

LAND AT BINHAMY FARM, BUDE, CORNWALL

(NGR SS 21903 05808)

Results of an archaeological watching brief

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AC archaeology

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by AC archaeology in March 2015 on land at Binhamy Farm, Bude, Cornwall (SS 21903 05808). The works involved the excavation of a 125m long trench for an underground high voltage electricity cable, which was located in close proximity to a medieval moated site that is designated as a Scheduled Monument.

Archaeological features included a metalled trackway in alignment with the entrance to the medieval moated site, a demolition layer, and undated ditches and pits. The finds assemblage consists of a small collection of medieval ridge tile, some early post-medieval pottery and a lead shot.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

- 1.1** This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by AC archaeology between 2nd to 6th March 2015 at Binhamy Farm, Bude, Cornwall (SS 21903 05808; Fig. 1). The recording was commissioned by Western Power Distribution, and was requested by the Cornwall Council Historic Environmental Service and English Heritage. The archaeological interest in the scheme was the adjacent medieval moated site, which is designated as a Scheduled Monument (NHLE no. 1004655).
- 1.2** The site is located on the southeastern side of Bude on the edge of the current settlement at a height of approximately 45m aOD. The excavation for the electricity cable trench took place on two parcels of land, a field used for keeping chickens and a former camp site, divided by a lane. The trench was 125m long and measured 1m wide with a larger area excavated to position a double pole mounted transformer. The underlying solid geology comprises of Carboniferous sandstone of the Bude Formation.

2. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Scheduled Monument (National Heritage List for England no. 1004655) is a medieval moated site, designated under the name "Moated site 415m west of Binhamy Farm", with the following description:

The monument includes a moated site, situated on a low coastal ridge to the east of the settlement of Bude, between the River Neet and the coast. The moat defines a roughly-rectangular interior of approximately 0.15 ha. It is mostly dry and up to 2.2m deep with a partial inner bank of up to 3m wide and 0.3m high. There are surrounding outer banks of up-cast material on three sides, two of which have been re-used as field boundaries. The interior contains a series of mounds, hollows and some fragmentary walling.

The moated site is thought to be the site of 'Bynhamy' or 'Binamy Castle', built in around 1335 by Ralph de Blanchminster, Lord of the Manor of Stratton, who had been granted a license to castellate his mansion at Binhamy. It was later spoken of as the seat of Sir J Colshill by William Worcester and subsequently described as 'Ruyned aunient seate of the Grenvilles' by Norden in around 1600. Borlase identified it as a Roman camp in around 1750 but by 1814 Lysons, and later Gilbert (1820), identified it as the mansion house of the Blanchminsters. In use as an orchard by 1750, it remained so until the late 19th century.

- 2.2** In addition to the moated site, the Cornwall Historic Environment Record has an entry (MCO200) for the findspot of copper coins. These were thought by one antiquary to be Roman, which may have given rise to the misidentification of the moated site as a Roman fort.

- 2.3** The earthworks of the moated site are clearly depicted on historic Ordnance Survey maps, some of which show an entrance on the north side. This entrance, along with one on the southern side, appears on modern mapping, and it is thought that the south entrance is modern (Cornwall HER no. MCO21883). The two plots where the cable trench was excavated are depicted on historic maps as enclosed, rough pasture.

3. AIMS

- 3.1** The excavations had the potential to expose and remove archaeological evidence relating to the moated site, in particular any evidence for a trackway leading to the entrance on its north side. The aim of the investigation was to monitor the excavations for the new cable to identify, excavate and record any below-ground archaeological deposits and features.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1** All monitoring and recording were carried out in line with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by AC archaeology (Passmore 2014).
- 4.2** All excavations were undertaken with a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. Material was removed to the required formation level or the top of significant archaeological deposits. Where possible 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 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate.

5. RESULTS (Figs 2-3; Plates 1-5)

5.1 Introduction

The watching brief comprised observation of the excavation of a trench for an electricity cable that measured 125m long by up to 1m wide and 1m deep. The whole of this was located to the north of the moated site and outside of the scheduled area. The excavation revealed a metallised trackway, a spread of rubble interpreted as a demolition layer, and two pits and a possible pit or ditch. In general the deposits consisted of a topsoil (001) up to 0.4m deep consisting of dark brown clayey silt on top of a natural subsoil (002) of light brownish yellow silty clay. The relevant plans and sections are included as Figs 2-3.

5.2 The metallised trackway (Figs 2-3; Plates 2 and 3)

The metallised surface of a track (015) coincided with where the trench crossed opposite to the north gateway to the moated site. It consisted of tightly-packed small to large sub-angular and sub-rounded stones and measured 8.10m wide and up to 0.30m thick within a cut (F018). The stones were bedded directly on the natural at the base of the cut, although the hollow created by the track was filled above by a layer (017) of greyish brown clayey silt. On the eastern side there was a less thick layer (016) of stones measuring at least 5.30m in length by 0.24m deep. Several sherds of pottery from a 16th-century jug were collected from the surface of the trackway.

5.3 Demolition layer (Fig. 3; Plate 4)

Beginning on the west side of trackway 015 was a layer (012) of mixed stone and slate present over a length of 6.90m and measuring up to 0.16m thick. There was no coherent pattern to the spread, but it appeared that the material had derived from buildings and this is further supported by the recovery from this layer of late medieval ceramic roof tile fragments. It was

overlain by two deposits (003 and 004). These layers and demolition deposit 012 were cut by a ditch or pit F007.

5.4 Pits and ditches (Figs 2-3; Plate 5)

Gully F014 was N-S aligned and measured 0.92m wide by 0.20m deep. It had an asymmetric profile with a steep east side, shallow sloping west side and a flat base. It contained a single fill (013) consisting of brownish grey and clayey silt. No finds were recovered. It was sealed by demolition layer 012.

Ditch F007 measured 2.2m wide and was exposed to a depth of 0.70m but its base was not exposed within the limits of the excavation. It had steep straight sides with two fills (005 and 006). Upper fill 005 consisted of brownish grey clayey silt. The lowest fill 006 consisted of greyish brown clayey silt. No finds were recovered. The feature cut demolition deposit 012 and made ground layer 009. It was sealed by a levelling layer (008) which consisted of brown clayey silt, which itself was beneath loose tarmac (027) and a further levelling layer (003) which consisted of greyish brownish yellow clayey silt.

Ditch F022 was E-W aligned and measured 0.70m wide by at least 0.64m deep although its base was not exposed within the trench. It contained two fills (020 and 021). Upper fill 020 consisted of brownish yellow silty clay. The lowest fill 021 consisted of abundant stones in a greyish brown clayey silt. No finds were recovered. The character of fill 021 indicates that the feature is a drainage ditch.

Pit/trench F011 measured 9.60m wide by 0.60m deep. At its base was a horizontal slate slab (010) which appeared to have been deliberately laid; it measured 2m long by a minimum of 0.60m wide and 0.10m deep (Plate 5); the purpose of this was unclear. The slate and the whole feature were filled and sealed by modern made ground layers 008 and 009.

Pit F025 measured 1.60m wide by 0.40m deep with gradually sloping concave sides and rounded base. It contained two fills (023 and 024). Upper fill 023 consisted of light grey silty clay. The primary fill 024 consisted of a thin layer of charcoal which lined the base of the pit although there is no evidence of burning *in situ*. No finds were recovered. The pit was sealed by layer (026) which consisted of greyish brown clayey silt mixed with patches of yellow clay; this appears to be a disturbed subsoil.

Pit F029 was only partially exposed within the trench. It measured 2.20m wide by 0.20m deep with a steep concave side and flat base. It contained a single fill (028) consisting of light grey clayey silt. No finds were recovered. It was cut on its southeast side by pit F007.

6. FINDS by Naomi Payne

6.1 Introduction

All finds recovered on site were retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. They were then quantified according to material type within each context and the assemblage was scanned to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented. The assemblage consists of a small collection of medieval ridge tile, some early post-medieval pottery and a lead shot. The finds are summarised in Table 1.

6.2 Post-medieval pottery

A total of five pieces (64g) of early post-medieval pottery was recovered from the top of the track metalling (015). All pieces refit, and are body sherds from a single jar or jug. The fabric is sandy with sparse sub-rounded to sub-angular gritty inclusions up to 2mm. The internal and external surfaces are an oxidised orange and the core is a reduced light grey. There is a

splash of an external green glaze on two of the sherds. This is North Devon ware, almost gravel free, of early 16th-century date (John Allan, pers. comm.).

6.3 Medieval tile

A total of six pieces of glazed ridge tile (356g) was recovered from two contexts. Four of the pieces from demolition layer 012 refit; the breaks are old and abraded and much of the tile is missing. Another piece has a similar fabric and glaze, and has been similarly fired; it may well have also formed part of the same tile. What remains of the overall tile is chunky with an incomplete, heavily scored crest. Another ridge tile fragment was recovered from levelling layer 009. This piece is not as highly fired as the other fragments and contains fewer gritty inclusions of larger size. Ridge tiles like these were produced by the same local pottery kilns which manufactured coarse ware pottery during the medieval and post-medieval periods (Gaskell-Brown 1986, 71) and these examples are North Devon products. Tiles of similar form from Exeter adorned buildings of 14th and 15th century date (Allan 1980, 227).

Context	Context Description	Post-medieval Pottery		Medieval Tile		Lead Shot	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
009	Levelling layer			1	39	1	19
012	Demolition layer			5	317		
015	Metalling	5	64				
Total		5	64	6	356	1	19

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

6.4 Metalwork

An incomplete post-medieval lead musket ball (19g) was recovered from levelling layer 009. The ball has been damaged, apparently by being cut rather than through impact. The casting sprue is still attached. It is 16mm in diameter.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The medieval moated manor house at Binhamy is one of only four known in Cornwall so any new evidence regarding it is significant. The remains of a metalled track leading to the north entrance of the moated site indicates that this was an important route. The earthworks show a causeway across the moat, but at the nearby moated site of Penhallam Manor, Week St Mary (8km to the south) a draw bridge was replaced by a permanent stone bridge in the 13th century (Beresford 1974; NHLE no. 1013669).
- 7.2 The demolition deposits may indicate that structures of probable medieval date were situated outside of the north entrance of the moated site. No further definition of this activity was possible, although previous archaeological trench evaluation to the east and south of the site did not recover such evidence (Wessex Archaeology 2013), which may indicate that the most substantial extra-mural settlement was located on the approach to the single entrance to the manor.
- 7.3 The extensive excavation at Penhallam Manor indicates that it was abandoned in the middle of the 14th century (Beresford 1974). The finds of pottery of post-medieval date from Binhamy may indicate that activities on the site continued in to the 16th century; historic records show that it was certainly abandoned by 1600. Binhamy appears then to be built about the time Penhallam was being abandoned and may have continued in use for approximately two centuries.

- 7.4** The several pit and linear features were not revealed in a large enough area to indicate their function in most cases. The majority had been sealed by modern made ground illustrating that they are probably at least early modern or late post-medieval in date and a few may be contemporary with activities in the moated site, but the paucity of finds means that definitive dating of these features was not possible. The archaeological evaluation by Wessex Archaeology (2013) to the east and south of the moated site located several ditches. These all corresponded with previous geophysical survey anomalies (GSB Prospection Ltd 2008) with the one to the east most probably a post-medieval field boundary, with three in the south regarded as related to a sub-square ditched enclosure of unknown date, although two pieces of pegged slate roof tiles were recovered from one of these indicating the possibility of activity related to the occupation of the moated site. South again a palaeochannel was identified indicating that the enclosure and the moated site were located on drier ground to its north (Wessex Archaeology 2013, 16).

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1** The watching brief has added some detail to the Binhamy Castle medieval moated site, which is currently poorly understood. The road aligned with the north entrance was well made with metalling. The spread of demolition deposits was instructive in providing some evidence for possible contemporary activity external to the moat. The find of a glazed roof tile matches the substantial remains of stone walls within the moated site and providing some indication of the presence of grand buildings. Other features were of unknown date and function.

9. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

- 9.1** The finds, paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. The archive will be offered to the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro but if they are unable to accept this, then it will be dealt with under their current accession policy.
- 9.2** An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier 219564, which includes a digital copy of this report.

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 10.1** The evaluation was commissioned by Western Power Distribution, and managed for them by Geoff May, and for AC archaeology by Andrew Passmore. The site work was undertaken by Abigail Brown, with the figures prepared by Elisabeth Patkai. The collaborative roles of Phil Copplestone, Senior Archaeology Officer, Cornwall Council and Nick Russell, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Historic England, is duly acknowledged.

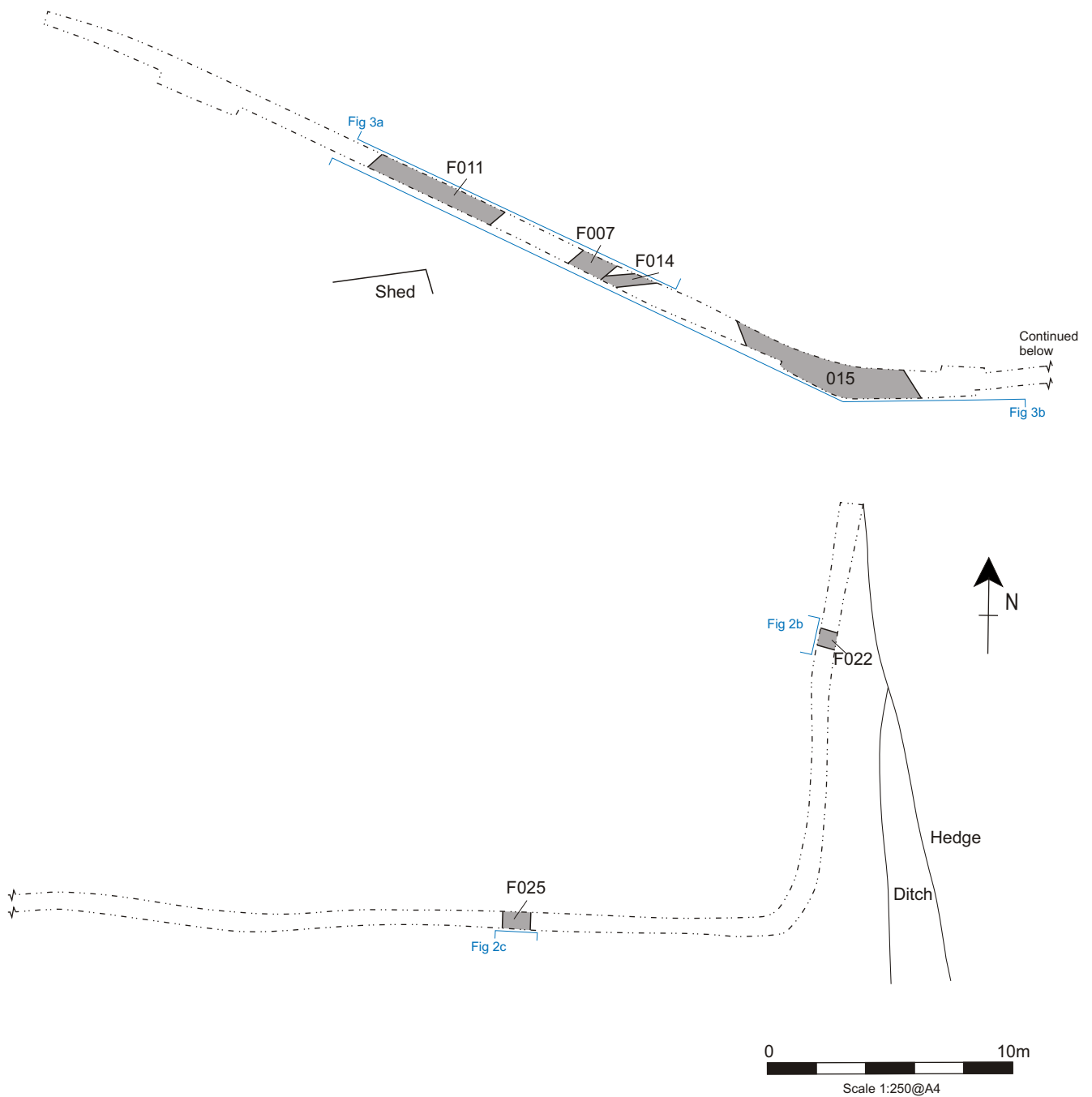
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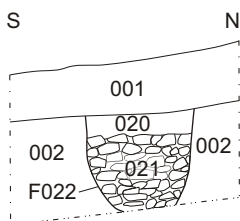
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- Wessex Archaeology, 2013, *Binhamy Farm, Bude, Cornwall: Archaeological Evaluation Report*. Report ref. no. 88100.03.



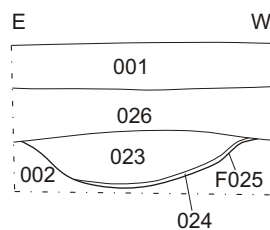
a) Plan



b) Section of F022



c) Section of F025



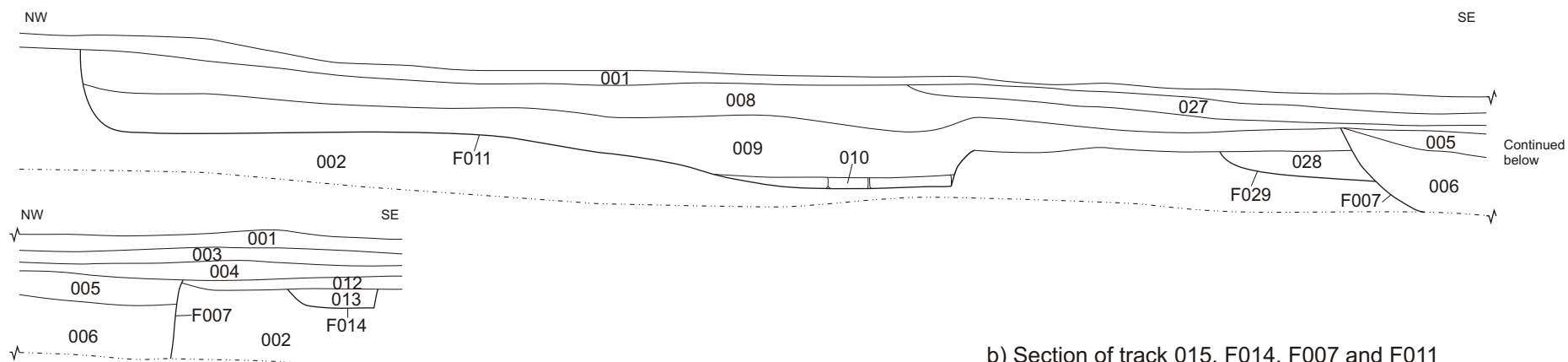
PROJECT

Land at Binhamy Farm, Bude, Cornwall

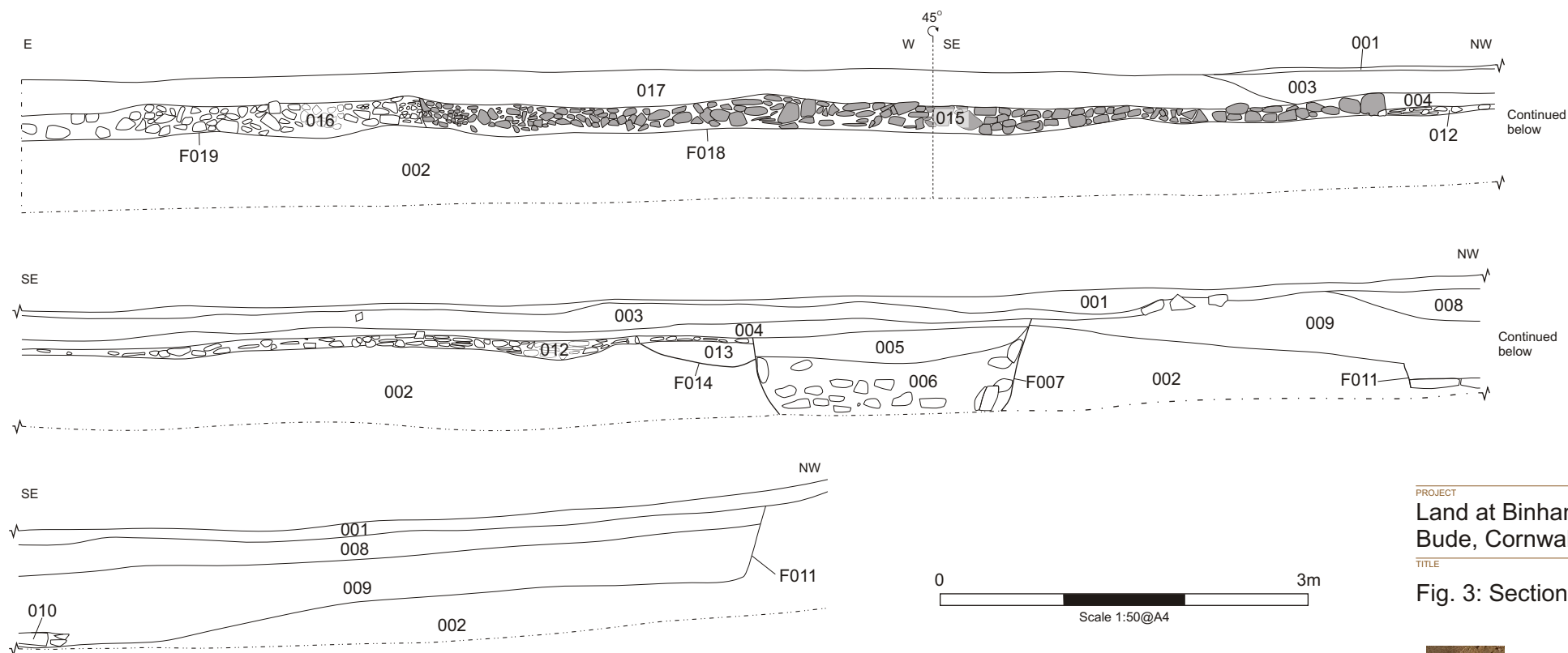
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Fig. 2: Location of track 015, position of sections and sections of F022 and F025

a) Section of F011, F029 and F007



b) Section of track 015, F014, F007 and F011



0 3m
Scale 1:50@A4

PROJECT
Land at Binhamy Farm,
Bude, Cornwall

TITLE
Fig. 3: Sections



Plate 1: General view of the cable trench in area directly north of the moated site, viewed from the west (scale 1m)



Plate 2: Track 015, viewed from the northeast (scale 1m)



Plate 3: Track 015 with causeway to moated site behind, viewed from the northwest (scale 1m)



Plate 4: Demolition layer (012),
viewed from the northeast
(scale 1m)



Plate 5: Slate slab 010,
viewed from the northeast
(scale 1m)

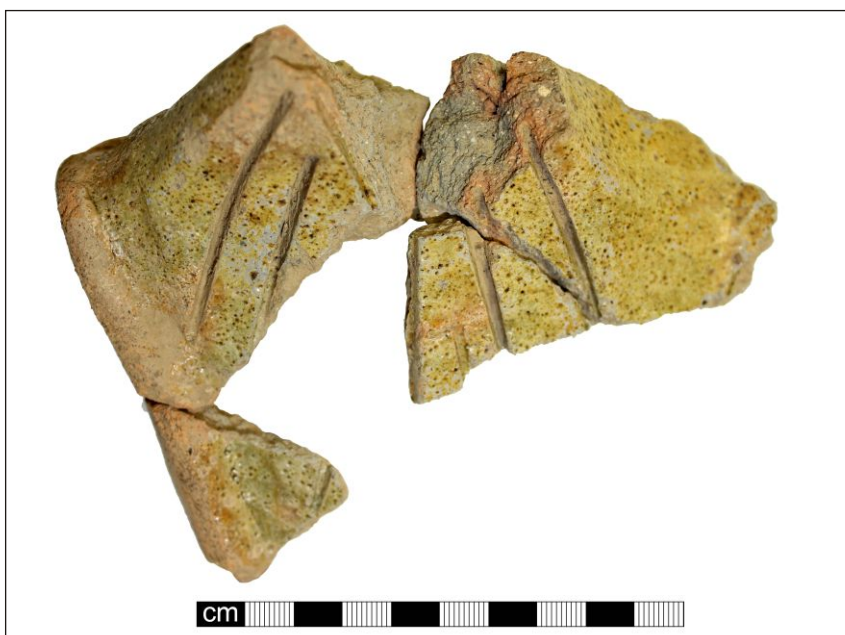


Plate 6: Conjoined ridge tile
from demolition layer 012

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