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# WARDEN FLOOD ALLEVIATION WORKS NORTHUMBERLAND

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

MAY-JUNE 2007

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| Prepared for:<br><i>The Environment Agency</i> | By:<br><i>The Archaeological Practice Ltd.</i> |
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# WARDEN FLOOD ALLEVIATION WORKS NORTHUMBERLAND

## REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Prepared by:

*The Archaeological Practice Ltd.*



**Frontispiece:** Trench 2 looking south towards man-hole (marked by fence at end of trench), with the excavation of trench 4 in progress to the rear.

## CONTENTS

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1. PURPOSE OF THE WATCHING BRIEF
2. CULTURAL HERITAGE BACKGROUND
3. WATCHING BRIEF
4. RESULTS
5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## ILLUSTRATIONS

*Cover: Area of watching brief at Hard Haugh, Warden, facing south east.*

*Frontispiece: Trench 2 looking south towards man hole (fence at end of trench), excavation of trench 4 in progress in background.*

*Illus. 01: The location of Warden in Northumberland.*

*Illus. 02: The approximate location of the watching brief at Warden, Northumberland.*

*Illus. 03: The location of the watching brief site at Warden, Northumberland.*

*Illus. 04-07: shown on successive editions of the Ordnance Survey map series, c.1863-1940.*

*Illus. 08: Plan of Flood Alleviation Works showing in red the areas observed as part of an Archaeological Watching Brief. Plan supplied by The Environment Agency and adapted by The Archaeological Practice Ltd.*

*Illus. 09: Trench 1 viewed from the south east.*

*Illus. 10: Trench 1 looking north, showing stoney spread.*

*Illus. 11: Excavation of Trench 2, facing north.*

*Illus. 12: Trench 2, at junction of Trench 3, facing north.*

*Illus. 13: View eastwards of Trench 3 and Trench 2.*

*Illus. 14: Excavation of Trench 3 looking south west.*

*Illus. 15: Extension to the east end of Trench 3, facing west.*

*Illus. 16: Extension to the east end of Trench 3, facing south.*

*Illus. 17: north facing section of extension to T3..*

*Illus. 18: Trench 4 viewed from the south east.*

*Illus. 19: Trench 4 north-facing section.*

*Illus. 20: West end of Trench 3, facing east.*

*Illus. 21: Field boundary at the west end of Trench 5.*

*Illus. 22: Field boundary across Trench 5 facing north, existing gateway in background.*

*Illus. 23: Trench 5, facing east.*

*Illus. 24: Trench 5, facing south west.*

*Illus. 25: Trench 5, facing east*

## 1. PURPOSE OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

An archaeological watching brief was requested by Environment Agency, to be carried out at on land known as Hard Haugh, a low lying flood plain, on the north bank of the River South Tyne, near Warden, 4km to the north west of Hexham, Northumberland (Illus. 1-3 & 8) The watching brief was requested in order to monitor the works associated with the Warden Flood Alleviation Scheme, and to record the character and extent of any remains of archaeological importance found to survive there.

## 2. CULTURAL HERITAGE BACKGROUND

There are no sites of known cultural significance within the area of the watching brief, possibly due to the frequent flooding of the area of Hard Haugh. In the area north of the site Mesolithic flints have been found, indicating that the area was occupied or used by Mesolithic hunter-gatherers. Areas of interest in the vicinity of the site include Warden Iron Age hillfort situated approx. 3km to the north, as well as the Stanegate Roman road c.4km to the north, and the early medieval village of Warden with its pre-Norman church.

More recently, the area of Hard Haugh has been used for arable farming since at least the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century (Illus. 4-7). It is thought that the modern river bank on the south side of the site was constructed in the 1950s.

## 3. WATCHING BRIEF

The aims of the watching brief were to make an appropriate record by photographic and other means of any archaeological features or deposits found to survive on the site of the proposed Flood Alleviation Scheme. Accordingly, attendance by an archaeologist was required during the excavations.

## 4. RESULTS

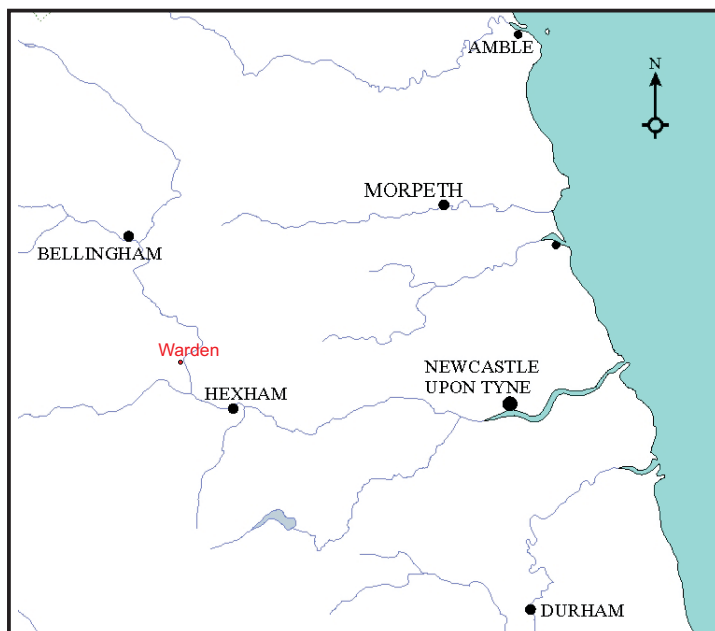
The work was carried out between 24<sup>th</sup> May and June 7<sup>th</sup> 2007 (Illus. 9-25).

Area 1 (T1), a rectilinear area of approximately 1600m<sup>2</sup> was located towards the western end of the site. The area was stripped by a JCB which removed and flattened the earth. The depth of topsoil stripped was between 0.30-40m and exposed river-worn cobbles but no finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance.

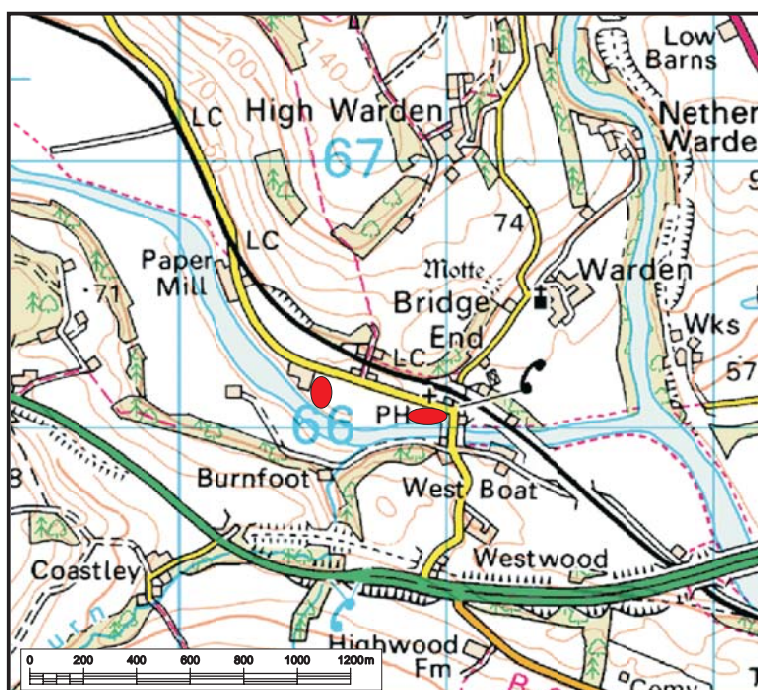
Three trenches were then stripped at the eastern end of the site close to the road bridge. The first of these (T2) was approximately 2m in width, 20m long and up to 0.35m deep. It ran from south to north from a position two metres north of the man-hole at the east end of the site. No finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were revealed in T2.

The second of the eastern group of trenches (T3) began at the north end of the aforementioned trench (T2) running east to west. It was approximately 50m in length, 2m wide and up to 0.35m deep. A 3.5m extension was dug at the eastern end of T3 to locate an existing drainage system. A depth of 2m was reached without finding the drains. No finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were revealed in T3.

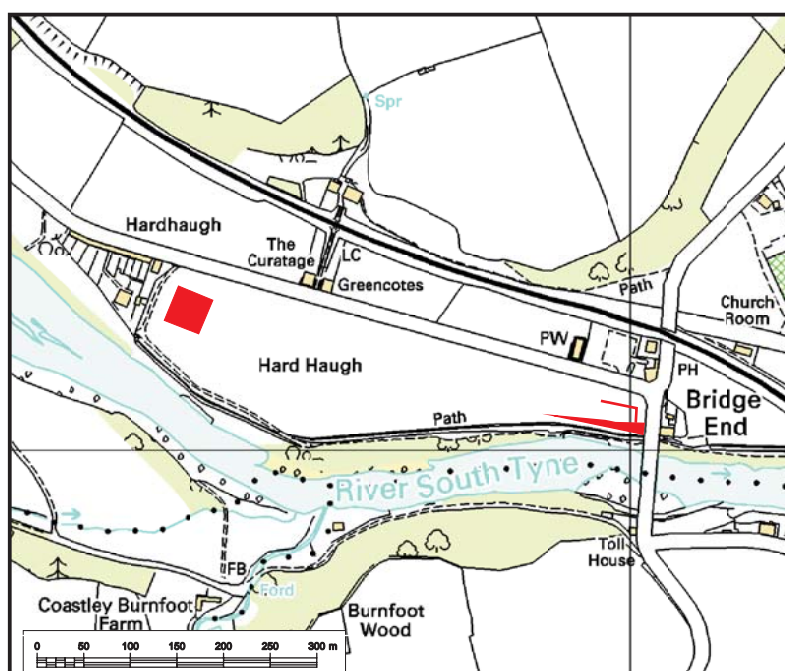




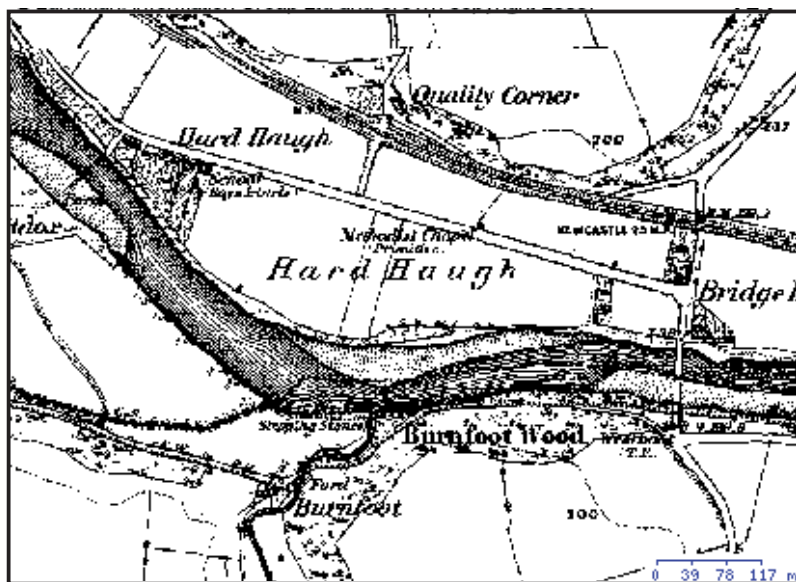
**Illus. 01:** The location of Warden in Northumberland



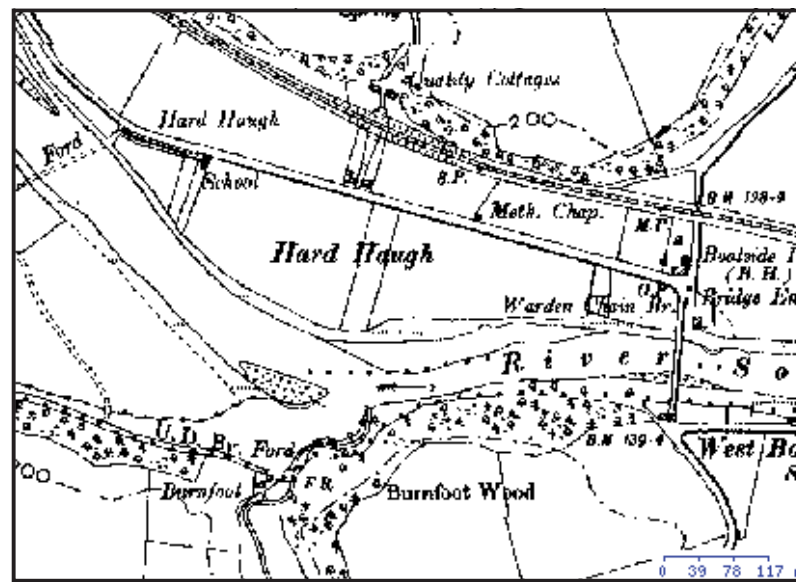
**Illus. 02:** The approximate locations of the watching brief site in Warden (shown in red).



**Illus. 03:** The location of the area of the watching brief site in Warden (shown in red).

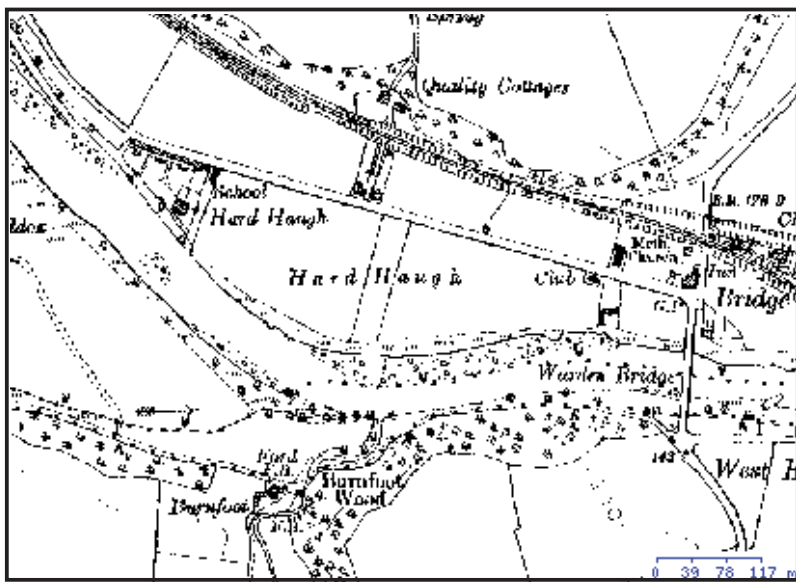


1865

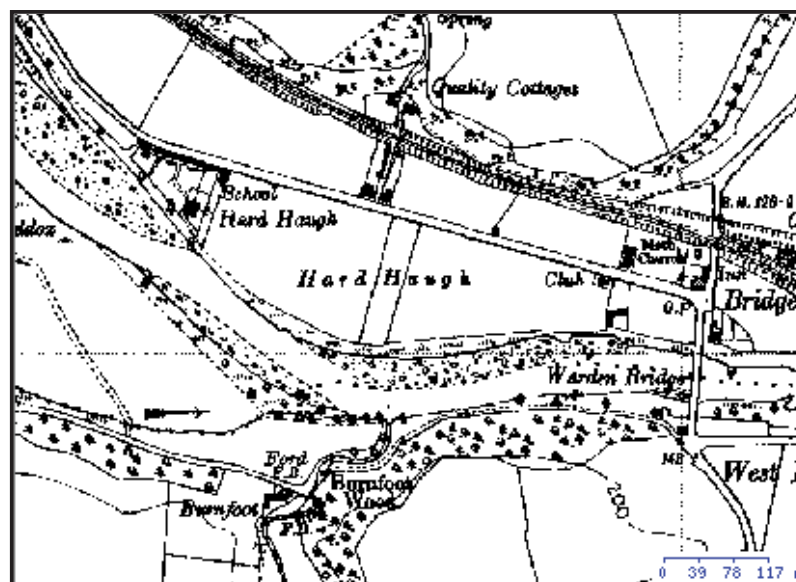


1898

*Illus. 04-07: The area of the watching brief shown on successive First-Fourth Edition Ordnance Survey plans,*



c.1924



1952





The third trench of the eastern group of trenches (T4) was excavated one metre west of the man-hole at the east end of the site. This trench was 0.5m wide, 2m long and reached a maximum depth of 1.7m in a sondage, within which the existing drainage system was located. All earth in this trench was disturbed by drainage and the construction of the existing river bank. No finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were revealed in T4.

Trench 5 was a large wedge-shaped area to the east end of the site. The wedge was 2m wide at its narrowest point and approximately 10m at its widest. It varied between 0.30 and 0.35m in depth. The ground was of a stoney-silt makeup and contained small fragments of modern pottery and glass. A line of larger stones was uncovered approx. 6m east from the west (thin) end of the wedge section. Probably a modern field boundary, the stones almost line up with an existing gateway in the field wall to the north of the trench which encloses the site.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

No finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were revealed in any of the areas subjected to surface stripping during works on Hard Haugh associated with the Warden Flood Alleviation Scheme. It is concluded, therefore, that no archaeological remains of significance were disturbed during the works.

The absence of any remains of importance is explained by the fact that the area is prone to flooding and therefore unattractive to permanent human settlement. The portion of the site closest to the river bank had previously been disturbed with the construction of the bank and the insertion of drainage systems.



***Illus. 09:*** Trench 1 viewed from the south east.



***Illus. 10:*** Trench 1 looking north, showing stoney spread.



**Illus. 11:** *Excavation of Trench 2, facing north.*



**Illus. 12:** *Trench 2, at junction of Trench 3, facing north.*



**Illus. 13:** *View eastwards of Trench 3 (right) and Trench 2 (bottom).*



**Illus. 14:** *Excavation of Trench 3 looking south west*





***Illus. 15:*** Extension to the east end of Trench 3, facing west



***Illus. 16:*** Extension to the east end of Trench 3, facing south



***Illus. 17:*** north facing section of the extension to the east end of Trench 3.



***Illus. 18:*** Trench 4 viewed from the south east.



***Illus. 19:*** Trench 4, north facing section.





***Illus. 20:*** West end of Trench 5, facing east.



***Illus. 21:*** Possible field boundary at the west end of Trench 5.



***Illus. 22:*** View northwards of the remains of a possible field boundary in Trench 5.



***Illus. 23:*** Trench 5, facing east.



***Illus. 24:*** Trench 5, facing south west.



***Illus. 25:*** Trench 5, facing east