

T V A S



SOUTH WEST

**Otterburn Farm, Halwill,
Beaworthy, Devon**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Weale

**Site Code: OSD18/143
(SS 4317 0012)**

Otterburn Farm, Halwill, Beaworthy, Devon

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Armour Heritage Ltd**

by Andrew Weale
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code OSD 18/143

October 2018

Summary

Site name: Otterburn Farm, Halwill, Beaworthy, Devon

Grid reference: SS 4317 0012

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 26-27th September 2018

Project manager: Agata Socha-Paszkwicz

Site supervisor: Andrew Weale

Site code: OSD 18/143

Area of site: c. 0.5ha

Summary of results: The evaluation was carried out as intended. It revealed a number of linear features considered to be field boundaries of post-medieval date. No deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were recorded and the site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at TVAS South West, Taunton and will be deposited at the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon in report form with accession no. NDDMS:17.2018a in due course.

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

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	Steve Preston ✓ 03.10.18

Otterburn Farm, Halwill, Beaworthy, Devon An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andrew Weale

Report 18/143

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Otterburn Farm, Halwill, Beaworthy, Devon EX21 5UG (SS 4317 0012) (Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Sue Farr of Armour Heritage Ltd, Foghamshire Timber Yard, Foghamshire Lane, Trudoxhill, Frome, Somerset BA11 5DG on behalf of Mr D Stevenson of Otterburn Farm, Halwill, Beaworthy, Devon, EX21 5UG

Three separate planning applications have been submitted to Torridge District Council for equestrian facilities comprising the construction of stables and associated works (1/0268/2018/FUL), the construction of a riding arena (manege) with associated works (1/0269/2018/FUL) and the erection of agricultural storage buildings with associated works (1/0689/2018/FUL). For the purposes of the potential impact of the works on archaeological remains, all three applications are being considered together. The applications are subject to a condition which requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and Torridge District Council's policies on archaeology.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Stephen Reed, Senior Historic Environment Officer of the Historic Environment Team Planning, Transportation and Environment, Devon County Council, Torridge District Council's adviser on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Weale and Piotr Wrobel between 26th and 27th September 2018 and the site code is OSD 18/143. The archive is presently held at TVAS South West and will be deposited in report form at the Museum of Barnstable and North Devon with accession No. NDDMS:17.2018a.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located north of Halwill and west of Halwill Junction in western Devon (Fig. 1) and consists of an irregular parcel of land comprising three separate plots over an area of *c* 0.5ha. The majority of the site comprises open agricultural land, with the eastern extent formed by the site of recently demolished outbuildings. The western two thirds of the site comprises part of a large field which is currently pasture. A short length of

trackway defined by hedges and trees is positioned at the approximate south-west corner of the field which provides access to the former farmyard. The buildings of the former farmyard have recently been demolished although virtually all of the area remains under concrete hard standing. The western part of the site is generally flat, lying at elevations of between 181m (western boundary) and 183m (eastern boundary) above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The underlying geology of the site is described (BGS 1974) as Carboniferous Crackington Formation mudstone and siltstone. No superficial deposits are recorded. Running from the south-west to north-east in the locality of the site is an intrusion of Permian Lamprophyre igneous bedrock. A yellow clay was observed in all the trenches throughout the evaluation.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been presented in a desk-based assessment (AH 2018) and geophysical survey (LG 2018). A summary of the results of both reports is provided below.

The site is located within an upland area where several Bronze Age round barrows have been identified. Four Scheduled Monuments are recorded within a 1km radius of the site. These comprise: a wayside cross at Halwill; a churchyard cross at Halwill church; a bowl barrow north-east of Lane End; and, most significantly for the site, another bowl barrow south-west of Lane End. The latter barrow lies some 20m south of the site's southern boundary. Eleven Listed Buildings are also recorded within 1km of the site.

The National Heritage List for England records the nearby barrow as "...an elongated oval mound which measures 27m long from east to west and 25m wide from north to south and is 0.8m high. The ditch, from which material to construct the mound was derived, survives as a 2m wide buried feature. The mound and ditch have been cut by a quarry to the east, which has been partly backfilled". The barrow is known to have been partially excavated by the antiquarian Burnard in 1895. Burnard recorded "A platform of small, flat, fired stones which measured 3.6m long, 1.8m wide and 0.3m high was found at the centre of the mound and this was covered with charcoal and ash. A pit was also found nearby which measured 1.36m long, 1m wide and 1.2m deep. This contained calcined animal bone. Also recovered were a few sherds of Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age pottery and an amber pendant".

Historic map regression and the developmental history of the Site

The 1843 Halwell tithe map and apportionment indicate that all the fields within the Site, and indeed in the surrounding area, were in the almost exclusive whole or part ownership of Sir William Molesworth (1810–

1855), a politician from London whose family seat was located at Pencarrow, near Bodmin, Cornwall. The extant house in the east of the site is recorded as a smithy. An additional house and yard existed within the farmyard area, prior to the recently removed agricultural buildings. A further building, recorded as Houses and Yard, lies in the north eastern part of the site whilst a short lane or trackway runs along the southern boundary. The 1885 Ordnance Survey First Edition illustrates a similar layout to that seen in the title map. The 1906 Ordnance Survey map is the first to identify the nearby round barrow, as a *Tumulus* and already shown to be impacted by the quarrying to the south-east. The roadside building within the Site to the west of the smithy has been extended to the north and a well is illustrated in the northern part of this area.

Geophysical survey

A geophysical survey of the site (LG 2018). showed few potentially archaeological features. Three possible pits showed as sub-oval positive anomalies although these could also relate to deeply buried ferrous responses or geological variation and were considered to have a low archaeological potential. The majority of features were agricultural in origin with former field boundaries, possible drains and numerous ploughing trends detected (Fig. 3).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development.

Specific aims of the projects were to:

- ground truth the results of the recently completed geophysical survey;
- clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the Site that may be impacted by development;
- identify, within the constraints of the evaluation, the date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the site;
- assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits; and to
- produce a report which will present the results of the evaluation in sufficient detail to allow an informed decision to be made concerning the Site's archaeological potential, and inform an archaeological mitigation strategy

Eight trenches were proposed to be excavated, each measuring 25m long and 1.8m wide. These were to be dug using a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds. Where archaeological or palaeoenvironmental remains were exposed, these were to be cleaned by hand, investigated, recorded and sampled to an agreed sampling fraction depending on the

nature and significance of the deposit. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims outlined above, without compromising the integrity of any archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation. A programme of environmental sampling was to take place where sufficiently well stratified subsoil deposits were located. Metal detectors were used to enhance the recovery of metal finds.

Results

Eight trenches were excavated (Fig. 2). Seven of the eight trenches were excavated as planned. The proposed location of Trench 8 fell within an area of a disused silage or slurry pit and farm track which had cut down into underlying geology so was moved north-wards to the nearest area of undisturbed ground. The excavated trenches ranged in length from 23.80m to 26.40m and in depth from 0.30m to 0.41m. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The only possible archaeological features were identified within Trenches 1, 2, 4 and 7. The excavated features, with dating evidence, are summarized in Appendix 2.

Trench 1 (Figs 2 and 4; Pls 1 and 5)

Trench 1 was aligned West – East and was 24.7m long and 0.39m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil, beneath which was Ditch 3. At 4m from the west end of the trench, ditch 3 was slightly curvilinear in plan from south–north to closer to SW–NE, 0.83m wide and a maximum of 0.26m deep. Ditch 3 was filled with light to mid grey brown silty clay (54) with patches of mid yellow clay. Deposit 54 contained a length of iron chain, a horseshoe, an iron hinge and an iron nail. After discussion with Stephen Reed, Senior Historic Environment Officer these were recorded on site and not collected. Ditch 3 cut into the underlying subsoil which was a maximum of 0.12m thick in this area of the trench and overlay natural geology. Ditch 3 is in a similar location and orientation to a geophysical anomaly interpreted as a former field boundary and which may have terminated just to the north of the trench.

Trench 2 (Figs 2 and 4; Pls 2 and 6)

Trench 2 was aligned SW – NE and was 24.70m long and 0.32m in depth. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil, beneath which was Ditch 4. Ditch 4 was linear in plan and was aligned south to north, 1m wide and a maximum of 0.21m deep. Ditch 4 was filled with light to mid grey brown silty clay (55) with patches of mid

yellow clay and contained an iron nail (not retained). Ditch 4 cut into the underlying subsoil which was a maximum of 0.08m thick and overlay natural geology. Ditch 4 appears to be a continuation of ditch 3 from Trench 1 and also would match the line of a geophysical anomaly if extended further south.

Trench 3 (Fig. 2)

Trench 3 was roughly aligned West to East 24.40m in length and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted 0.36m of topsoil overlying a natural geology. The Trench ran along the course of a track from the farm yard and bailing area into the surrounding fields. The track had cut into the underlying natural in a series of deep wheel ruts. The trench depth was deepened to remove as much of the rutting as possible to reveal any deeper archaeological feature. No archaeological finds or features were encountered. The ditch observed in Trenches 1 and 2 did not extend this far south.

Trench 4 (Figs 2 and 4; Pls 3 and 7)

Trench 4 was aligned WSW – ENE and was 23.80m long and 0.37m in depth. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil, beneath which was Ditch 1. Ditch 1 was linear in plan and was aligned almost south to north, and was 1.35m wide and a maximum of 0.18m deep. It was filled with light to mid grey brown silty clay (52) with patches of mid yellow clay. Ditch 1 cut into the underlying natural geology with no subsoil seen in this area of the trench. Ditch 1 is in a similar location and orientation to a geophysical anomaly interpreted as a former field boundary. A modern ceramic land drain was encountered within the topsoil which appeared to follow the same line as Ditch 1 beneath it and may have respected the same field boundary when laid. No archaeological finds were encountered within Trench 4.

Trench 5 (Fig. 2)

Trench 5 was aligned West – East and was 26.40m long and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil overlying natural geology with no subsoil. The geophysical anomaly recorded as possibly agricultural origin was a modern deep land drain. No archaeological finds or features were encountered.

Trench 6 (Fig. 2)

Trench 6 was aligned West – East and was 26.00m long and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil overlying natural geology with no subsoil. The geophysical anomaly recorded as a former field boundary was a modern deep land drain. No archaeological finds or features were encountered.

Trench 7 (Figs 2 and 4; Pls 4 and 8)

Trench 7 aligned SW – NE was 26.20m long and 0.34m in depth. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil, beneath which was 0.04m of subsoil. Beneath the subsoil (51) was Ditch 2. It was linear in plan with a rounded terminal end and it appeared to be aligned south to north, 0.76m wide and a maximum of 0.06m deep. Ditch 2 was filled with mid grey yellow silty clay (53). Ditch 2 cut into the underlying natural geology. Ditch 2 may represent a geophysical anomaly recorded as of agricultural origin. No archaeological finds were encountered.

Trench 8 (Fig. 2)

Trench 8 was aligned West – East and was 25.20m long and 0.41m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil beneath which was 0.08m of subsoil and which in turn overlaid natural geology. No archaeological finds or features were encountered..

Finds

Modern metallic items were noted in ditches 3 and 4 but not retained.

Conclusion

The evaluation has successfully investigated the site with an alteration made to the locations of one trench. Of the eight trenches opened, all but trenches 1, 2, 4 and 7 were devoid of features and finds. The ditch identified within Trenches 1 and 2 appears to form a single field boundary which however does not continue into Trench 3 to the south. Finds from each of the excavated sections of this ditch date for the most part to the post-medieval/modern period. This field boundary appears to be shown on the Tithe Map of 1842, the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885 and the 2nd Edition of 1906, but has been removed by the map of 1955. Likewise the ditch in Trench 4 also appears on the same maps and has gone by 1955. All of these cut the subsoil. There is no cartographic evidence corresponding to the possible ditch terminal (2) in Trench 7, which could not be dated but stratigraphically belongs to an earlier phase (below subsoil) than the other ditches; nonetheless it is most probably also related to relatively recent agriculture.

No evidence of prehistoric activity associated with the nearby scheduled barrow was encountered nor were any finds recovered from any of the topsoil or subsoils across the site.

References

- AH, 2018, 'Land at Otterburn Farm, Halwill, Beaworthy, Devon. Historic Environment Desk Based Assessment', Armour Heritage unpubl rep **AH687/1**, Frome
- BGS, 1974, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet **E323**, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- LG, 2018, 'Land at Otterburn Farm, Halwill, Devon Gradiometer Survey Report', Lefort Geophysics unpubl rep **18-0010.01**, North Petherton
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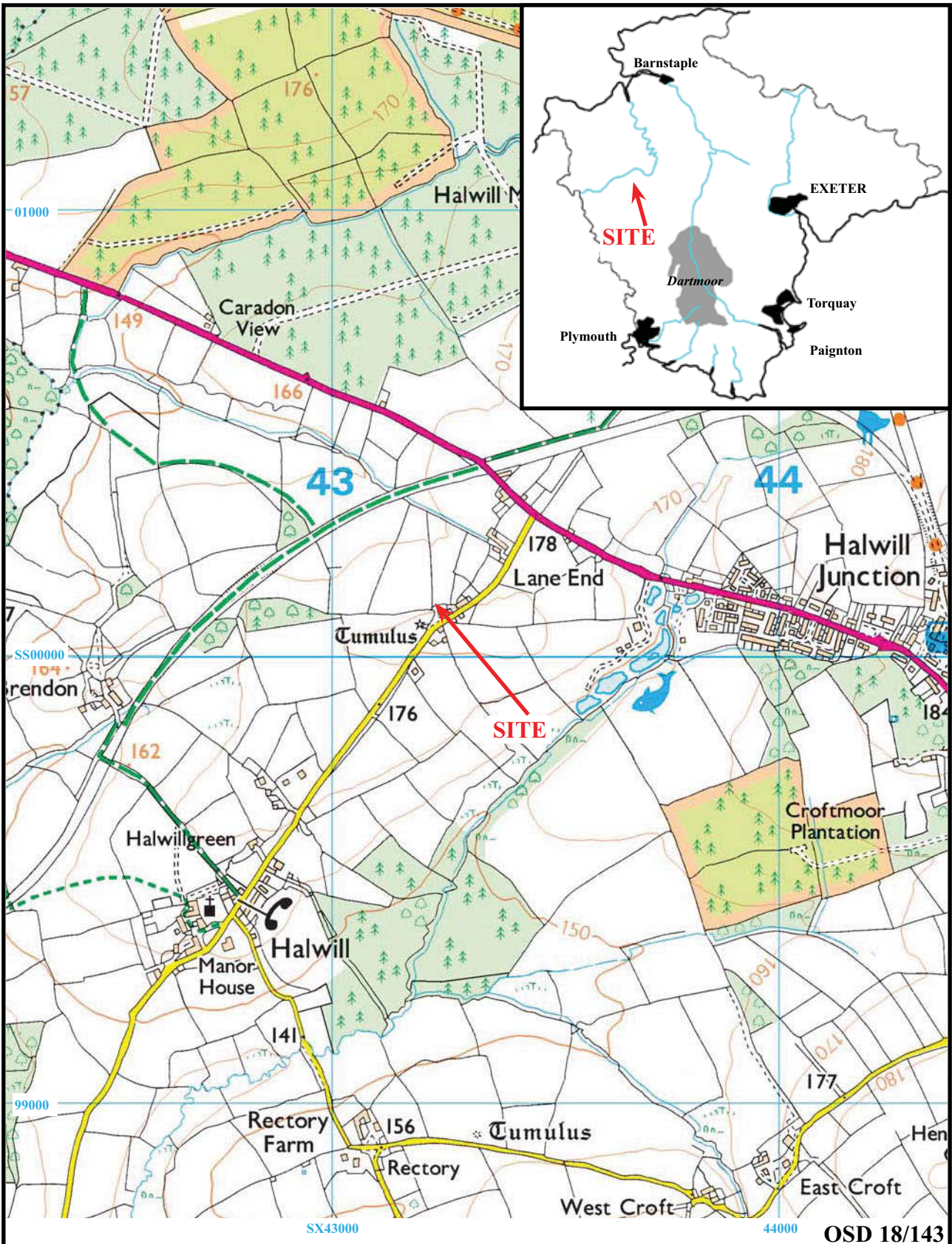
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at west or south end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	24.70	1.8	0.39	0–0.26m topsoil, 0.26-0.30m subsoil, 0.30m+ Yellow clay with occasional stone. Ditch 3 [Pls 1 and 5]
2	24.70	1.8	0.32	0–0.26m topsoil, 0.26-0.30m subsoil, 0.32m+ Yellow clay with occasional stone. Ditch 4 [Pls 2 and 6]
3	24.40	1.8	0.40	0–0.36m topsoil, , 0.36m+ Yellow clay with occasional stone
4	23.80	1.8	0.37	0–0.30m topsoil, 0.30-0.32m subsoil, 0.32m+ Yellow clay with occasional stone. Ditch 1 [Pls 3 and 7]
5	26.4	1.8	0.30	0–0.26m topsoil, 1, 0.26m+ Yellow clay with occasional stone
6	26.0	1.8	0.30	0–0.26m topsoil, 1, 0.26m+ Yellow clay with occasional stone
7	26.20	1.8	0.34	0–0.26m topsoil, 0.26-0.30m subsoil, 0.30m+ Yellow clay with occasional stone. Ditch 2 [Pls 4 and 8]
8	25.20	1.8	0.41	0–0.20m topsoil, 0.20-0.38m subsoil, 0.38m+ Yellow clay with occasional stone.

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	3	54	Ditch	Post Medieval- Modern	Iron Objects & Cartographic
2	4	55	Ditch	Post Medieval - Modern	Iron Object & Cartographic
4	1	52	Ditch	Post Medieval - Modern	Cartographic
7	2	53	Ditch	Unknown	None

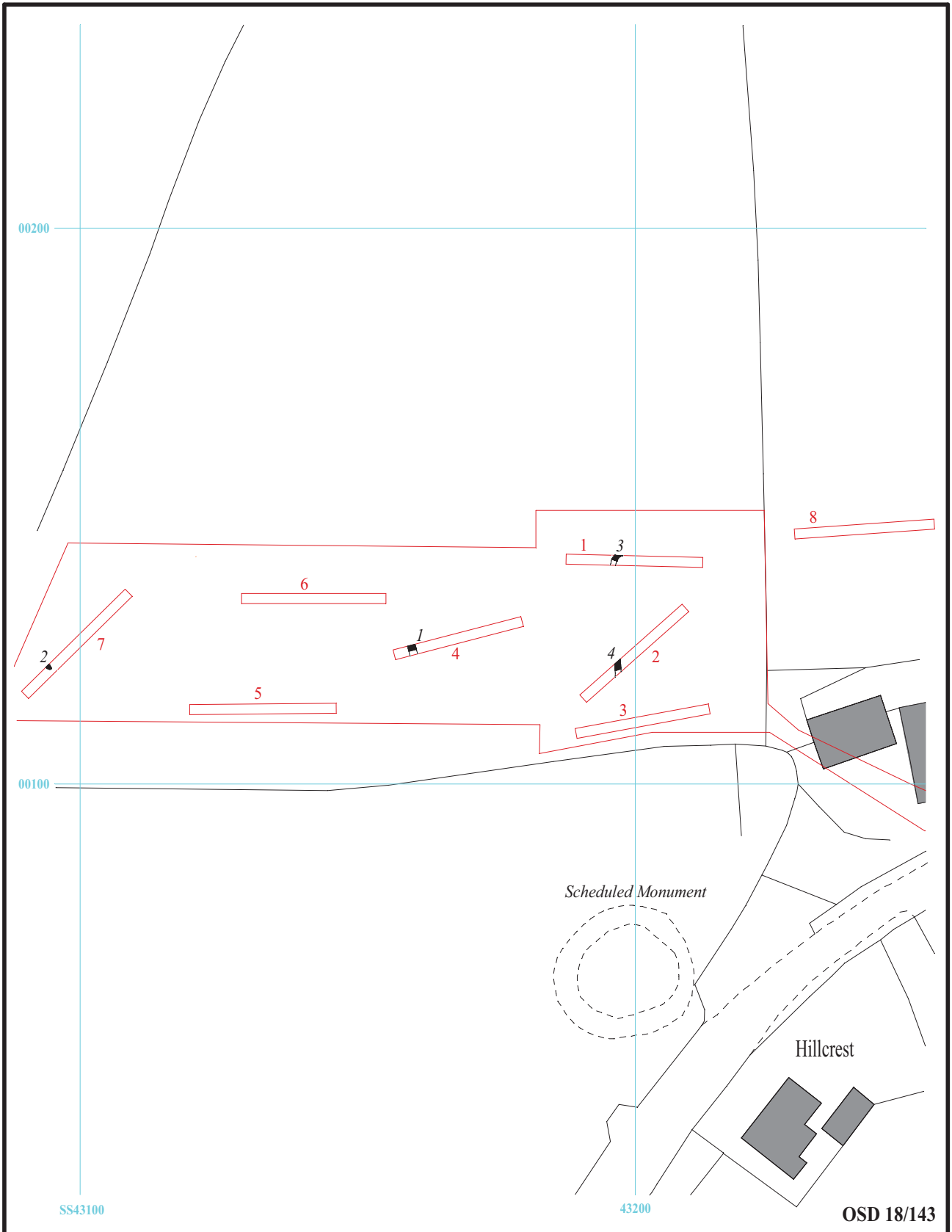


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Figure 1. Location of site within Halwill and Devon.

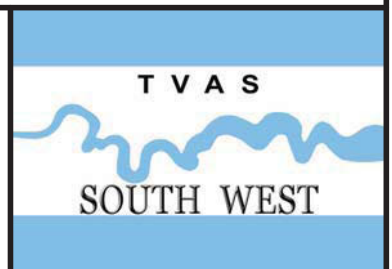
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Figure 2. Site plan.

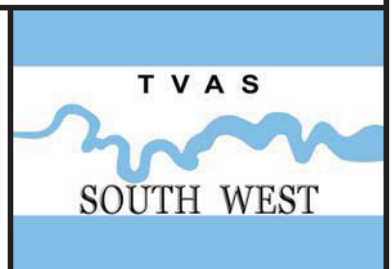


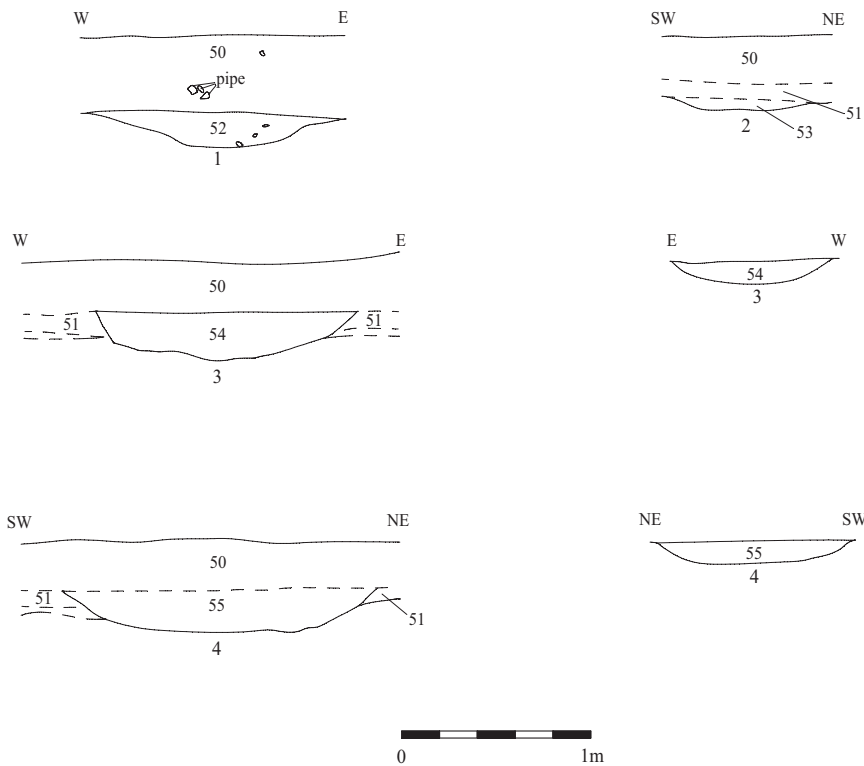
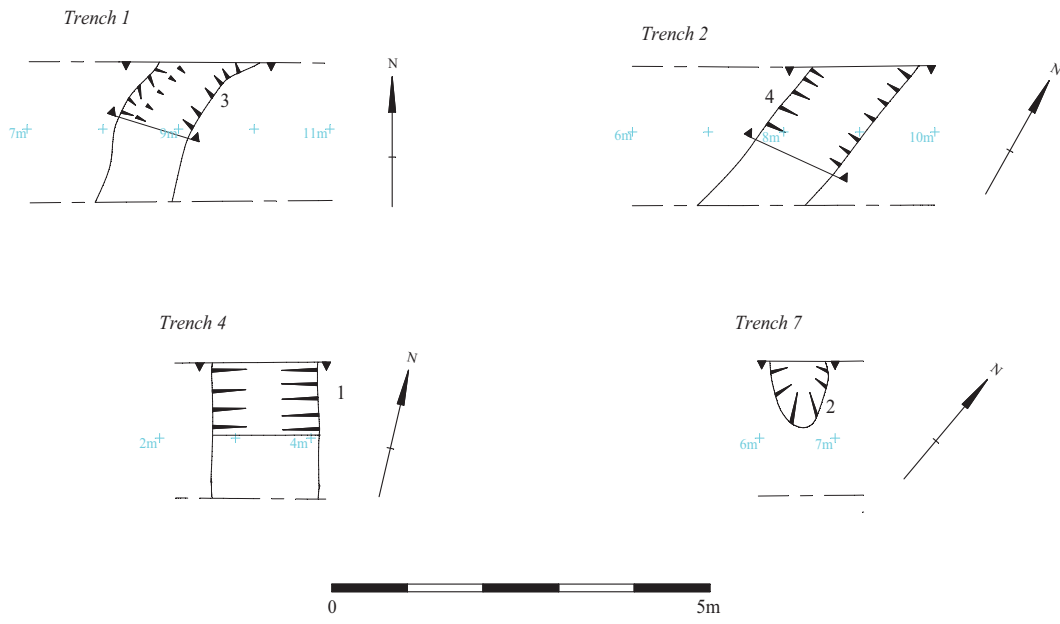


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Figure 3. Site plan overlaying geophysical survey results (after LG 2018).

0 50m





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Figure 4. Details of trenches.

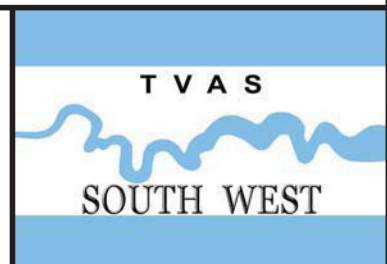




Plate 1. Trench 1 looking East. Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m



Plate 2. Trench 2 looking North East. Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m

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Plates 1 and 2.





Plate 3. Trench 4 looking North East. Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m



Plate 4. Trench 7 looking North East. Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.03m

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Plates 3 and 4.**





Plate 5. Trench 1 Ditch 3 looking North. Scales: 2m and 0.3m.



Plate 6. Trench 2 Ditch 4 Looking North West. Scales: 2m and 0.3m

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Plates 5 and 6.





Plate 7. Trench 4 Ditch 1 looking North. Scales: 1m and 0.3m



Plate 8. Trench 7 Ditch 2 looking North West. Scales: 1m and 0.3m

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Otterburn Farm, Halwill,
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Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 and 2.



TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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