

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AND METAL DETECTOR SURVEY AT BROKENBURY QUARRY, CHURSTON FERRERS

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INTRODUCTION

This report details the results of a watching brief and archaeological metal detector survey carried out by Exeter Archaeology (EA) at the disused Brokenbury Quarry site adjoining the A3022 road to Brixham (centred at SX898563). This work was commissioned by South West Water and was carried out in accordance with guidance notes for archaeological investigations provided by the Torbay Council Archaeological Officer (28 September 1999). The area of the site is considered to have considerable archaeological potential, particularly in the light of previous finds of prehistoric lithic material. The archaeological, geographical, and geological background for the site is discussed at length in an earlier EA assessment (Turton & Weddell 1993) and evaluation report (Reed & Weddell 1993).

RESULTS

Metal detector survey

This was undertaken by EA on 6-7 October 1999. The entire west field (SX89605638) and the southern part of the north field (SX89805636) were systematically surveyed following a regular grid pattern using a *Garrett Treasure Ace 100* metal detector. A large quantity of metallic material (which included four coins) was recovered for further examination.

The most significant finds from the metal detector survey included a single medieval coin or token in very poor condition, post-medieval buttons (possibly silver-gilded), cabinet fittings and a copper alloy cauldron foot. These all derived from the north field. Finds from the west field were less numerous, with 19th- and 20th-century material in greater proportion than in the north field.

Upon arrival at the site, it was discovered that the northern part of the south field (SX89745620), which in accordance with the archaeological guidance notes (28 September 1999) was also required to be subjected to metal detector survey and watching brief, had in fact already been previously stripped of overburden and was being used as the location for massive spoil heaps.

The watching brief

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by EA during the stripping of topsoil from a 15m wide corridor adjacent to the south-western boundary of the north field after the metal detector survey had been completed on 6 October 1999. Stripping was undertaken using a large tracked bulldozer, which provided a finished surface that was less than ideal for archaeological observation. Overburden was removed down to the level of undisturbed natural clay and fractured bedrock encountered at an average depth of 0.25m. No archaeological features were observed, and no finds were recovered from the stripped area or spoil heaps.

Topsoil stripping took place in the west field in November 1999, again undertaken using a tracked bulldozer. The work was not confined to the eastern portion of the field as described in guidance notes. A 10m wide band running alongside the northern end of the field boundary (adjoining Bridge Road) and at right angles along the western field boundary (adjoining the A3022) was stripped. In addition, a rectangular area measuring approximately 70m x 40m in the centre of the field was also stripped. The areas adjacent to the field boundaries, which

form the lowest corner of the field and where the roads are steeply embanked, revealed a 0.6m depth of made ground, which was the full depth of the stripping operations. This deposit was a friable mid brown silty clay containing frequent coal fragments, occasional massive sandstone boulders and considerable quantities of modern rubbish as well as tarmac and brick fragments and English Industrial China. In the centre of the west field, a 0.3m depth of friable mid brown silty clay topsoil graduated into the natural undisturbed subsoil of clay and fractured bedrock. This area yielded a variety of post-medieval finds, including English industrial china. No archaeological features or deposits were revealed during work in the west field.

CONCLUSION.

No significant archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the archaeological watching brief, which is consistent with the findings of the evaluation excavation (Reed & Weddell 1993). No direct evidence was discovered to explain the considerable depth of made ground observed adjacent to the junction between Bridge Road and the A3022. Finds contained within this deposit confirm its modern origin. It is possible that this material was deposited at the time of the construction of the road junction, which had adopted its present embanked form by the time of the 1887 OS 1:10560 map. These embankments probably arose from the need to raise the road level to allow bridging of the Dartmouth & Torbay railway line which passes just to the west of Bridge Road; this section of railway had been completed in 1861 (St John Thomas 1981, 78). The material may have also derived from later alterations to roads or embankments. Although the edges of the deposit were not observed, given its considerable extent it undoubtedly represents a spread of material over the lowest part of the field, rather than the fill of a cut feature. It was clear that the centre of this field had not been subjected to a similar sequence of deposition.

The distribution of finds collected during the metal detector survey seems to confirm that the west field had been subject to greater modern disturbance and/or greater build up of soil deposits in the 19th-20th centuries. By contrast, the north field was less disturbed and yielded a much greater range of pre-19th century artefacts.

Despite the recognised high archaeological potential of this site, no prehistoric finds were recovered, and indeed there was no evidence of any human activity on the site that predated the medieval period.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- OS Ordnance Survey 1:10560 map sheet 128, 1864-87.
 Reed, S.J. & Weddell P.J. 1993 *SWW Torbay Marine Scheme: an archaeological evaluation at Brokenbury Quarry, Churston Ferrers*, Exeter Archaeology Report No. 93.77.
 St John Thomas, D. 1981 *The Regional Railways of Britain Volume 1 The West Country*.
 Turton, S.D. & Weddell, P.J. 1993 *Preliminary archaeological assessment of SWW Torbay Marine Scheme*, Exeter Archaeology Report No. 93.26.

APPENDIX: FINDS CATALOGUE by G. Langman

The following finds were collected during the metal detector survey at Brokenbury Quarry, Devon 1999; site code BKBQ 99. SF denotes small find; qty denotes quantity.

Coins/Tokens

<i>context</i>	<i>SF</i>	<i>qty</i>	<i>comments</i>
north field	400	1	clipped coin: ?medieval
west field	412	1	token: ?19th century
west field	413	1	worn & illegible coin: post-medieval
west	414	1	bent, worn & illegible coin: post-medieval

Copper Alloy

<i>context</i>	<i>SF</i>	<i>qty</i>	<i>comments</i>
north field	400	1	coin: ?medieval
north field	401	1	button, ?silver gilded: post-medieval
north field	402	1	button, ?silver gilded: post-medieval
north field	403	1	cauldron foot: post-medieval
north field	404	1	drawer handle: post-medieval
north field	405	1	?drawer handle: post-medieval
north field	406	1	?coin/button (if coin, very worn/illegible): post-medieval
west field	412	1	token: ?19th century
west field	413	1	worn & illegible coin: post-medieval
west field	414	1	bent, worn & illegible coin: post-medieval
west field	415	1	flat fragment

Ironwork

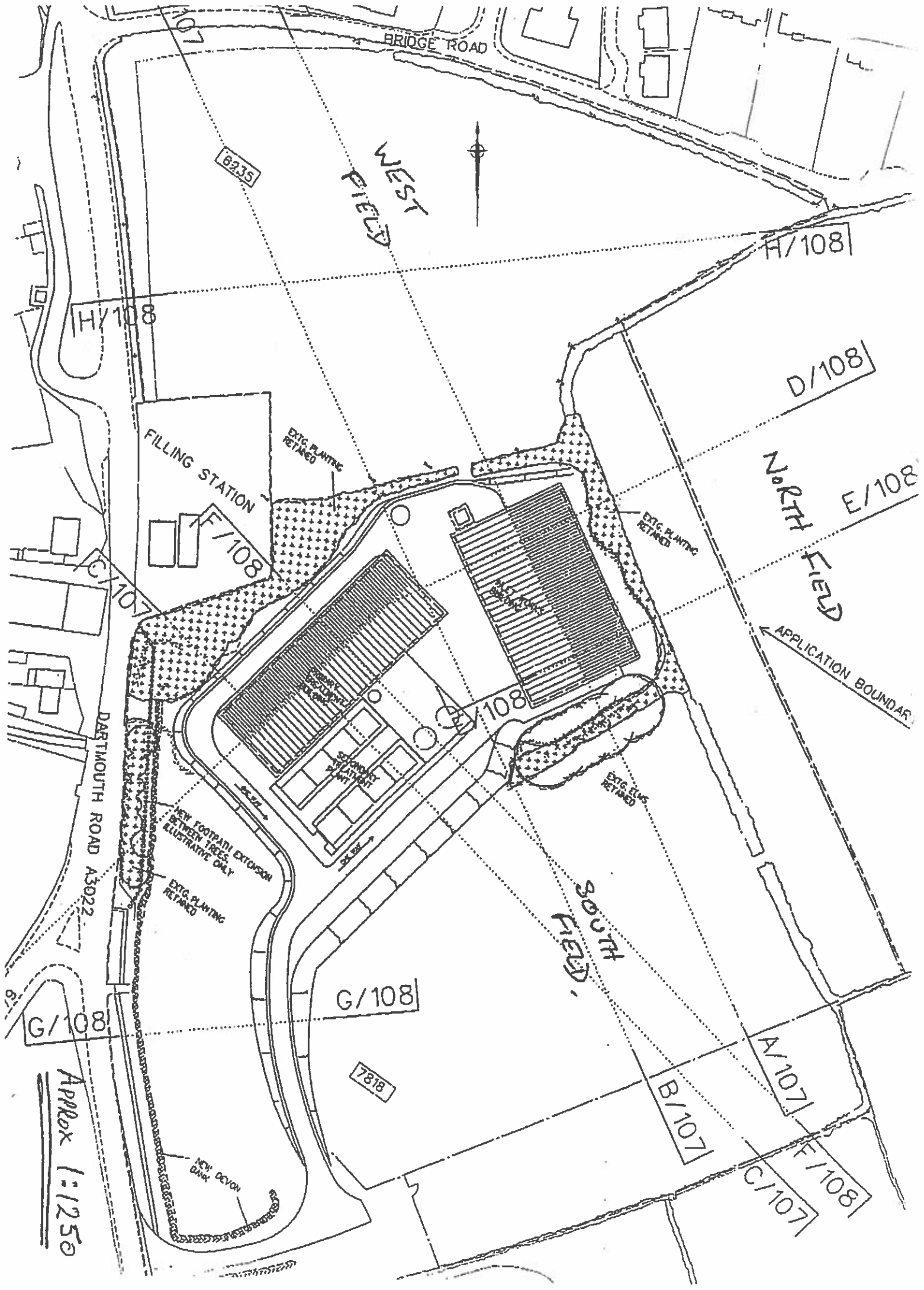
<i>context</i>	<i>SF</i>	<i>qty</i>	<i>comments</i>
north field	407	8	nails (assorted sizes)
north field	408	1	?horseshoe fragment: post-medieval
north field	409	1	object (?fixture): post-medieval
north field	410	1	flat fragment
north field	411	1	lump
west field	416	1	fixture
west field	417	2	nails

Lead

<i>context</i>	<i>SF</i>	<i>qty</i>	<i>comments</i>
west field	418	2	lumps

Small Finds

<i>SF</i>	<i>context</i>	<i>qty</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>comments</i>
400	north field	1	Cu alloy	coin: medieval
401	north field	1	Cu alloy	button, ?silver gilded: post-medieval
402	north field	1	Cu alloy	button, ?silver gilded: post-medieval
403	north field	1	Cu alloy	cauldron foot: post-medieval
404	north field	1	Cu alloy	drawer handle: post-medieval
405	north field	1	Cu alloy	?drawer handle: post-medieval
406	north field	1	Cu alloy	?coin/button: post-medieval
407	north field	8	Fe	nails (assorted sizes)
408	north field	1	Fe	?horseshoe fragment: post-medieval
409	north field	1	Fe	object (?fixture): post-medieval
410	north field	1	Fe	flat fragment
411	north field	1	Fe	lump
412	west field	1	Cu alloy	token: ?19th century
413	west field	1	Cu alloy	worn & illegible coin: post-medieval
414	west field	1	Cu alloy	bent, worn & illegible coin: post-medieval
415	west field	1	Cu alloy	flat fragment
416	west field	1	Fe	fixture
417	west field	2	Fe	nails
418	west field	2	Pb	lumps



BRIDGE ROAD

6235

WEST FIELD



H/108

H/108

D/108

FILLING STATION

F/108

NORTH FIELD

E/108

EXTG. PLANTING RETAINED

DARTMOUTH ROAD A3022

G/108

APPLICATION BOUNDARY

NEW FOOTPATH EXTENSION BETWEEN PLOTS ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY

EXTG. PLANTING RETAINED

SOUTH FIELD

EXTG. PLANTING RETAINED

G/108

G/108

7818

B/107

A/107

Approx 1:1250

NEW DECKING

F/108

C/107