

# Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> Stokenham, South Hams, Devon	<b>National Grid Reference</b> SX 8023 4295	<b>Number:</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Excavation & recording of five 1x1m test pits in the playing field of Stokenham Primary School, Stokenham		<b>Photo attached?</b> YES
<b>Planning Application no:</b> N/A	<b>Recipient museum:</b> N/A	
<b>OASIS ID:</b> southwes1-156706	<b>Museum Accession no:</b> N/A	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b> EPS13	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b> 03/07/13	
<p><b>DESCRIPTION OF WORKS</b></p> <p>Archaeological test pitting was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) as part of a community out-reach project in collaboration with the Friends of East Portlemouth Church. The work was carried out in accordance with a Project Design drawn up for the 2012 season by SWARCH in consultation with Graham Tait, Archaeology Officer of Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET). The work was supervised by Dr. S. Walls and Mrs A. Pickstone.</p> <p>Five c.1x1m test pits were excavated on land to the rear of Stokenham Primary School by pupils, monitored and directed by professional archaeologists from SWARCH and a teacher from the school. This followed the methodology pioneered and outlined by the CORS (Currently Occupied Rural Settlements) project and in accordance with the <i>Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation 1994 (revised 2001 &amp; 2008)</i> and <i>Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief 1994 (revised 2001 &amp; 2008)</i>.</p> <p>The test pits were located in respect of the local landscaped and natural topography and foliage. The locations of the test pits were recorded in relation to existing boundaries and previous year's test-pits (see Figure 2). Once the turf was removed by the archaeologists the Test Pits were excavated by hand by the children. All the Test Pits went to a depth of c. 0.2-0.35m, and with the exception of Test Pit 6 revealed the undisturbed natural subsoil. All the soil was sieved for finds, which were recovered and cleaned on site and used in a presentation to the school children.</p> <p>No archaeological features were discovered and only a small number of finds were recovered. However, these did cover an interestingly broad date range. The finds have been returned to the school with a copy of this report.</p> <p><b>FINDS</b></p> <p>The finds from the five test pits were comprised of 12x flint flakes (104g) largely derived judging by the cortex to have been beach pebbles; of these flints there was 1x small core, 1x scraper, 1x retouched blade and 9x waste flakes. The pottery was comprised of 9x sherds of post-medieval wares, including 1x tin glaze (1g), 3x gravel-free North Devon Wares (30g) and 5x White Refined Earthenware (6g). The other finds were 12x shards of glass (97g), mostly modern but including 1x base of an 18th century bottle, 6x small iron slag fragments (22g), 3x clay pipe stems (7g), 2x coal fragments (4g), 1x animal bone fragment (6g), and 1x iron nail (1g)</p> <p><b>DISCUSSION</b></p> <p>Stokenham village lies within a broad and agriculturally rich valley in the South Hams. The cropmarks of Iron Age or Romano-British enclosures are known from the north of the parish. The church is noted for its unusual dedication (St. Humbert) and may be the minster church of Coleridge Hundred. Recent excavations have uncovered the remains of a known 14<sup>th</sup> century manor house in the field adjacent to the church, as well as earlier, perhaps Bronze Age, field ditches.</p> <p>Stokenham Primary School is located to the west of the historic centre of Stokenham village, in land categorized as 'Barton Fields' – large regular enclosures laid out between the 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The field names as recorded in the tithe apportionment of 1843 (Higher and Lower Holebrook) are generally uninformative. This part of Stokenham remained open until after 1907, and the school was constructed between 1963 and 1972. The southern part of the field to the rear of the school has been terraced to provide a level playing field.</p>		

While the volume of genuine archaeological finds recovered from the site is quite small, the small assemblage of flint flakes (some of which is un-worked) suggests a 'background' of prehistoric activity on or near to the site. The small assemblage of largely post-medieval finds, iron slag and coal is probably the result of the fields having been fertilized with midden material during this period. The presence of a large number of small rounded pebbles within each of the test-pits suggests that the field may have also been fertilized with seaweed historically.

**A plan as well as any other relevant drawings must be attached showing the location and extent of site, areas investigated and features exposed.**

**Recorder:** S. Walls

**Date sent to HER:** 08/08/2013

Please email completed form to: [archaeol@devon.gov.uk](mailto:archaeol@devon.gov.uk) or post to County Archaeology Service, Environment Directorate, Matford Lane Offices, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QW. Information recorded on this form will be added to the Historic Environment Record, and made available to all researchers.

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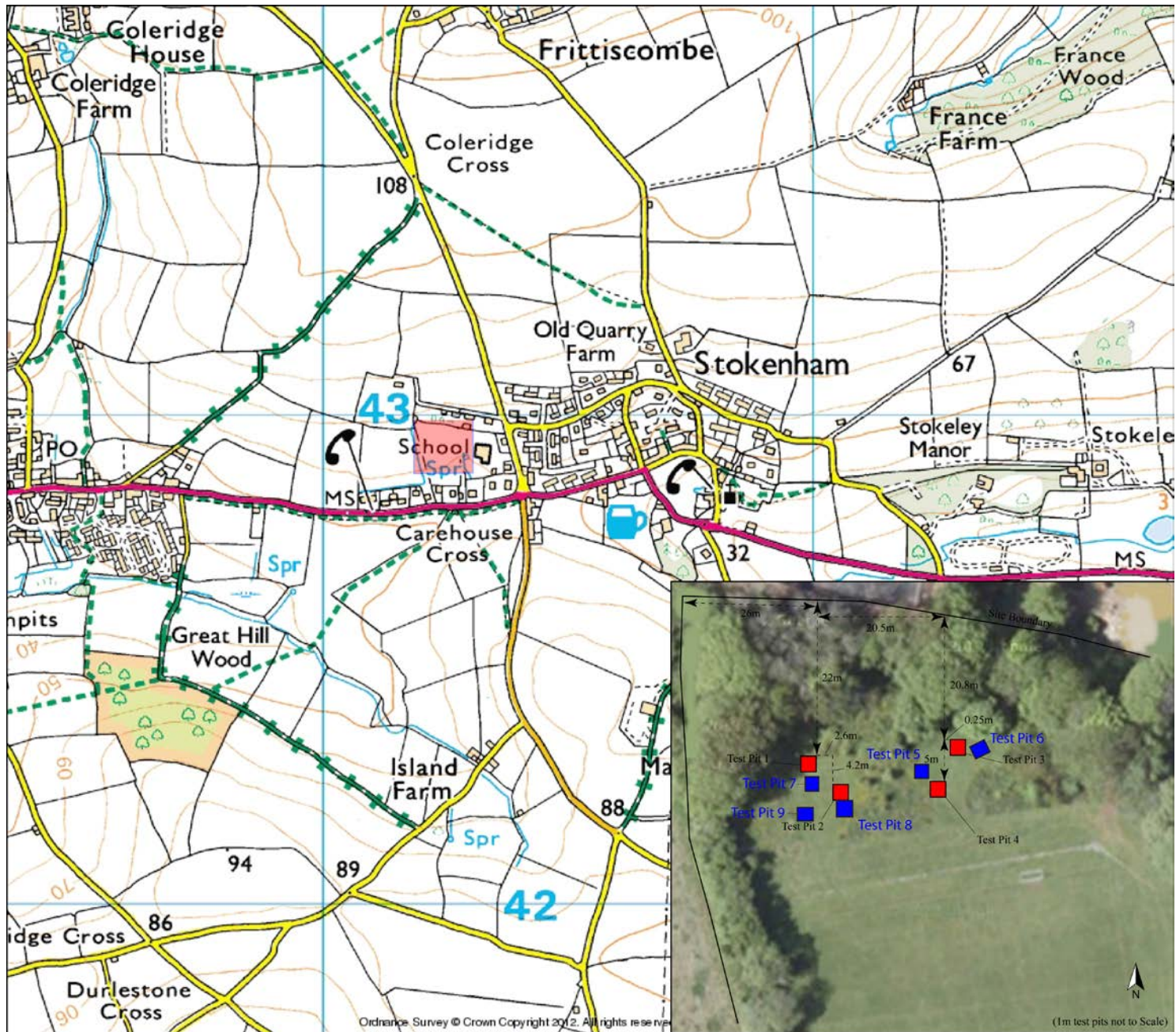


Figure 1: Site location highlighted. The inset locates the 2013 test pits (shown in blue) in relation to the 2012 test pits (shown in red).



Figure 2: Test Pit 5 South Facing Section (1m scale).



Figure 3: Test Pit 7 South Facing Section (1m scale).