



# LYVERS OCLE, OCLE PYCHARD HEREFORDSHIRE

*Archaeological Monitoring*



**July 2007**

SMR 44558

Hereford Archaeology Series 751

**This report is produced by**

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS LTD**

Manager : A Boucher BSc

**UNIT 1, PREMIER BUSINESS PARK,  
WESTFIELDS TRADING ESTATE,  
FARADAY ROAD, HEREFORD  
HR4 9NZ**

Tel. (01432) 364901

Fax. (01432) 364900

for: Mr Mark Coleman  
Coleman Construction  
Flights Farm, Little Marcle Road  
Ledbury  
Herefordshire HR8 2JN

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**Cover picture: Trench looking north east.**

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**LYVERS OCLE,  
OCLE PYCHARD**

Herefordshire.  
NGR SO 5781 4635

*Archaeological watching brief*

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**Text**

B. Ward

**Site Work**

B. Ward

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July 2007

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Lyvers Ocle,  
Ocle Pychard  
Herefordshire.  
(NGR SO 5781 4635)

### *Archaeological Watching Brief*

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#### **1. Summary**

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*An application had been submitted to Herefordshire County Council to construct a new access road at Lyvers Farm, Ocle Pychard. Under the auspices of PPG16 an archaeological investigation was required as a condition of the planning consent and Archaeological Investigations Ltd was commissioned by Coleman Construction to undertake the monitoring of the construction of a new access road from the main A465 to Lyvers Ocle farm. The main farm required a new access road due to the re-development of some of the farm buildings for housing.*

*The site lies to the north of the A465 and to the west of Ocle Pychard, Herefordshire (Fig. 1a 1b) and lies in close proximity to what was a small Benedictine cell founded in c. 1100. The main aim was to enable archaeological features to be adequately recorded in the areas affected by the proposal.*

*The area investigated had been in agricultural use as hop field, orchard and pasture for many years. The trench for the access road was only dug to a depth of 0.35m and therefore only affected an area of already disturbed soil. No archaeological features or finds were recovered during the investigation.*

*Archaeological Investigations Ltd would like to thank staff from Smiths, Nr. Stroud, the on-site contractor for their co-operation while the archaeological monitoring was carried out.*

*The fieldwork was undertaken on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2007.*

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## 2. Introduction

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The site lies to the north of the A4645 and to the west of the village of Ocle Pychard (NGR SO 5781 4635) by Lyvers Ocle Farm (Figs. 1a & b). This is situated in an area, which may have been occupied by a deserted medieval village (SMR 6542).

The reason why archaeological monitoring was undertaken was because a small Benedictine cell (SMR 6535) was situated in the area of the farm, and the access road (Fig. 2) finishes near the remains of an old Roman Catholic chapel, which is now converted into an outhouse.

The site lies at a height of approximately 65m OD and the underlying geology comprises of Ledbury Group or Raglan Mudstone formations of the Old Red Sandstone (BGS 1990).

Under the auspices of PPG16 an archaeological investigation was required as a planning condition. Archaeological Investigations Ltd was contracted to fulfil the archaeological work. The fieldwork was carried on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2007.

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## 3. Historical Background

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The site is mentioned in the Domesday Book as being land under Roger of Lacy. Pevsner (1963) mentions a small Benedictine cell at Lyvers Ocle, founded in c. 1100 and dependent upon Lyre Abbey in Normandy. The manor of Livers Ocle was granted to Lire (Lyre) Abbey in Normandy by Hugo l'Aisne (known as Asinus), who was a great landowner in Gloucestershire. He witnessed the charter of William Fitz Osbern, the founder of the abbey at Lyre, which granted the monks their lands in England in 1046.

It is known that Lire Abbey acquired other estates in Herefordshire, which may have been administered from Lyvers Ocle. The abbey's procurator-general, Ralph Maylock, was also referred to as the prior of Lyvers Ocle just before the dissolution of the cell in 1414. Lire's properties in England were granted to the Carthusian priory of Sheen after the dissolution. The area on the other side of the A465 is known as Monkton (SMR9007).

In 1414 Henry V founded at Sheen, Richmond, a priory known as the House of Jesus of Bethlehem for forty monks of the Carthusian order. One of the farm out-buildings, which has been much altered and rebuilt is referred to as the chapel. In its present form it has two 17<sup>th</sup> century chimney stacks, but the rest of the features are modern.

More recently a wind pump mill was situated at the high point of the field. This used to pump water from the reservoir to the south east of the field, down to ponds on the north western side of the field. (pers. comm. Mr J Ecroyd). There is also a well in the vicinity of the mill site. The field is currently grass, but has had many different uses over time, like orchard, hop field and cereal has been grown there too.

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#### 4. Aims and Objectives

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The main aim of the project was to enable archaeological features to be adequately recorded in the areas affected by the proposal.

The main objectives were to:

- a) Identify the date and nature of features being investigated.
- b) Assess survival, quality, condition and relative significance of any archaeological features, deposits and structures within the study area.
- c) Produce a record of the features.

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#### 5. Methodology

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The access road runs SW to NE towards the East of Lyvers Farm and it was dug using a mechanical digger with a 2m wide toothless bucket. An archaeologist was present during the excavation of the access road.

Full context recording was not deemed appropriate as no archaeological features were present in the trench. Site notes were taken during the work.

The trench was photographed using both colour film and black & white film. A register was kept of the photographs.

The site was given accession number HFDMG 2007-17 in accordance with Herefordshire Heritage Services' accessioning procedure and this code was used to identify all documents associated with the site.

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#### 6. Results

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The access (Fig. 2) road was dug to a width of 3.50m and approximately 250m in length, with a slight curve at the entrance to the farm yard. The area investigated has been in agricultural use for many years as an orchard, a hop field, and cereal have been grown there too. The area has therefore been ploughed substantially over the years. The trench for the access road was only excavated to a depth of 0.35m, which was all topsoil or already disturbed sub-soil. There was one small area of exposed soil, of approximately 10m length towards the entrance to the road, which was very dark in patches. This was explained as being an area where there had been a small fire, when the field was an orchard (pers. comm. Mr Ecroyd).

No archaeological features or finds were found.

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## 7. Discussion

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Although the site lies in close proximity to a Benedictine cell and the remains of a Roman Catholic chapel dating to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, no features or finds of significance were uncovered. This may be due to the shallow depth of the excavation,

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## 8. Conclusion

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The aim of this project was to record, date and assess any archaeological features discovered during the excavation of a new access road to Lyvers Ocle Farm. However, no archaeological features or finds were found during the excavation

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## 9. Bibliography

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BGS, 1990, *Mid Wales and Marches Sheet 52° N 04° W*, Solid edition 1:250000

Morris, J. (ed), 1983, *Domesday Book 17: Herefordshire*, Chichester: Phillimore

Pevsner, N.; Penguin 1999, p.254: *The Buildings of England, Herefordshire*.

Sites and Monuments Record Office, Herefordshire: *Historic Herefordshire On line*

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## 10. Site Archive

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1. Document archive (notes from site note book, photo register and photographs)

The site archive is stored with Hereford Museum, Accession number HFDMG 2007-17

NGR SO  
4300

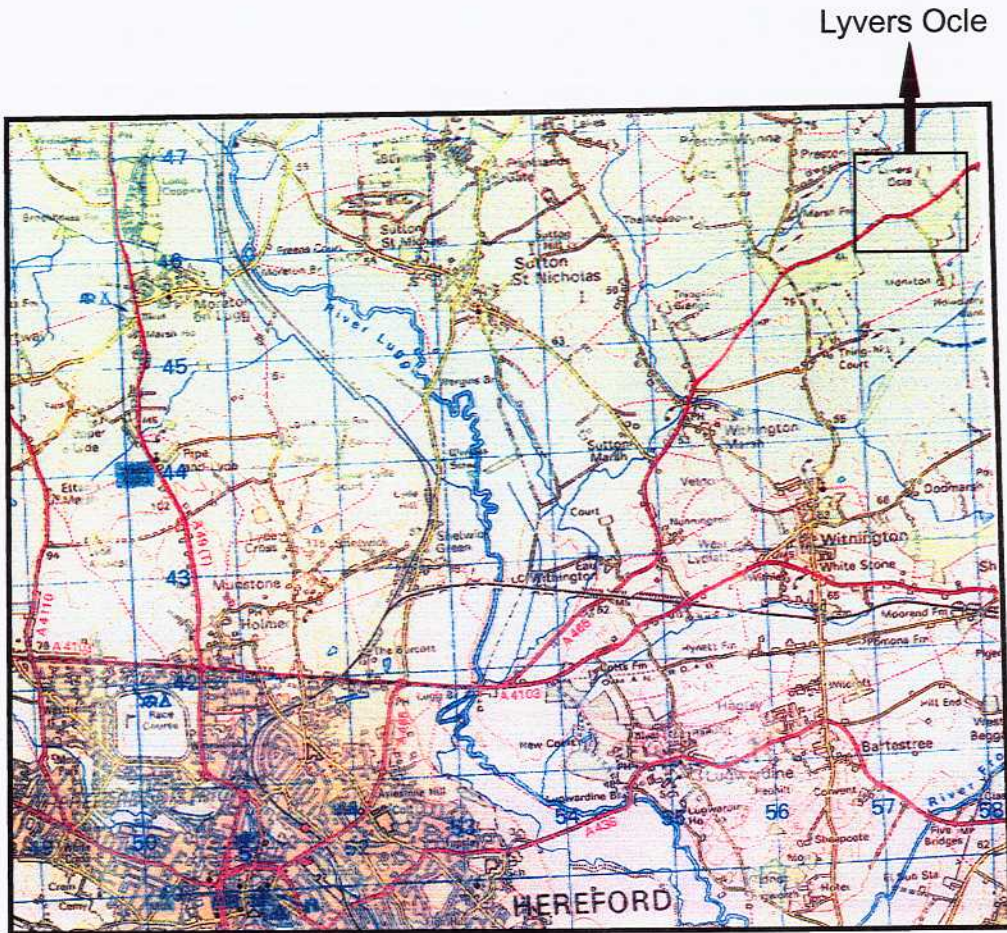


Fig 1a: Location map

NGR SO 5600

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Fig 1b: Location map



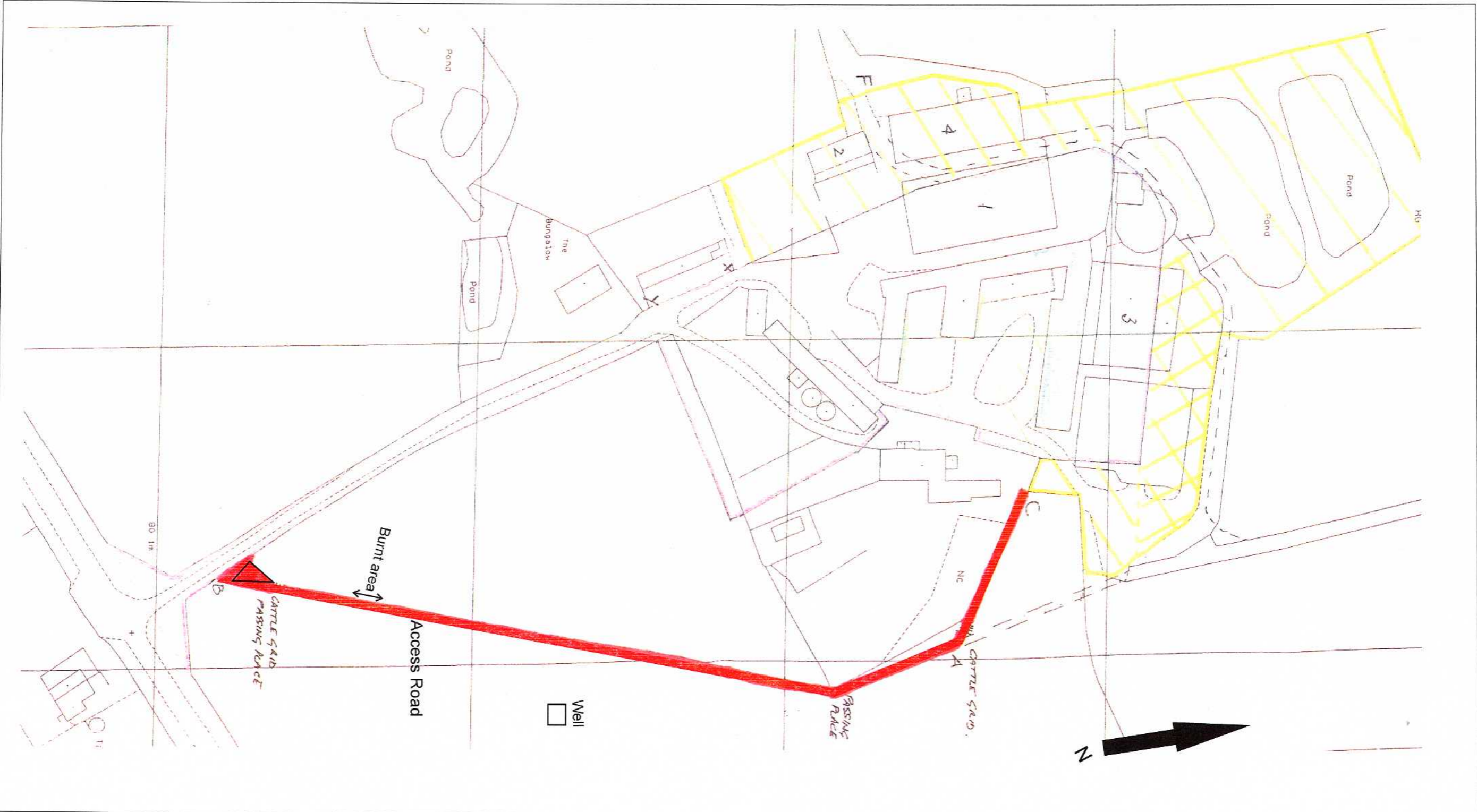


Fig 2: Access Road

50 m