

**Loop 40-42, RAF Lakenheath
LKH 335**

Archaeological Monitoring Report

SCCAS Report No. 2011/211

Client: Defence Infrastructure Organisation

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Disclaimer

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Team alone. Ultimately the need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its Archaeological Advisors when a planning application is registered. Suffolk County Council's archaeological contracting services cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to the clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.

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Date: 12/2011

Approved By: Jo Caruth

Position: Senior Project Officer

Date:

Signed:

Contents

Summary

| | |
|--|----------|
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 2. Geology and topography | 1 |
| 3. Archaeology and historical background | 1 |
| 4. Methodology | 4 |
| 5. Results | 4 |
| 5.1 Introduction | 4 |
| 6. Finds and environmental evidence | 5 |
| 6.1 Introduction | 5 |
| 6.2 The Pottery | 5 |
| Roman pottery | 5 |
| 6.3 Worked flint | 5 |
| 6.4 Discussion of material evidence | 7 |
| 7. Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations for further work | 7 |
| 9. Archive deposition | 8 |
| 10. Acknowledgements | 8 |
| OASIS DATA | 9 |
| List of Figures | |
| Figure 1. Location map showing development area (red). | 2 |
| Figure 2. HER listings (green) mentioned in text. | 3 |
| List of Tables | |
| Table 1. Finds quantities | 5 |
| Table 2. Flint descriptions | 6 |

Summary

Eight monitoring visits were carried out between July and September 2011 in order to observe ground works relating to the enhancement of the runway (Loop 40-42) at RAF Lakenheath, Suffolk. The development area was mechanically lowered by approximately 0.7m. No archaeological horizon was identified due to the severe degree of disturbance and truncation originating from the previous runways construction. Initial cable locating trenches recovered unstratified burnt and struck flints of a prehistoric nature as well as two sherds of abraded Roman pottery.

1. Introduction

Groundworks for an enhancement to the runway at RAF Lakenheath were archaeologically monitored over 8 visits between July and September 2011. The monitoring observed a portion of the mechanical excavation as well as the areas stripped during the absence of an archaeologist in accordance with a verbal brief supplied by Jude Plouviez.

2. Geology and topography

The geology within the development area displayed a common Breckland profile comprising fine windblown sands overlying a solid chalk with peri-glacial scarring. Appearing sporadically throughout the fine sand, possibly surviving in natural hollows, are patches of dark brownish-black mineralised, granular sand (podsol). Similar podsols were noted by the author to the West at LKH 335 and LKH 329 to the East. At its highest point the natural chalk appeared 0.3m below the current ground level.

3. Archaeology and historical background

The development area lies within the bounds of Wangford warren (WNG 030), a post-medieval rabbit warren. The sites and monument record identifies five entries within a 500m radius of the development area (Figure 1);

- Lakenheath Warren (LKH 174) lies 80m south of the site.
- A single Neolithic arrowhead was found at WNG 010
- Several earth banks related to the Lakenheath warren were observed at WNG 020.
- Another monitoring towards the NE of the site observed unstratified medieval materials (WNG 047).
- WNG 090 indicates a find spot comprising Bronze Age Beaker pottery and flint arrowheads.
- Large quantities of Mesolithic flints were discovered throughout the 1930's by J. G. D. Clark and LKH 075 and WNG 017 after wind erosion uncovered Mesolithic floor layers.
- J.G.D Clarks' excavation through a dune complex at LKH 127 recovered Mesolithic microliths.

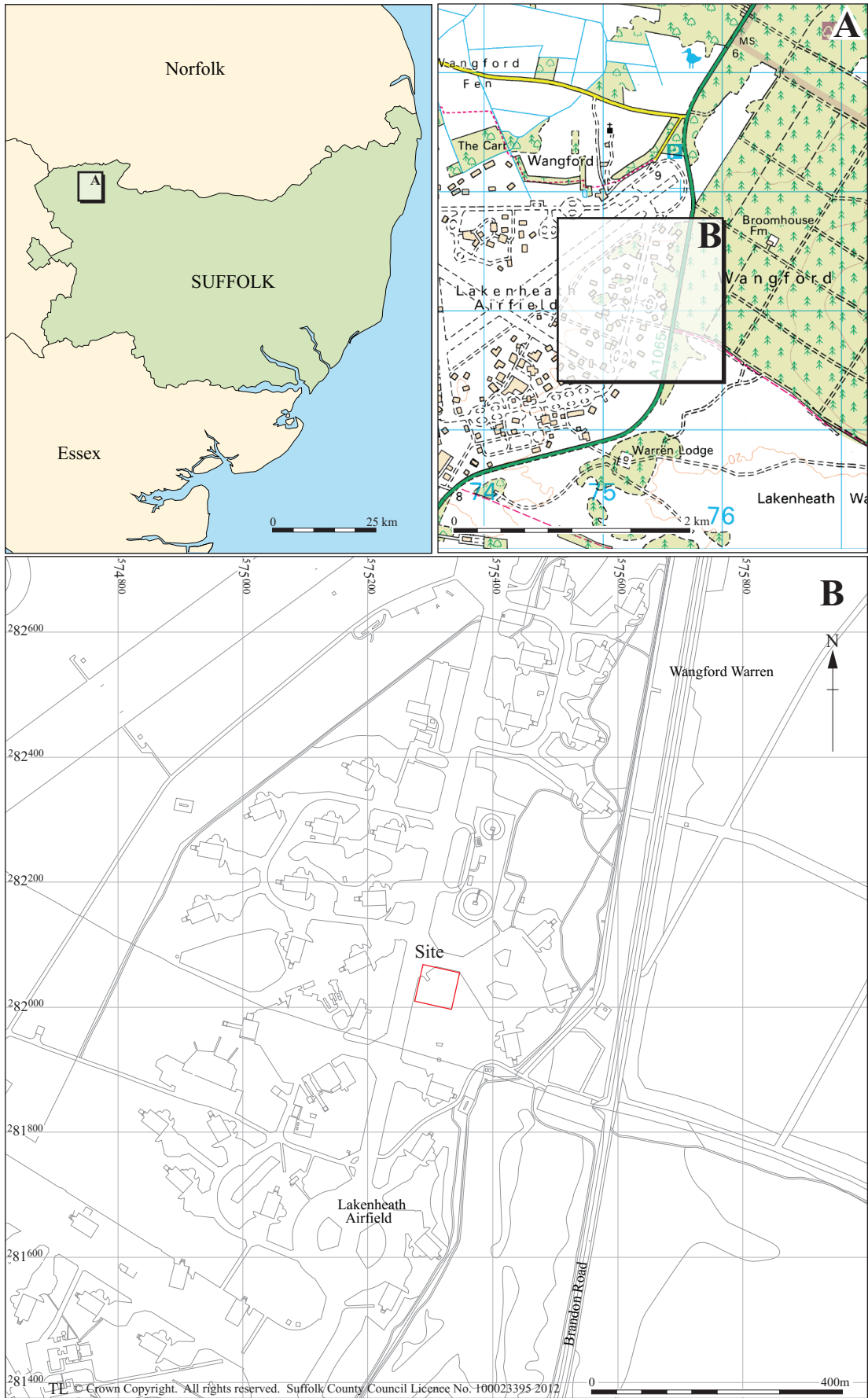


Figure 1. Location map, showing development area (red)

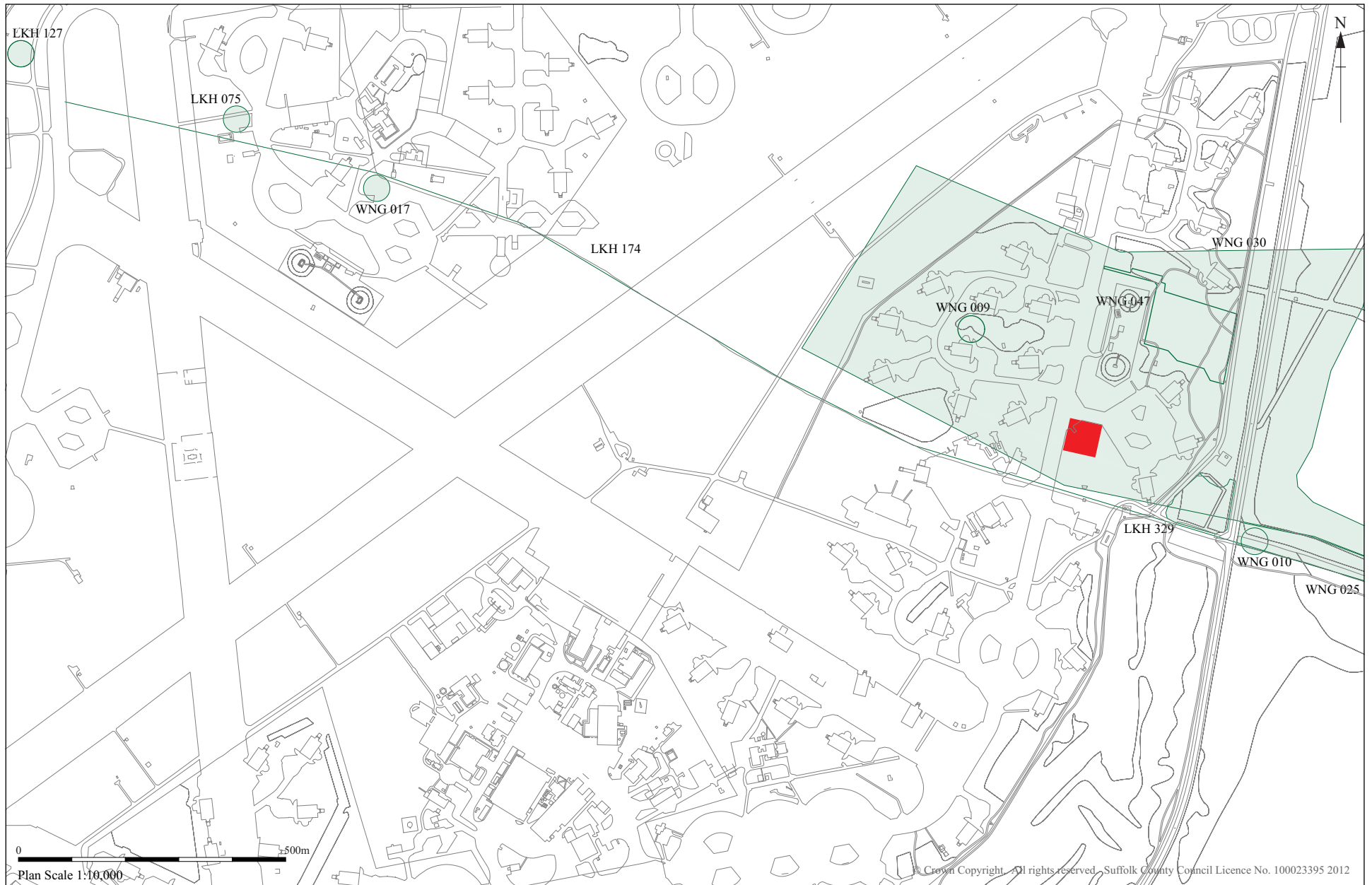


Figure 2. HER listings (green) mentioned in the text

4. Methodology

The development area was mechanically stripped with a 360 degree machine fitted with a ditching bucket. This bucket was swapped for a toothed bucket in areas containing compacted hardcore. The machining was semi-continuously monitored and spoil from the groundwork was investigated thoroughly for archaeological evidence. Sections of the trench walls were hand cleaned to ascertain the presence of archaeological deposits.

Due to the sensitive nature of the location photography was prohibited on site.

5. Results

5.1 Introduction

The development area measured 65m by 70m and was lowered by an approximate depth of 0.7m.

The monitoring observed a severe degree of modern truncation and disturbance across the development area. This disturbance originates from a series of modern pipes and cables across the area whilst the truncation is due to landscaping for the original runway. The soil profile comprised a modern mid/dark greyish-brown sandy-silty topsoil (0001) overlying a mixed mid/pale orangey-greyish-brown silty-sand subsoil (0002) from which all the finds were retrieved. Under this subsoil, where not disturbed by modern activity, lay the natural geology of fine yellow sand.

An archaeological horizon could not be identified due to the severe disturbance although several struck and burnt flints and two sherds of Roman pottery were retrieved from test pits initially dug to locate live cables.

6. Finds and environmental evidence

Richenda Goffin

6.1 Introduction

Only a small quantity of finds was recovered from the monitoring.

| Context | Pottery | | Worked flint | | Spotdate |
|--------------|----------|-----------|--------------|------------|----------|
| | No | Wt/g | No | Wt/g | |
| 0002 | 2 | 11 | 23 | 206 | Roman |
| Total | 2 | 11 | 23 | 206 | |

Table 1. Finds quantities

6.2 The Pottery

Roman pottery

(Identifications by Cathy Tester)

Two joining body sherds of very abraded Roman pottery were collected (11g). The fragments are made in a greyware fabric and may come from the base of a jar. They are not closely datable within the Roman period.

6.3 Worked flint

Justine Biddle

Twenty-three pieces of struck flint were recovered from layer 0002. The assemblage was recorded by type and other descriptive comments about appearance, condition and technology were noted and a date for each flint has been suggested. Descriptions are included in the table below.

| Context | Type | No | Patinated | Notes | Date |
|---------|-----------------|----|------------|--|--|
| 0002 | Retouched flake | 1 | Yes Heavy | Long heavily patinated blade with sub-triangular cross-section. Approx 30% cortex remaining. Possibly a core-rejuvenation blade. One edge shows unpatinated retouch forming a notch which has obviously been done later. | Upper Palaeolithic with Later Prehistoric retouch |
| 0002 | Retouched blade | 2 | Yes Heavy | Both broken with distal ends missing. Both are long flakes with evidence of retouch on their edges. One also shows evidence of unpatinated retouch on one edge suggesting later modification. | Upper Palaeolithic with Later Prehistoric retouch on one |
| 0002 | Retouched blade | 1 | No | Long blade, snapped at the proximal end. Both edges show evidence of retouch. Blade scars present on the dorsal surface. | Later Prehistoric |
| 0002 | Scraper | 1 | No | Squat oval primary flake. Edges have been retouched, probably for use as a scraper. | Later Prehistoric |
| 0002 | Retouched flake | 1 | No | Flake with a hinge fracture and evidence of retouch/use-wear on both edges. Sub-triangular cross-section. | Later Prehistoric |
| 0002 | Retouched flake | 1 | No | Small flake with hinge fracture and pronounced ripples on the ventral surface. Negative flake scars on the dorsal surface also show pronounced ripples. | Later Prehistoric |
| 0002 | Retouched flake | 1 | No | Small crescent-shaped flake with extensive retouch on one edge, probably for use as a scraper. | Later Prehistoric |
| 0002 | Notched flake | 1 | No | Distal end of a snapped flake with negative flake scars on the dorsal surface. One edge has been retouched to form a shallow notch. | Later Prehistoric |
| 0002 | Utilised flake | 1 | No | Small thin flake, snapped at the proximal end. Evidence of limited retouch/use-wear on one edge. | Later Prehistoric |
| 0002 | Utilised flake | 1 | No | Squat flake with approx 50% cortex remaining and showing evidence of limited retouch/use-wear on one edge. | Later Prehistoric |
| 0002 | Utilised flake | 3 | No | 3 small thin flakes, all with small amounts of cortex and all showing evidence of limited use-wear or retouch. One has a hinge fracture. All have parallel flake scars on their dorsal surface. | Later Prehistoric |
| 0002 | Primary flake | 1 | No | Primary flake with a hinge fracture. No evidence of use-wear or retouch. | Later Prehistoric |
| 0002 | Flake | 1 | No | Small flake, snapped at the proximal end. No evidence of use-wear or retouch. | Later Prehistoric |
| 0002 | Flake | 1 | No | Large flake with approximately 50% cortex remaining. Negative flake scars on the dorsal surface. No evidence of use-wear or retouch. | Later Prehistoric |
| 0002 | Flake | 4 | No | 4 small thin flakes, all with small amounts of cortex, none showing evidence of use-wear or retouch. All with parallel flake scars on the dorsal surface. | Later Prehistoric |
| 0002 | Flake | 1 | No | Squat thin flake with small amount of cortex, probably from the very edge of a core. | Later Prehistoric |
| 0002 | Flake | 1 | Yes Slight | Large flake with approximately 25% cortex remaining and slight patination on part of the ventral side. It appears that it has later been broken at the proximal end, removing the bulb of percussion as part of the ventral and the dorsal surfaces are unpatinated. Further flakes have been removed from both the ventral and dorsal surfaces as there are negative scars on both. One edge shows evidence of limited retouch. | Early Neolithic |

Table 2. Flint descriptions

There are three phases within this assemblage. The first relates to the heavily patinated flake and blades which could be from the Upper Palaeolithic, although a Mesolithic date is more likely. Two of these show evidence of later retouch/damage which suggests that they were re-used during the third phase.

The second phase consists of the slightly patinated flake. One face is lightly patinated and again has later retouch suggesting re-use in the third phase. The date of the patination is unknown but is likely to be the early Neolithic.

The final phase consists of all the unpatinated pieces (19) which consist mainly of flakes (17), many of which have been utilised in some way, either by purposeful retouch or some form of use which has left marks on an edge. In addition to the flakes there is a snapped blade and at least one scraper and a notched flake. All pieces are well made; generally thin and probably date to the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age.

6.4 Discussion of material evidence

The presence of some quantity of prehistoric flint, including several examples of Mesolithic flints which have been modified and reused at a later date, together with the presence of burnt flint which was noted by the excavator, reflects the general background of prehistoric activity at RAF Lakenheath. Two joining sherds of Roman pot were also identified. The finds were collected from an area of levelled heathland and did not come from archaeological features.

7. Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations for further work

Finds recovered from the monitoring were not recovered from an identifiable archaeological horizon but their presence suggests Prehistoric and Roman activity in the area.

The monitoring concluded that a large amount of disturbance and truncation across the site has occurred and that that any surviving archaeological deposits will be located in natural hollows or areas that have survived the previous groundworks. As such it is

recommended that further work in the immediate area is monitored in order to identify these areas of surviving archaeology.

8. Archive deposition

Paper archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds

Digital archive: R:\Environmental

Protection\Conservation\Archaeology\Archive\RAFLakenheath\LKH 335

Finds evidence: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds H/82/3

9. Acknowledgements

The Archaeological monitoring visits were carried out by Andrew Tester and Andrew Vaughan Beverton.

The project was directed by Andrew Vaughan Beverton and managed by Jo Caruth. Advice was provided by Jo Caruth and Andrew Tester during both the monitoring and report writing phases of the project.

OASIS DATA

OASIS ID: suffolkc1-116931

Project details

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Project name | Loop 40-42, RAF Lakenheath |
| Short description of the project | Eight monitoring visits were carried out between July and September 2011 in order to observe ground works relating to the enhancement of the runway (Loop 40-42) at RAF Lakenheath, Suffolk. The development area was mechanically lowered by approximately 0.7m. No archaeological horizon was identified, likely due to the severe degree of disturbance and truncation originating from the previous runways construction. Initial cable locating trenches recovered unstratified burnt and struck flints of a prehistoric nature as well as two sherds of abraded Roman pottery |
| Project dates | Start: 01-07-2011 End: 30-09-2011 |
| Previous/future work | No / No |
| Type of project | Field evaluation |
| Site status (other) | M.O.D |
| Current Land use | Other 15 - Other |
| Monument type | N/A None |
| Monument type | N/A None |
| Significant Finds | POT Roman |
| Significant Finds | FLINT Late Prehistoric |
| Methods & techniques | 'Visual Inspection' |
| Development type | Not recorded |
| Prompt | Planning condition |
| Position in the planning process | Not known / Not recorded |

Project location

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Country | England |
| Site location | SUFFOLK FOREST HEATH LAKENHEATH Loop 40-42 RAF Lakenheath |
| Postcode | IP27 9BU |
| Study area | 4.55 Kilometres |

Site coordinates TL 752 820 52.4074799320 0.575979150248 52 24 26 N 000 34 33 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body

Project design originator Jude Plouviez

Project director/manager Jo Caruth

Project supervisor A Beverton

Type of sponsor/funding body DEFENCE ESTATES USAF

Name of sponsor/funding body DIO

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

Physical Contents 'Ceramics', 'Worked stone/lithics'

Digital Archive recipient Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

Digital Contents 'none'

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Paper Archive recipient Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

Paper Contents 'none'

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