

**YCCART 2012/Y1
North Somerset HER 2012/037**

Resistivity survey at Bickley Orchard, Cleeve, 2006

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

General Editor: Vince Russett



Braving the elements, Bickley Orchard

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Abstract

In 2006, YCCCART carried out a small resistivity survey in the orchard at Bickley. The field has been excavated in the past, revealing medieval occupation and a house site. It was also for many years used as the site for the experimental firing of a pottery kiln.

The survey revealed a few features, primarily the line of what may be an earlier wood bank, and a number of parallel linear features, thought to be field drains. No further traces of medieval occupation were seen.

Acknowledgements

YCCCART is grateful to the Council for British Archaeology South-West for the loan of a TR/CIA resistivity meter and accompanying software.

This survey would also not have been carried out without the willing permission of the landowner, Mrs M Campbell.

The author is grateful for the hard work by the members of YCCCART in performing the survey.

Introduction

Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team (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, and better understanding and management of, the heritage of North Somerset.

Site Location

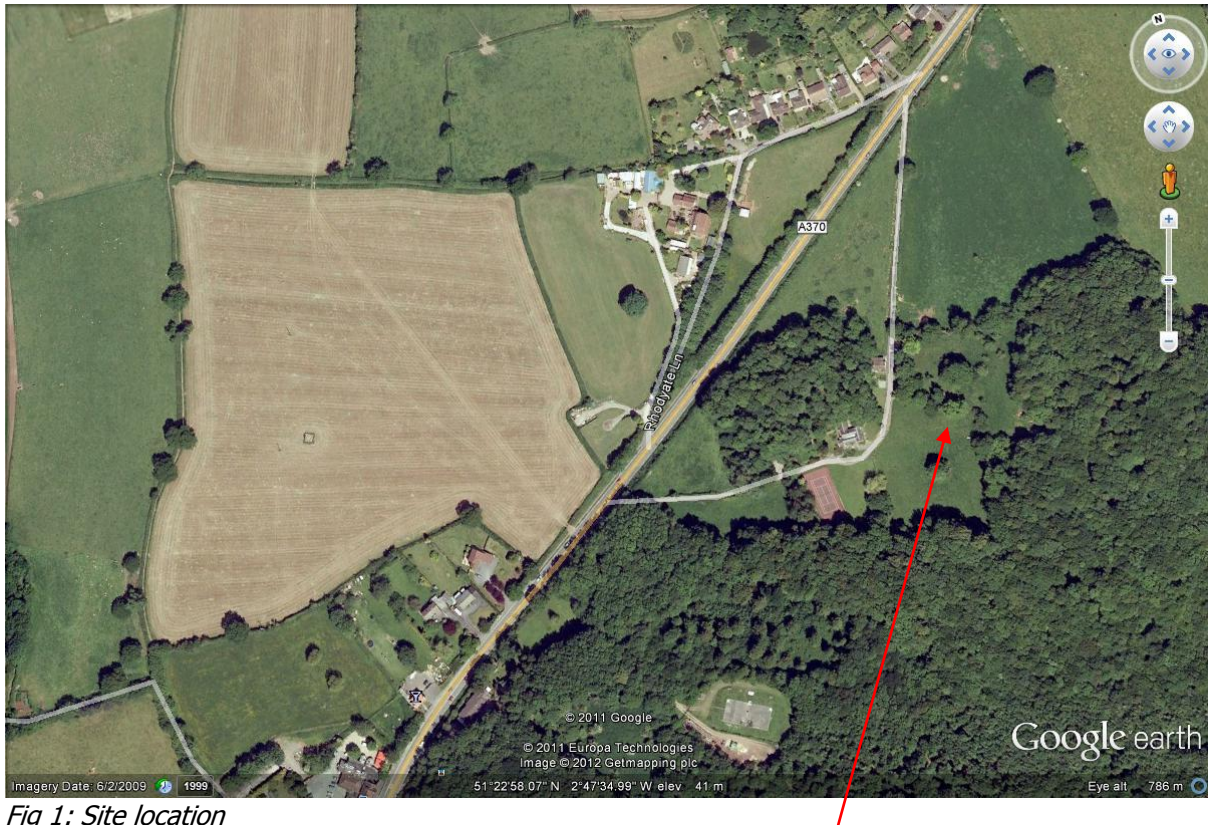


Fig 1: Site location

The site is off the A370, in the parish of Cleeve, in North Somerset. It is centred on ST4516765100.

The field is privately owned, and there are no rights of way, although the site can be easily seen from the permissive public footpath running along the south edge of the field.

Land use and geology

The field lies entirely on the upper edge of the Mercia Mudstones, although outcrops of the heavily mineralised Carboniferous Limestones of Broadfield Down outcrop both in and adjacent to the field. An old orchard with some standing trees, the field is mainly used for grazing sheep.

Historical & archaeological context

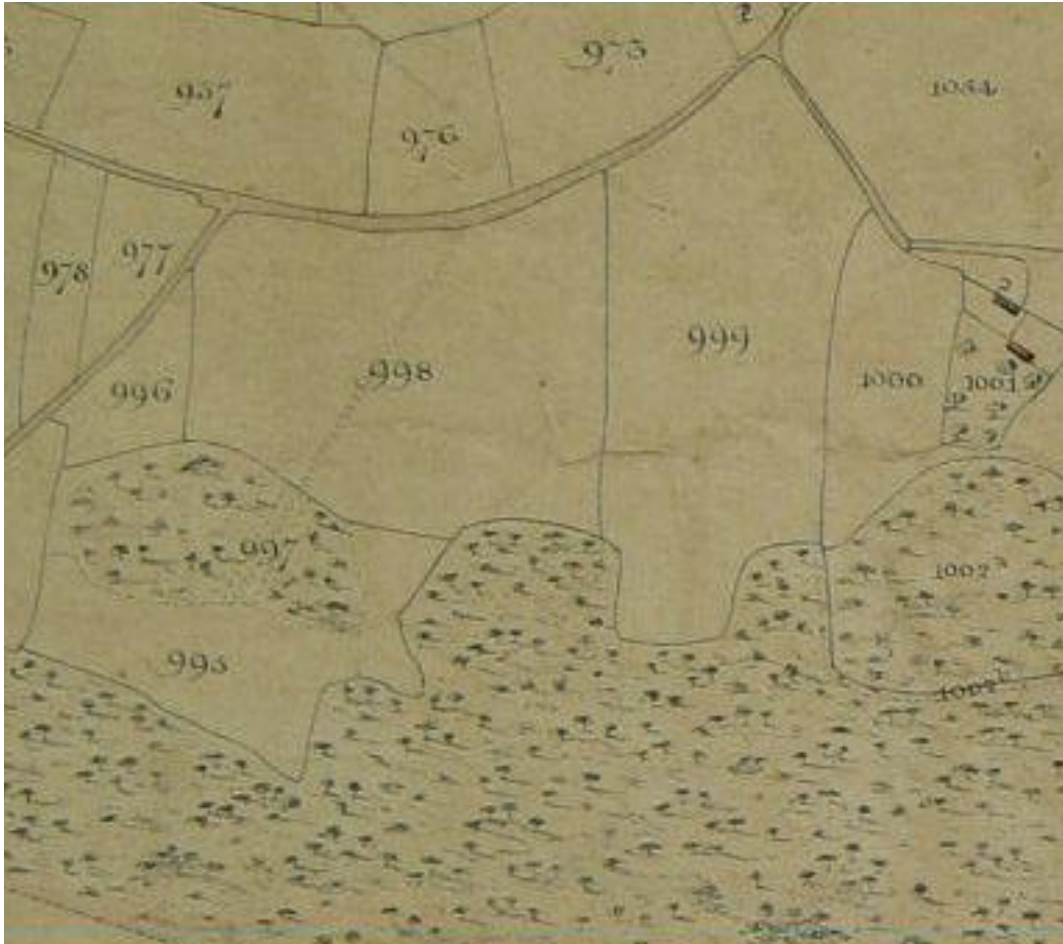


Fig 2 : 1821 Map of Yatton.

The surveyed field is to the right of the field number 997. Note this map was made before the adjoining Bickley and Bickley Cottage were built.

The 1821 map apportionment, relating to the map above, shows the field as Bickley, almost certainly derived from an OE 'Bican' + 'leah' (clearing belonging to a man named Bica), in use as pasture for sheep. The fields are very typical 'assart' shapes, almost certainly formed by medieval clearance of woodland (Campbell 1988).

Excavations (Ponsford 2003) revealed two successive post hole buildings, dating between the 11th and 12th centuries AD. There was also evidence for garden cultivation, and many pits. The excavators also sectioned the adjacent wood bank, but no dating evidence was found.

Survey objectives

The survey had the following objectives.

- 1) To examine the field for any further structures relating to the medieval settlement.
- 2) To use the survey to further train YCCCART members and members of Community Archaeology in North Somerset (CANS) in the use of the TR/CIA resistivity meter.

Methodology

The survey of field was undertaken during January 2006 by teams from YCCCART using a TR/CIA resistivity meter, and surveying 2 20m square grids.

The completed survey was downloaded TR/CIA software in the field using a Dell Latitude D510 laptop.

The report was written in Microsoft Word 2007.

Photographs were taken by members of YCCCART, and remain the copyright of YCCCART.

Results



Fig 4: The result of the resistivity survey (processed with Photoshop Gaussian blur filter: high resistance is pale, low dark)

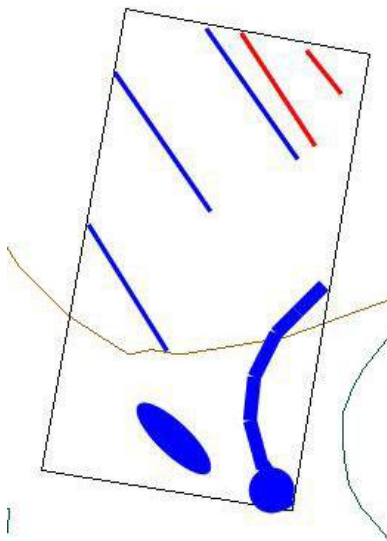


Fig 5: Interpretation of results (north at top)

The results (high resistance blue) shows an arc of high resistance to the lower right of the survey, which runs out from the adjacent wood bank and back into it. This is probably best interpreted as the line of an earlier superceded bank.

The linear features running SE – NW at the top of the survey are most likely to be the remains of field drains, since this is the prevailing direction of slope of the field. It seems likely that those that still work are of high resistance, since drier, while those which are blocked retain water.

Recommendations

This small evaluation by geophysical survey does not seem to have revealed archaeology of significant note, so no further work here is recommended

References

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Campbell, M. 1988 | <i>Cleeve Parish Survey</i> Bristol and Avon Archaeological Research Group, Bristol |
| Ponsford, M. 2003 | Excavations at a Saxo-Norman settlement, Bickley, Cleeve 1982-89
<i>Somerset Archaeology and Natural History 146: 47-112</i> |

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Appendix: Site photos



'Come on, come on...more wire, please'



Team with rather dashing hats and wood bank in the background. Deep background is the experimental pottery kiln.