

NDAS

NORTH DEVON
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



ISSUE 14 Winter 2007/08

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Cover Picture:

Editorial

Progress and Problems

The most exciting work that NDAS members are currently involved with is the survey project at Hartland. Building on the outstanding documentary work done by Stephen Hobbs and the Hartland Society and on the understanding of Hartland's history that this has led to, geophysical survey was begun over a year ago on the coastal area above Hartland Quay and on the area of St Catherine's Tor to the south of the Quay. With the technical support of the Exeter University XArch Project (successor to the Community Landscapes Project) the survey is producing quite astonishing results which point to the existence of a complex prehistoric landscape in this exposed coastal area. In addition, landscape survey inland is adding to the understanding of the medieval landscape; and, with the permission of the landowner, Sir Hugh Stukeley, there are plans afoot to survey the grounds of Hartland Abbey. This is all good stuff and it has been agreed that the work at Hartland shall be treated as a joint NDAS/Hartland Society project. At the same time, at the other end of our area, we go on nibbling away at Parracombe, where Margaret Reed has done excellent documentary work and where we hope to do further survey work at West Middleton.

Another very positive development is that the NDAS website is now up and running. If you key www.ndas.org.uk into a search engine you will find articles from all of the Society's past newsletters brought together thematically. This is a great boon to new members and provides anyone with an interest in the archaeology of northern Devon with an overview of the Society's activities. Here too we have to thank Stephen Hobbs for taking the website in hand and finally achieving what we had long hoped for. And in terms of promoting the Society, Judy Parker too deserves our gratitude for the hard work she has put into publicising the Society's activities and programme.

Now the difficult bit. We are about to lose not only our secretary but also our treasurer/membership secretary. These have to be replaced. Derry Bryant has been the NDAS Secretary for a number of years now, during which time she has done an outstanding job of recording meetings, conducting correspondence and communicating with members. She has organised the three Local History Days that we have held and she has taken responsibility for applying for an 'Awards for All' grant. She has taken on these tasks willingly and the Society owes her its gratitude. Jane Green has been the Society's Treasurer and Membership Secretary for five years and feels she has done it long enough. She has very efficiently kept the NDAS finances in order and has kept track of the ebb and flow of membership. To Jane too, the Society owes its thanks.

New blood on the Society's Committee is always welcome, and this may be an occasion to take on new talent. The opportunity exists therefore, for any member with appropriate skills and commitment to take on either of these roles which are vital to the Society's functioning. Elsewhere in this newsletter Jane Green describes the work she has been doing as treasurer/membership secretary, so that any member interested in the job can see what is involved. The workload that Derry Bryant has taken on over and above dealing with minutes and correspondence was of her own choosing; the principal requirement of the Society's secretary is to take and write up the minutes of meetings, to communicate information to Committee members and to deal with correspondence. ANY member who feels he or she could take on either role and help NDAS to continue to function is invited to put him- or herself forward.

Please speak to Derry on 01769 572963 or Jane on 01271 374429 or the Chairman, Terry Green also on 01271 374429.

Officers of the Society

Chairman:

Terry Green

Vice-Chairman:

Alistair Miller

Meetings and Correspondence

Secretary: Derry Bryant

Treasurer and Membership

Secretary:

Jane Green

The NDAS General Committee:

Representing Members:

Derry Bryant, Malcolm Canham, Malcolm Faulkner, Terry Green, Jane Green, Stephen Hobbs, Mary Houldsworth, Marion Hughes, Jonathan Lomas, Alistair Miller, Judy Parker, Chris Preece, Margaret Reed.

Representing Associated Groups:

June Aiken (Parracombe History and Archaeology Society), Sally Cotton (South Molton Archives), Harry Cramp (Torrington History Society), Trevor Dunkerley (Combe Martin Silver Mines Research and Preservation Society), Deborah Laing-Trengove (Hatherleigh Archaeological Group).

Representing Interested Bodies:

Malcolm Prowse (North Devon District Council), Alison Mills (Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon), Dr V Torrington (Barnstaple Town Council).

Useful contacts

June Aiken (Parracombe Archaeology & History Society)
01598 763316

Derry Bryant (NDAS Secretary) 01769 572963

Sally Cotton (South Molton and District Local History Society) 01769 572378

Janet Daynes (ACE Archaeology, Winkleigh and District)
01769 520326

Trevor Dunkerley (Combe Martin Silver Mines Research and Preservation Society) 01271 883833

Jane Green (NDAS Treasurer and Membership Secretary)
01271 374429

Terry Green (NDAS Newsletter) 01271 374429

Collette Hall (NDDC Conservation Officer) 01271 346436

Marion Hughes (NDAS Social Secretary) 01271 374738

Deborah Laing-Trengove (Hatherleigh History Group)
01837 810310

Alison Mills (Museums Service) 01271 346747

Jenny Yendall (Tiverton Archaeological Group and South Molton Museum) 01884 255397

Rob Wilson-North (Exmoor National Park Authority Archaeologist) 01398 323665

David Parker (NDAS Projects) 01271 865311

Judy Parker (NDAS Publicity) 01271 865311

Other Archaeological Bodies:

Devon County Historic Environment Service:
01392 382246

Portable Antiquities Scheme: (RAM Museum Exeter):
01392 665983

Council for British Archaeology (York):
01904 671417

National Sites and Monuments Record (Swindon):
01793 414600

Devon Record Office: 01392 384253

North Devon Local Studies and Record Office: 01271 388607

West Country Studies Library: 01392 384216

Replacing the Treasurer/Membership Secretary

Jane Green

I have been Membership Secretary and Treasurer for the Society for 5 years and now I am retiring from the post. As it is essential for someone to take on the role or roles at the AGM in March it seems appropriate to describe the roles and the work they involve in this newsletter.

The choice was mine to combine the roles and they can easily be separated again if necessary.

Treasurer

The basic task is to record income and expenditure. Income is from membership subscription and the occasional grant. Expenditure involves cheques for which there is always a receipt (otherwise no payment!) At the end of our financial year an independent person has to examine the books and sign a copy of the Balance sheet. The balance sheet is literally that – income plus balance from last year equals expenditure and balance from this year.

The reason the 2 roles are combined is that it is easier to receive all membership cheques and bank them as Treasurer than rely on someone else sending them to you, but this was my choice – it's not essential. The busiest time of the year is April/May when the majority of people send their

money or pay by standing order.

All payments out are only done with a receipt – NO petty cash is held!

Membership Secretary

The job involves recording payments from existing or new members and sending membership forms to prospective new members. The membership cards, which are ordered from Bruce Aiken each spring (March/April), are sent out to each individual to acknowledge receipt of money. An up-to-date list of members has to be kept to ensure no communication breakdown. This is extremely easy on a computer database such as Access, which I use, but it can be done by hand if someone is not happy with computers.

Whichever choices are made all the information I have on the computer is freely available to whoever takes the jobs on – printed out if a computer is not to be used.

I have not found the job arduous at all and will give any help required to the new Treasurer/ Membership Secretary.

Thanks to all who helped me and tolerated any mistakes over the years – there were a few!

Miscellaneous Developments

As was mentioned in the Editorial, the NDAS website is now up and running. If you type www.ndas.org.uk into a search engine such as Google, you will find a well presented site (the work of Stephen Hobbs) in which you can follow NDAS activities and communications by theme. At present the content is mostly drawn from past newsletters, but the facility is there to comment, to update and to keep this informative resource abreast of developments. The site has the potential to become a location where members can pool their knowledge and observations. If you wish to comment or to add anything to the site, use the appropriate Contact button on the screen.

You will be aware that Six Acre Farm in Lynton Parish had caught our interest. We have carried out survey work there (including most recently further earthwork survey) centred on an apparent ovoid enclosure containing an earthwork which appears to represent a deserted medieval settlement. There are few of these on Exmoor and this is one of the best preserved. Under the direction of Mary Houldsworth, the plan had been to undertake a limited excavation this autumn, which would have enjoyed the enthusiastic support of the owners. However, it was pointed out to us that the Farm is in a potentially delicate position in regard to agri-environment schemes, and that it would be in the owners' interests if for the moment the site were left undisturbed. For this reason the investigation of the Six Acre Farm site has been put on hold.

At West Middleton Farm, Parracombe 'humps and bumps' noted during field-boundary survey invite geophysical survey. It is hoped that the technological resources offered by Xarch (Exeter University) as well as the expertise of Jim Knights can be put to good use here during 2008.

Local History Day 13th October

Derry Bryant

NDAS played hosts to a Local History and Archaeology day on Saturday 13 October at Lynton Town Hall. This was the third such event in recent years run by our Society and was attended by 14 local history/archaeology groups from across North Devon, as follows:

NDAS

Parracombe Local History Society

South Molton museum

South Molton Archive & Local History Society

North Devon Museum, Barnstaple

Explore North Devon Project

ACE Archaeology, Winkleigh

Paul Madgett, geologist

Combe Martin Silver Mine Research and Preservation Society

Taw & Torridge Metal Detectors

Lynton Museum

Kings Nympton Local History Society

Chulmleigh Local History Society

Bratton Fleming Local History Society

The morning session consisted of 3 lectures: Terry Green, NDAS Chairman, on "NDAS Projects in Parracombe and Lynton"; Chris Preece, NDAS, "Archaeology of the Taw/Torridge estuaries", and Dr Judith Cannell, "Archaeology of Woodland". The day was open to the general public – about 60 people attended the lecture, and we had casual visitors in the afternoon to see displays/exhibitions of local society projects and artefacts.

Terry's lecture centred on the landscape around Parracombe, Martinhoe and Lynton, featuring the Society's excavation and survey work and taking a look at patterns in the landscape that are indicative of early settlement.

Chris Preece's talk covered the investigation and recording of remnants of fish-weirs in the estuaries which are constantly being

revealed/hidden by the shifting silts and sand. He talked about his work on hulks of ships beached in the estuaries which are gradually deteriorating, and which need to be recorded before they eventually disappear. Chris is hoping to produce a book on his work in the near future.

Judith's talk showed how woodland on the edges of Exmoor has been exploited and has changed over the years. Woodland has been used for coppicing/grazing animals, and charcoal burning. It was interesting to see the illustrations of charcoal burning and the industry which was involved, the remaining evidence for which is platforms within the woods.

Once again it was an enjoyable and interesting day, with a lot of networking between groups. It was particularly nice to meet members of groups

we have not seen before, such as Kings Nympton, Chulmleigh and Bratton Fleming. Also to meet the Taw & Torridge metal detectorists who are keen to get involved in archaeological projects, and work in a responsible manner, according to codes of practice. They now make a valuable contribution to local museums.

Lastly, I would like to thank all those who helped make the day a success; the "stallholders", speakers, Stephen Hobbs for acting as projectionist, Judy Parker for publicity and creating an excellent NDAS display, and of course the "girls" for hard work with refreshments.

Visitors to the NDAS Local History Day viewing the displays in Lynton Town Hall



Hartland Update

Stephen Hobbs

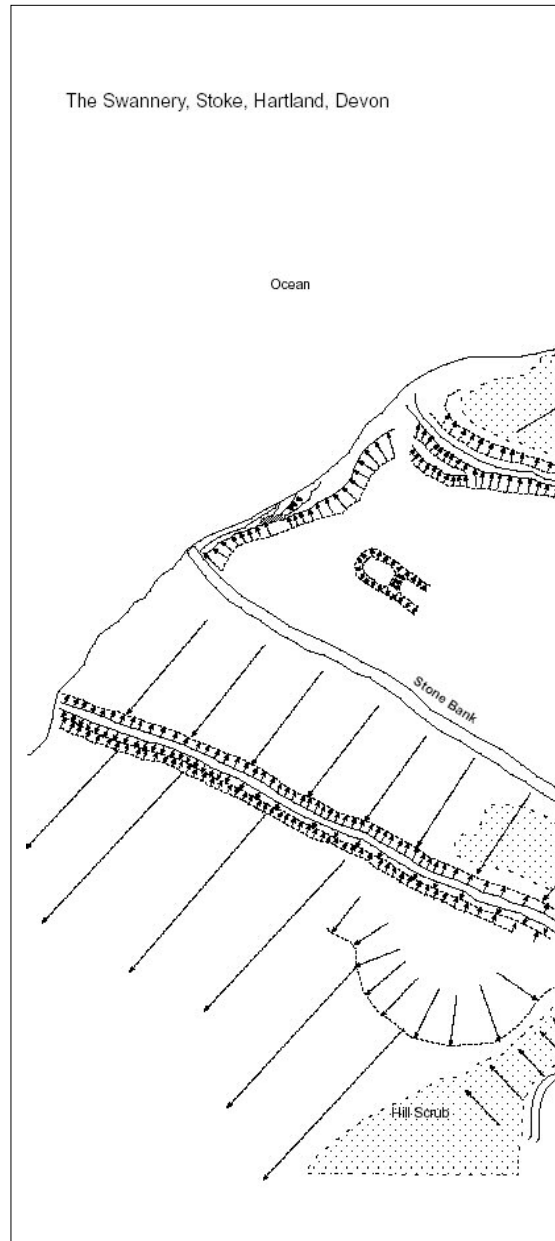
Survey in the parish of Hartland, at The Warren above Hartland Quay and in the area of St Catherine's Tor about a mile to the south, has become more and more extensive, continuing to produce very interesting results. The Hartland Project is now a joint Hartland Society/ NDAS project enjoying the support of Xarch, the University of Exeter project which is successor to the Community Landscapes Project.

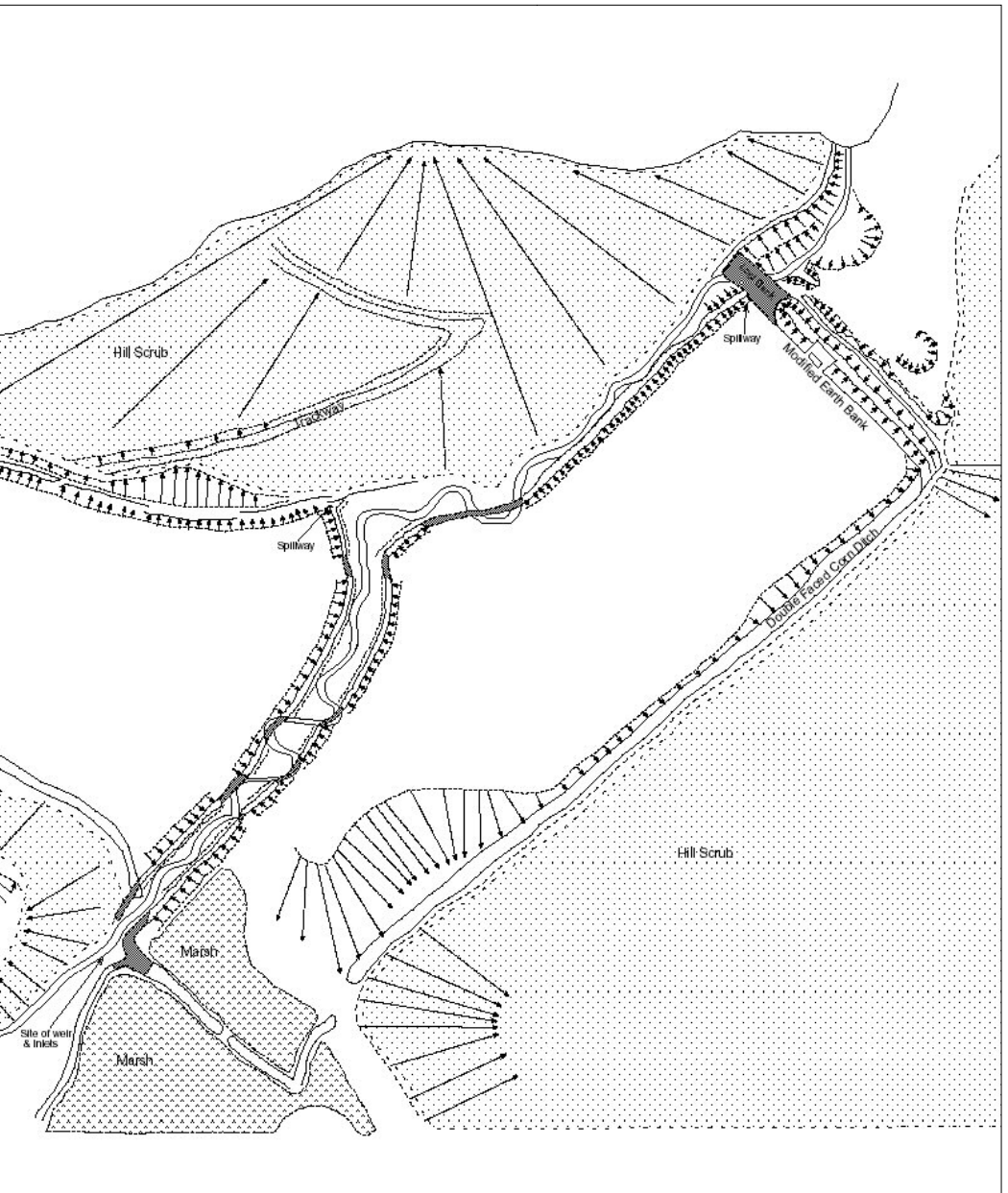
It is unfortunate to have to report that the summer proved rather a loss at Hartland as far as further geophysical survey is concerned. Various distractions meant that we lost all the fine late summer weather and were back working alongside our horizontal wind systems again. However, that is not to say that there was no activity. Away from the cliff-top surveys, walks have been conducted in the woodland valley between Hartland Abbey and Hartland, also at the Swannery below St Catherine's Tor. In addition, Xarch held an exhibition at Hartland Methodist Hall in September displaying the work they



Above: Members of NDAS and the Hartland Society with Sean Hawken (centre), formerly of XArch at The Warren. (Photo T Green)

Right: Topographical drawing of St Catherine's Tor and the Swannery (NGR: SS225242).





undertake for community groups and schools in Devon. A number of local groups and researchers took the opportunity to exhibit their work here. (www.projects.ex.ac.uk/xarch/).

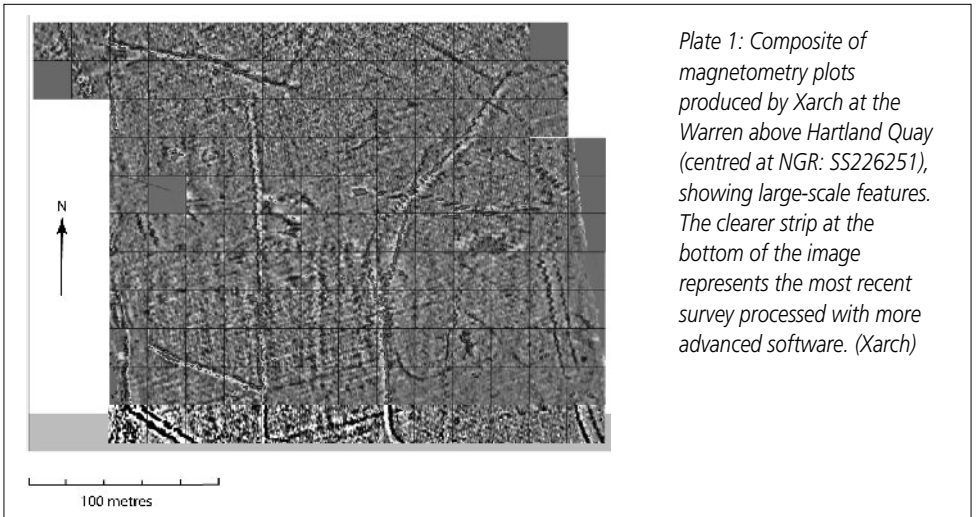
Geophysical survey on the main site (The Warren) has continued to produce interesting results and Xarch have continued to infer from these the possible early land uses in the area. This is looking to be an extensive, multi-use site with evidence dating from the Bronze Age to the early medieval period. To date, an area some 52,000 m². has been recorded which equates to less than 50% of the main site (See www.ndas.org.uk/hartland-3.html for last newsletter Spring 2007). Plate 1 represents the results of magnetometer survey produced so far. Each square on the plot represents 20x20m, so it is clear that numerous large-scale features exist. These are mostly ditch and bank-type features, but exactly what they represent is at present

impossible to say.

A low-lying area on the landward side of St Catherine's Tor is known as the Swannery and is thought by some to have been created as such by the Abbots of Hartland. Field-walking at the Swannery has produced some interesting observations, as a result of which an earthwork (topographical) survey was conducted (see Fig.1). Close inspection of the stream bank and secondary banking was undertaken, and from the earthwork drawing it is now clear how the river was embanked or canalised, raising the possibility that in fact two ponds existed on the site (north & south). Although many river valleys in the area contain areas of wet-land there are no natural pools. The areas of wet-land have been thought to represent the existence of sub surface lens(es) of clay in confined patches. At the Swannery it appears that a layer of clay may have been deposited which, due to the sea dissection of the

Plate 2: A section of the deerpark boundary to the south-west of Hartland village (NGR: SS253241). Patches of this very fine stonework survive at intervals along the boundary. (Xarch)





valley, was never scoured out, so that an extensive basin system exists. Inspection of the stream banks confirms the existence of the clay deposit. Erosion has also exposed the method of construction of the dams with water washed pebbles, sands and gravels forming a base on top of the pre-existing topsoil. Examination of the bank shows that it was strengthened by a form of stone wall or coping and covered in turf. The identification of water-retaining banks has isolated other structures as being unnecessary for this purpose. We therefore can conclude that two of the stone boundary walls are a later 18th century element of stock control and that the earlier valley floor earthwork and the banking running around the base of the Tor were later adapted to a different purpose. It was also possible to identify a second bank & ditch system on the hillside to the south-east of the valley. Aerial photographs indicate that a further series of previously unidentified field boundaries exists in this region. The next stage will be a contour survey of the valley bed to establish the possible

extent of water retention. This will be followed by a core sampling programme looking for sediments and evidence of use (www.ndas.org.uk/swannery.htm).

The woodland walk was an initial observation to complement an earlier study relating to the coach-drive of Hartland Abbey. A number of features had been identified in the earlier study and a list of areas of interest within the valley has now been produced. We have evidence of the existence of a deer park – presumably created by the Dinhams – together with its boundary walls (Plate 2). Numerous sub-divisions of the woodlands, by means of banks and ditches are to be found. Some of these are extensive and persist as sunken walkways in some areas.

A further series of walks is planned and an initial earthwork survey is being prepared.

NB. Following the Internet links in brackets above will lead to more extensive coverage of researches at Hartland which Stephen has entered into the NDAS website.

Archaeological walk at West Irishborough Farm, Chittlehampton

Peter and Sarah Kerr

On Sunday 24th June, despite pouring rain, a group of twelve NDAS members met at West Irishborough Farm, Chittlehampton for a look at their cob barn and lime kiln. The owner Hugh Muirhead met us and as it was rather wet we went straight to the barn, restored with a grant from DEFRA. Hugh gave us a brief history of the farm, explaining that there had been a farm recorded on the site for over 700 years but that the actual farmhouse itself was Victorian. Terry Green did an archaeological survey for him when he took over and was able to explain the name 'Irishborough' which has nothing to do with Ireland but means 'eagle hill'. There were also East Irishborough and Tower Farm, all linked together at an earlier date.

We then looked at the barn. It had been virtually derelict with only about two walls standing when Hugh took over, but you would never believe it now, as it is a magnificent piece of restoration. Hugh employed a local builder, a thatcher by trade who also builds cob walls, who did virtually all the work and where possible reused existing materials. A good example of this was the roof beams where he mixed the old and new, replacing missing timbers with new green wood specially selected and shaped to resemble the original beams. It was virtually impossible to tell them apart. There was a small room above thought to have been an apple store with a chute to send the apples down and then on to the cider press. The dismantled press itself was across the way in another small building. There is no written evidence for this but it seems to fit within the farm layout. The thatched roof was superb as was all the workmanship here, including the finishing touches to the beam-ends. When asked how old the barn was Hugh did not know for sure and said that the only definite pieces of datable evidence had been some timbers found within the actual cob wall at one corner. Sadly they had been

thrown away, a lesson that nothing should ever be got rid of! By now we had all arrived, including Hugh's guest, the previous farmer who had lived at and worked West Irishborough for many years. Suitably booted and waterproofed therefore, we set off across the fields towards the newly constructed pond, admiring Hugh's dam at one end, and then on towards the lime kiln.

We stopped on a trackway built up to indicate that it was a definite 'road' that led from the direction of Bishops Tawton to the kiln, believed to have been the route by which coal was carried for use as fuel. It was certainly wide enough for carts and horses and there was even a pull off section that could have been used as a passing/resting place. We traipsed through some wet woods to the top of the kiln and looked down into the cleared bowl where the lime and fuel would have been tipped. We then went down and saw the real treasure, the actual kiln itself. Hugh told us it had been virtually buried and he had cleared it out himself over many weeks. It is a cathedral like structure with two opposing entrances, thought to be for ventilation or possibly just two different access points, and three fire grates with a central chimney through which the burnt lime and coal dropped down. One grate had a channel leading to it from outside where Hugh said there was evidence of another smaller furnace-like building. Two members of the party who had some previous experience of researching lime kilns and talking to lime kiln workers expressed doubts over the viability of this building as a lime kiln because of size of the furnace but Hugh said that limekilns were recorded here from the mid-18th century. Work apparently ceased in the mid-19th century.

Next we went to look at a nearby flooded quarry with a 50ft depth of water in middle. There was a mysterious well-like structure to one side, thought by one of us to be the site for a small

pump to draw water for the horses. We then walked a little further to look at the site of East Irishborough and the area where there had once been what looked like a large pool to hold water for possibly a mill of some kind, the remains of which can be seen just down the stream.

On our return to the farm Hugh took us into a traditional threshing barn with carved graffiti

dated 1765, and to a small attached outbuilding which showed evidence of use as a roundhouse for threshing, complete with the remains of the large support for the drive shaft. The rain had now stopped and we finished our visit with a lovely tea in the garden complete with delicious cake made by Hugh and Sarah's daughter. We thank them both for their kind hospitality.



NDAS members entering the 'cathedral' kiln at West Irishborough.

A walk around Countisbury

On Sunday 2nd September NDAS members met up with Roger Ferrar to take a guided walk looking at some of the archaeological features around Countisbury. Lying at the top of the hill as you climb up out of Lynmouth in the Porlock direction, the settlement of Countisbury consists principally of the church and the Sandpiper Inn plus a small group of houses on the roadside. Other houses and farms are thinly scattered throughout the parish. Archaeologically Countisbury lies at the centre of an intensely interesting area of Exmoor.

We met at the Barna Barrow carpark on a rather grey and chilly September day, and set off at once towards the former maritime look-out post on Butter Hill from where you look north-west across the Bristol Channel. On the way there we were instructed by Roger to look out for the flat stones set in the path which had been placed there in the past to help men find their way to the look-out post on dark and foggy nights. The

original purpose of this small building, we were told, was to observe commercial shipping in the Channel heading for Bristol. To the right of the path we also noted a number of very low, eroded field-boundaries revealed by swaying (burning off the heather and gorse to encourage new growth), and as we descended from the top of the hill towards the church, it was apparent that we were passing through and by more relict field boundaries. Like the earthworks which are visible to the east of the church, these are presumably memorials to the days when Countisbury was a more populous community. It is notable that the Domesday Book (1086) records that Countisbury had a population of around 75, land for 10 ploughs with 50 acres of woodland and with pasture land 1 league long and 1 furlong wide (perhaps grazing land above the cliffs). It was worth £4 which was within the middle range of Domesday values. Around 1200 Henry III gave the



Walking along the rampart of the Wind Hill promontory fort.

NDAS Training Day, April 12th, 2008

manors of Countisbury and Lynton to Ford Abbey, and the Abbot's ambition to increase production from the Abbey's holdings may further account for agricultural development of this exposed area.

We were taken next to the church where the churchwarden, John Peddar gave us some account of its history. The building was expanded and restored during the late 18th and early 19th century, and very little is visible in the way of early features, though one elaborate and well preserved medieval carved bench end gives some indication that this was not a poor church. Mr Peddar gave us an informed account of the building for which we were grateful.

Taking a brief look at the tiny school house below the churchyard, we crossed the road and headed for Wind Hill. This magnificent - presumably Iron Age - promontory fort is thought to be the bury or 'fortified place' in the settlement name, the Countis- part deriving from a British or Old Welsh word for 'high place'. The rampart, up to 30 feet in height and stretching for a quarter of a mile from just above the sea on the north side to the edge of a precipitous cleeve on the south side, would have presented an unavoidable barrier to anyone travelling westwards along the coast, forcing them to pass through its central gateway. Whether it was ever a 'fort' in the military sense is debatable. Because of its position it seems quite defensible, but was probably meant to impress rather than intimidate. This promontory fort is thought to be the Arx Cinuit referred to by Asser, King Alfred's biographer, as the site of the defeat of Hubba the Dane in AD 878 (Kenwith between Northam and Abbotsham is now generally dismissed as the battle site).

We walked along the rampart, admired the view and discussed this and that before returning across the fields and back up the road to Barna Barrow where we thanked Roger for his guidance and set out on our various journeys home.

For several years now the Society has organised a training day for the benefit of members in late winter or early spring. Following this tradition we intend to hold a training day on Saturday 12th April, 2008 in the Henry Williamson Room next door to the North Devon Record Office above Barnstaple Library.

The focus this time will be documentary. Since there is currently a great deal of interest in parish histories and house histories, and the resources are available if only you know how to use them, we are offering the services of people experienced with such things to guide participants through the processes involved. The day will include an introductory talk and a case history followed by a 'hands on' session and an introduction to the documentary resources of the North Devon Record Office and Local Studies Library. It will be a great help to have some specific enquiries to pursue, so if you would like to investigate the history of your own house or locality, please bring along any useful material - deeds are a good start - and although the time will be limited, we shall try to help you find the most profitable lines of enquiry.

The day will run from 10.00am to 4.00pm. The facilities are available to provide tea and coffee (for which there will be a small charge), but for lunch you will need to fend for yourself! For practical purposes, we shall have to set a limit on the number of participants (probably 30 at maximum), so if you would like to take part, please phone Derry Bryant (NDAS Secretary) on 01769 572963 sooner rather than later.

The Three Tuns Inn, Barnstaple: (The oldest pub...?)

Terry Green

If you frequent Barnstaple High Street, it won't have escaped your notice that the Three Tuns Inn has been undergoing 'works'. The familiar Barnstaple pub closed down some while ago and has been taken over by Pizza Express, who apparently have a good reputation for looking after the old buildings that they acquire. Re-opening as a pizzeria will be only the latest change of personality that this building has undergone in over 500 years. In the circumstances, and since the Three Tuns is such a Barnstaple landmark, a brief account of it seems an appropriate contribution to this edition of the NDAS Newsletter.

Firstly, things are not at all what they seem. The half-timbered frontage with its faintly Elizabethan look is a pastiche created by the Barnstaple architect and antiquarian Bruce Oliver in 1946. Before that date the Three Tuns looked quite different, having a plain Georgian frontage with a Victorian shop window at street level (Plate 1). Nevertheless, the name goes back to at least 1704 when Thomas Randle is recorded as paying 6½d Poor Rate for 'the 3 Tuns'.

In 1948 Bruce Oliver, having, at the request of the owner Harry Dawe, 'restored' the inn to what he considered to be its original condition, gave a presentation to the Devonshire Association, detailing the features that he had found and the history that he could piece together from Barnstaple records. The history below is largely derived from his information.

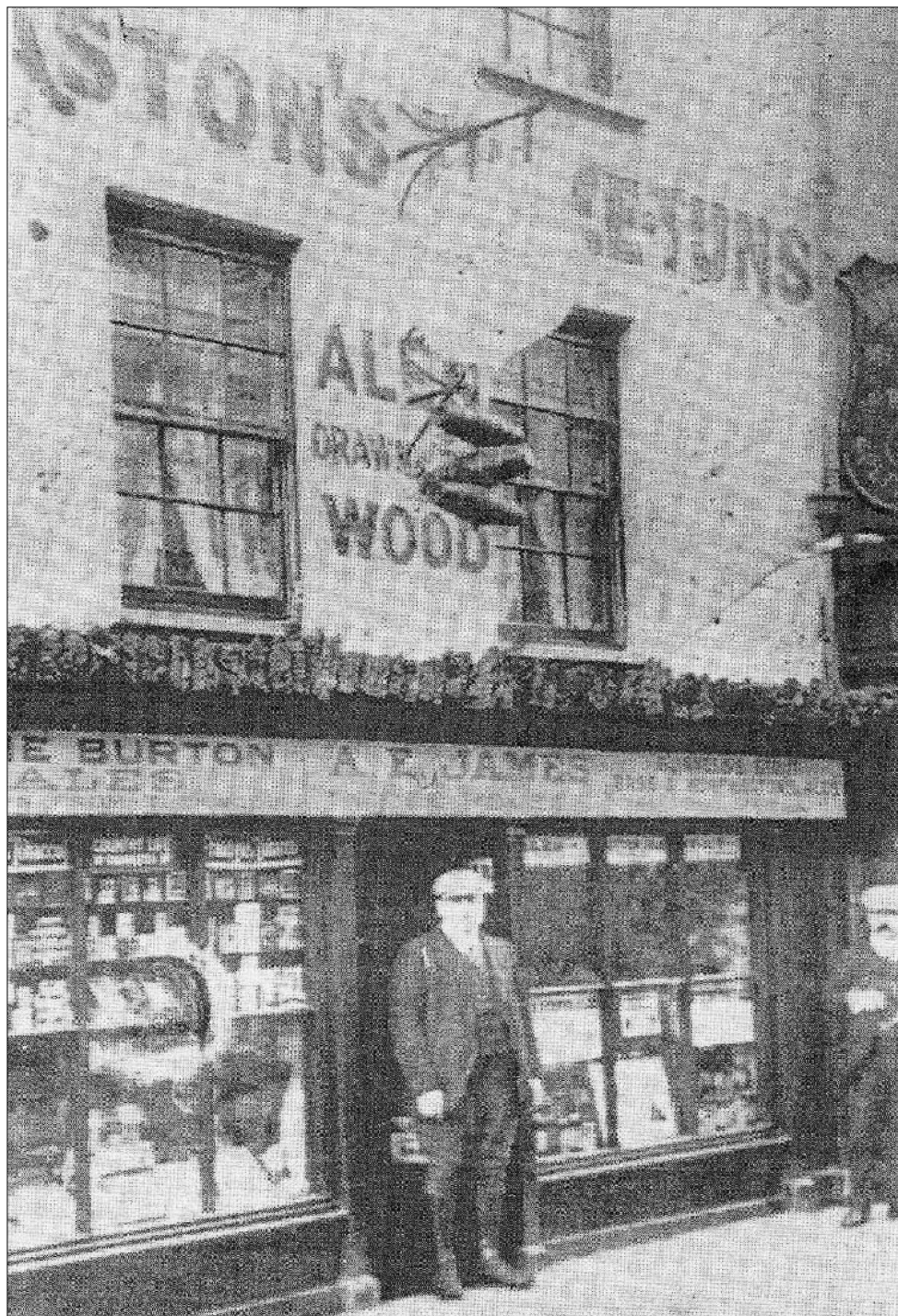
From documentary evidence it is quite clear that urban occupation of the centre of Barnstaple was well developed before 1066, and such evidence was backed up by archaeological work in the 1970s and '80s. Investigations in the Holland Walk and Paiges Lane area under the direction of Trevor Miles found evidence of timber buildings and tenement boundaries pre-dating the stone buildings which began to go up in the

14th/15th century. These buildings had undergone alteration in the 16th to 18th century period and further radical rebuilding took place in the early 19th century.

The picture emerging from documents of developments in the central High Street sits quite comfortably in this archaeological context. In 1415 John Hunt bought a property in this location – very probably a merchant's premises at the time. From John Hunt it descended to his grandson, Henry who, in 1449, gave it to John Holman, rector of Heanton Punchardon and Walter Hayne, merchant. In 1459 John Holman granted to John Denys and 23 other feoffees all his properties in Barnstaple, including those which he had by the gift of Henry Hunt. For his lifetime John Holman was to enjoy the income of the properties, as was Henry Hunt for those properties which he had given to John Holman. On their deaths, the feoffees were to provide for the offices of a priest to conduct service in St Anne's Chapel for the benefit of the souls of John Holman and Henry Hunt and their families. Within the agreement of 1459 were clauses for the repair and maintenance of the properties, stating 'Before all other things it is necessary that all needful outlay be made for rebuilding, etc.'. John Holman died in 1461.

In 1549, under Edward VI, St Anne's Chapel was secularised and was turned into a grammar school, while the other associated properties were retained to the use of the town. From this time the properties bequeathed by John Holman were administered by feoffees comprising the leading merchants of the town. The document listing the feoffees provides a schedule of 42 properties among which the (antecedent of) The Three Tuns was in the tenure of John Wichalse. A century later, in 1647 the tenant can be identified as a

Right: High Street frontage of the Three Tuns in the early 20th century. (North Devon Athenaeum)





widow, Elizabeth Cooper who was followed by her daughter Mary in 1667 and then by Jane Squire. In August 1669, Christopher Hunt, a bookseller leased the property from Henry Masson and John Downe, merchants, surviving feoffees of the Corporation land. Christopher's son John

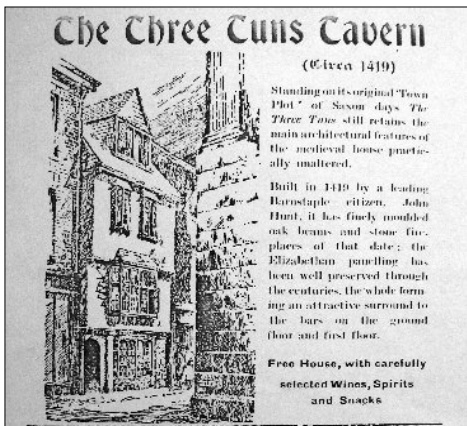
succeeded his father in the business and tenancy and in 1700 took up a fresh lease for a term of 31 years. Unfortunately tragedy struck and by 1703, John, his wife Mary and his son John were all dead. In 1704 Thomas Randle took over the tenancy of the property and it is in this year that

we first find the name Three Tuns. In 1747 John Baker bought the property continuing there with his son until around 1796, when it was sold to William Barbor. In 1826 James Easton bought The Three Tuns, and Eastons were owners and landlords until 1909. The Eastons were followed by a succession of landlords down to 1946 when Harry Dawe bought it and approached Bruce Oliver to restore it to what was thought to be its original state.

When Oliver stripped away Victorian studwork, fireplaces and paint, he found what he took to be a late medieval merchant's premises with shop, workshop and storage on the ground-floor and a panelled hall on the first floor, the front of which,

Left: Part of the first floor showing one of the fireplaces, panelling and finely worked beams. The corbel of the right-hand jamb of the fireplace appears to be a wooden replica of the stone version on the left. Bruce Oliver thought this represented the 15th century rebuilding. (Photo: C.Humphreys)

Below: A 1948 advertisement for the 'restored' Three Tuns. (North Devon Athenaeum)



he conjectured, would have been originally jettied out over the street. The ceiling beams were elaborately decorated with acanthus leaf stops, a motif repeated on the lintels of the two fireplaces. The jambs of one of the fireplaces appeared to have been put together from salvaged architectural material, perhaps corresponding to the rebuilding recommended in the late 15th century (Plate 2). The panelling appeared to date from three different periods, the latest 17th century. The roof timbers were original. There was a back-block with a large fireplace, probably representing a detached kitchen which was connected to the main building by a first-floor gallery on the north side. (Oliver thought this to be Elizabethan, but there is a problem with this as the Barnstaple town map of 1843 shows the back-block connected by a structure on the south side!) One curious find was a pair of 18th century lady's shoes inside a cloam oven beside a ground-floor 16th century fireplace, apparently put there to dry and then forgotten.

Bruce Oliver left numerous photographs of the building as he found it, which show a number of principal features, as now seen, to be authentic. However, it is quite obvious that he remodelled the street frontage completely, and it is hard to know what other features inside were introduced by him in order to 'restore' the building. It is known that some architectural items were brought in from elsewhere in the district. An advertisement from the 1940s (Plate 3) makes great claims for the age and authenticity of the Three Tuns, but claims for its great age as a pub have to be treated with a deal of scepticism. When did it become a pub? Which bits are oldest? How many changes has it undergone? It is not alone in retaining features of medieval and post-medieval Barnstaple building (have a look inside the North County Inn some time), nevertheless it probably has more on display than any other.

Excavation at Mount Folly 2007

Brian Fox

Brian spent time this summer digging at Mount Folly, near Bigbury-on-Sea, South Hams, where there is evidence of two Iron Age and Romano-British enclosures.

Having the opportunity to write something about my archaeological activities this season somewhat emphatically thrust upon me by Terry, I will overcome my reticence and attempt to describe the activities at Mount Folly. This year will be my second season and third session on what I regard as a rather special dig. The Mount Folly Enclosures Project started in 2003 on an area originally discovered through aerial reconnaissance by Frances Griffith in 1989. The director, Dr. Eileen Wilkes of Bournemouth University, has made volunteers feel very welcome throughout the dig, and everyone has been offered the opportunity to cover the normal range of activities, including geophysics, the levelling and gridding in of all finds, planning and recording, and, as the dig matures, the chance to thoroughly investigate, interpret and record a chosen feature. This writer seemed to spend much of his time with his head in a pit and his feet in the air. Training days at Devon Archaeological Society's Berkeley House in Exeter have been useful and this venue has provided the opportunity for post-excavation work, including pottery handling and sorting.

The site is on a hilltop overlooking Bigbury Bay and Burgh Island, and a short walk inland will give a panoramic view over the South Hams and Dartmoor. It would appear to be an ideal occupation site for many reasons, but particularly if you needed to be visible from a distance, especially from the sea. Initially trenches were cut, but the excavation has been extended into a large open area, revealing in the centre of an enclosure, evidence for a roundhouse, or sequence of roundhouses, cut into a terrace composed mainly of shillet. Within and around this structure pottery

has been found, dating mainly from first century BC to first century AD, but also samples extending from the third century BC to the third AD, and within the area of excavation, a few of Bronze Age date. The pottery types include local Devon wares, with wares from Cornwall, Dorset, France, Italy and Germany.

The work was repeatedly interrupted by this year's not so wonderful summer weather, but despite this the diggers were able to work carefully through the terrace fills and the roundhouse floor. Some of the volunteers were given responsibility to excavate record and interpret some very enigmatic features. There are signs for continuity of use through time, with post-holes and other structures suggesting rebuilding through a number of phases. It is being considered that Mount Folly would have made an ideal trading focus for a very long time, perhaps as far back as the Bronze Age, but certainly in the Iron Age, as the wealth of pottery from European sources would suggest.

This excavation has enjoyed a lot of local popular support, which has gone so far as to help with funding, and this, combined with a friendly and supportive landowner, and no apparent threat of backfilling due to the patented out-of-season site preservation method makes this a volunteer-friendly dig. Should any NDAS. member wish to volunteer for any of next year's dig, (camping on site for tents only), could they please contact Eileen (details below)?

Dr. Eileen Wilkes
Centre for Archaeology, Anthropology and
Heritage, School of Conservation Sciences,
Talbot Campus, Bournemouth University, Poole,
Dorset BH12 5BB

Right: The excavation site at Mount Folly. If you dig in Devon you get to do it in some very pretty places!



A New Member's Tale.

Bob Shrigley

A year has passed since I retired and joined NDAS and our chairman has invited me to say something about my background and what I have been up to during the last twelve months. My entire career was spent working in the archive profession as a conservator, first at the Public Record Office, (now the National Archive), and finally at the Surrey Record Office. My work involved the repair of material dating from medieval times to the last century, which had been ravaged by mould, insects, the effects of acidity and general mis-handling. This included paper and parchment documents, seals, books and maps. Over the years repair materials, methods and equipment changed. For example, long-fibred Japanese papers and tissues began to be used on documents in order to produce more light and flexible repairs. We even profited from the Cold War when 'leafcasting' technology came to the West by way of a Bulgarian emigrant to Israel. This involved the use of a machine in which liquid paper pulp was used to infill missing areas in paper documents. The job also changed with greater emphasis on preservation matters such as climatic storage conditions, packaging and disaster planning. Strategies also had to be developed for the long-term care of the newer record media eg. photographs, sound recordings and digital material. The highlight of my career was my involvement in the relocation of the Surrey Record Office to the new Surrey History Centre at Woking. This was a £6.2 million development grant-aided by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Along with others, I helped battle to ensure that the majority of this money went into fitting out the reading rooms, storage areas, workrooms and offices, and not into producing an architectural edifice as had happened elsewhere in building new record offices.

Having joined the Surrey Archaeological Society at the tender age of 13, one of my

objectives in retiring to Devon, was to revive my past interests, which had been overtaken by such things as family and a career. I have been to most of NDAS's evening talks and other events but have devoted all outdoor activities to the Hartland Project, as I live reasonably near at Northam. What immediately struck me is how archaeology has changed with the use of newer technologies to 'read the land'. I have been assisting Stephen Hobbs and the Exeter University's Xarch Project Team with geophysical survey work. At The Warren this has involved setting out 20-metre grid-squares and helping with magnetometry data gathering. Although there is very little to see on the surface, the scans have shown up a fascinating wealth of information indicating the possible existence of barrows, a trackway and field systems etc. There is still a lot more survey work to be undertaken here and in the adjoining fields, and if the current results are anything to go by, it is hoped that even more 'good' archaeology will be revealed. I have also helped with GIS work at the Swannery below St Catherine's Tor in which computer and satellite technologies are used. It is hoped that once a 3D survey picture is produced, it will assist in the interpretation of the area which contains many intriguing banks and ditches.

I am indebted to the Exeter University team, Stephen Hobbs and many other NDAS members who have been helping me to get up to date with today's new archaeological practices and for imparting their wealth of knowledge on the history of the North Devon Area.

Note: For more information on the Hartland Project go to the NDAS website at www.ndas.org.uk

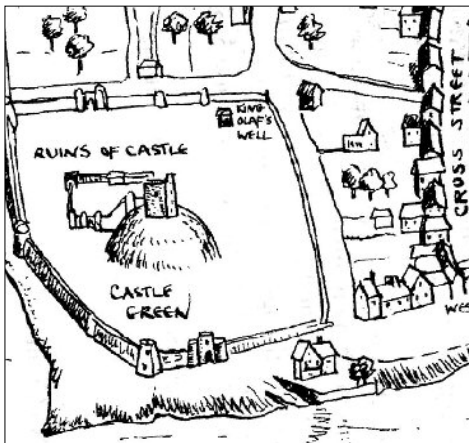
*Lunch break for the Hartland surveyors,
author to the right*



So why Tuly Street?

Jim Coulter and Terry Green

There is quite a bit of history bound up in street names and a better understanding of the history of a town can be gained by looking at their origin. Barnstaple has some quite revealing examples. Of the main thoroughfares, High Street requires little explanation and the Strand is clearly the riverbank, while Boutport Street is less obvious. When the town was walled, this was the way that went "about the port", in Old English: *būtan porte*, the Old and Middle English 'port' meaning 'a town with a market'. The curving line of Boutport Street echoes the course of the town wall. Newport was the Bishop of Exeter's 13th century 'new town and market' set up to rival Barnstaple. Cross Street was originally Crock Street and was inhabited by potters. Bell Meadow is thought to be the 'bailey meadow', which was presumably grazing land outside the town and somehow identified with the castle bailey, while Barbican Lane was probably marked by an outwork of the castle, perhaps a tax gathering point for traders entering or leaving



Part of (a copy of) Bruce Oliver's 16th century plan of Barnstaple, showing King Olaf's well inside the castle bailey.

the town by the route across Frankmarsh. Litchdon Street commemorates the location, the cemetery of Saxon Barnstaple. Bear Street was the road that led to or away from the bar or barrier at the east gate of the town (like Temple Bar in London or Bargate in Southampton). Magdalen Street lies in the vicinity of the Cluniac Priory of St Mary Magdalen, which lay immediately to the east of the town.

So what about that very odd name, Tuly Street?

A sixteenth century map of Barnstaple drawn by Bruce Oliver (Fig.1) includes within the precincts of the castle the location of King Olaf's well on a site now occupied by the library and North Devon Record Office. Olaf, a scion of Norwegian aristocracy, fought on the side of the English king Ethelred II in his wars against the Danes in 1013. On his return to Norway he became king where his rule is mainly remembered for converting that country to Christianity. In 1030 he was killed in battle and from his grave, springs of water with healing properties flowed and miracles were reported. He was declared a saint and his cult became widespread in Scandinavian areas and in England too, especially in the 'Viking' parts.* There are over forty ancient church dedications mainly in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, East Anglia and the Western Isles of Scotland. In Devon there is one in Exeter and a chapel at Riddlecombe. And in Barnstaple there was King Olaf's or St Olaf's well. In the course of time, Olaf's name became corrupted by the transfer of the final 't' of 'saint' to give 'Tolaf' which eventually became 'Tooley' or 'Tuly' as it remains today in the name of Tuly Street.

(*Based on David Farmer: Oxford Dictionary of Saints)

Excavation Training at Welcombe Farm:

A Joint XArch/ Brayford Community Archaeology Group Project

Jim Knights

Have you always wanted to participate in a dig?

Would you just like to brush up previous experience?

Would you like to be part of a Time Team-type dig, but also learn all the bits they miss out of the programme?

At Easter 2008, Exeter University (XArch) is hoping to guide any North Devon persons interested in archaeology through an excavation. All participants will be given training in the skills and routines that are part of current good archaeological practice. Previous experience is not necessary, and you will only be asked to work within your mental and physical comfort level. A wide range of tasks will be available and, from previous work on the site, we can almost guarantee some exciting progress.

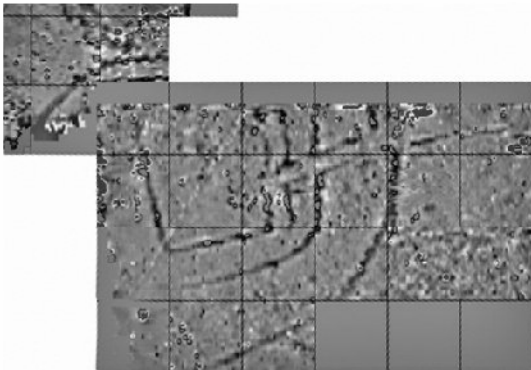
The site, at Welcombe Farm, Charles, has already been thoroughly surveyed with topographic and geophysical equipment and the results suggest it contains a multi-vallate hillside enclosure (See image below). We have no knowledge as to its function; it could have been built as a status symbol for a local dignitary or

even as a defensive structure allied to the Romano-British iron industry that surrounds it.

The geophysical survey results have already been tested by two earlier small trenches, which not only proved the existence of the ditches, but revealed quantities of Roman pottery sherds. While acting as a training dig, we do hope that, as a consequence of digging a bigger trench, we will increase the chances of finding evidence to date the construction as well as more detail of the spread of the inner banks and counterscarps. The site is in a very beautiful position, but unlike many other hill forts, there are no visible earthworks except for a platform.

We have some large tents that will enable the dig to continue in the event of wet weather, and we have all the tools, unless you wish to use your own trowel. In addition, we are hoping to mount a related theme day, with the local schools participating towards the end of the dig...

Times and dates have not yet been fixed but anyone who would like to have more details should express an interest to Jim Knights, telephone 01598 710014 or by email james_knights@onetel.net Further details will be sent to interested parties.



Results of magnetometer survey at Welcombe Farm, showing a multivallate enclosure which is completely invisible on the ground.

Oral History on Exmoor

Rob Wilson-North

We are in imminent danger of losing knowledge of traditional farming methods in North Devon and Exmoor, most especially of the way farm buildings were used. The recollections of older people who have worked the land are a dwindling source of this valuable information. Rob Wilson-North, Exmoor National Park Archaeologist writes:

In recent years there have been several 'goes' at addressing Exmoor's recent past through memories. Birdie Johnson worked on a wide ranging oral history project which culminated in her book *Reflections* illustrated with Mark Rattenbury's wonderful photographs of the interviewees. More recently the Exmoor Flood Memories Project collected around 20 interviews from people who remembered the Lynmouth Flood Disaster and its impact across Exmoor, but who had not been asked to speak about it before. All these oral history recordings are now housed within Somerset County Council's Exmoor Oral History Archive. My aspiration is that we should gradually add to this wonderful resource when we come across people whose insights vividly illuminate aspects of Exmoor's past.

The latest focus of our attention comes from the recent Victoria County History initiative

(England's Past for Everyone) which has worked with local volunteers (including from NDAS) to record farm buildings across southern Exmoor. As the work has progressed, the volunteers have found themselves from time to time enthralled by the detailed memories of some owners who recalled how the buildings were used. For the project, the building record could almost be described as 'incomplete' without a formal recording of these memories. It is as valuable as the photographs, drawings, plans and reconstructions that the project has so far produced.

During 2008, with additional funding from England's Past for Everyone, we hope to collect memories from farming families and farm workers about the buildings of the farmsteads. Such a project could be enormous and span farming life on Exmoor, but for now we would like to focus as much as possible on people's memories of the farm buildings themselves. If you know of anyone who you think we should speak to, please let us know. Contact me or my colleague Jessica Turner at Exmoor House, Dulverton, telephone 01398 323665 or by email: rwilson-north@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk

Rosemary Akers: Obituary

Jonathan Lomas

The North Devon Archaeological Society has lost not only one of its most loyal members and friends but, indeed, one of its longest serving supporters, with the sad death of Rosemary Akers on 13th November, 2007. She passed away peacefully at the North Devon District Hospital aged 88 years. The level of affection in which she was held was evident from the numbers attending at the North Devon Crematorium on November 20th when several members of the NDAS represented the Society. The service was conducted by the Reverend Kim Mathers and there was an appreciation of her life by the family.

Born in 1919, Rosemary Veronica Penton Akers was the youngest of three children. Ursula, her sister who had married the composer, the late Vaughan Williams, died only three weeks before Rosemary who was determined to outlive her. She served during World War II in the Women's Land Army. Much of her early life was spent in Washington, but it was upon her return to Shropshire in 1963 that she met her husband. She enjoyed family life to the full, and is survived by her three children, Matthew, Simon and daughter Francis. Rosemary was the most jovial of characters, accommodating in her delightful manner and a person never keen to pursue the limelight.

Coming to live in North Devon, Rosemary and her husband had acquired Plaistow Mill near Muddiford and were heavily involved with repairs to the working mill machinery when in 1978 he suddenly died. After her husband's death, Rosemary retained the property for several years but eventually it became too much of a responsibility for her and she retired to live with her daughter at Patchole, Kentisbury Parish.

Rosemary joined North Devon Archaeological Society shortly before her husband's death and served the Society for nearly 30 years. She became the Society's Secretary as well as taking the chair and was part of an active working group for the watermill and limekiln projects. Often the Society would visit Plaistow Mill and always there was a welcome cream tea on offer to members. It was there that I first met her. As a member of NDAS, she attended meetings regularly, until in recent times, ill health made it more difficult for her. In recognition of her devoted service to the Society, she was elected a life member.

Rosemary was a long-serving member of the Women's Institute and supported Devon Wild Life. She had a keen interest in the Donkey Sanctuary in East Devon. Her family's wish was for donations to be given to the Sidmouth Donkey Sanctuary and the Macmillan Nurses (Macmillan Cancer Support).

Dates for Your Diary

North Devon Archaeological Society:

Monday 21st January: Pilton Community College, Chaddiford Lane, Barnstaple, 7.30 pm: Finding Patterns in the Landscape: Tithe Map Digitisation in East Devon with Philippe Planel, Parish-scapes Officer for East Devon District Council.

Monday 18th February: Pilton Community College, Chaddiford Lane, Barnstaple, 7.30 pm: Aspects of Experimental Archaeology with Prof. Bruce Bradley, University of Exeter.

Monday 17th March: North Devon Archaeological Society AGM, Pilton Community College, Chaddiford Lane, Barnstaple, 7.00 pm.

Saturday 12th April: NDAS Training Day: Tracing the History of a House, Settlement or Parish using Record Office Resources, 10.00am until 4.00pm in the Henry Williamson Room, Barnstaple Library. Contact Derry Bryant on 01769 572963 to sign up.

Monday 21st April: Pilton Community College, Chaddiford Lane, Barnstaple, 7.30 pm: Finding out about the Things you Find with Danielle Wootton, Finds Liaison Officer for Devon.

Devon Archaeological Society:

Currently all DAS lectures are held at the Guild Hall, High Street, Exeter. All begin at 8.00pm.

Wednesday 16th January: Sark – a sacred island? Some prehistoric maritime interactions with Professor Barry Cunliffe. This is a joint meeting with the Prehistoric Society preceded with a wine reception at 7.30 to which DAS members are invited.

Pre-booking for this lecture is essential. Write to Jill Cobley, Brookdene, Metcombe, Ottery St Mary EX11 1RU or email jillcobley@tiscali.co.uk.

Tuesday 12th February: The identification and protection of cultural heritage during the Iraq conflict with Dr Peter Stone, Newcastle University.

Thursday 20th March: The end of the world at the end of the Lower Palaeolithic: asymmetrical hominins in the River Axe with Dr Rob Hossfield, University of Reading