

LAND AT HART'S YARD, FORE STREET, HEMYOCK, DEVON

(Centred on NGR ST 13669 13281)

Results of an Archaeological Trench Evaluation

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AC 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

An archaeological trench evaluation on land at Hart's Yard, Hemyock, Devon (NGR ST 13669 13281), was undertaken by AC archaeology during July 2017. The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of six trenches totaling 73m in length, with each trench 1.8m wide. These were positioned to provide sample coverage of the site.

The site lies adjacent to the former Hemyock Motors garage where pits containing early post-medieval pottery wasters were recorded, while in the near vicinity, extensive evidence for early post-medieval pottery production and early medieval ironworking medieval and post medieval iron working have been found.

The evaluation exposed archaeology of limited interest, comprising mainly linear ditches and gullies. No evidence for in situ ironworking was identified, although both gullies contained quantities of residual and displaced smelting slag in association with 17th or 18th century pottery.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology during July 2017 on land at Hart's Yard, Fore Street, Hemyock, Devon (NGR ST 13669 13281), to provide supporting information for a forthcoming planning application for residential development. The works were commissioned by Andrew Perry.
- 1.2 The proposed development area lies to the north of properties fronting onto Fore Street and Broadway in the centre of Hemyock. It covers an irregular area totalling c. 0.18ha and comprises two plots currently occupied by Hart's builder's yard to the east and a property and garden fronting onto Culmstock Road to the west (Fig.1, Plate 1). The underlying solid geology is sedimentary bedrock of the Mercia Mudstone Group (www.bgs.ac.uk).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Although the castle at Hemyock was not constructed until the late 14th century, the settlement is thought to date back to the Saxon period. Before 1066 Hemyock was held by King Edward (the Confessor) and remained part of the royal demesne for a short while after the conquest. The manor was the head of the Hundred of Hemyock, which attests to its early importance.
- 2.2 Recent archaeological work to the immediate west of the village along Culmstock Road (Rainbird and Young 2015) and to the south at Churchill's Farm (Hughes 2009a) has produced evidence for early medieval ironworking, as well as late medieval and post-medieval pottery production. Archaeological trial trenching on adjacent land to the west, at the former Hemyock Motors garage (now a development of six houses), produced further evidence in the form of pits and pottery wasters (Hughes 2009b).
- 2.3 The Hemyock parish tithe map of 1843 shows the properties to the north of Fore Street largely as they are now, however the land to the north was formerly orchards. Minor boundary changes are shown on the 1888 or 1903 25-inch Ordnance Survey maps, including the addition of a rectangular yard area.

3. AIMS

- 3.1 The aim of the trial trench evaluation 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, as set out in this report, will be reviewed and used to inform the need for further work via condition, should planning permission be granted.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The trench evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' document *Standards and Guidance for Field Evaluation* (revised December 2014). It comprised the machine-excavation of six trenches totaling 73m in length, with each 1.8m wide. These were positioned with respect to existing structures and services on the site to achieve, where possible, sample coverage of the proposed development area. Trenches 1-4 were positioned around the builder's yard, with Trench 5 at the entrance onto Fore Street. Trench 6 was positioned in the garden area to the west of the yard. (Fig. 1).
- 4.2 All trenches were located with a Leica Net rover GPS accurate to 1cm. The removal of soils within the trenches was undertaken in 20cm spits (maximum) under the control and direction of the site archaeologist. Stripping by mechanical excavator ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural subsoil was exposed.
- 4.3 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 and plans were produced at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate. All site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Introduction (*Trench location Fig. 1*)

Archaeological features were exposed in Trenches 2, 3 and 5 and are described below. Trenches 1 and 6 were archaeologically negative, however, Trench 4 exposed two modern features, a drain and the footing trench (F404) for the existing western boundary wall of the site (not depicted on Fig. 1). Neither was excavated, although two 19th-20th century pottery sherds were recovered from the exposed upper fill (405) of footing F404.

5.2 Trench 2 (*Plan Fig. 2a, section Fig. 2b*)

This trench was aligned north-south, measured 10m long and 1.8m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.79m. Natural subsoil (203) was exposed at a depth of 0.79m below existing levels, overlain by 0.16m of subsoil (202), 0.22m of topsoil (201) and then modern gravel surface 200. A single linear feature (F205) was exposed.

Ditch F205 was aligned east-west, measured 0.73m wide and 0.27m deep with moderate straight or slightly stepped sides and concave base. It contained a single fill (204) composed of dark greyish brown compact silty clay, with rare sub-angular pebbles and charcoal flecks. No finds were recovered.

5.3 Trench 3 (*Plan Fig. 2c, sections Figs 2d-e; Plates 2-4*)

This trench was aligned east-west, measured 15m long and 1.8m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.70m. Natural subsoil (303) was exposed at a depth of 0.70m below existing levels, overlain by 0.39m of subsoil (302), 0.22m of topsoil

(301), then a modern gravel surface (300). Two linear features (F304 and F306) were exposed.

Gully F304 (Plate 3) was aligned NW-SE, measured 0.55m wide and 0.1m deep, with shallow straight sides and a flattish base. It contained a single fill (305) composed of dark greyish brown soft silty clay, with occasional sub-angular gravel. Seventeen fragments of iron slag were recovered.

Gully F306 (Plate 4) was aligned NE-SW and measured 0.88m wide and 0.22m deep with moderate convex sides and a flattish base. It contained a single fill (307) composed of dark greyish brown, soft silty clay with occasional sub-angular gravel. A single sherd of post-medieval pottery and 18 fragments of iron slag were recovered from the fill.

5.4 Trench 5 (Plan Fig. 2f, section Fig. 2g)

This trench was aligned NW-SE, measured 8m long and 1m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.51m. Natural subsoil (503) was exposed at a depth of 0.51m below existing levels, overlain by 0.3m of subsoil (502), 0.12m of rubble hardcore (501) then tarmac surface 500. A single stone wall (505) was exposed. Its construction trench (F504) cut through subsoil layer 502.

Wall construction cut F504 was aligned north-south, measured 0.2m wide and 0.33m deep, with vertical sides and a flat base. It contained wall structure 505, composed of sub-angular flint and quartz nodules, bonded by a weak or degraded yellowish sandy mortar.

6. THE FINDS by Charlotte Coles

6.1 All finds recovered on site during the evaluation have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. They have been quantified according to material type within each context and the assemblage examined to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented. The collection of finds is summarised in Table 1 below.

Context	Context Description	Post-medieval pottery		Slag		Clay tobacco pipe		Glass	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
305	Fill of gully 304			17	4541				
307	Fill of gully 306	1	5	18	1992				
405	Fill of foundation trench 404	2	14			1	3	1	2
Total		3	19	35	6533	1	3	1	2

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

6.2 Post-medieval pottery

Three pieces of post medieval pottery were recovered from contexts 307 and 405. The sherd from context 307 is a small sherd of South Somerset ware pottery dating from the 17th or 18th centuries. The two sherds from context 405 are a sherd of whiteware and a sherd of English stoneware; these are both 19th or 20th century in date.

6.3 Slag

A total of 35 pieces of ironworking slag (6533g) was recovered from two contexts (305 and 307). These consist of tap slag; the slag that has flowed out of a bloomery furnace, furnace slag including one piece of unabraded furnace base and heat affected clay pieces with fragments of lining attached. The assemblage is consistent with other finds of Iron working waste from Hemyock, in particular, the nearby sites of Churchill's Farm and Culmstock Road.

6.4 Clay tobacco pipe

A single piece of clay tobacco pipe stem was retrieved from context 405; it is not possible to ascertain the date of this.

6.5 Glass

A single shard of glass from a small clear bottle was found from context 405, which is 19th or 20th century in date.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 Fragments of furnace slag had been deposited in two backfilled gullies whose alignment did not closely follow the surrounding plot layout. A sherd of 17th or 18th century pottery was also recovered from one of the gullies. The slag is likely to be related to the early medieval ironworking industry at Hemyock, previously recognised during investigations at Churchills Farm to the south (Hughes 2009a) and Culmstock Road to the west (Rainbird and Young 2015), where widespread deposits containing iron smelting slag were encountered.

7.2 No *in-situ* furnace remains were exposed at Hart's Yard and deposits of slag are clearly residual in later contexts. The ironworking industry at Hemyock was clearly extensive and it is therefore not surprising to find displaced slag on this site, as was seen on the adjacent Hemyock Motors investigation (Hughes 2009b). Ironworking would also not be expected in what is effectively the historic core of the village, established in the Saxon period, as industrial processes would have been situated away from settlement centres, as can be seen at both Churchill's Farm and Culmstock Road.

7.3 Features identified at the former Hemyock Motors garage comprised pits containing wasters from pottery production, dating from the late 16th century onwards. No evidence was produced from trial trenching at Hart's Yard to suggest that features of this character continue into the development area. No pits were exposed or waster sherds recovered.

7.4 Other features exposed in Trenches 2 and 5 are depicted on early mapping. Ditch F205 appears on the 1888 first-edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey map and represents a former boundary separating building plots along Fore Street from orchards further to the north. Wall 505 is clearly a continuation of an existing wall to the north, shown on the Hemyock Parish tithe map of 1843 as a boundary which extended south as far as Fore Street. In addition, the eastern boundary of a square yard area, depicted on the 1903 second-edition Ordnance Survey map, extended through the location of Trench 1, although no evidence for it was present.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 No *in situ* remains of ironworking or pottery production were exposed by trial trenching. Dumped slag from iron smelting was highly localised in the fill of two small gullies and is clearly residual, with the features dated by associated pottery to the post-medieval period. No evidence was recorded for features or deposits relating to post-medieval pottery production. Across the site, archaeological features were covered by thick soil overburden measuring up to 1.12m, but more typically 0.7m deep.

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, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ under the unique project code of **ACD1660**. It will be held until the need for any further archaeological work on the site is established and ultimately will be offered to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter under a pending temporary reference number, 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 **294112**, which includes a digital copy of this report.

10. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey Online Viewer, www.bgs.ac.uk

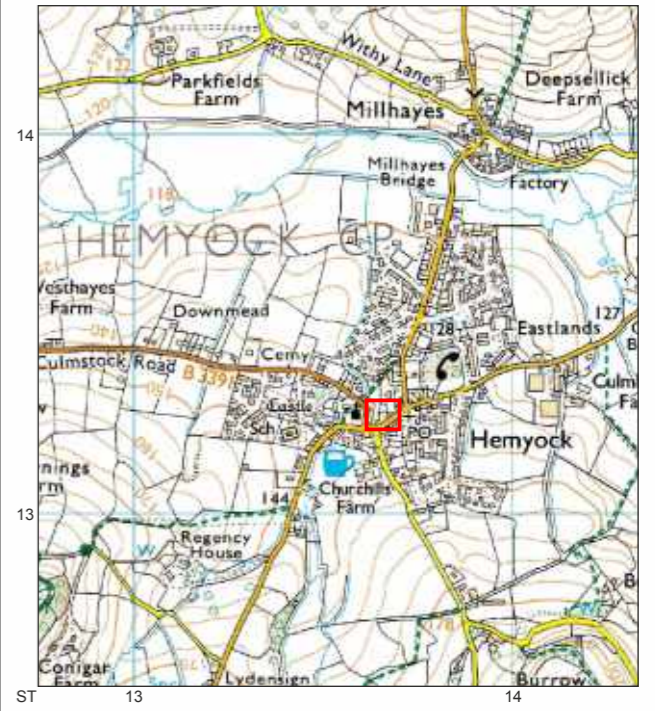
Devon Record Office, Hemyock parish tithe map, 1843 and apportionment, 1841

Ordnance Survey 25-inch Devonshire sheet 47.3, surveyed 1888, published 1889, revised 1903, published 1905



Hughes S. 2009a, *Land to the rear of Churchills Farm, High Street, Hemyock, Devon*. AC archaeology unpublished report, ref. **ACD87/2/0**

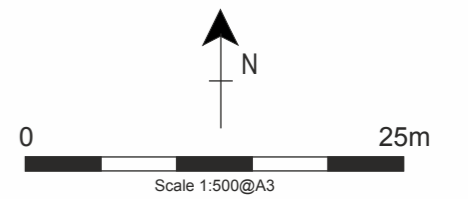
Hughes S. 2009b, *Results of a trench evaluation on land at Hemyock Motors, Culmstock road, Hemyock, Devon: an interim statement*. AC archaeology unpublished report, ref. **ACD44/2/0**

Rainbird, P., and Young, T., 2015, 'Saxon iron smelting furnaces at Culmstock Road, Hemyock, Devon', *Proc. Devon. Archaeol. Soc.* **73**, 279-313



Legend

-  Application area
-  Trenches 1 - 6 showing archaeological features

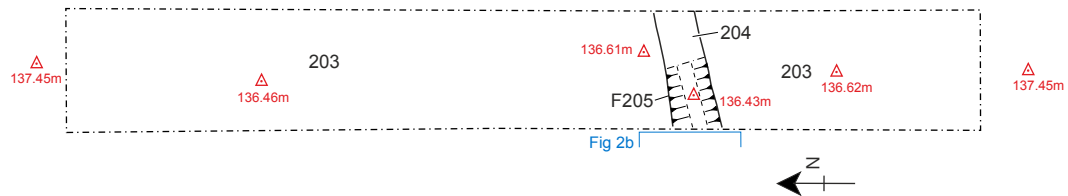


PROJECT
Land at Hart's Yard, Fore Street, Hemyock, Devon

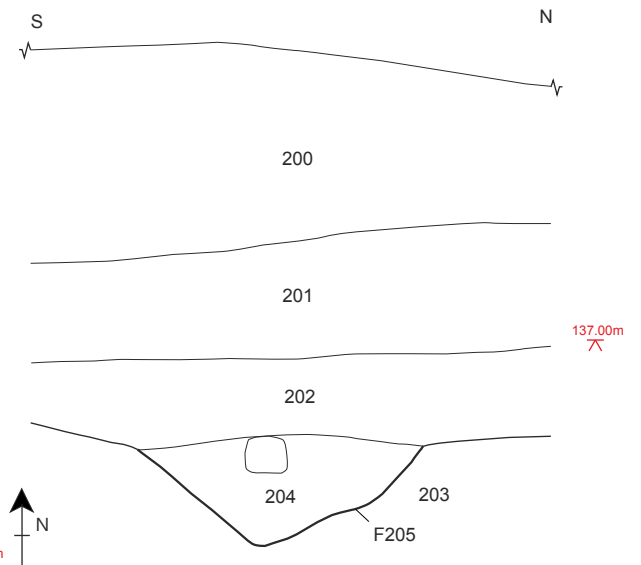
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Fig. 1: Location of site and trenches, showing archaeological features identified



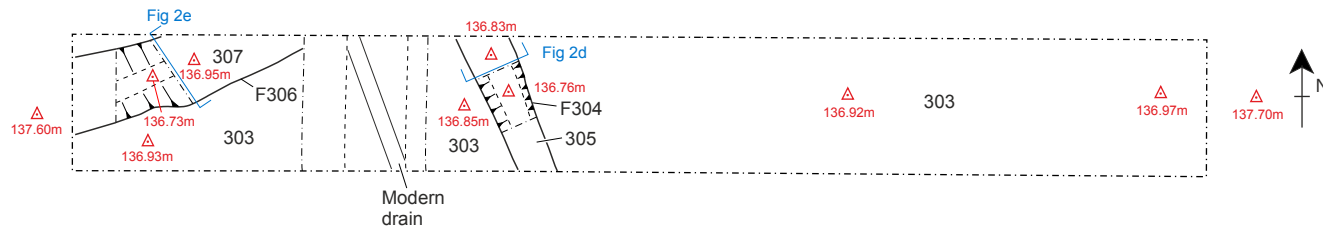
a) Trench 2, plan



b) Section of ditch F205



c) Trench 3, plan



d) Section of gully F304



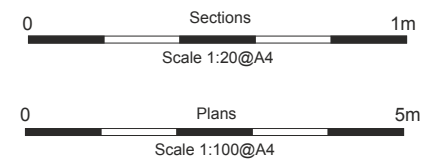
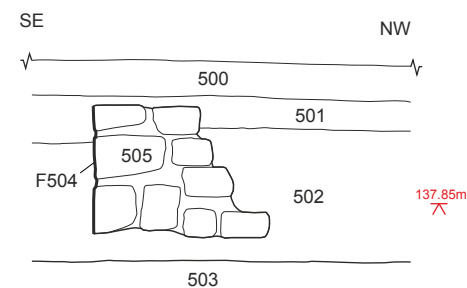
e) Section of gully F306



f) Trench 5, plan



g) Section of wall F504



PROJECT
Land at Hart's Yard, Fore Street, Hemyock, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 2: Trenches 2, 3 and 5, plans and sections





Plate 1: General site view. Looking southeast



Plate 2: General site view. Looking northwest towards Trench 3



Plate 3: Trench 3, view of gully F304. Looking northwest. Scale 1m



Plate 4: Trench 3, view of gully F306. Looking northeast. Scale 1m

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