

A Park with a Story to Tell

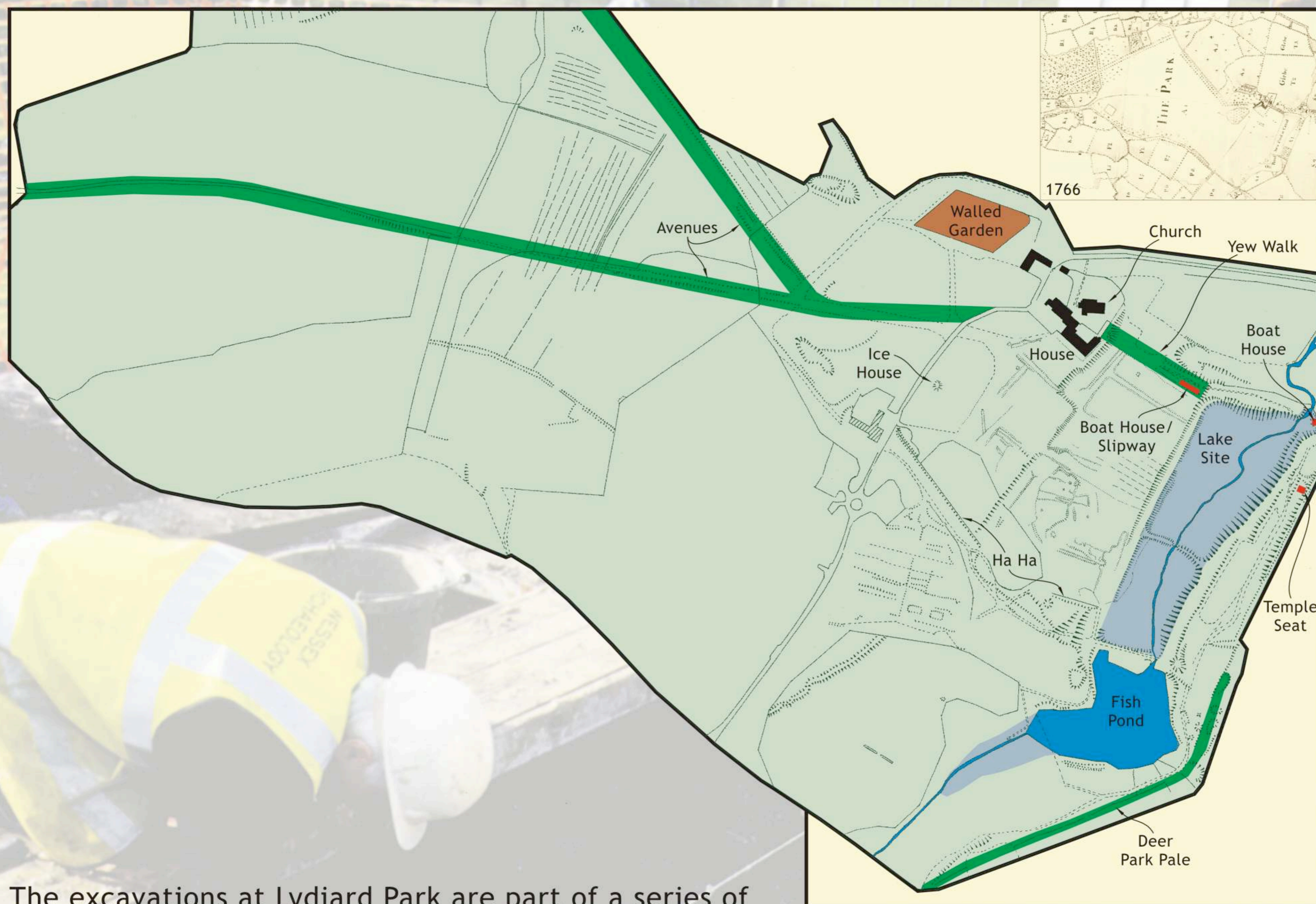
By the Domesday survey of 1086 the manor of *Lidiarde* had 'eight villeins and ten cottagers with four ploughs'. However by 1254 a deerpark had been created for the exclusive hunting of the lord of the manor, enclosed by a steep fenced bank and ditch or 'park pale'.

Lydiard House and St. Mary's Church both have their origins in the medieval period but the fields and any houses near them may have been swept away when the Park was landscaped in the 17th century. In the 18th century fashion in garden design changed and formal gardens were cleared away to be replaced with open vistas, romantic features and attractive walks. Some of these landscape features, such as the lake dam and the walled garden are easily visible; of others only traces survive.

In the eighteenth century George Stubbs painted the racehorses which grazed in the Park



Discovering Lost Lydiard



The excavations at Lydiard Park are part of a series of archaeological investigations that will help decide how the Park is to be restored.

A 'desk-based study' involves searching the archives for old maps and documents that show how the Park developed over the centuries.

The 'earthwork survey' by English Heritage, records the surviving visible parkland features, however slight, from the faint traces of the original avenues to the dam wall and walled garden.

This preliminary work is essential. It helps the archaeologists decide where and how they should excavate to gain the most information with the least impact on the archaeological remains.

The excavation itself will help us find out more about key features in the Park. Finds will be washed, marked and sorted ready for analysis by experts. Soil samples may be taken to find out more about the past landscape of Lydiard Park.

Many people in the local community will be helping with the excavation and the finds processing during April, May and June 2004. If you would like to be one of them please talk to one of the team or pick up a leaflet.



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The Walled Garden

It was built c. 1743, and a map from 1766 shows its original layout. The excavations will try to find details of its design such as the path layout, any pool or fountains, and the site of seats. This will help to design the restoration.



The Linear Features

Sample excavations will be conducted along the old tree lined avenues and walks and the park boundary. This will help us understand how these features were built.



The Lake

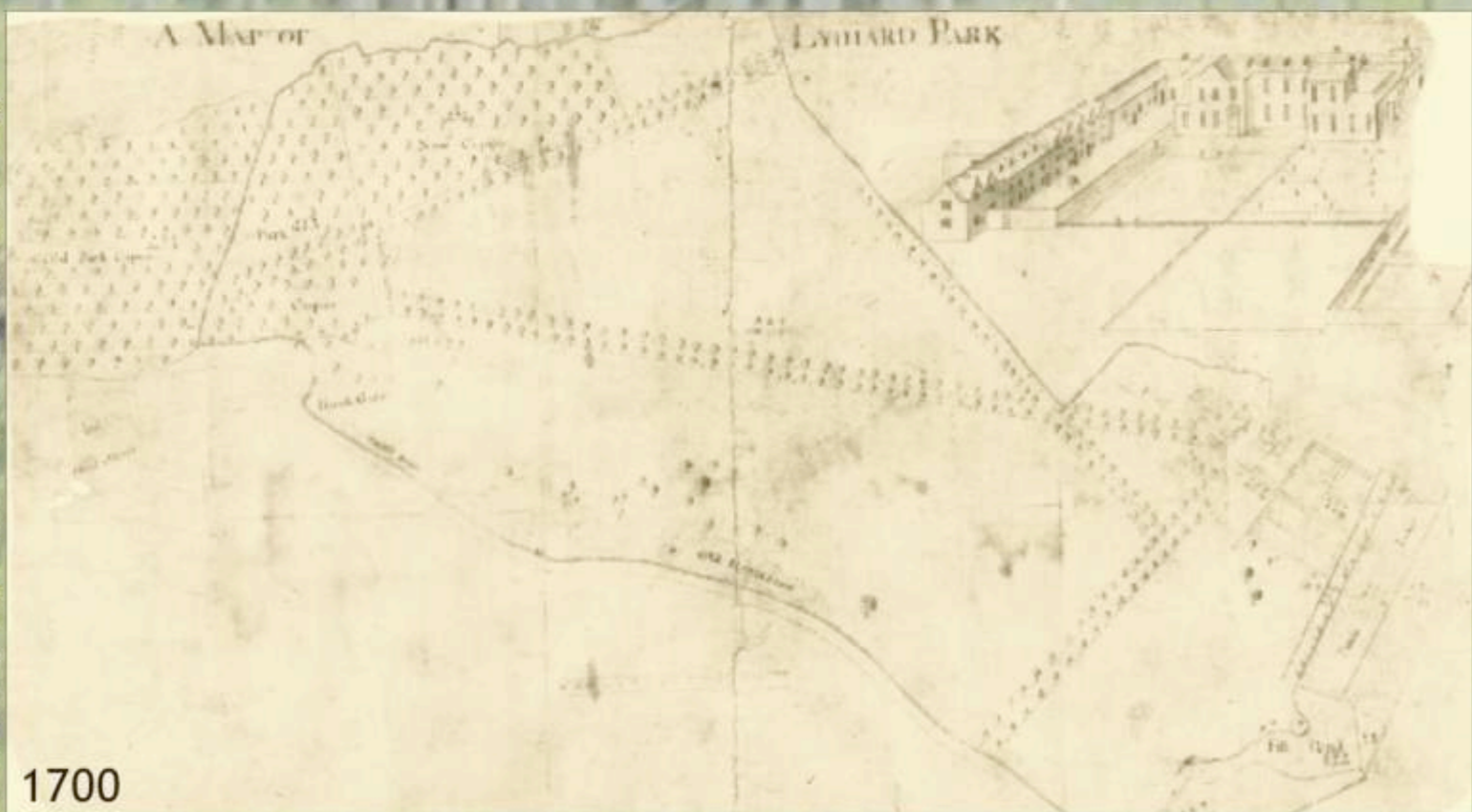
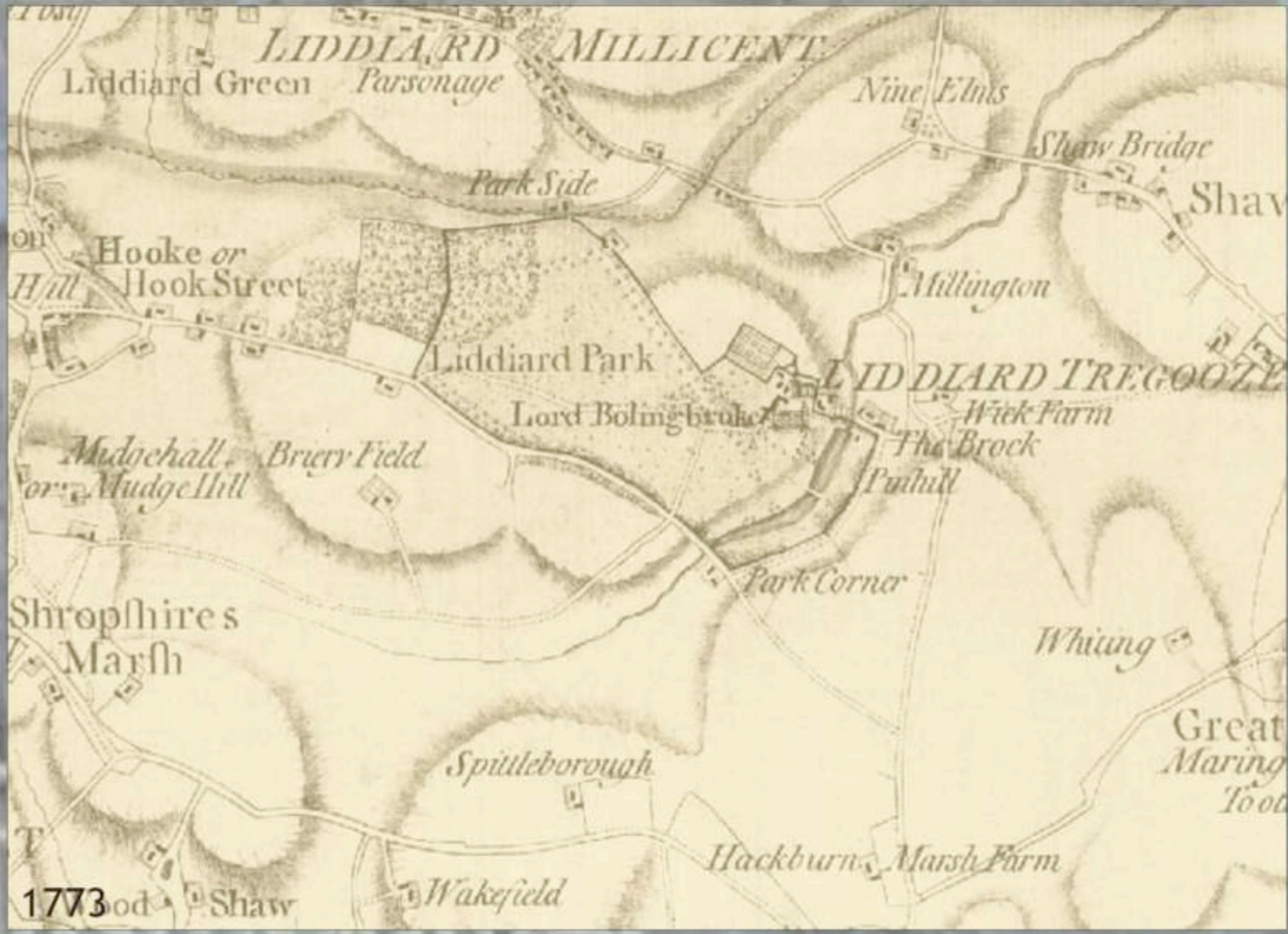
In order to restore the lake to its original size and shape, the construction of the earthen dam and its stone wall, breached in 1911, is being investigated. The excavations will also try to find remains of a boathouse shown on a 1766 map.

Design by K. Nichols Wessex Archaeology

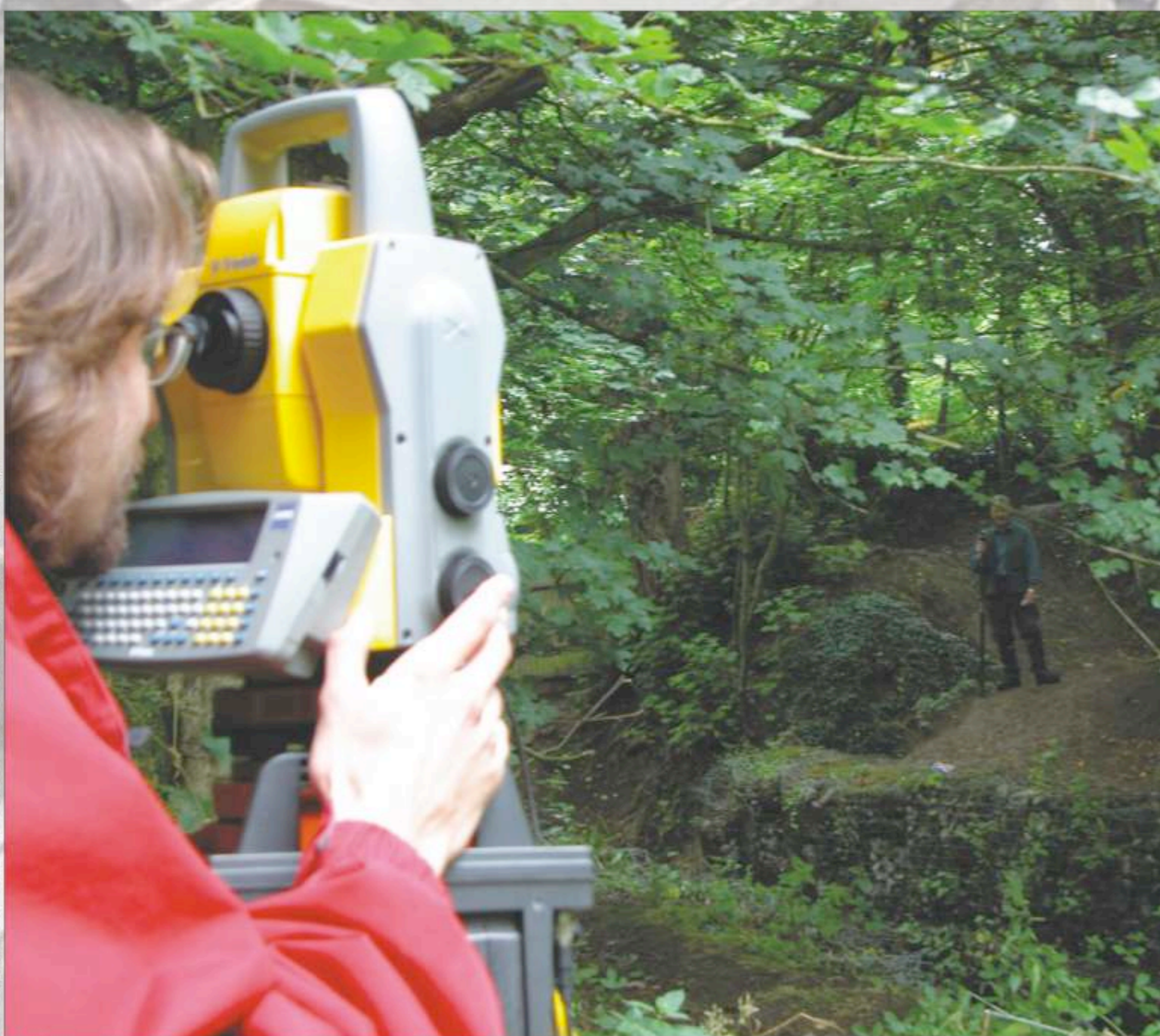




1810

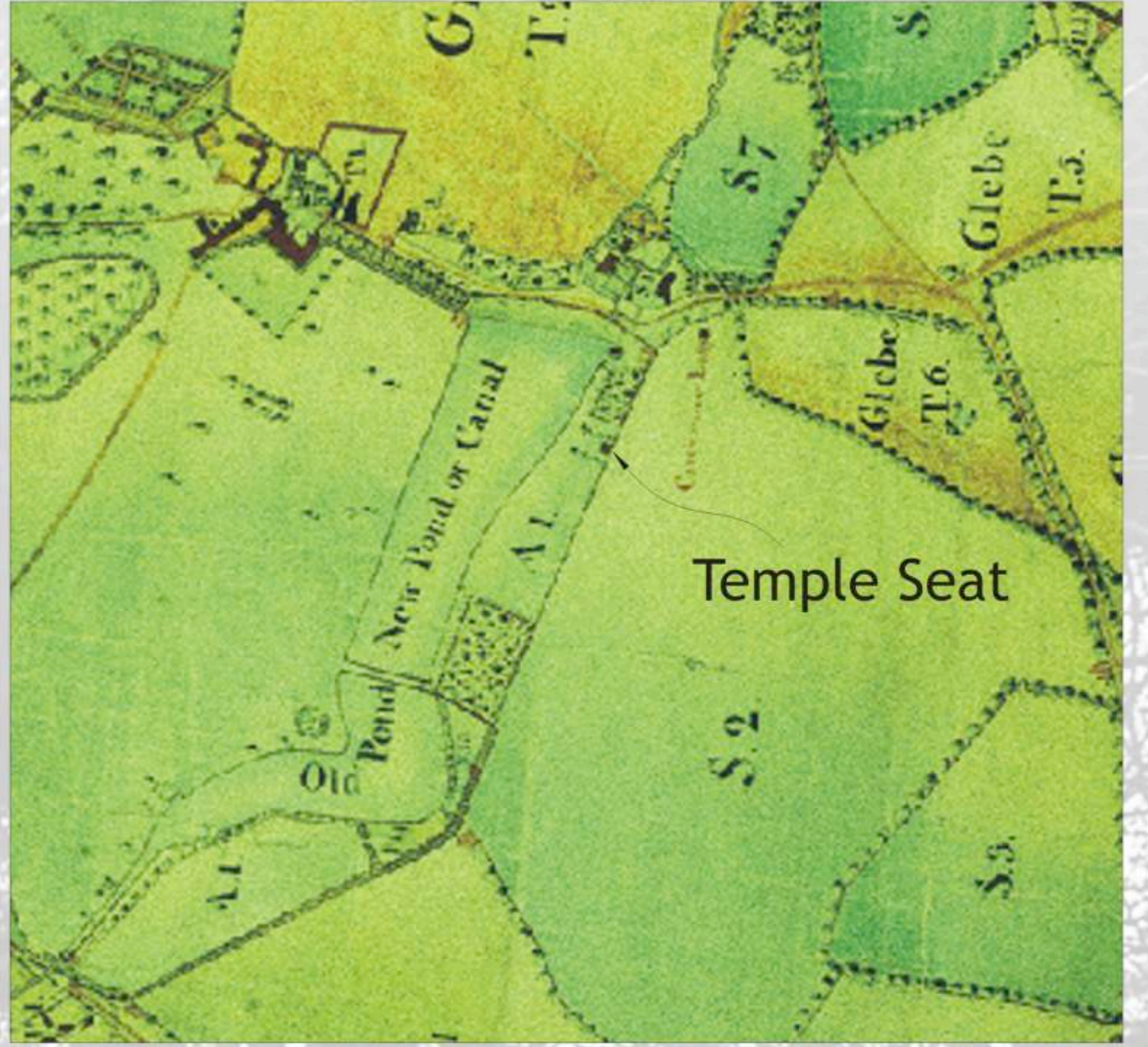


1700



The Temple Seat

The 1766 map clearly shows a structure backing onto the park pale, on a rise overlooking the lake. It would have been in full view of the house and was probably a temple seat. The excavations should tell us more about it.



The Boathouse or Plunge Pool

This structure may have been a boathouse or a plunge pool. We are investigating it to find out how it would have been used, before its possible reconstruction.



Garden Earthworks

There are a large number of bumps and dips in the grass in front of the house. Are they all the remains of the 17th century garden?

