

## East Midlands

**Mark Newman**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVISER

DERBYSHIRE

**Calke Abbey -**

**Southwood House Farm** Pm 🏡 🏠

Southwood House Farm, on the Calke Abbey estate, is proving to conceal a degree of interest, which one might not suspect when first approaching it along the farm track. The early nineteenth-century brick outbuildings, and relatively modest façade of the farmhouse itself, don't really hint at the complicated history of the building. In fact, much of the main range of the house is probably of seventeenth-century (or earlier) date, with traces of cruck construction incorporated in later masonry. This would make the building interesting enough in its own right, but a second, rear range was constructed in the early nineteenth century. Although the building is only one-room deep, the rooms were handsomely proportioned, around an unexpectedly grandiose staircase. This nineteenth-century accommodation was too insubstantial to operate in its own right, and clearly benefited from services provided in the older range. However, in other regards it maintained a marked social distinction. Documentary research remains to be completed, but it appears that this is a fossil of one generation of tenants moving on from

farming to a retirement of higher social pretension, without the wherewithal to set up in a new location.

The interest of the house is matched by its surroundings. Between the house and the road lies a substantial walled enclosure, which has been the subject of investigation in 2001. This is roughly square in plan, and of considerable interest in the context of the seventeenth-century house. The entire farm area is well supplied with watercourses, most of which have been artificially channelled or diverted. One appears to bisect the walled enclosure along its centre line, to emerge in a cascade into a pond just outside the walls. Steps once linked the garden to the pond. The pond itself, now much overgrown, is still clearly artificial, with multiple inflow and outflow channels serving a circular basin with a small central island. Its shape is reminiscent of a duck decoy, though on a rather small scale; the diameter of the pond is only about 6m.

The only evident features of note in the enclosure are bee boles in the south-facing wall. However, it is hoped, given the recent history of land use as pasture, that archaeological traces of other functional features may survive beneath the surface. Initial geophysical survey by RK-M Archaeological Surveying (on behalf of the Derbyshire Historic Gardens Society) identified a number of features, which will be further investigated.

In his initial assessment of the site, the researcher enthused about the possibility of it



*Calke Abbey, Derbyshire. Close-up of the portico on the south front of the house.*

NICK MEERS/NTPL

being a very rare survival of a sixteenth-century, planned, productive garden. Further investigation cannot really support (with regard to dating) this exciting possibility, though it is obvious that the enclosure was indeed a complex productive garden over a long period of time. Further investigations are planned, which may well illuminate exactly how long that period was.



*The south front of Calke Abbey from the Park. A 4-square Baroque design with corner pavilions, built for John Harpur and completed on 1703. The portico was added on 1806-8. Southwood House Farm, described above, forms part of the Calke estate.*

RUPERT TRUMAN/NTPL

**Duffield Castle, site investigations.** 

Duffield Castle is one of those more unusual places, which make the National Trust's landholding so idiosyncratic. The site consists of a hillock on the outskirts of Belper, now somewhat overgrown, and characterised by the atmosphere and function of a small urban park; the A6 runs past one side. However, in the twelfth century the hill was crowned by one of the largest stone keeps in England. This was slighted during the mid-thirteenth-century revolt led by Simon de Montfort, and demolished to its foundations. These remained undisturbed until they were revealed by excavation in 1886, and the site was subsequently donated to the National Trust in 1899, one of its earliest archaeological monuments.

Management of the property has always been low key, a local landscape mainly enjoyed by local people. The battered remnants of medieval work were a difficult challenge to present. The solution lighted upon in the early post-war years - capping with a thick layer of tarmac - is now not only failing to meet modern expectations but also physically disintegrating. After many years in the care of the local parish council the site is now back in National Trust management, and a reinvigorated approach to the site was energised by the centenary of its acquisition.


In 1999 and 2000, initial site investigation took place, with excavations through the tarmac capping by Trent and Peak Archaeological Unit. These revealed the very different states of preservation of the walling in different parts of the site, something hinted at by the excavation report of 1886, but not fully documented. Facing stones survive in relatively few locations, and even the wall core is more poorly represented than had been expected. Indeed, one large area of the present surface representation of the site is based not on medieval work at all, but nineteenth to twentieth-century rubble dumping in what may (just) have been the original foundation trench.

Although the keep has been the main focus of interest in the past, there are also quite substantial, largely unexplored areas of the hilltop outside its walls. Trenching in the 1930s and in 1957 recovered little of medieval date, but added to an assemblage of Romano-British finds, suggesting earlier occupation of that date. In May 2001, the University of Bradford carried out geophysical investigations of two areas to the south and south-east of the keep, with significant results. Several features were identified, including

possible traces of a curtain wall and sub-rectangular structures. It is not clear if the latter relate to the castle or earlier phases of occupation, although the documentary evidence would suggest that no building was constructed on the hill after the demolition of the keep.

Armed with this new information, a planning document for further investigation and presentation of the site is in preparation. The costs of such are likely to be substantial but it seems that Duffield Castle yet holds secrets that will repay the investment.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

**Lyveden New Bield - Survey and research** 

This fascinating site near Oundle, consisting of the shell of a cruciform lodge and the earthwork remains of an associated garden, dating from late in the reign of Elizabeth I, continues to reveal hidden facets.

As regular readers of this Review will know, improved recent management of the property has often made significant new archaeological discoveries. The relationship is now symbiotic as the archaeological research assists in achieving new management objectives.

The largest project in 2001 has been the planning, and first phase of replanting, of the multi-fruit orchard which once occupied the middle section of the garden, below the waterworks. Fruit trees are named and described by the original owner, Sir Thomas Tresham, in a letter of 1597, but were sold by his descendants and carted away from the site in 1622. Rows of planting holes are clearly visible on early aerial photographs, while one source even suggests that they were discernible as surface features around fifty years ago. Unfortunately, since then modern farming methods have levelled the site, though it is not known whether subsurface remains survive.

In order to elucidate this question, a geophysical survey was conducted over two sample areas in July 2001. Neither recovered any trace of the planting holes - though whether this indicated that the pits had been completely ploughed out or that they contained fills unresponsive to geophysical survey methods remains unclear. Excavations are planned for summer 2002 to clarify the picture.

Meanwhile, Chris Hunt of Huddersfield University completed the analysis of the core samples taken from the canals in 2000, with rather more success. The pollen profiles recorded

a changing sequence of vegetation cover dating back from the present day to the inception of the garden. Apparently, even the basal layers retained evidence for garden species, and a remarkable new strand of evidence for the layout of the Elizabethan gardens. Further environmental archaeological work is planned for the future.

Further development of our understanding of Lyveden will rely heavily on non-destructive methods of investigation. The next steps in this process have been taken with the initiation of geophysical survey in the upper garden and adjacent to the Bield itself. Aerial photographs suggested that a lattice of gravelled walks once survived in the field adjacent to the building, while there were possible bedding trenches in the upper area of the garden. A preliminary trial geophysical survey, filmed as part of forthcoming BBC television programme about the site, was carried out on the two areas in November. Unfortunately, the results failed to identify any garden-related features, although clear evidence of the medieval moated site, which preceded the garden, was recovered. Survey methods can now be refined for further investigations, which we hope will be taken forward as a research project by Bradford University.

OTHER PROJECTS

(DERBYSHIRE)

**Calke Abbey**

Excavations in St.Giles Church churchyard, and watching brief during installation of drainage (Archaeological Project Services, under contract to NT).

**Hardwick Hall Estate**

Assessment of impact of repairs to Stableyard Buildings (M.Newman/N.Cooper, under contract to NT).

Watching Brief during excavation works, Ivy Cottage, Stainsby (M.Newman/NT in house).

**High Peak Estate**

Watching brief during footpath repairs, Mam Tor (M.Newman/NT in house).

**Kedleston Hall**

Evaluation of potential archaeological causes of subsidence, South Lawn (M.Newman/NT in house).

**South Peak Estate**

Evaluation and project design, Manifold Valley cave deposits (M.Newman/NT in house).  
Watching brief during installation of septic tank, Dovedale House, Ilam (M.Newman/NT in house).



*A view of Lyveden New Bield, taken from the south-east showing the south and east wings.*

NICK MEERS/NTPL

(LINCOLNSHIRE)

**Belton Hall**

Assessment of remains and future treatment of Knucklebone Arbour (M.Newman/NT in house).

(NORTHAMPTONSHIRE)

**Canon's Ashby**

Watching brief during repairs to garden boundary wall (Oxford Archaeological Unit, under contract to NT).

(NOTTINGHAMSHIRE)

Watching brief and recording during building works, The Workhouse, Southwell. John Samuels Archaeological Services, under contract to NT).