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**Manual survey of north east ramparts of Cadbury Congresbury Hill Fort,
2008-2011**

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

General Editor: Vince Russett



Geoff and Unsal surveying in March 2011; Yatton seen in background

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Abstract

In 2004, Mark Corney surveyed the interior of Cadbury Congresbury Hill Fort, including the inner post-Roman bank but not including the outer ramparts, which are probably of an earlier (Iron Age) date.

Between 2008 and 2010 members of Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team (YCCCART) completed a manual survey of the north east section of these outer ramparts which revealed a series of at least two banks and ditches lying outside the slight inner bank. A profile of the ramparts was produced, and a grid survey of one of the house platforms enabled production of a contour diagram with intervals of 5 cms. The Team was also able to fix the position of the ramparts in relation to the Ordnance Survey grid.

In 2011, members returned to Cadbury to survey a small section of the interior which had been cleared of scrub and bracken, and confirmed the position of several round house platforms shown on Mark Corney's survey.

Acknowledgements

The authors are very grateful for the persistence of the members of YCCCART who completed this survey in the course of almost three years of hard work.

This survey could not have been carried out without the willing permission of Yatton and Congresbury Parish Councils and English Heritage. A Heritage Lottery Grant allowed YCCCART to acquire a Nivcomp Digital Altimeter which was invaluable for the rapid survey of the profile of the ramparts and the grid survey of the house platform, providing the data used by the "Surfer10" program, kindly donated by Golden Software, to produce figures 4 and 5.

YCCCART are also most 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 location

Cadbury hill fort is part of the Cadbury Hill Local Nature Reserve, situated on the parish boundary between Yatton and Congresbury parishes, in North Somerset, the centre of the site being at ST441650. The site is the westernmost point of Broadfield Down, the largely limestone down which occupies much of the central area of North Somerset.

The site can be accessed from the north by Henley Lane, off Frost Hill in Yatton parish, which leads to a small public car park: there is also access by Blind Lane, off the A370 at Rhodyate Hill in Congresbury parish

Land use and geology

Cadbury Hill is a public area owned by Congresbury and Yatton Parish Councils and North Somerset Council, and enjoyed by walkers (particularly dog walkers). The main ramparts are thickly covered with trees, while the interior is used as rough grazing, and has been mainly cleared of scrub recently.

The hill fort is situated on a small outcrop of Oxwich Head limestone which overlies the Clifton Down limestone formation. The junction of these two formations appears to result in a steeper slope in some places, and at Cadbury Hill this steep slope has been utilised as part of the outer defences.

Historical & archaeological context

Please see the Cadbury Interim Report YCCART 2011/8

Survey Objectives

The manual survey had the following objectives:

- 1) to record the northern ramparts lying outside the inner post-Roman bank of the hill fort.
- 2) to record features in the north-east part of the interior of the hill fort recently cleared of vegetation
- 3) to fix the position of the hill fort in relation to the Ordnance Survey grid

Methodology

Surveys were undertaken during the period 2008 to 2011.

A tape and offset survey was completed and drawn at a scale of 400:1. All areas of bare soil were examined for finds, and all visible structures were recorded. Positional readings were made using a GPS meter, and it was found that readings taken underneath the (substantial) tree cover on the ramparts were not sufficiently accurate or precise. Main survey lines were therefore extended up onto the open top of the hill fort, and more stable and reliable readings were obtained, enabling the survey drawing to be more exactly related to the Ordnance Survey grid.

Using the Nivcomp Digital Altimeter, a profile of the ramparts 100 metres in length was surveyed at intervals of 1m., changing to 1/2m at important points. One of the house platforms was surveyed in a grid pattern, and the data obtained from these two surveys enabled the production of the profile (figure 4) and the contour diagram with intervals of 5 cms. (figure 5), using the "Surfer10" program. A further grid survey of one of the D-shaped enclosures beside the north-east entrance was also completed.

The report was written in Microsoft Word 2003.

Current photographs were taken by members of YCCART, and remain the copyright of YCCART.

Results

The area surveyed covered approximately 25,000 sq metres. Besides the ramparts themselves, a number of features were found and recorded, as numbered on the drawing below (figure 2).

1. Inner post-Roman bank: visible as a low mound, up to 40cms. high in places, that appeared to be constructed of earth and rubble. Virtually intact around the eastern half of the area surveyed except for an eroded modern gap (2) about 25m. north of the presumed original north-east entrance (3), the western half of the earthwork was more eroded.
2. Eroded modern gap.
3. Entrance: this is presumed to be the original north-east entrance to the hill fort.
4. D-shaped enclosures: two enclosures formed the terminals of the inner rampart (1) on either side of the presumed north-east entrance (3). The southern enclosure was fairly well preserved and visible, though there appeared to be some rubble over parts of it. The more northern enclosure was less easy to see, and appeared to be more eroded than the southern.
5. The main rampart: consisted of a deep ditch with a steep, narrow bank outside it. The ditch and bank appeared to commence about 40m. north of the presumed north-east entrance (3), but might have been eroded away at its south-east end. The bank and ditch extended for about 200m. towards the west, but the ditch is broken close to its most northern point by a causeway (6). Here, it is noticeable that the two terminals of the ditch appear to have been dug separately, as they are at an angle and, if they were extended, would not meet to form a continuous ditch. To the west, the bank and ditch become more slight, and appear to cease at a point where the natural slope of the hill becomes much steeper.
6. The apparent causeway across the ditch is angled, and it may be coincidental that it appears to point directly at the top of the neighbouring Henley Wood, where the remains of a Roman (and pre-Roman) temple were quarried away in the recent past.
7. Between the inner bank (1) and the main rampart (5) there is evidence of quarrying at some later date. Only major quarrying remains were included in the drawing.
8. The boundary between the parishes of Yatton and Congresbury was delineated by a wall, the remains of which were seen at several places on top of the narrow bank.
9. At the far western end of the rampart two flattened areas, roughly rectangular in shape, had been cut into the hill slope. Both were close above the remains of the parish wall, and it appeared that they might have been house platforms. A further area immediately south of the parish wall seemed to have been flattened and cut slightly into the slope of the hill. This might have been the result of quarrying to provide stone for the construction of the wall, or possibly was the result of flattening to provide an enclosure related to the house platforms.
10. Outside the main bank and ditch on the eastern side were a series of minor earthworks, in the form of slight banks and pits. The purpose of these was not obvious, but might have been connected with attempted mining.
11. Outside the main ditch and bank on the western side were the remains of a second ditch and bank. Considerably slighter than the main bank and

interrupted in at least two places, the date or purpose of these earthworks could not be suggested.

12. House platforms were recorded in a part of the interior of the hill fort which previously had been covered by brambles, trees and shrubs. At least four earthworks appeared to be circular house platforms, while there were about five earthworks which could be seen as partial remains of platforms, sometimes eroded or perhaps obscured by later earthworks.

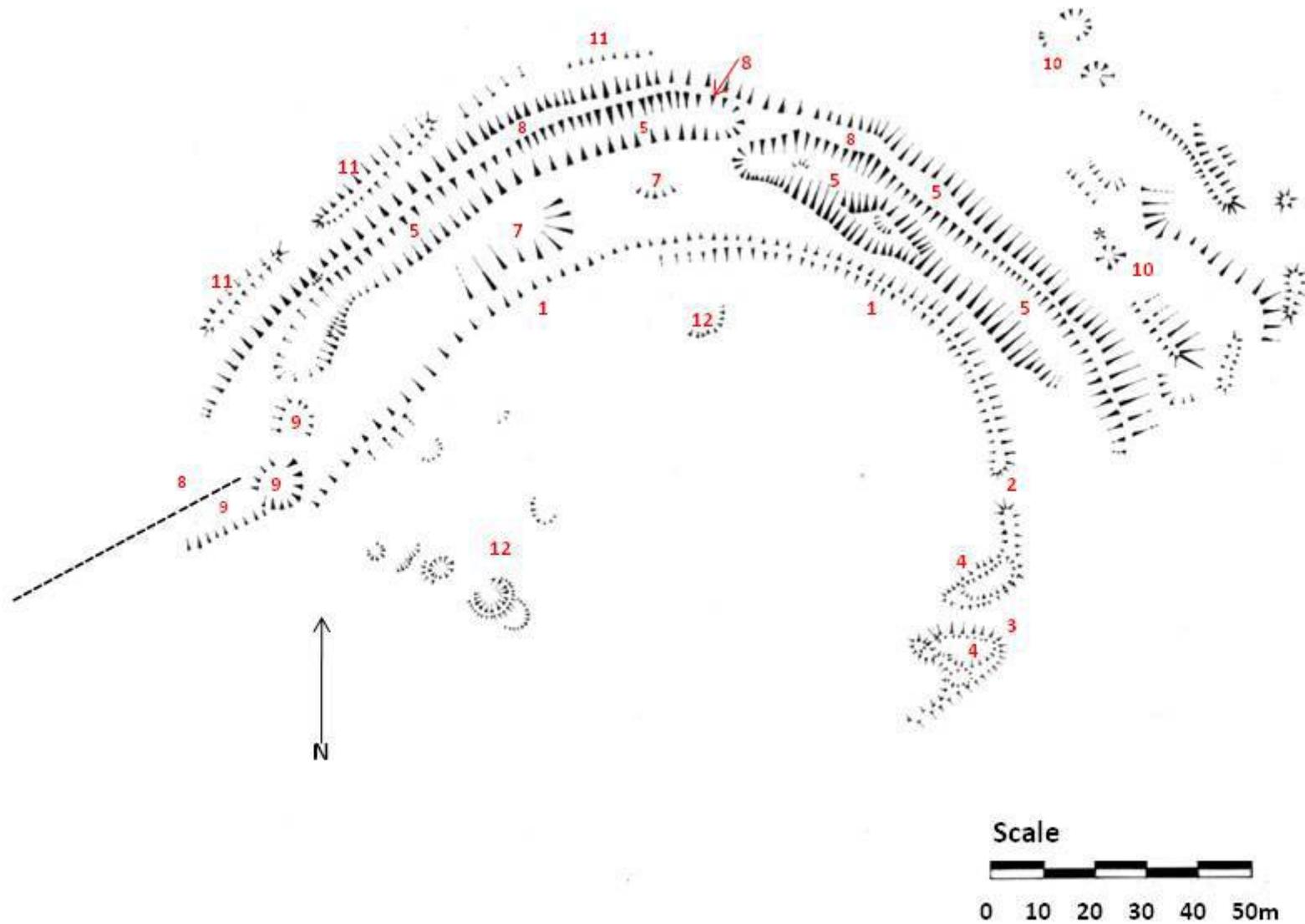


Fig 2: Northern ramparts of Cadbury-Congresbury hillfort, with position of features listed above (1 -12) shown in red.

Using the methods described above, the position of the ramparts of the hill fort in relation to the Ordnance Survey National Grid was determined to be as shown on figure 3 below. A profile of the ramparts between points A and A1 (shown on figure 3) appears below as figure 4. This was surveyed at 1m intervals, changing to ½ m. intervals at important points, using a Nivcomp Digital Altimeter. Also shown on figure 3, the house platform marked with * was surveyed in a grid pattern using Nivcomp Digital Altimeter and the data obtained were used in a program called Surfer 10 made by Golden Software to produce figure 5 below.

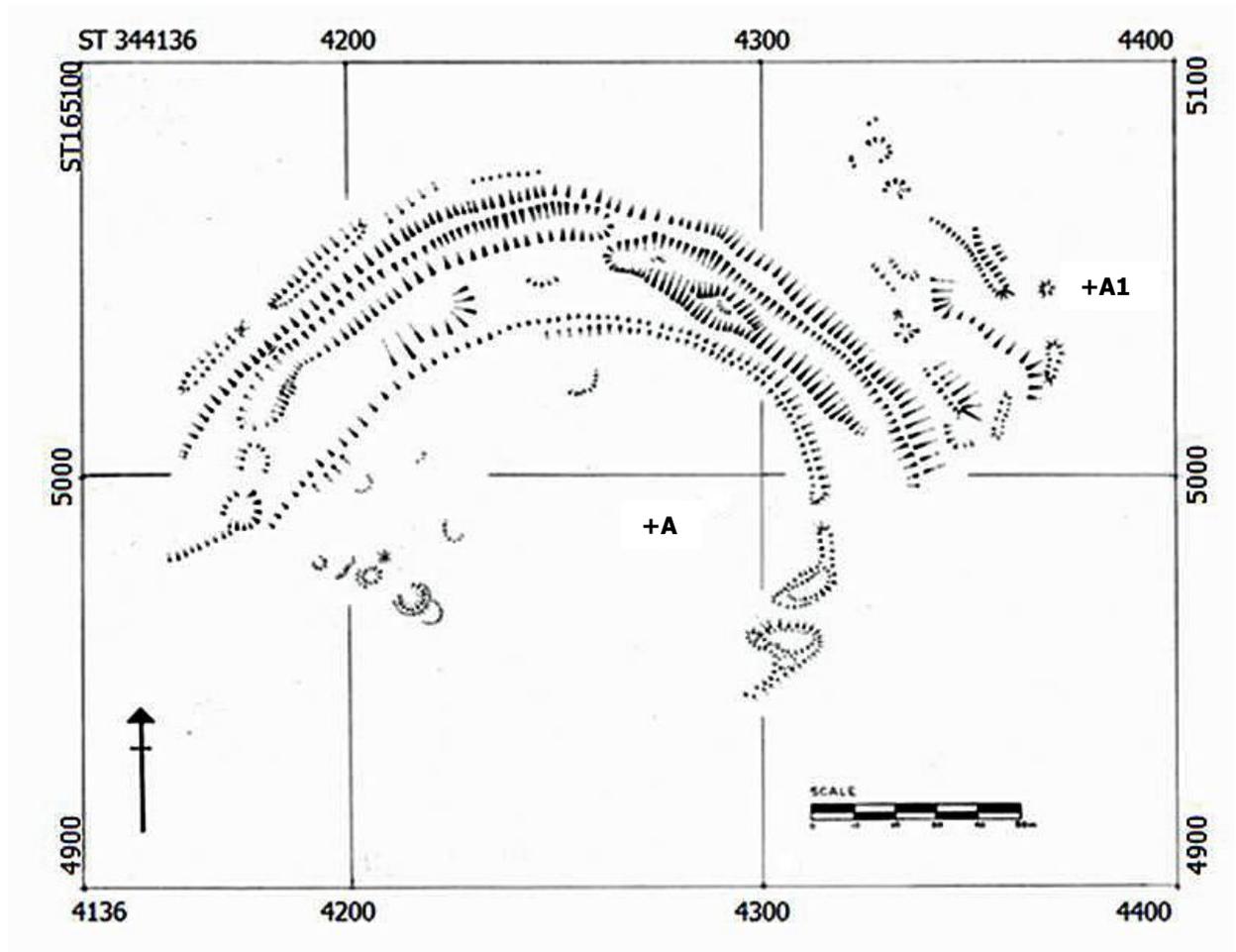


Fig 3: Northern ramparts of Cadbury Congresbury hill fort showing Ordnance Survey National Grid. Position of profile (figure 4) marked as A to A1, and asterisk indicates house platform shown below as Figure 5.

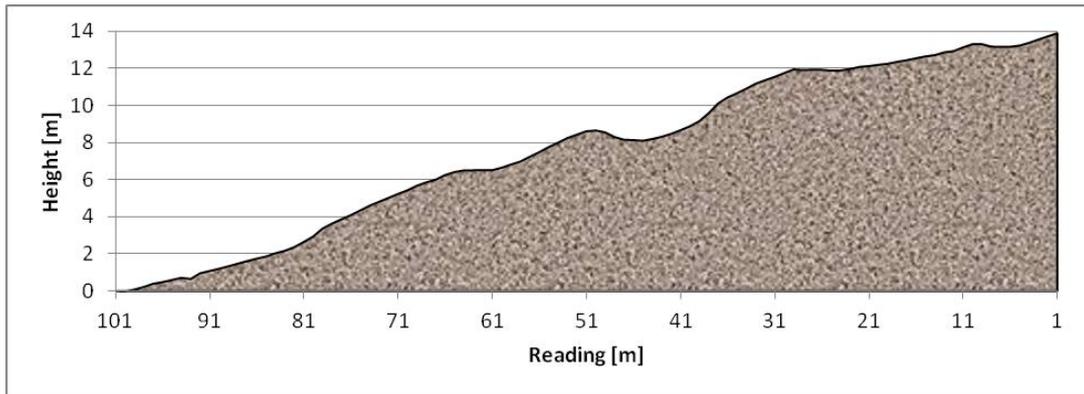


Fig 4: Profile of the ramparts, surveyed using Nivcomp digital altimeter

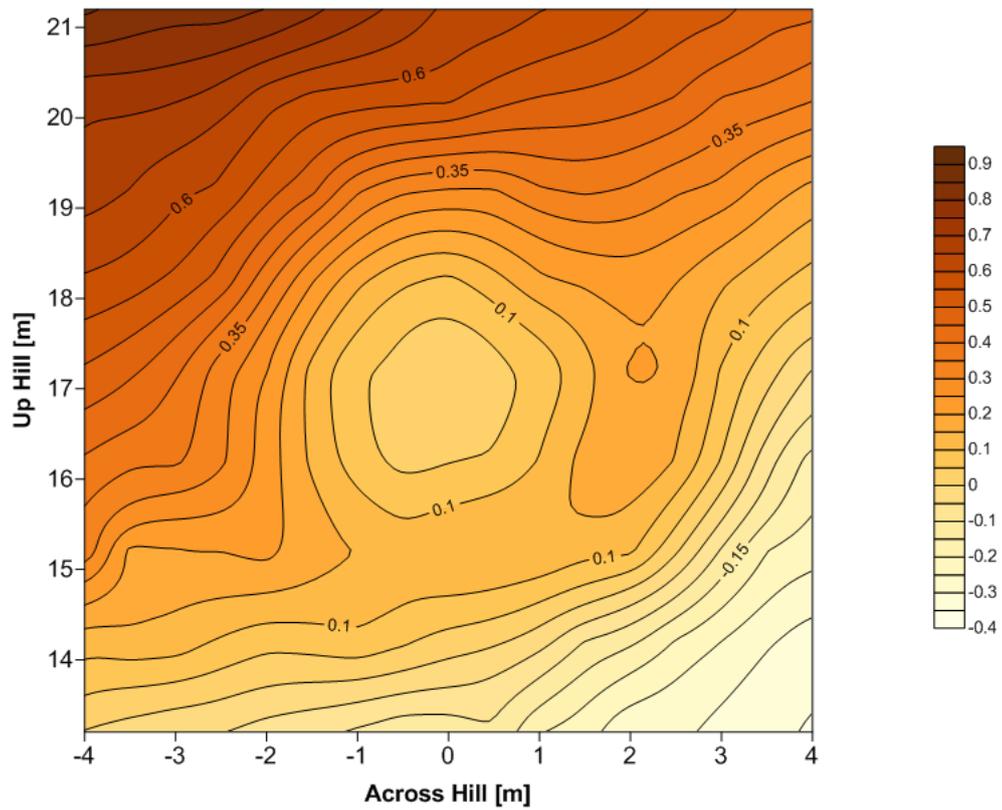


Fig 5: Survey of house platform (marked * on fig 3), produced using Surfer 10 program. Contours at 0.05m. intervals

Recommendations

Several hectares of the outer bounds of Cadbury Congresbury Hill Fort have yet to be surveyed. Much of this area consists either of steep cliffs or is covered with dense woodland and scrub. It may one day be possible to survey parts of this area, if the concealing vegetation could be cleared away. But without a programme of clearance it is unlikely that more work would be productive.

References

Corney, Mark, with Morris, Nik. 2004. *Cadbury Hill Fort: an Analytical Survey*. www.YCCCART.co.uk Report 2011/Y6

Please see the Cadbury Interim Report YCCCART 2011/8 for historical references.

Author.

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