

## **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.

# **SEPTEMBER 2022**

## **Issue 70**

## **THIS MONTH'S FEATURES**

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# CONSERVATION ON SCILLY

*Katharine Sawyer is the CAS Area Representative for the Isles of Scilly. She and her associates have been very busy clearing various sites, as she describes here:*

The Isles of Scilly Community Archaeology Group has been able to hold site clearance meetings in most months between April and October 2022.

In April we worked on two of the Bronze Age burial chambers (two entrance graves and a cist) on Cruther's Hill, St Martin's. This is a site which we have cleared several times since the group started in May 2014 and each time it gets a bit easier!

In May we headed to Bryher where we tidied the entrance grave (HER 7384.01; Scheduled Monument 15457; SV 8716 1492) and cist (HER 7384.02; Scheduled Monument 15457; SV 8714 1490) on Gweal Hill. Here is the cist after our attentions:



Photo: Katharine Sawyer

In June we had to postpone our visit to Teän because of the weather conditions but we got there in early July and then visited St Helen's at the end of that month. Both were sites that we hadn't been able to work on for at least three years, so there was plenty to do. Fortunately, we had a good turn-out for these meetings with several visitors joining the local regulars.

Here are 'after' photos of one of the Early Mediaeval cist graves and the farmhouse on Teän (HER 71306; Scheduled Monument 15500; SV 9093 1640):



Photo: Katharine Sawyer



Photo: Katharine Sawyer



'Before' and 'after' photos of our work at the chapel and the hut on St Helen's:



Photo: Katharine Sawyer



Photo: Katharine Sawyer



Photo: Katharine Sawyer



Photo: Katharine Sawyer

In September we made our first ever site clearance visit to White Island, St Martin's. Again, there was a good turn-out so we were able to clear both the kelp pit (HER 7116; Scheduled Monument 15442; SV 9248 1727) and the entrance grave (HER 7096; Scheduled Monument 15396; SV 9223 1763). We got to the kelp pit just in time – if we had left it until next year, I think that we would have struggled to find it. Here are the 'before' and 'after' pictures of it:



Photo: Katharine Sawyer



Photo: Katharine Sawyer



In October we headed to Gugh to tackle the Clapper of Works entrance grave (HER 7020.12; Scheduled Monument 15294; SV 8903 0795); we had 14 attendees so, having cleared the encroaching vegetation at that site, we were also able to work on Obadiah's Barrow (HER 7031; Scheduled Monument 15445; SV 8880 0850). Here are some photos of the two sites (Clapper of Works first):



Photo: Katharine Sawyer



Photo: Katharine Sawyer



Photo: Katharine Sawyer



Photo: Katharine Sawyer

**Report and photos: Katharine Sawyer**

## DECIPHERING KING ARTHUR'S HALL

*Ann Preston-Jones gives an update about investigations of one of Cornwall's most mysterious archaeological features, King Arthur's Hall (HER 1967; Scheduled Monument CO81; SX 1297 7765; St Breward parish):*

The Cornwall AONB's Monumental Improvement Project has recently begun and one of their new appointments, into the role of activities officer, is Iain Rowe, the Area Representatives' convenor. Fortunately, Iain will be able to continue his voluntary post with the ARs in his new job.

The project made an exciting start with a small research excavation at King Arthur's Hall on Bodmin Moor in mid September. The dig was led by James Gossip of CAU with a good number of volunteers providing the hard work and muscle-power. The volunteers included members of the Bodmin Moor-based TimeSeekers and CAS members including Area Reps David Edyvean and Karen Dickin. In his new role Iain was involved in a busy day of associated activities at the middle weekend of the dig.



*King Arthur's Hall, with the waterlogged interior in the foreground, and upright stones lining the bank clearly visible on the left. On the horizon Roughtor can be seen just right of centre and Brown Willy on the far right.  
Photo: Ann Preston-Jones*

For those who don't know King Arthur's Hall, it is a large rectangular enclosure formed by a substantial bank with an inner facing of large granite slabs and a sunken waterlogged interior. It is on open flat moorland in St Breward parish, with the hills of Roughtor, Brown Willy a dramatic backdrop to the north-east.

[https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results\\_Single.aspx?uid=MCO21647&resourceID=1020](https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MCO21647&resourceID=1020)



Volunteers excavating the main trench through the bank

Photo: Ann Preston-Jones

One main trench was cut through the bank, close to the entrance on the SW side, and a number of smaller test pits were excavated around the site to investigate anomalies identified by the TimeSeekers' geophysical survey. The purpose of the main trench was not only to reveal the stratigraphy and development of this enigmatic site, for which Pete Herring has found 18 different interpretations varying from Neolithic ritual enclosure to



medieval reservoir, but also to undertake OSL dating to help obtain an absolute date for the very well preserved buried soil found under the bank. In addition, the peat in the interior was cored and will be examined for pollens.



The team from Reading University augering for peats across the interior of the hall. Photo: Ann Preston-Jones



Overseen by Ryan Smith, student volunteer Noah Breslin is excavating the deep cut in the interior of the hall which helps to explain why it is waterlogged. The section through the very stony bank can be seen behind Noah. Photo: Ann Preston-Jones

On the penultimate day of the dig, David Edyvean performed a starring role by racing off to rescue the OSL dating team from Newcastle and St Andrew's universities, who were stranded in Launceston after their vehicle broke down.

There is more about the excavation, including video diaries, on the AONB's website:

<https://www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/king-arthurs-hall>

Following backfilling and re-turfing of the trenches, the management of the site and its enclosing fence will be monitored and reviewed and most importantly its future will be informed by a much-improved understanding of the site and its significance.

**Report and photos: Ann Preston-Jones**

## BURIED AT BURY

*Karen Dickin reports on some interesting artefacts from Bury Castle (HER 1539; Scheduled Monument CO395; SX 1352 6962; Cardinham parish):*

A few months ago, I was contacted by Robin Hanbury-Tennison who wished to show me a collection of roughly 100 artefacts that he had been given many years ago which had been languishing in his attic. They had been found by a chap called Laurie Smith who was a local leather worker and eccentric with an obvious eye for spotting archaeological finds. They were given to him as the (then) owner of Bury Castle just before Laurie Smith died in 1997 and was told they had been collected from the site.

Robin has now contacted Tasha Fullbrook to report the finds to the PAS. Unfortunately, there is no way now of verifying the exact location of each find.

Most of the collection consists of flint flakes and microliths but there are a couple of possible arrowheads, a few bits of pottery and a fragment of what could be a doughnut-shaped macehead.

Ann PJ passed a photo of this on to Andy Jones at CAU who confirmed that it looks like a mace-head fragment, possibly later Neolithic or Early Bronze Age.



**Photo: Karen Dickin**





Photo: Karen Dickin

One of the pottery fragments is medieval and presumably associated with manuring from the settlement of Bury to the SW and NE of the hillfort which was first recorded in the 12<sup>th</sup> century AD.

Report and photos: Karen Dickin

## NEWQUAY SCRUB-BASHERS

*Steve Hebdige and Sheila Harper, together with the dedicated group of Newquay scrub-bashers have had a busy summer. This is Steve's account:*

Since the last Area Reps' meeting Sheila's Scrub bashers including myself have revisited Mawgan Porth 6 times, Trevemper Bridge 4 times, St Eval Longstone 2 times, Barrowfields 3 times, the Little Barrow on Porth Island 2 times and Trevelgue Downs two cliff barrows.

Our last visit to Mawgan Porth Early Medieval Village (HER 22101; Scheduled Monument CO530; SW 8511 6726; Mawgan-in-Pydar parish) on September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2022 revealed that a number of walls had been scuffed on the top by the rabbits and there are two burrows at the moment. There were also a couple of burrows that I saw on the golf links below. Sheila has been in contact with Ann Preston-Jones, about refilling the burrows and using blood and bone fertiliser to help the grass to grow back. (There was an article on how rabbits don't like the blood and bone fertiliser and this may stop any more damage to the site.) See photos and map below.



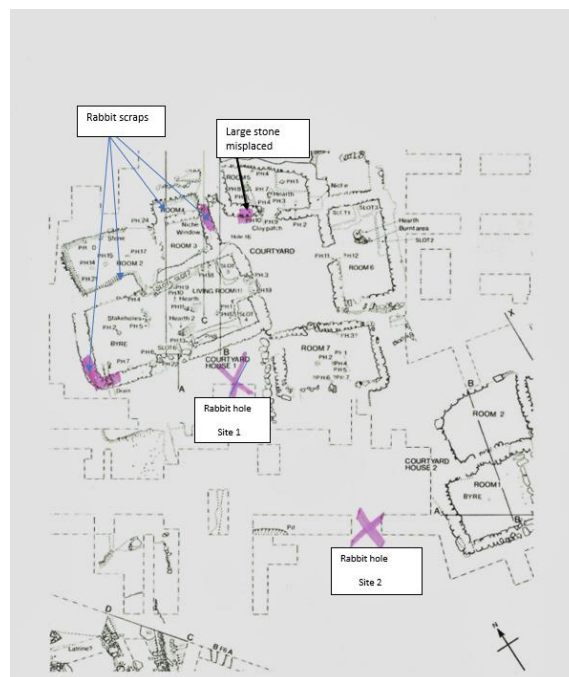
**Outside house one    Site 1**

**Photo: Steve Hebdige**



### Lower down slope Site 2

**Photo: Steve Hebdige**



### Map of damage to site



**Large Stone dislodged from outside wall of room 5      Photo: Steve Hebdige**



The large dislodged stone from outside wall of room 5 could be put back but may need to be propped up with stones. We are not sure rabbits could dislodge the stone; it's more likely that someone stood on top of it. The rabbit hole damage will be filled in next time we visit the site

### **Photos of sites recently visited**

28<sup>th</sup> July 2022 the smaller barrow on the Barrowfields in Newquay,



**Synchronized Strimming**

**Photo: Steve Hebdige**



**Photo: Steve Hebdige**

St Eval Longstone 25<sup>th</sup> August 2022 (HER 21980; SW 8714 6802; St Eval parish): we were also visited by Lea Thomas our new Cormac Officer, who came to see what we do. Sheila has to send in reports and photos of all the Cornwall council sites.

Trevemper Bridge 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022 after the scrub bashers have tidied up (HER 25068; Listed Building (II) 63659; SW 8194 5987; Cubert parish):



Photo: Steve Hebdige

I visited Carnewas Longstone nr Bedruthan Steps on 24 August 2022:



Photo: Steve Hebdige



The Longstone which was lying down across the footpath has now been incorporated into the hedge which may save further damage.

Recently have been out twice to Booby's Bay and Trevoise Head after a report about two sites of interest. One site is a possible barrow, and I have shown pictures to Cornwall Archaeological Unit. The other site, at Trevoise Head, was thought to be a cairn but may be the demolished remains of one of the buildings used in WW2 Trevoise Head Chain Home Low Radar Station.

Whilst at Booby's Bay checked on the shell middens by steps onto Constantine beach. There has not been much change. I also looked in on Constantine Well (HER 108084; Scheduled Monument 31827 ; Listed Building (II) 397252 ; SW 8651 7495; St Merryn parish) and the ruins of the church (HER 107294; Scheduled Monument 31827; Listed Building (II) 397249; SW 8652 7489; St Merryn parish).

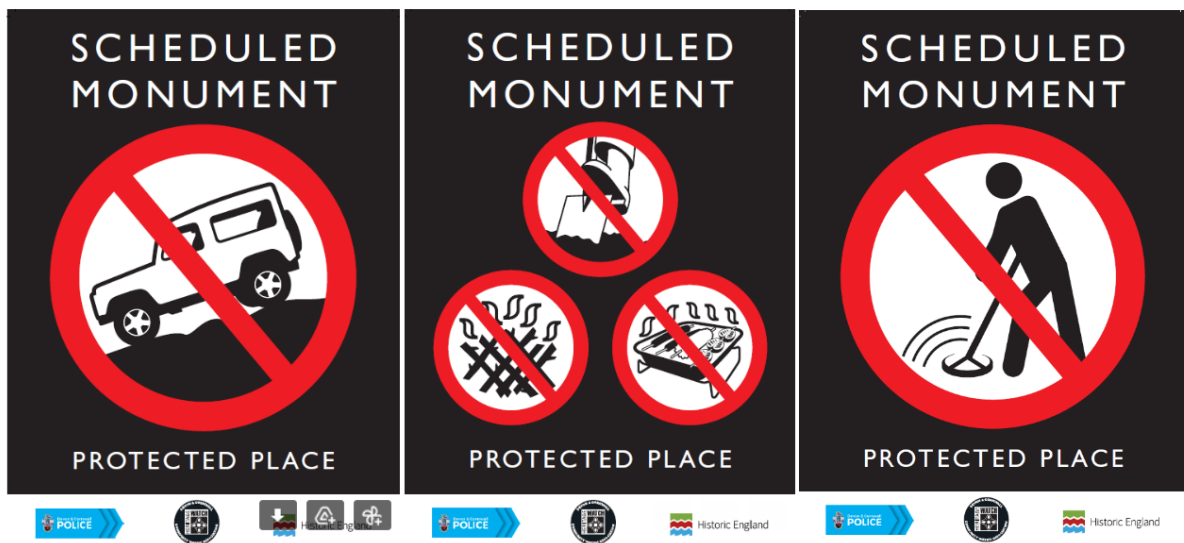
Report and photos: Steve Hebdige

## POLICING OUR HERITAGE

*PC Julian Fry, Devon & Cornwall Police, is leading an initiative to deal with heritage crime. Here is his round-up of recent activity:*

**Police Day of Action** - The Devon and Cornwall Police Rural Affairs Team held a really constructive day of action on and around RAF Davidstow Moor on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> July in conjunction with officers from the local Policing team and Julie Dowton from the Devon and Cornwall Community Watch Association. 'Heritage' was the focus of the day with the event starting at RAF Davidstow Moor Memorial Museum to learn more about the important role the airfield played in WW2 and the location of surviving airfield buildings and infrastructure. From here officers split up and headed out to pre-selected locations on Bodmin Moor to erect new heritage signage (images below) which was produced in collaboration with Historic England and the Devon and Cornwall Community Watch Association. All locations were scheduled monuments which were identified as being vulnerable to damage. At the end of the day all units returned to RAF Davidstow Moor to carry out proactive patrols and engage with visitors on and around the airfield.

**Heritage signage** – So far the majority of signs have been put up on Bodmin Moor and these have been aimed at preventing seasonal wild camping and fires/bbq's on protected sites. In addition a number of nighthawking signs have also been erected near Minions in response to illegal metal detecting in the area, proactive patrols continue. The aim of the signs is to highlight the protected status of these sites and to increase natural surveillance by members of the public visiting the location being alerted to the fact that damaging activity/nighthawking is a criminal offence.



Nighthawking sign at The Hurlers car park, Minions:



A number of additional sites across Cornwall are due to receive signs from this series once all necessary permissions are in place. These will be deployed with site managers during the autumn. If any CAS members feel they have a site that would benefit from one of these signs and I haven't already spoken with them, please can they make themselves known to me and I will add their site to the list.

**Vandalism in Luxulyan Valley** - this has been recorded as a heritage crime on police systems although at this time there are no viable lines of enquiry to pursue. Thank you to CAS for bringing this to our attention. If anybody does become aware of any information that would help us progress enquiries then I would be only too pleased to hear from them.

**The Ebay Menhirs** – Over recent months concern has been growing about the legitimacy of the sale of large Cornish granite menhirs on ebay. I can advise that I have had constructive



conversations with all persons involved and these were followed up with a site visit to the location where the stones were being recovered. There are no criminal offences being committed and all the scheduled monuments in the vicinity have been visited and remain untouched. These stones are the product of legitimate land clearance on private land and are not in fact heritage landmarks themselves.

**Report and photos: P.C. Julian Fry**



**PC 6043 Julian Fry**

Rural Affairs Officer

Tel: 07525 409663 | Internal: 308257

## ST ERTH'S CROSSES

*Richard McAulay has been monitoring some lovely crosses in St Erth:*

The first is a 'wayside cross in St Erth's churchyard, comprising an upright granite shaft with a round 'wheel' head cemented onto a modern three stepped granite base. The cross is located to the north west of the church, and is placed over a grave; the base bears the word 'Gilbart'' (HER 29166; Scheduled Monument 31871; SW 5497 3509; St Erth parish).

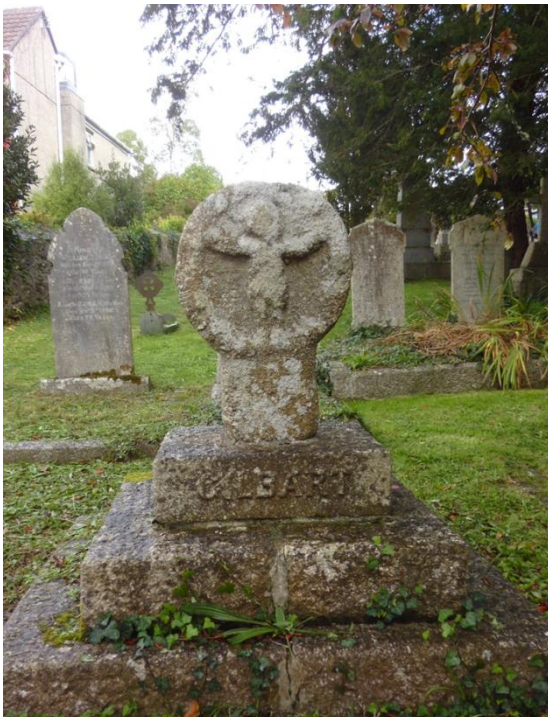


Photo: Richard McAulay

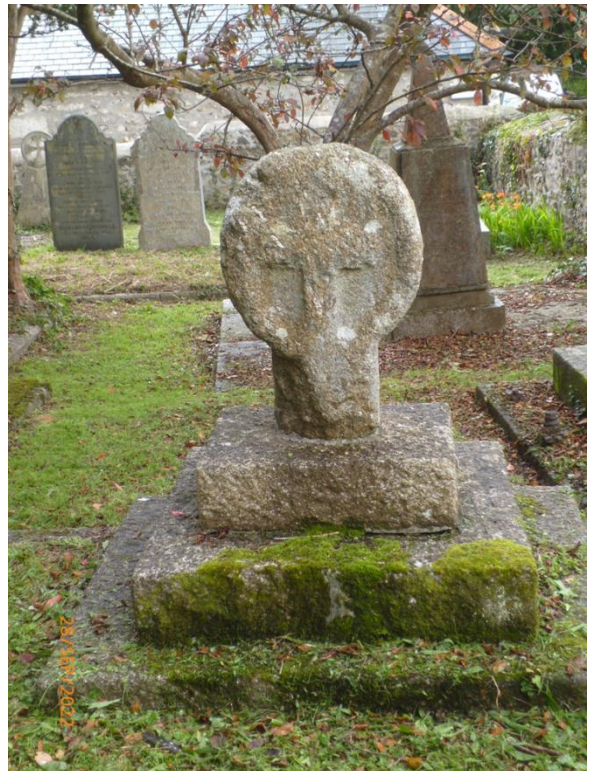


Photo: Richard MacAulay



Next is a 'medieval churchyard cross in St Erth's churchyard, comprising a round or 'wheel' head mounted on a rectangular granite base. The cross is located to the south east of the church, set into a low retaining wall' (HER 31072; Scheduled Monument 31871: SW 5498 350; St Erth parish).



Photo: Richard McAulay

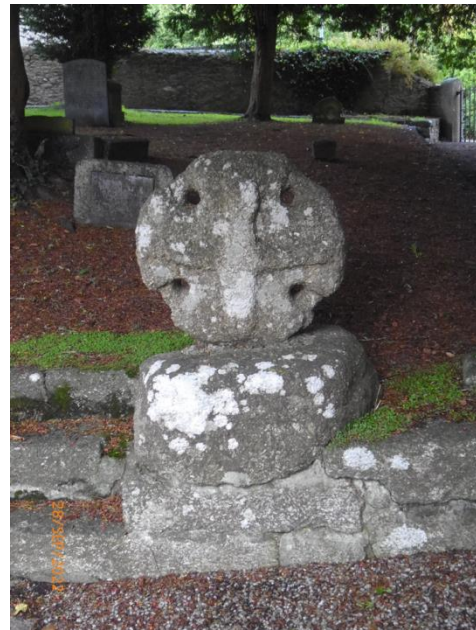


Photo: Richard McAulay

Below is a 'tapered stone incised with a cross, located by the south wall of St Erth Church' (HER 31074; SW 5498 3502; St Erth parish).



Photo: Richard McAulay



Photo: Richard McAulay



Last, but not least, is a 'medieval wayside cross and a protective margin around it set slightly back from the north west angle of the main staggered cross-roads in the centre of St Erth village. The cross survives as an upright granite shaft and head set in a rectangular granite base stone. A worn modern inscription of capital letter inserts on the south face of the base reads: 'This site is dedicated to the parishioners of St Erth and entrusted to their care by John Lord St Levan Lord of the Manor of Treloweth in this parish 1891'(HER 31917; Scheduled Monument 26241; SW 5507 3512).



Photo: Richard McAulay



Photo: Richard McAulay

### Report and photos: Richard McAulay

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* 59, or send an email to [arearep@cornisharchaeology.org.uk](mailto:arearep@cornisharchaeology.org.uk).

Roger Smith, 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022





