

# LAND AT BANTHAM BEACH, BANTHAM, DEVON

NGR SX 66770 43720

## Results of an Archaeological Trench Evaluation

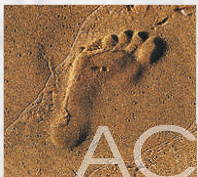
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Prepared by:  
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On behalf of:  
The Bantham Estate

Report No: ACD1309/2/0

Date: March 2016



archaeology

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(NGR SX 66770 43720)

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## Summary

*An archaeological trench evaluation was carried out by AC archaeology during February 2016 on land at Bantham Beach, Bantham, Devon (NGR SX 66770 43720). The site comprised part of an arable field and a car park area on the west side of Bantham.*

*The archaeological trench evaluation consisted of the machine-excavation of four trenches totalling 65m in length and 1.6m wide. These were positioned to provide a sampled coverage of the site.*

*No archaeological features or deposits were exposed within the trenches and no finds were recovered.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out the results of an archaeological trench evaluation, which was undertaken by AC archaeology during February 2016 on land at Bantham Beach, Bantham, Devon (NGR SX 66770 43720; Fig 1). The work was carried out in advance of a proposed application to change of use of land consisted of the construction of new Estate office, alterations and extension of the existing car park and erection of an entrance/exit barrier. The work was commissioned by The Bantham Estate and was required to provide accompanying information for a revised application to ref. 55/2484/15/F, as advised by the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (hereafter DCCHET).
- 1.2 The site lay on the west side of Bantham and to the south of Bantham to Aunemouth Cross Road, which leads to Bantham Beach, approximately 500m to the east. It comprised part of a wider arable field and a plot currently occupied by a workshop and a mixed gravel and grass-covered public car-parking area.
- 1.3 The site was situated on broadly level ground at 13m aOD (above Ordnance Datum), with the underlying solid geology comprising of slate, siltstone and sandstone of the Meadfoot Group (British Geological Survey Online Viewer).

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Bantham Ham, which lies to the east of the proposed application area and occupies the peninsula between the mouth of the River Avon and the English Channel, is the site of a Scheduled Roman and Post-Roman settlement (Heritage List for England ref. 1019322). Numerous finds recovered from the sand dunes, including midden deposits of animal bones, pottery and other finds, were made throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The date range for the recovered artefacts demonstrated that occupation continued beyond the end of the Roman period and included material from the Mediterranean region suggesting continued trade-links after the 5th century AD. In addition to these, prehistoric finds within the material recovered from the site suggests that the occupation on the peninsula includes the Bronze Age and Iron Age. More recent fieldwork, including excavations ahead of development to the RNLI Surf Lifesaving Clubhouse, exposed multiple late Roman and Post-Roman occupation horizons that included hearths, pits and ditches associated with a large assemblage of Post-Roman amphorae sherds (Reed, Bidwell and Allan 2011).

### **3. AIMS**

- 3.1** The aim of the work was to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any archaeological features, deposits or finds within the site. The results of the work will be reviewed and used to inform any subsequent mitigation and whether or not the significance and state of survival of any buried archaeological remains is great enough to influence the layout of the proposed development should planning consent be obtained.

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1** The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design for an Archaeological Trench Evaluation (Hughes 2016), submitted to and approved by DCCHET prior to commencement on site. The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of four trenches totalling 65m in length, with each trench 1.6m wide. These were positioned to provide a sampled coverage of the proposed application area. The removal of soil overburden was undertaken using a mechanical excavator fitted with a grading bucket under the control and direction of the site archaeologist. Machine-excavation ceased at the level at which natural subsoil was exposed.
- 4.3** All trenches 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).

### **5. RESULTS (Plan Fig. 2; Plates 1-5)**

- 5.1** No archaeological features were exposed within the trenches and no finds were recovered. The results for all trenches are set out in tabulated form in Appendix 1 and summarised below.
- 5.2** Natural subsoil comprised a vertically-bedded slate with natural fissures that were filled with a reddish brown silty-sand. A broadly consistent overlying deposit sequence was exposed within each of the trenches. For Trenches 1-3, which were positioned within the arable plot, this was between 0.32m and 0.71m thick and comprised a mid reddish-brown silty-sand subsoil (101, 201 and 301), beneath a dark brown sandy-silt loam ploughsoil (100, 200 and 300). The thickness of the subsoil increased towards the south (downslope), with this probably due to colluvial action.
- 5.3** Trench 4 was positioned within the existing carpark. The deposit sequence here was the shallowest, probably due to its more elevated position. Natural subsoil was exposed at a depth of 0.27m beneath subsoil (401) and topsoil (400), with this in turn sealed by a layer of plastic mesh representing the existing carpark surface.

### **6. CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1** The trial trench evaluation has established that there were no archaeological features or deposits present within the sampled portion of the site. A simple sequence of colluvial subsoil and ploughsoil was consistent throughout each of the trenches, with

its presence within the carpark area representing its relatively recent conversion from agricultural use.

- 6.2 The lack of finds recovered from the overlying soils suggests that there is no evidence for a broader continuation of the multi-phase activity recorded to the west on Bantham Ham.

## 7. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

- 7.1 An OASIS entry including a digital copy of this report has been created using the unique identifier **246522**.
- 7.2 This report and the OASIS entry represent the archive for the project.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 The fieldwork was commissioned by the Bantham Estate. The site work was supervised by Fiona Pink with assistance from Jon Hall. The report was prepared by Fiona Pink, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Stella De-Villiers. The collaborative role of Stephen Reed, DCHES Archaeology Officer, is duly acknowledged.

## 9. SOURCES CONSULTED

### Published and unpublished sources

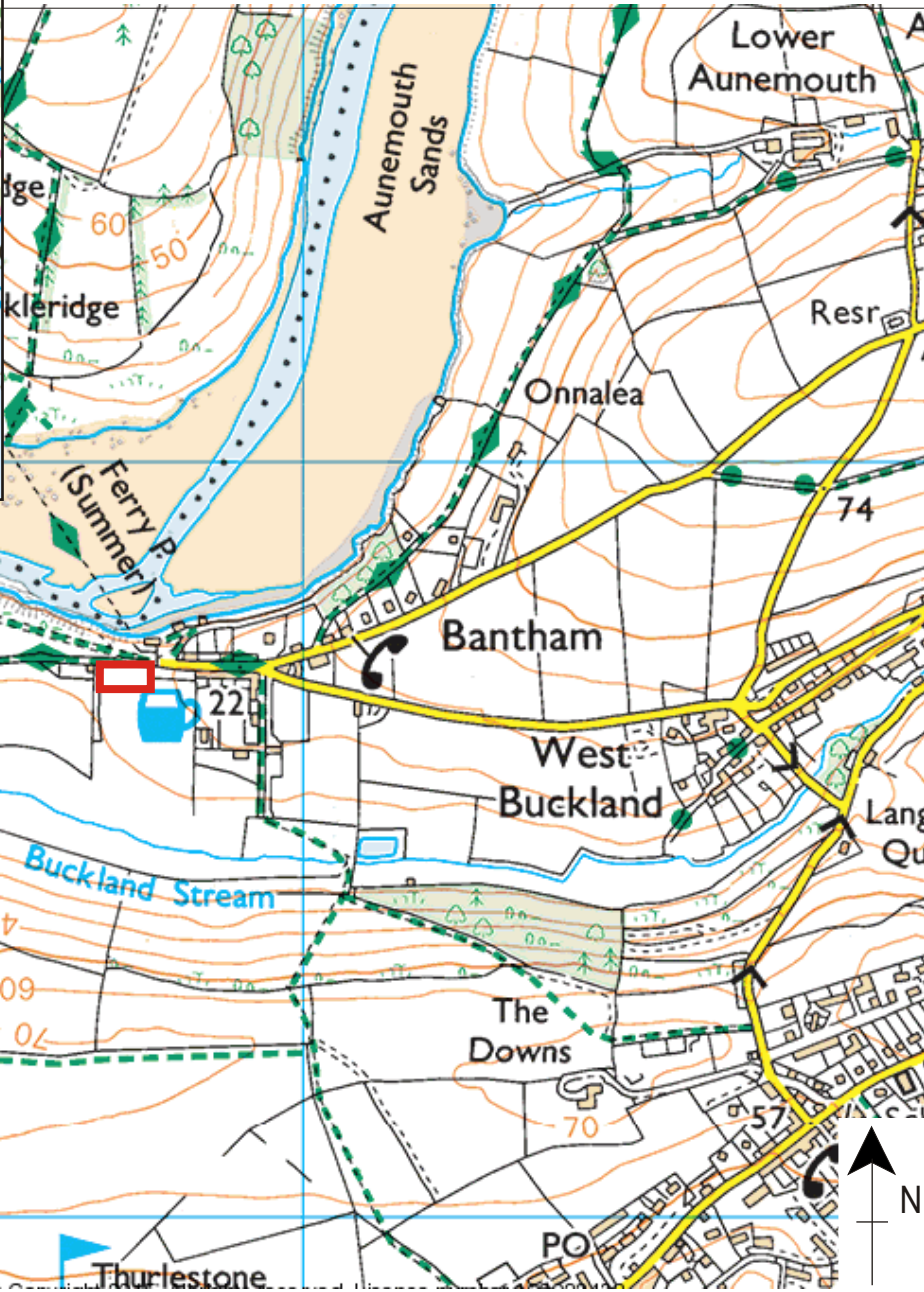
Hughes, S., 2016, *Land at Bantham Beach, Bantham, Devon (NGR SX 66770 43720)*. Project Design for an archaeological trial trench evaluation. AC archaeology document no. **ACD1309/1/1**

Reed, S., Bidwell, P. and Allan, J., 2011, 'Excavation at Bantham, South Devon, and Post-Roman Trade in South-West England.' *Medieval Archaeology*, **55**, 82-155.

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<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

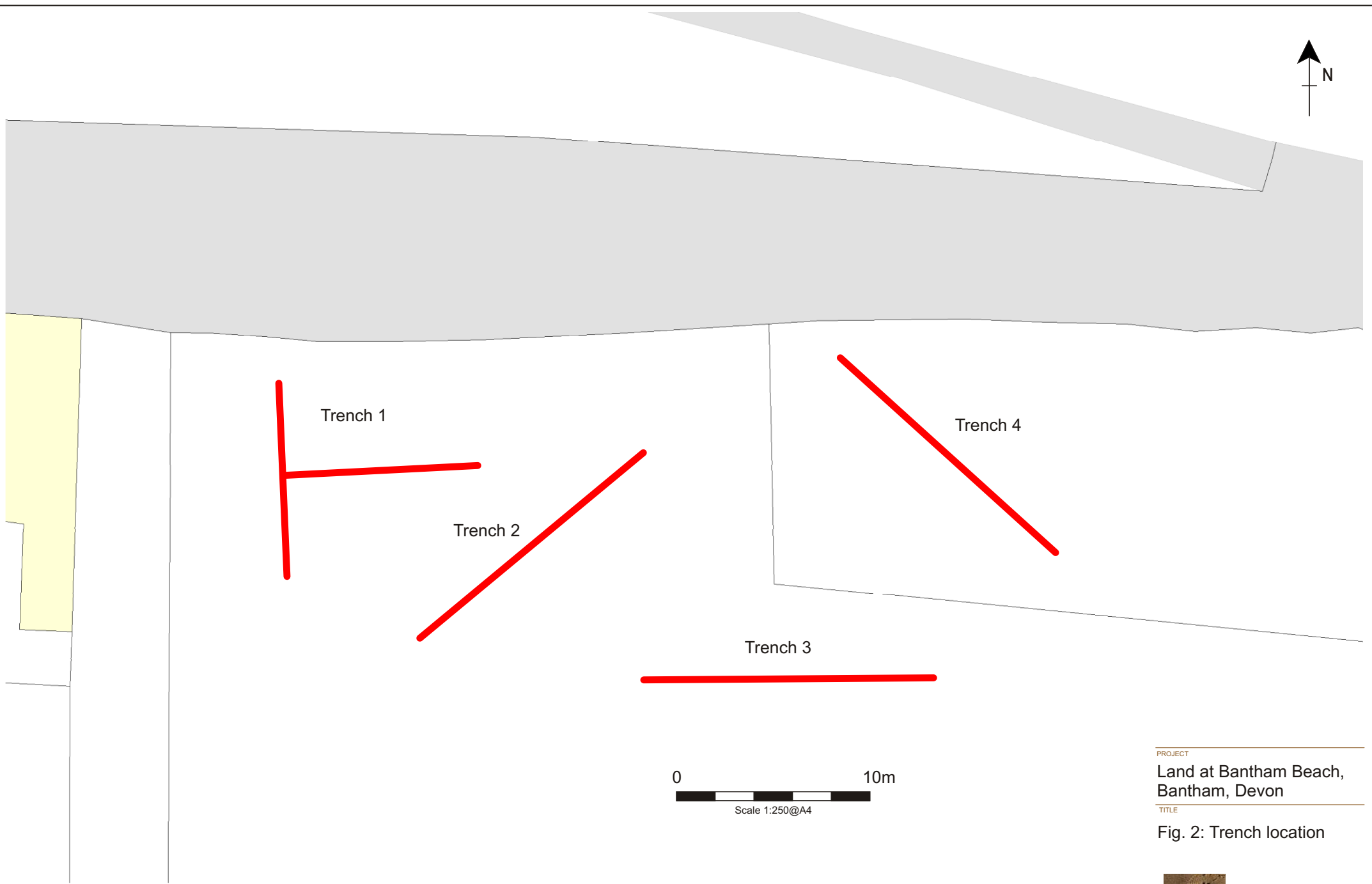




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PROJECT  
Land at Bantham Beach,  
Bantham, Devon  
TITLE  
Fig. 1: Site location





Trench 1

Trench 2

Trench 3

Trench 4



PROJECT  
Land at Bantham Beach,  
Bantham, Devon

TITLE  
Fig. 2: Trench location







Plate 1: View to the southeast showing Trench 1, with Trenches 2 and 3 beyond



Plate 2: View to the southwest showing Trench 2 (Scale 1m)



Plate 3: View to the west showing Trench 3 with Trenches 1 and 2 beyond





Plate 4: View to the northwest showing Trench 4 (Scale 1m)



Plate 5: Southeast facing section of Trench 2 (Scale 1m)

# Appendix 1

## Tabulated Context Descriptions by Trench



Appendix 1: Tabulated context descriptions by trench

Trench 1		Length 20m	Width 1.60m	Alignment N-S and E-W
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
100	Dark brown sandy-silt loam with abundant small fragments of mudstone.	0-0.22m N end 0-0.30m S end 0-0.35m E end	Ploughsoil	
101	Reddish-brown silty-sand with abundant small fragments of mudstone and sandstone.	0.22-0.36m N end 0.30-0.55m S end 0.35-0.55m E end	Subsoil	
102	Weathered slate	0.36m+ N end 0.55m+ S end 0.55m+ E end	Natural subsoil	

Trench 2		Length 15m	Width 1.60m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
200	Dark brown sandy-silt loam with abundant small fragments of mudstone.	0-0.25m NE end 0-0.30m SW end	Ploughsoil	
201	Reddish-brown silty-sand with abundant small fragments of mudstone and sandstone.	0.25-0.32m NE end 0.30-0.60m SW end	Subsoil	
202	Weathered slate	0.32m+ NE end 0.60m+ SW end	Natural subsoil	

Trench 3		Length 15m	Width 1.6m	Alignment E-W
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
300	Dark brown sandy-silt loam with abundant small fragments of mudstone.	0-0.30m E end 0-0.36m W end	Ploughsoil	
301	Reddish-brown silty-sand with abundant small fragments of mudstone and sandstone.	0.30-0.70m E end 0.36-0.71m W end	Subsoil	
302	Weathered slate	0.70m+ E end 0.71m+ W end	Natural subsoil	

Trench 4		Length 15m	Width 1.6m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
400	Dark reddish-brown sandy-silt loam.	0-0.25m NW end 0-0.18m SE end	Topsoil	
401	Reddish-brown silty-sand with abundant small fragments of mudstone and sandstone	0.25-0.42m NW end 0.18-0.27m SE end	Subsoil	
402	Weathered slate	0.42m+ NW end 0.27m+ SE end	Natural subsoil	

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