

Watching Brief Report for
KETTLEBY QUARRY
BIGBY, LINCOLNSHIRE
NGR TA 0420 0820

on behalf of
J.W. Hurdiss Quarries Ltd

by
York Archaeological Trust 1998

KETTLEBY QUARRY

A REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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Fig.1 Site location Plan

We do not appear
to have the
Site location plan
for this report.

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1. Introduction

On the 20th and 23rd of June 1997, the 9th of February 1998 and the 15th of October 1998 (does not include DAB visits), York Archaeological Trust carried out an archaeological watching brief at Kettleby Quarry, Bigby, Lincolnshire (NGR TA 0420 0820) on behalf of J.W. Hurdiss Quarries Ltd. The work was carried out as part of an ongoing watching brief and scheme of work devised by Lincolnshire County Council as a planning condition on the gravel extraction programme at the site. The newly stripped areas were monitored for archaeological deposits and evidence for the survival of archaeological features and stratigraphy.

1.1 Methodology

The area was stripped of topsoil using a highmac 360 degrees mechanical excavator with a wide smooth bladed bucket. The stripping was not supervised by an archaeologist as previous monitoring of the area to the south-east had shown the archaeology to be stratigraphically simple and the driver competent enough to be left unsupervised. This process of machine supervision was discussed at a site meeting on the 25th of June between the assistant county archaeologist, Jim Bonner, York Archaeological Trust and Hurdiss Quarries Limited and preliminary approval, subject to future reassessment, was given for the future implementation of this policy of continued stripping without archaeological supervision. A sketch plan was made of the features revealed and several of them were cleaned, sketched, excavated, measured, and recorded. All significant archaeological deposits were photographed using colour print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the York Archaeological Trust *Context Recording Manual* (1996).

Site Records and finds are currently stored with York Archaeological Trust under the Lincolnshire Museums accession code 120.96.

1.2 Geology and Topography

The site is situated on glacial sands and gravels to the north-east of Kettleby Thorpe farm, in an area sandwiched between Wellholmes Holt Wood and the railway line from Grimsby to Market Rasen, two kilometres north-west of Bigby and just over four kilometres north-east of Brigg. The land is fairly flat and low lying, between the 10 m and 15 m contour lines, only rising slightly to the east towards Wellholmes Holt Wood.

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

The watching brief area lies north-east of the deserted medieval village of Kettleby Thorpe, which was investigated in previous watching briefs by York Archaeological Trust, and a rescue excavation in 1964 by Rex Russell for the Ministry of Works. The latter investigation was undertaken after the site had been de-scheduled as an ancient monument and was being bulldozed by the owner Mr. J. Morwood to level the land

for agricultural purposes. The deserted medieval village had already been extensively damaged by a gravel quarry, excavated in 1847, during the construction of the railway, during which time an undated cemetery was destroyed.

The villages documentary history dates back to the Domesday Survey of 1086 which records modest amounts of Late Saxon/Early Norman settlement in the area including the village of Kettleby Torp. *Torp* probably deriving from the Anglo Scandinavian *thorp*, and meaning a smaller village colonised from a larger one.

Kettleby Thorpe is thought to have been depopulated under the ownership of the Tyrwhitts who became owners of the estate in 1431. The Tyrwhitts were established at nearby Kettleby in 1322, and are known as one of the major depopulators in Lincolnshire (Barley, Lincolnshire and the fens p115). By 1565 the village of Kettleby Thorpe consisted of only five families. The pottery evidence points to depopulation before 1450, probably after the village came into the possession of the Tyrwhitts. Kettleby Thorpe remained part of the Tyrwhitt estate until the end of the seventeenth century. (Russell, 196*)

The principal feature was a moated site of medieval date, excavation of which produced no major internal structural evidence suggesting that it was early and timber built. Excavation elsewhere on the site revealed a manor house of modest proportions and rather crude construction dating to the second quarter of the 14th century (Griffiths, 1994) and a number of houses within small enclosures 60 x 25 m in area. (Griffiths, 1994).

a few
dispersed trenches
- not
excavated

2.0 Results

The area stripped revealed little of archaeological importance in relation to the previous watching briefs. A number of small streams appeared to meander across the site and in the extreme north-east corner strip 18 and 19 collected in a large area that possibly represented a back filled pond or marshy area. Cut 20 and 21, had a stream that ran from the wood in a north south direction, towards the pond area and the Skegger Beck and strip 24 also contained a backfilled stream course aligned roughly NE to SW. The drainage of the land probably in conjunction with land enclosure from the mid 18th to the mid 19th centuries probably resulted in the cutting of straight dikes and the insertion of land drains. The former meandering stream courses, are therefore thought to have been filled in at this time. The ground was thought to have been too well drained for good environmental samples to be worth while. A former straight field boundary or dyke, which had been backfilled, and contained a later land drain within it was located in strips 21 and 22, running in a north-west to south-east direction. This was also thought to be of late post-medieval or early modern date.

The only other features that occurred within the freshly stripped area were several elliptically shaped and sub-circular features filled with a light greyish silty sand or a charcoal or organic rich dark grey silty sand. The former features were interpreted as being the result of tree clearance, of uncertain date, and the latter were thought best interpreted the sets of burrowing mammals, such as rabbits, or moles.

There were no other features of interest, and no traces of medieval field systems or other features related to the deserted medieval village, or to any earlier settlements. The whole site was sealed by a dark grey brown sandy loam plough soil.

3. Discussion and Conclusions

The newly stripped area north-east of the deserted medieval village of Kettleby Thorpe appears not to have played a major role either within the agricultural economy or within the settlement itself. The land appears to have been very lowlying marginal land, with a number of winding streams within it. It probably would have been fairly wet and marshy in the medieval period. This area then probably represented an area of water meadows and summer common grazing land that developed along the banks of the Skegger beck to the north and north-east of the village. 'Dikes end close', the name for the area within the village dates back to 1665 (Russell p5) and may be a good indicator that this land was wet and marshy and not utilised for arable crops in the medieval period.

4. Archaeological Implications

No further archaeological recording on this area of the watching brief was thought necessary.

5. List of Sources

Griffiths, M. (1994) *Draft - Kettleby Thorpe DMV - Site Assessment*.

Russell, E. (1974) *Excavations on the site of the deserted medieval village of Kettleby Thorpe, Lincolnshire*; in *Journal of the Scunthorpe Museum Society*. Vol. 3 No. 2.

York Archaeological Trust (1996) *Context Recording Manual*, York.

6. List of Contributors

Watching Brief and Report

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