



Tintagel Island Trial Pits, Tintagel Castle, Cornwall Scheduled Monument 1014793

Archaeological Watching Brief



Historic Environment Projects

**Tintagel Island Trial Pits,
Tintagel Castle, Cornwall
Scheduled Monument 1014793**

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This study was commissioned by James Byrne, Technical Manager (Devon & Cornwall), English Heritage, and carried out by Historic Environment Projects, Cornwall Council.

The contractors on site who arranged safe access and dug the actual trial pits were 'Vertical Technology' (Dave Parker, Director, and Andrew Roberts, Site Supervisor).

The Project Manager was 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.

Freedom of Information Act

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Cover illustration

Trial Pit 1 under excavation.

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Abbreviations

- CRO Cornwall County Record Office
- EH English Heritage
- HER Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Historic Environment Record
- HE Historic Environment, Cornwall Council
- MCO Monument number in Cornwall HER
- NGR National Grid Reference
- NRHE National Record of the Historic Environment
- OD Ordnance Datum – height above mean sea level at Newlyn
- OS Ordnance Survey
- RCHME Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England
- RIC Royal Institution of Cornwall

1 Summary

Tintagel Castle and early medieval settlement is a Scheduled Monument (National Monument Number 1014793) in the Guardianship of English Heritage.

In February 2014 Historic Environment Projects, Cornwall Council (HE Projects) carried out archaeological recording on Tintagel Island where English Heritage were reinforcing a series of abseil anchor points on the southern and eastern sides of the island. The anchor points ran along the cliff edge which truncates the southern part of the Inner Ward and site of the Great Hall, before then skirting the exterior of the Inner Ward Curtain wall to a point at SX 05079 89035 before then running down slope alongside the railings to the Iron Gate (SX 05091 89151).

Mitigation for this work involved the excavation of four trial pits in those areas considered most archaeologically sensitive in order to examine the nature of the ground to be affected. This was thought to be the area immediately outside the Inner Ward curtain wall.

Tintagel is the site of a late Roman settlement (possibly the *Durocornovio* of the Ravenna Cosmography) of the 4th and 5th centuries AD; a major fortified citadel with trading links to the Mediterranean in the Post-Roman period of the 5th to end of 6th centuries; and a castle of the 13th century. The site was already a ruin by the late 16th century.

The area examined was near or adjacent to Site Z, excavated by Raleigh Radford between 1933 and 1935, and is an area that previous work and observation had suggested was a post-Roman artificial terrace underlying the current medieval buildings and curtain wall.

The trial pitting appeared to confirm this with the lowest contexts encountered being interpreted as Period II occupation above an artificial rock cut terrace. A quantity of post-Roman imported Mediterranean pottery was recovered consisting of amphorae of varying categories (Bi, Bii, Biv and Bv), accompanied by a coarseware. The suite of material suggests a date c AD 550.

No artefacts of medieval date were recovered, despite the pits being immediately adjacent to the curtain wall although a layer containing slate fragments and flecked with white mortar seen in the upper levels of the sections within Pits 1 to 3 may represent evidence for activity during this period, being possibly waste from the construction of the wall, or an episode of renovation, and re-pointing.

The watching brief has given further insight into the archaeological potential of this area of Tintagel Island. It has also emphasised the remarkable nature of the post-Roman occupation on the Island. This must surely be close to being one of the largest post-Roman citadels identified in Britain, playing a prominent part in the economy of the western Atlantic seaboard at that time.

2 Introduction

2.1 Project background

In February 2014 HE Projects were approached by James Byrne, English Heritage Technical Manager (Devon & Cornwall), to discuss the archaeological implications of excavating approximately 12 pits, each measuring 0.5m by 0.5m by 0.5m deep around existing abseil anchor pins on the island part of Tintagel Castle in order that a concrete collar could be installed around them to act as re-enforcement. The line of anchor points ran from SX 05091 890004 to SX 05101 89012 across the truncated end of the Inner Ward and site of the Great Hall, then skirting the exterior of the Inner Ward curtain wall to SX 05079 89035 to then run down slope alongside the railings to the Iron Gate SX 05091 89151 (Figs 2 and 3).

Tintagel Castle which is owned by the Duchy of Cornwall, is a Scheduled Monument (1014793) under the guardianship of English Heritage, therefore archaeological recording during the works was required as a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent. A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by HE Projects and submitted to English Heritage (Appendix 1).

HE Projects were commissioned to undertake the archaeological recording. Rather than observe every single hole dug, the mitigation strategy adopted was to dig trial pits in those areas considered most archaeologically sensitive in order to examine the nature of the ground to be affected.

The fieldwork was carried on the 10 March 2014. In total 4 trial pits were dug and examined.

2.2 Aims

The purpose of the archaeological watching brief was to gain information about the character of activity within the area affected by the work, which would give an insight into the archaeological potential existing below ground. The programme of archaeological recording was designed to:

- Locate and record in plan and section any archaeological features detected within the area.
- Record evidence of the archaeological potential of the area, for example the depth and character of deposits.
- Recover any artefacts.

2.3 Methods

2.3.1 Desk-based assessment

During the desk-based assessment historical databases and archives were consulted in order to obtain information about the history of the site and the structures and features that were likely to survive. The main sources consulted were as follows:

- Cornwall HER
- Images of England online listed buildings database
- Early maps and photographs (see Section 12.1)
- Published histories (see Section 12.2)
- Previous archaeological reports

2.3.2 Fieldwork

The fieldwork was carried out as follows.

Four trial pits were excavated. The size of each pit varied in the area opened, being governed by the amount of ground available that could be accessed and worked safely. Trial Pit 1 was square shaped and measured 0.7m x 0.7m; Trial Pit 2 was rectangular in shape measuring 1m x 0.6m; Trial Pit 3 was 0.7m x 0.6m, while Trial Pit 4 measured 0.5m x 0.5m. Trial Pits 1,2 and 3 were taken down to an approximate depth of 0.5m, while Trial Pit 4 was dug to a depth of 0.07m before wire meshing, part of the protective netting over the cliff edge was encountered and the trench abandoned. All were dug by hand. Due to health and safety considerations, the actual pits were dug by the contractors, Vertical Technology, under archaeological supervision.

The location of each trial pit was plotted onto a site plan at a scale of 1:200. They were measured in from fixed points on the ground, which are shown on the 1985 RCHME survey (enlarged to the correct scale), together with compass bearings (Fig 3).

The sides of the trial pits were archaeologically cleaned with pit plans and representative sections (noting the nature of soil depths, layers present, etc.) being recorded (Fig 4) at a scale of 1:10. The sides of pits were also examined for artefacts. These were collected, with their contexts being recorded. A photographic record was made where appropriate.

Spoil from each pit was set aside by the contractor. This was also examined for any artefacts which were collected. Twentieth century debris, where present was noted but not retained.

2.3.3 Post-fieldwork

Any artefacts collected were bagged and recorded by trial pit number and context. Subsequently all the objects were allowed to air dry (especially important for pottery to allow it to harden) then carefully washed. The material was then identified and catalogued (Appendix 3).

3 Background

3.1 Location and setting

Tintagel Island lies on the north coast of Cornwall (NGR SX 05060 89050) within Tintagel parish (Figs 1 and 2).

The site of the castle is split (Figs 2 and 3) between the island and the mainland with the Upper and Lower Wards on the landward side and the Inner Ward on the island. Both of these were originally joined by a low saddle of land forming a headland similar in shape to the nearby Willapark. This saddle has been removed by coastal erosion that continues to this day. The island consists of a sub-circular shaped plateau bounded by steep sided cliffs dropping down to the sea. Access was originally from the south, at the top of the valley leading to the present village, into the Barbican and Lower Ward. Access from the sea (Tintagel Haven) was via the Iron Gate. Today the castle can be reached along the valley bottom from the village or along the coastal path from Glebe Cliffs.

The site is underlain by Upper Devonian, Upper Delabole Slates, and the Lower Carboniferous rocks of the Tintagel Group consisting of slates of the Barras Nose Formation, and sheared lava and tuff of the Tintagel Volcanic Formation (BGS 1969 Sheet 322). The area has suffered from heavy faulting with some mineralization, with lead/silver lodes being found on the island.

The bedrock underlying the actual area under investigation is very highly cleaved slate (shillet) with bands of clay. This rock which is easily quarried into rough square shaped blocks was utilised for the walls of both the post-Roman buildings, and the rubble built walls of the 13th century castle. Greenstone obtained from a dyke outcropping beneath the island was utilised for quoins, mullions, and other decorative stonework within the latter castle.

3.2 Brief history of Tintagel Island and Castle

There is currently no evidence for pre-Roman occupation on the headland of Tintagel though occurrences of prehistoric flints and Neolithic / Bronze Age cup-marked stones do provide evidence for some activity at this time.

There is evidence that Tintagel was a relatively important place by the Roman period. Within the neighbourhood there are two inscribed Roman milestones that suggest a route passing near to Tintagel while Roman coins and pottery (Oxford Colour-coated Wares and native flanged bowls) have been found on the island, suggesting a date cAD 300 – 400. Radiocarbon dates obtained from the recent excavation of structures on the

Lower Terrace, Site C give a range c AD 395-460 (Harry and Morris 1997; Barrowman *et al* 2007).

It has been suggested that Tintagel was just possibly the "*Durocornovio*" (fort of the Cornovii) of the *Ravenna Cosmography* (Thomas 1993, 84).

During the post-Roman period (from the 5th to early 7th centuries) the headland of Tintagel developed into a major fortified citadel (the neck of the headland being separated from the mainland by the excavation of the "Great Ditch"). It is suggested that this may point to the origin of the place-name, in Cornish '*dyn tagell*' means the fortress of the constriction or throat (Padel 1988).

Excavations since the 1950s have revealed numerous buildings and structures related to this period, the density of settlement appearing to cover every available space on the headland, including on artificial terraces that had been cut into the precipitous sea cliffs that surround most of the site. Associated with these buildings are artefacts, especially pottery, that reflect the importance of this site at this time. Very large quantities of imported pottery (both fine table wares and coarsewares) originating from North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean have been found along with some exotic glass. This suggests that at Tintagel there was a degree of control, organisation and power to trade directly with the Byzantine Empire. The nature of the trade is not known though there is some evidence from other sites that the distribution of tin was an important element (Thomas 1993; Harry and Morris 1997; Barrowman *et al* 2007).

Subsequently the island was abandoned (apart from a small chapel being built on the peak of the island c 1100) until the present castle was constructed by Richard, Earl of Cornwall in the mid 13th century.

Though the more substantial buildings on the island, along with the garden and the tunnel, date from this period, from the ceramic evidence occupation appears to have been sporadic (it was sometimes used as a state prison in the 14th century) and ceasing by the 15th century. In the 16th century, two small gun houses were built on the island in response to a possible threat from the Spanish (it is uncertain if they were ever completed); the rest of the castle however was being described as a picturesque ruin (Thomas 1993).

In the 19th century various small scale repair works were done to the fabric of the castle while there was an attempt to mine the lead and silver on the island – King Arthur's Mine. The haven developed as a harbour for servicing the surrounding slate quarrying industries.

3.3 Previous archaeological work

Tintagel Island, being an important early medieval as well as a medieval castle site, has received much archaeological attention during the 20th century. Those with significance for the current study are:

- 1918 cliff fall. This occurred on the cliff edge below the Inner Ward of the castle on the Island (SX 05088 89042). Some 40+ artefacts were collected from the beach (all of post-Roman date consisting of all classes of imported wares and animal bone). This suggested the existence of earlier occupation on levels lying below the current castle walls. This material was examined and described in 1988 (Thomas and Thorpe 1988).
- Radford's excavations 1933–1939. Work done on the Island when the site was taken under government care. The archaeologist in charge was CA Raleigh Radford. Excavation revealed numerous structures on both the Mainland and Island, and he was the first to identify them as belonging to the post-Roman period, though at this time the site was interpreted as a Celtic monastery. Sites relevant to the current work are Site Z (two small holes dug just outside the northern side of the curtain wall belonging to the Inner ward) that produced 100+ post-Roman artefacts, and Site Y, the Iron Gate where rubble clearance

(but not excavation) produced 4 sherds of imported amphora (Raleigh Radford 1939). The material was catalogued and described in 1988 (Thomas and Thorpe 1988).

- Central Excavation Unit 1981-85. The Central Excavation Unit undertook minor excavations on the site, excavating a small trench near the south-west corner of the Hall in the Inner Ward in 1981 (Thomas 1988b).
- RCHME survey 1985. As a result of extensive cliff fires on Tintagel Island in 1983, a survey of the whole Island was undertaken by the RCHME. This identified numerous buildings and artificial terraces with possible structures cut into the side of the island. It showed that the Inner Ward comprised at least two terraces, while at least three are recognised in the vicinity of the Iron Gate and the path down to it passes over at least two others (Thomas 1993).
- Inner Ward, Soakaway Pit excavation. 1988. This was undertaken for Cornwall Archaeological Unit by Nick Appleton-Fox. The Soakaway Pit within the area of the Great Hall was dug to provide a drainage pit for the main pathway through the castle. The trench reached a depth of c 3m encountering an old land surface and walling at its base that was dated by artefacts (50+) to the post-Roman period (Thomas and Thorpe 1988). This was interpreted as an extension of Site Z dug by Raleigh Radford outside the curtain wall, indicating that a major artificial terrace lay beneath the current castle (Thomas 1988).
- Site C, University of Glasgow excavations 1990-1999. Excavations at Site C on the Lower, Middle and Upper Terraces confirmed that these are all either Late Roman or post-Roman in date (from both artefacts recovered and radiocarbon dating), the Lower and Upper terraces being first identified in the RCHME survey of 1985. This suggests that similar terraces in the vicinity of the Inner Ward and the Iron Gate are most likely of the same date (Harry and Morris 1997).
- 'Extreme Archaeology' 2003. Small scale excavations were carried out on Tintagel Island in September 2003 for Mentorn Productions. The work that has direct relevance to the current project was the excavation of Trench 1 (NGR SX 0508089044) situated across the scar of a cliff fall that had occurred in 1918 (see above). A structure and artificial terrace (the lowest terrace of three) were revealed. All the artefacts being associated with this feature dated from the 5th or 6th centuries AD (Thorpe 2004).
- HE Projects watching brief along the path to the Iron Gate 2006. A watching brief was carried out in February 2006 on the east side of Tintagel Island when work was undertaken to replace a line of fencing between the Iron Gate and the Inner Ward of the castle. Seven artificial terraces cut into the hillside were identified along the line of the pathway, of which three were previously unknown. Evidence for structures of probable post-Roman date built on the terraces was noted on two of the terraces and 42 sherds of post-Roman imported Mediterranean pottery were recovered. An original route between the Iron Gate and the southern end of the Island discovered during this work appeared likely to be of pre-medieval date (Thorpe 2007).
- HE Projects watching brief in advance of works adjacent to the Inner Ward information hut 2007. A watching brief was carried out during ground lowering activities in front of the information hut on the east side of Tintagel Island in 2007. A further three artificial terraces cut into the hillside were identified, the information hut being sited on the largest, the others being on the hill slope above it. The form of the building evidence recorded on the lowest terrace was consistent with a post-Roman date and similar in form to that extant at Sites F, B and C. Sixty-seven sherds of post-Roman imported Mediterranean pottery were recovered from this site (Thorpe 2008).

- Chance artefact finds. More than 50 artefacts of imported pottery, bone and metalwork, all dating from the post-Roman period, have been recovered by visitors from along the length of the path from the Inner Ward to the Iron Gate, while over 30 have come from the path in front of the information hut (Thomas and Thorpe 1988, updated 1990).

4 Archaeological results

A total of four trial pits were examined during the course of this project, their sections being recorded and photographed. The size of each pit varied in the area opened, being governed by the amount of ground available that could be accessed and worked safely. All were dug by hand.

4.1 Trial Pit 1

Trial Pit 1 was square, measured 0.7m x 0.7m and reached a maximum depth of 0.6m. Within the pit the following contexts were recorded:

- 0.06m of grass and topsoil, context (01)
- 0.15m of grey-brown clay with numerous shillet fragments and flecks of white lime mortar, context (02)
- 0.06m of yellow, grey-brown sandy loam which has appearance of beach sand mixed with loam, context (03)
- 0.2m of friable grey-brown clay with occasional large stone block, context (04)
- 0.16m of hard compacted brown-grey clay containing one sherd of Bi amphora, one sherd of Bii amphora, a very large sherd of Bv amphora and 7 animal bones some exhibiting butchery marks, context (05). This last layer was not bottomed (Cover photo, Figs 3, 4, 5, 6, and 9).

4.2 Trial Pit 2

This pit was rectangular, with the long axis running parallel to the curtain wall, and some 1.3m from it. It measured 1m x 0.6m and reached a maximum depth of 0.5m. Within the pit the following contexts were recorded

- 0.06m of grass and topsoil, context (06)
- 0.1m of grey-brown clay loam, that contained two small heavily abraded sherds of pottery or burnt clay, and some modern plastic (not collected), context (07)
- 0.08m of friable grey-brown clay with numerous shillet fragments and flecked with white mortar, context (08)
- 0.07m of hard compacted brown-grey clay, context (09). This lay on top of 0.2m of rotten shillet bedrock which was not bottomed.

At the northern corner of the pit part of a concrete plinth was exposed, that part which was visible measuring 0.4m x 0.35m. Embedded within this concrete was the remnant of a cast iron bar with a circular perforation close to its base. This certainly appears to be an anchor point of some kind. It is uncertain what phase of activity this represents; it may be related to the mining, or operation of the Haven as a harbour in the 19th or early 20th centuries, or could be related to Raleigh Radford's works for the Ministry of Works that occurred between 1933 and 1939 (Figs 3, 4, and 7).

4.3 Trial Pit 3

Trial Pit 3 was rectangular, with the long axis running parallel to the curtain wall, and some 1.3m from it. It measured 0.7m x 0.6m, and reached a maximum depth of 0.6m. Within the pit the following contexts were recorded

- 0.05m of grass and topsoil, context (11)
- 0.08m of grey-brown clay loam, context (12)
- 0.06m of friable grey-brown clay with numerous shillet fragments, stony rubble, and flecked with white mortar, context (13)
- 0.08m of friable grey-brown clay, context (14)
- 0.13m of hard compacted brown-grey clay containing 11 sherds of Bi amphora, six sherds of Bii amphora, two sherds of Biv amphora, and a single sherd of Post-Roman Imported Coarseware Fabric 1, and 10 animal bones some exhibiting butchery marks, context (15). This lay on top of 0.19m of rotten shillet bedrock which was not bottomed (Figs 3, 4, 8, and 10).

4.4 Trial Pit 4.

This trial pit was square, measured 0.75m x 0.5m and reached a maximum depth of 0.07m. Within the pit 0.06m of grass and topsoil, context (01) overlay 0.01m of grey-brown clay loam. At this depth wire mesh netting was encountered. This was a continuation of the protective netting stretched over the cliff edge and face to prevent rock falls onto the steps and beach below. This mesh could not be penetrated so the trench abandoned (Fig 3).

4.5 Finds

A total of 42 artefacts were recovered during the course of this project. These are summarised in Table 1, and are described in detail in Appendix 3. The bulk of the collection comprises post-Roman pottery (23 sherds), but there is also animal bone, and burnt clay (Figs 9 and 10).

Table 1. Summary of Finds

Post-Roman pottery	
Class Bi Amphora	12
Class Bii Amphora	7
Class Biv Amphora	2
Class Bv Amphora	1
Post-Roman Imported Coarseware Fabric 1	1
Total post-Roman Sherds	23
Other finds	
Animal bone	17
Burnt clay/Daub	2
Total, all finds	42

5 Discussion

This project has given a great insight into the archaeological potential of this area of Tintagel Island.

The area occupied by the Inner Ward of the castle had originally been postulated as the main nucleus of the post-Roman settlement and the main focus of activity during the 5th to 7th centuries AD. The settlement was spread across several artificial terraces running roughly north-west to south-east and underlying the current medieval buildings (Fig 11) and was identified by a great concentration of artefacts produced by Raleigh

Radford's Site Z consisting of small trenches situated immediately outside the curtain wall (Thomas and Thorpe 1988).

This was later confirmed by small scale archaeological work within the area of the Great Hall, and by careful observation of the southern cliff edge (Fig 12) prior to the erection of the protective wire mesh (Thomas, 1988b; Thomas 1993). The work done by 'Extreme Archaeology' in 2003 indicated the presence of yet another structure and artificial terrace further below and to the north east of those noted above, being at a level with the scar of the 1918 cliff fall (Thorpe 2004).

The current trial pits (1 – 3) were excavated in or near the vicinity (Fig 3) of Raleigh Radford's Site Z. The recorded sections (Fig 4) are very similar to that recorded in the cliff section drawing (Fig 12) the hard compacted brown-grey clay, contexts (5), (9) and (15) being the equivalent to Layer 3 interpreted as Period II occupation above an artificial rock cut terrace running beneath the medieval curtain wall (Thomas 1988b).

All the dateable artefacts recovered were post-Roman ceramics, especially imported Mediterranean wares (Figs 9 and 10). The bulk consists of amphorae of varying categories (Bi, Bii, Biv and Bv), which were accompanied by a coarseware (first identified in 1988 by Thomas and Thorpe). This material is known to date from the 5th to 7th centuries from work done in the Mediterranean, especially at Carthage (Fulford and Peacock 1984), with the importation into Britain traditionally being centred around AD 475 to 550 (Thomas 1993). The work on the Lower Terrace, Site C (Harry and Morris 1997) indicated that the terraces with associated structures and features exhibited two main phases of occupation, the first dated to cal AD 415-535, the second cal AD 560-670 (Harry and Morris 1997; Barrowman, Batey, and Morris 2007).

At Tintagel the fragmentary remains of well over 100 amphorae of all types, a similar number of fine table ware, and numerous coarseware vessels have been recovered in excavations since the 1930s. This almost certainly indicates a trade involving more than one voyage in the period AD 500 to 600. Each shipment was probably heterogeneous in character, with cargo being picked up at more than one port in the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa. It is clear that the amphorae were imported for their contents, most probably olive oil and wine (Thomas 1993, Barrowman *et al* 2007). It is also of interest that many of the sherds recovered were large in size and fresh, showing little to no evidence of wear or erosion, indicating that the fragments are not far from where the vessels were last used, and broken.

The trade would not of course have been one way but it is uncertain what would have been exchanged, though tin is the most likely candidate. The fact that Tintagel was at the end of this complex trade route suggests that the occupants wielded tremendous influence during the 5th and 6th centuries AD. Current thinking is that it was a high status citadel, a centre for tribute gathering and distribution, tribute being the payment made periodically by one state or ruler to another, or tribal chieftain to ruler as a sign of dependence, and also a center for trade.

This project has further emphasised the extraordinary nature of the post-Roman occupation of Tintagel by demonstrating the great extent and density to which post-Roman occupation took advantage of all available land surfaces, with structural elements and sherds of Mediterranean imported ware being found in almost every area examined.

It is of note that no medieval artefacts were found despite the pits being immediately adjacent to the Inner Ward curtain wall. A layer recorded in the upper levels of the sections within Pits 1 to 3 (Fig 4) containing slate fragments and flecked with white mortar, contexts (2), (8) and (13) may represent evidence for activity during this period, being possibly waste from the construction of the wall, or an episode of renovation, and re-pointing. However this may also be waste derived from a more modern period of maintenance.

6 References

6.1 Primary sources

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6.3 Websites

<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/> English Heritage's online database of Sites and Monuments Records, and Listed Buildings

<http://www.potsherd.uklinux.net/> Potsherd. Atlas of Roman pottery.

http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/archive/amphora_ahrb_2005/index.cfm?CFID=441062&CFTOKEN=84690075 Roman Amphora: A digital Resource. University of Southampton.

7 Project archive

The HE project number is **146360**

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

1. A project and information file containing site records and notes, project correspondence and administration (file no 146360).
2. Field plans and copies of historic maps stored in an A2-size plastic envelope (GRE 811/1-3).
3. Digital photographs stored in the directory: R:\Historic Environment (Images)\SITES.Q-T\Tintagel Castle Trial Pits 146360
4. English Heritage/ADS OASIS online reference: cornwall2-176745
5. This report text is held in digital form as: G:\TWE\Waste & Env\Strat Waste & Land\Historic Environment\Projects\Sites\Sites T\Tintagel Trial Pits March 146360\Report

Artefacts and environmental material retrieved during the project are stored at the HE Projects Finds Archive Store, Cardrew Industrial Estate, Redruth. The site code is TTP14.

8 Appendix 1: Tintagel Castle, Cornwall: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief during trial pits for anchor pins reinforcement

Client: English Heritage

Client contact: James Byrne

Client tel: 01179751302

Client e-mail: james.byrne@english-heritage.org.uk

• Project Background

James Byrne, Technical Manager (Devon & Cornwall), English Heritage, has asked Historic Environment Projects (HE Projects) for a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) and estimate for an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of four trial pits prior to excavation of approximately 12 pits, each measuring 0.5m by 0.5m by 0.5m deep around existing anchor pins at Tintagel Castle.

• Methodology

The four trial pits will be 1m by 1m by 0.5m deep and spaced between the existing anchor pins. An archaeologist will be present during the excavation of the trial pits by the contractor. Any archaeological features and deposits that may be revealed will be recorded. Excavated spoil will be carefully inspected for artefacts. A written/scaled drawing/photographic record will be made as appropriate. The methodology and timetable for recording, archiving and reporting will be similar to that described in full in the WSI for an archaeological watching brief during drainage works at St Mawes Castle submitted by HE to EH in August 2005.

The final report will be submitted within six months, with copies supplied to English Heritage (two), Cornwall Council Historic Environment Record and the Royal Cornwall Museum. A draft will initially be submitted to the Inspector of Ancient Monuments for comment.

The project will be managed by Senior Archaeologist Charlie Johns (BA, MIFA) and the fieldwork will be carried out by Carl Thorpe BSc who has extensive experience of archaeological work at Tintagel Castle.

Standards

Historic Environment is a registered organisation with the Institute for Archaeologists. All recording work will be undertaken according to the Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*. Site staff will be expected to follow the IfA *Code of Conduct* and *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*.

As part of Cornwall Council, HE has certification in BS9001 (Quality Management), BS14001 (Environmental Management), OHSAS18001 (Health, Safety and Welfare), Investors in People and Charter Mark.

HE Projects follows the County Council's *Statement of Safety Policy*. Prior to carrying out on-site work HES will carry out a Risk Assessment.

As part of Cornwall County Council, HES is covered by Public Liability and Employers Liability and Insurance.

Charles Johns, Senior Archaeologist

21/02/2014

9 Appendix 2: Table of contexts

Context no.	Area	Cut/ Build / Deposit	Description	Figure no.
1	Trial Pit 1	D	Grass, roots and topsoil This last layer was not bottomed.	3,4
2	Trial Pit 1	D	Grey-brown clay with numerous shillet fragments and flecks of white lime mortar.	3,4
3	Trial Pit 1	D	Yellow, grey-brown sandy loam which has appearance of beach sand mixed with loam.	3,4
4	Trial Pit 1	D	Grey-brown clay with occasional large stone block.	3,4
5	Trial Pit 1	D	Hard compacted brown-grey clay containing one sherd of Bi amphora, one sherd of Bii amphora, a very large sherd of Bv amphora and 7 animal bones.	3,4
6	Trial Pit 2	D	Grass and topsoil.	3,4
7	Trial Pit 2	D	Grey-brown clay loam that contained two small heavily abraded sherds of pottery, or burnt clay, and some modern plastic (not collected).	3,4
8	Trial Pit 2	D	Grey-brown clay with numerous shillet fragments and flecks of white lime mortar.	3,4
9	Trial Pit 2	D	Hard compacted brown-grey clay.	3,4
10	Trial Pit 2	D	Rotten shillet bedrock which was not bottomed.	3,4
11	Trial Pit 3	D	Grass and topsoil.	3,4
12	Trial Pit 3	D	Grey-brown clay loam.	3,4
13	Trial Pit 3	D	Friable grey-brown clay with numerous shillet fragments, stony rubble and flecks of white lime mortar.	3,4
14	Trial Pit 3	D	Friable grey-brown clay.	3,4
15	Trial Pit 3	D	Hard compacted brown-grey clay containing 11 sherds of Bi amphora, 6 sherds of Bii amphora, 2 sherds of Biv amphora, and a single sherd of Post-Roman Imported Coarseware Fabric 1, and 10 animal bones.	3,4
16	Trial Pit 3	D	Rotten shillet bedrock which was not bottomed.	3,4
17	Trial Pit 4.	D	Grass and topsoil.	3
18	Trial Pit 4.	D	Grey-brown clay loam. At the base of this deposit wire mesh netting was encountered and the trench abandoned.	3

10 Appendix 3: Finds report

Trial Pit 1. Context No: (5).

MATERIAL	WEIGHT (g)	NO OF ITEMS	OBJECT NO	INTERIM BOX NO
Pottery				
Early Medieval	603g	3		1
Bone				
Animal	37g	7		1

1 sherd Class Bi Amphorae (Peacock and Williams Form 43).

1 sherd Class Bii Amphorae (Peacock and Williams Form 44).

1 sherd Class Bv Amphorae (Thomas 1981).

7 animal bones.

Trial Pit 2. Context No: (7).

MATERIAL	WEIGHT (g)	NO OF ITEMS	OBJECT NO	INTERIM BOX NO
Clay				
Daub	2.2g	2		

1 fragments of burnt clay or daub.

Trial Pit . Context No: (15).

MATERIAL	WEIGHT (g)	NO OF ITEMS	OBJECT NO	INTERIM BOX NO
Pottery				
Early Medieval	108g	20		
Bone				
Animal	55g	10		

11 sherds Class Bi Amphorae (Peacock and Williams Form 43).

6 sherds Class Bii Amphorae (Peacock and Williams Form 44).

2 sherds Class Biv Amphorae (Peacock and Williams Form 45).

1 sherd post-Roman Imported Coarseware Fabric 1 (Eastern Mediterranean Red ware).

10 animal bones.

Post-Roman ceramics

Class Bi Amphorae (Peacock and Williams Form 43).

A widespread form, production sites are known in the Argolid region of the Peloponnese, however other sites on the Greek mainland, Crete and the wine producing Greek islands may have produced similar forms. A globular shaped vessel with basal knob, short conical neck and high everted rim is characterised by combed ribbing often fairly deep in a band on the shoulder region; the fabric is fine grained, well sorted with white grains of limestone often visible, pink buff to orange brown in colour. Both graffiti and dipinti are known on vessel surfaces, perhaps traders or makers marks. Though a fairly long lived form, current from the early 5th century to the late 6th century the peak of its use and distribution was reached between 450 and 550 AD. A wine content has been suggested.

Class Bii Amphorae (Peacock and Williams Form 44).

Known from several kiln sites to have originated from the coastal plain of Cilicia in southeast Turkey. An ovoid shape with rounded base, broad neck, and twisted asymmetric handles; the vessel is characterised by tegulated ribbing that covers the body. The fabric is hard, sandy and variable in colour from pinkish-cream to reddish-yellow. Examples with graffiti and dipinti are known. The form of Bii is that dating from about 450 AD to 600AD (Peacock and Williams 1986). The contents are uncertain, but the olive oil industry of the Antioch region may be involved.

Class Biv Amphorae (Peacock and Williams Form 45).

These originate from Sardis in western Turkey. They are small carrot shaped vessels with tegulated ribbing on the body and a distinctive hard, highly micaceous fine fabric, red-brown in colour. The two handled form seen at Tintagel came into use by the middle of the 5th century AD and became rare after the middle of the 6th century. Contents are not known but wine or fine oils have been suggested.

Class Bv Amphorae (Thomas 1981).

These amphorae are still not provenanced, however they resemble Tunisian Africana Grande Peacock and Williams Class 34 from Byzacena. Large (up to 1m high) cylindrical in form with a pronounced foot spike and large handles. Characterised by thick-ridged walls the fabric is very sandy, pale buff-brown in colour. Residue analysis has shown these vessels to have carried olive oil.

Imported Coarseware Fabric 1: Eastern Mediterranean Red Ware.

This is similar in form to North African Red Ware (Fulford and Peacock 1984) and is purple-red to reddish-orange in colour. It has a hard smooth texture, and is micaceous, with numerous well-rounded quartz grains. Some white limestone specks are present but not common. Forms include casseroles, storage jars, and jugs. Munsell: Light red 2.5YR 6/6 to Reddish Yellow 7.5YR 7/6 (Thomas and Thorpe forthcoming).

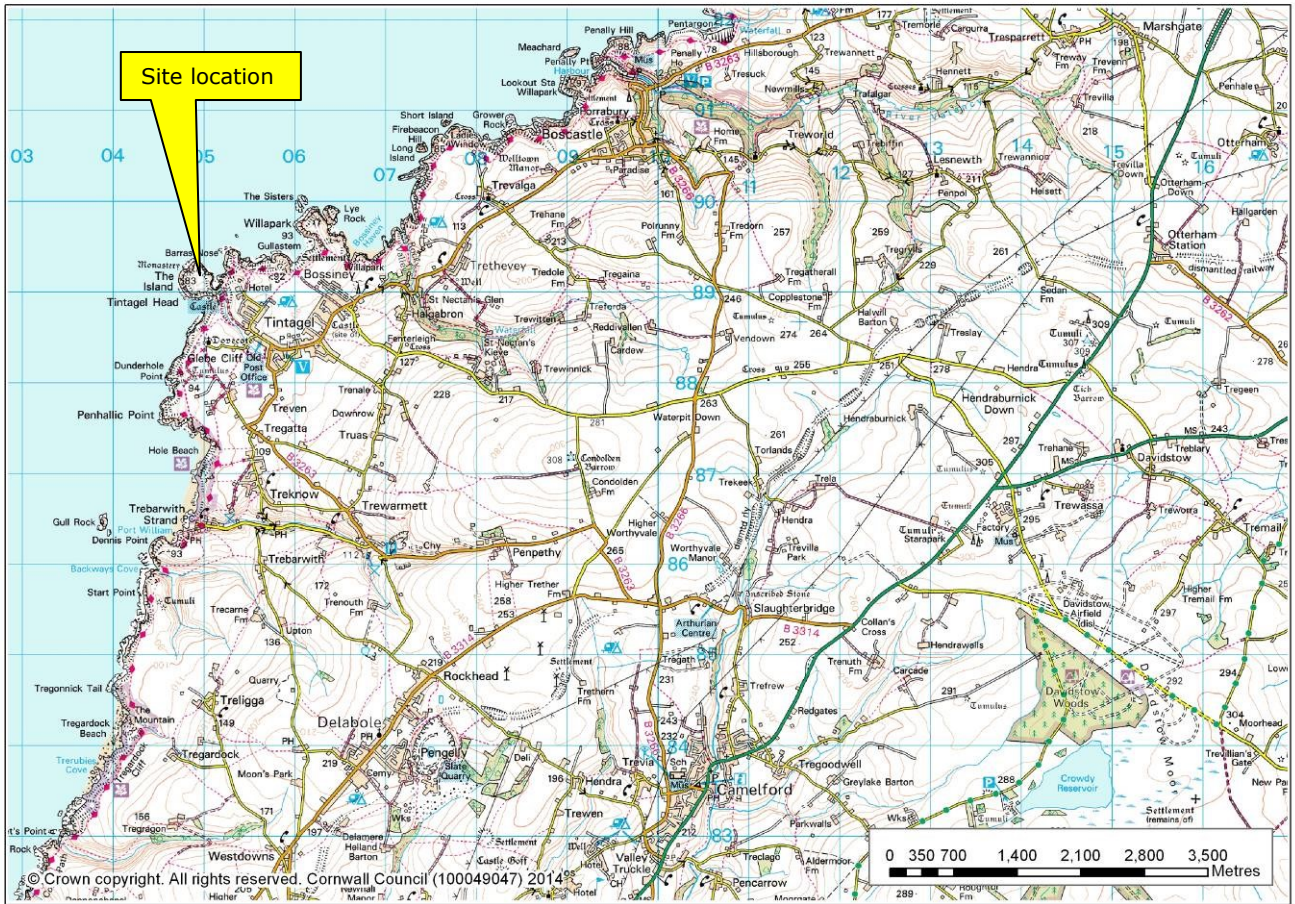


Figure 1. General location of Tintagel Castle

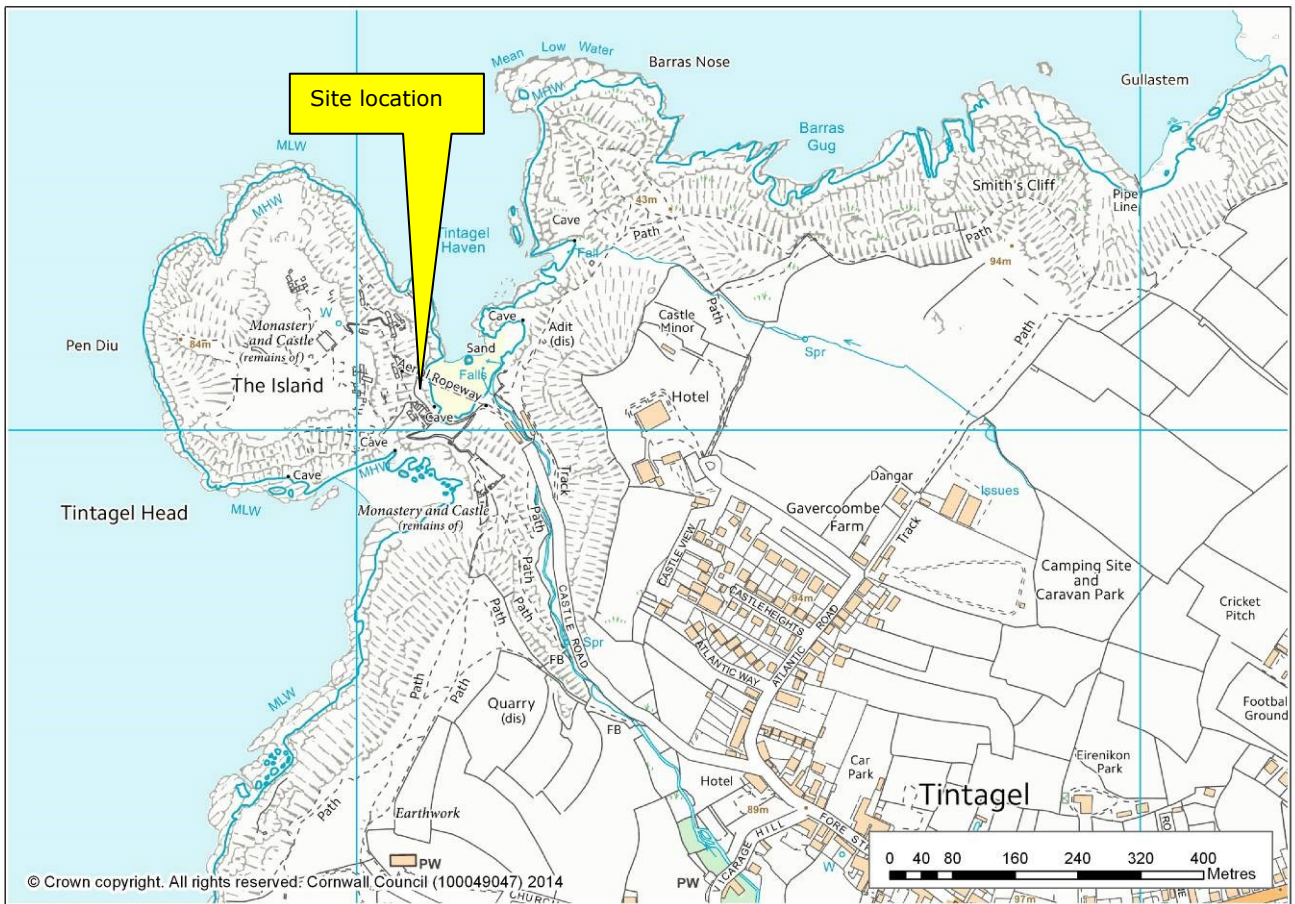


Figure 2. Site location

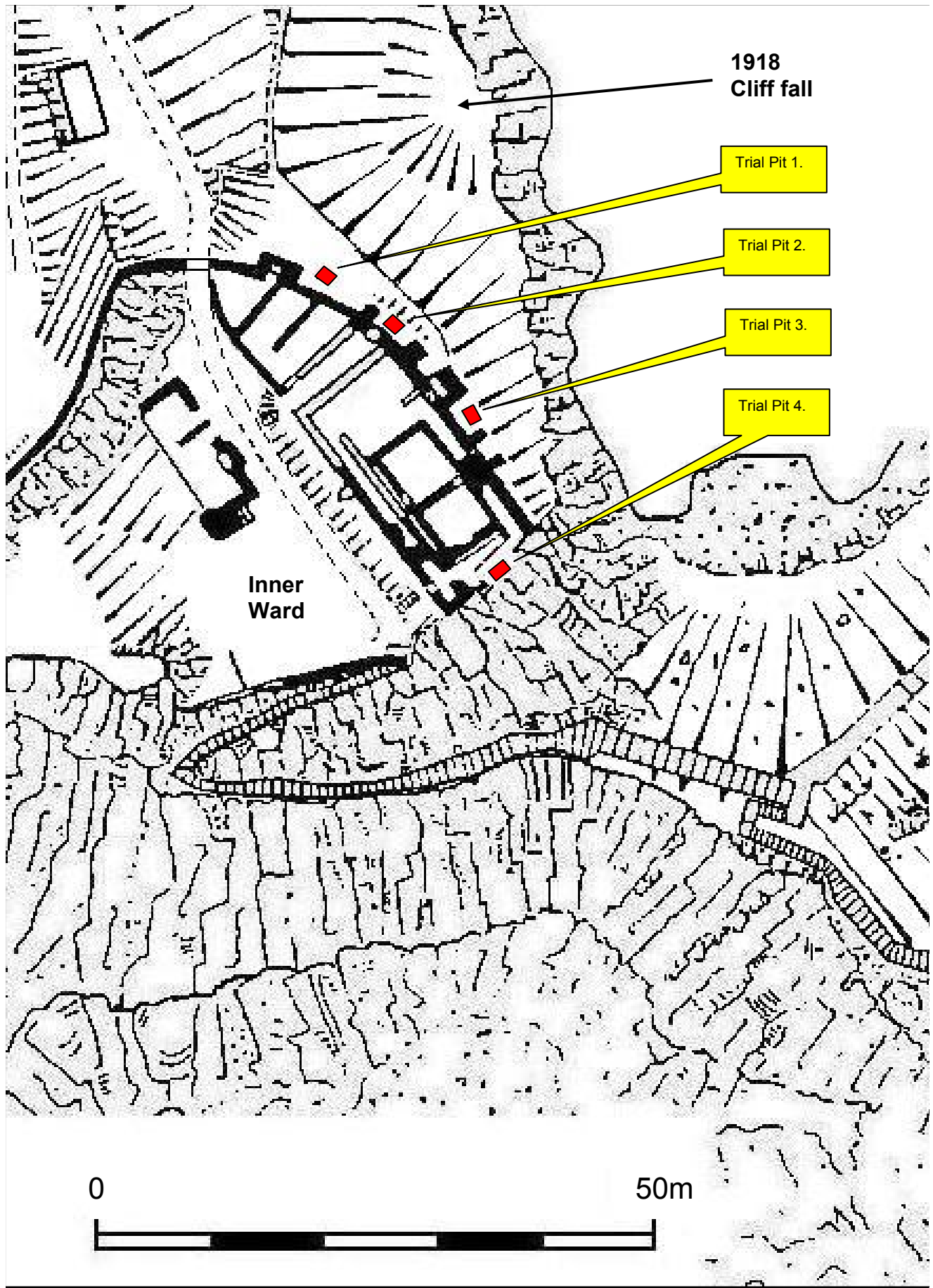
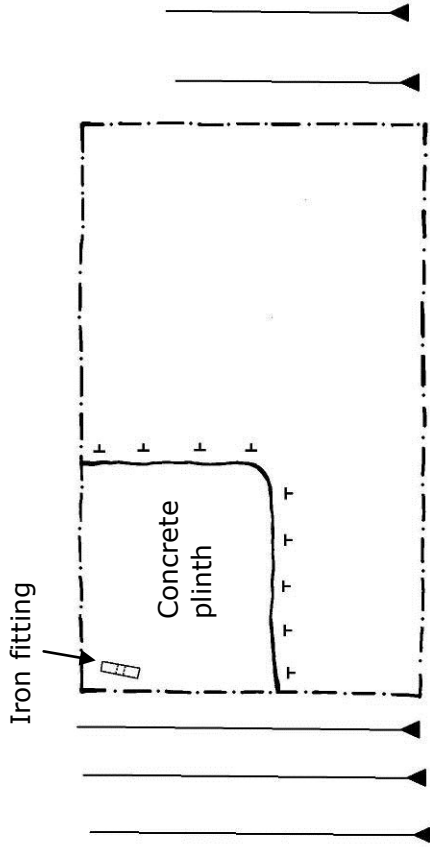
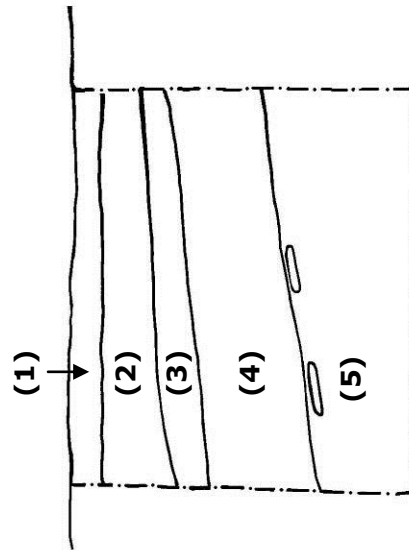


Figure 3. An extract from the RCHME 1985 survey of Tintagel showing the location of Trial Pits 1 - 4.

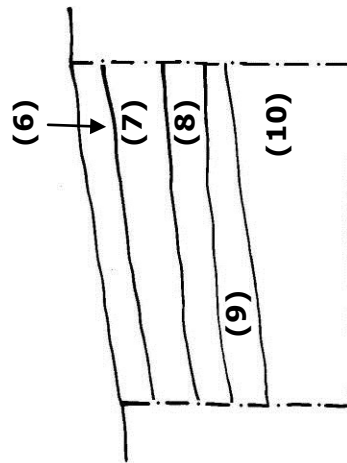
Trial Pit 2. Plan



Trial Pit 1



Trial Pit 2



Trial Pit 3

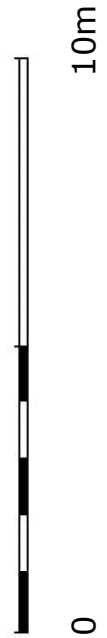
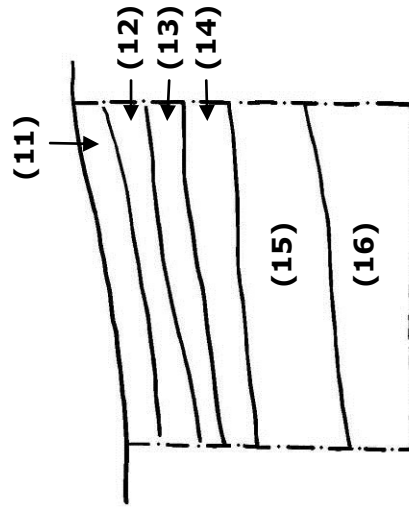


Figure 4. Plan and sections of Trial Pits 1 to 3



Figure 5. Trial Pit 1 under excavation, showing uncovering of large Bv amphora sherd within context (5)



Figure 6. Trial Pit 1 after excavation looking south east showing section



Figure 7. Trial Pit 2 after excavation looking south east showing section



Figure 8. Trial Pit 3 after excavation looking south west

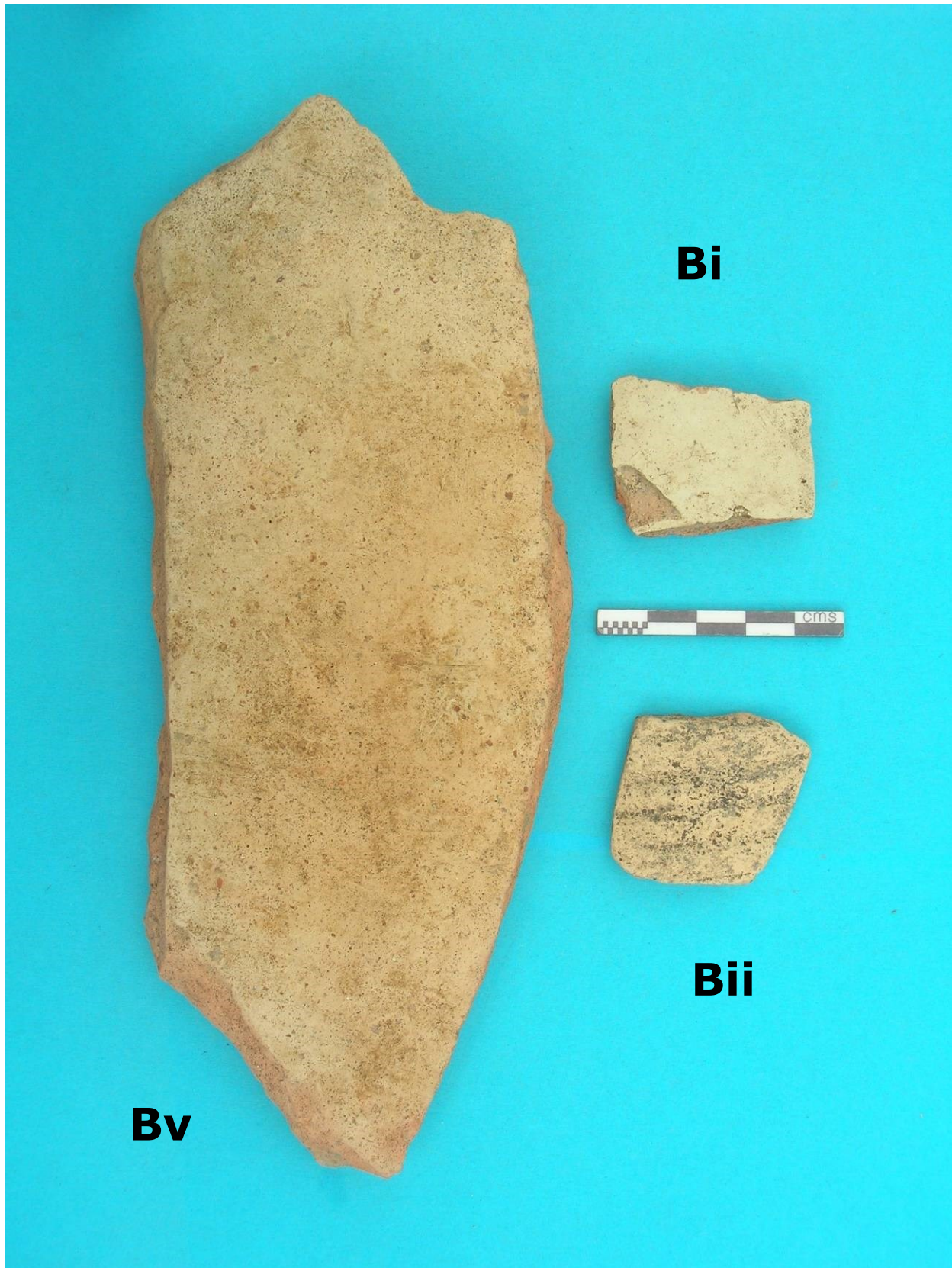


Figure 9. Trial Pit 1. Post-Roman pottery from context (5)

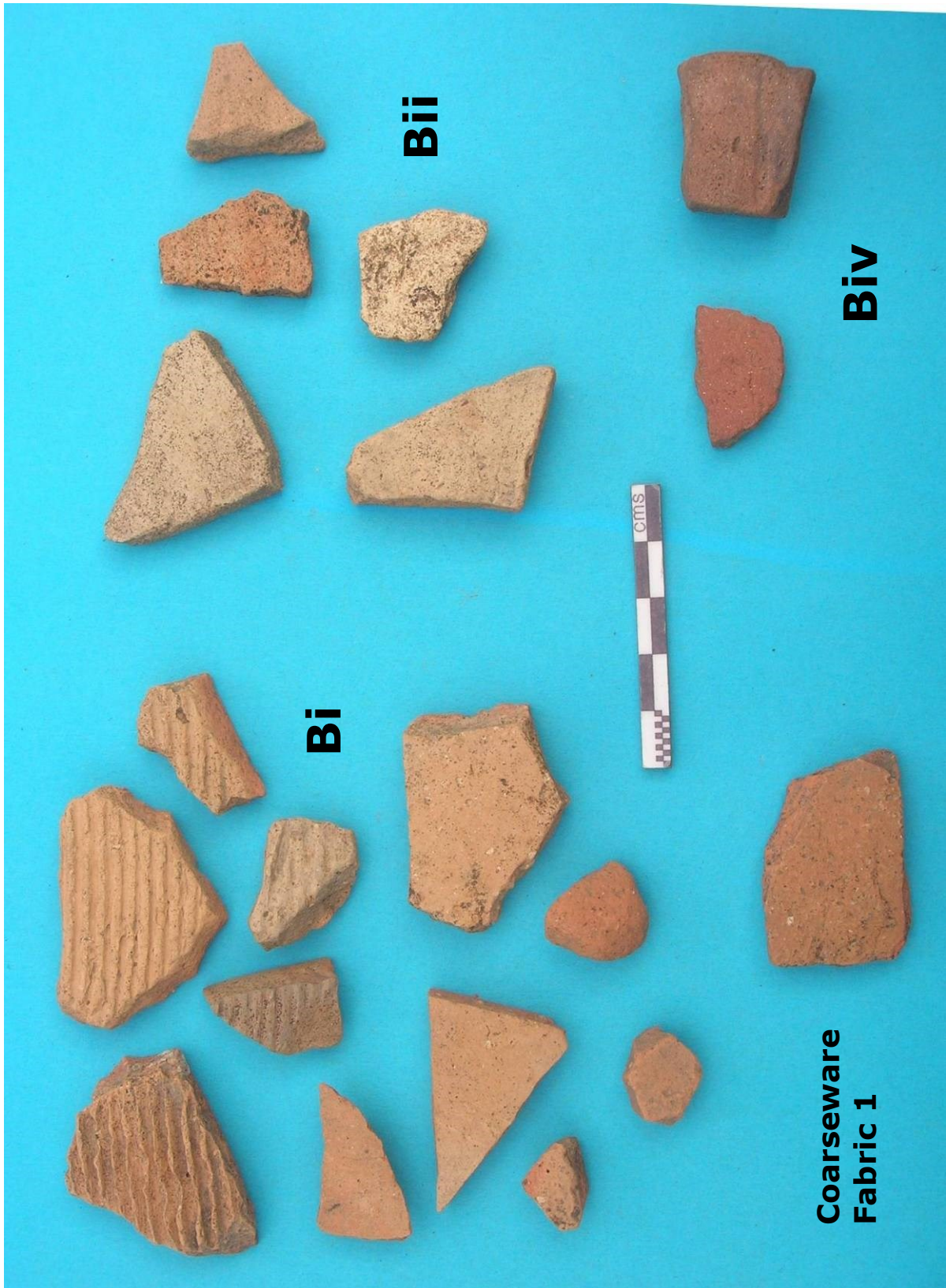
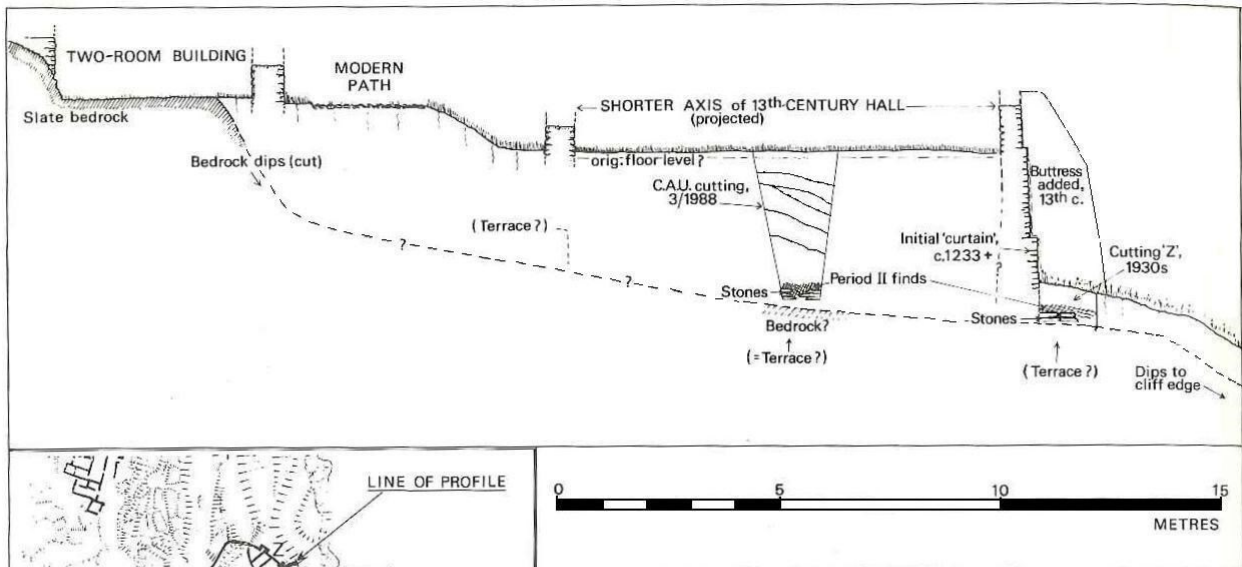


Figure 10. Trial Pit 3. Post-Roman pottery from context (15)

MODELS FOR THE MOMENT – PRE-NORMAN AND MEDIEVAL



99 (Above) Reconstructed profile west to east (line indicated on the inset plan) just north of the Great Hall – side-walls of the Hall and the line of the first retaining curtain-wall projected northward into the profile. Remains of clay-set stone walling and post-Roman finds from the base of the CAU's 1988 cutting ('Soakaway') and Radford's 1930s Site Z cutting belong to the same episode/occupation/date.

Figure 11. Postulated section through the Inner ward showing implied existence of post-Roman artificial terraces lying below current medieval buildings (Thomas 1993).

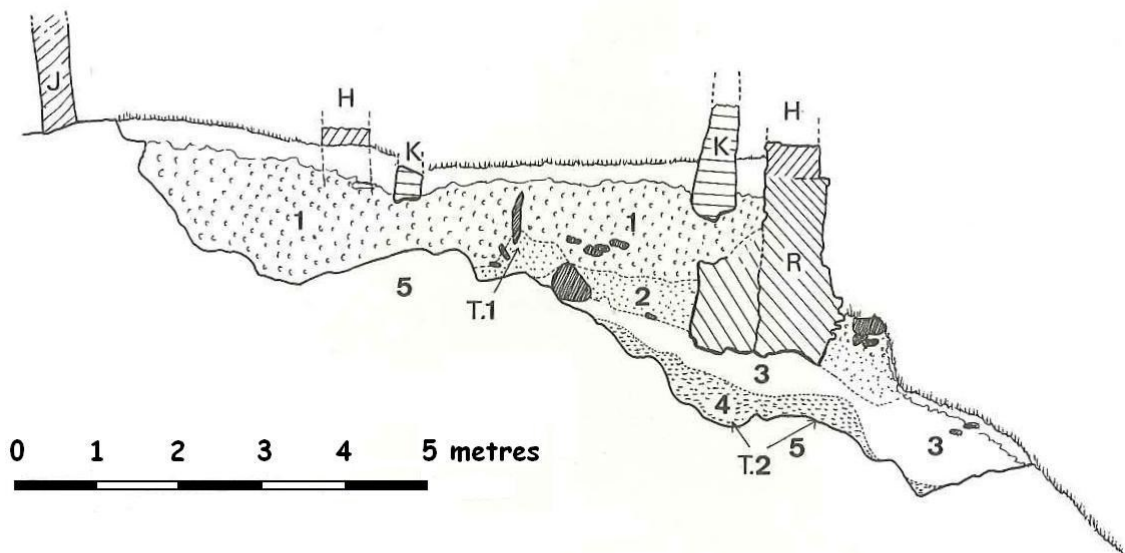


Fig. 24

Schematic section visible (1988) in cliff-face at S end of Island Ward, drawn from long-distance photographs by Carl Thorpe. Key: J, Victorian wall by present gateway entrance. K, medieval building inserted in Hall. H, side-walls of 1230s Hall. R, first retaining-wall, partly double, below seaward wall of Hall 1, lightish grey fill, soil and stones, up to Hall's floor-level. 2, darker grey layer. 3, grainy reddish-brown layer, perhaps Period II occupation. 4, medium greyish-brown layer. 5, slate bedrock. T 1, T 2, most likely positions of any built Period II terraces

Figure 12. Cliff section recorded in 1988 prior to erection of safety mesh across face (Thomas 1988b)