

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

WATCHING BRIEF AT WHILTON LODGE,
DAVENTRY,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

S. ANN 3761 .
NILITIA

Layers is
"Observed"
Reel hatching / Stock
Boundary.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY
JANUARY 1999

WATCHING BRIEF AT WHILTON LODGE,
DAVENTRY,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

WATCHING BRIEF AT WHILTON LODGE, DAVENTRY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Abstract

A temporary road corridor revealed an area of cobbling, pits and a ditch of Roman date to the north of the walled town of Banaventa, east of the Watling Street.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In order to replace a railway bridge over the Grand Union Canal, a temporary road had to be constructed to enable access for heavy lifting machinery from the nearest trunkroad (Fig 1, NGR: SP 609 561).
651
- 1.2 This comprised a six metre wide track of compacted hardcore laid on geotextile membrane in a shallow trench. The contractors, Gallifords, suggested that this could be done by the removal of topsoil only and so minimise the risk to any underlying archaeology.
- 1.3 Northamptonshire Heritage requested that the topsoil stripping should be carried out under archaeological control both during the removal of the soil, and later, when the temporary road was removed prior to re-instatement.
- 1.4 Northamptonshire Archaeology maintained a watching brief between December 1997 and April 1998 during the removal of the topsoil, and while the hardcore was removed prior to re-instatement.
- 1.5 The objectives of the work were to record any features that the topsoil stripping might uncover, and to determine their extent, date and character if possible. Where features were found they were not to be excavated but recorded in plan only.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site of the temporary road lies approximately 250m to the north of the Roman town of Banaventa, and to the east of Watling Street (Fig 1). Identified from the Itinerary of Antoninus, the existence of Roman occupation has been known about since the eighteenth century when 'the stones of ruined walls and the like have been ploughed or dugged up and amongst the ruins some pieces of Roman money' (Morton, 1712, 532).
- 2.2 The town appears to have grown up along the line of the Roman Watling Street and was subsequently provided with defences enclosing an area of 4-4.5 hectares (RCHM 1981,150-2, Dix and Taylor 1988,299-339)
- 2.3 Various finds have been made in the surrounding area, including remains at Thrupp Lodge approximately 600 m to the north-west, but little was previously known of the pasture fields crossed by the temporary road.

3. OBSERVATIONS

- 3.1 The temporary road was started from the present A5 and comprised a wide V shaped flared entrance narrowing to 6m for the majority of the length of the road (Fig 1). Between the road and the adjacent hedge modern disturbance had removed any archaeological remains.
- 3.2 To the east of the hedge, the ground falls gently for approximately 30m and then is relatively flat for another 100-110m before dropping more steeply to the east until it reaches the bottom of the valley.
- 3.3 At the base of the first slope an area of cobbling (Fig 1, 5) was revealed at the time of the removal of the hardcore. It consisted of an area approximately 4.0m X 2.0m lying along the southern side of the temporary road and truncated by it. Comprising large bunter pebbles and flints (up to 350mm) with a

coarse orange gravel between, it appeared to be a single thickness. Three shallow depressions may have been post settings but whether contemporary or later is unknown, and no associated structural elements were uncovered. A single piece of Roman brick was found amongst the cobbling, along with iron nails.

- 3.4 Across this flat area three pits and a ditch were observed cutting into the natural gravels beneath the topsoil (Fig 1, 1-4).
- 3.5 Pottery was recovered from three of the features along with some roof tile and a single coin.
- 3.6 From the point where the land falls away to the east more steeply, as far as the railway bridge at the bottom of the valley, there were no archaeological features of any date.

4. THE POTTERY

- 4.1 The pottery dates from the late first to the third/fourth centuries and consists of a collection of local, non-local and imported domestic wares which parallel some of the second to third century forms recovered during the excavations at Whilton Lodge in 1970-71 (MacRobert in Dix and Taylor).
- 4.2 Unlike earlier excavations at Banaventa there are no diagnostically early grog tempered wares, rather local greywares predominate together with smaller quantities of shell-gritted, soft-pink-grog, black-burnished type and colour coated wares from the Nene valley.
- 4.3 Greyware forms include channel rimmed jars, necked jars, indented beakers, a poppy head beaker and pie and dog dishes with acute lattice, barbotine dots and burnished grooves being the main forms of decoration. Other forms include a handmade black-burnished ware (BB1) dog dish with incised line decoration (Marney 1989, fig 48, 6), shell gritted jars and colour coated indented beakers from the Nene valley.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dix, B. and Taylor, S. 1998, Excavations at Bannaventa (Whilton Lodge, Northants 1970-71, Britannia, 19, 299-339

Marney, PT, 1989 Roman and Belgic Pottery from excavations in Milton Keynes 1972-82, Bucks Archaeol Soc Mongr Ser No2

Morton, J, 1712 The natural history of Northamptonshire with some account of the antiquities

RCHM, 1981 Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Northampton; 3: Archaeological Sites in North West Northamptonshire

Tyers, P 1996 Roman Pottery in Britain

Webster, P, 1996 Roman Samian Pottery in Britain, Practical Handbooks in Archaeology No 13, CBA

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig 1 Site location

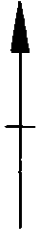
Fig 2 Archaeological features

Project Manager:	Steve Parry, MA MIFA
Fieldwork and text:	Joe Prentice
Illustration:	Alex Thorne, BSc MAAIS AIFA
Finds:	Tora Hylton

Northamptonshire Archaeology
A service of the Northamptonshire County Council
Environment Directorate 26 January 1999

611

614



650

Temporary Road

A5

646

Watling Street

Bannaventa



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence No LA D76767 Published 1/99

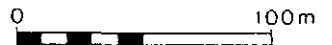


Fig. 1

Temporary Road

Stone Spread 5

Pit 1 Pit 2 Pit 3 Ditch 4



Author PRENTICE J Date 1999
Title WATCHING BRIEF AT WHILTON LODGE,
DAVENTRY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
Series parish = Long Buckby Volume

SIMR Ref NN43761



**Northamptonshire
County Council**
Environment Directorate

Northamptonshire Archaeology
2 Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton NN4 8BE

Tel: 01604 700493/4
Fax: 01604 702822

Class-3.00
Book-5650