

Report on Resistivity Survey at Weald View,
Noak Hill, Romford.
London Borough of Havering.

NH - PR 96.

TQ5340 9397

Report Prepared for: Rochford Hundred Field Archaeology Group

M. Beasley and M. D. Turner.

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Introduction.

A resistivity survey was conducted by a field team from the Newham Museum Service, on the 18th November 1995. The Survey was conducted as a private project for the Rochford Hundred Field Archaeology Group on a garden adjoining Weald View, Noak Hill (*Fig. 1*). The Survey was designed to assess the surviving sub-surface archaeology of the survey area in the light of the discovery of significant quantities of Mill Green pottery during the construction of a garden pond. The project was arranged through Frank Meddens of Newham Museum Service, and conducted by the authors.

Resistivity is a non-intrusive remote sensing technique relying on the resistance to an electric current. The method works on the principal that wetter deposits, for example ditches and pits, will have a lower resistance than drier or more compact deposits such as walls and banks. By passing a small current through the ground at regular intervals on a grid, the relative resistance is measured and mapped to form a plot of sub-surface resistance. This essentially gives a plan at about 0.75m. depth of the survey area.

The survey area (*Fig. 2.*) comprised an area approximately 20m. x 50m. In the back garden of Weald View. The area was grassed with small and medium size trees at intervals within the surface area. A garden pond and a timber pile were within the survey area, as were ornamental garden beds. A small bank ran along the north of the garden. a service trench ran along the western boundary of the garden but was not included within the survey. Other areas around the side of the house were considered unsuitable for survey.

The area sloped gently to the south-west, covered in short-cropped grass, and appeared to be well drained. Inspection of the garden beds showed the sub-soil to be a sandy silt clay.

The area lies on the boundary between London clay and Boulder clay (British Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales), sheet 257, 1976).

Archival Background.

Widdrington Farm is shown by documentary sources to stand on a medieval site (GLSMR 060356, 061021). The farm buildings retain a timber framed crosswing building of 17th century date, with reconstruction in the 18th century. The whole building was encased in brick and re-roofed in the 19th century (VCH 1978, 62-73). The farm was originally two properties; Joyes and Wolves farms. The Joyes farm is associated with the family of John Joye (1497), with Joyes Mead mentioned in 1482 and 1549 (Reaney 1935, 116).

The first documentary evidence of a kiln at the Widdrington Farm site comes from 1558, when a tile kiln is mentioned as being attached to Wolves and Joyes Farm (GLSMR 06035601). More recently, unspecified ground works at Noak Hill prior to 1960 revealed “sherds of late 12th and early 13th century pottery, including jug handles.” (CBA, 1960)(GLSMR 060039). One reference states that the pottery was donated to the Passmore Edwards Museum (now Newham Museum Service).

The site is also close to the location of Newbury Manor (GLSMR 060372), thought to be sited to the west of Widdrington Farm. The manor of Reynes, later Newbury, originated from a tenement of a ½ virgate¹ and a ¼ virgate granted in fee to William Dun by Adam de Reyns in 1222. In 1243 the 40 acre manor was conveyed to Hornchurch Priory by Richard Newman. It was described in 1355 as the priory tenement “called Reyns and now called Newbury”, comprising a ½ virgate and ³/₁₆ vergate. By 1376 the property was described as comprising “a grange called Otberne and tithes of hay from tennants”. The manor was conveyed to New College, Oxford in 1391. It was leased to Tuke in 1518, and the lease was aquired by Henry VIII when he took over Tukes estate at Pyrigo. It became Crown land in 1549, and by 1555 had become part of Pyrigo Park, and was no longer mentioned. The manor house itself is thought to have disappeared by the 16th century (VCH 1978, 17).

If a kiln exists on the site it was probably producing pottery for Hornchurch Priory; the Priory owning the manor between 1243 and 1391. The mention of a tile kiln in 1558, when the estate was Crown land, may suggest that, with the manor passing into secular control, the kiln(s) started producing tile rather than pottery.

The Survey.

¹A virgate is a numerically imprecise measure of land. It is the ploughland of one yolk of oxen.

The survey was conducted using a Geoscan RM15 Basic resistance meter, with 0.5m. separation twin probe array. The machine was set to a current of 1 mA, with x10 gain. Samples were taken on 20m. x 20m. grids, at 1m. sample and traverse intervals, on a zigzag traverse. The first grid was then partially re-surveyed using 0.5m. traverse and sample interval to try gain focus on any smaller features.

A localised survey base-line was established north to south over the survey area, and grids surveyed from this base-line. This base line was tied into the property boundaries to the south and west. Two partial grids were surveyed, oriented north. Obstructions and incomplete grids were dummy logged, and grid information was recorded on Museum pro-forma sheets, these sheets forming part of the site archive. Results were processed using Geoplot v1.2 and 2.0 software.

Processed Results.

There appear to be no anomalies of either high or low resistance indicative of archaeological deposits on the site. The plot (*Fig. 3*) shows a change from higher resistance to the north-east of the area to lower resistance to the south-west. This is a gradual transition with none of the defined breaks that would be expected from archaeological deposits. It appears that this graduation is geological and is entirely consistent with the hill slope running down to the south-west.

One area of relatively higher resistance to the north-east of Grid 2 relates to a garden bed, with sizeable shrubs. Trees, the pond and the timber piles appear as blank areas in Grids 1 and 2.

Grid 3, sampled at 0.5m. intervals in the same area as Grid 1, shows no difference in this pattern.

Interpretation and Conclusions.

The results of the survey are, from an archaeological stand-point, disappointing. No archaeological features are apparent on the plot. This does not discount the presence of surviving archaeology on the site. If any such deposits do survive they are of a small scale, ephemeral nature. It is unlikely that a kiln (as originally postulated) exists in the survey area.

It is possible that recent rainfall has masked any archaeological features, although this is unlikely as the ground appears to be well drained, and the surface showed no indication of excessive water retention. It also remains a possibility that archaeological deposits may exist at a depth in excess of 0.75m., although again the topography makes this unlikely.

Rather more feasible is the possibility that any features are masked or have been destroyed by ploughing. This would leave the pottery still in the soil while destroying any associated features.

The plot shows fairly clearly that the geology of the site follows the surface topography, suggesting no significant build-up of the area.

Acknowledgements.

The Museum and the authors would like to thank the householder, Mr. Martin White, for allowing access to the site, and Joan Cockrill and Neil Faulkner of the Roxford Hundred Field Archaeology Group.

Bibliography.

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CBA, 1960 *The Archaeologist in Essex, Herts, London and Middlesex* CBA
Regional Group 10
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APPENDIX A

GLSMR/RCHME NMR ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FORM

1. TYPE OF RECORDING.

Evaluation ~~_____~~ Excavation ~~_____~~ Watching brief

Other (please specify) RESISTIVITY SURVEY

2. LOCATION.

Borough: LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING

Site address: WEALD VIEW, NOAK HILL, ROMFORD

Site name: NOAK HILL

Site code: NH - PR 96

Nat. Grid Refs: Centre of site: TQ5340 9397

Limits of site: a) N/A b)

c) d)

3. ORGANISATION.

Name of archaeological unit/ company/ society:

Address: NEWHAM MUSEUM SERVICE
31, STOCK STREET
PLAISTOW
LONDON
E13 OBX

Site director/ supervisor: M. BEASLEY

Project manager: F.M. MEDDENS

Funded by: VOLUNTARY PROJECT

4. DURATION.

Date fieldwork started: 18.11.1995 Date finished: 18.11.1995

Field work previously notified? ~~YES~~/ NO

Fieldwork will continue? ~~YES/NO~~/ NOT KNOWN

5. PERIODS REPRESENTED.

Palaeolithic ~~_____~~ Roman

~~Mesolithic~~ _____ ~~Saxon (pre-AD 1066)~~
~~Neolithic~~ _____ ~~Medieval (AD 1066-1485)~~
~~Bronze Age~~ _____ ~~Post-Medieval~~
~~Iron Age~~ _____ Unknown NA

6. PERIOD SUMMARIES. Use headings for each period (Roman; Medieval; etc.), and continue on additional sheets as necessary.

NA

7. NATURAL. (state if not observed; please DO NOT LEAVE BLANK)

Type: NOT OBSERVED

Height above Ordnance Datum: A.O.D. UNKNOWN

8. LOCATION OF ARCHIVES.

a) Please indicate those categories still in your possession:

Notes _____ Plans _____ Photos _____ Negatives _____
 Slides _____ Correspondence _____ Manuscripts (unpub. reports etc.) _____

b) All/ ~~some records~~ have been/ ~~will be~~ deposited in the following museum/ records office etc. :

NEWHAM MUSEUM SERVICE,
 31, STOCK STREET,
 PLAISTOW,
 LONDON E13 OBX.

c) Approximate year of transfer: 1996

d) Location of any copies: AS ABOVE

e) Has a security copy of the archive been made? YES/ NO

If not, do you wish RCHME to consider microfilming? YES/ NO

9. LOCATION OF FINDS.

a) In your possession?

~~ALL/ SOME/~~ NONE

b) All/ some finds have been/ will be deposited with the following museum/ other body:

NEWHAM MUSEUM SERVICE,
31, STOCK STREET,
PLAISTOW,
LONDON.
E13 OBX.

c) Approximate year of transfer: 1996

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Beasley, M 1996 Report on Resistivity Survey at Weald View, Noak Hill, Romford, unpublished client report, Newham Museum Service.

SIGNED: *Beasley*

DATE: 07.02. 1996

NAME (Block capitals): M. BEASLEY

Please return completed form to The Greater London Sites and Monuments Record, English Heritage London Region, 30 Warwick St., London W1R 5RD. Tel. 0171 973 3731/ 3779 (direct dial).