

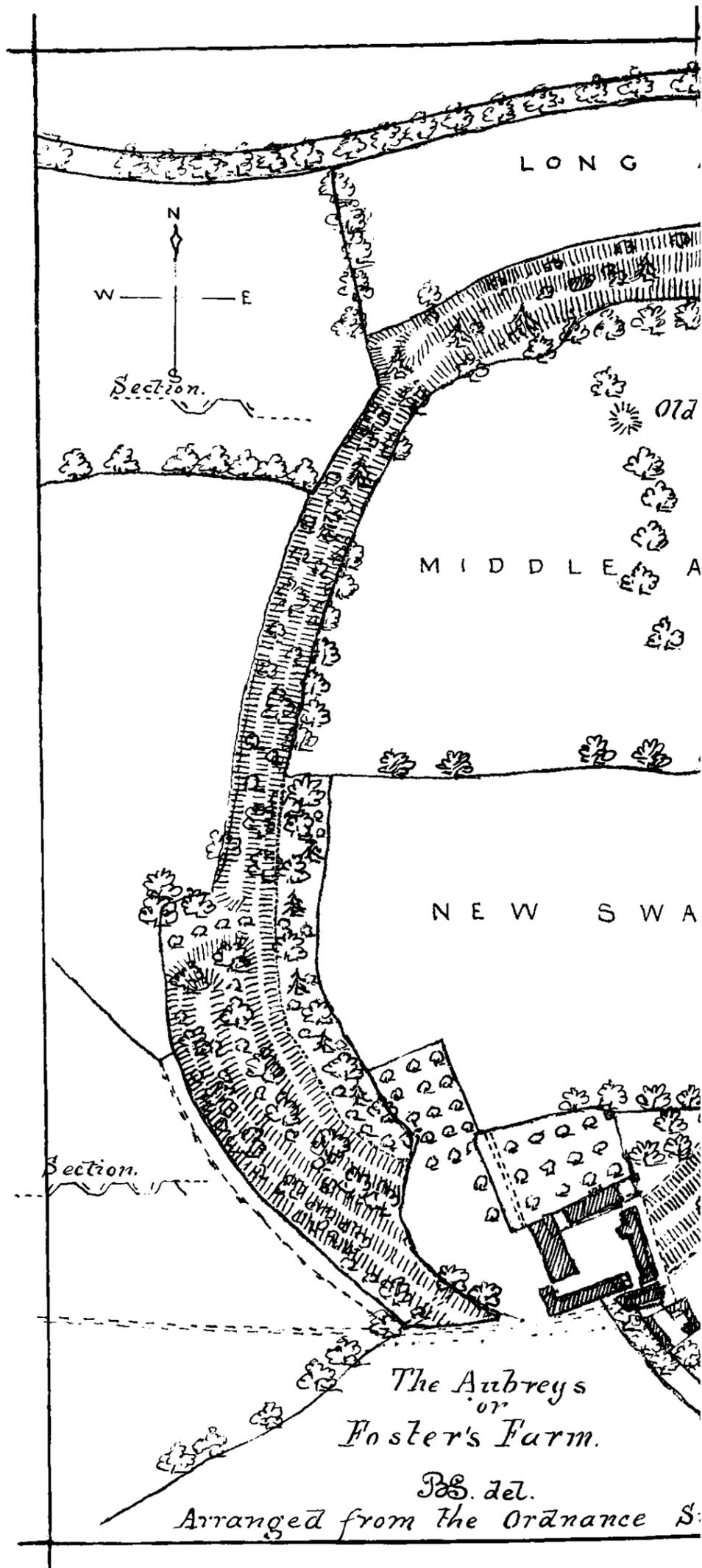
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**Redbourn Camp.**

BY THE REV. J. GRIFFITH, LL.D.

Persons who have visited the dungeons of the Castle, built by one of our early kings in Normandy at Gisors, will remember how great interest is awakened by the sculpturing of the walls of the circular prison there, as strange and mysterious as that which we saw in the circular cave on our visit to Royston in the year 1884. The prisoner at Gisors left no trace there of his history but the title "*un gentilhomme oublié.*" We must apply the same epithet "*forgotten*" to the camp in which we stand. It is not mentioned in the large histories of Herts, and I can find no reference to it in any record. It has been "*forgotten,*" though one might have expected, that its old-world appearance, now clothed in sylvan beauty, would have attracted some notice. Its area of twenty acres is nearly oval in form, about 440 yards from North to





LONG



Section.

Old

MIDDLE A

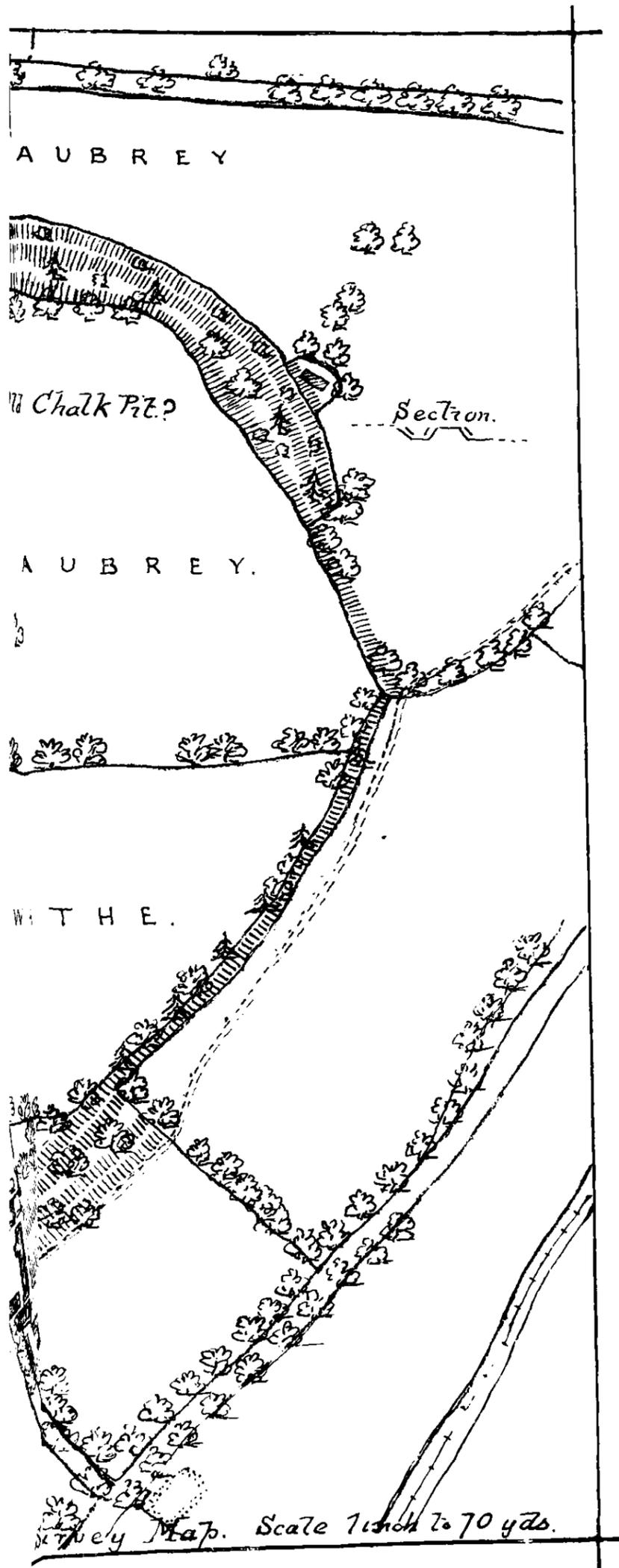
NEW SWA

Section.

The Aubreys  
or  
Foster's Farm.

J.S. del.

Arranged from the Ordnance S.





South, 415 yards from East to West. Its fosse is still from nine to thirteen feet deep, and from forty-five to sixty feet wide from top to top, where the mounds are double, that is towards the North and South, where ancient British trackways ran near the works. There is a slight general descent in the ground towards the North, and at the lowest level the ditch is both widened out and deepened, apparently to receive and preserve a supply of water. The continuity of this double work is curiously broken on the Western side, where there appears to have been an entrance easy for friends, but rendered difficult against enemies by a roundish mound on the Southern side of the entrance, standing in the middle of the fosse, and by the increased height of the single rampart which runs on thence, not in the line of either of the mounds, but on the line of the ditch between them, as is shown in the annexed plan. A large piece of the double work at the South has been levelled to form a suitable site for the Old Farm House and Farm Yard. Cultivation too has nearly levelled much of the work on the North-East and East portions of the circumvallation, but the appearances presented there are well worth inspection by the student of early earthworks, as indications still left by the plough can, with the aid of the perfect portion on the Western side, teach him how to restore in his imagination, other works elsewhere, more completely destroyed. "The Aubreys" the local name of the spot is in the plural because the Northern portion is called "Middle Aubrey," and the meadow outside immediately to the North is called "Long Aubrey"; the Southern field within is now called "New Swathe," pointing to a change in its cultivation in recent times. This name will bring back to your recollection the "Arbury" and "Danes' Field" in Sandridge Parish, which I had the honour to bring before your notice, when you visited the "Devil's Dyke" there in the year 1882, and possibly also the name "Arbury Banks" near Ashwell, on which, owing to the great heat, you did not do me the honour of listening to a paper, which I had rather carefully prepared, in 1885. This word, "Arbury" will repay a careful search among field names in Parish maps as well as in published accounts of various "Arbury Banks," &c., in many parts of England. It is chiefly

by a study of comparative Archæology, that we can hope to recover, what is recoverable, of the history of early, and even of pre-historic monuments. You will ask then, what was this "stronghold," this "Arbury" as our Saxon forefathers named it? It pretty certainly was not a Roman camp, though some later Roman camps approached a rounder form. You must not picture Suetonius Paulinus, as he hastened from the West to meet and conquer Boadicea after her fearful vengeance on Verulam, throwing up these embankments to secure his comparatively small force against sudden attack from her hosts: his men would have made their vallum as nearly a square or rectangle as this ground would allow. Neither can I quite encourage the idea that the terrified Saxons threw up these works on hearing that the Danes were marching Westward, and were destroying all before them, when King Alfred's weir at Ware had rendered the Danish ships useless on the River Lea. Still less must we think, that they are as modern as the time when William the Conqueror, in his rage at the opposition of our last Saxon Abbot, Frederic, took Redbourn for a time, from the Abbey of St. Albans, or when in the reign of Henry III, the Earl of Winchester, and Patrick, Marshall of France, defaced Redbourn Church on their march to Mount Sorrel; still less that it was the work of those ruthless "*Boreales Homines*" whom Queen Margaret brought from North of the Trent, through Dunstable and Redbourn to the second battle of St. Albans, or of the men and officers collected near St. Albans, in the course of the Great Rebellion. It seems rather to be the work of early inhabitants before the Christian era, who protected themselves against neighbouring tribes, by forming Camps of Refuge, into which they could collect their wives, children and cattle, in case of a threatened attack, and which were sufficiently large to maintain them for some considerable time. The Earthworks here, though inferior in strength, are so similar to the Celtic Camps described by Mr. Warne, in his book on Celtic, Roman, Saxon and Danish Camps in Dorsetshire, and to the mounds, on which the Romans reared the walls of Verulam, that I venture to suggest an extremely early date for the construction of this "Arbury," though they bear no comparison in extent with those of Verulam and of Ravensbourne near Hexton