

PART I: DESCRIPTION

CHAPTER 1.1: GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1.1 Location

Geographical setting. On Salisbury Plain between the valleys of the rivers Wylde and Till, 7 miles from Amesbury and 13 miles north-west of Salisbury.

Access to Cherry Lodge, farm and office, from B3083 secondary road 1 mile south of Shrewton.

Access, by arrangement, to downland from the old sheep drive (RUPP Shrewton No 10) which leaves the A303 immediately east of Yarnbury Castle.

There are no public footpaths on the NNR.

Parishes. Within 2 parishes. The northern part, including Cherry Lodge Farm, is in Shrewton and the southern part is in Winterbourne Stoke. Parish boundaries form part of the site boundary.

District: Salisbury

County: Wiltshire

Vice-county: South Wiltshire 8

National Grid Reference: SU 055415

Written BG 1985

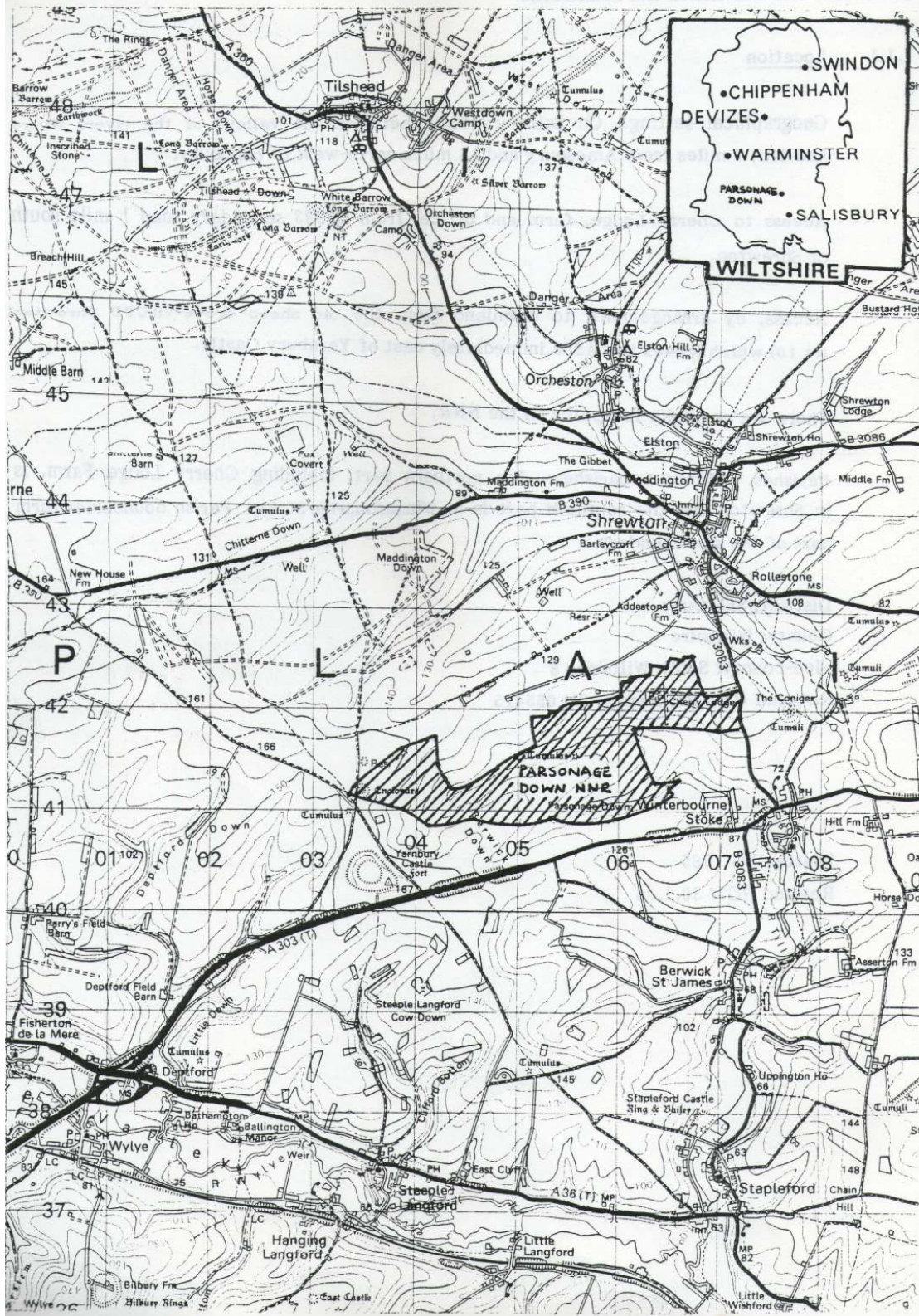
Revised RGW 30.1.86

LOCATION MAP :

Figure. 1.1 | a

PARSONAGE DOWN NN 2.

0.5 Sheet 184 1:50,000.



1.1.2 Summary Description

The 277 ha (683 acre) reserve lies on Upper Chalk at the southern edge of the main area of Salisbury Plain. It lies between 87 and 152 m (284 and 497 ft), and two dry valleys cross it from west to east, their slopes varying from 5° to 25°.

Biologically, it is one of the richest chalk downlands in Britain, containing several rare plant species. It is unusual in that it is on flat or gently sloping ground. A scrub community has developed at the north-west end. There are two planted beech woods and two beech shelterbelts, all past maturity. There are 700 m of species-poor hedge.

The archaeological interest is high with two Scheduled Ancient Monuments and several other archaeological features.

The reserve has a long land use history, spanning several thousand years. Within the reserve the ratio between arable and pasture has fluctuated over the last 2,000 years or more. Most of the reserve has been ploughed at some time since the Bronze Age, the majority however remaining unploughed since mediaeval times. The vegetation is thought to reflect this land use history. Much of the down was commandeered for military use during both world wars.

The reserve is an NCC-owned farm, producing pastoral products (beef and lamb). The 147 ha of unimproved downland and 83 ha of improved ley are grazed throughout the year by cattle and sheep. The current management is the continuation of over sixty years of stable farming practice on a low input-low output system. Rare breeds of cattle are a component of the livestock. The farm has the necessary buildings and equipment for farm operations.

Written BG 1985

Revised RGW Feb 1986

Table 1.1.2a Summary of Important Facts

Biological

Diverse Festuca - Avenula calcicolous grassland on gently sloping land.

5 restricted plant species (16 - 100 km²)

1 RDB 3 and 1 Nb invertebrate species

Archaeological

2 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and many other features.

Land Use History

Land use history is well documented.

Farming System

A 50 year old continuous and well recorded (in Warden's head!) farming regime.

The only NCC-owned operational farm.

Research

Ideal site for biological, archaeological and agricultural research.

Interpretation

Potential to expand interpretation of the low input - low output profitable conservation/farming system.

1.1.3 Tenure

- i) 277 ha (683 acres) - see table 1.1.3a
- ii) SSSI Notified under Section 23 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 in April 1971.
Revised in June 1973, boundary extended.
Re-notified under Section 28 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 on 18 April 1986.
- iii) Acquired on 29 March 1980.
- iv) Declared a National Nature Reserve on 11 July 1980.
- v) Class: owned.
- vi) Ownership: Nature Conservancy Council.
Previous owner: Mr R Wales.
- viii) Rights of access are possessed by the following persons as easements for the maintenance of services.
 - (a) Esso Petroleum Company 11.8.1961
 - (b) Lord Hugh Russell or successors 1.2.1966
 - (c) Wessex Electric Company (Southern Electricity) 17.2.1934
 - (d) Post Office (British Telecom) 14.4.1971

NCC holds a licence to abstract water at two points from Wessex Water Authority. Licence Number: 13/43/23/237. The NCC must keep records of pump running times and make these available for inspection when requested.

The sporting rights are held by NCC. The local Hunt has used the down in the past but due to the stock being frightened, permission has not been granted since the early 1960s. The disturbance was particularly serious during February and March, leading to miscarried lambs and calves.

The far western tip of the reserve is crossed by a 'road used as a public

path', RUPP Shrewton No 10, as defined in Section 27(b) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The status of these are being reviewed by Wiltshire County Council under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is proposed to regrade Shrewton No 10 to a byway open to all traffic. When this happens, a notice will be served on NCC and NCC will have the option to object.

viii) Reservations:

(a) 188.6 ha has been renotified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. A list of operations likely to damage the features of interest and which require prior consultation with NCC together with a letter of consent dated 13.10.86, can be found in section 2.1.2.2.

(b) Two ancient monuments are scheduled under Section 1 of the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979*.

ix) There are no common rights over the reserve.

x) There are no byelaws over the reserve.

xi) Disagreements:

There is currently a land dispute over compartment 1a, ownership of which is claimed by both MoD and NCC.

Location of Legal Documents:

The following original documents are held at NCC England Headquarters, Northminster House, Peterborough, with copies held at South Region office, Foxhold House, Newbury, Berks.

A. The following conveyance documents:-

R C Dawson to R Wales, 1927

R Wales executors to NCC, 1980

NCC to Rawlins, Grant, Willis and Armfelt, 1980/81.

B. The following Deeds of Grant:-

R Wales and ESSO Petroleum Co Ltd

R Wales and the Post Office

R Wales and Lord Hugh Russell.

C. Consent to erect electric lines (plus Wayleave Payment):-

R Wales and Wessex Electricity Company.

The original Licence to Abstract Water is held at Foxhold House.

A copy of R Wales' Will is also held at Foxhold House.

Table 1.1.3a

Land Schedule of Parsonage Down NNR

Total area 276.6 ha 683.478 ac
 SSSI 188.6 ha 466.03 ac
 Back-up land 88.0 ha 217.448 ac

Compt No	Name	Land Use	Acreage	Hectareage
1	Castle Barn	Old down	116.852	47.289
1a	Castle Scrub	Scrub/long grass	1.776	0.719
2	Castle Down	Old Down	209.492	84.780
3	Parsonage Down	Old down	37.286) 68.29
		New down	31.004	
4	100 acres	New down	64.26	26.006
5	No Mans Land	New ley	57.611	23.315
6	McIsomcs	New ley	24.924	10.087
7	Lodge Field	Old pasture	17.964	7.270
8	Dig/Horse Paddock	Old pasture	6.654	2.693
9	Little Paddock	Old pasture	2.0	0.809
10)	High Down	New ley	58.839	23.811
11)				
12	Access		0.006	0.002
14	Back of the Trees	New ley	37.926	15.342
15	Seven Acres	New ley	6.800	2.752
16	The Beeches	Plantation	1.890	0.765
17		Plantation	0.39	0.158
	Cherry Lodge and Trees	Farm buildings and plantation	1.663	0.673
	Drive Trees		1.94	0.785

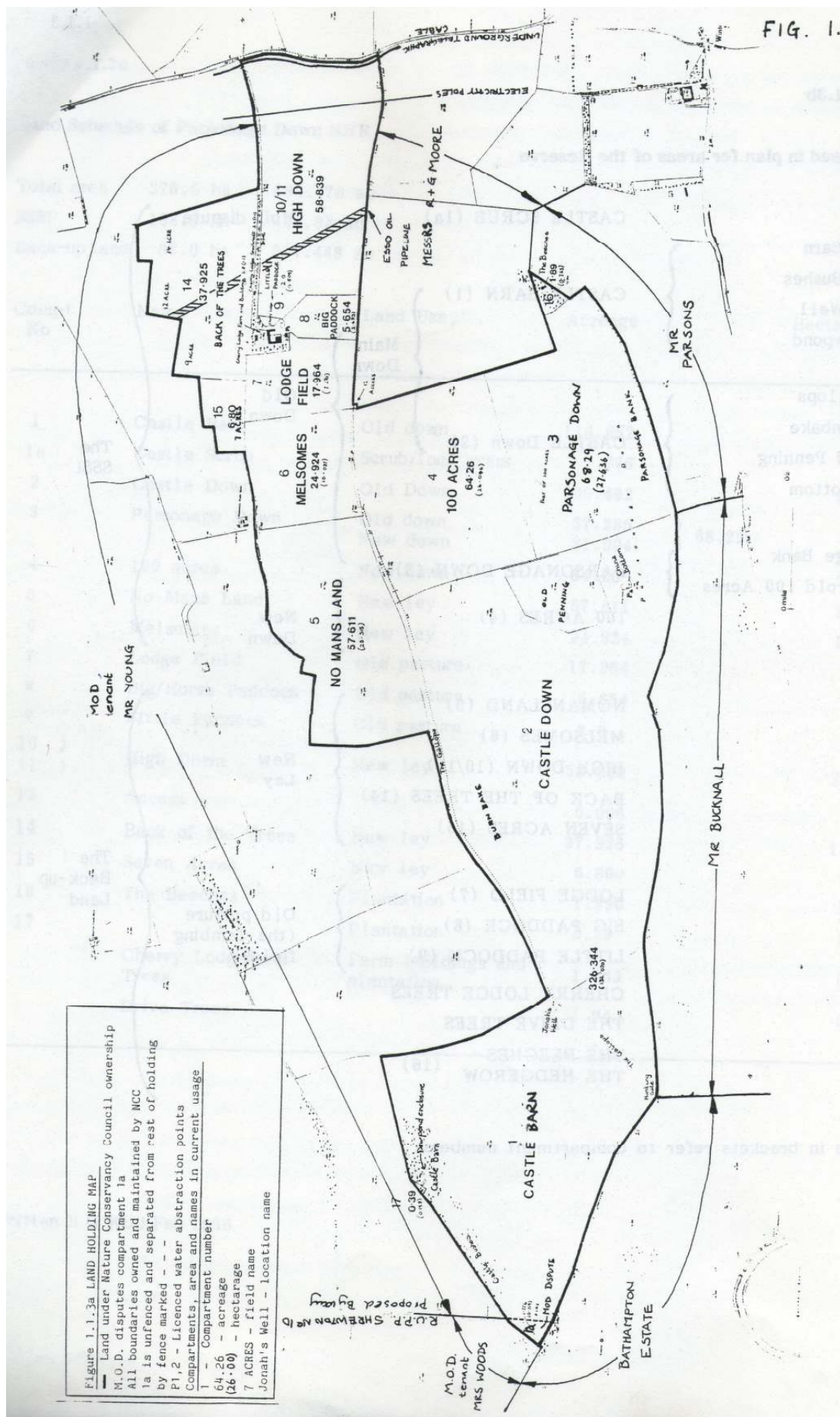
Written R G Wild Feb 1986

Table 1.1.3b

Names used in plan for areas of the Reserve

	CASTLE SCRUB (1a)	MoD dispute	The SSSI
Castle Barn	CASTLE BARN (1)	Main Down	
Castle Bushes			
Jonahs Well			
The Dewpond			
The Gallops	CASTLE Down (2)	Old Down	
The Burnbake			
The Old Penning			
China Bottom			
Parsonage Bank	PARSONAGE DOWN (3)		
Part of old 100 Acres			
	100 ACRES (4)	New Down	
	NOMANSLAND (5)	New Ley	
	MELSOMES (6)		
	HIGH DOWN (10/11)		
	BACK OF THE TREES (14)		
	SEVEN ACRES (15)		
	LODGE FIELD (7)	Old pasture (the lambing fields)	
	BIG PADDOCK (8)		
	LITTLE PADDOCK (9)		
	CHERRY LODGE TREES		
	THE DRIVE TREES		
	THE BEECHES		
	THE HEDGEROW (16)		

Numbers in brackets refer to compartment numbers



Appendix 1.1.3

List of Interested Persons

Legal interests

Wessex Water Authority
Southern Electricity
Mr D Morgan Evans, Inspector of Ancient Monuments
Esso Petroleum Co Ltd
Lord Hugh Russell or Successor

Surrounding land owners

Mr Bucknell, Manor Farm, Berwick St James (co-operates on fencing).
Mr Parsons, Bonhamend House, Wishford. Tel: Salisbury 790400.
Messrs Roger and Geoff Moore, Manor Farm, Stapleford (land formerly owned by Mr Grant. Manor Farm, Orcheston, who purchased from NCC).
Mr A Maitland Robinson, Bathampton, Wyley, Warminster, Wilts. (Owner of Yarnbury Castle SSSI.)
MoD, PSA, Durrington
MoD Tenant, Mrs Woods, Maddington Manor, Shrewton
MoD Tenant, Mr John Young, The Glen, Salisbury Rd, Shrewton.

Archaeological and Historical

C H Bowen, RCHM
*Ms H Care-Penny, Wiltshire Library and Museum Service
N D Elliott

NCC Staff, Past and Present

*D N Elliott and family
*R Elliott
*R Withers
D Warne

*S Lane
E Roberts
Dr R Hornby
T Williams
D A Wells
*D A Rogers
*R G Wild
*Dr L Jones Walters

Voluntary Wardens

*Miss B Gillam
*J Rayner
*T Williams

Institute of terrestrial Ecology (ITE)

T C E Wells
*M Morris
*E Rispin

Other Scientists

Professor Dennis Bellamy, Cardiff University
*Dr J Evans, Cardiff University
Dr F Rose

Agricultural

*R Sawbridge

*current active involvement

RW 1987

1.1.4 Map/Chart Coverage

- i) OS Sheet 184, 1:50,000
- ii) OS Sheet SU 04, 2½"
- iii) Geological Survey (Drift), Sheet 298, 1 inch to 1 mile
- iv) Soil Survey of England and Wales, Soils of South West England (1983) published by the Ordnance Survey.

BG 1985

1.1.5 Photographic Coverage

A. Held at Regional Office (Newbury)

1. Date: 25 August 1971
Fairey Surveys Ltd, Wiltshire County Surveys
Code of flight: 212 124, 085
Scale: 1:12,000
Vertical, monochrome, $8\frac{1}{2}" \times 8\frac{1}{2}"$
No of photographs: 1

2. Date: August 1969
Air Survey Company, NCC
Code of flight: 313-323
Scale:
Oblique, 2 x 2
No of photographs: 3

3. Date: 9 September 1971
Fairey Surveys Ltd
Code of flight: 221178
Scale:
Vertical, monochrome, $8\frac{1}{2}" \times 8\frac{1}{2}"$
No of photographs: 1

4. Many slides

B. Held at NCC Office, Devizes

Date: 22 August 1968, late afternoon
RAF
Code of flight: VO58 RAF 8970, Nos 0015, 0016, 0017
6" 5500-12900 ft. Direction of runs: east to west
Vertical, monochrome
No of photographs: 3
Quality: good

C. Other sources

BBC, ITV, HTV (South), National Press

