

Land at Crealy Adventure Park, Clyst St Mary, Devon

NGR SS 99424 90384

Interim report on the results of an archaeological trench
evaluation

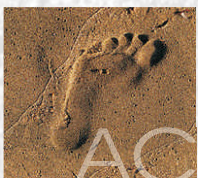
Planning ref. East Devon District Council 07/3218/MFUL

Prepared by
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On behalf of
Maximum Fun Ltd

Document No: ACD294/2/0

Date: June 2011



archaeology

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Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology during May 2011 on land at Crealy Adventure Park, Clyst St Mary, Devon (NGR SX 99424 90384). The site occupies approximately 5.7 hectares of land to the east of Clyst St Mary and to the south of Sidmouth Road. The land-use at the time of the evaluation was pasture used for grazing horses.

The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of three trenches totalling 120m in length, with each 1.6m wide. These were positioned close to the recorded position of a Bronze Age barrow in the Phase 1 access road part of the development only, with further trenches to be excavated during Phase 2. A shallow and irregular linear feature containing charcoal was identified within Trench 2, with the other two trenches containing wholly negative results.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trench evaluation on land at Crealy Adventure Park, Clyst St Mary, Devon, was undertaken by AC archaeology during May 2011. The work was commissioned by Maximum Fun Ltd and was required by East Devon District Council as a condition of planning consent, as advised by Devon County Council Historic Environment Service (hereafter DCHES). The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.
- 1.2 The work was carried out in association with the erection of 15 holiday lodges, 3 fishing/amenity lakes, landscaping, Biomass heating plant and reception lodge with associated access tracks (Phase 1) and outline planning permission for the erection of a further 15 holiday lodges.
- 1.3 The application site covers a total of approximately 5.7 hectares of land to the east of Clyst St Mary and south of Sidmouth Road (the current A3052). The dispersed proposed development includes 12 plots of largely arable and pasture fields (Plate 1), as well as the location of a paint ball business. Across the site the ground generally slopes gradually from the north and south to a low-lying plateau bisected by two tributaries of the River Clyst, including the Grindle Brook. The site lies between 36m and 22m OD, with the underlying solid geology comprising Exmouth Mudstone and Sandstone formation.
- 1.4 This report presents the results from Trenches 1-3 only, which were positioned on the line of the new access track (Phase 1) to the main holiday lodge complex. Further evaluation trenches on the west side of the track and in the position of where the holiday lodges are proposed will be undertaken prior to commencement of groundworks in that area.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Prior to the start of the evaluation a desk-based appraisal was undertaken to establish the archaeological potential of the site. This included:
 - Archaeological and historical data held by Devon County Council's Historic Environment Record (DCHER)
 - Historical cartographic and documentary information at Devon Record Office (DRO) and Westcountry Studies Library (WCSL)
 - A site inspection
- 2.2 The location of the current Crealy Barton Farmstead is on the site of the settlement of Creely, which was probably in existence before 1066 (DCHER ref. 15527). It was known to be part of

the Priory of St. James estate in the 12th century, and later belonged to the Manor of Bishops Clyst. The current house, which dates from the 1920s, contains some 16th century plasterwork (10301) that was transferred from the old farmhouse.

- 2.3 There are no known archaeological features present within the development proposal. However, the site of a possible barrow is present immediately adjacent to Plots 1 and 2, which survives as a low mound present within a garden (DCHER ref. 4106). To the north of the site the current Sidmouth Road represents the route of a Roman Road from Exeter to Charmouth (18536).
- 2.4 An estate map of 1814 and the Farringdon parish tithe map of 1839 depicts the farm complex of Crealy Barton as a number of buildings, with the proposed development area within the surrounding field system which extends into Clyst St Mary parish. The accompanying apportionment names many of the fields as 'close' suggesting a post-medieval origin for the current layout. The Ordnance Survey 25-inch maps of 1889 and 1903 show little change to that depicted on the earlier maps.
- 2.5 The present arrangement of Crealy Barton is now much changed with little survival of the buildings previously depicted. The development of the Crealy Adventure Park occupies the area of Crealy Barton and the fields to the south, while the surrounding area remains largely unchanged from the 19th century.

3. AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the trial trench evaluation were to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any archaeological features, deposits or finds within the Phase 1 access track area. The results of the work as set out in this report will be reviewed and used to inform any subsequent mitigation as a second stage of archaeological works.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design prepared by AC archaeology (Hughes 2011), submitted to and approved by DCHES prior to the commencement on site. The full evaluation will comprise the machine excavation of twenty trenches totalling 680m in length. The initial stage of work comprised the machine excavation of the first three trenches, totalling 120m in length, with each trench 1.6m wide, the results from which are covered within this report. The trenches were located within Plots 1 and 2 and were positioned close to the location of a possible barrow, as well as targeting the area that would be affected by the construction of the new trackway (Fig. 1).
- 4.2 Trenches were excavated using a machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket working under the control and direction of the site archaeologist. They were excavated to the level at which either archaeological deposits were exposed or natural subsoil was encountered.
- 4.3 All deposits revealed were recorded using the standard AC archaeology pro-forma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 1*. Detailed sections and plans were produced at a scale of 1:20 or 1:50. All site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Trench 1

This trench was 30m long, 1.6m wide and was orientated east to west. The trench was excavated to a depth ranging between 0.27m and 0.58m onto natural subsoil. The recorded

layer sequence consisted of a light greyish-brown compact silty sandy clay topsoil (context 100) with common rounded stone inclusions, directly overlying a dark orange-brown sandy clay natural subsoil (101), which contained patches of clay and common rounded stone inclusions. No archaeological features or deposits were present and no finds recovered.

5.2 Trench 2 (Detailed plan and section Fig. 2, Plate 2)

This trench was 30m long, 1.6m wide and was orientated approximately north to south within the southeast corner of Plot 2. The trench was excavated to a depth ranging between 0.23m and 0.49m directly onto natural subsoil (201). This was composed of a dark orange-brown compact clay with common small rounded stones and small fragments of manganese. This was overlain by a light greyish-brown compact silty clay topsoil containing common small rounded stone inclusions (200). A small possible linear feature (F203) on a NW-SE alignment was identified towards the centre of the trench. F203 was 0.23m wide, 0.13m deep and had irregular sides and an undulating base. The fill was very similar to the surrounding natural subsoil, being composed of a compact mid yellowish-brown slightly silty clay, although it did contain frequent charcoal. No finds were recovered.

5.3 Trench 3

This was a T-shaped trench in plan and measured a total of 60m in length. Natural subsoil (301) was encountered from a depth ranging between 0.24m and 0.38m, with this composed of a dark orangey-brown compact clay with common rounded small stone inclusions and common small fragments of manganese. This was overlain by a light greyish-brown compact silty clay topsoil (300), containing common small rounded stone inclusions. No archaeological features or deposits were present and no finds recovered.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 All three of the evaluation trenches contained the same layer sequence of topsoil directly above natural subsoil. The only archaeological feature recorded was a small linear feature (F203) in Trench 2. The function of this feature is uncertain, but it could represent remnants of a former field or drainage ditch, although it was very narrow, had irregular sides and contained frequent charcoal. There are also no field boundaries shown in this location on the 19th and early 20th-century historic maps.

6.2 The results of the initial phase of evaluation show that the area that will be affected by the construction of the new trackway within Plots 1 and 2 appears to be of fairly low archaeological potential, with the results being either wholly negative or comprising a small linear feature only. The date and function of this is not known. No other associated features or finds were present.

7. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

7.1 The paper and digital archives are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd. at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ.

7.2 The OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS) number for this project is 103562.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluation was commissioned by Maximum Fun Ltd. The site trial trenching was carried out by Fiona Pink and Frances Ward, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Cain Hegarty. The advice of Stephen Reed, Devon Archaeology Officer is duly acknowledged.

9. SOURCES CONSULTED

DRO 50/3/1/3, Faringdon 1814 'Sketch of Creely Barton the property of Mrs Hawtrey'

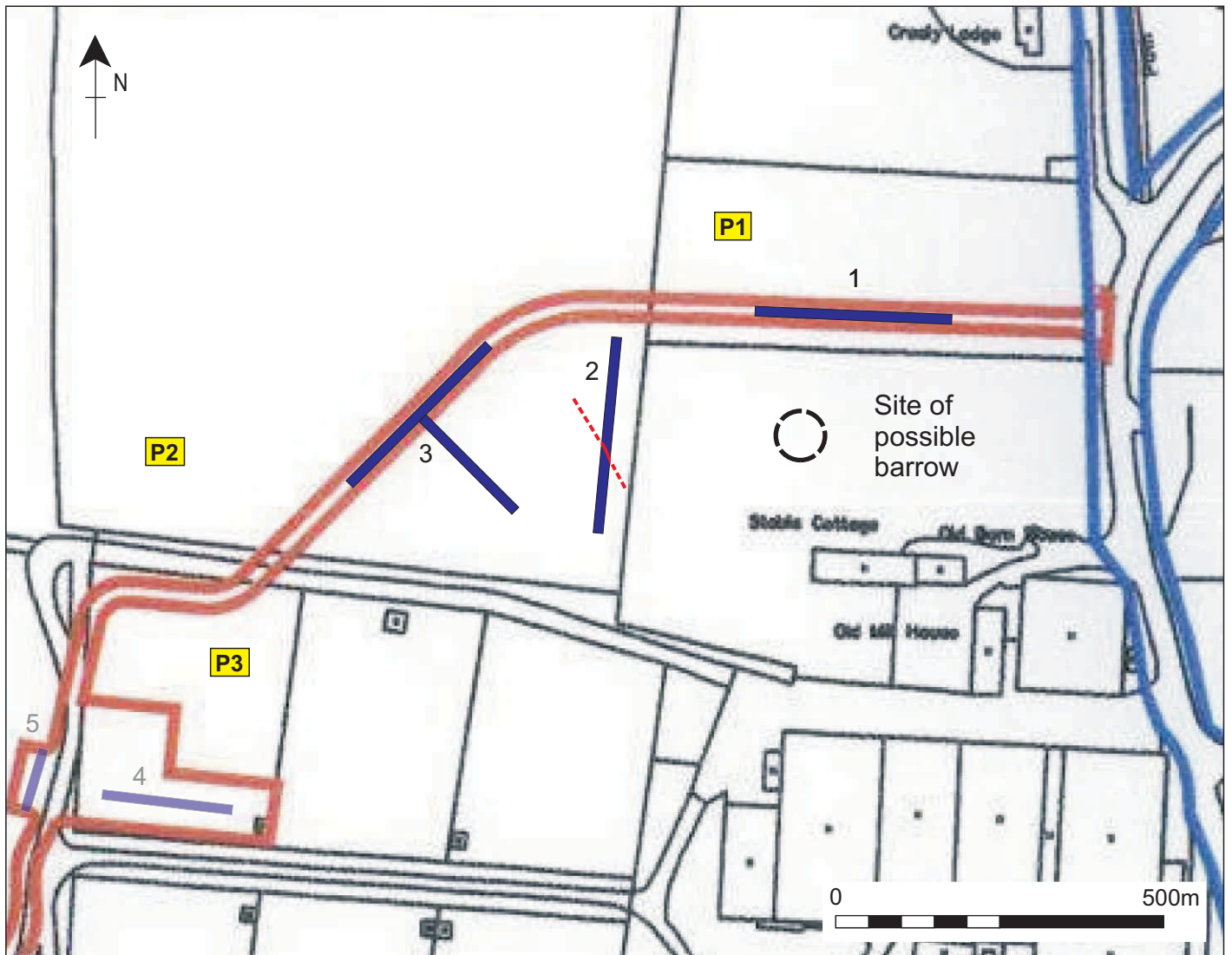
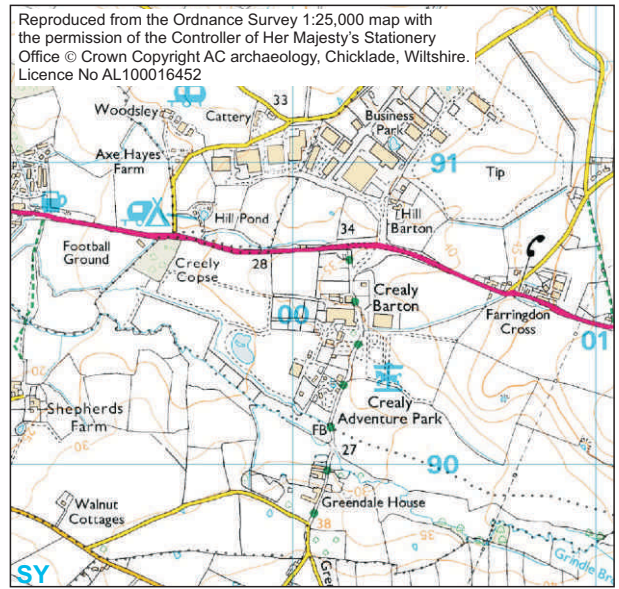
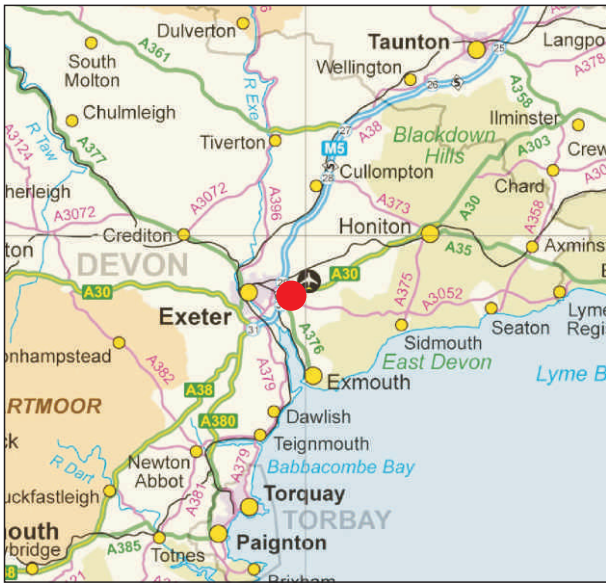
DRO Clyst St Mary parish tithe map 1839, apportionment, 1838

DRO Farringdon parish tithe map 1839, apportionment, 1838

English Heritage, 2002, *Environmental Archaeology – A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation.*

Hughes, S., 2011, *Land at Crealy Adventure Park, Clyst St Mary, Devon: Project Design for a staged programme of archaeological works.* Unpublished AC archaeology document for client, ref. ACD294/1/0

Ordnance Survey 25-inch map sheets 81:9, 81:13, surveyed 1888, published 1889, revised 1903, published 1905



Key

- P1 Plot Number
- Trial trenches and observed features
- Application area

PROJECT

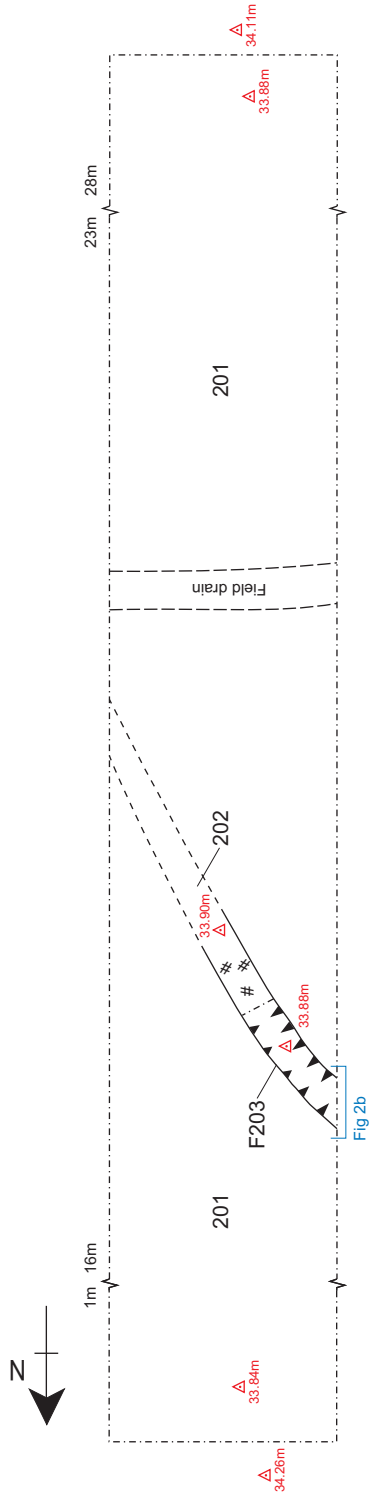
Crealy Park, Clyst St Mary

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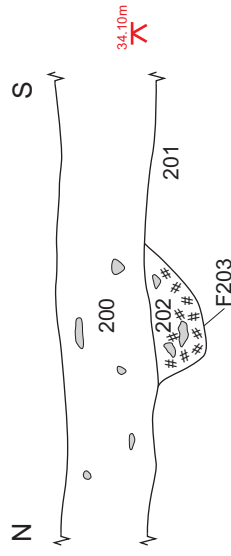
Fig.1: Location of site and Trenches 1-3



a) Plan of Trench 2



b) Section of linear feature F203



PROJECT

Crealy Park, Clyst St Mary

TITLE

Fig.2: Plan and section of Trench 2





Plate 1. General view including Trenches 2 and 3, looking south



Plate 2. Trench 2, linear feature F203, view to northeast (scale 1m)

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