

# Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> Ilfracombe, North Devon	<b>National Grid Reference:</b> SS 53447 47754	<b>Number:</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Emergency recording at 22 Beach Road, Hele Bay, North Devon, Devon		<b>Photo attached?</b> YES
<b>Planning Application no:</b> N/A	<b>Recipient museum:</b> Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon (MBND)	
<b>OASIS ID:</b> southwes1-331841	<b>Museum Accession no:</b> N/A	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b> IHB18	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b> 14 <sup>th</sup> April 2018	
<p><b>Description of works:</b></p> <p>Emergency recording work was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. at the request of a Private Client following the removal of a retaining wall to the rear of 22 Beach Road, Hele Bay, Ilfracombe, Devon. This wall retains a footpath that runs along the south-eastern side of a Scheduled promontory fort (Hillsborough – SAM1002512); the wall was damaged during the construction of an access ramp. The recording was carried out by B. Morris on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2018; this work was undertaken in accordance with ClfA guidelines and at the request of Nick Russell (Historic England).</p> <p>The site lies in an area of clear archaeological interest on the eastern boundary of Hillsborough Promontory Fort; survey work has identified defensive ditches, and settlement activity within the interior. The settlement at Hele has its origins in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but is essentially a 19<sup>th</sup> century settlement associated with the growth of tourism. The site is located on the north-western edge of Hele at a height of c.75-80m AOD (Figure 1). The soils of this hillside are the well-drained fine loamy and fine silty soils over rock of the Denbigh 1 Association (SSEW 1983), overlying slates of the Combe Martin Slates Member (BGS 2018).</p> <p>A linear access track c.15m long and 2m wide was excavated by tracked mechanical excavator to allow equipment and materials to be brought to the house during its repair and redevelopment. The new sloping track drops steeply down from the adjacent footpath on an approximate south-west to north-east orientation; unfortunately, it removed part of the wall retaining the footpath leading to a partial collapse. Two short sections were cleaned and examined, as the central part of the area was shored and supported against further collapse. The sections and adjacent spoil were examined for artefacts, but no finds were observed.</p> <p>The footpaths extending across the promontory were built after 1895 as part of the development of the area for tourism and public benefit. The footpath in question is partly cut into the slope, and retained to the lower side by a drystone wall {104} of slatestone rubble up to 1.3m high; the wall is constructed in alternating sections of pitched and horizontal stonework. The surface of the footpath (103) is comprised of angular and sub-angular stone within a compacted layer of dark grey-brown clay-silt. Behind wall {104}, and below surface (103), is a buried topsoil (100). This topsoil is a layer of stony friable-soft dark grey-brown clay-silt loam up to c.0.30m thick. This overlies a mid friable-soft yellow-brown clayey-silt subsoil (101) up c.0.25m thick, trending into the natural slate bedrock (102) beneath.</p> <p><b>Discussion and Conclusion</b></p> <p>Two features were identified during the works: a footpath and stone-built retaining wall. The footpath was created after 1895 as part of the landscaping of Hillsborough as a recreation area, and does not appear to follow the line of an earlier feature. Earthworks and a rock-cut ditch to the north-east seem quite different in character and appear to terminate some (c.70m) distance away. The condition of the retaining wall is variable along its length; a section immediately to the south-west is supported by a battered wall of concrete blocks. The construction of the footpath is likely to have disturbed any archaeological features along its length and no features or artefacts were observed during the site visit.</p> <p><b>Bibliography</b></p> <p><b>British Geological Survey 2018:</b> <i>Geology of Britain Viewer</i>.  <a href="http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html">http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html</a> [accessed 18.04.2018].</p> <p><b>Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983:</b> <i>Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales</i>.</p>		
<b>Recorder:</b> P. Webb & S. Walls		<b>Date sent to HER:</b> 24.10.18

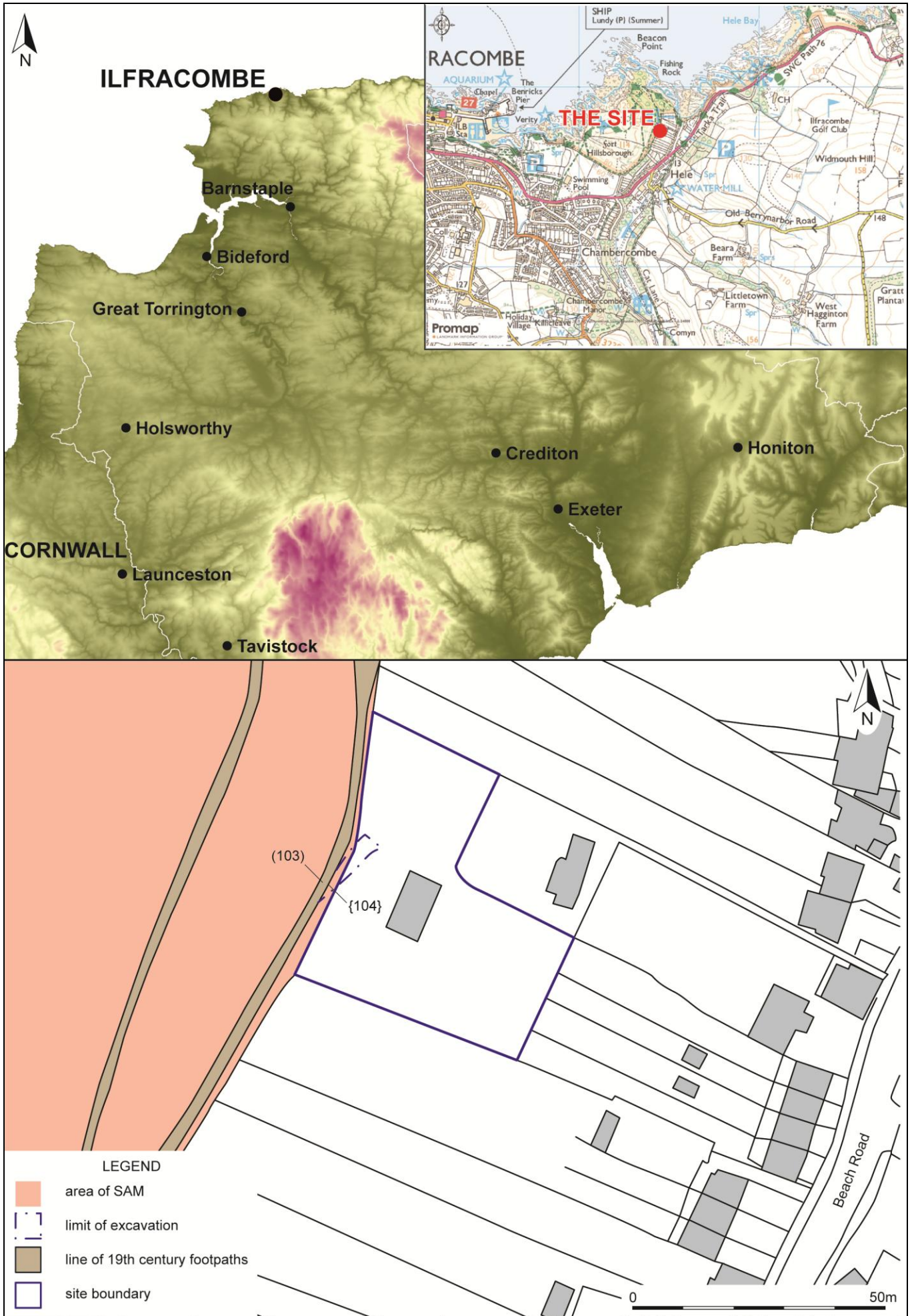


FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION AND SITE PLAN SHOWING LOCATION OF EXCAVATED AREAS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES.





FIGURE 2: SOUTH-EAST FACING SECTION SHOWING THE STRATIGRAPHY BEHIND RETAINING WALL {104}; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST (2M SCALE).



FIGURE 3: LEFT -SOUTH-EAST FACING ELEVATION OF WALL {104}, SHOWING ALTERNATING SECTIONS OF HORIZONTAL AND PITCHED SLATESTONE; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST (2M SCALE). RIGHT – SITE RE-INSTATED IN OCTOBER 2018, FROM THE SOUTH (CLIENT).