

LAND AT TAW VIEW PHASE 2, BICKINGTON, NEAR BARNSTAPLE, DEVON

(Centred on NGR SS 5256 3274)

Results of an Archaeological Trench Evaluation

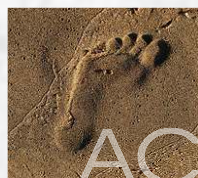
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On behalf of:
Orion Heritage

Report No: ACD1785/2/0

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AC archaeology

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(CENTRED ON NGR SS 5256 3274)

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Planning ref. North Devon District Council 62783

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Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by Will Bedford of Orion Heritage and managed for AC archaeology by John Valentin. The site works were carried out by Chris Caine, Paul Bracken and Sean Johnson, with the illustrations for this report were prepared by Samia Blackmore.

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 Taw View, Bickington, near Barnstaple, Devon (NGR SS 5256 3274), was undertaken by AC archaeology during February 2018. The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of 10 trenches totalling 300m in length, with each 2m wide. These were positioned to provide representative coverage of the development area.

Most of the trenches contained negative results. However, one trench contained a single linear feature representing a field boundary ditch of post-medieval date. A small collection of finds recovered comprise sherds of pottery, a fragment of ceramic ridge tile, pieces of clay tobacco pipe and a piece of animal bone, all of post-medieval date. A group of five pottery sherds from topsoil came from a single medieval jug. The spread of finds can largely be accounted for by manuring of the fields.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** An archaeological trench evaluation on land at Taw View, Bickington, near Barnstaple, Devon (NGR SS 5256 3274; Fig. 1), was undertaken by AC archaeology during February 2018. The evaluation was commissioned by Orion Heritage on behalf of clients and archaeological works were expected as a condition once planning consent has been obtained from North Devon District Council, as advised by the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team. The new development will comprise the construction of 44 open market and affordable dwellings, including associated highways, drainage and landscaping.
- 1.2** The overall outline application area covers approximately 2.7 hectares. It is located on currently pasture land (Plate 1) to the west of Bickington on a slight north facing slope, with a height above Ordnance Datum (aOD) of 20m at the northern boundary, rising to 25m aOD at the southern boundary. The underlying geology of the study site comprises mudstone and siltstones of the Crackington Formation. This is overlain by Diamicton till deposits from the Pleistocene (British Geological Survey Online Viewer 2018).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The site has been the subject of a Heritage Desk Based Assessment (Bedford 2017). This established that the site is located in an area that contains documented evidence for post-medieval and modern pottery and brick manufacture, as well as the extraction of clay for use in pottery production in Barnstaple and Bideford. The earliest manufacture here appears to date to the early post-medieval period, north of Muddlebridge House, but the local industry may well extend back into the medieval period.
- 2.2** A recent trench evaluation on land immediately to the south provided largely negative results, with only a single undated linear gully recorded (Lichtenstein 2018). The paucity of features and finds there indicates that the area has been in agricultural use throughout historic times and there is no indication for settlement or use of the site prior to this. The single gully found is consistent with being a former field boundary running parallel with the lie of the extant field boundary to its north.

3. AIMS

- 3.1** The main aim of trial trenching was to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any archaeological features, deposits or finds within the site, with particular reference for potential evidence for medieval and post-medieval ceramics production and early

field systems. The results of the work will be reviewed and used to inform any subsequent mitigation.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1** The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by AC archaeology (Valentin 2018) and with reference to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014). It comprised the machine-excavation of 10 trenches, with each 30m long and 2m wide. These were positioned to provide representative coverage across the site.
- 4.2** All trenches were located with a Leica Net rover GPS with sub-10mm accuracy. The removal of overlying deposits within the trenches was undertaken in a maximum of 0.2m spits under the control and direction of a site archaeologist. Stripping by mechanical excavator ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural geology was exposed. Spoilheaps were scanned for displaced artefacts.
- 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

A single trench (Trench 10) contained a small linear feature, while the remainder (Trenches 1-2, 4-9, and 11) had negative results. The proposed Trench 3, located in an extension to the northeast of the site adjacent to Clompitt Farm, could not be excavated due to waterlogged ground conditions. Trench 10 is described in detail below, with the results of the remaining trenches presented in tabulated form in Appendix 1. Across the site, the recorded layer sequence comprised a topsoil of dark greyish-brown clayey silt, above a mid reddish-brown silty clay loam agricultural subsoil. The natural subsoil largely comprised mid yellowish-brown sandy clay and was present at a depth of between 0.43m and 0.60m below the current ground surface.

5.2 Trench 10 (Plate 2)

This trench was located in the southwestern part of the site, was 30m long and aligned east-west. The overlying layer sequence consisted of 0.30m of topsoil (context 1000), overlying 0.26m of agricultural subsoil (1001). The natural subsoil (1002) was therefore present at 0.56m below the ground surface. The trench contained one linear feature (F1003).

Ditch F1003 (Section Fig. 1b)

This was aligned approximately north to south and measured 1.7m wide by 0.66m deep, with moderately sloping sides and a rounded base. It contained three fills. Primary fill (1004) was composed of dark greyish-brown silty sand, which contained three sherds of post-medieval pottery, two pieces of clay tobacco pipe and one piece of animal bone. This was overlain by secondary fill 1005, which was a mid yellowish-brown silty sandy loam and contained no finds. Upper fill 1006 was composed of dark yellowish-brown sandy silt and contained one sherd of post-medieval pottery. The ditch cut agricultural subsoil layer 1001.

6. THE FINDS *by Naomi Payne with a contribution from 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	Medieval pottery		Post-medieval pottery		Clay tobacco pipe		CBM		Animal bone	
		No.	Wt	No.	Wt	No.	Wt	No.	Wt	No.	Wt
400	Trench 4, topsoil			5	113			1	235		
600	Trench 6, topsoil			3	87						
700	Trench 7, topsoil			2	126						
800	Trench 8, topsoil			1	11						
900	Trench 9, topsoil	5	55								
1000	Trench 10, topsoil			3	69						
1004	Primary fill of ditch F1003			3	83	2	10			1	51
1006	Upper fill of ditch F1003			1	46						
Totals		5	55	18	535	2	10	1	235	1	51

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

6.2 Medieval pottery

Five sherds (55g) of medieval pottery were recovered from the topsoil in Trench 9. They are all conjoining body sherds and there are splashes of glaze on the exterior surfaces. The sherds derive from a North Devon medieval coarseware jug dating from c. 1200-1450.

6.3 Post-medieval pottery

A total of 18 sherds (535g) of post-medieval pottery was recovered from seven contexts in Trenches 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10. The majority of the post-medieval sherds are North Devon products. Identifiable vessels include a Type 1E bowl, two chamber pots, a Type 1B dish and a Type 5 porringer (see Allan *et al.* 2005, 191-2). There is one non-local piece, a body sherd of salt-glazed stoneware from the topsoil in Trench 6. All of the post-medieval pottery is likely to date from the 17th or 18th centuries.

6.4 Clay tobacco pipe

Two fragments (10g) of clay tobacco pipe were recovered from context 1004. Both are plain stem fragments and cannot be closely dated.

6.5 Ceramic building material (CBM)

A single fragment (235g) of ceramic building material was recovered from the topsoil in Trench 4. This appears to be part of a North Devon ridge tile of 17th or 18th century date.

6.6 Animal bone *by Charlotte Coles*

A single fragment of animal bone (51g) was recovered from context 1004. This is a piece of a tibia derived from a large mammal.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The evaluation was largely negative, with only a single ditch in Trench 10 the only archaeological feature present.
- 7.2 Ditch F1003 in Trench 10 marks the position of a former field boundary which is present on the 1838 Bickington Tithe Map and was removed for field enlargement before the end of the 19th century (Bedford 2017, Figs 4-5). It follows the line of the neighbouring extant field boundary. The Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation Project has identified the fields on the site as forming a pattern that is derived from medieval strip fields (DCC 2018). These were laid out as smaller fields in the medieval period and have given way to gradual subsequent enlargement to match new expectations of evolving agricultural methods and land ownership.
- 7.3 The small collection of finds was derived from overlying deposits and post-medieval ditch F1003. The pottery is almost exclusively of local type and are not waste products, with no evidence found for pottery production or clay extraction manufacture. The spread of finds can largely be accounted for by manuring of the fields.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The trench evaluation provided largely negative results. The paucity of features and finds indicates that the area has been agricultural in historic times and there is no indication for settlement or use of the site prior to this. The single ditch is consistent with being a former field boundary present on historic mapping and running parallel with the lie of the extant field boundary to its west.

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 **ACD1785** and under the accession number **NDDMS: 5.2018a** obtained from the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon, Barnstaple. The finds and paper archive will be offered to the museum, 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 **310965**, which includes a digital copy of this report.

10. REFERENCES

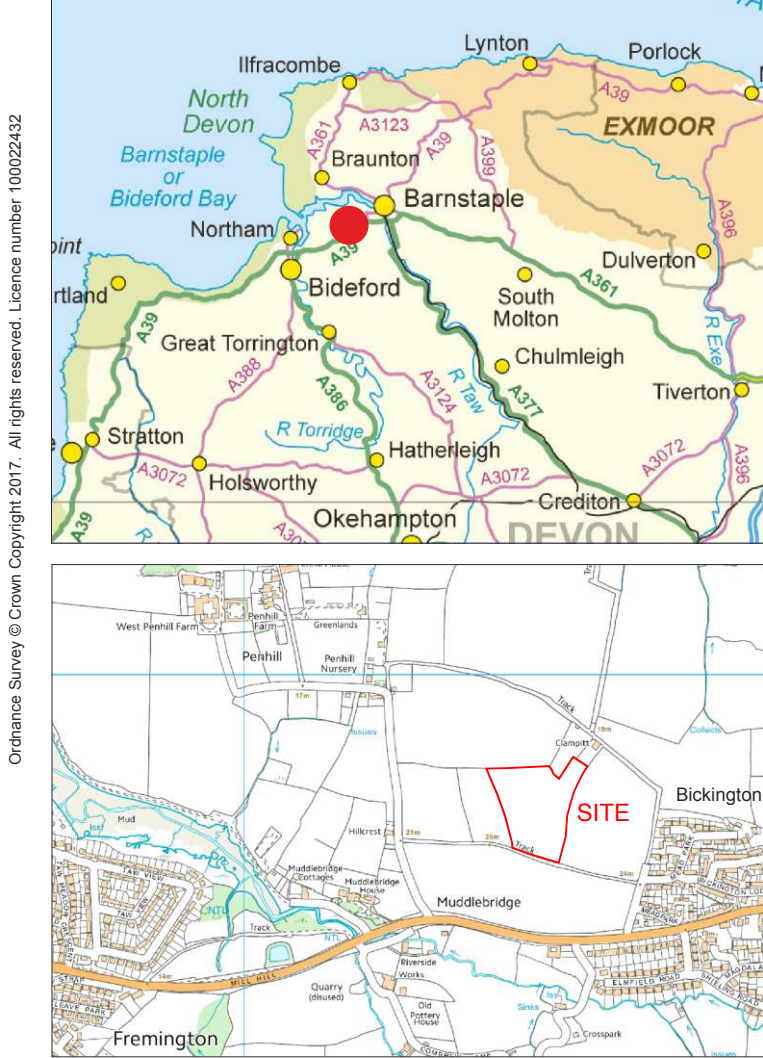
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a) Trench plan



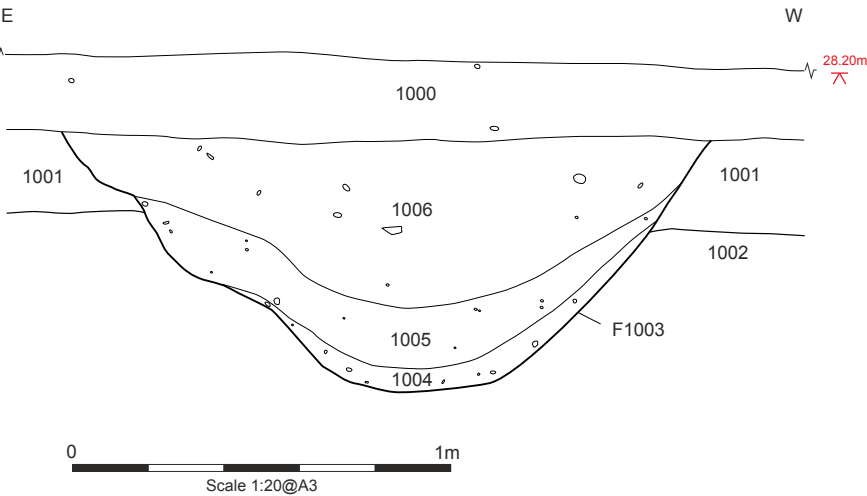
Plan supplied by Orion Heritage

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b) Section of ditch F1003



PROJECT
Land at Taw View, Bickington, Devon

TITLE
Fig. 1: Location of site and trenches with archaeological feature shown, as well as section of ditch F1003, Trench 10





Plate 1: General view of the site with Trench 1 in the foreground, looking southeast



Plate 2: General view of Trench 10, looking east
(1m scale)

Appendix 1

Tabulated Context Descriptions by Trench

APPENDIX 1: TABULATED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS BY TRENCH

Trench 1		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment E-W
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
100	Dark greyish-brown, clayey silt, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0-0.27m	Topsoil	
101	Mid reddish-brown, silty clay loam, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.27-0.43m	Agricultural subsoil	
102	Mid yellowish-brown, sandy clay, soft with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.43m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 2		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment N-S
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
200	Dark greyish-brown, clayey silt, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0-0.28m	Topsoil	
201	Mid reddish-brown, silty clay loam, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.28-0.58m	Agricultural subsoil	
202	Mid yellowish-brown, sandy clay, soft with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.58m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 3 – Not Excavated

Trench 4		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment N-S
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
400	Dark greyish-brown, clayey silt, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0-0.32m	Topsoil	
401	Mid reddish-brown, silty clay loam, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.32-0.54m	Agricultural subsoil	
402	Mid yellowish-brown, sandy clay, soft with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.54m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 5		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment E-W
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
500	Dark greyish-brown, clayey silt, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0-0.34m	Topsoil	
501	Mid reddish-brown, silty clay loam, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.34-0.58m	Agricultural subsoil	
502	Mid yellowish-brown, sandy clay, soft with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.58m+	Natural subsoil	

APPENDIX 1: TABULATED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS BY TRENCH

Trench 6		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment N-S
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
600	Dark greyish-brown, clayey silt, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0-0.30m	Topsoil	
601	Mid reddish-brown, silty clay loam, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.30-0.55m	Agricultural subsoil	
602	Mid yellowish-brown, sandy clay, soft with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.55m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 7		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
700	Dark greyish-brown, clayey silt, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0-0.30m	Topsoil	
701	Mid reddish-brown, silty clay loam, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.30-0.60m	Agricultural subsoil	
702	Mid yellowish-brown, sandy clay, soft with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.60m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 8		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment N-S
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
800	Dark greyish-brown, clayey silt, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0-0.30m	Topsoil	
801	Mid reddish-brown, silty clay loam, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.30-0.60m	Agricultural subsoil	
802	Mid yellowish-brown, sandy clay, soft with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.60m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 9		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
900	Dark greyish-brown, clayey silt, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0-0.23m	Topsoil	
901	Mid reddish-brown, silty clay loam, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.23-0.50m	Agricultural subsoil	
902	Mid yellowish-brown, sandy clay, soft with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.50m+	Natural subsoil	

APPENDIX 1: TABULATED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS BY TRENCH

Trench 10		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment E-W
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
1000	Dark greyish-brown, clayey silt, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0-0.30m	Topsoil	
1001	Mid reddish-brown, silty clay loam, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.30-0.56m	Agricultural subsoil	
1002	Mid yellowish-brown, sandy clay, soft with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.56m+	Natural subsoil	
F1003	A linear feature aligned approximately north to south and measuring 1.7m wide by 0.66m deep, with moderately sloping sides and a rounded base	0.30-0.96m	Probable field boundary or drainage.	
1004	Dark greyish-brown, silty sand, soft with occasional rounded gravels and pebbles	0.52-0.96m	Primary fill of F1003	
1005	Mid-yellowish-brown, silty sandy loam, soft with rare rounded pebbles	0.42-0.90m	Secondary fill of F1003	
1006	Dark yellowish-brown, sandy silt, soft with rare rounded pebbles	0.30-0.70m	Upper fill of F1003	

Trench 11		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
1100	Dark greyish-brown, clayey silt, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0-0.25m	Topsoil	
1101	Mid reddish-brown, silty clay loam, friable with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.25-0.50m	Agricultural subsoil	
1102	Mid yellowish-brown, sandy clay, soft with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.50m+	Natural subsoil	

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