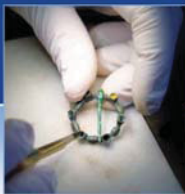


Ashybank, Denholm: Watching Brief Report

20910
September 2009



Ashybank, Denholm: Watching Brief Report

On Behalf of: Scottish Power
30 Melrose Road
Galashiels
TD1 2BZ

National Grid Reference (NGR): NT 5430 1774

AOC Project No: 20910

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Date of Fieldwork: May 2008 – Sept 2009

Date of Report: Sept 2008

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

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Date: 28 September 2009

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Date: 28 September 2009

Draft/Final Report Stage: Final

Date: 28 September 2009

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Abstract

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group on ground breaking works associated with the erection of new electricity poles and removal of old poles at Ashybank, Denholm, Scottish Borders. No deposits, features or small finds of any archaeological significance were found.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Scottish Power to undertake an archaeological watching brief on groundwork associated with the erection of new overhead electricity poles and subsequent removal of old overhead electricity poles in an area crossing the Eastcote Roman Temporary Camp. The archaeological works were designed to satisfy the advice rendered by the Scottish Borders Council archaeological advisor, Mr Rory MacDonald. The works were conducted according to the terms of a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (AOC 2008) approved by Mr. MacDonald. .

1.2 Location

1.2.1 The area of investigation is centred on NGR NT 5430 1774 (Figure 1) at Ashybank, Denholm, Scottish Borders within the flood plain of the River Teviot and is currently under arable crop cultivation.

1.3 Archaeological Background

1.3.1 The Eastcote Temporary Roman Camp (*NMRS* NT51NW 23) appears on aerial photographs. These show the course of the ditch on camp's north-east and south-east sides, as well as the south-west side and much of the southern and eastern angles. It measures approximately 360 m north-east to south-west by 300 m transversely. The western corner appears eroded by the river (St Joseph 1961; Maxwell 1980).

1.3.2 In a wider landscape context, evidence of prehistoric activity can be seen approximately 600 m to the west at Midshiels in the guise of a round cairn (*NMRS* NT51NW 11) and standing stone (*NMRS* NT51NW 12). Aerial photographs have also recorded circular cropmarks described as a possible ritual enclosure 600 m to the south-west (*NMRS* NT51NW 56). In addition a flat bronze axe (*NMRS* NT51NW 22) was found at Ashybank approximately 500 m to the south. Later activity has also been noted via aerial photography to the south of the site with the identification of a field system at Eastcote (*NMRS* NT51NW 55) and a possible settlement at Cavers Main Strip (*NMRS* NT51 NW 24). Approximately 350 to the north-east is the site of Hassendean Church (*NMRS* NT51NW 20) although no standing remains can be seen due to river erosion. The churchyard was last used in 1796 (Barton 1950).

2 Objectives

2.1 The objectives of the watching brief were:

- i) to monitor ground breaking works associated with the pole renewal programme and prevent the destruction of significant archaeological features prior to their recording;
- ii) to undertake the immediate recording of isolated finds of moderately significant archaeological material that will be disturbed by the pole renewal program;

- iii) given the discovery of highly significant archaeological material in quantity that will suffer an adverse impact from the construction works (i.e. preservation *in situ* is impractical), the recording of all archaeological features by means of a mitigation strategy to be formulated with Mr. MacDonald.

3 Method

- 3.1 The watching brief was conducted on the erection of new poles identified as Pole 69 (NGR: NT 54150 17715) through to Pole 72 (NGR: NT 54400 17720) (Figure 2). Pole 73 (NGR: NT 54505 17725) also within the scope of the watching brief had been erected prior to AOC Archaeology Group being called out. Ground breaking works were carried out using a 360° type tracked excavator fitted with a 0.6 m wide toothless bucket under the direct supervision of an archaeologist with the removal of soil in shallow spits to a depth of approximately 2.0 m.
- 3.2 The watching brief conducted on the removal of the old poles included one labelled as Pole A which lay within a circular cropmark site described as a possible ritual enclosure, (NMRS NT51NW 56), 600 m to the south-west of the Temporary Camp on higher ground looking down onto the River Teviot. Pole B was positioned within an area of trees and was left *in situ* with the metal stays cut flush with the top of the concrete base and covered with a small amount of soil. The remaining old poles, Poles C, D and E, all lay very close to the Temporary Camp, beyond its probable western extent on the lower-lying flood plain of River Teviot. In each instance excavation work was undertaken using a JCB 3CX excavator fitted with a 0.6 m wide toothless bucket under the direct supervision of an archaeologist with the removal of soil in shallow spits to a depth of 2.0 to 3.0 m to create a hole c. 4.0 m long by 2.0 m wide into which the concrete footing of the old poles could be pulled over and then buried.

4 Results

- 4.1 The watching brief on the erection of the new poles was conducted on 8th May 2008. The watching brief on the removal of the old poles was conducted on 24th June 2009 and 15th September 2009. The weather conditions during the works were dry and sunny which rendered good archaeological visibility. The various data gathered from the evaluation are presented as a series of appendices:
 - i) Appendix 1 contains the pole pit summaries;
 - ii) Appendix 2 contains the photographic register;
 - iii) Appendix 3 reproduces the Discovery and Excavation in Scotland entry.
- 4.2 Each new pole pit measured between 0.7 m by 2.0 m up to 1.2 m by 2.0 m with a depth of 2.0 m. Two of the pits, 72 and 69, were dug through the existing hedge line and showed that the topsoil had a depth of between 0.5 m to 0.8 m and lay directly over the natural gravels. The two other pits, 70 and 71, had a layer of modern plough soil some 0.3 m in depth over a subsoil similar to the topsoil noted above with a depth of 1.0 m (pit 71) and 0.3 m (pit 70). This subsoil lay directly above the natural gravels. No significant archaeological features, deposits or finds were observed within any of the foundation pits.



Plate 1: Pit 69

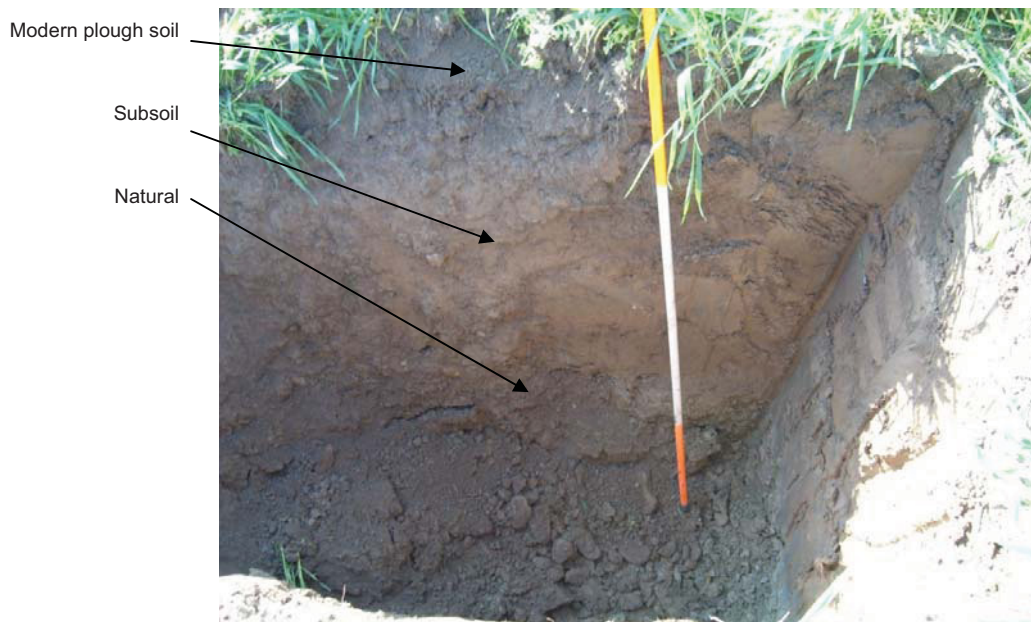


Plate 2: Pit 71

4.3 The large concrete bases of the old poles were all buried on site. In each case a pit c. 4.0 m by 2.0 m was excavated adjacent to and around the concrete base. With the pit c. 2.5 m deep the base was toppled into the pit and buried. On average the pits excavated to bury the footings had a layer of modern plough soil some 0.3 m in depth over a subsoil similar to the topsoil noted above with a depth of between 0.4 m and 0.3 m. This subsoil lay directly above the natural gravels. No significant archaeological features, deposits or finds were observed within any of the pits.



Plate 3: Pole C



Plate 4: Pole C pushed over prior to burying

- 4.4 At Poles D and E, two additional small pit c. 1.0 m long by 0.6 m wide were excavated to remove wire support stays. These smaller scale excavations did not uncover any significant archaeological features, deposits or finds.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 No features, deposits or artefacts of any archaeological significance were recorded during the watching brief. No further archaeological works are considered necessary.

6 Bibliography

- AOC 2008 *Ashybank, Denholm: Written Scheme of investigation*, AOC Archaeology, Unpublished Client Report
- Barton, E 1950 *The Passing of the Church and Churchyard of Hassendean*, Trans Hawick Archaeol Soc, 1950, 18
- Maxwell, GS 1980 'Agricola's campaign's: the evidence of the temporary camps', *Scot Arch Forum*, 12, 1980, 40.
- St Joseph, JK 1961 *Air reconnaissance in Britain, 1958-60*.

Ashybank, Denholm
Watching Brief Data Structure Report

Section 2: Appendices

Appendix 1: Excavation Summaries

Pole No.	Dimensions			Summaries	
	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Descriptions	Depth (m)
A	4.0 N/S	2.0 E/W	2.8	Topsoil Mid brown clay silt Cultivated	0.3
				Subsoil Mid brown clay silt	0.4
				Natural Grey brown silty clay Frequent inclusions of gravels and large stones	>2.0
C	4.0 N/S	2.0 E/W	2.8	Topsoil Mid brown clay silt Cultivated	0.5
				Subsoil	None
				Natural Grey brown silty clay Frequent inclusions of gravels and large stones	>2.3
D	4.0 N/S	2.0 E/W	2.5	Topsoil Mid brown clay silt Cultivated	0.4
				Subsoil Mid brown clay silt	0.4
				Natural Grey brown silty clay Frequent inclusions of gravels and large stones	>1.7
E	4.0 N/S	2.0 E/W	2.3	Topsoil Mid brown clay silt Cultivated	0.4
				Subsoil Mid brown clay silt	0.4
				Natural Grey brown silty clay Frequent inclusions of gravels and large stones	>1.5
69	2.0 N/S	1 E/W	2.0	Topsoil Mid brown clay silt Uncultivated	0.5
				Subsoil	None
				Natural Grey brown silty clay Frequent inclusions of gravels and Large stones	>1.5
70	2.0 E/W	1.2 N/S	2.0	Modern plough soil Dark brown clay silt Cultivated	0.3
				Subsoil Mid brown clay silt	0.3
				Natural Grey brown silty clay Frequent inclusions of gravels and large stones	>1.4
71	2.0 E/W	1 N/S	2.0	Modern plough soil Dark brown clay silt Cultivated	0.3
				Subsoil Mid brown clay silt	1.0
				Natural	>0.7

				Grey brown silty clay Frequent inclusions of gravels and large stones	
72	0.7 NE/SW	2.0 NW/SE	2.0	Topsoil Mid brown clay silt Uncultivated	0.8
				Subsoil	None
				Natural Grey brown silty clay Frequent inclusions of gravels and large stones	>1.2

Appendix 2: Photographic Register

Colour slide film 1

Number	Pit	Description	From
1		Registration	
2	72	General shot of section	NW
3	72	General shot of section	NW
4	71	General shot of section	NE
5	71	General shot of section	NE
6	70	General shot of section	W
7	70	General shot of section	W
8	69	General shot of section	E
9	69	General shot of section	E

Black and white film 1

Number	Pit	Description	From
1		Registration	
2	72	General shot of section	NW
3	72	General shot of section	NW
4	71	General shot of section	NE
5	71	General shot of section	NE
6	70	General shot of section	W
7	70	General shot of section	W
8	69	General shot of section	E
9	69	General shot of section	E

Digital images

Number	Pit/Pole	Description	From
1		Registration	
2	72	General shot of section	NW
3	71	General shot of section	NE
4	70	General shot of section	W
5	69	General shot of section	E
6	C	Working shot	S
7	C	West facing section	W
8	C	East facing section	E
9	C	Post-Excavation showing concrete base in base of hole	S
10	D	Northeast facing section – working shot	NE
11	D	Northeast facing section	NE
12	D	Post-Excavation showing concrete base in base of hole	SE
13	D	Holes excavated to enable removal of north stay	E
14	D	Holes excavated to enable removal of south stay	E
15	E	North facing section	N
16	E	Post-Excavation showing concrete base in base of hole	E

Appendix 3: 'Discovery and Excavation in Scotland' Report

LOCAL AUTHORITY: Borders Council
 PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME: Ashybank, Denholm
 PROJECT CODE: 20910
 PARISH: Cavers
 NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S): Hindmarch, Erlend
 NAME OF ORGANISATION: AOC Archaeology Group
 TYPES(S) OF PROJECTS: Watching brief
 NMRS NO(S): NT51NW 23; NT51NW 56
 SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S): Eastcote Roman Temporary Camp
 SIGNIFICANT FINDS: None
 NGR: NT 5430 1774
 START DATE: 08/05/2008
 END DATE: 15/09/2009
 PREVIOUS WORK: None
 MAIN DESCRIPTION: A watching brief was undertaken during the replacement of overhead electricity poles, the path of which crossed Eastcote Temporary Roman Camp NMRS NT51NW 23. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were recorded during the works and no finds were recovered. A watching brief on the removal of the old overhead electricity poles from within the camp boundaries and at Midshiel cropmark enclosure (NMRS NT51NW 56) was also completed with no archaeological material observed.

PROPOSED FUTURE WORK: None
 SPONSOR OR FUNDING: Scottish Power
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