



Bradford-on-Avon Museum Research Group

Walls Ground Report

Introduction

The Research Group's Interactive Landscapes Project aims to discover or confirm archaeological features in the landscape through the use of LIDAR images, field walking, geophysics, documentary sources and excavation in order to add to the existing knowledge of the history and archaeology of the Bradford Hundred. Cavill's New Dictionary of English Field-Names (ref 1) describes 'wall' names as 'land near a wall or containing a ruin'. An analysis of Tithe Map field-names revealed that there were twelve within the Bradford Hundred which contained the term wall. Locally field walls are now a common feature of the landscape and it is believed that the use of 'wall' may survive from a time when walls were unusual enough to be remarked upon. This interpretation was confirmed locally when a Roman site was identified at Cumberwell in a field called Little Walls (Bradford Tithe Apportionment (TA) 1941) in 2010. One of the twelve fields, Walls Ground in Winsley (TA 1054), is near to Temple Ground (TA 1050), a name used in Farleigh Hungerford for a Roman villa site (Farleigh Hungerford TA 66), and because of this a resistance survey of Walls Ground was carried out.

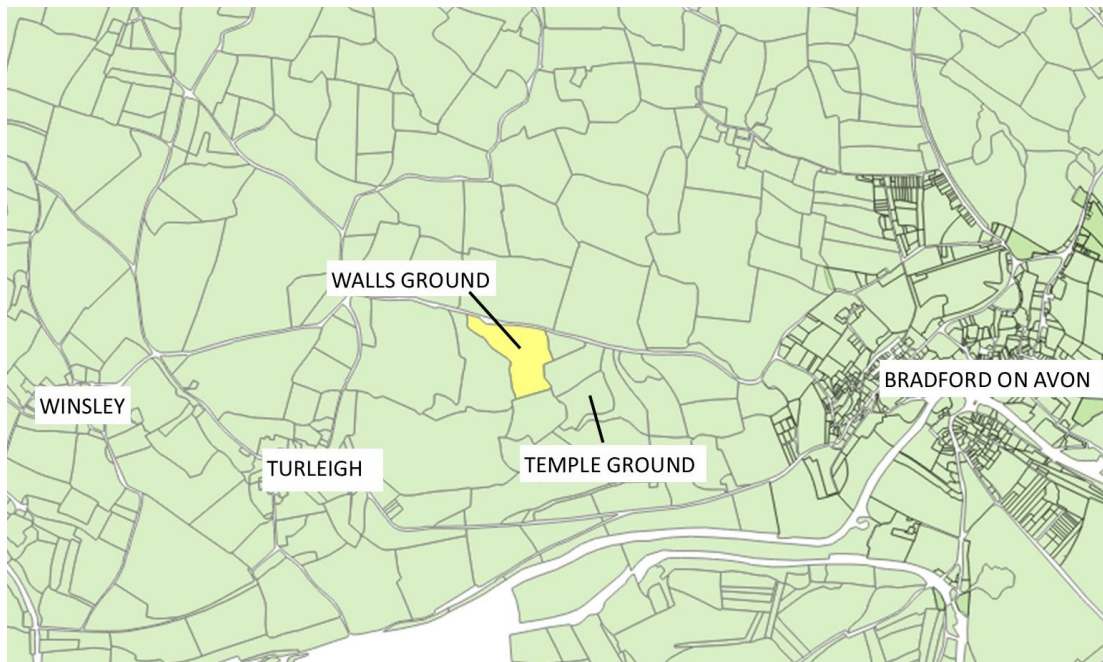
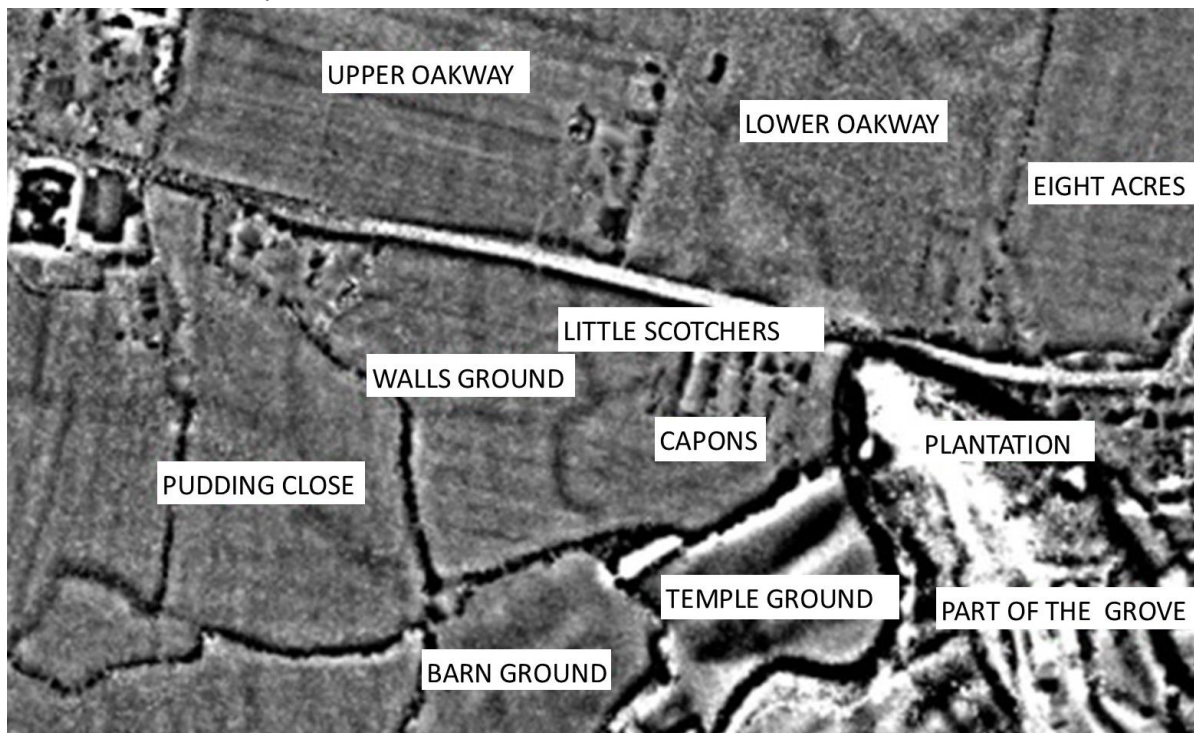


Fig 1. Walls Ground location on Tithe Map

A LIDAR image of the area was reviewed which revealed the Tithe Map field boundaries and an additional field boundary within Walls Ground, together with an underlying pattern running parallel to the road which may indicate the most recent direction of cultivation.



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Fig 2. LIDAR image with Tithe Map fields

Resistance Survey

Permission to carry out a resistance survey was sought from the owners and the survey was started in November 2020 when COVID restrictions allowed and completed after March 2021. The survey area covered the whole of the current field containing Walls Ground which includes the fields Little Scotchers and Capons. Datum points were measured in from the garden wall of a small housing development which intrudes into Little Scotchers and Capons. The survey area was divided into 20m-by-20m squares with one reading per metre being taken in both directions using a Frobisher TAR3 unit.

The data was analysed using Snuffler software and printed with black indicating high resistance. The results for the field are shown in figure 3, and the paddock and lawn in figure 4.

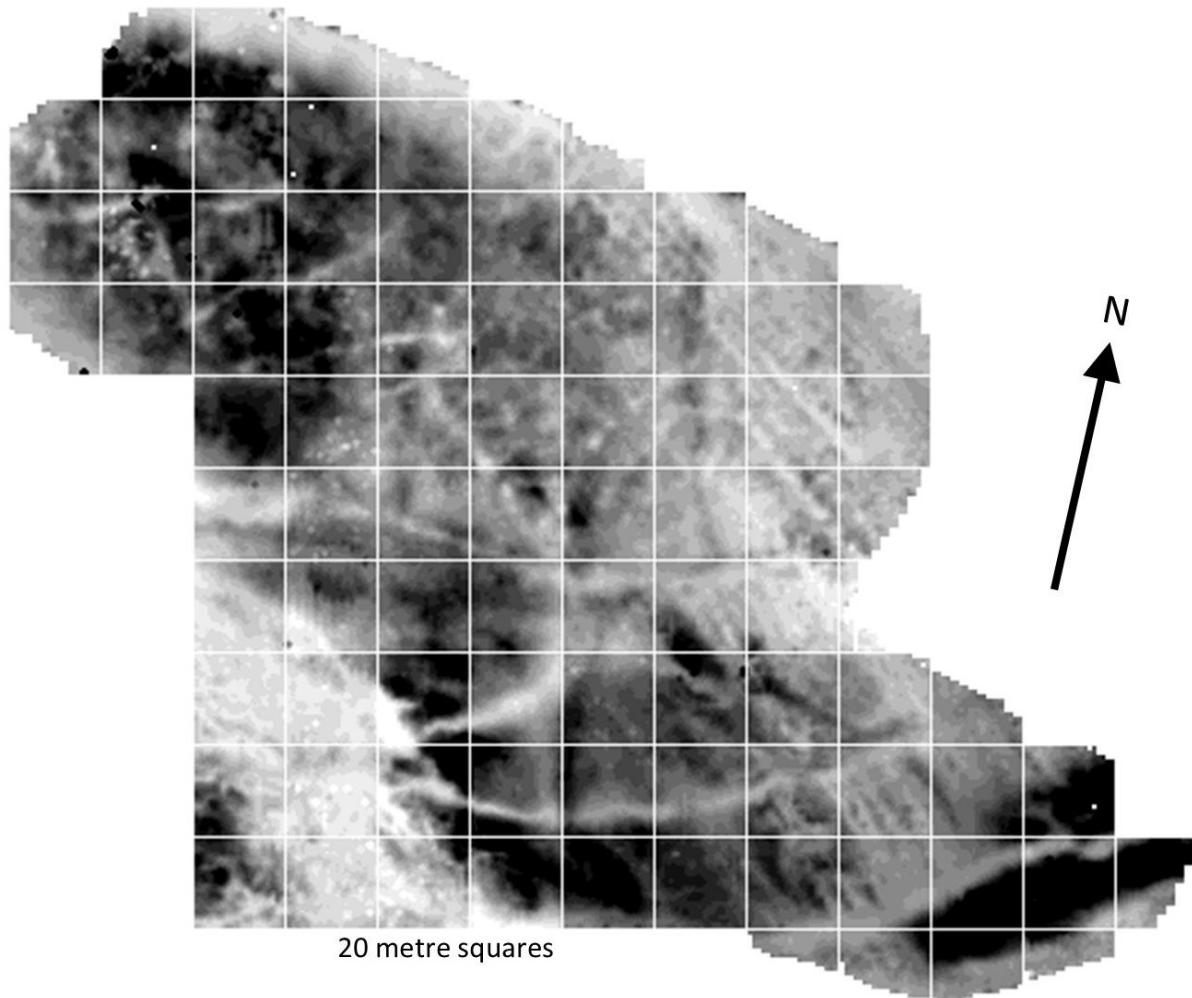


Fig 3. Resistance Survey results for field

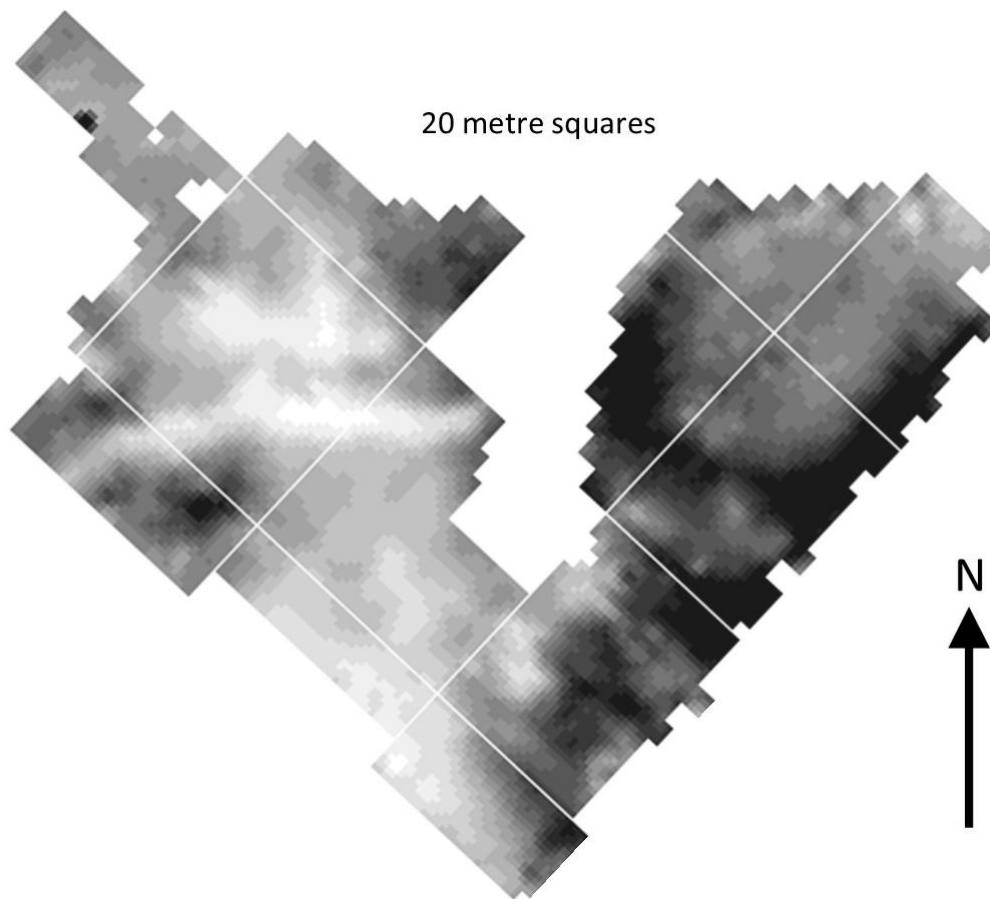


Fig 3. Resistance Survey results for paddock and lawn

These are shown superimposed on a map in figure 4, together with the positions of the centre points of nine test pits which were dug to investigate areas of interest.



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Fig 4. Survey results relative to map with Test Pit locations

Discussion of Soil Resistance Results

The background pattern of lines running north-west to south-east is thought to result from early ploughing. These are on a different alignment to the lines seen on the LiDAR image (fig 2). The predominantly high (black) and low (white) resistance areas are due to underlying geology. Areas where there is a mixture of low and high may indicate the site of human activity such as a building. These areas were selected for test pits. Test Pit 1 was placed over a low resistance line feature. Test Pit 2 was placed over a high resistance area. Test Pits 3 and 4 were placed over an area showing both low and high resistance. Test Pit 5 was placed over an area of medium resistance. Test Pit 6 was placed over an area which showed a square high resistance feature and two parallel low resistance features. Test Pit 7 was placed on the border of an oval high resistance feature. Test Pit 8 was placed over the south-west corner of the surveyed area so that all areas of the field were sampled. Test Pit 9 was dug across the edge of an oval low resistance feature in the paddock.

Test Pits

The Test Pits were dug in April, May and June 2021 and May 2022. Turf thickness varied from 100 to 200mm. The test pits were dug down to what appeared to be the natural geology, which is Cotswold Brash over limestone pavement.



Fig 5: Bedrock in WG3 at 200 mm



Fig 6: Bedrock in WG9 (SW end at left)

Test Pit	WG1	WG2	WG3	WG4	WG5	WG6	WG7	WG8	WG9
Size (metres maximum)	2.8 x 1.28	0.5 x 0.5	0.45 x 0.5	0.32 x 0.25	0.25 x 0.25	8.6 x 0.27	0.3 x 0.3	0.3 x 0.3	4.0 x 0.6
Area (sq.m)	1.626	0.25	0.225	0.08	0.063	2.32	0.09	0.09	2.4
Maximum depth (mm)	500	300	200	300	250	400	300	250	350
Medieval Pottery Count	3			1	1	4			
Medieval Pottery Weight (g)	7.59			0.35	0.15	18.25			
Medieval Pottery Density (g/sq.m)	4.668			4.375	2.4	7.866			
Post-Medieval Pottery Count	35	7				27	1	1	61
Post-Medieval Pottery Weight (g)	62.63	7.92				39.35	4.14	5.21	310.4
Post-Medieval Pottery Density (g/sq.m)	38.52	31.68				16.96	46	57.89	129.3
Bristol/Staffordshire Slipware Count	3								2
Bristol/Staffordshire Slipware Weight (g)	27.1								
Flint/ Chert	4								7
Oyster Shell	1					1			5
Welsh Slate	4	2				2			2
Ceramic Building Material (excl. Tile)	9					4			5
Clay Tile Count						6			
Clay Tile Weight(g)						76.2			
Marble Tile	1								
Charcoal / Coal	8	1			1	9	1		12
Clinker	8	4	1	1	5	15	2	2	11
Iron nails	4					4	1		6
Clay pipe stem fragment	5					3			4
Clay pipe bowl fragment						1			
Window Glass	3					2			14
Bottle Glass	5					3		1	3
Bone									3

Fig 5: Test Pit Finds

Discussion of Test Pit Findings

The low quantity and density or absence of medieval pottery indicates manuring scatter rather than an occupied site. The quantity and density of post-medieval pottery is much higher with the test pit nearest the current house site, WG9, having the highest. This is consistent with occupation and the presence of Bristol/Staffordshire slipware (Fig 6) suggests occupation before the early 19th C although there is no house shown on the site on the 1841 Tithe map. Examination of early OS maps reveals that the first house was built on the site of the current house between 1901 and 1924, so the presence of these quantities of pottery may be due to the area being used as a rubbish dump. The current house lies on the western edge of the paddock and lawn survey (Fig 3). The fragment of marble tile, tapering from 12 mm to 10 mm in thickness, Fig 7, found in WG1 is unexplained. The single piece of post-medieval pottery found in WG8 is thought to be a fragment of a glazed stoneware jug or bottle, probably made by Price or Powell in the Redcliff area of Bristol, late C19 to early C20. They were usually used for containing liquid chemicals or beer and coincidentally the occupier of Walls Ground in 1841 was Alexander Wilkins, farmer and brewer of the Seven Stars Brewery in Newtown. Thus the W1 may be the start of Wilkins (with 1 being used for l) and the G may be part of G v R, an abbreviation for King George V (ref 2). A fragment of patinated bottle glass was found in WG9 on the bedrock (Fig 9).



Fig 6: Bristol/Staffs slipware found in WG1



Fig 7: Tapered marble tile found in WG1



Fig 8: WG8 Pottery fragment with lettering Fig 9: WG9 Bottle glass

Many of the finds, which are typical of local manuring scatter, are only found in the larger Test Pits, WG1, WG6 and WG9, but their presence near the smaller test pits cannot be ruled out.

In the larger Test Pits the depth of soil over the bedrock explains the pattern of the resistance readings. The low resistance line in WG1 was revealed to be a natural gully in the bedrock (Fig 10).



Photo © Rick Buettner

Fig 10: WG1 showing bedrock and gully (1 metre pole)

The pattern of high and low resistance in WG6 was found to related to soil depth (Fig 11). The high-low resistance contrast in WG9 was again found to be due to deeper soil over the bedrock at the east end.

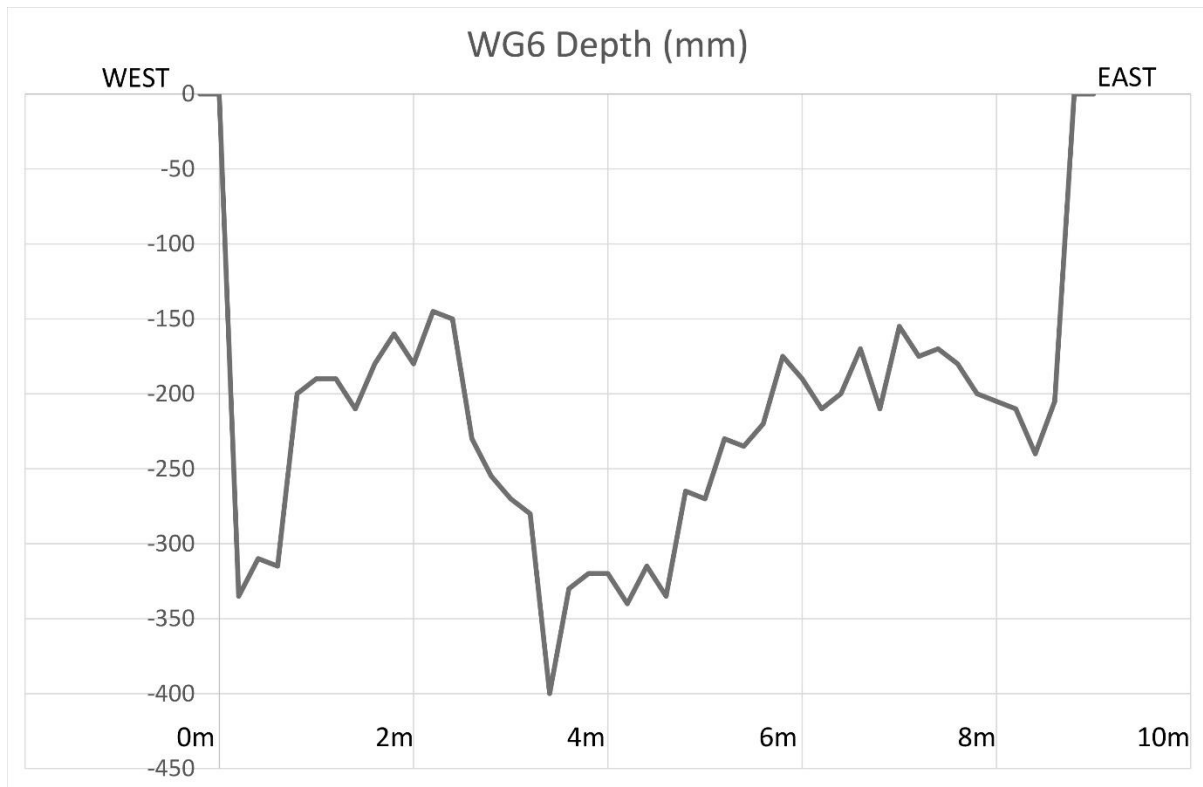


Fig 11: WG6 cross section



Photo © Rick Buettner

Fig 12: WG6 soil section (East end at left)

Temple Ground

Temple Ground has subsequently been found to be named for the Georgian Temple garden feature in Belcombe park (Fig 13) which is built into the lower wall of the field.

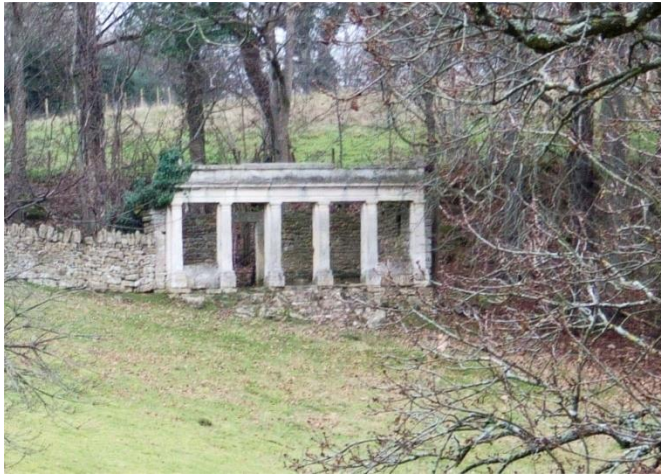


Fig 13: Belcombe park Temple

Conclusion

No signs of Romano-British buildings or activity were found to support the theory that the field-name Walls Ground derived from the presence of Romano-British remains. The name is therefore thought to derive from the supporting wall which divides Capons from Temple Ground (Fig 14), with ground level in Capons being just below the top of the wall.



Fig 14: Supporting wall between Capons and Temple Ground viewed from Temple Ground

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Liz and Stuart Burrell for permission to access the site and dig Test Pits, and to Rick Buettner, Sue Grier, Judith Patterson, Janet Slack and Phil Thornton for carrying out the survey and digging the test pits.

References

1. A New Dictionary of English Field-Names, Paul Cavill, English Place-Name Society, 2018
2. Personal comment Roger Clarke – Curator, Bradford on Avon Museum.

Rob Arkell

18-8-22