

CORPSE ROADS: DIGITAL LANDSCAPE ARCHAEOLOGY

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@StuartEDunn

ALFRED WATKINS
**THE OLD
 STRAIGHT TRACK**
 THE CLASSIC BOOK
 ON LEY LINES

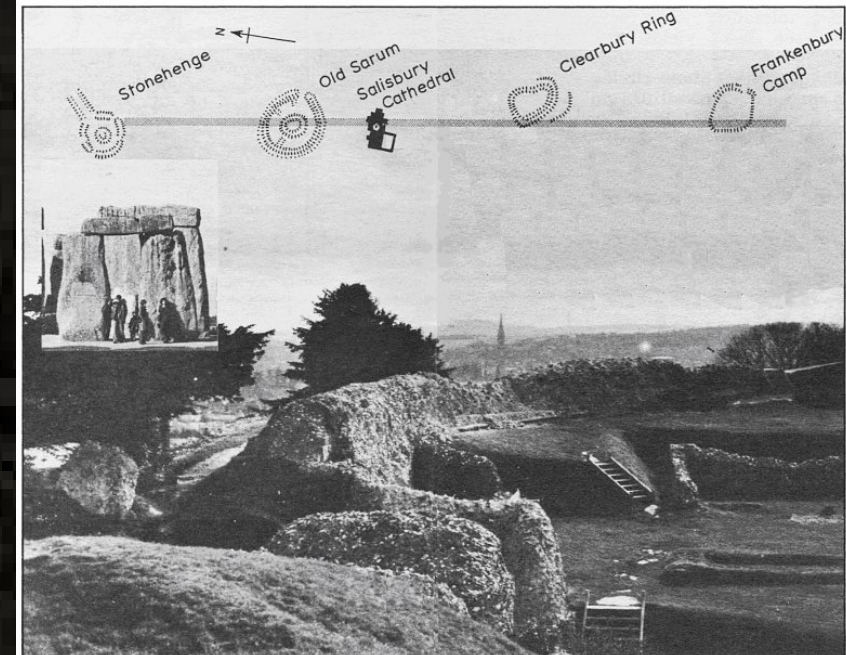
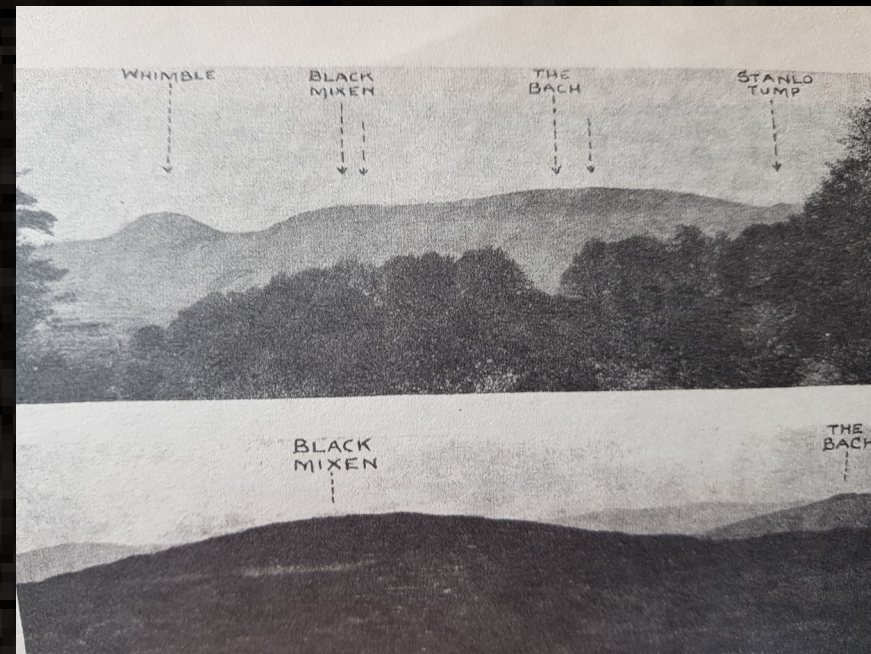


Figure 1 Alignments marked on the map can be observed on the ground (above). The 18-km Old Sarum ley in Wiltshire seen from the earthworks at Old Sarum (foreground) with Salisbury Cathedral and the earthworks at Clearbury Ring (clump on horizon) directly behind

Paul Devereux







‘In the churchyard of this village is a yew tree whose aspect bespeaks it to be of great age: it seems to have seen several centuries, and is probably coeval with the church, and therefore may be deemed an antiquity: the body is squat, short and thick, and measures twenty-three feet in girth, supporting an head of suitable extent to its bulk. This is a male tree, which in the spring sheds clouds of dust and fills the atmosphere with its farina.’

Gilbert White, *Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne* (1789)



THE FORTINGALL YEW.

Plate 1. A Funeral Passing Through the Fortingall Yew⁴⁵





[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St_Mary_Magdalene%27s_Church,_Bolney_\(Lychgate\).JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St_Mary_Magdalene%27s_Church,_Bolney_(Lychgate).JPG)



Yorkshire 234
 Ordnance Survey. Six-inch to the mile
 Surveyed 1846 to 1848, Published 1852



Yorkshire CCXXXIV.SE
 Ordnance Survey. Six-inch to the mile Revised 1938
 Published 1947





Yorkshire 71
Ordnance Survey. Six-inch to the mile, Surveyed 1854, Published: 1857



ROUTES

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Corpse Road

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Corpse Road

Corpse Road

50 m

100 ft







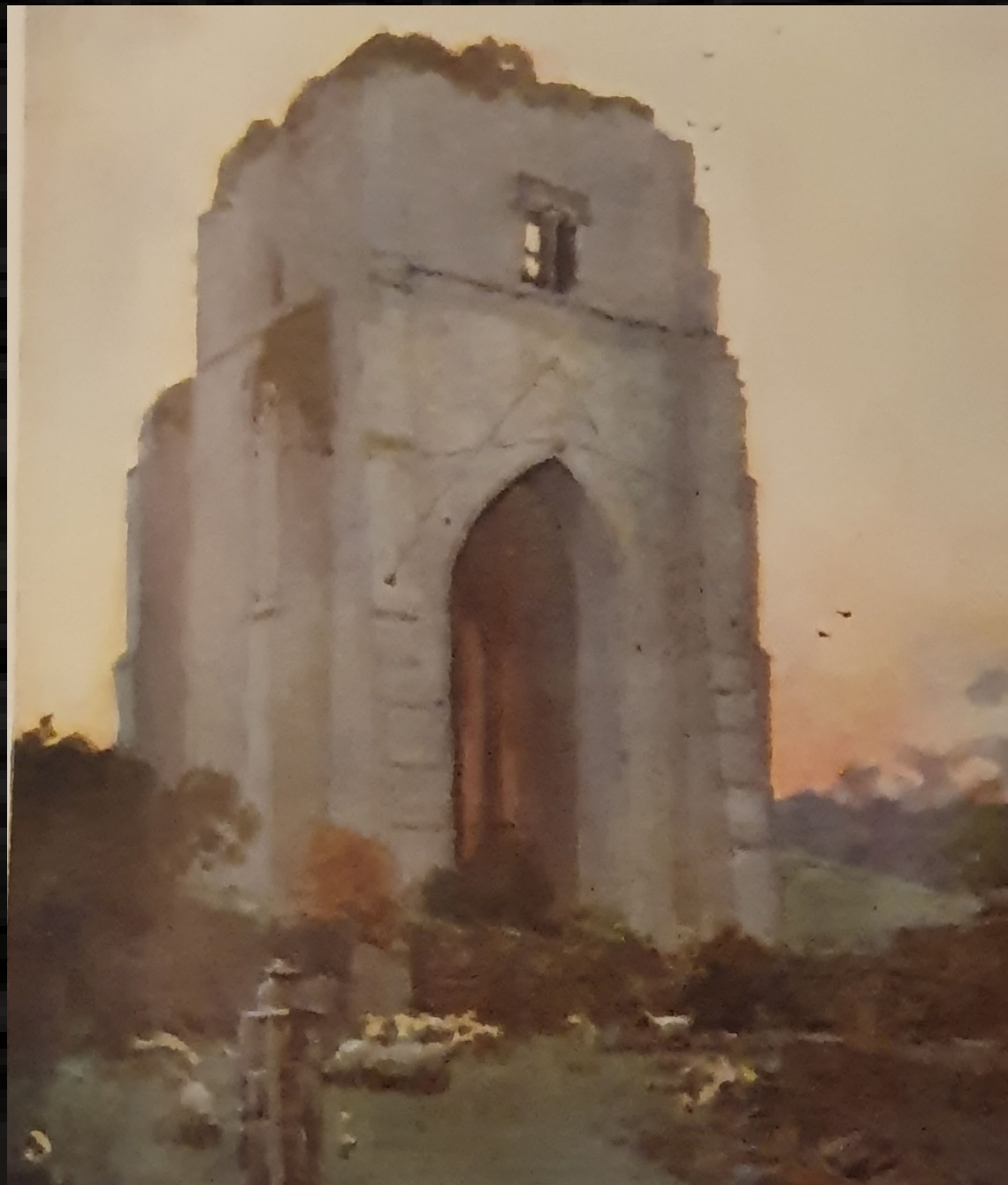
1	Start	Lat	Long	End	Lat	Long	References
2	Littleworth	51.673166	-1.550766	Farringdon	51.659454	-1.583659	Weeks, W. S. 1928: Public Right of Way Believed to Be Created by the Passage of a Corpse. Folklore, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Dec. 31, 1928), pp. 393-398 - note that the farm at the entrance to Littleworth is called 'Church Path Farm'
3	Spratton	52.323886	-0.950534	Creton	52.338737	-0.964472	Word of mouth - Norma (?) at HLF meeting mentioned it, 18-6-2013
4	Mardale	54.825577	-3.161102	Shap	54.531855	-2.677969	http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/72907 also in Devereaux
5	Ludgvan Leaze	50.140761	-5.484849	Ludgvan	50.14476	-5.49319	Devereaux
6	Bosulow	50.153468	-5.614879	Madron	50.132871	-5.566222	Devereaux
7	St Levan	50.04228	-5.660218	Porthcurno	50.047078	-5.656217	Devereaux - Celtic wayside cross on path between the two villages (on Panoramio)
8	Wicca	50.200924	-5.542189	Zennor	50.190103	-5.564873	Devereaux
9	Arnside	54.203169	-2.833104	Beetham	54.212163	-2.771256	http://englishhistoryauthors.blogspot.co.uk/2013/05/the-corpse-road.html
10	Rydal	54.446852	-2.981013	Grassmere / Ambleside	54.457984	-3.025045	Devereaux - also mentioned in 'Eleven Weeks in Europe; and what may be seen in that time', James Freeman Clarke, 1887
11	Bellever	50.580952	-3.901486	Lydford	50.646248	-4.105662	Devereaux (Lych Way over Dartmoor)
12	Plush	50.818401	-2.406748	Buckland Newton	50.844226	-2.443411	Devereaux
13	Noke	51.813071	-1.1206512	Islip	51.823059	-1.23282	Devereaux
14	Henton	51.206573	-2.725987	Wookey	51.209321	-2.690828	Devereaux
15	Cruise Hill	52.272544	-1.989118	Feckenham	52.250915	-1.988302	Devereaux - Cruise Hill seems (from Google Earth) to have a main street called 'Burial Lane'
16	Gayle	54.298921	-2.199374	Hawes	54.304035	-2.198923	Devereaux
17	Fryup	54.440805	-0.886541	Danby	54.469471	-0.911258	Devereaux
18				Widdecombe-in-the-Mo			in 1260, the Bishop decreed that the dead from Pizwell and neighbouring Babeny, could be taken to Widecombe-in-the-Moor, which was much closer and more accessible - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Tenements - ref for this? -

ODD YARNS
OF
ENGLISH LAKELAND

WILLIAM T. PALMER

“Some of our mountain hamlets are far from the parish church, which has given rise to the “corpse road,” which goes straight a lance to the village centre ... But the official who dared to meddle with the corpse road, even though it might not be sued once in twenty years, was in for dire trouble”.

W. Palmer, *Odd Yarns of English Lakeland* 1915:37





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Flooded village of Mardale emerges after dry weather

24 September 2014



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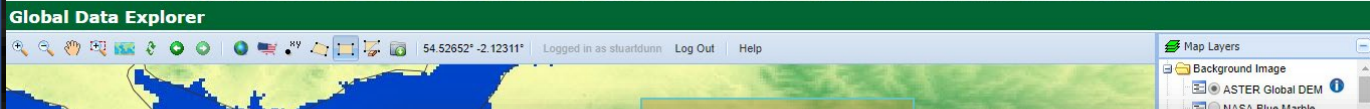


SUZANNA CRUICKSHANK

Water levels have fallen because of a dry start to September

A village flooded in the 1930s to create Haweswater reservoir in Cumbria has started to reappear as water levels recede because of low rainfall.

Villagers were moved out of Mardale which disappeared when the valley was filled



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Cumbria

[one level up]

Commonly Used Formats

- [cumbria-latest.osm.pbf](#), suitable for Osmium, Osmosis, imago and contains all OSM data up to 2018-03-19T21:44:02Z
- [cumbria-latest-free.shp.zip](#), yields a number of ESRI compatible modified 7 hours ago. File size: 26.9 MB.

Other Formats and Auxiliary Files

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Sub Regions

No sub regions are defined for this region.

U.S. Department of the Interior | U.S. Geological Survey
URL: <https://gdex.cr.usgs.gov/gdex/>
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Dataset containing the public rights of way of Lake District National Park

The Lake District National Park Authority provide a [web page](#) from where you can download an [ESRI shape file](#) that contains details of their public rights of way. Cumbria Council provides information about the public rights of way of the Lake District National Park Authority on its [online map](#). It may be that their map uses more up-to-date information.

An authority's Definitive Map is the authoritative source of their rights of way. The details of the public rights of way network contained in an authority's data are for information only, and are an interpretation of the Definitive Map, not the Definitive Map itself, and should not be relied on for determining the position or alignment of any public right of way. For legal purposes, an authority's data does not replace their Definitive Map. And changes may have been made to the Definitive Map that are not included in their data. The authority's data contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2013. Attempting to view this data with more detail than 1:10000 may produce an inaccurate rendering of the route of a public right of way.

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<input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Revision (1906-1939)...	Info (27/20) tiles
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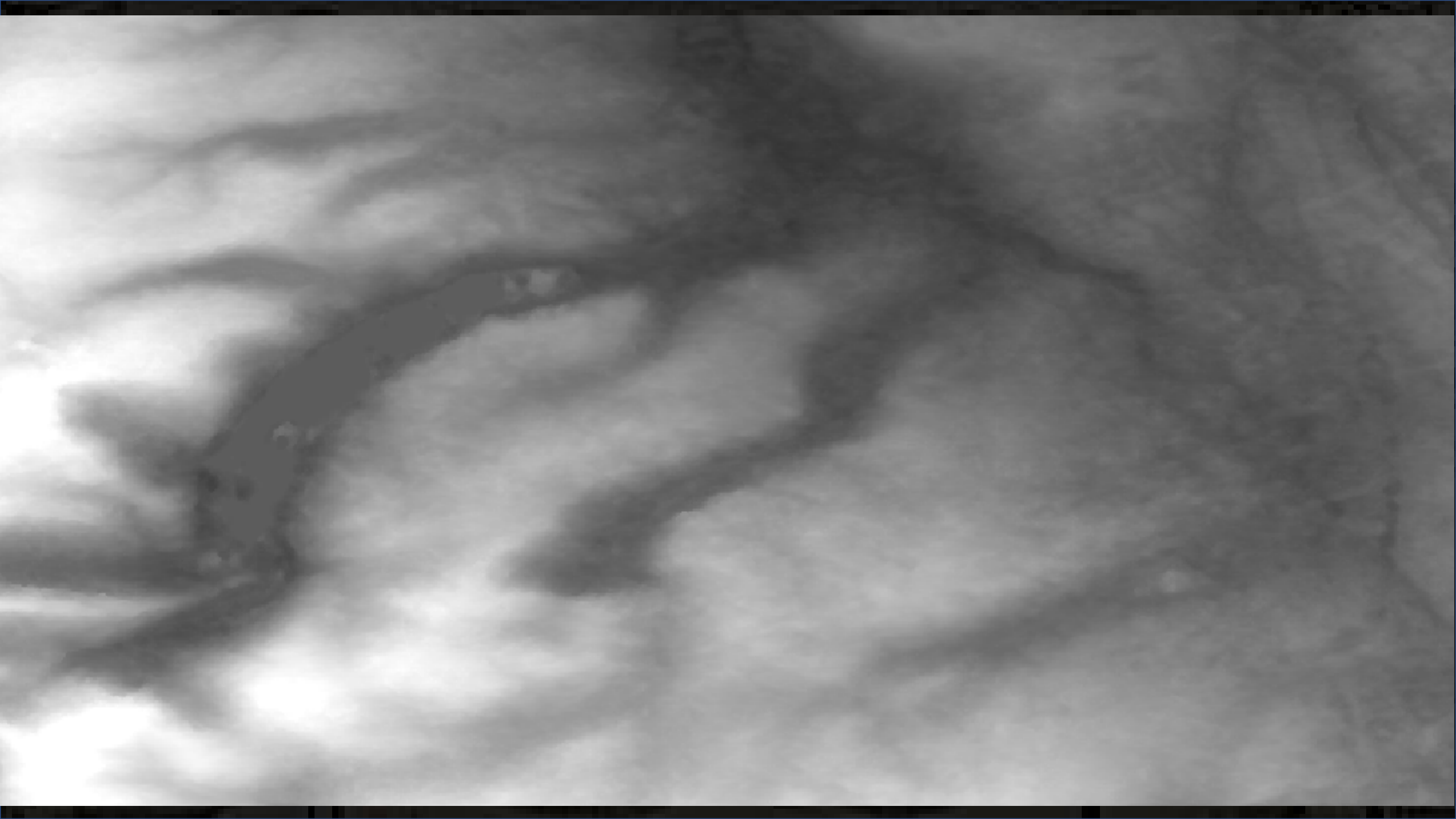
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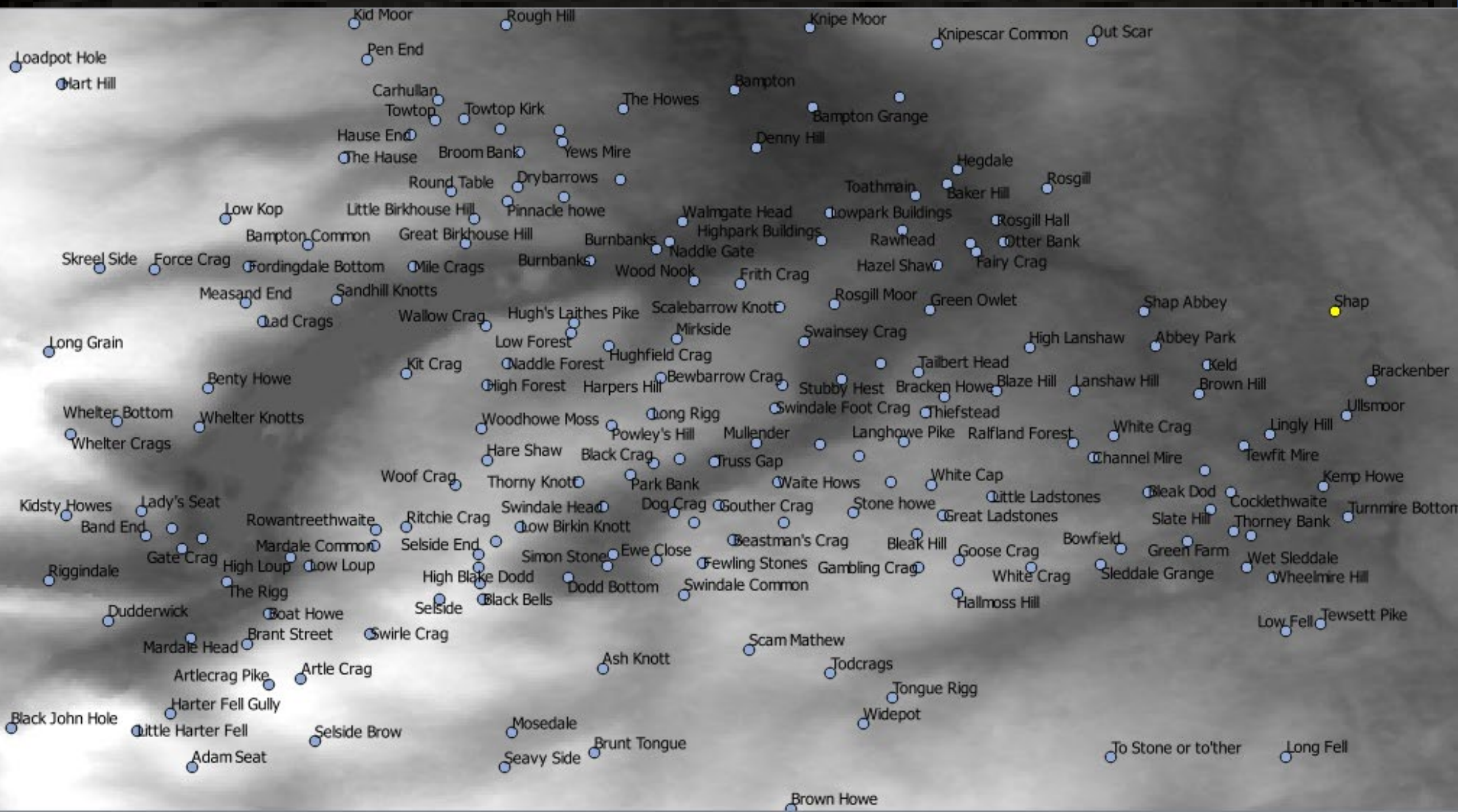
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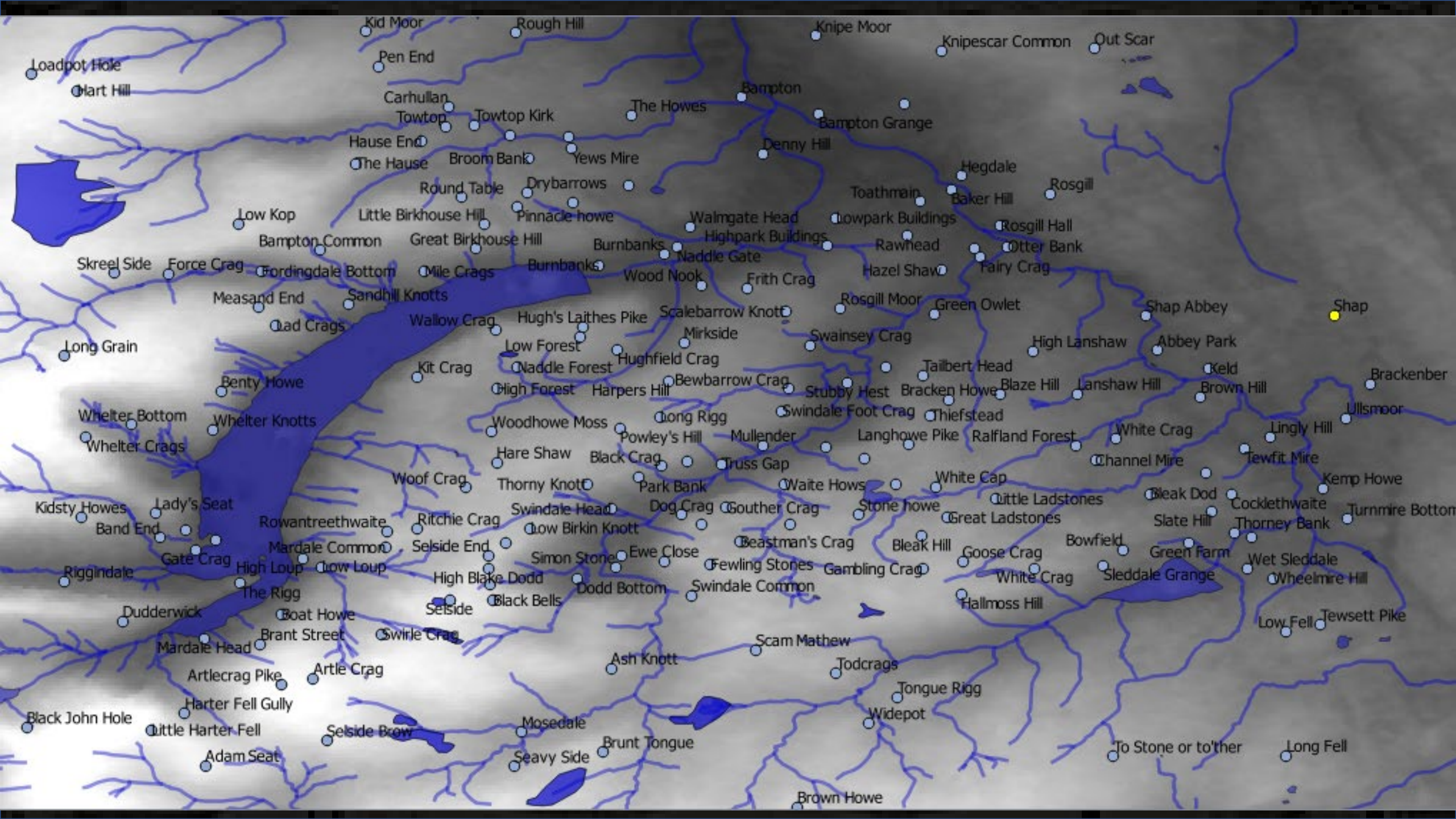
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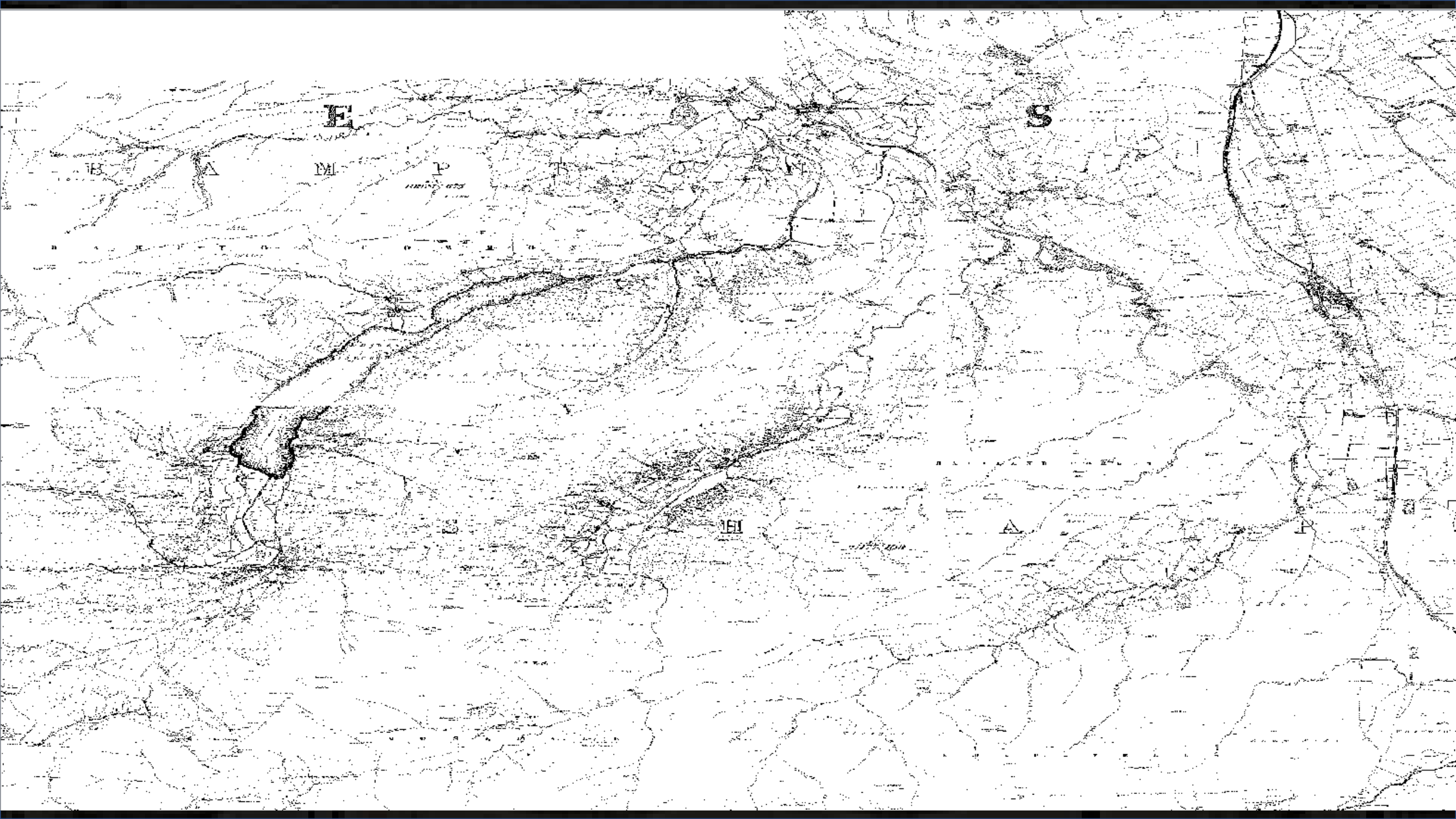
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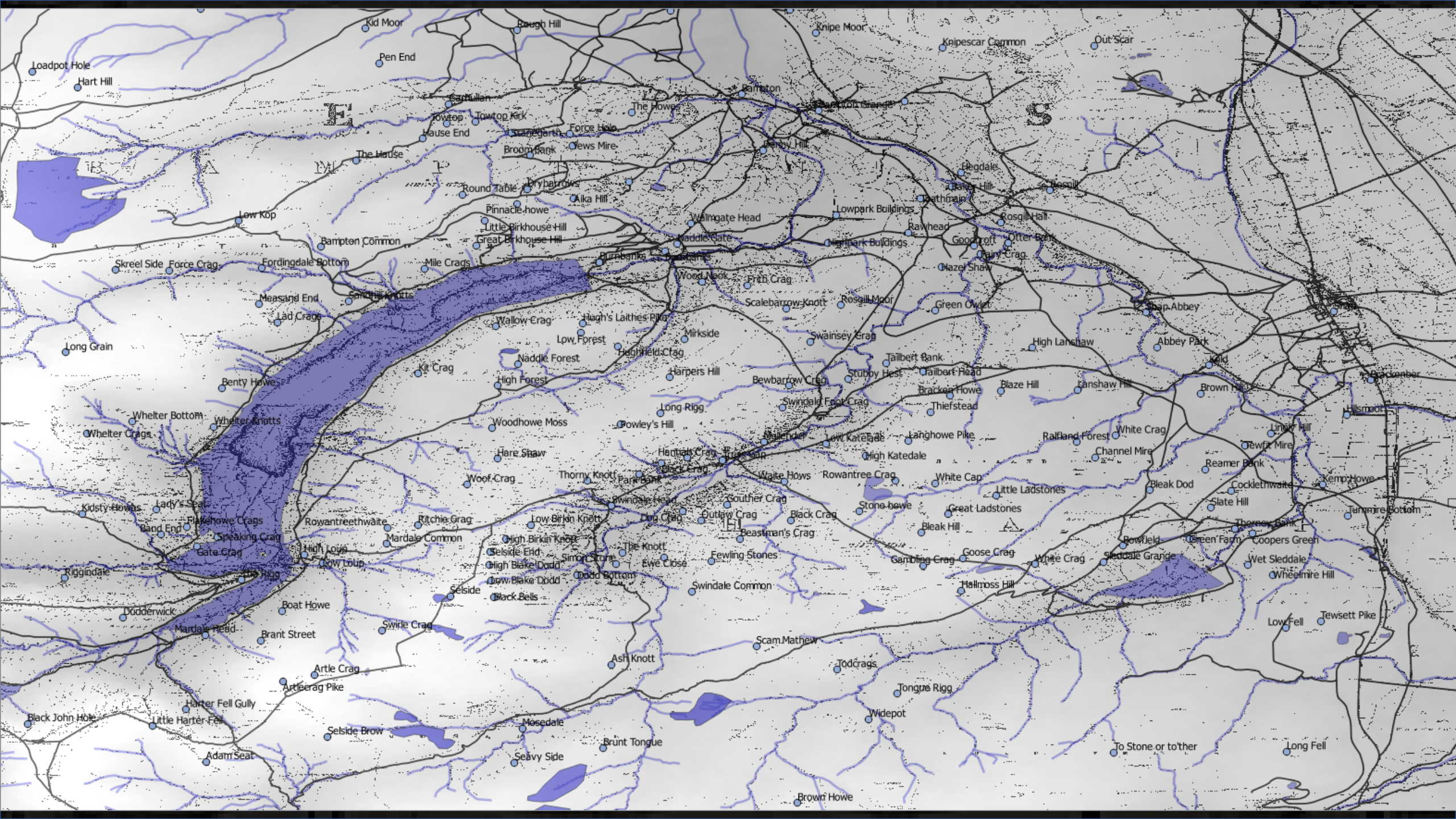
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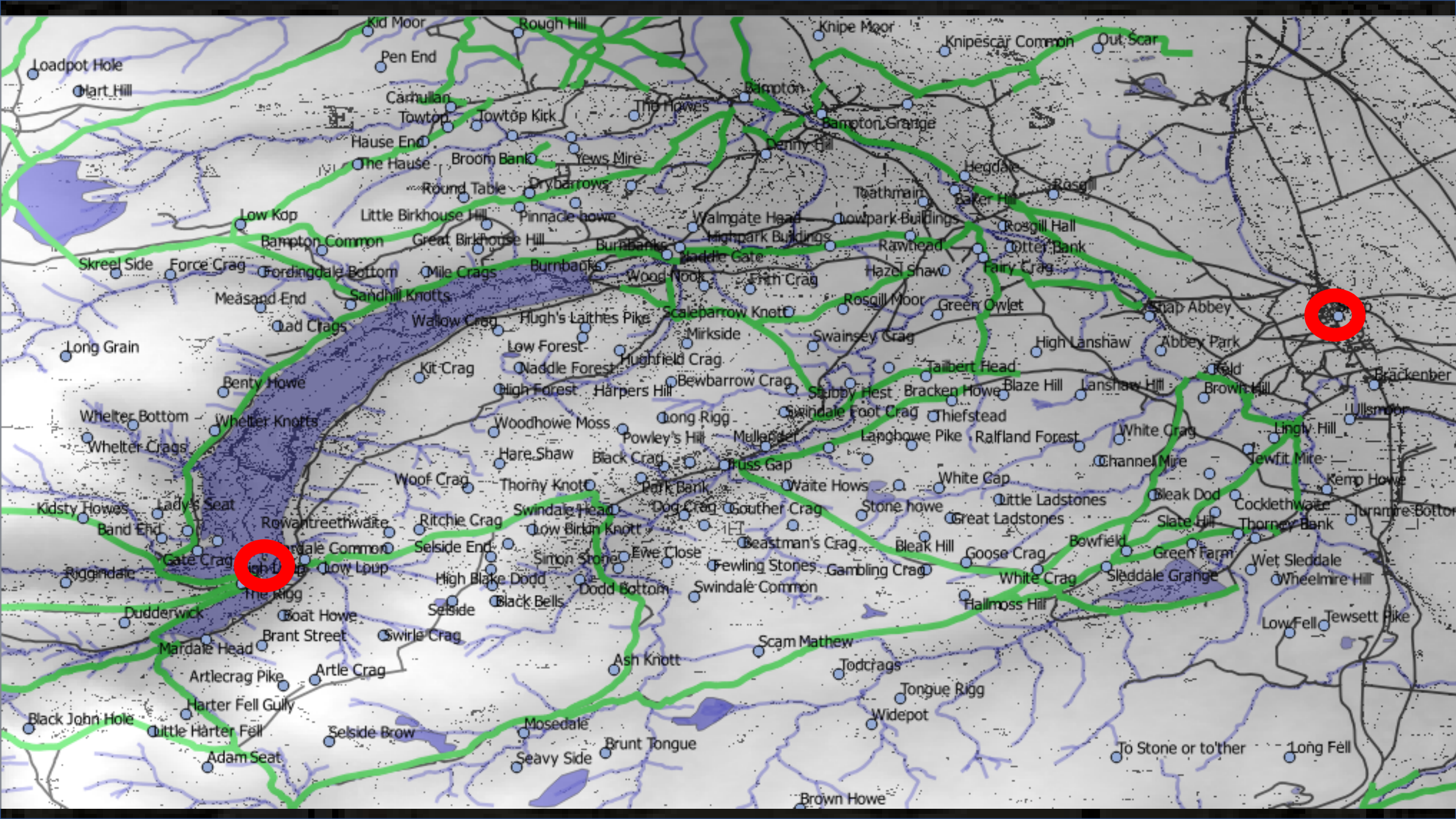


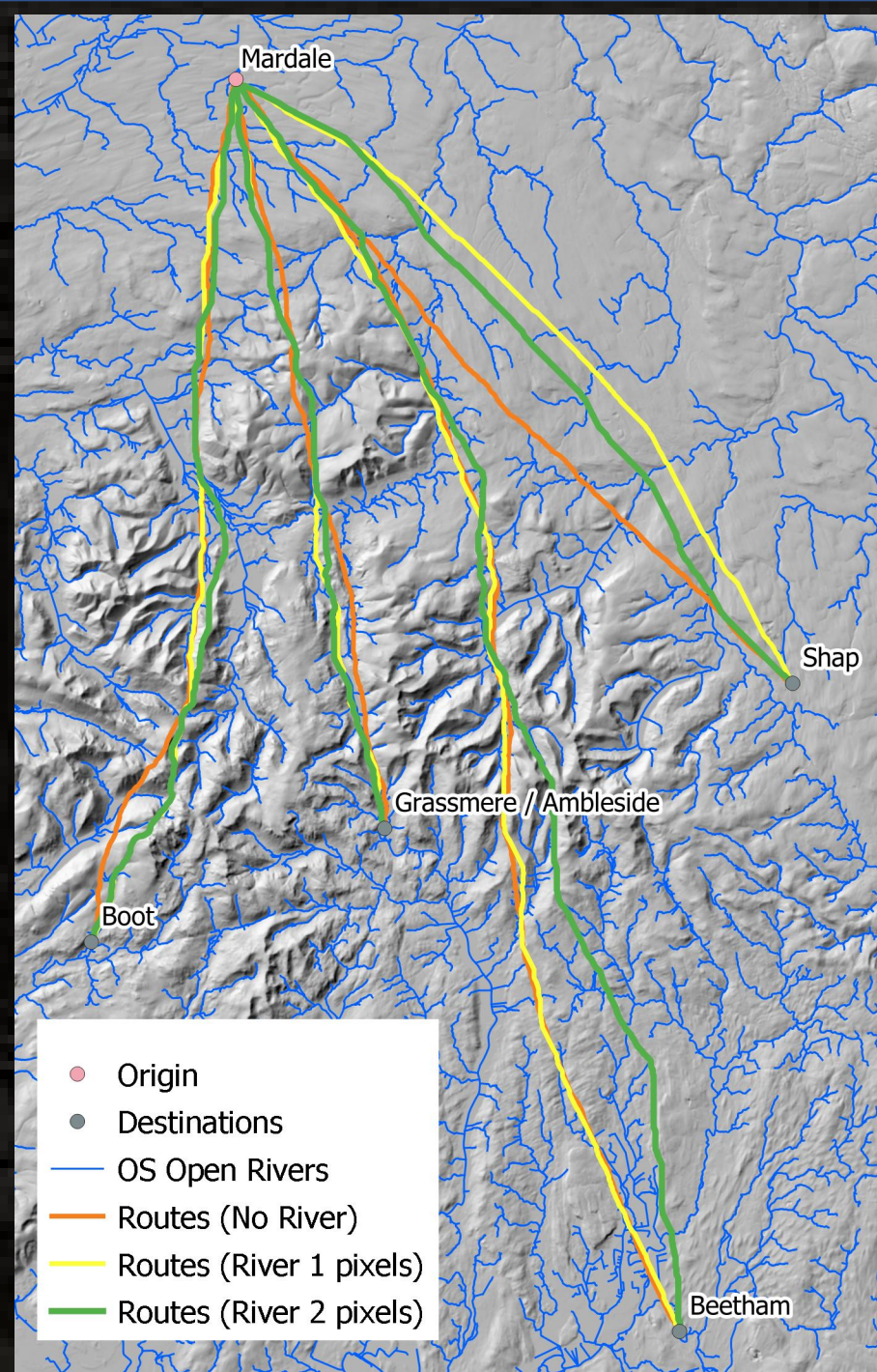


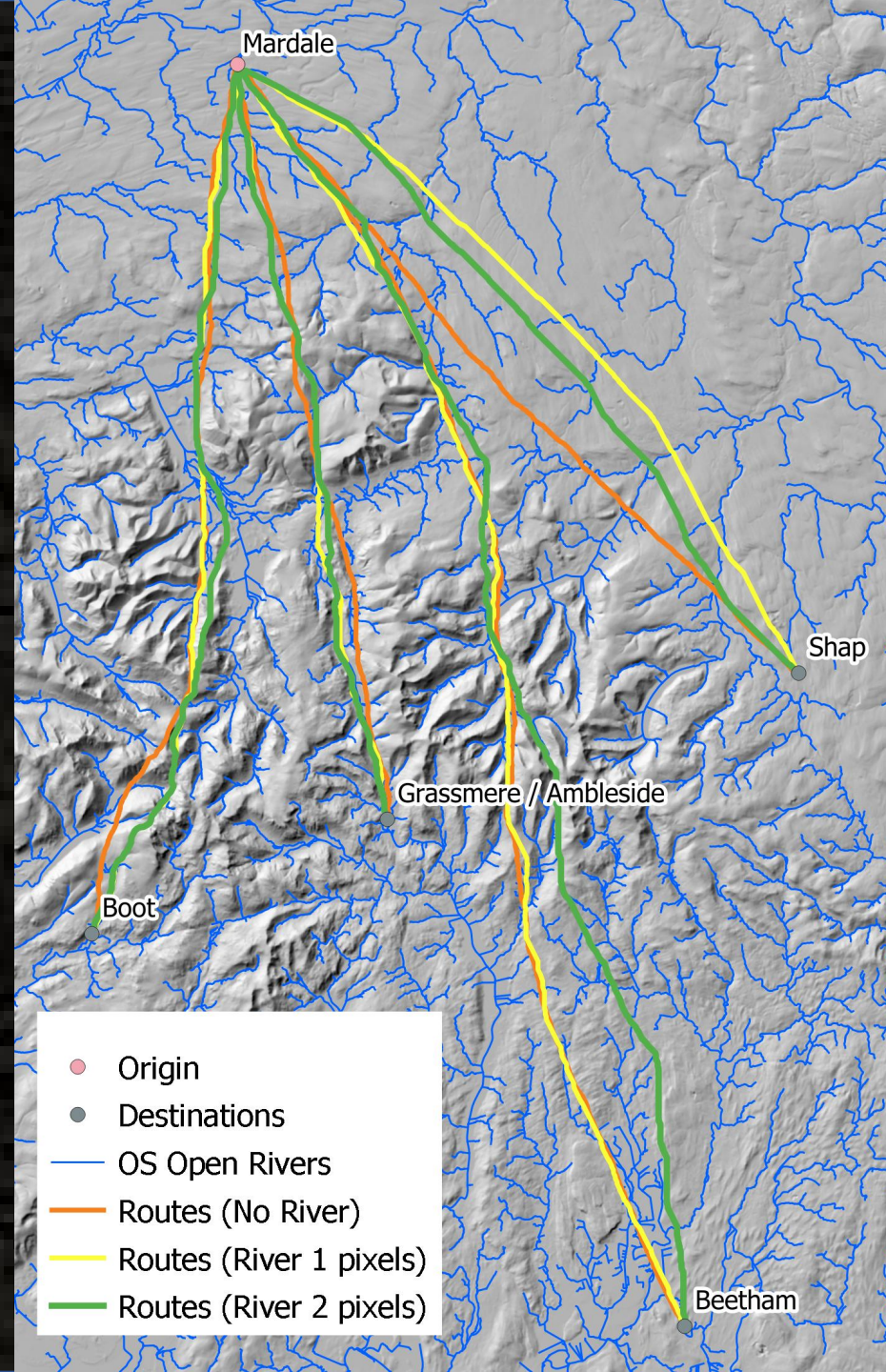












CORRESPONDENCE.

PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY BELIEVED TO BE CREATED BY THE PASSAGE OF A CORPSE.

(*Antea*, pp. 284-5).

I HAVE met with this idea in East Lancashire. Between thirty and forty years ago, a gentleman, (who by the way was a practising solicitor), lived at Worston, near Clitheroe. His house was situate some distance from the high road, and was approached simply by a track across the intervening fields. He had in contemplation the construction of a properly formed carriage drive to his house, and, on mentioning this to the landlady of the village inn at Worston, she cautioned him that if he allowed three funerals to pass over the road when made it would become a public highway. In the *Justice of the Peace* (a legal journal mainly devoted to matters affecting Magistrates and Local Authorities generally) for the 16th April, 1887, (vol. li, p. 249) "Undertaker" wrote as follows :—

"A case has recently happened in which a landowner refused

Letter to the Editor

From A. R. Vickery

FUNERALS PROHIBITED

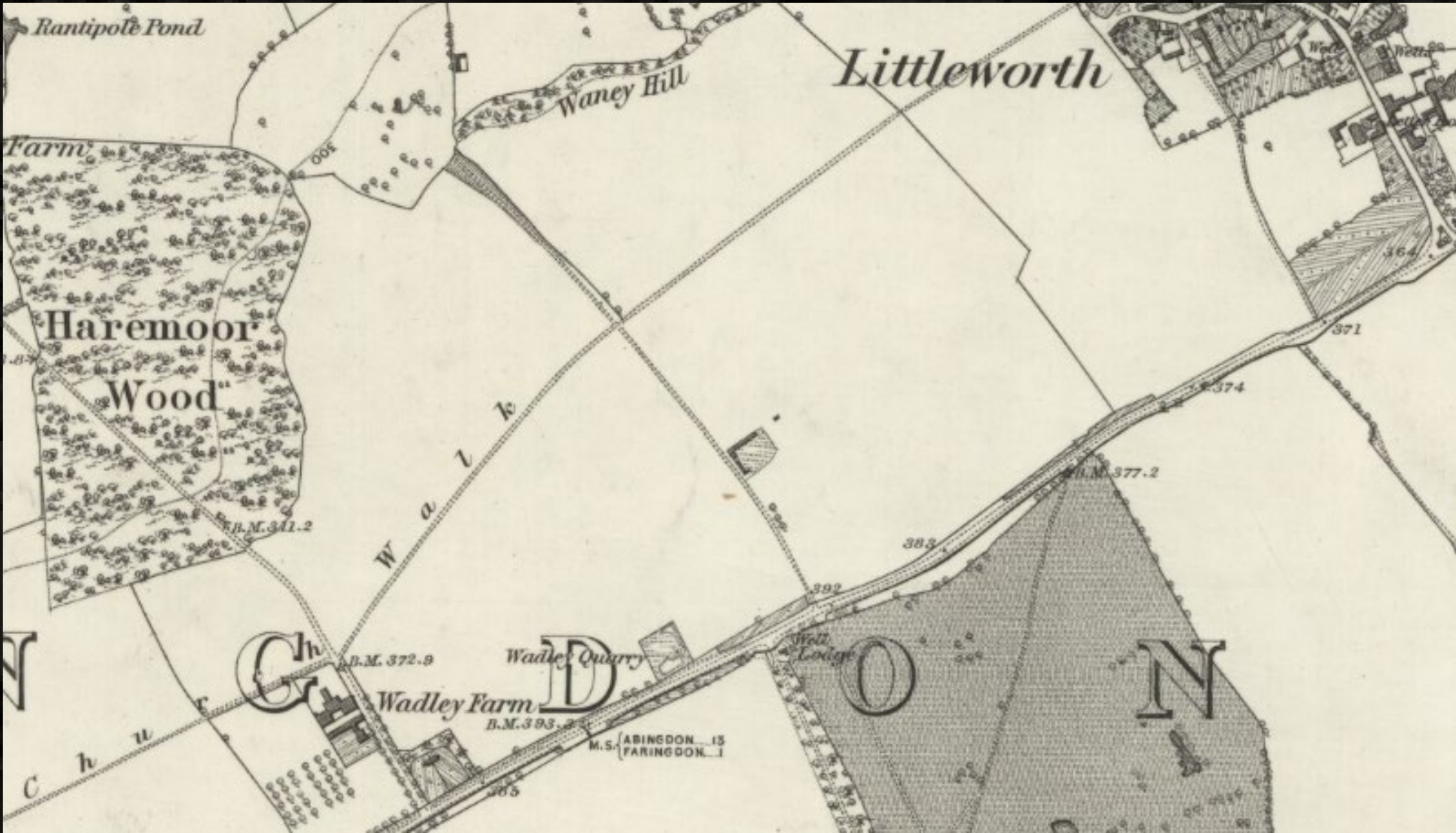
MANY writers on folklore (e.g. Christina Hole (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Superstitions*, 1961, pp. 83-5) mention the widespread belief that the passage of a corpse or funeral procession across private land establishes a public right of way. At the entrance to Palace Road in Brixton, South London, a wooden sign board in good condition states:

Private Road
Heavy Traffic
Funerals & Hawkers
Prohibited

Whilst the prohibition of heavy traffic and hawkers is understandable, the ban on funerals can only be explained in light of this belief, and might, therefore, be worthy of record in *Folklore*.

From L. R. Phelps, Oriel College, Oxford " In many parishes the church path is a familiar feature. Where I knew it best, at Littleworth, in Berkshire, it connected an outlying hamlet with its parish church at Farrington, some two miles off. The characteristic of a ' church path ' is that it is never ploughed over, but stands out from the field, hard and dry, and of a width sufficient to allow the bearers of a coffin to walk abreast along it. Now, the tradition which I heard as a boy in Kent was that when a funeral had passed along an existing path, the path could not be ploughed over, and was thus distinguished from the ordinary path, which had to be trodden out afresh from time to time. Perhaps we have here a stage in the growth of the legend that the passage of a coffin can make a right of way.





Berkshire VIII

Series: Ordnance Survey. Six-inch to the mile Surveyed 1876 to 1877, Published 1883





