

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF AT CASTLE TUMP,
CASTLEMORTON,
WORCESTERSHIRE

James Goad and Elizabeth Pearson

Illustrated by Carolyn Hunt

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Archaeological Service,
Worcestershire County Council,
Woodbury Hall,
University College Worcester,
Henwick Grove,
Worcester WR2 6AJ



Project 2297
Report 1145
WSM 32273

Archaeological watching brief at Castle Tump, Castlemorton, Worcestershire

James Goad

Background information

<i>Client</i>	Severn Trent Water
<i>Site address</i>	Motte and Bailey adjacent to Severn Trent Sewage Treatment Works, Castlemorton, Worcestershire
<i>National Grid Reference</i>	SO 7946 3708
<i>Sites and Monuments Record reference</i>	WSM 280
<i>Planning authority reference</i>	Department for Culture, Media and Sport HSD 9/2/4917
<i>Project proposal</i>	AS 2002
<i>Project parameters</i>	IFA 1999
<i>Previous archaeological work on the site</i>	

Two watching briefs were carried out at Castle Tump with regard to the sewage works situated adjacent to the site. The first project (Topping 1996) did not locate anything of significance but the second located soil layers pre-dating the construction of the treatment plant, as well as an earthwork and sherds of 13th-14th century pottery (Topping 1998).

Previous archaeological work on associated sites

A watching brief was undertaken approximately 200m north-east of the site reported here. This succeeded in identifying a series of undisturbed layers. Two of these are identified as plough soils, one possibly dating to the medieval period. They were sealed with a modern dumped layer (Wichbold 1993)

Geology and historical background

The soil from the area is from the Whimple series. This is either a slightly stony clay loam or a silty clay loam. These are slightly mottled medium loams or silts with slight seasonal waterlogging over slowly permeable reddish clays passing to soft blocky mudstone at depth. Some similar clayey soils (Worcester series) on eroded slopes and prominently mottled soils (Brockhurst series) in hollows (Ragg *et al* 1984).

The motte and bailey castle at Castlemorton (Castle Tump) was probably constructed in the 12th century, possibly during unstable times in the reign of King Stephen by a member of the land-owning Folliott family. Its defences were probably of timber, as was frequent in this type of castle; and being raised possibly for a temporary purpose as it seems to have little history. The castle was bought by Richard de Berkyng, Abbot of Westminster (1222-46), from the Folliott family. This Abbott possibly appointed a chaplain to celebrate divine service daily in the chapel of his castle here (VCH IV, 49-50).

Castle Tump is listed as a fortified mount with one or more attached courts. It is situated on a long, narrow ridge of Keuper Stone, running east to west, and on the crest of the ridge is located an oval motte, approximately 10m high and strengthened on the south by a semi-lunar ditch with counterscarp bank, and having on the north a small court covering three quarters of an acre. Part of the bailey ditch remains on the north, interrupted at one point by a causeway, but on the east it is encroached upon by one of a series of deep and irregular clay pits, running south-south-west for about 180m. There are traces of subsidiary enclosures on the east and north of the castle. The plan of the castle is typically Norman, being modified to suit the ground (VCH IV, 426).

Sources consulted

Cartographic

- 1839 Transcription of Tithe map
- 1886 1st edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey map. Reproduced to 1:5000
- 2000 Ordnance Survey map, 1:10000. Reproduced to 1:1000 and 1:5000

Written sources

- Victoria County History of Worcestershire, **IV**, 1913
 - Previous fieldwork reports (see bibliography)
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Aims

The aim of the watching brief was to observe and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible.

Deposit descriptions

Context	Type Colour Texture	Description	Date	Interpretation	Depth below ground level
100				Trench cut	
101	Sticky dark grey sandy silt	A thin layer of material.	Post- medieval/mo dern	Topsoil	0-0.15m
102	Sticky mid brown silty clay	Occasional fragments of angular stone within the deposit which look like material from the natural below it		Subsoil/buried ploughsoil(?)	0.15-0.50m
103	Dark drown, sandy	Probable keuper marl		Natural	0.50-0.80m

Environmental

Fieldwork and sampling policy

The environmental sampling policy was as defined in the County Archaeological Service Recording System (CAS 1995 as amended). Large animal bone was hand-collected during excavation and samples of 5 to 10 litres taken from two contexts of probable post-medieval date.

Processing and analysis

The samples were processed by flotation followed by wet-sieving using a Siraf tank. The flots were collected on a 300µm sieve and the residues retained on a 1mm mesh. This allows for the recovery of items such as small animal bones, molluscs and seeds.

The residues were fully sorted by eye and the abundance of each category of environmental remains estimated. The flots were sorted using a low power EMT stereo light microscope and plant remains identified using modern reference collections maintained by the Service.

Results

The proximal end and shaft of one cattle metatarsal (left-hand side) was hand-collected from context 102.

Of the wet-sieved samples, no environmental remains were recovered from context 101. A fragment of oyster shell and unidentifiable vegetative plant remains were recovered from context 102.

Little interpretation can be made of these remains, except that the animal bone and oyster shell show some evidence of disposal of waste, probably food waste.

Discussion

The trench was located at the extreme western side of the castle and surrounding earthworks, and adjacent to the road. The area of excavation was extremely small, with only a 1x0.40x0.80m trench exposing a small amount of stratigraphy. This seemed to be most visible in the eastern section only. Most of the trench was cut down through the existing pipe trench backfill, and only one section in the trench revealed the surrounding stratigraphy. None of the layers visible could be said to be of archaeological interest. Previous fieldwork on the site took place near the castle, in the area of the Sewage Works. Pre-Works soil layers were discovered, along with a buried earthwork and some 13th to 14th century pottery. Given these discoveries and the proximity of the groundworks to the castle, the area had a very high potential for discovering further archaeology. The site was unaffected by this trenching.

Conclusions

Nothing of archaeological interest was noticed in the area of the groundworks. The size and location of the trench probably limited the chances of finding anything of significance. Some evidence of waste dumping activity was evident from the environmental samples. However, this appears to be one small part of the site that was unaffected by the construction of the fortifications, or any subsequent activity that is reflected in the archaeological record. It is highly probable that archaeological deposits exist very close to the area of the watching brief, but unfortunately the trench failed to reveal them.

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.

A watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Severn Trent Water at Castle Tump, Castlemorton, Worcestershire (NGR SO 7946 3708; WSM 32273). A small area was excavated in the location of a fractured water pipe. The side of the excavated trench revealed a soil profile revealing a very shallow topsoil sitting on top of a deeper brown clay subsoil. The pipe trench was cut down in to

the natural. No archaeological features or ancient soil horizons were found during the course of the groundworks.

Archive

Trench record sheets AS41	1
Fieldwork progress records AS2	1
Colour transparency photographs	14
Black and white photographs	14
Sample records AS17	1
Drawings	1
Computer disks	1

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

telephone

Acknowledgements

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