

LAND TO THE NORTH OF THE A3052, CLYST ST MARY, DEVON

NGR SX 9781 9104

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

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On behalf of:
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archaeology

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Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation, carried out in support of a future planning application for residential development on land north of the A3052 road, Clyst St Mary, Devon (NGR SX 9781 9104), was undertaken by AC archaeology during December 2012. The site occupies an area of approximately 2.2 hectares over two plots of pasture land. A previous geophysical gradiometer survey of the site indentified a series of linear anomalies, as well as a potential early settlement enclosure.

The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of five trenches totalling 140m in length and each trench 1.8m wide, with these positioned to target some of the geophysical anomalies. A series of linear features dating to the post-medieval period were identified in the western part of the site and there was no evidence for the enclosure recorded during the geophysical survey. It is likely that many of the anomalies recorded during the survey relate to banding of sands and gravels forming the natural subsoil. Early finds recovered comprise a single sherd of Iron Age pottery and a piece of prehistoric worked flint. The pottery sherd was recovered from the exposed surface of a probable natural hollow, while the flint piece was recovered residually in a post-medieval ditch.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trench evaluation carried out in support of a future planning application for residential development on land to the north of the A3052 road, Clyst St Mary, Devon, was undertaken by AC archaeology during December 2012. The work was commissioned by PCL Planning Ltd on behalf of Mr Chris Bayliss and was undertaken following consultation with Devon Historic Environment Service (DCHES). The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.
- 1.2 The site extends over approximately 2.2 hectares and comprises two generally level plots of land on the north side of the A3052 road, which are currently under pasture (Plate 1). It lies at around 25m aOD, with the underlying solid geology comprising sandstone of the Dawlish Sandstone Formation.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 While there are no known previously recorded archaeological sites or monuments on the site itself, it is located in an area where evidence for prehistoric activity has been previously identified, including a possible cropmark enclosure, worked flint scatters and other findspots. The site is also located immediately north of the A3052 road, the alignment of which represents the course of a Roman road linking Honiton and Exeter.
- 2.2 A geophysical survey of the site itself (Dean 2012) identified a number of linear and curvilinear anomalies which were thought to represent former field boundaries. In addition, a possible enclosure was identified, as well as a former trackway on its western side (interpreted results included on Fig. 2).

3. AIMS

- 3.1 The aim of the evaluation was to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any archaeological features, deposits or finds within the site. The results as set out in this report will be reviewed and used to inform any decisions about subsequent mitigation as a condition should planning permission be granted.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of five trenches totalling 140m in length and with each trench measuring 1.8m wide (Fig. 2). Trenches were positioned to target anomalies identified from the geophysical survey. Machine-excavation ceased at the level at which natural subsoil or archaeological deposits were exposed.
- 4.2 All features and 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 2* (revised August 2012). Detailed sections or plans were produced at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate, and all site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The general recorded layer sequence observed across the site comprised between 0.25-0.32m of topsoil, over between 0.10-0.20m of agricultural subsoil onto sand and gravel natural subsoil. Archaeological features were present within Trenches 1 to 3 and are discussed below. All trenches are summarised in tabulated form in Appendix 1. Relevant plans and sections are included as Figs 3 & 4 and photographs as Plates 2-4.

5.2 Trench 1 (Plan Fig. 3a and section Fig. 3b)

This trench was north-south aligned and was positioned to target a single east-west aligned geophysical anomaly. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.50m below ground level onto a dark reddish-brown sand and gravel natural subsoil (102). The overlying layer sequence comprised 0.30m of dark reddish-brown silty clay topsoil (100), over 0.20m of dark grey to reddish-brown sandy silt subsoil (101). A single possible linear feature corresponding to the geophysical anomaly was recorded (F103).

F103 was approximately east to west aligned and measured 2.82m wide by 0.42m deep, with shallow-moderate sloping sides and an undulating base. It contained a single mid grey/red brown silty sand fill (104) containing common small-large sub-rounded stones. This feature was irregular in plan and profile, indicating that it may have been naturally formed, perhaps a natural hollow, although a single sherd of prehistoric pottery was recovered from its surface.

5.3 Trench 2 (Plan Fig. 3c and section Figs. 3d-f; Plate 2)

This trench was approximately east-west aligned and was positioned to target a series of geophysical anomalies. It was excavated to a depth of 0.48m below ground level onto a dark reddish-brown sand and gravel natural subsoil (202). The overlying layer sequence comprised 0.32m of dark reddish-brown silt clay topsoil (200), over 0.16m of dark grey to reddish-brown sandy silt subsoil (201). A total of three features was recorded, including two linear drainage/field boundary ditches (F206 & F208) and a possible feature of geological origin (F204).

F204 was irregular/sub-rounded in shape and measured 4.50m wide by 0.40m deep, with shallow sloping sides and an undulating, flattish base. It contained a single dark reddish-brown sandy silt fill (203) containing occasional sub-rounded stones. No finds were recovered.

F206 was northeast-southwest aligned and measured 0.65m wide by 0.20m deep, with moderate sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a single dark brown sandy silt fill (205) containing frequent large sub-rounded stones. No finds were recovered.

F208 was north-south aligned and measured 2.60m wide by 0.48m deep, with shallow-moderate sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a single mid reddish-brown sandy silt fill (207) containing common small-large sub-rounded stones. Mainly post-medieval finds were recovered, although a single piece of prehistoric worked flint was also present.

5.4 Trench 3 (Plan Fig. 4a and sections Figs. 4b-d; Plates 3 & 4)

This trench was northeast-southwest aligned and was positioned to target a series of three linear geophysical anomalies. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.40m below ground level onto a dark reddish-brown sand and gravel natural subsoil (302). The overlying layer sequence comprised 0.30m of dark reddish-brown silty clay topsoil (300), over 0.10m of dark grey to reddish-brown sandy silt subsoil (301). A total of two linear drainage/field boundary ditches (F304 & F306) was recorded.

F304 was northeast-southwest aligned and measured 0.83m wide by 0.24m deep, with moderate sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a single dark greyish-brown sandy silt fill (303) containing abundant small-large sub-rounded stones. No finds were recovered.

F306 was north-south aligned and measured 1.70m wide by 0.22m deep, with moderate-steep sloping sides and a shallow concave base. It contained a single mid reddish-brown silty sand fill containing frequent sub-rounded stones. A total of three sherds of post-medieval pottery was recovered.

6. THE FINDS by Naomi Payne

6.1 Introduction

All finds recovered on site have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. Finds have been quantified according to material type within each context, and then scanned by context to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented. This information is briefly discussed below.

6.2 Finds were recovered from three evaluation trenches. Most of these are of post-medieval date, but there was also a single sherd of prehistoric pottery and one piece of worked flint found. The finds are summarised in Table 1 below. Weights are in grams.

Context	Context description	Prehistoric pottery		Post-medieval pottery		Worked flint		Glass		Clay pipe		Animal bone		Clinker	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
104	Surface of linear F103	1	14												
207	Single fill of linear F208			4	41	1	2	1	12	6	10	1	2	1	1
305	Single fill of linear F306			3	18										
Totals		1	14	7	59	1	2	1	12	6	10	3	2	1	1

Table1. Finds summary (weight is in grams)

6.3 Prehistoric pottery

One sherd of prehistoric pottery (14g) was recovered from the exposed surface of linear feature F103, so may have actually originated from subsoil layer 101. No other finds were recovered from this context. The sherd is part of a base from a hand-built vessel. It is largely an oxidised dark brownish-black with a more oxidised brownish-orange external surface. It contains various well-sorted inclusions including mica, iron oxide and grog, most of which are very small, but occasionally up to 3mm. It probably dates from the early to middle Iron Age. There are traces of a black residue on the internal surface.

6.4 Worked flint

A single piece of worked flint was recovered from context 207, a ditch which also contained post-medieval material. The broken flake has been retouched along one edge to blunt it. It may have been a rudimentary scraper. It is most likely to be of later Neolithic or early Bronze Age date.

6.5 Post medieval pottery

Seven sherds (59g) of post-medieval pottery were recovered from the single fills of two linear features, one in Trench 2 and the other in Trench 3. All are body sherds. Most is South Somerset coarseware of 17th or 18th century date, but there is also a single sherd of Westerwald stone ware, also of 17th to 18th century date. A very small piece of hand painted blue on white glazed earthenware is also present, which could be as late as c. 1800.

6.6 Other post-medieval finds

Other post-medieval finds included three scraps (2g) of animal bone, a fragment (12g) of undiagnostic English green bottle glass, a small piece of modern blacksmith's clinker (1g) and six pieces (10g) of clay tobacco pipe. The largest of the clay pipe fragments has a pointed spur indicating that it is probably post-1770 in date.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 The evaluation has identified the presence of a number of archaeological features, some of which correspond to anomalies identified by the earlier geophysical survey. The features were recorded within the western portion of the site, within Trenches 1 to 3. These comprised four linear features; F206 and F208 (Trench 2) and F304 and F306 (Trench 3), all of which are likely to represent field boundary/drainage ditches. In addition, two probable features of natural origin were recorded as F103 (Trench 1) and F204 (Trench 2). Numerous plough scars were observed within Trenches 4 and 5 within the eastern portion of the site, but no other evidence for archaeological activity was identified.

7.2 The linear features were either north-south or northeast-southwest aligned and generally respected the existing field patterns. Linear features F304 and F208, within the western extent of Trenches 2 and 3 respectively, are likely form part of the same boundary ditch, although there was no such evidence for the continuation of ditch F306 within Trench 2. The features varied from between 0.65-2.60m in width and between 0.20-0.48m in depth and each contained naturally silted fills of either mid reddish-brown or dark brown sandy silt. Finds recovered from features F208 and F306 include post-medieval pottery, glass, clay pipe, animal bone and clinker, suggesting a 17th or 18th century date. A single worked flint flake of probable Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date was also recovered from F208 and is clearly residual.

7.3 The remaining features, comprising F103 and F204, were of probable natural origin and located within trenches which exhibited much geological banding and variation. A single sherd of early-mid Iron Age pottery was recovered from the exposed surface of F103, a probable silted natural hollow.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The evaluation has established the presence of a series of post-medieval field boundary and drainage ditches forming a pattern of smaller land division, which generally respect the alignment of existing field boundaries. Based on the results of the work it is considered unlikely that there is a prehistoric enclosure on the site as identified during the geophysical survey, with some of the anomalies identified likely to relate to the banding of sands and gravels forming the natural subsoil.

9. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

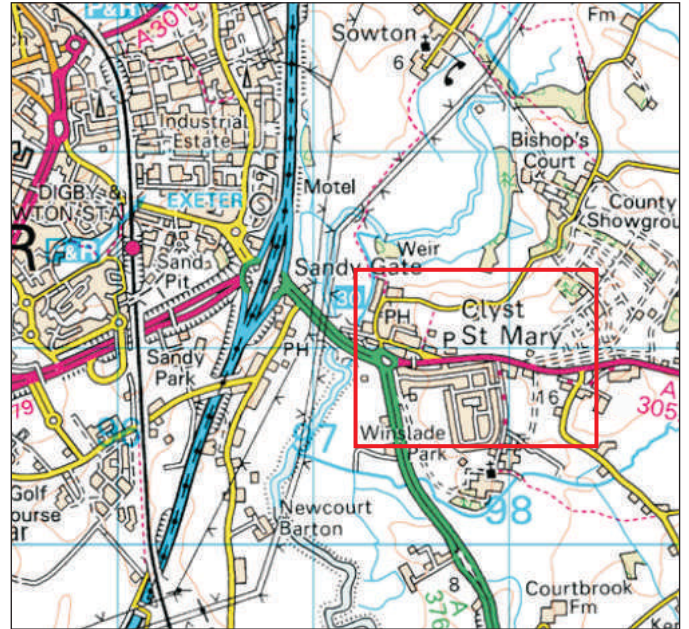
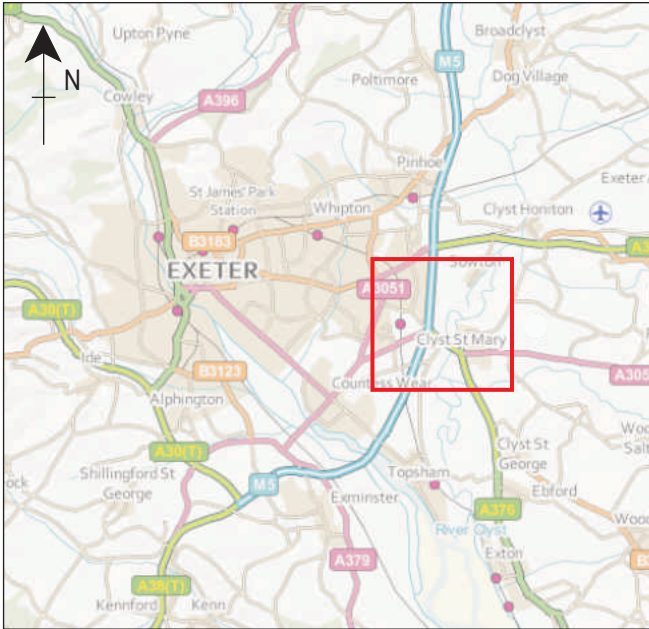
- 9.1** The paper and digital archive and finds are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ.
- 9.2** The OASIS (**O**nline **A**ccess to the Index of Archaeological Investigation**S**) number for this project is 141827.

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

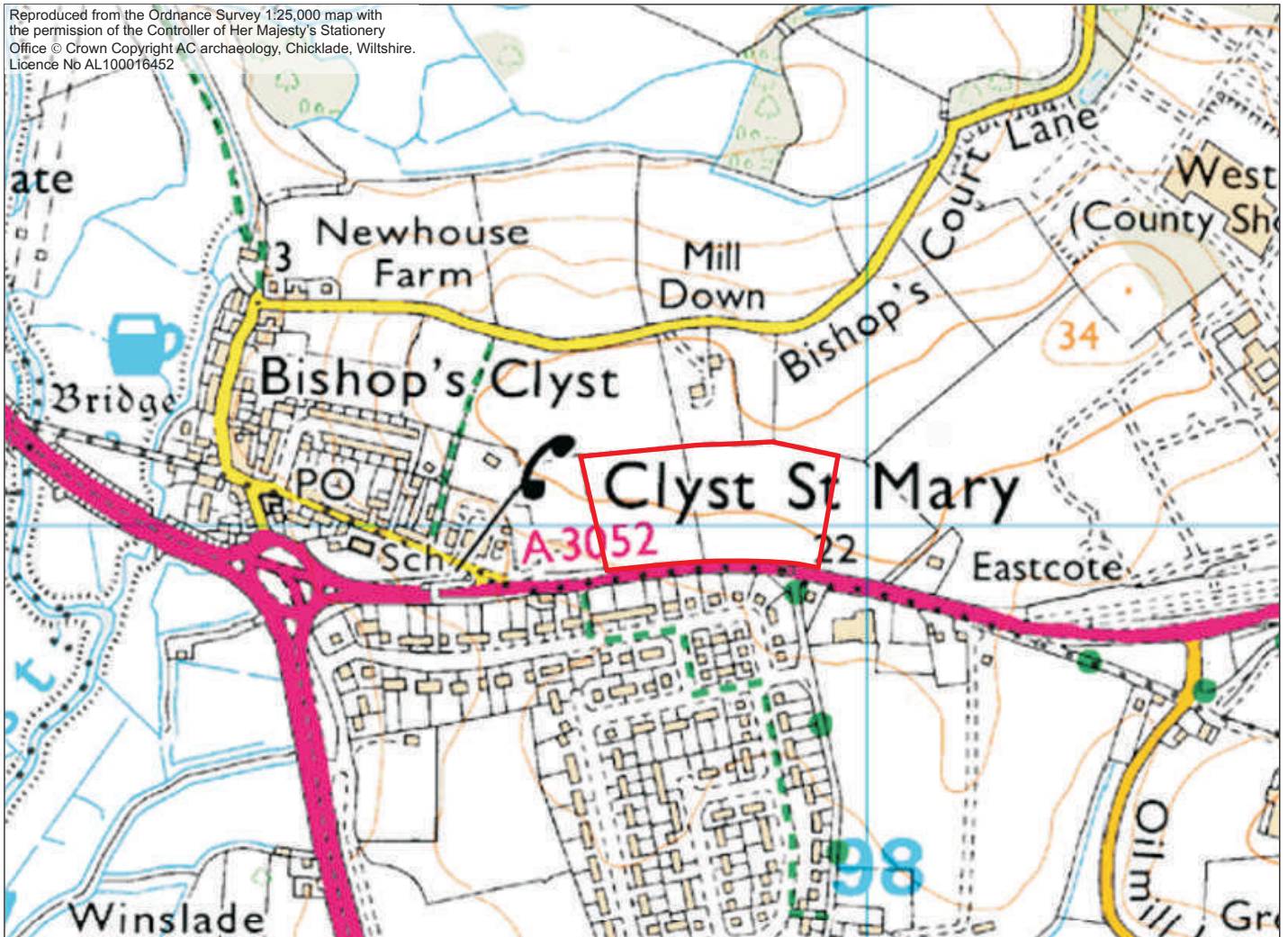
The evaluation was commissioned by Katherine Brommage of PCL Planning on behalf of the site owner Mr Chris Bayliss. The site trial trenching was carried out by Simon Sworn and Elisabeth Patkai, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Elisabeth Patkai and Sarnia Blackmore. The collaboration of Stephen Reed, Devon Archaeology Officer, is duly acknowledged.

11. REFERENCES

Dean, R., 2012, *An Archaeological Gradiometer Survey: Land at Clyst St Mary, Devon*. Substrata report, ref. 121123



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0 250m



Scale 1:7500@A4



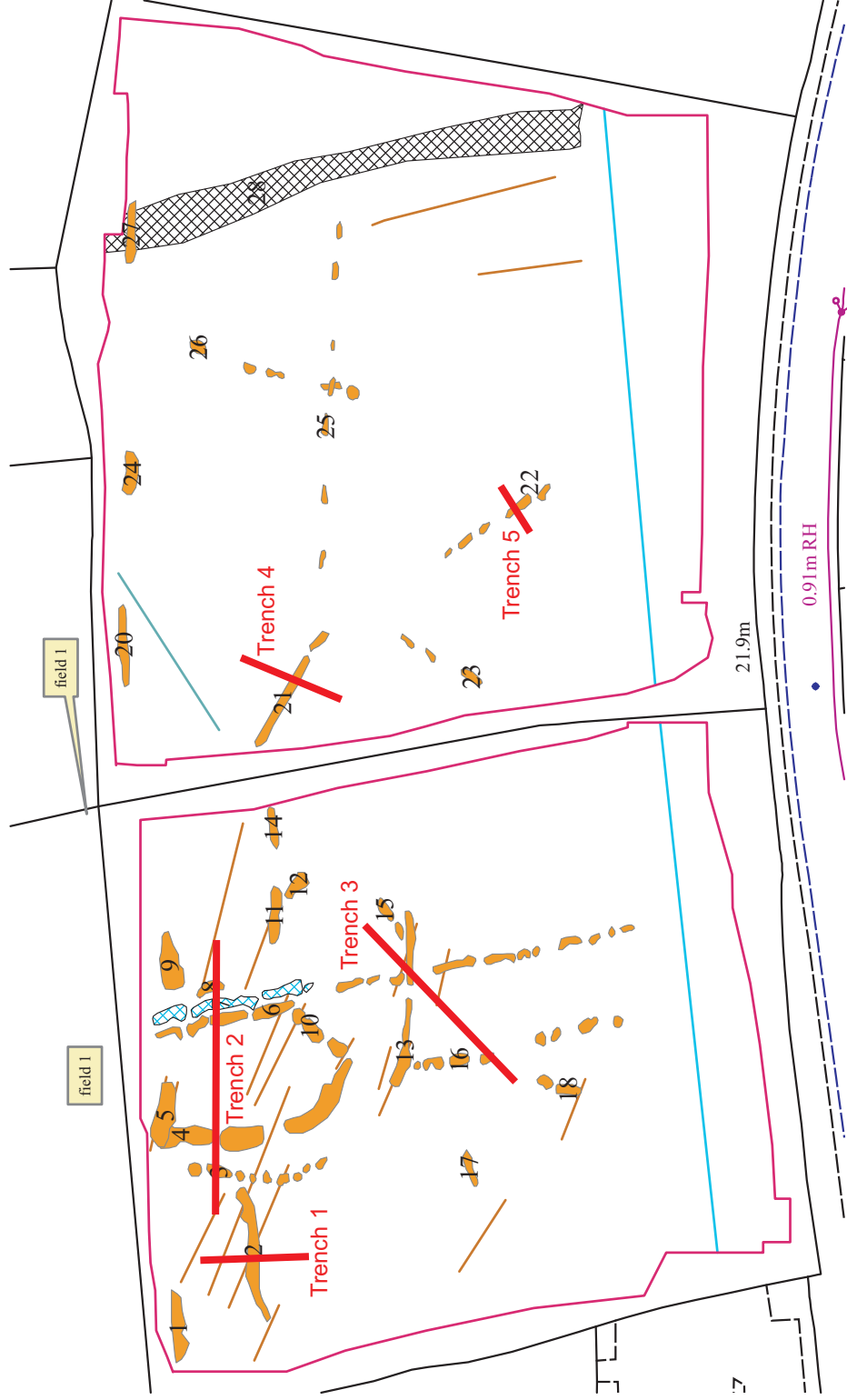
Application area

PROJECT

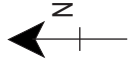
Land at Cyst St Mary, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 1: Location of site



- Trench 1
- Archaeological trenches
- gradiometer survey area
- gradiometer potential archaeology**
- possible archaeology, positive anomaly
- likely archaeology, mixed spread
- possible archaeology, negative spread
- gradiometer potential archaeological trends**
- possible archaeology, ploughing traces (2)
- gradiometer possible services**
- possible service trench
- possible service drain, pipe or cable



PROJECT
 Land at Clyst St Mary,
 Devon

TITLE
 Location of trenches
 in relation to the
 geophysics results

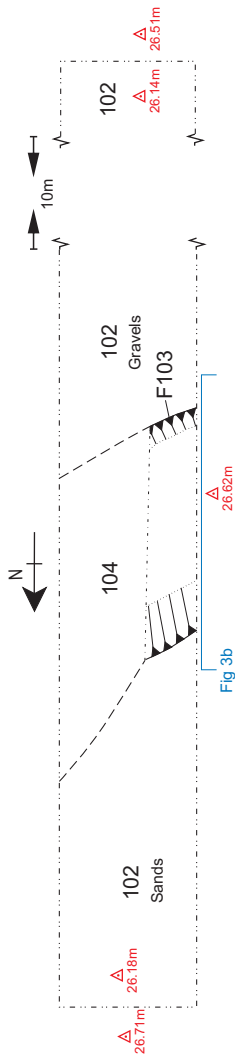


AC archaeology

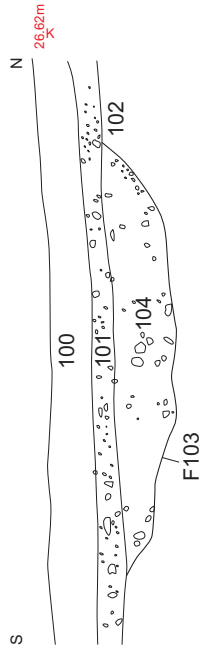


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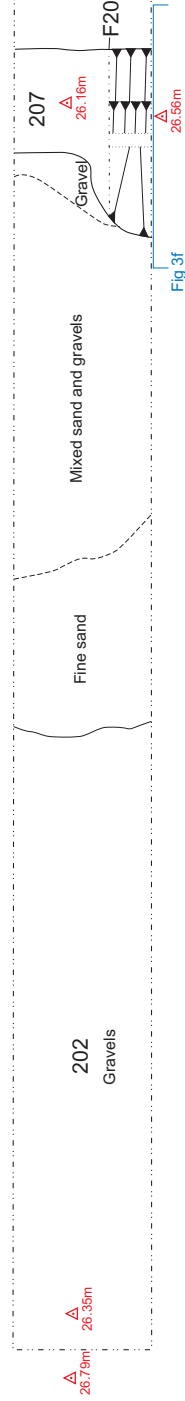
a) Trench 1, plan



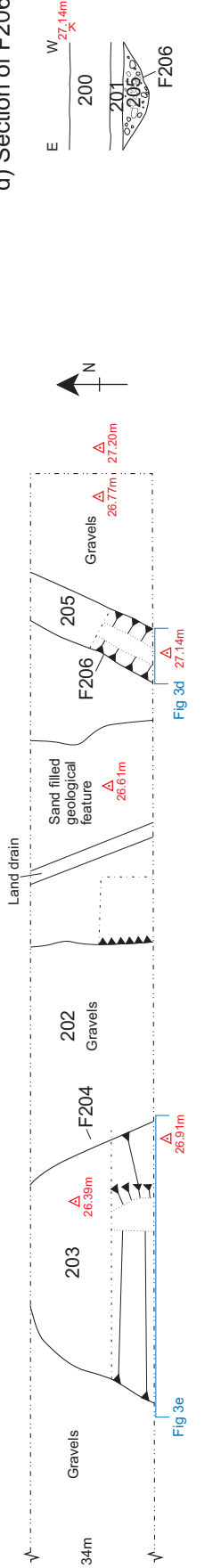
b) Section of F103



c) Trench 2, plan



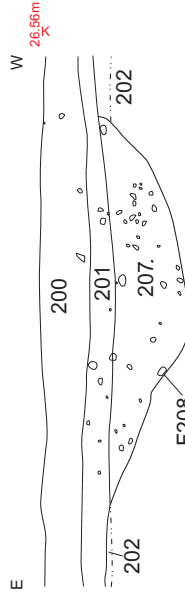
d) Section of F206



e) Section of F204



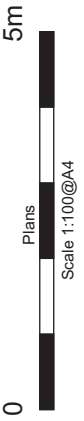
f) Section of F208



Stones



Plough scars



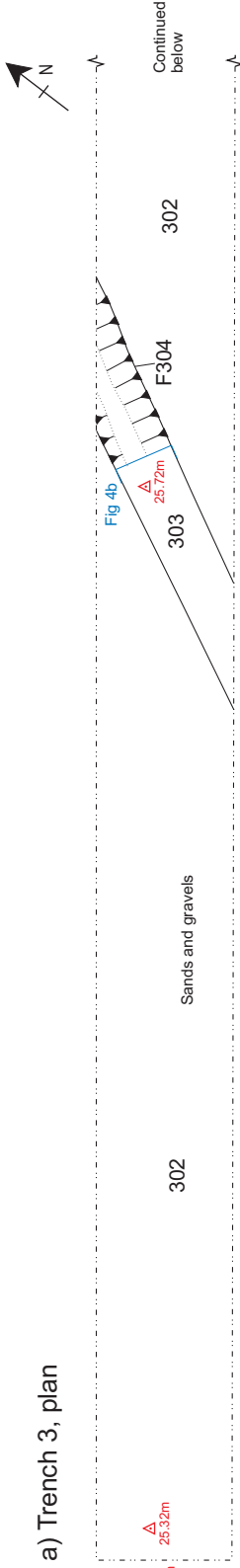
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Fig. 3: Plans and sections,
Trenches 1 and 2



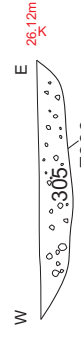
ACI archaeology



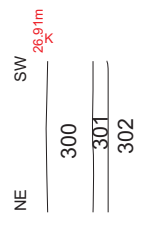
b) Section of F304



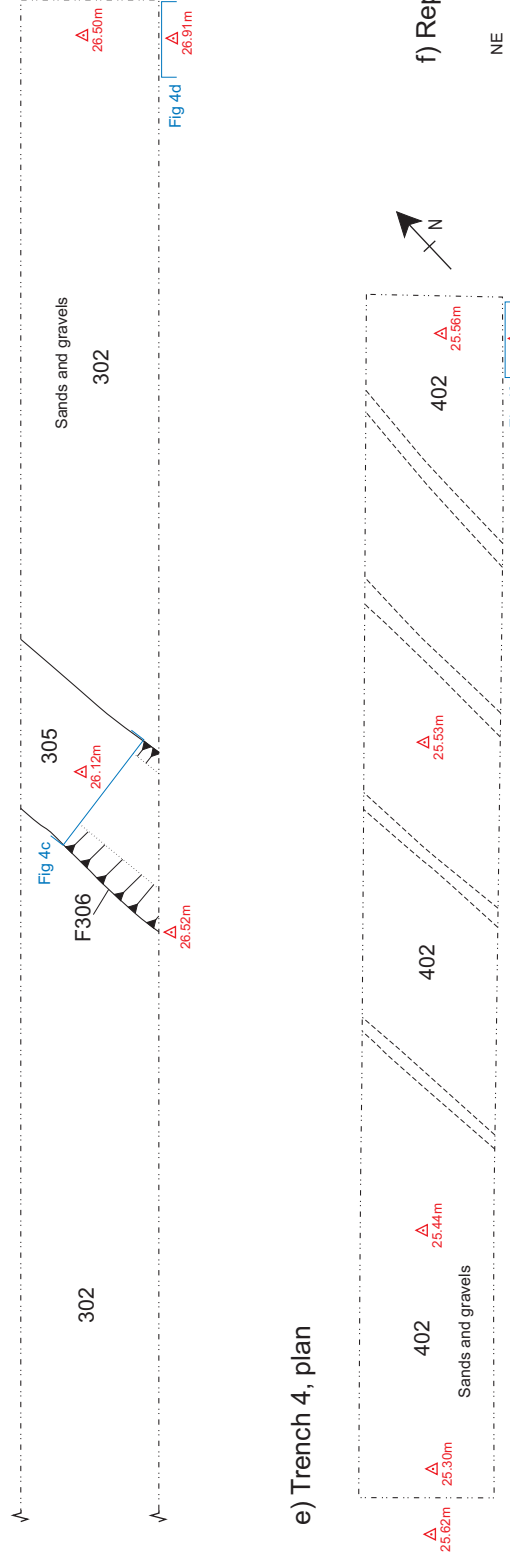
c) Section of F306



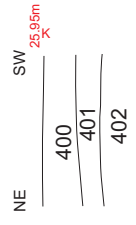
d) Representative section, Trench 3



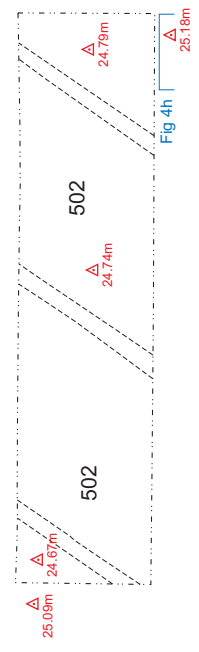
e) Trench 4, plan



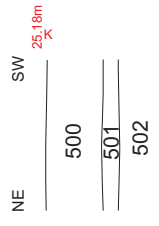
f) Representative section, Trench 4



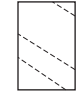
g) Trench 5, plan



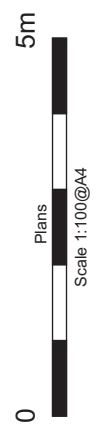
h) Representative section, Trench 5



Stones



Plough scars



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**Fig. 4: Plans and sections,
Trenches 3, 4 and 5**



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Plate 1: Machine excavation of Trench 2, view to northwest



Plate 2: Linear feature F208, Trench 2, view to south. Scale 1m



Plate 3: Linear feature F304, Trench 3, view to south. Scale 1m



Plate 4: Linear feature F306, Trench 3, view to south. Scale 1m

Appendix 1

Tabulated context descriptions by trench



Appendix 1: Tabulated context descriptions by trench

Trench 1			Length: 20m	Width: 1.80m	Alignment: N-S
Context	Depth below ground level	Description	Interpretation		
100	0-0.30m	Dark reddish-brown friable silty clay with common small sub rounded stones	Topsoil		
101	0.30-0.50	Dark grey to reddish-brown friable sandy silt with abundant small-large sub rounded stones	Agricultural subsoil		
102	0.50m+	Dark reddish-brown friable-soft sand and gravel	Natural subsoil		
103	0.44-0.86m	E-W aligned linear feature, 2.82m wide by 0.42m deep, with shallow-moderate sloping sides and an undulating base	Cut of possible natural hollow		
104	0.44-0.86m	Mid grey/reddish-brown soft silty sand with common small-large sub rounded stones	Fill of F103		

Trench 2			Length: 50m	Width: 1.80m	Alignment: E-W
Context	Depth below ground level	Description	Interpretation		
200	0-0.32m	Dark reddish-brown friable silty clay with common small sub rounded stones	Topsoil		
201	0.32-0.48m	Dark grey to reddish-brown friable sandy silt with abundant small-large sub rounded stones	Agricultural subsoil		
202	0.48m+	Dark reddish-brown friable-soft sand and gravel	Natural subsoil		
203	0.40-0.80m	Dark reddish-brown friable sand silt with occasional sub-rounded stones	Fill of F204		
204	0.40-0.80m	Irregular/sub rounded shaped feature, 4.50m wide by 0.40m deep, with shallow sloping sides and a undulating but flattish base	Possible geological feature		
205	0.40-0.60m	Dark brown friable sandy silt with frequent large sub-rounded stones	Fill of F206		
206	0.40-0.60m	NE-SW aligned linear feature, 0.65m wide by 0.20m deep, with moderate sloping sides and a concave base	Cut of probable drainage ditch		
207	0.48-0.96m	Mid red brown friable-soft sand silt with common small-large sub-rounded stones	Fill of ditch F208		
208	0.48-0.96m	N-S aligned irregular shaped linear feature, 2.60m wide by 0.48m deep, with shallow-moderate sloping sides and a concave base	Cut of post-medieval field boundary ditch		

Appendix 1: Tabulated context descriptions by trench

Trench 3			Length: 40m	Width: 1.80m	Alignment: NE-SW
Context	Depth below ground level	Description	Interpretation		
300	0-0.30m	Dark reddish-brown friable silty clay with common small sub rounded stones	Topsoil		
301	0.30-0.40m	Dark grey to reddish-brown friable sandy silt with abundant small-large sub rounded stones	Agricultural subsoil		
302	0.40m+	Dark red brown friable-soft sand and gravel	Natural subsoil		
303	0.40-0.64m	Dark greyish-brown friable sandy silt with abundant small-large sub-rounded stones	Fill of ditch F304		
304	0.40-0.64m	NE-SW aligned linear feature, 0.83m wide by 0.24m deep, with moderate sloping sides and a concave base	Cut of probable drainage ditch		
305	0.40-0.62m	Mid reddish-brown friable silty sand with frequent sub-rounded stones	Fill of ditch [306]		
306	0.40-0.62m	N-S aligned linear feature, 1.70m wide by 0.22m deep, with moderate-steep sloping sides and a shallow concave base	Cut of field boundary/drainage ditch		

Trench 4			Length: 20m	Width: 1.80m	Alignment: NNE-SSW
Context	Depth below ground level	Description	Interpretation		
400	0-.26m	Dark reddish-brown friable silty clay with common small sub rounded stones	Topsoil		
401	0.26-0.43m	Dark grey to reddish-brown friable sandy silt with abundant small-large sub rounded stones	Agricultural subsoil		
402	0.43m+	Dark reddish-brown friable-soft sand and gravel	Natural subsoil		

Trench 5			Length: 10m	Width: 1.80m	Alignment: NE-SW
Context	Depth below ground level	Description	Interpretation		
500	0-0.25m	Dark reddish-brown friable silty clay with common small sub rounded stones	Topsoil		
501	0.25-0.35m	Dark grey to reddish-brown friable sandy silt with abundant small-large sub rounded stones	Agricultural subsoil		
502	0.35m+	Dark reddish-brown friable-soft sand and gravel	Natural subsoil		

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