

# SCRIBBLES, CHADDLEHANGER, LAMERTON, TAVISTOCK, DEVON

(NGR SX 46534 77795)

## Results of an Archaeological Excavation

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On behalf of:  
Roderick James Architects LLP

Report No: ACD1638/1/0

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archaeology

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Client	Roderick James Architects LLP on behalf of Mr and Mr Roberts
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Report Author(s)	Paul Rainbird
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Checked by	Andrew Passmore
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### Acknowledgements

The excavation was commissioned by Roderick James Architects LLP on behalf of the owners and managed for AC archaeology by Andrew Passmore. The site works were carried out by Stella De-Villiers, Simon Hughes and Naomi Kysh. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Leon Cauchois.

The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of AC archaeology and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

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## Summary

*An archaeological excavation at Scribbles, Chaddlehanger, Lamerton, Tavistock, Devon, was undertaken by AC archaeology during June and July 2017. The excavation comprised one trench measuring 5m long by 0.8m wide. It was placed externally to the east of Scribbles, a Grade II\* Listed Devon longhouse of late medieval date, and was positioned to assess the extent of survival for a suspected former inner room of the longhouse.*

*The excavation revealed that the room had previously existed and was furnished with a surviving slate slab floor beneath abandonment, demolition and levelling deposits. The south wall had previously been identified as a standing structure but the north wall was absent, although there was some possible evidence for an external doorway on the supposed line of the wall. Finds from the deposits in-filling the former room included pottery of medieval and post-medieval date, ironwork and window glass. The former longhouse was used as a barn for the majority of its life and the inner room survived as part of the farm building until the 19th century when it was demolished or collapsed, possibly prompting the re-building of the east gable end of the longhouse and the addition of a hayloft door at this end. A levelling layer providing a platform for unloading carts or trailers to the hayloft door was identified and evidence from aerial photography shows that this was in use during the middle of the 20th century. By the late 20th century the barn was a ruin and in the 1990s was renovated as a dwelling, with a further levelling layer over the former inner room forming a garden feature related to the reinstated longhouse.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological excavation at Scribbles, Chaddlehanger, Lamerton, Tavistock, Devon (NGR SX 46534 77795; Fig. 1, Plates 1-2) was undertaken by AC archaeology during June and July 2017. The evaluation was commissioned by Roderick James Architects LLP on behalf of the owners, Mr and Mrs Robert, in support of a forthcoming planning application for an extension. The work was undertaken following consultation with Historic England.
- 1.2 The site is located in the hamlet of Chaddlehanger, in the parish of Lamerton, to the north of Tavistock, and consists of a thatched Devon longhouse of late medieval date, abandoned as a dwelling in the 1600s and renovated from a ruined barn during the 1990s. It is located within a landscape of remnant medieval fields and possibly a shrunken medieval village (Devon Historic Environment Record nos MDV114332 and MDV80361). The site lies at around 185m aOD (above Ordnance Datum) and slopes down to the southwest. The underlying solid geology comprises basaltic lava and basaltic tuff of the Milton Abbot Formation (BGS 2017).

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Settlement at Chaddlehanger has certainly been in place since medieval times and the placename is first recorded as 'Cheldesangre' in 1238 (Gover *et al.* 1931). Scribbles is a longhouse which is a type of building that under a single roof has a byre (locally called a 'shippon') at one end and accommodation at the other and which often had access for animals and people through the same central door (Beacham 1995). Alcock notes that 'it is the dominant early house type on the fringes of Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor and, to a lesser extent, Exmoor' and that they 'clearly fitted their economic niche extremely well, that of smallish mixed farms with valuable cattle – either milking cows or plough oxen, or perhaps a few of both' (Alcock 2015, 15-6).

- 2.2** Scribbles is Grade II\* Listed (National Heritage List for England no. 1105776). The listing text is reproduced below, but it should be noted that the building was added to the list in 1987 when it was a barn and prior to conversion into the current dwelling.

Longhouse, now barn. C15 origin, probably abandoned c.1600, with some later alterations. Slatestone rubble with greenstone dressings, short cob upper parts to walls, remains of wheat reed thatch under corrugated iron roof. Oriented east/west on fairly steep slope; a longhouse with hall to left and shippon to right without a structural division between passage and shippon. The full height solid wall between hall and passage is a later insertion and may have supported a fire hood. There is also no partition at higher end of hall. Therefore if the house were originally divided it would have been by low screens. A curious feature of the plan is the full height projection at the higher end of the front. 1½ storeys, possibly raised for storage above upper end, north front has projection to left, not clear for what purpose, and narrow opening, small square opening with stone lintel and straight joint below, possibly originally deeper, 2-centred arched stone door opening, chamfered with edge set slate arch, very neat masonry, later door and corrugated iron lean-to attached to shippon end to right. Higher gable end to left has loading door with granite cill inserted at upper level; lower gable end has ventilation slit in stone surround and drain. Rear has stonework rebuilt at higher and lower ends, possibly originally extended further at higher end, rear door blocked, single light with cambered brick head inserted, 2 ventilation slits to loft in shippon, one to right. Interior passage open to shippon, wall to left probably inserted, no fireplace but signs of 2 projections, possibly suggesting to a hood; hall end has keeping hole in north wall, splayed reveals to window openings. One true cruck truss foot to south built into cross wall, roof over lower end has 2 cut-off beams and mortices remaining from others, 5 bays including passage, crossed principals with side-pegged collars, battens for thatch. This is one of the rare surviving primitive longhouses which originally had no structural partitions. However the pointed arched door is of quite high quality. It was particularly interesting because it was abandoned so early and shows clearly its original plan form without later alterations. It may have been abandoned when Cleaves, Chaddlehanger was built, 1585.

- 2.3** The conclusions of a report for Devon County Council and English Heritage by Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants (Keystone 1990) is summarised as follows (Devon HER no. MDV35629).

Apparently the earliest building in the hamlet of Chaddlehanger. Includes the extensive remains of a medieval hall house with a two or three-room and cross passage Dartmoor longhouse plan. Oldest fabric could be 14th century, with evidence for various changes between then and 17th century. In late 18th century the domestic section was abandoned and the whole building used for housing cattle. Present plan has two shippons separated by the cross passage. There is a timber boarded partition between the passage and the original shippon to west. The full height stone wall along the east side of the passage separates it from the east shippon (former hall). It once incorporated the hall fireplace, but the stack has been removed to increase shippon space. Present layout probably dates from late 18th century. There was a minor remodelling in late 19th-early 20th century. Stone built with some cob on wall tops.

Three distinct phases:

Phase i: Medieval. Original masonry survives each side of former hall. Walls c750mm thick, on a foundation course of large blocks of white quartz. Masonry above is distinctive blocks of local sandstone and the odd lump of quartz in rough courses with copious thin stone chippings. Original openings are of large, diagonally-tooled blocks of green hurdwick ashlar.

Phase ii: 17th century shippon. Rebuilt with lower quality masonry. Walls 600-800mm thick on foundation of quartz boulders. Slit windows of roughly shaped slabs of hurdwick. The 16th century crosswall is similar.

Phase iii: Later alterations. Late 18th century rebuild at east end is also of random rubble. Here the doorway has a flat brick head (as does the passage south doorway). They may have been repaired with brick in late 19th-early 20th century. The sill of the hayloft doorway inserted at east end in late 19th-early 20th century is a single slab of granite. The roof of thatch under corrugated iron had blown off in 1989.

### **3. AIM**

- 3.1** The aim of the excavation was to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any archaeological features, deposits or finds with particular reference to establishing the extent of survival for a former inner room at the east end of the longhouse. The results of the work will be used to inform any subsequent mitigation and whether or not the significance and state of survival of any buried archaeological remains is great enough to influence any localised modifications to the proposed extension should planning consent be obtained.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The excavation comprised the hand-excavation of a trench measuring 5m long by 0.8m wide.
- 4.2 The archaeological works were conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (2014) and all features and deposits revealed were recorded using the standard AC archaeology pro-forma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2* (revised August 2012). Detailed sections and plans were produced at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate. All site levels relate to a temporary benchmark given the arbitrary height of 100m.

## 5. RESULTS (Plan Fig. 2; Plate 3)

### 5.1 Walls S109 and S110

A wall (S109) at the southeast end of the trench had previously been noted and at that time was considered to potentially indicate the position of an inner room at the upper end of the longhouse (Chesher 2017). Its inner face was exposed, measuring 0.80m high, and was constructed of roughly dressed slate stone in random coursing (Fig. 3a; Plate 4). The wall was bonded with clay and had remnants of lime render attached to its face. Abutting wall S109 was another wall (S110) which was only partially exposed in the excavation trench. This wall abutted wall S109 and was of different construction being comprised of small slabs of slate and occasional quartz bonded by lime mortar. It measured 0.56m high and was exposed for a length of 0.44m, and was not aligned perpendicular to wall S109. The exposed face showed an alignment that was angled further to the west than would have been achieved if it extended at a right-angle from wall S109.

### 5.2 Slate floor (108) (Plan Fig. 2; Plates 5-6)

A slate floor (108) which abutted walls S109 and S110 was revealed at a depth of 0.5m below current ground surface. It was formed of well-laid slabs that had clearly been shaped to fit together to form a level floor. The slabs were not removed during the excavation, but where visible it was evident that they had been laid directly on the natural subsoil (102) formed by stone in a yellowish-grey silty clay matrix. At the northwest end of the trench was a squared unpaved area (F112) which had the appearance of being deliberately formed. The purpose of this area was not ascertained but it was noted that it was approximately in line with the main north wall of Scribbles and may be the position of the robbed north wall of the inner room; in this scenario the slabs to the west of F112 would potentially form a threshold for an external door in this wall.

### 5.3 Overlying deposits (contexts 101, 103-7 and 111) (Section Fig. 3b; Plate 7)

Overlying slate floor (108) was a series of deposits. Directly above the floor and stretching across the full length of the trench was a layer (107) of dark brown silty clay, an abandonment deposit, which contained eight sherds of post-medieval pottery with the most recent dated to the 19th century, indicating that the room fell out of use at this date. At either end of the trench were deposits in-filling the cavity formed by the walls although they appear to illustrate different histories of demolition or collapse. At the southeast end of the trench deposit (106) was formed by rubble and some roofing slate, and a handmade iron nail, indicating that wall S109 and the roof had partially collapsed prior to a garden soil type deposit (105) accumulated above it and against the remaining upstanding remains of wall S109; this deposit contained one sherd of medieval pottery and two sherds of post-medieval pottery which ought to be regarded as residual in this deposit as it also contained a piece of modern brick. At the northwest end of the trench a deposit (111) of clay and rubble waste was formed in the position of the north wall prior to being overlain by a clear demolition dump (103) of wall material which appears to have been pushed in from the north side. The cavity formed by the dumps located at either end of the trench was

filled by a levelling deposit (104) of mottled greenish grey and light brown clay, which contained four sherds of post-medieval pottery, which once again ought to be regarded as residual in this context as it post-dates deposit (105). The full length of the trench was capped by a layer (101) of gravel and clay forming a modern landscaped garden platform.

## 6. THE FINDS *by Charlotte Coles*

### 6.1 Introduction

All finds recovered on site during the excavation have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. They have been quantified according to material type within each context and the assemblage examined to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented. The collection of finds is summarised in Table 1.

Context	Context description	Iron		Medieval pottery		Post-medieval pottery		Glass		CBM	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
104	Levelling deposit					4	53	1	1		
105	Garden soil	1	35	1	4	2	7	1	10	1	290
106	Wall collapse	1	48								
107	Layer					8	254				
Total		2	83	1	4	14	314	2	11	1	290

Table 1: Finds by context (weights in grams)

### 6.2 Medieval pottery

A single undecorated unglazed body sherd of North Devon medieval coarseware (4g) was recovered from context 105. This dates from between AD1200 to the middle of the 15th century.

### 6.3 Post-medieval pottery

A total of 14 sherds of post-medieval pottery (314g) was recovered. These are mostly North Devon gravel-tempered wares, which include a chamberpot rim and a handle from a further vessel from context 107. The other sherds of pottery include two pieces of 18th-century hand-painted porcelain and a sherd of Staffordshire-type 19th-century transfer-printed ware from context 104. The sherds from context 105 are a base piece of white stoneware vessel and a piece of granite derived pottery with white mica, which is possibly from local Cornish potteries, and dates to the 18th century. The other sherds from context 107 are a North Devon gravel-free bowl rim and a sherd of transfer-printed Staffordshire-type ware teacup from the 19th century.

### 6.4 Iron

Two pieces of iron (83g) were recovered. These are a fragment of a small horseshoe from context 105 and a handmade nail from context 106. It is not possible to ascertain the date of these.

### 6.5 Glass

Two shards of glass were retrieved (11g); these are both pieces of late 19th- or 20th-century window glass.

### 6.6 Ceramic building material (CBM)

A single fragment (290g) of a modern house brick from context 105of was recovered.

## **7. DISCUSSION**

- 7.1** The results of the archaeological excavation support the earlier proposal that an inner room formerly existed at the upper end of the longhouse. An inner room is not always present, but its presence in excavated examples of medieval longhouses shows that it was an option from the earliest period of construction for this type of building (Alcock 1969, 94; Henderson and Weddell 1994, 135). These inner rooms are typically at a higher level, approached internally via steps, as a result of the higher end of the longhouse being constructed into the hillside. The carefully laid slate floor and remnants of render on the inside of wall S109 indicates that Scribbles was provided with an inner room. This gave the occupiers much needed extra accommodation and gave a greater balance to the accommodation versus the shippon ends of the building. No evidence was forthcoming to show if the inner room was part of the primary structure or an extension to the original building, with both scenarios identified in excavations and standing buildings (Jones 1971; Henderson and Weddell 1994, 135). If it is an original component of the longhouse it would have been unheated – in the Widecombe area the inner rooms were typically used as a dairy before conversion, in most instances to a parlour, at a later date (Gawne and Sanders 1998, 21); in this regard the wall S110 which abutted wall S109, but was abutted by slate floor (108), is unlikely to be related to a chimney stack, which would be more typically added externally, and it is not possible to attribute a function for this stub of wall at present. The possible external door to the inner room is not typical of buildings of this type and is only tentatively identified as such.
- 7.2** The excavation and associated observation of Scribbles supports two of the conclusions of the Keystone (1990) report in regard to the east gable wall. Firstly, this wall must be a late re-build as no evidence for the necessary internal door giving access to the inner room survives in this wall; secondly, the inserted hayloft door must also be a late feature as access to it by cart or trailer would not have been possible until levelling deposit (104) was used to fill the cavity left by the demolition or collapse of the inner room – this most probably dates to the early 20th century and was certainly in place by the mid 20th century when a RAF aerial photograph shows a track approaching the gable end from the lane in the north (DCC 2017).

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1** The excavation has confirmed that the Scribbles longhouse was formerly furnished with an inner room, which is a common component of Devon longhouse architecture. The remains of the inner room comprise the south wall, well laid slate floor and stub of wall for unknown purpose. Tentative evidence for an external door to north was observed, but this would be an unusual position in buildings of this type.
- 8.2** The inner room survived until the 19th century when it was either demolished or collapsed and this may have prompted the re-building of the east gable end, removing the former internal door and the adding of a hayloft door. The site of the inner room was levelled to provide a platform for unloading to the hayloft until the barn became ruined in the second half of the 20th century. At the end of the 20th century and into the 21st century the area was further levelled and gravelled to form a garden feature for the newly renovated dwelling.



## 9. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

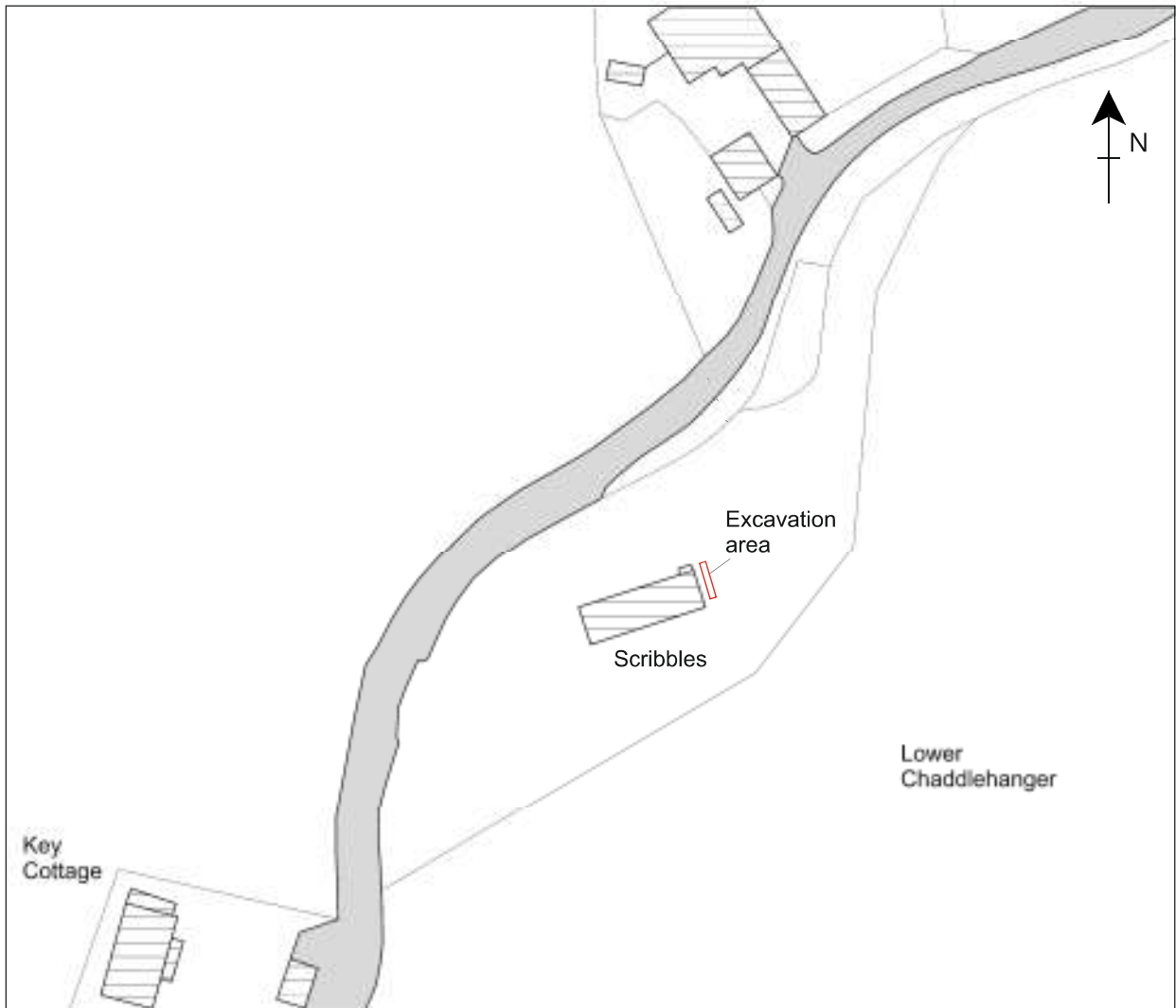
- 9.1 The finds, paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ under the unique project code of **ACD1638**. It will be held until the need for any further archaeological work on the site is established.
- 9.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier **291547**, which includes a digital copy of this report.

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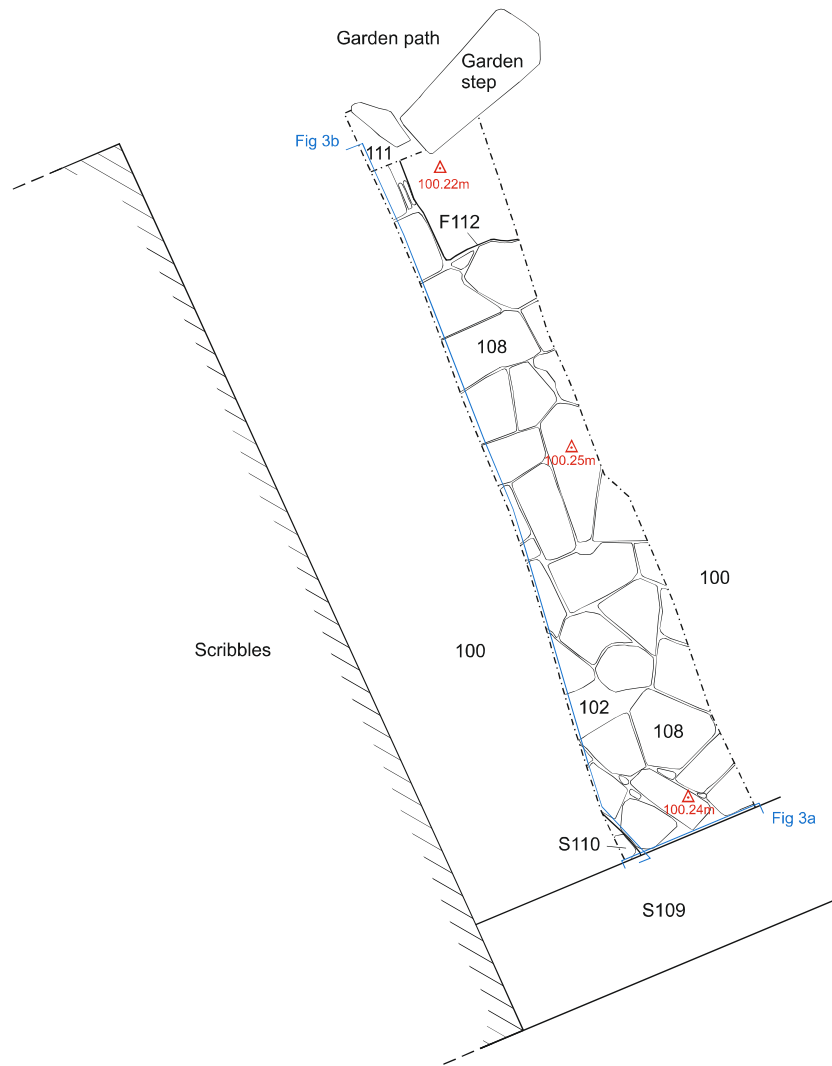


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PROJECT  
Scribbles, Chaddlehanger, Lamerton, Tavistock, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 1: Location of site and trench location



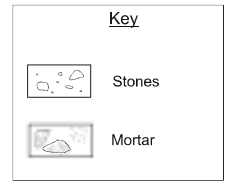
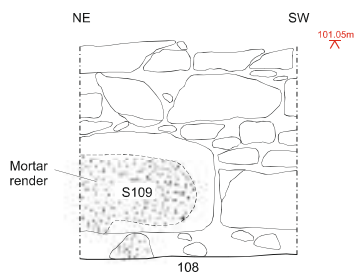
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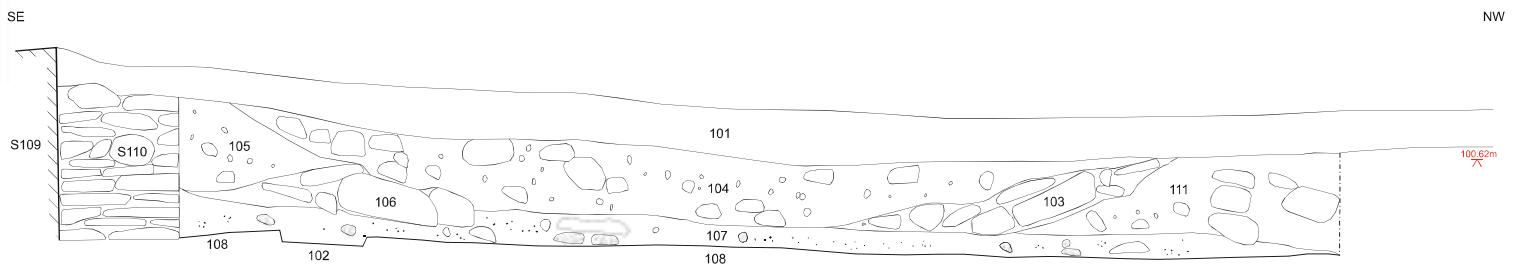
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Fig. 2: Plan of trench

a) Elevation of wall S109



b) Section of excavation trench



PROJECT  
Scribbles, Chaddlehanger, Lamerton,  
Tavistock, Devon

TITLE  
Fig. 3: Elevation of wall S109 and  
section of trench





Plate 1: Scribbles,  
Chaddlehanger, looking  
southwest



Plate 2: Scribbles,  
Chaddlehanger, looking west



Plate 3: Excavation in  
progress, looking northwest





Plate 4: Northwest-facing elevation of wall S109 (scale 1m)



Plate 5: Slate floor (108), looking northwest (scale 1m)



Plate 6: Slate floor (108), looking southeast (scale 1m)



Plate 7: Slate floor (108) and overlying deposits, looking west (scale 1m)

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