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**A63 Selby Bypass**  
**Trial-Trenching**

*Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit*



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Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit  
Project No 827 03  
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**A63 Selby Bypass  
Trial-Trenching**

by  
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# A63 Selby Bypass, Trial-Trenching

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## A63 SELBY BYPASS TRIAL-TRENCHING

### 1 0 SUMMARY

Archaeological trial trenching was carried out at three sites in August 2001 by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit in advance of the new A63 Selby Bypass North Yorkshire (centered on NGR SE 602300 and NGR SE 635330). The work was commissioned by Skanska Construction Limited. The work followed a staged archaeological assessment, geophysical survey, fieldwalking and palaeoenvironmental sampling of the River Ouse Valley. Geophysical anomalies were tested by trenching. No features of archaeological, or possible archaeological interest were identified.

Other work undertaken in advance of bypass construction included building recording, watching brief and salvage recording, reported on separately.

### 2 0 INTRODUCTION (Figs 1-3)

This report describes the results of archaeological fieldwork undertaken at three sites along the route of the new A63 Selby Bypass North Yorkshire (centered on NGR SE 602300 and NGR SE 635330) in August 2001. The work was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) and was commissioned by Skanska Construction Limited in advance of the construction of the Selby Bypass. Other, preliminary work on the scheme has included an archaeological assessment, geophysical survey and fieldwalking, reported in summary form in the Archaeological Assessment prepared by BHWB in August (BHWB 2000). Other work undertaken by BUFAU has comprised building recording, archaeological watching brief and salvage recording, separately reported together with the results of palaeoenvironmental investigations undertaken by the University of Hull.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with an Indicative Specification for Trial Trenching prepared by BHWB (BHWB 2001) and a Project Design prepared by BUFAU (BUFAU 2001) approved by North Yorkshire County Council. More generally, the trial trenching was undertaken in accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994).

The site archive is currently held at BUFAU. It will be deposited with an appropriate repository, subject to the approval of the landowner.

### 3 0 LOCATION

The A63 Selby bypass runs from Thorpe Willoughby in the west to Barlby in the north. The route passes to the south of Brayton village and Selby itself (Figs 1-3). Three areas were targeted for trial trenching (Figs 2, 4 and 7).

Area B2 – This area lies to the east of the A19 to the south of Barlby village (NGR SE 634332) This area lies adjacent to a pig and poultry farm This field was in arable cultivation at the time of the trenching

Area B3 – This area lies immediately to the south of Area B2 and to the north of the Leeds York railway line (NGR SE 634329) This field was in arable cultivation

Area S2 – This area lies to the south of Brayton village on the east side of the A19 road and north of the Selby Canal (NGR SE 598298) The field was in arable cultivation

## **4 0 BACKGROUND**

Previous work undertaken has comprised

- Staged archaeological assessment undertaken by BHWB following previous assessment by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit and Northern Archaeological Associates
- Geophysical Survey undertaken on two areas to the north and south of the A19 road, and in the Area of Site 19 undertaken by GeoQuest Associates followed by the excavation of test pits to verify the identification of features identified by geophysical survey
- Fieldwalking was to the south of Brayton Barff to test for the presence of mesolithic activity Previous fieldwalking by Northern Archaeological Associates adjoining Staynor Hall located no finds concentrations of archaeological significance within the ploughsoil
- Palaeoenvironmental sampling in the area of the River Ouse Valley undertaken by the University of Hull

## **5 0 OBJECTIVES**

The aims and methodology of the evaluation were set down in an Indicative Specification (BHWB 2001) The main objectives of the trial trenching were

- To test the anomalies identified by geophysical survey
- To identify any previously unknown archaeological features
- To define the extent complexity, date and significance of any archaeological features identified
- To assess the significance of any identified archaeological features at a local or national level
- To determine the level of mitigation fieldwork which might be required before bypass construction

## 6 0 METHODOLOGY

The layers of topsoil and subsoil were removed with the use of a JCB excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket working under archaeological supervision to expose the natural subsoil which was tested as appropriate with machine cut and hand cleaned sondages. Subsequent excavation of archaeological deposits was carried out by hand. Recording was carried out using pre printed *pro forma* record cards for contexts and features supplemented by plans (at 1:20 and 1:50) sections (at 1:10 and 1:20) and monochrome print and colour shade photography. The trenches were located using a total station EDM.

Trenches B2/1, S2/1 and S2/2 were located to test linear and curvilinear geophysical anomalies. Trench B3/1 was located to examine a roughly circular geophysical anomaly thought to represent a kiln or hearth. The anomalies identified in Area S2 were of uncertain origin as noted in the survey report because of the difficult ground conditions. Other geophysical anomalies identified interpreted as palaeochannels were not tested by trenching.

## 7 0 RESULTS

### Trench B2/1 (Figs 4 & 6 Plate 1)

This trench was excavated on a roughly northwest southeast alignment and was 50m in length.

The earliest deposit encountered in the trench was a natural dark brown woody peat layer (1008) which was tested in a machine cut and hand cleaned sondage at the northwestern end of the trench. The base of this deposit was not reached. Overlying this deposit was a layer natural orange brown clay (1007) measuring approximately 0.25m deep and exposed over the whole length of the trench. Layer 1007 was cut by a modern field boundary and two field drains. Overlying layer 1007 was a mixed blue grey clay (1006) measuring approximately 0.2m deep which was in turn sealed by a dark brown silty clay topsoil (1005) measuring approximately 0.3m deep.

No features of archaeological interest were identified and no finds were recovered from this trench.

The main roughly east west aligned geophysical anomaly tested by the trench corresponded with a field drain located towards the northwestern end of the trench and the parallel field boundary further to the southeast may be similarly interpreted.

### Trench B3/1 (Figs 4 and 6 Plate 2)

This trench was excavated on a north south alignment and measured 20m in length.

The earliest deposit located was a natural dark brown woody peat layer (1004) which was tested by a combination of machine and hand excavation in a sondage cut to a further depth of 0.5m at the northern end of the trench. The base of this deposit was

not reached. Overlying this deposit was a natural blue-grey clay (1003) measuring approximately 0.3m deep. This layer was overlain by a dark brown silty clay topsoil (1002) approximately 0.35m deep.

No features, or possible features were identified in this trench and no finds were collected.

#### Trench S2/1 (Figs 5-7 Plate 3)

This trench was excavated on a northeast-southwest alignment and was 50m in length.

The natural subsoil, an orange and brown sand (1001) was located at a depth of 0.35m. Two features were recorded, both cutting the subsoil. A small circular feature (F100) approximately 0.3m in diameter and 0.15m deep was located at the northeastern end of the trench. This was filled with a loose brown silt (1011) with fragments of wood and appeared to be modern. An irregular feature (F101) approximately 1.2m wide and 0.2m deep was located in the middle of the trench. This was filled with a loose brown silt (1012) and may be interpreted as a tree bowl. A field drain was also cut through the subsoil. Features F100 and F101 and the field drain were sealed by the topsoil, a dark grey-brown loam (1000).

The linear and curvilinear geophysical anomalies that this trench was located to intercept were not located. No features or possible features of archaeological interest were identified and no finds were collected from this trench.

#### Trench S2/2 (Figs 6-7 Plate 4)

This trench was excavated on an approximate northeast-southwest alignment and was 20m in length.

The natural subsoil, an orange and brown sand (1010) was located at a depth of 0.35m. A land drain was cut through the subsoil at the southwest end of the trench. The topsoil was a dark grey-brown loam (1009).

The U-shaped geophysical anomaly which this trench was located to intercept was not located. No features or possible features were identified and no finds were collected.

## **8.0 DISCUSSION**

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were recorded in any of the trenches and no finds were recovered. The geophysical anomalies tested by Trench B2/1 were at least in part located, although the other geophysical anomalies tested by trenching were not. Attention has already been drawn to the uncertain nature of the anomalies tested in Area S2. It may be that those anomalies which were not identified related to changes in the composition of the topsoil only.

## 9 0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## 10 0 REFERENCES

BHWB 2000 *A63 Selby Bypass Volume 17 Environmental Information BHWB/Mouchel*

BHWB 2001 *Selby Bypass Indicative Specification For Archaeological Trial Trenching*

BUFAU 2001 *A63 Selby Bypass Project Design Archaeological Fieldwork and Post Excavation Reporting*

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