

## NORTH DEVON IN THE GREY ARCHAEOLOGICAL LITERATURE

### REPORTS COVERING NORTH DEVON DISTRICT 2009

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

Table 1: Summary of reports for 2009

Parish	Site	Grid Ref	Report Producer	Type of Report	Nature of Development
Barnstaple	6 Litchdon Street	5599 3291	SWARCH	Monitoring & recording	Extension to house
Bratton Fleming	Friendship Farm	6581 4517	AC Archaeology	Watching brief	Construction of access track
Brayford	Riverside Cottages	6850 3460	Exeter Archaeology	Watching brief	Replacement of water main
Brayford	Welcombe Farm, Charles	6839 3375	XArch & Brayford Comm Arch Group	Geophysical survey and trench evaluation	None
Burrington	Eaglescott Airfield	6032 1603	Exeter Archaeology	Watching brief	Foundations for airfield facility
Georgeham	Baggy Point, Croyde	4302 3979	Exeter Archaeology	Monitoring	Underground pumping station
Goodleigh	Priory Cottage, Snapper	5873 3416	Exeter Archaeology	Monitoring	Construction of dwelling
Heanton Punchardon	RMB Chivenor	4967 3449	Exeter Archaeology	Monitoring	Flood defence scheme
Ilfracombe	Great Shelfin Farm	5200 4462	AC Archaeology	Trench evaluation	Wind energy development
Knowstone	Owlaborough Moor	5614 3334	SWARCH	Monitoring & recording	Construction of slurry pit
Mortehoe	Primary School, Woolacombe	4620 4370	Exeter Archaeology	Watching brief	Extension to school

Parracombe	Beacon Down Quarry	6650 4590	Exeter Archaeology	Monitoring	Telecoms mast

In 2009 12 site reports were posted in 11 parishes. A total of 3 commercial organisations were involved, with Exeter Archaeology producing 7 reports, South West Archaeology producing 2 reports, and AC Archaeology 2 reports. One report was produced by a community group.

### **1. Barnstaple: 6 Litchdon Street**

Groundworks to the rear of 6 Litchdon Street were monitored and recorded. The area is known for its pottery manufacture. The ground was higher than the house and excavation revealed some earlier features, including retaining walls and a well that had been backfilled in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A considerable quantity of pottery waste had been dumped in the garden at various levels. The ceramic evidence suggested that this had been dumped in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, probably from pottery production nearby.

John Allen's view, set out in the report, is worth quoting "The entire collection appears to date to c.1500-50. Hitherto, excavations in Barnstaple have recovered enormous quantities of post-1600 (mainly post-1650) wasters and a small amount of 13C and 15C material. This is therefore the first find of an otherwise unrepresented period of the town's pottery production, containing a number of features of wider interest. The date at which saggars came into use in SW England, for example, is uncertain, & this is probably the earliest instance of this significant innovation."

This site has gained even greater significance in view of the subsequent excavation of the Exeter Inn site in Litchdon Street and the discovery of around 2 tons of pottery waste of the same period.

### **2. Bratton Fleming: Friendship Farm**

Friendship Farm lies on the east side of the A399 at its junction with the B3358, in an area of known Bronze Age round barrows and mediaeval field systems. However, the excavation trenches yielded only a single linear feature that was probably a trackway from the farm into the adjacent fields. No finds were recovered.

### **3. Brayford: Riverside Cottages**

Riverside Cottage lies in an area known for the production of iron ore in the Romano-British period. Four of the five trenches excavated revealed iron smelting slag. A single pottery sherd of late-1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century Roman grey ware was recovered from one of the trenches.

### **4. Brayford: Welcombe Farm, Charles**

This is an interesting report of a community archaeology project carried out by the Brayford Community Archaeology Group, supported by XArch, consisting of funding from Heritage Lottery Fund and Exeter University. The project built on earlier work by Oxford Archaeometrics in 2002 and NDAS in 2004 who had carried out geophysics surveys at Welcombe Farm. They partially revealed a triple ditched square enclosure at the farm. The intention of the project was to carry out further geophysics and trench evaluation, in order to reveal more of and to date the structure.

Despite some logistical difficulties, the survey revealed a prehistoric/Romano-British hill side enclosure. The excavation carried out over the two outer ditches failed to reveal whether the two ditches were of a similar date. However, the outer ditch contained a number of pieces of Roman pottery, some worked flint and two radio-carbon dates, one from the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age and one from the Romano-British period.

### **5. Burrington: Eaglescott Airfield**

A watching brief was carried out during groundworks for new facilities for Devon Air Ambulance at the Airfield. The site lies within an area of known archaeological features. However, no features, deposits or dating evidence were found in the area of the development.

### **6. Georgeham: Baggy Point, Croyde**

Monitoring was undertaken during groundworks for structures relating to an underground pumping station. No archaeological features were revealed and no finds recovered.

### **7. Goodleigh: Priory Cottage, Snapper**

Monitoring was carried out when a new house was being built at Snapper. The site lay adjacent to the site of the mediaeval manor house, known as Yeotown. Excavation work had already commenced before the monitoring started, but the remains of one of the earthworks known to exist at the site was recorded. It was considered to be of early post-mediaeval date. A walkover survey was also carried out of the remaining

earthworks on the manor house site and these were interpreted and recorded. A single fragment of earthenware ridge tile was found, probably of 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century date.

#### **8. Heanton Punchardon: RMB Chivenor**

Monitoring and recording were carried out during flood defence works on this estuarine site. The features exposed were all from post-mediaeval agricultural activity, primarily field boundaries and ditches, ploughing evidence (including ridge and furrow) or farm tracks. However, the finds gave a much wider date range and included a rare sherd of 17<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese faience, several flint flakes of late Neolithic/Bronze Age origin and some sherds of mediaeval and post-mediaeval pottery.

#### **9. Ilfracombe: Great Shelfin Farm**

Nine trenches were evaluated at this site, covering 10% of the area likely to be affected by a proposed wind farm development. Although the ridge to the south of Ilfracombe is known to be the location of prehistoric barrows, only one trench yielded any features, a drainage ditch and two former boundary ditches, one of which contained two sherds of mediaeval pottery. The alignment of the boundary ditches indicated that they predated the post-mediaeval field system.

#### **10. Knowstone: Owlaborough Moor**

The entire site of a proposed slurry pit was stripped of soil. However, there were no archaeological features or finds identified.

#### **11. Mortehoe: land adjacent to Woolacombe Primary School**

The site of a proposed development at the Primary School was stripped and monitored. It lay close to where the mediaeval manor house of Woolacombe Tracey was believed to have been located. However, no archaeological features, deposits or finds were discovered.

#### **12. Parracombe: Beacon Down Quarry**

Monitoring was carried out during groundworks for a new telecommunications mast. Previous quarrying meant that the groundworks only revealed the underlying geology. No archaeological deposits or finds were discovered.

### **Discussion**

Of the twelve reports posted this year, only two contained worthwhile findings: the site at 6 Litchdon Street, Barnstaple for its contribution to uncovering the story of

early 16<sup>th</sup> century pottery production in the town, and the site at Welcombe Farm, Charles, where the community archaeology project added further to the understanding of a Late Bronze Age/Iron Age feature, with Bronze Age and Roman finds.

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