

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Virginstow, Torridge	National Grid Reference SX 39580 93489	Number:
Subject: Archaeological monitoring and recording on land at Bradaford Farm, Virginstow, during groundworks associated with the installation of a communications mast & service trench		Photo attached? YES
Planning Application no: 1/0860/2018/TEL	Recipient museum: Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon	
OASIS ID: southwes1-330936	Museum Accession no: N/A	
Contractor's reference number/code: ABB18	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 22 nd January 2019	
<p>Description of works: Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of Airband Community Internet Ltd (the Clients), during groundwork associated with the installation of a communications mast and cable trench at Bradaford Farm, Virginstow, Devon (Figure 1). This work was undertaken on 22nd January 2019 in accordance with a Project Design drawn up in consultation with the Devon County Historic Environment Team.</p> <p>The site lies across two fields south of Bradaford Farm, c.2km north-east of Virginstow and 1.8km south-south-east of Ashwater. It is on a relatively level plateau (c.203m AOD) on a north-east by south-west aligned ridge in a river valley landscape between the River Carey to the north and west and River Wolf (including Roadford Lake reservoir) to the east, and their tributaries. The soils of the area are the well-drained fine loamy soils often over rock of the Neath Association (SSEW 1983), which overlie the mudstone and siltstone of the Crackington Formation (BGS 2019). Bradaford was recorded in Domesday as a small estate with a single household, worth c.30 pence. It was held by Sæwine before the conquest and Nigel, from Ludichael of Totnes, in 1086 (Morris 1992). Bradaford's name is derived from the Old English <i>brāda</i> and <i>ford</i> meaning 'broad ford' (Watts 2004). The Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) depicts the northern field of the site as medieval enclosure based on strip fields; and the southern field as post-medieval enclosures. The 1803 Surveyor's Draft map for the Holsworthy area shows some post-medieval enclosure in the area and an irregular curving boundary running across what could later be the northern field of the site. The 1839 tithe map and subsequent Ordnance Survey mapping up to 1906 shows the site and field-scape much as it is today with a structure in the location of what today is <i>Higher Bradaford</i>, at the north end of the site. Aerial photography from the 1940's shows that <i>Higher Bradaford</i> had expanded to a small farmstead by the mid 20th century. The Devon Historic Environment Record lists a soil-mark square enclosure (MDV2775) in the south field of the site. The square enclosure was identified on aerial photography.</p> <p>A 1.8m wide trench was stripped to the depth of weathered natural under archaeological supervision along the length of the proposed cable trench (c.370m) and mast location. Excavations were c.0.25m deep and conducted using a tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. Two undated ditches, a natural feature (probably root disturbance) and modern service trenches were present (see Figures 1-4). The cable trenching subsequently ran along this stripped corridor, but was not monitored.</p> <p>Topsoil (100)/(200) consisted of a mid yellow-brown, friable clay-silt (0.18-0.26m deep). In the north field this overlaid a ploughsoil (101), a mid reddish-brown, friable clay-silt with occasional stone, c.0.08m thick; and in the south field it overlaid the natural, (102)/(201), a light mottled brown-yellow with reddish stony patches, compact stony clay.</p> <p>Two archaeological features, Ditches [103] and [106] were exposed, and a single natural feature, likely root disturbance (see Figures 1-4). Ditch [103] was a linear feature aligned approximately east-west, 1.86m wide and 0.40m deep, with a gentle-moderate south slope and a moderate-steep north slope with gentle concave breaks of slope and a flattish base. It contained two fills; lower fill (104), a light blue-grey, firm silt-clay with frequent angular stone; and upper fill (105), a mid yellow-brown, soft-friable clay-silt with occasional burnt clay or brick flecks. Fill (105) was sealed by ploughsoil (101). Ditch [106] was a linear feature aligned approximately north-south, 0.60m wide and 0.10m deep, with gentle-moderate sides and a flattish base. It contained a single fill, (107), a mid brown-grey, friable clay-silt with frequent shillet and stony gravel, overlain by (101).</p> <p>Ditch [103] may tentatively equate to a boundary depicted on 1803 mapping. Ditch [106] was perpendicular to it and may equate to part of the same field system. There was no evidence of an enclosure in the southern field. The only finds on site were from Topsoil (100): x3 sherds (3g) of white refined earthenware that were subsequently discarded.</p> <p>Bibliography: Morris, J. 1992: <i>Domesday Book</i>. Phillimore. Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983: <i>Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales</i> Watts, V. 2004: <i>The Cambridge Dictionary to English Place Names</i>. Cambridge University Press. British Geological Survey 2019: <i>Geology of Britain Viewer</i>. http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html</p>		
Recorder: J. Bampton	Date sent to HER: 31/01/2019	



FIGURE 2: DITCH [103]; VIEWED FROM THE EAST-NORTH-EAST (2M SCALE).



FIGURE 3: DITCH [106]; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-SOUTH-EAST (1M SCALE).



FIGURE 4: TRENCH IN THE SOUTHERN FIELD; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (1M SCALE).