

**Land Off Linden Road,
Bournville, Birmingham
An Archaeological
Watching Brief 2001**

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
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Land off Linden Road, Bournville, Birmingham
An Archaeological Watching Brief 2001

by
Helen Martin

For further information please contact:
Simon Buteux, or Iain Ferris (Directors)
Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
Tel: 0121 414 5513
Fax: 0121 414 5516
E-Mail: BUFAU@bham.ac.uk
Web Address: <http://www.bufau.bham.ac.uk>

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1.0: Summary

Archaeological observation and recording was carried out within open parkland adjoining the Bourn Brook, off Linden Road, Bournville, Birmingham (centred on NGR SO 043811), during works for a flood alleviation scheme. Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit was commissioned by Severn Trent Water Limited to carry out the fieldwork in November 2001. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were identified, and no finds were collected. Machining exposed natural gravel deposits and modern overburden.

2.0: Introduction

This report describes the results of archaeological observation and recording carried out during groundworks for the construction of an off-line storage tank for a flood alleviation scheme, on parkland adjoining the Bourn Brook, off Linden Road, Bournville, Birmingham (NGR SO 043811, Fig. 1). Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) was commissioned by Severn Trent Water Limited to carry out the fieldwork.

The observation and recording was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by BUFAU (BUFAU 2001) and a Design Brief prepared by Birmingham City Council, Department of Planning and Architecture (Birmingham C.C. 2001). The watching brief was carried out in accordance with guidelines set down in the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1999).

3.0: Site Location and proposed works

The works are located in open parkland adjoining the Bourn Brook, Bournville, Birmingham, to the west of Linden Road. The works will comprise an off-line storage tank with ancillary manholes and pipes linking the tanks to existing services.

4.0: Archaeological Background

Currently no archaeological sites are recorded in the Birmingham Sites and Monuments Record in the location of the drainage works. Bronze Age burnt mounds, comprising heat-shattered pebbles in charcoal-rich soil are often found in close proximity to stream courses, including a number of examples located in the Bournville area (e.g. Barfield and Hodder 1980). Given the frequent clustering of these sites, and their association with

streamcourses (Barfield and Hodder 1989, fig. 1.1) it was thought possible that one or more burnt mounds could have been located within the area of the drainage works.

5.0: Aims

The objectives of the archaeological watching brief was to identify and record any archaeological features revealed during contractors ground works, paying particular attention to the potential of the site to contain burnt mounds, associated features and contemporary stream-courses.

6.0: Method

The watching brief involved archaeological monitoring of construction groundworks, including topsoil clearance along the haul road, and the excavation of the uppermost subsoil deposits within the storage tank area (measuring 100m by 8m, Fig. 2). The topsoil strip and excavation was carried out by a 360 degree tracked excavator fitted with a ditching bucket. Following removal of the topsoil, only the removal of the uppermost 1m of the subsoil in the tank area was archaeologically monitored. The surfaces exposed by excavation in plan and section were monitored carefully.

No hand excavation was undertaken, except for the cleaning of exposed deposits in plan and section, for better definition. A full record of all stratigraphic sequences, supplemented by scale drawings, was made. Stratigraphy was recorded using pro-forma context and feature record cards. Plans, sections and photographs, form the site archive and are currently stored at Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit.

7.0: Archaeological results (Fig. 3)

The earliest deposit observed was a natural red/brown clay (1004) encountered at a depth of approximately 1.8m below the modern ground surface. This was overlain by a band of yellow-brown natural sand and gravel (1003), measuring between 0.7m to 1m in depth. Above was a layer of brown sand-silt (1002), containing pockets of clay and gravel. This layer was flecked with charcoal, and also contained post-medieval brick and tile fragments. The topsoil (1001, not illustrated) measured between 0.15m and 0.3m in depth, and comprised a dark brown silt.

Mechanical excavation along the haul road exposed a lower horizon of the topsoil; no subsoil was exposed in these areas. Subsoil was only exposed within the area of the tank.

No features or deposits of archaeological, or possible archaeological interest could be identified, and no finds, with the exception of post-medieval brick and tile fragments, were collected.

8.0: Discussion

Burnt mounds are most usually found adjacent to stream channels. It is possible that any burnt mounds in the vicinity could have been located closer to the line of the existing Bourn Brook, outside the area of the watching brief. There was no evidence of former palaeochannels within the area of the watching brief..

The subsoil deposits encountered comprised boulder clay (1004), overlain by sand and gravel (1003). Above was a levelling up deposit (1002), probably contemporary with the layout of Bournville Park. Any burnt mounds located within the area investigated could have been scoured-out by such landscaping works.

9.0: Acknowledgements

The watching brief was undertaken by Helen Martin and was managed by Alex Jones. The report was written by Helen Martin and edited by Alex Jones. Illustrations were drawn by Nigel Dodds. The project was monitored by Dr. Michael Hodder on behalf of Birmingham City Council, Department of Planning and Architecture. Thanks are due to Sad Buray of Severn Trent Water Limited.

10.0: References

Barfield, L. H. and Hodder, M. A. 1980. The Excavation of Two Burnt Mounds in South Birmingham. *West Midlands Archaeology* 23, 14-26.

Barfield, L. H and Hodder, M. A. 1989. *Burnt Mounds in the West Midlands: Surveys and Excavations*, in Gibson, A (Ed.) Midlands Prehistory. British Archaeological Reports, British Series, 204, Oxford.

BUFAU 2001 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Observation off Cartland Road and off Linden Road, Birmingham.*

Birmingham C. C. 2001 *Design Brief for Archaeological observation and recording during works off Cartland Road and off Linden Road, Birmingham.*

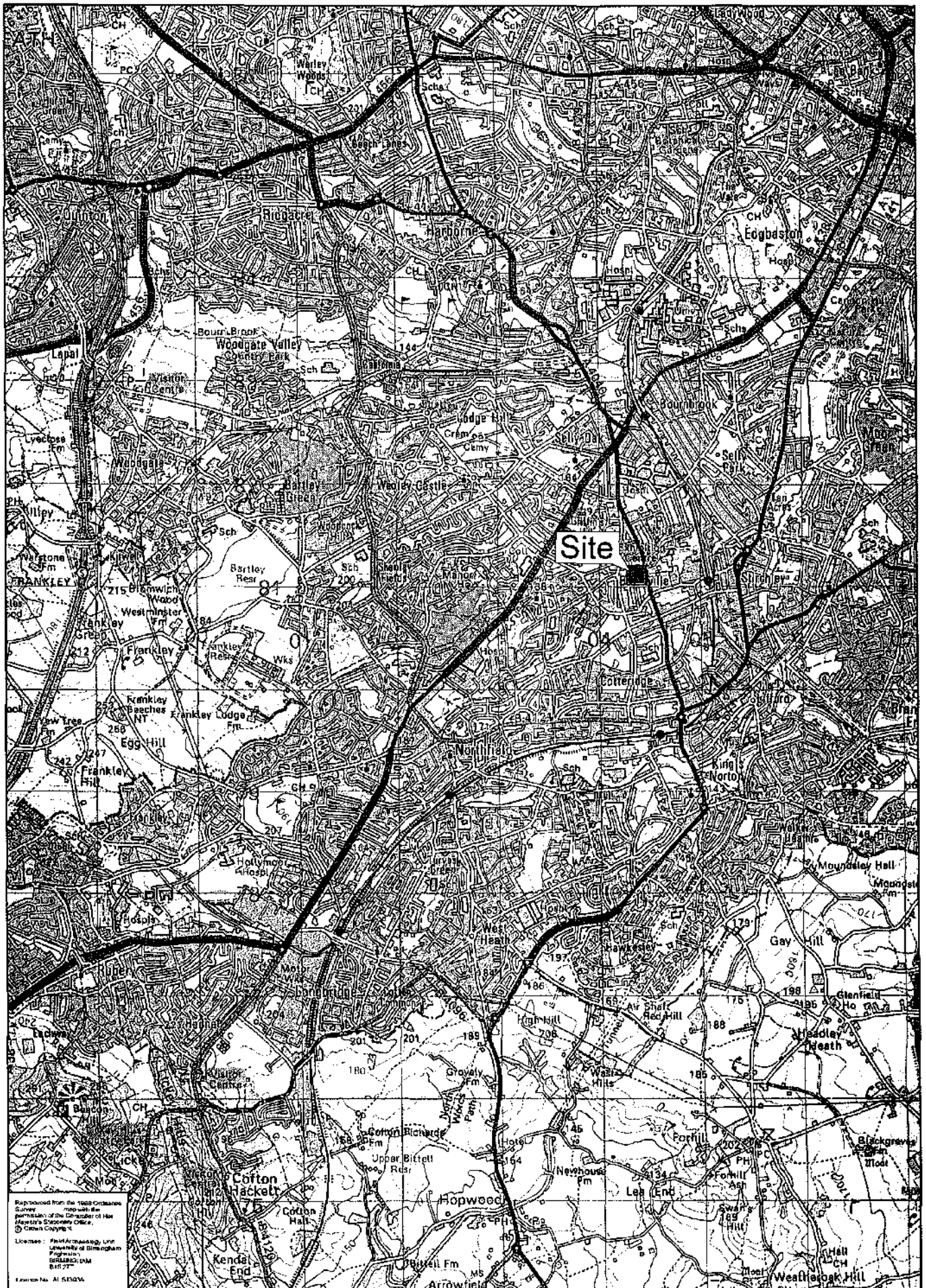


Fig.1

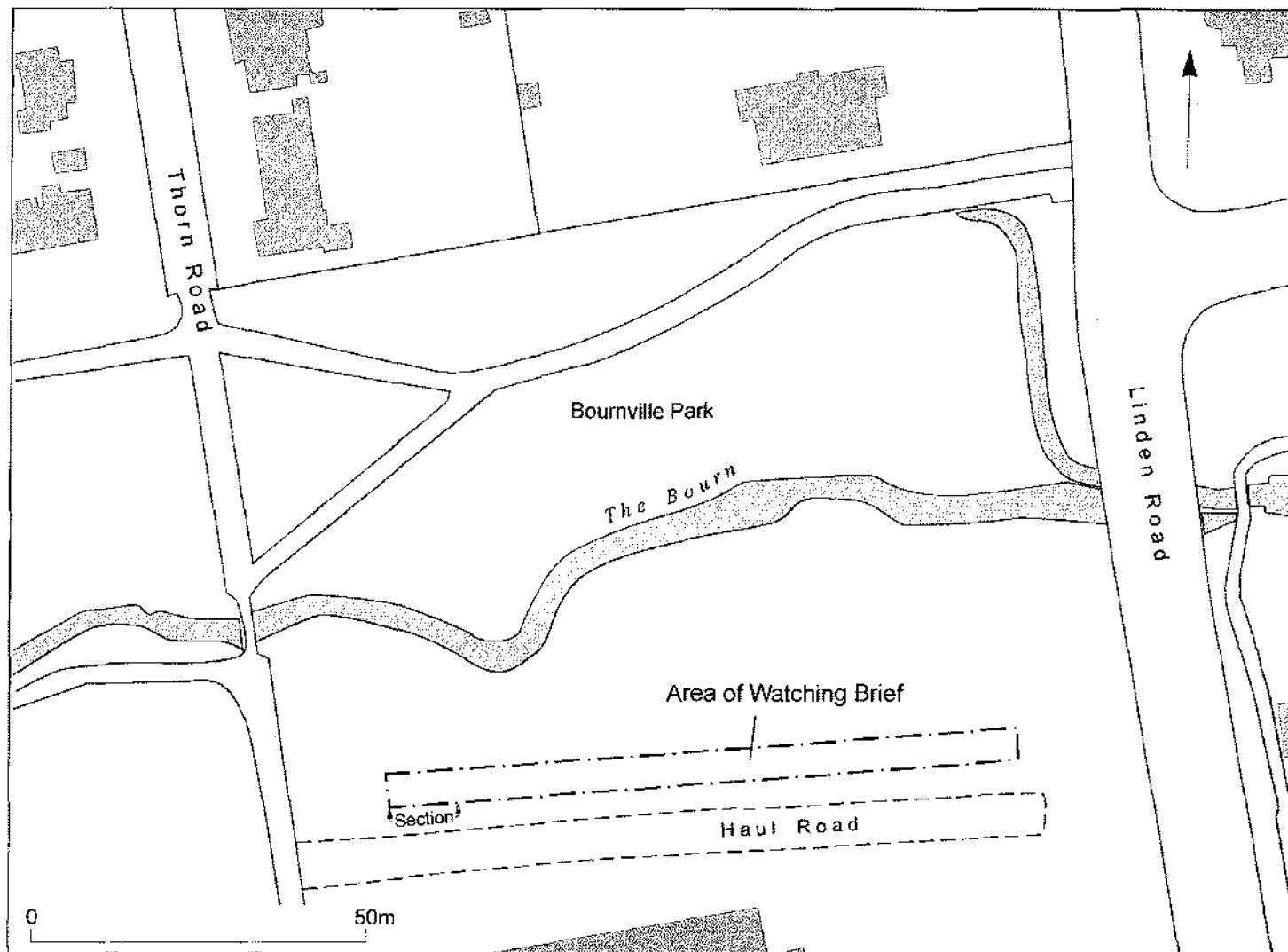
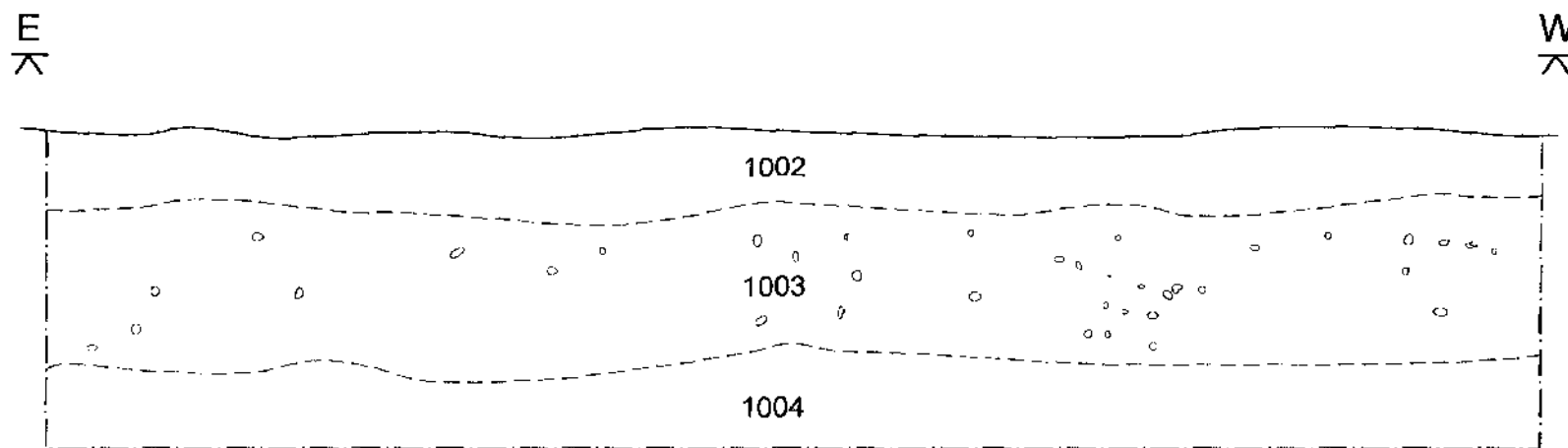


Fig.2

Section



0 2m

Fig.3