

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Clyst St George, East Devon Topsham, Exeter	National Grid Reference: SX 9715 8789 SX 9757 8758	Number:
Subject: Archaeological monitoring and recording on the River Clyst to Bowling Green Marsh Road cycle way, Topsham, Devon.		Photo attached: Y
Planning Application no: 07/3208/CM	Recipient museum: Royal Albert Memorial Museum	
OASIS ID: oakforda1-160806	Museum Accession no: RAMM 11/76	
Contractor's reference number/code: OA1025	Dates fieldwork undertaken: September 2012 – August 2013	
<p>Description of works: An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Oakford Archaeology between September 2012 and August 2013 on the River Clyst to Bowling Green Marsh Road cycle way, Topsham, Devon (SX 9715 8789 to SX 9757 8758). The site (Fig. 1) lies in an area of archaeological potential on either side of the River Clyst, in an area immediately south-east of Topsham. Due to its location it was possible that palaeo-environmental deposits may be exposed. Part of the development also lies within land reclaimed from the marshland along the edge of the River Clyst in 1844 and it was possible that the development would expose the remains of a Saltworks and a bowling green. The work was therefore required by the Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET).</p> <p>A watching brief was maintained during works associated with the construction of a new cycle path and bridge (Fig. 1). The topsoil stripping for the cycle path adjacent to the access at Topsham was monitored in September 2012. This covered an area 100m long and 28m wide, extending to a depth of 0.5m. The works for the new bridge and boardwalk were monitored between May and August 2013. The southern abutment was 6m x 3m x 1.5m, and the southern pier base 8m x 8m x 2.5m., while the northern pier base was 6m x 6m x 2.5m and the northern abutment was 6m x 6m x 1.5m. Elsewhere the route of the cycleway was constructed on a raised boardwalk supported on piles close to the railway embankment.</p> <p>Results: Inspection of the exposed area adjacent to the access at Topsham showed little evidence of archaeological activity. It contained a 0.15m thick dark brown silty clay loam topsoil (1000), overlying a mid reddish brown clay natural subsoil (1001). A single linear feature (Fig. 2) aligned approximately E-W was exposed by the works. This probable ditch was 2.85m wide and 0.3m deep. It had gently breaking sides and a flat base, the sides showing distinct evidence of weathering over time. Although no finds were recovered from its single dark greyish brown silty clay fill (203), the location of this feature equates with a drainage ditch shown on the 1890 OS map (Fig. 3).</p> <p>The excavation of the bridge piers revealed a sequence of estuarine clays. Underneath 0.6m of tenacious mid brown silty clay (1009) was a 0.8m thick dark greyish-black layer of tenacious silty clay (1010) containing frequent marine shells. Below this was a clean mid to dark grey silty clay deposit (1011) containing rare marine shells. The alluvial deposits exposed showed no sign of lamination, suggesting thick homogenous tidal river/flood deposits with limited environmental potential. No archaeological artefacts were recovered from these.</p> <p>Work on the northern bridge abutment and boardwalk identified 0.15m thick dark brown silty clay loam topsoil (1000), overlying a 0.4m thick mid reddish brown silty clay reclamation deposit (1006). This was in turn overlying a dark grey silty clay alluvial deposit (1007). Work on the southern abutment identified a 0.3m thick mid reddish brown silty clay loam topsoil (1002), overlying a mid red silty clay made ground (1003) to a depth of 1.5m below current ground level.</p>		

Conclusion:

No early archaeological features or deposits were exposed, with a single 19th century drainage ditch uncovered at the northern end of the site. The works also identified a thick layer above the alluvium which almost certainly represents a deposit of made ground associated with the reclaiming of the ground in 1844.

Project archive and OASIS entry

The site records have been compiled into a fully integrated site archive which is currently held at Oakford Archaeology's offices under project number 1025, pending deposition with the Royal Albert Memorial Museum. A summary of the investigations has been submitted to the on-line archaeological database OASIS (Online Access to the Index of archaeological InterventionS).

Recorder:

MFR Steinmetzer (Oakford Archaeology)

Date sent to HER:

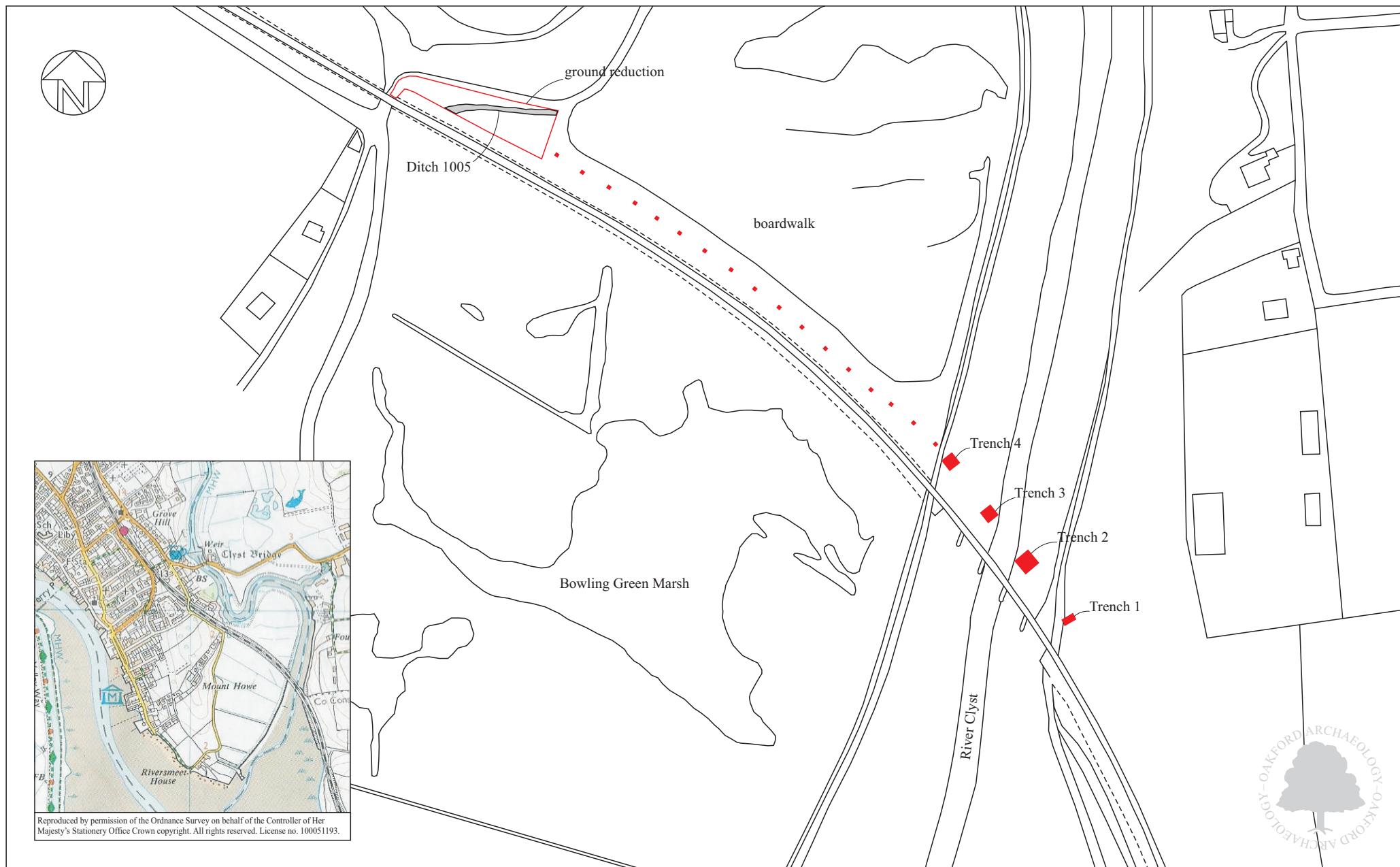


Fig. 1 Location of site showing location of observations.

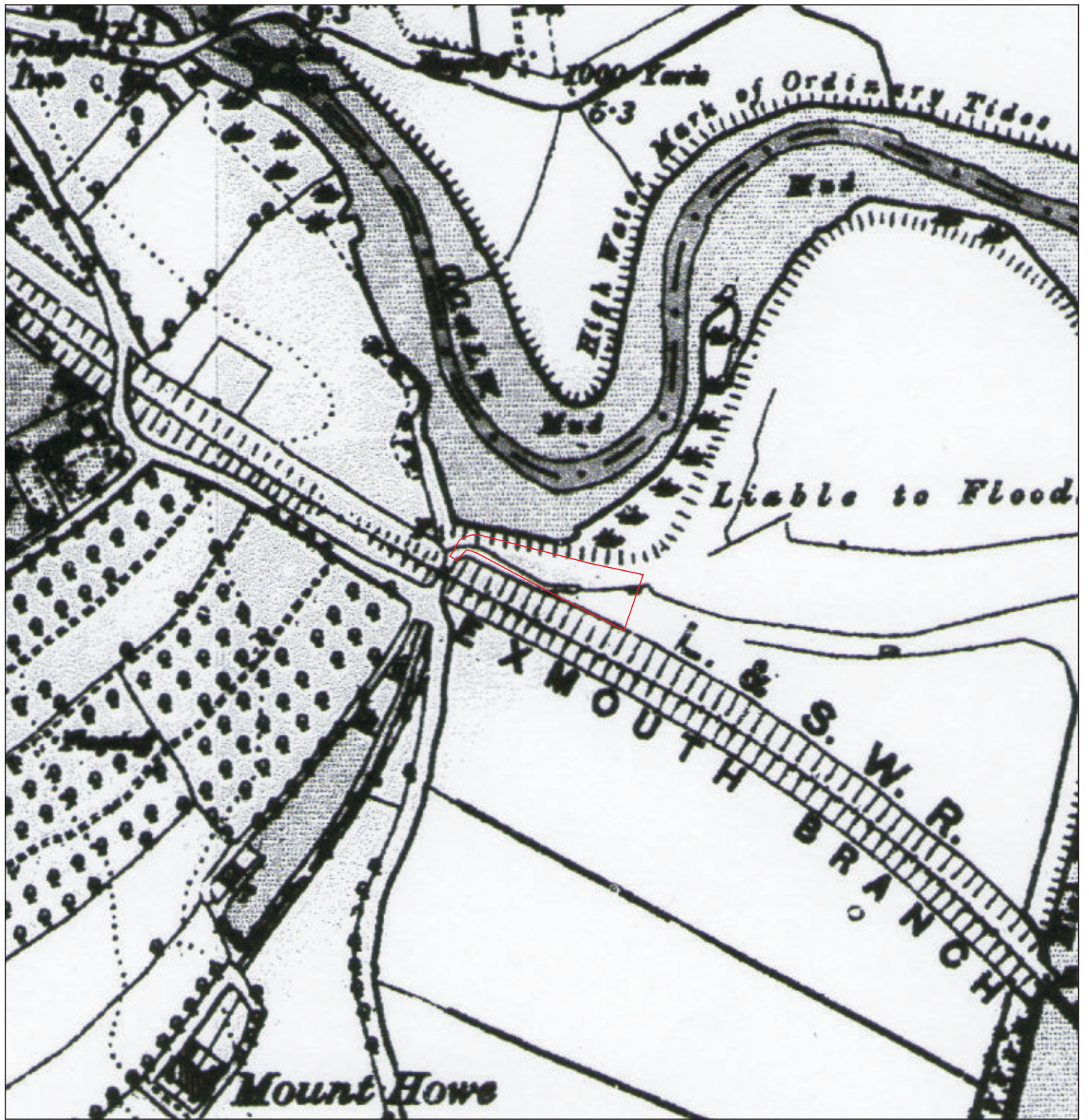


Fig. 2 The site area in 1890 showing the 6 inch 1st edition OS map Devonshire Sheet 92.NE.



Pl. 1 General view of Ditch [1005]. Looking west. 1m scale.



Pl. 2 Section through Ditch [1005]. Looking north-east. 1m scale.



Pl. 3 General view of southern pier base (Trench 2). Looking south-west.



Pl. 4 General view of southern pier base (Tr 2) showing alluvial deposit (1011) and northern pier base (Tr 3) in background. Looking north.



Pl. 5 General view of northern abutment (Trench 4), showing other interventions (Trenches 1-3) in background. Looking southeast.