

Project No. 1112
October 2003

**A5 Weeford-Fazeley, Staffordshire
Further Evaluations, 2003**

By
Alex Jones

For further information please contact:
Birmingham Archaeology
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
Tel: 0121 414 5513
Fax: 0121 414 5516
E-Mail: bham-arch@bham.ac.uk
Web Address: <http://www.barch.bham.ac.uk/bufau>

**A5 Weeford-Fazeley,
Staffordshire
Further Evaluations, 2003**

A5 WEEFORD-FAZELEY, STAFFORDSHIRE

FURTHER EVALUATIONS, 2003

1.0: SUMMARY

Two further sample areas (Trenches T29 and T32) were excavated by Birmingham Archaeology in October 2003, to complete the programme of archaeological evaluation of the A5 Weeford-Fazeley Road Improvement, Staffordshire. The work was undertaken on behalf of Weeks Consulting. Earlier archaeological work undertaken in connection with the scheme has comprised archaeological assessment, and evaluation. No features, or possible features of archaeological interest could be identified in either area tested in 2003.

2.0: INTRODUCTION

The two sample areas described in this report (Trenches T29 and T32, Figs. 1-2, centered on NGR SK 165035 and SK 155037, respectively) were excavated by Birmingham Archaeology on instruction from Weeks Consultants in advance of the A5 Weeford-Fazeley Road Improvement. These interventions complete the programme of evaluation defined in a Written Scheme of Investigation (BUFAU 2002) approved by Staffordshire County Council. Details of the background to the scheme and the results of earlier evaluation fieldwork may be found in Martin and Neilson (2002), and will not be repeated here.

Both interventions T29 and T32 formed part of a programme of sampling an area in the east of the route for which little or no archaeological information was available. Trench T29 was located to test a natural plateau, a location thought to have been possibly favourable for past settlement. Trench T32 contained a number of interrupted linear geophysical anomalies. Each sample area measured a total of 15m by 50m. The topsoil was removed by machine under archaeological supervision. A review meeting was held with Staffordshire County Council, and no further archaeological work was undertaken at either location, because no features, or possible features of archaeological interest, were identified. The topsoil and subsoil horizons were recorded by means of pre-printed pro-formas, and a photographic record was also maintained.

3.0: RESULTS (Figs. 2-3)

3.1: Trench T29

The natural subsoil was a red-brown clay-sand-silt (29002), with pockets of yellow-red sand of natural formation. It was recorded at a depth up to 0.2m below the modern surface. The subsoil was cut by plough furrows orientated northeast-southwest. The subsoil was overlain by a b-horizon soil consisting of brown clay-silt (29001), measuring up to 0.1m in depth. Above was the modern topsoil, a dark brown clay-silt (29000), measuring up to 0.15m in depth. It contained rounded pebbles and some flecks of

birmingham archaeology

charcoal. The topsoil also contained a few heat-shattered stones, but no particular concentrations could be identified within this material.

3.2: Trench T32

The natural subsoil was a red-orange sand (32001), recorded at a depth of between 0.4-0.2m below the modern surface. The surface of the subsoil was truncated by north-south aligned plough scars. These cut the truncated remains of east-west aligned ridge and furrow. No features, or possible features of archaeological interest could be identified. The subsoil was sealed by a red-brown sand topsoil (32000) which measured an average of 0.3m in depth. A number of heat-shattered pebbles were recovered from the interface between the topsoil and the natural subsoil, but no discernable pattern could be identified in their distribution, except that most were located in the southern half of the trench. Three small abraded fragments of medieval pottery and two fragments of slag were found in the topsoil. These may derive from manuring.

4.0: DISCUSSION

Trench T29 was located to test a natural plateau which was thought could contain evidence of past settlement. In the event, no features, or possible features of archaeological interest could be located. Any shallow archaeological features could have been obliterated by erosion down the mainly east-facing slope.

Trench T32 was also located on a natural plateau. The trench was intended to test a number of interrupted linear anomalies identified by geophysics (Area D). In the event, these could not be related to features of archaeological, or possible archaeological interest. The anomalies may have been caused by variations in the composition of the natural subsoil or topsoil.

5.0: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The fieldwork was commissioned by Weeks Consulting, and was undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Mark Hewson and Josh Williams, and was managed by Alex Jones. The fieldwork was monitored for Staffordshire County Council by Chris Wardle. The illustrations were prepared by Nigel Dodds. Thanks are due to the landowners, tenants and their managing agents for permission to undertake the trenching.

6.0: REFERENCES

BUFAU 2002 *A5 Weeford-Fazeley Road Improvement, Staffordshire, Written Scheme of Investigation for Evaluation*, BUFAU

Martin, H and Neilson, C 2003 *A5 Weeford-Fazeley Road Improvement, Staffordshire, Trial-Trenching 2002*, BUFAU Report No. 951