

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT WHITE WALTHAM TO BEENHAMS HEATH WATER MAIN

BERKSHIRE

SU 8510 7510

On behalf of

South East Water Ltd

NOVEMBER 2008

REPORT FOR	South East Water Ltd c/o Scott Wilson Scott House Alencon Lnk Basingstoke Hampshire RG21 7PP
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Summary

A watching brief was carried out by John Moore Heritage Services on a specified section of the pipeline construction between White Waltham and Beenhams Heath. Topsoil overlay subsoil, which in turn overlay natural deposits silty clay. Finds of worked flint, ceramic building material, and copper alloy objects were recovered from the area stripped, no features were uncovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The route of the pipeline extended approximately 5.3km northwards from Beenhams Heath Water Treatment Works (Grid reference SU 8510 7510) and ending just south of White Waltham village (SU 8640 7860). It was within agricultural land, which has a combination of arable and pasture use. The route crosses roads, field boundaries, hedgerows and footpaths. For approximately two thirds of its route the proposed pipeline closely follows and is traversed by four existing water mains and two existing gas mains. The northern part of the route was within an area of Chalk, whereas the southern part of the route was within an area of Lower Eocene deposits of London Clay and Lower London Tertiary (British Geological Survey). The site was relatively flat and low-lying at a level of between 35m OD and 45m OD.

1.2 Planning Background

South East Water constructed the new RZ4 Raw Water Transfer Pipeline, to transfer water between three new boreholes in White Waltham to Beenhams Heath Water Treatment Works. They commissioned Scott Wilson to produce a desk-based assessment, and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological watching brief to be carried out on part of the pipeline length; specified as part of the route, which had experienced low modern disturbance. The watching brief was carried out between Grid references SU 8589 7792 and SU 8640 7832. The overall route was identified as having a low potential for archaeological remains dating to the Neolithic, Roman and Post-Medieval periods.

1.3 Archaeological Background

1.3.1 Prehistoric

There is limited evidence for prehistoric activity within the study area, largely made up of find spots dispersed throughout the landscape. These find spots comprise isolated worked flint flakes, sherds of pottery, and two worked flint scatters. A group of three pits of Neolithic date were located c. 180m to the south of White Waltham. The pits were recorded by Maidenhead Archaeological Society during the construction of a gas pipeline in 1963 and contained burnt deposits. Minute fragments of calcined bone including a fragment of potentially human skull were recovered from two of the pits. These pits also contained four worked flint flakes, two small crude flint cores and four sherds of pottery. A scatter of worked flint of Neolithic date is also known within the study area.



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Key:

Pipeline Ancient Woodland

Borehole 0

BH.NO.	EASTING	NORTHING
BHA	486377	178622
BHB	486416	178400
BHC	485344	177886

0 m 1000 m

1.3.2 Roman

Evidence of Roman activity in the search area comprises a bronze coin, possibly of Claudian date, found at Heywood Court Close at the northern end of the route. A plated denarius and fragments of Roman tile and pottery were found at Pondwood Farm; limestone slabs found in a stream and a 3m wide area of stone close to the find spot at Pondwood farm have also been attributed to the Roman period (Scott Wilson 2007). Roman coins were found during the construction of council houses in White Waltham (Scott Wilson 2007).

A rectangular earthwork found in woods near Ockwells Manor is also of possible Roman date and may represent the earliest predecessor of the current Manor and a reputed medieval manor house that stood on this site. The site of a Roman villa has been tentatively located to the west of White Waltham, but its location is also posited at Berry Grove near White Waltham church. A rectangular crop mark on aerial photographs (www.livelocal.com) was identified c. 500m to the southeast of the proposed pipeline route during research for this report. It has been postulated that the rectangular plan form of this crop mark suggests a building, possibly a villa of Roman date, stood at the site. Aerial photographs of the area examined at the National Monuments Record, Swindon taken in 1963 show the area to be wooded at that time.

1.3.3 Medieval

There is no direct evidence in the HER for early medieval activity in the area, although the moated site of the Manor of Heywood (located to the north of the proposed pipeline route) is referred to in documents dating from 940AD.

A settlement was established at Waltham St Lawrence in the early medieval period, near to the Roman temple at Weycock Hill. The temple had fallen into ruin and was referred to as Wealt-Ham meaning 'dilapidated home', from which Waltham St Lawrence and White Waltham may derive their names. (www.berkshirehistory.com/articles/berks hist03.html).

The north-eastern section of the pipeline is within the Parish of Bray. Within this parish, lay two medieval Manors, now known as Lillibrooke Manor and Ockwells Manor. The Manor at Lillibrooke is first referred to in 1376 and is shown on the 1817 Enclosure map for Bray Parish as Great Lowbrooks. The present manor house at Lillibrooke dates to the 14 century and is located approximately 350m north of the northern end of the route. An area of faint ridge and furrow earthworks together with the remains of several terraces has been identified to the south of White Waltham. These represent the remains of the village's medieval field system. The pipeline route passes directly through these earthworks.

Ockwells Manor was granted to Richard le Norreys in c. 1283, when it was known as Ockholt (Scott Wilson 2007). It is thought that the original house may have been located within a rectangular earthwork of possible Roman date. The current Ockwells Manor House was built by Sir John Norreys between 1446 and 1466 and is an interesting example of the domestic architecture of the period. It is located c. 500m from the north-eastern end of the pipeline route.

1.3.4 Post medieval

The layout of the area has remained relatively unchanged throughout the postmedieval and modern periods. Historic mapping shows a pattern of fields and woodlands that has altered very little in the last 150 years (Scott Wilson 2007). There has been some field boundary loss and parish boundaries have been altered, however overall the historic boundaries remain preserved in the landscape.

The enclosure map for Bray Parish and tithe maps for Bray, White Waltham and Shottesbrooke Parishes were examined for fieldnames and features that may indicate previous land use and possible archaeological site(Scott Wilson 2007).

The above information has been obtained from Scott Wilson's Brief(Scott Wilson 2008).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* were as follows:

• To establish the nature and extent of archaeological activity within the northern zone of the pipeline trench and;

• To mitigate the impact of the pipeline works by preserving by record any archaeological features, finds or deposits.

• To record to an appropriate level any archaeological activity identified;

• To disseminate the results of any investigation, if required, through the deposition of an ordered archive at an appropriate local museum and by the production of a fieldwork report for the Berkshire HER.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation written by Scott Wilson, and agreed with Berkshire Archaeology. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record throughout, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and possible.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist monitored the excavation of the easement, which was excavated prior to the pipeline. This easement was 10 to 15m wide. The strip was undertaken with a toothless grading bucket; however, it was not possible to observe clean natural deposits. Therefore, areas requiring further investigation were established from the

spread of artefacts recovered during the easement strip. Following agreement from Scott Wilson a further watching brief was carried out on these specified areas during the excavation of the 0.7m wide, 1.3m -1.6m deep pipeline. A toothed 700mm ditching bucket was used during the pipeline excavation.

4 **RESULTS**

All archaeological features were assigned individual context numbers. This number covered both the feature cut and fill, unless the feature was sample excavated by hand. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

The dark brown topsoil (01), and most of the subsoil (02) was removed by machine during the 10m wide, 0.3-0.4m deep easement strip, this exposed the top of a layer of orange brown silty clay natural geological deposit (03), which overlay the chalk natural (04). Underlying (03) in the northern end of the pipeline excavation was grey-orange clay natural (08).

The initial easement strip did not reveal a consistently clean archaeological horizon; however, concentrations of prehistoric worked flints and other artefacts were recovered from two separate areas (Area 1 and 2). Area 1 measured 160m in length, situated at the western end of the specified watching brief area, (See figure 1) where X worked flint fragments were recovered (given unstratified number (05)). The pipeline excavation was observed through this area; however, no archaeological features were uncovered.

Area 2 was around 90m long, situated at the far northern end of the specified area (see figure 1), and x fragments of worked flint were recovered (06). However no archaeological features were observed during the pipeline excavation.

Area 3 on the plan was highlighted due to an area of disturbance to the natural layers seen around the corner of the specified area, a length of around 170m, where patches of dirty chalky areas were observed (see figure 1). The shape and orientation of these patches could not be clearly ascertained due to the constraints of the easement. Finds recovered in this area were assigned context number (07). However, when the pipeline was excavated through the area, it was found that the natural chalk had large variations in level, and in this area the chalk was a lot closer to ground level. It was therefore probably plough damage, which had caused the layers to look disturbed.

5 FINDS

All finds were unstratified, collected mainly during the easement stripping. Area 1's finds were given context number (05), Area 2, (06); and Area 3 was context number (07).

5.1 Flint (*By D. Gilbert*)

All the flint artefacts came from the plough soil, unsurprisingly the majority displayed signs of recent damage. Almost the entire assemblage of flint was dark grey in colour with the odd piece displaying a pale blue-white patina.

The high proportion of primary flakes with a high percentage of cortex on the dorsal surface is indicative of core preparation. These flakes were detached utilising the hard hammer technique. A Late Neolithic date is most likely with perhaps an element of

some earlier material.

Due to the lack of associated features coupled with the character of the assemblage it may indicate that the area was utilised for the gathering of flint as a raw material. Some basic trimming of the nodules was carried out to reduce its weight before it was removed from the area.

Context	Туре	L (mm)	B (mm)	D (mm)	Notes
U/S (05)	Flake	18	21	4	
U/S (05)	Flake	24	25	5	20% cortex on dorsal surface
U/S (05)	Flake	30	21	7	20% cortex on dorsal surface
U/S (05)	Flake	20	30	7	10% cortex on dorsal surface
U/S (05)	Flake	76	57	20	50% cortex on dorsal surface
U/S (06)	Flake	25	41	5	15% cortex on dorsal surface
U/S (06)	Flake	32	38	10	10% cortex on dorsal surface
U/S (06)	Flake	35	24	6	60% cortex on dorsal surface
U/S (06)	Flake	25	18	3	5% cortex on dorsal surface
U/S (06)	Flake	36	29	9	
U/S (07)	Flake	23	19	3	
U/S (07)	Flake	25	30	6	5% cortex on dorsal surface
U/S (07)	Flake	32	20	6	20% cortex on dorsal surface
U/S (07)	Flake	20	19	2	
U/S (07)	Blade	30	15	4	
U/S (07)	Broken Blade	30	20	4	10% cortex on dorsal surface
U/S (07)	Flake	34	26	8	90% cortex on dorsal surface
U/S (07)	Thermal fracture	50	35	27	Possible burnt core fragment

5.2 Other Finds

Pottery

Context	Count	Description	Comments
(06)	1	Base sherd sandy-ware with oxidised outer	

Ceramics

Context	Count	Description	Comments
(05)	2	Heavily abraded tile edge fragment.	
		Small undiagnostic spalled fragment cbm.	
(06)	5	5 fragments of roof tile	Mostly Post Medieval
(07)	4	4 fragments roof tile	Post Medieval

Metals

Context	Count	Description	Comments	
(05)	1	Possibly one half of a chape for a dagger scabbard.	Post Medieval	by
			preservation	and
			workmanship.	
(06)	1	Clinker slag	Modern	
(07)	1	Cu. Alloy coin, 1965 halfpenny	Modern	

Animal Bone

Context	Count	Description	Comments	
(06)	1	Medium mammal long bone shaft fragment	Heavily	abraded,
			undiagnostic.	

6 **DISCUSSION**

The site was deemed to have a low archaeological potential, and, apart from the spreads of worked flint, tile and other finds recovered, no associated archaeology was observed during the watching brief. It is likely that the areas of artefacts are either from archaeological features, which have since been ploughed away from the area, or are from sites in the vicinity of the pipeline, and the action of ploughing has moved the artefacts over time. The variation in the level of the chalk natural (04) was surprising, with irregular drops and rises observed in the upper level of the chalk along the pipeline excavation. The scoops and bowl 'features' were filled with the orange brown silty clay (03). This is likely to be a result of periglacial activity eroding the chalk across the area. The variations in levels were not evident in the clay natural (08) at the northern end.

7 **ARCHIVE**

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

<u>Paper Record</u> The project brief Written Scheme of Investigation

The project report The primary site records

The archive is awaiting an accession number from Reading Museum Service, where it will be deposited.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage 1991 Management of Archaeological Projects

- Institute of Field Archaeologists. 1994. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.
- Scott Wilson 2007 White Waltham to Beenhams Heath Water Main, Cultural heritage Desk-based Assessment Final Report
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