

Archaeological Excavations at High Peak, Otterton - Sept 2012



August 2012 – High Peak with the trees removed



View from summit of High Peak looking westwards over Ladram Bay



View from summit of High Peak looking eastwards to Sidmouth

The site is perched on a steep hill on the cliff edge between Sidmouth and Ladram Bay. For decades High Peak has been covered in coniferous woodland. This has now been felled and the area looks similar to how it was in the 1840s - local antiquary Peter Orlando Hutchinson's time. Not quite the same as coastal erosion is always reducing the site. Hutchinson painted views of the site showing earthworks and he also excavated on the seaward side, finding bones and charcoal. It is very difficult now to imagine the original earthworks.

The site is considered to be in danger of disappearing altogether and is on **English Heritage's 'Heritage at Risk Register'**. The excavations being carried out now are possibly the last before the land slips away into the sea.

The present excavations are not the first on the site. The most recent were in the 1960s by Sheila Pollard. Evidence from these excavations pointed to early Neolithic and Post-Roman dates. Perhaps puzzling that there is such a gap in occupation, or use, of the site.

Trenches have been put in next to those of the 1960s excavation to explore the rampart and ditch. Volunteers are working under the professional guidance of **AC Archaeology**.

Quantities of worked flint have been found by the excavators.



Trench 2 Tuesday afternoon 11.9.12 – Claire Hurst, Mary Dale and Jan Oke





Paul Cooke in the trench that produced this pottery





A finished trench



Close to the cliff edge



Katrin shovelling

AC Archaeology are carrying out the work of investigating and excavating High Peak as part of **Unlocking Our Coastal Heritage Project**. This aims to improve visitor experience. They are working in conjunction with **English Heritage**, **East Devon AONB**, **Devon County Council Historic Environment Service** and **South West Coast Path National Trail**.

This article is purely for interest and does not represent the views of any of the organisations concerned. (Sue Dymond)