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CONSERVATION APPRAISAL & HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In respect of

**Development proposals at land off Bishopstone Road, Stone,
Buckinghamshire**

On behalf of

Manor Oak Homes

AHC REF: 9300

Date: November 2014

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been prepared and written by David Bevan, IHBC, MRTPI (Heritage Adviser) and Kate Jefferson (Senior Heritage Consultant), and overseen by Sarah Watt, MIfA (Director), of Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd., on behalf of Manor Oak Homes. Its purpose is to provide the proposed development scheme at land off Bishopstone Road, Stone with a cogent and sustainable justification in heritage terms.
- 1.2 The report falls into two distinct parts, the first examining the historical background to the application site in its existing form (including how it fits into the context of the evolution of Stone as a whole) and then going on to assess the contribution the site currently makes to the heritage significance and character of Stone and the Stone Conservation Area, which it adjoins.
- 1.3 The second part of the report, which should be read in conjunction with the Design & Access Statement prepared by the scheme architects, Apps Creative Design, considers the impact of the development proposals on the application site and the setting of the Stone Conservation Area.
- 1.4 As the Design & Access Statement naturally includes a full explanation of the design approach taken to the development proposals, this second part of the report focuses instead on the ways in which those elements of the existing site that make a positive or negative contribution to heritage significance are retained or removed and, in particular, how the development will fit with, add to, or otherwise impact on, the historic significance and character of its surroundings.
- 1.5 This two-part approach of properly understanding significance and allowing this to inform the development proposals is of course consistent with good conservation and planning practice advocated in documents such as English Heritage's *Conservation Principles* (2008), and formally expressed in the government's policies on conserving and enhancing the historic environment contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the additional guidance set out in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

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- 1.6 The use of this approach will help to demonstrate to the Council (or any other decision maker) that the heritage value of the site has been fully considered in formulating the development scheme.
- 1.7 Following our assessment of the application site and surrounding area carried out for this report, we are of the view that the proposed development scheme successfully fits with the character of Stone and will not have a significant impact on either the setting of the Stone Conservation Area or the settings of listed buildings within it.
- 1.8 As such, and for the detailed reasons outlined in this report, it is our professional opinion that there is no material reason in heritage terms why consent should not be granted for the development proposals.

2.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

- 2.1 The purpose of this part of the report, which is accompanied by a detailed map regression exercise, is to examine the historical background to the development of the application site and its surroundings, including how they fit into the context of Stone as a whole.
- 2.2 Some knowledge of this background is obviously essential to gaining a proper understanding of the heritage significance of the application site and how it relates to the surrounding area but it is also important to state at the outset that this section of the report is not intended to provide a comprehensive history of the development of Stone.
- 2.3 Information on Stone's evolution is available in other sources including the *Stone Conservation Area Appraisal* (Aylesbury Vale District Council, 2013).
- 2.4 This means that it is necessary here only to introduce the parish and provide a summary of the village's historical development before looking in more detail at the way in which the character and appearance of the application site and its immediate surroundings have evolved over time.

Stone and its early history

- 2.5 The village of Stone is located in the Vale of Aylesbury, through which the River Thame and its tributaries flow, and is 2½ miles south-west of Aylesbury itself. It is situated at the eastern end of a low sand and limestone ridge, looking over the Thame Valley to the north and towards the Chiltern Hills to the south. The appearance and construction of historic buildings and boundary walls within the area has been influenced by the latter's geology, which is primarily Portland and Purbeck sand and limestone, as noted in the *Stone Conservation Area Appraisal* (Aylesbury Vale District Council, 2013), while local Kimmeridge Clay has been used for bricks.

- 2.6 The village of Stone grew up around an important junction of several roads: Oxford Road (A418) leading east to Hartwell and Aylesbury and west to Thame; Eythrope Road heading north-west to Eythrope; Bishopstone Road going south-east to Bishopstone; and Church Way. St. John the Baptist Church sits on raised ground to the south of this junction of roads.
- 2.7 Stone's early history was strongly tied to that of the Hartwell Estate to the east. Alwin, a thegn of King Edward, held the manor at Hartwell before the Norman Conquest and, following the invasion, the manor was granted to William Peverel, the natural son of William the Conqueror. Both Hartwell and Stone are mentioned in the Domesday Survey, with Stone recorded as 'Stanes' (Aylesbury Vale District Council, 2013).

Historical development

- 2.8 For much of its history Stone was primarily an agricultural settlement. Early maps such as Jeffrey's map from the 1760s (**Fig. 1**), show a small number of buildings clustered around a prominently depicted church. At that time the main route to Aylesbury ran down Church Way, through what has become the modern housing estate at its southern end, to join with the access road to Stonethorpe Farm. From there the road turned east to Bishopstone Road to join the Ford/Portway Road. The north-west section of Bishopstone Road, probably including at least part of that which now runs next to the application site, is missing from the Jeffrey's map.
- 2.9 Significant change was brought to the village in the 18th century, with the main road from Aylesbury to Oxford developed into a turnpike in 1770 (Page, 1908). This new highway replaced the contorted route described above.
- 2.10 The turnpike changed the amount and pattern of development in Stone and is responsible for much of the current shape and appearance of the village. The improved route meant that the former focus on the junction of streets and church, with some outlying farmhouses, was replaced by linear development along Oxford Road. The *Stone Conservation Area Appraisal* (CAA; Aylesbury Vale District Council, 2013) describes how the former historic core became a backwater, bypassed by Oxford Road.

- 2.11 A few years after the turnpike was opened the parish was enclosed under the same Act of Parliament as Hartwell, with the award dated 19th March 1777 (Page, 1908).
- 2.12 In 1852, the parish became home to the Bucks County Lunatic Asylum (later Bucks County Mental Hospital and St John's Hospital) that was erected on Oxford Road to the west of the village. The original quota of beds for 200 patients had expanded to nearly 700 by the turn of the 20th century (*Kelly's Directory of Buckinghamshire*, 1907).
- 2.13 The first Ordnance Survey (OS) map we have of Stone is that published at 1:2500 scale in 1879 (**Fig. 2**). On that map the area forming the current application site is contained within the relatively large field (No.98; recorded as 10.4 acres of pasture in the OS Area Book) on the north-east side of Bishopstone Road. A footpath ran through it from east to west towards the church.
- 2.14 Immediately to the north-west of this field was situated Stone Farm, with numerous farm buildings and a roughly triangular orchard bounded by Oxford Road. (Numerous orchards are shown in and around the village on this map.) The south-eastern boundary of one of the farm's enclosures (No.101; a stackyard) appears to have been on the same line as part of the application site's north-west boundary.
- 2.15 A wider view of the settlement and landscape pattern of Stone and its surroundings, including Hartwell, is given on the 1884-85 OS map at 1:10560 scale (**Fig. 3**). The field which included the application site area (with 'Stone' written across it on the map) is sizeable and has some regularity of form, like its neighbours to the south-east.
- 2.16 By the time of the 1899 OS map (**Fig. 4**) and the smaller scale 1900 OS map (**Fig. 5**), Stone Croft, a large detached house surrounded by several smaller buildings, had been built immediately to the north of the application site, on land taken from the north-east part of the field (No.98) shown in 1879 which included the application site area and a corner of Stone Farm's orchard. (The maps show buildings on a number of former orchard plots in and around the village.) Part of Stone Croft's new southern boundary would become the northern boundary of the application site.

- 2.17 The 1900 map shows changes to the character of the larger area of land to the south-east of the field which includes the application site area, notably boundaries removed and added and a quarry located at its eastern end next to Oxford Road.
- 2.18 No changes to the application site are evident on the 1921 and 1922 OS maps (**Figs. 6 & 7**), but Stone Farm to its north-west was by this time called Manor Farm. Changes to the village were modest too, though the new village hall on the north side of Oxford Road (designed by Clough Williams-Ellis and built by public subscription in 1910) deserves to be mentioned.
- 2.19 A historic RAF aerial photograph from 1947 (**Fig. 8**) is rather fuzzy but suggests changes shown on later maps such as a distinction between the application site area and the rest of the field in which it sits, and, on the other side of the large area to the south-east, allotments. The 1960 OS map (**Fig. 9**) shows the allotment gardens just described and three small enclosures in the large field from which the application site would be formed.
- 2.20 The origins of the application site's northern edge and part of its north-west boundary have been identified, while the south-east boundary is given by Bishopstone Road. The application site's remaining boundaries were defined much more recently (first recorded on the 1981 and 1984 OS maps), giving it its present form (**Figs. 10 & 11**).
- 2.21 This establishment of the application site's existing form arose from the development (by 1981) of large detached houses around a cul-de-sac, replacing Stone Croft house to the north of the proposal site and, to the east, the formation of a new recreation ground. Manor Farmhouse, to the immediate north-west of the application site, is all that remains of Manor Farm, the associated farm buildings having also been replaced at that time (by 1981) by large detached houses around a cul-de-sac (Manor Farm Close).
- 2.22 The school on Oxford Road had been replaced by a much larger building, and the land between it and Bishopstone Road had been developed with the Round Hill and Chiltern Close and Chiltern Avenue developments. The Spiert and Cromhamston estate on the north side of Oxford Road, facing the school, had also been built.

- 2.23 Vicarage Farmhouse to the south of the church remained but its farm buildings had been absorbed into new structures at Stonethorpe Farm, with extra buildings added. The 1995 OS map (**Fig. 12**) shows further change in this area, with the relatively short-lived buildings of Stonethorpe Farm demolished and a cul-de-sac development of houses at the southern end of Church Way taking their place.
- 2.24 This 1995 map illustrates the scale of modern development next and near to the application site, with 20th-century housing estates on its north-west and north boundaries and, further away, to the south-west, north-east, east and south-east.
- 2.25 The 2014 OS map (**Fig. 13**) shows a fuller picture of the growth of Stone, with further development off the north and south sides of Oxford Road to the west of the central junction, to the west of Eythrope Road, and to the east of Bishopstone Road, close to the junction with Portway.

3.0 THE APPLICATION SITE: DESCRIPTION AND ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE AND CHARACTER

3.1 The application site: description

- 3.1.1 The application site lies off the north-east side of Bishopstone Road, a little south of the junction with Oxford Road (A418) (**Plate 1**). The A418 connects Stone with Aylesbury to the north-east and Haddenham and Thame to the south-west.
- 3.1.2 The site is an irregular shape though with mostly straight-edged boundaries (the Bishopstone Road boundary is slightly curved). The north-west and south-east boundaries of the site converge from the Bishopstone Road and the northern edge of the site is defined by a line which turns at an angle towards the north-west as it approaches the site's north-western boundary. The site area is 0.95 ha.
- 3.1.3 A public right of way from Bishopstone Road to Oxford Road goes through a gate at the west corner of the site and leaves it through a second gate at the northern end of the south-east boundary (**Plates 2 & 3**). There is also access to the site from Bishopstone Road through a field gate opposite the entrance to Willow Barn.
- 3.1.4 The surface of the site is mostly rough grass, nettles and other weeds. The north-west boundary is formed by a continuous and dense belt of large bushes and mature and other trees, with a stone wall at its north-eastern end (**Plate 4**). The northern edge of the site also has a substantial boundary of trees and bushes, along with a timber fence and hedge (**Plate 5**). The south-east boundary (between the site and the recreation ground) is more open, but is still made up of trees and lengths of hedging and fencing (**Plate 6**). The south-west boundary consists of a dense, managed hedge, with trees on the site side (**Plate 7**).

3.2 The heritage significance of the application site and its surroundings

- 3.2.1 The application site has no intrinsic heritage significance. Any limited heritage interest it may once have possessed (as an agricultural field associated with the historic Stone (later, Manor) Farm on the edge of the settlement) has been substantially reduced by the historical changes to its form and character and those of its surroundings, which have been described in section 2.0 and are detailed here.
- 3.2.2 The 1879 and 1884-1885 OS maps (**Figs. 2 & 3**) show the area of the application site as part of a larger field. Apart from the south-west (Bishopstone Road) boundary line, only part of the original north-west boundary line shown on this map remains today. The northern boundary of the proposal site is first shown on the 1899 OS map (**Fig. 4**) and the south-eastern boundary and complete north-western boundary on the 1981 OS map (**Fig. 10**; and see paragraph 2.20 above). In summary, the application site boundaries (other than the Bishopstone Road boundary) were either not established until the late 20th century or have otherwise undergone major changes since 1879.
- 3.2.3 The presence of a right-of-way across the application site is of some interest but that relates to its general route linking Bishopstone Road to Oxford Road rather than to its precise line and physical form.
- 3.2.4 The physical makeup and character of the areas adjoining the application site have also changed completely since 1879. To the north of the site area the 1899 map shows that a large chunk had been taken out of the field shown on the 1879 map to accommodate the substantial Stone Croft house, changing the shape of the field and replacing agricultural with residential use. By 1981, Stone Croft house had itself been replaced by detached houses grouped informally around a short access road (Stone Croft Close) (**Plate 8**).
- 3.2.5 To the north-west of the site area the 1899 map shows Stone Farm (later called Manor Farm), and its farm buildings around a yard with access through to the field which includes the application site area. But by 1981 all of that, with the exception of the now isolated Manor Farmhouse, had been lost. The farmyard and buildings had been replaced by Manor Farm Close, substituting the historic agricultural use, character and

rectilinear arrangement in favour of detached dwellings set at different angles around a curved, cul-de-sac road (**Plate 9**).

- 3.2.6 To the south-east of the application site is the area which was part of the same field but by 1981 (**Fig. 10**) had become a recreation ground complete with pavilion and playground. The recreation ground's football pitch and general character is illustrated in **Plates 3 & 10**. While the creation of the recreation ground provided a valuable community facility for recreation and sport, and a public open space, it too marked a radical change from the agricultural use and character of the field shown in 1879 and the area surrounding the application site.
- 3.2.7 Housing and other development on and from Bishopstone Road and Oxford Road (as described in section 2.0) were part of the same but larger picture of change in Stone.
- 3.2.8 The Round Hill and Chiltern Close and Chiltern Avenue residential developments, and the enlarged school to the north-east, which are seen on the 1981 map, had a dramatic impact, removing the remaining agricultural character from the north-eastern part of the large field lying to the south-east of the field encompassing the application site (as depicted in 1879). The developments also filled the gap between Bishopstone Road and Oxford Road, and separated the 'original field' containing the site from the fields and landscape to its south-east (**Plates 11 & 12**). Further development on the north side of Oxford Road 'sealed off' the recreation ground and the application site from the countryside to the north and north-east.
- 3.2.9 Other than remaining as open ground, the application site has therefore retained little historic character (as an edge-of-settlement agricultural field) because of the changes that have been made within both its immediate and wider context. The site's surroundings on the north-west, north and south-east sides have lost their historic agricultural use and character (with the exception of the isolated Manor Farmhouse), and farm buildings and large parts of the original 19th-century field have been replaced by residential developments and a recreation ground. The changes to the application site's setting therefore further diminish any heritage interest it might otherwise have retained.

3.2.10 Having undertaken our assessment of heritage significance, we fully support the Council's decision not to include the application site within the Stone Conservation Area when it was designated in 2013. We agree that the site does not make a meaningful contribution to the architectural or historic interest of the area and is not part of the area's immediate setting. Its inclusion within the conservation area would not therefore be justified.

3.2.11 The Council has therefore decided, for good reason, that the site is not part of a designated heritage asset. Moreover, because of the degree of change to the area of the application site it has little or no historic interest and therefore cannot be considered to be an undesignated heritage asset. The NPPF defines a heritage asset as: *'A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage significance.'*

3.3 The contribution of the application site to the settings and significance of heritage assets

3.3.1 Despite the fact that the application site is not a heritage asset, it is necessary for this assessment to consider whether it contributes to the settings, and therefore significance, of other heritage assets. That contribution will, of course, be limited by the site's own lack of heritage significance.

3.3.2 Consequently, the rest of this section will focus on the contribution that the proposal site makes to the setting of the parts of the conservation area, and the settings of the listed buildings within those parts, to which it is related visually or otherwise. Other listed buildings in both the Stone and Hartwell Conservation Areas are too far away to be affected by the development of the site and views are prevented by topography, vegetation and buildings.

The heritage significance of the Stone Conservation Area

3.3.3 Before looking at the contribution of the application site, it is necessary to make some general points on the 'weight' or degree of importance that should be given to the heritage significance of the conservation area.

- 3.3.4 The first, as recognised in the Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA), is the large scale of development that has taken place in Stone, for example since the building of the Turnpike and in the 20th century, and how this has changed the structure and character of the village. Stone is now largely a commuter rather than agricultural settlement with little differentiation between it and Hartwell.
- 3.3.5 The second related point is that the conservation area is surrounded by modern housing including that described above, that close to the west end of the listed church (**Plate 13**), and that at the south end of Church Way next to the listed Great Barn (**Plate 14**).
- 3.3.6 The third point is that the conservation area is very small and contains just seven listed buildings. At its heart is the Grade II* listed St. John the Baptist Church (Norman with 13th- and 14th-century additions, restored in the 19th century) and its Grade II listed late medieval cross. The other designated buildings between Church Way and Bishopstone Road are the Vicarage Farmhouse, the Great Barn, and the Malthouse Annexe and Willow Barn, all of which date to the 18th century and are listed at Grade II.
- 3.3.7 The fourth and final point is that the Council did not consider the area worthy of designation until 2013. Almost 30% of Aylesbury Vale's conservation areas were designated in the 1970s and '80s, with a similar number designated in 1990 and 1991 (when it is clear a major programme of designation took place) and a similar number again in the 2000s. Since 2010 another 12 (including Stone) have been designated.

The relationship of the application site to the conservation area

- 3.3.8 Next it is helpful to consider the relationship between the application site and the conservation area.
- 3.3.9 The conservation area boundary runs along the north-east side of Bishopstone Road, next to part of the application site boundary, and then steps to the north-east to include Manor Farmhouse. Only a little under half of the south-west boundary of the application site adjoins the conservation area and it is separated and clearly

distinguished from the distinct cluster of historic buildings in the part of the conservation area to its south-west by the road.

3.3.10 This sense of separation is emphasised by the dense hedge along the roadside boundary of the application site (the top of which is at or above eye level) and the trees and bushes behind (**Plate 15**). Bishopstone Road similarly divides the land on either side to the north-west of the site, with a brickwork wall and dense vegetation to the north-east and the raised bank and planting of the churchyard to the south-west (**Plates 16 & 17**).

3.3.11 The CAA describes the historic core of Stone (and the conservation area) as '*a small and cohesive area which is defined by Church Way and Bishopstone Road and focused on the church of St. John the Baptist*'. The document notes that the majority of buildings in this historic core have an agricultural character.

3.3.12 The application site is therefore divided from this historic core physically, historically and by character.

The contribution of the application site to the setting of the conservation area: views

3.3.13 Views inside and into and out of conservation areas can contribute to their significance and setting. The CAA identifies a number of 'key views and vistas', including a 'general view' south-east along Bishopstone Road; a 'general view' from Bishopstone Road east across the application site; and 'panoramic views' north-west along this road and west from the same point, both towards the settlement and conservation area, the view north-west taking in the application site within its compass.

3.3.14 As the CAA states, '*Along Bishopstone Road, the banks of the churchyard restrict views to the west and the boundary wall and overhanging vegetation of Manor Farmhouse restrict views to the east. Therefore views in a south-eastern direction are focused along the length of the carriageway towards a group of predominantly modern houses in the middle distance which are separated from the historic core of the village by fields. Visually prominent within this view is the thatched roof and rendered walls of the 18th century 30, Bishopstone Road. Long distance views are terminated by the outline of the Chiltern Hills*'.

- 3.3.15 Bishopstone Road does contain and channel views in both directions, as illustrated by **Plates 16 & 17**, while **Plate 18** shows the view looking south-east out of the conservation area along Bishopstone Road with the Chiltern Hills just visible in the distance. As one progresses further south-east along Bishopstone Road, the view takes in No.30 and wider views of the Chilterns. These long-distance views contribute something generally to the setting of the conservation area in terms of placing the settlement in its wider context as one leaves it, while the view north-west channels the approach into the conservation area; the application site contributes nothing of significance to these views in terms of their contribution to the setting of the conservation area, other than the high hedge against Bishopstone Road adds to the 'channelling' or framing of the views.
- 3.3.16 The CAA refers to more extensive views of the wider landscape being gained from Bishopstone Road, *'close to The Hawthornes and Willow Barn. Here, open fields to the east and south-west allow wider vistas across the surrounding countryside towards the Chiltern Hills'*.
- 3.3.17 This seems to be the only reference in the document to the 'general view' identified eastwards from the junction of Bishopstone Road and Manor Farm Close, which incorporates the application site. The view is, however, a long-distance view, and not a view of the application site itself.
- 3.3.18 In fact, vistas from the application site looking out and away from the settlement core and conservation area are particularly limited by the density of vegetation on three boundaries, and only views across the recreation ground on the south-east side give a longer view. **Plate 3** shows this view from the public footpath across the site with the recreation ground in the middle distance and more extended vistas, including of the Chiltern Hills, prevented by modern developments, hedges and trees.
- 3.3.19 The site therefore makes a very limited contribution to the setting of the conservation area through the views it offers of the wider landscape. What is of most importance about the character and appearance of this small and discrete conservation area, however, is not its setting or the views outwards, but rather the cluster of historic buildings forming the historic core of the settlement and centred around the church, which itself is largely concealed from direct view.

- 3.3.20 As the CAA states, *'The Conservation Area...is small and concentrates on the original area of historic development at the junction of the A418, Eythrope Road and Bishopstone Road...historic buildings survive here in greater concentration than elsewhere within the village...the historic development centred around St. John the Baptist Church, the A418 road junction and the village pond forms a strongly cohesive group of buildings...'* and, as the quotes additionally cited at paragraphs 3.3.25 and 3.3.26 below reinforce, a key aspect of the character of the conservation area is its intimate, discrete and enclosed character.
- 3.3.21 The 'panoramic view' identified north-westwards combines with another from the same vantage point, looking west, the vista as a whole looking towards the settlement in general (the view is not otherwise described in the CAA). The most significant element of this vista is the attractive view west/north-west towards the church and other historic buildings within the conservation area, a view which clearly indicates the presence of the historic settlement in the landscape, as well as emphasising its enclosed nature (**Plate 19**). The application site does not contribute significantly to this view.
- 3.3.22 The element of the vista looking north-west on the other hand is towards modern housing development (outside the conservation area and largely screened by trees), seen across the recreation ground and application site, a view which, although taking in open land, is of much less significance in respect of what is important about the setting of the conservation area (**Plate 20**).

The contribution of the application site to the other aspects of the setting of the conservation area

- 3.3.23 In the next part of this section we consider the contribution that the site makes to the settings of listed buildings in the conservation area, and therefore to the setting of the conservation area itself. (No other buildings near to the site have sufficient historic interest to be considered worthy of 'local note' in the CAA.)
- 3.3.24 In terms of inter-visibility, this assessment is essentially limited to St. John the Baptist Church, Willow Barn and Manor Farmhouse, as views of other listed buildings are prevented by distance, buildings and vegetation.

- 3.3.25 Views of these three buildings from the application site are restricted to glimpses of a small part of each at best, mainly because of screening by vegetation. As the CAA notes: *'Trees and hedges help to create an intimate and enclosed character along Church Way and Bishopstone Road'*.
- 3.3.26 As far as views of the church, and those across the conservation area, are concerned, the raised level of the churchyard is also an important factor. The CAA notes that: *'Views between Church Way and Bishopstone Road are restricted by the churchyard which sits considerably higher than the level of both roads. The churchyard is populated with lots of trees and vegetation which also serves to truncate views. It is a key feature of the Conservation Area that views of the church are restricted within its immediate vicinity'*.
- 3.3.27 **Plates 7 & 21** illustrate the limited views of the church which are possible from the application site because of intervening vegetation, the height of the churchyard and the set-back position of the church. These allow only fleeting sights of small areas of the upper part of the church.
- 3.3.28 Looking from the church, the application site is effectively screened by vegetation, as illustrated by **Plate 22**.
- 3.3.29 The views of Willow Barn from the application site are also very limited, as illustrated by **Plates 7 & 23**. The Barn is set back from Bishopstone Road, and there are hedges, trees and an ancillary building between it and the application site.
- 3.3.30 Willow Barn has clearly been converted to residential use, replacing much of its agricultural character with that of a house. (The Barn, along with vegetation, screens listed buildings to its east.)
- 3.3.31 While Manor Farmhouse is on the same side of Bishopstone Road as the application site, it is also effectively screened from it as illustrated in **Plates 4 & 24**. The site is separated from the plot of Manor Farmhouse by Manor Farm Court and, in particular, a large house and the tall, dense *Leylandii* hedges either side of the access road (**Plates 25 & 26**).

3.3.32 The slight curves in Bishopstone Road mean that Manor Farmhouse stands out from the line of the hedge along the application site and is seen to the side of rather than across the site, though still heavily screened (**Plate 27**). Better views of Manor Farmhouse are possible from the road closer to the building, past the application site, just to its south (**Plate 28**).

Conclusion

3.3.33 To conclude this section, it is clear that the application site has very little heritage significance and is rightly excluded from the conservation area. The site does not have sufficient historic interest to be considered an undesignated heritage asset and therefore, in its own right, be a consideration in planning decisions.

3.3.34 There are a number of points which reduce the 'weight' or degree of significance that should be given to the conservation area which adjoins the site. The conservation area and its 'enclave' of historic buildings between Church Way and Bishopstone Road is also separated physically, historically and by character from the application site.

3.3.35 The application site makes a very small contribution to views of the wider landscape which could contribute to the setting of the conservation area. However, the more significant aspect of the setting of the conservation area is the view west/north-west towards it from Bishopstone Road, to which the application site does not make a significant contribution.

3.3.36 Inter-visibility between the application site and the church, Willow Barn and Manor Farmhouse is extremely limited because of screening by extensive vegetation and buildings, and because of the positions of these listed buildings in relation to the application site. No other listed buildings are directly related to the site.

3.3.37 The site therefore makes only a negligible contribution to the wider setting of the conservation area and no meaningful contribution to the settings of the listed buildings it contains and, therefore, to their heritage significance.

4.0 THE PROPOSALS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE CONSERVATION AREA

Introduction

- 4.1 The purpose of this part of the report is to examine the ways in which the development proposals have been formulated to take account of what is currently significant about the application site and its surroundings in heritage terms and to assess their impact on the setting of the conservation area.
- 4.2 At the start of this section it is important to note that the Council's assessment of the site in its SHLAA document (site reference SHL/STO/011) is: *'Suitable – No significant constraints. Site well related to the rest of the settlement development of the site would need to be at a lower density to be in keeping with the character of the surrounding area.'*
- 4.3 Section 3.0 of this report has established that the application site has no intrinsic heritage interest and that it makes no significant contribution to the significant setting of the conservation area. Views between the application site and the three listed buildings in the conservation area with which it has some inter-visibility (but no other direct or meaningful relationship) are extremely limited.

The proposals and their impact

- 4.4 The proposals are for a residential development of 12 dwellings, 8 of which are detached and 4 of which are semi-detached. The detached houses have free-standing garages while the semi-detached houses are linked by their garages.
- 4.5 The main access is from near to the middle of the south-west boundary, close to the position of the existing field gate. The route from this entrance has houses on either side and then turns to the east before following the south-eastern boundary to give access to most of the remaining dwellings. There are separate vehicle accesses for individual dwellings at the two ends of the Bishopstone Road boundary.

- 4.6 The proposed scheme will retain the existing boundary lines of the site, including those parts which follow the boundaries shown on 19th-century maps, one of the few features of the site's form which pre-dates the late 20th century. It will also, importantly, retain existing trees and hedges around the edge of the application site.
- 4.7 The replacement of an open area by development, albeit one which is well landscaped, will obviously be a marked change. However, this will fit with the historical development and growth of Stone in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and its change of character from agricultural to residential, representing a continuation of (and being in character with) existing late 20th-century development immediately to the north and north-west of the application site, and other such development immediately west and south-west of the conservation area.
- 4.8 This growth and change is reflected in the immediate surroundings of the application site which has dwellings on its south-west, north-west and north sides. The proposed development will fit with the structure and residential character of development in this part of Stone, located between Manor Farm Close and Stone Croft to the north-west and north, and the recreation ground, Round Hill and Chiltern Close and Chiltern Avenue to the south-east.
- 4.9 While the application site is outside the conservation area, its development will be part of the natural growth of the settlement supported by the CAA when it says that: *'The purpose of Conservation Area designation is to acknowledge the special character of an area. Designation is not intended to prevent future development of an area, nor would it be desirable or constructive to do so as it would inhibit the natural growth of the settlement'*.
- 4.10 The assimilation of the proposed scheme into its surroundings will be aided by trees, hedges and other planting on the site, and that on neighbouring sites. The CAA notes that *'Trees help to reinforce the distinct character of this area of the village and shield it from the full visual impact of surrounding areas of development'*. As already noted, the proposed development will be enclosed with hedges and trees.

- 4.11 The public right of way will continue to link Bishopstone Road and Oxford Road through the west and north-east entrances to the application site, continuing to give glimpsed views towards the top of the church and to the north-east.
- 4.12 On the northern side of the right of way a generous area of new public open space is provided, edged to the north-west by trees, and continuing to provide a pleasant environment for the footpath.
- 4.13 The proposed layout has gentle curves, with corner buildings giving different angles. The development has a relatively low density and a scatter of buildings across the site with gaps in between. There is a mix of houses and free-standing garages, including behind the Bishopstone Road boundary, from which they are set back behind the high hedgerow and open space, which will provide screening. The forms of the buildings are traditional and varied.
- 4.14 The informality and other aspects of the character of the development just described echo those found on the other side of Bishopstone Road, with its scatter of dwellings and ancillary buildings, and in Manor Farm Close and Stone Croft Close.
- 4.15 As well as from the public right of way and new open spaces, fleeting and very limited views of the church, Willow Barn and Manor Farmhouse will still be possible from other parts of the application site.
- 4.16 The view west/north-west towards the historic core of the settlement (and conservation area) will remain unaffected in terms of the character and appearance of the conservation area; while the proposed development will be visible on what is currently open land off to the north-west of this view, this development will be clearly distinct from the historic core within the conservation area.

Conclusion

- 4.17 To conclude this section, it is important to repeat the view of the Council in its SHLAA document that, as far as residential development is concerned, there are '*No significant constraints*' and the application site is '*well related to the rest of the*

settlement'. The proposals will fit with the historic development, structure and character of their surroundings and represent the '*natural growth of the settlement*' supported by the CAA.

- 4.18 The remaining historic boundaries of the site will be retained, along with trees and hedges along its edges. The public right of way link between Bishopstone Road and Oxford Road will remain, and a new public open space created next to it.
- 4.19 The informal, spacious and varied character of the development echoes that on the other side of Bishopstone Road and in Manor Farm Court and Stone Croft Close. Fleeting and limited views of the three listed buildings in the conservation area will still be possible from within the built development as well as from the public right of way and open space.
- 4.20 The proposed development will not harm the setting of the Stone Conservation Area or the settings of the three listed buildings it contains which have some inter-visibility with the site, and its sensitive design means that it will fit successfully into its surroundings.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 For the reasons set out in the body of this report and in the accompanying Design & Access Statement, we are firmly of the view that the development proposals are compatible with the character of Stone and the setting of the adjoining Stone Conservation Area.
- 5.2 The approach taken by the proposals has been carefully considered, taking full account of the historical development of Stone, and the character of the application site and its surroundings. The proposals continue the natural growth of the settlement.
- 5.3 The proposals retain features which are of at least some historic interest or otherwise make a positive contribution to the site and its surroundings, and will enhance people's experiences with a new public open space. The layout and design of the buildings reflects the informal character of existing residential developments around the site.
- 5.4 As such, it is our considered opinion that the development proposals comply with the policies and guidance contained in the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance, the planning policies and guidance of Aylesbury Vale District Council including the *Stone Conservation Area Appraisal*, together of course with meeting the statutory tests set by Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

References

Aylesbury Vale District Council, *Stone Conservation Area Appraisal* (2013)

Kelly's Directory of Buckinghamshire (1907)

Page, W. (ed.), *A History of the County of Buckingham*, volume 2 (1908)



Plate 1: View from Bishopstone Road towards the junction with Oxford Road (A418)



Plate 2: The Bishopstone Road entrance to the public right of way across the site



Plate 3: View from the right of way across the site towards the south-east boundary, with the gate to the recreation ground next to the large trees on the left



Plate 4: The north-west boundary seen from the other side of the site



Plate 5: The north boundary seen from the other side of the site



Plate 6: The south-east boundary seen from the other side of the site



Plate 7: The south-west boundary seen from the other side of the site



Plate 8: The Stone Croft Close residential development to the north of the site



Plate 9: The Manor Farm Close residential development to the north-west of the site



Plate 10: View of the recreation ground to the south-east of the site from the Bishopstone Road entrance



Plate 11: View down Bishopstone Road towards the south-east with the boundary of the site to the left and the Round Hill development further on



Plate 12: The Round Hill development to the south-east of the site and the recreation ground



Plate 13: View of modern houses from the churchyard close to the west end of the Church of St. John the Baptist



Plate 14: View of modern houses at the southern end of Church Way with the stone wall of the listed Great Barn to the left



Plate 15: Screening by the hedge and other vegetation along the south-west boundary of the site



Plate 16: View to the south-east along Bishopstone Road with the brick wall of Manor Farmhouse to the left and the raised bank of the churchyard to the right



Plate 17: View along the enclosed Bishopstone Road to the north-west



Plate 18: View to the south-east along Bishopstone Road with the proposal site on the left and the Chiltern Hills just visible in the distance



Plate 19: View west/north-west from Bishopstone Road towards the conservation area; the application site lies behind the hedge to the right



Plate 20: View north-west across the recreation ground towards the application site



Plate 21: A glimpsed view of the upper part of the church from the west corner of the site with the white gable of the Hawthorns to the left



Plate 22: Views of the site from the east end of the church blocked by vegetation



Plate 23: The limited view of the roof of the heavily converted Willow Barn behind its garage/outbuilding as seen from close to the south-west boundary of the site



Plate 24: A glimpse of the roof of Manor Farmhouse, which is otherwise well-screened, from the west corner of the proposal site



Plate 25: The Manor Farm Close house which is between Manor Farmhouse and the north-west boundary of the site



Plate 26: The tall Leylandii hedges of Manor Farm Close between Manor Farmhouse and the north-west boundary of the site



Plate 27: Manor farmhouse is heavily screened when viewed from Bishopstone Road to the south-east; the site is to the right



Plate 28: A more open view of Manor Farmhouse from Bishopstone Road is possible once past the site

Fig. 1:

Jeffrey's map of Stone from the 1760's

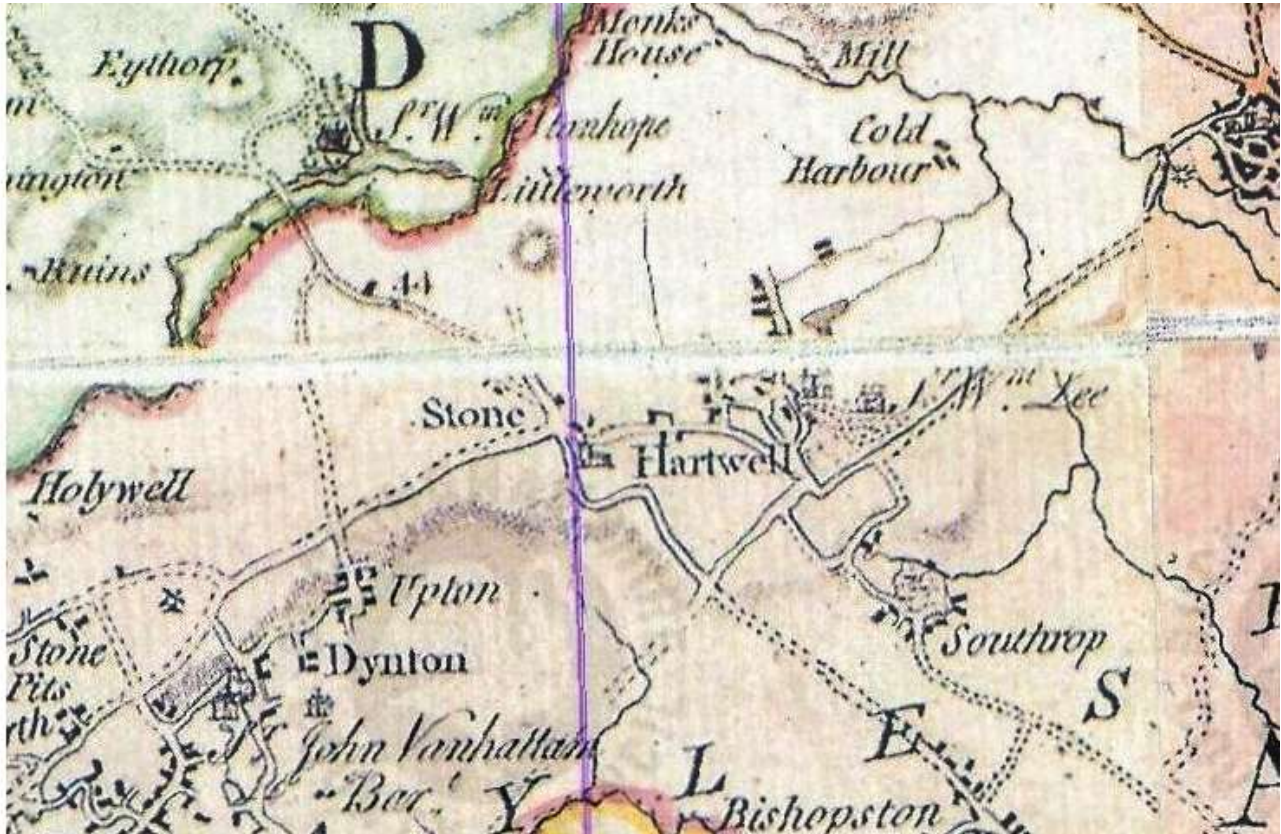


Fig. 2:

1879 OS map (1:2500 scale)

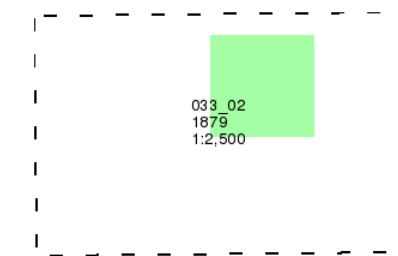
Buckinghamshire

Published 1879

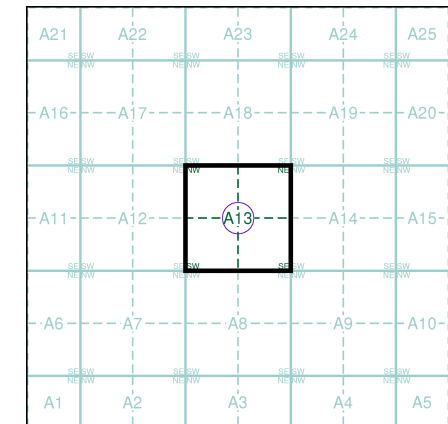
Source map scale - 1:2,500

The historical maps shown were reproduced from maps predominantly held at the scale adopted for England, Wales and Scotland in the 1840's. In 1854 the 1:2,500 scale was adopted for mapping urban areas and by 1896 it covered the whole of what were considered to be the cultivated parts of Great Britain. The published date given below is often some years later than the surveyed date. Before 1938, all OS maps were based on the Cassini Projection, with independent surveys of a single county or group of counties, giving rise to significant inaccuracies in outlying areas.

Map Name(s) and Date(s)



Historical Map - Segment A13



Order Details

Order Number: 60819267_1_1
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 National Grid Reference: 478560, 212250
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 Site Area (Ha): 0.01
 Search Buffer (m): 100

Site Details

Land off Bishopstone Road, Stone, AYLESBURY,
 Buckinghamshire, HP17 8RG

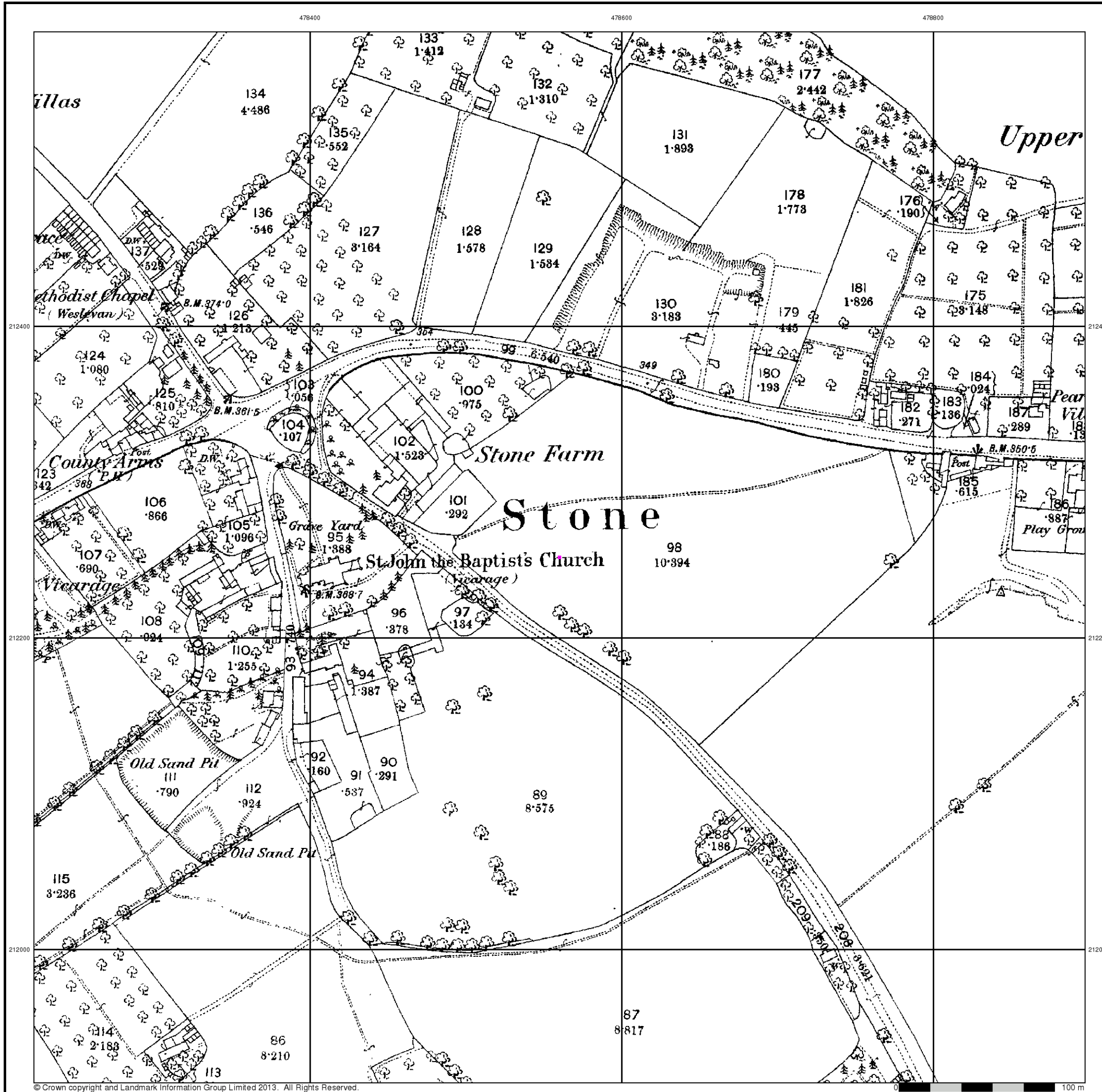


Fig. 3:

1884-1885 OS map (1:10560 scale)

Fig. 4:

1899 OS map (1:2500 scale)

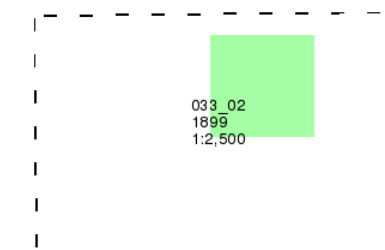
Buckinghamshire

Published 1899

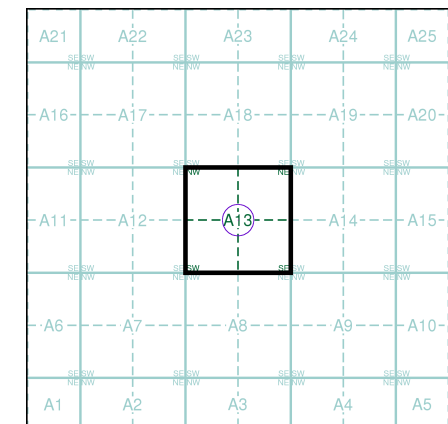
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The historical maps shown were reproduced from maps predominantly held at the scale adopted for England, Wales and Scotland in the 1840's. In 1854 the 1:2,500 scale was adopted for mapping urban areas and by 1896 it covered the whole of what were considered to be the cultivated parts of Great Britain. The published date given below is often some years later than the surveyed date. Before 1938, all OS maps were based on the Cassini Projection, with independent surveys of a single county or group of counties, giving rise to significant inaccuracies in outlying areas.

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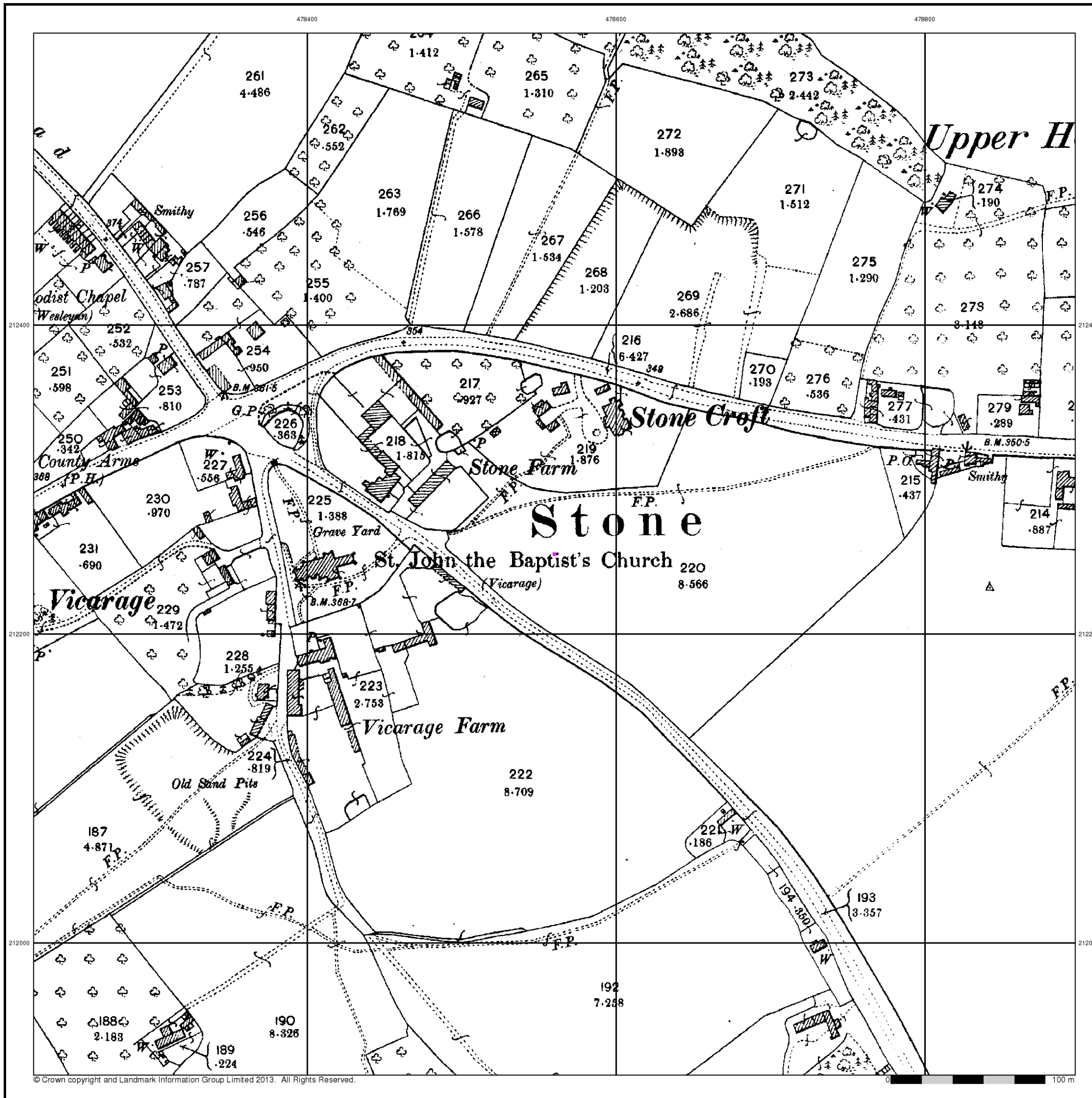


Fig. 5:

1900 OS map (1:10560 scale)

Buckinghamshire

Published 1900

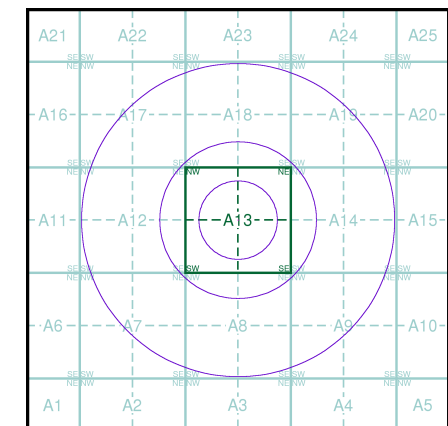
Source map scale - 1:10,560

The historical maps shown were reproduced from maps predominantly held at the scale adopted for England, Wales and Scotland in the 1840's. In 1854 the 1:2,500 scale was adopted for mapping urban areas; these maps were used to update the 1:10,560 maps. The published date given therefore is often some years later than the surveyed date. Before 1938, all OS maps were based on the Cassini Projection, with independent surveys of a single county or group of counties, giving rise to significant inaccuracies in outlying areas. In the late 1940's, a Provisional Edition was produced, which updated the 1:10,560 mapping from a number of sources. The maps appear unfinished - with all military camps and other strategic sites removed. These maps were initially overprinted with the National Grid. In 1970, the first 1:10,000 maps were produced using the Transverse Mercator Projection. The revision process continued until recently, with new editions appearing every 10 years or so for urban areas.

Map Name(s) and Date(s)

028SW 1900 1:10,560	028SE 1900 1:10,560
033NW 1900 1:10,560	033NE 1900 1:10,560

Historical Map - Slice A



Order Details

Order Number: 60819267_1_1
 Customer Ref: 9300
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Site Details

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 Buckinghamshire, HP17 8RG

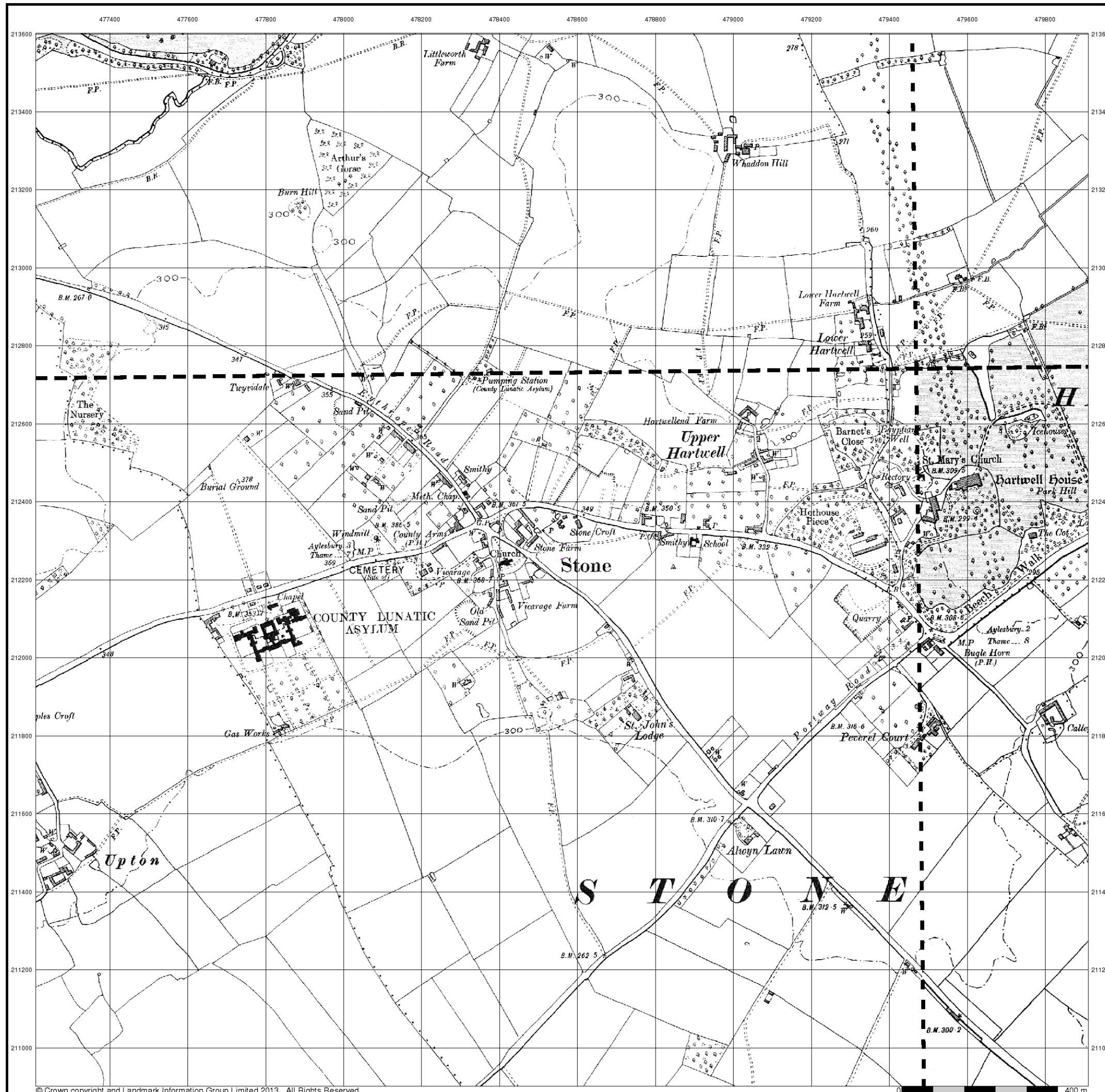


Fig. 6:

1921 OS map (1:2500 scale)

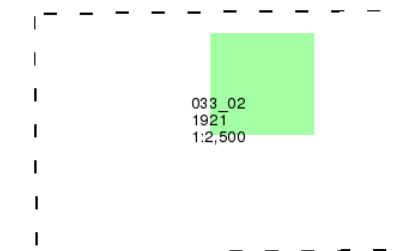
Buckinghamshire

Published 1921

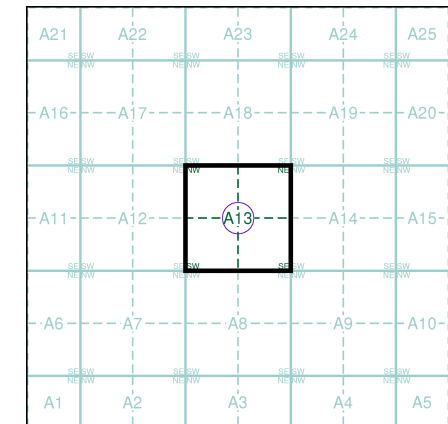
Source map scale - 1:2,500

The historical maps shown were reproduced from maps predominantly held at the scale adopted for England, Wales and Scotland in the 1840's. In 1854 the 1:2,500 scale was adopted for mapping urban areas and by 1896 it covered the whole of what were considered to be the cultivated parts of Great Britain. The published date given below is often some years later than the surveyed date. Before 1938, all OS maps were based on the Cassini Projection, with independent surveys of a single county or group of counties, giving rise to significant inaccuracies in outlying areas.

Map Name(s) and Date(s)



Historical Map - Segment A13



Order Details

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Site Details

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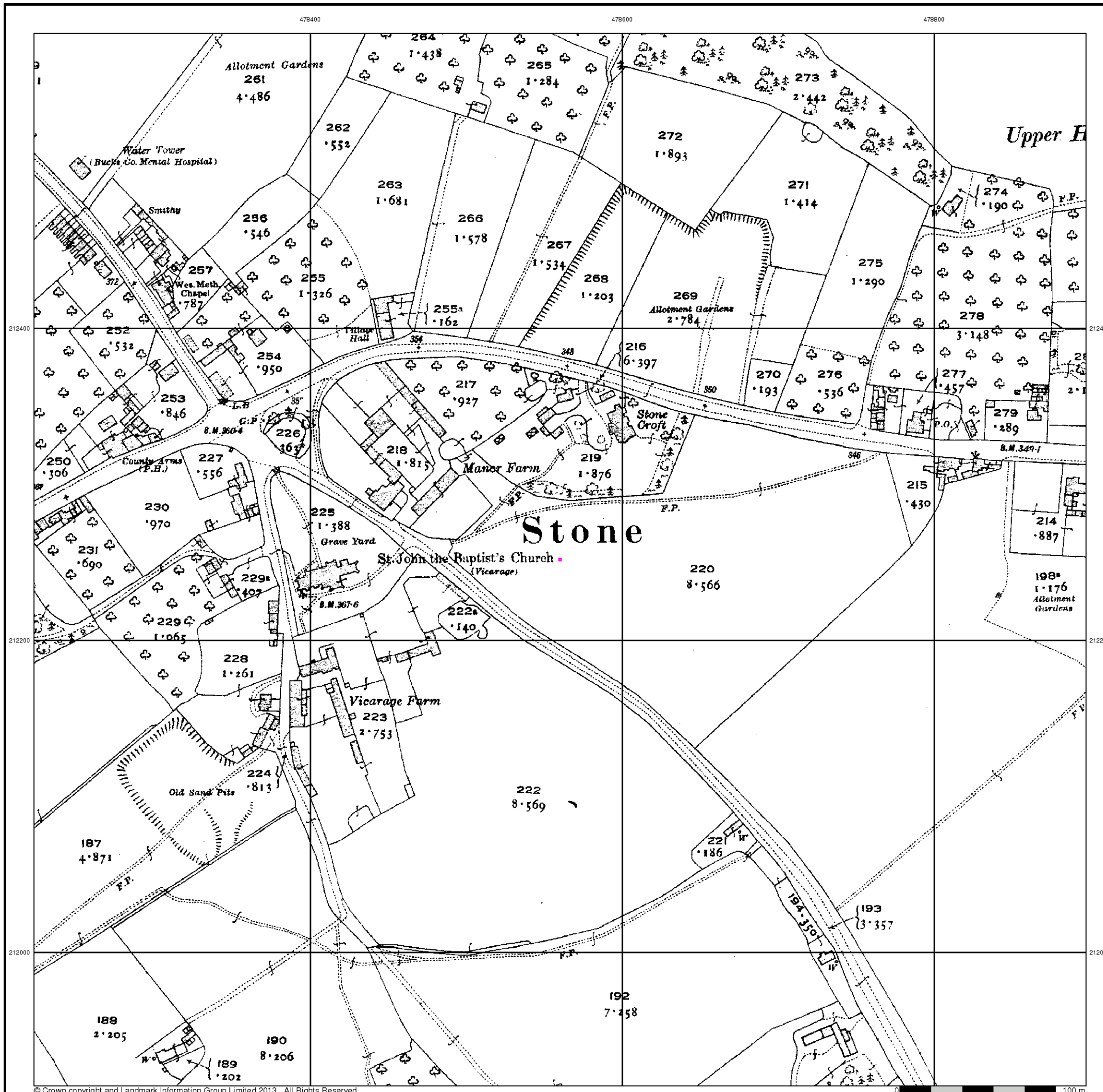


Fig. 7:

1922-1926 OS map (1:10560 scale)

Buckinghamshire

Published 1922 - 1926

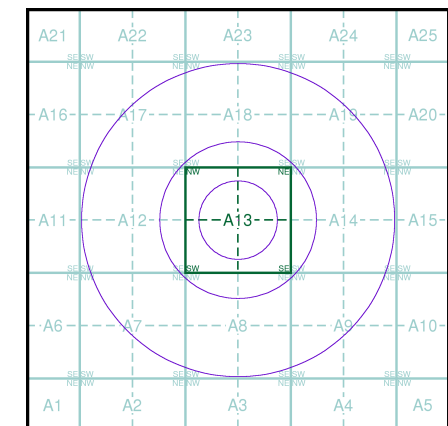
Source map scale - 1:10,560

The historical maps shown were reproduced from maps predominantly held at the scale adopted for England, Wales and Scotland in the 1840's. In 1854 the 1:2,500 scale was adopted for mapping urban areas; these maps were used to update the 1:10,560 maps. The published date given therefore is often some years later than the surveyed date. Before 1938, all OS maps were based on the Cassini Projection, with independent surveys of a single county or group of counties, giving rise to significant inaccuracies in outlying areas. In the late 1940's, a Provisional Edition was produced, which updated the 1:10,560 mapping from a number of sources. The maps appear unfinished - with all military camps and other strategic sites removed. These maps were initially overprinted with the National Grid. In 1970, the first 1:10,000 maps were produced using the Transverse Mercator Projection. The revision process continued until recently, with new editions appearing every 10 years or so for urban areas.

Map Name(s) and Date(s)

028SW 1926 1:10,560	028SE 1926 1:10,560
033NW 1922 1:10,560	033NE 1922 1:10,560

Historical Map - Slice A



Order Details

Order Number: 60819267_1_1
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Site Details

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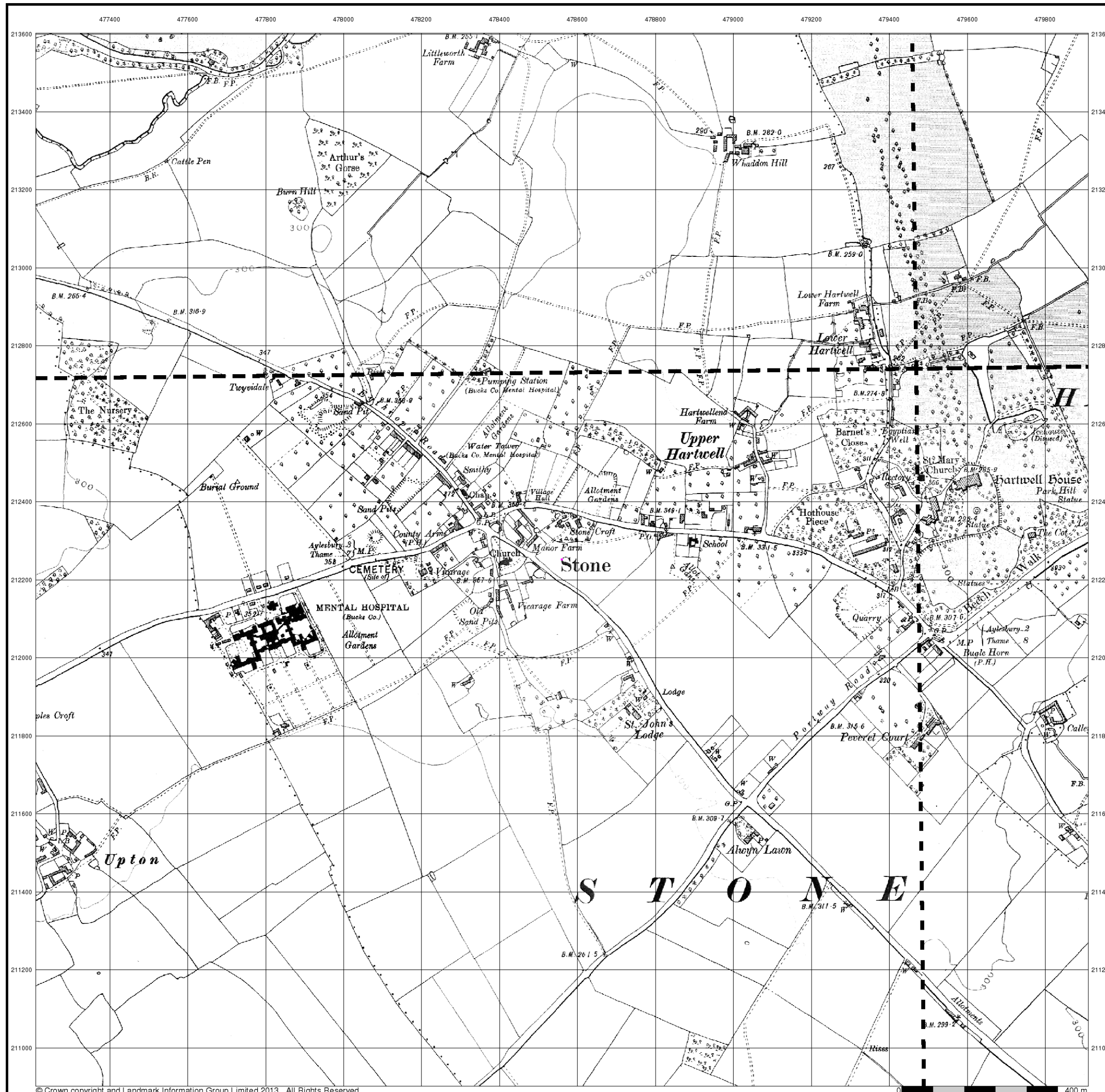


Fig. 8:

1947 aerial photograph

Historical Aerial Photography

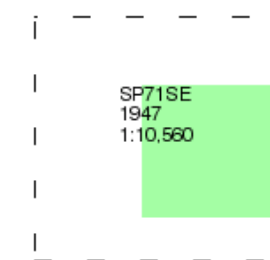
Published 1947

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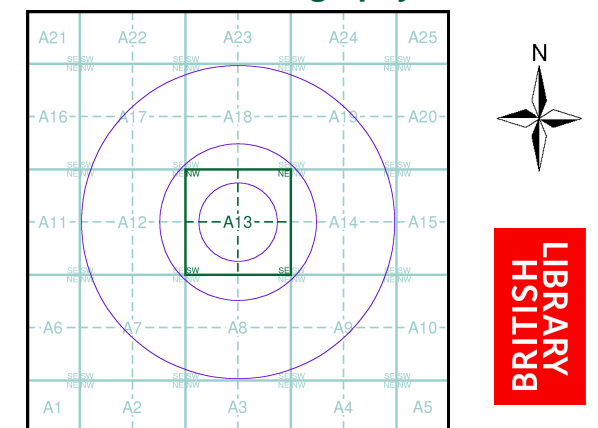
The Historical Aerial Photos were produced by the Ordnance Survey at a scale of 1:1,250 and 1:10,560 from Air Force photography. They were produced between 1944 and 1951 as an interim measure, pending preparation of conventional mapping, due to post war resource shortages. New security measures in the 1950's meant that every photograph was re-checked for potentially unsafe information with security sites replaced by fake fields or clouds. The original editions were withdrawn and only later made available after a period of fifty years although due to the accuracy of the editing, without viewing both revisions it is not easy to spot the edits. Where available Landmark have included both revisions.

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Map Name(s) and Date(s)



Historical Aerial Photography - Slice A



Order Details

Order Number: 60819267_1_1
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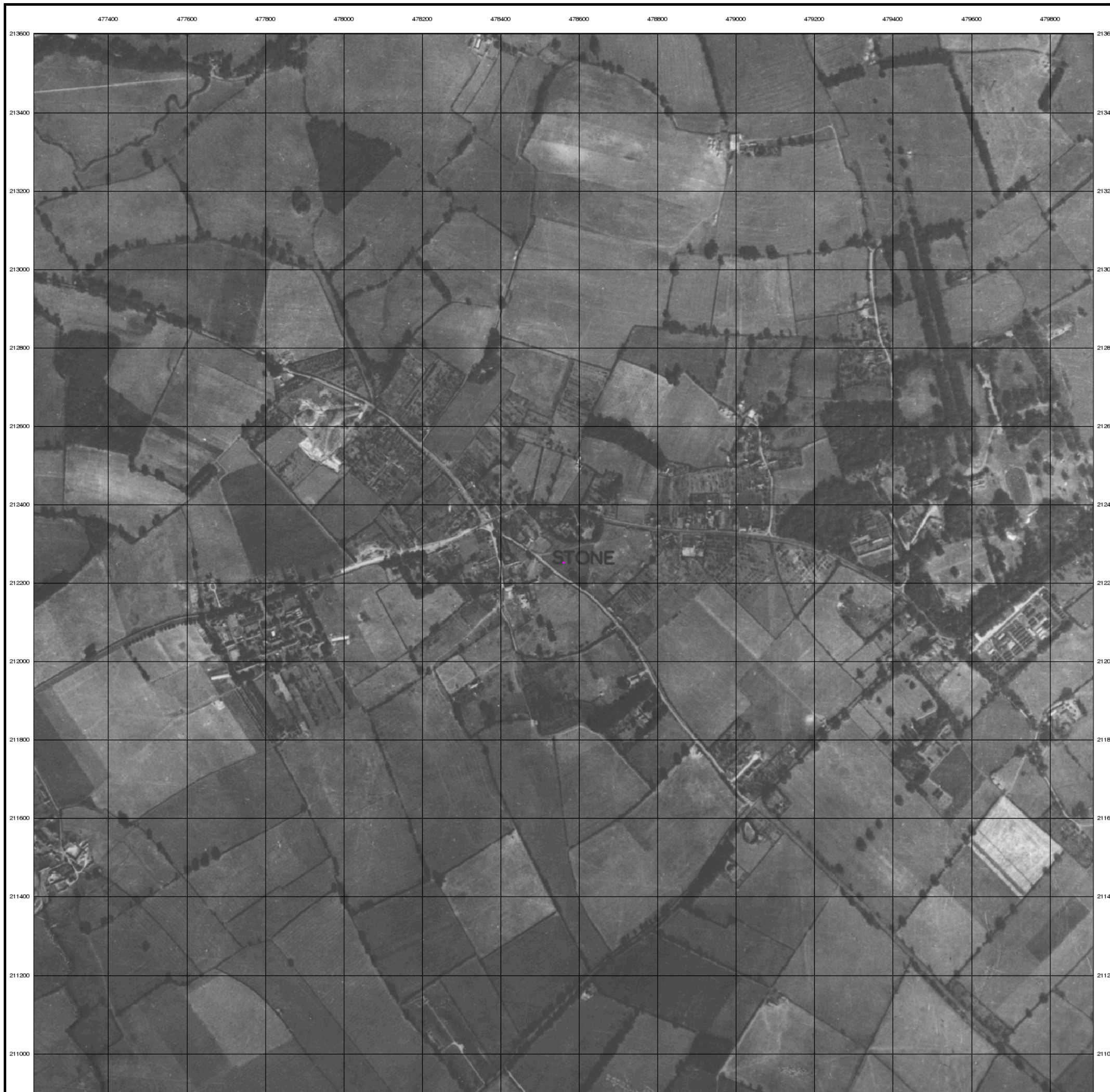


Fig. 9:

1960 OS map (1:10000 scale)

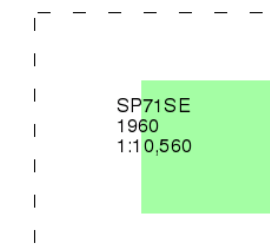
Ordnance Survey Plan

Published 1960

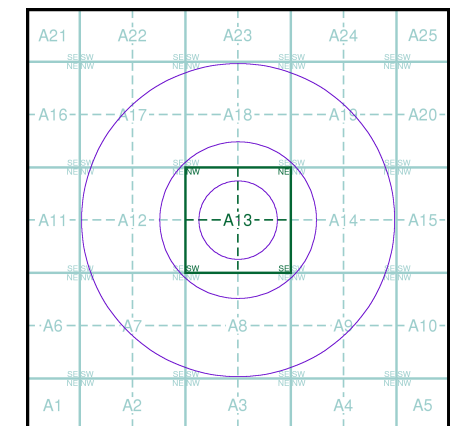
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The historical maps shown were reproduced from maps predominantly held at the scale adopted for England, Wales and Scotland in the 1840's. In 1854 the 1:2,500 scale was adopted for mapping urban areas; these maps were used to update the 1:10,560 maps. The published date given therefore is often some years later than the surveyed date. Before 1938, all OS maps were based on the Cassini Projection, with independent surveys of a single county or group of counties, giving rise to significant inaccuracies in outlying areas. In the late 1940's, a Provisional Edition was produced, which updated the 1:10,560 mapping from a number of sources. The maps appear unfinished - with all military camps and other strategic sites removed. These maps were initially overprinted with the National Grid. In 1970, the first 1:10,000 maps were produced using the Transverse Mercator Projection. The revision process continued until recently, with new editions appearing every 10 years or so for urban areas.

Map Name(s) and Date(s)



Historical Map - Slice A



Order Details

Order Number: 60819267_1_1
 Customer Ref: 9300
 National Grid Reference: 478560, 212250
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Site Details

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 Buckinghamshire, HP17 8RG

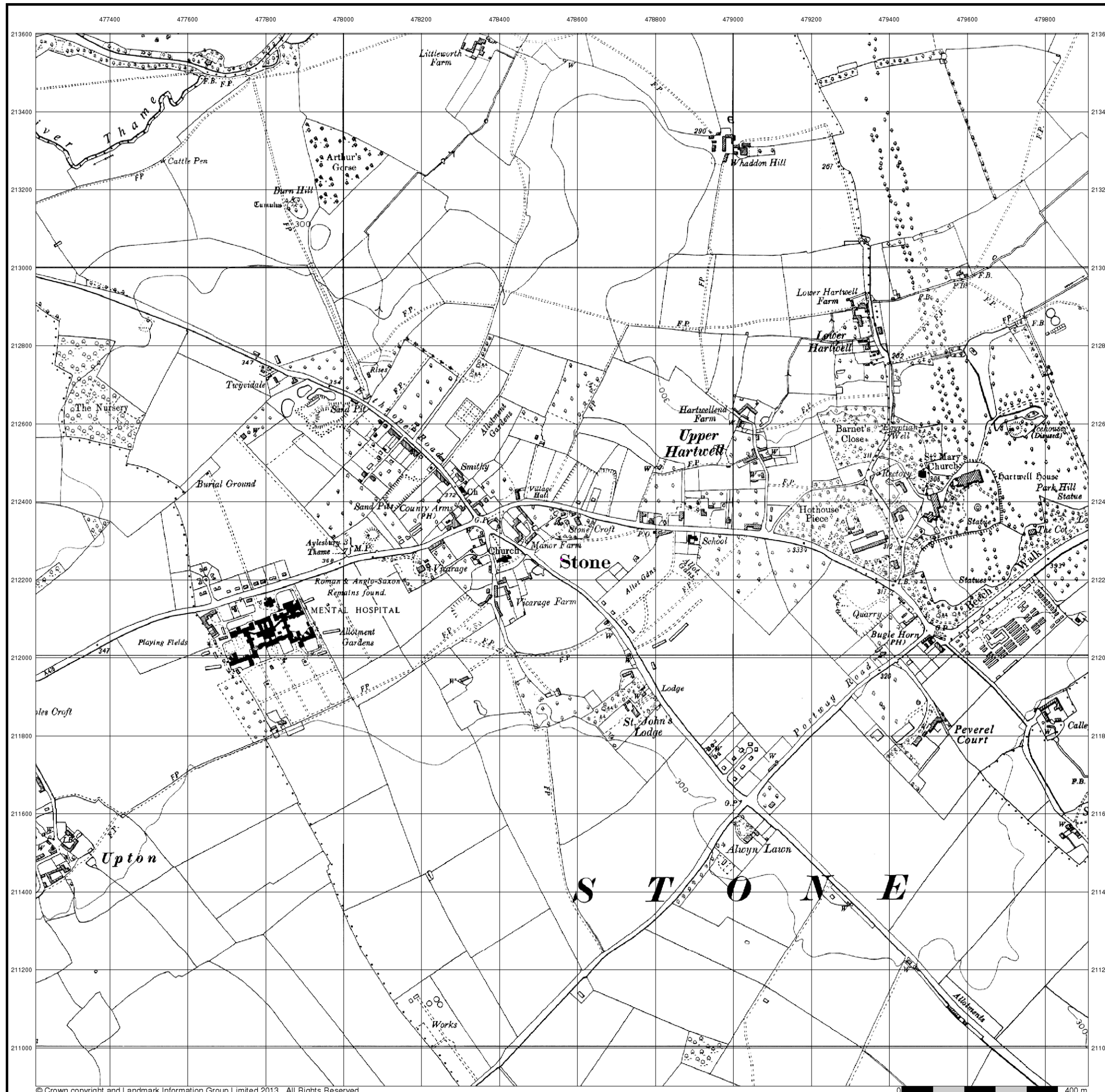


Fig. 10:

1981 OS map (1:2500 scale)

Ordnance Survey Plan

Published 1981

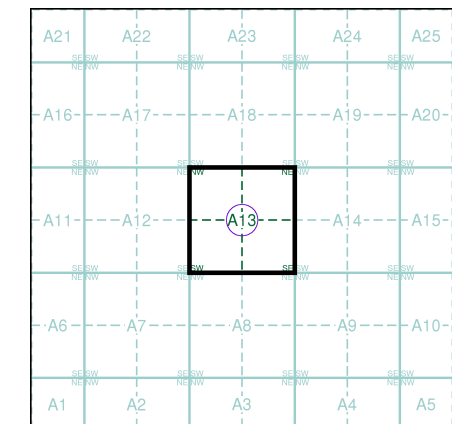
Source map scale - 1:2,500

The historical maps shown were reproduced from maps predominantly held at the scale adopted for England, Wales and Scotland in the 1840's. In 1854 the 1:2,500 scale was adopted for mapping urban areas and by 1896 it covered the whole of what were considered to be the cultivated parts of Great Britain. The published date given below is often some years later than the surveyed date. Before 1938, all OS maps were based on the Cassini Projection, with independent surveys of a single county or group of counties, giving rise to significant inaccuracies in outlying areas.

Map Name(s) and Date(s)

SP7812	1981	1:2,500
SP7811	1981	1:2,500

Historical Map - Segment A13



Order Details

Order Number: 60819267_1_1
 Customer Ref: 9300
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Site Details

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 Buckinghamshire, HP17 8RG

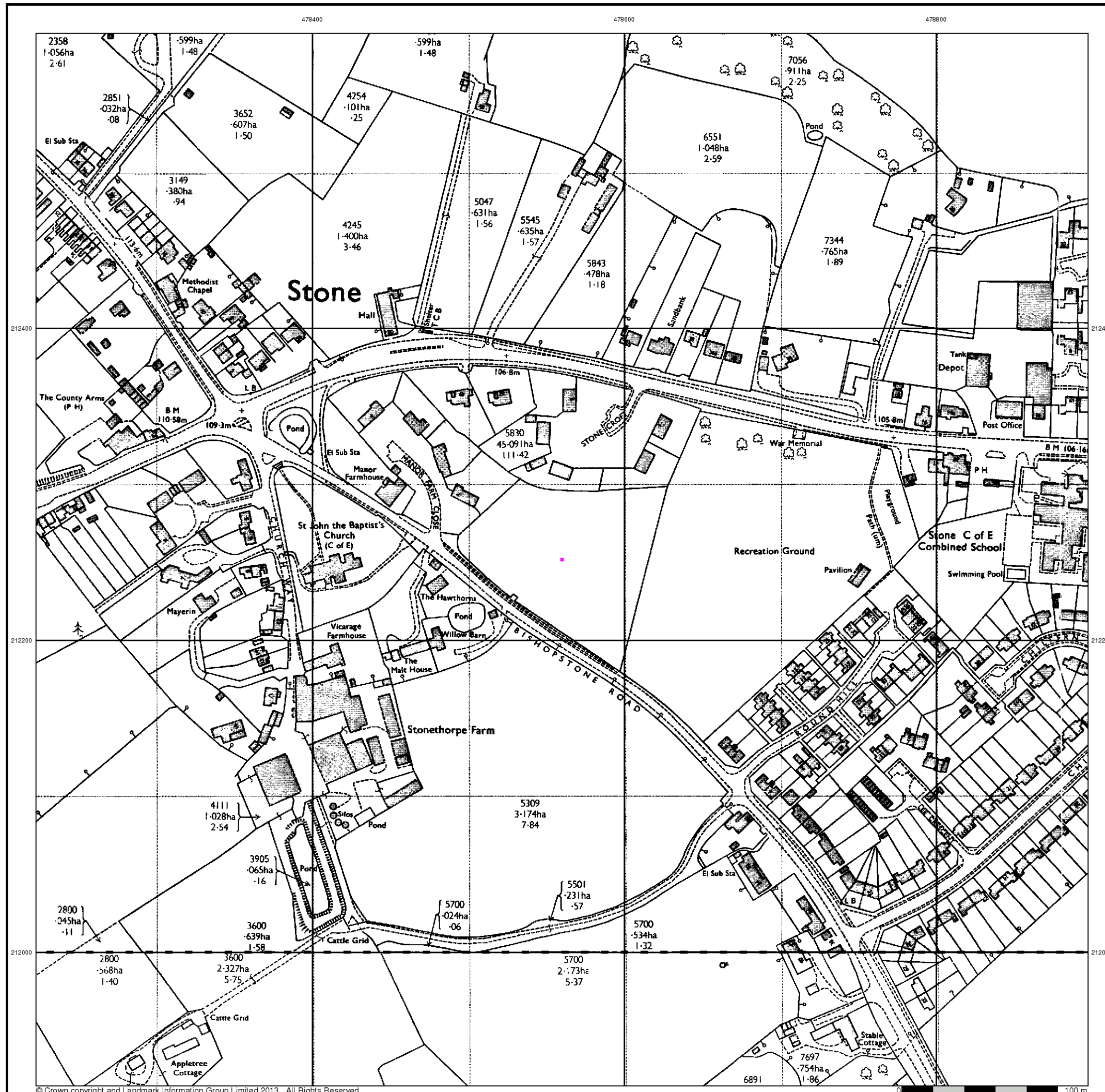
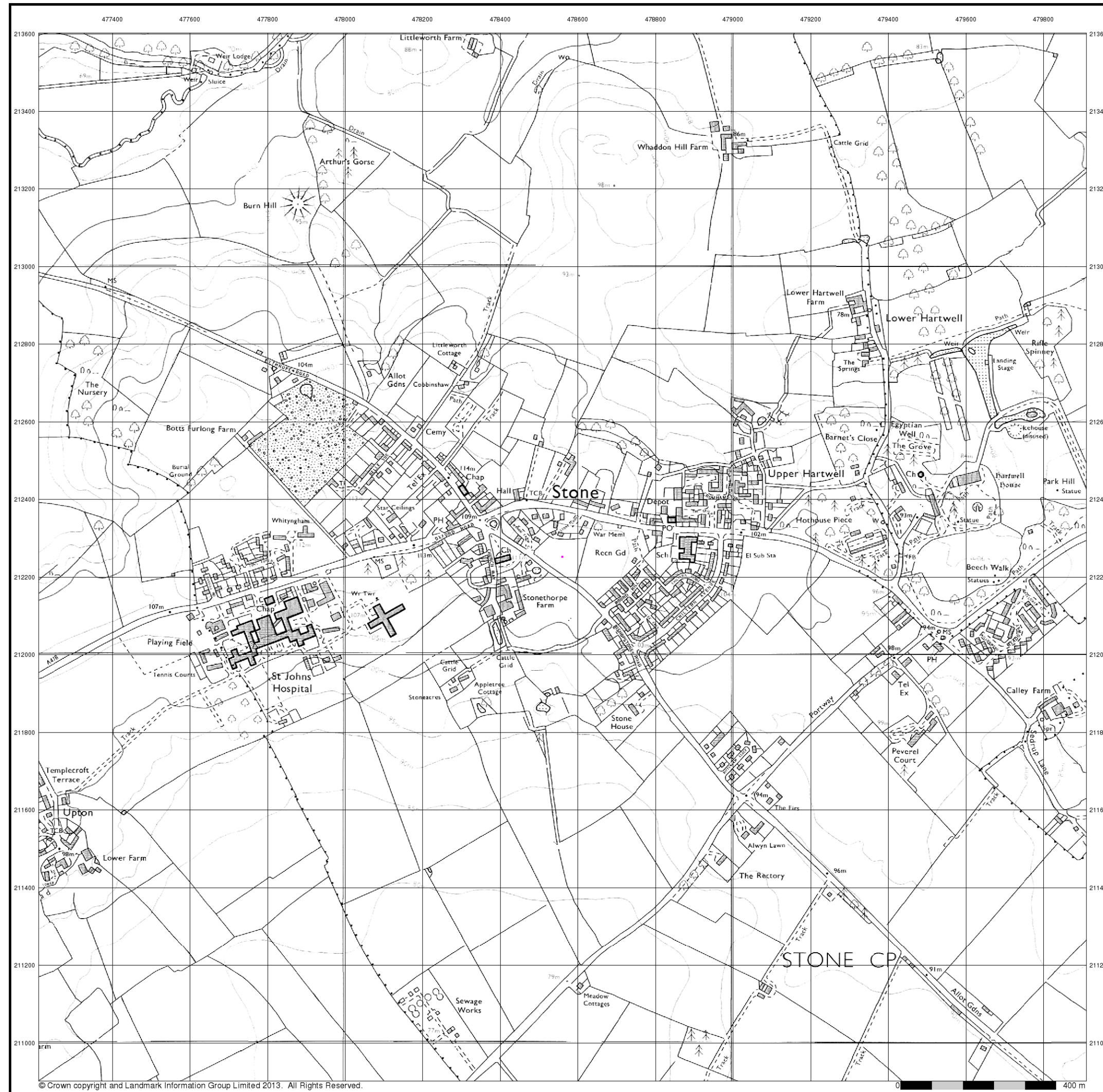


Fig. 11:

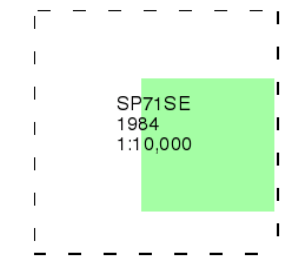
1984 OS map (1:10000 scale)



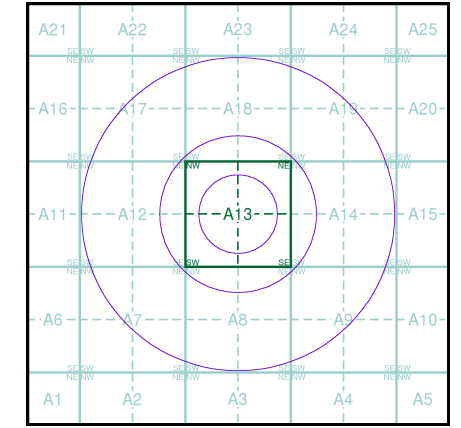
Ordnance Survey Plan
Published 1984
Source map scale - 1:10,000

The historical maps shown were reproduced from maps predominantly held at the scale adopted for England, Wales and Scotland in the 1840's. In 1854 the 1:2,500 scale was adopted for mapping urban areas; these maps were used to update the 1:10,560 maps. The published date given therefore is often some years later than the surveyed date. Before 1938, all OS maps were based on the Cassini Projection, with independent surveys of a single county or group of counties, giving rise to significant inaccuracies in outlying areas. In the late 1940's, a Provisional Edition was produced, which updated the 1:10,560 mapping from a number of sources. The maps appear unfinished - with all military camps and other strategic sites removed. These maps were initially overprinted with the National Grid. In 1970, the first 1:10,000 maps were produced using the Transverse Mercator Projection. The revision process continued until recently, with new editions appearing every 10 years or so for urban areas.

Map Name(s) and Date(s)



Historical Map - Slice A



Order Details

Order Number: 60819267_1_1
 Customer Ref: 9300
 National Grid Reference: 478560, 212250
 Slice: A
 Site Area (Ha): 0.01
 Search Buffer (m): 1000

Site Details

Land off Bishopstone Road, Stone, AYLESBURY,
 Buckinghamshire, HP17 8RG



Tel: 0844 844 9952
 Fax: 0844 844 9951
 Web: www.envirocheck.co.uk

Fig. 12:

1995 OS map (1:2500 scale)

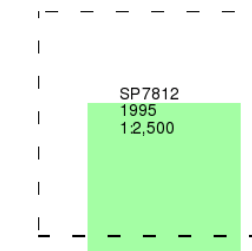
Large-Scale National Grid Data

Published 1995

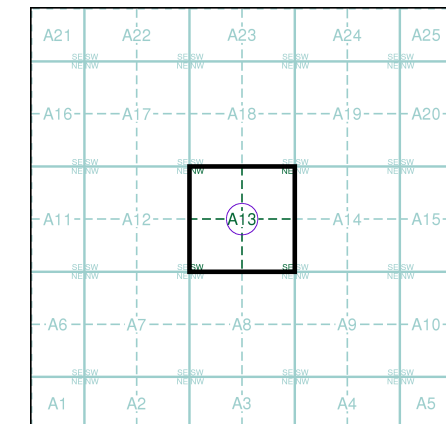
Source map scale - 1:2,500

'Large Scale National Grid Data' superseded SIM cards (Ordnance Survey's 'Survey of Information on Microfilm') in 1992, and continued to be produced until 1999. These maps were the fore-runners of digital mapping and so provide detailed information on houses and roads, but tend to show less topographic features such as vegetation. These maps were produced at both 1:2,500 and 1:1,250 scales.

Map Name(s) and Date(s)



Historical Map - Segment A13



Order Details

Order Number: 60819267_1_1
 Customer Ref: 9300
 National Grid Reference: 478560, 212250
 Slice: A
 Site Area (Ha): 0.01
 Search Buffer (m): 100

Site Details

Land off Bishopstone Road, Stone, AYLESBURY,
 Buckinghamshire, HP17 8RG

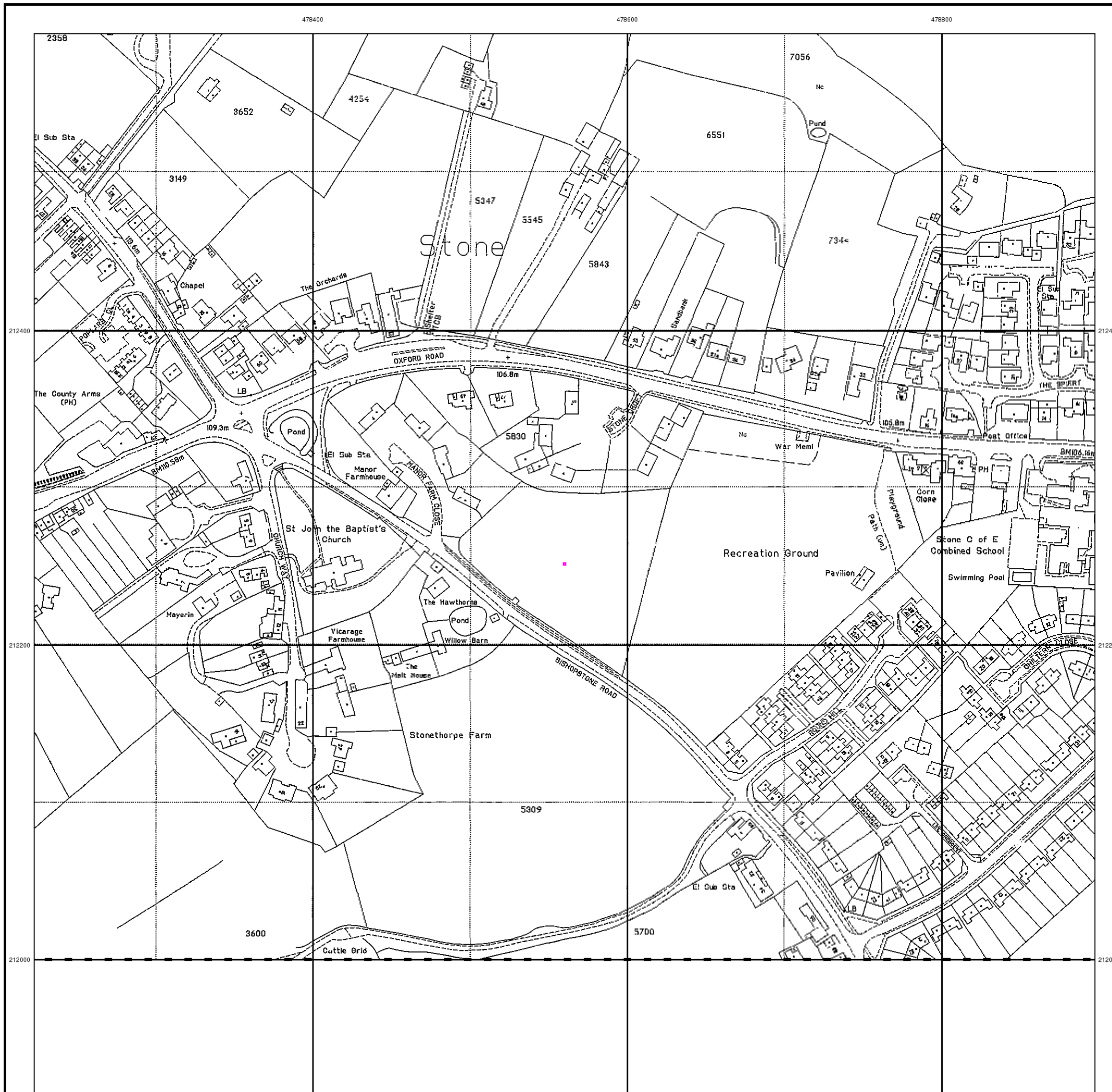


Fig. 13:

2014 OS map (1:10000 scale)

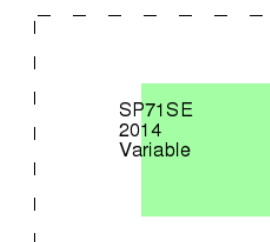
VectorMap Local

Published 2014

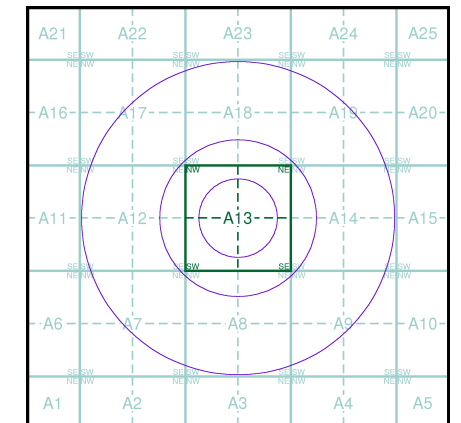
Source map scale - 1:10,000

VectorMap Local (Raster) is Ordnance Survey's highest detailed 'backdrop' mapping product. These maps are produced from OS's VectorMap Local, a simple vector dataset at a nominal scale of 1:10,000, covering the whole of Great Britain, that has been designed for creating graphical mapping. OS VectorMap Local is derived from large-scale information surveyed at 1:1250 scale (covering major towns and cities), 1:2500 scale (smaller towns, villages and developed rural areas), and 1:10 000 scale (mountain, moorland and river estuary areas).

Map Name(s) and Date(s)



Historical Map - Slice A



Order Details

Order Number: 60819267_1_1
 Customer Ref: 9300
 National Grid Reference: 478560, 212250
 Slice: A
 Site Area (Ha): 0.01
 Search Buffer (m): 1000

Site Details

Land off Bishopstone Road, Stone, AYLESBURY,
 Buckinghamshire, HP17 8RG

