

**Severn Trent Foul Water  
Sewer, Beacon Street,  
Lichfield, Staffordshire:  
An Archaeological  
Watching Brief.  
2000**

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit

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Lichfield, Staffordshire:  
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## **Severn Trent Foul Water Sewer, Beacon Street, Lichfield, Staffordshire:**

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#### **1.0 Summary**

*Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit carried out an archaeological watching brief on behalf of Severn Trent Water Ltd., in August 2000, during groundworks for a foul and storm sewer across a golf course and municipal play area to the south of Beacon Street in Lichfield (NGR SK 107 100). There were three sections of pipeline which required archaeological monitoring, as identified by Staffordshire County Council. It was possible that groundworks would affect a buried Medieval conduit (PRN 4213) running to the Cathedral Close, the exact line of which was uncertain. No evidence of the conduit, or of any other significant archaeological remains, was identified during the course of the watching brief.*

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This report describes the results of a watching brief carried out in August 2000, during topsoil stripping and excavation of a pipe trench for a foul and storm sewer through a golf course and municipal play area to the south of Beacon Street in Lichfield, Staffordshire (NGR SK 107 100, Figure 1). Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit was commissioned to carry out the watching brief on behalf of Severn Trent Water Ltd.

One possible feature of archaeological significance was identified from the Staffordshire Sites and Monuments Record; a buried Medieval conduit which was believed to run close to the area of the proposed works. It was recommended by the archaeological advisor to Staffordshire County Council that the topsoil-stripping and excavation of the pipe trench be monitored by a professional archaeologist, with a contingency allowance for the recording of any archaeological features identified, principally the Medieval conduit.

#### **3.0 The site**

Three sections of pipeline were excavated (Figure 2). Section I started at the northwest corner of the golf course and ran in a southeasterly direction before joining up with an existing pipeline. Section II also started at the northwest corner of the golf course, but ran to the north of Section I and into an electricity sub station. Section III ran from a

housing estate, southwards across a children's playground to a pond situated on the Leamonsley Brook.

Lichfield is situated on a natural Keuper sandstone bedrock shelf, and the land use in the area of the pipelines consisted of a municipal golf course (sections I and II) and a children's play area (Section III).

#### **4.0 Archaeological and historical background**

The earliest finds from the Lichfield area consist of fragments of Mesolithic flints and traces of a Neolithic settlement. Scattered finds also represent evidence of probable Romano-British occupation. Lichfield was first recognised as an ecclesiastical centre when St. Chad established the Cathedral in 669. In the late-9th century, after the Danish invasion, the area fell out of favour but was re-established in the 12th century when the modern town was laid out. Rebuilding of the Cathedral was completed at the beginning of the 15th century. Recent archaeological investigations in the centre of Lichfield have identified several phases of activity (Nichol, forthcoming) ranging from the 13th and 14th century, through the early post Medieval period, to the 19th century.

The presumed line of a buried Medieval conduit, which fed water from a spring to the Cathedral Close, is recorded on the Staffordshire Sites and Monuments Record (PRN 4213) as running close to the proposed works, although the exact line is uncertain.

#### **5.0 Objectives**

The objectives of the archaeological watching brief were twofold:

1. To record any remains of the buried Medieval conduit and any archaeological features associated with it.
2. To identify any other potential archaeology and to record such deposits.

#### **6.0 Methodology**

A 10m wide abandonment was stripped of topsoil along the sections of the pipeline route. This was carried out by contractors using a JCB excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. The trenching and manholes were then excavated using a toothed ditching bucket. The groundwork in all three sections of pipeline was monitored by a qualified archaeologist from Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit. Any significant archaeological deposits were to be recorded on *pro-forma* record cards supplemented by scale plans, section drawings and photographs, where appropriate. Where no archaeological deposits were identified the stratigraphy was photographed.

These records comprise the site archive which, at the time of writing, is stored at Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit.

## **7.0 The Results**

### **7.1 Sections I and II (Figure 2)**

No archaeological deposits were identified in these two sections. A layer of topsoil (1000), approximately 0.1m deep, overlay a deposit of demolition rubble (1001) which was assumed to be a levelling layer preceding the construction of the golf course. This 0.35m depth of rubble contained various 19th century artifacts including pottery and bottle glass. The underlying subsoil (1002) was a grey sandy gravel mix which was excavated to a depth of 1.8 m along the route of the pipelines, and to a depth of 3.5m in the area of the inspection pit MH8801c (Figure 2). The natural sandstone bedrock was not encountered anywhere along these sections of pipeline.

### **7.2 Section III (Figure 2)**

No archaeological deposits were identified in this section. There was no levelling rubble identified in this area. Instead, topsoil (1001) overlay a 0.2m deep deposit of grey loam subsoil (1003), which in turn overlay the same grey sandy gravel subsoil (1002) as in sections I and II. The trenches were excavated to a similar depth of 1.6m - 1.8m, revealing no finds.

## **8.0 Discussion**

No significant archaeological features were identified and no artifacts were recovered, other than 19th-century pottery and glass from the rubble layer in sections I and II. No evidence of the buried Medieval conduit or associated features was identified in any of the sections of pipeline. This suggests that either the line of the conduit did not cross the route of the sewers, or that no remains of the conduit survive in this particular zone. As there was no evidence for extensive post-Medieval disturbance in the area, the former explanation is more likely

## **9.0 Acknowledgements**

The watching brief was undertaken by Ed Newton and managed by Lucie Dingwall for BUFAU. The report was edited by Lucie Dingwall and the figures were prepared by Mark Breedon. Thanks are due to Severn Trent Water Ltd. for sponsoring the project, and to the groundwork contractors for their co-operation on site.

## 10.0 References

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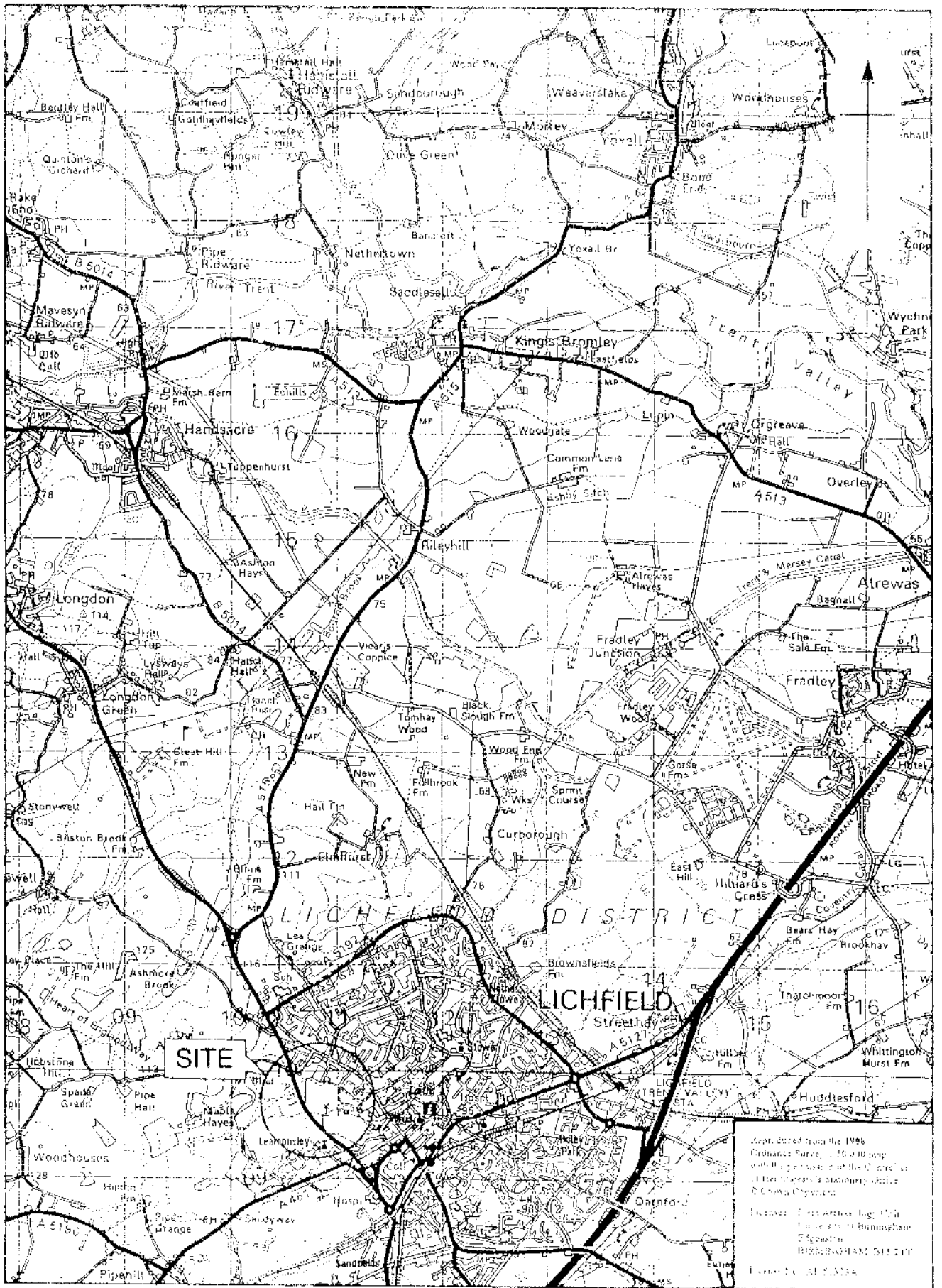


Fig.1





Fig.2