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An Archaeological Watching Brief
On behalf of Severn Trent Water Plc,
Great Dalby SPS rising main renewal, Leicestershire.
NGR: SK 741 145

Summary

A watching brief was undertaken for Severn Trent Water Plc. by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on 9th, 10th and 11th of June 2003 during topsoil stripping in preparation for trench excavation for a rising mains renewal running to the north west of the village of Great Dalby (NGR: SK 741 145). The construction works are located in a field containing ridge and furrow and associated earthworks. Because of these features and the proximity to the village of Great Dalby the works were seen as having potential for uncovering archaeological deposits.

A band of topsoil and turf was partially stripped along the length of the pipeline to an approximate depth of 0.15 metres to reveal, in places, pale orange-brown silty clay subsoil. Within this a 0.3 metre wide x 1.0 metre deep trench was to be excavated into the natural substratum but was not observed. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded.

Records will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services, Accession number X.A.3.2004

1. Introduction

Severn Trent Water Plc. has undertaken a programme of water mains renewals in the area west of Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire with the Great Dalby pipeline being part of this scheme. The new pipeline lies approximately 3km south west of Melton Mowbray (Fig 1.) and runs to the north west of the village of Great Dalby towards the road to Kirby Bellars. Remnants of ridge and furrow and the possible course of a dry valley could be observed in the field containing the pipeline. In view of this, Nottingham University Consultants Limited, as archaeological advisors to Severn Trent Water Plc, recommended that there should be archaeological attendance and recording during the construction works for the proposed mains renewal to ensure that any affected deposits were adequately recorded (Appendix 1).

2. Background

The proposed works by Severn Trent Water Plc. were for a new 0.18m replacement rising water main. Prior to this the site had been used as pasture land and will be reinstated as pasture once the construction works have been completed.

The proposed construction line of the pipe ran, as discussed, parallel to the village between a stream and the road leading towards Kirby Bellars (Fig. 2). Faint ridge and furrow running in a south west to north easterly direction could be seen in the northern field of the pipeline works. Further south a possible dry valley sloped down to the east of the pipeline. After entering the western limits of Great Dalby the pipeline ran along the road leading to Kirby Bellars. This was out of the watching brief area.

3. Archaeological Objectives

To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.

To establish the character, extent, date range and significance of any archaeological deposits affected by the proposed ground works.

To excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the ground works.

To produce an archive and report of any results.

4. Methodology

The work consisted of stripping a wide band of turf and topsoil with a central excavation for the 0.18m diameter water pipe, as discussed above. An initial walkover survey identified ridge and furrow earthworks running parallel to the proposed pipeline. Topsoil stripping proceeded during the second and third visits with the remaining topsoil, subsoil and spoil being scanned for finds. All topsoil stripping was removed using a toothless ditching bucket on the front actor of a 360° mechanical excavator. The water pipe trench was to be excavated using a mechanical continuous ditching machine. This was not observed. All deposits were recorded by notes, photographs and sketches.

All work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Code of Conduct and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.

5. Results

The initial strip along the length of the pipeline only partially removed the topsoil to reveal patches of pale orange brown silty clay subsoil. No archaeological features or deposits were apparent in either section and no pre-modern artefacts were recovered.

6. Discussion

No archaeological deposits, features or pre-modern artefacts were encountered during the watching brief.

7. Archive

The archive consists of site notes, sketches and photographs to be held by Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services under accession number X.A.3.2004

8. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course.

9. References

Nottingham University Consultants Limited 2002: *Specification for Archaeology Watching Brief on Behalf of Severn Trent Great Dalby SPS Rising Main Renewal, Leicestershire.*

10. Acknowledgements

Fieldwork was undertaken by J. Thomas. The project was managed by Dr P Clay.

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9th January 2004

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Appendix 2.

Site visits

Date	Duration
9.6.03	Half day
10.6.03	Half day
11.6.03	Half day

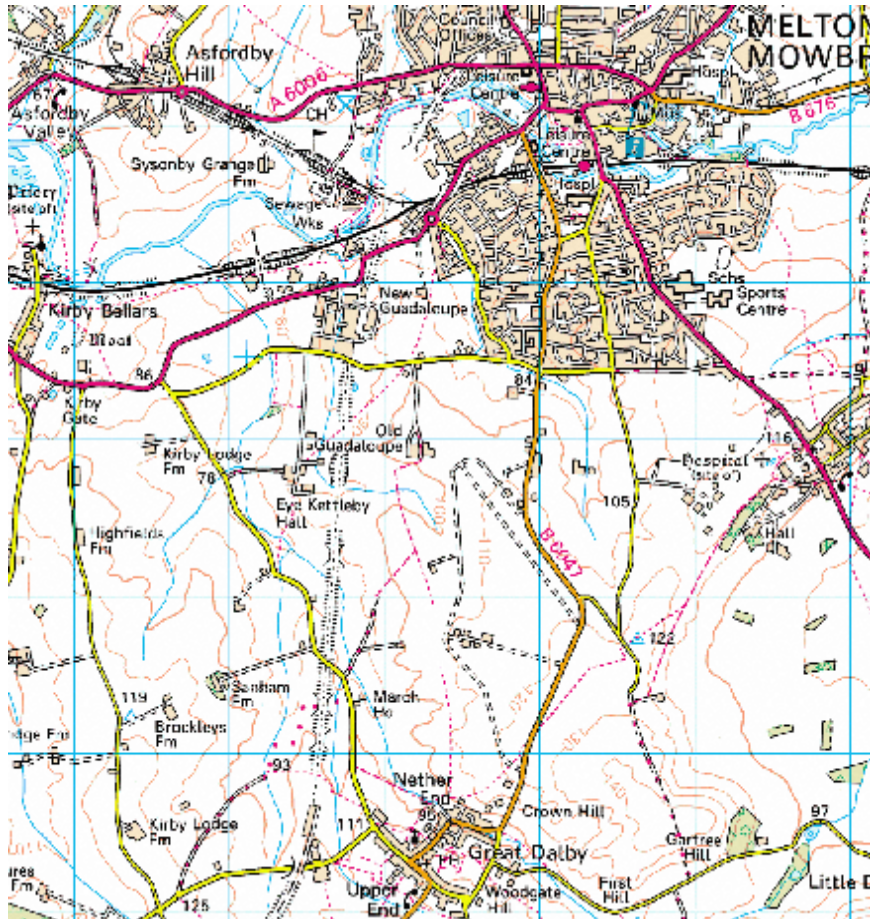


Figure 1. Great Dalby location map.

Reproduced from Landranger 1:50 000 scale by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

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Figure 2. Great Dalby mains renewal location map. Severn Trent Water.