

NORTHERN DEVON IN THE GREY ARCHAEOLOGICAL LITERATURE

REPORTS COVERING NORTH DEVON DISTRICT 2019

Table 1 sets out the reports filed with ADS relating to 2019. The reports are then discussed in a little more detail, in alphabetical order of parish. A brief synthesis of the findings completes the document.

Table 1: Summary of reports for 2019

Parish	Site	Grid Ref	Report Producer	Type of Report*	Nature of Development
Arlington	Arlington Court	6109 4052	Cornwall Arch Unit	HBS	Management & conservation
Ashford	St Peter's Church	5334 3535	SWARCH	Monitoring & recording	Installation of water supply pipe
Barnstaple	Barnstaple Castle	5554 3335	Oakford Archaeology	Watching brief	Installation of people counters
Barnstaple	Brannams Medical Centre	5607 3290	AC Archaeology	Trench evaluation	Construction of extension
Brayford	Mockham Down House	6651 3582	SWARCH	HIA	Construction of garage/workshop
Challacombe	South Regis Common	7125 4047	SWARCH	HIA	ENP management
East & West Buckland	Middlecott Farm	6699 3295	SWARCH	Monitoring	Construction of slurry lagoon
East Anstey	St Michael's Church	8673 2652	Oakford Archaeology	Watching brief	Construction of drainage and soakaway
East Worlington	Village Hall	7747 1369	SWARCH	Monitoring & recording	Construction of porch
Filleigh	Land adj. Village Hall (2)	6653 2793	SWARCH	Geophysical survey & archaeological evaluation	Residential development
Filleigh	The Smithy	6655 2801	SWARCH	HBR	Conversion to office use
Fremington	United Reformed Church,	5349 3248	SWARCH	HBR	Conversion to house

	Bickington				
Georgeham	Marigold Cottage, Croyde	4360 3869	SWARCH	Monitoring & recording	Demolition, construction of house
Newton Tracey	West Woodlands	5331 2519	SWARCH	Monitoring	Erection of domestic extension
North Molton	Barton Pitts	7237 3202	AC Archaeology	Watching brief	Construction of holiday accommodation
South Molton	Tannery site, East Street	7198 2586	SWARCH	Evaluation trenching	Residential development
Tawstock	Eastacombe	5401 2975	SWARCH	Monitoring & recording	Residential development
Tawstock	Larkbear Phase 1	5486 3161	Cotswold Archaeology	Evaluation trenching	Residential development

*HBR/S/A - historic building recording/survey/assessment, DBA - Desk-based assessment, HVIA - Historic visual impact assessment

Nineteen reports were recorded in 2019 (one of which, at Arlington Court, was carried over from 2018), in fourteen parishes. Of these reports, thirteen were produced by SWARCH, two each by AC Archaeology and Oakford Archaeology, and one each by Cotswold Archaeology and Cornwall Archaeology Unit. Most were developer commissioned but one was commissioned by Exmoor National Park Authority and one by the National Trust to assist with management of land or property.

1. Arlington: Arlington Court

Cornwall Archaeology Unit was commissioned by the National Trust to undertake a historic buildings survey at the house and stable block at Arlington Court. The purpose of the survey was to provide a better understanding of the buildings and to help inform future management and conservation. The survey is a comprehensive and detailed account of the buildings, including a room-by-room description of the house and a large number of plans, drawings and photographs. It also sets out the history and context of the buildings. This is likely to be the definitive document for the buildings for the foreseeable future.

2. Ashford: St Peter's Church

Monitoring was carried out during the construction of a service trench for a water pipe in the churchyard of St Peter's. Only one feature was revealed, which appeared to be either part of a wall or demolition rubble, and a few finds none of which merited retention.

3. Barnstaple: Barnstaple Castle

A watching brief was maintained during the installation of three people counters on castle Green. Due to the shallow nature of the excavations, no features or finds of significance were encountered.

4. Barnstaple: Brannams Medical Centre

Trench evaluation was carried out during the excavation of two trial trenches, ahead of construction of an extension to the medical centre. Both trenches revealed pottery rich deposits in the lower levels of the trenches, down to 1.2m. The finds were mainly late 19th century/early 20th century locally made earthenware, with some 17th/18th century North Devon Gravel tempered pottery. Other finds included waster material and kiln furniture. The finds were as might be expected from the site of the former Royal Barum Ware factory of C H Brannam, and were consistent with another recent excavation on site.

5. Brayford: Mockham Down House

A heritage impact assessment was made of the proposed development of stable and garage buildings in the grounds of Mockham Down House. The house is a former farm built in the early 20th century immediately to the west of the scheduled hillfort at Mockham Down, on the site of an old quarry. The site of the proposed buildings is 70m from the hillfort, in a wooded area.

The assessment concluded that, given the topography woodland planting and proposed materials of the buildings, the proposal would not compound the impact of the existing modern buildings. The overall impact was assessed as negative/moderate. In view of the close proximity of the site to the scheduled hillfort and a potential routeway leading west from it, the impact of the development on the buried archaeological resource was assessed as permanent/irreversible, but that it could be mitigated through the provision of an archaeological recording condition on any planning permission.

6. Challacombe: South Regis Common

A heritage impact assessment was commissioned by Exmoor National Park Authority in advance of the rewetting of South Regis Common and the temporary reopening of an old quarry, as part of the Exmoor Mires project. The work included blocking hedgebank ditches and creating short bunds to slow the flow of water.

South Regis Common slopes away to the north from Shoulsbarrow and is the known location of scheduled and unscheduled barrows. South Regis Common was enclosed fairly late, as part of the work carried out by the Knight family in recreating Exmoor Forest. The report described the historical and archaeological background, before considering the impact the work would have.

The report concluded that for the barrows the impact would be negligible over time, but negative/slight during and immediately after the works. For the quarry, there would be negative/slight impact for the visual landscape setting, but negative/substantial in terms of the impact on the historic quarry.

7. East and West Buckland: Middlecott Farm

This report on archaeological monitoring during groundworks for a new slurry lagoon, is wrongly ascribed to Brayford parish, just to the east. The site lay off Middlecott Hill, to the north of Middlecott Farm, in an area of archaeological potential. No archaeological features were observed and only a single find, of glazed blue transfer print pottery.

8. East Anstey: St Michael's Church

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during the excavation of a trench in preparation for drainage works in the vicinity of the tower of St Michael's Church. Three architectural fragments were recovered from the trench; they comprised two window mullion fragments and one piece of window tracery, all made of Beer stone. Their location suggested that they may have come from the heavily-repaired window above the west doorway.

9. East Worlington: Village Hall

Archaeological monitoring and recording were carried out during groundworks for the construction of a new porch to the village hall. The former barn has been in community use for a century, but is believed to have been constructed in the late 16th/mid-17th century. The excavations uncovered the foundations of the former porch and a stone drain running parallel with and adjacent to the wall of the building. A single sherd of 16th/17th century North Devon gravel-tempered pottery was recovered from the trench

that exposed the stone drain. An assemblage of other finds included fragments of vessel glass, possibly 18th century, and sherds of several sherds of white refined earthenware, amongst other things.

The report concluded that the stone drain was probably coeval with the construction of the barn, which was attached to the adjacent East Worlington House.

10. Filleigh: Land adjacent to Village Hall (two reports)

These reports were of a geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation carried out on land adjacent to Filleigh Village Hall, in support of a planning application for residential development. The geophysical survey identified multiple features, including known historic field boundaries. One feature suggested a holloway that may have predated the construction of the turnpike road, which itself relocated the east-west route away from Castle Hill House, and may represent a different land use in the development of the park at Castle Hill. The park is Grade 1 listed and the site was considered to have archaeological potential.

The archaeological evaluation of eight trenches excavated across the site largely confirmed the findings of the geophysical survey. The features were considered to be former field boundaries and associated ditches. The evaluation confirmed that the site formed part of the post-mediaeval agricultural landscape, but that there was limited archaeological potential.

11. Filleigh: The Smithy

The Smithy lies adjacent to the village hall at Filleigh; a historic building survey was commissioned prior to the restoration of the building. It was a small early 19th century building that was adapted to other uses once no longer occupied as a smithy. Latterly it has been used for minimal storage purposes. The report concluded that renovating and converting the building to form a business office would ensure the survival of the structure and would be a positive change.

12. Fremington: United Reformed Church, Bickington

A historic building survey of the former chapel was commissioned prior to its conversion to a dwelling. The chapel was built in 1835 on the north side of the road between Barnstaple and Fremington. It served the non-conformist or Independent congregation of Bickington and Fremington. The current building was constructed in three phases, the original construction in 1835 being followed by a restoration in 1896 and the building of a community hall extension on the north side of the chapel in 1949. Further works of modernisation have been carried out since then.

The survey recorded that the original construction of the chapel in a Georgian style was largely unaltered, although much of the original interior features were lost in the late-19th century restoration. The survey describes all the remaining features of the building and considers that it is of local historical significance.

13. Georgeham: Marigold Cottage, Croyde

Monitoring and recording was undertaken in advance of construction works for a new dwelling on the north side of the B3231 near Downend. The site lies at 20m AOD on the lower slope of Saunton Down and had been previously occupied by a bungalow. The excavation revealed various soil and subsoil layers and a possible tree-throw feature. Finds were limited and consisted of two sherds of 17th century North Devon gravel-tempered pottery, two sherds of 19th century North Devon gravel-tempered pottery, three sherds of white refined earthenware and two fragments of oyster shell.

14. Newton Tracey: West Woodlands

Monitoring was carried out during groundworks for the construction of a single-storey extension to the house. West Woodlands is a 17th century farmhouse and attached barn which lies to the south of Newton Tracey and to the east of a double-ditched enclosure. The only feature observed was a land drain. Finds included seven sherds of 17th century North Devon gravel-tempered pottery, four sherds of 17th/18th century North Devon gravel-free pottery, two sherds of Mediaeval coarseware, four sherds of burnt Mediaeval coarseware, and two sherds of unglazed North Devon pottery. These were considered to represent the mediaeval and post-mediaeval occupation of the site.

15. North Molton: Barton Pitts

Monitoring and recording took place during groundworks for the construction of a holiday unit. The site was known to have been used for iron ore extraction previously, as indicated both by the place-name and by evidence from 19th and early 20th century Ordnance Survey maps and later RAF aerial photos. The excavations revealed that the area had been used for opencast extraction, but had been completely backfilled with a consistent layer of sub and topsoil during the latter half of the 20th century. There were no finds related to the iron mining industry.

16. South Molton: Tannery, East Street

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on the site of the former South Molton Tannery, on the south side of East Street. The evaluation trenching identified twelve features which reflected the developing field system from mediaeval strip fields to larger post-mediaeval enclosed fields. Evidence of the 19th century development of the site included a metalled track with probable ditches and a large building, no structural

remains of which existed. Eight sherds of locally-produced mediaeval pottery were recovered, together with 110 sherds of post-mediaeval and 19th/20th century pottery. This indicates a background of mediaeval activity, but with a dominance of 17th to 19th century material, which is typical of the area and the period.

17. Tawstock: Eastacombe

Monitoring and recording was carried out in conjunction with groundworks associated with residential development, in a field to the east of the largely 19th century hamlet of Eastacombe. Monitoring broadly confirmed the results of evaluation trenching carried out previously. It identified a concentration of linear features most likely associated with mediaeval and post-mediaeval field systems. A more substantial curvilinear ditch in the north-east end of the site may have formed part of an earlier closure, perhaps suggested by the "burrow" field names recorded for this field and the two adjoining fields to the north in the 1840 Tithe.

A moderate assemblage of finds was recovered from the backfill of one of the trenches. This comprised 283 sherds the majority of which were either post-mediaeval North Devon Gravel-free ware or industrial ware. Six sherds of mediaeval ware were also recovered.

18. Tawstock: Larkbear Phase 1

Archaeological evaluation was carried out of a 7ha site that has planning permission for residential development. The evaluation comprised 19 trenches across the site. The features recorded were eight post-mediaeval ditches, which indicated the existence of former field boundaries. No significant archaeological features were identified. A small assemblage of pottery was recovered, mainly comprising post-mediaeval North Devon ware.

Conclusions

None of the 2019 reports identified new discoveries. Most site evaluations confirmed former field boundary patterns. The most significant report was the Historic Building Survey carried out at Arlington Court for the National Trust.

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