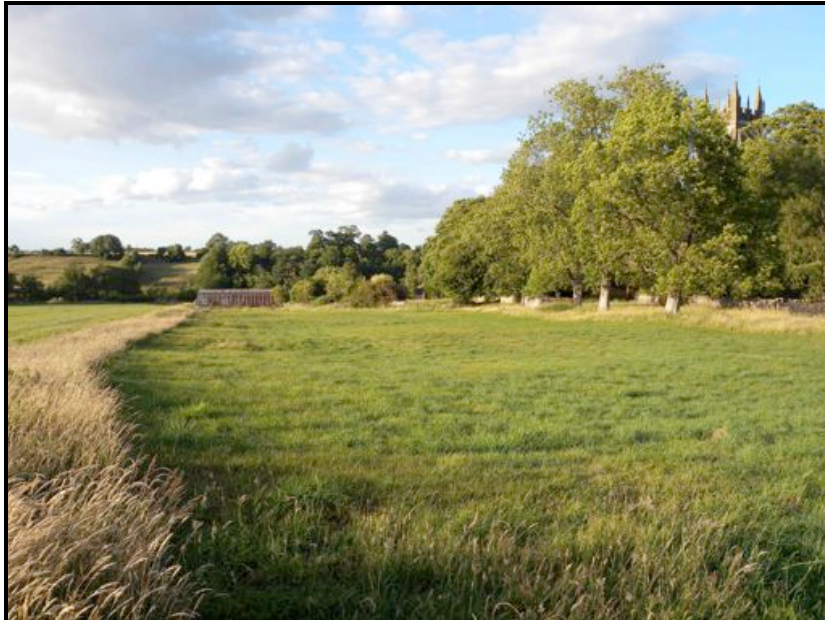


CHEWTON MENDIP SOMERSET



Pound Paddock

A Report on
Earthwork and Resistivity Surveys
undertaken in March 2014

by
Pip Osborne (BA Hons)

with members of **Community Archaeology** on the
Mendip Plateau (CAMP)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Pound Paddock, historically part of the secular Chewton Estate, is centred on NGR ST 59555315. It lies to the west of the parish church of St Mary Magdalene, a minster establishment of pre-Norman Conquest origins (figure 1)



*Figure 1
The church as viewed
from the west. Pound
Paddock is indicated in
red in the foreground
(Google Image)*

Its eastern boundary, in part, is a curvilinear wall with bank, believed by the author, to be an ancient boundary of the minster precinct (PRN31636). Pound Paddock then heads south abutting the modern churchyard wall and continues as a bank topped with trees. The southern boundary consists of the ephemeral earthwork remains of an elaborate field entrance. The western boundary was once a wall separating the field from Pound Close. The boundary has been robbed out, although earthworks remain in places. The northern extremity of the field contains two barns, one of which may be the one depicted on a map of 1740 (DD/WG/1).



*Figure 2
Pound Paddock
looking south showing
earthworks with
proposed minster
precinct boundary in
foreground*

There are significant earthwork remains within Pound Paddock (Figure 2). These are both linear and curvilinear and could represent its former use as a pound for animals.

The pound was a feature of medieval villages where stray animals were impounded until a payment to the lord was made for their release. English Heritage states that very little archaeological investigation has taken place into the nature of these structures, but from investigations and surviving examples we know that pounds could be square, rectangular, circular or of irregular shape and range in size from 4x6m to over 0.5 ha. The main component was the enclosing wall. The entrance may have contained a rudimentary shelter for the pound keeper. In addition to impounding strays pounds may have been used for the sorting of animals driven off common pasture lands (<http://www.eng-h.gov.uk/mpp/mcd/pound.htm>). It may be that Chewton's Pound Paddock contained a number of buildings within an enclosing wall and in addition to impounding strays it might have been used to contain animals being sold at Chewton Fair (Charter granted 1347). This investigation, using documentary evidence as well as earthwork and resistivity surveys, aims to shed some light on the history and function of Pound Paddock.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Domesday Book records Chewton as being held by the Crown (Thorn C&F1980). During the 12th Century the manor was granted to the Vivonias of Normandy. It then passed, through a succession of landed families, to the Bonvilles in the 15th century, before returning to the Crown in the 16th century. After the Reformation it was granted to the Waldegrave family who hold it to this day. It is not known whether any medieval lord was ever resident in Chewton although the field named Court Hayes, abutting Pound Paddock, suggests the former presence of a Manorial Court House.

The earliest informative map of Chewton (see fig.3) is by John Rocque dated 1740 (DD/WG/1 and has accompanying Book of Reference (DD/WG Box 9 no.8). This records all the enclosures belonging to the secular estate and gives their names, details of tenants and any obligations on the land. Land not belonging to the Estate but within the overall manorial bounds is detailed by owners' names only. Study of these documents shows Pound Paddock as belonging to Earl Waldegrave but rented to tenants in the village. The Paddock is directly connected, by an enclosed trackway, to an area of pasture called Medbury lying to the west. In between the two is a larger field called Pound Close. A trackway leads north from Pound Paddock to a triangular enclosure called the Fair Place, close to the River Chew. There is also direct access to the Chewton common fields on Chewton Plain by means of the 'Way to the West Field' mentioned in the Book of Reference.



Figure 3 Part of the Chewton Estate Map of 1740, drawn by John Rocque, showing Pound Paddock (L22) and Pound Close (G23). East is at the top. Note the rectangular gateway entrance to the paddock from the enclosed track leading from Medbury and also the outline of a barn in the northwest corner where one still stands today. The red cottage stood at the head of the trackway leading to the Fair Place.

The earliest known survey of the secular estate lands of Chewton is that of 1525 (A\AMX/12). There is very little mention of enclosure names in this survey but their acreage is noted. No reference to a pound is given, though the following appears:

Held by The Reeve ...One close called Medbury... 3 acres per annum for strays 20d
This is the first evidence of Medbury's connection with the management of stray animals.

In a Survey Book spanning both the 17th and 18th centuries (DD/WG Box 8 No.2) there is the earliest known reference to the pound. *Valentine Dudden... a cottage and garden next to the pound...1/4 acre...copy dated 1668*

All three interconnecting closes are mentioned in the 1696 Rent Book (DD/WG Box 9 No.4)-

Valentine Dudden... A cottage with garden and backside adjoining containing ½ acre lying near the pound

Edith Spirringe and Martha Greene... One close called Pound Close lying near the church containing 4 acres

Also:

Ann Guy and Thos... 4 acres of land called Medbury near the church

The 1740 Survey of Rocque Map is the first document to identify the precise locations of the various enclosures on an accompanying map and giving the acreage of each-

Martha and William Hunt... Pound Close....3.2.0 acres(pasture)

Upper Medbury ...1 acre (pasture)

Stephen Poynting...Pound Paddock ...1.1.14 acres (pasture)

Mr Hunt...a Medbury...4.2.3 acres.

In the Apportionment to the Tithe Map of 1839 Pound Paddock is being held by William Culliford (D/D/Rt/M/119).

At some time between 1839 and the Ordinance Survey map of 1904 all walls except the curvilinear boundary of Pound Paddock were dismantled to make it part of a much larger field and the paddock name went out of use.

3. EARTHWORK SURVEY

An earthwork survey of Pound Paddock was undertaken on March 11 and 12, 2014 by members of CAMP. The survey conveys the key features of the field in terms of visible earthworks.

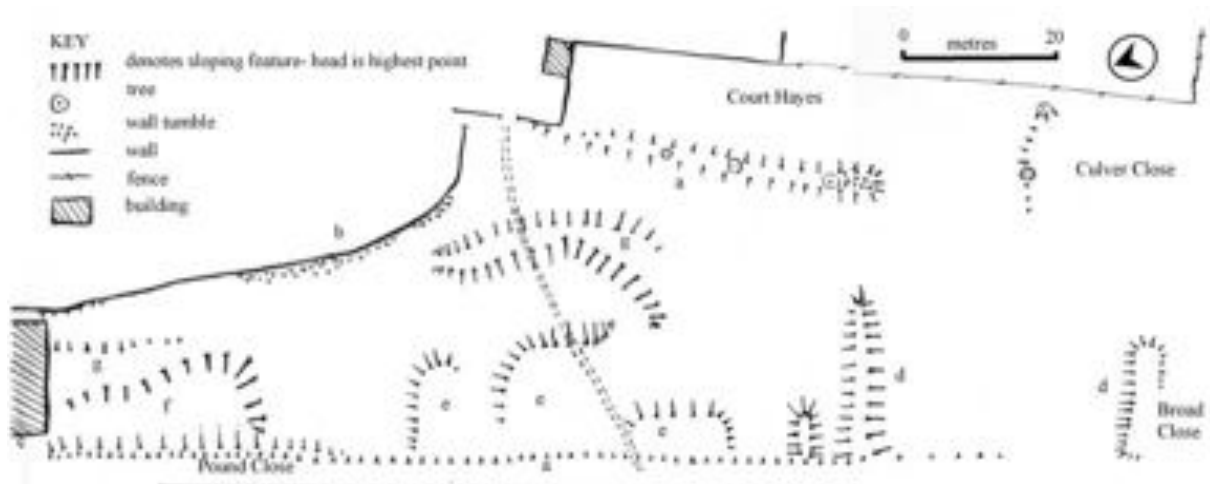


Figure 4 Earthwork survey of Pound Paddock



Figure 5 1740 map with earthwork overlay

3.1 INTERPRETATION

The key issue with the earthworks in this field is whether they were formed by manmade structures or as a result of quarrying. The general level of the field is below that of Pound Close with certain curvilinear features suggesting that it might

have been quarried in the past, however these could also be interpreted as building platforms and trackways.

The bounds of the field to west and east survive in the most part as earth and stone banks (a) (see fig. 4). To the northeast, the curvilinear boundary is marked by a substantial wall, in places topping a bank (b). The northernmost portion of the field is now occupied by a stone barn (c). The trackway and entrance to the field from Medbury can still be traced in the ephemeral remains of earthwork banks (d).

The interior of the field is more difficult to interpret from earthworks alone. The raised platforms (e) abutting the western boundary could represent former buildings whilst the depression (f) could have been the floor level of a rectilinear building. The raised and curvilinear bank-like features could represent cobble trackways (g)

4. RESISTIVITY SURVEY

To compliment the earthwork study, a resistivity survey was carried out over 3 days in March 2014 using a TR/CIA resistance meter. Figure 6 covers all but the far north end of Pound Paddock, but includes the southern approach from Medbury and some of Court Hayes and Culver Close. Areas of dark signify features such as buried wall foundations, cobbled areas or possible geology. Lighter shades represent areas of greater soil depth such as ditches.

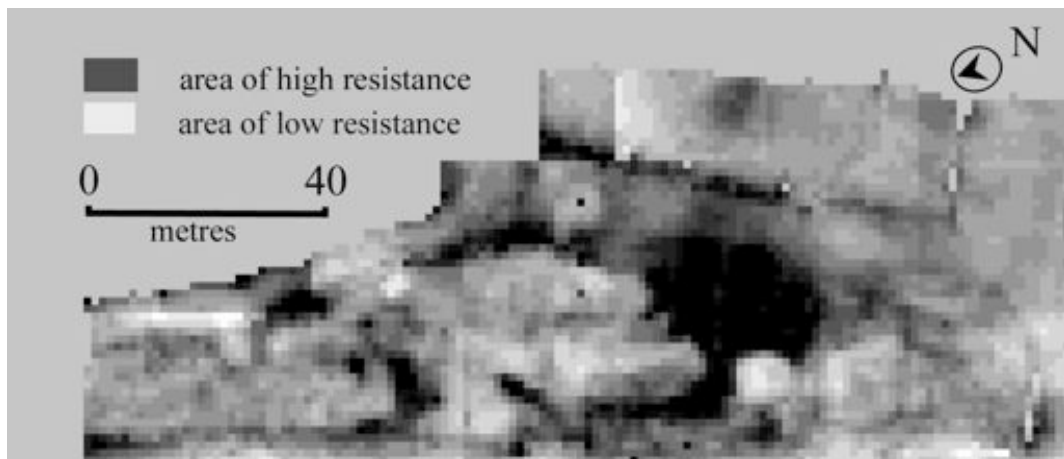


Figure 6 Resistivity survey

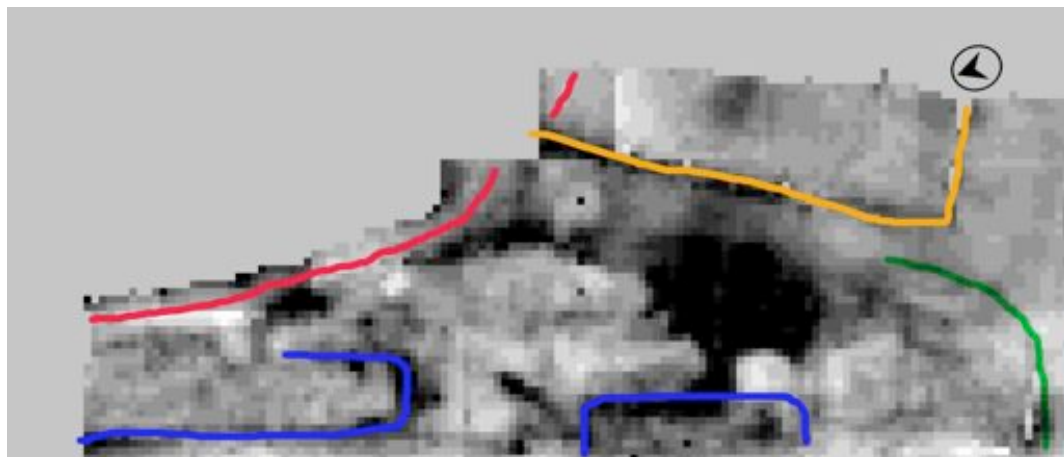


Figure 7 Annotated resistivity survey. The coloured lines denote possible archaeological features as explained in Section 4.1

4.1 INTERPRETATION

The boundary of Pound Paddock and Culver Close shows as a strong high resistance reading (yellow). Between Pound Paddock and Pound Close the reading is less well defined. The blue to the left could represent the wall of a stone enclosure whilst to the right there is an indication of a stone building platform. There is a noticeably low resistance reading running parallel with the outer face of the curvilinear wall and bank boundary (red). This is significant as a possible outer ditch of the minster

boundary. The green denotes a higher resistivity reading corresponding to the outer curve of the trackway from Medbury leading into Pound Paddock and could be a wall foundation. Within this approach to the field there is patchy high resistance which may be the remains of a cobbled surface. The area of very high resistivity corresponding to the inner entrance of the field might represent a paved area but may be geology close to the surface through quarrying, as may other dark areas.

5. DISCUSSION

Documentary and map evidence shows an organized landscape typical of medieval settlement, where the fair, the pound and the church were the central focus of village life. It also underlines the necessity of free movement between the various focal points. Hence, the animals could be driven between the Pound Paddock for enclosure, and pasturing in the Medbury fields. How long this practice continued is not known. The 1696 Rent book refers to 'the Pound'. Thereafter it is only mentioned as Pound Paddock, as if merely a memory of its former use.

The Paddock was also accessed at its north end by a trackway running alongside the curvilinear boundary. This is significant as it connected the Pound with the Fair Field, where annual fairs were held and animals traded. Animals could have been temporarily housed in Pound Paddock, Pound Close and Medbury.

The resistivity and earthwork surveys provide a glimpse of what could still remain beneath the surface of what is now a grass field. Pound Paddock is noticeably at a lower depth than Pound Close and this might suggest quarrying in the past. However, given that both surveys fairly accurately indentify the former field boundaries, including the entrance arrangement into the field from Medbury, and possible rectilinear buildings within the Paddock this would counter the argument for a quarry site. The high resistance within areas of the Paddock could easily be cobbled surfaces as this would have been necessary in an area with heavy animal use.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It would be useful to put small investigative trenches across such features as the entrance from Medbury, the building platform and the curvilinear ditch to assess the accuracy of the surveys. These may also provide some form of dating evidence for the site.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CAMP wishes to thank the landowner Earl Waldegrave and the tenant Brian Clothier for granting permission to survey the field.

Bob Smisson for loan of the resistivity equipment and Steve Tofts for computer expertise in processing the data.

8. REFERENCES

Thorn C&F. 1980, *Domesday Book Somerset*, London & Chichester: Phillimore

Documents (available at the Somerset Heritage Centre)

Survey of the West Country Manors of Cecily Bonville 1525 A\AMX/12

Survey of Chewton 1696 DD/WG Box 9 No.4

Survey of Chewton 1710-20 DD/WG Box 8 No.2

Map of 1740 Manor of Chewton by John Rocque DD/WG 1
Book of reference to 1740 map DD/WG Box 9 no 8
Chewton Tithe Map of 1839 (D/D/Rt/M/119).
Chewton Tithe Apportionment of 1839 (D/D/Rt/A/119).

APPENDIX

Somerset Monument Record PRN31636

About Community Archaeology on the Mendip Plateau (CAMP)

This Community Archaeology Group based in Chewton Mendip was established in 2009 by Pip Osborne to provide an opportunity for interested local people to investigate their environment through archaeological and historical study. It publishes reports on its findings on www.camplat.btck.co.uk

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