

Electricity Substation, Billingshurst By-pass, Billingshurst, West Sussex

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
For Scottish and Southern Power Distribution**

by Jo Pine

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BWS 05/19

February 2006

Summary

Site name: Electricity Substation, Billingshurst By-pass, Billingshurst, West Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 0829 2631

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 17th March and 7th April 2005

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Roy Kracowicz

Site code: BWS 05/19

Area of site: 610 sq m

Summary of results: No deposits of an archaeological nature were observed. A few possible prehistoric flints were recovered.

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Horsham Museum in due course.

This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 21.02.06
	Steve Preston ✓ 21.2.06

Electricity Substation, Billingshurst, Billingshurst By-pass, West Sussex An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Jo Pine

Report 05/19

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at the site of a new electricity substation built on the north-western margins of Billingshurst, West Sussex (TQ 0829 2631) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Jenny Emmett of Wardell Armstrong, 22 Windsor, Cardiff CF10 3BY on behalf of Scottish and Southern Power Distribution.

The scheme of archaeological monitoring is in line with the government guidance on archaeology as set out in *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16, 1990), and with section 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 which obliges companies to ‘have regard to the desirability of ... protecting sites, buildings (including structures) and objects of architectural, historical or archaeological interest’.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Roy Kracowicz on the 17th March and the 7th April 2005 and the site code is BWS 05/19. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Horsham Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the north-western fringes of Billingshurst, which has recently been defined by the construction of the Billingshurst By-pass (A29). It comprised a c. 610 sq m area of gently rising land, which was grassland with small trees (Fig. 2). The site lies at height of c. 25m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology consists of Weald Clay (BGS 1981) and this was observed during the groundworks.

Archaeological background

The archaeological background to the project is detailed in a desk-based assessment for the site (WA 2005). In summary, a number of sites and finds have been recorded for the area in the West Sussex Sites and Monuments Record. These include a number of archaeological sites, which were investigated during construction of the Billingshurst By-pass, which comprised pits of Late Bronze Age and Saxon/early medieval date. Close to the substation is the site of a post-medieval windmill (pre-1813).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits, which would be damaged or destroyed by the construction of the substation. This was to involve examination of topsoil stripping/ground reduction and the excavation of any trenches for foundations.

Results

An area of 610 sq m was stripped of topsoil between 0.25M and 0.35m deep. However, as this topsoil was not of a uniform depth, a small of the northern part of the site was not stripped sufficiently to expose the natural Weald Clay (Fig. 3). Where topsoil stripping had fully taken place no archaeological features were observed and only a burnt out treehole was noted. In the remaining northern part of the site the remnants of the topsoil left during the stripping process obscured the relevant level. A foundation trench for a retaining wall was excavated in the latter area but no archaeological deposits were exposed in the sections of the trench. Foundation pads for the substation buildings were also excavated but these were located in areas where the natural geology had already been exposed during the preliminary topsoil strip and no archaeology had been observed.

Finds

Modern glass and brick/tile were noted in the topsoil but not retained

Struck flint by Steve Ford

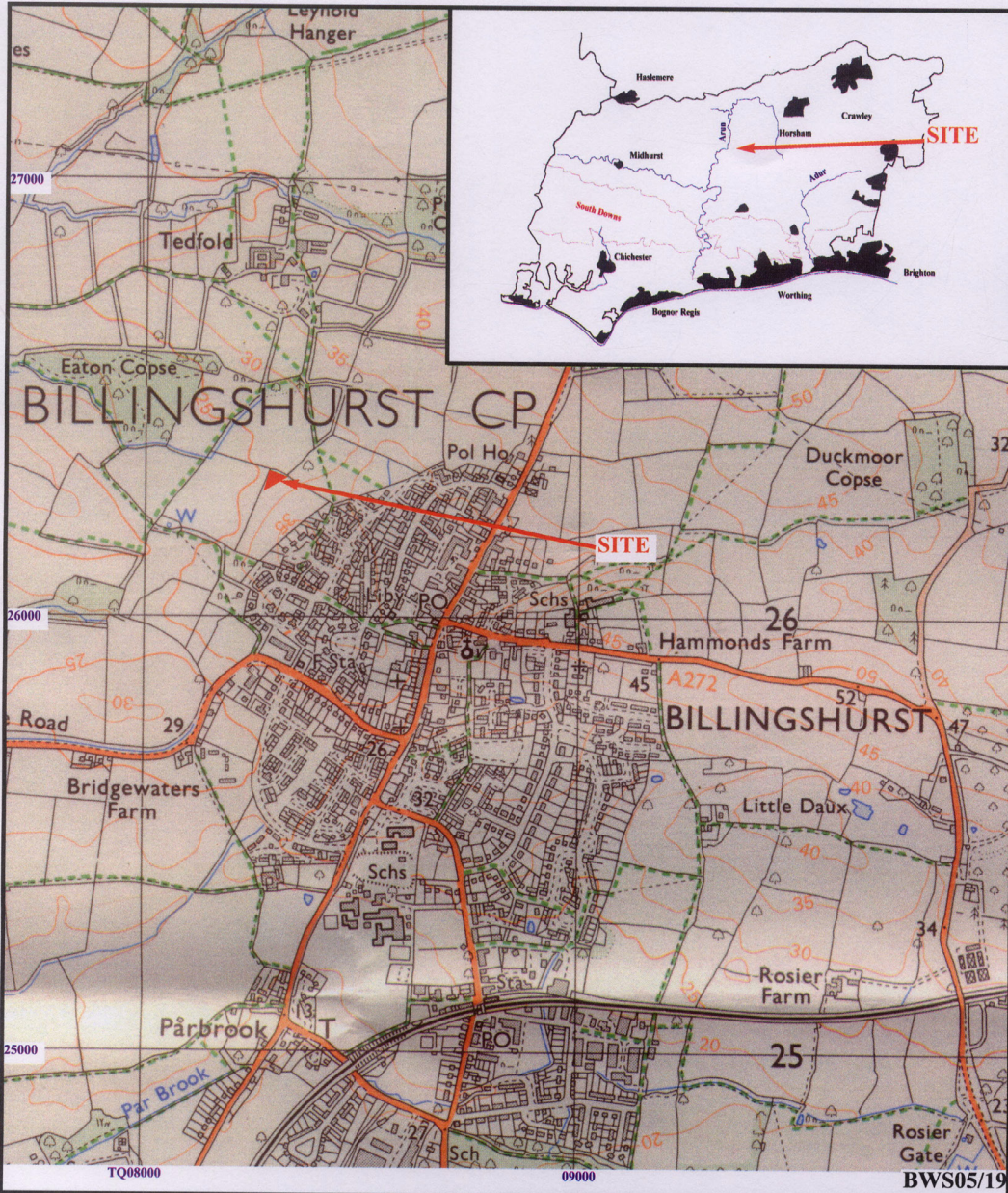
Four struck flints were recovered from the stripped areas and spoilheaps. All were broken with much edge damage. It is likely that they are all of prehistoric date but they are not otherwise closely datable. They are probably from the Neolithic or Bronze Age. However, given their condition it is possible that some of them are an accidental product of later activity such as ploughing, or are derived from the surface of a trackway metalled with flint gravel.

Conclusion

The observed groundworks did not encounter any archaeological deposits. A small number of struck flints might indicate some prehistoric activity in the area although some doubt remains as to their authenticity.

References

BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 301, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
WA, 2005, 'Proposed 33kV substation and associated underground cable route, Billingshurst, an archaeological desk-based assessment', Wardell Armstrong report NL07145J01, Newcastle under Lyme

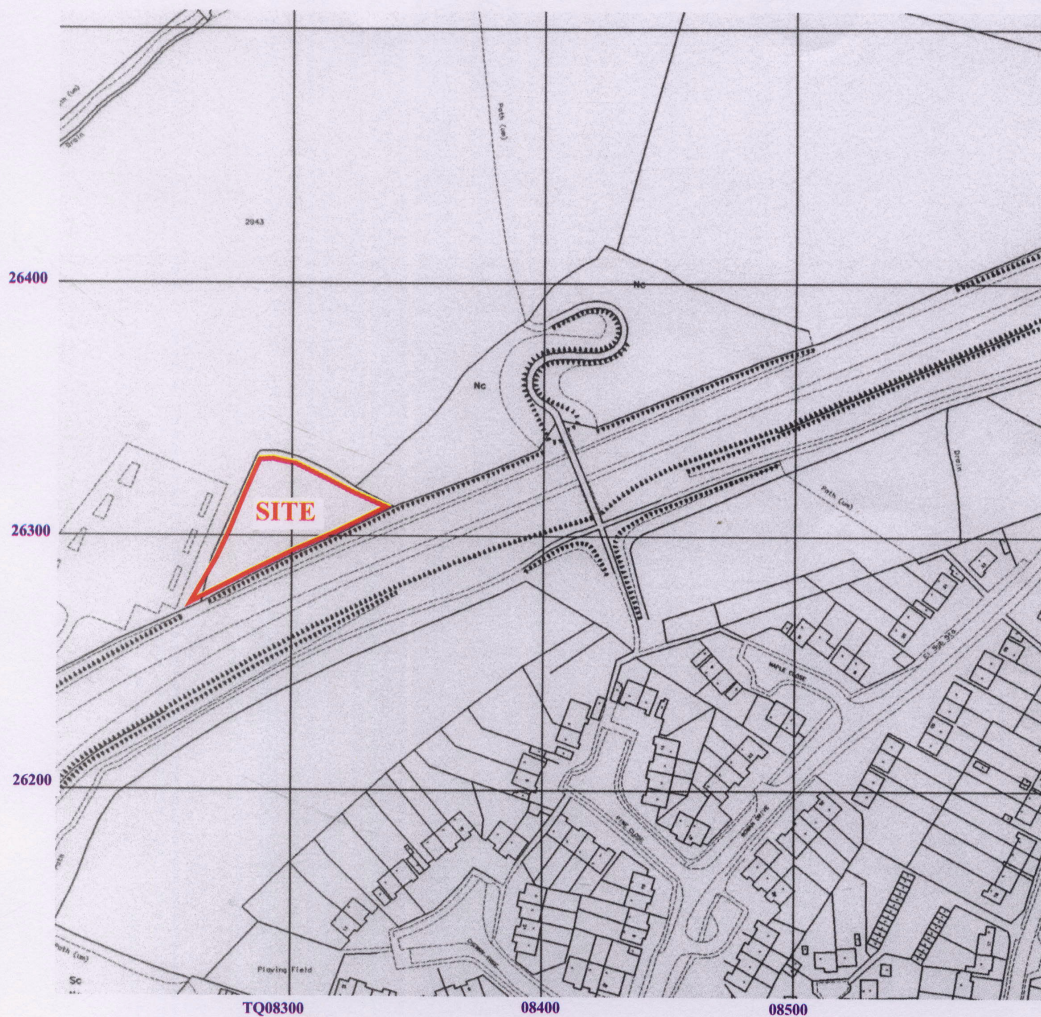


**Electricity Substation, Billingshurst By-pass,
Billingshurst, West Sussex, 2005
An Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Billingshurst
and West Sussex.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Pathfinder 1267 TQ02/12
at 1:12500.
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



BWS05/19

**Electricity Substation, Billingshurst By-pass,
Billingshurst, West Sussex, 2005
An Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 2. Detailed location of the site. Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital mapping. Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880

Scale: 1:2500.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

Electricity Substation, Billingshurst By-pass, Billingshurst, West Sussex 2005

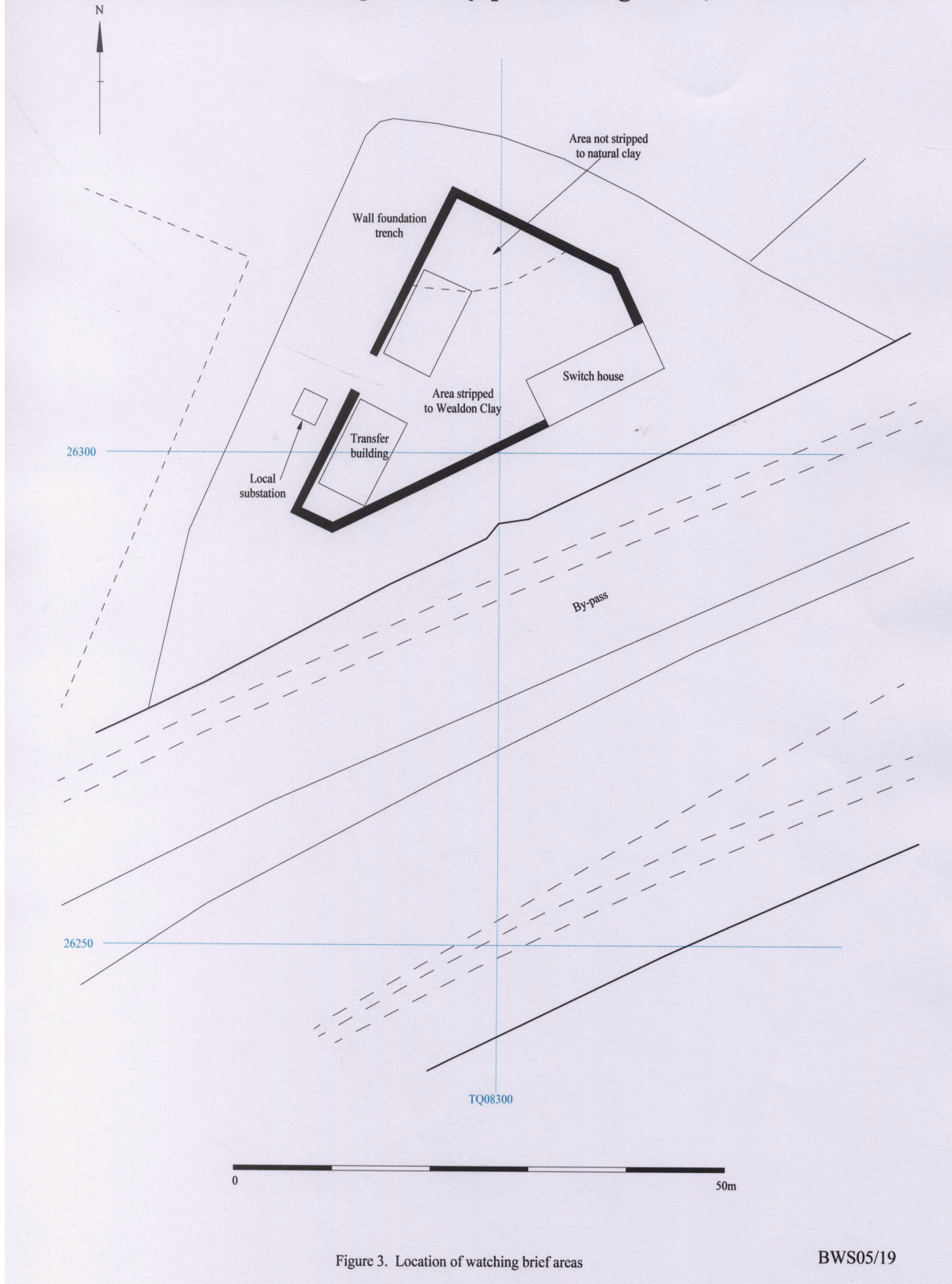


Figure 3. Location of watching brief areas

BWS05/19

Electricity Substation, Billingshurst By-pass, Billingshurst, West Sussex 2005

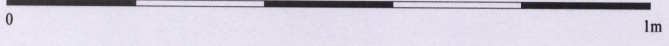
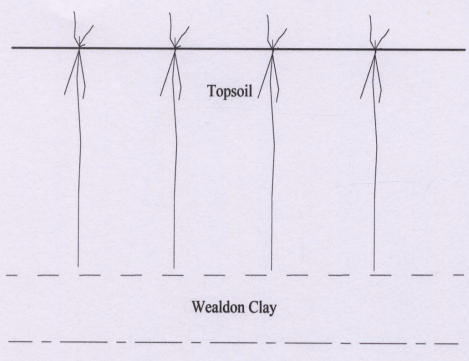


Figure 4. Representative section