



Monitoring of Works under Archaeological Supervision and Control

River Nar Restoration Project Mileham, Norfolk

**on behalf of
Norfolk Rivers Trust**

**Heather Wallis
November 2012
(HW Report No 120)**



Project Name	River Nar, Mileham
Client	Norfolk Rivers Trust
NHER Event No	ENF 129695
Grid reference	TF 9059 1873 to TF 8909 1748
Date of fieldwork	10th and 17th October 2012

Introduction

The Norfolk Rivers Trust is undertaking restoration works at various locations along the River Nar one of which is located between Litcham and Mileham (Fig 1). In this area the river runs in a deep straight channel. The project aimed to recreate a more 'natural' course for the Nar improving the habitat of the river. An archaeological watching brief was commissioned by the Norfolk Rivers Trust following consultation with Norfolk Historic Environment Service.

Archaeological Background

The Norfolk Historic Environment Record does not show any sites directly on the line of the proposed works however the area of river improvement lay between two important sites of medieval date.

To the east is Mileham Castle. This large motte and bailey castle was constructed about 1100 and is made up of a stone keep around which the motte was constructed. In addition to this two baileys and a squared banked enclosure are still visible as earthworks. It is probable that the castle fell out of use by 1300. To the west is Litcham Priory, a medieval hermitage or chapel. Architectural remains of a 14th century religious building have been identified incorporated within a domestic building dating to the 16th century.

Evidence of both earlier and later sites is also present nearby. Bronze Age ring ditches have been recorded both to the north and south of the River Nar as have post-medieval windmills and limekilns. A trackway and moated site have been identified through the study of aerial photographs, and artefacts dating from the Neolithic through to the Post-medieval period have been found nearby (Fig. 2).

The Watching Brief

Works were undertaken over a period of 10 days during which time two visits to site were made. The first monitored works on the eastern stretch of the river, across Mileham Common, the second monitored the newly cut channel across Grenstein Farm Meadow and the construction of a new silt trap. Prior to the works the river ran in a straighten channel often with low raised banks, probably formed from material derived from the clearing of the river. The new channel was relatively small in both width and depth but dimensions varied along the length of the works. The sides of the newly cut channel were

observed for any notable changes in soils and the excavated soils inspected for the retrieval of finds. Excavated material was not removed from the site but spread to either side of the new cut. Nothing of archaeological significance was noted although the natural subsoil varied along the length of the dig. The eastern part across Mileham Common was mainly cut into sands and gravels, while the most eastern end of the works cut through peats.

All works were carried out in full accordance with national and regional guidelines for the treatment of archaeological remains, and in particular the guidance set out in *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003) and the *Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2001).



Plate showing works in progress

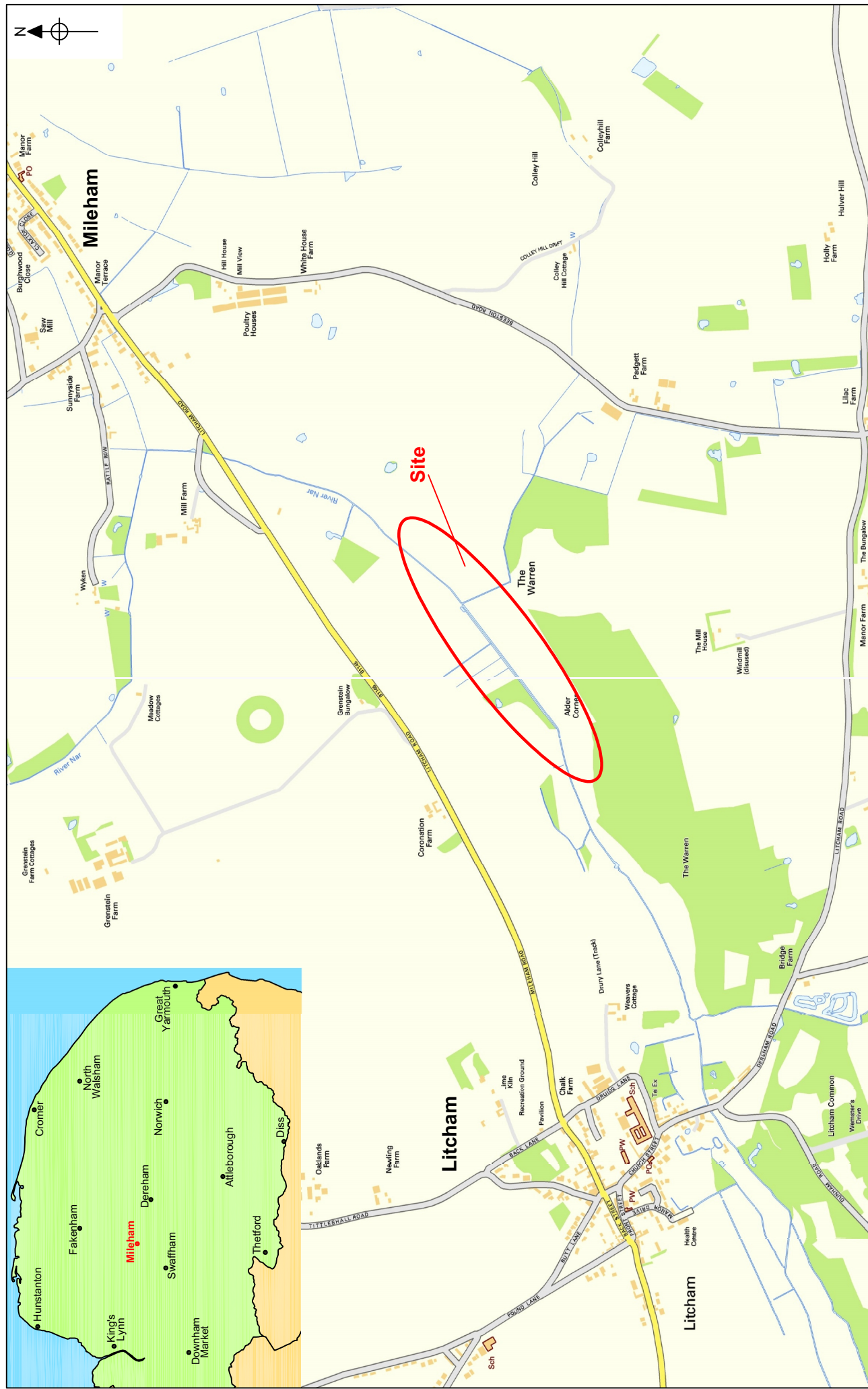


Figure 1. Site Location.

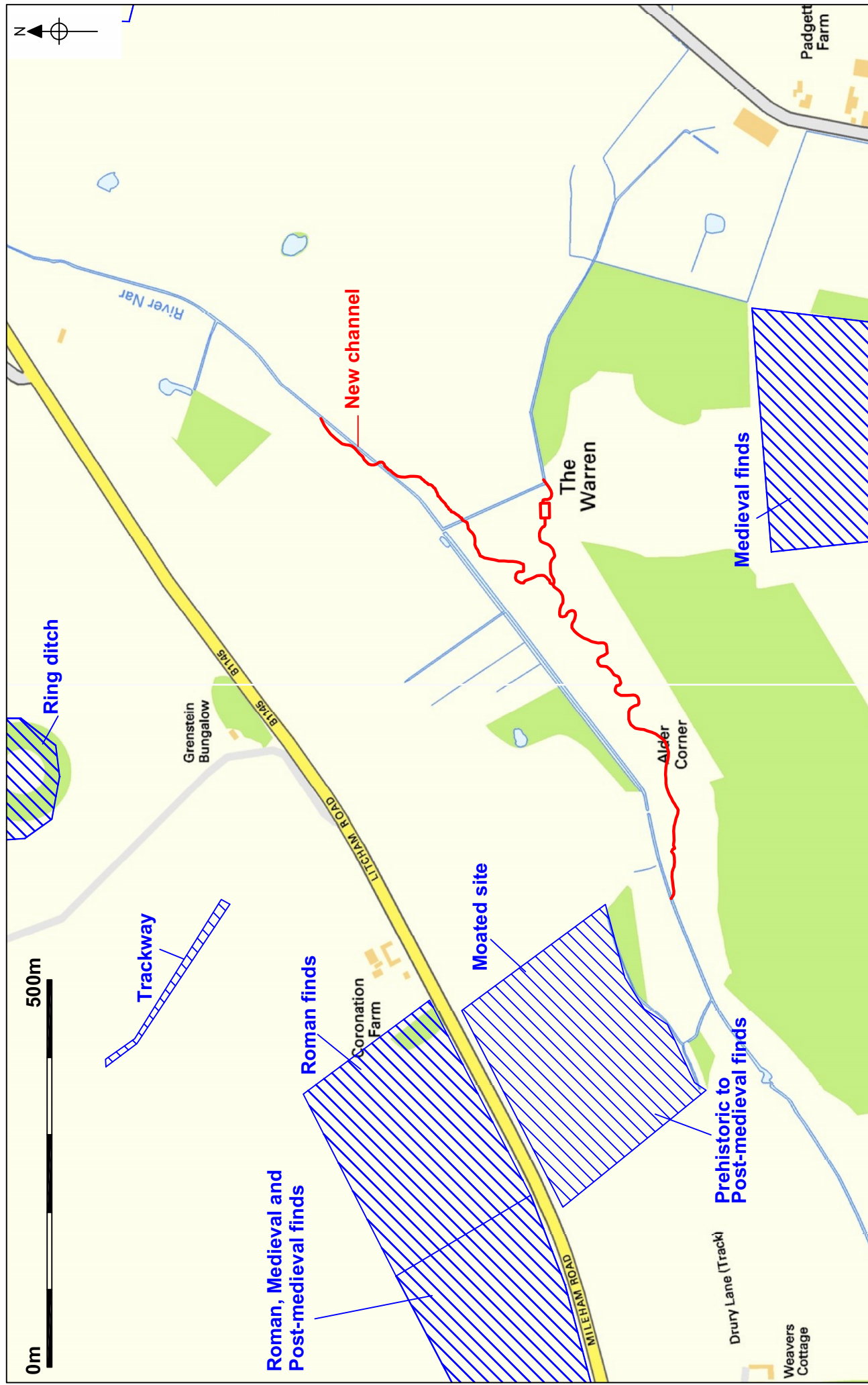


Figure 2. Line of new channel (red) and known archaeological sites (blue).