

LAND NEAR ALSWEAR OLD ROAD SOUTH MOLTON DEVON

Results of an Archaeological Gradiometer Survey



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Report No.: 150224
Date: 24.02.2015
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Land adjacent to Alswear Old Road, South Molton, Devon

Land near Alswear Old Road, South Molton, Devon

Results of an Archaeological Gradiometer Survey

For

Neil Kingdon

On behalf of

South Molton Rugby Club

By



SWARCH project reference: SMR15
National Grid Reference: SS 71669 25132
Planning Application Ref: Pre-planning
Project Director: Dr. Bryn Morris
Fieldwork Managers: Dr Bryn Morris
Project Officer: Joe Bampton
Fieldwork: Joe Bampton
Research: Joe Bampton
Report: Joe Bampton
Report Editing: Dr. Bryn Morris
Graphics: Joe Bampton

February 2015

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Summary

This report presents the results of a geophysical survey carried out by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) on land adjacent to Alswear Old Road, South Molton in Devon, as part of the pre-planning requirements for a proposed rugby pitch.

The survey identified a small number of archaeological anomalies, including the northern edge of a small sub-rectangular enclosure previously noted on aerial photographs. An irregular possible ditched routeway extends north-north-west from the enclosure. A double-ditched anomaly corresponding with a historic field boundary was also identified, as well as recent plough scars.

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Acknowledgements

Thanks for assistance are due to:

Neil Kingdon, on behalf of South Molton Rugby Club
Stephen Reed of the Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET)
The Staff of the Devon Record Office

1.0 Introduction

Location:	Land adjacent to Alswear Old Road
Parish:	South Molton
County:	Devon
NGR:	SS 71669 25132
Type of survey:	Gradiometer
Date of survey:	19.02.2015
Area surveyed:	1.53ha

1.1 Project Background

This report presents the results of a geophysical survey carried out by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) on land adjacent to Alswear Old Road, South Molton in Devon (Figure 1). The work was commissioned by Neil Kingdon on behalf of South Molton Rugby Club (the Client) in order to identify any archaeological sites or features that might be affected by the creation of a proposed rugby pitch.

1.2 Topographical and Geological Background

The location of the proposed development is on the slope of a low hill, at a height of between 144m and 149m AOD, in the south-west corner of a single large rectangular field on the south side of South Molton. The site is 2km south-west of the A361, 800m south of the heart of South Molton and 850m west of the river Mole on agricultural land between the Old and New Alswear Roads (see Figure 1).

The soils of this area are the well-drained fine loamy soils over slate or rubble of the Denbigh 2 Association (SSEW 1983). These overlie mudstones and siltstones of the Bude Formation (BGS 2015).

1.3 Historical Background

The place-name South Molton (unknown element *mol* + *OE Sud* and *tūn*), meaning ‘the south estate at a place called mol’ or ‘south estate on the River Mole’ (Watts 2004). It is suggested that the River Mole is a back-formation taken from these names, although it is possible the place took its name from the river. South Molton is one of a number of important estate centres in Devon that combine a river name with the suffix *tūn* (e.g. Tawton, Crediton, Okehampton etc.).

In 1086 William I held the Manor of South Molton (*Sudmoltone*), and four priests held c.30 acres of land from the king. In the 13th century it was held by Lord Martin, under the Earl of Gloucester. It later passed to Lord Audley and then back to the crown. It was then held by royal grant by the Hollands, Dukes of Exeter and then Margaret Countess of Richmond in 1487. Queen Elizabeth I granted it to Thomas Whitmore from whom it passed to Hugh Squier. The executors of William Squier purchased the manor in 1700. His father Hugh died in 1710.

South Molton, in the hundred and deanery of that name, was created as a borough in the 12th century and a fair was granted in 1327 (Beresford and Finberg 1973). Numerous boroughs were created in this period, principally with the purpose of boosting manorial incomes. The scheme was to concentrate the freemen of the manor in a settlement consisting of a wide main street with long, narrow burgage plots stretching out either side. The street would be wide enough to accommodate a regular weekly market from which the lord of the manor would take a levy. The prosperity of the borough relied on the woollen

trade and through the marketing of livestock. Prosperity declined in the 19th century and was modestly restored in the later 20th century.

In 1839 the land specific to the site was owned and occupied by one James Huxtable. The fields were under pasture and called 'Broom Park' and 'Broom Close'. *Broom* presumably refers to the common flowering shrub. These fields clearly lay within the open fields associated with South Molton, as the morphology of this fieldscape and the intermingled landholding would indicate.

1.4 Archaeological Background

The site is located on land characterised as *modern enclosures adapted from post-medieval fields* (Devon HLC). The land surrounding the site, particularly to the west, is characterised as *medieval enclosures based on strip fields* thus falling into the category of *Anciently Enclosed Land* (AEL).

There has been little or no archaeological investigation within the immediate area of the proposed site. However, a cropmark enclosure and relict fieldscape immediately to the south (MDV29582) may extend into the proposed site area. There are no Scheduled Monuments listed in the town. The Devon Historic Environment Record (HER) shows a number of various Grade I, Grade II* and Grade II Listed buildings throughout South Molton. Some of these are identified in Appendix 2, along with the other immediate heritage assets.

1.5 Methodology

The gradiometer survey follows the guidance outlined in *Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation* (English Heritage, 2008) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey* (IfA, 2011, updated 2013).

'Archaeological geophysical survey uses non-intrusive and non-destructive techniques to determine the presence or absence of anomalies likely to be caused by archaeological features, structures or deposits, as far as reasonably possible, within a specified area or site on land, in the inter-tidal zone or underwater. Geophysical survey determines the presence of anomalies of archaeological potential through measurement of one or more physical properties of the subsurface' (Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey 2011).

The results of the survey will, as far as possible, inform on the presence or absence, character, extent and, in some cases, apparent relative phasing of buried archaeology leading to the formulation of a strategy to mitigate a threat to the archaeological resource.

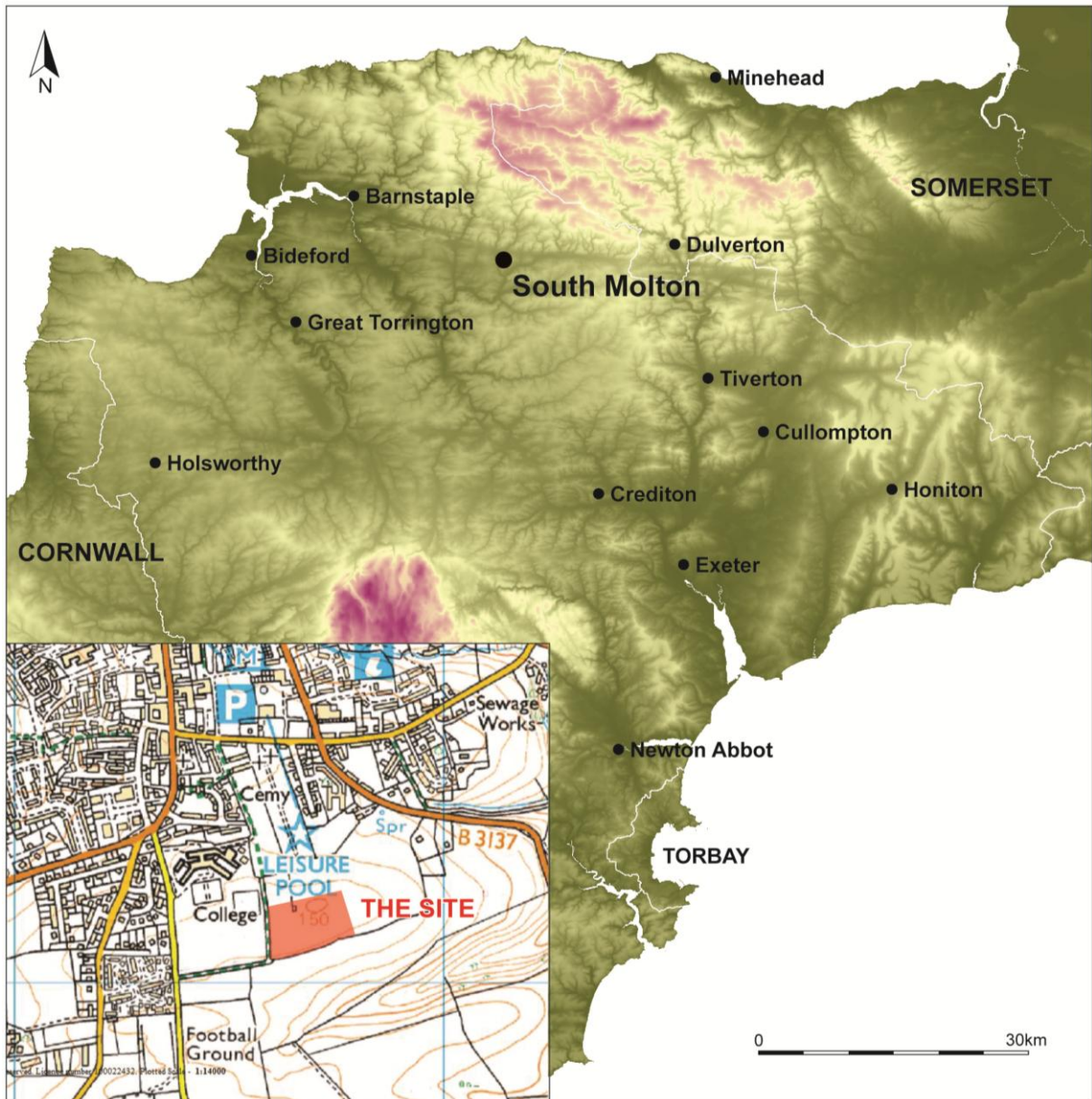


Figure 1: Site location (the location of the proposed development area is indicated).

2.0 Gradiometer Survey

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this survey was to identify and record magnetic anomalies. While the anomalies may relate to archaeological deposits and structures, the dimensions of recorded anomalies may not directly correspond with any associated archaeological features. The following discussion attempts to clarify and characterise any identified anomalies. The survey took place towards in February 2015 by SWARCH personnel in wet and showery conditions. The field contained a young winter cereal crop. The stony topsoil contained a reasonably large amount of pottery, glass and clay pipe fragments; the pottery was dominated by 19th century industrial white wares and post-medieval gravel-tempered North Devon wares; two sherds of Westerwald stoneware were also noted. The land sloped moderately-to-gently from the north to the south.

The results of geotechnical sampling were provided by the Client. These indicate the soil varies in depth from 200mm (presumably at the top of the slope) to 500mm.

The survey identified six groups of anomalies; Groups 1, 2 and 3 are of probable archaeological origin; Group 4 is of possible archaeological origin; Groups 5 and 6 are possible anomalies indicative of ferrous material and ploughing activity. Anomaly Group 1 equates to a historic field boundary. Group 2 equates to an undated rectangular enclosure identified on aerial photography (MDV29582). Group 3 is indicative of a pair of narrow ditches that run between Group 2 and a derelict structure in the north of the site and may relate to either, both or neither of these features. Group 4 comprises a group of weak anomalies, presumably reflecting poor survival, defining a possible rectangular enclosure with internal ditches. Group 5 is indicative of plough scars and Group 6 of metallic objects.

2.2 Methodology

The gradiometer survey follows the general guidance as outlined in: *Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation* (English Heritage, 2008) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey* (Institute for Archaeologists, 2011, updated 2013).

The survey was carried out using a twin-sensor fluxgate gradiometer (Bartington Grad601). These machines are sensitive to depths of up to 1.50m. The survey parameters were: sample intervals of 0.25m, traverse intervals of 1m, a zigzag traverse pattern, traverse orientation was circumstantial, grid squares of 30×30m. The gradiometer was adjusted ('zeroed') every 0.5-1ha. The survey grid was tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The data was downloaded onto *Grad601 Version 3.16* and processed using *TerraSurveyor Version 3.0.25.0*. The primary data plots and analytical tools used in this analysis were *Shade* and *Metadata*. The details of the data processing are as follows:

Processes: Clip +/- 3SD; DeStripe all traverses, median; DeStagger, offset in- and outbound by 3 intervals; Interpolate X and Y, double resolution.

Details: 1.53ha surveyed; Max. 144.91nT, Min. -113.28nT; Standard Deviation 7.09nT, mean 0.28nT, median 0nT.

2.3 Results

Figures 2 and 3 with the accompanying Table 1 show the analyses and interpretation of the geophysical survey data. Additional graphic images of the survey data can be seen in Appendix 3.

Anomaly group	Class and Certainty	Form	Archaeological characterisation	Comments
1	Strong negative and positive flanks, probable	Linear	Field Boundary. Removed after 1938	Field boundary present on 1830's tithe map and removed after 1938. Negative linear anomaly (bank material) with flanking positive anomalies (ditches)
2	Strong positive, probable	Linear	Pre-19 th century enclosure ditch	Northern part of an enclosure visible as part of a series of cropmarks in aerial photography (MDV29582)
3	Weak positive, probable	Linear	Possible drainage ditches	Possibly associated with enclosure in south-east of survey area and/or structure in north of survey area
4	Very weak positive, possible	Linear, irregular	Possible ditches within an enclosure	May denote shallow linear features within a rectangular enclosure
5	Weak positive and negative, possible	Linear	Plough scars	Striations indicative of ploughing activity
6	Strong dipolar, possible	Oval	Metallic debris	Strong dipolar responses indicative of metallic objects such as farm machinery within topsoil

Table 1: Interpretation of Gradiometer Survey data.

Land adjacent to Alswear Old Road, South Molton, Devon



Figure 2: Interpretation of gradiometer survey data (the 30m grid is shown in grey).

Land adjacent to Alswear Old Road, South Molton, Devon

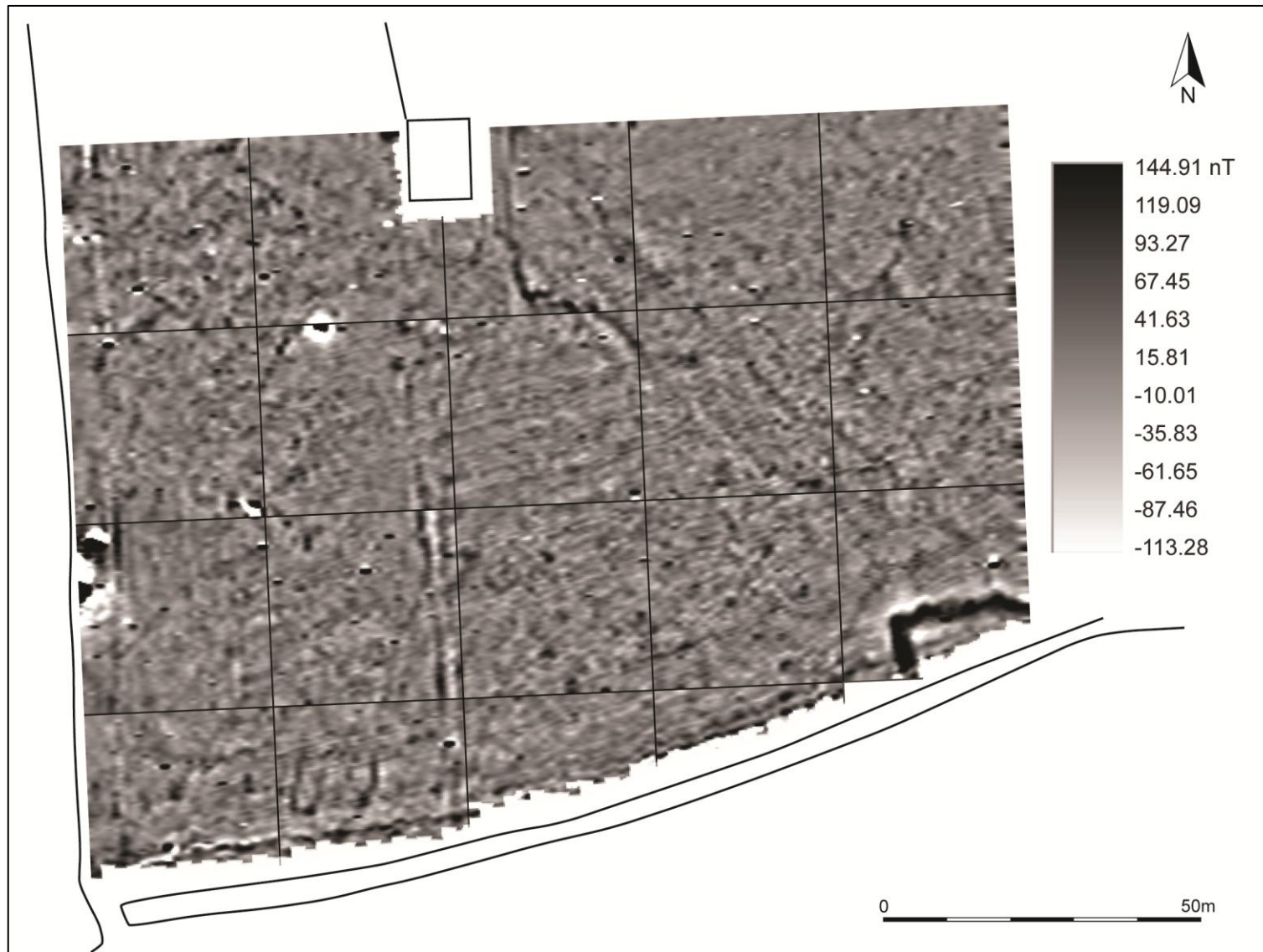


Figure 3: Shade plot of gradiometer survey results.

3.0 Discussion and Conclusion

3.1 Discussion

The survey identified six groups of anomalies; Groups 1, 2 and 3 were of probable archaeological origin; Group 4 was of possible archaeological origin; Groups 5 and 6 were possible anomalies indicative of ferrous material and ploughing activity.

Anomaly Group 1 equates to a historic field boundary, which is visible on the 1830's tithe map, aerial photography and Ordnance Survey mapping up to 1938 (see Appendix 4 for supporting images).

Group 2 equates to an undated rectangular enclosure identified on aerial photography (MDV29582) (see Appendix 4).

Group 3 is indicative of a pair of narrow ditches which run between Group 2 and an extant derelict structure in the north of the site and may relate to either, both or neither of these features.

Group 4 appear to be a series of cut features in an apparent rectangular area with subdivisions. These weak anomalies may reflect poor survival or the relatively slight nature of associated features or possibly natural variation within the geology possibly caused by subsurface erosion.

Group 5 is indicative of ploughing activity.

Group 6 is indicative of ferrous objects. These are probable pieces of farm machinery or fencing within the topsoil.

The amount of stone in the soil and firmness/stoniness of the ground during the survey, particularly on the top of the small hill in the field, is indicative of a shallow topsoil subject to modern ploughing; this probably means archaeological features in the upper part of the field will have been truncated or destroyed. This may account for the weak responses of many of the anomalies.

3.2 Conclusion

The geophysical survey would indicate there are features of archaeological origin present within the area of the proposed development associated with a mid 19th century or earlier field system and a Prehistoric or Romano-British enclosure. A number of linear anomalies occur within the development area that are not accounted for in the cartographic evidence and cannot be reliably attributed to specific archaeological period. It is possible that these features relate to Prehistoric/Romano-British activity (MDV29062 and MDV29582), or medieval activity associated with South Molton, the centre of which is less than 900m to the north.

Any development is likely to disturb any archaeological deposits or remains (see Appendix 4).

4.0 Bibliography & References

Published Sources:

- Beresford, M. & Finberg, H.** 1973: *English Medieval Boroughs – a Handlist*. Oxford.
- English Heritage** 2008: *Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation*.
- Institute for Archaeologists** 2011: (updated 2013) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey*.
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- Soil Survey of England and Wales** 1983: *Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales (a brief explanation of the constituent soil associations)*.
- Watts, V.** 2010: *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names*. Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, A & Martin, E.H.** (eds.) 2002: *Domesday Book*. Penguin Books, London.

Websites:

- British Geological Survey** 2014: *Geology of Britain Viewer*.
http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html [accessed 20.02.2015]
- Historic Environment Records** 2014: *Heritage Gateway*.
<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results.aspx> [accessed 20.02.2015]

Unpublished Sources:

Devon Record Office:

- South Molton Tithe Map 1844(?)
- South Molton Tithe Apportionment 1839
- Ordnance Survey 1st Edition map of 1889

Appendix 1

PROJECT DESIGN FOR GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY AT LAND ADJACENT TO ALSWEAR OLD ROAD, SOUTH MOLTON.

Location: Land Adjacent to Alswear Old Road
Parish: South Molton
County: Devon
NGR: SS 71669 25132
Planning no: Pre-planning
Proposal: Creation of a rugby pitch.
Date: 13th February 2015

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document forms a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which has been produced by South West Archaeology (SWARCH) at the request of Ian Kingdon on behalf of South Molton Rugby Club. It sets out the methodology for a geophysical survey to be undertaken in advance of the application for planning for the above development and for related off site analysis and reporting. The Project Design and the schedule of work it proposes were drawn up in consultation with Stephen Reed of the Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies approximately 250m away from South Molton Community College and 290m away from Alswear Old Road. It is located on land assessed on the Devon County Historic Landscape Characterisation as modern enclosures adapted from post-medieval fields. The land surrounding the site, particularly to the west, is characterised as medieval enclosures based on strip fields thus falling into the category of *Anciently Enclosed Land* (AEL).

There has been little or no archaeological investigation within the immediate area of the proposed site and there is nothing noted on the Devon Historic Environment Record for the proposed location or for the immediate or extended areas surrounding the site. However, there is documentary evidence of crop marks on the south-east edge of the site which may or may not extend into the proposed site area. There are no scheduled ancient monuments listed in the town, The HER shows a number of various Grade I, Grade II* and Grade II Listed buildings throughout South Molton.

3.0 AIMS

3.1 The principal objectives of the work will be to:

- 3.1.1 To observe and identify archaeological features through geophysical survey.
- 3.1.2 To analyse and report on the results of the project as appropriate.

4.0 METHOD

4.1 Geophysical Survey:

The programme of work shall include a magnetometer survey of c.2 hectares, covering the field in which the proposed development would be located. The results of this survey will inform whether an archaeological evaluation or further archaeological recording of any potential buried remains or other mitigation is required.

4.2 The Client will provide SWARCH with details of the location of existing services and of proposed groundworks within the site area, and of the proposed construction programme.

4.3 Health and Safety requirements will be observed at all times by any archaeological staff working on site, particularly when working with machinery. As a minimum: high-visibility jackets, safety helmets and protective footwear will be worn.

4.4.1 Appropriate PPE will be employed at all times.

4.4.2 The site archaeologist will undertake any site safety induction course provided by the Client.

5.0 REPORTING

- 5.1 The type of report produced will be agreed with the HET in view of the results. If a full report is produced it will include the following elements:
- 5.1.1 A report number, date and the OASIS record number;
 - 5.1.2 A copy of this WSI;
 - 5.1.3 A summary of the project's background;
 - 5.1.4 A description and illustration of the site location;
 - 5.1.5 A methodology of the works undertaken, and an evaluation of that methodology;
 - 5.1.6 Plans and reports of all documentary and other research undertaken;
 - 5.1.7 A summary of the project's results;
 - 5.1.8 An interpretation of the results in the appropriate context;
 - 5.1.9 A summary of the contents of the project archive and its location (including summary catalogues of finds and samples);
 - 5.1.10 A location plan and overall site plan including the location of areas subject to archaeological recording;
 - 5.1.11 A description of any remains and deposits identified including an interpretation of their character and significance;
 - 5.1.12 A consideration of the evidence within its wider context;
 - 5.1.13 Specialist assessment or analysis reports where undertaken.
- 5.2 DCHET will receive the report within three months of completion of fieldwork.
- 5.7 A copy of the report detailing the results of these investigations will be submitted to the OASIS (*Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations*) database under reference Southwes1-204619 within 3 months of completion of fieldwork.

7.0 ARCHIVE

- 7.1 On completion of the project an ordered and integrated site archive will be prepared in accordance with the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)(<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/morphe-project-managers-guide/>). The digital element of the archive will be transferred to the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) for long-term curation. A reference number will be obtained from the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon (MBND), with regard deposition of the material (finds) element of any archive created by these works.
- 7.2 The archive will consist of two elements, the digital archive and the material archive.
- 7.2.1 The digital archive, including digital copies of all relevant written and drawn records and photographs, will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) and in compliance with their standards and requirements.
 - 7.2.2 The material archive, comprising the retained artefacts/samples and the hardcopy paper record (if requested) will be cleaned (or otherwise treated), ordered, recorded, packed and boxed in accordance with the deposition standards of the MBND, and in a timely fashion.
 - 7.2.3 If the MBND wishes to retain the hardcopy paper archive, it will be deposited with the rest of the material archive under the same accession number. Should the MBND decline the hardcopy paper archive, that archive will be offered to other appropriate museum bodies or the HET. If a suitable third party cannot be found, the hardcopy paper archive will be retained by SWARCH for 3 years and then destroyed.
- 7.3 SWARCH will, on behalf of the MBND obtain a written agreement from the landowner to transfer title to all items in the material archive to the receiving museum.
- 7.4 If ownership of all or any of the finds is to remain with the landowner, provision and agreement must be made for the time-limited retention of the material and its full analysis and recording, by appropriate specialists.
- 7.5 SWARCH will notify the HET upon the completion of:
- i) deposition of the digital archive with the ADS, and
 - ii) deposition of the material (finds) archive with the museum.
- 7.6 The condition placed upon this development will not be regarded as discharged until the report has been produced and submitted to the HET and the LPA, the site archive deposited and the OASIS form completed.
- 7.7 The archive will be completed within 3 months of the completion of the final report.

8.0 CONFLICT WITH OTHER CONDITIONS AND STATUTORY PROTECTED SPECIES

Even where groundworks are being undertaken under the direct control and supervision of SWARCH personnel, it remains the responsibility of the Client - in consultation with SWARCH, the applicant or

agent - to ensure that the required archaeological works do not conflict with any other conditions that have been imposed upon the consent granted and should also consider any biodiversity issues as covered by the NERC Act 2006. In particular, such conflicts may arise where archaeological investigations/excavations have the potential to have an impact upon protected species and/or natural habitats e.g. SSSIs, National Nature Reserves, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Ramsar sites, County Wildlife Sites etc.

9.0 PERSONNEL & MONITORING

9.1 The project will be managed by Dr. Brynmor Morris; the archaeological monitoring and building recording will be undertaken by SWARCH personnel with appropriate expertise and experience. Where necessary, appropriate specialist advice will be sought (see list of consultant specialists in Appendix 1 below).

Clair Wyatt South West Archaeology

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Appendix 1 – List of specialists

Building recording

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Conservation

Alison Hopper Bishop the Royal Albert Memorial Museum Conservation service a.hopperbishop@exeter.gov.uk
Richard and Helena Jaeschke 2 Bydown Cottages, Swimbridge, Barnstaple EX32 0QD mrshjaeschke@email.msn.com
Tel: 01271 830891

Curatorial

Thomas Cadbury Curator of Antiquities Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Bradninch Offices, Bradninch Place, Gandy Street, Exeter EX4 3LS Tel: 01392 665356

Bone

Human Professor Chris Knusel University of Exeter Tel: 01392 722491 c.j.knusel@ex.ac.uk
Animal Wendy Howard Department of Archaeology, Laver Building, University of Exeter, North Park Road, Exeter EX4 4QE
w.j.howard@exeter.ac.uk Tel: 01392 269330

Lithics

Martin Tingle Higher Brownston, Brownston, Modbury, Devon, PL21 OSQ martin@mtingle.freemove.co.uk

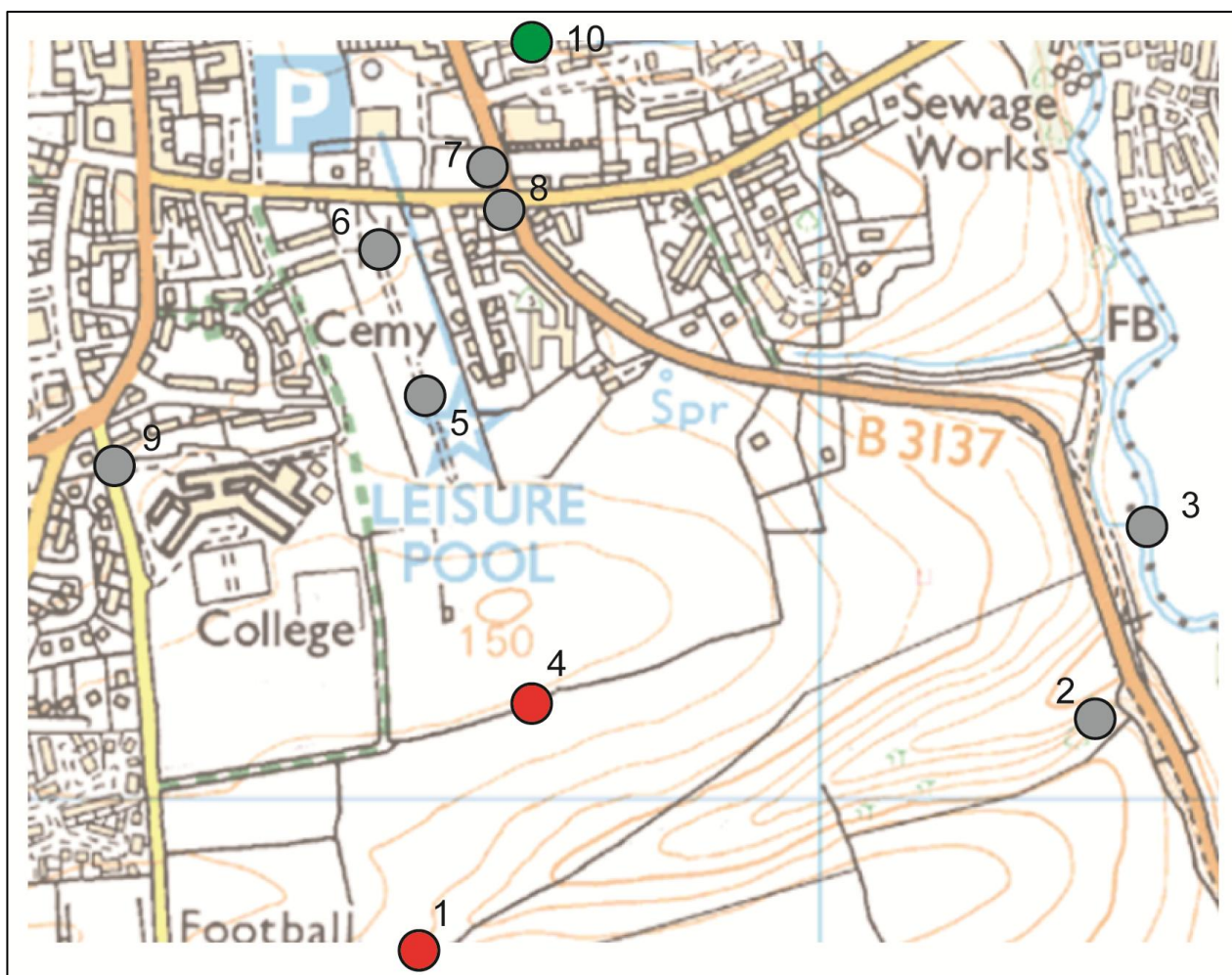
Palaeoenvironmental/Organic

Wood identification Dana Challinor Tel: 01869 810150 dana.challinor@tiscali.co.uk
Plant macro-fossils Julie Jones juliedjones@blueyonder.co.uk
Pollen analysis Ralph Fyfe Room 211, 8 Kirkby Place, Drake Circus, Plymouth, Devon, PL4 8AA

Pottery

Prehistoric Henrietta Quinnell 39D Polsloe Road, Exeter EX1 2DN Tel: 01392 433214
Roman Alex Croom, Keeper of Archaeology Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, Arbeia Roman Fort and Museum, Baring Street, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE332BB Tel: (0191) 454 4093 alex.croom@twmuseums.org.uk
Medieval John Allen, 22, Rivermead Road Exeter EX2 4RL Tel: 01392 256154 john.p.allan@btinternet.com
Post Medieval Graham Langman Exeter, EX1 2UF Tel: 01392 215900 email: su1429@eclipse.co.uk

Appendix 2
Key Heritage Assets

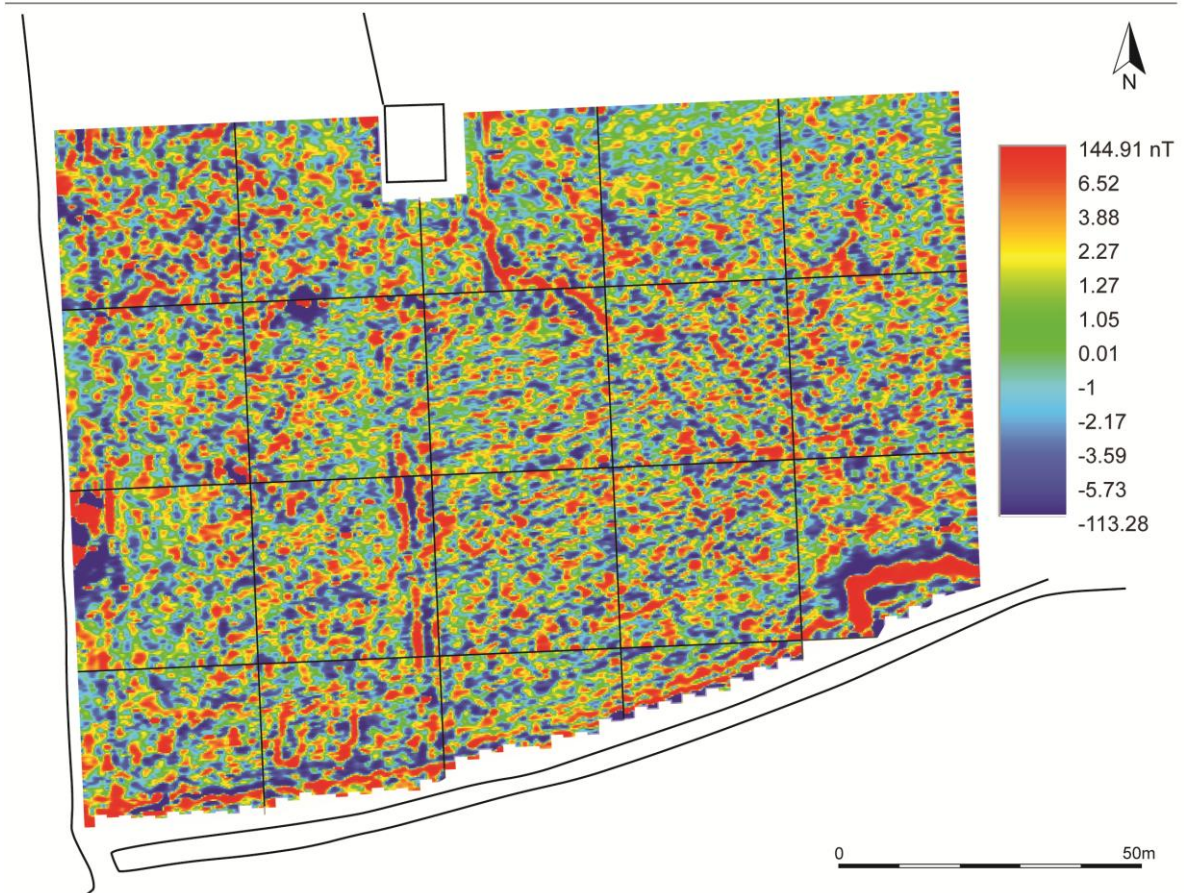
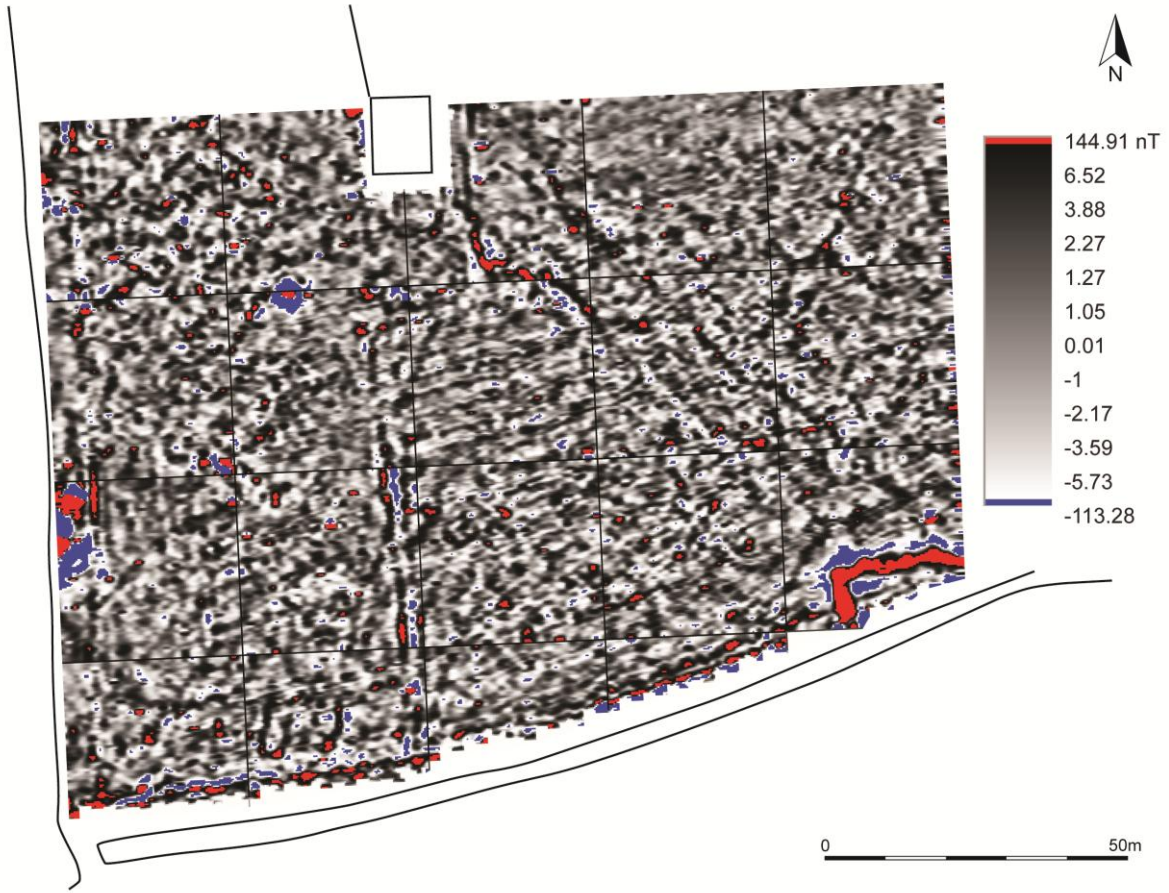


Map of nearby heritage assets according to the Devon Historic Environment Record (HER).

No.	HER No.	Site Name	Record	Notes
1	MDV29062	-	Cropmark	Several superimposed, possibly Prehistoric, enclosures
2	MDV34458	-	Cartographic	Quarry, modern
3	MDV34457	-	Cartographic	Disused tucking mill, modern
4	MDV29582	-	Cropmark	Prehistoric enclosure
5	MDV51875	South Molton Cemetery	Extant Structure	Laid out in 1857
6	MDV51877	Pair of Chapels	Extant Structure	Grade I Listed
7	MDV51873	New Road	Extant Structure	'Bunker's New Road' built in 1840's
8	MDV51874	Toll House	Extant Structure	Junction of New Road Mill Street and entrance to Alswear New Road
9	MDV97874	32, Woodville, South Street	Extant Structure	Grade II Listed late 19 th century house
10	MDV60809	Burgage plots	Cartographic	12 th century on ward, running south from Broad Street
Other 18 th and 19 th century buildings listed on the Historic Environment Record can be found in the north-west corner of the map extract above. Some examples of these have been given above.				

List of nearby heritage assets (source: Devon HER).

Appendix 3
Additional Graphic Images of Gradiometer Survey Data



Appendix 4
Supporting Images



Extract of 1844(?) Tithe map for the Parish of South Molton (the site is indicated).



Extract from 1889 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map (the site is indicated).



Aerial photograph viewing the site from the north-west; the enclosure cropmark (MDV29582) is indicated (image courtesy of DCHET).



Wide-angle lens photograph of the site, viewed from the south-west corner looking north-north-east (no scale).

Land adjacent to Alswear Old Road, South Molton, Devon



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