



Promoting awareness of the archaeology  
and history of North Devon

## Newsletter, Spring 2020

### Hold It!

In fact, everything is on hold apart from this newsletter which comes to you this spring just as it has for many a year. Inevitably we are disappointed that our winter talks had to be curtailed and any summer activities may be limited, depending on how the national situation develops. Nevertheless, at least we can continue to communicate news and ideas while maintaining social distancing.

In the annual report sent out to you in preparation for the AGM, Chris detailed the highlights of 2019/20 from among which I should like to single out our partnership with the North Devon Coast AONB. Through a combination of site clearance by volunteers, sophisticated aerial photography and geophysical survey as well as excavation, all facilitated by a co-operation between landowners and tenants, the AONB, Devon County Historic Environment Service, Historic England and NDAS, it has been possible to advance the understanding and appreciation of important prehistoric, medieval and WW2 sites in a way which would scarcely have been feasible without such co-operation. It is especially satisfying to have been able to get to grips with Clovelly Dykes. For this we need to thank the landowner John Rous, the tenant Stephen Goaman and the Clovelly Estate for their support and co-operation.

The AONB Coastal Heritage Project concludes this year, so at this point I should like to express our appreciation for the work of Joe Penfold and Dave Edgcombe whose efforts have been so productive in opening up to local people and to seasonal visitors the historic features to be found along our North Devon coast. So on behalf of NDAS, sincere thanks to Joe and Dave.

### Clovelly Dykes – excavations 2019

Chris Preece

In 2019 we continued investigating the fields to the south of the A39 which contained what we believe to be the outer enclosure ditch of Clovelly Dykes, as well as a settlement associated with it. Thanks to the diplomatic skills of Steve Pitcher, we managed to negotiate (with the farmer) excavation in the field to the east of that investigated in 2018. The same strictures regarding crop harvesting applied as in 2018 and we were allowed a maximum of 8x2m in terms of trench area (but in fact did not need to use this much). We had just over a week for the dig, including turf removal, re-laying turves and backfilling.

There were two reasons we wanted to investigate the east field. Firstly, the late Ross Dean and myself had discussed the possibility of a third ringditch in this field when we examined the geophysics results – the example we'd noticed had a weaker signature than the two in the field to the west, but

its circumference was similar. Secondly, we wanted to investigate whether the difference in the data illustrated on the geophysics contour plot between the two fields was due to differences in ploughing depths or for other reasons, such as poor survivability. This would help inform future decisions about the preservation of the site.

To begin with we put a 5m x 2m trench across the ringditch. This was located for us by Mark Edwards of Substrata with considerable accuracy, as



Fig.1: *Excavating the first trench*

excavation revealed. Firstly, as part of the agreement with the farmer to minimise damage to the field, we *carefully removed the turf*. The next layer was excavated by hand (Fig. 1) and proved to be a relatively modern ploughsoil with finds ranging from flint flakes to North Devon medieval coarseware through to C19 ceramics, clay pipe fragments etc. Finds which could relate to Iron Age occupation were two small waterworn pebbles between 2 and 3cm width. These have been noted at a number of other hillforts throughout the country and may have been slingstones.



Fig.2: *The ringditch showing up after rain.*

Beneath this was a thin compact layer of mid-brown soil mixed with yellow/orange clay derived from subsoil. This interface sealed the natural. After trowelling back, the ringditch was visible but the edges were indistinct. A second clean back followed by overnight rain revealed it nicely however and a section was put across the ditch at the north end of the trench. This showed the ditch to be shallower than the 2018 ringditch but still deeper than many examples found elsewhere (Fig. 2). No finds were made. In the south end of the trench a small posthole was half sectioned (Fig.3) by Derry and Sarah and a tiny fragment of pot was found. This has been examined by Henrietta Quinnell who says it is different from the pottery found in the enclosure ditch last year which was probably of Cornish origin. The posthole's function was unlikely to have been part of a structural post-ring judging by its size but smaller postholes are common in roundhouses and often denote small raised structures within the house.

To the west of the ringditch was a spread of stones which was half-sectioned. This was sitting on the natural and was possibly clearance from the inside of the assumed roundhouse, ringditch or both. However, it was vaguely linear in form and must have had some function therefore - possibly a platform for some objects which had to be raised off the soil?

By the time we had finished, we'd achieved the objectives of the dig and the weather had spared us the worst of its excesses. The roundhouse was confirmed and the difference between the two fields assessed (the roundhouse ringditch being shallower than the 2018 example in the field to the west and the depth of soil being greater in the east field, thus accounting for the difference in the geophysics contour plot).



Fig.3: *Half-sectioned posthole*

We are now in the process of writing it all up with an intended publication date of June 2020.

## Acknowledgements

This excavation owes much to the initiative and support of the North Devon AONB. NDAS is also very grateful for the co-operation of John Rous of Clovelly Estates and Stephen Goaman the farmer. Mark Edwards of Substrata was generous with his time and enabled us to locate the feature easily. Finally, I am grateful to the band of loyal NDAS diggers without whose dedication the week's work could not have taken place.

## Coastal Heritage Project – AONB Partnership Report

Joe Penfold

Following on from archaeological surveys at Clovelly Dykes, the Coastal Heritage Project (CHP) began a practical programme of conservation work this winter.

Last year, the project was successful in securing £28k funding from Historic England's Monument Management Scheme (MMS) for conservation, survey and interpretation at five Iron Age hillforts in the AONB. The final phase of the project was to engage a contractor to manage the scrub-clad ramparts at Clovelly Dykes. Given the size and scope of the project approximately 60% of the total MMS budget had been allocated.



*Volunteers clearing scrub from Clovelly Dykes*

Clearing the way, quite literally, for the mechanically assisted work, the project began with three well-attended volunteer work parties. The steepest (and deepest) of the ramparts, and therefore the worst affected were revealed, much to the satisfaction of both volunteers and the tenant farmer. The remaining MMS funds will be used at the AONB's second largest hillfort, at Hillsborough in Ilfracombe. As with Clovelly Dykes, the aim is to facilitate mechanical access to the hard-to-reach, scrubbed-over areas of the monument.



*The remains of RAF Northam*

Historic England have complimented the AONB on both the design and delivery of the hillforts project, especially in terms of the level of volunteer engagement and the production of interpretative media. As a result of this work, Clovelly Dykes will be removed from HE's Heritage at Risk register. The AONB has also been awarded additional MMS funding to deliver a full programme of restoration, after the CHP ends.

In other work, the project used HLF funding to produce two new World War II walking leaflets. Complementing the successful D-Day heritage guide, the leaflets feature self-guided circular walks on Baggy Point and Northam Burrows and reveal a surprising number of remains which are



otherwise easily missed. The foundations of the former RAF radar station at Northam Burrows are one such example and were another of the heritage sites that were improved over the winter. Thanks to the volunteers, the remains are now much more visible and interpreted via both the leaflet and a new lectern information panel. Similar work is underway to highlight 'hidden' heritage in the Hartland Peninsula by way of an area guide to complement the information posts installed at Gallantry Bower, Mouthmill and Hartland Point last year.

Following the outbreak of COVID 19, the project has inevitably had to adapt and change. Much of the public engagement work that was planned, to include guided walks, heritage workshops and school engagement has either been postponed or cancelled. In the time that remains (the project is funded until the end of July) the project will concentrate on the delivery of other HLF outputs, such as the production of a learning resource pack for schools, themed on the Iron Age, and web-development, as legacy for the project. Whilst the lockdown continues other opportunities to bring 'heritage to the people' include the packaging of aerial photography captured by drone last year.

Our thanks to volunteers, landowners, funders and partners for helping to make the project a success.

## **A Flint Cobble Tool (Chopper) from Clovelly Dykes**

Derry Bryant

In January I took part in the clearing of scrub at Clovelly Dykes as part of the Coastal Heritage Project. Our Project Leader was Joe Penfold, and there were about a dozen volunteers on the day.

We started with a guided walk across the hillfort and Joe explained that it was important to clear the gorse, shrubs and small trees from the bank and ditch to help with conservation. He explained that recent archaeological survey had included aerial survey with a drone, and also a geophysical survey of the inner enclosure, which revealed some surprising results, yet to be published.

We were provided with tools for sawing and clipping undergrowth. The deep ditch we worked on had water in the bottom, so some intrepid volunteers paddled about for most of the day, whilst cutting and dragging out the branches which would be removed later by contractors.

Whilst walking along the grass beside the ditch chosen for the day, near the entrance on the East side, I noticed a large oval flint cobble which seemed out of place. I picked it up, thinking that it looked like a stone tool, as one end seemed to have been shaped into a cutting edge. I then thought perhaps it had just been cut by a plough and put it back where I found it. A little later, I saw it again and had another look, deciding that it was indeed out of place as it was a beach pebble and the stones in the field are angular sandstone. I also reflected that the field isn't normally ploughed but is used for stock grazing, so I asked Joe if I could take it home for further examination, and he agreed it was worth looking at.



*A simple flint tool of unknown date*

After washing the cobble I photographed it, examined it closely and completed an illustration. I sought the advice of Henrietta Quinnell, who, after seeing the flint herself, confirmed to me that it is a

“chopper of date unknown but a simple form of tool in use from the Mesolithic onward. It is of interest because of its size (12.5cm x W: 8.4 cm x D: 6.1cm Weight: 632 g.) coming from a local beach”.

I prepared a report for the Devon Historic Environment Service, with photos, illustration, location details etc. The flint will form part of the archaeological record for Clovelly Dykes.

It is interesting to note that in 2018 and 2019 some Mesolithic flints were picked up as surface finds during NDAS excavations in the field across the A39, south of the scheduled monument.

Historically, other flint flakes were discovered next to the site. (See Wymer JJ, 1977 *Gazetteer Mesolithic Sites England/Wales*).

***Finds of out-of-place flint are not confined to Clovelly Dykes and require explanation. Paul Madgett (geologist) here examines the question:***

## The Puzzling Occurrence of a Flint Nodule on Baggy Point

Paul Madgett

Baggy Point is well-known for scatters of flint flakes and implements, mostly Mesolithic, but with a few from Neolithic and Bronze Ages, even one or two much more recent gun-flints (see “Croyde in my Lifetime”, John Lewis 2009, p.88). Another Croyde resident, David Maddocks, has recently given me a large flint nodule found in the stream bed north of Middleborough Hill. Occasional flint pebbles can be found on Baggy - presumed to be from local beaches - usually showing signs of flaking, but this is the only large nodule I have seen. Irregularly-shaped, size 20x18x14cm, it has a thin white cortex but with several broken surfaces showing the black core. Are these surfaces human-worked, or simply hit by an agricultural implement?

How did it reach Baggy?

Was it humanly transported many thousands of years ago, as much better knapping material than the local beach pebbles?

Prehistoric flint-knapping is recorded for Orleigh Court, south of Bideford, using the flint nodules from the Tertiary-aged deposit there (see John Newberry "Inland Flint in Prehistoric Devon" Proc. Devon Archaeological Soc. No.60, 2002). Perhaps some “raw material” was brought to Baggy? But why then abandon such valuable material without obvious use?



*The Holworthy flint nodule (Fifty pence piece for scale)*



*The Baggy Point flint nodule*

Or perhaps it represents much more recent transport, as a “curio”? The Hyde family, who used to own most of Baggy, treated as “garden” the areas near their house, including the valley just upstream from the pond. Or maybe a geology student decided the specimen in their rucksack was too heavy, so that after a field day visiting various parts of Devon, this nodule was just “dumped”! Is there a “natural” explanation?

The nearest land occurrence of chalk containing flints is around Beer in S.E. Devon. Cretaceous sea-levels were far higher than at present with chalk probably deposited across most of England. The Clay-with-Flints of southern England is considered to be a residual deposit from this, likewise the small Orleigh Court deposit. Geological transport from either S.E. Devon or Orleigh Court does not seem feasible, but is the latter material just a final residuum from formerly much more extensive spreads, with isolated boulders and cobbles still scattered around the North Devon landscape? A large flint rather similar to this Baggy one was found a few years ago in a valley-bottom context (also a stream bed) at Holworthy Farm near Parracombe. Perhaps both had a “residual” origin? Boulders lying around on any sloping ground would have been subjected to solifluction during the Ice Ages, so moved down-slope to valley bottoms.

There are further potential geological sources offshore: e.g. the Stanley Bank Basin near Lundy (see Cope, J.C.W. 2007. “A new Tertiary basin in North Devon — a progress report”; *Geoscience in south-west England*, 11, 338-341). This is thought to be of a similar age to, but much larger than the Petrockstow and Bovey Tracey Basins, and being post-Cretaceous is likely to include flints. Further offshore, beyond Lundy, the Chalk itself outcrops on the sea-bed; flint nodules could have been eroded from this. Reconstructions of former ice-sheets and their movements indicates that such material could have been glacially-transported to the North Devon coast. Several such non-local / far-travelled “erratic” boulders have been found at high-level on Baggy in recent decades; most easily explained by an over-riding ice-sheet. Could this particular flint nodule have been emplaced by this mechanism? However, this seems less plausible for the Parracombe flint.

Further suggestions?

## Anchor Wood & The Dripping Well

Frances Bell & Alison McRae Spencer



*The Dripping Well in Anchor Wood*

Recently retired, we inadvertently found an historical research project that is local, fascinating, and ongoing. We had always wondered about the history of The Dripping Well, located at the western end of Anchor Wood (SS547327), just off the Tarka Trail. (Barnstaple to Fremington section) A chance conversation with Chris Preece, led us to hypothesize that there was a link between The Dripping Well and Anchor Wood and we decided to check it out!

The Dripping Well is a mossy, green outcrop of rock, that drips with water continuously. There are various references to it in local books and online and the waters were scientifically tested between the wars, revealing mineral content that potentially supports its alleged, curative properties. In 1864, a stone, Gothic style surround was built by the owners of Tawstock Court who owned the land. This “enhanced” the distinctive rock and it is mentioned in a late Victorian book of local Sunday afternoon strolls around Barnstaple. Now a little overgrown and “forgotten”, there

appears to be no firm evidence that this place was a holy well or any information about a more ancient history / provenance. We assume it is ancient.



Anchor Wood, likewise, has been enigmatic! We thought that the name had originated from its proximity to the estuary and that it was an anchorage for ships. When Chris mentioned the possibility of it being a place where an “Anchorite” lived, we decided to investigate further.



*The Dripping Well on an early 20<sup>th</sup> century postcard*

We learned that to collect alms in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the anchorite or hermit required a license from the King via the Church. For example, in Pilton Churchyard, an anchorite called Alice lived and the now forgotten “Anchor Lane” in the centre of Barnstaple (Market Street), near St Peter’s Church, is the reminder that an Anchorite lived in the corner of that place. Chapel Wood near Braunton was also the home of a hermit and so, can we reasonably assume that Anchor Wood was the home of another such person, long forgotten and unrecorded?

We then decided that we would investigate the possible ecclesiastical bodies that would have had “responsibility” for the license including Barnstaple Priory and Pilton Priory. Anchor Wood and within it, the Dripping Well, are located on the boundaries of the parishes of Fremington and Tawstock and we asked each parish church about their records and we have begun the wider search into records held at Exeter Cathedral library.

At the eastern end of Anchor Wood, Hollowcombe Farm sits on the edge of the salt marsh. A bundle of records in North Devon Record Office exists and looking through those, the earliest reference to Anchor Wood is in 1794. We have looked at as many old maps as possible trying to establish the earliest references to Anchor Wood and The Dripping Well and we have probed every record held in the locality. Anchor Wood Farm, now gone, is also worth investigating as these buildings were known to be, at least, medieval in age.

It is possible that an Anchorite lived near the well and maintained it, collecting alms for cures. It is probable that the well dates back far in time and that the nearby (now silted) pool was sacred. (*Editor’s Note: the 1905 OS map at 1:2500 records a stone close by.*) The pathway from the top of the escarpment, at Sticklepath, was possibly an ancient path linking the raised pathway of Anchor Wood Bank to the crossing point by Barnstaple Long Bridge. Could the anchorite have had responsibility for maintaining part of the raised trackway and collected alms for this? Could alms have been collected for a safe crossing of the River Taw? We are continuing our investigations and we welcome any information from readers. Our research is only in its infancy!

## **The Seventeenth Century: North Devon’s Maritime Golden Age?**

John Bradbeer

I guess that more people have heard of Charles Kingsley’s 1855 novel *Westward Ho!* than have read it but most probably would go along with him in giving the previous century the accolade of North Devon’s Golden Age of shipping. The Port Books for the seventeenth century tell a rather different story. True, trade did increase in the later sixteenth century, enough so that the first true stone quays were built in Barnstaple and Bideford, but it was on a far larger and complex scale in the following century. It also saw both the long standing trade with France, Portugal and Spain but also a major increase in commerce with Ireland and across the Atlantic to Newfoundland and the American colonies.



The prosperity of North Devon's merchants in the 17<sup>th</sup> century expressed in iconic buildings

*Left: Queen Anne's Walk, Barnstaple., where rich merchants would 'walk' and seal deals.*

*Right: Fine late 17<sup>th</sup> century town houses in Bridgeland Street, Bideford, built to house the town's wealthy merchants.*

The Port Books serve to remind us of the perils of navigation in the seventeenth century. In November 1680, the Bideford Port Book records the arrival of butter, Irish frieze, a coarse woollen cloth, hides and tallow salvaged from the wreck of the Flemish ship *St Peter* at Portledge on passage to Bruges. In August that year, the *Waterford Merchant* landed her cargo from Waterford at Barnstaple, amongst which was a horse, so badly injured in the crossing that it was exempted from duty. That this was not an unusual occurrence is shown by another horse arriving from Dungarvan on the *Elizabeth* being similarly exempted.

Much of the trade in the seventeenth century involved the woollen industry, with finished cloth going to France, Portugal, and Spain and raw wool imported from northern Spain and steadily increasing volumes from Ireland by the end of the century. Dyestuffs too were significant imports from Iberia. Wine and fruit also arrived from France and Iberia. Northern Spain supplied considerable quantities of iron, essential for the Newfoundland fishery for the hooks and nails used in wooden buildings erected there. The other great needs of the Newfoundland fishery were for salt to cure the cod, and this initially came from France but later also from Iberia, and provisions of butter, cheese and salt meat to sustain the men in Newfoundland for the summer season. These provisions came from Ireland in ever increasing volumes as the century progressed. The classic histories of the Newfoundland trade suggest that ships made triangular voyages, either sailing for Newfoundland via France and Spain to collect salt en route or via Ireland to collect provisions. The Port Books show little evidence of this but do show salt and provisions arriving in North Devon, often imported by merchants involved with Newfoundland. Likewise, North Devon received very little salt cod, but rather more cod-liver oil from Newfoundland.

By mid-century, the tobacco trade was expanding and North Devon imported a great deal from Maryland and Virginia and then dispatched most either coast-wise to Bristol, or Ireland, or internationally to the Low Countries. Most of the Newfoundland merchants were also active in the tobacco trade and it must be presumed that profits were greater in the latter trade. North Devon also supplied the North American colonies with a range of basic commodities, including cereal, peas and beans but also earthenware, lead shot for muskets and really unusual things like quern stones and cartwheels. While tobacco, and to lesser extent sugar, were the glamorous and highly profitable trades, the majority of trade was in more prosaic commodities like the export of earthenware and



import of coal from South Wales, with a surprising amount then being re-exported to La Rochelle and to ports in Ireland from Cork in the south-west to Dublin in the east. The Newfoundland trade also has to be a factor in the import of hides and skins from Ireland to be tanned and made into leather to meet the demand for aprons, jerkins and sea-boots for the mariners and fishermen.

So the seventeenth century saw a great expansion in maritime activity in North Devon, with the more prosaic earthenware and salt cod, being as important as the more glamorous tobacco and sugar.

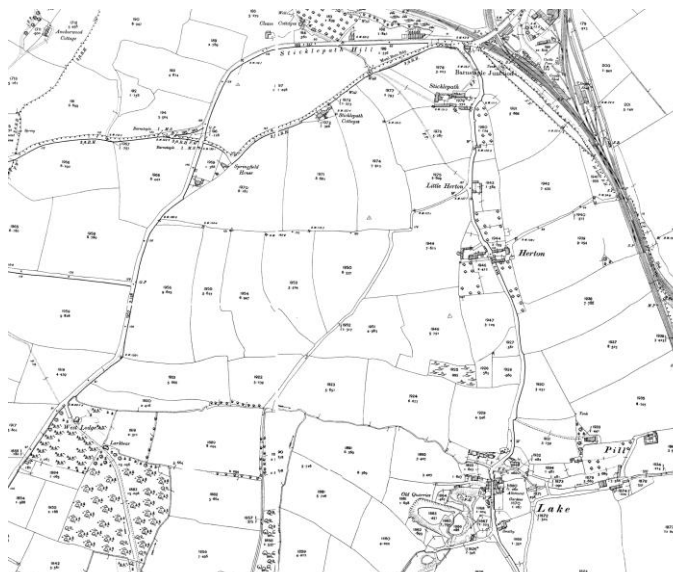
That it was a Golden Age surely is attested by the grand merchants' houses in Bridgeland Street in Bideford from the 1690s and Queen Anne's Walk in Barnstaple from a few years later. So Kingsley was wrong, but then one of his sub-texts was a particularly virulent anti-Catholicism and so the sixteenth century Spanish bashing of Grenville was more to his taste than the trading links with Spain of the seventeenth century.

## An exercise in landscape interpretation

Terry Green



*Extract from the Tawstock tithe map 1844. The track runs NE to S from Little Herton to Tallins Moor.*



*Extract from the OS Second Edition map at 1:2500 published 1905.*

About 50 metres east of my front gate the road dead-ends in a hedge beyond which the land drops into a deep slot in the landscape where brambles, hazel and willow together with the cast off rubbish of careless humans make any passage currently impossible. Nevertheless, my landscape archaeologist's eye tells me that this now disused track or hollow way was once a drove.

On the tithe map and on OS maps it can be seen that the track originates at a former farm called Little Herton in the parish and manor of Tawstock. More or less next door is Herton itself, the two farms probably representing the division of an original patrimony.

The name Herton is immediately interesting as it descends from Old English *heordatun*, literally 'herd farm', which, in turn, reinforces the interpretation of the '-stock' element of Tawstock as something like 'cattle mustering place'.

The track, which is quite narrow and very deep, leads south-west from Little Herton, doglegging round the corner of what was once a medieval strip field-system called 'Sharlands' (now mostly the playing field of Petroc), then continuing south-west where another former field-system, contiguous to and to the south of Sharlands, addresses the

track as a boundary. About two kilometres from its starting point the track comes to a stream where it appears to abruptly end. At this point we are in 20<sup>th</sup> century plantation which obscures any possible further continuation. In any case, the track has come to an area to which attach the names Tallins Moor and Hollamoor. Now largely taken up with post-medieval and 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century enclosures, this gently rising area is crowned with a long ridge or down – ‘moor’ in Devon parlance -, such as in early times would have represented valuable rough grazing. It is fair to assume that the track developed as the regular route by which stock were taken from the stock farm, Herton to their – possibly seasonal – grazing.

The settlement name Herton is of pre-Conquest origin. The clear connection between Herton and the down or moor strongly suggests that the movement of cattle from lowland to upland by way of the track or drove is of corresponding antiquity. The relationship of track to field systems strengthens the argument. The dog-leg around the corner of ‘Sharlands’ would ordinarily suggest that the field-system predates the track, though an alternative interpretation is that the track was briefly diverted to accommodate a newly established group of strip fields. This may well be the case, since the ‘Sharlands’ area is on the top of ‘Herton Down’ and inclines to the north, perhaps representing an expansion of the arable onto more marginal ground, whereas the neighbouring field-system is on a favoured south-facing slope. The fact that this field-system addresses the track suggests that the track predates the fields. The depth of the track, the connection to a pre-Conquest settlement and its relationship to the field-systems indicate the antiquity of the drove and the practice of transferring stock from lowland to upland, a form of local transhumance, evidence of which is quite abundant in North Devon, where it may point to the adaptation of an ancient pastoral economy to one which was increasingly turned towards arable with large-scale field-systems.

This brief study demonstrates how, through physical evidence, map analysis and place name study, it is possible to unpick the palimpsest landscape and write its deep history.

## **Dulverton Weir and Leat Project – a forthcoming joint project with NDAS**

Derry Bryant

In a rare foray onto the Somerset side of Exmoor, members of NDAS accepted an invitation from the Dulverton Weir & Leat Conservation Trust (a registered charity) to help with an archaeological survey and excavation of part of the existing weir and leat on the River Barle at Dilverton, prior to possible restoration and conservation by the Trust. The fieldwork will be a community project, with NDAS providing advice, guidance, practical excavation and recording techniques alongside community volunteers, and hopefully will find some dating evidence. On Saturday 14 March five NDAS members visited Dulverton to meet up with Philip Hull and Peter Romain, from the Trust, for a guided tour of the site.



*The weir showing the probable medieval section (nearest to viewer by fallen tree)*

The Conservation Trust have produced a project design with the help of Dr Matt Edgeworth (University of Leicester) and Dr Joanne O’Hara, to include a plan for archaeological fieldwork in 2020. It is also planned to carry out remote surveying (aerial photography). The eventual aim of the Trust is

to restore and conserve the weir in the way it was originally built, having first established how it was constructed. It would seem the weir is of medieval date. The project has a group of sponsors/interested parties, including Exmoor National Park, Somerset County Council, West Somerset Council, the Society for Post Medieval Archaeology, and British Canoeing.



*Town Mills – there were 2 large water wheels originally under this archway*

During the visit, we saw the existing weir across the river Barle, which retains a small part of original stonework visible at one end, but most of it being of modern reconstruction. In 2014 after serious flooding, residents rescued some oak stakes from the face of the weir during reconstruction work by contractors.

It is proposed to put three test trenches across the edge of the “island” beside the leat to look for the original part of the weir which is “buried” under the “island”.

On the other side of the river is a field which may contain evidence of the original course of the river and also ancient weir stonework. It was suggested that NDAS could help by surveying with the Society’s earth resistance meter. Failing that, it might be possible to engage a professional unit to carry out a gradiometry survey (the Trust indicated they would have funding for this).

Documentation shows there were watermills in the town from before 1295 and milling continued until 1972. With Peter and Phil, we walked along the footpath beside the leat into the village, passing several historical mills along the way, to the location of a fourth proposed work site. Here there is a small bridge, now close to the water level but in years past children were able to walk underneath. The leat has silted up here and the Trust would like to excavate an area in front of the bridge, to expose the foundation of the leat - apparently “a cobbled floor”. To do this, they would be able to divert the water for the purpose of excavation.

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*The leat going under the bridge*

It was suggested that excavation work might take place in July, although there are a few trees to be felled before work takes place on the island. (Naturally the global virus infection may have some effect on the start date).

It is a delightful spot by the river; prospective diggers may like to reflect they would be very close to, if not in, the river at times! (Snorkels not provided). We would like to thank Phil and Peter for their hospitality and a very interesting tour and look forward to splashing about with them in the near future.. Thanks too, to Chris, Bob, Nigel for making the trip and to Sarah for being our driver for the day.

More information on the project can be found at the website: [www.dulvertonweir.org.uk](http://www.dulvertonweir.org.uk). Anyone interested in taking part, should let Chris Preece know.



## General Notices

### Subscription Reminder:

*The Treasurer and Membership Secretary would like to remind you that annual subscriptions (£16 single membership, £24 joint, £8 students) became due on 1st April. If you've not yet renewed your NDAS membership, please make your cheque (payable to NDAS) and send it to Bob Shrigley, 20 Skern Way, Northam, Bideford EX39 1HZ.*

*Or save yourself the worry by setting up a standing order, details available from Bob [rvs1120@gmail.com](mailto:rvs1120@gmail.com)*

### Grey Literature in North Devon & Torridge: 2000-2018

John Bradbeer and Steve Pitcher have been taking advantage of lock-down to do some more work on the grey literature reports from the ADS website. These are unpublished archaeological reports of site investigations that have been uploaded on the Archaeological Data Service website run by the University of York. John and Steve have now downloaded and summarised all the reports for this area from 2000 to 2018. They are indexed by year and parish and each report is briefly summarised. There are overall indexes for both districts, arranged by parish, site and year, to make it easier for users to find reports by area or individual sites. All these reports can be found on the NDAS website at [www.ndas.org.uk](http://www.ndas.org.uk)

John and Steve would welcome feedback on the reports, both to gauge how much they are used and whether the format is useful to readers and researchers. In due course they plan to write a retrospective on 20 years of grey literature in the area, including highlights and some of the broader issues the work has revealed.

Contact John on [johnbradbeer@btinternet.com](mailto:johnbradbeer@btinternet.com)

Contact Steve on [stephenpitcher3@gmail.com](mailto:stephenpitcher3@gmail.com)

### NDAS Publications

The Society has a long history of research and publishing. Over the years it has featured reports on Mills in Northern Devon and on the Taw and Torridge Estuary and two currently available publications: The Heritage Handbook, now in its second edition, and Bronze Age to Bottle Seals, its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary publication.

To these it is now adding online publication of essays and monographs by its members. The first of these, now on our website, is a study on The Origin of Early Mediaeval Settlement in Northern Devon by Steve Pitcher, shortly to be followed by studies of North Devon's links with Newfoundland and North Devon in Domesday by John Bradbeer. The intention is that this work should be made freely available both to members of the Society and visitors to the website.

## **Finally from our Chairman Chris Preece:**

Our website desperately needs updating and for this we need someone reasonably tech savvy (not hacking/programming level!) who would like to work with our webmaster, Andy Hedges. This would entail trawling through the website, identifying areas which need updating (Little Potheridge for example) and badgering those responsible for details/suggesting deletion/moving stuff around etc. Initially there will be a bit to do (so if you're looking for a lock down task...) but after that it would be just oversight and occasional interventions.

If you're interested please let me know,

Contact Chris on [chrispreece23@gmail.com](mailto:chrispreece23@gmail.com)

TG.

