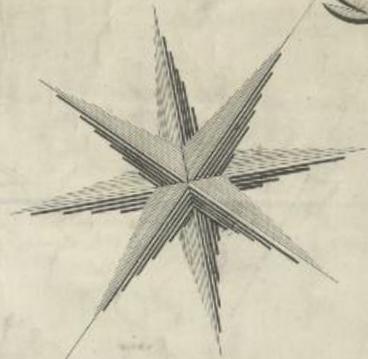




East Devon

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Parishscapes Project 2007–2010

BRINGING THE PAST TO LIFE

Evaluation Report



PARISHSCAPES HAS BEEN SUPPORTED BY



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Parishscapes Project 2007–2010

BRINGING THE PAST TO LIFE

Main Report

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

<i>AONB</i>	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<i>Apportionment</i>	The supporting recording sheets for the tithe maps
<i>DCC</i>	Devon County Council
<i>DRO</i>	Devon Record Office
<i>EDDC</i>	East Devon District Council
<i>Geo-rectification</i>	Modifying boundaries of old maps to fit modern day electronic maps
<i>GIS</i>	Geographical Information System – digitally mapped information
<i>HER/S</i>	Historic Environment Record/Service – record based in DCC
<i>IT</i>	Information Technology – the service/use of computers and electronic equipment for information
<i>Polygonisation</i>	Assigning information to individual parcels (e.g. fields) of digitally mapped information
<i>Tithe map</i>	Maps drawn up in the mid 1800s to record land cover/value for tax purposes in England
<i>HLF</i>	Heritage Lottery Fund

SECTION 1

Project Background

IN A SHORT space of time the pilot Parishscapes project (2005–6), based in Branscombe and Beer, achieved a great deal. Most of all, it emphasised the value of providing resources to increase access to heritage information and to find ways of bringing such information alive and technically available.

From the perspective of the AONB Partnership there was a strong desire to see this work develop further within the AONB as a mechanism for increasing awareness and engagement around the inter-related subjects of *heritage*, *biodiversity* and *landscape*.

The initial Parishscapes pilot project demonstrated the value of creating channels of communication within communities, between communities, between communities and organisations such as the AONB or English Nature and across generations. It also demonstrated the ways in which heritage, biodiversity and landscape can be expressed – from digitised tithe maps to camcorder recordings of former quarrying works.

As a minimum the AONB Partnership wished to see an AONB wide record of the digitised tithe maps. As part of this work however, it would be vital to improve access to this heritage record which up to now has been locked away and out of reach to most – ideally through the development of web site access. Complementing this wider work should be the networking and collaborative engagement of local interest groups and individuals, agencies and organisations through the medium of recording, art, walks, talks and imagery ... the process.

Discussions with educational institutions, local contacts, funding agencies and key organisations led to the submission and successful award of a HLF grant in 2007 for a strategic Parishscapes project covering the whole of the East Devon AONB – this is the report on that project.

SECTION 2

Project Aims and Achievements

AIMS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PARISHCAPES PROJECT

What we set out to do	What we achieved
Digitise the remaining twenty-seven parish tithe maps of the AONB using the landscape cover technique developed during the pilot Parishscapes project – linking with the Devon Record Office and SW Digital Tithe Map Project.	Digitised thirty-six maps for the AONB in the first year – the support and close working with the Devon Record Office has led to the digitisation process being applied across the whole of Devon – some 400+ parishes.
Provide an accompanying narrative account for each parish tithe map.	This has effectively been achieved through the digital production of the apportionment sheets (for which a standard template has been devised). The apportionment sheets accompanied the tithe maps and recorded such things as ownership, crop, and values.
Collate DVD oral accounts on selected key landscape features within the AONB as determined through community consultation process groups.	We have over thirty hours of (archived) landscape related recordings covering occupations, trades, transport, rural crafts, women's work, etc.
Convene events and workshops to connect schools and communities as a means of portraying landscape perceptions past and present.	The annual Parishscapes Conference provided an excellent medium through which to connect a wide range of interests. 'First of all, congratulations on producing such a splendid day last Saturday – R.S. told me it was the best history conference he had ever been to ...'

What we set out to do	What we achieved
Create and present heritage information on landscape change through a variety of mediums for use in schools, through events, etc.	We ran a number of projects with local schools which have helped to deliver their curriculum, in particular in helping to understand the environment around them. A key project at Newton Poppleford school focussed on a former mill site and has been warmly received by the local community.
Create webpages for the digitised maps, oral accounts, community accounts/portraits and supporting information via the existing AONB website.	Webpages established and detailed information and links provided – the most frequently visited part of the AONB website.
Use best practice examples from the Parishscapes project for fledgling parishes to engage with – encouraging parish hubs and mentoring to coordinate ideas/events.	The mentoring and networking approach worked in effect through the annual Parishscapes conference and joint involvement in the excavation at Northleigh.
Organise walks, talks, travelling exhibitions and events across the AONB.	A range of walks, talks and events reached a wide audience from school children to European colleagues. Additionally, the project provided resources and support to a number of locally run history group events.

SECTION 3

Structure and Delivery

PROJECT OFFICER

THE PARISHSCAPES OFFICER was experienced in the historic environment and almost of equal importance, community involvement – essential characteristics for the project.

He worked a three day week for three years, which gave more time for contacts to be forged, information to trickle down to communities, etc., as compared to working full-time for two years. It also allowed time to carry out complementary professional and consultancy work and voluntary activity for example with the Devon History Society (as Vice Chair).

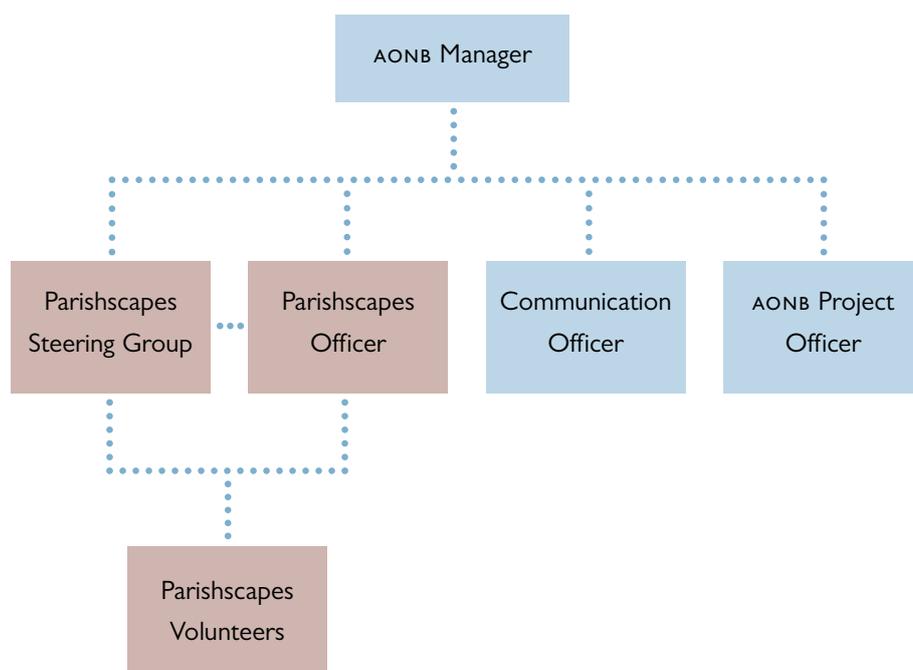


FIGURE 1
The East Devon AONB team
and Parishscapes project

THE VALUE OF WORKING WITHIN AN EXISTING PARTNERSHIP AND SUPPORT NETWORK

The project officer was part of the East Devon AONB team and immediately benefited from the accumulated experience of the team as regards IT, GIS, local knowledge, contacts etc. In addition the GIS department at East Devon District Council (EDDC) provided training and advice and was incredibly supportive and helpful.

The AONB office is in Honiton and is connected to the Sidmouth based EDDC server. The lead volunteer for the project, Martin Smith, was provided with a hot-desk at EDDC, allowing him to liaise more closely with the GIS team – geo-rectifying tithe maps and linking them with the apportionment data that was coming in from upwards of twenty volunteer transcribers across the parishes.

THE PROJECT STEERING GROUP

The steering group originally consisted of Barbara Farquharson (Branscombe Project), Chris Woodruff (AONB Manager), Bill Horner (Deputy County Archaeologist), Amanda Newsome (Natural England) and Charlie Plowden (Countryside Manager EDDC).

John Draisey (Devon Record Office) and Martin Smith (lead volunteer) joined the group and Cressida Whitton (Devon HER) replaced Bill Horner in the latter years. Charlie Plowden withdrew due to general pressure on meetings, but asked to be kept up to date with minutes, agendas, etc.

The group met every three months and provided considerable support to the project officer. For example, John Draisey's knowledge on copyright and permissions relating to oral history interviews; Cressida Whitton's assistance in planning and preparing the Disappeared Houses excavation.

DATA

As the project evolved so the equipment needs had to keep pace – this required changes to the planned provision. A small camcorder was purchased, rather than a semi-professional model, when it became clear that older people could be intimidated by a big camera!

An additional laptop was purchased to allow volunteers to polygonise maps from home and then hand on the laptop to the next person. It soon became clear that too much data (map and oral history) was being generated to be stored on the EDDC system and a first and then a second hard drive was purchased.

SUPPORT

A relationship with the Devon Record Office (DRO) was soon forged (previous employer of the Parishscapes Officer) and as noted above, John Draisey (county archivist) joined the Steering Group. Very quickly the project entered an agreement with the DRO whereby a shared resource was produced – digitised images of the thirty-six tithe maps of East Devon AONB.

This was no mean achievement as it involved transportation of the tithe maps up to Coal Board offices in Nottingham, where a specially configured camera/plinth was available to copy the maps, some of which were enormous. In addition to advising on copyright issues, the DRO advised on authorisation slips for oral history interviews and provided an end of project repository for the data collected by the project – all extremely important aspects of its success.

VOLUNTEERS

Three main volunteers emerged who gave extensive support to the project and helped in the coordination of others. From the second of the year project this voluntary support was complemented by paid activity in order to ensure that all the main data entry would be completed before the end of the project. The three main volunteers were:

- *Martin Smith* – lead volunteer and co-ordinator of all mapped information and apportionments.
- *Sue Dymond* – oral history interviewer and transcriber.
- *Robert Beard* – IT support and tithe map ‘polygoniser’. Robert, a



FIGURE 2

Large scale photo table erected by ICAM at the Devon Record Office following the initial digitisation of the East Devon AONB tithe maps

recent graduate, has been able to use the Parishscapes Project as a springboard to work in protected landscapes.

A much larger group of volunteers (over twenty) were recruited, through walks, talks and the annual conference. These volunteers provided useful input as tithe map apportionment transcribers but Parishscapes also increased their skills base through surveying experience, archive training (with the DRO) and excavation experience.

SECTION 4

Overview of Outputs

OVERALL AIMS

AS REGARDS working to the aims of project, the only aim which it could be said was not wholly met was the hope that ‘hub’ parishes would help extend the work to surrounding parishes. Hubs did in fact emerge (Woodbury, Ottery, Colyton and Uplyme) but local history is very much parish based and only a few individuals go to meetings of any sort in adjoining parishes. The annual Parishscapes Conference emerged as a means of establishing a community hub by default, developing links and networks and enabling email addresses to be exchanged by individuals engaged in similar activity.

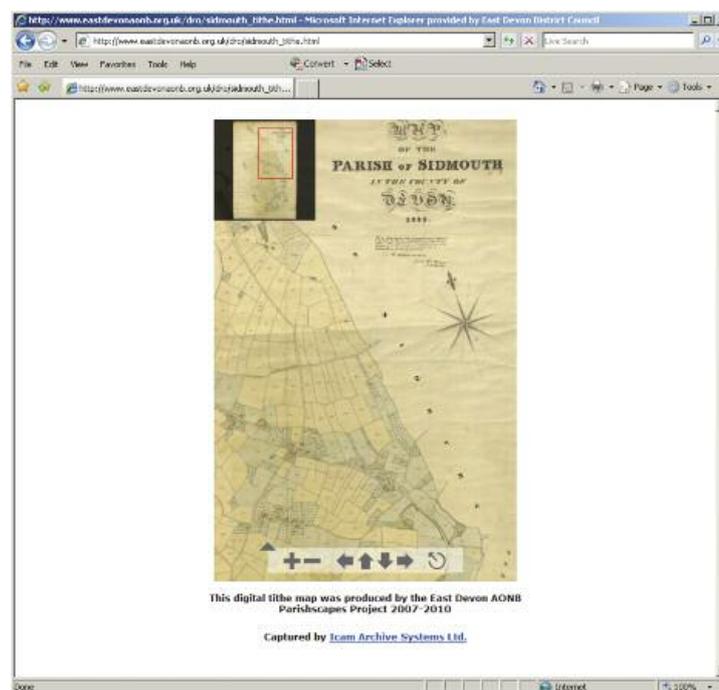


FIGURE 3

Tithe map on pages of East Devon AONB web site with a ‘zoom’ facility for ease of use

NEW AREAS ‘BEYOND THE TITHE MAPS’

Parishscapes also took up local interest in ‘disappeared houses’ (houses present on the 1840 tithe map but absent today) to form a Disappeared Houses Research Group. This group began work by developing a recording form for disappeared houses (with advice from Devon HER) and moved on to site clearance on an important site (Aplins Farm) and finally to excavation of a dwelling at Summerdown (Northleigh).

COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

There is no doubt that the tithe maps provided the essential mechanism for community engagement, with individuals, Parish councils and with schools. No-one could fail to be attracted to these very visual reminders of what the nineteenth-century landscape looked like.

Previously only consultable through a visit to the DRO in Exeter, these often enormous maps could easily be viewed once in digital form and all interested parties could ‘zoom in’ on their own property or onto parts of their parish which interested them. The data was initially supplied on disk, free of charge, and subsequently via the internet on the East Devon AONB site (also with ‘zoom’ and ‘print-off’ facilities). Thanks to speedy co-operation with the DRO and the digital map producing company, the tithe maps were available within a month of the project starting – the significance of this timing cannot be underestimated.

Because the tithe maps do need some explanation to become a usable resource (unlike OS maps they were drawn for fiscal rather



FIGURE 4
Otter Valley Association
members self run training
day on tithe maps

than general topographic reasons), the project officer preferred to present the maps to schools and Parish Councils rather than simply post them; all the Parish Councils in the AONB were offered this service and many took it up.

The availability of the maps on line also encouraged others to learn how to access them. Through the lead volunteer (Martin Smith) the Otter Valley Association ran its own in house training event for group members to appraise them on the maps, the information and how to access them on line.

It was through the resulting discussions that volunteers were recruited to transcribe the apportionments, school projects were



FIGURE 5
School children experience
direct access to tithe maps



FIGURE 6
School children experience
exploring tithe maps

formulated and interest generated in the historical landscape walks and other activities.

We ran a number of projects with local schools which helped to deliver their curriculum, in particular in helping to understand the environment around them. A number of schools requested a visit and tithe map data, but several (East Budleigh, Newton Poppleford and Beer) went on to use the data and our expertise to develop a project of their own. A key project at Newton Poppleford School focussed on a former mill site and was warmly received by the local community.

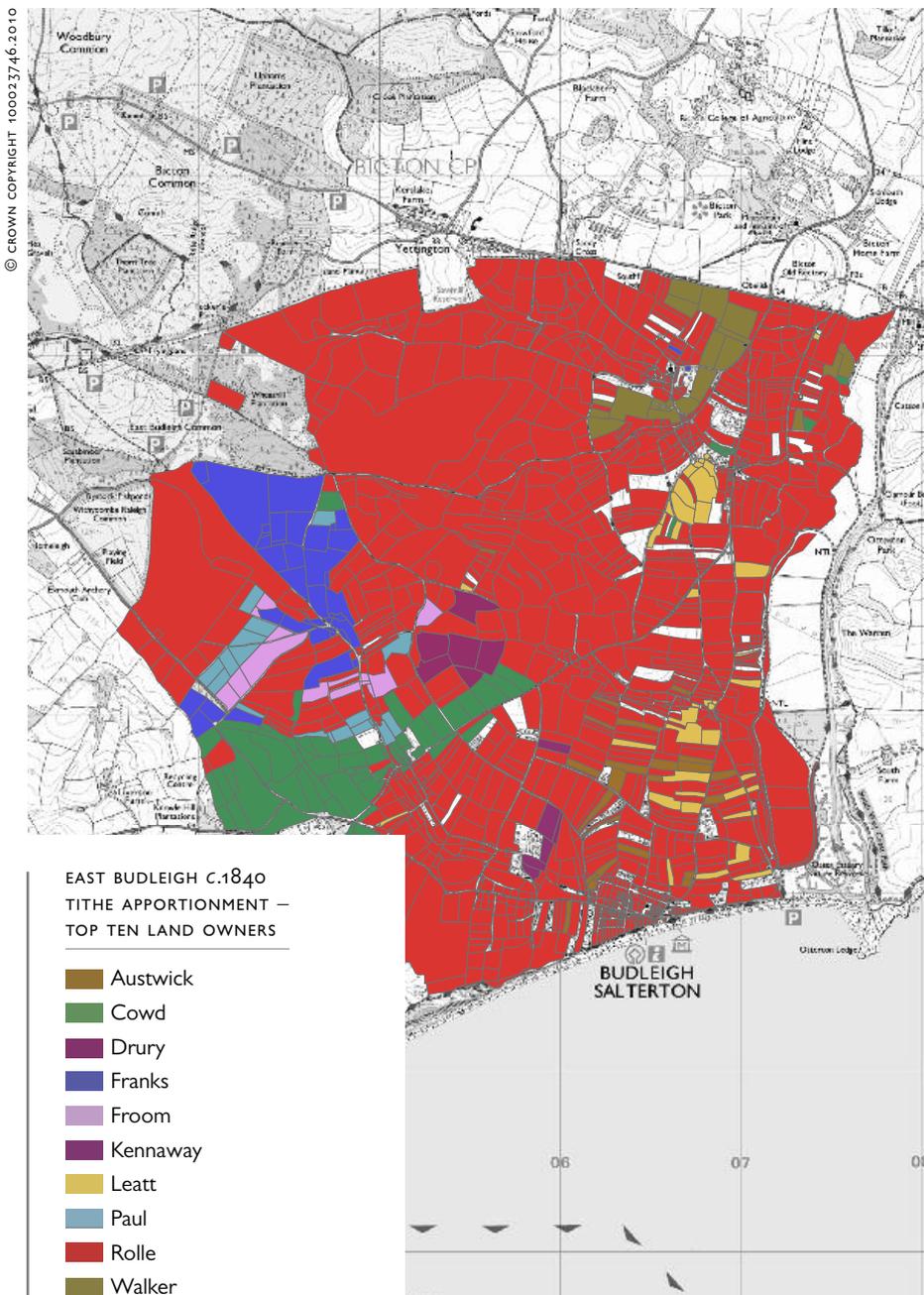


FIGURE 7
Landownership in
East Budleigh at the time
of the tithe map

DEVELOPING THE MAPS

The geo-rectified and polygonised digital tithe maps are a permanent resource for local people and for researchers. They provide a visual interpretation of the tithe maps on a modern map base, integrating the apportionment data and allowing for further research and development.

A huge amount of data was produced by volunteers for a coordinating volunteer to collate. Martin Smith emerged as the lead volunteer in this activity and EDDC kindly made a desk available at the Knowle.

Here he was able to liaise with the other five volunteers who had

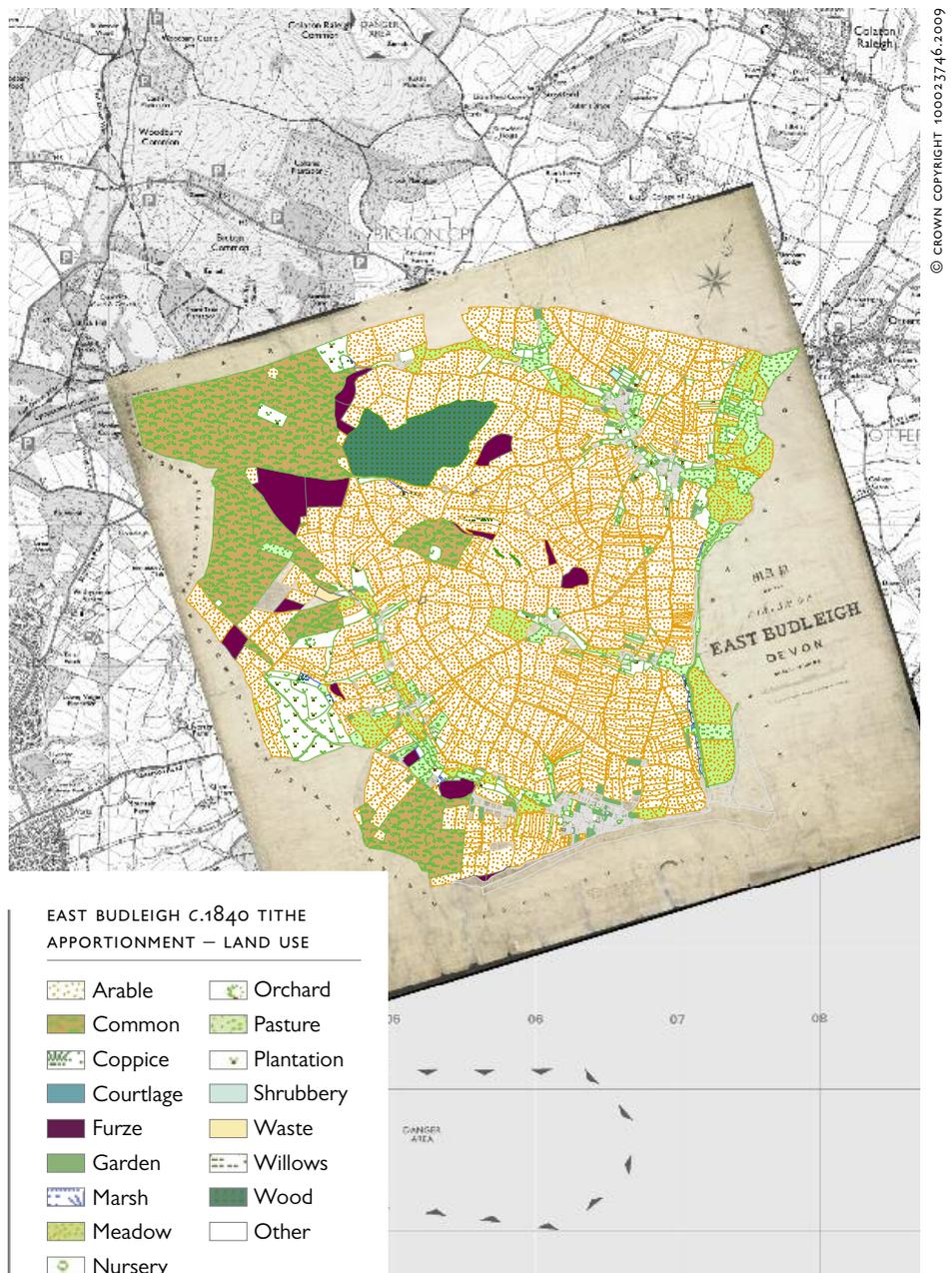


FIGURE 7A
Land cover in East Budleigh at the time of the tithe map (prior to full integration on GIS mapbase)

received training and over twenty volunteers who transcribed apportionments. Transcription notes for transcribers were produced so that everyone followed the same parameters (Appendix 3) and a diary of activity was also kept.

Not only would this work, representing hundreds of hours of work and thousands of discrete data, cost an enormous sum of money to be done professionally, but, arguably, local knowledge in the form of terrain, dialect, corruption of words, etc., was essential to guarantee accuracy – the sort of accuracy that could not be provided by commercial data entry companies from outside the area.

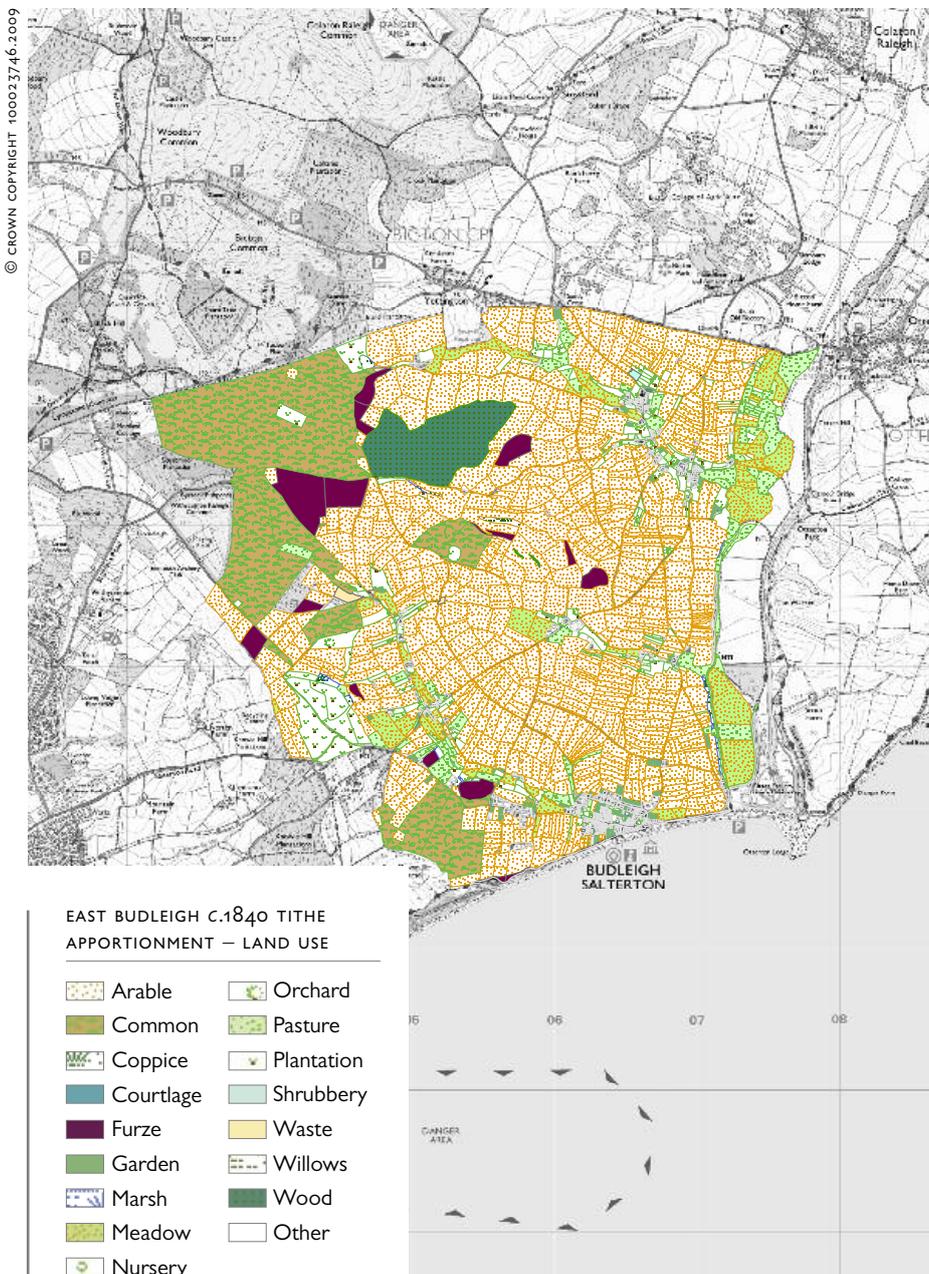
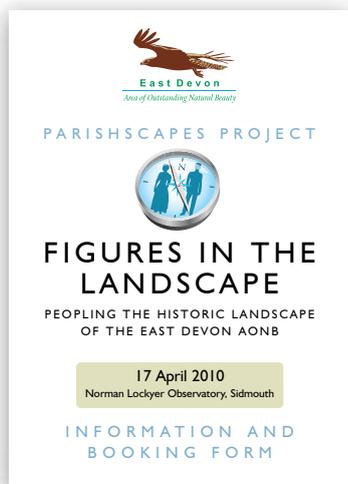


FIGURE 7B
Land cover in East Budleigh at the time of the tithe map integrated onto os base

Figures 7, 7A, and 7B show the result of this work: a land ownership map and a land use map of East Budleigh Parish (the area is now two separate parishes, Budleigh Salterton and East Budleigh). These images are a combination of the tithe map geo-rectified onto an OS base and the digitised data from the apportionment schedule polygonised to effectively ‘fill’ the fields.

Below: flier for annual Parishscapes Conference 2010



WALKS, TALKS AND EVENTS

The project organised talks in all the parishes and to local amenity groups and history societies about how the ancient landscape is ‘legible’ in the present landscape. It also responded to requests from elsewhere (Devon and Dorset), the SW Protected Landscapes Forum, Tamar AONB, North Devon Archaeological society, and RAMM Exeter, to present the Parishscapes approach to community history.

The three annual Parishscapes Conferences (years two and three oversubscribed) acted as the project’s centre-piece for networking, hub, PR and awareness raising exercise which helped to develop links and activity with others. In addition to these main events, the project supported and helped to resource local history exhibitions at Uplyme, Ottery St Mary and Axminster.

A series of walks were organised and delivered in which archaeologists, local landowners and experts shared their knowledge of the landscape. Some of these walks, (Sidbury Castle for example) allowed members of the public to see parts of the historic landscape to which they do not usually have access. Some walks were oversubscribed and were therefore repeated.



FIGURE 8
Walk on Sidbury Castle

ORAL HISTORY

The bald figure of over thirty hours of filmed interview, although creditable, does little justice to the many ways these oral histories have helped give the East Devon AONB a 'personalised' identity.

The testimonies, which have all been landscape related: occupations, trades, transport, rural crafts, women's work, etc. have aroused considerable community interest and as a by-product, have given older people, often undervalued in our towns and villages, renewed self-esteem. The older people have, in turn, been very generous in retrieving interesting photographs, paintings and documents which have further enhanced our understanding.

Filming with a camcorder need not be a technically difficult or expensive exercise but local history societies, whilst conscious of its value, have been reluctant to engage in this activity. It is in truth, probably best handled by someone outside the community who is seen as somehow more professional, detached and objective, and therefore unlikely to get involved in the old quarrels that are never far below the surface in our town and villages.

However, it was local history societies, Ottery St Mary and Colyton in particular, who drew up a short list and programmed the interviews. Ottery St Mary subsequently set aside a room at their local history exhibition where the Ottery interviews were played back to visitors to the exhibition.

The decision to film interviews on a camcorder was appropriate in a landscape setting, allowing the camera lens to follow the pointing finger. It is only in future years that the full value of these interviews



FIGURE 9

A still frame from one of the digital recordings – brick-making by Jeff Woodley

SECTION 4 OVERVIEW OF OUTPUTS

will be apparent. It was a privilege to be invited into kitchens and living rooms (small, dark and cosy), redolent of a bygone age and which will soon only be recreated in museum displays.

Old people who worked outdoors in the landscape preferred their interiors to be small, dark and cosy. Today's 'picture windows' are suited to those who no longer spend so long outdoors. The filmed record of these interiors will also provide a permanent record. All interviewees have, once they have viewed a DVD of their interview, signed a release slip to the effect that their testimony can be used for archival, educational and non-commercial purposes.

A BRIEF SNAPSHOT OF THE OUTPUTS

Actions	Areas	Numbers involved
Schools we worked with included:	Beer, Branscombe, Budleigh Salterton, Dalwood, East Budleigh, Farway, Newton Poppleford, Tipton St John	c.230 children
Parishes where we held meetings:	Twenty-seven parishes in East Devon AONB plus Exmouth and Sidmouth	Av. 13 per meet (351)
Parishes where we assisted in events:	Uplyme, Ottery St Mary and Axminster	
Parishes offered digital and hard copy of tithe map:	All parishes	Thirty-three
Walks were provided at:	Branscombe, Colyford, Northleigh, Otterton, Sidbury Castle (x2) and Uplyme	c.200 attendees
Activities outside the study area were provided for a wide range of organisations ranging from:	North Devon (North Devon Archaeological Society) to the far west of the County (Ugborough History Society), via Exeter (Royal Albert Museum) and out of County (Dorchester – SW protected landscapes) and internationally (Franco-English cross-border workshop – May 2008)	
Parishscapes Conferences:	Three – annual, oversubscribed, Norman Lockyer (Sidmouth)	c.280 attendees

SECTION 5

Quantative Evaluation

Activities:

	All that apply	Number provided	Participants (total)
Open Days	•	3	280
Festivals			
Temporary exhibitions and displays	•	3	100
Guided tours or walks	•	7	200
Visits from schools and colleges			
Outreach sessions in schools and colleges	•	8	230
Other on-site activities	•	3	18
Other outreach or off-site activities	•	1	16
Publications or IT applications	•	1	25

Volunteers:

- Number of volunteers working on project, from start to finish: 30 +
- Number of volunteer hours delivered in total: 1,960
- Number of volunteers working on project in the last twelve months: 20
- Age of volunteers:
 - 11–16: 0%
 - 17–18: 0%
 - 19–25: 3%
 - 26–59: 14%
 - 60+: 83%

Gender of volunteers working on project:

- Male: 65%
- Female: 35%

Ethnic groups of volunteers working on project:

- Asian (Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, other): 0%
- Asian (Chinese): 0%
- Black (Caribbean, African, other): 0%
- Mixed ethnic group: 0%
- White: 100%
- Other: 0%

Socio-economic groups of volunteers working on project:

- Higher managerial and professional occupations: 0%
- Lower managerial and professional occupations: 10%
- Intermediate occupations: 0%
- Small employers and own account workers: 80%
- Lower supervisory and technical occupations: 0%
- Semi-routine occupations: 0%
- Routine occupations: 0%
- Long-term unemployed (retired): 10%

Training:

- Number of people receiving training through the project: 18
- Skills trained in:
 - Construction: no
 - Conservation – land, habitats, species: no
 - Conservation – buildings, monuments: no
 - Archaeology: yes (15)
 - Conservation – industrial, maritime and transport heritage: no
 - Conservation – collections including oral history: yes (7)
 - Delivering participation, including consultation and volunteer management: no
 - Managing heritage sites, including customer care and marketing
 - Media skills, including websites, films and recordings: yes (5 – trained in GIS related skills)

Age of trainees:

- 16–18: 0%
- 26–59: 15%
- 19–25: 5%
- 60+: 80%

Gender of trainees:

- Male: 60%
- Female: 40%

Ethnic groups of trainees:

- Asian (Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, other): 0%
- Asian (Chinese): 0%
- Black (Caribbean, African, other): 0%
- Mixed ethnic group: 0%
- White: 100%
- Other: 0%

Trainees considering themselves as having a disability: 0%

Socio-economic groups of trainees:

- Higher managerial and professional occupations: 33%
- Lower managerial and professional occupations: 34%
- Intermediate occupations: 33%
- Small employers and own account workers: 0%
- Lower supervisory and technical occupations: 0%
- Semi-routine occupations: 0%
- Routine occupations: 0%
- Long-term unemployed (retired): 0%

Staff employed in delivering the project: 1 part time staff (0.6 fte)

SECTION 6

Qualitative Evaluation

1 SUMMARY

This qualitative evaluation was carried out independently for East Devon AONB by Jenny Archard during May 2010, as the Parishscapes project was drawing to a close. The focus of the evaluation was capturing the experiences and comments of those involved during the life of the project, so that any lessons can be learned and ideas taken forward.

1.1 THE QUALITATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS

There were two elements to the evaluation. The first was a series of interviews with nine people. This included most of the Steering Group and some key Volunteers. The second was an email which was sent out to ninety-four people who had been involved with the project in some way – fourteen replied within the timescale set. The quotes from those two groups are used to illustrate this evaluation. (Names of respondents and questions are in the Appendices.)

Two comments from this process encapsulate what the Parishscapes project achieved:

This was a fantastic project which I believe set a marvellous precedent for other similar work. It developed volunteer skills and encouraged wide participation in all its work, rather than simply exploiting available labour. The return for this was a really worthwhile archive and living resource, multi-faceted in its content and appeal – useful for tourism, environment, leisure, heritage, study and analysis. It should be a blueprint for other cross-discipline projects and I believe the credit for this goes very much to the project leadership and its vision.

Parishscapes showed how a talented project leader with a modest budget can inspire and coordinate a large number of interested volunteers to carry out a task of considerable historical, geographical, social and environmental importance. Phil's patience and 'light touch' overseeing of the project meant that volunteers did not feel resentful at the work they were being asked to do, but could fit it into their daily lives. From my point of view, it would be hard to improve on this project.

This evaluation has provided an opportunity to celebrate what has so obviously been a successful project, from many different viewpoints. It is aptly summed up in the following quotes:

We are really pleased with it – they deserve [the success].
—Helen Wheatley, Heritage Lottery Fund

A refreshing project – very specific and local.
—Amanda Newsome, Natural England

2 PROJECT DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT

This section has comments from members of the Steering Group and volunteers.

2.1 WHAT WORKED WELL – KEY FACTORS IN THE SUCCESS OF PARISHSCAPES

The Parishscapes Project Officer, Philippe Planel, was repeatedly singled out as crucial to the projects success – most people commented that it was his skills and approach that made the project work. Everyone made positive comments about his ability to engage people and work in a light touch way with the volunteers. His face-to-face approach, including doing talks at many Parish Council meetings, was very successful.

Phil was crucial – the success of the project was very much to do with his skills.

He was very inclusive and encouraging and had a big capacity as well as being very interested in the historic environment.
—Steering Group members

He was easy to get on with, persuasive and it was enjoyable working with him.
—Volunteer

The AONB team as a whole were seen as easy to work with, very supportive to the volunteers and to the Steering Group. When working with a large cohort of volunteers, it is frequently the relationships that are formed that are the deciding factor. Chris Woodruff as overall Manager was also praised for his management, which played a large part in the project's success.

They were all remarkably flexible.

Very open-minded.

They were responsive to needs, problems were sorted out, wheels were oiled.

—Volunteers

Support from the East Devon District Council ICT team was invaluable to the completion of the technical aspects of the project with volunteers.

They were very accommodating and offered assistance when they didn't need to.

—Volunteer

All of the intended outcomes were achieved. This may not be surprising given the comment from the HLF Officer, 'I was impressed with the application from the start so was not surprised [at its success].'

The Parishscapes activities that people reported on most often during this evaluation were:

- The digitisation of the tithe maps and the corresponding apportionments, which together form an 'amazing research tool' and 'a lovely, solid creation' (volunteer and Steering Group members). Getting all the tithe maps digitised in the first year was seen as the key that 'enabled the project to progress rapidly' (Steering Group member). A volunteer also commented that 'the provision of digital tithe maps, initially on CDs, gave the volunteers the encouragement needed to digitize apportionment rolls and field polygons.'
- The Annual Conferences were a focal point. They broadened involvement and got different people along each time. They allowed people to talk directly to each other and make personal links which then led to collaboration. They were 'a lovely forum for people to talk to each other' (volunteer and Steering Group member). The three conferences were a full house every time. A Heritage Professional

remarked: ‘One of the best day conferences that I have been to – and I do go to quite a lot related to my business.’

- The walks, which were so well attended that sometimes a second walk in the same location was organised (the Sidbury Castle walk, for example). The ‘recipe’ for the walks, with a mix of people with different knowledge leading them, worked very well. So well in fact, that some communities are now intending to organise their own.
- The talks which Phil carried out in virtually every Parish, using the CD of the digitised tithe maps. This created more involvement and also raised the profile of the AONB across the area.
- The oral history interviews which have sparked much interest and spin-off research. ‘They will form a very valuable resource in the future’ (Steering Group member).
- The disappeared houses project, which wasn’t planned but grew from people’s interests. ‘[It] has been really exciting. [It] demonstrated the potential of disappeared sites – we ought to find out more about the history of ordinary people’ (Heritage Professional).
- The work with schools, which was limited but seen as high impact. ‘The children can relate old maps to the existing landscape; their ability to see was amazing’ (Steering Group member). ‘Unlocking information worked well with different ages. There is huge potential here’ (Steering Group member).

The involvement of volunteers underpinned all the project activity. Parishscapes was as much about community engagement as it was about any of the specific activities that took place, but without either it would not have worked. The very high levels of involvement grew as the project itself grew. It stands out as a remarkable achievement and is reflected in the very high levels of volunteer participation and their commitment.

I was impressed with volunteer involvement, with people doing the mind-numbing tasks of tables and apportionment. It created a passion – people were fascinated by their heritage.

—Steering Group Member

It was not very efficient or businesslike, but is a labour of love. It’s the people [that made it work].

—Volunteer

The composition of the Steering Group was an essential part of the mix. It was described as a free and open forum that allowed for constructive discussion around some of the knotty issues that any partnership may have to deal with.

This was a particularly good group.

—Steering Group member

This may have been down to luck, but the descriptions of good communications suggest that the approach of key staff made this an easy project to manage. The valuable connections made in the Group have a life beyond the Project itself, and have led to changes in views and new opportunities.

Working with the AONB staff and others is a fruitful source of collaboration.

—Steering Group member

It was seen as an exemplar project and very good value. It can be used for case studies by the funders and will leave a lasting legacy which others can use to build similar projects.

Good value for money; money well spent. We put in a small amount of money but it has done an awful lot and left a big legacy.

—Natural England

2.2 WHAT WORKED LESS WELL?

There were some tensions about the oral histories and in what medium they should be made available, which was worked through by the Steering Group. The community hubs aspect did not happen in the way that had been envisaged, but did happen to a lesser degree through the Annual Conferences. The work in schools was much less than had been planned, but was an element that people were excited about.

It would have been nice to have more take-up from schools, but this is down to the curriculum and to individual teachers.

—Steering Group member

There are aspects of the project that developed away from what had initially been envisaged. For example, the initial concept included looking at ‘features’ such as dewponds and limekilns and the

associated biodiversity. In practice, the focus became more one of social history. There was some frustration with this in the early days from Natural England, but that changed as the project developed its own identity.

[I expected] more focus on biodiversity and wildlife; but was not sure what that would look like ... relaxed as time went on.

—Steering Group Member

There were many ICT issues in the early days, which for some were sorted out in a way that worked, but continued to prove a barrier for at least one volunteer, who remarked: ‘One small gripe ... access to their network and the software seemed very restricted and the hours available did not fit with my working day. Eventually a laptop was provided with the software on but this had to be circulated amongst volunteers and for me this arrangement was unsatisfactory as it would have tied me to working certain times/days.’

The technology needed to make the final data interpretable is more involved than anticipated. The hyperlinking of details to the title maps is more complex than expected.

There were some comments that more publicity in the early days of the project could have involved people more quickly; three people commented that they did not find out about it until the final year.

A Conference attendee said: ‘I don’t think that I ever had any details through the post or noticed any details advertised locally about the work of the AONB it was only through a friend that I came to the conference.’

3 THE DIFFERENCE MADE BY THE PROJECT TO ACCESSING THE HERITAGE RESOURCE

This section has a focus on comments from those involved with heritage in the area including the Steering Group members from Devon Records Office and the Historic Environment Service, two locally based heritage professionals and people from three local history groups.

Volunteers were able to pursue their own interests, which led to new aspects of the project. The most notable of these was the Disappeared Houses, which raised lots of local interest. This in itself demonstrated the potential of these disappeared sites and the interest in the history of ordinary people in a relatively recent period of time.

It’s really exciting what they’ve done – people have been given permission and the tools to look into the past.

—Heritage Professional

Harnessing volunteer power will have a legacy in the local communities.

We are always pleased to see something that awakens an interest in local history.

—Volunteer

People from the Local History Societies have been involved and people from Parishes have connected with each other.

Our main involvement was in the Parishscapes oral history project, and a number of recorded interviews were successfully undertaken ... I believe this has been the main benefit to the History Society in their aim to record and preserve local history.

In retrospect, I wish that we had been able to devote more resources ourselves, and play a greater role in the various projects. By benefiting ourselves, we would have been able to contribute to the greater good by 'looking after our own patch' as it were. As it is we have a legacy that should endure, and prove to be a worthy learning resource, not simply a record.

—Volunteers

Volunteers gained new understanding of their landscape in a direct way. Looking at maps in detail has changed the way that one volunteer now looks at maps in general, and the way that he sees his own area. Others described how they see the area differently and how the information has been used.

Benefits to me included a greater understanding of my parish and its history, in particular the extent of orchards in the Parish. This allowed me to produce an exhibit at two Apple Days and there may be more. This exhibit generated a good deal of interest.

I have a better idea of how the community has evolved in changing economic and social circumstances. This helps to explain landscape features, place names, graveyard inscriptions, disappeared buildings, etc.

—Volunteers

The project awakened an interest in the link between the landscape and past history in local people. Having the expertise available to carry out local archaeological research was very valuable.

People showed a commitment to the excavation and I've had emails from people following up leads.

—Heritage professional

I also learned lots about archaeological method from participation in the Northleigh excavation – this was both enjoyable (despite the weather) and educational. I have worked on other digs but this was a different (equally valid) style and the comparison was very instructive.

—Volunteer

The work with schools was tricky, but inspiring.

... most of the project has sparked interest leading to local people doing further research. I worked in a primary school as part of the project investigating a disappeared silk mill.

—Volunteer

The value of the digitised tithe maps was remarked on by many people already involved with local history.

Digitising of the tithe maps is a superb achievement ... the parish apportionments will be very useful to researchers via the internet. People are already using these as research tools and it has stirred interest in local history in many parishes.

The ready availability of the tithe maps and apportionment rolls on the web is encouraging many non-specialists to take a new interest in the history of their immediate locality. It will also provide a valuable database for more serious future research into changing land use and rural society.

The availability of the maps and information online is a major advantage to local historians.

—Volunteers

4 THE DIFFERENCE MADE BY THE PROJECT FOR PEOPLE

This section focuses on the experience of volunteers and others from the local community. There were a considerable number of volunteers involved in the project. Those who took time to answer questions were very positive about the experience as a whole and the work that they took part in.

Completing the apportionments generated a great sense of

achievement and satisfaction for both volunteers and the Steering Group members. The regular updates to the website added to the motivation.

Seeing the results of one's labours appear quickly as part of a well-designed website was motivating and satisfying.

Personally, I gained considerable satisfaction from being a part of an initiative to promote the cultural life within the AONB. I am a strong supporter of making records available online, so this is fully aligned with a large part of the project deliverables.

—Volunteers

For some members of the Steering Group, their views changed or they gained more knowledge about the relationships between heritage, biodiversity and the landscape.

I am now more attuned to the idea of protected landscapes ... and it provides the right focus to do heritage work. Biodiversity hotspots are often cultural hotspots.

—Project Officer

It made me more appreciative of the historic environment in agri-environment schemes. [Natural England doesn't] have a statutory remit on the historic environment except through these schemes.

—Steering Group member

It is helpful to agri-environment schemes to have people mapping the historic environment. Having local contacts has helped to gain more knowledge of the area.

—Steering Group member

Although the work for some volunteers was quite hard, the constructive relationships had practical outcomes.

My only real problem was that I underestimated the time I needed to complete the apportionment. Perhaps Axmouth was a bit longer and more complicated than others. I found the staff at the Devon Record Office very helpful and allowing us to photograph the documents meant that we did not have to make repeated journeys to Exeter.

—Volunteer

People gained real skills, including the GIS training and working on the Disappeared Houses dig.

... it was an opportunity to gain skills we might not otherwise have been able to. For myself it was GIS training by EDDC staff'. This led to involvement in things that they would not have otherwise done.'

Doing things that I wouldn't normally have done (the excavation at Northleigh) made people feel a part of it.

—Volunteers

Some were able to develop their existing skills further, with real impact.

This was the first time I had conducted a geo-physics survey on my own and so I gained a tremendous training benefit from it ... Both the geophysics and, in particular, the field boundary will be useful in my PhD.

The feeling of involvement created as people worked on the project was very strong and genuine – there was real passion and care for their 'place'.

The project grabbed me – I lost track of time.

The advantage in being involved is that one learns to look, observe and then enquire wherever one is. The use of volunteers meant that there was a high level of commitment. No doubt also more training and coordination was required as a result, but the knowledge levels and enthusiasm was very high.

—Volunteer

The feeling of belonging to the area was enhanced for some who had not been here very long. Being involved in practical and meaningful activity with others has created community links.

I didn't know people in the area before this project; it takes time to settle in and be part of a community. I can now talk to people wouldn't normally talk to.

5 PROJECT LEGACY AND IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

There were many comments about how the work of Parishscapes should be continued, what developments have already come about, and new ideas for the project.

Clearly the maps have been digitised and made available on line and distributed to local organisations with the apportionment information. How much of the work undertaken by Phil has been recorded for use, for example by other primary schools in future or community activities which will be ongoing needs to be considered as the project draws to a close? It may be that additional arrangements need to be made to maximise the ongoing benefit from what we perceive as a valuable project.

5.1 THE DIRECT LEGACY

In the East Devon AONB team, the historic landscape knowledge and experience has permeated the team; English Heritage is now part of the AONB Partnership. Having the heritage expertise operating within the AONB team and Partnership has led to an increased understanding and awareness amongst fellow professionals that will positively influence future work with local communities and partners long into the future.

From a practical point of view, it was noted that it is extremely useful having people mapping the historic environment for agri-environment schemes, which can directly benefit the AONB.

The historical dimension of the AONB elicits a huge interest – so there should be someone to work with this
—Steering Group member

Parishscapes has served as a catalyst for the AONB team, who have worked on two Heritage based projects to follow on from this. One is a collaborative project with the French, the other based around Peter Orlando Hutchinson. If this gets the funding applied for it will in the words of one Steering Group member ‘sweep this work along’, whilst ‘co-operation with the French would be remarkable’.

Devon County Council is now digitising tithe maps across the whole county, a project which has been spurred on by the success of Parishscapes. The idea to do this had been around; Parishscapes as a pilot helped unlock the funds and establish a methodology for the apportionments. Philippe has spoken outside of the AONB area which has generated interest in other places.

The connections built with the community, and communities with each other, through this project cannot be underestimated. It has also provided a link between Local Government and local groups, which has been beneficial especially to the Local Government Officers.

The impact on the people directly involved – the Steering Group members and Volunteers – has already lead to changes to peoples

views and in some cases to their lives. It is always hard to quantify this kind of change, but with so many positive views expressed at this stage it would be very interesting to come back in a few years and ask more questions.

5.2 IDEAS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

Several people commented that there is still work to be done on Parishscapes. There are still maps to be connected – ‘we could easily continue for another year.’ The website as a resource needs further development to be properly useful.

Finish the maps – there [still] is a lot more to do. It would be nice to know how it is going but I'd like to stay involved.

—Volunteer

There was much enthusiasm for a project or resources aimed specially at schools, but this would need to take a different approach. From the experience of this project it would need to provide clearly focused resources for schools, along with a project officer to deliver them.

A key step would be getting contacts in the schools to be involved, which is difficult with the pressures on the curriculum. A suggestion for a more simple approach is an education pack, but with the value of face-to-face contact evidenced by this project, that may have limited value.

The Annual Conferences were very successful, with the mix of locals and professionals presenting on topics that people were already engaged with. Again the project has hit upon a successful ‘recipe’. An annual heritage related conference would be a good part of a new project, but seems unlikely to stand on its own.

There was one suggestion of a permanent record such as a glossy book, celebrating or presenting some of the findings. This would need resourcing, as books can be very time-consuming, especially as data has not been gathered with this in mind.

Now that the oral histories have been captured, more use can be made of them – the project needed to get them completed whilst some folk were still around. Carrying out full transcriptions could be useful.

There was one suggestion that the project could in some way be rolled out beyond this AONB; perhaps into other AONBs. Having local people take work forward was seen by some as a powerful tool, but that it could only happen successfully with the support of an intermediary body like the AONB. Another suggested that rolling this out would be difficult – for Parishscapes it was the right time and the right person to lead it.

5.3 DEVELOPING A NEW PROJECT: KEY LEARNING POINTS

One Steering Group member commented: ‘My biggest learning is that you play on the strengths of [the Project Officer].’ Working with volunteers takes a particular style and focus. A Steering Group Member said that ‘[you] can’t be too rigid with community involvement – [you] need to be dynamic and flexible.’

To get really good volunteer involvement a project is needed, with funding for an Officer who can galvanise action and provide support.

It’s hard work to keep a team of volunteers enthused and motivated.

—Steering Group member

5.4 THE LASTING IMPRESSION

Some comments made were:

The tithe map project is of lasting value (and the data must be looked after by the way – the website is hosted by EDDC at the moment, and should be developed a little more to optimise its value).

—Volunteer

I’m very pleased to have been involved with this; it got a lot of people together. I hope to keep the links and that the process will carry on beyond this.

—Steering Group Member

It’s a shame that the project has finished – we need an East Devon dimension to local and landscape history, and that almost became a reality through Parishscapes. We will have to set up East Devon History and Archaeology Group!

It has given us a greater understanding of our parish. The large estate was broken up in the 1960s and this work has allowed a glimpse back into the past which we would not have normally had.

5.5 PEOPLE CONSULTED FOR THIS EVALUATION

Interviewed (face to face or by phone):

- Chris Woodruff, AONB Manager, Steering Group Member
- Phil Planel, Parishscapes Officer, Steering Group Member
- Martin Smith, Volunteer, Steering Group Member
- John Draisey, Devon Records Office, Steering Group Member

- Barbara Farquharson, Branscombe Project, Steering Group Member and Volunteer
- Amanda Newsome, Natural England, Steering Group Member
- Cressida Whitton, DCC Historic Environment Service, Steering Group Member
- Hazel Riley, Consultant in Landscape History
- Helen Wheatley, Heritage Lottery Fund

Email replies from:

- Sue Dymond, Volunteer
- Brian Turnbull, Volunteer
- Dennis Hall, Volunteer
- Helen Tickle, Otter Valley Association
- John Griffiths, Volunteer
- Mike Lock, Volunteer
- Pat Farrell, Fine Foundation Centre at Beer
- Shirley Purves, Conference attendee
- Nichola Burley, Heritage professional and conference attendee
- Richard Wells, interested but not involved
- Sandy Sandover, Volunteer
- Chris Wakefield, Volunteer
- Lois Wakeman, Uplyme Parish Council
- Chris Saunders, Ottery St Mary Heritage Society

5.6 QUESTIONS USED

For interviews:

- 1 Your involvement/role? How long for?
- 2 Significant or key events or activities involved with?
- 3 Other significant events in the life of this project – for example, changes to the project?
- 4 What worked well for you in respect of this project?
- 5 What did not work well?
- 6 What surprises were there along the way?
- 7 How well do you think the project did against what it set out to?
- 8 What would you have done differently?
- 9 What new opportunities/ideas have emerged?
- 10 How has your organisation changed the way it works or been influenced as a result of this project?
- 11 In what ways has the project been of value to you/your organisation?
- 12 What legacy will the project leave?
- 13 What steps do you think you should be taken next?

- 14 Is there anything you would like to say about the project we have not covered?
- 15 How well has the project helped people to gain a deeper understanding of their heritage?
- 16 What impact has this had on people's ability to access to their heritage?

Via email:

- 1 In your view, what worked well and what did not work so well in this project?
- 2 What benefits did you/your organisation/your community get from being involved?
- 3 Any other comment you would like to make?

SECTION 7

Conclusions and Acknowledgements

HERITAGE Lottery Funding has allowed the East Devon AONB Partnership to develop a strategic community landscape heritage project based around tithe maps that would otherwise not have been possible.

The principal lesson in relation to project outputs is that real community projects, unlike research projects, cannot have too narrowly defined outputs, if, that is, they want to carry communities with them. If an area of work does not interest a community, the project ceases to be a community project and the output is compromised.

It is difficult to gauge the outcomes of a community project in advance because communities are dynamic, have their own ideas and agendas. A community project has to recognise this fact. In the case of Parishscapes, disappeared houses emerged as an area where many audiences in parish halls came forward with information about houses they remember having seen or were told used to exist. The project design could not have anticipated this.

An inclusive and dynamic steering group allowed the project to be guided and developed in a way that developed professional liaisons and wider networks and ensured integrity.

Working within a team of knowledgeable professionals in the form of the AONB team and the local authority IT unit added immeasurable value, saved substantial costs and facilitated rapid engagement within local communities.

It is impossible to engage and get all your messages to all parties all the time – some people came to the project late or were unaware of its

activities. Despite supporting many local events, providing a local walks and talks, and visiting the nearly all Parish Councils, some community representatives still remained beyond us.

The AONB's activity in the heritage sector through this project has inspired a further HLF project proposal and has led to the development of specific heritage actions with regional and national partners that would otherwise have not been progressed.

It is hoped that the Parishscapes approach will have provided a template for historical landscapes and historical mapping projects. Indeed, at least two other AONB's have taken up elements of the work and general lessons learnt have been communicated to interested groups through media as SW Protected Landscapes Forum for example. A significant legacy of the project will be the continuing involvement of volunteers who wish to remain active and clearly attach value to the work they are doing.

This report has included a frank and open evaluation which highlights many of the excellent achievements but also some of the minor areas where some felt we perhaps fell a little short. The overriding impression is of an initiative that has been truly successful, inspiring and inclusive and that has enhanced understanding, access and engagement in our heritage assets.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editor would like to acknowledge the following who all, in some way shape or form, helped to make this project so successful.

Helen Wheatley (Heritage Lottery Fund) for her support and guidance throughout the project. The Parishscapes Steering Group members, in particular, Barbara Farquharson, John Draisey, Bill Horner, Cressida Whitton, Amanda Newsome, Chris Woodruff and Charlie Plowden. The volunteers, in particular Martin Smith, Rob Beard, Sue Dymond, Ron Woodcock, Brian Turnbull, Mike Lock, John Griffiths, Dennis Hall, Chris Wakefield but also all those involved in the apportionment and excavation.

Apportionment volunteers:

Graham Davies
Graham Little
Helen Barrow
Hugh Jones
John Cochrane
John Griffiths
John Torrance
John Wakefield

Mark Farry
Martin Smith
Martin Smith
Mike Lock
Mrs Campbell
Paula Morris
Pongo Blanchard
Roger Saunders
Roland Smith
Sue Dymond

Excavation Volunteers:

Bennett, Phyllis
Cobley, Jill
Griffith, John
Sandover, Richard
Seward, David
Smith, Martin
Wakefield, Chris
Whittock, Laura
Whitton, Cressida
Woodcock, Ron

The experts and advisors – Hazel Riley, Adrian Marsden, Anna Cloke. The landowners Sue Woodruff, Sir John Cave, Commander Tuke. The AONB Team, in particular Pete Youngman, Kimmo Evans and Claudia McDonald.

And finally, Parishscapes Project Officer Philippe Planel – without his guile and ease of communication and engagement with community groups, local history societies and others, this project would not have been so successful.

C. Woodruff, AONB Manager

APPENDIX A

School Tithe Map Workshop – St Peter’s Primary School

TITHE MAP WORKSHOP – ST PETER’S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Learning objective	Activity	Organisation	Evaluation
To use old maps and aerial photos of Budleigh Salterton to investigate land use in the past and compare it with the way land is used in the town today.	<p>1 <i>Pose question:</i> What do you think Budleigh Salterton was like in the past?</p>	Whole group discussion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of coloured map and key relating to area around the school based on 1842 map.
	<p>2 <i>Explore the digitised tithe map:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put map in historical context (Victorian). • Discuss the purpose of the map and relate it to other maps for other purposes, e.g. OS map and A–Z map. • Describe what the map shows (large fields, roads without names, few houses, etc.) • Locate the school site, home and other features of the town. 	Whole group investigation, using IWB and work in small groups/pairs with PCs to explore map.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of a second map and key relating to area around the school based on 2005 aerial photograph. • Written summary of investigation.

Learning objective	Activity	Organisation	Evaluation
<p>To use old maps and aerial photos of Budleigh Salterton to investigate land use in the past and compare it with the way land is used in the town today.</p>	<p>3 <i>Introduce the apportionment index:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss what information it gives and why. Briefly define, e.g. ‘leaseholder’, ‘rods’ and ‘perches’. • Relate the apportionment index to the map to investigate how land was owned and used in area around school (e.g. arable farmland, groups of fields occupied by one farmer etc.). • Discuss how to create a key to show land use. 	<p>Whole group discussion followed by individual work producing a coloured map with simple key for area around the school based on 1842 map.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of coloured map and key relating to area around the school based on 1842 map. • Production of a second map and key relating to area around the school based on 2005 aerial photograph. • Written summary of investigation.
<p>To use old maps and aerial photos of Budleigh Salterton to investigate land use in the past and compare it with the way land is used in the town today.</p>	<p>4 <i>Look at area around school in 1888, 1946 and 2005:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note changes and when they occurred (houses, railway, school, fields). • Discuss these changes and suggest reasons. • Discuss how key for 1842 map would need to be adapted to show land use in 2005. 	<p>Whole group discussion followed by individual work producing a coloured map with simple key for area around the school based on 2005 aerial photograph.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of coloured map and key relating to area around the school based on 1842 map. • Production of a second map and key relating to area around the school based on 2005 aerial photograph. • Written summary of investigation.
<p>To use old maps and aerial photos of Budleigh Salterton to investigate land use in the past and compare it with the way land is used in the town today.</p>	<p>5 <i>Take a field walk around the area of the school:</i> Note how land is currently used and looked for clues about how it was used in the past (field boundaries, hedges, banks, road layout, etc.).</p>	<p>Whole group walk around area observing land use and looking for clues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of coloured map and key relating to area around the school based on 1842 map. • Production of a second map and key relating to area around the school based on 2005 aerial photograph.

Learning objective	Activity	Organisation	Evaluation
To use old maps and aerial photos of Budleigh Salterton to investigate land use in the past and compare it with the way land is used in the town today.	6 Plenary: Write a summary of what investigation has revealed about how land around the school was used in 1842 and how it is used now.	Whole class discussion on what investigation has revealed about how land was used in 1842 and how it is used now, followed by individual written work.	Written summary of investigation.

Resources (provided by school):

- IWB
- PCs/laptops
- flip chart and pen
- coloured pencils and paper
- photocopying facilities

APPENDIX B

Emails and Feedback from a Range of Contacts

GENERAL EMAILS SENT TO THE PROJECT OFFICER

Just a quick note to say thank you to everyone involved on Saturday. It was very informative and interesting. Well done to all (conference).

First of all, congratulations on producing such a splendid day last Saturday – Roger Stokes told me that it was the best history conference he had ever been to.

On behalf of the OVA, I would like to congratulate the team and particularly Phil Planel on the East Devon Parishscapes Project which will end shortly. Phil has been extremely successful in interesting local people in the tithe maps and has provided inspiration to both the young and the more mature in the pursuit of local history.

Members of the OVA have benefited from his expertise at a workshop in East Budleigh in 2008, a visit to the Record Office which he arranged, a walk along the Otter in 2009 with Gerald Millington and several have become actively involved in working on the apportionment documents to provide information alongside the maps.

To motivate local volunteers to take a sustained part in the project is a considerable challenge that Phil must be congratulated on achieving. He is able to share his enthusiasm and knowledge without becoming intimidating or didactic.

The availability of the maps and information online is a major advantage to local historians. Phil's expertise in archaeology has brought an additional element to the project and we will await news of the excavations of the disappeared house in Northleigh.

In evaluating the project you may wish to invite further contributions from societies such as ourselves so please let us know if we can be of further help.

The Honiton Tithe map CD arrived this morning. Very interesting indeed. Thank you very much for your assistance.

I would like to congratulate you on the excellent online resource of the East Devon parish tithe maps and schedules.

Many thanks for your time yesterday introducing the silk mill to the children. They were very enthusiastic about the project and we continued chatting about it after you left! Sarah, the girl who had heard about the silk mill mentioned to me after you left that her cousin has researched her family tree and it turns out some of her family worked in the silk mill!

Thanks for this. Personally I find the conference one of the most enjoyable and informative I attend. I think the venue is good even though it is a little small it is central for the majority of people. The catering is always first class. I wouldn't change anything.

Barry Lane, Trustee and Acting Curator of Wells and Mendip Museum:

A brief appreciation: I have very much enjoyed the conferences and am impressed with the results of the project overall. Many thanks for all you have done.

Congratulations, Philippe, a great day. Well done. I came home full of ideas.

EMAILS COLLATED AS PART OF THE INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

Sue Dymond:

I think it went very well. We all feel a great sense of achievement at what has been done. Getting people involved from across the local region and enabling us to work on various elements, and be in touch, was excellent as there were many skills, knowledge and interests to tap into.

Equally it was an opportunity to gain skills we might not otherwise have been able to. For myself it was GIS training by EDDC staff. If I have one small gripe about the project it is, however, that I was not able to use this training as access to their network and the software seemed very restricted and the hours available did not fit with my working day.

Eventually a laptop was provided with the software on but this had to be circulated amongst volunteers and for me this arrangement was unsatisfactory as it would have tied me to working certain times/days. In other words I feel EDDC could have been more helpful.

Digitising of the tithe maps is a superb achievement. I transcribed a number of parish apportionments, as did other volunteers, and these will be very useful to researchers via the Internet. People are already using these as research tools and it has stirred interest in local history in many parishes.

The oral history interviews have sparked much interest and spin-off research. In fact most of the project has sparked interest leading to local people doing further research. I worked in a primary school as part of the project investigating a disappeared silk mill. The school were appreciative of the support of Parishscapes and I think we enthused young children about the history on their doorstep. The school hope to build on the work we've done with them in future.

This project would have been a much lesser affair without Philippe Planel at the helm. His enthusiasm, expertise and interest in local history and archaeology made him a good leader. His management of all the volunteers working away on various parts of the project has always been supportive and constructive and at the same time light touch.

Phil is very well thought of throughout the community by those involved in this project and I should imagine the project has left behind a positive impression that reflects well on the AONB.

Chris Woodruff is to be praised for his overall management which I'm sure played a large part in the project's success.

Brian Turnbull:

Parishscapes showed how a talented project leader with a modest budget can inspire and coordinate a large number of interested volunteers to carry out a task of considerable historical, geographical, social and environmental importance.

The Parishscapes days and occasional talks spread the word through the community. The provision of digital tithe maps, initially on CDs, gave the volunteers the encouragement needed to digitize apportionment rolls and field polygons.

Phil's patience and 'light touch' overseeing of the project meant that volunteers did not feel resentful at the work they were being asked to do, but could fit it into their daily lives. Seeing the results of one's labours appear quickly as part of a well-designed website was motivating and satisfying. From my point of view, it would be hard to improve on this project.

The project has taught me a lot about the C19 history, geography and land use of the parish of Colaton Raleigh. I have a better idea of how the community has evolved in changing economic and social circumstances. This helps to explain landscape features, place names, graveyard inscriptions, disappeared buildings etc. Some of these observations will find their way in due course into an article for the OVA website.

The ready availability of the tithe maps and apportionment rolls on the web is encouraging many non-specialists to take a new interest in the history of their immediate locality. It will also provide a valuable database for more serious future research into changing land use and rural society.

Well done, and thank you!

Dennis Hall, Axmouth:

My only real problem was that I underestimated the time I needed to complete apportionment. Perhaps Axmouth was a bit longer and more complicated than others. I found the staff at the DRO very helpful and allowing us to photograph the documents meant that we did not have to make repeated journeys to Exeter. It has given us a greater understanding of our parish.

The large estate was broken up in the 1960s and this work has allowed a glimpse back into the past which we would not have normally had.

Helen Tickle, OVA:

The OVA has definitely benefited from this project and we regard it as a very successful and well run community project.

Phil Planel contacted the OVA at an early stage and raised our awareness. Individual members became volunteers particularly in relation to apportionment transcription. He worked with David Daniel of the OVA History group in providing a workshop at Drakes Primary school in East Budleigh, using some of the approaches already adopted with the pupils. This struck me as an innovative and remarkable piece of community involvement.

Phil has been very successful in tapping into and stimulating the expertise available in the local community. He is able to encourage all sorts of people to contribute their comments during the walks and visits he has facilitated. His archaeological training has enabled him to bring another approach to the study of the tithe maps. The annual conferences have attracted our members and proved very popular. He has made good use of the AONB partnership contacts to disseminate information.

Phil has liaised with David Daniel in relation to OVApedia, the OVA on line resource of historical research relating to the lower Otter valley. (I believe you are contacting him direct.)

One of the questions I ask about such projects is, is the legacy left? Clearly the maps have been digitised and made available on line and distributed to local organisations with the apportionment information. How much of the work undertaken by Phil has been recorded for use, for example by other primary schools in future or community activities which will be ongoing needs to be considered as the project draws to a close? It may be that additional arrangements need to be made to maximise the ongoing benefit from what we perceive as a valuable project.

On behalf of the OVA, I would like to congratulate the team and particularly Phil Planel on the East Devon Parishscapes Project which will end shortly. Phil has been extremely successful in interesting local people in the tithe maps and has provided inspiration to both the young and the more mature in the pursuit of local history.

Members of the OVA have benefited from his expertise at a workshop in East Budleigh in 2008, a visit to the Record Office which he arranged, a walk along the Otter in 2009 with Gerald Millington and several have become actively involved in working on the apportionment documents to provide information alongside the maps. To motivate local volunteers to take a

sustained part in the project is a considerable challenge that Phil must be congratulated on achieving. He is able to share his enthusiasm and knowledge without becoming intimidating or didactic.

The availability of the maps and information online is a major advantage to local historians. Phil's expertise in archaeology has brought an additional element to the project and we will await news of the excavations of the disappeared house in Northleigh.

In evaluating the project you may wish to invite further contributions from societies such as ourselves so please let us know if we can be of further help.

John Griffiths:

Yes indeed I have been involved and yes, I'm happy to provide feedback for a project evaluation. As a project manager myself in my day-job, it's good to see the feedback being gathered – and hopefully kept for future reference.

Background – my involvement was three-fold: transcribing tithe records, part of a clearance team at the Sheepwash on the Axmouth Undercliff, part of the excavation team at Lee's Cottage, Northleigh.

I joined the project in 2009 to help with tithe record transcription, by which time Phil had a good level of resource and information to supply: this helped a great deal in getting started quickly. There was a clear process and Phil and Martin had also prepared a standards document for setting up excel recording sheets, which cut down the need for reworking datasheets.

Phil spent a lot of time communicating with his team – this was very valuable and although the team rarely convened in one place, I believe everyone had a high level of confidence in Phil's leadership and coordination skills.

The use of volunteers meant that there was a high level of commitment. No doubt also more training and coordination was required as a result but the knowledge levels and enthusiasm was very high.

I would have liked the opportunity to do more with adding data to the GIS system, having worked with this before – unfortunately our access was limited to attendance at The Knowle, Sidmouth, and my day-job prevented me from being able to commit enough time to make this viable.

I came to the project late – maybe with wider publicity in the earlier days, there may have been an even bigger team to help? Personally, I gained considerable satisfaction from being a part of

an initiative to promote the cultural life within the AONB. I am a strong supporter of making records available online, so this is fully aligned with a large part of the project deliverables.

I also learned lots about archaeological method from participation in the Northleigh excavation – this was both enjoyable (despite the weather) and educational. I have worked on other digs but this was a different (equally valid) style and the comparison was very instructive.

I discovered the Axmouth Undercliff, which I would not have found if not for the project's effort to clear a Sheepwash on the Undercliff – and have revisited it a couple of times since. My son was delighted to see ammonites on the sandstone pavements nearby and also enjoyed the adventure of the Undercliff path.

This was a fantastic project which I believe set a marvellous precedent for other similar work. It developed volunteer skills and encouraged wide participation in all its work, rather than simply exploiting available labour. The return for this was a really worthwhile archive and living resource, multi-faceted in its content and appeal – useful for tourism, environment, leisure, heritage, study and analysis. It should be a blueprint for other cross-discipline projects and I believe the credit for this goes very much to the project leadership and its vision.

Mike Lock:

I was involved in only a very limited way – inputting the apportionments to the tithe map for a single parish – and in all respects this went fine.

Benefits to me included a greater understanding of my parish and its history, in particular the extent of orchards in the Parish. This allowed me to produce an exhibit at two Apple Days and there may be more. This exhibit generated a good deal of interest.

I believe a presentation was given to our Parish Council which appears to have been well received and I believe that there are plans for a fuller presentation to a wider audience sometime in the near future.

Pat Farrell:

The ground-truthing walks in collaboration with local people worked very well and feedback to local organisations worked very well.

The main benefit for our centre (The Fine Foundation Centre at Beer) was having the Tithe map digitalised and available to be accessed by the general public in our centre. Other benefits

included waking an interest in the link between the landscape and past history in local people and the expertise being available to carry out local archaeological research.

Shirley Purves:

The advantage in being involved is that one learns to look, observe and then enquire, wherever one is. The popularity of this sort of study means that you may have to consider acquiring a bigger hall for meetings!

Thanks for organising such excellent seminars.

Nichola Burley, Heritage Vision:

Sadly, despite being a resident of Beer I did not become aware of the project until the recent Parishscapes conference at the Norman Lockyer Observatory. However I would like to report, and did mean to get in touch with Chris and Phil, to say that it was one of the best day conferences that I have been to – and I do go to quite a lot related to my business.

My day-job is concerned with unpicking building and site histories and I live in Beer so the day was perfect for me – it was truly informative, thought provoking and inspiring – thank you.

I have worked for many years with the Blackdowns AONB but have never previously had any contact with the East Devon AONB which is dreadful considering that I live and work in it. I would be very interested in seeing if there is anyway that I could get involved with the AONB and its work and if there are email newsletters then please sign me up – I have to say that I don't think that I ever had any details through the post or noticed any details advertised locally about the work of the AONB it was only through a friend that I came to the conference.

Thank you for your enquiry and I hope to have more contact with the AONB team in the future.

Richard Wells:

I'm afraid that, in the end, we didn't participate at all. We discovered that somebody at Exeter University had transcribed the Upottery Lay Rolls and the last I had anything to do with it was an email to John Draisey at the Devon Record Office to tell him just that.

Sorry not to be able to help further but I (and others in the village) are still interested!

Richard ‘Sandy’ Sandover:

For most of the time I was an interested bystander, only attending the Parishscapes Conferences and not getting involved until the end. In the first instance then, I found the Conferences very interesting and informative and, as a PhD student involved in investigating the farm/field systems of Devon (starting with the tithe maps in a fashion similar to Phil’s team) I made a lot of useful contacts through the conferences. Towards the end of the Project, Phil approached me, wearing my Devon Archaeological Society ‘hat’, asking if he could borrow some equipment for the excavation.

The Society has a small amount of equipment specifically to help small excavations. In addition to agreeing to loan the equipment I offered him a geophysical survey of the site, if required, and this offer was accepted by Hazel Riley, who ran the dig. Discussions with Phil also revealed a shared aspiration to excavate a field boundary and so I ended up spending a week on the geophysics and a week on the boundary.

This was the first time I had conducted a geophysics survey on my own and so I gained a tremendous training benefit from it, whilst the field boundary also provided me with some fascinating insights into their construction and this knowledge was enhanced through discussions with another excavator, Dave, who used to work on the farms and who had experience of repairing other such boundaries. Both the geophysics and, in particular, the field boundary will be useful in my PhD. The Devon Archaeological Society benefitted through the loan of the equipment because this helps justify our ‘charity’ status to the charities commission.

Chris Wakefield:

From my point of view Parishscapes represented a great leap forward for local landscape historians. The tithe map project is of lasting value (and the data must be looked after by the way – the website is hosted by EDDC at the moment, and should be developed a little more to optimise its value).

Ottery Heritage Soc obtained invaluable local data in the form of the tithe map in digital form, from which we made a near full size replica for display. The website continues to provide a useful resource for local research.

The investigative work at Northleigh was also valuable. I didn’t attend many of the other events but they too looked useful.

It’s a shame that the project has finished – we need an East Devon dimension to local and landscape history, and that almost

became a reality through Parishscapes. We will have to set up East Devon History and Archaeology Group. Maybe Making it Local will give us a start up grant!

Lois Wakeman, Uplyme Parish Council:

As I have not seen the results, I cannot provide any meaningful feedback.

Chris Saunders, OSM Heritage Society:

There were a number of very good initiatives, in which we tried to participate. The OSM Heritage Society was already trying to tackle the problems of digitising the Tithe Map, and although we thought that we could probably succeed, were not too disappointed to learn that DCC were proposing to cover the whole of Devon officially!

Our main involvement was in the Parishscapes oral history project, and a number of recorded interviews were successfully undertaken, with Philippe's guidance and assistance. I believe this has been the main benefit to the HS in their aim to record and preserve local history.

The annual seminar days at the Norman Lockyer Observatory were excellent, and were a great shop window for the AONB Parishscapes concept and successes. In retrospect, I wish that we had been able to devote more resources ourselves, and play a greater role in the various projects. By benefitting ourselves, we would have been able to contribute to the greater good by 'looking after our own patch' as it were. As it is we have a legacy that should endure, and prove to be a worthy learning resource, not simply a record.

We think it has all been a 'very good thing'!

APPENDIX C

Apportionment Guidelines

AS MANY PEOPLE use Microsoft Office software it is suggested that MS Excel is the most appropriate and easiest product to use when transcribing tithe apportionment records. However, depending on a person's IT skills one may find it beneficial to use a software package they are more familiar with. If this is the case please ensure that each discreet piece of data is either in a separate column or is clearly separated with a comma or colon etc., and each record is on a new line.

Whatever software is used it is essential that all columns are headed and that the relevant information is entered under each heading for each row – if there is no data to insert the column must be left blank.

From transcription work that has taken place to date it has been found that not all apportionment records follow the same format so it is impossible to give a template to cover all the variations that will be encountered. The following is a list of points that one may need to take into account during the course of their work.

- 1 If the parish is sub-divided into tithings, or as in the case of East Budleigh, 'townside' and 'landside' indicate this in the first column.
- 2 All surnames should be in a separate column, followed in the next column by the forename. If there are joint owners/occupiers insert the joint surnames followed by the joint forenames.
- 3 If a landowner leases his land show the landowner, lessee and occupier in separate columns.

- 4 Plots are sometimes numbered '1234 A', '1234 B', etc. To ease data handling show these plot numbers of '1234.1', '1234.2' and so on.
- 5 Always show land-use/cultivation. If a plot is named as 'orchard', 'coppice', 'wood', etc., and the use column is blank, insert the appropriate use in square brackets. This will indicate to users in future that an assumption has been made to land-use. Enter the full word for land-use and do not abbreviate words.
- 6 Some apportionments further group tithe plots under a farm or homestead name (Colaton Raleigh is an example). If this is the case enter the farm/homestead name against each tithe plot record under the relevant column heading.
- 7 If time (and enthusiasm) permits please enter all area and financial data. All figures need to be entered into separate columns.
- 8 No sub-totals, totals or summaries are necessary.
- 9 Ideally, when complete the whole transcription should be copy-edited/checked by a third party.
- 10 When the transcription is complete save the file as 'Parish name' apportionment *master*.
- 11 The apportionment file can then be sorted by tithe plot number and that file saved as 'Parish name' apportionment by *tithe number*.
- 12 A MS Excel template is available if required.

M. Smith, 2009

APPENDIX D

Finances

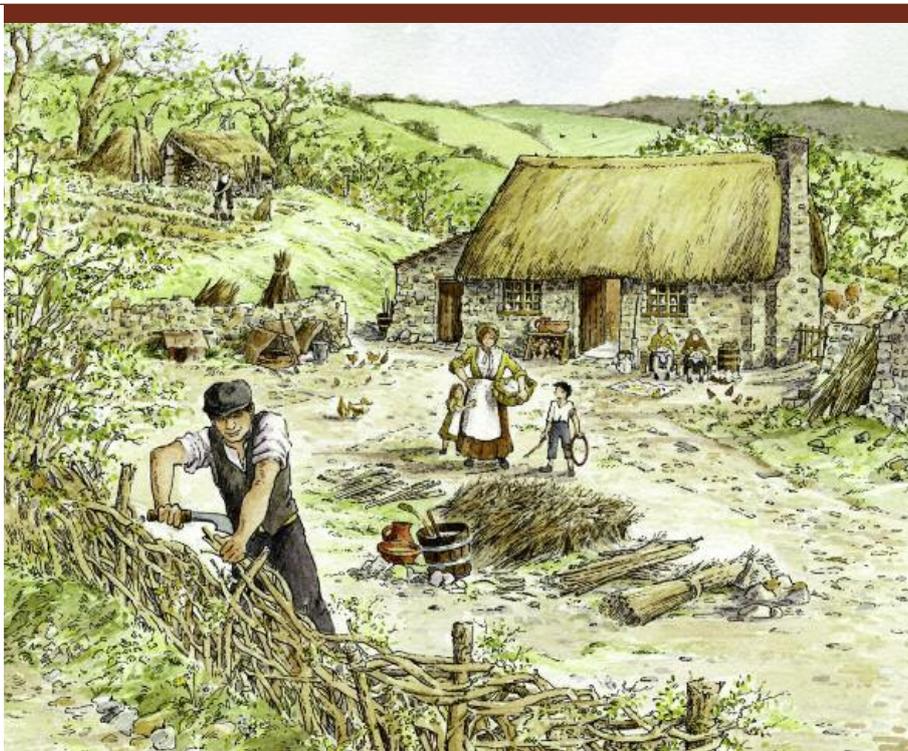
PARISHSCAPES FINANCES 2007–10 (£)

<i>Capital costs:</i>	<i>Est.</i>	<i>Act.</i>
Equipment	3,950.00	2,989.09
<i>Activity costs:</i>		
Staff costs	60,265.00	60,731.19
Recruitment	2,500.00	2,138.10
Project specific	2,500.00	4,900.16
Training	900.00	330.50
Travel	6,300.00	6,176.90
Overheads	12,544.00	10,909.90
Stationery	900.00	72.29
Non-cash contributions	2,782.00	2,782.00
Other activities	6,000.00	8,769.61
Consultancy and advice	9,489.00	10,035.00
<i>Other:</i>		
Contingency	4,223.00	5,375.76
Total project costs	112,353.00	115,211.22
<i>Contributions:</i>		
AONB/in kind office space	2,853.00	5,711.22
EDDC	30,000.00	30,000.00
Natural England	30,000.00	30,000.00
Heritage Lottery Fund	49,500.00	49,500.00
Total cash contributions	112,353.00	115,211.22

Parishscapes Project 2007–2010

BRINGING THE PAST TO LIFE

Excavation of a Deserted Cottage at Summerdown Farm, Northleigh, Devon



By **Hazel Riley** with
contributions by
Philippe Planel,
Richard Sandover
and **Ron Woodcock**

LIST OF FIGURES AND IMAGE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SECTION 1

Abstract

AN ABANDONED cottage near Summerdown, Northleigh, Devon, was the subject of an excavation carried out in March 2010 as part of the Parishcapes community project. The earthworks of the cottage and its plot of land were surveyed before the excavation commenced and most of that plot, together with an adjoining field, were the subject of a geophysical survey.

The cottage was a single storey building with heated kitchen/living room, perhaps partitioned to provide a bedroom. A large fireplace and bread oven occupied the east end of the kitchen. A small store room had been added to the west wall of the cottage.

A section through a boundary bank was excavated, together with three trial trenches. The finds were virtually all from the nineteenth century. A study of the documentary evidence showed that the cottage was occupied by several families in the course of the later part of the nineteenth century and was abandoned by the 1870s. It was part of a wider landscape of small farms which, by the end of the nineteenth century, had been deserted.

SECTION 2

Introduction

AS PART of the Parishscapes community project, a joint initiative funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, East Devon District Council and Natural England (www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk), a group of volunteers have been investigating ‘disappeared houses’ in the parishes of Northleigh and Offwell. These are buildings which are marked as dwellings on the tithe map but are now no longer lived in.

One of these sites, occupied by Richard Mellish in 1840 (tithe map and apportionment for Northleigh), was chosen as the site for the Parishscapes community excavation in March 2010. At the beginning of the excavation the only link with the building and a person was from the tithe map, hence the site was called Mellish's Cottage (MC). As work progressed Ron Woodcock identified the site as ‘Lees’ or ‘Lees Cottage’ (see documentary evidence).

LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

Lees Cottage lies at some 155m OD, in the valley of an unnamed tributary stream of the River Coly, between Honiton and Colyton, at NGR SY 190 971. It is in the parish of Northleigh and lies within East Devon AONB (fig. 1).

The deeply incised valley is one of a number of such valleys in the area – across the ridge top to the west is the valley of the River Coly and to the east is the valley of the Offwell Brook. The ridge top (or plateau), here marked by land above c.180–200 m, is formed from rocks of Cretaceous age, mudstones, sandstones and limestone of the Gault and Upper Greensand formations.

The valley sides and floor expose older rocks of Triassic age, comprising mudstones, siltstones and sandstone (British Geological Survey – www.bgs.ac.uk). The junction between the Greensand and the older rocks is marked by a spring line.

The area is characterised by three landscape types: open, inland planned (i.e. more recently enclosed) plateaux; steep wooded slopes, and upper undulating farmed and wooded slopes (East Devon and Blackdown Hills AONBs and East Devon District 2008), Lees Cottage lies at the junction of the latter two landscape types. It is now in an area of unmanaged woodland, part of Summerdown's holding. The woodland is mostly hazel, holly, ash and oak, with a field of permanent pasture immediately to the southwest.

PREVIOUS WORK

There are no recorded archaeological excavations on the site and no entries in the Devon HER in the immediate environs.

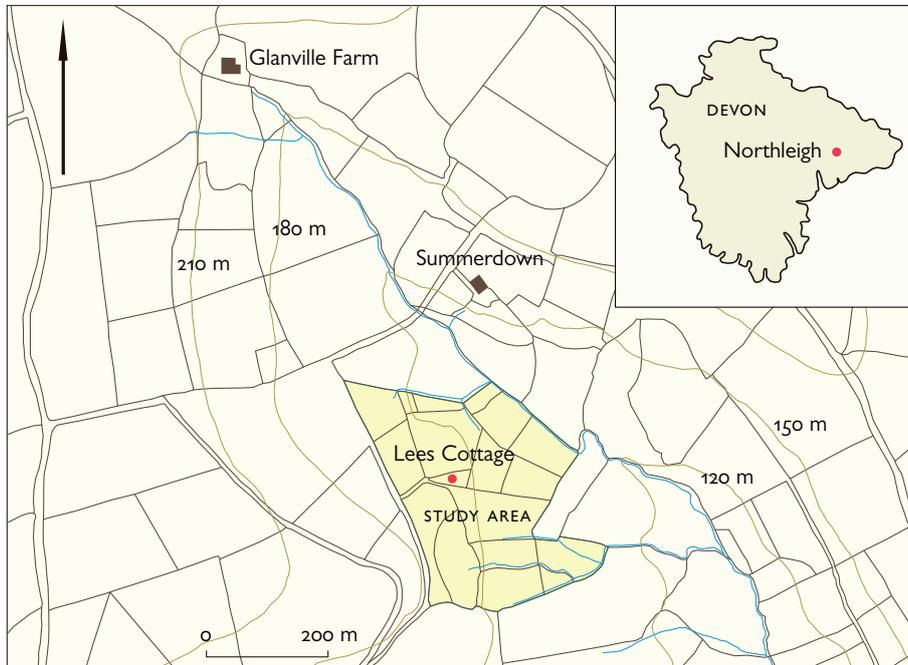


FIGURE 1
Location map

SECTION 3

The Survey and the Site Before Excavation

A SURVEY OF THE SITE and its immediate environs, at a scale of 1:500, was undertaken before the excavation took place. The survey was carried out using a total station and tied to the Ordnance Survey National Grid using survey grade differential GPS. The survey showed that the cottage stands in a small triangular plot of land, some 0.116 ha (0.287 acres) in area (fig. 2). The plot is oriented west/east and its maximum dimensions are 65 m E/W by 28m N/S. The plot is enclosed by a bank, 1m high and 2 m wide, composed of earth and stone, with the remnants of an unmanaged hedge growing on its top.

The cottage was built on a small, level platform, measuring 15 m N/S by 8 m E/W, defined on the west by a steep scarp some 2 m high and to the east by a more gradual scarp 1 m high. A smaller triangular plot of land is formed by the western end of the building platform and the apex of the main plot. At its apex is a disturbed area where recent material has been dumped. A rectangular hollow, 4 m SW/NE, 1.5 m NW/SE and 0.75 m deep may be the remains of a small building, although the later disturbance has made interpretation of this area rather difficult.

The remains of the cottage are defined by a rectangular area of tumbled stone, measuring 14 m E/W by 6.5 m N/S (external measurements), with some wall tops and wall faces visible (fig. 3). The building appeared to be divided into two: the main building, 6 m E/W by 3 m N/S (internal measurements), with a small room 2 m E/W by 6 m N/S (internal measurements) adjoining the western end of the main building. The best preserved wall face visible before the excavation was the inner face of the northern wall of the main

building, which stands to a height of 0.8 m and is constructed of coursed blocks of undressed chert with decayed lime mortar visible in the interstices (fig. 4).

The eastern end of the building is defined by a large mound of tumbled stone, containing a number of fragments of burnt brick, with a marked concentration of these bricks at its northern end, suggesting that this was the location of the fireplace and chimney. Two ash trees are now growing just to the north of the north wall of the cottage; they are of a size to suggest that the cottage has not been inhabited for at least 150 years.

The cottage faces south, with an entrance gap 1 m wide in the southern wall, positioned centrally to the main building. Access into the plot and so to the cottage was in three or four places. A small gap 2 m wide at the apex of the triangular plot provides access to the top of the plot, but access down to the cottage is rather awkward. A gap 4 m wide in the northern boundary bank gives access to the plot and to the back of the cottage, but, again, access to the front of the building

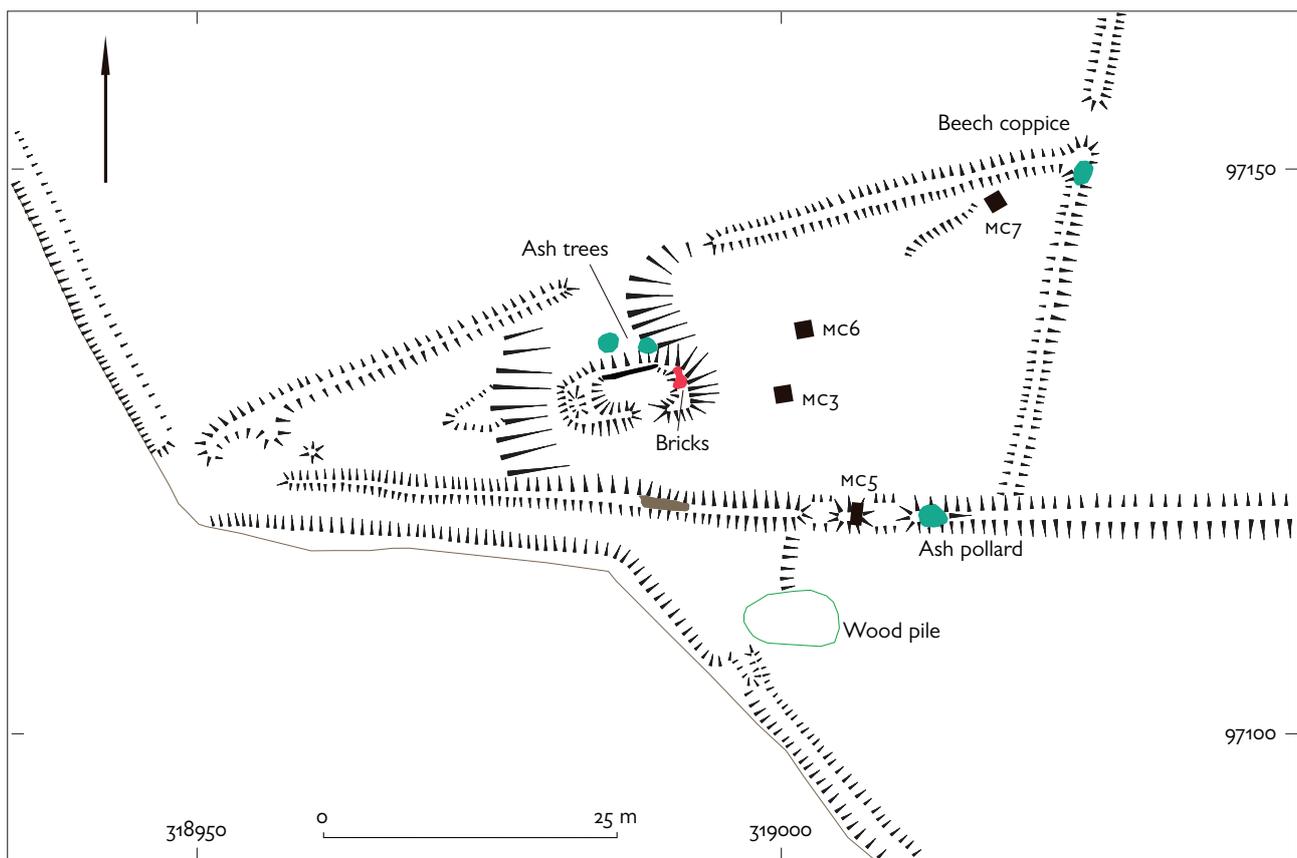


FIGURE 2

1:1000 survey of the site before excavation
and location of trenches MC3, MC5, MC6, MC7

is awkward. This gap does open directly from the plot onto a track shown on the tithe map (fig. 27).

Towards the southeast of the plot a 6m wide gap in the boundary bank, now partially in filled and the site of one of the excavation trenches, allowed access to both the plot and the cottage from the track which linked the neighbouring Lees Cottage House to the common. On the boundary bank opposite the cottage doorway is a lower area with a large amount of stone visible on top of the bank. This could be in filling of a former access point, and is most likely to be of quite recent origin, resulting from curious visitors scrambling across the bank to view the ruins.



FIGURE 3
Lees Cottage
before excavation



FIGURE 4
Detail of the north wall

SECTION 4

The Geophysical Survey

by Richard Sandover

A GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY was carried out at the beginning of the excavation as part of research work for a PhD thesis for the University of Exeter. The survey was undertaken using a Bartington/Grad/-601-2 magnetic gradiometer and the data was processed using Geoplot software.

Two areas were the subject of a magnetometer survey (fig. 5). Area 1 was the ground immediately to the east of the cottage, carried out to investigate the potential of this area in terms of features such as buildings, paths/tracks, garden plots or other boundary features, middens or areas of burning.

The survey around the cottage was conducted using a 10 m × 10 m grid pattern aligned N/S. Traverses were parallel with each traverse heading south. Gradiometer resolution was set to 0.25 m. The data is presented as raw data because of the uneven muddy terrain and a desire not to lose any data through excessive processing. There are four small areas with low potential, all of which were investigated using a metal detector and small metal objects were discovered in each location, supporting both the identification of an anomaly and its classification as 'minor'.

Area 2 was in the field immediately to the southwest of the cottage, undertaken to assess the potential of an area adjacent to a busy eighteenth and nineteenth landscape of farming and farmsteads (see documentary evidence), yet apparently devoid of any archaeological remains.

The survey of the field was conducted using a 20 m × 20 m grid pattern aligned N/S. Traverses were zigzag with the first of each grid

being to the north. Resolution was again set to 0.25 m. Several relatively small anomalies are visible (fig. 5A). These may be similar to those investigated around the cottage, and are probably caused by small amounts of metal such as nails. The strong anomaly on the eastern edge of the plot (B) is caused by a metal gate lying in the hedge close by. The southwest corner of the plot (C), as well as containing anomalies similar to those in the areas marked A, has a possible diffuse linear feature lying E/W in the southwest corner. There is no visible disturbance of the ground in this area, the feature may indicate disturbed earth, such as a pit, but there is nothing really distinctive about it.

A linear anomaly running NE/SW across the centre of the plot (D) marks the line of a former field boundary with a track to the south, shown on both the tithe map and the OS first edition map (1888). Two or three linear anomalies (E) run N/S and parallel to the field boundaries, perhaps representing ploughing.

The tithe map (fig. 27) and apportionment show that the field was earlier divided into five fields, all of which were then recorded as being arable. The geophysics has not detected any form of drainage system within the field and most of the field boundaries are indicative of post-medieval enclosure of an open area of land that is interpreted as being possible former common land, probably associated with a larger, contiguous field to the west.

The intention of this survey had been to cover and analyse only the complete 20 m grids and move onto the partials to complete the field if the results merited expanding the search. This was not considered to be the case and so a full survey of the field covering the periphery was not conducted.

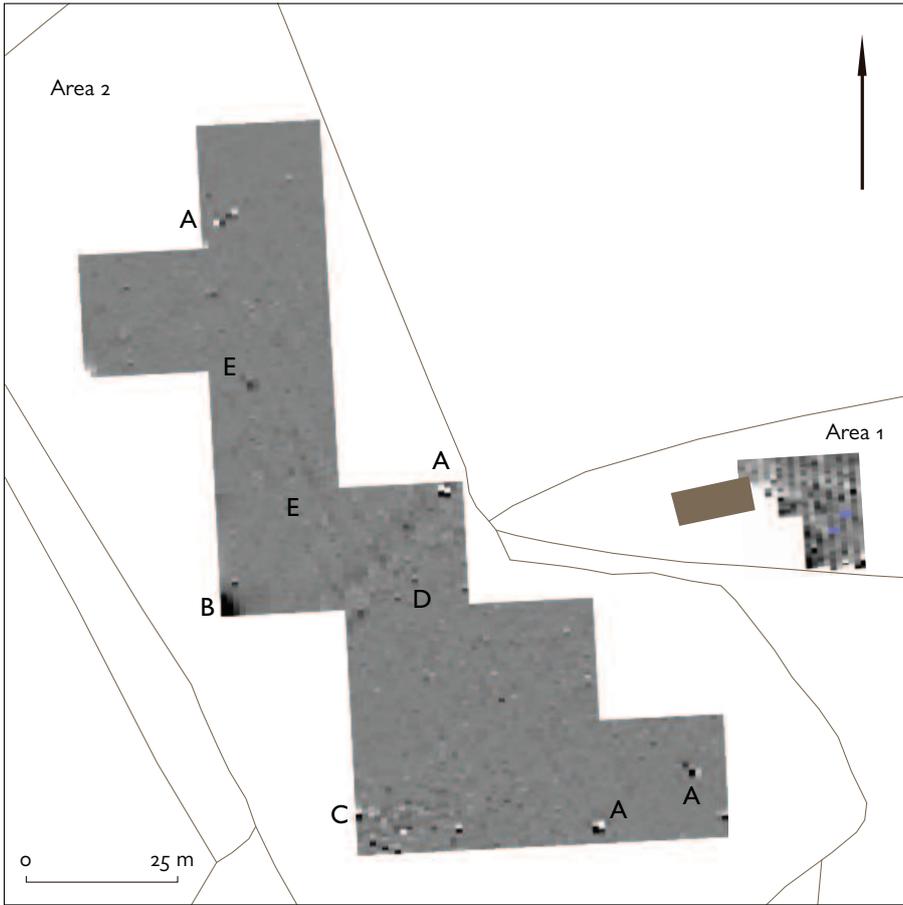


FIGURE 4
The geophysical surveys

SECTION 5

The Excavation

THE EXCAVATION was carried out in order to explore the structure, function and date range of the building known as Lees Cottage. Seven trenches (fig. 6) were excavated between 24 March 2010 and 1 April 2010. All of the work was carried out by volunteers under the supervision of two professional archaeologists.

TRENCH MC1

This trench took in the interior of the small room on the western end of the building, together with a small area to the north of its northern wall. The excavation was carried out by hand.

The upper layer of tumbled stone from the walls of the building was removed and the fill of the room was taken down by hand. The

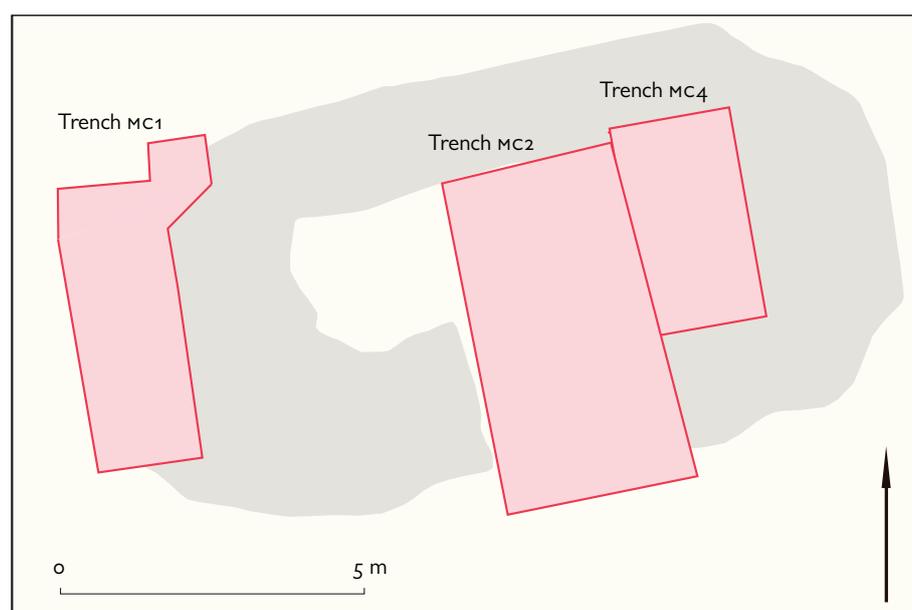


FIGURE 6
Cottage and trench layout
before excavation

finds were all recorded three dimensionally. A layer of very dark material, at least 0.15 m deep, comprising a soil rich in decayed leaf mould, immediately underneath, and mixed with, the building stone tumble was excavated (context 1). It contained a high proportion of the total number of finds from the whole excavation, including a virtually complete stoneware storage bottle.

Areas with substantial amounts of decayed mortar were noted close to the walls, no coherent pieces of mortar were recovered, suggesting that the interior of this room was not finished, but perhaps just lime washed (compare the main building, below). In the northeast corner of the room a lens of pinky brown clay (context 13) lay below the dark brown soil. The clay lens was at least 0.1m deep. The dark brown soil and the clay lens were not fully excavated.

The excavation revealed a small room, 2.8 m long and 1.4 m wide (internal measurements) (fig. 7). The walls stood to a height of 0.45 m and were quite narrow, only 0.3 m wide (compared to 0.55 m in the main building, below). The entrance was narrow, only 0.5 m wide, and utilised the west end of the main building as its east side. The west side was finished with roughly dressed chert blocks; a flake found in the area of the doorway suggests that the dressing was carried out very close to the building.

The distribution of finds, a stone weight for keeping the door open or closed (fig. 22), and a quantity of nails, found in and around the doorway, suggests a simple wooden plank door. There was probably a small window, perhaps in the western wall: a small amount of window glass was recovered from context 1 close to the western wall. The room



FIGURE 7
The store room (MC1)
after excavation

was single storey, given the thin walls and amount of building stone tumble, and had a roof of clay pan tiles, suggested from the large pieces found in the interior.

The exact relationship of the small room to the main building remains unclear, but it was probably built after the main building, utilising the main western wall as its eastern wall and interpreted as a store room.

TRENCHES MC2 AND MC4

This area of the excavation examined about half of the interior of the main room (MC2) and the eastern end of the building (MC4). Tumbled building stone intermixed with a very dark brown soil rich in leaf mould (context 3) was removed by hand. One metre square (the northwest corner of the trench) of this material was sieved (fig. 8). The material recovered from the sieving included a metal button (see Section 7, *The Cu alloy objects*, fig. 20) and a substantial quantity (800 g) of lime mortar (building materials below).

Very few finds came from context 3, particularly in comparison to those which were recovered from the adjoining store room. A stone weight, like that found in the store room, was found very close to the doorway, and, as in the store room, functioned as a simple way of keeping the door open or closed. A fragment of the bowl of a clay pipe, dating from the mid nineteenth century, was found near the northern wall (fig. 23 and 17).



FIGURE 8

Context 3 under excavation:
sieved metre square

Below context 3, which was some 0.25 m deep, was a lime ash or composition floor (context 6). The floor was well preserved, with some superficial cracks and a small patch of slightly different material where the floor has been repaired.

Lime ash floors were relatively common in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and four ‘recipes’ for use in ‘plain country habitations’ are given in the Builders’ Dictionary of 1734. These range from the standard recipe for the ‘best Floors for Houses’ (a recipe which uses no lime but loam, fresh horse dung and coal ash, which is more suited to cottages, barns and other small houses), a recipe for more beautiful floors which involves a large quantity of egg whites, and a recipe for smooth and glittering floors which uses ox blood and fine clay. Although the floor at Lees Cottage has not been subject to any analysis (it remains intact), its colour and finish suggest that the recipe used is probably the first given in the Builders’ Dictionary:

Take two thirds of lime, and one of coal ashes well-fitted, with a small quantity of loamy clay; mix the whole together, and temper it well with water, making it up into a heap, let it lie a week or ten days, in which time it will mellow and digest. Then temper it well over again, and be sure that your quantity of water does not exceed, but rather that it may obtain a mellow softness and toughness from labour. Then heap it up again for three or four days, and repeat the tempering very high, till it becomes smooth and yielding and glewy.

Then the ground being levelled, lay your floor about two and a half to three inches thick, making it smooth with a trowel, the hotter the season is, the better, and when it is thoroughly dried it will continue Time out of Mind.

(Quoted in Beacham 2001, 31).

The tumbled building stone was removed by hand on the eastern end of the building. It soon became apparent that the concentration of burnt brick to the northern end was lying on top of a structure which was actually only a few centimetres below the remains as they survived before excavation.

The base of a bread oven, constructed of dressed sandstone blocks surrounding a brick hearth lay in the northeast corner of the building, with a fireplace occupying the rest of the eastern end (fig. 9). An iron handle, probably from a kettle, and a chain with a hook were found on the base of the bread oven, and an inscribed stone lay to the north of it (fig. 18, 19, and 24). The stone has the inscription ‘R Lee 18 ...’ and

the top has been dressed and shows evidence of being used for sharpening, suggesting that it had once been part of the fireplace, perhaps conveniently on the edge of the bread oven.

The material infilling the fireplace was not excavated, but the back of it was marked by a line of fire blackened bricks and dressed stone blocks, giving a fireplace which measured 2.05 m by 1.24 m (fig. 10).

THE LAYOUT OF LEES COTTAGE

The excavations showed that the internal measurements of the main building were 8.06 m E/W by 3.1 m N/S, with an additional room, interpreted as a store room, to the west with internal measurements of



FIGURE 9
Detail of the bread oven



FIGURE 10
Kitchen after excavation

1.7 m N/S by 3.2 m E/W. The southern wall of the main building was 0.55m thick, that of the store room slighter narrower, 0.3 m thick.

The excavation did not examine the whole of the interior of the main building, but it may have been divided into two rooms, probably by a wooden partition as there seems to be no evidence of any tumbled stone in the interior, marking the site of a dividing wall. Such a plan would give a living room and kitchen to the east, with an unheated bedroom or service room to the west.

Although the rooms given by this subdivision seem very small by today's standards, Great Well Cottage in West Chinnock, Somerset, measures 7 m by 3.5 m in ground floor plan and was divided into two rooms, the smaller being only 1.7 m wide (Penoyre 2005, fig. 3.7). The store room was unheated and was accessed by an external door; access through the west wall seems unlikely but cannot be ruled out without further excavation.

The cottage was probably single storey, with further sleeping accommodation in the loft space accessed via a ladder stair off the kitchen or, more likely, the service room. The loft was probably lit by a window in the gable. An upper storey seems unlikely given the amount of stone remaining on the site before excavation, although the possibility remains of a low upper storey.

Surviving examples of this sort of cottage are rare, most have been extended upwards and outwards, but some historic photographs show buildings surviving in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which compare with the suggested layout of Lees Cottage. Jolly Lane Cottage, Widcombe in the Moor, photographed in about 1885, was a single



FIGURE 11
Lees Cottage after excavation

storey cottage, with a thatched roof, a central doorway and one chimney at the end of the building. An early eighteenth-century farmyard cottage at Lower Netherton, Stoke-in-Teignhead, photographed in 1987, is a two-storey building, with a very low upper storey, thatched roof and one chimney with an external stack (Cox and Thorp 2001, 115; plate 23).

The roof of the store room was of clay pan tiles, the main building would have been thatched – the only slates found during the excavation were from around the fireplace and bread oven where they were used to level courses of stone and brickwork.

TRENCHES MC3, MC6 AND MC7

Three trial trenches, each 1.5 m square, were excavated in the plot immediately to the east of the cottage (fig. 6). MC3 was located on one of the strongest anomalies found on the geophysical survey; MC6 was located close to MC3, and MC7 was located close to the northeast end of the plot, where the trees precluded geophysical survey but the build up of material against the boundary banks suggested the site of a midden.

All three trenches were excavated to bedrock, a pale grey limestone with weathered bedrock above. The material from trench MC3 was sieved. Most of the artefacts came from MC3 and MC6, the trenches nearest the cottage, with nothing to suggest that the area around trench MC7 was a midden. The earliest dateable find from the excavation came from trench MC7, a finely retouched end scraper, of

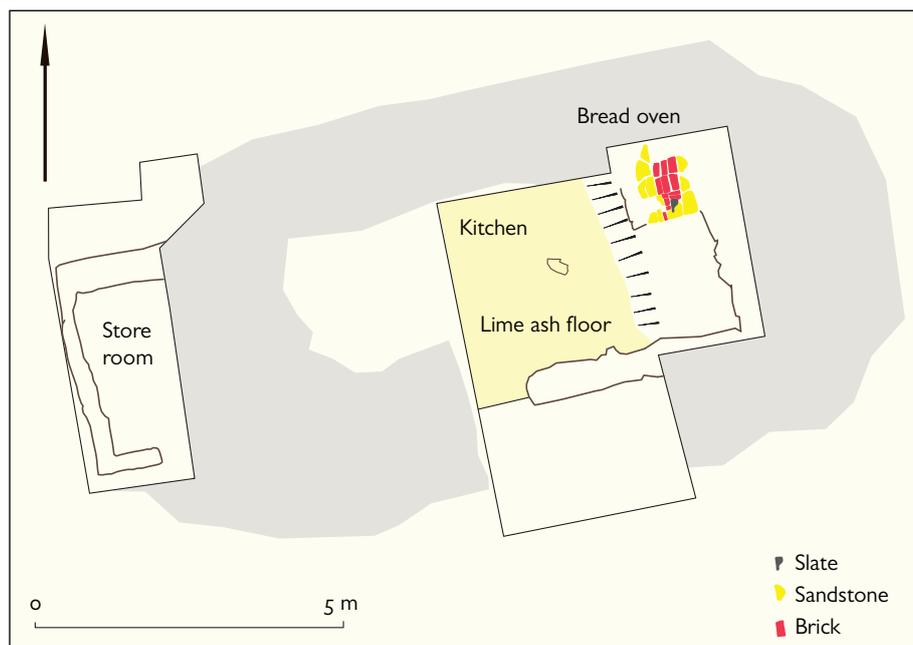


FIGURE 12
fig 12 1:100 plan of
cottage after excavation

black flint, probably from the Beer Head area, dating from the Neolithic or Bronze Age. The finds from MC3 were remarkably numerous. Most notable were a metal button with an inscribed floral decoration, dating from the nineteenth century, and a sherd of blue and white transfer printed pottery. The piece is from the base of a plate and is stamped with the word 'SIRIUS', dating from the mid nineteenth century (see fig. 16).

The trial trenches and the geophysical survey suggest that the plot of land surrounding the cottage was used in what can be termed an informal way. There is no evidence of a dedicated midden, or of laid out garden plots, enclosures and buildings for animals, paths or tracks.

TRENCH MC5

A section across the bank on the south side of the cottage plot was excavated (fig. 6), in an area which appeared to have been infilled with material, probably blocking access to the plot and cottage (the survey and the site before excavation above). An area 2 m × 1 m was excavated by hand and all finds were recorded in three dimensions.

A layer of brown topsoil (context 15), 0.2–0.3 m deep, lay above the core of the bank which was made up of chert in a matrix of sandy clay with a high proportion of small chert fragments (context 17). The chert core of the bank was 0.7 m high and 0.9 m wide, and the excavation showed that there was a rounded end to the bank here (fig. 13), where there had been access to the plot and cottage.

There was no evidence for a ditch on either side of the bank. Below the bank was a shallow layer of stony clay (context 21) which overlay a layer of very dark brown, humus rich soil (context 23). This material was interpreted as the buried land surface on which the bank was built; it was not excavated.

The material above the bank contained a relatively large number of artefacts, including several sherds of an earthenware storage vessel stamped with an unclear mark, but with the name 'R WILLMAN' on the top line. Towards the top of the stone core of the bank was a piece of a whetstone.

Some of the trees on the bank have been managed at some time in the past. A large ash pollard lies on the bank just to the east of the trench and a very large beech coppice stool lies at the northeast angle of the plot, both of these trees mark access points and are perhaps 250–300 years old.

FIGURE 13

Section of the bank MC5 showing the chert core



SECTION 6

The Pottery

AN ASSEMBLAGE of 154 sherds of pottery, with a total weight of 1536 g, was recovered from the excavation. The assemblage is tabulated and described in the site archive. Most of this (30 per cent) came from unstratified contexts, either from locations on the surface found during the excavation, which were three dimensionally recorded, or from the southern boundary bank of the cottage plot, which seems to have functioned as a repository for ‘found’ objects in the recent past.

Two of these pieces are large rim sherds from a glazed earthenware jug or storage jar and a large bowl, typical of the sort of crockery used in the kitchen in the nineteenth century (fig. 14A and B).

Some 29 per cent of the pottery came from trench MC1, the store room, suggesting that this room was not kept as clean and tidy as the cottage kitchen or that material was left in this room after the cottage

POTTERY ASSEMBLAGE BY TRENCH AND WEIGHT

Trench	No. of sherds	Weight (g)
MC1	19	449
MC2	2	6
MC4	9	36
MC3	53	220
MC6	31	130
MC7	12	87
MC5	15	149
U/s	13	459
<i>Total</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>1536</i>

was abandoned. The most complete vessel recovered came from this room: a cream stoneware storage jar, dating from the nineteenth century (fig. 15).

Three sherds from a blue and white transfer printed plate came from just outside the northern wall of the room. One has a pattern mark indicating that it came from Enoch Wood and Sons, Burslem, and was produced between 1818 and 1846 (information from Ron Woodcock). The rest of the pottery is fragmentary in nature and can be broadly attributed to the nineteenth century.

In contrast to trench MC1, trench MC2 contained only two small sherds of pottery, suggesting that the cottage kitchen was kept clean and tidy, and perhaps that possessions were taken from the kitchen when the building was abandoned. The pottery from the material over the bread oven and fireplace (trench MC4) comprised only 2 per cent of the assemblage, most of this was five sherds of a jade patterned creamware jug or bowl, again broadly attributable to the nineteenth century, and found in the material over the bread oven.

The three trial trenches, MC3, MC6 and MC7, contained 28 per cent (437 g) of the pottery assemblage, with most, 14 per cent (220 g), coming from MC3, the trench closest to the cottage. The assemblage from MC3 included the only closely dateable pottery from the excavation.

This is the base of a blue and white transfer printed plate with the pattern mark 'SIRIUS' on the underside (fig. 16). This pattern comes

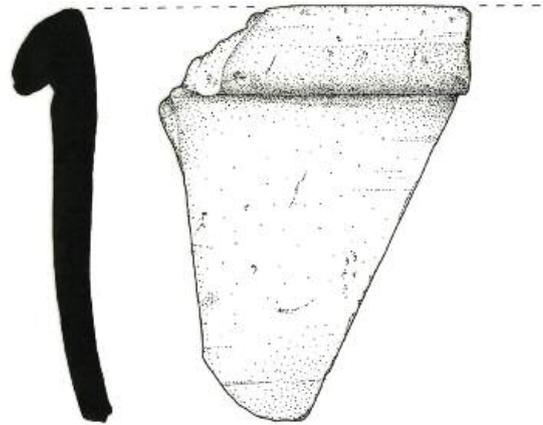


FIGURE 14A
Earthenware storage jar
(50%)

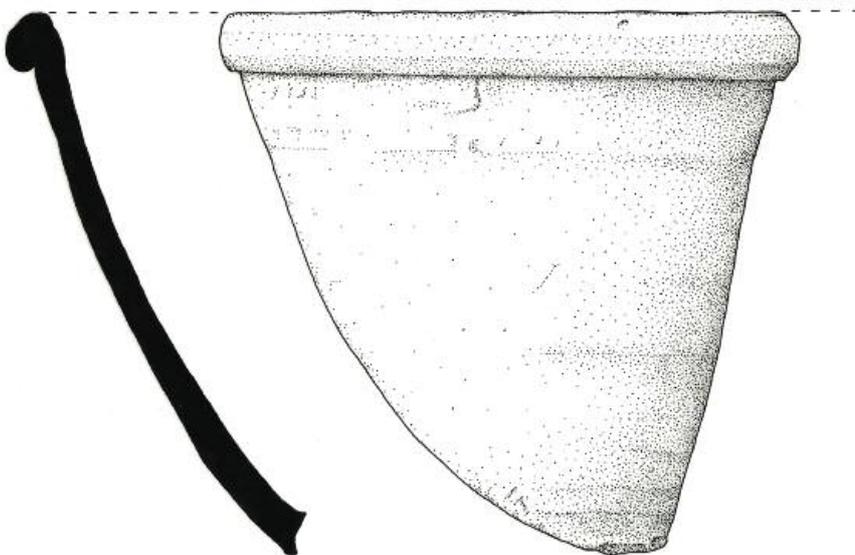


FIGURE 14B
Earthenware bowl
(50%)



FIGURE 15
Storage jar from store room
MC1 (jar is 10 cm high)

from the Llanelly Pottery in south Wales and was produced between 1839 and 1855 (Bebb 2004, 31).

The pottery from all three trenches comprised glazed earthenware storage and kitchen vessels, willow pattern and blue and white plates, creamware vessels and some unglazed earthenware (probably flower pots). All of the material can be attributed to the nineteenth century, with the exception of three sherds which are probably from the first half of the twentieth century.

The pottery from these trenches was very fragmentary: an average sherd weight of 4.5 g. This is the result of recent land use at the site, as pigs were kept here about fifty years ago.

The section through the bank, trench MC5, contained 10 per cent of the assemblage, including the base of a glazed earthenware storage vessel with the stamp 'R WILLMAN' and the base of a blue-striped creamware bowl. Part of the same vessel was found in context 4, outside the store room. All of the pottery from the section can be attributed to the nineteenth century.



FIGURE 16
Sirius pattern mark
(cartouche 14 × 11 mm internal)

CLAY PIPES

Two clay pipe stems were found in the trial trenches MC3 and MC6 and a fragment of a bowl came from the material above the floor in the kitchen, context 3. It is decorated with a fine, ribbed pattern, typical of pipes made between 1830 and 1860 (fig. 17).

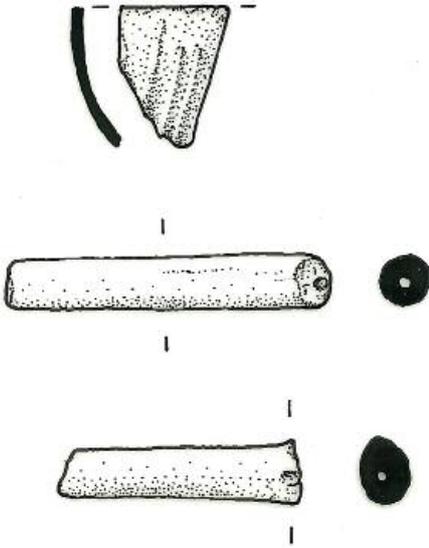


FIGURE 17

Clay pipes from Lees Cottage:
fine-ribbed bowl and two
stems (full size)

SECTION 7

The Metalwork

THE METALWORK ASSEMBLAGE from the excavation comprised forty-four iron objects (the term iron is here used to describe objects made from mild steel, ie iron with a small amount of carbon) and four Cu alloy objects. The assemblage is tabulated and described in the site archive. 75 per cent of the iron objects were hand forged and there was a certain amount of evidence for curation of metal objects, consistent with a farm labourer supporting a large family in a small cottage.

THE IRON OBJECTS

Over half (66 per cent) of the iron objects were nails. One was a workshop made clout nail, probably used for a horse shoe, there were four small wire nails, again workshop made, probably came from an upholstered piece of furniture. The rest of the nails were all hand forged and were probably made locally at the blacksmiths in Northleigh or Colyton.

IRON OBJECTS BY NUMBER AND WEIGHT

Trench	No. of objects	Weight (g)
MC1	3	44
MC2	8	62
MC4	9	966
MC3	8	419
MC5	1	62
U/s	15	255
Total	44	10808

Most of the larger nails had been driven into masonry. A group found near the door and south wall in MC2 and, judging from the corrosion near the nail heads, came from fixing the oak door frame and window frame. A group of large nails from around the bread oven were used to support cooking vessels and perhaps for hanging meat for smoking in the chimney.

A chain and hook and the handle of a kettle were found on the base of the bread oven (fig. 18 and 19), indicating that the bread oven base was probably used as a hob for the kettle and that most cooking was done in a large pot suspended over the fire. The chain was workshop made but the hook was hand forged, suggesting curation and recycling of materials.

A small key, perhaps from a wooden chest, came from the sieved metre square (context 3) in MC2, as did part of a buckle, probably from horse tack; part of a door latch was found in the trial trench MC3.

Apart from the end of a twelve bore cartridge case and two pieces of pressed iron from a wheel rim, all of the iron objects can be attributed to the nineteenth century. Some of the larger nails may have been made from recycled pieces and the hook was reused.

THE CU ALLOY OBJECTS

Three of the four Cu alloy objects are buttons (fig. 20).



FIGURE 18

Iron chain (19 cm long) and hook (10 cm long)



FIG 19

Iron kettle handle (14 cm wide)

One came from the sieved metre square of context 3, inside the cottage. The button is 25 mm in diameter and is electroplated, with an unusual design of a sun rising above the clouds. The sun is shown with a happy face. Although it has affinities with the Sun Fire Office marks, and could be a livery button from that company, it does not match any of the published marks (www.fireworks.co.uk).

The smiling sun has similarities to Victorian children's picture buttons, like the *Man in the Moon* (Vocelle 2009). The obverse has the legend 'BEST QUALITY WARRANTED'. The button is die struck and is probably best described as a livery button dating from the mid- to late nineteenth century.

The second button was found in the trial trench MC3. This button, 22 mm in diameter, is electroplated with an inscribed floral design, and the legend '... QUALITY ...' on the obverse. It is made of pressed metal, in two pieces, and is a dress button dating from the mid-to-late nineteenth century.

The third button, 22 mm in diameter, is the back of a two piece, pressed button, which probably also dates from the mid-to-late nineteenth century. The final Cu alloy object is a small piece of plate with two holes drilled in it.



FIGURE 20

Left button: floral design (22 mm diameter)

Right button: sunrise (25 mm diameter)

SECTION 8

Building Materials, Glass and Faunal Remains

BUILDING MATERIALS

THE WALLS are made from locally available chert, roughly coursed and bonded with lime mortar. There is no evidence for any exterior finish on the walls, but a large amount of lime mortar fragments were recovered from the sieved metre square (context 3), which was close to the northern wall of the kitchen.

This material has no animal hair in it and so is best described as mortar which was used lavishly to point the interior walls, with the excess smoothed across the stonework (some pieces show that they were pushed into interstices on one side and floated smooth on the other). The interior walls were then probably limewashed. There is no evidence of such material from the store room. Two large pieces of pan tile were found in the interior of the store room.

The openings for the doors and windows were finished with dressed chert and limestone, both being locally available. The use of brick seems to have been restricted to the fireplace and bread oven. The bricks are all of a similar size, 22 cm high × 11 cm wide × 6 cm deep, and have no manufacturer's stamps. They probably came from local brickworks, such as those at Colyton or Streethayne.

GLASS

Eight pieces of window glass came from the area inside the store room, indicating a glazed window in the western wall. The base of a thick glass

bottle came from above the bread oven, and small pieces of drinking glass came from both the store room and above the bread oven.

FAUNAL REMAINS

The faunal assemblage recovered from the excavation was small: two vertebrae and four other fragments of bone, weighing a total of 115g. The interior of the store room, MC1, contained a fragment of the lower leg bone of sheep/goat, with evidence of marrow extraction at the lower end, and a fragment of cattle rib bone.

One sheep/goat vertebrae and a fragment of sheep/goat rib bone came from the sieved metre square from inside the kitchen (MC2, context 3). The only other bone from the kitchen was a fragment of avian bone. A single cattle/horse vertebrae came from the core of the boundary bank (MC5, context 17).

IRON OBJECTS BY NUMBER AND WEIGHT

Trench	No. of objects	Weight (g)
MC1	2	38
MC2	2	7
MC4	1	2
MC5	1	68
Total	6	115

This assemblage is consistent with a thrifty family, subsisting on a diet of stews and vegetables cooked over the fire, and making full use of the small amounts of meat – mutton and beef – they could afford.

SECTION 9

Worked Stone and Flint

A PREHISTORIC FLINT TOOL was found in the trial trench MC7. It is a small end scraper, made on a flake of black flint and dating from the Neolithic or Bronze Age (fig. 21). The flint probably came from the Beer Head area. The Farway and Broad Down barrow cemeteries are only a few kilometres from Northleigh (Simpson and Noble 1993).

The flint tool may have found its way to the garden of Lees Cottage through natural processes but it is also possible that the tool was picked up from elsewhere and brought to the site. Two pierced stone objects came from the material infilling the store room and the kitchen (contexts 1 and 3), both from similar locations by the doorways in each room (fig. 22 and 23). Both are made from local sandstone. The hole through the object from the kitchen shows a high amount of wear, presumably from a rope. These objects are interpreted as weights for holding the doors open or closed.

A piece of sandstone with an inscription came from the tumble around the bread oven (context 14). The piece is inscribed with the characters 'R Lee 18 ...'. The top is dressed smooth and has some cut marks which suggest that it was used for sharpening knives (fig. 24). The stone may have been set on the edge of the bread oven where it was used for this purpose.

This inscribed stone is an example of a small datestone and may have been originally set in the chimney breast or hearth. Although they are unreliable as a source of dating evidence, as they can be reused, this stone seems to tie together the information we have from other sources (see documentary evidence) to suggest that our site is Lees Cottage and that a Lee may

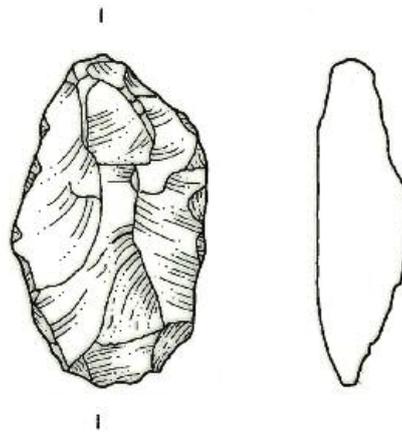


FIGURE 21

Flint scraper found in a trial pit at Lees Cottage (full size)

have lived here in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. The stone may mark an event such as the rebuilding of the chimney, or it could mean that the cottage was built in the nineteenth century.

The parish records show that Richard Lee was born in the parish of Northleigh in 1807. He may have lived here in the early part of the nineteenth century and so given the cottage its name. Alternatively, the name Lee could refer to the builder of the cottage.

A fragment of whetstone, with evidence of use of one face (fig. 25), was found in the chert core of the boundary bank (MC5, context 17).

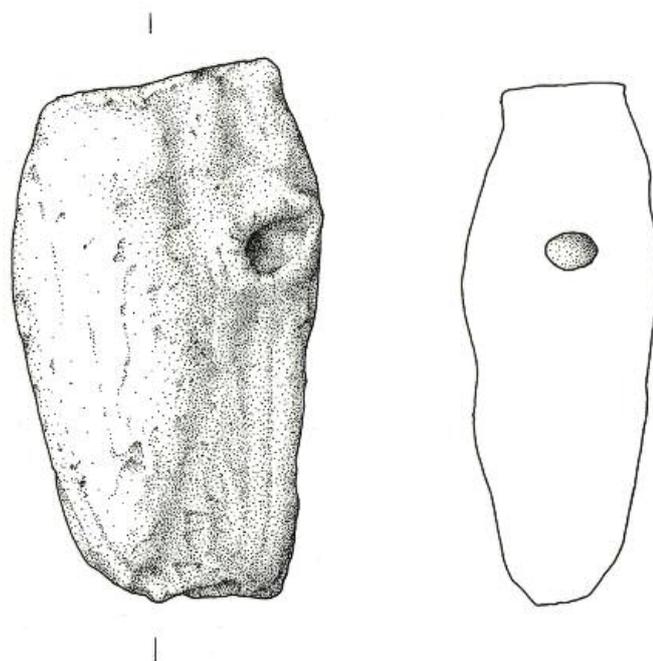


FIGURE 22
Pierced stone weight
from the store room at
Lees Cottage (50%)

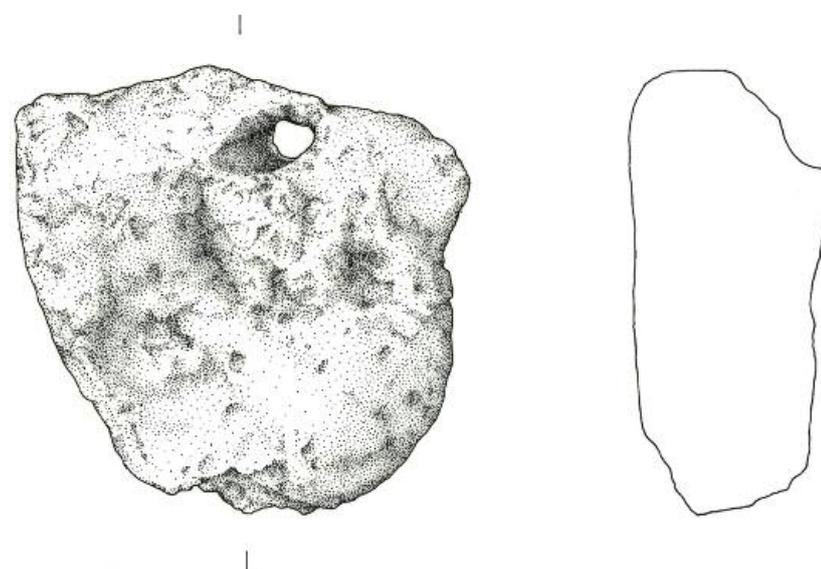


FIGURE 23
Pierced stone weight
from the kitchen at
Lees Cottage (75%)

The hard, fine grained sandstone probably came from the Blackborough whetstone mines, on the Blackdown Hills, northeast of Honiton, which provided high quality whetstones for sharpening edge tools in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/parishchests/blackborough).

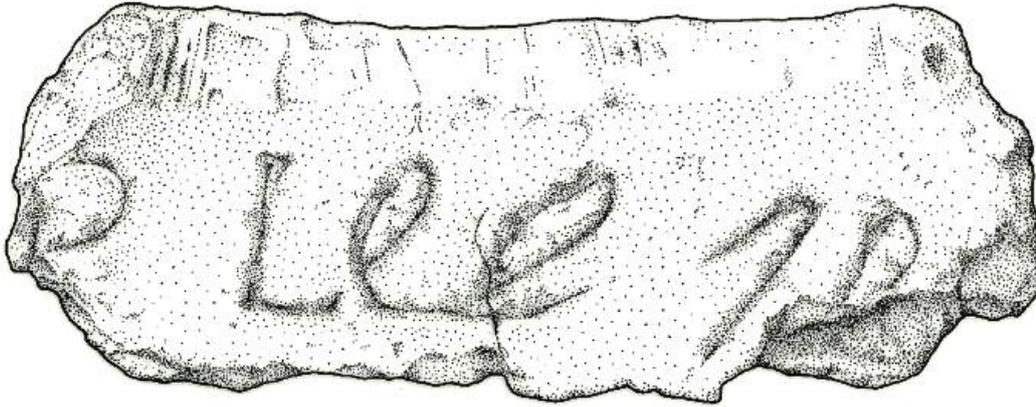


FIGURE 24
Datestone from
Lees Cottage (75%)

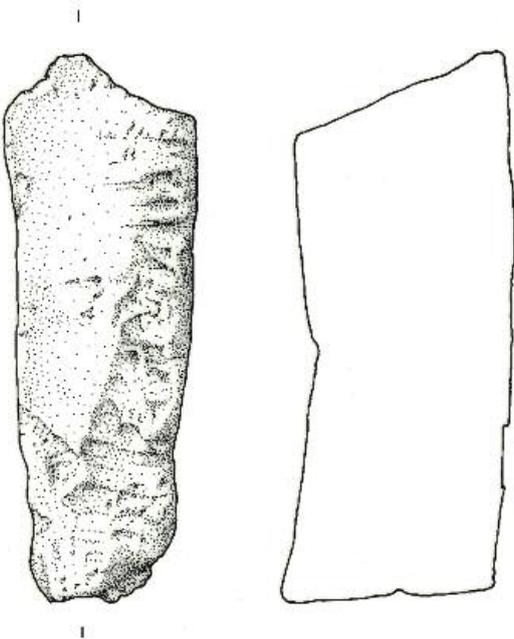


FIGURE 25
Whetstone from the section
of the boundary bank (75%)

SECTION 10

The Documentary Evidence by Ron Woodcock and Philippe Planel

THE TITHE MAP (1840) and apportionment (1839) for the parish of Northleigh show that Lees Cottage stood in a busy agricultural landscape of small farms in the mid nineteenth century (fig. 26 and 27). The area was divided into five small holdings. John Stocker, a tenant of Thomas Melliush, occupied the house in plot 29, together with the land parcels 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, and 36.

The house is clearly shown on the tithe map and the remains can be identified on the ground today (fig. 28). John Tucker owned and occupied the house in plot 46, together with its holding of plots 47–53. His house, although clearly shown on the tithe map, is very difficult to identify on the ground today.

Gideon Ware held plots 37–45 from William Henry Baptist. His house is clearly shown on the tithe map in red (red meant inhabited) and there are ruins there today, although the footprint and existing walls are of a different shape. Gideon Ware was also tenant of Summerdown so it is not clear who was living on plot 37 in 1840. William Drewe was the owner and occupier of plots 54–59.

The apportionment lists plot 54A as ‘Cottage and Garden’, and plot 54 as ‘Orchard’, but neither is depicted on the tithe map. However, there is a building on the OS first edition map (1888) where William

Drewe's house should be, both as regards the numbering sequence and its position in an orchard – the other three farmsteads are also set in orchards (fig. 27). We can only conclude that the tithe map was wrong in this case, concentrating as it did on its principal aim of assessing titheable land rather than depicting houses accurately.

By modern standards these were all very small holdings, although around 1840 small farmers in Northleigh may have had access to common grazing, a valuable resource. Surprisingly, given the state of the land today, plots 32, 34, 35, 36, 38, 40, 43, 44, 49, 51, 52, 53, and 56 are all described as arable in the apportionment – though arable may mean ploughable rather than actually under the plough at the time. Plot 50 is described as 'arable and brake', and its name, 'bog plot' certainly ties in with the state of the land today.

Although each of the farms consisted of several fields, their total acreage is in fact tiny. John Tucker was farming just over six acres, William Drewe slightly less, whilst John Stocker was only farming just three acres, one rood, and twelve perches. Gideon Ware occupied six



FIGURE 26

Reconstruction of the landscape around Lee Cottage in the 1840s

acres here but, as we have seen, also occupied other plots in the parish. The cottage in plot 33, selected for excavation in March 2010, was tenanted by Richard Mellish from Thomas Melliush. This holding was too small to furnish a living, although it was provided with enough land for a large garden.

Since 1840 this area has gradually reverted to woodland. Was this originally a medieval assart into the waste and with time has now come full circle, over 500 years later? In conjunction with more recent maps and photographs it is possible to plot over 150 years of landscape change in this remote valley.

The tithe map (1840) shows an active farming landscape, with few trees apart from those in orchards and hedgerows. Most of the smaller plots are classed as arable on the apportionment, together with larger plots of pasture sloping down to the valley bottom. This high proportion of arable land suggests that animals were grazed outside the study area, presumably on common land which was probably to the west and north of Summerdown Farm.

The OS first edition map (1888) shows that there are no longer any domestically occupied buildings in the area, the buildings shown are depicted as either buildings or ruins, suggesting that the valley has been hit by the late nineteenth century agricultural depression. The loss of common grazing at this time was also a factor in the abandonment of these sites. The first edition map also shows that a large area of probable former common land to the north and west of the study area has been enclosed between 1840 and 1888.

A document of land conveyance for the sale of Summerdown in 1925

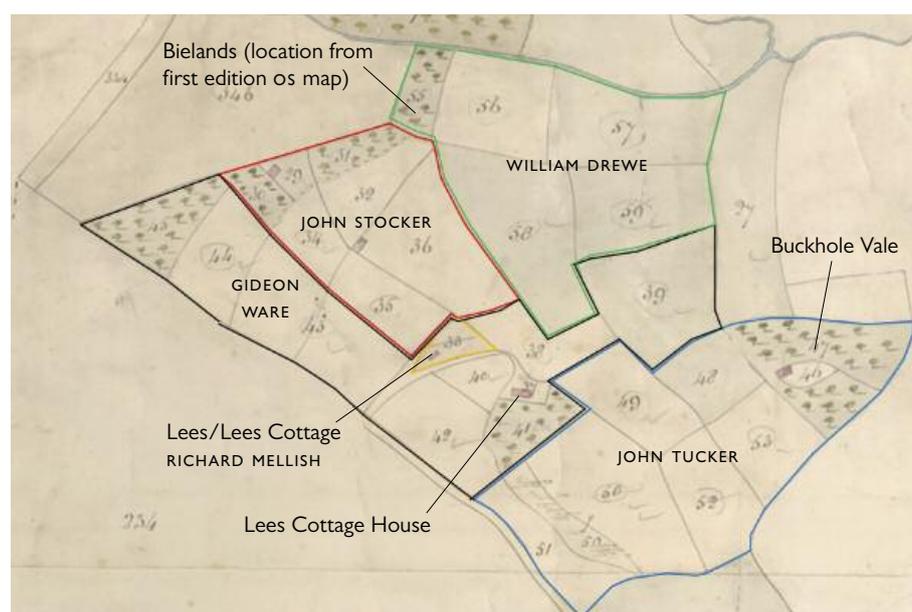


FIGURE 27

The tithe map (1840) for the study area, showing the four small holdings and Lees Cottage

(held by the owner) classifies all the plots as rough pasture. RAF air photographs show that by 1946 woodland is beginning to take over the small fields and air photographs taken in 2005 show that dense woodland now covers nearly all of the previous farmland (Air photographs held at East Devon AONB). On the ground, it is clear that not only have these fields reverted to woodland but the lower lying areas are impenetrable bog; huge amounts of labour must have been expended in the drainage of this land.

LINKING PEOPLE AND PLACES

The main problem in linking people with the four farm holdings and one cottage in the study area is the difficulty with linking families and house names to the houses on the tithe map, accompanying apportionment and house remains on the ground. Names of the houses do appear in the 1841 and 1861 census, but they are floating names, not anchored to any map. However, we can make deductions by a process of elimination, checking the enumerator's route and back referencing.

The house listed on plot 55 (not actually on the tithe map but shown on the OS first edition map (1888) must be Bielands. William Drew, the tenant of this farm (54a, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, and 59) in the tithe apportionment, subsequently appears on the 1841 census for Bielands. Drew, aged 40, was listed as a farmer and lived with his wife Betty, 37, his sons William (cordwainer), 19 and James, 7.

The house on plot 29 and tenanted by John Stocker on the tithe map, along with its holding of seven parcels of land, cannot be linked to the census, nor is there a spare house name or family from 1861 onwards to attribute to it. We can only assume that this house was abandoned shortly after 1839. This would tie in with the remains on the ground, which are very hard to identify.

The house on plot 46 was owned and occupied by John Tucker in 1839, together with its holding of eight plots of land. John Tucker appears on the 1841 census as a farmer, aged 76, along with his wife, 67 and Edward Evans, aged 19, farm labourer. This must be Bucknole Vale (1861 census) because the farm labourer, Edward Evans, had become the principal occupant by the 1851 census, hardly surprising given John Tucker's age in 1841.

By 1861 Evans had a wife and five children, aged 7, 6, 4, 2, and 1. Samuel Evans was aged 2 in 1861. In the 1871 census he appears as a 12-year-old servant at Bucknole. Bucknole Vale lies below Bucknole Farm (a surviving farm just outside the study area) and is listed immediately before Bucknole Farm by the 1861 census enumerator. The remains of Bucknole Vale have been identified on the ground and the plot is part of Bucknole Farm today.

The house on plot 33 is tenanted by Richard Mellish in the tithe apportionment and is not linked to any other parcels of land. It cannot be directly linked with the census evidence but the strong presumption is that this is Lees, occupied by William Spurway with his wife and two children in 1841, and known as Lees Cottage in the 1851 census. Living at Lees Cottage in 1851 were William Spurway and his wife, aged 40 and 33, with their five children. Edward at 13 was a plough boy and Mirah and Mary, aged 10 and 8, were lace makers.

The reason for this presumption is twofold: its position on the enumerator's route – Summerdown, Lees Cottage, Lees Cottage House, Bucknole Vale, Bucknole (1861 census), and the fact that it was occupied by a tailor, Charles Dunning, aged 56, his wife and son, in the same census.

The other properties in the study area are occupied by farm labourers or farmers; in other words it seems they were, either on a full or part-time basis, farming at least some of the parcels of land associated with the property in the tithe apportionment. Lees Cottage is the only house not encumbered in 1839 with surrounding fields, hence suitable for a full-time artisan, a tailor, in 1861.

Why was Lees Cottage so called? The only male Lees born in Northleigh in the right time frame are: Richard Lee (1807) and Francis Lee (1811). There are twelve female christenings between 1700 and 1812. No-one by the name of Lee is listed in the census for Lees Cottage. Richard Lee was living elsewhere in the parish in 1851 and was a



FIGURE 28

Remains of the farmstead
occupied by John Stocker
in 1840

labourer. Francis Lee's father was called Robert Lee. We do not know his age as he was not born in Northleigh.

The house on plot 37 was tenanted in 1839 by Gideon Ware and associated with plots 41, 42, 43, 44, and 45 in the study area. Gideon was also a tenant of Summerdown. The house on plot 37 is probably Lees Cottage House which only appears as a named dwelling in the 1861 census. It is clearly shown as inhabited (coloured red) on the tithe map but does not seem to feature in the 1841 census.

In the 1861 census it is occupied by James and Elizabeth Underdown, 41 and 37, farm labourer and lace maker respectively, and their three children. The evidence for this attribution is again twofold – Lees Cottage and Lees Cottage House must surely be close to each other and only two of the five properties do indeed lie very close to each other; the enumerator's route, in 1861, sandwiched between two surviving farms is Summerdown, Lees Cottage, Lees Cottage House, Bucknole Vale, Bucknole, the logical route.

The only family in the census data not mentioned so far is that of John and Elizabeth Marwood, 56 and 52 in the 1851 census, farm labourer and lace maker respectively and their four daughters, aged 20, 15, 11, and 11, also listed as lace makers – a total of six breadwinners, five of them working from home. The likely house, from the enumerator's route is Lees Cottage House.

By 1871 Lees Cottage is no longer listed. Lees Cottage House has become Bucknole Hill House, still occupied by Elizabeth Underdown (now widowed), aged 47, a lace maker, and her three sons, one of whom, Edward, 21, is a farm labourer. In 1881 Bucknole Hill is occupied by Henry Lakeland, an unemployed man of 36 with his wife and mother-in-law. These marginal people are the last occupants of the study area, a fact confirmed by the enumerator's route in subsequent censuses, which changes and no longer passes through the vale between Bucknole and Summerdown.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, in this area of wet marginal land, two small farms (Bielands and Bucknole Vale) seem to have been broken up and henceforth the inhabitants relied on farm labouring, the lace industry and artisanal skills to survive. Two further farms may have already disappeared by 1850 – that tenanted by John Stocker in 1839 (with two buildings shown on the tithe map) and that tenanted by Gideon Ware, already part of Summerdown in 1839. Significantly, the last remaining head of household in the vale was, in 1881, unemployed.

SECTION 11

Lees Cottage and the Surrounding Landscape

THERE WERE FEW finds from sealed contexts, but the overall assemblage dates the final phase of occupation and abandonment to the mid-to-late nineteenth century. The almost complete lack of material from the twentieth century fits well with the documented later history of the site – rough pasture in the 1920s and a gradual reversion to scrubby woodland in the post-war years.

The layout of the boundaries and the age of the trees on them suggest that the Lees Cottage plot was inserted into the corner of a larger parcel of land at some time in the eighteenth century. Features such as the lime ash floor and the bricks from the bread oven would fit well with such a date. The farms around Lees Cottage, with their small holding size and straight field boundaries suggest that they are themselves relatively late comers to the landscape, perhaps dating from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, when there was little choice for those wishing to expand the agricultural land other than to enclose and reclaim the poorest land on the steep valley sides.

The documentary evidence and the finds assemblage combine to give a date for the abandonment of Lees Cottage in the last decades or so of the nineteenth century. By this time the small farms in the valley had been broken up or abandoned, suggesting that such small farms were no longer viable in the face of the loss of the commons and the general agricultural depression of the later nineteenth century.

William Spurway, the agricultural labourer who lived at Lees Cottage in 1851 with his large family, had to move away from the area,

like many others, to seek work elsewhere on the land, perhaps on one of the larger farms, or in one of the rapidly expanding towns and cities. In 1871 he had moved to Honiton, but in 1881, now in his seventies, William Spurway moved back to the parish of Northleigh.

Lees Cottage is just one of hundreds of deserted cottages and small farms which lie at the end of forgotten lanes, hidden in the valleys of Devon and West Somerset (for example, Riley and Wilson-North 2001, 125-132; Riley 2006, 131-4). The excavation at Lees Cottage has shown that their humble outward appearance conceals a wealth of information, both about the buildings and about the people who lived in them and worked on the land.

SECTION 12

Acknowledgements and References

THE SITE ARCHIVE

The finds and archive will be deposited at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter.

ACCESS

There is no public access to the site or to the surrounding abandoned farms and fields.

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Visiting the Summerdown Dig

Poem by John Torrance

This valley wilderness of seemingly
millennial woods is a dark tangle of lies.
Now, what's this? A crime scene? Investigators
have pitched a tent, taped off a suspect area,
and dig and sieve the claggy soil for clues.
Here's a brass button with a merry sunburst
stamped upon it; there's a broken stone
carved with a name and half a date—'Lee,
18 ...' So meaning what? Living or leaving?

Bread-oven, chimney—one of a dozen, once,
which on a cold spring day like this would send
their wood-smoke signals round the neighbourhood.
When tithe surveyors were pacing out these hedgerows
(banks tumbled now, brambled and wrecked by roots)
they walked through orchards, among cows and sheep,
and saw wheat standing in the tended fields.
They drew a tidy web of little holdings—
Lee's cottage too, in this triangular close.

But each tenth year enumerators found
more farmsteads derelict, and in the fields
wild daffodils already under scrub,
until, with none to count, they ceased to come.
Searching goes on: stone with a hole—why this?
Why that? Why any of this? Mankind, for sure,
were losers here, yet what defeated them
was not just oak and ash, hazel and thorn,
but something more. So what unleashed this cleansing?

A landlord's greed? Factory wages? Gold Rush?
Abstractions drift in the air like small snow—
the Great Depression, History, Time itself.
Was it the common tale of suffering here—
hunger, squalor, children dying and dying?
A trowel which scrapes and probes will often strike
the hardest question, beyond why this or that—
why anything? Or why not nothing?—but finds
no answer here. Tomorrow always beckons.



East Devon

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

If you would like to know more
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the Parishscapes project, or to
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