

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**S O U T H W E S T**

**Dimmer Landfill Site, Dimmer Lane, Dimmer,  
Castle Cary, Somerset**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Andrew Weale**

**Site Code: DLL12/126**

**(ST 6079 3114)**

**Dimmer Landfill Site, Dimmer Lane, Dimmer,  
Castle Cary, Somerset**

**An Archaeological watching brief  
For Viridor Waste Management Limited**

by Andrew Weale

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code DLL12/126

**December 2013**

## Summary

**Site name:** Dimmer Landfill Site, Dimmer Lane, Dimmer, Castle Cary, Somerset

**Grid reference:** ST 6079 3114

**Site activity:** Watching brief

**Date and duration of project:** 6th –9th December 2011

**Project manager:** Andrew Weale

**Site supervisor:** Andrew Weale

**Site code:** DLL12/126

**Area of site:** c. 0.2ha

**Summary of results:** No deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were recorded other than traces of medieval ridge and furrow field system.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Somerset County Museum Service in due course, with accession code TTN CM 49/2012 and PRN 32215.

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|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Report edited/checked by: | Steve Ford ✓ 18.12.13    |
|                           | Steve Preston ✓ 18.12.13 |

# Dimmer Lane, Dimmer, Castle Cary, Somerset An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Weale

Report 12/126

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Dimmer Landfill Site, Dimmer Lane, Dimmer, Castle Cary, Somerset (ST 6079 3114) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr James Warren, of Viridor Waste Management Limited, Harrison House, Blackbrook Park Avenue, Taunton Somerset, TA1 2PX.

Planning permission for the extraction of clay for use as a capping material on the current landfill cell has been granted by Somerset County Council as part of an ongoing planning consent (99/02055/CPO). The site occupies an area of *c.*0.2ha. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990) and the County Council's Waste Plan Policies on archaeology. It is acknowledged that the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2012) has since superseded PPG16. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Brunning, Senior Levels and Moors Heritage Officer of Somerset County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Weale, from 12th to 13th June 2013 and the site code is DLL12/126. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, South West, Taunton and will be deposited with Somerset County Museum Service, with accession code TTN CM 49/2012 and PRN 32215

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located 800m to the south-west of the hamlet of Dimmer, 1km south of the village of Alford (Fig. 1), with the village of Galhampton 2km to the south and the town of Castle Cary 3km to the north-east. The Dry Brook and River Cray are 800m and 1km to the south of the site. The site is mostly flat with a slight drop to the south towards the brook and river and is around 30m above Ordnance Datum. Currently the site is a large grass covered area of former pasture (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is mapped as Jurassic and Triassic Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation part of the Langport Member (BGS 1973). A mixture of Clays were observed within the watching brief area.

## **Archaeological background**

An archaeological assessment highlighted the potential of archaeology within the area surrounding the site (Croft *et al.* 1991). It has shown that during the medieval period the site lay within an open field of the parish of Alford called South Field. The southern area of the landfill site contained two areas of archaeological interest crop marks and a field name which may indicate the presence of a Roman site and the name Penny's Grave which may indicate a burial site.

Alford is mentioned in Domesday Book of AD1086 when it was held by the Count of Mortain. Before the Conquest it was held by Godric and paid taxes for 5 hides (Williams and Martin 2002, 252). There was enough arable land for 5 ploughs and 50 acres of meadow. Fifteen villagers (heads of households) together with three slaves made up the population. There was also a mill and the villagers produce eight blooms of iron. It was formerly worth 100 shillings but by the time of Domesday Book it was worth £4.

Until recently the parish of Alford contained some of the best preserved medieval ridge and furrow in Somerset and, although now mostly ploughed out, some still survives in the field to the north of the site. The extent of the ridge and furrow in Alford and visible on aerial photography, all north of the Back Brook has been mapped to show it extended across the site (Aston 1988, 88–9). The enclosure map of 1805 shows that the area of the watching brief had all ready been enclosed, but with open fields surviving to the north and north west.

Previous phases of archaeological fieldwork have taken place on earlier phases of the landfill development as recorded in the county Historic Environment Record. These recorded sporadic prehistoric and Roman finds and deposits without obvious foci of settlement. More recently, two phases of evaluation have taken place to the south of the watching brief area within an area that was proposed for a new landfill cell. Three trenches were dug as part of a larger evaluation (Hollingdrake and Hollingdrake 2009) with a further nine trenches dug subsequently (C1 2011). These trenches revealed a modest volume of probable and possible archaeological deposits, none of which were well dated, but comprised ditches and gullies and a pit along with treeholes and geological/fluvial features. Pottery possibly of Bronze Age and Late Iron Age/Roman date was also recorded.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The aims of the project were to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This was to involve examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks. Topsoil, and any other overburden was be removed by a tracked machine fitted with a toothless bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive levels, under constant archaeological supervision. Metal detectors were to be used to enhance the recovery of metal finds.

## Results

The fieldwork took place on a near square parcel of land of c. 2000 sq m located towards the western side of the landfill complex (Fig. 2).

On removal of the topsoil, which was c. 0.25m deep, a blue plastic clay with brown and yellow patches was exposed, up to 0.30m thick. This was alluvium. Cutting this layer were a series of furrows between 1.2m and 1.8m wide, up to 0.25m deep and spaced approximately 8m apart. They were aligned SSW to NNW and were infilled with topsoil which contained only modern artefacts (modern brick, plastic, bailing twine). Beneath the blue clay was a darker blue clay with occasional limestone fragments up to 0.50m thick. Beneath the darker blue plastic clay was a hard blue grey clay with limestone fragments which was considered to be the natural geology. No archaeological features or non-modern artefacts were observed within the watching brief area.

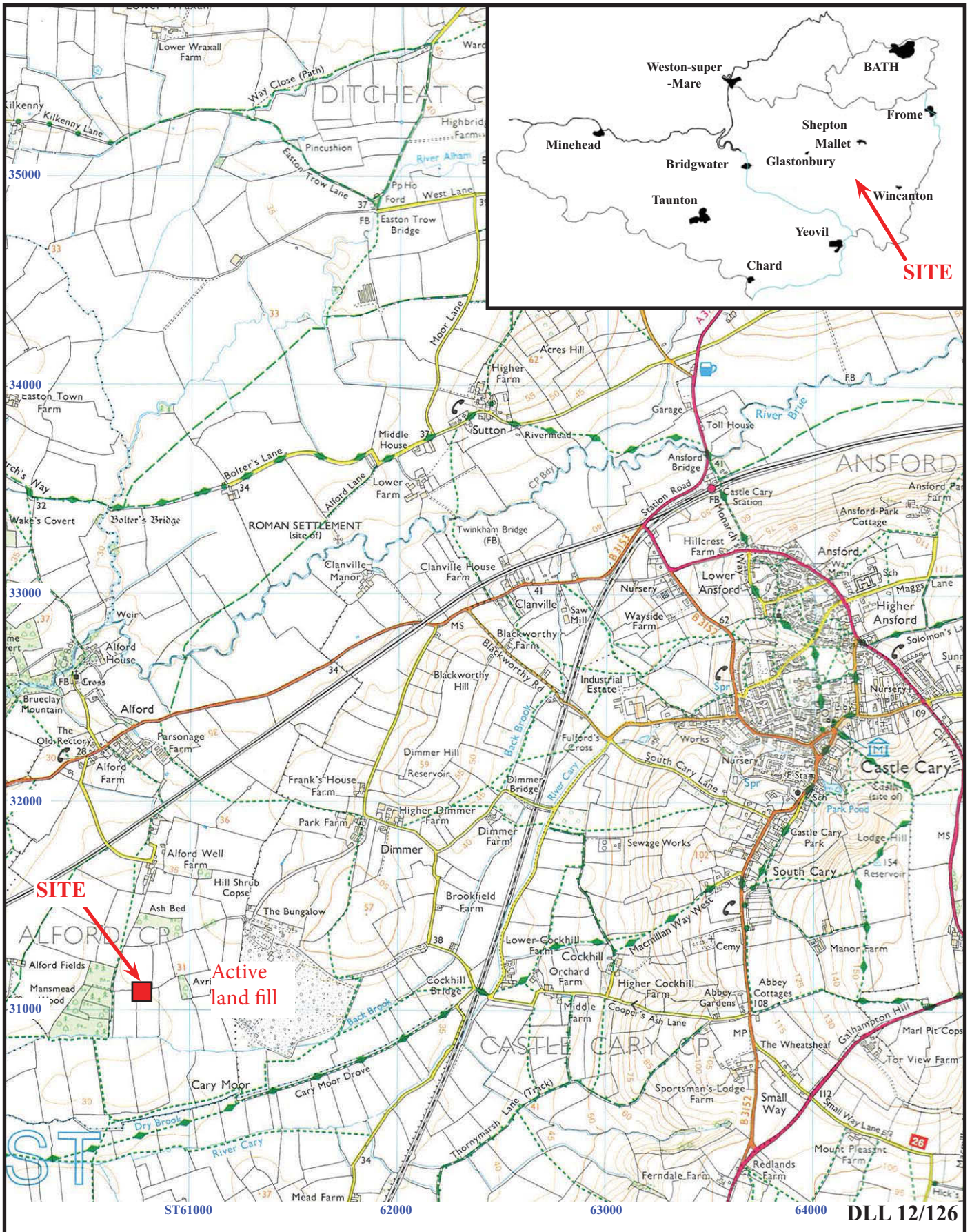
## Conclusion

The only features noted within the watching brief area were the remains of the medieval ridge and furrow field system which has been mapped from 1947 aerial photographs (Aston 1988). The orientation of the surviving furrows appear to match those depicted on the survey and would have constituted part of the open field which can be partly reconstructed as *south field* from the tithe map (Croft *et al.* 1991). The field directly north of the field with the watching brief area within it, contains some of the preserved ridge and furrow from the parish of Alford, however the orientation of that ridge and furrow is WSW to ENE. No deposits or artefacts of archaeological interest were recorded.

## References

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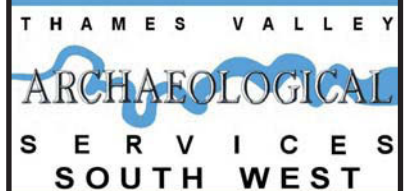


**Dimmer Land fill site, Dimmer, Castle Cary,  
Somerset, 2013**

**Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Dimmer and Castle Cary within Somerset.

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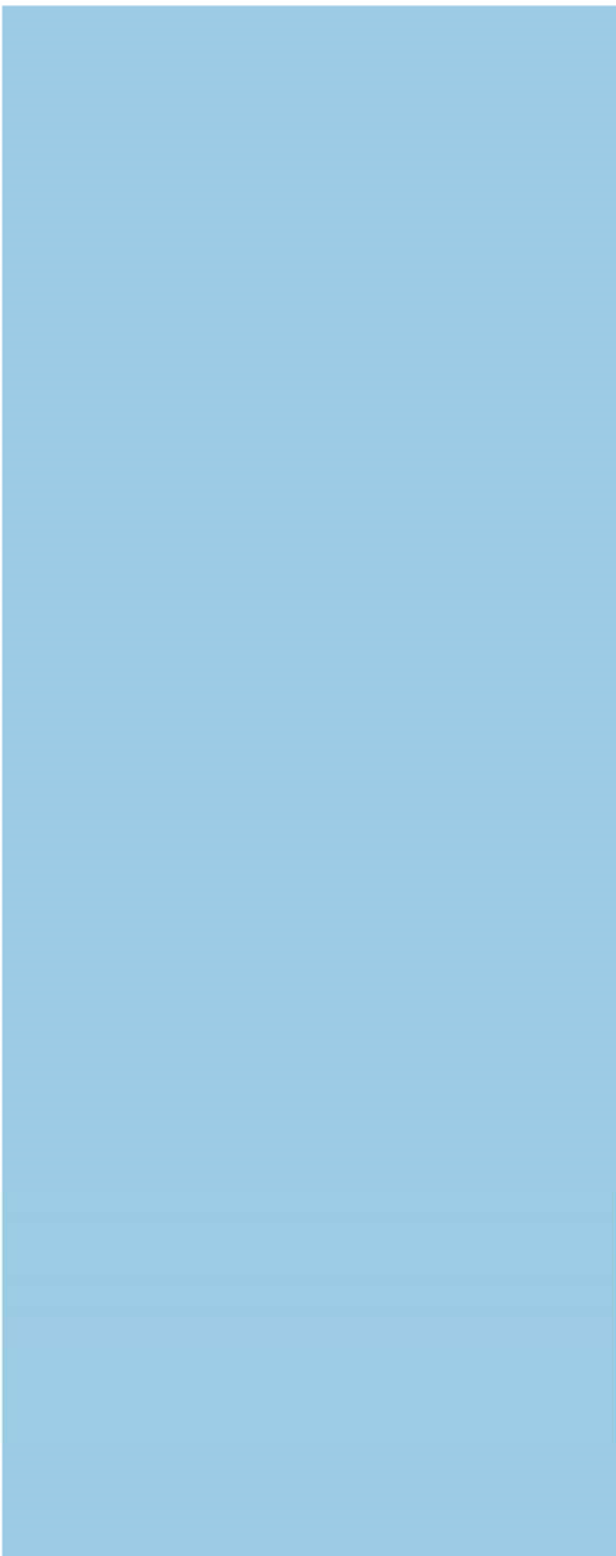
Figure 2. Location of site within the landfill complex.



## TIME CHART

|                            | <b>Calendar Years</b> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Modern _____               | AD 1901               |
| Victorian _____            | AD 1837               |
| Post Medieval _____        | AD 1500               |
| Medieval _____             | AD 1066               |
| Saxon _____                | AD 410                |
| Roman _____                | AD 43                 |
| Iron Age _____             | BC/AD<br>750 BC       |
| <br>                       |                       |
| Bronze Age: Late -----     | 1300 BC               |
| Bronze Age: Middle -----   | 1700 BC               |
| Bronze Age: Early -----    | 2100 BC               |
| <br>                       |                       |
| Neolithic: Late .....      | 3300 BC               |
| Neolithic: Early .....     | 4300 BC               |
| <br>                       |                       |
| Mesolithic: Late .....     | 6000 BC               |
| Mesolithic: Early .....    | 10000 BC              |
| <br>                       |                       |
| Palaeolithic: Upper .....  | 30000 BC              |
| Palaeolithic: Middle ..... | 70000 BC              |
| Palaeolithic: Lower .....  | 2,000,000 BC          |





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