Rievers Gate, Longhorsley, Northumberland:

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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AOC 22917

18th December 2014

AOC Archaeology Group

ARCHAEOLOGY | HERITAGE | CONSERVATION

Rievers Gate, Longhorsley, Northumberland: Archaeological Evaluation Report

On Behalf of:	**Cussins Ltd** 8 Bondgate Within Alnwick NE66 1TD
National Grid Reference (NGR):	**NZ 14806 94825**
AOC Project No:	**22917**
Prepared by:	**Jamie Humble**
Illustration by:	**Jamie Humble**
Date of Excavation:	**16th to 17th December 2014**
Date of Report:	**18th December 2014**

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

Author: Jamie Humble	**Date: 18th December 2014**
Approved by: Martin Cook	**Date: 18th December 2014**
Draft/Final Report Stage: draft	**Date: 18th December 2014**

Enquiries to: AOC Archaeology Group
Edgefield Road Industrial Estate
Edgefield Road
Loanhead
Edinburgh

tel. 0131 440 3593
e-mail. admin@aocarchaeology.com

www.aocarchaeology.com

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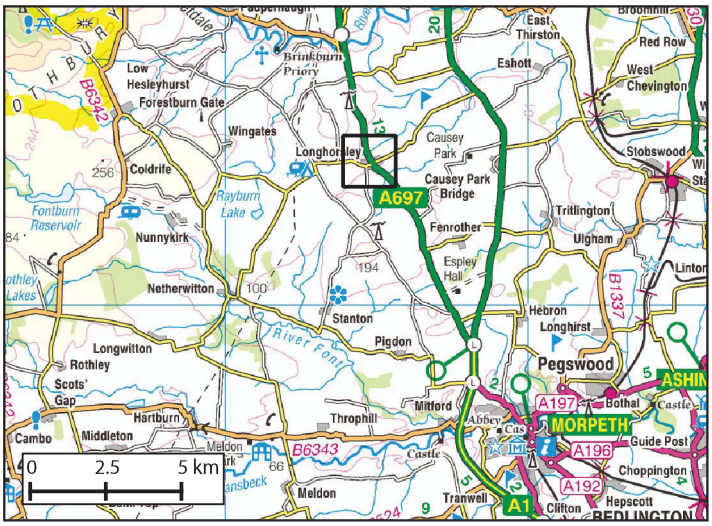
Non-Technical Summary

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group on the site of a proposed residential development on land to the north of Rievers Gate, Longhorsley, Northumberland.

The archaeological evaluation investigated a 5% sample of the proposed development area and comprised the machine excavation of nine linear trenches, totaling 840m^2 (basal area) across the development.

The only archaeological features revealed within the trenches were two linear furrows of probable post-medieval date demonstrating the long agricultural use of the site.



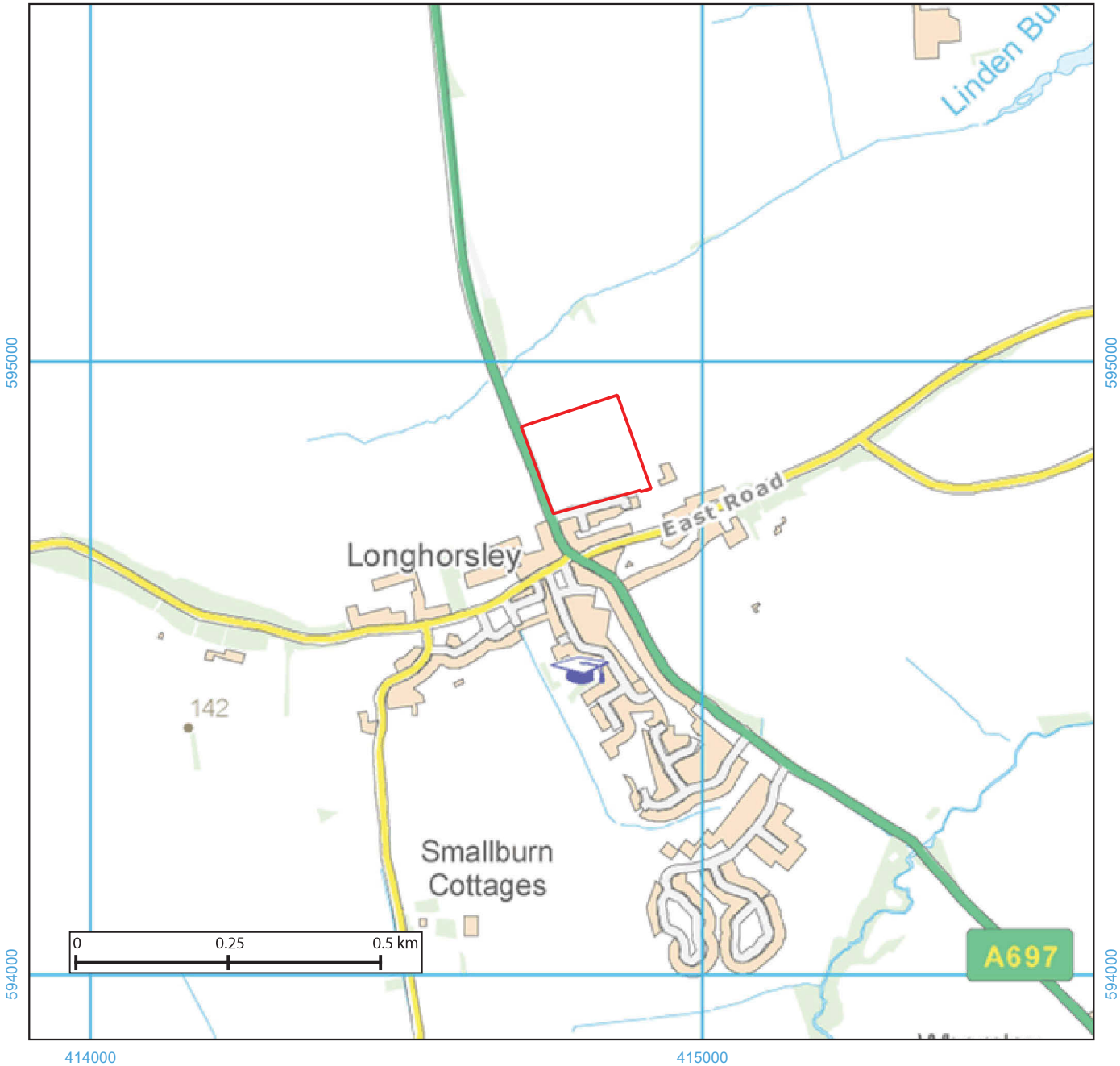


Figure 1: Site location

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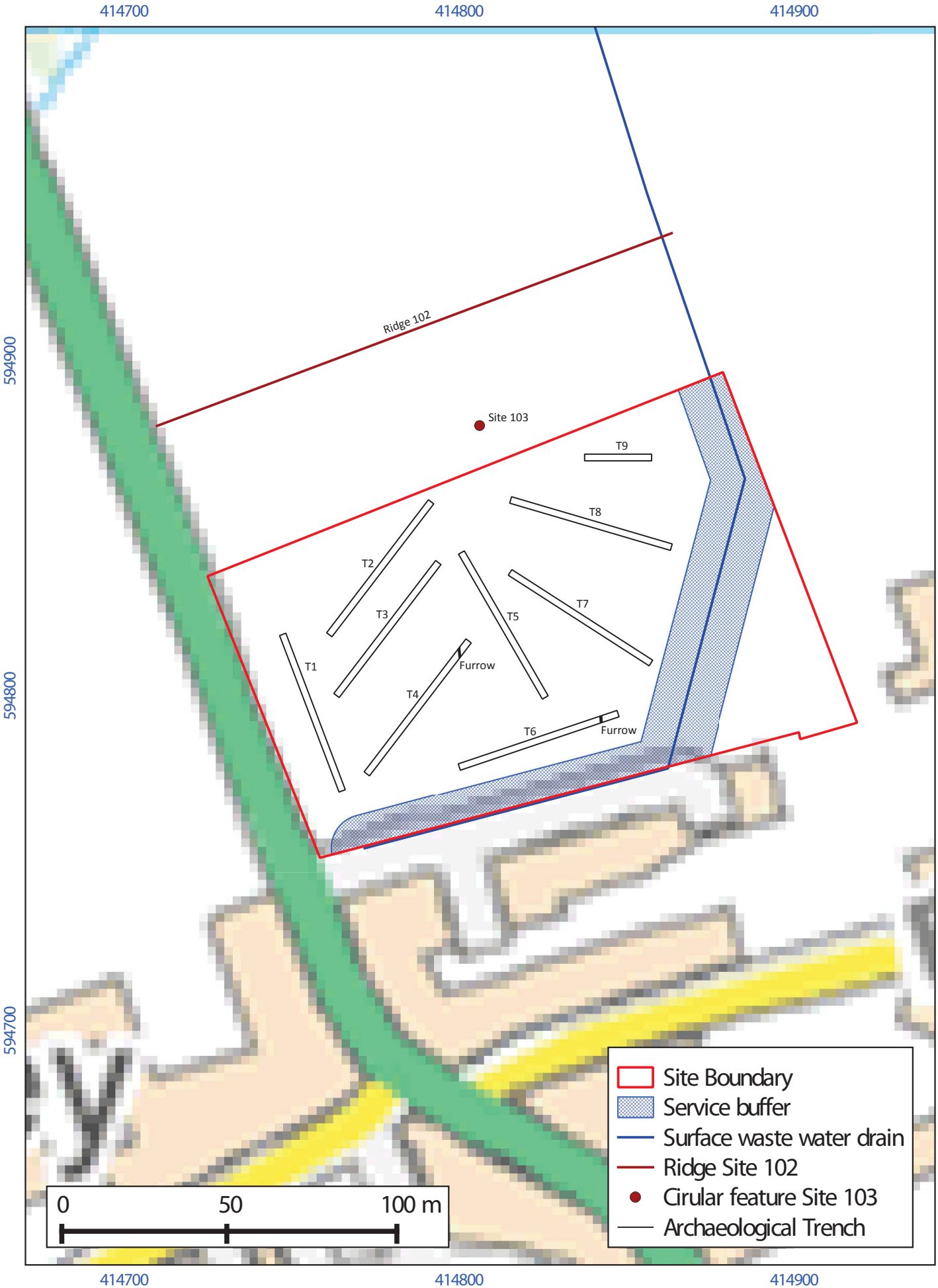

Figure 2: Location of archaeological trenches

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Reasons for the project

1.1.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Cussins Ltd, to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land to the north of Rievers Gate, Longhorsley, Northumberland (centred on NGR: NZ 14806 94825; Figure 1) in advance of an outline planning application for the residential development of the site.

1.1.2 The evaluation follows on from an archaeological desk-based assessment has been undertaken (AOC 2014). This identified that there are no known archaeological sites within the development area. Two known heritage assets lie to the immediate north of the development area, both identified from aerial photographs. These are a linear ridge or possible relict field boundary (**Site 102**) and a roughly circular feature of unknown origin (**Site 103**). There was the potential for hitherto unknown remains, particularly of prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval date to be directly impacted by the development. Medieval and Post-medieval sites are known in the local area.

1.2 Location and topography

1.2.1 The site comprises an area of greenfield covering 1.667 ha and is bounded by the Rievers Gate housing development to the south and the A697 to the west. A narrow band of trees runs along the development area's eastern boundary while the northern extent of the development lies in an open field. The site is currently under pasture.

1.3 Project parameters

1.3.1 The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IFA 1994, rev. 2008). The project followed a detailed specification (AOC 2014). Northumberland County Council Conservation Team (NCCCT) provided an initial brief (ref CM11/1; 20478) which was consulted throughout the archaeological works.

2. AIMS & OBJECTIVES

2.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to identify significant archaeological structures, features or deposits and to determine, if present, their extent, state of preservation, date, type and vulnerability to disturbance. The purpose of this was to determine their significance so as to inform any future planning application relating to the land and any associated archaeological mitigation strategy.

2.2 The general objectives of the archaeological evaluation were:

i) to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development.

ii) given the discovery of highly significant archaeological material in quantity that that will suffer an adverse impact from construction works (ie preservation *in situ* is impractical), the development of a mitigation strategy to be formulated with NCCCT.

2.3 The results of the evaluation had the potential to contribute to regional research priorities as laid out in the North East Regional Research Framework (Petts and Gerrard, 2006) in the following areas:

i) Iii. Settlement the site has the potential to contribute to studies of site classification/typology, social role/function within the wider landscape and chronological development.

ii) MDii Landscapes – the site has the potential to contribute to studies of the morphological and chronological development field systems associated with rural settlements.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork

3.1.1 Nine linear trenches (Trenches 1 - 9) were excavated using a 360^{o} tracked excavator equipped with toothless ditching bucket. The trenches covered a total basal area of 840m^{2} (Figure 2).

3.2.2 Excavation of the evaluation trenches was conducted in shallow spits until the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural geology was reached. All machine excavation was supervised by an experienced field archaeologist.

3.2.3 Any potential archaeological features were cleaned by hand and then hand excavated to determine their nature and to retrieve artefactual and environmental samples where appropriate. For all investigated features, an adequate proportion was excavated to satisfy the aims of the project.

3.2.4 The trenching and recording was undertaken according to AOC Archaeology Group's standard operating procedures, as outlined in the specification (AOC Archaeology 2014, Appendix 7, 7.15-7.25).

3.2.5 All trenches were surveyed using a Trimble RS differential GPS and related to nearby landscape features. Levels were taken across all trenches. On completion of the evaluation, all trenches were backfilled.

3.3 Structural analysis

3.3.1 All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Stratigraphic relationships were also checked once fieldwork was completed.

3.4 Artefact recovery and methodology

3.4.1 The artefact recovery policy conformed to AOC Archaeology's standard operating procedures (AOC Archaeology 2014, Appendix 7, 7.26-7.29). In the event, few artefacts were observed and all were unstratified and clearly modern in date. Unstratified, modern artefacts were noted but not retained.

3.5 Environmental methodology

3.5.1 The environmental sampling methodology conformed to AOC Archaeology's standard operating procedures (AOC Archaeology 2014, Appendix 7, 7.11) and was confirmed in advance by Dr. Jacqui Huntley, the English Heritage Advisor for North East England. In the event no environmental samples were taken.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

4.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment had been undertaken (CFA 2014). This identified that there are no known archaeological sites within the development area. Two known heritage assets lie to the immediate north of the development area, both identified from aerial photographs. These are a linear ridge or possible relict field boundary and a roughly circular feature of unknown origin. There was the potential for hitherto unknown remains, particularly of prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval date to be directly impacted by the development. Medieval and Post-medieval sites are known in the local area.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Statement of confidence

5.1.1 The fieldwork was undertaken between Tuesday 16th and Wednesday 17th February 2014. Weather conditions were good with clear skies and no rain allowing ample opportunity to examine the bases of all trenches and archaeological visibility was generally good. The conditions and the methodologies adopted therefore allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

5.1.2 The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figures 2 and Plate 1. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1. The following sections should be read in conjunction with these data.

5.2 Natural deposits

5.2.1 Natural deposits were exposed in all trenches and consisted of Grey orange sandy clays with common areas of boulders set in clayey san matrices.

5.2.2 The entire field was covered in a thin layer of turf (remnant crop), overlying a dark brown humic silty sand topsoil between 0.30 m and 0.60 m in depth, depending on the local topography. Unstratified artefactual material was rare, but some white ceramic of late date was observed within the topsoil but not collected.

5.3 Probable Post-Medieval features

5.3.1 Trenches 2 and 5, contained evidence for pre-18th century land improvement agriculture, in the form of furrows, evidently the surviving elements of a ridge and furrow agricultural system. The features were aligned north to south across the field, and were around 1m in width and 0.10m deep and were filled with deposits of dark brown humic silty sand, very similar in character to the topsoil.

Plate 1: Trench 5, looking west with furrow in foreground

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The development area (trenches 1 to 9) appeared to be archaeologically sterile, with only evidence of ridge and furrow.

7. RESEARCH FRAMEWORKS

7.1 The results of the evaluation suggest that the site has no potential to contribute to our understanding of either medieval or prehistoric settlement chronology and landscape morphology as defined in the original aims of the investigation.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

8.1 AOC Archaeology would like to thank Ronnie Baird (Cussins Ltd) and Nick Best (NCCCT) for their assistance in the successful conclusion of this project.

8.2 The project was managed by Martin Cook. Fieldwork, the report and illustrations are by Jamie Humble.

9. SITE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

1 Trench record sheets
1 Photographic register sheets
14 Digital photographs

The project archive is intended to be deposited at:
Northumberland Museum and Archives
Queen Elizabeth 11 Country Park
Ashington
NE63 9YF

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Trench summaries

Rievers Gate, Longhorsley, Northumberland				AOC 22917			
Trench 1							
Length	50 m	***Width***	2 m	***Depth***	0.45 m	***Alignment***	NNW-SSE
Soil Descriptions							
Topsoil	Dark brown humic silty sand. Occasional 19th/20th century white ceramic and glass (not retained).						
Subsoil	N/A						
Natural	Grey orange sand and clay with rounded boulders						
Features							
None							

Rievers Gate, Longhorsley, Northumberland				AOC 22917			
Trench 2							
Length	50 m	***Width***	2 m	***Depth***	0.35 m	***Alignment***	NE-SW
Soil Descriptions							
Topsoil	Dark brown humic silty sand. Occasional 19th/20th century white ceramic and glass (not retained).						
Subsoil	N/A						
Natural	Grey orange sand and clay with rounded boulders						
Features							
N-S oriented furrow 1.05m wide and 0.06m deep with gentle break of slope at top and base, shallow sides and rounded base. Filled with a dark brown silty sand.							

Rievers Gate, Longhorsley, Northumberland				AOC 22917			
Trench 3							
Length	50 m	***Width***	2 m	***Depth***	0.40 m	***Alignment***	NE-SW
Soil Descriptions							
Topsoil	Dark brown humic silty sand. Occasional 19th/20th century white ceramic and glass (not retained).						
Subsoil	N/A						
Natural	Grey orange sand and clay with rounded boulders						
Features							
None							

Rievers Gate, Longhorsley, Northumberland				AOC 22917			
Trench 4							
Length	50 m	***Width***	2 m	***Depth***	0.30 m	***Alignment***	NE-SW
Soil Descriptions							
Topsoil	Dark brown humic silty sand. Occasional 19th/20th century white ceramic and glass (not retained).						
Subsoil	N/A						
Natural	Grey orange sand and clay with rounded boulders						
Features							
None							

Rievers Gate, Longhorsley, Northumberland				AOC 22917			
Trench 5							
Length	50 m	***Width***	2 m	***Depth***	0.50 m	***Alignment***	E-W
Soil Descriptions							
Topsoil	Dark brown humic silty sand. Occasional 19th/20th century white ceramic and glass (not retained).						
Subsoil	N/A						
Natural	Grey orange sand and clay with rounded boulders						
Features							
None							

Rievers Gate, Longhorsley, Northumberland				**AOC 22917**			
Trench 6							
Length	50 m	***Width***	2 m	***Depth***	0.50 m	***Alignment***	NNW-SSE
Soil Descriptions							
Topsoil	Dark brown humic silty sand. Occasional 19th/20th century white ceramic and glass (not retained).						
Subsoil	N/A						
Natural	Grey orange sand and clay with rounded boulders						
Features							
N-S oriented furrow 1.12m wide and 0.12m deep with gentle break of slope at top and base, shallow sides and rounded base. Filled with a dark brown silty sand.							

Rievers Gate, Longhorsley, Northumberland				**AOC 22917**			
Trench 7							
Length	50 m	***Width***	2 m	***Depth***	0.40 m	***Alignment***	NW-SE
Soil Descriptions							
Topsoil	Dark brown humic silty sand. Occasional 19th/20th century white ceramic and glass (not retained).						
Subsoil	N/A						
Natural	Grey orange sand and clay with rounded boulders						
Features							
None							

Rievers Gate, Longhorsley, Northumberland				**AOC 22917**			
Trench 8							
Length	50 m	***Width***	2 m	***Depth***	0.40 m	***Alignment***	NW-SE
Soil Descriptions							
Topsoil	Dark brown humic silty sand. Occasional 19th/20th century white ceramic and glass (not retained).						
Subsoil	N/A						
Natural	Grey orange sand and clay with rounded boulders						
Features							
None							

Rievers Gate, Longhorsley, Northumberland				**AOC 22917**			
Trench 7							
Length	20 m	***Width***	2 m	***Depth***	0.35 m	***Alignment***	WNW-ESE
Soil Descriptions							
Topsoil	Dark brown humic silty sand. Occasional 19th/20th century white ceramic and glass (not retained).						
Subsoil	N/A						
Natural	Grey orange sand and clay with rounded boulders						
Features							
None							

APPENDIX 2

Colour Digital Photographic Register

Ref No	Area	Description	From	Date
1	-	Registration	-	16/12/2014
2	Trench 1	Post-excavation	NNW	16/12/2014
3	Trench 2	Trench 2 furrow N-facing section	N	16/12/2014
4	Trench 2	Trench 10 modern pit N-facing section	SW	16/12/2014
5	Trench 3	Post-excavation	SW	16/12/2014
6	Trench 4	Post-excavation	SW	16/12/2014
7	Trench 5	Post-excavation	SSE	16/12/2014
8	Trench 6	Post-excavation, showing furrow in foreground	E	16/12/2014
9	Trench 7	Post-excavation	NW	16/12/2014
10	Trench 9	Post-excavation	WNW	16/12/2014
11	Trench 8	Post-excavation	NW	16/12/2014
12	Trench 7	Post-excavation	NW	16/12/2014
13	-	General view of site Post-excavation	S	16/12/2014
14	-	General view of site Post-excavation	SE	16/12/2014









AOC Archaeology Group, Edgefield Road Industrial Estate, Loanhead, Edinburgh

tel: 0131 440 3593 | **fax:** 0131 440 3422 | **e-mail:** admin@aocarchaeology.com