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KETTLEBY QUARRY

WATCHING BRIEF

INTERIM REPORT



York Archaeological Trust

Site Investigations

EU 565

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WATCHING BRIEF AT KETTLEBY QUARRY, KETTLEBY THORPE, LINCOLNSHIRE

An Interim Report TA 042 080

Introduction

Permission to quarry gravel from OS field 0083 to the north of Kettleby Thorpe Farm, Kettleby Thorpe, Lincolnshire was granted to J.W. Hurdiss Ltd. by Lincolnshire County Council subject to an archaeological condition. A specification for an archaeological watching brief was negotiated by Mike Griffiths Associates on behalf of J.W Hurdiss Ltd. York Archaeological Trust was employed by J.W Hurdiss Ltd. to carry out the work detailed in the specification.

Desk top study of the site by Mike Griffiths had identified a deserted medieval village which had been partially investigated in the 1960's and an area of quarrying which had commenced in the 19th century when the adjacent railway line was built and continued until the return of the field to agriculture in about 1940.

The Watching Brief

Between 26th August and September 24th 1994 a small team from York Archaeological Trust monitored the removal of top soil from the first area to be stripped, that is the strip immediately east of the railway line. The location and orientation of features seen in this area was recorded by use of an electronic theodolite and EDM. Sections were excavated through a selected number of the features; these were recorded and any artefacts found were removed to York for assessment and dating.

It was evident that in the area between the edge of the former quarry and the railway line, survival of undisturbed archaeological features was good since they were buried beneath a greater depth of topsoil than elsewhere. It was also clear that there was evidence of intensive use of the area over a long period of time. At the northern end of the site the only visible features appeared to be modern rubbish pits. At the southern end there was a small number of linear features and stake-holes but their density was significantly less than in the central part of the stripped area.

The watching brief covering the first area stripped demonstrated that the area in which there was the highest level of survival of archaeological deposits lay between the site of the former quarry and the railway line. In order to concentrate the available time on recovering most data, it was evident that recording should be centred on this area.

Following a meeting on 30th September 1994 a revision to the method of monitoring was agreed by Lincolnshire County Archaeologist, Steve Catney, York Archaeological Trust and Hurdiss Quarries. In order to carry out the watching brief most efficiently it was agreed that it was necessary to concentrate on the area of greatest survival and to record the archaeological remains within a single exercise rather than piecemeal as the top

soil was removed.

Observation of the stripping of topsoil from the plant area which straddled areas 1 and 3 as defined in the specification demonstrated that no lower topsoil was present in this area and that archaeological features had thus been disturbed by modern ploughing. A series of boundary ditches which matched those visible on the air photographs was recorded together with the shallow remnants of a circular ditched feature of c7.5m diameter.

The second area west of the former quarry to be stripped of top soil was monitored in the following manner. The top soil was removed by machine to a level agreed with York Archaeological Trust. This removed the cultivated soil, and a small amount of archaeological material. Within these archaeological deposits some stratigraphy was lost but it was thought that this material related to the deserted medieval village already known and examined to some extent by excavation in 1964 by Eleanor Russell. The time constraints dictated that priority was given to examining the earlier archaeological deposits.

When the machine removal of soil was complete a small team of archaeologists endeavoured to record the surviving archaeological features. This work was carried out between 7th and 18th November 1994. Initially the area was shovel scraped to define the main features visible on the surface. The position and alignments of these features was recorded by use of an electronic theodolite and EDM. Small sections were excavated through many of the features. These sections were recorded, soil types examined and any artefacts found were removed to York for assessment and dating.

A record of the location and fill of the features and any stratigraphic information concerning their inter-relationships was made. In many cases excavation revealed the features to be more complex than was possible to discern from a surface view. What appeared to be a single feature from the surface was found on excavation to be several inter-cutting features. It must be stressed that within the available time the level of information that could be recovered in comparison with the quantity of information present was small and that the level of analysis to which the recorded information can contribute is limited.

Conclusions

Despite the reservations stated above it is possible to present some broad conclusions from the observations :

- 1) It was possible to define an edge to the area in which archaeological deposits had been severely truncated or removed. In 1847 gravel was extracted from an area in the centre of the field for the construction of the railway. This was followed by periodic small scale extraction for the upkeep of farm tracks etc. The area was also levelled by bulldozer in 1964.

The area in which disturbance of archaeological material was concentrated commences approximately 40m west of the visible edge of the former quarry and has been marked in plan.

2) Some features which are visible on air photographs and relate to the deserted medieval village Kettleby Thorpe were located.

a) At the eastern end of the site a moated platform was clearly visible. The small trench excavated in 1964 to examine the moat and platform was also clearly located.

b) Some of the medieval field boundaries have been identified as ditches. Features numbered 082, 083, 052, 078, 077, 076.

Some of these were clearly recut, and some inter-cut with other ditches suggesting development of the field system over a period of time.

A number of similar features which are not visible on the air photographs but are likely to be further similar field boundaries were investigated. These are features numbered 084, 081, 053.

c) A sunken pathway identified on the air photograph is likely to be feature 015.

d) In the plant area a number of the medieval field boundaries were identified. Features 101, 102, 103, 104, 107.

e) A meandering feature identified in the plant area was probably the course of the stream - feature 105/106.

3) A meandering linear feature aligned east-west was cut by the later medieval field boundaries. In section at some points it was two inter-cutting features, elsewhere it was two separate features and at other points it was one single ditch. It may represent an earlier boundary feature.

4) There were two areas where a number of circular pits inter-cut.

Features 055, 056, 057, 058, 059, 060, 061.

Some of these pits were later than the linear feature 015, described above.

Features 023, 024, 025, 026.

5) A series of shallow circular cuts in alignment, with associated circular cuts and shallow linear cuts were also recorded. These may represent post-holes and slots indicating the presence of a building. The shallowness of the features suggests that they were truncated from above possibly by medieval ploughing. Some were cut by medieval boundary 077.

Features 033, 034, 035, 027, 028, 049, 045, 044, 038, 039, 040, 036, 037

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6) There were linear features with burnt debris, clay and charcoal and a possible hearth or furnace. This suggests that some industrial process had taken place on site.

Features 032, 006, 007

7) One isolated feature containing a concentration of charcoal suggests some other activity involving fire.

Feature 050.

8) There were two semi-circular ditches filled with chalk gravel

Features 003, 008

9) A circular ditched feature identified in the plant area would appear to pre-date the medieval field boundaries.

Feature 108.

The characteristics of some of the boundary ditches, where several recuts were identified, indicates that they marked boundaries over a long period of time. Some of these are associated with the field boundaries which relate to the deserted medieval village, but some may be earlier.

Some of the features identified suggest the existence of an earlier pattern of agricultural use of the area prior to the pattern contemporary with the deserted medieval village.

The existence of features containing burnt residues suggests the practice of an industrial process on the site.

There is some evidence of building(s) on the site which may be associated with either agricultural or industrial use.

A number of artefacts and a quantity of pottery has been removed from the site for further study. The contexts from which material has been removed are listed below.

Further analysis of pottery and of samples taken from the site may help to clarify the dating of some features and the processes carried out on site. This will form part of a post-excavation programme to be agreed with the Mineral Planning Authority when the project is concluded following the final topsoil stripping exercise.

Further observations will be made when topsoil stripping commences again, probably some time in 1996. In the meantime the finds and site records are stored by York Archaeological Trust in appropriate conditions as approved by the Museums and Galleries Commission under the YAT project code 1994 P0215.

David Brinklow and Rhona Finlayson
York Archaeological Trust February 1995

Finds from the first area stripped

context number	material
001	lava quern fragment
002	lava stone, quern fragments ?
008	sandstone block
009	Fe object
009	slag
001	pottery
003	pottery
004	pottery
005	pottery
006	pottery
007	pottery
010	pottery
011	pottery
007	tile/brick
010	tile/brick
012	tile/brick
001	burnt clay
002	burnt clay
006	burnt clay
007	burnt clay
002	animal bone
003	animal bone
009	animal bone
013	animal bone
unstratified	animal bone and pot

Finds from second area stripped

context number	material
020	sandstone rotary quern fragment
022	Fe object
026	slag
021	pottery
022	pottery
026	pottery
030	pottery
031	pottery
033	pottery
050	pottery
052	pottery
054	pottery
070	pottery
072	pottery
073	pottery
unstratified pottery	
031	daub
050	daub
070	daub
021	animal bone
031	animal bone
033	animal bone
050	animal bone
052	animal bone
056	animal bone
070	animal bone
071	animal bone
074	animal bone

Samples from second area stripped

sample 1 charcoal from feature 050

sample 2 "buried" charcoal from the interface between natrual sand and natural gravel

sample 3 burnt material from 032

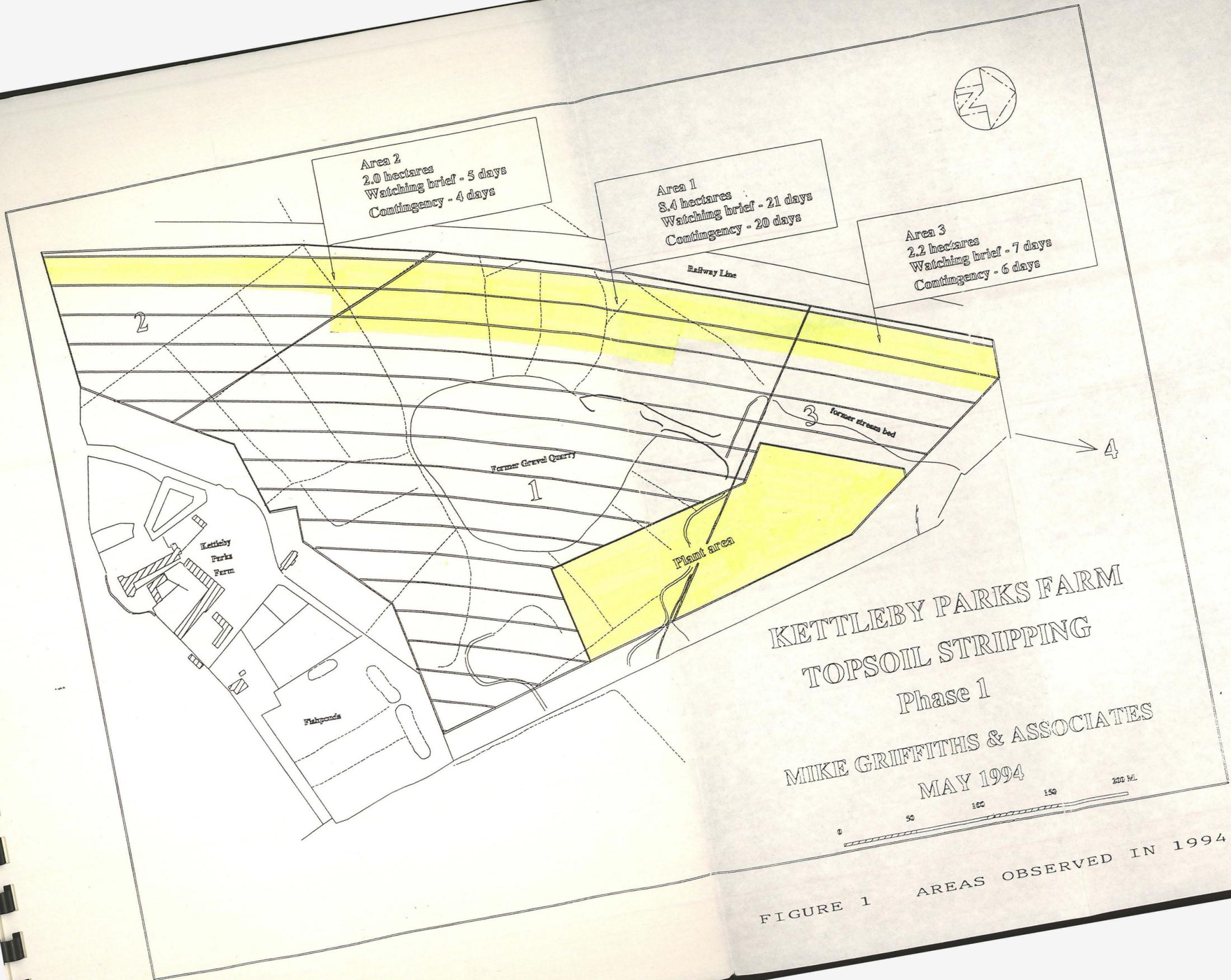


FIGURE 1 AREAS OBSERVED IN 1994