

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE SURVEY OF LUNDY 1990

First Interim Report

By

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INTRODUCTION

The intention of this paper is to provide a brief summary of the results of the first full season of work on the Historic Landscape Survey of Lundy, undertaken by National Trust staff and volunteers.

Our approach to this project was described in an earlier report (Claris 1989): over a period of four years a topographical survey of the island will identify and document in detail all visible archaeological traces of past land use. By examining the archaeological landscape *in toto* in this way we hope to achieve two things: an improved understanding of Lundy's historic evolution; and the creation of an up-to-date and consistent record for conservation purposes.

Interim statements will continue to appear annually in the *Annual Report of the Lundy Field Society* and on completion the results of the survey will be published in full. Our debt to all those who have carried out research into Lundy's past will be apparent. In particular, Keith Gardner's *Archaeological Field Guide* has for many years provided visitors with a key to Lundy's "great and almost tangible atmosphere of history" (Gardner 1972,3). The presentation of the final results of the present survey for the enjoyment of future visitors is our further aim.

FIELDWORK APRIL 21st TO MAY 5th 1990

The objective of the first season was to survey the North End of Lundy, extending from the Threequarter Wall to the northernmost point of the island. By the end of the season two areas remained for completion in 1991: the area around Brazen Ward (the Civil War gun batteries) extending south east to Threequarter Wall Bay (including the remains of a long-house and associated features); and part of the Widow's Tenement complex. Middle Park will also be surveyed in 1991.

Archaeological features and significant natural topography were planned at 1:1000 throughout by total station and EDM (electronic distance measuring) survey. In addition detailed plans, sections and elevations were drawn of important individual sites or site complexes at scales of 1:20 or 1:50. All sites were described and photographed. Further contour information, aerial photographic and other existing mapped detail will ultimately be combined with the 1:1000 metrical survey to produce a final plan for the island as a whole.

SURVEY RESULTS 1990

Prehistoric survivals in the North End area are particularly good: the range of sites and field system components clearly demonstrate that early farming communities were able to establish and develop settlement and an economy which made effective use of the restricted available territory and resources. No further artefacts were recorded to supplement the existing known evidence for flint scatters in the area, such as the barbed and tanged arrowhead discovered on the northwestern edge of the North End plateau in 1970 (Anon, 1970, 36-37). Settlement of the medieval period is clearly represented by the well preserved Widow's Tenement longhouse and enclosed field system.

In total, ninety-one sites (including field system components) were separately identified and described (sometimes these are formed of several elements). Of these sites, twenty-six have been drawn at 1:20 or 1:50. An inventory of sites with preliminary interpretations is given at *Appendix 1*.

The recorded sites can be broadly classified by type as follows:

Walls, orthostats, lynchets, tracks:	23
Enclosures:	6
Cairns (single or groups):	19
Cultivation evidence:	5
Hut circles (single or groups):	9
Longhouses, structures, platforms:	12
Batteries, watch-houses:	5
Lighthouse components:	3
Quarries and millstones:	7
Misc. & unclassified:	5
Total	94

(N.B. three sites have been counted twice because they fall into two categories)

SITE TYPE DESCRIPTIONS

Here and in subsequent Interim Reports a broadly classified description of the main archaeological site types and principal features will be given.

a. LINEAR FEATURES (WALLS, ORTHOSTATS, LYNCHETS, TRACKS)

Two principal areas of field system and other components related to settlement were recorded: the prehistoric system with associated huts and other features north of Gannet's Coombe; and the Widow's Tenement area to the south. Prehistoric field system elements also survive within the medieval enclosure.

1. North End field system

The field system north of Gannet's Coombe has been previously described by Gardner (Gardner 1956,56-57). Linear stone boundaries survive defining a series of field plots; huts and enclosures also remain, either built into the boundary structures or closely aligned with them. One major boundary extends across the neck of the island from the hut complexes overlooking Gannet's Coombe in the east to a point overlooking the western cliffs, effectively enclosing the northernmost area. At its western end the boundary appears to have been a substantial wall, surviving as irregularly spaced orthostats up to 0.8m high. This wall runs to within 3m of a hut circle; a few metres on the wall line continues as a lower tumble or spread of stones 0.5-0.7m wide and generally 0.1-0.2m high, until meeting another wall of similar construction belonging to the pattern of smaller enclosed fields which continues to Gannet's Cove. The southernmost element of this system is completed by a poorly preserved three-sided enclosure on a rocky spur in Gannet's Coombe.

The boundaries to the north appear to define an enclosed system of small fields associated with huts. Generally they are composed of lines of small granite boulders lacking any visible structure but nevertheless in a stable condition in thin moorland soil.

2. Widow's Tenement field system

The dominant historic land use feature of the area between Gannet's Coombe and the Threequarter Wall is the Widow's Tenement enclosure of some seventeen acres with its associated medieval longhouse remains and other features. The enclosure is formed of a low spread wall, averaging 1.3m wide and 0.4m high; it is now mostly turf covered but with some orthostats visible along its length. At the south east corner part of a hut circle may be incorporated; other structures occur built against the outer face of the wall, probably representing yards or buildings. A further earthen bank, averaging 2m in width with traces of ditches, cuts across the south east part of the enclosed area. While the main enclosure boundaries are rather irregular in plan this feature is remarkably straight; it appears to abut the main boundary at its eastern end and may represent a later internal subdivision.

Whatever its relationship with the main enclosure this bank clearly cuts and overlies the remains of an earlier subcircular enclosure containing three hut circles, surviving as earthworks to an average height of 0.4m. Six lengths of wall line, earthen bank or lynchet (some with orthostats) were identified and planned immediately north of and adjacent to the hut complex and contained within the Widow's Tenement enclosure; one further discontinuous earthen bank lies to the east. All these features may belong to the system of later prehistoric fields which occurs throughout the island (Gardner 1972,23).

3. Tracks

Tracks formed by human or animal usage occur at various places within the area of survey. The principal structured route running the length of the island and cutting through the Widow's Tenement enclosure and the prehistoric east-west wall to the north is the Trinity House track built to provide access to the North Light.

b. ENCLOSURES

Small enclosures are a feature of the huts, built contiguously, in the North End field system. In addition two sites of stone built enclosures were recorded. The first is built into the northern limit of the field system and comprises one approximately oval and one rectangular enclosure, 7m and 3.5m E-W respectively. Further examination is needed to determine whether this site is integral to the field wall or represents a later construction. To the east lies another square enclosure, standing outside the principal known field boundaries, although traces of a possible boundary running east were recorded as a line of large granite boulders partly concealed by heather. The enclosure is similarly formed of large granite boulders and measures 3m square by about 0.5m high.

A less well-defined semicircular earthwork bank, on the northern outer face of the Widow's Tenement boundary, appears to represent an enclosure site, probably in association with the medieval boundary, but also perhaps part of an earlier system indicated by a surviving hut circle a few metres away.

c. CAIRNS

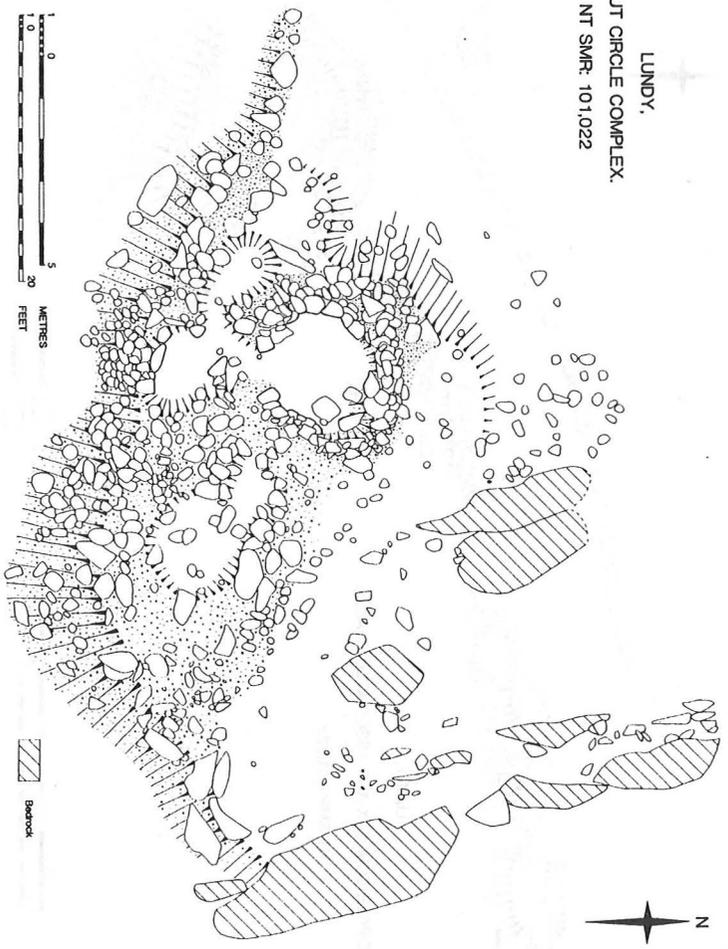
The survival on Lundy of a wide range of cairns of varying morphology indicates the need for a detailed and critical examination. Large scale site planning and analysis of this class of structure will be applied throughout the survey. Preliminary interpretation of the group of five cairns clustered in the area of John O' Groats raises a number of possibilities, including quarry scoops for the building of the watch-house used in the Civil War period. If, on the other hand, a prehistoric date is preferred then all bear signs of later robbing or excavation. The cairn on which John O' Groats sits is the best preserved, and is probably best interpreted as pre-dating the building which was later superimposed; within the building the surface of the cairn appears to have been partly excavated to create a sunken floor.

Certain features previously described as hut circles require re-appraisal and can best be considered within the cairn category of sites. One example is the site located on the northern edge of the North End field system previously described as a hut (Gardner 1956,56) but probably a field clearance cairn: it consists of a mound of small stones of c.3m diameter and 0.3m high in an area of numerous stones. Another row of four cairns south west of this site may be either clearance cairns or the surviving part of a wall adjoining the rest of the field system. Cairns are distributed throughout the remainder of the survey area down to Threquarter Wall, some evidently robbed and disturbed.

d. CULTIVATION EVIDENCE

Direct evidence for cultivation was observed only in the grassland area of the Widow's Tenement: four distinct blocks west of the Trinity House track, and one less well defined area to the east. Preliminary examination of aerial photographic cover suggests a wider area of cultivation, including the observed blocks, probably representing a system of narrow ridge and furrow. Lazy bed cultivation would also be a possible interpretation.

LUNDY,
HUT CIRCLE COMPLEX,
NT SMR: 101.022

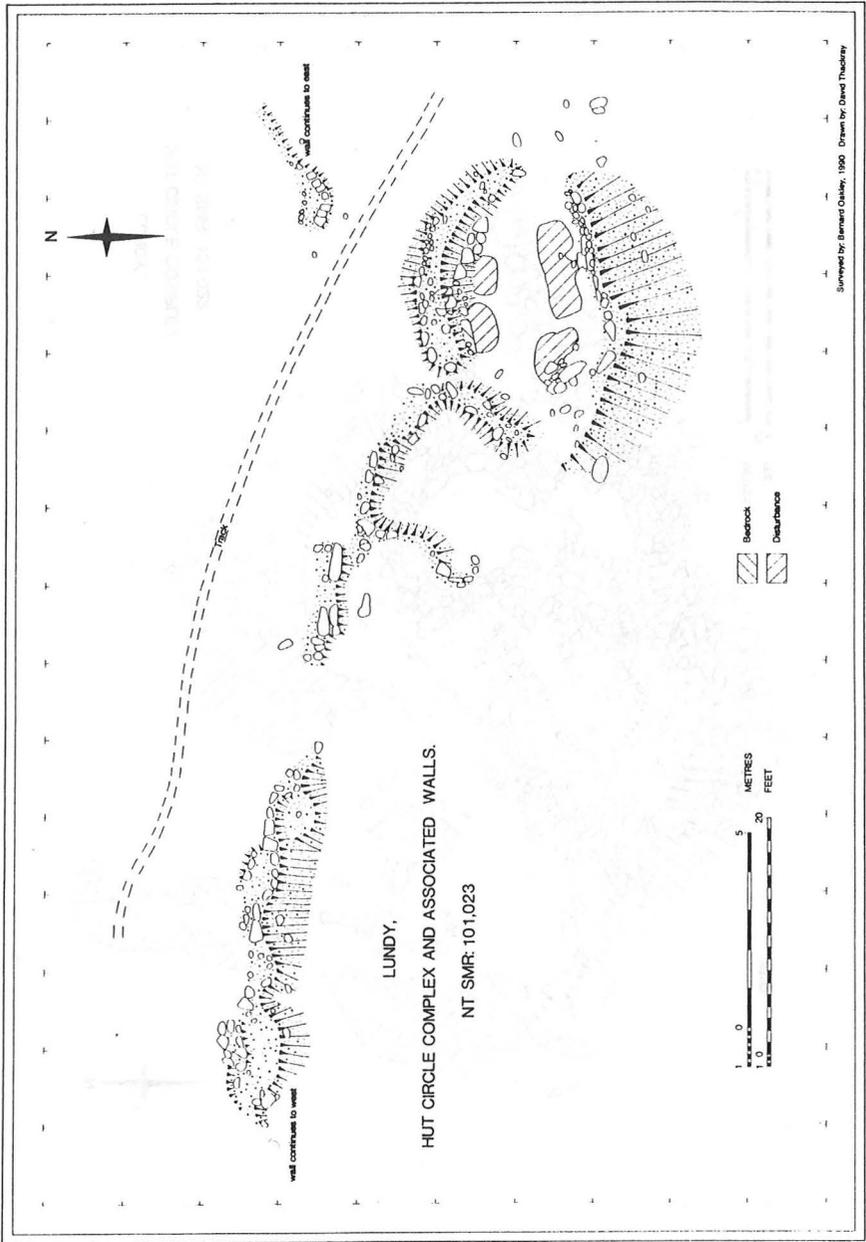


0 5 20
METRES
0 5 20
FEET

Diagonal hatching symbol
Barrack

Surveyed by: Charles Thomas, Sarah Lewis, 1980

Drawn by: David Thomas



e HUT CIRCLES

A field system related to settlement probably of the later prehistoric period has already been mentioned as underlying the more prominent medieval settlement of the Widow's Tenement. Four sites of probable huts or hut groups were recorded in this area. The site cut by the earth bank subdivision of the tenement is formed of a stone enclosure bank containing three hut circles of average internal diameters of 1m; other sites are of single structures up to 3.2m diameter, some ill-defined.

Integrated with the North End field system is an important series of huts and hut complexes. One hut site is also known from the extreme north east of the area, excavated by Gardner in 1967 (Gardner 1968,41-42). Four sites form part of the enclosed field pattern: most appear to have been at least partly excavated or in some cases rebuilt. Two examples of the sites overlooking Gannet's Cove are illustrated here (figs 1-2).

f LONGHOUSES, STRUCTURES, PLATFORMS

Of the twelve sites recorded in this category the most significant remains are those of the Widow's Tenement longhouse (Gardner 1972,23-24). At the time of writing the large scale drawing of this site is incomplete, and another significant site at Threequarter Wall Bay is yet to be surveyed. A range of rectangular structural remains and platform sites exists which, like the cairns, requires close analysis and detailed planning. Work on these sites will continue in 1991.

g OTHER CATEGORIES

Work similarly will continue in 1991 on the detailed recording of the Brazen Ward battery. All other known sites of batteries or watch-houses were surveyed and planned (cf. Gardner 1972). Plan detail of the lighthouse installations will be transferred from existing maps and plans. Remaining quarry sites and other features were identified to complete the survey cover of the North End.

CONCLUSION

Much of the descriptive content of a survey of this kind relies on the survey plan to become fully intelligible. This plan will remain in progress until the last season of survey is complete, and will continue to develop accordingly. Separated from their landscape context, the sites described in general terms here can therefore represent only a basic statement of the range of observed and recorded data.

Analysis of the data (beyond the most basic of period attributions) and sequential phasing must similarly continue to develop with the remainder of the programme accompanied by appropriate further research (cf. Schofield 1988; Schofield and Webster 1989).

Although much of the archaeological evidence briefly summarised above has been previously examined it has become clear that only by comprehensive and detailed survey can sites be accurately characterised and located; without such accuracy confusion between one site and another can easily occur, and an integrated view of the development of the whole is harder to achieve. It is hoped that by continuing to apply this approach to the remaining areas of Lundy, a firm basis for understanding its historic evolution and for managing the preservation of its historic features will be created.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our thanks are due to the volunteers who worked with tireless energy and enthusiasm to produce survey results of high quality; and to the Landmark Trust and their staff on the island who offered much practical help and encouragement.

This survey would not have been possible without the generous grants made available by Devon County Council and the British Academy and we are indebted to these organisations for their support.

APPENDIX 1

Site Inventory, 1990

Field Number	Feature
001	Threequarter Wall
002	Clearance cairns, group
003	Trinity House Track
004	Quarry scoop
005	Trinity House stone markers
006	Cairn
007	Widow's Tenement wall (earthwork; orthostats)
008	Widow's Tenement wall-associated earthworks
009	Cairn
010	Bank, Lynchet
011	Track
012	Bank and ditch
013	Wall (earthwork)
014	Earthwork enclosure
015	Earthwork enclosure and hut circles
016	Ridge and furrow and bank/lynchet
017	Wall (earthwork)
018	Widow's Tenement Longhouse and enclosures
019	Widow's Tenement ancillary structure
020	Hut circle
021	Hut Platform
022	Rabbit warren (probably natural feature)
023	Building foundations (earthwork)
024	? Hut platform
025	Clearance cairn
026	Clearance cairn
027	Wall foundations (earthwork)
028	Hut circle
029	Subrectangular earthwork, ? longhouse
030	Cairn
031	? Kerbed cairn
032	Subrectangular earthwork
033	Hut circle
034	Oval earthwork
035	Subrectangular ditch, ? quarry
036	? Quarry
037	? Quarry
038	Orthostat row (? wall remains)
039	Millstone
040	Cairn
041	Wall/lynchet
042	Cairn
043	Cultivation ridges (lazy beds/ridge & furrow)
044	Millstones
045	Bank
046	Cultivation ridges (lazy beds/ridge & furrow)
047	Bank
048	Cultivation ridges (lazy beds/ridge & furrow)
049	Lynchet
050	? Ridge and furrow
051	Bank
052	Stone tumble/? rectangular structure
053	Orthostat row
054	Dam

055	? Wall/natural stone alignment
056	? Wall/natural stone alignment
057	? Quarry
058	Orthostat row
059	Hollow
101	North Lighthouse
102	North Lighthouse landing area
103	North Lighthouse steps
104	Hut circle
105	Cairn
106	Cairn
107	Cairn
108	Cairn
109	Cairn (John O'Groats)
110	John O'Groats watch house
111	Building platform
112	Hut circle complex
113	Walls, lynchets (North End field system)
114	Cairn
115	Enclosure
116	Enclosure
117	Cairns
118	Hut circle
119	Hut circle and enclosure
120	Cairns
121	Cairn
122	Stone spread/tumble
123	Quarry
124	House terrace (remains of Gannet's Coombe summer house)
125	Hut circle
126	Cairn
127	Hut (rectangular)
128	Battery
129	Battery on Puffin Slope
130	Wall
131	Battery
132	Rectangular earthwork, stone footings

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