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Parish 1015

Rec'd 13/09/2006

THE BRIGANTIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRACTICE



**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING at the  
PLAYING FIELDS, LEEMING LANE,  
CATTERICK, NORTH YORKSHIRE**

(SE 23622 98642)

**A report to Richmondshire District Council**



11th September 2006

**N. Y. C. C.**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

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***ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING at the  
PLAYING FIELDS, LEEMING LANE,  
CATTERICK,  
(RICHMONDSHIRE DISTRICT)  
NORTH YORKSHIRE***

**(SE 23622 98642)**

**In connection with Planning Consent 1/15/325/FUL**

**A report to Richmondshire District Council**

**Fieldwork: Percival Turnbull & Deborah Walsh**

**Report: Percival Turnbull**

**11th September 2006**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING at the  
PLAYING FIELDS, LEEMING LANE,  
CATTERICK, NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**PLANNING BACKGROUND**

1. On instructions from Richmondshire District Council, a programme of archaeological monitoring was devised and implemented in connection with a scheme of improvement and expansion to public playing fields off Leeming Lane, Catterick. This work was carried out under the provision of planning consent 1/15/325/FUL, and particularly to an archaeological condition (Condition 7) attached to the consent.
2. A Written Scheme of Investigation for the archaeological work was provided by the office of the County Archaeologist, and is dated 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2006. This provided for:
  - (i) Supervision of the initial removal of topsoil over the area of proposed ground reduction down to the top of archaeological deposits, or the depth to be affected by development, whichever appears first.
  - (ii) A controlled programme of archaeological excavation and recording over the area thus exposed where archaeological features and finds are revealed.
3. The second part of this process is, plainly, dependant on something being brought to light by the first.

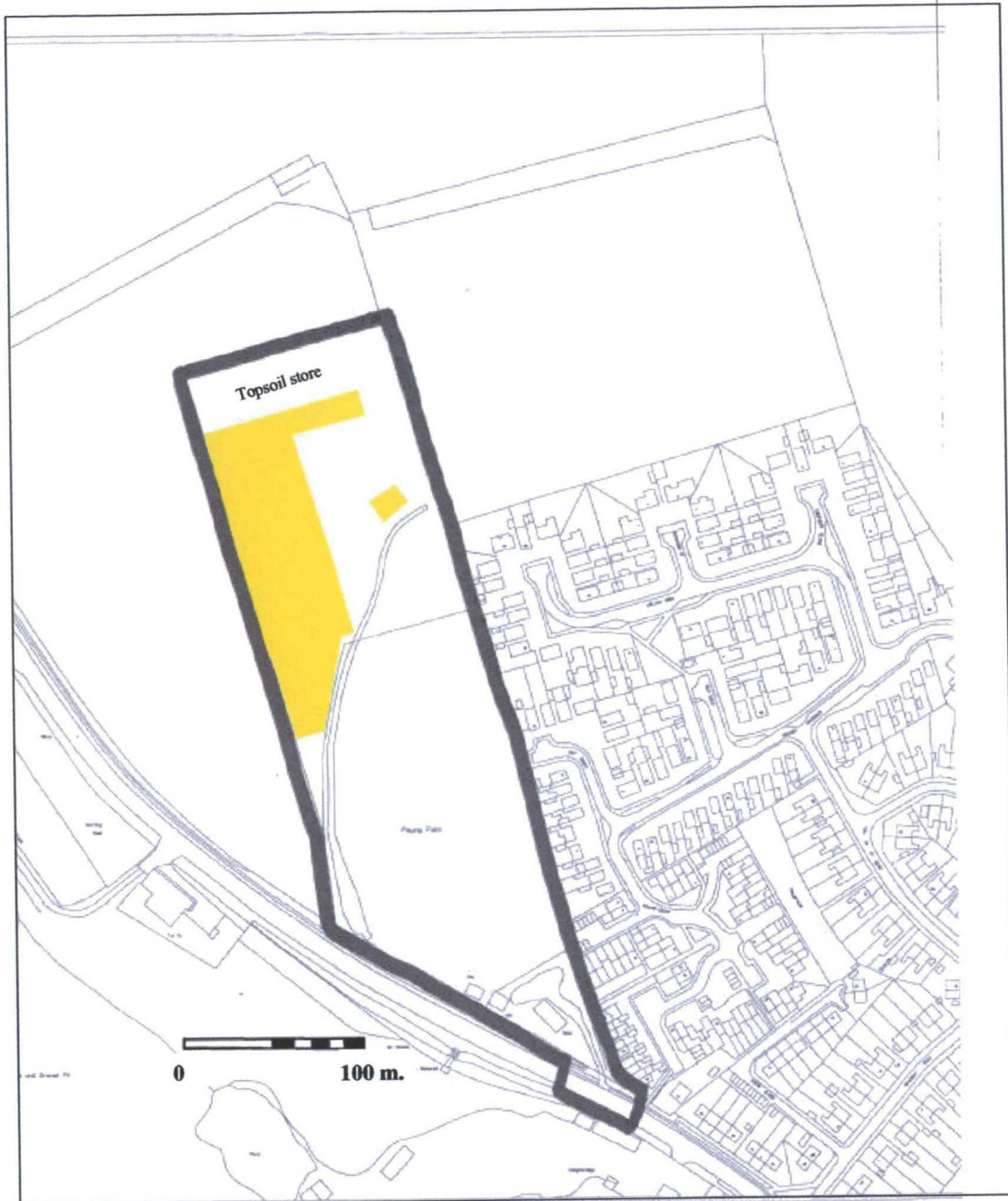
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

4. The site is located (Fig. 1) at the northern end of Catterick village, well away from the mediaeval core of Catterick itself but within a wider landscape of considerable archaeological importance and complexity. The topography of Roman Catterick and its environs has been delineated by Peter Wilson (*Cataractonium: Roman Catterick and its hinterland*. CBA Research report 128-9, 2002): nothing is known on or immediately adjacent to the site now under consideration, and the Dere Street Roman road, the main axis of Roman activity, passes some way to the west, through the area of Pallett Hill Quarry. Finds made on the site by users of metal detectors appear to include a small amount of Roman material, but they seem to be no more than the 'background noise' which one would expect in an area peripheral to one of fairly intensive Roman activity. There is a 'marching camp' a couple of hundred metres to the north of the site. The Catterick area also includes important prehistoric and Anglian settlement and burial sites.
5. The southern edge of the part of the site to be stripped and landscaped is marked by a fairly steep bank, which becomes less pronounced to the east and which peters out close to the eastern edge of the arable field. To the west, it curves progressively to the south and becomes part of a substantial embankment along the side of Leeming Lane (Fig. 2). It seems fairly clear that this bank marks the edge of a palaeochannel, representing an early course of the Swale: there is, however, nothing to suggest that it dates from recent times (from the last couple of millennia, for

instance). The bank has certainly been modified, perhaps by digging into it for the sand and gravel which are accessible as bands of colluvial material visible in the side of the bank.

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

6. Initial scanning with a metal detector revealed nothing but modern ferrous rubbish.
7. Topsoil was stripped by a large 360<sup>0</sup> tracked excavator, fitted with a broad edentulous bucket: it was then carried to a topsoil store at the northern end of the site. Initially, the strip left small peaks of subsoil, though a clean strip was quickly achieved (Fig. 3): at all points it was clear that any archaeological features- including backfilled cut ditches, pits *etc.*- would have been clearly visible. A very close and constant watch was maintained throughout, the removal of every bucketful of soil being monitored. Spoilheaps were checked during breaks in stripping.
8. A sandy loam topsoil was spread over the entire field, progressively varying from an average thickness of circa 20 cms at the northern end of the field to about 32 cms at the southern edge of the stripped area: the difference may be explained entirely in terms of soil creep on the natural slope under an arable regime. At the base of the topsoil was a paler sandy subsoil, effectively a zone of interface between the topsoil and the natural gravel and sand; this 'subsoil' had a constant thickness of 5 cms.
9. Loose finds were confined to a very small quantity (12 sherds in total) of mediaeval and early modern pottery. All but one of the sherds was small and abraded, and typical of material brought onto an arable field by manuring; the exception was a 10 cm. piece of a post-mediaeval platter, found in the former hedgeline at the south-west corner of the site. A single small flint nodule, bearing traces of a bulb of percussion, was also recovered.
10. Archaeological features were confined to land drains, containing modern brick and tile and plainly of recent date.
11. At the end of a wholly fruitless week of monitoring, a site visit by the County Archaeologist was arranged, and the scheme reviewed. As a result, after stripping of a further sample area on the brow of the bank towards the south of the site (visible in Fig. 1 as a discrete rectangular area), again with negative results, operations were concluded.
12. It was evident that this field has for a long time suffered considerable erosion by the plough; sufficient, perhaps, to destroy some evanescent archaeological features, but the virtually total absence of significant pottery or flint is a very strong indication that the field has never contained anything of archaeological significance.



**Catterick Playing Fields**

**Fig.1**

**Location, showing site boundary (black) and area monitored (yellow)**



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**Catterick Playing Fields**

**Fig.2**

**View to south-west, showing bank along edge of site**



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**Catterick Playing Fields**

**Fig.3**

**Typical stripped surface**



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**Catterick Playing Fields**

**Fig.4**

**View across site, looking north**



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