

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF ON THE
CALLOW END FLOOD
ALLEVIATION SCHEME,
WORCESTERSHIRE

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With finds by Laura Griffin

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Archaeological watching brief on the Callow End Flood Alleviation Scheme, Worcestershire

James Goad and Angus Crawford

Part 1 Project summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Callow End, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8373 4955 to SO 8464 4946). It was undertaken on behalf of Severn Trent Water, who intended to install flood alleviation works between Lower Ferry Lane and the River Severn. The pipeline passed through an area where cropmarks had been identified by aerial photography, so the project aimed to determine the nature of the cropmarks and their date, along with the nature of the other archaeology along the route of the pipeline.

The trenching down the pipeline easement might have cut through a boundary ditch just to the east of the northern-most cropmark. The trenching produced a substantial number of pottery sherds in one location. A hand-excavated slot near the findspot located the tops of a number of features, one of which might have been a substantial boundary ditch. The feature cut through by the trenching produced a substantial amount of pottery dating to the 2nd century AD. The pottery consisted of large sherds of Severn Valley ware, Malvernian ware and Samian vessels. The trenching continued through the area of the cropmark but didn't succeed in revealing any more features or artefacts, though some pottery of Roman date was recovered from the spoil heap after the topsoil strip.

The project succeeded in uncovering enough evidence for the presence of a small but significant 2nd century Romano-British settlement existing around a small raised area on the western edge of the Callow End floodplain. Cropmarks to the south of the findspot were not impacted upon by the pipeline easement; therefore a more complete picture of the nature of the Roman settlement could not be determined. However, the quantity and quality of the artefacts recovered and the size of the feature found suggest that the presence of a sizeable Romano-British enclosure, with the possibility of a settlement within its boundaries.

Part 2 Detailed report

1. Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at the Callow End Flood Alleviation Scheme, on behalf of Severn Trent Water and their consultants Pick Everard Consulting Engineers. The client intends to install a flood alleviation works between Lower Ferry Lane and the River Severn. Worcestershire County Council considered that a site of archaeological interest was affected (WSM 06059 and WSM 15750).

1.2 Project parameters

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IFA 1999). The project also conforms to a brief prepared by Worcestershire County Council (HEAS 2004a) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (HEAS 2004b).

1.3 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to locate archaeological deposits, given the information supplied on the aerial photographs and determine, if present, their extent, state of preservation, date, type, vulnerability and documentation. The purpose of this was to establish their significance.

2. Methods

2.1 Documentary search

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). In addition the following sources were also consulted:

Cartographic sources

- 1885 Ordnance Survey 1:10000
- 1904 Ordnance Survey 1:10000
- 1928 Ordnance Survey 1:10000

Aerial photographs

- NMR ref. 8449-3, Film ref. BYA 068, HW SO 8449, No. 1832. 1992
- Film ref. 697-9, Pickering 1989

Documentary sources

- VCH IV
- Robson 1999

2.2 Fieldwork

2.2.1 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by the Service (HEAS 2004). Fieldwork was undertaken between 6th July and 24th August 2004. The pipeline easement was located between Lower Ferry Lane and the River Severn. The easement measured approximately 910m in length and 10m in width. The location of the pipeline is shown on Figure 1.

The topsoil was stripped along the length of the easement with a 360° tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket and was subject to periodic archaeological inspection. A 600mm pipe was inserted along the length of the easement, which required trenching to install it. This was done in short sections, with a length of trench being opened by machine and a metal box inserted in to the open trench immediately to shore the sides. The requisite length of pipe was then installed and the open excavation backfilled prior to a new length being opened. Inspections were made during the machining but access into the trench was not made due to safety reasons. Selected areas were excavated by hand and clean surfaces inspected near the areas where archaeological deposits were located with the machine. The hand excavation meant to determine location and orientation of features. Deposits were recorded according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995).

2.2.2 Structural analysis

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was effected through a combination of structural, artefactual and ecofactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

2.3 Artefacts

2.3.1 Artefact recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Service practice (CAS 1995; appendix 2).

2.3.2 Method of analysis

All hand retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A *terminus post quem* date was produced for each stratified context. The date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on *pro forma* sheets.

Artefacts from environmental samples were examined, but none were worthy of comment, and so they not included below, nor included in the Table 1 quantification.

Pottery fabrics are referenced to the fabric reference series maintained by the Service (Hurst and Rees 1992).

2.3.3 Artefactual analysis

The artefactual assemblage retrieved from the site consisted of 78 sherds of Roman pottery weighing 3474g, which were recovered from context 105 (probably a ditch), six fragments of modern tile, a highly fragmentary copper alloy object, thought to be a spoon and three copper alloy coins (see Table 1). The majority of finds could be dated from the early Roman period onwards. Levels of preservation were generally poor with the majority of sherds displaying high levels of surface degradation, although the majority were also relatively sizable suggesting low levels of disturbance following discard. It would therefore appear that the

deterioration of the pottery surfaces has resulted from chemical rather than mechanical abrasion, presumably related to the soil conditions of the post-depositional environment.

All sherds have been grouped and quantified according to fabric type (see Table 2). A total of 15 diagnostic sherds were present and could be dated accordingly, the remaining sherds were datable by fabric type to the general period or production span. Where mentioned, all specific forms are referenced to established form series for each specific pottery fabric type (Webster 1976 for Severn Valley ware; Seager-Smith and Davies 1993 for Black-burnished ware I and Webster 1996 for Samian ware forms)

2.4 **Environment**

2.4.1 **Sampling policy**

The environmental sampling strategy conformed to standard Service practice (CAS 1995). However, the archaeological features discovered were not thought significant enough to merit environmental sampling.

2.5 **The methods in retrospect**

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

3. **Topographical and archaeological context**

The area of the watching brief is very low and liable to flooding, much of it being floodplain of the River Severn. The natural ground in the area of the pipeline is composed of two soil types. Wick 1, Glaciofluvial or river terrace drift, which are deep well drained coarse loamy and sandy soils, locally over gravel. Lugwardine soils are composed of reddish river alluvium, which are deep stoneless permeable silty soils (Barclay *et al* Sheet 3, Soil Survey of England and Wales).

Callow End is within the parish boundary of Powick. A former hamlet existed, along with others, inside the sizeable Powick parish boundary (VCH IV, p184). There hasn't been a great amount of archaeological investigation in Callow End apart from aerial photography of cropmarks in the study area and building recording to the north of the site at Beauchamp Court. Beauchamp Court is a 19th century farmhouse that incorporates fragments of earlier fabric within its structure. The site was documented back to the 11th century, with the Beauchamp family on the site since the 13th century (Robson 1999).

Crop marks were located by aerial photography in 1992 in the form of two rectangular features adjacent to one another (WSM 06059). The marks were located in a field around 200m directly to the east of Moorhouse Farm. These occur around a slightly raised area on the western edge of the floodplain.

4. **Description**

The contexts are listed in Table 4, with Tables 1-3 summarising the artefacts recovered. The easement, trenches and features recorded are shown in Figures 1-3.

4.1.1 **Discussion of the artefacts**

The discussion below is a summary of the finds by period. Where possible, dates have been allocated and the importance of individual finds commented upon as necessary.

4.1.2 Roman

Material of this period retrieved from the site consisted of 78 sherds of pottery and a fragmentary copper alloy coin.

The pottery formed a standard assemblage for a site in this area, consisting primarily of locally produced Severn Valley wares (fabrics 12, 12.1 and 12.2). Other fabrics identified in very small amounts consisted of fine sandy greyware (fabric 14), wheelthrown Malvernian ware (fabric 19), Black-burnished ware I (fabric 22) and Samian ware (fabric 43). Forms within the group also formed a standard range with a dominance of jars and indicated activity from the early Roman period, peaking in the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

The earliest datable sherds were from two straight-sided tankards of oxidised Severn Valley ware datable to the 1st century (fabric 12; Webster 1976, type 38). In addition, four sherds of the organically tempered version of this fabric (fabric 12.2) were also identified and could be dated between the 1st and earlier 2nd centuries. It is also likely that the reduced Severn Valley ware (fabric 12.1), including a well preserved jar rim (Webster 1976, type 5) and the fine sandy greyware (fabric 14) sherds also date to this earlier period.

Other diagnostic sherds within the assemblage were of 2nd-3rd century date. Those of Severn Valley ware were all of oxidised fabric (fabric 12) and consisted of four tankard forms (Webster 1976, types 40 and 42), three narrow-mouthed jars (*ibid*, types 1, 5 and 6), two wide-mouthed jars (*ibid*, types 23 and 24) and a flanged, reeded rimmed bowl (*ibid*, type 56). Remaining sherds of this fabric were undiagnostic and ranged from large pieces to small fragments.

A single sherd of Black-burnished ware I could be identified as coming from an everted rim jar and displayed a band of roughly acute to right angled lattice indicating it to be of 2nd century date (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, *WA* type 2). In addition, the profile of a wheelthrown Malvernian ware plain-rimmed bowl was identified as being an imitation of a commonly identified Black-burnished ware I form and dated from the late 2nd century onwards (*ibid*, *WA* type 20).

The remaining sherds of Roman date came from a large, decorated samian ware bowl identified as a Dragendorf 37 in form (fabric 43; Webster 1996). The decorated sherds displayed an ovolo above a wider band of decoration. Unfortunately, due to the sherds being abraded much of the pattern was obscured and the slip fragmentary. Vessels of this form can be dated between the late 1st and 3rd centuries.

The only other artefacts of Roman date consisted of two copper alloy coins (unstratified and context 107) and a highly fragmentary copper alloy object which was identified as a possible spoon (context 107). The largest coin was in relatively good repair and could be identified as an As of Antoninus Pius (AD138-161) with the words ANTONINVS AVG TRPXXV on the obverse and Britannia and the letter SC on the reverse (Reece and James 1986, 21). The mint mark was unfortunately illegible. The other coin was small and fragmentary and unfortunately, due to high levels of abrasion it was not possible to identify this object to any further degree.

4.1.3 Post-medieval and modern

A copper alloy/bronze coin was identified within the assemblage. The highly degraded surfaces prevented identification of date or denomination but the general thickness and appearance of the object indicated it to be post-medieval or later in date.

Six pieces of highly fired modern tile dating from the late 19th century onwards were also retrieved from the site.

Table 1: *Quantification of the assemblage*

Material	Total	Weight (g)
Roman pottery	78	3474
Modern tile	6	1557
Copper alloy spoon	1	1
Copper alloy coin	3	35

Table 2: *Quantification of the pottery by fabric type*

Fabric no.	Fabric name	Total sherds	Weight (g)
12	Oxidised Severn Valley ware	62	2596
12.1	Reduced Severn Valley ware	4	264
12.2	Oxidised organically tempered Severn Valley ware	4	290
14	Fine sandy greyware	1	5
19	Wheelthrown Malvernian ware	1	45
22	Black-burnished ware I	1	10
43	Samian ware	5	264

Table 3: *Summary of the assemblage*

Date	Artefact type	Total	Weight (g)	Specialist report?	Important research assemblage?
1-2C	Pottery	1	5	Y	N
1C	Pottery	2	63	Y	N
M1-2C	Pottery	7	507	Y	N
L1-3C	Pottery	5	264	Y	N
2-3C	Pottery	8	237	Y	N
2-L3C	Pottery	3	115	Y	N
3-4C	Pottery	1	45	Y	N
3C	Pottery	2	285	Y	N
M1-4C	Pottery	49	1953	Y	N
L19C+	Tile	5	1266	N	N
20C+	Tile	1	291	N	N
Roman	Copper alloy spoon	1	1	N	N
Roman	Copper alloy coin	1	1	N	N
AD138-161	Copper alloy coin	1	18	Y	N
Post-medieval	Copper alloy coin	2	6	N	N

5. Discussion

5.1 Phase 1 Natural deposits

Natural deposits were located along the length of the easement and took the form of sandy gravels, consistent with river terrace material from the area.

5.2 Prehistoric

There was no evidence of settlement or any other form of activity from this period.

5.3 Roman

The pipe trenching cut through a feature to the east of the northernmost of the two rectilinear enclosures (Figure 3). Large sherds of Roman pot of several varieties were recovered from the fill. These included Malvernian grey ware, Severn Valley ware and Samian. All of these sherds were securely dated to the 2nd century. A slot measuring 5m in length and 0.50m in width was hand dug several metres directly to the south of the find spot to determine the extent and orientation of the feature. Although it was located under 0.70m of alluvium and topsoil, the archaeology seemed to comprise of more than one feature, with at least one wide linear running in a roughly north east to south west direction (Figure 3). The linear located in the hand dug slot is likely to be the same feature that yielded the large quantity of Roman pot in the pipe trench.

The trenching continued westwards from the finds spot but did not reveal any further features or artefacts, even at the point where it crossed through the western edge of the rectilinear crop mark. The nature of the way in which the groundworks were carried out and the very wet conditions prejudiced any chance of spotting features at this point.

The crop mark can be quite confidently dated to the early Roman period, given the 2nd century date of the pottery. It would seem that the crop mark is an enclosure of some sort, perhaps the outer perimeter boundary of a settlement. There appears to be a relationship with the similar rectilinear enclosure immediately adjacent to the south. These enclosure ditches could be contemporary or might be evidence of a shifting settlement pattern, with one rectilinear enclosure falling out of use with a new one being established next to it. The two crop marks appear conjoined, sharing their northern and southern boundaries respectively (Figure 3). Even if the two enclosures were not contemporary there was re-use of one stretch of ditch.

The siting of a settlement there is quite likely. The features exist around a slight rise in the ground level within the present field. During seasonal flooding the settlement would have been raised sufficiently high enough to avoid inundation. The location on this slightly elevated position would have been ideal for exploiting the fertile alluvial soils of the Severn floodplain. The presence of two similar enclosures hints at a continuity of settlement, possibly by a family group, sustained by rich agricultural soil. The quantity and quality of the artefacts recovered from the site, including some high status Samian ware, suggest that the occupants of the settlement were relatively affluent. Perhaps the quality of the crop from the fertile floodplain land enabled the farmers to live a life where quality goods could be occasionally purchased.

The presence of a fairly sizeable and localised assemblage of Roman pottery from the upper levels of this site would indicate the presence of a settlement in the immediate vicinity. In addition, the large size of the majority of sherds recovered and the high number of diagnostic pieces suggests that little disturbance of the material has taken place previously.

5.4 Anglo Saxon to medieval

There were no artefacts or finds from these periods found during the project.

5.5 Post medieval to modern

There were various unstratified finds from the post medieval and modern periods recovered along the length of the pipeline easement. These comprised pieces of brick and pottery sherds. No features were found dating to these periods aside from modern drainage ditches, which periodically cross the route of the pipeline easement from north to south.

5.6 Research frameworks

The confirmation of the existence of a settlement in the location in question informs the local and regional research cycles and adds to the archaeological sites register for the county.

6. 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 watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Severn Trent Water at Callow End, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8373 4955 to SO 8464 4946; WSM 33640). The pipe trench for the flood alleviation scheme crossed through an area of cropmarks, which had been identified by aerial photography. The trench cut through a possible ditch which produced a large quantity of 2nd century Romano-British pottery including high quality Samian ware. The location of the findspot and the feature were almost undoubtedly part of an enclosure shown by a faint cropmark. The substantial nature of the ditch and the pottery recovered from it demonstrated the presence of a settlement. This settlement probably represents the location of a small farming community on the edge of the River Severn floodplain, which possibly existed for generations, occasionally shifting slightly.

7. The archive

The archive consists of:

1	Context records AS1
13	Fieldwork progress records AS2
4	Photographic records AS3
16	Colour transparency film
1	Box of finds

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum

Hartlebury Castle

Hartlebury

Near Kidderminster

Worcestershire DY11 7XZ

Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416

8. Acknowledgements

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Severn Trent Water, Pick Everard Consulting Engineers and Mike Glyde.

9. Personnel

The report preparation was undertaken by James Goad. The fieldwork was led by Adam Mindykowski, James Goad, Anna Deeks, Angus Crawford, Marc Steinmetzer and Derek

Hurst. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Simon Woodiwiss. Fieldwork was undertaken by Adam Mindykowski, James Goad, Angus Crawford, Anna Deeks, Derek Hurst and Marc Steinmetzer, finds analysis by Angus Crawford and illustration by Adam Mindykowski and Carolyn Hunt.

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11. Abbreviations

NMR National Monuments Record.

SMR Sites and Monuments Record.

WCRO	Worcestershire County Records Office.
WSM	Numbers prefixed with ‘WSM’ are the primary reference numbers used by the Worcestershire County Historic Environment Record.

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Table 4

Maximum dimensions: Length: 910m Width: c10m

Orientation: East to west

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100 and 101	Topsoil	Mid grey silty sand	0-0.20m
102	Subsoil	Light to mid brown alluvial deposit	0.20-0.50m
103	Natural	Alluvial terrace gravels	0.70m-
104	Fill of ditch 105	Dark brown sandy clay	0.70m-
105	N-S oriented ditch,	Filled by 104, Roman in date	0.70m-
106	Field drain	Filled by 107	c0.40-0.70m
107		Backfill within field drain cut 106	c0.40-0.70m