

LCBH/01



LAND OPPOSITE LABURNAM COTTAGE, BROMSASH, ROSS-ON-WYE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

commissioned by David Kirk (HDP)
on behalf of Ms S Thomsen

April 2016

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project info

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project team

PROJECT MANAGER Luke Craddock-Bennett
AUTHOR Iain Bennett
FIELDWORK Iain Bennett, Liam Delaney
GRAPHICS Rafael Maya-Torcely, Mano Kapazoglou
SPECIALISTS Julie Franklin, Julie Lochrie – Finds
APPROVED BY Luke Craddock-Bennett – Project Manager



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ARCHAEOLOGY**

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Headland Archaeology were commissioned by Ms S Thomsen, through her agent David Kirk (HDP), to undertake an archaeological evaluation on an area of land situated in Bromsash, Herefordshire. The evaluation revealed a single pit containing abraded Roman pottery along the southern edge of the development area and the site was deemed to be of low archaeological potential.

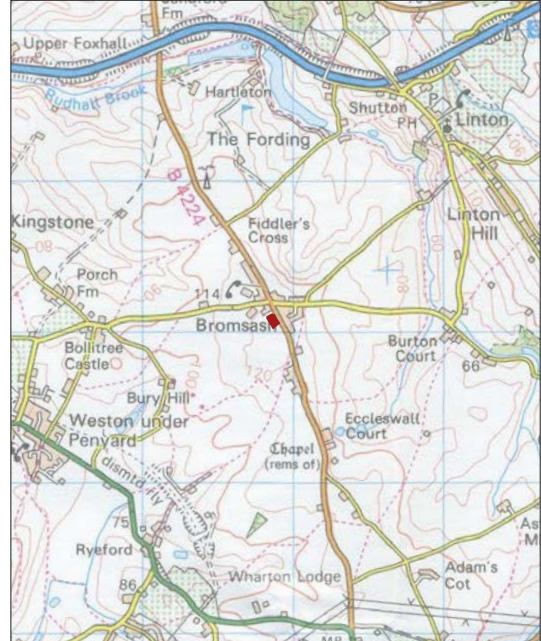
CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 1 | INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 2 | SITE DESCRIPTION ILLUS 1 | 1 |
| 3 | ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND | 1 |
| 4 | AIMS AND OBJECTIVES | 1 |
| 5 | METHOD | 1 |
| 6 | RESULTS ILLUS 2 | 2 |
| 6.1 | TRENCHES THAT CONTAINED ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES ILLUS 3 AND ILLUS 4 | 2 |
| 6.2 | BLANK TRENCHES | 2 |
| 6.3 | FINDS ASSESSMENT | 2 |
| 7 | DISCUSSION | 3 |
| 8 | CONCLUSION | 3 |
| 9 | BIBLIOGRAPHY | 3 |
| 10 | APPENDICES | 4 |
| | APPENDIX 1 SITE REGISTERS | 4 |
| | APPENDIX 2 FINDS CATALOGUE | 5 |

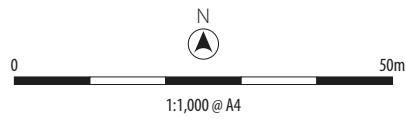
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

| | |
|---|------|
| ILLUS 1 SITE LOCATION | VIII |
| ILLUS 2 NE FACING SAMPLE SECTION OF TRENCH 2 | 2 |
| ILLUS 3 NE FACING SECTION OF POSSIBLE PIT [305] | 2 |
| ILLUS 4 SW FACING SHOT OF TRENCH 3 SHOWING LOCATION OF [305] IN CENTRE AS GROUND RISES TO THE SW | 2 |

LCBH/01
 land opposite Laburnam Cottage
 Bromsash
 Herefordshire



- KEY
- development boundary
 - trench location
 - archaeological feature



MIDLANDS & WEST Unit 1, Clearview Court, Twyford Road
 Hereford HR2 6JR
 01432 364 901
 www.headlandarchaeology.com

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ILLUS 1 Site location

LAND OPPOSITE LABURNAM COTTAGE, BROMSASH, ROSS-ON-WYE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

1 INTRODUCTION

Ms S Thomsen, through her agent David Kirk (HDP), commissioned Headland Archaeology to undertake an archaeological evaluation on an area of land situated in Bromsash, Herefordshire. The client intends to submit an application to Herefordshire Council for residential development of the site.

A bronze statue of the goddess Diana was exhibited to the Society of Antiquaries in 1788, but has since been lost. No mosaic pavements had been discovered in this area by 1908, although it has been noted by a Mr Southall that in the mid-1800s a farmer found a tessellated pavement but destroyed it 'lest he should be bothered by antiquarian visitors' (Craddock-Bennett 2016). The possible site of this pavement is unknown.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION (ILLUS 1)

The site is located to the south of the Bromsash Crossroads and immediately to the west of the B4224 (Centred on NGR 364878, 224095). The geology of the site comprises Brownstones Formation with no previous superficial deposits recorded (BGS 2016). The land is under pasture and rises to the south west, away from the B4224. It is bounded by arable land to the south, pasture to the west, the B4224 to the east and an area of farm buildings to the north.

By the beginning of the 21st century the sole visible trace of the town was a fairly steep bank under which the aforementioned wall is said to be. There is also a stretch of Roman road which runs past the site.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The development site is located immediately to the east of the Roman Station of Ariconium. The scheduled area of Ariconium extends to within 125m of the western boundary of the development area.

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the evaluation was to determine whether any archaeological remains are present within the area of the proposed development, characterise them by date, extent, preservation and significance and to produce a report and archive which is to be deposited within a local repository.

Ariconium is located between the villages of Weston under Penyard and Bromsash. The site is mentioned in the 13th Iter of the Antonine Itinerary, where it is said to be 15 miles from Glevum (Gloucester) and 11 from Blestium (Monmouth). Ariconium appears to have been an area of intensive iron working and possesses smelting furnaces and forges. Apart from the frequent discoveries of scoriae, hand-bloomeries and floors, the extent of the site is marked by a blackened appearance of the soil which contrasts to the red soil of the rest of the county. The blackened soil is suggestive of the town having been destroyed by fire, like Kenchester or Leintwardine.

5 METHOD

The evaluation comprised the excavation of three trenches (each measuring 20m x 1.6m in plan) within the development area. This amounted to a 3% sample of the development site.

All trenches were opened by a CAT 420F mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.6m wide flat-bladed bucket under direct archaeological supervision and excavated in controlled spits. Spoil was stored beside each trench; topsoil and subsoil were kept separate by putting topsoil on one side of the trench and subsoil on the other. Trenches were backfilled by replacing excavated materials in their reverse order of excavation; and by tamping down with the excavator as tidily as practicable.

The slope towards Weston under Penyard on the west is called Cinder Hill, and the ground here has turned up numerous scoriae (lumps of metal slag). In 1804, several skeletons were discovered and also the remains of a stone wall – apparently the façade of a building. The coins found at this site were chiefly of the Lower Empire, but dated from Claudius (AD 41) to Constantinus (AD 340).

The stratigraphic sequence was recorded in full in each of the trenches, even where no archaeological deposits were identified. All recording followed ClfA Standards and Guidance for conducting archaeological evaluations (ClfA 2014). All contexts were given



ILLUS 2 NE facing sample section of Trench 2 **ILLUS 3** NE facing section of possible pit [305] **ILLUS 4** SW facing shot of Trench 3 showing location of [305] in centre as ground rises to the SW

unique numbers and recorded on pro forma record cards. The photographic archive was formed of monochrome prints each with a graduated metric scale clearly visible. Digital images were taken for illustrative purposes.

6 RESULTS (ILLUS 2)

Deposits were consistent across the site, with the natural geological deposits (104, 204 and 304) comprising a firm grey sandy clay with a mid-red hue that contained occasional small to medium rounded stones throughout. This was present between 0.71m and 0.84m below ground level (BGL) across the site becoming deeper to the north. Above this was a firm red sandy clay deposit (103, 203, and 303) with a mid-brown hue that contained occasional small rounded stones throughout. This was present between 0.55m and 0.84m BGL, becoming deeper to the north of the site.

The subsoil across the site (102, 202 and 302) was a friable red sandy silt with a mid-brown hue that contained rare small rounded stones; encountered at depths of between 0.26m and 0.60m BGL. The topsoil (101, 201 and 301) was represented by a friable red sandy silt with a mid-brown hue that is slightly darker than the subsoil and contains slightly more common small rounded stones throughout. Topsoil measured between 0.26 and 0.43m in depth, becoming deeper towards the north of the site as with the other deposits present.

6.1 TRENCHES THAT CONTAINED ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES (ILLUS 3 AND ILLUS 4)

Trench 3 contained a feature that has been interpreted as a possible large pit [305] located in the centre of the trench, measuring approximately 3m across and at least 1.25m in depth. The full dimensions of the feature could not be ascertained due to the restrictions of the trench. The feature appeared to be cut from just below the topsoil (301) and into the natural geology (304). The interface however between the fill of the feature (306) and the surrounding material was very diffuse. The north eastern edge of the feature was clearly defined however there was no definitive edge found to the south west.

6.2 BLANK TRENCHES

Trenches 1 and 2 did not contain any archaeological deposits or features.

6.3 FINDS ASSESSMENT

BY JULIE FRANKLIN, JULIE LOCHRIE

The assemblage numbers six sherds (13g) of pottery and 918g of industrial waste, all from the one feature, pit [305] (306). The finds appear to be of Romano-British date.

Pottery

The six pottery sherds are of a soft oxidised fabric, small and very abraded and of little diagnostic value. They are of probable Roman date and are probably of local Severn Valley Ware.

Industrial Waste

Slag weighing 918g was found. It is heavy and dense with most of the material presenting a flowed appearance. It may be related to iron smelting or another unknown industry. The quantity of slag and its fragmentation suggest a dump of material rather than in situ industry.

Discussion

The finds suggest that Romano-British domestic and industrial activity took place in the vicinity of pit [305]. Unfortunately the evidence is too scant to provide further details of the nature of that activity or more refined dating.

7 DISCUSSION

The pottery and slag that were found within pit [305] were found to be Romano-British in date. This connects the site with the nearby Roman settlement of Ariconium where large quantities of slag have previously been found. The industrial waste is likely related to iron smelting or other industrial practices, the material however is a dump rather than part of in situ industry. This would suggest that the material may have been worked in Ariconium itself and then the waste product discarded outside of the settlement.

8 CONCLUSION

The evaluation has revealed that despite the close proximity of the development site to the scheduled area of Ariconium there is very little archaeology present. The results of the evaluation suggest that the eastern edge of Ariconium lies to the west, and does not extend into the proposed development site.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

BGS 2016 *British Geological Survey* Website Available: www.bgs.ac.uk

CIfA 2014 *Code of Conduct* Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

CIfA 2014 *Standard and Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings)* Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

Craddock-Bennett, L 2016 *Land opposite Laburnam Cottage, Bromsash, Ross-on-Wye* Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation, Headland Archaeology, Hereford.

10 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 SITE REGISTERS

Appendix 1.1 Trench register

| TR 1 | ORIENTATION | L (M) | W (M) | AVG D (M) |
|------|-------------|-------|-------|-----------|
| | SW – NE | 20 | 1.6 | 0.75 |

| CONTEXT | CONTEXT DESCRIPTION | DEPOSIT D (MBGL) |
|---------|--|------------------|
| 101 | Topsoil – mid brownish red, sandy silt, friable, occasional small rounded stones throughout. | 0.0–0.43 |
| 102 | Subsoil – mid brownish red, sandy silt, friable, rare small rounded stones. Slightly darker than (101) | 0.43–0.65 |
| 103 | Sandy clay, mid brownish red, firm, occasional small rounded stones throughout. | 0.65–0.84 |
| 104 | Natural – Mid reddish grey sandy clay, firm, occasional small to medium rounded stones throughout. | 0.84+ |

| TR 2 | ORIENTATION | L (M) | W (M) | AVG D (M) |
|------|-------------|-------|-------|-----------|
| | NW – SE | 20 | 1.6 | 0.76 |

| CONTEXT | CONTEXT DESCRIPTION | DEPOSIT D (MBGL) |
|---------|--|------------------|
| 201 | Topsoil – mid brownish red, sandy silt, friable, occasional small rounded stones throughout. | 0.0–0.36 |
| 202 | Subsoil – mid brownish red, sandy silt, friable, rare small rounded stones. Slightly darker than (101) | 0.36–0.55 |
| 203 | Sandy clay, mid brownish red, firm, occasional small rounded stones throughout. | 0.55–0.71 |
| 204 | Natural – Mid reddish grey sandy clay, firm, occasional small to medium rounded stones throughout. | 0.71+ |

| TR 3 | ORIENTATION | L (M) | W (M) | AVG D (M) |
|------|-------------|-------|-------|-----------|
| | NE – SW | 20 | 1.6 | 0.73 |

| CONTEXT | CONTEXT DESCRIPTION | DEPOSIT D (MBGL) |
|---------|---|------------------|
| 301 | Topsoil – mid brownish red, sandy silt, friable, occasional small rounded stones throughout. | 0.0–0.26 |
| 302 | Subsoil – mid brownish red, sandy silt, friable, rare small rounded stones. Slightly darker than (101) | 0.26–0.60 |
| 303 | Sandy clay, mid brownish red, firm, occasional small rounded stones throughout. | 0.60–0.71 |
| 304 | Natural – Mid reddish grey sandy clay, firm, occasional small to medium rounded stones throughout. | 0.71+ |
| 305 | Cut of possible pit – irregular shape in plan, steep sides, flat base, and gradual break of slope. Unknown length, approx. 3m in width and 1.25m+ in depth. | 0.26–1.30+ |
| 306 | Fill of possible pit [305] – Dark reddish brown sandy clay, loose/friable. Clear interface with natural to NE, not visible to SW. Occasional slag present. | 0.26–1.30+ |

Appendix 1.2 Photo register

| PHOTO | B/W | DIGITAL | DIRECTION FACING | DESCRIPTION |
|-------|-----|---------|------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | 37 | 1 | – | I.D Shot – Film Number. 1269 |
| 2 | 36 | 2 | SE | TR1 – Sample Section |
| 3 | 35 | 3 | NE | TR1 – Completed trench shot |
| 4 | 34 | 4 | SW | TR2 – Sample Section |
| 5 | 33 | 5 | NW | TR2 – Completed trench shot |
| 6 | 32 | 6 | SE | TR3 – NWFS of [305] |
| 7 | 31 | 7 | SE | TR3 – NWFS of [305] |
| 8 | 30 | 8 | SW | TR3 – NEFS of [305] |
| 9 | 29 | 9 | SE | TR3 – NWFS of [305] |
| 10 | 28 | 10 | SE | TR3 – NWFS of [305] |
| 11 | 27 | 11 | SW | TR3 – NEFS of [305] |
| 12 | 26 | 12 | NW | TR3 – Sample Section |
| 13 | 25 | 13 | SW | TR3 – Completed trench shot |
| 14 | 24 | 14 | NE | TR1 – Backfilled trench |
| 15 | 23 | 15 | SE | TR2 – Backfilled trench |
| 16 | 22 | 16 | SW | TR3 – Backfilled trench |

APPENDIX 2 FINDS CATALOGUE

| TRENCH | CONTEXT | CONTEXT NOTES | QUANTITY | WEIGHT (G) | MATERIAL | OBJECT | DESCRIPTION | SPOT DATE |
|--------|---------|---------------|----------|------------|------------------|--------|---|-----------|
| 3 | 306 | pit 305 | — | 918 | Industrial Waste | Slag | heavy and dense fragments with a typically flowed appearance and occasional purple colour | — |
| 3 | 306 | pit 305 | 6 | 13 | Pottery (Rom) | SVW? | small, soft, very abraded sherds, typically of oxidised pottery, possibly SVW | Rom |



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SOUTH & EAST

Headland Archaeology
Building 68C, Wrest Park, Silsoe
Bedfordshire MK45 4HS

01525 861 578

southandeast@headlandarchaeology.com

MIDLANDS & WEST

Headland Archaeology
Unit 1, Clearview Court, Twyford Road
Hereford HR2 6JR

01432 364 901

midlandsandwest@headlandarchaeology.com

NORTH

Headland Archaeology
Unit 16, Hillside, Beeston Road
Leeds LS11 8ND

0113 387 6430

north@headlandarchaeology.com

SCOTLAND

Headland Archaeology
13 Jane Street
Edinburgh EH6 5HE

0131 467 7705

scotland@headlandarchaeology.com

www.headlandarchaeology.com