

Virworthy Farm, Pancrasweek, Devon

(SX 31099 10485)

Results of an archaeological watching brief

Planning Ref: Torridge District Council 1/0076/2012/FUL

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Prepared by  
Fiona Pink MA AlFA

On behalf of Mr Kenyan

Document No: ACD538/2/0

Date: January 2013



AC archaeology

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# Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> Pancrasweek, Torridge	<b>National Grid Reference</b> (SX 31099 10485)	<b>Number:</b> (Leave blank for HES to fill in)
<b>Subject:</b> Virworthy Farm, Pancrasweek: Results of an archaeological watching brief		<b>Photo attached?</b> Y
<b>Planning Application no:</b> 1/0076/2012/FUL	<b>Recipient museum:</b> Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon	
<b>OASIS ID:</b> 141084	<b>Museum Accession no:</b> NDMS2012.31	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b>  ACD538	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b>  01 November 2012	
<p><b>Description of works.</b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b> (Figs 1 and 2)  An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by AC archaeology in November 2012 during the laying of an electricity cable to a new wind turbine at Virworthy Farm, Pancrasweek, Devon.</p> <p>The archaeological interest in the area focuses on a potential medieval oval enclosure (HER Monument ID MDV80705), represented by curving field boundaries to the north of the farm. The service trench passed through the fields within the enclosure, and breached hedgebanks on its putative outer boundary, as well as an internal hedgebank. A further breach on the south side of the enclosure, immediately north of the farm, had been carried out and reinstated without archaeological monitoring. The aim of the watching brief was to observe, investigate, excavate and record any surviving below-ground archaeological artefacts and deposits within the service trench where breaches in the hedgebanks were made or existing openings are widened.</p> <p><b>Results</b> (Figs 1-3; Plates 1-3)  <i>Breach 1</i>  This was a breach of a hedgebank within the putative enclosure. The opening measured 8.25m wide and was an extension of an existing gap for a track. The bank (F100) measured 3.02m wide by 1.30m high and was formed from two distinct deposits. The lower material (101) was a maximum of 0.56m deep and comprised a pale brownish-yellow clay-loam, very similar to the natural subsoil. Overlying this and concentrated on the eastern side of the bank was a pale yellowish-brown silty-loam with grey hues (102). This was 0.86m deep, and contained common inclusions of medium sized subangular sandstone and mudstone fragments. There was a possible depression on the east side of the boundary, but it was difficult to determine its true extent as the vegetation was very overgrown, and in the vicinity of the breach had been disturbed by the construction of the track. The bank had a tall, sparse hedge along its top.</p> <p><i>Breach 2</i>  This breach, which measured 8m wide, was located on the east side of a track and may have formed the western side of the putative enclosure. The bank (F103) measured 3.32m wide by 0.86m high. Depressions either side of the bank may indicate the location of ditches, but these were not excavated. (As per the agreed methodology, all excavations through hard surfaces had been carried out prior to the site visit and backfilled and reinstated.) The lower bank material (104) was 0.64m deep and comprised a mid yellowish-brown clay-loam with grey hues and common inclusions of small angular shale. The upper bank material (105) measured 0.26m deep and comprised a mid brownish-yellow silty-loam with grey and red hues and common inclusions of small angular shale. The horizon between these two contexts was very diffuse as a result of bioturbation. The hedgerow along the top of the bank consisted of tall and sparse shrubs.</p> <p><i>Breach 3</i>  This breach, which measured 7.4m wide, was located on the west side of the track, west of the putative enclosure. The bank (F106) measured 2.70m wide by 0.66m high. The lowest bank deposit (107) measured 1.24m wide by 0.25m high and comprised a mid brownish-yellow clay-loam with red hues and common inclusions of small sub-angular shale. Overlying this was a mid brownish-yellow silty-loam (108), measuring 2.70m wide by 0.86m deep, containing common inclusions of small sub-rounded shale. The upper bank material (109) measured 0.64m wide by 0.34m deep and comprised a mid brownish-grey clay-loam with sparse angular shale inclusions. This material probably represents a secondary heightening of the boundary. The bank had a tall, sparse hedge along its top, displaying signs of it having been coppiced.</p>		

Two sherds of pottery were recovered from the topsoil excavated from the service trench in the field north of the farm. These were a body sherd of a medieval North Devon gravel tempered ware cooking pot, and a body sherd of post-medieval North Devon pottery. Both were very abraded.

**Comments**

The three recorded boundaries are typical of Devon Hedgebanks created using locally-available soil deposits, including a core of redeposited subsoil. No dating evidence was recovered from them, and any associated ditches were not exposed within the monitored excavations. The boundary of the putative enclosure was recorded in breach 2. The bank was slightly wider than the other two but lower and displayed no special characteristics.

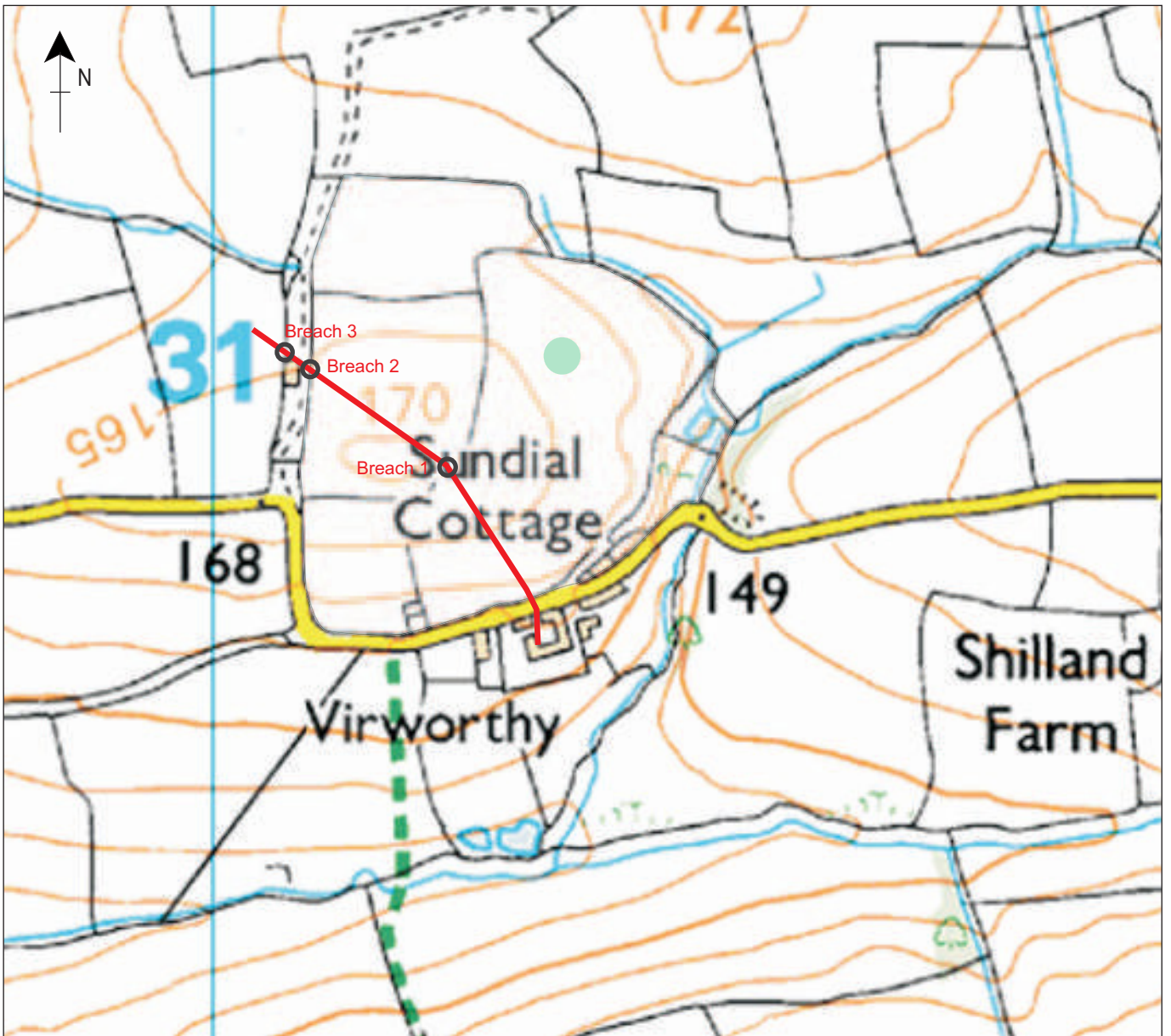
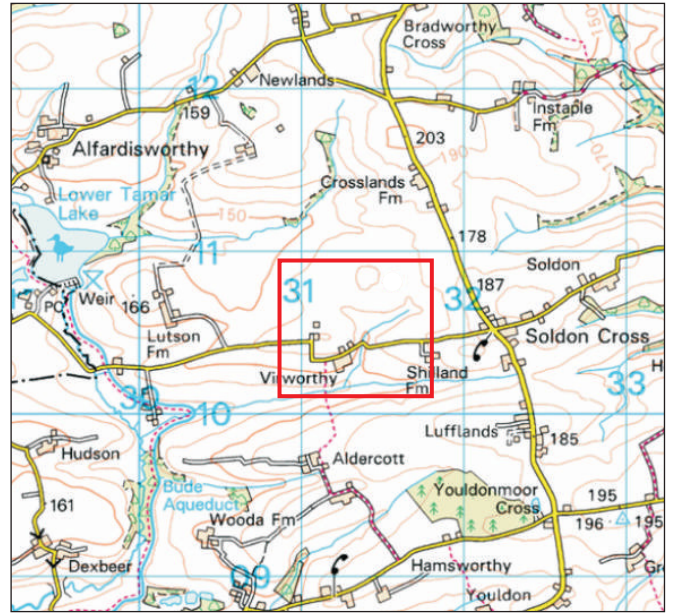
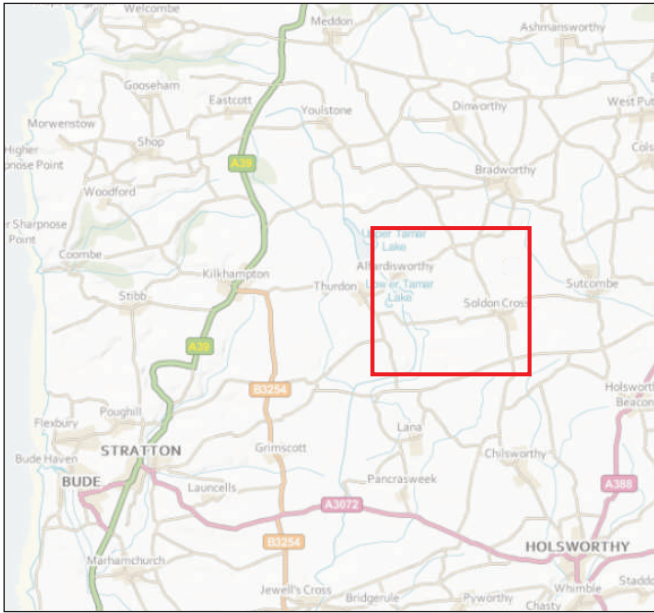
**A plan as well as any other relevant drawings must be attached showing the location and extent of site, areas investigated and features exposed.**



**Recorder:**

Paul Cooke, AC archaeology

**Date sent to HER:**

16 January 2013



-  Service trench and hedgebank breaches
-  Putative enclosure

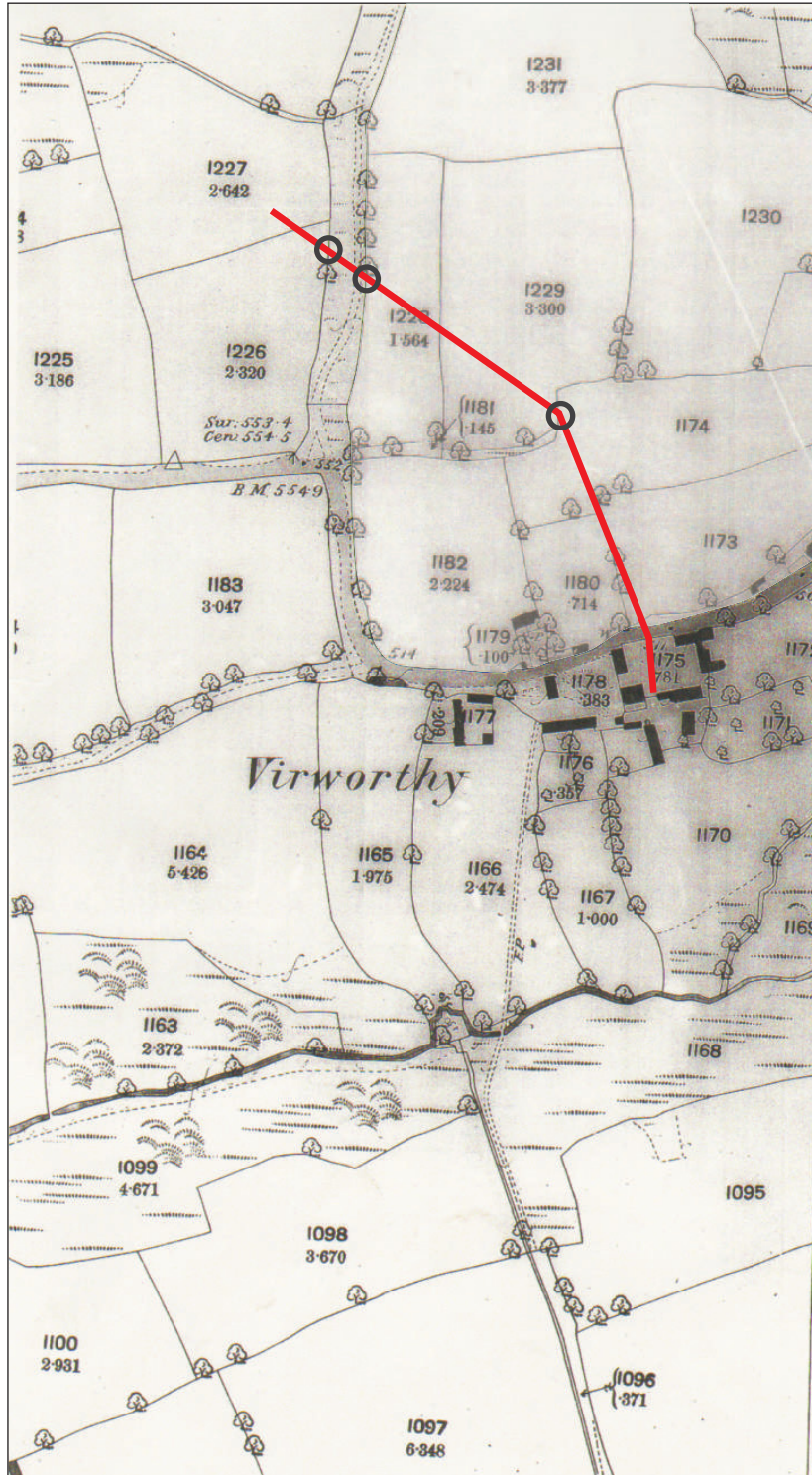
PROJECT

Virworthy Farm, Pancrasweek, Devon

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Fig. 1: Site location





 Putative enclosure

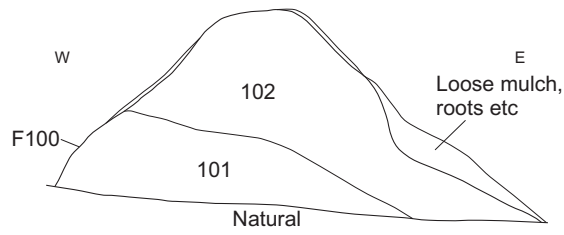
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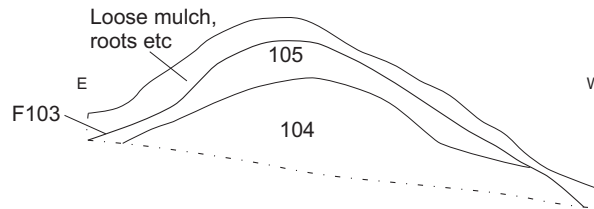
TITLE

Fig. 2: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 25-inch Devonshire map sheet 38.16, surveyed 1884, published 1885

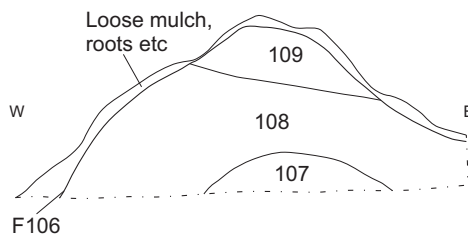
a) Section through hedgebank breach 1



b) Section through hedgebank breach 2



c) Section through hedgebank breach 3



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Fig. 3: Sections through hedgebank breaches 1, 2 and 3



Plate 1: Hedgebank breach 1 viewed from the south.  
1m scale.



Plate 2: Hedgebank breach 2 viewed from the north.  
1m scale.



Plate 3: Hedgebank breach 3 viewed from the south.  
1m scale.

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