

Regional Reviews

Cornwall

NORTH CORNWALL

Simon Ford

COUNTRYSIDE MANAGER

Duckpool to Sandymouth

This property lies five miles north of Bude, and includes 2½ miles of the north Cornish coast. Steep cliffs rise behind a very large sandy beach to which access is only found at Duckpool and Sandymouth. Inland, the property contains the impressive historic remains of Kilkhampton Castle and the Great House of Stowe.

Duckpool

P R M 


A Romano-British forge and the medieval port for Kilkhampton were discovered on the beach at Duckpool in the 1980s by Mr Richard Hurd and, following erosion both by the sea and by vehicles driving over the site, was excavated by Jeanette Radcliffe of the Cornwall Archaeological Unit. Inappropriate parking of cars, and coastal erosion have continued to degrade these sites, and past attempts at preventing vehicles parking there have been vandalised (gates have been chainsawed twice). A recent initiative has involved meeting the local Parish Councils and writing a piece for the village newsletters, highlighting the significance of these remains. Instead of gates, large random boulders were placed to prevent parking across the key area.

Kilkhampton Castle

M 

The estate includes the impressive earthwork remains of the Norman motte and bailey castle of Kilkhampton from which the views are extensive and inspiring. Here, Countryside Stewardship funding has successfully been gained, to include the installation of a water supply to the motte and bailey to permit grazing, as well as to produce an archaeological survey of the property, completed in October 1999.

Stowe Barton

P M 

Stowe is located within Kilkhampton parish in the extreme north of Cornwall. The National Trust property at Stowe Barton has particular historic and archaeological importance as the site of the great country house, built in 1679 for John Grenville, first Earl of Bath. Described as 'by far the noblest house in the west of England' (Lysons, 1814, 165), it was surrounded by extensive formal gardens of the same period. Both the gardens and the Great House of Stowe have since



Lanhydrock: View of the deer park wall at Lanhydrock, which has recently been subject to conservation with part funding from Countryside Stewardship.

BRIAN MUELANER/NATIONAL TRUST

gone, surviving now as a complex of intriguing and extensive earthworks which lie on the southern lip of Coombe valley, to the south-east of Stowe Barton farmhouse. The earthworks are remarkable for their completeness and exceptional preservation; they were surveyed and planned for the National Trust in 1992 by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME).

Because of the importance of this archaeological landscape, the tenant's requirements for new agricultural buildings at Stowe Barton resulted in very careful planning to allow the sensitive positioning of the structures. Not only was it critical to reduce the impact on this most important site but also to ensure that excavations would not damage parts of the great house of Stowe. A watching brief is incorporated into the building project.

References

- Lysons, D. & S. 1814 *Magna Britannia III, Cornwall*
 Wilson-North, W.R. 1992 *Stowe: The Country House and Garden of the Grenville Family: A Survey by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England*

Rapid Assessment Surveys on North Cornwall properties

Mp 

Three new archaeological surveys were commissioned from the Cornwall Archaeological Unit at Home Farm (Boscastle), Royston Farm (Delabole) and Bre Pen Farm (Mawgan Porth). As the latter two are generally considered to be of

lower archaeological potential, the newly devised 'rapid assessment survey' technique was used in preference to full survey. This has resulted in a substantially better understanding of the properties and caused a change in management practices to better suit their needs.

SOUTH EAST CORNWALL

Brian Meulaner

COUNTRYSIDE MANAGER

Lanhydrock - the Deer Wall

Pm 

Between 1650 and 1780 the deer park of Lanhydrock was an important feature of the post-medieval Cornish landscape.

It was ringed by a 2m high and 1.5m wide stone-faced hedge with 1m deep ditch on the inner side. One section of the original wall, approximately 300m long, is still in remarkably good condition. Over the centuries trees have grown out of the hedge, fallen onto it or blown over, taking sections of hedge with them. A recent project (50% funded by Countryside Stewardship) has involved removing all trees less than 200 years old, replacing all missing stone facing and cleaning out the ditch and diverting water back into it. The ancient deer wall should now be ready to stand for another 350 years.

The following reports record projects which were undertaken by staff of the Cornwall Archaeological Unit (CAU) on behalf of the National Trust:

Cotehele Estate



Danescombe Valley

Works funded by English Partnerships and organised by Cornwall County Council are already under way on the Danescombe Valley (west of Calstock), an area owned mostly by the National Trust. This included consolidation of the paper mill, the saw mill and two chimney stacks, and the improvement of the valley's footpath network. The CAU were involved in archaeological survey to identify sites and features and set out management proposals.

Ethy, St Winnow



Ethy is an eighteenth-century park on the north bank of the Lerryn River and is part of a National Trust property that has been managed mainly for its superb creek and valley side woodlands. The Trust intends to restore the park, which is in agricultural tenancy, to something like its former glory, the fine Georgian country house having been sold some years ago. The Cornwall Archaeological Unit was commissioned to prepare an historic landscape survey for Ethy in the autumn of 1997 as part of an application for Countryside Stewardship funding.

As well as historical and archaeological surveys (the latter undertaken by Cathy Parkes),

the Unit recorded views within, from, and to the park, to help understand and reconstruct the original designs of the multi-period ornamental landscape at Ethy. The Courtneys, that famous Devon family, had established a branch here in the sixteenth century, but Ethy had been a locally important house as early as the late thirteenth century. Fragments of a seventeenth-century garden layout survive, including embanked avenues along an L-shaped approach and part of a raised walk from which distant views of the Lerryn and Fowey Rivers could be had. The main park, with lawns edged by ha-has and containing scattered standard trees, was laid out in the seventeenth century by the Arscotts, and altered and extended by Admiral Penrose, a colourful tenant of the Mount Edgcumbes, in the early nineteenth century. Walks and drives were guided past rocky outcrops in the wooded western valley and down to a boathouse and quay at Ethy rock, a low headland in the tidal Lerryn River.

These woodlands, and the wood pastures on the southern creekside slopes, can be demonstrated from both archives and archaeology to be ancient, and thus valuable habitats. To better understand their communities, and to ensure that future management conserves and enhances them, a number of biological surveys, supplementary to the Trust's decennial biological surveys, were commissioned from specialists. All produced valuable information (their lists including numerous protected and rare species) which enhanced an understanding of the development and dynamics of the various parts of



Penberth Cove: The old capstan, paved slipway, and fish cellars at Penberth Cove, originally associated with the Cornish pilchard industry. CORNWALL ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT

the property, not just the woodlands but also the park and the neglected western valley-bottom meadows and orchards.

The National Trust will use these findings to ensure that Ethy retains its historic integrity and remains one of the most beautiful and ecologically important corners of Cornwall.

WEST PENWITH

Pendeen to Penberth



Penberth Cove & Treen Cliff

An archaeological assessment carried out for the National Trust included Treen and Rospletha Cliffs, and Penberth Valley and Cove. The assessment consisted of a limited amount of historical research, followed by a rapid walk-over survey. The aim was to define the different types of historic landscape (Coastal Rough Ground, Anciently Enclosed Land, nineteenth/twentieth-century Flower Fields) in Penberth Cove, identify specific archaeological sites, and draw up archaeological management recommendations for the property.

St Ives to Pendeen



St Just Mines

In St Just the National Trust, CAU and Cornwall County Council Land Reclamation Team working in partnership, have continued to promote shaft treatment methods which reduce the hazards which these sites can pose, yet minimise the impact of the works on their archaeology, ecology and visual amenity. All of the engine houses owned by the National Trust in the St Just area have now been consolidated to a very high standard.

St Michael's Mount



Study of the finds from the excavations in 1997 has revealed fragments of the same kinds of post-Roman Mediterranean amphorae (large storage vessels) that have made Tintagel such a famous site. The six shards of 'B wares' are the first concrete evidence to support earlier suggestions that the Mount may have served a similar function as 'Arthurian' Tintagel, namely as a courtly centre for a local elite.

Ethy: Aerial view of Ethy from the south-west. The park with its ha-has and scattered trees, is to the right of the house, above the tidal Lerryn River. Ethy Wood, an ancient semi-natural oak wood, runs up the sunny side of the valley in the left foreground.

BRIAN MUELANER/NATIONAL TRUST



LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION PROJECT**Mapping historic woodlands** Mp **A**

The 1994 Historic Landscape Characterisation project identified a number of zones where archaeological recording and landscape history research has been less thorough than others. One of these was Steep-Sided Valleys. The parts of the Cornish historic landscape which contain most of the county's ancient woodland. In the years since 1994 the CAU has welcomed opportunities including those provided by surveys for the National Trust to investigate such valleys, either in themselves or as elements of the wider landscapes. Surveys of Lanydrock, and Ethy were joined in 1997-98 by another at Home Farm in Minster, a property newly acquired by the Trust.

Most of these archaeological and historical surveys have been undertaken in conjunction with various biological surveys, and all have identified areas of both ancient and secondary woodlands. Typical components of the former have been large numbers of coppice stools (mainly oak and hazel) with more variable numbers of charcoal burners' platforms, (a handful in Minster Wood at Home Farm). Woodland banks built around perimeters and to subdivide woods were recorded on all sites, as were woodsmen's trackways.

Equally important has been the lack of evidence of any arable farming within the woods; no field systems, lynchets or cultivation ridges. This negative archaeological evidence can be added to the many biological indicators of continuous woodland cover confirm that these woods really are ancient. They are not, however, wildwoods as all have been thoroughly and intensively managed and harvested from at least the medieval period.



Minster Wood, Home Farm: Aerial view of the northern part of Home Farm, looking north-west down the Valency valley to Boscastle. Minster Wood is in the foreground, to the right of the medieval-derived field system; that part of the wood nearest the camera is ancient semi-natural woodland but that near the car park is secondary woodland, colonising neglected medieval fields.