

**A WATCHING BRIEF ON EXCAVATIONS FOR
WIND TURBINE BASES AT
THREE BIRCHES AND TWO CROSSES,
NEWCASTLE, SHROPSHIRE**

by
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A report for
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ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: Location of the turbine sites at Three Birches and Two Crosses

Photo 1: The excavation for the turbine base at Three Birches, looking NW, scale bar
1m

Photo 2: The excavation for the turbine base at Two Crosses, looking NW

SUMMARY

In May and June 2012 the Archaeology Service carried out a watching brief on the excavations for two wind turbine bases at Three Birches and at Two Crosses, Newcastle, Craven Arms, Shropshire. The pits for the turbine bases were excavated by machine to a depth of between 1m and 1.9m depth. No significant archaeological deposits or features were observed in either of the two pits.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Three Birches and Two Crosses lie about 8km west-southwest of Bishop's Castle in southwest Shropshire.

1.2 In May and June 2012 excavations were carried out on land at each of these sites (at NGR SO 2363 8584 and SO 2403 8651) for the erection of a wind turbine. The development sites were located within an area known to contain rare prehistoric field boundaries centered on the scheduled monument of Caer-Din Ring, a small enclosed Iron Age or Romano-British settlement, an adjacent ancient field boundary, round barrow and cultivation remains (National Monument No. 1021280). The development sites were therefore deemed to have a moderate level of archaeological potential.

1.3 Other scheduled ancient monuments within 2km include a small enclosed Iron Age or Romano-British settlement and adjacent cultivation remains, 450m north west of Cwm Farm (National Monument No. 1021279), the Lower Short Ditch (National Monument No. 1020563) and sections of Offa's Dyke (National Monument No. 1003246) over Edenhope Hill. Non designated heritage assets in the vicinity include several find spots of pre-historic worked flint (Shropshire Council Historic Environment Record [HER] Nos. 03064, 01971, 01966, 01945), a possible ring ditch (HER No. 01969) and an enclosure (HER No. 04770).

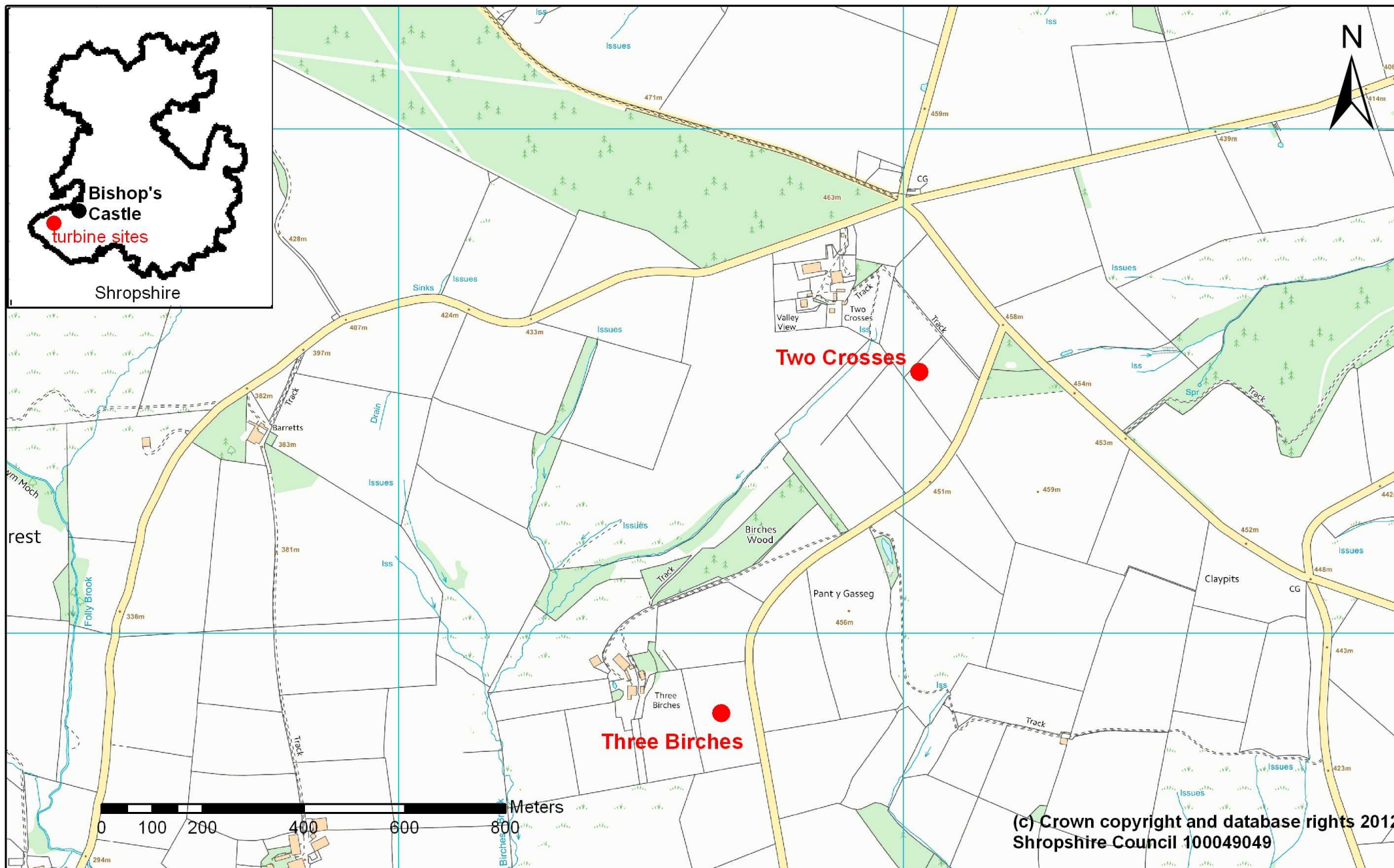
1.4 Because of the potential significance of the archaeological resource it was made a condition of the planning consent for the works that they be accompanied by a programme of archaeological work which should include a walk over survey prior to work commencing and a watching brief during any ground disturbance. The Archaeology Service, Shropshire Council, was commissioned to undertake the archaeological work.

1.5 The aim of the watching brief was to allow for the preservation by record of any archaeological remains that were encountered during the groundworks.

2 THE WATCHING BRIEF.

2.1 Three Birches The site for the turbine was under pasture and there were no visible earthwork features. A trench 5.5m by 5.5m square was excavated by machine to a depth of c. 1.4m (on the up-slope side of the trench). A topsoil of greyish brown loam 0.15m thick lay over a subsoil of brown silty loam 0.2m thick. These cultivation soils lay over natural deposits of light grey brown silt with stone fragments 0.4m thick, over grey silt with rock fragments 0.65m thick, over hard light grey clay bedrock. No significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

2.2 Two Crosses The site for the turbine was under pasture and there were no visible earthwork features. A trench 5.5m by 5.5m square was excavated by machine to a depth of c. 1.9m (on the up-slope side of the trench). A topsoil of dark brown sandy loam 0.3m thick lay over a subsoil 0.2m thick of brown sandy silty loam. These soils lay over natural deposits of compact grey clay 0.15m thick, over compact reddish brown clay 1.1m thick, over compact grey clay with rock fragments. No significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered.



*A Watching Brief on Excavations for Wind Turbine Bases at
Three Birches and Two Crosses, Newcastle, Shropshire*



Photo 1: The excavation for the turbine base at Three Birches, looking NW, scale bar 1m



Photo 2: The excavation for the turbine base at Two Crosses, looking NW