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**LEICESTER**

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological  
Evaluation on land off  
Lake Terrace, Melton  
Mowbray, Leicestershire  
NGR: SK 7433 1899**

Roger Kipling




ULAS Report No 2018-057  
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Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire  
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**For: Landmark Planning Limited**

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off Lake Terrace, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire  
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## **Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in March 2018 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Landmark Planning Limited on land off Lake Terrace, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, in advance of proposed residential development. The fieldwork followed an initial geophysical survey which identified possible archaeological features. The evaluation provided limited evidence for archaeological activity in the form of medieval ridge and furrow and a single undated ditch.*

*The site archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council under the accession number X.A28.2018.*

## **Introduction**

An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was undertaken on land off Lake Terrace, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, in advance of a proposed residential development. The site is located on the south-western periphery of the town on open pasture at the end of Lake Terrace. The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) for the area shows that the application site lies outside the Melton Mowbray Conservation Area, and a desk-based assessment identified that the area of the site has significant archaeological interest. A geophysical survey indicated the possible presence of archaeological features.

The Principal Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council (LCC) required a programme of archaeological work comprising trial trenching in order to determine the impact of the proposed scheme on any buried archaeology and produce a mitigation strategy for the site.

The programme of archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Section 12 Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment). The fieldwork was intended to provide a record of the archaeological remains in mitigation of the impact of the proposed development. The agreed scheme was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (ULAS 2018; hereinafter WSI).

Fieldwork was undertaken in March 2018 and involved the machine excavation of trial trenches followed by hand cleaning, excavation and recording of archaeological remains if found to be present.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG March 2012). All archaeological work was in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Code of Conduct (2014) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014).

## Site Description, Topography and Geology

The proposed development is located on the south-western edge of Melton Mowbray, in the administrative district of Melton Mowbray. The application site is situated 31km north-east of Leicester and 32km south-east of Nottingham. The development site consists of two areas of open land bisected by a disused train line. The site is currently fenced in but can be accessed through a break in the fence from Ullswater Road. A bank runs broadly east-west along this boundary (AAL 2017a).

The bedrock geology is formed of Lias Formation mudstone, with superficial deposits of alluvium close to the curve of the river and Syston Member sand and gravel recorded further to the south. (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).



Figure 1: Location of the proposed site (Scale 1:50 000)

*Reproduced from the Landranger 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1996. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495*

## Archaeological and Historical Background

The Desk Based Assessment (AAL 2017a) identified that the area has a significant archaeological interest, with medieval, Iron Age and Roman deposits, and various phases of prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon activity. The site appears to occupy the edge of the Syston gravel terrace, with the potential for settlement and activity including Neolithic/Early Bronze Age funerary monuments. The LiDAR data for the site suggests faint ridge and furrow appear to lie over possible water management or palaeochannel-type features. To the west of the railway embankment, there is potential for at least one palaeochannel crossing the site with palaeo-

environmental potential. The following archaeological background has been adapted from the Allen Archaeology Ltd desk-based assessment completed specifically for this proposed development (AAL 2017a).

- The earliest evidence of activity within the study area dates from the Mesolithic. Worked flint of this date was recovered during trial trenching 500m to the southeast of the development site. A second find of worked flint recovered during a watching brief 150m to the east, might also date to the early Mesolithic. These were located on terraces, associated with the River Eye which formed during the Quaternary period.
- Neolithic activity is represented within the study area by a possible mortuary site c.500m to the southeast of the development site (MLE9229). Large quantities of pottery and flint were recorded alongside three pits forming a small enclosure or structure. A number of flint cores have been recorded in the area and could also be Neolithic.
- Approximately 300m to the south-east of the site, a number of intercutting ditches, pits and the eaves drip gully of a possible roundhouse have been recorded, indicating later prehistoric occupation in the area, although no dating evidence was recovered from these features. More extensive evidence, comprising enclosures, pits and ditches, producing finds of Late Iron Age to Roman date, as well as evidence of small scale metal working was recorded just to the south of this (MLE9232). Towards the southern edge of the study area, geophysics identified further possible settlement activity of later prehistoric to Roman date, with more than 40 enclosures or structures recorded.
- Aside from a number of find spots of Roman date, no substantial activity has been recorded within the study area for this period.
- The study area appears to be located between the two early medieval settlements at Melton Mowbray and Sysonby. Excavations have revealed evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity to the southeast of the development, consisting of two ditches and finds of Early Saxon pottery. Saxon finds within the study area include a spearhead, two knives and a shield boss reputedly found in Sysonby churchyard and an early Saxon brooch to the south (MLE3911).
- There were three villages within the study area during the medieval period; Melton Mowbray, Sysonby and Eye Kettleby. Sysonby and Eye Kettleby are both deserted medieval settlements mentioned in the Domesday Book as part of Melton Mowbray.
- Despite some damage by ploughing, there are some surviving settlement earthwork remains of the deserted medieval village of Eye Kettleby at the southwest edge of the study area, including a number of fishponds. Further geophysical survey and intrusive work has recorded further structures, pits, ditches and finds scatters. Small amounts of medieval pottery have been found in a garden to the northeast of these earthworks.
- The Enclosure Map of 1761 shows that a number of the development site boundaries were in use at this time. Of particular interest is the uneven line which runs along the northern edge of the site and is possibly an earlier watercourse. The line of the railway that runs through the site is depicted as a track at this time, but does not feature on the later Tithe Map. The site lies on the outer fringes of the town and as such, only features as part of the altered apportionments to the Tithe Map recorded in 1873. A boundary running through the eastern section of the site no longer exists but is clearly depicted.
- The First Edition Ordnance Survey map shows that a Sewerage Works occupied the land between the railway line and the eastern section of the development site and was in use by 1885. The 1930 Ordnance Survey map shows that the Sewerage Works was also in use as a Destructor Works by this time. Although the buildings are still present on the 1966–7 mapping, their use is not annotated, suggesting they may be redundant by this time. Otherwise there are no changes to the use of the development site during this period.

A geophysical survey (AAL 2017b) found probable archaeological anomalies. The survey results revealed a number of potential archaeological features across both survey areas (Figure 4).

The results corresponded well with LiDAR images of the site, showing ridge and furrow cultivation in the western part of Area 1 and the southern part of Area 2. Within the southern part of Area 1 there were a large number of amorphous positive features that are likely to represent natural features or geological variation, although they may also be fishponds and associated water management features.

At the very northern end of Area 1 and running across the center of Area 2 are linear features that likely represent former field boundaries shown on historic mapping. There are also modern services clearly visible within both areas. Both areas also contain areas of magnetic noise that likely represent modern features such as metal fences and spreads of modern waste. There were a parallel pair of positive and negative linear features aligned northeast to southwest within Area 2 which may relate to the former train line running parallel with the features or represent ditches or possibly a former river channel. Close to the southern edge of Area 2 are a pair of parallel linear positive features aligned east to west which may represent linear ditches, potentially either side of a former trackway although no date for this feature is known.

## **Aims and Objectives**

The general aims of the archaeological works were as follows:

- To identify the presence/absence of archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Leicestershire HER.

In addition, the archaeological work was identified to have the potential to contribute to the following research aims, derived from *East Midlands Heritage: An updated research agenda and strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* (Knight et al. 2012) and *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda* (Cooper 2006).

### **Mesolithic**

- 2.4.4 *Can we shed further light upon variations in the lithic assemblages surviving in earlier and later Mesolithic industries?*
- 2.6.1 *What can analysis of palaeochannel fills and other deposits with the potential for preserved pollen, charcoal and other organic remains contribute to studies of the earliest stages of woodland clearance and plant domestication?*
- 2.6.2 *How can we maximize the potential of palaeochannels as sources of data on Early Holocene landscapes and changes in subsistence strategies and diet?*

### **Neolithic**

- 3.1.3. *Can we further refine lithic artefact chronologies within the region?*
- 3.4.3. *Can we further refine our knowledge of the selective use of particular landscapes for ritual, agricultural and other activities?*



## **Medieval**

- 6.4.4. *What factors may underlie the progression from dispersed to nucleated settlement and the growth of settlement hierarchies?*
- 7.2.4. *Can we clarify further the processes of settlement desertion and shrinkage, especially within zones of dispersed settlement?*
- 7.6. 3. *Can we identify, investigate and date sites associated with the region's key extractive industries such as freshwater fishing?*

## **Methods**

Prior to the commencement of works an Accession Code was obtained, an OASIS online record was initiated and the key fields completed on Details, Location and Creator forms. Following recommendations from the Principal Planning Archaeologist of Leicestershire County Council, a programme of archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken.

An excavated 3.5% sample of the available development area comprised 18 30m x 1.8m trenches (c.972m<sup>2</sup>), providing a representative sample of the proposed area of development (Figures 2 & 3). A mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket (c.1.8m wide) was employed under constant archaeological supervision, with excavation ceasing at undisturbed natural deposits. The trenches were recorded at an appropriate scale by measured drawing and photography and were located to Ordnance Survey National Grid. Summary details of the trenches are outlined in Table 1 below.



Figure 2: Machining in progress; view south-east

## **Results**

Seven trenches (1-7) were excavated across the area of pasture west of the disused railway line. A mid brown clay loam topsoil and underlying orange-brown silty clay subsoil were observed over a pale orange-brown silty clay natural. No archaeology was present in any of the trenches;

the amorphous signals identified in the geophysical survey are consequently likely to represent geological anomalies.

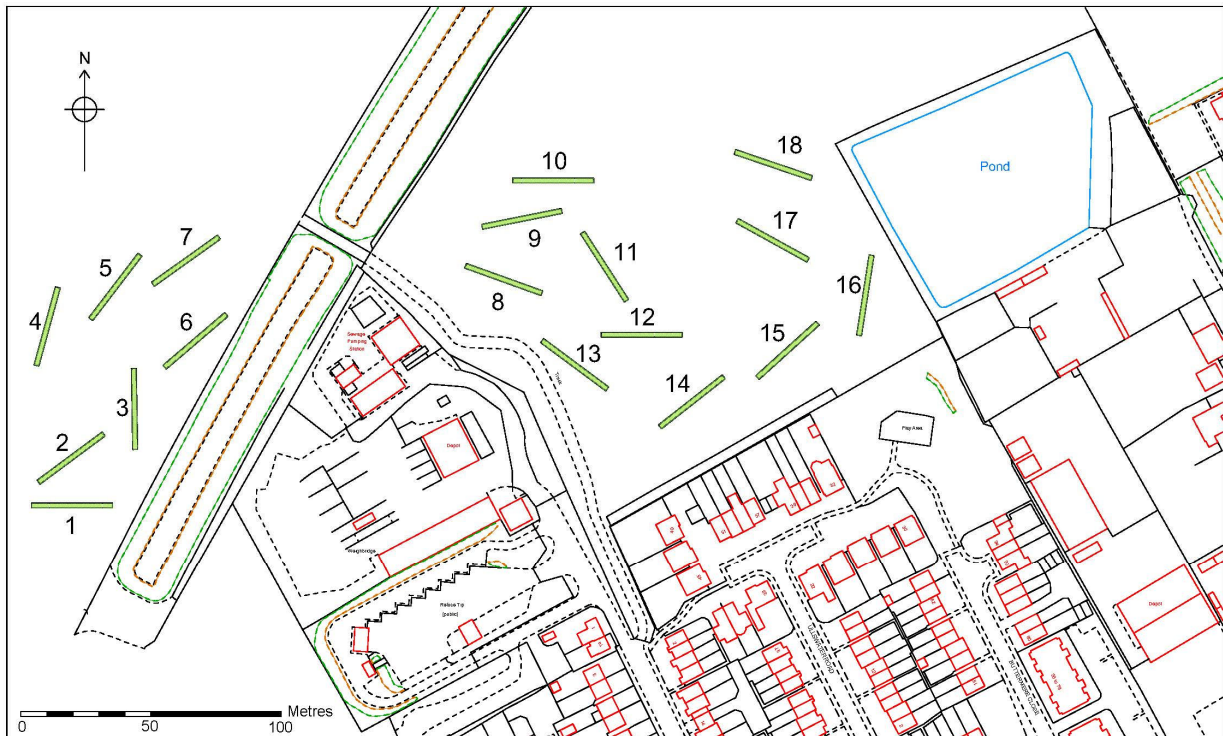


Figure 3: Trench location plan

**Trenches 11 and 18** targeted parallel north-east to south-west signals possibly relating to the former rail line. The northern end of the former featured a 1m-wide blue clay and gravel-filled linear feature and associated grey clay and gravels likely relating to the railway. However, a shallow linear observed at the northern end of **Trench 18** appeared to derive from a documented field boundary.

**Trenches 12, 13 and 17** sought to identify a possible linear feature aligned south-west to north-east. **Trench 13**, located at the western edge of the site, contained the only tangible archaeological feature [01] in the form of a 2m wide and 0.2m deep truncated ditch with an open profile and concave base (Figures 7 & 8). The undated feature contained a single orange-grey silty clay fill (02); it was not traced into Trenches 12 and 17.

Medieval plough furrows were observed at 4m intervals along the length of **Trench 15**, aligned north-west to south-east and tallying with those identified in the geophysical survey.



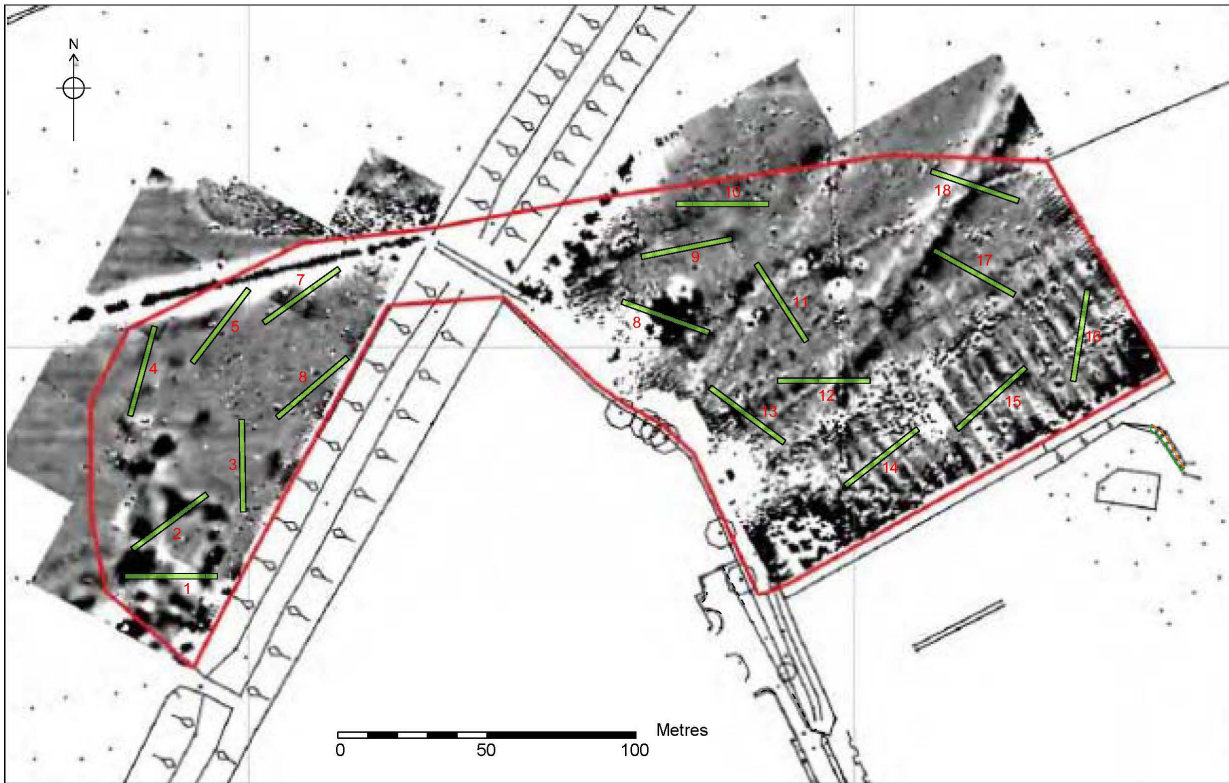


Figure 4: Site plan showing evaluation trench locations with geophysical survey results



Figure 5: Trench 2: general view south-west (1m scales)





Figure 6: Trench 14: general view north-east (1m scales)



Figure 7: Trench 13: Feature [01]; view west (1m scale)

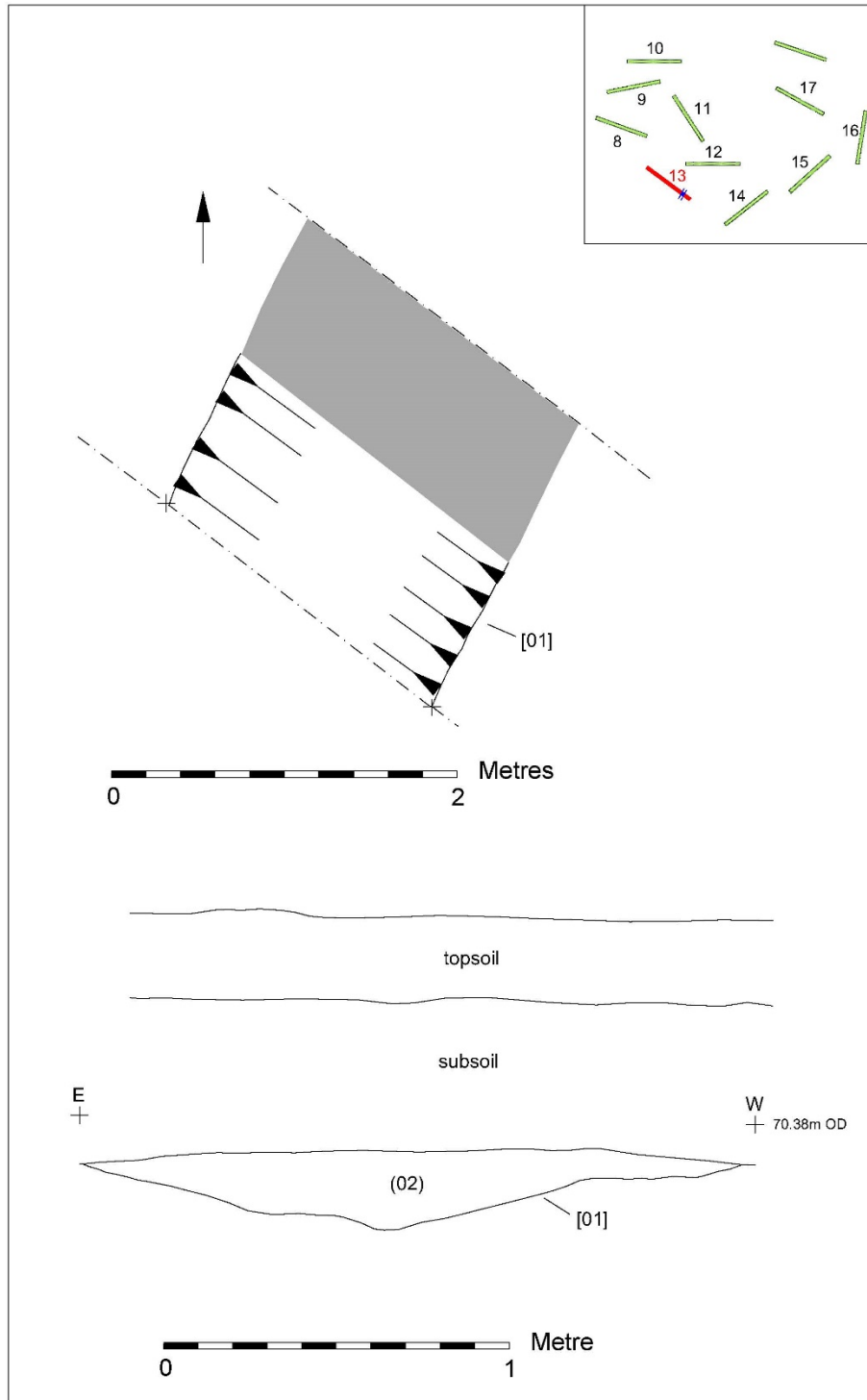


Figure 8: Feature [01], Trench 13; plan and section drawings

TRENCH	ORIENTATION	LENGTH (m)	TOPSOIL THICKNESS (m)	SUBSOIL THICKNESS (m)	DESCRIPTION
1	E-W	30	0.20-0.30	0.20-0.30	no archaeology present
2	NE-SW	30	0.20-0.30	0.20-0.30	no archaeology present
3	N-S	30	0.20-0.30	0.20-0.30	no archaeology present
4	N-S	30	0.24-0.30	0.20-0.30	no archaeology present
5	NE-SW	30	0.18-0.25	0.20-0.30	no archaeology present
6	NE-SW	30	0.15-0.20	0.20-0.30	no archaeology present
7	NE-SW	30	0.15-0.20	0.0-0.30	no archaeology present
8	E-W	30	0.20-0.25	0.20-0.35	no archaeology present
9	E-W	30	0.20-0.25	0.20-0.38	no archaeology present
10	E-W	30	0.20-0.30	0.30-0.35	no archaeology present
11	NW-SE	30	0.20-0.28	0.30-0.35	no archaeology present
12	E-W	30	0.20-0.25	0.30-0.40	no archaeology present
13	NE-SW	30	0.20-0.36	0.30-0.50	single undated linear
14	E-W	30	0.20-0.25	0.25-0.35	no archaeology present
15	NE-SW	30	0.20-0.30	0.30-0.45	no archaeology present
16	N-S	30	0.20-0.30	0.40-0.50	no archaeology present
17	NW-SE	30	0.20-0.30	0.40-0.65	no archaeology present
18	NE-SW	30	0.20-0.25	0.40-0.60	no archaeology present

Table 1: Trench Descriptions

## Discussion and Conclusions

The archaeological evaluation undertaken in March 2018 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Landmark Planning Limited at land off Lake Terrace, Melton Mowbray provided limited evidence for medieval archaeological activity in the area east of the disused railway line in the form of a single truncated ditch in addition to evidence of medieval ploughing in the form of ridge and furrow. The remainder of the small number of features encountered likely pertain to geological activity and the railway line.

## Archive and Publications

The site archive (X.A28.2018), consisting of paper, drawing and photographic records will be housed with Leicestershire County Council.

The archive consists of:

- 18 x trench record sheets
- 2 x context record sheets
- Photographic, context and drawing record indices
- 1 x A3 drawing sheet
- 40 x digital photographs
- Risk assessment form

A version of the excavation summary (see above) will appear in due course in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*.

## **Acknowledgements**

Roger Kipling of ULAS undertook the archaeological evaluation on behalf of Landmark Planning Limited. The project was managed by John Thomas.

## **Bibliography**

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27.03.2018



## Appendix: OASIS Data Entry

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	<b>OASIS ID</b>	universil-312684		
	<b>Project Name</b>	Land off Lake Terrace, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire		
	<b>Start/end dates of field work</b>	19-13-2018-22-03-2018		
	<b>Previous/Future Work</b>	Yes		
	<b>Project Type</b>	Evaluation		
	<b>Site Status</b>	None		
	<b>Current Land Use</b>	Pasture		
	<b>Monument Type/Period</b>	Undated ditch		
	<b>Significant Finds/Period</b>	None		
	<b>Development Type</b>	Residential development		
	<b>Reason for Investigation</b>	NPPF		
	<b>Position in the Planning Process</b>	Pre-determination		
	<b>Planning Ref.</b>	17/01500/OUT		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	<b>Site Address/Postcode</b>	Land of Lake Terrace, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE13 0LS		
	<b>Study Area</b>	2.85ha		
	<b>Site Coordinates</b>	SK 7433 1899		
	<b>Height OD</b>	71m OD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Brief Originator</b>	Local Planning Authority (Melton Borough Council)		
	<b>Project Design Originator</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Manager</b>	John Thomas		
	<b>Project Director/Supervisor</b>	Roger Kipling		
	<b>Sponsor/Funding Body</b>	Landmark Planning Limited		
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		<b>Physical</b>	<b>Digital</b>	<b>Paper</b>
	<b>Recipient</b>	ULAS	ULAS	ULAS
	<b>ID (Acc. No.)</b>	X.A28 2018	X.A28 2018	X.A28 2018
	<b>Contents</b>	none	Photos	Site records Field notes
<b>PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>Type</b>	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	<b>Title</b>	<i>An Archaeological Evaluation at Land off Lake Terrace, Melton Mowbray,, Leicestershire</i>		
	<b>Author</b>	Kipling, R.		
	<b>Other bibliographic details</b>	ULAS Report No 2018-057		
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