

Land off Furge Lane, Henstridge, South Somerset

Results of an archaeological evaluation

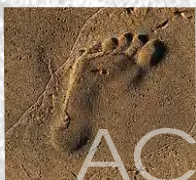
NGR 72356 19596

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archaeology

LAND OFF FURGE LANE, HENSTRIDGE, SOUTH SOMERSET:

NGR ST 72356 19596

Results of an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching

SUMMARY

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by AC archaeology Ltd. in June 2018 in support of a planning application for the construction of up to sixteen dwellings. The site is currently under pasture and is located to the southwest of Henstridge, with Furge Lane and Furge Grove to its immediate south and west (centred on ST 72356 19596). The site is immediately surrounded by housing, with St Nicolas' Church to the north.

The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of six trenches, each 1.6m wide and no more than 20m in length, totalling c. 320m² of trenching. The trenches were positioned in order to understand the nature of the archaeological resource present within the site boundaries. None of the trenches contained significant archaeological deposits, although a number of natural features and modern disturbance was noted. A very limited number of artefacts was collected as a result of the evaluation.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report sets out the results of an archaeological evaluation relating to land off Furge Lane, Henstridge, Somerset. The site location and trench positions are included in Fig.1.
- 1.2 The investigation was undertaken by AC archaeology Ltd. in June 2018. It was commissioned by J Palmer Ltd. following consultation with the South West Heritage Trust Senior Historic Environment Officer (SWHTSHEO). The evaluation was designed to assess the buried archaeological potential of the site in advance of the construction of sixteen dwellings (South Somerset District Council 12/01887/OUT & 16/02380/REM).
- 1.3 The site area, comprising approximately 0.5ha, is situated within the south-western portion of Henstridge, which is located approximately 8.5km south of Wincanton. The solid geology across the site consisted of Cornbrash Formation - Limestone. This is a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 164 to 168 million years ago during the Jurassic Period. (BGS online). There are no recorded details regarding superficial deposits.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Somerset Historic Environment Record (SHER) was consulted on-line. Records indicated that the village of Henstridge was a royal estate in the 10th century and was held by Earl Harold in 1066. By the 12th century it was held by the Camville family who are documented holding the manor & granary (HER 28150). In 1976 a carved 8th-10th century stone was found built into the east wall of Oak Vale Cottage; this stone was crudely carved in relief with poorly executed single

strand running knot interlace and has similar parallels to a stone from Batcombe in Dorset (HER 53956).

- 2.2 The surviving medieval structures of Henstridge are represented by the church of St Nicholas situated to the north of the site. St Nicholas (HER 51326) is a Grade II* listed building that was mostly rebuilt between 1872-3. Various 13th to 15th century elements including windows, porch and tower are still evident from the major rebuilding works in the mid-19th century. Sited within the churchyard is the remains of the 13th century cross set on its octagonal base (HER 51327).
- 2.3 Several archaeological interventions have taken place in and around the site of Henstridge, during 2007-2008 a watching brief at the Fountain Inn located c.134m to the north-east of the site uncovered several Saxo-Norman ditches and pits as well as the robbed wall trench from a medieval structure (HER 28149). At Church Farm, located 139m north of the site, a series of evaluation trenches and a subsequent excavation, between 2008 and 2009, uncovered 12th and 13th century ditches and dumps of occupational material (HER 28158).
- 2.4 The village of Henstridge continued to thrive during the post-medieval period and the village displays numerous standing structures dating from the mid-17th century, these include Manor Farmhouse located to the north-west (HER 51334); twelve domestic dwellings, including Glebe Cottage near Church Street (HER 51329) and Sundial House on Vale Street (HER 51353). A single coach house (HER 51319) of mid-18th century date is sited at Pond Farm (HER 51318) on Ash Walk to the north-east of the site.
- 2.5 Later 19th century structures present near the site include the corn mill (HER 53970); Henstridge House (HER 51331), the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel (HER 36829) and Congregational Church (HER 17839); Public House (HER 36889) and the National School (HER 36894). The site of a mill pond can be found depicted on the 1887 Ordnance Survey map to the north of the site. It is possible this mill pond may have earlier origins as it lies adjacent to the church of St Nicholas.

3. AIMS

- 3.1 The aim of the evaluation was to establish the significance, presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any archaeological features, deposits or finds within the site. The results of the investigation as set out in this document will be reviewed and used to inform any subsequent archaeological mitigation, as required.

4. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a project design for archaeological evaluation, prepared by AC archaeology (Trott 2018), which was submitted to and approved by the SWHTSHEO, prior to commencement.
- 4.2 The investigation comprised the machine excavation of six trenches (a total of 320m² in area) with each trench being 1.6m wide and 20m in length. Each trench was positioned to understand the nature of the archaeological resource and amounts to a c. 4% sample of the site. Trenches were positioned on the ground using a survey grade GNSS instrument with a horizontal precision of c. 20mm (see Fig. 1).

5. RESULTS

- 5.1** None of the trenches excavated contained significant archaeological features. Descriptions of 'negative' trenches, devoid of any archaeological deposits, are summarised in Appendix 1, while a selection of photographs are included as plates (**Plates 1 - 4**).
- 5.2** Several irregular features were investigated, noticeably in Trench 4 and Trench 6. In Trench 4 two parallel linear features, located towards the south-southeast end of the trench, were investigated but not found to be archaeological in origin. In Trench 6 a limestone filled 'French' drain was noted approximately 2.8m from the east end of the trench. This probable field drain was aligned north to south and cut into the subsoil (**Plate 3**). In addition, 3.6m to the west of the drain was a sub circular pit-like feature, F603. This pit feature had a maximum diameter of 0.5m and was 0.3m deep. It had a single fill, comprising dark grey-brown silty clay, which contained modern debris such as brick, glass and metal fragments (**Plate 4**). It is thought to be 20th century in origin and may relate to agricultural activity on the site; similar debris and disturbance was noted in the topsoil in a number of the other trenches during the site investigation. Feature F603 is of limited archaeological value.
- 5.3** Subsoil was evident throughout the evaluation trenches, with a noticeably greater depth recorded in Trenches 5 and 6. This is attributed to the gradual slope of the land towards the east, with the resultant increased depth in subsurface soils.

6. FINDS

- 6.1** A small quantity of post-medieval pottery and animal bone was observed in the topsoil and subsoil of a number of the trenches. Only those pre-c1850 were retained.

Context	Type	No	Wt	Note
401	Animal Bone	1	4	
401	Post Medieval pottery	4	27	Earthenware
401	Modern pottery	1	2	blue white ware
501	Post Medieval pottery	2	30	Earthenware adjoining handle fragments
601	Animal Bone	4	14	

7. COMMENT

- 7.1** A consistent deposit sequence of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural was encountered throughout the evaluation trenches.
- 7.2** Aside from the modern features and anomalies described above, no discernible archaeological features or deposits were present in the trenches. The only features present relate to geological anomalies and those having a modern origin. Overall, the results of the evaluation indicate that there has been little archaeological activity within the site boundary.

8. REFERENCES

Trott. K, 2018, *Land off Furge Lane, Henstridge, South Somerset. Project design for Archaeological evaluation*. Unpublished AC archaeology Ltd. Document no. ACW1128/1/0

British Geological Survey Online Viewer. <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>.
Accessed June 2018

Selected Photographic Plates



Plate 1: General view of site with Trench 4 in the foreground. View from the southeast



Plate 2: View of Trench 5 from the northeast. Scale 2 x 1m



Plate 3: Oblique view of limestone drain in Trench 6. View from the north



Plate 4: View of Trench 6 with pit F603. View from the east. Scale 0.2m

SCALE 1:500
0 5 10 15 20 25m



APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY TABLE OF TRENCH RESULTS

(All depths from ground surface)

Trench 1 (20m)			Alignment
			NW – SE
Context	Description	Depth (mm)	Interpretation
100	Mid grey-brown silty clay. Loose with rare sub-angular stones	0-220	Topsoil
101	Mid yellow-brown silt with clay. Friable with rare limestone frags and stones	220-350	Subsoil
102	Mottled mid yellow-brown clay with silt with common limestone/brash	+350	Natural geology
Trench 2 (20m)			Alignment
			N – S
Context	Description	Depth (mm)	Interpretation
200	Mid grey-brown silty clay. Loose with rare sub-angular stones	0-200	Topsoil
201	Mid yellow-brown silt with clay. Friable with rare limestone frags and stones	200-380	Subsoil
202	Mottled mid yellow-brown clay with silt with common limestone/brash	+380	Natural geology
Trench 3 (20m)			Alignment
			NE – SW
Context	Description	Depth (mm)	Interpretation
300	Mid grey-brown silty clay. Loose with rare sub-angular stones	0-200	Topsoil
301	Mid yellow-brown silt with clay. Friable with rare limestone frags and stones	200-350	Subsoil
302	Mottled mid yellow-brown clay with silt with common limestone/brash	+350	Natural geology
Trench 4 (20m)			Alignment
			NNW – SSE
Context	Description	Depth (mm)	Interpretation
400	Mid grey-brown silty clay. Loose with rare sub-angular stones	0-250	Topsoil
401	Mid yellow-brown silt with clay. Friable with rare limestone frags and stones	250-450	Subsoil
402	Mottled mid yellow-brown clay with silt with common limestone/brash	+450	Natural geology
Trench 5 (20m)			Alignment
			NE – SW
Context	Description	Depth (mm)	Interpretation
500	Mid grey-brown silty clay. Loose with rare sub-angular stones	0-250	Topsoil
501	Mid yellow-brown silt with clay. Friable with rare limestone frags and stones	250-650	Subsoil
502	Mottled mid yellow-brown clay with silt with common limestone/brash	+650	Natural geology
Trench 6 (20m)			Alignment
			E – W
Context	Description	Depth (mm)	Interpretation
600	Mid grey-brown silty clay. Loose with rare sub-angular stones	0-250	Topsoil
601	Mid yellow-brown silt with clay. Friable with rare limestone frags and stones	250-550	Subsoil
602	Mottled mid yellow-brown clay with silt with common limestone/brash	+550	Natural geology
F603	Sub circular 'pit' feature, filled with dark grey-brown silty clay with CBM	300	Modern 'pit'

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