

**LONG LANE,  
WILLOUGHTON,  
LINCOLNSHIRE.**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

Site Code: LLW05  
NGR: SK 9322 9268-9325 9148  
Planning Ref. M/04/P/1206  
Accession No. 2005.17

Report prepared for Mr C. G. Rowles-Nicholson

by

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EVENT ELI 6419

INTERVENTION: SLI 10385 L110633 *BC*  
EXCAVATIONS: SLI 10386 MS/11

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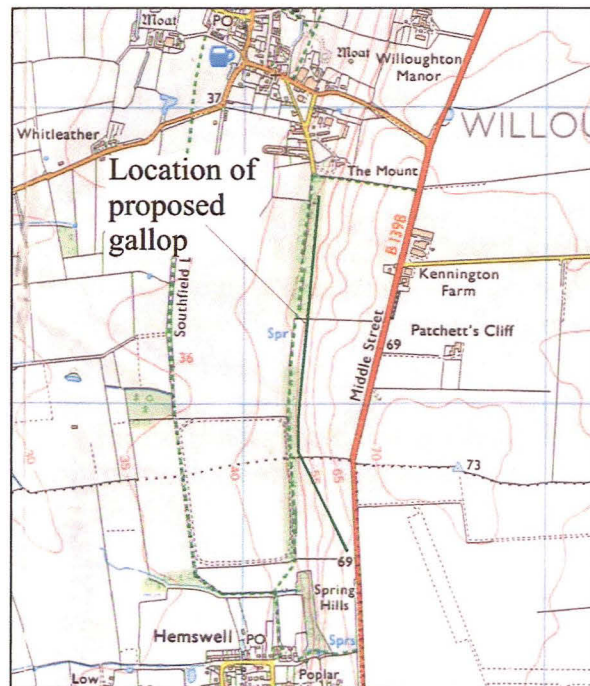
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### Summary

- *Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) was commissioned by Mr C G Rowles-Nicholson to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the construction of an all-weather gallop on land at Willoughton, Lincolnshire.*
- *A single archaeological feature was exposed during the course of the brief; a former field boundary, which appears to have been neglected towards the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was finally lost towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup>.*
- *A number of unstratified finds were recovered from the topsoil, including a Neolithic or early Bronze Age flint core.*
- *For the most part, the results of the brief are negative.*



**Fig. 1:** Site location plan showing location of proposed all-weather gallop. 1:25,000  
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## 1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) was commissioned by Mr C G Rowles-Nicholson to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the construction of an all-weather gallop and associated drainage on land to the south of Willoughton, Lincolnshire. This work was commissioned to satisfy a planning requirement issued by West Lindsey District Council. The approach complies with the requirements of *Archaeology and Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16*, Dept. of Environment (1990); *Management of Archaeological Projects*, EH (1991) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, IFA (1999) and the LCC document *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice*, 1998

## 2.0 Location and description

Willoughton is approximately 22km north of central Lincoln in the administrative district of West Lindsey. It is situated to the west side of the Lincoln Edge towards the bottom of the west-facing scarp.

The proposed development extends southwards from the southern end of Long Lane for a total distance of approximately 1400m. It is linear, with the gallop being some 3m across, with associated drainage works to the east and west of it.

The British Geological Survey characterises the local solid geology as Whitby Mudstone Formation, with occasional pockets of glacio-fluvial sand and gravel with no overlying drift (BGS, 1999), although examination of the deposits seen on site revealed a slightly sandy silt, possibly colluvium, deriving from up-slope (to the north of the gallop).

The National Grid Reference for the site northern end of the site is SK 9322 926 and SK 9325 9148 to the south. The mean elevation is approximately 45m OD for the majority of the works, rising to 65m at the southern end.

## 3.0 Planning background

West Lindsey District Council granted full planning consent for a development comprising an all-weather gallop with associated drainage works, subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief on all intrusive ground works. This approach is consistent with the recommendations of *Archaeology and Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16*, 1990.

The planning reference number for this development is M/04/P/1206.

#### 4.0 Archaeological and historical background

The edge of the limestone escarpment upon which Willoughton is located has long been a focus for settlement. In 1932, excavations took place close to the village in response to the discovery of a possible Mesolithic (c.8000-4000BC) occupation site at the crest of the scarp slope. This revealed an occupation layer that yielded approximately 4000 worked flints, and identified a number of hearths, interpreted as evidence of periodic, perhaps seasonal, occupation over an extended period of time (May, 1976). To the north of Willoughton, a single Early Bronze Age spearhead was found at Grayingham (*ibid.*).

The village also lies close to the Jurassic Way, a prehistoric track that meandered along the spring line that follows the escarpment; no doubt connecting settlements along its length. This did not take the form of a formal metalled track, but was a frequently used route that was probably subject to slight re-routings in order to maintain the most expedient path from place to place. The route northwards from Lincoln was later formalised by the construction of Ermine Street; an initially military road that ran in a straight line northwards from Lincoln (on the line of the modern A15), and lies approximately 3km to the west of the current site (Whitwell, 1992).

This spring line marked by the Jurassic Way was also a settlement focus in the Anglo-Saxon period. Fieldwalking has recovered substantial quantities of early Saxon pottery, and a sunken-feature building has been excavated to the south of the village (Everson et.al. 1991). The settlement appears in the Domesday Book, at which time the principal landowners were Waldin the Artificer and Odo the Crossbowman, who held 188 acres of meadow between them (Morgan & Thorne, 1986).

During the reign of King Stephen (1135-54), land was granted to Roger de Builli to found a preceptory of the Knights Templars (VCH, 1908); a military and religious order established c.1119, with the purpose of protecting pilgrims travelling to the newly conquered Holy Lands and Jerusalem. Estate centres, or preceptories, established across Europe, which farmed the land and employed local populations, funded these activities. There were five such establishments in Lincolnshire, at Aslackby, Eagle, South Witham, Temple Bruer and Willoughton. Their huge wealth soon bought suspicion and jealousy, ultimately resulting in the violent suppression of the order in 1308-12. Many of these establishments passed into the hands of the Knight's Hospitallers, including the Willoughton preceptory (Mee, 1970). At this time, the preceptory was the richest such estate in the country, with an annual income of £284, and was the administrative centre of all the Hospitaller's estates in England (Everson et.al., 1991). This survives as earthworks at Temple Garth, at the west end of the village. At Monk's Garth, approximately 400m north of the northern end of the site are the earthwork remains of a moated grange of the alien priory of St. Nicholas of Angers (Mee, 1970). After the Anglo-French wars of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, these estates were confiscated by the crown, eventually passing into the hands of King's College Cambridge in 1441. There is also believed to be a planned hamlet associated with this grange, which went by the name Helpesthorp (Everson et.al., 1991).

The county Sites and Monuments Record holds data on a number of sites in the vicinity. Neolithic flints have been found, 150m east of the start of the gallop (SMR no. 50944) and 400m north-east of the start (50945). To the east of the southern portion of the gallop, a large series of cropmarks evidencing a system of linear boundaries with elements of probable curvilinear and rectilinear occupation sites is probably of a later prehistoric date (50354). Sites dated to the Iron Age are also present; to the south west an early Iron Age artefact scatter, including flints, beads and coarse-ware pottery, is assumed to be an occupation site, (50978), to the north of which is a possible early Iron Age site, recorded by F T Baker, (50977). To the west of these is a series of rectilinear cropmarks, possibly a prehistoric or Romano-British field system, (54104).

Activity from the Romano-British period includes pottery scatters to the northeast and southwest of the site, (50971, 50988 & 50989); the later two being primarily 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century, and the latter thought to evidence domestic occupation. A bronze coin of Antoninianus of Victorinus (268-270) was found northwest of the route start (50976). A large Romano-British (54814) settlement is known at Patchett's Cliff, comprising an L-shaped enclosure, further sub-divided within. It seems to have been in use during the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, and may overlie an earlier Neolithic enclosure. An excavation by Wessex Archaeology during the construction of the Cottham Pipeline is listed as LI4085.

Two scatters of Anglo-Saxon pottery are present to the west of the gallop, (50939 & 50940), and a further artefact scatter to the north, (50987) has been interpreted as an early Saxon occupation site; it is alongside the Willoughton to Hemswell path, a trackway that was probably established during this period. Some 550m east of the start, a fragment of a bronze Anglo-Saxon hanging bowl was recovered from the ploughsoil, (50942), while immediately adjacent to the start the remains of a 6<sup>th</sup> century Anglo-Saxon timber building, (50938), probably part of a larger settlement, have been recorded.

The start of the route is immediately due south of the site of the probable medieval hamlet of Helpesthorpe, (50933). Everson suggests that the location of this is fossilised by the rectangular block of properties on the south side of Willoughton Village. Approximately 550m to the east is a site listed on the 1769 enclosure award plan as a postmill known as Willoughton Mill (50928).

SMR entry LI414 represents five possible sites recorded during geophysical survey in advance of the construction of the Blyborough to Cottam pipeline. Given its proximity to SMR entry 50988, it seems probable that at least some of these are of a similar (Romano-British) date. To the east of the southern end (54101) is a former quarry; evident as an earthwork, of unknown date.

## 5.0 Methodology

Fourteen visits were made to the site by the author and Ms Jennifer Kitch, on the 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of January, the 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of February and the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2005.

The specification required the monitoring of all intrusive works. However it was decided (in full consultation with the Built Environment Officer of West Lindsey District Council) that, as the excavation for the gallop itself did not appear to extend below the ploughsoil, this would not require monitoring.

It became apparent at an early stage that the monitoring of all drainage works would be a very protracted process; additionally, given that the trenches were so narrow that they were unsuitable for archaeological examination, it was decided to concentrate on soak-aways in order to examine a representative portion of the site; the drainage trenches were examined periodically when no other works were taking place.

During the course of the brief, a change in the design of the gallop led to certain sections cutting into the hillside by as much as 1m. The deeper portion in field 2 was monitored as it was excavated. The deeper portion in field 3 was excavated on a day when there was no archaeological presence on site, although it was thoroughly examined later that same week. Unfortunately, machines had tracked across it in the intervening period, so examination for archaeological features was problematic.

All archaeological deposits identified were subjected to limited excavation, in order to assess their nature, dimensions and to attempt to recover datable materials. These investigations resulted in the production of written descriptions. Colour photographs and scale drawings, in both plan and section, compliment these accounts. Pottery and other finds recovered during these works were processed at the offices of PCA before being submitted for specialist examination, the results of which are appended to this report.

During the course of the watching brief, excavated topsoil was scanned with a metal detector (Fisher 1236 X-2) but no archaeological finds were recovered.

## 6.0 Results

The uppermost material exposed was context 001, comprising a pale brown sandy silt ploughsoil, with occasional pebbles and ceramic building material (CBM) fragments. Three pottery sherds were recovered from this horizon, all of relatively recent date. Also recovered was a fragment of a late Bronze Age or Neolithic flint core, from which blades were struck before being further worked into tools.

Towards the centre of field 2, a single cut feature was observed, [004]. This was a shallow V-shaped ditch, aligned approximately northeast to southwest. Its fill, 003, was loose dark grey sandy silt with sub-angular pebbles in its upper part. A single sherd of black glazed earthenware pottery was recovered from this material; probably of later 19<sup>th</sup> century date.

Natural soils to the north of this ditch were considerably more rooted than those to the south; possibly resulting from a former hedgerow.

Three varying natural horizons were observed along the length of the gallop: towards the north was pale orange sandy silt, 002, interpreted as being of glaciofluvial origin. Further south, towards the boundary between fields 2 and 3 was a much brighter yellowish orange compact silty sand, 005, while to the very south of the gallop, 006 was broken platy limestone, the upper surface of the Lincolnshire Limestone bedrock.

## **7.0 Discussion and conclusions**

No significant archaeological features were recorded during the course of this watching brief. A number of factors may have influenced the absence of finds in an area that SMR entries suggest was archaeologically rich.

As noted above, it was impractical to monitor all of the drainage trenches, given their narrow width. Only the soakaways, as well as sections where the gallop impacted on the archaeological horizon, were fully examined.

A single feature, interpreted as a boundary ditch, was observed running roughly east-west across the centre of field 2. The 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map (1891) depicts this as an extant field boundary (see fig 8). The present landowner recalls that this boundary was removed in approximately 1970, (G. Rowles-Nicholson, pers. comm.).

A single late Bronze Age or Neolithic flint core was recovered from the topsoil, and worked flints of similar date have been recovered from north and east of the route, slightly higher up the slope.

## **8.0 Effectiveness of methodology**

The methodology employed allowed a representative proportion of the intrusive works to be monitored for archaeological remains, and a full record of the deposits encountered to be made. The methodology employed allowed this work to take place with minimal disruption to the primary scheme.

## **9.0 Acknowledgments**

The author would like to thank Mr C G Rowles-Nicholson for commissioning this work, and also the ground workers for their assistance on site.



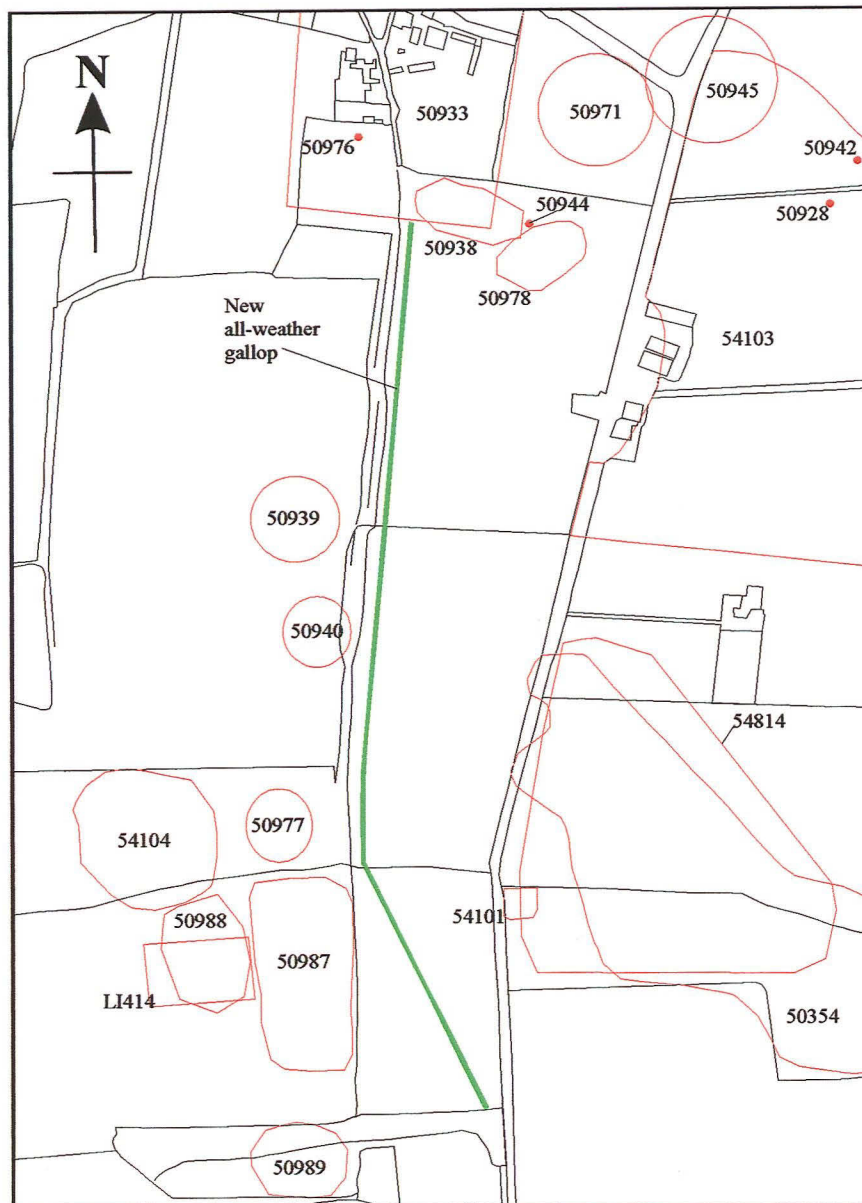
## 10.0 References

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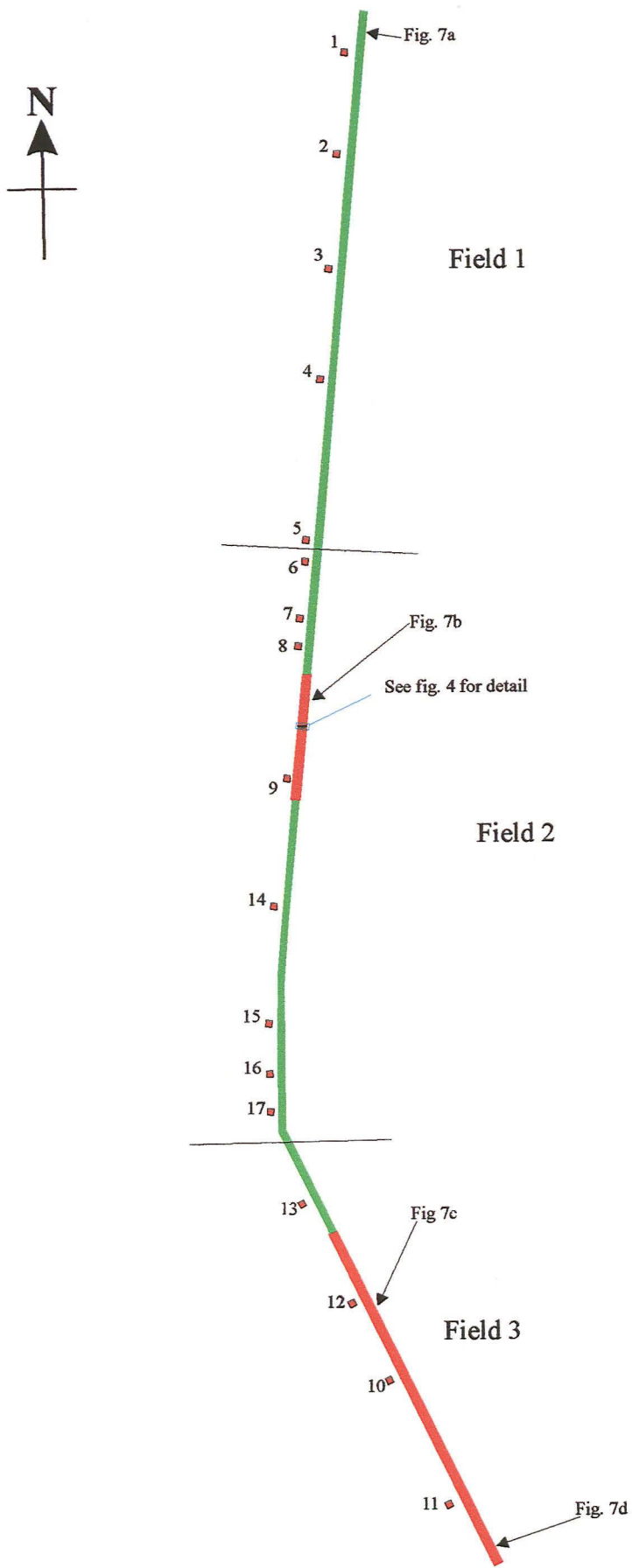
## 11.0 Site archive

The site archive (documentary and physical) for this project is in preparation and will be deposited with Lincolnshire City and County Museum within six months.

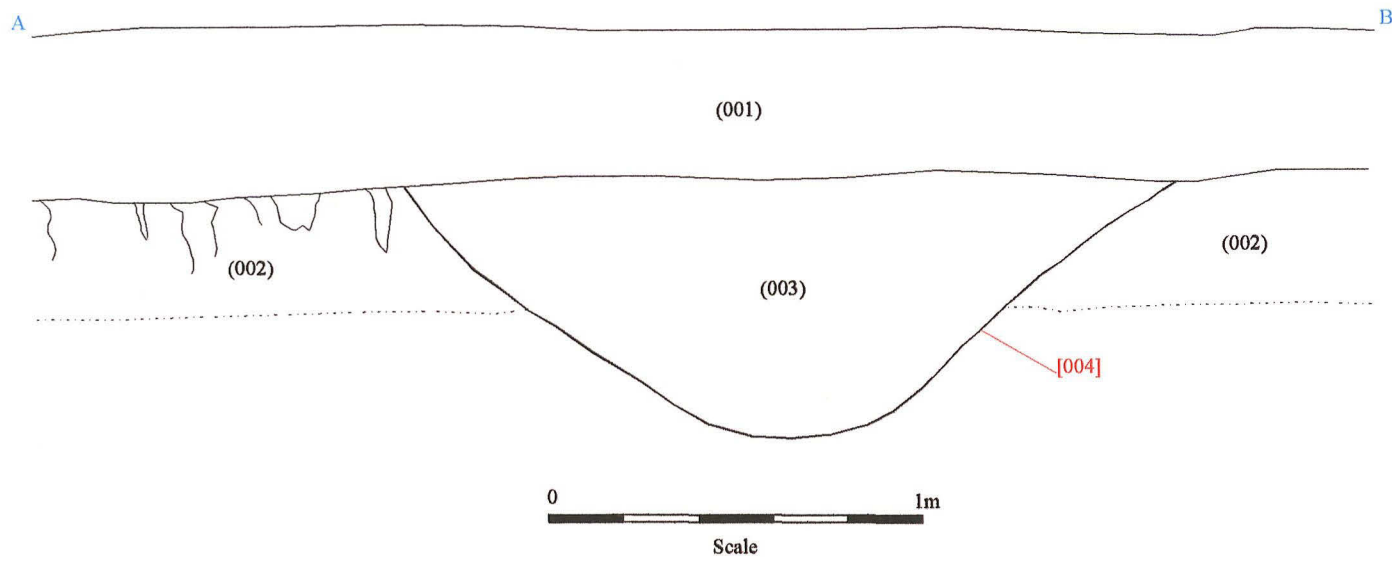
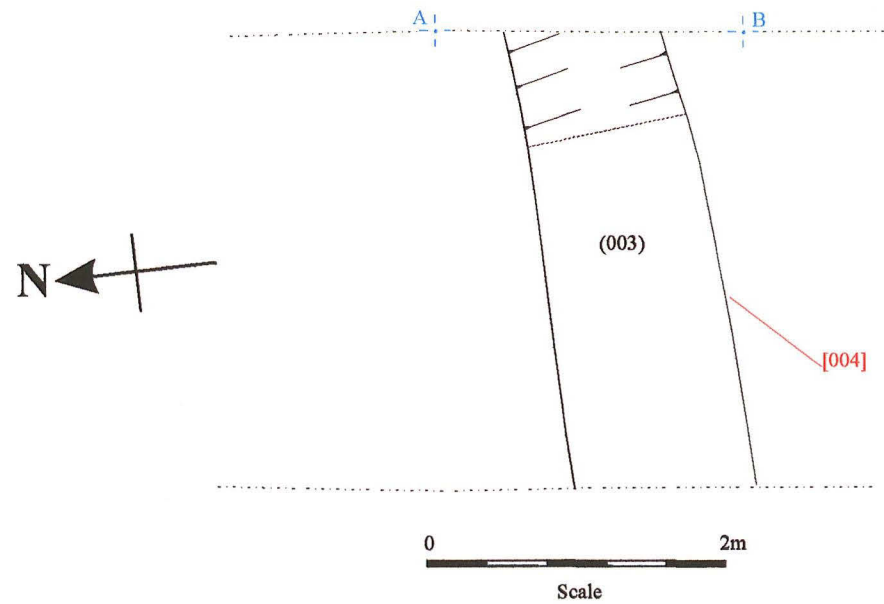
Access to the archive can be gained by quoting the universal accession number 2005.17



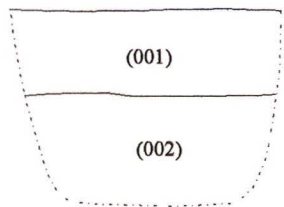
**Fig. 2:** Plan showing route of new all-weather gallop (in green) and SMR entries from the vicinity (in red).  
1:10,000  
From plot provided by Lines SMR.



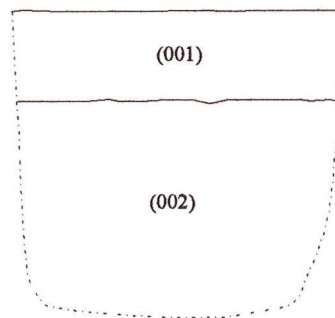
**Fig. 3:** Plan showing gallop, with monitored sections and soakaways in red. 1:5,000



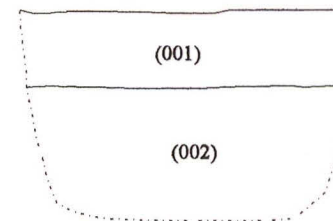
**Fig. 4:** Plan and section showing ditch [004]  
 Plan at 1:50, section at 1:20



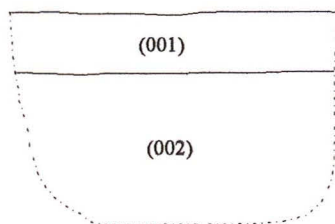
Soakaway 3, E facing.



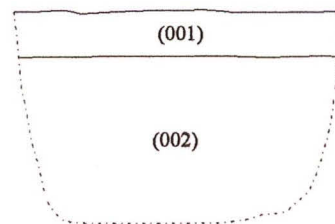
Soakaway 5, E facing.



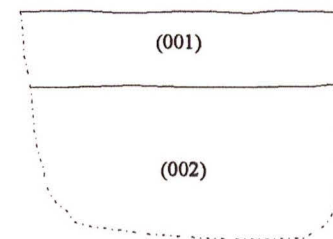
Soakaway 6, E facing.



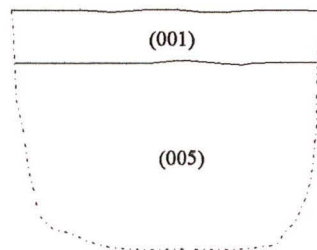
Soakaway 7, E facing.



Soakaway 8, E facing.



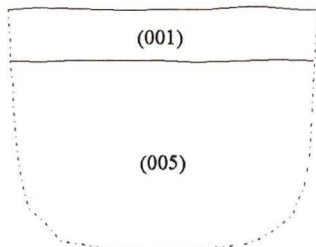
Soakaway 9, E facing.



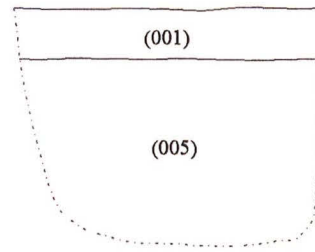
Soakaway 10, NE facing.



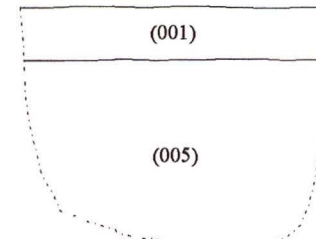
**Fig. 5:** Sections from Soakaways 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. All at 1:50



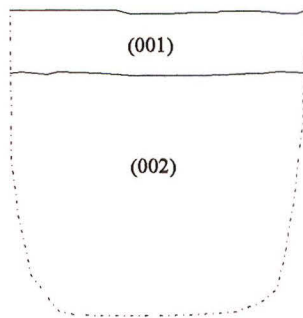
Soakaway 11, NE facing.



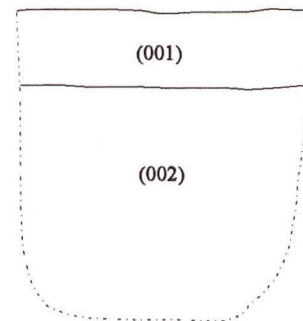
Soakaway 12, NE facing.



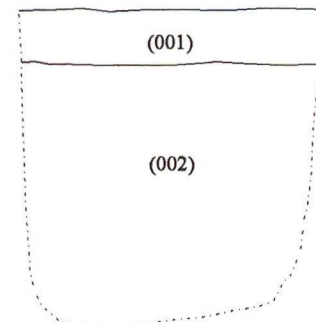
Soakaway 13, S facing.



Soakaway 14, E facing.



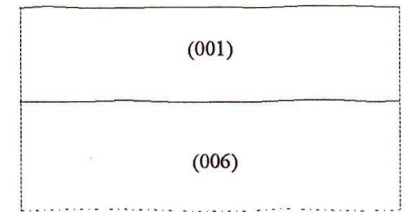
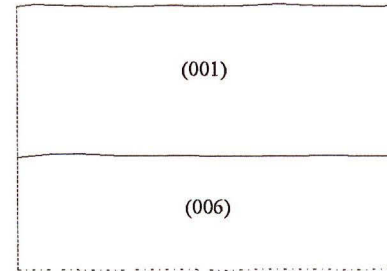
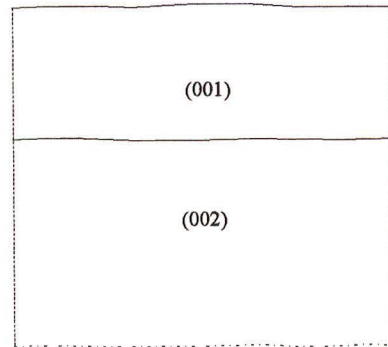
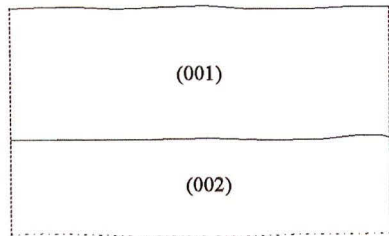
Soakaway 15, E facing.



Soakaway 16, E facing.



**Fig. 6:** Sections from  
Soakaways 11, 12, 13,  
14, 15 and 16.  
All at 1:50



**Fig. 7:** Sample sections (a-d) from along route of gallop. All west facing, all 1:20

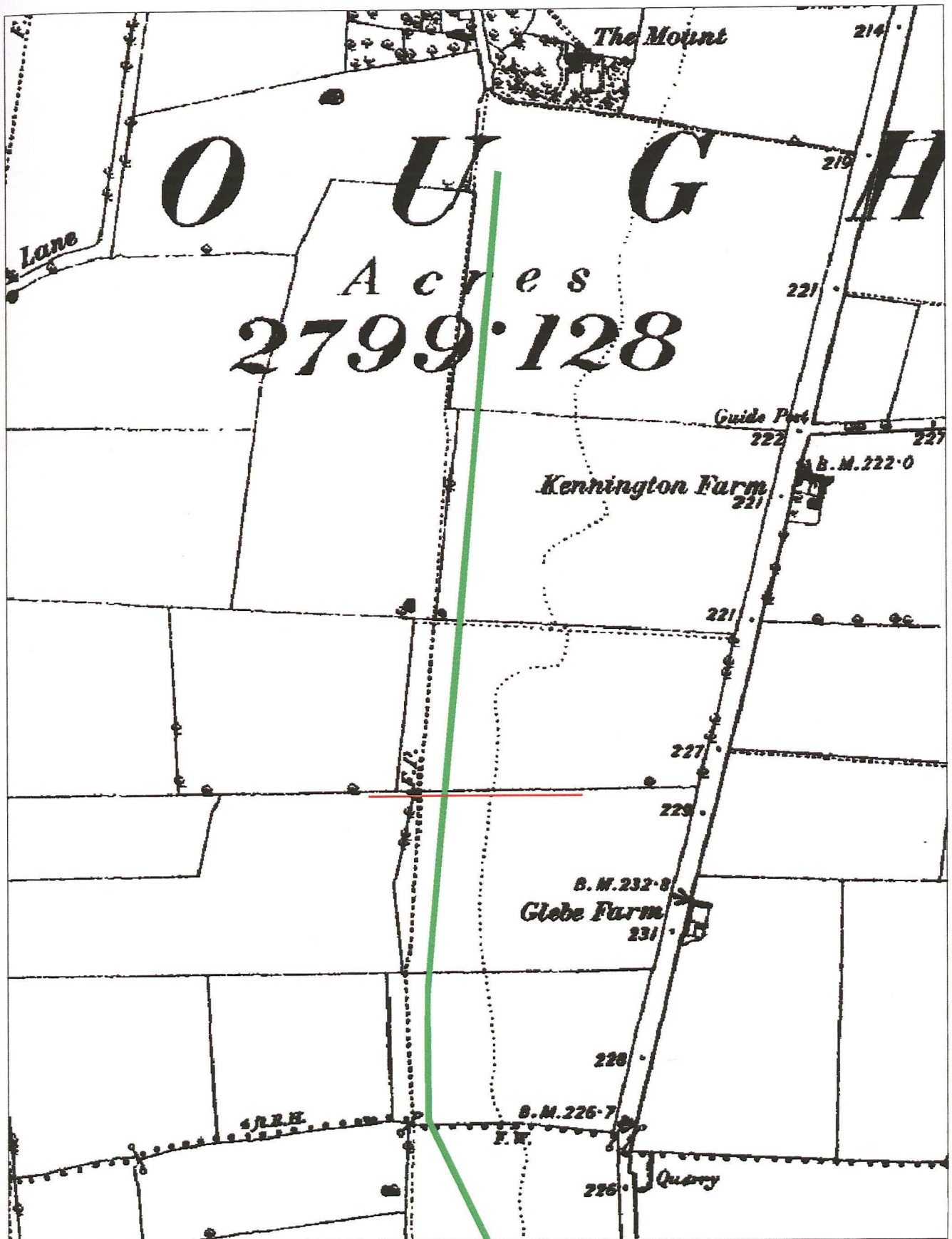


Fig. 8: Excerpt from 1st edition O.S. Map (1891) showing northern portion of gallop. Location of ditch [004] is shown in red. Not to scale

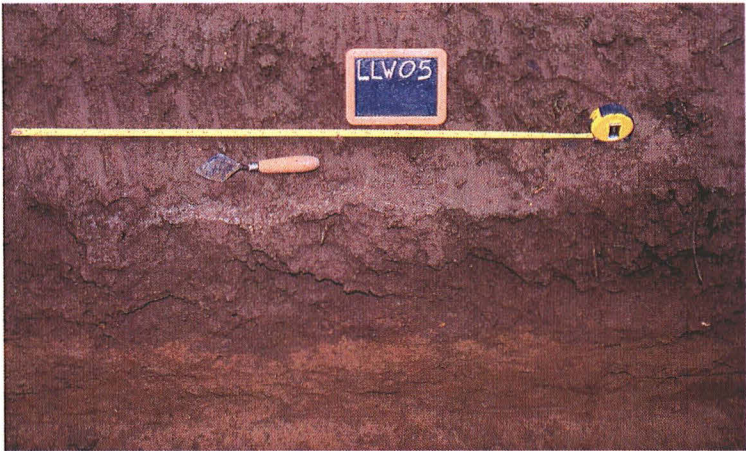
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**Appendix 1. Colour plates**



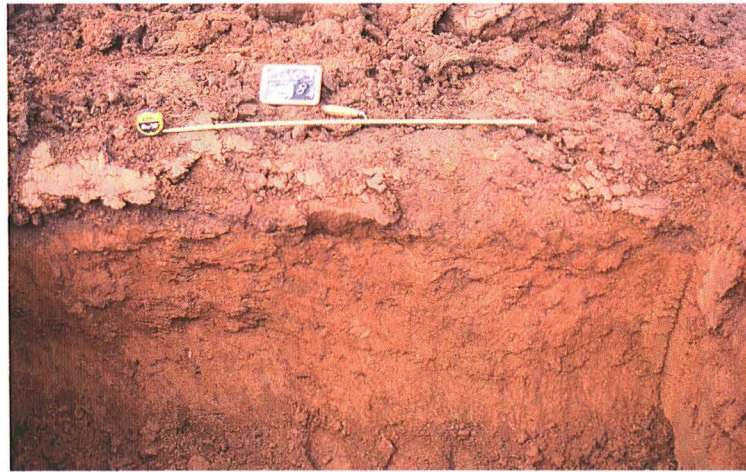
**Pl. 1:** Shot showing northern part of gallop. Looking south from start.



**Pl. 2:** Sample section from northern end of drain trench. Looking East.



**Pl. 3:** Section from soakaway 3. Looking West.



**Pl. 4:** Section from soakaway 8. Looking West.



**Pl. 5:** Excavated slot through ditch [004]. Note rooting to left. Looking East.



**Pl. 6:** Sample section from southern end of gallop excavation. Looking East.



**Pl. 7:** View along line of gallop, north westwards from southern end.

## Appendix 2. Context Summary

CONTEXT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
001	Pale brown sandy silt, occasional pebbles and CBM fragments. Pottery and worked flint recovered.
002	Pale orange sandy silt. Natural. Glaciofluvial.
003	FO [004]. Loose dark grey fine sandy silt, occ sub angular pebbles in upper part of deposit. Pottery recovered.
[004]	Ditch, former field boundary. Rooted natural to N evidence of former hedge. Boundary ploughed out in 20 <sup>th</sup> century.
005	Yellowish orange slightly silty sand, very compact. Natural.
006	Broken platy limestone (80%) in a matrix of coarse limestone sand (20%). Natural, upper surface of bedrock, Lincolnshire Limestone.

### Appendix 3. Finds report

A small very small finds assemblage recovered during the watching brief predominantly comprised late post-medieval/early modern pottery. The one exception was a fragment of what is probably a pyramid blade core.

#### *Pottery*

The pottery comprises two body sherds and one base/body sherd from three different vessels of Black Glazed Earthenware (BGE); and a single plain rim/body sherd of Salt Glazed Earthenware probably from either the Nottingham or South Derbyshire industries.

Both fabrics represented within the assemblage are very common both within and beyond the region. All the pottery is abraded and does not appear to have been derived from primary contexts within the recent past.

#### *Flint*

The core is very poorly preserved with extensive plough damage. In isolation, it has little meaning other than indicating some form of flint working activity within the area during the late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age.

#### *Summary*

Context	Quantity	Description	Weight (gms)	Retained
101	2	Small abraded body sherds of BGE	34.00	No
101	1	Small abraded body/plain rim sherd in (?) Nottingham SGE	16.00	No
101	1	Worked flint. Frag of (?) pyramid core. Badly plough damaged	10.00	Yes
103	1	Medium sized base/lower body sherd of BGE	164.00	No