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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

MANOR FARM, STEWTON,

LINCOLNSHIRE

Site Code MNF 97

National Grid Reference (NGR) TQ 3626 8689

AOC (Archaeology) Ltd

on behalf of:

Yorkshire Electricity

April 1997

Llanidloes County Council
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Timing: Watching brief
2nd-3rd April 1997

Report preparation
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1) SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was conducted by AOC (Archaeology) Ltd between the 2nd - 3rd March 1997, on behalf of Yorkshire Electricity, to monitor the excavation of approximately 140m of trenches for electric cable laying near Manor Farm, Stewton, Lincolnshire. No archaeological remains were encountered.

2) INTRODUCTION

2.1 Site Location

The site (Fig. 1) is located to the south west of Manor Farm, Stewton, Lincolnshire. The Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (centre of site) is TQ 3626 8689. The site rises slightly from west to east and lies at approximately 20m above Ordnance Datum.

2.2 Planning Background

Due to the presence of known archaeological remains in the area, the Archaeological Officer for Lincolnshire County Council recommended that an archaeological watching brief was undertaken to monitor the groundworks in order to record any archaeology revealed.

2.3 Archaeological Background

The presence of a Norman church to the north and the placename Manor Farm suggests that this area was the focus of settlement during the medieval period. Aerial photographs show medieval ridge and furrow to the north and south in addition to further features which may be the remains of the medieval village.

3) STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

A scheme of investigation was designed in agreement with the Archaeological Officer for Lincolnshire County Council. This involved monitoring the excavation of four adjoining trenches, A, B, C and D (Fig. 2), with a combined length of approximately 140m, 0.3-0.4m wide and 0.5-0.7m deep. Any archaeological deposits thus exposed would then be hand excavated to determine their date and character.

Provision was made for post-excavation analysis and reports to Level 3 as outlined in English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects (1991)*.

The work was carried out to the standard specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and was monitored by Mr. Jim Bonner, Archaeological Officer for Lincolnshire County Council.

3.2 Methodology

Trenches A, C and D were excavated using hand tools to a depth of 0.5-0.7m. The tarmac road surface in Trenches C and D was broken out using pneumatic tools. Trench B, to the south of the road, was excavated to a depth of 0.5-0.7m using a mini-excavator equipped with a 0.2m wide toothed bucket. Following machining, hand tools were used to clean the trench sides where appropriate in order to define the soil horizons. All artefactual material was retained.

Standard AOC (Archaeology) Ltd. techniques were used throughout involving the completion of a drawn and written record for the deposits encountered. A full photographic record was also made, using black and white and colour slide film.

4) RESULTS

Trench A (36m x 0.3-0.4m)

The basal deposit consisted of orange brown silty clay containing occasional rootlets, occasional-moderate gravel and small stones and rare flecks of charcoal (002). This was overlain by mid-dark brown silty clay, 0.35m thick, which was moderately root disturbed and contained occasional gravel and small stones (001). Two small fragments of ceramic building material and one sherd of modern pottery were recovered. This sequence of deposits remained consistent along the length of the trench.

Trench B (85m x 0.3m)

The basal deposit consisted of orange brown sandy silty clay to mid brown silty clay containing moderate to very frequent chalky limestone flecks and angular fragments, gravel and rounded pebbles and flint nodules (005). The composition varied along the length of the trench. Towards the west end of the trench was a north-west to south-east aligned palaeochannel, 3.3m wide, filled with clean orange brown sand overlying mixed coarse sand and gravel at the edges. This was overlain by a 0.25m thick deposit of medium brown sandy clay containing chalky limestone fragments and occasional gravel and rare flecks of charcoal (004), overlain in turn by friable dark brown sandy silt topsoil, c.0.30m thick, containing occasional gravel and frequent roots (003). Towards the eastern end of the trench the stratigraphy was severely disturbed by tree roots. At the western end the trench bisected a concrete path leading to a building 6m to the south.

Trench C (10m x 0.3-0.4m)

The earliest deposit identified in this trench was a medium brown silty clay subsoil containing small-medium chalky limestone fragments (009). This provided the base for a former road surface consisting of packed dark brown silty clay with c.50% chalky limestone gravel and small fragments (008), 3m wide and 0.12m deep. This was overlain by a second, slightly cambered, road surface composed of orange brown silty clay with 50-60% gravel and flinty pebbles (007), 0.2m deep and c.4m wide. The upper surface (007) was sealed by the existing tarmac capping (006) and roadside verges of topsoil (003).

Trench D (10m x 0.3-0.4m)

The earliest deposit consisted of mid brown silty clay containing occasional small chalky limestone fragments (012). This deposit was overlain by a former road surface, 3.5m wide and 0.2m deep, comprising crushed chalky limestone fragments bound with orange brown silty clay (011). This surface was sealed by the existing tarmac capping (010) with topsoil (003) to either side.

5) DISCUSSION

During the course of the excavation of the trenches no archaeological features associated with the medieval village were exposed and no diagnostic artefactual material was recovered. It is possible that the trenches passed through an open area where paddocks or fields existed, however due to the width of the trenches it was difficult to ascertain whether medieval ridge and furrow was present. The depth of the topsoil, c.0.3m, on the verges flanking the existing road suggests that they have been ploughed and/or cultivated at some time.

6) BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AOC (Archaeology) Ltd. (1997): *Electric Cable Laying Near Manor Farm, Stewton. Archaeological Watching Brief. Written Scheme of Investigation.*
- Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994): *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs.*
- English Heritage (1991): *Management of Archaeological Projects*

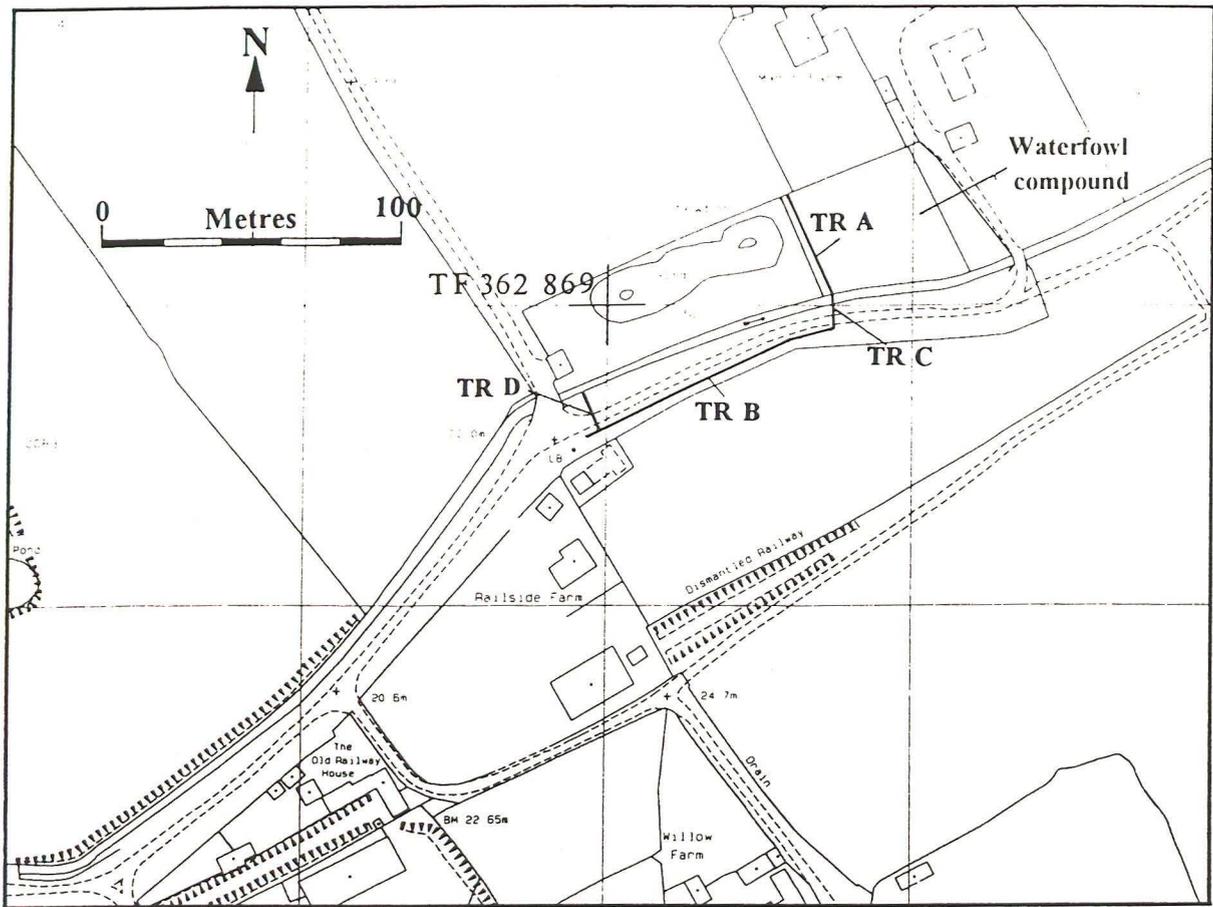


Figure 2. Trench locations

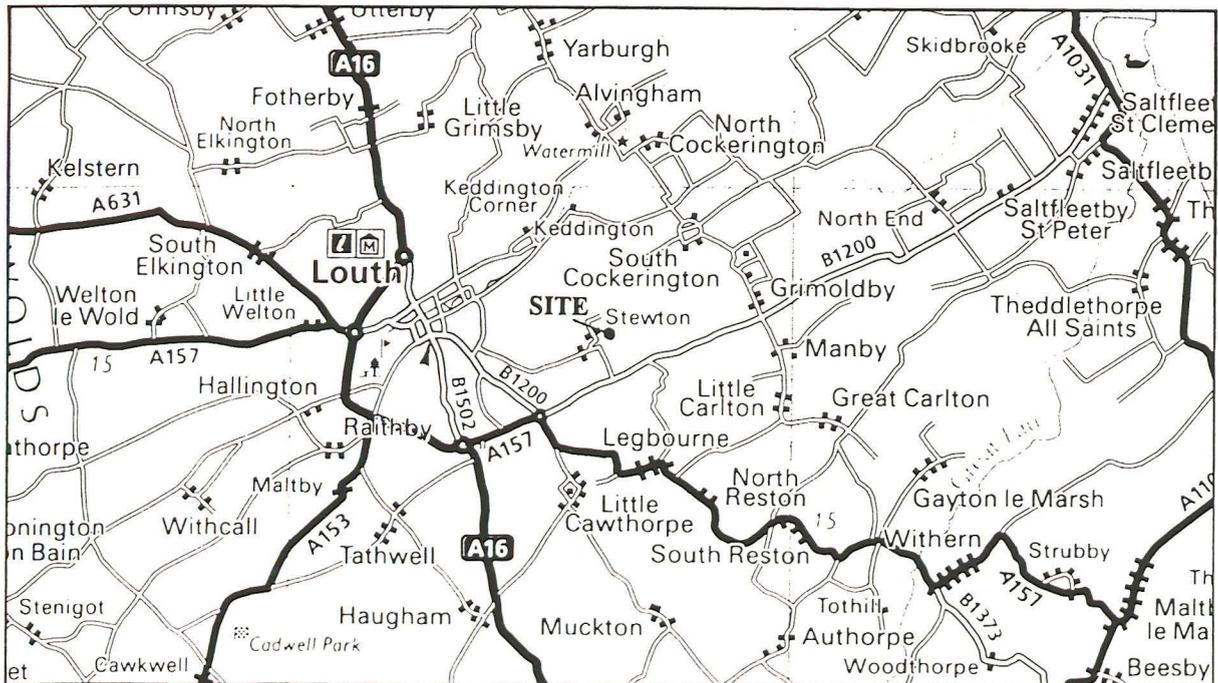


Figure 1. Site location