

Penhallam Manor Moat, Jacobstow, Cornwall

Archaeological Watching Brief



Historic Environment Projects

Report No 2012R018	Report Name Penhallam Manor moat: Archaeological Watching Brief	Report Author C. M. Thorpe
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Event Type Watching Brief			
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Client Organisation English Heritage	Client Contact Chris Bally
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Monuments (MonUID)					
SM 15413	HER 2059				

Fieldwork dates (From)	(To)	(Created By)	(Create Date)
13/03/12	13/03/12	CMT	14/03/12

Location (postal address; or general location and parish) Penhallam Manor, Jacobstow

(Town - for urban sites)	(Postcode)
	EX226XW

(Easting) X co-ord	(Northing) Y co-ord		
SX 22465	97425		

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Historic Environment, Cornwall Council is a Registered Organisation with the Institute for Archaeologists

Project background

HE Projects was commissioned by Mr Chris Bally on behalf of English Heritage to undertake an archaeological watching brief during works required to remove silt and debris to a depth of circa 0.40m from the moat surrounding the medieval Manor of Penhallam.

Penhallam Manor (also known as Berry or Bury Court) is the site of a moated 13th century manor house. The earthworks including the moat form part of a Scheduled Monument (SM 15413) located near Week St Mary, Cornwall at NGR SX 22465 97425. In order for the work to be carried out a certificate of Scheduled Monument Consent had been issued which required that several archaeological conditions be met. An archaeological watching brief was considered suitable to meet these conditions for which a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Jo Sturgess (29/02/2012) was submitted to, and accepted by English Heritage.

This report presents the results of the archaeological watching brief carried out on the 13th March 2012.

Location and setting

Penhallam is the site of a medieval manor house surrounded by a protective moat. It was designated as a Scheduled Monument (SM 15413) and is now in the guardianship of English Heritage. The site is situated in the civil parish of Jacobstow in north-east Cornwall, at NGR SX 22465 97425.

Historical records show that the manor of Penhallam formed part of the honour of Cardinham, held by Richard fitz Tuold in 1087, and by his descendants (eventually the de Cardinan family). It is thought that the site was abandoned by about 1428 when the land was divided into six partitions.

The site consists of a quadrangle of buildings including a chapel, great hall, camera, and kitchen range, around a central courtyard encompassed by a sub-circular shaped moat. The manor was originally reached by a drawbridge over the moat which was later in the 13th century replaced by a fixed stone bridge.

Excavations took place within the manor house buildings between the years 1968–1973 (Beresford 1974). The site is currently a grass-covered ruin that shows the complete ground-plan of the manor house.

The moated manor lies in the floor of a steep sided valley that runs roughly north to south, at a height of 80m OD, the stream being a tributary of the River Neet that reaches the sea at Bude. The underlying geology consists of Carboniferous mudstones and siltstones of the Crackington Formation.

Aims and objectives

The aims of the project were:

- To gain a better understanding of the surviving deposits within the moat.
- To record archaeological features, layers and finds affected by the works.
- To establish the extent, condition, significance and character of the archaeological resource.
- To identify any artefacts relating to the occupation of the site.
- To gain further information about the archaeological potential of the area.
- The dissemination and publication of the results.
- The long-term conservation of the project archive in appropriate conditions.

Working methods

The de-silting of the moat was carried out using a machine fitted with a toothless bucket. The moat was to be stripped to a depth of approximately 0.40m, over a zone approximately 50m long covering the northern sector of the moat.

The silts and debris were to be loaded onto a dumper and then tipped and spread over a nearby area of ground to the north of the site. This was then to be inspected by an archaeologist to locate any artefacts. The silt was also to be scanned with a Garret Ace 250 metal detector for any metallic objects.

Results

The area of the moat cleared (about 0.015Ha) was *circa* 50m long, and was on average 3m wide, though this varied due to limited reach of machine, and access to moat edge. This meant that unfortunately the whole width of the moat could not be de-silted (Fig 2).

Mixed silts varying in colour between dark grey-brown to light blue, grey-brown were removed. This contained plentiful leaf mould, and tree branch fragments. However no artefacts were recovered.

The inspection of the silts confirmed that the moat had been cleared previously. In conversation with Chris Bally of English Heritage who was on site, the clearance of the moat seems to be a regular feature of the landscape management of the ground with small sectors of the moat being de-silted on a regular basis in order to create open water for wildlife. It appears that the sector looked at in the course of the current project was last de-silted sometime *circa* 1995-7.

Most of the silt and debris that currently fills the moat was apparently derived from the Boscastle flood storm event of 16th August 2004 which also severely affected the valley in which Penhallam sits, including inundating part of the site, and even physically lifting and moving the modern wooden bridge that is used to cross the moat onto the site (Chris Bally, pers comm).

In conclusion it appears that this work had no affect on any significant archaeological deposits, or features.

References

Beresford, G, 1974. 'The medieval manor of Penhallam, Jacobstow, Cornwall' *Medieval Archaeology* Vol. **18**, 90-145

Project archive

The HE project number is **2012025**

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. Projects file containing site records and notes, project correspondence and administration (2012025).
2. Digital photographs stored in the directory R:\Historic Environment (Images)\SITES.M-P\Penhallam Manor Moat WB 2012025
3. English Heritage/ADS OASIS online reference: cornwall2- 121103
4. This report text is held in digital form as: G:\TWE\Waste & Env\Strat Waste & Land\Historic Environment\Projects\Sites\Sites P\Penhallam Manor Moat WB 2012025\Report

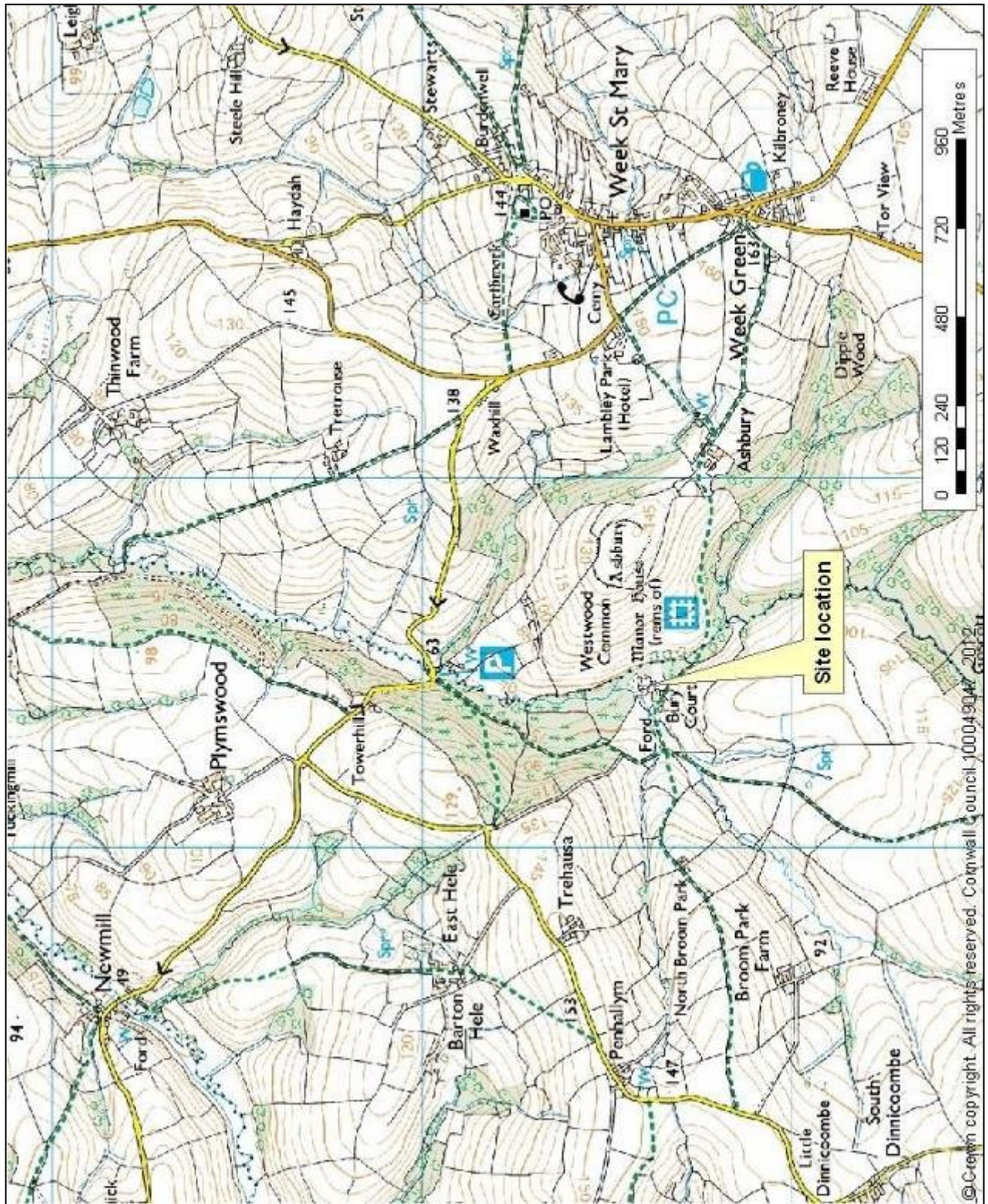


Figure 1. Site Location

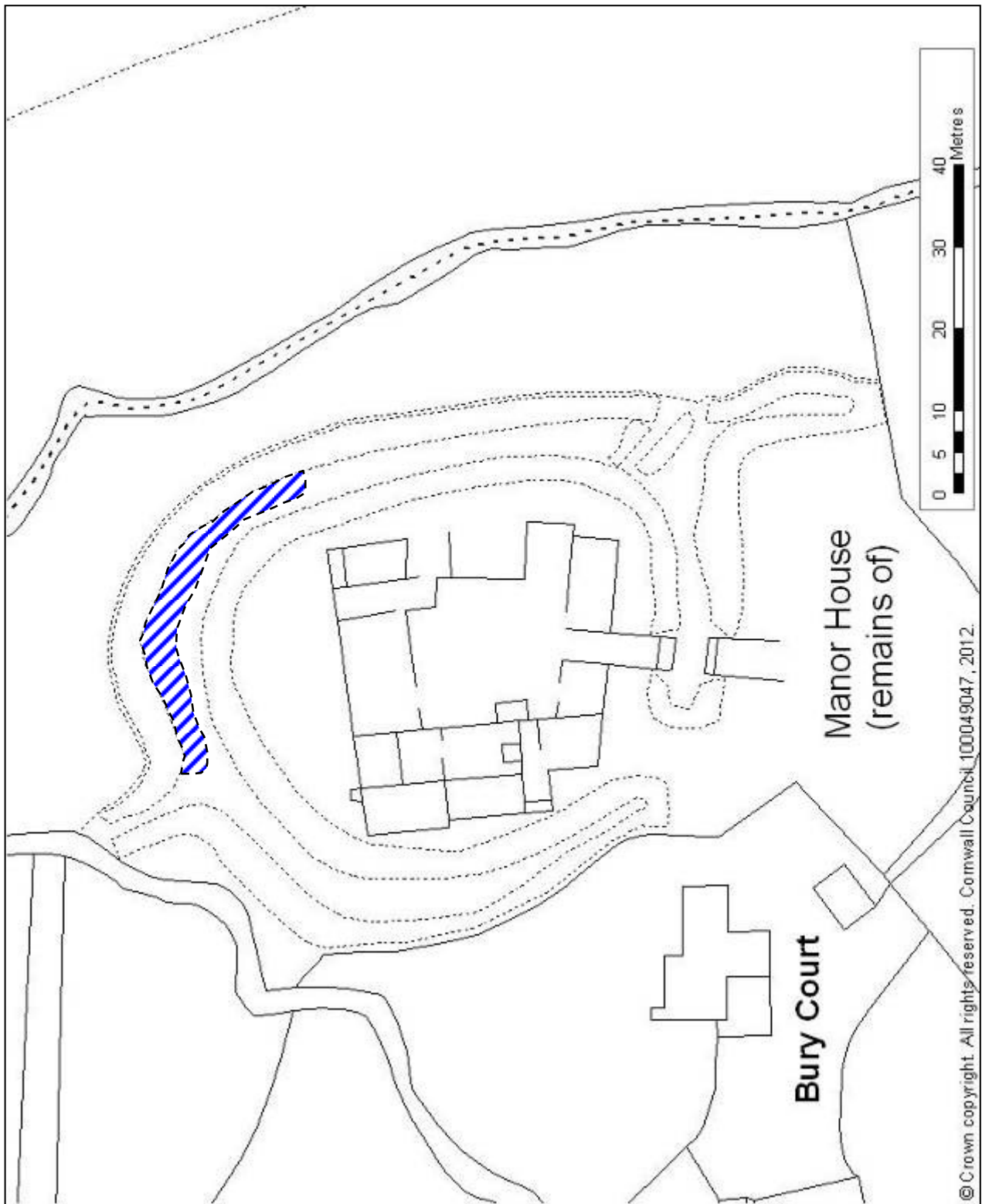


Figure 2. Site Plan showing the area of moat that was de-silted



Figure 3. The NE sector of the moat prior to cleaning



Figure 4. The Northern sector of the moat prior to cleaning



Figure 5. Cleared area of NE sector of moat. View looking SE



Figure 6. Cleared area of NE sector of moat. View looking NW