

Results of archaeological recording of groundworks on land north of Mill Lane, Creech St Michael, Somerset

Centred on NGR ST2712325379

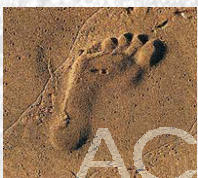
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archaeology

RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING OF GROUNDWORKS ON LAND NORTH OF MILL LANE, CREECH ST. MICHAEL, SOMERSET (CENTRED ON ST2712325379)

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out in June and July 2009 during groundworks associated with the construction of a millstream diversion channel on land to the north of Mill Lane, Creech St. Michael, Somerset (ST2712325379). The site is located within and adjacent to the course of a post-medieval millstream, with a possibility that buried features associated with an early mill might have been present and where there is potential for the survival of organic and other palaeoenvironmental remains sealed by and within flood deposits adjacent to the River Tone.

The watching brief was carried out during groundworks associated with the installation of a box culvert and gabions within the southern bank of the millstream and in the millstream itself, within an area measuring 4 m long x 3.6 m wide x 2.4 m deep. Undated alluvial layers were present in the lower part of the recorded layer sequence, which were overlain by a redeposited clay subsoil onto which was a modern levelling deposit and a partly reinstated bank.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report sets out the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out during groundworks associated with the diversion of a millstream to the north of Mill Lane, Creech St. Michael, Somerset (NGR ST27 12325379). The work forms part of a general scheme of improvements to the flood defences of the River Tone at Creech St. Michael. The watching brief was carried out by AC archaeology during June and July, 2009 and was commissioned by Jacobs Engineering UK Ltd on behalf of the Environment Agency.
- 1.2 The site is located on land adjacent to Mill Lane along the northern flank of the River Tone, approximately 250m west of Creech St. Michael (Fig. 1). The works requiring archaeological monitoring comprised the construction of a millstream diversion channel from the River Tone to the millstream north of Mill Lane, which involved the installation of a box culvert, retaining gabions, a control structure and silt trap. These works formed part of a series of flood defence improvements at Creech St. Michael, which are also shown on Fig. 1.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site is located in an area where there is potential for the survival of organic and other palaeoenvironmental remains sealed by and within flood deposits adjacent to the river. There was also the possibility that buried features associated with an early mill might be present.
- 2.2 As part of the scheme, an earlier trench evaluation was carried out for a proposed borrow pit on land to the northeast of Brickyard Farm (Fig. 1). This revealed largely negative results, although a pre-glacial alluvial deposit was present at a depth of 2.7m below ground level (Hughes 2009).

3. AIM

- 3.1 The aim of the watching brief was to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any *in-situ* archaeological features or deposits exposed during construction of the millstream diversion channel.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1** The watching brief was carried out during groundworks to the north of Mill Lane, within the area of the southern millstream bank and the millstream itself (Fig. 2 and Plate 1). This included the monitoring of groundworks associated with the insertion of the northern moat section of the box culvert and the retaining gabions. All groundworks were carried out using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket and working under constant archaeological supervision.
- 4.2** The site was recorded in accordance with the AC archaeology pro-forma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 1*.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1** The area of excavation for the box culvert and gabions measured approximately 4m x 3.6m and was dug to a depth of approximately 2.4 m below ground level into a homogenous alluvial clay deposit (context 105). The recorded layer sequence is summarised in Table 1 below and shown on Fig. 3 and Plate 2.

Table 1: The recorded layer sequence

Context	Depth below ground level (m)	Description	Interpretation
100	0-0.3	Existing tarmac surface with gravel bedding	Existing road surface of Mill lane
101	0-0.3	Dark brown friable silt with occasional small-medium sub-angular stones <0.05m	Bank material
102	0-1	A mix of dark grey and black compact sand, gravels and clay with abundant clinker and small-medium stones <0.05m, moderate stones >0.05m and occasional brick fragments	Levelling deposit
103	1-1.7	Light brown firm silty clay	Redeposited layer
104	1.70-2.2	Light greyish-brown firm silty clay with rare small-medium stones <0.05m	Alluvial clay
105	2.2+	Light blue/grey firm silty clay	Alluvial clay

6. COMMENTS

- 6.1** The watching brief has established the presence in the lower layer sequence of alluvial clay deposits (104) and (105). These were probably deposited as a result of undated successive episodes of flooding from the River Tone. The accumulation of overlying subsoil layer (103) represents a period of greater stabilisation within the river floodplain area when it was less prone to such flooding. The original millstream, which would have played an important role in providing water to the nearby mill during the post-medieval period, was most likely cut into this layer.
- 6.2** During the late 19th or early 20th-century an up to 1m thick rubble and cinder layer (102) was deposited within the area, either as a levelling deposit for the construction of the existing Mill Lane or as a dump of residual waste material from the construction of the railway line and embankment located immediately to the north. This layer was partly overlain by a brown silt (101), which was probably deposited as part of the reinstatement of the southern millstream bank.

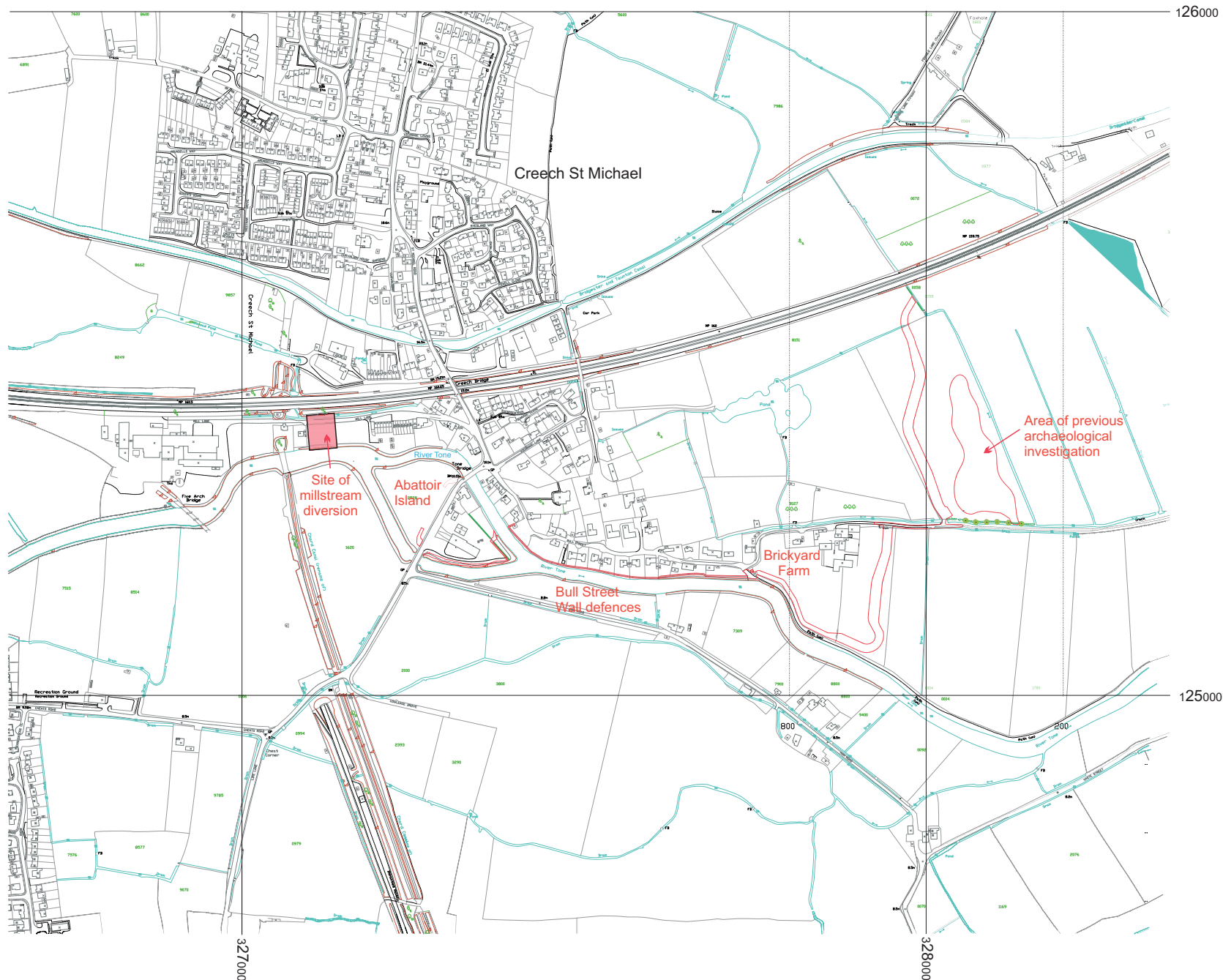
- 6.3** No *in situ* archaeological deposits or features were exposed during groundworks and no palaeoenvironmental deposits were recorded. No pre-modern finds were recovered either from the spoil or from the exposed deposits.

7. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

- 7.1** The paper and digital archive and finds are currently held at the offices of AC Archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. They will be deposited at Somerset County Museum, Taunton, under the accession code TTNCM 157/2009.
- 7.2** The OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations) number for this project is 64867.

8. REFERENCES

Hughes, S., 2009, *A proposed borrow pit on land at Brickyard Farm, Creech St. Michael, Somerset: Results of an archaeological evaluation*. AC archaeology report ref. ACD43/1/0.



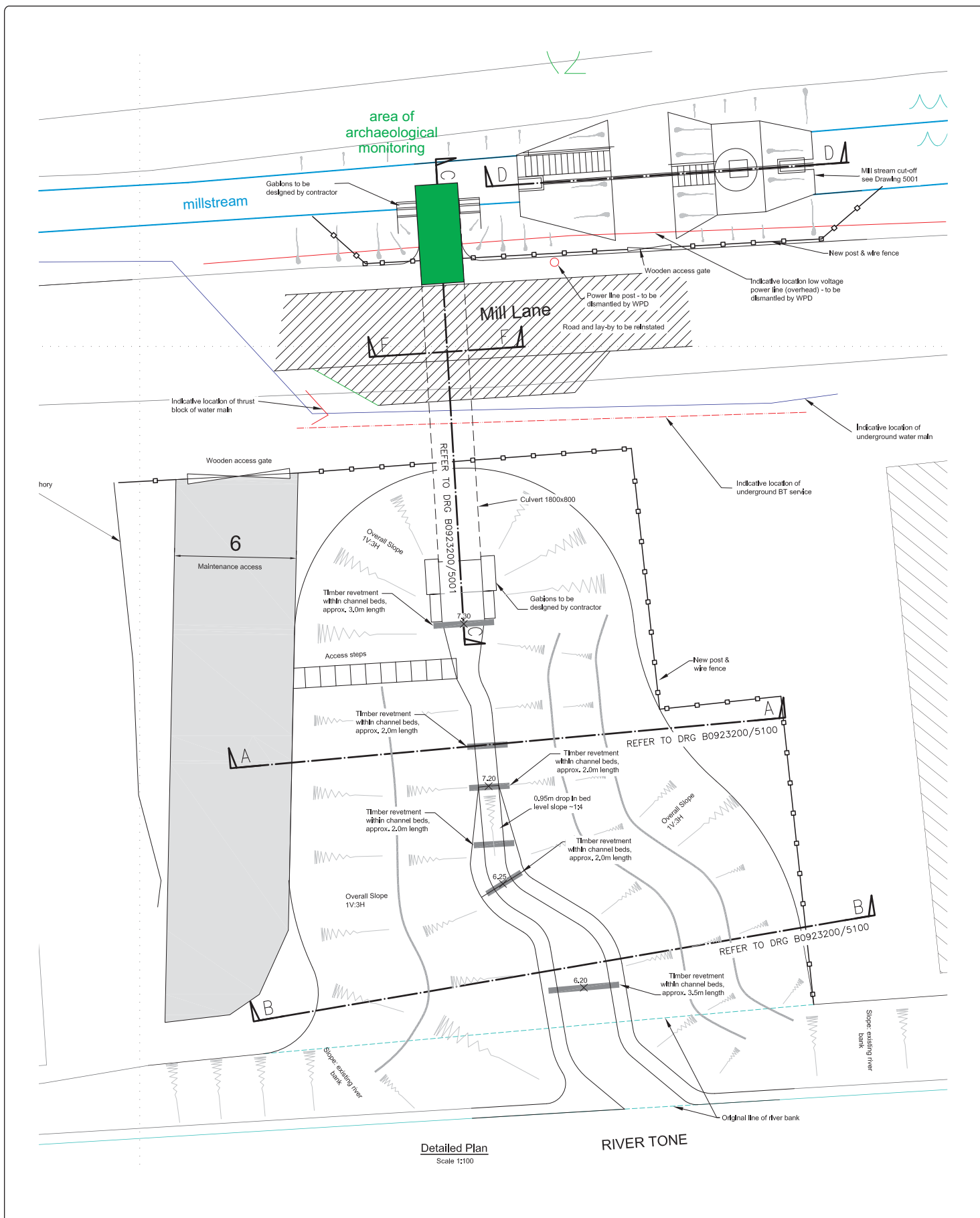
PROJECT

Land adjacent to Mill Lane,
Creech St Michael

TITLE

Fig. 1:
Location of site and flood defence
improvements





0 10m

PROJECT

Land adjacent to Mill Lane,
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Fig. 2:
Site of millstream diversion channel and area of
archaeological monitoring



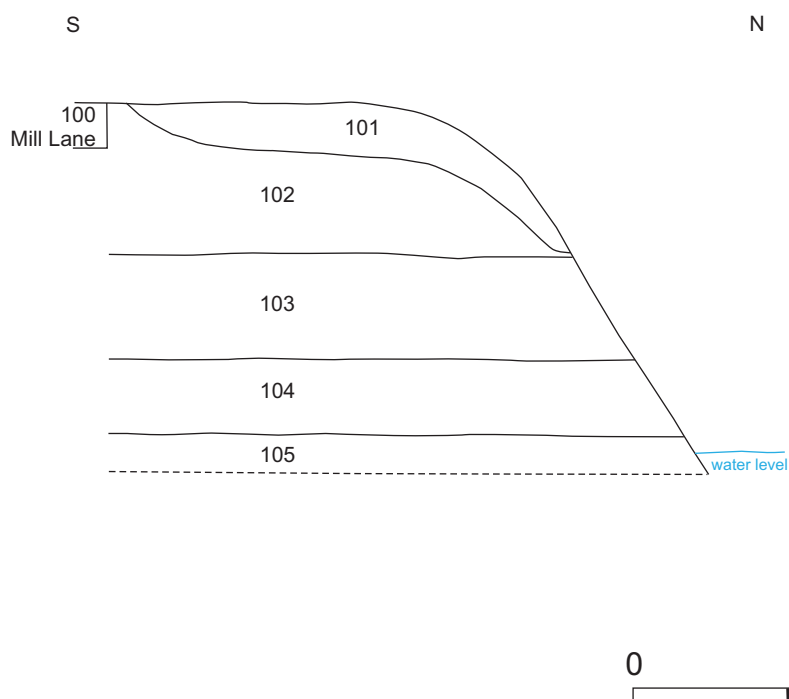




Plate 1: General view of site, looking west



Plate 2: Section showing the recorded layer sequence, looking to the east (scale 1m)

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