

IDEFORD COMMON, IDEFORD, DEVON

(Centred on NGR SX 900 785)

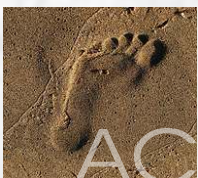
Results of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

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and
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On behalf of:
Teignbridge District Council

Report No: ACD1757/1/1

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archaeology

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The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of AC archaeology and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

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Summary

Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out by AC archaeology in February 2018 on Ideford Common, Ideford, Devon (centred on NGR SX 900 785). The work comprised the fourth phase of work associated with the creation of bare earth habitats on the heathland. Ideford Common contains a total of eight prehistoric cairns, which are located adjacent to the areas investigated.

The de-vegetation of areas cleared for habitat creation exposed a possible additional cairn to the known group. Comprising a similar round and stone rubble composition as the adjacent cairns, the newly identified earthwork is considered to represent a potential addition to the existing group.

A small number of features were exposed by the creation of bare earth scrapes. These consisted of a small ditch of unknown date and a series of probable wheel ruts and vegetation hollows of likely recent origin.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

1.1 This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring and recording undertaken during the fourth phase of bare ground habitat creation at Ideford Common, Ideford, Devon (centred on NGR SX 900 785). The work was required by Teignbridge District Council, following consultation with the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team.

1.2 Ideford Common is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) incorporating approximately 40 hectares of heathland on the southern edge of the Great Haldon Hills, south of the A380 and close to the Ashcombe Cross, Chudleigh/Teignmouth Junction (Fig. 1 and Plate 1). It is positioned on ground that slopes gradually down to the south between 230m and 200m aOD (above Ordnance Datum), with the underlying solid geology comprising sandstones and gravels of the Upper Greensand formation (British Geological Survey Online Viewer).

1.3 This phase of bare earth creation was carried out within five areas referred to in this report as Areas A-E (Fig. 1).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Great Haldon is an area of upland heathland which contains a number of prehistoric sites. On Ideford Common there is a Bronze Age barrow cemetery comprised of eight cairns that measure between 20m and 5m across and between 0.5m and 1.2m high (Devon County Historic Environment Record reference for the group MDV79238). The location of these are shown on Fig. 1. Of these, the cairn on the west of the group (individual reference MDV9002), which is the largest of the group, is thought to relate to a record of an excavation carried out in 1780. During this, a cist containing an inverted cremation vessel was exposed.

2.2 The Ordnance Survey First-Edition 6-inch map of 1889 depicts Ideford Common as an area of rough heathland. On this a number of gravel and sand extraction pits are shown.

2.3 Two previous phases of archaeological monitoring during bare earth habitat creation was carried out in 2015 and 2016 (Cooke 2015 and Patkai 2016). The third phase of work carried out in 2017 did not include the creation of bare earth and therefore did

not require archaeological attendance. The location of all phases of work are shown on Fig. 1. The monitoring in 2015 recorded four earthwork features in the vicinity of the investigated areas as well as four possible archaeological features within the scraped areas. The earthworks and features were all interpreted as being related to quarrying activity. The monitoring in 2016 exposed two undated possible pits. A series of linear features thought to represent recent wheel rutting was also exposed.

3. AIMS OF THE WORK

- 3.1** The aim of the monitoring and recording was to record any earthworks and archaeological features or deposits exposed during the habitat creation work. This was with particular reference for the potential for prehistoric remains to be present on the site.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1** Five areas were initially swaled to remove vegetation (Areas A-E on Fig. 1). These and the areas swaled in 2017 were inspected for earthworks. A total of five bare earth ground scrapes measuring approximately 4m square were then excavated within each of the swaled areas using a tracked-machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket.

- 4.2** Each of the bare earth ground scrapes was 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*. The locations of the swaled areas and scrapes were recorded using a Leica Viva netrover.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Introduction (Plan Fig. 1)

Natural subsoil (context 101), which comprised a light grey to mid greyish-brown silty-sand with abundant gravels, was exposed within each of the bare earth scrapes at a depth of between 0.1m and 0.15m beneath a dark grey silty-loam topsoil.

Features were exposed in Area A (bare earth patches A1 and A2) and Area C (bare earth patches C3 and C5). An earthwork representing a possible cairn was exposed within Area C following the removal of vegetation. These features are described below.

5.2 Area A (Plan Fig. 2a-b: Plates 2-3)

Three north to south aligned parallel linear features F102, F103 and F104 were exposed in bare earth patch A1. These measured between 0.2m to 0.3m wide and were comprised of dark grey silty-loams that was similar to the overlying topsoil. No finds were recovered.

Two partially-exposed amorphous probable vegetation features were exposed in bare earth patch A2 (F105 and F106). These measured 3.25m and 1.60m across respectively and contained deposits similar to the overlying topsoil. No finds were recovered.

5.3 Area C (Plan Figs 1 and 2c-d: Plates 3-8)

The earthwork representing a possible cairn was located on the northeast side of the de-vegetated area. It was sub-circular in plan and was principally comprised of chert

rubble. The possible cairn measured 9m long, 8.5m wide and a maximum of 0.4m in height.

One linear feature (F107) on an approximate northwest to southeast alignment was exposed in bare earth patch C3. It measured 0.20m wide and up to 0.12m deep, with a V-shaped profile. It was filled with dark greyish-brown silty-sand loam with occasional chert gravel inclusions. No finds were recovered.

One partially-exposed probable vegetation feature (F108) was exposed in bare earth patch in C5. It was sub-oval in plan and measured 1.90m across and contained a mixed dark greyish-brown silty-sand loam with occasional chert gravels and dark brownish-yellow silty-clay mottling. No finds were recovered.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 The possible new cairn exposed following the de-vegetation of Area C is of a similar composition and fits within the dimension range represented by the known cairn group. Its position within the group represents the filling of a gap that would form a northeast to southwest alignment made up of cairns MVD9785, MDV29047, MDV29043, MDV9003, MDV9002 and potentially also MDV55929 (Fig. 1). If the earthwork feature does represent a further prehistoric cairn, then it would therefore be an important addition to the group and furthermore would establish a potential spatial alignment within the group.

6.2 The linear features in A1 were characteristic of wheel ruts and are therefore of probable modern origin. Linear feature F107, which was exposed in bare-earth patch C3, represents a probable ditch. Its function and date was not established. The features in bare-earth patch A2 and C5 were probable natural vegetation features.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The de-vegetation of areas cleared for habitat creation have exposed a possible additional cairn to a known group of eight such features present on Ideford Common. Comprising a similar sub oval shape and stone rubble construction to the known adjacent cairns, the newly identified earthwork has the potential to represent an important addition to the existing group of prehistoric features.

7.2 Other than a small ditch of unknown date, the small number of features exposed by the creation of bare earth scrapes, which comprised probable wheel ruts and vegetation hollows, were of probable recent date.

8. ARCHIVE AND OASIS ENTRY

8.1 An Online AccessS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS (OASIS) entry has been created using the unique identifier **208697** and includes a copy of this report.

8.2 This report and the associated OASIS entry will form the archive for the project.

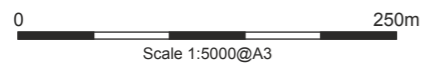
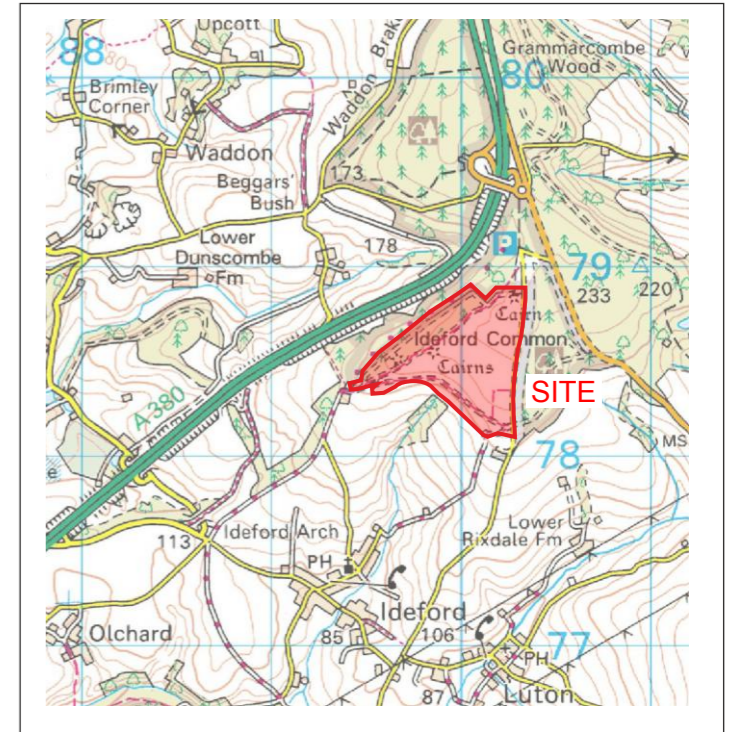
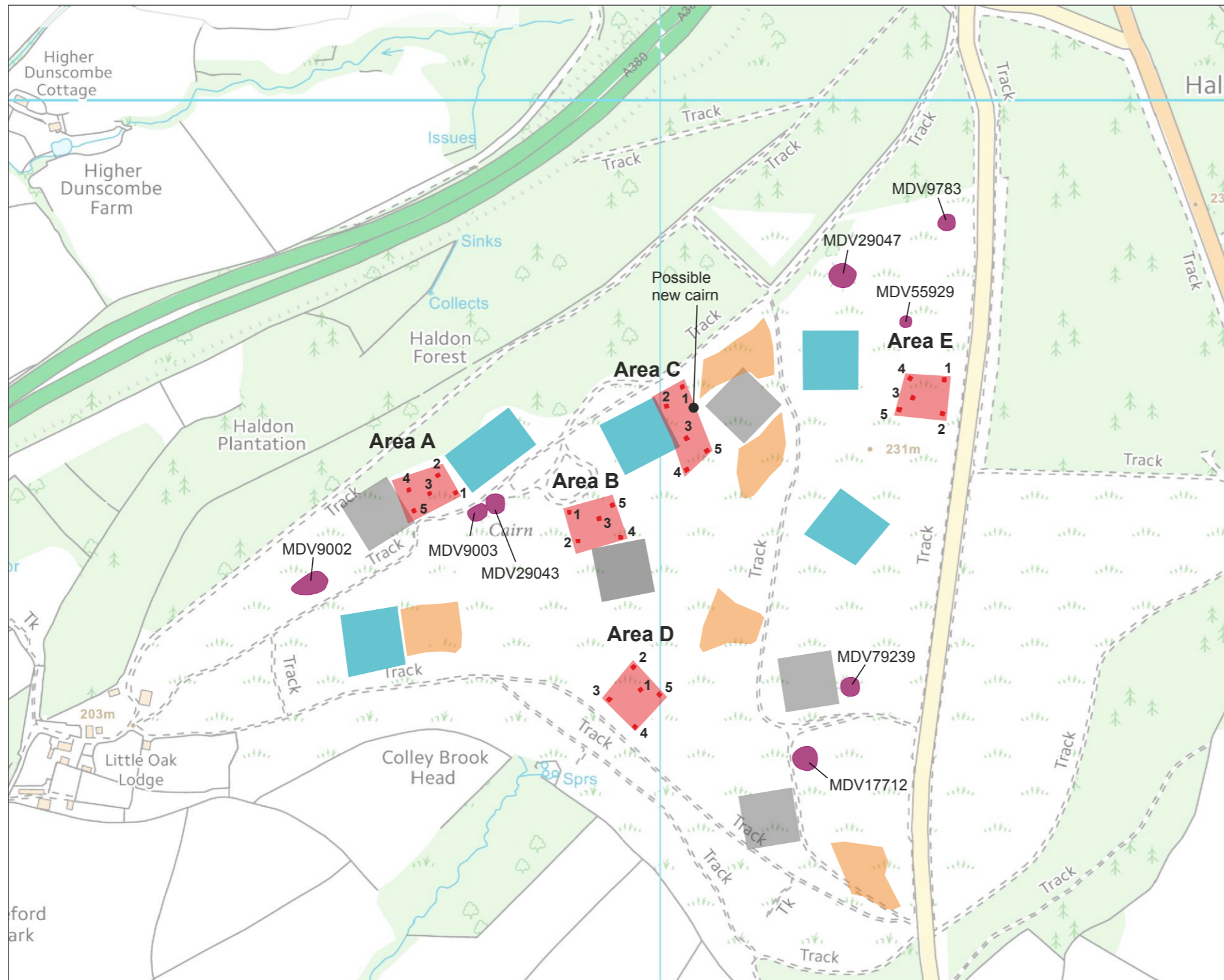
9. REFERENCES

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Patkai, E., 2016, *Ideford Common, Ideford, Devon: Results of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording*. Unpublished AC archaeology report ref. ACD1334/1/0

Teignbridge District Council, 2105, *Specification for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording Associated with Bare Ground Creation, Ideford Common SSSI, Haldon Hills*, Teignbridge District Council project design, ref. IC/HLS/HA



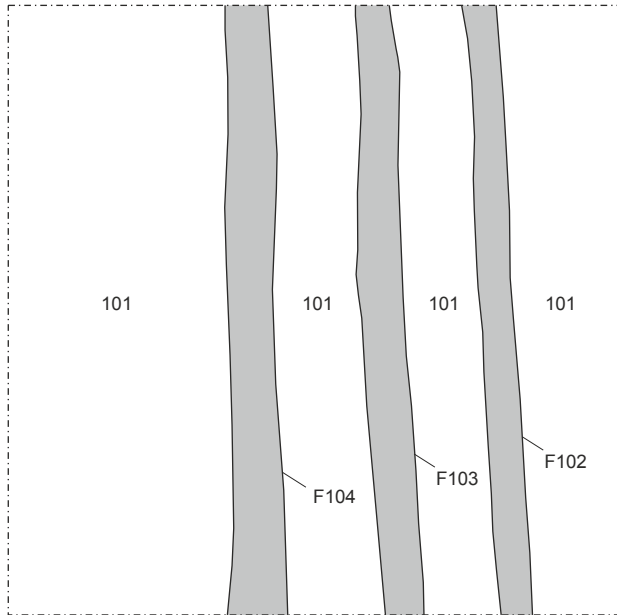
- Phase 1, 2015
- Phase 2, 2016
- Phase 3, 2017
- Phase 4, 2018
- Prehistoric cairn with HER number
- Bare earth patches and numbers

PROJECT
Ideford Common, Ideford, Devon

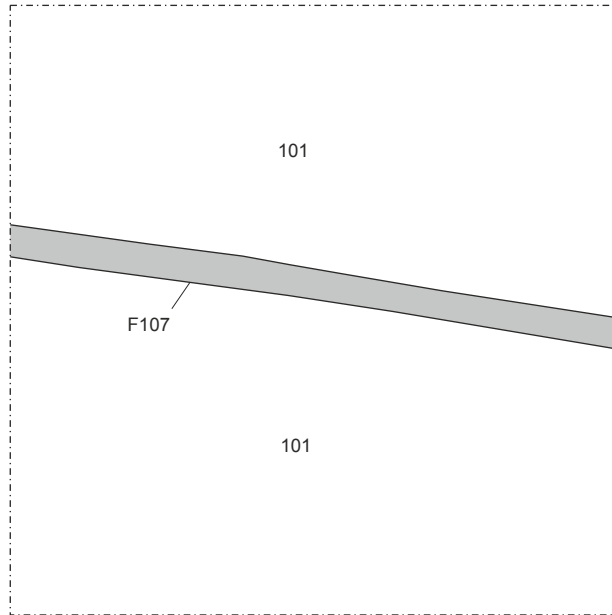
TITLE
Fig. 1: Location of site and areas monitored



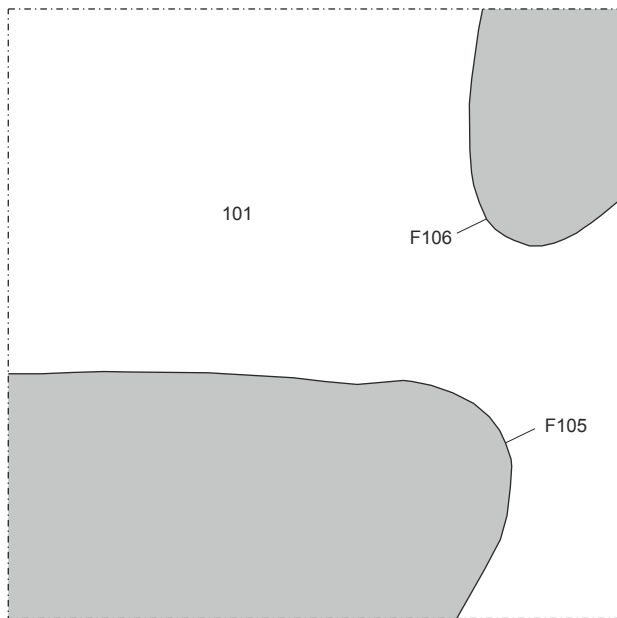
a) Plan of bare earth patch A1



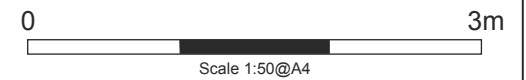
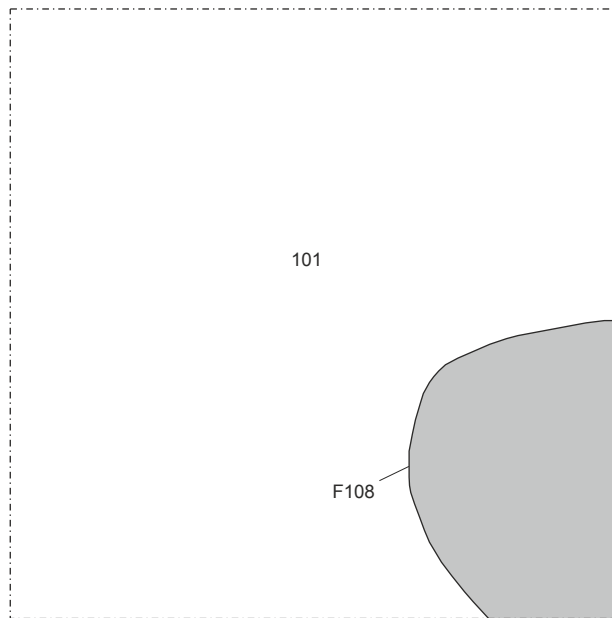
c) Plan of bare earth patch C3



b) Plan of bare earth patch A2



d) Plan of bare earth patch C5



PROJECT

Ideford Common, Ideford, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 2: Plan of bare earth patches A1, A2, C3 and C5



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Plate 1: General view of Ideford Common, looking west



Plate 2: Area A, bare earth patch A1, showing probable wheel ruts. View to north (scale 1m)



Plate 3: Area A, bare earth patch A2, probable vegetation features F105 and F106. View to north (scale 1m)



Plate 4: Area C, possible cairn. View to north (scale 1m)



Plate 5: Area C, possible cairn. View to east (scale 1m)



Plate 6: Area C, possible cairn. View to northwest (scale 1m)



Plate 7: Area C, bare earth patch C3, ditch F107. View to east (scale 1m)



Plate 8: Area C, bare earth patch C5, probable vegetation feature F108. View to east (scale 1m)

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