



Northamptonshire Archaeology

An Archaeological Watching Brief at Shawell Quarry Gas
Pipeline Diversion, Shawell, Leicestershire
April 2011
X.A60.2011



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Report 11/98

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QUALITY CONTROL

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SHAWELL GAS PIPELINE DIVERSION

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Shawell Quarry Gas Pipeline Diversion, Shawell, Leicestershire April 2011 X.A60.2011	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in April 2011 to observe the stripping of the gas pipeline diversion for Shawell Quarry, Leicestershire. No archaeological features were present, evidence for medieval agriculture was observed in the form of furrows aligned north west to south east. No artefacts were recovered.	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	Geophysical Survey undertaken by GSB Prospection	
Current Land use	Arable	
Future work	Unknown	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Leicestershire	
Site address	Shawell Quarry, Shawell, Leicestershire	
Study area ha		
OS Easting & Northing	NGR SP528810 to SP 539814	
Height aOD	100-110m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator		
Project Design originator	Sally Randell, Mouchel	
Supervisor	Tim Upson-Smith	
Project Manager	Adam Yates NA, Sally Randell Mouchel	
Sponsor	Mouchel	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	April 2011	
End date	April 2011	
ARCHIVES		Paper
Paper	NA office X.A60.2011	10 watching brief forms and 10 black and white negatives and contact sheet.
Digital	1 Disc containing digital photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Shawell Quarry Gas Pipeline Diversion, Shawell, Leicestershire April 2011 X.A60.2011	
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Fig 2: Plan showing observed furrows

Fig 3: General view of Area 1 looking north-east, showing the furrows

Fig 4: General view of Area 3 looking north-east, showing the furrows

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT
SHAWELL QUARRY GAS PIPELINE DIVERSION,
SHAWELL, LEICESTERSHIRE**

APRIL 2011

X.A60.2011

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in April 2011 to observe the stripping of the gas pipeline diversion for Shawell Quarry, Leicestershire. No archaeological features were present, evidence for medieval agriculture was observed in the form of furrows aligned north-west to south-east. No artefacts were recovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in April 2011 to observe the topsoil strip for the Shawell Quarry gas pipeline diversion route, on land adjacent to Shawell Quarry, Shawell, Leicestershire (between NGR SP528810 to SP 539814, Figs 1 and 2). The work was commissioned by Mouchel, on behalf of National Grid.

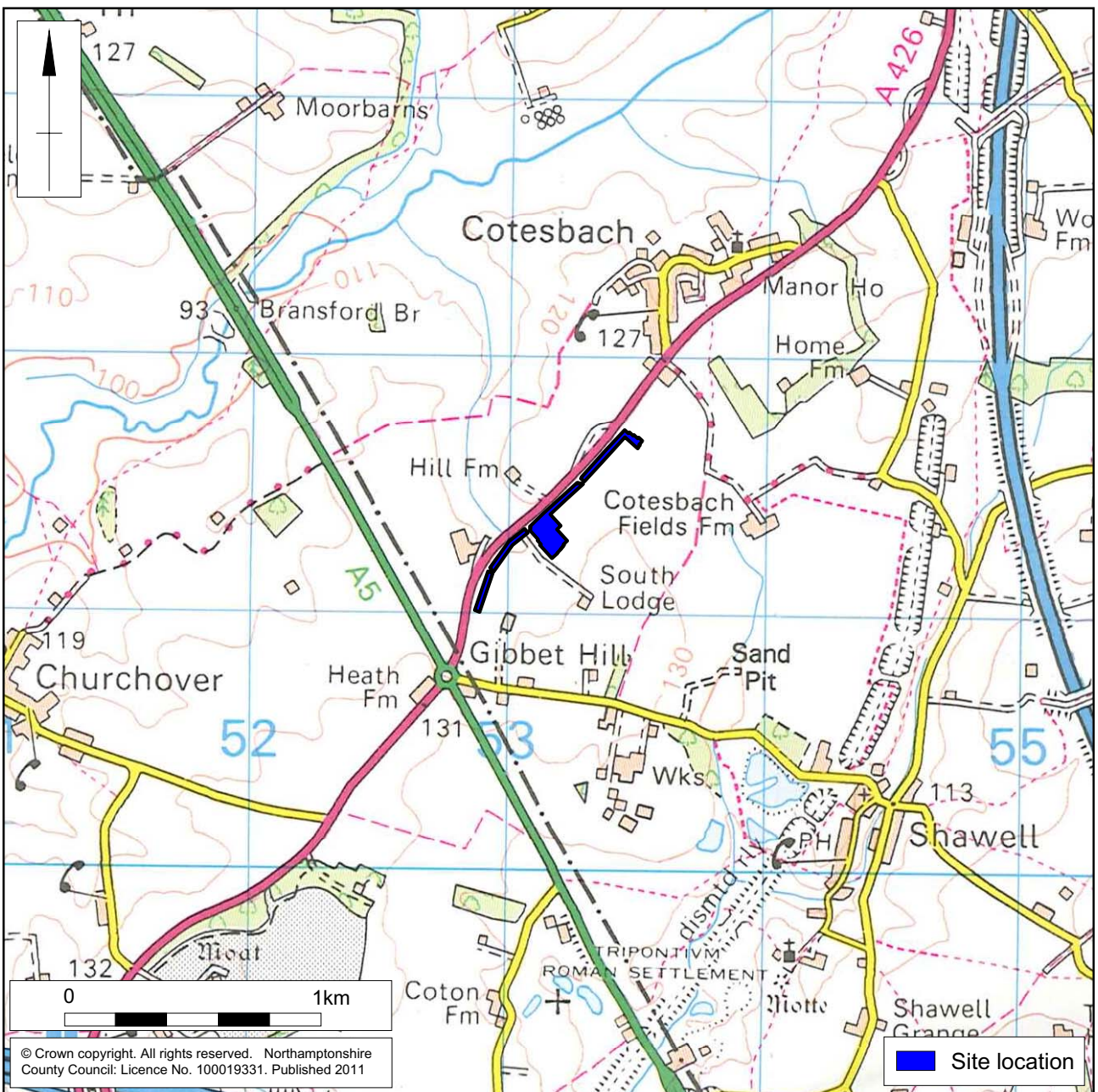
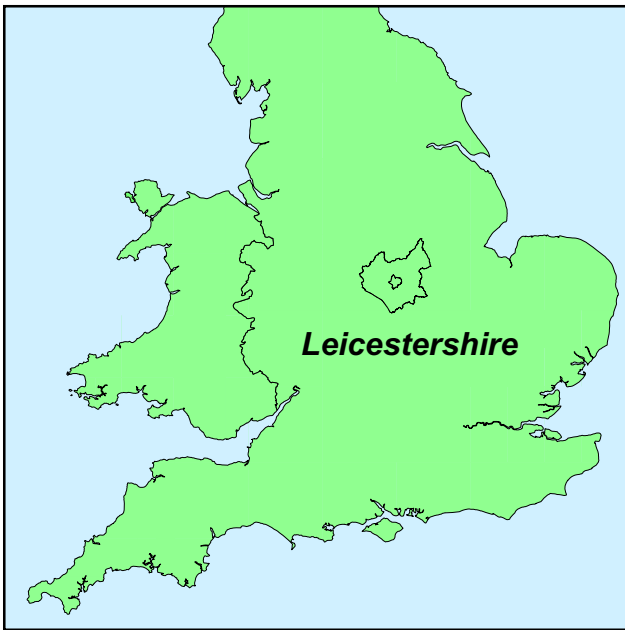
2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography

The site comprised an approximate 2km length of pipeline from SP528810 to SP 539814 located on the western side of Shawell Quarry, c2 miles south of Lutterworth on the eastern side of the A426. The pipeline corridor was 30m wide narrowing to 10m at hedgerow crossings.

The topography is low lying reaching a maximum of 130m above Ordnance datum (aOD) to the north-west and north-east and south of the quarry, the surface across the area is undulating averaging between 100-110m aOD.

The underlying superficial deposits consist of Diamicton, (poorly sorted sediments), which overlie the Lias group, Mudstone, Siltstone, Limestone and Sandstone bedrock geology (<http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/GeolIndex/default.aspx>).



Scale 1:25,000

Site Location Fig 1

2.2 Historical background

A summary of the archaeological background taken from the WSI prepared by Mouchel (Randell 2011) is provided below.

Prehistoric

There is limited evidence for early prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site. A number of flint artefacts have been recovered from within the study area. These are stray finds with no associated context and therefore there is no known evidence for any sustained prehistoric occupation of the area.

There is no evidence for later prehistoric activity and overall evidence for this period is limited, the flint recovered is most likely residual and suggestive of occasional activity rather than prolonged substantial occupation.

Roman

Evidence for the Roman occupation of the study area and the surrounding landscape is abundant and indicates that this area was an important thoroughfare in Roman Britain. The Roman town of *Tripontium* is located just outside the study area and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Within and surrounding the town are numerous archaeological sites, features and deposits and many stray finds of Roman date have been recovered. The Roman remains include but are not limited to a cemetery, villa, defensive banks and ditches, various buildings. The northern limit of the site of *Tripontium* is less than 650m to the south of the proposed route of the pipeline.

There are several Roman roads recorded in the vicinity, including part of Watling Street running from Chester to Richborough. A possible Roman road, linking *Tripontium* with the major town of *Ratae Corieltavorum* (Leicester) to the north has been identified aligned towards Lutterworth. A parallel road to the south-west running through Shawell has been identified from aerial photographs and possible physical evidence for the potential continuation of the alignment of this road has been variously identified from the remains of a cobblestone and pebble pavement. However, it is also possible that this represents a medieval yard surface. A further possible Roman road is recorded at Bullaces Lane.

Anglo-Saxon

The Anglo-Saxon evidence within the study area consists mainly of stray finds to the north-west of Cotesbach. An Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemetery was located near Caves Inn Farm. No settlement evidence has been identified within the study area for this period.

Medieval

The villages of Shawell and Cotesbach both have medieval origins. Varied evidence for medieval activity is recorded in the vicinity of the site including a medieval monastery recorded from documentary evidence 1km to the south-west of Shawell at Holywell Priory, Coton Farm (Caves Inn). The monastery was founded between 1240 and 1270 and was dissolved in 1325.

There is evidence for medieval settlement in Shawell, earthworks of a shrunken medieval village, located to the west of Shawell Manor and parch marks recorded to the north of Shawell Church further suggesting evidence for a shrunken medieval village. Earthworks of a shrunken medieval village to the west of Cedar Farm have been destroyed by modern activity.

The Church of All Saints in Shawell has 15th century origins but this building was also heavily re-built, mainly in the 19th century.

The village of Cotesbach was established during the medieval period and was under the ownership of the Devereuxs. The Church of St. Mary has 14th century origins however it was heavily re-built in the 18th century.

Earthworks of a possible medieval watermill including a dam and platform have also been recorded. This possibly relates to the early medieval watermill recorded in Domesday records.

Post-medieval

There is limited evidence of post medieval activity. As with the other periods the Historic Environment Record records a number of stray finds (pottery) located within the study area.

Undated

A number of undated features including rectilinear enclosures and undated linear earthworks have been identified within the study area.

2.3 Archaeological investigations within the study area

A geophysical survey was undertaken by GSB prospecting, in March 2011 along the route of the pipeline corridor. This survey identified furrows and magnetic anomalies of geological origin (GSB 2011).

A geophysical survey was undertaken by Archaeologica Ltd across the fields to the immediate south and south-east of the proposed pipeline route and to the north and north-west of the existing gas main route in advance of the proposed extension of Shawell Quarry in 2007. This identified two possible pit clusters, although these are not necessarily of archaeological origin. However, this does demonstrate the potential for the survival of archaeological features within a close proximity to the site.

The University of Leicester Archaeological Services carried out fieldwork in 1998 and 1999 excavating the ridge and furrow field systems in the vicinity of the site, carrying out geophysics, an earthwork survey and test pitting, however, only post-medieval and modern artefacts were recovered.

Various research excavations have been undertaken at Tripontium, such as that at Caves Inn Quarry undertaken by Rugby Archaeological Society, revealing a tile kiln, bathhouse, well, cemetery and the remains of the bank and ditch defences.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

An archaeological watching brief is defined by the Institute for Archaeologists as 'a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive.' *IfA Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (1994, revised 2008).

In general the aims of the archaeological watching brief were to:

- define the presence or absence of archaeological deposits within the working corridor taking into account the previous investigations and indications of presence or absence;
- determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered, through the implementation of an archaeological watching brief during the topsoil strip at the site, as dictated by current best practice;
- establish whether any further salvage archaeological excavation works may be necessary;
- and prepare a report and archive to the required standard.

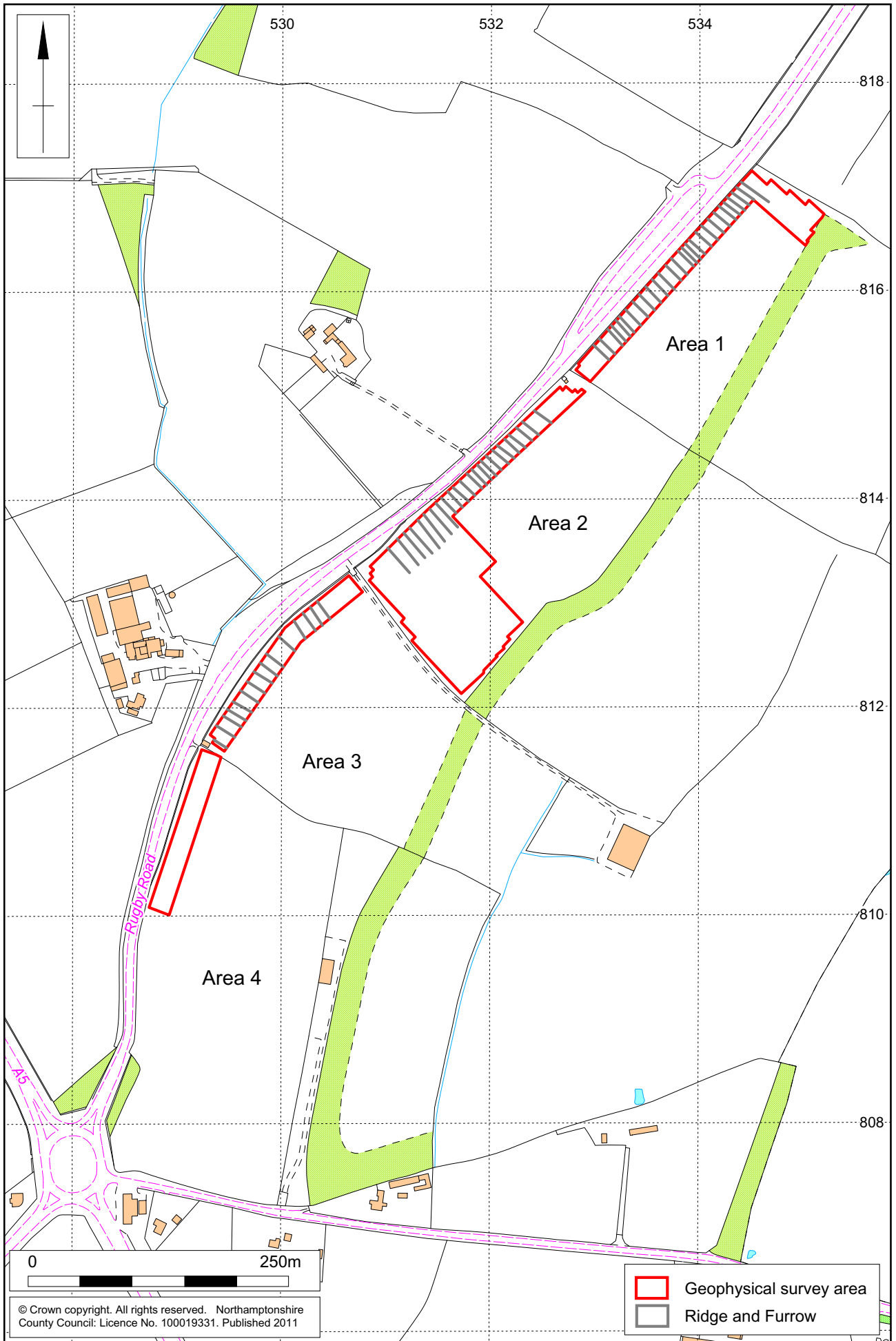
The fieldwork comprised 10 day visits to the site during the stripping of the topsoil for the gas pipeline diversion (Fig 2). A photographic record in both black and white negative and digital format was kept. The written record used Northamptonshire Archaeology pro-forma sheets. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the standards and guidelines for an archaeological watching brief (IfA 2008), and the written scheme of investigation prepared by Sally Randell of Mouchell on behalf of National Grid (Randell 2011).

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

The topsoil (c400mm) was removed from the pipeline corridor and the site compound by two 360° excavators fitted with toothless ditching buckets under continuous archaeological supervision. Part of the compound area (Area 2) and the southern part of Area 1 had the top c200mm of topsoil removed by a D6 bulldozer, the remaining topsoil was then removed by the 360° excavators.

The natural orange-brown sandy clay natural was exposed along the length of the pipeline corridor and was overlain by c400mm of mid brown-orange sandy clay loam topsoil.

Evidence for medieval agriculture was observed in the form of furrows cutting into the natural in Areas 1, 2 and 3 (Figs 2, 3 and 4).



Scale 1:5000 (A4)

Plan showing observed furrows Fig 2



General view of Area 1 looking north-east, showing the furrows Fig 3



General view of Area 3 looking north-east, showing the furrows Fig 4

The furrows were aligned north-west to south-east and were c2m wide with 5m to 10m between centres. No other archaeological features were observed.

Some of the furrows were identified by the geophysical survey undertaken by GSB Prospection during February 2011, however, further furrows were observed in Areas 1 and 3 (Fig 2).

5 CONCLUSION

Evidence for medieval agriculture was observed in the form of furrows cutting the natural, no further archaeological deposits, were present and no artefacts were recovered during the course of the watching brief.

The watching brief was carried out in favourable conditions and the results are considered to be reliable.

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