

CTCM10/002



## CASTLE TOOT, CLEOBURY MORTIMER

*Archaeological Watching Brief*

*for Mr S Thorogood*

*May 2012*



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HA Job no.: CTCM10/002

HAS no.: 932

NGR: so 68201 76064

Parish: Cleobury Mortimer

Council: Shropshire

OASIS ref.: headland3-125923

Archive will be deposited with Shropshire Museum Service

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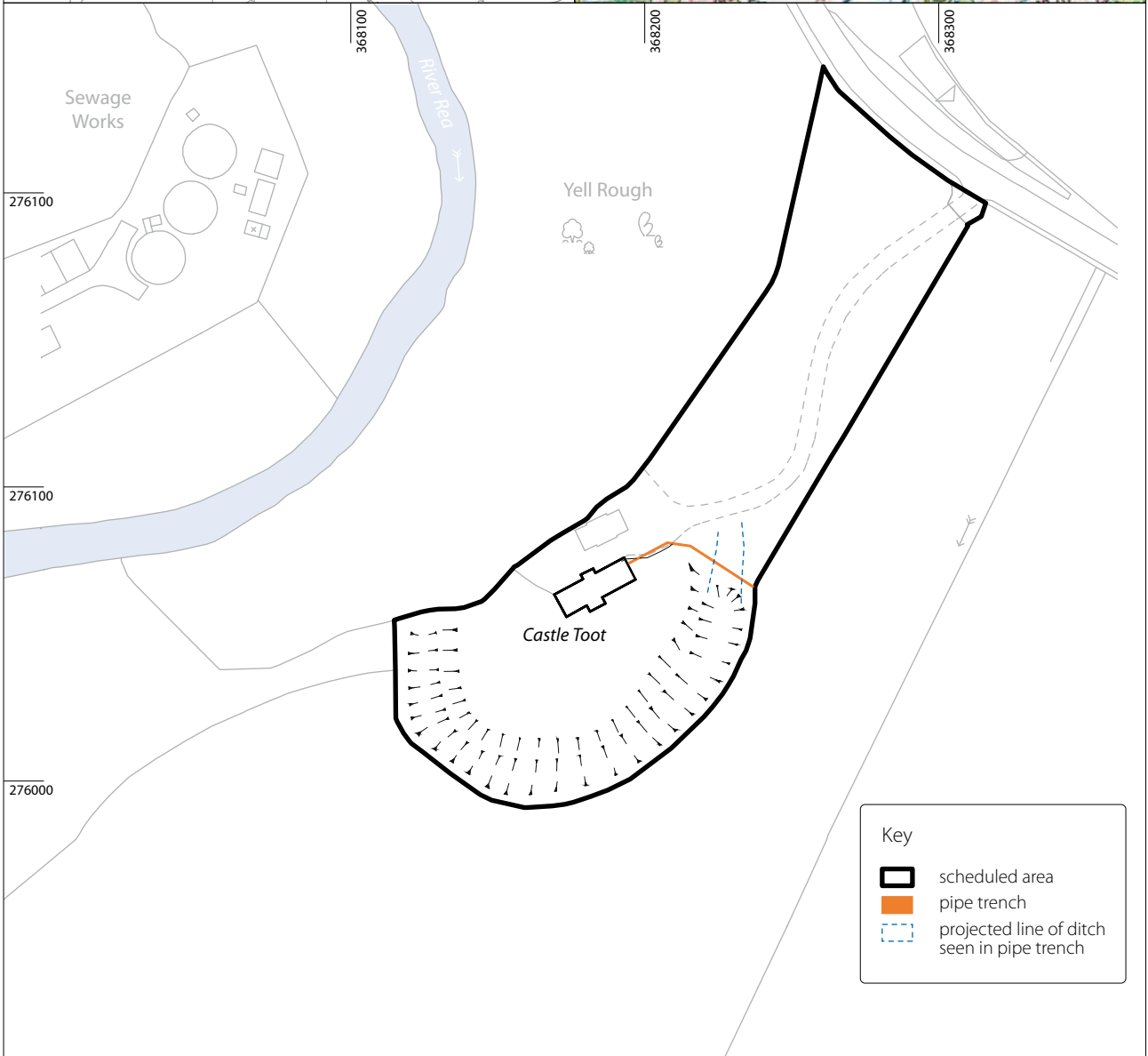
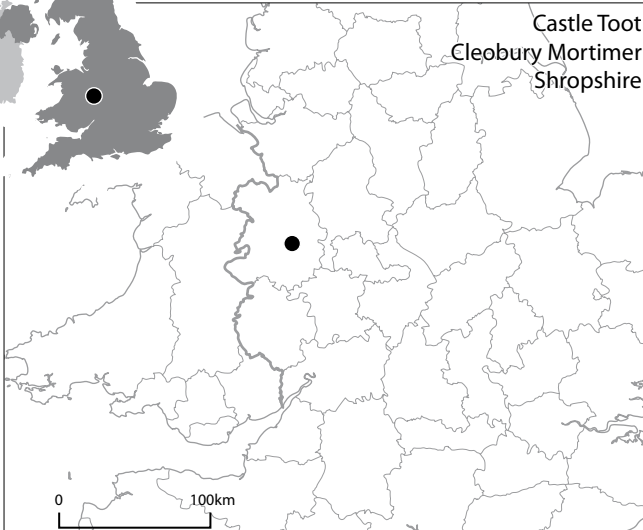


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Key

- scheduled area
- pipe trench
- projected line of ditch seen in pipe trench

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Scale 1:1,750 @ A4



**Illus 1**  
Site location



# CASTLE TOOT, CLEOBURY MORTIMER

## Archaeological Watching Brief

*Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd conducted a watching brief at Castle Toot, Cleobury Mortimer during the installation of a water pipe associated with an extension to the property. The existing house is built on the position of a scheduled motte but is not included in the scheduling of the site.*

*During the excavation of the water pipe trench, evidence for the infilling of the outer moat ditch was observed.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at Castle Toot, Cleobury Mortimer (NGR SO 68201 76064), during the excavation of a service trench associated with an extension to the main house. A watching brief was previously conducted by Headland Archaeology during the excavation of the foundation trenches for the extension (Crooks 2012).

This phase of works consisted of a short run of narrow trenching being excavated in order to install a new water supply pipe to the house (Illus 1). The pipe run gave the opportunity to examine a flattened area to the north of the site and close to the road access.

Castle Toot lies about 1km to the east of the town of Cleobury Mortimer on the Shropshire/Worcestershire border. The site is currently occupied by a house, garage, lawns and a garden. Underlying geology comprises the top of the Lower Old Red Sandstone comprising Clee Formation and Brownstones group – sandstone and conglomerate with some siltstone.

The site comprises a Scheduled motte situated on a natural promontory on the east side of the River Rea. It is surrounded by a dry moat on three sides and drops steeply to the river on the fourth. The entrance is in the northeast corner of the motte. Fragments of walling and the remains of a gatehouse were visible in this area at the

end of the 18th century and in 1911 stones forming the base of a causeway or bridge were observed. The current house was built in the 1950s.

Cleobury is mentioned in the Domesday Book as 'Claiberie' or 'Cleberie'. It was held by Ralph de Mortimer 'Edith held it. There are 4 hides paying geld. There is land for 24 ploughs. In the demesne are 4 plough and fourteen slaves and 20 villans and a priest and 2 radmen and 8 bordars. Among them all they have 20 ploughs. There is a mill rendering 2 summae of corn. Woodland for fattening 500 pigs renders 40s. TRE it was worth £8 and afterwards the same: now £12'.

There is no obvious reason for the presence of two castles at Cleobury. Possible suggestions are that Castle Toot was constructed as a replacement for Cleobury Castle when it was burnt down in 1155 by the forces of Henry II against whom Hugh Mortimer was in rebellion. Another suggestion is that it was a subsidiary fortification or that it was constructed by Henry's army as a siege work (Ironbridge Archaeology 2007).

A small evaluation was carried on the site in 2007 by Ironbridge Archaeology, which identified only post-medieval remains. It was thought most likely that an outcrop of sandstone encountered was natural bedrock but the possibility that it could have been structural and associated with the castle was not completely ruled out.



## 2. METHOD

The excavation took place, on 20th February 2012. Excavation was undertaken by the contractors throughout, with an archaeologist on site during the groundworks.

Excavation took place using a mechanical excavator to a depth of 0.5m–0.6m, following which the trench was hand cleaned in order to inspect the exposed sections.

All recording followed standard archaeological guidelines as set out by the Institute for Archaeologists. Contexts were given unique numbers and recording was undertaken on *pro forma* record cards that conform to accepted archaeological norms.

Photographs were taken throughout using 35mm monochrome, while digital photographs were taken on a 7.2mp camera for illustrative purposes. Registers were kept for context records, photographs, and drawings.

## 3. RESULTS

No structural remains associated with the construction of a stone castle were observed within the pipe run, however, significant archaeological evidence for the infilling of the dry moat was observed in the course of work at Castle Toot.

### 3.1 Pipe trench

Removal of the modern surface revealed a similar make up to the deposits seen within the foundation footings and evaluation trenches as previously conducted by Headland Archaeology and Ironbridge Archaeology, respectively.

In the northeastern run of the pipe trench, there was, however, a significant deposit of dark topsoil measuring 7m in width and 0.6m in depth within the excavated trench.

The location of the deposit indicated that the dry moat surrounding the castle site had at this point been filled in and levelled. Examination of the spoil showed no finds to be present within the loam.

## 4. DISCUSSION

No finds were observed during the watching brief at Castle Toot, the pipe run showed that the dry moat once continued further to the north and probably formed a complete circular feature, suggesting that access to the motte might have been across a linking bridge.

No finds were observed within the fill of the ditch, however, it may be safe to suggest that the levelling layer has a contemporary relationship with the construction of the road link for the main house in the 1950s.

## 5. ARCHIVE

The project archive will be deposited with Shropshire Museum Service.

## 6. REFERENCES

- Crooks, K 2012 *Archaeological Watching Brief*, Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd, HAS 909 CTCM10.
- Ironbridge Archaeology, 2007 *Archaeological Evaluation of Castle Toot, Cleobury Mortimer*, Ironbridge Archaeology no. 188.
- Williams, A & Martin, GH (edss) 1992 *Domesday Book, a complete translation*.



Illus 2

Dark topsoil indicating potential continuation of moat to N

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Site registers

#### Appendix 1.1 Context register

Context no.	Pipe trench	Description	Dimensions (m)
1000	Y	Existing surface of concrete and aggregate.	D: 0.1m
1001	Y	Mixed dark brown silt clay and stones, present turf and topsoil	D: 0.15m
1002	Y	Light/mid brown clay silt – subsoil beneath 1001.	D: 0.1m
1003	Y	Layer of natural sand overlying natural clay.	D: 0.1m
1004	Y	Firm red brown clay – natural in seen within pipe run.	D: 0.5m
1005	Y	Cut for ditch	D: unknown
1006	Y	Dark brown black –rich topsoil used to fill and level the ditch	D: unknown

#### Appendix 1.2 Photographic register

Photo no.	B&W	Digital	Facing	Description
01	Y	Y	E	View down the Pipe run showing dark earth of ditch fill in spoil
02	Y	Y	E	View down the Pipe run showing natural within base of trench located on the flattened area of the motte
03	Y	Y	S	View showing western cut of in filled ditch with in the natural
04	Y	Y	S	View showing western cut of in filled ditch with in the natural
05	Y	Y	N	General view of northern section showing natural within Pipe trench at eastern end
06	Y	Y	W	General view looking up Pipe run, showing dark earth of ditch infill within spoil
07	Y	Y	W	General view looking up Pipe run, showing dark earth of ditch infill within spoil
08	Y	Y	N	View showing eastern cut of in filled ditch with in the natural, the ditch cut appears less defined, and may just make use of the natural topography.
09	Y	Y	N	Pipe run from connection point at house , showing natural within the base of excavation
10	Y	Y	E	View of Pipe run from House showing modern make up and construction debris associated with the present building
11	Y	Y	S	View of Pipe run from House showing modern make up and construction debris associated with the present building





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