



Promoting awareness of the history
and archaeology of North Devon

WEST YEO FARM, WITHERIDGE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL PROJECT BY NORTH DEVON ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

2009 – 2012



Council for
British Archaeology



West Yeo Farm, Witheridge, Devon
NGR: SS78931493
Devon Historic Environment Record 15916: "Medieval Farmstead"

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1. PROJECT OUTLINE - AIMS

1.1 Why West Yeo?

Members of North Devon Archaeological Society visited West Yeo Farm on a farm walk in 2008. The owner Kate Palmer mentioned some interesting features on the farm, such as the “medieval causeway” and flints had been found in neighbouring fields. These flints had been examined by the late Ann and Martin Plummer and detailed by them in a report. (Appendix 3: Lithics Report, West Yeo, (Flint report, Town Barton Farm, 2006)).

When viewed by Society members, it was agreed the flints were probably indicative of prehistoric activity, and there might be similar artefacts on the current West Yeo property. Kate also mentioned that an old “bye road” had run through the farm, visible as an earthwork of parallel lines on the ridge south of the farmhouse, running eastwards towards the present quarry.

A previous farmhouse had burned down in the late 1880s and the current Victorian house was constructed above the remains. Given that the farm is close to a line of three Bronze Age barrows at Dart Raffe Moor, barrows at Witheridge Moor and West Burrow Moor, is situated on a promontory of land overlooking a river and lies just below a ridge, with a standing stone nearby at Stone Farm, the prospect of finding more archaeological features seemed promising.

The Devon Historic Environment Record (HER) showed that West Yeo featured as part of the Devon Culm Measures Rapid Archaeological survey (Exeter Archaeology, S.J.Simpson and P.J.Weddell) and that worked flints had been found in close proximity to the farm. The Devon HER listed the causeway (‘medieval road’), barrows, a medieval chapel etc., also mentioning a possible Roman enclosure at Berry Castle SS8344917062, see also the Witheridge Historical Archive (www.witheridge-historical-archive.com).

The Society (NDAS) was keen to train members in the use of geophysical equipment, (an earth resistance TR meter available to North Devon archaeologists through a grant.) It was suggested that members look for remains of the old house and possible previous buildings in the garden and meadow south of the farmhouse.

The “medieval chapel” listed in the HER, was dedicated to St Paul, and had later become a dwelling house. (HER Monument no. 70157), according to the Dean Milles questionnaire 1747-1762. It was also hoped to find remains of this building.

1.2 Aims

In summary it was agreed with the landowner that NDAS carry out a project over several years to include these elements:

- Documentary research; maps, documents, aerial photos to provide background
- Oral histories
- Fieldwalking of ploughed fields to look for artefacts and provide dating evidence for prehistoric activity/settlement
- Geophysical surveys to look for evidence of previous buildings/activities
- Earthwork surveys to record existing earthworks
- Building recording; record standing buildings
- Excavation: any excavation required to provide dating evidence/further examination of existing features
- Provide training opportunities for NDAS members, students and local community volunteers in archaeological surveying, fieldwalking, geophysical techniques, excavation, planning, drawing and recording of finds
- Boundaries; study. An intended survey of hedgebanks/boundaries was not carried out as most boundaries/walls on the farm have been rebuilt under the new ownership, along the lines of original boundaries
- Search for chapel – missing from maps

1.3 Methodology

Documentary research and desk based study to be undertaken using old maps, aerial photos, records from the North Devon Record Office, Devon Record Office, Historic Environment Record, West Country Studies Library (WCSL) local parish records, Witheridge Historical Archive, newspaper articles, landowner's documents etc. compiled in the main by Terry Green, archaeologist and local historian, with assistance from NDAS members and previous farm owner.

Oral history undertaken by Derry Bryant, Terry Green and Kate Palmer using digital oral recording equipment loaned by Exmoor National Park archaeology dept. Recorded digitally onto CD, and transcribed. Copies to be made available to Exmoor National Park, Devon Historic Environment Record, CBA, North Devon Records Office, landowner, and participants as part of the final report.

Fieldwalking of three ploughed, harrowed fields by NDAS members and volunteers. Fields divided into 20m² grids, subdivided into 2m strips, each strip walked twice, picking up non-natural items: pot, glass, flints, metal, possible stone tools, quartz pieces. Finds washed, locations noted, flints/possible stone tools recorded onto database, to produce distribution plotting. Flint experts consulted: the late Ann Plummer, John Newberry, Henrietta Quinnell and Dr Andy Woodcock.

Geophysical surveys: using earth resistance TR meter, laying out 20m² grids across specific areas, taking data readings at 1m intervals. Using "Snuffler" software to interpret data and produce printed results.

Recording earthworks with tapes and using surveying equipment ("dumpy" level), plan and section drawing, photographing and recording.

Building recording – photography and use of old maps to determine possible locations of pre-existing buildings. Professional recording of current farm buildings already undertaken by Historical Buildings Expert, see report by Peter Child, 5.1.1

Excavation undertaken by members of NDAS, members of Tiverton Archaeology Group (TAG), amateur archaeologists, students and local volunteers under the guidance of qualified archaeologists Terry Green, Chris Preece (for machine excavation). Several members studying for Diplomas in Archaeology, with experience in excavating.

Training on site by qualified archaeologists and experienced excavators. Project led by Derry Bryant, a qualified teacher of adult education, amateur archaeologist and author of this report. Flint training provided to Derry Bryant by the late Ann Plummer, and John Newberry, author of *DAS Proceedings No. 60 2002 'Inland Flint in Prehistoric Devon: Sources, Tool-making Quality and Use'* Advice also given by Dr Andy Woodcock (ex- East Sussex County Archaeologist) and Henrietta Quinnell (Exeter University). Flints referenced to *Prehistoric Flintwork*, Chris Butler 2005. Training was given to members and volunteers on site on surveying, recording, plan and section drawing, and excavation techniques.

Pottery identification: pottery advice sought from John Allan, previously of the RAMM and Exeter Archaeology.

Glass bottle identification by Kevin Shaddick.

Final report to be lodged with Devon HER, North Devon Records Office, CBA, Exmoor National Park, archive and artefacts to be recorded and deposited with the Museum of North Devon and Barnstaple. The farm owner expressed an interest in using some of the artefacts as an educational resource.

Health and Safety: NDAS has a Health and Safety policy and risk assessments were carried out. First aid equipment was available on site, with a trained first aider on site.

1.4 Programme of Activities at West Yeo Farm 2009 – 2012

15-19 June 2009	Geophysical survey Pond Meadow
2 – 6 October 2009	Fieldwalk Long Park
15-16 March 2010	Earthwork Survey – Causeway
17-19 March 2010	Fieldwalk New Close
21-24 March 2010	Fieldwalk New Close
12-16 April 2010	Geophysical survey cottage site/barn site/ opposite quarry
19 – 19 July 2010	Excavation in garden, gradiometry survey and metal detecting Pond Meadow/New Close
August 2010	Fieldwalk Long Park
February 2011	Geophysical survey Pond Meadow and ridgeway to quarry
March 2011	Fieldwalk New Close (completed)
March 2011	Fieldwalk Mead 2
8-12 April 2011	Excavate T4 and T5 in garden and Pond Meadow
3-12 June 2011	Excavate T4 and T5 “
July 2011	Excavate T4 and T5 “
August 2011	Excavate T4 and T5 and T6 test pit in meadow
September 2011	Excavate T4, T5, T6
24-27 March 2012	Fieldwalk Mead 2 (completed)
14-20 April 2012	Complete excavation of T4 and T5
“	Excavate evaluation trench across Causeway

2. LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

West Yeo Farm, Witheridge, Devon

NGR: SS78931493

The farm buildings lie just below the ridge road from West Yeo Cross to Drayford. Close to the entrance of the farm is an abundant spring which was diverted with stone drains by the Victorian owners to provide water for the farm buildings. This corner of the field (known as Lake Park) is wet all year round, and is currently used for storing manure etc. The ridge road runs west to Drayford and north towards South Molton. It used to continue towards Rose Ash but the “new” turnpike road B3137 from South Molton road cut through it in 1839, building a new bridge across the river and up into Witheridge. “New Close” was formed by cutting across from the turnpike road B3137 to the ridge road, leaving a portion of the old road abandoned, now a visible grassy track, known locally as Muxey Lane.

Standing close to this position, at approx 180m above sea level it is possible to see the hills of Dartmoor to the South. It is perhaps not surprising that there should be barrows just a mile or so away on what was probably originally moorland. There is a standing stone in a field on the next farm (Stone Farm) to the west. The location is in a commanding position, with gentle slopes down to the river flats and good views along the valley.

2.1 Observations

Soil on the farm is of a silty clay, light red in colour to a depth of at least 1.5m in places (observed in Long Park during pipe laying activity.) A band of heavy sandstone forms an east-west ridge, south of the farmhouse, used as part of the route for the old bye road, probably offering a drier route.

Field stones are of sandstone, angular and sub angular, with some small quartz noted. No natural rounded pebbles were observed in the fields. Other stones noted were small heavy, reddish-brown smooth “ironstone” pieces, which produced a very red stain when wet, and some small red ochre pieces with possible use wear. Some of the “ironstones” were oval or cylindrical (although broken). The previous farmer commented that he had found narrow (several inches wide) clay drainage pipes in the field opposite New Close, going down slope, westwards towards Adworthy. He thought these pipes had held sediment which formed such stones. Unfortunately none of these pipe fragments were still available to view. Further research would be useful.

There is no known source of flint in the vicinity; it is possible that pebble flints could have been collected from the river Little Dart on the southern boundary, or brought in from other locations (the Exe Valley or North Devon beaches). There was a light blue/grey coarse textured stone noted in a narrow band in the clay below the surface in Long Park – this stone fractures into small pieces and there are several possible worked pieces within the collection.



Lake Park looking east towards Witheridge and the church

3. GEOLOGY

3.1 Geology description by Paul Madgett:

'The rocks in this area look to be typical alternating sandstone and shale layers, as seen in Carboniferous strata across central Devon; with a steep dip imposed by the Variscan earth movements at the end of the Carboniferous. These are stained a deep red colour presumed to be from the Permian "red-beds" which would once have overlain them, as the mountain chain resulting from those earth movements was eroded, and land-based sediments were deposited in the lower-lying areas between the mountain ridges.

As to the local geology, the pocket of red soil (around West Yeo) may be significant. That area of north-central Devon 'ought' to be Culm Measures - i.e. Carboniferous age shales and subsidiary sandstones, weathering to the typical heavy clay soils of the Culm. But trending west from the Tiverton area is a "wedge" of Permian strata (red-coloured) overlying these Carboniferous beds, with a few small outliers of Permian to the north and north-west of Tiverton as well. In NW Devon Permian strata are represented only by the small outlier around Portledge and Peppercombe, but red-staining from the former greater extent of these beds does extend to the Clovelly area along the coast there, and I believe in patches inland; Permian strata occur offshore as well. It is perhaps noteworthy that the Peppercombe occurrence lies on the same roughly E-W trend as the "wedge" around Tiverton and probably indicates that the latter once formed a much more extensive infilled trough during Permian times.

The palaeogeography of the time could be summarised as the uplift of the earlier Devonian and Carboniferous sediments into part of an extensive E-W mountain range, with inter-montane valleys being infilled with scree deposits and poorly-sorted gravels and sands laid down in wadi-type valleys by flash-floods, with alluvial fans building out from north and south into the valleys (think of somewhere like Death Valley, California!)

Thus it is possible that the "pocket of red soil" may represent an isolated remnant of Permian strata, most of the former extent having been long-since eroded in the ensuing 250 or so million

years...

Within these Permian deposits there will be a mix of pre-existing rock-types, eroded from the mountains around them, some being transported far enough to have gained a smooth, rounded pebble shape. So the 'mystery stones' could be "local" in derivation.'

3.3 Note From Dr Elaine Burt Bsc PhD, British Geological Survey, December 2012:

'The Bude Formation is Carboniferous in age and equates to parts of the coal measures in other parts of the country. However, it does not contain viable coal seams, but rather comprises a succession of mudstones, locally dominated by units of sandstone. Areas which are underlain by the sandstones are often better drained than those underlain by mudstones and can be used more easily for arable purposes. The area around West Yeo Farm is within one of the sandstone dominated units. The sandstone is often dark grey in colour when fresh, but when weathered it becomes buff coloured and often friable (with a sugary texture). The sandstone beds within the Bude Formation are usually fairly thick with thin interbedded units of mudstone and siltstone, although as I recall, the sandstone beds at West Yeo farm were thinner than in some other parts of the Bude Formation. This is probably because it is close to the boundary with the underlying Crackington Formation.

The boundary of the Bude and the Crackington Formation lies approximately 1km North of the farm. The Crackington Formation is also of Carboniferous age and comprises a succession of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone. However, the sandstones of the Crackington Formation generally contain a higher percentage of mud as a matrix and are more resistant to weathering. Fewer areas are dominated by sandstone than in the Bude Formation."



The quarry viewed from the east



Note the central break at the top (section through the "bye road")



Small pieces of light blue/grey stone in clay in Long Park



Deep clay in Long Park



Oval stones from Long Park: mudstones?

3.4 Water Sources

There is a substantial spring at the entrance to the farm, at the corner of “Lake Park” – apparently this source was diverted with stone drains by the Victorian owners to provide water into the farmyard. The spring area is still very wet, with a cart pond on the southern side of the track, opposite the source. The spring area is now used for storing manure. In wet weather, the water still runs down the “bye road” farm track into Pond Meadow and down towards the river.

Comment on drainage from Fred Woollacott, previous owner: Fred had noticed 3 different types of drainage in “Sand Park”, across the ridge road on the adjoining farm.

1. Old stick pipes; i.e. alder sticks laid along a trench. The water ran along them, as drainage and “ they lasted for years”.
2. Hand made clay drainage pipes 1.5” – 2” (25-50mm) in diameter, age and maker unknown.
3. Fred’s grandfather laid standard small pipes butted up against each other (factory made) – laid by POWs during the war.

The spur of land occupied by West Yeo is bordered by the Adworthy Brook to the north west and the river Little Dart to the south east, a permanent source of fresh water.



Lake Park; looking south; the spring is to the right, by the big trees. Centre photo, old linhay, with farm buildings beyond

4. DESK BASED STUDY

4.1 Location and brief history of site, by Terry Green

West Yeo Farm, comprising 29.2 hectares and run as a fully organic stock rearing enterprise, lies about 1km to the west of the small Devonshire town of Witheridge. To the west of the farm are the villages of East and West Worlington situated on the Little Dart River which flows westwards to join the River Taw near Chulmleigh. The farm buildings lie in an elevated position with a view eastwards towards the valley of the Little Dart and the hilltop town of Witheridge beyond. Most of the farm's land occupies the summit and eastern slopes of a ridge of land embraced by the Little Dart and the Adworthy Brook, the remainder being riverside pasture. The present owner, Kate Palmer, being dedicated to conservation, has made efforts to replace lost hedge-banks, to replant orchards and to return the riverside meadows to their natural state as culm grassland. The aim is to create a model of profitable organic farming and to provide educational facilities for the general public. In the interests of raising the perception of the farm as an integral product of an historic landscape, members of North Devon Archaeological Society have been invited to investigate the historic origins and evolution of the farm and to present the results of the investigation as part of the projected educational programme.



Fig 1: Extract from Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition Map 1905OS map 1905

Prehistory: General Background:

This part of mid-Devon is not rich in recorded (prehistoric) archaeological sites. There is no intrinsic reason for this and the relative absence of evidence is likely to result from a lack of investigation rather than any avoidance of the area by early populations. The old idea that mid-Devon was clad in wildwood until the arrival of Saxon farmers has long been abandoned, though it does seem that the area may have carried a considerable amount of (managed?) woodland in pre-English days, as suggested by numerous place-names, both of English and of British-Celtic origin, containing a 'woodland' element. Nevertheless the presence of Neolithic standing stones, Bronze Age round barrows and Bronze Age/Iron Age enclosures and settlements suggests that the wildwood was long ago reduced to isolated stands. We do not know in fact what the natural post-glacial state of the vegetation was: it may well have been more park-like than jungle-like, which would account for the widespread occurrence of mesolithic flint scatters, particularly on ridges and hillsides overlooking the potential hunting grounds of the river valleys. To be specific, in the more or less immediate vicinity of West Yeo, finds of flint and chert implements and debitage are recorded, round barrows are mapped on West Yeo Moor and to the north at Middle Burrow an Iron Age settlement was recently excavated. Recent field-walking exercises by NDAS on the fields of West Yeo have produced large quantities of flint implements and debitage.

Romano-British Period:

Apart from the odd coin find, there is at present no evidence of a Roman presence or of Roman influence in this area, though not so very far away, the Roman fort at Tiverton and a Romano-British settlement at Bury Barton near Lapford (Todd 2002) together with the growing recognition of a Roman presence in North Devon suggest that this part of mid-Devon was not off the Roman map.

Medieval:

West Yeo is within the parish and hundred of Witheridge. Referring to the pre-Conquest character of the hundred, O.J.Reichel (1898, 391) penned the phrase 'a hundred of small thanes', ie. minor figures with holdings of no more than 150 acres. Certainly the Domesday Book valuations of the nearby manors of Thelbridge, Dart Raffe, Worlington, Drayford and Adworthy bear this out, ranging from 40 shillings (Thelbridge) to 30 pence (Adworthy). Witheridge itself was a royal manor being held by Gytha, mother of Earl Harold before the Conquest and by the King after 1066 and was valued at £6.

West Yeo does not feature in the Domesday survey, at least not under this name. It was asserted by O.J.Reichel (1898, 421 and 1904, 357) that an otherwise unplaced manor held by Walter de Claville and named 'Ratdone' should be identified with a place called 'Freemanscot(e) or Freemanecote', which should also be identified as West Yeo. Reichel made this assertion without good evidence other than the fact that in 1243 'Freemaniscote' was held by William Vassal under William de Clavil, a descendant of Walter (Testa de Nevill) and that in 1284-6 William Vassal is recorded as holding 'Westaya' (Feudal Aids) implying that 'Westaya' is identical with 'Freemanscot(e)'. The identification of West Yeo as synonymous with 'Ratdone' *may* be sound, but cannot really be affirmed (see Thorn and Thorn 1985 note 24,4).

If in fact West Yeo is to be identified with Freemanscot(e) or Freemanecot(e), then it is worth considering the origin of this name. In the original medieval records there is a vacillation between forms of the name, occasionally with -s- in the middle, but mostly without. In Feudal Aids of 1303, 1346 and 1428 the name is predominantly presented as Freemanecot(e), the element - mane- appearing to reflect the Old English genitive plural *mana* rather than the singular *manes*, so that we should translate the name as 'cot of the freemen. Who these 'freemen' might have been can only be a matter of speculation.

Additionally the -cot(e) part of the name implies an originally minor holding, but one which might be susceptible to growth and aggrandisement. If in fact West Yeo originated as the rather small Freemanecot(e), the holding subsequently increased in size and importance, so that by 1243 it

was worth a quarter of a knight's fee, ie. a quarter of (typically) £20 per year, therefore £5. At this date William Wassal or Vassal is recorded as holding Freemaniscot of William de Claville who held it of the Honour (Barony) of Gloucester (Reichel 1898). Over forty years later in 1284-6 the record (Feudal Aids) states that William Wassal or Vassal - perhaps son of the former - held Westaya (West Yeo) for a quarter fee of John de Claville – also of the next generation apparently – who held it of the Honour of Gloucester and that the Earl of Gloucester held it of the King.

By 1303 the de Clavilles seem to have faded from the picture, because under this year date the record states that William Poleyn held a quarter of a knight's fee in 'Freemanecot'. Under Witheridge, the Lay Subsidy of 1334 (Erskine 1969) lists William Poleyn as paying 2 shillings tax, the highest valuation (equal to Oliver de Esse) in the parish. We are told by Risdon and later by Lysons that the Poleyns were in fact lords of the manor of Witheridge, and so may have levied money from Freemanecot/West Yeo but did not hold it as tenants. In fact the 1334 Lay Subsidy lists a William atte Yo who *may* have been the tenant of Freemanecot/West Yeo. William Poleyn was succeeded by Robert Poleyn and Robert by John. In 1428 John Poleyn held a quarter knight's fee in Fremanecote together with John Reyman 'neither of them holding a whole quarter part', as the record states (*et nullus eorum tenet integram quartam partem.*) That neither Poleyn nor Reyman was the holder of West Yeo is perhaps confirmed by an entry in the Register of Bishop Lacy recording that in 1438 John Fry, Lord of West Yeo, presented to Washford Pyne. Two years earlier in 1436 the same John Fry of West Yeo had been witness to a Cruwys Morchard deed and two years later in 1440 he was involved in a dispute over boundaries in which West Yeo was implicated (Typescript History of Witheridge, NDRO 1629-2/PZ1).

The tenure of John Fry appears to imply that West Yeo had achieved elevated status since it is recorded (Sir John Carew's Scroll of Arms) that the Fry(e) coat of arms stood in Witheridge church. The Fry family joined by marriage with the Parker family of North Molton and became ancestral to the Earls of Morley. It may well have been during the Fry tenure that a **chapel** or family oratory was installed at West Yeo (see below).

Post-Medieval – Modern:

The Devonshire historian Risdon writing around 1600 does not mention West Yeo in his description of the parish of Witheridge, so that we have no knowledge of 16th century developments. By the 1620s however, West Yeo may have been home to the Elworthy family. Parish records show that in 1682 Dorothy Elworthy of West Yeo paid £3 towards repairs to the parish church of Witheridge (Typescript NDRO 1629-2/PZ1). This documented connection allows us to speculate that the William Elworthy who in 1621 paid a Land Tax of 40 shillings in the parish of Witheridge, was Dorothy Elworthy's ancestor in tenure. A notice in the Exeter Flying Post of 5th February 1784 advertising the proposed sale of the lease of West Yeo names Thomas Elworthy Gent as the principal lessee (together with his brother Richard Elworthy and a nine-year old boy named Richard Oxenham) of the 'Capital Messuage Barton and Farm, called West Yeo situate in Witheridge'. It seems therefore that Elworthys occupied West Yeo for much of the 17th and 18th centuries.

The Land Tax records (1780-1832) tell us that in 1780 West Yeo was the property of Richard Copplestone (of Ottery St Mary), who had presumably been the owner of the lease when it was offered for sale in 1784. West Yeo had a taxable value of £8..8s..0d. Thomas Elworthy was the tenant in 1780, but by 1788 he was both owner and occupier, having presumably bought the freehold from Richard Copplestone. In 1809/10 the property was apparently again put up for sale and was bought by William Adams who now both owned and occupied the farm. The census of 1841 records William Adams aged 70 as farmer at West Yeo. By 1851, his son William Brook Adams, aged 44 had taken over. William Adams Junior was still in possession in 1861, but by 1867 he was in poor health and was in the process of selling his livestock (North Devon Journal). Morris's Directory of Devon 1870 records Samuel Cock, yeoman at West Yeo, and the census of 1871 has Samuel Cock resident and farming at West Yeo. This clearly indicates that the Cock Family were in residence well before the fire which burnt the old house to the ground in or about 1880. John Usmar's hand written notes suggest that the Adams family sold West Yeo to the Cock

brothers (George and Samuel?) in 1886. If this is correct and until that date the Cocks were tenants of the Adams', we have to wonder who paid for the rebuilding after the fire and who was responsible for the modernisation that apparently took place.

Kelly's Directory of 1889 records Samuel Cock as farming at West Yeo, but from the sale particulars of 1893 it is evident that by that date George Cock was the owner of the 'freehold estate', the 'substantially erected modern house' and the 'well arranged and convenient stone built and slated farm buildings'. Trade Directories from 1906 to 1930 record George Cock as farmer at West Yeo, though the census return of 1901 has Eva Carter as resident here. Kelly's Directories for 1935 and 1939 identify James Woollacott as farmer at West Yeo. It is apparent from a Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries survey of 1941 (see below) that he had been in residence since 1931. Records post-1939 have not yet been available to this study.

Additional History:

Lysons (1822) records that William Chapple, the antiquary and editor of Risdon, was born at West Yeo. He was the son of William Chapple, Parish Clerk, who died in 1755. Chapple (which one?) bequeathed a prayer book to the parish church with an inscription including 'the place where I drew my first breath, viz. at Stukeley's, Lower West Yeo alias New House On the 14th January (old style) 1718-19'.

It was William Chapple (the younger) who provided a response to Dean Milles questionnaire around 1750, mentioning in his account of Witheridge three ancient chapels:

'dedicated to St Margaret, St Peter, and Paul, some traces of which still remain at Myll, Bradford, and West Yeo in this parish. The last mentioned was turned into an ox house, and since to a dwelling house, and other two are quite demolished, having nothing to perpetuate their names but the names of the fields adjoining where they stood, viz Chappel-Hill at Myl, and Chappel-Meadow at Bradford. These Chappels very probably occasioned the division of the parish in to 4 quarters now called the town quarter, the east quarter, the south quarter, and the west quarter. The church is situated in the town quarter, Bradford Chapel in the east, Myll Chappel in the south, and West Yeo in the west.'

Farm Surveys – 20th Century

Government surveys and valuation exercises were carried out in 1910 and 1941.

In 1910 George Cock(s) was the owner and occupier of West Yeo comprising 380 acres of land, buildings and cottages, one within the curtilage and three others called Park Cottages. The farm was assigned an 'original gross value' of £7645.

In 1941 the occupier was James Woollacott paying £205 per year, while the owner was G.Cocks who lived on the Isle of Wight.

The record of the 1941 survey is very informative and the following details are worthy of note:

There were 163 acres under cereal, potatoes and fodder crops. There were 39 cattle and calves, 125 sheep, 14 pigs, 70 head of poultry and 2 horses.

The condition of the land was judged to be 40% good, 30% fair and 30% bad.

The buildings were in good condition while the fences and ditches were fair. There was no cottage attached to the farm.

There was no infestation with vermin of any kind.

Water supply to the farmhouse was from a well, to the buildings was by drainage from the roofs and to the fields was from a stream.

There was no electricity.

Motive power was supplied by 2 petrol engines of 7.5 and 3.5 horsepower respectively. There was one Fordson tractor of 26 horsepower.

For the purposes of increased food production during wartime certain grass fields were ploughed up, namely in 1940 fields numbered (OS) 161 and 143, and in 1941 fields numbered (OS) 148, 273 and 176.

A further undated mid-20th century survey made available to this study includes a plan and description of the buildings.

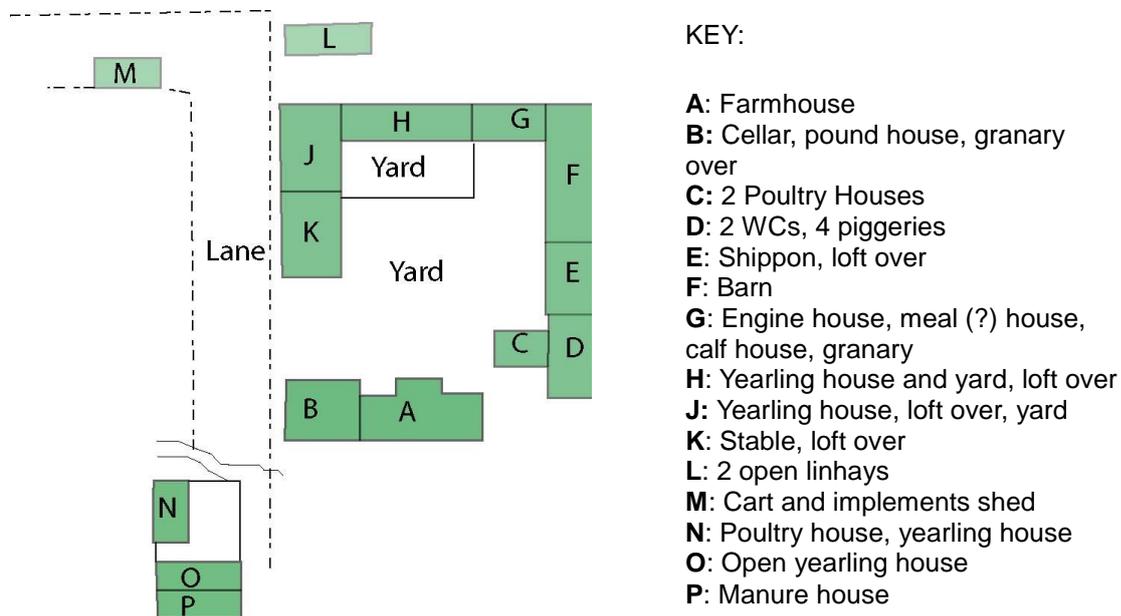
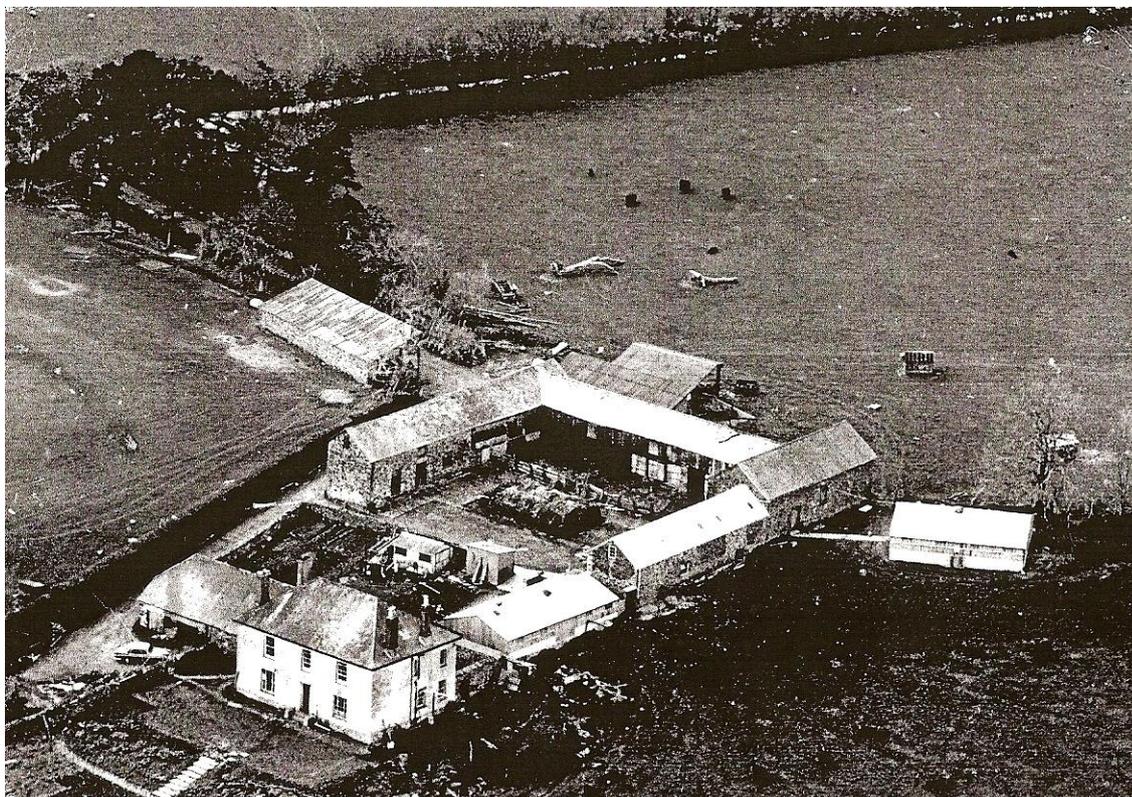


Fig2: 20th century farm survey

The house and buildings are described as modern and in good repair. Four cottages on the farm are said to be old and in fair repair.



Photograph showing farm with western range still extant, before demolition (courtesy of Kate Palmer)

4.2 Cartographic History:

Maps

The earliest cartographic representation of West Yeo is the Ordnance Survey surveyor's draft map of 1804-5 (fig 3). This shows West Yeo lying at the end of a short length of track leading off the road to East Worlington. Running through and beyond the farm the map shows a track delineated with a dotted line leading across the Little Dart river through a belt of woodland and joining up with a more clearly defined route heading towards Witheridge. This routeway features somewhat more clearly on the Greenwood map of 1820 (fig 4). Both the 1804-5 OS map and the Greenwood map are quite unhelpful when it comes to the buildings and their lay-out. For accurate information we have to turn to the very skillfully surveyed tithe map of 1839 (fig 5).

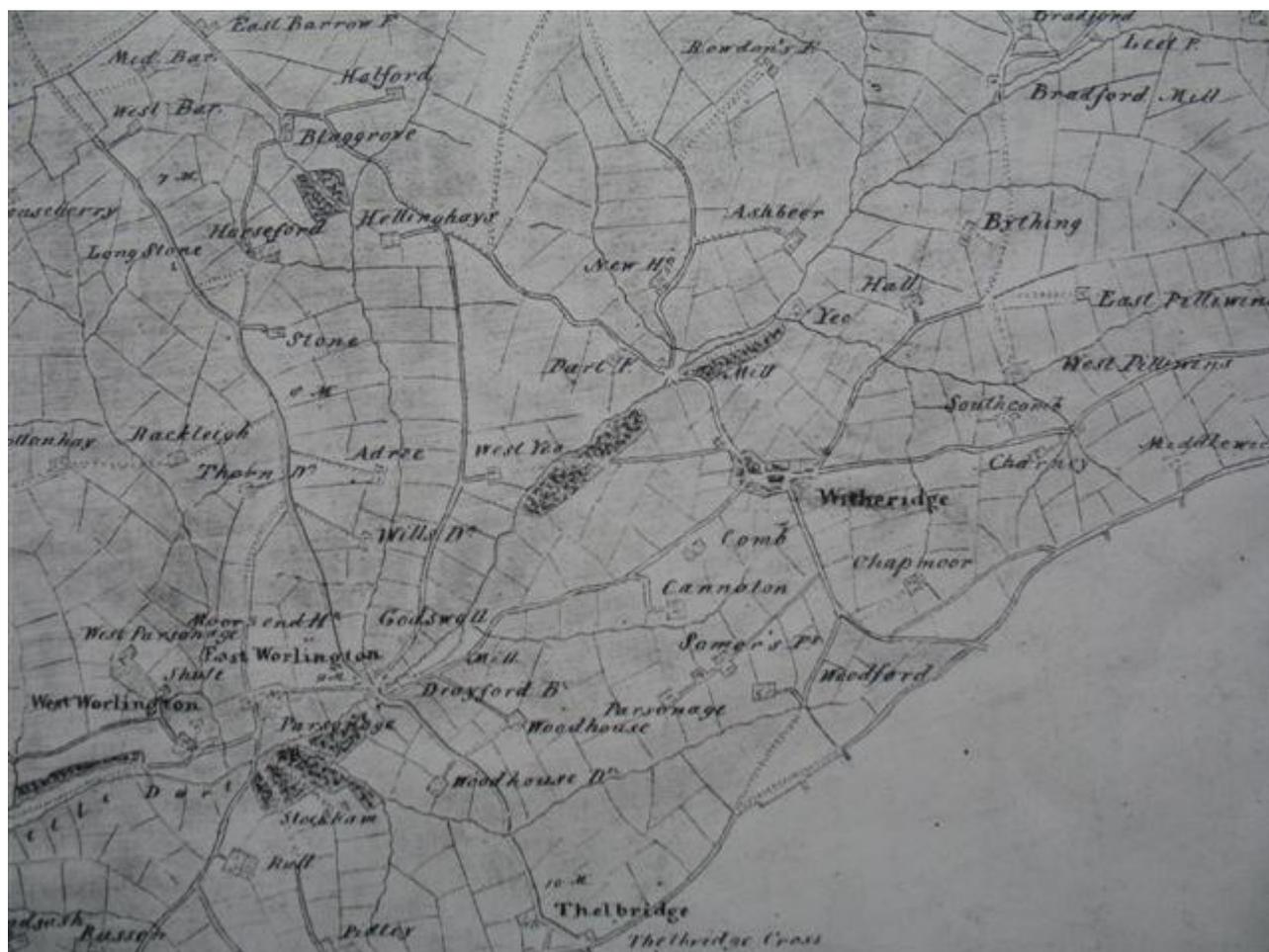


Fig 3: OS Surveyors' draft 1804 Source: West Country Studies Library



Fig 4: OS Old Series 1809 Source: North Devon Record Office

The tithe map furnishes the earliest detailed record of the farm, clearly showing the buildings, field boundaries and routeways. In addition the apportionment document which accompanies the map provides details of ownership, tenancy, field names and acreage as well as contemporary use of the land.

On the tithe map the farmhouse - coloured pink to distinguish it as a dwelling – is shown as a long building oriented more or less east-west – having therefore a southern aspect – with relatively stubby wings running northwards at the east and west ends. This suggests a typical three-cell house with cross-passage originating in the 16th -early 17th century period with possibly later extensions. The house is set within a 'court'. To the north is a garden and to the south is a 'barn yard'. Other buildings include a long structure aligned north-south on the west side of the barn yard and an east-west oriented open-sided building in its own enclosure to the north of the garden. North-west of the farmhouse is a small building in the corner of the 'court'. The buildings are approached from the north-west via what is described as a 'bye-road' leading off the road which goes to East Worlinton. Where the bye-road leaves the main road the main road widens and in the north-west corner of the wide area is an L-shaped building the north-east wing of which almost straddles the road, allowing access only through a narrow gap. Beside the bye-road leading into the farm there are further small buildings, one on each side of the road.

Unlike on earlier maps the 'bye road' is not continuous through the farm, but reappears to the east running along the north side of an orchard (813 on the tithe map) and turning sharply south between fields named East and West Close to approach the Little Dart river where it appears to stop. Beyond the river is an area of woodland out of the southern apex of which a track emerges heading towards Witheridge. This would appear to be a continuation of the 'bye road'. In the 1830-40 period what is now the road from South Molton to Witheridge did not exist. Instead Witheridge was approached via Dart Raffie and the most direct route from West Yeo to Witheridge was by way of the 'bye road'.



Fig 5:1839 Tithe map

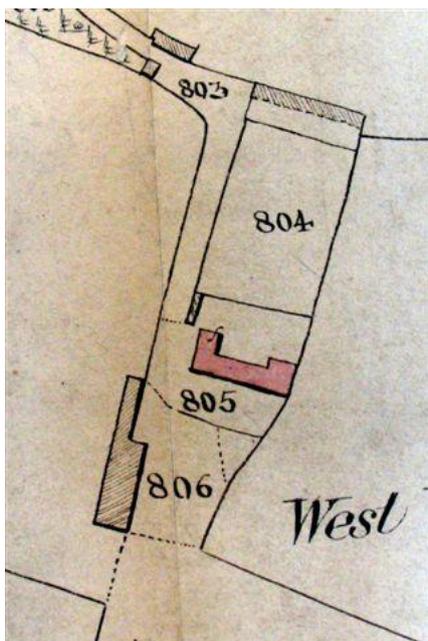


Fig 6: Extract from 1839 Tithe map showing location of West Yeo, showing house in pink. Source: Devon Record Office



Fig 7: mid 19th century Solicitor's copy of Tithe map



Fig 8: extract from mid 19th century Solicitor's copy of Tithe map, showing field names and description of court and garden

Tithe Apportionment 1837:

The numbers refer to those of the 1839 tithe map

- 793: Down Park
- 794: Bye Road
- 795: New Close
- 796: Plantation
- 797: Wood Park
- 798: Plantation
- 799: Lower Tunbridge
- 800: Long Close
- 801: Lake Field
- 802: Plantation
- 803: Bye Road
- 804: ?Possibly Barn and Yard or House and Yard?
- 805: Garden
- 806: Barn and Yard
- 807: Bakes Meadow
- 808: Higher Barn Field
- 809: Plantation
- 810: Lower Barns Field
- 811: Pond Field
- 812: Tembridge (= Tunbridge?)
- 813: Orchard
- 814: West Close
- 815: Bye Road
- 816: East Close
- 817: Island
- 818: Copse

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1889 (fig 9) indicates numerous changes in the preceding 50 years. We know that the farmhouse of West Yeo suffered a disastrous fire around 1880, and that the house was rebuilt in the style of the day. The new house – as represented on the Second Edition map of 1905 (fig.1) - is more square than the original farmhouse and, in relation to the oddly dog-legged eastern boundary recorded on both the tithe map and the OS map, appears to be located somewhat farther to the north.

The house was either set away from the eastern boundary or a new boundary had been created echoing the alignment of the original boundary. Attached to the western end of the house was a large square building which was presumably the pound-house mentioned in the 20th century survey records. What was originally the garden to the north had been divided up and new buildings have been installed around it, while the former barnyard to the south had been divided with a north-south boundary and the larger part turned into a garden. The long building on the south-west of the original barn yard had been truncated leaving only the northern, narrower part to the south of which a new enclosure had been created with a pair of buildings on the south.

Along the bye-road approaching from the north-west a building which in 1839 lay to the north had gone, while on the south a new open-sided building had been built. The buildings on the road to East Worlington had been removed.

There is no longer any indication of a routeway – bye-road – crossing the farm's land, presumably because by this date the new South Molton to Witheridge road had been constructed, bypassing West Yeo. All that remains on the map is the eastern extremity of the bye-road where it approaches the Little Dart river.

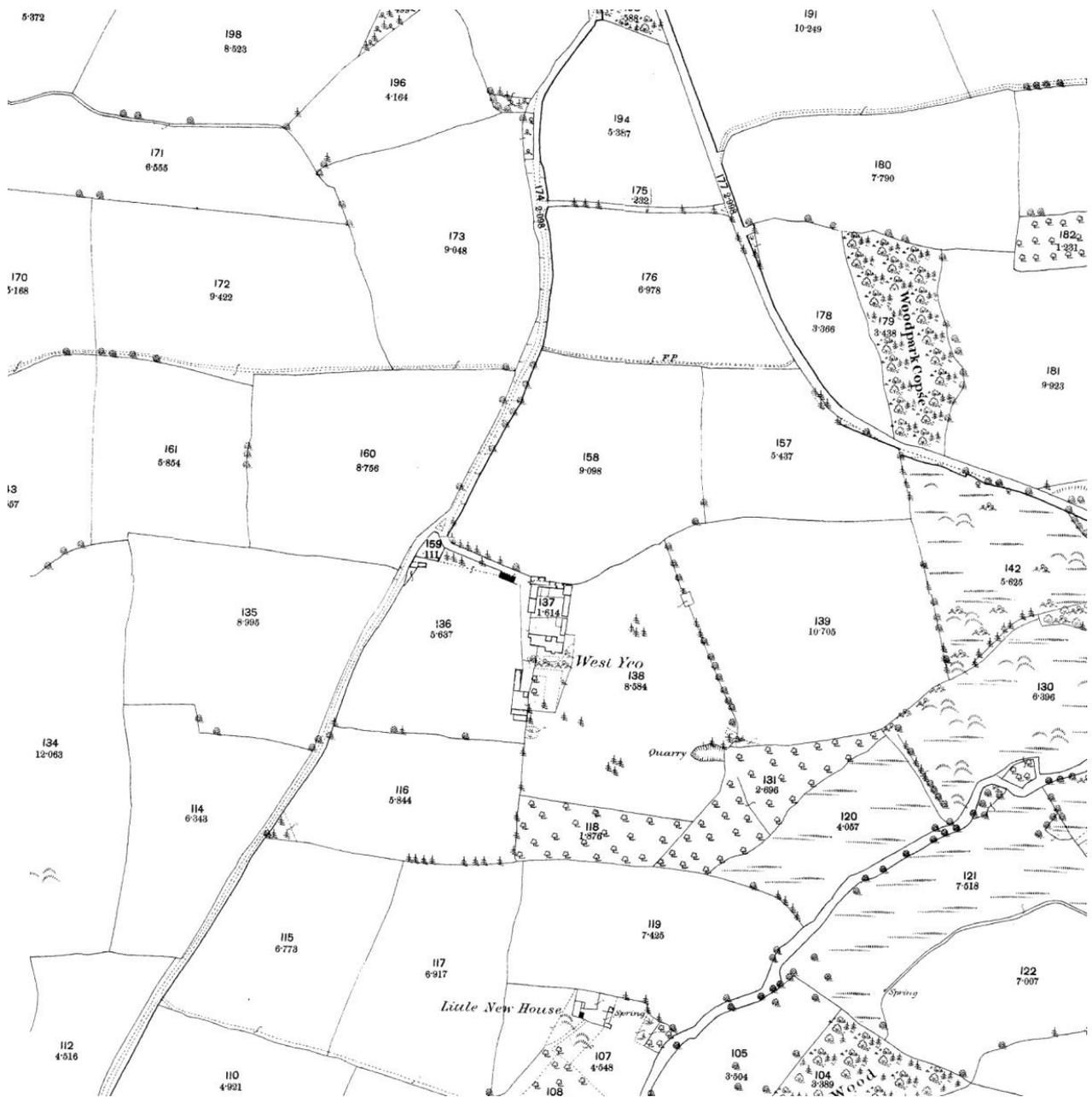


Fig 9: Extract from Ordnance Survey First Edition Map at 1:2500 1889

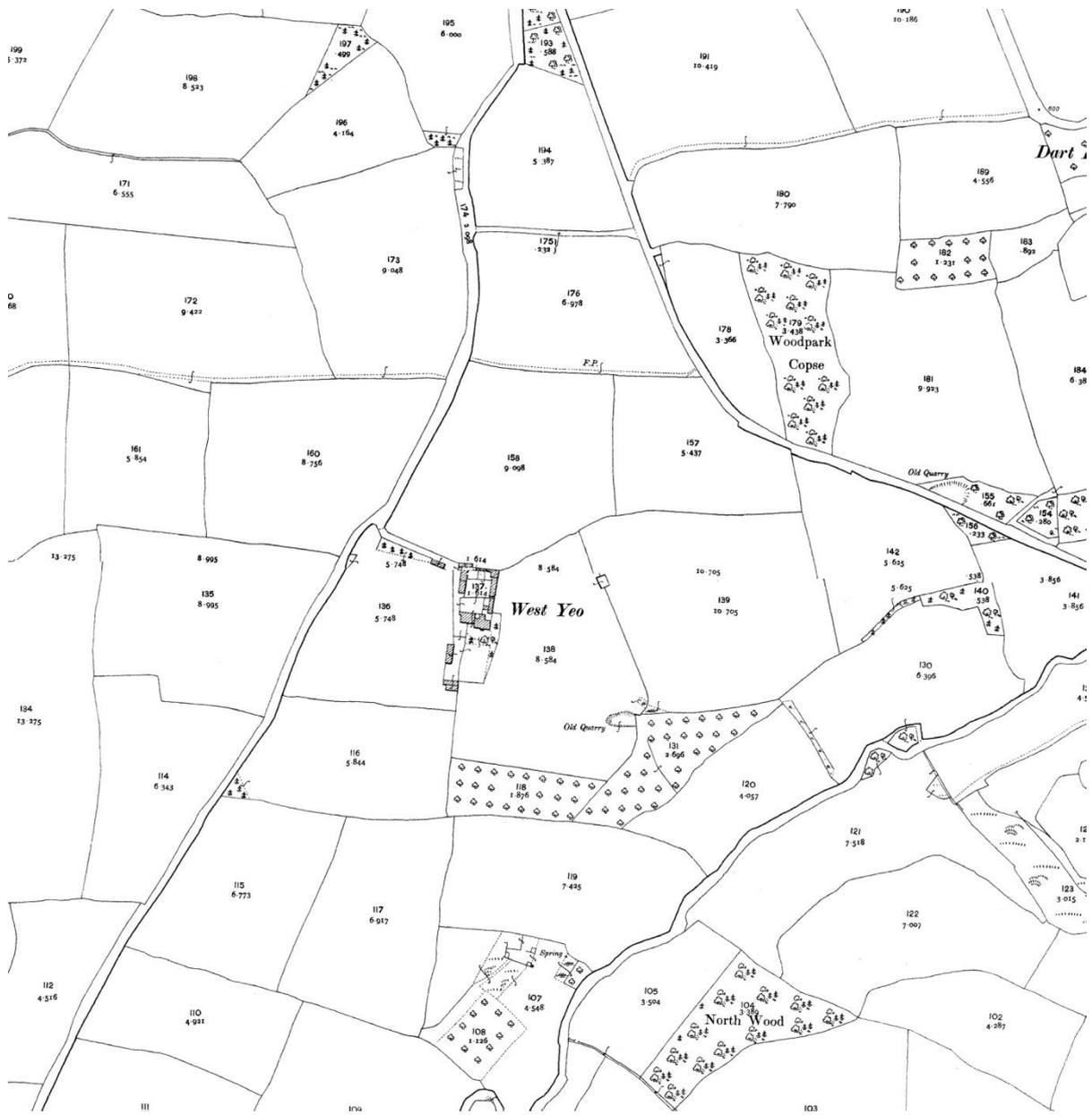


Fig 10: Extract from Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition Map 1905

WITHERIDGE, NORTH DEVON,

Within easy reach of good Markets and Rail, 6 miles from Lapford, 7 from Eggesford, 8 from Southmolton, and 9 from Tiverton, and with Postal and Telegraph Offices, Doctor and Shops, &c., at Witheridge, about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile distant.

Particulars, Plan, and Conditions of Sale

OF ALL THAT

VALUABLE

FREEHOLD ESTATE

KNOWN AS

"WEST YEO,"

IN THE PARISH OF WITHERIDGE,

AND CONSISTING OF

A SUBSTANTIAL MODERN HOUSE,

WELL-ARRANGED FARM BUILDINGS,

AND ABOUT

381 a. 2 r. 29 p.

Of well proportioned Closes of Arable, Pasture, Meadow, Moor, Marsh, Coppice, Wood, Orchard and other Lands, the whole in excellent heart, and possessing special agricultural features, and well known as a splendid all-round Sporting Property, and which is to be SOLD BY AUCTION, by

Thompson, Rippon & Co.

AT THE

HALF MOON HOTEL, EXETER,

On **FRIDAY, 25th AUGUST, 1893,** at 3.30 p.m. precisely,

IN ONE LOT.

The Property may be viewed by applying to Mr. GEORGE COCK, West Yeo, Witheridge, and Printed Particulars and Plan obtained of the AUCTIONEERS, Exeter; or

Messrs. RICCARD & SON,

SOLICITORS, SOUTHMOLTON.

James Townsend, Printer, Little Queen Street, Exeter.

4.3 Landscape Features:

The Bye-road:

Indicated on the early maps, the course of the bye-road can be identified on the ground. Firstly it is represented by the track into the farm from the East Worlington road. Arriving at the farm buildings, the track turns abruptly south passing the house and accessing the field to the south of the house through a metal farm gate. Its course can be picked up again as two parallel low banks running along a west-east ridge as it heads towards a quarry where it is lost. In the next field to the east known as 'Tunbridge', it can be seen as a low bank running parallel to the southern field boundary, but on the other side, ie. within the orchard. This can be traced as far as the next field gate where it turns abruptly south heading towards the river. Here the bye-road is clearest, being an apparently metalled track running between banks and ending abruptly at the riverbank.

There is currently no indication as to how the river may have been crossed, but there are vestiges of a continuation on the opposite bank. It has become usual to describe this last part of the bye-road as a causeway, an appropriate term as it crosses low, marshy ground in true causeway fashion. It is particularly well preserved here because considerable effort has been expended in the past to make it substantial and presumably passable in all conditions. This in turn implies importance, the primary reason for which being the need to cross the river to Witheridge without taking the round-about route via Dart Raffie.

Field-systems, Boundaries and Field Names:

The extant fields and boundaries immediately around West Yeo do not present any suggestion of a medieval strip field-system. However to the south-west around the now ruined holding known variously as Lower West Yeo or Stuckleys or Little New House parallel field boundaries as recorded on the tithe map of 1839 *may* represent the enclosure of medieval plough strips. Also, to the west of the East Worlington road a single dog-legged field-boundary may have similar implications. The field-name 'Gratton' here is likewise suggestive of infield/outfield cultivation. At the same time, the numerous parallel boundaries to the south and to the west of West Yeo *could* conceivably reflect a co-axial field-system of potentially Bronze Age date. These are merely suggestions for consideration. There is no compelling evidence for either possibility.

It has been suggested that curving boundaries emanating eastwards from the farm centre enclosing fields known as Pond Field and Tunbridge may represent an ovoid enclosure, perhaps an early infield. However, the topography of quite steeply sloping ground makes this questionable, since the purpose of an enclosed infield was intensive arable cultivation.

Field names immediately to the north involving 'Park' and 'Close', especially 'New Close' suggest late medieval or post-medieval enclosure, perhaps from open grazing land (West Yeo Moor is only a short distance to the north). This may be borne out by the paucity of pottery finds (ie. an absence of long-term midden carting) and, among those present, a preponderance of early modern material picked up during field-walking of fields in this area.

The field-name 'Tunbridge' is interesting. The southern boundary of this field is mainly marked by the course of the bye-road with the causeway leading off it. The modern name 'Tunbridge' appears to be based on the earlier recorded form 'Tembridge' (Tithe apportionment 1837) which might be parsed as follows: The term 'bridge' in medieval topographic usage could apply equally to a bridge as we recognise it and also to a causeway across wet ground (Smith: English Place-Name Elements). There was no bridge across the Little Dart in this vicinity until the mid-19th century so the term in this field name must apply to the causeway. As for the first part of the name, I would suggest that 'Tem-' is properly 'Ten-', the nasal dental consonant -n- being assimilated to the labial consonant -b-, producing the compromise nasal labial -m-, a common enough occurrence in spoken English. 'Ten' would derive from Middle English 'atten' meaning 'at or by the...', so that the field name translates as 'at or by the causeway', which is apt. If this interpretation is correct, then it confirms the medieval origin of the causeway.

The chapel

From the Dean Milles questionnaire it would appear that West Yeo once had a chapel. In common with other Devonshire estates, the owners of West Yeo would have acquired a licence to build a family oratory some time in the medieval period. The granting of a licence to build a chapel implies high status, the family being allowed the privilege of celebrating mass conveniently in their own chapel rather than trekking across country to the parish church – which in this case would have involved use of the bye-road, and the causeway, crossing the river and negotiating the steep ground on the far side. Responding to the questionnaire, the local informant tells us that by the mid-18th century the chapel had been converted to an ox-house and subsequently to a dwelling. The down-grading of the chapel to an animal house may have stemmed from the upheaval of the Reformation or may imply loss of status for the West Yeo estate. In any case it appears that by the mid-18th century it had become one of the farm cottages. The precise location of the former chapel can at present only be guessed, though in common with other medieval domestic oratories (eg. Honiton Barton, Lower Alsworthy, Ayshford Court) it would have lain quite close to the house. It is tempting to suppose that it may have been represented by one of the cottages which lay on the west side of the former barnyard, but the north-south orientation of these buildings tells against it.

The tithe map of 1842 records relatively few outbuildings, while the recent excavation suggested the former existence of structures lying to the south-east of the farmhouse and not present on the tithe map. These structures had been buried beneath a considerable depth of redeposited material including quantities of pottery fragments and thick, dark green bottle glass none of which suggested a date later than the late 18th or early 19th century. This was a period when the property twice changed hands, and it seems likely that a change of ownership brought reorganisation involving the destruction of old buildings. These may well have included the descendant of the former chapel. Without more extensive excavation its whereabouts must remain a mystery.

Note: A fragment of volcanic stone, dressed and moulded as ashlar, found built into the buried remains of what appears to have been a wall (whether building or boundary is uncertain) is likely to have come from a high-status building which may have been the chapel.

4.4 West Yeo: Details from 19th century census returns.

Date	Householder	Family	Employees	Other
1841	William Adams 70	Hannah Adams 65, William Adams 30, Sophia Adams 35	2 female servants, 1 Ag Lab, 2 apprentices	Ann Benford, Independent 35 Mary Selwood, Independent 15
1851	William Adams 44	Mary Elizabeth Adams 36, Mary Elizabeth Adams 3, Frances Hannah Adams 1	3 male servants, 1 female servant, 5 labourers	Farmer of ?? acres with 100 acres of moorland
1861	William Adams 53	Mary Elizabeth Adams 45	1 female servant, 5 labourers	Farmer of 367 acres
1871	Samuel Cock 62 (from Middlesex)	Sarah Cock 62, Samuel Cock 21, Sarah Ann Cock 26, George Cock 19	2 male servants, 1 female servant	
1881	Samuel Cock 72	Sarah Cock 63, Sarah Ann Cock 36, George Cock 28	4 labourers, 2 boys	
1891	George Cock 39	Susanna Cock 38, Samuel Cock 5, Mabel Cock 18 months	1 male servant, 2 female servants	
1901	Eva Carter 46	Bessie Carter 25, Frederick Carter 22, Laura Carter 19, Margaret Carter 17, Charles Carter 14, Christian Carter 12	Samuel Veysey, Farm bailiff Henry Heaman, Horseman on farm Samuel Dymond, Cow boy	

Fig 12: 19th century census returns

4.5 Advert in the Tiverton Gazette

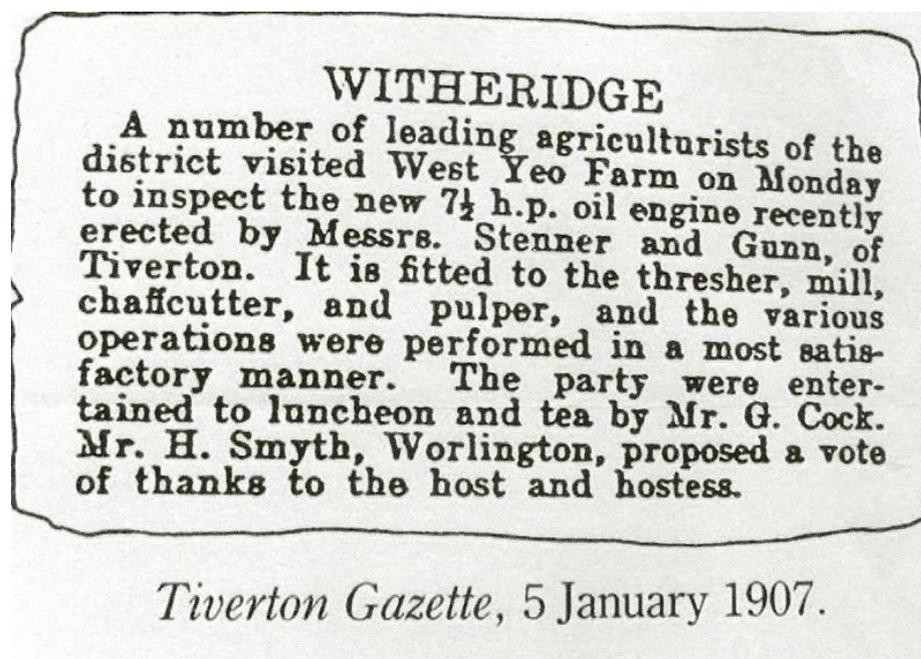


Fig 13: Excerpt from the Tiverton Gazette, 5 January 1907

4.6 West Yeo Timeline

It is interesting that a 'timeline' of habitation on the site can be shown, using evidence through the artefacts found and historical documentation.

Mesolithic	9000 – 4000BC Evidence: lithics
Neolithic	4000 – 2000 BC: Evidence: lithics
Bronze Age	2000 – 650/500BC: Evidence: lithics
Iron Age	None found at West Yeo but iron age settlement at Middle Burrow Farm, East Worlington, excavated by South West Archaeology ("Bronze Age to Bottle Seals, chapter 6 (An Iron Age Roundhouse at Middle Burrow Farm, East Worlington, by South West Archaeology)
Roman	Evidence: suspected Roman watch tower at Berry Castle nearby
Saxon	Evidence: Witheridge mentioned in Domesday as a King's Manor in 1086 Evidence: Pot sherds from excavation SF7 and SF12: Oxidised late 10 th -13 th century pot sherds Upper Greensand derived, Blackdown Hills
1436	Lord John Fry – elevated status at West Yeo
1621	William Elworthy paid £3 towards church repairs
1755	Death of William Chapple Parish Clerk (lived at Little New House/Stucleys) at West Yeo . Son William Chapple replied to Dean Milles questionnaire
1780	West Yeo is property of Richard Coplestone of Ottery st Mary (tenant in 1780)
1788	Thos Elworthy both owner and occupier
1809/10	Put up for sale - purchased by William Adams
1851	Son William Adams took over aged 44
1870	Samuel Cock – yeoman, 1811 resident and farming at West Yeo
1881	House burned to ground?
1886	Adams family sold West Yeo to Cock brothers George and Samuel
1889	Kelly's Directory: Samuel Cock as farmer
1893	Sale particulars: George Cock owner of freehold estate. Substantially erected modern house, stone built and slated farm buildings.
1901	Eva Carter, age 46 tenant
1906 – 1930	George Cock, Farmer at West Yeo
1935 & 1939	James Woollacott farmer (since 1931)
1941	G.Cocks owner (living on Isle of Wight), Jane Woolacott tenant
2000-present	Kate Palmer

5. RESULTS:

5.1.1 REPORT ON BUILDINGS, BY PETER CHILD, MARCH 2000

I visited West Yeo Farm on 13th March 2000 and discussed its farmstead buildings and their repair with Kate Palmer with a view to this repair forming a component in a Countryside Stewardship application for the whole farm. I set out my thoughts below. You will appreciate that these are based on a relatively short visit and will clearly need to be supplemented as the application develops with more detail on the specific works needed to particular buildings.

The farm complex at West Yeo is a good example of a late C19th farmyard, still traditional in its components but showing some elements borrowed from "model" farm practices developed in the C19th. Unfortunately, the westerly range which originally formed the fourth side of the courtyard has been removed and the courtyard itself largely filled in with a modern building. However I understand it is the intention in the long term to remove this building and this would enable the historic form of the original courtyard to be better able to be appreciated, particularly if a suitable new building were to be placed on the site of the missing one. The group of buildings is relatively unusual for Devon in that it appears all to have been constructed at the same time together with the farmhouse itself. I understand from Kate Palmer that this was circa 1880 and the style of the house and buildings would certainly accord with this date. Single period complexes in Devon are in my experience usually the product of estate building, since most small farmers or their landlords could only afford to replace buildings one at a time, typically producing a motley collection of buildings of various dates in often irregular arrangements. West Yeo in fact did not form part of an estate but was built it seems by a newcomer to the district which again makes it unusual. Although the buildings are almost entirely constructed of local rubble there are one or two small sections of cob walling surviving and it seems likely that these are fragments of the previous farmyard on the site. The roofs were all originally clad with slate. In most instances the slate roofs require repair or reinstatement, as do the rain water goods which originally would have been of cast-iron. The roofs are all supported on king-post trusses typical of nineteenth century construction.

I would certainly consider all the traditional buildings at West Yeo to be worthy candidates for grant aid under Country Stewardship in terms of their interest and appearance, The fact that they are all of one period together with the farmhouse itself adds to this interest. I set out below comments on specific buildings using the numbers marked on the attached plan. I also enclose a copy of the 1893 25" map which shows the site of the building which has been taken down on the west side of the yard.

1. The House

This is a late example of the very standard double-pile central entrance farmhouse which succeeds buildings with more vernacular plans from circa 1700 onwards and continued to be built until the First World War. It has the usual sash windows, hipped roof and central gable chimney stacks of this kind of farmhouse.

2. Cider House and Trap House

Attached to the west side of the house is a composite building. At the front on the ground floor is the stable for the farmer's horse and the house for the trap which it pulled. Behind these are two rooms which were used for cider production with the press in the room nearest the drive and the barrels stored in the next room. The covered area which links this building to the house was used for domestic purposes. There is a low loft over the building which presumably was for apple storage. The slates of the roof of this building are beginning to slip and need re-nailing and other ancillary repairs. There is a serious collapse of the gable wall which abuts the drive to the farmhouse which needs addressing as a matter of priority. This wall would appear to need rebuilding within the triangle of the gable.

3. Ash House

According to the previous owner this building was originally an ash house. Ash houses occur on Devon farmsteads (they are particularly to be found on Dartmoor) and were places where ash and other compostable material was dumped, sometimes in conjunction with a privy (which I believe was the case in this instance) later to be spread on the fields. This building has however been considerably altered and extended and would not therefore be suitable for grant aid as a traditional structure.

4. Lofted Shippen

This is a lofted shippen. It has the usual multiple doors of such buildings although these have been widened using blockwork in relatively recent times. The blockwork however is not unduly disfiguring and it would involve considerable interference with the building to replace it, which I would not consider justified. The roof of the building is clad with asbestos sheeting and it would be desirable in terms of the character and appearance of the building to replace this with slate to match that which survives on other buildings.

5. Corn Barn

This is a corn barn which has its main threshing and access doors at the lower end rather than placed centrally. Doors in this position in Devon are characteristic of later C19th barns and probably reflect the fact that by this date most storage of crops was external in rick yards and that the barn was then primarily used for processing the crops and storing them after processing rather than for keeping the unthreshed crop under shelter.

6. Horse Engine House

This is a horse engine house attached to the upper west side of the barn. Originally a large overhead wheel would have been turned by horses walking round beneath it and a drive shaft from this wheel would have supplied power for a threshing machine in the barn and other machinery such as root and chaff cutters. The large head beam from which the mechanism (now all removed) was effectively suspended still survives but the roof of the building is almost entirely missing. This is clearly something which should be addressed urgently as the head beam in particular will suffer from being exposed to the elements. The roof which has been lost was clad in corrugated iron and it may be appropriate to renew the roof in this material again, given its shallow pitch which would seem unsuitable for slates.

7. Linhay

This is a late example of the traditional Devon linhay or open-fronted lofted cattle shed. The upper floor of this building is now entirely boarded and it is possible that this boarding is original although on balance I think it unlikely. The two bays of the linhay nearest the barn form a separate compartment which seems to have been a granary linked to the adjacent barn. A section of boarding survives here which has metal strips to cover the gaps between the boards. This is a most unusual feature and this section should be carefully preserved in any scheme of restoration. The floor of the linhay is in a very bad condition and needs to be repaired to be made safe. The front posts of the linhay where they survive are also in very poor condition and would need careful repair. One bay has been converted to a bull pen by means of inserted blockwork walls; perhaps this should be kept as evidence of the farm yard's later development. The roof of the linhay consists of sheeting along the rear and slating along the front is in very poor condition. The slates of the front roof need fairly radical attention with probably a fair number of new slates to be found and it would be desirable to slate the rear section at the same time. The junction of the linhay roof with the barn roof is in need of attention as water is penetrating here; this would involve renewal of the lead work in the valley.

8. Cart Linhay

There is a cart linhay which looks as if has been cut down to its present shape with a single pitch sheeting roof replacing the original double pitch roof. However the previous owners of the farm insist that it has always been in this form and I am in no position to contradict them! If so, it is a

unique structure in my experience of Devon farm buildings. It is certainly of interest as part of the original set of traditional buildings at West Yeo. The upper courses of the stone wall are loose and need repair in various places and I anticipate that the sheeting of the roof will need attention.

Please let me know if you require any further comment or advice.

Yours faithfully

Peter Child
Historic Buildings Adviser
For County Environment Director

5.1.2 Buildings: by North Devon Archaeological Society

The “modern” farm comprises the Victorian house and stone farm buildings; some now in disrepair. The farm buildings were described more fully in the above report by Peter Child, the plan for which has since become unavailable; but referring to the 20th century diagram the following features are worth noting:

- A long linhay east-west (H on the 20th century diagram fig.2) with the upper floor constructed of fir poles, which would have been covered with gorse, to allow air to circulate.
- Remains of a pulley system above the corn barn/granary from when the engine was in place – (horses were originally used to turn millstones for grinding the animal feed). Two millstones have since been placed decoratively in the stone wall entrance to Pond Meadow.
- A particular feature was thin metal strips between both floorboards and vertical external weatherboarding – presumably for strength/weather resistance/keeping out vermin. This would have been expensive to install and was replaced during recent repairs to the upper part of the linhay. See photograph for detail prior to repair
- An early original stone and cob linhay (previously thatched), oldest building on site.
- A large stone barn (north-south J/K on fig. 2), formerly the western range of the yard, has been removed, replaced by a modern metal open structure. (Still visible on photograph)
- A row of small cottages (N in fig. 2) north-south beside the track in Pond Meadow has been demolished, remains covered over with material from a local housing development. The previous owner Mr Woollacott remembers the remains of the buildings and sketched drawings of the layout before demolition.
- Large barn from corner of field Pond Meadow (O/P on fig. 2) beside ash trees has been demolished (shown in photo of garden)



North elevation of farmhouse with “ash house” to the left (east), now used for poultry



North-east corner of range of buildings; shippen, granary and loft in need of repair



Upper floor of the long linhay east-west, fir pole flooring in evidence



Carved post supports



Remains of the pulley system from the upper linhay, into the granary



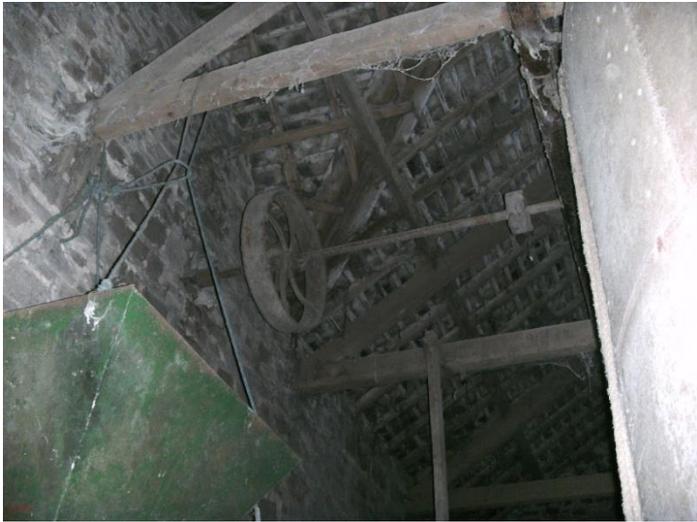
A (cat) flap in the upper floor of loft shows metal strips between the boarding.



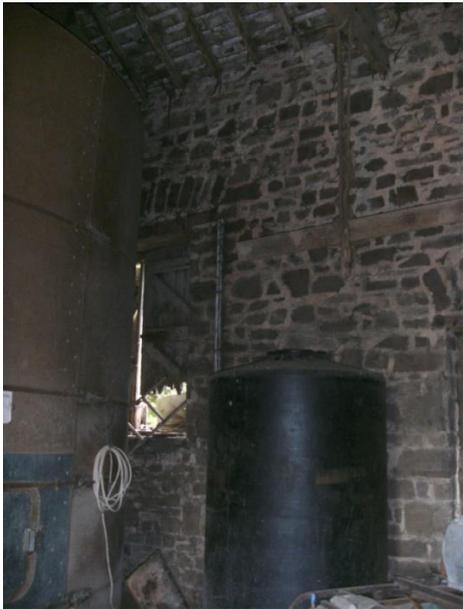
Barn (shippen) east of the range, currently used as a butchery



Granary, adjoining shippen



Engine pulley in granary roof



Grain silo inside granary, for mixing animal feed



Entrance door to stairs to upper floor of the engine house loft



External boarding to the upper floor of the engine house; note metal strips between boarding



The linhay and granary before restoration



Feeding racks beneath the fir poles in the linhay



Support post with iron studs and hinge fixings



Supporting posts with metal strengthening. Modern barn in front



View of northern range; with modern supporting pillars at western end.



Eastern elevation of granary and barn, north-south



Oldest building on site: double linhay constructed of stone and cob, previously thatched. East-west alignment, north of Victorian range of long linhay and granary. Southern aspect.



Feeding racks, still in use for cattle. Note cob wall to rear



Cattle have licked the cob, making substantial inroads into the material



Hole through the cob in eastern end, presumably for wooden beam



A modern extension to the old linhay



Here the new extension of the linhay (left) joins onto the old engine house, behind the large stone linhay



Western elevation of end of cider house (part of the old wall shown on tithe map?)



Pony/trap stable adjoining house



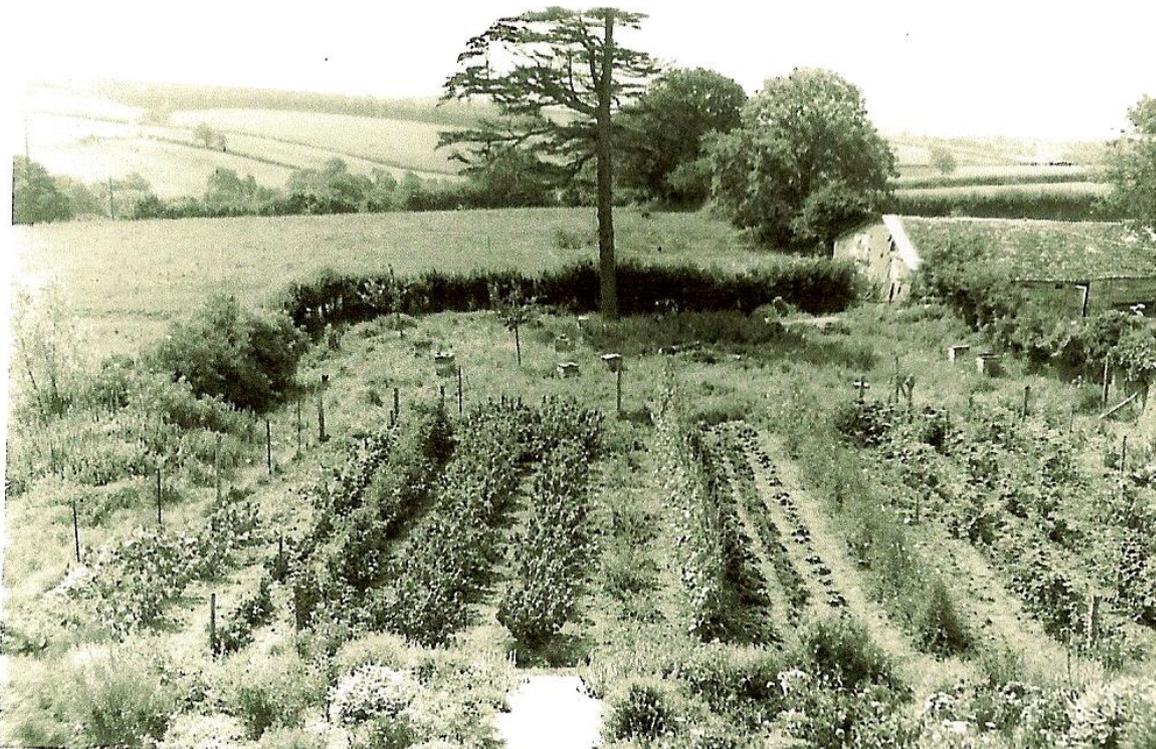
Door to courtyard/pound house

The garden south of the farmhouse:

Previous owner Mr Fred Woollacott told us: there was a decorative wrought-iron gate in the centre of the garden wall (now blocked up) which was the carriage entrance to the garden, with a carriage turning circle in front (south) of the house.

Mr Woollacott remembers an old barn aligned east-west approx 10' north of the big ash trees in Pond Meadow, adjacent to the corner of Mead 2. The barn was constructed of stone and cob

with a lime ash floor and large double doors. The front was in line with the current hedge (it was “much older than Victorian”). The barn can be seen top right in the following photograph.



An old view of the garden south of the house, taken from an upstairs window, showing barn still in existence. Note large ash trees (*Photo: courtesy of the Woollacott family*)



One of the old millstones set into the wall at the entrance to Pond Meadow. Barn long gone, ash trees still there

Little New House (Stucleys)

The modern (2012) West Yeo Farm is much smaller than the farm on the Tithe map, which included a property to the south west (Little New House or Stucleys, also known as Lower West Yeo) on sloping land above the river Little Dart. This building had now disappeared, currently on land known as Town Barton Farm. West Yeo also previously included cottages higher on West Yeo Moor, now known as West Yeo Moor Farm.

Several members walked to Lower West Yeo to look for remains of the old building and found signs of a track leading to a copse – in roots of trees found two building platforms of lime ash. The building which was still partly standing in living memory, has now almost completely disappeared.

Following examination of aerial photo (fig.11) dark rectangular crop marks showed in the field adjacent to (south) of current orchard; this field is now part of Town Barton Farm. Members walked the field to look for any evidence. Patches of dark green grass, but no visible earthworks.

5.1.2 Chapel

Described in the Devon HER as Monument No 70157, 'broad medieval period', and extract from Dean Milles Questionnaire, 1747-62.

It was hoped to establish the location and possible remains of the chapel during the farm study, but no conclusive evidence was found. Theories are:

The only possible evidence of the former presence of a chapel was a piece of volcanic stone ('trapp') found re-used as part of the wall (F5(2)) in Trench 5. The stone was dressed square, the tool marks clearly visible. It is reminiscent of the same geological material seen in use as moulding in Devon churches such as, e.g. Nymet Roland. We cannot be sure that it originates from an ecclesiastical building, but it stands out as 'special' in this context.

5.2 Geophysical Study

5.2.1 Pond Meadow

The meadow immediately south of the house was surveyed using the Society's TR earth resistance meter. Training on geophysics was kindly provided by Dr Chris Carey of Birmingham University, in evening lectures prior to work commencing. Survey area was set out using a 40m base line east-west. From the base line 20m² grids were set out using an optical square and ranging poles. Grids were divided into strips with data readings taken at 1m intervals along the lines. Data was then uploaded to "Snuffler" software which enabled interpretation of the data, giving black and white images of any features underground, up to a depth of about half a metre. Note: earth resistance surveying is limited to approx half a metre depth – anything below this depth may not be picked up. Gradiometry, ground penetrating radar or magnetometry is possibly more effective but expensive.

The first survey started within the garden, looking for features which might indicate foundations of an earlier house. This was then extended into the meadow, but it was realised results may be inconclusive as a large part of the meadow immediately south of the house had been used as a garden (see photo taken from upstairs window).



Earth resistance survey in barn area of Pond Meadow

The site of the old cottages south of the farmhouse was surveyed but this area had been buried under tons of earth from a development site in Witheridge. Results do show an area of high resistance in the location of the old barn, beside the ash trees – probably the remains of the lime ash floor. See above photo for location.

The most striking results on the left of the final results picture (fig. 15) shows the parallel lines of the old bye road along the ridge – black areas indicate areas of low resistance, i.e. ditches or disturbed/wet earth, the white shows areas of high resistance, drier areas i.e. possible stone walls. Appears to be bank and ditch (double) feature, possibly with break/entrance at one point, and truncated at western end by previous vegetable garden. Also an interesting circular area of high resistance enclosing a dark patch of low resistance in garden, close to the structural feature found in 2010. This circular dark patch would later be the subject of excavation.



WEST YEO FARM, WITHERIDGE, DEVON

Earth Resistance Survey

All grids 20mx20m

The geophysics was commenced in the SE corner of each grid.

The orientation of the data readings taken is indicated by the green arrow

Fig.14: Layout of 16 survey grids Pond Meadow

Not to scale

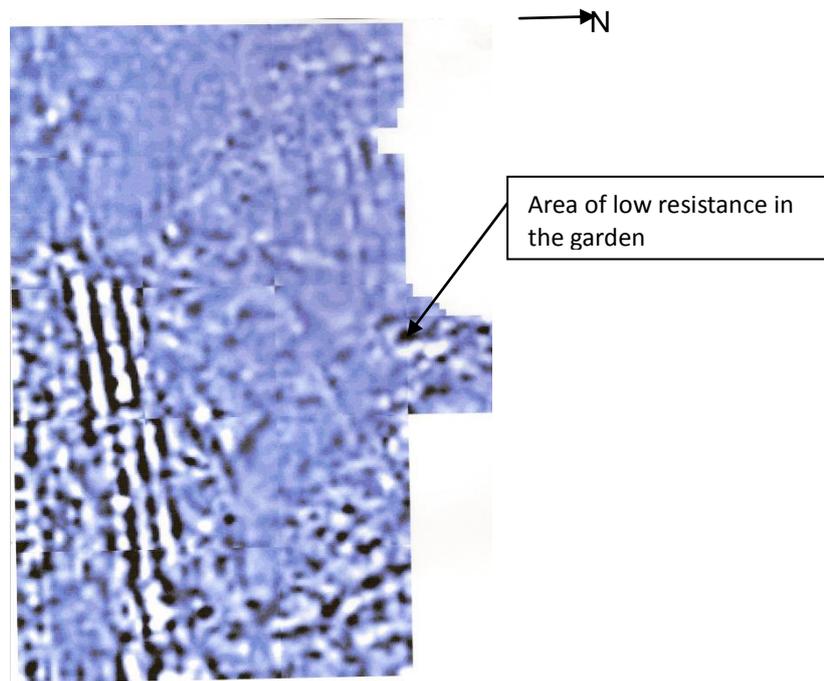


Fig 15: Geophysics: Earth Resistance results Pond Meadow

The geophysical survey results were used to plan the location of trench 4 in the garden, hoping to locate the dark area surrounded by high resistance to the right of the picture, and trench 5 in Pond Meadow, immediately below (south) of the garden

Quarry platform:

A small flat platform area, with a curved visible earthwork on the ground was noticed opposite the quarry. 1 x 20m² grid was set out and surveyed. Results show a curving double line of high resistance (?wall- like feature), possibly cutting through a rectangular feature (possible building foundations), east-west.. It was suggested there may have been a small building associated with the quarry working. Further investigation needed.

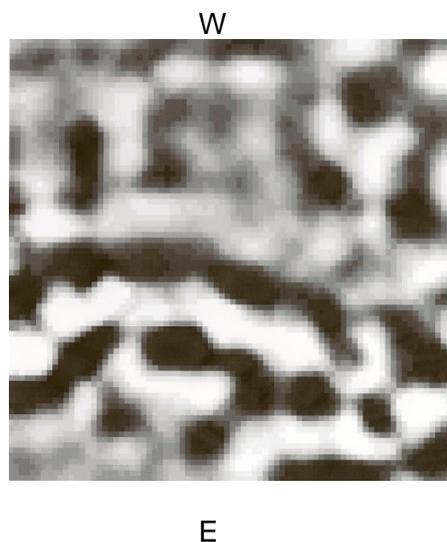


Fig 16: Geophysics: Earth Resistance results platform opposite quarry



Survey of Pond Meadow



Walking to the quarry (*Photo Brian Fox*)

5.3 Metal detecting 2009

New Close:

Members of Taw and Torridge Metal Detectorists surveyed New Close whilst fieldwalking was taking place. Some nails and small pieces of farm machinery found. One coin: 1694 William & Mary farthing. Nothing else of note.

Pond Meadow:

Detectorists noted activity in grids 1 and 2 South of house.

Finds :

- White metal ?silver band decorated with cross (found at a depth of 6"/1400mm); very thin flat band with cross detail punched into it as decoration and tiny rivets at the back as fastening. Possible strap end for prayer book or bible - date unknown. See photo under Finds section
- Lead seals (rectangular) with holes
- Blade (bill hook)
- Iron ring.
- Halfpenny 1867 (6th post going North by garden fence)

More metal finds found in plough soil south of garden; broken farm implements.

5.4 Earthwork Survey – Causeway

Devon HER Monument No 53735 “possible Causeway, period Medieval/post medieval”

March 2009: Crossed river to look for continuation of track on other side. Evidence of a narrow track on far bank leading away from river towards village. Large tree growing in middle of river suggests causeway previously extended further across, nearer to the opposite bank. Note: Flint pebble found on river gravels.

Probing of the surface indicated some evidence of stone, i.e. metalled surface, the width of the central section measured approx 3m. Landowner keen to see evidence, so we agreed to return to put in an evaluation trench across the surface. (excavation carried out in April 2012). The causeway was measured (length 79m) and drawn in plan and section. The ditches on each side have been machine dug in recent times to aid drainage.



North entrance to causeway, banks visible on either side, across river meadows



Taking measurements. Note culm meadows



Probable continuation of the “bye road” towards Witheridge, on the opposite bank of the Little Dart. Tree in water shows erosion of bank



River Little Dart, beyond the trees



Evidence of coppicing on the "island", no. 817 on the Tithe Apportionment

Fred Woollacott (previous owner), remembers his father coppicing. The coppiced wood and the hedge trimmings were piled up in the yard; half went to the village baker and half stayed on the farm.

5.4.2 Profile of Causeway

WEST 4E0 - CAUSEWAY - PROFILE VIEW
CROSS SECTION "A" 1:50 12/3/10 T. Green
WY10

View to N.

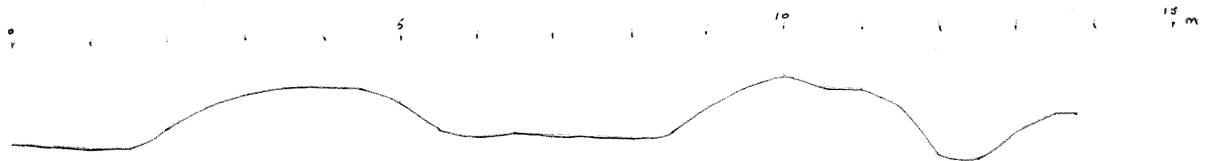


Fig 18: Profile of Causeway

5.5 Fieldwalking (For full details of fieldwalking finds, see Appendix 3, Lithics Report)

It was decided to carry out a fieldwalk on as many of the fields at West Yeo as possible, as a significant collection of flints found in 2006 on adjoining land had been identified by Ann and Martin Plummer as Neolithic and Bronze Age. This collection included flint tools: scrapers, denticulated blades, awls and an arrowhead

Three fields in total were walked between October 2009 and March 2012 in accordance with the farm ploughing/growing programme, i.e. visiting each field twice per year.

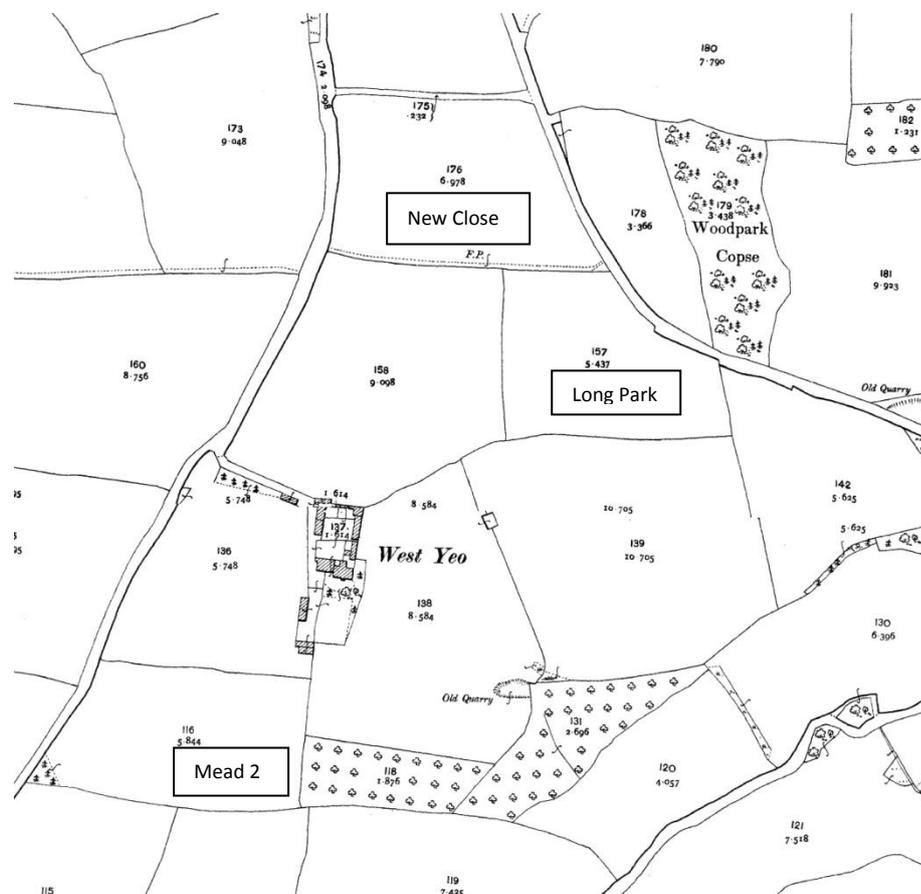


Fig 18: Location of fields walked with modern field names

5.5.2 New Close (arable field) 3 visits: 2009, 2010, 2011

Topography: Between (east of) ridge road and road to Witheridge, almost at top of ridge, flattish, gently sloping down towards south eastern corner.

A grid formation was laid out across the field west to east, using 20m² grids. Each grid was divided into 2m wide transects, walked from the baseline, one person in each transect, south to north and back again. Walkers placed finds from each transect in numbered bags, deposited at the beginning of each row, for later collection and recording. Due to heavy ploughed soil on the first visit, trowels were used to lightly pick over the clods. On subsequent fieldwalks the fields were harrowed prior to walking and trowels were not used. The soil was a light red/orange heavy clay with angular/sub-angular sandstones. No natural flint (raw material) noted but some quartz.

Field had been limed, with modern industrial slag introduced (confirmed by farmer).

It was calculated that it was possible to walk one 20m² square per person per day in good weather using a transect system; an intensive method of fieldwalking, enabling very small flint pieces to be recognised and collected.

Summary/Observations 2009:

Very little pottery found, only one piece medieval ND ware, otherwise mostly 18/19th century ceramics.

Cores and core rejuvenating flakes were found, indicating were that flint knapping had been carried out here.

The field name "New Close" and "New Cut" (the road linking the old ridgeway and the Victorian Witheridge road), indicates recent enclosure, the site was previously downland and had not been fertilised much with midden, hence the lack of pottery sherds.

Ann Plummer, co-author of the flint report in 2006 from Town Barton Farm, identified and dated flints from New Close: "It is an interesting small collection - the amount of debitage is right for the number of tools, therefore could be a camp". The types of flint (microliths, bladelets, small cores) indicated a mesolithic collection. Tool types (scrapers, awls, piercers, choppers and microliths indicate hunting/skin preparation activity.

Some unusual stones were found; smooth, heavy, dark brown "burnished"? Utilised pieces of unknown age, natural, requiring more investigation.

1 Whetstone (sandstone).

Small quern stone. Chert core. Utilised dark brown "iron" stones. Rubbing stones. Flints: microliths, bladelets). Possible evidence of hafted pieces. Possible quartz knife blade. Chopper, knife blades.

Ochre: small pieces of ochre were collected, some with rounded edges indicating possible use wear, which "bleed" heavily when wet.

Bladelet cores. Scrapers, including nose scrapers, side and end scrapers, notched scrapers and 5 pieces found together, which gave the impression of possible woodworking tools.

Bladelets/notched bladelets. Possible chisel, awl, microliths, arrowheads (broken); quartz points; triangular (possible composite arrow tips?).

No evidence of flint waste from straw baling in New Close. Cortex on pebble flint very stained red/brown showing absorption of colour from red clay soil.

Some burned flint. Nodular and pebble flint included, small amount of chert (some large thick flakes and also small pieces). Quartz flakes, possibly utilised.

5.5.3 Long Park (grass meadow)

2 Visits: 2009, 2010

Topography: Higher at western edge, slopes west to east. North-eastern boundary - now the road to Witheridge, probably old watercourse down to river.

Summary/observations: Small red ochre pieces. Tanged arrowheads, microliths, bladelets, piercers, small pebble choppers. Unusual red/amber small scraper (Orleigh Court source?).

Quartz flakes/points, some of the small points are possibly the tips from composite arrowheads. See the West Yeo lithics report (Appendix 1).

Large amount of coarse grey waste flint with thick white chalky cortex, not soil stained. Possibly "Wessex Spreaders" introduced by earlier farmer to improve quality of soil. A local farmer from Tiverton area recalls "marling" by fetching chalk from Dorset quarry, and on viewing the collection from Long Park, thought they could be from a similar source.

"Chocolate brown chert". (ref *DAS Proceedings no. 60, 2002* p9 John Newberry. Some flint pieces reworked. Some 'silvery' coated pebbles - possible slag from lime kilns. Possible quartz arrowhead. Brown stone arrowhead? - worked natural brown stones, also blue stone bladelets. There is a natural band of light blue stone within the clay (see photograph). Several leaf shaped arrowheads, possibly Neolithic. Pottery included 13th-15th century, 18th-19th century ceramics. Late medieval ND coarse pot (lead glazed).

5.5.4 Mead 2 (arable field, previously grass meadow) 2 Visits: 2011, 2012

Topography

Rectangular field east-west, bordered by ridge road to Drayford to west. Not often ploughed.

Fairly level at ridge height, sloping down gently towards east



Mead 2 looking east towards Witheridge



Mead 2 looking towards north west towards ridge road



Walkers with Brian Fox's find of transverse arrowhead



Young volunteer with bladelet

Summary/observations:

More Mesolithic activity noted with bladelets, microliths, fabricator and a transverse arrowhead (Neolithic). Also small brown nodular stones (pitted) possibly used as hammerstones.

For full details and analyses of lithics, see Appendix 3: Lithics Report.

5.6 Excavations

Note re context numbering: context numbers with a C4 at the beginning i.e. C404 denote a change of context in Trench 4. Those with F at the beginning of the number i.e. F5(2) indicate a feature, for example, in T5.

5.6.1 2010 Excavation in garden Trenches 1, 2 and 3

At the foot of the sloping lawn was an area of cobbled surface aligned east-west, discovered by the previous owner. The feature was in good condition, closely cobbled with a runnel east west, and an outturn towards the field. Possibly a remnant of the "Court" shown on the Tithe map. Two evaluation trenches: **T1** directly south from the cobbles towards the meadow to see if it extended south and **T3** to the east of the feature to ascertain its width.



A visible "hard" feature was noted E-W inside the current fence; reportedly the line of the old garden fence. A sharp turn to the north east indicated the possible return of the fence. Geophysical results showed high resistance in a linear feature in this area. An evaluation trench (**T2**) was placed on the corner of this feature.



Removing turf for trench 1

Trench 1:

1m wide strip from cobbled area to garden fence.

Aim: to look for extension of cobbles/floor surface/wall of house

1st trowelling revealed larger stones/brick 0.70m from South end and darker soil in a line E-W (possibly trench for old garden wall). A layer of hard packed light coloured silty clay soil in mid area of trench, between cobbled area up to darker soil feature E-W.

Also noted a line E-W, of small hard packed stones close to the cobbled area; at first thought to be a wall foundation, but stone not coursed; eventual conclusion was a drainage channel at the bottom of the lawn slope, this later appeared to terminate in trench 4 (2011).

Cleaning between cobbles and section revealed several small stake holes .

Extended T1 from fence 2m² eastwards to pick up high resistance area. No obvious wall found except for line of dark soft earth with some random larger stones. Conclusion; robbed out wall/line of old garden fence..





E-W line of old fence; rubble and darker soil; line of old garden wall



Possible drain feature filled with stones E-W
(lines up with drain feature in west section of T4)



T1

Trench 2:

A 2m² box section was set out beside the garden fence on the “corner” of the visible hard feature (previous fence line). This was extended both to the north and south, and a sondage sunk in the NW corner of the original square. The south extension revealed a modern concrete pillar base for the garden wall. A substantial amount of pottery and glass was found in soil surrounding the modern pillar base, including North Devon coarseware pot base (damaged) with internal lead glaze. (see photo in Finds section)



T2 marked out



Preparing T2



T2, south extension: Concrete base of "modern" pillar from garden wall

Under the topsoil a hard layer of clay was exposed, at first resembling a platform or floor, but excavation of this revealed "modern" pottery, glass etc. However, to the south and east of the

hard clay, softer soil produced large amounts of pottery, mainly North Devon coarseware, thick glazed pot, some with slip decoration, and a lot of heavy black/dark green bottle glass. Examples of tin glaze, lead glaze, manganese/iron glaze, some thick rims, also finer glazed pot with crimped edges. Also lumps of orange clay daub. Suggestive of a midden.

The sondage was taken down to look for “natural”, and after a layer of ash and burned soil from a bonfire which (also very evident in the Northern extension to T2 and in T3), and another layer of soft dark soil, larger stones were revealed; a deliberate coursed structure of small angular stones with no apparent bonding, with a straight edge, continuing south towards the meadow, and a darker, layer at the bottom of the sondage, east of the structure.



T2 looking east



Structure discovered in T2, in extended sondage.
Looking south towards Pond Meadow

Extension (North) of T2:

A mixture of soils found with evidence of a large bonfire: this area had been used as a tip, and finds included an old tin bath, 1st World War gas mask, pieces of burned metal, a small laundry iron etc. The level was not taken down very far as there seemed no point in exposing more modern finds, and due to lack of time.



T2 with extensions, looking south Photos: Brian Fox



First World War gas mask found in burned area



Laundry iron found in burned area

Trench 3:

A 2m² box section was opened across the N-S feature “bump” shown as high resistance on geophysical results, in line with the cobbled area already exposed. Aim: to investigate the feature, and locate any further cobbled surface which might extend eastwards.

This trench quickly exposed as an area of the same bonfire as T2, soil was very black, mixed with ash. Finds included ash glazed pot, a quantity of burned metal (modern). A sondage was sunk in the South West corner to look for the cobbled layer or “natural”. The natural appeared to be orange/light red clay, with small gravelly stones underneath. This was recorded in section and the trench finished. The cobbled layer did not extend this far.



Location of Trench 3. Looking north



T3 sondage to look for natural/cobbles. Looking west. *Photo: Brian Fox*

Finds from 2010 excavation:

A large quantity of North Devon coarseware domestic pottery found, mostly to the sides of the clay area in Trench 2, which may be part of a midden. A substantial amount of bottle glass, some clay pipes (one identified as made by John Seldon of Barnstaple, factory 1857-1865 (ref. C.Preece, NDAS newsletter 9, spring 2005). Black glazed roof tiles, also pieces of red clay floor tiles. Building material such as plaster (T1), window fittings(T1), daub (T2) would indicate the presence of an old building. Finds were washed and recorded on site and afterwards. .



Washing of finds on site

Small sherd of fine porcelain c1750 – Chinese tea bowl, indicating high status of occupants.

Sherd of salt glazed grey Bellamine bottle (for decanting wine) with armorial badge, possibly German – another indication of high status, mid 17th century. High firing. (Pottery identified by John Allan)

5.6.2 2011/12 Excavations Trenches 4 (garden), 5(meadow), 6(test pit, meadow) and 8 (extension to T4)

April 2011: 2 trenches (4 and 5) opened by mechanical digger in garden and meadow south of farmhouse under the supervision of Chris Preece, professional archaeologist and member of NDAS. Both trenches worked on simultaneously, and reported here separately. Trenches 4 and 5 occupied a slope from the garden into the meadow. Features in T4 were found under relatively shallow topsoil, features in T5 were at a deeper level, covered with layers of overburden as well as the topsoil. Trench 5 NW corner final depth – 1m.

Note: method of numbering of contexts varies between T4 and T5; i.e. consecutive numbering for both contexts and features used in T4. In T5, features numbered thus: F5(2).



Chris Preece supervising the mechanical digger opening T4 in the garden

Trench 4: 5m² trench in garden

Aim:

- to expose more of the area surrounding the coursed wall structure F407 found in 2010 and establish if it continues into the meadow.
- to relocate and uncover previously found structure and establish complete depth down to “natural”
- to investigate curved area of high resistance/dark patch in NE corner of trench.

The structure revealed in 2010 (F407) was uncovered from terram and loose soil (winter protection) and cleaned – another large flat stone on the top of the structure was exposed..

Two cuts into the west section were noted, one contained large stones and was probably the old garden wall (modern) east-west discovered in 2010, the other cut through the ash bonfire layer and was possibly a continuation of the small ditch found in 2010, E-W at the foot of the sloping lawn, in T1. Trench 4 was lightly trowelled across the whole surface.

Finds: Glass/ND pot/bone fragments. A round pink sandstone rubbing stone.

June 2011: Revealed layer of small tightly packed stones adjacent (west) to the structure (F407). East section contained modern concrete pillar base, with mix of old handmade brick, pot and glass, also bone. Also a curved line of large stones set diagonally, close to eastern section, curving towards NE. (This may have been the cause of a circle of high resistance shown on the geophysical survey.)



T4 looking North West: orange clay pad to North East, curved line of large stones to South East.

Large black bottle base. Exposed more of structure, with larger long flat stones E-W across coursed wall of small stones. Cleaning north area of T4 revealed a patch of hard clay (yellow/orange) at eastern end. Bright orange clay revealed between structure F407 and west section, with darker soil next to wall. Possible narrow foundation ditch for wall, with clear definition between soil colours. Very little finds. Structure now revealed as “bridge” with two small coursed walls, and large stones across the top, with gap underneath. Possible drain or vermin trap? Structure in same alignment as that in T5 but offset.



T4 feature revealed: note soil colour changes to East.

July 2011: Fill of foundation ditch next to structure F407 removed. Contents of fill: dark soil including white glazed ceramic and green glazed pot. Various post holes appearing in clay pad and area of darker earth north of trench, one large, possibly modern posthole from old fence. A 2m section E-W to south of trench removed overburden and 2010 redeposited soil. No large stones exposed, no finds. Mostly dark brown soil mixed with small stones.

Clay pad containing small charcoal flecks, sectioned N-S. Level of clay pad taken down, east to west, also removing brown soil with stones. Two flint flakes found (Mesolithic). Removed soil from gully of bridged wall. Note: a vertical stone had been placed at end of gully as a terminus, resting on a padstone. Section drawings of south section and west section undertaken by student.

Colour changes noted in soil in southern section E-W. Strip of orange clay E-W with dark soil beside. Possible cut features.



T4 looking South West. Clay pad in foreground, postholes appearing. Structure excavated



T4 close up of structure F407 with central gully excavated



Top shot of gully; terminal stone vertical at end on padstone.

Note on finds: a large amount of post medieval North Devon pot, much of it thick, coarse, with internal lead green glaze, also pots with thinner rims, white and coloured ceramics, 19th century blue/white etc..Across T5 in particular, a substantial amount of thick heavy green bottle glass sherds and heavy bottle bases with pontilles. Some identified by Kevin Shaddick as Bristol , 1770-1780, one onion bottle neck and base Bristol 1715-1720. A quantity of very thin flat pale green glass (window glass), heavy door nails. Volcanic building stone (dressed trapp)possibly imported from the Crediton area. 13th-15th century sherds of pot, (orange or salmon pink, very gritty). Mesolithic flints, rubbing stones.

August 2011

Removed layer C421 (dark stony soil) plus 1" of clay pad, to determine extent of clay layer. Tiny Mesolithic bladelet butt (damaged) found by Eastern section (SF No. 111).



T4 removing 421 dark stony soil from clay surface

Two parallel lines of medium sized stones noted from out of west section, towards south east.
Possible drain/gulley - F425.

Small stakeholes in clay pad near north section. Find: copper alloy strip – possible knife blade (damaged) found at south edge of clay band (SF No110).



T4: 2 parallel lines diagonal N-S (left to right)

Sieved soil from the gully of the structure F407 (sample S7). No finds.

Examined stake holes – some small depressions containing dark soil, probably final remnants of small stakeholes. New stakehole identified in NW corner F429

Noted spread of loose angular stone in north section directly dumped onto clay. **Therefore assume clay C404 is not natural and could be floor surface.** Clay surface dips down at southern edge. Noted layer of hard packed small stones C431 underneath (possible preparation layer for clay floor?)

NW corner; drain feature runs south east in a gully of dark soil and stones. With larger stones at south termination of gully. Possible sump C432. Flint SF112 and thin piece 13-15th century medieval pot SF114 and piece of charcoal.



T4 looking West. Diagonal gully of stones ending in “sump”, central to picture



T4 - cleaning termination of “sump” – 13th - 15th century pot found here. Note dark soil next to clay band extreme left of photo, beside structure.

September 2011:

Cleaned 2m southern section to expose red clay band and dark soil next to south section, east of wall feature. No finds.

Levels were taken of the major features, stakeholes measured in from sections; (“dumpy” level used; no GPS equipment/total station available)

New context no. C438 in clay lens 404: hard orange clay changed to darker brown, hard packed soil with small stones and flecks of charcoal, next to the modern post hole. Appeared to continue downslope towards centre trench lower level.

Cleared back central area to investigate stones. Drain feature appears to continue diagonally towards south east corner.

Removed dark soft soil from beside (S) of red clay band.
Widened section across clay lens N-S to 1m to expose possible line/cut between change of contexts i.e. clay into dark softer soil, stones. Not found.

Extended section N-S again to west – to 1.5m wide.

Small sondage (0.5 x 0.5) cut into clay 404 to determine natural clay. Natural confirmed.
Removed top clay from extended section to check for soft soil change.

Measured difference in height between 2 clay layers T4 (bottom of dark ditch) and clay “floor” in retained area of T5 = 3 cm.

Black flint core found in south east corner (TG) in stony/wet surface. SF137, C435
No finds in clay lens (section). Possible hole in extreme SE corner – very wet soft soil.

Took down level of test pit T6 to look for natural/or stones. Still finding dumped material/lime mortar, bone, pot

April 2012

Cleaned off edges and sections from fallen in soil (trench open over winter). A tray of unstratified finds collected. North section measures 5.2m, west section measures 4.5m

Flint bladelet found centre trench in loose stony soil below clay surface SF135 near central “sump” stones.

Inserted a half metre section north-south across clay pad.

Cleaning of clay layer in NW corner revealed drain feature with a definite edge – 2 courses of stones visible.

Mattocking down in south east corner; a couple of inches (60mm) revealed very wet/dark soil, charcoal rich. Same as fill of posthole in T5? Some big flat stones revealed in south section next to SE corner.

Old thin pot sherd next to big stones (TG) SF136 with fine sandy texture, in dark soil next to clay band E-W. Trowelled stony layer – new context no. C436 next to clay band and clay.

Cleaned off band of small stones hard packed W-E between structure ditch and tumbled terminus eastwards to join with stones in possible ditch N of clay band.

Noted 2 new stakeholes. F442. Removed some fill from F429/428.

SE corner – Looked for continuation of clay band cut in SE corner. Not found. Cleaned surface of clay south of drain feature, revealed another stakehole in west section (F443)

New context no. C438 in clay lens 404: Hard orange clay changed to darker brown hard packed soil with small stones and flecks of charcoal, next to the modern post hole. Appeared to continue downslope towards centre trench lower level.

Clay band revealed a sharp cut edge (437) straight down on south side of clay band..

Started trial trench T8 E-W at NE corner of T4, 0.5m x 2m to look for possible stone (high resistance reading on geophysics).





Final photo of T4 with clay pad, drain, stakeholes, structure, cut into clay band. Note arc of shallow stakeholes, left centre of trench

NB: new small stakeholes in clay – one in north section, one in NW corner. Noted arc of shallow stake holes in NW corner; became more evident in final photograph
Small post hole (F441) in north section of T4, cut into clay 404.

Section through clay north-south revealed thick natural clay. Sterile of finds, no finds on drain feature .

Structure:

Removed soil at rear of structure in T4 – soil dark, soft, charcoal rich with glazed pot, glass and small stones, (same as fill of post hole in T5 north section)– loose on western side. Eastern side of soil more like red clay, with thin wall (coursed) going S into section. When loose soil on south side cleaned away, layer of thin stones laid flat at bottom of structure, abutting structure, at same level as bottom of terminal stone, possibly flooring/paved area? Photographed and shown on plan drawing. NB: no flat stone revealed around other 3 edges of structure.



Note flat stones to right (south) of terminal stone – possible paving?

Trench 5: 1 x 5m² in meadow

Aim:

- to see if structure from T4 continues into meadow
- investigate two areas of high resistance shown as parallel features in earth resistance survey east-west, possibly as part of an oval feature or a feature with a rectangular right angle return to the north.



The mechanical digger quickly revealed heavy flat building stones aligned east-west at the north of T5, with more natural looking flattish heavy stones placed side by side at the south end of T5. Further excavating done by hand.

April 2011:

15 members over five days excavated a large amount of overburden soil, clearly dumped, with a mix of ND pottery (post med, internal glaze), a large amount of heavy bottle glass, including bases, and 19th century pottery/ceramics. The area of heavy building stone in the north of T5 was trowelled and revealed 2 possible walls, one substantial, wide, wall running straight N-S (F5(4)) into the north section towards the garden and terminating south with a broken end (?robbed out wall). The other slightly curved, butting up to it E-W at the same level, a possible retaining wall with no inner face (F5(2)) seemingly containing a hard clay surface (query floor?) A posthole was revealed in the north section of the trench within F5(4), filled included dark soil and charcoal. The posthole was recorded, photographed, and the fill removed (This posthole of similar dimensions to modern fence posts close by.)



T5: posthole against north section

There was a layer of hard clay with no finds within the retaining wall north-east of T5(2) -possible floor surface? The NW corner of T5 revealed tumbled stones in a dark red soil with evidence of burned material and voids. Heavy amount of ND pottery/glass finds in this area.

June 2011:

Cleaned off trench as cattle had trampled the surface (trench unfenced). The clay lens retained by curved wall F5(2) was cleaned –small sherds 13th – 15th century pot found. Clay surface very hard. Light orange silty clay flecked with charcoal. Central section of T5 revealed thick glass bottle ends, and 19th century ceramics. The curved wall (F5(2)) revealed at least 2 courses, clay bonded. There was a small infill wall (appeared to be a step F5(24)) in the junction between the two walls, with a row of small flattish stones packed on edge along the front, either for support or decoration.

F5(4) running NW/SE revealed a substantial wall, faced both sides, with some large building stones on the eastern side, possibly rubble filled. (Possible building foundation?). The centre of T5 contained tightly packed medium stone rubble, some with rounded edges, possibly redeposited cobbles. The eastern section had softer/damper soil. A lot of flat, thin, light green glass was found in T5, also sherds of 13th -15th century pot, very gritty, unstratified. Finds: pieces of large, dark green bottle and bottle bases, ND glazed pot, ceramics, 19th century pot. Bone.



June 2011 a trench full of people (photo Brian Fox)



N ←

T5 Both walls visible, with curved “step” at the junction of the two walls



T5 showing flat stones in SE corner

A series of small stake holes (some triangular) found in south section of trench, within clay soil, one contained dried remainder of small stake. Slump of small stones in SE corner removed, with more flat large stone underneath. Bright orange clay (natural?) revealed in NW corner. Wall edge F5(2) revealed at least 3 courses.



North East corner within retaining wall: ?possible floor

Photographer from North Devon Journal took photos of members on site.

Central area: very dark soil: (burning?/old vegetation) underneath smaller stones, plus area of black burning on southern edge (SE) and going under section. 1 flint microlith and 1 piece of charcoal found. (black soil context 513).

The clay layer in the central section was removed, showing more dark soil underneath, 1 more stake hole with black stake in situ.



Close up of front (S) of wall F5(2) and "step" to left



July 2011:

12 members (over 8 days) were joined by five students and three volunteers,. A mixture of weather, hot and sunny when the earth was baked hard, and several days where torrential overnight rain filled trenches with water, requiring baling out in the morning, making trowelling impossible.

Two walls were now clearly visible, with a small infilled feature between the walls – possibly a step or garden feature, filled with dark soil and the remains of a tree/plant. This “step” area originally had a line of small stones packed on edge, along the curved frontage. When removed this exposed more large flat stones running underneath, up to and under the main walls. The area of hard clay fill behind the retaining curved wall was taken down about 3” (75mm), with no finds. It is assumed this may have been a floor and was left to see if it extended further north into T4.



Removal of soil from “step” before small packing stones removed from frontage

Removal of overlaying small stones/old cobbles in clay soil, centre trench south revealed a bright orange clay strip with some large stones beside (east), continuing north-south in alignment with standing wall, probably the original line of the wall before being robbed out. Several postholes – one each side of this strip. Area of very small hard packed stones in west lower portion of T5, to west of orange clay band. Find: bell-shaped thick ND pot artefact with hole through centre, (SF No.48) (later identified as possible 'ND Chill; fish oil lamp'). This area might be a yard surface. Examination of Tithe map shows old boundary wall in this alignment, with yard identified on map. Find: small strip of copper alloy metal found, plus small buckle. Black flint scraper (SF No.37 found at end of wall F5(4).



SF48: Partial stem of North Devon gravel-tempered "chill" – fish oil lamp; from yard surface to west of building

South east area of T5 showed larger area of flat stones, in a band north west – south east with small stones vertically packed in beside – possibly a path or gully. South section of T5 revealed an area of firm, hard packed very small stones, possibly circular area, in which a dark soil (possible pit) featured next to south section, and 3 new stakeholes. Query? floor surface.

Black, possibly burned patches noted all over T5 – but no lumps of charcoal - explanation may be burned thatch - all seems to be "inside" the wall features.

August 2011:



Cleaning off the gulleys in floor surface



T5: shows heavy flattish stones to south east corner; floor surface?



T5: shows continuation of clay band from robbed out wall north-south; probable line of robbed out wall



Flat stones under "step"



View to south west

North west corner: Apparent ditch 0.6m wide abutting (west of) wall F5(4) and on same alignment as wall, with dark soil/tumbled stone. Possible foundation ditch for wall F5(4)

New feature noticed beside west section: two parallel lines of medium stones east-west from west section, dark soil in between. Appear to be edging stones bordering an area of red ?natural clay in north west corner (see following photo). A concentration of stones in west section immediately above the gap between these lines. Finds: salt glazed pot sherds, bottle glass, thin flat green glass (window?). Brick sherds. Internally glazed pot sherds.



North west corner of T5 showing possible foundation ditch beside wall feature, note line of stones coming out of west section

Removal of dark charcoal stained soil C514 east-west across clay band revealed definite edge to clay band, becoming heavier mid brown loam to east with small stones underneath. Dark, possibly burned soil going into south section. No finds.

T5 cleaning west to east, revealed limit of clay band/?robbed out wall. Note position of possible post pad of volcanic trapp. Note 2 lines of stones coming out of west section.



Post pad? of volcanic trapp

South east 2m section west-east; removal of mid brown soil around small stones revealed hard layer of close packed small stones, resembling a floor surface (C524) with possible circular edge of larger flat stone.

Central; more flat stones south east – north west towards a soggy stone-filled depression to west, beside clay band. Interpretation; possible entrance?

September 2011:

Eastern central; curved shallow gully 528 SE-NW from SE corner revealed when lifting flat stone in circular edging stones next to surface of small stones. Possible continuation of gully up towards wall F5(4). Stakehole F5(21) examined and disregarded.



Emptied posthole F5(23). Dark soil fill and stake remnant SF No.122 + 1 glazed pot sherd.

Final day in late September, two more gulleys revealed. One east of robbed out wall: stone lined drain C525. Another drainage gully 527 north west – south east – big flat stones – straight edge and side next to floor/stony layer, running towards C525

One curved gully from wet area at junction of walls F5(4) and F5(2). Also made a small section beside west section between parallel stone rows, into apparent small pit of dark soil C532. Some pot and bone. Drawings completed.

Drains numbered as follows:

- 528 Curved stone lined drain
- 527 Straight covered drain joining 528
- 525 Drain beside clay band (S)
- 523 Heavy stones beside clay band (covering drain?)



T5 complete view of trench with possible pit to west



September (very wet, trenches filled with water, requiring baling out: unable to work properly)

On the last wet day, members walked the north boundary of the oval outline evident on the Tithe map to look for the “missing” part of the boundary, and found earthworks evident in field in alignment with the missing portion, indicating the original outline of an oval enclosure.

Dr Andy Woodcock identified a D shaped gunflint (unstratified) from T5 and a stone rubbing ball from T4, from amongst the finds.

Both trenches covered with terram, remaining open until spring 2012 for further limited excavation.

14 – 20 April 2012: Excavation of Trench 5, and Causeway Trench 7

T5, took down level of clay corner retained behind wall F5(2). At east end large heavy stones appeared(jumbled). New context no.C536. At west end of retained feature heavier stone revealed in wall underneath facing stone and smaller tumbled stone (context no. 537) plus soil wetter. Soil thick/brown/sticky clayey but not natural.



Top shot of baulk between T4 (left) and T5 (right) showing proximity of trenches (N of T5, S of T4) Before removal of soil from retained feature in T5

Removed hardpacked clay soil in retained feature. Removed soil from corner of wall F5(4) by post hole: no big stones, appeared to be collapsed wall, with possible removal of corner stone? Leaving clay loam mix – orange/grey/brown, removed to reveal gap and straight edged terminus of F5(4) wall.



Something missing from corner?

NE corner: revealed a row of thin packing stones angled N-S close packed behind rubble band, in foundation trench which was cut into natural clay. Trench only partially filled with packing stones, others probably robbed out, back filled with loam. No finds. Wall F5(2) faced only on south side. Cut presumed to be foundation trench cut into clay at north side.



Row of thin packing stones in a row towards eastern section

On cleaning north section of loose soil from overwintering – find: a round flat piece of shillet with central hole – possible spindle whorl.. See photo in Finds section



Showing coursing of wall F5(2)



Trench 6:

Started 2m² test pit in meadow (**T6**) 2m west of T5 to establish if areas of high resistance on geophysics results continue.

Half sectioned, to look for stone wall or natural. Revealed small/med angular stones at North end. Finds: iron hinge/ pieces of farm tool, green glass, pot handle, glazed pot. 2 cobbles. Wall plaster, substantial amount of lime mortar at south end.

Removal of more material showed that demolition debris continued, until stony surface revealed. T6 final depth 0.90m. No structure found.

↑
N



T6 test pit in Meadow; no evidence of continuation of building



T8: Adjoining NE corner of T4: T8 final depth 42cm – no large stone found – mix of finds including glass, glazed pot, clay pipe stem, coal. Turf/topsoil removed down to layer of redder clayey soil on same level as clay surface in T4. Small stones and medium stones in several places but no solid band.

5.6.3: T7: Causeway:

1m wide trench (T7) across causeway – exposed stone metalled surface in centre and dark/softer soil at either edge. Photographed and recorded. No finds.





Looking south towards river Little Dart



Evidence of stone metalled surface in centre

6. Figures

- Fig 1: OS map 2nd edition 1905
- Fig 2: 20th century farm survey
- Fig 3: OS Surveyor's Draft 1804
- Fig 4: 1809 Greenwood map
- Fig 5: 1839 Tithe map
- Fig 6: Extract from Tithe map
- Fig 7: Mid 19th century map
- Fig 8: Extract from mid 19th century map
- Fig 9: Extract from Ordnance Survey First Edition map 1889
- Fig 10: Extract from Ordnance Survey 2nd edition map 1905
- Fig 11: RAF Aerial photo 1946-49
- Fig 12: 19th century census return
- Fig 13: Excerpt from the Tiverton Gazette, 5 January 1907
- Fig 14: Layout of 16 survey grids Pond Meadow
- Fig 15: Geophysics results (earth resistance) of Pond Meadow
- Fig 16: Geophysics results (earth resistance) platform opposite quarry
- Fig 17: Plan of Causeway
- Fig 18: Section drawing of Causeway

7. Drawings

Location of trenches 1, 2, 3 – 2010

Location of trenches 4, 5 – 2011/2012

Location of trenches 1 - 5

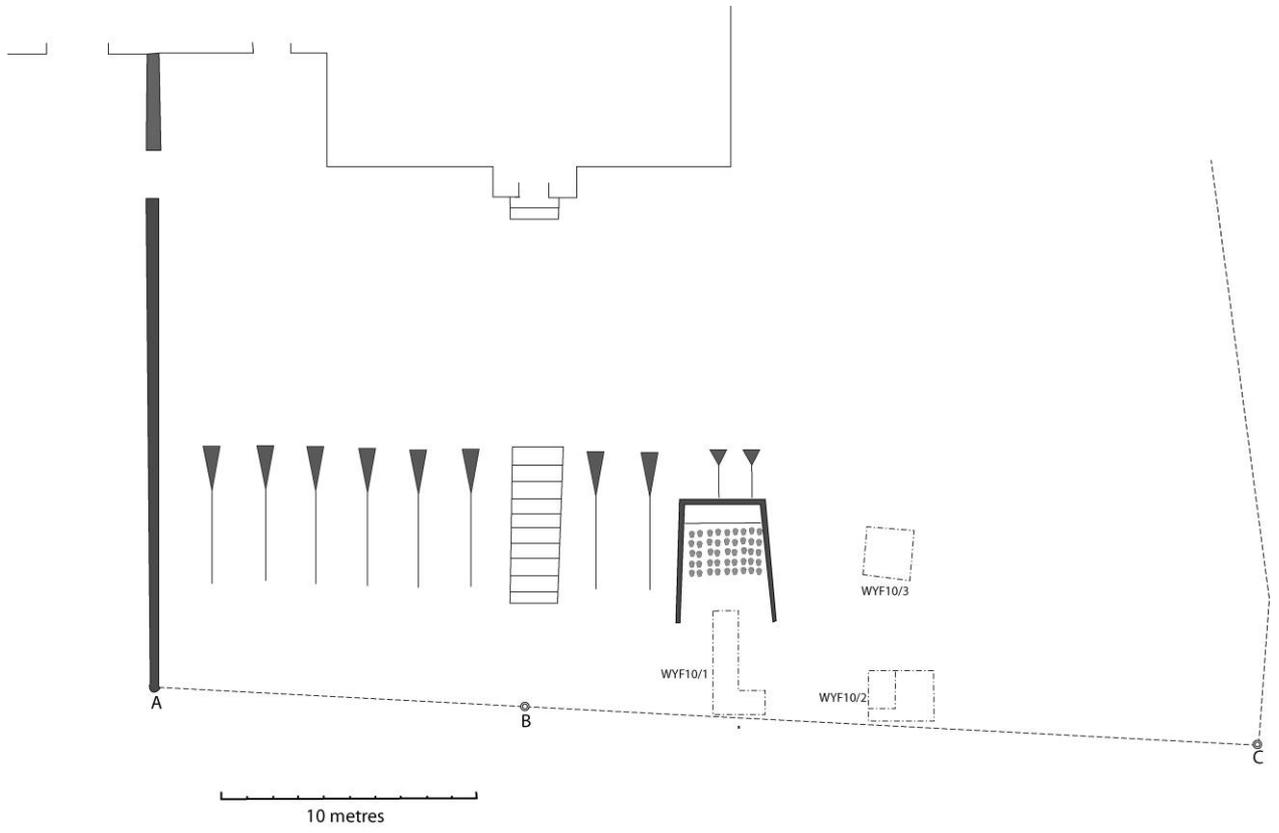
T4 East section April 2012

Final plan drawing T4 September 2011

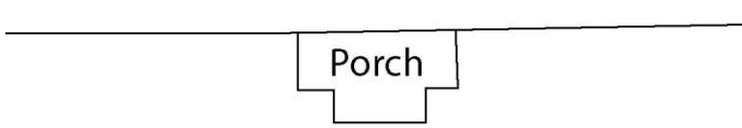
T5 West section (interim) April 2011

T5 Excavation to north of retaining wall NE corner April 2012

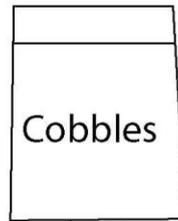
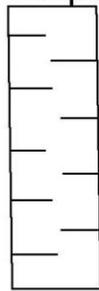
Final plan drawing T5 September 11



West Yeo Farm Location of trenches 1,2,3 2010



Steps



T1

5.2m

T4

4.6m

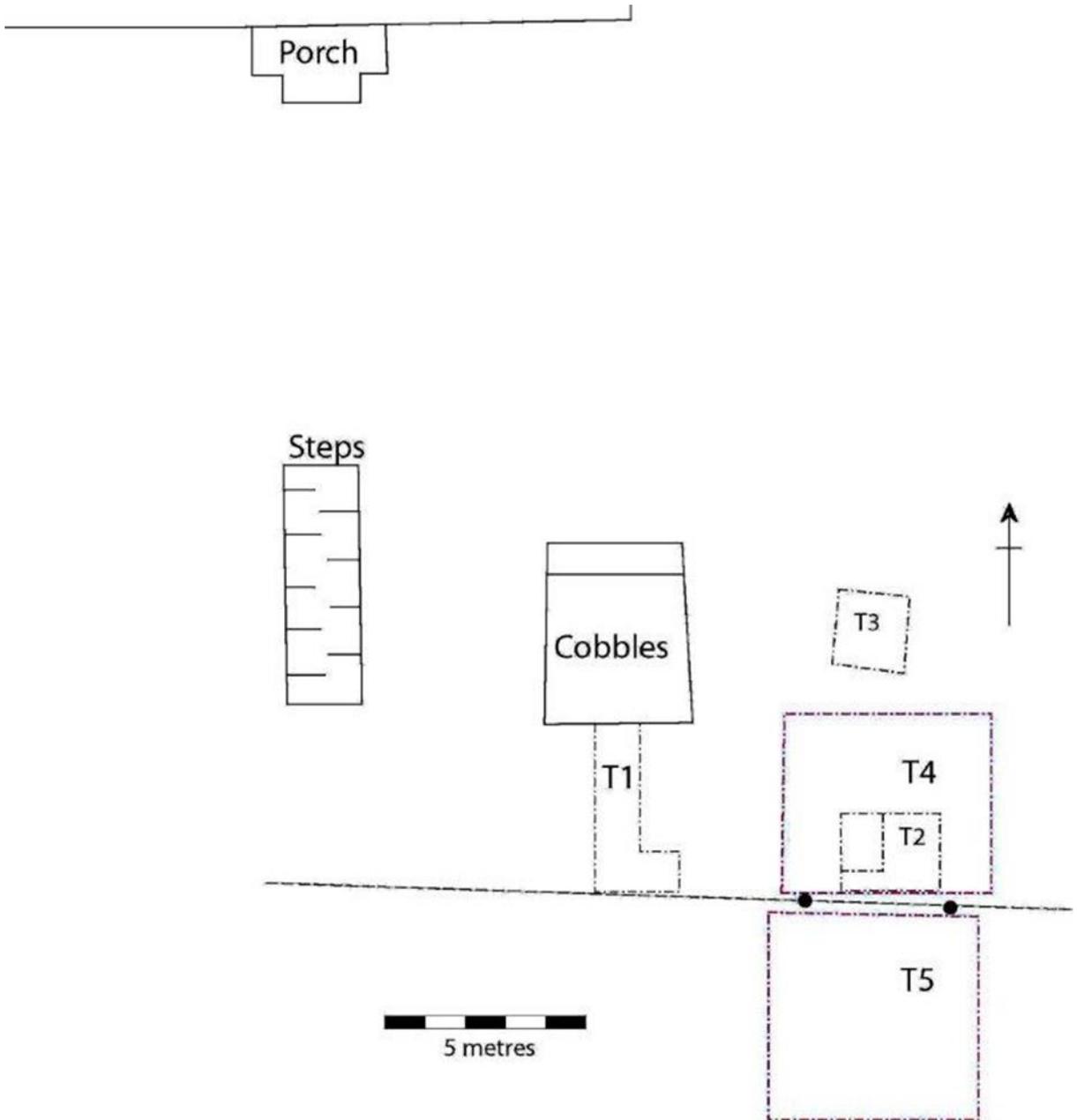


T5

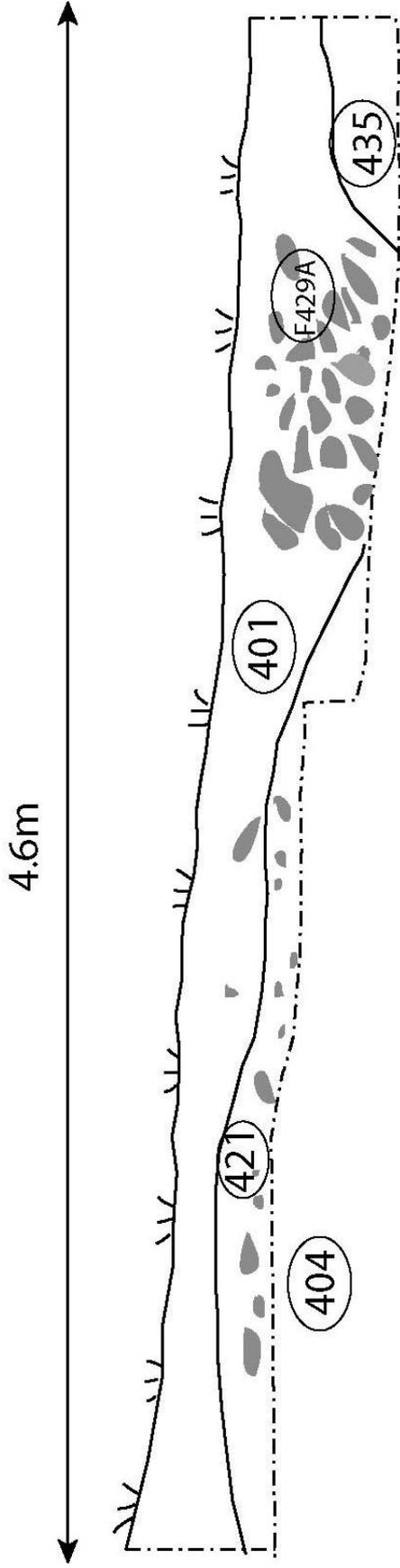
5.2m

5.2m

West Yeo Farm Location of trenches 4 and 5 2011/2012

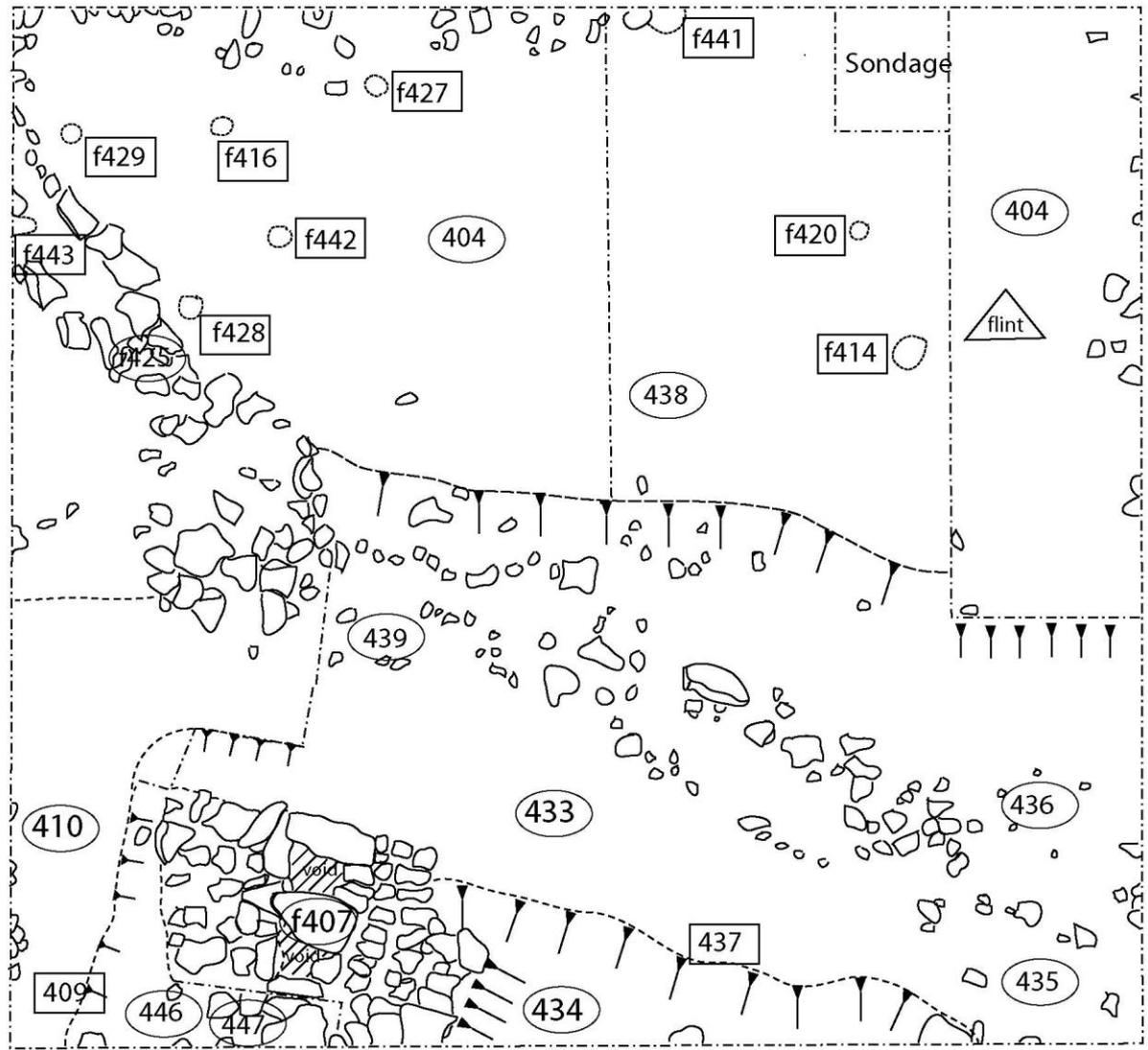


West Yeo Farm Location of trenches 1-5



West Yeo Farm, Trench 4, east section at April 2012

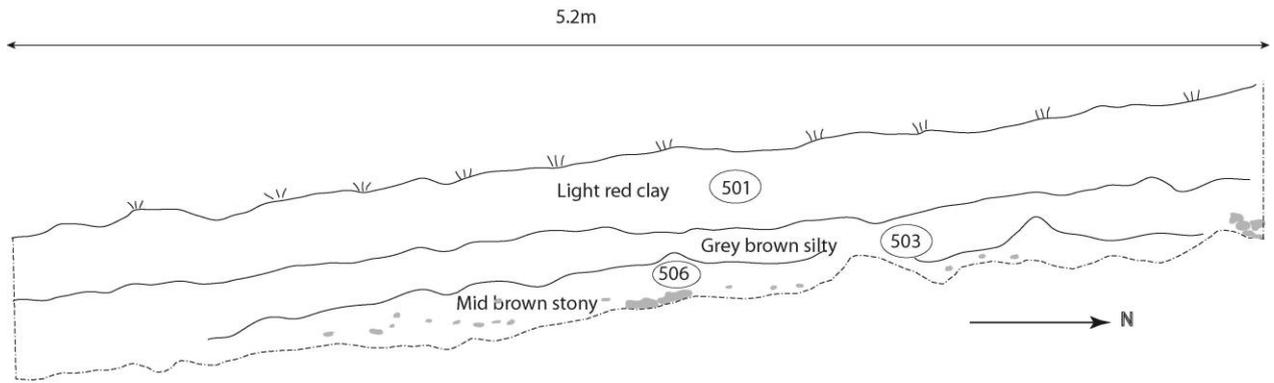
West Yeo Farm, Trench 4 plan



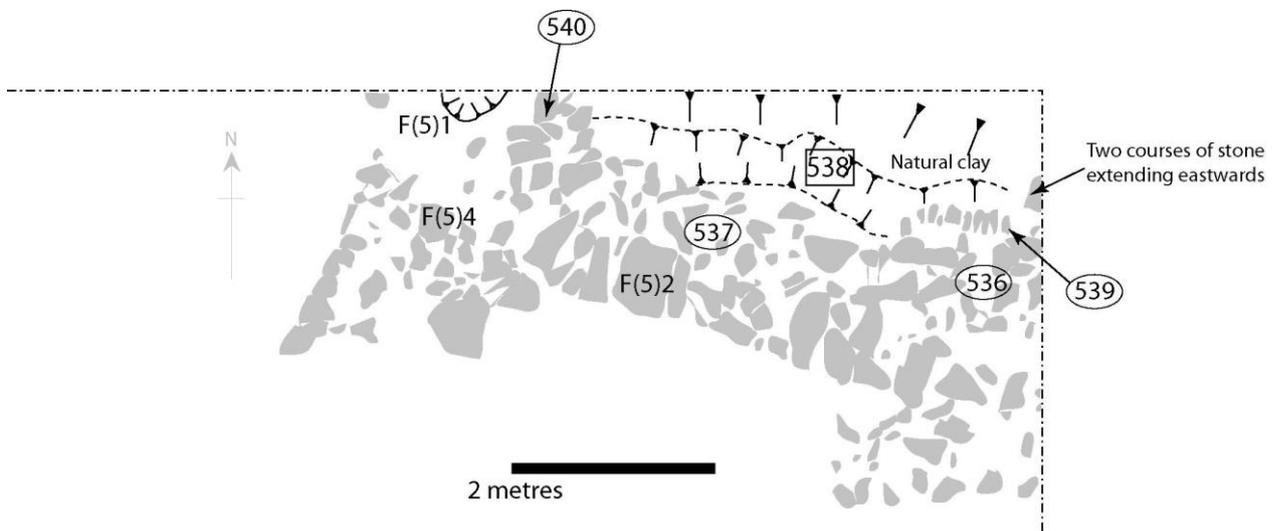
0m

5m

West Yeo Farm, T4 plan drawing September 2011

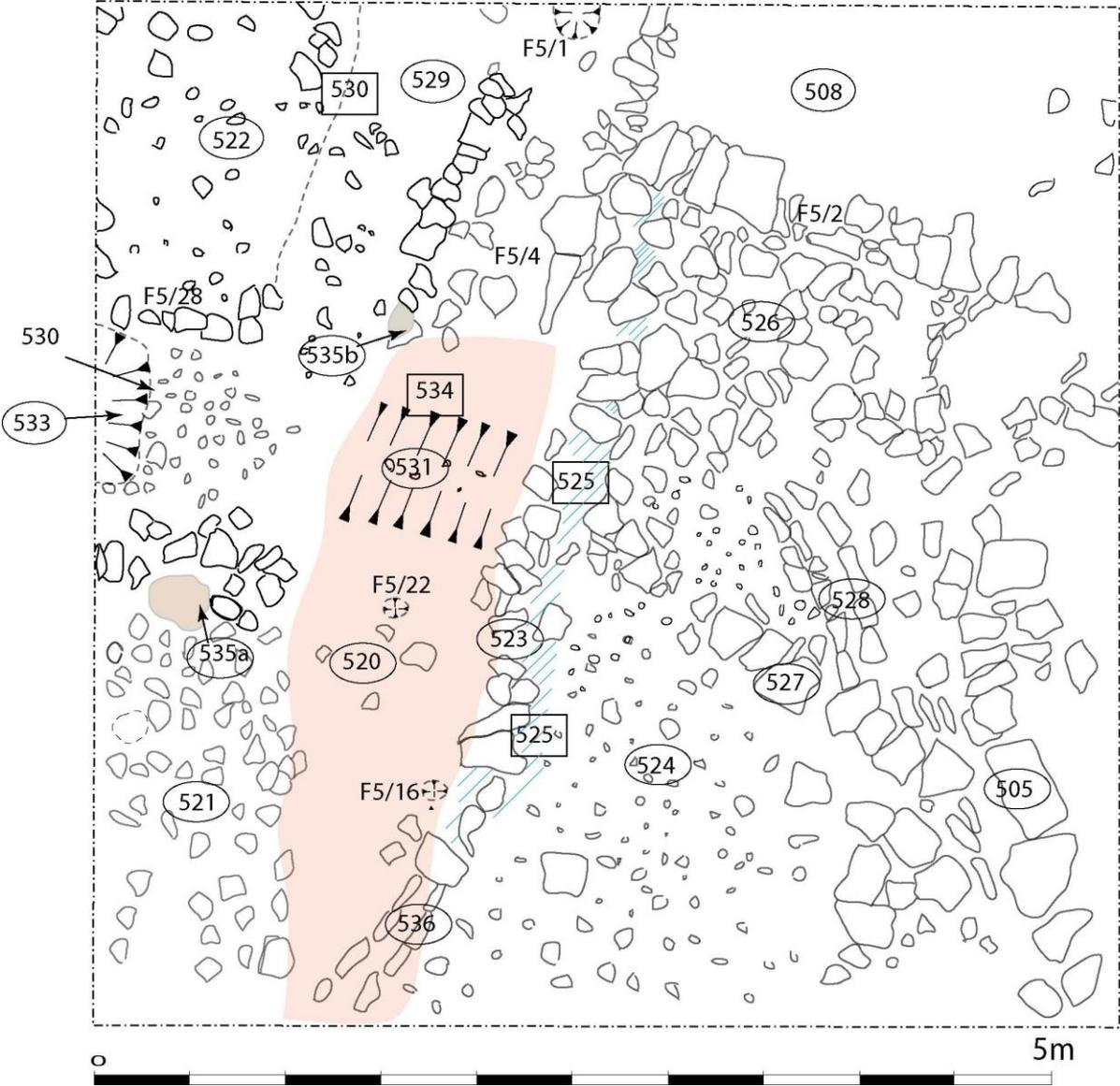


West Yeo Farm, Trench 5 west section at April 2011.



West Yeo Farm, Trench 5:
Result of excavation on north side of retaining wall F(5)2

West Yeo Farm, Trench 5 plan



West Yeo Farm, T5 plan drawing September 2011

8. FINDS

8.1 Discussion on Finds from excavation

A large amount of pottery was recovered, mostly local North Devon coarseware, dating from 13th-15th century through medieval, post medieval, to 19th century Victorian. Much of the post medieval coarseware with internal green or brown lead glaze. Domestic ware including jugs with thick handles, bowls. Ceramics included German Bellamine ware, and the neck of a medieval "costrel" hip flask from Long Park. Glazed ceramics include Bristol/Staffs ware, very recognisable with yellow/brown glaze pattern, North Devon sgraffito, and North Devon slipware (yellow glaze over a white slip). Remnants of white porcelain tea bowl and decorated porcelain circa 1750 indicate high status living at some time.

A collection of thick, heavy, dark green bottle bases identified as circa 1750 Bristol ware (by Kevin Shaddick) which would also indicate high status of the house occupants, as glass bottles were expensive at that time.

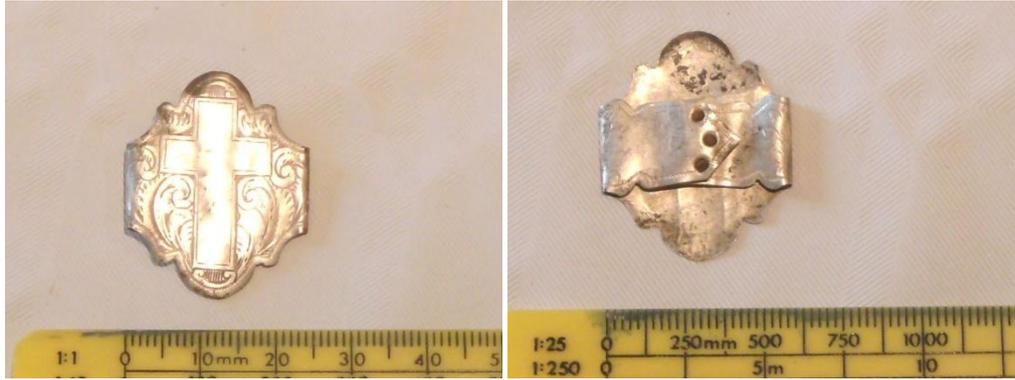
A substantial amount of very thin flat window glass (light green). Large, thick, square headed nails. Hand made brick, roof slate with black glaze. Most of the pottery and glass would appear to be dumped material from the farmhouse, burned down in the late 1880s, foundations now buried under the current Victorian farmhouse..

The absence of personal items found during excavation might indicate the farmhouse was cleared before deliberate demolition.

The 13-15th century pottery sherds found at lower levels e.g. beside the "latrine" feature in trench 4, and close to the "sump" feature in T4 may relate to the newly discovered building found in trench 5 during excavations. 2 small sherds of an earlier date, described as "*Upper Greensand derivative, may date to 10th – 13th century, probably Saxo-Norman, from the fringes of the Blackdown Hills*" (John Allan, pers.comm).. Found in trench 5, one in the NW corner and the other when cleaning small stones close to stakeholes, south of trench 5 (on the yard surface). Small sherds of 13-15th century pot were found on the possible clay floor feature within retaining wall F5(2) in the NE corner.

The newly discovered building in trench 5 showed substantial stone coursed wall foundations – possibly with a path leading up to the west elevation. Beside the path, in the "yard" surface, a possible post pad, made of volcanic trapp. Dark patches noted across floor surface of the internal structure may indicate burned thatch. Stone lined drains across internal surface. A possible step up/down in internal NW corner of building. Probably constructed of cob walls on stone foundation. A pottery bell-shaped object buried in the "yard" surface west of the wall in T5 could be the remains of "*a North Devon gravel-tempered chill - the equivalent of a candlestick but for burning fish oil. They have a wide tray at the bottom, a central column (this bit) and a small dish on the top, usually with a pulled spout. Most of those I've seen date from the 17-18C*" Thomas Cadbury, RAMM Museum, Exeter, pers comm.

Could the building be the chapel referred to in Dean Milles questionnaire of the 17th century? From metal detecting in Pond Meadow a silver strap end impressed with a cross was found in the meadow on the ridgeline just south of the site (SF 49), probably from a bible/prayer book.



SF No 49: Silver/white metal strap end.

Lead pieces with holes; small rough pieces of melted lead with a hole in each. Used for securing roof slates? Found in Pond Meadow on the ridgeline.

Also found on the ridgeline: oval metal horse furniture; marked "Chapple Maker Dulverton". John Chapple 1.1.826 Dulverton, on 1841 census: Saddler, High Street, Dulverton. Architect St Albans Abbey, Clerk of Works His father was George Chapple (Pigot's Directory 1844) as a saddler/ironmonger/postmaster

After cleaning loose soil from trench 4, it was noted that the upper (Northern) part of the trench on the hard clay pad was fairly sterile of finds. A few flints in and around the diagonal "drain" feature. A stone rubbing ball found in loose soil just above clay pad. Biggest concentration of pottery found in the lower (southern) edge of T4 and in the NW section of T5 and spread across T5 in general, before reaching the final lower level.



Neck of costrel hip flask from fieldwalking Long Park. Fabric includes soft red lumps (iron oxide) Blackdown/Donyatt.(identified by John Allan) Example of a complete costrel in Bideford museum



SF49: Broken double loop trapezoid buckle c1620-1680. Copper alloy and tinned.(ref Buckles 1250-1800 Ross Whitehead) (Found south of Trench 5 in yard surface July 2011)



Round slate(shillet) spindle whorl with central hole SF138 Trench 5 from north section April 2012 close to "latrine" structure



Bottle pontilles/necks July 2011 from trenches 4 and 5

8.2 Pottery from excavation:

Pottery from the excavation was viewed by John Allan and his brief comments are as follows:

Bristol/Staffs cream ware (yellow/brown stripes) press moulded (see photo)

Black glazed pot: treacle glazed Stafford ware.

Post med pot after 1500, with inside glaze, e.g. big bowls and jars. Thick pot denotes post medieval.

Earlier medieval pot (thin; fired in a small kiln and not durable/unglazed). Thin sherds of coarse hand made local pot; 1200 – 1500 AD. The brown/green glaze is a lead glaze. Dry conditions of fuel create the red colour, and autumn firing. Green glaze denotes damp fuel, spring firing. There were red clay pits at Fremington, to which gravel and quartz were added for tempering.

The pot sherds found at the base of the structure (medieval latrine) in T4 were hand made (no wheel), quartz tempered with sandstone inclusions; possibly cooking pot.

There was a large volume of pottery, post med and 19th century. John pointed out that the volume of pot decreases in older times; Georgian homes had more pewter and less pottery. This would explain why relatively few sherds of 13-15th century pot were found, in comparison with the large amount of post med pot. The earliest two pot sherds were “Upper Greensand derived’ from the fringes of the Blackdown Hills, probably Saxo-Norman”. This is important dating evidence which coincides with the documented history of the site. A “surprising amount of medieval coarseware, all North Devon (13th – 15th century, some early post medieval (also all North Devon). Some 18th century pieces from Donyatt”. From amongst the early pottery collection “there is not a single piece of imported sherd”.

A variety of thick ND coarse rims and handles were found.



SF98: 17th Century Sgraffito ware on left.

SF99: 18th Century Donyatt with double slips
(Trench 4) C403 on right



SF123: Donyatt 18th century cup, smooth red clay with slip and copper green, thin rim



SF 2: Base of ND gravel tempered heavy pot base found in T2 beside modern pillar base



SF133: Bristol/Staffs ware Trench 5 C504 April 2011 striped SF134 wavy



Jug rim – yellow glaze both sides



SF40: Thick ND gravel tempered bowl rim. Probably 16th century.. Trace of internal lead glaze. Trench 4 July 2011 From clay pad 404



SF22: Sculpted rim, ND gravel tempered Trench 5 C508 clay corner June 2011



SF57: Thick ND medieval coarseware jug handle and body sherd. AD1200 - 1450 Trace of internal lead glaze. T5 Clay corner NE July 2011



SF113:ND medieval coarseware 2 jug sherds AD1200 - 1450 Hand made Trench 4 in group of large stones at end of gully feature September 2011



SF118: Very thin ND medieval coarseware - hand made. Light coloured clay. Trench 4, C425 gully, south September 2011



SF81: ND medieval coarseware AD1200-1450 Orange Clay with large inclusions, hand made pot Trench 4 (east) July 2011



SF43: ND medieval coarseware AD1200 - 1450. Very thin, 1 possible spout sherd Trench 4, south section July 2011

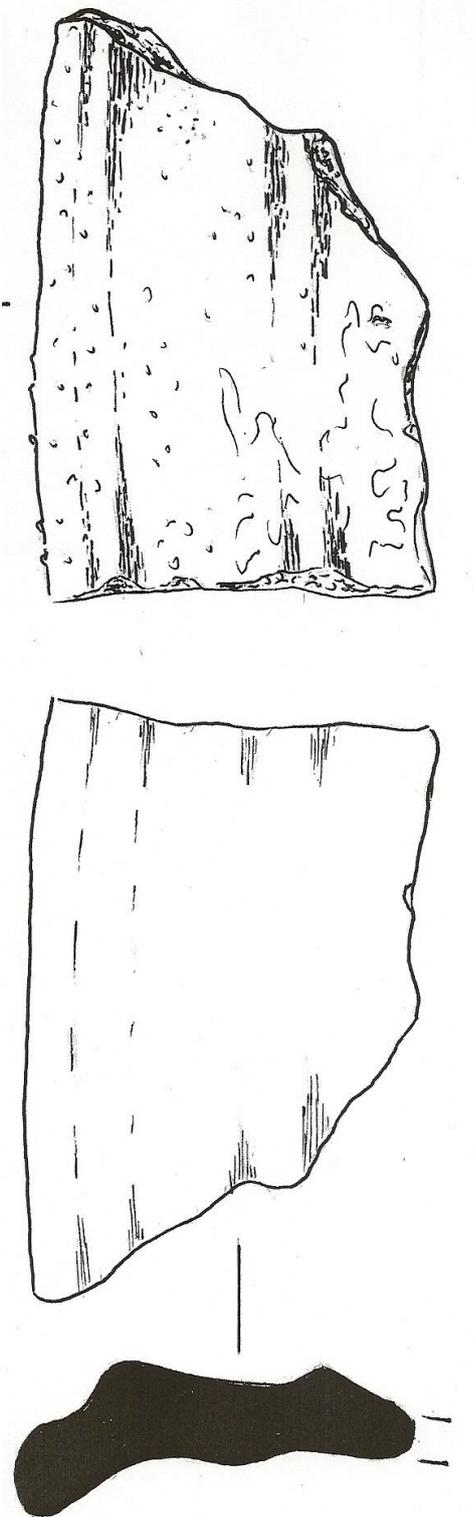


SF7: Burned cooking pot?– Upper Greensand derived. Oxidised. Probably Saxo-Norman. Late 10th-13th century. Trench 5 near stakeholes S of trench June 2011



Small thin jug - rim: 12cm dia. Base dia: 10cm Smooth clay with white slip/yellow glaze T4 C403 April 2011

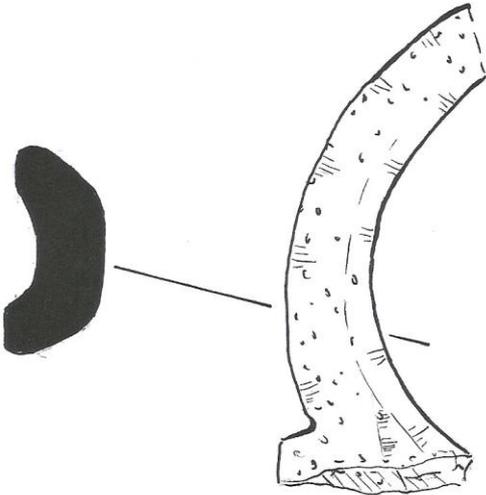
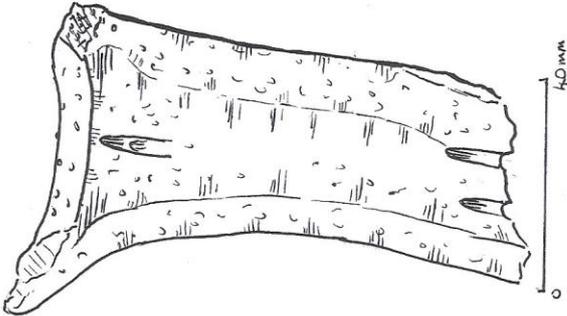
8.2.1 Illustration of North Devon Coarseware pot sherd



WYFI West Yeo Farm SF40 14
ND Gravel tempered bowl 16cm dia. rim
Prob. 16th century July 2011 Dig, gant
Actual size 1:1 Traces of internal glaze

8.2.2 Illustration of North Devon coarseware jug handle

8.2.2 Illustration of North Devon coarseware jug handle



WYF11 West Yeo Farm SF57 T5
ND Medieval Coarseware Jug Handle
13th-14th Century July 2011
Actual size 1:1 D.Bryant

9. CONCLUSIONS

Fieldwalking and surveys

The fieldwalking and landscape surveys provided an interesting collection of lithic artefacts, with flints identified as Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age. Also a selection of worked quartz pieces and stone tools showing use wear, including several pieces of ochre. The lithics give a basis for the start of a timeline of occupation on the site from prehistoric times.

Features noted during the exercise were a possible oval boundary of unknown date and a causeway also of unknown date, but with a suggested medieval date. Early pottery sherds indicate evidence to match the documented early history, at least from the 10th century. The story of the bye road cutting through the farm, with the chapel, adds to the medieval history, up to the 19th century when the new road to Witheridge was constructed.

Excavation

The limited excavation did not produce enough evidence to identify exactly what the features were, or give accurate dating, but through the pottery show evidence of the evolution of the farm from Saxo-Norman, through medieval, to modern times.

Trench 4 revealed features of:

- A hard clay pad (floor surface?) across the trench, fairly sterile of finds
- A diagonal gully which contained several small sherds of early pot
- A group of small stakeholes close to the gully, with a larger arc of shallow indentations (ends of stake holes, date unknown) visible
- A possible “latrine” of possible medieval date; several pieces of early pot found at the base of the wall structure. This structure located in a narrow curving ditch of dark soil
- A sharp cut into the clay at the southern area of T4; purpose unknown, enclosing very dark soft soil up to the side of the south section.
- Remains of a “step” like feature were located at the eastern side of trench 4, with a curve of stones coming out of the eastern section, with small flat stones packed upright around the top edge. Purpose and date unknown.

Trench 5 revealed a possible building:

- **A robbed out wall** north-south with a section still remaining; possibly of a building or boundary, probably of a stone foundation and cob upper structure. More likely to be a building wall, as there appeared to be floor surfaces on either side – internal stone floor with gulleys to the east and a “yard” surface to the west. Included in this wall was a piece of dressed volcanic trap from an unknown location.
- **Drains:** a drain/gulley alongside the wall and several others straight and curved, across the internal floor surface of flat stones.
- **Retaining wall:** a retaining coursed wall east-west butting up to and at right angles to main wall, laid on top of large flat stones of floor surface, therefore probably a later addition. Level with the top of and retained by this wall, a hard clay-packed possible floor surface, mostly sterile of finds except for a few early sherds of ND coarseware. On removal of this hard surface, a wider base foundation of rubble within a sharp cut into the clay.
- **“Step”:** A small half circular step between the joints of both walls, at first appearing to be a garden feature, but later realised to be a possible step up to a higher level (i.e. top of retaining wall). Also laid on top of flat stones underneath, so probably a later addition.
- **Post pad:** a pad of volcanic trap set into yard area west of main wall, close to an area of softer wetter soil in the wall. Possibly close to an entrance through the wall into the building?

Finds /Artefacts:

A large amount of pottery and glass, mostly North Devon coarse domestic ware, including sherds of early pot, from 10th to 19th century. Some high status porcelain from mid 18th century.

Heavy dark green bottle glass dating from mid 18th century - indicating high status.

Probable processes which have taken place on site:

Demolition of buildings in the late 18th century

Dumping of material; at least 2-3 episodes

19th century improvement; burning/demolition of house shown on tithe map, to make way for new build in late 1880s.

Conversion of farmyard to garden, then to open landscape in 20th century.

It is noticeable from the Tithe map that the boundary wall (east of and relating to) the farmhouse turns diagonally to the south west; which raises the question that it might be respecting a previous building, perhaps the building found during the excavation? Such a building does not feature on the Tithe map – it may have fallen into disrepair by the time the Tithe map was drawn.

The mass of debris of 18th/19th century pottery, building materials, bottles etc was apparently dumped and pushed across the garden and field, covering any remains of the old building, after the old farmhouse burned down in the late 1880s. The oldest pot sherds (10th – 12th century) were found on the 'floor' surface and 'yard' surface of the building in trench 5. 13th – 15th century sherds were found at the base of the 'latrine', under the gulley stones and across the southern area of T4 and in the north east corner of trench 5 in the retained possible floor feature.

The floor of the 'building' revealed stone lined gulleys laid within the surface of larger flat stones. The 'step' in T5 was laid on top of these floor stones, so may have been a later addition to the building.

On removal of turf and top soil, Trench 5 was covered in clay soil mixed with debris, with a layer of hard packed small stones (including pot and glass) in a hard band west – east. When cleaned off, two parallel lines of medium sized stones were revealed coming out of the west section towards the 'building', with a square pad of volcanic trap to the south side (remains of a postpad?) This might have been a path leading towards the entrance of the building, date unknown.

After clearing the final surface of trench 4, finds became very scarce, especially on the clay pad to the north of the trench, but it did reveal a group of small stake holes, with another larger arc of shallow indentations (remains of stakeholes?) outside it, date unknown. This clay surface was presumably a floor of beaten earth, directly on top of natural clay. It was not possible to date this surface, but it had become clear why this 'dark' area had shown up on the geophysical results, due to lack of stone.

The project allowed members of North Devon Archaeological Society and volunteers from the local community the opportunity to observe and record some of the history and archaeology of West Yeo farm, from prehistoric times until the present day. It was a valuable learning experience in archaeological techniques and produced a range of finds and features associated with the way of life on the farm, probably since its early beginnings.

An exhibition of the project, with documents and artefacts, is planned at Witheridge Village Hall for 27th July 2013 as part of the National Festival of British Archaeology (Council for British Archaeology).

It is hoped the archive will provide an interesting and useful record for future study and that the information will be an addition to the rich record of history already associated with Witheridge. We hope the farm owners past and present will enjoy reading about the project.

Our sincere thanks go to Kate Palmer and Robert James, current farmers at West Yeo for their kindness and generosity in allowing us to explore their beautiful farmland, and also to the Woollacott family and John Usmar MBE for their reminiscences and family photographs. Also, of course, to our intrepid volunteers and members of North Devon Archaeological Society.

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Derry Bryant
Chairman NDAS

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11. Acknowledgments

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Promoting awareness of the archaeology
and history of North Devon

**NORTH DEVON ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL PROJECT AT WEST YEO FARM, WITHERIDGE
2009 – 2012**

APPENDIX 1:

CONTEXT NOS. AND DESCRIPTIONS FROM EXCAVATIONS

Trenches 1, 2, 3 in the garden of the farmhouse

Trench 4 in the garden of the farmhouse

Trench 5 in Pond Meadow, south of the farmhouse

Trench 6 test pit in Pond Meadow and Trench 7 across the causeway

Trench 8 additional narrow trench NE of T4

FINDS REGISTERS

Small Find Registers

Small Find Register July 2010 Excavation T2 and T3 and metal detecting garden

Small Find Register 2011/2012 Excavations

Bulk Finds Analyses

Bulk Finds Analysis July 10 T1, T2, T3

Bulk Finds Analysis 2011/2012 all trenches

Sample Register 2011/12 T4, T5



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APPENDIX 2:

**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW:
MR FRED WOOLLACOTT AND MR JOHN USMAR MBE
AT WEST YEO FARM, WITHERIDGE, 4 MAY 2010**

TRANSCRIPTION

Interviewer: Derry Bryant (NDAS), Kate Palmer, Owner of West Yeo
Interviewees: John Usmar MBE (historian and previous farm worker, Fred Woollacott (previous owner/farmer)
Also present: Terry Green, (NDAS)

John Usmar:

Born in Bray, Berkshire. Came to live in Witheridge in 1952. Started working at West Yeo in 1961, worked on the farm for 5 years. Used to travel to the farm by car; in 1961 had to stay on the farm for six weeks because of the snow. John remembers having to stop everything from freezing, making sure the sheep were not smothered, and that they had something to eat and drink. He remembers shifting roots.

The cattle were Red Devons – stayed indoors in the winter. They fed their calves in the yard and when they had finished they were tied up in the yard and were milked of what was left for the house.

John remembers a tremendous system of deliveries to the farm which included Touts butchers, Reeds Bakery, Walls ice cream (“with 8 children it was probably worth it”). Fish lorry. Groceries were delivered in the 30’s, 40’s, and 50’s. Binder & Tuckwell (clothing outfitters from Exeter). Farmer’s Friend. Kingdom’s (little shop). John felt because of these deliveries the farms weren’t isolated.

Blacksmith: village had a blacksmith. He was a great attraction – the back of the school classroom was right by the forge and the children would watch him through the window). John said in the winter several of the older residents could be found in the blacksmith’s - it was a social meeting place, and warm.

Road to farm: “Muxey Lane” was the name of the ridge road, which cut across “New Cut” at the same time as the new road was built (next to New Close field).

Little West Yeo (Stucleys): doesn’t remember who lived there – house was derelict before the war, but the son from Stucleys became an estate agent on the Powderham estate.

Mangolds:

John said at the back of the stables, where there was 6-8 feet of verge between stable and road, was the mangold cave. They were covered with a layer of straw or rushes and then hedge trimmings. Mangolds were almost valueless, as they are 98% water, but the stock liked them. They were grown on rotation, there was a root field every year, Swedes, mangolds, potatoes. The mangold crop was not the favourite of workmen because you had to ‘single’ them.

Kate asked John where he had done the research for his set of handwritten notes on the farm, but he was unable to remember. Terry Green reported that there is a history of Witheridge in the North Devon Record Office by the Rev.J.A.S.Castlehow.

Fred:

Fred Woollacott was born on 27 March 1942 in the farmhouse at West Yeo. His father was Robert Woollacott and his mother Queenie Woollacott. His grandfather was James, who came in 1931, and his grandmother was Ethel Jones from Parsonage Farm, on Exmoor. He had three brothers, and four sisters. Fred was second eldest.

Fred’s parents bought the house two or three years after they came, after first renting the house. (The 1941 Farm Survey refers to it being rented). His parents bought the freehold but the mortgage was not paid for until 50s/60s.

Fred went to school in Witheridge, then to the big school in Chulmleigh.

He worked on the farm as a child, doing general farm work. First thing in the morning they milked the cows and took the churns out when they were going to school. He remembers at about 12- 13 years old, the churns weighing over one hundredweight. They milked the Devons, never had Friesians. When bulk tankers came in, the Devons went, as the small amount of milk didn't warrant the large tankers. They made butter and cream, Fred said they grew up on clotted cream. The milk in the churns went to the Ambrosia milk factory at Lapford. During the war the farm was a War Agricultural Depot – there was machinery for people to borrow or hire for ploughing and cutting grass etc. There is a picture of Fred's father cutting grass in the history book on a Fordson Standard tractor.

They reared their own animals. Father was not much of a market man. He did sell animals at Thelbridge market up until 1950, then South Molton and Tiverton. For the market at Thelbridge they used to walk the sheep there. All the kids stood in gateways and roads to shepherd the sheep. It took a while to get through Drayford with all the gateways. Fred's grandfather was a Grader at Thelbridge so he went every week.

Fred's grandparents (James and Ethel) came to the farm in 1931. His grandparents also lived at the farm with all the children. His grandmother was a character, very small and feisty. She came from Exmoor (Ethel Jones, from Parsonage Farm). She was one of the stalwarts of the village tea committee, did the teas for the ploughing matches. John said it was very important who was holding the teapot when the photographs were taken. There were social gatherings at the farm; the Young Farmers started at West Yeo. Grandfather was one of the instigators of the Young Farmers Club.

It was a traditional mixed farm with three or four fields of grain, roots. This district was early makers of silage, Fred's father was making silage in 1943/44. Not many other people were making silage. 300 acres was being farmed

School; the children used to watch the blacksmith through the window instead of working.

Church: there were two chapels and the church. Fred's father was a bell ringer. The children went to Sunday school every Sunday.

Fred remembered Dr Finlay in village. Dr Morton came after Dr Finlay.

Chemist: there was a chemist shop in the village. There was a big outdoor thermometer which worked. There were wooden boxes and jars, and a weighing machine. It was a fascinating shop, and the chemist was very shortsighted.

Old farm buildings, Lower Yard

Fred recounted his memories of the old barn in "Lower Yard": it was a real barn. The far one was a double grain barn (lime ash barn), a long barn with a lean-to on the side. It was stone based with a cob top. The lean-to had a cobbled floor. The barn was not being used in the early 60's.

The square feature on the map of 1889: Fred could not identify. Yard: the yard was a double sided rick yard with raised cobbles each side, the central portion was "natural". Fred thought the cobbles would still be there under the soil.

There was also a linnhay. The first half was originally cottages – plaster walls and rooms with ceiling joists. The second half was for cattle. The cottages are now underneath the modern fence in the field - the original front was in line with the hedge. Fred had made a sketch of the floor plan of this building, which he referred to as the "Longhouse".

He did not know what the remaining part of the building was (gone by 1886). He had flattened the buildings and covered them with soil from the new housing estate in Witheridge (Appletree Close), and left the rubble underneath, this included the big barn which was falling down. Fred reported that the lean-to of the big barn had expensive tiles but the barn itself had been re-roofed with tin (probably a replacement for thatch). The “longhouse” had 4 or 5 doors at the front of the cottages. There was one cobbled-up window at the back. Rooms were straight through from front to back.

Hoskins had visited the farm and said the building was of no importance., and was a “worker’s cottage”.

Fred had found window leads in the garden of the current farmhouse. He said the cobbled area extends the full width of the garden. He dug an experimental hole in the right hand side of the lawn and found cobbles. He reported the cobbled area extends both sides of the modern patio. He thought they would not be very deep, it would have been the court for the old house. Fred assumed the ruins of the old house were covered up by digging for the new house.

Terry Green thought the old barn and cottages were very substantial buildings. Fred felt the old barn may not have been sufficient so it was knocked down and the new barn put up. He was not aware of any unusual features or bumps in the fields otherwise. Had never found any flints, but reported that someone from Exeter had come and looked in the 1980’s. It was agreed this was part of the Devon Culm Rapid Measures Survey by the HER. They had found some flints in the fields now belonging to Jean Smythe and also on the other side of the ridge road.

Chapel: Fred and John knew of no evidence of a chapel at West Yeo (mentioned in Dean Milles Questionnaire, 1770’s)... Fred only knew of the stone hedge against the lane (drive) of the farm but had never noticed any building there, although a building is indicated on the Tithe map.

Fred commented the end of the old building (a cob wall) was very old and felt it was part of the original wall, close to the house.

John felt it was a “titchy” farm and wouldn’t have had a chapel.

Terry Green said it was possible that it was a mediaeval chapel and that the original farm may have lost status, as there were some high status names in surrounding area.

Water: John commented that there was a very comprehensive and clever water supply on the farm.

Lake Park produces a spring, now piped.

Fred reported that halfway up the road on the verge there used to be a long pond. A stone culvert came down inside the hedge under the road and into the pond which had a sluice gate which controlled water levels into the farm which fed a well. (big black splodge on map is a pond).

There was a concrete trough at the top of the lane, beside it was a concrete lined zinc tubular container 10’ deep. They controlled the water levels with a sluice gate – led into the centre of the big yard and the shippen.

Quarry at West Yeo: Used to build the new house. Fred and John were not aware of any building opposite the quarry, where there is a slight platform. There was another quarry on the Adworthy side for Adworthy farm.

Quarry at Drayford:

Fred recalled a gantry during the war. Notts owned the quarry and could not get the lorries up the hill into Witheridge so hauled the stones across the farm. There were mountings at this end and mountings at the quarry but no sign of anything inbetween. There must have been wooden posts to hold the wires. Stone was used for roads and for Winkleigh aerodrome. The road was turned into a one way system to haul the stones up.

Road:

On looking at the Tithe map John said they went to a lot of trouble over building the "causeway" but going where? (It stops at the river edge). The Greenwood map 1827 shows old road going through the farm. Fred said the dotted line on the Tithe map was a track in Fred's time which went to the causeway and the hedge was taken out. Fred said the Tithe apportionment calls it a "Bye way".

He did not know of a track on the other side of the river, but there is an existing ford on Jean Smyth's land adjoining West Yeo.

Derry asked how people got to Witheridge before the new road was built?

Fred said there is a road from Harrison's through Geoffrey's fields which went to Little New House (follows hedge over the ford).

Fred said the footpath across to Adworthy took the Adworthy people across to the bridge. John asked if the water was up, how did the kids get down to Drayford? Kate said the footpath across New Close went across to Dart Raffe.

Gerald.. .. maintains the main road to Witheridge went through Dart Raffe.

Fred said the road comes from Hellinghayes round the back of ? Park and straight across and down past Dart Raffe – comes out opposite the old school.

John said it was possible to tell the time at West Yeo because you could hear the trains from Lapford.

Kate said from the hay meadow you can see Dartmoor and to the South you can look across to Exmoor.

John said the road to Drayford - "Muxey Lane" is an old ridge road. It used to join the South Molton road at Dart Raffe Cross. There is still a piece of old road (now a track) where the corner was cut off. The new road across was called "New Cut", next to New Close. It was made in the 1830's when the new road went in. The turnpike went in, in 1839, just after the Tithe map was done.

Island: Fred confirmed the island belongs to West Yeo. It silted up during Fred's time. Fred's father used to carry out coppicing. Across the road and turn right towards Witheridge there was a coppice at Wood Park Copse coppiced on a regular basis. Half went to the baker in the village and half came to the farm. The baker used it in his bread oven.

Turnpike road of 1839 sliced off Wood Park Copse (the line of hedges crosses the road). Fred believes Wood Park Copse was sold in the 1980's?

Little New House (Stucley's)

Fred has always known this as Little New House. He only remembers the remains of low walls. But didn't know who lived there.

John thought the son of the family (William Chapple, born in 1718) was an estate agent to Powderham. who grew up at Little New House, but never came back.. The father was a smallholder. The house probably became derelict before the war. John felt it was probably only about 30 acres in size. The Smyth's bought it. (William Chapple was born at Little New House and donated a prayer book to the church stating where he was born. He was an antiquary and did a History of Devonshire. Sadly the bible was given away and so was the prayer book.)

Late showed a Sale Poster 1893 describing what was on the farm at that time, George Cock built the new buildings. There was a Pound House: Fred said this was used for cider making. The coach house: was in front of it.

The first half was a 2 stall nag stable. The coach house was double doors next to it. Pastures; used to grow grain and apples. Fred said when they were youngsters they found a lot of wine bottles up above the cider house with big green dimpled bottoms, so the previous owners must have drunk a lot. There were at least a thousand bottles! There was a wooden cider press but with two screws; were still making cider when Fred was a lad. There was no round house. Upstairs was general storage.

(Kate pointed out the poster referred to corn and wool chambers and lofts and a wooden auger).

Fred said the thresher was in the barn. Oil engine (Lister Blackstone) was in the engine house. The millstones were beside the engine, on top of each other. There was a complete belt system with pulleys and ropes which drove everything In the barn was the threshing machine and the winnower and reed comber and elevator through the wall into the auger. There were three corn bins in front, with a shute down into the mill below. The chaff cutter was up in the loft. The mill was for grinding grain into feed.

The root house was in the second half of the back yard.

Shearing:

Heads were fixed in the legs of the thresher. Sacks were not used. The lower end of the barn was partitioned off and the wool was chucked in a big heap. They used to shear a lot of sheep; the wool cheque was used to buy a new tractor. (equivalent to £60,000– £70,000 now). The wool was stored there until the Wool Board came and weighed and graded it and took it away.

Pig sties/ash house

The pig sties were up against the path to the kitchen. Fred demolished the brick steps up to the privy which was a single privy with a wooden seat. They made a poultry house on top in the 1950's, in the early days of intensive poultry farming. They put a concrete floor across (demolished piggery and filled in the ash house). Fred said if you dig up the calve's house you might find some interesting things! To reach the ash house you climbed up the steps (about 4' to door, toilet was there, little shute went down. Someone had the job to tip the ashes in and mix it up. Then it was taken out into the fields once a year (ashes from fires, cooker etc). Used a lot when Fred was little (12 people in the house and only one rainwater closet upstairs so the ash house was very busy!). They must have taken it out on a horse and cart and spread it on the fields.

Village pottery: John and Fred had no knowledge of any pottery being made in the village.

John said there was an iron gate which was intriguing. . Kate said it used to be next door to Claire (New..) a smart iron gate with iron posts(like an estate would have) on the main road opposite Wood Park Copse. John said in 1961 they had a milk box and put churns in, drove down the field through the iron gate and stood in the village square waiting for the milk lorry.

Kate had collected 4 massive stones which contained iron posts. Fred said these were round the house. Kate had thought this gate was at one time by the house. Fred said there was a similar gate and a double carriage gate as well, the lawn was circular for the carriage to come in. Fred filled up the gaps in the garden wall where the gates had been. John said some people went to the village on foot and would have gone through the iron gate.

Pigs: used to have 4 sties, two or three big white pigs. They were fattened and occasionally one would be dragged down the path (children not allowed to watch, so they went in to the back bedroom and watched from the window) while the pig was butchered in the yard by throat cutting by Fred's father. The back yard was cobbled, there was no well. The back kitchen was where the water was drawn. Fred's mother used the copper for doing all the washing. His grandparents used a copper in a prefabricated shed on the front lawn.

Carthorse stables were on the left side of the yard.

Fred's father and Fred both worked horses. Fred only had two but there were six stalls in the stable and on the end was a section for a riding pony. Hay and straw was stored above.

Detached Lambing House in poster of 1893: Fred said lambing was done out in the hay meadow, which was never ploughed.

Cottages; There were two cottages where Higher Park Bungalow is now.

Hellinghayes: some of the fields were called Hellinghayes.

West Yeo Moor Farm

Belonged to Fred's grandfather (it was part of the estate but was rented out). West Yeo Moor was sold in the 70's/80's. Beryl (Fred's sister) bought one field on the moor, but not the farm. Fred's family always farmed the 40 acre field on the moor, but did not own the cottage.

John said that in the spring they took the stock out on the main road. It was culm grassland.

Fred said in 1946/47 there was a NAAS demonstration of drainage, trying to rejuvenate grass in different ways, ploughing, rotovating, swaling. The cattle fattened well there in the summer.

Long Park ("Tank Field") and the war:

Fred said the Americans were transporting tanks from Chivenor for D-Day. He remembered as a 3 year old, the transporter came round the bend, the tank tipped off the lorry. He was coming back on the cart from Witheridge with Grandfather and had to divert through Dart Raffie. During the war Fred's father was in the Home Guard. Fred can remember standing on the front step (possibly D-Day?) and the whole house was shaking, glass and plates were vibrating and windows rattled because of so many planes, although you couldn't see them. As a farm, they didn't suffer much for food. Father had a lot of bees, and there was butter, cream etc. They set pans of cream which was heated on ranges. Grandparents had a Rayburn in the front room. There was a little shed as a shippen and for cooling (dairy).

Prisoners of war worked on the farm. There was a POW camp on the way to Tiverton at Deer Park Cross/Musford Gate. They billeted on the farms at harvest time and came out daily (after the war before they were repatriated). Ruth used to take in foreign students when Fred was first married. Later on, Fred said his elder brother was not home very much, and the girls did not choose to farm with Fred.

Long Park – grey flints: Derry asked where the rough grey flint had come from which was found in Long Park.

Fred had no knowledge of putting in any flint but suggested it could have been used by the Water Board? The main water comes up through that field.

Orchards: There was a grant to clear or ?? in the mid 50's. Everyone was to grow more food, drainage, grubbing up orchards etc.

Dipping: West Yeo was the dipping farm for the area. It had a decent dip and local farmers used to bring their sheep for dipping (behind the shippen).

Chickens/eggs: Fred always had eggs, always 4 or 5 medium sized houses moved around the corn fields (egg layers and Christmas birds). Fred said eggs were valuable income..

Kate also had chicken houses 7 years ago for Lloyd Maunder's.

Bats/Owls

Fred remembered bats in all the buildings. Owls used to nest in the stables; there was a little window opening. Fledglings used to sit on the window sill.

Barn owls nested in the hedges in the lane.

History Society

John said there had never been a society but just a few people such as David?? For 20 or 30 years. They tried about 25 years ago to start a history society no one wanted to do anything except turn up to a lecture once a month.

Butcher: family came from Burnley in 1940. Everything was delivered. If he didn't get to the village in time for the kickoff on Saturday afternoon he got told off.

Baker: The baker used his oven for cooking the joints. At 12.30 or 1 o'clock you would see men coming out of the pub and staggering up the road with their dinners. Dr Morton once let go of his dinner and it ended upon the road. However every scrap was picked up and "she" never knew!

Pubs/Entertainment

Fred said before the parish hall the only room in the village was the room above the Angel pub for dances, concerts. The parish hall was built around 1965.

John said events were held in the upper room in the Angel and people of a certain age would say why do they want another one? But they won in the end. John said it was tough in the upstairs room – there were two fireplaces, with half a bag of coal for an evening meeting or a play. Sometimes they went to another place like North Molton, for plays etc.

St John's Fair

There is a play and a procession, the town crier. Dancing etc and fun run, open air service. The Charter is read. Fred said it was resurrected about 15 years ago.

Market

Fred said there was always a market in old times. John said the market was defeated by Thelbridge, which had the knack of having a very successful market across the road from the pub. Thelbridge also had a point-to-point. (later moved to Eggesford).

Fred thought Thelbridge had the edge with Lapford being down the road. When the stock was bought it was taken to the station.

Terry Green asked if Witheridge has a market Charter? John said there were a number of places in the 1600's/1700's with a charter. Rackenford had one but it never took off.

Notes on flints/stones found by fieldwalking: Fred identified the smooth red/brown oval “stones” as what he called “iron ochre”. He had found lots of small clay drainage pipes on the farm and had concluded that the hard iron coloured stone was iron residue which had collected in the drainage pipes.

He had never found any worked flints. He did not know what the grey “modern” flint was from – possibly from the Water Board as the main water comes up through Long Park.