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# Pingry Farm, Milkwall, Coleford, Gloucestershire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Forest of Dean District Council Planning Ref: P1418/12/FUL

Accession code: SOYDH:2013.7

Ref: 87803.01

April 2015



**Pingry Farm, Milkwall,  
Coleford, Gloucestershire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

**Prepared for:**

Coleford Energy Ltd  
The Long Barn  
Manor Farm  
Stratton on the Fosse  
Radstock  
Bath  
Somerset  
BA3 4QF

**Prepared by:**

Wessex Archaeology  
1 Friary  
Temple Quay  
Bristol  
BS1 6EA

[www.wessexarch.co.uk](http://www.wessexarch.co.uk)


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## Quality Assurance

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# Pingry Farm, Milkwall, Coleford, Gloucestershire

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Plate 2: Trench 4 representative section, from the south-east.



# **Pingry Farm, Milkwall, Coleford, Gloucestershire**

## **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

### **Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Coleford Energy Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during preparatory groundworks on land at Pingry Farm, Coleford, Gloucestershire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 357044 209445.

The watching brief and subsequent reporting was to meet the requirements of a planning condition for the construction of a solar farm, consisting of solar panel supports, service trenches and access routes. The watching brief followed a phase of archaeological works undertaken in early 2013 and 2014 which identified a number of isolated pit features and tree-throw holes. This watching brief was to monitor the excavation of service trenches and took place over a period of 9 days between the 19<sup>th</sup> February to the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

No archaeological features were revealed and this reflects the sparse results of previous investigations on the site. Due to the lack of material encountered it is unlikely that any further archaeological work will be required.



# **Pingry Farm, Milkwall, Coleford, Gloucestershire**

## **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

### **Acknowledgements**

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Coleford Energy Ltd for commissioning and funding the archaeological work. The assistance of Nigel Davie in particular is appreciated. Wessex Archaeology are also grateful to Charles Parry of Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), on behalf of the Forest of Dean District Council, for his advice and assistance.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Luke Jarvis, Lynn Hume and Ray Ducker. This report was written and compiled by Luke Jarvis and Michael Fleming. The illustrations were produced by Will Foster. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Andy King.



# Pingry Farm, Milkwall, Coleford, Gloucestershire

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Coleford Energy Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief during preparatory groundworks associated with construction of a solar farm on land at Pingry Farm, Coleford, Gloucestershire, hereafter 'the Site' (**Figure 1**). The Site area comprised approximately 16ha of arable land centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 357044 209445).

1.1.2 A planning application was submitted to Forest of Dean District Council in October 2012 for the construction of a solar farm, which was accompanied by an archaeological desk-based assessment (WA 2012).

1.1.3 Planning permission was granted by Forest of Dean District Council (P1418/12/FUL) in March 2013 for the development of the Site as a solar park. The decision notice issued for the scheme includes a pre-commencement condition (13) stating the requirement for a programme of archaeological work.

1.1.4 Condition 13 of the approval states:

- *No works shall take place within the area indicated (the site) until there has been carried out a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

*Reason: To ensure that any items of archaeological interest are properly recorded for posterity, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.*

1.1.5 The development work comprised the establishing of solar panels, service trenches and access routes. Initially a geophysical survey and an evaluation by trial trenching (WA 2013a and b), to assess the archaeological potential of the Site. Following discussions with the Senior Archaeological Officer at Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), it was agreed that a watching brief was required on the main, deeper construction elements of the scheme.

1.1.6 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the watching brief (WA 2013c) was prepared by Wessex Archaeology and submitted to, and approved by, GCC and subsequently the LPA, prior to the start of fieldwork. The watching brief was conducted in accordance with the guidelines and standards outlined in the Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (CIFA 2014a). The first stage of the watching brief was completed in March 2014 (Wessex 2014).

1.1.7 The second and final stage of the watching brief took place over 9 days between the 19<sup>th</sup> February to 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015.



## 1.2 The site, location and geology

- 1.2.1 The Site is located in western Gloucestershire, just over 3km east of the Welsh border, and c. 1km south-south west of the centre of Coleford. The Site comprises an irregular, c. 16ha parcel of agricultural land containing four fields and a small portion of a fifth field which are currently under stubble.
- 1.2.2 The Site is bounded on three sides by farmland, with woodland along the south-western boundary. Pingry Farm itself is c. 250m beyond the eastern Site boundary, outside the application area (**Figure 1**). The Site is crossed by a generally north-south aligned footpath. There are no watercourses within the Site. The highest point lies slightly to the west of Site centre, at an elevation of c. 160m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The Site occupies a hilltop; there are gentle downslopes to the north, east and south.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology is mapped as Black Rock limestone of the Pembroke Limestone group (BGS Online Viewer).

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The previous desk-based assessment (WA 2012) identified the potential for as yet unidentified, buried archaeological features to be present within the Site. The lack of intrusive archaeological investigations within the Site and surrounding area meant that the archaeological potential of the Site is largely untested.
- 2.1.2 The Site is likely to have been woodland or farmland belonging to the Brecknock Court Estate since at least the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It was therefore considered unlikely that significant buried archaeological features from this date to the present day would occur within the Site.
- 2.1.3 Both the geophysical survey of the area and the trial trenching (WA 2013a and b) demonstrated that archaeological features were present on the Site, but were limited to undated pits and tree throws. These probably reflect periods of tree and shrub clearances during the establishment of arable fields. The current layout of fields has remained largely unchanged since their establishment in the 1840's.
- 2.1.4 To the north of the Site there is a post-medieval iron working complex at Whitecliff Iron Works (WA 2012).
- 2.1.5 Linear features identified by the geophysical survey were shown by subsequent fieldwork to reflect changes in the underlying geology and the location of the dry valley/coombe rather than archaeological features.





### 3 AIMS AND METHODS

#### 3.1 General aims and objectives

3.1.1 With due regard to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a), the aims of the watching brief were to establish the presence/absence of any archaeological remains on the Site, and to record them prior to their destruction.

3.1.2 Prior to the commencement of works, a WSI (WA 2013c) was written which set out the agreed aims of the archaeological watching brief and the methods by which these aims would be achieved.

3.1.3 The general aims and objectives of the archaeological works were to:

- *Record any features which may be encountered during the excavation of any main, deeper groundwork's (comprising of the underground cable trench and drainage swales);*
- *Identify, within the constraints of the investigation, the date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the Site;*
- *Assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits; and*
- *Produce a report which will present the results of the fieldwork.*

#### 3.2 Fieldwork methodology

3.2.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the methodology set out within the WSI (WA 2013c).

3.2.2 The works consisted of the constant archaeological supervision of the excavation of five cable trenches of varying length; 0.80m deep and 0.60m wide (**Figure 1**). All machining took place using a mechanical tracked excavator using a toothless trenching bucket (**Plate 1**).

3.2.3 Where practicable and safe to do so, all archaeological deposits and features observed were cleaned manually to an acceptable standard by the archaeologist on site and planned and/or drawn in section, and located on a site plan.

3.2.4 The excavated material from the groundwork was stored adjacent to the service trenches, and was scanned for artefacts by the archaeologist on site during excavation.

3.2.5 Recording was undertaken using WA's *pro forma* recording sheets. Representative soil profile sections of the excavations were drawn to appropriate scale. Digital images were taken of groundwork operations during the watching brief.

3.2.6 Site survey was carried out using a Leica Viva series GNSS unit using the OS National GPS Network through an RTK network with a 3D accuracy of 30mm or below. All survey data was recorded using the OSGB36 British National Grid coordinate system.



## 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section provides a descriptive summary of archaeological information derived from the watching brief. The location of the trenches is detailed in **Figure 1**.

### 4.2 Natural deposits and soil sequences

4.2.1 The natural soil sequence was relatively uniform across the whole Site and consisted of mid - dark brown silty loam topsoil that was up to 0.20m in depth. Underlying the topsoil was a reddish brown silty clay subsoil extending for 0.30m in depth, containing occasional to common inclusions of fragmented, angular limestone (<0.15m) (**Plate 2**).

4.2.2 The underlying natural geology consisted of weathered limestone rubble within a mid-reddish-brown clay-loam matrix. The limestone rubble consisted of sub-angular and angular cobbles and occasional boulders, ranging in size from 0.15m – 0.70m. The natural was exposed at 0.50 – 1.00m across site.

4.2.3 No archaeological features, finds, or deposits were uncovered in any part of the Site.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1.1 The archaeological watching brief aimed to record any archaeological material encountered during the machining of deeper cable routes, in order to obtain any additional information and dating about the archaeology of the area.

5.1.2 The watching brief uncovered no archaeological features within this phase of excavation. Intermittent undated pits and tree throws which were exposed during the previous works do not appear in trenches 1-5, further evidence of the lack of archaeological activity in the immediate area.

5.1.3 The absence of remains encountered is probably due to the past land use and the landscape of the area. The use as woodland and subsequently for farming means that limited activity would have occurred within the site.

## 6 STORAGE AND CURATION

### 6.1 Museum

6.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the fieldwork and reporting be deposited with the Dean Heritage Centre. The Centre has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project, under the accession code: **SOYDH:2013.7**. Deposition of any finds with the Centre will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner. Prior to deposition the archive will be temporarily stored at Wessex Archaeology's central office in Salisbury under Site Codes 87802-3.

### 6.2 Preparation of Archive

6.2.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by the Dean Heritage Centre, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014b; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).



6.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code SOYDH 2013:7, and a full index will be prepared.

### **6.3 Discard policy**

6.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows the guidelines set out in *Selection, Retention and Dispersal* (Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. Any discard of artefacts will be fully documented in the project archive.

6.3.2 The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993; 1995; English Heritage 2002).

### **6.4 Security Copy**

6.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

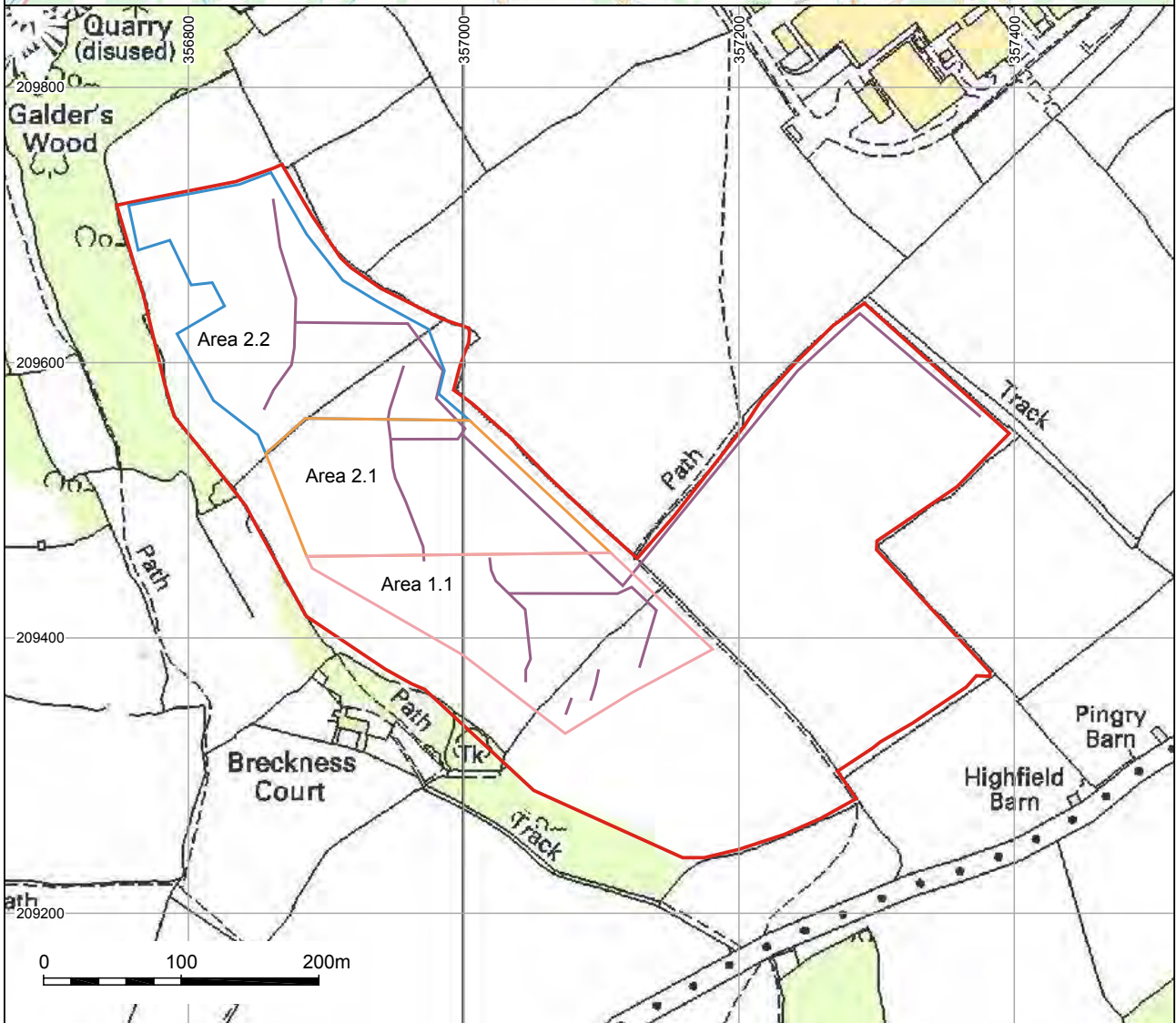
### **6.5 OASIS**


6.5.1 An OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/projects/oasis/> will be kept under the code of wessexar1-208047. All appropriate parts of the OASIS online form have been initiated for submission to the GHER. This completed record will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included with the archive). A full archive of site photographs will also be submitted to the ADS.



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 Site boundary

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Site and trench location plan of ground works associated with the solar farm on land at Pingry Farm, Coleford, Gloucestershire


Figure 1



Plate 1: Overall view of Trench 2 from the south



Plate 2: Trench 4 representative section from the south-east.

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Wessex Archaeology Ltd registered office Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB  
Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk



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