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**LEICESTER**

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation at  
Ilott Wharf ,  
Bosworth Road,  
Measham,  
Leicestershire**

**NGR: SK 348 112**

Andrew Hyam



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**An Archaeological evaluation at**

**Ilott Wharf,**

**Bosworth Road,**

**Measham,**

**Leicestershire**

**NGR: SK 348 112**

**A R Hyam**

**For: Ashby Canal Association**

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## **An Archaeological Evaluation at Ilott Wharf, Bosworth Road, Measham, Leicestershire.**

**NGR: SK 348 112**

**Andrew Hyam**

### **Summary**

*An archaeological field evaluation was undertaken on land at Ilott Wharf, Bosworth Road, Measham, Leicestershire on the 23rd of May 2018 by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) and volunteers from the Ticknall Archaeological Research Group and the Ashby Canal Association. The site lies on the former Ilott Wharf which was a coal loading facility on the Ashby Canal.*

*The work revealed the foundation of a brick-built boundary wall, the base of a brick feature and the probable edge of the former railway line which served the wharf. All of the features exposed appear to date to around the 1920s.*

*The report will be archived under accession number X.A56.2018*

### **Introduction**

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* this document forms the report for an archaeological evaluation on land at Ilott Wharf, Bosworth Road, Measham, Leicestershire. Transport and Works Act Order 2786 (7<sup>th</sup> October 2005) authorised the construction of a length of canal from the existing terminus to Measham. Once restored the canal will follow the line of the original canal between its current terminus at Snarestone and Ilott Wharf. To the west of this point the canal will then be constructed on a new route between Ilott Wharf and Measham. The Leicestershire County Council Principal Planning Archaeologist as advisor to the planning authority has requested a programme of archaeological work within the project as a condition on the planning permission.

### **Background**

Ilott Wharf is located approximately 2km to the east of Measham and nearly 2km north of Snarestone village and lies on the southern side of the Bosworth Road (Figure 1). The area of Ilott Wharf comprises 1.3 hectares of rough ground with the northern boundary formed by the Bosworth Road. The area to the south of Ilott Wharf adjacent to the Gilwiskaw Brook contains alluvial and river terrace deposits.

The land is mostly flat with a fall to the south. It lies at a height of around 90m aOD. The British Geological Survey website indicates that the underlying geology is likely to be Moira Formation sedimentary bedrocks Mudstone and Breccia formed approximately 242 to 272 million years ago in the Triassic and Permian Periods. The canal has been constructed as a contour canal and is built on an embankment in this area. Subsidence from coal workings is also extensive across the area and has caused a number of problems for the canal.

An archaeological Desk Based Assessment was produced by ULAS on 2006 (Meek, 2006) which discussed much of the history and background of the Ashby Canal. Ilott Wharf was a coal loading facility on the canal and is the focus of attention for this phase of work. Between the late 19th century and the 1960s coal was brought by rail to the wharf, where it was loaded onto narrow boats (Figure 2). The canal was eventually abandoned in 1966 due to subsidence caused by mining activity and by declining traffic.

Planning conditions on the restoration of the Ashby Canal from its current terminus includes provision for archaeological recording of surviving remains at Ilott Wharf. Since its abandonment the area has been infilled, and subsequently used by a model aircraft club, and also for wargames. Prior to this evaluation work the extent of destruction or preservation of in situ remains was unknown.

At the time of the evaluation a small area around Ilott Wharf had already been cleared of vegetation and the ground partially levelled in preparation for a temporary car park. The parking area will be used for volunteers working on the project. The limited work to clear the area entailed the use of a mechanical excavator which partially exposed possible brick-built structures (Figure 3). Once the brickwork was exposed the machining was halted (Figure 4).



Figure 1 Location of Ilott Wharf  
Site highlighted in red

Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right] 2018

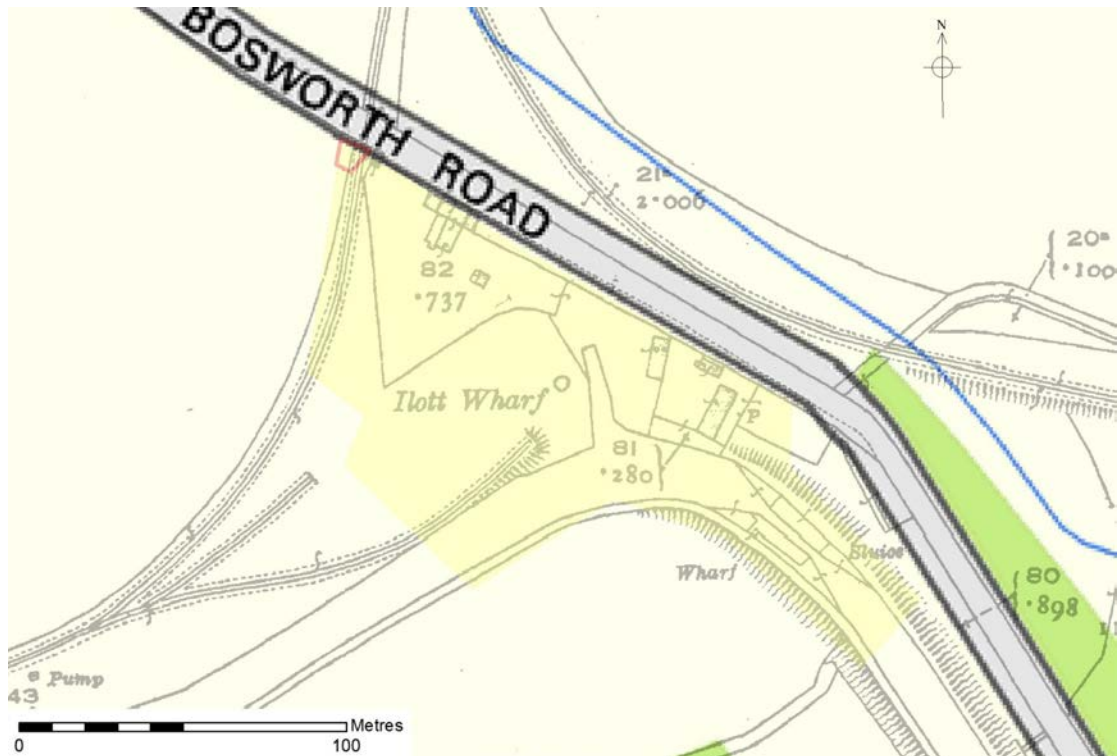


Figure 2 Ilott Wharf location  
Approximate location of evaluation area highlighted in red, superimposed over 1927  
Ordnance Survey map  
Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right] 2018



Figure 3 Ilott Wharf cleared area  
Looking north-west. Bosworth Road on right behind the brown sign. The brickwork  
exposed by the machine was protected behind the temporary barriers



Figure 4 Brickwork exposed by machine prior to the evaluation  
Looking north. Former railway line ran across the road in the gap between the hedge  
lines on left of picture

### **Objectives**

The overall objectives and research agenda are detailed in the ULAS Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for *Evaluation at Ilott Wharf, Bosworth Road, Measham, Leicestershire* (ULAS 2018).

The specific objectives for this programme of work were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any 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 establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscape.
- To recover artefacts and ecofacts to compare with other assemblages and results.
  - To produce an archive and report of the results.
  - To ascertain the nature and extent of any further mitigation works required prior to development commencing.

## Methodology

The methodology used throughout the evaluation is discussed in detail in the ULAS WSI. Initially all recent vegetation and weeds was removed by hand around the area of brickwork identified during the machining phase. The area was then hand-trowelled to expose and clarify the brickwork and other areas of archaeological interest. Limited and targeted small-scale slots were excavated in order to ascertain depths of features.

The cleaned area was recorded by digital photographs, written notes and scale drawings at 1:20.

For this evaluation the fieldwork was undertaken by volunteers from the Ticknall Archaeological Research Group and the Ashby Canal Association under supervision by the author (Figure 5).



Figure 5 Cleaning in progress following removal of weeds  
Looking north-west

## Results

A broadly rectangular area was available for cleaning following the machine stripping on the western side of the temporary car park. Within this area a small rectangle of brickwork was exposed with a similarly sized rectangle of concrete on the eastern side of it. An indication of a line of bricks was also seen running from north to south along the eastern edge of the area.

Hand cleaning revealed a small concentration of brick and concrete features located towards the northern end of the area and a brick-built boundary wall running along the eastern edge of the area (Figure 6). In addition to these structures it was also possible



to discern the probable edge of the former railway line which ran from north to south along the western edge of the area.

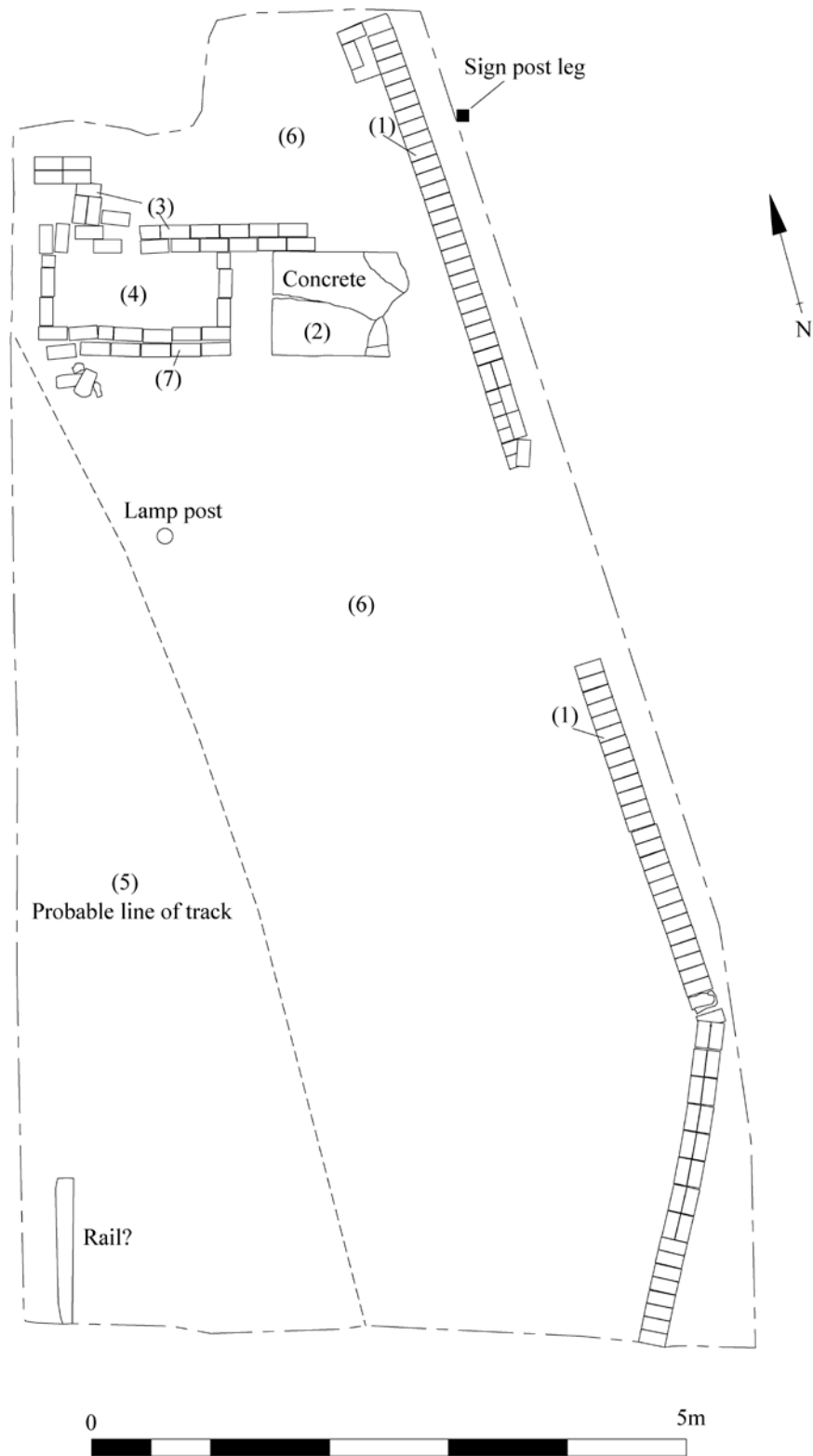


Figure 6 Results of cleaned area  
Bosworth Road runs across the top end of the site

The cleaning showed that the boundary wall (1) started at the northern edge of the cleaned area with a brick pillar (Figure 7). From the pillar it continued southwards before stopping at an area of disturbed ground where the bricks showed signs of being broken and creating a gap in the wall. The ground to the east and west of the disturbed wall also appeared to be disturbed which suggested that the break in the wall was made after the closure of the site. After around 1.5 metres the wall began again on the same southern alignment before turning slightly to the south-west and continuing beyond the south edge of excavation (Figure 8). The wall appears to have been laid in an English bond i.e. alternating courses of headers and stretchers. The average size of the red bricks was 225mm long by 110mm wide by 63mm high ( $8\frac{7}{8}$ " by  $4\frac{3}{8}$ " by  $2\frac{1}{2}$ "). Partial excavation where the wall was disturbed indicated that there were at least four courses surviving.

To the west of wall (1) the possible rectangle of brickwork consisted of two main parts: a roughly east to west double line of bricks (3) and a rectangle of slightly differently sized bricks (7) surrounding an ashy deposit (4) (Figure 9 and Figure 10). The double line of bricks (3) ran from north-west to south-east on a slightly different alignment to wall (1). It stopped, possibly due to disturbance, approximately 0.9m from wall (1) so there is no clear relationship, if any, between the two features. At the west limit of the bricks (3) and to the north was a rather unclear area of brickwork, which may possibly represent a corner to this feature. The red bricks of (3) were a different size to the wall (1) and measured 235mm long by 110mm wide by 75mm high ( $9\frac{1}{4}$ " by  $4\frac{3}{8}$ " by 3").

Butting against, but not joining, the south side of brick feature (3) was a small rectangle of brickwork (7). This feature had minimal mortar bonding it together and was only two courses deep. The bricks were a different size to the other brick features and measured 240mm long by 110mm wide by 70mm high ( $9\frac{1}{2}$ " by  $4\frac{3}{8}$ " by  $2\frac{3}{4}$ "). Within the rectangle formed by (7) was a greyish ashy silty deposit (4) sitting on top of a possible brick base.

Just over 0.3m to the east of feature (7) and immediately south of (3) was a 90mm thick slab of concrete (Figure 10). The slab appeared to be sat on a layer of mid orange-brown clay which extended all the way west to meet (7). The slab is clearly associated with both (3) and (7) as it butts against (3) and extends as far south as the limit of (7). The slab had been extensively cracked although it was not clear if this had happened before or after the closure of the wharf.

Running at an angle across the south-west corner of the area was a layer of mid-grey silty clay with traces of ash and frequent angular stone (5). The stones were similar to those used as ballast on railway lines and may represent the last trace of the edge of the former railway line (Figure 11). This line matches the approximate alignment of the railway as it crossed Bosworth Road, from the north, and continued to the south-west across the evaluation area. To the east of the layer (5) was a cleaner mid-orange brown silty clay layer (6) which extended as far east as the wall (1). This layer is probably disturbed subsoil and is likely to extend beyond wall (1) although no more trowelling was carried out east of it. Neither layer was excavated so it is not known how deep they were.

During the work a plastic-sheathed electricity cable was seen on the western side of the area. Although this was thought to be dead it was still avoided throughout the work.

Near to the cable was a cast iron metal cylinder which was partially buried at an angle in the ground. During the afternoon Dr. Mulka brought in a photograph taken in the 1950s showing a locomotive which had just crossed Bosworth Road and is standing in front of the boundary wall which we had identified as wall (1) (Figure 12). The photographs also showed the top of a lamp post in a similar location to the metal cylinder already observed. Limited small-scale excavation around the cylinder revealed it to be the toppled base of the lamp post. This was easily stood upright in its original earthfast socket (Figure 13). It would appear that the cable runs to the base of the post.

A short length of possible tram rail had been partially exposed during machining and was located within the topsoil in the south-west corner of the area. This was left in-situ and not fully excavated as it extended beyond the limit of excavation into the field beyond. It is possible that it may be a rail and its location would look to correlate with track location as showing on Ordnance Survey mapping for 1959 (Figure 14). A more certain interpretation of its origin could only follow further work.



Figure 7 Wall (1), northern end. 1m and 0.5m scales. The wall stops at the far end with an adjacent brick pillar



Figure 8 Wall (1), southern end  
1m and 0.5m scales



Figure 9 Cleaned area of brickwork  
1m scales. Boundary wall (1) at top of picture



Figure 10 Concrete slab (2)  
1m scales. Brick features (3) and (7) beyond



Figure 11 Possible line of former railway line  
The darker soil of the former line is shown to the right of the 1m scales.



Figure 12 1950s Photograph of Bosworth Road crossing  
The boundary wall (1) is arrowed. The lamp post can be seen on the right  
Photograph supplied by Dr O Mulka



Figure 13 Re-erected base of former lamp post

## Discussion

The limited scope of the evaluation revealed a surprising amount of in-situ features which were in quite a good state of preservation. It would appear that following closure in 1966 the area was levelled but not extensively disturbed below ground level.

The most substantial feature revealed during the evaluation is the brick-built boundary wall (1) which continues southwards beyond the cleaned evaluation area. The 1950s photograph suggests that this was a relatively low structure and was perhaps only around four to five feet high. Although not completely clear it seems likely that the line of this wall is the boundary shown on the 1927 OS map which can be seen in Figure 2 above. The boundary persists and is still present on the 1959 map, and the clear kink in the wall can be used to locate the results (Figure 14). It is therefore most probable that the wall continued in use right up to the closure date. OS maps published before 1927 indicate that the alignment of the track was slightly different and further east so that none of the early maps show the boundary wall.

Unfortunately the OS 1927 and 1959 maps do not appear to show the brick structures (3) and (7). It may be possible that they were small ephemeral structures which were deemed unworthy of recording. It is interesting that all of the brick features use differently sized bricks which would suggest different building dates. As both the concrete slab (2) and brick structure (7) butt against (3) they must both be later than (3). Their date of construction relationship with wall (1) is unclear but is probably shortly before 1927.

Figure 14: Results of evaluation with Ordnance Survey sheet SK3411, 1:2500, 1959

Apart from the boundary wall none of the other features can be seen in the 1950s photograph. A narrow chimney can be seen near to the location of (3) and (7) but it is



by no means certain exactly where it is located. The photograph however does appear to indicate that there are no structures to the south of (2), (3) and (7).

The faint trace of the edge of the railway line was an interesting bonus to the work as was the identification and partial re-erecting of the old lamp post.

The function of (2), (3) and (7) remains unclear. They are quite insubstantial and may be the remnants of a small hut similar to a platelayers hut or crossing-keeper's shelter. The ashy deposit (4) might therefore be the remains of a hearth which was served by the chimney seen in the 1950s photograph. Alternatively it may have been the base for a ground-frame or similar for signal or trackside equipment.

### **Archive**

The archive consists of:

- This report,
- 1 DVD containing 44 digital photographs,
- 1 contact sheet of 44 digital images,
- 1 A4 photo record sheet,
- 1 A3 drawing sheet,
- 7 context record sheets,
- 1 A4 context register.

### **Publication**

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. A record of the project will also be submitted to the OASIS project. OASIS is an online index to archaeological grey literature.

### **Acknowledgements**

The project was managed by M Beamish, ULAS and Dr Orest Mulka made arrangements for the Ashby Canal Association. Fieldwork was supervised by A Hyam, ULAS and carried out by volunteers who were members of the Ticknall Archaeological Research Group and the Ashby Canal Association. The help of Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society who generously granted the cost of the supervision of the work and the production of this report is gratefully acknowledged.

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31.05.18

### Appendix 1 Context Index

Context	Notes
1	Brick boundary wall along east of area. Brick size: 225mm long x 110mm wide x 63mm high
2	Concrete slab to south of (3)
3	NW to SE Brick structure. Bricks: 235mm long x 110mm wide x 75mm high
4	Ashy silty fill within (7)
5	Mid grey silty clay and ballast fill. Poss line of track
6	Mid orange brown silty clay. Disturbed subsoil
7	Brick structure to south of (3). Bricks: 240mm long x 110mm wide x 70mm high

## Appendix 2 Digital photographs



XA56 2018 (1).JPG



XA56 2018 (2).JPG



XA56 2018 (3).JPG



XA56 2018 (4).JPG



XA56 2018 (5).JPG



XA56 2018 (6).JPG



XA56 2018 (7).JPG



XA56 2018 (8).JPG



XA56 2018 (9).JPG



XA56 2018 (10).JPG



XA56 2018 (11).JPG



XA56 2018 (12).JPG



XA56 2018 (13).JPG



XA56 2018 (14).JPG



XA56 2018 (15).JPG



XA56 2018 (16).JPG



XA56 2018 (17).JPG



XA56 2018 (18).JPG



XA56 2018 (19).JPG



XA56 2018 (20).JPG



XA56 2018 (21).JPG



XA56 2018 (22).JPG



XA56 2018 (23).JPG



XA56 2018 (24).JPG



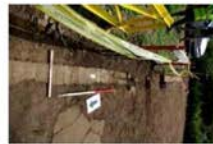
XA56 2018 (25).JPG



XA56 2018 (26).JPG



XA56 2018 (27).JPG



XA56 2018 (28).JPG



XA56 2018 (29).JPG



XA56 2018 (30).JPG



XA56 2018 (31).JPG



XA56 2018 (32).JPG



XA56 2018 (33).JPG



XA56 2018 (34).JPG



XA56 2018 (35).JPG



XA56 2018 (36).JPG



XA56 2018 (37).JPG



XA56 2018 (38).JPG



XA56 2018 (39).JPG



XA56 2018 (40).JPG



XA56 2018 (41).JPG



XA56 2018 (42).JPG



XA56 2018 (43).JPG



XA56 2018 (44).JPG

### Appendix 3 OASIS Information

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	<b>Oasis No</b>	universi1-318572		
	<b>Project Name</b>	An Archaeological Evaluation at Ilott Wharf, Bosworth Road, Measham, Leicestershire.		
	<b>Start/end dates of field work</b>	23-05-2018 One day		
	<b>Previous/Future Work</b>	No/ Not known		
	<b>Project Type</b>	Evaluation		
	<b>Site Status</b>	None		
	<b>Current Land Use</b>	Former industrial wharf		
	<b>Monument Type/Period</b>	Canal and railway structures/Modern		
	<b>Significant Finds/Period</b>	None/none		
	<b>Development Type</b>	Reinstatement of canal		
	<b>Reason for Investigation</b>	NPPF		
	<b>Position in the Planning Process</b>	Planning condition		
<b>Planning Ref.</b>	Transport and Works Act Order 2786			
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	<b>Site Address/Postcode</b>	Bosworth Road, Measham, Leicestershire. DE12 7HA		
	<b>Study Area</b>	1.3 ha		
	<b>Site Coordinates</b>	SK 348 112		
	<b>Height OD</b>	90m OD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Brief Originator</b>	Local Planning Authority (LCC)		
	<b>Project Design Originator</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Manager</b>	M Beamish		
	<b>Project Director/Supervisor</b>	A Hyam		
	<b>Sponsor/Funding Body</b>	Developer / Ashby Canal Association		
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		<b>Physical</b>	<b>Digital</b>	<b>Paper</b>
	<b>Recipient</b>	NA	LCC MusService	LCCMusService
	<b>ID (Acc. No.)</b>		X.A56.2018	X.A56.2018
	<b>Contents</b>		Photos Survey data	Field Notes, context sheets
<b>PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>Type</b>	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	<b>Title</b>	An Archaeological Evaluation at Ilott Wharf, Bosworth Road, Measham, Leicestershire.		
	<b>Author</b>	A Hyam		
	<b>Other bibliographic details</b>	ULAS Report No 2018-103		
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