

# THE HARE & HOUNDS INN, SIDMOUTH, DEVON

(SY 14580 96194)

Results of an archaeological watching brief

East Devon District Council planning reference 11/0560/FUL,  
condition 11

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Prepared by:  
Andrew Passmore BSc MIfA

On behalf of:  
Heartstone Inns Ltd

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archaeology

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was carried out by AC archaeology during January and February 2012 during groundworks for extensions to the Hare & Hounds Inn, Sidmouth, Devon (centred on SY 14580 96194). The site lies within an area containing a dense concentration of prehistoric barrows.*

*A late 19th- or early 20th-century boundary ditch associated with a former wood and the field to the south was exposed, as were two other ditches. These were undated but may be of some antiquity, potentially being of prehistoric origin.*

### **1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)**

- 1.1** This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out during January and February 2012 by AC archaeology during groundworks associated with extensions to the Hare & Hounds Inn, Putts Corner, Sidmouth (SY 14580 96194; Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Heartstone Inns Ltd, and was required by East Devon District Council under condition 11 of the grant of planning permission (reference 11/0560/FUL), as advised by the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (DCCHET).
- 1.2** The Hare & Hounds Inn is located on level ground at around 246m aOD just above the eastern edge of a coombe containing Pin Hill Wood. The underlying solid geology comprises Cretaceous sandstone from the Upper Greensand Formation overlaid by Quaternary clay, silts, sand and gravel of the clay-with-flints formation (British Geological Survey online).
- 1.3** The development comprised the construction of extensions to form an enlarged kitchen and dining room, a new plant room, toilet and staff accommodation, replacement cold rooms, as well as repositioning of the vehicular access from the B3174.

### **2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

#### **2.1 Archaeological background**

The Hare & Hounds Inn is situated at the western edge of the Farway Barrow Cemetery (Devon County Council Historic Environment Record (DCCHER) ref: 10804), one of the most extensive and densest concentrations of Bronze Age round barrows in Devon. At least 57 round barrows, some with associated enclosures, have been identified within a 3 mile stretch of the upland plateau, encompassing parts of Gittisham Hill, Farway Hill and Broad Down. Limited excavations of several of the barrows have revealed a remarkable diversity in the size, form, nature and funerary content of the monuments. While no round barrows have currently been recorded to the south of Seaton Road (B3174) and west of the A375 (on land occupied by the Hare and Hounds Inn), other heritage assets have been recorded within the immediate vicinity. These include the Rolling Stone (DCCHER Ref. 10965), a prehistoric way marker, which may have been later used as a boundary stone between the parishes of Gittisham and Sidbury. The stone, which was originally situated on the northeast corner of the crossroads at Putts Corner, was moved to its current location in the front garden of the Hare and Hounds Inn (DCCHER Ref. No. 58512) during road widening works in the 1980s.

A gallows (DCCHER Ref. 49821) is also believed to have been located on the crossroads adjacent to the Rolling Stone (DCCHER Ref. 10965). Highwaymen were reputedly hung by or adjacent to the stone. Gallows were commonly found at crossroads located on parish boundaries, to emphasise the criminal's outcast nature as well as the boundary between life and death.

A probable Roman Road (DCCHER Ref. 14169) has also been identified to the north of the Inn. A short section of its course appears to be coterminous with a section of the Gittisham/Sidmouth parish boundary, with parts of the former route surviving as parallel, low earthwork banks. It is possible that the road may follow a much earlier route aligned on the Bronze Age barrow cemetery. The alignment of similar prehistoric upland Ridgeway routes has been identified elsewhere in Devon.

### 2.3 Cartographic evidence

The Sidmouth tithe map of 1840 depicts the Hare and Hounds public house in its current location, within a small plot of land adjacent to the crossroads. It is recorded in the apportionment of 1840 as being part of the Woolversley Estate, owned by John Guppy Esquire and leased by Jonathan Carter. The main building is shown in red, with an outbuilding (depicted in grey) attached to the southwest side of the property. A separate garden is shown to the south. Both plots appear to be a subdivision of the plot to the west, recorded as *Plantation Field*. The two plots immediately to the south are recorded as *Lower* and *Higher Park*. The 'park' element of these names may simply imply an enclosed piece of land. The area is recorded on Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation map as being former woodland and/or an area which was enclosed with hedgebanks during the medieval period (Devon County Council Historic Landscape Characterisation online 2011).

The Inn is depicted as a much larger property on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25-inch map of 1889. Extensions appear to have been added to the northwest and southeast sides of the property. A boundary stone (the Rolling Stone) is shown on the northeast corner of the crossroads, as are a number of round barrows on the moorland to the northeast. A similar scene is depicted on the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25-inch map of 1905. The name 'Putts Corner' is thought to be derived from the Putt family who once owned the parish of Gittisham.

## 3. AIMS

- 3.1 The aim of the watching brief was to preserve by record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during groundworks associated with development.

## 4. METHODOLOGY (Plates 1 and 2)

- 4.1 The monitoring and recording was carried out in line with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by AC archaeology (James 2011), with the recording undertaken in accordance with the AC archaeology *pro forma* recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and with reference to AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 1*.
- 4.2 Attendance by the site archaeologist was 'comprehensive' in accordance with the meaning of the term as defined in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (published 1994, revised 2008) section 3.2.10, i.e. present during all (relevant) groundwork. The excavation of foundation trenches were monitored, as were service trenches in the garden to the south. In general, the trenches were too narrow to be entered, and deposits and features were recorded from ground level (Plates 1 and 2). A new access track was laid across the lawn with no disturbance caused.

## 5. RESULTS (Figs 1 and 2; Plates 3 and 4)

- 5.1 The general deposit sequence across the site consisted of a 0.19m thick layer of dark grey-brown silty-loam topsoil (100) overlying a 0.28m thick layer of mid brown silty clay subsoil (101). Natural deposits comprised light yellow clay with chert gravels (102). No finds were recovered from the topsoil or subsoil. In the terrace for the former marquee at the rear of the building a loose dark brown silty loam (107) was present but in places adjacent to the present

inn had been removed and replaced with imported topsoil and gravel (106). Three features were exposed under the various deposits described above.

- 5.2** Ditch F103/F116 was exposed in the southern part of the site and was orientated northeast-southwest (Plate 3). It measured 0.84m wide by 0.52m deep and had a steep profile with a flattish base that was more pointed in the northern exposures. In the southern service trench excavation the ditch (F103) contained two fills – a light brownish red firm clay with moderate chert inclusions (104) and a mid grey-brown friable silty clay with frequent small chert inclusions (105). These are interpreted as an initial gradual accumulation followed by a rapid infilling. No finds were recovered from either deposit. To the north, the ditch (F116) contained more fills, with primary silty clay and clay fills (117 and 118) sealed by silty clays containing gravel and rare charcoal (119 and 120).
- 5.3** Ditch F108 was uncovered across the middle of the site and was orientated southeast-northwest. It measured 1.05m wide by between 0.15-0.30m deep and had sides of varying steepness with a broad flattish base. The feature contained a single fill of dark grey-brown soft silty-loam containing occasional small gravels (109), as well as two conjoining body sherds of a 19th- or early 20th-century glazed stoneware inkwell.
- 5.4** Ditch F110 was located in a foundation trench to the east of F116. It was aligned northeast-southwest, measured 0.70m wide by 0.25m deep and had sides of varying steepness with a narrow flat base (Plate 4). The feature contained a single fill (111) of light grey-brown friable silty-clay containing moderate flint gravels.

## **6. COMMENTS**

- 6.1** Monitoring of groundworks has demonstrated that despite the use of the area as a public house and associated beer garden for over 150 years much of the development site contained undisturbed ground – truncation was generally present adjacent to the existing building where temporary structures such as a marquee had been erected. Few features were, however, exposed during the groundworks.
- 6.2** Ditch F103/F116 does not correspond with any field boundaries recorded on historic maps. There were no finds from its fills, although its size and profile may indicate a feature of some antiquity, with it potentially being of prehistoric origin. It was only observed over a short distance and its function is not known. Similarly, no finds were recovered from the fill of F110, and its date is unknown. However, it was on the same alignment as ditch F103/F116, and may therefore be contemporary.
- 6.3** Ditch F108 was infilled in the late 19th or early 20th century. Its position and alignment corresponds a field boundary depicted on the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25-inch map of 1905. The boundary seems to have been a short-lived feature that formalised the southern extent of a small wood in the northwest corner of the field south of the pub; trees are depicted on the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25-inch map of 1889, but the boundary is not.

## **7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 7.1** The fieldwork was commissioned by the Heartstone Inns Ltd and managed for them by David Kemp and for AC archaeology by Tanya James. The watching brief was undertaken Simon Hughes, Chris Caine and Fiona Pink. The documentary research and finds analysis were carried out by Kerry Kerr-Peterson, the report was prepared by Andrew Passmore, with the illustrations drawn by Elisabeth Patkai.

## 8. ARCHIVE AND OASIS ENTRY

- 8.1 The paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ, but will be deposited at the RAMM, Exeter under the accession number 11/60 once their non-acceptance policy has been reviewed.
- 8.2 The OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS) number for this project is 152671.

## 9. REFERENCES

### Devon Heritage Centre

Sidmouth tithe map and apportionment 1840

Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25-inch map, Sheet 70:15, surveyed 1888, published 1889

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25-inch map, Sheet 70:15, surveyed 1887-88, revised 1903, published 1905

James, T., 2011, *Hare and Hounds Inn, Putts Corner, Honiton, Sidmouth, EX10 0QQ*, (SY 14580 96194), *Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological watching brief, East Devon District Council Planning Application Ref. No. 11.0560/FUL, Condition 11*, AC archaeology document no. **ACD378/1/0**.

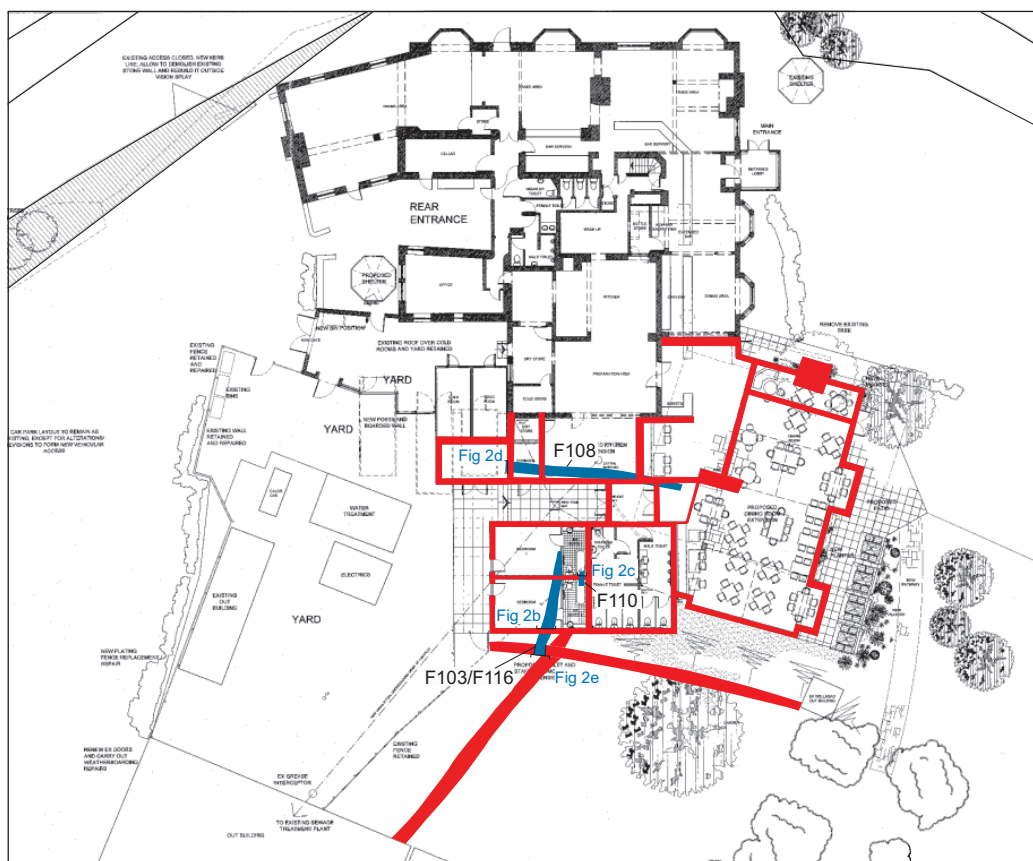
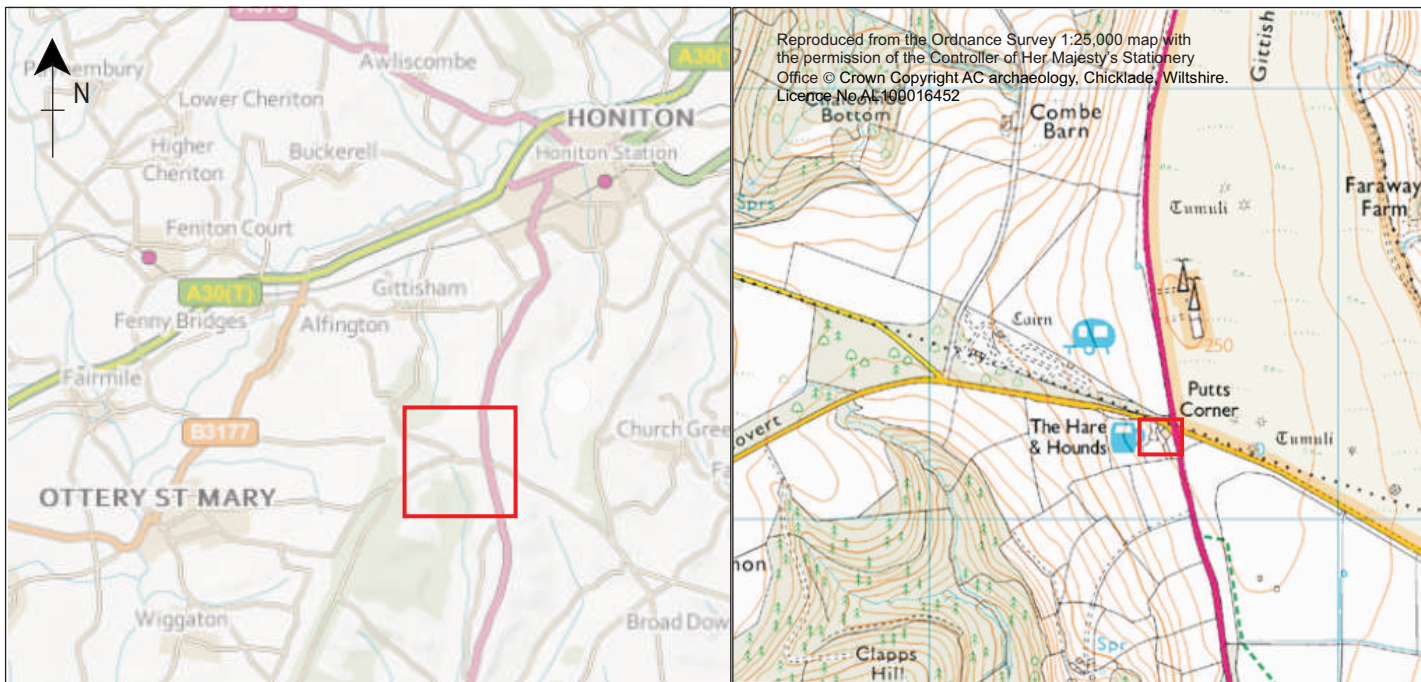
### Internet sources

British Geological Survey [www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience)

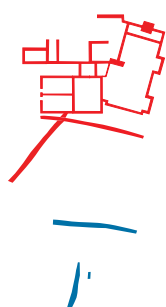
Devon County Council Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation online website

[http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/environmentplanning/historic\\_environment/landscapes/landscape-characterisation.him](http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/environmentplanning/historic_environment/landscapes/landscape-characterisation.him)





0 20m



Areas monitored

Archaeological features

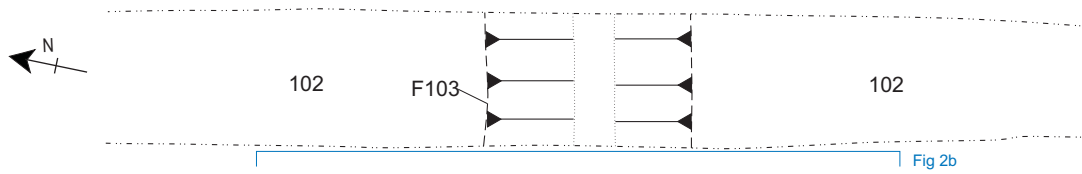
PROJECT

Hare & Hounds Inn, Sidmouth

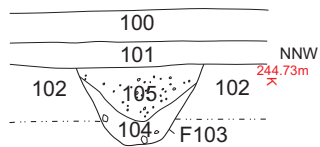
TITLE

Fig. 1: Site location and site plan

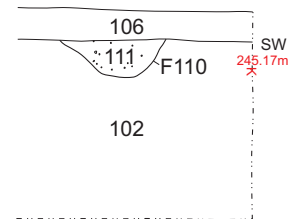
### a) Plan of F103



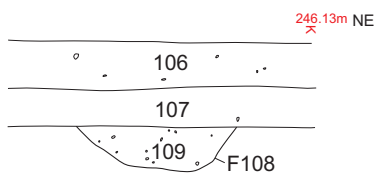
### b) Section of F103



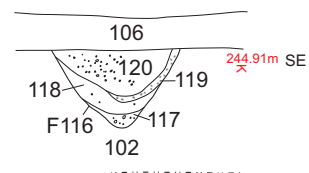
### c) Section of F110



### d) Section of F108



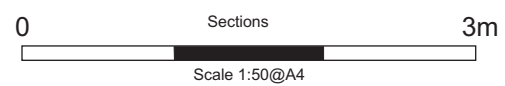
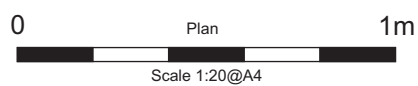
### e) Section of F116



Charcoal



Stones



PROJECT

Hare & Hounds Inn, Sidmouth

TITLE

Fig. 2: Plan and sections





Plate 1: Working shot of service trench, viewed from the north-northwest



Plate 2: Working shot of the kitchen extension, viewed from the southeast



Plate 3: East-northeast facing section of ditch F103, viewed from the east-northeast (scale 1m)



Plate 4: Southwest facing section of ditch F110, viewed from the southwest (scale 1m)

### Devon Office

AC archaeology Ltd  
Unit 4, Halthaies Workshops  
Bradninch  
Nr Exeter  
Devon  
EX5 4LQ

Telephone/Fax: 01392 882410

### Wiltshire Office

AC archaeology Ltd  
Manor Farm Stables  
Chicklade  
Hindon  
Nr Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
SP3 5SU

Telephone: 01747 820581  
Fax: 01747 820440

[www.acarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.acarchaeology.co.uk)