

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**Tithe Barn Cottage, Temple Lane,  
Bisham, Berkshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Cecilia Galleano and Andrew Muddin**

**Site Code: TBC17/270**

**(SU 8462 8486)**

**Tithe Barn Cottage, Temple Lane,  
Bisham, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Mr and Mrs Vye**

by Cecilia Galleano and Andrew Muddin  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code TBC 17/270

**June 2018**

## Summary

**Site name:** Tithe Barn Cottage, Temple Lane, Bisham, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 8462 8486

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 19th December 2017 – 12th June 2018

**Project coordinator:** Danielle Milbank

**Site supervisor:** Cecilia Galleano, Andrew Munding

**Site code:** TBC17/270

**Area of site:** c. 45 sq m

**Summary of results:** Excavation under the floorboard of the dining room of Tithe Barn Cottage was observed. An oil spill from a broken oil line leading to the boiler, required the ground to be removed, after the pipe had been capped. Once test pits had been dug to ascertain the depth of the contamination, the ground was removed and checked for structural remains and datable evidence. Nothing of archaeological interest was observed. Within the living room, one borehole breached the brick capping of a well, which would originally have been external to the house.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with a suitable local repository (to be decided) in due course.

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# **Tithe Barn Cottage, Temple Lane, Bisham, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief**

by Cecilia Galleano and Andrew Muddin

**Report 17/270**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Tithe Barn Cottage, Temple Lane, Bisham, Berkshire, SL7 1RS (SU 84625 84857) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Carly Powell, of RAW Environmental Services Group, 339 Yorktown Road, Sandhurst, Berkshire, GU47 0PX, on behalf of the homeowners, Mr and Mrs Vye, of the above address.

Emergency Scheduled Ancient Monument consent was sought for the hand excavation of test pits for the preliminary assessment of sub-floor soils following an oil tank leak at the site. Tithe Barn Cottage is itself, a Grade II Listed building, and is sited within the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Bisham Abbey and Manor Complex (SAM 1007934). The building itself is specifically excluded from the Scheduling, but the ground below it is included. Mr David Wilkinson, Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Historic England (Planning Group South East Region) approved a Class 5 Scheduled Monument Consent, on immediate Health and Safety grounds, subject to the requirement for an archaeological watching brief, while the advice of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Conservation Officer, Ms Jessica Stileman, was that Listed Building consent would not be required as none of the historic fabric of the listed building was to be affected.

The consent allowed for the excavation of four test pits in the first instance under the floorboards of the dining room to check the depth of oil contamination of the ground. After this the removal of contaminated ground was allowed under archaeological supervision, with boreholes sunk to install monitoring equipment in underlying clay deposits beneath the house, in the dining room and the living room. The test pits required excavation to be of minimal depth and limited in scope to the site of the spill, with an archaeologist observing or undertaking excavation.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Cecilia Galleano, on 19th of December 2017, and by Andrew Muddin on 12th June 2018. The site code is TBC17/270. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a suitable local repository when one becomes available.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located on the south side of Bisham village in Berkshire, 4km north-west of Maidenhead (Fig. 1). The site is north of a bend in Temple Road. The River Thames is immediately west, and Marlow, on the opposite side of the river is in Buckinghamshire, but only *c.*1km to the north. Tithe Barn Cottage is one of a number of Listed properties on the south and south-west of the Bisham Abbey Sports Complex (Fig. 2), which contains the historic property, which is Grade I Listed. The underlying drift geology is mapped as Shepperton Gravel and Alluvium from the nearby River Thames (BGS, 2005). This was observed on site as grey, plastic clay. The site is at approximately 28m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

Tithe Barn Cottage (Grade II listed; 1319402, Pl.1) with 18th century elements was altered greatly in the 20th century. It is attached to two dwellings in the north that once formed Bisham Grange, of late 16th century origin but much altered. It is thought that the 2-storey western range of Tithe Barn Cottage would have been a larger south-west addition to the Grange in the 18th century, originally of an ancillary or agricultural use, such as a cart shed, before conversion to a domestic dwelling. It has a 2nd storey tile-hung facing on the exterior and string course with its ground floor infilled with a different brick (Lowe 2018) (Pl. 1). The doorway between the hall and dining room, on the ground floor is also 18th century with panels on the door and architrave surround. Other interior features that could be original in the house, such as the staircase, are later. This, adding to the contemporary date of the landing doorway upstairs, suggests that the hall and landing were the only part of this house to have a connection to the rest of the older structure to the north when originally constructed (Lowe 2018, 14). The eastern extension of Tithe Barn Cottage is a modern single-storey kitchen range and conservatory, which abuts the west end lean-to of the brick and chalk-built Tithe Barn (Grade II\*, 1117563), now also a separate dwelling. This is at least late 15th century but has also later additions. Other ancillary buildings in the vicinity of the Grange that are now separate dwellings include the Dairy, part of the timber-frame and brick infilled barn in the northeast and stables in the north. Most of the core elements are contemporary and are also Grade II Listed Buildings (Fig. 2).

This collection of buildings is sited in the larger Scheduled Ancient Monument of the Bisham Abbey and Manor Complex (SAM; 1007934). The manor was granted to Henry de Ferrers, whose grandson, Stephen, was Earl of Derby and give the site in alms to the Knights Templars (VCH 1923). In the north the Templar Perceptory, dated from 1260 is Grade I Listed. After the Templars, the building was added to in the 14th century,

and Augustinian canons were given the Prefectory to use as a Priory which gained national significance as a burial place, with its connections to the Neville family (Earls of Warwick) and the Montacute family (Earls of Salisbury) in the 15th century (Compton 1973). After the Dissolution, and a failed attempt to establish a Benedictine order in 1538, the Preceptory and Abbey building was modified again to become the Manor of an enclosed estate with gardens and an attached farm, forming the late 16th Grange complex in the south. The enclosing square moat circuit is still visible in areas today, with archaeological investigation of part of the north-east circuit, producing a radiocarbon date from the base of the ditch of AD1655–1695 (95% probability) (Hunn *et al.* 2017, 29). Late Bronze Age and Roman remains have also been found in work on the sports pitches and flood compensation areas outside the north of the SAM (Hunn *et al.* 2017, 48). A remnant of the partially infilled moat's southern course lies in the garden of Tithe Barn Cottage, surveyed as 15m long, 9m wide and 1.3m deep (Hunn *et al.* 2017, 28) (Pl. 2).

The Scheduled Area protects the buried remains of the site, with the built heritage protected by Listing Building status. There is considerable archaeological potential across the site for the survival of deposits relating to the internal layout of the structures in the monument. The presence of the moat and the site's location on the south bank of the River Thames also give the potential for preserved waterlogged remains. This part of the Thames Valley has been particularly rich in prehistoric finds and features with its proximity to the alluvial clay and gravels of the river floodplain (VCH 1923; Gates 1975). The nearby hamlet of Temple contains remains of Iron Age, Roman and Saxon settlement (Pine 2013).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits or finds affected by the excavation of hand dug test pits for contamination assessment. All excavation was either undertaken by hand or with core drilling in order to establish monitoring equipment in the clays above the natural river gravel.

All test pits were continuously archaeologically monitored for and where archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered, all subsequent manual excavation was to be by an archaeologist. The test pits were between 0.4m - 0.8m long and 0.3m wide as they were restricted by parts of the above floor structure. A deeper central drilled borehole was taken in each to test for oil penetration. All excavated areas during the two phases of works were fully photographed and recorded after excavation. All spoil removed from the site was scanned for finds during hand excavation.

## **Results**

Four test pits (Fig. 3) were excavated under the dining room floor at the site of the leak of an oil pipe which fed the oil boiler in the hall. Below the supports for the current floorboards, 0.1m thick, was a void above the concrete scree floor. The beams were supported by a single course of bricks, 0.1m thick. The stratigraphy observed in each test pit was the same (Fig. 4). Under the concrete was rubble backfill. All of the pits located grey clay at 0.65m deep, and were dug to a maximum depth of 0.9m.

In Test Pit 1 (Pl.3), a smaller core was taken to a depth 1.2m lower than the base of hand excavation. The made ground rubble was 0.3m thick containing frequent fragments of chalk, flint and stone. This overlay the natural clay alluvium geology. The maximum depth of coring reached gravel at 4m deep.

An area 1.3m x 1.6m (Pl.4) was excavated in the second phase works, removing the rubble fill across the area to a depth of 0.6m. This exposed the clay, though no excavation of the clay was necessary as it was not contaminated by the oil.

Additional boreholes were undertaken in the neighbouring room, the living room, with a drilled core with a borehole 10mm diameter in the centre of the room, and another in the west. The western borehole broke through the top of a brick-covered chamber 0.65m below existing floor level. This represented the domed cap of a well over a void, which was most likely *c.*1m in diameter which would be contained entirely under the floor of the west side of the living room. No further disturbance of this feature was required, and it could not be recorded further, but monitoring equipment was put in place to identify if the water in the well, which was seen at 2.2m deep, had been contaminated.

## **Finds**

No finds of any archaeological interest were encountered during the works.

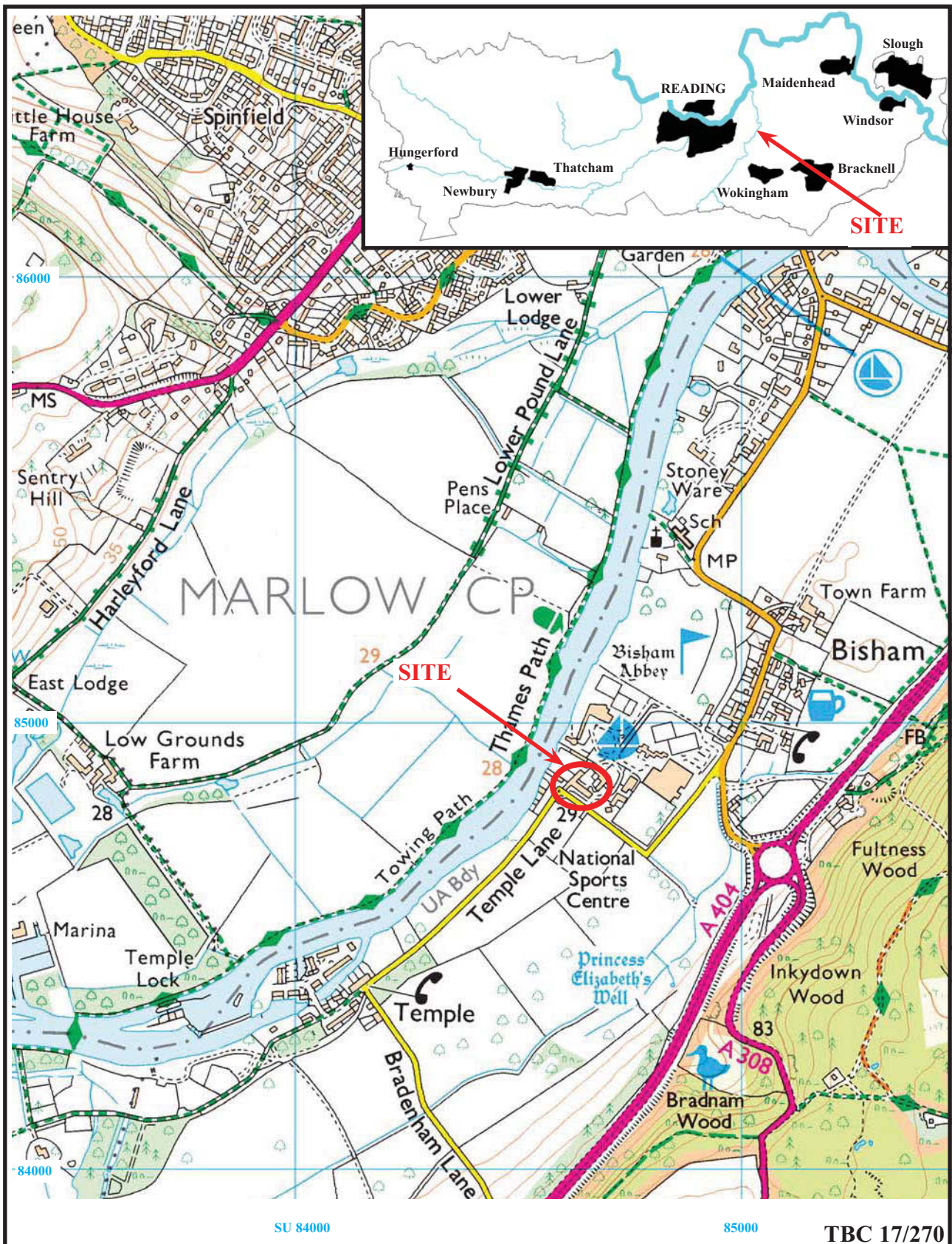
## **Conclusion**

The decontamination work of Tithe Barn Cottage has not encountered any archaeological remains nor finds to add further structural information of earlier walls or internal arrangement of the house. The well, however, was previously unknown at this location, which would originally have been exterior to the Grange, before the elements that were to later become Tithe Barn Cottage, were added to the south of the Grange in the late 18th century.

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Figure 1. Location of site within Bisham and Berkshire.

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Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Temple Lane, showing southern edge of SAM (blue) and Listed buildings (red).

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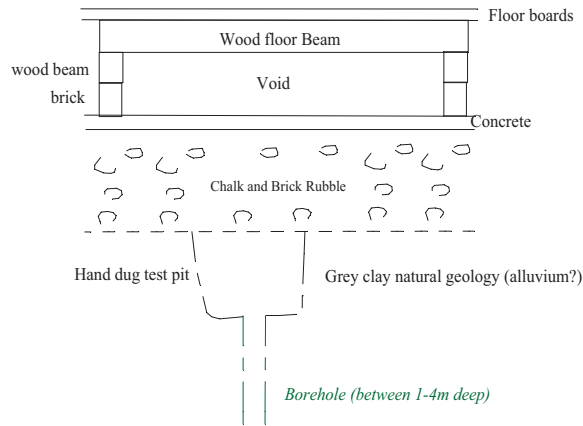
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Bisham, Berkshire, 2018  
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 3. Ground floor detail of observed interior areas, excavation areas in red, boreholes in green.

0 10m

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*Test pit 4*



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Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 4. Representative section.



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Plate 1. Tithe Barn Cottage, looking north north west.



Plate 2. Remnant of infilled Late Medieval moat in garden, looking south east.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 1. Dining Room, test pit 1, looking north west, Scales: 0.5m and 0.3m.



Plate 4. Rubble fill excavated in Dining Room floor, looking north west, Scales: 0.2m and 0.3m.

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Archaeological Watching Brief  
Plates 3 and 4.**

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## TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late .....	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early .....	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late .....	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early .....	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper .....	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle .....	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower .....	2,000,000 BC





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,  
47-49 De Beauvoir Road,  
Reading RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552  
Email: [tvas@tvas.co.uk](mailto:tvas@tvas.co.uk)  
Web: [www.tvas.co.uk](http://www.tvas.co.uk)**

***Offices in:  
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