

# Power Line Renewal Middleton Stoney Oxfordshire



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

oxfordarchaeology



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**Scottish Southern Energy Plc**

Issue No: 1  
OA Job No: 3924  
NGR: SU 51742471 to SU 52022419



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# Power Line Renewal, Middleton Stoney, Oxfordshire

## SUMMARY

*On January 28th 2008, Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook an archaeological watching brief near Middleton Stoney, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU 5174 2471 to SU 5202 2419). The work was commissioned by Scottish and South Eastern Electricity Plc in advance of the renewal of overhead power cable poles within the region of an earthwork known as "Ave's Ditch". The watching brief revealed deposits of colluvium overlying weathered limestone. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook an archaeological watching brief on 28th January 2008 near Middleton Stoney, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU 5174 2471 to SU5202 2419). The work was commissioned by Scottish and South Eastern Electricity Plc in response to the requirement to replace overhead power cable poles close to the earthwork known as "Ave's Ditch".

1.1.2 The line of poles was located both to the north and south of the B4030, approximately 1.8 km north-west of the village of Middleton Stoney, 5 km west of Bicester. The area under consideration was predominately pasture with some arable land.

## 2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

### 2.1 Topography

2.1.1 The site lies between 110 m and 116 m above OD, with the southern end roughly level at 110 m rising to 116 m high at the northern end.

### 2.2 Geology

2.2.1 The underlying geology is Oxford clay over Great Oolite Limestone (Geological Survey of Great Britain, sheet no 218).

## 3 AIMS AND METHODS

### 3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 The work observed comprised the excavation of 8 holes for replacement electricity poles. These were excavated using a machine mounted 0.5 m diameter auger. The holes were typically excavated to a depth of 1.8 m below the current ground level.

3.1.2 The watching brief aimed to establish if the pole locations impacted upon below ground potential archaeological deposits within the vicinity of Ave's Ditch. To establish this each auger hole and the resultant spoil were examined after excavation for the presence of artefacts and potential archaeological/palaeo-environmental deposits.

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 Description of deposits

4.1.1 The observed stratigraphy was similar throughout the site and a general description can be applied. The underlying bedrock, a weathered and fractured oolitic limestone in a yellow clay matrix (3), was encountered at a depth of between 0.55 m and 1.85 m below ground level. This was overlain by a layer of orange-brown sandy silt clay (2), that varied in depth between 0.3 m and 1.6 m below the modern ground level. This deposit was deepest within the lowest parts of the area and probably represents a colluvial deposit. Overlying this was a layer of grey-brown clay loam (1), the present day topsoil, of between 0.25 m and 0.35 m in depth.

### 4.2 Finds

4.2.1 No dating evidence was recovered during the course of the watching brief.

## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1.1 No evidence for any archaeologically significant deposits or features were encountered during the course of the watching brief.

5.1.2 Two of the post holes straddled the line of Ave's Ditch. The stratigraphy exposed was of geological origin and it is probable that they were excavated outside the impact area of the ditch and bank.

**APPENDICES****APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY**

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	0.25 m - 0.35 m	Present day topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	0.3 m - 1.6 m	Colluvium	-	-
3	Layer	> 1.25 m	Weathered natural oolitic limestone	-	-

**APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES**

IFA, 2001 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

OA, 1992 *Field Manual* (ed. D. Wilkinson)

**APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**

**Site name:** Power Line Renewal, Middleton Stoney, Oxfordshire

**Site code:** MISTPL 08

**Grid reference:** SU 51742471 to SU 52022419

**Date and duration of project:** 28th January 2008

**Area of site:** eight circular auger holes each c. 0.5 m diameter

**Summary of results:** The watching brief exposed a layer of colluvium overlying the natural bedrock. No significant archaeological deposits or features were encountered.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course under the accession number OXCMS 2008.13.



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