

## REPORTS COVERING TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL 2020

Table 1 sets out the reports filed with Archaeological Data Services at York relating to 2020. In 2020 some 17 sites in 12 parishes were the subject of reports. Five contractors undertook this work. South West Archaeology produced 11 reports, AC Archaeology 3 reports and single reports came from Context One, Cotswold Archaeology, and Nimrod Research. 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 2020 completes the document.

Table 1 Summary of reports for 2020

Parish	Site	Grid reference	Report Producer	Type of report	Nature of development
Alwington	St Andrew's church	SS405 232	S W Archaeology	Archaeological monitoring and recording	Trench for new gas supply to church
Black Torrington	The Retreat, Windmilland Cross	SS467 039	S W Archaeology	Archaeological monitoring and recording	Creation of an equestrian arena
Buckland Brewer	Tower Hill	SS418 209	S W Archaeology	Archaeological evaluation	Small scale residential development
Bulkworthy	Outer part of Town Farm	SS405 148	A C Archaeology	Archaeological trench evaluation	Solar farm
Frithelstock	Cloister Hall Farm	SS463 196	S W Archaeology	Archaeological monitoring and recording	Relaying farm yard and excavation of service trenches
Hartland	Ambleside, Stoke	SS233 248	Context One	Archaeological monitoring and recording	Construction of a single dwelling
Holsworthy	Twinney Park	SS347 046	S W Archaeology	Archaeological monitoring and recording	Construction of a single dwelling
Langtree	East Stibb, Stibb Cross	SS427 152	A C Archaeology	Historic building appraisal	Demolition of unlisted building and new replacement
Northam	Goats Hill House	SS456 286	Nimrod Research	Building recording	Demolition of existing house
Northam	Golf Links Road, Westward Ho!	SS435 293	S W Archaeology	Archaeological monitoring	Residential development
Northam	Slipway, Westward Ho!	SS433 294	S W Archaeology	Archaeological evaluation	Extension to the existing slipway
Northam	St Margaret's church	SS449 291	S W Archaeology	Historic building recording	Roof repairs

Parish	Site	Grid reference	Report Producer	Type of report	Nature of development
Parkham	Barton Road	SS388 214	S W Archaeology	Archaeological evaluation	Residential development
Parkham	Brittons Farm, Goldsworthy	SS393 228	S W Archaeology	Historic building recording and archaeological excavation	Conversion of shippon to residential use
Parkham	Mount Pleasant	SS387 215	Cotswold Archaeology	Watching brief	Construction of 2 dwelling houses
Pyworthy	Around Derrill Water	SS304 022 +	S W Archaeology	Walk-over survey	Solar farm
St Giles-in-the-Wood	Deer Barn, Stevenstone	SS525 186	A C Archaeology	Archaeological monitoring and recording	Conversion to dwelling

+ The report does not give a grid reference. This reference is inferred as roughly the central point of the site surveyed

The majority of reports arose because of residential development, usually on a small scale, and most of the others were either from repair work to parish churches or proposed solar farms.

### **1. Alwington: parish church of St Andrew**

The report concerned monitoring and recording during the excavation of a small trench to bring a new gas supply pipe to the church. Repairs to the roof yielded a report in 2009 which gave dates for the roof timbers. Alwington is a parish without a single village nucleus and the church stands next to Town Farm as a classic North Devon 'churchtown' settlement. The trench approached the church tower from the north-west and on the opposite side to Town Farm and was excavated to a depth of 0.7 metres but no archaeology was found.

### **2. Black Torrington: The Retreat, Windmilland Cross**

The report concerned monitoring and recording during construction of an equestrian arena. The site lies about 1.8 kilometres south of Black Torrington village and adjacent to the A3072 Holsworthy to Hatherleigh road. The field patterns are those of post-medieval enclosure and in the Tithe Survey of 1843, the field where the arena was to be constructed was described as 'arable occasionally', almost certainly implying that it was still being beat-burned or Devonshired. Work found evidence of a former adjustment to the field boundaries but no significant archaeology, just a few fragments of nineteenth century white refined earthenware, which would be expected given the probable history of the site.

### **3. Buckland Brewer: Tower Hill**

The report concerned a general archaeological evaluation of a site ahead of a small scale residential development, on the eastern side of the village but close to the parish church. The fields here suggest medieval enclosure of former strips. Six trial trenches were dug finding evidence of two probable former field banks but only a single trench yielded any medieval pottery, a single sherd of North Devon coarse-ware. It was concluded that the site as a whole had only very limited potential to contain significant archaeology.

### **4. Bulkworthy: outer part of Town Farm**

The site lies in the eastern part of the parish, just to the north of the road from Bulkworthy to Veilstone Cross and about 1 kilometre to the north-east of Bulkworthy church. Several fields were to be covered by a solar farm development. A previous report of magnetometry survey of the site had suggested several linear features which were presumed to be former field boundaries and a possible more irregular feature considered to be a former area of wetter ground or a stream. Several trenches were excavated to assess the geophysics and trench three confirmed that the irregular feature was indeed a natural combe. No archaeology was found in any of the trenches.

### **5. Frithelstock: Cloister Hall**

The report concerned archaeological monitoring and recording during ground works associated with the relaying of a yard and excavation of a new service trench. Cloister Hall is on the north side of Frithelstock village and the property includes the site of the former Augustinian priory of St Gregory, which is a Scheduled Monument. The present farm house contains probable medieval fabric which probably formed part of the Prior's House. Ground works for relaying the yard were not deep enough to reveal any archaeology and the service trench, which was dug to a depth of c 0.65 metres, did penetrate to the natural base but it too yielded only a few sherds of nineteenth century pottery.

### **6. Hartland: Ambleside, Stoke**

The report concerned archaeological monitoring and recording during the construction of a single dwelling house. The site lies about 100 metres west of St Nectan's church and adjacent to the site is a sub-circular cropmark suggesting a possible prehistoric enclosure. The adjacent field is named in the Tithe Apportionment of 1842 as Great Churchyard, which suggests a possible association with the Augustinian priory. Work at the site involved the demolition of the previous dwelling, site levelling and reduction by 20 centimetres and the excavation of foundation trenches to a depth of 0.5 to 0.8 metres. Nothing was found during observation of these works and the report concludes that any archaeology may have been lost in previous work at the site.

## **7. Holsworthy: Twinney Park**

The report concerned archaeological monitoring and recording associated with the construction of a single dwelling house. The site is on the east side of North Road and about 600 metres north-north-east of the parish church. The immediate environment of the site has high archaeological potential with cropmarks and a prevailing field boundary pattern suggesting enclosures of medieval strip fields. The service trenches produced no archaeology, and no more was disclosed by the foundation trenches.

## **8. Langtree: East Stibb, Stibb Cross**

The report was a Historic Building appraisal of East Stibb farm house, which lies about 100 metres west of the cross roads in Stibb Cross village. The existing building was to be demolished and a new dwelling house built to replace it. The old farm house was not listed in the Devon Historic Environment Record and is first known from its appearance on the First Edition of the Ordnance Survey One Inch map series of the early nineteenth century. The building appears to be in a classic *Georgian* style, with no vernacular influences but equally built by local craftsmen imitating the then fashionable trend. The plan of the farmhouse suggests that it may sit on the site of an earlier building and it is evident that later in the nineteenth century it was extended at the rear and given a new front porch. The report concludes that it is a 'heritage asset of low significance'.

## **9. Northam: Goats Hill House**

The report was a building recording and assessment of Goats Hill House which it was proposed to demolish and replace with a new dwelling. The house was a late example in the Arts and Crafts style, although much modified in the years since it was built in 1923. The report concluded that it was not representative enough and had lost too many of its original features to merit Listed Building status or offer sufficiently strong reasons to reject the planning application. For instance, the original thatched roof was replaced with tiles in the 1950s, although these preserved the contours of the original. The building has many interesting associations. It was designed, almost certainly, by Frank Whiting, who was the architect of the Burton Art Gallery in Bideford and was a partner in an architectural firm with B N H Orphoot, who lived at Instow and designed All Saints Chapel, Instow and the former Regal Cinema in Barnstaple. The house was built for Hubert Coop, a local artist and benefactor, many of whose works are now exhibited in the Burton Art Gallery.

## **10. Northam: Golf Links Road, Westward Ho!**

The report concerned archaeological monitoring at Hylward, Golf Links Road, Westward Ho! The previous dwelling house had been demolished and monitoring took place during

the groundworks to prepare the site for new construction of a dwelling house. It lies on the north side of the junction of Avon Lane and Golf Links Road. Various pits and ditches were revealed but the dominant feature was the former track bed of the Bideford, Westward Ho! and Appledore railway, which crossed the site. The track bed was a clear feature, although nothing associated with the railway was found, which was probably not surprising as the line was completely lifted after closure with the locomotives, rolling stock and track being requisitioned for the First World War effort. Pit and ditch infills yielded only modern pottery.

#### **11. Northam: Slipway, Westward Ho!**

The report concerned archaeological monitoring during work to extend the existing slip-way. Westward Ho! beach contains much of archaeological interest, including the famous midden and sunken forest site a little to the west of the slip-way as well as various traces of ship-wrecks and World War Two defensive installations. The beach sand was excavated mechanically to a depth of c 2 metres, deeper than the foundations for the slip-way, but the challenging conditions of the site, including collapse of trench sides and inundation by the tide, meant that it was hard to observe the materials excavated and exposed and nothing was found.

#### **12. Northam: St Margaret's church**

The report was a Historic Building Recording during work at the church to repair leaks in the roof and the nineteenth century vestry. The church has been the subject of several previous reports during a variety of repair and restoration work. The nave of the church has a waggon roof and more of the medieval wood work survives than had been previous thought, although none was available for tree-ring dating. It was found that the medieval work was still in fairly good condition and that it was the nineteenth century restoration and repair work that had deteriorated so that water ingress was a significant problem. The report also concluded that it looked as if a conscious effort had been made by the nineteenth century restorers to retain as much as possible of the earlier timber, a rather unusual departure from the prevalent custom of wholesale removal and replacement. Most of the arch bracing and moulding seemed to be medieval. The roof slates themselves appeared to be a mixture of Delabole slates and Welsh slates, presumed to have been used in the nineteenth century restoration. While aesthetically sympathetic to the medieval church fabric, the nineteenth century vestry was a triumph of style over substance and much of the workmanship was of poor quality and required considerable reconstruction to make the structure properly weather-proof.

#### **13. Parkham: Barton Road**

The report concerned archaeological evaluation at the site of a small scale residential development. This had already seen a previous report in 2017 and the new report covered five further evaluation trenches. The site lies close to the centre of Parkham

village. The trenches, dug by mechanical excavator, revealed no significant archaeology and the top soil produced a few sherds of pottery, none of which were dated earlier than the early nineteenth century. A single fragment of a clay pipe was found in the lower topsoil of one of the trenches. It has to be concluded that if Parkham village were physically larger than at the present time, then such areas were away from the modern core.

#### **14. Parkham: Britton's Farm, Goldsworthy**

The report was an historic building record of a shippon attached to a Grade 2 Listed farmhouse at Goldsworthy, one of the hamlets within Parkham parish, and about 1.5km north of Parkham village. The shippon was to be converted to residential accommodation. The farmhouse itself dates to the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century and the shippon was judged to be broad contemporaneous with it, although seeing three major phases of building and alteration. An evaluation trench was dug by the eastern gable end of the shippon but this gave little further information about the evolution of the building and yielded no archaeological material.

#### **15. Parkham: Mount Pleasant**

The report concerned an archaeological watching brief while the site, a few metres from Barton Road (13 above), was being prepared for the construction of two dwelling houses. Bucket excavators uncovered a single ditch which proved to contain a single sherd of post-medieval white ware, of a probable eighteenth or early nineteenth century date.

#### **16. Pyworthy: around Derrill**

The report is of a walk-over survey of a large site occupying 63 fields and proposed to be developed as a solar farm and is situated about a kilometre due north of Pyworthy village. The fields were typical Devon features with earth banks and surmounted by hedges. The Devon Historic Environment Record had no entries for the area under consideration and no obvious historic or archaeological features were identified by the walk-over survey.

#### **17. St Giles-in-the-Wood: Deer Barn, Stevenstone**

The report was of archaeological monitoring and recording during ground works to convert the building to use as holiday accommodation. It had been the subject of recording in 2009. This phase of work exposed no archaeological or historical features and no finds were made. The barn itself is of considerable interest in that it is a rare survivor of a shelter within a deer park and probably dates from around 1700.

## ***Discussion***

The reports from 2020 added relatively little to the archaeological and historical knowledge of Torrington District. In part this was because most of the sites generating reports were away from medieval settlement nuclei, and unusually did not include any from Bideford or Great Torrington. Most of the sites produced negative evidence in the form of the absence of finds and suggested that the medieval settlement cores were very small.