

**YCCCART 2011 / Y9
North Somerset HER 2011/205**

Castle Batch, Worle

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

General Editor: Vince Russett



Surveying beside the motte

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Abstract

YCCCART has agreed with the Heritage Lottery Fund to undertake a project over two years commencing May 2009 to establish the extent of the Congresbury Roman kiln sites and investigate the archaeology of the environs around Cadbury Hill, Congresbury.

We were invited to carry out geophysical surveys close to the site of a known medieval castle motte at Castle Batch park in Worle. This is to inform the management plan for the site, which is owned by North Somerset Council. The surveys have established the existence of substantial archaeology to the west of the Scheduled motte, and these findings will be incorporated into future plans for the park.

Acknowledgements

A Heritage Lottery Grant enabled the purchase, by YCCCART, of a Bartington 601 Gradiometer and Geoscan RM 15 Resistance Meter without which this survey could not have been undertaken.

This survey would also not have been carried out without the willing permission of North Somerset Council, the landowner

The authors are grateful for the hard work by the members of YCCCART, NEAT, CLEAT & WESMART in performing the survey and Vince Russett for editing this report.

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 of, the heritage of North Somerset.

Site Location



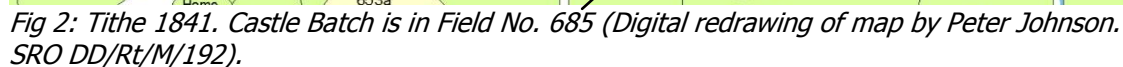
Fig 1: Site location. The survey site is to the left of the motte.

Land use and geology

The site is park land open to the public. It is regularly mown to keep the grass short, but scrub has been allowed to develop on the Scheduled motte, and it is intended to begin removal of this in the coming winter of 2011-12.

The geology of the site is at the junction of the Triassic and Jurassic geologies: the survey site lies almost entirely on the Rhaetic Limestone, with bands of the lower Tea Green Marls to the south, and Blue Lias to the north.

Frances A Knight in the Seaboard of Mendip (1902, London, J M Dent & Co, p248) states "To the right of the road leading from Worle to Wick St Lawrence, on a ridge called Castle Batch, is a large tumulus made apparently of earth, but which has never been disturbed. It is a round, crater-shaped barrow, 160 feet in diameter, and 17 feet high, with a hollow in the centre 75 feet across. It is surrounded by a broad but shallow ditch, from 15 to 25 feet wide, and it has an entrance on the south-west."



The North Somerset Historic Environment Record (Number 00202) records the feature as a motte (a ditched mound, usually artificial, which supported the strongpoint of a motte-and-bailey castle, overshadowing the bailey or enclosed courtyard). The record is based on that provided in the description of the monument in the Scheduling documents, ultimately derived from English Heritage.

The field name 'Castle'

It is ironic that although archaeologists frequently 'discover' new earthwork sites, such as Roman forts, iron age hill forts and medieval mottes, it is all too obvious that local people were quite aware of the existence of the structures and that they had been inhabited, well before antiquarians became aware of them.

This is reflected in the field name 'Castles', very obvious in Fig 2 above. The name occurs over a wide area: clearly the motte as it stands was a conspicuous landscape feature before development took place. Ironically, the widespread use of the name in the area had led the field in which the motte stands to acquire the tautological word 'Batch', a SW English term meaning 'mound, slope, hill', whose origins are not clear.

Other similar namings are, for example, at Charterhouse Roman fort (e.g. Skinner 1826) and Burlage hill fort, West Harptree (not discovered by archaeologists until the 1950s, after a Skinner reference in the 1820s), although the 'Castle' field name was recorded in 1610, if not earlier (Russett 1986). The name is in origin OE *'castel'*, which in its original meaning can be 'castle' in the modern sense, although it can also mean 'town' or 'village'. It ultimately, of course, derives from the Latin *'castellum'*, a diminutive of *'castrum'* = 'fortification, camp' (Bosworth and Toller 1898: 134).

Other castle earthworks (e. g. the earthwork castle at Lockinghead, in the parish of Locking, North Somerset) are not named as such, but instead, attract the place-name 'bury' (OE *'burh'* = 'castle, fortification', and by extension even 'dwelling surrounded by a bank of earth') (Bosworth and Toller 1898: 146). It is not entirely clear why either of these should be chosen over the other, but the absence of 'bury' names at Castle Batch implies there is something about this site which causes the alternative 'castle' to be used: could it possibly be the (former) existence of visible wall fabric at the site? This may be so, but of course in contrary, most hill forts take the suffix '-bury', even those like Dolebury in Churchill or Worlebury in Weston-super-Mare, where there is definitely exposed stone, and sometimes even walling visible.

Cognate word *'ceaster'* seems to be mainly used of larger sites, such as Exeter (OE *Exanceaster*) or even simply Chester (OE *ceastre*) and these are probably sites that, at the time they received their OE names were still recognisably Roman settlements. A fourth word *'ceosol'* giving rise the modern 'chessel' or 'Chesil' (as in the beach), is sometimes thought to indicate (Roman) settlement, but this should be used with caution, since its literal meaning is 'gravel', and only occasionally, by extension 'gravelly or stony soil' which may imply stone structures being ploughed out.

Survey objectives

The survey had the following objectives.

- 1) To identify any archaeological features, particularly the bailey wall, since the line of a possible ploughed-out bailey wall was noticed on Environment Agency lidar data.
- 2) To use the survey to further train YCCCART members and members of Community Archaeology in North Somerset (CANS) in the use of the Bartington 601 gradiometer, and RM 15 resistance meter.

Methodology

The survey was undertaken during the period May to September 2011, by teams from YCCCART, CLEAT, NEAT & WESMART, using a Bartington 601 gradiometer and Geoscan RM 15 Resistance Meter, with settings as per the site record in Appendix 1.

The completed survey was downloaded to an ArcheoSurveyor and Snuffler programmes

ArcheoSurveyor composites were adjusted using the following filters

Band Weight Equaliser

Grad shade

Despiked

Destriped (Gradiometer only)

Clip SD2

Edge match (Resistivity only)

Colour filters: Red, Green Blue 2

The report was written in Microsoft Word 2007.

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

Results

A) Gradiometry

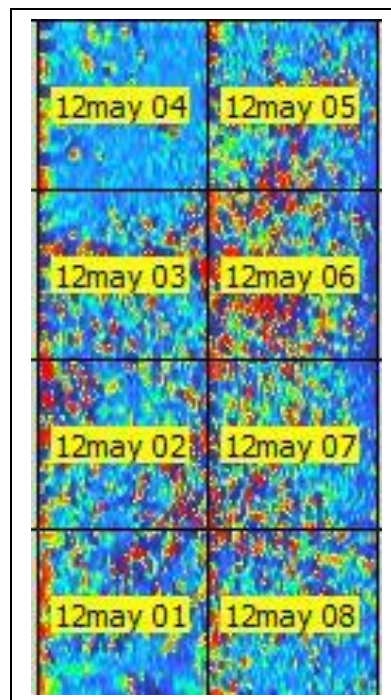
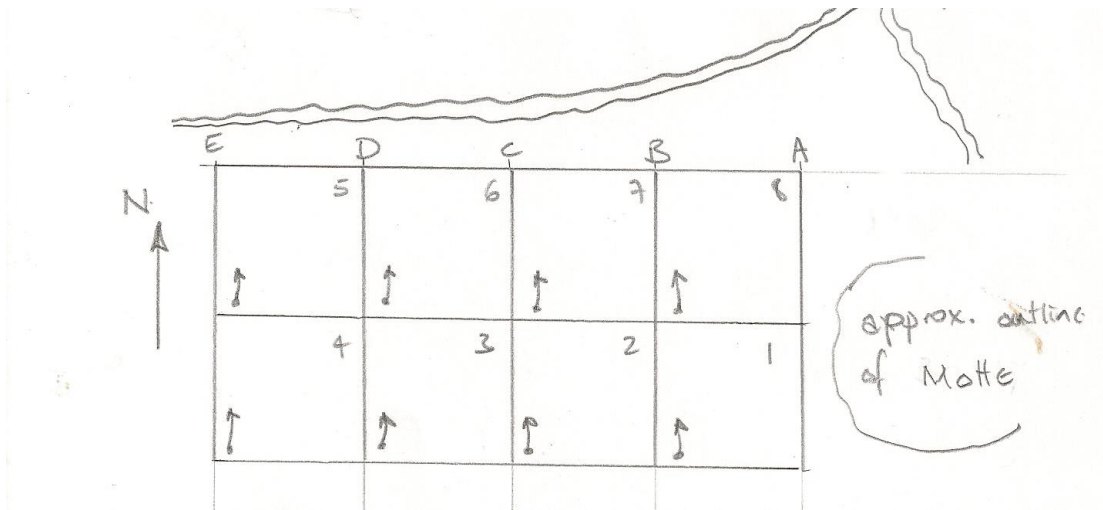


Fig 3: Above is the grid layout & below the grid names on ArcheoSurveyor.

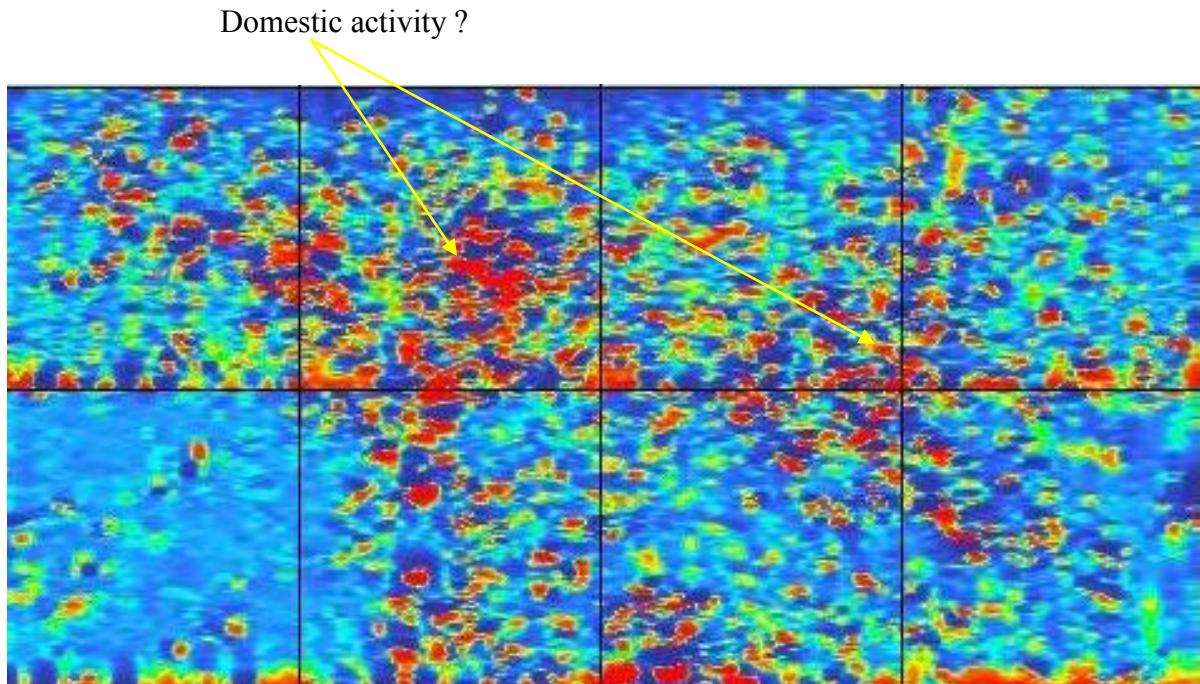
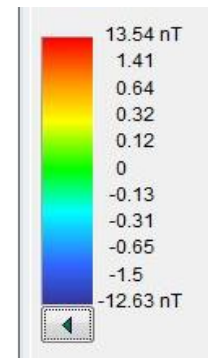


Fig 4: Shade view colour image. High readings are red.

The results from the gradiometer survey are intriguing. There are definitely two areas of enhanced magnetic signals (see Fig 4), which are almost certainly the result of settlement activity, such as domestic hearths or industrial activity.

This is the sort of activity that would be seen in a castle bailey, where domestic dwellings and halls, and smithies and other industrial workplaces would be found. There is some indication within these that some of the anomalies form rectangular patterns: that to the west some 21m x 7m, while that to the

east appears to be about 20m square: the first could just about be a large building, but the latter seems too large: it is just possible that this may be a set of magnetically-enhanced post-hole fills, but excavation would be needed to test this idea.



To the east end of the excavation, a semi-circular low magnetic response is the ditch of the castle motte: a number of small linear features in the centre south of the survey are currently inexplicable. The scatter of dipoles across the site is hardly surprising in a public park.

Generally, gradiometry results in castle baileys seem to be unhelpful: for example, with geophysicists remarking on this (e.g. English Heritage 1996) and there is a spread of types of results, the most useful seeming to be at Laxton Castle, where gradiometry recognised a former building as a series of dipoles (Kincey et al 2008: 21).

B) Resistivity

Grid layout

Grid 3 29 Sep ←	Grid 3 1 Sep ↓	Grid 1 28 July ↓	Grid 1 21 July ↓
Grid 2 29 Sep ←	Grid 1 1 Sep ↓	Grid 2 28 July ↓	Grid 2 21 July ↓
Grid 1 29 Sep ←	Grid 2 1 Sep ↓	Grid 4 21 July ↓	Grid 3 21 July ↓

Fig 5: RM 15 grid lay out.

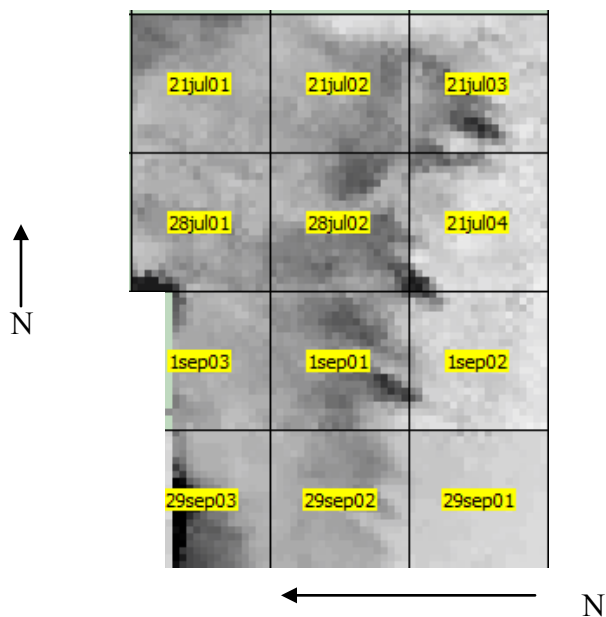


Fig 6: Grid names on ArcheoSurveyor

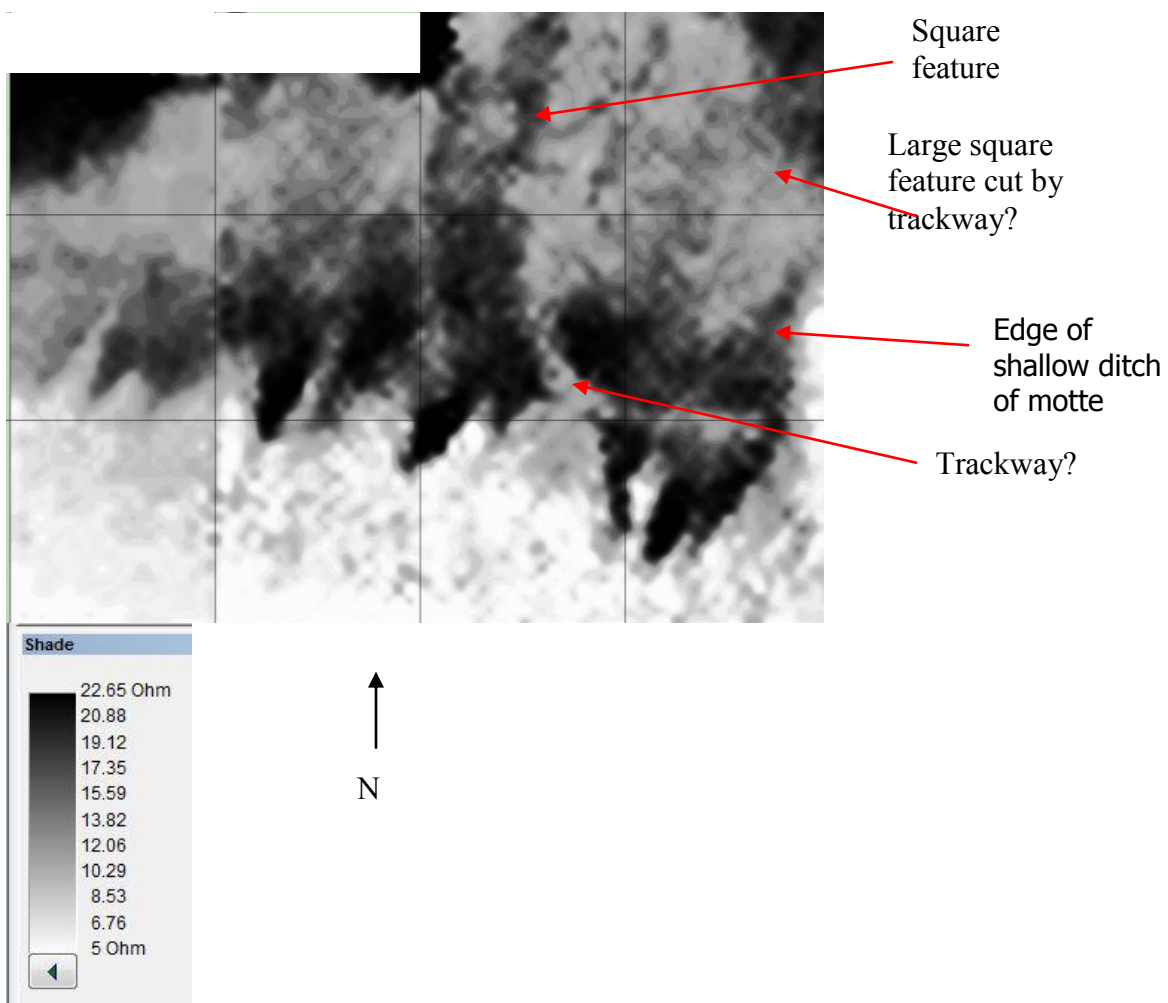


Fig 7: Resistivity shade view. ArcheoSurveyor image. High readings are black.

The white area top left in figure 7 was not surveyed as it is covered by bushes etc.

These results are quite remarkable. The line of high resistance running across the centre of the survey roughly corresponds with the line of slightly raised ground seen on the Environment Agency lidar plot. Their form is most unusual, and we have not been able to find parallels in other castle surveys, despite a lengthy search. From first principles, however, this should represent a stone structure heavily degraded from ploughing: an alternative is that this represents the edge of the Rhaetic limestone where it meets the softer Tea Green Marls: without further investigation it is impossible to be certain.

Other features can be clearly seen in the resistivity plot. A square feature, roughly respecting the alignment of the linear feature discussed above, can be seen in figure 7. This of higher resistance and thus may be corresponding to walls or similar structures at the site. It is around 16m square, and on a different site to the features seen in the gradiometry survey. It shows clearly in the colour view (Fig 8 below), and even more clearly in the '3D' view below (Fig 9 below).

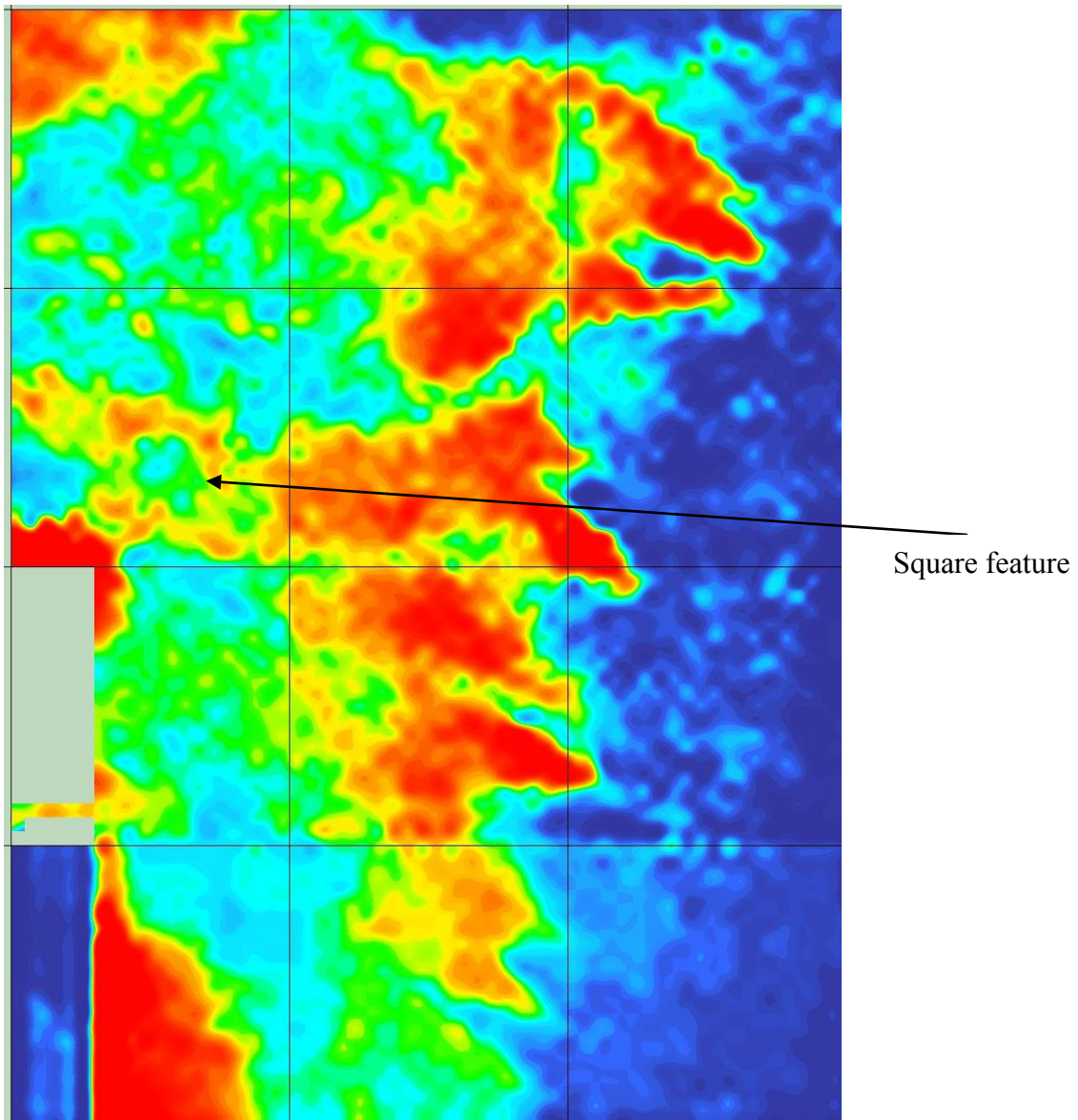


Fig 8: Shade view colour image. High readings are red.

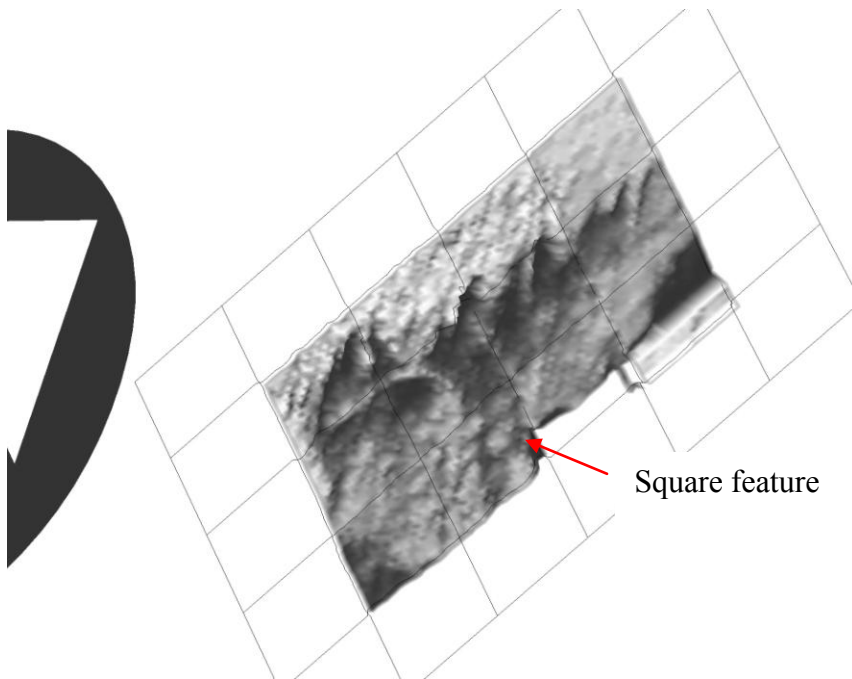
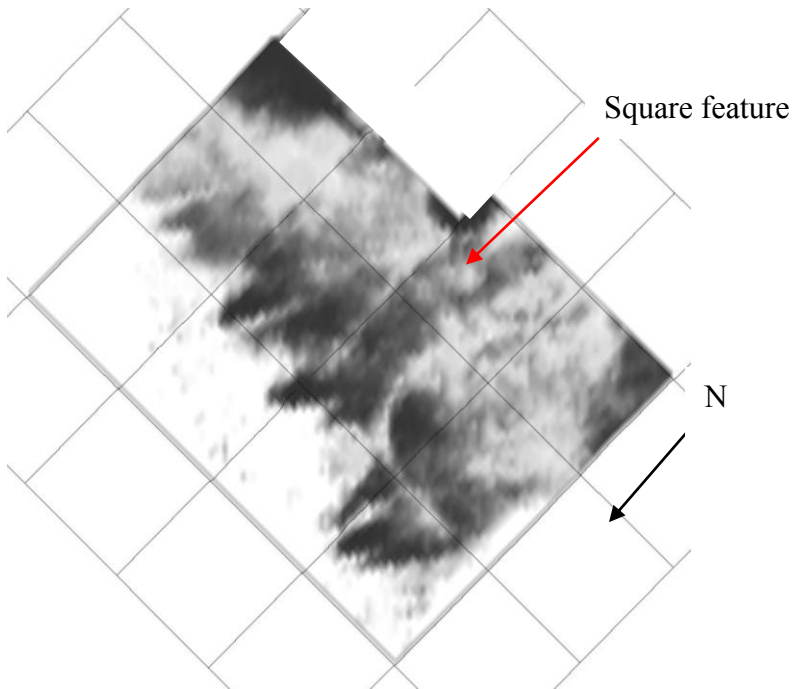


Fig 9: Axonometric views

Recommendations

These surveys have not unequivocally established the existence of a bailey attached to the motte at Castle Batch, although the results of the resistivity survey show a high resistance feature along the line of a previously observed lidar feature. Unfortunately, this line also roughly represents a geological boundary, so although the feature resembles a bailey wall badly eroded by ploughing, a geological explanation cannot be ruled out.

Pseudosections along the line of the high resistance feature may help to establish its nature, and these are recommended.

The results of these surveys can help to more effectively manage the site: the fact there is certainly significant archaeology in the area to the west of the Scheduled Monument should be considered in any decisions regarding proposed development in the area.

References

Bosworth, J. and Toller, T. 1898	<i>An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary</i> Oxford University Press, Oxford
English Heritage 1996	<i>Resistivity survey, Hamptead Marshall Castle, Berks</i> Ancient Monuments Laboratory (http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/reports/hamstead_marshall)
Kincey, M. et al 2008	Laxton Castle Survey: report on the 2008 season of work (www.tvg.bham.ac.uk/laxton/Laxton%20survey%20report%202008_compresed.pdf)
Russett, V. 1986	<i>Widcombe, a landscape history</i> Avon County Council, Bristol
Skinner, J. 1826	Unpublished diaries of the Rev J Skinner in the British Library

Authors. YCCART

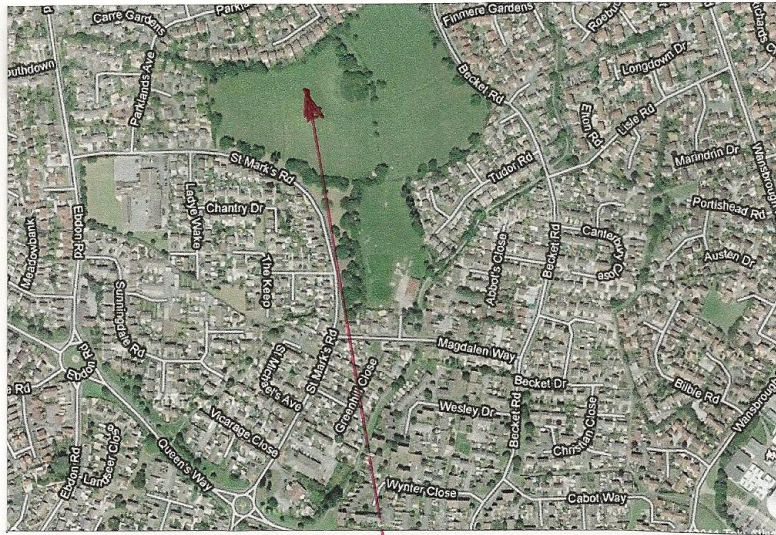
Date October 2011

Appendix

YCCART Site Survey		
Project – Castle batch, St Georges		
Survey date	12 th May 2011	
Report date	12 th May 2011	
Type /Instrument	Grad 601	
	Pace :1.5m/s Lines/m : 1 Range:100nT Volume: High Sensors:2	Grid size: 30m x30m Pattern : Zig Zag Samples/m:4 Audio: On Threshold:10nT Reject:50 Hz
Location	St Marks Road St. Georges, BS24	
	See annex 1	
Ref	none	
Site name	Castle Batch	
Landowner	North Somerset Council	
Tenant	none	
HER ref	TBC	
Site type	Open land	
Description	Well mowed grass	
Period	Unknown	
Geology		
Land use	Public recreation	
Survey team and conditions		
9 th May 2011	Team	Peter English, Ferdi, Sue Dugas, Mike Fox and Ian Morton
	Weather	Bright and warm

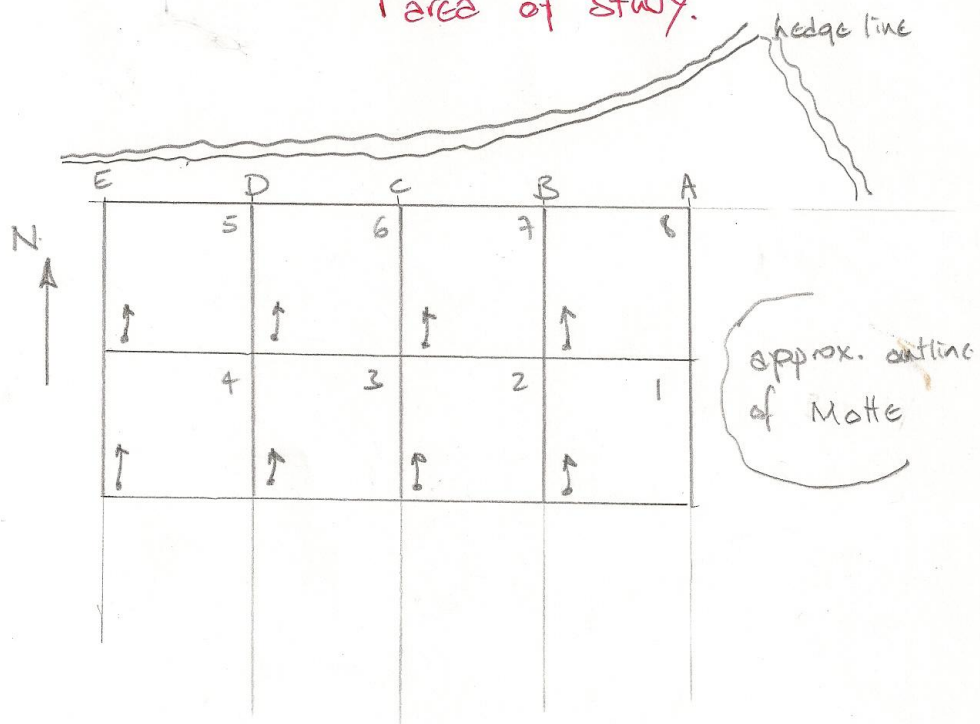
Survey area			notes		readings		
			size	walk direction	max	min	mean
Grid ref #	12/05/2011	1	30 x 30 m	N	+99.5	-100.0	-0.2
		2	30 x 30 m	N	+100.0	-52.1	+0.8
		3	30 x 30 m	N	+72.4	-41.2	-0.1
		4	30 x 30 m	N	+15.2	-11.2	+0.1
		5	30 x 30 m	N	+67.7	-73.0	-2.1
		6	30 x 30 m	N	+74.9	-63.7	-2.0
		7	30 x 30 m	N	+31.2	-33.8	-2.2
		8	30 x 30 m	N	+98.9	-100.0	-2.0

Annex 1
Setting out details



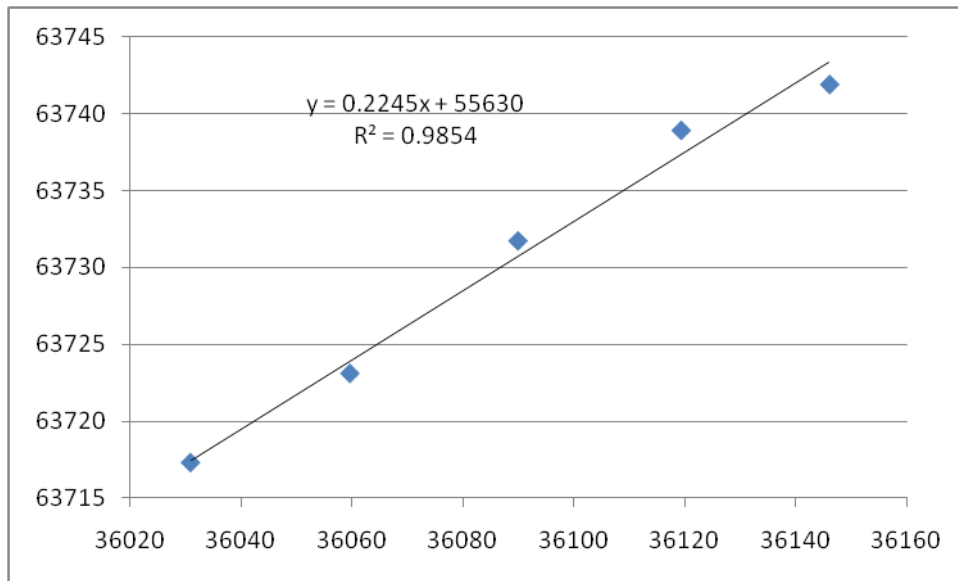
A N

area of study.



Grid location details

	ST	Eastings	Northings
Base line	A	36146.07	63741.86
	B	36119.32	63738.88
	C	36089.93	63731.70
	D	36059.65	63723.09
	E	36030.96	63717.30

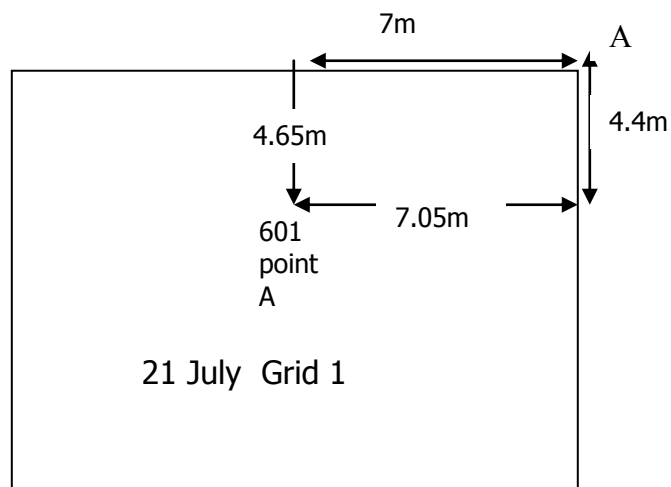
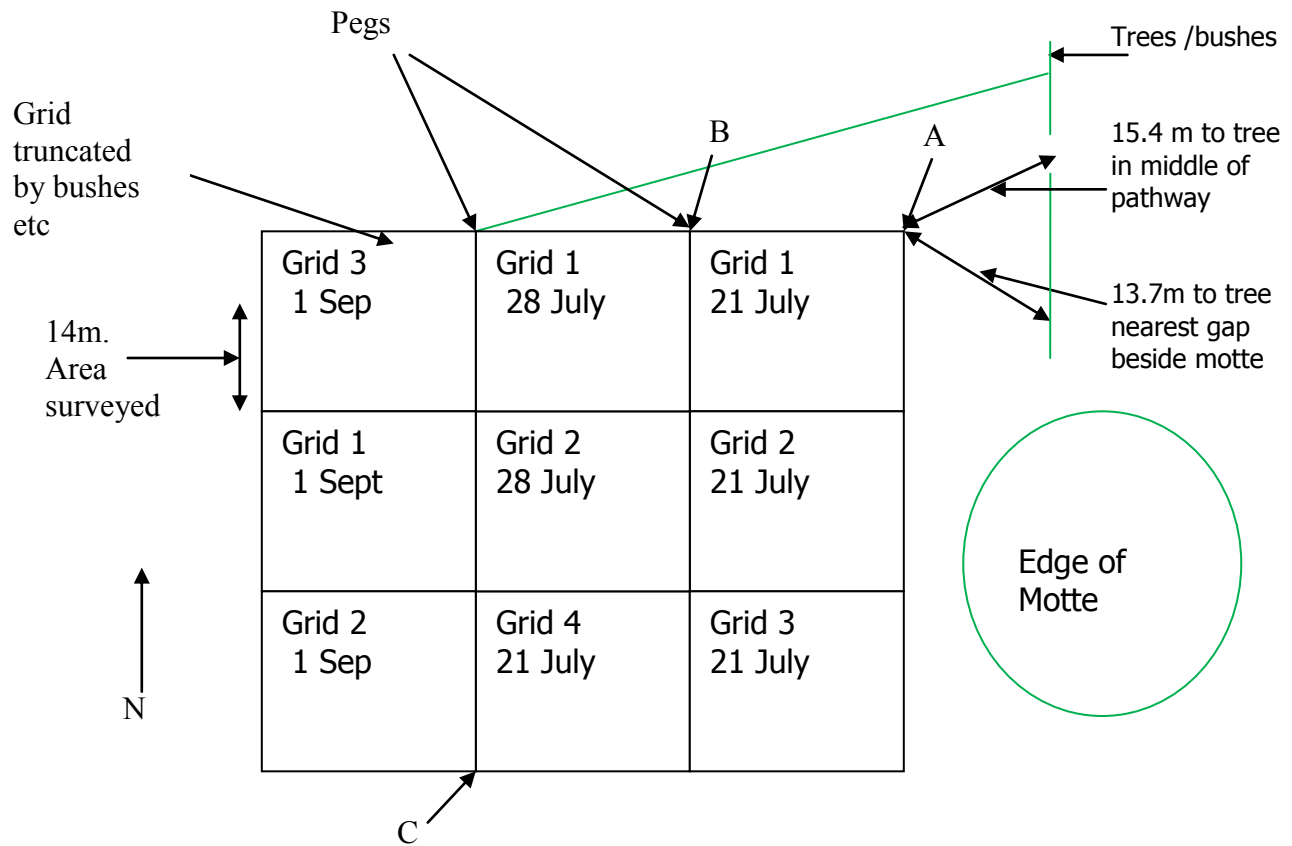


Resistivity Site Record

YCCART Site Survey		
Project – Castle Batch		
Survey date	21 & 28 July and 1 & 29 September 2011	
Report date	29 September 2011	
Type /Instrument	RM15	
	Gain x1, Current 1mA Frequency 137Hz Probes 'Config 1' (2 probes)	Grid size: 20m x20m Pattern : Zig Zag Sample interval 1m Traverse Interval 1m. Mode Zig-Zag
Weather	Dry, warm and sunny (All days)	
OS Ref or Lat-Longitude	ST	
Site name	Castle Batch	
Landowner	North Somerset Council	
Tenant	None	
HER ref		
Site type		
Description	Open public space	
Period	Unknown	
Geology		
Land use	Walking /recreation	

<i>Survey team</i>		<i>21 July: Chris Short, David Long, Philippa Cormack, Vince Russett, Bob Smisson, Jackie Harrington, Jennifer Waters, Cheryl Muriel, Richard Ivens.</i> <i>28 July : Chris Short, David Long, Vince Russett, Heather Morrisey, Lesley Candal.</i> <i>1 Sept : Chris Short, David Long, Colin Campbell, John Haynes and</i> <i>From WESMART: Margaret Batten, Peter Johnson, Dean Price & Heather Morrisey.</i> <i>29 Sept : Colin Campbell, Robert Cleland, Peter English, Peter Wright & Ferdi.</i>				
Survey area		Notes		Readings		
		Size	Walk direction			
21July	Grid 1 Grid 2 Grid 3	20 x 20m 20 x 20m 20 x 20m	S S S			
28 July	Grid 1 Grid 2	20 x 20m 20 x 20m	S S			
1 Sept	Grid 1 Grid 2 Grid 3	20 x 20m 20 x 20m 14x 20m	S S S			
29 Sept	Grid 1 Grid 2 Grid 3	20 x 20m 20 x 20m 14x 20m	W W W			
Summary		Downloaded as: ArcheoSurveyor: <i>Castle Batch 21 July grids 1 to 4, 28 July 1 & 2, 1 Sep grids 1 to 3. 29 Sep grids 1 to 3.</i> Snuffler: <i>Castle Batch Grids 1 to 12.</i>				

Layout – Not to scale



B = 13.85m from 601 point A

A = 8.33m from 601 point A

A = 36152 63745
C= 36117.90 63682.15

D	B	A						
			Position	Easting	Northing	Delta X	Delta Y	Degree N
			C	336117.06	163683.77			
			D	336114.54	163743.43	2.52	-59.66	-2.7
E	G		E	336114.79	163723.95			
			F	336116.13	163703.47			
			B	336132.45	163742.77	-4.89	58.23	-4.9
			G	336134.68	163724.58			
F	H		H	336136.23	163705.00			
			I	336137.34	163684.54			
			A	336151.44	163744.22	-5.80	57.43	-5.8
C		J	J	336157.24	163686.79			
	I							

K	1 Sep Grid 3		
L	1 Sep Grid 1	E	
M	1 Sep Grid 2	F	
N		C	

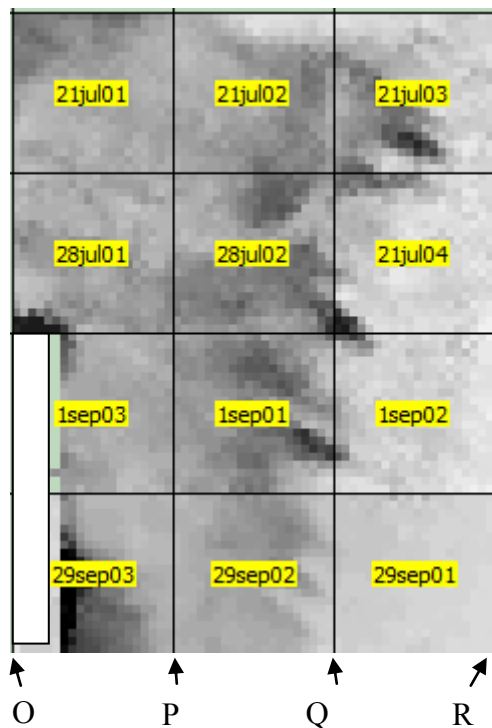
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B) To 29 September 2011

Grid layout

Grid 3 29 Sep ←	Grid 3 1 Sep ↓	Grid 1 28 July ↓	Grid 1 21 July ↓
Grid 2 29 Sep ←	Grid 1 1 Sep ↓	Grid 2 28 July ↓	Grid 2 21 July ↓
Grid 1 29 Sep ←	Grid 2 1 Sep ↓	Grid 4 21 July ↓	Grid 3 21 July ↓

Per ArcheoSurveyor



GPS

O = 336073.90 163730.61

P= 336074.72 163717.95

Q= 336076.48 163698.92

R = 336077.41 163697.12