

YCCCART 2019/ Y16

Earthwork survey of building remains at Garrett's path, Kings Wood, Cleeve

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RESEARCH TEAM (YCCCART)**

General Editor: Vince Russett



The foundations in the woods: a possible 19th century beer house

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Abstract

An earthwork survey by YCCCART members in 2005 uncovered the remaining three walls of a building at a junction of tracks in King's Wood. It is locally thought to be the remains of a beer house, serving the short-lived 19th century iron mining industry in the wood.

Acknowledgements

This survey would also not have been carried out without the willing permission of the landowner in 2005, the Vincent Trust.

The authors are grateful for the hard work by the members of YCCCART in performing the surveys and Vince Russett for editing.

Introduction

Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team (YCCCART) is one of a number of Community Archaeology teams across northern Somerset, formerly supported by the North Somerset Council Development Management Team.

Our objective is to undertake archaeological fieldwork to enable a better understanding and management of the heritage of the area while recording and publishing the activities and locations of the research carried out.

Site location



Fig 1: Location of the site in Kings Wood (2005)

The site lies at ST45296485, at a junction of two tracks in King's Wood, just a few metres inside the boundary of Cleeve parish with Congresbury, in North Somerset. Boundary stone 13 of Congresbury is immediately adjacent to the building.

Land use and geology

The site is under ancient woodland, standing entirely on the metalliferous Clifton Down (Carboniferous) Limestone of Broadfield Down. It lies within the King's Wood & Urchin Wood SSSI (notified September 1992). Please bear this in mind and do not disturb wildlife in the wood. The metalled track immediately adjacent to the building is a Public Right of Way, and the site is visible from there.

Historical & archaeological context

Despite previous suggestions (Barraclough & Campbell 2011) that this site pre-dates 1799 (the earliest map of Yatton known - Cleeve was part of Yatton parish at that date), it does not appear on the map of that date, nor that of 1821, nor on either Congresbury or Yatton Tithe Maps of 1840. Nor do the Congresbury perambulations of 1796 or 1805 mention a building here, although the latter does refer to Boundary Stone 13 standing '.. by where four Ways in the Wood meet, called the Shoulder of Mutton..'

The first map that is known to record this site is the 1884 OS plan.

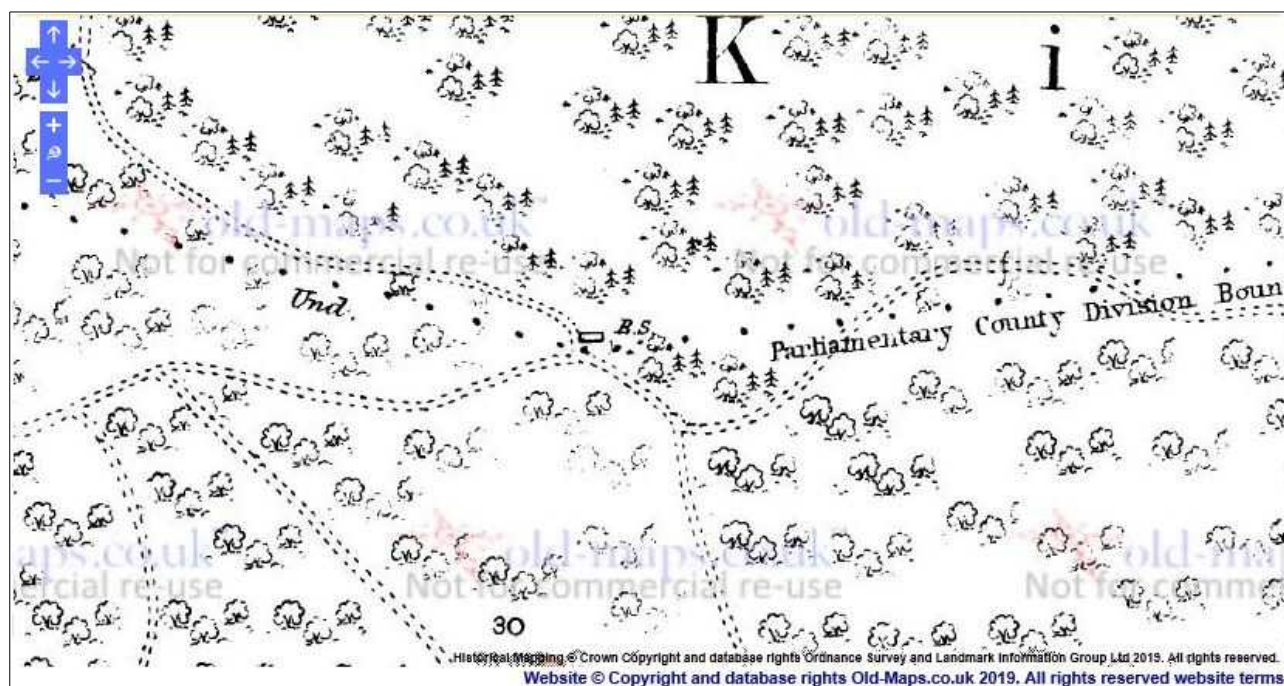


Fig 2: First mapped record of the site (1884 OS plan)

The site is already shown as unroofed. It continued to be recorded in exactly the same way until 1931, but is not subsequently noted.

Assuming then, from the documentary evidence that it's active life was post-1840, and pre-1885, the persistent local stories that this was a beer house may well be true.

King's Wood was the site of a brief (1847-c1875) but active iron mining industry, the remains of which are scattered through the wood (Barraclough 1990: 90; 'TW stones' report under Congresbury-this site).

It is therefore suggested that local stories are true, and that this was a (very) short-lived beer house, supplying passing miners.

Survey objectives

The objectives were to record the remains at the site, since they were very close to a vehicular track, and heavily overgrown. One side of the structure had been removed by machine some time in the 20th century, presumably in widening the track.

Methodology

The site was recorded by tape and offset at a scale of 50:1.

The report was written in Libre Office 5 Writer.

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

Results

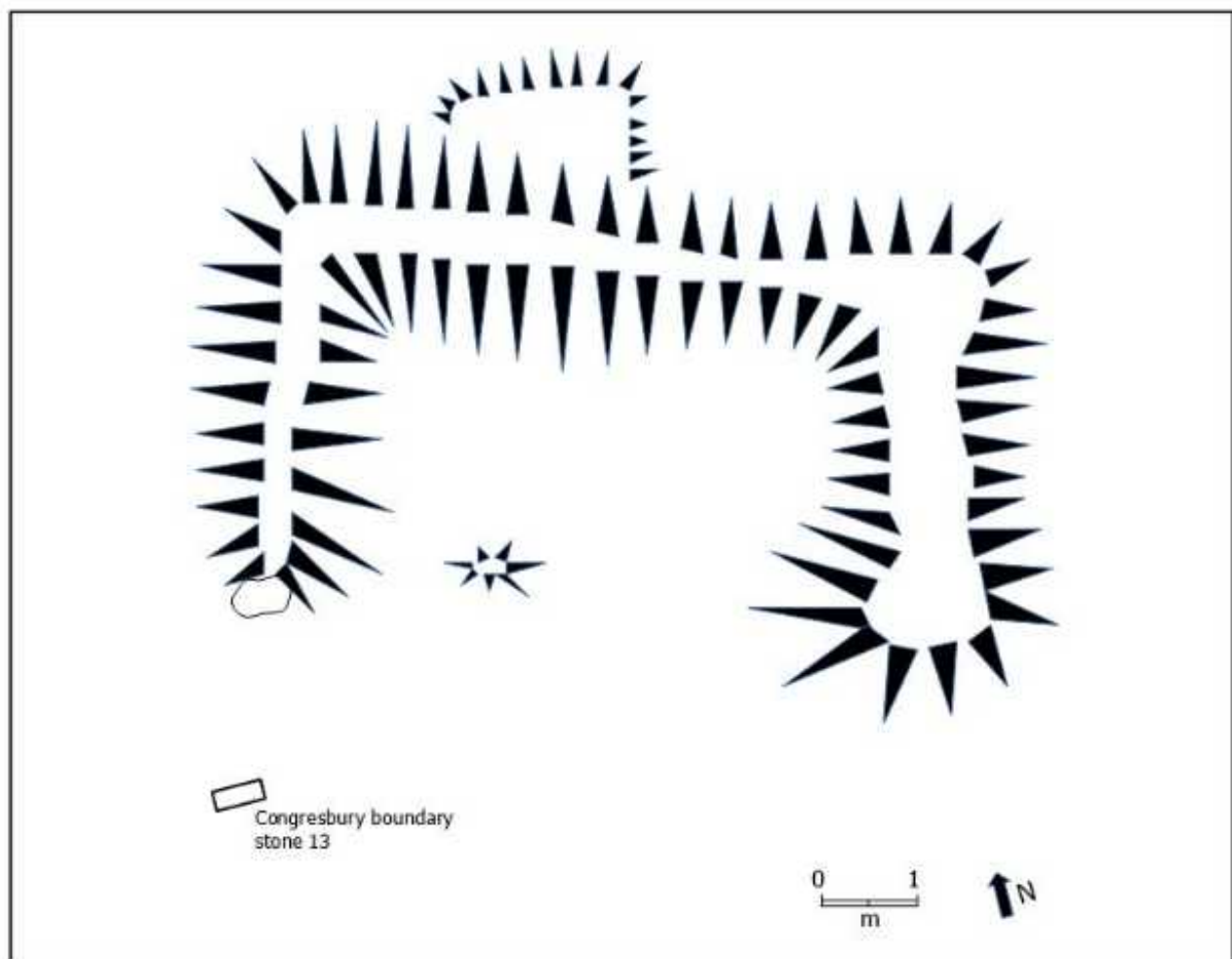


Fig 3: The earthwork survey

This shows the remains of the footings of three walls of a building 6m x c4m, with a smaller ?attached structure to it's north, around 3m square. If the site was a beer house, this may have been an outside toilet. It's siting by a busy crossing implies this: its siting right on the parish boundary may also imply a hint of unlawfulness. No remains of roofing materials or worked stone were found, implying a fairly low-grade building. The other possibility (bearing in mind that most of the 19th century ore was despatched from Yatton station) it could functioned as a tally-house, but this seems less likely.

While post-medieval mining landscapes have been extensively studied and published (Jones, N. et al. 2004, for example), very little work seems to have been done on the support services (such as informal beer houses or provisions stores) they must have attracted.

The individual stone at the SW corner of the structure (extreme right on cover illustration) seems very large to be part of it - could it be a boundary stone, a precursor of stone 13, as mentioned in the 1796 perambulation of Congresbury?



Fig 4: North wall and 'outshot' of structure, from the path

Recommendations for further work

None

References

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| Barraclough, M. (1990) | The story of Yatton |
| Barraclough, M. & Campbell, C. (2011) | The survey of Yatton (copy on this web site) |
| Jones, N. , Walters, M. & Frost, P. (2004) | Mountains and Orefields; metal-mining landscapes of mid and north-east Wales |

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