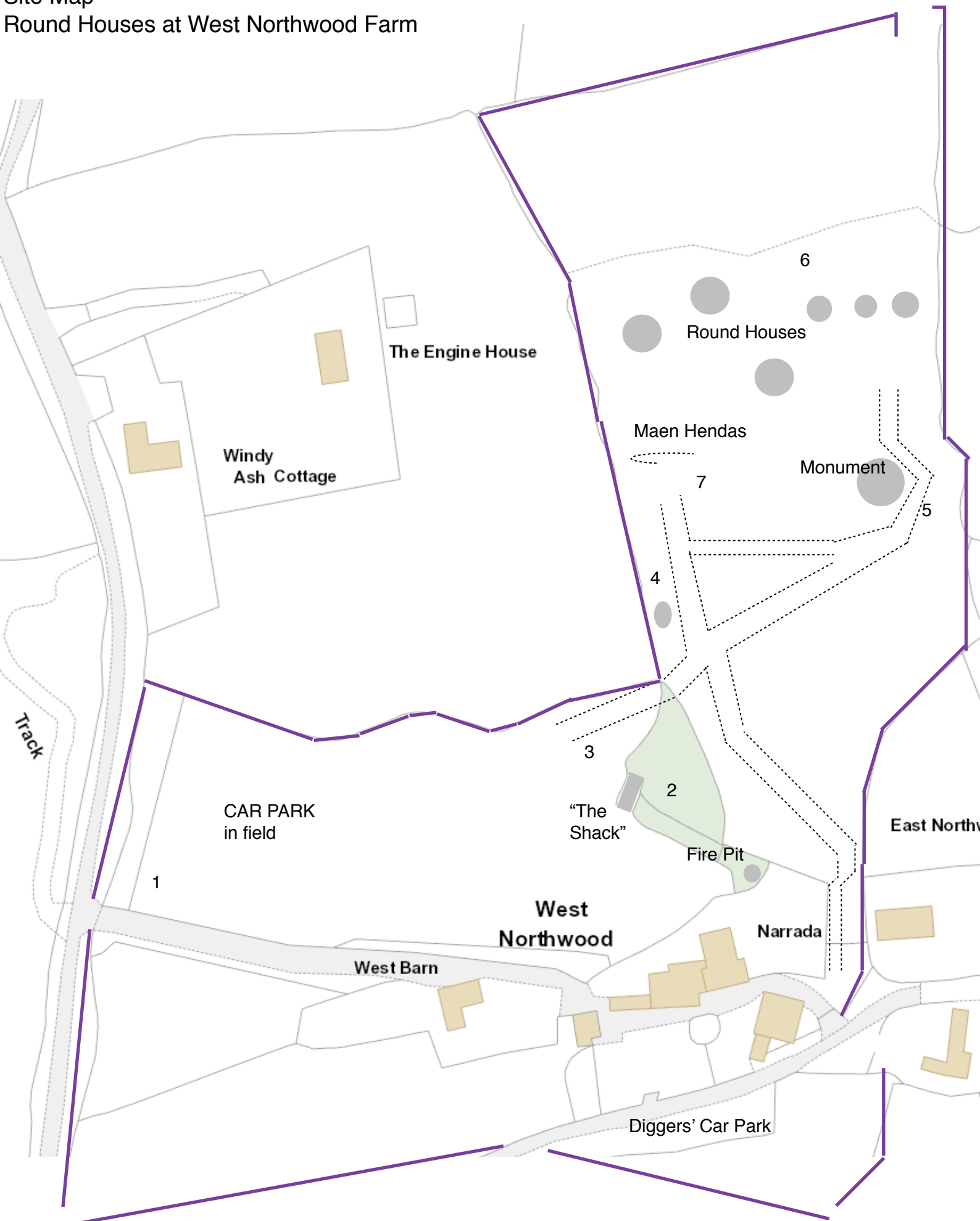


Site Map

Round Houses at West Northwood Farm



Welcome to West Northwood Farm

WE HOPE THAT YOU HAVE AN ENJOYABLE VISIT TO THIS FARM, WHICH IS FULL OF HISTORICAL INTEREST. EXPECT UNEVEN SURFACES ON THE PATHWAYS AND HAZARDS INHERENT IN A MOORLAND HILL FARM. YOU ARE WELCOME AT YOUR OWN RISK. WE ACCEPT NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY ACCIDENT WHILE ON THIS PROPERTY HOWEVER CAUSED.

Nick and Jenny Hart

Brief Overview

We bought the farm in 1972 and ran it as a residential riding centre and suckler beef farm. Our two sons were born and raised here, and our eldest son Ed, with his wife Nema, live in the converted barn next to our house with their two children.

The farm is first mentioned in 1327, but as North Wode. It has variously been Northwood or Narrada ever since. We now retain both names for the two families. At some point the farm was split up and became West Northwood and East Northwood. Rather confusingly, the old clay dries at the end of the road was converted in the early 1970s and is now called Northwood Farm.

1 The '**home field**' has recently had 600 meters of pipe laid under its lower slope in order to extract heat for all our heating needs in a ground source heating system. We found some massive stones (as you do on a granite hill) and they reappear as Maen Hendas. (See 7)

2 The "**Shack**" was until last year a dilapidated shell, with sycamore, thorn and brambles growing in and through the walls. I started to clear it out for a field shelter for ponies when we discovered a blocked up fireplace on the north gable end though there was no sign of a lintel. The hearth and the stones up to the level of the (new) lintel are exactly as I found them once we had removed all the stone and rubble. There was even charred material beneath all the infill at the back and on the right hand side. The remains of a hook can be seen in the chimney on the right hand side. Note the worn stone on the left of the fireplace where the cook would have 'entered'.

Amongst the rubble and shards of pottery I found a beautiful 'napped' flint, which is probably Neolithic. The rest of the finds can be seen on a table in front of our house. Parish records show that in the 19th century it was leased to Thomas Keast. But we have no idea of how old the building is. Your guesses please!

I am reconstructing the chimney as a bit of guesswork and making the walls safe bit by bit.

3 **Manhole cover**. There is a 100m borehole here with a flow and return pipe which my son uses to extract heat for his ground source heating system.

4 **Standing stone**. When I was making the tracks in the Brake I came across this lying down and buried and thought it would be more fun to have it standing.

NOTE ABOUT STONES

Stones which are beside the track have mostly been dug out in the last few years to create the paths. Stones in the track itself didn't want to come out! Huge stones in the mid part of the hill are probably exposed bedrock. Stones on the mown section above have a definite human connection.

5 Scheduled Monument. This magical circle of stones with the oak tree in the middle is a **scheduled monument**, described as a round house. However, more recent observers have suggested that it may be a Neolithic Circular Cairn. In other words, a burial site for the hunter-gatherers who had yet to adopt farming and settlement as a way of life.

This site is very special to us as a family. Our son Jim exchanged his marriage vows here with his bride Maud, and two of the children have undergone naming ceremonies beneath the boughs. On one occasion over 100 people gathered here to listen to international jazz musicians give a concert.

6 Round Houses

We finally managed to find time to clear away gorse, thorn, bracken and bramble to try to find out what we always thought was there. We were also on a mission to 're-wild' the area and rescue it from centuries of extensive farming.

We found one definite 'round' and cleared it by felling two thorn trees and removing the grass and ants nests covering the stones. At the same time we started to plant the perimeter with spruce for shelter, and to establish a small broadleaf copse at the top of the tree line.

At this point we contacted the professionals for advice about how to proceed with what we had found. The Cornwall Archaeological Unit were very excited by what we had uncovered and suggested that we bid for Heritage Lottery funding to undertake a dig. We were delighted that the Local History Society took the project on and have managed the process of organising a two week excavation.

We have now cleared further areas and have found two things:

- i) a number of other platforms and stunning rounds
- ii) that we have planted our saplings in the middle of a village! We will transplant at a later date.

On the southern edge of the round house there is a 19th century leat, we think, associated with the mine. The Engine House - the large converted building to our west - was a Stamps.

7 Maen Hendas otherwise known as 'Bappa's Stones'. Digging out the trenches for the ground source heating gave us some huge boulders to play with. My neighbour kindly carted them up the hill, and I spent a happy week trying to fit them together. My grandchildren called me Bappa at the time, so that is why they are so-named. But one day I will carve the Cornish translation of this on to one of them - Maen Hendas - stones of the old father!

We use the area as a performance space and barbecue site. I wrote most of 'A Story of Cornwall' sitting up here, and we just enjoy staring out to sea when the weather permits.

Next steps. When the nesting season is over we will clear the field to the north of the site as there are a number of undulations there which crave attention. And we are working out how to manage the site so that all the settlements are visible while the space can be shared with wildlife.