

Photographic Recording & Archaeological Observation

**Castle Farm Moat Wall
Cheney Longville
Shropshire**

NGR SO 4174 8479

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1. Non Technical Summary

A rectified photographic survey was undertaken prior to restoration work being carried out on the NE section of the Moat Wall at Castle Farm, Cheney Longville, a 14th century moated site occupied by a post-medieval farmhouse and outbuildings.

Four sections of wall facing located to the SE of the central gateway and a 5m long section immediately NW of the gateway were removed under archaeological observation.

At least three distinct phases of construction were identified, the earliest represented by the drystone rubble core of the Moat Wall behind which was a large deposit of made-up soil probably relating to post-medieval landscaping of the site.

Several sherds of early to mid 19th century pottery were recovered from the rubble core indicating that certain sections of the Moat Wall, although not necessarily its entire length, were either newly built or reconstructed between c.1800-1850.

The masonry facing of the wall on either side of the gateway also exhibited marked differences in construction method and materials used, suggesting that they represent two distinct phases of building activity, again probably of late post-medieval (19th century) date.

2. Introduction

This report details the programme of archaeological works carried out by Border Archaeology at Castle Farm Cheney Longville Shropshire (SAM Ref. 13679; NGR SO 4174 8479) by Border Archaeology on behalf of Natural England, comprising the photographic recording of the NE section of the Moat Wall (approximately 85m in length) and archaeological observation of groundworks carried out in the same location.

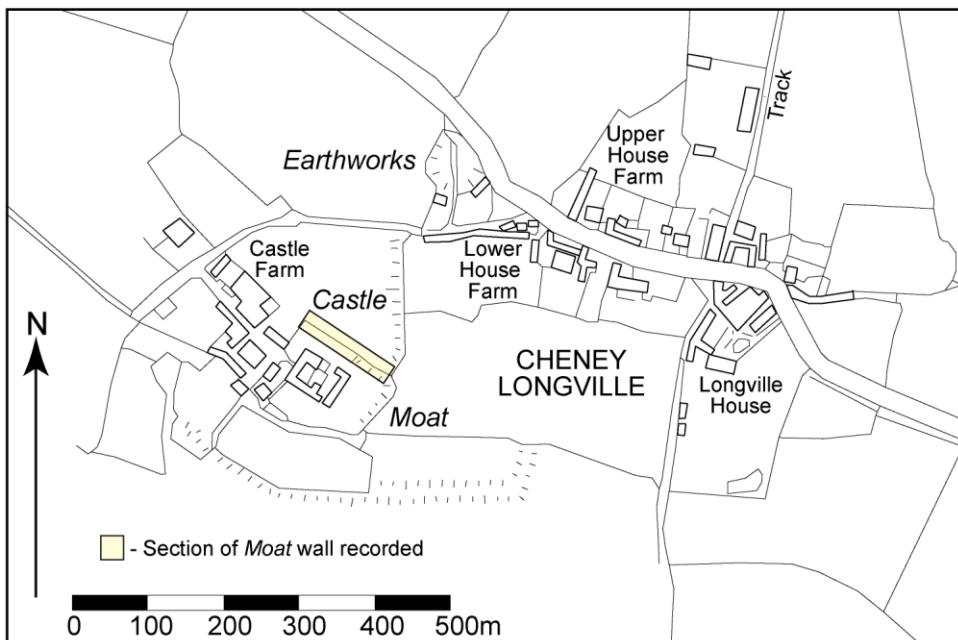


Fig. 1: Site Location Plan

Copies of this report will be submitted to the client, Bill Klemperer of English Heritage, Gill Meehan of Natural England and the Shropshire Sites and Monuments Record.

2.1 Soils and Geology

The predominant soil type in this area comprises the typical brown earths of the MUNSLow series (541i), consisting of well-drained coarse silty soils over siltstone and occasional similar but fine silty and coarse loamy soils over Silurian siltstone (SSEW, 1983).

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

Castle Farm (**Plate 1**), in its present form, comprises a 17th century farmhouse and associated outbuildings, ranging in date from the 14th-19th centuries, built around a central courtyard and accessed from the NW by an arched gateway. The farmhouse and outbuildings occupy the raised platform of a 14th century moated manor house, of which considerable earthworks survive, together with associated water management features and a number of post-medieval tanning pits. The site is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SMR No. 00162; SAM Ref. 13679).

The origins of the manor house probably date back to the early 14th century, when the Cheney family obtained possession of the manor of Longville. This manor house appears to have superseded an earlier 12th century ringwork castle situated approximately 150m to the NE. In September 1394, Richard II granted Hugh Cheney a licence to crenellate (fortify) his manor house at Longville and it has usually been assumed that the substantial moat surrounding the manor house dates from this period (Duckers, 2006, 54-5; Salter, 2001, 34). The property passed to the Plowden family in 1682 and was sold to William Beddoes, whose descendants still own it, in 1745.



Plate 1: General view looking SW of Castle Farm showing the farmhouse and outbuildings occupying the raised platform of the original medieval moated site, below which is the NE arm of the Moat Wall with evidence of earthwork banks in foreground

The NW and NE moat ditches have been largely infilled but probably survive as buried features, while the remains of an earthen bank at the E corner of the moated site indicate that the NE moat arm was originally bounded by a retaining bank which continues along the SE side of the moat. Immediately N of the moated site is a substantial retaining bank, up to 2.5m high, which was originally constructed across a stream channel (now buried), thereby creating a substantial pond which originally extended over a large area to the N and NW of the moated site.



4. Methodology

Fieldwork was carried out in accordance with archaeological practices set out in *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994 revised 2001). Border Archaeology adheres to the IFA *Code of conduct* and *Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology*.

The archaeological programme of works began on 29th July 2008 and finished on 8th August 2008, with a number of site visits being carried out between these dates.

The programme of works consisted of two distinct phases, the first of which comprised the photographic recording of the NE arm of the Moat Wall, measuring approximately 85m in length.

This record was produced using a 10.3MPX digital camera in accordance with a methodology based upon guidelines set out in *Photography in Archaeology and Conservation* (Dorrell, 1989). A baseline was established 5m from the wall parallel to its face and taped markers were placed at regular intervals to provide a series of photographic control points. Photographs were taken with a 20 per cent overlap at right angles to the wall every 2.5m. A sketch plan of the elevation was drawn at 1:100 with the height of the wall and the height of the marker points recorded at each photographic point.

The second phase of works involved the observation of the removal of several sections of the Moat Wall. These included a 5m section of the wall 30m immediately NW of the gateway where there is evidence of 'bowing' and 'blowing'; and four individual small sections of wall within the section running approximately 55m SE from the gateway, where root damage has caused instability or collapse.

Full written and drawn records of exposed structures and deposits were made in accordance with archaeological practices set out by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994; revised 2001). Any identified archaeological deposits; features and structures were recorded in plan at a scale of 1:20 or 1:50 and in section or elevation at a scale of 1:20 or 1:50. Any significant features or structures were recorded at 1:10 in plan and section. The profile of the Moat Wall in its entirety was recorded at a scale of 1:100.

Written, graphic and photographic records were made using pro-forma record forms and sheets, in accordance with Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Standard and Guidance documents. A detailed stratigraphic record was made using a context numbering system and a Harris Matrix was produced to demonstrate stratigraphic relationships.





5. Results

5.1 Phase 1: Recording of Moat Wall

The results of the photographic recording of the NE arm of the Moat Wall (approximately 85m in length) extending SE-NW from NGR SO 41808 84769 to NGR SO 41740 84817 are presented as a photomontage (**Figs. 2-5**).

5.2 Phase 2: Observation of Removal of Moat Wall

Archaeological observation of the removal of four sections of wall-facing to the SE of the gateway took place on July 29th and was completed on July 31st. Subsequent observation of the removal of a 5m long section of wall to the NW of the gateway commenced on August 7th and was completed on August 8th.



Plate 2: View SW showing rubble core (003) and external masonry facing (004)

Removal of the facing masonry on either side of the gateway revealed a drystone rubble wall core (003) containing sherds of late post-medieval pottery (chiefly china and Midlands redware of early to mid 19th century date), fragmentary animal bone and CBM (**Plates 2 & 3; Fig. 6**).

Behind (003), a cohesive yellowish-brown clay deposit (002) was observed where the rubble core had been removed or collapsed, although this was visible intermittently, mainly where the wall had been disturbed by root action. (002) was interpreted as a backfill soil deposit, retained by rubble wall (003) and probably associated with the raising of the ground level behind the wall to create a gently sloping garden lawn. It is likely that the landscaping activity represented by (002) and (003) dates from the late post-medieval period.



Plate 3: Cross-section through external masonry facing and rubble core to NW of gateway



Plate 4: View S showing extent of root disturbance to SE of gateway

The coursing of the external facing masonry on either side of the gateway exhibited two markedly different methods of construction (**Plate 5**). The section extending NW of the gateway (approximately 30m in length) was characterised by a facing constructed primarily of randomly coursed, roughly worked and elongated sandstone slabs (004), largely drystone bonded, with a batter of approximately 80 degrees (**Fig. 6**). ‘Blowing’ and ‘bowing’ had occurred in several places due to the weight of material behind the section; two stone buttresses, bonded with cement, had been added to support this part of the wall, in addition to other minor repairs, which were evidenced by the use of cement bonding particularly in the immediate vicinity of the gateway.



Plate 5: View SW showing marked differences in masonry coursing on either side of the gateway

The external masonry facing of the longer section (006) running SE from the gateway (approximately 55m in length) consisted of large, dressed sandstone blocks, randomly coursed and largely drystone bonded. The quality of the dressed masonry suggested that it could have been re-used from earlier buildings, although no obvious evidence of diagnostic features such as mouldings or masons' marks was noted. Evidence of stone coping was visible in several places and the masonry was built upright with no discernible batter. Parts of the wall had collapsed due to tree root disturbance (**Plate 4**).

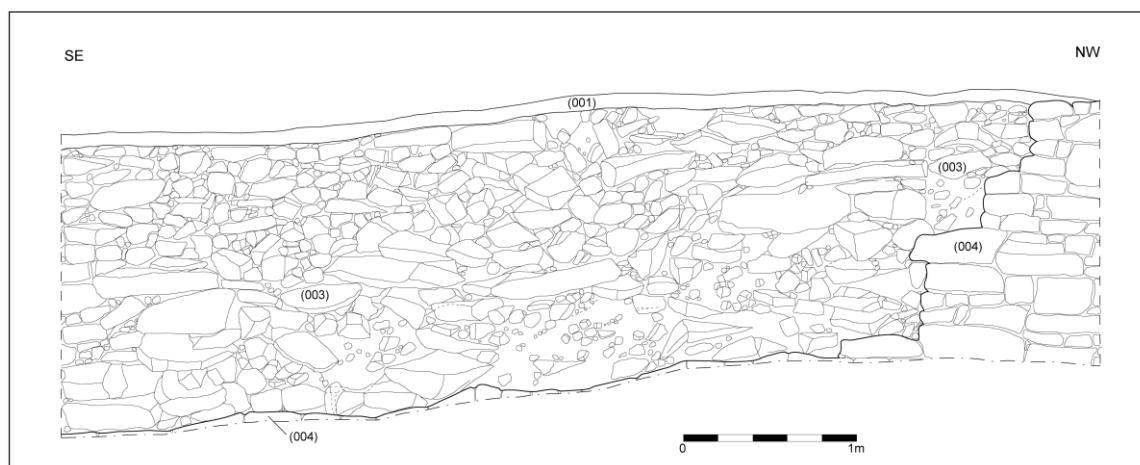


Fig. 6: NE facing elevation of section of Moat Wall to NW of gateway, showing drystone rubble core (003) and later masonry facing (004)



6. Conclusion

This programme of photographic recording and archaeological observation of the NE arm of the Moat Wall at Castle Farm revealed evidence of considerable repair and rebuilding. At least three distinct phases of construction were identified, the earliest represented by the drystone rubble core of the Moat Wall (003). Several sherds of early to mid 19th century pottery were recovered from (003), some of which were *in situ*, which would appear to indicate that certain sections of the Moat Wall, although not necessarily its entire length, were either newly built or reconstructed between c.1800-1850. Further evidence of post-medieval landscaping was indicated by the fact that the ground level behind the wall had been artificially raised to create a gently sloping garden area.

The external facing of the wall also exhibited two clearly discernible phases of building activity, represented by the marked difference in construction method and materials between the stretch of walling to the NW of the gateway and that stretch extending SE of the gateway. The gateway appeared to mark a distinct break in construction between the two stretches of wall, although it is difficult to determine which was the earlier; the gateway and both sections of wall are shown on the OS 1st edition 6 inch map of 1890. It may be presumed that the masonry facing of the Moat Wall, in its present form, is also post-medieval in date.

7. Copyright

Border Archaeology shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs & Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of the report by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.

8. Bibliography

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Duckers, P. & Duckers, A., 2006, *Castles of Shropshire*, Stroud

Pevsner, N, 1958, *The Buildings of England: Shropshire*, London

Salter, M, 2001, *The Castles and Moated Mansions of Shropshire*, 2nd ed., Malvern

SSEW, 1983, Soil Survey of England and Wales, Silsoe

9. Cartography

(All maps were obtained from the Shropshire Archives unless otherwise stated)

OS 1st edition 6 inch map (Shropshire 63 SE) – 1890

OS 2nd edition 6 inch map (Shropshire 63 SE) – 1903

OS provisional edition 6 inch map (Shropshire 63 SE) - 1953

10. Context Register

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION
(001)	Loosely compacted dark humic sandy silt, up to 0.25m thick. Overlies (002), (003).
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Garden soil deposit</i>
(002)	Cohesive pale yellowish-brown to mid brown sandy clay, >0.20m thick. Abuts (003)
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Backfilled soil deposit behind rubble wall (003) probably relating to late post-medieval landscaping activity</i>
(003)	Masonry wall, oriented NW-SE, constructed of uncoursed & unbonded sandstone rubble, measuring 87.25m x 0.26m. Fills [007]. Abutted by (002)
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Core of drystone rubble wall retaining soil deposit (002) probably relating to late post-medieval landscaping activity</i>
(004)	Masonry wall, oriented NW-SE, consisting of randomly coursed, elongated sandstone slabs, largely of drystone construction with limited evidence of cement bonding in places, measuring 29.85m x 0.29m x 1.90m. Fills [007]
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Section of external masonry wall facing to NW of gateway</i>
(005)	Cohesive dark brown sandy silt, occasional angular sandstone, >0.15m thick
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Topsoil deposit on bank below wall</i>
(006)	Masonry wall, oriented NW-SE, consisting of randomly coursed, large squared sandstone blocks, of drystone construction, measuring 53.25m x 0.30m x 1.50m. Fills [007]
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Drystone wall facing</i>
[007]	Cut. Rectilinear in plan oriented NW-SE and measuring 87.25m x >0.43m. Filled by (003) (004) & (006)
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Cut for external masonry wall facing to SE of gateway</i>



Document Control

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