

Champerhaies Bridge, Bradninch, Devon

NGR ST 01349 04230

Results of archaeological monitoring

Planning reference: Mid Devon District Council 13/00441/LBC

Prepared by
Andrew Passmore BSc MIfA

On behalf of
Devon County Council

Document No: ACD689/1/0

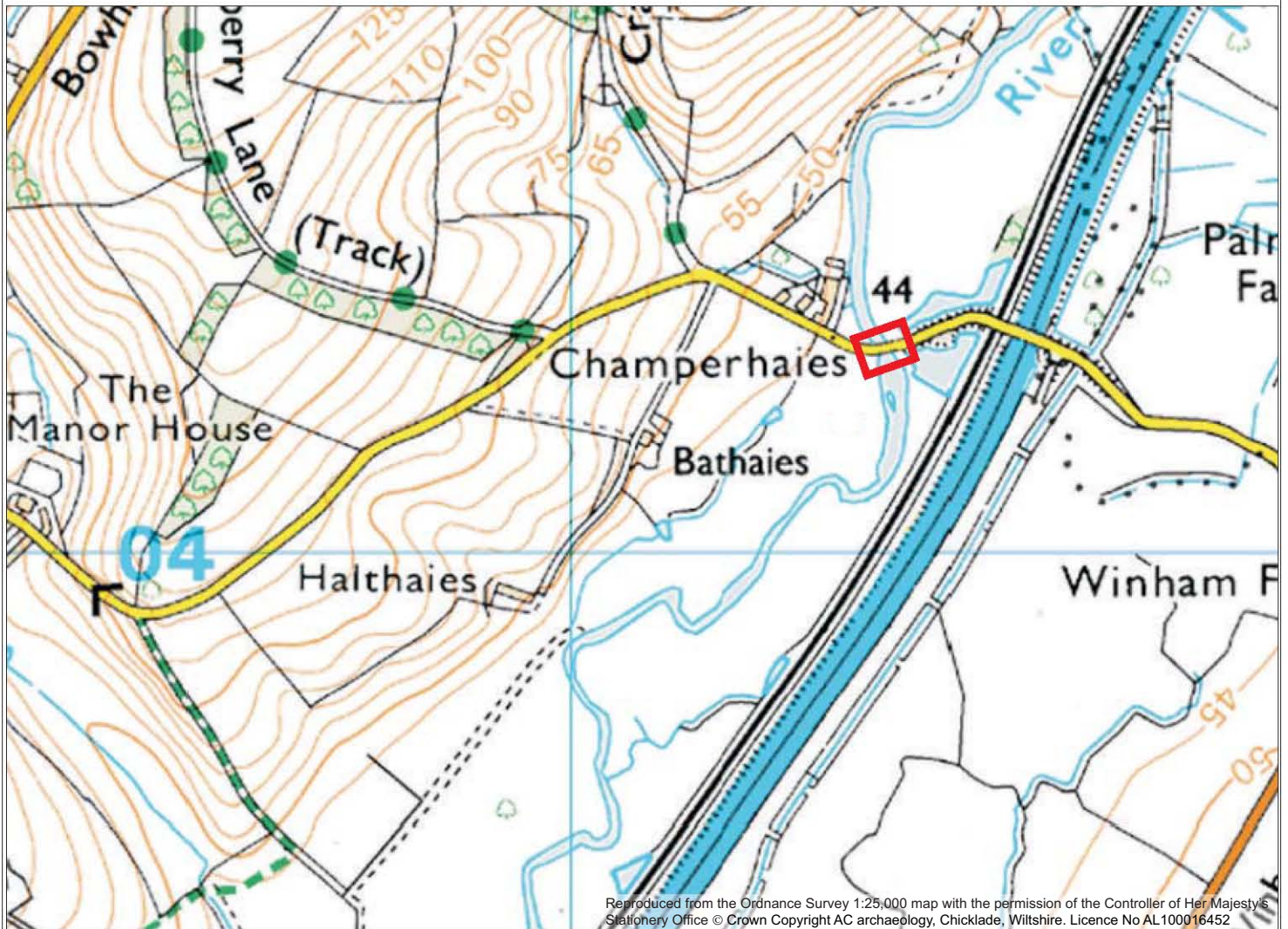
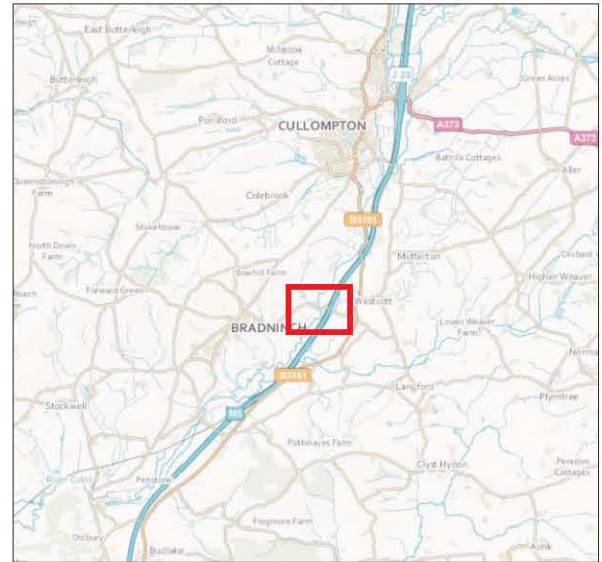
Date: October 2013




archaeology

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Bradninch, Mid Devon	National Grid Reference ST 01349 04230	Number: (Leave blank for HES to fill in)
Subject: Champerhaies Bridge: Results of archaeological monitoring		Photo attached? Y
Planning Application no: 13/00441/LBC	Recipient museum: N/A	
OASIS ID: 159942	Museum Accession no: N/A	
Contractor's reference number/code: ACD689	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 7-9 May 2013	
Description of works. <p><i>Introduction</i></p> <p>Champerhaies Bridge was a Grade II listed structure (National Heritage List reference 1326153) over the River Culm at Bradninch (Fig. 1). It was described as being of early to mid 19th century; the listing description noted a datestone of 1835 on a nearby weir, which was attested to the bridge. After heavy rain that caused the Culm to flood, on 21 November 2012 the bridge was partially washed away leaving it unusable. Archaeological recording was carried out in May 2012 during the demolition of the bridge. The remains of the structure were de-listed in June 2013 (National Heritage List reference 1415674).</p> <p><i>Results</i></p> <p>A photographic and written description of the bridge was made prior to and during its demolition. The remains of the bridge were demolished into the river using a mechanical excavator and subsequently fished out and loaded into trucks. No works took place to the river bed and the river was not drained during the operation.</p> <p>The northern (upstream) face and some of the adjacent arch had been washed away (Plate 1). The remaining fabric had moved away from the river banks, and was tilting downwards to the north. The tarmac surface and any associated sub-base had also been washed away.</p> <p>The arch of the bridge was constructed of red unfrogged bricks laid in English Bond, with a total thickness of approximately 0.65m. The face was constructed from local rubble mudstone or siltstone bonded in pink-white mortar, and had been laid over the arch. Below the head of the arch, the masonry projected out slightly, and at a low level was abutted by three courses of bricks laid in header bond. The latter may have supported the original road surface (Plate 2). The parapet above was constructed from red unfrogged bricks (totalling 0.92m high) laid in English Bond capped with dressed sandstone blocks (0.28m high), all bonded with cement. The two capstones at the centre of the bridge displayed graffiti (variously on their upper and inner surfaces), whilst one also had a bench mark arrow inscribed on its inner face (Plates 3-4).</p> <p>The parapet of the bridge approach on the east side had collapsed, but its construction method could be discerned. It comprised red bricks bonded with white-grey mortar, overlain by four blocks of breccia and volcanic trap. These were capped with sandstone blocks. This masonry is almost certainly later than the bridge and may represent a rebuild, perhaps associated with regrading of the road following the construction of the railway to the east and the associated road bridge over it.</p> <p>On the bridge itself no evidence for surfaces earlier than the former tarmac survived. The section through the eastern approach road was visible, and could be recorded from the other side of the river (Plate 5). Bands of gravel and red clay with gravel were present above the natural subsoil. None could be convincingly identified as an earlier surface, although a distinctive gravelly layer immediately above the natural may be associated with an earlier bridge or lower road level.</p> <p>During the recovery of the collapsed bridge from the river two pieces of timber were noted. One large timber floated downstream and was not recovered. The other was recorded and discarded. This was an oak plank, and measured 440mm long by 115mm wide by 40mm deep. Its ends had been damaged and its original length is unknown (Plate 6). Although the context of these timbers is not known, they were waterlogged and must to have been <i>in situ</i> below the bridge (rather than debris within the river). They may have formed part of an earlier structure or an invert associated with the present bridge.</p>		
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: Fiona Pink, AC archaeology		Date sent to HER: 3 October 2013



0 250m
Scale 1:7500@A4

 Location of site

PROJECT

Champerhaies Bridge, Bradninch, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 1: Site location



Plate 1: The collapsed bridge prior to demolition, viewed from the west. 1m scale.



Plate 2: Close-up view of the bridge showing the brick arch and stone and brick face and parapet, viewed from the northwest. 1m scale.



Plate 3: The top face of the parapet capping stones showing graffiti. 1m scale.



Plate 4: The inner face of the parapet capping stones showing graffiti and bench mark. 1m scale.



Plate 5: The section through the eastern approach road, viewed from the west.



Plate 6: The timber plank recovered from the river. 1m scale.

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