

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD  
EVALUATION AT MORETON  
PARK, MORETON-ON-LUGG,  
HEREFORDSHIRE

Darren Miller

Illustrated by Laura Templeton and Adam Mindykowski

21<sup>st</sup> November 2003

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Project 2470  
Report 1201



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# Archaeological field evaluation at Moreton Park, Moreton-on-Lugg, Herefordshire

**Darren Miller**

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## Background information

### *Planning background*

The project was requested by CgMs consulting, on behalf of Greatwest Investments Ltd, who intend to develop the site, and wished to begin the archaeological evaluation required by Herefordshire County Council with a programme of test-pitting and deposit mapping.

### *Topographical and archaeological background*

The site lies on the floodplain of the river Lugg, 6.5km to the north of Hereford (Fig 1). The floodplain at this point is generally level at about 55m above Ordnance Datum, and consists of Holocene alluvium over Devensian sands and gravels. The underlying bedrock is Devonian mudstone. Since 1942, the site has lain within a compound that was formerly an army depot and is now an industrial estate. At the time of the fieldwork, the site contained a mixture of ex-army buildings and modern industrial units, separated by grassed areas and tarmac surfaces, and connected by roads, footpaths and disused railways (Fig 2).

The archaeological background to the site has been summarised in the project specification prepared by CgMS (2003, 4-5). In summary, no archaeological sites or find-spots have been recorded within the boundaries of the site itself, though significant remains of prehistoric, Roman and medieval date have been found in Wellington quarry immediately to the north-east. In addition, three projects recently undertaken in the north of the compound (in association with other developments) have shown that such remains are widely, if unevenly distributed across this area (Miller and Griffin 2000; Griffin and Jackson 2003; Miller 2003). Moreover, geoarchaeological investigations associated with one of these projects identified important evidence for the development of the floodplain (Terra Nova 2002).

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## Aims

The aim of the evaluation was to establish the presence/absence, extent, character, condition and quality of archaeological remains on the site (CgMs 2003, 6). This was to be done by excavating and recording 11 small trenches in locations specified by CgMs, and by relating the results to existing ground investigation records. The combined results were to be presented in the form of a report and a deposit map, which would inform future planning decisions on archaeological matters.

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## Methods

The trenches were excavated by a JCB wheeled excavator. For the most part, the JCB was fitted with a wide ditching bucket, although was occasionally necessary to use a smaller toothed bucket to remove compact surfaces or made ground. The trenches were excavated in or near the specified locations (Fig 2), with some shifts being necessary to avoid buried services and other obstructions. Drawn, written and photographic records were made according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995). All trenches were backfilled with excavated material.

After the fieldwork, the levelled profiles of all trenches, test-pits and boreholes were redrawn to a uniform scale. Variations in the character and depth of deposits across the site were investigated by

integrating thumbnail profiles with large-scale maps, and by producing a 3D terrain model of the site.

These methods are considered to have been successful in establishing the extent and character and of potential archaeological deposits (Holocene alluvium), and the extent to which these have been modified by modern landscaping. As a result, it is now clear which areas should be targeted in any future evaluation of the site, and what depositional sequences are likely to be encountered. The absence of archaeological remains from the trenches is not thought to be significant in view of the very small size of the excavated sample (about a fifth of one percent).

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## Results

The results of the fieldwork and post-fieldwork analysis are best presented in the form of tables, plans and images (Tables 1-2; Fig 3-6 and Plates 1-6), but some additional description is necessary in order to highlight certain patterns.

In general, three kinds of profiles were exposed in the trenches and can be reconstructed from the ground investigation records. The first kind of profile showed made ground overlying heavily truncated alluvium or gravels (Plates 1 and 2). Such profiles clearly indicate a considerable amount of modern landscaping, involving both truncation and deposition. The second kind of profile showed made ground over less truncated alluvium (Plates 3 and 4), while the third kind of profile showed essentially undisturbed alluvium (Plates 5 and 6).

The distribution of these profiles, and the levels at which different deposits were found give some indication of the site's topography and stratigraphy. Beginning with the basal Devensian gravels, these are highest in the west of the site around Trench 1 (55.83m) and lowest to the east around Boreholes 4 and 7 (52.78m and 53.26m respectively). The fall seems to be uneven, however, being around 1m in 200m between Trenches 1 and 7, but 1.16m in 125m between Trench 2 and Borehole 7, and 1.33m in 75m between Trench 10 and Borehole 4. It therefore seems that the late glacial topography of the site was very varied, perhaps reflecting minor terrace features formed at the margins of the floodplain. Figures 4-6 represent various attempts to illustrate the surfaces of the gravels, alluvium and made ground, though without much claim to accuracy in view of the limited data available, and the amount of interpolation that such figures require.

Turning to the Holocene alluvium, variations in the depth of these deposits are closely related to the level of the underlying gravels, and the extent of modern landscaping. The deepest alluvium was recorded in Boreholes 4 and 7 (1.80m and 2.80m respectively), but only slightly further to the west, undisturbed profiles in Trenches 2, 3 and 10 were much shallower (1.31m at most). No undisturbed profiles were recorded in the central and western parts of the site, but it is likely that the alluvium was not much more than 1m deep in this area. With regard to the nature of the alluvium, the trenches indicate a basic sequence of brownish red clay silt over brownish red silty clay with common gravels (Table 2, Units 1 and 3). However, there was evidence in Trenches 2 and 10 for an intervening unit of yellowish brown clay silt (Table 2, Unit 2). In the south of the site, and in pockets elsewhere, it seems that all or most of the alluvium has been removed; elsewhere, it seems that only the upper unit has been truncated (Fig 3).

Finally, the made ground covering much of the site deserves a brief mention. For the most part, it consists of redeposited alluvium and tarmac shavings, with occasional brick and concrete inclusions (Table 2). It varies in depth between 0.28m in Trench 10 and 1.80m in CP Borehole 3, but apparently not in relation to the previous topography of the site.

Trench	Dimensions			Levels			Summary
	Length	Width	Depth	Surface	Top of alluvium	Top of gravels	
1A	3.00m	1.20m	2.12m	57.68m	56.70m	55.83m	0.98m made ground over 0.87m alluvium
2	3.20m	1.80m	1.10m	55.68m	55.55m	54.58m*	1.31m* undisturbed alluvium
3	3.00m	1.60m	0.80m	55.71m	55.51m	54.73*	0.98m* undisturbed alluvium
4	3.50m	1.20m	1.30m	56.70m	56.16m	55.40m	0.54m made ground over 0.76m truncated alluvium
5	3.00m	1.20m	1.20m	56.31m	55.71m	54.17m	0.60m made ground over 0.60m truncated alluvium
6	3.10m	1.00m	0.95m	55.31m	54.92m	54.57m	0.39m made ground over 0.35m alluvium
7	3.40m	1.60m	1.50m	56.24m	55.91m	54.84m	0.33m made ground over 1.07m alluvium
8	3.60m	1.50m	2.20m	57.28m	56.78m	55.38m	0.50m made ground over 1.40m alluvium
9	3.90m	1.60m	1.55m	55.89m	55.15m	54.45m	0.74m made ground over 0.17m truncated alluvium
10	3.20m	1.60m	1.14m	55.02m	54.74m	54.11m	0.28m made ground over 0.63m undisturbed alluvium
11A	2.50m	1.70m	0.80m	56.82m	56.38m	55.85m*	0.44m made ground over 0.53m* truncated alluvium

*Table 1: Quantitative data from trenches 1A-11A (asterisks indicate levels extrapolated from average depths of lowest alluvial unit)*

Trench	Topsoil	Made ground	Alluvium			Gravels
			Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	
1A	n/a	Tarmac roadstone and over brownish grey clay silt	Brownish red clay silt	n/a	Brownish red silty clay with common gravels	Gravels in brownish red clay sand
2	Brown silt loam	n/a	Brownish red clay silt	Yellowish brown clay silt	Brownish red silty clay with common gravels	Gravels in brownish red clay sand (inferred)
3	Brown silt loam	n/a	Brownish red clay silt	n/a	Brownish red silty clay with common gravels	Gravels in brownish red clay sand (inferred)
4	Brown silt loam	Mixed red/brown silty clay over clinker	n/a	n/a	Brownish red silty clay with common gravels	Gravels in brownish red clay sand (inferred)
5	Brown silt loam	Clinker over yellowish/reddish brown silty clay with common gravels	n/a	n/a	Brownish red silty clay with common gravels	Gravels in brownish red clay sand (inferred)
6	n/a	Tarmac over redeposited gravels and greenish grey clay silt	n/a	n/a	Brownish red silty clay with common gravels	Gravels in brownish red clay sand
7	Brown silt loam	Redeposited topsoil and tarmac shavings	Reddish brown clay silt	n/a	Brownish red clay silt with common small gravels	Gravels in brownish red clay sand
8	n/a	Tarmac over roadstone	Reddish brown clay silt	n/a	Brownish red clay sand with common gravels	Gravels in brownish red clay sand
9	Brown silt loam	Brownish red and greyish brown clay silt and tarmac shavings	Brownish red clay silt	n/a	Brownish red clay silt with common gravels	Gravels in brownish red clay sand
10	Greyish brown silt loam	n/a	Yellowish/reddish brown clay silt		Reddish brown silty clay with common small gravels	Gravels in brownish red clay sand
11A	Dark brown silt loam	Brown and orange silty clay/tarmac shavings	n/a	n/a	Reddish brown silty clay with common small gravels	Gravels in brownish red clay sand (inferred)

Table 2: Summary of deposits in Trenches 1A-11A

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## Discussion

Having presented the results of the evaluation and identified certain patterns in the data, it is necessary to consider what these might mean with regard to potential archaeological remains. In the first place, the impact of modern landscaping combined with the relative shallowness of the alluvium makes it likely that any archaeological remains will be truncated to some extent, unless they happen to co-incide with the few undisturbed areas. The foundations of standing and demolished buildings might also have truncated archaeological remains, as might the many service-runs that criss-cross the site. Secondly, the relatively high elevation and sloping aspect of the site seems to have prevented the formation of waterlogged deposits, except perhaps in the lowest-lying areas (no palaeochannels were identified within or immediately below the alluvium, although the made ground in Trenches 1A and 6 contains redeposited clay which may have come from waterlogged deposits). It is therefore unlikely that extensive waterlogged deposits will be present, although smaller channels may possibly run between the trenches and ground investigations. Finally, the combination of shallow alluvium and little or no waterlogging may have intensified natural soil-forming processes and resulted in a loss of fine stratigraphic detail. This may explain the lack of definition in many of the trench profiles, and the near-total loss of the second, yellowish brown alluvial unit.

In conclusion, the evidence suggests that the site contains extensive deposits that may be associated with archaeological remains, though these are likely to survive less well than in areas to the north and east.

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## Publication summary

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

*An archaeological field evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Greatwest Investments Ltd at Moreton Park near Moreton-on-Lugg in Herefordshire (NGR SO 5020 4560), in order to inform future decisions regarding a proposed development. No archaeological information was available on the site, but previous work in the surrounding area suggested that significant prehistoric and Roman remains might be present. The aim of the evaluation was to establish the presence/absence, extent, character, condition and quality of archaeological remains by excavating 11 trial trenches, and relating the results to existing ground investigation records.*

*For the most part, the trenches exposed shallow and partially truncated alluvial profiles, while the ground investigation records suggested that a similar pattern obtained across the site. These phenomena are considered to reflect the location of the site on the margins of a floodplain, and the impact of landscaping associated with the site's former military use. In some areas, pre-existing alluvium had been completely removed, or heavily truncated. However, across over much of the site, truncation was relatively minimal, and in two areas at least the alluvium was undisturbed, though probably altered from its original state. Taken together, the evidence suggests that the site may contain archaeological remains, though they are likely to survive less well than in other parts of the Lugg valley.*

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## Archive

Fieldwork progress records AS2	2
Photographic records AS3	2
Levels record AS19	2
Trench record sheets AS41	11
Alluvium record sheet AS42	1

Computer disks	1
Drawings	6
Ground investigation reports	2
Manuscript sheets	2
Ordnance Survey maps	2

The project archive is intended to be placed at the Hereford Heritage Service

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### Acknowledgements

The Service would like to thank Cathy Mould and Jim Hunter (CgMS), and Rebecca Roseff (Herefordshire Archaeology) for their kind assistance.

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### Bibliography

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Miller, D, 2003 *Programme of archaeological work at Moreton-on-Lugg rail loading facility, Herefordshire*, Historical Environment and Archaeological Service, Worcestershire County Council, report **1195**

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Griffin, S and Jackson, R, 2002 *Evaluation at Moreton-on-Lugg, Herefordshire*, Archaeological Service, Worcestershire County Council, report, **1142**

Terra Nova, 2002 *A geoarchaeological evaluation of deposits from Moreton-on-Lugg, Herefordshire*, in Griffin and Jackson 2003, Appendix 2



<b>Report Name and Title</b>	Archaeological field evaluation at Moreton Park, Moreton-on-Lugg, Herefordshire
<b>Contractors Name and Address</b>	Field Section, Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council, Woodbury Hall, University College Worcester, Henwick Grove, Worcester, WR2 6AJ
<b>Site Name</b>	Brooks Industrial Estate, Moreton Park, Moreton-on-Lugg, Herefordshire
<b>Grid Reference (8 fig)</b>	NGR SO 5020 4560 <b>Planning Application reference</b> CW2001/3080/M
<b>SMR number/s of site</b>	HSM <b>XXXX</b> neighbouring sites numbered HSM 3185, 32268 and 36591
<b>Dates of Field Work</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> and 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2003
<b>Date of Report</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2003
<b>Number and type of finds and samples collected</b>	No pre-modern finds were present, and no deposits contained significant ecofactual material.
<b>Summary of the report</b>	<p>An archaeological field evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Greatwest Investments Ltd at Moreton Park near Moreton-on-Lugg in Herefordshire (NGR SO 5020 4560; HSM <b>XXXX</b>), in order to inform future decisions regarding a proposed development. No archaeological information was available on the site, but previous work in the surrounding area suggested that significant prehistoric and Roman remains might be present. The aim of the evaluation was to establish the presence/absence, extent, character, condition and quality of archaeological remains by excavating 11 trial trenches, and relating the results to existing ground investigation records.</p> <p>For the most part, the trenches exposed shallow and partially truncated alluvial profiles, while the ground investigation records suggested that a similar pattern obtained across the site. These phenomena are considered to reflect the location of the site on the margins of a floodplain, and the impact of landscaping associated with the site's former military use. In some areas, pre-existing alluvium had been completely removed, or heavily truncated. However, across over much of the site, truncation was relatively minimal, and in two areas at least the alluvium was undisturbed, though probably altered from its original state. Taken together, the evidence suggests that the site may contain archaeological remains, though they are likely to survive less well than in other parts of the Lugg valley.</p>