

Marches Archaeology

Proposed Track at Castlett Farm Guiting Power Gloucestershire

**A report on an
archaeological desk based assessment**

June 2005

Marches Archaeology Series 386

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**Proposed Track at
Castlett Farm
Guiting Power
Gloucestershire**

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NGR: SP 091 258

**Report by
Jo Wainwright**

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NGR: SP 091 258

**A report on an
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Summary

A desk based assessment along the route of a proposed track at Castlett Farm, Guiting Power, Gloucestershire revealed that the site is on the edge of a deserted medieval settlement registered on the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR 2221). Although the cartographic and photographic evidence indicated that no earthworks existed along the route of the track it is highly likely that they did exist and have, perhaps been subject to agrarian improvements.

Earth moving operations for the construction of a ménage, which the proposed track is to service, revealed a high density of medieval pottery suggesting that this area was not just utilised for agrarian purposes. Therefore it is highly likely that below ground medieval features and deposits exist in the area of the proposed track.

1 Introduction

A planning application has been submitted to the local planning authority for permission to provide an access road for a ménage (ref. 05/00666/FUL). The site is situated at NGR: SP 091 258 (Fig. 1).

The site is listed on the local Sites and Monuments Record as a site of archaeological interest being the site of a deserted medieval settlement (SMR 2221, Fig. 1). The Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor advised that further information was required before the archaeological implications of the application could be adequately assessed and recommended that an archaeological desk-based assessment be carried out.

The Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor produced no 'Brief for the works'. However, during a telephone conversation between the Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor and Marches Archaeology it was ascertained that the project should follow a standard brief with a contingency for an earthwork survey in the area of the proposed track. In an attempt to reduce the impact on the archaeological resource changes to the route of the proposed track have been proposed by the client and in a further conversation between the Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor and Marches Archaeology it was decided that no earthwork survey would be necessary for this project.

Hunter Page Planning, on behalf of the client, commissioned Marches Archaeology to provide the archaeological services required for this project.

2 Aims and objectives

The purpose of Desk-based Assessment is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as “to gain information about the known or potential archaeological resource within a given area or site (including presence or absence, character and extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and relative quality of the potential archaeological resource), in order to make an assessment of its merit in the appropriate context, leading to one or more of the following: the formation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource; the formation of a strategy for further investigation, whether or not intrusive, where the character and value of the resource is not sufficiently defined to permit a mitigation strategy or other response to be devised; the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research”.

3 Methodology

Initially a site visit was made and the Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record was consulted. Visits were made to the Gloucestershire Record Office and the Gloucester Reference Library. The following primary and secondary sources were considered:

Ordnance Survey maps; Tithe maps; Estate maps and other historical maps;
Previous published and unpublished archaeological reports and archive work;
Written non-archaeological sources; Air photographs; Geological maps;
Borehole and other engineering data.

4 Site description

Before the construction of the ménage the area of the proposed track was wholly within a field (Fig. 1). However, a temporary access route has been formed which runs from the ménage to the lane at the north-east (Plates 1-3). This area has been fenced off and hardcore laid over parts to provide a solid base for this access route. Several site accommodation units line this temporary track. The north-western route of the proposed track, parallel with the existing lane, is still under pasture (Plates 4-6). Here the field is under long grass and a wooden fence separates the field from the existing lane.

The land of the study area slopes down from about 190m O. D. in the north-east to about 180m O.D. in the south-west. To the west of the ménage the land slopes steeply down to a stream and a series of ponds. Although there are earthworks visible within the field of the proposed track none can be seen along the proposed route. One small tree which has a fence around it is situated at the northern end of the proposed track.

5 Archaeological and historical background

A dense scatter of Neolithic and Bronze Age worked flint about 1 kilometre to the south-west of the site attests that activity was taking place in the vicinity of the study area during this

time (SMR 14066, Fig. 1). A magnetometry survey of the area revealed below ground features which may represent structures, pits and ditches.

Settlement during the Iron Age was taking place about 400 metres to the west of the site at The Bowsings where an enclosure and domestic features have been partially excavated (SMR 14065 and 14644, Fig. 1). Further west at The Park another settlement site has been identified (SMR 2223, Fig. 1). Both these settlements continued as farmsteads or larger entities until at least the end of the Romano-British period. A further enclosure and settlement site has been partially excavated to the south of the study area at Guiting Manor Farm (SMR 2227, Fig. 1). As with The Bowsings and The Park settlement here continued into the Romano-British period. Therefore in the prehistoric period and the Romano-British period the area in the immediate vicinity of the site was settled and it is probable that the site itself was at least being utilised for agrarian purposes.

The place name Castlett is Old English and has the meaning 'cats valley'. Gelling suggests that OE *slaed* can mean a short valley which lacked the bowl-shaped end which might have suggested the terms *cumb* or *hop* (Gelling, 1984).

The first spelling of Castlett (*Cateslat*) is found in Domesday. The entry lists Castlett as a separate manor from Guiting Power. The entry is as follows.

*Alwin held it. 2 hides which pay tax. In lordship
2 ploughs; 4 slaves.
A mill at 5s.
The value was 40s; now 10s.* (Moore, 1982)

It was held after the conquest by William Goizenboded. Slaves are mentioned in Domesday and it is possible that Castlett was originally settled by slaves as a separate entity from the lord and the manorial complex (Dyer, 2002). Therefore there must have been some sort of settlement at Castlett before 1066.

Excavations at Guiting Power have uncovered grass tempered ware pottery which probably dates between the 6th to 9th centuries (Dyer, 2002). Parts of the defences of a later Saxon burh have been excavated as have the Saxo-Norman church at Guiting Power (Marshall, 1992).

The site itself lies in the north-eastern corner of a deserted medieval settlement complex (SMR 2221, Fig. 1). The SMR lists the site as being centred on NGR: SP 089 259 and consisting of about 14 house platforms and associated paddocks. The area is delineated by a hollow way and a low boundary bank in the north-east (SMR 2221). In the north-east and south-east more recent usage of the land has obliterated any further remains. A visit to the site revealed that the area was under pasture and the earthworks to the north-west of the proposed track were very obvious. In the area of the proposed track no earthworks were visible but the length of the grass and the formation of the temporary access route in this area may be shielding any earthworks if they exist (Plates 1-6). The boundary bank and hollow way may have extended as far east as the proposed track and it cannot be discounted that other earthworks exist in the area.

Professor Christopher Dyer visited the site in December 2004 whilst the ménage was being constructed and much medieval pottery including oolitic tempered ware and two sherds of Brill jugs were observed in the ground disturbed by the earth-moving operation (SMR 2221).

Oolithic tempered ware (Gloucester Type Fabric 41) dates from the late 9th century until the 13th century and the Brill jugs sherds probably date from the late 13th century to the 14th century (pers. comm. S Rátkai).

Earthworks situated to the west of the deserted settlement have been identified as cultivation terraces dating from the ?12th-14th century (SMR 4289, Fig. 1). Marshall suggests that they may have been constructed for a specialised crop, perhaps vines, as terraces are usually constructed when there is sparse level ground which is not the scenario here as there is ample level ground in the vicinity (Marshall, 1992). These terraces could be associated with the settlement at Castlett but it has been argued that they may have been constructed as a distinct planned project serving the manor rather than the village community (*op cit*). The terraces were abandoned sometime in probably the later medieval period.

By 1381, after the Black Death of 1348-9, Castlett was reduced to a single household (Dyer, 2002). Presumably the settlement became deserted shortly after this date. The abandonment of the terraces to the west of the settlement and the absence of later medieval pottery recovered from earth-moving operations when the ménage was constructed appear to support a 15th century date for abandonment.

The earliest map evidence for the area is the 1840 Tithe Map for the Hamlet of Castlett (Fig. 2). However, the site of the proposed track and deserted medieval settlement are not shown. Presumably this area was not titheable. However, a 1869 Map of the Manor of Castlett taken from sale particulars does show the site (Fig. 3). The southern arm of the proposed track is within an area of trees known as the Fir Plantation and the western arm is within a parcel of land called Shepherds Close. The earthworks of the deserted medieval settlement are not shown but a line of trees running east to west in the north of the field may delineate the low boundary bank. A building is shown in the centre of the field as is a copse of trees.

The 1881 First Edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch Plan shows the fir plantation and the line of trees in the north of the field (Fig. 4). Although the line of trees in the north are shown as being slightly closer to the hedge than on the 1869 plan they must be the same trees. The building and copse of trees in the centre of the field are not shown or have disappeared by this time. A small building is shown directly to the south-east of the proposed track. The 1883 first Edition Ordnance survey 6 inch Plan shows no difference from the 1881 plan (not illustrated). The 1902 second Edition Ordnance Survey Plan shows a boundary where the Fir Plantation was but the trees have disappeared as have the trees in the north of the field (Fig. 5). The small building shown to the south-east of the proposed track on the 1881 Plan has had additions made to it.

The 1920s Ordnance Survey 25 inch Plan shows the same detail as the 1902 plan except there is no division between the area of the fir plantation and the field (Fig. 6). The 1955 Ordnance Survey 6 inch Plan shows no change to the 1920s plan (not illustrated).

Aerial photographs from the 1940s do not show the earthworks of the deserted settlement well. A 1973 photograph shows the earthworks but it is difficult to make out any actual form to these earthworks (Plate 7). The division between the plantation and the field is visible and the area where the plantation was situated appears to be a yard or at least not under pasture. No earthworks can be made out along the route of the proposed track.

The 1977 Ordnance Survey 1:1250 plan shows little change in the area of the proposed track from the 1920s plan but the building shown to the south-east of the track has disappeared

(Fig. 7). However, the earthworks of the deserted settlement have been surveyed in. The plan shows the hollow way and low boundary bank but they do not continue as far as the area of the proposed track. However, these earthworks may have continued eastwards but in this area they have been disturbed by perhaps agricultural activity.

6 Discussion

There has been human activity in the vicinity of the site from at least the Neolithic period onwards. In the Iron Age and Romano-British periods settlement close to the site was taking place. It is possible that similar settlement was taking place in the area of the proposed track. However, it is likely that the site was being utilised for agrarian purposes only during this period.

A settlement is recorded at Castlett in Domesday and it is possible that this settlement was in existence during the later Anglo-Saxon period. It seems probable that if such an entity existed it would be situated where the later medieval settlement was sited.

The proposed track lies within the deserted medieval settlement of Castlett which was abandoned probably in the 15th century. Although the main focus of this settlement appears to be west of the site it is highly likely that activity was taking place in this area. Indeed the line of a hollow way and low boundary bank are likely to cross the proposed track and other below ground features may exist in the area.

No earthworks were visible during a visit to the site but the north-western arm and part of the south-western arm of the proposed track was covered in quite long grass which restricted the identification of such features. The rest of the south-western arm of the proposed track is utilised as a temporary access route and hardcore has been laid down. Several site accommodation units line this temporary track further reducing the ability to spot any anomalies on the ground. It is also possible that this part of the deserted settlement has been subject to agrarian improvements which may have levelled any above ground features.

No earthworks were visible on maps or aerial photographs for the area of the ménage but excavations revealed a high density of medieval pottery suggesting that this area was not just utilised for agrarian purposes. Therefore, below ground features and deposits are likely to exist in the area of the proposed track.

7 Conclusions

Although the site is probably on the peripheries of the deserted medieval settlement below ground features and deposits associated with the complex are highly likely to exist in the area of the proposed track. The cartographic and photographic evidence indicated that no earthworks existed along the route of the track but it is highly likely that they did exist and have, perhaps been subject to agrarian improvements.

Earth moving operations for the construction of the ménage, which is also on the edge of the settlement, uncovered quantities of medieval pottery which suggests settlement and not just a scattering for manuring.

The proposed impact levels for the development are about 300mm below the present ground surface and medieval deposits and features may be encountered at this depth. In the area of the temporary access route it is not clear how much overburden, if any, was removed for the construction of this route. Therefore in this area it is possible that more than 300mm will be removed.

8 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Neil Hodson, the architect for the project, for his cooperation during the project.

9 References

Abbreviations

RO: Gloucestershire Record Office Accession Number

NMR: National Monuments Record

SMR: Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record

Maps

1840 Tithe Map for the Hamlet of Castlett (RO PC 1812/88)

1869 Map of the Manor of Castlett taken from sale particulars for the Manor of Castlett (RO D6432 2/4)

1881 First Edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch Plan, Gloucestershire Sheet XXI. 13

1883 First Edition Ordnance Survey 6 inch Plan

1902 Second Edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch Plan, Gloucestershire Sheet XXI. 13

1920s Ordnance Survey 25 inch Plan, Gloucestershire Sheet XXI. 13

1955 Ordnance Survey 6 inch Plan

1977 Ordnance Survey 1:1,250 Plan

1979 Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 Plan

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1842 Tithe Map apportionment (RO PC 1812/88)

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Aerial Photographs

All held at the NMR

1 April 1946, Film Number RAF/106G/UK/1347, Frame Number 5176
1 April 1946, Film Number RAF/106G/UK/1347, Frame Number 5314
14 May 1948, Film Number RAF/541/17, Frame Number 3007
14 May 1948, Film Number RAF/541/17, Frame Number 3008
14 May 1948, Film Number RAF/541/17, Frame Number 3009
14 June 1973, Film Number OS/73288, Frame Number 75
14 June 1973, Film Number OS/73288, Frame Number 76
20 July 1983, Film and Frame Number 2145/0159
20 July 1983, Film and Frame Number 2145/0160
20 July 1983, Film and Frame Number 2145/0161

10 Archive

The site code is CFG05A. The archive consists of:

- 1 sheet of notes
- 1 photo record sheet
- 1 set of CD pictures

This report

The archive is currently held by Marches Archaeology awaiting transfer to an appropriate museum.

Appendix I: List of SMR sites in the vicinity

<i>SMR Number</i>	<i>Site/activity</i>	<i>Grid Ref</i>
<i>Prehistoric and or Romano-British</i>		
2223	The Park- Iron Age settlement	408310 225840
2227	Guiting Manor Farm-Iron Age settlement	408920 225000
14065	The Bowsings, enclosure	408550 225850
14066	Bull Piece, flint scatter	408200 225100
14644	Trapeziodal enclosure	408600 225800
<i>Medieval</i>		
2221	Deserted settlement at Castlett Farm	408900 225900
4289	Cultivation terraces west of Castlett Farm	404830 226050
<i>Post-medieval</i>		
2220	Earthworks at the Manor House	408040 225850