

**A PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT TO THE WALLED AREA OF
THE INN ON THE QUAY, GOODRINGTON SANDS,
TORBAY, DEVON**

OS ref SX893595

**A SURVEY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGY
AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT,
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	2
The Archaeological Background	2
The History and Development of the Site	3
The Archaeological Potential and the Implications of the Development	6
Conclusions and Recommendations	7
Bibliography	7
APPENDICES	
I. Admiralty Records in the PRO	8
II. A Structural Outline of the rear walled area by <i>S.W. Brown</i>	8
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	
Fig 1 Plan of Goodrington sketched from the 1840 Tithe Map, by J Pike (Torquay Library)	9
Fig 2 Ordnance Survey Devon CXXII.9, 1861 revised 1933	10

Introduction

The site, a public house and a series of adjoining buildings, lies due south of Paignton and north of Goodrington village on the sea front of Goodrington Sands, east of the A379 and the Torbay & Dartmouth railway. Access is from Tanners Road, a turning off the A379. It is located above the beach, between the red sandstone and breccia cliffs of Roundham and Goodrington, on a solitary low outcrop, which is connected to a half-submerged outlier of rock between the high and low water tide lines. The Goodrington sands themselves lie at the mouth of the Clennon valley; the old valley stream, now canalised, flows beneath Goodrington Park below the sand and a lower layer of buried peat into the sea.

The author, who was contracted as an archaeological consultant by Torbay Council, was supplied with an historical outline compiled by Dr Michael Rhodes, the Principal Curator of Torre Abbey. This survey, while not accurate in every respect, was the starting point for all further work and the author is greatly indebted to Dr Rhodes. The brief was to investigate and summarise the archaeological history and potential of a walled area to the west and rear of the building complex proper, where it is proposed that much accumulated rubbish is cleared and a car park established, and to advise on the archaeological implications of such a development. The site was visited with Council Officers on 9 May 1995, and with a local historic building specialist on 15 May.

The Archaeological Background

There are no known prehistoric settlement sites in the vicinity of the Inn on the Quay, though a number of barrows (burial mounds) survive about 1km to the south in the Goodrington-Broadsands area. The internationally important Palaeolithic sites of Kent's Cavern, Torquay and Windmill Hill Cave, Brixham are not strictly relevant here, though finds indicate occupation in the caves in the first millennium BC. Chance finds of burials and artefacts in the immediate vicinity of the site are listed below; they indicate that though known settlements are absent, human activity is certainly not. The Saxon *tun* of *Godhere* appears in the Domesday book at *Godrintona*, a manor separate from Paignton, with which it was later joined.

1. A skeleton was found in association with a leaf-shaped arrowhead and a ceramic sherd, both typical of the Neolithic, during work to a house in Vennford Close, Hookhills in the 1980s (SX88445776).

Ref. Devon County Council *Sites and Monuments Register* SX 85NE110.

2. The megalithic polygonal chambered tomb at Broadsands (SX89295732) is possibly unique in England. Excavated in 1958 by C A Raleigh Radford, interments in the chamber included 3 primary inhumations with associated neolithic sherds, and a secondary inhumation with two distinct types of bronze age ceramic sherds.

Ref. The Barrows of South and East Devon. L.V. Grinsell. *Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society* 41, 1983, pp 6, 27

3. Three round barrows are situated on Sugarloaf Hill (approximate centre SX 89335848); the largest 40m diameter and 3m high has been considered natural, while doubt remains over another. No finds are associated with any of this group, but neither has there been any excavation.

Ref. The Barrows of South and East Devon. L.V. Grinsell. *Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society* 41, 1983, p 43.

4. In 1936, a coin, a Roman *sestertius* of Domitian, 81-96 AD was found in a garden in York Road, St Michaels, Paignton (SX88575998).

Ref. Devon County Council *Sites and Monuments Register* SX 85 NE 017

5. In 1883 two pewter flagons were found on Goodrington sands; one passed to the Torquay Natural History Society Museum, where it was later identified by Lady Fox as 4th century AD. In 1979 a metal detector found another similar flagon on the sands below the buried peat layer.

Refs. Devon County Council *Sites and Monuments Register* SX 85 NE 21; *History Beneath our Feet*. Brian K Read. 1988, p.26

6. From the Paignton/Goodrington beaches in recent times metal detectors have found in addition to a number of Roman coins many other metal artefacts with dates spanning from prehistoric to post-medieval times.

Ref. *History Beneath Our Feet*. Brian K Read. 1988, *passim*

The History and Development of the Site

An historical outline of the site's development as a building has already been put forward (Rhodes 1995). The withdrawal of the Channel Fleet's Hospital ship (the converted 50-gun *Medusa* was on station in Torbay from 1796-99) in the winter of 1799/1800 was condemned by the Physician to His Majesty's Fleet, Thomas Trotter, *the sick of the fleet suffered severely from having no hospital ship in Torbay during the winter months* (Trotter 1804). He identified a large dwelling house near the beach in August 1800, whose fitting up as a hospital was accelerated with the assistance of naval carpenters and joiners in October, such that it was functioning by November/December as *Mr Ball's Hospital*, doubtless the name of the first surgeon in charge. No evidence has been forthcoming to alter or challenge Rhodes' suggestion that the private house had no antecedents pre c.1760. Benjamin Donn's Map of Devon of 1765 shows a road leading to, and linking, Goodrington Sands with both Paignton and Goodrington, but no buildings at all are shown at the site's location. This is in contrast to the depiction on the first Ordnance Survey of 1809 (see below).

There is no evidence that the area was fortified with a high wall surrounding a barracks (*contra* Rhodes 1995, 1). White in his *History of Torquay* records that *the Government purchased 3 acres at Goodrington for a hospital, the remainder [for] a burial ground. Independently of the hospital there was sufficient accommodation for a guard of soldiers* (White, 1878, 175). Brixey records in his *The Story of Torbay* that *a Company of Devonshire militia were ordered to Berry Head in November 1801. One of its duties*

was to mount guard at Paignton Naval Hospital at Goodrington (Brixey, nd, post-1888). A recent publication records, without citing any supporting evidence, that *Goodrington House became incorporated into Admiralty barracks ... fortified with a high wall surrounding the barracks and a gatehouse manned by professional soldiers.... a burial ground [was] marked out at 2 acres 5 perches and a wall was built around its perimeter. The whole complex was known as King George III Barracks ... the gatehouse or barrack room was used as a summer house (at that time only 1-storey) until rebuilt* (Britton, 1990). For a discussion of the walled area in the light of these accounts see below.

The records of the Admiralty are held in the Public Records Office at Kew (see Appendix I); unfortunately little on the hospital appears to have survived, this situation having been surmised in the 1920s (H. Tapley-Soper and R. Dymond, 1924-5). No plans or a description of the hospital appear to exist. The only direct records are the Hospital Muster Books; six are preserved (PRO ADM 102 588-593). These cover the years 1803 to 1814, i.e., neither the beginnings nor the end of the hospital, and though the social information is both illuminating and fascinating, no information of the buildings appears in the musters.

For the month of November 1803 when the first surviving muster book begins (PRO ADM 102 588) the surgeon in charge, John Dulhunty, had only 1 man in his care, Thomas Halsforth, a Leading Seaman from HMS *Mermaid* whose ills are recorded as *ruptures* and *venereal*. In January 1804 30 sick and hurt men were received; 1 was discharged, 3 died of which 2 were sent home for interment, the other being buried for the standard cost of £1 2s 3d. The commonest ailments were *Flux*, *hernia* and *ulcer*. Thus by February 27 remained and a further 7 were admitted. Numbers fluctuate throughout 1805-6 between 46 and 11, being lowest immediately before and after Trafalgar when the bulk of the fleet was off southern Spain. The wounded were cared for initially by 2 nurses, later rising to a matron and 3 nurses, while victualling was carried out by a private contractor who had tendered from the Government.

John Dulhunty disappears from the record in August 1806 when John Alexander Houston signs the registers as Acting Surgeon. In September Thomas Willes signs as surgeon; he died in June 1809, receiving favourable mention in *the Gentleman's Magazine* (1809, 693). By that time the burial ground to the north of the hospital had been opened; consecrated by the Bishop of Exeter, George Pelham, on 28 September 1808 (Pike 1986). Unfortunately no contemporary record of this occasion survives. It is unmentioned in the weekly *Exeter Flying Post*, which otherwise usually chronicles in detail the diocesan bishop's activities. The last muster book which runs from January 1813 to July 1814 (PRO ADM 102 593) records George Vance as Surgeon, with a matron and 2 nurses in attendance. The monthly average in the hospital throughout 1813 is about 30 men, mostly Royal Marines or men of the 88th Regiment based at Berry Head; overwhelmingly the ailment in the register is *venereal*. This is in contrast to ten years before where almost all the patients were from ships. By 1814 with the termination of the war in Europe the hospital was winding down; though there were still a matron and 2 nurses in attendance, there were never more than 3 patients and by July all had been discharged. The final end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 led to the hospital's closure the following year.

A most useful contemporary description of the buildings exists from the time of the Admiralty's sale of the premises; the *Exeter Flying Post* of 25 April 1822 contains the following item:

PAIGNTON, DEVON.

To be sold by Auction, J. Pridham, at the Globe Hotel, Plymouth, by order of the Comptroller of the Barrack on 1 May 1822.

Building and land comprising Naval Hospital (Except the burial ground).

The buildings are substantial, and capable of being converted, at small expense, into a respectable dwelling house, having several convenient offices attached; and a lawn in front included with a stone wall; or into small tenements for the convenience of sea bathing.

The hospital or main building consists of a spacious room on the ground floor, with anti-rooms partitioned off. The first floor has a spacious room with anti-rooms communicating with the buildings on the south side of the parade. The attic story contains a range of small rooms. The officers' houses on the south side of the parade contain several convenient rooms, a kitchen, wash house etc. on the ground floor, and bed chambers over; with separate stairs; with a variety of other requisites.

The above freehold property will be sold in one lot without reserve.

The premises can be viewed by applying to the barrack serjeant on the spot; and a plan of the same with descriptive particulars may be seen at the office of the Barrack master, Plymouth Dock; or at the office of the Barrack Master at Exeter.

13 April 1822

The buildings and land were bought by Colonel Drake of Ipplepen. This clear description of the buildings does not imply the presence of a high walled barracks. The account refers to a naval hospital – this indeed is how the site was depicted on the first Ordnance Survey (one inch to the mile) published in October 1809 – not to barracks. The presence of a *barrack serjeant on the spot*, but barrack masters in Plymouth and Exeter indicates a guard detachment, as put forward by White and as might be expected for a military establishment, not an administrative or barrack complex, or plans would have been available there. More importantly, the area within the wall is described as a *lawn*, ie the walled area at the end of the military tenure of the site was a walled garden.

Unfortunately the Land Tax Assessments held in the Devon County Records Office (DRO Land Tax Assessments Series & II) cannot be relied upon as evidence. In 1805 the building appears for the first time, where it is assessed at 1/-, as the *Royal Naval Hospital*; between 1807-14 it is the *Royal Hospital*, 1815-16 it is again the *Royal Naval Hospital*, between 1817-18 it is the *Royal Naval Barracks*, in 1819 the *Royal Naval Hospital*, reverting to *Royal Naval Barracks* for 1821-22, the same year in which the auction announcement refers to the *Naval Hospital*. Neither can the Land Tax Assessments for Paignton parish, which survive from 1780 to 1831, be used to track down Trotter's *large dwelling house near the beach*, as no properties are given in the

earlier assessments and only a few estates are mentioned after 1790. The first assessment of 1/- in 1805 can not then be traced backwards. However, from 1815 both the proprietor and the occupier are recorded, though this too confuses rather than clarifies. The proprietor is *His Majesty the King* and the occupier variously as hospital or barracks as above. Between 1823 and 1831 while the King continues to be listed as the proprietor, George Drake is listed as the occupier (despite the freehold sale) and the property listed as the *Naval Burial Ground*. Drake appears elsewhere in the assessments as the proprietor of *Weymouths & other lands* but these cannot be the hospital buildings as they appear as the property of another individual contemporaneously with the *Royal Naval Barracks* in 1822.

So although the burial ground was excluded from the sale in 1822, it appears that George Drake was in occupation of both it and the hospital buildings from 1823; the 1840 Goodrington Tithe Map (Pike, 1988; Rhodes, 1995) records that both the former hospital buildings and the burial ground, then under pasture, were owned by the Trustees of a George Drake, who was himself in occupation (Fig. 1).

Thus it has not been possible to ascertain whether the walled area was constructed as part of the original 18th century house, or as part of the hospital complex (but see Appendix II). As for the burial ground proper, by the late 19th century all but one of the graves had been washed away and it was recorded that the relevant records no longer survived (Tapley-Soper & Dymond, 1924-25). The later history of the buildings is detailed in Rhodes.

The Archaeological Potential and the Implications of the Development

The rear walled area cannot in all likelihood be any earlier than the original building existing when the hospital was founded; neither historic, cartographic or architectural (Appendix II) evidence supports this. Nor if the walls are contemporary with the hospital is there any solid evidence that they were part of a barracks constructed with any defensive capability. Architectural evidence indicates lean-to buildings associated within a garden structure, as indeed does Ordnance Survey evidence. The 1933 revision of 1861 clearly shows 3 glass buildings and another structure attached to the cross wall and further buildings attached to both the internal and external faces (Fig 2).

For these reasons no archaeological case can be advanced for any special importance to be attached to the walls. However the accumulated evidence of prehistoric activity in the area, and in particular the site's location on rising ground above the sands of the north and south beaches, which have been the source of numerous archaeological finds, suggests perhaps a focal point, above the boggy Clennon valley between the beach and settlements inland, for transient occupation, the sands having been a well attested landing point from prehistoric times to the present. The unique nature of the Broadsands megalithic chambered tomb is by its coastal location alone indicative of continental influence and seaborne migration.

Any development within the walls will, through the removal of accumulated rubbish and modern levels, the excavation of drainage and the stabilisation of the walls, lead to the removal of what are, strictly speaking, archaeological strata.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The garden walls have no great archaeological significance, though it must be said that they add greatly to the charm and aesthetic appeal of the site, and are of a piece with the main (former hospital) buildings enhancing their value as a group. Were a detailed architectural report required, this could be accomplished, following the removal of some of the vegetation – some of the invasive ivy, *hedera sp.*, must be removed in any case, such as at the southeast angle where it is already detrimental to the wall fabric – in two days: a day on site and a day to report.

Although it has been noted that clearance and groundworks in advance of the formation of the carpark will remove archaeological deposits, those of modern accumulation and garden soil are of no importance; below these, however, there is the possibility of earlier strata surviving. Any earlier buried landscape evidence and in particular peat deposits, which are known to lie below the beach sands, have the potential for revealing something of both the archaeological and palaeo-environmental history of the site. For these reasons it is recommended that initial groundworks take place in tandem with an archaeological presence which can record any features that may arise.

Bibliography

Unpublished Sources

Devon Record office (DRO):

Land Tax Assessments 1780-1832, Parish of Paignton

Public Record office (PRO):

ADM 102 588-593 Paignton Hospital Musters 1740-1860

J. Pike 1988 *Facts About Goodrington*, (typescript in Torquay Local Studies Library, File D.982)

M. Rhodes 1995 *The Inn on the Quay, Goodrington* (unpublished manuscript)

6.

Published Sources

E.E. Britton 1990 *The Oldenburg Hotel*

A. Brixey nd (post-1888) *The Story of Torbay*

J. Pike 1986 *Tall Ships in Torbay*

H. Tapley-Soper & R Dymond 1924-5 'Goodrington Naval Hospital' in *Devon & Cornwall Notes & queries* 13, 115-117

T. Trotter 1804 *Medicina Nautica*

W. White 1878 *History of Torquay*

APPENDICES

I Admiralty Records in the PRO

A number of the Admiralty (ADM) class lists were searched for reference to the Paignton Naval Hospital, chiefly those that might reveal the origin, construction and sale of the buildings, and in particular for a detailed plan and description. ADM 140 *Works Departments* contained 1430 pieces, maps and plans, similarly WORK 41 *Naval Establishments* contained 657 pieces, maps and plans. Not one reference to Paignton was revealed in either. ADM 105 *Medical Miscellanea* contained 93 volumes, bundles and booklets of Sick and Hurt Board Inspectors' reports, which included some hospital plans, but again with no Paignton reference. Only ADM 102 *Hospital Musters 1740-1860* had any Paignton relevance; of the 921 pieces, monthly muster returns bound into volumes, six, Nos 588-593, cover the hospital musters from November 1803 to July 1814; they are described in the text above. Two further volumes 594-5 are Paylists covering the same period. Two classes not searched were ADM 97-8 *Correspondence of the Sick and Hurt Board* and ADM 99 *Minutes of the Sick and Hurt Board*; these cover the Board's entire responsibilities, including the care of prisoners of war, worldwide. Though references to Paignton might be expected, it was considered that it was not cost-effective in the timeframe allowed.

II A structural outline of the rear walled area by S W Brown

The surviving buildings, walled garden, burial ground, and remains of the demolished stable block together form a group of considerable interest, dating from the late 18th and 19th centuries. At the centre the hospital building retains most of its original external structure and architectural features.

The walled enclosure lies to the rear of the hospital building, and is separated from it by a courtyard, one side of which was occupied by a long, narrow structure (Fig 2; Rhodes 1995, Fig 2) now demolished, which may have been a stable block. Adjoining the walled enclosure is the burial ground which shares a common boundary line and may have been laid out either at the same time, or perhaps a little later.

The walled enclosure seems likely to have been a walled garden associated with the hospital, probably functioning as a kitchen and herb garden, perhaps with additional recreational value. It is divided into two by a cross-wall which may mark the division of use. The wall shows at least four phases of masonry, almost certainly dating from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. It is built largely of poor quality local red sandstone, mudstone and breccia (some with quartzitic veins), many stones of which have eroded with weathering, despite the presence in places of projecting drip courses on both the interior and exterior. There are a number of internal raking buttresses which could be original. The earliest visible phases of masonry are bonded with pinkish mortar containing coarse gravel aggregate and numerous fragments of coal, indicating a post-medieval date (*i.e.* nothing stands out as appreciably earlier in date than the standing buildings). It would be instructive to compare mortars with the adjacent structures.

There are clear signs of 19th and 20th century lean-to structures. The area between the walled garden and the house may well contain yard surfaces and the buried remains of buildings.

NOTES and REFERENCES

Dewey Decimal: Naval Hospitals 359.72
Military Hospitals 355.7205

[MR: "The area was fortified with a high wall surrounding a barracks". *Ref* to White, p.175 [*This is not in White*. HCB]

C.H. Patterson, *History of Paignton*, 1952
"Old quarters of the guard are still called Drake Cottage."

Trewman's *Exeter Flying Post* (refs. To Paignton Naval Hospital)
5 May 1803 4c Inspection by commissioner for sick and the hurt
6 October 1803 2b Tenders invited for provisions
25 April 1822 1b For sale by auction

COUNTY RECORDS OFFICE

Place Name Index:

Paignton

Goodrington Rental late 18C 118M/E2
Goodrington Deeds re properties 1538-160990N/T771-780
Copy of (?Tithe?) map 19C 115Z/Z129-132

Personal Name Index

George Drake

Correspondence 1824 – item I 1148M/add 36/365
Correspondence 1824 – item ii 1148M/add 36/368

Court Roll List

No entry for Paignton or Goodrington

Land Tax 1780-1832