

Land adjacent to Blamphayne Sawmill, Gittisham, Devon

NGR SY11959893

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

Planning ref. East Devon District Council 10/1046/FUL

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On behalf of:
Taylor-Wilkinson Ltd

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archaeology

LAND ADJACENT TO BLAMPHAYNE SAWMILL, GITTISHAM, DEVON (CENTRED ON SY11959893)

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SUMMARY

An archaeological trench evaluation, on the site of a proposed new tanalising plant on land adjacent to Blamphayne Sawmill, Gittisham, Devon (NGR SY11959893), was undertaken by AC archaeology during July 2010. The site is located on agricultural land slightly raised above the River Otter floodplain, in an area where evidence for prehistoric and Romano-British settlement has been previously identified.

The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of three trenches totalling 60m in length, with each trench 1.6m wide. With the exception of eight pieces of prehistoric flaked stone recovered from a colluvial layer, negative archaeological results were recorded.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trench evaluation, undertaken in support of a planning application for the construction of a new tanalising plant and associated works on land adjacent to Blamphayne Sawmill, Gittisham, Devon, was carried out by AC archaeology on 2 July 2010. The work was commissioned by Taylor-Wilkinson Ltd on behalf of clients, and was undertaken following consultation with the Archaeology Officer, Devon County Historic Environment Service. The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.
- 1.2 The site is situated on agricultural land on the north side of the present A30 Trunk Road. It lies on ground which slopes gently down to the northwest at around 64m OD, with the underlying geology comprising Keuper Marl and sandstones.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site is located in an area where investigations associated with the construction of the present A30 identified evidence for prehistoric and Romano-British settlement. A possible prehistoric pit or linear feature was recorded (DCHER ref. 61289) and pottery of Romano-British date was recovered (61084). The line of the old A30 in this location is on the route of the Roman road between Honiton and Exeter.
- 2.2 The Gittisham parish tithe map of 1838 depicts the area of the site before the construction of the present main road and railway line. At this time the site is within an agricultural field called 'New Meadow', which was owned by the Reverend Putt and occupied by Ann North. The Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1888 shows the boundaries of the field as they are today, which is also the case in 1903.

3. AIMS

- 3.1 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 of the work as set out in this report will be reviewed by DCHES and used to inform any subsequent mitigation should planning permission be granted.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design prepared by AC archaeology (Valentin 2010), submitted to and approved by the Archaeology Officer, Devon County Council. It comprised the machine-excavation of three trenches totalling 60m in length, with each trench 1.6m wide (Fig. 1).

- 4.2** The site was recorded in accordance with the AC archaeology pro-forma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and with reference to AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 1*. All sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and all levels have been related to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Trench 1 (Section Fig. 2a)

This trench was 20m long and 1.6m wide, orientated approximately NW-SE. It was positioned on generally level ground with a slight slope down to the north. No archaeological features were exposed; worked flint was recovered from the layer 101. The layer sequence exposed is described in Table 1.

Context	Depth below gs (m)	Description	interpretation
100	0.0 – 0.20	Dark brown silty clay loam	Modern topsoil
101	0.20 – 0.40	Dark reddish-brown silty clay with sparse small gravel	Colluvial layer
102	0.40+	Orange-brown silty clay with manganese flecks, flint gravel and chert fragments to 150mm	Natural drift geology

Table 1: General depositional sequence in Trench 1

5.2 Trench 2 (Section Fig. 2b & c)

This trench was 20m long and 1.6m wide, orientated approximately NW-SE. It was positioned on generally level ground with a slight slope down to the north. No archaeological features were exposed; worked flint was recovered from the layer 201. The layer sequence exposed is described in Table 2.

Context	Depth below gs (m)	Description	interpretation
200	0.0 – 0.20	Dark brown silty clay loam	Modern topsoil
201	0.20 – 0.80 (max.)	Dark reddish-brown to dark brown silty clay with sparse small gravel	Colluvial layer
202	0.80+	Dark reddish-brown to dark brown stiff silty clay with manganese flecks, flint gravel and chert fragments to 250mm	Natural drift geology

Table 2: General depositional sequence in Trench 2

5.3 Trench 3 (Section Fig. 2d; Plates 1 & 2)

This trench was 20m long and 1.6m wide, orientated approximately NW-SE. It was positioned on generally level ground with a slight slope down to the north. No archaeological features were exposed; worked flint was recovered from layer 301. The layer sequence exposed is described in Table 3.

Context	Depth below gs (m)	Description	interpretation
300	0.0 – 0.15	Dark brown silty clay loam with occasional gravel	Modern topsoil
301	0.15 – 0.60	Dark reddish-brown silty clay with occasional gravel	Colluvial layer
302	0.60+	Dark red-brown with common gravel	Natural drift geology

Table 3: General depositional sequence in Trench 3

6. THE FINDS

6.1 All finds recovered on site have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. Finds were then quantified according to material type within each context. The assemblage was then scanned by context to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented.

6.2 Flaked stone

The flaked stone assemblage comprises eight pieces listed by context in Table 3 below and has characteristics which could be either Neolithic or Bronze Age date. The assemblage includes gravel derived flint and two pieces of chert, with all in good condition.

Context	Weight (g)	Comments
101	35	Retouched flint flake, possibly a scraper, gravel flint, cortex. Small flint core fragment, gravel flint. Broken small flint blade with retouch. Broken chert flint with retouch.
201	24	Chert flake. Flint blade flake with retouch.
301	7	Chert flake. Broken flint flake - possibly a blade flake.

Table 3: Flaked stone catalogue

6.3 Pottery

A single sherd (67g), of a red earthenware vessel was recovered from context 200. The sherd has a white slip under a clear glaze over the top and is 18th or 19th-century date.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 With the exception of a small quantity prehistoric flaked stone recovered from a colluvial layer, the evaluation revealed largely negative results. The new tanalising plant will be situated on what would be considered marginal, slightly raised ground on the edge of the floodplain of the River Otter and at the base of a north-facing slope, which drops down steeply from the opposite side of the present A30. The colluvial soil layer present in all trenches was largely consistent, with the flaked stone recovered from this probably Neolithic or Bronze Age date. Prior to the accumulation of this colluvial layer, it is likely that this area was also within the floodplain of the river. The flaked stone recovered appears to have been displaced from elsewhere further upslope to the south, rather than being an indicator of *in situ* settlement.

7.2 Based on the good trench coverage, the absence of archaeological features and deposits and the general paucity of finds, it is considered unlikely that the construction of the new tanalising plant will impact on any *in situ* buried remains.

8. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

8.1 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 131/2010. The OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS) number for this project is 80237.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

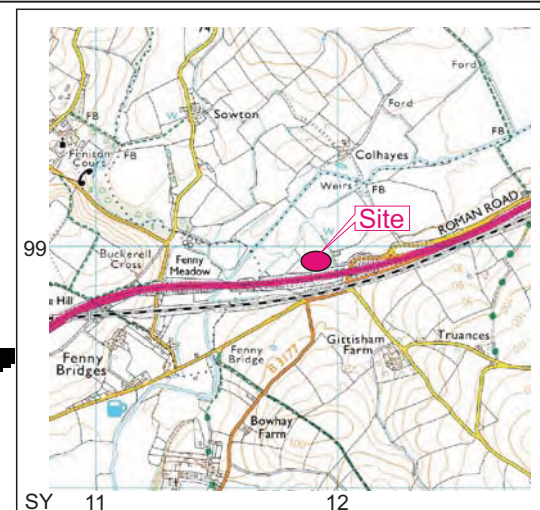
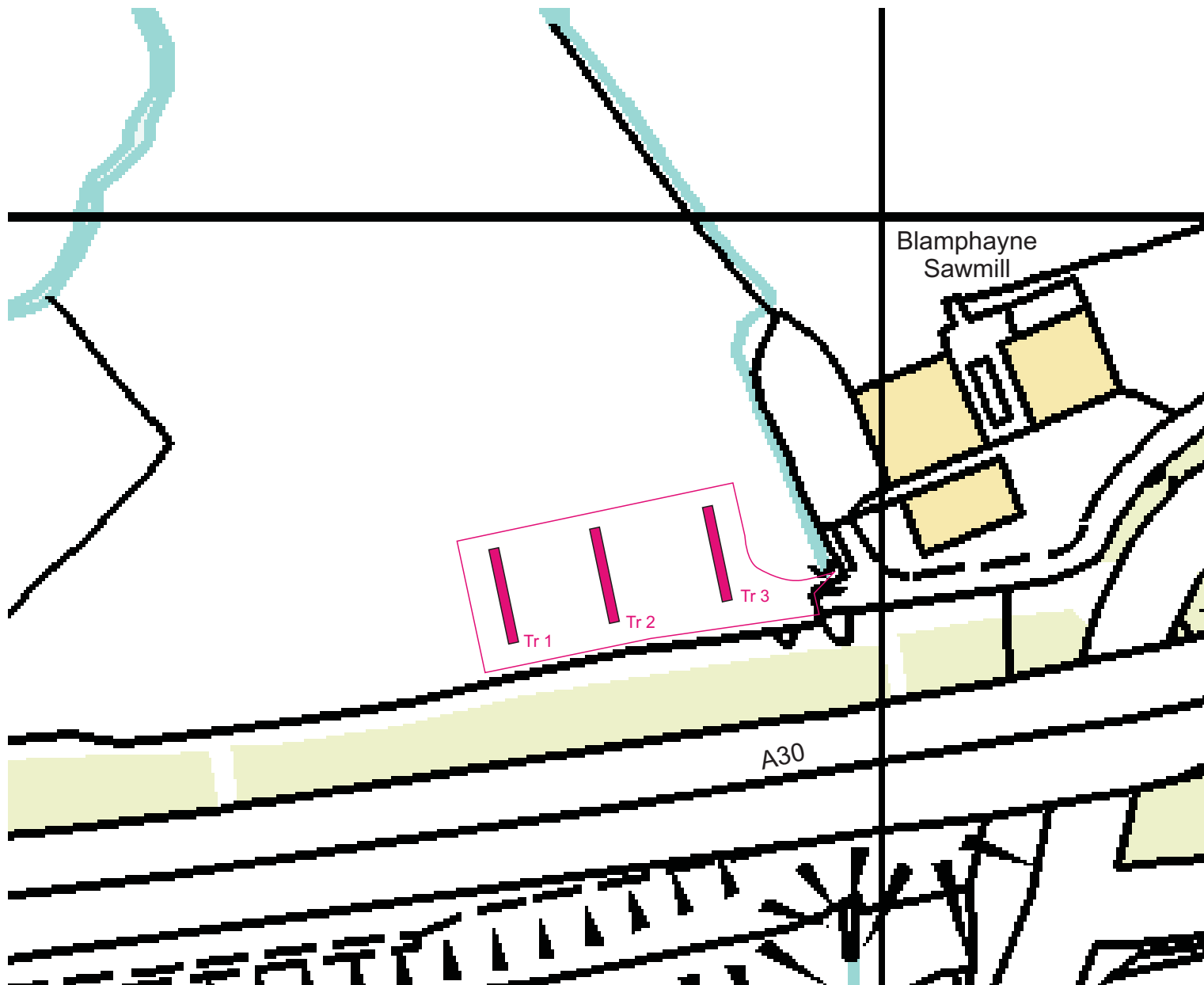
The evaluation was commissioned on behalf of Taylor-Wilkinson Ltd by Andrew Wilkinson. The site trial trenching was carried out by Steve Robinson and Tina Tapply and the illustrations for this report were prepared by Sarah Cottam. The advice and collaboration of Stephen Reed, Devon Archaeology Officer, is duly acknowledged.

10. SOURCES CONSULTED

DRO, Gittisham parish tithe map and apportionment, 1838

Ordnance Survey 25-inch Devonshire sheet 70.6, surveyed 1888, published 1889, revised 1903, published 1905

Valentin, J., 2010, *Land adjacent to Blamphayne Sawmill, Gittisham: Project Design for an archaeological trench evaluation*. Unpublished AC archaeology document, ref. ACD178/1/0



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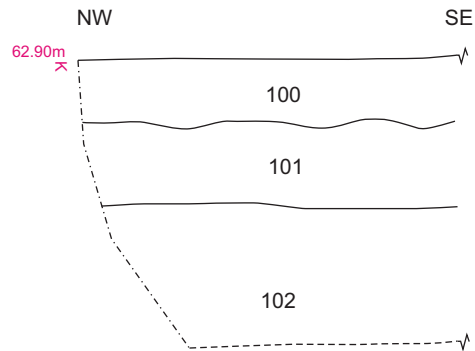
TITLE

Fig 1: Site and trench locations

0 100m

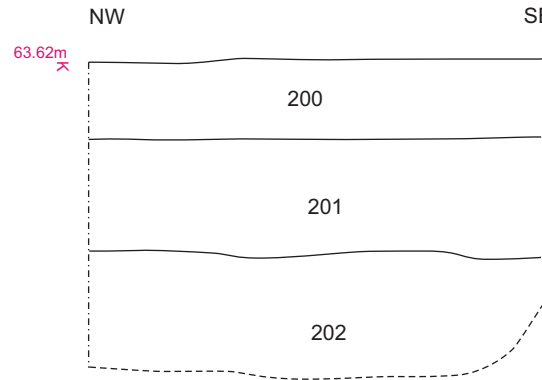
Trench 1

a) Representative section

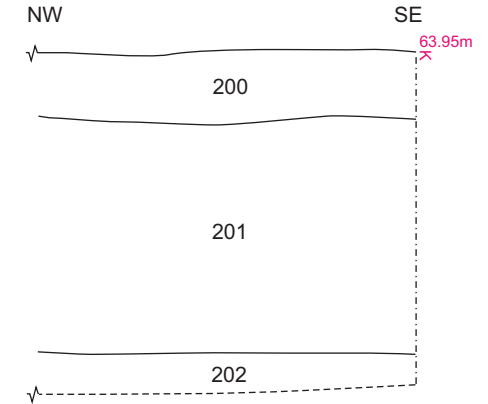


Trench 2

b) Representative section, northwest end

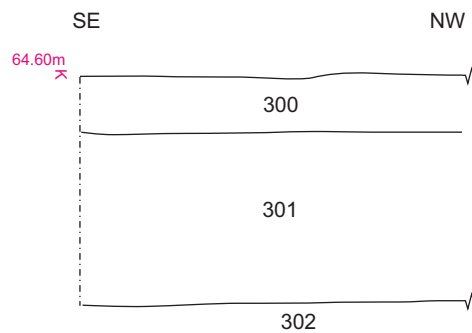


c) Representative section, southeast end



Trench 3

d) Representative section



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Fig 2: Sections of all trenches



Plate 1: General working shot of Trench 3. View from the southeast.



Plate 2:
General view along Trench 3
from the northwest (scale 2m)

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