

**PATTERNS OF SETTLEMENT ON LUNDY:
PUTTING LUNDY'S ARCHAEOLOGY ON THE MAP**

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ABSTRACT

The landscape features of Lundy show settlement evidence that can be traced from at least the Early Bronze Age (c.2000 B.C.) to the present. This paper looks at elements of the National Trust survey of these extensive features, with emphasis on field systems, prehistoric and medieval settlement.

Keywords: *Landscape survey, field systems, Bronze Age, Medieval, settlement*

INTRODUCTION

Lundy has excited archaeological interest for at least 150 years and our understanding of the archaeological remains on Lundy and what they can tell us about past life on the island has developed considerably from what was known 60 years ago when the Lundy Field Society was established. Ten years ago, for the 50th Anniversary of the Society, Caroline Thackray summarised past archaeological work and the nature of the recently completed landscape survey undertaken by The National Trust (Thackray, 1997). At that time we were still very much grappling with the huge volume of detailed data collected from the survey and trying to make sense of it all. All the survey data is now on a database and some interpretations have been worked through, although a full synthesis of the results integrated with past work has not been prepared. Numerous questions have also been raised and some remain unanswered. It has not been possible to publish a full account of the survey and in this paper I will attempt to summarise some of our main conclusions from the survey, combined with results from recent work on excavated material.

The purpose of the landscape survey was twofold. To return to the title of this paper, the main objective was to map the archaeological remains (Figure 1) to know, in the most basic terms, where they were both in relation to each other and the topography. There was a real need to have this map and a written, drawn and photographic record of known or visible archaeological features so that they could be properly managed. In certain cases individual site plans existed and there were spot locations for others but the location of many sites was still problematic and their site plan unrecorded. Parts of the relict field systems had also been mapped but there were many gaps. The second objective was really a by-product of the survey. We wanted to improve our understanding of the landscape and hoped to provide material

for updated interpretation by looking at the patterns of settlement and occupation and attempting to understand what this could tell us about the extent and nature of man's activities on the island. It is intended that the survey is a base for future work including additional observations or discoveries. The survey was undertaken as a training exercise for National Trust staff and volunteers, including some members of the Lundy Field Society.

The landscape survey is available on a map- and site-based database held by The National Trust and in the island office and is used for information when works are proposed or to improve management of the archaeological sites, for example by vegetation control (largely bracken and rhododendron) or consolidation of fabric. The survey data was also used as the basis for a new general field guide (The National Trust 2002) and leaflet (The National Trust 2000) and a new interpretation room in the Rocket Shed. Even since these were completed, our understanding of the archaeology has developed perhaps most particularly by the re-examination of the prehistoric pottery by Henrietta Quinnell in the light of increased knowledge since the excavations 40 years ago. A recent 'watching brief' of service trenches has produced a volume of medieval pottery sufficient for detailed scientific analysis not previously undertaken, and this tells us more about the status of the settlement, trade links and markets and brings Lundy into the regional study of medieval pottery currently being developed.

As seems always to be the case with the study of archaeological remains the more we learn the more we realise we do not know. Interpreting individual landscape features is full of difficulties. The interpretation of an earthwork will be developed from its apparent relationship to other landscape features and a comparison with other sites. However later activities such as ploughing, robbing for stone and excavation can change the morphology of the site or feature and make interpretation less secure. Sometimes the interpretation of the function of a feature or site can be satisfactorily determined but the dating of the feature is much more tentative; this is very much the case with parts of the field systems, some of which may have evolved over a long time or been utilised in more than one period. It is also true for the remains of some recorded structures. We can do our best to interpret what we have from our present knowledge, derived from the decades of past work, but also be open to new ideas and research. There is still much to be discovered.

THE EARLIEST PREHISTORIC LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Although material remains from the later Neolithic and Early Bronze Age are scant, Bronze Age burial sites are recorded across the whole island and a small number of standing stones is found south of Quarter Wall. These are site types generally thought to belong to a slightly earlier period than most of the evidence for Bronze Age settlement so far identified. This situation is not uncommon on the mainland and the usual explanation of this may apply here: that the island was used seasonally or had a particular ritual or religious significance for its tribal area, with burial or ritual sites established before a larger, more settled, farming community inhabited the island. A small number of the burial sites may be considered to be prestige cairns

Management of Lundy's Archaeological Monuments

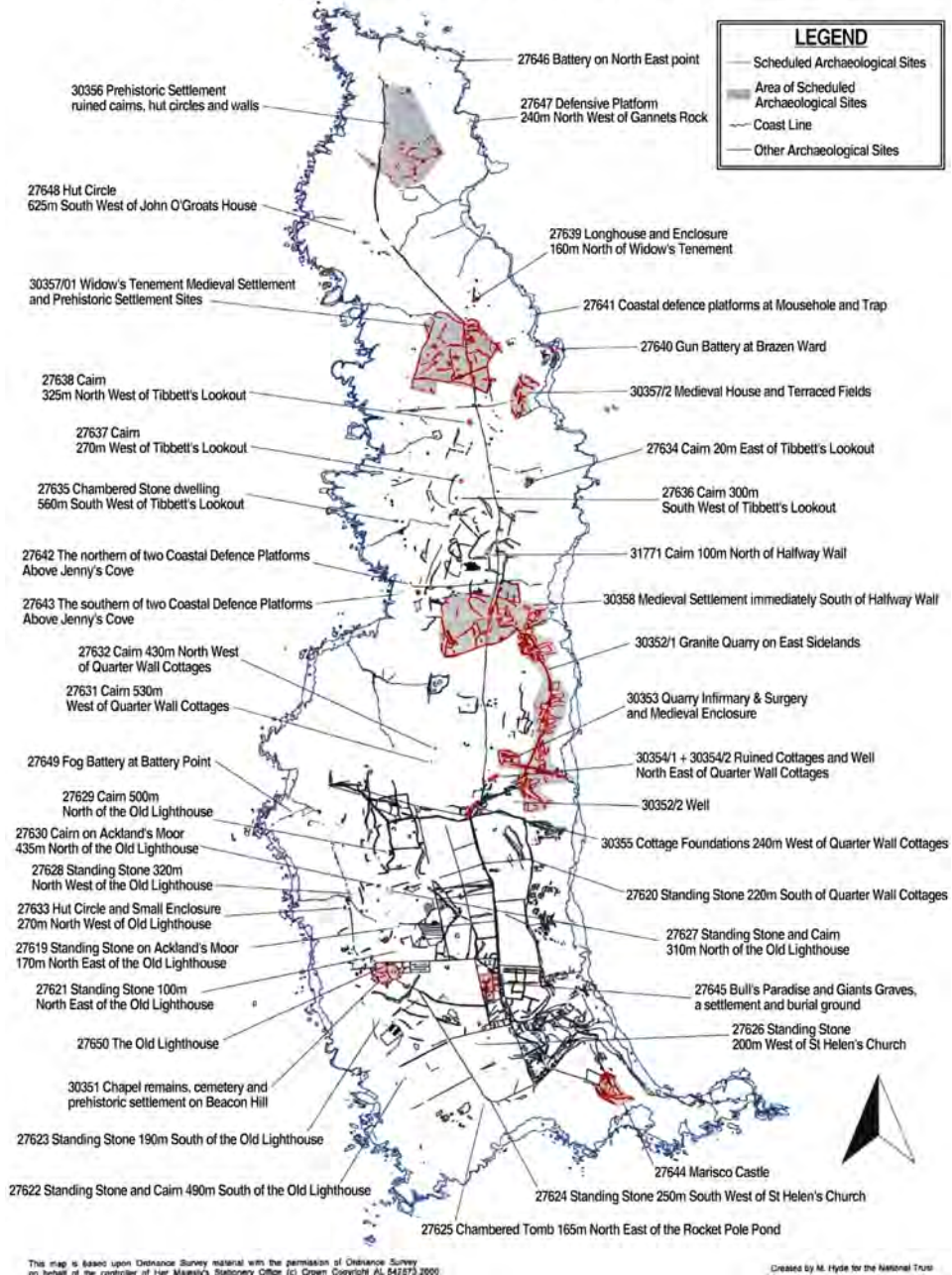


Figure 1: A simplified plan of island archaeology derived from the National Trust measured survey

or major landscape markers as they appear to be deliberately sited in a prominent position. These include the remains of a cairn under John O'Groat's House at the extreme North End; a similar cairn built on a rocky outcrop just south of Threequarter Wall (at times interpreted as a round tower or windmill base, Figure 2); two burial sites on Tibbetts Hill including a cist; a probable cist burial at the south end of the island (now heavily mutilated) just outside the modern field wall enclosure; and possibly in Ackland's Moor. There is the tantalising possibility that a similar cairn or burial was sited on Beacon Hill although no evidence for this has so far been identified. It may be that some of these cairns were intended to be visible from the sea, one only needs to observe the prominence of the Admiralty Lookout on approaching the island to realise this. However, they are also prominent from the land and perhaps would have been much more so when the landscape was devoid of more modern features such as walls and buildings that now attract the eye. Standing on the high points themselves a number of these sites are intervisible. Other less prominent sites have also been recorded: a mound in Widow's Tenement; two burials in Middle Park, one of which is within a kerb or enclosing stone setting; five mounds south of Pondsburry; and possibly a small number of others at the North End.

An enigmatic oval enclosure of individual stones lies just to the north of the water course emanating from Pondsburry. It appears to be prehistoric in type - most likely Bronze Age - but its function is still puzzling. It may be a compound or designated area of either a religious or practical function although the visible remains are too fragmentary to suggest a stock proof enclosure unless it was reinforced with banks or fencing of which there is now no trace.

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIELD SYSTEMS AND BRONZE AGE SETTLEMENT

If we take away the modern field walls and enclosures, there are strong suggestions that many of the remaining field systems recorded by the landscape survey originated in the Bronze Age. As outlined by Henrietta Quinnell (this volume) a re-examination of the pottery excavated in the 1960s tells us that much of the settlement previously believed to be of Late Bronze Age or Iron Age date is of the Middle or Late Bronze Age contemporary with similar settlements and farming communities on the uplands of the South West. This has led us to conclude that much of the identifiable relict field systems visible across the island could have originated at this time too; many are clearly associated with hut circles or other Bronze Age remains.

The best-known settlement lies at the North End and is of Middle Bronze Age date (Figure 3 and Quinnell, this volume), although interpretation of the individual features within it is not always easy. As indicated by Gardner (1972), the North End appears to be cut off by the location of a wall across the plateau neck at Gannets Combe. Whether this is for stock control, or demarcation for some other form of land division, for example ownership, is not clear. All apart from one identified structure lie on or north of this boundary, perhaps representing five units, sometimes, as described by Gardner, a round structure attached to an apparently rectangular one. One hut circle lies on this wall, four other units are associated with fragmentary



Figure 2: A large cairn south of Threequarter Wall

walls, suggesting one or two enclosures. One of the houses is strangely isolated in a very exposed position at the North End but is associated with domestic pottery (Gardner, Hut 6). The remaining isolated structure at the North End is sub-rectangular and appears to contain a dividing wall. It is undated, leaving the possibility that it could be later, and lies some 280 metres to the south of this boundary. The layout and relationships of these features suggest that the hut circles were built first with the boundary walls being secondary.

The only other location where a group of dwellings forming a small settlement is recorded is on Beacon Hill. Two structures identified as houses have been excavated (Beacon Hill I, Gardner, 1967; Thomas, 1994) dating to the Late Bronze Age (Quinnell, this volume). A further three were tentatively identified in the survey, but in an area heavily disturbed, two curved terraces may represent building platforms. It is very possible that clusters of huts have been robbed in later periods especially in areas where medieval and later activity is recorded such as at Widow's Tenement, Halfway Wall and the village area, leaving little or no evidence above ground to survey. Other individual hut circles are found amongst the relict field systems.

From Widow's Tenement to south of the village, field systems are extensive although it becomes much harder to determine a date for individual features. Re-use in the medieval period is much more likely and in significant areas, for example Middle Park and south of Quarter Wall, later ploughing in the post medieval period has obliterated or softened features. Interestingly in Middle Park walls survive east

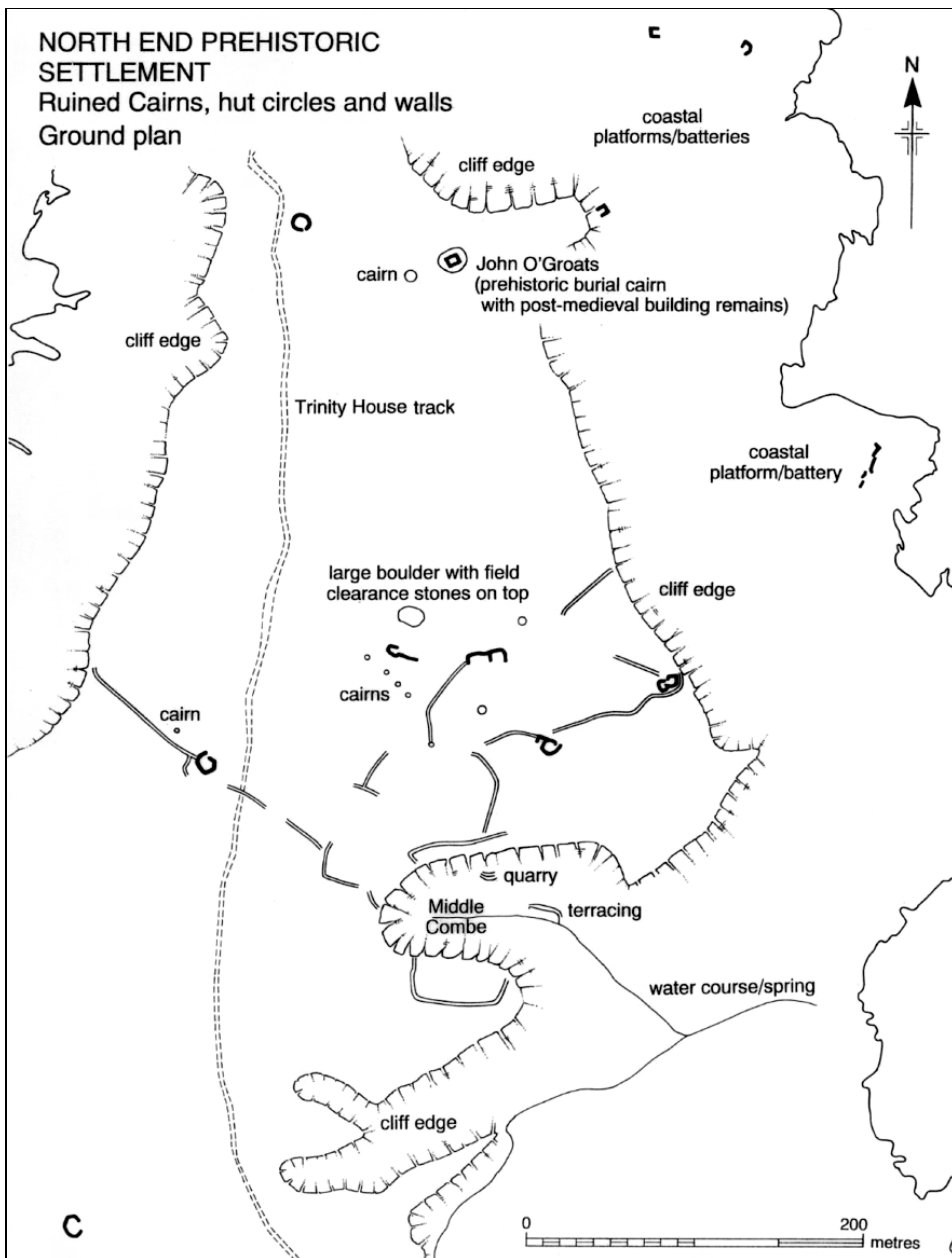


Figure 3: A plan of the North End prehistoric settlement
(National Trust Archaeological Survey; drawn by Jane Goddard)

of the main track whereas only lynchets are found to the west, suggesting perhaps that elsewhere lynchets could represent the robbed out remains of more substantial boundaries. In Widow's Tenement the discovery of Bronze Age pottery indicates settlement at this time and there may be remnants of Bronze Age structures on a platform in the angle of the north tenement wall and in a possible hut circle or other

structure just to the north of the centre of the southern boundary. However the recognised field system and enclosure appear to be associated with the medieval settlement. In Middle Park, both north and south of Halfway Wall, Gardner excavated trenches into two Bronze Age hut circles. These two sites appear to be associated with the same field system. North of the wall a number of curvilinear lynchets are clear, with other lynchets extending to south of the wall, some of which are crossed by later ridged cultivation. The story here may be quite complex with reuse and development of the field system in the medieval period, perhaps culminating with the construction of the enclosed tenement identified here in the survey. In Ackland's Moor and south of the Old Light numerous lynchets and banks have been recorded. Some of these will undoubtedly belong to the Bronze Age landscape, associated with the hut circle complex at the Old Light and cemetery and sites excavated by Gardner further north. A number of field boundaries are shown on earlier nineteenth century maps (see below) and it seems likely that a prehistoric system was reused and developed throughout the medieval period and maintained until the present system was laid out in the second half of the nineteenth century. The modern enclosures south of Quarter Wall have been regularly ploughed until relatively recent times and contain few earthwork features, but as now, it is likely to have been the most favourable area for agricultural activity in the past and is likely to have contained Bronze Age fields and settlement.

MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEDIEVAL LANDSCAPE

Post Roman Period

The remarkable group of early Christian memorial stones and the number and character of identified burials on Beacon Hill, suggests a significant community or at the very least a strong Christian influence and importance of the island in the post Roman period. Perhaps this is based on a religious leader or saint as suggested by Thomas (1994). As yet we have very little evidence to suggest where or how the inhabitants were living at this time and the survey has given us no further clues. Only a few isolated, unstratified sherds of imported pottery from this period have been identified (Gardner, 1963, 23; Ray McBride in Allan and Blaylock, 2005, 88). Perhaps there is undiscovered evidence of habitation somewhere in the environs of the village yet to be located or elsewhere on the island. Perhaps the community was largely aceramic with only occasional Mediterranean imports. The discovery of the re-use of a Bronze Age hut circle at Beacon Hill (Quinnell, this volume) in the Roman period obviously indicates a long continuation of sites traditionally regarded as prehistoric.

There are a number of sites notionally designated as prehistoric but with no real evidence for their date. These include the 'Black House' excavated on the West coast of Middle Park (Gardner, 1969, 44-48); a small sub-rectangular structure and wall perched just below the plateau north of Old Light (Scheduled Monument 27633); and a partial enclosure and structure above the West Coast Fog Battery. Any of these could be of this period, but they are also in suitable locations for birding or egg collecting activities at any time in the prehistoric or medieval periods and further dating evidence is required to help with their interpretation.

Later medieval period

In the later medieval period we can begin to appreciate the benefit of written documents to expand our knowledge of life on the island and to try to make links with some of the archaeological remains. There is considerable evidence for a settled community on the island, at least for periods of time, during the later medieval period of the twelfth to fifteenth centuries both in terms of archaeological remains and historic information and events. It is likely that a farming population persisted. We have no means of knowing whether this was an indigenous, static or fluctuating population, but the island would need to be fairly self-supporting if it was not to rely on imports from across the sea. Occasional documents from the thirteenth century onward provide snapshots of ordinary life. From around 1200 rabbit warrening was established, and in 1274 it was estimated at providing 2000 rabbits a year, although we have no recognised archaeological evidence for this in the form of pillow mounds (artificial warrens) or traps. A document of 1321 mentions eight tenants paying 15s yearly, who hold land with one tenant allowed to keep the gannets; the same document tells us that there are 200 acres of waste land, used as common by all the tenants. It also states that the castle, barton and rabbit warren were of no value that year as they had been destroyed by the Scots, revealing that life was not always peaceful or easy. Collectively in these documents we are told that there was cultivated land for barley and oats, meadow and pasture, cattle, sheep and horses (Steinman Steinman, 1836, 4; Thackray, 1989, 163). It is tempting to look at the survey and see what can be identified as a tenement although it is not possible to say which sites are contemporary with each other or for how long they were in use.

Widow's Tenement

Widow's Tenement (Figure 4) is the best known of these medieval farmsteads, lying north of Threequarter Wall within its own enclosing compound. This compound appears to have been sited on a Bronze Age settlement and therefore some of the fields may have been cultivated from this time although the enclosing wall appears to be a planned unit. Within this area lies the house, excavated by Gardner (1965, 30) and approximately ten field areas delineated by walls, banks, lynchets and traces of ridged cultivation. One might assume that during the summer months crops were grown on a rotational basis in the interior and stock put out on the surrounding common land, perhaps using some of the small external enclosures as stockades when required. Wintering stock within the enclosure could allow fertilisation of the fields. The water resource appears to be an important feature, there is a dewpond, a spring in the north west corner and spring on the west side at the edge of the plateau, which is protected by side walls to produce a funnel shape in plan. This may have been a drinking water supply that needed protecting from stock.

Although seemingly isolated, Widow's Tenement has at least two neighbours (although not necessarily contemporary). The foundations of a small, roughly rectangular, structure presumed to be a medieval house and part of an enclosure wall lie to the north-east (Figure 1). This seems to have no other associated field system so, unless it was an additional dwelling related to Widow's Tenement, the inhabitants

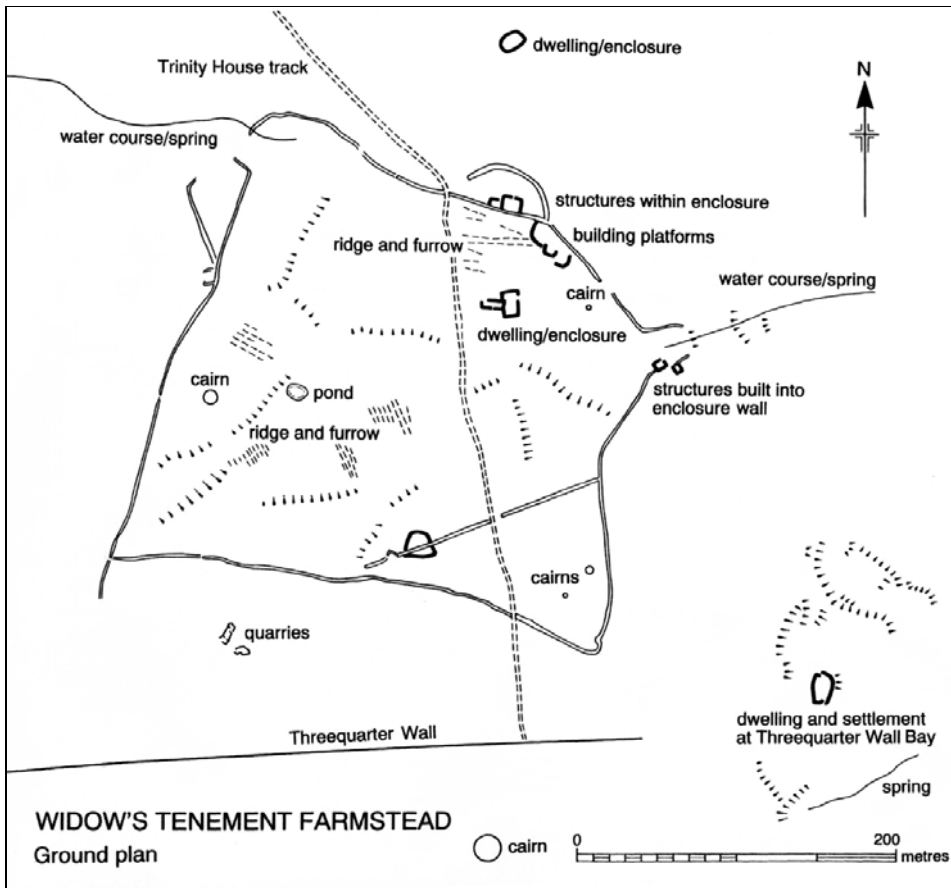


Figure 4: A plan of Widow's Tenement
(National Trust Archaeological Survey; drawn by Jane Goddard)

may have had another main occupation for example shepherding or catching sea birds. On the steep slopes to the east there lies another rectangular structure with a number of associated terraces, which may represent an independent tenement. No enclosing boundary has been identified, although individual plots of land could have been protected by banks or fences. There is a further spring to the south of this settlement and all three of these medieval settlement sites are close to Brazen Ward, which provides relatively easy access to the sea.

Settlements south of Halfway Wall

South of Halfway Wall is another well-defined tenement enclosure (Figure 5). Parts of the enclosure overlie earlier lynchets and the existence of the hut circle excavated by Gardner (1965) indicate that the tenement again overlies a Bronze Age site. This tenement has a number of similarities to Widow's Tenement; it appears to be fully enclosed, a water course is also enclosed with a small stream running from west of the main track down the east slope. Here there is also a walled funnel shape extending down the slope either side of the stream and also enclosing a small number of terraces.

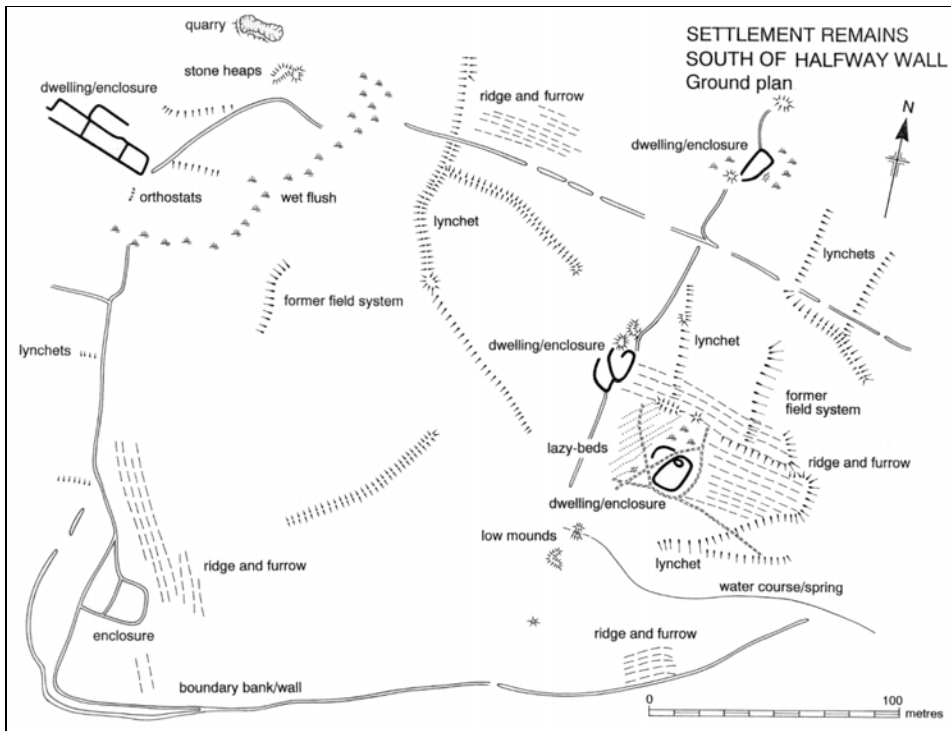


Figure 5: A plan of the medieval tenement at Halfway Wall
(National Trust Archaeological Survey; drawn by Jane Goddard)

The location of the house is problematic. During the survey it was thought that the Bronze Age house site could have been reused as it is large and sub-rectangular in shape, with what appears to be an attached cultivated plot. However, the lack of any medieval finds from Gardner's excavation seems to count against this. Other candidates may be small stone walled enclosures adjacent to the track although these could not be securely identified as buildings. Ridged cultivation is also apparent both inside and outside the walled enclosure, perhaps indicating that the tenement boundary wall was a secondary element of the medieval settlement. However, there may also have been a further settlement adjoining to the north, using the network of fields found here. There is a possible rectangular structure lying close to the track.

The quarry hospital lies within an enclosure, which is of earlier date and could be medieval. Within the wall on the north side lie the remains of a small rectangular structure and traces of cultivation ridges have been identified within the plot. There are a number of lynchets or banks to the north of this site, which may be associated with it.

Settlements south of Quarter Wall

Earlier nineteenth century maps may give us an insight into the appearance of the medieval landscape south of Quarter Wall. These are usefully described by Langham (1991) in his attempt to identify the location of 'New Town'. These maps were drawn up before the existing system of enclosures was developed. The organic looking field

systems represented could have medieval or earlier origins and it is instructive to compare these with the relict field systems recorded in the survey. The most useful map is that compiled from surveys undertaken by the Ordnance Survey to produce the 1 inch to 1 mile map, and drawn up at a scale of 1:10,650 or 6 inches to 1 mile. This is a compilation of three surveys; initially by Thomas Compton in 1804, corrected by A.W. Robe in 1820 (Figure 6) and with additions and corrections made by Lieutenant Denham in 1832. A map included with auction papers from 1840 is similar (from a copy of a tracing made by Tony Langham). The easiest enclosure to pick out from the survey is an irregular oval or sub-rectangular enclosure in the central area now cut by

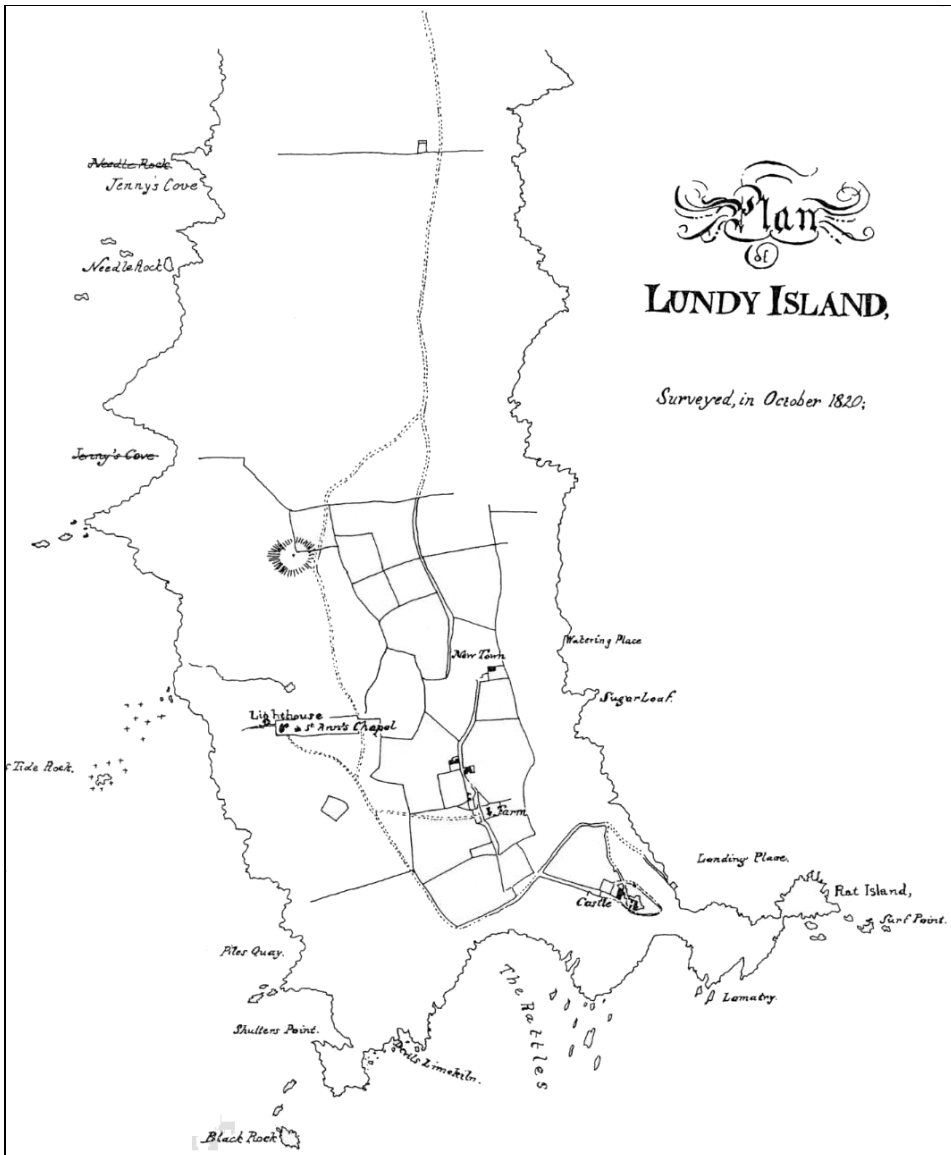


Figure 6: Map of Lundy surveyed by the Ordnance Survey in October 1820 (A.W. Robe)

the Old Light Wall. This also appears to be an early enclosure within the field system perhaps even prehistoric in origin. A number of other boundaries run up to or lead away from it. To the north there appears to be a broad track or drove way, which approximates to the line of the shape of field boundaries shown on the nineteenth century maps although no track is shown. The track can be followed on the ground as an earthwork feature leading into Bull's Paradise. Running along the southern boundary of this enclosure another possible track also leads out of 'Bull's Paradise', this is shown on the map of 1840. A large lynchet roughly parallel to this southern boundary also appears to be shown in part on both maps mentioned above. To the north, this relict field system is crossed by the present line of Quarter Wall. There are traces of ridged cultivation both just to the south of Quarter Wall and south of the air strip. An outlying field known as 'Friar's Garden' is depicted on both maps and was also recorded by the survey. It may be that this enclosure survived for longer than its associated field system or was reused as there are further lynchets and banks recorded in the survey to the north-east but not shown on any maps. No traces of 'New Town' and the fields and trackways shown in this area on the maps, were found by the survey (now Tillage Field) indicating fairly intensive clearance and ploughing from the later half of the nineteenth century onwards, although it is possible that negative features such as ditches and robbed out wall foundation trenches will survive here.

From the nineteenth century quarries southwards, short sections of terraced walls have been constructed on the steep slopes of the east sidelands, occasionally with evidence for a small associated structure. The logical interpretation of these is as garden or cultivation plots. Dating them is not easy. Some may be associated with the construction of the nineteenth century gardens and paths leading up the east side from Millcombe. In origin however, they are probably earlier. This is the warm and sheltered side of the island and it may have been utilised in earlier periods for a variety of types of crop cultivation, possibly including managed trees. Access to the plots from the village across the fields or from 'New Town' may have been easier than it is today.

The focus of the medieval settlement lies around the site of the present farm buildings and the fields to the west and south known as Bull's Paradise and Pigs Paradise. Earthworks have long been recognised here and chance archaeological discoveries, encouraged a number of small-scale excavations, most recently in the 1960s. From the mid-twelfth to the mid-thirteenth century the island was held by the Marisco family. Gardner suggests that the foundations of a substantially built structure in 'Bull's Paradise' partially excavated in the 1960s, just to the west of the present farm buildings, was their stronghold (Gardner, 1963, 1969). Here, a courtyard containing a 'waterhole' and lean-to structures, was enclosed by a heavily built wall and surrounding ditch. Burials, with a building in close proximity and the discovery of part of a piscina suggest that there was also a chapel and cemetery here which had gone out of use by the seventeenth century (Gardner, 1963). A watching brief of service trenches in Pigs Paradise in 2000 (Allan and Blaylock, 2005) recorded what appears to be part of a medieval farmstead, including a possible building, wall and a small number of pits and post-holes. Further structural walls were found under 'Quarters' when these buildings were constructed in 1972. The quantity of pottery

excavated in 2000 allowed a detailed examination to be undertaken. This included petrological study of the inclusions in the pottery and chemical analysis of the pottery fabrics. Of the 1451 sherds retrieved, the vast majority (80%) were from North Devon Coarseware vessels, largely unglazed cooking pots probably imported from Barnstaple and Bideford, with a smaller number of coarsewares probably coming from Exmoor. Some glazed fragments, principally jugs, and some sherds of unglazed cooking pots, are from Ham Green, near the Bristol Avon. Six sherds of glazed ware from Redcliffe, Bristol, were also present with a small collection of limestone-tempered wares from Wiltshire including a tripod pitcher, two cooking pots and a jug. The pottery is suggestive of a significant farmstead or hamlet settlement at sometime between the mid twelfth to mid fourteenth centuries, with prime market links in Bideford or Barnstaple, but also links to Exmoor and Bristol and possibly South Wales. The mention of eight tenants in 1321, the other known sites, and the quantity of archaeological evidence from this area suggests that there was more than one tenement, more likely three or four, centred on the village at this time. It is likely that at least one of these lies in Pigs Paradise.

Castle

After the capture and execution of William de Marisco for plotting against King Henry III, the island was brought directly under royal control, and the first castle was built in 1244 in an imposing position above the Landing Bay (Ternstrom 1994). The surrounding rampart and ditch comprise the most impressive earthwork remains from this period, although the present structure is likely to have been heavily rebuilt from the seventeenth century onwards (Figure 7). The castle was essentially a strong keep within these defences, with a gatehouse on the landward side (Figure 8).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion therefore it seems likely that in the later medieval period, roughly the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, there was a village or hamlet in a similar position to or slightly north of the present village, comprised of perhaps three or four tenements or farmsteads and at least in the later part of this period, a cemetery and probably a small chapel. The hamlet is likely to have been surrounded by enclosed fields with a number of tracks to provide access to the fields and to rough pasture or common land beyond. If one accepts Gardner's thesis, the hamlet would have been dominated by the defensive compound discovered in 'Bull's Paradise', until the construction of the castle in the thirteenth century took the administrative focus out of the village to a more strategic position above the Landing Bay. Away from the village there were a small number of outlying farmsteads or tenements; with at least Widow's Tenement, and the tenement at Halfway Wall, lying within their own enclosed fields protected from stock by an enclosure wall, outside of which was common land. Other settlement sites appear to represent smaller units, the largest of which is the medieval house on the line of Threequarter Wall situated among terraces, which could have been protected from stock by banks or hurdles. Those smaller still at the site of the quarry hospital and north of Widow's Tenement could have derived more

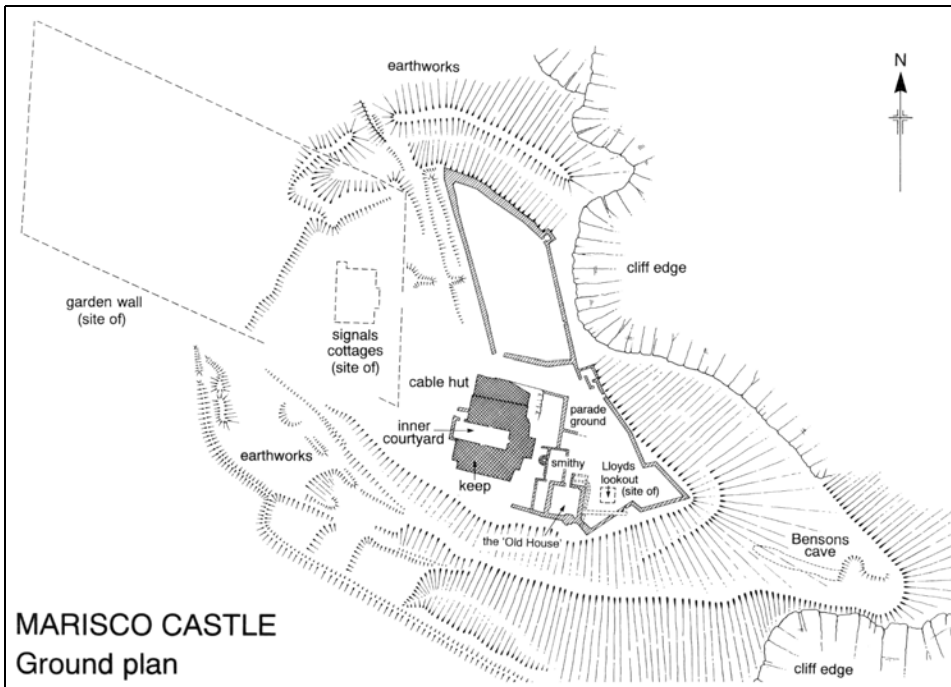


Figure 7: A plan of the Castle, Lundy
(National Trust Archaeological Survey; drawn by Jane Goddard)

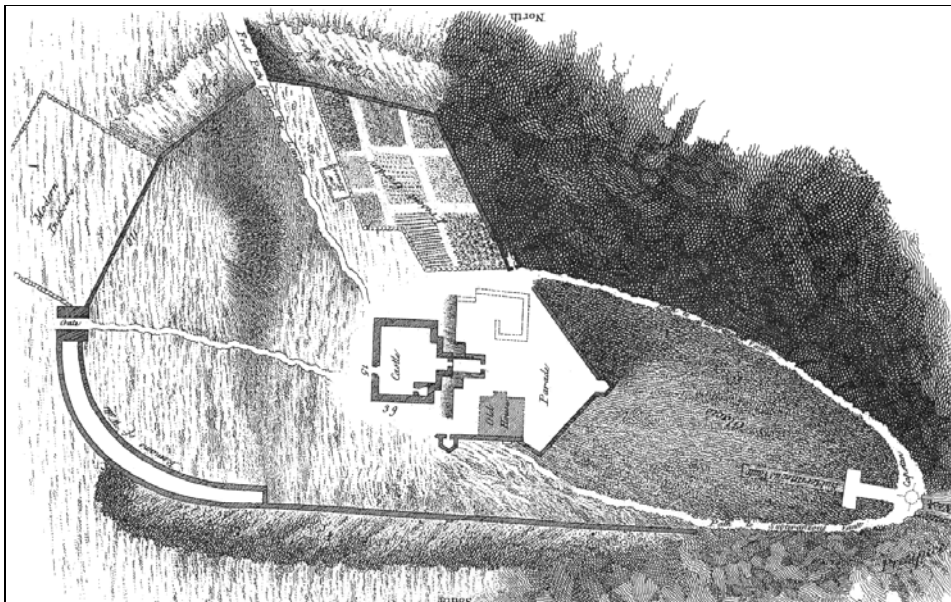


Figure 8: A plan of the Castle in 1776 (Grose)

of their income from activities such as fishing, taking sea birds and their eggs or possibly rabbit warrening.

As mentioned in the introductory section, this paper only presents our thinking on certain elements of the survey. I have not even touched on a number of important aspects of the archaeology on Lundy such as coastal lookouts or defences, neither have I attempted to discuss the considerable archaeological remains relating to the post-medieval period, many of which are readily appreciated in the landscape by Lundy's many visitors. These were also recorded in detail by the survey and the work of Myrtle Ternstrom in studying the historic documents from this period, has added specific detail on subjects and issues that we can only guess at for the earlier periods. Never the less I hope this paper has provided an overview of the fascinating early landscape of Lundy of which there is still much to be understood. One of the biggest lessons learnt in studying Lundy's past is that although it may seem so when coming in to land by helicopter, Lundy's landscape is far from flat.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The biggest debt of gratitude is owed to Caroline Thackray who for many years led National Trust surveying expeditions to Lundy. Her extensive research has been drawn on and ideas for overall interpretation developed from her lively discussions with myself and other team members. I am very grateful to her for discussing the content of this paper. Thanks are also due to Henrietta Quinnell and Myrtle Ternstrom for commenting on a draft of this text. Very many people have contributed to helping us develop our understanding of the island, most recently John Allan, Henrietta Quinnell and Ann and Martin Plummer in their studies of material remains. Valuable discussion and useful information have also been provided by Myrtle Ternstrom, Keith Gardner, Vanessa Straker and Stuart Blaylock together with other friends and colleagues. The jigsaw pieces of our knowledge and interpretation have been brought together by many, including the staff and volunteers of the landscape survey, all of whom gave so much in the recording and interpretation of the island, a most particular mention of the contribution of Gary Marshall, Jeremy Milln and Angus Wainwright, should be made.

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