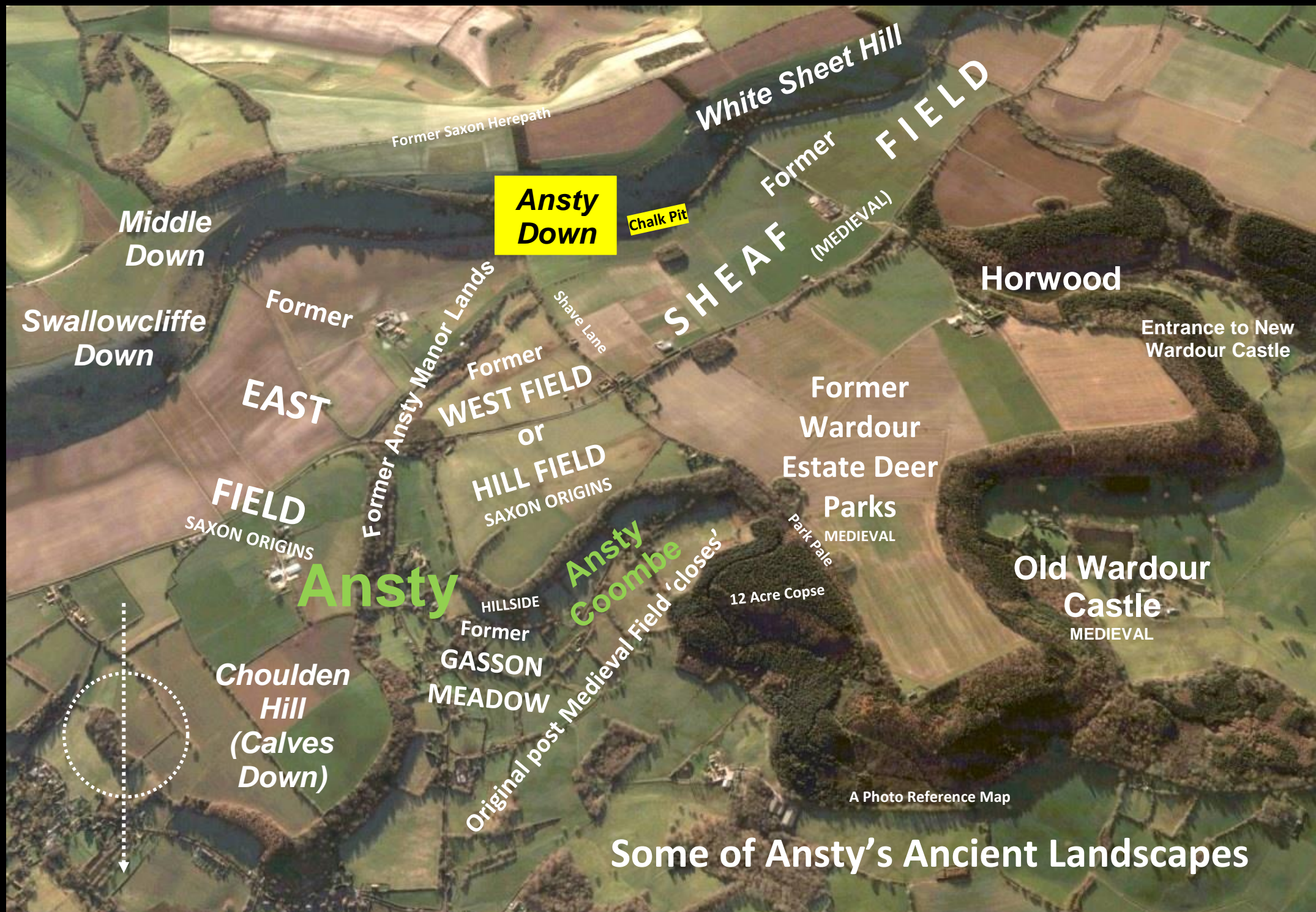


Discover Ansty's Ancient Landscapes 2

In this series of photo-information we choose well-known areas of the Ansty Parish and investigate the history and geography of the surrounding landscape. This set looks at Ansty Down and its old chalk pits.



**Ansty
Down**

Chalk Pit

White Sheet Hill

Former
(MEDIEVAL)

FIELD

Horwood

Entrance to New
Wardour Castle

Former
Wardour
Estate Deer
Parks
MEDIEVAL

Old Wardour
Castle
MEDIEVAL

12 Acre Copse

A Photo Reference Map

Some of Ansty's Ancient Landscapes

Former Saxon Herepath

Middle
Down

Swallowcliffe
Down

Former
EAST
FIELD

SAXON ORIGINS

Ansty

Choulden
Hill
(Calves
Down)

Former Ansty Manor Lands

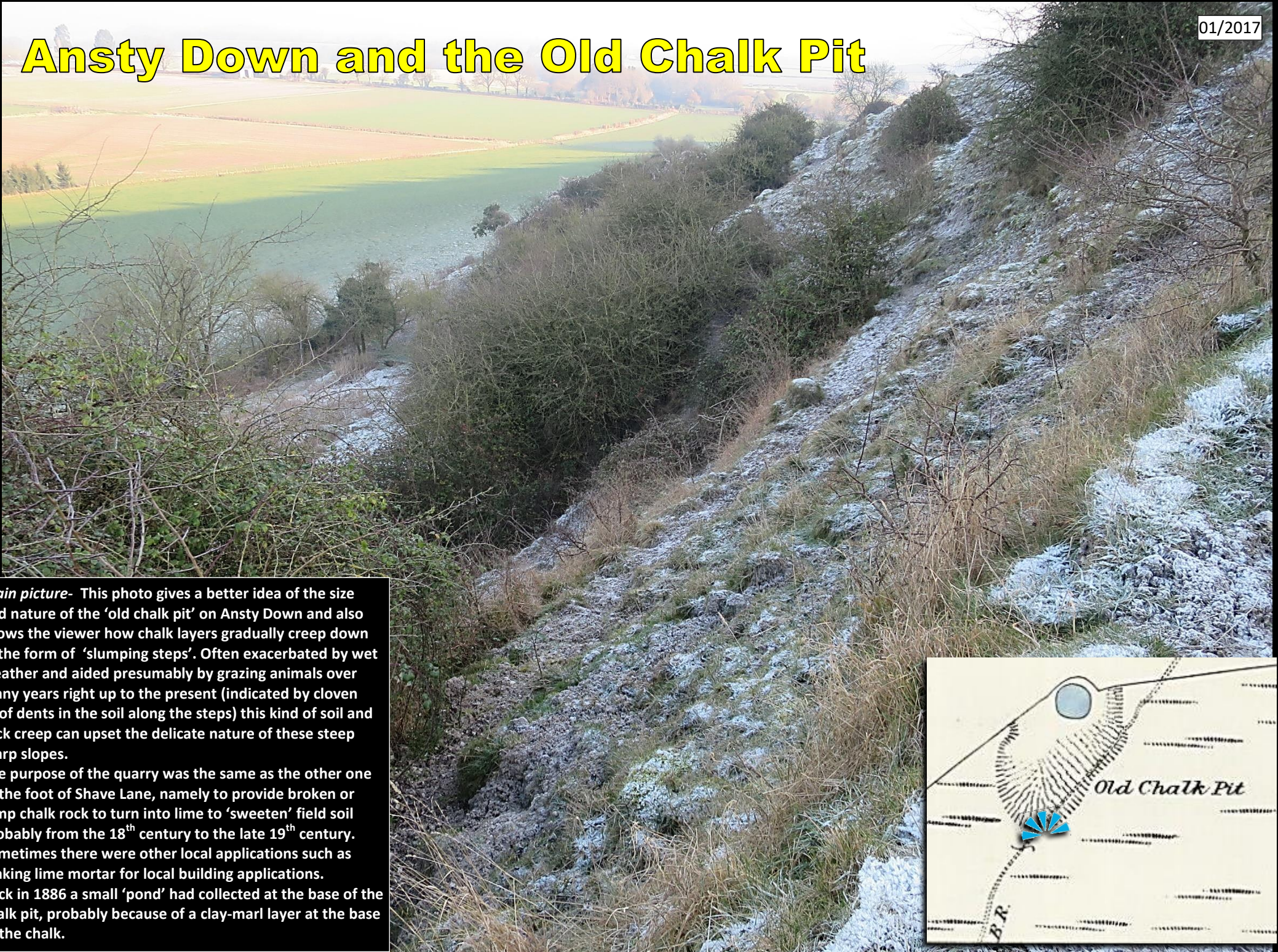
Former
WEST FIELD
or
HILL FIELD
SAXON ORIGINS

HILLSIDE

Former
GASSON
MEADOW

Ansty
Coombe
Original post Medieval Field 'closes'

Ansty Down and the Old Chalk Pit



Main picture- This photo gives a better idea of the size and nature of the 'old chalk pit' on Ansty Down and also shows the viewer how chalk layers gradually creep down in the form of 'slumping steps'. Often exacerbated by wet weather and aided presumably by grazing animals over many years right up to the present (indicated by cloven hoof dents in the soil along the steps) this kind of soil and rock creep can upset the delicate nature of these steep scarp slopes.

The purpose of the quarry was the same as the other one at the foot of Shave Lane, namely to provide broken or lump chalk rock to turn into lime to 'sweeten' field soil probably from the 18th century to the late 19th century. Sometimes there were other local applications such as making lime mortar for local building applications. Back in 1886 a small 'pond' had collected at the base of the chalk pit, probably because of a clay-marl layer at the base of the chalk.



Ansty Down: Old Chalk pits and bridle roads

Quarrying for chalk below the old bridleway on Ansty Down eventually led to slumping and collapse probably well over a century ago. You can follow the line of the old road here – if you are careful!

The original Bridle Road to Ansty via Shave Lane

This old Chalk Quarry had its own field lime kiln which was probably in use from the late 18th century until perhaps the mid-19th century.

The 'Old Chalk Quarry' and chalk lime kiln

The 'Old Chalk Pit'

The bridleway is now a footpath (known as FP5) but it can still be recognised as a 'road' in places

A permissive footpath now accesses the old bridleway from the byway (once the winter 'herepath').

The original Saxon Herepath that became a long established and important route-way until the late 18th century. Now classified as a 'byway'.

The original Bridle Road connecting Ansty with Berwick St John

The modern OS 1:25,000 maps (where this small extract came from) no longer appears to show small landscape features such as chalk pits and small quarries like they once did. The compiler has had to draw them in.

This map summarises some of the detail found in the next four or five photo views.



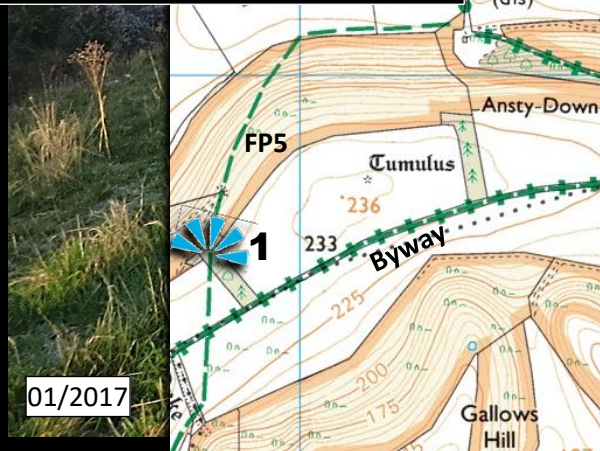
1

Camera viewpoints

Ansty Down: Descending the old bridleway/drove road 1



Note how the upper greensand 'bench' stretches all the way from the foot of the chalk downs to the treeline on the horizon. Here many small 'coombes' or valleys have been etched into the slopes of the upper greensand rock. These small valleys were ideal for the Saxon development of villages and hamlets.



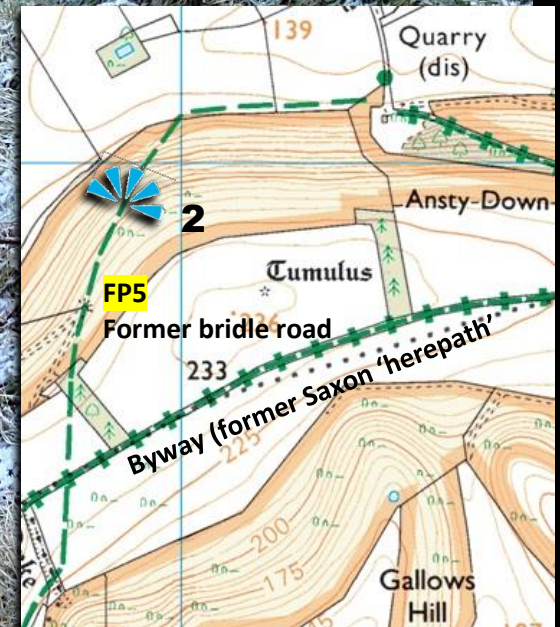
Picture map view (1)- The faintly discernible outline of the former bridleway (drove track) is seen winding its way from the top slopes of the chalky Whitesheet Hill towards Ansty Down from a junction on the long established Salisbury – Shaftesbury Herepath, now a byway. The Herepath /byway was always a major route way from the 10th century eventually linking London with Exeter in the coaching days of the 17th and 18th centuries. Today this bridleway has lost much of its status and is now referred to as *Footpath 5* (FP5) This footpath links with Shave Lane which joins the A30 at New Barn. Crossing directly over the A30 takes you up Ansty Coombe Lane to reach Ansty Coombe hamlet and Ansty itself.

Ansty Down: Further down the old bridleway/drove road 2

01/2017



Picture map view (2)- Further down the scarp slope we are very near to Ansty Down. The old bridle road is about to dip down on to the top rim of the old chalk pit (where the shrubs are).



Ansty Down: Problems with the Old Chalk Pit!

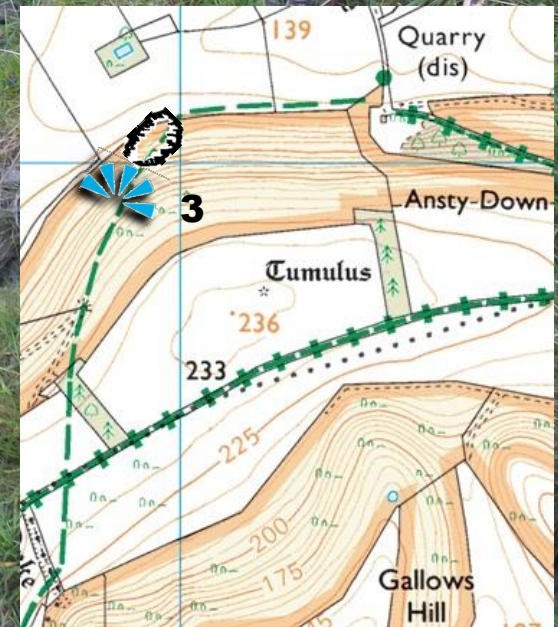
Picture map view (3)- Here the old Bridle Road can just about be discerned. Some of the road has long dropped down the edge of the chalk pit to the left (a vertical drop of some 20 metres). This slumping (look for the shelf- like steps and the arrows showing the movement) is a natural occurrence caused by the angle of the slope here and the slippery chalky marl that results in a downward movement of rock debris, soil and vegetation often exacerbated by spells of wet weather during autumn and winter.

Here, the natural slumping and the continued quarrying of the chalk face in the 18th and 19th centuries led to a dramatic collapse of the back and edge of the quarry face.

Downward (slump) movement
of rock, clay marl and vegetation

The collapse probably happened well over one hundred years ago; possibly 150 years. Since then this vital drove road, linking Ansty with Berwick St John and the Ox-Drove ceased to be a Bridle Road, although even today it still retains the status of a bridleway. It can still be walked up and down (though it can be challenging). However, it is considered to be in a far too dangerous state for even the most expert of horse riders.

For many years cattle have also grazed on these slopes at certain times – a practice that probably adds further to slope erosion and slumping.

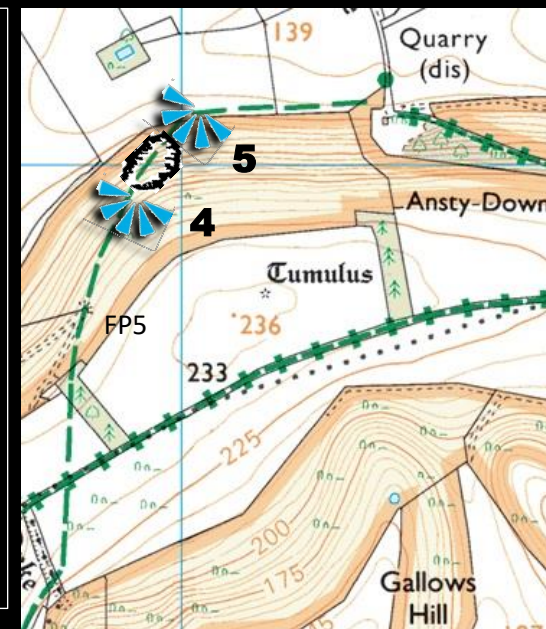


Ansty Down: The old bridle road at the foot of Ansty Down 4, 5.



Right, map view (4) – Above the 'old chalk pit' the former drove road can be picked out. This former bridleway (now classed as a footpath) has been in continuous use for well over a thousand years and the herepath on the tops was probably established thousands of years before the Saxons turned it into a 'military road' in the ninth century.

Left, map view (5) -- This stile marks the original access on to Ansty Down for the ancient bridle road or drove road to Berwick St John and the Saxon winter 'herepath' (military road) of the 10th century. The word 'herepath' or 'herewag' literally means 'an army path'.



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herepath>

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