

**An Archaeological Watching Brief during the laying of a new sewer
between Pipit Meadow and Harland Villas,
Mallard Drive, Ridgewood, Uckfield, East Sussex**

**NGR 547653 120150
TQ 476 201**

**Project No. 3296
Site Code: HVU 08**

**ASE Report No. 2009141
OASIS ID: archaeol6-64086**

**By
Simon Stevens BA MIFA**

**With contributions by
Elke Raemen and Sarah Porteus**

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Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the groundworks for the laying of a new sewer between Pipit Meadow and Harland Villas, Mallard Drive, Ridgewood, Uckfield. No significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered. A small assemblage of late post-medieval material was recovered from the spoil.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA) was commissioned by Holleran Mouchel Parkman Joint Venture (HMPJV) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during intrusive groundworks associated with the laying of a new sewer between Pipit Meadow and Harland Villas, Mallard Drive, Uckfield (NGR 547653 120150) (Fig. 1).

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The site is situated to the south of the historic core of the market town of Uckfield. The monitored element of the groundworks for the new sewer consisted of the excavation of pipe trenches and associated man-hole chambers in the yard of C.J. Thorne and Co. Ltd., and in gardens to the rear of Harland Villas. The site is located within an area of raised ground bounded by the River Uck and two of its tributaries, at a height of c.50m AOD.

1.2.2 According to the British Geological Survey 1: 50 000 map of the area (Sheet 319, *Lewes*), the underlying geology at the site consists of Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Following consultation between with the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer, it was agreed that a watching brief should be maintained during the eastern portion of the pipeline groundworks in the yard of C. J. Thorne and Co. Ltd. and in private gardens to the rear of Harland Villas, Mallard Drive. The western part of the pipeline, in Woodpecker Way and Pipit Meadow, did not require archaeological monitoring as this is located in remediated land and is considered to have no archaeological potential.

1.3.2 A *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) was prepared by ASE (ASE 2008) in response to this requirement and fully complies with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording, and Post Excavation (Development Control) in East Sussex* Version 3 (dated 17-09-03) including Annex B, and also with the *Standards and Guidance: watching brief* of the Institute of Field Archaeologists

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The principle objectives of the archaeological work laid out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (ASE 2008, 2) were:

- To what extent, if any, is there any evidence of the Mesolithic occupation of the site?
- To what extent is any prehistoric (Mesolithic) occupation of the site associated with the River Uck?
- How do any Mesolithic remains recovered, relate to the surrounding topography, in particular the outcrops of sandstone which have been shown to be a focus for Mesolithic activity in geologically / topographically similar area (notably High Rocks, near Tunbridge Wells)?

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 The current report provides results of the archaeological monitoring of groundworks carried out during visits to the site in June and July 2009. The work was undertaken by Diccon Hart and Simon Stevens (Senior Archaeologists) and Dylan Hopkinson (Archaeologist). The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Project Manager) and by Jim Stevenson (Post-Excavation Manager).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The site lies in area of East Sussex which has seen little in the way of published archaeological investigations, and hence the archaeological potential of the general area is largely unknown.
- 2.2** The East Sussex County Historic Environment Record (HER) contains a reference to the findspot of Mesolithic flints at Ridgewood Sandpit (Fig. 1, No. 1). The former sandpit lies in a similar high position in the landscape to the current site overlooking the River Uck. Excavations at similar sites with rocky outcrops have uncovered evidence of flintwork and later activity based around rock shelters (Greatorex and Seager Thomas 2000).
- 2.3** Although the current site does not have the potential for the discovery of rock shelters, the topographical situation of the site corresponds to a long-recognised pattern of Mesolithic activity in the Weald, involving hunting closely related to the system of river valleys in the area (Tebbutt 1974). Recent fieldwork on sites overlooking river systems has highlighted the presence of Mesolithic hunting camps away from rock shelters, usually comprised of scatters of struck flint (Stevens forthcoming; Dr Richard Carter, University of Sussex, *pers. comm.*).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1** Personnel from Archaeology South-East monitored the mechanical and manual excavations for the laying of the new sewer and the associated man-hole chambers. All sections were examined for the presence of archaeological features and/or deposits. All available spoil was scanned for the presence of archaeological artefacts.
- 3.2** All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded to accepted professional standards using standard Archaeology South-East context record forms. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.3** A full photographic record of the work was kept and will form part of the site archive. The site archive is currently held by Archaeology South-East at the offices in Portslade, and will be offered to a suitable local museum in due course. The archive consists of the following material:

Number of Contexts	13
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	-
Bulk Samples	-
Photographs	c.20 black & white c.20 colour slides c.40 digital
Bulk finds	1 box
Registered finds	-
Environmental flots/residue	-

Table 1: Quantification of Site Archive

4.0 RESULTS – Thorne’s Yard (Fig. 2)

- 4.1 The mechanical excavation of c.90m of pipe trench and two chambers for the insertion of man-holes were archaeologically monitored in the yard currently used by C. J Thorne and Co. Ltd. for the storage of materials and plant. Limited manual excavation was also monitored. The work was undertaken during June 2009.
- 4.2 The pipe trench was 600mm in width and often more than 2m in depth. The excavations for the man-holes were c.2m by c.2m, and of similar depth. Excavation was undertaken with a mini excavator, with some manual ‘tidying’.
- 4.3 The stratigraphic sequence encountered is outlined below:

Context	Type	Description	Max. Thickness
01	Deposit	Concrete	160mm
02	Deposit	‘Natural’	n/a
03	Deposit	Made Ground	1.2m
04	Deposit	Membrane	<5mm

Table 2: Recorded Contexts, Thorne’s Yard

- 4.4 The natural [02] was located at approximately 1.3m below ground level, and varied in colour between brownish orange and orangey yellow, and in character between clay and sandy clay, typical of the Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand formation. Above this was [03] which consisted of a silty clay, varied in colour between brownish yellow and mid-greyish brown and contained an assortment of material including crushed brick rubble, sand, gravel and occasional machine parts.
- 4.5 [03] varied in thickness between 120mm and 1.2m in the c.90m of monitored excavation although there were no obviously discernible separate backfilling episodes. The deposit appeared to be the result of levelling of uneven ground to form the level surface of the yard.
- 4.6 Above [03] was the yard surface formed from reinforced concrete, [01] which varied in thickness between 140mm and 160mm, laid onto sheets of ‘*Terram*’ geotextile, Context [04].
- 4.7 A single post-medieval stoneware pottery vessel was recovered from Context [03].

5.0 RESULTS – The Gardens to the Rear of Harland Villas (Fig. 2)

5.1 Groundworks in the gardens consisted of the excavation of pipe trenches and man-hole chambers of similar dimensions to those excavated in Thorne’s Yard (see Section 4.2 above). Forty metres of pipe trench and five man-hole chambers were monitored. Excavations were undertaken below the dividing fence in early July 2009 and the work was archaeologically monitored during subsequent weeks. The last site visit was made on 20th July 2009.

5.2 The stratigraphic sequence encountered is outlined below:

Context	Type	Description	Max. Thickness	Location (Fig 2)
05	Deposit	Garden Soil	120mm	MHF-05 To MHF-04
06	Deposit	Made Ground	1.0m	
07	Deposit	‘Natural’	n/a	
08	Deposit	Garden Soil	130mm	MHF-05 to MHF-06
09	Deposit	Made Ground	1.1m	
10	Deposit	‘Natural’	n/a	
11	Deposit	Garden Soil	100mm	MHF-02 To MHF-04
12	Deposit	Made Ground	500mm	
13	Deposit	‘Natural’	n/a	

Table 3: Recorded Contexts, Gardens to the rear of Harland Villas

5.3 Separate context numbers were issued for the garden soil, made ground and ‘natural’ sequence observed in all of the monitored excavations in the gardens (the locations given above refer to the man-hole chambers and the pipe trenches in-between them). Owing to a misunderstanding on the part of the on-site contractors the excavation of man-hole chamber MHF-01 was not monitored.

5.4 The natural ([07], [10] and [13]) was similar in character to the geological deposits encountered in Thorne’s Yard (see Section 4.5 above) and was located at a maximum depth of 1.2m below ground level.

5.5 Directly above the natural was a layer of made ground ([06], [09] and [12]). This consisted of a mid-brown silty clay containing a high density of brick rubble and occasional modern debris, and varied in depth between 500m and 1.1m, growing noticeably shallower to the south-west. Above the made ground was a layer of humic mid-brown silty clay topsoil ([05], [08] and [11]) which varied in depth between 100mm and 130mm.

5.6 A small assemblage of post-medieval material was recovered from the garden soil layers.

6.0 THE FINDS

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 A small assemblage of finds was recovered during the watching brief. Pieces all date to the early 20th century. An overview can be found in Table 2.

Context	Pottery	Wt (g)	CBM	Wt (g)	Fe	Wt (g)	Glass	Wt (g)	Graphite/ Zinc	Wt (g)
03	1	536								
06	8	664			1	64	3	294		
09	12	102	3	40			1	200	2	4
12	17	434	1	52			6	902	1	18
Total	38	1736	4	92	1	64	10	1396	3	22

Table 4. Quantification of the Finds

6.2 The Pottery by Elke Raemen

6.2.1 A small group of 38 fragments of pottery was recovered from four different contexts. Sherds all date to the early 20th-century. Included are industrial slipware bowl fragments from [06], a complete Bristol-glazed stoneware bottle from [03], as well as a Bristol-glazed fragment from [06] with incuse embossing "LONDON" and a stoneware, ribbed preserve jar fragment from [09]. English white porcelain ([09]), white china (i.e. [9] and [12]) and transfer printed ware (i.e. [9] and [12]) were also recovered. The latter includes a James Keiller Dundee Marmalade jar fragment.

6.3 The Ceramic Building Material by Sarah Porteus

6.3.1 A small quantity of ceramic building material (CBM) was recovered from the site. A single abraded piece of peg tile in an orange fabric with moderate medium sized black iron rich inclusions was recovered from Context [12], and most likely dates from the 19th or 20th century. [09] contained three fragments of peg tile, one in a similar fabric to that from [12] of 19th or 20th century date appears to be machine made. The remaining two fragments from [09] are in a finer pale orange fabric with sparse fine calcareous and red iron rich inclusions, these fragments may be of 18th to 20th century date.

6.4 The Glass by Elke Raemen

6.4.1 A small glass assemblage of ten pieces was recovered from three different contexts. Complete bottles include a Goodall Backhouse Yorkshire Relish bottle, a Gartons HP Sauce bottle and a small aqua rectangular-sectioned bottle. Other bottles include a green glass, oval poison bottle base from [06], a green glass wine bottle fragment and an aqua large cylindrical bottle fragment, the latter both from [12]. Complete meat paste jars, two of which are from Shippams, were recovered from [06] and [12]. The latter also contained a frosted aqua possible vase fragment. All glass recovered dates to the early 20th century.

6.5 Other Finds by Elke Raemen

6.5.1 A 20th- century iron bolt with octagonal-sectioned nut in situ was recovered from [06]. [09] and [12] contained two graphite battery cores and a zinc battery fragment, all dating to the first half of the 20th century.

6.6 Potential

6.6.1 The assemblage is modern in date and is too small to be of any significance. The assemblage would not merit from further analysis and no further work is required

7.0 DISCUSSION

- 7.1** No significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the watching brief. The only artefacts recovered from the spoil were late post-medieval in date, and therefore of only limited archaeological significance.
- 7.2** Although it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from the monitoring of such a narrow trench, it would appear that much of the area traversed by the pipe trench (including the gardens), had been levelled during the 20th century. Prior to its use as a builder's yard, the area was used as a brick yard (Jim Frasier, *pers. comm.*), but doubt remains as to whether clay was actually extracted at the site. The depth of some of the made ground below the yard might hint at localised extraction, but systematic removal seems unlikely given the depth of even the deepest excavations (c.1.2m).
- 7.3** Arguably archaeological features could have survived in areas where the made ground in both the yard and gardens was shallower and hence truncation had apparently not been so extensive. Although recent fieldwork has highlighted the fact that Mesolithic sites can have buried archaeological features as well as scatters of flintwork (Butler 2007: Harding 2000), none were encountered at the present site, and no struck flints were recovered from the spoil. Hence, based on the present results, there is no evidence for Mesolithic activity at the site.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1** Despite the negative results, the maintenance of an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks associated with the laying of the new sewer was prudent given the archaeological sensitivity of the area and would have resulted in the discovery and recording of archaeological remains of Mesolithic, or of any other date, had they been encountered.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The input of Greg Chuter, East Sussex County Council is gratefully acknowledged. Thanks are also due to the on-site contractors, especially to the Project Manager, Jim Frasier, for co-operation and provision of welfare facilities.

SMR Summary Form

Site Code	HVU 08					
Identification Name and Address	New Sewer between Pipits Meadow and Harland Villas, Mallard Drive, Ridgewood, Uckfield					
County, District &/or Borough	Wealden District, East Sussex.					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR 547653 120150					
Geology	Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand					
Arch. South-East Project Number	3296					
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. June and July 2009	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Holleran Mouchel Parkman Joint Venture					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin/Jim Stevenson					
Project Supervisor	Simon Stevens					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM ✓	Other		
100 Word Summary.						
<p><i>An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the groundworks for the laying of a new sewer between Pipit Meadow and Harland Villas, Mallard Drive, Ridgewood, Uckfield. No significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered. A small assemblage of late post-medieval material was recovered from the spoil.</i></p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-64086

Project details

Project name	Harland Villas, Mallard Drive, Ridgewood, Uckfield, East Sussex
Short description of the project	A watching brief was maintained during the excavation of a pipe trench and associated man-holes for a new sewer in June and July 2009. A small assemblage of post-medieval pottery was recovered, but no significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered.
Project dates	Start: 09-06-2009 End: 20-07-2009
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	3296 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	HVU 08 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Water Act 1989 and subsequent code of practice

Project location

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX WEALDEN UCKFIELD Harland Villas, Mallard Drive
Postcode	TN22 5PW
Study area	200.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 47653 20150 50.9612610501 0.102780600224 50 57 40 N 000 06 10 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 45.00m Max: 50.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	East Sussex County Council
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Neil Griffin
Project supervisor	Simon Stevens
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	HMPJV

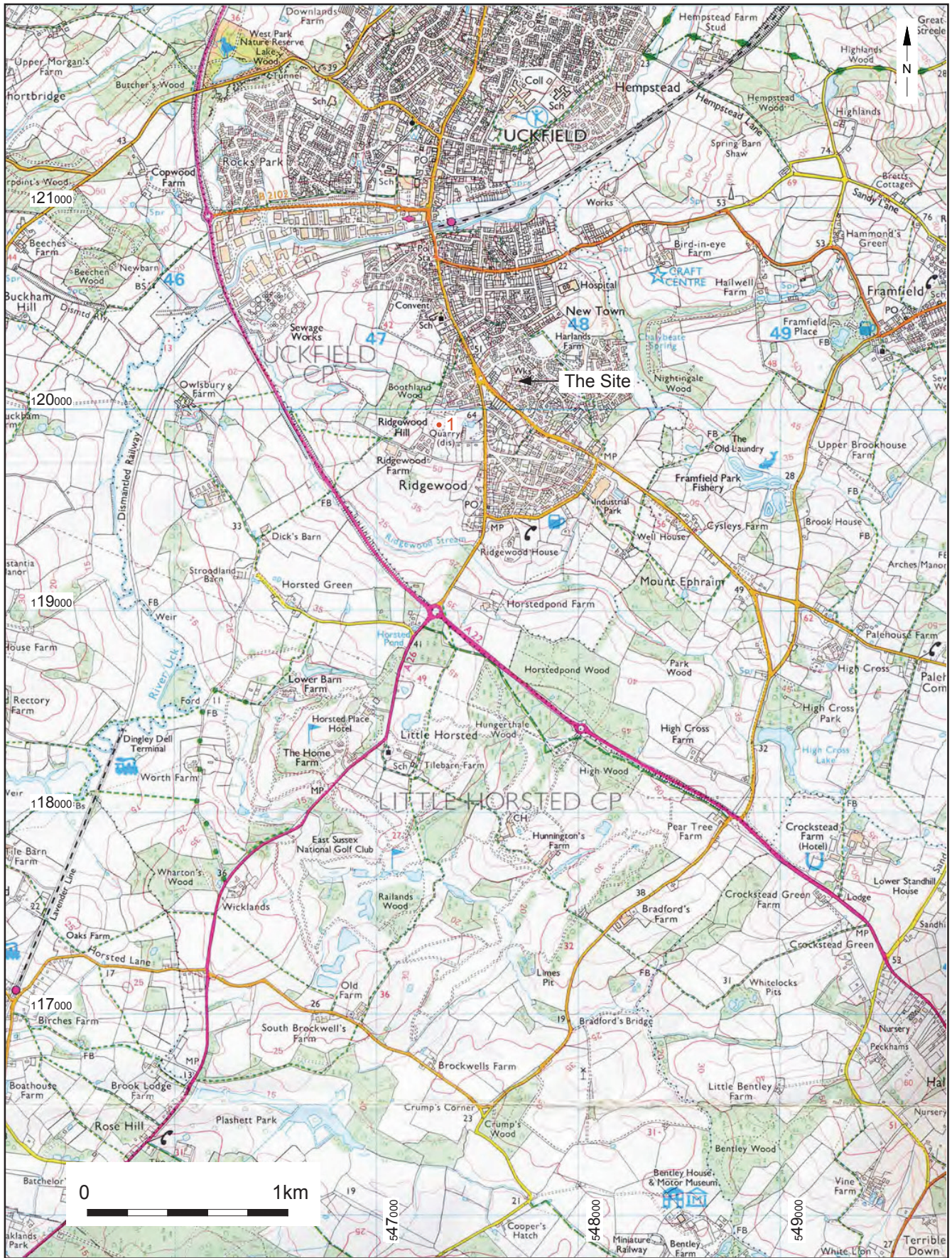
Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	local museum
Physical Contents	'Ceramics'
Digital Archive recipient	local museum
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Database','Images raster / digital photography','Spreadsheets','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	local museum
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	'Aerial Photograph','Context sheet','Correspondence','Map','Miscellaneous Material','Photograph','Report','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief during the laying of a new sewer between Pipit Meadow and Harland Villas, Mallard Drive, Ridgewood, Uckfield, East Sussex
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Stevens, S.
Other bibliographic details	Report No. 2009141

Date	2009
Issuer or publisher	Archaeology South-East
Place of issue or publication	Portslade, East Sussex
Description	Standard ASE Client Report - A4-sized with cover photo and logos.



© Archaeology South-East		Harland Villas, Mallard Drive, Uckfield	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 3296	Sept 2009	Site location plan	
Report Ref: 2009141	Drawn by: JLR		

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Harland Villas, Mallard Drive, Uckfield

Project Ref: 3296

Plan of monitored areas

Sept 2009

Fig. 2

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Drawn by: JLR

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