NAU Archaeology

Report No. 1310

An Archaeological Watching Brief at Packhorse Bridge, Moulton Suffolk

MUN 008

Packhorse Bridge from the south-west

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BAU 1621

Contents

Location:	Moulton Packhorse Bridge, Suffolk
District:	Forest Heath
Grid Ref:	TL 6975 6453
SMR No:	MUN 008
SAM No:	SF17
Date of fieldwork:	19th July 2007

Summary

The replacement of a display panel at Moulton Packhorse Bridge was monitored. A hole was dug through topsoil and the posts for the new panel were concreted into place. Nothing of archaeological interest was observed.

1.0 Introduction

The watching brief involved observation and renewal of a display panel at Moulton Packhorse Bridge at Moulton, about five kilometres east of Newmarket, Suffolk (Figs 1 and 2).

The work was requested, commissioned and funded by English Heritage.

The site archive is currently held by NAU Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited with Suffolk Historical Environment Record, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

Moulton Packhorse Bridge is a four-arched bridge which spans the River Kennett on the old route between Cambridge and Bury St Edmunds. It is of 15th-century date and built of flint and rubble, faced at the arches and cut-water buttresses with brick.

The objective of this watching brief was to record any archaeological evidence revealed during the groundworks in the vicinity of the bridge.

The work on site involved the removal of a tall display panel and its replacement with an updated low-level notice board.

Spoil and exposed areas of soil were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection.

Plans were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken to show the work in progress.

Site conditions were good; it was dry and bright and there was no problem with access to the area of work.

2.0 Observations

A trench was hand-dug around the base of the existing display panel by the site contractors. It soon became apparent that the display panel had a larger than expected area of concrete around the two uprights that held it. Removal of this concrete would have caused disturbance to a larger ground area than had been anticipated and permission was obtained from John Ette (English Heritage Inspector) to situate the new notice board slightly to the fore of the old one.

Figure 1. Site location

Thus, two holes were dug immediately to the south of the existing concrete. The two holes were 0.60m deep and approximately 0.20 x 0.30m in size. The soil removed from them was brown fine sandy loam. At the bottom of the holes a paler brown, slightly firmer subsoil was observed but was not dug into.

The position of the disturbed areas was recorded, the new notice board was inserted into the two new holes and they were backfilled with concrete and then topsoil.

Pottery

by Sue Anderson

Seven sherds of pottery weighing 29g were collected during the watching brief. Table 1 shows the quantification by fabric:

Fabric	No.	Wt (g)	Description	Spot date
REFW	1	2	Rim of plain white saucer	19th c.+
REFW	1	6	Base of plate with red lining close to rim	19th c.+
REFW	1	6	Plain white body sherd of hollow ware	19th c.+
REFW	1	1	Small rimsherd with internal blue transfer print	19th c.+
ESW	1	10	Preserve jar, moulded vertical lines	19th c.+
PORC	1	2	Rim of saucer with gold lining	19th c.+
LPME	1	2	Plantpot body sherd	19th c.+

Table 1. Pottery catalogue

Key REFW – refined whitewares; ESW – English stonewares; PORC – porcelain; LPME – late post-medieval unglazed earthenwares.

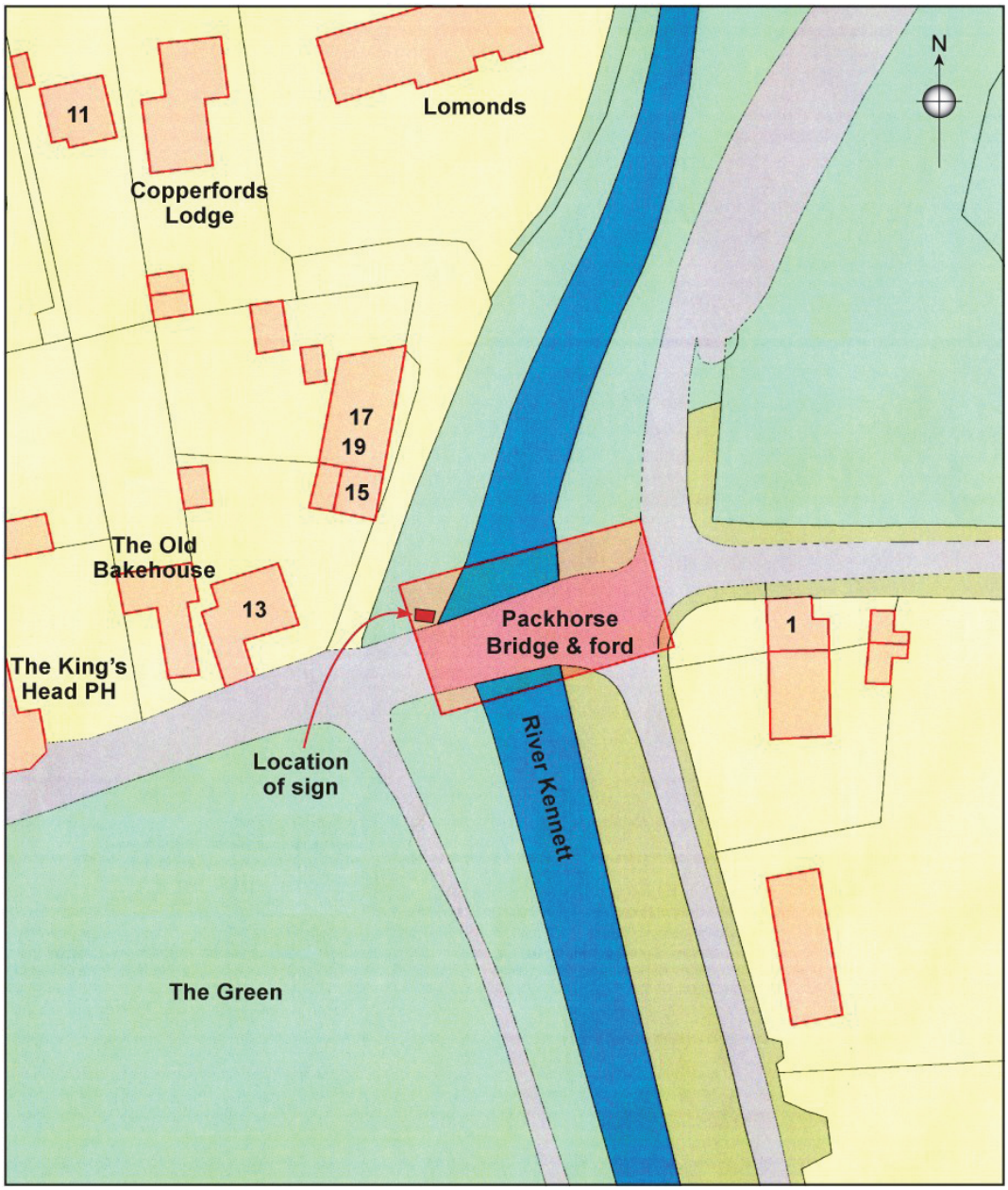

Figure 2. Location of sign

All fabric and form types represented in this group are most commonly found in the 19th to early 20th centuries, although some could be later. The group is too small for further interpretation.

Ceramic Building Material

by Sue Anderson

One abraded fragment (18g) of white-firing plain roof tile with coarse red grog inclusions was found, together with a fragment of pantile (156g) in a fine orange sandy fabric with small grog inclusions. Both were of post-medieval date, the pantile probably being machine-made and 19th century or later.

Flint

A single small piece of flint was retained but on cleaning it can be seen to be of natural origin and has been discarded.

Glass

The site produced two fragments of post-medieval bottle glass.

Metalwork

A single copper alloy eyelet was recovered from context [1] and is large enough perhaps for use on a piece of tarpaulin or similar - it is of late post-medieval or perhaps modern date.

3.0 Conclusions

Nothing of archaeological significance was observed during the groundworks undertaken to install the new display panel.

Plate 1. Packhorse Bridge and ford

Plate 2. Packhorse Bridge showing the position of the sign

Plate 3. Position of the sign relative to the bridge

Acknowledgements

The work was commissioned and funded by English Heritage. Interest and advice from Sarah Tatham of English Heritage is acknowledged.

Site recording was by Sarah Bates. The finds from the site were processed by Lucy Talbot and reported on by Sue Anderson (pottery and ceramic building material) and Lucy Talbot (glass and metal finds).

This report was edited by Martin Smith and illustrated by David Dobson and Michael Feather. It was produced by David Dobson.

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Category	Description	Period
1	Deposit	Topsoil	Modern

Appendix 2: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Period
01	Pottery	7	0.034	Post-medieval
01	Ceramic building material	2	0.172	Post-medieval
01	Glass - bottle	2	-	Post-medieval
01	Flint	1	-	-