



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF BIRMINGHAM

**Oxhill, Warwickshire:  
An Archaeological  
Watching Brief 2002**

*Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit*



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by  
Erica Macey

*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](mailto:BUFAU@bham.ac.uk)  
Web Address: <http://www.bufau.bham.ac.uk>

## **Oxhill, Warwickshire: An Archaeological Watching Brief 2002**

### **1.0 Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was carried out on 27<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> September and 1<sup>st</sup> October 2002 during the stripping of an area to construct a reed bed at Oxhill, Warwickshire (NGR SP 3150 4630). The work was commissioned by Charles Haswell and Partners Limited and was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU). Stripping of the area revealed part of the rubble foundations of a small building. A slot through the foundations exposed the cut for a wall, which was cut into the natural clay. A Romano-British coin and pottery and tile associated with the building were also recovered.*

### **2.0 Introduction**

This short report outlines the results of a watching brief carried out during the stripping of an area to construct a reed bed at Oxhill, Warwickshire (NGR SP 3150 4630). The work was commissioned by Charles Haswell and Partners Limited and carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU). The work was not undertaken as part of a planning condition, but as a rescue excavation in advance of the area being flooded to create a reed bed. The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record the archaeological features affected by the construction of the reed bed.

### **3.0 Methodology**

The area was stripped by a 360° mechanical excavator, using a toothless ditching bucket, under supervision of a qualified archaeologist. The exposed features were hand-cleaned, excavated and recorded by BUFAU. A full record was made of the stratigraphic sequence using pro-forma context and feature record cards; this was supplemented by scale drawings where appropriate. These records, along with colour print photographs, form the site archive, and are currently stored at BUFAU.

### **4.0 Results**

Stripping of the area down to the natural clay (1006) revealed part of a rubble wall (1004), consisting of large, sub-angular stones, forming part of the foundation of a small building (Plate 1). The foundation was aligned east-west, extending approximately 6 metres into the stripped area, then turned north-east for approximately 3 metres before becoming indistinct. A sondage through the rubble revealed a shallow linear feature (F101) cut into the natural clay (Plate 2). A small quantity of animal bone and a fragment of Romano-British pottery were recovered from the grey-black clay fill (1005) of the linear.

The natural clay and the linear were overlain by a layer of yellow-brown clay subsoil (1003), 0.20 – 0.30m thick. Several large pieces of stone were set into this subsoil. A

large sherd of 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Century Romano-British pottery was also recovered from this layer during machining.

A layer of former topsoil (1002) overlay the subsoil. This was composed of mid-grey-brown silty clay and was 0.20m in depth. This layer was in turn overlain by two layers of made-up ground (1000, 1001); these were a hard clay-silt orange-black layer (1001), 0.17 – 0.20m in depth, and the modern topsoil (1000), which was composed of grey-brown clay, with frequent small pebbles, to a depth of 0.23m.

### *Interpretation*

Feature F101 probably represents the foundation of a former building. A gap of approximately 1.0m in the line of rubble may mark the entrance to this building (Fig 2).

The large stones set into the subsoil (1003) were assumed to be associated with the building, probably having been deposited when the building was demolished.

## **5.0 The Finds**

The site produced a small quantity of finds, including a coin, pottery, tile and animal bone. The coin, which was recovered during machining and is unstratified, was dated to ca. 364 – 375AD, and was identified as a *Gloria Romanorum* of the House of Valentinian (R. White, pers. comm.).

The pottery assemblage consisted of five sherds (1003 x 2, 1005 x 1, U/S x 2), the largest of which was a coarse greyware base dating broadly to the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD (A. Hancock, pers. comm.). Pottery was being produced at nearby kiln sites at Bubbenhall and Ryton-on-Dunsmore in this period, although this sherd does not appear to have come from either of those production centres. The other sherds in the assemblage were too small to be of any diagnostic use, but were of Romano-British appearance.

Other finds recovered from the site included a small quantity of animal bone (1005, U/S), four fragments of tile (1003 x 1, U/S x 3), including one possible *tegula* fragment (U/S), a section of an iron nail (1005) and two unidentifiable iron rods of modern appearance (U/S).

## **6.0 Acknowledgements**

The watching brief was carried out by Kate Bain and Erica Macey, who also wrote the report. The project was managed by Richard Cuttler, who also edited the report. Illustrations were prepared by Nigel Dodds and Edward Newton. Thanks are due to Roy Weavers and his team from Charles Haswell and Partners Limited for their co-operation and support on site.

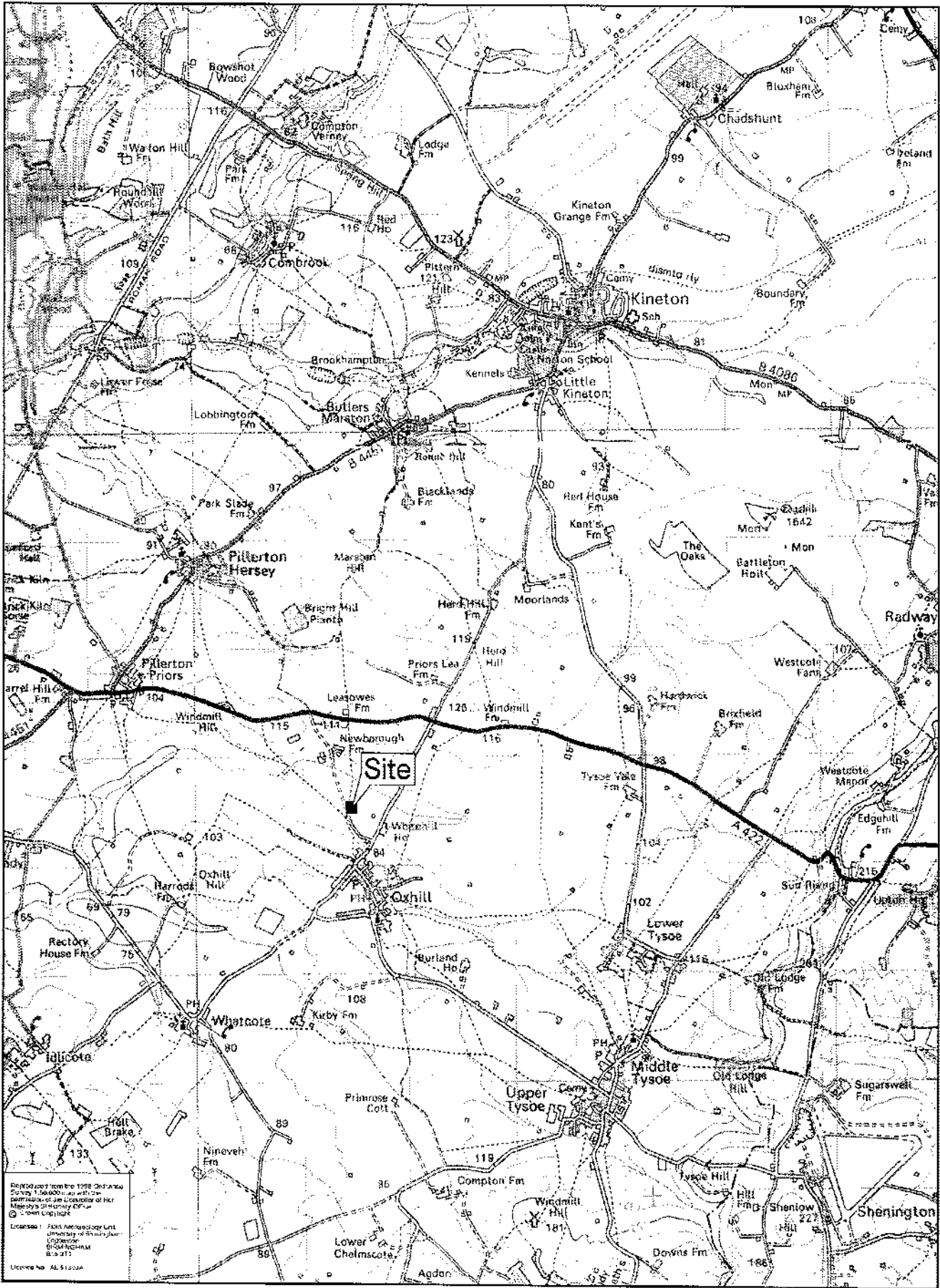


Fig.1

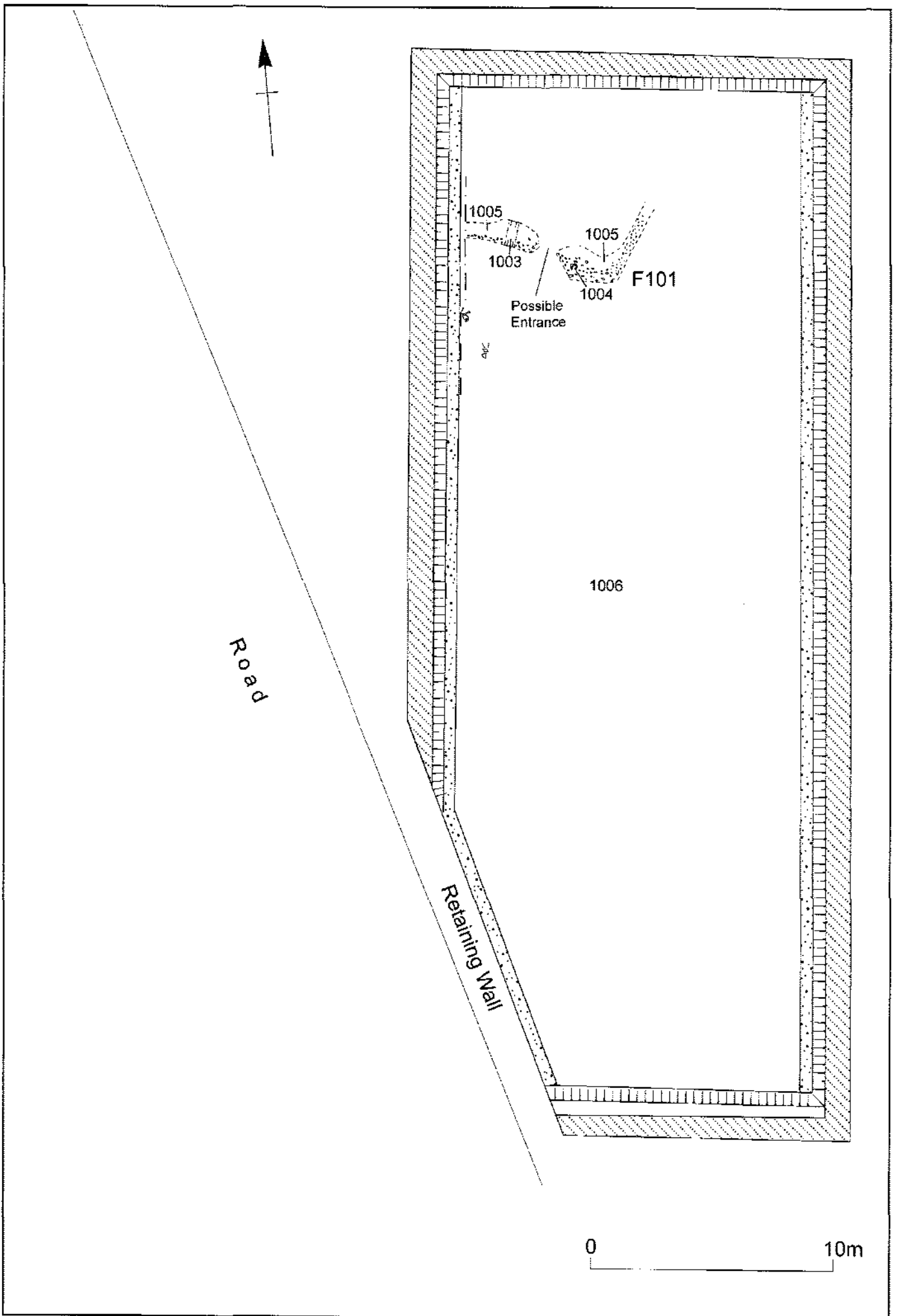


Fig.2



Plate 1.

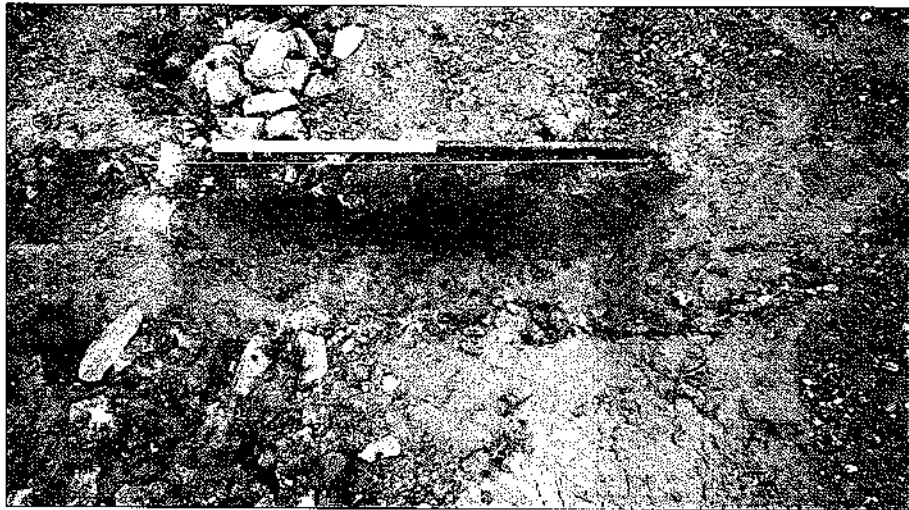


Plate 2.