NDAS
NORTH DEVON ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Promoting awareness of the archaeology and history of North Devon

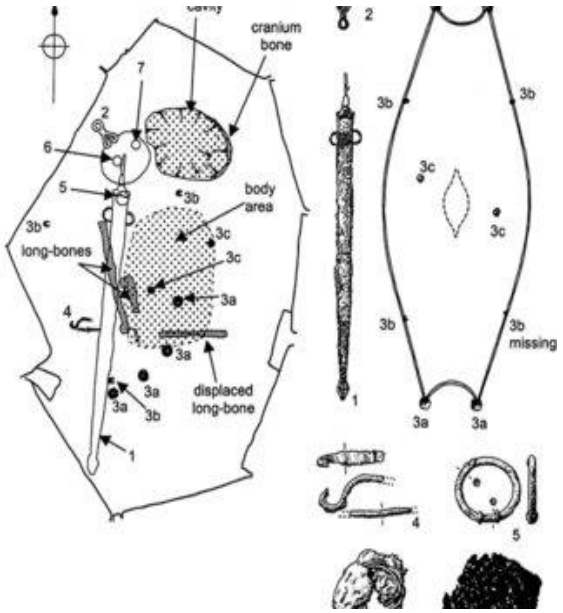
Newsletter, Autumn 2021

Not out of the Woods yet

I've just looked back at my opening remarks in the Spring 2021 newsletter and found that I said, *cross your fingers and trust that the PM's roadmap for opening up stays on track and that by the time I compile the next newsletter, we shall be back to normal.* Well, normality isn't quite what it used to be; I have the feeling that this is as normal as it's going to get for quite a while yet. However, even if we find ourselves locked down again in the coming winter, at least we've learnt to Zoom and find the experience not bad, and we feel confident to get out in the field with field walks, visits and a socially distanced dig. In terms of talks, we owe enormous thanks to Henrietta Quinnell for the time she has taken to share her vast knowledge and experience with NDAS members, so in a reversal of the usual order of service in our newsletters, this time we start with the talks programme. (TG)

NDAS Talks 2021/22

The season kicked off on Tuesday 19th October with another excellent talk by Zoom from Henrietta Quinnell. Chris Preece has provided the following report:



Many thanks to Henrietta Quinnell who opened our season of talks with a fascinating overview of the archaeology of the Scilly Isles. With her usual magisterial command of subject she went from the Mesolithic to Roman period covering the major sites of the islands. What struck many of us I'm sure was the distinctiveness of the islands' archaeology, in particular the flints (with their presumed link to the continent) and the later, tiny gabbroic vessels of unknown (presumed ritual) purpose. The photos of the sites (as befits the Scillies) were stunning and many of us will be planning a staycation to see Halangy Down, Bant's Carn, the wonderfully named Knackyboy Carn and of course Nornour. For me the highlight was the Iron Age burial from Bryher (see illustration right) – a cist grave with the unusual combination of mirror, sword and shield accompanying the deceased - again testimony to the unique nature of Scilly archaeology.
Many thanks again to Henrietta for an inspiring talk; I'm already looking to book the Scillonian in the Spring!

Talks 2021/22

Given the current uncertainties re: the Covid situation this winter, the committee decided to continue with digital talks (via Zoom) for the time being. This is in line with many other societies (DAS for example). This is the programme for 2021/22 thus far.

(All online talks will start at 7.30pm. You will be sent a link a few days before).

19th October: Henrietta Quinnell: *The Archaeology of the Scilly Isles*

16th November: Chris Preece: *A Load of Cobbles*

18th January: (T.B.A.)

15th February: David Dawson: *Clay and Fire*

15th March: (+AGM) Cressida Whitton: *The Aylesbeare Pebble Beds*

19th April: *An update on the Mesolithic in Devon and the South West*: Henrietta Quinnell has kindly offered again to repeat a DAS seminar for NDAS. This will follow the format of those last year with opportunities for questions.

Excavations for the Dulverton Weir Project

Chris Preece

Back in March 2020 BC (Before Covid), several NDAS members visited the weir at Dulverton and were shown around the industrial sites that had sprung up thanks to the water management system that derived from it. Derry Bryant wrote a detailed article about the day and the site, which is worth revisiting for background information (NDAS Spring newsletter 2020.pdf). Since then the excavation project we agreed with Philip Hull and Peter Romain (two of the Dulverton Weir and Leat Conservation Trust trustees), has been postponed twice due to Covid. The intention was to dig some small trenches to confirm features.

So it was with some relief that on Friday 24th September 2021 several familiar NDAS diggers reconvened in Dulverton that morning. We met up with Philip Hull and due to the small number of volunteers we decided that pragmatism would override optimism. We plumped for two trenches rather than the three originally planned for on the 'island' (see plan, Fig. 1). This proved to be a wise decision as the depth of the trenches allied to heavy root entanglement and very stony ground meant excavation was hard work. We finished literally on the buzzer on the last day (the buzzing being provided by an endless stream of pheasants overhead). However, the weather was kind to us (it rained heavily the day after we finished) and the setting was as scenic as you could wish for.
The rationale for these two trenches was to locate the rest of the weir (which it was presumed had been covered by the gradual accumulation of silt, water-borne stones and detritus which had covered it – now called 'the island'). It soon became evident that a lot of rubbish had been deposited

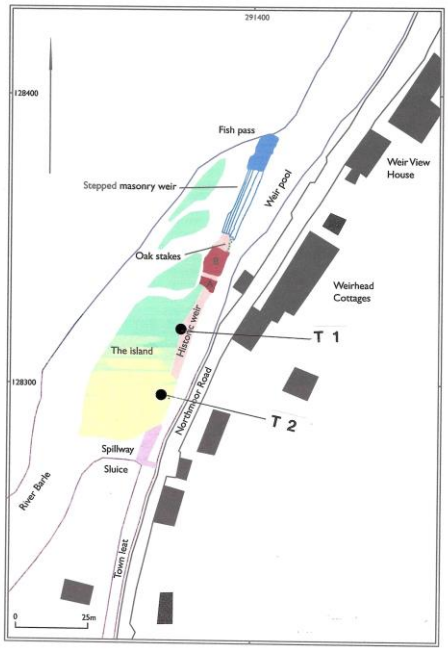


Fig.1: site plan

Fig.2: Thomas Ford Brewery bottle (Photo Nigel Dymond)

there in the Victorian era and the finds would have delighted the bottle collecting fraternity (except almost all were broken). Several bottles had makers' names on and a number of Codd and Hamilton bottles were evidenced. The one illustrated (Thomas Ford Brewery) dated to between 1852 and 1895 (Fig. 2). Derry was particularly delighted to find a slate pencil and was recipient of 'find of the day award'. Although the weir is thought to be medieval in origin, we were unable to find any evidence of the date of construction – a long shot to be honest, as only a sherd of pot sealed beneath the lowest stone of the weir would provide this.

Trench 1 was effectively extending the test pit dug by Weir Project personnel which had previously located part of the weir. The trench was bottomed out at one metre depth and the lower part of the weir revealed. The lowest stone on the structure (the 'toe stone') was larger than those upslope. This presumably was to prevent slippage and retain the smaller stones above (Fig. 3). In all four layers Victorian pottery was found, right down to the base of the weir suggesting that the formation of the 'island' began in this era and that until then this segment of the weir had been maintained and kept clear of detritus.

Trench 2, further to the south, was sited to further confirm continuation of the weir but from the start (apart from stones and roots!) the deposits were different from trench 1. The layers were drier for a start and the layer below topsoil (201) was a reddish brown sandy clay. This sealed a more compact light grey silty clay, more suggestive of alluvial action. Beneath this (203) a stony damp clay similar to that evidenced in Trench 1 was found and due to the depth of the trench, excavation ceased at this level. In (203) though, Victorian pottery was still being found but there was no evidence of the weir structure. Discussions aplenty arose as to why this was. Had we just missed the toe of the weir? Unlikely as when we aligned the other parts it should have been in Trench 2. Did the extant part of the weir extend to Trench 1 but not as far as Trench 2? A possibility, but that would seem to imply the part of the weir further to the south was a later build and as structurally it seemed similar to the portion found in Trench 1, this would seem only marginally feasible. A third possibility was pointed out by Peter Romain: there is a rectangular feature on the 1888 OS map of unknown function. Was this responsible for the different deposits in Trench 2? So Trench 2 left us with more questions than answers.

Fig.3: 'Toe' of weir in trench 1

We are still planning to do a further trial trench in town near the bridge by Leat House in order to confirm the original bedding of the leat which is thought to be cobbled. This may have to wait until Spring however.

Thanks to all the NDAS volunteers who gave their time and travelled some distance into Somerset: Nigel and Rosemary Dymond, Derry Bryant, Lance Hosegood, Brian Fox, Bob Shrigley and Ruth

Downie. Trustee Philip Hull not only worked harder than any of us on the dig but provided coffee and various snacks for us! Our sincere gratitude. Thanks also to Peter Romain for his assistance, particularly with early maps and documentation.

Lance planning Trench 1

Derry and Ruth recording the section in Trench 2

Something on Watermills

We recently received an enquiry from a PhD student regarding the now largely forgotten NDAS publication of 1989 'North Devon Watermills'. We were able to put her onto a website through which she could obtain a copy of the booklet and she was grateful to our 'wonderful society' for the help. There are in fact copies in the North Devon Athenaeum and at the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon, and probably some older members will have a copy. In addition, a scanned copy has now been added to the NDAS website. Anyway, this enquiry prompted the question 'What about something on watermills for the newsletter?' Well, if you have your Heritage Handbook handy you will find that on pages 85-88 there is precisely that, a contribution by the specialist Martin Watts on 'Mills'.

Landkey Town Mill (photo: Martin Watts)

In a short article it would be difficult to add to Martin's words, but it is worth reviewing the excellent work put in by NDAS members back in the day. From 1971 to 1975 members of NDAS surveyed and recorded extant or the remains of 78 watermills in North Devon, and then in 1989 added records of 35 more. They covered a roughly quadrilateral area comprising the parishes between the Exmoor National Park boundary in the east and the Taw in the west, extending to Instow, then between the North Devon Coast and (roughly) Bishop's Nympton to the south. This is a remarkable number of mills within a small area and clearly left all of Torridge District yet to be covered. Choosing to carry out the survey in the early 1970s was timely, since it is quite possible that in the roughly half century since, much of the evidence will have disappeared.

The survey was directed by Thomas E.Spencer who prefaced the booklet with a history of watermills as well as tucking (fulling) mills from the 11th century to the present, and including the more recent use of water power for industrial and agricultural purposes. From this we learn that the earliest

surviving reference to watermills in North Devon is in the Domesday Book of 1086. All those recorded at that date were corn mills, including mills at Barnstaple, Heanton Punchardon, Bishop's Tawton and Lynton or more precisely, Lynbridge. Compared with the 98 mills recorded in Devon as a whole at that time, this is a meagre figure, suggesting the peripheral state of North Devon in the pre-Conquest period – or the predominance of livestock farming. However, with population increase between the 11th and the 14th centuries, more land was put to the plough for grain and the number of corn or grist mills increased correspondingly.

In the medieval period mills were controlled by the Lord of the Manor who drew income from their use, tenants being obliged to use the manor mill to grind their corn at a price set by the manor. Mills were valuable assets and manorial ownership of mills continued beyond the end of feudalism, in some cases right up until the 19th century, when tenants of Lord Rolle at Landkey were obliged to 'cause all the corn, grain or malt ….used on (their) premises to be ground at the mill of …Lord Rolle within the Manor of Landkey'. And at Instow the quite unique tide mill belonged in 1842 to Augustus Willett, Lord of the Manor of Instow and resident at Tapeley Park. (It disappeared under the railway embankment in the 1850s.)

Mills held in freehold by individual millers were often the focus of discontent and even rioting. In times of scarcity, prosperous millers were very unpopular, being suspected of holding back grain or flour in anticipation of rising prices, so that public anger boiled up. In 1847, for example, a mob gathered outside the Barnstaple Town Mills, smashing windows and threatening violence, so that the Mayor had to read the Riot Act. And in 1867 250 people marched along the Muddiford Valley to Plaistow Mill with threats and shouts for Mr Davey, the miller to come out and face them. His son discharged a pistol over their heads, which did nothing to calm them and despite being offered gifts of bread, cheese and cider – which presumably they accepted - they set off to attack Bradiford Mills and were only deflected from their purpose by special constables and the militia .

One kind of mill that has apparently disappeared completely from the landscape is the fulling mill, known in Devon as a tucking mill. First appearing in England in the 12th century, the fulling mill was a vital part of the process by which the raw product of the loom was turned into saleable cloth. The process involved soaking the freshly woven cloth in urine, then in water and beating it with water-driven hammers or stocks for a period of days in order to combine the warp and the weft and produce a seamless, felted fabric. The product was then dried on racks in the many rackfields found across the district. From the 12th to the early 19th century tucking mills supported the cloth trade in which North Devon excelled. The principal surviving evidence of this industry is the occupational surname Tucker borne by many a North Devonian.

Hele Mill, Ilfracombe, now largely diesel powered, supplying stoneground wholemeal flour for home bakers.

Important as they were throughout the last 1000 years, water powered mills were converted to diesel and electric power in the age of industrialisation and after WW2 faded away almost completely. Evidence of their their former existence is mostly to be found in place, farm or house names or millstones propped decoratively against the walls of houses in the countryside or at best as restored and working flour mills catering to the tourist trade and a 21st century desperation to regain 'authenticity' through stoneground wholemeal flour and sourdough bread.

Visit to Woodford Bridge

Simon Carroll

On a recent weekend, the Friends of Berry Castle visited the motte and bailey site of Woodford Bridge fort. (located at Grid Reference: SS397126).

Trench cut through the motte

In Devon, many motte and baileys are thought to have been built during the 12th century civil war between King Stephen and Matilda. Civil conflict developed in England and Normandy between 1135 and 1153, a period known as The Anarchy. There was a succession crisis, caused by the accidental death by drowning of William Adelin, the only legitimate son of Henry I, in a shipwreck in 1120. Henry's attempts to install his daughter, the Empress Matilda, as his successor were unsuccessful and on Henry's death in 1135, Stephen seized the throne with the help of his brother, Henry, Bishop of Winchester. Stephen's early reign was marked by fighting with English barons, Welsh leaders and Scottish invaders. Following a major rebellion in the south-west of England, Matilda invaded in 1139 with the help of her half-brother Robert of Gloucester. Stalemate eventually occurred and after Stephen died, Matilda's son took the throne, reigning as Henry II.

The monument is covered in trees and overgrown by low lying vegetation. The surrounding ditches can be made out, around the edges of the site, still relatively deep, considering the gradual infilling, over the years. Measuring 23m by 27m, the bailey sits below the motte. The motte itself, is curious. Rather than the usual round conical shape, it's elongated, measuring 16m by 10m. A trench has been cut through it at some point in the past, possibly as part of the hedgebank and ditch, which bisects the entire site, or maybe a family dispute between siblings meant that the land was shared out. Or even, like Durpley, treasure hunters were possibly at work.

The site sits atop a prominent spur, overlooking the River Torridge. The steep sides are ideal defences. The old ford, at the bottom, can still be seen. Bank, ditch and form suggest that the site may have originally been an Iron Age enclosure, before being built on by the Normans. Something which several of us agreed on.

Woodford Bridge is just one of three recognised mottes, in the local area. The others being Durpley and Walland Farm, SW of Newton St Petrock. All of which are relatively small in size. A possible fourth may lie nearby, but further investigation is needed.

All the sites lie near old routes and, apart from Higher Walland, near a river crossing. Whether this was to remind the local population of who was in charge, or just a strategic point, the sites would have been visible in the landscape.

Bank and ditches at the overgrown entrance

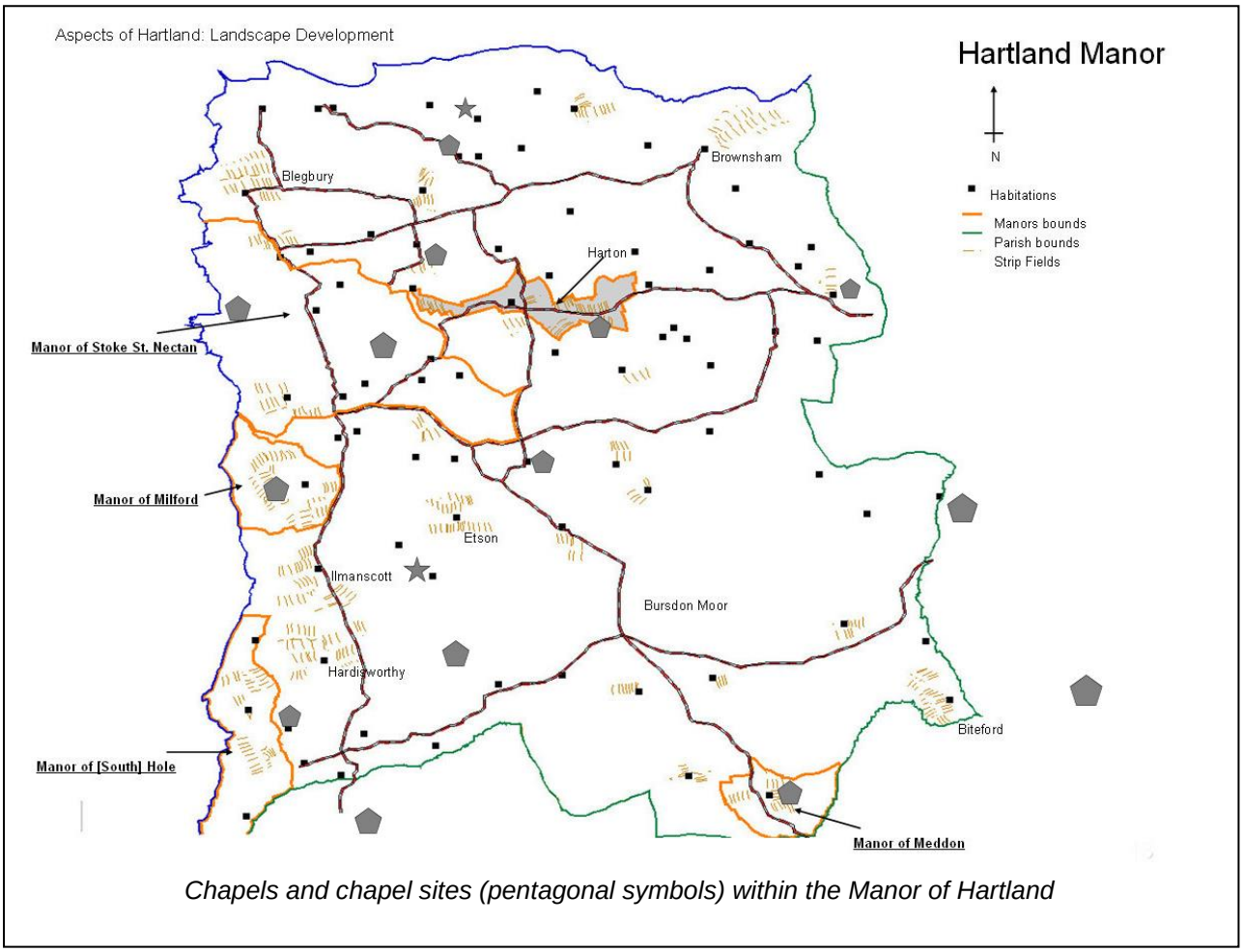
From Woodford Bridge, Higher Walland is in easy view. During the Anarchy, could rival families have built their own motte, to ‘posture’ at each other? The mottes are certainly too small to house any substantial building but would be visible and could hold a flag of allegiance, just like many do, during the World Cup!! We hope to run another visit, along with Durpley, to give people the chance to compare, what are interestingly unusual sites.

The Chapels of Hartland

Stephen Hobbs

Little is written on chapels or oratories within their landscapes. As they often get included as an adjunct of the local church, we may not understand them individually. Archaeologically, few leave visible traces, which is not to say the footprint is undiscoverable with modern technology.

The existence of a considerable number of chapels within the parish of Hartland has been known for a long time. Most references rely on the Registers of Bishops Brantyngham (1371) and Stafford (1400) where licences are given for named chapels. The granting of a licence does not necessarily confer on the building a date for its establishment, but an acknowledgement that at such dates they are known or in operation. It is possible that some chapels predate the Bishoprics by a considerable period. They are often described as ‘chapels of ease’, allowing a dispersed population to practice their religion without a substantial trek to the primary church.



Chapels and chapel sites (pentagonal symbols) within the Manor of Hartland

Of the fourteen named locations some immediately form an independent group: Meddon, Southole, Milford, Welcombe and Ashmansworthy. These settlements became independent manors and could represent a religious centre within the manorial holding. A further chapel at Harton could be closely associated with the Dynham family and their establishment of a private borough there. Numerically the Harton chapel is the only one where population density supports a 'chapel of ease' association.

This leaves as non-manorial: Longfurlong, St. Leonards, Higher Velly, Philham, Kernstone, Cheristow, Firebeacon and Clifford. Two of these are of interest: Cheristow and St Leonard's, as both have a connection with the 'Life of St Nectan'. Recently the late Brian Wormington dissected the 'Life' and drew a number of tentative conclusions: That the site at Cheristow may have been the earlier religious focus, being translated into a new focus based on St Leonard's, which represents the modern interpretation. The site at Cheristow has been shown to contain human burials. St Leonard's is allegedly the site of the murder of St Nectan, the two cottages now on the site have some indications of its earlier religious use. This site in turn was translated to a new focus at Stoke where the present parish church stands.

The evidence for a chapel at Philham centres on the existence of a holy well dedicated to St Clare. An actual site for a chapel there is unknown, but may be indicated by the discovery of human remains on land just north of the holy well, and local 'lore' has it that they were buried in the chapel yard.

The Morwenstow font found in a hedgerow.

Longfurlong is a short distance north-east of Cheristow; the chapel has always been co-located with the farm of that name. An early estate map of the locality indicates that a chapel stood further north-west on the higher ground by a fork between two rivers. Ploughing has revealed a scatter of building stone in that area. Rev Hawker of Morwenstow claimed the font at his church originated from the chapel at Longfurlong, having been found discarded in a hedgerow. Other references inform us that it was a piscina that was taken to Morwenstow. There is mention of a possible chapel at Gawlish (Northhole) which is dismissed as improbable. I would suggest the confusion arises here over a named priest, John Husband, at Stoke who held land at Gawlish.

Two chapels are thought to be private family establishments. Higher Velly is linked to the Velly family, although I doubt this, and further research would be needed on the family to establish their living at this site. It is just as likely to be a coincidental linking of locative names. The site of the chapel is said to be within a building recently converted into a dwelling, adjacent to an enclosure more reminiscent of a 'Lan'. The second chapel is not on the list of licenses and is the private chapel of the Prust family at Thorry, Nr Elmscott. he site of the chapel at Firebeacon is within scrubland south-west of the crossroads. If any evidence exists, it may be discoverable through geophysical survey (as would the chapel at Milford). Of the chapel at Clifford there is little evidence to be found. The final chapel is that of St Catherine at Kernstone which was a hamlet in multiple occupancy and had its own watermill plus dwellings and may have had a chapel at one time. However, attention has been focused on St Catherine's Tor on the coast west of Kernstone. The Tor itself has eroded at its crown by at least forty feet since the late 19th century. There is clear evidence of a track from the valley leading in a zigzag to the summit and the whole Tor is enclosed within an embankment. Discussion has varied between a chapel, a summerhouse or a Roman Villa. The physical evidence rests upon occasional finds of floor/roof tiles found at the summit in the late 19th century . These are now on display in the small museum at St Nectan's, Stoke. Further tiles were found and documented by a William Heard in his 'Remembrances' but he discarded them in a hedge bank! The suggestion of a

link to Roman activity was always thought to be romantic rather than factual but mounting evidence of a Roman presence in the area suggests that the possibility may have to be reconsidered.

I am unsure that the term 'chapel of ease' can be confirmed but the manorial connections are of interest and a comparison with other clusters of chapels may open a line of research. There is an opportunity here for some survey work to disclose if below ground evidence still exists at a number of the sites.

This illustration shows a slate inscribed with two examples of the game, Nine-Men's-Morris. This was found at the site of the chapel at Southole lying on an area of cobbled floor uncovered when the market garden was expanding. Such games are often found on stone and woodwork within religious buildings and are associated with the craftsmen working on them

Catching up with Barnstaple Pottery

Our brand new museum extension contains at its core a dedicated archaeology store which is currently full. The bulk of the stored material consists of pottery sherds, kiln waste and kiln furniture excavated within Barnstaple between the 1970s and early 1990s. Together with more of the same stored in a building at the cemetery, there are some 2000 boxes of excavated pottery awaiting study and analysis. There have been several initiatives aimed at tackling this huge backlog, but so far all have come to nought.

The pottery spans the medieval to early modern period, representing an industry, which, from the 16th to the early 20th century particularly, was a major element in Barnstaple's prosperity, its products being exported to North America, the Caribbean and Australia as well as Ireland and South Wales. This export trade invests pottery from North Devon – including Barnstaple, Bideford and Torrington - with international significance. Since the beginning of controlled excavation in the 19th century, archaeologists everywhere have relied on evolving pottery styles and fabrics to provide a basic chronology and to work out patterns of trade for the sites that they excavate. In North America the excavators of early colonial sites such as Jamestown in Virginia or the Colony of Avalon in Newfoundland find quantities of imported 16th and 17th century pottery from North Devon for which at present there is no reference study to help them. On both sides of the Atlantic there is an awareness that the Barnstaple archive urgently needs study and publication.

Prompted by a recent article in the *Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society* on pottery rescued from the Taw, the Barnstaple and North Devon Museum Development Trust (BNDMDT) has decided to attempt once and for all to 'get the pottery done!' An advisory group has been formed with the Museum Manager Alison Mills and three Trustees together with pottery specialists David Dawson and John Allan and the Devon County Archaeologist Bill Horner. Previous attempts to proceed have been brought to a halt largely by cost, but also by logistics and the demise of the former commercial unit, Exeter Archaeology which in 2002 had set out a clear and comprehensive project design for dealing with the Barnstaple pottery. The circumstances of 2021 differ from those of 2002 in that we have a locally based archaeological unit (Southwest Archaeology, SWARCH) which can undertake at

least the initial task of reducing the size of the archive, and we have the Trust whose remit is to assist in raising funds for the benefit of the Museum and North Devon heritage. Even so, the task remains a very large undertaking which could stretch over a period of years.

Another difference between now and then is that SWARCH has established a methodology based on the excavation, study and publication of the very large cache of 16th century pottery waste from behind the former Exeter Inn in Litchdon Street. The excavation was a joint project between SWARCH, NDAS and the Community and the success was very much down to volunteer participation. Similarly, the currently developing project to 'deal with' the Barnstaple pottery will need volunteers to help reduce the excavated material to manageable proportions. NDAS members, therefore, please be ready to pitch in and help with the sorting of grubby potsherds into a meaningful selection the study of which will fill in more of the detail of our history and that of the Americas.

PS. We need a big empty space in which to work on the 2000 boxes. If anyone knows of a large barn, shed or other big space that would be available for a year or so, is close to Barnstaple and might have access to facilities, please let Steve Pitcher know – email stephenpitcher3@gmail.com

More Clay Pipes!

Chris Preece

Back in April this year I received an email from NDAS member Peter Mullen asking if we would be interested in a collection of clay pipes from fields at Pen Hill Point (just north of Fremington Quay) which had been passed on to him by the owner. Peter brought the collection to the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon where we met up with Alison Mills and Samantha Bevan to assess the finds. We were all surprised at the quantity and quality of the pipes and initial perusal suggested they were mainly of two groups in terms of date: early 1600s and early 1700s. There were also a few Victorian moulded examples commensurate with occasional discard (the proximity to a lime kiln suggesting possible owners of these). The museum was happy to accommodate them but I suggested taking them first to Heather Coleman (who analysed and drew the Little Potherington clay pipe typology) and all were in agreement with this. The quantity of the two main groups suggested the possibility of a clay pipe kiln site and so a field walk was the obvious solution. If there was a kiln site in the field there should be kiln furniture (muffle, sheet, concreted stems etc. as found in quantity at Little Potheridge). Also it might be possible to see if there were concentrations of finds in particular areas.

Pipe bowls from Penhill, part of a collection now in the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon. (Photo: Peter Mullen)

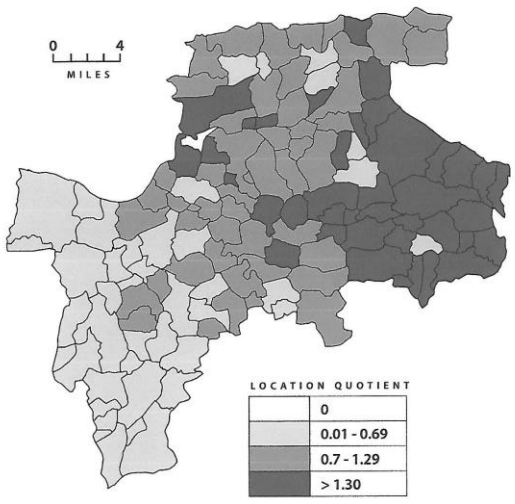
Peter kindly liaised with the present farmer Paul Tucker who had given us permission for a survey and when the field had been harvested and ploughed we were given the go-ahead. The weather was kind to us and nine of us from NDAS met up on the Saturday at Fremington Quay car park at 9.30a.m. before the hordes arrived (it was heaving by the time we finished). Analysis of the finds we made is underway and Tim Crane has kindly volunteered to write up a full account with maps and photos for the next newsletter.

Field Names

John Bradbeer

I suppose that I had, from an early age, known that fields had names. Great-Aunt Caroline, in whose house we lived in Gloster Road in Newport in Barnstaple had told me as a seven-year old that Broadfield Road, which was a continuation of Portland Street, was named after this field and she seemed to think that this made Broadfield Road somehow inferior, with Gloster Road commemorating either a cathedral city or a royal duke and not the ground on which it was built. I was reminded of this when transcribing the Tithe Apportionment for Bishops Tawton, in which parish Newport was located until later Victorian boundary changes moved the area to Barnstaple. The Tithe Apportionments are by far and away the best sources for field names, but field names remain rather the poor relations in the place-name studies family. Although more recent volumes in the English Place Name Society's county place name series now include field names, that for Devon, published in the 1930s did not.

I have started to look at the field names I have transcribed and I present here a few preliminary findings. The Devonshire Association and the Devon History Society have plans for a county wide survey of field names, as has been done for a number of other counties. Place name scholars analyse field names by distinguishing *generic* and *specific* elements. The former are components like 'close', 'down', 'field', 'meadow', 'moor', and 'park', and the latter are the distinguishing elements such as 'great', 'higher', 'little', 'long', and 'lower'. Sometimes these elements are combined in a single name like 'Broadpark' and in some cases there is a second specific element as in 'East Lower Field'. Field names, unlike botanical names have specific (species) preceding the generic.



Distribution map of the term 'close' in field names in Northern Devon.

The generic elements in northern Devon have some peculiarities; the classic names 'close', 'field', and 'park' are not interchangeable, but have distinctive geographical distributions. These three terms account for just over a third of all the field names in northern Devon, with 'field' actually being the least common of the three. 'Close' names are concentrated in the parishes surrounding the former Royal Forest of Exmoor, but also in a belt running east and south east from Yarnscombe to include Chulmleigh and Witheridge. 'Park' names are much rarer around Exmoor and in the Chulmleigh and Witheridge areas but especially common around Holsworthy, but rather less so along the shores of Bideford Bay. Quite why this should be so is not clear. 'Moor' is another name that presents a distinctive geographical distribution and one that initially seems paradoxical. 'Moor' names are quite rare around Exmoor, and in Brendon, Countisbury, and Martinhoe they are completely absent. 'Moor names become very common south and west of Bideford, with over a fifth of the names in East Putford being 'Moor' There is a second string of parishes where the name is common, running south from Fremington to St Giles-in-the-Wood and generally the name is frequent on the heavy soils of the Culm Measures rocks. It is clear that in field names, at least, moor refers to wet, rushy pasture which may have patches of heath, but is the type area for what is now called Culm Grassland. Local dialect also used to distinguish this type of moorland from the moorland of Exmoor,

with the former often referred to as white-moor and the latter as black-moor. ‘Meadow’ is another generic element with a distinctive distribution. In the Tithe Survey some of the surveyor-valuers were extremely reluctant to record meadow as a land-use, thus many fields called ’meadow’ were returned with their land use as pasture. ‘Meadow’ names are far more common in the parishes around Exmoor and distinctly uncommon in parishes running from Hartland, through Bradworthy to Pyworthy. The term ‘meadow’ is also common in a band of parishes from Bishops Nympton to Rackenford. It does seem to be more associated with areas with a great specialisation in livestock rearing, where the provision of winter fodder was a great priority,

In 1913 Edwin Stanbury wrote in the *Devonshire Association Transactions* about the names around North Tawton. He focused on the specific elements and came up with a classification that was later adopted by Robin Stanes in his writing on Devon farming. In working my way through the northern Devon Tithe Apportionments I found that most names could be fitted into the Stanbury-Stanes system, although I would add a further category, that of local toponymy, where fields are called after specific parts of parishes or adjoining holdings or because of their location at or near the boundary with another parish. Ironic names like London, or Newfoundland for fields distant from the farmstead and derogatory names like ‘Little Gain’ or ‘Good-for-Nothing’ could be regarded as special cases of direction and soil categories.

Direction: such as the compass points; higher and lower; homer and yonder (in relation to the farmstead). In some cases a series of fields is identified as first, second, etc and middle is also often used in conjunction with higher and lower

Shape: such as broad, narrow, round, square, three-corners/three-cornered; also brandis or one of its common variants (three-legged); dagger (long and thin) and hatchet(t) describing a field that is roughly square but with a thin extension at one corner.

Size: such as great and little and sometimes an estimated acreage, as in Four Acres. These estimates are surprisingly accurate but two quite common appellations, Forty Acres and Hundred Acres, are usually sardonic references to tiny fields.

Farm and landscape features: such as barn, garden, linhay, quarry, saw-pit, and well

Agricultural crops: most usually cereals, sometimes pulses and roots, such as bean, pea (usually in the old singular, pease) and especially potato and turnip

Animals: usually farm livestock, especially bulls, calves, horses, lambs, oxen, and pigs, but much less frequently, sheep. There are also some references to wild creatures, with frogs and toads more common than larger animals. Some of the Deer Parks probably relate to former medieval enclosures where deer were kept for hunting. There are a few instances of coney, but hardly any of rabbit

Soil and vegetation: soil colour is sometimes mentioned as in red and yellow, although black and white may refer to soil, (black would imply peat) but more probably heather (black) and rush/purple moor grass (white, in winter). Soil conditions are quite commonly used, such as moisture in dry, miry, and wet and texture as in clay, sandy and stoney. The general character of the vegetation appears in names such as coarse, moory, rough, and rushy Specific plants are sometimes mentioned, especially alder /aller, furze, bramble, broom, blackthorn and daisy. I was surprised to find tansy as a specific name in several parishes, though it once found use as a medicinal herb.

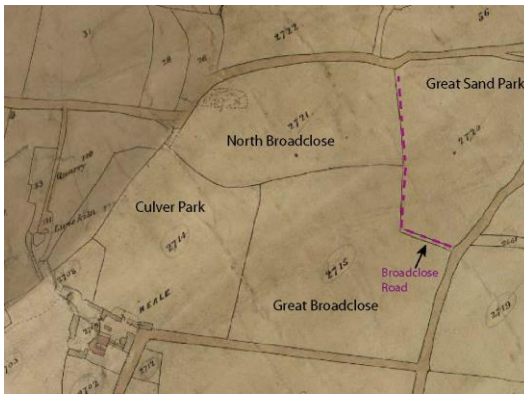
Former names of occupiers (and owners): these are usually in the form first name and second name or just the second name, but a few employ just a a first name and other fields have presumed family story associations as in Aunt Sally’s Field or Granfer Slee’s Field

A full analysis of the nearly 100,000 field names in northern Devon would probably take several years and I have only done a close analysis of the names of a dozen parishes. This suggests that the Stanbury-Stanes classification is robust and useful and that the first four classes as listed above tend to be commoner as specific elements. Some field names are not of any great age, partly as there were many intakes of waste and moorland in the century before the Tithe Survey, and along the alignment of the Bude Canal, several small parcels were given the name 'Canal Plot' because portions of fields were left detached when the canal was cut and the original name was retained by the larger portion.

In some county-wide studies of field names, an association between specific names and hidden or previously unsuspected archaeology has been established. Some burial mounds are found in fields with the specific element 'bury' although crop marks are the more reliable indicators. In northern Devon, there appear to be relatively few field names associated with archaeological features and many barrows and hut circles, for instance are found in fields with no hints as to their presence in their names.

A somewhat splenetic note to follow John's piece:

Some field names are retained in street and road names as, illustrated below, for example, in Tawstock Parish. The tithe map for this area of the parish records two fields called Broadclose, North and Great. The modern Broadclose Road is a narrow thoroughfare created within an inter-war development and laid out along the line of the original boundary between fields named Great Broadclose and Great Sandpark. The developer of the 1930s respected the history of the site unlike many 21st century developers who show no regard for history and in a lame attempt to create an air of rurality produce meaningless estate and road names such as Cherry Fields and Barleycorn Way.



Appledore Civil War Fort – under siege again!

Derry Bryant

The Civil War fort at Appledore is under threat of development yet again. The earthwork remains of the four-sided flanked quadrangle redoubt with demi-bastion sit in a grassy field atop Staddon Hill; a green oasis at the highest point of the peninsula. The fort holds a commanding position in a stunning location overlooking the estuary and the entrance to the rivers Taw and Torridge. The site can be clearly seen from Crow Point, Instow, Yelland and Northam Burrows and by any waterborne craft in the estuary.

The extensive view from the fort's position taking in all of the Taw-Torridge Estuary

Built in 1643 by Major General James Chudleigh, the fort played an important part in the Civil War in North Devon. Visited by the future King Charles in 1645 and defended at one time by Cornish musketeers, the fort surrendered to Royalists in 1643, was besieged unsuccessfully by Parliamentarians in 1644 and remained in Royalist control until the end of the war.

The field is in private ownership and successive generations of landowners have attempted to sell off the land for housing development, so far unsuccessfully. An early attempt, however, resulted in an "agricultural" building being built in the centre of the fort earthworks! In spring 2021 developers applied to convert the barn into holiday housing. The application has been refused by Torridge District Council.

Local historian Nick Arnold has compiled exhaustive and detailed documentary evidence: researching old maps and documents, and archaeological evidence of lidar and geophysics results he has made an application to Historic England to register the site as a Scheduled Monument – the result is awaited with some trepidation. Devon County archaeologists are aware and have recommended refusal of the application, advising the developers accordingly. The DCC HER also commissioned a geophysical survey of the site for this purpose. NDAS has written a letter of support to Historic England, along with other notable experts on Civil War history, the Battlefields Trust, CPRE Devon and is supported by local MP Sir Geoffrey Cox. The developers commissioned a survey by AC Archaeology, who did an earthwork survey and took some surface finds from the later mound.

Evidence of erosion due to sheep

The remains of the fort above ground can be seen as an upstanding wall to the north and some raised linear features to the south and east, with a low mound to the north east corner (the remains of the demi bastion on which a cannon would have been placed to control the conjunction of the rivers). There is also a substantial mound dating from the 1800s, possibly for signalling purposes (shown as "flagstaffe" on old maps), it is also believed to have been used as a trig point for OS mapping locally. Of course, there are underground features such as a cobbled area, seen during minimal excavation by Tim Gent prior to the barn being built. Any development on the fort site would damage features known and unknown.

Sadly, the earthworks are being eroded by sheep grazing and developers/landowners have given no indication of how the site would be protected in future. It would be devastating to lose this remaining important feature of the Civil War period in North Devon; it should be preserved for future generations and could become an educational asset for the local community. The documentation, plans and associated surveys can be viewed on the TDC planning website 1/0323/2021/AGMB or just search for " Staddon Hill".

And finally: In search of two sturdy NDAS members and one small one!

We still have three limited-edition NDAS polo shirts left in stock. These are good quality short-sleeved polycotton shirts in pale grey, embroidered with the NDAS logo. Just the thing for a Summer dig, or as a cosy layer under all those fleeces and waterproofs for a bracing fieldwalk. There's one size S (fit 34") and two XL (fit 44"). They are priced at £16 each. If you would like one, or more info, please contact Ruth at ndas.secretary@gmail.com.

Terry Green