

# Land to the rear of Churchills Farm, High Street, Hemyock, Devon

Centred on NGR ST1363313152

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

---

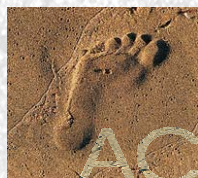
Prepared by:  
Simon Hughes

with contributions by:  
Kerry Dean and Emma Firth

On behalf of:  
Mr and Mrs Lock

Document No: ACD87/2/0

Date: September 2009



archaeology

---



# LAND TO THE REAR OF CHURCHILLS FARM, HIGH STREET, HEMYOCK, DEVON

## CENTRED ON NGR ST1363313152

### RESULTS OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRENCH EVALUATION

---

#### CONTENTS

	Summary	
1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	Archaeological and historical background .....	1
3.	Aims.....	2
4.	Methodology.....	2
5.	Results.....	2
6.	The finds.....	3
7.	Discussion.....	6
8.	Conclusions.....	6
9.	Archive and OASIS.....	7
10.	Acknowledgements.....	7
11.	Sources consulted.....	7

#### List of figures

Fig. 1: Site location

Fig. 2: Trench locations

Fig. 3: Plans and sections

#### List of plates

Plate 1: Machine-excavation of Trench 1. View to west

Plate 2: Trench 1, layer 103 containing frequent ferrous slag. View to southeast

Plate 3: Sondage through layer 103, Trench 1. View to west

Plate 4: Trench 2 showing ditch F202 (foreground). View to northwest

## Summary

*An archaeological trench evaluation, carried out in support of a future re-submission of a planning application for residential development on land to the rear of Churchills Farm, High Street, Hemyock, Devon (NGR ST1363313152), was undertaken by AC archaeology during September 2009. The site occupies an area of approximately 185m<sup>2</sup> and is situated on land currently used as a garden and vegetable plot. It is located immediately to the north of where recent archaeological investigations identified a late medieval pottery production site, as well as medieval or earlier iron smelting furnace bases.*

*The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of two trenches, each 1.6m wide and totalling 11.5m in length. Both trenches revealed a dumped layer, at c. 0.8m depth, containing significant quantities of ironworking debris, including tap slag, cake slag and furnace lining. Pottery recovered from these layers dates them to the 15th or 16th century. No in situ furnaces or other structures were present. In one trench a ditch dating to the early post-medieval period was recorded. In the overlying layers and deposits significant quantities of mainly 16th to 17th-century pottery was present, including a number of waster sherds. Smaller quantities of earlier medieval and later post-medieval finds were also recovered.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trench evaluation carried out in support of a future re-submission of a planning application for the construction of two houses on land to the rear of Churchills Farm, High Street, Hemyock, Devon, was undertaken by AC archaeology during September 2009. The work was commissioned by the site owners Mr and Mrs Lock and was undertaken following consultation with Devon County Historic Environment Service (DCHES).
- 1.2 The site is located on the west side of Hemyock High Street (Fig. 1) and occupies a level plot of land currently used a garden and vegetable plot. It lies at around 143m OD and covers an area of approximately 185m<sup>2</sup>. The underlying solid geology comprises Triassic Mercia Mudstone.

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Recent archaeological excavations immediately to the south of the site identified large pits containing significant amounts of late medieval pottery, many of which were waster sherds. Although an associated kiln was not found, it is likely that an important pottery production site is located in the immediate vicinity. The excavation also identified a number of furnace bases from iron production, as well as large quantities of iron smelting slag. This could have been taking place any time between the Romano-British and earlier medieval periods.
- 2.2 The Hemyock parish tithe map of 1843 shows the site as part of Churchills tenement and it is described on the accompanying apportionment of 1841 as 'Cottage and Garden'. It was owned by William Rogers and occupied by James Macy. The name 'Churchills' is likely to refer to a John Churchyll mentioned in a Lay Subsidy Roll for Hemyock, dated 1524 (Gover *et al* 1932, 617).

- 2.3** None of the surrounding fields contain elements which might indicate early settlement or industry and include a 'Hound Orchard', 'Barley Close' and 'Seadings Close'. Further to the south, however, there are fields called 'Little Cheffhayes' and 'Great Cheffhayes' (both also part of Churchills tenement), with the 'Hayes' place name element often meaning enclosed area of land (for example around a settlement or farmstead).
- 2.4** By 1888, the first-edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map shows that the range of buildings on the southern side of the farmhouse has been constructed, and there is also a very small structure in the southwest corner of the garden. The range had been extended westwards by 1903, but the small building is also still present.

### **3. AIMS**

The aim of the 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 as set out in this report will be reviewed and used to inform any subsequent mitigation as a condition of planning permission, if granted.

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a method statement prepared by AC archaeology (Valentin 2009), submitted to and approved by DCHES prior to commencement on site. It comprised the machine-excavation of two trenches totalling 11.5m in length, with each trench 1.6m wide (Fig. 2). This represents an approximate 10% sample of the total site area.

### **5. RESULTS**

#### **5.1 Trench 1** (Detailed plan Fig. 3a and section 3b; Plates 1 - 3)

This 7.6m long trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m (within hand dug sondages) onto natural subsoil (105) consisting of brownish-yellow clay.

Overlying the natural subsoil was a 0.1m thick layer of brownish-grey clay (104), possibly a buried soil, which was sealed by a layer of dark grey clayey silt (103). Layer 103 was a maximum of 0.2m thick and contained frequent pieces of ferrous slag with lengths varying between 0.05m and 0.3m. Also present within this layer was a piece of iron ore and two sherds of late medieval to early post-medieval pottery.

Above layer 103 was a 0.4m thick mixed deposit of dark greyish-brown clayey silt (102) containing mortar flecks and occasional ferrous slag. Post-medieval and medieval pottery, a clay tobacco pipe fragment and a ceramic floor tile waster were also recovered. Layer 102 was below a 0.25m thick dark brown clayey silt accumulation deposit (101), which contained mixed brick, mortar and clinker. This was below topsoil and turf (100).

#### **5.2 Trench 2** (Detailed plan Fig. 3c and sections 3d-g; Plate 4)

This trench was 3.9m long and was excavated onto a mixed red to yellow clay natural subsoil (216) present at a depth of 1m below ground level.

Sealing the natural subsoil was a 0.1m thick layer of dark grey silty clay (205), which was cut by a northwest to southeast aligned linear feature (F202). This probable ditch was 0.83m wide and 0.25m deep with a stepped southwest side, steeper northeast side and a flat, but sloping base (Fig. 3g). The ditch contained two fills composed of a brownish-red clay basal fill (203) and a dark brownish-grey silty clay upper fill (204). Finds recovered from the ditch include early post-medieval pottery, ferrous slag and a single piece of iron ore.

Sealing fill 204 was a homogenous 0.56m thick dark brown clayey silt subsoil layer (206), which contained medieval and post-medieval pottery. This layer was cut by a moderately steep-sided and flat-based probable pit (F215). This was 0.9m deep and contained a basal dumped deposit of red clay (207) overlain by a homogenous dark brown clayey silt (208). Post-medieval pottery was recovered from both fills, including 19th-century industrial whitewares.

Fill layer 208 was cut by two north to south aligned wall construction trenches (F213 and F209). Construction cut F213 was 0.52m deep and 0.48m wide with vertical sides and a flat base. It extended 0.1m into the trench from the south and contained un-faced stone footings (214).

To the west of wall 214 was construction cut F209; which was 0.5m deep and 0.3m wide and had vertical sides and a flat base. It contained a roughly-faced stone wall (210) that was one course wide and four courses high. Wall 210 was overlain along its eastern side by a packing deposit of red clay (212). To the west of wall 210 was a mixed clay silt deposit (211) containing stone, brick rubble and 20th century iron and plastic. Sealing deposit 211 was a garden cultivation soil layer (201) containing mortar and cinder fragments, which was below garden topsoil (200).

## 6. THE FINDS by Emma Firth and Kerry Dean

### 6.1 Introduction

All finds recovered on site have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. Finds were then quantified according to material type within each context. All metal finds will be x-rayed in order to enable identification of objects. The assemblage was scanned by context to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented. This information is briefly discussed below. Finds totals by material type are given in Table 1. All the finds, including the metal object, are in good condition.

The range of artefacts is comparable with those previously recovered during earlier excavations in Hemyock and reflects the industrial activity noted in those excavations, in terms of both the ironworking and pottery production. The pottery has parallels with assemblages recovered during earlier investigations in the village (Exeter Archaeology in prep, Allan and Langman 2009).

Table 1. Finds summary (weight is in grams; CBM = Ceramic Building Material)

Context	Ferrous Slag		Copper alloy		Iron ore		CBM		Glass		Clay pipe		Fired clay		Medieval pottery		Post-medieval pottery		Kiln furniture		Animal bone	
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
101	11	391	1	1			5	129			2	7					60	1305			1	17
102	12	445					1	114			1	7	1	6	1	7	36	677	3	276		
103	13	9596			1	86											2	15				
201											2	5					9	152				
203	3	366			1	143											2	61				
204	9	398															12	189				
205	2	62															2	9				
206															3	21	9	250				
207									1	5							4	74				
208																	22	1212				
TOTAL	50	11258	1	1	2	229	6	243	1	5	5	19	1	6	4	28	158	3944	3	276	1	17

## **6.2 Ferrous slag and associated iron ore**

A total of 50 pieces (11,258g) of slag was recovered from a range of deposits. The assemblage includes both tap slag and slag cake from furnace bases. Contexts 101, 102, 103, 203, 204 and 205 produced tapping slag and layer 103 also contained two large pieces of slag, one a slag cake and the other with evidence of tapping. Both have adhering furnace lining. The slag is all from the smelting process. Raw material (iron ore) was also noted and recovered from a small number of deposits.

## **6.3 Copper alloy objects**

Only one copper alloy object was recovered, which comprises a single lace end from overburden layer 101, Trench 1. This object could date from the earlier post-medieval period onwards.

## **6.4 Glass**

A single shard of post-medieval bottle glass was recovered from context 207, Trench 2. The shard is laminating and undiagnostic.

## **6.5 Clay pipe**

A total of five fragments (19g) of clay tobacco pipe was recovered and comprise plain stems only.

## **6.6 Ceramic building material**

A total of six fragments (243g) of ceramic building material was recovered, the majority (5/129g) are broken 18th-century and later roof tile and brick fragments from layer 101. Layer 102 contained a decorated floor tile, with olive glaze and white slip in a very crude pattern, which has split during firing and the glaze has subsequently run into the split.

## **6.7 The pottery**

The assemblage of pottery comprises a total of 162 sherds (3,972g), of which four sherds (28g) are medieval and 158 sherds (3,944g) are post medieval. The pottery is summarised by context in Table 2.

The medieval sherds include three sherds which derive from the Blackdown Hills area and were recovered from contexts 206 and 102. All are plain, undiagnostic body sherds and date from the 12th to 13th centuries.

The post-medieval pottery includes a range of red earthenwares which are comparable with those recovered during earlier excavations at Hemyock. Most of the red earthenwares are plain or slip-decorated glazed wares, but there are several yellow-glazed slip-coated sherds with copper staining. The range of forms within the post-medieval assemblage includes bowls and plates, although few rims are present and overall the assemblage comprises mainly body sherds. Many of the post-medieval sherds are large and unabraded, with the assemblage mainly dating to the 16th and 17th centuries, but extending into the 18th and 19th centuries. The sherds in a micaceous fabric recovered from contexts 204 and 206 are potentially slightly earlier and could be 15th or 16th-century in date.

A single sgraffito sherd from a large plate, with irregular, crude combing, was present within layer 101 and this sherd also has the distinctive copper staining. This dish could potentially date from around 1600 and is comparable with similar sherds noted by Allan and Langman (2009) at the nearby Hemyock Motors site. Other vessels present include several slip-decorated sherds, which also have the copper stain. Layer 101 also contained an unusual decorated body sherd which may derive from a jug, which contains incised and painted

(manganese or iron oxide) decoration comprising wavy lines running vertically over the body. The external surface has large areas of white slip and is internally glazed with clear glaze which may have copper staining.

Two sherds of Staffordshire/Bristol slipware; one with a white slip and feathered decoration and the other with a white slip and relief decoration with brown slip, were recovered from ditch fill context 204, and a second was recovered from layer 201. These sherds probably date to the mid 17th century.

Wasters were present in layer 102 and includes several sherds which have been over-fired. In one case the surface of the vessel has spalled. A large strap handle appears to have been either re-fired or over-fired and the fabric is almost vitrified.

Only one imported vessel was noted, which is a Raeren (Flemish) mug/jug stoneware sherd with cobalt blue decoration. This was recovered from layer 101 and dates to the later 16th century. Later sherds include industrial whitewares which date from the 18th to 19th centuries.

Table 2. Medieval and Post-medieval pottery by context

Context	Medieval Pottery		Post - medieval Pottery		Comments
	No	Wt	No	Wt	
101			60	1305	Includes one industrial whiteware; Raeren mug/jug sherd with cobalt blue decoration dated from the later 16th century; redwares decorated with clear glazes and includes bowls and jars; sgraffito decorated bowl with crude combed lines and addition of copper stain in the glaze; single sherd from bowl with white slip and copper stain in glaze; decorated jug with incised and painted (manganese or iron oxide) decoration with a white slip internally glazed with clear glaze with possible copper stain; possible late medieval/early post-medieval vessel with thin walls and abraded surfaces.
102	1	7	36	677	Redwares many of which have been glazed, two conjoining sherds with remains of an applied handle with stabbing on body, other sherds with pale slip and copper stain, other red earthenwares with amber glazes, several sherds, including a large strap handle and spalled glazed ware, could be wasters.
103			2	15	Undiagnostic sherds, redware with olive green glaze and one mottled green glazed ware, late medieval/early post-medieval.
201			9	152	Redwares from jar and jug; slipware with copper staining, base with white slip, pale fired fabric decorated with white slip and decorated with brown slip over relief decoration; Staffordshire/Bristol Slipware sherd.
203			2	61	conjoining sherds - manganese glaze internally, part glazed externally. 16th to 17th-century.
204			12	189	Micaceous fabrics, includes dark olive-glazed sherd, rim from bowl decorated with bands of white slip with clear glaze; redwares. Mainly 16th to 17th century, but micaceous fabrics could be late medieval.
205			2	9	Small thin-walled vessels one with white slip, micaceous fabric. 15th to 16th-century.
206	3	21	9	250	Three micaceous fabric with quartz temper (medieval); slipwares and glazed redwares from bowls and jars; grey fabric with thick green glaze rim. Mainly 16th to 17th century.
207			4	74	rod handle; small rim from jar with white slip; two conjoining sherds with white slip decoration under an amber glaze.
208			22	1212	Includes industrial whitewares; Staffordshire/Bristol Slipware with feathered decoration; one possible late medieval to early post-medieval sherd with a soft sandy fabric and very abraded internal glaze and sooting externally.
TOTAL	4	28	158	3944	

## 6.8 Kiln furniture

Three pieces (276g) of ceramic kiln furniture were recovered from layer 102. They include two flat pieces, one of which has a circular perforation and the remains of a perforation on one edge. A second fragment has a square perforation. None of the perforations extend right through any of the fragments. All pieces are in a micaceous sandy fabric with quartz and chert inclusions.

## **6.9 Fired clay**

A total of three pieces (20g) of fired clay was recovered from layer 102. One piece is undiagnostic and small. The remaining pieces are the same fabric but have been reduced and re-fired; it is probable that they are fragments of kiln lining.

## **6.10 Animal bone**

A single fragment (17g) of undiagnostic animal bone was recovered from layer 101.

## **7. DISCUSSION**

**7.1** The evaluation has confirmed that similar deposits and finds, as identified during the earlier excavation immediately to the south (Exeter Archaeology in prep.), continue into the present site. Towards the lower levels of each of the trenches there were layers containing frequent ferrous slag (contexts 103 and 205), with these likely to be waste dumps associated with ironworking. In contrast to the Exeter Archaeology site, however, no *in situ* furnaces were present. Pottery recovered from layers 103 and 205 indicates a date for their deposition of the late 15th or early 16th-century.

**7.2** The earliest layer present in Trench 1 comprised an undated buried soil (context 104). Above this were accumulated layers containing a mixed range of finds dating from the medieval period through to the 18th/19th century. These layers contained a number of waster pottery sherds, as well as a floor tile fragment, with these dating from the late 16th or early 17th-century; significantly later than the adjacent pottery production site identified by Exeter Archaeology, but comparable with the material recovered from the Hemyock Motors site (Allan and Langman 2009).

**7.3** The layer containing ferrous slag in Trench 2 (205) was cut by a northeast to southwest aligned ditch (202). In its lower fill (203), pottery dating to the late 16th or early 17th-century was present. Layer 205 and ditch F202 were sealed by a thick accumulation of silty clay (206), with the pottery recovered from this dating to the late medieval period and the late 16th or early 17th-century.

**7.4** The layers and features cutting and overlying layer 206 in Trench 2 are likely to date to the 18th and 19th centuries. These include a large possible pit (F215) which extended beyond the trench limits and two stone walls (210 and 214). Wall 214, which did not extend across the trench and had no bonding, is likely to be a footing for a small boundary wall or perhaps a former outbuilding, whereas wall 210 is unlikely to have had a structural purpose and may have been part of a former garden wall. The composition of deposit 211 to the west of the wall suggests that this area has been recently infilled and wall 210 might have been constructed to retain the ground to the east.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

**8.1** While both trenches contained finds indicating ironworking and pottery production nearby, there were no *in situ* industrial features present, such as kilns or furnaces, and there were no large pits containing substantial quantities of waster pottery sherds, as recorded on the adjacent site to the south. Nevertheless, the results from this site, as well as the localised nature of some of the deposits identified during the adjacent excavations, do indicate that there is still the potential elsewhere for features of this type to be present. The most significant deposits recorded were probably the layers containing dumps of ferrous slag and other ironworking debris, dated by the associated pottery to the late medieval period. These were present at between 0.8m and 0.9m below ground level. Above these layers were soil accumulation deposits and later post-medieval features and structures.



**8.2** If the site is to be developed, then important archaeological deposits are likely to be affected which may require additional archaeological investigation, but the scope and extent of such investigations will be dependent on the depth of excavations needed for construction and services etc. On this basis, it is considered that the following is likely to apply:

- Excavations below 0.8m will impact upon the ferrous slag layer and, potentially, on other important (as yet unidentified) remains at this level. If this is the case, then it is likely that formal excavation will be needed in those areas to be affected by development.
- Excavations between 0.5m and 0.8m are unlikely to impact upon any significant *in situ* early remains, but important artefactual material will be present. There is also the potential for damage to remains at a lower level through compaction. If this is the case, then it is likely that formal excavation will be needed in those areas to be affected by development.
- Excavations above 0.5m are unlikely to impact upon any significant *in situ* early remains, but important artefactual material may be present. If this is the case, then a comprehensive watching brief during ground reduction would enable the recording of any unexpected archaeological remains present higher in the layer sequence and for the recovery of residual pre-modern artefacts from the upper levels.

## **9. ARCHIVE**

**9.1** The paper and digital archive and finds are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. They will be deposited at Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter under the accession code 284/2009, along with any archive generated by any subsequent work on the site.

**9.2** The OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS) number for this project is 64530.

## **10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The evaluation was commissioned by the landowners Mr and Mrs Lock. The site trial-trenching was carried out by Simon Hughes and Richard Sims and the illustrations for this report were prepared by Sarah Cottam. The advice and collaboration of Stephen Reed, Devon County Archaeology Officer, is duly acknowledged.

## **11. SOURCES CONSULTED**

DRO, Hemyock parish tithe map, 1843 and apportionment, 1841

Allan, J. and Langman, G., 2009, 'The pottery' in S. Hughes, *Results of a trench evaluation on land at Hemyock Motors, Culmstock Road, Hemyock, Devon. Interim Archaeological Statement*. AC archaeology report, ref. ACD44/2/0

Exeter Archaeology, in prep., *Land at Churchills Farm, Hemyock: Post-excavation assessment report*

Gover, J.E.B., Mawer, A. and Stenton, F.M., 1932, *The place-names of Devon Parts 1 and 2*. English place-name society, vol. 9

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

Valentin, J., 2009, *Land to the rear of Churchills Farm, High Street, Hemyock, Devon: Method statement for an archaeological trench evaluation*. Unpublished AC archaeology document, ref. ACD87/1/0



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright AC archaeology, Chicklade, Wiltshire. Licence No AL100016452



PROJECT

Churchill's farm, Hemyock

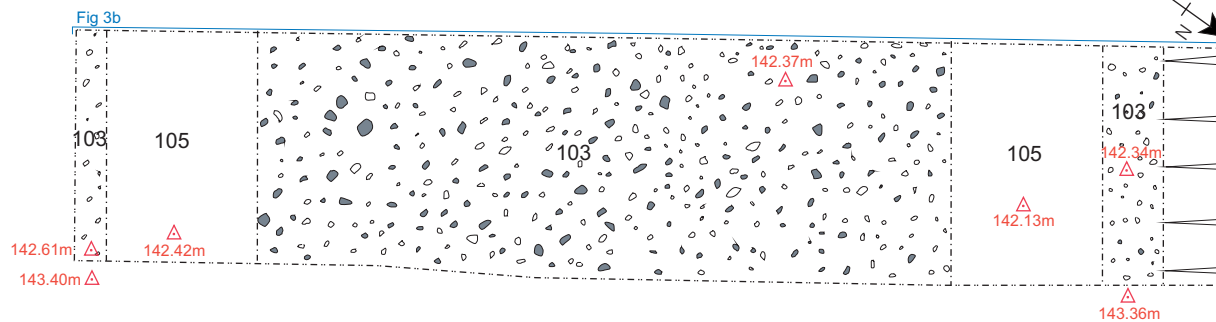
TITLE

Fig. 1: Site Location

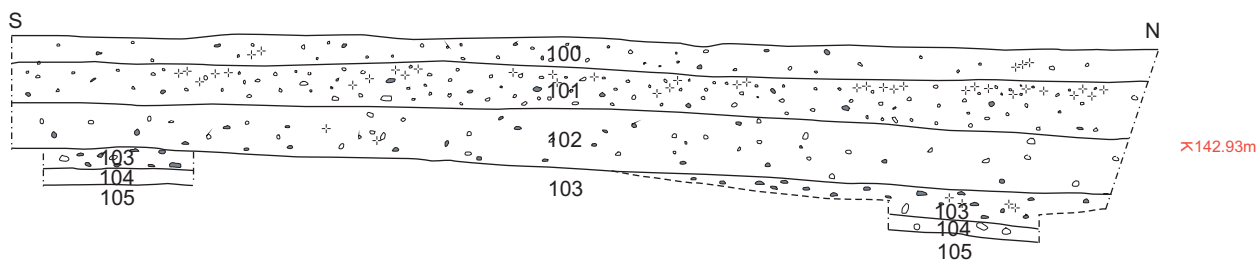


## Trench 1

### a) Plan

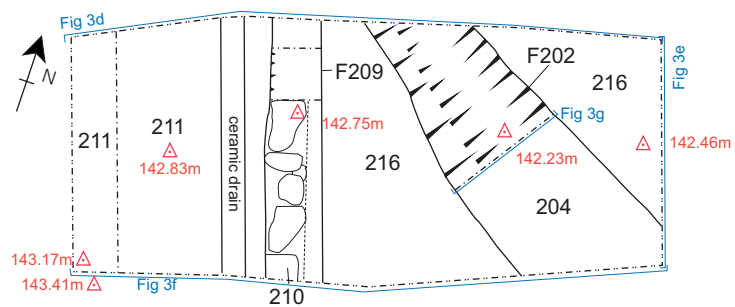


### b) Section

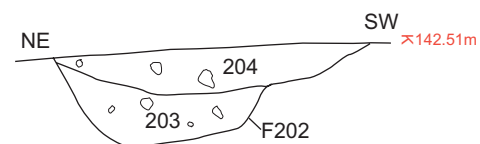


## Trench 2

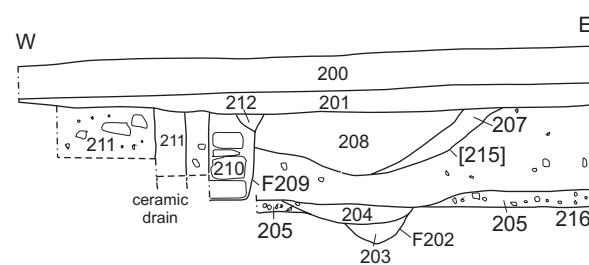
### c) Plan



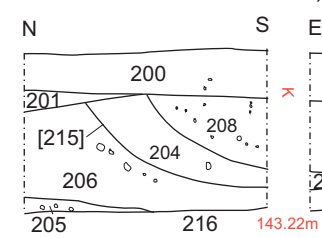
### g) Section, F202



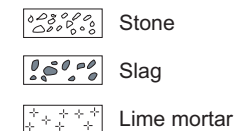
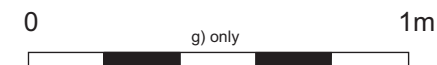
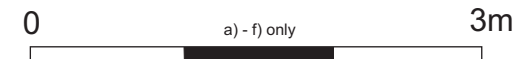
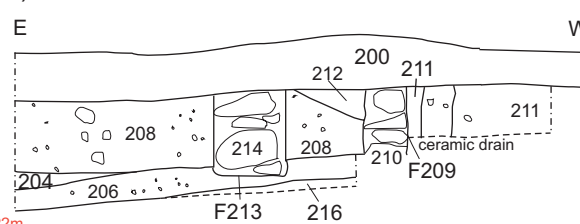
### d) Section



### e) Section



### f) Section



PROJECT

Churchill's Farm, Hemyock

TITLE

Fig. 3:  
Plans and sections





Plate 1: Machine-excavation of Trench 1. View to west



Plate 2:  
Trench 1, layer 103 containing  
frequent ferrous slag.  
View to southeast (scale 1m)





Plate 3: Sondage through layer 103, Trench 1. View to west (scale 1m)



Plate 4: Trench 2 showing ditch F202 (foreground). View to northwest (scales 1m and 2m)

### Wiltshire Office

AC archaeology Ltd  
Manor Farm Stables  
Chicklade  
Hindon  
Nr Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
SP3 5SU

Telephone: 01747 820581  
Fax: 01747 820440

### Devon Office

AC archaeology Ltd  
Unit 4, Halthaies Workshops  
Bradninch  
Nr Exeter  
Devon  
EX5 4LQ

Telephone/Fax: 01392 882410

[www.acarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.acarchaeology.co.uk)