

2004 Excavation Results

Trench 31

5.6 Figures: 21, 22 and 23.

Trench 31 was designed to seek confirmation as to whether or not the stretch of stone lined gully found in Trench 18 in 2003 is a palisade slot associated with the large defensive ditch. Although the gully and ditch did run parallel to each other in Trench 18 only a relatively short stretch was revealed and the possibility existed that their proximity was just a coincidence. Trench 31 was roughly triangular in shape measuring approximately 8m by 6.5m by 5m. The results showed that the stone lined gully, OVM03 [302] found during the excavation of Trench 18 continued to run the full length of Trench 31, OVM04 [680]. The trench also revealed the northern continuation of the west edge of the large ditch.

Discussion

The alignments between ditch and gully in Trench 31 and Trench 18, which had been left open after the 2003 season, matched exactly and meant that we could now see the two features running parallel to each other for 10m. This means that we can say with some certainty that the two are associated with each other. The gully is linear in nature, c0.50m wide and 0.26m deep filled with large upright angular stones. The stones are predominantly the same as the bedrock excavated from the large ditch in Trench 18. No dateable material was recovered from the palisade slot. The most likely explanation is that the gully represents part of a defensive feature running inside the ditch. It may have supported timber posts designed to hold a bank or rampart in place or it may have been to hold a palisade fence, as yet no evidence has been recovered indicating the presence of a rampart. What is clear is that along with the ditch it would have provided a substantial defence for this part of the hilltop at Mellor.

5.7 Trench 32

Figures: 21, 22 and 23.

Trench 32 was excavated 4m to the south of Trench 18. Its purpose was to confirm the suspected southern alignment of the large ditch within Area A. Trench 32 measured 8.10m in length and was 1m wide. No excavation was carried out in this trench as once the topsoil and subsoil had been removed the fill of the ditch stood out against the natural fractured bedrock clearly showing its alignment. Also visible in Trench 32 was the palisade gully again running parallel with the ditch.

Discussion

Trench 32 showed the ditch continuing along the same alignment as identified within Trench 18. A projection of this line would take it through the wooded area of the Old Vicarage Garden into the graveyard of St.Thomas's Church.