



Archaeological Observation

On behalf of:

Amey plc

Concerning:

Water Main Replacement Works

**North Street, Back Lane & High
Street**

Winchcombe

Gloucestershire

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Cover: View west showing trenching excavation in progress

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1 Non-Technical Summary

Border Archaeology Ltd (BA) was instructed by Amey plc on behalf of Severn Trent Water to carry out Archaeological Observation of groundworks associated with the installation of a replacement water main within the historic town of Winchcombe, an important centre in the Saxon period and the second largest borough in Gloucestershire at the time of the Domesday survey of 1086.

The pipe trench and a series of access pits were excavated along the approximate route of the existing main. The trench was approximately 0.30–1.00m wide and was excavated to an average depth of 1.10m.

Observation focused on two areas along the pipeline route: Area A situated on the junction of Hailes Street/High Street and North Street and Area B on the junction of North Street and Back Lane.

A series of 18th -century deposits were revealed within Area A, together with a potential masonry culvert associated with the development of Hailes Street and North Street. Similar deposits and a further two culverts were recorded in Area B.

2 Introduction

Border Archaeology (BA) was instructed by Amey plc on behalf of Severn Trent Water plc to carry out Archaeological Observation (AO) of groundworks relating to a replacement water main in the historic core of Winchcombe Gloucestershire. The works comprise installation of 125mm diameter pipeline along North Street to High Street and a 90mm diameter pipe along part of Back Lane (*fig. 1*).

Two specific areas of groundworks observations were thus carried out. Area A (NGR: SP 025 283) was located at the junction of Hailes Street/High Street and North Street, representing the site of a Saxon and medieval marketplace, whilst Area B (SP 024 285) encompassed the North Street/Back Lane junction, considered to represent the location of the *burh* defences.

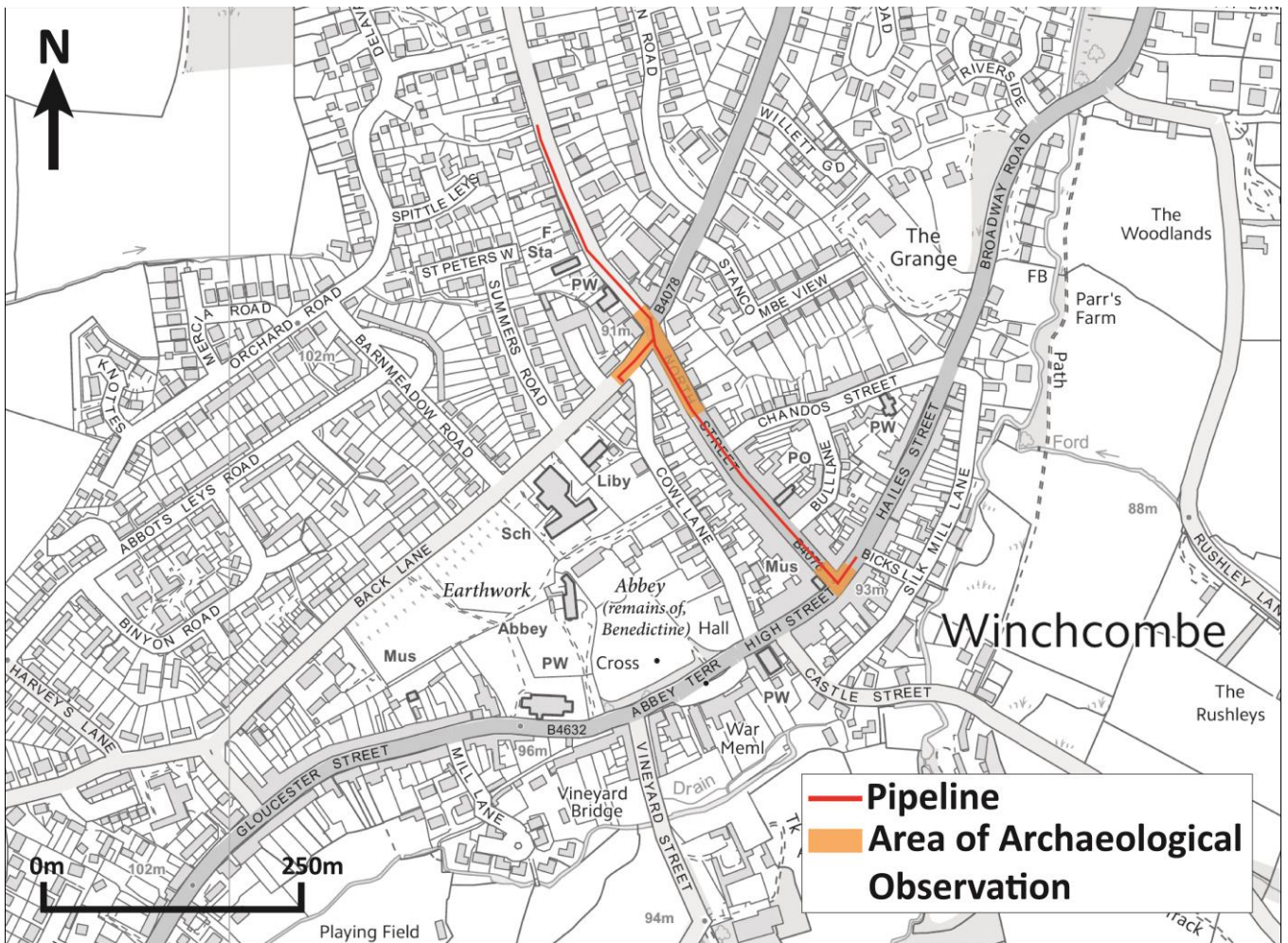


Fig. 1: Plan showing location of groundworks observations

3 Site Description & Geology

The soils within the groundworks area consist of pelo-stagnogleys of the DENCHWORTH series (712b), composed of slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged clayey soils with similar fine loamy over clayey soils, some fine loamy over clayey soils with only slight seasonal waterlogging and some slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils over Jurassic and Cretaceous clay (SSEW 1983).

4 Brief Historical & Archaeological Background

Evidence of occupation from the prehistoric period has been revealed in the town and wider vicinity. Excavations at Greet Road (NGR: SP 0257 2902) in 2014 revealed a pit (Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record (GHER) No. 48204) containing an assemblage of 74 pieces of struck flint and 14 very small sherds of prehistoric pottery, which probably belonged to a single vessel. The pit contained frequent charcoal pieces, mostly oak, and a large quantity of hazelnut shells. A radiocarbon determination on a fragment of hazelnut returned a date range of 3940-3870 and 3810-3640 cal. BC. A stone rubber possibly used with a saddle quern was also recovered. Some 21 pieces of similarly dated flint was recovered from residual contexts in later features in the excavation area. Among these later features was evidence for a Late Bronze Age post-built roundhouse and five discrete pits (GHER No. 48207). A radiocarbon determination of 930-810 cal. BC was obtained for a sample of charcoal from a posthole forming part of the roundhouse.

Romano-British settlement is well attested by the Scheduled remains of Romano-British villa and associated agricultural enclosures (GHER No. 35775) (Scheduled Monument No. 21700) located 170m SW of Winchcombe School Greet Road (NGR: SP 02410 29371). The site is located on the northern edge of the town on land gently sloping to the E towards the River Isbourne.

The groundworks extended through two main areas highlighted as being of high potential for the preservation of later archaeological deposits. The junction of Hailes Street/High Street and North Street (Area A) represents the site of the medieval market (GHER No. 20913) (Bassett 1977, 71) and it was thought that evidence for associated structures and deposits may be encountered during the course of the groundworks excavations. The market declined in importance during the post-medieval period, following the Dissolution of the Abbey (NGR: SP 02 28) (Gloucestershire HER No. 39; Monument No. 327803; NMR No. SP 02 NW 5), the precinct of which is defined by Back Lane on the N side, High Street, Gloucester Street and Abbey Terrace to the S and Malt Lane and Cowl Lane on the western and eastern sides, respectively. The Abbots House was subsequently used as a parish workhouse and was eventually demolished in 1815. The possible site of an early medieval Mercian Palace lies near the High Street (NGR: SP 0247 2827) (GHER No. 20393).

North Street was also known as 'Horse Fair Street' and a horse-market is documented in the 13th century; a market continued to be held in this location until the mid-20th -century (Adlard 1939, 14). There appear to have been both a Booth Hall and a Guild Hall during the 13th century, which would indicate a relatively high volume of trade (Dent 1877, 97).

Area B, at the junction of North Street and Back Lane, covers an area in which two alternative alignments for the *burh* defences (NGR: SP 02 28) (GHER No. 39462) have been proposed on the S side of Back Lane. A watching brief carried out at CEVA Infant School between 1999 and 2001 identified the bank as an earthwork running parallel to the S side of Back Lane, which was preserved up to 1m in height and which had been built over in areas for a carpark and an access route (Bashford & Vallender 2002). The section recorded showed that the earliest deposits as comprising re-deposited clay, suggesting a 5m-wide bank. The two layers overlying the re-deposited clay suggested the *burh* bank was re-constructed on its N side and possibly filling a ditch. However, whilst multiple phases were recorded, no datable material was recovered.

A second watching brief in 2007 revealed a section of Saxon *burh* bank previously observed during construction of steps and the upper playground area in 1999-2001. A further watching brief undertaken by Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service in 2009 at Winchcombe Primary School (GHER Nos. 33563; 33564) revealed an undated posthole near to two 11th-12th century ditches. An undated trackway was also recorded.

These watching briefs form part of a series of interventions from the late 19th-century onwards, which, in addition to 8th-11th-century Saxon pottery, including limestone tempered wares of the 10th to 11th centuries, also recovered artefactual evidence for Romano-British activity in the form of pottery sherds, including Samian and other Romano-British red-wares.

5 Methodology

The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014), *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Lee 2015).

5.1 Trenching and Access Pits

Tarmac and concrete surfaces were initially removed using a hydraulic breaker, the ground was then removed under archaeological supervision in level spits using a back-acting toothless bucket down to the first significant archaeological horizon or to the planned depths of the groundworks, whichever was encountered first.

Archaeological deposits were not removed by machine except by agreement with the principal archaeologist. Potentially significant deposits were not removed by machine before their character was reasonably understood.

5.2 Recording

A full written, graphic and photographic record was made in accordance with BA's *Archaeological Field Recording Manual* (2017) and included:

- A standard numbered context record for each stratigraphic unit encountered.
- A location plan tied into Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid data. Contractor regulatory conditions precluded entry to trenching in order to undertake detailed recording.
- A high-resolution digital photographic record was made. Photographs contained appropriate scales and were indexed and cross-referenced to written site records. Details concerning subject and direction of view were maintained in a photographic register and on a photograph board, indexed by frame number.
- Sections were produced on gridded, archive-stable polyester film at a scale of 1:10. All drawings were numbered and listed in a drawing register, these drawing numbers being cross-referenced to written site records.

6 Results

6.1 Area A: Hailes Street/High Street & North Street junction

Item	Context No.	Date	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	0001	Modern.	Surface.	Road/pavement surface material.	Tarmac & aggregate; 0.10-0.23m deep. Overlying (0002), (0007), (0014).	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	0002	Modern.	Spread/surface.	Foundation for road surface/service backfill.	Firm but poorly consolidated orange sandy gravel; 0.04-0.26m deep. Underlying (0001), overlying (0003), (0011).	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	0003	Modern.	Fill.	Fill of service trenching [0004].	Very compact light greyish-brown silty sand & well-mixed stone; >1.00m depth. Underlying (0002), fills [0004].	-	✓	✓	CBM	-	True depth not reached. Finds probably residual.
4	0004	Modern.	Cut.	Service trenching.	(Not seen in plan); sides steep to vertical. Cuts (0006).	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	0005	-	Geological horizon.	Natural.	Natural clays. Underlying (0006).	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	0006	C18.	Deposit.	Made-ground.	Very firm dark grey/black silty clayey sand; occasional mixed stone; up to 0.30m deep. Cut by [0004], [0013]. Overlying (0005), (0012).	-	✓	✓	CBM and slag.	-	Abraded pottery suggests redeposited material.
7	0007	C19.	Deposit.	Consolidation layer/older pavement.	Very firm greyish-white limestone rubble; <22cm in size; 0.11m deep. Underlying (0001), overlying (0008).	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	0008	C19.	Deposit.	Made-ground.	Soft/friable mid greyish-brown sandy loam; occasional small limestone pieces (<2cm); 0.21m deep. Underlying (0007), overlying (0009).	-	-	-	-	-	-

Item	Context No.	Date	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
9	0009	C19.	Deposit.	Made-ground/ consolidation layer.	Very firm greyish-white limestone rubble (<6cm); 0.03m deep. Overlying (0010), underlying (0008).	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	0010	C19.	Deposit.	Made-ground.	Soft/friable mid greyish-brown sandy loam, occasional small limestone pieces (<2cm); >0.23m deep. Underlying (0009).	-	-	-	Pipe stem, CBM	-	Actual depth not reached.
11	0011	C18 or later.	Structure.	Possible culvert.	Masonry; aligned NE/SW; roughly dressed; size of materials: 270mm x 240mm x 70mm. Fills [0013], truncated by [0004], underlying (0002).	-	-	-	-	-	Limestone uprights only visible.
12	0012	Unknown	Deposit.	Possible geological horizon.	Very firm orange grey clayey sandy gravel; >0.49m depth. Underlying (0006).	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	0013	C18 or later	Cut.	Cut for culvert (0011).	(Not seen in plan); base flat (in section); 0.53-0.76m deep. Cuts (0006), filled by (0011).	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	0014	C18 or later.	Surface.	Earlier road surface.	Compact light orangey-grey sandstone & limestone rubble & coarse sands; max. 0.34m depth. Underlying (0001), overlying (0015).	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	0015	C18 or later.	Deposit.	Made-ground.	Very firm dark orangey-grey stony silty sand; frequent well-mixed stone; >0.15m depth. Underlying (0014).	-	✓	-	-	-	Contained C18 slipware.

6.2 Discussion

The modern road surface (0001) sealed a series of deposits associated with modern services (0002) and (0003).

The service trenching [0004] cut through to the geological horizon, (0005), (0012), and truncated an earlier masonry culvert, (0011)/[0013], which, in turn, truncated made-ground deposit (0006) (*Plate 1*).

Elsewhere, the road surface (0001) sealed earlier stone road-surfacing (0014), which sealed made-ground deposit (0015) (*Plate 2*), which contained 18th century Staffordshire slip ware (*Appendix 1*). The modern pavement (of similar tarmac construction to the road (0001)) sealed a series of deposits - (0007), (0008), (0009) and (0010) - which appeared to comprise made-ground dating to the 19th century (*Plate 3*).



Plate 1: NW-facing trench section showing stone-lined culvert (0011)/[0013], sealing made ground (0006).



Plate 2: NW-facing section showing stone surface (0014), sealing made-ground (0015).



Plate 3: View NE showing deposits (0007), (0008), (0009) and (0010,) which appeared to represent made-ground deposits of 19th -century date.

6.3 Area B: North Street/Back Lane junction

Item	Context No.	Date	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	1001	Modern	Surface	Road & pavement surface	Tarmac & aggregate; 0.10-0.28m deep. Overlying (1002), (1006).	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	1002	Modern	Deposit	Fill of service trench [1004]	Redeposited & imported materials. Underlying (1001).	-	-	-	-	-	Group number for all modern service cut deposits.
3	1003	Modern	Cut	Service trenches	Seen to truncate (1004) (1005) (1006) (1007) (1009).	-	-	-	-	-	Group number for to all modern service cuts.
4	1004	-	Geological horizon	Natural	Firm clay; occasional degraded calcareous stones. Underlying (1005) (1006), cut by [1003].	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	1005	C18 or later	Surface	Older pavement & road surface	Sandstone; rectangular cut slabs in sandy gravel; 400 × 330 × 120mm. Cut by [1003]. Overlying (1004).	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	1006	C18 or later	Surface	Older road surface	Very compact light yellowish-brown well-mixed limestone rubble; 0.21m deep. Underlying (1001). Overlying (1004), cut by [1003].	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	1007	C18 or later	Deposit	Backfill sealing culvert (1008)	Firm dark greyish-blue redeposited natural clays; concentrations of orange-brown sandy gravels; >0.28m deep, cut by [1003], overlying (1008).	-	✓	-	CBM	-	-
8	1008	C18 or later	Structure	Culvert	Masonry; aligned NE/SW; roughly dressed sandstone slabs; size of materials: 487 × 160mm - width unknown. Underlying (1007), cut by [1003].	-	-	-	-	-	Only capping stones exposed.

Item	Context No.	Date	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
9	1009	C18 or later	Structure	Culvert	Masonry; roughly dressed sandstone slabs; two uprights and one lintel stone; 430 × 540 × 180mm.	-	-	-	-	-	Heavily truncated by [1003].

The modern road surface (1001) sealed a series of modern services, grouped together as [1003]/(1002), and were seen to cut through to the geological horizon (1004) (*Plate 4*). Along North Street these services were seen to heavily truncate earlier stone pavement (1005) (*Plate 5*) and a possible rubble road surface (1006) (*Plate 6*), both of which appear to seal the geological horizon (1004).

Excavations along Back Lane revealed the capping stones of an 18th/ 19th -century masonry culvert (1008) and its sealing deposit (1007) consisting of redeposited natural and containing 18th -century ceramics (*Plate 7*; *Appendix 1*). This was seen to be sealed by the road surface [1001] and heavily truncated by modern services [1003].

Within the main junction between the roads, another stone culvert (1009) of an unknown date was revealed, and seen to be heavily truncated by modern services [1003] (*Plate 8*).



Plate 4: North Street: Extent of modern services [1003] running parallel and perpendicular to trench and pits. NE-facing section.



Plate 5: North Street: Earlier stone pavement (1005) sealing geological horizon (1004). SE-facing section.



Plate 6: North Street: Possible rubble road surface (1006) sealing geological horizon (1004). SW-facing section.



Plate 7: Back Lane: capping stones of 18th/ 19th century masonry culvert (1008) and sealing deposit (1007). NW-facing section.



Plate 8: Road junction, masonry culvert (1009) of unknown date. View NW.

7 Discussion

Within both Area A and Area B, the main trench and access pits were dug on top of and adjacent to existing services. As a result, many of the deposits encountered along the length of the groundworks area were associated with service-laying and backfilling activity. Where older deposits were encountered, the limited extent of investigative work reflects the substantial contractor Health & Safety considerations relating to work around live services and associated access constraints.

7.1 Area A

Area A was focused on the junction of Hailes Street/High Street and North Street, the site of the medieval market, an area been subject to continual redevelopment since the medieval period (GCC 2007), this being reflected in the nature of archaeological deposition in this area.

Deposit (0010), encountered outside No 8 High Street, appeared to be comprise made-ground containing redeposited waste material, including post-medieval tile and an 18th century pipe-stem (*Appendix 1*). This was sealed by similar deposits (0009/0008/0007), likely formed as a result of works to the property and continued development of the street.

Within the main trench, at a depth of 0.80m, an extensive deposit of heavily truncated 18th -century waste material (0006) was encountered, which was seen to contain abraded, and presumably redeposited, 17th and 18th -century pottery, CBM and slag (*Appendix 1*).

Cutting made-ground deposit (0006) was a potential stone-lined culvert [0013]/(0011), formed of roughly dressed limestone slabs. Unfortunately, only one stone face was seen in section, which appeared to be truncated by later services [0004].

North Street likewise only revealed deposits associated with post-medieval development. An earlier sandstone and limestone rubble road surface (0014) was sealed by the existing tarmac surface (0001), beneath which was a redeposited stony silty sand deposit (0015) containing a single piece of 18th -century Staffordshire slipware (*Appendix 1*).

7.2 Area B

Area B, at the junction of North Street and Back Lane, contained evidence for two alternative alignments for the *burh* defences, part of which survive along the southern extent of Back Lane (Amey 2016).

Unfortunately, no evidence of the bank or ditch were seen during the course of the groundworks. The majority of the groundworks within the area comprised small access pits for pipe-bursting and did not allow the full course of North Street to be observed. Additionally, the watercourse, a tributary of the River Isbourne,

which the defences are considered likely to follow (GCC 2007), has been channeled through a concrete culvert and watercourse management works undertaken from at least the 19th century must be assumed to have truncated any surviving features of the earthworks.

Much like Area A, evidence for an earlier (18th/19th century) stone pavement (1005) (*Plate 5*) and a rubble road surface (1006) (*Plate 6*) were partially observed, as was a masonry culvert system, these features being indicative of continued and intensive post-medieval development activity.

Along Back Lane, the capping stones of an 18th or 19th -century masonry culvert (1008) were revealed at the very base of the pipe-trench, consisting of roughly dressed sandstone slabs sealed by a mixed deposit (1007) of redeposited natural and occasional 18th or 19th -century debris (CBM and pottery) (*Plate 7*).

Within the main junction between the roads, another masonry culvert (1009), of unknown date, was revealed and seen to be heavily truncated by the modern services [1003] (*Plate 9*).

8 Conclusion

Consistent with an urban environment, the archaeology revealed a sequence of general disturbance across the entirety of the groundworks area, this reflecting continued development from the medieval period onwards, with further significant levels of intrusion relating to utility works, road-construction activity and subsequent maintenance and repairs.

The use of access pits and limited open-cut trenching targeting existing services reduced opportunities to observe isolated features or finds, as well as restricting investigation of deposits encountered.

The only archaeological finds of any significance comprised residual material from made-ground and backfill deposits associated with a post-medieval culvert system.

No evidence for the medieval marketplace was revealed in area A but the extent of the late medieval structures within the area suggests potential for the discovery of additional, possibly more ephemeral features or residual finds during future development activity.

Area B similarly showed no evidence indicative of defensive works and it is likely any such evidence has been heavily impacted by post-medieval activity associated with culverting the River Isbourne.

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11 Appendix 1: Ceramic Assessment

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Border Archaeology*

A total of 15 sherds of pottery (181.1g) were recovered during mains replacement work at the junction of North Street and Hailes Street. All dated to the post-medieval period and consisted of utilitarian domestic wares. Other finds from the same contexts included ceramic building material.

The majority of the pottery present (10 sherds) was red firing Welsh Borderlands ware, material which was produced at a number of kilns in the border area. With the exception of a single rim (22.7g) and a base, this material consisted of body sherds with a clear lead internal glaze and all were much abraded, suggesting that the contexts from which the material was recovered may represent secondary deposition.

11.1 Method

The pottery was washed and sorted by fabric and form according to work by Vince (1985, 2004).

11.2 The Pottery

11.2.1 Area A

11.2.1.1 Context (0003) (fill of service trenching [0004]).

A single non-diagnostic body sherd (10.9g) of Welsh Borderlands ware was present, with an internal clear lead glaze. The nearest kiln producing this material was probably at Newent some 32km away. The rim was a simple 'flower-pot' type (Vince 1985, *fig.* 55.1).

11.2.1.2 (Context 0006) (made ground)

Wt. (g)	Date	NoSh.	Comments
74.2	C17 to C18	7	Welsh Borderland ware.
22.7	C17 to C18	1	Rim as above, diameter 24cm. Internal clear lead glaze
7.3	m/l C18	1	Staffordshire coarse ware, mixed red and yellow clay
8.7	C18	1	Pulled spout of a jug with white slip and incised decoration. Decoration suggests S Somerset/N Devon ware; the sherd was probably burnt post-breakage

Table 1: Summary of the pottery from context (0006)

The majority of the pottery recovered from the site came from context (0006). A single sherd, which appeared to have been burnt post-breakage, was probably of South Somerset/North Devon type ware and

consisted of the spout of a jug with white slip stripes and an incised line at the rim. An internal glaze was also present.

The base of a mug or tankard in Staffordshire ware is dated to the mid-to-late 18th century. The sherd had a red slip underlying a glossy brown glaze. The fabric consisted of mixed red and yellow clay.

The Welsh Borderlands ware from the same deposit included the simple rim of a jar with an internal clear glaze. The remaining sherds in this fabric were non-diagnostic body sherds.

11.2.1.3 Context (0010) (made ground)

No pottery was present in context (0010), with a fragment of later post-medieval tile – possibly quarry tile – and a piece of machine-made brick found in this context, together with a fragment of clay tobacco pipe.

11.2.1.4 Context (0015) (made ground)

Wt. (g)	Date	NoSh.	Comments
25.1	C18	1	Staffordshire slipware. Combed slip

Table 2: Summary of the pottery from context (0015)

11.2.2 Area B

11.2.2.1 Context (1007) (backfill sealing culvert [1008])

Wt (g)	Date	NoSh.	Comments
7.2	C19	1	Transfer printed ware. Willow pattern.
7.1	C19	1	Pearlware
28.8	C17 to C18	2	Welsh Borderlands ware including base of jar with internal clear lead glaze

Table 3: Summary of the pottery from context (1007)

11.3 Discussion

The sherd of Staffordshire coarse ware from (0006) was noticeably less abraded than the Welsh Borderlands ware from this deposit, which may reflect its more recent date. It is also possible, however, that it indicates the final deposition of the latter, in the middle to later part of the 18th century. The extremely abraded condition of the Welsh Borderland wares implies that originally the sherds had been dumped on a surface or in a midden where they had been subjected to considerable damage post-deposition.

Pottery from Area B included a sherd of transfer-printed ware, dating to the very end of the 18th or the 19th centuries. A sherd of pearlware (18th century or later) with a deckled blue decoration was recovered from the same deposit.

As with material from contexts (0006) and (0010), the pottery from Area B showed a fairly wide date-range suggesting a mixed deposit.

11.4 Assessment

In addition to the pottery, finds from the contexts included medieval or later post-medieval CBM. In view of the probably redeposited nature of the material, and the 18th century or later date of deposition, it is not considered that further work is necessary.

11.5 References

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