

North Bristol Water Trunk Main

Archaeological Watching Brief

***Ref: 63720.01
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NORTH BRISTOL WATER TRUNK MAIN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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**North Bristol Water Trunk Main
Archaeological Watching Brief**

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Figure1: Location map showing area of watching brief

North Bristol Water Trunk Main

Archaeological Watching Brief

Summary

Black & Veatch Ltd, on behalf of Bristol Water, commissioned Wessex Archaeology to undertake an archaeological watching brief on sections of the Bristol Water Northern Trunk Main pipeline.

The route of the pipeline subject to the watching brief runs along the northern side of the A4174, beginning south of Harry Stoke village at NGR 362000,178500. The pipeline intersects Junction 1 of the M32 and follows the road north before crossing opposite Hambrook Farm. The route then follows field boundaries to the south and east before rejoining the northern edge of the A4174 and continuing as far as the Bromley Heath roundabout at NGR 364700, 178200 (**Figure 1**).

The watching brief monitored groundworks at two pre-determined locations along the route of the pipeline and in both sections the initial process of topsoil stripping had been undertaken prior to the watching brief. The topsoil strip consisted of 8m wide easement along the Route. The easement was not stripped to sufficient depth to expose clean archaeological horizons, this combined with the constant tracking of plant across the stripped area made the identification of any insitu archaeological deposits along the easement impossible. No stratified archaeological features were observed within the trench excavation.

The single fragment of Romano-British pottery found in the topsoil at chainage 800 may be indicative of some limited Roman activity in the locality. Roman cist burials are recorded in the South Gloucestershire SMR just north of Hambrook, so some level of settlement in the wider locality is possible.

The method of excavation (the use of a toothed bucket and immediate backfilling of excavation) combined with the unmonitored stripping of the topsoil is likely to have made the identification and recording of archaeological deposits difficult. However, during the watching brief no archaeological deposits were discovered at the site south of Hambrook, or within the Harry Stoke Development Site. It should also be noted, it is possible that archaeological deposits were present but were not identified due to the adverse conditions. Adjacent areas did not highlight any archaeological finds and thus the likelihood of additional finds is low.

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Acknowledgements

Black & Veatch Ltd commissioned this watching brief on behalf of Bristol Water and the on-site assistance of Andrew Turner of Costain is gratefully acknowledged.

The watching brief was undertaken by Andrew Armstrong and Steve George. The report was compiled by Andrew Armstrong and Liz James prepared the illustrations. Paul White managed the project for Wessex Archaeology.

NORTH BRISTOL WATER TRUNK MAIN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

1 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Black & Veatch Ltd, on behalf of Bristol Water, to undertake a targeted archaeological watching brief during the installation of the North Bristol Trunk Main.
- 1.1.2 The pipeline is aligned approximately west - east from the approximate National Grid reference (NGR) 362000,178500 in the west to NGR 364700, 178200 in the east (hereafter 'the Route'). The Route crosses north Bristol from just south of Harry Stoke and Hambrook (**Figure1**).

2 Route Description

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The Route runs along the northern side of the A4174, beginning just to the south of Harry Stoke village at NGR 362000,178500. The pipeline intersects the M32 at Junction 1 and follows the eastern edge of the motorway northwards before crossing the road at Hambrook Farm. The Route then follows the field boundaries on the western edge of the M32 before rejoining the northern edge of the A4174 and continuing as far as the Bromley Heath roundabout at NGR 364700, 178200 (**Figure 1**).
- 2.1.2 This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief targeted on pre-determined areas of archaeological potential identified during an earlier desk-based assessment of the archaeological potential. Fieldwork was undertaken in two phases between 24th - 28th July and 14th - 22nd September 2006.
- 2.1.3 The length of the Route is numbered by Chainage (metres), from its point of origin at the east end to Chainage 3400 at the western end. The area subject to the watching brief was targeted on two distinct sections of the Route, which are listed below;
1. Settlement south of Hambrook (Chainage 800)
 2. The Harry Stoke development site, chainage 2800 (Maules Lane) to 3400 (Bus Lane).

2.2 Topography

- 2.2.1 The eastern end of the route is located on flat ground approximately 40m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The ground rises gradually to 60m aOD towards the west. The pipeline is predominantly set in arable farmland, except where it crosses the M32, and south of Harry Stoke where the route follows a bus lane.

2.3 Geology

- 2.3.1 The route passes through a sequence of different geologies with Jurassic Upper and Lower Lias clays and silts in the west, through Triassic Keuper Marl and ending in Redcliffe Sandstone at the eastern end of the Route (Geological Survey of Great Britain Solid and Drift, Sheet 264 Bristol, 1:50,000, 1974).

3 Methodology

3.1 Aim

- 3.1.1 The aim of the watching brief was to provide a detailed record of all archaeological features and deposits exposed during trench cutting within the re-determined areas of archaeological potential. This included, where possible and practicable, recording the location, extent, date, nature, character and relationship of any archaeological features and deposits encountered.

3.2 Recording

- 3.2.1 Archaeological recording was undertaken in accordance with Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief as approved by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1999) which seeks to define best practice for the execution of an archaeological watching brief and concomitant reporting.
- 3.2.2 Written details using Wessex Archaeology *pro-forma* recording sheets were compiled and a (digital) photographic record was made of all stages of groundworks.

3.3 Scope of the watching brief

- 3.3.1 The watching brief was targeted on two pre-determined sections of the pipeline route (**Figure 1**). At each section the watching brief was undertaken during the trench cutting in advance of pipe laying operations.
- 3.3.2 Excavation of the pipe trench was undertaken by tracked 360° mechanical excavators fitted with 0.8m wide toothed ditching buckets.
- 3.3.3 In both sections the initial process of topsoil stripping had been undertaken prior to the watching brief. The topsoil strip consisted of an 8m wide easement along the Route. The easement was not stripped to sufficient depth to expose clean archaeological horizons, and this combined with the constant tracking of plant across the stripped area, unfortunately made the identification of any insitu archaeological deposits below or within the topsoil impossible...

4 Results

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The results of each area of watching brief are presented below with reference to their chainage (location) along the pipeline route.

4.2 Settlement south of Hambrook (Chainage 800)

4.2.1 The Route between chainage 700 and 850 runs adjacent to a recorded post medieval settlement south of Hambrook (**Figure 1**).

4.2.2 The first stage of groundworks within this section of the Route comprised the stripping of topsoil along the 8m wide easement which was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.15m. The investigating archaeologist did walk over the stripped area, but as mentioned above, from the depth of the topsoil stripped area no identification of any in-situ deposits were possible.

4.2.3 The excavation of the pipe trench was monitored between the 24th-28th July 2006. The pipe trench was excavated to a maximum depth of up to 2.4m below the present ground surface. No archaeological features or deposits were observed. A single abraded fragment of probable Romano-British pottery was recovered from the topsoil.

4.3 The Harry Stoke development site, chainage 2800 to 3400

4.3.1 The route of the pipeline between chainage 2800 and 3400 passes through an area of high archaeological potential which has undergone extensive investigation in recent years, including evaluation trenches in the fields west of the M32. There is evidence of a medieval settlement, 300m north of the pipeline, and further earthworks have been noted in the field just north of the Route. Bronze Age activity has been discovered north of the western end of the pipeline.

4.3.2 This section of the Route is set in pasture, with the ground rising gradually to the west. Chainage. No archaeological features or deposits were observed between chainage 3100 and 3400. Unfortunately, between 2800- 3100 excavation and backfilling occurred without being observed during the watching brief by the investigating archaeologist. However, adjacent areas did not highlight any archaeological finds and thus the likelihood of additional finds is low.

5 Conclusions

5.1.1 The watching brief monitored groundworks at two pre-determined locations along the route of the pipeline. No stratified archaeological features were observed within the trench excavation. The stripping of the topsoil along the easement was not observed but no finds were observed during the excavation of the trench.

5.1.2 The single fragment of Romano-British pottery found in the topsoil at chainage 800 may be indicative of Romano-British activity. Roman cist burials are recorded in the South Gloucestershire SMR just north of Hambrook.

5.1.3 The method of excavation (the use of a toothed bucket and immediate backfilling of excavation pipe trench) combined with the unmonitored stripping of the topsoil is

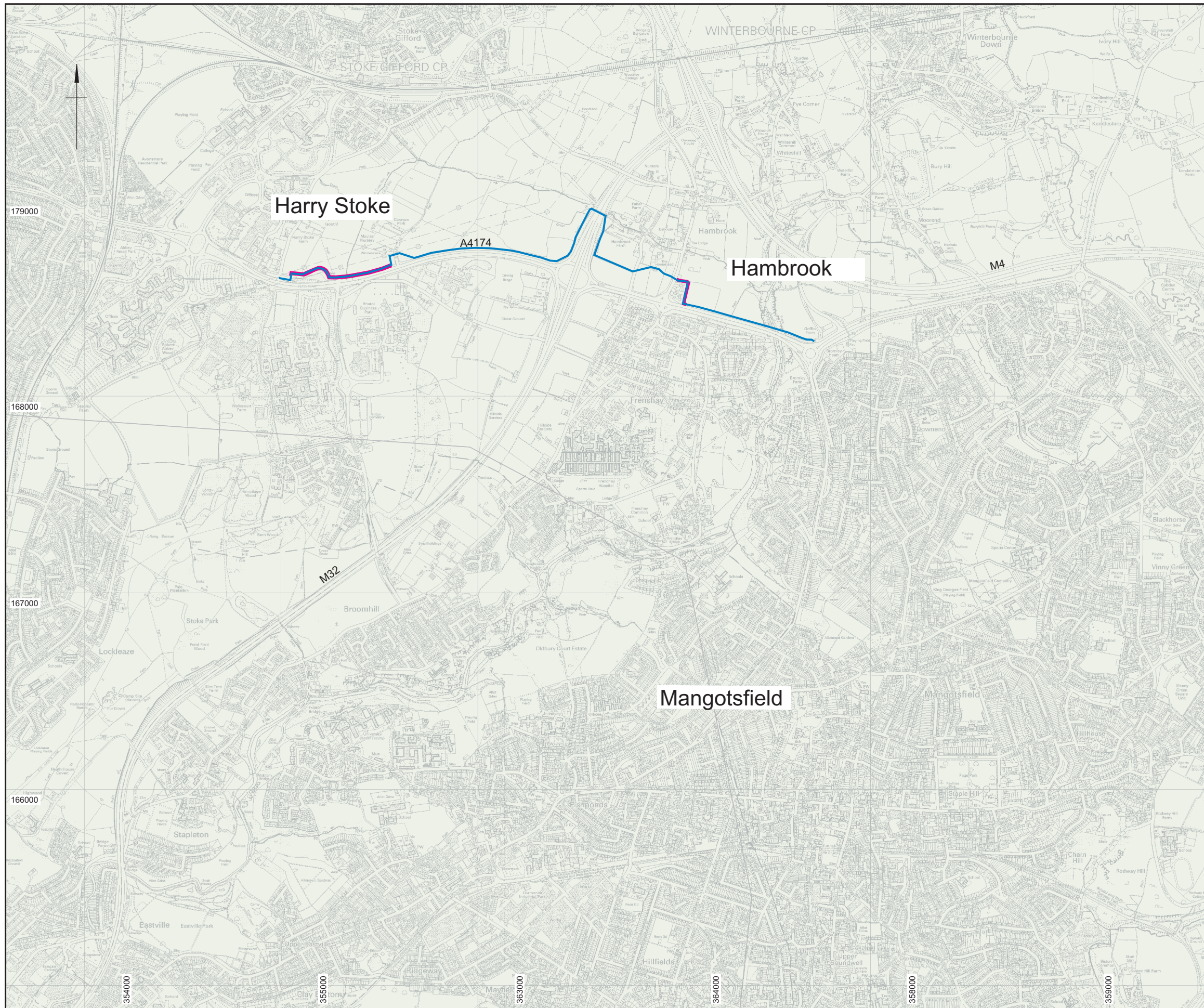
likely to have made the identification and recording of archaeological deposits very difficult. The possibility remains that insitu archaeological deposits were present, but were not identified by the investigating archaeologist due to the adverse conditions. However, adjacent areas did not highlight any archaeological finds and thus the likelihood of additional finds is low.

6 Archive

- 6.1.1 The paper records have been compiled to form an indexed and internally cross-referenced archive, which is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology under project code 63720. This will be deposited, in due course, with Gloucestershire Museum Service.

7 References

IFA, 1999, *Standards and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Reading



Scale for inset 1:500000

Key:

— Proposed pipe route

— Watching Brief



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Location map showing area of watching brief

Figure 1