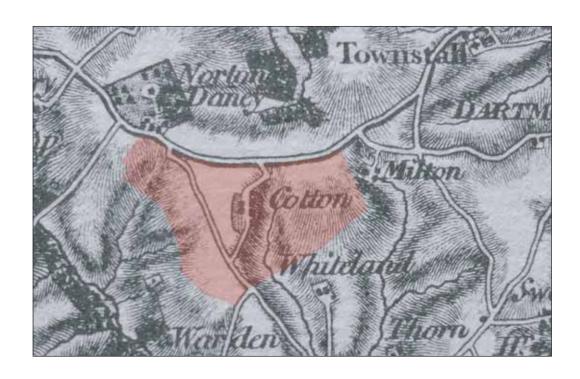
Land Centred on GREAT COTTON FARM DARTMOUTH DEVON

Results of a Historical and Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment





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Acknowledgements

Thanks for assistance are due to:

The Staff of the Devon Record Office
The Staff of the West Country Studies Library
The Staff of the Devon County Historic Environment Service

1.0 Introduction

Location:CottonParish:DartmouthDistrict:South HamsCounty:Devon

NGR: Centred at SX 957506 OS Map copying Licence No: 100044808

1.1 Background

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) were asked by Millwood Homes (Devon) Ltd. (the Client) to prepare a historical and archaeological assessment of an area of land on the south side of the A3122 road to the west of Dartmouth, Devon. The area of land comprises a group of around 20 fields at the core of which is the historic settlement of Great and Little Cotton.

The purpose of this assessment is to place the site in its historical and archaeological context and to identify any archaeological or historical factors which may require action in the form of recording, evaluation or other mitigation prior to or during the course of any development works.

1.2 Abstract of Main Findings

The potential development area embraces the medieval settlement of Cotton and its attendant fields together with fields associated with the neighbouring settlements of Broomhill, Worden and Wheatland. It also lies across the parish boundary between Stoke Fleming and Dartmouth (formerly Townstall), taking in land which was historically part of the settlement of Milton. While this latter area has been largely overtaken by modern developments, the land around Cotton to west and south – apart from some modern residential development, the use of part of the land as a caravan park, and the partial conversion of traditional farm buildings to holiday accommodation – retains the late and post-medieval character of its fieldscape. Having been occupied historically as two holdings, Great and Little Cotton appear to represent the descendants of a medieval farmstead managed as an infield-outfield system, the evidence for which remains in certain field names and in the configuration of historic boundaries. A long, curving boundary to the south of the farmstead is characteristic of an early stage of medieval settlement. Part of a long, curving boundary around Worden at the southern extremity of the area has similar implications.

The buildings of the settlement were the subject of extensive redevelopment in the mid19th century. While the residential element of Great Cotton is represented by the present farmhouse, any corresponding accommodation for Little Cotton had been removed or obscured by the early 19th century. A barn towards the far west of the potential development area was removed during the 19th century. Prehistoric features observed in the landscape to the south and the evidence of one nineteenth century field name may imply the presence of evidence for similar features within the potential development area.

1.3 Methodology

The desk-based study was carried out by Terry Green and was undertaken with reference to IfA guidelines on the preparation of archaeological assessments. The necessary research was conducted at the Devon Record Office and the West Country Studies Library and involved a search of the County Historic Environment Records (HER).

2.0 Results of the Desk-Based Study

2.1 Site Location and Topography

For ease of reference, the area is here divided into four segments A,B, C and D, see Fig. 3b and 8.

- A: This area comprises four fields (formerly nine) lying to the south of Norton Cross and the settlement of Norton and to the west of Venn Lane. The land lies around the head of a combe out of which a watercourse flows to the south west.
- B: This area, lying to the south of the A3221 and to the east of Venn Lane, is bordered on the east by the parish boundary between the civil parishes of Stoke Fleming and Dartmouth. To the south the area is defined by a curving hedge-line, at the west end of which a spring rises, feeding a watercourse flowing to the south east. On the south west side the area is defined by part of a lane leading off Venn Lane through the settlement of Cotton and joining the A3221 at a point north of Cotton. The settlement, comprising Great and Little Cotton with residential (some holiday lets) and working farm buildings, lies at the centre of a collection of small fields on lightly undulating land. To the east the fields are largely given over to Little Cotton Caravan Park.
- C: This part of the area lying within the parish of Dartmouth (formerly the parish of Townstall) includes a sports ground or playing-field and a large car park serving the park-and-ride scheme. The north eastern portion of the area is occupied by Lidls Supermarket and Townstall Road Garage.
- D. This area to the south of A and B comprises six fields lying on either side of Venn Lane. Those to the west are crossed by an access track leading to Broomhill. The fields on the east of the lane lie on ground which falls from the west and the east into the valley containing the watercourse flowing out of B. The land to the east of Venn Lane is bordered on the north by the long curving boundary of B. On the west side of Venn Lane area D touches, at its southern extremity, part of a similar curving boundary embracing the settlement of Worden.

2.2 Brief Manorial History

Most of the area (A, B and D) lies within the parish and former manor of Stoke Fleming. Having been held in the 11th-12th century by the family of Fleming, the manor was passed by Sir William Fleming to Lord Mohun of Dunster. From Mohun it passed by marriage to the family of Carew. Sir Peter Carew gave it to Thomas Southcote whose descendant John Henry Southcote sold it around the turn of the 19th century to John Henry Seale of Mount Boone. Until the 1830s Miss Southcote, daughter of Henry Southcote retained ownership of part of the manor including Great and Little Cotton. By 1840 (the date of the tithe apportionment) Cotton had been sold to Robert Leach.

The portion of the site which lies in the parish of Dartmouth (C) was historically part of Milton, a holding within Townstall parish and within the manor of Norton Downey. Held in the medieval and post-medieval period by Fitzstephens, then Downey, then Courtenay, the manor was sold in 1679 to John Harris whose descendant sold it to John Seal of Mount Boone. John Henry Seale is recorded in the Townstall tithe apportionment of 1840 as the owner of Milton.

(The above based on Lysons 1822 et al.)

The name 'Cotton' is first recorded in the Subsidy Rolls of 1333 in the form *atte Cotene*, i.e. 'at the cottages' (Gover, Mawer and Stenton 1931, 331), suggesting a minor settlement.

2.3 The Landscape and Cartographic History

The earliest detailed map of the area available to this study was the Ordnance Survey map at one inch to the mile (the so-called 'Old Series') surveyed around 1805 and published in 1809 (Fig. 2) On this map both Cotton and Milton are recorded. Cotton is shown as groups of buildings lying on either side of a lane or road corresponding to the north-south lane existing at present. Milton is shown as buildings grouped around and within a courtyard.

The tithe maps of 1841 (Fig. 3a and 4) are the earliest to provide full details of fields, boundaries, routeways and buildings. The Ordnance Survey maps at a scale of 1:2500 (Fig. 5 and 6) published in 1889 (First Edition) and 1905 (Second Edition) provide a record of the area around the turn of the 20th century. For details from the tithe apportionments 1840/1841, please refer to Appendix 1.

In **Area A** nine fields are shown on the tithe map. Comparison with the Ordnance Survey maps of the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Fig. 5 and 6) indicates that boundary loss and reshaping occurred entirely within the 20th century. The now lost boundaries are highlighted in Fig. 3c. In the north western part of area A, contained between the fields numbered 714, 704 and 708, is a small area numbered 706 and containing a building. This is described in the tithe apportionment as 'Wallace Barn and Court'. To the south of this is a long, narrow enclosure named 'Strole Plot' (No. 703). From the field numbered 714 and named Well Park a spring issues, heading a watercourse that flows to the south through 'Strole Plot'. To the east of the barn is a short 'corridor' between fields. All of this detail was retained in 1904, but has now been lost through a radical reshaping of the boundaries in this area.

Area B contains the settlement of Cotton. Comparison of the 1841 tithe map with the present lay-out indicates the loss of only one boundary (Fig.3c). Apart from the settlement itself, the most striking feature here is the long curving boundary to the south. To the north of this boundary the field shapes are irregular, while the boundaries abutting it on the south define fields of a more regular, almost rectilinear character. While all of the enclosures are likely to be of post-medieval origin, perhaps based ultimately on medieval strips (Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation: HLC), the curving boundary itself is very probably a relic of the early medieval enclosure of a cultivated 'infield' centred on the hamlet of Cotton. A further sign of medieval land management is the name 'Quillet' applied in the tithe apportionment to the small field numbered 678. The term 'quillet' signifies a narrow strip of land (Muir 2000, 220), which is patently inappropriate when applied to this basically square field; however the curvature of a number of the boundaries within the eastern part of Area A suggests (as the Devon HLC analysis implies) the fossilisation of the often sinuous lines created by medieval ploughing of the land in narrow strips. In the late medieval period bundles of strips were amalgamated and enclosed in 'parks' and 'closes' producing a field pattern such as is seen here. The name 'Quillet' is probably a relic of the period before enclosure. It is notable that the fields to the west of the north-south lane show far less of such evidence, suggesting either a different tradition of management or a somewhat different ancestry. The occurrence of 'Gratton' in the names of the fields numbered 667 (Long Gratton), 688 (Little Gratton) and 693 (Nix's Gratton) might suggest the latter. The term 'gratton' signifies the occasionally cultivated outfield as opposed to the intensively cultivated infield in the medieval system of convertible husbandry.

The cartographic record indicates that the buildings of Cotton, lying on either side of a north-south lane, underwent considerable change during the period from 1841 to 1905 (compare Fig. 3d and 6). The farmhouse of Great Cotton (the northern building in the group numbered 686 on the tithe map) was completely remodelled, as were the various

outbuildings. It is noteworthy that the building ligatured together with the area numbered 680, apparently a barn (680 is described in the tithe apportionment as 'Barn Yard etc'), appears to have been demolished and replaced by a simpler, L-shaped building somewhat to the north.

Area C is within the modern parish of Dartmouth, the ancient parish of Townstall. In 1841 the area comprised three fields numbered 276, 277 and 291 on the Townstall tithe map and described in the apportionment as 'Little Inwells', 'Great Inwells' and 'Long Cross Field' respectively. By the end of the 19th century the boundaries of these fields had been modified only slightly with the extension north eastwards of the southern boundary of the field numbered 291. During the early 20th century a secondary boundary appears to have been created dividing the field numbered 277 (Great Inwells) in 1841 (see Plate 1). Later 20th century developments have disrupted the historic pattern, but certain of the historic boundaries appear to be maintained, *viz*. the parish boundary to the west and the south eastern boundaries of the area.

On the tithe map of 1841 the land here designated **Area D** comprises 13 fields plus parts of two others. It is probable that all of these represent late or post-medieval enclosure, quite possibly of blocks of strips which characterise medieval open or common field-systems. In the tithe apportionment, all of the fields to the west of Venn lane were associated with Broomhill. Between 1841 and the end of the Second World War there were no boundary changes in this area, but comparison of an aerial photograph of 1946 with the present lay-out indicates quite radical change during the second half of the 20th century (See Fig.3c). At its southern extremity Area D is bounded by part of the long curving boundary of the settlement of Worden, the earliest record of which dates from 1386 (Gover Mawer and Stenton 1931, 331). Like that noted above in Area B, this boundary probably marks the edge of an early infield enclosure.

To the east of Venn Lane the fields on the west of the stream were owned and occupied in 1841 by Henry Neale Netherton (gentleman), while those to the east of the stream were associated with the settlement of Wheatland. In this part of Area D only three boundaries have been removed since 1841. These were entirely 20th century removals. The boundaries between the fields numbered 168 and 169 and between fields 169 and 170 show, on the tithe map, some of the curvature that suggests the fossilisation of boundaries originating in medieval field systems. The north side of this area shares the long curving boundary on the south of Area B.

Note that in this area, on the sloping ground between Venn Lane and the stream which flows out of Cotton, there are contour leats originating high up the watercourse and running south along the valleyside.

In **Area D** a number of the field names, as recorded in the tithe apportionment of 1841, are noteworthy. Of particular interest is field number 653 named 'Lower Burrow Park'. In light of the Historic Environment Record (HER) 36970 noted below (Fig.7/D) this suggests the historic knowledge of a (probably) prehistoric enclosure in this vicinity, part of which is now visible only from the air as crop marks. Apart from this noteworthy example, other field names record the existence of features which are now gone. Field names 'Linhay Field' (tithe map 568) and 'Higher Lynhay Field' (tithe map 569) commemorate the existence of a linhay, quite possibly the small building recorded on the tithe map on the Venn Lane edge of field number 568. The field numbered 570 is named 'Higher Barn Park', apparently indicating the former presence of a barn. The fields numbered 665 and 666 are named respectively 'Well Park' and 'Outer Well Park', suggesting the presence of a spring.

2.4 Great and Little Cotton

It is common in Devon to find farm hamlets comprising multiple holdings, most frequently three. Great and Little Cotton appear to represent a two-farm hamlet. From the Land Tax records of the 18th century it is not entirely clear whether Cotton was always held as two holdings: the record of 1747 refers only to Cotton, however later records up to 1832 refer to Great and Little Cotton, Great Cotton being valued at £3.4s.0d and Little Cotton at £1.12s.0d. Up until the 1830s both were owned by the Southcote Family (but were separately tenanted). In 1840-1 however, the tithe surveyors recorded that 'Cotton farmhouse' and its yards and buildings together with all the land to the west of the north-south lane were owned by Robert Leach and were tenanted by John Harris and were comprised within a holding called Thorn, while the barn and yard numbered 680 together with all the land between the north-south lane and the parish boundary were owned and occupied by Maria Holdsworth. Great Cotton was apparently the land to the west and Little Cotton that to the east. The holdings were held separately through the later 19th century and have continued to be so held up to the present time.

While, in 1840-1, 'Cotton farmhouse' together with outbuildings was apparently part of Great Cotton, Little Cotton appears to have had only a barn; there is no evidence of a dwelling for Little Cotton at this date, though there may be archaeological evidence of an earlier domestic building.

2.5 The Archaeological Record and Archaeological Implications

The Devon County Historic Environment Service (DCHES) holds only three records of sites of archaeological interest within the bounds of the land discussed here. There are however a small number of nearby sites that are recorded and which may be of relevance. For the geographical location of the recorded sites see Fig. 8.

2.5.1 HERs within the Potential Development Area

HER 55690: A World War 2 military building visible on a 1946 aerial photograph (See Plate 1 and Fig. 7/A)

HER 73291: Field name 'Long Cross Field' (Fig. 7/B) occurs in the tithe apportionment of 1840. This may incorporate a reference to a wayside cross or may refer to the road junction to the north east.

HER 45723: Mile stone on the south side of the A3221 (Fig. 7/C).

2.5.2 HERs to the South of the Potential Development Area

HER 36970: A prehistoric ditched enclosure observed from the air as cropmarks to the north-west of Broomhill (Fig. 7/D).

HER 36969: Two parallel curvilinear features observed from the air as cropmarks to the north of Thorn (Fig. 7/E).

2.5.3 Aerial Photography

In addition, it has been noted during the course of this study that the 1946 aerial photograph number CPE/UK/1890 10 Dec.46 F20//MULTI (4) 58 SQDN: 2969 (Plate 1) reveals in the north-western quarter of the large kite-shaped field in Area C (in 1841, field number 277: 'Great Inwells') a cropmark or soilmark outlining a large rectangular enclosure (Fig. 7/F).

2.5.4 Area A

The former barn site (Fig. 7/H) should be examined and any remains recorded.

2.5.5 Area B

This area has the highest potential to produce as yet unrecorded archaeological evidence.

Recent development here has been mainly in the form of landscaping a caravan park. Historic boundaries appear to have been preserved. As the historic landscape here appears to encompass elements of a relict medieval landscape principally in the form of late or post-medieval boundaries, any boundary removal should be subject to monitoring and recording. Particular attention should be paid to the long curving boundary to the south (Fig. 7/I).

Ground disturbance to the south of the historic farm buildings and to the east of the north-south lane may uncover evidence of an earlier building (Fig. 7/G).

2.5.6 Area C

The site of HER 55690 (Fig. 7/A), the WW2 building, is now occupied by Lidls Supermarket and a garage. There are unlikely to be any traces of the building remaining. The milestone HER 45723 (Fig. 7/C), if it is still in place, should be respected during any development. The crop- or soilmark noted above (Fig. 7/F) lies within an area now taken up by a playing field. It is very possible that levelling of the ground will have removed any archaeological evidence; nevertheless a watching brief during any development works is recommended. A geophysical survey might be undertaken.

2.5.7 Area D

To the west of Venn Lane, the field name 'Burrow Park' reinforces the aerial photo graphic evidence (HER 36970) of a prehistoric enclosure in this vicinity. Traces of attendant features (e.g. field-systems) may exist nearby. Geophysical survey is recommended. To the east of Venn Lane, the field-gutter or contour-leats might be recorded.

2.5.8 General

The evidence, to the south of the area, of prehistoric linear features (Fig.7/E) and an enclosure (Fig.7/D) together with the field name 'Burrow Park' (see above) suggests the possibility of other such features within the extended potential development area. Geophysical survey is recommended.

2.5.9 Wetland Areas

Wetland areas such as spring heads (Fig.7/J) may preserve environmental evidence of past land-use.

6.0 Bibliography and References

Published Sources:

Gover, J., Mawer, A. & Stenton, F. 1931: *The Place-Names of Devon*, The English Place-Name Society Vol. 8, Cambridge

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Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation:

 $http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/environment/historic_environment/landscapes/landscape-characterisation.htm\\$

Unpublished Sources:

Devon Record Office (DRO):

Stoke Fleming tithe map 1841 and apportionment 1840 Townstall tithe map 1841 and apportionment 1840

Devon County Historic Environment Service (DCHES)

Historic Environment Records (HER) 36969
36970
45723
55690
73291

CPE/UK/1890 10 Dec.46 F20//MULTI (4) 58 SQDN: 2969

Google Maps

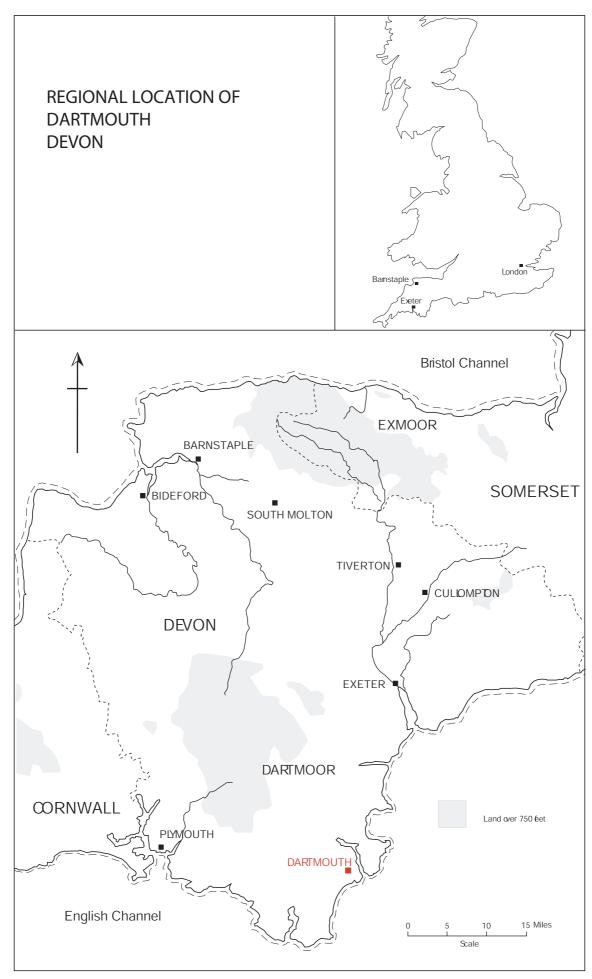


Fig. 1a: Regional location.

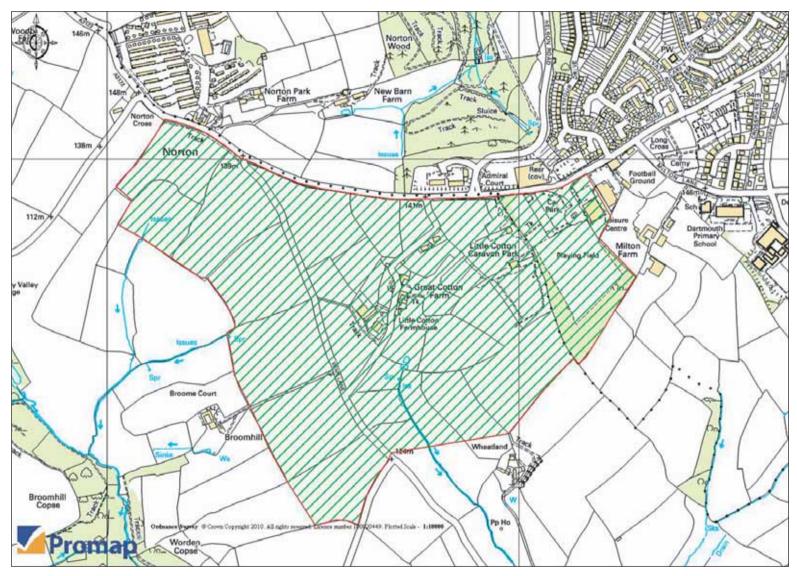


Fig. 1b: Site location.

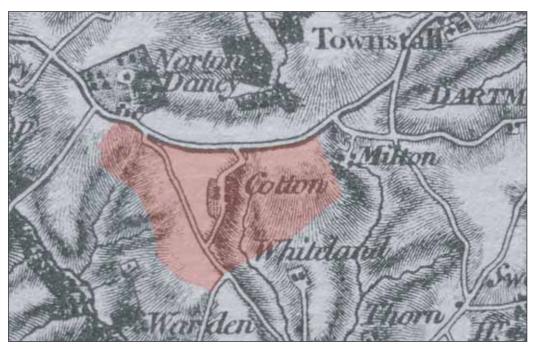


Fig. 2: Extract from the 'Old Series' Ordnance Survey map at one inch to the mile, surveyed c.1805, published 1809. The approximate area to be occupied by the potential development site is indicated in colour.

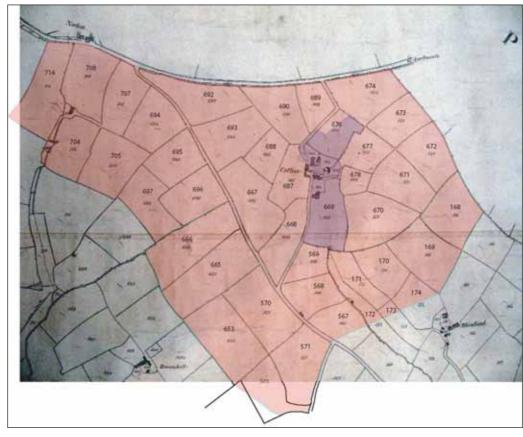


Fig. 3a: Extract from the Stoke Fleming tithe map of 1841 (field numbers reprinted for clarity). The area to be occupied by the potential development site is indicated in pink. The area in blue is currently excepted. (DRO)

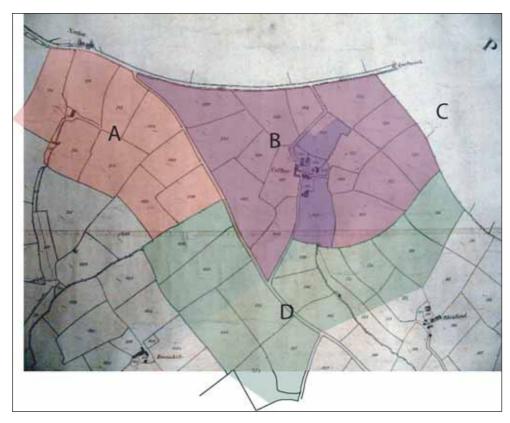


Fig. 3b: As Fig. 3a with areas of discussion A, B and D. For Area C refer to Fig. 4. Compare Fig. 8.

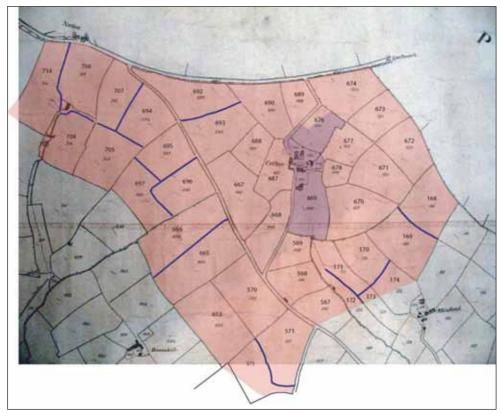


Fig. 3c: Extract from the Stoke Fleming tithe map of 1841 highlighting (in blue) those field boundaries lost since the mid-19th century.

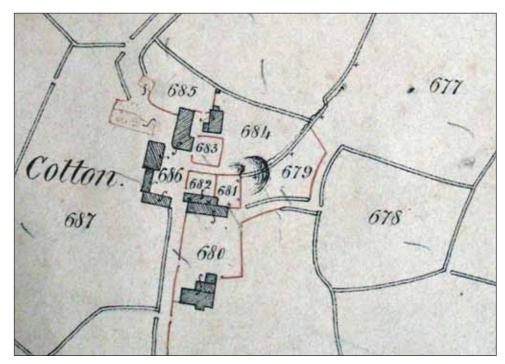


Fig. 3d: The buildings of Cotton as recorded on the Stoke Fleming tithe map of 1841.



Fig. 4: Extract from the Townstall tithe map of 1841. The area to be occupied by the potential development site is indicated in colour. (DRO)

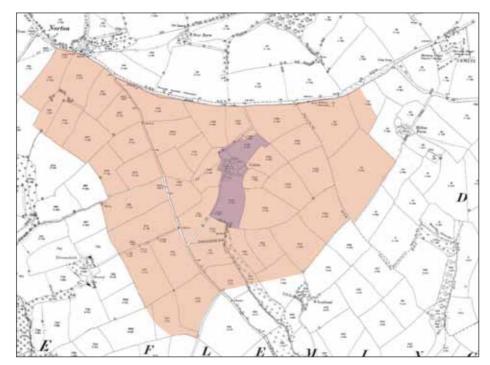


Fig. 5: Extract from the Ordnance Survey First Edition map at 1:2500, surveyed 1885, published 1889. Colour coding as Fig. 3.

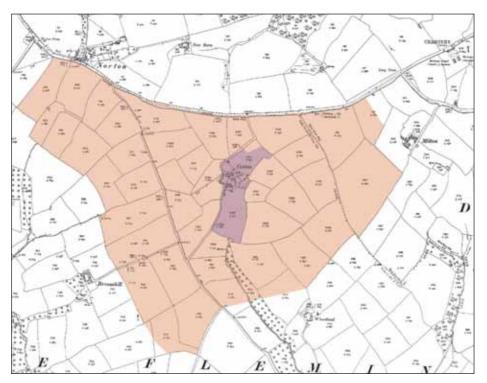
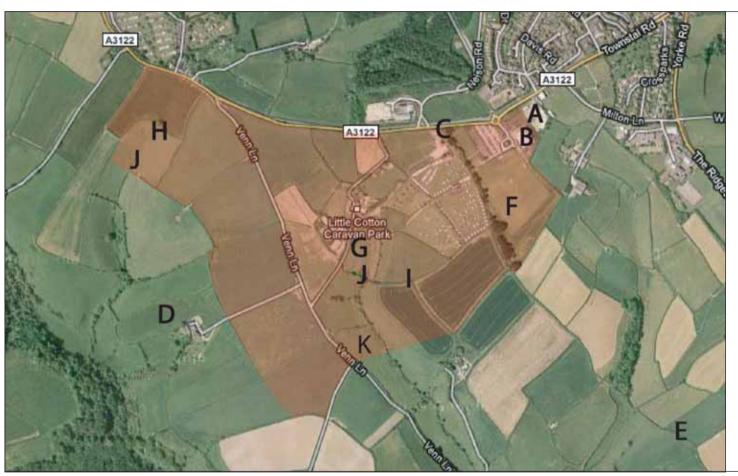


Fig. 6: Extract from the Ordnance Survey Second Edition map at 1:2500, published 1905. Colour coding as Fig. 3.



Key:

- **A:** Military building, Devon HER 55690.
- **B:** Field Name 'Long Cross Field', Devon HER 73291.
- **C:** Mile stone, Devon HER 45723.
- **D:** Ditched enclosure (cropmark), Devon HER 36970.
- **E:** Curvilinear feature (cropmark), Devon HER 36969.
- F: Rectangular feature noted
- on 1946 aerial photograph.
- **G:** Former barn site south of building group at Cotton.
- **H:** Former barn site ('Wallace Barn') to west of Cotton.
- I: Curvilinear boundary.
- **J:** Spring heads.
- K: Contour leats.

Fig. 7: Location of archaeological features recorded in the Devon County Historic Environment Record and/or referred to in this study. (Google Maps)



Fig. 8: The potential development area highlighted and divided for ease of reference into segments A,B,C and D (Compare Fig. 3b). (Google Maps)

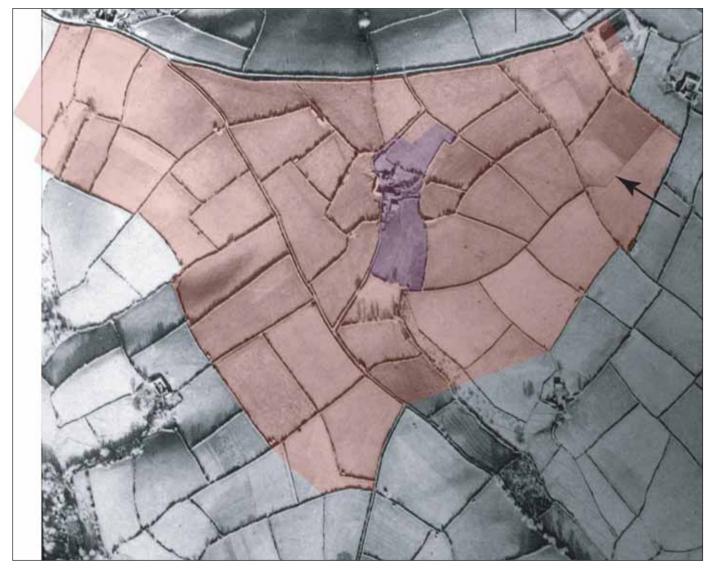


Plate 1: Aerial photograph taken in December 1946. Colour coding is as Fig. 3. Arrowed top right is a rectangular crop- or soilmark. (English Heritage (NMR) RAF Photography)

Appendix 1

Details from the Stoke Fleming Tithe Apportionment, 1841.

Field Number	Field Name	Owner	Occupier
168	Outer Trapstyle	William Rogers	John Bidlake
169	Inner Trapstyle	William Rogers	John Bidlake
170	Outer Cotton Field	William Rogers	John Bidlake
171	Outer Worden Field	William Rogers	John Bidlake
174	Homer Cotton Field	William Rogers	John Bidlake
567	Park Meadow	Henry N. Netherton	Himself
568	Linhay Field	Henry N. Netherton	Himself
569	Higher Linhay Field	Henry N. Netherton	Himself
570	Higher Barn Park	John Ashford	James Marchant
571	Worden Field	Henry N. Netherton	Himself
573	Peas Field	John Ashford	James Marchant
653	Lower Burrow Park	John Ashford	James Marchant
665	Well Park	John Ashford	James Marchant
666	Outer Well Park	John Ashford	James Marchant
667	Long Gratton	Robert Leach	Himself
668	Long Close	Robert Leach	Himself
669	Cotton Meadow	Maria Holdsworth	Herself
670	Quarry Field	Maria Holdsworth	Herself
671	Middle Field	Maria Holdsworth	Herself
672	Higher Field	Maria Holdsworth	Herself
673	Mowhay Field	Maria Holdsworth	Herself
676	Dry Meadow	Robert Leach	Himself
677	Well Park	Maria Holdsworth	Herself
678	Quillet	Maria Holdsworth	Herself
679	Garden	Maria Holdsworth	Herself
680	Barn, Yard etc.	Maria Holdsworth	Herself
681	Garden	Robert Leach	Himself
682	Court and Linhay	Robert Leach	Himself
683	Garden – Flowers and	Robert Leach	Himself
	Vegetables		
684	Orchard	Robert Leach	John Harris
685	Garden	Robert Leach	John Harris
686	Cotton Farmhouse, Yard and Homestead	Robert Leach	John Harris
687	Barn Field	Robert Leach	John Harris
688	Little Gratton	Robert Leach	John Harris
689	Little Winsclose	Robert Leach	John Harris
690	Great Winsclose	Robert Leach	John Harris
692	Tongue Close	Robert Leach	John Harris
693	Nix's Gratton	Robert Leach	John Harris
694	Trefoil	Robert Leach	John Harris
695	Three Gates	Robert Leach	John Harris
696	Higher Furze Park	Robert Leach	John Harris
697	Hatchet Furze Park	Robert Leach	John Harris
703	Strole Plot	Robert Leach	John Harris
704	Lower Bottom Close	Robert Leach	John Harris
705	Four Acres	Robert Leach	John Harris
706	Wallace Barn and Court	Robert Leach	John Harris
707	Cross Park	Robert Leach	John Harris
708	Bottom Park	Robert Leach	John Harris
714	Well Park	Maria Holdsworth	Herself

Details from the Townstall Tithe Apportionment, 1840

Field Number	Field Name	Owner	Occupier
276	Little Inwells	Sir J.H.Seale	Richard Coombes
277	Great Inwells	Sir J.H.Seale	Richard Coombes
291	Long Cross Field	Sir J.H.Seale	Richard Coombes