

PBCH12



## POST BOX COTTAGE, LONGTOWN, HEREFORDSHIRE

*Archaeological Watching Brief*

*for Healing Herbs Ltd*

*DMS/110514/F*

*November 2012*



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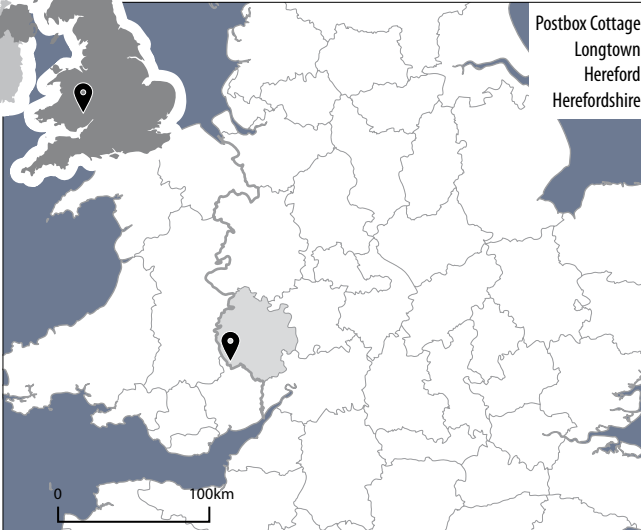


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Postbox Cottage  
Longtown  
Hereford  
Herefordshire



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# POST BOX COTTAGE, LONGTOWN, HEREFORDSHIRE

## Archaeological Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd at Post Box Cottage, Longtown on behalf of Healing Herbs Ltd. During ground works three bowl-like depressions were observed which may indicate the locations of previous trees; two post-holes of a 19th century date were encountered; and a single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from the topsoil.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd at Post Box Cottage, Longtown on behalf of Healing Herbs Ltd. Planning permission was granted on the condition that the developer secured the implementation of an agreed programme of archaeological work based on a Herefordshire Council Brief (ref: DMS/110514/F).

The site lies on the east side of the main road through Longtown, which occupies a sandstone ridge between the valleys of the Olchon brook and the River Monnow (NGR SO 324 287 site centre). The underlying geology consists of interbedded argillaceous rocks and sandstone with sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 391 to 417 million years ago in the Devonian Period (British Geological Survey 2012).

The site was previously occupied by a dwelling with a rear garden, which has since been demolished and thereafter remained a vacant area of ground for some time. Work began on the 24th July 2012 and involved seven site visits in total, the final visit being on 8th August 2012. Work was undertaken in line with a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the planning authority (Kimber 2012).

#### 1.1 Archaeological and historical background

The settlement of Longtown arose as a ribbon settlement along the main road associated with the motte and the bailey castle built following the Norman conquest. The main road itself is thought to be Roman in origin and Longtown castle is theorised to lie on the site of a Roman fort. Evidence for Roman activity is alleged to have been found within the bailey of the castle in the 19th century, however, recent work has failed to prove this claim. The castle complex consists of a large earthwork, forming the inner and outer baileys, and a motte (or earthen mound).

A number of earthworks are visible in the fields surrounding Longtown, and may relate to the medieval enclosure, or are

possibly Roman in origin. The development area sits within a land parcel enclosed by some of these earthworks. Archaeological work in the vicinity of the development area has demonstrated only low density and in the main undated archaeological features (Sherlock & Pikes 2001).

No archaeological investigations have been undertaken on the site previously. However, an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the site of Greyhound Farm and Glyneath House located directly across the road from Post Box Cottage (*ibid*). Most of the activity found during this exercise consisted of post-medieval activity related to the area being used as a farm and gardens. Sherds of 14/15th century pottery were found within the area of Greyhound Farm indicating activity on this site and in the vicinity of Post Box Cottage within the medieval period.

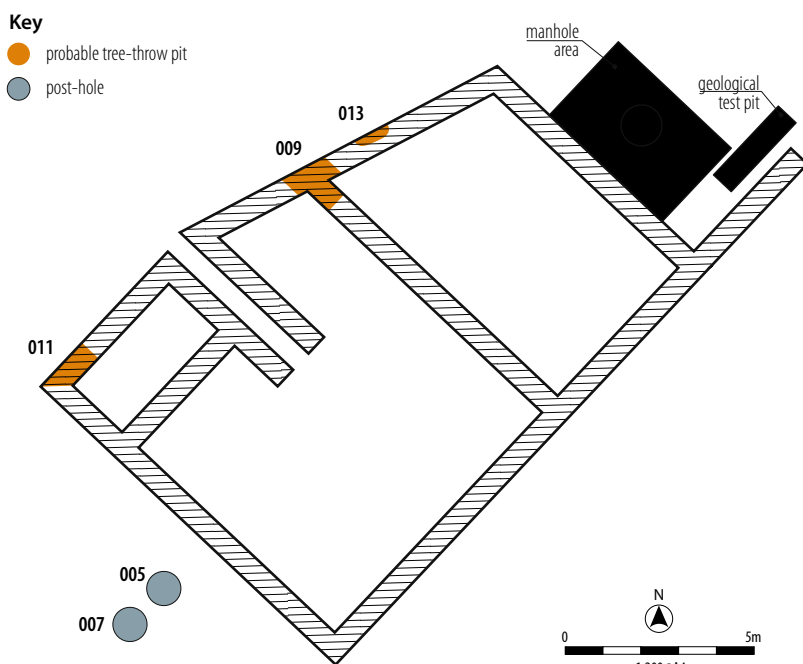
The first edition Ordnance Survey map (1892) of the development area indicates that the site remained vacant as far back as 1886 and may have existed as a garden associated with the adjacent house.

### 2. METHOD

The watching brief was undertaken during several site visits in order to monitor the excavation of foundation footings associated with the construction of a light industrial unit with a flat above, and ground reduction of up to 0.5m at the western end of the site for an associated car park. The site comprised an area of 200m<sup>2</sup>. The foundation footings reached a depth of up to 1.2m and varied in width from 0.6m to 0.9m. Prior to commencement, the site had been cleared of scrub and was ready for excavation.

A geological test pit measuring 1 x 0.4 x c.2m had been dug, at the east of the site, prior to the arrival of the archaeologist.

Excavation was undertaken by the main contractor using a mechanical excavator with the use of a toothless bucket. A toothed bucket was utilised when hard modern surfaces or concrete were encountered.



**Illus 2**  
Site plan

Two circular features, [005] and [007], cutting [003] were discovered during the stripping of the car park area to the west of the site. The dimensions of both features were similar and indicated that these were probably post-holes; [005] measured 0.28 x 0.3 x 0.12 metres and [007] 0.34 x 0.32 x 0.14 metres (W x L x D). Both also had a similar fill consisting of a mid-brownish grey silty clay [006, 008] and contained sherds of blue and white pottery, which can be dated to the 19th century. The pottery was not retained.

A sherd of pottery, potentially originating from the medieval period was found loose within the spoil heap and therefore could not be isolated to a single context (see Appendix 2).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

No significant archaeological features were uncovered within the footing trenches excavated. The proximity of the site to Longtown Castle and its associated bailey to the north, and the existence of the medieval ribbon settlement suggested that the potential for archaeological remains to occur was high. However this does not seem to have been the case in this part of the village.

The existence of a previous dwelling on site would suggest that the area may have been disturbed somewhat during its construction and its subsequent removal. The presence of the bowl shaped features suggests the area was planted with trees which were later removed. The two circular features [005, 007] to the west of the site most likely represent post-holes associated with modern fence posts and may represent the land's previous use as a garden in the 19th century.

#### 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sherlock, H & Pikes, PJ 2001 *Greyhound Farm and Glyneath House, Longtown, Herefordshire: Archaeological Evaluation*, Archenfield Archaeology.

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) 2007 *Archaeological Archives Forum Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*.

British Geological Survey. Accessed November 2012 online: <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience/home.html?Accordion2=1#maps>

Kimber, M 2012 *Post Box Cottage, Longtown, Herefordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief*, Headland Archaeology.

All recording followed standard archaeological guidelines as set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA). All contexts were given unique numbers. All recording was undertaken on *pro forma* record cards. 35mm colour transparencies and black-and-white prints were taken; with graduated metric scale clearly visible.

Site plans were provided by the on-site building contractors and were annotated accordingly.

#### 3. RESULTS

The topsoil [001] consisted of a dark greyish-brown silty loam containing modern elements such as red brick fragments and modern pottery probably as a result of the former structure on site and its subsequent demolition; or from the site's previous use as a garden. The deposit was 0.25m thick and plant root activity was abundant throughout the topsoil indicating a heavily planted area.

Below this was a light greyish brown silty clay subsoil [002] c.0.3m thick, present across the entire site. The earliest deposit [003], which varied across the site, was a mid-yellowish grey silty clay, with naturally occurring large sandstone slabs observed mainly at the eastern and southern edges of the site.

At the northern edge of the site a series of bowl-like depressions [009, 011, 013] were observed in the section of an E-W aligned footing; cutting [002] and [003]. These features were filled by [004, 010, 012] respectively, which all consisted of a grey-brown silty clay with frequent large stones and sandstone rubble. They each had a depth of 0.7m and width of 1.0m and probably indicate disturbance caused by the removal of trees previously growing on the site.

**Illus 3** ▶

*Excavated footings at the south of the site*



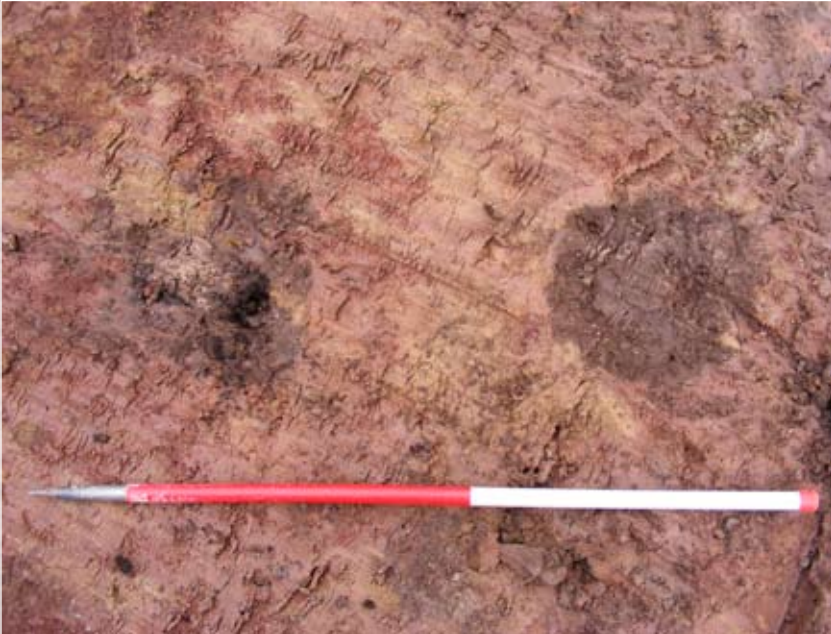
**Illus 4** ▶

*[009] tree-throw pit visible in section*



**Illus 5** ▶

*[005] & [007] post-holes*





## 6. APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Site Registers

#### Appendix 1.1 Context register

Context	Description	Dimensions: W x L x D(m)
001	Dark greyish brown silty loam topsoil, red brick inclusions	D 0.25
002	Light greyish brown silty clay subsoil	D 0.3
003	Mid yellowish grey silty clay	D 0.4–0.7
004	Grey-brown silty clay with frequent large stones & sandstone rubble, fill of [009]	D 0.7 W 1.0
005	Cut of post-hole, filled by (006)	0.28 x 0.30 x 0.12
006	Mid-brown silty clay, fill of [005]	0.28 x 0.30 x 0.12
007	Cut of post-hole, filled by (008)	0.34 x 0.32 x 0.14
008	Mid-brown silty clay, fill of [007]	0.34 x 0.32 x 0.14
009	Cut of probable tree-throw, filled by (004)	D 0.7 W 1.0
010	Fill of (011), same as (004)	D 0.7 W 1.0
011	Cut of tree-throw, filled by (010)	D 0.7 W 1.0
012	Fill of (013), same as (004)	D 0.7 W 1.0
013	Cut of tree-throw, filled by (019)	D 0.7 W 1.0

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#### Appendix 1.2 Photographic register

Shot	C/S	B/W	Digital	Direction	Description
1			01	E	General site shot
2	–	–	02	N	S facing section of footing at S of site
3	–	–	03	W	General shot SE corner of footings
4	–	–	04	E	Test hole dug E edge of site
5	–	–	05	NE	S facing section, SE corner of footings
6	–	–	06	S	N facing section, SE corner of footings
7	–	–	07	–	Misfire
8	–	–	08	N	E facing section
9	–	–	09	W	E facing section
10	–	–	10	E	Tree-throw disturbance NE corner

Shot	C/S	B/W	Digital	Direction	Description
11	–	–	11	W	General site shot – E of site
12	–	–	12	W	General site shot – E of site
13	–	–	13	N	S facing section
14	–	–	14	N	S facing section with [004] in section
15	–	–	15	W	General site shot
16	–	–	16	S	Footing at centre of site
17	1	1	17	–	ID shot
18	2	2	18	E	General site shot
19	3	3	19	E	Footing trench at east edge of site
20	4	4	20	SE	Footing at SW of building
21	5	5	21	N	Subsoil variation – extends into (003)
22	6	6	22	SE	General shot – footing at west of building
23	7	7	23	N	Two circular features [005] and [006]
24	8	8	24	W	Reduction of area to west (car park area)
25	9	9	25	E	Reduction of area to west (car park area)
26	10	10	26	E	Drainage trenches
27	11	11	27	E	W facing section within drainage trench at east edge
28	12	12	28	N	Drainage trench – east edge of site

#### Appendix 1.3 Drawing register

Drw	Scale	Plan / Section	Description
1	NTS	Plan	Plan of foundation footings

## Appendix 2 Pottery assessment

*Kath Crooks*

A single sherd (21g) of medieval pottery was recovered from the site. The sherd is from the rim of a jug in fabric A7B: The sherd is from the spout area, though the spout itself is now broken away. Decoration consists of knife cut lines at the point of the join between body and spout. A thin, clear or tan green speckled glaze is present on the exterior of the sherd.

Fabric A7B is dated in Hereford to between the 13th and 15th centuries; it predominates in the city during the 14th century and is thought to be residual by the middle of the 16th century (Vince 1985, 43).

### *Reference*

Vince, A 1985 'The ceramic finds', in Shoesmith, R (ed) 'The finds' *Hereford City Excavations, Vol 3*, CBA Research Report No 58, Council for British Archaeology, pp 34–82, fiche M6.A2–M8.A4



## Appendix 3 Herefordshire Contractors Report Recording Form

<b>Report Name and Title</b>	Postbox Cottage, Longtown, Herefordshire		
<b>Contractors Name and Address</b>	Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd, Unit 1 Premier Business Park, Faraday Road, Hereford HR4 9NZ		
<b>Site Name</b>	Postbox Cottage		
<b>Grid Reference (8 fig)</b>	SO 324 287	<b>Planning application no.</b>	DMS/110514/F
<b>SMR number/s of site</b>	EHE1994		
<b>Date of Field Work</b>	July – August 2012		
<b>Date of Report</b>	November 2012		

### NUMBER AND TYPE OF FINDS

Pottery	Period	Number of sherds
1	13th – 15th Century	1
Other	Period	Quantity
-	-	-

### NUMBER AND TYPE OF SAMPLES COLLECTED

<b>Sieving for charred plant remains</b>	No of Features sampled No of buckets
<b>C14/scientific dates</b>	No and Type Result
<b>Pollen</b>	No of Columns/spot samples Name of pollen specialist
<b>Bone</b>	Number of buckets coarse sieved for bone <b>Quantity Recovered Period</b>
<b>Insect</b>	No of Columns/spot samples Name of insect specialist
<b>Other</b>	Type and specialist
<b>Summary of the report</b>	An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd at Post Box Cottage, Longtown on behalf of Healing Herbs Ltd. During ground works three bowl-like depressions were observed which may indicate the locations of previous trees; two postholes of a 19th century date were encountered; and a single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from the topsoil.





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