

Discoed

SO 27716479
16132

Introduction

Discoed lies on the south side of the River Lugg, 4km to the west of Presteigne in eastern Radnorshire. The Lugg here passes through a deep steep-sided valley, the village lying close to the bottom of the slope just above the valley floor. The older part of the settlement occupies the west flank of a narrow valley dropping down towards the river, with more modern dwellings on the east side.

This brief report examines Discoed's emergence and development up to 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. Numbers in brackets are primary record numbers used in the HER to provide information that is specific to individual sites and features. These can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).



Discoed village, photo 00-C-0079 © CPAT, 2011

History of development

Discoed is one of those rare Welsh settlements that makes an appearance in Domesday Book in 1086. Containing two Old English elements – *dīc* meaning dyke and *cot(e)* meaning cottage – it appears as Discote. In 1553 it was *Discoide*, and *Discoide alias Ditchcote* in 1591-2.

Despite this early reference, the origin and early history of Discoed are obscure. Perhaps the church dedication and the shape of the churchyard militate against an early medieval beginning, and the fact that this was a chapelry within the ancient ecclesiastical parish of Presteigne cannot be used to either confirm or refute any notion of a pre-Conquest beginning. However, an early date cannot be ruled out; there is a truly venerable yew in the churchyard which some would argue is centuries earlier than the first churches in the land. Putting such mythologizing aside, its size argues for an a pre-Conquest origin to the ecclesiastical site at Discoed.

There is no evidence to suggest that a settlement sprang up around the church in the Middle Ages, rather than a couple of farms emerged here, perhaps in the late medieval or Tudor era. By the middle of the 19th century, the village presented an appearance very similar to today, with the two farms and a couple of dwellings.

The heritage to 1750

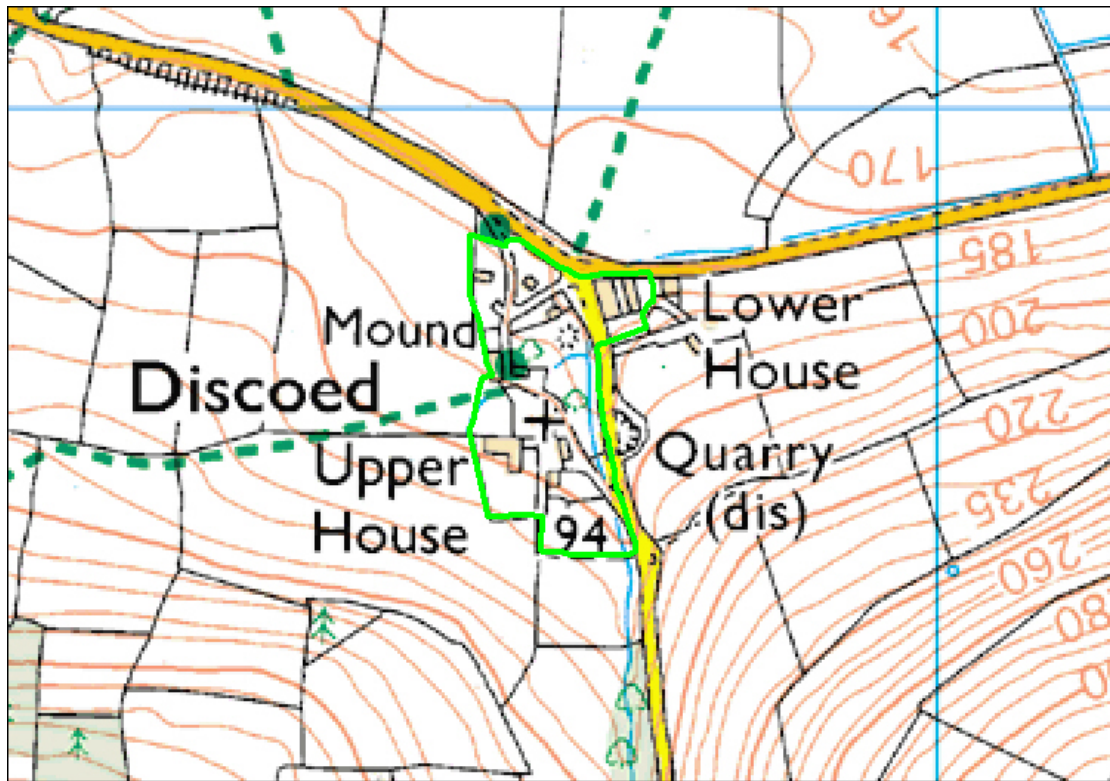
The church of St Michael (16012; Grade II listing) was rebuilt in 1869, probably utilising the walls of the earlier building, but adding new windows and doors. Little survived the Victorian cull.

The churchyard (16252) is sub-triangular in shape and raised on the east and north-east.

A mound (294; SAM Rd 050) to the north of the church has been variously interpreted as a gazebo platform, barrow or a motte. From some directions this appears to be little more than a landscaped spur, and the barrow/motte hypothesis is not entirely unconvincing, although it has been scheduled on the basis of this interpretation. Another writer has suggested that it could have been a castle mound, abandoned before its completion.

Upper House (20645; Grade II* listing) just to the south of the church is a reconstructed, timber-framed hall-house with a crosswing which was tree-ring dated to 1536. A barn now used as a workshop (16253), 20m to the north, may be slightly later, and is evidently part of the same complex. It has been thoroughly renovated, and has not been listed. Lower House Farm was attributed to the 18th century, but was destroyed in 1971.

Post-war aerial photography revealed earthworks including ridge and furrow around the western edge of the village (16254; OS plots 4300 and 5265). These have not been closely inspected and may have erased by more recent agricultural activity.



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