

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Chulmleigh, North Devon	National Grid Reference SS 6983 1576	Number:
Subject: Archaeological evaluation on land at Parsonage Farm, Chulmleigh, Devon in advance of the erection of one agricultural farm building		Photo attached? YES
Planning Application no: 56660	Recipient museum: Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon	
OASIS ID: southwes1-176897	Museum Accession no: no material archive	
Contractor's reference number/code: CPF14	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 16 th April 2014	
<p>Description of works.</p> <p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of John Crocombe (The Client), prior to the erection of one agricultural building at Parsonage Farm, Chulmleigh, Devon (Figure 1). This work was undertaken by J. Bampton on 16th April 2014 in accordance with a WSI drawn up in consultation with Stephen Reed of the Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET).</p> <p>The proposed development lies in the drained moorland pasture north of Parsonage Farm shown in the cartographic record as <i>Lower Beacon Moor</i>. Despite the traditionally poor drainage of the site there was some archaeological potential for the site; less than 500m uphill from the proposed development lies a cluster of prehistoric funerary monuments protected as Scheduled Monuments (monument refs: 1015154, 1015469, 1015478, 1015468, 1015956 and 1015153); and a possible prehistoric funerary monument has been identified less than 400m to the south of the application area.</p> <p>Five evaluation trenches, each 1.5m wide and 25m in length (see Figure 1 & 2) were excavated by a JCB using a toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision. The trenches were positioned to investigate a representative proportion of the potential site in accordance with the WSI. The topsoil consisted of a dark grey-brown, rooty, friable lay-silt turf (0.13-0.20m in depth). This topsoil overlaid a plough soil (subsoil); a mid brown-grey, friable very clayey-silt (0.09-0.21m in depth). Trench 4 included a 2nd subsoil surviving intermittently along its north section; a light grey, soft-friable slightly silty-clay (up to 0.09m in depth). The natural on site was a mottled light grey-yellow, compact clay with occasional medium-large angular stones (occurred 0.20-0.41m below ground level). Plough scars, aligned roughly north-south, were also visible across most of the trenches (See Figures 2, 5 & 6).</p> <p>No significant archaeological features or remains were encountered. No finds were recovered from the site. Trenches 1 and 5 had both been disturbed by activity associated with the entrance way to the field at their south-west ends. Trench 1 revealed no archaeological activity. Trench 2 contained a natural irregular gully feature, [203] probably associated with rooting from trees and scrub removed from between Trenches 1 and 2 in the 20th century and then disturbed by ploughing (Figures 2 & 3). Trench 2 also revealed a field drain aligned roughly east-west, laid down in living memory. The same drain was encountered in Trench 5. Trench 3 revealed Ditch [303], a linear with steep, slightly concave sides and a flattish base that contained Fill (304) (Figures 2 & 4). Fill (304) was a mid-dark brown-grey, soft humic silt-clay, seemingly alluvial in nature. Trench 3 also revealed another field drain aligned roughly east-west again repeated in Trench 5. Trench 4 revealed no archaeological features but did contain 2nd Subsoil (403) that may have survived plough truncation or be the result of earlier deeper ploughing. Trench 5 only revealed the same field drains identified in Trenches 2 and 3. Its south end had also been disturbed by activity near to the field's entrance way and cattle feeds.</p> <p>The primary drainage ditch across the field is located east of the trenches, running roughly north-south. It was originally part of a natural watercourse through the moorland and utilized for drainage and fed by field drains. The field drains are spread roughly a <i>chain</i> (c.21 paces) apart but also follow some visible tributaries of this relict watercourse and do not necessarily run parallel. Ditch [303] is likely an earlier phase of this drainage using an open ditch as can often still be seen on Exmoor.</p> <p>No finds were produced from the features or recovered from the site.</p>		
<p>A plan as well as any other relevant drawings must be attached showing the location and extent of site, areas investigated and features exposed.</p>		
Recorder: J. Bampton	Date sent to HER: 17.04.2014	

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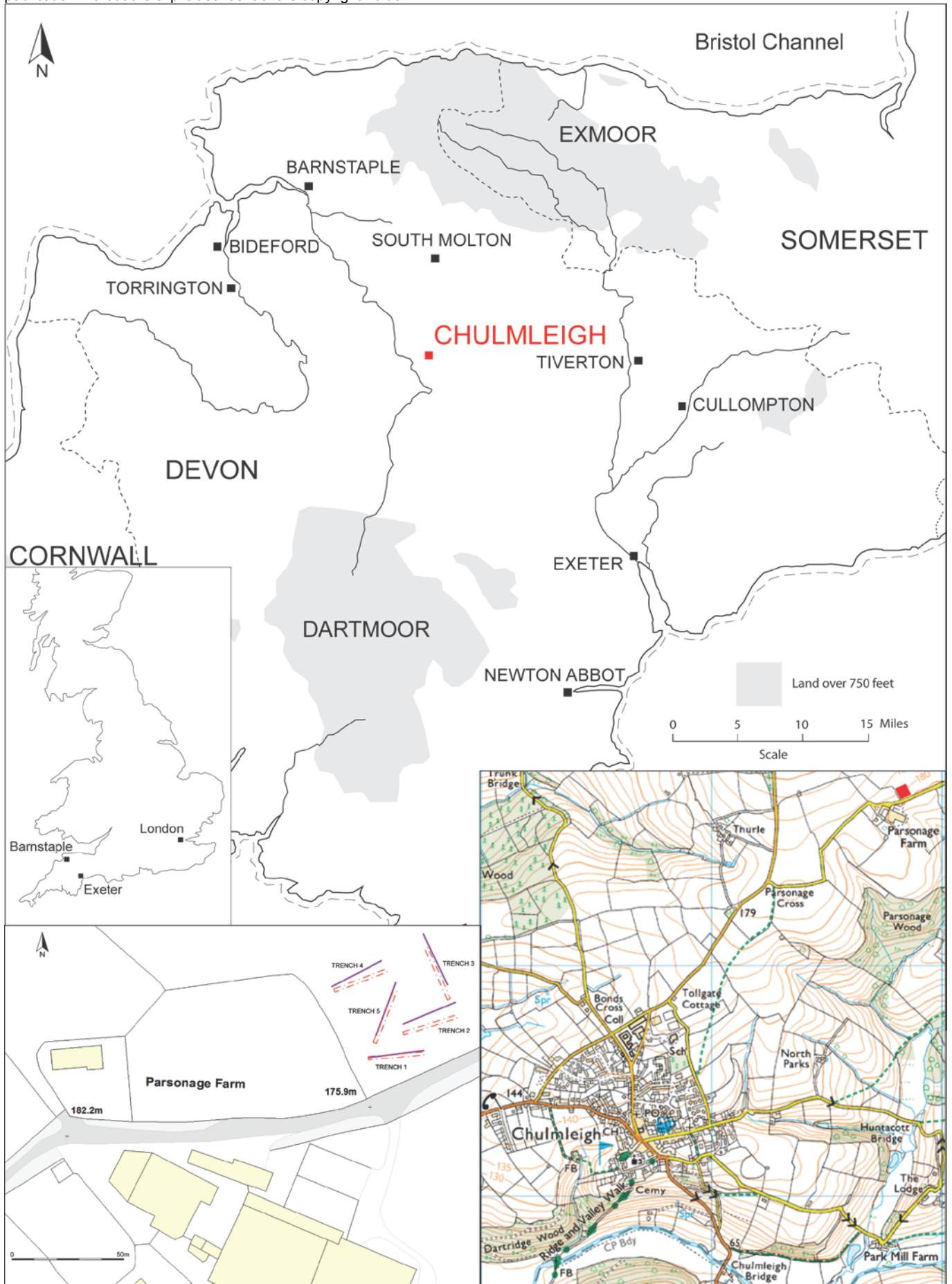


Figure 1: Site Location and trench locations (located trenches in red; proposed trench locations in purple).

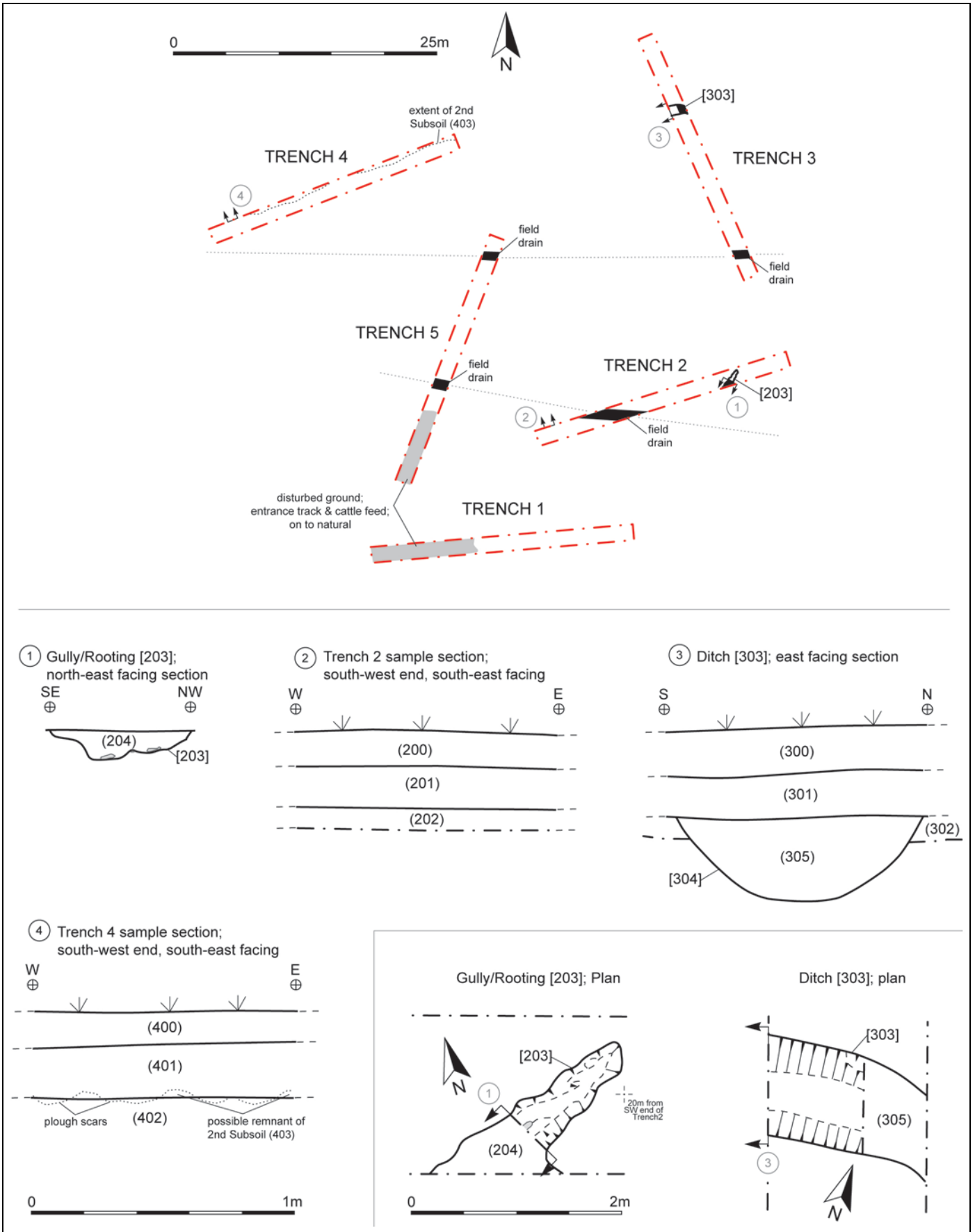


Figure 2: Trench plans and site drawings (greyscale numbers in plans correspond to section drawing numbers).



Figure 3: Gully/Rooting [203], viewed from the north-east (1m scale).



Figure 4: Ditch [303], viewed from the north-east (1m scale).



Figure 5: Trench 4 sample section, south-west end, viewed from the south-east (1m scale).



Figure 6: Trench 4, viewed from the south-west (2m scale) & Trench 5, viewed from the north-east (2m scale).