

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit  
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**Redhill Marina, Radcliffe on Soar,  
Nottinghamshire 2001  
Geotechnical Test Pit, Watching Brief**

by  
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## **1.0 Summary**

*A watching brief was carried out during the excavation of twelve geotechnical test pits at the site of a proposed marina at Redhill, Radcliffe on Soar, Nottingham (centered on NGR SK 44954295). The project was sponsored by Redhill Marina Ltd and undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit. Fieldwalking, metal detecting and an archaeological evaluation in adjacent fields identified zones of intensive archaeological remains close to the track leading from the A453 to Redhill Farm.*

*Two test pits close to the track identified potential archaeological features, a gully and a pit. A piece of Romano-British pottery was retrieved from the pit. The other test pits did not locate any archaeological deposits but identified layers of alluvium, which was deepest in the test pits closest to the River Soar.*

## **2.0 Introduction**

This report describes the results of a watching brief carried out during the excavation of twelve geotechnical test pits at the site of a proposed marina at Redhill, Radcliffe on Soar, Nottingham (centered on NGR SK44954295, Fig. 1). The work was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of Redhill Marina Ltd.

The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the guidelines contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Department of the Environment, November 1990). The methodology conforms to a Written Scheme of Investigation (BUFAU, 2001), which was approved by Nottinghamshire County Council.

The area of investigation is arable farmland, with the River Soar to the west. Approximately 200m to the northeast of the site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, possibly the location of a small Roman town. Previous work on the site has included fieldwalking and metal detecting, which has indicated zones of archaeological interest on both sides of the track leading from the A453 to Redhill Farm. An archaeological evaluation on the eastern side of the track has confirmed intense archaeological activity running north-south along the eastern side of the track, and it seemed likely that similar deposits would also be encountered on the western side.

The site archive is currently held at Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit.

### 3.0 Aims and Methodology

The aims of the watching brief were as follows:

- To observe the depth of modern overburden.
- To identify and briefly characterise any alluvial or colluvial deposits, and any palaeochannels that might contain waterlogged deposits.
- To identify the changes in the underlying geology that might reflect the presence of past settlement.
- To identify any finds or settlement features revealed in section, either within archaeological features/deposits or as scatters within the overburden.
- To test the character of any above-ground earthworks adjoining the test pits.
- To identify any made or disturbed-ground.
- To enable trial trenching to be targeted in areas of archaeological interest, as a requirement of planning conditions.

12 test pits were excavated by machine in four fields that are likely to be affected by the proposed development. Measured sketches were made of the profiles and supplemented by brief soil descriptions. Finds were collected by layer and were retained for washing, marking and identification.

### 4.0 Results

Since previous archaeological work indicated the possible presence of stratified archaeological remains, no test pits were excavated within 30m of the Red Hill Farm access road. Fig. 2 shows a plan of the test pit locations. The following tables have been compiled describing deposits from the uppermost contexts to the lower.

#### Test Pit 1

Context	Depth below surface (m)	Depth of Context (m)	Identification	Comment
1041		0.55	Dark brown clayey silt	Topsoil
1042	0.55	0.40	Modern make-up and silt	Track Construction?
1043	0.95	0.45	Brown silt	Alluvium
1044	1.40	0.80	Yellow gravel	Natural subsoil

### Test Pit 2

Context	Depth below surface	Depth of Context	Identification	Comment
1036		0.40	Dark brown clay silt	Topsoil
1037	0.40	0.30	Mid brown clay silt	B-horizon
1038	0.70	0.75	Red/brown silt with modern debris (brick and tile)	Flood defence construction?
1039	1.45	0.50	Blue clay	Natural subsoil
1040	1.95	0.35	Yellow-grey gravel	Natural subsoil

### Test Pit 3

Context	Depth below surface	Depth of Context	Identification	Comment
1032		0.30	Dark brown clay silt	Topsoil
1033	0.30	0.50	Red brown clay silt	Alluvium
1034	0.80	0.65	Blue clay	Natural subsoil
1035	1.45	0.25	Yellow gravel	Natural subsoil

### Test Pit 4 (Fig. 3)

Context	Depth below surface	Depth of Context	Identification	Comment
1045		0.40	Dark brown clayey silt	Topsoil
1046	0.40	0.35	Brown clayey silt	B-horizon
1048	0.75	0.6	Dark brown silt with charcoal and one piece of Romano-British pottery	Fill of pit
F101	0.75	0.6	U-shaped feature, 1.5m visible in sections	Pit
1047	0.75	1.35	Yellow gravel	Natural subsoil

### Test Pit 5

Context	Depth below surface	Depth of Context	Identification	Comment
1028		0.35	Dark brown clayey silt	Topsoil
1029	0.35	0.75	Red-brown silty clay	Alluvium
1030	1.10	0.70	Blue clay with gravel patches	Natural subsoil
1031	1.80	0.20	Yellow-grey gravel	Natural subsoil

Test Pit 6 (Fig. 3)

Context	Depth below surface	Depth of Context	Identification	Comment
1012		0.30	Dark brown clay silt	Topsoil
1013	0.3	1.20	Brown silt	Alluvium
1014	1.5	0.30	Blue clay	Natural subsoil
1015	1.8	0.15	Grey gravel	Natural subsoil

Test Pit 7

Context	Depth below surface	Depth of Context	Identification	Comment
1009		0.45	Dark brown clay silt	Topsoil
1010	0.45	1.00	Brown silt	Alluvium
1011	1.45	0.35	Yellow gravel	Natural subsoil

Test Pit 8

Context	Depth below surface	Depth of Context	Identification	Comment
1016		0.55	Dark brown clay silt	Topsoil
1017	0.55	1.25	Red-brown silt	Alluvium
1018	1.80	2.00	Red-brown gravel	Natural subsoil

Test Pit 9

Context	Depth below surface	Depth of Context	Identification	Comment
1023		0.45	Dark brown clay silt	Topsoil
1024	0.45	0.40	Mixed silts and clay	B-horizon
1025	0.85	0.65	Red-brown silty clay	Alluvium
1026	1.50	0.40	Yellow gravel	Natural subsoil
1027	1.90	0.35	Grey gravel	Natural subsoil

Test Pit 10

Context	Depth below surface	Depth of Context	Identification	Comment
1019		0.40	Dark brown clay silt	Topsoil
1020	0.40	0.15	Brown silty clay	B-horizon
1021	0.55	0.80	Yellow gravel	Natural subsoil
1022	1.35	0.55	Grey gravel	Natural subsoil

Test Pit 11

Context	Depth below surface	Depth of Context	Identification	Comment
1005		0.35	Dark brown clayey silt	Topsoil
1006	0.35	0.50	Mixed sand and gravel	Natural subsoil
1007	0.85	0.65	Red/brown gavel	Natural subsoil
1008	1.50	0.05	Red clay	Natural subsoil

### Test Pit 12 (Fig. 3)

Context	Depth below surface	Depth of Context	Identification	Comment
1000		0.50	Dark brown clay silt	Topsoil
1004	1.0	0.65	Dark brown silt with flecks of charcoal	Gully fill
F100	1.0	0.65	U-shaped feature, 0.5m wide	Probable gully
1001	0.5	0.50	Yellow gravel with silt patches	Natural subsoil
1002	1.0	0.75	Red-brown gravel	Natural subsoil
1003	1.75	0.25	Red clay	Natural subsoil

## **5.0 Discussion**

The watching brief confirmed the results of previous archaeological work, with possible archaeological features recorded near to the access road from the A453 to Redhill Farm. The feature located in Test pit 4 was a probable pit and the presence of Romano-British pottery suggests Roman activity. The feature in Test pit 12 was undated, but would appear to be a small pit or gully.

The test pits showed deeper alluvial deposits towards the River Soar. No alluvium was recorded in Test pits 4, 9, 10, 11 and 12, which suggests that the degree of flooding in areas to the east of these test pits was significantly less than to the west. This may have implications for the changing focus of archaeological activity during the Prehistoric and Roman periods. The alluvium is probably the result of successive flooding over a long period, and further work may consider the presence of archaeological deposits at any horizon within the alluvium.

Test pit 2 suggests that the construction of flood defences along the bank of the river may have caused some below-ground disturbance. A modern make-up layer in Test-pit 1 may be related to the construction of a track to the north.

Due to the size of the test pits (2m by 1m in plan), it is not possible to discount the possibility of archaeology away from the track. The discovery of features in Test pits 4 and 12 suggests that any concentration of archaeology would be in this area, although the sample provided by the geotechnical test pits was small.

No paleochannels were recorded within the site. The flooding of the River Trent is well documented, with the river occasionally taking a new course once floods have subsided. Much of the land to the west of the River Soar consists of low-lying areas of marshland, which may provide one reason for the absence of paleochannels in the test pits. Further work within the site may however reveal the presence of paleochaennels, with a potential for waterlogged archaeological remains.

## **6.0 Acknowledgements**

Thanks are due to Richard Morley of Redhill Marina Ltd, who commissioned the work. Josh Williams from Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit carried out the watching brief and wrote this report. The project was managed, and this report edited by Richard Cuttler. Illustrations were prepared by Nigel Dodds.

## **7.0 References**

BUFAU 2001. *Redhill Marina, Radcliffe on Soar, Nottingham. Proposal for rapid archaeological monitoring of geotechnical test pits.*

Spence, U. 2001. *Brief For Archaeological Evaluation at Redhill, Radcliffe on Soar.*



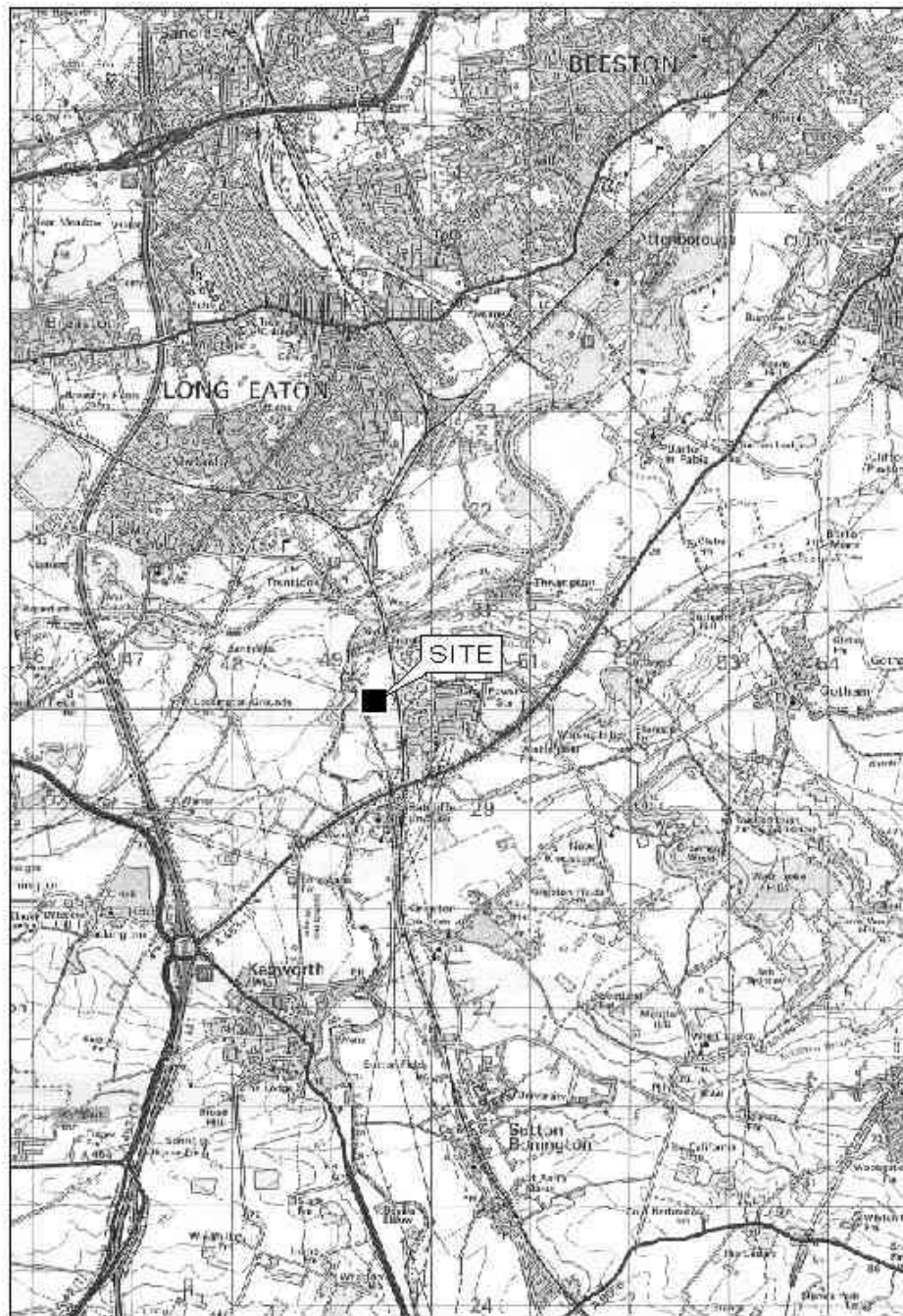


Fig.1

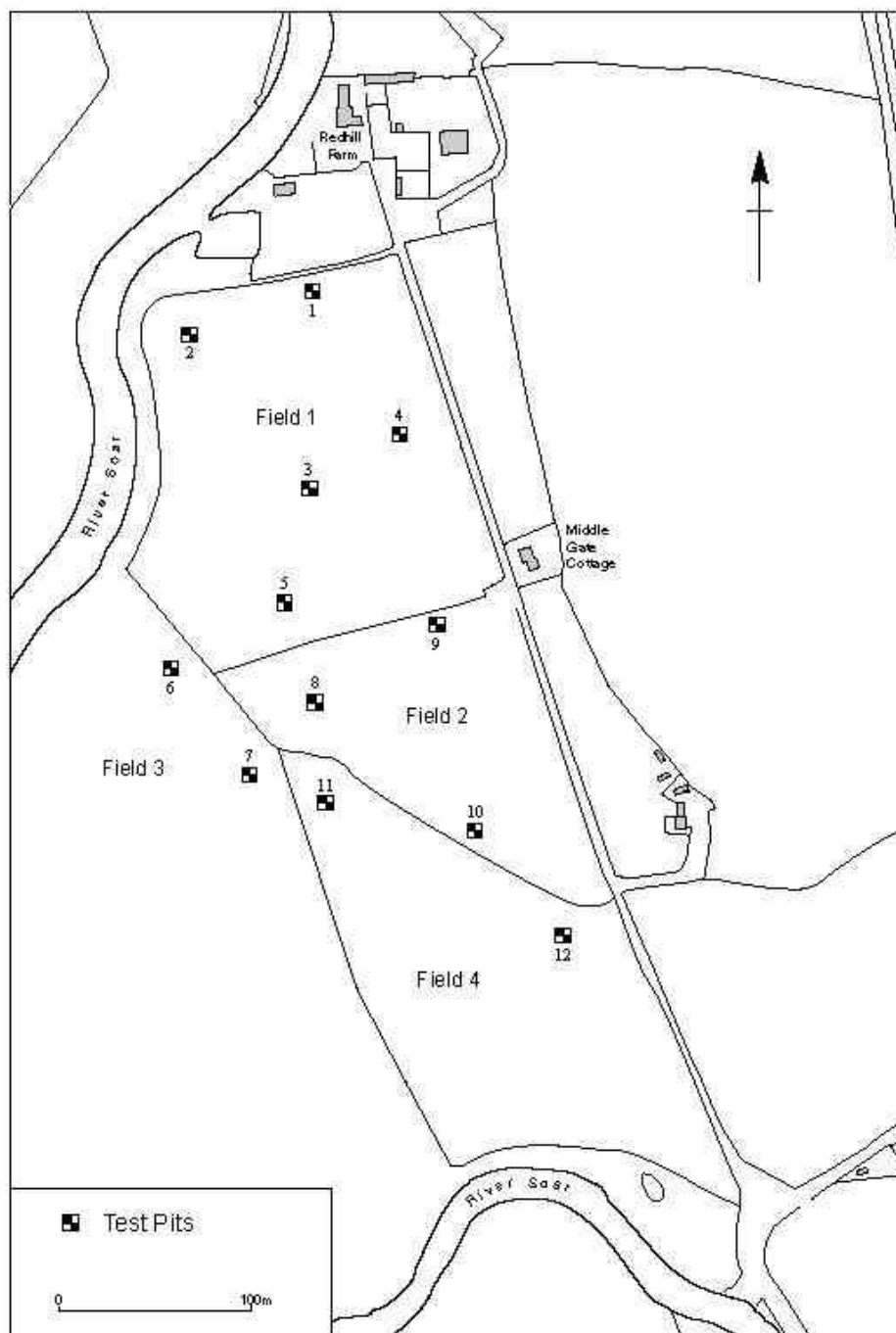
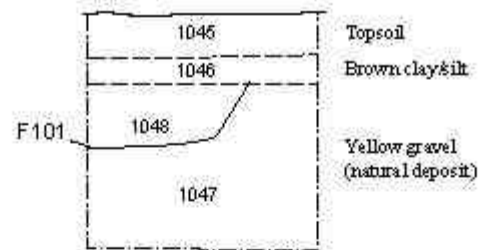


Fig.2

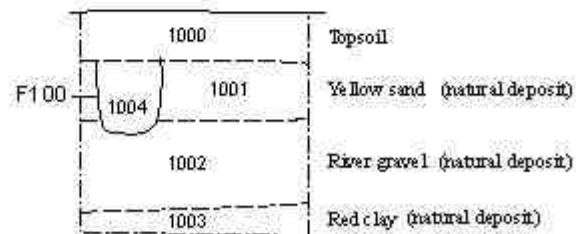
### TP4 South Facing Section



### TP 6 North Facing Section



### TP12 West Facing Section



0 5m

Fig.3