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## **Southampton Archaeology Unit**

Report 898

### **Archaeological Watching Brief at Golf Driving Range, Burrfields Road, Portsmouth PORMG:2008/124**

By GL Elliott & MF Garner

2009

Client: Portsmouth Golf Centre



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Cover photo: Golf course looking north-west

## **Summary Statement**

### **Planning Reference 08/00480/FUL, GR SU 673 019**

The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Golf Driving Range, Burrfields Road, Portsmouth on behalf of Portsmouth Golf Centre. This was carried out prior to the erection of a new fence. The area around Langstone harbour has revealed extensive prehistoric activity and Edward's map of Portsea dated 1716 and Milne's map published in 1791 show that the area of the driving range was part of an extensive saltern.

The watching brief revealed no natural or ancient deposits – all deposits and finds were modern. The watching brief showed that modern deposits on the west side of the driving range were at least 1m thick. This area was used for rubbish disposal in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Archaeologically significant deposits may survive below the modern deposits.

## **Archaeological Watching Brief at Golf Driving Range, Burrfields Road, Portsmouth (PORMG:2008/124)**

By GL Elliott BA MPhil and MF Garner BA AIFA

Site code	PORMG:2008/124
Planning Reference	08/00480/FUL
Grid reference	SU 673 019
Accession Number	PORMG:2008/124
Archaeology Unit report	898

### **1. Summary**

The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Golf Driving Range, Burrfields Road, Portsmouth on behalf of Portsmouth Golf Centre on 4 June 2008. This was carried out prior to the erection of a new fence along the western edge of the site and was intended to look for evidence of prehistoric activity and the salterns as seen on maps from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The work revealed no natural or ancient deposits – all deposits and finds were modern. The watching brief showed that modern deposits on the west side of the driving range were at least 1m thick. This area was used for rubbish disposal in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Archaeologically significant deposits may survive below the modern deposits.

### **2. Introduction**

The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Golf Driving Range, Burrfields Road, Portsmouth (Fig 1) on behalf of Portsmouth Golf Centre. Portsmouth City Council gave conditional consent for the erection of a new fence along the western edge of the site. The watching brief was conducted according to the Portsmouth City Council specification (PCC 2007).

Observations were made by G Thompson on 4 June 2008. The project was managed by MF Garner, and this report was edited by AD Russel.



**Figure 1 Location of the site (red star) on the east side of Portsea Island.**  
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### **3. Historical and Archaeological Background**

The site is located in the southern part of Local Area of Archaeological Importance 12 (PCC 2006, 13). This area 'covers the northern part of the shore of Langstone Harbour. Work in the harbour itself has revealed extensive prehistoric activity likely to

extend into this area. Later it includes the northern part of the extensive salterns on the shore of Langstone Harbour. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century there were 40 acres of salterns at “Portsey”, extended to 100 acres by the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. The salterns are shown on a map of 1678. The area was used for salt production from the prehistoric period onwards’ (*idem*). ‘No recent investigations have taken place in the area’ (*idem*).

The shoreline has been used for food collection, settlement, and salt production for millennia. The area of the driving range was part of an extensive saltern shown on Edward’s map of Portsea dated 1716 and Milne’s map published in 1791 (Fig 2). The fringes of Langstone and Portsmouth Harbours have been used for salt production since the prehistoric period. Parts of the area were used for rubbish disposal in more recent times.

Surveys along the shoreline have recorded flint of Mesolithic and Neolithic date and pottery distributions (Allen and Gardiner 2000).

#### **4. Aims and Objectives**

The aim of the work was ‘to determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within the area of groundworks’ (SCC 2008, 2). ‘Any such remains [were to] be recorded and artefacts recovered’ (*idem*).

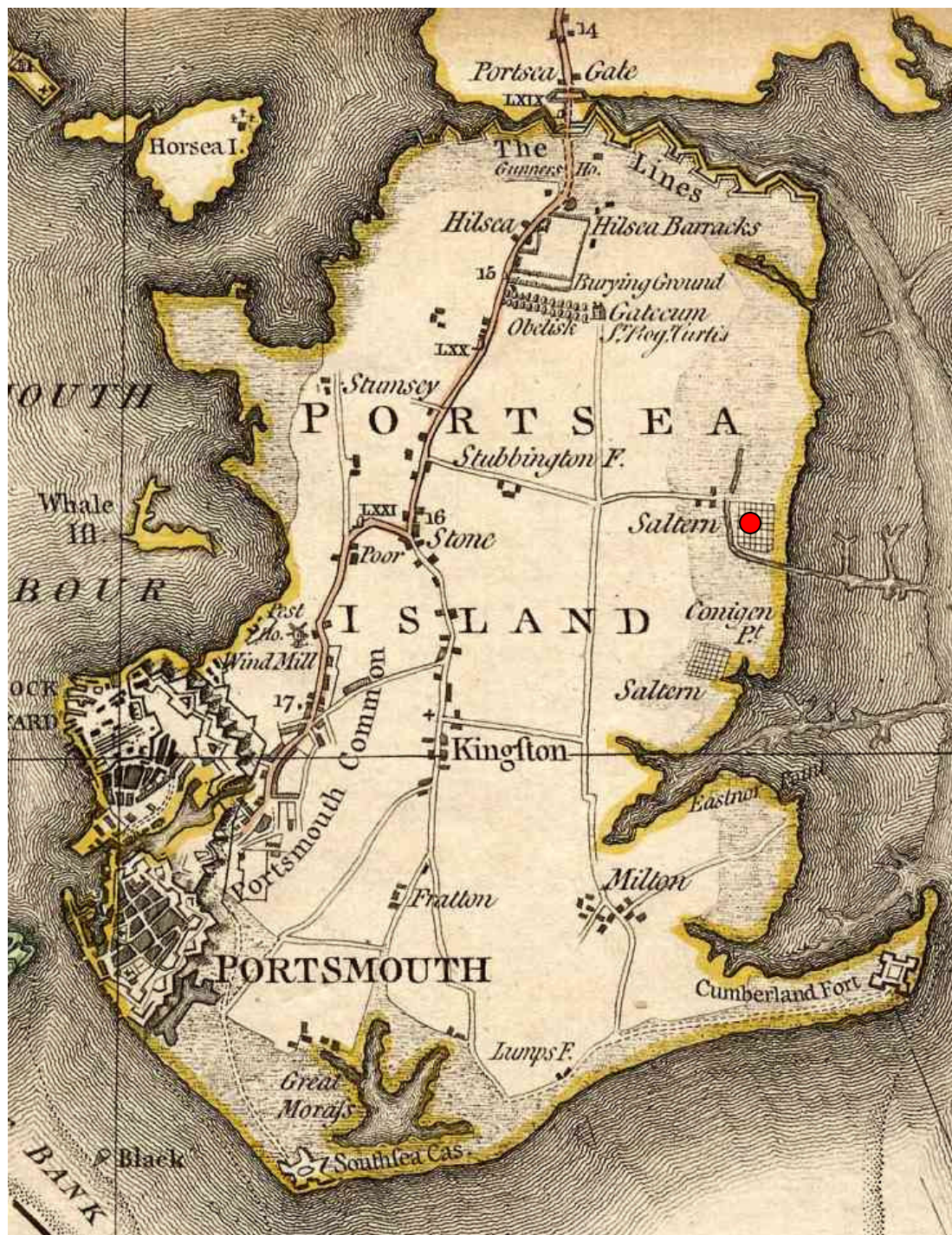
#### **5. Site Location and Topography**

Portsmouth Golf Centre is on the east side of Portsea Island in Portsmouth. It is bounded by Burrfields Road to the north, Eastern Road to the east, and Great Salterns Lake to the south and west. The site is on the west side of Portsmouth Golf Centre (Fig 3).

Immediately to the west of the site is Great Salterns Lake, which flows into Langstone Harbour. The area is protected from the sea on the east by an embankment and Eastern Road runs along the landward side of the embankment. A spot height on Eastern Road is 1.2m OD. A spot height on Burrfields Road is 0.3m OD and the ground slopes down to the west.



Portsea Island has *River terrace and aeolian deposits* ('Brickearth'; mainly loam and clay) above *River terrace deposits number 2* (BGS 1994). The site is shown as *made ground with marine and estuarine alluvium* to the north and *marine beach and tidal flat deposits* to the east (*idem*).

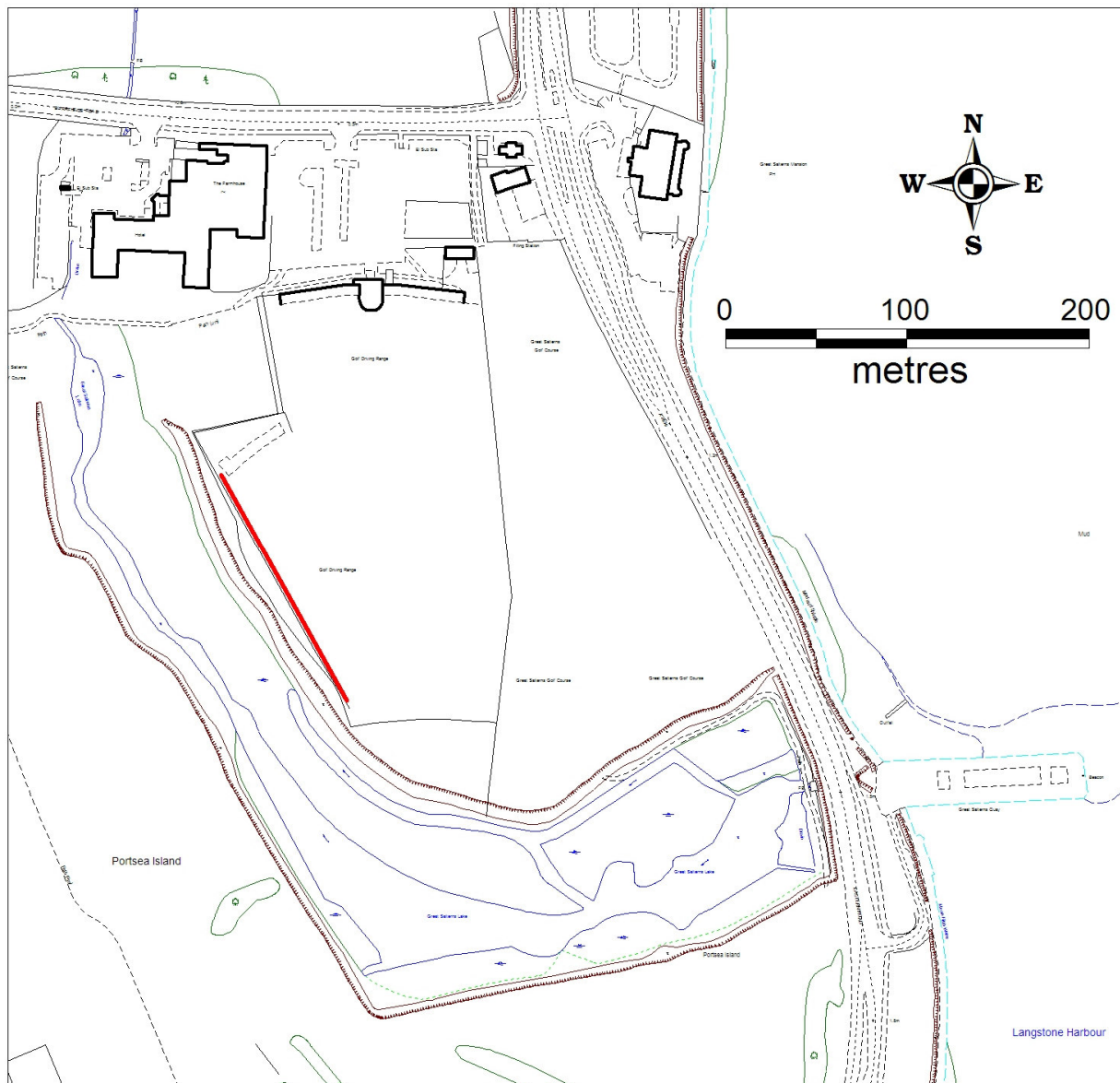


**Figure 2** Extract of map by Milne, published in 1791, showing salterns in relation to the position of the site (red dot).



## 6. Fieldwork Methodology

Post-holes, 1m deep and with a diameter of 0.5m, were excavated by auger. A total of fifteen post-holes were observed on the west side of the driving range before observations ceased. The watching brief ceased when it became clear that the new fence was only going to disturb a 20<sup>th</sup> century rubbish dump. Contexts were recorded using the Southampton City Council Archaeology Recording system. The colours of deposits were recorded using the Munsell Soil Color Chart and these are used in this report (Munsell Color 2000). Contexts were numbered 1–2. Finds were recovered.



**Figure 3 Location of the observed stretch of new fence (red line).**

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## **7. Results**

Stones refer to naturally occurring flint pebbles. All post-holes revealed the same deposits.

### **7.1 Modern Deposits (layers 1 and 2)**

The earliest deposit exposed was a layer (2) of moderately stony, firm, very dark greyish brown, silt loam. It had common roots and a few worm-holes, and was at least 0.86m thick. Layer 2 contained glass bottles and jars (including ones for *BOVRIL* (patented 1886) and *MILK OF MAGNESIA* (patented 1871)) and fragments of china crockery and a figurine.

Above layer 2 was a layer (1) of topsoil and grass that was 0.14m thick. It was stoneless, humic, friable, very dark greyish brown, silt loam with abundant roots and a few worm-holes. No cultural material was observed but the boundary between the two layers was diffuse.

## **8. Conclusion**

No natural or ancient deposits were exposed by groundworks – all deposits and finds were modern. The watching brief showed that modern deposits on the west side of the driving range were at least 1m thick. This area had been used for rubbish disposal in recent times. Archaeologically significant deposits may survive below the modern deposits.

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