

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF

**Farm Reservoir on Land South East of Grimseys Lane,
Leiston
LCS 146**

PLANNING APPLICATION REF: C/05/0968/FUL

N.G. REF: TM 4638 6160

OASIS REF: suffolkc1- 19843

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2006/217

Commissioned by: Prime Irrigation for their clients

**Jezz Meredith, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (Field Team),
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Figure 1: View across the site showing soil stripping in progress

Summary

Monitoring of the soil scrape during the creation of a farm reservoir revealed several sections of ditch. Two of these appear to correspond to anti-glider ditches shown on aerial photographs made in 1945, the third ditch has a similar fill and is probably also 20th century. No other finds or features were recognised although the disturbance of the ground caused by the use of box-scrapers for excavation meant that only the most obvious features could be recognised.

Introduction

The location of the reservoir is within a field to the south-east of Grimseys Lane on the south side of Leiston (figure 2), affecting an area of c.4 hectares. The reservoir was situated on level ground, just above the 10m contour. This is an area of light sandy acidic soils, used in the past as heath and rough pasturage, but more recently brought into cultivation for growing deep root crops such as carrots and potatoes. Like the surrounding fields, this field has probably had pigs on it.

The 1st to the 3rd edition Ordnance Survey maps (1880s – 1920s) show this area as heathland, as does an aerial photograph of 1945. This photograph also clearly shows a network of anti-glider ditches across Aldringham Common and the area of the site known as The Walks (these have been marked on the plan of the site, figure 4). The area of anti-glider ditches has collectively been given the Suffolk Sites and Monuments reference ARG 017.

In the vicinity, as with a number of other areas of established heathland in Suffolk, tumuli (or round-barrows) still survive as above ground features as they have not been ploughed flat by agriculture. These were likely to be erected over burials within the Early Bronze Age period (c.2,300 – 1,500 BC). Several of the monuments are located to the south and south-east of the site (see figure 2) with the closest of these (ARG 003) c.500m to the south-west.

The archaeological potential of this area is to examine traces of Second World War defences and any vestiges of the prehistoric landscape of which the tumuli would have been a part.

The Planning Authority (Suffolk Coastal District Council) has been advised by Jess Tipper of the Conservation Team of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service that an archaeological monitoring be conducted as a condition of planning consent. A monitoring of the excavation for the reservoir was therefore required to determine if any archaeological deposits and finds could be recognised.

Monitoring visits were made to the site by Jez Meredith between the 13th and 24th of January 2006

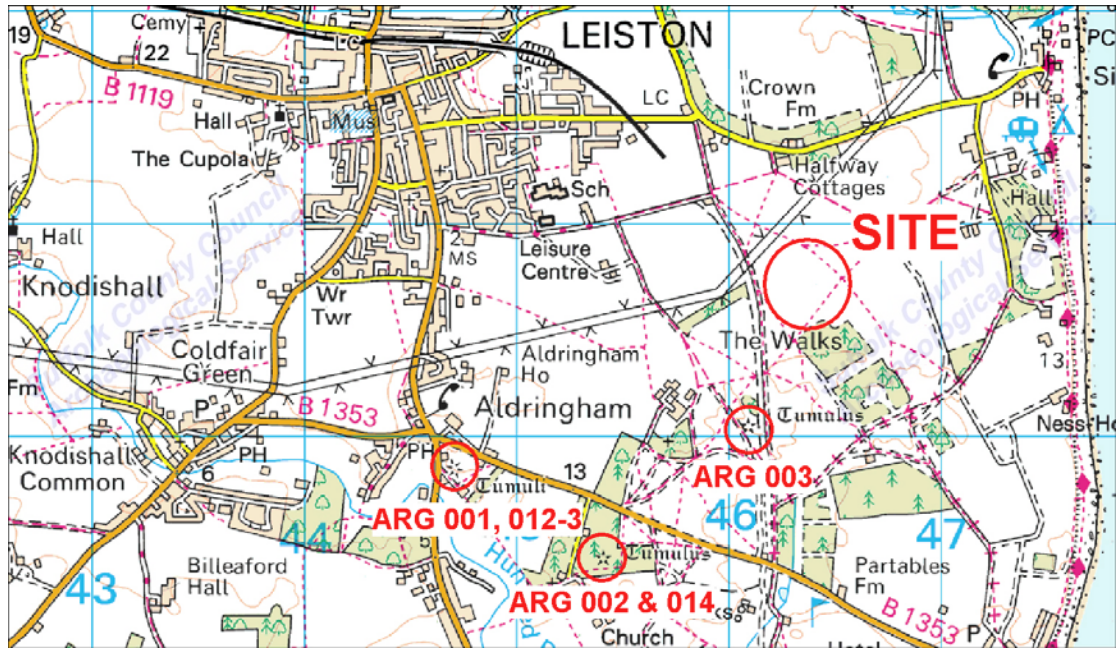


Figure 2: location of the site and nearby prehistoric burial mounds

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Results

The area under investigation was being excavated using large box-scrapers pushed from behind by powerful bulldozers. This resulted in most of the stripped area being tracked over and very highly disturbed (figure 1). An area towards the northern corner could not be observed as this was being used as a ramp for plant.

Occasionally distinct linear features could be traced between the tracks and ruts; ditches 0002, 0004 and 0006 (figure 4). The locations of these ditches were recorded using a hand-held (GPS) satellite location detector working with an accuracy of 5m. Given the disturbed nature of the site, the removal of all recognisable landmarks and the necessity to be able to move quickly to avoid large and fast plant this was thought to be of sufficient accuracy.

The sections for the ditches are shown in figure 3 and these features are described in more detail below.

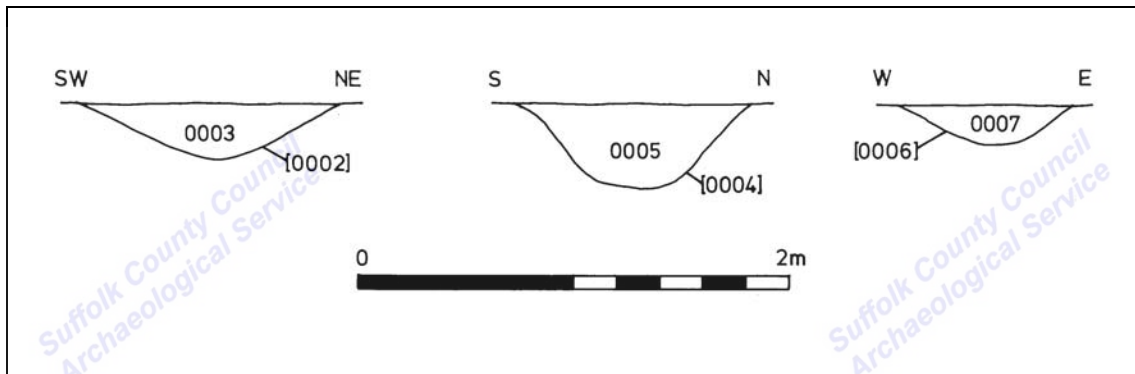


Figure 3: cross-sections of features recorded

Ditch 0002 was north-west to south-east running and a length of c.20m was recorded. This feature had an open u-shaped profile and was 1.2m wide and 250mm deep. Its fill (0003) was mottled dark brown silty sand with occasional small stones

Ditch 0004 was north-east to south-west running and c.80m of this feature was seen in parts. Similar in width but deeper than 0002, this ditch was 1.1m wide and 400mm deep. Fill 0005 was mottled dark grey / black silty sand with occasional small stones.

Ditch 0006 was orientated north to south and a length of c.35m was seen, similar in profile shape to 0002 but smaller, this feature was 800mm in width and 200mm deep. Fill 0007 was mottled grey and black silty sand with occasional charcoal.

No finds were recovered from these features or from any other part of the site.

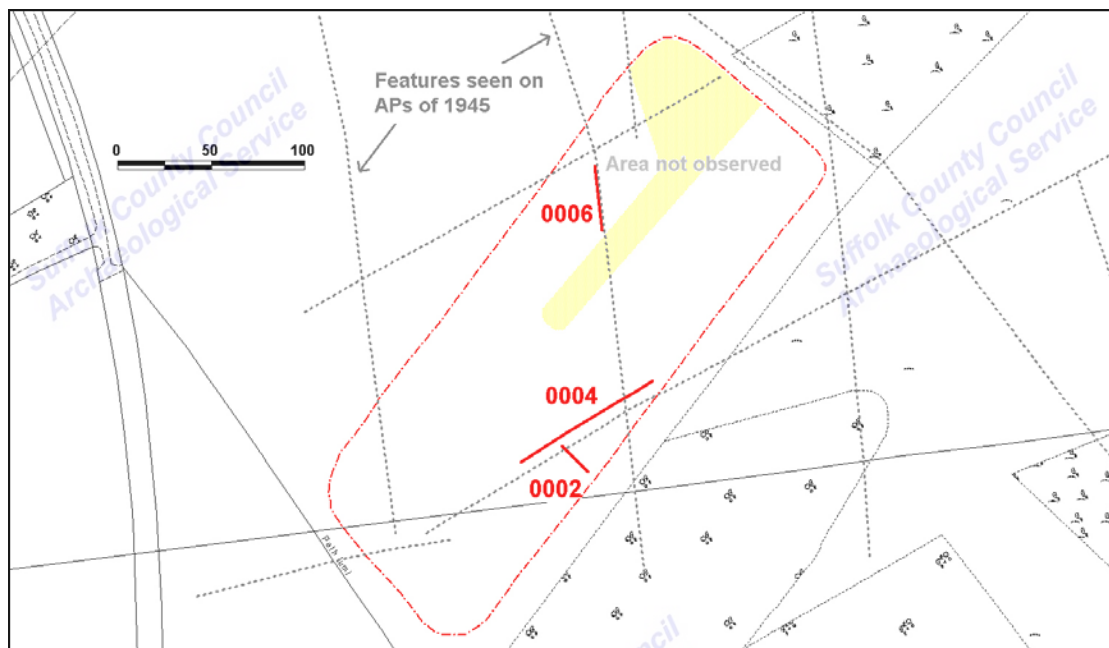


Figure 4: showing extent of reservoir excavation (dot-dash red line), area left as ramp and not observed (yellow block) and linear features recorded (solid red line). Ditches 0004 and 0006 correspond closely to the lines of anti-glider ditches, recorded on the aerial photographs of 1945 (dashed grey lines).

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Conclusions

Two of the linear features encountered (0004 and 0006) corresponded closely to cropmarks recorded on the aerial photographs of 1945 (shown as grey dashed lines on figure 4). Forming a lattice of rhomboid enclosures, the majority of the features on the photographs are likely to be anti-glider trenches dug early in the Second World War to deter German invasion.

The line of 0002 is on a different orientation from the majority of those shown on the aerial photographs (although one linear feature c.200m to the east appears parallel). The dark fill of this feature, similar to the fills from the other two ditches, suggests that this too was of 20th century origin.

Only the most obvious, substantial and dark-filled features could be recognised, due to the amount of disturbance caused by the method of excavation. Earlier features, particularly those of prehistoric date, would be unlikely to be detected. No finds of archaeological interest were recovered and it is probable that this area of light, sandy and acidic soils have mainly been used for pasture in the past. Occasional prehistoric burial mounds might have been positioned as territorial markers.