



Tintagel Haven, Cornwall: Archaeological watching brief during cliff edge stabilisation works.

Cornwall Archaeological Unit

Report No: 2017R001



# **Tintagel Haven, Cornwall: Archaeological watching brief during cliff edge stabilisation works.**

## **Archaeological Watching Brief**

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## **Acknowledgements**

This study was commissioned by Mr Matt Brooke of English Heritage and carried out by Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall Council.

The Project Manager at CAU was Adam Sharpe.

The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of Cornwall Archaeological Unit 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

*Staff from Vertical Technology removing loose material from the lower section of the cliff face in the process uncovering a levelled platform. Tintagel Haven, North Cornwall, December 2016.*

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*Fig 23. A hand-tinted late 19<sup>th</sup> century postcard showing the northern loading point. © Charles Thomas Archive.*

## **Abbreviations**

CAU	Cornwall Archaeological Unit
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
EH	English Heritage
NE	Natural England
NGR	National Grid Reference
OD	Ordnance Datum – height above mean sea level at Newlyn
OS	Ordnance Survey
VT	Vertical Technology

## **1 Summary**

In December 2016 Cornwall Archaeological Unit (CAU) was commissioned by Mr Matthew Brooke of English Heritage, to carry out an archaeological watching brief on the cliffs at Tintagel Haven, Tintagel, Cornwall (SX 05158 89037) while stabilisation works were carried out on the cliff face at the southern end of the Haven. A retaining wall which had previously been secured to the cliff face by a metal net had begun to subside. The net had been removed and the wall had subsequently collapsed into the sea. In order to ensure the future safety of beach users, the decision was made by English Heritage to remove all loose material at the site of the collapse down to bedrock.

The wall and associated platform cut into the cliff face were thought to have sited a derrick used to load locally-won slate into vessels on the beach below during the early and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

A Written Scheme of Investigation outlining the methodology for archaeological recording was produced (22/11/2016) by Adam Sharpe, Archaeology Projects Officer, Cornwall Archaeological Unit.

The subsequent excavation and removal of loose material revealed a rock cut platform at the head of the cliff face, together with a series of stepped cuts which had sited the outer wall of the platform. Iron chain links were recovered, together with the remains of a substantial composite wooden beam buried under the material forming the platform which are likely to have been part of the winching arrangements. The removal of loose material also revealed extensive evidence of the working of the cliff face to site this equipment.





Fig 1. Location map.

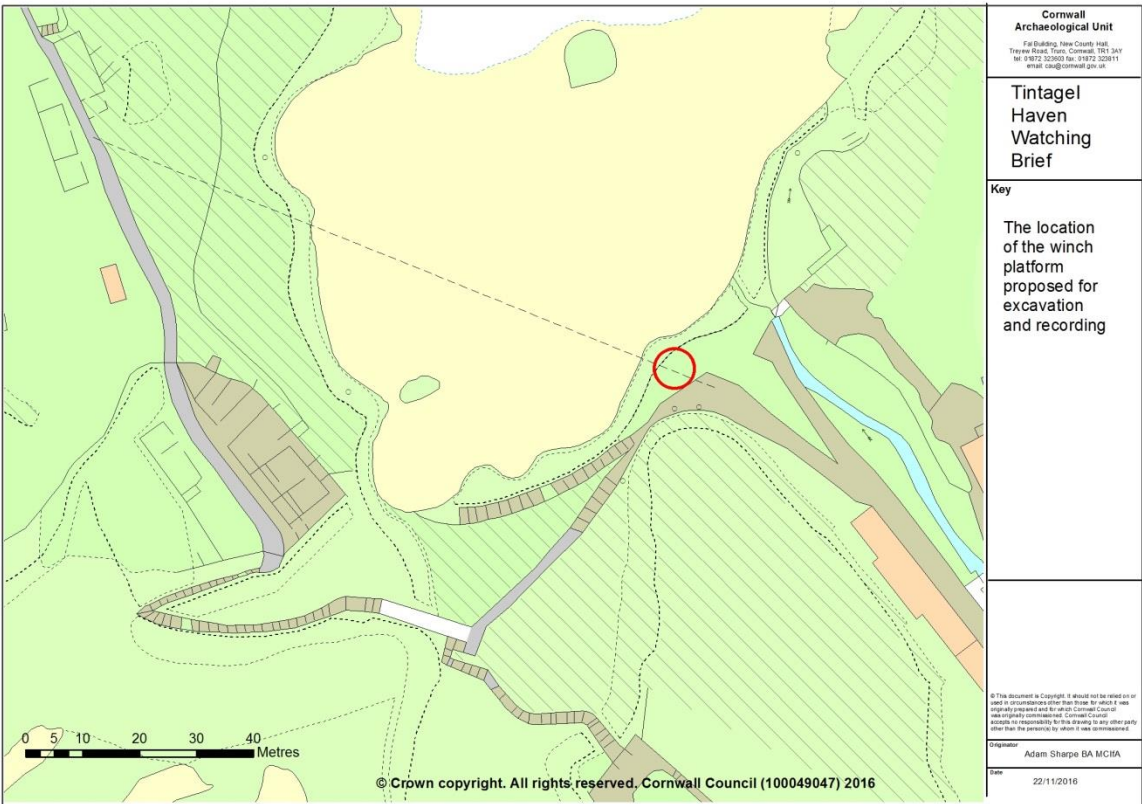


Fig 2. Site extent.

## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Project background

In December 2016 Cornwall Archaeological Unit (CAU) were commissioned by Mr Matthew Brooke of English Heritage to carry out an archaeological watching brief at Tintagel Haven while stabilisation works were carried out on the cliff face at the head of the Haven where a recent collapse of an old retaining wall had taken place. The wall had been secured to the cliff face by netting as it had shown signs of movement (Figs 8 – 9). When this became more substantial it was decided to release the net and allow the wall to fall into the sea (Fig 10). In order to ensure the future safety of beach users, the plan was to hand-remove all loose material from the site of the collapse down to bedrock.

A Written Scheme of Investigation, outlining the methodology for archaeological recording was produced by Adam Sharpe, Archaeology Projects Officer, Cornwall Archaeological Unit. A full risk assessment was also produced at the same time.

### 2.2 Aims

No specific brief was produced which covered the aims and objectives of this watching brief, though the WSI (Appendix 1) was guided by advice and information provided by the client and in consultation with Historic England and Natural England

The site specific aims were to:

- Establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains and record features which would be removed during the works and those to which they relate which will be left *in situ*.
- Determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains encountered.
- Retrieve and identify any artefacts relating to the occupation or use of this part of the Tintagel site.
- Provide further information on the archaeology of Tintagel from the archaeological remains encountered.

The project objective was to produce a report setting out the results of the archaeological watching brief and placing them in their historical and landscape context. A further objective is the creation of an entry to the Historic England OASIS/ADS national online database of archaeological projects.

### 2.3 Methods

All recording work was undertaken according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeological Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording. CAU Staff follow the CIfA Code of Conduct and Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Archaeology. The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists is the professional body for archaeologists working in the UK. Fieldwork strategy was discussed and agreed with the client, Historic England and Natural England.

#### 2.3.1 Fieldwork

The majority of the excavation work was carried out by staff employed by Vertical Technology (VT) using hand tools; a mechanical excavator was used to move the excavated spoil to the top of the cliff. Once features began to appear the VT staff provided a secure roped access for the archaeologist to allow archaeological recording as the excavation progressed. The spoil from the site was removed in one tonne dumpy bags by the mechanical excavator and was stockpiled on a strip of land to the south east of the English Heritage café.

Site drawings (plans, sections and locations of finds) were made by pencil on drafting film; all plans are linked to the Ordnance Survey Landline electronic map; all drawings were either 1:10 or 1:20 scale. All contexts were sequentially numbered (Appendix 2) and small finds recorded (Appendix 3).

Photographs were taken using a Pentax digital SLR, a Lumix compact digital camera, a Canon SLR loaded with archive quality black and white film and a Go Pro type camera to record overhead views.

### **3 Location and setting**

The site is located at the southern end of Tintagel Haven, immediately to the north of the visitor route leading from the English Heritage visitor centre to the footbridge to the Island (Figs 1 and 2). The excavation site comprised a platform cut into the cliff face below an area previously which is recorded as having formerly sited a horse whim (Figs 3 and 4).

#### **3.1.1 Topography**

The site is a small one, located 2.7m below the approach footpath to Tintagel Castle Island (Fig 2), within an area of the cliff face which had been quarried away to provide the location for a loading derrick associated with the local slate quarrying industry. The site has a commanding view of the Haven and was formerly approached from the north along a now redundant footpath cut into the cliff face.

#### **3.1.2 Geology**

The underlying bedrock geology is identified as the Tredorn Slate Formation – this being a slate bedrock formed approximately 359 to 375 million years ago in the Devonian Period. Also present is the Barras Nose Formation – this being slate bedrock formed approximately 326 to 359 million years ago during the Carboniferous Period. (BGS 2017)

#### **3.1.3 Archaeological background**

Tintagel is world famous for its association with the conception of the mythical King Arthur, something which was initially devised by Geoffrey of Monmouth and which became the basis of the economy of the area and the settlement of Trevena from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, persisting to the present day, as is readily apparent by a walk down the settlement's main (and only) street. Archaeological excavations on Tintagel Island from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century onwards began to suggest a different narrative for Tintagel Castle which were initially thought to focus around a post-Roman monastic settlement, but which has now been shown to be a high status trading settlement of the period, subsequently partly over-written by what is now thought to be a Medieval folly (i.e., Tintagel Castle) designed to enhance the status of a local aristocrat through the association of this site with a mythical and powerful king of Britain.

Notably, local people and their activities do not feature in these stories, yet it is the structures they constructed and on which their economy was based for centuries that give the Haven much of its character. Generations of local men, women and children worked here and in the quarries where slate was laboriously hacked out from local cliff faces, split and trimmed and then fashioned into roofing slates, which were then loaded into boats beached in the Haven which sailed along this dangerous coast to ports from which they could be sent to market.

The strong points, loading points, whim plats and associated features found around the edges of Tintagel Haven and along the nearby coast, constructed of local stone and thus blending into the local landscape and often overlooked are very much distinctive of this part of the north Cornish coast, the surviving physical evidence for a once major coastal industry which formerly supplied durable roofing materials across the whole of Cornwall and beyond.

## **4 Designations**

### **4.1 National**

The site investigated in 2016/2017 is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Tintagel – Marsland – Clovelly Coast), a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and a Scheduled Monument (1014793).

### **4.2 Regional/county**

This location was identified as being within an Area of Great Scientific Value and an Area of Great Historic Value in the former Cornwall Structure Plan. It is part of the Heritage Coast between Pentire Point and Widemouth Bay.

## **5 Site history**

During the 19th century the Haven was home to three industries: fishing, mining and quarrying. Inshore fishing was probably the oldest industry at Tintagel, an official muster of 1626 listing thirteen mariners and fishermen based at Tintagel (Thomas 1993, 38). A fishery continued here until at least the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as can be seen from contemporary postcards (for example Fig 22), winches and derricks being used to haul small boats clear of the water when not in use to protect them from damage. There is some evidence that a small harbour was established on the eastern side of the Haven, but this has now been largely washed away by the sea and only its foundations stones survive.

A relatively short-lived and unsuccessful lead mine was sited beneath Tintagel Island (Site 9 in Craze 2003). A waterwheel-powered pump was fed by a large water pipe running from the nearby valley; a timber walkway hung from the cliff face gave access to the mine's adit which can still be seen in the cliff face on the east face of the Island some way above the high tide level. Further adits can be seen in a lode outcrop on the mainland cliff face to the south of the Island. The lodes of lead ore (galena) mined here are understood to have been significantly argentiferous (containing silver), and may well have been first exploited somewhat earlier than their earliest recorded working as Wheal Heart in 1806. The mine was reworked as King Arthur Consols between 1852 and 1853 and as King Arthur Mine between 1870 and 1873. The adit is understood to have been blocked off by walling constructed just inside its entrance and the extent and depth of the mine workings are unknown.

Slate quarrying within the area dates back to at least the early 14<sup>th</sup> century (Sharpe 1990), but the industry became of considerable local importance during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and in particular during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (ibid.). A slate works was constructed at the end of the valley above the beach during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some of its buildings subsequently being converted to form the present day English Heritage café and shop/reception and visitor centre buildings. The Haven forms one of the very few safe landing points along this section of coast and was used to export slates from the quarries sited along the cliffs to its north as far as Boscastle, and its south down to Trebarwith Strand, as well as those in the valley between Penpethy and Bowithick (a few miles away to the south-west) and probably also from the inland quarries at Delabole.

Thomas Pope Rosevear, a Boscastle merchant in the 1820s and 1830s, (together with another partner) owned coastal slate quarries in the area and is recorded as having shipped slate from the quay at 'King Arthur's Castle'; it is possible that he owned the works near the Haven at the time. The shipping of locally-quarried slate from Tintagel Haven had more or less ceased by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as very large quantities were by then being produced at Delabole, which had become linked to the main line railway system.

Late 19<sup>th</sup> century OS mapping (Fig 3) shows that the majority of the buildings and other features constructed around the head of the Haven at the time related to the slate industry, and included horse whim platforms, strong points, loading points, dressing and storage areas and buildings such as crib huts, workshops and stores. It seems likely that the slate in the Haven was not quarried for sale since it is of a poorer quality than that found further along the coast, and that slate from the surrounding area was brought here either by boat or cart to be worked, dressed and then shipped to its final destination. The substantial whim plat and loading point to the north of the position where the stream meets the sea was constructed for the purpose of loading and unloading ships in the Haven and for winching smaller boats up from the beach (Sturgess 2004) and was constructed between 1887 and 1907 (OS map evidence). Archive photographs and postcards show that there were at least two smaller examples of these loading structures around the Haven, one of these being the example excavated during the winter of 2016/2017. The horse whim associated with this feature was shown on late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Ordnance Survey maps, but has been destroyed as a result of 20<sup>th</sup> century activities. It was probably no longer operational by 1877 and was clearly disused by 1907 when the whim plat was crossed by a trackway.

During the 20th century the Haven became a tourist beach (Craze 2003) following the construction of the prominent hotel above the cliffs. Tintagel had also, by this time become a popular tourist destination with the developing association between the Castle and legends of the life of King Arthur. As a result, a number of photographs of the Haven, Island and Castle were taken during the later decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, incidentally recording details of features associated with its fishing, mining and quarrying industries which have now mostly been lost.

## **6 Archaeological results**

Work commenced at Tintagel Haven on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2016 on the excavation of the rock cut platform above the Haven (Fig 11). Staff from Vertical Technology (VT) set up a fixed rope system and inducted the archaeologists on the safe use of this access system. The archaeologist then briefed the VT excavation team on the archaeology of the site, and work began on de-turfing the platform, reserving this material for re-use on the wider Tintagel site (this being an English Nature requirement). The soil and rock fills of the cliff-edge feature were hand-excavated and loaded into dumpy bags for potential subsequent use as path surfacings or to infill erosion hollows on the site (see Fig 7).

### **Rock cut platform No 1 [104] and low wall [102]**

(See Fig 11)

Once the turf was removed, the first feature to be exposed was a roughly level rock-cut platform [104] defined on its inland side by two rock-cut vertical faces, the north east face measuring approximately 5.17m long and a maximum of 2.2m high, its face including a horizontal cut averaging 0.5m wide. The south eastern face was approximately 5m long and between 2.2 and 2.7m high. The surviving section of the platform measured 7m by 6m though would originally have been somewhat more extensive on its seaward side, and would additionally have been extended out over the cliff edge as a timber deck.

The floor (Fig 12) of [104] was covered with a thin layer of turf and soil [101], this comprising thick grass on top of a layer of a mid to dark brown soil between 0.1 and 0.2m deep. The soil was very fine in appearance and incorporated a loamy silt; it was easily excavated and contained modern rubbish including plastic bags, ring-can pulls and crisp packets. It appeared to get deeper closer towards the edge of the cliff.

Prior to the removal of the turf an area at the centre of the site was noted as exhibiting a change in depth, apparently reflecting the position of a feature. The removal of the turf and further soil revealed a low wall [102], this comprising three courses of slate

measuring 0.4m wide, 0.4m long and no more than 0.05m in thickness; the slate ranged from medium grey to dark grey in colour. In places this wall appeared to be bound by a mid to dark brown soil [103], this being finer than [101] and rested on [106], a mix of shillet and clay soil.

This low wall did not appear to have a solid foundation or have any relevance to the working life of the platform, whilst material associated with it contained modern rubbish. The wall was probably a recent addition to the site, being surrounded by modern rubbish; it may well have been a small bench constructed for use by visitors to Tintagel and may be the feature just visible at the rear of the platform on a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century aerial photograph.

The removal of the topsoil from the southern and eastern parts of the site revealed that the bedrock was very high up and appeared to have been deliberately quarried; the bedding planes of the stone were aligned north east to south west and the excavated faces followed this orientation. The (natural) stone floor sloped down to the south west and excavation revealed what initially appeared to be a secondary wall. This interpretation was subsequently revised as it became apparent that this feature was actually the edge of a vertical cut into the seaward section of the platform, this subsequently being found to define a second, lower rock-cut platform.

### **Rock cut platform No 2 [107]**

(See Figs 11, 16, 17, 18 & 21)

This second rock cut platform measured approximately 4.5m long; its south wall was 2.1m long, its north wall was 2.5m long and it was between 1.1m and 1.3m wide. The floor of the cut sloped to the south and was uneven, following natural fractures and bedding planes in the bedrock. The width of the platform at its northern end was 2.5m from the east wall, but to the south the floor area became narrower and irregular in plan, ranging from 1.1m to 1.8m in width from the east wall. Its seaward edge was formed by a vertical drop to a further smaller platform or shelf.

Cut into the stone forming the north face of this platform was a possible notch [115], this being about 0.5m from the eastern face of the platform. The notch appeared to be curved and had been roughly cut; it measured 0.3m deep and was 0.2m above the floor of the platform (Fig 14).

The south wall of the platform contained a rectangular notch [116]; this was 0.4m deep, 0.1m wide and was located between 0.2m and 0.3m above the surface of the floor of the platform (Fig 18).

As excavation continued into the shillet, clay and soil mix fills, an animal jaw bone was revealed at about 0.5m below the level of the second platform; in close proximity to this a series of iron chain links were revealed together with a small piece of bottle glass.

At the south end of the platform excavation revealed the remains of a wooden beam and two cross members (Fig 14). The wooden beam was made up of three rectangular sections of wood joined together by iron bolts. The upper piece measured 0.7m long, 0.2m wide and 0.33m thick, the second section was 1.47m long, 0.2m wide and 0.33m thick and the third piece was 1.8m long, 0.2m wide and 0.33m thick. These timbers were set on a layer of shillet [106] (0.2m deep), which in turn overlaid bedrock. This composite timber was in a fairly poor state and had been truncated at its outer end.

The composite timber had been neatly cut at its inner end, where it was joined to a further timber. This cross-beam was a rounded section timber 0.1m in diameter and 2.1m long; it was set perpendicular to the composite beam and was joined to it by an iron bolt; a cut had been made in the lower platform face to accommodate the cross-beam [116]. A second cross member of similar form was found running parallel to it and 0.5m from it on its seaward side. This was in very poor condition and was not recoverable. Metal artefacts found in close proximity to the main beam appeared to be the remains of further iron bolts.

The cross member slot cut into the south face of the platform appeared to have been overcut and was rectangular in shape. Although accommodating a 0.1m square timber, the cut was over 0.3m in width and was recessed 0.4m back into the face of the platform.

### **Wall adjacent to rock cut platform No 2 [109]**

(See Figs 11 & 13)

The remnants of a dwarf wall [109] were found running almost parallel to the eastern face of the lower rock cut platform; this was made up of at least four courses of laid stone and appeared to be sited on the outer edge of its floor. It continued along the edge of the platform to the south, but was clearly incomplete; the missing section is likely to have been lost during the late autumn 2016 collapse of the revetting stonework. The wall did not appear to be attached to the rock face. Some of its stones were quite large being 0.5m long, 0.3m - 0.4m wide, and 0.05m - 0.1m thick; all appeared to have been set in soil. The area in which the walling was found was particularly unstable; it was recorded photographically (Fig 13) before being dismantled. During its removal it was not possible to determine whether it was abutted by the shillet fills or had been backed by other material. Features recorded during the watching brief suggest that the outer revetting walling of the platform, founded off the rock steps cut into the cliff face, may have been backed by this inner wall, which may possibly have been constructed in order to reduce the pressure of the backfill on the outer walling.

The collapse of the outer revetment wall of the strong point had also resulted in the loss of part of the inner wall and at least one metre of its fill, this being at least three metres in depth at its outer edge (pers comm VT staff).

### **Ledge [117] and steps [118]**

(See Figs 11, 17 & 19)

Below the second rock platform [107] a narrow ledge was revealed following the excavation of covering material, and below this was a series of what appeared to be steps cut into the cliff face. The southern end of this stepped section was about 1.5m wide, though the features narrowed further downwards and to the north; each step was less than 0.5m wide and each was between 0.1m and 0.2m below the one above. Archive photographs suggest that these were cut to site the foundation courses for the revetment wall.

### **Notches in cliff face [116]**

(See Fig 20)

One of the VT staff noted two notches at least one metre below the middle of the stepped area, the notch to the south apparently being better defined. Archive images of a similar site on the eastern side of the Haven (Figs 21 and 22) suggest that these rock-cut hitches would have held timber struts supporting the outer end of a now-lost timber platform.

## **7 Discussion/conclusions**

Archive mapping (Figs 3 & 4) indicates that the area immediately above the site investigated was the site of a horse whim platform, almost certainly serving a loading platform projecting over the cliffs from the cliff-edge strong point. Postcards and photographs dating to the later decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (for example Fig 7) show the remains of the strong point walling, one of several set up around the Haven to serve the slate trade. Unlike the other, larger equivalent to its north which continued in operation until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this example appears to have gone out of use before the end of the century, as postcards from this period show no timberwork or machinery sited on it and its strong point walling gradually deteriorating. Its associated horse whim platform seems to have been completely destroyed, its last remnants probably being removed when the area it occupied was levelled during the setting up of



a storage area associated with a zip wire used to transfer materials to the Island (possibly during the 1980s).

With the exception of an 1818 etching after JMW Turner which may show this site when at work, and an undated (but probably early 19<sup>th</sup> century engraving) which shows a very distant view of a tall rectangular frame on the cliff edge at this location (Fig 6), no image of this site in its operational condition could be located. However the postcards and photographs collected by the late Professor Charles Thomas include many of Tintagel Haven and allow us to attempt the interpretation of what was found at this cliff edge site, though some queries remain as to why the shaping of the cliff face associated with its construction was more complex than would have been expected to have been the case.

As discussed by Sharpe (1999) this type of feature was a relatively commonplace feature of the cliff quarries between Tintagel and Trebarwith Strand, sixteen surviving examples of cliff edge strong points having been recorded along this stretch of coast. Each sited a derrick and was associated with a horse whim used to haul slate up to the clifftops from the working areas in the cliff faces. Map and photographic evidence indicates that a variant on this technology was also utilised at Tintagel Haven for loading slate into boats on the beach.

The archaeological evidence suggests that a substantial cut with a levelled base was made into a suitable section of vertical cliff face above the beach. A substantial horizontal frame protruding out well beyond the cliff face was installed on the floor of this lower platform; the outer arms of the frame would have been diagonally braced by timbers hitched into the cliff face below the platform (as is indicated by the notches found there). Revetment walling was constructed off steps cut into the cliff face, archive postcards indicating that this originally substantial feature included a right angled wall return to define a rectangular area. The lower cut was completely backfilled with a layer of soil and slate waste up to the level of the upper platform, pinning the frame in place. A rock-cut walkway was created from the north to access the platform. A horse whim was constructed on the clifftop immediately to the south, together with vertical framing to carry the winding rope from the whim drum to a pulley set up on a shearlegs on the protruding section of the frame (which would have been decked over, possibly incorporating an access hatch). This arrangement would allow slate carried down to the cliff edge platform to be lowered to boats beached underneath the frame at high tide. An arrangement closely matching the archaeological evidence is shown in several postcards of the Haven (for instance see Figs 22 and 23).

These archive images show that the equivalent but larger site to the north employed a more sophisticated piece of equipment – a Blondin running along a cable running between the clifftop and the large rock in the centre of the Haven. This arrangement allowed the running pulley to be positioned directly over a beached boat and loads of slate to be accurately lowered into its hold.

It is unclear why the sections of chain recorded during the watching brief were buried so deeply within the site – it is possible that these were used to attach the timber frame to the bedrock at its inner end, though no clear evidence was found for this.

It is unclear whether the timberwork was deliberately dismantled after the landing point became redundant, though this is likely to have been the case given the value of these materials; this is likely to explain why all but the inner section of one of the main bearer timbers and the deeply-buried cross members are the only ones to survive. The platform seems subsequently to have become used by visitors to Tintagel. The bench constructed along its rear edge would have provided a sheltered and accessible spot from which to watch the comings and goings in the Haven.

## **8 Recommendations**

It is unfortunate that a key piece of evidence for one of the industries which characterised Tintagel Harbour has now been lost to coastal erosion, and it is therefore

particularly important that the surviving horse whim platform, winch and strong point masonry on the eastern side of the Haven is appropriately conserved, managed and interpreted.

Nevertheless, the 2016/2017 watching brief has enabled some otherwise unrecorded aspects of this type of structure to be archaeologically recorded and better understood, although some uncertainties remain as to why the rock cut detail of this particular site proved to be more complex than had been anticipated. It may be that these reflect a remodelling of the site during a period when it sited different equipment, or it may simply reflect adaptation to the local topography and geology when constructing the cliff-edge platform. Unfortunately too much detail was lost during the 2016 cliff fall and the available photographs of this feature are insufficiently detailed to allow CAU to determine whether or not this was the case.

## 9 References

### 9.1 Primary sources

Ordnance Survey, c1880. 25 Inch Map First Edition (licensed digital copy at CAU)

Ordnance Survey, c1907. 25 Inch Map Second Edition (licensed digital copy at CAU)

Ordnance Survey, MasterMap Topography

### 9.2 Publications

Craze, N, 2003. *Tintagel Regeneration Project*, Cornwall, Archaeological Assessment 2003R047, Cornwall County Council

Sharpe, A, 1990. *Coastal Slate Quarries Tintagel to Trebarwith*, Archaeological Survey for the National Trust, Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall County Council, Report 1990R023

Sturgess, J, 2004. *Tintagel Haven Slate Works*, Cornwall, Historic Building Survey 2004R079, Historic Environment Service (Projects) Cornwall County Council

Thomas, C, 1993. *Tintagel, Arthur and Archaeology*: English Heritage, London

### 9.3 Websites

<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/> Online database of Sites and Monuments Records, and Listed Buildings

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringgeology/geologyofbritain/viewer.html?src=topNav>  
British Geological Survey Geology of Britain Viewer

## 10 Project archive

The CAU project number is **146648**

The project's documentary, digital, photographic and drawn archive is maintained by Cornwall Archaeological Unit

Black & White Images GBP 2396

Drawings GRE 870

Electronic data is stored in the following locations:

Project admin: \\ Sites\\Sites T\\Tintagel Haven WB\\Project Docs

Digital photographs: \\Historic Environment (Images)\\ Sites Q-T\\ Tintagel \\Tintagel Cliff Collapse 2016

Electronic drawings: \\Historic Environment (CAD)\\Tintagel Haven Cliff 2016\\Scans

Historic England/ADS OASIS online reference: cornwall2-272747

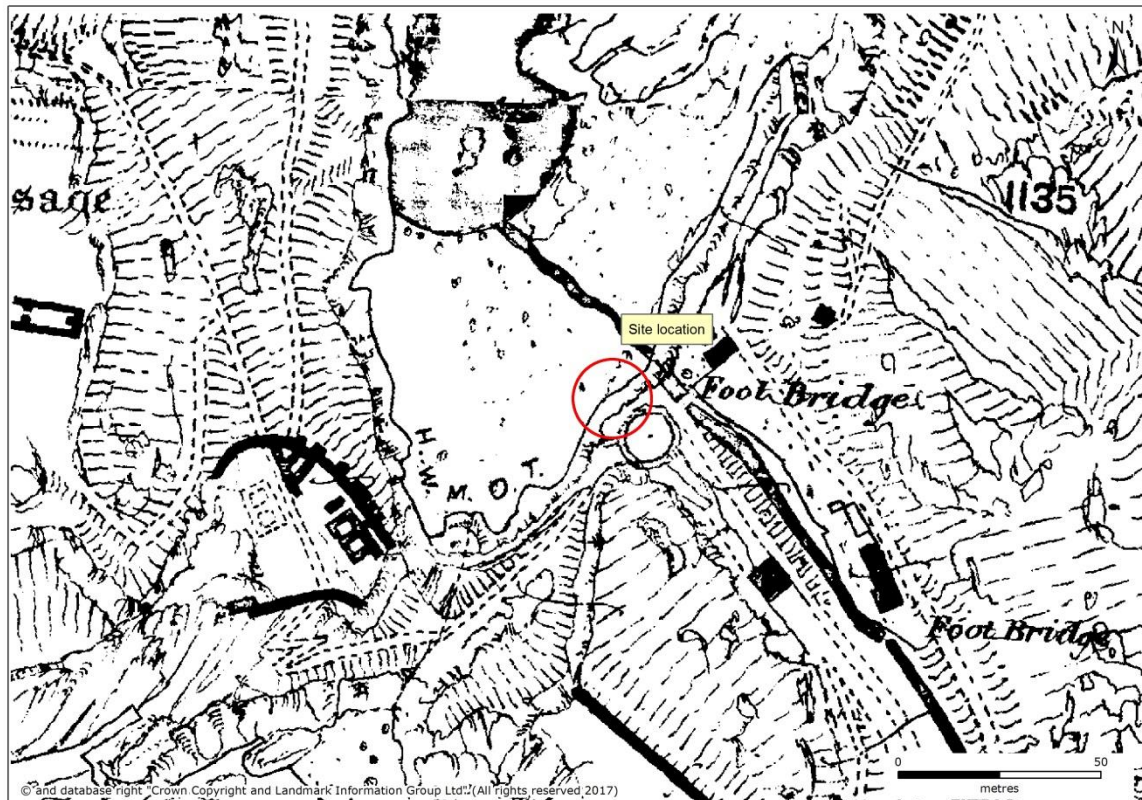


Fig 3. First Edition of the Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Map, c1880. Note the circular horse whim platform on the clifftop immediately to the south. The site appears disused at this date.

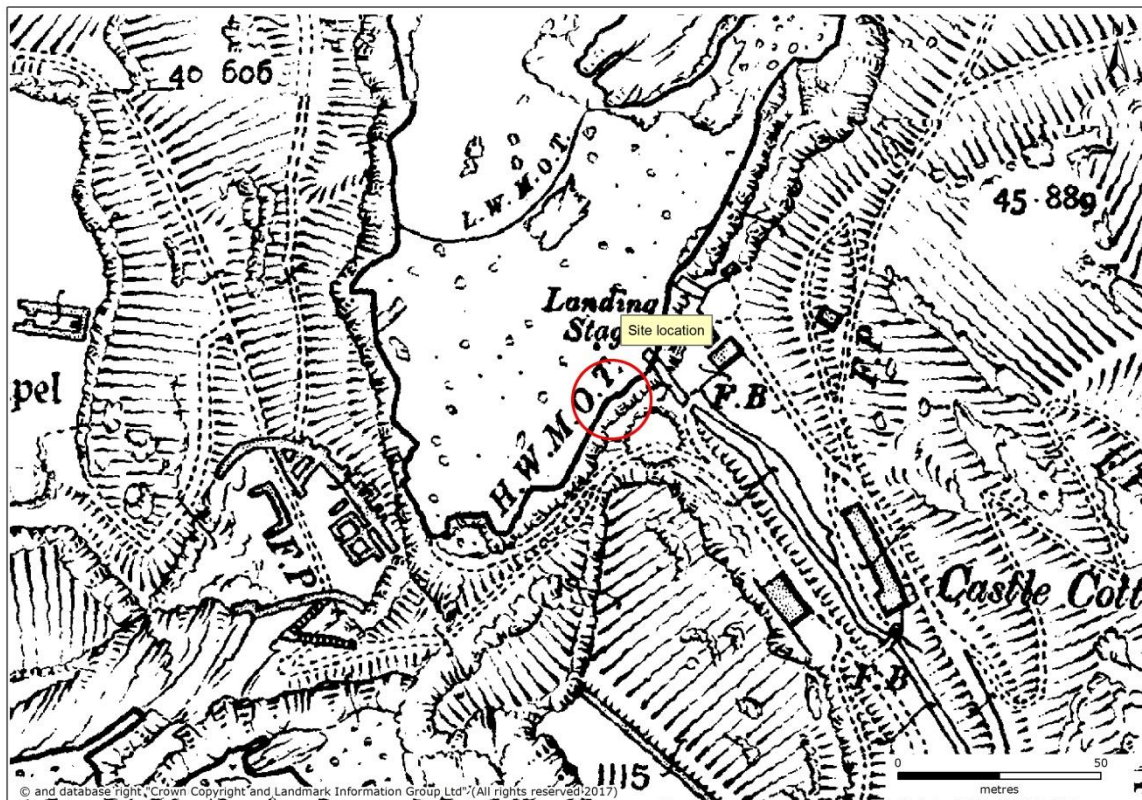
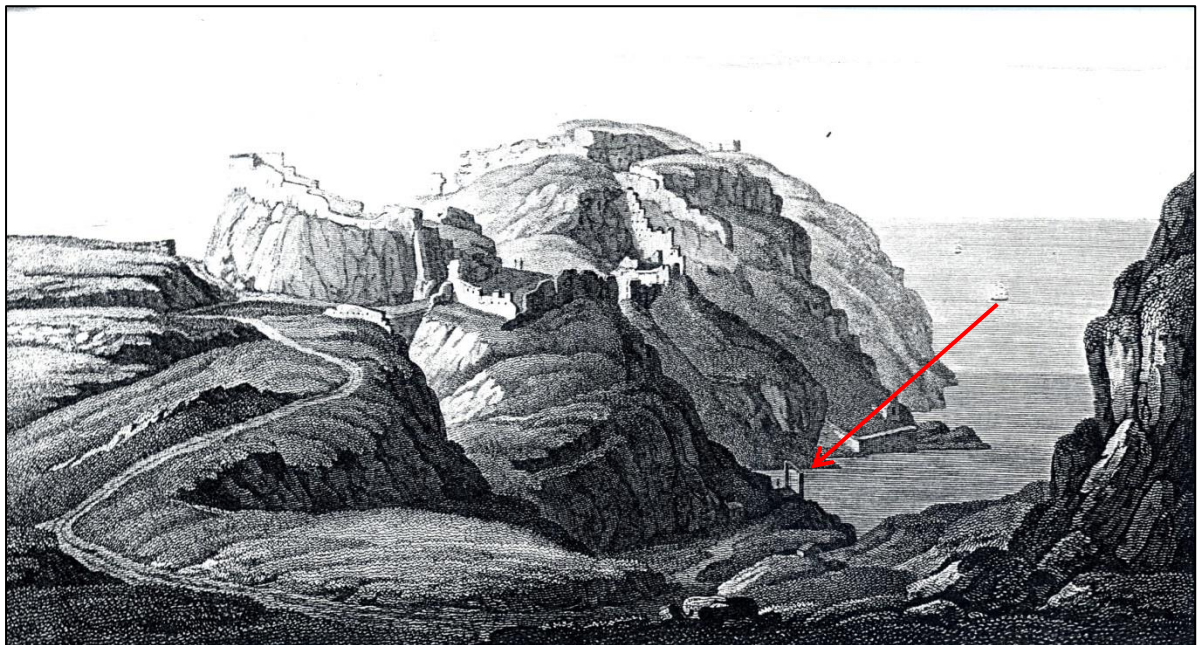


Fig 4. Second Edition of the Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Map, c1907. The site is clearly disused, the horse whim being crossed by a track.



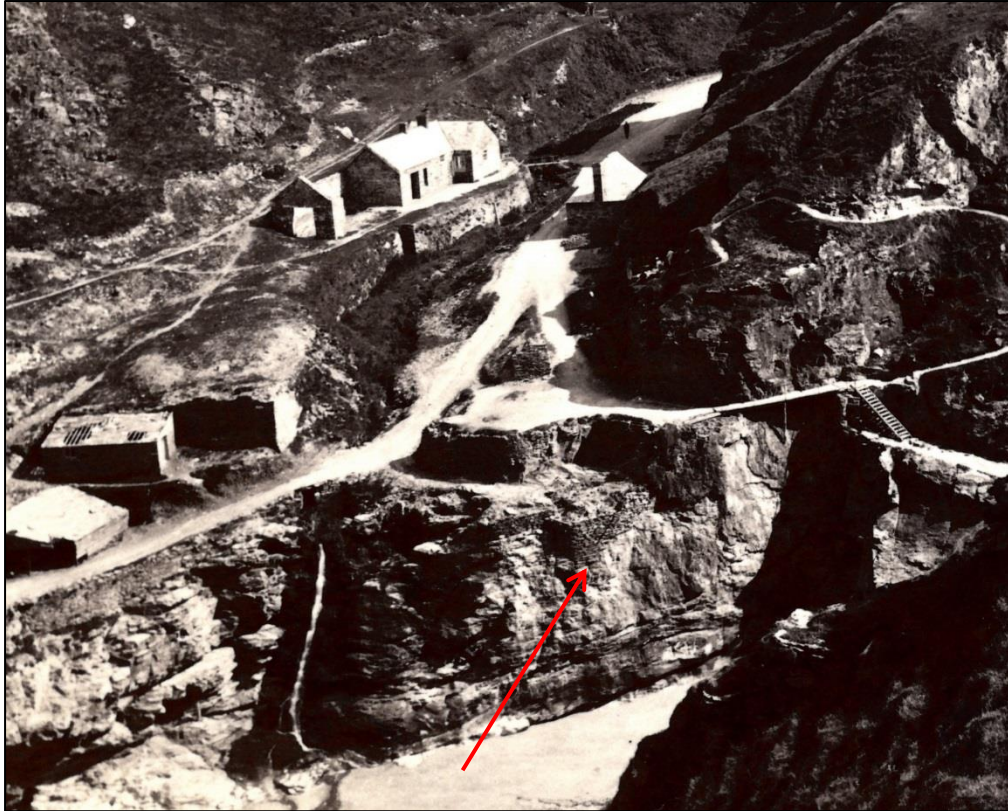


*Fig 5. A 2005 aerial image showing the location of the site. The associated horse whim platform can be seen to have been obliterated during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.*



*Fig 6. An undated but probably early 19<sup>th</sup> century engraving showing a tall cliff-edge timber frame at the location of the loading point (arrowed). © Charles Thomas Archive.*





*Fig 7. An extract from a late 19<sup>th</sup> century postcard of Tintagel Haven showing (arrowed) the cliff edge walling. © Charles Thomas Archive.*



*Fig 8. A 2004 CAU view of the remains of the cliff edge walling following its netting (arrowed). The other intact horse whim plat can clearly be seen on the left.*





*Fig 9. A 2004 image of the netted remains of the strong point walling taken from the beach below.*



*Fig 10. View looking north east from Tintagel Island showing the extent of the collapse (arrowed), this having removed all of the remaining sections of the former strong point.*



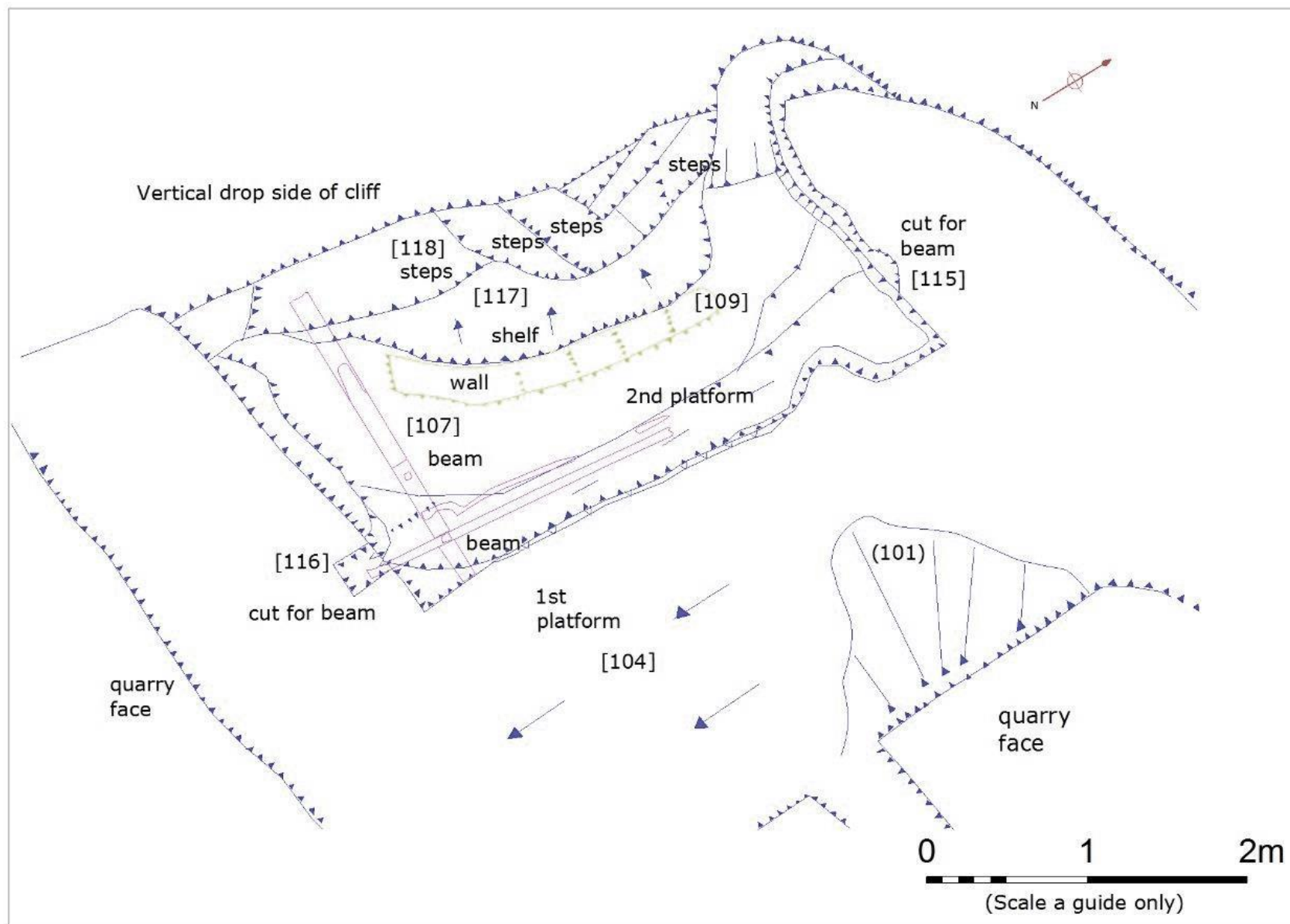


Fig 11. As excavated plan of site (scale as a guide only)





Fig 12. The site prior to its excavation, looking north west. The collapsed walling formerly revetted this (originally more extensive) platform on its seaward side.



Fig 13. Buried wall [109] near the cliff edge, 0.5m scale looking north.





*Fig 14. Looking down onto the surviving wooden beam and cross member in situ (1m and 0.5m scales).*



*Fig 15. Vertical Technology staff clearing steps cut into the cliff face.*





Fig 16.1 The south-facing section of the north end of the platform prior to the removal of the last part of the backfilled material, showing the remnants of a possible wall and quarried face (1m scale).



Fig 17. Mid excavation view prior to the removal of the material covering the north end of the platform (1m scale).



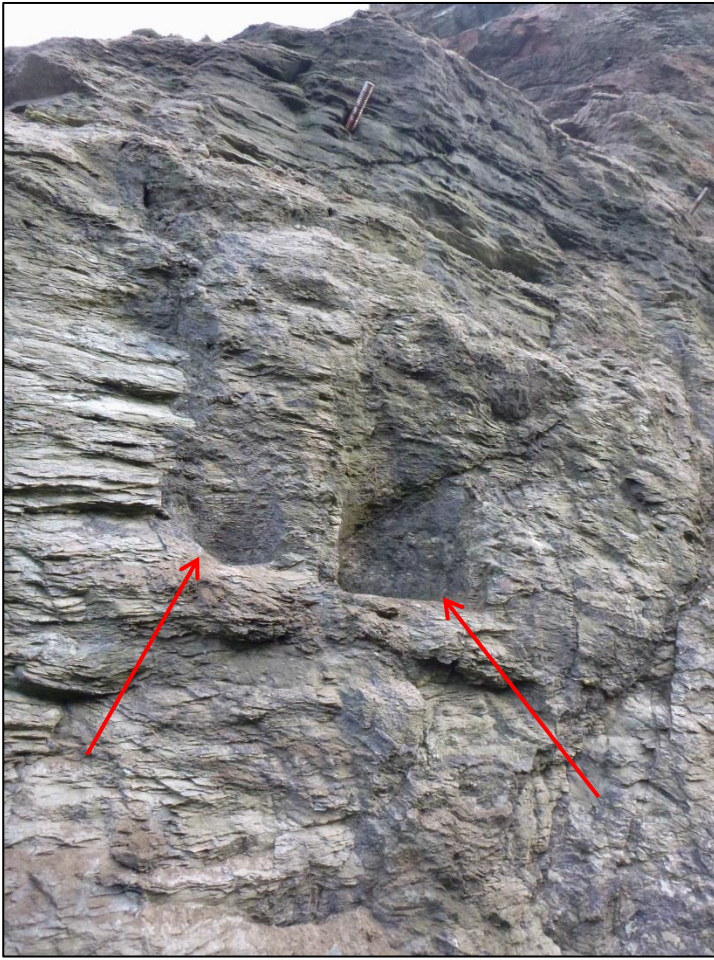


*Fig 18. The north end of the platform cut after the removal of the backfill (1m scale). Note the possible notch in the face (centre).*

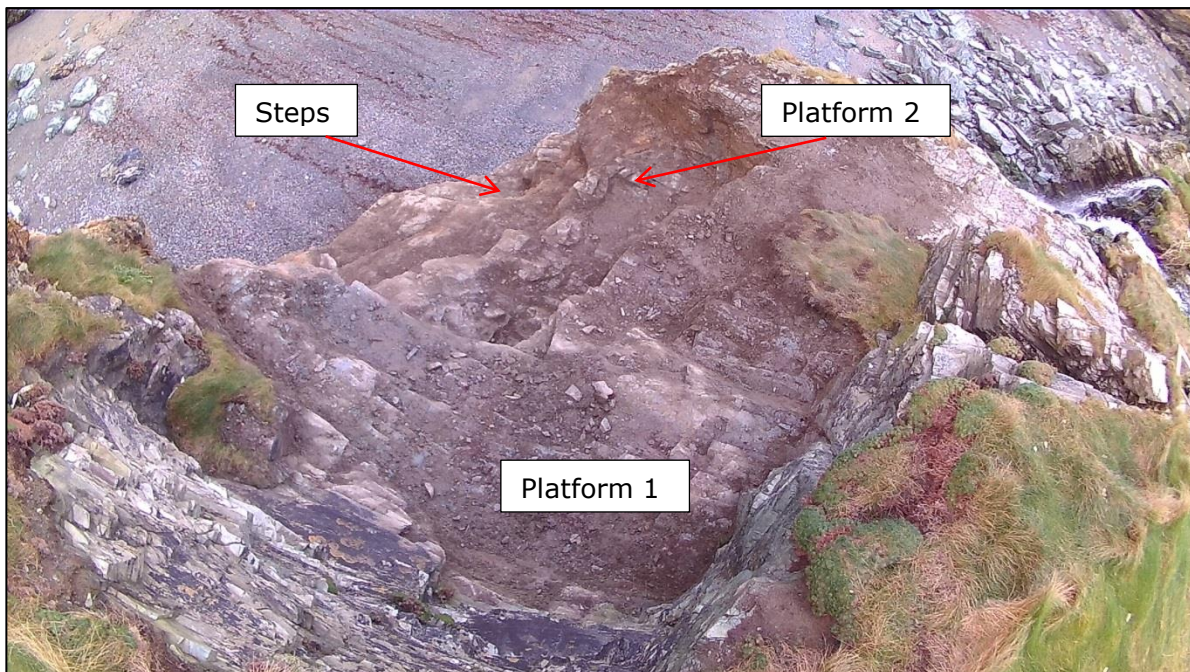


*Fig 19. A vertical view of the stepped area after the final clean up.*





*Fig 20. Two notches cut into the cliff face below the stepped area.*



*Fig 21. A vertical view of the platform following the final clear up of the site.*





*Fig 22. A late 19<sup>th</sup> century view of the Haven from the north showing the horse whim, strong point and timber gantry on the site to the north of that excavated in 2016/17. Its details are likely to have been very similar to that examined during this project. © Charles Thomas Archive.*



*Fig 23. A hand-tinted late 19<sup>th</sup> century postcard showing the northern loading point. © Charles Thomas Archive.*



## **Appendix 2: Written Scheme of Investigation**

**Cornwall Archaeological Unit,  
Cornwall Council**



### **Tintagel Haven, Cornwall: Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological watching brief during cliff edge stabilisation works**

Client: English Heritage Trust  
Client contact: Matthew Brooke  
Client tel: 01179 750738  
Client email: Matthew.Brooke@english-heritage.org.uk

### **Project background**

Cornwall Archaeological Unit (CAU) was contacted by Matthew Brooke of English Heritage on 3 November 2016 with a request for a cost schedule and associated method statement for undertaking an archaeological watching brief during stabilisation works to an area of the cliff face at Tintagel Haven which has recently experienced significant instability. The area is at the location of a rock-cut platform covered by built up levelling material which, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, sited a derrick or windlass used for loading/unloading small ships on the beach. The material involved was almost certainly locally-quarried slate. This feature has been unstable for some years and a section of its retaining wall had been netted and rock anchored for the safety of visitors using the beach below. It was recently noted that sections of the wall had become very unstable and the netting was released to allow the unstable material to fall to the beach. The cliff fall revealed that the platform had been constructed of levelled, built-up material over sloping bedrock.

In order to stabilise this feature for the future safety of beach users English Heritage proposed either raking back the loose slumped material over its 4.5m length along the cliff face to a stable angle of repose or removing all loose material down to bedrock. As the fill materials making up the surface of the winch platform are up to 3m in depth and nearly 8m in width a considerable amount of made-up material will need to be removed. English Heritage's engineers have recommended the complete removal of the fill materials. This is known to incorporate at least one original slate wall, and may conceal other, earlier features which will, of necessity, be removed during the stabilisation works, and which will also need to be recorded as a result. The source of the fill material is uncertain, but it is known that previous cliff falls within this area have produced post-Roman artefactual material, presumably displaced into redeposited material. A site meeting took place on 10 November between Matt Brooke and Matt Ward from English Heritage, Chris Flewitt from Vertical Technology (a specialised rope access contractor working in the south-west which has previously undertaken work for English Heritage on the cliffs at Tintagel) and Archaeologist Ryan Smith from CAU. A rope inspection was undertaken by Vertical Technology and its results and a proposed mitigation strategy were discussed.

It is proposed by English Heritage that the excavation work (i.e. the removal of the fill) will be undertaken by Vertical Technology. CAU has been asked to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the works to record the results of the controlled excavation and to recover any artefacts from the excavated spoil as practically as possible by controlled spit and/or context. Vertical Technology will provide a safety tether so that the CAU Archaeologist can view the ongoing works, as well as potentially descend to the excavation site to record any preserved walling or other related features of historic interest. Following the removal of the turf for re-use, the excavation spoil will be placed into one tonne Dumpy bags at the top of the cliff face, whose contents will be checked for artefacts by the CAU Archaeologist and bagged as stratified finds as feasible. The material will subsequently be used by English Heritage for footpath remediation elsewhere on the Tintagel site.

This Written Scheme for Investigation (WSI) outlines the aims and objectives and methods for the proposed watching brief to be undertaken during the excavation works. As the works will be subject to Scheduled Monument Consent, the WSI will need to be approved by the Inspector of Monuments, Historic England.

## **Project extent**

The project area is as shown on the plan and photograph included within this WSI, the site being centred at SX 05158 89037.

## **Aims and objectives**

No specific brief has been produced which covers the aims and objectives of this watching brief, though the WSI has been guided by advice provided by the client.

The site specific aims are to:

- Establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains and record features which will be removed during the works and those to which they relate which will be left *in situ*.
- Determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains encountered.
- Retrieve and identify any artefacts relating to the occupation or use of this part of the Tintagel site.
- Provide further information on the archaeology of Tintagel from the archaeological remains encountered.

The project objective is to produce a report setting out the results of the archaeological watching brief and placing them in their historical and landscape context. A further objective is to create an entry to the Historic England OASIS/ADS national online database of archaeological projects.

## **Working methods**

All recording work will be undertaken according to the Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording*. Staff will follow the CIfA *Code of Conduct* and *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Archaeology*. The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists is the professional body for archaeologists working in the UK.

### **Fieldwork: watching brief**

The CAU Archaeologist will be on site during the stripping of the material to be removed from the winch platform at Tintagel Haven.

The excavation work will be undertaken by employees of Vertical Technology using a safe working system employing rope access technology. Following the removal and

recovery of the turf for re-use, the underlying fills should be excavated in horizontal spits. The CAU Archaeologist will be provided with a secure rope tether set up by Vertical Technology and will be instructed in its safe use. This will enable the Archaeologist to observe and record the work from a safe location at the top of the cliff or other suitable location. The CAU Archaeologist will also be provided with a safe means of accessing the platform to undertake the recording of walling or other features should these be exposed during the excavation work, and will be given training in the use of the rope access system. The rope access system will be set up and supervised by Vertical Technology.

The area to be excavated will be periodically inspected by the CAU Archaeologist and any archaeological features or layers exposed will be recorded by written description, plan, section and photographic record as appropriate (subject to safety considerations).

The fill materials transferred to the clifftop following their excavation will be examined to ensure the recovery of any artefacts for further study and analysis.

If complex and/or significant archaeological deposits are encountered then the archaeological requirements will need to be reviewed by the client, the Inspector of Monuments, HE, and CAU. Any significant archaeological remains which are uncovered during the removal of the fills should be subjected to an appropriate level of archaeological recording. The significance of the remains will need to be agreed between CAU, the client and the Inspector of Monuments and a way forwards for consolidation (if appropriate) would also require agreement.

The detailed archaeological recording will include:

- The recording (either whole or in part) of archaeological features exposed in the excavated area and accurately plotting their locations and extents onto a base map.
- Production of plans and section drawings of the excavated features and their recording using a continuous numbering system (subject to safety considerations).
- Retrieval of artefacts, listing and cataloguing

#### Recording - general

Site drawings (plans, sections, locations of finds) will be made by pencil (4H) on drafting film; all plans will be linked to the Ordnance Survey MasterMap; all drawings will include standard information: site details, personnel, date, scale, north-point and location.

Sections will normally be drawn at 1:10 and plans at 1:20.

All archaeological contexts will be described to a standard format linked to a continuous numbering sequence.

Drawings and photographs will be recorded in a register giving details of feature number and location.

#### Treatment of finds

The archaeological fieldwork may produce artefactual material.

All finds in significant stratified contexts predating 1800 AD (e.g., settlement features) will be collected and described. Post medieval or modern finds may be disposed of at the cataloguing stage. This process will be reviewed ahead of its implementation.

All finds will be collected in sealable plastic bags which will be labelled immediately with the identifier details. As the area will not be excavated archaeologically by context, efforts will be made to determine the area from which any artefacts incorporated within the deposits are revealed during the excavation process and the depth at which they are found. This will be recorded on a base map and in the finds register. All other

artefacts will be treated as deriving from a single bulk context, unless it proves possible to identify sub-contexts during the excavation of the fill material.

### **Fieldwork: photographic recording**

Archive quality photographic recording will be based on black and white photographs using a 35mm camera on fine grain archive quality film;

Colour photography using a digital SLR camera (with a resolution of 10 million pixels or higher) will be used to produce images for the archive report.

CAU follows Historic England guidance on digital image capture and file storage (2014).

The photo record will comprise:

- General views of the site and the excavation process.
- Archaeological detail.

#### *General*

- Photography will include both general and feature specific photographs.
- Detailed photographs will, where possible, include a metric scale.
- The archive standard photographs will be accompanied by a register detailing as a minimum the feature number, location, and direction of shot.
- Photographs of details will be taken with lenses of appropriate focal length.
- A tripod will be used to take advantage of slower exposures.

### **Creation of site archive**

An ordered and cross-referenced site archive will be produced. Site plans, photographs and other records will be completed and indexed, and any artefacts retrieved will be washed and marked (where appropriate) and catalogued.

A Historic England /ADS OASIS online archive index will be created at this stage of the project.

### **Archive report**

The results from the watching brief will be presented in a concise report. Copies of the report will be distributed to the Client, the Development Officer (Historic Environment) and the local and main archaeological record libraries. A PDF copy of the report will be produced.

This will involve:

- producing a descriptive text;
- producing maps and line drawings;
- selecting photographs;
- report design;
- report editing;
- dissemination of the finished report
- Deposition of archive and finds.

The report will have the following contents:

- Summary - Concise non-technical summary.
- Introduction - Background, objectives, aims and methods.
- Results - Factual description of the results of the various aspects of the project, with separate sections as necessary for



discussion/interpretation and potential for further analysis.

- Discussion
  - Discussion of the interpretation of the results, highlighting information gained on a chronological or thematic basis.
  - Recommendations for further archaeological recording.
  - Recommendations for any further analysis and publication.
- Archive
  - A brief summary and index to the project archive.
- References
  - Sources referred to in text.
- Appendix
  - A copy of the WSI.
  -
- Illustrations
  - General location plan.
  - Detailed location plans to link fieldwork results to OS map.
  - Selected plans and section drawings (where appropriate).
  - Finds drawings (if appropriate).
  - Photographs.

### **Assessment/analysis**

In the event that significant archaeological remains are uncovered, the structural and stratigraphic data and artefactual material will be assessed to establish whether further analyses and reporting are appropriate. The form of the final report, and the work required to produce it will be determined in an updated project design.

In the event of significant remains being recovered (e.g. prehistoric or medieval sites or associated artefacts or potentially significant palaeoenvironmental deposits) it may be necessary to:

- Consult with the Inspector of Monuments over the detailed requirements for assessment, analysis and reporting.
- Liaise with specialists (e.g. artefacts, material suitable for scientific analysis or dating) to arrange for assessment of the potential for further analysis and reporting.
- Arrange for specialist analyses, where appropriate.

### **Final publication**

In the event of significant archaeological remains being recorded the scope and final form of the report will be reviewed; for example in addition to an archive report the results should be published in an academic journal (e.g. *Cornish Archaeology*).

### **Archive deposition**

An index to the site archive will be created and the archive contents prepared for long term storage, in accordance with CAU standards.

The archiving will comprise the following:

- All correspondence relating to the project, the WSI, a single paper copy of the report together with an electronic copy on CD, stored in an archive standard (acid-free) documentation box;
- A2 drawn archive storage (plastic wallets for the annotated record drawings);
- Archive standard negative holders and archive print holders, to be stored in the CAU system until transferred to the Royal Cornwall Museum.
- Digital images filed according to Cornwall HER requirements.

The project archive will be deposited initially at ReStore PLC, Liskeard and in due course (when space permits) at Cornwall Record Office.

## **Timetable**

It is anticipated that the watching brief will commence during the Winter of 2016/2017. CAU will require adequate notice before commencement of work in order to allocate field staff time and arrange other logistics.

The archive report will be completed within 3 months of the end of the fieldwork. The deposition of the archive will be completed within 3 months of the completion of the archive report.

## **Monitoring and Signing Off Condition**

Monitoring of the project will be carried out by the Historic England Inspector of Monuments. The Inspector of Monuments will monitor the work and will be kept regularly informed of progress.

1. Notification of the start of work shall be given preferably in writing at least one week in advance of its commencement.
2. Any variations to the WSI will be agreed with the Inspector of Monuments prior to them being carried out.
3. If significant detail is discovered, all works must cease and a meeting convened with the client and the Inspector of Monuments to discuss the most appropriate way forward.

Monitoring points during the study will include:

- Approval of the WSI
- Completion of fieldwork
- Completion of archive report
- Deposition of the archive

## **Cornwall Archaeological Unit**

Cornwall Archaeological Unit is part of Cornwall Council. CAU employs 20 project staff with a broad range of expertise, undertaking around 120 projects each year.

CAU is committed to conserving and enhancing the distinctiveness of the historic environment and heritage of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly by providing clients with a number of services including:

- Conservation works to sites and monuments
- Conservation surveys and management plans
- Historic landscape characterisation
- Town surveys for conservation and regeneration
- Historic building surveys and analysis
- Maritime and coastal zone assessments
- Air photo mapping
- Excavations and watching briefs
- Assessments and evaluations
- Post-excavation analysis and publication
- Outreach: exhibitions, publication, presentations

## **Standards**



CAU is a Registered Organisation with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and follows their Standards and Code of Conduct.

<http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa>

## **Terms and conditions**

### **Contract**

CAU is part of Cornwall Council. If accepted, the contract for this work will be between the client (the English Heritage Trust) and Cornwall Council.

The views and recommendations expressed will be those of CAU and will be presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

### **Project staff**

Archaeologists employed by CAU, who are members of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), and are experienced in this type of project, will carry out the archaeological fieldwork.

The report will be compiled by experienced archaeologists employed by CAU.

Relevant experienced and qualified specialists will be employed to undertake appropriate tasks during the assessment and analysis stages of the project.

Project assurance will be overseen by CAU Principal Archaeologist Jacky Nowakowski MCIfA.

The project will be managed by CAU Archaeology Projects Officer Adam Sharpe who is a Member of the CIfA, Adam will:

- Take responsibility for the overall direction of the project.
- Discuss and agree the objectives and programme of each stage of the project with project staff, including arrangements for Health and Safety.
- Monitor progress and results for each stage.
- Edit the project report.

### **Copyright**

Copyright of all material gathered as a result of the project will be reserved to Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall Council. Existing copyrights of external sources will be acknowledged where required.

Use of the material will be granted to the client.

### **Freedom of Information Act**

As Cornwall Council is a public authority it is subject to the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which came into effect from 1st January 2005.

CAU will ensure that all information arising from the project shall be held in strict confidence to the extent permitted under the Act. However, the Act permits information to be released under a public right of access (a "Request"). If such a Request is received CAU may need to disclose any information it holds, unless it is excluded from disclosure under the Act.

## **Health and safety statement**

CAU follows Cornwall Council's *Statement of Safety Policy*.

Prior to carrying out on-site work CAU will carry out a Risk Assessment. Site safety arrangements will be overseen by Vertical Technology, who will establish safe systems for work during the project.

## **Insurance**

CAU is covered by Cornwall Council's Public and Employers Liability Insurance, with a policy value of £50m. The Council also has Professional Negligence insurance with a policy value of £10m.

*Adam Sharpe BA MCIfA*

*Archaeology Projects Officer*

*22 November 2016*

## **Cornwall Archaeological Unit**

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*Fal Building, County Hall,*

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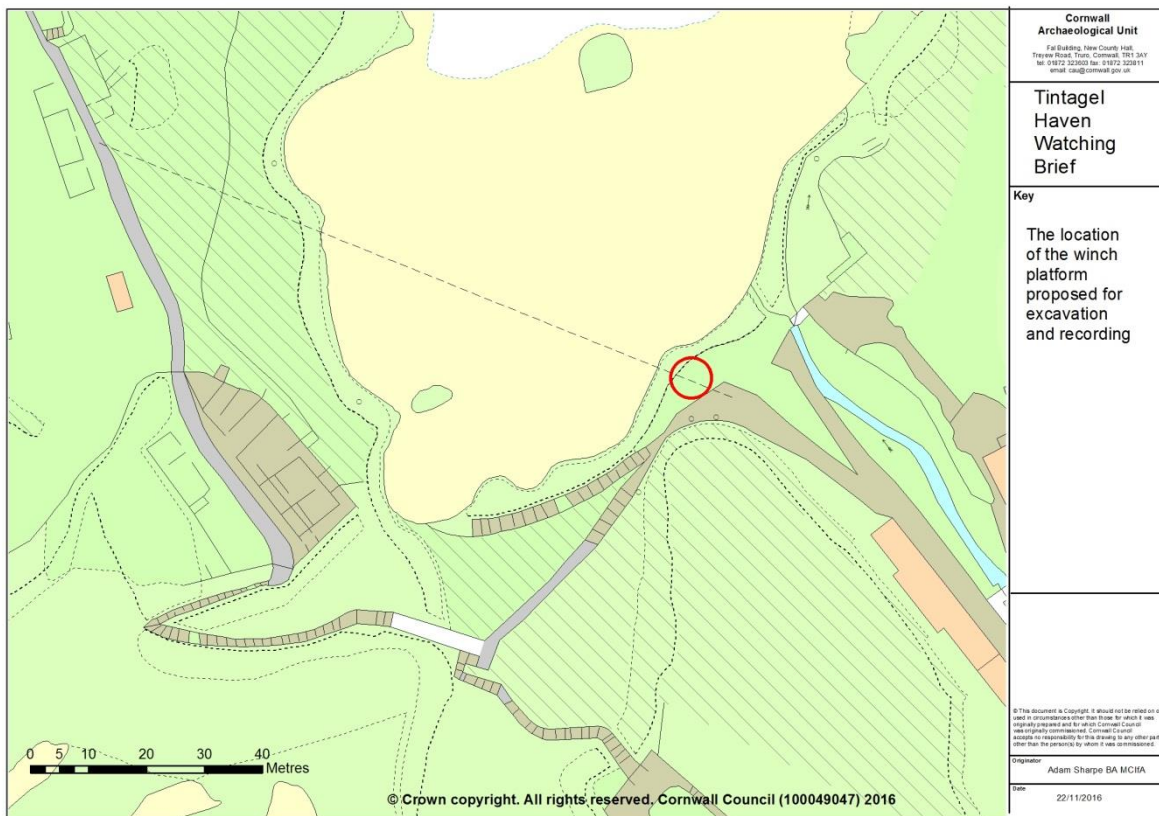


Fig 1. The location of the winch platform at Tintagel Haven.



Fig 2. A view of the area to be excavated from the north-west.

## Appendix 3: Table of contexts

Context Number	Description
(101)	Topsoil, a mid to dark brown soil very fine in appearance mixed in with a loam, 0.1m – 0.2m in depth, varying on location within the platform. Contained modern refuse of crisp packets, ring pulls etc. along with some pieces of metal from a metal fence still in situ on the north eastern side of the site.
[102]	A low wall sat on top of a shillet base, the wall approximately 4m in length, less than 0.4m wide, composed of three courses of stone, comprising slate slabs, 0.4m wide, averaging 0.4m long and 0.05m thick, the stones were bonded by an earth and shillet mix. The wall formed an inverted crescent and appeared to be more decorative than having any industrial purpose. The base of the wall did not touch the bedrock.
(103)	A mid to dark brown with grey earth/shillet mix used as a bonding agent for wall 102.
[104]	Rock cut platform number 1. Clearly visible on the surface, this is the upper part of a platformed feature cut into the side of the cliff, having two walls or faces the north face approximately 5.17m long and the south face over 6m in length (stops on the cliff edge), the north face is over 2.2m in height, while the south face exceeds 2.7m in height. The faces are irregular in shape clearly as a result of their being excavated into bedrock. On removal of (101) the bedrock was revealed showing that the stone sloped downward to the south west and was uneven.
(105)	Upper fill on the surface of 104, a shillet/clay/soil mix, depth no more than 0.2m underneath (101), easy to trowel loose material sits on top of the bedrock.
(106)	Main fill, this is the same as (105) but appears to be cleaner, no rubbish or waste material within the upper parts of the layer; the layer is about 1.1m in depth and sits on bedrock on the lower of the rock cut platforms. Looser toward the base, and appeared to be coming away from the rock face as it was excavated within the cut of the lower platform.
[107]	Rock cut platform number 2. Revealed as the excavation progressed, this quarried area had three faces, north, south and east faces, the western side overlooking and open to the sea. Over 4m in length varying due to the unevenness of the face, the sides also varied in height from about 1.1 – 1.3m in height.
(108)	Soil fill near the cliff edge to the north, a mid-brown loose loam but also contained some clay toward the edge of the cliff, no more than 0.2m deep, appeared to be imported material; clean and devoid of any beach stones or rubbish.
[109]	Wall near cliff: Possible remnants of an inner wall sitting on the lower platform, comprised of at least three courses of stone, larger slate blocks at least 0.4m wide, 0.5m long, 0.05m – 0.1m thick, not very cohesive structurally as a wall. Shillet/soil mix appears to be the binding agent.

[110]	Rock cut ledges: these are located below and to the seaward side of platform number 2, a series of steps or ledges cut into the cliff face, probably ledges used to provide the foundations for the construction of the outer wall. At their widest the ledges were over 1m wide and 0.5m long; they were irregular heights but each was at least 0.15m high.
[111]	Wooden Beam: A wooden beam comprised of three pieces of lengths of rectangular shaped wood, located at the south end of platform number 2. The top piece measured 0.7m long and 0.2m wide and 0.1m thick, the second length of wood lying directly under the first, measured 1.47m long, 0.2m wide and 0.1m thick, the wood tapered off at the western end and appeared rotten. The third section lying underneath the second piece of wood was 2m long, 0.2m wide and 0.1m thick, the wood was still recognisably rectangular in shape. All three pieces were joined together by iron bolts, placed through the wood at the east end within 0.1m of the end and 0.6m from the east end. The wooden beam appeared to display tool marks along its sides. The beam was set on a bed of shillet 0.2m thick over the bedrock shelf and was orientated east to west.
[112]	Wooden spar: A length of round section timber, approximately 2.1m long, 0.1m in diameter, this was joined to the top of 111 by an iron bolt. The timber was tapered at the northern end and showing signs of decay. The southern end of the spar was located within a cut into the south face of the wall of platform number 2. Some iron staining and possibly remnants of bolt still within the surface of the spar. This feature was orientated north to south.
[113]	Wooden spar: The remnants of a length of what was originally a round section wood, very poor condition but found lying on top of 111 and orientated north to south.
[114]	Rock cut beam slot: A rectangular shaped cut into the south face of platform number 2, measuring 0.25-0.3m high, 0.3m wide, and 0.4m deep.
[115]	Rock cut beam slot: A circular shaped cut into the north face of platform number 2, measuring 0.3m in diameter, sits above the bedrock floor of the platform. The rock face at this end of the platform is not as solid nor worked in the way that the south face had been.
[116]	Two rebated slots (hitches) in the cliff face, these two rebates have been cut into the actual cliff face and are sited at least one metre below the middle of the rock cut steps, they are not reachable except by rope. The rebate to the south is more obvious with a flat base, and a deep impression within the cliff face, the second slot to the north is no more than 0.5m from the first, appears more shallow.
[117]	Ledge or shelf below rock cut platform no 2, about 1m in width, at its widest point. Sites above [118] the steps cuts into the cliff face.
[118]	Series of steps on the outer edge of the quarry, about 0.4-0.5m wide, longest was 1.5m in length near the top, shortest barely 0.3m. Each steps between 0.1 and 0.2m vertical.

## **Appendix 4: Finds report**

Context	Description
101	Various pieces of pottery/tile and glass, all post medieval in date.
105	Metal pipe, probably associated with the modern fence.
106	Animal jaw bone found 0.5m below the surface of the lower platform, alongside the inner wall remains, possibly associated with an animal burrow.
106	Piece of bottle glass found near the wooden beam.
106	Pieces of badly rusted iron, probably the remains of chain links associated with the derrick.
106	Corroded iron bolts associated with the beam, and found in close proximity to it.



## **Cornwall Archaeological Unit**

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