

# BS069: Holt to Semington Water Main Replacement, Wiltshire.

An Archaeological Watching Brief.



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# BS069: Holt to Semington Water Main Replacement, Wiltshire.

## An Archaeological Watching Brief

for

Wessex Water plc

by



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**OASIS Record No:** 1-95222

**National Grid Reference:** From NGR ST 88434 61711 to NGR ST 89982 61192

**Wessex Water plc scheme reference:** BS069

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February 2011

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## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on groundworks relating to a water main replacement scheme running between Holt and Semington in Wiltshire (centred on NGR ST 88434 61711 to NGR ST 89982 61192) over 22 days between the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2010 and the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2010. The investigation was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc.*

*The Watching Brief revealed three main areas of archaeological activity along the route of the easement. These included two areas of medieval ridge and furrow and a post-medieval/modern foundation of a small agricultural building. The easement strip across the earthworks was unable to prove or disprove the exact nature of the earthworks and the finds recovered during the watching brief indicate that there has been archaeological activity within the vicinity of the easement since the prehistoric period.*

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks relating to a water main replacement scheme running between Holt and Semington, Wiltshire (centred on NGR ST 88434 61711 to NGR ST 89982 61192) (hereafter referred to as the Site) (**Figure 1**) over 22 days between the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2010 and the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2010. The investigation was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc.
- 1.2 The watching brief was requested by Ms Lizzie Willis (Assistant Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc) following a consultation request to Mr David Vaughan (Assistant County Archaeologist, Wiltshire County Archaeology Service (WCAS)). In a consultation letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010 Mr Vaughan stated:
- “The following archaeology will potentially be disturbed or destroyed by the works along the proposed route:*
- *ST86SE457 - NGR ST87996207: earthworks, possible site of Manaton village (AD1325)*
  - *ST86SE615 - NGR88076185: possible enclosure overlain by medieval ridge and furrow”*
- 1.3 The watching brief works were monitored by Mr Vaughan, with Site visits on 13<sup>th</sup> August, 21<sup>st</sup> September and 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010.
- 1.4 At the request of Ms Willis, COAS issued a *Written Scheme of Investigation for An Archaeological Watching Brief: Holt to Semington Water Main Replacement, Wiltshire* (COAS May 2010), which provided a strategy for the archaeological works. This was submitted to and approved by Mr Vaughan prior to the commencement of the investigation.
- 1.5 The request for the archaeological work follows advice given by Central Government as set out in *Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1), General Policy and Principles, 2005*, and *Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5)*, issued by the DoE in 2010. The recommendation also conforms to County Structure and Local Plans.
- 1.6 This report summarises the topographical, geological, archaeological setting of the site, and presents the results of the watching brief.

## 2. Site Location, Topography and Geology

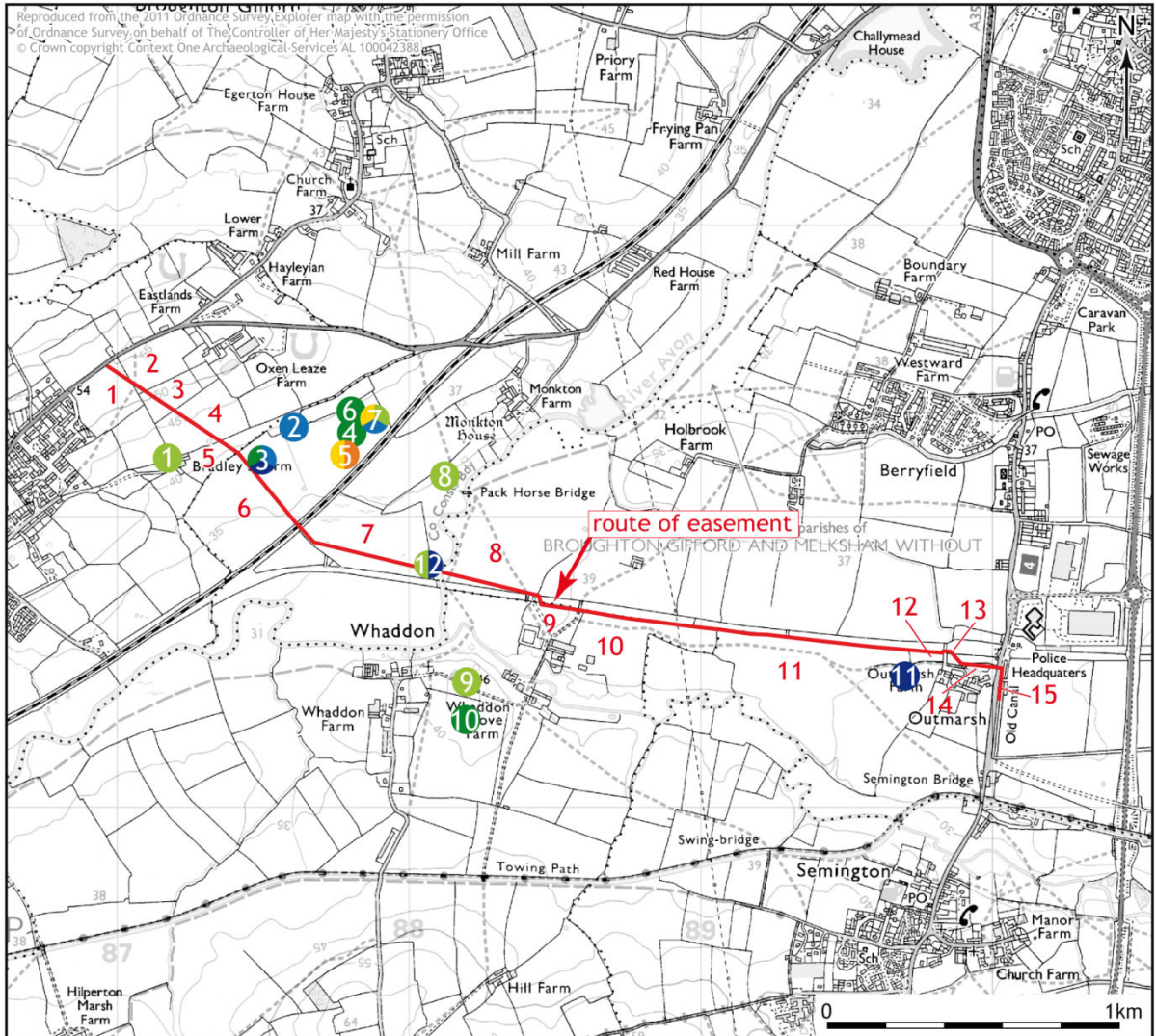
- 2.1 The route of the pipeline runs in a north-westerly to south-easterly direction from a location c. 1.2km north-east of the village of Holt (NGR ST 88434 61711) and terminates at a location between the village of Semington and Outmarsh (NGR ST 89982 61192, **Figure 1**). The western end of the pipeline route is c.54m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and this dips to c.30m aOD at c.1.30km along its length, rising again to c.40m aOD at its eastern end. According to the British Geological Survey (2011, the underlying geology consists of Kellaways Clay Member Mudstone with superficial deposits of river terrace sand and gravel, and Oxford Clay Formation with superficial deposits of clay, silt and gravel. The soils in this area are characterised by free draining, lime-rich loamy soils and slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC), 2011.

### 3. Archaeological Background

3.1 The archaeological background for the Site has been drawn the records held by Wiltshire County Council as part of the Wiltshire County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). A summary of this information is displayed below in **Table 1** and illustrated on **Figure 1**.

SMR No.	Description	NGR	Distance/Direction from Site
<b>Bronze Age 2100BC-700BC</b>			
ST86SE150	Bronze Age pottery fragments	ST 8780 6225	c.400m N
ST86SE151	Bronze Age pottery fragments.	ST 8787 6235	c.500m N
<b>Iron Age 699BC-AD43</b>			
ST86SE200	Iron Age pottery fragments and a metal object.	ST 8780 6225	c.430m N
<b>Roman AD43-AD450</b>			
ST86SE300	Romano-British pottery fragments. Other material suggests presence of a villa building nearby.	ST 882 613	c.460m S
ST86SE301	Romano-British building foundations found with pottery fragments and coins.	ST 8780 6231	c.470m N
ST86SE303	Romano-British building stone, pottery fragments and other objects	ST 8780 6235	c.500m N
ST86SE304	Six sherds of Roman pottery and 1 piece of stone tile.	ST 875 622	c.100m E
<b>Medieval AD1066-AD1547</b>			
ST86SE456	Settlement with Medieval origins known as Wadone AD1086. Medieval pottery fragments.	ST 8820 6143	c.340m S
ST86SE457	Medieval earthworks. Possibly the former settlement of Monkton.	ST 8799 6207	c.250m N
ST86SE458	Farmstead with Medieval origins.	ST 872 622	c.100m W
ST86SE615	Possible enclosure overlain by medieval ridge & furrow	ST 8807615	c. 0m
ST86SE467	Medieval pottery fragments and a bronze mount for holding pendants.	ST 8787 6235	c.500m N
<b>Post-medieval AD1547-AD1800</b>			
ST86SE528	Post-Medieval sherds found in a possible ditch.	ST 876 623	c.330m E
ST86SE526	Post-Medieval bottle seal and two lead tokens.	ST 8787 6235	c.500m N
ST86SE527	Post-Medieval pottery pieces associated with possible demolished building.	ST 875 622	c.100m E
<b>Undated</b>			
ST86SE550	Nine undated flint implements.	ST 875 622	c.80m E
ST86SE623	Undated circular earthwork, possibly a low mound.	ST 8971 6144	c.120m S

**Table 1:** Summary of recorded archaeological events within a 500m radius of the Site.



1. SMR No. ST86SE458 Farmstead with medieval origins
2. SMR No. ST86SE528 Post Medieval pottery sherds found in a possible ditch
3. SMR No. ST86SE304 Many pieces of Roman pottery and one piece of stone tile  
SMR No. ST86SE527 Post-Medieval pottery pieces associated with possible demolished building  
SMR No. ST86SE550 Nine undated flint implements
4. SMR No. ST86SE301 Romano-British building foundations found with pottery fragments and coins
5. SMR No. ST86SE150 Bronze Age pottery fragments  
SMR No. ST86SE200 Iron Age pottery fragments and a metal object
6. SMR No. ST86SE303 Romano-British building stone, pottery fragments and other objects
7. SMR No. ST86SE151 Bronze Age pottery fragments  
SMR No. ST86SE467 Medieval pottery fragments and a bronze object  
SMR No. ST86SE526 Post-Medieval bottle seal and two lead tokens
8. SMR No. ST86SE457 Medieval earthworks. Possibly the former settlement of Monkton
9. SMR No. ST86SE456 Settlement with Medieval origins. Medieval pottery fragments
10. SMR No. ST86SE300 Romano-British pottery fragments. Other material suggests presence of a villa building nearby
11. SMR No. ST86SE623 Undated circular earthwork, possibly a low mound
12. SMR No. ST86SE615 Possible enclosure overlain by medieval ridge and furrow



- Bronze Age
- Iron Age
- Romano-British
- Medieval
- Post Medieval
- Undated
- XX field numbers

**PROJECT TITLE**

Holt to Semington Water Main Replacement, Wiltshire

**FIGURE TITLE**

Site setting showing relevant archaeological landscape

**SCALE**

as shown

**PROJECT CODE**

COAS/WBF/10/HSW

**FIGURE NO.**

1

## 4. Methodology

### Wessex Water Methodology

- 4.1 The total length of the pipeline under archaeological observation was c. 3.4km (from NGR ST 88434 61711 to NGR ST 89982 61192). An easement c. 10m wide was machine excavated in order to provide a working surface and facilitate access (**Figure 1**). To create the easement a machine equipped with a toothless bucket removed the topsoil to a maximum depth of c. 0.20m. A tracked wheel trencher was used to excavate the trench for the replacement water supply main to a maximum depth of 1.20m and a maximum width of 1m.
- 4.2 Where the required route of the pipeline crossed a road, railway, or river, directional drilling was used to tunnel under the ground. A machine equipped with a toothless grading bucket excavated four launch pits (c. 1.6m wide and between 2.50m and 3.50m deep) between Fields 6 and 7 and Fields 7 and 8.

### Archaeological Methodology

- 4.3 The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation in Wiltshire* (County Archaeological Service (CAS), Wiltshire County Council Libraries Museums and Arts, 1995) and under the terms of the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* published by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IfA) in October, 1994 (rev. September, 1999). COAS adhered to the *Code of Conduct* issued by the IfA in October 1997, and *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* (1990, rev. September, 2000), at all times during the course of the investigation. The current Health and Safety legislation and guidelines were followed on site.

### Easement stripping

- 4.4 The machine removal of the ploughsoil/topsoil along the route of the easement was carried out under archaeological supervision.
- 4.5 For the purposes of archaeological recording, all areas exposed through development excavations were systematically scanned for features/deposits by walking in 'zig-zag' traverses across their width. The location of any archaeological features/deposits were initially recorded using a handheld GPS unit capable of <3m accuracy. The Site Manager and groundwork contractors were informed of these locations.
- 4.6 The surface collection of cultural material (excluding modern bulk material) was also carried out during scanning operations and these were bagged according to field/land unit. Significant objects or concentrations of artefacts were bagged separately and their location recorded using a TopCon GRS-1 RTK GPS unit. The character of topsoil/ploughsoil deposits and the natural geology within each field/land unit were also recorded using standard COAS *pro-forma* recording sheets. Soil colours were recorded using a Munsell soil colour chart.
- 4.7 A GPS survey was undertaken of the easement using a TopCon GRS-1 RTK GPS unit. Readings were taken at 10-15m intervals and at changes in alignment along each edge of the easement to accurately record its location, shape and altitude relative to the National Grid and Ordnance Datum. The location and altitude of archaeological remains and excavated sections was also recorded as part of the GPS survey.



### **Detailed Site Survey**

- 4.8 A detailed topographic survey was carried out in Field 7 across the extent of the earthworks of a possible Deserted Medieval Villiage, within the easement, prior to any groundworks taking place. Following reinstatement of the trench, easement and earthworks, a second topographic survey was carried out to check reinstatement levels. The reinstated levels were within 0.03/0.04m of the original level. All topographic survey work was undertaken using a TopCon GRS-1 RTK GPS unit.

### **Trenching**

- 4.9 Due to the nature of the trenching methodology (the pipe being laid in the trench immediately after the trencher has opened the ground) it was not possible to clearly observe the deposit sequence within the trench. As such the ground was stripped to a clean archaeological level during the formation of the easement, thus exposing all potential archaeological features/deposits on Site.
- 4.10 At appropriate intervals along the pipe trench, profile sections were recorded using COAS *pro-forma* profile log sheets to illustrate the principal stratigraphic and physical characteristics of the deposits encountered.
- 4.11 All deposits and archaeological features were sampled by manual excavation to establish stratigraphic relationships, recover sufficient artefacts to establish 'absolute' dates, determine feature/deposit morphology and character and to recover economic and palaeoenvironmental indicators. Features and deposits were recorded on dimensionally stable media at scales of 1:20 (plans) and 1:10 (sections). All features/deposits were recorded using standard COAS *pro-forma* recording sheets. Stratigraphic relationships were recorded using a "Harris-Winchester matrix" diagram. Soil colours were recorded using a Munsell soil colour chart. A photographic record of the work was prepared and involved the use of digital images. The photographic record included shots of the stripped area, individual features and working shots to illustrate the nature of the archaeological operation mounted. Consideration was also given to the possibility of publication.
- 4.12 Artefacts collected from archaeological features/deposits were bagged using a combination of site code and context numbers. All finds from the Site were retained for processing in preparation for further analysis and archiving. Specialist reports of the artefact assemblage were compiled using both descriptive and tabular formats (see section 7.). Deposits were considered for soil sample retention, but no suitable deposits were revealed during the watching brief. Discussions as to the disposal of any artefactual material will be held with the Curator of Wiltshire Heritage Museum.

## **5. Results**

- 5.1 In the text, context numbers for cuts appear in square brackets, e.g. [1004]; layer and fill numbers appear in standard brackets, e.g. (1002). Where a feature is discussed, it is referenced with its cut and associated fill numbers.

### **Soil Sequence and Geology**

- 5.2 The same general sequence of topsoil (100) over subsoil (101) over natural clay (102) was observed throughout the route of the easement and conforms to the geology and soils records of the British Geological Survey (2011) and MAGIC (2011).

### Archaeological Features

- 5.2 Within Field 12 the foundation remains of a small stone built structure (**Figure 2, Plate 1**) were revealed directly beneath the topsoil (100). The structure (G110) measured 4.5m x 3.2m with a small paved area (115 & 117) to the south measuring 2.5m x 1.5m. At the southern end of the paved area a line of red bricks (116) was revealed. Two courses of stonework survive with the lower course (111) slightly stepped out from the upper course (112/113).



Plate 1. Structure (G115) in Field 12

- 5.3 Two areas of medieval ridge and furrow were located directly beneath the topsoil within Fields 7 & 12. Excavation of a section across the ridge a furrow in Field 12 (**Figure 2, Plate 2**) revealed that the furrows were aligned approximately north/south and were between 0.1m deep at their western end and extended to a depth of 0.4m at their eastern end. The furrows were separated by ridges spaced c. 6m apart.



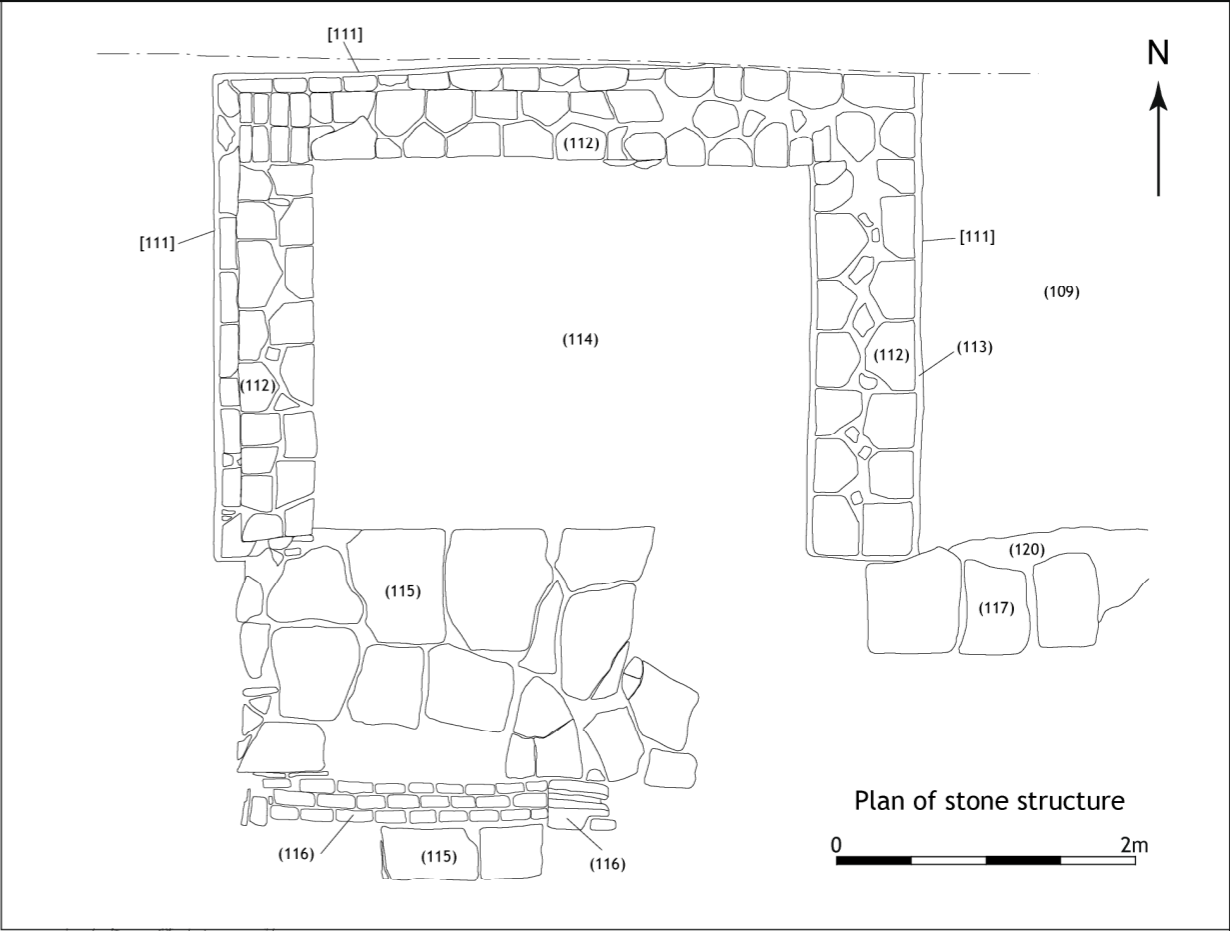
Plate 2. Ridge and Furrow in Field 12

- 5.3 As stated above (Section 4.8) a full topographical survey was undertaken of the earthworks (a possible deserted medieval village) in Field 7 prior to the stripping of the easement. The easement strip revealed no direct evidence (features or finds) of medieval activity or any other period within the area of the earthworks. A single modern horse shoe was noted within a water borne deposit (200) at the base of the southernmost earthwork (**Plate 3**).



**Plate 3.** Water borne deposit at the base of southernmost earthwork.

Based on a drawing by Wessex Water Plc.



- route of easement
- area surveyed
- (000) deposit/layer/structure number
- [000] cut number

PROJECT TITLE		
Holt to Semington Water Main Replacement, Wiltshire		
FIGURE TITLE		
Detailed site setting		
SCALE	PROJECT CODE	FIGURE NO.
as shown	COAS/WBF/10/HSW	<b>2</b>

## 6 The Finds

- 6.1 With the exception of metalwork, the finds recovered from the watching brief were washed and, where necessary, will be marked with the site code and context number. The finds were separated into artefact types and quantified by context number, quantity and weight in grams. Bulk finds such as post-medieval and modern brick, tile and slate were noted but not collected. The finds are discussed separately below. A request will be made to the Site owner(s) to transfer the title of all finds to the above Museum.

### **Metal finds**

- 6.2 From the topsoil (100) in Field 10, a 1714 Queen Anne gold guinea was collected, measuring 25mm in diameter and 8.35g in weight. The coin is in excellent condition other than one slight chip to the rim.



Plate 4. Queen Anne Gold Guinea

- 6.3 Following the recovery of the gold coin it was decided that a metal detector would be used within the immediate surrounding area. As a result several further metal objects were recovered, the details of which are summarised below.
- 6.4 From the topsoil (100) in Field 10, a medieval (1250 -1450 AD) copper alloy brooch (2g) was recovered. It is roughly circular with a diameter of 18mm with the pin (18mm) still attached.
- 6.5 Six lead objects were recovered from the topsoil in Field 10 and consisted of a complete cast musket ball (8g) with casting mark, a lead seal (6g) with the inscription B & P, and four undiagnostic fragments (34g).
- 6.6 Three iron nails (85g) were recovered from the topsoil (100) surrounding the stone foundations in Field 12. A further three unstratified iron objects were located within the topsoil in Field 10 and consisted of a blade fragment (7g), a circular disc/possible token (4g) and a further nail 17(17g).
- 6.7 A fragment of bronze (105g), possibly from an axe, was recovered from the topsoil (100) in Field 10.

### **Stone Object**

- 6.8 A single fragment of a 19<sup>th</sup> century slate pencil (4g) was recovered from deposit (108) which covered part of Structure G110 in Field 12. It is 43mm long and has a diameter of 5mm.

### **Pottery**

- 6.9 Seventeen sherds of pottery were recovered during the topsoil strip of the easement, four of which were unstratified and consisted of three very abraded prehistoric sherds (18g) and a single sherd of late 19<sup>th</sup> century red earthenware (11g). The other 13 sherds of pottery (70g) were located within the

topsoil (101) during the easement strip of Fields 7 & 8 and consisted of very abraded ceramic sherds of Roman date.

#### **Flint**

- 6.9 Eight fragment of flint were recovered during the easement strip. A single waste flake fragment (7g) was stratified and recovered from the subsoil (101) and seven further unstratified fragments (45g) were recovered along the length of the easement.

## **6. Discussion and Conclusions**

- 6.1 The watching brief revealed three main areas of archaeological activity along the route of the easement. This included two areas of medieval ridge and furrow in Fields 7 and 12 and a post-medieval/modern foundation of a small 19<sup>th</sup> century agricultural building in Field 12. The building does not appear on any of the historic maps and is therefore likely to have been erected and demolished within the intervening periods of late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century mapping. The easement strip across the earthworks was unable to prove or disprove the exact nature of the earthworks. The finds recovered during the watching brief indicate that there has been archaeological activity within the vicinity of the easement from the prehistoric, to modern periods, although the only dateable features were the medieval ridge and furrow and the 19<sup>th</sup> century building.
- 6.2 It is very unusual to find a gold coin. The metal detecting survey that followed its discovery did not locate any further coins and it would appear that the coins deposition has resulted from a casual loss and is an isolated find.

## **7. Archive**

- 7.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of Context One Archaeological Services Ltd and consists of 221 digital images in .jpg format, drawn plans and sections on stable drawing film and the written paper record - including context sheets, COAS pro-forma profile log sheets, day books and photographic register. The archive will be prepared to comply with guidelines set out in *Environmental Standards for the Permanent Storage of Excavated Material from Archaeological Sites* (UKIC 1984, Conservation Guidelines 3)/ *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage* (UKIC 1990)/ *Standards in the Museums Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museum and Galleries Commission 1992)/ *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991). Arrangements will be made to deposit the site archive with Wiltshire Heritage Museum within 12 months following the submission of this report.
- 7.2 Copies of the watching brief report will be deposited with:

**Wessex Water plc**  
Claverton Down Road  
Claverton Down  
Bath  
BA2 7WW

**Wiltshire County Archaeology Service**  
The Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre  
Cocklebury Road  
Chippenham  
Wiltshire  
SN15 3QN

## **8. COAS Acknowledgements**

- 8.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd would like to thank Ms Lizzie Willis (Assistant Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc), for her kind assistance throughout the course of the investigation, and

Mr David Vaughan (Assistant County Archaeologist, Wiltshire County Archaeology Service (WCAS)), for curatorial advice.

## 9. Bibliography

- |   |  |
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| Department of the Environment, 2005                                   | <i>Planning Policy Statement 1: General Principles, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office</i>                    |
| Institute of Field Archaeologists (IfA), 1985 (rev. 2000)             | <i>Code of Conduct, Reading: IfA</i>   |
| Institute of Field Archaeologists (IfA), 1990 (rev. 2000)             | <i>Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology, Reading: IfA</i> |
| Institute of Field Archaeologists (IfA), 1994 rev. 1999               | <i>Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological watching brief</i>  |
| Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC), 2010 | <a href="http://www.magic.gov.uk">http://www.magic.gov.uk</a>  |

## APPENDIX 1

# OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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### Project details

Project name Holt to Semington Water Main Replacement, Wiltshire  
Short description of the project Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks relating to a water main replacement scheme running between Holt and Semington, Wiltshire (centred on NGR ST 88434 61711 to NGR ST 89982 61192) over 22 days between the 7th July 2010 and the 24th November 2010.  
Project dates Start: 21-06-2010

### Project location

Country England  
Site location WILTSHIRE WEST WILTSHIRE SEMINGTON Holt to Semington Water Main Replacement, Wiltshire  
Study area 3.40 Kilometres

### Project creators

Name of Organisation Context One Archaeological Services

Entered by Kelly Evans ([kelly.evans@contextone.co.uk](mailto:kelly.evans@contextone.co.uk))  
Entered on 4 March 2011