

7 Archaeological Potential

The importance of Lydford's beginnings and its failure to capitalise on those make it a highly important and sensitive archaeological area. A number of excavations have taken place in Lydford, most notably at the castle, the ringwork; across the ramparts, in the car park, across the road from the church and by Southgate Cottages. The area south west of the ramparts (behind Nicholls Hall), was surveyed by English Heritage in 1996 and 2000.

The discovery of a sherd of pottery dating to the immediate post-Roman period, together with the dedication of the church to the 6th century Welsh missionary, St Petrock, suggests that there is potential for very early occupation of some sort to be discovered, perhaps within and around the church and castle grounds.

Lydford is generally believed to be the location of the Saxon burh ad Hlidan referred to in the late 9th to early 10th century document, the Burghal Hidage; although a case has been made for another smaller defended site at Lifton. Whichever theory is correct, there was most certainly a defended settlement at Lydford by the mid 10th century. Associated with the burh are the ramparts across the neck of the promontory and potentially a lesser bank around the promontory itself; the English Heritage survey also identified a possible outer bank some 30-50 metres beyond (NE) of the main ramparts. The internal plan of the settlement is attributed to the Saxon period.

There is thus potential anywhere within (SW of) the ramparts for archaeological deposits from the Saxon right through to the modern period. The fact that Lydford attained early importance, but then declined in status suggests that it was more densely occupied in the past than it is now and that therefore presently undeveloped areas could contain significant archaeological features. This is certainly indicated by the excavations which have already taken place.

A mint is known to have operated in Lydford since the reign of Edward the Martyr (AD 975 – 978), but so far no physical trace of it has been discovered. The presence of Silver Lane may be significant in this context, although outside the Saxon defended area.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that in 997 Viking raiders coming from the Tamar Valley 'went up till they came to Liddyford', which suggests perhaps that the settlement repelled any further advance. Again no physical evidence for any military activity has been discovered; this should perhaps be expected on the outside (NE) of the Saxon ramparts.

The reference in the Domesday Book (1086), to Lydford having a population of 28 burgesses within the borough and 41 outside, may indicate pre-Norman expansion of the settlement beyond the extent of the Saxon burh and the pattern of medieval strip fields extending NW of the Saxon ramparts could support this. There is thus potential for archaeological features from at least the late Saxon period through to the modern period to be located as far as the war memorial and behind the street frontages (including Silver Street). The construction of Nicholls Hall in 1929 uncovered some earlier remains (including stairs) of a granite structure.

8 Trees

The distribution of trees both within and outside the Conservation Area and their significance are covered by a survey in Appendix A.

Within the Conservation Area there is a diverse mix of species with a range of age classes. The mature trees in the churchyard and around the castle are the most visually important trees, but the linear groups of trees growing on the old banks add to the character of the village.

Outside of the Conservation Area the woodlands to the north and south of the village are visually important.

Some new planting has been carried out within the gardens of properties within the conservation area, but there are numerous sites suitable for further tree planting. Likewise, outside the Conservation Area there are many potential tree planting sites.

Trees in Conservation Areas Footnote:

The *Town and Country Planning Act*: Section 211 makes special provision for trees in Conservation Areas not subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). A tree is not defined in the Act, but a Section 211 Notice is only required for a tree with a diameter exceeding 75 mm in diameter. Trees in a Conservation Area already protected by a TPO are subject to the normal TPO controls. A Tree Preservation Order is an order made by the Local Planning Authority in respect of trees and woodlands. The principle effect of a TPO is to prohibit the cutting down, uprooting, lopping, wilful damage or wilful destruction of a tree without the Local Planning Authority's consent.