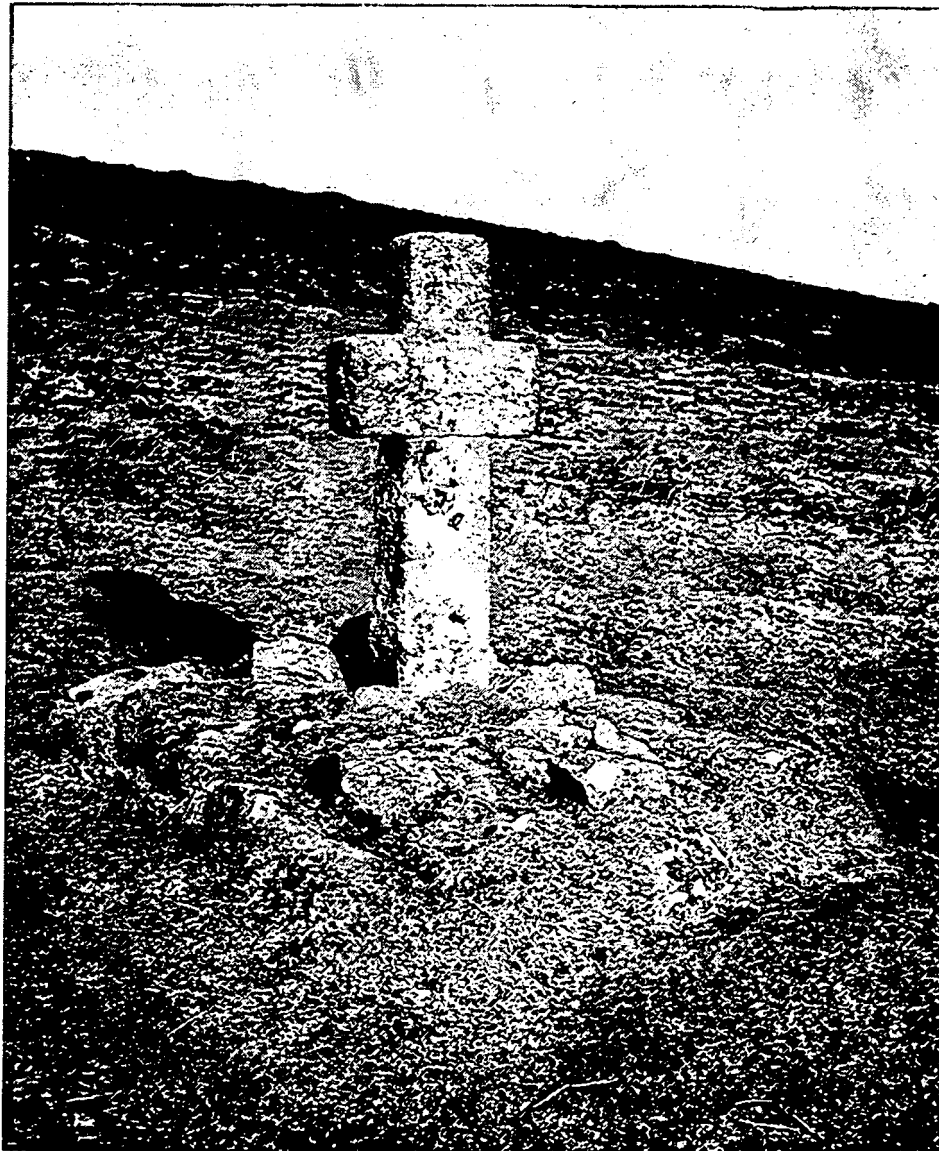


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# REPAIRS TO THE MODERN CROSS ON RIDGE, NORTH HILL



Cornwall Archaeological Unit  
Cornwall County Council  
May 2000

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CORNWALL ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT  
OLD COUNTY HALL, STATION ROAD  
TRURO, TR1 3AY

## **REPAIRS TO THE MODERN CROSS ON RIDGE, NORTHILL**

Ann Preston-Jones

January 2000

CORNWALL ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

A service of the Environment Section of the Planning Directorate, Cornwall County Council  
Kennall Building, Old County Hall, Station Road, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 3AY  
tel (01872) 323603 fax (01872) 323811 E-mail [cau@planning.cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:cau@planning.cornwall.gov.uk)



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## 1 Summary

A granite memorial cross on Ridge, on the east side of Bodmin Moor (PRN 1142; NGR SX 245 775), was damaged in September 1999. Although less than eighty years old, it is a Scheduled Monument because it lies within a large area of prehistoric and medieval fields (Scheduled Monument 15220; the cross is archaeological item 120995). The cross-head had been lifted off, possibly by cattle rubbing against it. Repair of the cross, which involved drilling and the insertion of new stainless steel pins, was organised by David Attwell of the North Cornwall Heritage Coast and Countryside Service and carried out by Ernie Hillson of Tynes Quarry, Pendoggett, in January 2000.

Research prompted by this work established that the cross was erected in memory of a woman killed in a riding accident here in 1922.

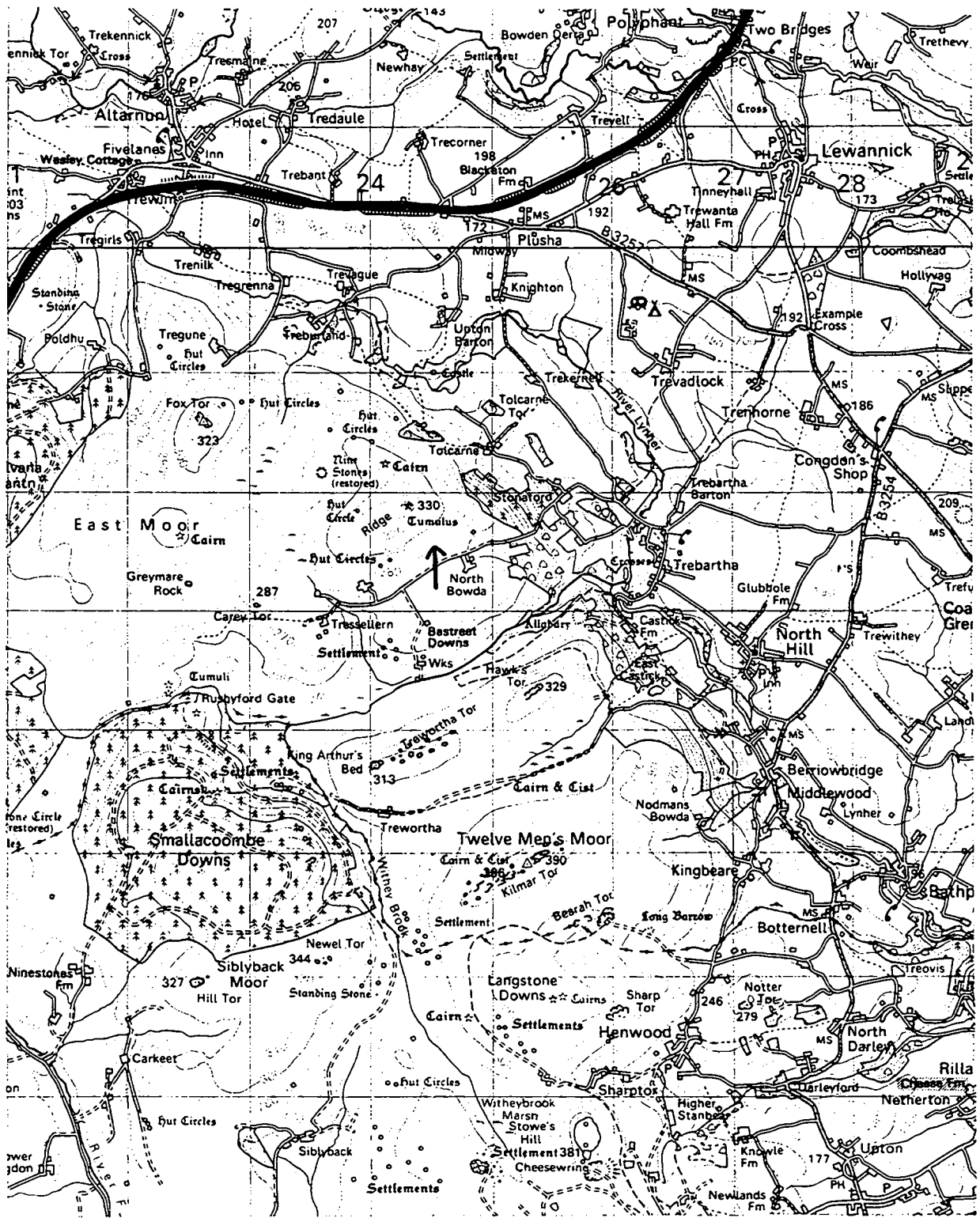
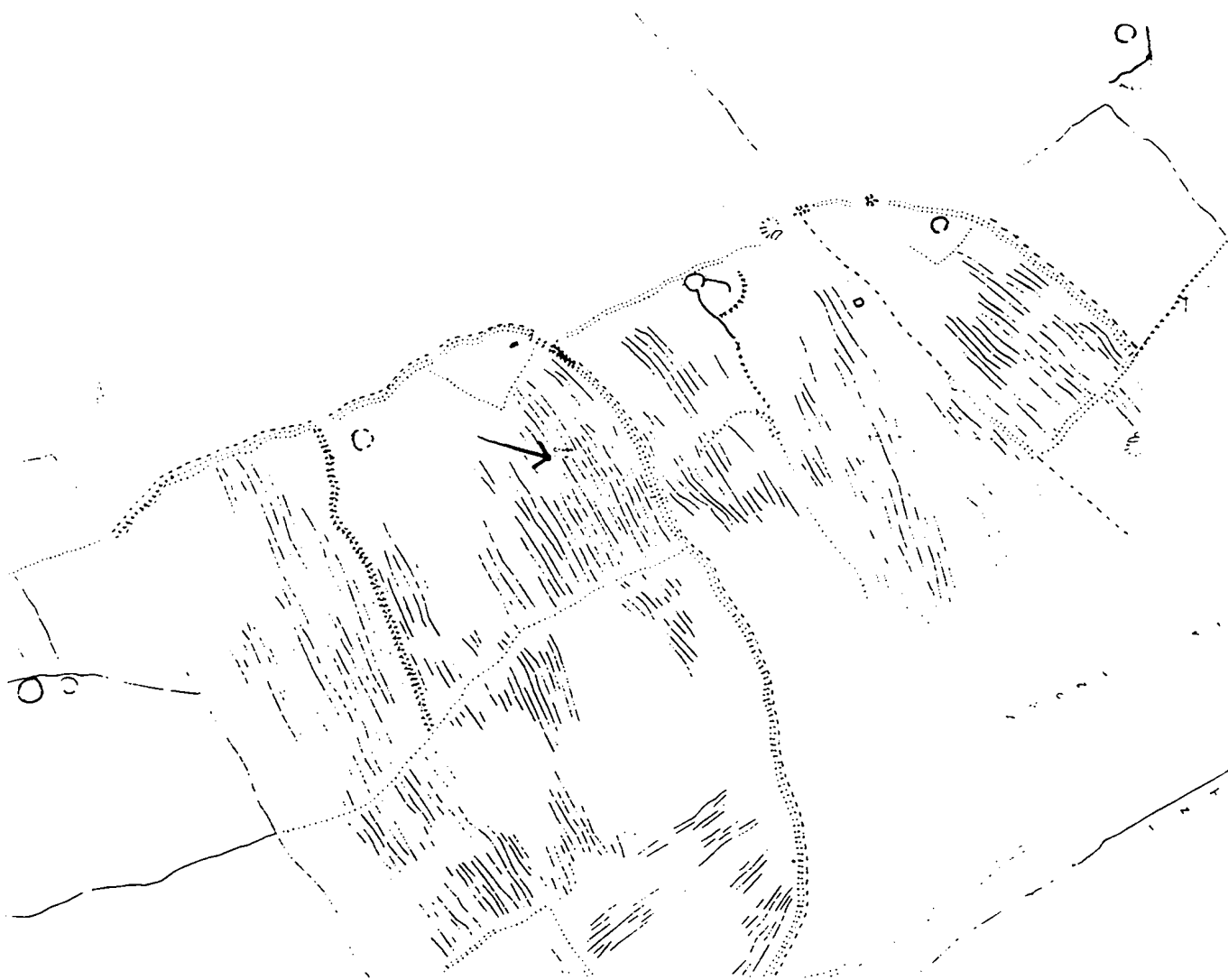


Fig 1 The location of the cross on Ridge. This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material. Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. LA076538, 2000

## 2 Background to the project

On 13th September 1999, Mary Avent, a member of Cornwall Archaeological Society, reported to the English Heritage (EH) Field Monument Warden that the cross on Ridge had fallen down. Following this, Dave Hooley, the EH Monuments Protection Programme archaeologist, who lives locally and had been responsible for Scheduling the cross, agreed to look at the problem and liaise with the agents for the owner, the Trebartha Estate. The upshot of this was that Dave Hooley and Maurice Hosking rescued the broken section of the cross and stored it at home until it could be taken by David Attwell of North Cornwall Heritage Coast and countryside Service, for repair by Ernie Hillson at Tynes Quarry, Pendoggett, St Teath. The cross was finally restored in January 2000.

The cross is a modern granite latin cross, standing in open moorland on the south-east facing slope of Ridge, a hill on the east side of Bodmin Moor in North Hill Parish. It forms a prominent landmark close to the track leading up the hill from the south-east, and is probably more obvious to most visitors than the medieval and prehistoric field systems which surround it (Fig 2).



*Fig 2 The cross in relation to the medieval and prehistoric field systems on Ridge. From the Royal Commission on Historic Monument's (RCHM's) 1:2500 air photo transcript*



### Description of the cross

The cross is a composite monument, made of three rectangular pieces of granite held together with iron pins and cramps. In this, it closely resembles some of the Dartmoor crosses, such as Horse Ford Cross, Goldsmiths Cross or Nun's (Seward's) Cross and also the cross on the southern tip of the Dodman in Gorran, erected in the late 1890s, either as a navigational aid or to commemorate a naval disaster close to the promontory (Le Messurier 1990, 10; Whetter 1991, 84). Shaft, horizontal arms and upper vertical limb are all separate pieces of granite. Lead and iron-plugged holes in the shaft indicate that this originated as a gatepost while Henderson (nd, 437) suggested that the upper part of the head might be the remains of an ancient cross found at Trebartha, but this is far from certain. The complete cross is 1.3m high, 0.3m wide across the shaft, 0.6m wide across the horizontal arms and 0.15m thick; it stands on a rough base of turf-covered granite blocks said by some to cover the horse's grave.

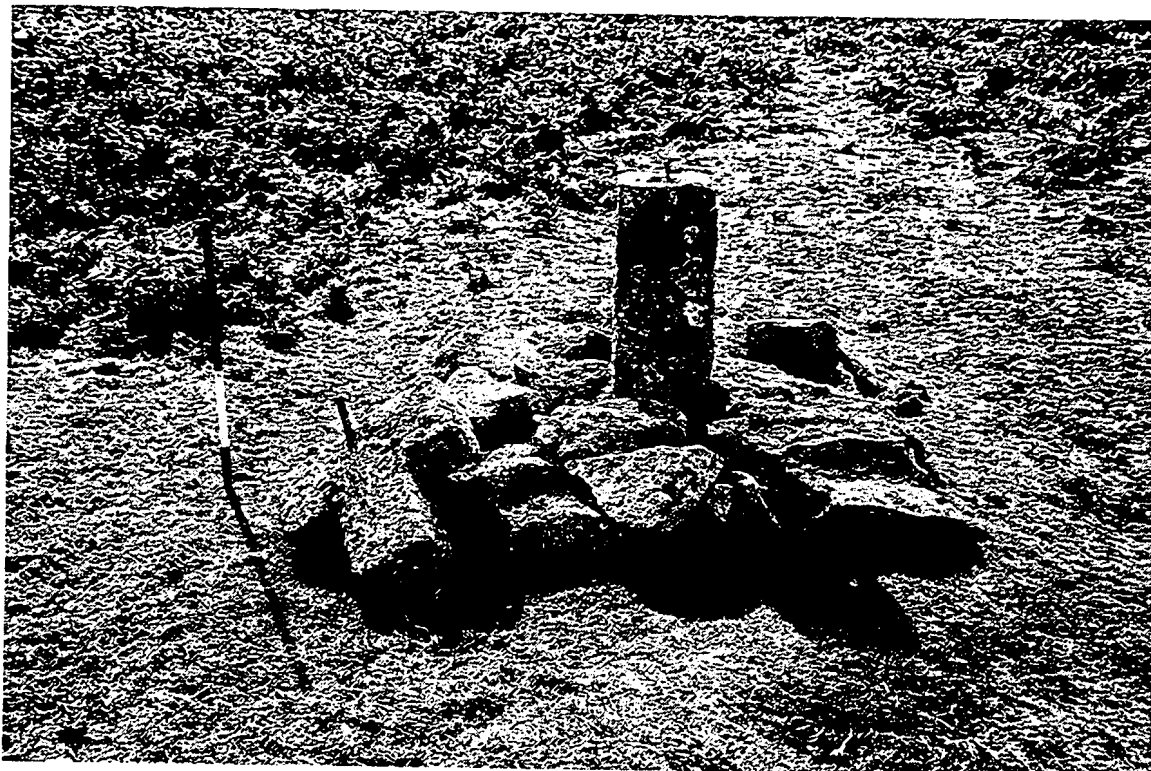
### The origin of the cross

Because there is no inscription or plaque on it, the origin of the cross had become something of a mystery. Latham (1971- 128-9) records that it was erected in about 1920 as a memorial to a member of the Rodd family (of Trebartha) who was killed here in a riding accident; Henderson (nd, 437) that one of the Rodds had a cross set up on the moors where a woman was killed in a hunting fall. More recently, Dave Hooley was told that the cross was set up to mark the spot where a traveller over the moor perished in the snow one winter (Hooley 1992). In fact, contemporary newspaper reports indicated that the cross was set up in memory of Miss Doris Shellaber, aged 24, of Tavistock. While out hunting with the East Cornwall Hunt on 2nd December 1922, Miss Shellaber was thrown from her horse when it trod in a rabbit hole (information supplied by Mr Budge of Kingsbear, North Hill, in response to a letter written by Andrew Langdon to the *Devon and Cornwall Post and Cornish Times*).

### Damage to the cross

The damage was to the upper part of the head. The horizontal arms and upper vertical arm had broken off, perhaps as a result of cattle rubbing against it. The iron clamp down the back of the cross, which effectively united the three sections of granite, had long been broken, but the head had somehow been lifted free of the central iron pin and been completely dislodged from the shaft (Fig 3). To allow this to happen, the cement filling the joint must have cracked, allowing water in which corroded and weakened the pin. The joint between the horizontal and top arms appeared secure and apparently stable.

Because the cross is such a significant local landmark, it was decided that the head should be replaced and the cross restored as soon as possible. This took place on Friday 17th January 2000, with the work being recorded by photograph and description.



*Fig 3 The damaged cross: note the recently detached cross-head lying beside the corner of the rubble cross-base (photo by Dave Hooley)*

### **3 The repair work**

Repairs to the cross took place at two locations.

At Tynes Quarry, two new 5 inch deep holes were drilled in the head, to either side of the original dowel hole, and stainless steel pins inserted, set in stone glue (Fig 4). The iron clamp was removed and the hole filled with a mixture of glue and stone dust, and the opportunity also taken to renew the central fittings of the upper section of the head.

Back out on site, the monument was reassembled. A portable compressor and drill were taken out to enable the two 5 inch holes for the pins to be drilled in the top of the shaft. Having filled these with stone glue, the head was then re-fitted to the shaft, bedded on a layer of glue. The joint was finished with a mix of glue and stone dust, which blended almost invisibly with the granite of the cross and should weather to a rough, stone-like texture.



*Fig 4 The cross head, showing new stainless steel pins*

Because it was so firmly bedded in the shaft, the original iron pin was not removed. Hopefully the joint between shaft and head will prove sufficiently tight and weatherproof to keep moisture out and prevent future corrosion.



*Fig 5 Reassembling the cross. Ernie Hillson, David Attwell and Mike Millard lift the cross-head back onto the shaft*

## **4 Conclusion**

In restoring the cross, considerable care was taken to ensure that the lichens and mosses growing on it were damaged as little as possible. As a result, it now looks unchanged and as though nothing ever happened. This is excellent; but two points should be flagged up for future monitoring:

1. The old central iron pin was not removed. In the long term, if water penetrates the joint, this will corrode and expand and may cause the shaft to crack. Unfortunately, it may not be until cracking occurs that the problem is apparent. But this will not happen in the short term, as the joint is a tight one and at present sealed by the glue.
2. Extensive use was made of stone glue in fixing pins, bedding joints, and finishing joints. Use of this medium in particular to finish joints when mixed with stone dust

may be a traditional method in stone masonry nowadays but has never been used before in a project financed by CAU. At this stage, it certainly looks good, but it will be interesting to see how it weathers in the long term.



*Fig 6 The restored cross*

## **5 References**

- Henderson, M, nd. *A survey of Ancient Crosses of Cornwall 1952-1983*, manuscript at the Courtney Library of the Royal Institution of Cornwall, Truro.
- Hooley, A D, 1992. *Scheduling description*, for Scheduled Monument 15220 (Archaeological Item 120995).
- Latham, B, 1971. *Trebartha: the House by the Stream*, London.
- Le Messurier, B, 1990. *Nare Head and the Dodman*, National Trust coast of Cornwall leaflet.
- Whetter, J, 1991. *The History of Gorran Haven*, Part II, Trelyspen, Gorran.

## **6 Project archive**

The Project Archive, which consists of correspondence, notes, references, and colour prints, is housed in the offices of Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall County Council, Kennall Building, Old County Hall, Station Road, Truro, TR1 3AY, in the Scheduled Monument Management file 8.9610/1999-2000. Project number 1999044. This report is held in digital form as: H:\DOCUMENT\Sites\Sites R\Ridge\Repair report.doc.