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Crinacott Farm Pyworthy, Devon

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Ref: 86532.03
July 2013



**Crinacott Farm
Pyworthy, Devon**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Quality Assurance

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* I = Internal Draft; E = External Draft; F = Final

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Figure 1: Location of Site and observed work



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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Parker Dann, on behalf of Vogt Solar to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land at Crinacott Farm, near Pyworthy, Devon (NGR 230815 101634) during works associated with the construction of a proposed solar farm.

Following the preparation of a desk-based assessment and subsequent geophysical survey, three areas within the site were considered to be of archaeological potential and the Archaeological Advisor to Devon County Council recommended all groundwork in these areas should be subject to an archaeological watching brief.

The fieldwork consisted of archaeological monitoring during the excavation of cable trenches in each of these areas, to determine the nature of the geophysical anomalies identified. The watching brief was undertaken on 4th, 11th and 12th March 2013.

Although no features or archaeological deposits were identified during the watching brief, given the small areas observed and the minimal impact of the development overall, there remains the potential for archaeological material to be present within the site.



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Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Vogt Solar. The assistance of Debbie Marriage of Parker Dann on behalf of Vogt Solar is gratefully acknowledged in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Ann Dick (Devon County Council) for her assistance and advice during the course of the project.

The watching brief was undertaken by Naomi Brennan and Ben Cullen. This report was written and compiled by Naomi Brennan with illustrations prepared by Linda Coleman and Naomi Brennan. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Sue Farr.



Crinacott Farm Pyworthy, Devon

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Parker Dann, on behalf of Vogt Solar (the Client) to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land at Crinacott Farm, near Pyworthy, Devon, (hereafter 'the Site') centred upon National Grid Reference (NGR) 230815 101634 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 Planning consent (1/0883/2012/FULM) was granted by Torridge District Council for a solar farm with associated infrastructure on condition (condition 15) that a programme of archaeological works was undertaken. After preparation of the desk-based assessment (WA 2012) which identified some archaeological potential, a geophysical survey (WA 2013a) was completed for the Site which identified several anomalies of archaeological origin and a number of anomalies consistent with former field boundaries.
- 1.1.3 The watching brief was undertaken on 4th, 11th and 12th March 2013.

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The Site is located in north-west Devon, just over 3km east of the Cornish border, and c. 3.5km south-west of the town of Holsworthy. The Site comprises an irregular, c. 21ha parcel of agricultural land containing six fields which are currently under pasture.
- 1.2.2 The Site is bounded to the north, east, south and west by farmland, and Crinacott Farm itself is located immediately beyond the western Site boundary, immediately outside the application area (**Figure 1**). The Site is bisected by an east-west aligned unmetalled trackway which leads to Crinacott farmyard. There are a number of watercourses within the Site, including north to south aligned streams or drains, likely man-made on the basis of their regularity, along the eastern and the western Site boundaries, whilst another runs through the centre of the Site. The southern Site boundary is formed by a natural, irregular meandering stream which crosses the base of the valley. The highest point lies at the centre of the northern Site limit, at an elevation of c. 115m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The land within the Site slopes away to the south and south-west, towards the base of the valley. The south-west corner of the Site lies at c. 100m aOD.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology is mapped as sandstones and mudstones/siltstones of the Bude Formation in the north of Site, and mudstones/siltstones of the Crackington Formation in the south of the Site (BGS).



2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 A desk-based assessment (WA 2012) and a detailed gradiometer survey (WA 2013a) have been completed for the Site and are summarised below.

2.2 Desk-based assessment

- 2.2.1 The DBA suggested that there is the potential for as yet unknown, buried archaeological features to occur within the Site. The lack of intrusive archaeological investigations within the Site and surrounding area means that the archaeological potential of the Site remains largely untested.
- 2.2.2 There is evidence that the wider landscape was the focus for funerary activity during the prehistoric period, with a linear barrow cemetery located on a ridge of higher ground in the south-east of the wider study area. The north of the Site, located upon higher ground, commands views across the surrounding countryside to the south-west, whilst from the centre of the Site there are views across land to the south. As such these may have been considered favourable locations for prehistoric funerary activity.
- 2.2.3 Crinacott Farm is known to have existed for over seven centuries, and the Site itself is likely to have been farmland belonging to Crinacott throughout this period, and potentially earlier. As a result, it is considered somewhat unlikely that significant buried archaeological features dating from the early medieval period to the present day will occur within the Site. However it is possible that some buried features relating to medieval and post-medieval agriculture will be present within the Site, in particular, remains of earlier field boundaries. There may also be potential for buried remains relating to medieval farmstead settlement to occur within the west of the Site.

2.3 Geophysical survey

- 2.3.1 A detailed gradiometer survey (WA 2013a) was undertaken across the Site and identified several anomalies of possible archaeological interest, the clearest of which are consistent with former field boundaries (**Figure 1**). Many of these appear on historic mapping and were noted in a previous desk-based assessment (WA 2012). A number do not appear on historic maps however, and indicate further subdivisions of the former known field systems.
- 2.3.2 Several clusters of anomalies were identified at the northern and southern extents of the survey areas. The proximity of these anomalies to the existing boundaries and their limited extents within the survey area made the interpretation less conclusive, although it is possible that they are of archaeological interest. A possible sub-circular anomaly (4040) was identified towards the eastern extent and a cluster of curvilinear anomalies (4000) were positioned at the corner of the northern field and appeared to extend northwards under the boundary.
- 2.3.3 Numerous regions of increased magnetic response appeared throughout the survey areas and it was considered likely that they were geological in origin. Clusters of linear and pit-like anomalies (4014 & 4015) were closely associated with these regions, and although they were interpreted as being of possible archaeological interest, a geological origin could not be discounted entirely.
- 2.3.4 Elsewhere within the survey area, numerous linear and curvilinear trends were visible on differing orientations to local ploughing trends. Although the origin of these trends is

unclear, it is possible that some may be archaeological in origin; however, it was considered that many will relate to changes in the near-surface geology or agricultural activity.

- 2.3.5 A network of linear anomalies within one of the survey areas was considered likely to relate to field drainage.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

- 3.1.1 The objective of the watching brief was to establish within the constraints of the agreed strategy the presence or absence, location, extent, date, character, condition, and depth of any surviving remains identified during the geophysical survey which may be impacted by the proposed development.
- 3.1.2 In particular the watching brief aimed to clarify the impact of the development on anomalies 4000, 4014/15 and 4040 and if disturbed, to ensure their preservation by record.

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

- 3.2.1 The full detailed methodology of the archaeological works was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WA 2013b).
- 3.2.2 Based on the results of a geophysical survey, three areas were identified where groundworks were to be subject to an archaeological watching brief. The fieldwork consisted of the monitoring of groundwork associated with the excavation of cable trenches in these areas of the Site (**Figure 1**).
- 3.2.3 Any archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets with a unique numbering system for individual contexts. Archaeological features and deposits were hand-drawn at either 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate. Monitored works were referenced to OS mapping.
- 3.2.4 A full photographic record was compiled using digital images. The record illustrated both the detail and the general context of the principal features, finds excavated, and the Site as a whole. Digital images have been subject to a managed quality control and curation process which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and ensures the long term accessibility of the image set.
- 3.2.5 A unique site code **86532** was allocated to the Site, and was used on all records.

3.3 Best practice

- 3.3.1 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the *Institute for Archaeologist's Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IfA 2008).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

- 4.1.1 Due to the nature of the development, the below ground disturbance and subsequent impact on any buried archaeological features or deposits was very limited in scope. The solar panels themselves are mounted on stands or racking systems, which are attached to the ground via earth screws. Observable groundwork was therefore restricted to the excavated cable trenches in the areas of archaeological potential.

4.1.2 Of the three areas of watching brief, cable trench excavations were undertaken in two of the areas (**Figure 1**). The excavated cable trenches had a maximum width of 0.4m and were between 1.0-1.2m in depth giving very restricted visibility.

4.1.3 The general stratigraphic sequence encountered was 0.22-0.24m of a dark grey-brown silty clay ploughsoil directly overlying the mid yellow clay geology.

4.1.4 No features or archaeological deposits were identified during the watching brief.

4.2 Artefactual evidence

4.2.1 No artefactual evidence was recovered during the watching brief.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Discussion

5.1.1 Although no features or archaeological deposits were identified during the course of the watching brief, given the small areas observed and the minimal below ground impact of the development overall, the results of the archaeological mitigation cannot be taken as an indication of the archaeological potential within the Site. The responses identified through the geophysical survey would seem to mainly relate to post-medieval and modern agriculture, though there still remains some 'possible features' that may be archaeological in origin (Wessex Archaeology 2013a).

6 STORAGE AND CURATION

6.1 Archive

6.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon. The Museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project, currently under the project code **86532**. Deposition of the finds with the Museum will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.

6.1.2 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts and ecofacts, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (Walker 1990; SMA 1995; Richards and Robinson 2000; Brown 2007).

6.1.3 An OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/projects/oasis/> will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators Forms. All appropriate parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the AHBR. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included with the archive).

6.2 Copyright

6.2.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the Site will be retained by Wessex Archaeology Ltd under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The recipient museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profitmaking, and conforms with the *Copyright and Related Rights regulations 2003*.

- 6.2.2 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. The client is reminded that they remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

6.3 Security Copy

- 6.3.1 In line with current best practice, on completion of the project a security copy of the paper records will be prepared, in the form of microfilm. The master jackets and one diazo copy of the microfilm will be submitted to the National Archaeological Record (English Heritage), a second diazo copy will be deposited with the paper records, and a third diazo copy will be retained by Wessex Archaeology. Alternatively, the security copy may be in the form of a pdf file.

7 REFERENCES

7.1 Bibliography

British Geological Survey data available at:

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8 APPENDIX: OASIS FORM

8.1 Crinacott Farm, Pyworthy, Devon - Wessex Archaeology

OASIS ID - wessexar1-153911

Versions

View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
View 1	1	S Farr	s.farr@wessexarch.co.uk	27 June 2013

Completed sections in current version

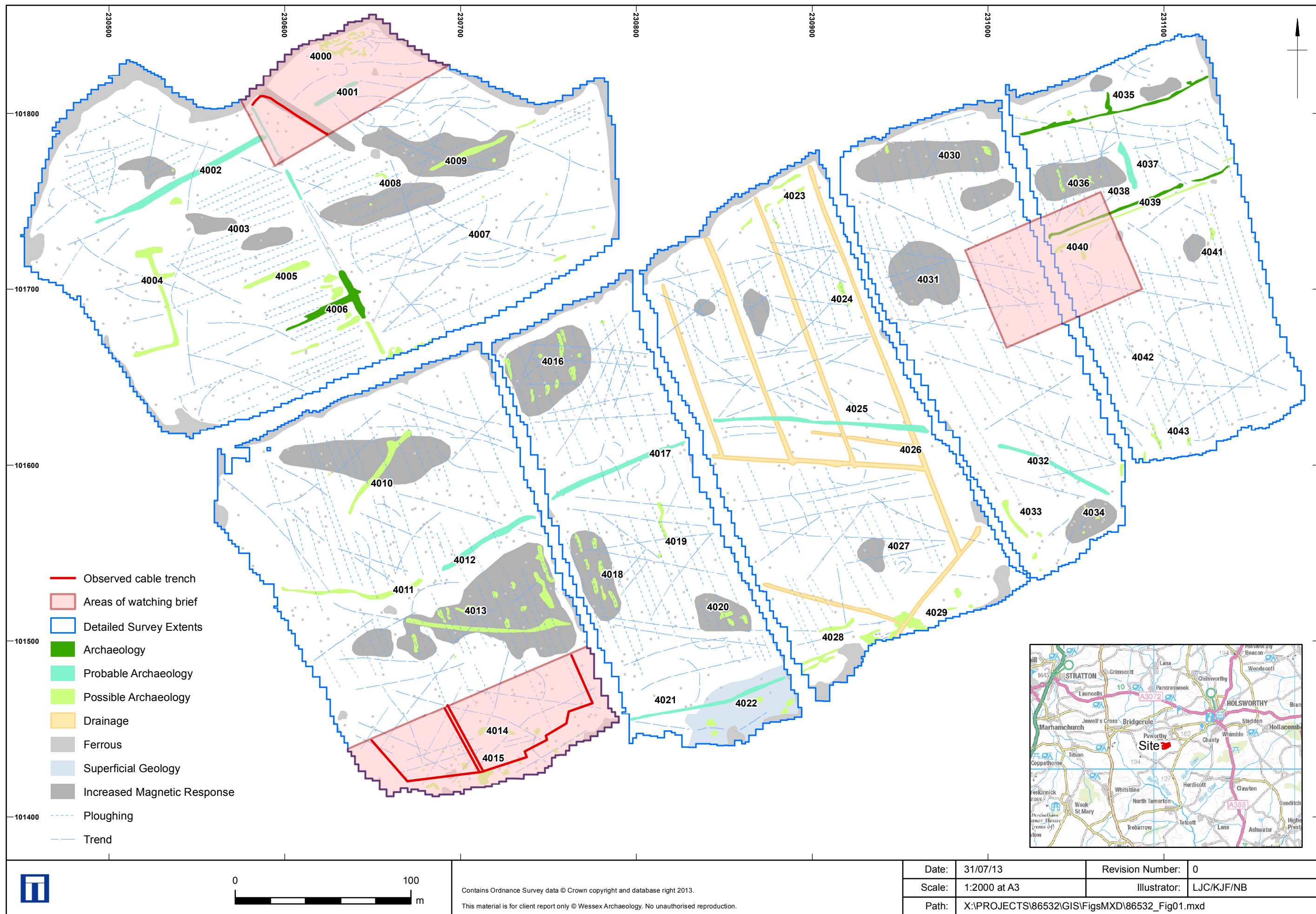
Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1

Validated sections in current version

Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
No	No	No	No	0/1

File submission and form progress

Grey literature report submitted?	No	Grey literature report filename/s	
Report release delay specified?	Yes	Release delay	Release into ADS library once signed off
Images submitted?	No	Image filename/s	
Boundary file submitted?	No	Boundary filename	
HER signed off?		NMR signed off?	



Location of Site and observed work

Figure 1



salisbury rochester sheffield edinburgh



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