

A SOLITARY WAR

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A SOLITARY WAR (1966)

covering the period September 1939 to July 1940

In September 1939, war with Germany casts its long shadow over town and countryside. Phillip Maddison, now farming in East Anglia, still stubbornly believes that Hitler's chief aim is the defence of Europe against Stalin; but he is engaged in a personal war on the 'bad lands' where his farm is situated, trying to subdue mounting debts and to create a fertile yeoman holding for his family. The portrayal of his struggles, both with himself and with the land, carry total conviction, as does the picture of life in England until the ending of the Battle of Britain.

(Dust-jacket)

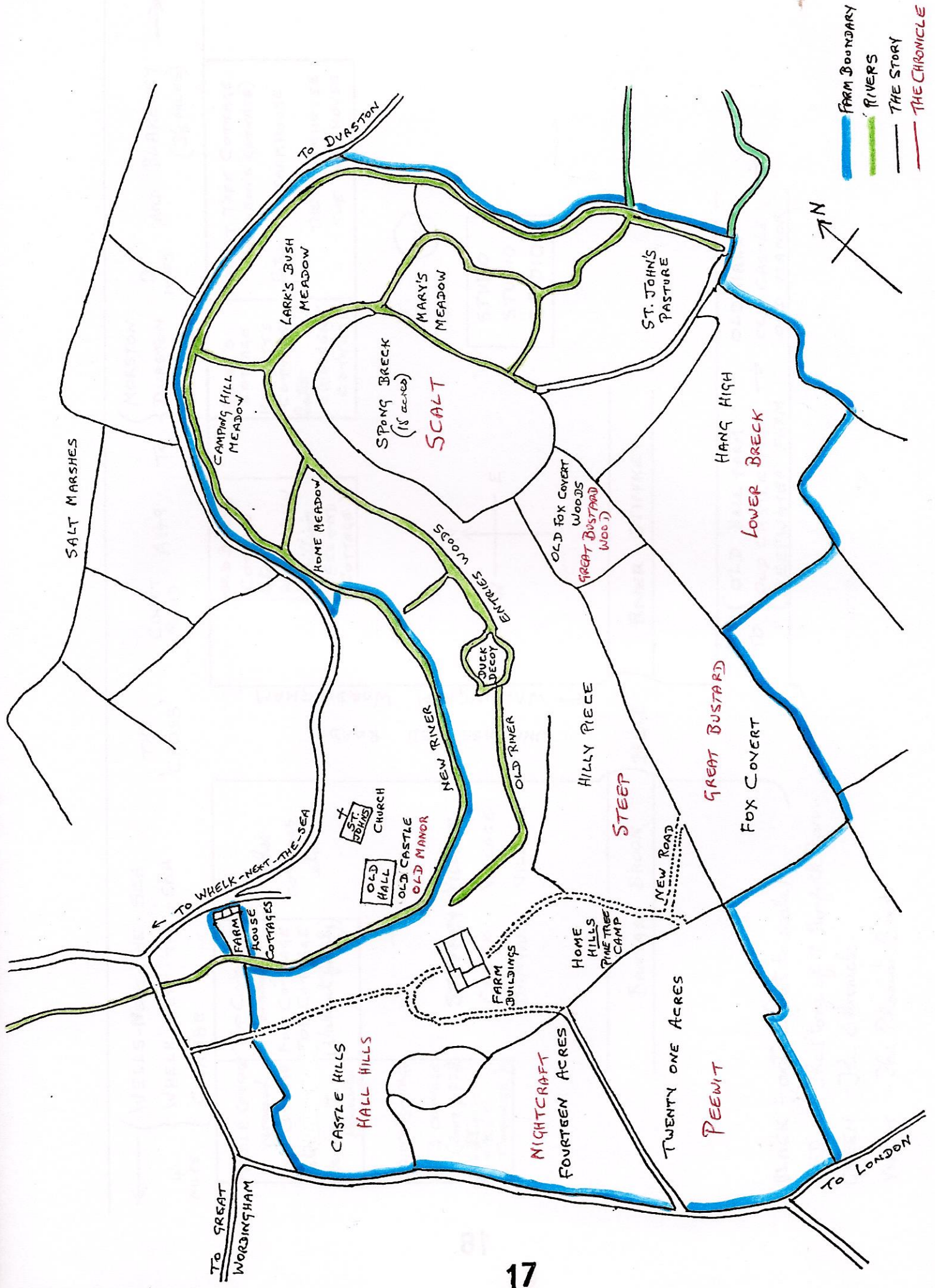
A WW2 Chronology, up to August 23rd 1940

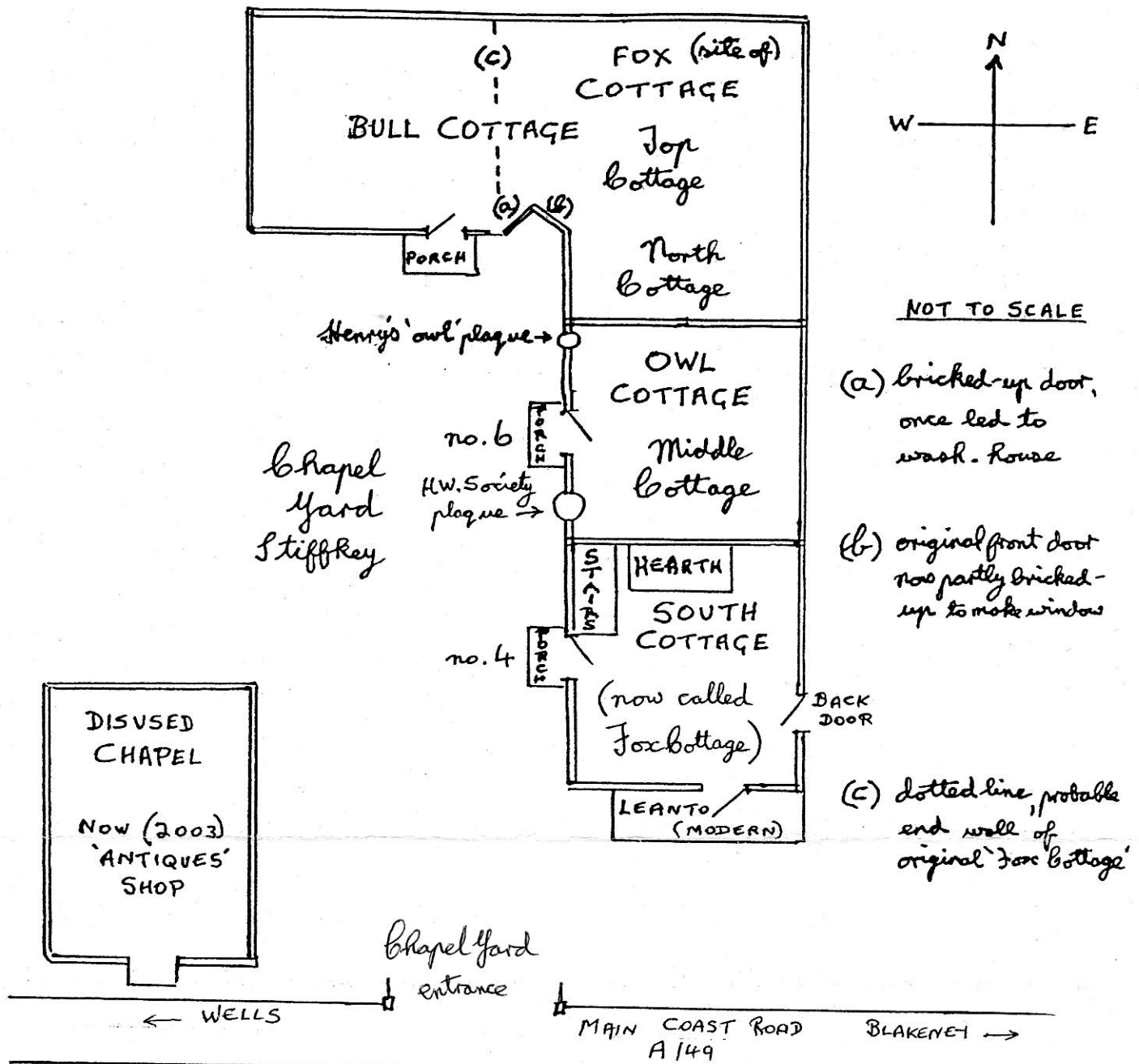
1939

- September 1st Germany invades Poland, destroying its air-force,
Warsaw bombed and bombarded
- 3rd Britain and France declare war on Germany, when Hitler does
not withdraw from Poland
- October B.E.F. to France
- November Hitler prepares his plans to invade north-western Europe
in the spring

1940

- February 16th the 'Altmark' rescue - see summary page 46
- April 9th Germany invades neutral Denmark and Norway -
Denmark overrun in 24 hours
- May 10th Chamberlain resigns, replaced by Churchill and National Gov't
- 10th Germany invades neutral Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg.
Hitler, enforcing his policy of 'Schrecklichkeit' (frightful-
ness), orders the destruction of Rotterdam
- 15th Dutch army surrenders
- 21st Germans advance into France, taking Amiens and Arras
- 26th B.E.F. starts to evacuate from Dunkirk
- 27th Belgium surrenders, King Leopold taken prisoner
- June 11th Italy declares war on Britain and France
- 14th Germans enter Paris
First concentration camps for European Jews established
- 22nd Franco-German Armistice (surrender) signed
- July 1st Hitler orders plans drawn up for invasion of Britain, with
a first provisional date of August 15th (after achieving
air supremacy), then September 15th ('Operation Sea Lion')
- 9th R.A.F. night-bomber raids on Germany
- 10th Battle of Britain begins (ends 'officially' October 31st)
- August 23rd London 'blitz' begins



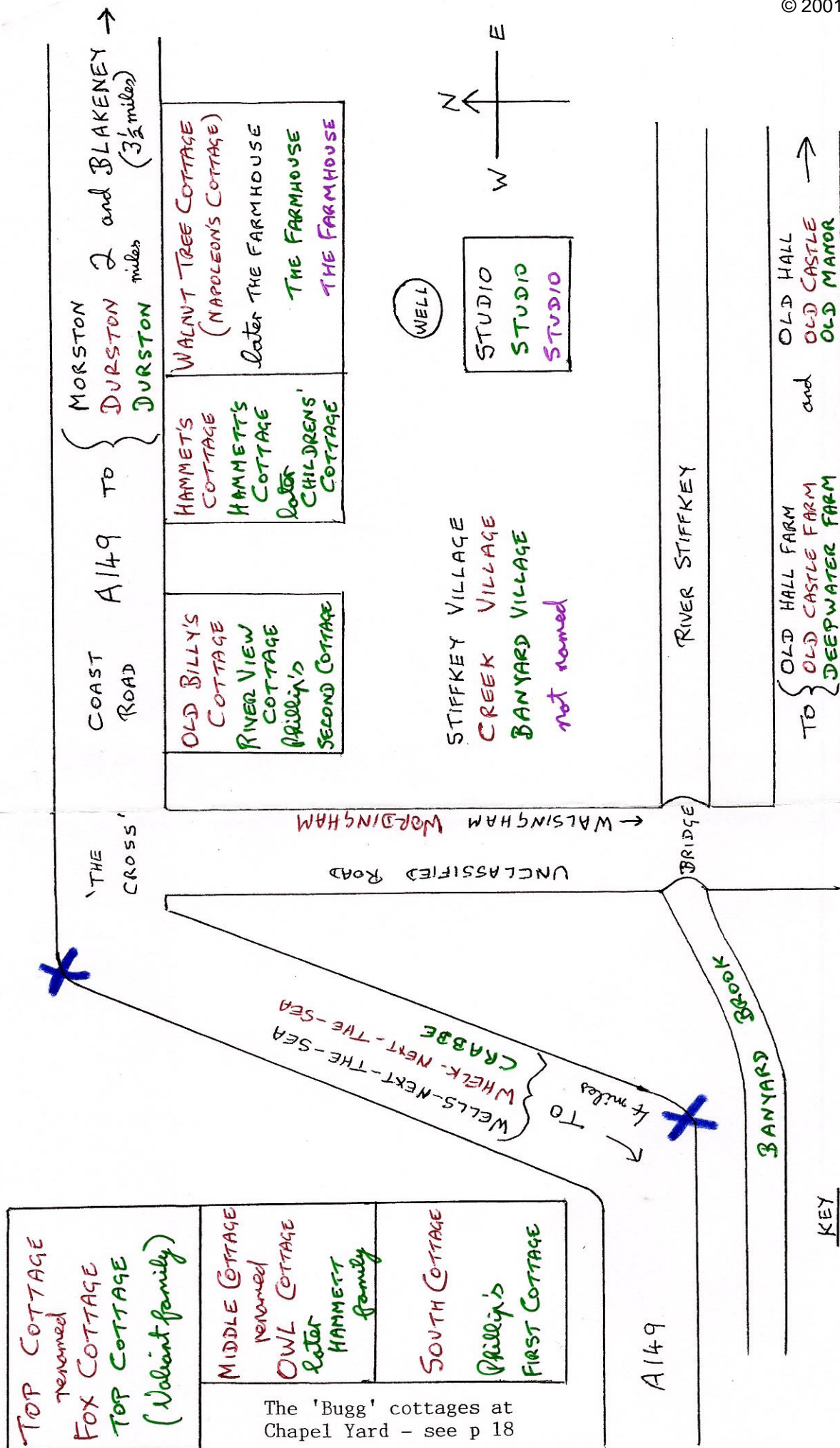



Since Henry's days the original Fox/Top/North Cottage has been incorporated into the new(ish) Bull Cottage as shown above. Owl Cottage is still known as such; officially it is no 6, Chapel Yard. South Cottage is now no 4, Chapel Yard; it is described in holiday brochures as Fox Cottage!

Bull Cottage bears no number on its door. I have searched in vain for nos 1,2,3 & 5, Chapel Yard. All three cottages in Chapel Yard are let out in the summer, it seems. The disused chapel/Antiques Centre is currently (May 2003) up For Sale. The single upstairs room of South Cottage (now called Fox Cottage), where Henry lived alone in the late 1930s until late 1939, is now divided into two very small bedrooms and a tiny bathroom.

Douglas Jordan tells me that opposite the entrance to Chapel Yard, across the road, during the war, stood the wooden fish-and-chip shop patronised by the soldiers of the camps around Stiffkey. Douglas lodged with his uncle Norman Jordan in South Cottage sometime in the 1940s; Norman is portrayed as the red-headed farm labourer 'Steve' in the Chronicle.

Henry's 'owl' plaque on Owl Cottage is actually the metal end-plate of a tie-rod which prevents the west wall of the cottage from collapsing outwards.



This rough sketch, obviously not to scale, is an attempt to get all the Williamson/Maddison cottages on a single page. The coast road, the A149, is fairly straight, and the bends shown here at  do not exist.

- BLACK - actual (not to scale)
- RED - The Story of A Norfolk Farm
- GREEN - The Grasshike
- VIOLET - The Passion Bird

The 'Chronicle' cottages - an index

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148(the 'old' cottage). (sometimes 'the cottage up the street')

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