

**Shirebrook Colliery and
Associated Land,
Derbyshire**

**An Archaeological Watching
Brief 2002**

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
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An Archaeological Watching Brief 2002

by
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Shirebrook Colliery and Associated Land, Derbyshire: An Archaeological Watching Brief 2002

1.0 Summary

A watching brief was carried out at Shirebrook colliery and associated land, Derbyshire (NGR SK 5182 6710) in November 2002 by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU), on instruction from G F Tomlinson and Sons Ltd. This followed a desk-based assessment and a programme of trial trenching, including areas outside the scope of the watching brief, which revealed possible prehistoric activity (Williams 2002). The watching brief involved the monitoring of soil stripping along part of the route of the Perimeter Access Road (PAR), in an area identified during the trial trenching as containing features of archaeological interest. The area monitored was entirely stripped of topsoil, but only a limited area was machined down to the natural subsoil or bedrock. No features of archaeological interest were observed during these works.

2.0 Introduction

A watching brief was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit under commission from G F Tomlinson and Sons Ltd. The site was located at Shirebrook Colliery and associated land, Derbyshire (NGR SK 5182 6710; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken in November 2002, in advance of the construction of a Perimeter Access Road (PAR) associated with a residential development. The site has been the subject of a desk based assessment (John Samuels Archaeological Consultants 1999), a geophysical survey (GSB 2000a/b) and an evaluation (Williams 2002), which included other land outside the scope of the watching brief.

3.0 Site location (Fig. 1)

The entire development site comprises approximately 38 ha. of land close to Stinting Lane in Shirebrook, Derbyshire (centred on NGR SK 5182 6710). The watching brief was, however, solely concerned with landtake along the line of the PAR in Field 7 (Fig. 2). The soils of the area comprised shallow, well drained calcareous fine loamy deposits over limestone.

4.0 Archaeological and historical context

The site is located within an area of known archaeological significance. The County Sites and Monuments Record contains reference to the recovery of a small quantity of prehistoric flint waste flakes and the survival of associated burnt material from the proposed development area (SMR 12534 and 12535 respectively) which suggests some prehistoric activity, such as encampments or settlements, within the immediate environs of the proposed development area.

Just outside the proposed development area, an archaeological evaluation at Stinting Lane, Shirebrook during February 1998, was followed by an excavation in July 1998. Both stages of work were carried out by BUFAU ahead of residential development (Hewitson and Mould 1998, Mould 2000). Prior to these projects no below-ground archaeological investigations had been conducted within the proposed development site or within its immediate environs. Following the evaluation, an area excavation identified a small, prehistoric enclosure, with associated pits and post-holes. Despite total sieving of the feature fills, artifacts were scarce and only a small assemblage of flint artifacts was recovered. No chronologically diagnostic flint artefacts were identified and no charred plant remains or molluscs were recovered from the environmental samples.

An archaeological evaluation of part of the proposed development site was carried out in March 2002 (Williams 2002). This included geophysical survey and trial trenching. The geophysical survey identified several possible enclosures, and the trial trenching identified one or more possible enclosures in the north part of the area investigated, away from the line of the PAR. No trace was found of the possible enclosures identified by geophysical survey (GSB 2000a/b). During the evaluation, a total of five trenches were excavated in Field 7. Only two of these trenches contained archaeological features (Trenches 60 and 75, Williams 2000, fig. 2). Trench 60 contained two north-south aligned gullies (F600-1), and Trench 75 contained a single east-west aligned gully (F750). None of these features was associated with any datable artifacts.

5.0 Aims

The watching brief aimed to establish the presence or absence of archaeological deposits and features along the PAR line in Field 7, and to define the nature, extent and significance of any archaeology discovered, in accordance with recommendations contained in the evaluation report (Williams 2002). A Written Scheme of Investigation (BUFAU 2002) for the watching brief was approved by the Local Planning Authority.

6.0 Method

All below ground works associated with PAR construction within Field 7 (Fig. 2) were monitored by a qualified archaeologist. Recording was by means of pre-printed pro-formas for contexts and features, supplemented by scaled plans and sections, monochrome and colour print photography. It was intended that any artifacts be recorded by their context. Subject to the approval of the landowner, it is intended to deposit the watching brief archive with a repository approved by Derbyshire County Council.

7.0 Results

Within Field 7, the whole of the area along the line of the PAR was stripped of topsoil using 360 degree mechanical excavators. At the top of the slope the fissured limestone bedrock (1000) was immediately overlain by the topsoil (1001), a light brown clay-silt, measuring between 0.15-0.3m in depth. Where the PAR crossed natural gradients, and in lowlying areas, the bedrock was overlain by a layer of colluvial light brown clay (1002), measuring up to 0.1m in depth. The colluvium was overlain by the topsoil (1001).

No features of archaeological, or possible archaeological interest were identified, and no artifacts were collected.

8.0 Discussion

No archaeological, or possible archaeological features were identified cutting the bedrock or natural colluvium, within those areas monitored during the construction of the PAR in Field 7. The features identified in Field 7 during the evaluation (Trenches 60 and 75) were cut into bedrock, and were overlain by the colluvium. Since the colluvium was not required to be removed throughout Field 7 during PAR groundworks, it is possible that some archaeological features sealed by the colluvium may not have been exposed by the PAR groundworks in Field 7.

9.0 Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by G F Tomlinson and Sons Ltd. The watching brief was carried out by Kate Bain. and the project was managed by Alex Jones, who edited this report. The illustrations were prepared by Bryony Ryder.

10.0 References

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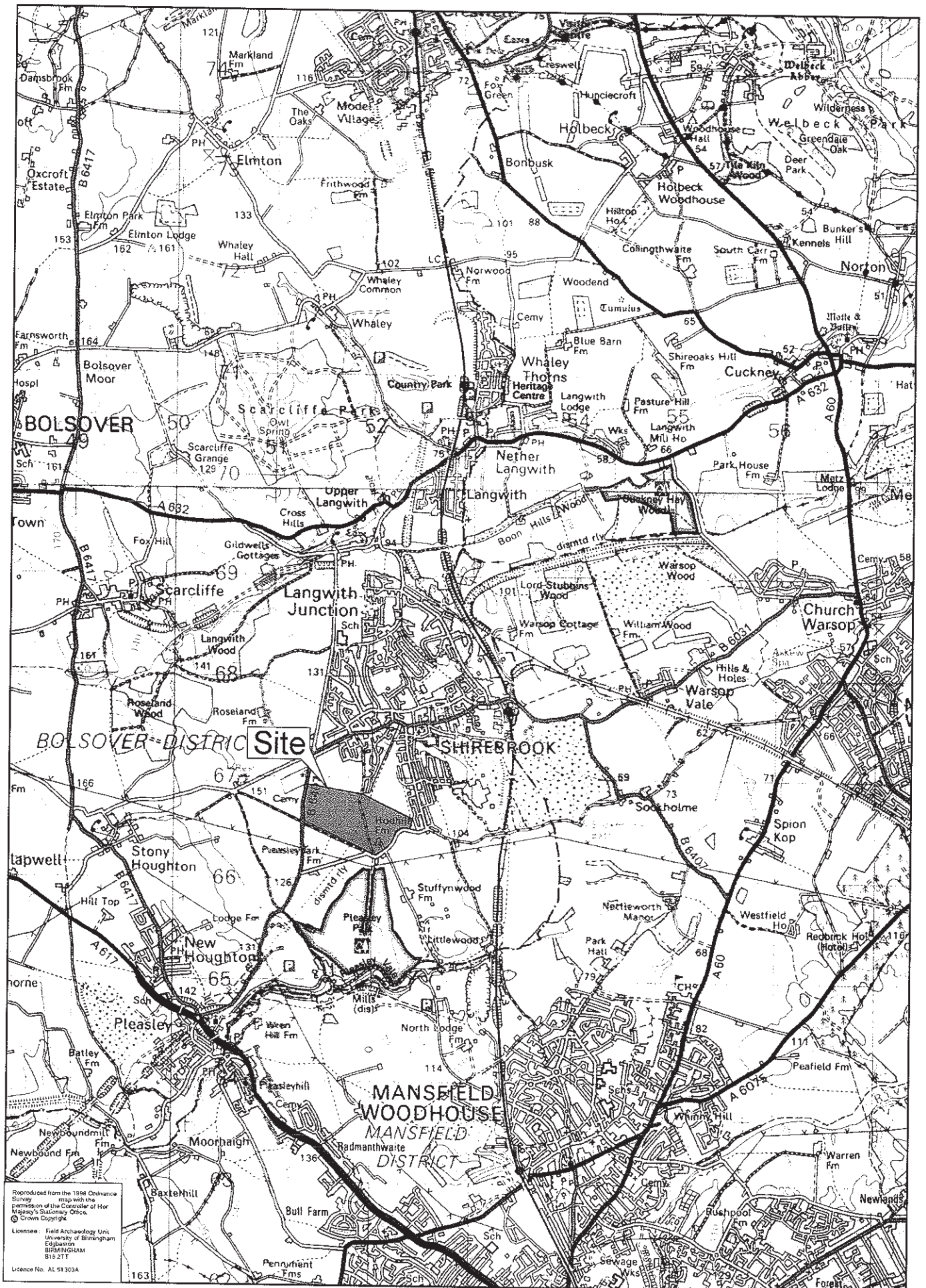


Fig.1

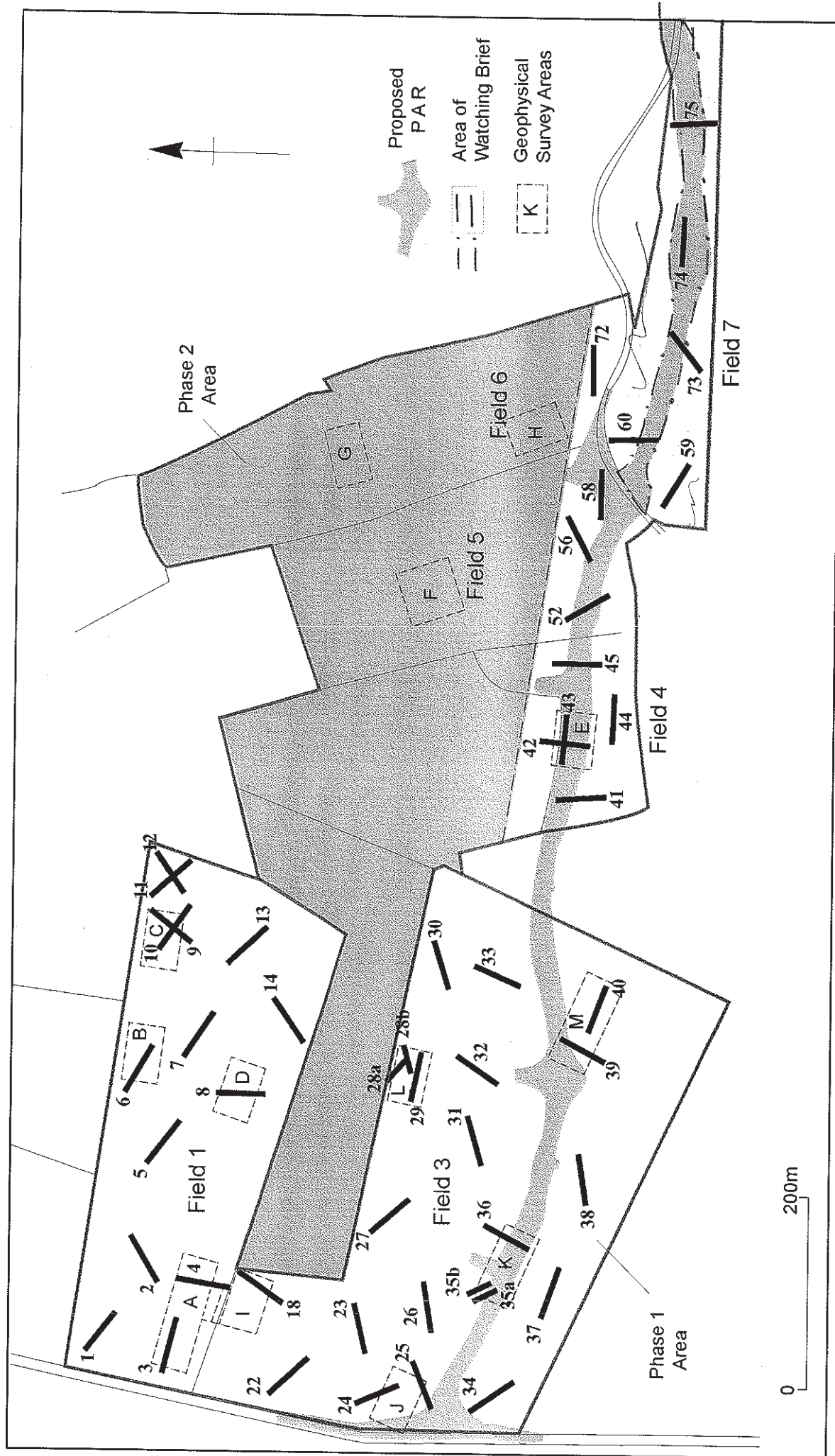


Fig.2