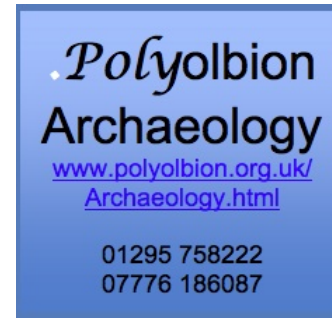


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Tysoe Manor, Warwickshire – Notes of Site Visits



Fig. 1 Sunken area to north of manor, view looking south-west.

1.0 Introduction.

1.1 On Thursday July 17th. 2014 a preliminary site visit was made to Tysoe Manor, Warwickshire (SP33414377, 52° 5'28.20"N 1°30'48.75"W) at the invitation of the land-owner. During the course of this visit a visual inspection was made of a variety of earthwork features in the garden. The results of some recent geophysics work were also discussed and a brief examination of exposed soil around the garden

was undertaken. On Wednesday July 23rd. and Friday August 1st. further visits were made to survey and to draw measured profiles of the earthworks

2.0 The Manor.

2.1 The manor was part of an important pre-conquest estate held by the thegn Waga. By Domesday it had passed into the hands of Robert de Stafford whose descendants held it until 1520 when Edward Stafford, Duke of Buckingham passed it on to Sir William Compton with whose family it remained.¹ Given the shifting pattern of ownership which was common with many English manors this is an unusual degree of continuity.

2.2 The existing buildings consist of, from west to east, a late medieval block with original roof trusses and a two light window, a sixteenth or seventeenth century extension with mullioned windows and a large wing added in the 1930s.² An earlier barn has also been incorporated into the house and further agricultural out-buildings exist to the south.

3.0 The Geophysics

3.1 A geophysics (resistivity) survey had been undertaken in two blocks (Area A to the north approximately 2,000 m² and Area B to the east approximately 3,600 m²) by Professor John Hunter, University of Birmingham (Fig. 2).

3.2 Area A shows two distinct sets of results (Figure 3). To the west are a series of partially defined rectangular features which could indicate the presence of buildings. Although it is not possible to assign a date from these indications alone the layout is quite consistent with that of a Romano-British settlement. An initial look at the distribution of Roman sites within the parish³ shows a strong concentration to the north and east but little in the vicinity of Upper Tysoe. To the east we have what appears to be the beginning of an avenue like structure flanked by two curvilinear features. It is likely that these features extend into the field to the north.

3.3 Area B exhibits two linear features running east – west across the centre of the area (Figure 3). These were initially interpreted as a possible early approach road to the manor but earthwork evidence

¹ *Victoria County History of Warwickshire*, Volume 5. Tysoe.

² Pevsner, N. and Wedgewood, A. 1966. *The Buildings of England Warwickshire* London: Penguin Books

³ Warwickshire Historic Environment Records, Tysoe

suggests an alternate explanation (see 4.2), however there is a single large bank in the woods to the east which could be such a feature (See 4.3).



Fig. 2 Geophysical (resistivity) survey



Fig. 3 Geophysics and earthwork analysis

4.0 The Earthworks (Figs. 8 and 9)

4.1 A raised platform to the south-west of the manor is defined by a revetment wall of roughly coursed random rubble and a pronounced hollow roughly 1.5 metres deep and 8 metres wide (Fig. 4). To the north

of the house is another hollow (Fig. 1) and around the north east corner is a further declivity. To the south-east is a small irregular pond. Taken together these are indications of a possible sub-rectangular moated area roughly 70 m (north-south) by 50 m (east-west). Typically such a feature would be associated with a medieval manor although moats also figure in a number of seventeenth-century gardens.

A small sample was taken from the lower level of this feature on the line of Profile 1 using an auger showed silty clay at a depth of 0.6 metre. This could be consistent with the kind of water laid sediments that one might expect to be present in a moat.



Fig. 4 Possible moat: (top) west side viewed from north; (bottom) south-west side showing revetment.

4.2 To the east of the manor are a series of earthworks consisting of a rectangular sunken area to the south (Fig. 5) and a series of banks and terraces aligned east – west (although at least one of these probably represents the line of modern pipe work). This arrangement is typical of a formal garden area from the sixteenth or seventeenth century (see for example Catesby 4, area b and Lamport 12 ⁴) and offers an alternative explanation for the geophysics results for Area B (see 3.3). Equally such earthworks could be consistent with the kind of arrangement of small paddocks and closes that would be incorporated within the enclosure associated with a medieval manor.



Fig. 5 Earthworks in paddock to east of manor, view looking north-west.

4.3 Other earthworks consisting of a bank with traces of an outer ditch, are evident adjoining the woodland to the south west (Profile 2) and defining the boundary of the property to the north (Profile 3, Fig. 6) The ditch at this point carries an irregular flow of water and suggests efforts to perhaps canalize the course of a small stream. No date can be ascribed to these features but they are typical of the kind of earthworks

⁴ Royal Commission on Historical Monuments 1981. *An Inventory of Archaeological Sites in North-west Northamptonshire*. London: HMSO

that would mark the boundaries of a medieval manorial complex. A low broad bank extends through the woodland to the east (Profile 4, Fig. 7)) and may be the line of an earlier approach road.



Fig. 6 Northern boundary bank, view looking north-east.



Fig. 7 Causeway to east of paddock, view looking east.

5.0 Finds.

5.1 A cursory examination of garden soil exposed in a number of locations around the property revealed the existence of a variety of fragments of tile, brick and pottery including a piece of shell tempered ware which could be dated to the Saxon period.

6.0 Map Evidence.

6.1 The 1880 edition of the Ordnance Survey 6 inch to the mile map for the village shows a square enclosure to the west of the manor and the layout of paths within the raised area to the south clearly both features of the nineteenth century gardens.

7.0 Conclusions.

7.1 It is evident that a high status building has existed on this site for several centuries together with a variety of ancillary buildings and earthwork features related to its setting within what could be described as an 'elite landscape'⁵. The various features noted would have formed part of an economic unit dependant on the surrounding agricultural land as well as giving expression to a series of cultural and social values associated with local leaders of the community. In this context the connection between the earthworks of the medieval manor and the adjacent ridge and furrow to the north are particularly significant. Despite being noted in the Warwickshire HER⁶ the area around the manor has not been subject to detailed archaeological study.

8.0 Recommendations.

8.1 A full earthwork survey to be carried out in the Manor grounds.

8.2 Further auguring to be used to establish the location of water laid silts and so verify the existence and extent of the moat.

8.3 A small trench be excavated taking in a portion of the moat and its retaining wall. There is a section of this wall towards the south-west corner which needs rebuilding. This would be an ideal opportunity to examine the whole feature.

8.4. Field walking be undertaken in the field to the west to explore the possibility of earlier settlement on the site.

8.5 The geophysics survey be extended to examine the field to the north.

⁵ See for example Creighton, O.H. 2009 *Designs Upon the Land: Elite Landscapes of the Middle Ages* Woodbridge: The Boydell Press

⁶ Warwickshire Historic Environment Records. Tysoe: Entry MWA2077

Tysoe Manor, Earthworks

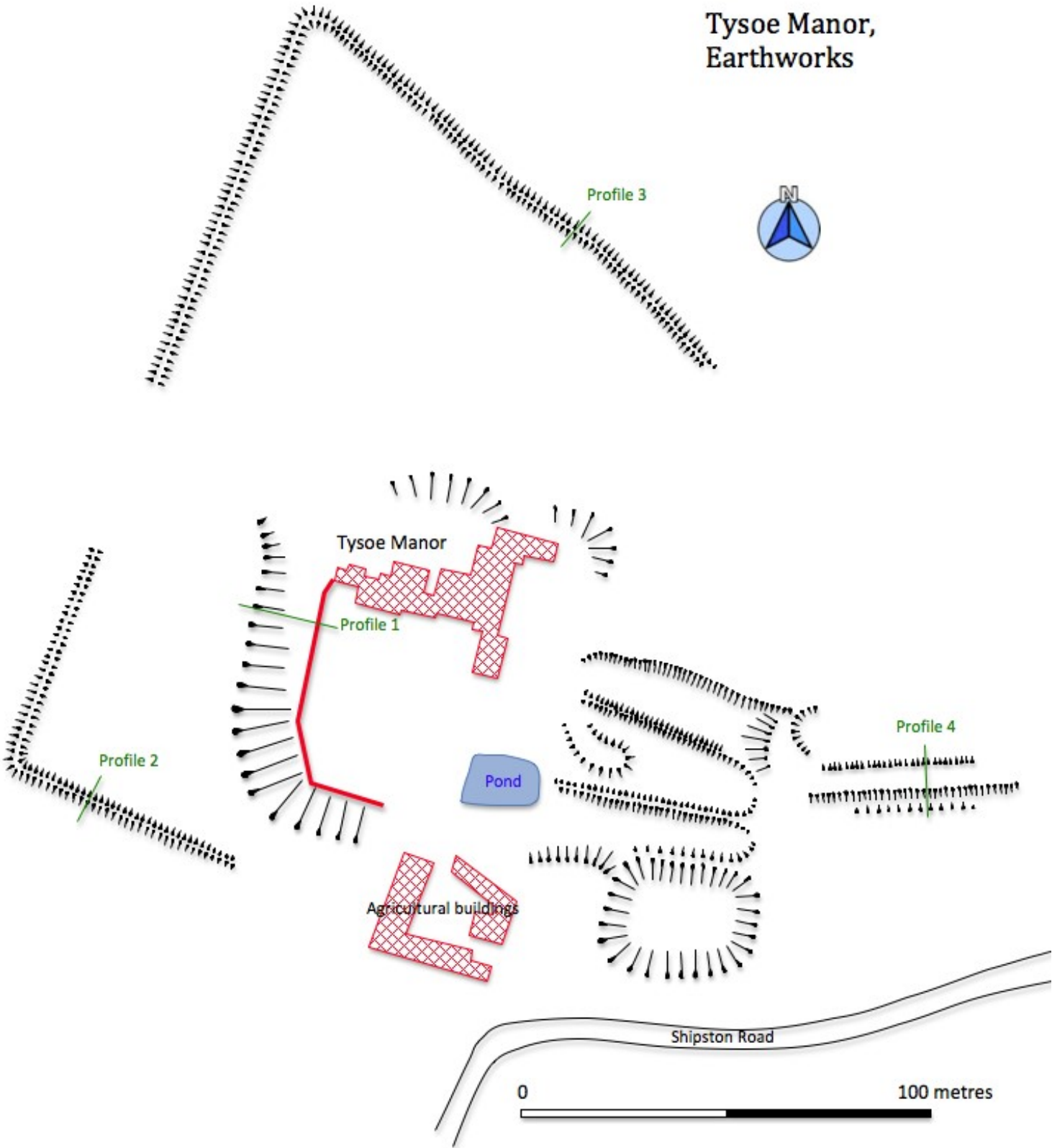


Fig. 8 Earthworks plan

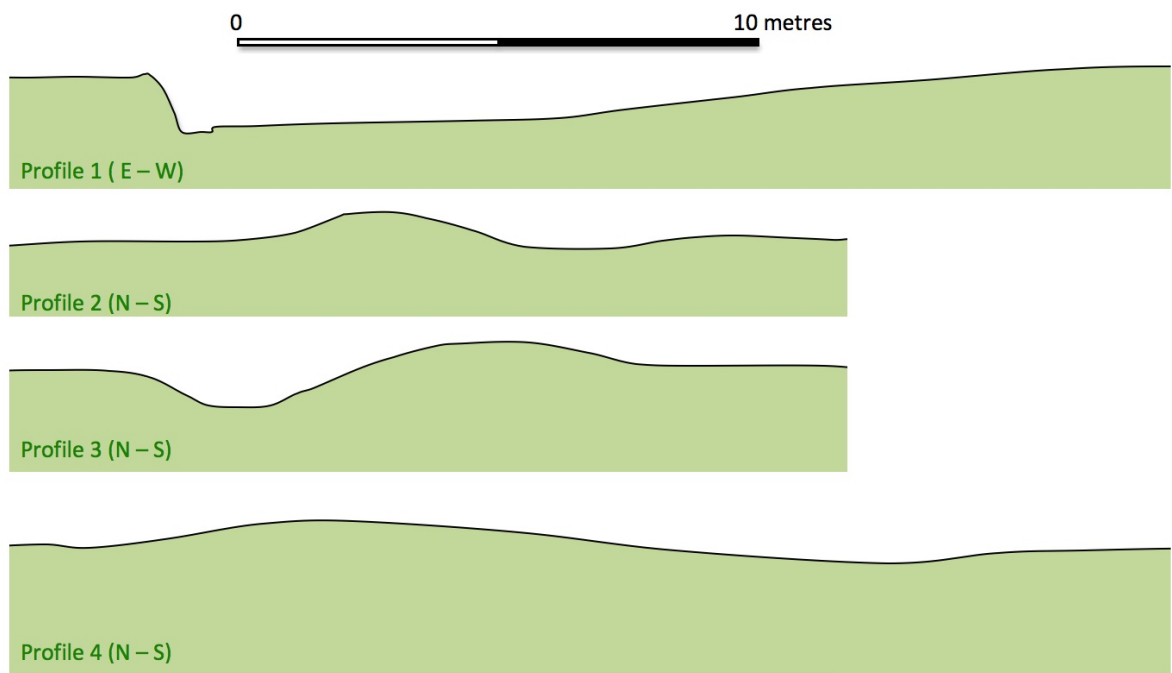


Fig. 9 Earthwork profiles.

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