

## EHER 9236 and 9276

### LOCATION: BURES ST MARY, SUFFOLK

Two fields to the east of Bures St Mary, immediately to northwest of Smallbridge Hall, centred on NGR TL923332 and TL936334

### Background

These two fields lie to the East of the Bures cursus (9194) and Bures Sewage Works and to the northwest of Smallbridge Hall. They are bordered to the north by the road between Bures and Nayland (Clicket Hill) and to the south by the River Stour. Both fields slope gently down towards the river and are currently under arable cultivation.

9236 to the east of the 9194 contains a single ditch oriented north/south and a circular cropmark to the east almost enclosed by cropmarks in a square formation.

9276 to the north east contains a number of intersecting linear cropmarks.

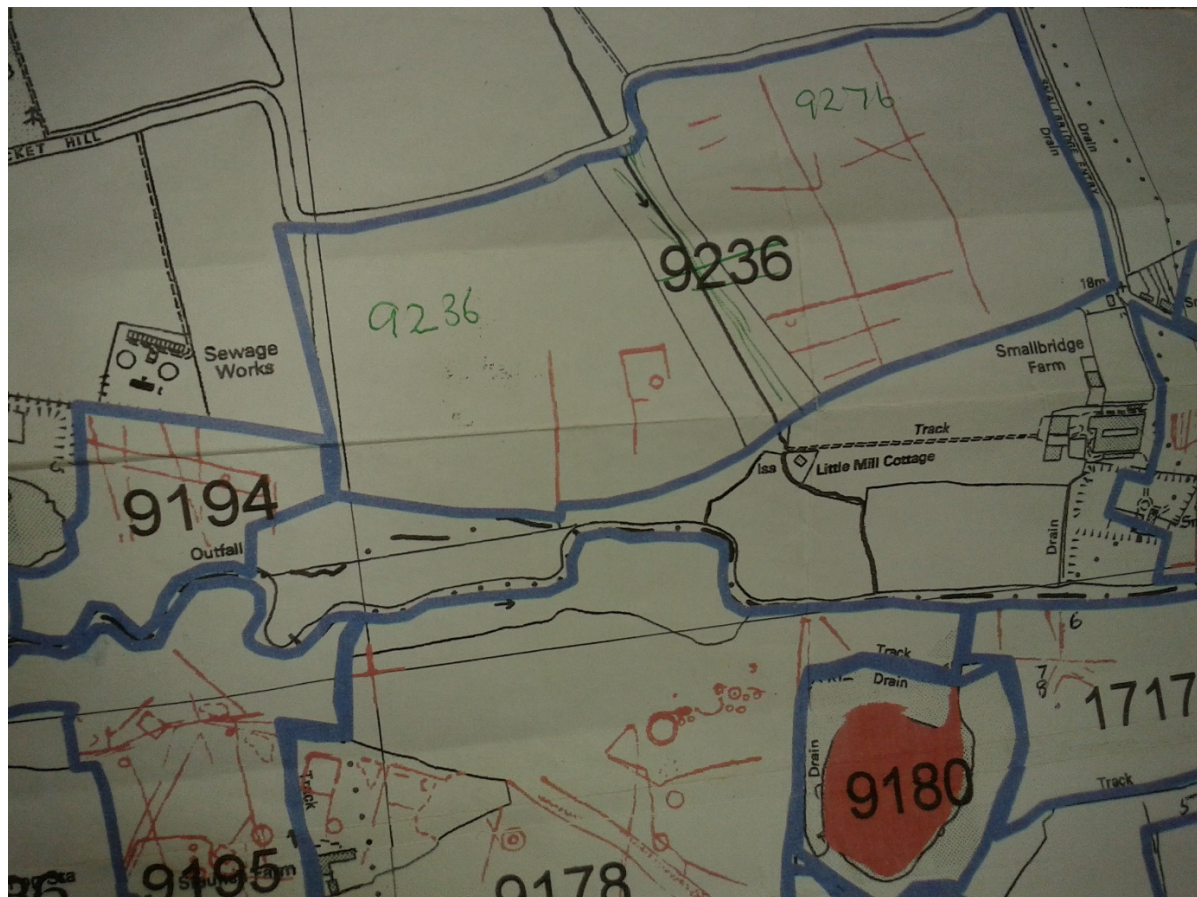
On the 1838 Tithe Map (see below) 9236 was split into two long fields Cross Path (601) and Charity Field (600) both owned by Smallbridge Hall. The single N/S ditch may therefore be part of a field boundary dating to this time. Likewise 9276 was split into 3 fields: Thirteen Acres (598), Twelve Acres (597) and Eighteen Acres (596). These divisions would appear to align with the two long N/S cropmarks in this area. **(NB Error on blue and red crop mark map which states whole area to be 9236)** These field divisions are not shown on the 1905 O/S map.





1905 O/S Map





**Map showing crop marks (with amended SHER numbering in green)**

### **Previous Surveys**

According to Colin Pembleton (Suffolk Archaeology Unit) there have been no recorded excavations of any of these features.

### **Analysis of the Cropmarks**

Brown, Knopp and Strachan, in their 2002 study of the Stour Valley cropmarks, write of other dispersed linear crop marks in the landscape thus: 'this complex of enclosures and trackways may well be of Bronze Age origin, it is clearly a long-lived multi-period crop-mark landscape. This would seem to apply to most of the cropmarks in these two areas: it is not possible to date them to any specific period, they are marks left on the landscape by the practice of farming over the centuries.'

However, Brown and Saunders state that 'There is widespread evidence for the association of barrows/ring-ditches with field systems dating to the Bronze Age throughout eastern England and, indeed, more generally in the British Isles. The intimate connection between the construction/use of monument complexes and the origins and development of agriculture is increasingly apparent. This relationship encompasses not only the physical division of the landscape but also the conceptual and social changes necessary for the adoption and development of an agricultural lifestyle (e.g. Bradley 1998, 2000: Tilley 1994).'

It is therefore possible that the ring ditch feature in 9236 could be a barrow, the last remnant of a Bronze Age cemetery mirroring the barrow features on the opposite side of the valley at Wormingford.

9236 looking west (Photo: E Mead 2012)



9276 Looking southwest (Photo: E Mead 2012)

