

# FIELDWORK BY TRENT & PEAK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST IN DERBYSHIRE, 1995–96

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## INTRODUCTION

During the normal course of its business, conducting archaeological projects within the Trent Basin and the Peak District, the Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust (hereinafter T&PAT) undertakes numerous pieces of fieldwork, often, though not always, in response to some proposal for development that is likely to affect either known features of archaeological importance or areas believed to have archaeological potential. In common with similar organisations operating both here and in other parts of the country, the character of the archaeological projects carried out by T&PAT varies considerably, not least in Derbyshire, where it has ranged from the investigation of tenuous traces of early-prehistoric activities on the eroding peaty moorlands of the Dark Peak to the recording of industrial and ornamental buildings in the affluent Post-Medieval parklands on the southern clays. The nature of the threats to archaeological deposits and structures posed by development is equally variable, ranging from the flooding of entire valleys as reservoirs to the opening of localized trial-pits for one purpose or another; and the nature and scale of the concomitant archaeological activities vary accordingly, as do the sources of funding for the conduct of the fieldwork, being most often derived from the developers themselves, but occasionally resulting from bids for grants in aid of more specifically problem-oriented archaeological research.

Much of this is the commonplace experience of those engaged professionally in field-archaeology, and it is well known that the exigencies of such work can lead to difficulties in maintaining an adequate output of published reports upon the myriad projects undertaken, creating a backlog of recorded information. Unfortunately, this is all the more common in these days of developer-funding, for it can be difficult to obtain resources for publication when many funders have no intrinsic interest in the matter at hand and, even where this is not so, they must weigh the inevitable costs of publishing our work against other priorities. To some, the obligation to produce merely an archive can seem to be all that need be met, leaving the archaeologist either to be content with this outcome or to work the overtime that is required under such circumstances to prepare reports for publication. This is bound to mean that report-writing cannot keep pace with the accumulation of records, and it is unhappily true that much information confined to the archive can languish there for want of publicizing its existence — many archaeological records are lodged in the County Council's Sites & Monuments Record (SMR), thereby entering the public domain, but this does not necessarily mean that they have entered the public consciousness. It is in recognition of these factors that the present compilation of summary reports has been assembled, with the purpose of presenting to

the archaeological community some account of recent endeavours by T&PAT in Derbyshire. It is intended to produce similar compilations in the future, though it is hoped that these will provide a more comprehensive coverage than has proved possible in this instance, which deals solely, but selectively, with fieldwork conducted during 1995 and 1996 (i.e. fifteen of thirty sites tackled then, while two comparable projects from previous years, treating evaluations on Bradwell Moor and round about Whitwell, are included elsewhere in this volume).

Some of T&PAT's archaeological projects achieve a scale of operation and/or results of sufficient note to merit individual publication at length and in detail, and examples of these appear from time to time in the pages of this and other archaeological journals. Other projects are more restricted in scope. For example, some do not progress beyond the trial, or evaluation, stage of fieldwork, and therefore produce limited information; even so, in many cases, this too is worthy of concise publication. Some produce only negative results, at least in relation to the questions posed at the outset; but, provided those questions were valid, even negative answers are not without interest and deserve brief explanation in the archaeological literature. It is largely those projects which do not demand extensive treatment that are addressed here, in reports summarizing pieces of archaeological work that will not be pursued beyond this point, and for which these reports may therefore be regarded as definitive. For others, the report given below comprises merely succinct interim notice of an excavation or survey that will eventually be subjected to fuller publication, which may itself take some time to accomplish. The definitive reports will be readily distinguishable from those of an interim nature because each of the former specifies the whereabouts of the related written, drawn and photographic archive as well as any artefacts.

Each report is headed by a name appropriate to the site of the archaeological fieldwork, followed by a National Grid Reference for that site and the name(s) of those responsible for the report and/or the fieldwork (each author being a member of the staff of T&PAT). Due acknowledgement to others who have contributed to a given project (be it in cash, in kind, or of their expertise) is generally stated at the relevant point in the text. For simplicity, the reports are set out in alphabetical order of site-names, numbered as in Fig. 1, where it will be seen that T&PAT's field-projects were scattered widely across the county during 1995–96, though with a strong bias towards the low-lying land of the Trent Valley, where the threats were numerous in this period.

## REPORTS

### 1. ACRE LANE, ASTON UPON TRENT (SK 42442968) *D. Garton & L. Elliott*

As part of the works for the construction of the Derby Southern Bypass in 1995, an existing field-drain was enlarged alongside Acre Lane, cutting across the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Aston Cursus. The sides of the drain were cleaned and recorded archaeologically. The western cursus-ditch was not present here, though it is known from aerial photography in the field south of Acre Lane, suggesting a gap, or entrance, through the ditch immediately north of the lane. On the other hand, the eastern cursus-ditch is not known from aerial photography at this point (probably because a darker band in the vegetation has obscured any cropmark), but it was located below 1.3m of sediment, c. 100m away from the line of the western ditch. The basal fills of the eastern

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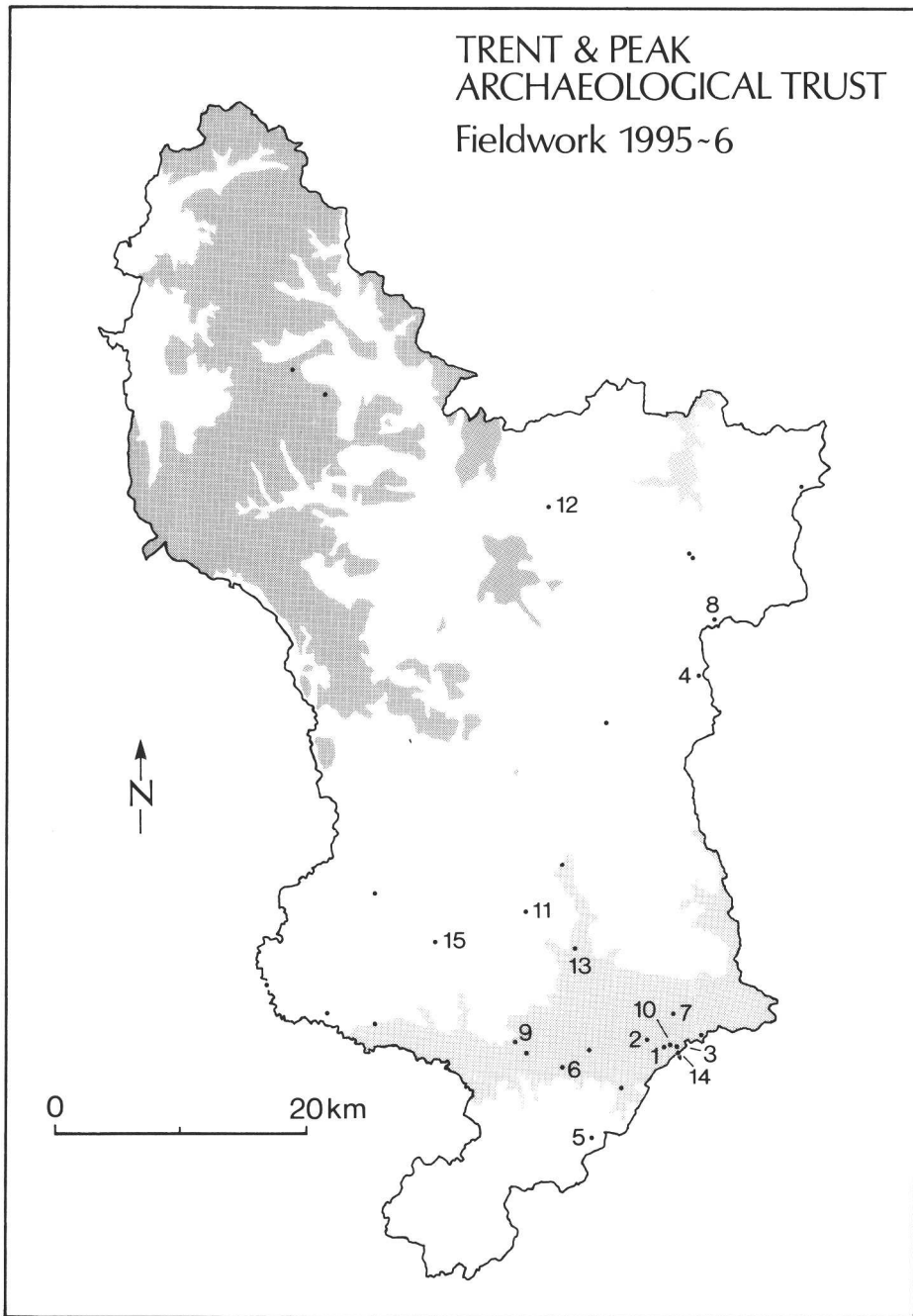


Fig. 1: Derbyshire, with the highest land, over 300m in the Peak District, shaded dark, and the lowest, under 60m in the Trent and Rother valleys, shaded relatively pale. Sites investigated by T&PAT in 1995-96 are represented by spots, and those described in the text are numbered as follows: 1 Acre Lane, Aston upon Trent; 2 Aston Hill; 3 Aston upon Trent; 4 Blackwell; 5 Calke Park; 6 Fernello Sitch; 7 Great Pickles, Shardlow; 8 Hardwick Park; 9 Heath Lane, Findern; 10 Hicken's Bridge, Aston upon Trent; 11 Kedleston Park; 12 Linacre Reservoirs, Brampton; 13 Little Chester, Derby; 14 Shardlow; 15 Thurstaston.

ditch were similar to those in a section of the western ditch excavated in 1994, c. 450m further north. Its upper fill was alluvium. Samples were taken for pollen-analysis, and a fragment of waterlogged wood from the base of the eastern cursus-ditch will be used for a radiocarbon-determination.

## 2. ASTON HILL (SK 41083025)

*D. Garton & C. Abbott*

Evaluation of the area of a proposed borrow-pit was conducted in 1995 for John Jones (Excavations) Ltd as part of the Derby Southern Bypass roadworks. This locally-prominent hill of Mercia Mudstone lies close to the Trent river-gravels, with their rich array of prehistoric cropmarks. Before evaluation, no archaeological remains were known there, but, as cropmarks do not develop on these clayey soils, a series of trial-trenches was excavated. Ridge-and-furrow ploughsoils sealed part of a rectilinear ditch-system, or enclosure, and a pit-alignment. The latter was traced for c. 155m; at its west end, it stopped at a ditch running roughly perpendicular to it. A small number of Late-Bronze-Age/Early-Iron-Age potsherds came from both the ditch and a few of the pits in the alignment, where they were probably residual. If so, features from the earlier activity were not identified and may not have survived Medieval ploughing. This system of ditches and pit-alignment suggests that the landscape known from cropmarks on the lower-lying gravels extends into the areas of clay subsoil that are usually excluded from discussions of past patterns of settlement.

## 3. ASTON UPON TRENT (SK 433296)

*D. Garton, C. Abbott & A. J. Howard*

Monitoring of construction-works on the Derby Southern Bypass in 1995 located three ditches and a probable pit in a newly-cut drain-culvert alongside the new road, which has itself been built on an embankment here, covering further remains of these features. The latter were cut through a sandy-clay, alluvial deposit that lay directly on the sands and gravels of the floodplain, and all was overlain by a thin layer of ploughsoil containing Medieval pottery, in turn overlain by modern ploughsoil. Between two of the ditches, a layer interpreted as a remnant of a bank survived, apparently reduced by ploughing only after the ditches had become largely filled. Romano-British pottery was recovered from all the features and the layers overlying them, and this can be dated to the late 1st to 2nd century AD (examined by R. Leary). The amount and size of the sherds, and their lack of abrasion, indicates that the ditches probably lay close to a settlement. Fragmentary brick from the upper fills may suggest Romanized buildings in the vicinity.

This site is on the floodplain of the River Trent, an area where cropmarks do not often develop, and where archaeological features are therefore difficult to locate except by chance. Its location in an area susceptible to flooding and the consequent build-up of sediments may account for the preservation of possible bank-remnants, and this suggests that the rest of the settlement may be well preserved. In addition, since the ditches cut the riverine alluvial deposits, they give a *terminus ante quem* for the deposition of most of the alluvium. This contrasts with the lower reaches of the Trent, where Romano-British remains are buried by alluvial sediments (e.g. Buckland and Sadler 1985), and demonstrates that the timing of alluviation is a complex phenomenon in the Trent Valley.

### *Reference*

Buckland, P. and Sadler, J. (1985) The nature of late Flandrian alluviation in the Humberhead Levels. *East Midland Geographer* 8: 239–51.



**4. BLACKWELL (SK 451592)***D. Garton & A. Kennett*

Fieldwalking of seven arable fields in an area of proposed development adjacent to the M1 was undertaken in 1995, to complement an SMR search conducted by Acer Consultants Ltd for N. Mansell. The SMR for the landscape overlying the Coal Measures is scanty, and it was hoped that systematic artefact-collection from the surface of the ploughsoil would locate any previously unknown archaeological remains.

The area has been subject to considerable disturbance from mining activities, as can be demonstrated from both surface evidence (hollows and spreads of coal and sandstone) and Post-Medieval documents. Significant quantities of artefacts from the Medieval, Roman and prehistoric periods were recovered from only three of the fields walked. Romano-British potsherds include grey ware and Derbyshire Ware fabrics similar to those manufactured at the Holbrook and Hazelwood kilns. The prehistoric material is entirely lithic, occurring both in discrete clusters and in less dense scatters along the edge of a shelving plateau, and including diagnostic pieces of Later-Neolithic/Bronze-Age types, with a smaller proportion of Mesolithic material. The raw materials include translucent, mottled and Wolds-type flint, with a small amount of chert. The density of these artefacts is high enough to suggest that they are not merely casual losses, but further investigation of these fields would be required for a fuller assessment of their significance.

A full report is deposited in the SMR at Matlock, and the artefacts will be placed in Sheffield Museum. Thanks go to J. Brown, P. Caldwell and J. Eccles for assistance with the fieldwork.

**5. CALKE PARK (SK 3622)***G. Guilbert, S. Malone & R. Sheppard*

The park and mansion known as Calke Abbey were acquired by the National Trust (NT) in 1985, since when various restoration-works have proceeded apace, often accompanied by archaeological recording. Two separate pieces of recording were undertaken there in 1995, by T&PAT on behalf of NT: one involved detailed survey of a ruinous deer-shelter, the restoration of which is in mind; the other arose from a watching-brief which located an infilled ditch in ground disturbed for the construction of new facilities for NT staff in the vicinity of Home Farm.

The deer-shelter (SK 367223; Fig. 2; named on map in Colvin 1985, 119) occupies a high point within the park, where it might be viewed *en route* to and from the house. It therefore displays considerable architectural pretensions, especially the cote at the heart of the complex, which is rectangular, measuring 19.7 × 8.2m, with closed chambers at the ends, and open-sided between these (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 1). Both 12.3m-long loggias are divided into three bays by circular columns of sandstone ashlar, each with moulded capital, supporting a chamfered wall-plate at c. 2.3m height. The walls are of red brick with sandstone dressings (i.e. quoins and western plinth), but much of the brickwork was once hidden by rendering, as is shown by surviving fragments, and this was scored externally to imitate stone-coursing. The ridge-roof has had a covering of red tiles, but one of the two roof-trusses has now collapsed. The gables stand 7.4m (west) and 6.3m high, compensating for the westward fall of the ground; in each, there is a Venetian window, now semi-blind. Beneath this, the western chamber is ventilated by diamond-shaped breathers of honeycomb brickwork, three in the gable-end and two in the internal wall. There are no breathers in the eastern chamber, which has been split secondarily to

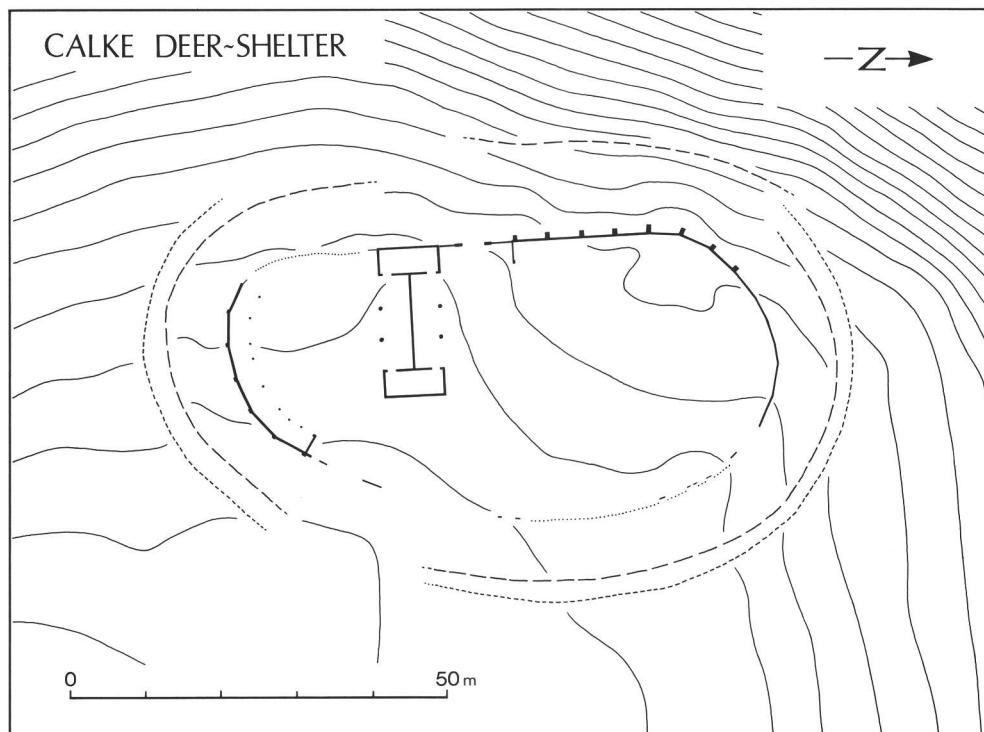


Fig. 2: Calke Park: overall plan of the deer-shelter (i.e. cote within enclosure), recorded by GG and SM using electronic distance-measuring equipment; with walls shown as heavy lines (dotted where barely discernible at present ground-level); simplified contours as unbroken lines at 0.5m vertical interval, falling towards the north-west; and the earthwork-enclosure as broken lines following the crest of the bank (long dashes) and the bottom of the ditch (short dashes); scale 1:1000.

provide an upper floor; probably at the same time, its ground-floor was divided into two rooms, each lit by a rectangular window, suggesting that this end of the building may have been converted for some use other than to shelter deer. The former positions of feeding-racks can be discerned from the remains of timber-supports and sockets in the back wall of each loggia.

Abutting the western corners of the cote are the remains of a red-brick, kidney-shaped enclosure, measuring *c.* 73 × 36m overall, its flattened western side standing above a 1-in-5 slope, where buttresses have been added to primary pilasters externally (Fig. 2). Much of this has been robbed (reputedly, and ironically, to gain materials for use in conservation-projects at neighbouring properties), but its course can be traced around most of the circuit, in places marked by no more than a slight ridge in the turf, and it may be assumed to have formed a complete pen. Where best preserved, close to the north-west corner of the cote, it stands over 3.0m to the stone-coping, with a 2.7m-wide gateway flanked by square, stone-capped pillars. In addition, much of the curved southern end survives as an open-fronted feeding-shelter, its rear wall still lined with wooden hay-racks. Its hipped roof, standing 3.0m high at the ridge and covered in blue

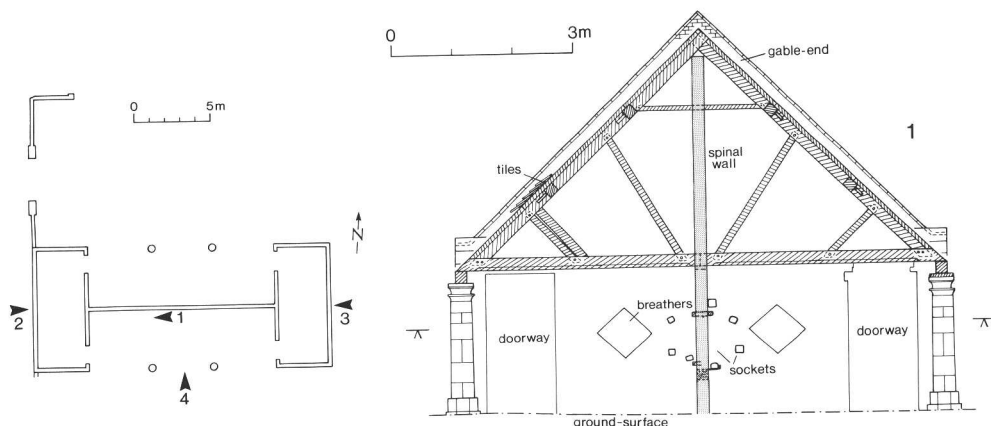


Fig. 3: Calke Park: ground-plan and cross-section of the deer-cote, recorded by RS; timbers are hatched; in the background of the section, features of the eastern wall of the western chamber are shown in outline; scale of plan 1:500, scale of section 1:125.

tiles, is supported at the front by cast-iron pillars, *c.* 0.07m (3") in diameter and *c.* 1.6m in height (Fig. 5). Eight of these pillars remain wholly or partially *in situ*, showing that they were probably originally set at *c.* 1.7–2.0m intervals. Fragmentary tiles and pillars scattered over the ground-surface suggest that a similar construction once stood at the north end, but it remains unclear how much of the enclosure's perimeter was equipped with shelters in this way.

The deer-cote is said to have been built in about 1774, replacing an earlier one situated elsewhere in the park, which had itself been in existence for over a century by that time and was subject to episodic landscaping and enlargement (Colvin 1985, 120–22). The brick-built enclosure was evidently added to the cote, and seems not to have existed, at least to its fullest extent, when an anonymous map of Calke was made in about 1800. However, it is possible that the cote once stood free within a larger enclosure, perhaps timber-built, measuring *c.* 95×60m, as witnessed on the ground by a low earthwork running concentric with the brick-built enclosure (Fig. 2). Alternatively, a timber enclosure may have been constructed around that of brick, thus explaining the apparent depiction of a double-walled enclosure here on the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey 1" map (1836). A third possibility would be to suppose that the earthwork was formed as a wood-bank, i.e. surrounding a young plantation and serving to keep animals out rather than in; its ditch is external for much of the circuit (though it is difficult to trace along the top of the steep western slope, where there may have been an external bank, while the break at the south-east appears to be due to modern disturbance), and this would be in keeping with such a purpose. Even so, the slightness of the earthwork would indicate the necessity for a fence or hedge atop the bank if animals were to be controlled either way, and this scale of earthwork would be appropriate to a wood-bank of quite recent, rather than Medieval, age (cf. Rackham 1986, 67, 98–100), as befits its relation to ridge-and-furrow earthworks (explained below). If so, the deer-cote was perhaps erected within a pre-existing clump, as might anyway be inferred from the position of a plantation shown on Samuel Wyatt's 'Map of the Lordship of Calke', dated 1761 (partially reproduced in Colvin 1985, 118, where the plantation in question lies above the name 'Green Gore',

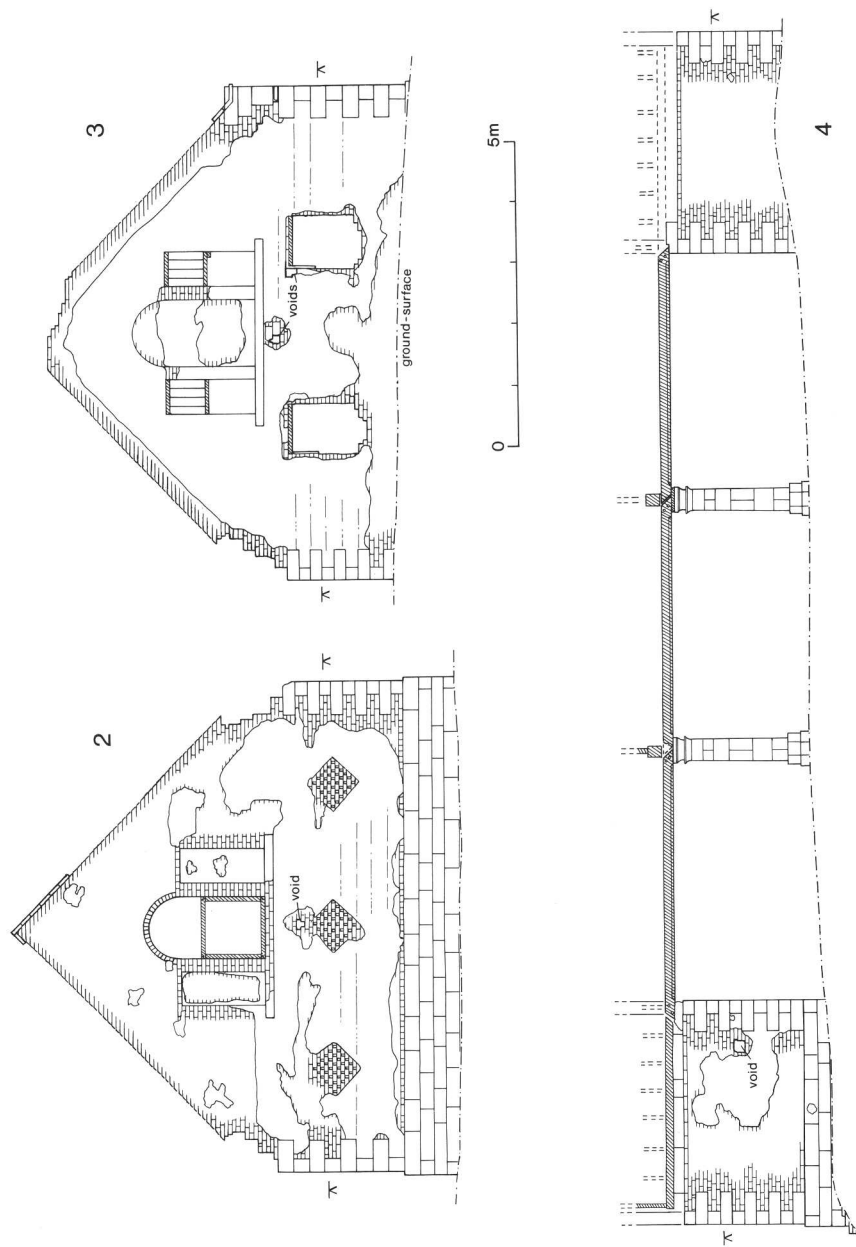


Fig. 4: Calke Park: elevations of the gable-ends and the south face of the deer-cote (numbered as in the plan in Fig. 3), recorded by RS; timbers are hatched; scale 1:125.



Pl. 1. Calke Park: the deer-cote, viewed from the south-east in January 1994. *Photograph by GG.*

west of the church). Excavation alone would seem to offer any prospect of resolving how this earthwork functioned, perhaps also when it was made, though any pre-park context can probably be discounted because it appears to cut across earthworks created by ridge-and-furrow cultivation (not represented in Fig. 2), themselves presumed Medieval and, though slight hereabouts, seen to good effect in other parts of the park.

The watching-brief was instigated in the hope of recovering evidence relevant to the village of Calke, the origins and greatest extent of which are uncertain. Comparison of the maps of 1761 and *c.* 1800 reveals that the sinuous north-south village-street once passed where the complex of buildings at Home Farm now stands, and there is known to have been some demolition of buildings hereabouts in the late-18th century (Colvin 1985, 122), when the park was extended to the east, and the street therefore re-aligned.

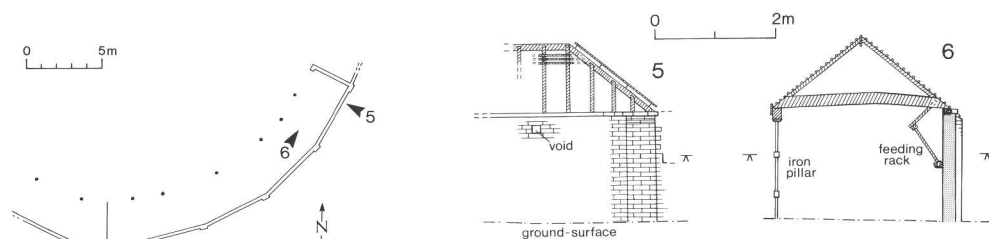


Fig. 5: Calke Park: ground-plan, elevation and section (numbered as in the plan) of the feeding-shelter at the south end of the deer-enclosure, recorded by RS; timbers are hatched; the back wall is stippled in section; scale of plan 1:500, scale of elevation and section 1:125.

Although nothing pertinent to the village was learnt in 1995, the top of an infilled ditch was seen in a section at the southern side of a platform excavated by machine for the erection of a new building. The ditch, centred at SK 3715722498, measured at least 6.6m wide, but was obscured at one edge and truncated at the other; it was not bottomed by the 1995 terracing, which removed only the upper 0.55–1.05m of its fill, and this appeared already to have been reduced to some extent. The recorded fill showed that a mixture of rubble and clay had been dumped into the top over an accumulation of silts. Such details are of less account than the identity of this ditch, which lies on line with that of a ha-ha laid out to circumscribe new gardens and pleasure-grounds in the late-18th and early-19th centuries (Colvin 1985, 125). That ditch is well preserved from c. 120m to the north (i.e. where it is occupied by an ice-house — Beamon and Roaf 1990, 235), remaining visible as a grass-grown hollow, now up to 11–12m wide, with a low, spread bank along its eastern margin, making an earthwork of c. 20m width overall. This peters out just 43m to the north-north-east of the 1995 section, but would seem to demonstrate that the ha-ha (designed to exclude animals from the gardens while retaining them within the park without impairing the eastward prospect) was not broken along this stretch of the perimeter, as might appear to be the case from superficial indications. Rather, the ha-ha probably passes continuously beneath the former piggeries and stables/workshops connected with Home Farm (i.e. alongside the east wall of the garden, numbered 8, in the map shown by Colvin 1985, 119, where Home Farm is numbered 9 and called ‘dairy’) to link up with that along the south side of the walled garden.

Copies of all records resulting from both the survey of the deer-shelter and the watching-brief, including fuller accounts of the recording-procedures as well as more detail of the recorded features and the extent of the 1995 disturbances for the new building and related services, have been deposited both at the NT East Midlands Regional Office in Clumber Park, Nottinghamshire, and with their Archaeological Sites & Monuments Record in Cirencester, Gloucestershire. Thanks go to D. M. Priddle (NT Managing Agent) for commissioning the work, and to P. Caldwell and T. Mandal for assistance in the field.

### References

- Beamon, S. P. and Roaf, S. (1990) *The Ice-Houses of Britain*. London and New York.  
 Colvin, H. (1985) *Calke Abbey, Derbyshire — a Hidden House Revealed*. London.  
 Rackham, O. (1986) *The History of the Countryside*. London.

### 6. FERNELLO SITCH (SK 343281)

*D. Knight & T. Morris*

The 1995 excavation of a ring-ditch, located on the Trent Floodplain Terrace to the west of Barrow-upon-Trent, was funded by Redland Aggregates Ltd as part of a Scheme of Treatment for an extension of their Swarkestone Quarry. The ditch enclosed a roughly circular area, c. 22m in diameter, containing at least two cremations. One small pit near the centre of the monument yielded only cremated bone; a second pit just inside the ditched area held a Collared Urn containing cremated human remains. Several other internal pits could have represented the remains of other cremations. An approximately straight gully near the centre of the monument, rich in both pottery and flintwork, may originally have held upright timbers. Both the gully and the central cremation

incorporated charcoal with potential for radiocarbon-dating. Deep penetration of ridge-and-furrow cultivation suggests that the site was originally defined solely by a ditch, perhaps with an inner or outer bank, but no mound. Numerous pits, postholes and gullies lay adjacent to the ring-ditch, and may have related to occasional finds of Iron-Age and Romano-British potsherds. Two of the pits were filled with heat-affected stones, possibly for cooking associated with the late-prehistoric activity — a possibility which it is hoped to test by thermoluminescence-dating.

A complex of linear boundary features crossing one corner of the trench comprised two roughly-parallel pit-alignments, spaced so closely that they seem unlikely to have been in use contemporarily. One of these had been truncated by a ditch, itself recut on at least one occasion, but none yielded datable finds. A watching-brief in 1996 suggested that the boundary continued westwards to the edge of the quarry, where a complex of pits and ditches could be seen in section. These were further investigated in a small trench adjacent to the quarry-edge. This revealed several pits cut by two phases of ditch, suggesting a similar structural sequence to that recorded beside the ring-ditch. A small quantity of hand-made Iron-Age sherds from the later of the two ditches provides the only dating evidence for this long-lived boundary.

#### **7. GREAT PICKLES, SHARDLOW (SK 430332)**

*D. Garton & L. Elliott*

A desk-top assessment undertaken before construction of the Derby Southern Bypass identified cropmarks in fields to the south of Grove Hospital, Shardlow. Although undated, the rectilinear pattern of the cropmarks suggests that they represent settlements of the Iron Age and Romano-British period. A new storm-drain was dug by contractors in a field adjacent to the cropmarks in 1995, revealing four archaeological features, which were cleaned and recorded during monitoring of the construction-works for the Highways Agency. Three ditches were sealed by a sub-ploughsoil layer containing Medieval pottery and a flint knife. Two contained burnt stone, and one of these also produced quantities of charcoal; although not strictly datable, such burnt stones are common in prehistoric and Romano-British contexts elsewhere in the Trent Valley. Hence, these ditches could represent an extension of the cropmark-complex. The fourth feature, not sealed by the sub-ploughsoil layer and containing an unabraded green-glazed Medieval potsherd at the base of its fill, is likely to be later.

A full report is deposited in the SMR at Matlock, and the artefacts will be placed in Derby Museum. Thanks go to D. Gilbert for assistance with the fieldwork.

#### **8. HARDWICK PARK (SK 4664)**

*G. Guilbert & S. Malone*

Hardwick, former seat of Bess and, later, of the Devonshires, came into the hands of the National Trust (NT) in 1956. In common with many deer-parks that have escaped extensive cultivation since emparkment, that surrounding the old and new Halls at Hardwick is rich in Medieval earthworks, as well as those relating to the functioning of the park itself, which was established here by or before the mid-16th century. Hardwick Park straddles the boundary of the Coal Measures and the Magnesian Limestone, and, in the context of this over-exploited belt of the countryside, its survival as a tract of rural, historic landscape is impressive and significant archaeologically. Consequently, a comprehensive, superficial survey of archaeological remains within the park is being undertaken by T&PAT on behalf of NT. The aim is to record features of all periods, not



only to heighten understanding of the range and time-depth of land-use within the former deer-park but also to improve management of the archaeological landscape. Some of the park lies within Nottinghamshire, but features so far recorded in Derbyshire include stretches of the park-pale, terracing and embankment of pre-park settlements, extensive tracts of ridge-and-furrow, contemporary and later field-boundaries, hollow-ways and terrace-ways, two possible pillow-mounds, fish-ponds, ornamental ponds and related features, a duck-decoy, and a linear earthwork marking a stretch of the county-boundary. In due course, it should prove possible to reconstruct the development of much of the landscape around the Hall, both before and after its emparkment.

#### 9. HEATH LANE, FINDERN (SK 306300)

*D. Garton & C. Abbott*

During construction of the Derby Southern Bypass in 1995, a drainage-culvert was cut to the west of Heath Lane, Findern. Archaeological monitoring of these works for the Highways Agency resulted in the recording of fifteen features in a 70m length of the culvert, where no archaeological remains were previously known. These were all cut into the gravels of the river-terrace, and were all overlain by two ploughsoils, the earlier being interpreted as a remnant of ridge-and-furrow cultivation, still evident at the surface of the field, though reduced by later ploughing.

The recorded features have been interpreted as pits where they appeared in only one side of the culvert, but as ditches where they could be seen in both sides. The majority were 0.5–1.0m wide, and 0.2–0.5m deep, but two ditches were larger than all others, at almost 2.0m wide and penetrating deeper than the 0.75m culvert. In one 7.5m length of the culvert, five pits/ditches were identified, two containing dark, humic material which extended over the others, demonstrating at least two phases of activity here. All features were seen only in section, and no stratified artefacts were recovered, though two sherds of pot came from the spoil-heaps alongside the features: a piece of green-glazed Medieval pottery, and a badly abraded piece of Roman Samian ware.

A full report is deposited in the Sites & Monuments Record at Matlock, and the potsherds will be placed in Derby Museum. Thanks go to J. Mordan for assistance with the fieldwork.

#### 10. HICKEN'S BRIDGE, ASTON UPON TRENT (SK 428297)

*D. Garton, L. Elliott, & A. J. Howard*

Evaluation of the area of a proposed gravel-pit near Hicken's Bridge was conducted in 1995 for Tarmac Construction Ltd, in connection with the Derby Southern Bypass roadworks. At least two palaeochannels (infilled, relict river-channels) were identified from surface undulations within the area, and these were investigated by machine-trenching conducted under archaeological supervision, with the objectives of locating any activities along the river-banks and sampling for palaeo-environmental information. The first objective proved negative, but the channels contained organic remains which were sampled for pollen (analysed by F. Green) and dated by radiocarbon. The latter demonstrated that one channel was open at the end of the 2nd millennium BC, with grassland and open places increasing at the expense of woodland later in the sequence. Samples taken from an earlier channel, radiocarbon-dated to the early 6th millennium BC, are being analysed. Clasts and lenses of organic deposits were also recorded within the gravels during a watching-brief, and, together with the palaeochannel, these will be

the subject of a more detailed report. When considered alongside other palaeo-environmental data collected locally, these samples will contribute to an understanding of landscape-development, providing a context for the wealth of archaeological remains in this area.

A watching-brief during the removal of the superficial deposits resulted in the recovery of a red-deer antler from the top of the sands and gravels. Its small size would suggest that it is of Holocene date (i.e. less than 10,000 years old) rather than late glacial (identified by N. Moyse, Natural History Curator, Derby Museum & Art Gallery).

The only other significant feature identified by the watching-brief was a stone-lined trough linked to a network of sandstone and slate-lined drains. The use of slate probably links them with the Trent & Mersey Canal, which runs immediately to the north and was built in the 1770s, as it was only after this event that slate would have been readily available as a building-material. The function of the trough is unclear. It is unlikely to be related to the nearby wharf for loading gypsum from the mines at Aston Hill, as this was on the opposite (north) side of the canal. Similar stone structures fed by stone land-drains have been discovered in or alongside ponds (Hartley 1964, 39), so an agricultural water-hole may be the best interpretation.

A full report has been lodged with the SMR in Matlock. The archive and artefacts will be deposited in Derby Museum. Thanks go to D. Gilbert for assistance with the fieldwork.

### *Reference*

Hartley, D. (1964) *Water in England*. London.

### **11. KEDLESTON PARK (SK 3140)**

*G. Guilbert, S. Malone & R. Sheppard*

The hall and park at Kedleston were given to the National Trust (NT) in 1986, and recording and restoration of dilapidated structures have continued intermittently since then. During 1995, several surveys of 18th-century features within the park were conducted by T&PAT on behalf of NT, each in anticipation of remedial works. These included detailed recording of a ruinous circular building called the Hermitage (SK 30644048), once a rusticated and romantic retreat situated in an evergreen glade on the route of the picturesque, serpentine footway known as the Long Walk. The standing structure was drawn stone-by-stone, and its 2.6m-diameter interior was excavated, revealing evidence of former timber-flooring as well as fragmentary building-materials that add considerably to knowledge of the appearance of the building, especially internally. The wall of the ha-ha along the southern side of the Long Walk was recorded photographically; and a series of trenches excavated across it demonstrated great variety in its construction. It is hoped to publish further details of these features in due course.

Other surveys concerned particulars of the string of lakes which dominate the parkland to the north of the Hall. Paving downstream of the splash-pool at the lowermost end of the Lower Lake (SK 32254005) had begun to collapse and was recorded in detail using EDM (electronic distance-measuring equipment), prior to its intended reinstatement. The water in the Island Lake was lowered, partly in order to facilitate inspection of the foundations of Robert Adam's famous Fishing-Room cum Boat-House (SK 31104080), which lies at its southern margin, and partly to allow the removal of silt that had accumulated over the floor of the lake and within the vaulted chambers where the boats

were once housed. EDM-recording included the lines of former revetments of timber and stone around the shores of both the lake and the island at its centre; these differ a little from their modern equivalents, and it is expected that they will be restored to the original course as and when repairs are effected. The old outlines are a remarkably good match for those seen in George Ingman's map of 1764 (Harris and Jackson-Stops 1987, 69), especially when it is recalled that that map was a design for the intended re-fashioning of the lakes rather than a record of landscaping that had already been accomplished. Ingman's map has proved to be an equally useful source in relation to the Long Walk, which took shape during the same episode of landscaping as the Island Lake and the Boat-House, itself built in about 1770. The biggest surprise to emerge from behind the silt was the quality of the ashlar used even for the courses of the walling of the Boat-House that were intended to lie below the level of water in the lake. These are rusticated in the 'vermiculated' style, contrasting with the 'smooth rustication' of the facade that is normally on view. Adam is well known for his attention to detail, but this does seem a little excessive even for him.

Copies of the records resulting from each of these pieces of work at Kedleston have been deposited both at the NT East Midlands Regional Office in Clumber Park, Nottinghamshire, and with their Archaeological Sites & Monuments Record in Cirencester, Gloucestershire. Thanks go to S. Braune (NT Managing Agent in 1995) for her appreciation of the need of archaeological recording; also to P. Caldwell, T. Mandal, and J. Schmidt for assistance in the field.

### *Reference*

Harris, L. and Jackson-Stops, G. (1987) *Robert Adam and Kedleston* (National Trust). London.

### **12. LINACRE RESERVOIRS, BRAMPTON (SK 330727)**

*D. Garton & J. Brown*

In 1995, T&PAT was commissioned to undertake an archaeological survey of the Severn Trent Water land-holding around Linacre Reservoirs, in order to assess both the range and preservation of archaeological remains and their potential attraction to visitors. The survey was conducted in two stages: a documentary search, collating and summarizing written and map sources; and a 'walk-over survey', noting and sketching the positions of all earthworks, with a view to assessing their past use and associations. Iron forges and hearths are mentioned in 12th-century documents, while documents of the 15th–18th centuries refer to the sale and management of woodland as well as the production of charcoal and white coal (kiln-dried wood) for the smelting of iron and lead. By the end of the 16th century, two mills provided power for lead-production here; but, by the early-17th century, these had been converted to a corn-mill and cutler's mill. Two hundred and three records of individual earthworks were recorded within the 71ha surveyed. These include dams, ditches/leats, quarries, banks, pits/hollows, white-coal kilns (Q-holes), terraced platforms, trackways and traces of ridge-and-furrow cultivation. There is a clear correlation between the older woodland and surviving archaeological features. The evidence from the documentary and field surveys both focus around the two major economic activities within the woodland — namely, the use of water-power and fuel-resources. The combination of historical sources and relatively robust earthworks makes this area particularly suitable for public interpretation.

**13. LITTLE CHESTER, DERBY (SK 3537)***T. Morris*

A watching-brief was carried out in 1995 on cable-trenches excavated by Nynex CableComms Ltd along the three modern roads within the Scheduled Ancient Monument area of the Roman settlement. This allowed the examination of 750m of trench over 18 days, providing a profile of the upper, archaeological deposits. Features were discovered along both sides of Old Chester Road, including several areas of stone structure within the bounds of the 3rd-century wall first recorded by Stukeley in 1726. Other features included compacted gravel surfaces, clay flooring and a ditch, but there were few stratified finds. However, sieving of spoil from the trenches (by Little Chester Local History Group) recovered approximately 150 sherds of Romano-British pottery. The ground-surface south of Old Chester Road was found to have been raised artificially with ash and slag, producing a terrace that supports Victorian housing. The trenches along Derwent Close and City Road did not penetrate to the level of Roman deposits. A more detailed report is planned for future publication.

**14. SHARDLOW (SK 43652915)***D. Garton*

When a tusk was found during quarrying, the Site Manager of the ARC gravel-pit near Shardlow, Mr R. Woolley, reported this to T&PAT. The tusk was collected, and its reported find-spot examined, in September 1995.

The tusk was found in pieces, with *c.* 0.30m of the external sheaf (maximum diameter *c.* 0.15m), but only a small part of the inner core, surviving. The external surface and broken ends are pitted and weathered. Sand and gravel adhered to the outside of the tusk, correlating with its stratigraphic location. This is said to have been at *c.* 1m above the Mercia Mudstone floor of the quarry, which here lay beneath *c.* 4–5m of banded sands and gravels, *c.* 2m of overburden, and the modern topsoil. The sands and gravel are probably of Devensian age (120,000–12,000BP), forming the lowest body of sediment in the river-valley, and the coarseness of these sediments probably indicates deposition in a cold climate. Another fragment of the same part of the tusk was recovered from the spoil-heap, but no other bones or artefacts were visible. The size of the tusk, its elongated form, and stratigraphic position suggest that it belonged to a mammoth.

The fragmentary tusk survived only because it had been waterlogged, and its future preservation would have required costly conservation. Since it is not of display quality and was found unassociated with other objects or with sediments of palaeo-environmental potential, only a sample of the sheath and core has been kept for future analysis. The sample was allowed to dry slowly, and has been deposited in Derby Museum.

**15. THURVASTON (SK 243378)***K. Challis*

During autumn 1996, an excavation on the northern edge of the village of Thurstaston was undertaken on behalf of Derwent Housing Association, funded by English Heritage. This followed an evaluation which had revealed the presence of archaeological deposits, now shown to include four principal periods of activity. The earliest comprised an east–west ditch containing a number of sherds of Medieval pottery. This was succeeded by a rectilinear structure on roughly the same alignment, defined by a continuous, shallow gully, broken once on its southern side to form a 2.5m-wide entrance. The gully did not serve a structural function and may be interpreted in a similar light to those noted surrounding some timber structures at Barton Blount, Derbyshire (Beresford 1975, 24),

i.e. as an eaves-drip trench. A number of postholes lay within the *c.* 11.0×5.5m area enclosed by the gully, though none seem likely to have supported the walls of the structure. A central hearth provided an archaeo-magnetic date of AD 1100–1210 or 1450–1530. The structure was overlain by a fragmentary cobbled surface, perhaps associated with a further building, for which there was only slight evidence. Later, the whole site was given over to agricultural use, evidenced by the ridge-and-furrow earthworks which covered the area prior to the excavation.

### *References*

Beresford, M. (1975) *The Medieval Clay-Land Village: Excavations at Goltho and Barton Blount* (Society for Medieval Archaeology, Monograph 6).

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