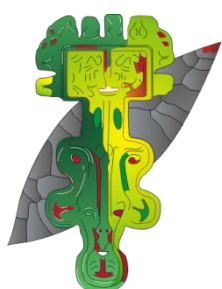


2013

Results of a Programme of Archaeological Investigation
At Minchinhampton Golf Club, Minchinhampton Common, Gloucestershire




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On behalf of

Minchinhampton Golf Club

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Summary

Absolute Archaeology was commissioned to carry out a Programme of Archaeological Investigation at Minchinhampton Golf Club, Minchinhampton Common, Gloucestershire. The scheme of work was informed by Ms Melanie Barge (Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage) in order to mitigate the impact on any potential archaeological resource posed by the excavation of 19 post holes in the region of the 5th and 9th Greens.

Groundwork was carried out on the 28th May 2013. The results revealed a high level of ground disturbance, in the region of the 5th and 9th Greens, which has been attributed to extensive stone extraction noted across the common. The results of the investigation were negative and no further investigation is recommended in association with the current programme of work.

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1. Introduction

This document sets out the results of a programme of Archaeological Investigation on Minchinhampton Golf Club, Minchinhampton Common, Gloucestershire, carried out on the 28th May 2013. The scheme of work was informed by Ms Melanie Barge (Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage) in order to mitigate the impact on any potential archaeological resource posed by the excavation of 19 post holes in the region of the 5th and 9th Greens.

The programme of investigation was undertaken as a direct response to Condition (b), of the guidance issued by English Heritage, which states that *'No ground works shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of a programme of archaeological work during the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State advised by English Heritage.'* (Mr A Tyson, Business Officer, English Heritage, Preliminary Statement issued 29th April 2013)

The programme of work comprised an archaeological watching brief as the first phase of a staged approach, designed to allow for the identification, recording and preservation of archaeological remains, to an appropriate level.

2. Project Site

The groundwork was divided between the 5th and 9th Greens, located on Minchinhampton Common. Although common land, the site is also in use for recreational purposes and is managed by Minchinhampton Golf Club.

The Project Site is located between 195m-200m aOD and is defined geologically by Mid Jurassic ooidal limestone of the Athelstan Oolite Formation.

Minchinhampton Common is a large open area on the west side of the village of Minchinhampton. The land, which was given to the villagers in the time of Henry VIII by Dame Alice Hampton, originally comprised 1000 acres, but has been diminished by a succession of encroachments, to little more than 500 acres.

Both the 5th and 9th Greens are located in the region of earthworks ranging from the Neolithic to Medieval periods, the most notable of which are summarised below:

The Bulwarks- Minchinhampton Common is the site of the Scheduled Monument known as the '*Bulwarks*'. The earthworks comprise a broken earthen bank and ditch system curving approximately 2.4km across the Common, from the NW corner of Minchinhampton Park to the north of the Half Way House Inn. The earthworks have been dated to the Iron Age (800 BC- 43AD) and are located within 1km of the Project Site.

Cross-dyke- Cross-dyke is a linear earthwork that could be contemporary with the Bulwarks. Measuring approximately 238m in length and lying west of the reservoir, excavations in 1937 showed similarities in dimensions to those encountered during the 'Bulwarks' excavation. The earthwork is located <200m NNW of the 5th green.

Amberley Camp and Pinfarthing Camp- Amberley Camp and Pinfarthing Camp have been recorded as minor earthworks on the common and probably relate to modern field boundaries. However, they appear to enclose the area of the 5th green and are located within 250m of the site.

Whitfield's Tump- Whitfield's Tump is a disturbed Neolithic long barrow, located to the NW of Minchinhampton Common. The monument measures 23m in length x 11m in width, and dates to c. 3000 BC. It was used by Methodist preacher George Whitfield (1714-1770 AD) as the location of his open air services on a number of occasions.

3. Approach To Archaeological Investigation

The broad aim of the watching brief was to identify and record features of archaeological interest discovered during groundwork associated with the project, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on any archaeological resource and to enable the discharge of the condition.

All work was undertaken in accordance with the IFA *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (revised 2008).

The primary aims were:

- To allow the preservation by record of archaeological deposits within the resources available;
- To provide an opportunity for the watching archaeologist to warn the appropriate parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological

find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.

3.1. Methodology

Archaeological control was maintained over all ground reduction. The investigation took the approach of an archaeological watching brief, with provision for the recording of archaeological features or finds. The programme of work was designed to inform the record on the extent of preserved archaeological remains on the Project Site and to allow for the implementation of a suitable strategy in order to mitigate the impact of the works.

Specifically the targeted watching brief sought to:

- Assess the potential for archaeological activity associated with the project site;
- Record and identify archaeological features and deposits to a level appropriate to their extent and significance, as possible within the confines of the project;
- Undertake sufficient post-excavation assessment to interpret archaeological features and phasing identified during the project, and to place these within their local and regional context;
- Create a site archive for deposition in a suitable repository.

4. Results

A total of 19 post holes were excavated using a combination of machine and manual ground reduction. All post holes measured approximately 500mm (l) x 500mm (w) x 600mm (d).

4.1. 5th Green

A total of 2 post holes (Numbered 18-19) were relocated to the NE of the 5th Green. The results revealed c. 100mm of topsoil/turfline, sealing loosely compacted limestone rubble (80%), mixed with mid yellowish brown silty clay (20%).

4.2. 9th Green

A total of 17 new post holes (Numbered 1-17) were excavated in the area of the 9th Green. The results revealed c. 200mm of topsoil/turfline, also sealing loosely compacted limestone rubble (80%), mixed with mid yellowish brown silty clay (20%).

No archaeological features or finds were identified during the excavation and no finds were recovered from the spoil, which was monitored throughout.

4.3. Discussion

The excavation in the area of the 5th Green revealed a topsoil material sealing a deposit of apparently redeposited natural limestone rubble, to the NE of the existing Green. To the SW it was clear that significant landscaping had taken place in order to establish a level terraced area. Although the investigated area was limited to the stratigraphy noted in the post holes, it is suggested here that results indicate quarrying in this area of the site, with subsequent landscaping resulting in the levelling of waste quarry material.

A similar stratigraphy was noted in the post holes excavated to around the 9th Green, with evidence of stone extraction in this area much more apparent. Overgrown historic spoil heaps were identified to the east, south and west of the Green, which is located on a levelled plateau of banked quarry material. Although possible remnants of ridge and furrow were identified to the north of the Green, it is possible that the quarry activity predates this phase of agricultural activity.

5. Conclusion

The results of the investigation were negative and no further investigation is recommended in association with the current programme of work.

6. References

English Heritage. 2011. Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation (second edition). Swindon: English Heritage

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7. Figures

Figure 1 Project Site Location



Minchinhampton Common, Gloucestershire
 SO 85126 01090 (5th Hole) / SO 85625 01744(9th Hole)

AArc112/WB

Archaeological Watching Brief

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8. Photographs

Photograph 1 NE Facing Section Post Hole 3 (9th Green) Scales 1 x 300mm & 1 x 500mm



Photograph 2 SSE Facing Section Post Hole 7 (9th Green) Scales 1 x 300mm & 1 x 500mm



Photograph 3 SE Facing Section Post Hole 8 (9th Green) Scales 1 x 300mm & 1 x 500mm



Photograph 4 SW Facing Section Post Hole 18 (5th Green) Scales 1 x 300mm & 1 x 600mm



9. Appendices

Appendix 1: General chronological table (guide only)

Period	Date	Information
Prehistoric	800000 – 43 AD	Generalised period from the earliest human activity in Britain (Happisburgh) to the conquest of Britain by Claudius.
Palaeolithic	800000 - 10000 BC	Mobile groups, ephemeral habitation evidence, stone tool technology. Material evidence found predominantly in caves. Earliest evidence for hominins in Britain is at Happisburgh and Pakefield in Norfolk dating to the Pleistocene c.800,000 BP.
Mesolithic	10000 – 4000 BC	Period of major transformation in the European environment and landscape after the end of the last Ice Age. Mobile hunter-gatherer communities, sophisticated tool technology and some semi-permanent settlement, particularly along the east coast of England and in Ireland.
Neolithic	4000 – 2200 BC	Emergence of monumental architecture, such as long barrows and causewayed enclosures. Movement towards more complex society and sedentary lifestyles.
Bronze Age	2200 – 800 BC	Introduction of Bronze, construction of barrows/tumuli for the dead in the early stages replaced by a lack of monuments and the preponderance toward hoard deposition.
Iron Age	800 BC– 43 AD	Introduction of Iron and the return of monumental architecture in the form of hillforts, tribal boundaries and the introduction of coinage.
Romano-British	43-410 AD	Romano-British period including the emergence of villas and Roman infrastructure.
Early Medieval	410 –1066 AD	Post-Roman period including Saxon invasions and the arrival of Christianity.
Medieval	1066 – 1540 AD	Medieval period in Britain including Tudor activity, with arbitrary cut off point of 1650 AD.
Post-Medieval	1540 – 1900 AD	Period of rapid industrial development and changes to the English landscape.
Modern	1900 – Present	Including WWI, WWII and Cold War archaeology.