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# Catridge Farm, Lacock, Wiltshire Remains of a Shrunk Settlement

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Discovery, Innovation and Science in the Historic Environment



# CATRIDGE, LACOCK, WILTSHIRE

## REMAINS OF A SHRUNKEN SETTLEMENT

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## **SUMMARY**

During late spring and early summer of 2014 English Heritage's Assessment Team (West) undertook a detailed investigation and survey of the earthwork remains surrounding Catridge Farm, Lacock, Wiltshire, as part of an English Heritage National Archaeological Identification Survey (NAIS) pilot project. Settlement shrinkage at Catridge appears to have been a gradual process and not confined to the medieval period. While some tenements were probably lost in the 14th or 15th centuries, the casualties of social, economic and environmental change, the 16th and 17th centuries saw a period of investment and rebuilding, a phenomenon witnessed across much of England. Remaining tenements were finally amalgamated around the middle of the 18th century, an estate-led process reflecting a drive towards the adoption of new farming techniques, in a period when more efficient farming methods were seen as vital for boosting agricultural production.

## **CONTRIBUTORS**

The surveys were carried out by Elaine Jamieson and Nicky Smith (Investigators, Assessment Team West). The report text, illustrations and photography are by Elaine Jamieson.

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Thanks are due to the landowner, Mr Powell, for kindly allowing access to the site.

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## INTRODUCTION

During late spring and early summer of 2014, Elaine Jamieson and Nicky Smith of English Heritage's Assessment Team (West) undertook a detailed investigation and survey of the earthwork remains surrounding Catridge Farm, Lacock, Wiltshire. This site was identified as a shrunken settlement and had been mapped from lidar images taken in 2005 as part of an English Heritage National Archaeological Identification Survey (NAIS) pilot project.

### Location, topography and geology

The settlement remains at Catridge (NHER: ST 96 NW 227) are located on a level terrace at the foot of a south-east facing escarpment (centred ST 8986 6764), between 55m and 60m above OD. The settlement remains lie predominantly within two paddocks immediately to the north and north-west of Catridge Farm, towards the south-western corner of the parish of Lacock, Wiltshire. The holding of Wick Farm is located around 400m to the north-east of the survey area.

The site is located on the boundary between the Jurassic limestone of the Cornbrash Formation and the sandstones, siltstones and mudstones of the Kellaways Formation. At the foot of the limestone geology springs rise and feed a series of small ponds and streams, the latter winding their way south-eastwards towards the River Avon.

## BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There is no separate entry for Catridge or Wick in the Domesday Book, but Lacock is listed, and was held by Edward of Salisbury after the Conquest. It paid geld for 7 hides and there was land for nine ploughs, of which three ploughs and 3.5 hides were in demesne. The estate also included 20 acres of meadow, half an acre of vineyard, and two mills worth 17s 6d. The population at this time was recorded as 12 villagers, seven slaves, three cottagers and a further 16 households, and the manor was valued at £7 in 1086 (Pugh & Crittall 1955, 138).

No reference to Catridge dating from the medieval period has yet been discovered. However, Wick is first documented in 1257-83 when a tenement comprising buildings (including a messuage), meadows and lands tenanted by Richard Purchaz were surrendered to the abbess of Lacock [Ward. 2/94b/109; N.C. 29] (Rogers 1979, 33). The name 'Charloweswyke' (later 'Cherlosweswyke' or 'Cherlawyswyk') is first documented in 1309, and is mentioned in reference to a debtor, Henry Crook (The National Archives: C 241/65/90). The name would appear to be interchangeable with Wick, with the components of the name suggesting a meaning 'the west(ern) dwelling or specialized farm of the freemen or peasant'. The name is used on several occasions throughout the first half of the 14th century, including in 1326 in relation to a grant at fee farm by Thomas le Wyte of Nattone to John de Nony of a croft with a fence (clausura) round it called Muchelelegh at Cherlaweswyke [Ward.2/94B/41](Rogers 1979, 42). Although the name does not seem to appear in the documents after 1338, a lease of 1783 refers to 'all parts of the manor of Charles's Wick known as Wick Farm' (Wiltshire and Swindon Archives: 2664 Box 40 OB7/9 1/2/1), suggesting the name continued to be associated with the holding. A croft at Wick is also documented in 1371, at which time it was held by John Ponyter and Juliana his wife from the abbess of Lacock for their lives [E 40/9456](Rogers 1979, 55). The manor of Wick is first mentioned in 1346 and is documented throughout the 15th century when it appears to be in the hands of the Croke family (WSA: 2664 Box1 D1 1/2/1). By 1482 it was held for life by John Croke, after which it passed to John Bonham and Alice his wife (WSA: 2664 Box1 D8 1/2/1). In 1574 the lease of Wick Farm was surrendered by John Bonham to Matthew Smythe who sold his interest in the farm two years later to Sir Henry Sharington (WSA: 2664 Box 1 D22 1/2/1; Box 1D25 1/2/1). In 1660 Wick Farm 'with houses, edifices, barns, stables, buildings, gardens, orchards, lands, meadows, closes, pastures, ways, waters, waste grounds and hereditaments in the parish of Lacock' was part of a bargain sale by Sir John Talbot of Lacock to Sir Thomas Slingsby of Redhouse, Yorkshire and Sir Thomas Ingram of Isleworth, Middlesex (WSA: 2664 Box 37 16 1/2/1). Wick Farm came back under the control of the Talbot family in 1677 and was subsequently leased for terms to various yeoman farmers during the 18th century (WSA: 2664 Box42 11 1/2/1). By 1838 Wick Farm was



occupied by Thomas Hayard and comprised 236 acres of arable, pasture and meadow (WSA: 1769/3; D/1/25/T/A/Lacock).



Figure 1: Estate map of 1755 (Wiltshire and Swindon Archives:2664/1/2D/21)

One of the earliest references to Catridge or ‘Catheridge’ Farm is on an estate survey of 1755, with the estate map depicting the farmhouse and its surrounding fields (Fig. 1). A second farmstead is also depicted to the north- east of Catridge Farm and named ‘Wick’ on the estate map. The associated field names in the apportionment indicate this was some time held by the Fry family (such as Frys Home Close and Frys Cow Leaze), with John Fry of Wick documented in a lease of 1731(WSA: 2664 Box 39 60/1/2/1). This is the earliest evidence linking the name Wick and the settlement at Catridge, and raises the possibility that the wider settlement was known as Wick from the medieval period. The map also shows a

further holding to the south- west of Catridge Farm which was in the ownership of Edward Barton; this land parcel remained separate from Catridge Farm into the 19th century.

A second survey was undertaken in 1764 and records the amalgamation of Wick and Catridge (Fig. 2). A note on the apportionment reads: 'All these grounds are altered in this Bond since the first and second survey; owing to making them more convenient and some of them being life holders, and fall'n in since' (WSA: 2664 Box 6 15 1/2/4/1015). Catridge was a freehold farm subject to tithes, and was owned by Mr Montague and occupied by William Taylor in 1764. The Taylor family remained the tenants of the farm into the 19th century, with Robert Taylor listed as the sitting tenant when the farm was sold in 1826, and Sarah Taylor recorded as occupier on the tithe apportionment of 1838 when the holding was owned by James Burgess (WSA: 1769/3; D/1/25/T/A/Lacock). The tithe map shows that by this time the farmstead comprised a farmhouse and six farm buildings set around two or more yards, as well as a further detached complex to the north-east; the holding consisting of 144 acres of pasture, arable and meadow.





Figure 2: Estate map of 1764 (Wiltshire and Swindon Archives:2664 Box 6 15 1/2/4/1015)



Figure 3 English Heritage 1:1000 scale earthwork survey (reduced)

## EARTHWORK SURVEY AND INTERPRETATION

The remains of the shrunken settlement at Catridge are predominantly located in two paddocks to the north-west of Catridge Farm (Fig. 3). The paddocks have been heavily improved in recent years, and the archaeological remains are represented (above ground) by slight, smoothed grass-covered earthworks. The main area of settlement covers around 1.7ha and is surrounded by relict field boundaries, ridge-and-furrow ploughing and track-ways.

The core of the settlement lies along a well-marked hollow-way (a) aligned north-east to south-west, which turns westwards to join Wick Lane at its south-western end. The remains of this hollow-way can also be seen continuing eastwards, beyond the survey area, to Wick Farm and have been transcribed from aerial photographs. This sinuous hollow-way ranges in width from 5.4m towards its south-western end, to 12.6m at the north-east where it is better preserved and survives to a depth of over 0.8m. Towards its junction with Wick Lane in the south-west, the remains of a farmstead or cottage were identified abutting or perhaps encroaching on the hollow-way (b). These remains are primarily represented by a sub-rectangular building platform, 19.5m long and 5.9m wide, which shows clear evidence for subdivision. This may represent an in-line arrangement of farmhouse and barn or a pair of cottages sitting side-by-side.

There is clear evidence for infilling of the main hollow-way around Catridge Farm where it is overlain by a substantial stone barn. This indicates the main hollow-way had gone out of use as a through road by the time the farm building was constructed (the building is first depicted on the estate map of 1764), and possibly represents a deliberate attempt to prevent common access through the farmyard. The modern access to the farm runs south from Wick Lane and carves through the settlement earthworks. The clear stratigraphic relationship must mark a change in the road pattern and access route to the farm. This new access would appear to have been created some time after 1764, with a boundary and possibly a track depicted in this location on a plan accompanying sales particulars of 1826 (WRO: 1769/3).

A number of tracks strike off at right angles from the main hollow-way, with a convergence of routes c.45m to the north-east of Catridge farmhouse. Here a sunken track, a maximum of 0.4m deep, runs north-west from the main street for approximately 37m before turning slightly westwards and continuing for a further 43m (c), possibly giving access to a back lane. Where the track changes direction there is earthwork evidence for a terraced platform (d), indicating this route was blocked at some point by the insertion of a small building. Part of the north-eastern side of this track also formed the boundary of a small close depicted on the 1750 estate map.

A second track runs south-eastwards from the main route for c. 85m, turning east and then south-east at its south-eastern end, presumably snaking round an existing field boundary (e); earthwork evidence for the central section of this track has been lost, possibly due to disturbance related to a pair of modern field gates. Approximately 100m to the south-west of Catridge farmhouse a further track leads

north-west from the main route (f). The track, a maximum of 0.3m deep, turns slightly westwards after c. 28m and carries on towards Wick Lane which it would originally have joined. All these tracks would undoubtedly have given access from the main hollow-way to the settlement plots and out into the surrounding fields, but may also reflect some of the earliest land divisions. On the north-western side of the main hollow-way a further three tracks have been recorded running north-westwards (g). These tracks survive as very shallow earthworks, a maximum of 0.3m deep, and would appear to have given access from the main street to a series of crofts and tofts. The very slight earthwork remains of possible building platforms have been identified associated with these plots (f), with platforms measuring from between 9.3m to 11.4m in length and 5.9m to 7.3m in width.

More clearly defined remains of farmstead complexes were identified set back from the main hollow-way. One was depicted on the estate map of 1750, approximately 100m to the north-east of Catridge farmhouse, and was accessed from the main settlement street by a sunken track. This farm track is now defined by modern field boundaries and has been blocked by the insertion of a pond. The pond was in existence by 1764 and appears to have been cut into the track when the farmstead it served was abandoned (see above). One of the farm buildings was reused as an out barn and survives as an unroofed structure, with the location of the farmhouse now defined by a slight, sub-rectangular terraced platform (i).

To the north-west of Catridge farmhouse a second, relatively well-defined complex has been identified set back from the main street (j). The remains of this farmstead have been sliced through by the later access route to Catridge Farm, making interpretation more problematic. The earthwork remains suggest a complex comprising a series of buildings, yards and closes accessed from the main hollow-way by one or more tracks. This complex had been abandoned before the earliest estate map was produced in 1750, its land amalgamated with the holding to its north-east.

A number of ponds were cut into the main hollow-way, including one which still holds water today c.55m to the north-east of Catridge farmhouse. Another was depicted on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition map of 1886 in the north-western corner of the modern farmyard but has now been infilled. Creating these ponds in the hollow-way may in part be attributed to ease of construction, but also emphasises the change in the patterns of movement around and through the landscape. A sub-rectangular hollow, a maximum of 0.5m deep, recorded to the north-east of the farmhouse may represent a further pond (k); a short channel running westwards from the hollow may have functioned as an overflow channel carrying water to an existing pond.

The remaining earthworks recorded during survey work largely relate to relic field boundaries and evidence for past agriculture. In the field immediately to the east of Catridge Farm (depicted as an orchard on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition map of 1886), a substantial lynchet was recorded running almost east to west across the field (l). The lynchet is topped with a low spread bank and has narrow ridge-and-furrow ploughing running over it. This boundary had gone out of use by the time of the 1750s estate map. A similar broad, spread bank was also identified following

the curving boundary which runs to the south and west of the farm complex; these low, spread banks possibly representing the fragmentary remains of medieval headlands. The fields on the south side of the main hollow-way also display evidence for subdivision, defined by linear ditched boundaries. A slight scarp (m) represents the western extent of a field depicted on the 1750s estate map, this boundary removed by 1764. The western boundary of the close surrounding Catridge Farm, shown on both the 17th-century estate maps, was identified as a short section of bank surviving in the paddock on the south side of the modern farmyard (n).

## DISCUSSION

Although the name Catridge has proved difficult to detect in the documentary record prior to the 18th century, there are several references to the manor of Wick during the medieval and post-medieval periods. The term manor refers to a territorial unit of lordship which also served as the basic unit of estate administration. Medieval manorial complexes generally comprised an enclosure or curia, often accessed through a gatehouse, within which all the buildings required for a lordly residence sat. These seigneurial assets would have included an open hall, solar and oratory or chapel, as well as service buildings such as kitchens and stables. Other lordly appurtenances – fishponds, dovecotes, gardens and orchards – were also commonly associated with manorial centres. The remains of a circular dovecote at Wick Farm dating from the 15th or 16th century (LB No: 1198708; SAM No:1005662), and documentary references to gardens, orchards and fish ponds at the site in 1660 and 1711 (WSA: 2664 Box 37 16 1/2/1), suggest a high-status residence. In the medieval period dovecotes were a prerogative of the manorial gentry by law, and as well as providing a year round supply of fresh meat, they also played a symbolic role in demonstrating power and status (Williamson 1997, 95-96). Dovecotes were therefore often sited within the manorial complex, and the surviving example at Wick Farm suggests the farmstead represents the former location of a secondary manor.

Map evidence indicates the name Wick was connected with the settlement at Catridge until the 1750s. There are also references to crofts at Wick in the 14th century and, although it is unclear exactly where these holdings were located, it does suggest peasant farmsteads formed part of the settlement pattern. It therefore seems likely that the settlement remains at Catridge were collectively known as Wick or Charloweswyke in the medieval period, and represented a small settlement or hamlet which developed next to a secondary manor. The communication pattern demonstrates a direct link between the holdings at Catridge and the manorial centre at Wick Farm, with the main hollow-way mapped continuing north-eastwards for around 300m towards the manorial curia. By the 18th century the fields immediately surrounding Wick Farm were known as 'Wick Home Grounds' (WSA: 2664 Box 6151/2/4/1015), and reflect the extent of the demesne land. The small dependant settlement at Catridge would therefore appear to have developed on the western boundary of the demesne land, at the very western extremity of Lacock parish.

Enduring activity at the site has made evidence for the earliest phases of occupation more difficult to detect. The pattern of boundary features and tracks, and their relationship to the main hollow-way, represent the clearest indication of the medieval settlement pattern. Slight evidence for possible buildings identified in the closes adjoining the main hollow-way may represent some of the earliest structures on the site. The settlement pattern was not static, however, with changes clearly visible, such as the blocking of one of tracks through the settlement with a later building. The small farmstead or paired cottages identified at the south-western end of the main hollow way also reflects a period of settlement expansion. Another holding in a similar location but on the opposite

side of Wick Lane survived into the 18th century, settlement possibly attracted to this location as it was close to a natural spring. Other changes are visible through the scale, location and complexity of some of the earthwork remains. Some of the best preserved earthworks were identified set back from the main hollow-way and have been shown through excavation to be predominantly 16th and 17th century in date (Roberts forthcoming). Map and earthwork evidence also indicates a similar position for the former farmstead named Wick, which survived into the 1750s.

The archaeological and cartographic evidence suggests that settlement shrinkage at Catridge was a gradual process and not confined to the medieval period. Some tenements were probably lost in the 14th or 15th centuries, the casualties of social, economic and environmental change, with others holding on and perhaps accumulating land as their neighbours left. Evidence from the upstanding buildings and archaeological remains at Catridge suggest that the 16th and 17th centuries saw a period of investment and rebuilding, a phenomenon witnessed across much of England. Studies of vernacular architecture from elsewhere, however, such as the Mendip Hills to the west, have highlighted that many buildings attributed to this period of transformation demonstrate some degree of retention of earlier fabric, or were built on the footprint of earlier structures (Jamieson 2015). It is unclear if this is the case at Catridge, but this process of retention is reflected in the 18th century by the incorporation of a farm building from the abandoned holding of Wick into Catridge Farm. Documentary records show that the remaining tenements were finally amalgamated around the middle of the 18th century, an estate-led process bringing the holdings together when they came in hand. This process reflects a drive towards the adoption of improvement farming techniques, in a period when more efficient farming methods were seen as vital to boosting agricultural production. Investment in the new barn at Catridge may also be viewed as the beginning of a move towards a more ordered and enlightened approach to agricultural production.

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