

# LAND AT LANGHAM FARM, LUXBOROUGH, WATCHET, SOMERSET

NGR SS 98046 35985 to SS 98159 35532

Results of an Archaeological Watching Brief

Exmoor National Park Authority Planning Reference  
6/20/13/102 (Condition 7)

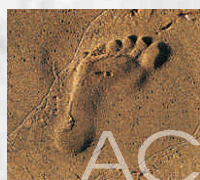
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Prepared by:  
Elisabeth Patkai

On behalf of:  
The Chargot Estate

Report No: ACD1304/2/1

Date: April 2016



archaeology

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# Exmoor National Park Authority Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> Luxborough, West Somerset	<b>National Grid Reference</b> SS 98046 35985 to SS98159 35532	<b>Number:</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Land at Langham Farm, Luxborough, Watchet, Somerset. Results of an archaeological watching brief.		<b>Photo attached?</b> Plates 1-5
<b>Planning Application no:</b> Exmoor National Park Authority planning ref 6/20/13/102 (condition 7)	<b>Recipient museum:</b> N/A	
<b>OASIS ID:</b> 248633	<b>Museum Accession no:</b> N/A	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b> ACD1304	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b> 14 <sup>th</sup> and 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2016	
<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>An archaeological watching brief carried out during groundworks associated with the construction of a vehicular access track on land at Langham Farm, Luxborough, Watchet, Somerset (SS 98046 35985 to SS 98159 35532), was undertaken by AC archaeology during March 2016.</p> <p>The site was to southeast of Luxborough and to the north of Withiel Hill Road (the current B3224). It extended for a distance of 490m to the south of Langham Farm and crossed through four arable plots bounded by hedge lines and tree-topped hedgebanks. The route was positioned on ground that sloped to the north between 355m and 325m aOD (above Ordnance Datum), with the underlying solid geology comprising slates of the Morte Slates Formation.</p> <p>The scheme lay in an area containing post-medieval agricultural and industrial features relating to iron ore extraction. Towards the south, the route crossed the line of a probable post-medieval boundary. This was depicted on historic mapping of the site and had subsequently been identified as a cropmark from an aerial photograph. To the north of the scheme, in the plots surrounding Langham Farm, there are earthworks associated with a former water meadow system. The southern hedgebank forming the boundary with Withiel Hill Road also marked the boundary between the parishes of Luxborough and Brompton Regis, a feature which may have also have marked the limit of the medieval manor of Langham.</p> <p><b>Description of works</b></p> <p>Monitored groundworks comprised the machine-excavation of topsoil from the four plots (Fields 1-4 on Fig. 1 and Plate 1). A hedgebank breach was also established across the historic boundary between Withiel Hill Road and Field 1. Elsewhere, the scheme crossed through an existing breach in the boundary between Fields 2 and 3, while the boundary between Fields 3 and 4 comprised a low hedge with no bank.</p> <p>Natural subsoil (context 101), which comprised a light yellowish-red silty-clay with common slate gravels, was exposed in Fields 1,3 and 4 at a depth of between 0.25m and 0.4m beneath a mid reddish-brown clayey-loam ploughsoil (100). Stripping was not of a sufficient depth to expose the natural subsoil in Field 2. Here, the topsoil was reduced by 0.25m into a heavily root-disturbed mixed mid reddish brown and mid greyish-brown silty-clay with patches of redeposited natural (112).</p> <p>The historic hedgebank that formed the boundary between Withiel Hill Road and Field 1 measured 1.65m wide and 1.32m high (Fig 2a and Plate 2). At the base of the bank, the natural subsoil was overlain by a mid reddish-grey silty-clay (108). This represented a possible buried soil layer, which was overlain by the upstanding hedgebank material comprised of a dumped mid reddish-brown silty-clay (106). This was, in turn, sealed by dense roots of the existing vegetation (105). The topsoil strip immediately to the north of the hedgebank was not deep enough in this this location to expose the natural subsoil nor an associated ditch that may have been expected.</p> <p>A single northwest-southeast aligned ditch (F103) was exposed within Field 1 (Fig. 2b-c, Plates 3-4). Ditch F103 measured approximately 1.1m wide and 0.15m deep with a shallow concave profile. It contained a light reddish-brown silty-clay fill (104). No finds were recovered.</p> <p>A second ditch (F109) was exposed adjacent to the existing breach in the boundary between Fields 2 and 3 (Fig. 3a-b, Plate 5). Ditch F109 extended parallel to the hedgebank and measured 2.14m wide and 0.25m deep with moderately-steep sloping sides and a flattish base that cut through a mid greyish-brown silty-clay layer (111), representing tree-root disturbance. The ditch contained a mixed mid reddish-brown to dark greyish-brown silty-clay fill (110). No finds were recovered from ditch F109.</p>		

**Discussion**

Monitoring of the new Langham Farm access established a cross-section of the historic hedgebank that forms the boundary between Luxborough and Brompton Regis parishes. Its profile was reasonably root-disturbed but included a buried soil sealed beneath the dumped hedgebank material. No dating was recovered from its deposits.

A previously-recorded former boundary identified from historic mapping and an aerial photograph as within Field 1 was not encountered. However, a small ditch (F103) was recorded close to this former boundary, but extended at right-angles to its projected alignment. Ditch F103 was undated but is likely to have represented an agricultural feature of probable medieval to post-medieval date.

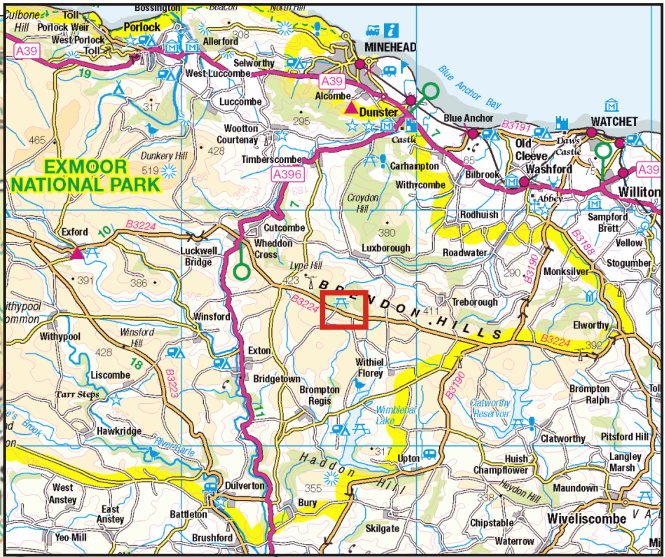
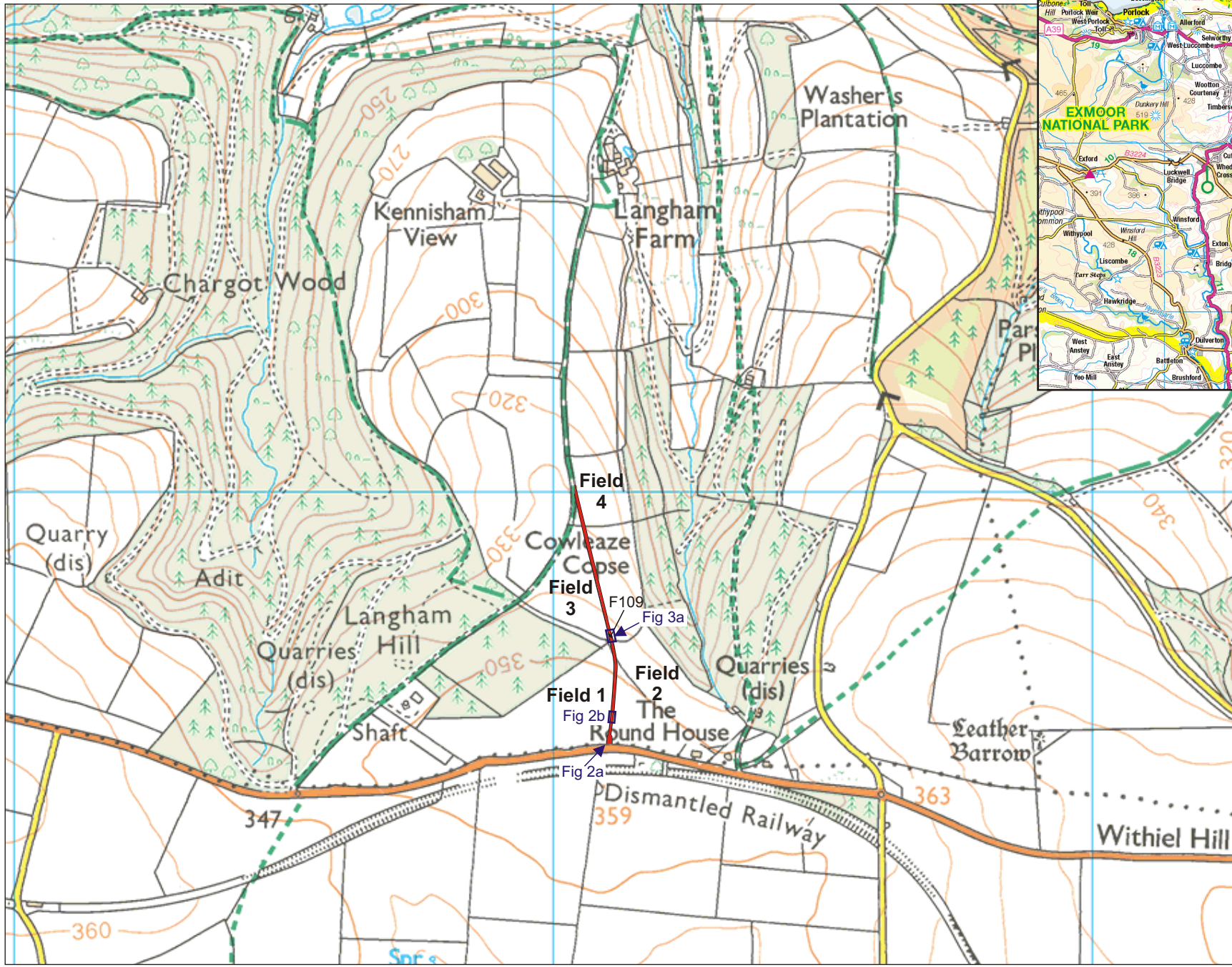
A second ditch (F109) exposed as extending parallel to the boundary between Fields 3 and 4 almost certainly represented an associated ditch to the adjacent historic hedgebank. Although undated, this is likely to have had medieval to post-medieval origins.

**Recorder:**

Elisabeth Patkai

**Date sent to HER:**

22 April 2016

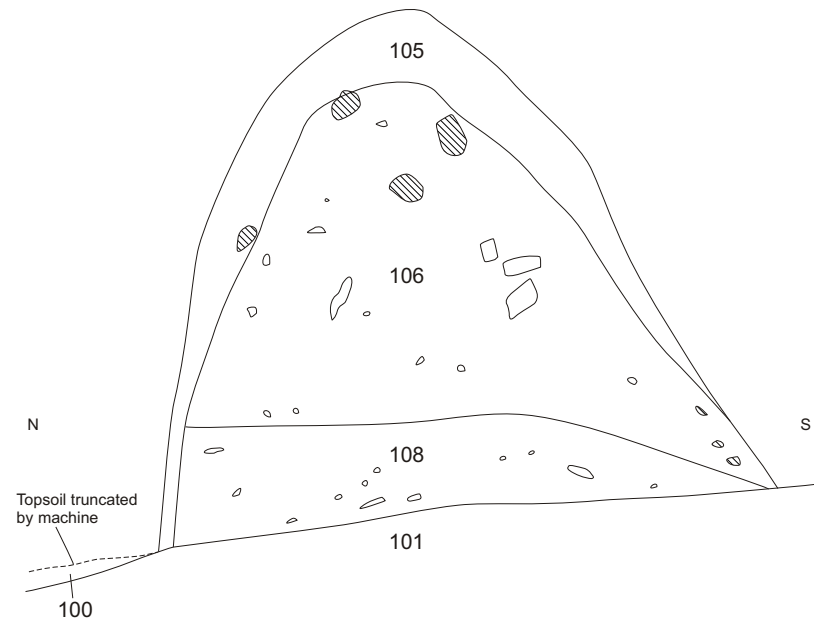


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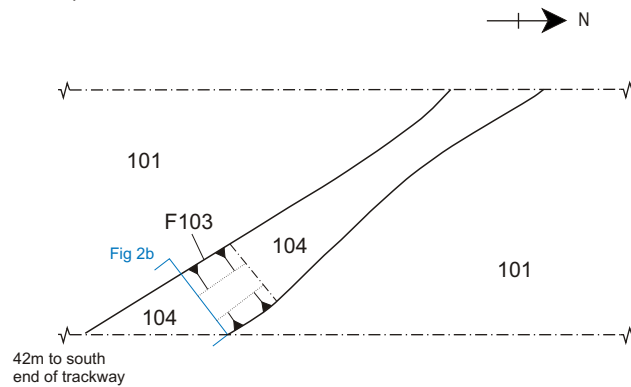
PROJECT  
 Land at Langham Farm,  
 Luxborough, Devon  
 TITLE  
 Fig. 1: Location of site  
 with archaeological  
 features shown



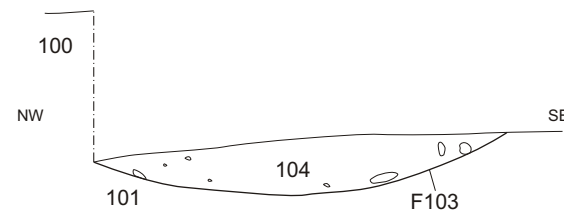
a) Section of historic hedgebank



b) Plan of ditch F103



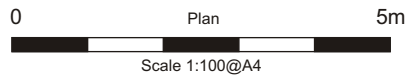
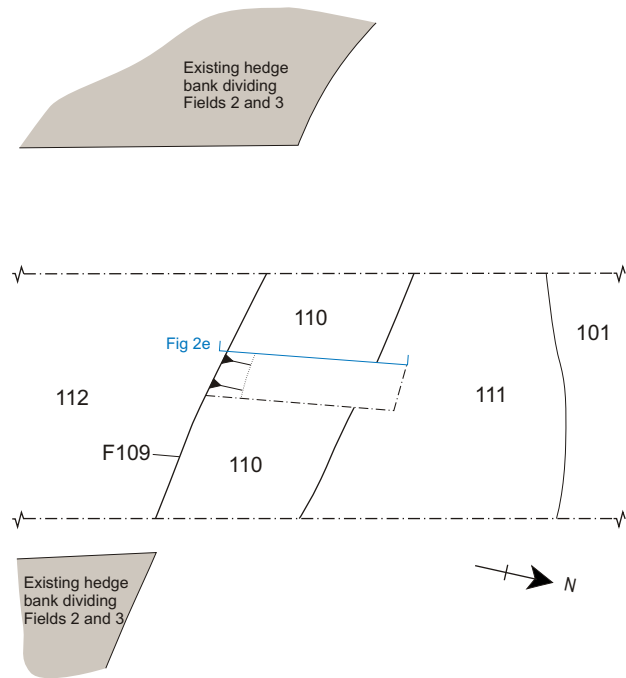
c) Section of F103



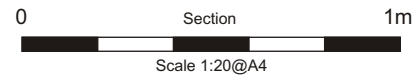
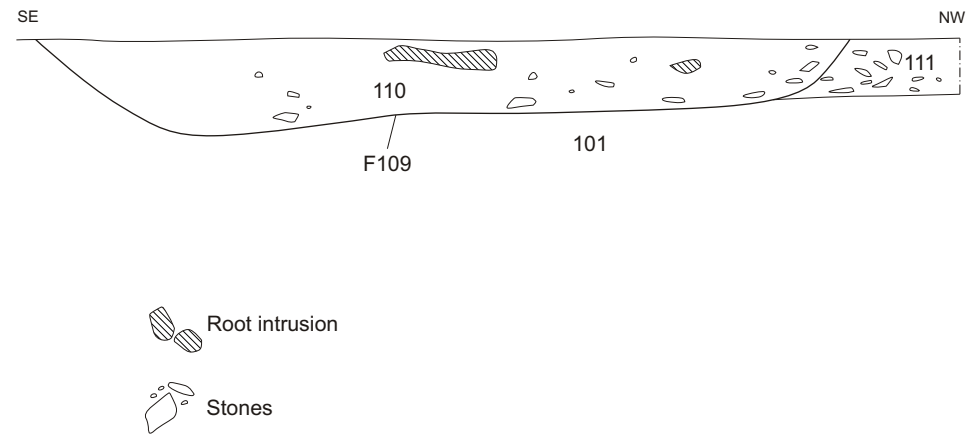
PROJECT  
Land at Langham Farm,  
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Fig. 2: Plan and sections

a) Plan of ditch F109



b) Section of F109



PROJECT  
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Fig. 3: Plan and sections



Plate 1: View of trackway strip, looking north in Field 1



Plate 2: Field 1, showing section through hedgebank breach, view to east (scale 1m)



Plate 3: Field 1, showing ditch F103 in foreground, view to south (scale 1m)



Plate 4: Showing ditch F103, view to southeast (scale 1m)



Plate 5: Ditch F109, with associated hedge bank in background, view to northwest (scale 1m)



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