

# Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> Broadhembury, East Devon	<b>National Grid Reference</b> ST 1230 0554	<b>Number:</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Monitoring the creation of an area of hardstanding and timber stacking area in Coronation Plantation, Broadhembury		<b>Photo attached?</b> YES
<b>Planning Application no:</b> 14/2250/FUL	<b>Recipient museum:</b> N/A (no finds)	
<b>OASIS ID:</b> southwes1-197572	<b>Museum Accession no:</b>	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b> BWC14	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b> 6 <sup>th</sup> January, 2015	

## Introduction

South West Archaeology Ltd. monitored the removal of a section of hedgebank and a topsoil strip in advance of the creation of an area of hardstanding and timber stacking area within Coronation Plantation, Broadhembury. This work was undertaken at the request of Julian Ohlson of UPM Tilhill (the Client) and in accordance with a WSI drawn up in consultation with Stephen Reed (DCHET). An area 24.5x8.5m in extent was monitored (Figure 2); this work also entailed widening the access to the site, and thus a short segment of hedgebank was removed. This work was carried out by a 14t mechanical excavator using a 2m wide toothless grading bucket.

## Background

The site is located on the Blackdowns, north-east of Hembury hillfort on the same high ridge of land. In c.1840 the site lay on the edge of a large area of unenclosed rough grazing ('Blackdown') close to the parish boundary between Broadhembury and Awliscombe. By the 1880s the land had been enclosed and planted with trees (labelled 'New Plantation'); the 1940s RAF aerial photograph appear to show earthworks associated with iron extraction pits close to the site (MDV50040).

## Stratigraphy

The stratigraphy across the site was fairly simple, but formation levels did not reach the base of the topsoil in most areas. The roadside hedgebank {104} was c.1.3m high and c.1.5m wide; there were no hedge shrubs, but there were occasional mature beech trees, including one on the section of hedgebank to be removed. The bank comprised a single dump (105) of clean soft yellowish-brown clay silt with common chert fragments and frequent tree roots. This appeared to overlie material similar to (103) (see below) and a dark humic deposit of clay silt c.0.1m thick (110); the development of this humic deposit would perhaps suggest the hedgebank was preceded by a wide (i.e. 5-6m wide) ditch or possible holloway (see Figure Figures 2-5).

The hedgebank was flanked by ditches: the roadside ditch [106] was c.1.5m wide and c.0.4m deep (partly infilled) and the other ditch [108] was c.2.5m wide and 0.5m deep. Both features contained dark moist or wet humic fills. The southern half of the stripped area contained an area of metalling (tarmac and/or chippings) c.3m wide and c.9.5m long that spanned these ditches and gave access to the plantation from the road.

The former topsoil (101) was revealed in several areas; it was a firm mid-to-dark grey clay silt that contained common angular and sub-angular chert fragments (c.30-60mm diameter, rare examples up to 300mm across) and occasional charcoal fragments. At the north-western end of the strip this soil became looser and more akin to a brown earth, but also appeared more disturbed.

Much of the former topsoil layer (101) was sealed below a dump of clean firm stoneless yellow clay silt (103) that formed a broad low bank c.9m wide and 0.3-0.4m high that ran parallel to the hedgebank. There are traces of this material underlying the hedgebank (see Figure 7), but the bulk of the hedgebank (105) and the natural (112) contain frequent-to-abundant angular chert fragments, so it seems unlikely it was derived from *in situ* deposits. If not simply redeposited (perhaps from the post-enclosure creation of the adjacent road?), then the origin and function of this bank is unclear. It was cut by tree throws so pre-dates tree-planting and probably the hedgebank, but clearly post-dates topsoil (101). It is possible that, as the road south to Hembury sometimes runs along a raised bank, this may be a related feature (i.e. former or intended road). This material (103) was overlain by a thin (c.0.2m) moist root-filled humic grey clay-silt topsoil (111).

The natural (112) comprised coarse angular chert gravel in a clean whitish- to yellowish-grey gritty clay silt matrix.

**Results**

No features apart from tree-throws (oval or slightly curving features c.1-1.5m wide and c.2-3m long; identical features created when tree stumps were ripped out) and animal burrows were observed during the monitoring, and no finds were noted.

**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:** Dr Bryn Morris, South West Archaeology Ltd

**Date sent to HER:** 06.01.15

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. Any plans or photographs embedded within or attached to this form remain the copyright © of the recorder, and must not be reproduced in any publication without the explicit consent of the copyright holder.

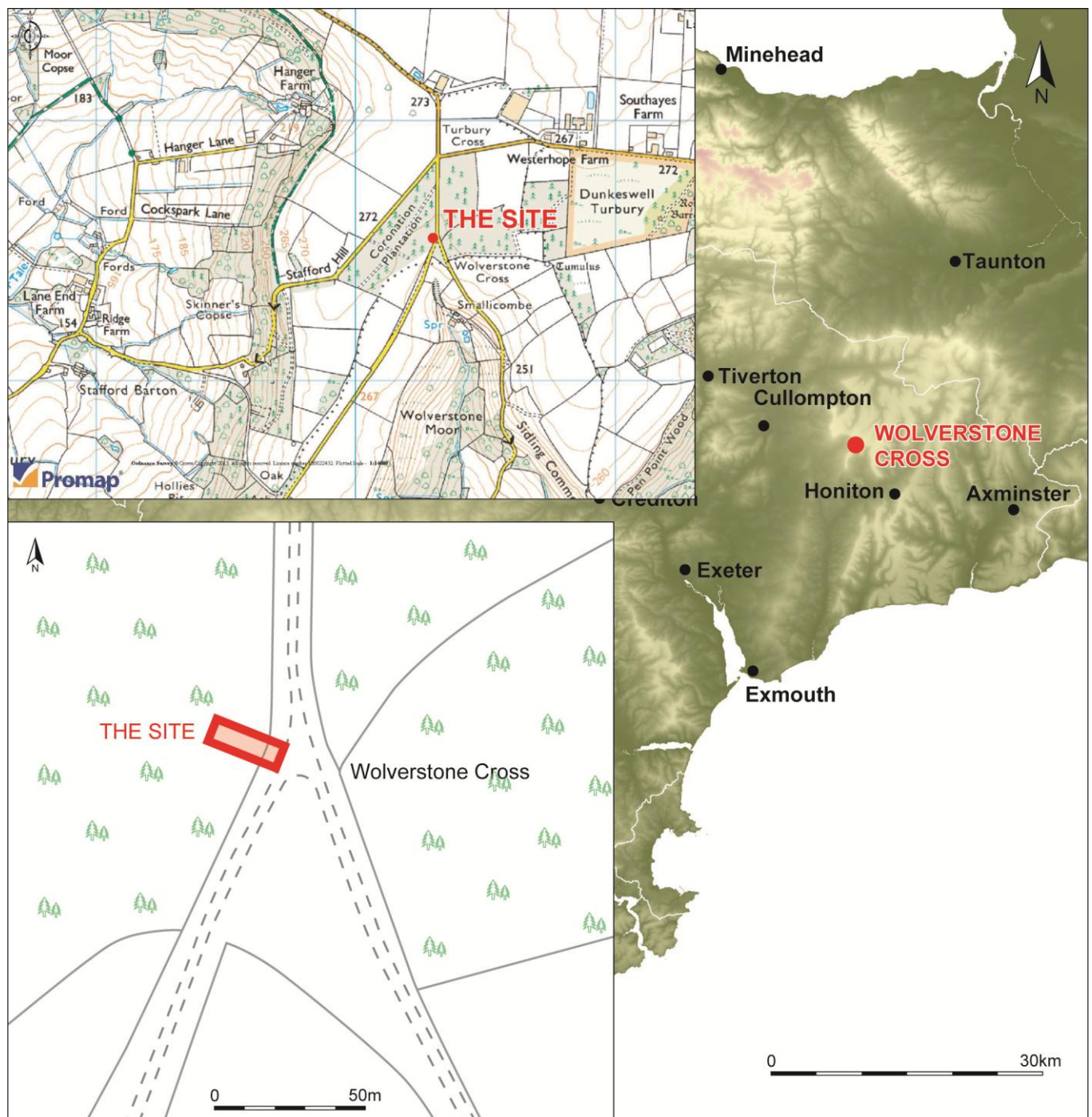


Figure 1: Location map.

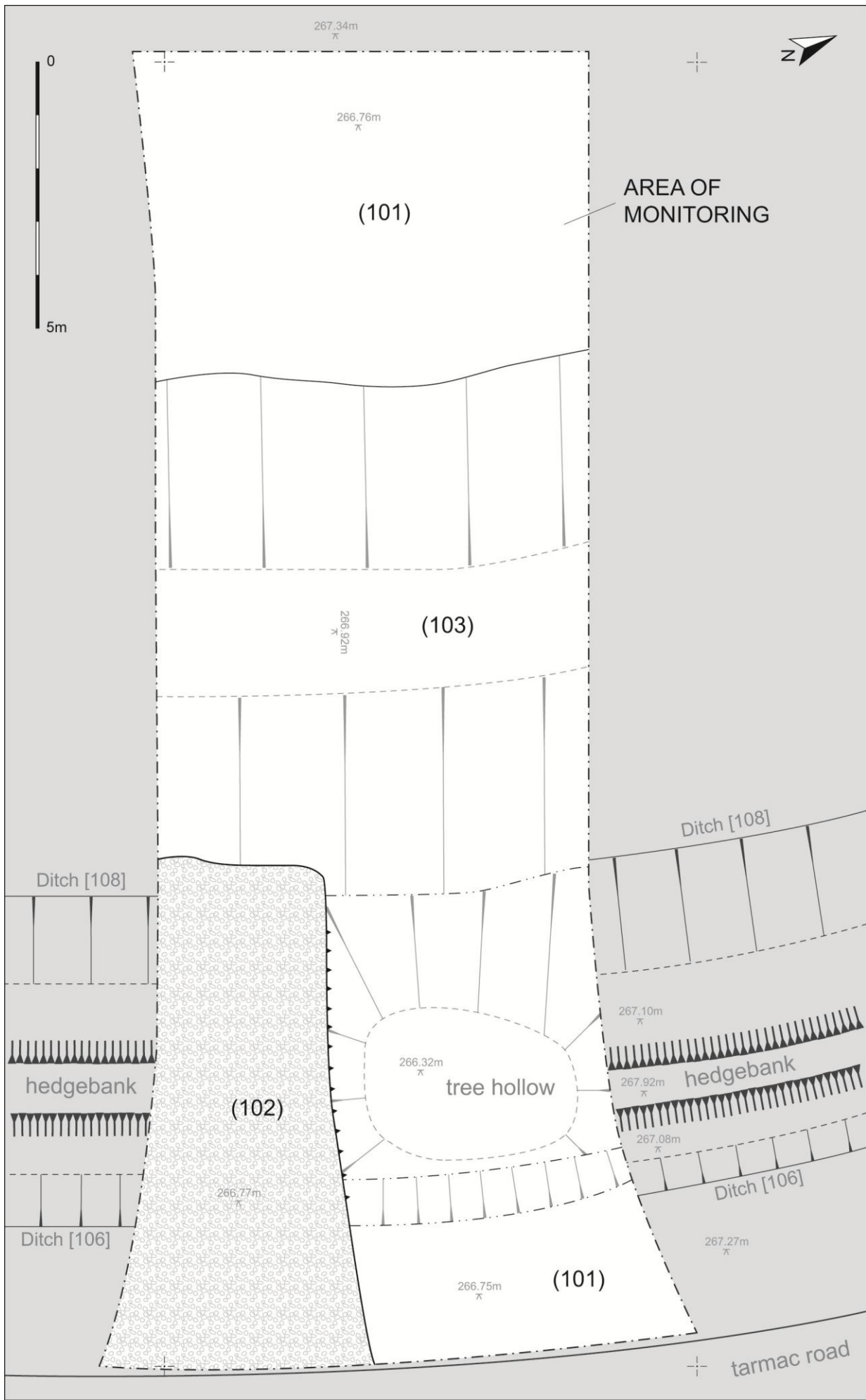


Figure 2: Site plan.



Figure 3: The excavator removing the beech tree stump; viewed from the south-south-east.



Figure 4: The completed strip; viewed from the south-east (scale 2m).



Figure 5: The completed strip; viewed from the east (scale 2m).



Figure 6: South-facing section through the hedgebank (scale 2m).