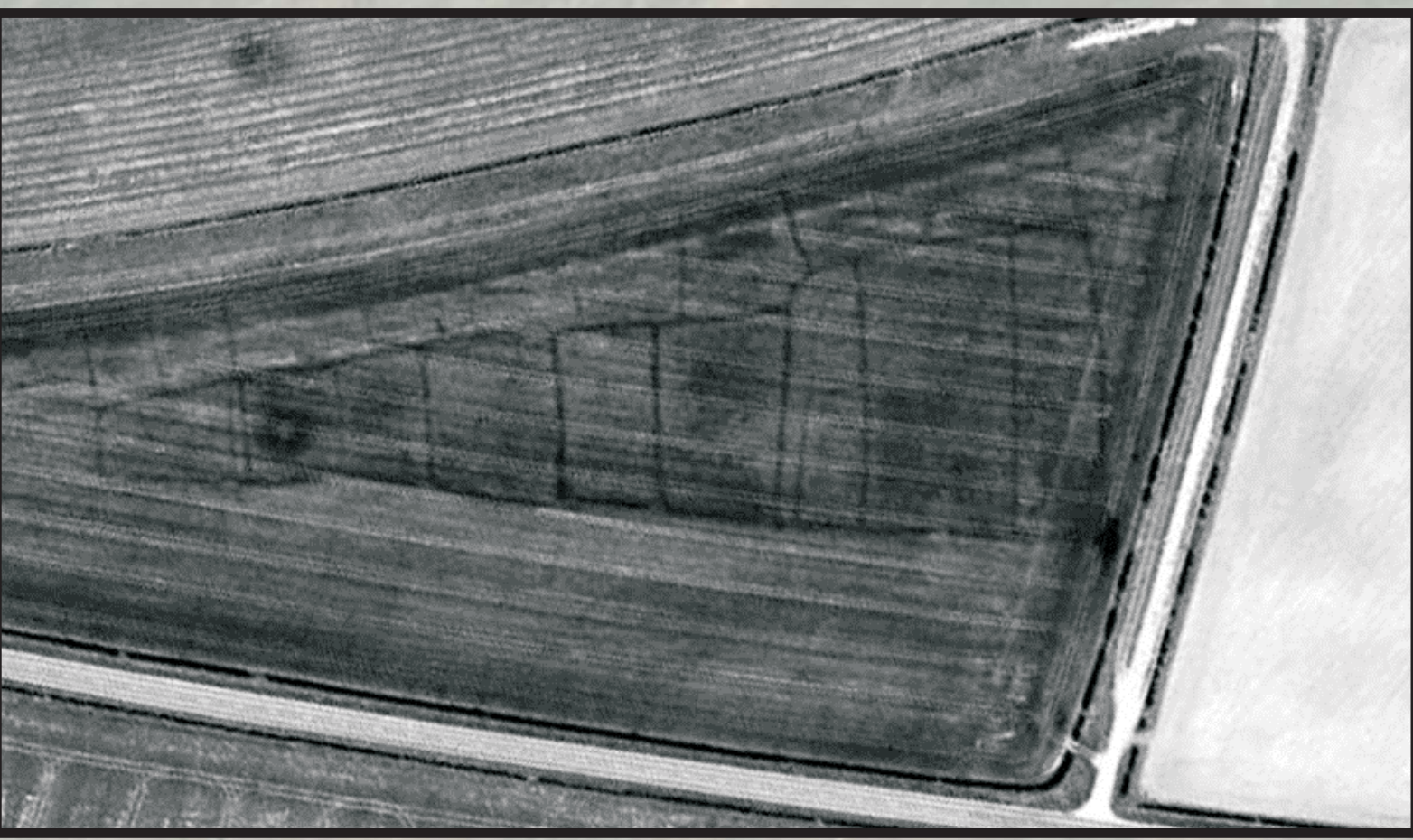
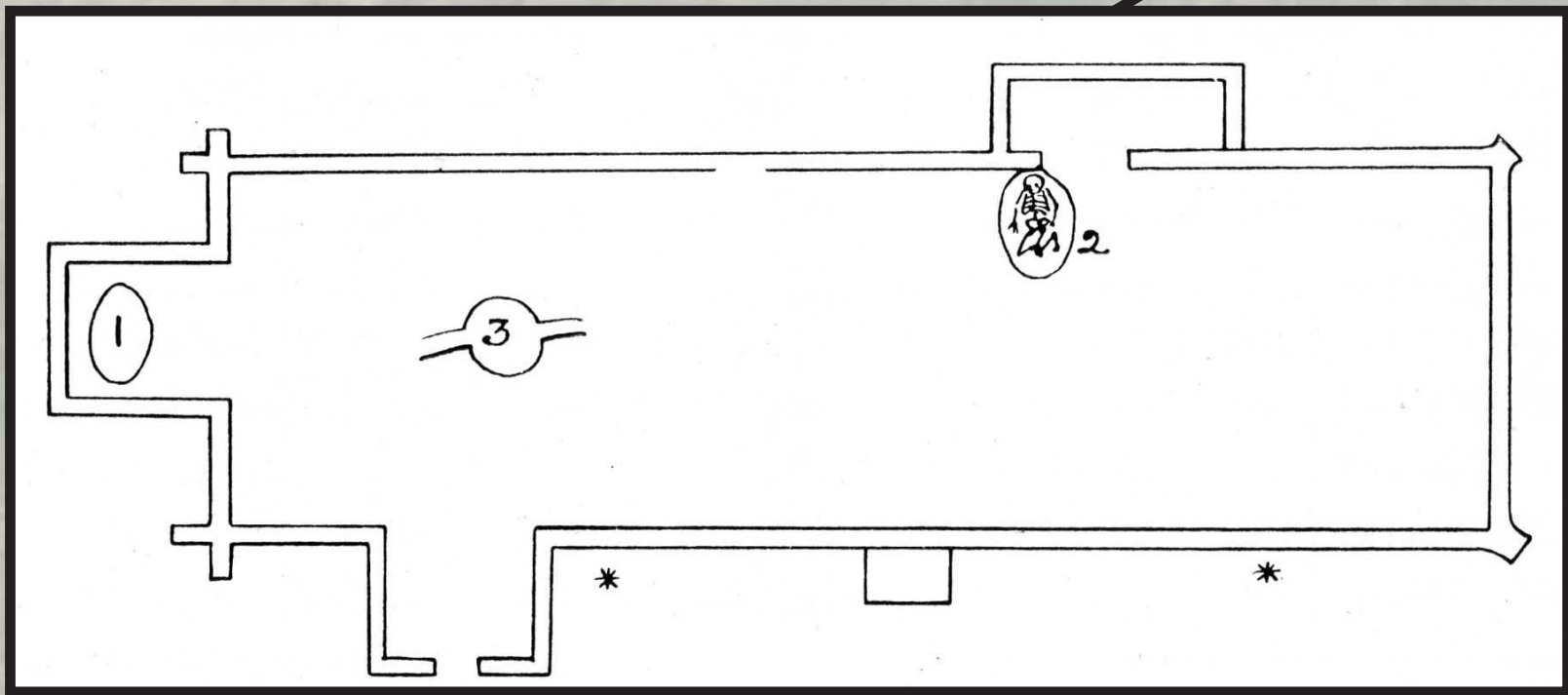
## M133 Church Hill, Fimber: round barrow

Excavations: June and July 1869 during demolition of medieval chapel of ease and building of the present church (mainly recording what turned up in construction trenches and limited excavation of features revealed during this work).

"[The church] had stood upon an artificial mound - apparently an oval barrow - consisting of horizontal beds of clay, interspersed with patches of loose flint stones of various sizes. These had been obtained from the surface of the surrounding land, while the clay - which at first we mistook for a natural bed of Hesse boulder-clay capping the chalk - had been obtained from a deposit filling a hole in the surface close by, and now the site of two fine meres in the centre of the village. Probably the extraction of this clay for the building of the barrow and bedanking the walled huts of that and succeeding periods left the pits or hollows which in part now form the beds of the present meres.

... In 1884 the water [in the meres] was sufficiently low to enable the villagers to remove the whole of the mud which had accumulated during untold ages along its centre to a depth of three to six feet. This exposed the original irregular bottom, which much resembled shallow pits from which the clay had been at different times taken".

Mortimer, *Forty Years' Researches*, pp.189-90



Aerial photograph of crop marks at Blealands Nook