



**QUARRY EXTENSION, BLACKLANDS FIELD, ACTON,  
LANGTON MATRAVERS, PURBECK, DORSET  
Archaeological Observations and Recording**



**Report No. 53268/3/1**

**October 2007**

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**CONTENTS**

Summary .....	1
Introduction .....	1
Archaeological and Historical background .....	1
Aims and Objectives .....	2
Methods .....	2
Results .....	2
Conclusions .....	2
References .....	3
Figures	
1 Site location map .....	4
2 Plan of observations .....	5
Plates	
1 View of southern half of stripped area .....	6
2 View of northern half of stripped area .....	6

# **QUARRY EXTENSION, BLACKLANDS FIELD, ACTON, LANGTON MATRAVERS, PURBECK, DORSET**

## **Archaeological Observations & Recording**

### **October 2007**

#### **SUMMARY**

*An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Terrain Archaeology during topsoil stripping for an extension to a quarry in the southeast part of Blacklands Field to the south of Acton near Langton Matravers, Purbeck, Dorset. Two stone-filled field drains were revealed, but no other features or deposits of archaeological interest were found. The results of this watching brief suggest that the Iron Age and Roman activity discovered in the late 1940s is confined to the western part of the field.*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by P B Lovell Quarries Ltd, to undertake archaeological observations and recording during topsoil stripping for an extension to the quarry in Blacklands Field to the south of Acton near Langton Matravers.

‘Archaeological Observations and Recording’ (also known as a ‘watching brief’) has been defined in the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief as “a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons, within a specified area or site where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed

The site lies in Blacklands Field, immediately to the north of the recent quarry workings, on flat ground at a height of approximately 130 m above Ordnance Datum. It lies on the Purbeck limestone plateau on the south side of the Isle of Purbeck where the various stone beds are overlain by clay deposits between 0.3 m and 1.0 m thick.

The fieldwork was carried out on the 4th October 2007 by Steven Tatler.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the help and cooperation of Lorrain Puckett and D P Lovell Quarries Ltd, The National Trust, and Nick Dunn (Land and Mineral Management Ltd) during this project.

#### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The earliest evidence for activity at Blacklands (and the surrounding fields) is a scatter of worked flint, including tools typical of the Neolithic and Bronze Age, found during fieldwalking and evaluation excavation by the National Trust. These artefacts must have been brought into the area as flint is not found in the Purbeck limestone beds but derives from the chalk deposits to the north. No specific focus of activity was recognised but there was a concentration in Sea Spray Field to the east (Papworth 2004; 2005). A small pit and hearth probably of Neolithic date were found in Pond Field to the northeast (Terrain Archaeology 2005).

Late Iron Age and Romano-British occupation and burials associated with Kimmeridge shale working was discovered during the excavation of the original quarry in the southwest part of Blacklands field in the late 1940s (Calkin 1948; 1949). Archaeological evaluation of Blacklands

and the surrounding fields by The National Trust in January 2004 indicated that this occupation was confined to the southwest corner of Blacklands Field (Papworth 2005). An isolated Roman burial was found in Pond Field to the northeast (Terrain Archaeology 2005).

The north–south boundary wall between Blacklands Field and Pond/Sea Spray Fields probably represented a medieval manorial boundary and is shown on the 1586 map by Treswell (Papworth 1994).

Observations by Terrain Archaeology during the topsoil stripping of the quarry in the southeast corner of Blacklands revealed no archaeological features other than stone-filled field drains (Terrain Archaeology 2005).

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The aim of the fieldwork was to preserve by archaeological record any archaeological features that will be disturbed within the area included in the planning application.

Areas of archaeological significance have been avoided where known, but additional discoveries have been recorded to the standards of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

## **METHODS**

Archaeological observations were carried out during topsoil stripping of an area immediately north of the present quarry. The observations and subsequent recording were undertaken in accordance with a brief produced by The National Trust and the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*.

All deposits and features exposed during the topsoil strip were recorded using elements of Terrain Archaeology's recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records.

The records have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current UKIC guidelines and the requirements of The National Trust.

## **RESULTS**

The topsoil was stripped from an area approximately 25 m by 30 m across, immediately north of the present quarry (Figure 2). The overlying topsoil (100) was a yellowish-brown clayey loam, up to 0.4 m thick, containing occasional pieces of limestone. It lay immediately on top of the natural geology (101), which consisted of compact, yellowish-brown clay with a large spread of yellow clay in the northern half of the area. It contained occasional pieces of limestone slab and in places the underlying limestone bedrock showed through.

Two stone-filled land drains were observed running across the northern and southern ends of the site and were found to be continuations of those found during the 2005 and 2007 watching briefs (Figure 2).

No finds were recovered during this watching brief.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The watching brief on the extension to the quarry in the southeast corner of Blacklands field confirmed the results of the 2005 watching brief during the original quarry opening (Terrain Archaeology). The only features found were stone-filled field drains, part of an extensive system of field drainage in this area. No other features or deposits of archaeological significance were

observed. This provides further confirmation that the Iron Age and Romano-British occupation site found in 1948 (Calkin 1948) is confined to the southwest corner of Blacklands Field.

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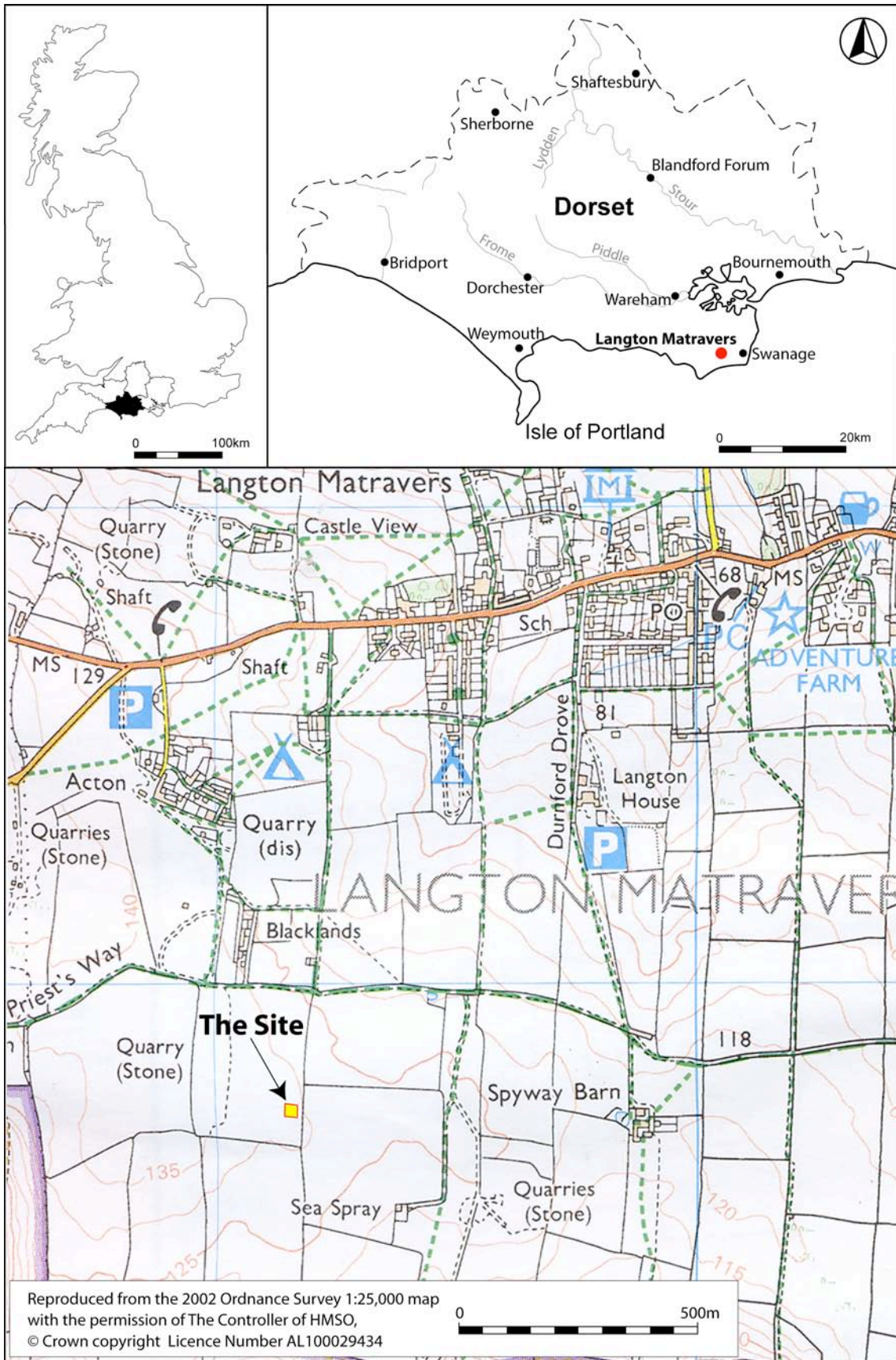


Figure 1: Site location map

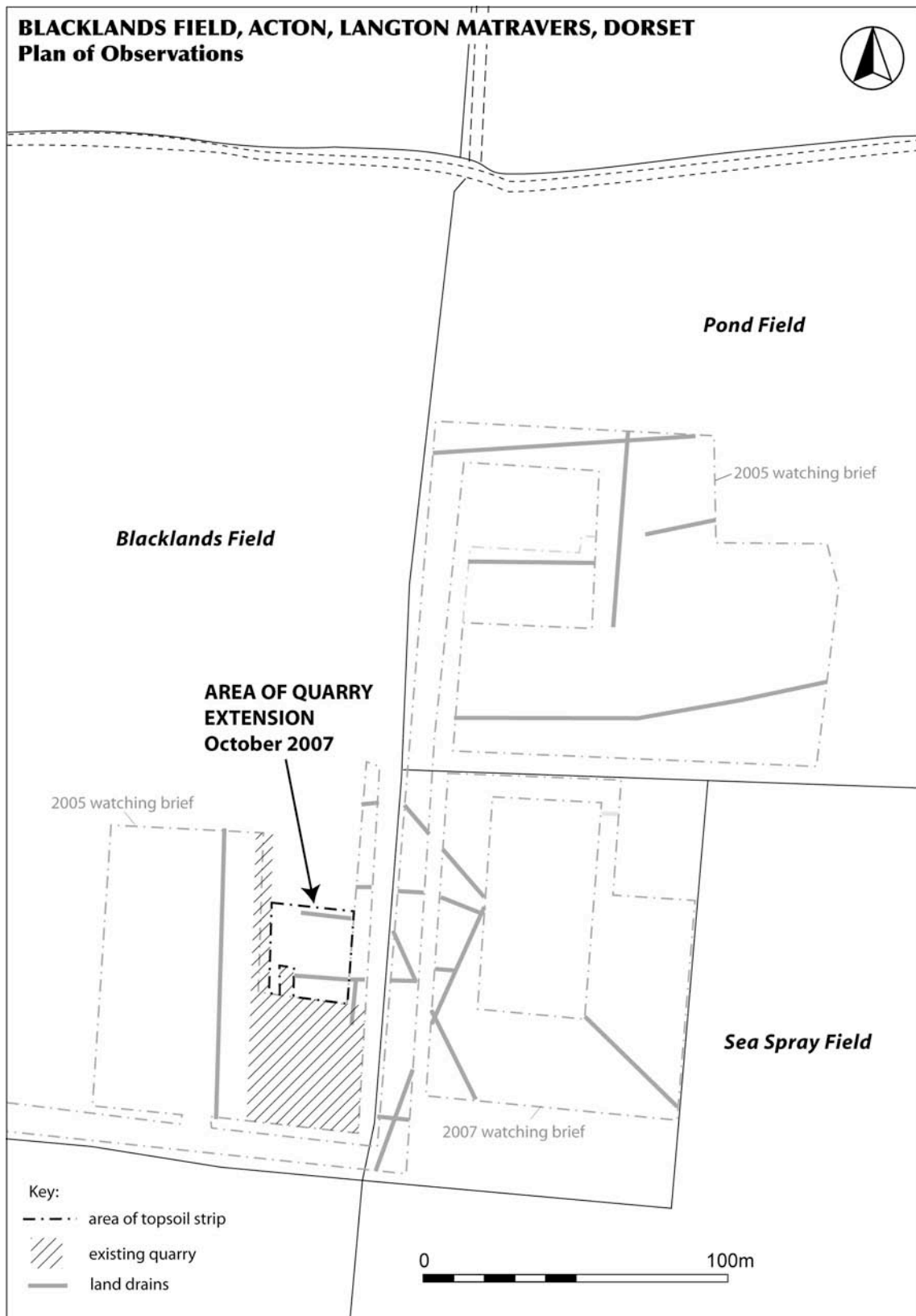


Figure 2: Plan of Observations





*Plate 1: View of southern half of stripped area, looking east, showing field drain crossing area and Seas Spray Quarry in background.*



*Plate 2: View of northern half of stripped area, looking east.*