



INDEX DATA	RPS INFORMATION
Scheme Title A4 & Wickney Bypass	Details Arch. Watch Brief.
Road Number A48.	Date
Contractor	
County Gloucs.	
OS Reference 8060	
Single sided <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Double sided A3 <input type="checkbox"/> Colour <input type="checkbox"/>	

Glos 14936  
SO64990436 - SO64000218

(9)

**A48 Lydney Bypass, Eastern Section - Archaeological Watching Brief**  
4.5.93 - 13.5.93 (ref 477.19)

## 1 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at the site of the A48 Lydney Bypass (Eastern Section), by the Archaeology Section of Gloucestershire County Council's Planning Department, from 4.5.93 to 13.5.93. Advance groundworks were undertaken at this time by M. F. Freeman Ltd., Ruardean Workshop, Varnister Road, Drybrook, Glos., GL17 9BH. The watching brief was commissioned by the County Surveyors Department of Gloucestershire County Council.

## 2 Background

An evaluation of the area to be affected by road construction had previously been recommended in a preliminary archaeological assessment (Hoyle 1991). A number of sites had been identified at that time as being in the vicinity of the projected road corridor, some of which would be either damaged or destroyed by the road works. Many of the recommendations were implemented in advance of the construction of the western section of the bypass, and a watching brief of the advance groundworks undertaken in 1992 (Hoyle forthcoming). Unfortunately, work on the eastern section of the new road commenced in 1993 without any of the assessment recommendations having taken place, leaving a watching brief as the one remaining archaeological option.

## 3 Description of the road corridor

### 3.1 General

The road corridor was c.3km in length and generally c.30m wide, although it tended to be wider at embankments and cuttings. The route leaves the present A48 at c.1km east of the outskirts of Lydney town, runs south-west for c.0.5km, then south for c.1.5km before turning west-south-west for c.1km in skirting the town and the foundry of Lydmet Ltd. to their south. Immediately west of the foundry lay the foundry and council tips, which were excluded from the watching brief, due to extensive previous ground disturbance thereon. The site lies wholly in the parish of Lydney.

### 3.2 Topography and geology

The road corridor leaves the existing A48 to the east of Lydney, at a height of 150m AOD. It crosses rolling hill country with an underlying geology of Old Red Sandstone of the St. Maughan's Group. From here the route descends, and crosses the second and third gravel terraces of the River Severn, before reaching the flat estuarine alluvium, at a height of less than 50m AOD, immediately south of Lydney (Hoyle 1991).

### **3.3 Land use**

The site consisted primarily of agricultural land, most of which lay under grass in 1991. Additionally, the route included part of the corridor of the dismantled Severn and Wye Railway, two very small areas of unmanaged woodland (Hoyle 1991), and several thoroughfares (a minor road, a farm road, and tracks/paths).

### **4 Description of contractors works**

The observed advance groundworks stage of the contract consisted mainly of topsoil stripping by box scraper. Topsoil depth tended to be c.0.20m to c.0.25m. There was some deeper excavation at the junction of the road corridor with the old railway cutting at Naas Lane of up to c.2m. Fencing the corridor was undertaken at this time.

### **5 Extent of Archaeology Section involvement**

A continuous daily presence was maintained during normal office hours, although contractors working hours tended towards a twelve hour day. No attendance was made on 6.5.93, or during the contractors weekend working. Observation of the topsoil stripping and other groundworks was made, with particular reference to known archaeological features. Post-Medieval structures lying on the route of, and unavoidably destroyed by the road scheme, were recorded in a series of written descriptions, measurements, colour slides, and monochrome prints.

### **6 Archaeological Observations**

#### **6.1 Summary**

The nature of contractors operations, and wet weather, meant conditions for archaeological observation were not ideal. Stripping of topsoil had to be observed as it took place, as within a short time subsequent plant movements despoiled the surface and, further, the box scraper tended to leave a smeared stripped surface. Also, stripping continued even when the site was very wet, when the box scraper had to be pushed by bulldozer. No new archaeological sites were noted within the road corridor during the watching brief. It had previously been recommended that three Post-Medieval structures affected by the scheme should be photographically recorded prior to their destruction. Two of these structures had already been lost in advance of the watching brief. The following paragraphs detail observations made on those sites previously identified as being affected by the road scheme (Hoyle 1991). Additionally, although not affected, a further disused railway structure was added to the Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record.

#### **6.2 Glos 5702 : Severn and Wye Railway SO64000218 - SO64750256**

A section of the disused nineteenth century railway, c.0.9km in length and running east-north-east from the south-western corner of the foundry, was to be used for part of the bypass. This included the embankment to the south-east of the golf course, due for removal in June 1993 (pers. comm. A.

Harrison), and the western extremity of the cutting at Naas Lane. During the watching brief two large dressed stones were observed, on the northern edge of the old line at SO64550246. These were, no doubt, from a railway structure. The stones were sized at c.1.10m by c.0.60m by c.0.55m and c.0.95m by c.0.68m by c.0.35m/c.0.55m (chamfered). The final measurement in each case did not take into account partial burying of the stones, which suggested their having lain in this position for some time. The future of the stones, in view of the road construction, was not ascertained.

**6.3 Glos 6212 : Site of Roman road  
SO64850426 - SO64990436**

The removal of a hedge, forming the boundary of OS land parcel 9425 with the A48 main road east of Lydney, and topsoil stripping in the vicinity, revealed no features or finds of Roman, or any other date, excepting modern finds.

**6.4 Glos 11863 : "Mill Ground" field name  
SO 65170445**

OS land parcel 1544 lies at the extreme north-eastern end of the bypass corridor. It was not the subject of any advance groundworks, being used only in later works, involving re-alignment of the A48 road.

**6.5 Glos 11864 : Holloway north-east of Rodley Manor  
SO64730392**

The holloway, lying immediately to the east of the bypass route, was outside the area of advance groundworks, and did not appear to be threatened by the construction of the new road.

**6.6 Glos 11865 : Quarry (backfilled)  
SO64650415**

Some of the topsoil stripped from the adjacent proposed road corridor was used as fill in the area of the backfilled quarry. This was at the request of the farmer, Mr. W. Sanders of Nursehill Farm, to rectify the problem of rubbish at ground level from the original backfilling (pers. comm. A. Harrison).

**6.7 Glos 11866 : "Old Lane" field name  
SO64810313**

A wooded holloway lay across the route of the new road, and this section was infilled during advance groundworks.

**6.8 Glos 11869 : Stone lined weir north-west of Naas Court  
SO64440237**

A Post-Medieval weir adjacent to the disused Severn and Wye Railway, would necessarily be destroyed by construction of the new road. It had been recommended that the structure should be recorded as part of a programme of archaeological work in advance of the bypass construction (Hoyle 1991). None of this programme had been implemented, and the structure was destroyed prior to the commencement of the watching brief. Fortunately, photographs had been taken of the weir, both by the Archaeology Section in 1991 and the Surveyors

Department in 1993. At the time of the watching brief, the stone remains lay in a pile, close to the site of the weir, and apparently were to be reused (pers. comm. A. Harrison). The roughly dressed stones were mainly rectangular, and although varying considerably in size, were typically c.0.48m by c.0.28m by c.0.16m.

**6.9 Glos 11870 : Arched stone bridge north-west of Naas Court  
SO64390234**

A nineteenth century bridge of the disused Severn and Wye Railway, allowing stock to pass through the embankment, would necessarily be destroyed by construction of the new road. It had been recommended that the structure should be recorded in advance of its destruction (Hoyle 1991). Unlike the weir (Glos 11869) and causeway (Glos 11871), the bridge was found to be still intact at the commencement of the watching brief. The round arched structure was constructed of variously sized, rusticated stones, usually of regular courses and fixed by mortar. The stones were usually rectangular, and only occasionally square. They were typically sized c.0.55m by c.0.23m, with the largest observed, at the north-east end of the arch, at c.1.40m by c.0.45m. The smallest stone noted was c.0.13m by c.0.11m. Alignment was approximately north-north-west/south-south-east through the railway embankment. The structure had splayed entrances of c.40 degrees (north) and c.50 degrees (south), each c.4m each in length, the walls of which were capped with large rectangular coping stones, c.0.60m in width, c.0.20m in thickness, and of various length. Each entrance culminated with a pair of small capped piers, the south-western of which was broken, and the northern pair overgrown. Overall length through the embankment was c.16.3m, and greatest width, across the piers of each splayed entrance, was c.7m. The arch was c.2.63m in width at ground level, c.8.3m in length, and c.1.90m (north) c.2.20m (south) in height. Following destruction, the stones were due to be transported to the County Council Depot at Cannop, and used in maintenance work (pers. comm. A. Harrison).

**6.10 Glos 11871 : Stone built causeway west of Naas Crossing  
SO64700251**

A nineteenth century causeway of the disused Severn and Wye Railway, allowing stock to pass through the embankment, had a parallel history to the weir (Glos 11869), as regards the bypass construction. However, in this case, the iron girders lay close to the site of the structure's demise, and the stones lay in a pile on the tip to the west of the foundry. Apparently, the stones were to be used as building stone by Mr. G. Liddington, the farmer/owner of Plummers Farm, on whose land the causeway stood (pers. comm. A. Harrison). The size and shape of the rusticated stones varied considerably, but were typically c.0.30m by c.0.30m by c.0.20m, and the largest observed was c.0.55m by c.0.55m by c.0.50m. The girders were sized c.3.66m by c.0.57m by c.0.38m.

**6.11 Glos 11877 : Curved depression  
SO64720377**

The feature may represent part of an old trackway. The extreme north-western end lay within the corridor of the proposed road corridor and, as a result, the feature was damaged by the road works. No further observations were made.

**6.12 Glos 11879 : Naas Lane  
SO64800265**

The lane, which for much of its length from Crump Farm to the railway bridge (Glos 13951) is a holloway, was breached by the bypass immediately to the north-west of the railway bridge. Further bypass works, in October 1994, will include blocking the lane to the north-west of the bypass, making it a continuous thoroughfare no longer (pers. comm. M. Smith).

**6.13 Glos 11884 : Old field boundary  
SO64700375**

The linear hollow of a former field boundary was not located during the watching brief. It appeared to lie within the corridor of the proposed road (Hoyle 1991) and was, no doubt, either destroyed or severely damaged.

**6.14 Glos 11885 : Old field boundary  
SO64900270**

A linear earthwork marks the position of a former field boundary, part of which lay across the route of the proposed road. This central part was destroyed by the road works, leaving no visible remains. Apparently, the hedge was removed c.60 years ago, with the help of the current farmer/owner as a youth (pers. comm. G. Liddington).

**6.15 Glos 11887 : Two ovoid hollows  
SO64650389; SO64680394**

The hollows may have been backfilled ponds or natural features. They were not located during the watching brief, and, as they appeared to lie within the corridor of the proposed road (Hoyle 1991) they were, no doubt, either destroyed or severely damaged.

**6.16 Glos 11888 : Field boundary  
SO64630370**

The field boundary between OS land parcels 6657 and 5972 lies on a degraded field bank. Towards its eastern end, part of the feature lay within the proposed road corridor, and as a result, that part was destroyed. No further observations were made.

**6.17 Glos 11898 : Amorphous low mound  
SO64900427**

The status of this feature was unknown. It may be the result of differential ploughing around the base of the oak tree which surmounts it, or a surviving segment of the agger of the Roman Road (Glos 6212), or a Bronze Age round barrow (Hoyle 1993). It had previously been recommended that trial excavation of this feature be undertaken, in advance of the road construction (Hoyle 1991), but this was not done. It was envisaged that the route of the road would skirt round the tree but encroach slightly into the mound (Surveyors DRG no.GD2322/92/R17). During the watching brief of advance groundworks, topsoil stripping stopped short of the mound. Consequently, a proposal was made to undertake a single trench archaeological evaluation, as a matter of

some urgency (Hoyle 1993). However, even with the short timescale, road works had by this time continued on the mound itself, which had been stripped of topsoil. The evaluation was not proceeded with. The tree remains in place (pers. comm. J. Hoyle), and the extent of damage to the mound was not ascertained.

**6.18 Glos 11901 : Trackway  
SO64700400**

Part of the trackway appeared to have used as a modern dump for rubbish, with the small mapped quarry (OS 1:2500 1958) filled with bottles, rubber motor tyres, electrical capacitors, and other recent material. South of the quarry the trackway is no longer visible, and where its course crossed the new road corridor no observations were made.

**6.19 Glos 11903 : Dry valley  
SO64750350**

The extreme northern end of a linear hollow lay within the corridor of the proposed bypass and, consequently, the feature was damaged by the road works. No further observations were made.

**6.20 Glos 11906 : Linear hollow  
SO64740368**

The extreme south-westerly end of a curved linear hollow, reportedly a ditch until recent times, lay within the corridor of the proposed bypass, and, as a result, the feature was damaged by the road works. No further observations were made.

**6.21 Glos 11907 : Field boundary  
SO64600377**

The field boundary hedge previously observed (Hoyle 1991) had been removed at some time since, but not as part of the bypass groundworks. At its eastern end the feature lay within the corridor of the proposed road, and this part was destroyed during the groundworks, leaving no visible remains.

**6.22 Glos 11909 : Hurst Medieval Settlement  
SO64950370**

The Medieval settlement at Hurst lay immediately to the east of, or possibly just within, the road corridor, but no observations were made during the watching brief.

**6.23 Glos 13951 : Bridge at Naas Lane (road over rail)  
SO6485502596**

A nineteenth century bridge carrying Naas Lane over the disused Severn and Wye Railway, the single track of which ran through a cutting at this point. The bridge is constructed of rusticated stone, with an iron span with modern wooden fence parapets infilled with wire mesh. The current state of a mapped benchmark (OS 1:2500 1966), on the north-east wall of the bridge at 80.33 ft. (24.48m) AOD, was not ascertained at the time of recording (May 1993). The bridge has splayed entrances, and is aligned approximately north-west/south-east over the line of the railway.



## 7 Finds

Each of the OS land parcels were remarkably clean of material and, generally, obviously Post-Medieval and modern artefacts were not retained. Two body sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered from the stripped surface of OS land parcel 8973, to the north-east of Naas Lane.

## 8 List of figures

8.1 Lydney highways route strategy OS 1:10000

8.2 A48 Lydney Bypass (east) archaeological survey 1:10000

## 9 References

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| Glos SMR | Gloucestershire County Council,<br>Sites and Monuments Record.   |
| Hoyle J  | 1991 A48 Lydney Bypass, Gloucestershire,<br>A preliminary archaeological assessment.<br>Gloucestershire County Council,<br>Archaeology Section.<br>unpublished report                  |
| Hoyle J  | 1993 Proposal for evaluation of a mound to the<br>north of Hurst Farm, Lydney.<br>Gloucestershire County Council,<br>Archaeology Section.<br>evaluation costing                        |
| Hoyle J  | A48 Lydney Bypass (western section),<br>Gloucestershire,<br>An archaeological evaluation.<br>Gloucestershire County Council,<br>Archaeology Section.<br>forthcoming unpublished report |
| OS       | Ordnance Survey  |

## 10 Acknowledgments

10.1 Gloucestershire County Council Surveyors Department supplied figure 8.1.

10.2 Mrs. W. Greenhalgh, Archaeology Section, Gloucestershire County Council,  
drew figure 8.2

10.3 Co-operation was received from Gloucestershire County Council Surveyors  
Department on-site staff: - Mike Smith (Resident Engineer), Andy Harrison,  
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


16.8.94

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# A48 LYDNEY BYPASS (EAST) ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

## KEY

-  visible earthwork
-  limit of road corridor
-  other area of archaeological interest

