

Parish	Site	Grid Reference	Report Producer	Type of Report	Nature of Development	Parish
Barnstaple	Joy Street – Green Lanes	55853335	Wessex Archaeology Ltd	Archaeological evaluation	Erection of retail unit and conversion of existing buildings	Barnstaple
Berrynarbor	Stapleton Farm	56064376	South West Archaeology Ltd	Desk-based assessment, walkover survey and historic visual impact assessment	Erection of two wind turbines	Berrynarbor
Brayford	Brayford School	69063478	South West Archaeology Ltd	Archaeological excavation	Construction of terraced playing area	Brayford
East Worlington	The Parish Hall	77491361	South West Archaeology Ltd	Desk-based assessment and historic building survey	None proposed	East Worlington
Filleigh	Meadow Park Lodge, Castle Hill	67092794	South West Archaeology Ltd	Historic building assessment	Demolition of fire-damaged listed building	Filleigh
Georgeham	Putsborough Court	449403	South West Archaeology Ltd	Desk-based assessment and historic building survey	None proposed	Georgeham
Ilfracombe	Old Maids' Cottage, Lee	485464	R. W. Parker	Historic building survey and watching brief	Demolitions, repair and extensions to listed building	Ilfracombe
Ilfracombe	The Old Quay Head	52474777	South West Archaeology Ltd	Historic building recording and archaeological monitoring	Reconstruction of quay wall	Ilfracombe
Instow	St John's Parish Church	47973097	South West Archaeology Ltd	Monitoring and recording	Drainage works and repairs to south transept	Instow
Lynton & Lynmouth and Brendon (and Exmoor Forest)	Hoarok Valley	742434 (centred on Hoarok Cottage)	Hazel Riley for Exmoor Moorland Landscape Partnership	Historic landscape survey and analysis	None proposed	Lynton & Lynmouth and Brendon (and Exmoor Forest)
Lynton & Lynmouth	Car park, Valley of the Rocks	70774977	South West Archaeology Ltd	Monitoring and recording	Re-grading and extension of car park	Lynton & Lynmouth
Lynton & Lynmouth	Lower East Lyn	73434816	AC Archaeology	Historic building recording	Building works to lower walls of listed outbuilding	Lynton & Lynmouth
South Molton	Hill Farm, Hill Village	69302638	South West Archaeology Ltd	Monitoring and recording	Erection of farm buildings and associated works	South Molton
Swimbridge	West Stowford	62552656	South West Archaeology Ltd	Monitoring and recording	Formation of a swimming pool	Swimbridge

Tawstock	Land off Old Torrington Road	54383142	South West Archaeology Ltd	Desk-based assessment	Residential development	Tawstock
West Down	Land at Mullacott Cross Industrial Estate	51724402	AC Archaeology	Watching brief	Erection of wind turbine	West Down

Thus some 16 sites were examined in 13 parishes. A total of 5 commercial organisations were involved, with South West Archaeology producing 11 reports, AC Archaeology producing 2 reports and Hazel Riley, R W Parker Associates, and Wessex Archaeology producing 1 each. Unlike in Torridge only two of the proposed developments were for wind turbines and in three cases no development was proposed. There was a greater diversity of proposed development, probably indicating more economic activity in the district. The other notable feature is that three sites are in Exmoor National Park.

Reports

1. Barnstaple: Joy Street – Green Lanes

The demolition of 22/23 Joy Street, on the corner of Green Lane, provided an opportunity to carry out an archaeological investigation of a site in an important town centre location. The significance of the location had been thoroughly described in the Heritage Statement prepared by Wessex Archaeology that had accompanied the application to develop the cleared site earlier in 2013 and is summarised in this report. The Society had previously expressed its concern at the failure to secure the proper recording of the building before demolition. The current report is an account of the findings of the site investigation.

The evaluation consisted of the excavation of 3 trenches which provided an extensive sample of the features within the site. The earliest identified remains consisted of a possible mediaeval ditch which was aligned with the course of the mediaeval town walls, a shallow ditch or wall footing, and a large stone built buttress structure. No finds were recovered which were directly associated with these features, to enable dating, but their location within the archaeological sequence indicates that a mediaeval date is possible.

Later features included post-mediaeval brick built walls which were aligned with the existing property boundaries, which were indicative of mediaeval burgage plots. Evidence of post-mediaeval industrial activities, in the form of horn-working waste, was revealed from finds in a rubbish pit in one of the trenches. Of the 77 pottery sherds recovered from across the site, two were mediaeval and the remainder post-mediaeval.

The report recommended that the project archive should be deposited with the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon. It is disappointing that there were no dateable finds from this site; it is unlikely that such a central location in the heart of Anglo-Saxon Barnstaple will become available for excavation in the foreseeable future.

2. Berryarbor: Stapleton Farm

This report presents the results of a survey at Stapleton farm, before the construction of two small wind turbines. The site is located on the coastal ridge to the west of Berry Down in an area where there are many archaeological features, particularly Bronze Age barrows. It is an area of former open downland with enclosure taking place early in the 19th century. The resulting rectilinear field pattern has been modified in the 20th century. However no archaeological features were found on the site. The visual impact of the turbines on the area was assessed as negative but minor.

3. Brayford: Brayford Primary School

This report represents probably the highlight of the year. It increases the known extent of Roman-period iron-smelting in the Brayford area and demonstrates that evidence for earlier occupation does survive within or below the slag heaps.

Brayford Primary School intended to construct a new terraced playing area to the south of the main school building. A previous test pit had indicated the presence of iron slag in a thin layer. A full excavation was carried out as a result.

The excavation revealed several linear features and a posthole concealed beneath a spread of iron-smelting debris. The largest linear feature produced a mass of primary smelting waste and a single sherd of Romano-British greyware. All the features are likely to be of Roman date and represent some of the first features to produce securely stratified Roman metalworking debris in the Brayford area. Three radiocarbon dates were obtained, all of which returned a date of c75-225 cal AD.

Dr Lee Bray considers the smelting waste is consistent with its generation by metal-smelting using a slag-tapping technology similar to that used elsewhere in Brayford and at Sherracombe Ford 3.5km to the north-east on Exmoor. The recovery of a sherd of Exeter Greyware provides an early 2nd century end to infilling of the linear feature, and suggests a re-organisation of iron production in the vicinity, which coincides with the start of smelting at Sherracombe Ford and Clatworthy.

A welcome feature of this excavation is that it took place in a school playground and was readily available as an educational tool for the pupils and the wider community.

4. East Worlington: The Parish Hall

This report was sponsored by the Parish Hall Management Committee who wanted to know more about the history of the building. It consists of a desk-based assessment and a historic building survey.

The Parish Hall represents the early 20th century conversion of a possibly early 17th century threshing barn in the curtilage of the former East Worlington rectory, now known as east Worlington House. The assessment takes the view that this house was probably always associated with the church and is unlikely to have been the site of a manorial dwelling.

The survey demonstrates that the six-bay barn was substantially refurbished on its conversion to a parish hall, albeit in keeping with its original appearance and construction. It is still a listed building.

5. Filleigh: Meadow Park Lodge, Castle Hill

Meadow Park Lodge stood at the road entrance at the end of the drive leading to Castle Hill. Tragically it was subject to a fatal fire in 2012. A historic building assessment was commissioned prior to its demolition.

The assessment confirmed that the Lodge was constructed in about 1845 as part of a reorganisation of the landscape and remodelling of the house at Castle Hill. The building comprised a main phase and two subsequent extensions. Its style was modelled on the house at Castle Hill, including stucco banding over handmade brick and sandstone detailing, including the window openings.

6. Georgeham: Putsborough Court

A desk-based assessment and historic building survey was commissioned by the owner of Putsborough Court, who wished to know more of its history.

Putsborough Court, or Tuckers Farm as it was previously known, appears to be a building of late mediaeval origin. The property remained a working farm until the Second World War and was renamed Putsborough Court in about 1970. It is situated in the hamlet of Putsborough, which was associated with the manor of Croyde. Putsborough itself only seems to have acquired the name of “manor” in the post-mediaeval period. The house appears to have originated as a small cross-passage dwelling possibly built in the mid-16th century and has been much altered and extended since.

The report is worth reading for its account of the relationship between the manors of Croyde and Georgeham and the reputed manor of Putsborough and of how a relatively modest house can, through multiple changes of ownership, acquire an elevated status.

7. Ilfracombe: Old Maids' Cottage, Lee

This is another example of a modest cottage acquiring a status way beyond its origins. The Old Maids' Cottage became famous through the Romantic tradition of Victorian rusticism, fuelled by 19th century tourism. Its thatched charm was captured on postcards, in a china model and even, reputedly, in a popular late Victorian song. There is uncertainty as to which came first, the tradition of the three old maids and the song that immortalised them or the association of the cottage with the tradition and the song. In either case it became an early 20th century “icon”. The building fell into disrepair at the end of the 20th century, before being acquired, modernised, extended and (tastefully) restored.

The report was commissioned by the new owners as a requirement of planning permission for the alterations and extensions to the listed building. Through a historic building survey and watching brief it demonstrates that the building was originally a single-roomed cottage built in the 17th or 18th century, and extended in the early 19th century. In 1870 it was remodelled to accord with its picturesque associations, with further 20th century extensions, not always sympathetically designed or executed. The last sentence of the report's conclusions is worth quoting in full: “It has now been fully repaired and restored as a holiday cottage, with a bright modern interior which would no doubt have greatly astonished the Three Old Maids of Lee”.

8. Ilfracombe: The Old Quay Head

This is a sorry tale of how the demands of conserving the heritage can conflict with the need to maintain the structural integrity of a Grade II* listed sea defence! The Old Quay Head was reputedly built in the 14th century by the Bouchier family and refurbished in 1676, 1760, 1820 and 1870 to provide protection to the Inner Harbour at Ilfracombe. Further protection was provided in the late 19th century by the construction of the Pier, which also served as a landing for pleasure steamers. By the late 20th century the high tides and stormy conditions associated with an exposed location on the Bristol Channel coast had taken their toll of both structures. Part of the later Pier was removed and a couple of attempts were

made to strengthen the Old Quay Head, within the constraints accorded by its listed status. These attempts soon failed and a more radical approach to the protection of the structure had to be taken, comprising the construction of a reinforced concrete wall faced with natural stone to support the inner face of the existing quay wall. This report presents the findings of the historic building recording and monitoring and recording of test pits undertaken as part of the work.

The Old Quay Head has been patched and repaired so many times in its history that the historic building recording could only observe the later, modern materials used in repairs of the late 19th, 20th and early 21st centuries. One of the test pits revealed an earlier wall parallel to the existing east (outer) wall of the structure. There was a small assemblage of finds, with coal inclusions, suggesting a 19th century backfill of an earlier repair. The earlier wall discovered in the test pit probably dates from 1760 or 1820, rather than the 1676 structure that the Exeter Archaeology report of 2001 discovered in a test pit. The report concludes that significant archaeological phases are clearly preserved within the existing structure and consolidation and preservation of it would further preserve the archaeological remains contained within.

9. Instow: St John's Parish Church

This short report describes the monitoring of repairs to the south transept wall and the excavation of a pipe trench to improve drainage; both were outside the church. Two relatively late graves were discovered in the trench. Finds from the topsoil and subsoil were mainly post-mediaeval, with only one sherd of mediaeval fine sandy ware. Only a few pottery sherd finds have been retained.

10. Lynton & Lynmouth, Brendon and Exmoor Forest: Hoarook Valley

This historic landscape study is centred on Hoarook Cottage, Lynton, an abandoned 19th century farmstead now in the ownership of Exmoor National Park Authority. It lies at the centre of the Hoarook Valley, which contains a wealth of historic landscape features from the late Neolithic onwards. The study area extends from The Chains and Exe Plain in the south to Cheriton Ridge and the boundary of Furzehill Common to the north.

Four Bronze Age round houses, an enclosure and several fields lie at the heart of a newly discovered settlement complex on the west-facing slopes of Cheriton Ridge, opposite Hoarook Cottage. By about AD 1200 a hamlet of two farms was established close to these prehistoric settlements. These farms worked two large blocks of fields, growing arable crops and keeping livestock, until about AD 1400. Periodic cultivation of these fields continued in the post-mediaeval period.

The later history of the area, and of Hoarook Cottage itself, centres on its ownership by the Vellacott and Knight families. The cottage is believed to have been built in the late eighteenth century. Eventually it was acquired by the Fortescue Estate and ultimately by the Exmoor National Park Authority, which has recently carried out conservation work to consolidate the remains of the structure.

The aims of the study were:

- To synthesise the results of a number of surveys and reports that have been carried out on the Hoarook Valley and
- To place the historic structure of Hoarook Cottage in its historic landscape context

A large scale survey and preliminary assessment of the newly discovered prehistoric settlement also forms part of the study. The report concludes that the multi-period settlement complex on Cheriton Ridge highlights the potential for the discovery of new sites on Exmoor and emphasises the importance of

Exmoor in the study of settlement transition in the early mediaeval period. It ends with recommendations for further study, particularly of this feature.

This is an important study that draws together many elements over a period of 4000 years in a single landscape unit on Exmoor.

11. Lynton & Lynmouth: Car park in the Valley of the Rocks

This short report describes monitoring and recording that took place during the re-grading and extension of the car park in the Valley of the Rocks. Although the site lay in an area of great archaeological potential, no features or deposits were discovered and all finds were discarded.

12. Lynton & Lynmouth: Lower East Lyn

Another short report that summarises the historic building recording that was undertaken during the lowering of the walls of a ruined outbuilding to make it safe. The buildings origin and purpose are unclear but it is believed to be mediaeval or early post-mediaeval. Major alterations first occurred in the 18th or early 19th century, when the building seems to have been converted to a shippon. Further alterations led to its last use as a cattle shed. No previously unrecorded features were discovered during the building works.

13. South Molton: Hill Farm, Hill Village

This report into monitoring and recording prior to construction of a range of agricultural buildings was required because the area was known to have potential for pre-historic and mediaeval activity. In the event excavation by topsoil stripping and the digging of four trenches revealed very little archaeology. The features uncovered included post-mediaeval field drains, two pits and a ditch, the latter being undated. There were few finds, mainly post mediaeval sherds and clay pipe stems; none were retained.

14. Swimbridge: West Stowford

This is another short report commissioned to monitor the excavation of a swimming pool, in view of the proximity of the three surrounding early 16th century listed houses. However, no archaeological features or deposits were found in the excavated area.

15. Tawstock: Land off Old Torrington Road

This desk-based assessment was commissioned because residential development was intended for the site and a previous development on the opposite side of Old Torrington Road had yielded a large quantity of pottery, a significant proportion of which was 13th/14th century.

Using available cartographic and documentary sources, the history of the two fields was tracked, through their changes of ownership. Owners included the Bouchier and Wrey families. The fields appeared to be relatively late enclosures of seasonally water-logged moor and differed from the field pattern immediately to the west that suggested an association with the mediaeval settlement of Brynsworthy.

Nevertheless, the report concludes that it is likely that Roundswell Farm and the adjoining fields are of mediaeval rather than post-mediaeval origin and that “archaeological features and artefacts of mediaeval date need not be unexpected”.

16. West Down: Land at Mullacott Cross Industrial Estate

This report is of a watching brief carried out during the groundworks for the construction of a wind turbine. It was required as a condition of the planning permission as prehistoric burial sites have been recorded on land immediately to the north east of the industrial estate. However, no archaeological features or deposits were found and no artefacts were recovered as a result of the excavation.

Discussion

These 16 reports had hugely varying outcomes; 5 of them yielded nothing of note, some of the historic building surveys were able to summarise the histories of their subjects, (the most interesting of which were probably East Worlington Parish Hall and Putsborough Court) and 3 of the reports were of greater significance. The most notable of these were the Hoarook Valley historic landscape study and the excavation of Roman period iron smelting at Brayford Primary School. Old Quay Head, Ilfracombe is notable for its account of the difficulties of reconciling the conservation needs of heritage structures with the sea defence requirements of an exposed coastal site. The most disappointing outcome was the paucity of information yielded by the excavation at Joy Street, Barnstaple.