



Land at Carne Hill, Trewoon, St Mewan, Cornwall

Archaeological watching brief



Historic Environment Projects

Land at Carne Hill, Trewoon, St Mewan, Cornwall

Archaeological watching brief

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Within Historic Environment, the Project Managers were Andy Jones and Charlie Johns.

The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of Historic Environment Projects and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

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Cover illustration

Stone drain structure 181 within ditch [180].

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Abbreviations

CRO	Cornwall County Record Office
HER	Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Historic Environment Record
HE	Historic Environment, Cornwall Council
NGR	National Grid Reference
PRN	Primary Record Number in Cornwall HER

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out on a site of approximately 1.12 ha at Carne Hill, Trewoon, Cornwall, in advance of proposed development. The site of the St Mewan parish poor house, identified in documentary material and known to have been in existence between 1838 and 1851, was also partly excavated.

The watching brief identified a number of removed field boundaries, one group of which pre-dated the field pattern documented by historic maps. No dating evidence was recovered, however, and the date of the field system defined by these older boundaries remains unknown. Other boundaries, characterised by the parallel ditches which accompany Cornish hedges (stone-faced earth banks), are likely to have been associated with the smallholdings which occupied the site in the early nineteenth century.

A number of ditches containing well-built stone drains were also investigated, some of which were clearly linked to the Cornish hedges associated with the post-medieval smallholdings.

Investigation of the poor house site provided an indication of its plan and aspects of its construction, together with a very small assemblage of nineteenth-century artefactual material.

1 Introduction

1.1 Project background

Historic Environment Projects, Cornwall Council, was requested by Mr Shaun Stapleton of *ROK* to provide a project design and estimate for a programme of archaeological recording in advance of the construction of 49 affordable dwellings at Carne Hill, Trewoon, St Austell. The development was to cover an area of approximately 0.7 ha on a site with a total area of about 1.12 ha. The investigations were required as part of planning condition (08/01628):

'No development shall take place within the site until the applicant has secured and implemented a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation to be submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the County Archaeologist'.

The Historic Environment Planning Advice Officer, Cornwall Council, produced a brief for archaeological recording (dated 11 May 2010) and was consulted in the preparation of the project design.

The excavation and post-excavation programme was, in the event, funded by Mansell Partnership Housing South West, who took over development of the site.

1.2 Aims

The following general aims for the project were set out in the project design:

- To ensure that the site works are carried out in such a way as to allow recording as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation.
- To record archaeological features and deposits affected by the scheme.
- To recover and record artefacts uncovered by the works.
- Determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To establish the nature of the activity on the site.
- To recover and assess the potential for further analysis of any environmental evidence or industrial residues from archaeological features.
- To deposit the archive (including any finds) with the relevant museum and disseminate the results of discoveries as a concise archive report and, if merited, wider publication.

A 'poor house' is shown on the site by two maps dated 1831 and 1838 (below). Accordingly, the project design noted that archaeological recording had potential to answer questions highlighted in the South West Archaeological Research Framework (Webster 2008), in particular, Research Aim 9: 'Prioritise a recording strategy for buildings related to post-medieval to modern social provision'. Specific objectives were also set for investigation of the site of the poor house:

- To identify any artefacts relating to the occupation or use of the poor house site.
- Investigate the social relations involved in the operation of the poor house.

- Challenge, illustrate, supplement or corroborate documentary evidence relating to the poor house.

1.3 Methods

The project design set out an archaeological programme of five stages: historical research; fieldwork; archiving; assessment; analysis; final publication.

1.3.1 Historical research

Prior to fieldwork, research was carried out using online sources and documentary and printed material held by Cornwall Record Office and the Courtney Library, Royal Institute of Cornwall, Truro. Secondary sources relating to the poor house and the wider history of such institutions in Cornwall were also sought.

1.3.2 Fieldwork

The project design indicated that the soil strip on the development site should be carried out under archaeological supervision using a machine fitted with a toothless bucket. The soil should be stripped cleanly to a level at which archaeological features or layers could be expected to be revealed (that is, the top of the first archaeologically significant horizon or the natural, whichever is highest). The exposed area was to be inspected by an archaeologist and any archaeological features or layers identified in the stripped area should then be carefully excavated by hand and archaeologically recorded by written description, plan and section and photographic record, as appropriate, by an HE Projects archaeologist. The project design emphasised that machines should not run over the stripped area until archaeological works were complete.

1.3.3 Post-fieldwork

Post-fieldwork elements envisaged in the project design were

- Archiving.
- Production of an archive report.
- Assessment and analysis of the archaeological data recovered during fieldwork and a review of whether assessment by specialists of the further potential for analysis of, for example, artefacts or environmental samples is required.
- Consultation with the Historic Environment Planning Advice Officer over requirements for assessment, analysis and reporting.
- In the event of significant remains being recorded the scope and final form of reporting will be reviewed, including the possibility of preparation of a report for an academic journal.

2 Location and setting

The development site covers approximately 1.12 ha and is located on the north side of the A3058 St Austell to Newquay road, adjacent to the junction with

Carne Hill, centred on NGR SW 9912 5309 (Fig 1). It lies on a gentle south-facing slope at 125-130m above Ordnance Datum, in the parish of St Mewan.

The underlying geology is hornfelsed slates and sandstones of the Meadfoot Group, overlain by well-drained fine loamy or fine silty soils (British Geological Survey digital data; National Soil Resources Institute Soil Systems Group, 2004).

There are views to the south from the site but views to the north are limited by rising ground and to east and west by trees and vegetated Cornish hedges.

2.1 Historic Landscape Character and archaeological potential

The site lies within Anciently Enclosed Land (AEL), characterised as the agricultural heartland of Cornwall, with farming settlements documented before the seventeenth century AD and with field patterns which are morphologically distinct from the generally straight-sided fields of later enclosure (Cornwall County Council 1996). The origins of the historic enclosed landscapes may be either medieval or prehistoric, but it is well understood that AEL has been settled, enclosed and farmed since the Middle Bronze Age, c 1500 BC, and that there is significant archaeological potential within this landscape type for the preservation of extensive remains of prehistoric, Roman and medieval activity.

This potential has been demonstrated in the wider vicinity of Trewoon by large-scale archaeological investigations at Trenowah, St Austell, 5 km east of the site, on the St Austell North-East Distributor Road, and at Pennance, St Stephen-in-Brannel, 6 km to the west of the site, in advance of the creation of the Scarcewater china-clay spoil tip. The Trenowah excavations revealed groups of pits of probable Early Neolithic date, a hollow containing Middle Bronze Age pottery, a Late Bronze Age post-built structure, an Early Iron Age field system, three Middle to Late Iron Age enclosures and a curvilinear ditch of Romano-British date (Johns 2008). At Pennance the investigations found the well-preserved remains of a Middle Bronze Age settlement and Iron Age and Roman-period field and holding boundaries, burials and ceremonial sites (Jones and Taylor 2010). Several of the later prehistoric and Roman-period enclosed farming settlements known as rounds survive within the wider area – at Lanjeth and Trethullan, to the west of Trewoon, for example (HER PRNs 20663, 20658) – and further sites of this type are suspected in the vicinity from the evidence of air photographs and field names; a possible round site suggested by a field-name lies 550m to the north of the present site (HER PRN 20654). An important site of this type, with occupation extending into the post-Roman period, has been excavated at Trethurgy, 5 km north east of Trewoon (Quinnell 2004).

3 Site history

The field which is the site of the proposed development (Fig 2) was formerly part of the manor of Trewoon and of the head holding within the manor, also called Trewoon. The name Trewoon is from Cornish: *tre*, meaning a farm estate, and *goon*, downs (that is, upland, unenclosed rough grazing); it would have had the meaning 'farm on (or more probably near) the downs' (Padel 1985, 108-9, 223-232), referring to the extensive area of upland rough ground nearby on the southern flank of the Hensbarrow Downs; historic maps show

substantial areas of rough ground and former rough ground to the west and north west of Trewoon. The place-name is first recorded in Domesday Book in 1086 in the form *Tregoin* (Cornwall HER PRN 20836). Settlements in Cornwall incorporating the place-name element *tre* are of early medieval origin, probably dating to about the sixth or seventh century AD (Padel 1985, 225). Many such settlements were themselves the successors to nearby farmsteads of the later prehistoric and Roman periods.

By the post-medieval period the manor of Trewoon had been divided: a deed of 1723 refers to the acquisition of a 'moiety' [that is, a part or portion, sometimes a notional half] of the manor (CRO J/1/58) and in the mid nineteenth century parts were held by the Hawkins, Tremayne and Hoblyn families (Gilbert 1838, III, 197). Some of the individual farms within the manor had also been divided into several relatively small holdings. This may have been prompted by the presence within the area of streaming and mining for tin and, from the second half of the eighteenth century, of china clay working, creating a demand for smallholdings for a partly industrial workforce and those who supplied them: a number of these holdings were held by butchers, for example. Unusually for Cornwall, this process produced several nucleated settlements within the otherwise rural parish, including Trewoon: Thomas Tonkin, writing in the early eighteenth century, referred to the 'pretty large village which has grown up in this manor' (Polsue 1870, III, 334) and the tithe map of 1838 shows 'Trewoon village' as several clusters of houses and cottages stretched along the road between St Austell and Newquay.

Parts of the original farm estate of Trewoon were divided into holdings known as Trewoon Veor and Trewoon Vean; that is, great and small respectively, from the Cornish place-name elements *meur*, big, and *byghan*, small (Padel 1985); the use of these Cornish language elements in the holding names suggests that the division took place during the medieval or early post-medieval periods when Cornish would still have been in current use in this area of mid Cornwall. These holdings were themselves divided: a lease of 1698 refers to a 'moiety' of Trewoon Vean (CRO HH/7/51) and another of 1754 to a 'full moiety of a messuage and tenement called Trewoon-vean' (CRO J/1/1055A). The tithe survey of 1838 referred to one of the portions of the latter as Higher Trewoon Vean. By that time there were several holdings bearing the names of Trewoon Vean and Veor, dispersed over a substantial area around Trewoon village.

Parts of the present development site lay within both Trewoon Veor and Trewoon Vean. A map of the Manor of Trewoon made in 1831 (CRO X 148/7) shows the present site covering four fields (Fig 3). The largest portion, made up of the fields to the east labelled u4, u5 and u6 on the 1831 map (1347 and 1348 on the tithe map of 1838; Fig 4), lay within Higher Trewoon Vean, a 7-acre (2.8 ha) holding occupied in 1831 by Mary Harris (CRO J/1/1485) and in 1838 by John Gaved (Tables 1 and 2). A strip down the western side of the present site was the northern part of a field within the similarly sized Trewoon Veor, held in 1831 by Thomas Clemo senior and in 1838 by Edmund Clemo (shown as field v7 on the 1831 map, 1385 on the tithe map).

A boundary between fields u4 and u5 shown on the 1831 map had been removed by the time the tithe map was surveyed in 1838 and another east-west boundary shown on that between fields 1347 and 1348 had been removed by the time surveying was carried out for the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25in: 1 mile map, published in 1881 (Fig 5). The 2nd edition map of 1907 (Fig

6) showed that the boundary which form erly ran north-south down the west side of the site had also been removed. The nineteenth century was therefore a period of significant change in the farming landscape, with the small enclosures associated with the later eighteenth or early-nineteenth century smallholdings in this area progressively removed.

Table 1 Hawkins estate map and reference book entries for fields u4, u5, u6 and v7, and St Mewan poor house, 1831 (CRO J/1/1485; X 148/7)

Field nos	Lessee	Holding name	Land use	Area (statute measure)		
				Clear ground a-r-p	Hedges a-r-p	Total a-r-p
u4	Mary Harris	Trewoon-vean	Arable	0-1-28	0-0-15	0-2-3
u5			Arable	1-3-17	0-0-30	2-0-7
u6			Arable			
v7 [with v8]	Thomas Clemo snr	Not stated [Trewoon-veor]	Arable	1-1-8	0-0-38	1-2-6
v9	Thomas Clemo snr	Not stated [Trewoon-veor]	Poor House and road	0-1-20		0-1-20

Table 2 Tithe apportionment entries for fields 1347, 1348 and 1385, and St Mewan poor house, 1838

Tithe Apportionment no	Lessee	Holding name	Land use	Area a-r-p
1347	John Gaved	Higher Trewoon Vean	Arable	1-3-7
1348	John Gaved	Higher Trewoon Vean	Arable	0-3-0
1385	Edmund Clemo	Trewoon Veor	Arable	0-3-29
1386	Edmund Clemo	Trewoon Veor	Poor House and Road	-

In the period between the 2nd revised edition of the Ordnance Survey 25in: 1 mile map of the 1930s and current Ordnance Survey large-scale mapping the southern portion of the historic boundary forming the eastern side of the site was re-aligned, with the present boundary, south of the marked kink in this side of the site, lying up to 8m north east of the historic position. This area was not stripped during the work reported on here and it is not known whether any sub-surface traces of the former boundary survive.

The maps of 1831 and 1838 both showed a long, narrow rectangular building identified as the 'Poor House' on the site (below). The tithe map and the 1st and 2nd editions of the Ordnance Survey 25in map of 1881 and 1907 also all marked a watercourse, running west to east within the present site, parallel and immediately adjacent to the northern boundary. This ran broadly along the contour before turning downhill to the farm known as Trewoon Vean Old Town (another subdivision of Trewoon Vean), approximately 450m to the south east of the site, and was probably originally a farm leat. The revised 2nd edition map, published in the 1930s, indicated a change in the line of the leat, which now ran partly to the north of and just outside the northern site boundary, passing through it to run along the south side only on its eastern portion. The watercourse does not appear on current Ordnance Survey mapping (Fig 2).

3.1 St Mewan poor house

The history of the St Mewan poor house is poorly documented. Nothing is shown at this location on the surveyors' drawings for the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 1in: 1 mile map, created c 1809, or on the published map of about 1814. This is not a conclusive demonstration that construction of the poor house post-dated these sources, however, because at this small scale, although farms and other rural settlements appear in schematic form, individual buildings are seldom shown and the building, not forming part of a larger settlement, may not have merited inclusion on the map.

The earliest evidence found for the poor house is a map (Fig 3) and accompanying 'book of reference' of the Manor of Trewoon, surveyed for the Hawkins estate by the St Austell surveyor Richard Carveth in 1831 (CRO J/1/1485; X 148/7). The map (Fig 3) shows a long, narrow rectangular structure with one internal subdivision located in one of the fields held by Thomas Clemo senior (see above) as part of Trewoon Veor; it was described in the accompanying document as 'Poor House'.

The tithe map of 1838 (Fig 4) showed the same building, depicted as approximately 32m long and 4m wide, with a small rectangular enclosure at the north-west end of the long side fronting the road. The accompanying tithe apportionment also listed the structure as 'Poor House'.

The building does not appear on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25in: 1 mile map (Fig 5), published in 1881 but probably surveyed in the late 1870s, and must therefore have been demolished by then. However, something of its history after 1838 can be compiled from other sources. The 1841 census (the first for which detailed returns survive) recorded 14 people living in the poor house, in five households; one dwelling unit was noted as uninhabited (Table 3). One 62-year old woman, Elizabeth Mann, lived alone but the other units were all held by households of more than one generation. Henry Martyn, aged 84, lived with a wife or daughter named Alice Martyn aged 54 and two girls in their teens also named Martyn who were plausibly his grand-daughters. Benjamin Andrews and his wife Grace lived with a four-year old grand-daughter (see below) and John and Ann Tabb resided with the 12-year old Jane Tabb, again most probably a grand-daughter. Mary Keane, aged 57, lived with two girls in their late teens who were probably her daughters. (Further research using baptism and other records would probably obtain more precise data on the family relationships represented.)

Unfortunately, the surviving poor rate books for St Mewan, which cover the period 1840-45, record only the collection of poor rates in the parish and contain no reference to the poor house itself (CRO AD 626/4-3).

Table 3 The 1841 census return for the Poor House, St Mewan (Public Record Office HO/107/146, book 9, folio 30, page 2)

Name	Age	Occupation or profession	Whether born in same county
Henry Martyn	84	Ag[gricultural] Lab[ourer]	In county
Alice Martyn	54		In county
Alice Martyn	18		In county
Emma Martyn	15		In county
Benjamin Andrew	68	Ag Lab	In county
Grace Andrew	64		In county
Jane Andrew	4		In county
Uninhabited			
Elizabeth Mann	62		In county
John Tabb	79	Ag Lab	In county
Ann Tabb	70		In county
Jane Tabb	12		In county
Mary Keane	57		In county
Elizabeth Keane	19		In county
Maria Keane	17		In county

A major change in legislation (below) meant that from the late 1830s paupers could be accommodated in workhouses serving a 'union' of parishes, rendering the poor houses of individual parishes technically redundant. The parish body with responsibility for administering poor relief was the 'vestry' and the St Mewan vestry book records that on 28 March 1848 'this Meeting do consent to the Guardians of the Poor of the Saint Austell Union selling the premises described in the Margin hereof'; the left-hand margin is annotated 'The Property commonly called and known by the name of the Poor Houses [sic] belonging to this Parish' (CRO P 148/8/1). The vestry minutes noted that the sale was to be carried out under an act of parliament of William IV titled 'An Act to facilitate the conveyance of of Workhouses and other property of Parishes and Incorporations or Unions of Parishes in England and Wales'. Eight signatures were recorded in favour of the resolution, with one dissenting voice, that of the rector of St Mewan, R Wilson Taylor. Taylor added a note explaining the reason for his dissent:

'As the Rector of the Parish of Saint Mewan I hereby record my protest against the sale of the Property commonly called and known by the name of the Poor Houses belonging to this Parish, inasmuch as four of the seven houses are occupied by persons to whom the payment of rent is a

considerable object, and they have severally expressed to me, their Clergyman, an earnest wish that they may not be dispossessed thereof' (*ibid.*).

There is no further reference to the proposed sale in the vestry book, which runs to 1854, or in the succeeding volume (CRO P 148/8/2). Unfortunately, the surviving minutes of the St Austell Union end on 24 March 1848, four days before the vestry meeting decision (CRO PU/AUS/3) and do not resume until c 1890. It is clear, however, that the poor house remained open for at least a few years after 1848. The 1851 census (Table 4) recorded two households there: William and Mary Roberts, aged 72 and 69 respectively, and Benjamin Andrew and his 13-year-old grand-daughter Jane. Both Benjamin and Jane Andrew had been resident in the poor house 10 years earlier (above), but he was now described as bed-ridden and she as 'House Keeper', presumably caring for him. The census return listed him as 68, but his age had been noted as 67 ten years earlier (Table 3) and when he died in November 1852 the St Mewan burial register recorded him as 79 (St Mewan burials 1850s). There is no indication in the 1851 census record of other inhabitants or of uninhabited units in the poor house.

In November 1855 the St Mewan vestry book recorded William Roberts as one of several paupers then living in St Mewan 'whose relief is charged against the parish' and who the meeting voted to receive increased payments, but it is unclear whether he remained in the poor house at this date (CRO P 148/8/2). In 1861 he was listed in the census as living with a family headed by an agricultural labourer named John Collins and the census of that year made no reference to the poor house (1861 census online). Roberts died, aged 87, in 1864 (St Mewan burials 1850s).

In summary, the St Mewan poor house was built before 1831 and closed at some time after the date at which the 1851 census was taken, probably soon after. It was not occupied at the time of the 1861 census and may have already been demolished; it was certainly not extant by c 1880. The census evidence from St Mewan, confirmed by other contemporary sources (below), indicates that poor houses at this period mostly housed elderly men and women, accompanied and probably cared for by daughters and, to a greater extent, grand-daughters. Additionally, they appear to have provided accommodation for the very poor, both individuals and families, able to do some work – several of the aged inhabitants in both 1841 and 1851 were recorded as agricultural labourers (Tables 3 and 4) – but to whom, as the Reverend Taylor observed, 'the payment of rent is a considerable object'.

3.1.1 The poor house building: documentary evidence

The available maps show the St Mewan poor house as a long, narrow, rectangular structure; its depiction on the tithe map suggests that it was very approximately 32m long by 4m wide. The evidence from poor houses of similar form in Tregony and St Michael Caerhays (below) suggests that it was probably a single-storey structure. The house was divided into either six dwelling units, as indicated by the 1841 census, or seven as referred to by the rector in 1848, suggesting that individual units or 'houses' within it were probably 4-5m wide.

Table 4 The 1851 census return for the Poor House, St Mewan (PRO HO 107/1908, folio 326, pages 7-9)

Name	Relation to head of family	Condition	Age	Rank, profession or occupation	Where born
Poor House					
William Roberts	Head	Married	72	Farm Labourer	Port Isaac, Cornwall
Mary Roberts	Wife	M	69	Farm Labourer's Wife	St Stephens, Cornwall
Benjiman [sic] Andrew	Head	W	67	Bed Ridden	St Stephens, Cornwall
Jane Andrew	Grndau	U	13	House Keeper	St Mewan, Cornwall

3.1.2 The wider context for the St Mewan poor house

Elizabethan legislation allowed parishes to establish a poor rate and set the poor to work, although relatively few did so. In 1623 an Act was passed to encourage the building of 'Hospitals and Working-houses for the Poor' (Morrison 1999, 5), but the resulting institutions were mostly urban and intended as workshops where the poor could be profitably employed. Poor houses or public almshouses for the care of the aged or infirm began to appear about the end of the seventeenth century but again were primarily urban (*ibid.*, 9). These were paralleled, however, by privately endowed almshouses. Examples in Cornwall include one at Tywardreath, where in 1653 the Rashleigh family gave a house and garden for four poor persons, and another in St Agnes, where in 1688 a house divided into four was left by will for the benefit of poor widows (Cornwall County Council 1973). A number of privately funded, purpose-built almshouses were also established; one at Launcells is said to date to the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, that at St Germans to c 1600, one at St Ewe to before 1617 and one at Veryan to before 1622; the surviving Tregony almshouses are well dated to 1696 and an almshouse in Camelford was set up in 1709 (Cornwall HER PRNs 112, 4626, 24311, 38099; Cornwall County Council 1973).

The Relief of the Poor Act of 1782 allowed parishes to establish poor houses for the use of the elderly, sick and orphaned; able-bodied paupers were provided with relief in their own homes (Morrison 1999). Poor houses clearly already existed in some parishes in Cornwall, however: a rapid trawl through calendars of documentary sources undertaken for this project identified references to poor houses having existed prior to 1782 in Budock, St Eval, Mabe, St Martin-in-Meneage, Perranuthnoe and Poughill (CRO RH/1/2240; AR/3/663; QS/1/4/278, 279; G/577; P 183/4/1; P 192/16b/11). Many of these were probably existing dwellings turned over to the use of the parish poor but that at Perranuthnoe appears to have been purpose-built in 1763 (CRO P 183/4/1). Madron parish, which included Penzance, had several poor houses until a single purpose-built structure was erected in 1806, after which the others were closed (Jennings 1928). Many of the establishments known to have been set up under this legislation were large and provided for groups of parishes. In most the inmates were required to work for their board and lodging.

During the early decades of the nineteenth century there is documentary evidence for the existence of many more poor houses, some of which were clearly newly built. In Braddock, for example, a new poor house was to be erected on the site of Taphouse turnpike gatehouse in 1821 (CRO P 17/8/1) and a new poor house was built in Budock in 1818 (CRO P 22/4/2); in 1825 a 'lately built' poor house was noted on Goonreeth Downs, St Gluvias (CRO X517/32; X 263/71). Local magistrates visited the parish workhouse at Gweek in Constantine in 1816, found it unsafe and ordered a new one to be built (CRO CRO QS/1/8/297, 298). At Morvah, in West Penwith, subscriptions towards a new poor house were being sought in 1826 (CRO CA/B42/21-22) and in Stithians a property was purchased to serve as a poor house in 1830-31 (CRO SHM/484/2, 3-5). The poor house in Tregony (below) was shown on the tithe map of c 1840 but does not appear on maps of 1787 (CRO J/1/1516) or 1828 (Foundations Archaeology 2008).

The long, narrow form of the St Mewan poor house, evidently divided into a number of dwelling units, suggests that it was purpose-built as a poor house. This form is paralleled by a small number of other examples identified during the current research. The 'Poors' House' recorded in the tithe survey of c 1840 at St Michael Caerhays survives and is a single-storey structure, approximately 26m in length and 6.5m wide, with short projecting bays at either end of the façade. In 1841 the census recorded 16 people in the poor house there, including families of seven and five persons (PRO HO107/146/10, folio 7, page 8). The surviving poor houses at Tregony [NB. not the almshouses] similarly take the form of a single-storey row, in that instance approximately 45m long and 5m wide. The tithe map of c 1840 shows the building divided into 13 separate rooms; the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25in: 1 mile map of c 1880 indicates only five separate units, however, and it is likely that the building had undergone some modification by that date. The 'Poor House' depicted on the Breage tithe map of c 1840 at Goon Rins ey was similar in plan to that at St Michael Caerhays but appears to have been about 50m in length.

Some contemporary descriptions of poor houses also hint that they were divided into single-roomed units for inmates. The premises 'lately used as the poor house of the parish' in St Columb Major were recorded in 1848 as nine dwelling houses, a garden and a sawpit (CRO WH/1/5726) and the former almshouses in St Ewe, later used as the parish poor house, were described in the 1930s as 'four one roomed houses built of cob and thatched roof, and an adjoining cottage (six-roomed)' (Cornwall County Council 1973). An editorial in the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* in 1842 described the situation which formerly existed in rural areas:

'The poorhouse in such parishes was a small building, sometimes decent, sometimes a mere hovel in which the poor were granted merely a room, or a part of a room, supporting themselves, sometimes by their own labor [sic], sometimes by a money allowance from the parish, going where they liked, doing what they liked, without any domestic authority to control them' (*Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 27 May 1842).

The accommodation of both the infirm and old, some in receipt of parish relief, and the working poor unable to afford other accommodation was evidently paralleled elsewhere. Harris (1973, 81) cites an early nineteenth century report concerning the poor house in an unidentified parish in Cornwall:

'I cannot think the Houses, wretched hovels as they are, can be better applied than to the reception of old women and the infirm people as they generally have been. At present two of them are unoccupied – one of them is occupied by an infirm Labourer with a Family, who works on the roads – and the other by two old women – one rather deficient in understanding and a cripple who has I believe her 2/- [2s = 10 pence] a week from the Parish and the other a hard working woman who almost always keeps herself clear of Parish Pay.'

The legislation known as the New Poor Law was passed in 1834 and provided for the construction of large workhouses by groups or 'unions' of parishes; in principle, relief to the poor was henceforth only to be available through these union workhouses (Morrison 1999). A St Austell Union was established in February 1837 and in addition to St Mewan and St Austell it also incorporated the parishes of St Blazey, Tywardreath, St Sampson, Fowey, St Dennis, Roche, St Ewe, St Gorran, Mevagissey, Creed with Grampound, St Michael Caerhays and St Stephen-in-Brannel (www.workhouses.org.uk; Bennett 1987, 6-9). A workhouse for 300 inmates was completed at St Austell in 1838 (www.workhouses.org.uk).

As noted above, however, some paupers continued to reside in the poor houses at St Mewan and St Michael Caerhays for some years after the start of the new regime. The situation was evidently the same in some other parishes in the St Austell Union: the 1841 census recorded one family and one unoccupied unit in the poor house at Roche (HO 107/145, 9, folio 28, page 22), a family and an individual in the workhouse in Grampound (PRO HO 107/147/5, folio 19, page 10) and 22 inmates in Cross Poor House in St Stephen-in-Brannel (PRO HO 107/146/12, folio 65, page 6).

With the new workhouses and union arrangements in place, however, it seems probable that parish authorities would have been inclined to reduce their local liabilities. This is likely to have been the context for the sale of the St Mewan poor house proposed in 1848 (above). Similar sales took place elsewhere in Cornwall: Menheniot poor house was sold in 1839 (CRO R/3238), St Mellion in 1840 (CRO CY/765, 6481), Lostwithiel in 1841 (CRO BLOS/387/1, 2), those for Falmouth and Perranarworthal in 1845 (CRO P 182/19/65, 66; P 182/19/63), Laneast in 1847, under the same legislation as that used to sell St Mewan (CRO P 108/16b/1), and St Gluvias in 1851 (CRO X 394/57-58). In some instances the poor houses were converted for other uses. That at Ruan Lanihorne was leased in 1857 to a group of merchants and a carpenter from Portloe (CRO G/299). The former poor house at St Michael Caerhays is shown as an infants' school on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25in: 1 mile map of c 1880, and that at Mylor Bridge was described in 1884 as 'now converted into and used as a Board School' (CRO WH/1/715/1, 2). The 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25in map showed the former site of Breage workhouse occupied by Goutrinsey United Methodist chapel. In other instances, as at St Mewan, the old poor houses were demolished and the sites abandoned.

4 Archaeological results

NB. Archaeological contexts are referred to in the following ways: cuts (for example, ditches and pits) are shown with the context number in square brackets: 'ditch [178]'; 'pit [152]'. Deposits, fills and layers are presented in the form 'fill (172)'; 'layer (155)'. Structures are shown in the form 'stone drain 154'; wall 342.

Soil stripping on the site began on 23 August 2010 and continued for several days, during which a watching brief was carried out on areas revealed by the stripping. Archaeological work continued on the site, with some interruptions, until mid September. The weather was for the most part dry and fine but there were several episodes of very heavy rain which carried substantial quantities of loose material across the site and blurred or re-covered features initially revealed by the topsoil strip (Fig 10). An area along the southern edge of the site was, in the event, not stripped during the groundworks (Fig 2). A further area in the north-west corner, after initial stripping and archaeological inspection, was used for stockpiling topsoil.

Features observed were initially sketch plotted onto a plan of the site and subsequently an EDM survey was carried out to record the positions of ditches and other features, with other features subsequently sketch plotted onto a print-out of the EDM survey as they were recognised during fieldwork. The plan of archaeological features recorded on the site is reproduced as Figure 7. Features, the majority of which were ditches and other linear cuts, were characterised with the aid of one or more sections cut across them and recorded. The poor house, investigated over the last three days of fieldwork, was recorded with the aid of a local site grid tied in to the EDM survey (Fig 8).

Dimensions and descriptions of the recorded features as well as details of finds recovered are given in section 6.

4.1 Field boundaries

4.1.1 First-phase boundaries

Ditch [114] followed a sinuous line for about 50m approximately north – south, turning sharply to the east near the northern edge of the site (Figs 7 and 11) and continuing for approximately 16m before fading out, presumably truncated by past cultivation of the eastern part of the site. It appeared to be the earliest linear feature identified on the site, being cut by, and therefore pre-dating, other linear features intersecting with it such as ditches [124], [148] and the removed Cornish hedge represented by ditches [116] and [118]. A number of slots were cut across ditch [114] but these produced no stratified finds to offer additional dating evidence. One section towards its east end revealed traces of what were probably spade or shovel cuts into the base of the ditch. Although shallow and relatively narrow where exposed in the natural (Fig 12), it should be remembered that the ditch would originally have been cut through the overlying topsoil and would therefore have been up to 0.6-0.7m deep and have produced sufficient spoil for an accompanying earth bank or stone-faced hedge, although no direct evidence for this was identified.

Ditch [112] may represent a contemporary boundary associated with [114]: it was aligned on the sharp change of direction at the northern extent of [114]

and could have divided the area to the west of [114] from the area to the north of its eastern arm. An area of disturbed and discoloured natural (140) lying in the space between the southern terminals of [110] and [112] and the northern loop of [114] could have derived from disturbance and hollowing in a gateway in this area, although there were no post-holes or other evidence to indicate the existence of such a feature. Ditch [110], immediately west of [112] could also have functioned as a boundary with [114], as suggested for [112], but the stone-packed primary fill (151) discovered within it hints that it was more probably a field drain, although it is unclear why in this case it should have terminated in this area and not continued downslope.

Ditch [170], similar in size and orientation to [114] and lying approximately 20m to the west, could also have been associated with it. Investigation at the intersection of this feature with ditch [118] provided no clear conclusion on which of them was primary, but the differing widths of [118] on each side of this junction suggested that [170] pre-dated the east – west Cornish hedge of which [118] represents the northern ditch. Other linear features to the east on the same alignment clearly post-date the hedge (below).

Ditch [101] was visible in the extreme north-west corner of the site, running roughly east-west. In size and form it was comparable with [114]. It was cut by – and therefore pre-dated – ditch [104] which formed part of the north – south Cornish hedge on the western side of the site and therefore also falls within the earlier phase of enclosure on the site. At the time the site work was carried out it was thought that this feature could represent the farm leat identified on the tithe map and historic Ordnance Survey maps. However, these show the watercourse located tight against the boundary forming the northern edge of the site and it seems more probable that [101] was part of an earlier field division.

If these ditched features – [114], [112], [170] and [101] – were contemporary they may have formed part of an irregular but broadly rectilinear field system. Their date is unclear, other than that they are earlier than the Cornish hedges on the site. It is conceivable that some or all were Iron Age or Romano-British in date (that is, c 300 cal BC to c AD 410): ditched field systems of these periods are known elsewhere in Cornwall, as, for example, at the nearby site of Pennance, in St Stephen-in-Brannel (Jones and Taylor 2010), at Trenowah, on the route of the St Austell North-East Distributor Road (Johns 2008), at the Combined Universities Campus at Tremough, Penryn (Gossip and Jones 2007) and at the Truro College and Richard Lander School sites at Threemilestone, Truro (Gossip, forthcoming). These sites have been dated for the most part from pottery found within ditch fills, recovered during much more extensive investigations than were undertaken on this site.

Alternatively, these ditches (and the banks which are likely to have accompanied them) may derive from an early medieval or medieval pattern of enclosure in the area, subsequently effaced and replaced by fields divided by Cornish hedges when this part of the Trewoon estate was divided into smallholdings, probably during the eighteenth century.

4.1.2 Cornish hedges

Two removed Cornish hedges were identified on the site, both of which were depicted on an estate map of 1831 and the St Mewan tithe map of 1838 (Figs 3 and 4). One of these, running roughly north – south, was represented by the

parallel ditches [104] and [106]. The other ran approximately east – west and was formed by parallel ditches [116] and [118]. The latter had been removed by the time of the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25in: 1 mile map of c 1880 (Fig 5) and the other had also gone by the date of the 2nd edition in c 1907 (Fig 6). These two hedges (and others shown on historic maps in the immediate area) are notably straight and form a broadly rectilinear pattern. These lie within a framework of rather more sinuous boundaries, such as those forming the eastern and northern boundaries of the site, which almost certainly derive from the enclosure of medieval cultivation blocks. The straight Cornish hedges are likely to have been associated with the creation of smallholdings in this part of Trewoon, probably during the eighteenth century. A small assemblage of post-medieval pottery was collected from the exposed surface of the fill (117) of ditch [116]; this is most likely to have derived from household rubbish incorporated into farmyard midden material spread on the field surface to enhance fertility.

A stone-lined drainage ditch [126] was found to have been cut into ditch [118] and a modern pipe trench [120] into ditch [106] (below).

4.2 Drainage

A number of drainage ditches were encountered on the site and it is evident that the western portion has been regarded as requiring significant drainage over some period, with at least two discrete historic episodes of drainage and subsequent modifications.

The first identifiable phase included ditches [178], [180] and [130], each of which ran roughly perpendicular to, and appeared to terminate on, ditch [118], the northern element of the east – west Cornish hedge crossing the site. Each of these features incorporated a stone 'gutter' or drain (structures 179, 181 and 214) (Fig 14) and it is probable that they were initially constructed to drain into ditch [118].

The construction of these drains followed a similar form in each case. A steep, near vertical-sided trench was cut and a line of stones laid along each side of the base. The stones were placed with flat faces set towards the centre line of the trench, forming a channel 0.1-0.23 wide between them. In some instances further courses of stones were laid above, creating a channel up to 0.32m deep (structure 154 in ditch [146]) (Fig 13). Capstones, often extending across much of the width of the trench, were laid over the double line of stones with smaller stones filling gaps between them. A capping of re-deposited natural (clay and shillet) was laid over the capstones. In the case of ditch [146] (below) this appeared to extend across the full width of the trench, at least at the point at which it was sectioned, but in other instances the capping could be seen to form a ribbon narrower than the trench overlying the capstones, perhaps to allow water to percolate into the drain along the edges of the cut.

In a second phase, ditch [126], which also incorporated a stone drain (structure 213), was cut into the fill (119) of the eastern portion of ditch [118]. The western portion of ditch [126] (recorded as [146]) diverted south from the line of ditch [118] and continued towards the south west. It is unclear whether this took place while the Cornish hedge represented by ditches [116] and [118] was extant or after its removal between 1838 and c 1880 (above).

After the construction of ditch [126]/[146], ditch [180] was diverted to feed into the new drain. A pit [182] was dug across [180] with a short ditch [185] running from it into [126].

Ditch [124] lay parallel to [146] approximately 8m to the east. This feature did not contain a stone gutter, however, and there is no other indication of an association other than the similar alignment. Ditch [124] cut and therefore post-dated ditch [114].

Ditch [144] ran parallel to and approximately 2m to the west of ditch [146] and it was initially assumed that these features were the ditches of a Cornish hedge. Cut [144] was poorly defined but a modern plastic pipe was found to lie within it. It appeared to follow the same alignment as ditch [148] to the north east and may therefore have been cut on the line of an earlier feature.

Trench [120] was cut into and followed the alignment of ditch [106] which formed the eastern element of the pair of ditches representing a north – south Cornish hedge (above). A modern pipe was found within this feature.

The various drainage features are not closely datable, although it is most probable that the ditches containing stone structures were created as part of improvements wrought by the tenants of the smallholdings on the site during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Worgan, writing in about 1808, noted that

'The drains are generally stone gutters, upon which are sometimes thrown small leased stones [leased = removed from the cultivated field surface]; the whole covered with earth, sufficiently deep to admit the operation of the plough. In some instances, reed or brush wood is placed on the covered stone gutters, to prevent their being choked with earth. . . .' (Worgan 1815, 108-9).

He also observed that the advantages 'immediately resulting' from draining 'are so striking to the meanest capacity, that the tenantry who have any permanency in their holding [that is, a long lease], are excited to undertake the improvement at their own expense' (*ibid.*, 108).

4.3 The poor house

The approximate position of the Poor House was known from the 1831 Hawkins estate map and St Mewan tithe map (Figs 3, 4). Topsoil stripping across this area revealed a number of features, including some apparent pits and linear elements together with several poorly defined concentrations of stones, the whole revealed over an area approximately 22m by 6m (Fig 15). The approximate position of the eastern end of the building could be fixed from the location of ditch [104], shown on the maps passing immediately to the east of it, but it was apparent that the western end of the poor house, originally approximately 32m long, had been removed at some time in the past by the cutting of a lane to fields to the north, deepened to improve access to the adjacent bungalow (owner, pers comm).

Preservation of below-ground remains initially appeared to be poor: most of the remains were concealed under a substantial sealing deposit of re-deposited natural (221) which overlay the site of the building (below), but where this had been removed by the topsoil strip only a stony foundation layer (225) initially appeared to be present, with no clear evidence of any surviving structural detail

or features (Fig 15). Accordingly, a timetable of three days was agreed for investigation and recording. In the event it soon became apparent that the remains of the building were more extensive than was initially evident. The investigation was limited to cleaning and defining features revealed on the stripped surface, a section cut across the full width of the building (Figs 8, 9, 18-20) and a few small sondages elsewhere. This enabled the approximate form and dimensions of the poor house to be determined, together with some aspects of its construction. Regrettably, it was not possible to determine absolutely whether the exposures of amorphous concentrations of stone, subsequently seen to be a foundation layer underlying the floor of the building, were a consequence of the topsoil stripping or were related to the decay or partial demolition of the building after abandonment, prior to deposition of deposit (221). The topsoil strip scraped material from south to north across the site, resulting in exposures of the remains to different vertical levels in different areas (Fig 15). In the central portion in particular, it removed much of the sealing layer of re-deposited natural over the site and it is most probable that this operation also removed portions of the floor layer (237) / (222), revealing the stony foundation (225).

4.3.1 Excavated features

The northern side of the poor house building – almost certainly the rear, as it faced away from the road – was more fully defined than what is likely to have been the front on the south side, most of which lay under or very close to the baulk. On this northern side the building was defined by a scarp [247] up to 0.36m deep cut into the natural slope (Figs 8, 9). The lower part of this scarp steepened to form the north side of a shallow flat-bottomed ditch [223], 0.7-0.8m wide (Fig 9). The southern edge of the ditch defined the north side of a flat-topped bank of upstanding natural [224] 0.6m wide. This bank was defined on its south side by the northern edge of a cut [226] about 3m wide and up to 0.18m deep which underlay most of the central area of the building. This feature was flat-bottomed over much of its northern and central area but became shallower towards the southern side. It was densely packed with a layer of stones up to 0.3m within a loose matrix of mid yellowish-brown silty clay (225). There were many voids between the stones and this matrix is likely to have formed in the interstices between stones over time, probably from the overlying deposits (227) and (222) (below), rather than being part of the original construction. This stony layer (225) below the building is interpreted as a means of providing a foundation and some form of drainage for the floor to the living area on what was probably, judging from the provision of drainage elsewhere, a rather wet site.

The southern side of the building lay partly under the baulk of the southern edge of the stripped area but was in any case less well-defined than the northern side. Again, however, it appeared that there was a shallow ditch [229] along the southern frontage. This was not fully revealed but the fill (230) incorporated a number of pieces of nineteenth-century pottery and, in one area, appeared to be charcoal rich (no separate context number given). Unlike the northern side, however, there appeared to be no clear upstanding bank of natural paralleling the ditch but rather a somewhat irregular 'bench' [228] between the stone-filled cut and the ditch (Fig 9). A possible posthole [250] was cut into the natural adjacent to the northern side of this bench.

Laid over the stony fill (225) of cut [226] was a compact deposit of gritty, light to mid yellowish-red clay silt (222), the upper surface of which, where it survived, had been smoothed as a floor (237); this surface appeared to incorporate a thin layer of dark-mid grey ash and had a slightly sandy or gritty texture. Deposit (222) is interpreted as re-deposited natural which had been spread over the stony layer and smoothed and possibly beaten to produce a compact, level and relatively regular floor surface (237). It is probable that it subsequently acquired a layer of ash from hearths within the building (below) and also perhaps incorporated sand used as a floor covering or in cleaning.

Overlying almost the entire site was a substantial deposit of clean and very compact mid olive-yellow clay silt (221); part of this was removed during the topsoil strip but it survived in places up to 0.3m deep and was generally 0.1-0.15m deep over much of the poor house floor (237), although becoming thinner and fading out on the south side of the site. Layer (221) appears to have been a discrete layer of re-deposited natural spread over the remains of the poor house soon after abandonment. It directly overlies floor (237), structural elements of the foundations such as [224] and shallow fills in ditches [223] and [229] and it therefore appears that standing elements of the structure such as external walls and any internal divisions must have been removed beforehand.

This sealing deposit (221) was separated from the rising natural on the north side of the cut in which the poor house lay by deposit (232), which could be traced as a linear feature along much of the middle and eastern parts of the north side of the poor house (Fig 8) and must have developed in a gap between the cut [247] at the rear of the poor house and deposit (221), perhaps accumulating as the latter dried out and shrank. The southern side of the middle and western parts of the poor house building showed a similar narrow, sinuous linear feature indicated by its darker fill (238). This was not investigated in the time available (and did not appear in the section across the building; Fig 9) but may represent a deposit which developed against the southern edge of re-deposited natural layer (221), comparable with (232). A further linear deposit (248) was observed apparently following the south side of bank [224] in the north-east corner of the poor house. This may again have formed against the edge of deposit (221) within the structure but the curve to the south of its eastern end may show the approximate form of the north-east corner of the poor house structure. Shortage of time meant that it was not possible to further investigate this area.

The only substantial features evident within the interior of the poor house other than floor (237) were two probable hearths, each represented by blackening and burnt deposits overlying stony layer (225) (Figs 8, 17). No formal structure was apparent in either instance. The more easterly of these features was roughly oval, approximately 0.9 by 0.55m, sectioned, revealing a blackened area about 0.55m across with the gaps over and between the stones of (225) filled with ash and charcoal-rich deposits of friable dark greyish-black sandy silt (233). This deposit included a number of small slate fragments, a small granite pebble and three small sherds of nineteenth-century china. Immediately to the east of this hearth the section revealed a sequence of clay layers – (234), (235), (236) – laid in a small hollow between the stones, the topmost layer of which (235), a mid yellowish-pink compact sandy clay, may have been heated or burnt). These may represent patching of an area adjacent to the hearth.

A second possible hearth, 1.5 m to the west, showed as a sub-circular small area of closely-packed blackened stones in layer (225), but apparently raised slightly higher than the adjacent clay floor, with much ash and fragmented charcoal (245) on and around them (Figs 8, 17). Again, there was no indication of a formal structure. It is uncertain whether floor (237) had been deliberately removed over these areas prior to their use as hearths or whether it had cracked and eroded over time as fires were set on it, exposing the stones of layer (225) underneath.

Between these two hearths lay an area which extended across the full width of the poor house from north to south which showed no clear evidence for the existence of stony layer (225) below it, although this was not tested by excavation; it was unclear whether the exposed surface represented floor (222) or the underlying natural (220). In this area was a shallow cup-shaped socket [246] 0.12m in diameter but only 30mm deep. It is possible that an internal division crossed the building here, lying between the two hearths, each of which would then have been in a separate room. Their proximity is otherwise difficult to explain.

A deposit of dark greyish-black charcoal and ash-rich clay silt (234), apparently lying on floor (237) and adjacent to the probable position of the eastern end wall of the poor house, is likely to indicate the location of a further hearth.

At the western end of the surviving extent of the poor house a large irregularly-shaped pit or hollow [239] was apparent from its dark fill (240), cut through the re-deposited natural layer (221) which elsewhere covered the site. This pit was itself cut by a trench carrying a high-tension electricity cable (no context number given) and this part of the site was not further investigated.

Two further possible pits or hollows, both irregular in shape, were cut into the natural on the north side of the building close to its eastern end (Fig 8). One of these, [241], lay immediately beside the ditch [223] defining the rear of the structure, and had a fill (242) of what was probably re-deposited natural. The other pit, [243], located just over 1m north of the rear ditch; the upper surface of its fill (244) incorporated an unworked stone of pink spotted granite. These features were not investigated and it is unclear whether they were associated with the poor house.

4.3.2 Discussion

No clear evidence of the construction details of the standing part of the poor house was recovered. There was no trace of stone or brick rubble across the site and it seems probable that the walls were either of timber or of cob; cob is created from on-site natural subsoil, mixed with straw and sometimes some form of aggregate as a matrix for the mixture and dung as a plasticiser (Ashurst and Ashurst 1988; Beacham 1990). The most probable position for these walls was on the banks or benches of upstanding natural, [224] and [228], seen on the north and south sides of the building (Figs 8, 9). The width of these banks, approximately 0.6m, would allow for either form of construction for a single-storey building. The external ditches [223] and [229] would have been intended to keep the bases of the walls dry. The east end of ditch [223] appeared to run out at the edge of ditch [104] which formed the west side of the north-south Cornish hedge on this part of the site. Maintaining a dry base is particularly important for cob walls and structures in this material were often constructed on a stone plinth. Whether this would have been specified for a

structure built at the expense of the parish and intended for occupation by the poor is questionable.

One small caveat to the suggestion of a cob wall is that in one place on the northern side of the building the floor surface appeared to extend over the estimated position of the bank of upstanding natural (Fig 8); this observation was not tested by excavation, however, and it is conceivable that this represented a doorway or other opening in this side of the building. There was no archaeological evidence to suggest the height of the building but the relatively narrow width of banks [224] and [228] would probably only have allowed a single storey.

The presence of numerous slate fragments in ditch [223] along the north side of the structure, particularly around the north-east corner, with more slate pieces on and in other deposits in this area, suggest that the building may have had a slate roof or, if of timber-framed construction, slate hanging on the exterior. Again, it is uncertain whether a building for the poor would have attracted such expense. Nineteenth-century window glass recovered from the surface of floor layer (237) hints that the building had glazed windows. These were presumably broken from the outside shortly before the structure was demolished, leaving glass on the floor prior to the covering of the remains with sealing layer (221).

The location of two hearths was established during the excavation, possibly lying on either side of an internal partition; a third hearth may have been located against or close to the eastern wall of the building. There were no other indications of the positions of internal divisions or of the positions of doors to the building, which were probably located on the south side fronting the road. A possible posthole [250] could perhaps have held an upright post standing against the inner edge of a wall constructed on the bank or bench of natural [228] along the south side of the building.

The function and significance of sealing layer (221) is not clear. Where seen it appeared to be formed of clean and fresh re-deposited natural, similar to that found elsewhere on the site and probably derived from somewhere in the immediate vicinity (although no pits were identified from which it might have been obtained). The remains of collapsed cob walling might be expected to incorporate traces of straw or other binding materials and / or animal dung as a plasticiser. It would also be expected that the remains would show some layering, indicating the process and sequence of collapse. Nothing of this kind was seen and the deposit appeared homogenous. On the other hand, however, organic materials do not survive well in Cornish soils and cob when exposed to the elements reverts fairly quickly to a more-or-less homogenous consistency. In either case, no build-up of rubble, rubbish or soil was observed over floor (237) and it seems probable that only a relatively short interval separated the removal or destruction of the standing remains of the poor house and its sealing by layer (221).

If not representing collapsed cob walling layer (221) was may have been intended to infill the cut in which the site lay to enable it to be brought back into agricultural use, interposing a substantive layer between a re-instated ploughsoil above and the stony layer (225) and floor deposits (222) / (237) beneath. It is conceivable that removal of the above-ground elements of the building, and the deposition of such a sealing layer, also served to erase

potentially socially divisive reminders of the parish poor regime which preceded that of the New Poor Law and its union workhouses.

4.4 Other features

4.4.1 Modern animal burial pits

After the topsoil had been removed the dark fills of pits [128] and [152] could be seen to incorporate partly decomposed animal bone and fatty material, probably of relatively recent date. These are likely to represent informal burials of animal remains in *ad hoc* pits within the fields. These features were not further investigated.

4.4.2 Tree bowls or throws

A number of irregular features clustered in the north-eastern corner of the site were revealed after the topsoil strip by their darker fills ([108], [136], [138], [142]). Investigation showed these to be shallow sub-circular bowl-shaped hollows with irregular bases showing evidence of root runs. An arc-shaped pit [174] on the western side of the site had a similarly irregular base and is also likely to have been a tree bowl. The dating of these features is unclear. The group in the north-east corner of the site could perhaps indicate a period of neglect or abandonment of the field, allowing shrubs or small trees to grow in a corner.

5 Significance

The remains of the poor house were the most significant archaeological features on the site. Although not well preserved, and only investigated to a limited extent, the recovery of physical evidence of the form of the structure is a very worthwhile addition to the documentary record of its existence. As far as is known, no other post-medieval poor house structure in Cornwall has been investigated.

In the absence of any dating evidence the significance of the first-phase field system (section 4.1.1) is unclear. If prehistoric or Romano-British in origin it would be classed as of regional importance. In the event the existence of the field system can be regarded only as indicating that the site has a longer history than is represented by the available historic mapping.

The evidence of the substantial works undertaken to drain part of the site in the historic period is significant in illustrating the time and effort invested in improving holdings and making land productive which is a feature of the post-medieval period in Cornwall. Such features are probably widely distributed in Cornwall.

6 Contexts and finds descriptions

Archaeological contexts are referred to in the following ways: cuts (for example, ditches and pits) are shown with the context number in square brackets: [178]; [152]. Deposits, fills and layers are presented in the form (172); (155). Structures are shown as 154; 342.

Finds were examined and identified by Historic Environment (Projects) finds specialist Carl Thorpe.

Context number	Context description and interpretation	General finds: description and date
(100)	Natural. Variable reddish-yellow friable sandy clay with occasional lenses of compact pale to dark grey silty clay. Occasional stones up to about 0.7m, mostly smaller.	
[101]	Ditch running E-W in extreme NW corner of the site. The feature was 0.6m wide and up to 0.17m deep with steep sides and a flat base with a central deeper cut 0.15m wide and up to 0.04m deep. Cut by ditch [104].	
(102)	Upper fill of [101]. Dark grey friable clay silt with some small stones up to 0.07m.	
(103)	Primary fill of [101]. Olive-grey soft clay silt.	
[104]	Western ditch of a pair of parallel ditches representing a N-S Cornish hedge on the W side of the site. 1.15 m wide, up to 0.23m deep, flat bottomed, steeper-sided to E than to (outer) W side.	
(105)	Fill of [104]. Dark greyish-brown friable silty clay with infrequent stones up to 0.12m.	
[106]	E ditch of N-S Cornish hedge on W side of site (with [104]). Probably originally similar to [104] but modern pipe trench [120] cut into its E side.	
(107)	Fill of [106]. Mid – dark greyish-brown friable silty clay with infrequent stones up to 0.1m.	
[108]	Tree bowl / tree throw hole, sub-oval, 1.7m by 1.1m, up to 0.15 m deep with irregular base indicating root runs.	
(109)	Fill of [108]. Firm mid greyish-brown silty sand; iron pan in root runs on base of tree bowl.	
[110]	Ditch running N-S close to northern edge of site. Ditch cut 0.36 – 0.4m wide and up to 0.2m deep; steep, near vertical sides; slightly rounded base. Irregular terminal at S end, including a rounded hollow 0.15m deep in the base (not apparently a posthole).	

	Some animal or root disturbance to the sides. Possibly a field drain (NB. Stone-packed lower fill (151).)	
(111)	Upper fill of [110]. Dark brownish-grey friable clay silt; up to about 15 per cent stones, some up to fist size.	
[112]	N-S ditch, probably forming part of field system with [114]. 0.6-0.7m wide and up to 0.15m deep, with moderately step sides and a slightly rounded base. The ditch ran out as a shallow pointed terminal to the S, leaving a gap approximately 3 m wide between its southern extent and the northern extent of ditch [114]. Considerable root disturbance in terminal.	
(113)	Fill of [112]. Very dark brownish-grey friable clayey silt; few stones, mostly small, largest to 0.03m. Rooty. Occasional charcoal flecks. Occasional lumps of re-deposited natural within (113) close to base of the cut.	
[114]	Ditch, sinuous, making a more than right angled change of direction close to the northern edge of the site. Up to 0.5m wide but more typically about 0.35m; up to 0.3m deep. Moderately steep sided and symmetrical, with a flat bottom 0.2-0.25m wide, although in one of the slots close to the E end of the feature a series of apparent spade or shovel cuts could be seen along each side of the base leaving a low median ridge.	
(115)	Fill of [114]. Variable dark to mid brownish-grey clayey silt, with variable quantities of angular stones up to 0.2m, although mostly smaller. Frequent lenses, lumps and smears of re-deposited natural.	
[116]	Ditch (S ditch of removed E-W Cornish hedge), visible as dark fill (117). Not investigated.	
(117)	Fill of [116]. Not investigated.	Nineteenth-century pottery exposed on upper surface of fill. Not retained.
[118]	Ditch (N ditch of removed E-W Cornish hedge). Ditch [126] is cut into the base of [118] along part of its length and where sectioned in this vicinity it was 1.3m wide and probably originally about 0.15m deep. Towards its western end [118] crosses and probably post-dates ditch [170] because it differs in width on each side of the junction; to the E it was 0.6m wide, 0.1m deep, to the W only 0.45m with a similar depth.	

(119)	Fill of [118] and upper fill of [170]. Dark variable grey to reddish-brown friable clayey-silt with a few stones to fist size.	
[120]	Modern pipe trench cut into E side of ditch [106]. Approximately 1m wide. Not fully excavated.	
(121)	Fill of [120].	
[122]	Ditch running N-S towards S edge of stripped area [=114].	
(123)	Fill of [122]	
[124]	Ditch to the E of and running parallel to [144] and [146]. 0.55m wide and 0.2 m deep; flat base and moderately steep, straight sides. Cuts [114] towards the southern end of the latter.	
(125)	Primary fill of [124]. Dark greyish-brown friable silty clay, olive where mixed with lumps / smears of re-deposited natural. Few stones, up to 0.1m.	
[126]	Ditch cut through fill (119) into base of ditch [118]; contains stone drain structure 213.	
(127)	Clay-shillet capping overlying stone drain structure 213 in ditch [126]. Compact mid reddish-creamy-yellow silty clay and shillet (re-deposited natural).	
[128]	Pit close to E end of E-W hedge.	
(129)	Fill of [128]; includes partly decomposed animal bone; pit therefore presumed to be modern. Not investigated.	
[130]	Cut containing stone drain structure 214, lying N of and perpendicular to E-W ditch [126]. 0.6m wide, 0.15m deep, 5.2m long.	
(131)	Fill of [130], between and around stones of structure 214. Loose reddish-brown clay silt with occasional ginger lenses (?iron pan) and small lumps of re-deposited natural.	
[132]	Ditch S of E-W hedge; dark fill (133) visible after topsoil strip but feature not subsequently re-located / investigated.	
(133)	Fill of [132].	
[134]	Possible pit S of E-W hedge. Dark fill (135) visible after topsoil strip but feature not subsequently re-located / investigated.	
(135)	Fill of [134].	
[136]	Pit in NE corner of site; probable tree bowl.	
(137)	Fill of [136]. Mid grey friable clay silt.	

[138]	Tree bowl / tree throw hole in NE corner of site.	
(139)	Fill of [138]. Mid grey friable clay silt.	
(140)	Disturbed and discoloured natural between ditches [114], [110] and [112]. A roughly oval area approximately 1.8m by 1.1m was slightly hollowed in the surface of the natural (100). Compact mid brownish-grey silty clay.	
141	Number not used.	
[142]	Tree bowl / tree throw hole in NE corner of site.	
(143)	Fill of [142]	
[144]	Ditch, detected after the initial topsoil strip as a dark linear deposit approximately 0.4m wide. Interpreted initially as the western ditch of a N-S Cornish hedge (with [146]). Investigations S of E-W Cornish hedge [116] / [118] subsequently showed the dark fill to be a thin layer of topsoil over natural on the W side of a cut 0.7m wide and more than 0.5m deep containing a plastic pipe. Cuts and therefore post-dates ditches [116], [118] and [148]. Probably machine cut, but possibly on the line of an earlier feature represented by [148].	
(145)	Fill of [144]. Re-deposited natural.	
[146]	Ditch containing stone drain structure 154, running parallel to and approximately 2m from ditch [144] on its E side. Steep (near vertical) sided ditch; approximately 0.6m wide at the base, up to 0.8m wide at the surface of natural, 0.6m deep. Flat bottomed.	
(147)	Primary fill of [146]. A thin dark olive-grey friable gritty clay-silt layer on the base of the ditch.	
[148]	Ditch, 0.63m wide and 0.13m deep, with flat base and near vertical sides. On same alignment as [144]; cuts and therefore post-dates [114]).	
(149)	Fill of [148]. Dark reddish-brown friable clay silt with very few stones. Occasional charcoal flecks.	1 sherd of nineteenth-century pottery. Not retained.
(150) = (205)	Primary fill of [114]. Mid greyish olive friable clayey silt, frequent small stones, occasional larger.	
(151)	Primary fill of [110]. Mid reddish-brown compact gritty silty clay, with numerous stones up to about 0.05m and in one slot packed with stones to 0.15m.	

[152]	Pit; sub-oval in shape.	
(153)	Fill of [152]; included partly decomposed animal bone. Not investigated.	
154	Stone drain structure within ditch [146]. Flat-faced stones set in one to three courses on the base of the trench with a consistent gap approximately 0.23m wide and 0.35m high between them; capped with flat stones, many of which extend the full width of the cut.	
(155)	Variable reddish-yellow clay-silt (re-deposited natural) capping 0.5m wide and up to 0.12m deep overlying the capstones of stone drain structure 154.	
156-159	Numbers not used.	
[160]	Ditch NW of pit [152]. Not investigated.	
(161)	Fill of [160]	
[162]	Ditch S of pit [152]. Not investigated.	
(163)	Fill of [162].	
164-169	Numbers not used.	
[170]	Ditch following a sinuous broadly N-S course on W side of site; up to 0.65m wide and 0.15m deep with steep sides and a rounded base. May pre-date ditch [118] because the latter differs in width to E and W of it.	
(171)	Primary fill of [170]; similar to upper fill (119) but slightly lighter olive-brown friable clay silt	
[172]	Short ditch approximately 20m long NE of [170]. Not investigated.	
(173)	Upper fill of [172]	
[174]	Arc-shaped pit on W side of site, 3.8m long and up to 0.7m wide, but only a maximum of 0.05m deep; the base was irregular stony natural. Probably a tree bowl or tree throw.	
(175)	Fill of [174]. Dark brownish-grey friable silty clay with no stones.	
[176]	Short ephemeral linear feature intersecting [114]. Character not determined but probably not of human origin.	
(177)	Fill of [176]	
[178]	N-S ditch cut containing stone drain structure 179, up to 0.4m wide and 0.15-0.2m deep. Perpendicular to and on N side of ditch [118].	
179	Stone drain structure in [178]. Stones set along the base of the cut with flat faces facing inwards to form a channel 0.15m wide	

	and more than 0.1m deep, over which were capstones up to 0.4m long.	
[180]	N-S ditch cut containing stone drain structure 181; up to 0.4m wide. Perpendicular to and on N side of ditch [118]. Cut by pit [182] and S end truncated by ditch [144].	
181	Stone drain structure in [180]. Stones up to 0.2m set along the base of the cut with flat faces facing inwards to form a channel 0.1m wide and more than 0.15m deep, over which were capstones up to 0.45m long.	
[182]	Pit cut into ditch [180], roughly circular, 0.75m in diameter and more than 0.3m deep with near vertical sides (undercut in places). The pit is likely to have been associated with ditch [185] exiting it to the SE.	
(183)	Stony fill of pit [182]. Densely packed stones, mostly less than 0.12m across but including two boulders up to 0.45m.	
(184)	Capping over capstones of drain structure 181. Compact mid reddish-yellow clay silt (re-deposited natural).	
[185]	Ditch running SE from pit [182] to ditch [146]. Not excavated. This is likely to represent a re-direction of water flows from ditch [180].	
(186)	Fill of [185]	
187-199	Numbers not used.	
200	Topsoil. At N edge of site up to 0.7m deep, elsewhere approximately 0.4m except adjacent to the S side of the poor house at the SW corner of the site where it was only 0.15m deep.	
201-204	Numbers not used.	
(205)	= (150)	
(206)	Fill of [114]. Re-deposited natural with variable mottling of darker material from adjacent contexts. Occurs in layers and lenses adjacent to where [114] cut by [124]; probably represents material from [124].	
(207)	Fill of [124]. Mottled re-deposited natural. Firm. Few stones.	
208	Number not used.	
209	Number not used.	
(210)	Secondary fill of ditch [146]. Dark greyish-brown friable clay silt.	
(211)	Deposit within interstices of structure 154, almost certainly re-deposited. Dark reddish-	

	brown friable clay silt.	
(212)	Deposit within interstices of structure 154, almost certainly re-deposited. Mid yellowish-brown friable / compact silty clay with frequent small stones/grit.	
(213)	Stone drain structure within ditch [126].	
214	Stone drain structure within ditch [130]. A double line of stones up to 0.4m long with flat faces set inwards towards the centre of the ditch cut leaving a gap 0.1m wide between them. No surviving capping stones.	
(215)	Fill of stone drain 179 in ditch [178]. Dark brownish-grey friable clay silt.	
(216)	Re-deposited clay sheet natural forming narrow linear capping to stone drain structure 179.	
217	Number not used.	
218	Number not used.	
219	Number not used.	
Poor House		
(220)	Natural. Variable mid reddish-yellow (sometimes olive, brown or grey) compact clay silt, frequent small stones.	
(221)	Sealing layer of re-deposited natural over the poor house site. Mid olive-yellow clay silt, very compact, incorporating frequent iron-rich (yellowish-brown) small stones, some larger stones to about 0.1m.	Some slate fragments (not retained) in disturbed deposit at north-east corner of site, otherwise clean.
(222)	Floor layer. Mid yellowish-red compact gritty clay silt. Upper surface (237) levelled and smoothed.	
[223]	Ditch cut into natural (220) on northern side of poor house, up to 0.36m deep and 0.6m wide.	
[224]	Upstanding bank of natural (220) 0.6m wide, defined on N side by ditch [223] and to S by cut [226]. (Presumed to be foundation of north wall of poor house.)	
(225)	Foundation layer of densely packed stones (up to 0.3 m) in a loose matrix of mid yellowish brown clay silt.	
[226]	Cut underlying central area of poor house containing foundation layer (225).	
(227)	Compact mid yellowish-brown clay silt (re-deposited natural) overlying (225) in places.	
[228]	Bench of natural (220) between cut [226]	

	and ditch [229]. (Presumed foundation for front wall of poor house.)	
[229]	Ditch on S side of poor house. Up to 0.07m deep and more than 0.4m wide (not fully exposed within excavation area).	
(230)	Fill overlying [228] and within [229]. Friable mid brownish-yellow clay silt. Incorporated lenses of re-deposited natural.	Several sherds of nineteenth-century white salt-glazed stoneware (china), some with decoration, and two heavily oxidised iron objects (probably nails). Not retained.
(231)	Fill of [223]. Friable mid yellowish-brown silty clay.	Pieces of broken roofing slate. Not retained.
(232)	Deposit in gap between scarp [247] and layer (221). Dark reddish-brown friable clay silt.	
(233)	Fill of hearth on layer (225). Friable dark greyish-black sandy silt, ash and charcoal rich.	Three sherds of nineteenth-century pottery, slate fragments and a small granite pebble. Not retained.
(234)	Dark greyish-black charcoal and ash-rich clay silt. (Probable hearth at east end of poor house.) Not excavated.	
(235)	Compact mid yellowish-pink sandy clay. Possibly reddened by heating.	
(236)	Mid olive-yellow friable clay silt	
(237)	Smoothed floor surface of layer (222) incorporating dark-mid grey ash and with a sandy / gritty texture.	Nineteenth-century window glass recovered from surface (234). Not retained.
(238)	Narrow, sinuous linear deposit, possibly formed against south side of deposit (221). Cf (232).	
[239]	Pit at western end of poor house. Cut through layer (221). Not investigated.	
(240)	Fill of [239].	
[241]	Pit at east end of north side of poor house. Not investigated.	
(242)	Fill of [241]. Mottled / variable mid greyish-yellow-cream clay silt (probable re-deposited natural).	
[243]	Pit at east end of north side of poor house. Not investigated.	
(244)	Fill of (243). Mid reddish-grey clay silt.	

(245)	A hearth area defined by a dark greyish-black ash and charcoal deposit overlying and between the stones of (225).	
[246]	Cup-shaped socket in floor (237) 0.12m in diameter and 30mm deep.	
[247]	Scarp up to 0.36 deep cut into natural on north side of poor house.	
(248)	Mid olive-greyish friable sandy silt adjacent to bank [224] at north-east corner of poor house	Fragments of roofing slate. Not retained.
(249)	Probably same as floor (237) but disturbed; not investigated.	Fragments of roofing slate. Not retained.
[250]	Possible post-hole 0.2m in diameter, 0.15m deep with packing stone against N side.	
(251)	Fill of [250].	
(252)	Mid reddish-yellow compact clay silt (=re-deposited natural) forming small lenses and lumps within fill (230).	

7 References

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7.3 Websites

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1841 census online:

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~kayhin/40146e.html>

1851 census online:

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~kayhin/51908d.html>

1861 census online:

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~kayhin/61551c.html>

www.workhouses.org.uk

8 Project archive

The HE project number is **2010071**

The project's documentary, photographic and drawn archive is housed at the offices of Historic Environment, Cornwall Council, Kennall Building, Old County Hall, Station Road, Truro, TR1 3AY. The contents of this archive are as listed below:

1. A project file containing site records and notes, project correspondence and administration.
2. Field drawings stored in an A2-size plastic envelope (GRE 746).
3. Electronic drawings stored in the directory R:\Historic Environment (CAD)\CAD Archive\Sites T\Trewoon\TrewoonCarneHillReportImages
4. Black and white photographs archived under the following index numbers: GB P 2192/3-34, 2193/2-12
5. Digital photographs stored in the directory R:\Historic Environment (Images)\SITES.Q-T\Trewoon Carne Hill WB 2010071
6. English Heritage/ADS OASIS online reference: cornwall2-103726

This report text is held in digital form as: G:\Historic Environment (Documents)\HE Projects\Sites\Sites T\Trewoon, Carne Hill, Watching Brief 2010071\Carne Hill, Trewoon, watching brief 2010071.doc

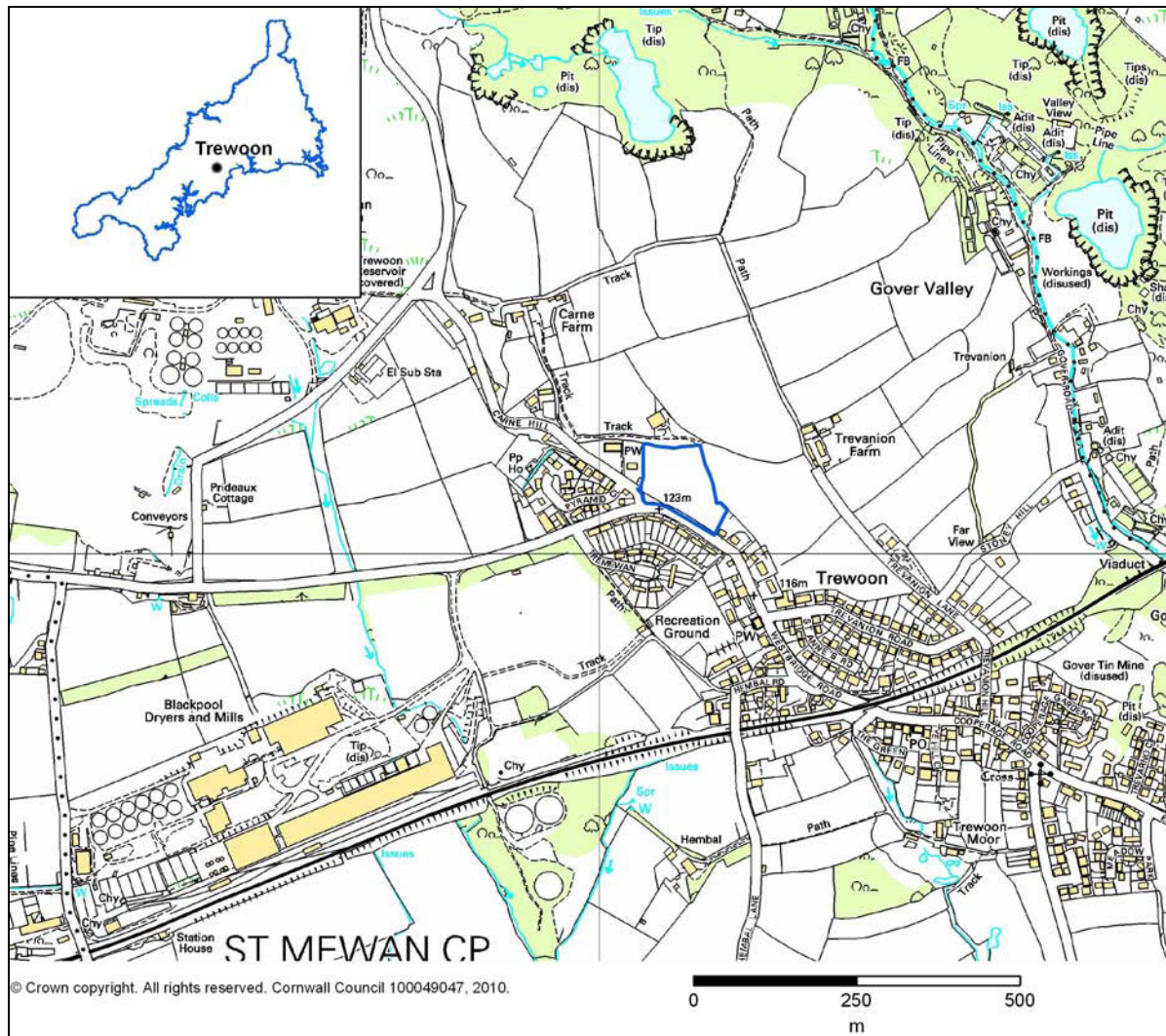


Fig 1 Location map. The site is outlined in blue.

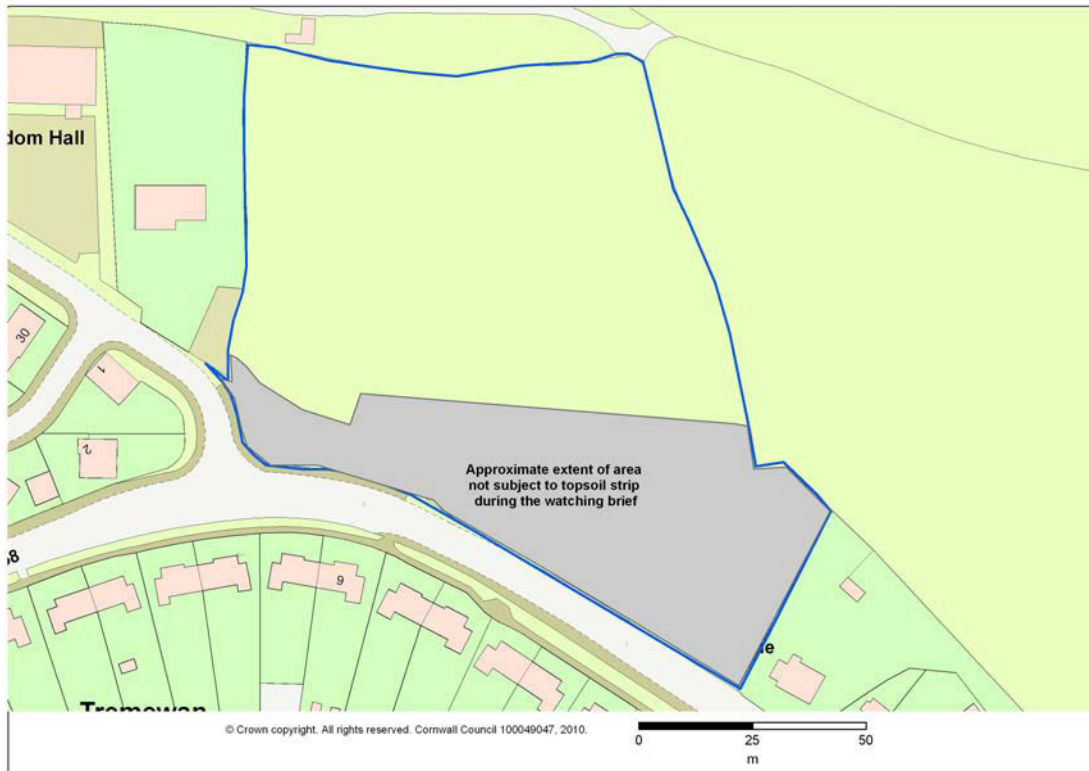


Fig 2 The site shown on current Ordnance Survey digital mapping (MasterMap), indicating the area not subject to topsoil strip.

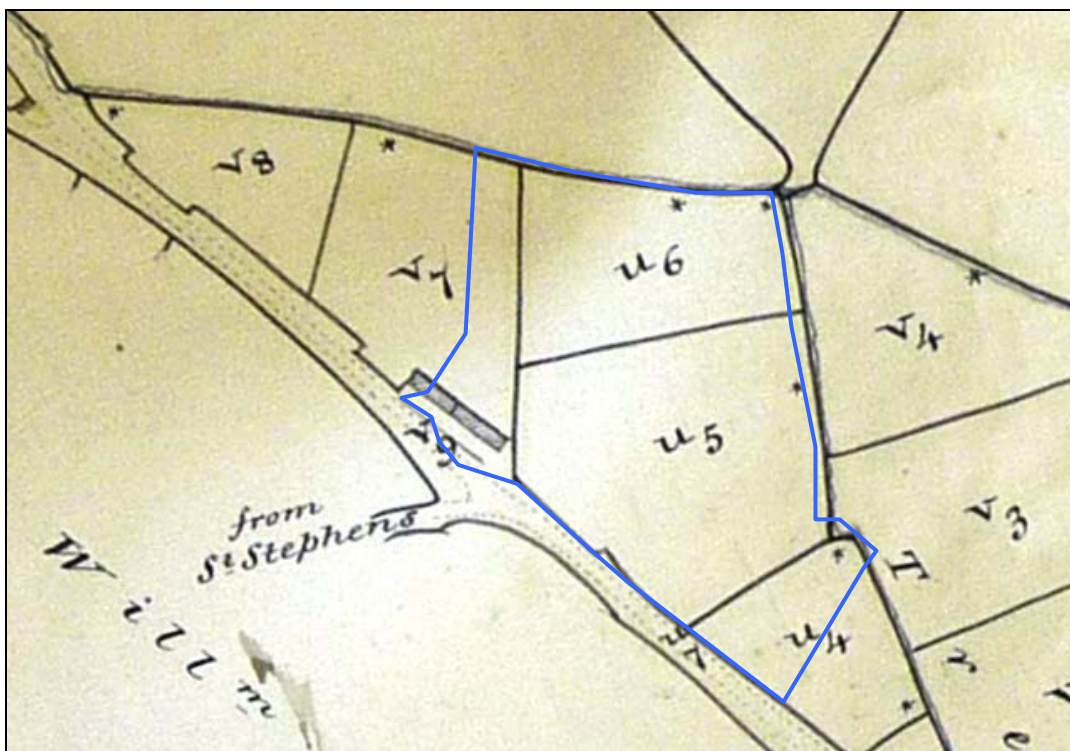


Fig 3 The site and surrounding area, including the poor house, depicted on a Hawkins estate map of 1831 (CRO X 148/7). The site extent is approximate.



Fig 4 The site, including the poor house, as shown on the St Mewan tithe map, 1838.

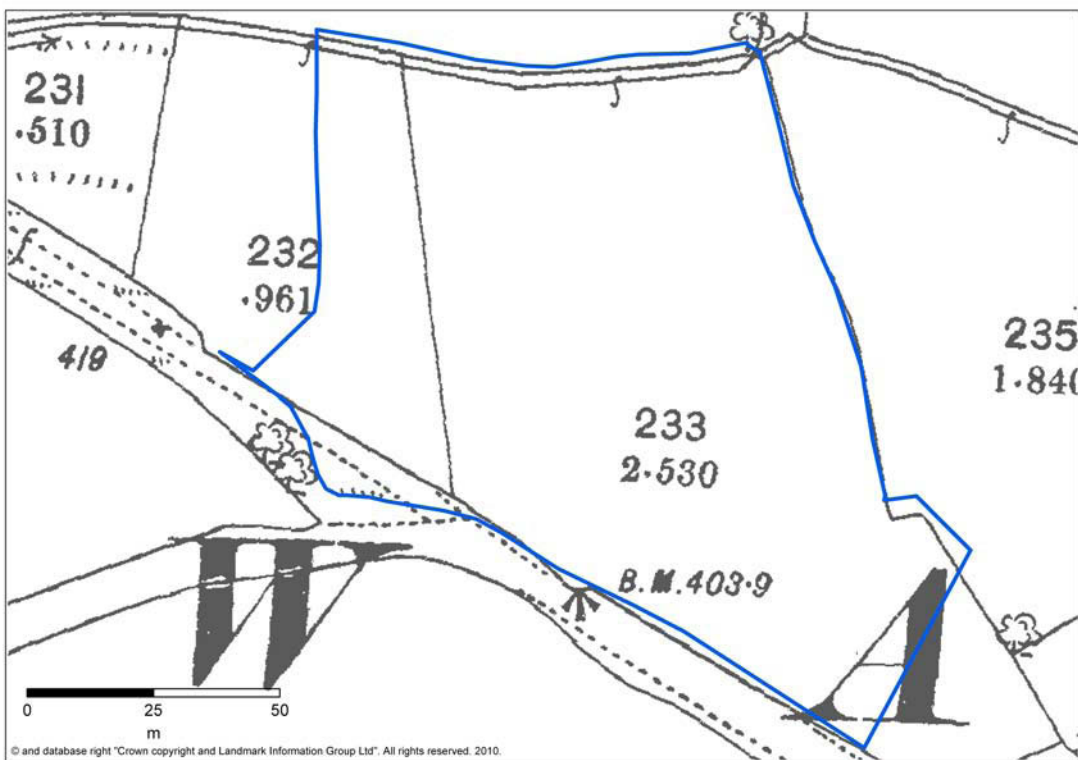


Fig 5 The site on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25in: 1 mile map of c 1880.



Fig 6 The site on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 25in: 1 mile map of c 1907.



Fig 7 Archaeological features identified on the site during the watching brief.

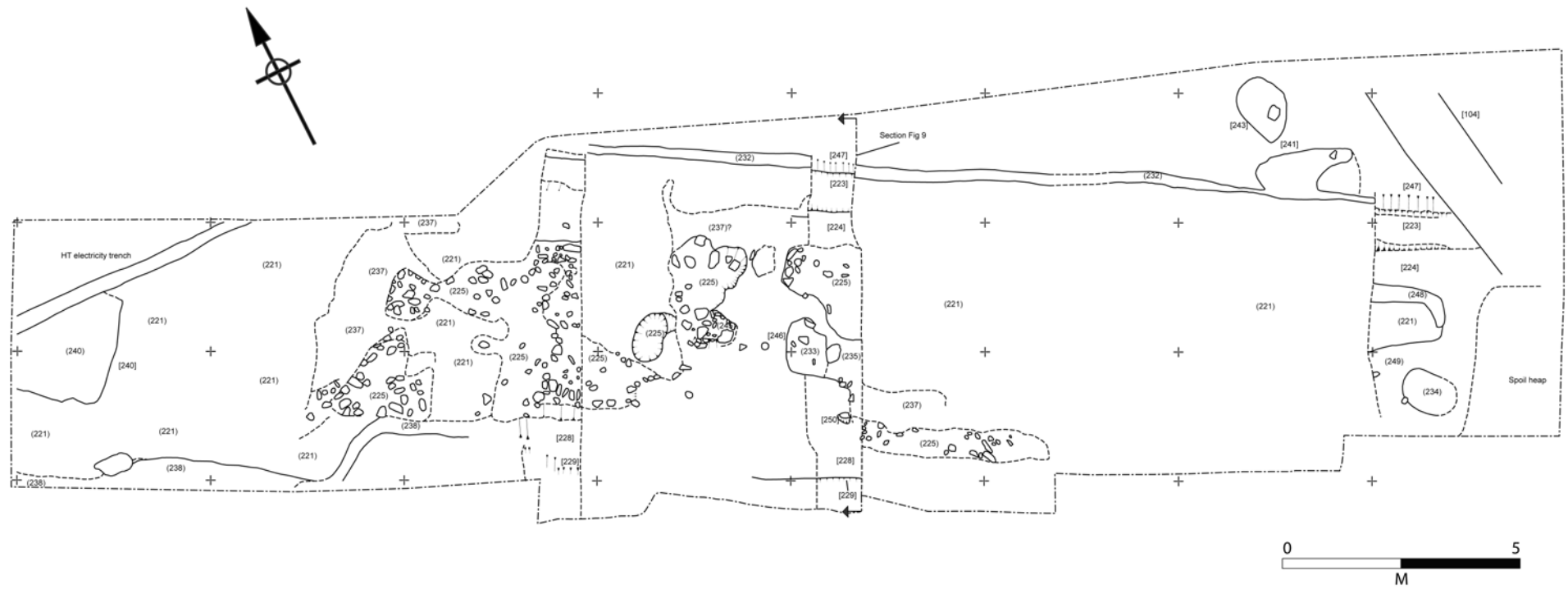


Fig 8 Post-excavation plan of the poor house site.

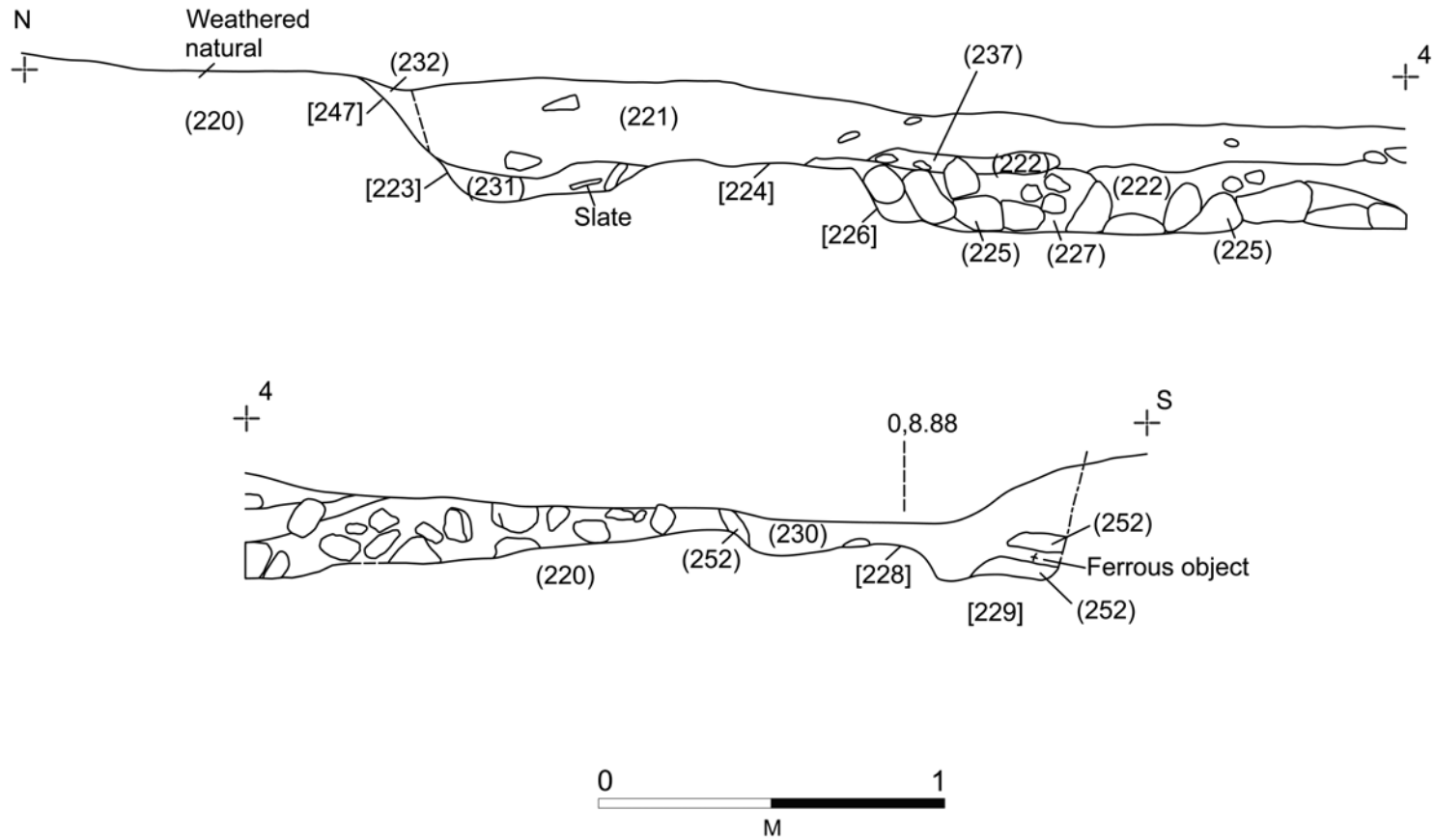


Fig 9 West-facing section across the centre of the poor house site (cf Figs 18-20).



Fig 10 Heavy rain on occasion created difficult conditions.



Fig 11 The sharp turn at the northern extent of ditch [114] in the foreground with ditch [110] at top left and ditch [112] at top right. Disturbed area (140), possibly representing trampling in a former gateway, lies above the left hand end of the 2m ranging pole.



Fig 12 A south-facing section across ditch [114] towards the southern side of the site.



Fig 13 Stone drain structure 154 in ditch [146].



Fig 14 The remains of stone drain 214 in ditch [130]. The pale reddish-yellow deposit on which the north arrow is lying is the capping (127) of re-deposited natural over the capstones of stone drain structure 213 within ditch [126].



Fig 15 The eastern end of the poor house site, looking east, after stripping.



Fig 16 Sealing layer (221) overlying floor (222) / (237) (on which 2m ranging pole rests), which in turn overlies stony layer (225).



Fig 17 The central part of the poor house looking north, with the scarp [247] representing the cut in which the building was located visible in the sondage at upper middle right. Two hearths defined by ash- and charcoal-rich deposits (233) and (245) overlying and within stony layer (225) are towards the foreground with exposed areas of (225) behind them. The ranging pole running away from the camera lies on the line of what may have been an internal division in the poor house.



Fig 18 West-facing section across the centre of the poor house (north).



Fig 19 West-facing section across the centre of the poor house (centre).



Fig 20 West-facing section across the centre of the poor house (south).