

THE SOUTH DEVON LINK ROAD, KINGSKERSWELL, DEVON-DECOY LINK ROAD

Centred on NGR SX 8705 6936

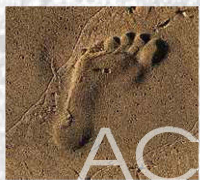
Results of an Archaeological Trench Evaluation

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On behalf of:
Galliford Try

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AC archaeology

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Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation along the Decoy Link Road section of the A380 South Devon Link Road, Newton Abbot, Devon (centred on NGR SX 8705 6936), was undertaken by AC archaeology in April 2014. The proposed development area occupies the corridor of land to be widened and at present is utilised as arable farmland.

The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of two trenches totalling 11.7m in length, with each trench 2m wide. These were positioned to target the line of a putative Roman road or prehistoric trackway extending from Aller Cross to the southeast. Both trenches contained re-cut ditches, with a number of fills from one ditch containing 18th and 19th century artefacts. The ditches are likely to be associated with late post-medieval and modern land division and drainage, including that for the road. No evidence for earlier roadways or other features was present.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trench evaluation to target the putative line of a possible Roman road or prehistoric trackway along the Decoy Link Road Section of the A380 South Devon Link Road, Kingskerswell, Devon (NGR SX 8705 6936) was undertaken by AC archaeology during April 2014. The work was commissioned by Galliford Try, following consultation with the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (DCCHET). The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.
- 1.2 The improvements along the Decoy Link Road section involve widening the existing roadway linking Aller Cross to the Decoy Industrial Estate on the southwest outskirts of Newton Abbot. The work will involve widening the existing roadway into fields on the northwest side of the road currently under pasture or arable uses. The underlying geology on the site consists of sands silts and clays of the Bovey Formation. Soils on the site consist of typical brown earths of the Crediton Association. The land lies at height of approximately 15-20m aOD.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The present works follow on from excavations at Aller Cross to the southeast, where excavations confirmed the presence of a Middle Iron Age and multi-phase Romano-British (1st-4th centuries AD) enclosure (Hughes and Payne 2013). The later phases of Romano-British enclosure ditch all appear to respect the line of the modern road at the point where it crosses the northwest boundaries of the enclosures (towards Decoy Industrial Estate). The way in which the enclosures respected the line of the existing road suggests that this route provided an important entrance or thoroughfare to the site and hints at the possibility of the presence of an earlier road or trackway heading in the direction of Decoy Industrial Estate.

3. AIMS

- 3.1 The main aim of the work was to establish the presence or absence of any putative prehistoric or Romano-British trackway or surfaces, alongside potential roadside ditches, extending from the recently excavated site at Aller Cross and along the line of the new Decoy Link Road Section.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with reference to the Institute for Archaeologists 2009 document *Standards and Guidance for Field Evaluation*. It comprised the machine-excavation of two trenches totalling 11.7m in length, with each 2m wide (see Fig. 1). These were positioned at two points along the line of the proposed road improvement, in fields currently used for agricultural purposes.

4.2 All features and deposits revealed were recorded using the standard AC archaeology pro-forma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2* (revised August 2012). Detailed sections or plans were produced at a scale of 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate. All site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

Archaeological features were present in both the trenches and these are discussed in detail below. The overlying soil sequence comprised topsoil only, ranging in depth from 0.25-0.30m. This was directly above natural clays.

5.2 Trench 1 (Plan Fig. 2a, section Fig. 2b; Plates 1-3)

This trench was located to the north of Langford Bridge Farm and to the east of the Kingskerswell Road. It was 5.7m long, 2m wide and aligned NE-SW. It contained two intercutting linear features (contexts F102 and F113) which were cutting natural clay (context 101) and beneath 0.30m of topsoil (100).

F102 was aligned approximately NW-SE, parallel with the existing hedgebank. It was +2m long, at least 1.15m wide and 0.50m deep, with a symmetrical profile comprising a gradual upper break of slope, moderately steep sides and a flat, uneven base. It contained seven fills (103-107 and 109-110). Fills 103 and 104 were thin 0.10m thick grey yellow coarse silty sands with compact consistencies. These are most likely to derive from the initial erosion of the edge of the ditch. Fills 105 and 106 were slightly thicker deposits (0.20m) and were composed of grey brown to brown sandy clays and sandy clay loams with compact consistencies. The most substantial fill was context 107, which was most present on the northeast side. This was 0.76m thick and consisted of a brownish grey sandy silty clay with a compact consistency and inclusions of sparse sub-angular chert fragments. Fills 1009 and 1010 were typically 0.11m to 0.13m thick reddish brown to brownish grey sandy clays, with compact consistencies and no inclusions. No finds were recovered.

The fills of F102 were subsequently re-cut by F113 to form a smaller ditch measuring +2m long by 1.65m wide and 0.47m deep. This too had a broadly northwest to southeast orientation and symmetrical profile with sharp upper break of slope, moderately steep sides and a concave base. The re-cut contained three fills, with the first (108) a distinctive 0.23m thick dump of redeposited natural, typically a grey brown sandy clay with a compact consistency. Above this was 111, a 0.31m thick brown grey silty sand clay with a compact consistency. Finally, the upper fill (112) was a 0.14m thick brown sandy silt clay with a compact consistency. No finds were recovered.

5.3 Trench 2 (Section Fig. 2c; Plates 4-6)

This trench was located to the northeast of the football club and to the east of the Kingskerswell Road. It was 6m long, 2m wide and aligned NE-SW and contained three intercutting linear features (F203, F210 and F214), which were cutting natural clay (201) and beneath 0.25m of topsoil (200).

The earliest ditch (F210) was aligned NW-SE and measured +2m long, at least 2.5m wide and 0.40m deep, although it had been truncated by a later re-cut. The feature had a sharp upper break of slope with fairly steep sides and a flat base. Three fills were identified within this cut, including 211, a 0.15m thick, blue grey sandy silt clay with a compact consistency. Overlying this was a grey brown sandy clay (212) with a friable consistency and inclusions of sparse angular chert gravels. At the exposed top of the sequence, fill 213 was a mid grey brown to blue grey sandy clay with a friable to firm consistency. No finds were recovered.

F210 was cut by ditch F203. This was a considerably larger feature orientated NW-SE but measuring +2m long, +5m wide and approximately 1m deep. The northeast edge of this ditch had a gradual upper break of slope with gently sloping sides and a rounded base. It contained four distinctive fills, with the basal deposit (209) a 0.09m thick, dark brownish grey sandy clay loam with abundant charcoal flecks. Above this was 208, a 0.14m thick very dark brown sandy clay loam with a soft compaction and inclusions of common mortar and charcoal flecks. Fill 207 was a 0.24m thick, very dark brown sandy clay loam with a soft compaction and inclusions of common degraded charcoal flecks. Filling the majority of the ditch was 206, a 0.50m thick dark brown sandy clay loam with a friable consistency and inclusions of sparse sub-angular mudstone and chert. Finds of post-medieval and modern date were recovered.

F203 was cut by F214, possibly created when the existing Kingskerswell Road was widened, straightened or re-surfaced. This feature was orientated NW-SE and measured +2m long, +2.9m wide and 0.95m deep, with a gradually sloping northeast edge, moderately sharp upper break of slope and a rounded to flat base. It contained two exposed fills, the earliest of which (205) was a 0.95m thick reddish, yellow to white clay with a well compacted consistency and inclusions of sparse sub-rounded chert inclusions. The uppermost fill (204) was a 0.20m thick light brown sandy clay with a friable consistency and inclusions of sparse, moderately sorted angular mudstone, sandstone and chert fragments. No finds were recovered.

6. THE FINDS

by Kerry Kerr-Peterson

6.1 Introduction

All finds recovered on site have been cleaned then quantified according to material type within each context. The assemblage contains post-medieval pottery, ceramic building material (CBM), several iron objects, glass and animal bone. A finds quantification is included below in Table 1. Subject to the agreement of the landowner, all finds will be discarded.

Context	Context Description	Iron		Glass		CBM		Post-medieval pottery		Animal bone	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
100	Topsoil Trench 1	2	114			1	337	5	32		
202	Fill of ditch F203, Trench 2					3	129				
206	Fill of ditch F203			2	99			4	14	1	6
207	Fill of ditch F203					1	420	3	427		
208	Fill of ditch F203			4	41	2	66	8	216	1	8
209	Fill of ditch F203			1	80			1	30		
Totals		2	114	7	220	7	952	21	719	2	14

Table 1: Summary of finds by context (weights in grams)

6.2 Pottery

All of the 21 sherds of pottery (719g) are late post-medieval to modern in date. There are two sherds of Totnes-type glazed coarseware and two sherds of South Somerset lead-glazed earthenware, all dating to the 18th century. The rest of the pottery consists of 15 pieces of industrial produced wares, one sherd of stoneware and one piece of North Devon gravel tempered ware, all dating to the 19th century.

6.3 Ceramic building material (CBM)

A total of seven fragments of ceramic building material (952g) was recovered. These are all industrially produced and comprise five pieces of roof tile and two brick fragments. These all date to the 19th century or later.

6.4 Iron

There are two iron objects (114g) within the assemblage. One is a spike with a square profile and one flat end. The other is a nail with a square head and the shaft has a circular profile. Both of these are modern.

6.5 Glass

Seven pieces of glass (220g) were recovered. All of these are fragments of clear bottle glass and include a complete Crosby's Balsamic Cough Elixir bottle dating to the 19th century.

6.6 Animal bone

There are two fragments of animal bone (14g). These are undiagnostic to species, but includes a fragment of rib. There are no signs of butchery on the bones.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 The evaluation has identified re-cut ditches in both trenches, which appear to relate to the ever changing boundary between the agricultural land to the east and the existing Kingskerswell Road. No direct evidence of any Roman or prehistoric features or artefacts were identified and the ditches are likely to relate to post-medieval and modern land division and drainage, given the sterility of fills. There were a number of re-cuts identified, indicating that the ditches were 'cleaned out' regularly, presumably because they also acted as roadside drainage ditches so needed to be maintained. Finds were restricted to ditch F203 in Trench 2, which are all 18th and 19th century in date.

8. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

8.1 The finds, paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. It will be dealt with under the current RAMM, Exeter accession and discard policy.

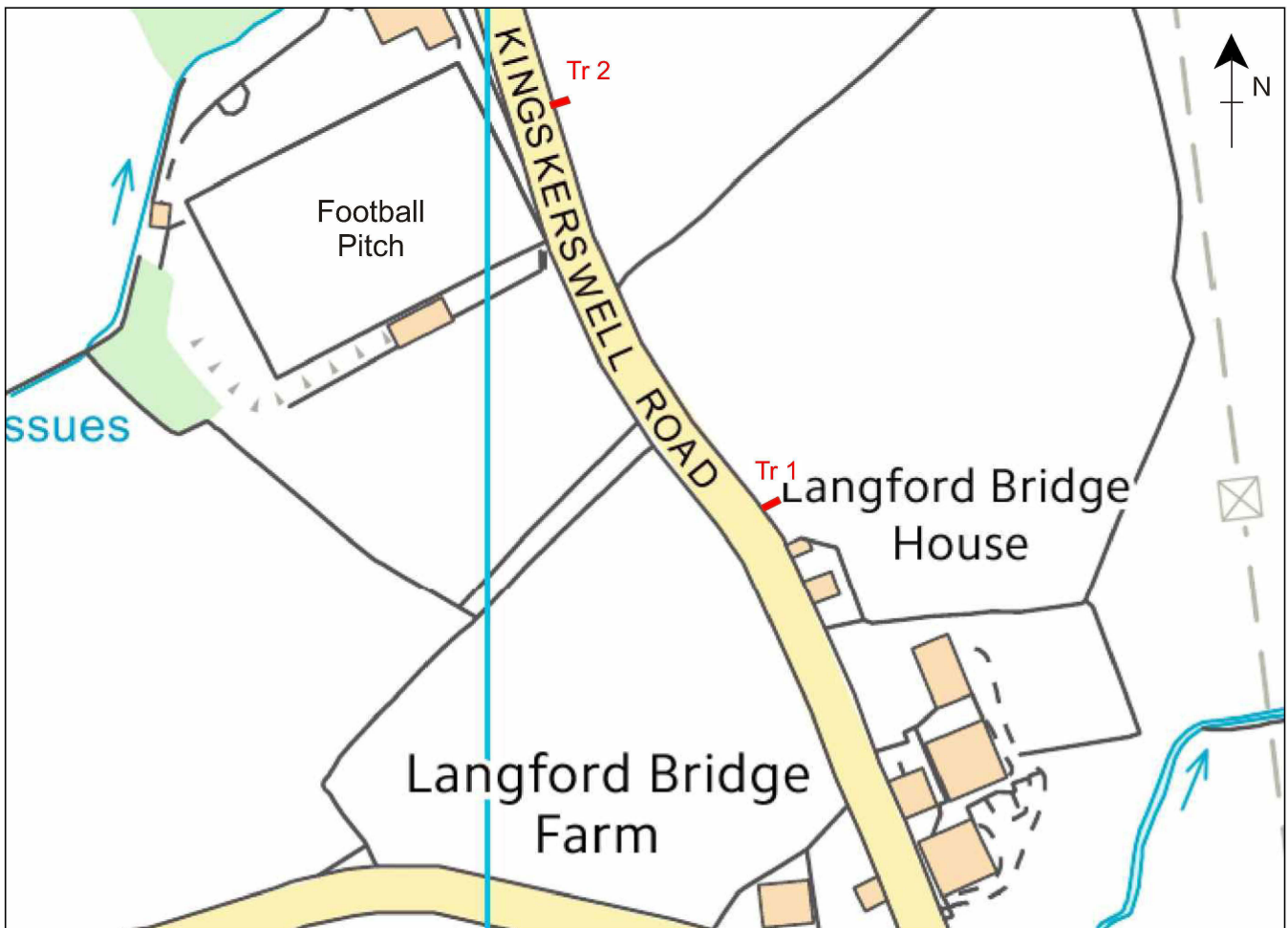
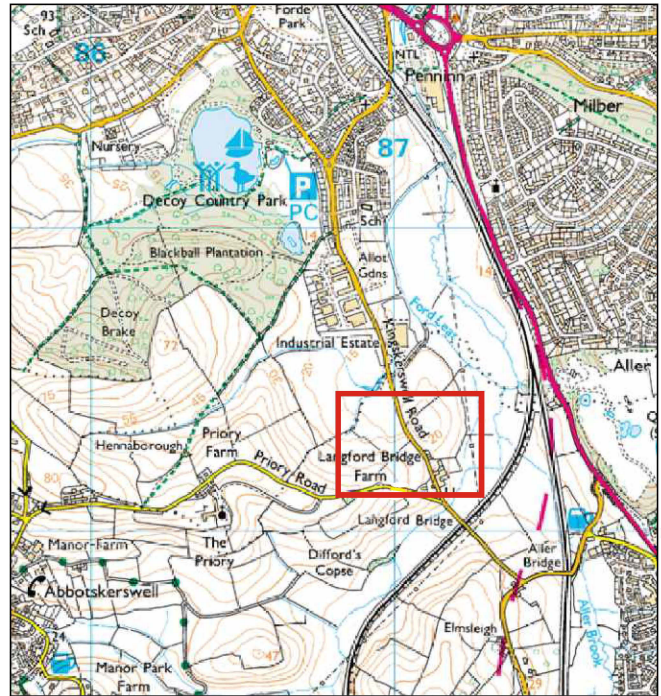
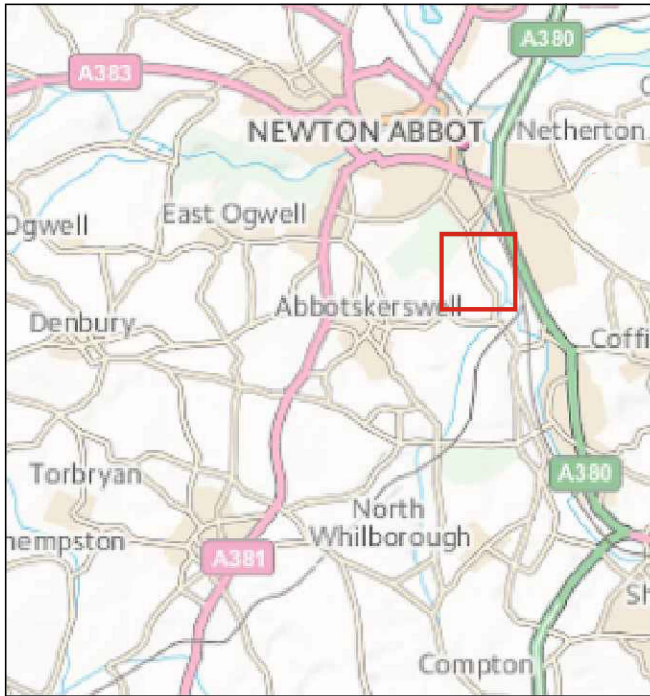
8.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed using the unique identifier 179100, which includes a digital copy of this report.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluation was commissioned by Richard Gallagher and Stephen Hansford of Galliford Try. The site work was undertaken by Ben Pears and Will Smith, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Elisabeth Patkai. The collaborative role of Stephen Reed, Devon Archaeology Officer, is duly acknowledged.

10. REFERENCE

Hughes, S., and Payne, N., 2013, *Archaeological Investigations along the A380 South Devon Link Road, Kingskerswell, Devon 2012-2013*. AC archaeology report for client, ref. ACD562/4/0



 Evaluation trenches

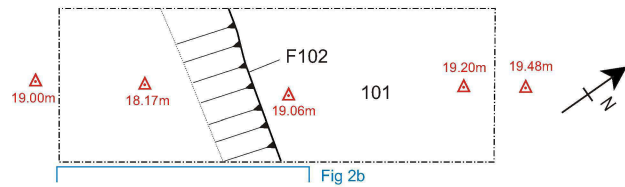
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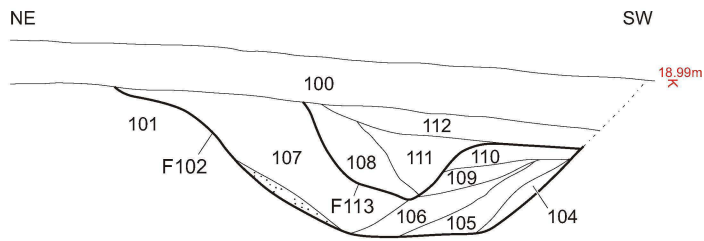
Fig. 1: Location of site and trenches



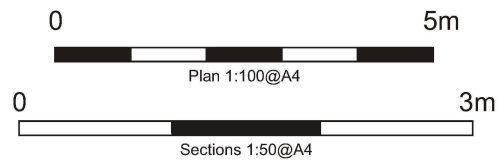
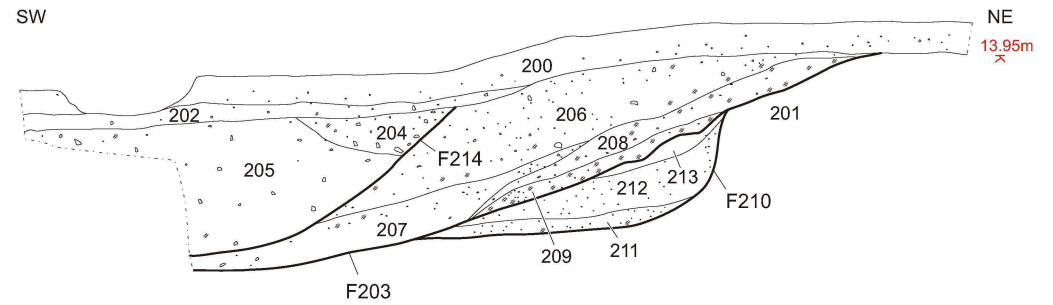
a) Trench 1, plan



b) Section of ditches, Trench 1



c) Section of Trench 2



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Kingskerswell, Devon

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Fig. 2: Trenches 1 and 2, plans
and sections



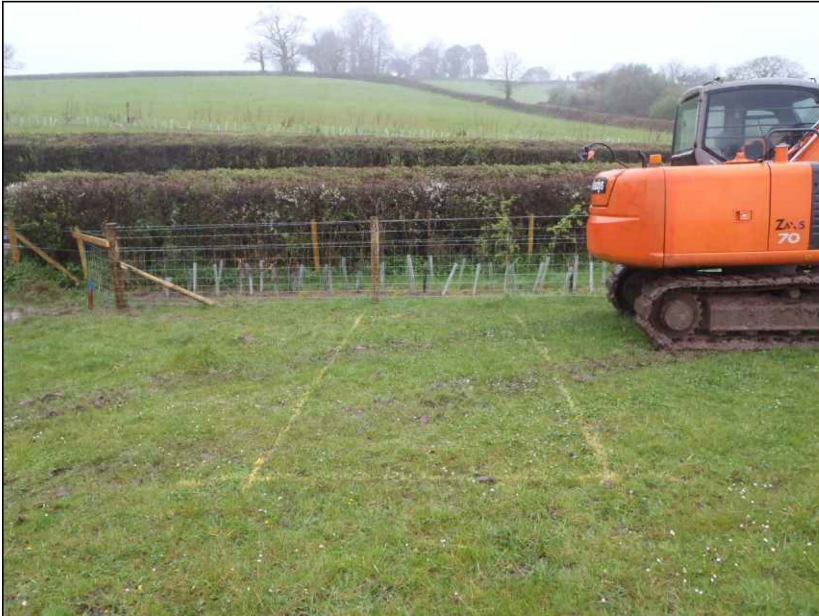


Plate 1: Trench 1, showing Kingskerswell Road beyond, view to southwest



Plate 2: Trench 1, ditches F102 and F113, view to southeast (1m scale)



Plate 3: Trench 1, view to southwest (1m scale)



Plate 4: Trench 2, showing Kingskerswell Road beyond, view to southwest



Plate 5: Trench 2, ditches F203 and F210, view to northeast (1m scale)



Plate 6: Trench 2, ditches F203, F210 and F214 in relation to hedgebank, view to west (1m scale)

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