

Congresbury Yeo Tidal Banks Congresbury North Somerset

Archaeological Watching Brief



for
Royal Haskoning DHV

CA Project: 5566
CA Report: 15683

September 2015



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Congresbury
North Somerset

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A	08 September 2015	S.J.Sworn	R.E.Young	Internal review		I.Barnes
B	28 July 2016	S.J. Sworn	R.E. Young	Curator review	Revised NGR	I. Barnes

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SUMMARY

Project Name: Congresbury Yeo Tidal Banks,
Location: Congresbury, North Somerset
NGR: ST 37806 65693
Type: Watching brief
Date: 8 September 2015
Planning Reference: 14/P/2188/F
Location of Archive: To be deposited with Somerset Museums Service
Site Code: CYT15

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in September 2015 at Congresbury Yeo Tidal Banks, Congresbury, North Somerset. The excavation of a single pipe trench through an existing tidal bank was observed.

The works afforded an opportunity to examine the profile of the existing bank. The bank was constructed from a single deposit and exhibited no evidence for repair. No other features or deposits of archaeological interest were identified during the course of the watching brief.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In September 2015 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Royal Haskoning DHV during improvement works to tidal embankments at Congresbury Yeo Tidal Banks, Congresbury, North Somerset. (centred on NGR: ST 37806 65693; Fig. 1). The works were granted permission by North Somerset Council (NSC; ref: 14/P/2188/F).
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2015) and approved by Vince Russett, Archaeologist for NSC.
- 1.3 The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014), *the Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006).

The site

- 1.4 The whole improvement scheme is approximately 2.2ha in extent, and comprises tidal mud flat and pasture situated within the Severn estuary on the south side of the River Yeo, and bounded on its southern side with the 'East-town Rhyne' (a drainage ditch, or canal, used to turn wetland areas at around sea level into useful pasture). The site lies at approximately 7m AOD. The watching brief focused on a single trench across an extant tidal bank.
- 1.5 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Mercia Mudstone formed in the Triassic Period. Superficial deposits are mapped as clay and silt tidal flat deposits of the Quaternary Period, with sediment deposited in former beaches and barrier islands (BGS 2015).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A cultural heritage component of an Environmental Statement was prepared by the Environment Agency in 2014 (EA 2014) in support of the planning application for the Congresbury Yeo Tidal Banks project. The following is a summary of the evidence presented therein and other evidence noted within the North Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER).

- 2.2 While early evidence is limited in the surrounding area, late prehistoric / Roman salt production has been identified. The area is relatively low-lying, which is considered to have been a deterrent to settlement from the medieval period onward. Agricultural activity, primarily grazing, is most likely in this period. The field patterns were noted to have been established by the post-medieval period, with some sections potentially dating to the medieval period (EA 2014, 136-7).
- 2.3 The HER notes the presence of a number of post medieval embankments around the eastern periphery of the site and to the north lies 'Yeo Haven', an early 20th century jetty.
- 2.4 In August 2012 15 archaeological evaluation trenches were excavated along the line of the proposed tidal banks. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were identified (EA 2014, 137). A trench excavated through an extant tidal bank to the north of the estuary revealed two phases of bank construction, with the second phase being somewhat later than the first, and representing repair and improvement of the earlier phase. No dating evidence was found from either phase (EA 2014, 138).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the archaeological works are:
- to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks;
 - at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The watching brief comprised the observation by a competent archaeologist of all intrusive groundworks, comprising the excavation of a single trench for the insertion

of a plastic drainage pipe through an extant tidal bank to the southern side of the site. This was required to allow water to drain into the 'East-town Rhyne' ditch to the south. Non-archaeologically significant deposits were removed by the contractors under archaeological supervision. Where mechanical excavators were used, these were equipped with a toothless bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate.

- 4.2 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*; no deposits were identified that required sampling.
- 4.3 The archive from the evaluation is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. The paper and digital site archive will be deposited with Somerset Museum Service.

5 RESULTS (FIGS 2-3)

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the watching brief results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are to be found in Appendix A.
- 5.2 The natural geological substrate, consisting of compact blue-brown alluvial clay, was revealed in the base of the pipe trench.
- 5.3 The excavation of the pipe trench revealed a section through the extant earthwork bank to the northern side of the 'East-town Rhyne' ditch. The bank was roughly 10m wide and up to 1.70m high with a flat top. On the southern side, the bank extended down to the water-filled ditch. The bank consisted of single homogenous light brown clay 1002, which lay directly on top of the alluvial clays. The bank was sealed by a uniform layer of grassed topsoil (1000).

6. THE FINDS

- 6.1 No artefacts were recovered during the course of the works.



7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 Despite the excavation of a section across the earthen bank, no artefacts were recovered that would have enabled dating of this feature. The bank itself appeared to sit directly on the underlying alluvial clays, with no indication of a buried soil horizon below. The bank was of only one build and had not been repaired, unlike the bank to the north of the estuary investigated in 2012.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Simon Sworn. The report was written by Simon Sworn. The archive has been compiled by Simon Sworn, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

9. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2015 *Geology of Britain Viewer* http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology_viewer_google/googleviewer.html Accessed 12 August 2015

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015 *Congresbury Yeo Tidal Banks, Congresbury, North Somerset: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

EA (Environment Agency) 2014 *Congresbury Yeo Tidal Banks, Congresbury: Environmental Statement*



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)	Spot-date
1	1000	Layer		Top soil	Mid/dark brown silty clay	>0.46m	>11.20	0.26m	
1	1002	Layer		Bank	Mid/light brown silty clay	>0.46m	10m	1.70m	
1	1003	Layer		Alluvial clay	Mid brown and blueish grey clay	>0.46m	>11.20m		

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Congresbury Yeo Tidal Banks, Congresbury, North Somerset	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in September 2015 at Congresbury Yeo Tidal Banks, Congresbury, North Somerset. The excavation of a single pipe trench through an existing tidal bank was observed. The works afforded an opportunity to examine the profile of the existing bank. The bank was constructed from a single deposit and exhibited no evidence for repair. No other features or deposits of archaeological interest were identified during the course of the watching brief.	
Project dates	08 September 2015	
Project type	Watching brief	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Congresbury, North Somerset	
Study area	2.2ha	
Site co-ordinates	ST 37806 65693	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	None	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Young	
Project Supervisor	Simon Sworn	
MONUMENT TYPE		
	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS		
	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Paper	Somerset Museums Service	Trench record sheets.
Digital	Somerset Museums Service	Database, digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015 <i>Congresbury Yeo Tidal Banks, Congresbury, North Somerset: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . CA typescript report 15683		



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PROJECT TITLE
 Congressbury Yeo Tidal Banks
 North Somerset

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

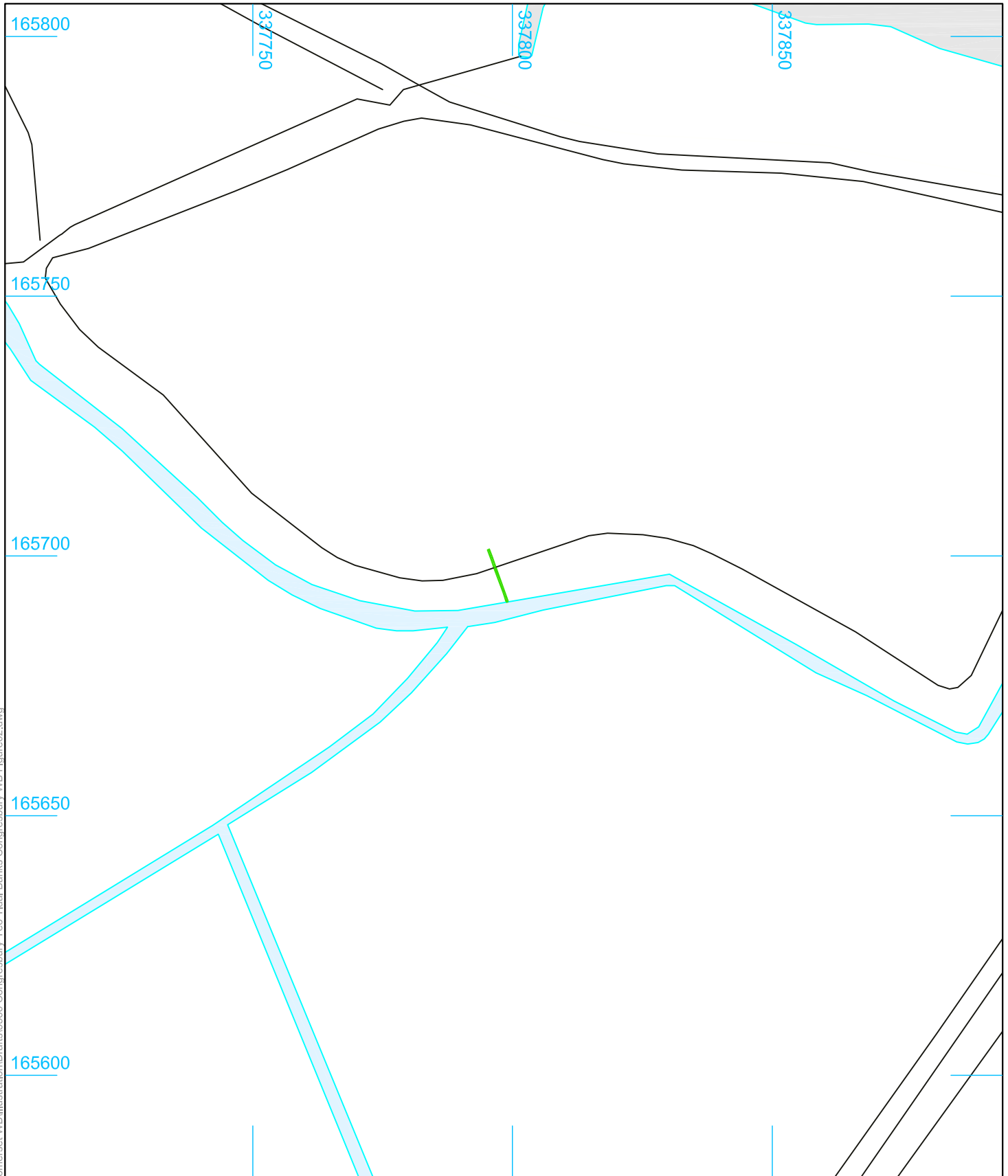


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FIGURE NO.

1



 evaluation trench



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FIGURE TITLE
Trench location plan

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a



b

a General view of bank prior to excavation, facing west

b Excavated trench for new water pipe, facing south (0.5m scale)



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FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

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FIGURE NO.

3



Section through bank 1002, facing west (0.5m scale)



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PROJECT TITLE

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FIGURE TITLE

Photograph

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FIGURE NO.

4

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