

FROM YOUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS

Updates from Cornwall Archaeological Society's Area Representatives

Any opinions or errors in these articles are those of the authors and must not be assumed to be those of Cornwall Archaeological Society.

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Issue 45

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BARBARIANS INSIDE THE GATES

The following comments are those of the writer and should not be taken as representing those of Cornwall Archaeological Society.

On 23rd June 2020, *The Times* reported that the Prime Minister's chief adviser, Dominic Cummings, had pledged to 'overhaul the "appalling" planning system' in England

(<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ill-take-axe-to-planning-laws-says-cummings-bwn5j3b88>).

Given his influence, it was no surprise that on 6th August the Government produced a White Paper, *Planning for the Future*. Reaction was swift from many quarters. Environmentalists were alarmed that deregulation would accelerate habitat and biodiversity loss, and were especially irked by the Prime Minister's statement that: 'Newt-counting delays are a massive drag on the prosperity of this country.' Others criticised the proposed reduction in the democratic rights of local councils and voters to have a say in planning. Housing experts and planners explained that planning laws had not prevented the building of homes, particularly affordable ones. In contrast, reaction from property developers has been favourable, unsurprisingly given the sector's lavish political donations (<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/dark-money-investigations/exclusive-property-tycoons-gave-tories-more-than-11m-in-less-than-a-year/>). However, those are wider issues, not within the scope of this newsletter. What about the impact of these proposals on archaeology and the historic environment?

Planning is very complicated. This is a very simple summary of how it seems to work. The National Planning Policy Framework (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>) sets out the national guidelines. Councils produce local plans within the parameters

of the national framework. Cornwall's Local Plan (<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/adopted-plans/>) was published in 2016. And at a parish level, many places have written Neighbourhood Development Plans and these can be found at: <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-planning-in-cornwall/#-tab-357841>.

All these tiers have been drawn up to make sure that development is appropriate to the needs of localities and their residents. They are not blocking measures; indeed, a presumption in favour of development exists. Archaeology and the historic environment feature in the National and Cornwall Plans and in some Neighbourhood Plans. This means that when planning decisions are made, attention must be given to archaeology and the historic environment, as well as to other issues such as ecology and wildlife. Policy 24 of Cornwall's Plan deals with the Historic Environment and states: *Development proposals will be permitted where they would sustain the cultural distinctiveness and significance of Cornwall's historic rural, urban and coastal environment by protecting, conserving and where appropriate enhancing the significance of designated and non-designated assets and their settings* (<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/22936789/adopted-local-plan-strategic-policies-2016.pdf>).

In Cornwall, qualified archaeologists monitor planning applications to see what impact proposals might have and can comment as statutory consultees. Informally, CAS Area Reps receive the Council planning lists each week. They can comment as individuals but sometimes, in the case of major applications, the CAS committee will comment on behalf of the society. In some cases, archaeological investigation is made a condition of planning approval. These developer-funded projects have led to some amazing and worthwhile discoveries.

The Council for British Archaeology is very concerned about the direction favoured by the Government:

It is 30 years since the introduction of Planning Policy Guidance 16 (PPG16) changed the way archaeology is treated in the planning system. It is now funded through the development of sites and requires the planning system to effectively and fairly deliver its substantial public benefits. Since 1990 this approach has generated a huge quantity and range of new knowledge about the past and the places we live while at the same time as helping development to proceed.

This mechanism for ensuring archaeology is addressed within the planning system delivers public benefits in terms of our increased understanding of the extent and richness of the surviving evidence of our past, while simultaneously reducing the risks to developers through a clear process for the identification, assessment and recording of archaeological evidence in advance of development. New knowledge has created an ever more detailed picture of our past, that is itself a resource to help inform future development potential...

...Since 1990 the planning system has been one of the main mechanism for securing archaeological knowledge and interest. Often via excavation and public dissemination this knowledge can be made widely available to the public and helps transform our understanding of the places in which we live. Only a very small fraction of our country's story is documented in

written records. We rely on archaeology to fill in the gaps and improve our knowledge and understanding about the past and the way people lived before us. The planning system is a crucial mechanism for unlocking the potential of undiscovered archaeology for the discovery and knowledge it is yet to yield. It is a proven system that works, prevents delays and delivers substantial public benefits (<https://blog.archaeologyuk.org/2020/07/22/cba-writes-to-pm-and-ministers-on-proposed-planning-reforms/>).

The CBA is asking anyone concerned about the negative effect that the new planning regime would have on archaeology to take action. This advice is given:

*One simple step you can take is to write a letter to your MP and you can find some helpful guidance on how to do this in our toolkit **here**. This toolkit was developed as part of the CBA's Local Heritage Engagement Network (LHEN) project and you can find advice and guidance, along with a range of other toolkits, to help you speak up for the archaeology in your local area **here**.*

Additionally, Dan Ratcliffe has forwarded a very detailed template that might be used by anyone who wishes to contact their M.P. or the Government. This can be found at the end of this article. Alternatively, you can write something shorter explaining why you are concerned. You can comment directly here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future> . Comments must be received by 11.45 p.m. on 29th October 2020.

Influencing a government with such a strong parliamentary majority and links to major developers will not be easy. I sent the template letter to my M.P., Sheryll Murray, and received this reply (dated 10th August 2020):

Re. Protection for heritage and archaeology in the planning system

Thank you for your recent email in respect of the above.

I have noted your views and appreciate you taking the time to contact me on this matter.

Should I be of any further assistance in the future, please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Readers will make their own judgements about the response. Maybe it would have been better to compose a letter instead of using someone else's words. Even so, I was surprised to discover later that the All Party Archaeology Group includes the name of....Sheryll Murray! (<http://www.appag.org.uk/mps.html>). Nonetheless, concerns need to be expressed if our heritage is not to be trashed by those who know the price of everything but the value of nothing.

Roger Smith

TEMPLATE LETTER

Dear [MP],

Re: Protection for heritage and archaeology in the planning system

On the 30th of June, the Prime Minister gave a speech promising to “build, build, build”. This came after his senior adviser, Dominic Cummings, was quoted by the press as saying that he intended to “take an axe” to planning legislation. On the 2nd of July, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government announced that “permission in principle” is to be granted to planning applications for housing on certain sites. On 6th July, the Government’s White Paper ‘Planning for the Future’ confirmed that the current planning system is proposed to be reformed, with permission in principle to be granted automatically to any land allocated for ‘growth’. The document makes no reference to how safeguards will be put in place to ensure the assessment and evaluation of the archaeological potential of sites either at public or private expense, nor how known archaeological sites within such areas shall be protected or, alternatively, excavated and ‘preserved by record’ at the expense of developers as currently is the case. This is gravely concerning to anybody who has concern for England’s built and archaeological heritage, which is once again threatened by proposals to deregulate the planning system

In Cornwall, archaeological heritage likely to be affected by planning decisions is currently protected by the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), as explained in the Government’s document, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice. The general requirements are that the impact of development on heritage should be appropriately mitigated:

Para 127c: new development should be “sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change”.

Para 184: “Heritage assets [...] are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.”

Importantly, the Policy provides protection both designated (e.g. Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Parks and Gardens), World Heritage Sites, Conservation Areas, Historic Battlefields, and non-designated heritage assets.

In respect of designated assets, Statutory duties are placed on Local Planning Authorities within the 1990 Planning Act. This important legal protection ensures that it is not only Listed assets themselves that are protected, but their settings¹, to which decision makers should have special regard. It will be insufficient to simply exclude the assets themselves from areas designated for ‘growth’. Unless the setting of each and every designated asset is given special regard in identifying these areas, any new development which the courts may decide lies within the setting of an asset may be determined to be unlawful. This is likely to place an enormous burden on public resources at the plan-making stage and poses a serious challenge to the workability of the proposed system.

Archaeological sites, by their very nature, are often unknown until the land in which they lie is explored, either via remote sensing or through intrusive evaluation and excavation. As such, planning policy has long recognised that it is the ‘archaeological interest’ or potential of sites that is to be considered in planning decisions, with NPPF P189 specifically ensuring that not only are existing ‘Historic Environment Records’ consulted for data on known sites, but that, where appropriate, desk based assessment and field evaluation is required in order to explore the archaeological potential of sites prior to the making of planning decisions.

¹ Setting is defined by the Government as ‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as its surroundings evolve’ (NPPF Annex 2: Glossary).

Heritage protection in UK law is set within the international legal framework. In particular, the Granada Convention (1975) requires parties to follow conservation policies which:

- 1. include the protection of the architectural heritage as an essential town and country planning objective [...] at all stages both in the drawing up of development plans and in the procedures for authorising work*
- 2. promote programmes for the restoration and maintenance of the architectural heritage;*
- 3. make the conservation, promotion and enhancement of the architectural heritage a major feature of cultural, environmental and planning policies*

The Valletta Convention (1992) recognises the importance of archaeological heritage. States parties are required to protect archaeological heritage in the planning process, including through the input of archaeologists in the planning process itself, by undertaking assessments of the impact of proposed development on archaeological heritage. States parties are also required to fund the mitigation of damage to archaeological sites; in the United Kingdom, funding is provided by the developer in accordance with the 'polluter pays' principle.

Further to this, the principle that 'the polluter pays' and other 'precautionary principles with respect to damage to the historic environment are set out in the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018.

Any alteration to the planning process must take into account the United Kingdom's legal tradition of protecting the historic environment, or taking steps to mitigate damage to it, where damage is justified. This is not only a moral obligation, but a requirement the United Kingdom has taken upon itself by acceding to international treaties. Without adequate protection for its historic environment in the planning process, the United Kingdom will do irreparable damage to its shared heritage, and breach international law.

Claims that environmental assessment processes holds back house-building is untrue. As Oliver Letwin's report of 2018 showed, the greatest obstacle to development is not the planning system, but the speed at which new houses can be made available without undermining the housing market – or, to put it another way, without reducing the price of houses. In fact, commercial archaeology, which employs over 5,000 people in the United Kingdom, makes a contribution of over a quarter of a billion pounds to the national economy each year. Archaeological fieldwork ahead of development, and other forms of conservation of historic buildings and places through the planning process, can help reduce local opposition to new development by providing excellent opportunities for community engagement. The justification the Government has provided for its radical changes is specious and misleading.

Without adequate protection for heritage in the planning process, innumerable sites and buildings would have been lost to future generations. The Government's new plan to assume permission on land set aside for development poses a clear and significant threat in particular to archaeological heritage assets, which are frequently buried and unknown until an assessment required as a condition of planning permission reveals them. Notable examples of archaeology discovered as a result of planning conditions include the Anglo-Saxon town and cemetery at the Buttermarket in Ipswich, 80 decapitated skeletons thought to have been Roman criminals or gladiators in York, and a Roman villa in Cam, Gloucestershire, which the developer agreed to preserve after discussion with the local community. Within Cornwall, notable discoveries made via the planning process include the [enclosure \(now protected under a recycling centre\) and Neolithic slate disc](#) discovered in 2012 at the Truro Eastern District Centre; the preservation of an Iron Age settlement or 'round' at Tregony as an open space within a housing development; and the discovery of two [Beaker period graves at Crantock in](#) 2019.

The planning system has been designed to recognise that heritage is important to local communities. Stripping away communities' right to inform the decisions that affect their heritage is an affront to those communities and a huge risk to our shared heritage. As MP for [\[insert constituency\]](#), I urge you to hold the Government to account. The heritage of the country and this constituency is being put at risk, without adequate scrutiny and

without any genuine justification. Please take whatever steps you can to question the Government and its Ministers on the matter, and to vote in a way that ensures the continued protection of the historic environment in the planning process. You may wish to join the All-Party Parliamentary Archaeology Group, which advocates on behalf of archaeology in Parliament. In Cornwall there has been significant support for Neighbourhood Plans and the heritage assets that are identified within and the consequent public support for their protection.

Yours sincerely,

[Name(s)]

Sources:

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This month we have a double contribution from Adrian Rodda:

TREAD SAFELY FOR YOU TREAD ON MY...

W.B.Yeats completed this poetic line with “*dreams.*” I am tempted to say “*Heritage.*” At a time when we fear that the Tory government’s new Planning Act will ignore the archaeology unrevealed below the ground, I fear for some of the revealed and recorded archaeology suffering under the tread of walkers and cyclists, especially on the Cornish Coast Path. Part of the problem is the decision by National Trust to not explain what all its lumps and bumps are and why they should be respected.

Let's look at one popular beauty spot which see thousands of visitors who park their cars and campervans to charge across or along the Cornish Coast Path eager to float their body boards or claim their socially distanced portion of the beach, often with portable barbecues and plastic wrapped snacks. Godrevy, from the mouth of the Red River to the Headland has a board walk to the beach below the watchful RNLI lifeguards and past their hut to other access points to Porth Godrevy beach across the channel from the lighthouse island. Cars drive beside it to the overflow car parks in the fields below the Headland. Neither drivers nor walkers have any idea of what is buried either side of their designated route. We should ignore the fields and grazing land inland of the road since that is not accessible to them. Let's just concentrate on the lumps under the gaze of the drivers who park in the overflow fields.

After the limited hard standing in front of Godrevy farmhouse, the road squeezes below a sharply rising slope and a half circle of a low bank which is obviously cut by the road itself. This is the site of a Romano-British homestead excavated in 1957/8 as part of the 10 year project led by Prof Charles Thomas to reveal the multi periods of archaeology in the Gwithian area, from the Mesolithic through the Bronze Ages to the early medieval and beyond which has been re-assessed in *Cornish Archaeology* 46 (2007). The excavator, Peter Fowler, published his assessment of the site in *Cornish Archaeology* 1. (1962: <https://cornisharchaeology.org.uk/volume-1-1962/>)



The enclosure today.

It is very difficult to match Fowler's plans to the lumps and bumps still visible because the road has been widened and the once sloping land has been cut to widen the road. Fowler mapped a low stone mound on the edge of the deep stream which he thought might have been the remains of a barrow, but it is too overgrown or too trodden down to be visible to me. Still visible is a circular, regular shaped depression near to the stream which he thought may have been a hut circle. Low banks just visible on the cliff edges may have been part of a field system lost to coastal erosion. None of these features were excavated and are of unknown date. Other small fields further towards the headland were thought to be contemporary with the homestead. Fowler wrote, "The site as a whole consisted of a complex of occupational material and features, bounded by a revetted rubble-filled bank and wall, and in part integrated with the bank of a surrounding enclosure." It is the enclosure we can see today as most of the house was under the road. In 1957/8 the area was still

private and the road was a narrow metalled lane, not the tarmacked highway it is today, so could be closed and dug up. However, as you can imagine even the existing road and its traffic meant that stratigraphy was confused and there had been plenty of redeposited soil and stones containing pottery in a random order. Mesolithic flint tools and flakes from beach pebbles were found under the whole area.



The enclosure was both sides of the road, but the homestead is almost all under the road.

Fowler decided there were three phases of activity at the site. Phase 1 threw up pottery with no Roman influence but was no earlier than the 1st century A D. This floor was built over for Phase 2 and the house wall integrated with the enclosure bank. The house was oval in shape, but some of the wall was tumbled and looted for stone to build the nearby hedges, so its exact shape and dimensions were not clear. Its entrance, under the road, had been blocked up and a new entrance built for Phase 3. Two drainage channels ran towards the entrance and the floor was randomly paved with local slate. There was a central post hole made narrower with several stones including the top of a rotary quern, which had not been used but broken before it was properly finished. There was a charcoal filled fire pit nearby. In Phase 3 the posthole was completely covered, but retained its central importance to the house by having a large hearth of burnt clay spread across it. Smaller postholes in the space towards the walls may have supported the new roof. The Phase 2 posthole was skirted by a drainage channel which terminated at a pit 9ft in diameter and 2ft deep. The end of the drain, which probably caught drip water, was packed with carefully chosen quartz beach pebbles, surely to filter the water. An external drain, sited to catch the rainwater from the eaves of the Phase 2 entrance, sent water into a sunken pottery jar.



This view taken in February 2018 gives a better idea of the depth of the enclosure. The apparent entrance is I think modern and not the break in the bank shown in Fowler's plan.

Sherds of native pottery were found all over the site. Imported Samian ware from Gaul and amphorae from Spain were found in the redeposited road material, as were 12 badly eroded Roman coins dated to second half of 3rd century. Strangely no shellfish were found, though there were many shells at Magor Roman villa, some 3.5 miles inland in the Red River Valley. Other links with Magor were the Godrevy slate and Godrevy "sandstone" used on that site. There were many stone tools, especially whetstones and slick stones, but no iron tools. A beautiful bronze brooch of Roman design and part of a bronze bracelet were discovered.

Henrietta Quinnell's reassessment of the site is that it was not a home at all, but a workshop as much of the native pottery was briquetage associated with salt production. She also pointed out that there were no spindle whorls. The rotary quern and imported pottery and coins may have come in from another site, Magor Villa or the Iron Age/Roman Period round higher on the hill above the coast.

My own interest in this site is that Peter Fowler allowed me, barely in my teens to excavate the Phase 3 hearth and the Phase 2 post hole with its rotary quern. If any single experience hooked me into archaeology it was the excitement and self-confidence he gave me. I shall be forever grateful to him.

https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MCO21601&resourceID=1020

This site is not scheduled as part of the complex of prehistoric sites on Godrevy Headland.

Text and photographs by Adrian Rodda

HERITAGE BURNING

Leave the Porth Godrevy Romano British site and walk along the cliff path towards the lighthouse. You will pass the site of a boathouse but I could find nothing. A little further on there is a steep path down to a terrace where a 17th century fish cellar was sited.

https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MCO33838&resourceID=1020

This site is not scheduled and is outside the wider scheduled area. It consists of a rectangular enclosure on a terrace (17x7metres) raised above the beach. The cellar was superseded by a tea room opened in 1898. It now makes a convenient picnic and barbecue site with alarming consequences.



Photo August 2020.

NT furloughed most of its Rangers and in August made them redundant. The staff at the Red River end car park only have time to supervise members' passes and collect litter and keep the toilets clean.

The remains of a “fisherman’s hut” cut into the cliff can be seen abutting the path down to the terrace. The wall could collapse under the weight of walkers.



Michael Tangye, who was the local Area Rep for many years, researched the site and published it in *Cornish Archaeology* No 30. (1991: <https://cornisharchaeology.org.uk/volume-30-1991/>). He located another hut behind the rectangular building and tucked into the cliff, but I could not find it. The HER description indicates that this was a toilet, so I did not look too assiduously. Nothing remains of the wooden teahouse so the visible walls are the fish cellar. Michael Tangye and the NT ranger excavated it in 1989. They revealed a wall similar to the one in the picture above, built with slate

slabs. The floor beside the walls was cobbled on each side with stones collected from the beach for some of its area, but as it sloped towards the sea the natural slate platform made an adequate floor in most of it. They found several roofing slates. The walls contained at least 10 sockets to accommodate the ends of pressing poles. These poles were weighted and sited to press onto the lids of hogsheads of pilchards. Pressing stones were discovered on the beach below, with their central sinkings to take iron hooks which could be suspended from the rectangular poles. Fish oil and brine would be pressed out through the staves of the barrel and slide across the slate floor.

Michael's research into the Bassets, who were Lords of the Manor, suggested that they built the fish cellar and its related capstan to pull up the boats before 1656. It may have been leased to the tenants of Godrevy farm as it was common for people to fish as well as farm. His article gives a clear account of how fish cellars operated and relates the Porth Godrevy one to his extensive research in Penwith and on the Lizard.

Text and photos Adrian Rodda

MONUMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

Iain Rowe and Chris Coldwell have provided updates about this exciting initiative run by Cornwall AONB:



On Saturday 22nd August five CAS Area Representatives and several CAS members attended a surveying training event at Stowe's Hill on Bodmin Moor. The event was run by Cornwall AONB as part of their Monumental Improvement project. See their webpage for more details: <https://www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/monumental-improvement>. CAS has been involved with this important project from day one and is a key project partner. Kurt Jackson the West Cornwall artist is also involved and an exhibition of his work in the AONB will be running at his gallery next month – again see the AONB website or <https://www.kurtjackson.com/> for more details.

The training event was being run in order to help those who attended to improve their knowledge of surveying Scheduled Ancient Monuments and also to input into the site management plan being produced for Historic England. We also created some entertainment for the visitors to the site, which there were very many of!



We all had a fantastic day, learnt a lot and also made some new acquaintances. We also will be having a training manual sent to us.

Chris Coldwell and James Gossip who ran the event had put a lot of preparation into making sure we were all able to socially distance ourselves and also had a good supply of hand sanitisers, so we all felt very safe carrying out the work. Many thanks to Chris and James for organising a brilliant day & they did pretty well with the weather also!

Iain Rowe



The show at the Kurt Jackson Gallery goes live at the end of August and will run for the remainder of 2020 and in to early 2021.

The ground floor of the gallery features Kurt's work across Cornwall with many of the AONB project sites featured including Black Head, Crane and the Rumps. The first floor display area features a display of the AONB project along with one by the Penwith Landscape Partnership, creating a comprehensive exhibition of respective complementary work across all 12 sections of the Cornwall AONB. There will also be some of our drone surveys playing on the TV in the upstairs display area.

Booking is not required at the gallery, but please be mindful that on busy days you might have to wait due to restricted numbers allowed in the gallery. The gallery can be found at North Row, St Just, TR19 7LB (<https://www.jacksonfoundationgallery.com/prehistoric-cornwall/>).

Chris Coldwell

RETURN TO GOSS MOOR



Issue 44 included a feature about Goss Moor and the two hillforts that flank it. Unfortunately, it was not as well-researched as it ought to have been. After publication, my attention was drawn to this major piece of work by Cornwall Archaeological Unit exploring the rich archaeology of the area:

Bypassing Indian Queens Archaeological Excavations 1992-1994, Investigating prehistoric and Romano-British settlement and landscapes in Cornwall by Jacqueline Nowakowski, Charlie Johns and others.

It will be invaluable as a resource for further exploration of this fascinating, yet overlooked, part of Cornwall and if you'd like to get your own copy, it is available as a CD from:

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/cornwall-archaeological-unit/publications/>

Bypassing Indian Queens: Archaeological Excavations 1992-1994. E-Publication on CD (2015) £9.99



[Buy online](#)

And, still on the subject of Goss Moor, Malcom Gould and Ros Hayward of Luxulyan and District Old Cornwall Society have been carrying out their own fieldwork and were intrigued to discover this boundary stone at SW96630 60006, on the boundary between Roche and St Dennis parishes.





Wanting to know more, they got in contact with Ian Thompson of the Milestone Society (<https://www.milestonesociety.co.uk/>) who was aware of various boundary stones between the two parishes but confirmed that they were not on the Historic Environment Record. As for the 'A' and 'F', Ian looked up Lake's Parochial History which 'suggests that in St Dennis, Ennis-Cavan (Enniscaven) formerly belonged to the Arundells, which might give us an A, and "the principal landowners (in Roche parish) are the Earl of Mount Edgecumbe and Viscount Falmouth."' Ian intends to research this further.

Area Representatives would love to hear from fellow CAS members, and the general public, about any feature of the historic environment in their parishes, whether a new discovery, something causing concern, or even just to answer queries. If you have any concerns, or new information, about any archaeological feature, please contact the Area Representative for the parish. If you do not know who that is, just look at the inside back cover of the latest journal, *Cornish Archaeology* 57, or send an email to arearep@cornisharchaeology.org.uk .

Roger Smith, 14th September 2020

