

Land to the north of The Barton, North Tawton, Devon

Centred on NGR SS 65904 00813

Results of archaeological excavation

Planning ref. West Devon Borough Council 03265/2012

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On behalf of:
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Document No: ACD670/2/0

Date: August 2014



AC archaeology

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Summary

An archaeological excavation on land to the north of The Barton, North Tawton (centred on NGR SS 65904 00813) was undertaken by AC archaeology during August 2013 in advance of construction of an equestrian 'sand school'. An area of 75 by 50m was stripped of overlying deposits and the archaeological features revealed sampled by hand excavation.

A small rectangular enclosure of probable 1st-2nd Century AD date lay partially within the excavation area. It was characterised by a single substantial ditch, up to 2.6m wide and 1.3m deep, with a distinctive V-shaped profile and is likely to be military in origin. An entrance on the east side provided access to the enclosure, which flanked the River Taw to its west. A very small assemblage of 1st-2nd century pottery was recovered and no evidence of internal structures or features was exposed.

The enclosure had been reused within the Romano-British period for probable agricultural purposes, later becoming incorporated into a long northeast-southwest aligned boundary.

A scatter of residual worked flints and a worked stone object were recovered from features of Romano-British date. They are indicative of prehistoric activity in the area, but no associated features were found.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

- 1.1 This document sets out the results of an archaeological excavation carried out between 5 and 29 August 2013 in advance of the construction of an equestrian 'sand school' at The Barton, North Tawton, Devon (centred on SS 65904 00813). The work was required under condition 4 of the grant of planning permission (West Devon Borough Council reference 03265/2012). Guidance on the scope of the archaeological investigations was provided by the County Archaeologist.
- 1.2 The excavation was carried out by AC archaeology and was commissioned by Stephen Blakeman on behalf of Mr and Mrs Dunn.
- 1.3 The site is situated within agricultural land to the north of The Barton, on the east side of the River Taw, and covers an area of approximately 75m by 50m. It lies at a height of approximately 123m aOD. The site is bounded to the west by a steep sided leat running along the east side of the River Taw and to the north by an existing hedgebank boundary. The underlying geology is Permian breccia of the Bow breccia formation overlain by the 7th member Quaternary Taw river terrace deposits comprising gravel, sand and silt.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site is immediately north of a large Scheduled Monument containing the remains of a complex of large Roman military enclosures together with a series of smaller enclosures, a Roman road and ring-ditches. The military enclosures have been identified as two forts and two marching camps. Three of the ring ditches (remains of prehistoric funerary monuments) lie to the north of The Barton, the fourth lies further south, at the northwestern angle of the northernmost fort (National Heritage List number 1021151). There are a further two bowl barrows (designated as Scheduled Monuments) on the west side of the River Taw, to the west of The Barton (National Heritage List no. 1017131).

- 2.2** Excavations by Southwest Archaeology in 2007 during the construction of a warehouse extension, associated services, access road and storm water retention pond within the Scheduled Monument immediately south of the present site uncovered archaeological features dating to several periods. Worked flint found within features and the ploughsoil has been dated to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age, and a radiocarbon determination from one feature provided a similar date. A radiocarbon determination from another feature produced an Iron Age date. The evidence uncovered for Roman military occupation included pits and ditches, possibly associated with several of the enclosures (Gillard n.d.).
- 2.3** Excavations south of The Barton in 2003 produced evidence for a Roman enclosure, a previously-unknown Roman trackway, as well as a later prehistoric buried soil (Passmore 2005).

3. AIM

- 3.1** The objective of the works was to investigate, excavate and record any surviving below-ground archaeological artefacts and deposits across the area affected by the development.

4. METHODOLOGY (Fig. 2)

- 4.1** The scope of the investigations has followed the approved Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by AC archaeology (Passmore 2013). The work comprised the machine stripping of soil overburden of an area measuring 75 by 50m (Fig. 2). The removal of soil overburden was undertaken under the control and direction of the site archaeologist. Archaeological features identified in the stripped area were excavated by hand.
- 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. All levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS (Detailed plan Fig. 2 and sections Fig. 3; Plates 1-6)

- 5.1** Natural subsoil (context 101) was encountered at a depth of approximately 0.3m below turf and topsoil. Along the northern extent of the site (defined by an extant hedgebank boundary) topsoil increased in depth to approximately 0.6m. Natural subsoil comprised varied river terrace deposits of gravel, sand and silt. A number of cut features were exposed beneath the topsoil, principally comprising a series of intercutting ditches, present across the western half of the site. Ditches F237 and F238 formed the eastern end of a square or sub-square enclosure. Further ditches and re-cuts of ditches were added to the primary enclosure. These features have undoubtedly been truncated by ploughing, with the depth of the topsoil matching that found to the south (Gillard nd, Passmore 2005). Results are described in detail below.

5.2 Enclosure

Ditches F237 and F238 form the eastern end of a square or sub-square enclosure. Ditch F237 was exposed to a length of 14.75m along its east-west leg, continuing beyond the limit of excavation to the west, and 14m along its north-south leg, terminating to the north. It measured up to 2.6m wide and 1.3m deep. Four segments were excavated [132, 146, 175 and 155]. Its profile was steep-sided becoming near vertical to the base with a sharp break of slope and a narrow flat base. The four segments revealed up to three primary fills (133-5/145/174/156)

composed of pale reddish brown clay sand, derived from weathering of the surrounding natural. Segment [155] exposed the south entrance terminus of an east-facing entrance to the enclosure where the primary fill (156) contained a single sherd of samian ware. Segments [146] and [175] of ditch F237 contained secondary fills (144) and (173), composed of mid-dark yellowish brown silty sand with moderate to frequent small gravel inclusions. In segment [155] the primary fill (156) of ditch F237 was truncated by a later ditch F239 and in segments [132], [155] and [175], fills had been truncated by a re-cut for ditch F240. Ditches F239 and F240 are discussed in detail below.

Ditch F238 formed the north-eastern corner of the enclosure. The ditch was exposed to a length of 15.65m along its east-west leg, continuing beyond the limit of excavation to the west, and 14.3m along its north-south leg, terminating to the south. It measured up to 2.31m wide and 1.22m deep. Four segments were excavated [182, 211, 230 and 121]. Its profile was very steep sided with a sharp break of slope to the base and a narrow flat base. It contained a sequence of fills, exemplified by segment [182]. Primary fill (183), composed of mid grey brown clay sand with abundant small-medium sub-rounded pebbles and fine gravel, was derived from weathering of the surrounding natural. This was overlain by accumulated soil fill (184) composed of firm, mid grey brown, sandy clay with occasional medium to large sub-rounded pebbles. Deposits (185-7), composed of coarse sandy gravel, represented a second episode of weathering of the ditch edge, possibly following a period of ditch maintenance where the stabilised ditch edge was disturbed. Fills (188, 192 and 189), composed of friable mid brown clay silt with occasional small to medium sub angular pebbles, were the result of disuse and gradual soil accumulation. A thin lens of charcoal-rich silt (190) overlay fill (189). This lens was a component of group no. 246 (see below).

In the northeast corner of the enclosure segment [211] revealed that the fills (212, 213, 214 and 215) of ditch F238 were cut by ditch F242. This feature is likely to have re-cut the length of the east-west leg of F238, however, this was not clearly discernable in segment [230]. The secondary fill (221) of the northern entrance terminus of the enclosure contained a single worked stone object.

Segments [121], [182] and [230] of ditch F238 contained an upper fill (118/191/236) composed of pale brown silt with rare small to large sub-rounded pebbles which is part of group no. 245 (see below). A fragment of abraded Roman tile was recovered from fill (191).

5.3 Ditch F239

Ditch F239 was aligned a northeast to southwest. It was exposed to a length of 35.5m and measured 1.53m wide and 0.68m deep. It was cut into the primary fill (156) of the terminus of ditch F237 in segment [155]. From here it continued beyond the limit of excavation to the northeast. Ditch F239 was observed in six segments [155, 130, 107, 206, 139 and 113]. Its profile was a broad V-shape with moderately sloping, slightly convex sides and a narrow base. At its southern extent in [155] its depth increased to c. 1m as it approached and intersected with the northern enclosure terminal of ditch F237. It contained a reasonably consistent sequence of fills comprising primary fills (112/115-6/122/124-6/158-9/194/207) composed of soft reddish brown clay sand, derived from weathering of the surrounding natural, overlain by layers of gradual soil accumulation (110-1/195/208) composed of pale brown silty clay with frequent black mineral flecking. A worked flint was recovered from fill (110). In segments [130] and [155] ditch F239 had been re-cut by ditch F240. In segment [107] it had been re-cut by ditch F241. This re-cut was present in segments [113], [139] and [206]. In segments [139] and [206] fills (195 and 208) are cut by ditch F242, which, along with ditches F240 and F241, is described in detail below. The final fill (109) of ditch F239 in segment [113] was a component of group 245 (see below).

5.4 Ditch F240

Ditch F240 was aligned northeast-southwest, turning north-south at its southern end. It re-cut along the line of ditches F239 and F237. It measured at least 18m long. It was observed in four segments [175, 132, 155 and 130]. Where it cut ditch F239 it measured c. 1.65m wide and 0.44m deep with a broad shallow profile, moderately sloping sides and a gradual break of slope to a broad concave base. It extended to c. 2.6m wide and 0.83m deep where it cut ditch F237, retaining a similar broad profile. At its northeast extent it formed a rounded terminal in segment [130] while to the southwest its presence was uncertain beyond segment [175]. It contained a pale brown silty sand fill (129/161-2/167-70/181/136-9) most likely derived from silting and soil accumulation. Mineral flecking in the fill suggests formation in frequently wet conditions. In segment [132] the fill was characterised by a thick homogenous deposit (137) of mineral rich silty sand with few inclusions (evidently an accumulation in wet conditions), flanked and overlain on either side by drier material (138 and 139) containing frequent small to medium sub-angular stone inclusions. Tip lines visible in these flanking fills and increased frequency of poorly sorted inclusions suggest introduction of this material from the sides rather than accumulation or soil formation; possibly as a result of agricultural activity around the partially infilled feature. A diffuse boundary between fill (137) and fills (138 and 139) suggests their formation was a gradual process occurring in tandem. Two sherds of samian ware were recovered from fill (162) of segment [130] and five sherds of BB1 pottery were recovered from fill (169) of segment [175]. A thin lens of charcoal-rich silt (163/140) overlay fills (162 and 139) in segments [155] and [132]. This lens was a component of group no. 246 (see below). The final upper fill (128/164/141/166) of ditch F240 was composed of pale brown silt with rare small to large sub-rounded pebbles and formed a component of group no. 245 (see below).

5.5 Ditch F241

Ditch F241, aligned northeast to southwest, was a re-cut along the line of ditch F239. It measured at least 12m long, 1.53m wide and up to 0.40m deep. It was observed in two segments [107 and 117]. At its southwest extent in segment [117] it formed a rounded terminal, while to the northeast its presence was uncertain beyond segment [107]. It had a broad shallow profile with moderately sloping sides and a gradual break of slope to a broad concave base. It contained up to two primary fills (103/114 and 108) of pale yellowish brown silty sand, derived from silting and soil accumulation. Mineral flecking in the fill suggests formation in frequently wet conditions. The final upper fill (102/106) was composed of pale brown silt with rare small to large sub-rounded pebbles and formed a component of group no. 245 (see below).

5.6 Ditch F242

Ditch F242 was an east-west aligned ditch, exposed to a maximum length of c. 34m. Five segments were excavated [211, 176, 222, 209 and 139]. At its eastern extent it formed a rounded terminus that had cut the fill of ditch F239. To the west it re-cut the upper fills of ditch F238 and was not readily discernable beyond segment [211]. It measured c. 1.75m wide and 0.50m deep. At its eastern extent it narrowed to c. 1.05m as it terminated. It contained a fill sequence, exemplified by segment [176]. Primary fill (177), composed of mid reddish brown silty sand, was derived from weathering of the natural. Secondary fill (178), composed of pale brown sandy silty with frequent mineralised flecks, was an accumulation of soil in apparently wet conditions. A final upper fill (179) of pale brown silt was part of group no. 245 (see below). A single residual worked flint was recovered from primary fill (210) in segment [209].

5.7 Group No. 246

This group is comprised of three fills (140/163/190), composed of pale brown silty sand with frequent charcoal flecking, overlying the fills of ditches F238 and F240.

5.8 Group No. 245

This group is formed by a deposit (236/216-7/191/118/143/166/141/164/128/102/106/109/225-7/179) forming the upper fill of ditches F237, F238, F239, F240, F241 and F242. This fill generally comprised a single layer, measured up to 0.2m thick and was composed of pale brown sandy silt with occasional small to large sub-rounded pebbles and rare larger cobbles. On the northeast corner of enclosure ditch F238 the fill was observed to extend to overlie natural subsoil beyond the cut of F238.

5.9 Other Features

Two discrete features located outside the enclosure were excavated: possible posthole F201 and shallow natural hollow F199. F201 was circular in plan and measured 0.55m in diameter and was 0.07m deep with a shallow gently concave profile. It contained a single charcoal-rich fill (200); possibly the remains of a burnt post. F199 was irregular in plan and measured 1.90m by 1.75m and was 0.1m deep. It contained a pale brown single silty fill (198), equivalent to group no. 245 present elsewhere on site. A single worked flint flake was recovered from this deposit.

6 THE FINDS *by Kerry Kerr-Peterson and Naomi Payne, with a contribution from Henrietta Quinnell*

6.1 Introduction

All finds recovered on site were retained, cleaned and quantified according to material type within each context. The finds included small assemblages of Roman pottery, worked flint/chert, an interesting worked stone object and a piece of ceramic building material (CBM). Finds totals by material type are presented in Table 1.

Context	Context Description	Roman pottery		Worked flint		Worked stone		CBM	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
100	Topsoil			1	1				
108	Primary fill of ditch F241			1	13				
110	Upper fill of ditch F239			1	1				
118	Upper fill of ditch F238			1	11				
119	Secondary fill of ditch F238					1	300		
124	Upper fill of ditch F239			1	2				
156	Primary fill of ditch F237	1	1						
162	Secondary fill of ditch F240	2	6						
169	Primary fill of ditch F240	5	36						
191	Upper fill of ditch F238							1	187
198	Fill of hollow F199			2	46				
210	Primary fill of ditch F242			1	3				
Totals		8	43	8	77	1	300	1	187

Table 1: Summary of finds by context (weights in grams)

6.2 Roman pottery

All eight sherds (43g) of pottery from the excavation date from the Roman period. The pottery includes three sherds of heavily abraded samian pottery. One small fragment of South Gaulish samian was recovered from the primary fill (156) of the terminus of ditch F237. The vessel's form is uncertain but it is likely to date to the late 1st century to early 2nd century AD. Two small sherds of Central Gaulish decorated samian were recovered from the secondary fill (162)

of ditch F240. These date from the 2nd century AD. Five further pieces of Roman pottery were recovered from the primary fill (169) of ditch F240. These are all from the same South Western Black Burnished 1 jar with a short everted rim. The form was in production from the mid-1st century until the early second century AD (Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 118).

6.3 Ceramic Building Material

A single fragment of CBM (187g) was recovered from upper fill (191) of ditch F238. This is a triangular fragment of flat tile with a thickness of 200mm. It is likely to be a fragment of tegula roof tile. The fabric is light red with common buff streaking. The temper is fairly coarse and includes frequent pieces of translucent, sub-rounded quartz grains, abundant white mica and frequent sub-angular rock inclusions. Recent work undertaken in the Mid Devon region has identified the site of a previously unknown Roman tilerly at Hatherleigh Moor, located c. 12km north-west of North Tawton. Previous examples of tiles from this source, known as Devon Group 1, have been identified from North Tawton, as well as elsewhere in Mid Devon, and this piece belongs to this group. This fragment of tile is not closely datable by itself, and although the period of production at Hatherleigh Moor is currently unknown, comparable study of other tilerly sites suggests that it may have been in use over several centuries (Wheeler and Laing-Trengrove 2006).

6.4 Worked stone by *Henrietta Quinnell*

A single piece of worked stone (300g) was recovered from the secondary fill (119) of ditch F238. This is a triangular river cobble of fine grained sandstone, maximum dimension of 90mm and 20mm thick. The cobble has split along weaknesses in sandstone to provide two flat surfaces. In each of these a hollow c. 20mm across and 5mm deep has been worked by pecking and grinding. The hollows are positioned directly opposite each other and provide good finger grips. One corner of the triangular cobble has pestle wear, supporting the suggestion that the tool was provided with finger grips to be used in this way. The hollows are similar to the larger 'cupmarks' often found in later prehistory.

The tool may belong to the Bronze Age. A review of cupped pebbles (or cobbles) (Roe 1985) suggested that those known at that date had strong Early Bronze Age associations in barrow deposits, for example at Lousey Barrow, St Juliot. The broad interpretation given by Roe favoured hammers and related artefacts provided with finger grips. More recently occasional examples have been recorded on settlement sites of the Middle Bronze Age, for example in Roundhouse 1500 at Scarcewater, Penance, Cornwall (Quinnell 2010). Roe (1985) comments that of the c. 200 examples across Britain known to her at the time of writing only one example was recorded from Devon and that the majority of the 200 were casual finds. The potential date bracket for cupped pebble tools should be regarded as wide given the large number of examples with poor provenance, but an Early/Middle Bronze Age date is quite likely.

6.5 Worked flint

A total of eight pieces of worked flint and chert (77g) were recovered from seven contexts. The assemblage includes five flakes, one of which, from hollow F199, has been retouched to form a notch. The remaining flint includes a small flake core from the primary fill (108) of ditch F241, a broken bladelet from tertiary fill (110) of ditch F239, and a side-and-end scraper from fill (198) of hollow F199. With the possible exception of the bladelet, none of the flintwork is diagnostic of a particular period and the assemblage as a whole is most likely to reflect Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age activity.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 A series of intercutting ditches were excavated representing four distinct phases of activity. Remains exposed comprised a small rectangular enclosure of probable 1st-2nd century AD date and evidence of its later reuse as an agricultural enclosure and field boundary. The four phases of activity all appear to have occurred within a relatively short timeframe with existing ditches being added to or reused rather than replaced. A fifth phase represented abandonment and subsoil formation over the features. Each phase is discussed in detail below.

7.2 *Phase 1*

Phase 1 comprised ditch cuts F237 and F238 and their primary fills, which formed a square or sub-square ditched enclosure. The enclosure was positioned to occupy an area of raised ground overlooking the River Taw to the west. It had an internal dimension of 30m north to south and was defined by striking V-shaped ditches of Roman military character, with a distinct vertical sided 'shovel slot' at the base. An entrance was positioned central to the east-facing side of the enclosure. The west side was not exposed. It is likely that an associated bank was located on the inside of the ditch, however, no clear evidence was exposed for this feature or its deliberate slighting into the ditch. Indeed, subsequent re-cutting and maintenance of the ditch would make the presence of such a deposit unlikely. No internal features were exposed. A securely stratified sherd of 1st to early 2nd century AD samian ware, recovered from the primary fill of the southern entrance terminal is the best dating evidence obtained from the enclosure. A further seven 1st–2nd century AD sherds were recovered from later re-cuts and are possibly residual in those deposits.

The enclosure fits into a fragmentary landscape of known military sites and routeways. At North Tawton, to the south of the site, a complex arrangement of two large marching camps, two phases of large fort, a smaller fort and an annexe is met by a road leading from Exeter (Margary 1973, Passmore 2005). From North Tawton the route of the road is presumed to continue to the west, via Okehampton, where the Roman fort is dated to the 1st century AD (Balkwill 1976, Bidwell *et al.* 1979), to link with forts in Cornwall (e.g., Griffith 1984, and Smart, in press). Segments of the latter road include the abandoned trackway at Sourton Down which was investigated at two separate locations in 1986 and 1991 (Reed and Weddell 1997). The Roman road between North Tawton and Exeter has been examined by (Salvatore and Knight 1991, Brennan and Leivers 2013).

A series of excavations in the area directly to the south of the site has revealed ditches and other features of Roman date (Gillard n.d., Passmore 2004). A north-south V-shaped ditch, revealed during both excavations, has been interpreted as belonging to a large Roman marching camp and provided a calibrated radiocarbon date of AD 18-127 (OxA-20371; Gillard n.d.). Further to the north, and in close proximity to the current site, an east-west aligned ditch with a V-shaped profile contained a Black Burnished Ware base of 1st-2nd century AD date. This ditch may be one previously identified by aerial photography and interpreted as part of a further marching camp (Griffith 1984), but this interpretation has been challenged on the basis of proximity to the River Taw (Welfare and Swan 1995). Recent unpublished geophysical survey directly to the west of the River Taw has revealed a landscape populated by five square enclosures, with the closest to the river appearing to have an entrance facing east. Enclosures of this type would fit happily into the known corpus of civilian settlements known in Devon, but as Griffith (1994) has pointed out, without excavation they can be difficult to date.

The presence of the road, ready access to water in the form of the River Taw, and the potential to guard an important river crossing, are all factors in the siting of Roman military facilities at North Tawton, although the forts are perhaps for over-wintering between summer campaigns rather than for occupation on a permanent basis. This leads to a paucity of finds (Maxfield 1987, also Todd 2002). The proximity of several earthworks of apparent military origin is

unparalleled in Roman Devon and Cornwall. Two phases of fort and two marching camps have been identified at Cullompton (Simpson and Griffith 1993), and at Okehampton evidence for extra-mural activities has previously been noted from aerial photography and field-walking finds of burnt clay and charcoal along with a possible neighbouring fortlet (Bidwell *et al.* 1979). Military establishments in association with, but outside of, the legionary fortress at Exeter have been identified in recent years (e.g. Passmore forthcoming, Salvatore *et al.* forthcoming). Elsewhere in Britain, in proximity to Roman forts, the earthworks of practice camps have been identified. Here the troops trained to establish the enclosure of a temporary marching camp, and this may explain some of the apparently detached sections of ditch identified from the air. It is also the case that Roman forts are known to have attracted civilian settlement, occasionally as a formal annexe to a fort in the form of a *vicus*; the presence of these has yet to be established in Devon and Cornwall. The lack of finds indicates that a civilian settlement is not likely to be an explanation for the enclosure.

7.3 **Phase 2**

A northeast-southwest aligned linear ditch (F239) extended from the terminus of F237 and continuing beyond the limit of excavation to the northeast. Aerial photography shows this feature to continue in the same direction across fields to the north for approximately 200m beyond the site. Enclosure ditches F237 and F238 appear to be partially infilled with primary weathering deposits, but are likely to have been maintained as a functioning feature throughout phase 2. Secondary weathering observed in segment F182 is indicative of probable ditch cleaning, where the natural edge was re-exposed causing further erosion and stabilisation. The configuration of a long boundary incorporating an enclosure may suggest stock management as a likely function as this may have acted as a hornwork to funnel animals into the enclosure.

7.4 **Phase 3**

Phase 3 comprised ditch cuts F240 and F241 and the secondary infilling of ditch F238. Two sections of ditch (F240 and F241) re-cut ditches F239 and F237. Their opposing termini formed an apparent entrance gap opposite the main enclosure entrance. Secondary fills had accumulated within the northern half of the enclosure (F238) with no further maintenance or re-cutting. It can be inferred that the enclosure was largely out of use by this stage and that the southern part (F237) simply continued to form the southern extent of an irregular field boundary. A thin charcoal-rich lens (group no. 246) overlay accumulated fills in F238 and F240. It appeared to represent burning in the locality, rather than deliberate deposition or indeed burning *in situ*.

7.5 **Phase 4**

Ditch 242 was a later addition, possibly to aid drainage. It respects ditch F239 and most likely re-cut the line of F238 suggesting that both of these features were still visible although largely infilled.

7.6 **Phase 5**

This final phase comprised group no. 245, deposits forming the final infilling of ditches described in phases 1-4. Group no. 245 comprised the final upper fill of ditches F237-42. It was remarkably uniform, suggesting a common origin. In segments [182], [211] and [218] this silty deposit was observed to extend beyond the cut feature to overlie the natural subsoil. This observation would suggest that its origins were as a leached subsoil horizon, formed sometime after the complete infilling of the features. Later it was truncated by ploughing leaving only remnants in the tops of features and natural hollows. A broad shallow hollow (F199) at the eastern extent of the site appears to be one such natural feature.

A fragment of probable roof tile in the upper fill (191) of ditch F238 is suggestive of possible structures in the area. However, it was quite abraded and was not contained within a securely

stratified context (fill 191 being a component of group no. 245). As such it could have travelled some distance.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The excavation revealed a Romano-British period enclosure set within a landscape of, what is for Devon, intensive Roman military activity, including several similar small enclosures. Proximity to the Roman road leading from Exeter towards Cornwall at the crossing of the River Taw, is probably, at least in part, responsible for this cluster of Romano-British period sites. The purpose of the enclosure is unclear, although the lack of pottery and evidence for structures suggests either that it was short-lived as a 'fortlet', or was in fact never used as a base, and perhaps had a role in corralling animals related to military activity. However, it remains a possibility that internal features may have been lost through truncation by ploughing.

9. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

9.1 The finds, paper and digital archive are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. The finds and paper archive will be offered to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, but if they are unable to accept this, then it will be dealt with under their current accession policy. A temporary accession number of RAMM 13/29 has been assigned by the Royal Albert Memorial Museum.

9.2 The OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS) number for this project is 174138.

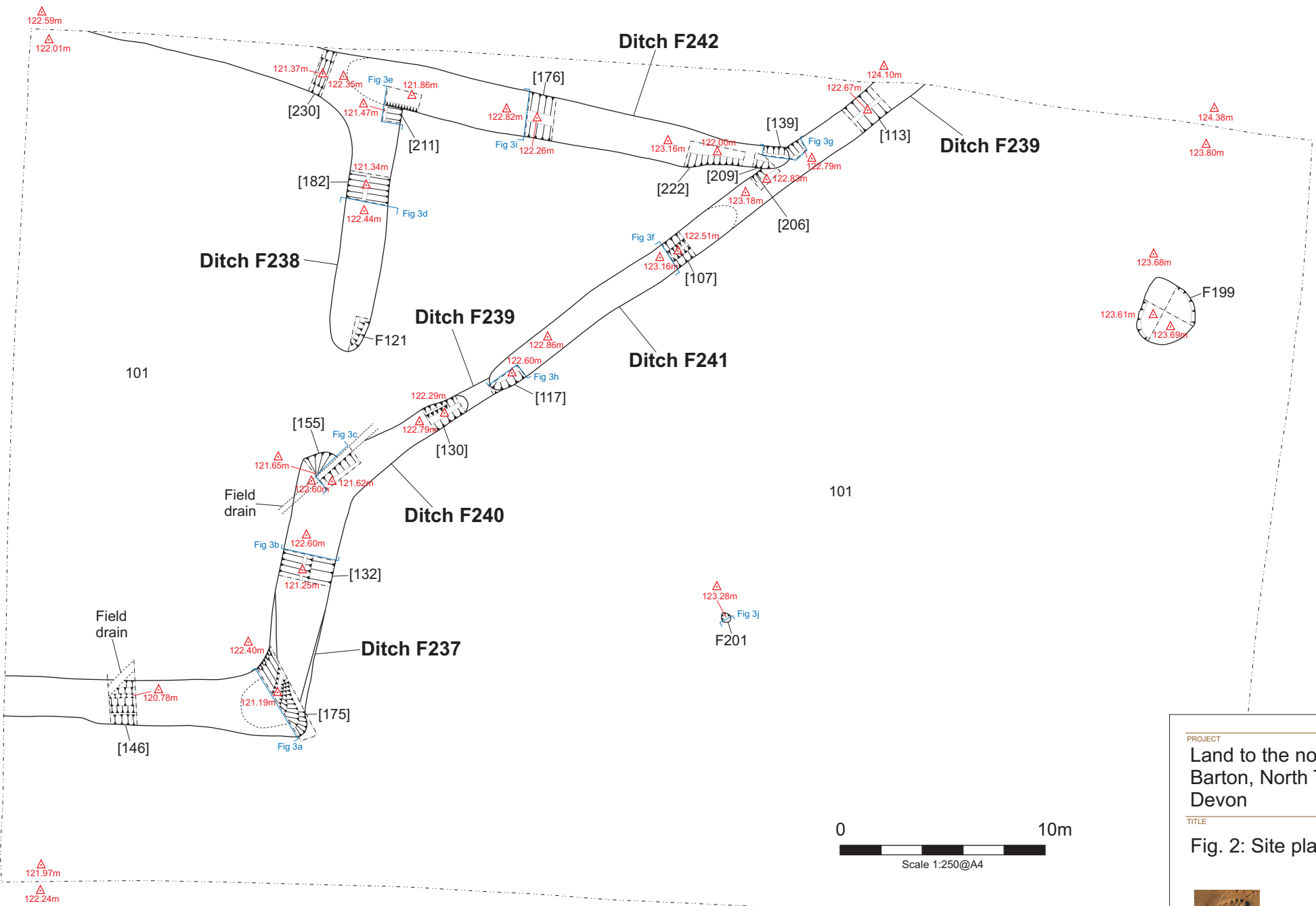
10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

10.1 The excavation was commissioned by Stephen Blakeman on behalf of Mr and Mrs Dunn. The fieldwork was undertaken by Fiona Pink and Alex Farnell with assistance from Jon Hall, Stella De-Villiers, Paul Cooke and William Smith. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Elisabeth Patkai.

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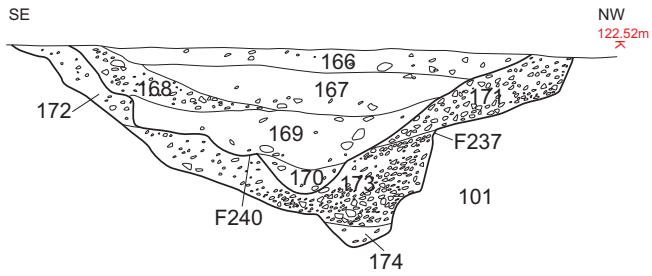


PROJECT
Land to the north of The Barton, North Tawton, Devon

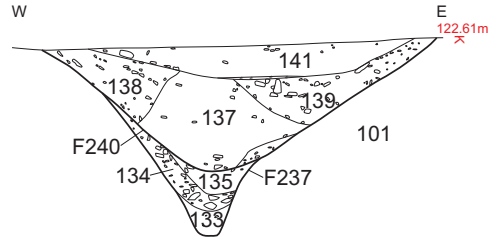
TITLE
Fig. 2: Site plan



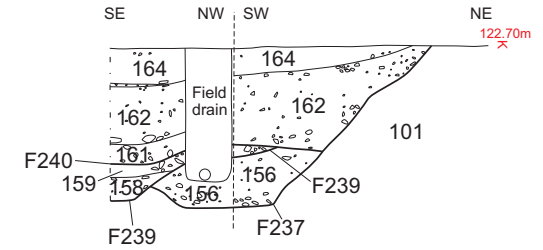
a) Segment [175]



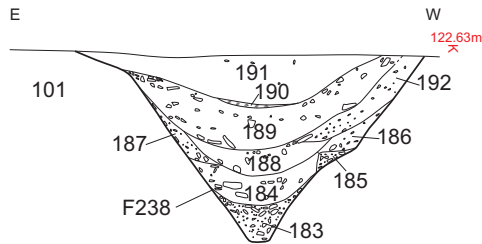
b) Segment [132]



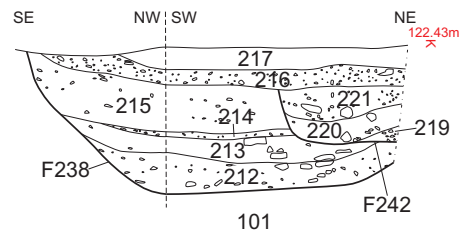
c) Segment [155]



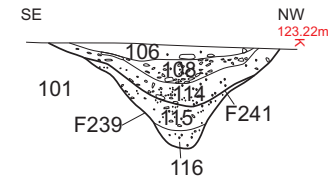
d) Segment [182]



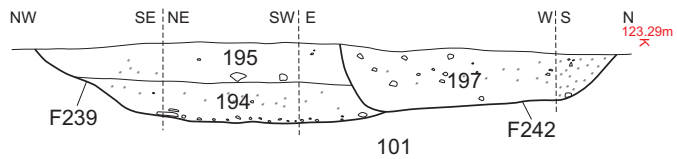
e) Segment [211]



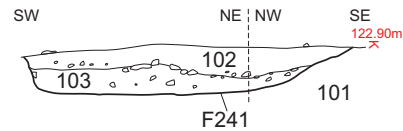
f) Segment [107]



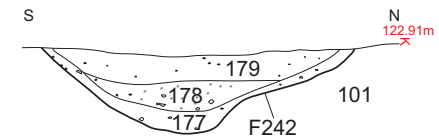
g) Segment [139]



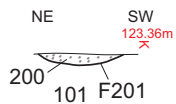
h) Segment [117]



i) Segment [176]



j) Section of posthole/pit F201



PROJECT
Land to the north of The
Barton, North Tawton,
Devon

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Fig. 3: Sections





Plate 1: Topsoil stripping,
looking southwest



Plate 2: Ditch F237 [132]
with excavation in progress



Plate 3: Ditch F237 [132],
south-facing section (scale 1m)



Plate 4: Ditch F238 [182],
south-facing section (scale 2m)



Plate 5: Ditches F239 and F241
[107], southwest-facing section
(scale 1m)

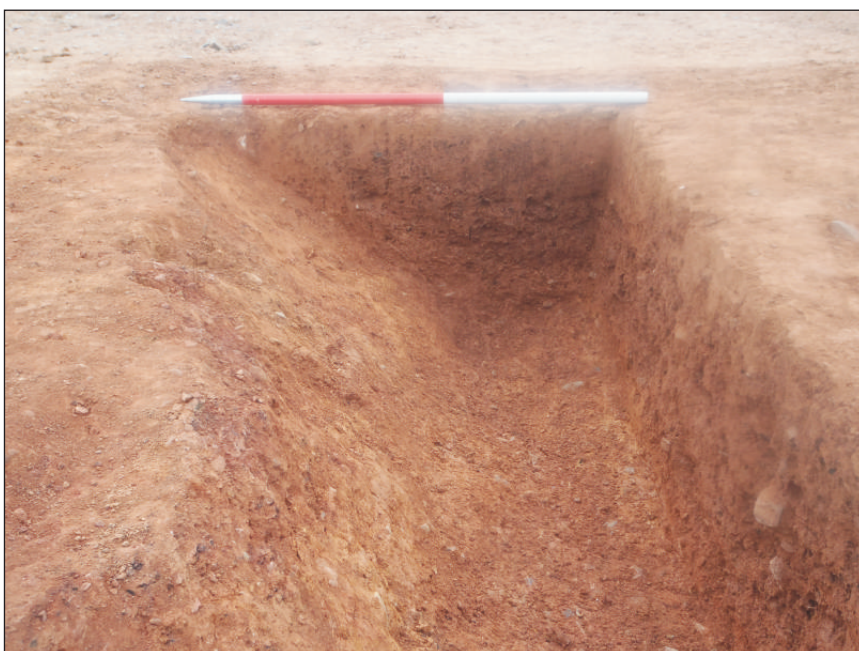


Plate 6: Ditch F242 [222],
half-section of east-facing section
(scale 1m)

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