BERRY POMEROY DEERPARK WALL
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

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OUTLINE OF THE ORIGINS AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEER PARK AND WALL

Deer parks – a general background

Deer parks were enclosed places set aside as reserves for rearing and managing deer, often alongside other semi-domesticated and wild creatures including rabbits, hares, wild boar and birds. They produced food for the tables of the king and nobles down to the level of manorial lords and minor gentry. A supply of venison was highly prized since it was a special dish for feasting and honouring guests. The parks were also intended for the sport of hunting, although the scope for a good hunt was limited by being a confined space full of trees. Deer were sometimes released from the park and hunted outside. The park boundary had to be a sufficiently high barrier to prevent the deer from leaping over it. It could be a stone wall with a ditch along its inside or more commonly a large earth bank topped by a timber fence or hedge with an internal and sometimes external ditch. The shape of deer parks was usually round or oval since this enclosed a greater area in proportion to the circumference, so were more economical to construct.

Deer parks were created mostly in areas already containing woodland. The woodland provided shelter, browsing and leaf fodder but was also cropped for building timber and fuel. Parks also needed to include sufficient areas of pasture for grazing. About one in two parks was compartmented into separate closes. Some compartments were for the production of wood, chiefly by coppicing (cutting trees back to just above ground level allowing rootstock to reshoot). Deer could be excluded when new shoots were growing. Other compartments known as `launds' were accessible to deer at all times, typically grassland with pollarded trees (pollarding is similar to coppicing but the tree is cut through sufficiently high up so that deer and other stock cannot reach new growth). Other parks had no such internal divisions and were managed as wood pasture, where woodland and grazing were intermixed. A stream usually supplied the deer with water, commonly being dammed to form fishponds. Deer parks varied greatly in size from small deer paddocks of a few acres up to great parks of 1200 acres or more. An average size was about 200- 250 acres. Red deer and occasionally roe deer were stocked but fallow deer were favoured, having been introduced into this country by the Normans. Most parks had a lodge for a parker sited at a high point with a commanding view.

Deer parks are known from the late Saxon period but became far more numerous after the Norman Conquest, reaching their highest numbers c. 1300 when there were perhaps 3200 parks in England and parkland covered about 2% of the countryside. The enclosure of a deer park required a licence from the crown in areas where royal hunting grounds already existed, but this was not always enforced. Some of the smaller parks were disparked in the later medieval period. Many however were maintained into the Tudor period, when a trend began for parks to acquire a role as the setting for mansions and country houses, some being newly created as landscape parks in association with the residence. The later 17th century saw widespread disparkment of deer parks and most were broken up in the 18th century and parcelled out for general farming purposes or forestry. Relatively few survived into the mid 19th century. There are about 100 active deer parks left.

Sources:

Liddiard, R. 2007 *The Medieval Park: New Perspectives*.

_____ 2010 *The Norfolk Deer Parks Project: Report for the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership.*

Neil, N., Baldwin, S. and Crosby, A. 2004 *The Medieval Deer Parks of Lathom in Lancashire.*

Rackham, O. 1986 *The History of the Countryside.*

Rotherham, I.D. 2010 Lecture text, `Landscape Context and Interpretation with the Example of the Ecology and Economics of Medieval Deer Parks', An Introduction to the History of Deer Parks and Ornamental Parks, *Wildlife and Landscape Survey 2010.*

Stamper, P. 1988 `Woods and Parks' in *The Countryside of Medieval England*, Astill, G and Grant, A. (eds).
_____ online edition on Parks and Gardens UK website, `Deer parks and hunting'

Location and physical background

Berry Pomeroy deer park is located ½ km to the north of the present village and 3km to the northeast of Totnes. The geology in the area of the deer park comprises largely Devonian limestone with Lower and Middle Devonian slates (`Norden' slates) outcropping at its eastern end. The landscape comprises gently rolling hills dissected by small combes (stream valleys) draining into Gatcombe Brook which flows westward. The valley profiles are quite steep in places. Gatcombe Brook has cut a gorge through the limestone immediately below the castle. Soils on the limestone have a reddish hue and are usually deep and productive, whilst those on the slate tend to be poor, shallow, and stony with a light yellow colour. Soil quality varies from good on the level ground, to poor and stony on slopes. The present woodland comprises small mixed copses and recent coniferous plantation with some deciduous trees. The plantations retain some remnants of older beech stands.

Sources:

Brown, S.W. 1998 `Berry Pomeroy – Archaeological Survey for Presentation' unpub. report to English Heritage (2 vols.).

Durrence, E.M. and Laming, D.J.C. (eds) 1982 *The Geology of Devon.*

History

The Pomeroys and Seymours

The deer park lies within Berry Pomeroy parish and the former medieval manor of Berry Pomeroy. The manor was held by the Pomeroy family for almost 500 years following the Norman Conquest. Berry Pomeroy was their chief property amongst 56 fees in Devon. Their estate at the time of the Domesday survey in 1086 was the fifth largest baronial landholding in the county. The Pomeroys had a manor house at Berry throughout the medieval period. In the late 15th century they built a castle within the deer park. The choice of site indicates that the castle was intended as a hunting lodge but built on a grand scale. The castle became their main family seat but they continued to occupy the manor house at the same time. In 1547, the castle and manor were bought by Edward Seymour, Protector Somerset. In 1553, his son Sir Edward acquired the property and made the castle his home. The Seymours resided at Berry

Pomeroy until c. 1700, when they abandoned the castle and moved to Maiden Bradley in Wiltshire. The castle is now a ruin managed by English Heritage. The Seymour family have a family home at Berry Pomeroy as well as Maiden Bradley.

Sources:

Brown S. W. 1996 `Berry Pomeroy Castle', *Proc. Devon Archaeol. Soc.* **54**.

Deer park

In 1207 Henry Pomeroy paid 10 marks to enclose his park at Berry Pomeroy. A manorial survey of 1293 records `a certain park worth each year in pannage and herbage 1 mark, and not more, for it is stocked with wild beasts'. In 1305, the park was said to have deer and to contain 100 acres of pasture. A park keeper called Richard Parker was provided with land in the park in 1408. Another parker, called Robert at Park, presumably Richard's successor, was granted a `tenement at park' in 1413. In 1463-4, a `cottage at the park with 4 acres of land' was granted to Thomas Taillour. The cottage was probably a keeper's lodge which had passed from keeper to keeper together with a small plot of land round about.

A park gate (`Porte de Byryparke') is mentioned in 1453-4, and two in 1496, when an assignment of dower to Elizabeth Pomeroy includes `a third part of the Park of Bury Pomerey, for a third part of the deer, containing by estimation 30a land, viz. from Slade Yate (Slade Gate) to William Tud's Style to the west, up to Sonde Yate (Sand Gate), and from Sonde Yate up to the said Slade Yate'.

In 1546 Thomas Pomeroy, the last of the Pomeroys to hold the Berry Pomeroy estate, sold the park together with the castle. In 1547 there is mention of the park as well as another enclosed ground in Berry Pomery `now called little park'. In 1552, Robert Robotham was `to enjoy the keeping of the Little Park of Berry Pomeroy. In 1553 there were two parks called the great park and the little park (with deer in them) in Berry Pomeroy'. In 1613 there was only `one park of Berry Pomeroy, where there once were two parks'. In 1662 the size of the park was estimated at 600 acres.

A small close called `Deer Park' in Bridgetown is mentioned in a rental document of 1723. It is also shown on the tithe map of 1841 a little to the west of the road between Bridgetown and Bourton. The origin of the name is unknown. The close occupied less than 3 acres and was far too small to have been a deer park in the true sense. It may once have been a holding pen or breeding enclosure.

Sources:
Travers, A. 1998 `Historical Sources' Appendix 2, pp 2-102, in Brown, S.W. `Berry Pomeroy – Archaeological Survey for Presentation', unpub. report to English Heritage (2 vols.).

Manco, J. 1996 `The History of Berry Pomeroy Castle', Appendix 1, pp 203-217, in Brown, S.W. `Berry Pomeroy Castle', *Proc. Devon Archaeol. Soc.* **54**.

Historic maps

The park is one of 22 deer parks appearing on Saxton's 1575 map, where it is shown surrounded by a wooden fence, the standard symbol used to denote all deer parks however enclosed in reality (Plate 1). Speed's map of 1610 shows it in a similar manner (Plate 2). Donn's map of 1765 gives an indication of its true shape and woodland within it (Plate 3). The first 1 inch OS map of 1809 is more accurate and shows woodland covering much the same area as at present (Plate 4). The tithe map of 1841 shows the park boundary and field boundaries in more detail (Plate 5). The earliest OS map of the 1889 shows no change apart from the loss of a small close at the northeast corner of North Tor (Plate 6). The field boundaries laid out at the time of the tithe apportionment have remained virtually unchanged until the present day.

Topography (Fig. 1)

The park straddles Gatcombe Brook valley and encloses largely steep wooded slopes. To each side of the valley there is flatter ground now used for crops or pasture: to the south, Summerhill and Kit Hill; and to the north, North Tor/Bird, Quillets and New Ground. The shape of the park on maps approximates to an oval with a flat-topped prominence projecting to the northwest. The east side of the prominence turns northward almost at right angles to the oval shape. The oval or rounded shape is a common one for deer parks, as noted above. The projecting area is doubtless an addition to the original park, the field names New Ground and Little New Ground indicating a later extension. The line of the original boundary on the northwest side of the oval can still be traced along the north sides of Lady Park Copse, Lady Park and Cray's Hole Plantation. Close to the northeast corner of Lady Park evidence can be seen for a former substantial stone wall (Plate 7). This part of the original boundary may have continued to the northeast corner of Croft near Netherton, or it could have turned southeastward to join another old wall remnant visible in places along the northeast side of East Summerhill (as suggested in Brown 1998, 39 and Fig. 8). The former would now seem more likely since the present field boundaries to the south of Cray's Hole turn sharp corners and form a pattern which is unlikely to reflect the course of the original park boundary which is sinuous elsewhere. Remains of the old wall along the northeast side of East Summerhill and other elsewhere in the park, may instead represent internal divisions of the park interior, such as those associated with `compartmented parks' as mentioned above (Plate 8).

Most of the later addition to the park, comprising the fields New Ground, Little New Ground and Quillets, occupies a relatively high area with gentle south-facing slopes. The land would have provided good summer grazing and perhaps a crop of hay to supplement the park's animal food resources. The addition may initially have formed a separate compartment with controlled access for deer such that they could be either contained or excluded at particular times. Such an addition would have allowed the head of deer to be increased during summer, in preparation for a cull in the autumn. The wall between the old park and new ground was later taken down so that the two areas became combined into one large park. This may possibly be recorded in documents relating to Great and Little Parks and their merging into one by the early 17th century, as mentioned above.

Evidence is preserved in two presently wooded areas for a bank and ditch inside the deer park wall (more below). A number of small stone quarries lying close to the wall's circuit almost certainly supplied stone for the wall's construction, in addition to stone excavated from the ditch.

A secondary use for the park was as a setting for the castle, and some features of the present landscape within the deer park date from the period in which the castle was occupied (c. 1496 - c.1700). The drive leading down to the castle is flanked by old stone walls. The lodge at the top of the drive dates from this period, as probably do some of the old walls enclosing gardens and yards round about. Below the castle were ponds formed by damming Gatcombe Brook (one has recently been restored). These were probably created earlier as fishponds, but added appeal to the setting of the castle perched on the rocky promontory above them. The mill probably also dates from the 15th or 16th century, built to take advantage of the water held in the ponds. Some of the leats and other water management channels in the vicinity of the ponds probably have contemporary origins. A dry stone wall similar in construction to the deer park wall abuts the deer park wall between the present two fields North Tor and Bird. This is certainly an old wall. It is however demonstrably later than the deer park wall, so could date from the time that the castle was built. The wall descends into the woodland on the valley side opposite Castle Field, formerly gardens attached to the castle. It may well be that the whole of the eastern end of the park was separated off from the rest to keep the deer and economic activities from straying too close to the residence and surrounding grounds. A large stone quarry near the castle (now used as the castle car park) provided slate stone for the castle's construction.

There is a later overlay of features in the landscape associated with 18th-century and later farming. These include the present earth bank field boundaries with stone revetting on each side, often set vertically. Where they meet the deer park wall, the field boundaries abut the wall. All the present gateways through the wall also date from this period, most being built of rubble bonded with off-white lime mortar. Many gateways have large round stone piers to hang the gates. The present largely coniferous plantations and forestry tracks, as well as some of the associated banks and ditches, date from the 20th century. Stumps and remnants also survive from earlier deciduous tree planting including stands of beech. Barns and other farm buildings built on or near the park wall date from the early 18th century and later. These buildings show that the park was being used by tenant farmers as arable and pasture for cattle and sheep. Water meadows fed by irrigation channels next to Gatcombe Brook are features dating from agricultural improvements dating from the 17th or 18th century. Current ecomomic activities include the raising of pheasants for shooting. There are numerous breeding and feeding pens surrounded by fences and drainage ditches. Numerous repairs to the deer park wall date from this period. These are dotted along the wall's circuit and are readily distinguishable from the earlier parts. It is clear that most repairs followed damage caused by wind-blown trees or by mature ivy dying. There are a number of lime kilns and small limestone quarries dating mostly from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Sources:
Brown, S.W. 1998 `Berry Pomeroy – Archaeological Survey for Presentation' unpub. report to English Heritage (2 vols.).

Cox, J. and Thorp, J. (Keystone Historic Building Consultants) 1990 `Berry Pomeroy Castle, Devon', unpub. report to English Heritage (2 vols.) - condition survey of the deer park wall and features within the deer park.

SURVIVING REMAINS (Fig. 1)

The wall

The wall is a little over 5km in length, up to 2.3m high, and varies in width from 0.8m to 1.35m. In places, it survives virtually intact, complete with coping (eg Plates 9 and 10). Elsewhere, its survival varies from good to barely a stub rising above ground level, with partially collapsed sections in between. There are numerous repairs of post-medieval date which can be recognised by the character of their more random and less skilled construction. The repairs seldom rise as high as the original wall and often incorporate stones pitched on their ends like those revetting nearby post-medieval hedgerows. There are some recent repairs made by tenant farmers.

The medieval wall

The medieval wall is largely built with dry stone. In one section of the wall however, alongside the fields now known as Bird and Torr, and from there down to Gatcombe Brook the wall retains remnants of an original red earth bonding material. The stone types used in the wall are limestone and slate. Where the wall crosses slate bedrock in the eastern part (First Kit Hill, Yonder Kit Hill and Castle Wood plantation), the wall is almost entirely built of slate. For the rest of the wall's circuit it stands on limestone bedrock and is built almost entirely of limestone. The wall's coping comprises large flat stones overlapping the wall top by on average 0.15m on each side. These are held down in position by further small stones piled on top (Plate 12). At the foot of the wall there is a rubble plinth. The plinth is visible in places along the outside of the wall where it projects between 0.1m and 0.3m (Plate 13). It is uncertain if there is a plinth along the inside face.

The wall shows considerable variation in construction along its length. Some of this variation is undoubtedly owing to differences in the building stone, which was quarried from numerous small quarries opened at different points along the park boundary. The local slate fractures along closely-spaced bedding planes so provides flat narrow stones which can be laid tightly together with very few gaps (Plate 14). Some of the local limestone also fractures along bedding planes but the planes chosen to split the rock are wider apart, so stones are often rectangular in shape, with broken, ragged ends (Plate 15). Some of the limestone used in the wall has since weathered along bedding planes, resulting in a striated appearance (Plate 16). Some limestone seems not to fracture along bedding planes readily, so parts of the wall are built with large irregularly-shaped rocks with little or no coursing (Plate 17). There are in addition differences in the style of construction. Some sections of the wall are more carefully and methodically constructed than others, having been built up in courses which were kept level even on sloping ground (Plate 18). The courses are undulating and intermittent but brought to a level course every so often. As far as can be seen from collapsed sections, the coursing runs through the full thickness of the wall (there is not, as in many mortared walls, an inner rubble core contained within outer skins of stone facework). Small stones were used to infill gaps in the facework (Plate 19). Other parts of the wall show a lesser degree of coursing or none at all. These are best described as random rubble construction, and often have fewer small stones used to fill gaps (Plate 20). This variation in construction appears to be a feature of the original wall. Occasional abrupt changes from one style to another may indicate junctions between the work of different hands, or possibly areas of later medieval rebuilding (Plates 21 and 22).

A likely explanation for the variation and changes of style in the wall is that its building and repair were undertaken by tenants of the manor, and that different tenants or groups of tenants were responsible for different parts, perhaps those parts closest to them. The upkeep of a deer park fence or wall was sometimes made customary work or labour service, particularly where tenants enjoyed common rights within the park (Stamper 1988). As early as the 13th century, the repair of the wall of the king's park at Moulton, Northamptonshire, was largely the responsibility of the surrounding townships and by the 16th century these obligations were recorded by stones bearing the township's names set into the wall (Steane, J. 1975 `The Medieval parks of Northamptonshire', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, **5**, 213). Documentary sources relating to the medieval and later manor at Berry Pomeroy have not yet been thoroughly studied, including a considerable number of reeve's accounts and manorial court rolls dating from the 15th and 16th century (as Anita Travers notes in her 1998 assessment). These might possibly contain references to rights and obligations associated with the deer park.

If indeed the wall was built by different tenants, perhaps in piecemeal fashion, and repaired by them, this would make it very difficult to distinguish between different phases of work, and whether particular parts are original or repair work. This is the case at present. Moreover, there is no appreciable difference between the construction of the wall surrounding the park's north-western extension (mentioned above) and the wall surrounding the original park, suggesting that construction methods did not change significantly over a considerable period.

Further evidence regarding changes in the style of construction will doubtless be revealed should the wall be cleared of brambles and scrub.

Post-medieval repairs and gateways

Post-medieval repairs to the wall are most often small pockets of rubble stonework commonly about 2m across which infill breaches caused by the uprooting of individual wind-blown trees which had grown up next to the wall. Sometimes the repairs consist of random rubble patching re-using stones from the collapsed wall and sometimes pitched stone revetting similar to that used to consolidate the sides of nearby post-medieval earth hedgebanks (Plates 23 and 24). Some repairs have had pitched stone coping stones placed along their top in the manner of moorland dry stone walls (Plate 25). A few repairs, mostly in Waynaps are bonded with an off-white mortar similar to that used in the present gateways through the wall. The gateways are all post-medieval in date, dating from after the time that the park became used as farmland following the Seymour family's move away from the castle to Maiden Bradley c.1700. The gateways typically have one and sometimes two round piers of mortared rubble masonry to bear the weight of the gate. The piers either form round terminals for the broken-through deer park wall, or are wider than the wall and project to each side, returning with a straight side to the wall (Plate 26). Some gateways on the west side of the park are modern and simpler. These are built of masonry bonded with an orange-coloured mortar. There are a number of modern repairs to the wall carried out by the present tenant farmers. Some along the south side, bordering Berry Farm, were carried out as recently as the autumn of 2011. The repairs are of a good standard and can be distinguished from the original by slight differences in building stone, the absence of ivy along their tops, and their lower height, which was raised only so far as to be stock proof (Plate 27).

Earthwork Bank and ditch (Fig. 2)

There are remains of a bank and ditch inside the wall at the east end of the park on the wooded valley slope to each side of Gatcombe Brook and continuing north-westward partway alongside the field now known as Bird, where it is also preserved in a narrow strip of woodland. The ditch is on average 2.6m across and up to 0.5m deep. The bank is built of earth and loose stone which breaks the ground surface. It is on average 2.4m wide and 0.5m high. At places the bank has spread to a width of 3m or more. On the exceptionally steep slope to the south of Gatcombe Brook, the bank was dispensed with and the ditch widened to 5m. There is no trace of the bank and ditch elsewhere alongside the wall but it would seem very likely that they once continued around much of its circuit. Farmers have probably infilled the ditch with material from the bank in order to create more tillage to grow crops.

The bank and ditch are either contemporary with the wall or features associated with an earlier earthwork boundary for the park. The former would seem more likely since there was usually a ditch around the *inside* of a park boundary in order to increase its effective height, thus preventing deer from leaping over it. The bank would have been formed with upcast from the digging the ditch. The wall, bank and ditch together form a functional barrier. If on the other hand the bank and ditch pre-date the wall, they are rather narrow and slight earthwork features to have formed a park boundary in their own right, even with a wooden fence or hedge along top of the bank. In addition, there should have been another large ditch inside the bank to prevent deer from leaping over. The only way to resolve the issue with certainty would be to excavate one or more investigative evaluation trenches.

Other Features

There are some curious small holes through the base of the wall the purpose of which is uncertain (Plates 19 and 28). Four such holes have been located to date. The holes are built into the wall and occur singly, spaced widely apart from each other. They resemble scaffolding putlog holes, although clearly not for that purpose in this case. They were however probably formed in a similar manner, ie by building the wall around a squared timber shaft which is no longer in position. More may be learnt about the holes should further examples be uncovered by clearing undergrowth from alongside the wall.

Remains survive from a ruined stone style over the wall close to where Gatcombe Brook enters the park at its east end (Fig, 1, style; Plate 29). The style consisted of a flight of steps built of rubble and rammed earth rising up the outside of the wall with a gap through the wall top flanked by large upright stone slabs. The riser for each step was a small upright stone slab. These have become rounded by wear on their upper edges, showing that the feature was a style used over a considerable period by people rather than a deer leap, a ramp-like feature sometimes found built against the outside of park boundaries to let wild deer into the park but not out. It is not certain how the style descended the inside of the wall. The style is certainly old but not closely datable. It may well be medieval in date.

A stone feature at the east end of the park projecting from the inside of the wall partway across the ditch may possibly be a deer leap. If not, it could be a post-medieval gate pier. The feature is presently largely obscured by woodland undergrowth, but can be seen to be approximately rectangular, rather than round like most post-medieval gate piers. There is however an area of post-medieval pitched stone revetting of the ditch side immediately

adjacent to the feature on its south. This is about a gateway's width, suggesting that there may have been a post-medieval gateway through the wall here which was later blocked. The feature will need to be cleared in order to see what it might be.

The wall is carried across Gatcombe Brook at the east end of the park by an arch (Plate 30). The arch, together with the wall above and for a short distance to each side, differs in construction from the rest of the wall. The arch is made up of limestone voussoirs with a granite keystone. The wall above is built of limestone blocks with additional slate levelling stones, brought to course every 0.2m-0.3m. The difference in construction probably indicates a later date, either in the later medieval or early post-medieval period.

The wall at the other end of the park has a gap in it to allow Gatcombe Brook through (Plate 31). Whether this arrangement is an original or later feature is uncertain since the adjacent parts of the wall to each side are largely overgrown.

A barn known as Berry Farm Barn stands across the line of the wall close to Castle Lodge. The barn dates from about the beginning of the 18th century and is similar to two other farm barns close to the wall at Broompark and Netherton (Keystone 1990, 3a). The deer park wall was broken through in order to erect the barn then made good with mortared masonry similar to that of the barn. The wall at this point can therefore be shown to date from before the 18th century.

To the south of the barn is a stockyard. The west wall of the stockyard is older than the other walls and similar in construction to the deer park wall. It is also a little over 2m high, about 0.8m thick, and has a plinth on its outside (west side). It would appear that there was an enclosure here dating from earlier than the present 18th- and 19th-century standing buildings, perhaps associated with a park gateway or lodge for the castle.

A post-medieval gateway through the wall at the west end of the park, a little to the east of Sandlane Copse, retains two re-used architectural fragments (Plate 32). These are parts of window lintels from a building of late medieval or early post-medieval date, possibly the castle.

CONCLUSION

The wall certainly dates from before the early 18th century when Berry Farm Barn was erected across its course and the present field boundaries were established inside the park. There is some evidence to suggest that the eastern end of the park was separated off from the rest by internal stone walls at the time that the castle was built. These internal stone walls are later in date than the deer park wall, indicating that the deer park wall dates from before the late 15th century.

The park was enclosed in 1207. The bank and ditch surviving at the east end of the park may possibly be remnants of the park boundary dating from before the wall but if so, the earthworks are now surprisingly narrow and slight, and show no sign of a second ditch inside the bank, which would have been necessary in order to contain the deer. It would seem more likely that the wall and ditch together formed the boundary from the outset, and that the bank was an incidental feature formed by upcast from digging the ditch. If so, the wall dates from the early 13th century.

There seems little reason to doubt that the wall dates from the medieval period. The question remains however whether or not it is an original feature. The only way to resolve the issue would be to excavate one or more evaluation trenches extending across the earthworks from the wall.

Topography suggests that the presently enclosed area containing the fields New Ground, Little New Ground, and Quillets forms a later extension of the original park. The wall enclosing this area is similar in appearance to parts of the wall elsewhere, and not distinctly different in the character of its construction. This means that two different phases of the wall are difficult to tell apart by construction alone. Further evidence which may help unravel the wall's structural development may be uncovered should the wall be fully cleared of undergrowth.

The original park enclosed woodland on the steep slopes of Gatcombe valley and areas of flatter ground to each side, probably consisting of grassland or `launds'. It was suggested in Brown 1998 that the original park extended westward only as far as Cray's Hole plantation, the boundary turning southward from there alongside Summer Hill Wood where there are remains from a substantial stone wall. Another possibility is that the original wall formerly continued westward from Cray's Hole to join the present wall where it crosses Gatcombe Brook (Fig. 1 red dotted line). This is perhaps the more likely course since to the south of Cray's Hole the present field boundaries turn sharp angled corners, a feature which is unlikely to reflect a former deer park boundary.

Remains from ancient stone walls inside the present park boundary are now interpreted as stockproof partitions between different compartments within the park. Another such wall is better preserved between the fields North Tor and Bird. The `compartmented park' was a way of managing parkland which controlled access by deer to certain parts used to maximise the production of wood, mostly by coppicing.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Devon Historic Environment Record at Devon County Council, Exeter, lists 141 entries for deer parks in Devon, most long vanished and many known only from place names or field names. Enclosing stone walls are noted at 11 sites, including Berry Pomeroy. The wall at Whiddon Down, Chagford, was created by John Whiddon (d. 1575). Its granite wall survives up to 3m high with similar coping and an internal ditch. A section of the deer park wall survives at Buckland Abbey, said to be possibly 16th-century in part. Ogwell park is first mentioned in 1618 but could be medieval. A dry stone wall bounds parts of it, now reduced in height to 1.5m. A license was granted to enclose Cadeleigh park c. 1200. It has a surrounding high wall but the wall appears not to have been described in any detail as yet. A park at Woodland presumed to have existed from place-name evidence has a decayed limestone wall along part of its possible boundary. Other deer park walls are 17th-century or later in date, usually surrounding grounds associated with a mansion. The walls at two well-known examples - Okehampton Castle and Dartington Hall - are said to have been built in the 18th century.

The deer park wall at Berry Pomeroy is therefore one of the earliest and best preserved deer park walls in Devon. Its date has yet to be firmly established, but probably lies in the medieval period, possibly as early as 1207 when the park was first enclosed. There are remains of an internal ditch and bank which are thought to be contemporary but which might

possibly represent the first boundary or pale, which was later encircled by the wall. The park includes an area which appears to be a later medieval or early post-medieval extension. The park ceased to be maintained as a deer park c. 1700 and became used for farmland and forestry.

Features associated with the wall dating from the period in which the deer park was in use are of equal importance. These include the ruined style, possible deer leap and at least one old wall in the vicinity of Castle Lodge which is similar in construction to the deer park wall and which extends at right angles to it. Other old walls and remnants of old walls within the deer park were associated with its management and separated off different compartments (these walls are not covered by the present survey).

Features dating from after the conversion of the park for farmland and forestry are of less archaeological interest and importance. These include 18th-century and later repairs and all the present field gateways through the wall.

ARCHEOLOGICAL MITIGATION

An archaeological watching brief should be maintained during any works to clear and repair the wall in order to record evidence relating to its construction and constructional phases. This need not be intensive and could be restricted to occasional visits but should cover works which open up the wall's internal structure in different areas. Any works affecting the foundations and surrounding ground, especially inside the wall, should be monitored for evidence of former earthworks.

An archaeological record including a scale plan should be made of the ruined style before any works are carried out, preferably in conjunction with shallow excavations sufficient to show how the style operated, which is not entirely clear at present. Parts of the style have collapsed and other parts have been damaged, so careful consideration will be needed regarding any proposed conservation and consolidation measures.
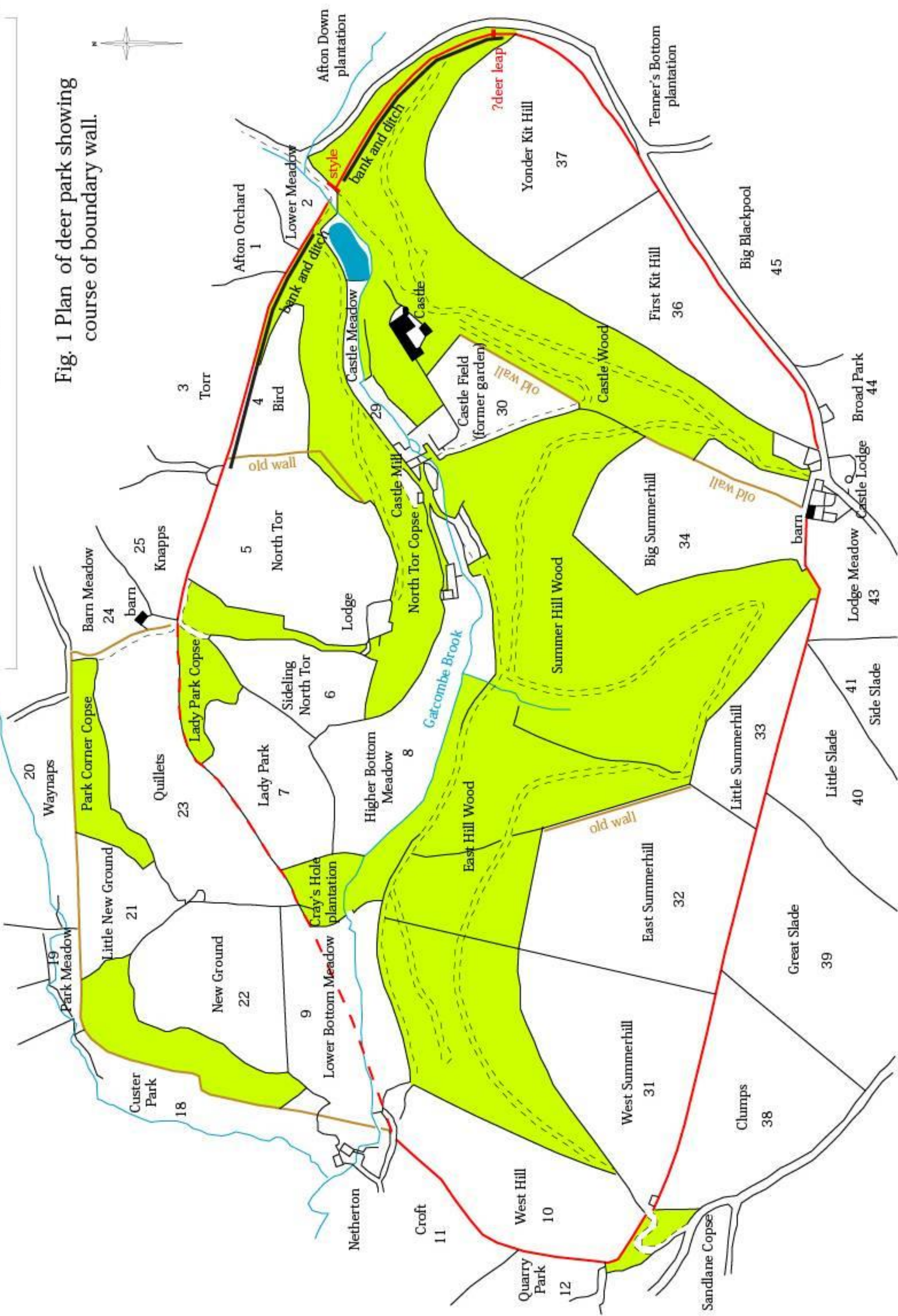
The possible deer leap feature should be cleared sufficiently to determine its function and extent, then archaeologically recorded should it prove to be of interest.

In view of the uncertainty regarding the relationship between the earthwork bank and ditch and the wall, and consequent uncertainty in dating the wall, it is suggested that a limited programme of excavation takes place. One or more evaluation trenches could be opened in order to determine whether the earthworks came first or the earthworks and wall are contemporary. This would answer the most crucial question regarding the history of the park and its boundary at relatively modest cost compared to a repair programme. Other important questions could also be resolved by limited excavations at relevant points elsewhere, such as on the presumed course of the original wall where it has now been lost in Lady Park and Lower Bottom Meadow, and next to the wall where it surrounds the later medieval extension, the latter investigating whether the internal earthworks once continued alongside this section of wall.
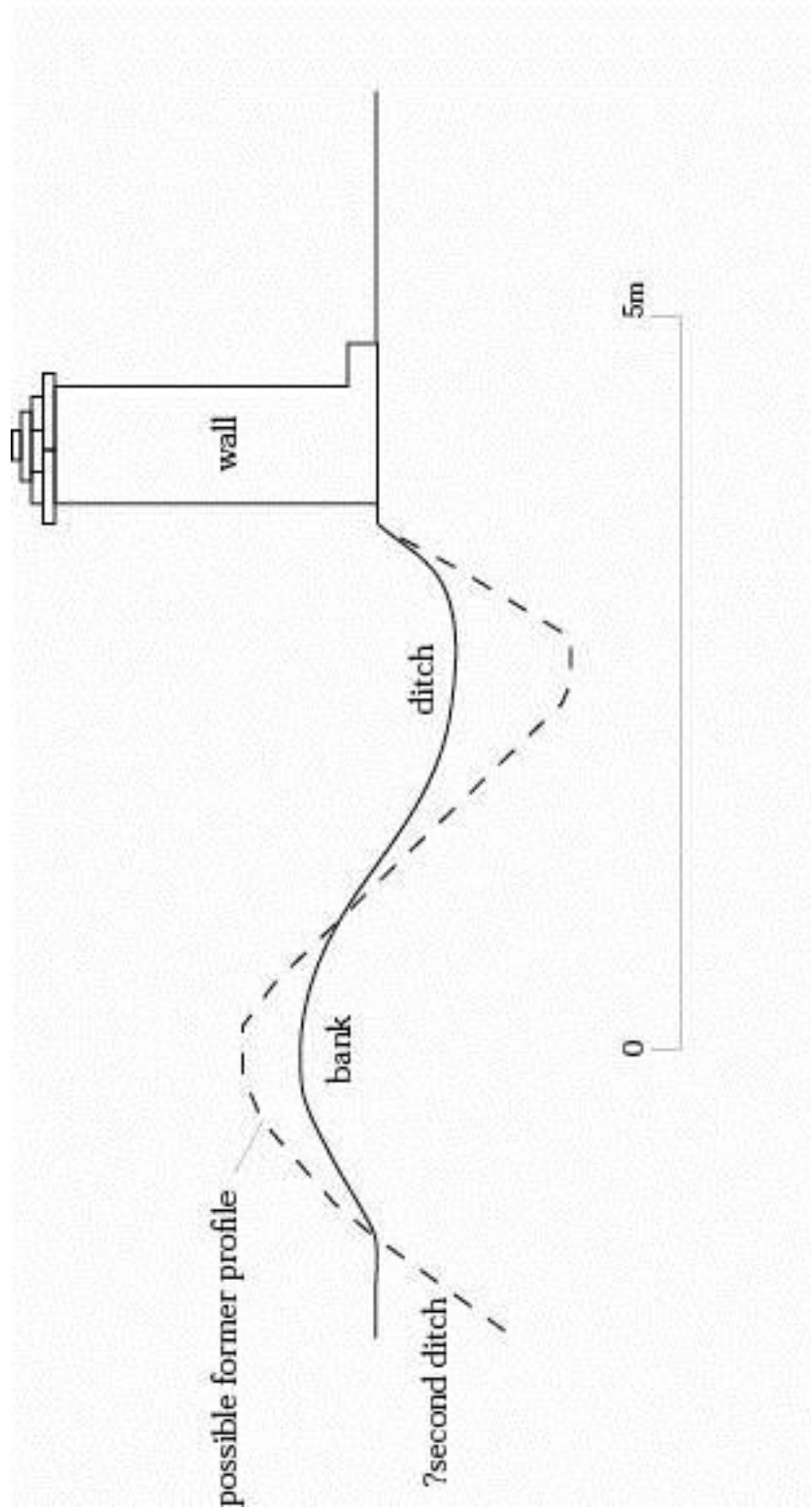
Fig. 1 Plan of deer park showing
course of boundary wall.

Afton Down
plantation

Afton Orchard
1

Lower Meadow
2

style

bank and ditch

bank and ditch

?deer leap

Yonder Kit Hill
37

Tenner's Bottom
plantation

Torr
3

Bird
4

Castle Meadow

Castle

Castle Field
(former garden)
30

Castle Wood

old wall

First Kit Hill
36

Big Blackpool
45

old wall

North Tor
5

Castle Mill

North Tor Copse

29

Big Summerhill
34

Barn Meadow
24

barn

Knapps
25

Park Corner Copse

Lady Park Copse

Quillets
23

Sideling
North Tor
6

Lodge

Gatcombe Brook

Summer Hill Wood

barn

Lodge Meadow
43

Castle Lodge

Broad Park
44

Waynaps
20

Little New Ground
21

Lady Park
7

Higher Bottom
Meadow
8

East Hill Wood

old wall

Little Summerhill
33

Side Slade
41

Little Slade
40

Park Meadow
19

Custer Park
18

New Ground
22

Gray's Hole
plantation

9

Lower Bottom Meadow

Netherton

East Summerhill
32

Great Slade
39

West Summerhill
31

Clumps
38

Croft
11

West Hill
Park
10

Quarry Park
12

Sandlane Copse

Fig. 2 Profile of present earthwork bank and ditch inside the deer park wall, showing possible former profile.

wall

ditch

bank

possible former profile

?second ditch

0

5m

14

Plate 1 Saxton's map of 1575.

Plate 2 Speed's map of 1610.

Plate 3 Donn's map of 1765.

Plate 4 OS map 1st edition 1809.

Plate 5 Tithe map 1841.

Plate 6 OS map 1889.

Plate 7 Remains from a substantial stone wall in Lady Park, looking northeast.

Plate 8 A well-preserved section of wall between North Tor and Bird which once separated off a close within the deer park, looking southwest.

Plate 9 Almost intact section of the wall in Lodge Meadow, looking north.

Plate 10 Almost intact section of the wall in Torr, looking west.

Plate 11 The wall in Torr, showing red earth bonding, looking southwest.

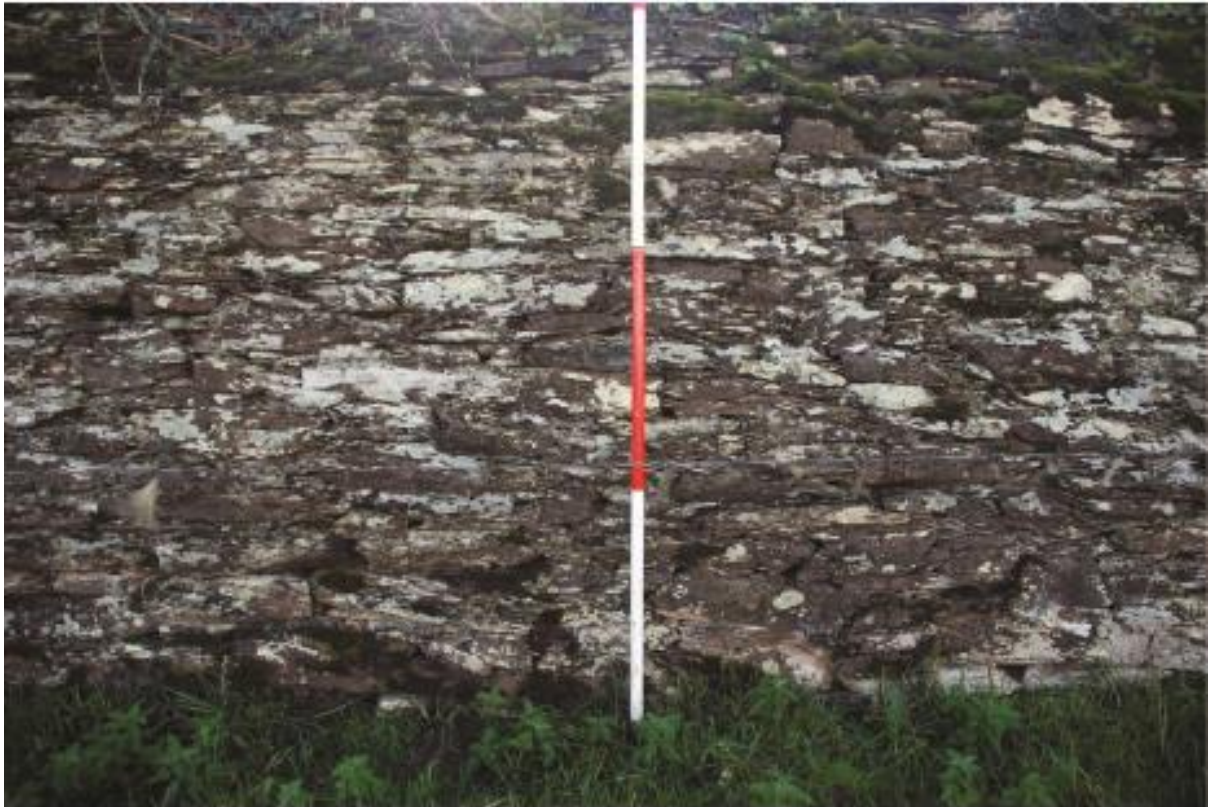Plate 12 The plinth on the outside of the wall in Waynaps, looking southeast.

Plate 13 The wall in First Kit Hill showing slate stone tightly fitted together, looking southeast.

Plate 14 The wall in Little Slade, showing rectangular limestone blocks, looking northwest.

Plate 15 The wall in Bird showing striated weathering pattern on stones, looking northwest.

Plate 16 The wall in Great Slade showing large irregular stones with little coursing, looking east.

Plate 17 The wall in Big Summerhill showing courses kept level on slope, looking southeast.

Plate 18 The wall in Croft showing courses kept level on slope and small stone packing, looking south.

Plate 19 The wall in Custer Park showing random rubble construction
and hole low down, looking south.

Plate 20 The wall in Custer Park showing change in character of construction,
looking east.

Plate 21 The wall in Great Slade showing change in construction,
looking northeast.

Plate 22 The wall in North Tor showing small post-medieval
or modern repair, looking northeast.

Plate 23 The wall in Yonder Kit Hill showing post-medieval repair using pitched stones, looking southeast.

Plate 24 The wall in Clumps showing post-medieval pitched stone capping, looking northeast.

Plate 25 The wall in Custer Park showing post-medieval round gate pier built against the wall, looking east.

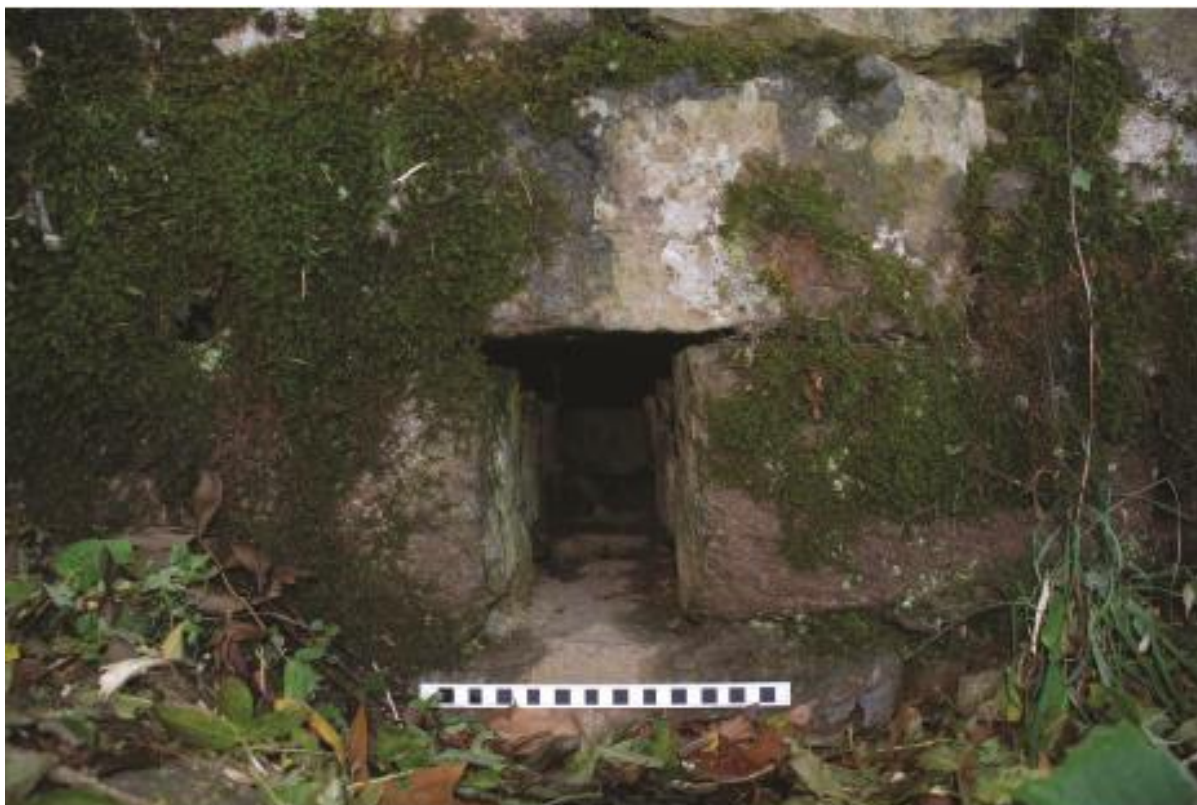Plate 26 The wall in Little Slade showing modern repair, looking northeast.

Plate 27 The wall in Custer Park showing one of the holes at the base of the wall,
looking south.

Plate 28 The style crossing the wall at the east end of the park
near Gatcombe Brook, looking southwest.

Plate 29 The arch carrying the wall over Gatcombe Brook at the east end of the park, looking north.

Plate 30 The gap in the wall to let Gatcombe Brook through at the west end of the park, looking east.

Plate 31 Architectural fragment built into a post-medieval gateway jamb in Clumps, looking southeast.