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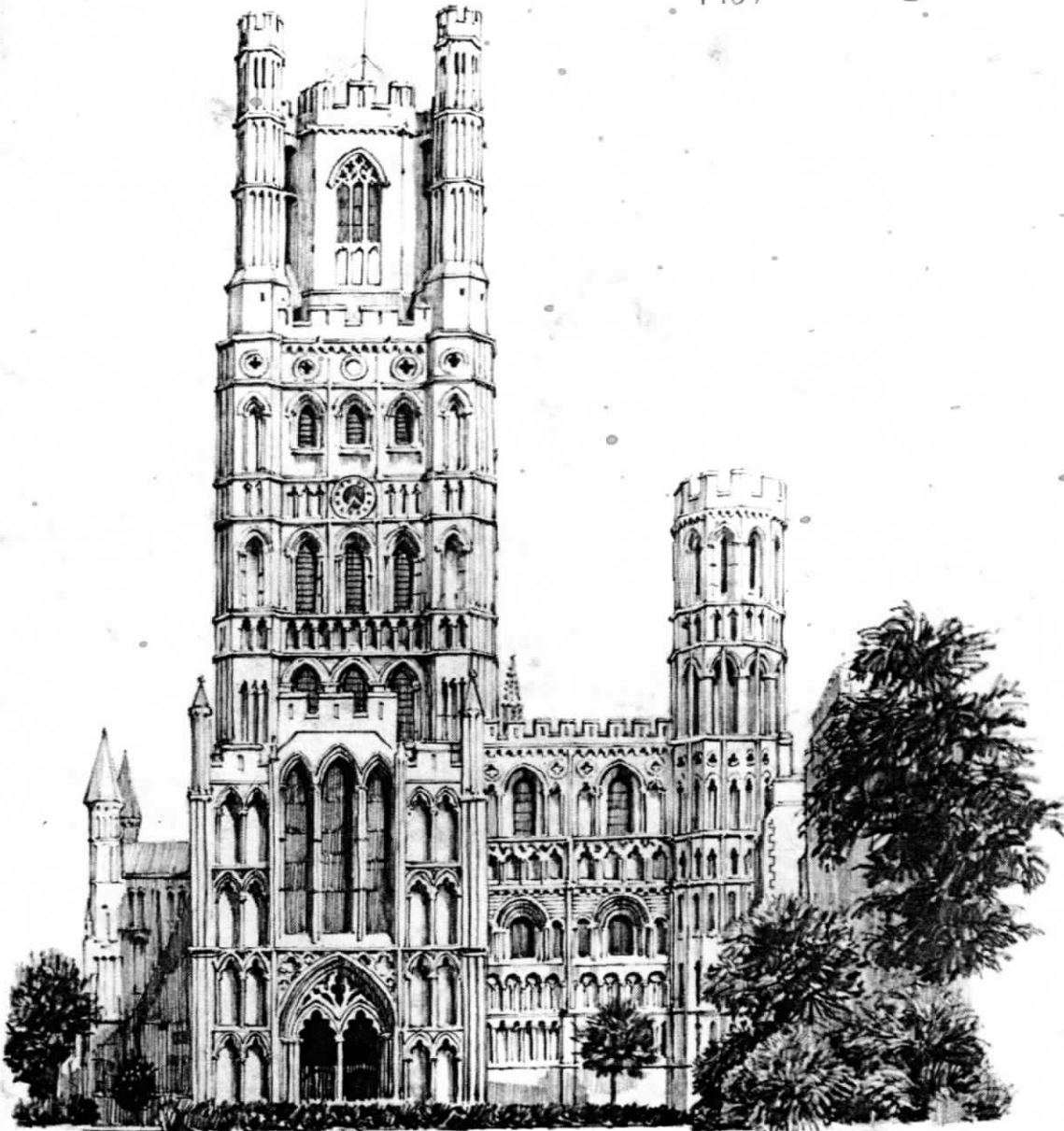
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RIVER CORRIDOR SURVEY

LITTLE OUSE RIVER

BLO' NORTON

CAMBRIDGE DIVISION

 **Anglian Water**

REPORT : John Alder
 Nigel Holmes

SURVEY : John Alder

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RIVER CORRIDOR SURVEY

LITTLE OUSE RIVER

BLO' NORTON

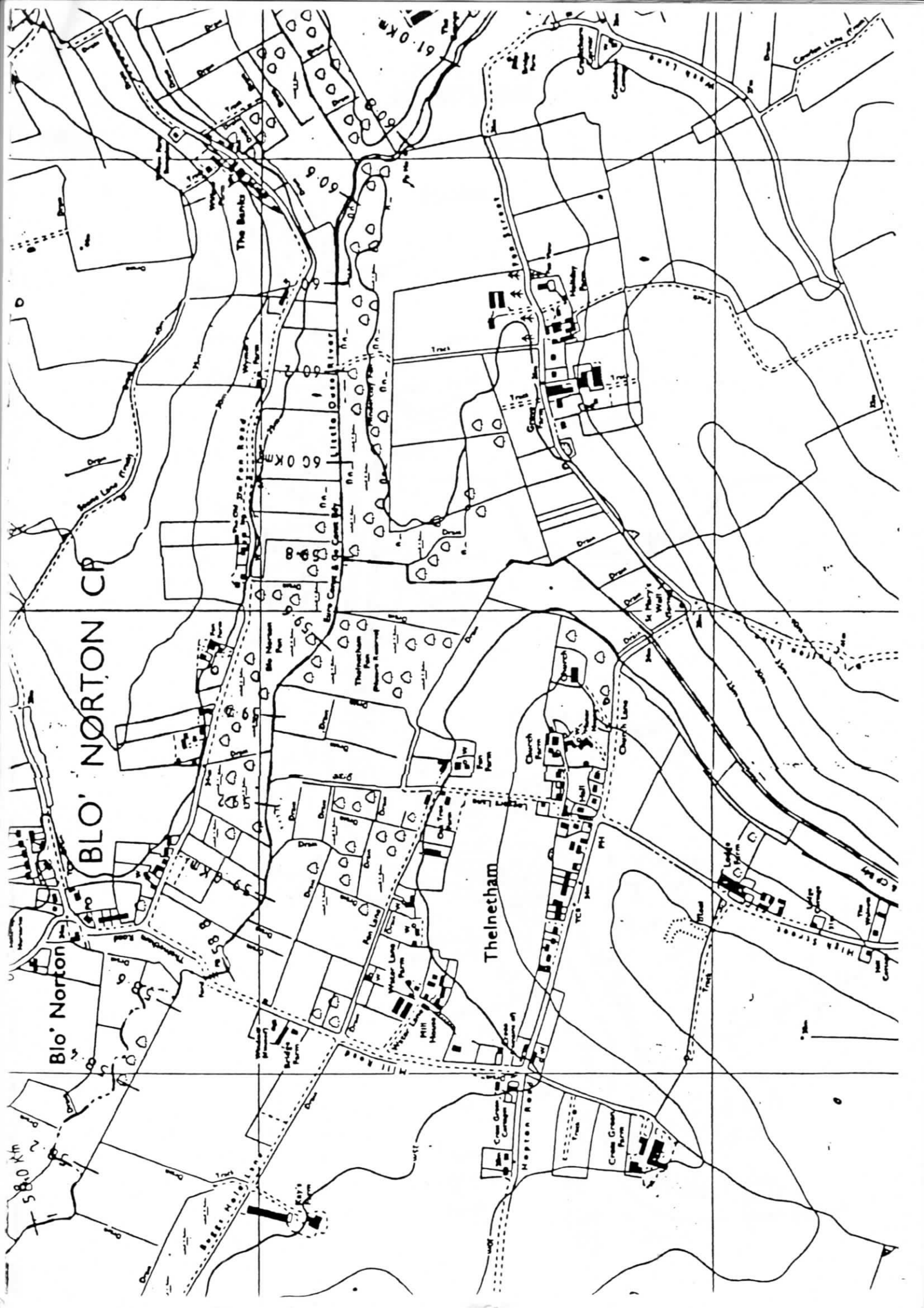
LITTLE OUSE RIVER, BLO' NORTON

Location A length of the river downstream of Crackthorn Bridge to Blo' Norton, (60.8 - 58.7), grid reference TM 030787 to TM 013791.

Length affected A 2.1 km. length flowing through a variety of land-use, including arable cultivation, poplar plantations, unimproved grassland, heathland, woodland and fen; part of the adjacent fen is an SSSI.

Division and Personnel Chris Spray the RCO and Ian Savage from the Ely Area Office of the Cambridge Division.

Maintenance requirements Maintenance dredging using a Priestman Cub.



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BLO' NORTON CP

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The Barks

Little Dose River

Moston Road

Cream Green Farm

Church Farm

White Lane Farm

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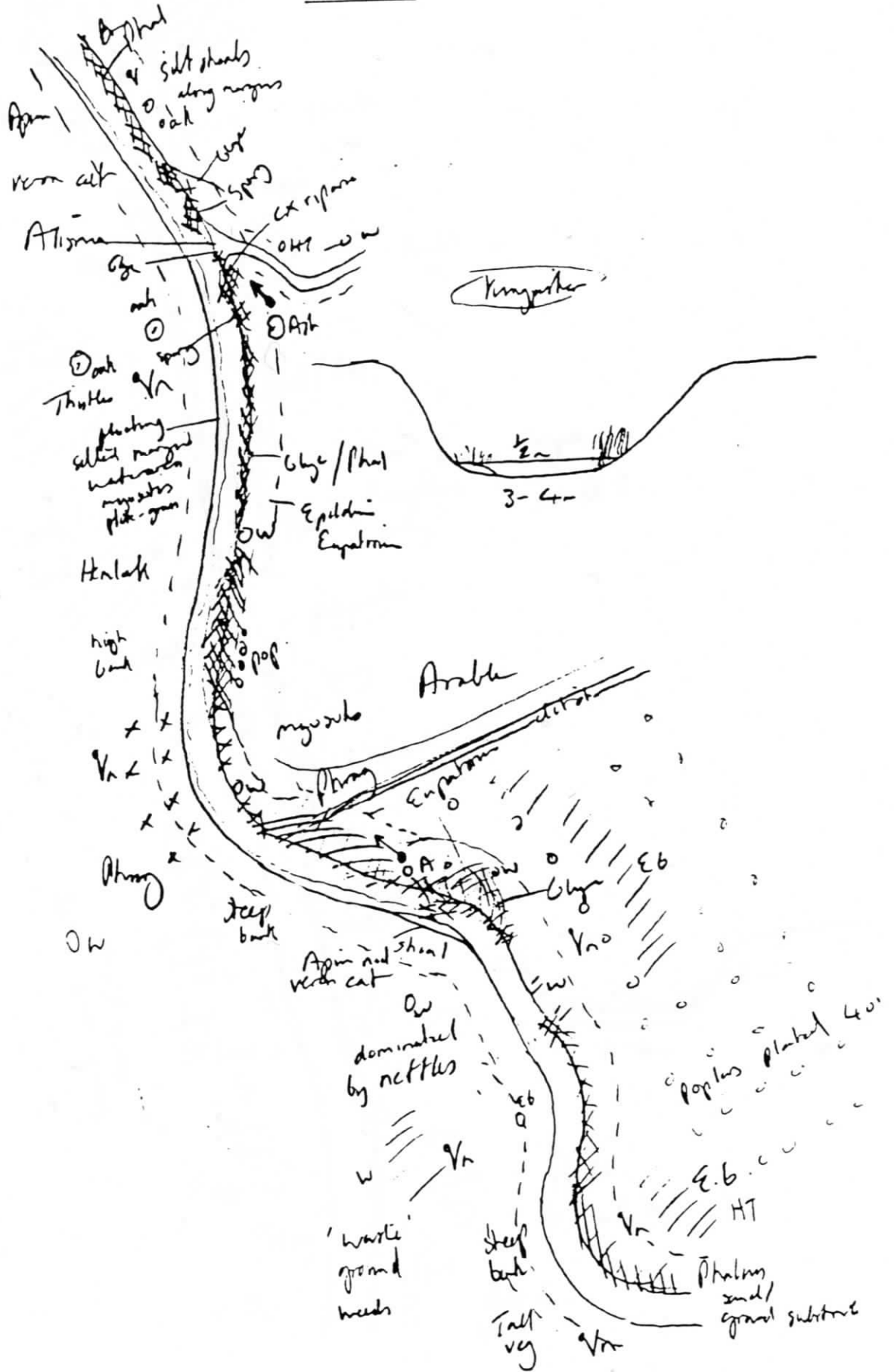
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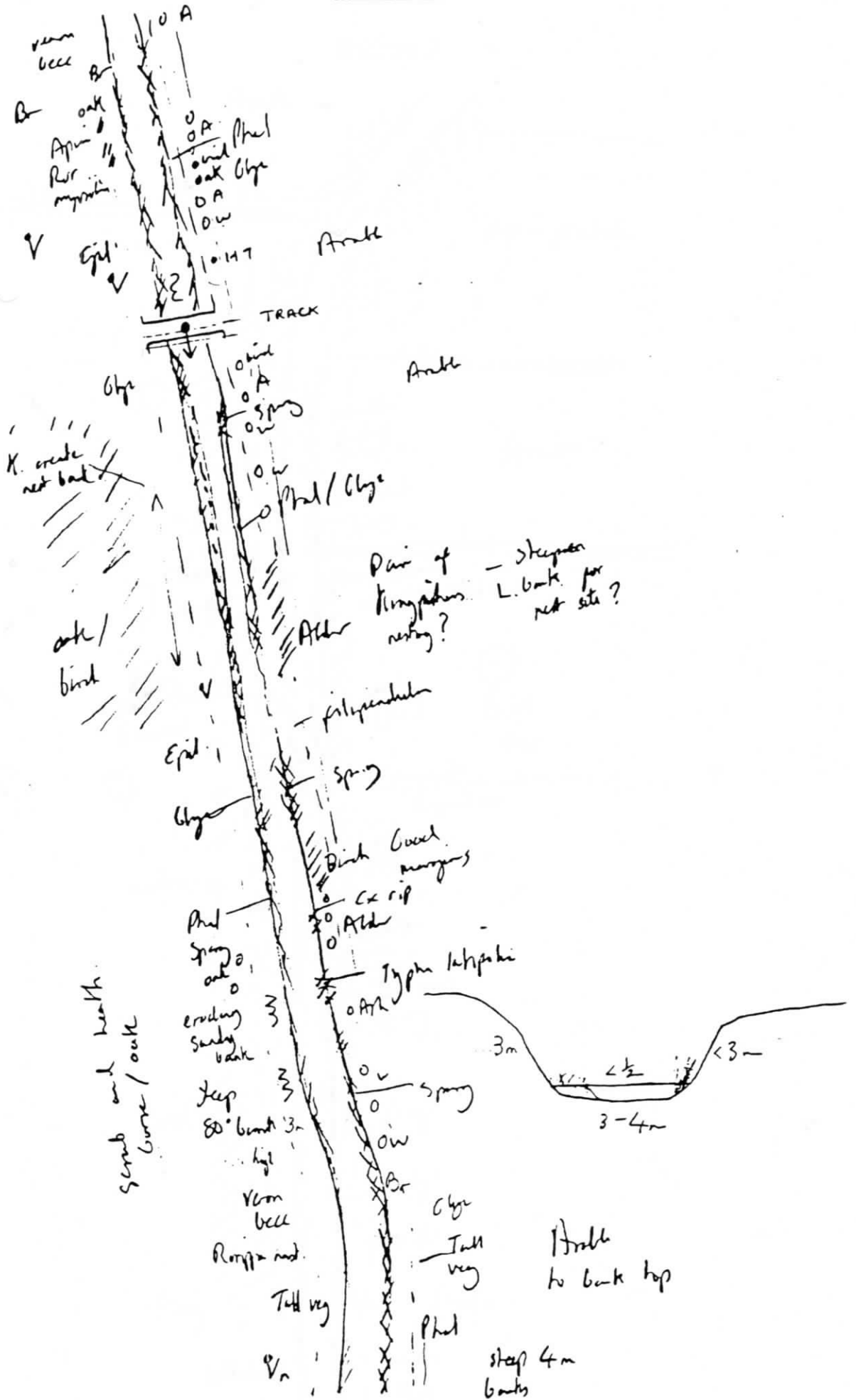
RAW SURVEY DATA

Little Ouse River

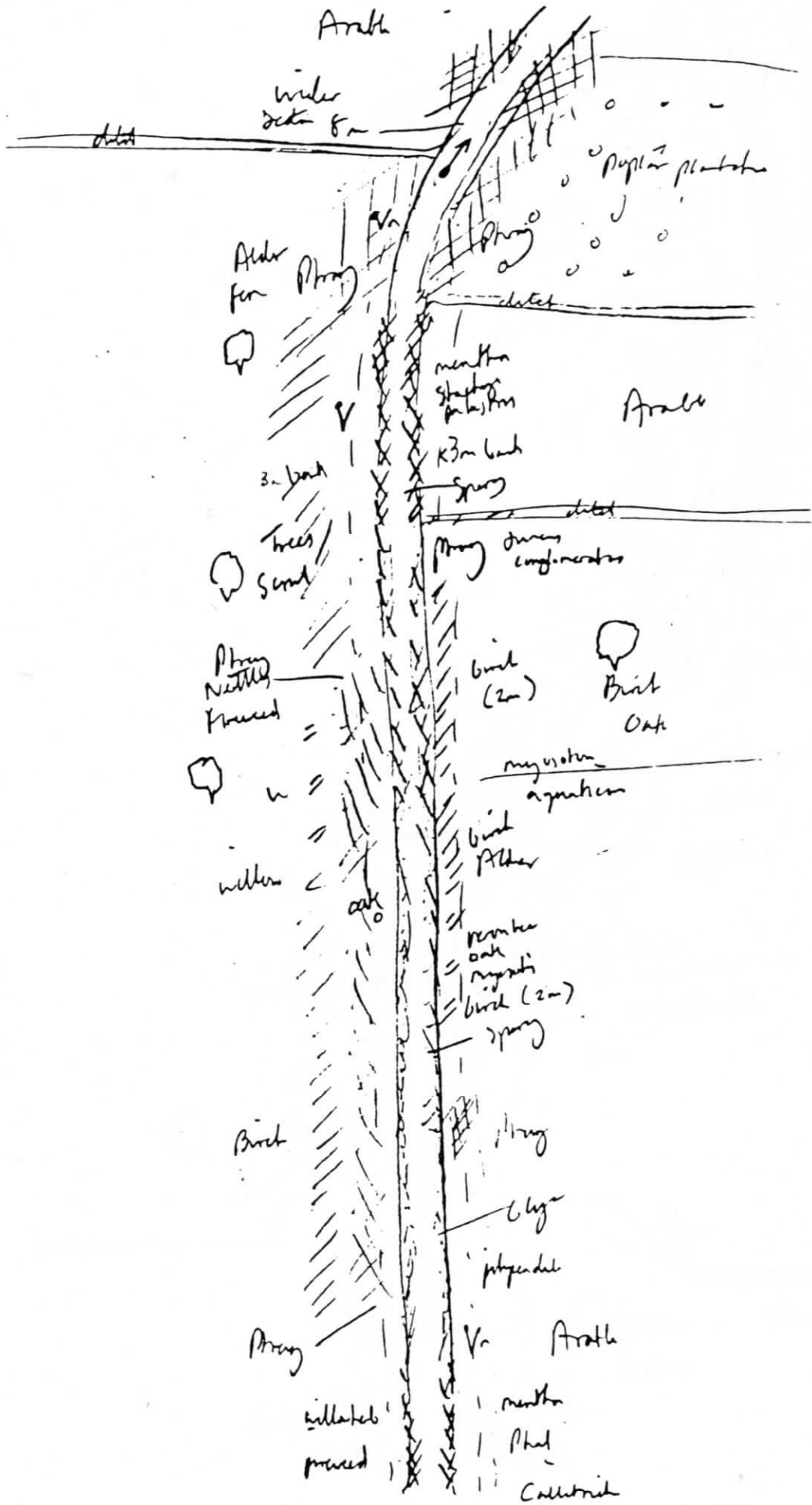
Section 1



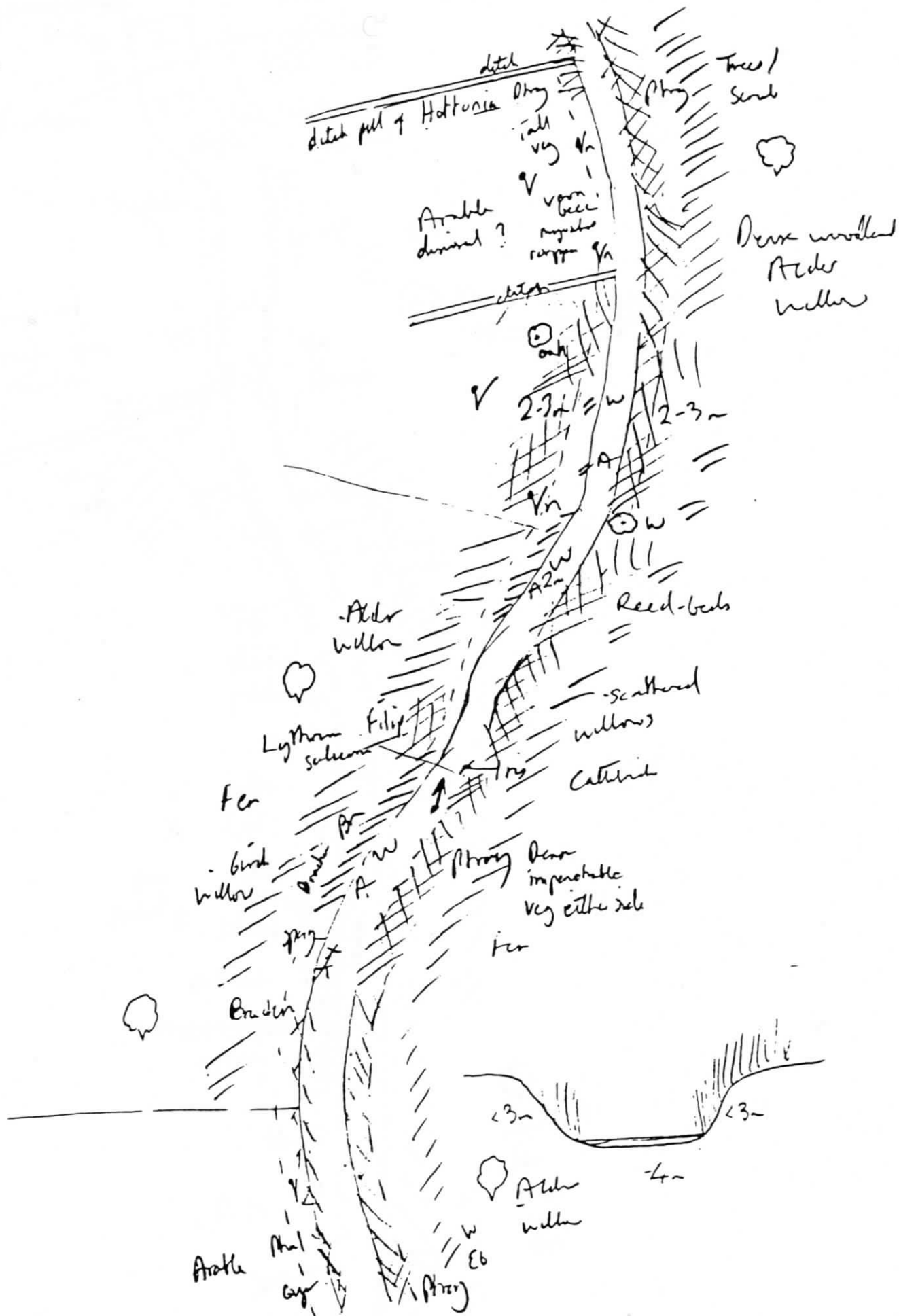
Section 2



Section 3

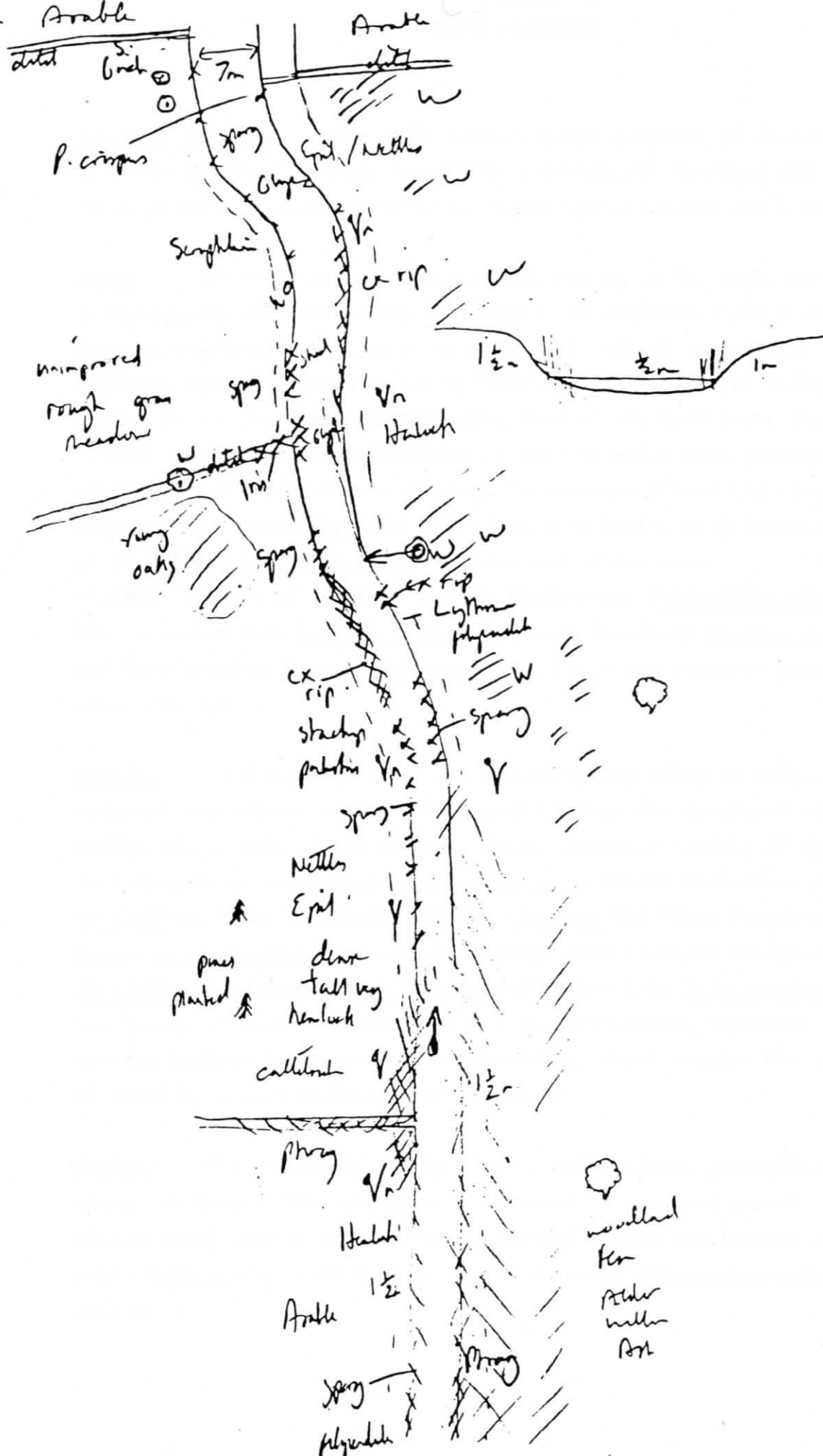


Section 4



Section 5

S. Arable



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Ken
Alder
with
Ash

SURVEY SUMMARY

Adjacent Land-use The river flows through a number of important wildlife habitats, notably heathland, semi-natural woodland and fen, in addition to poplar plantations, unimproved grassland and arable land.

Banks The banks are generally steep, and up to 3m. high, becoming progressively shallower along the length. On sections 1 and 2 the left bank is relatively dry, and covered by tall ruderal vegetation, with adjacent heathland areas of young birch and oak, scattered scrub and gorse. In section 2 the sandy eroding face of the bank forms ideal 'cliff' nest sites for kingfishers, a pair of which were present in the vicinity, and may have been nesting. In sections 3 to 5 the river flows through water-table dependant fen along both banks, with extensive beds of Reed Phragmites australis and alder and willow carr.

Bankside species of interest include Meadowsweet Filipendula ulmaria, Purple Loosestrife Lythrum salicaria, Marsh Woundwort Stachys palustris and Hemp Agrimony Eupatorium cannabinum. There are numerous young trees along the banks.

Margins Although the banks are generally too steep to support marginal vegetation, a distinct marginal fringe has developed along shoals either side of the channel. These support a variety of species, including Water-cress Nasturtium officinale, Fool's Watercress Apium nodiflorum, Water Speedwell Veronica catenata and Water Forget-me-not Myosotis scorpioides. The emergent fringe also includes Reedmace Typha latifolia, Pond Sedge Carex riparia and Yellow Iris Iris pseudacorus. The fringe of Reed in sections 3 to 5 is particularly important as nesting habitat for water-fowl and warblers, which require the security of building a nest actually over the water.

Channel The channel is fairly shallow and uniform, gradually widening along the length. The substrate is composed of sand and gravel, with silt shoals along much of the stretch. Submerged plants are limited to Starworts Callitriche, with beds of Curled Pondweed Potamogeton crispus in section 5.

DREDGING RECOMMENDATIONS

The river flows through a number of important wildlife features liable to be damaged by dredging work unless great care is taken to follow the recommendations.

Work should be carried out from the right bank in sections 1 to 3, and from the left bank in sections 4 and 5. This will avoid most of the fen habitat, apart from an area in section 4 where great care should be taken to minimise the spread of spoil and mechanical damage.

In sections 1 to 3 the species-rich margins along the left bank and the toe of the right bank should not be dredged. In sections 4 to 5 the valuable Reed fringe along the right bank and the toe of the left bank should not be dredged.

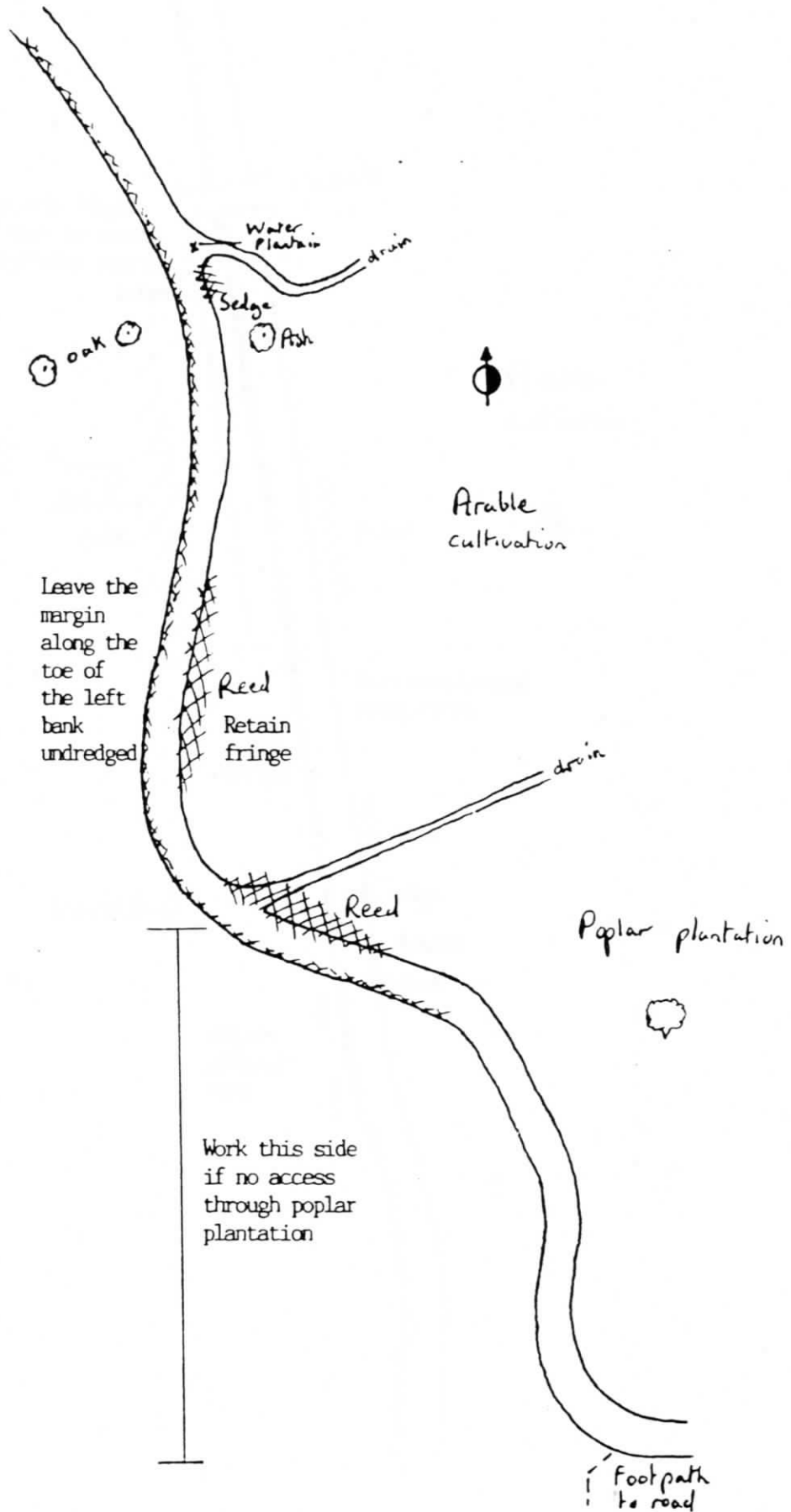
Any uneven or slumping banks should be left, since a variety of structure is important for wildlife. In Section 2, upstream of the bridge, the left bank could be enhanced as a potential kingfisher nesting site by facing it up to form a vertical sandy 'cliff'. Since the bank is already very steep, this would require the removal of only relatively small amounts of sandy material mainly along the base of the bank, and could be carried out by hand, to a limited extent, if the machine is unable to reach. Apart from this area, the banks should not be re-profiled in any way.

It is essential that only silt be removed from the channel; dredging the hard bed of the river could affect the water-table on which the adjacent fen habitat is dependent.

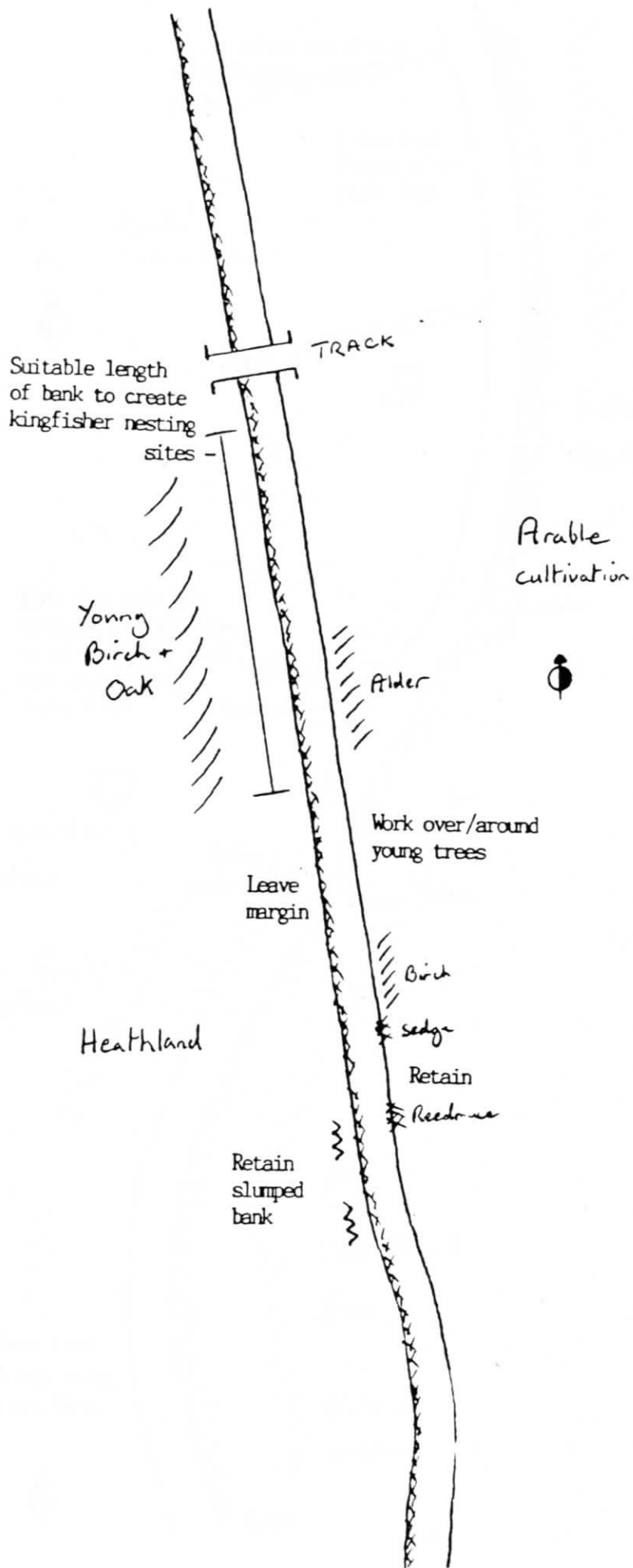
Specific requirements are indicated on the following maps.

DREDGING RECOMMENDATIONS

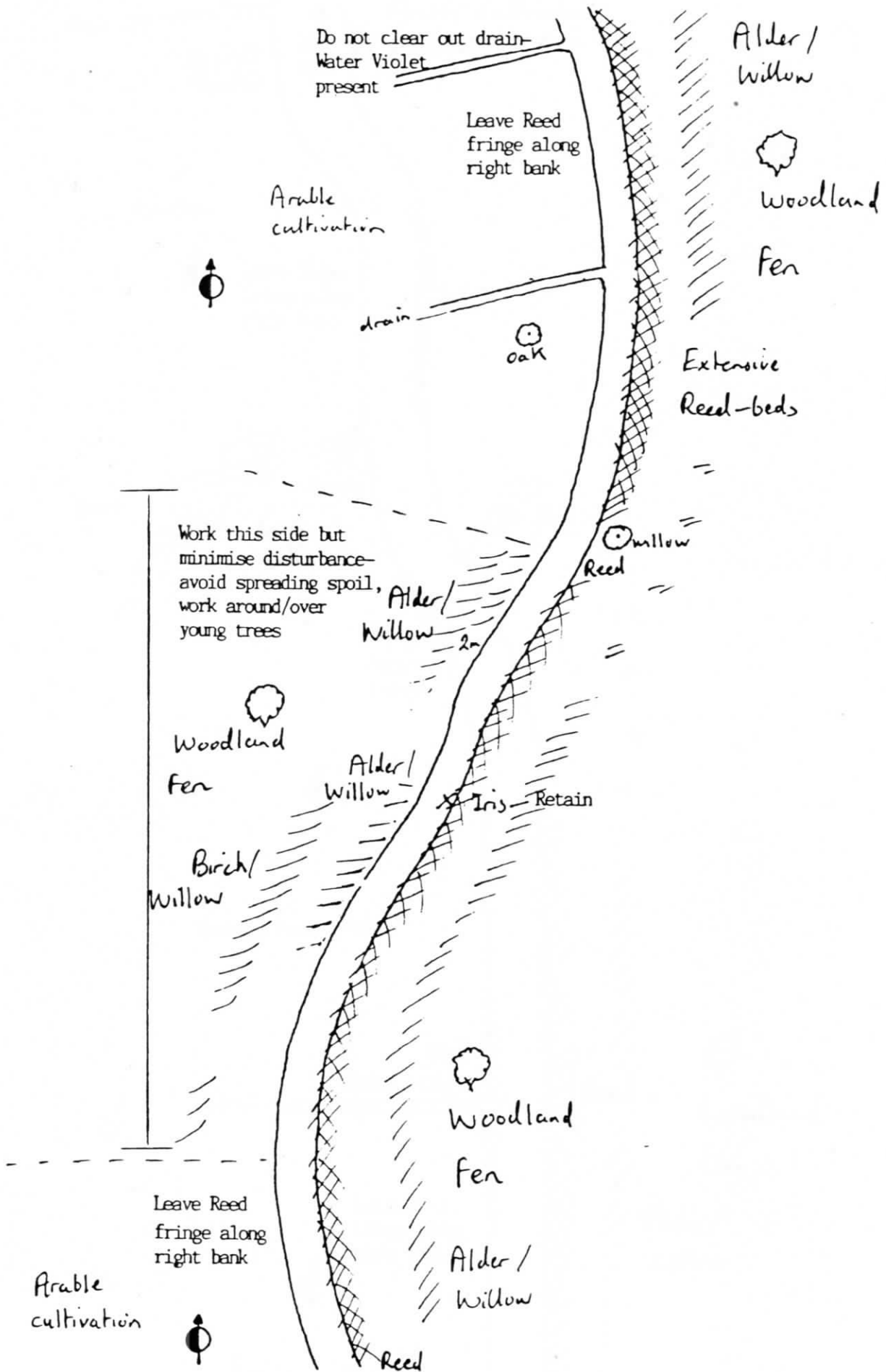
Section 1



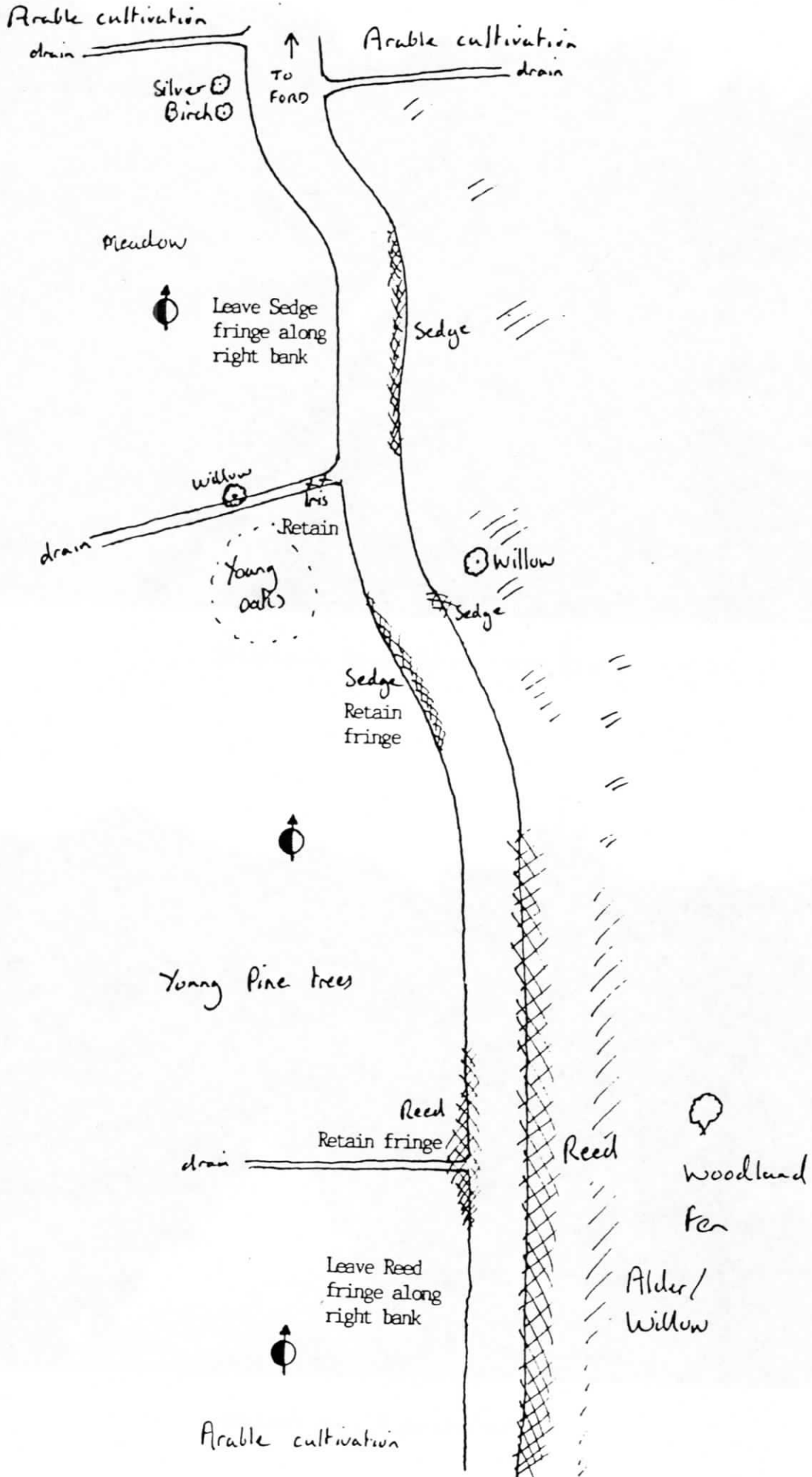
Section 2

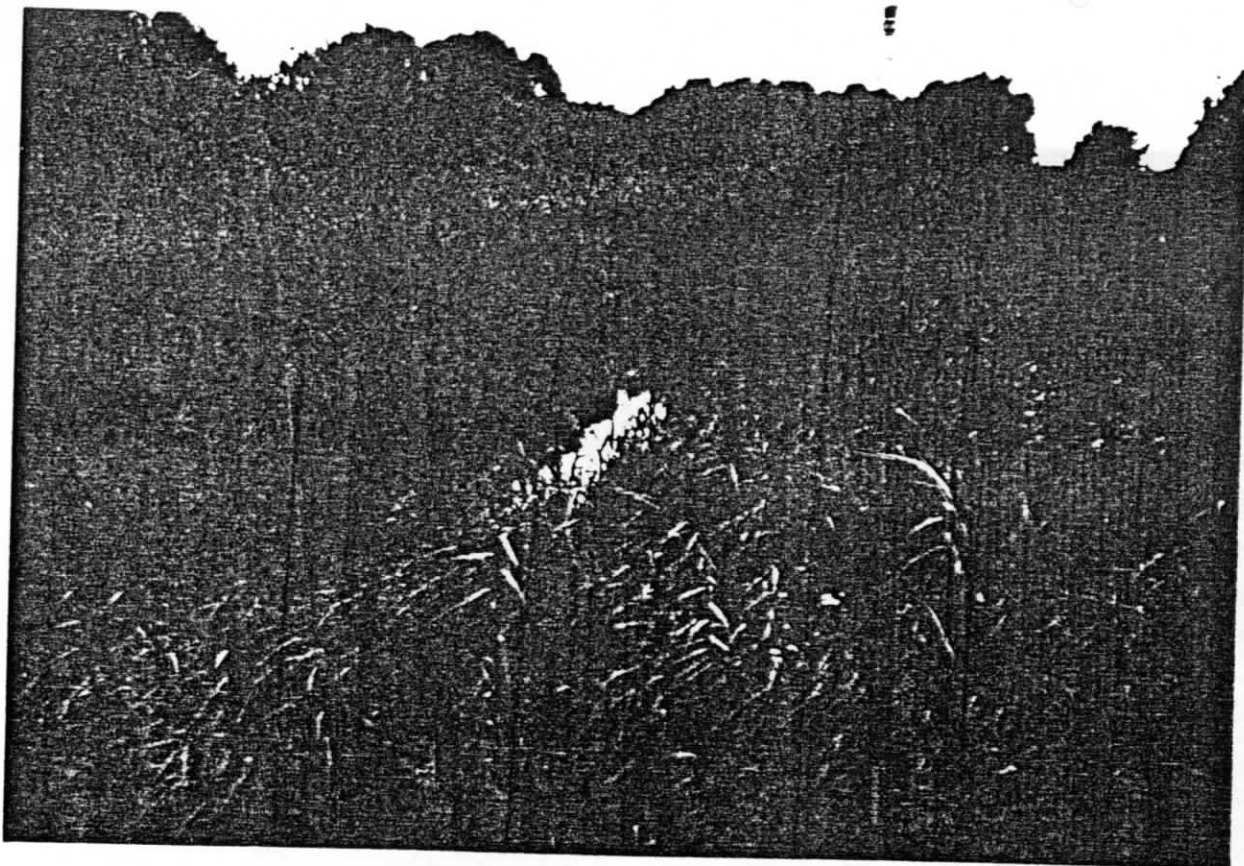


Section 4

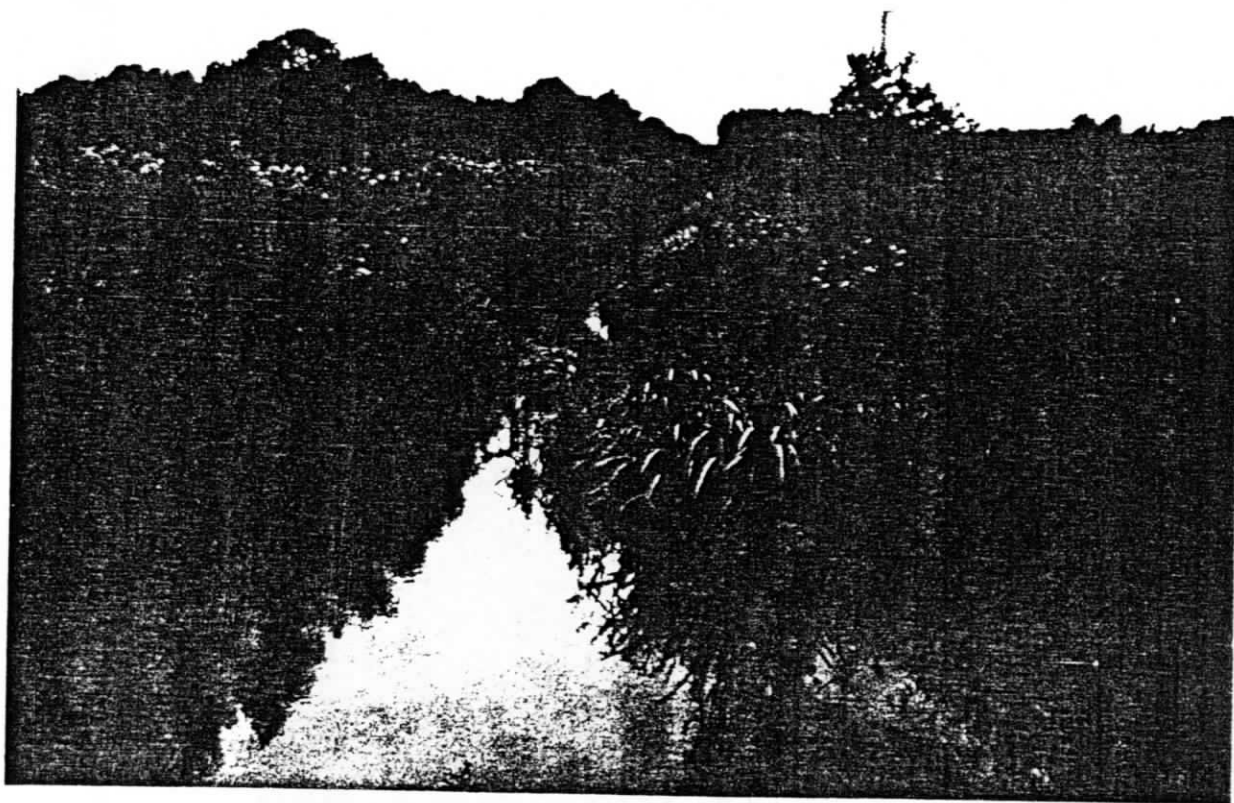


Section 5





Section 1. Reed-bed on right bank



Section 1-2. View downstream



Section 4. Purple Loosestrife and Meadowsweet; Reed-beds along right bank



Section 5. Reed-beds alongside channel