

**YCCCART 2012/Y9
North Somerset HER2012/241**

Manual Survey of Bickley Industrial Area, Bickley Wood, Cleeve

**YATTON, CONGRESBURY, CLAVERHAM AND CLEEVE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH TEAM (YCCCART)**

General Editor: Vince Russett



Early spring in Bickley quarry

Page No.	Contents
3	Abstract Acknowledgements Introduction
4	Site location Land use and geology
5	Historical and archaeological context Survey objectives Methodology
6	Results
8	Discussion References

Abstract

In the spring of 2007 and autumn of 2008 Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team (YCCCART) investigated several sites in an area of the woods at Bickley. Some of the sites were related to quarrying, but there were also a number of boundary stones, plus the remains of World War II activities. It was decided to include all these sites in one report, as they are closely grouped in the same area.

Acknowledgements.

This survey could not have been carried out without the willing permission of the owner, Mrs. Mary Campbell, whose unfailing welcome and delicious biscuits greeted us on every visit.

YCCCART is also very grateful to Vince Russett for editing this report.

Introduction

YCCCART is one of a number of Community Archaeology teams across North Somerset, supported by the North Somerset Council Development Management Team.

The objective of the Community Archaeology in North Somerset (CANS) teams is to carry out archaeological fieldwork, for the purpose of recording, better understanding and management of the heritage of North Somerset.

Site Location



Fig 1: Site of industrial activity at Bickley

Bickley lies in the south west part of the parish of Cleeve, in North Somerset, some 12 km south west of Bristol. The site itself is at ST4490 6500, and is bordered by the boundary between Congresbury and Cleeve parishes on the south west and adjoins the A370 Bristol to Weston-super-Mare road on the north. It is in private ownership, and there are no public footpaths across the site.

Land use and geology

The site lies on the south west slope of Broadfield Down, which is an upland area underlain by the Clifton Down limestone formation. The site is thickly wooded, and part of it is currently used to graze a small herd of Tamworth pigs.

Historical and archaeological context

There is unfortunately very little direct information about the quarries at Bickley, though one shown on the 1885 Ordnance Survey map as "Old Quarry" appears to be in this location, and the area of the quarries appears as a single discrete fenced area within the wood on the 1821 map of Yatton (SRO D\P\yat/13/1/3).

The slit trench (figure 3) was dug for members of the Home Guard during World War II, when it was used as an observation and guard post, overlooking a stretch of Kenn Moor towards the Severn Estuary. Guards were accommodated in a cottage (now demolished) adjoining the present Star Inn, and spent regular periods of guard duty in the trench, both at night and during the day (*pers comm* Mr B.Crossman).

Survey objectives

The survey had the following objectives:

1. To examine the woods at Bickley for archaeological features.
2. To record previously unrecorded sites.
3. To provide training in manual surveying for YCCCART members.

Methodology

A simple manual tape and offset survey was completed and drawn at a scale of 1:200 (figure 2). The positions of five boundary stones were recorded, and the slit trench was measured and recorded at a scale of 1:100 (figure 3).

Results

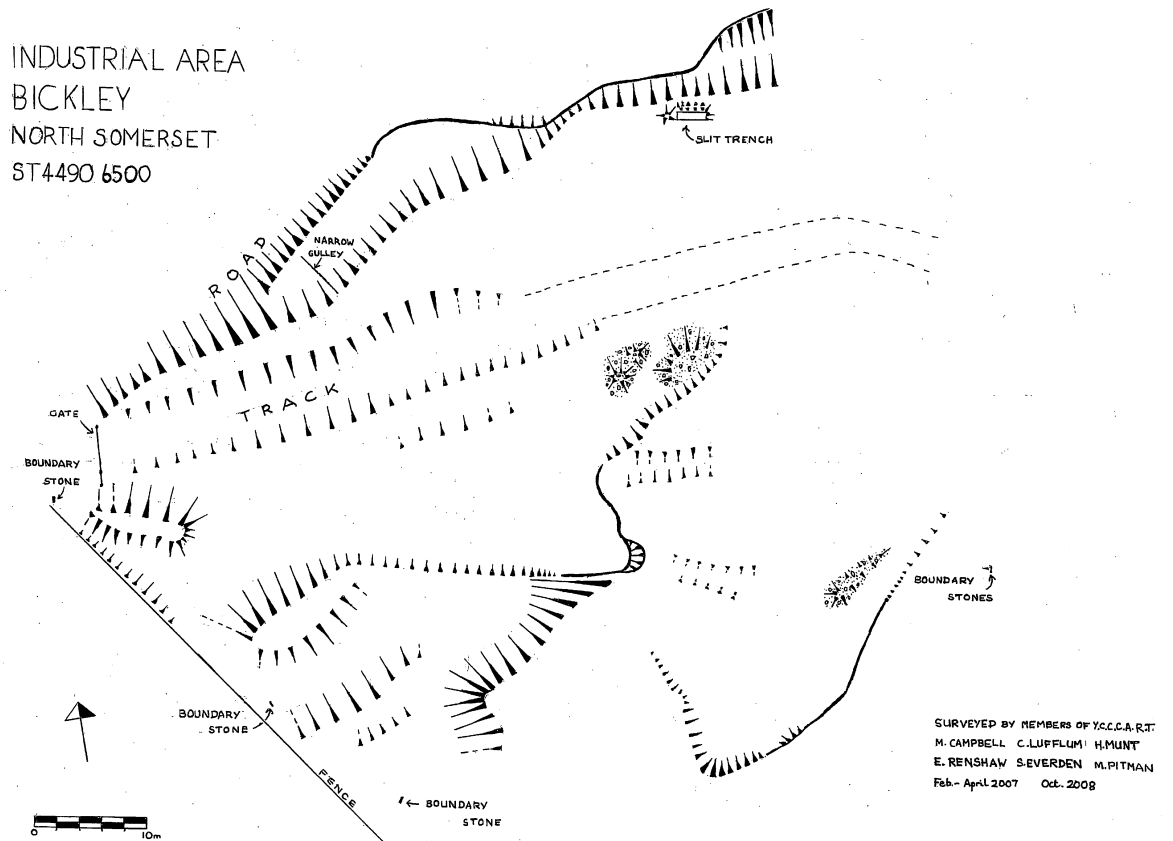


Fig 2: Bickley industrial area

The survey revealed at least two worked quarry faces; the lower face can be seen in the cover photograph. Working platforms were apparent in front of both upper and lower faces, with the remains of tracks in two places, and several piles of small loose stone. The main track continues past the quarry and along the hill side, where it is known as Cole's Path while to the north of the track the ground begins to drop towards the A370 road.

The slit trench was situated on the brow of a steep drop, with a good view to the north and north east. It is approximately 2.5 m. long and 1.0m wide, and is now about 50cm. deep, but has clearly filled up since its construction. The spoil was used to form a low parapet to the east and north, and a higher and larger one to the west, possibly for extra protection from the prevailing winds.

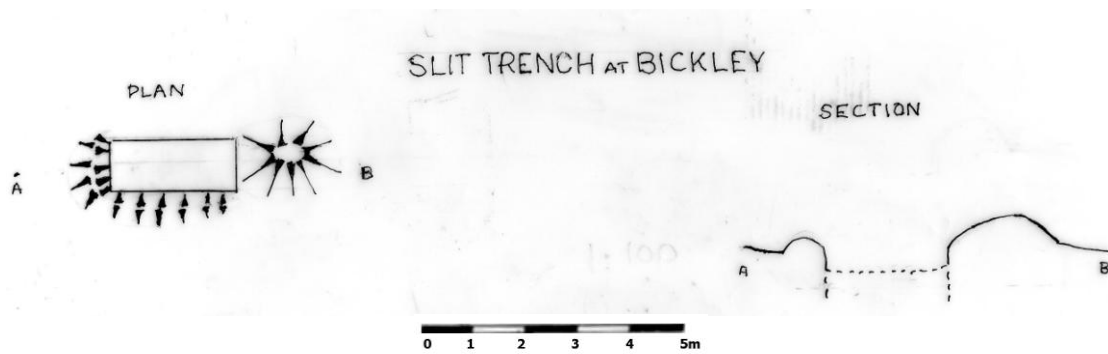


Fig 3: Slit trench

A total of five boundary stones were recorded, the most northerly on the line of the parish boundary beside the entrance gate to the track. The next two are on the same line (approximately), and are (respectively) about 27m. and 41m. further to the south. The last two were close together, at right angles to each other and above the upper quarry face, about 84 m. from the gate, and these are carved with the letters "TW" on one face. They are two of a group of 22 stones in Bickley and Cleeve woods with similar carving, discussed by Vince Russett in YCCART report no. Y6/2010. It is believed that the initials are those of the Vicar of Yatton from 1809 to 1830, Thomas Wickham.



Fig 4: One of the "TW" boundary stones

Discussion

The area around Bickley has provided an abundance of archaeological evidence of many periods, beginning with the tip of a mesolithic microlith found during excavation in 1989 (Walker 2003: 95). The most notable evidence, perhaps, was produced by the long period of excavation in one of the fields, which showed settlement from the early 12th century (Ponsford 2003), but other possibly earlier sites include three enclosures (YCCCART reports Y22/2010, Y28/2010) situated in the Bickley woods, which have produced no dating evidence as yet. The subjects of this report have brought some aspects of the history of Bickley up to the 20th century, and it is likely that the thick woods around the fields will produce further sites of interest in the future.

References

- Ponsford, M. 2003 'Excavations at a Saxo-Norman Settlement, Bickley, Cleeve, 1982-89', *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society*, 146, 47-112.
- Walker, E.A. 2003 'Lithic finds', in Ponsford, 2003, 95-97.

All YCCCART reports are published on their website at www.ycccart.co.uk

Author: Shirley Everden April 20th 2012