

# THE DISCOVERY OF A FURTHER EMBANKED ENCLOSURE AT 'THE GREEN' ALDWARK, NEAR BRASSINGTON, DERBYSHIRE

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## INTRODUCTION

In the course of surveys of 'Earthworks' in and around Derbyshire villages, a new earthwork was recognised at Aldwark. The site is situated in the centre of the village at SK2289457372 (The Ducket Well), *c.* 325m OD. Aldwark is a small village in the White Peak which developed around 'The Green' and has a perched water-table due to the volcanic strata sandwiched between the limestone. The place-name Aldwark derives from 'Old Work or fortification' (Cameron 1959, 339–341; Makepeace 2001, 162).

For some time it has been considered that the place-name may have referred to the oval banked enclosure situated at Hill Top Farm where previous surveys and excavations have taken place (Hart 1981, fig 8.11; Makepeace 2001, 162–189) (Fig. 1). With the new discovery of a further embanked enclosure at 'The Green', it is now difficult to determine which 'old work' the original place name may refer to. Could it be that the new embanked enclosure at 'The Green' is the one referred to as the 'old work' that gave Aldwark its name?

The site previously had been much overgrown by small shrubs and nettles and it was not until the autumn of 2007 that the authors identified the new earthwork after the vegetation was cut down and partially grazed by sheep.

On the edge of 'The Green' and lying to the south-east, is the old village well, called the Ducket Well (Naylor 1983, 76). This spring still supplies the old animal troughs at the side of the road and was one of a number of springs that supplied the village with fresh water. The name Ducket Well appears to be a recent historic name as is not mentioned in Cameron (1959). This spring would have been an essential source of water during prehistoric and historic periods and important to the communities around 'The Green'. The Ducket Well is enclosed by a series of limestone orthostats, under which is a channel cut to allow the water to flow from the well into a grooved stone and then into six rectangular gritstone troughs, before finally disappearing down a drain.

## 'THE GREEN' EMBANKED ENCLOSURE (Fig. 2)

The enclosure is situated entirely within the walled area known as 'The Green', although perhaps it was slightly larger originally. There has been some truncation of the outer bank by building of the wall and road which surround the earthwork. The

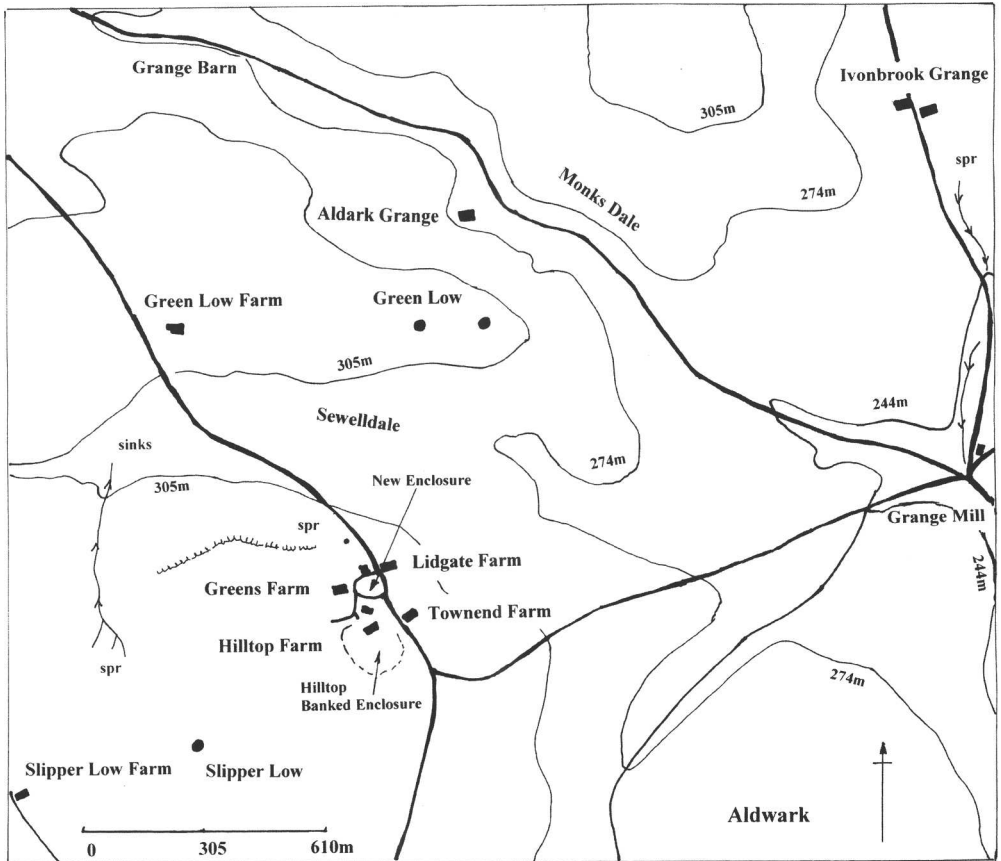


Fig. 1: Site location and White Peak environs.

circuitous lane around 'The Green' may have followed the previous outline of the outer ditch.

The present size of the enclosure is *c.* 46 × 64m, egg-shaped and situated on the hill slope. The entrance into the enclosure today is modern, however, 'The Green' has preserved its present shape for many centuries, as can be seen in the William Senior map of Aldwark, belonging to the Chatsworth Estate, dated 1618 (Survey Folio 191–2, Atlas Folio 62).

The best preserved parts of the enclosing bank and ditch are to the north and west and on the eastern sections. In the south-eastern section there appears to be a rounded break or 'ancient entrance' into the enclosure. It gives access to the 'Ducket Well' spring and lower pastures along the old lane coming from the 'common fields'. The south-eastern section of the bank and ditch is more prominent than other sections, as incorporated into the earthwork is a natural outcrop of limestone with large limestone blocks, rising *c.* 2m above The Ducket Well.

Internally, there are various low curvilinear earthworks and platforms along with more recent collapsed walled 'folds' and a possible lead exploratory pit. These

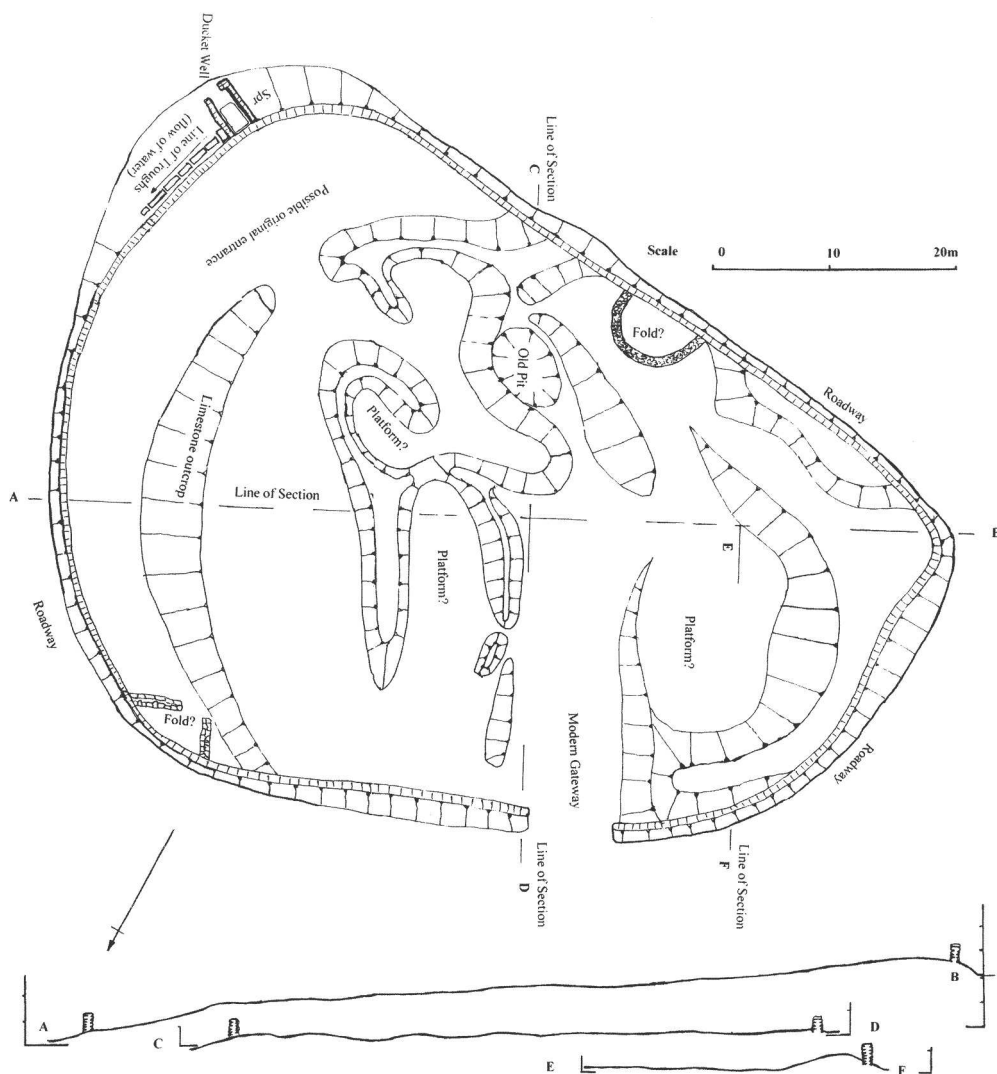


Fig. 2: Aldwark Enclosure (The Green) detailed site survey by G. A. Makepeace and C. R. Hart November 2007. Vertical scale of cross sections doubled to enhance profiles.

secondary activities make identification of any of the earlier features difficult. There are some level areas that may be building platforms but alternatively may be the result of later activity. It is not known whether these 'platforms' are original or later.

The embanked enclosure has been constructed on a false crest of the hill slope rising from east-west *c.* 3m (section A–B). Only a few sections show what the original height of the surrounding bank may have been. The north-eastern bank rises from the internal area *c.* 2.0m (E–F) and that of the eastern section on the line of section (A–B) *c.* 1.5m. The other parts of the surrounding bank have been much altered by later activities and today only show small rises above the internal and external areas.

A third enclosure SK22707300 may have existed to the west of Greens Farm, although much altered by later activity and a trackway. The earthwork is a 'D' shaped platform some 30–32m across and *c.* 1m high. It rises from the south to north due to the hillslope and projecting out from the hillside would appear to be a man-made rather than a natural feature

## DISCUSSION

'The Green' can be identified as far back as an oval enclosure on the William Senior 1618 map (Chatsworth MSS), which was rented by a 'Caldwell', demonstrating its longevity as an enclosure surrounded by local cottages and farms, as it is today. Though the present village survey adds two more possible earthworks to Aldwark, these features at present have not been identified in any other area of the White Peak. As to their date, this again is difficult to say, as the excavations conducted at Hill Top Farm were inconclusive as to the date of the enclosing bank. If the enclosed 'Green' was present during the early 1600s, then it is highly likely that the enclosure could be early medieval or even earlier.

There are a number of similar oval enclosures in the Peak District, but these are usually sited independently in the landscape, e.g. Tideswell Moor 'The Holmes', Eldon Hill, Speedwell (Hart 1981, fig. 7.4) and Wensley (*ibid.*, fig. 8.13).

There is only one location at present in the Peak District where there is a group of ancient enclosures and that is on the gritstone of Harthill Moor. Here survives a cluster of prehistoric and multi-period earthworks (Hart 1981, fig. 7.5: Makepeace 1999, 12–18).

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