

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING  
BRIEF ON REPLACEMENT  
TELEPHONE POLES AT GRAFTON  
FLYFORD MEDIEVAL VILLAGE,  
WORCESTERSHIRE

James Goad and Erica Darch

Illustrated by Carolyn Hunt

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Council

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Project 2328  
Report 1164  
WSM 32611



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## Archaeological watching brief on replacement telephone poles at Grafton Flyford medieval village, Grafton Flyford, Worcestershire

### James Goad and Erica Darch

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#### Background information

<i>Client</i>	Aquila Networks plc
<i>Site address</i>	Grafton Flyford medieval village, Grafton Flyford, Worcestershire
<i>National Grid Reference</i>	SO 9612 5578
<i>Sites and Monuments Record reference</i>	WSM 32611
<i>Consent authority</i>	English Heritage
<i>reference</i>	HSD 9/2/5109
<i>Project design</i>	HEAS 2002
<i>Project parameters</i>	IFA 1999
<i>Previous archaeological work on the site</i>	

There has been no previous archaeological work undertaken on site.

#### *Topographical context*

The soils in the area are mostly of the Evesham Series. Calcerous, greyish clayey soils, developed in Jurassic clays and shales. They are extensive between Alcester, Winchcombe and Tewkesbury on level to moderately sloping ground. These soils have slowly permeable subsoils and are seasonally waterlogged. In summer the soils shrink on drying and cracks develop which extend deeply into the subsoil. On steep slopes permanent grassland is common, with little opportunity for spring cultivation on flatter ground (Ragg *et al* 1984).

#### *Historical background*

Grafton Flyford lies to the north of the Worcester to Stratford road and is bounded on the south by the Piddle Brook (Figure 1). The village formed part of the earliest endowments of the monastery of Pershore. The Domesday Book mentions Grafton as being among the manors belonging to the abbot's manor of Pershore, being held as two hides less one virgate by the sheriff Urse (VCH I, 302). An account of the village and its various successive landowners can be found in VCH (IV, 85-89).

The telephone pole replacement was undertaken partly in the field just to the east of the village church and adjacent to Church Farm (Figure 1) across an area which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 200; Worcestershire Historic Environment Record WSM 521) as it is the location of a deserted medieval village. The actual location of the telephone poles is outside the area of the former medieval village but lie within an area of ridge and furrow agriculture.

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#### Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to observe the replacing of the telephone poles and the instatement of the new ones, making a record of any archaeological deposits exposed during the course of the groundworks. Pole replacement sometimes entails the digging of new holes adjacent to a new pole to accommodate supporting struts. All groundworks were to be inspected for archaeological deposits which were to be recorded and located in order to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible.

## Methods

General specification	CAS 1995
Sources consulted	HER Sources cited by the HER Ordnance Survey 1 <sup>st</sup> edition map 1884-1886, 1:10000 Ordnance Survey 1 <sup>st</sup> edition map 1884-1886, 1:2500
Date of fieldwork	24 <sup>th</sup> May 2003
Area of deposits observed	c 4m <sup>2</sup> . Indicated on Figure 2
Dimensions of excavated areas observed	Services            length 1.30m width 1.30m depth 1.30m

### *Access to or visibility of deposits*

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during and after machine excavation, which was undertaken using a wheeled excavator. The holes excavated by machine showed clear differences amongst the deposits, so no hand cleaning was necessary. In any case, down into the excavations was not possible due to health and safety considerations. In one case no record of any deposits could be made, as no excavation was necessary by machine, with the new pole being inserted directly into the hole left by its predecessor. In this case archaeological deposits were hard to observe, given the very small area exposed.

In addition to the observation of the groundworks around the Scheduled Ancient Monument, pole replacement was occurring in the field to the south (poles 1-3, see Figure 2). This field, which was outside the area of the Monument, produced a number of finds which were collected in a fieldwalk and metal detecting survey on land either side of the telephone pole. The area examined was approximately 50m either side of the line of poles. The artefacts collected were examined for this report.

### *Statement of confidence*

Access to the areas of excavation was adequate, and a reasonable degree of confidence can be had that the aims of the project have been achieved. A good degree of confidence can be attached in the projects conclusions.

## Table 1

**Deposit descriptions for telegraph pole 4**

Context	Type Colour Texture	Description	Interpretation	Depth (OD or below ground level)
<b>Trench 1</b>				
401	Sticky mid grey sandy silt		Topsoil	0-0.20m
402	Sticky light brown silty clay		Subsoil	0.20-0.40m
403	Plastic mid brown clay	Very homogenous and featureless clay layer.	Natural	0.40-1.30m
<b>Trench 2</b>				
404	Sticky mid grey sandy silt		Topsoil	0-0.20m
405	Sticky light brown		Subsoil	0.20-0.40m

	silty clay			
406	Plastic mid brown clay	Very homogenous and featureless clay layer.	Natural	0.40-1.30m

### Artefact recovery policy

All artefacts were retrieved by hand and retained in accordance with the service manual (CAS 1995 as amended).

### Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. Artefacts were identified, quantified, dated and recorded on a Microsoft Access 1997 database. A *terminus post quem* (TPQ) date was assigned to each stratified context. The pottery was examined and recorded by fabric type according to the fabric reference series maintained by the Service (Hurst and Rees 1992, 200-209). The artefacts recovered can be seen in Table 2.

### Artefact analysis

The material recovered was mainly post-medieval and modern, with some possible Roman and medieval tile. Most of the material was abraded, with some being highly abraded. The largest group of material by weight was tile (428g), followed by iron (137g) and miscellaneous metal (49g).

## Table 2

### Quantification of the artefacts

Context	Material	Type	Total	Weight (g)	Period
1 - 3	Metal	Button	1	1	Post-medieval / modern
1 - 3	Metal	Fragments	7	15	
1 - 3	Pot	Modern	1	4	Modern
1 - 3	Pot	Post-medieval	1	3	Post-medieval
1 - 3	Slag		1	15	
1 - 3	Fired clay		1	7	
1 - 3	Tile	Flat roof tile	1	35	Modern
1 - 3	Tile	Possible Roman	3	30	Roman?
1 - 3	Tile	Flat roof tile	3	128	Post-medieval / modern
1 - 4	Pot	Post-medieval	1	9	Post-medieval
1 - 4	Metal	Button	2	6	Post-medieval / modern
1 - 4	Metal	Bullet	1	11	Modern
1 - 4	Metal	Fragments	6	16	
1 - 4	Iron	Buckle	1	14	
1 - 4	Iron	Nail	1	123	
4	Tile	Flat roof tile	9	235	Modern
4	Ceramic	Drain	1	24	Post-medieval / modern
4	Pot	Post-medieval	1	17	Post-medieval

## Significance

The material is almost entirely post-medieval or modern with a very few pieces of possible Roman and medieval tile. Such a low density of finds would be typically the result of manuring using midden material, and does not necessarily indicate settlement occupation in the immediate vicinity.

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## Discussion

A good view of the deposits exposed by the groundworks was only achieved in the trenches dug for pole 4 (see Figure 2; WSM 32608). This pole was situated on the southern edge of the ancient monument, within an existing field boundary. No deposits of any archaeological significance were revealed by this trenching. The replacement of pole 7 (Figure 2; WSM 32609) did not require any groundworks in the form of machine excavation. The new pole slotted directly into the hole left by its predecessor. However the pole was situated on a ridge in an area of ridge and furrow. The only material visible was dark topsoil at the top of the exposed hole.

The area affected by the groundworks was an area of ridge and furrow, and away from the area of the deserted medieval village. No archaeological deposits were affected by the trenching and the replacement of the old poles. Any disturbance of archaeology would have taken place with the original telegraph pole insertion.

The finds derived from the cursory fieldwalk in the field to the south of the affected area would seem to derive from nearby settlement in the form of manuring scatters. In this case the settlement mentioned would be the deserted medieval village within the Scheduled Ancient Monument area and the subsequent settlement at Grafton Flyford. There doesn't seem to be any historical or cartographic evidence for a settlement in the field to the south of the SAM area.

The site remains almost wholly undisturbed by this programme of pole renewal.

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## Conclusions

The known deserted medieval village (SAM 200) was not affected by the programme of works because it lay slightly away from the area affected by the groundworks. The poles lay within an area of medieval ridge and furrow, which was little affected by the pole replacement activity.

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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 watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Aquila Network plc (a Midlands Electricity company) at Grafton Flyford deserted medieval village, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9612 5578; SAM 200). Although the programme of works took place within a Scheduled Ancient Monument, no archaeological deposits of any significance were revealed. The pole replacement programme took place away from the area of the deserted medieval village and within an area of ridge and furrow. The ridge and furrow was not adversely affected by the new groundworks and the site as a whole remains almost wholly unaffected by this programme of works.*

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## Archive

Fieldwork progress records AS2	2
Photographic records AS3	1
Colour digital photographs	19
Drawings	1
Boxes of finds	1
Computer disks	1

The project archive is intended to be placed at: Worcester County Museum  
Hartlebury Castle, Hartlebury  
Near Kidderminster  
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ  
01299 250416

telephone

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## Acknowledgements

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## Abbreviations

HEAS	Historic Environment and Archaeology Service
SAM	Scheduled Ancient Monument

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