

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS, LUNDY, 1964

The archaeological investigations in 1964 followed the policy of initial survey and excavation of virgin sites for identification purposes, and the more detailed exploration of an already known problem.

Work was accordingly carried out on three separate sites: Widows' Tenement, Middle Park, and Bull's Paradise, Site III.

1. Widows' Tenement (SS/136468)

This site consists of an area of about 20 acres, enclosed by a boundary line of granite blocks, in the middle of which are the obvious remains of a substantial building. The whole site including the building appears in plan on O.S. maps ref.: 25in. Devon IVA 6.

The building appears to consist of a central "house", approximately 18ft. x 45ft. whose thick masonry walls stand to a height of several feet, appended by three less substantially constructed enclosures.

No historical evidence has yet been forthcoming to suggest either its date or the origin of its name.

A 6ft. x 6ft. cutting was made in the S.E. corner of the central "house" and beneath the typical wall collapse was a dark occupation level containing a number of sherds of thirteenth century type, including one rim. Below this, presumably on the old land surface, were several flints and a sherd of much coarser pottery. Further examples of this latter were forthcoming from rabbit scrapes outside the N.E. corner of the E. enclosure, and proved to be similar in fabric to the Early Iron Age "A" pottery currently being found in Middle Park.

The indications are that this site is a Medieval Farmstead of "long-house" type. If so it is in a good state of preservation and it is recommended for further excavation at a later date.

2. Middle Park (SS/136/460)

In June, 1963, a survey of the old field boundaries north and south of Halfway Wall, together with a routine check on Chanter's "Sites of Ruined Cottages" (Map in "Lundy Island" 1877) revealed the interesting plan of an old farmstead. Small rectangular field plots and two associated buildings were recorded.

One of these, a flat circular platform on a natural rise in the ground 100 yards north of Halfway Wall, and 50 yards west of the eastern track, was subjected to trenching.

It proved to be a circular hut 30 feet in diameter with an occupation layer producing flints and pottery of Early Iron Age "A" type.

Further surveying remains to be carried out N.E. of the hut, where other plots and huts may exist. The full plan will be published next year.

3. Bull's Paradise

Site III (Nat. Grid Ref. SS/137442)

Work was continued in 1964 on the ditched mound identified as Site III which had produced twelfth and thirteenth century pottery in 1962.

These 1962 excavations gave us a section across the ditch and indicated that a structure of some substance had stood there.

The 1964 work was intended to locate this structure and gain some idea of its date and purpose.

Trench C-D was accordingly opened, running southward into the mound from the inner edge of the northern section of the ditch.

It was not long before signs of substantial masonry appeared and the top of a wall seven feet thick was uncovered.

The vertical sections obtained in this cutting are illustrated in Figure 1 and can be described as follows:

Layer 11. Old land surface encountered on south side of wall.

Layer 10. The most interesting and potentially most significant stratum encountered, it was composed of a fine black soil and appeared to run under all subsequent structures. It was seen to contain quantities of slate, bones, limpet shells, scraps of iron nails, etc., but nothing, unfortunately, by which we were able to date it.

It contained two large slabs of granite similar in position to two found in Trench A-B and ran under the foundations on the north to re-emerge from the south side.

We have not as yet removed the actual wall but it seems fair to assume that the Layer in question pre-dates the wall.

Layer 9. This formed the angle between the previous layer and the north face of the wall and consisted of an ochreous clay-like material which was subsequently identified as decomposed basalt. Basalt occurs naturally as dykes in the granite and is easily quarried. Its position here is suggestive of a form of revetment.

On its surface rested a thin spread of gravel, sand and small bits of stone (*Layer 8*).

The actual masonry of the wall we have designated 7 in the key. Most were rough blocks of granite but in the south face was a block rather like the "Giant's Pillow".*

In section E-F we have the occurrence of a cobble spread covering the top of the presumably pre-levelled wall. This *Layer 6* contained a quantity of thirteenth century pottery and seems to indicate the demolition of the structure at this time.

This hypothesis seems to be supported by *Layer 5* (which is identical to *Layer 5* in our 1962 section), which consists of a sandy rubble. From its stratigraphical position in the 1962 section we suggested that it had collapsed from a point above the foundation wall. Its position in this 1964 section tends to confirm this particularly as we have now located the stone wall which was only hypothetical in 1962.

It still appears that it could represent collapsed "cob" superstructure.

Layer 4 (L.3, 1962). Heavy rubble and loam which in 1962 contained thirteenth to fourteenth century pottery. This layer overlies much of *Layer 5* and occurs north and south of the wall. It represents silting and final collapse of the remaining stone structure.

Layer 3 appears only in the south end of Trench C-D and is composed of loose rubble. It rests between *Layers 2* and *4*, which elsewhere lie naturally one on top of the other. It may also be a significant fact that where *Layer 3* appears, *Layer 6* is absent and vice-versa. A possible explanation is that the top of the wall area was cleared in a search for building stone, *Layer 3* being the resultant throw-out.

Layer 2. Loam and small stones representing final silting and levelling of site.

Layer 1. Humus and turf.

Having located the massive wall foundation in Trench C-D it was decided to follow it towards our 1962 Trench A-B where we knew it to be non-existent.

*See LFS. XV 1962, p. 31.

We cleared an L-shaped area and soon uncovered the cobble spread referred to above (Layer 6). This was removed and the corner of the wall revealed. A difference in the style of masonry indicated a blocked up gap in the wall, and on removal of two large blocks of granite (indicated by broken outlines) soon found the remains of a flag-stone floor in this doorway (?). This rested on Layer 10, the black early occupation level.

Also at this low level were the foundations of two walls running at right angles to the main structure.

Unfortunately time did not permit us to pursue any of these extremely interesting features and it is obvious that a considerable amount of work remains to be carried out.

Conclusions

In 1962 we concluded that Site III had been "a ditched structure of stone and possibly cob, dating from the late twelfth century and having collapsed by the late thirteenth century. . . ."

The new evidence tends to confirm this and to raise also the problem of an earlier occupation, represented by Layer 10, which pre-dates the stone structure.

It is still too early to dogmatically propound any detailed theory on the exact dating of this site but the following historical synopsis of the period should provide food for thought.

During the period 1138-48 the Orkneyinga Saga refers to the Island as the stronghold of a Welsh Sea-Rover whose relations with the Norsemen were somewhat strained. They could never catch him, however, for he always withdrew to Lundy.

By 1154 Sir Jordan de Marisco owned Lundy and retained it against the Royal wishes. In 1222 the Mariscos further fortified the Island with stone-throwing machines. Henry III in 1237 prepared ships against the Mariscos' pirate galleys and in 1242 he succeeded in capturing the Island. "The King's buildings" were repaired whilst work was put in hand to build the new castle.

Whether Site III was witness to all of this only further excavation will tell.

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CLIFF AND CAMERA

Deep down in all of us, I'm sure, is the desire to get away from the pressures and tensions of modern life; to live at a more leisurely pace and closer to nature. This is why men climb mountains, sail and live on islands.

The idea of living on an island seems to conjure up a series of mysterious, nostalgic and exciting images. Knowing that many of us have this secret urge to own and get away to an island, I thought that I would try to capture some of the charm and fascination of the islands round the south-west of England, on film, for B.B.C. tv.

The islands I chose were Portland, Burgh Island, Drake's Island, Looe Island, St Michael's Mount, St Agnes and Sampson in the Scillies, and last but not least Lundy.