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archaeology & built heritage



## Archaeological Field Evaluation

On behalf of

**GALLAGHER  
ESTATES** | Part of the  
L&Q Group

Concerning

**Stockwell Lane Extension**

**MK Eastern Expansion Area**

**Milton Keynes**

**MK17 8LJ**

February 2019



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## Report Specification

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Joe France BSc PCIfA

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Holly Litherland BA

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**Edit:**

Rachel English MA MSc ACIfA

**OS Licence Number:**

100055758

**Final Edit & Approval:**

George Children MA MCIfA

**Date:**

February 2019



## GENERAL ENQUIRIES

**e:** [info@borderarchaeology.com](mailto:info@borderarchaeology.com)

**t:** 01568 610101

### Administration

The Plaza, Owen Way, Leominster Enterprise Park, Leominster, HR6 0LA

### Post-Ex Facility – Leominster

Telephone 01568 610101

Email [postex@borderarchaeology.com](mailto:postex@borderarchaeology.com)

### Post-Ex Facility – Milton Keynes

Telephone 01908 533233

Email [postexmk@borderarchaeology.com](mailto:postexmk@borderarchaeology.com)

## REGIONAL OFFICES

### Milton Keynes

Common Farm  
Calverton Lane  
Milton Keynes, MK19 6EU  
t: 01908 533233

### Leeds

No1 Leeds  
26 Whitehall Road  
Leeds, LS12 1BE  
t: 0113 8187959

### Shoreditch

The Old Fire Station,  
140 Tabernacle Street,  
London, EC2A 4SD  
t: 02033 015670

### Newport

Merlin House  
No1 Langstone Business Park  
Newport, NP18 2HJ  
t: 01633 415339

### Bristol

First Floor,  
Citibase Bristol Aztec West,  
Aztec Centre, Aztec West  
Almondsbury,  
Bristol, BS32 4TD  
t: 0117 9110767

### Winchester

Basepoint Business Centre,  
Winnal Valley Road,  
Winchester, SO23 0LD  
t: 01962 832777



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## 1 Non-Technical Summary

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*This Report presents the results of a programme of Archaeological Field Evaluation on behalf of Gallagher Estates in an area of land adjacent to Stockwell Lane (SLE18), which forms part of the Milton Keynes Eastern Area Expansion (MKEAE).*

*Five trenches were excavated, within which no features or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered.*

*No mitigation will be proposed for this field.*

## 2 Introduction

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Border Archaeology (BA) was instructed by Gallagher Estates (GE) to carry out a programme of Archaeological Field Evaluation (AFE) in an area of land adjacent to Stockwell Lane (SLE18) and forming part of the Milton Keynes Eastern Area Expansion.

Five 10m × 2m trenches constituting approximately 3% of the proposed development area, were opened between the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> July 2018 (*fig. 1*).

This report has been prepared for submission to Nick Crank BSc MCI<sup>f</sup>A, Senior Archaeological Officer for Milton Keynes Council (SAOMKC), and GE.

## 3 Site Description

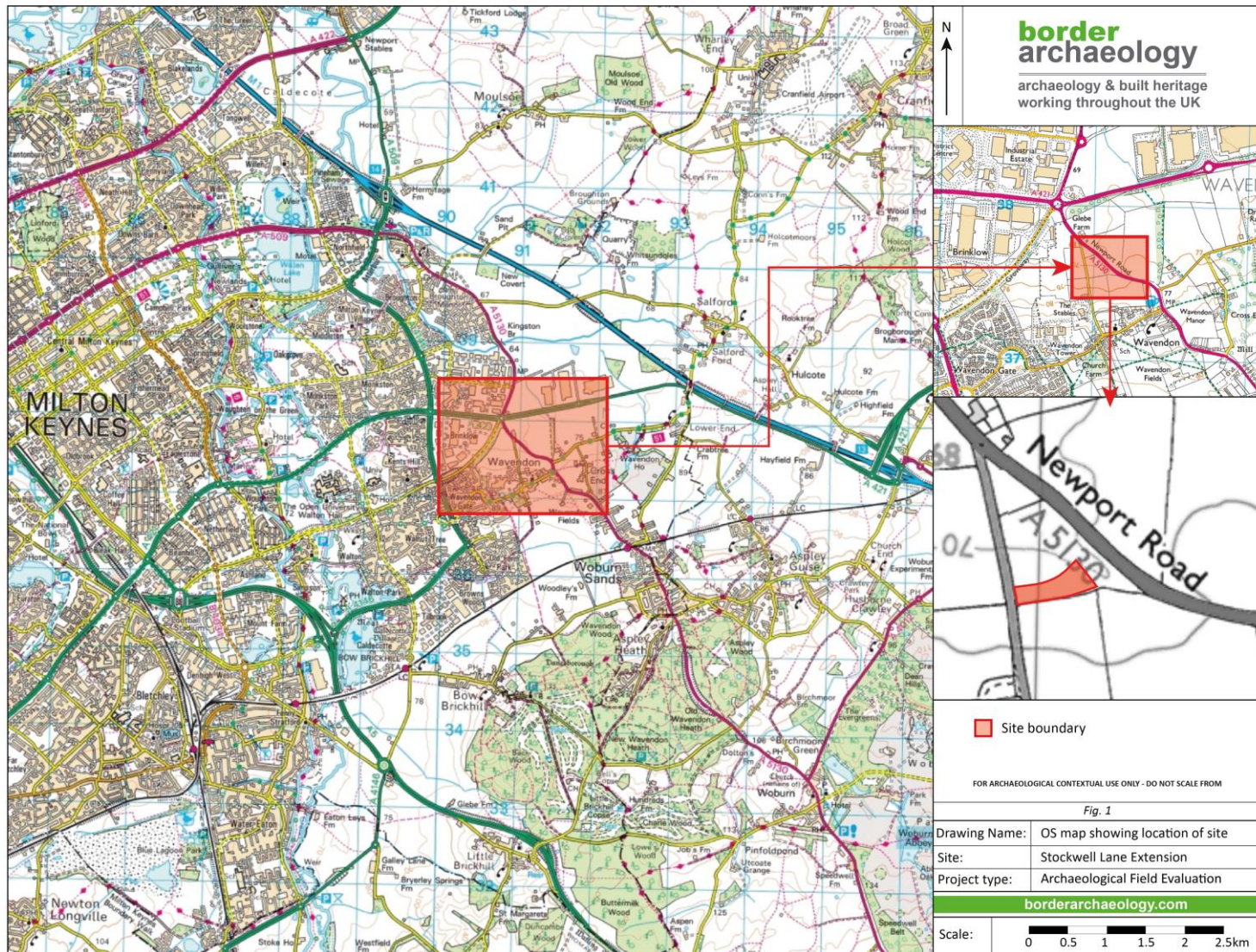
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The site lies SW of, and adjacent to the A5130 Newport Road and to the E of Stockwell Road and forms part of the proposed Newport Road Junction within the Milton Keynes Eastern Expansion Area. The site encompasses an area of approximately 3,464m<sup>2</sup> (*fig. 1*).

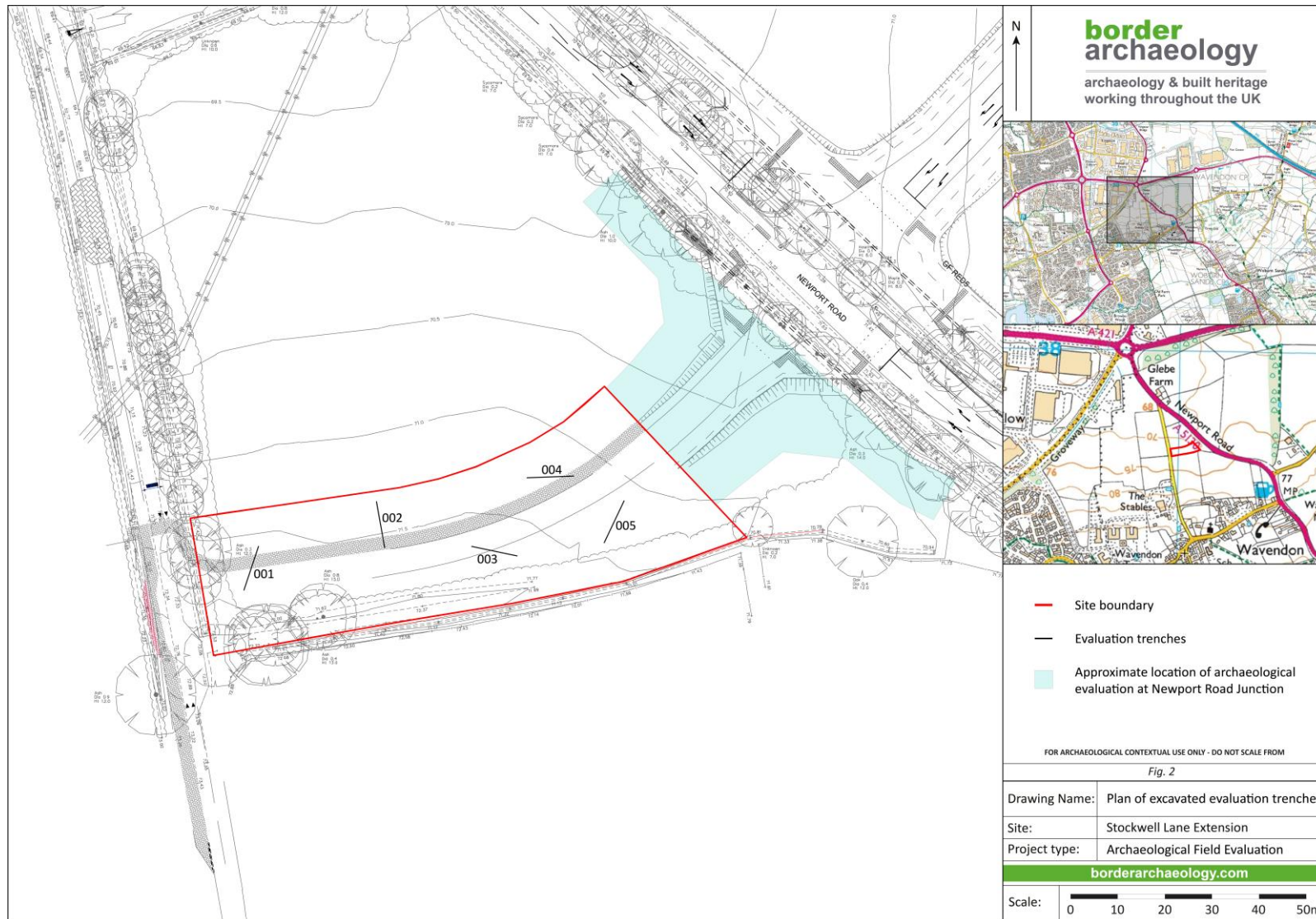
### 3.1 Soils & Geology

This area occupies a tract of typical calcareous pelosols of the EVESHAM 2 series (411b), which may be characterised as slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged calcareous clayey soils with some slowly permeable non-calcareous clayey soils and fine loamy or fine silty over clayey soils, the underlying geology comprising Jurassic and Cretaceous clay (SSEW 1983).









## 4 Aims & Objectives

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The research aims and objectives for this programme of work were informed by previous archaeological interventions within the immediate vicinity of the site together with the *Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment: Resource Assessments and Research Agendas* (STRF) (Hey & Hind 2014).

The overall aim of the AFE was to characterise, as fully as possible within the parameters of the project, the extant archaeological resource as established within the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (hereafter referred to as 'WSI') (BA 2018a). This is to inform any potential mitigation strategy with full reference to the relevant research priorities outlined in the *Solent-Thames Research Framework* (STRF) (Hey & Hind 2014).

## 5 Brief Historical & Archaeological Background

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A detailed archaeological and historical assessment was compiled by BA (2017a & 2018a) and previously submitted in connection with the programme of work for Stockwell Lane Extension and with the programme of AFE undertaken at the adjacent Newport Road junction site, to the immediate ENE of this site. A synopsis of the archaeological background is outlined below:

In 2017, AFE (BA 2018b) at the Newport Road junction site (NGR: SP 91085 37605), situated to the SW of the A5130 Newport Road, MK17 8LJ (nearest postcode), was undertaken. Of the five evaluation trenches opened, only Trench 003 revealed a feature of potential archaeological interest, which, although subject to disturbance from nearby rooting, was interpreted as a hedgerow [3004].

Slight evidence of hammerscale was also uncovered within this trench, and although it may be an indication that ironworking, such as smithing, was carried out in the vicinity, no direct evidence for such activity was recovered from within the evaluation area. With the exception of an agricultural furrow in Trench 004, most of the features encountered were interpreted as deriving from rooting or suspected rooting, which was further validated by the results of palaeoenvironmental sampling, demonstrating that the features were of limited archaeological value.

A small number of pottery sherds were recovered from areas of rooting or suspected rooting and dated to the Romano-British period (late 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD), although these finds attest only to the presence of human activity within the vicinity.

In 2016, BA also undertook AFE at Glebe Farm Land Parcel A (centered on NGR: 491042 237871) situated to the immediate NE of the A5130 Newport Road. This revealed evidence of occupation dating from the Late Iron Age to the Early Romano-British period. Features identified consisted of a cremation burial, a stone spread and pits, together with linear and curvilinear ditches, which probably formed field boundaries.

The archaeology further indicated widespread abandonment had occurred around the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD when ditches were infilled and the land probably returned to a more pastoral use. No dating evidence was recovered to suggest



that any land management changes were enacted until a ridge and furrow field system was established sometime during the medieval to post-medieval period.

## 6 Methodology

The programme of AFE was mandated by the WSI (BA 2018a) and the works were carried out in accordance with practices set out in *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014b); BA's *Archaeological Field Recording Manual* (2017b) and with other accepted standards of professional and ethical conduct, such as *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Lee 2015), and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014c). BA adheres to the requirements of the *ClfA Code of conduct* (2014a).

ClfA (2014b, 4) defines an archaeological field evaluation as follows:

### **The Standard**

*An archaeological field evaluation will determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the nature of the archaeological resource within a specified area using appropriate methods and practises. These will satisfy the stated aims on the project and comply with the Code of conduct and other relevant regulations of ClfA.*

### **Definition of field evaluation**

*The definition of archaeological field evaluation is a limited programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. If such archaeological remains are present, field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, and enables an assessment of their significance in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate.*

### 6.1 Site Specifics

Trench positions were determined by survey grade GPS with reference to the trench plan allocated in the WSI (BA 2018a; *fig. 2*). The WSI sought to achieve at least a 3% sample of the total site area of approximately 3,464m<sup>2</sup> through regular trench placement.

As outlined in the WSI (BA 2018a), five trenches were set out, each measuring 10m × 2m, equating to approximately 100m<sup>2</sup> of trenching. The trenches were excavated by a 360° tracked machine equipped with a grading (toothless) bucket. Under archaeological supervision, machine excavation was undertaken until the first significant archaeological horizon or geological natural was reached. Where archaeology was present, machining ceased and archaeological excavation proceeded by hand.

## 6.2 Recording

This programme of works was recorded under the site code SLE18. An OASIS online record has been initiated and the Oasis number assigned is: borderar1-330813.

Full written, drawn and photographic records were made in accordance with BA's *Archaeological Field Recording Manual* (2017b). In the absence of archaeological deposits, the written record comprised a *pro-forma* trench recording sheet and representative section for each excavated trench.

The drawn record was produced on gridded, archive stable polyester film. Sections were illustrated at 1:10, feature plans were illustrated at 1:20 and trench plans were illustrated at 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate. Temporary benchmarks (TBM) were established at appropriate locations and plans, elevations and sections contain grid and level information relative to OS data. All drawings were numbered and listed in a drawing register, these drawing numbers being cross-referenced to written site records.

A photographic record of all stratigraphic units was made using a high-resolution digital camera, comprising photographs of archaeological features and appropriate groups of features. An appropriate scale was included in each photograph and 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, in addition to photo boards. A representative photographic record of the progress of the archaeological work was also made.

## 6.3 Palaeoenvironmental/ palaeoeconomic sampling

Samples for palaeoenvironmental/palaeoeconomic purposes were not collected as no archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

## 7 Results

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No features or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered within any of the five excavated trenches.

All trenches exhibited a common stratigraphic sequence, with a dark brown-grey silty clay/clayey silt topsoil containing a large quantity of well-mixed modern domestic refuse, sealing a mid yellow-brown silty clay subsoil overlying the natural substrate formed of a yellow-grey silty clay. The natural substrate was typically encountered at a depth of c. 0.45-0.70m (*Plate 1*). The only find of note was a small copper-alloy (Cu) button with an embossed portrait of a hound on its front, recovered from the topsoil in Trench 001.

Ceramic field drains were observed across the site and were generally sealed by the subsoil and cut into the natural substrate. For this reason, they often appeared in plan.

Tabulated results of all trenching are presented shown in Appendix 1.



With the exception of a small area of rooting within Trench 001, none of the extensive rooting features or agricultural features recorded to the immediate ENE of this site in the adjacent Newport Road site (BA 2018b) were encountered.



*Plate 1: WSW-facing section of Trench 002*

## 8 Conclusion

No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the AFE and therefore no further archaeological investigation is proposed for this site.

The negative results of the evaluation should not, however, be seen to reflect the archaeological potential of the overall area. Previous archaeological evaluations and subsequent excavation (ongoing) at Glebe Farm to the immediate NE of the site have revealed evidence for extensive activity from the Iron Age through to the Late Medieval period, in addition to some small-scale evidence for early Romano-British activity in the vicinity of the adjoining Newport Road junction site.

## 9 Copyright

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## 11 Appendix 1: Context Tabulation

Trench	Context No	Type	F/B	F/O	Description	Interpretation	Finds	Sample No	Provisional Date
001	(001001)	Deposit	-	-	Friable dark brown-grey silty clay; occasional stones, charcoal & modern domestic waste; 0.34-0.40m deep.	Topsoil	Cu Button	-	Modern
	(001002)	Deposit	-	-	Moderately compacted mid yellow-brown clayey silt; occasional stones; 0.42-0.46m deep.	Subsoil	-	-	Modern
	(001003)	Deposit	-	-	Firmly compacted light yellow-grey silty clay; frequent chalk inclusions; overlain by orange sands.	Natural	-	-	-
	(001004)	Fill	-	[001005]	Friable dark orange-grey silty clay; occasional charcoal; at least 0.7m wide; 0.16m deep.	Fill associated with rooting [001005]	-	-	Unknown
	[001005]	Cut	(001004)	-	Not seen in plan; moderate sides, concave base; at least 0.7m wide; 0.16m deep.	Rooting	-	-	Unknown
002	(002001)	Deposit	-	-	Friable dark brown-grey silty clay; occasional stones, charcoal & modern domestic waste; 0.29-0.4m deep.	Topsoil	-	-	Modern
	(002002)	Deposit	-	-	Moderately compacted mid yellow-brown clayey silt; occasional stones; 0.16-0.2m deep.	Subsoil	-	-	Modern
	(002003)	Deposit	-	-	Firmly compacted light yellow-grey silty clay; frequent chalk inclusions; overlain by orange sands.	Natural	-	-	-
003	(003001)	Deposit	-	-	Friable dark brown-grey clayey silt; occasional stones, charcoal & modern domestic waste; 0.24-0.3m deep.	Topsoil	-	-	Modern

	(003002)	Deposit	-	-	Moderately compacted mid yellow-brown silty clay; occasional stones; 0.25-0.33m deep.	Subsoil	-	-	Modern
	(003003)	Deposit	-	-	Firmly compacted light yellow-grey silty clay; frequent chalk inclusions; overlain by orange sands.	Natural	-	-	-
<b>004</b>	(004001)	Deposit	-	-	Friable dark brown-grey clayey silt; occasional stones, charcoal & modern domestic waste; 0.29-0.37m deep.	Topsoil	-	-	Modern
	(004002)	Deposit	-	-	Moderately compacted mid yellow-brown silty clay; occasional stones; 0.15-0.2m deep.	Subsoil	-	-	Modern
	(004003)	Deposit	-	-	Firmly compacted light yellow-grey silty clay; frequent chalk inclusions; overlain by orange sands.	Natural	-	-	-
<b>005</b>	(005001)	Deposit	-	-	Friable dark brown-grey clayey silt; occasional stones, charcoal & modern domestic waste; 0.25-0.28m deep.	Topsoil	-	-	Modern
	(005002)	Deposit	-	-	Moderately compacted mid yellow-brown silty clay; occasional stones; 0.28-0.30m deep.	Subsoil	-	-	Modern
	(005003)	Deposit	-	-	Firmly compacted light yellow-grey silty clay; frequent chalk inclusions; overlain by orange sands.	Natural	-	-	-



## 12 Appendix 2: Metal Find

*Chris Faine MSc ACIfA  
Border Archaeology*

### 12.1 Copper-alloy button

(001001). Copper-alloy (Cu) cast livery button with separate shank. Diameter: 24mm Weight: 4.5g. Portrait of Talbot (hound) facing left with a border comprising a series of lozenges. Post-Medieval. Most likely 18<sup>th</sup> Century onwards.



*Plate 2: Copper-alloy cast livery button with embossed portrait of a Talbot (hound)*

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Compilation	Joe France BSc PCIfA		
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Artwork	Holly Litherland BA		
Artwork approved	Holly Litherland BA		
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1	Final	February 2019	George Children MA MCIfA