

Parish	Site	Grid Ref	Report Producer	Type of Report	Nature of development
Barnstaple	BT Exchange, North Walk	5555 3329	AC Arch	Monitoring & recording	Groundworks for sub-station and cable trench
Barnstaple	Guildhall, Butchers Row	5579 3325	SWARCH	HBR	Assessment of fabric
Barnstaple	Castle Mound	5560 3330	Substrata Ltd	Geophysical survey	Information on buried remains
Barnstaple	Church Grove, Newport	5663 3219	SWARCH	Monitoring & recording	Residential development
Barnstaple	Glove factory, Pilton	5559 3417	Context One Arch Services	Monitoring & recording	Conversion to residential units
Bishops Nympton	Bish Mill	7418 2530	Martin Watts	HBR	Conversion to holiday unit
Brendon & Countisbury	Coombe Farm Barns	7657 4888	SWARCH	HBR	Conversion to residential units
Burrington	Homelands	6390 1667	SWARCH	Evaluation trench & monitoring	Residential development
Filleigh	Barton Close	6640 2796	SWARCH	HVIA	Prior to residential development
Fremington	Land west of Oakland Park	5380 3280	AC Arch	Trench evaluation	Residential development
Heanton Punchardon	Chivenor Cross	5009 3517	SWARCH	Arch. assessment	Residential development
Ilfracombe	Holy Trinity	5141 4730	SWARCH	HBR	Repairs and re- slating of roof

Knowstone	Enfield House	8273 2310	SWARCH	Monitoring & recording	Construction of dwelling
Landkey	Higher Hunnacott	6029 3041	SWARCH	HBR, monitoring & recording	Residential development
Landkey	Land east of Westacott	5917 3215	WYAS Arch Services	Geophysical survey	Residential development
Landkey	Westacott	590 322	AC Arch.	Trench evaluation	Residential development
Lynton & Lynmouth	Furzehill Common	7360 4455	Cornwall Archaeology Unit	Walkover survey	Mire restoration works
Lynton & Lynmouth	Land at Lee Abbey	7006 4944	Substrata Ltd	Magnetometer and resistance survey	England Coast Path route
Marwood	Chapel Farm	2538 1374	Substrata Ltd	Magnetometer survey	Understanding of Iron Age structure
North Molton	Moorland View	7402 2976	SWARCH	Monitoring & recording	Construction of dwelling
South Molton	2 Albion Place	7140 2567	AC Arch.	Monitoring & recording	Construction of dwelling
South Molton	Norrington Yard	7145 2566	SWARCH	DBA, Walkover survey & HIA	Unknown
South Molton	The Old Savoy Cinema, New Road	7163 2587	AC Arch	HBS	Demolition for res devt

*HBR/S/A – historic building recording/survey/assessment, DBA – Desk-based assessment, HVIA – Historic visual impact assessment

Twenty-three reports were recorded in 2017. Of these, eleven were produced by SWARCH, five by AC Archaeology, three by Substrata Ltd and one each by Martin Watts, West Yorkshire Archaeology Services, Cornwall Archaeology Unit and Context One Archaeology Services. Most were developer commissioned but four were commissioned by the public sector to shed more light on known historic landscapes and features.

1. Barnstaple: BT Exchange, North Walk

Trenches were dug for the foundation of a sub-station and associated cable route being built on a site between the telephone exchange and Castle Mound. Even the deepest trench, 1.2m below surface level, did not penetrate beneath the made-up ground level when the exchange was developed. Disappointingly, given the location, no features were found and the finds were predominantly 19th/20th century.

2. Barnstaple: Guildhall, Butchers Row

A Historic Building Survey was commissioned by Barnstaple Town Council in order to assist it with proposals to restore and refurbish some of the spaces within the building. The survey outlines the history of the building and compares it with other town halls in the area. It sets out a full description of all the rooms in the building, their features and uses. It emphasises the evolution of the building and the mix of civic and mercantile uses to which it is still put. Finally, it considers options for the reuse and restoration of some of the rooms.

3. Barnstaple: Castle Mound

North Devon Council commissioned a geophysical survey of three areas of the Norman motte and bailey castle in the centre of Barnstaple. These comprised castle Green, the summit of the motte and the car park to the south that is considered to have potentially formed another bailey. The results of the survey revealed a number of anomalies, many of which appear to relate to the 19th century Castle House on the north side, including possible garden features and former cattle market buildings on the south side, beneath the car park. Other anomalies may represent Anglo-Saxon grave sites, which are known to be present on Castle Green. On the summit of the motte the outline of the donjon or keep could also be detected. The findings are intended to help the Council with the management of the site.

4. Barnstaple: Church Grove, Newport

Monitoring of this site during groundworks for development was carried out because it is located in the historic core of Newport, close to the site of a chapel that was first documented in the 14th century. However, the only features and finds related to the 19th/20th centuries, demonstrating that previous development had removed any earlier features, to the depth of the excavation.

5. Barnstaple: Former Glove Factory, Ladywell, Pilton

The former glove factory site lies in the historic core of Pilton close to the parish church and site of a former Benedictine monastery. The glove factory buildings were to be converted to apartments and the investigation was a requirement of the planning permission.

Of the seven trenches that were dug, five were described in the report as “archaeologically sterile”. In trench two a possible tanning pit and associated culvert were observed and in trench three an earlier cobbled surface and limestone flag associated with an earlier phase of the industrial use of the site. Despite its location, no archaeological features or deposits predating the post-mediaeval period were discovered, nor any dateable finds. All the excavated features related to the post-mediaeval industrial uses.

6. Bishops Nympton: Bish Mill

The former water mill building at Bish Mill, east of South Molton, was surveyed prior to it being converted to a holiday cottage. The mill was included in the survey of North Devon water mills carried out by NDAS and published in the 1980s. The mill building was originally three stories and was probably built in 1870, although it occupies the site of a mill that may have been the one referred to in the parish record in Domesday Book. The mill was then owned by the Bishop of Exeter and continued in that ownership well into the 19th century.

The survey is comprehensive and well-illustrated and, although the mill wheel and mechanism were removed in the 1960s, the building re-roofed and many timbers replaced, there is sufficient evidence in the remaining structure to illustrate how the mill would have operated.

7. Brendon & Countisbury: Coombe Farm Barns

This is a report of a historic building record of two barns at Coombe Farm, prior to their conversion to residential use. The barns were constructed in the mid-nineteenth century as part of the remodelling of the farm. Barn 1 includes in its loft 17th century beams which match those in the hall of the farmhouse. Barn 2 is single storey and has been extensively altered in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Together the barns are considered to add historic value to the farm complex.

8. Burrington: Homelands

Three evaluation trenches were excavated in advance of residential development at this site, which is within the Conservation Area at Burrington. Three features were identified in one of the trenches; all were modern. There were no finds.

9. Filleigh: Barton Close

This report sets out a historical visual assessment of the impact of proposed residential development on the landscape of the Castle Hill estate. The report contains an extensive history and description of the historic landscape, before setting out its assessment of impact. It concludes that the impact on the historic landscape and in particular on the registered park and garden would be negative/minor as the proposals will add a modern element into the historic parkland but not intrude on any of the key views or significantly alter its character.

10. Fremington: land west of Oakland Park South

Four trenches were excavated in a large field sloping down towards the Taw Estuary at Sticklepath. The trenches were sited in locations where previous geophysics survey suggested the presence of likely features. Archaeological features were discovered in three of the trenches. They mainly related to former ditches that probably delineated field boundaries of the strip fields that were present in the area. One or two features contained fills and also yielded interesting finds.

Two worked flint places, probably Bronze Age were found in one of the trenches. Six sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery were found in one trench, comprising a base angle sherd and five fragments from it. It was interpreted by Henrietta Quinnell as suggestive of Late Bronze Age Plain Ware and would be the first of this type identified in North Devon.

Four sherds of mediaeval pottery were identified from two trenches. Two of these were body sherds of North Devon Coarse ware, dated to c AD 1200-1450. One other was a body sherd in a finer fabric. The fourth sherd was from a glazed North Devon jug dating from the 14th or 15th centuries. There were twelve sherds of post-mediaeval pottery and one piece of slag or clinker.

In summary, the features relate to a pattern of fields established on the edge of the mediaeval settlement. The finds indicate prehistoric occupation of the site, probably in the Bronze Age and may indicate the attractiveness of the site, close to and overlooking the Taw estuary, to a prehistoric community.

11. Heanton Punchardon: Chivenor Cross

A historical assessment of a site on the north side of the A361 just to the west of Heanton Hill Lane was undertaken in view of possible residential development. The site had been in agricultural use, including former orchards and was currently used as a nursery, including a car park. There was very little evidence of archaeological features, other than a possible field boundary; any that might have existed would have been obliterated by the surfacing of the car park and construction of a gas main through the site.

12. Ilfracombe: Holy Trinity

The parish church of Holy Trinity is Grade 1 listed with a 12th century church and tower, enlarged in the 1320s and 15th century before substantial restoration in the 19th century. Limited historic building recording was carried out during partial re-roofing on the northern side of the east end of the church. The exposure of the roof timbers enabled an assessment of the evolution of the mediaeval building to be carried out, including additional detail to that contained in both the listing and the Pevsner description.

13. Knowstone: land adjacent to Enfield House

An area was excavated across the footprint of a proposed dwelling and through the hedgebank to provide a site access. No features were found. Finds were mainly post-mediaeval or modern. A single sherd of a mediaeval North Devon coarseware jar with a thumb strip decoration was found from the bank. An extremely worn post-mediaeval grindstone was also found in the hedgebank.

14. Landkey: Higher Hunnacott

This report describes limited historic building recording of standing structures and recording of excavated trenches prior to residential development. The majority of the archaeological features were post-mediaeval, primarily 19th century but much altered in the 20th. Finds largely comprised North Devon coarseware of post-mediaeval date, with other miscellaneous finds.

15. Landkey: land east of Westacott

This is a report of a magnetometer survey carried out on 55ha of land east of Westacott, Barnstaple. The site lies between Acland Barton to the north, Acland Road to the east and the A361 (North Devon Link Road) to the south. The site is currently a south-sloping pasture, but was, until the late 1970s the site of Acland Wood.

The site is identified for residential development in the Local Plan.

The findings of the survey relate largely to geological and agricultural features, including former field boundaries and field drains. In the north-west sector of the site, adjoining Westacott, there are features of particular archaeological interest, representative of a possible enclosure. Archaeological potential is deemed to be low to moderate across the rest of the survey area.

16. Landkey: Westacott

This is the report of a follow-up trench evaluation to the geophysical survey carried out on the site reported above. Little was found of an archaeological nature. Most of the anomalies proved to be geological or recent land drainage, with a couple of furrows of mediaeval or post-mediaeval origin. The only finds were a couple of pieces of roof slate.

17. Lynton & Lynmouth: Furzehill Common

A walkover survey of 34 ha of open moorland and 2.5ha of enclosed land was carried out by Cornwall Archaeology Unit on behalf of the Exmoor Mires Partnership. The report records that the survey was beset by two problems: the projection on the GPS hand held unit was not functioning properly making it difficult to locate features accurately, and the weather conditions were adverse, consisting of strong winds, driving rain and thick mist, making for very poor conditions for photography!

Nevertheless, the survey managed to identify a number of features. These ranged from post-mediaeval mounds, probably comprising collapsed peat or turf stacks, and quarries to pre-historic stone settings,

boundaries and cairns, including a possible ring cairn. A mediaeval/post-mediaeval holloway was also identified.

18. Lynton & Lynmouth: land at Lee Abbey

This report presents the results of an archaeological magnetometer and resistance survey on land east of Lee Abbey, commissioned by Exmoor National Park. The identified anomalies coincide with, and most likely represent, an extant prehistoric bank, elements of a relict Bronze Age field system, a section of post-mediaeval estate boundary wall, an extant ploughed-over circular mound and an extant sub-circular platform. The last two are considered to be either prehistoric or have a World War II origin. Two other sub-circular features could represent a cairn and a barrow. Other features had characteristics associated with field or enclosure boundaries, which, in the context of Lee Abbey, are considered to be mediaeval or earlier.

19. Marwood: Chapel Farm

This is the report of a geophysics survey commissioned by Devon County Council, in order to understand more about the archaeological potential of a small Iron Age enclosure on a west-facing hill slope above the Knowl Water, near Lee House in the parish of Marwood. The magnetometer survey produced results that were slightly at odds with the RCHME survey, in as much as the gap in the enclosure bank appeared to be on the opposite (west) side to that previously understood, although there were other suggested reasons for this outcome, including the fact that at the time of the original survey the site was enclosed within woodland, which had since been felled and the site ploughed. The gap may also coincide with a woodland ride.

Other anomalies could represent disturbed ground with archaeological potential, whilst one appeared to show a potential ring ditch outside and to the north of the enclosure. Further investigation would be required to verify this.

20. North Molton: Moorland View

This report describes the monitoring and recording of excavations carried out during the course of the construction of a dwelling on a garden site between terraced dwellings on the north Side of Eat Street in the historic core of the village. The excavation features and finds suggested four phases of activity. The first was mediaeval prospection pits, probably to test the presence of iron ore, given the prevalence of iron-working in the village at that period. These pits yielded finds of mediaeval pottery, but were apparently only open for a very short period.

Phase two comprised subsequent terracing of the site and construction of a cobbled floor in the 17th/18th centuries. Phase three represented the reinstatement of the rear boundary of the site and construction of a building that included a fireplace and four cobbled floors, in the 18th/19th centuries. The final phase was the demolition of the building and landscaping of the site in the nineteenth century.

21. South Molton: 2 Albion Place

Monitoring and recording were carried out during groundworks for the construction of a house on the site of a fire-damaged dwelling. The site was assessed due to its location in the centre of the historic core of the town, where burgage plots might have been expected, with associated finds. In the event, due to earlier ground disturbance, no pre-modern features or finds were observed.

22. South Molton: Norrington Yard

This lengthy report contains a desk-based assessment, walkover survey description and historic visual impact assessment of a large site in the historic core of South Molton. The desk-based assessment outlines the development of South Molton and its importance in the mediaeval and post-mediaeval period, as a manor, minster town and borough, whose prosperity was founded on wool and agricultural produce.

The site lies to the east of South Street and south of the Market Hall (Pannier Market). It is in several parts. The larger part to the south and east was an open field for much of the period until the 20th century

resulted in its industrial use. The northern and western parts lay within the area of mediaeval burgage plots to the rear of Broad Street and South Street. The walkover survey revealed the 19th and 20th century structures, including walls that represented its more recent uses.

The visual assessment considers that, although the development of the site will have a visual impact on the listed structures on South Street and, in particular, the Market hall, the impact could be positive compared to the present derelict state of the site.

The report points out that previous archaeological investigation of the town has shed very little light on its history, bearing in mind its antiquity and importance. One pit excavated on a site to the south of Broad Street was considered to be a mediaeval refuse pit, containing North Devon coarseware of the period. Investigation of a site to the south of the town at the Rugby Club site revealed undated enclosures that were probably prehistoric, but no finds enabling them to be dated. To the north-west of the town, a site investigation at Gunswell Lane revealed a double-ditched Iron Age enclosure.

23. South Molton: The Old Savoy Cinema, New Road

This is a report of a historic building survey of the Art Deco New Savoy Cinema building before it was demolished. The survey was carried out in 2008 but not published until 2017. The report describes both the exterior and interior of the building. The cinema was built in 1935. Although its use as a cinema ceased in 1970, it had subsequently been used for retail and storage purposes and some internal alterations had taken place. Nevertheless, many art deco features were retained and the projection room upstairs was still in its original condition, complete with original projection and other equipment, at the time of the survey.

Conclusions

Few reports reveal significant new finds. Of the five Barnstaple reports three show the limitations of developer-led archaeology, where the depth of excavation is determined by the needs of the development, rather than the archaeological potential of the site. All three were in potentially significant historic core locations, but none penetrated deep enough to go beyond 19th or 20th century construction layers.

The two reports commissioned by Exmoor National Park reveal additional information about their respective historic landscapes. The two reports about residential development sites on the edge of Barnstaple also reveal something of the archaeological potential of the area, particularly the finds on the site at Sticklepath. South Molton remains tantalisingly close to investigation that reveals more of its mediaeval history.