

Parish	Site	Grid Reference	Report Producer	Type of Report	Nature of Development
Barnstaple	Brannams medical centre	56073290	AC Arch	Monitoring and recording	Extension to medical centre
Barnstaple	Castle mound	55593330	Oakford Arch	Monitoring and recording	Minor works
Barnstaple	Paige's lane	55673321	A B Heritage Ltd	DBA	Demolition of existing buildings and erection of a retail unit and 6 dwellings
Barnstaple	St Mary's Church, Pilton	55623414	SWARCH	Monitoring and recording	Repair of churchyard walls
Bishops Nympton	West St	75832389	SWARCH	Monitoring and recording	Erection of dwellings
Braunton	Luscott Barton	51683706	Neo Environmental	Evaluation	Construction of solar farm
Filleigh	Castle Hill Kennels	66702350	SWARCH	HBR, Monitoring and recording	Construction of folly
Molland	Bommertown Farm	82142565	Cotswold Archaeology	Watching Brief	Construction of solar farm
Mortehoe	Barton Close Farm	47914155	Pre-construct Archaeol Services Ltd	Monitoring and recording	Construction of solar array
North Molton	Back Lane	73502980	SWARCH	DBA and Archaeol. Evaluation	Residential development
North Molton	Barton Pitts	72533206	AC Arch.	Trench evaluation	Construction of agricultural building
Shirwell	Coxleigh Barton	58493547 58423545	SWARCH	HVIA	Erection of 2 wind turbines

South Molton	Old Alswear Road (2)	71672513	SWARCH	Gradiometer survey and evaluation trenching	Construction of rugby pitch
South Molton	Cooks Cross	71272563	AC Arch.	Trench evaluation	Residential development
South Molton	Moors Yard	71262569	AC Arch.	Archaeol. Excavation	Residential development
Tawstock	Hollamoor Farm (2)	55003010	SWARCH	Gradiometer survey, DBA, walkover survey and HVIA	Solar farm

A total of 16 sites were examined in 10 parishes. 7 commercial firms produced the reports; 7 of these reports were prepared by SWARCH, with 4 by AC Archaeology, and one each by Oakford, AB Heritage, Neo Environmental, Cotswold and Pre-construct. 4 of the reports were related to solar farm proposals, and one to a wind turbine; renewal energy proposals thus dominated the developments that prompted the commissioning of the reports.

### 1. Barnstaple: Brannam's Medical Centre

This site formed part of the former Brannams Pottery that fronted Litchdon Street. At the turn of the twentieth century the pottery was extended onto the garden land to the rear. Subsequently Brannams Pottery relocated to Roundswell and the site was redeveloped towards the end of the twentieth century for a medical centre. The buildings fronting Litchdon Street and one of the bottle kilns were retained and restored as part of that development. Recently planning permission was granted for a minor extension to the medical centre. As part of the archaeological investigations a trial trench was dug along the length of the proposed extension and to the depths of its footings.

Findings included 19th century pottery waste used a fill material prior to the building of the factory extension. Part of the brick foundation wall of the factory was also revealed. Finds also included pottery and kiln waste, primarily of 19th century date, that had been used to level the site prior to the construction of the industrial building.

### 2. Barnstaple: Castle Mound

The Castle Mound is a scheduled ancient monument and consists of the remains of a Norman motte and bailey. Minor works were to be carried out, including the cutting by hand of two footpaths, the rebuilding of two retaining walls and the repair of an erosion scar. The work exposed the earthen core of the Mound, but no structural features or dateable evidence were found.

### 3. Barnstaple: Paiges Lane

This site lies at the junction of Paiges Lane and Holland Street and comprises an old cottage, garage and barn that are to be demolished and replaced with a retail unit and six dwellings. The site lies in the historic core of the mediaeval settlement of Barnstaple and is acknowledged in the desk-based assessment as having significant

archaeological potential. The report recommends a historic building record of the existing cottage and archaeological investigation of the site as work proceeds.

#### **4. Barnstaple: St Mary's Church, Pilton**

Excavations were carried out during repairs to the churchyard wall at St Mary's. The church was built on the site of a mediaeval priory and the graveyard is elevated above the surrounding area. Despite the known antiquity of the site very little was found: the finds are dominated by North Devon ceramics of a domesticated nature dating from the post-mediaeval era, mainly from unstratified contexts. There were some later ceramics and also some human and animal bone fragments.

#### **5. Bishops Nympton: West Street**

Two areas were excavated for groundworks for a proposed house on a site to the south of the parish church. Two ditches, a gully and a stone-lined drain were identified. All were dated to the post-mediaeval period, the ditches forming the boundaries of a garden plot. The drain and gully are likely to have contemporary with the use of the ditches.

#### **6. Braunton: Luscott Barton**

Six trenches were opened at Luscott Barton, in advance of the construction of a solar farm. No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

#### **7. Filleigh: Castle Hill Kennels**

This evaluation was of the site of a former folly and kennels that was to be partly reinstated. The folly was built in the early 18th century and demolished in the late 19th century, after which the site was used for housing and feeding cattle. The north and east walls of the original structure stand up to 2.4m but no floor surfaces were found.

#### **8. Bommertown Farm, Molland**

A watching brief was undertaken during ground works associated with the development of a solar farm in fields in a remote location not far from the southern boundary of Exmoor National Park. The archaeological features encountered comprised the remains of four ditches and two postholes. Only one of these features had been identified by earlier geophysical survey. Three worked flints were found, one of which was a fragment of a broken blade with a possible late Mesolithic/early Neolithic date. Three sherds of post-mediaeval pottery were also found. In the absence of further information, no attempt was made to interpret the features that were noted.

#### **9. Barton Close Farm, Georgeham**

Monitoring and recording were carried out during groundworks associated with the construction of a solar array. The site lies in a landscape of varied archaeological remains. These include a scatter of over 300 Neolithic/Bronze Age flints less than 200m to the north, undated cropmark and earthwork features to the east and west, and post mediaeval iron mines to the south. The site itself was part of a WWII training camp.

Disappointingly, no features or finds were revealed during the groundworks and, as a result, the intended excavations were not required.

#### **10. Back Lane, North Molton**

A desk based assessment and evaluation trenching were carried out on the site prior to its residential development. The evaluation trenches revealed a relatively dense concentration of slight archaeological features, which were considered to be mediaeval in date. Iron slag was present at the site and included material diagnostic of smelting and a deposit of concreted smelting waste in a large pit. This is considered to be the first conclusive evidence of iron production in the settlement, although it had long been associated with the industry.

#### **11. Barton Pitts, North Molton**

A trench evaluation was undertaken in advance of the construction of an agricultural building. No features or finds were encountered in the four trenches.

#### **12. Coxleigh Barton, Shirwell**

A historic Visual impact Assessment was carried out for two proposed wind turbines on a prominent site east of Barnstaple. The HVIA was notable for the number of significant heritage assets within a 5km radius; this is mainly explained by the proximity of the site to Barnstaple, which has a concentration of Grade 1 listed buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments in and around the town. The HVIA at least provides a valuable summary of these, although it concluded that in overall terms the wind turbines would have a negligible or negative/minor impact on heritage assets. The exceptions were the two closest historic sites, at Brightleycott farmhouse and bank barn where the impact was assessed as negative/moderate, and Burr ridge Hill Fort where the impact was negative/minor.

#### **13. Old Alswear Road, South Molton**

This site, a field on the southern edge of the town on which a rugby pitch is to be created, was the subject of two reports, the first of a gradiometer survey and the second of evaluation trenches dug to confirm archaeological features suggested by the first. The outcome was interesting, both for what the trenches revealed and for the fact that the trench results differed significantly from the gradiometer survey results.

Two features of significance were revealed. The first was the northern edge of a sub-rectangular enclosure evidenced both by the geophysical survey and by crop marks. The other was a penannular gully, indicating the presence of a possible roundhouse towards the centre of the site, in a location where the geophysical survey had not suggested any features. Whilst only a few finds were discovered, principally of mediaeval and post-mediaeval pottery, the overall conclusion was that the results indicate that this gently sloping south facing site formed part of a wider pattern of Prehistoric or Romano-British activity.

#### **14. Cooks Cross, South Molton**

A trench evaluation was carried out of a site for residential development to the rear of Cooks Cross on the south-eastern edge of the town centre. The results established that there had been a small amount of post-mediaeval settlement activity close to the site, with a lesser amount of mediaeval activity, and a great deal of later post-mediaeval and modern disturbance. Finds were largely mediaeval and post-mediaeval pottery sherds.

#### **15. Moors Yard, South Street, South Molton**

This excavation, carried out in advance of residential development, involved the stripping of soil to target an area previously identified as containing possible prehistoric activity. A small number of features were exposed, principally comprising ditches and small pits of mediaeval and post-mediaeval origin. The small collection of finds comprised mediaeval and post-mediaeval pottery.

## **16. Hollamoor, Tawstock**

Two reports on a proposed solar farm near Tawstock village assessed the impact of the development. The first was a gradiometer survey, which indicated that a small number of anomalies were present on the site. Most of these were indicative of former field boundaries. However, one of these field boundaries shows as a very substantial ditch or holloway that defines part of an oval enclosure associated with Hollamoor Farm. Within this enclosure there is a large but slight circular feature that may be evidence of a roundhouse.

The second report is a Historic Visual Impact Assessment of the solar farm. It concludes that in this topographically complex but intimate landscape the overall impact is negative/minor to negative/moderate, with the greater impacts being experienced at Hollamoor Farm, Tawstock Court and Tawstock village, where there are a number of listed buildings.

## **Discussion**

These 18 reports on 16 sites from 2015 are, in overall terms, rather disappointing in their findings. Very little archaeology was revealed in most of them, although the HVIA's did at least provide opportunities for comprehensive assessments of heritage assets in each area where wind turbines and solar farms were proposed. The most interesting reports were the evidence of iron working at North Molton village and the prehistoric enclosures just to the south of South Molton. Both add to an increasing body of evidence of such activity at each settlement.