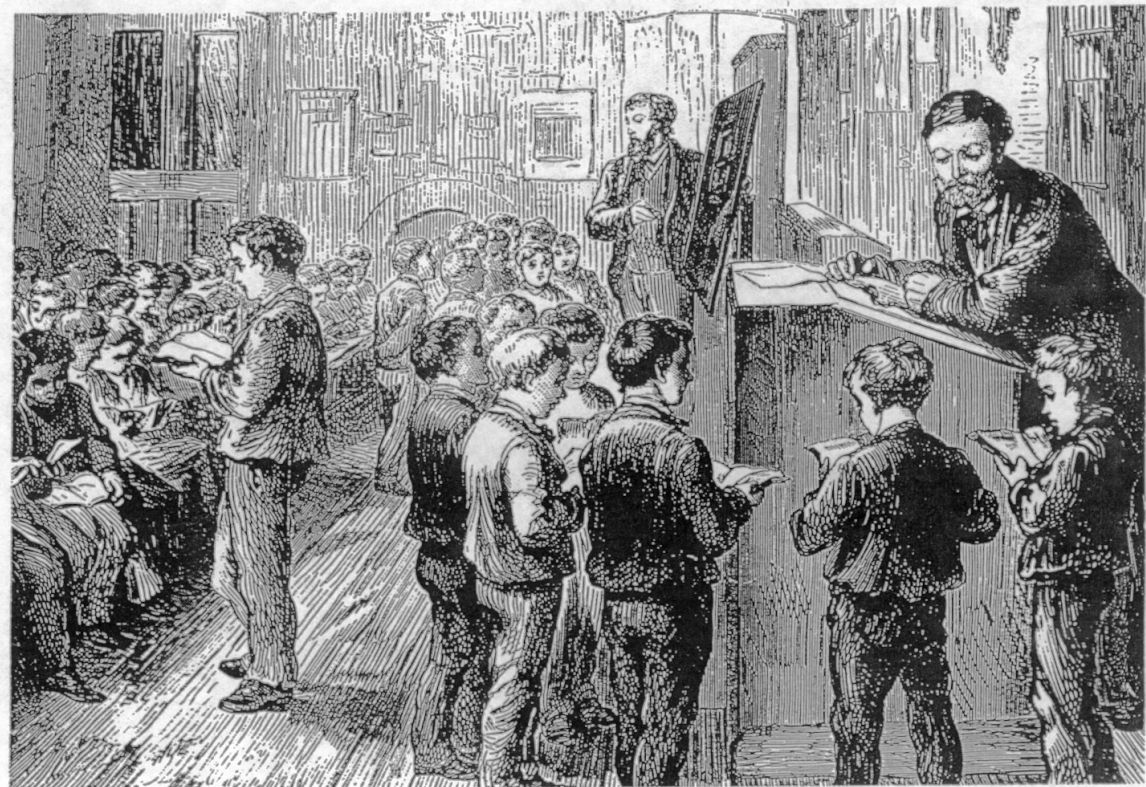


6.3 HISTORY AROUND US: BEACON HILL

(Provided jointly by Wrenn and Wollaston Schools)

BEACON HILL



Assignment

The Assignment

The assignment will count for 12.5% of your final mark.

The assignment requires you to investigate an historical site and examine it closely. You will then be required to analyse and evaluate different representations and interpretations of the site over a period of time.

Your Task

Read the question below.

Beacon Hill is a man-made hill standing in the centre of Wollaston. For many years, historians have disagreed about why it was built.

- a) Using the evidence contained in the sources, what different theories have historians put forward as to why Beacon Hill was constructed?
- b) Using your own personal investigation of the site, and analysing and evaluating evidence contained in the sources, try to decide which view is more likely to be correct.

What do I get marks for?

Marks are given to those candidates who can:

- 1 identify differences in the way historical sites have been interpreted, and support their conclusions from their own evidence and the other sources;
- 2 identify differences and explain why they are different, can evaluate and use critically a range of sources to investigate and draw relevant conclusions;
- 3 make balanced judgements about the value of sources, and reach reasoned and substantiated conclusions.

Good luck!

Beacon Hill

Beacon Hill is a man-made hill standing in the centre of Wollaston. For many years historians have disagreed about why it was built. The theories include:

- A Bronze Age barrow (c.2000 BC–c.1000 BC). These were man-made mounds of stone, wood, or earth piled up over the remains of the dead, especially important people. Often possessions would also be buried.
- A Roman Specula (43AD–407AD). These were fortresses used to protect the Romans and their allies (friendly native tribes) against those tribes who were their enemies.
- A 12th century motte and bailey castle. These were castles made of earth and wood, which were relatively quick and easy to build.
- A signalling station at the time of the Spanish Armada (1588). When the Spanish Armada (ships) were close to England a way of sending a warning across the country was needed. A series of large beacons (bonfires) were built on hilltops so that when they were lit the smoke could be seen a long way off. Each beacon was lit in turn as the smoke from its nearest neighbour became visible.

Your Task

- 1 On arriving at the site, draw a sketch of the mound and the surrounding features. Mark on your sketch:

The general shape of the mound and the measurements of the slope and the flat area on top of the mound. Are there any other features near the mound that deserve a mention? If so, include them.

Make a sketch of the view from the top of the mound – include nearby features particularly any old buildings and what can be seen from the top of the mound.

- 2 On returning to the classroom:

Draw both sketches in neat.

Draw a map of the location of Beacon Hill (use village maps to help you)

Write 1–2 sides on a description of the site. Include:

- a) a description of the mound inc. relevant measurements
- b) what can be seen from the top of the mound
- c) Beacon Hill's location in the village and whether any old buildings are nearby.

You will be using these findings as evidence. Make sure your written work/diagrams/maps are as neat and as detailed as possible.

Good luck!



How do I get started?

Your task is to decide why Beacon Hill was built.

First you need to sift the evidence. Use the table below to help you.

Remember that you should be analysing and evaluating the evidence and using these findings to make a decision.

Source	Does the source provide us with any clues as to why Beacon Hill was built? (Yes/No)	Information from the source that gives us an idea as to why Beacon Hill was built.	Is this evidence reliable? Give as many reasons as you can.
Source 1			
Source 2			
Source 3 (Etc)			

Remember to include the table in your own fieldwork studies.

Read carefully through the sources below.

SOURCE 1

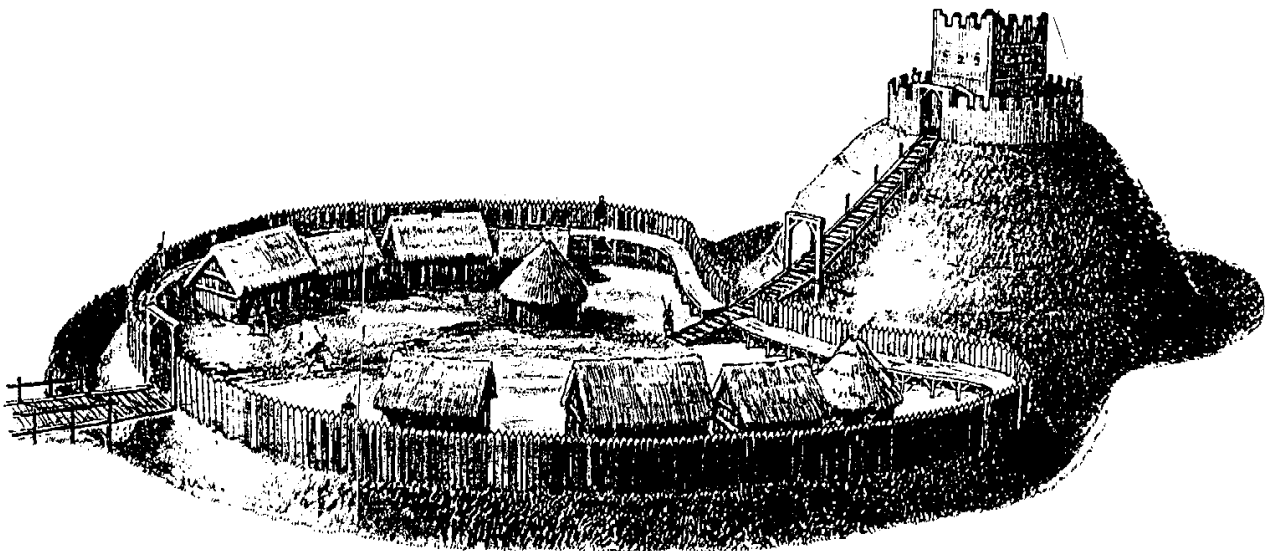
DESCRIPTION OF A SPECULA

“ ... a man made hill of circular form of pretty great extent and height surrounded with a wide and deep Ditch or Trench. The Hill appears by the Roman coins found there ... was probably raised as a Specula or Watch Hill for observing the motions of the enemy or perhaps as a Fortress to guard the Ford

Extract from the book “The Natural History of Northamptonshire” by John Morton (published 1712)

SOURCE 2

A DIAGRAM OF A MOTTE AND BAILEY CASTLE



From a school history text book. Remember that there were many different types of motte and bailey castles. Some had two mounds, others had the mound surrounded by the bailey.

SOURCE 3

“But yet I am of the Opinion ... the Nyne (Nene) was fortified ... by Ostorious Scapula, Lieutenant of Claudius* ... who provided for the ... Allies* and particularly the Casii or Catevellauni whose territories extended to the Nyne (Nene) or near it and who either in or before his time were brought under Roman Government and were termed Allies to the Romans. These (Allies) he defended from the inroads (invasions) of the Britons inhabiting the ... impassable woods ... by erecting the Fortresses we now have a view of, on the Nyne (Nene).”

*Claudius - Emperor of Rome who led the Roman invasion forces of 43AD

*Allies - tribes of Britain friendly to Rome who relied upon the Roman Army for protection against other British tribes who were their enemies.

Extract from the book “The Natural History of Northamptonshire” by John Morton (published 1712) Morton was an Antiquarian, a person fascinated with the remains of ancient people like the Romans. Some local historians accuse them of creating ‘Roman legends’.

SOURCE 4

“About the distance of a furlong (about 200m) southward from the Church is an eminence (in this instance an earth mound) enclosed with a stone wall in circumference about half an acre, not improbably supposed to have been a Roman Specula. It is now called Mill Hill ...”

A description of Wollaston by V Bridges contained in the book “The History of Antiquities of Northamptonshire” (written in 1791). Bridges was an antiquarian.

SOURCE 5

“Our history begins in the Roman period, AD 51. The conical hill, still to be seen on the south of the church, was a Roman specula, or signalling station, one of a chain of posts running parallel to the right bank of the Nene from Northampton to Peterborough... they were formed in the reign of Emperor Claudius, by order of his general, Ostorious, to check the power of a native tribe called the Coritani, in which attempt he was entirely successful. A writer on the Nene valley camps says: “From Hunsbury Hill we can exchange signals with a mound on the lofty site of Wollaston village which in its turn had communication (by a road now obliterated but shown on the old maps) with the great walled camp at Irchester ...two miles off”. A knife and a spearhead, found at the base of the hill, are believed to be of Roman make. The Roman nettle still grows in the neighbourhood of the mound...”

The hill has been called Beacon Hill, Mill Hill, and Laughton’s Hill from a recent owner who planted the trees on its slope... perhaps at one time it may have had a windmill on its’ summit. The title of Beacon Hill explains itself

From the book “The Annals of Wollaston” by Amy Whichello (pub. 1930)

SOURCE 6

ROMAN REMAINS AROUND WOLLASTON

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1) Roman Villa - NW of the parish | (SP 901650) |
| 2) Roman settlement - east of Vicarage Farm | (SP 904645) |
| 3) Roman settlement and crop marks | (SP 908645) |
| 4) Roman settlement - north side of the village | (SP905635) |
| 5) Roman settlement - north west of Cringle House | (SP887632) |
| 6) Roman settlement - | (SP886630) |
| 7) Roman settlement | (SP892632) |
| 8) Roman settlement | (SP894632) |
| 9) Roman settlement - west of the village | (SP897625) |
| 10) Roman building - south west of the village | (SP903625) |
| 11) Roman settlement - south east of the village | (SP913624) |
| 12) Roman settlement - south east of the parish | (SP922613) |
| 13) Roman settlement - south west of the village | (SP906624) |

ROMAN ROAD

This road enters this area from the south (and may have originated in) ...Kempston...It is said to run through Dungie Wood entering the county on the north-west side of the wood ... the road converges along Green Lane until it meets the latter at its junction with the modern road to Hinwick ...For the next 3.5 km the Roman road appears to run straight meeting the modern road from Wollaston ... to the west of Irchester village Beyond Irchester village there is no trace in the fields ...

*An inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Northamptonshire
Volume II - Archaeological sites in Central Northamptonshire.*

SOURCE 7

“... a section of the filled ditch surrounding the mound (Beacon Hill) was cut. The levels were well preserved through Victorian, Georgian and Elizabethan deposits ... the ditch finally bottomed at 12.5 feet below the present level. The pieces of pottery found date from 12th century and on one side of the mound there were masses of rubble thrown down from a substantial building on the hill top ...”

Report on excavations of Beacon Hill 1961-1962 carried out by a local archaeologist.

SOURCE 8

“In this King’s time there was nothing but disturbances and wickedness and robbery ... powerful men were traitors rose up against him ... the traitors understood that (King Stephen) was a mild man and gentle and good and did not exact the full penalty of the law ... Every powerful man built castles against (King Stephen) and they filled the country full of castles. They oppressed the wretched people of the country severely with castle building. When the castles were built they filled them with wicked men ... they took those people they thought had any goods, put them in prison and tortured them ...

I have neither the ability nor the power to tell all the horrors nor all the torments they inflicted upon the wretched people ... They (collected) taxes from the villages and called it **tenserie** (protection money). When the wretched people had no more to give they robbed and burned the villages ...

...contrary to custom (the wicked men) respected neither church or churchyard but took all the property that was inside then burnt the church and eveything altogether. Neither did they respect bishop’ land nor abbots or priests ...

If two or three men came riding onto the village all the villagers fled from them, they expected them to be robbers ...”

The Anglo Saxon Chronicle. This was a list of events which happened each year in England, recorded by monks at that time kept by monks since the 9th century. The extract records the events of King Stephen’s reign 1135 - 1154.

SOURCE 9

“Theories about the mound ... range from it being a Bronze Age barrow (burial mound) through use as a Roman signalling station to the site of a castle in the 12th century

And although the name Beacon Hill would tend to support the signalling station, Mrs Walker (a lifelong resident of Wollaston) disagrees with that idea.

She said: "It never was a signalling station. The hill was built in the reign of King Stephen in the early twelfth century and was to have been a fortified area - but it was never finished ..."

A supporter of the signal station idea is parish and district councillor Don Loakes who was also brought up in Wollaston.

He said: "I believe it is supposed to have been one of a line of signalling stations where fires were lit as signals. Wollaston is quite high up anyway so it would be seen for quite a way."

An article entitled "It's your Village - Wollaston" in the newspaper Wellingborough Evening Telegraph, May 25th 1988.

SOURCE 10

"I believe Beacon Hill was a Bronze Age barrow (burial mound)."

Reverend Creogh Coen, Vicar of Wollaston 1939-1953, in conversation with a resident of Wollaston. Reverend Coen was interested in Bronze Age burial mounds and monuments found on Sailisbury Plain.

SOURCE 11

Map of Wollaston 1774

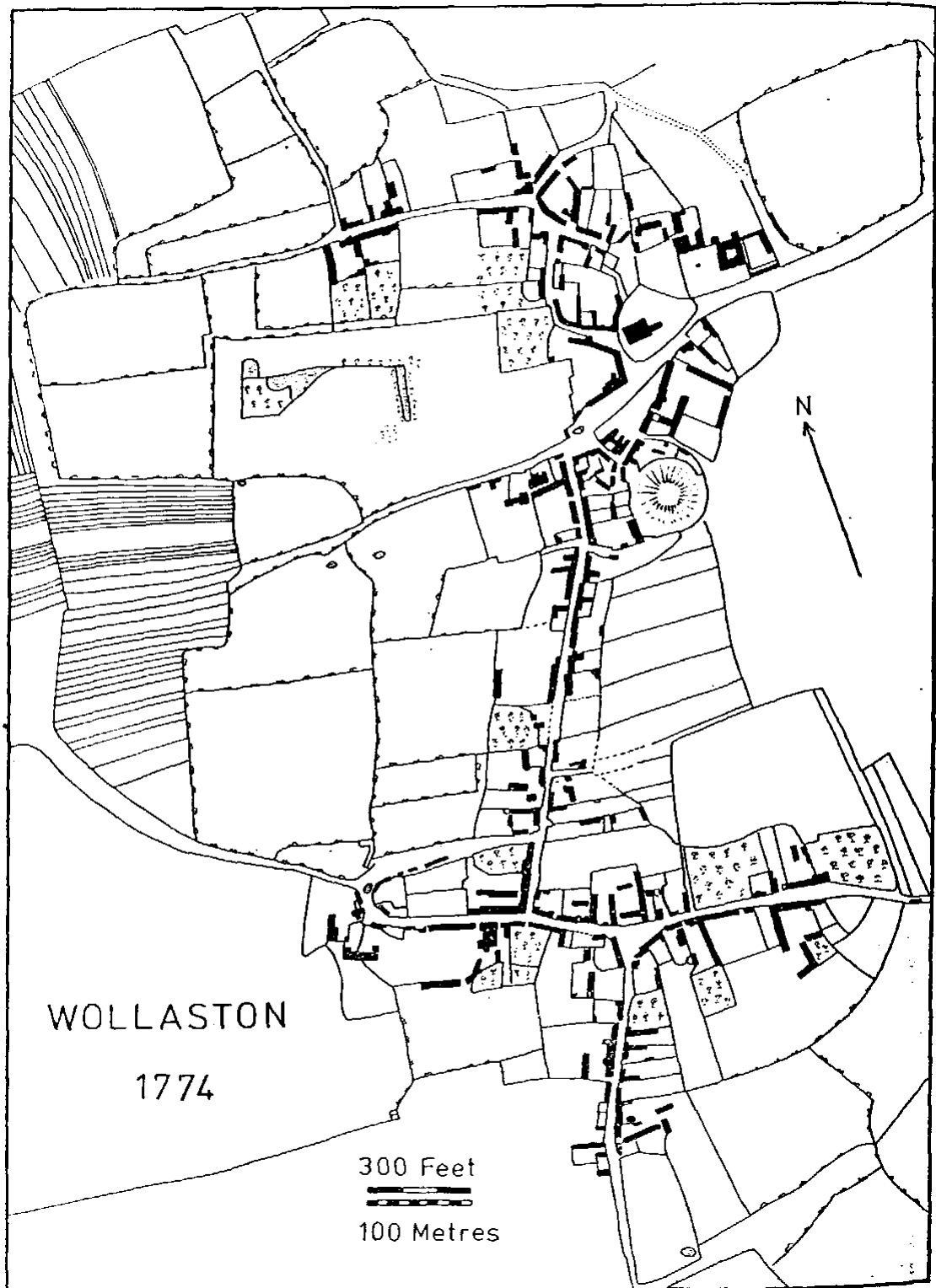
SOURCE 12

Map of Wollaston 1789

SOURCE 13

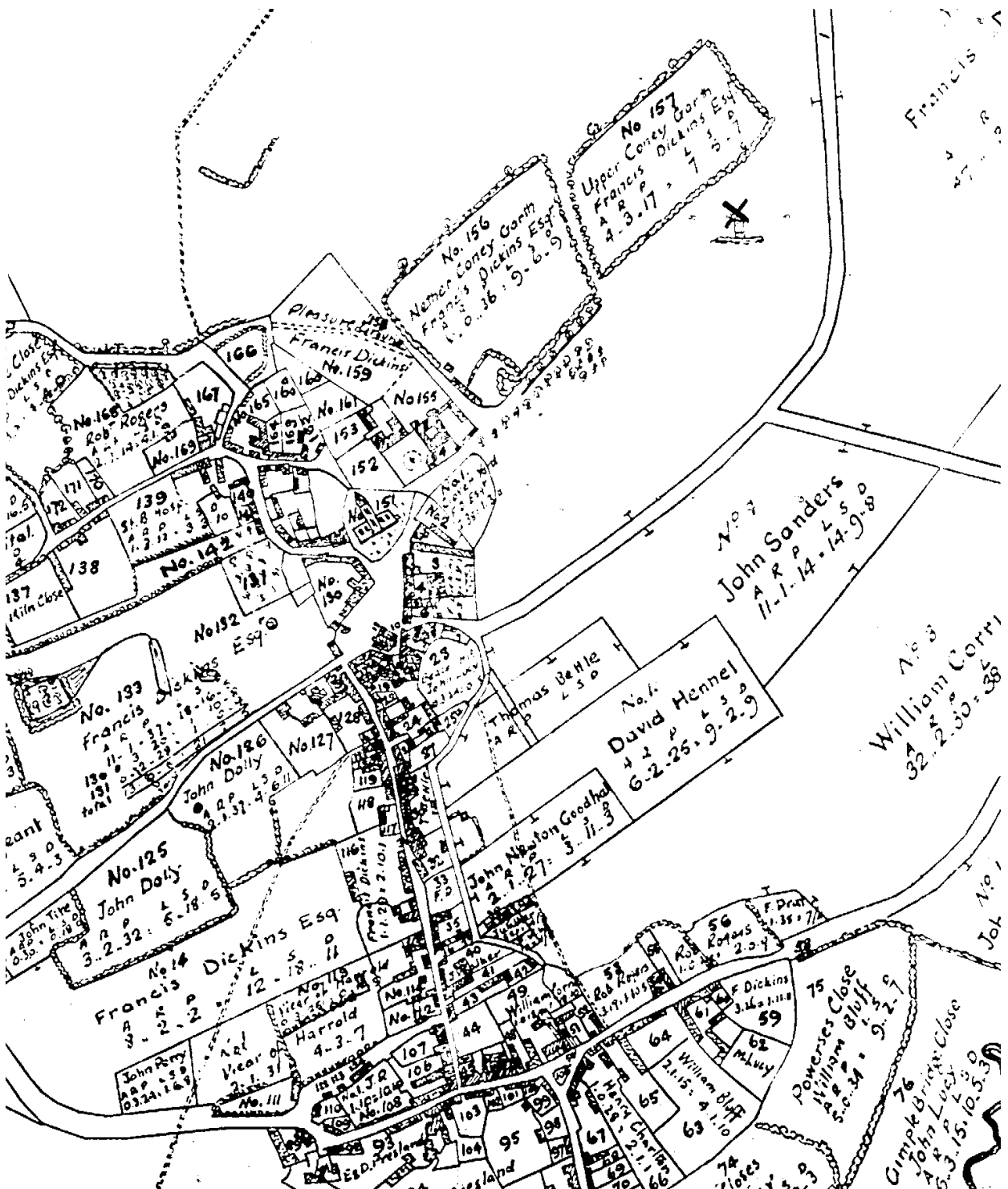
"Beacon Hill stands at the bottom of Irchester Road ... Over the years there has been much speculation as to the origin of the mound ... it cannot be said with certainty that it was not originally a Bronze Age barrow (burial mound) ... Bridges no doubt influenced by the great interest in Roman Britain in his day, believes it was a Roman specula ... The name Beacon Hill just might originate from the lighting of a warning fire at the time of the Spanish Armada (1588) ... the name most likely originates from a Roman legend created by 18th century antiquarians. On the 1774 map it is merely called 'Mound' but on the ... 1789 map it is called 'Beacon Hill'.

From a history book 'Wollaston' by local historian David Hall (published 1976)



SOURCE 11

Map of Wollaston 1774. This is an exact copy of the pre-enclosure map drawn by the Northamptonshire Record Office. Beacon Hill can be easily seen - on the original map it was marked as 'Mound'.



SOURCE 12

Enclosure map of Wollaston 1789. Again Beacon Hill is marked and is given its present name.

Mark Scheme

Objectives 2 and 3: comprehension, interpretation and evaluation of a range of sources:

- | | | |
|---------|---|---------------|
| Level 1 | Either gives an opinion with little/no reference to the evidence or uses the evidence only at face value. | (1–5 marks) |
| Level 2 | Interprets some evidence but fails to build a supported conclusion. | (6–10 marks) |
| Level 3 | Evaluates some evidence and builds a conclusion. | (10–15 marks) |
| Level 4 | Evaluates the evidence to reach a reasoned and substantiated conclusion. | (15–20 marks) |
| Level 5 | Produces an answer which evaluates all the options thoroughly and has a conclusion that recognises that it cannot be totally certain from the evidence available. | (20–25 marks) |

General marking guidance

Except for the qualitative difference between the levels one and two, overlapping mark schemes are designed to take account of the wide potential range of source use. Marks rise (within the appropriate level) with the number of sources used and the degree of detail with which they are discussed.

Evaluation of sources should show awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, leading to judgements about their value and enabling substantiated conclusions to be reached. Higher level responses are likely to cross-reference the sources.