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Archaeological Evaluation

Upper House Farm
Moreton-On-Lugg
Herefordshire

June 2014



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1 Executive Summary

Border Archaeology was instructed by Stuart Perkins Esq of Upper House Farm Moreton-on-Lugg Herefordshire to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation of land (centred upon NGR SO 49334 45779) extending over an area of approximately 14,000 sq. m to the west of the existing poultry units, in respect of a proposal to erect a further six units. The evaluation was carried out between the May 8th and May 12th 2014.

Eleven trenches, each measuring 20m × 2m, were opened within the study area, which comprised the southern extent of an arable field located to the west of the existing farm buildings.

No deposits of archaeological significance were revealed during the work. A single possible flint scraper of unknown date was recovered from the plough-soil in the vicinity of Trench 4.

2 Introduction

Border Archaeology (BA) was instructed by Stuart Perkins Esq Upper House Farm Moreton-on-Lugg Herefordshire to undertake a programme of archaeological work comprising field evaluation of land (centred upon NGR SO 49334 45779) extending over an area of approximately 14,000 sq. m to the W of the existing poultry units, in respect of a proposal to erect a further six units (Planning Ref. 132045/FH) (*fig. 1*).

2.1 Soils & geology

The site comprises typical stagnogley soils of the VERNOLDS series (711k). These are composed of slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged reddish silty soils, with some coarse loamy soils with slowly permeable sub-soils & slight seasonal waterlogging, & some deep stone-less silty soils in alluvium, affected by groundwater. These soils overlie reddish till (SSEW, 1983).

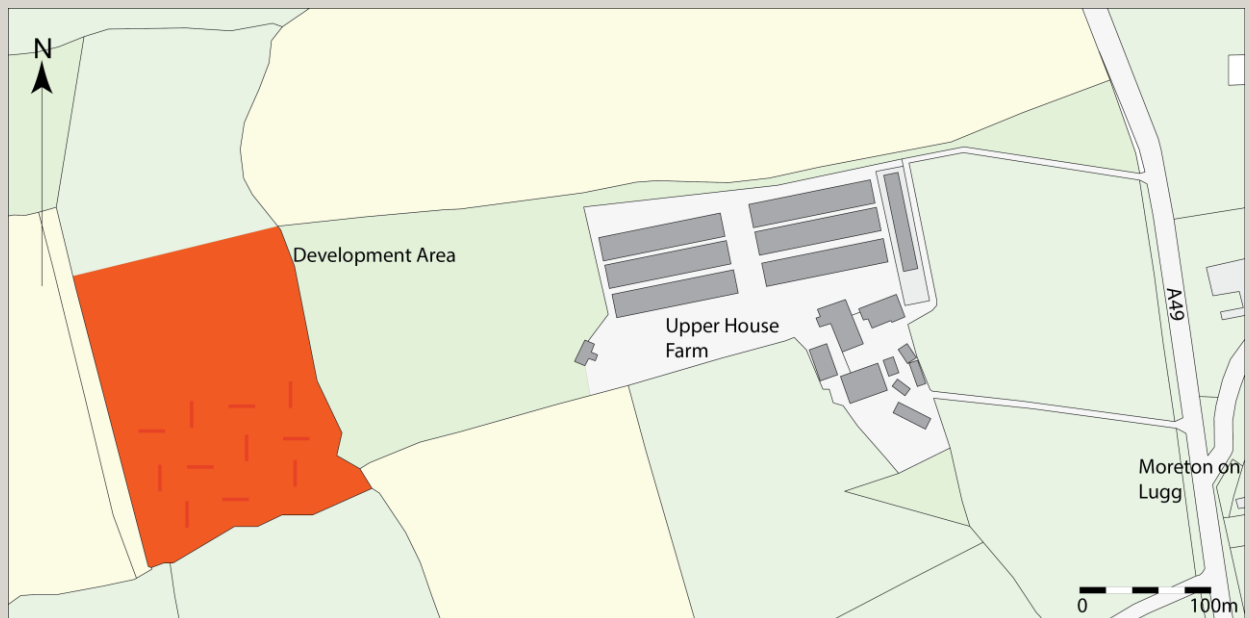


Fig. 1: Site location

3 Historical & archaeological background

Salvage recording over a number of years at Wellington/Moreton Quarry has revealed a number of significant archaeological sites spanning the prehistoric and Roman periods. These reveal the Lower Lugg Valley to be an area rich in evidence for intensive past human activity and which indicate the high archaeological potential of the floodplain zone within which the present site is located.

The discoveries indicate multi-period occupation and confirm that the Lower Lugg Valley has attracted human settlement and economic/subsistence activity from the Mesolithic through to the post-medieval and modern periods. The area is recognised as being 'regionally important' with respect to Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement activity and was evidently intensively settled during the Romano-British period. The discovery of two

mid-Saxon mills attests also to an Early Medieval presence, probably associated with the Mercian royal court located in the Marden/Sutton St Michael area.

A previous archaeological investigation carried out at Upper House Farm in 2007, some 500m to the NW of the present study area (SO 492 460), revealed deposits and artefacts ranging in date from the Mesolithic to the Medieval/Post-medieval period, the Romano-British period being particularly well represented (Wainwright & Rogers 2007). The majority of these finds, features and deposits occurred in the eastern part of the site (Trenches 6-9) and included a burnt beam set within an occupation layer dating from 120-200AD, which appears to have represented part of a wooden building, together with a ditch and pit of Romano-British date or earlier.

A further irregular ditch feature was identified running N-S through the centre of Trench 7, with a series of deposits representing occupation. Trench 9 revealed the remains of a possible NE-SW track-way, which may have formed part of a similar track-way previously identified in evaluation trenching at St Donats Farm (Jackson *et al.* 1999). Undated field boundaries and drainage gullies in the western part of the site may have been associated with Roman or earlier agricultural activity.

Trial-trenching and a watching brief carried out on the site of the former military camp at Moreton-on-Lugg (SO 5025 4676) revealed further significant archaeological remains of probable Romano-British date (Bain *et al.* 2005; Gittens 2006), which possibly related to the activity recorded at Upper House Farm and St Donats Farm and which revealed similar features to those recorded to the N of the site at Wellington Quarry.

The focus of activity within the present study area appears to have centred upon a double-ditched D-shaped enclosure, possibly representing a Late Prehistoric or Romano-British farmstead, one of several undated crop-mark sites in the immediate vicinity.

4 Methodology

The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with practices set out in *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008-updated Nov 22nd 2013) and *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IfA 2008-updated Nov 22nd 2013). Border Archaeology adheres to the IfA *Code of conduct* (2013 - updated Mar 20th 2014) and *Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in archaeology* (2008 – updated Mar 20th 2014) and to Herefordshire Archaeology's *Standards for Archaeological Projects in Herefordshire (Issue 1)* (Herefordshire Council 2004).

Eleven trenches, each measuring 20m × 2m, were opened by machine and toothless ditching bucket within the study area, which comprised the southern extent of an arable field located to the W of the existing farm buildings (*fig. 2*). Note: trench locations as shown reflect the area of actual impact.

Excavation revealed no significant archaeological deposits or surviving archaeological remains likely to be impacted by development.

4.1 Recording

Full written, graphic and photographic records were made in accordance with Border Archaeology's *Archaeological Field Recording Manual* (2014). Records included:

- A *pro-forma* context record for each stratigraphic unit
- Plans of excavated areas showing: the extent of the area (tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and located on a 1:2500 plan), the extent of all stratigraphic units, and appropriate detail within stratigraphic units.
- A photographic record of all stratigraphic units, in addition to a representative photographic record of the progress of the archaeological work. The record was made using a high-resolution digital camera and comprised photographs of archaeological features and appropriate groups of features and structures. Included in each photograph was an appropriate scale and all photographic records were indexed and cross-referenced to written site records. Details concerning subject and direction of view were maintained in a photographic register, indexed by frame number.

No artefactual information was identified during the course of the evaluation and no deposits containing potential palaeoenvironmental/palaeoeconomic data were revealed.

5 Results

5.1 Trench 1

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	(1001)	-	Deposit	Plough-soil	Firm mid reddish brown silt clay, occasional gravel. 0.4m thick.	-	-	-	-	-	Weakly stratified; artificially thickened due to dumping of soil from nearby field; sterile
2	(1002)	-	Deposit	Silting deposit formed by waterlogging of low-lying area of site	Firm dark greyish-brown silt and organic material. 0.1m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	(1003)	-	Layer	Gravel deposition	Firm greyish-brown gravel & clayey matrix. 0.2m thick	-	-	-	-	-	Natural
4	(1004)	-	Layer	Clay deposition	Very firm reddish silt clay and gravel. >0.2m thick	-	-	-	-	-	Natural

5.2 Trench 2

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	(2001)	-	Deposit	Plough-soil	Firm mid reddish-brown silt clay, occasional gravel. 0.4m thick.	-	-	-	-	-	Weakly stratified; artificially thickened due to dumping of soil from nearby field; sterile
2	(2002)	-	Deposit	Alluvial deposition	Firm dark reddish-brown silt clay. 0.35m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	(1003)	-	Layer	Gravel deposition	Firm greyish-brown gravel, clay matrix. >0.2m thick	-	-	-	-	-	Natural

5.3 Trench 3

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	(3001)	-	Deposit	Plough-soil	Firm mid reddish-brown silt clay, occasional gravel. 0.5m thick.	-	-	-	-	-	Weakly stratified; artificially thickened due to dumping of soil from nearby field

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
2	(3002)	-	Deposit	Alluvial deposition	Firm light reddish-brown silt clay. >0.25m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-

5.4 Trench 4

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	(4001)	-	Deposit	Plough-soil	Firm mid reddish-brown silt clay. 0.4m thick.	-	-	-	-	-	Weakly stratified; artificially thickened due to dumping of soil from nearby field. Overlies (4004)
2	(4002)	-	Deposit	Silting deposit formed by waterlogging	Firm dark greyish organic silt	-	-	-	-	-	Underlies (4004)
3	(4003)	-	Layer	Gravel deposition	Firm light greyish-brown gravel, clay matrix. >0.2m thick	-	-	-	-	-	Natural
4	(4004)	-	Deposit	Alluvium	Firm greyish-brown clay. 0.2m	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	(4005)	-	Layer	Clay deposition	Firm reddish-brown clay. >0.1m	-	-	-	-	-	Natural

Trench 5

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	(5001)	-	Deposit	Plough-soil	Firm mid reddish-brown silt clay. 0.4m thick.	-	-	-	-	-	Weakly stratified; artificially thickened due to dumping of soil from nearby field
2	(5002)	-	Deposit	Alluvium or subsoil	Firm dark reddish silt clay. 0.1m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	(5003)	-	Deposit	Alluvium	Firm light grey/yellowish silt clay. 0.2m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	(5004)	-	Layer	Clay deposition	Firm greyish-brown clay. >0.2m	-	-	-	-	-	Natural

5.5 Trench 6

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	(6001)	-	Deposit	Plough-soil	Friable mid brown silt clay. 0.44m thick.	-	-	-	-	-	Weakly stratified; artificially thickened due to dumping of soil from nearby field
2	(6002)	-	Deposit	Alluvium or subsoil	Firm mid reddish silt clay. 0.2m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	(6003)	-	Deposit	Alluvium	Firm bluish-grey silt clay. 0.15m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	(6004)	-	Layer	Clay deposition	Firm light reddish clay & gravel. >0.2m	-	-	-	-	-	Natural

5.6 Trench 7

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	(7001)	-	Deposit	Plough-soil	Firm mid reddish-brown silt clay. 0.6m thick	-	-	-	-	-	Weakly stratified; artificially thickened due to dumping of soil from nearby field
2	(7002)	-	Deposit	Subsoil	Firm dark brown silt clay, organic flecking. 0.32m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
3	(7003)	-	Layer	Clay deposition	Firm mid reddish silt clay & gravel. >0.3m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-

5.7 Trench 8

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	(8001)	-	Deposit	Plough-soil	Friable mid reddish-brown silt clay, occasional stones. 0.4m thick	-	-	-	-	-	Weakly stratified; artificially thickened due to dumping of soil from nearby field
2	(8002)	-	Deposit	Subsoil	Firm light reddish silt clay. 0.24m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	(8003)	-	Deposit	Possible buried soil horizon	Firm greyish-brown silt clay. 0.17m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	(8004)	-	Deposit	Silting deposit	Firm greyish/yellowish silt clay, organic matter. 0.12m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	(8005)	-	Layer	Clay deposition	Firm light reddish clay & gravel. >0.07m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-

5.8 Trench 9

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	(9001)	-	Deposit	Ploughsoil	Friable mid reddish-brown silt clay. 0.4m thick	-	-	-	-	-	Weakly stratified; artificially thickened due to dumping of soil from nearby field
2	(9002)	-	Deposit	Subsoil	Firm greyish-brown silt clay. 0.2m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	(9003)	-	Deposit	Silting deposit	Firm dark grey silt clay, organic staining. 0.17m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	(9004)	-	Layer	Clay deposition	Firm mid reddish clay deposition. >0.25m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-

5.9 Trench 10

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	(10001)	-	Deposit	Ploughsoil	Firm mid reddish-brown silt clay, occasional sub-angular stones. 0.45m thick	-	-	-	-	-	Weakly stratified; artificially thickened due to dumping of soil from nearby

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
											field
2	(10002)	-	Deposit	Subsoil	Firm dark reddish silt clay. 0.25m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	(10003)	-	Deposit	Silting deposit	Firm bluish-grey silt clay. 0.14m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	(10004)	-	Layer	Clay deposition	Firm mid reddish clay and gravel. >0.1m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-

5.10 Trench 11

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	(11001)	-	Deposit	Plough-soil	Firm mid reddish-brown silt clay, occasional sub-angular stones. 0.5m thick	-	-	-	-	-	Weakly stratified; artificially thickened due to dumping of soil from nearby field
2	(11002)	-	Deposit	Subsoil	Firm mid reddish silt clay. 0.2m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	(11003)	-	Deposit	Silting deposit	Firm grey silt clay, organic staining. 0.1m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	(11004)	-	Layer	Clay deposition	Firm mid reddish silt clay & gravel. >0.3m thick	-	-	-	-	-	-



Fig 2: Trench location plan

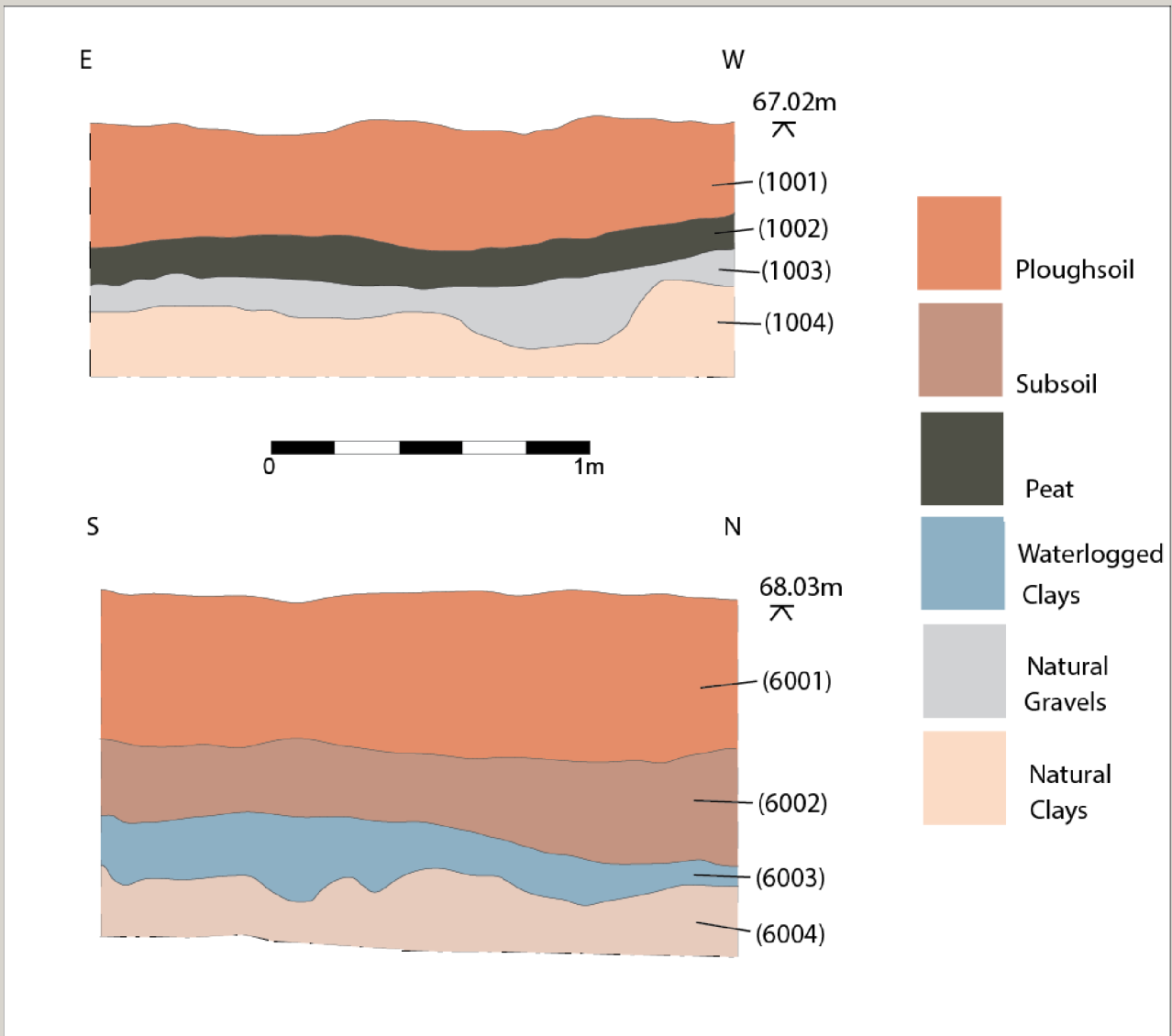


Fig 3: N-facing sample section of Trench 1 and E-facing sample section of Trench 6

6 Discussion

The evaluation at Upper House Farm Moreton-on-Lugg was carried out on the S extent of a large arable field immediately to the W of the farm buildings, an area of approximately 14000 sq. m. The ground trends gently to the N from a ridge to the SW, varying in level between 68.5m AOD at the southern field boundary to 66.7m AOD at the northern extent of the study area.

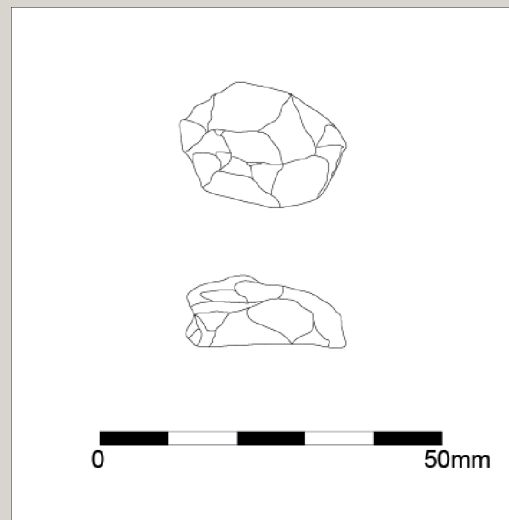


Fig 4: Line drawing of possible flint scraper (Scale: 1.1 @ A4)

The plough-soils across the study area were artificially built up due to dumping of soils from the field to the E. A flint scraper of unknown (prehistoric) date was recovered from this deposit in the vicinity of Trench 4 (*fig. 4*).



Plate 1: N-facing section of Trench 1

Extensive 20th -century land-drain systems were revealed throughout the study area, suggesting that the land had been seasonally waterlogged and probably unsuitable for arable usage prior to this.

Underlying the plough-soils was a substantial site-wide deposit of alluvial silt clay. This was not present in the north-western extent of the study area (Trench 1), which was especially low lying and waterlogged. Trench 1 contained deposits of peaty silt concentrated in low-lying depressions within the natural soils (*Plate 1; figs. 2 & 3*).

Evidence of waterlogging was present across with the site, with gleying visible in most trenches. Underlying this were natural soils, comprising clean gravels and gravelly clay deposits.

No stratified finds or features of archaeological significance were identified during the course of this evaluation.

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