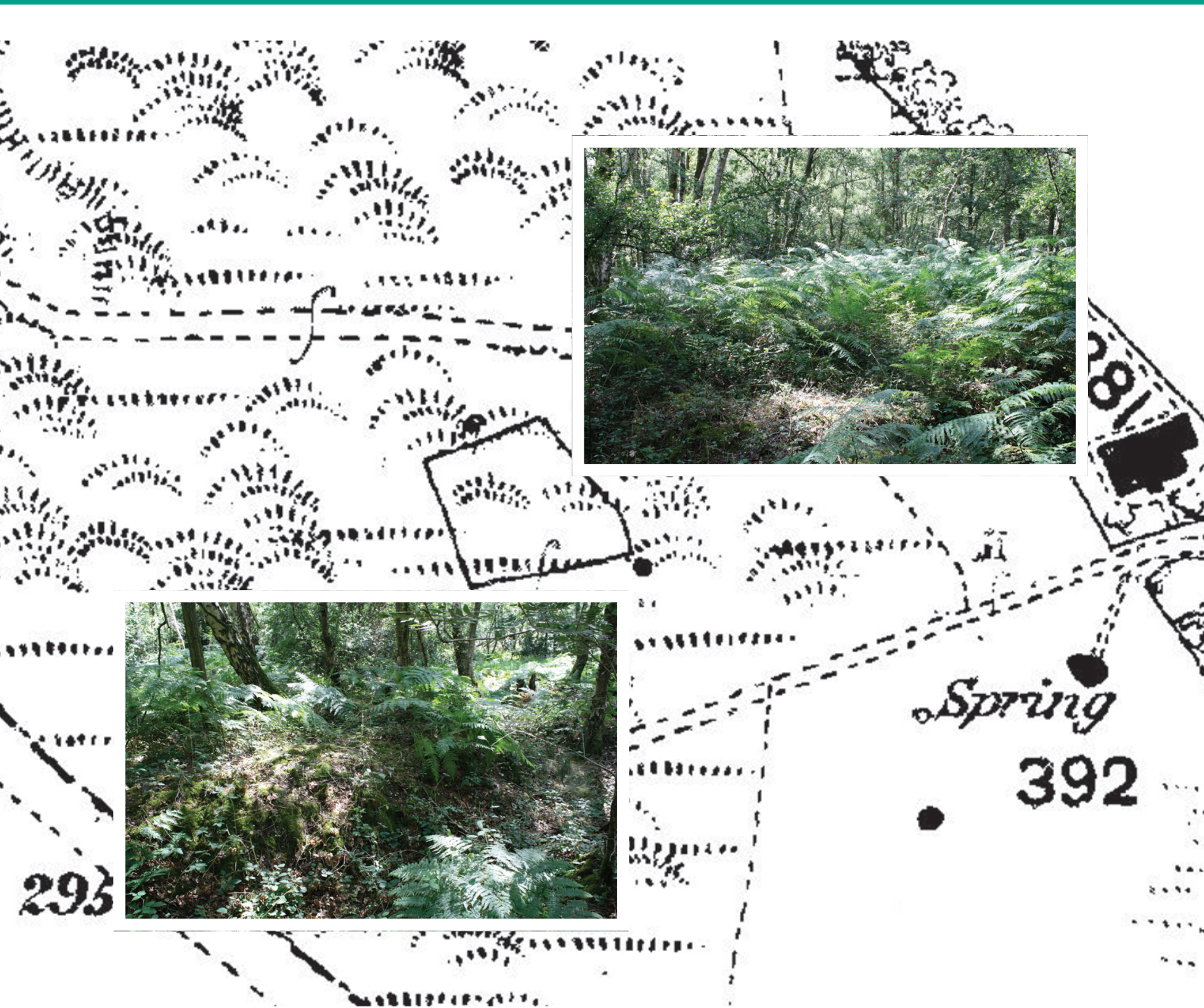


Martindale Pound Walkover Survey

West Berkshire Council - 2016

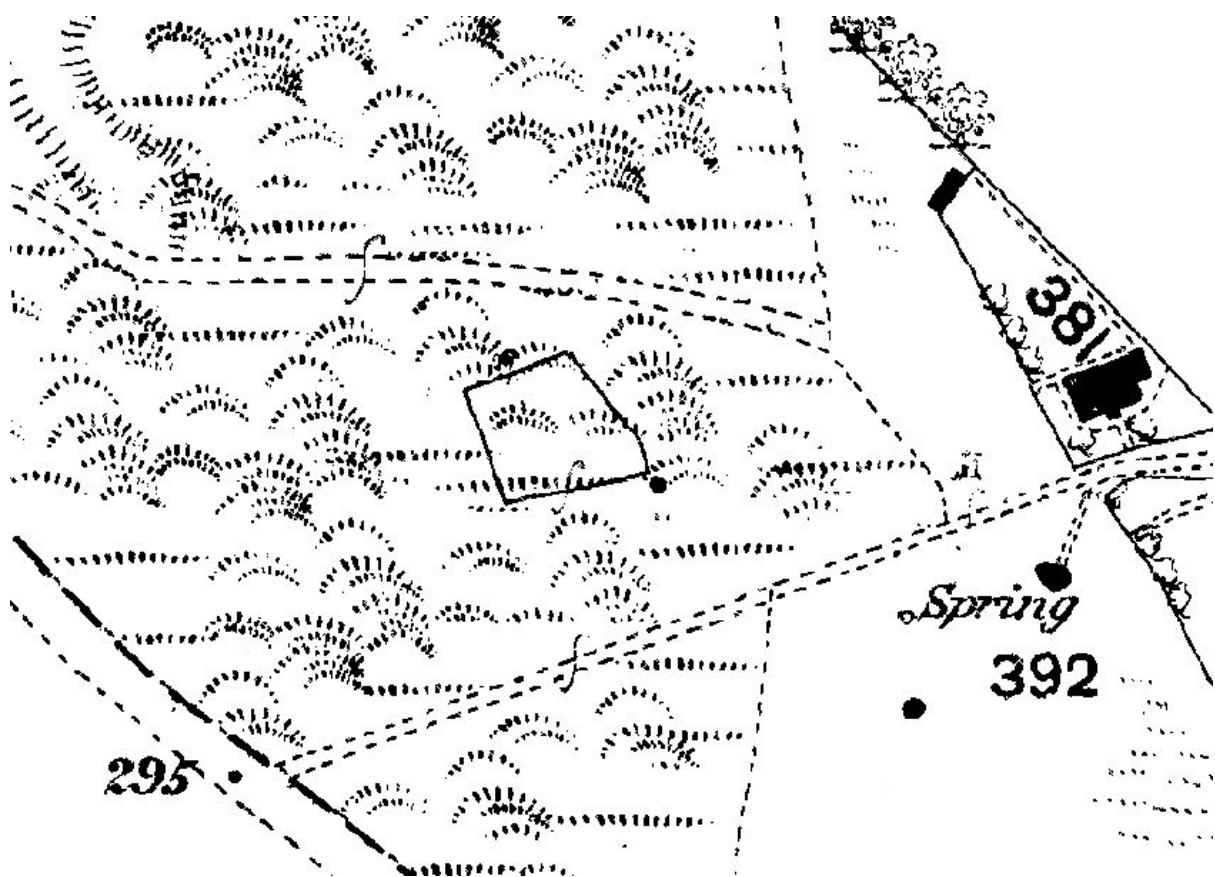
Alex Godden - Archaeological Officer



Martindale Pound Walkover Survey August 2015

Site background

A particularly well preserved and complete example of a pound survives to the south of Martindale Farm on Greenham Common. The enclosure is defined by a low bank with an external ditch and has a single entrance on its south-eastern side. There is small inner embanked enclosure in the south-east corner of the pound close to the entrance. The absence of this feature from the 1840 Greenham map is inconclusive as it would not have been subject to tithes. Although the 1841 census returns do not give the position of the pound, they do confirm that there was a pound keeper residing in the chapelry. The earthwork (Figure 8, Feature 427) was first surveyed in 1874, but was not labelled as a pound on the six inch scale map or on the subsequent 25 inch version of 1877 to 1878, implying that it had gone out of use by the late nineteenth century.



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Survey 07.08.15

A site visit and visual survey was carried out by Alex Godden (West Berkshire Council Archaeological Officer) on 7th August 2015. The site itself was under dense vegetation, but the earthwork of bank marking the edges of the pond were observed to be very well preserved on the north, west and southern sides. The eastern sides were not observed, but this could be down to vegetation cover as opposed to erosion.



Western earthwork bank



South West Corner of earthwork bank



Northern earthwork bank

There are trees on both the bank itself and within the interior of the pound, some of which appear to be of some maturity. While tree cover can have a beneficial effect upon earthworks, there may be some danger from wind throw - it was also noted that some trees had fallen close to the pound. There is also considerable scrub and bracken growth across the pound – root damage from species, in particular bracken, can have a detrimental effect on buried archaeological remains as well mask earthworks from view.

Conservation suggestions

Tree cover:

The chances of wind throw can be minimised by ensuring that the health of the trees is checked on a regular basis as part of an annual tree safety inspection. Traditional practices such as coppicing and pollarding present other options for reducing the likelihood of this kind of damage. Maintaining a canopy and planting scheme that minimises the chances of wind-throw occurring can also be helpful. In a similar manner, the careful planning of woodland clearance should ensure that earthworks or fragile buried remains are not exposed to the risk of this type of damage.

If trees have been blown, damage can be minimised by cutting the trunks and replacing the root plate. If buried remains are present, any significant revealed artefacts or deposits should be recorded. In the event of any such discoveries advice should be sought from the West Berkshire Archaeology Service.

Removing scrub and invasive species

Control of the scrub and invasive species on the site is recommended. Root damage can be an issue, while scrubby layers provide an attractive habitat for burrowing animals, which cause considerable damage. In addition, unchecked scrub will mask

the feature, making the site more vulnerable to accidental damage and hidden from public view. For mature scrub, methods which will not cause ground disturbance must be used. In practice this generally means cutting by hand; using herbicides where necessary; and leaving stumps, stems and roots in place. Once cleared, periodic monitoring to identify sites where regeneration requires renewed scrub control is recommended .

Conclusions

The pound is exceptionally well preserved and is a unique example of its type on the commons. It is a legible earthwork associated with the traditional control of grazing. It has a good visual impact that can be appreciated by visitors and used for educational purposes. The earthworks should be cleared of encroaching bramble and the birch assessed for vulnerability to wind throw, particularly as some trees have already fallen close to the pound. If this is one of the areas suitable for a small glade, clearance of the birch should be considered. Periodic monitoring and maintenance to control bramble and bracken are also recommended.

The existing Historic Environment Action Plan produced by Berkshire Archaeological Services provides an in-depth analysis and conservation management advice: this report has referenced all asset descriptions and reference numbers, as well as overall conservation discussions. Any future conservation and interpretation strategy should also use the HEMP as a basis for any proposals.

http://www.westcombe.org.uk/documents/appindex%2008%20heritage/Heritage_Management_Plan.pdf

Alex Godden
Archaeological Officer
West Berkshire Council
January 2016

If you require this information in an alternative format or translation,
please call 01635 519534 and ask for the Archaeological Officer.

West Berkshire Council

Archaeology

Market Street

Newbury

Berkshire

RG14 5LD

T 01635 519534

www.westberks.gov.uk/archaeology

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