

NDAS

NORTH DEVON
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



ISSUE 9 SPRING 2005

NDAS Committee 2005-6

Representing Members:

Derry Bryant, Malcolm Faulkner, Terry Green, Jane Green, Mary Houldsworth, Marion Hughes, Colin Humphreys, Jonathan Lomas, Ann Mandry, David Parker, Chris Preece, Maureen Wood

Representing Associated Groups:

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Chairman:

Terry Green

Vice-Chairman:

Ann Mandry

Meetings and Correspondence Secretary:

Derry Bryant

Treasurer and Membership Secretary:

Jane Green

Useful contacts

June Aiken (Parracombe Group) 01598 763316

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

Janet Daynes (ACE Archaeology, Winkleigh and District) 01837 83925

Jane Green (NDAS Treasurer and Membership Secretary) 01271 866662

Terry Green (NDAS Newsletter) 01271 866662

Collette Hall (NDDC Conservation Officer) 01271 346436

Sean Hawken (Community Landscapes Project) 01392 263851

Jim Knights (Brayford and Charles Group) 01598 710014

Deborah Laing-Trengove (Hatherleigh History Group) 01837 810310

Alistair Miller (NDAS Secretary) 01598 740359

Alison Mills (Museums Service) 01271 346747

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

Lyn Walmesley (Teign Archaeology Group and Secretary CBA South-West) 01392 432184

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

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

Other Archaeological Bodies:

Devon County Historic Environment Record: 01392 382246

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

Council for British Archaeology (York): 01904 671417

National Sites and Monuments Record (Swindon): 01793 414600

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Clovelly, 6th March 2005

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Editorial

Since the last newsletter in autumn 2004 we have had an AGM at which certain changes to the committee took place. Three members stood down and four new members were elected. Among those standing down was Rosemary Akers who has been involved with NDAS, and before that with the old Barnstaple and North Devon Rescue Archaeology Committee, for some 30 years. This makes Rosemary's association with North Devon's archaeology almost as old as the Society itself which will soon be coming up for a 40th birthday. Elsewhere in this edition Maureen Wood has written out some reminiscences of working side by side with Rosemary over the years and we thank Maureen for her contribution. Here I would just like to say that the Society is extremely grateful to Rosemary for her years of support and active involvement in saving and interpreting the remains of North Devon's past. The continuity that she and others from the 'early days' provide for us late-comers is a great asset, and I'm sure readers of the newsletter would value more reminiscences from long-standing members. Perhaps something for the next edition?

At the other end of the spectrum, as it were, we have some fresh blood on the Committee representing the influx of new members that the Society has seen recently. David Parker (who incidentally dug years ago on the Paiges Lane excavation) has proved himself invaluable, devising a flotation tank and taking charge of the bulk samples from Holworthy; Mary Houldsworth, having set out to get herself an A-Level qualification, has become very involved with survey at Parracombe; Marion Hughes has been a regular attendee at the 'pub' meetings and is happy to take on social functions; and Malcolm Faulkner, as a very interested farmer, provides a link with the farming community. They will all, I am sure, make a valuable contribution to the running of the Society. Alistair Miller has stood

down from the Committee and has been replaced as Secretary by Dery Bryant. The Society is grateful to Alistair for his work as Secretary.

The other significant outcome of the AGM was an increased membership subscription. The figures set out in the annual report, which you will all have received, made clear the reason for a need to increase the subscription and the rise from £12 to £16 was unanimously agreed upon at the AGM. Here I should just like to expand on what the subscription represents. Apart from covering the costs of running the Society, hiring speakers and a venue, producing the newsletter, providing insurance for the Society's activities, it ought also to be seen as representing your wish to make the aims of the Society achievable. As set out in the Society's constitution, these aims are:

- To promote awareness and interest in archaeology and history with particular reference to northern Devon.
- To encourage field survey, recording and research.
- To promote the preservation and interpretation of ancient monuments and antiquities in the region.
- Where appropriate and necessary, to excavate to professional standards and to publish the results of research.

This is a pretty broad brief and any one of its elements is almost infinitely extendable. A mark of our success in achieving these aims, however, must be the increasing range of individual research activity and growing knowledge that is apparent among members. In addition the networking with local groups that was promoted by last year's Local History Day and the links which the Society enjoys with bodies such as

Exmoor National Park and North Devon AONB are an indication of the calibre of the Society's members and their efforts. Above all the Society needs to be able to support and encourage ongoing and innovative archaeological/historical research activity in the north of Devon: this is what the subscription is about.

In this edition we have highlighted, as standard fare now, the further progress of the Society's excavation at Holworthy Farm and the sterling work that Trevor Dunkerley has done and continues to do at Combe Martin. In addition, however, we have contributions from new members who are either pursuing their own objectives or making an original and uniquely useful contribution to furthering the Society's projects. What has not been featured, but is worth mentioning here, is that the fish-weirs project that we began some five years ago, has been brought nearly to completion by Chris Preece who is planning to publish the results in the county journal, the Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society. Chris has shown considerable tenacity in bringing this project to a conclusion, especially as the field-work depends entirely on infrequent favourably low tides in the Tav-Torridge Estuary and on having sufficient volunteers to help out. One of these favourable tides will be on 21st August. Please try to give Chris a hand, if you possibly can.

Finally, another indefatigable member, Jim Knights has not only mastered resistivity survey to an impressive degree, but has been in touch with Time Team to engage their interest in a project that he is nurturing. There is nothing conclusive yet, but by the time this newsletter is ready to go out, there may be. Watch this space!

The Holworthy Project: Progress and Plans

Terry Green



Some of the undoubted carbonised cereal grains floated out of a bulk sample, in this case from a post-hole.

During the winter, examination of material recovered in the excavation at Holworthy Farm in 2004 has thrown up some very gratifying results. As I indicated in the last report, we were able to recover a considerable amount of charcoal from various contexts which meant that we had organic material which could be Carbon 14 dated. The process is based on the fact that all living things absorb, during their lifetime, the unstable isotope of carbon, carbon 14, from their environment. On death, no more is absorbed and what is present at that point begins to break down to a more stable form of carbon. Carbon 14 decay proceeds at a known rate, so that measurement of the proportion of the isotope remaining in, for example, a lump of charcoal, provides a measure of time elapsed since the wood was cut. It's not quite so straight forward, as the concentration of Carbon 14 in the environment has varied over time, so that raw dates have to be adjusted or 'calibrated'. Dates



What appear to be fragments of carbonised hazelnut shells from the fire trench.

are given as BP ie. Before Present where Present is conventionally 1950.

Four gross samples were selected for examination, one from a deposit of burnt material beneath the stones forming the enclosure bank (108), one from a small scoop which contained pottery sherds and charcoal (215) and one from the gully or trench which snaked through the roundhouse site and had a charcoal-rich fill (208). These were sent first to Rowena Gale for identification as to species and stage of growth, since short-lived species or sapwood are preferred for dating. Then, with financial support from Exmoor National Park, three selected samples were sent to the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre in Glasgow. We had to wait two months for the results, but they were worth waiting for. Sample 108 produced a date of (calibrated) 3360 +/- 50 BP; sample 215 gave a date of (calibrated) 3130 +/- 40 BP; and sample 208 came out at (calibrated) 2990 +/- 60 BP. Carbon 14 dating can be unreliable, and more dates will be needed before we can be fully confident, but on the face of it we have a date-range of about 1,400 BC to 1,000 BC, which places our site in the Middle to Later Bronze Age, as the pottery had already suggested.

We have also been able to make some deductions about the Bronze Age environment of the site. From the identification of the charcoal we

can say that oak, hazel and willow (presumably sallow or goat willow) were present in the vicinity. Further clues have been provided by pollen recovered from the fill of the gully. A 'tinned' sample was sent to Heather Tinsley of Bristol University who reported that, although the pollen preservation was poor, she could identify oak, hazel, alder and pine, thus adding to the picture of the Bronze Age tree cover. Among herbaceous species she identified principally dandelion, ribwort plantain, daisy and buttercup suggesting disturbed ground around the site, and heather, grasses and fern suggesting an open, grassland environment. She also found roundworm egg-cases, which could have come from pigs, but more likely came from people. Heather also found some cereal pollen, which fits nicely with the most recent discoveries.

Before we left the site last summer we took bulk samples (40 litres at a time) from a number of contexts. These were to be sorted by flotation in order to extract any organic material, most likely charcoal fragments and other carbonised matter. For this we needed a flotation tank, but did not possess one. Asking around got us nowhere, so we had to provide for ourselves. To this matter David Parker set his mind and manufacturing skills, and, with the generous provision by Alpharma of Whiddon Valley of an empty drum and fine mesh, he succeeded in building a very useful piece of kit (see the accompanying article) with which to treat our samples. At David and Judy Parker's house in Ilfracombe, a number of Society members spent several cold Saturdays processing the material and ending up with quantities of 'flot', the organic matter floated out. During the last couple of months, David has dedicated himself to sorting this material under a binocular microscope (lent by the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon) and has succeeded in extracting quantities of carbonised seeds, fragments of hazel nut shell and plant fragments. None of these have yet been submitted to a specialist for identification, but among them are undoubted cereal grains, probably barley and emmer wheat, nicely complementing the cereal pollen found by

Heather Tinsley. This is the first direct and positive evidence for prehistoric cereal cultivation in the Exmoor area, a first for NDAS!

Finally, the carbonised wooden object, which was discovered beside the fire-gully (see Autmn 2004 7,8) and which was lifted in a soil block, has been excavated from its block and stabilised by Richard Jaeschke. The work was difficult, as much of it is simply charcoal stained soil making a more or less defined shape. Freed from the soil and treated with stabilising chemicals, it is now a pretty unattractive assemblage of bits looking rather like burnt flapjack that has been trodden on! Nevertheless, two fairly large pieces do make sense and do seem to represent part of the body of a wooden bowl or dish. We have yet to get a specialist to look at it.

In July this year we are planning to return to the site, probably for the last time. Starting on 4th July, we intend to excavate between 140 and 200 square metres inside the enclosure. The objectives will be to examine a geophysical 'hot spot' identified by Ross Dean, to examine the area below the edge of the house-platform, to look for signs of activity in the centre of the enclosure, to

refine dating and add to the environmental evidence. We shall also extend trench 2 of 2004 northwestwards in order to identify further post-holes and to try to trace a floor. We have again been successful in securing financial assistance from the Royal Archaeological Institute (£1000), Council for British Archaeology (£500) and North Devon District Council (£500). We are grateful to all of these for their support. Dr Martin Gillard will again be our site supervisor. We already have a good number of volunteers, but anyone else wishing to join in should contact me on 01271 866662.

Finally, at the end of the main excavation period we shall be holding an Open Day at the site for NDAS members and the people of Parracombe. This will be on Sunday 17th July from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. If you don't know the site, there will be signs on the approach roads pointing you in the right direction. You will be asked to park on the roadside at SS 689445, from where you have a walk of about 400 metres downhill across grassland. I must point out that we are on private farmland and must, of course, observe all the usual countryside rules about shutting gates.



A part of the carbonised wooden object found beside the fire-trench. Unattractive as it looks, it is a remarkable survival, if it is in fact a dish or bowl.

The Landscape context of Holworthy Farm: Chapman Barrows



View from the largest of the Chapman barrows looking west.

We must always be aware that the site on which we are currently focusing, the Holworthy Farm hillslope enclosure, belongs within a wider landscape context. Now we are confident that this is a Bronze Age site, belonging to the second millennium BC, we must look at it as part of the Bronze Age landscape. Locally this is dominated by the barrow cemetery known as Chapman Barrows situated on the ridge to the south.

Hazel Parker, who is currently studying *Archaeology through Exeter University's Department of Lifelong Learning*, has had a few thoughts on the subject.

I have recently been looking at the Chapman barrow group on Exmoor hoping to understand the landscape in which they were constructed. For

an Exmoor barrow cemetery, the Chapman barrows are unusual, being set out in a line rather than scattered. The largest of the barrows occupy the highest ground, which may be significant in many ways. To build them, to visit them and to travel through the group would have demanded a great deal of effort, suggesting a communal purpose. The linear layout may be significant because the complete cemetery can only be viewed from a great distance, while on the ground, especially if approached from the west, the barrows reveal themselves one by one. Constructed to be seen in sequence, rather than concurrently, they may represent in space, a story which was revealed as each barrow on the ritual ground was passed.

To the south-east are the Longstone and the

Challacombe group of barrows. Although only one other of the Chapman barrows can be seen from the the barrow at NGR SS700435, the highest point of the group, the Longstone can be viewed from here as can the Longstone barrow on the horizon to the south-east. This intervisibility may indicate that the Challacombe group was important to the function of the ritual ground of Chapman Barrows.

Apart from the the linear Chapman group, there are other barrows nearby such as Roe Barrow at NGR SS697444. This separation may indicate a division within Bronze Age society, as may also the actual design of the barrows. Although all of the barrows are round barrows, a number of them appear to be bowl barrows, whereas others are lower rimmed platform or ring bank barrows. It is interesting to note that these are mixed in with each other, perhaps signifying that the difference was not the product of a change in style through a period of time, but a preference.

The importance of these monuments is illustrated by their location on some of the highest ground on Exmoor, with (apparently) contemporary settlements around them such as that at South Common from which the Chapman barrows can be seen on the horizon (and the Holworthy site from which the Holwell barrow at NGR SS673430 is visible, Ed.) This may indicate that the Chapman barrows were built on part of the South Common settlements' land, and that they were to be viewed from there. If this was the case then the other barrows in the area may also have been a focal point for their builders, raising the question of the number of and location of other settlements in the area, now destroyed by farming. Under the right conditions, aerial photography may reveal features representing other barrows or other settlements. I believe that more investigation is needed.

An A-Level Student's Thoughts on Holwell Castle

Mary Houldsworth

The presence of a well preserved Norman motte-and bailey castle in Parracombe is an archaeological and historical mystery. What is it doing there? As part of her A-Level in Archaeology, Mary Houldsworth has been prompted to give it some thought.

When I signed on for the A-Level Archaeology course at North Devon College last September, I had no idea how absorbing the work would become. Module 6 requires a 4,500-5,000 word project which needs to include a desktop study and research.

I wanted to find a subject close to home, so Trevor Dunkerley suggested Holwell Castle, the motte-and-bailey castle at Parracombe (SS9385 4460) where there are questions about its function and reasons for its situation on a hill-slope.

The question to be addressed was: 'To what extent does an assessment of the land use in the surrounding environs complement a study of the motte-and-bailey at Holwell?'

So why did the Normans decide to construct Holwell, one of the 500 castles built between 1066-1086, on a hill-slope overlooked by the then village which was organised around St. Petrock's Church? Maybe the invaders wanted to stamp their presence and ownership on the hamlet, and so made a symbolic statement in the form of a castle. In some cases, castles became social, legal or trading centres, or in the case of Parracombe on the western edge of Exmoor, maybe it was a Hunting Lodge protecting the Royal Forest.

It is known that Bury Castle near Dulverton was built on a former Iron Age Hill Fort, as were numerous castles in Wales. Thinking along the lines, therefore, that the Normans might have built on the site of an earlier earthwork, the project considered the known archaeological sites in the surrounding landscape from the Iron Age



Holwell Castle, Parracombe, one of the best preserved motte-and-bailey castles in the country.

back to Mesolithic times. With the Roman fortlet at Martinhoe, Voley and Beacon Iron Age Castles nearby, Holworthy Farm Bronze Age settlement and the Bronze Age Chapman Barrows, the likelihood was raised that the fertile, sheltered valley of Parracombe became a favoured settlement site following the climate deterioration of the first millennium BC. A late Neolithic discoidal flint knife found among large numbers of flints on Kentisbury Down, and, further afield, Mesolithic finds at Westward Ho! to the west and Hawkcombe Head to the east, indicates plentiful early human activity in the surrounding environs over a long period of time. It seems credible that Parracombe was a pivotal meeting place for seasonal hunter/gatherers. The 20 kilometer distances between Parracombe and these two Mesolithic sites, would have been an average day's walk, such as is still undertaken by the present-day cattle herders of South Sudan.

As to function, it is thought that Holwell castle may have been constructed to obtain taxes at the River Heddon bridging place, yet the present bridge only measures a few metres, and there are numerous easy alternative crossing places. Another theory considers silver mining may have been operating in the vicinity, requiring Norman protection or supervision. Silver mining history in

Combe Martin is now dated back to at least 1128, so could well have been functioning a century earlier.

Holwell is a very well preserved castle, comprising a circular motte, surrounded by a deep ditch, and kidney-shaped bailey, with 2 wing-walls surviving as a broad bank running up the side of the motte. So the earthwork evidence is quite clear. Might we learn more through geophysical survey? English Heritage was applied to and permission was given for Jim Knights to undertake a Resistivity Survey. So far this has identified a square keep, and postholes for an as yet an unknown structure. The survey of the bailey is still underway.

So who built this castle? 800 workmen were employed to construct Dover Castle, yet the Domesday Book records only 16 families living in Parracombe, among which there were possibly 60 available builders. The debate comes full circle. Did the site chosen already have the foundations or remains of an earlier fortification? Does its presence reflect the earlier history of this location?

(You are invited to visit Holwell Castle on 18th June for a Parracombe event. See the information elsewhere in this newsletter. Ed.)

Flotation! Flotation! Flotation!

Dave Parker

Following the NDAS. digs at Holworthy in 2003/04, we ended up with several bags of bulk sample material from post holes and gullies etc. The purpose was to extract any organic materials from the fill of these various holes. The Society had only a couple of sieves, which were not suitable to carry out the complete sorting of the samples. What we needed was some way of floating organic matter out. Having read descriptions of something called a 'flotation tank' I bravely (or foolishly) volunteered to have a go at constructing one. A couple of basic diagrams were found in leaflets and library books, but alas, no dimensions or details. The item most often used was a 40 gallon steel drum. This at least pointed me in the right direction, but these drums are not found lying about, nor do they grow on trees.

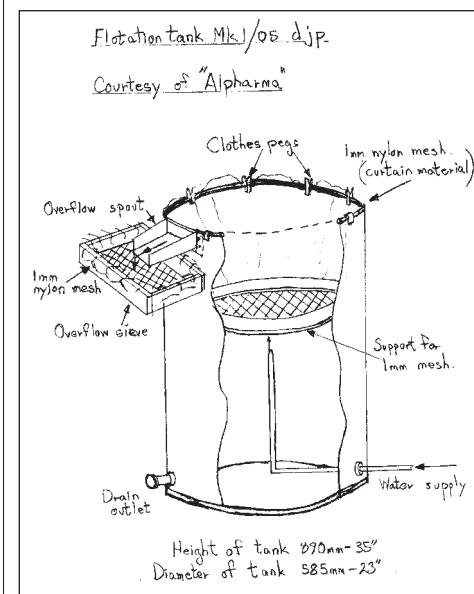
At this time, the North Devon District Council began delivering 'Wheely Bins' to our area. That's it, I thought, forget the steel drum, a wheely bin would be ideal, light in weight, and with wheels and a handle for pushing around. A phone call to the N.D.D.C. was very decisive, they cost over £200 and are definitely not for giving away, even to a highly respected NDAS. So it was back to a steel drum.

Following a bit of prospecting in the boatyard at Watermouth harbour, I was put in touch with Andy Clark at 'Alpharma' a Chemical Company in Barnstaple. A steel drum was kindly donated to the Society, along with a plastic drum and a polythene tank, the latter very useful for a number of purposes, especially if you have a three stone baby to bath!

After a bit of cutting, drilling, bending and hammering and a lot of time spent thinking, something resembling the sketches I had seen was produced, and with a splash of paint here and there it was completed (See diagram).

The big day arrived when six members of

NDAS turned up at our house to have a go. After processing two sample bags we already had good results, but the method we used was somewhat inefficient, basically because of lack of experience. After some trial and error however, we arrived at what appears to be the most effective method of operation: The drum is filled almost to the top with water, the supply coming in at the bottom with the overflow through a spout near the top. The sample is passed through a 5mm mesh sieve whilst being immersed just below the surface, which basically washes the sample, the silt dispersing in the water and out through the spout, the coarsest material being caught in the sieve and finer non-floating material being caught on a 1mm mesh suspended about one third of the way down the tank, while any sand or silt not washed away falls through this mesh and is deposited at the bottom of the tank to be



NDAS Flotation tank Mark 1.



Flotation, the first attempt with prototype tank 1. From left to right, Jim Knights, Judy Parker, David Parker, Alistair Miller.

drained off later. Hopefully floatable material (charcoal and carbonised items) will remain on the surface, to be scooped off using a kitchen sieve. Any floating material escaping through the overflow spout is caught in a sieve suspended on the outside of the tank below the spout, this sieve being lined with 1mm mesh. The material caught on the suspended mesh inside the tank may contain organic matter that has failed to float because waterlogged. This is therefore lifted out, dried and immersed in water again to float out organic matter. All organic matter recovered is dried and later sorted using hand lens, microscope and forceps.

By these methods a good quantity of organic matter was obtained from the samples including many small fragments of charcoal plus a few carbonised grains of cereal, possibly barley or wheat (expert analysis will tell) as well as other



Flotation, the third session: Judy Parker, Hazel Parker (no relation) and David Parker now employing more refined techniques.

Rosemary Akers

seeds and plant fragments. Among these was what appears to be a 'glume base', this is the little thingummy that holds the cereal gains on to the ear of whatever plant it is.

One lesson learned at the first session: February is not the best time for flotation! Though after ten minutes with your hands in cold water, fingers go numb so you don't feel the cold anyway. After a few modifications to the tank and the donation of very useful nylon mesh from 'Alpharma' a second session was carried out in the middle of March. The water in the tank was more tolerable, but this time the heavens opened up and we ended up being soaked. Nevertheless, this second attempt was a great success: we found cereal grains, seeds and possibly very small berries, and also possible fragments of hazelnut shell. The third session was carried out in late March on a day of perfect weather with nine NDAS members and our grandson taking part. Two sample bags were processed, and we found over 70 whole or parts of seeds in an extremely small portion of the samples as well as 3 fragments of pottery and what might be a piece of clay loom weight. We had an excellent day with a good exchange of ideas, opinions and plenty of chit-chat.

What has been learnt from these three sessions?

Apart from the general method of separating the material the most important thing by far, has got to be the care needed to avoid mixing up various bits and pieces of different sample bags. The only way to avoid this confusion is to have just one sample bag to hand, the one you are working on. Keep all others under lock and key until the one completed is bagged, labelled and locked away. If the chance of confusion is allowed to arise, then it definitely will!

Rosemary Akers, one of the longest standing members of NDAS and a former chairman, has decided to stand down from the Society's committee after many years of service. Maureen Wood, whose association with North Devon archaeology goes back to the 1970's, writes:

Rosemary Akers' resignation from the North Devon Archaeological Society's executive committee left me feeling sad. After all, Rosemary and I go back into the mists of time together to when we both served on the Barnstaple and North Devon Rescue Archaeological Committee (BANDRAC) before it was amalgamated with NDAS.

Many memories of that time came to the fore. How many times, I mused, had we scraped trowels or washed 'pot' together back in those early excavation days in Barnstaple? We were privileged to be in on the 1970s' dig of the Saxon burial ground in Castle Green Street. It was a scene of much activity with the ringing sounds of trowels hitting stone and the merry, eager voices of students and volunteers as they scraped away enthusiastically. The excavations in Green Lane, Paiges Lane, Potters Lane and Tuly Street were all brought to mind.

Our AGM was most often held in the Barnstaple Guildhall. It was Rosemary and I who organised the refreshments which in those days amounted almost to a banquet! Old-fashioned cut rounds with cream and jam supplied by Rosemary, home-made cakes and savouries and even trifle and junket made by myself all lay resplendent on starched white tablecloths or in glass bowls! Hard work went into making the evening a success and Rosemary never faltered. I shall miss you, Rosemary – but, as I say, we did have some fun, didn't we!

In recognition of her services to North Devon's archaeology, Rosemary has life membership of NDAS. TG.

Orleigh Court Flint and the North Devon Palaeolithic

John Newberry and Nan Pearce

Orleigh Court, Buckland Brewer stands out as the only inland source of flint in North Devon. The use of flint from this source in the later prehistoric periods is demonstrated, but was it exploited during the hundreds of thousands of years of the Palaeolithic? Were in fact humans of the Old Stone Age ever more than a passing presence in North Devon?

Orleigh Court, is the most westerly source known today in southern England where complete and unabraded flint nodules are found. The absence of other flint deposits in inland North Devon and in Cornwall makes it of unique importance for a large area of the South-West. Knapping tests confirm that some flint there is of excellent tool-making quality, while artefacts found at Orleigh Court show the source was used by both Mesolithic and Neolithic knappers.

There is at present no scientific method for determining flint sources, which means that flint artefacts can only be linked with a source through the visual appearance of the material. Because flint absorbs colour from its surroundings, this has its limitations. However, flint which is visually similar to that from Orleigh Court was used by Mesolithic and Neolithic knappers at a number of sites and to these, thanks to work by NDAS member Susan Huxtable-Selly, we have now been able to add the Chittlehampton area.

Mr D.Roe, who lives near Chittlehampton, was digging in his garden which borders a stream when he dug up the oldest artefact yet found in North Devon: a Lower Palaeolithic handaxe. As with other Devon flint, the nodule used was not a homogeneous material, and the knapper had overcome several potential material problems. The result is a well made biface of ovate form, similar to others found in both Lower and Middle Palaeolithic assemblages. The source of the flint used is uncertain, because it includes a range of

colours and textures and has no distinctive visual characteristics. However, Orleigh Court is the nearest source of flint and the surface colours of the axe are well within the range found here. Orleigh Court is distinctly possible as a source.

Among the material found at Orleigh Court is a fine-grained, lustrous flint which could be described as 'honey-coloured' and is considered to be of 'superior' tool-making quality. A finely made triangular arrowhead of visually similar material was found during work on the Taw-Torridge pipeline, and the excellence of the pressure-flaking illustrates the quality of the material. The use of 'honey' flint is reported in Early Mesolithic Cornwall and for some Middle and Early Upper Palaeolithic artefacts at Goat's Hole, Paviland on the Gower Peninsula. However, even if a comparison project showed that these Cornish and Welsh finds as well as certain finds from Devon were visually similar to flint from Orleigh Court, this would not conclusively prove an association, because there may have been visually similar flint at other contemporary sources which are now lost to



The Chittlehampton Lower Palaeolithic hand-axe.



A modern flint knapper (accompanied by apprentice) admiring his work

periglacial effects or rising sea-levels.

The evidence from limestone caves to the north, south and east suggests that North Devon could have been at the centre of an area of Palaeolithic activity. With water periodically locked up in ice, sea-levels were often much lower than today and the Bristol Channel was a broad plain so that there was no physical barrier to the movement of hunter-gatherers between South Wales and North Devon. The Orleigh Court flint source would have been available to people from a wide area. There is however no certainty that

they actually used it. A few of the finds from the Taw-Torridge Pipeline Project would fit comfortably into Palaeolithic assemblages, but, because the technology continued in use into more recent periods, they do not conclusively prove a Palaeolithic presence in this area. At present the Chittlehampton handaxe is the only known certain Palaeolithic artefact from North Devon.

The uncertainty could be resolved by more work at the Orleigh Court source. What is needed are finds of tools and debitage (flint waste) which could be related solely to the Palaeolithic period. If flint from this source was used for Palaeolithic handaxes, nodules would almost certainly have been tested on site for suitability. The evidence would thus include broken handaxes, rejects and flakes. Unless and until such work can be undertaken, uncertainty as to the Palaeolithic use of Orleigh Court flint will continue. However, the Chittlehampton axe both confirms a Palaeolithic presence in North Devon on at least one occasion and raises the possibility of Orleigh Court as the flint source. It therefore seems likely that further work at Orleigh Court would clarify matters.

Chronology of the British Palaeolithic - Neolithic

(Mostly very approximate)

Lower Palaeolithic: 700,000 BP to 250,000 BP
Middle Palaeolithic: 250,000 BP to 30,000 BP
Early Upper Palaeolithic: 30,000 BP to 20,000 BP
(Late Glacial Maximum 20,000 to 18,000 BP)
Middle Upper Palaeolithic: 18,000 BP to 12,000 BP
Late Upper Palaeolithic: 12,000 BP to 9,000 BP
Mesolithic: 9,000 BP to 6,500 BP
Neolithic: 6,500 BP to 4,500 BP

BP = Before Present where 'Present' is conventionally 1950.

Finds Days at the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon

Historically relationships between archaeologists and metal detectorists have ranged from uneasy to downright hostile. Everything changes however, and these days it is not rash to say that understanding has greatly improved and there is more co-operation than opposition. Apart from the passage of time in which metal detecting has 'bedded in', the Portable Antiquities Scheme (together with the revised Treasure Act) has greatly contributed to the improvement of relationships. The aims of the scheme are: To advance knowledge of the history and archaeology of England and Wales by systematically recording archaeological objects found by the public.

- To raise awareness among the public of the educational value of archaeological finds in their context and facilitate research in them.
- To increase opportunities for active public involvement in archaeology and strengthen links between metal-detector users and archaeologists.
- To encourage all those who find archaeological objects to make them available for recording and to promote best practice by finders.
- To define the nature and scope of a scheme for recording portable antiquities in the longer term, to access the likely costs and to identify resources to enable it to be put into practice.

This has provided a framework within which metal detector users (and in fact anyone who makes a chance find) can feel that they are making a positive contribution to knowledge as well as satisfying their interest in antiquities. Regular Finds Days, such as those which now take place at the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon on the first Tuesday of every month from 10.00 am till 2.00 pm, and on the occasional

Saturday, provide local finders with the opportunity to have their finds examined and identified by experts. The first of these was on Saturday 15th January this year. It was a very successful day on which Nicola Powell, Finds Liaison Officer for Devon and Brian Read, an acknowledged expert were kept busy by a stream of visitors queuing up to have their finds examined and identified. NDAS was in attendance represented by Jim Knights who set up a stall and provided a Society contact for anyone seeking information. On 7th May, a further well attended day was held. On these occasions finds were not only identified, but, crucially, recorded so that find-spots can be entered in the County Historic Environment Record. The number and quality of finds presented was astonishing and according to Nicola, North Devon is providing a wealth of new insights. One very interesting development is that the ever elusive Romans are showing more and more of a presence in North Devon with coins and



Nicola Powell and Brian Read examining finds brought into the Museum

metal objects appearing in certain areas, suggesting a Roman influence in North Devon which went beyond the production of vast quantities of iron.

Not only metal detectorists, but anyone who chances upon something of an antique nature from flints to post-medieval shoe buckles to Bovril jars is encouraged to bring in their finds for identification and recording.



A lead dice, probably Roman, brought in by one of the finders.

NDAS Lithics Recognition Days

Some 18 members of NDAS attended the previously advertised 'Lithics (flint) Recognition' day-schools on 2nd and 16th April, 2005 at the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon. These were conducted by Ann and Martin Plummer and John Newberry, who, as a team, have spent a lot of time familiarising themselves with West Country lithics and in particular have devoted a great deal of their efforts to the North Devon collections.

Each day began with an introduction to the geological sources of flint and chert, their origin and their characteristics. This was followed by an introduction to the processes of stone tool manufacture and the resulting features by which artefacts and manufacturing waste (debitage) may be recognised. Then types of artefact were discussed and introduced one by one. Each day ended with a hands-on session in which people were paired off to examine a bag of assorted items and judge whether they were tools, waste or products of nature.

The purpose of these days was to enable people to recognise flint and chert artefacts and waste in and on the ground. And in addition, and most importantly, it was to encourage the

reporting of finds to the County Archaeological Service by means of the so-called 'white sheets'. These are record-sheets which can be obtained from the County Archaeologist's office in Exeter (01392 382246) on which to register the details of a find so that it can be added to the Historic Environment Record (formerly Sites and Monuments Register) and mapped. The accumulation of information in this way ultimately adds up to a more and more detailed picture of the past and to greater understanding.

Participants apparently found the day-schools very enjoyable and informative and appreciated the opportunity for lively discussion. For anyone wishing to have clear guidance on sources and chronology, however, it was a bit of a sad day. For one thing you can't tell where flint comes from by its colour (so much for so-called black Beer flint!) and for another, the most frequently found artefact, the scraper could be from any prehistoric period – Ah, well!

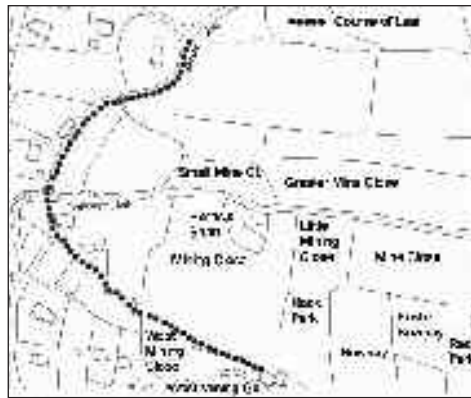
The Society's thanks go to Ann and Martin and John for giving their time and to the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon for their hospitality on the day.

Combe Martin: An Archaeological Update

Trevor Dunkerley

It has been good to see various volunteers, who have assisted in excavations at Mine Tenement progressing in their chosen interests. Congratulations to Jenny Yendall for securing the position of administrator at South Molton Museum. Congratulations also to Anne Todd, (who is supervising our excavations this year) on the valuable work she is doing with Dr. Gill Juleff and Lee Bray on the next phases of the Exmoor Iron Project. Jim Knights, who is rapidly becoming 'Mr. Geophysics' for our area., has not only carried out resistivity surveys at Mine Tenement, but has also been surveying Holwell motte and bailey at Parracombe, a large area at Whitechapel Barton, and some very interesting features at Welcombe Farm, Charles. Well done to them all!

As for Combe Martin, research during the winter months led to the realisation that two fields to the north of Bowhay Lane were named 'Rack Park'. This field-name indicates where rows of racks were situated on which new made cloth, having been 'fulled', was hung out to dry, ideally on a warm, south-facing slope. There is no record



The course of the channel or possible leat from Watery Lane to Mine Tenement. Fields named 'Rack Close' lie just to the west.

of Combe Martin having a fulling mill, (or locally, a tucking mill), and it has been supposed that the mills mentioned in the records of the parish were all grain (grist) mills. This field name suggested something different.

Fulling is the beating and cleaning of cloth in water. The process shrank the loose fibres of the cloth, making it a denser fabric. Originally this was done by foot, but later in a fulling mill which was usually water-powered. We know that Combe Martin had a thriving rope and cobblers thread industry, and records also indicate a small lace industry along with cottage based weaving – hence the several loom weights that have come to light in excavations. It would not be surprising, therefore, that the village should have a fulling mill.

But where might such a mill have been situated in the Mine Tenement area? It would have required a plentiful and consistent supply of water, so the first thing to do was to trace a leat. During the landscape alterations at Cato Ridge, the writer noted the destruction of a clay-lined channel, cut into the rock, and running from the junction of Watery Lane and Corner Lane diagonally across the field towards the land of Barry and Yvonne Squires. Closer inspection revealed the channel dissecting Barry and Yvonne's land (traces of it are still to be clearly seen), and running directly into Mine Tenement land in line with the blacksmith's workshop.

But where could the water source have been? Close inspection of the levels of Watery Lane (now why was it called watery lane we ask?) show that the source was almost certainly at the top of Chapel Lane. Additionally there was a known spring midway between Chapel Lane and Corner Lane. The reason why such a deep cutting through rock was made to cross Corner Lane is thus revealed. This would have been a substantial leat carrying a good and consistent supply of water.

Trevor Dunkerley and Combe Martin Silver

Terry Green

As has become usual, this newsletter contains an update on Trevor Dunkerley's work in Combe Martin. Just in case you missed it, I'm sure he won't mind if I add in a summary (and slight elaboration) of the recent accolade he received by way of the North Devon Journal (Thursday May 5th 2005).

In 2001 Trevor, having recently moved to the village, set out to relay a path outside his cottage. Having an archaeological background, however, and a great deal of energy, he went beyond what was necessary and ended up with an excavation from which he extracted materials that began to rewrite the history of silver extraction in Combe Martin. What he had found was initially a mystery, and it was not until he met up with Dr Peter Claughton, an acknowledged expert on the history of mineral mining in the South West, that he found out that he had excavated some of the slag produced in the silver smelting process. Very significantly, he had found it in association with ceramic materials that could be dated, and so began the business of interpreting the history of Combe Martin silver extraction archaeologically as opposed to through documentary history. In fact it was the first physical evidence found to back up the documents and as such aroused the interest of archaeometallurgists nationwide, indeed worldwide with universities in America and Europe asking to be sent samples of the material.

The documents said that Henry VIII had had a silver smelter built in Combe Martin, and when Trevor extended his excavations into his neighbour's garden across the road, he found evidence for just such an object. As the only site in Britain where such evidence had been found, this caught the attention of English Heritage and Dr Sarah Paynter of EH has been advising and providing laboratory services for the growing project ever since.

The large quantities of medieval pottery discovered during the cutting of the new road through the Mine Tenement area, have raised many questions. If a Fulling Mill was sited where the blacksmith's workshop now stands it would offer a simple explanation. Fulling mills, like grain mills, were meeting places for the people of the village, and if it was of medieval origin one might expect a large quantity of 'rubbish' to accumulate over the centuries.

A further clue was offered in Issue 12 of the Combe Martin Silver Mines Research and Preservation Society Journal with an extract from the Woolmers Gazette, dated 26th October 1816: 'Water Wheel For Sale – nearly new'. Had this twenty-foot iron wheel replaced the fulling mill wheel to drive the 50 fathoms of iron flat rods to pump Director's Shaft? If there had been a medieval fulling mill at the site, it would simply have required updating in 1813 when new mining works commenced, and the wheel being offered for sale in 1816 would certainly have been 'nearly new'?

Archaeological research is rather like trying to put all the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle together in the correct sequence. There is now just too much evidence pointing to an unknown village fulling mill to be dismissed as coincidence. This summer our excavations will attempt to discover more about this mill and its associations with mining in the village.

The Clay Pipe: an Archaeologist's Best Friend?

Chris Preece

In addition to corroborating the documentary record, Trevor's researches have succeeded in pushing back the earliest date of silver extraction in the village by several centuries, to the 12th century, at least. In addition he has found Romano-British material which does not of itself indicate a Roman interest in the local minerals, though it would not be at all surprising. In the context of possible Romano-British or Early Medieval activity, Trevor's interpretation of the Combe Martin lanes as possible early mining trenches is extremely interesting and an example of evidence which is so obvious that everyone misses it, until one individual looks at it with a fresh eye.

The most recent upshot of the work that Trevor initiated was an international seminar at the British Museum at which Trevor was due to speak. Unfortunately ill health made this impossible, but Peter Claughton and Sarah Paynter spoke on his behalf. The information that they were able to relay was extremely well received with many questions afterwards, always a sign of keen interest. As Sarah said, "there is still a glaring absence of work on this kind of waste ... from anywhere in the world".

Among the archaeological developments going on in North Devon, Trevor's work stands out as a very significant contribution with not only local, but national importance. Trevor is to be sincerely congratulated on "one of the most important archaeological finds of the last hundred years".

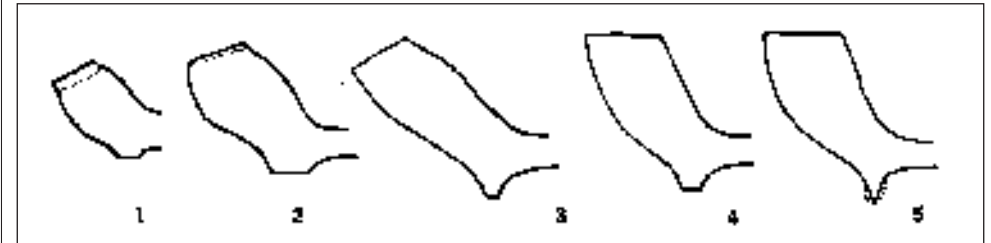
This is not a treatise in favour of pipe-smoking even though as Sam Slick the clockmaker said, the pipe ... "has made more good men, good husbands, kind masters, indulgent fathers than any other blessed thing on this universal earth." Nor is it a call for the return to the days when every good archaeologist clenched a pipe between his teeth (Wheeler, Mallowan and Seton-Williams to name but a few).

No, the title refers to the fact that there is no finer dating tool in post-medieval contexts than the humble clay pipe. It is not uncommon for them to provide a narrow time-span of 20 years and in one case (as we shall see) as little as eight years. Their ubiquity is reflected in the fact that my grandfather could remember them being given away with a pint of beer in pubs and being discarded as commonly as cigarette ends.

In addition, they are relatively easy to categorise in terms of size and shape and can therefore at a glance be given a broad date range. Basically, the earliest bowls are smaller and the angle of stem to bowl is greater (cf. fig. 1).

In the eighteenth century, incised or stamped decoration of stems and bowls became more widespread with moulded or relief decoration developing in the second half of the century and becoming the norm in the nineteenth century. Sometimes the name, town or date will be evident but more often the initials of the maker are the main identifier. The usual practice (on the spur; cf. fig 2) was for the initial of the Christian name to be on the left (looking from stem to bowl) and surname on the right. So a nineteenth century bowl with the initials WS found locally would probably have originated in Bideford at the hands of William Short.

Lists of makers' names are becoming more comprehensive as excavation and documentary research add to our knowledge. We are informed for instance, that a Peter Stevens was apprenticed



A very simplified national typology of claypipes:

1 c.1600 – 1640 2 c.1640 – 1680 3 c.1680 – 1710 4 c.1700 – 1770 5 c.1770 – 1840 (pointed spur tends to be later). In the 19th century moulded decoration is easier to identify, but a variety of bowl forms are used.

as a pipe-maker in Barnstaple in 1647 and bowls dating to c.1670 with the initials PS on the base of the spur have been found.

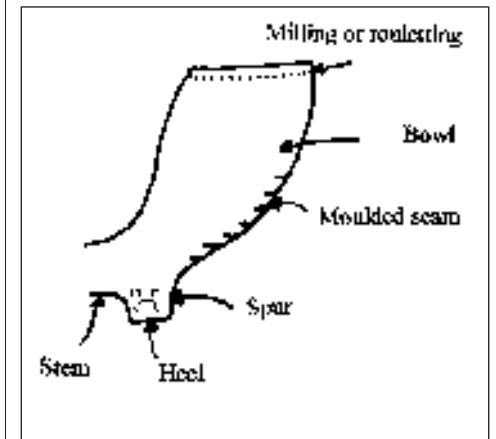
The most thorough catalogue of North Devon pipes can be found in Alison Grant and David Jemmett's contribution in BAR 146 (see below) but a few interesting examples will be detailed here.

The 'eglantine' (sweet briar) mark is often associated with Plymouth where several examples have been found. The design, originally thought to be Dutch, became fairly debased or stylised (cf. fig 3) and several N. Devon examples appear to be crude derivatives. If they are of local manufacture the connection with ports can not be coincidental.

One of the most common Barnstaple marks is 'Barum' (see fig. 4), found on flat-heeled spurs of bowls. These have turned up in Plymouth in a deposit sealed c. 1740 and as far afield as Worcester. Grant and Jemmett give them a broad date range of 1660 -1740 and it is far better to be conservative rather than be too specific. One web site, for instance, confidently states that scallop designs (see below re: Seldon's) are 'typical' of the period 1820-1840. Stylistic considerations however, should always be considered alongside typologies, marks, excavated evidence and, of course, regional variations. All

these factors came together with the publication of a particularly informative excavation in Alexandra Road, Barnstaple in 1986. During trial trenching prior to redevelopment, the pipe factory of John Seldon was located. Documentary evidence, allied to the locating of kiln debris, 1,500 complete bowls and 40,000 stem fragments, have ensured a remarkably complete picture of this industry.

The factory (usefully for us) was short-lived however, with a lifespan of just eight years from



The parts of a clay pipe.

1857 - 1865. Production must have been prolific, for a while at least, as bowls have been found during South West Archaeology excavations at Charlestown Barton (fig. 5) and at Totnes Mansion House (fig. 6). The latter example is a moulded bowl of fine quality with the initials 'JS' being those of the owner.

Of necessity, this is a quick overview of the humble clay pipe; for further reading and information the following should be consulted:

Bibliography:

Ayto, E.G: *Clay Tobacco Pipes* (Shire Album 37, 1979): an excellent introduction.

Oswald, A: *Marked Clay Pipes from Plymouth, Devon* (Post-Medieval Archaeology 3, 1969): a fascinating study of the influence of trade on local manufacture of pipes.

Terry, R: *The Barnstaple Clay Tobacco Pipe Factory* (NDDC Rescue Arch. Unit): an excellent (but undated) booklet describing the rescue excavation of Seldon's pipe factory in 1986.

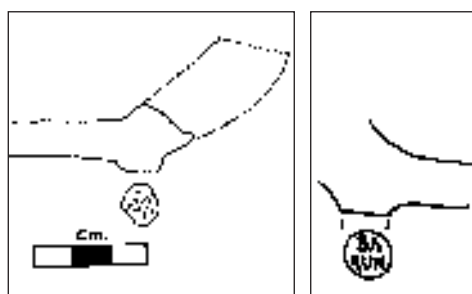
There are numerous BAR (British Archaeological Review) volumes on clay pipes but attention is drawn to two in particular:

Grant, A. and Jemmet, D: *Pipes and Pipemaking in Barnstaple, Devon*, in Davey, P. (ed), *The Archaeology of the Clay Tobacco Pipe* (BAR 146, 1985): a useful catalogue and overview of North Devon pipe finds and manufacturers

Oswald, A: *Clay Pipes for the Archaeologist* (BAR 14, 1975): the first and still the essential handbook by one of the acknowledged experts

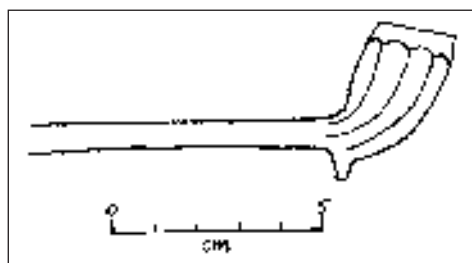
Museums

Most museums have clay pipe collections. In this area both North Devon Museum, Barnstaple and Great Torrington Museum have good displays.

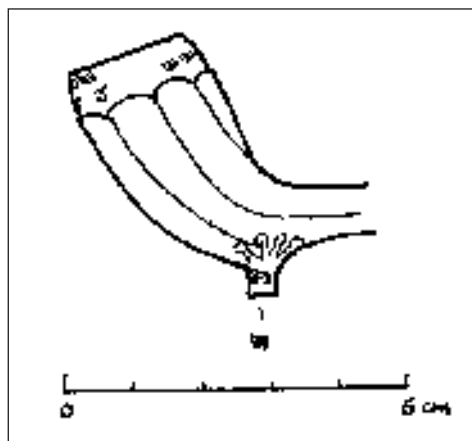


Late 17th century pipe from Great Torrington (author's garden!) with eglantine mark.

'Barum' mark on base of spur.



Seldon pipe from Charles Town Barton.



Seldon pipe from Totnes Mansion House.

Profiling the North Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty - A Community Project

Linda Blanchard

Manager, North Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Thanks in part to support from North Devon Archaeological Society, we have been successful in attracting around £55,000 grant aid from Europe to support survey work within the AONB, which is a protected landscape in the coastal strip of North Devon and Torrington from the Exmoor border through to the Cornish Border

Using the jargon required of funding bids, the project aims to:

Increase local community understanding of the importance and complexity of the North Devon AONB

Develop community ownership of the AONB by involvement in practical projects

Produce baseline information to measure the success of AONB management interventions

Put a bit more simply, the AONB Staff Unit is paid to encourage work which will protect or enhance the landscape of the AONB. For our purposes landscape is defined as the geology, the wildlife and habitats and the historic environment. So pretty broad really. In order to see if changes, e.g. in farming practice, tourism, project work or building development, actually do enhance the area, we need to have a better record of what's around now and what sort of condition it is in. As I am sure you know, some of our records are patchy and out of date and this project aims to fill

the gaps, at least in part.

What will actually happen is that very soon we will appoint a person to encourage people from groups such as NDAS to join us on survey work within the AONB on a theme of mutual interest. If needed, training will be provided and the project officer will set up simple recording systems for volunteers to use.

The main themes for study are likely to include: nesting birds survey, hedgerow condition survey, eyesores, historic monuments condition survey, landscape monitoring through fixed point photography, location of local food outlets, etc because we have a large number of subjects to survey, work will be tailored to a certain extent towards the interests of the volunteer. Volunteers might visit an archaeological site just four times a year and take a photograph or, if they are really keen, do a survey of all the hedgerows in a 1km square.

Once we have the project up and running, our co-coordinator will contact you and offer to talk to your committee in more detail about how NDAS members can be involved.

Thank you, NDAS, for your letter of support for the project and I look forward to meeting some of you on volunteer projects.

Clovelly, 6 March 2005

Derry Bryant recounts her experience manning (personning?) the NDAS stall at the AONB exhibition.

NDAS was recently invited by the AONB (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) Project Team to take part in an exhibition at the Clovelly Visitor Centre. Various organisations involved with the environment, heritage, coastline etc would be present, also the Portable Antiquities scheme.

Jim Knights gallantly volunteered to man a display stand for NDAS and mentioned it at a Committee meeting. I offered to help, so we turned up early at the Visitors Centre on Saturday 6 March. Jim had created a brilliant stand, with photos of NDAS activities, graphs of resistivity surveys and pottery sherds found on a field walk at High Bray – grouped in chronological order, from early medieval to 18th Century.

On the day there was to be a lecture by Mark Horton, who often appears on 'Time Team', on Landscape Archaeology, and Jim had ordered the tickets in advance. On arrival, we were given two tickets for the lecture, which included a VIP lunch for the stall holders, which sounded great.

From the start, we were quite busy, with the general public coming through and asking questions about the artefacts. We handed out lots of the Society's new publicity leaflets, and did our best to promote NDAS. When it was time for the lecture, we were so busy that I suggested Jim go to the lecture while I manned the display stand. I am no expert in archaeology or anything much historical, just interested and enthusiastic! Nevertheless, I managed to deal with most enquiries. The children particularly enjoyed touching the pottery and feeling the difference in tempering/glazes, etc.

However, I was a bit flummoxed when a farmer from Clovelly approached me with an object which he placed in my hand – it was very heavy, and round. "Aha" I said knowledgeably, "that's a cannon ball". (quite pleased with myself). "Yes I know", he said, " but can you tell

me who fired it, and when?"

Regrettably, I had to tell him I didn't have a clue – I think he was quite disappointed. He had read the newspaper article about the event and thought the experts on the day would be able to help him.

I was relieved when Jim came back from the lecture and kindly offered that I should be the first to go to lunch. I took my VIP ticket to the cafeteria and offered it to the cashier, who said she had never seen one before and didn't know what it was, so I paid for my lunch. When I got back it transpired that lunch was being held in the Red Lion pub at the bottom of the hill and included a ride back in a land rover, so Jim toddled off for his. He returned with a beaming smile and recounted the experience – glass of wine, sea bass, large prawns, oysters, mussels; a veritable feast, followed by a comfy ride back in the land rover. Guess what I had? A pasty and a bag of crisps! I was slightly mollified by getting to meet Mark Horton, so the day wasn't totally wasted!

The afternoon was very busy - people had brought in quite a few artefacts – after looking at them we directed them to Nicola Powell from the Portable Antiquities scheme, who at one stage was identifying a nice series of buckles brought in by a metal detectorist.

All in all, it was quite a successful day. I hope that we raised the profile of NDAS, but we could have done with a couple more helpers.

General Notices

North Devon Pottery:

Alison Grant's new book, final update

For a variety of reasons the appearance of this potentially important new book has suffered considerable delay since its launch was first announced in Autumn 2003. Problems have now been resolved and the completed work will be launched on Tuesday 12th July at the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon. There will be two sessions, one in the afternoon at 3.00 for sponsors, libraries, museums and secondary schools, and one in the evening at 6.00 for anyone wishing to buy a book or to pick up a book that they have pre-ordered. Members of NDAS will still have the advantage of a special pre-publication price of £12 (instead of £15) if they fill in the order form included with this newsletter and return it to Alison Grant before the end of June. Anyone placing an order in this way will receive an invitation to the launch.

Fishweirs Project:

Chris Preece is bringing the NDAS fishweirs project to completion and is working on publication of the results. He needs, however, to do one more survey. He is looking for volunteers to do an EDM survey on the fish weir at Horsey Weir on 21 August. This will involve meeting at the White House on the toll road at 12.00, to start the survey at 1 pm (determined by low tide). A packed lunch is suggested. The project began some years ago with work on the huge Horsey Weir, and it seems fitting that it should conclude with the same. Chris Preece would like to know who is coming, so please could volunteers phone 01237 475368.

Make a date to Float!

Dealing with bulk samples from Holworthy by flotation will require a few more sessions. This is an invitation to any members who might like to

have a go at this wet, but interesting and extremely valuable exercise, to volunteer themselves to David Parker and arrange a date to float! July is going to be taken up with excavation, so the emphasis is on June and August. The flotation tank is at David's house in Ilfracombe, so this is where the event will take place. If you can offer a day or even half a day and would like to be involved, please call David and Judy Parker on 01271 865311.

NDAS Local History Day 2005

Derry Bryant has taken on the task of organising a second NDAS Local History Day in October this year. Derry writes:

NDAS will be hosting another history day this autumn, following the success of the History Day held in South Molton last year. This year's will be held at Rosemoor Gardens, Great Torrington on Saturday 8th October. Many local history and archaeological societies will be invited; a number of them will have displays on the day. A full programme has yet to be finalised, but we do know that there will be three lectures on topics of local interest during the day. These will be delivered in the "log cabin" in the Rosemoor grounds. Entry to Rosemoor will be included in the price of the tickets for the day. At £3.00 per person, this represents incredible value, as members will also be able to enjoy the delights of the gardens. Any NDAS members wishing to attend as individuals should please contact Derry Bryant on 10769 572963 or email [HYPERLINK "mailto:derrybryant@hotmail.com"](mailto:derrybryant@hotmail.com) derrybryant@hotmail.com or write to Oxleigh, 78 East Street, South Molton, Devon EX36 3 DQ. Cheques should be made payable to NDAS/NDRA.

One of the great virtues of the first Local History Day was the opportunity which it provided for

people to see what others are doing and to discuss matters of common interest. The advantage of sharing or pooling information and experience was keenly felt and in order to facilitate this in the long term, Jenny Yendall undertook to begin compiling a register of individuals or groups and their interests.

Subscription reminder

May we remind you that membership subscriptions for 2005 – 2006 became due on 1st April. The subscription is now £16 per year per individual, £24 for couples and £5.00 for students and juveniles. The subscription covers the production of two newsletters a year, insurance, speakers' expenses and the hire of a lecture room, costs incurred in the Society's projects, general running costs and occasional financial support for individuals or groups making a contribution to preserving the heritage of North Devon. If you have not yet renewed your subscription for this year, we hope you will not mind being reminded and that you will wish to maintain your membership of NDAS and to support its activities. Subscriptions should be sent to the Membership Secretary, Jane Green, 5 Chambercombe Park Terrace, Ilfracombe EX34 9QW.

The Old Custom House: An Invitation

As you may remember from previous newsletters, NDAS member Philip Milton owns the Old Custom House Restaurant, one of the oldest buildings in Barnstaple. It has been extensively researched by Margaret Read, has been surveyed by Colin Humphreys and has been restored by Philip. Members may like to take advantage of the following offer:

On Tuesday 14th June at 7.00 pm Philip Milton will give a free guided tour of the Old Custom

House Restaurant on the Strand in Barnstaple. Several NDAS members have already expressed an interest in joining the tour. If anyone else would like to come along, please call Derry Bryant on 01769 572963, so that we can give Philip an idea of numbers.

After the talk and the tour you will be welcome to stay and have a drink or a coffee (at your own expense). If anyone would like to have a meal afterwards, please contact the restaurant direct to book a table on 01271 370123.

1066 and Lots More

On Saturday 18th June 2005 from midday until 5.00p.m., Parracombe History and Archaeology Society are putting on a "re-enactment day" based around the Norman motte-and-bailey known as Holwell Castle. June Aiken writes:

Come and join us at the Motte and Bailey in Parracombe for an afternoon of fun and living history. There will be attractions for all the family, including re-enactment groups, a falconer, a fletcher (arrow maker), ceramicist, spinners and weavers. During the afternoon there will be opportunities to watch and hear mediaeval dance and music from the 'Daughters of Elvin'.

There will be plenty for children to do making pinch or coil pots, and practising to storm a Norman castle!

On site will be an archaeologist who will give an historical interpretation of the site and will try to identify any artefacts you bring along.

Entry is free.

There is no parking on the site, but spaces are available at the Coronation Playing Field, the Buff Hall and Heddon Hall (by kind permission of Mr. and Mrs. de Falbe) This is a countryside event,

please wear suitable footwear!

We would like to thank Gilbert and Anne Walters and their family for all their help in allowing us to stage this event on their land.

Heddon Hall Gardens are also open from 12.00 until 5.00p.m. and are having a display of mediaeval herbs. There is a charge for garden entry. Contact number 01598 763541.

For further information telephone June Aiken on 01598 763316 or Julia Holtom on 01598 763295.

Dates for Your Diary

NDAS and North Devon generally:

Tues 14th June:

Guided tour of the Old Custom House, the Strand, Barnstaple, 7.00 pm. Book through Derry Bryant 01769 572963.

Sat 18th June:

Parracombe Re-enactment Day, 12.00 midday onwards.

Mon 4th to Sat 16th July:

Excavation at Holworthy Farm, Parracombe.

Sun 17th July:

Open Day at the NDAS Holworthy Farm excavation: a chance to have this year's work explained. Access via field gate at SS 689445. 10.00 am To 4.00 pm.

Tues 12th July:

Launch of Dr Alison Grant's new book on North Devon pottery, Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon, 3.00 pm and 6.00 pm.

Sun 25th September:

Guided geology walk round Baggy Point 10.00 am to 4.00 pm, led by Dr Paul Madgett, local geologist. Meet in the National Trust car park at Croyde. A walk around the point followed by a scramble over the rocks. Stout footwear and reasonable agility required. Packed lunch.

Sat 8th October:

NDAS Local History Day 10.00 am to 4.00 pm, Rosemoor Gardens, Torrington. Book through Derry Bryant 01769 572963.

Mon 17th October:

Deltas, Mountains, Deserts and Ice: An Introduction to the Geology of North Devon, a talk by Dr Paul Madgett, Pilton Community College, Chaddiford Lane, Barnstaple, 7.30 (This is the first talk of the NDAS winter season.)

Mon 21st November:

The Baron's Wine Cellar: An 18th century Plantation Site in St Lucia, a talk by Polly Thompson, an NDAS member with international digging experience. Pilton Community College, Chaddiford Lane, Barnstaple, 7.30.

Exmoor National Park:**Thurs 16th June:**

'Excellent Archaeology': an Exmoor walk with Rob Wilson-North and Jess Turner taking in Exe Head and Hoar Oak. Meet Preyway Head SS767411 11.00 am. Four hours' walking. Stout footwear and weatherproof gear. Picnic lunch.

Sun 19th June:

'Exmoor Through the Ages': a walk with an Exmoor National Park ranger looking at how man has shaped the landscape. Meet Ashcombe carpark SS774395 10.00 am. Seven hours' walking. Stout footwear and weatherproof gear. Picnic lunch.

Thurs 7th July:

'A Walk in the Past': a walk with an Exmoor archaeologist and a National Trust warden taking in hillforts and industrial archaeology. Meet Watersmeet Tea Garden SS744487 12.00 midday. Four hours' walking. Stout footwear and weatherproof gear. Picnic lunch.

Sun 17th July:

'Eleven Barrows and a Long Stone': a walk with a National Park voluntary guide visiting Chapman Barrows, the Longstone and Pinkery Pond. Meet at Goat Hill Bridge SS724405 11.00am. Six hours' walking. Stout footwear and weatherproof gear. Picnic lunch.

Weds 27th July:

'Shammick Silver': a walk with a member of the National Park staff to look at Combe Martin's

mining history. Meet in National Park Centre, Combe Martin SS 578473 10.30 am. Stout footwear and weatherproof gear. Picnic lunch.

Sat 10th September:

West Challacombe Manor Heritage Open Day: a chance to view this medieval manor house. Booking essential: 01271 850887.

Fri 23rd September:

'Cow Castle': a walk with an Exmoor National Park archaeologist along the River Barle to the earthwork. Meet Ashcombe car park SS774395 11.00 am. Four hours' walking. Stout footwear and weatherproof gear. Picnic lunch.

Sat 1st October:

'Ancient Trees and Archaeology': a walk through Dunkery and Horner NNR with a National Trust warden. Meet Allercombe Meadow SS894 431 2.00 pm. Cost £3/£1. Booking essential 01643 862452. Stout footwear and weatherproof gear.

Devon Archaeological Society:**Sat 29th October:**

Recent Work on Coastal Archaeology in Southwest England: Joint Symposium of the Devon and Cornwall Archaeological Societies, Tavistock, 10.00am - 4.30 pm. For details contact Val Barnes, 42 Oaktree Park, Sticklepath, Okehampton EX20 2NB.

Monthly informal meetings

This is a reminder that the monthly 'pub' meetings are now on the first Wednesday of the month at the Royal and Fortescue Hotel in Barnstaple. There is normally no meeting in August or December. (And the first Wednesday in July will be during the Holworthy excavation period, so the 'usual suspects' will probably be too tired to turn out!)