

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

WATCHING BRIEF: STEEPLE CLAYDON TO BUCKINGHAM UNDERGROUND CABLE INSTALLATION PADBURY BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

NGR: SP 2301 4713

for University of Leicester Archaeological Services, on behalf of Weston Power Distribution



Ralph Stewart Brown BSc Hons

November 2012

ASC: 1387/SCB/1

ISO 9001;2008
REGISTERD FIRM

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Site Data

ASC project code:	SCB		ASC Project No:	1387		
OASIS ref:	archaeol2-137255		Event/Accession no:	tbc		
County:		Buckingl	namshire			
Village/Town:		Padbury				
Civil Parish:		Padbury				
NGR (to 8 figs):		SP 2301	4713			
Extent of watching by	rief:	120m lor	ng trench (Project 3)			
Present use:		Grass field				
Planning proposal:		Underground electric cable (statutory works)				
Local Planning Auth	ority:	Aylesbury Vale District Council				
Date of fieldwork:		29/10/12-01/11/12				
Client:		ULAS University of Leicester University Road Leicester LE1 7RH				
Contact name:		Patrick Clay				

Internal Quality Check

Primary Author:	Ralph Brown	Date:	15 th November 2012
Revisions:		Date:	
Edited/Checked By:		Date:	19 th November 2013

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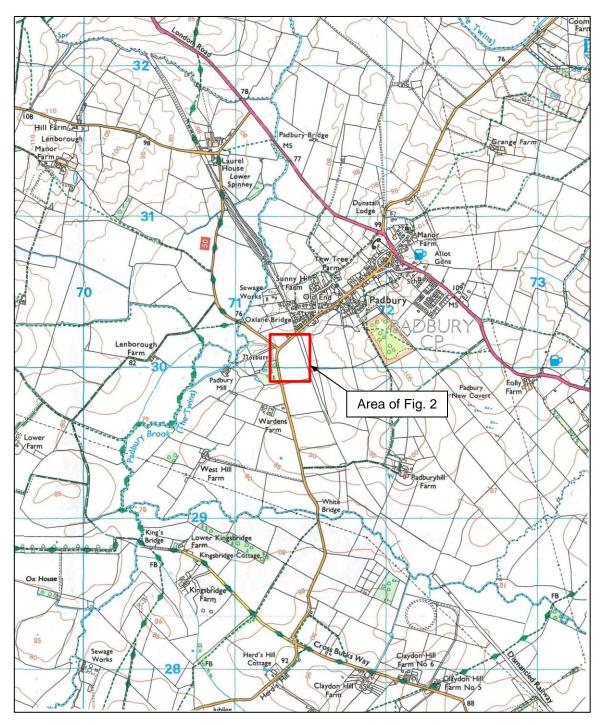


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In October 2012 a watching brief was carried out on the excavation of a trench for an underground electric cable in a field west of Padbury, Buckinghamshire. The cable forms part of a supply route between Steeple Claydon and Buckingham. The trench was cut through topsoil straight into the natural geology, in which nine archaeological features were encountered, including four ditches and one pit. Four of the features contained pottery dated Late Iron Age to Early Roman pottery. This indicates the presence of a substantial concentration of archaeological remains within this field with a date which suggests activity associated with the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Norbury Camp, immediately to the west.

1. Introduction

1.1 In October 2012 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out a watching brief on a section of the Steeple Claydon to Buckingham underground cable route at Padbury, Buckinghamshire. The project was commissioned by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on behalf of Weston Power Distribution, and was carried out according to a written scheme of investigation compiled by ULAS (2010), and approved by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS).

1.2 Planning Background

This watching brief was undertaken under the statutory obligations of the electricity supply utility, at the request of BCAS.

1.3 Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

ASC is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Organisation* by the Institute for Archaeologists and is also accredited ISO 9001, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

1.4 The Site

1.4.1 Location & Description

The electricity supply route runs $c.6 \, \mathrm{km}$ northwards from Shanks Generation, near Steeple Claydon, to Buckingham (NGR SP 6885 2448 – SP 7055 3334), within the administrative district of Aylesbury Vale, Buckinghamshire. The route is partly on poles and partly underground. Section 3 of this route, within the parish of Padbury at NGR SP 2301 4713, was the only below-ground section where BCAS requested archaeological monitoring (Fig. 1).

The site comprises a roughly rectangular grass field totalling c.5ha. It is bounded by Main Street to the north, the Padbury – Steeple Claydon road to the west, and a disused railway track to the east (Fig. 2). Access is through a gate to the south west of the site.

1.4.2 Topography & Geology

The line of the cable trench runs along the top of a gentle rise at a constant elevation of c.82m. The soils on the site and surrounding area belong to the Denchworth Association, described as: 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. Landslips and associated irregular terrain locally. The underlying geology comprises Jurassic and Cretaceous clay (Soil Survey 1983, 712b).

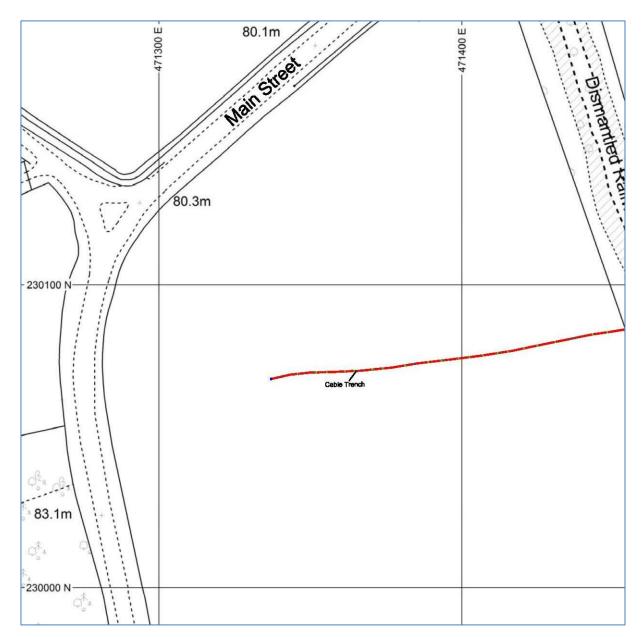


Figure 2: Site plan and cable trench location (*scale 1:1250*)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 *Aims*

As described in the written scheme of investigation, the aims of the watching brief were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any earlier building phases or archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the groundworks.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the recording was to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, and significance of the heritage assets within their local and regional context.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the written scheme of investigation (ULAS 2010), to the relevant sections of the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IfA 2008a & b) and *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2010), to current English Heritage guidelines (EH 1991; EH 2006), and to the relevant sections of ASC's *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the project design, which described:

- The supervision of overburden removal and other groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works specified above.
- The identification of significant archaeological remains for which a programme of excavation and recording was necessary.

2.4 *Constraints*

Because of the width of the trench (0.3m) it was necessary to excavate the archaeological features using the mechanical excavator.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 The following section, compiled with information from the Written Scheme of Investigation (ULAS 2010) provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs.
- 3.2 The Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record (HER) indicated that the proposed cable installation was likely to affect heritage assets of archaeological interest. The cable route lies within the context of nearby heritage assets comprising Norbury Camp Iron Age hillfort (HER 29707) a scheduled monument and a medieval to post-medieval ditched enclosure or moat recorded on aerial photographs (HER 0576400000) at the east end of Main Street, Padbury.

4. Results

4.1 General

The watching brief was undertaken over a period of three and a half days, during which a trench 120m long was excavated on an east-west alignment across the field (Fig. 2), and any archaeological features revealed were investigated and recorded (Appendix 1).

The natural strata was consistent across the site and comprised firm mid brown orange clay overlain by friable mid grey brown clay loam topsoil with a depth of 0.3m. Eleven plough furrows on roughly north-south alignments were observed along the length of the trench. These were generally 3m wide with 6m gaps between them.

Nine archaeological features were identified, all probably ditches or pits, though because of the narrowness of the trench it was difficult to determine their nature, extent and alignment. Locations are shown in Fig. 3. Pottery dating from the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD was recovered from four of the features. Apart from truncation by the furrows, the preservation of the archaeological features was very good, with little disturbance.

4.2 *Ditches* [102] & [105] (Fig. 4, S1: Plates 1 & 2)

These were most likely a pair of roughly north-south aligned ditches. Both were at least 0.45m in depth (neither was bottomed) and 1.87m and 1.30m wide respectively. Each was filled with a secondary silting of mid yellow grey clay without any finds. Ditch [102] also had a 0.15m thick primary fill of mid grey blue clay which produced one sherd of Late Iron Age/Early Roman pottery.

4.3 *Feature* [107] (Fig. 4, S2)

This was 3.76m across and 0.56m deep, and appears from its profile to have possibly been two intercut features. It was filled with yellow grey clay secondary silting containing a single sherd of Late Iron Age/Early Roman pottery.

4.4 *Ditch/pit* [109] (Fig. 4, S3: Plate 3)

Feature [109] was a shallow ditch or pit 2.23m wide and 0.37m deep. It was filled with dark blue grey clay with occasional charcoal flecks. One sherd of Late Iron Age/Early Roman pottery was recovered from it.

4.5 *Ditch* [111] (Fig. 5, S4)

This probable ditch was 1.46m wide and over 0.44m deep. It had a primary fill (112) of mottled light yellow-grey and mid brown-yellow clay containing a large proportion of redeposited natural. The concentration of this fill on the western side of the ditch indicates the possible existence of a bank along this side of the feature. The remainder of the ditch was filled with secondary silting comprising mid blue-grey clay containing one sherd of Late Iron Age/Early Roman pottery.

4.6 *Pit/ditch* [114] (Fig. 5, S5)

This feature was either a pit or ditch, 1.67m wide and 0.28m deep. There seemed to be a thin layer of redeposited natural at its base, probably deposited through primary silting or trample, overlain by mid grey-blue clay of uncertain origin. No finds or dating were found within this feature.

4.7 *Pit* [117] (Fig. 5, S6: Plate 4)

This was a probable pit 1.56m wide and more than 0.46m deep. Its primary fill was mixed light grey blue and mid brown orange silty clay (118), overlain by dark grey brown silty clay (119), both seemingly representing deliberate backfilling. Context (119) contained frequent fragments of fired clay, mostly less than 0.01m in diameter. Five of the largest fragments were retained, but are undated. These are not the remains of a domestic vessel, and possibly derive from an oven or kiln.

4.8 *Features* [122] [125] & [127] (Fig. 5, S7)

Cut [122] was probably a ditch, north-south aligned, and measured 1.54m wide by more than 0.46m deep. It contained two fills, mid grey blue silty clay (123) and mid orange grey silty clay (124), both the result of secondary silting. No finds were recovered from either context. Probable tree bole [127] was situated on the eastern side of ditch [122] and contained no dating evidence.

The top of ditch [122] was truncated by [125], a shallow feature 1.04m wide by 0.24m deep, possibly a ditch or a pit. This feature is also undated.



Plate 1: Ditches [102] and [105] pre-ex



Plate 2: Ditches [102] and [105]



Plate 3: Pit or ditch [109]



Plate 4: Pit [117]

Underground cable installation, Padbury, Bucks.

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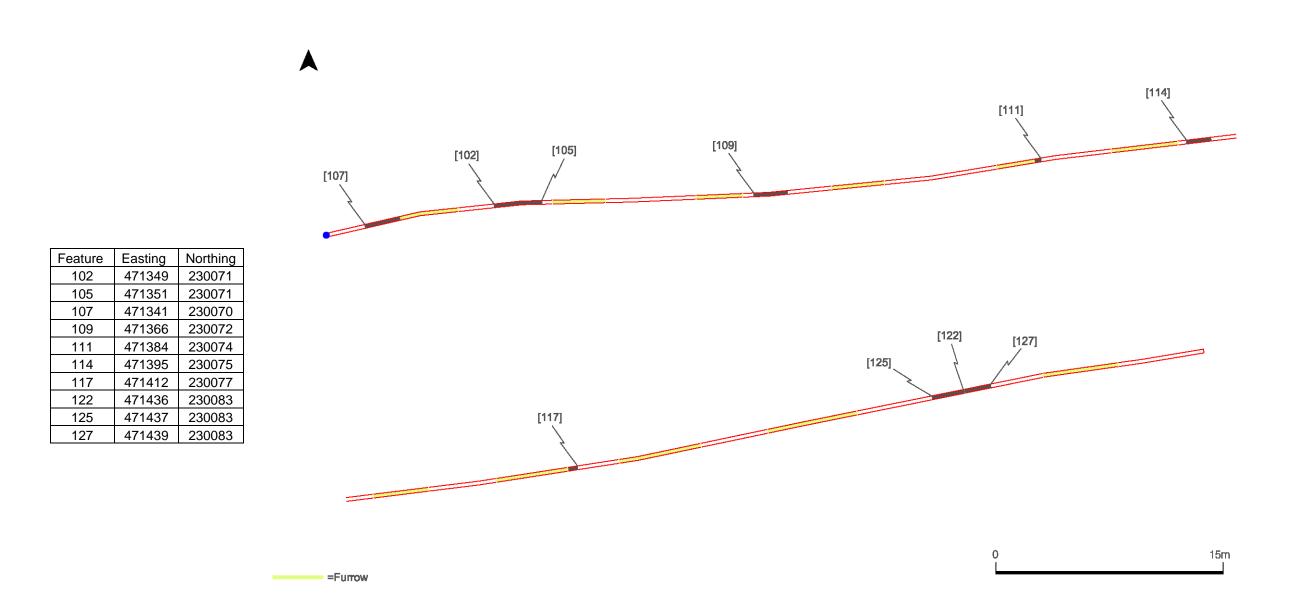
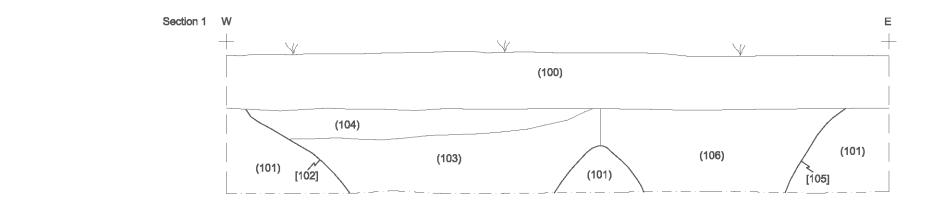
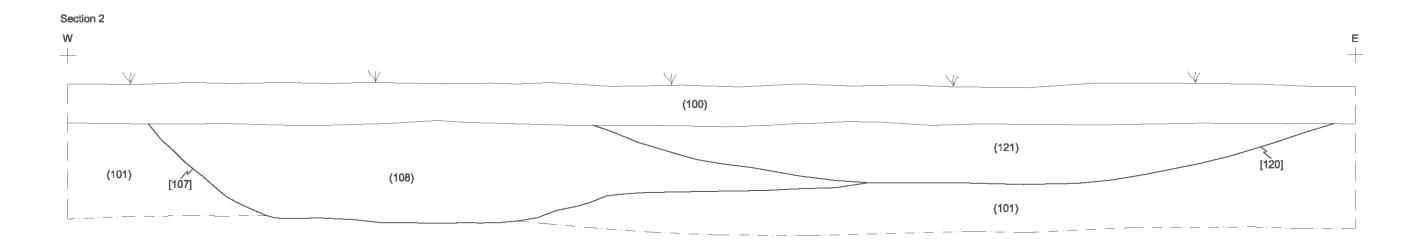
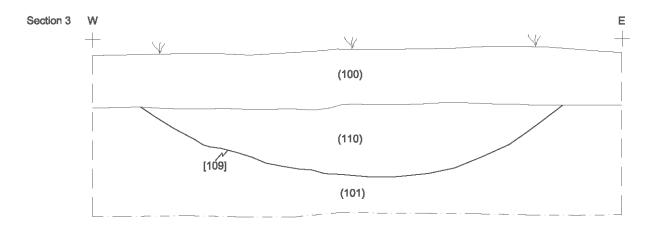


Figure 3: Plan of cable trench, showing feature locations (scale 1:250)

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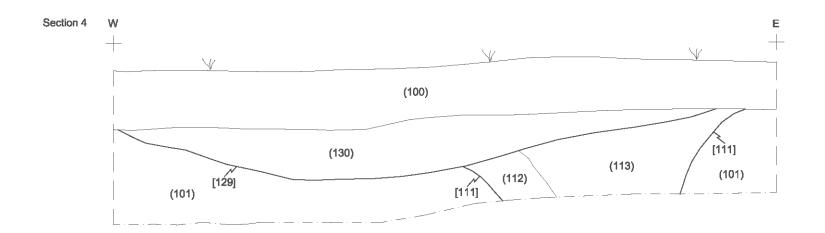


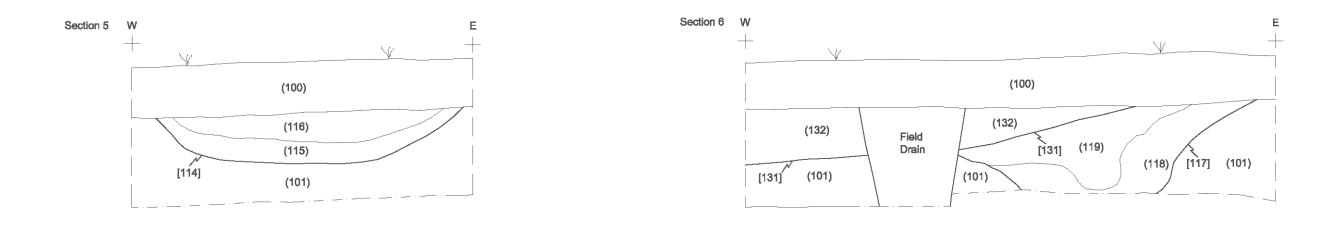




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Figure 4: Sections 1-3 (*scale 1:20*)





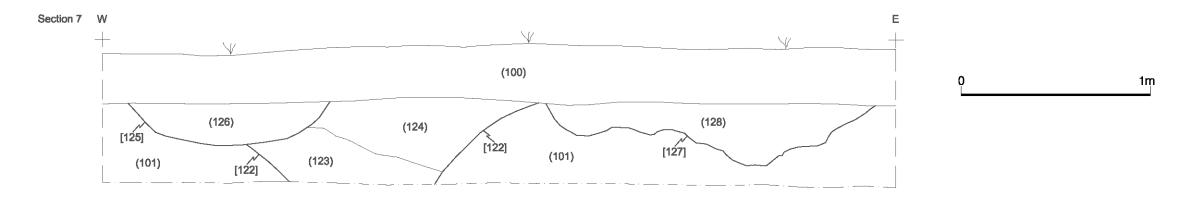


Figure 5: Sections 4-7 (*scale 1:250*)

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5. Conclusions

- 5.1 This watching brief has shown the existence of archaeological features evenly spaced along the entire length of the cable trench. Nine archaeological features were recorded, four of which contained pottery of dating from the 1st century BC to 1st century AD, *i.e.* to the Late Iron Age to Early Roman period. This suggests that a significant amount of archaeological remains are present within the site area, quite possibly extending beyond the limits of the field.
- 5.2 The small amount of finds and the slowly accumulated nature of many of the deposits indicate that the features within this trench are not part of a settlement, and are instead more likely indicative of an outlying field or enclosure system, probably associated with Norbury Camp, the Iron Age enclosure within the field immediately to the west.

5.3 Confidence Rating

Despite the constraints imposed on investigation and recording of archaeological features in such a narrow trench, it was possible to demonstrate that significant archaeological remains exist within the site. The weather conditions were good and the finds were taken from securely sealed contexts, leading to a high confidence rating.

6. Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by *ULAS* on behalf of *Weston Power Distribution*. The writer is grateful to Patrick Clay (ULAS) and Maurice Forshaw (Weston Power Distribution) for their assistance. The project was monitored by *Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service*. Thanks are also due to Jonathan Hunn for compiling the pottery report.

The project was managed for ASC by David Fell BA MA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Ralph Brown BSc Hons. The report was prepared by Ralph Brown and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

7. Archive

- 7.1 The project archive will comprise:
 - 1. Written Scheme of Investigation
 - 2. Initial Report
 - 3. Clients site plans
 - 4. Site Monitoring Sheets
 - 5. Finds records
 - 6. Finds
 - 7. Site record drawings
 - 8. List of photographs
 - 9. B/W prints & negatives
 - 10. Original specialist reports and supporting information
 - 11. CDROM with copies of all digital files.
- 7.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum. An accession number has been requested.

8. References

Standards & Specifications

BCAS (no date) Generic Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief

EH 1991 The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).

EH 2006 The Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment. English Heritage (London).

IFA 2010 Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct.

IFA 2008 Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology.

IFA (various dates) Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance* documents (*Watching Briefs* 2008, *Excavations* 2008, *Finds* 2008, *Archiving* 2009).

ULAS 2010 Written Scheme of Information for Archaeological Work: Steeple Claydon to Buckingham 11-583. Unuiversity of Leicester Archaeological Services.

Secondary Sources

BGS British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology.

Soil Survey 1983 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend (Harpenden).

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

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Appendix 2: Finds Concordance

Context	Pot	ttery	Во	one	Flint (no)	Shell	Stone	Other Finds	
	(no)	(g)	(no)	(g)	(110)	(g)	(no)	Туре	(no)
104	1	2.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
108	2	17.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
110	3	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
113	1	39	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
119	5	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Appendix 3: List of Photographs

SITE NAI		le Claydo	n Buckingham Undergound Cable SITE NO/CODE:1387/SCB			
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject			
1		√	Cable trench excavated to archaeological horizon [102.105,107] view to E			
2		✓	Cable trench excavated to archaeological horizon [102.105,107] view to W			
3	✓	✓	Ditches [102] and [105] Section 1 view to NE			
4		✓	Ditches [102] and [105] view to E			
5		✓	Ditches [102] and [105] Section 1 view to N			
6		✓	Ditches [102] and [105] Section 1 view to NE			
7		✓	Ditches [102] and [105] Section 1 view to NE			
8	✓	✓	Feature [107] Section 2 view to NE			
9		✓	Feature [107] Section 2 view to NW			
10		✓	Ditches [102] and [105] Section 1 view to NE			
11		✓	Ditches [102] and [105] Section 1 view to SW			
12	✓	✓	Feature [109] Section 3 view to NE			
13		✓	Feature [109] Section 3 view to NE			
14		✓	Feature [109] Section 3 view to NW			
15	✓	✓	Ditch [111] Section 4 view to NE			
16		✓	Ditch [111] Section 4 view to NE			
17		✓	Ditch [114] Section 5 view to NE			
18	✓	✓	Pit [117] Section 6 view to NE			
19		✓	Pit [117] Section 6 view to NE			
20		✓	Pit [117] Section 6 view to NW			
21	✓	✓	General cable trench shot view to W			
22	✓	✓	Ditch [122] and features [125] and [127] view to NE			
23		✓	Ditch [122] and features [125] and [127] view to N			
24	✓	✓	General site shot view to E			

Appendix 4: Pottery Report

Jonathan Hunn

Pottery fr	om Steeple Clay	don cab	le trench 1	1387/SCB		
Context	Туре	Fabric	Weight	Number	Munsell	Date
104	body sherd	GT	2.5g	1	ext. 7.5 5/3;int 7.5 3/1	LPRIA
108	body sherd	CG	16g	1	ext. 7.5 3/2; int. 7.5 6/6	1stC
108	body sherd	GT	1.6g	1	7.5 3/1	LPRIA
110	body sherd	VCG	22g	1	ext 5 YR 5/6; int 5 YR 5/8	LPRIA
110	body sherd	SCW	3g	1	ext 5 YR 7/6; int 5 YR 4/1	1stC
110	body sherd	CG	5g	1	7.5 YR 3/1	1stC
113	body sherd	ST *	39g	1	7.5 YR 6/6	1 st C
119	unidentified	CGF	13g	5	7.5 YR 4/6	undated
GT = grog	tempered					
CG = calci	te gritted					
VCG = ver	y coarse gritted					
SCW = sm	ooth coarse war	е				
ST = flint	tempered					
CGF = coa	arse grannular fal	oric				
* decorat	ed with single ho	rizontal	and two v	ertical shall	ow incisions	

A small collection of body sherds (7 sherds, 89g) was recovered from four contexts. A fifth context [119] produced 5 small fragments of a dark brown, coarse granular fabric which is not believed to be derived from a domestic vessel. Pottery from three of the four contexts [104, 108 and 110] comprises coarse domestic wares belonging to the 1st century BC and 1st century AD. To judge from the size and condition of the sherds, this material was subject to a period of weathering before it was finally deposited. Therefore these contexts are likely to belong to the early to middle Roman period. The coarsest ware was represented by a single sherd from [113], in a reddish yellow, shell-tempered fabric. It was 11mm thick and decorated with a single horizontal and two vertical lines. This is tentatively dated to the 1st century AD.

Appendix 5: ASC OASIS Form

	PROJEC	T DETAIL	S						
Project Name:	Steeple Claydon to Buckingham OASIS reference: archaeol2-137255 underground cable installation, Padbury								
Short Description:	In October 2012 a watching brief was carried out on the excavation of a trench for an underground electric cable in a field west of Padbury, Buckinghamshire. The cable forms part of a supply route between Steeple Claydon and Buckingham. The trench was cut through topsoil straight into the natural geology, in which nine archaeological features were encountered, including four ditches and one pit. Four of the features contained pottery dated Late Iron Age to Early Roman pottery. This indicates the presence of a substantial concentration of archaeological remains within this field with a date which suggests activity associated with the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Norbury Camp, immediately to the west.								
Project Type:	Watching Brief								
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	no		Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	none					
Current land use:	Field		Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	no					
Monument type:	-		Monument period:	Late Iron Age/ Early Roman					
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	Pottery								
	PROJECT	LOCATIO	N						
County:	Buckinghamshire	erence: (8 figs min)	SP 2301 4713						
Site address: (+ postcode if known)									
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	5ha	Height (OD: (metres)	83m					
	PROJECT	CREATO	RS						
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consu	ultancy Ltd	i						
Project brief originator:	Bucks. County Council	Project	design originator:	ULAS					
Project Manager:	David Fell	Director	r/Supervisor:	Ralph Brown					
Sponsor / funding body:	ULAS / Weston Power Distribution	n							
		CT DATE		1 04/44/40					
Start date:	29/10/12	End dat	te:	01/11/12					
	PROJECT								
	Location (Accession no.)		t (eg. pottery, animal	bone, files/sheets)					
Physical:	Bucks County Museum		, fired clay						
Paper:	-		Site Archive, WSI						
Digital:		CD with	n all digital files						
	APHY (Journal/monograph, publis		<u> </u>	· · ·					
Title:	Watching Brief: Steeple Claydon Buckinghamshire	to Buckin	gham underground ca	ble installation, Padbury,					
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1387/SCB/1								
Author(s):	Ralph Stewart Brown BSc Hons	T		I 444440040					
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