

The Raspberry Field – Upton Lovell

Possibly the site of Caleb Bawcombe's cottage

Kate Henderson and family

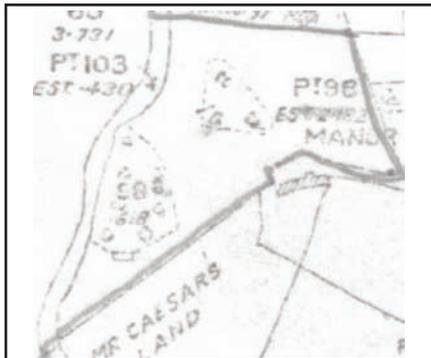
In late October 2009 BACAS members and some of my friends and neighbours surveyed a field south of the Village Hall in Upton Lovell near Warminster using the Society's FM256 magnetometer, RM15 2 probe resistance meter and TR/CIA twin probe resistance meter. The objective was to look for evidence of previous human activity in the field to guide plans for future land use and to identify possible sites for future excavations.



Locally the field is known as the place referred to as Doveton in W H Hudson's *A Shepherd's Life*, where the shepherd Caleb Bawcombe once lived. Hudson described it as: "... situated in the prettiest spot, near and within sight of the old church with old elms and beech-trees growing close to it, and the land about it green meadow. The clear river (Wylve), fringed with a luxuriant growth of sedges, flag, and reeds, was less than a stone's throw away."

Description of site and its history

The field (Figure 1) is bounded to the north by a ha-ha between it and old church land, to the east by a public footpath, to the south by a deep cut lane and a modern fence line and to the west by the carrier stream which the field gently slopes down to.



The field has been used for pasture for the last few decades, apart from a period when raspberries were grown in the eastern part, but was frequently ploughed prior to that. Temporary buildings were reputedly sited in the field during World War II.

Early 20th Century maps (see Figure 2) show two wooded enclosures inside the field and a single building in the south-west corner. An early 19th Century map (Figure 3) shows the deep cut lane extending into the field which is sub-divided into half a dozen smaller fields. There are also four buildings, the westernmost of which is in the same location as the building marked on the early 20th Century map. The earliest depiction of the land is Andrews and Dury's map of 1773 which shows two crofts in the field. A Medieval castle and a monastery are believed to have lain to the south of the church, somewhere close to the field.



The most revealing aerial images for the field are to be found at www.192.com/places/aerial-photos (Figure 4). This shows a number of dark crop marks along the western side of the field. There also appears to be a large circular feature in the north-east corner.



There have been a number of surface finds including pottery, dated to the 12th Century onwards, glass, brick and tile fragments, slag, animal bones, worked flint, charcoal and a single shard of grooved ware pottery found in the stream.

Analysis of the Magnetometry survey

From the top

Figure 1 21st Century map

Figure 2 early 20th Century map

Figure 3 early 19th Century map

Figure 4 20th Century aerial view of the field

The most obvious thing revealed by the magnetometry survey (*Figure 5*) aside from the modern pipeline, is the east-west linear feature, north of which there is little sign of human activity and south of which there are lots, including rectangular and linear features. There are possible post-holes in the south-west, north-east and south-east corners.

Analysis of Resistivity survey

The resistivity survey (*Figure 6*) does not show the same divide between the north and south of the field which the magnetometry survey did. There is extensive disturbance in all parts of the field. The field margins show high resistance consistent with stones being cleared from arable land. In the north-west part of the field are several large areas of high resistivity, some of which are probably associated with the laying of the pipeline. The southern part of the field contains many rectangular features and areas of high resistivity. There are also a number of possible linear and curvilinear post-hole features.

Interpretation

In the south and west there is a strong correlation between crop-marks, areas of high resistance and magnetic disturbance with the buildings and some of the boundaries shown on older maps.

There are a number of possible post-hole features of uncertain age. With the level of Medieval and Modern activity in the field, any evidence for prehistoric activity is likely to have been obscured or obliterated, although it is possible that some of the post-hole features may be of some antiquity.

The large circular feature visible on the satellite image is not apparent in either survey. That may well be because it was just an optical illusion. However, the resistance survey did reveal a large amount of disturbance in that north-east part of the field.

The next steps to take are to the county archive, to search through the parish records which cover much of the village's last half millennium.

In the future it would be good to put in a few small test pits and strip trenches to appraise the nature and extent of those features identified in the survey. A more informed and comprehensive plan could then be put together for the preservation and possible excavation and reconstruction of parts of the lost historic and ancient landscape.

Figure 5
Magnetometry survey of the field.

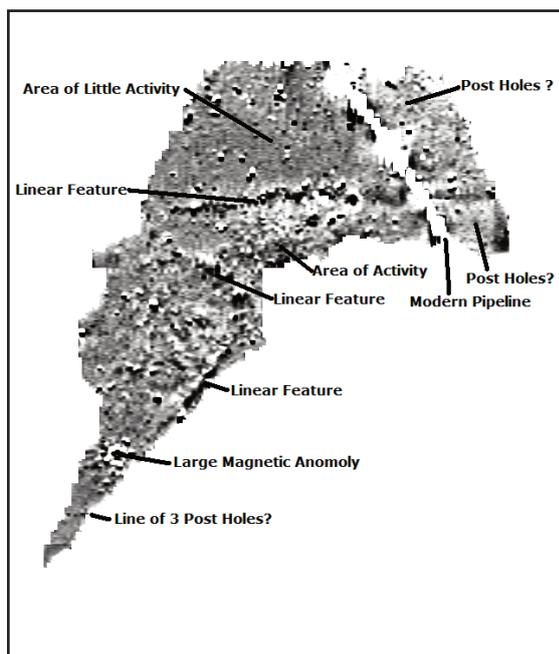


Figure 6
Resistance survey of the field.

