

REPORTS COVERING TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL 2009

Table 1 sets out the reports filed with Archaeological Data Services at York relating to 2009. The reports are then discussed in a little more detail, in alphabetical order of parish, as in Table 1. A brief synthesis of the findings of 2009 completes the document.

Table 1 Summary of reports for 2009

Parish	Site	Grid reference	Report Producer	Type of report	Nature of development
Alwington	St Andrew's church	SS 405 232	English Heritage	Tree-ring dating report	Roof repairs
Beaford	Beaford Mill	SS543 143	Exeter Archaeology	Historic Building Recording	Construction of new conservatory
Bideford	King Street	SS454 266	Exeter Archaeology	Archaeological Recording	Conversion
Clovelly	Downland Farm	SS 328 228	Exeter Archaeology	Archaeological Watching Brief	Digging of 4 drainage ponds
East Putford	Venn Farm	SS377 170	Stewart Brown Associates	Archaeological Monitoring and Recording	Countryside Stewardship restoration of Culm grassland
East Putford	Venn Farm	SS376 168	SW Archaeology	Historic Building Recording and Archaeological Monitoring	Building repairs to barns & stables
Great Torrington	Newtown Reservoir - Norbury - Locks Beam	SS514 206 to SS483 204	Exeter Archaeology	Archaeological Watching Brief	Water main
Lundy	Pigs Paradise and Beacon Hill	SS136 443	Exeter Archaeology	Archaeological Monitoring and Recording	Electricity cable
Northam	46 Market Street, Appledore	SS465 306	S W Archaeology	Desk-Based Assessment and Historic Building Recording	Building work to rear
Northam	St Margaret's church	SS449 291	Exeter Archaeology	Archaeological Recording	Removal of unusual heating system
St Giles in the Wood	Stevenstone	SS525 186	Exeter Archaeology	Archaeological Recording	Barn conversion to holiday accommodation
Tetcott	Eastcott Bridge	SX326 954	Stewart Brown Associates	Archaeological and Historic Assessment	Part of Countryside Stewardship scheme

Thus some 11 sites were examined (with one where different parts of the site were recorded by 2 different contractors) in 9 parishes. A total of 3 commercial organisations were involved, with Exeter Archaeology producing 7 reports and South West Archaeology and Stewart Brown Associates each producing 2 reports. A further report was produced by the statutory body, English Heritage. The reports arose from a wide range of development.

Reports

1. *Alwington: St Andrew's church*

The report was of tree-ring analysis of timbers from the roof of St Andrews church. It was an opportunity presented by repairs to the roof and the removal of the slates. The church stands with Town Farm roughly at the heart of the parish, which otherwise contains several hamlets. The roof timbers of the nave gave felling dates of 1401-1426 and those of the southern aisle felling dates of 1499-1524. Aisles are usually constructed after naves and so the roughly century difference between nave and south aisle is not unexpected.

2. *Beaford: Beaford Mill*

The report was an historic building record made when more of the roof of the Mill was exposed during work to provide a conservatory. The whole of the Mill had previously been the subject of an historic building recording in 2008. Beaford Mill lies about a kilometre south-south-west of Beaford village. The report concluded that the roof appeared to be of eighteenth century age and was later than the fabric of the walls.

3. *Bideford: King Street*

The report is of archaeological recording at a warehouse in King Street. King Street is presumed to mark a former edge of the quay in Bideford and the warehouse was one of several built in the mid nineteenth century. Work was in progress to convert it to other uses. It was of three stories and constructed from local sandstone with brick used for window surrounds. The building contained no features of special interest and was considered to be a typical, if unexceptional, example of its kind.

4. *Clovelly: Downland Farm*

The report was of an archaeological watching brief at Downland Farm, one of the medieval farmsteads in Clovelly parish, and about 3 kilometres south-south-east of the parish church. Downland Farm has become the Milky Way Adventure Park and a planning condition attached to recent construction was to provide 4 drainage ponds. During the excavation of these the watching brief took place as the top soil was removed. No archaeology was encountered and the owners opined that this was among

the wettest parts of the farm and over several generations had only ever been used as rough pasture, so the lack of finds was not unexpected.

5. *East Putford: Venn Farm fields*

The report was of archaeological monitoring and recording during the stripping of 30 centimetres of top soil from two fields adjacent to the farmstead. The aim was to attempt to restore the area to culm grassland and previous ecological management work on culm grassland has shown that most modern nutrients lie in this upper part of the soil and removal allows a culm grassland hay mixture a good chance of recreating this distinctive habitat. In the top soil 6 flints similar to those of Orleigh Court in Buckland Brewer, about 9 kilometres away, were found and a further 6 black flints and a cortex whose provenance could not be ascertained. There were 2 sherds of medieval North Devon coarse-ware, probably a jug or pot and 3 sherds of North Devon gravel-tempered ware from 1500 to 1800. Within a kilometre of Venn lies a series of prehistoric barrows and so the flints serve to confirm human presence in the area in the pre- or early Bronze Age period.

6. *East Putford: Venn Farm barns and shippon*

The report was archaeological monitoring of outbuildings at Venn Farm. The farmhouse itself and its associated barns and stables had previously been recorded in 2006 by Keystone and the new work resubmitted this report and sought to amend a few findings from it as related to the specific barn and stables. The report was occasioned by repairs and adaptation of the barn and stable. Venn lies about 1 kilometre north-north-east of East Putford church and is one of the medieval farmsteads in the parish. The farm house contains some work from the seventeenth century but most of the present fabric dates from an extensive rebuilding in the 1880s, when the outbuildings were also built or extensively modified. The farm yard group is a good example of a nineteenth century agricultural holding. This report was able to add little to the record of the barn and stables and monitoring of preparatory groundwork produced no archaeology or finds.

7. *Great Torrington: Newtown Reservoir-Norbury-Locks Beam*

The report concerns an archaeological watching brief during the construction of a new water main about 3.5 kilometres in length, running roughly east to west, and lying about 1 kilometre north of Great Torrington's historic core. The main passed close to Norwood, which is known to have been the site of a skirmish early in the English Civil War between the Trained Bands of Barnstaple and Bideford and the Royalists holding Great Torrington. When top soil was stripped, it was checked with a metal detector, but no shot from the skirmish was found. The route crossed 19 fields, using gates where possible, but 12 Devon hedge banks were cut through, but none yielded any dating evidence. Along the route, the top soil yielded three pieces of worked flint, 6

sherds of medieval pottery and 103 sherds of post-medieval pottery, mainly North Devon slip and coarse-ware and some clearly not of local provenance.

8. *Lundy: Pigs Paradise/Beacon Hill*

The report covered archaeological monitoring and recording during the excavation of a small trench for an electricity cable. The site lies close to the highest point on the island and near the Old Light and the early medieval graveyard. Previously medieval pottery had been recovered from Beacon Hill. The work to dig the trench produced some undiagnostic sherds of pottery from the top soil but no more medieval material.

9. *Northam: 46 Market Street, Appledore*

The report was a desk-based appraisal and historic building record of the house and a site to its rear where building work was to be carried out. The property lies on the east side of Market Street and was thus one of the properties where part of the rear of the garden was sacrificed when Appledore Quay was built in 1845. The precise age of the house was difficult to ascertain and most of the fabric appeared to be of mid nineteenth century age and later with much alteration evidenced. The opportunity was taken to dig two small test pits in the rear garden but these reached deposits of the presumed original foreshore without yielding any finds.

10. *Northam: St Margaret's church*

The report concerned archaeological monitoring during the removal of an early twentieth century high water pressure heating system from the tower. The system was not extensively used in England and Wales and most instances appear to have been in larger houses. Northam has one of only 11 known examples in a church. The report notes the details of the pipework prior to removal.

11. *St Giles-in-the-Wood: Stevenstone*

The report is of archaeological recording of a barn ahead of its conversion to holiday accommodation. It is unusual in that it lies in the former deer park of Stevenstone House and has no relationship either to the home farm or the stables of the house. Stevenstone House itself was a mid-nineteenth century construction and demolished in the post-war period, leaving a small part of the previous house and the stables. The barn was presumed to have been placed in the deer park as shelter for animals there. It is a Grade II listed building and thought to date from the early eighteenth century. It is a single story open fronted structure with an enclosed loft space above. The report concluded that the roof had probably been constructed from re-used materials from other buildings and showed signs of being adapted to make it fit the foot-print of the barn.

12. Tetcott: Eastcott Bridge

The report was an archaeological and historic assessment of Eastcott Bridge, part of the Tetcott estate and on a private road. It lies about 1.2 kilometres south-south west of Tetcott church. The work was occasioned by an application for Countryside Stewardship. The bridge was probably built in the mid eighteenth century and comprises two arches over the Tamar and single smaller flood arches either side. It is constructed of local sandstone. The upper part of the bridge and the low parapet appear to be later work and the parapet is capped with red brick.

Discussion

Unusually in 2009, only two reports concern sites in the historic core areas of settlements, although two more focused on churches. In the cases of Market Street Appledore and King Street, Bideford, the buildings were unremarkable and contained few features of interest. Probably the most usual report of the year was that on the unique early twentieth century heating system at St Margaret's church in Northam. The report on St Andrew's church in Alwington provided the only specific dates from any of the sites and the felling dates of timbers used in the roof were established. Two interesting structures were the subject of reports, the private and remote Eastcott Bridge over the Tamar in Tetcott and the deer park barn at Stevenstone in St Giles-in-the-Wood. The report that probably was most disappointing in its findings was that on the water main past Norwood in Great Torrington, where it might have been hoped that some evidence of the Civil War skirmish might have been found. In 2009 the grey literature did not add a great deal to our archaeological knowledge.