

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at  
Headsfoldswood Farm, Loxwood, West Sussex  
B2133 Crossing Project**

**NGR 503255 131355**

**Project No. 2576**

**By  
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**Abstract**

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during soil stripping works associated with improvements to the Wey and Arun Canal at Loxwood. Six site visits were made to monitor groundworks between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2006. Excavations reached depths of up to 300mm beneath the current ground surface. No archaeological features or deposits were revealed, however a limited number of stray finds were recovered from the ploughsoil.*

### **Archaeology South-East**

*Archaeology South-East is a division of the Field Archaeology Unit, University College London, one of the largest groupings of academic archaeologists in the country. Consequently, Archaeology South-East has access to the conservation, computing and environmental backup of the college, as well as a range of other archaeological services.*

*The Field Archaeology Unit and South Eastern Archaeological Services (which became Archaeology South-East in 1996) were established in 1974 and 1991 respectively. Although field projects have been conducted world-wide, the Field Archaeology Unit retains a special interest in South-East England with the majority of our contract and consultancy work concentrated in Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex, Kent, Greater London and Essex.*

*Based in the local community, the Field Archaeology Unit sees an important part of its work as explaining the results to the broader public. Public lectures, open days, training courses and liaison with local archaeological societies are aspects of its community-based approach.*

*Drawing on experience of the countryside and towns of the south east of England the Unit can give advice and carry out surveys at an early stage in the planning process. By working closely with developers and planning authorities it is possible to incorporate archaeological work into developments with little inconvenience.*

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**Fig. 1:** Site Location

**Fig. 2:** Site Plan

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Archaeology South East (ASE), a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit (UCLFAU), was commissioned by Mr Eric Walker on behalf of the Wey and Arun Canal Trust (WACT) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during top soil stripping works associated with improvements to the Wey and Arun Canal at Loxwood, West Sussex (centred NGR 503255 131355).
- 1.2 The development site is situated on an area of arable land adjacent to the line of the disused Wey and Arun Canal (TQ 023 310). Planning permission was granted by West Sussex County Council for the spoil deposition of clay arisings derived from deepening of the Wey and Arun Canal (Planning ref. LX/103/05). The West Sussex County Council's Archaeologist (Mr J. Mills) recommended that the applicant was required to carry out an archaeological watching brief during these intrusive groundworks.
- 1.3 The general objective of the archaeological work was to monitor the groundwork in order to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest exposed and affected by the excavations were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards. This was to include artefacts of archaeological interest (e.g. worked flint, burnt flint, pottery, ceramic building material) that may be recovered from within the topsoil during its removal.
- 1.4 A Brief outlining the requirements was prepared by WSCC, suggesting intermittent periods of attendance by a suitably qualified archaeologist. The fieldwork was undertaken initially by Alice Thorne on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August and subsequently by Andrew Margetts following piecemeal stripping of the site. The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Project Manager) and Louise Rayner (Post-excavation Manager).

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The British and Geological Survey Sheets 318/333 show that the site lies on Weald Clay and Sandstone with Weald Clay, potentially with alluvial deposits immediately adjacent to the route of the canal at the southern edge of the site.
- 2.2 The site is located on farmland near to the village of Loxwood and adjacent to the line of the partially disused Wey and Arun Junction Canal. The site comprises of c.2.5 Ha of arable land close to the River Arun and approximately a third of a mile from the village. It lies on sloping ground of c.25m above sea level.
- 2.3 The Wey and Arun Junction Canal (SMR no:1927 - MWS5818), begun in 1816, was 18.5 miles long from the Wey at Stonebridge Wharf to the Arun at Newbridge. However a combination of bad engineering and

competition from the railways resulted in its abandonment in 1871. Associated with the canal are a number of known locks, docks and bridges one of which (just N. of Pallingham Lock) has been restored by the Wey and Arun Canal Trust.

- 2.4 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential associated with the abandoned canal however no archaeological finds are known from the site.
- 2.5 The relevant SMR (sites and Monuments Record) information was provided by of West Sussex County Council. The results were within a radius of 1km from the centre of the study area. They are tabulated below and plotted on the site location map (Fig 1.)

<b>No.</b>	<b>SMR No.</b>	<b>NGR</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	1927 - MWS5818	TQ 051 273	Wey and Arun Canal including: the Orfold Aqueduct; Orfold Lock; Pallingham Lock; Pallingham Dock; Rowner Lock and Bridge; Loves Bridge; Malham Lock and Bridge; a restored masonry bridge just N. of Pallingham Lock; the remains of two docks which are now dry and Newbridge Warehouse and Wharf dating to 1839.
2	2694 - MWS17	TQ 02600 31450	A parkscape is shown at Ifold Estate by the OS in 1813 and, with an extension to NE, in 1898-9.
3	2951 - MWS5824	TQ 03800 31410	An archaeological assessment and standing building appraisal occurred in 1996 at Loxwood Place. Of the greatest interest were a barn (C17) and a granary (1900-1842 - now listed). The features found consisted of a possible boundary ditch, numerous small pits and postholes, and a sandstone wall with associated drain. A small amount of C13-14 pottery was also found. In the grounds exist dry and fragmentary remains of a homestead moat.
4	2952 - MWS6615	TQ 0386 3147	A church built in C15 existed in Loxwood, opposite the Manor pond. It had apparently fallen into disrepair by 1820 and was then pulled down. A new chapel incorporating the old chancel was built in 1820 and pulled down in c. 1900.
5	2955 - MWS6617	TQ 0273 3187	There is a widespread scatter of post medieval furnace slag across several smallholdings at Ifold, covering an area some 300 m across centred at about TQ02653192. Inspection of ponds in the area found them to be artificial, and embayed, but with no evidence of being associated with iron working.
6	4913 - MWS3197	TQ 04000 31000	A rotary quern fragment from Loxwood now in Worthing Museum.

### **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1 The objectives of the archaeological watching brief were to contribute to the knowledge of the area through the recording of any archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks. Particular attention was to be made to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.
- 3.2 All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded according to accepted professional standards in accordance with the Specification using standard Archaeology South-East context record sheets. Deposit colours were verified by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.3 The groundworks, (monitored intermittently by a suitably qualified archaeologist), comprised the stripping of 2.5 Ha of ploughsoil to a depth of up to 300mm with 20 tonne tracked machine equipped with a toothless bucket (Fig. 2). The site was stripped in piecemeal fashion in order to allow the monitoring archaeologist time to view areas before the deposition of clays from the canal cutting could occur. It was agreed with the developer that any areas that had been stripped would not be tracked over by vehicles until they were observed. This would help prevent any destruction of existing archaeological features or artefacts.
- 3.4 The spoil from the excavations was inspected to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest.
- 3.5 All archaeological features and deposits encountered were recorded according to accepted professional standards. A full photographic record was kept of the work as appropriate.

### **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS**

- 4.1 The deposits encountered comprised firstly of c.300mm of ploughsoil (Context **101**). This comprised a mid grey brown silty clay with infrequent inclusions of modern building materials, chalk marl, sandstone fragments and occasional fire-cracked flint.
- 4.2 It was decided that a sondage would be dug in order to establish the depth of an encountered interface layer (Context **102**). This comprised 80–100mm of a light brown silty clay with frequent manganese and sandstone inclusions. It was determined that this layer probably derived from deep ploughing and natural root action.

- 4.3 Below Context **102** was encountered the compact Weald Clay of variable colouration between mid reddish orange and mid orange yellow (Context **103**). This also contained natural outcrops of local sandstone.
- 4.4 The presence of archaeological evidence proved to be rather limited. No archaeological features were evident at the level reached by the limit of the groundworks. The ploughsoil did reveal a quantity of fire-cracked flint, however this did not appear in any concentrations. Investigation of the spoil created during stripping did reveal some finds of note including struck flint and pottery. These were stray finds probably lost in antiquity and subsequently disturbed by the plough.

## **5 The Finds by Charlotte Thompson**

### *5.1 Pottery*

Just one piece of ceramic was recovered from the site, from the plough soil. It is a fairly abraded sherd of a micaceous oxidised fabric tempered with medium quartz and rare coarse rounded red inclusions weighing 4g. It is likely to be from a rim or a flange of a straight-sided post-Roman vessel.

### *5.2 Metal*

An unstratified piece of lead weighing 74g was also recovered. It is curved and made from lead sheet that has been unevenly folded-over. One side has been sheered in parts and the curve of a piercing can be seen on one of the edges. It is possible that it was fitted and secured with screws or nails around something such as a drainpipe.

### *5.3 Worked Flint by Lucy Allott*

Five pieces of worked flint (18g), including one flake, three broken blades and one flake that is a probable core rejuvenation flake, were recovered from the plough soil during the watching brief. One of the broken blades has some small secondary removals although this does not appear to be formal retouch. The dorsal side of the rejuvenation flake shows four previous blade removals and three flake removals (one of which appears to be an attempted removal to rejuvenate the core).

Three pieces of fire cracked flint weighing 234g from unstratified deposits were collected.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

- 6.1 During the course of the groundworks no clear archaeological horizon was encountered. This may be explained by the fact that although a large area was stripped, its limit (c.300mm) did not reach the



underlying Weald Clay but rather an interface between this and the ploughsoil above. No features of archaeological importance were revealed however the stray finds recovered from the resultant spoil, for example the struck and fire-cracked flint, may indicate some limited prehistoric activity in the immediate vicinity of the site.

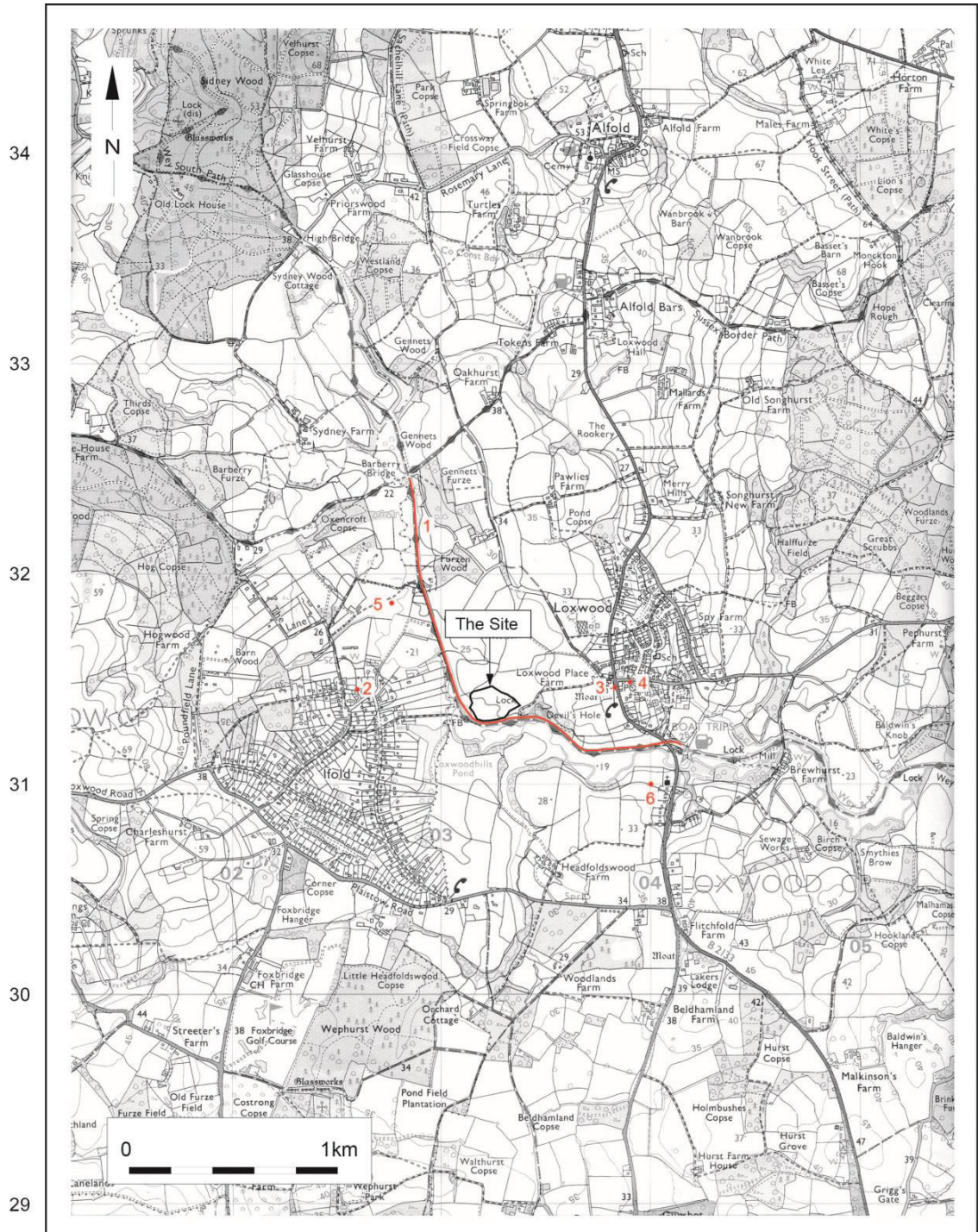
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**SMR Summary Form**

Site Code	WAC06					
Identification Name and Address	Headfoldswood Farm, Loxwood, West Sussex					
County, District &/or Borough	Chichester, West Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	503255 131355					
Geology	Weald Clay and Sandstone with Weald Clay.					
Arch. South-East Project Number	2576					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field ✓	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> and 22 <sup>nd</sup> August.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Mr Eric Walker (WACT)					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin and Louise Rayner					
Project Supervisor	Andrew Margetts					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern		
100 Word Summary.						
<p><i>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during soil stripping works associated with improvements to the Wey and Arun Canal at Loxwood. Six site visits were made to monitor groundworks between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2006. Excavations reached depths of up to 300mm beneath the current ground surface. No archaeological features or deposits were revealed however a limited number of stray finds were recovered from the ploughsoil.</i></p>						

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## Headfoldswood Farm, Loxwood – B213 Crossing Project



© Archaeology South-East			Wey and Arun Crossing Project	Fig. 1
Ref: 2576	Nov 2006	Drawn by: JLR	Site Location and SMR Data	

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