

**HAFOD
LADIES' WALK
AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ROUTE
FROM
EGLWYS NEWYDD TO HAFOD MANSION
AND FROM
HAFOD MANSION TO THE ALPINE MEADOW**

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is the intention of the Hafod Trust *Ymddiriedolaeth Yr Hafod* to restore the complete circuit of the Ladies' Walk. At the time of writing approximately half of route has been restored; this report is concerned with the remainder.

Consideration must be given when reading this report to *Hafod - Archaeological Guidelines* compiled by Brian Dix. Of particular relevance are his *General Principles* 8, 9, 10 and 12:

8. Disturbance of the original paths must be avoided wherever possible and careful consideration must be given to tree-felling and other clearance, particularly where it might cause bank erosion with the consequent loss of archaeological features and information. In some situations the potential for damage should be mitigated by making an alternative route.

9. It is accepted, however, that there may be instances where alteration or damage is unavoidable, and preservation *in situ* cannot be ensured. In these cases there should be full specialist investigation and analysis so that there is preservation at least by record. It is important also to ensure that any former path-evidence will not be lost by integration with new metalling or through erosion from use. It is recognised, however, that an intervention layer, such as a geotextile membrane, may not always be practicable in these situations and there may be rare occasions where it will be best to remove the historical fabric in its entirety rather than leave it to become contaminated.

10. In general, new paths should continue to be laid *on top* of the existing ground with fresh scalplings added to build up the surface, thereby avoiding direct contact with original features.

12. A full and proper record should be made of all restoration or remedial works, including all those already carried out as well as planned. The documentation should comprise plans and elevations as appropriate, in addition to before and after photographic views.

For much of the course under consideration here the line of the Ladies' Walk is known. Where the line is not known the scope for discovery using archaeological techniques is often limited and therefore very few proposals for further exploratory archaeological work are given. However, considerable amounts of archaeological recording, survey and excavation may be required to 'preserve by record' sections of the walk in advance of restoration.

2. DOCUMENTARY AND CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

2.1 *George Cumberland's description*

George Cumberland's 1796 description of Hafod with its accompanying map is the primary source for the Hafod walks. Because of its importance it is quoted here at length and the map is reproduced (Fig. 3). On page 11 Cumberland provides a general introduction to the walks:

There are four fine walks from the house, chiefly through ways artificially made by the proprietor; all dry, kept clean, and composed of materials found on the spot; which is chiefly a coarse stone, of a grayish cast, friable in many places, and like slate, but oftener consisting of immense masses, that cost the miner, in making some parts of these walks, excessive labour; for there are places, where it was necessary to perforate the rock many yards, in order to pass a promontory, that jutting across the way, denied further access; and to go round which, you must have taken a great tour, and made a fatiguing descent. At it is, the walks are so conducted, that few are steep; the transitions easy, the returns commodious, and the branches distinct. Neither are they too many, for much is left to future projectors; and if a man be stout enough to range the underwoods, and be fastidious enough to reject all trodden paths, he may, almost every where, stroll from the studied line, till he be glad to regain the friendly conduct of the well-known way.

On page 13 is the start of the description of what is now known as the Ladies' Walk from Hafod Mansion to the Alpine Meadow:

The first ramble I should chuse for a stranger would be, to take him down, through the lawn before the house, at once to the river Ystwith; where, instead of passing over the long Alpine Bridge, one turns short to the left into a path that skirts the water, and beneath which it runs rapidly over its pebbly bed, overhung with stragling boughs.

Thence you soon descend to the level of the mead, through which it flows, where after passing the cold bath, that is fed by a constant spring of the purest water, you enter a sweet, sheltered, level walk, running nearly on a line with the river, but separated from it by a narrow and irregular strips of meadow, and shaded above by climbing woods, and rocks fringed with old roots and ivy.

Pages 19 and 20 describe the walk from Eglwysnewydd back to the mansion:

Entering the brushwood, a rural path-way now carries you speedily to a very delightful little promontory, rather clear of wood; whence, with a gentle precipice below, you command the crescent-formed farm-yard, crouching under the hill, below the river, the bridge, and all around the variegated vale.

2.2 Ordnance Survey Maps

First Edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey maps (referred to here as the Ordnance Survey Map) are indubitably the most useful large-scale cartographic evidence for tracing the line of the Ladies' Walk. The Hafod area was surveyed in 1887. The maps show much information relevant to this study; many paths are depicted, some of which might be the line of the Ladies' Walk. A fuller description of these maps is provided in the relevant sections of the walk.

3. CEFN CREIGIAU

Cefn Creigiau is, as the name indicates, a craggy ridge. It has steep western and eastern flanks; the southern end is less steep. It is now entirely wooded, mostly with conifer plantations. A track runs from the car-park at Eglwys Newydd to Pen-Creigiau and a Forest Enterprise footpath follows the course of an old field-wall on the western side of Cefn-Creigiau.

3.1 Evidence for the line of the walk

Evidence for the exact line of the walk on Cefn Creigiau is not good. Cumberland's description and accompanying map are not of great assistance, though the map does seem to show the general course of the walk as passing over the crest of Cefn Creigiau. Cumberland's 'very delightful little promontory', the only topographic feature referred to in this section of the walk, could be interpreted as any one of many sites (see section 5). There is no unequivocal surface evidence for the line of the walk. The Ordnance Survey Map shows a maze of paths at the southern end of Cefn Creigiau. The track noted above may follow the line of an earlier path (though this was not shown on the Tithe Map): at its south-western end, a disused hollow track diverges and descends towards Pendre Field.

A survey by Grayston and Wills (1995) detected a 'worn forest path' crossing Cefn Creigiau. The route of this 'worn forest path' is a plausible line for the Ladies' Walk over the ridge, but no more so than several other routes. The site of the 'very delightful little promontory' as identified by Grayston and Wills is as likely a location, given the brevity of Cumberland's description, as several other positions. Any postulated line for the walk that crossed the summit of the ridge would be forced to descend to Pendre Field along the steep western side of Cefn Creigiau. The steepness of access to Pendre Field is least marked on the approaches to a solitary large beech tree beside the fence which runs down to the south-eastern corner of the field.

Earthworks of former track-ways or paths survive at the south-western end of Cefn Creigiau in the area of the maze of paths shown on the Ordnance Survey Map (Fig. 2), but because of the line of the modern track and a dense conifer plantation, the matching of these two classes of evidence is now virtually impossible. A clear linear depression, the line of a former track or path, diverges from the modern track where this swings sharply to the south-east towards Pen-Creigiau. The earthwork track/path

runs down to Pendre Field, joining it immediately to the south-west of the large beech tree. The track/path then turns sharply to the south-west in Pendre Field.

3.2 Proposals for further exploratory archaeological work

It is likely that intrusive archaeological work will not solve the problem of the location of the line across Cefn Creigiau: evaluation by excavation of the line proposed by Grayston and Wills would probably lead to a proliferation of trenches in an attempt to find the path; trenches dug across the earthworks at the south-western end of Cefn Creigiau would produce evidence of tracks and paths, but disentangling this evidence to demonstrate construction/use contemporaneous with the construction/use of the Ladies' Walk would be virtually impossible.

3.3 Recommendations

It is recommended that no further archaeological work is undertaken on the walk in this section as it is unlikely to assist in the detection of its exact line. The restored line of the walk will therefore, by necessity, be a new line, but a line that best fits the original according to the documentary, cartographic and topographical evidence.

4. PENDRE FIELD

This is an uneven pasture field. A slightly boggy area running approximately down the centre of the field marks the line of a stream.

4.1 Evidence for the line of the walk

Cumberland is of limited use in determining the exact line of the walk across Pendre Field, though its general course in this area loops to the north, apparently up Pendre Field (Fig. 3). The Ordnance Survey Map shows two paths crossing the field (Fig. 2). Both start from near the beech tree on the eastern side. One leads directly to Hawthorn Cottage, the other directly to Pendre.

A resistivity survey (Bewers 1995) revealed a linear anomaly crossing Pendre Field. The line of this feature is shown on Figure 2. Archaeological trenches excavated in Pendre Field (Phillips 1994, 16-18) prior to the resistivity survey failed to produce any evidence for a path. Though the positions of the trenches are difficult to locate by reference to the report; none lay on the line of the linear anomaly feature located in the resistivity survey.

4.2 Proposals for further exploratory archaeological work

The course of the linear anomaly detected in the resistivity survey needs to be investigated by trial trenches to determine its character. Two trenches are recommended, one on either side of Pendre Field at points where the linear anomaly and the course of the looping walk (the line proposed for restoration by the Hafod Trust) intersect.

4.3 Recommendations

Recommendations are dependent upon the results of the exploratory archaeological work. If results from the trial trenches positively demonstrate that linear anomaly is the line of the walk, consideration must be given to recreating its course and character in any restoration programme.

5. HAWTHORN COTTAGE - PENDRE

5.1 Evidence for the line of the walk

Documentary and cartographic sources provide the evidence for the line of the Ladies' Walk in the immediate vicinity of Hawthorn Cottage and Pendre. The most natural modern line for a path runs immediately in front (south) of Hawthorn Cottage. A path is shown here on the Ordnance Survey Map. The Ordnance Survey also shows a second path entering Pentre farmyard from Pendre Field, running over a rocky knoll to the north of Hawthorn Cottage and meeting the first path some 40m to the west of the cottage. This bifurcation of the path to the west of the cottage is shown on a manuscript map of c. 1825 (University of Nottingham NeC 8418).

There is no surface evidence for the line of the path in the Hawthorn Cottage area. This is not surprising as the strip of ground in front of Hawthorn Cottage has probably seen several episodes of disturbance over the past two centuries. It was not possible to examine the rocky knoll for evidence of a path in any detail due to very dense rhododendron growth. The possibility that the walk bifurcated at this point cannot be ruled out, with one branch running to the south of the cottage and the other to the north.

5.2 Proposals for further exploratory archaeological work

It is not proposed to undertake any further exploratory archaeological work in this area.

5.3 Recommendations

Due to property rights, it seems that the only practical course for the walk is to the south side of Hawthorn Cottage. It is recommended that some very small-scale archaeological trial trenching is undertaken in this area prior to construction to assess the depth of underlying deposits.

6. HAWTHORN COTTAGE TO HAFOD MANSION

6.1 Evidence for the line of the walk

A linear earthwork terrace running across the slope of a gentle valley above Hafod Mansion seems to be the line of the Ladies' Walk. This is supported by the depiction of a path on the Ordnance Survey Map on this line, by archaeological excavation (Phillips 1994, 18) and by resistivity survey (Bewers 1995).

6.2 Proposals for further exploratory archaeological work

It is not proposed to undertake any further exploratory archaeological work in this area.

6.3 Recommendations

The earthwork terrace is one the best examples on the course of the Ladies' Walk where well-preserved buried archaeological deposits are to be found. It is also a location where preservation by the creation of a new line is an option. It is therefore recommended that the earthwork terrace is preserved as found. This will allow for the integrity of the monument to be maintained, including post-Johnes' soil accumulation. It will also allow the interested visitor the ability to examine part of Johnes' original design and construction free from modern interference.

If preservation *in situ* is the preferred option, then, a new line for the Ladies' Walk will be required.

If it is considered that *in situ* preservation is not a viable option, then all superincumbent deposits should be removed, under archaeological supervision, along the full length of the earthwork terrace, thus permitting the path to be fully recorded. The excavated path should then be covered with a layer of appropriate protective material, on top of which path surfacing material could be applied without risk to the underlying archaeology.

7. THE ENVIRONS OF HAFOD MANSION

7.1 Evidence for the line of the walk

The route by which the walk entered and left the mansion is shown on Figure 3, though the considerable changes made to the mansion and its environs since the late-eighteenth century make it certain that no topographical or archaeological evidence for it survive. Cumberland's description suggests that there was no made path to the front of the mansion; the visitor was free to make his or her own way across the lawns. Any construction in this area will then, by necessity, be on a new route.

7.2 Recommendations

The area of Hafod Mansion is one of the most archaeologically sensitive areas on the whole estate. Any new construction work must recognise this and should be preceded by excavation in order to evaluate the archaeological resource and to frame mitigatory proposals. This programme of excavation need not be extensive. Over flat ground it may only be necessary to excavate test pits to examine the depth of underlying deposits.

Where the line of the walk crosses the terrace of the carriage-drive, construction work must be preceded by archaeological excavation. Two suggestions are provided which would minimise damage, both visual and physical, to the terrace and nullify the need for further excavation:

1. A limited amount of rearrangement to existing facilities is carried out. For instance, moving the wire fence surrounding the mansion closer to the mansion will bring a low flight of well-preserved stone steps into the public domain and so allow access from the terrace on which the house sits to a lower level.
2. A water-main runs close to the mansion and, as the archaeology above this pipe has been destroyed, its course could be utilised for the line of the walk with minimal damage to stratified deposits on the terrace.

8. HAFOD MANSION TO THE ALPINE BRIDGE

8.1 Evidence for the line of the walk

As with the area of the mansion, the route of the Ladies' Walk is unknown, and archaeological investigation is unlikely to reveal it. It is probable that for at least part of its course the walk followed the line of the modern track down to the Alpine Bridge. What role, if any, the flight of stone steps (Fig. 2) that leads down to the track from the Forest Enterprise road probably played in the Ladies' Walk is uncertain.

8.2 Proposals for further exploratory archaeological work

It is not proposed to undertake any exploratory work on this section.

9. THE ALPINE BRIDGE TO THE ALPINE MEADOW

9.1 Evidence for the line of the walk

The course of the Ladies' Walk in this section is reasonably certain, with Cumberland's description, the Ordnance Survey Map and topographic evidence in agreement.

The Ordnance Survey Map shows a path branching off from the track to the Alpine Bridge about 20m to the north of the bridge. This path is marked on the ground by a slight earthwork terrace. 50-60m to the north-east of the bridge the path begins to run along the very edge of the river bank on a terrace cut into the steep valley side. At several points it seems likely that river erosion has removed part of the path and severe slumping is evident in some areas. At A (Fig. 2) rubble dumped down the slope from the carriage-drive above has partly engulfed the course of the path. Crudely built revetments to this talus on the edge of the path testify to attempts to restore the line of the path some time after the rubble was dumped down the slope. It seems likely that the rubble was residue from construction of the cutting for the carriage-drive which leads south-east from the mansion.

In the vicinity of the site of the cold bath marked on Figure 2 the line of the walk becomes less clear. Figure 3 shows the walk running to the south of the bath, but topographical evidence seems to suggest that its course was to the upslope side. To the east of the cold bath a track cuts across the line of the walk obscuring its course. The means by which the path crossed a small stream (which fed the cold bath) is unknown. To the east of the track the Ladies' Walk would have lain on the earthwork terrace which is still clearly visible. An archaeological trench excavated across this terrace (Murphy 1996) as it begins its descent to the Alpine Meadow demonstrated that two phases of track/path metalled surface were present.

9.2 Proposals for further exploratory archaeological work

It is proposed that some archaeological trenching should be undertaken in the vicinity of the cold bath in order to establish the exact line of the path in this area.

9.2 Recommendations

As there is little room for manoeuvre between the river and the steep valley side for much of the route in this section then it would seem that the exact line of the original walk must be restored. This will involve considerable engineering works and therefore it will have a severe impact on archaeological deposits, probably destroying most of the evidence for the original walk. Any restoration work must be preceded by a programme of archaeological survey and recording in order to 'preserve by record' this section of the walk and help frame mitigatory measures.

Though not technically part of the walk, the cold bath is in a fragile condition and therefore some recommendations are given here to assist in its protection. It is recommended that several of the conifers growing on it and in the vicinity are felled and the stumps left to rot *in situ*. To protect the site, it is recommended that the cold bath should be covered with a layer of sterile soil. For protective purposes this need only be 20-30 cm thick, but it may be considered that the creation of a low mound to mark the position of the site may be desirable.

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to several individuals for providing me with information and sharing their time and knowledge. Particular thanks are due to Roger and Linda Hallett and Andrew Sclater.

11. COPY OF THE BRIEF

Hafod - Ladies' Walk Sections 2 and 3
Specifications for an archaeological study

This study will be run in conjunction with the basic Sites and Monuments Study for Hafod. Much of the specification for the SMR study is relevant to this project ; it is not repeated here. Below are the specific tasks for this study:

Study area. This comprises that part of the Ladies's Walk from Eglwys Newydd over Cefn Creigiau to Hafod Mansion to the Alpine Bridge and on to the Alpine Meadow. Apart from the Alpine Meadow, it is that portion of the Ladies' walk not yet restored.

Objectives. The objectives of the study are to review and assess the evidence for the Ladies Walk and to make recommendations in advance of restoration.

Methodology. A considerable amount of archaeological work has already been carried out on the Ladies' Walk.; this will be reviewed. Possible courses for the walk as suggested by several individuals will be assessed. Field visits will evaluate the character and condition of the walk.

Recommendations. It is expected that recommendations will principally concern measures designed to protect the archaeology during path restoration. Some recommendations may indicate where further study is required.

12. REFERENCES

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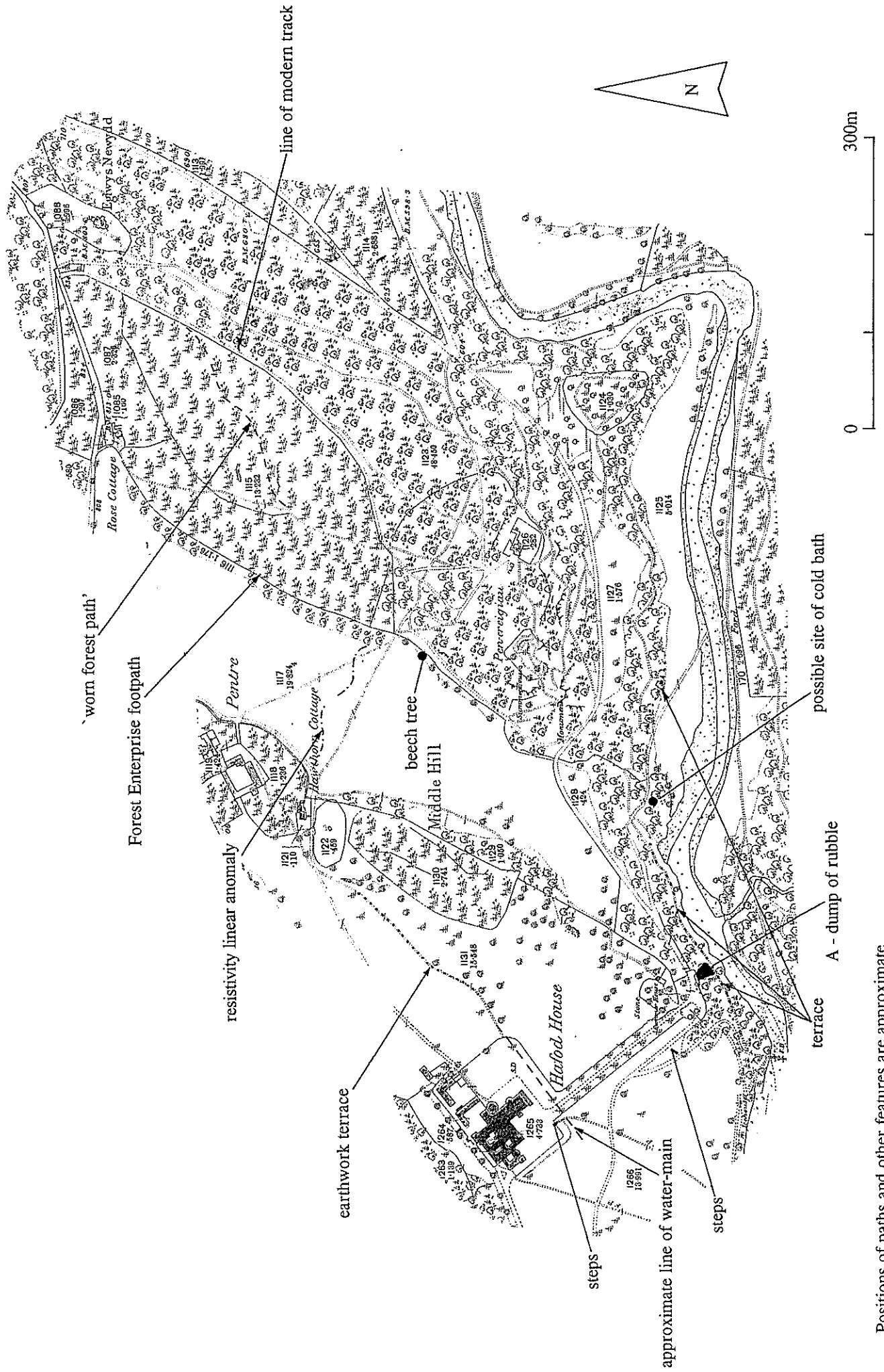
Grayston, M. E. and Wills, J. B., 1995 'Cefn Creigiau ground survey', unpublished report for the Hafod Trust.

HAFOD: THE LADIES' WALK

Murphy, K., 1996 'Hafod - The Ladies' Walk: Alpine Meadow Section', unpublished report for the Hafod Trust.

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Figure 2.
 Reduced copy of the Ordnance
 Survey 1:2500 First edition



Positions of paths and other features are approximate

Figure 3. Map accompanying
Cumberland's 1796 description
of Hafod

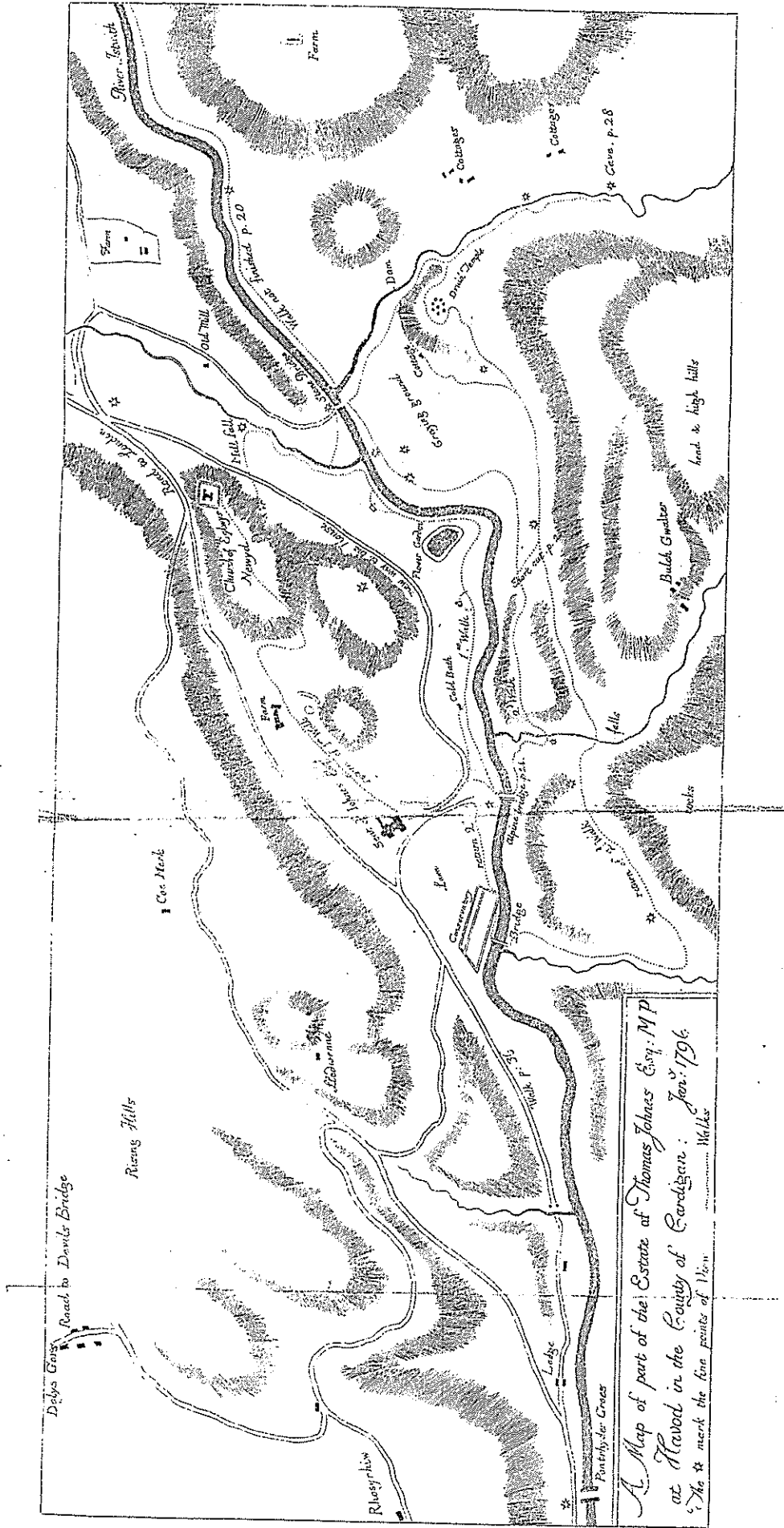
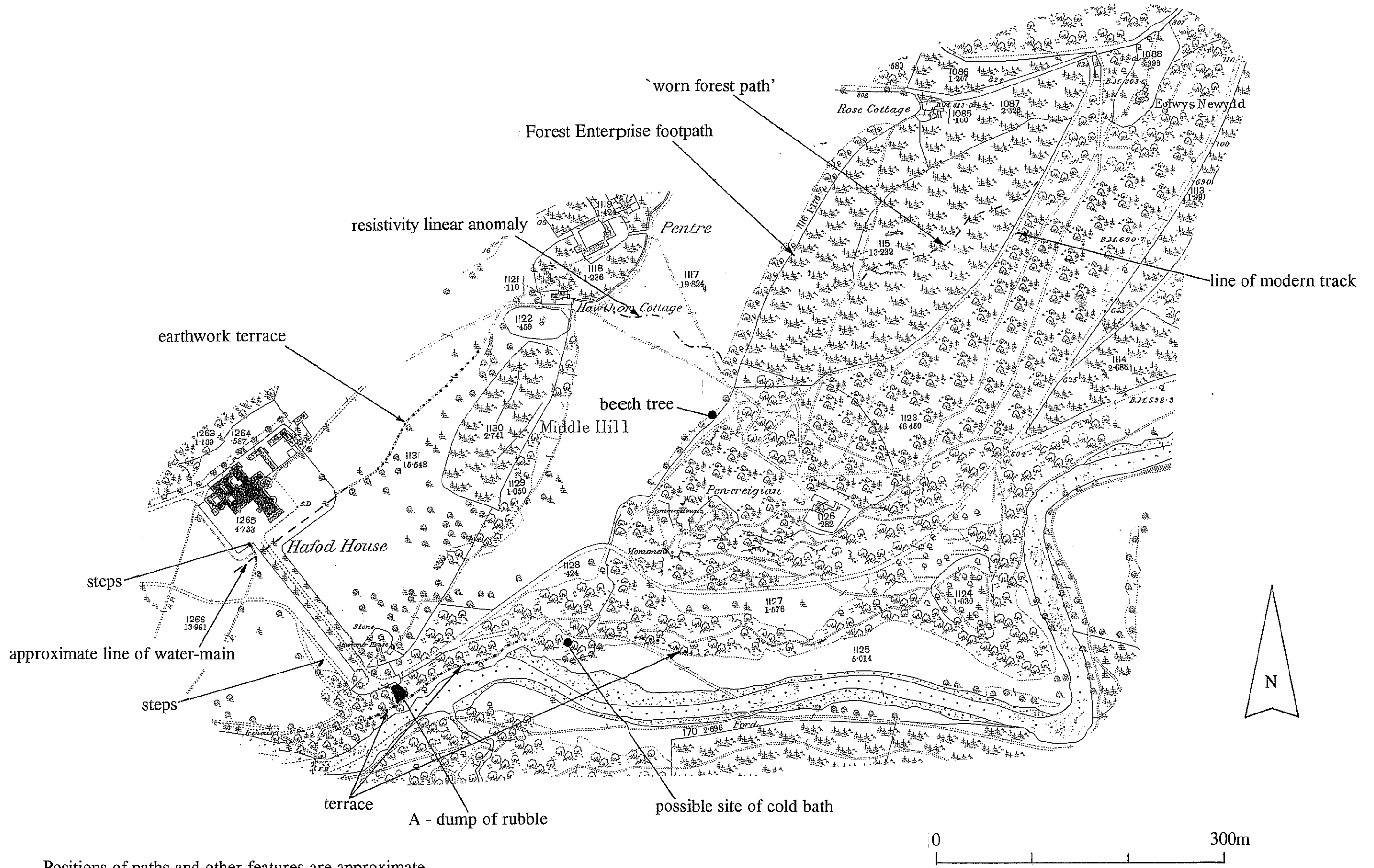


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