An Archaeological Excavation of an Iron Age Paleochannel within the Southern Extension of the Dimmer Landfill Site, near Castle Cary, Somerset

Summary

A wide, shallow (ca.22 metres wide and up to 2 metres deep) and slow moving watercourse or paleochannel running through the floodplain of the River Cary silted up and was re-cut in the Middle-Iron Age. Silting continued, however, and by the Late-Iron Age the watercourse was no longer draining the surrounding land, at which time a number of artificial drainage ditches were cut along it's course.

These ditches also silted up and by the 2nd century A.D. the paleochannel was sealed by larger flooding episodes. The Back Brook might be the successor to the paleochannel, cut at a later date but when the route of the paleochannel was still waterlogged and obvious.

An archaeological excavation of a natural paleochannel and investigations of a series of artificial ditches cut through the paleochannel, recovered pottery sherds and animal bone fragments. The pottery sherds indicated that the environs of the paleochannel were being exploited from at least the Middle Iron Age.

1.0 Introduction

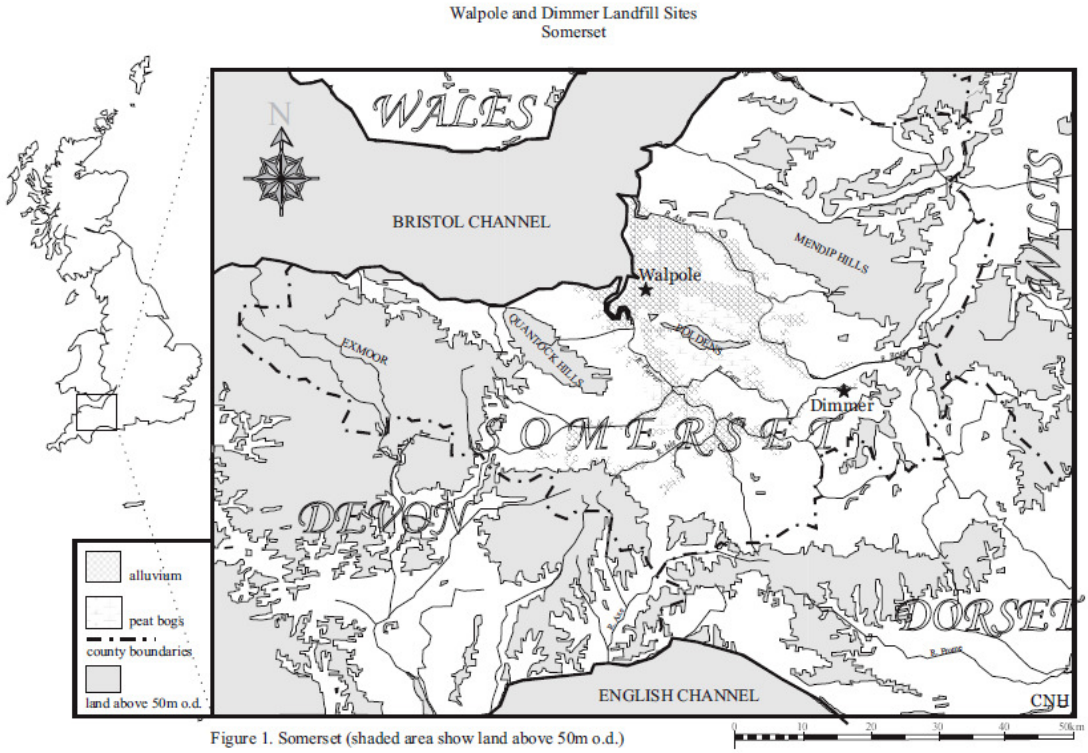

Figure 1. Somerset (shaded area show land above 50m o.d.)

1.1 Because the current landfill site at Dimmer, situated approximately 3 kilometres SW of Castle Cary, was almost full to capacity, Wyvern Waste Ltd. needed to extend the landfill site into fields to the south and south-west of the existing dump. This southern extension consisted of 4 large pasture and arable fields plus a

strip north of Dry Brook, the whole extension totalling approximately 75 acres.

1.2 In 1997, when the details of the planning application were being considered, Somerset County Council recommended that an archaeological watching brief should take place when a long established stream running through the centre of the extension area, the Back Brook, was diverted into a new, artificial channel routed around the edge of the extension area, and whenever soil or earth was disturbed or whenever excavations took place. The construction of the new channel was monitored during 1997 and 1998 resulting in the recording of clusters of prehistoric features - mainly small pits or gullies - some buried soil layers and a large, buried, paleochannel.

These results were contained in a watching brief report to Somerset County Council produced in 1998.

1.3 The construction method for the landfill extensions consists of excavating a series of long 'cells', each cell being ca.30m wide and with lengths varying from around 250metres at the eastern end to around 800metres to the west, these lengths running N-S through the full width of the extension. The cells are excavated down to impervious clays or bedrock deposits, at depths varying from around 1 metre down to 3 or 4 metres, thereby removing all silty clay or clay deposits.

1.4 As it was felt that archaeological monitoring of such large earth-moving projects would not have been viable or practical, and as it was not known where archaeological features or deposits would be found (apart from those areas already recorded within the new stream cut around the perimeter of the site), Wyvern Waste Ltd. were asked to fund a trial excavation of that part of the site which was to receive the first two cells of the new landfill extension and where is was known that archaeological features would, or should, be found.

1.5 The excavation area, on the extreme eastern end of the new extension, was assumed to contain a paleochannel, **F15**, recorded in 1988 within the new stream cut just east of the eastern boundary of the southern extension. It was not known whether other archaeological features or deposits were present within this initial construction zone neither nor was it known whether archaeological features or deposits could be recognised during earth moving even if they were present on the site.

2.0 Topography and Geology

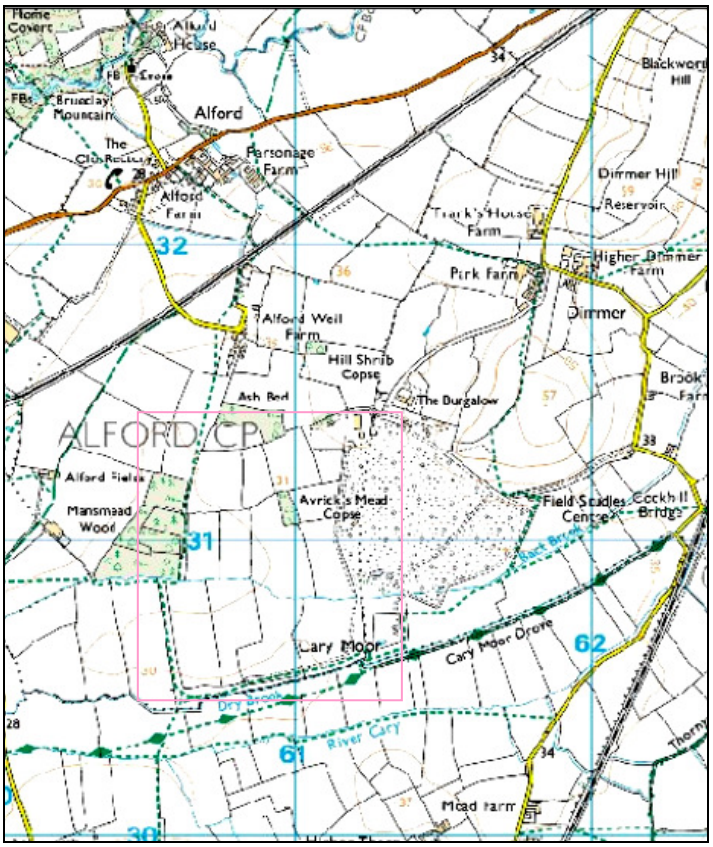

Figure 2. Dimmer Landfill site Southern Extension before construction[1]. The southern extension lies within the pink square.

2.1 The southern extension to the landfill site is situated on relatively low lying land within the floodplain of the River Cary and consists of a series of large fields standing between 30m and 32 metres above Ordnance Datum. The north and south borders of the extension are (or were) streams; Back Brook to the north (now diverted) and Dry Brook to the south, much of the latter within an artificially straightened channel.

The River Cary runs from east to west approximately 200metres south of Dry Brook.

2.2 Dry Brook is also the boundary between the parishes of Alford to the north and North Barrow to the south, and, slightly to the west, between Lovington and North Barrow, and to the east between Castle Cary and North Barrow.

2.3 The southern extension lies almost entirely within the parish of Alford with the addition of a smaller area at the eastern end within Castle Cary parish (although this will not contain landfill cells), the boundary between the two parishes being a field hedge and ditch. This parish boundary is contiguous with and apparently contemporary with the one between Alford and North Barrow, both consisting of mature, mixed hedges containing fairly regularly spaced boundary oaks.

2.4 The extension area lies on the southern edge of Alford parish, approximately

[1] Magic Maps.

1.5 kilometres south of the modern village which straddles the B3153 road. Alford church and the medieval village around it (now largely abandoned) are situated adjacent to the River Brue which forms the northern boundary of the parish, near to the confluence of the River Alham.

2.5 The Cary floodplain is surrounded by gentle hills. Higher ground lies approximately 500 metres to the north and the north-west where the 35 metres contour rises to around 60 metres; approximately 500 metres to the east the 35metre contour rises very gradually towards the hills south of Castle Cary where, approximately 2kilometres away from the landfill extension area the hills rise to around 150metres.

Approximately 400metres away to the south the land rises to around 50metres.

2.6 The fields within the extension area were mostly under pasture although occasional arable cultivation, mainly for fodder maize, did sometimes occur.

2.7 Geologically, the southern extension lies wholly within an area of alluvial river deposits of Pleistocene and recent date. Surrounding the alluvial flood plain [of the River Cary] are extensive deposits of Lower Lias clays with limestones of Jurassic date.

2.8 Approximately 3 kilometres to the east, around Castle Cary, the Lower Lias clays are overlain by Middle Lias silts and clays which are, in turn, overlain by Upper Lias sands, the upland being capped by limestones of the Inferior Oolite series.

3.0 Earlier archaeological projects.

Prior to the watching brief in 1998, there were three phases of archaeological works, all connected to the extension of the landfill site.

3.1 1991

In 1991 two archaeological trenches were excavated across a low platform and mound associated with the field name 'Pothills Leaze' [SMR entry 55400]. The work was carried out by Mr. Peter McCrone of Somerset County Council. Two possible early-medieval pottery sherds were recovered plus animal bone and post-medieval pottery. No function for the platform or mound could be determined from the excavation although it was assumed that the site was medieval in origin, possibly agricultural.

** important note...The fieldname 'Pothill' in the Tithe Map plot 134 is in fact a corruption of its original name of 'Tothill' which is shown on the earlier 1805 map. There are a number of Tothill names on the 1805 map, all apparently connected to Tothill Farm which is sited north of Alford village adjacent to the River Brue.

In view of the above there is no reason to assume that 'Pothill Leaze' [Tothill Leaze] was in any way connected to pottery manufacture or potsherd artefacts.

3.2 1996

In 1996 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken when the most easterly field in the extension area immediately east of the Castle Cary parish boundary, was stripped of its topsoil prior to use as a soil dump for material derived from stripping

elsewhere on the landfill site. Only post-medieval pottery sherds were recovered during this operation which did not disturb the clays below the turf/topsoil.

3.3 1997

The cut for the new stream commenced in 1997 on the western and south-western portions of its course. An archaeological watching brief was instituted for these works including fieldwalking after topsoil stripping and observation and recording during the machine excavation. In 1997, archaeological features were noted at the north-western end of the new stream cut and thin, dark grey bands were recorded within the alluvium at the south-west corner of the new cut. These deposits were assumed to be buried soils or buried turf lines and contained charcoal and fragments of fired clay.

3.4 1998

In 1998 the new stream cut was completed. The buried soil deposits noted in 1997 continued to the east. In the centre of the southern section of the new cut an extensive series of archaeological deposits and features was recorded. Pottery sherds from within the features suggested middle-late Bronze Age and possible middle-late Iron Age phases. Loom weights and spindle whorls suggested some form of permanent or semi-permanent/seasonal occupation. At the extreme north-eastern end of the new stream a series of ditches and pits were recorded, some seemingly cut through a relatively large paleochannel or watercourse feature, possibly a large stream or small river. Pottery from these features indicated a late-Iron Age date and suggested that the site was part of the Durotrigian culture group (of Dorset and south/central Somerset).

All of these archaeological features, including the paleochannel, were sealed by up to 0.6m of alluvial (or colluvial) orange clay deposits.[2]

4.0 The Excavation - Background

4.1 Agreement regarding the provision of an excavation area prior to development work had been reached between Wyvern Waste Ltd. - owners and operators of the waste site - the archaeology department of Somerset County Council and P. Trant Ltd., who were to construct the new land fill cells within the eastern end of the southern extension area. An area near to the eastern edge of the extension area, immediately west of the contractor's compound and just south of the course of the Back Brook, measuring approximately 50metres E-W x 40m N-S, had been marked out and set aside for the archaeological excavation. The location of the excavation site, later identified as Area 1, is shown on figure 3.

[2] Hollinrake C. and N. 1998, *An Archaeological Watching Brief on the creation of a new stream course at the Dimmer Landfill Site in 1997 and 1998*, unpubl. client report for Wyvern Waste, report number 134.

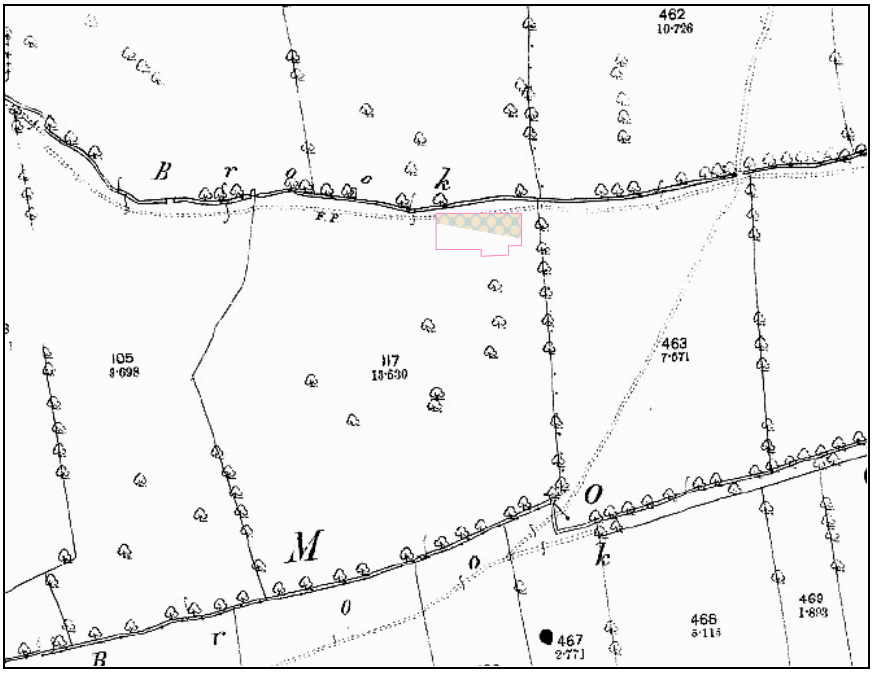

Figure 3. The location of the excavation area within its original field is outlined in pink. The palaeochannel silts are shown in blue-grey mottled with orange. The original course of the Back Brook is shown at the top of the plan.[3]

4.2 During the archaeological excavations, the new landfill cells were being constructed and large areas of ground were being removed. An ongoing watching brief was carried out throughout these construction works.

P. Trant Ltd. provided an office portakabin and a tools and storage portakabin, toilet, power and water facilities and the machinery and plant necessary to remove the overburden from above the archaeological horizon. P. Trant's site datum points, related to Ordnance Datum, were used to provide levels a.O.D. for the excavations.

4.3 The overburden, comprising the turf and topsoil and the thick upper deposit of orange clay, was removed (under archaeological supervision) by a tracked O+K RH6 slew excavating machine operated by Clive Ellis and dumped onto a spoil heap before being moved, along with all the other material from the cell construction work, onto a large site dump located towards the NW corner of the southern extension area.

5.0 The Excavation - Results

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The extent and location of the excavation area was determined by the desire to locate the paleochannel recorded in the 1998 watching brief. This feature, assigned context number **F15**, was seen at the northeast end of the new stream cut. As this was the only feature, or group of features recorded within this area, and as it was felt that it should be relatively easy to recognise the deposits which filled the paleochannel, Wyvern Waste Ltd. and P. Trant Ltd. were asked if they would make an area available for excavation where it was thought that the paleochannel might cross (although its

[3] 1886 O. S. map, taken from the Old Maps website.

course was not known and it was not at all certain that it was a paleochannel rather than a pond or similar waterlogged feature).

The large area requested for the investigation was made available along with a tracked excavating machine and large dumper trucks for removal of the spoil. A generous time span was allowed for the archaeological works after which the machinery and the large excavated area forming the new landfill cells, construction for which commenced at the SE corner of the extension area, would move through and obliterate the archaeological excavation area.

5.1.2 The northern and eastern sides of the designated archaeological excavation areas were limited and defined by the haul road which was required to remove the large quantities of material from the southern extension areas to the site dump.

The haul road to the north followed the route of the Back Brook. By 2001 this had become a dry channel; the water that originally flowed along its course was now fully diverted and running through the new stream cut. The old course had been filled by debris, vegetation and scrub which had recently been removed from the new extension area.

5.1.3 A tracked slew was used to remove the upper deposits, the machining commencing at the northwest corner and finishing at the southease corner. The area was stripped from north to south using a 1.8m (6ft) straight-edged ditching bucket. The strips were numbered from 102/1 through to 102/14, (context number (**102**)) to more easily identify the location of the finds recovered during the initial machining. Each strip was ca.3.5m wide (2 x machine-bucket widths).

The surface of the paleochannel was easily recognized: immediately below the overlying orange clay deposits was a soft, blue-grey silty clay with charcoal flecks. Pottery was recovered from the surface of the silts and bone fragments were also noted. The southern edge of the feature was also clear, the pale silts within the channel contrasting with the yellowish-orange silty clay to the south. Because the southern edge of the river or paleochannel was present throughout, the full 40m width of the area was not required and a N-S width of only 20metres - 25metres was exposed by the machine.

During the period when the archaeological excavation was in progress, construction work for the new landfill cells, entailing the continuous use of large earth-moving machinery and haul trucks, was constantly being undertaken, the work progressing from the south to the north of the new extension area.

5.1.4 When it was clear that the paleochannel was present and when the line and orientation of the south edge of the channel was known, it was decided that parts of the exposed channel should be cut through to determine the depth of the feature. This exercise was first carried out near to the west edge, but before a controlled excavation of the deposits could take place the newly excavated portion immediately flooded with water. The channel silts were obviously waterlogged and provided a conduit both for groundwater and for rainwater.

Thereafter, some sections of the upper layers of the channel silts were removed by

machine. A deeper and longer section was cut at the east end so that a full section or profile of the channel could be recorded. However, when this was carried out the silts proved to be unstable and the upper orange clays kept collapsing. As a result, those upper clays were also removed by the machine, apart from a few centimetres at the base of the deposit above the river silts. The section was then recorded with the aid of a pump provided by P. Trant Ltd. to remove the water which continually flowed into the new cut and which, eventually, undermined and collapsed the section.

The widest available section of the channel was at the eastern end but the full profile was not available even there. The northern edge of the paleochannel was assumed to lie below the haul road or below Back Brook or even beyond. The haul road was in continual use and that area would not be available for inspection until the cell construction programme moved through this part of the extension site.

The deposits at the western end were not excavated further after the initial machining, mainly because the river channel within Area 1 was at its narrowest at this point, and partly due to constant flooding through groundwater and subsequent rainfall.

5.2 Methods

5.2.1 From the start of the machine clearance, archaeological deposits, layers or features were assigned context numbers, the numbers running consecutively from 100 onwards. The paler orange clays to the south of the river were investigated through two small sondages. The surface of these clays were exposed by the machine but were not cut into. Finds from the surface of this deposit were assigned Cleaning Bag numbers (CB1-CB5).

Levels were taken throughout the excavation, a temporary bench mark being set up at the NE corner of area 1. The bench mark was carried from the extension site datum point:- P. Trant Ltd. Station 8, located on the north bank of the new stream cut at the SE corner of the landfill extension area.

Excavation plans were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. All drawings and drawing sheets were numbered and listed.

A day book was kept and the excavation was also recorded photographically using colour slides, colour prints and black and white prints.

5.2.2 The channel silts were divided into three excavation areas, 1A, 1B and 1C. These areas are shown on figure 4.

5.3 The Excavation - context descriptions

The channel silt deposits were assigned different context numbers in different places to aid in the location, identification and dating of the pottery sherds recovered from the silts.

5.3.1 The East-facing Section Drawing

After machining had been completed, the longest section - the west facing section on the eastern edge - was drawn at a scale of 1:10.

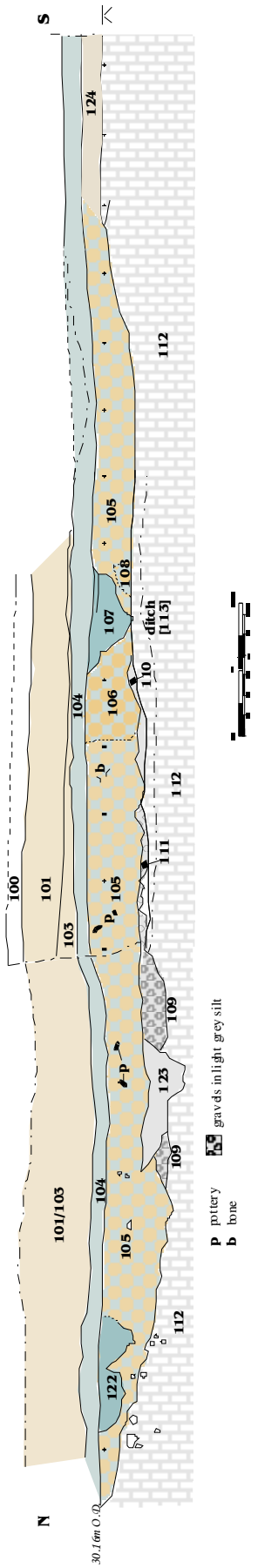

Figure 4. The east-facing section through the palaeochannel and its ditch cuts.

Figure 4 shows the full section of the paleochannel including that part below the haul road which was recorded after the completion of the excavation when construction work removed the haul road and exposed the remainder of the channel. When that operation occurred, there was only time to record the remainder of the section as the construction schedule entailed the removal of all deposits down to the required depth for the new cells. The original northern edge of the section drawing is shown on figure 4 where the break line is indicated in the centre of the top part of the section drawing (that part containing the topsoil deposit [100].

5.3.2 Descriptions of the Contexts shown on the Section Drawing

i) The alluvial clays - contexts [100], [101], [103] and [104]

On Figure 4, the topsoil, context (**100**), is shown on the only part of the section area where it had not been machined away.

Geoarchaeological analysis interpreted the clays which seal the archaeological horizons and the paleochannel as alluvial silts deposited through episodes of flooding from the rivers that ran through the flood plain (Jordan 2001).

context	type	description	interpretation
100	deposit	mid-brown silty clay, small stones (up to c30cm thick), surface relatively level over the whole site but gently sloping down to the south	turf and topsoil
101	deposit	pale orange hard clay with some small stones; depth from 0.4m to 0.8m; below 101,seals all deposits below	alluvial clay
103	deposit	pale orange clay at base of 101, not always obvious; above 104	base of 101
104	deposit	hard grey-blue clay with orange flecking, only visible below 101 and 103 some time after exposure, not uniformly present	base of 101, possibly containing more organic material

The alluvial clay (**101**) varies in depth between about 0.4m to 0.8m, shallower to the north, deeper in the centre of the extension area including the vicinity of the paleochannel, and becoming shallower again at the southern end of the new extension. The clay tends to crack and fissure when dry. No finds were recovered from (**101**).

The base of the clay, context (**103**), sometimes appeared to be a paler orange clay than (**101**) although this was not always the case.

Between the upper alluvial clays (**103**) and silts (**105**) was context (**104**), a hard, grey-blue clay with orange flecks and mottles, generally around 0.2m thick. This layer was not always visible, especially when first exposed or cleaned, and often only became obvious after becoming oxidised, although even then it could not always be seen. The darker colour might be the result of higher organic content (Jordan 2001).

ii) The paleochannel silts - contexts [102], [105], [108], [109], [110], [111]

context	type	description	interpretation
102	fill	blue-grey silty clays	fill of palaeochannel = 105
105	fill	blue-grey silty clay heavily mottled with orange and brown lenses; with bone, pottery, small stones and frequent charcoal lenses	fill of palaeochannel =102
106	fill	grey silty clay with very heavy and dense orange mottles, visible even when first cleaned;	fill of palaeochannel
108	fill	blue-grey silty clay heavily flecked with orange-brown mottles; with small snails;	fill of palaeochannel = 106
109	deposit	patch of silts with less dense mottling near base of 108	fill of palaeochannel
110	deposit	lens of fine silty, gritty gravel with grey silts	natural gravels formed on the base of palaeochannel
111	deposit	grey fine grits	fill of palaeochannel =? 109, 110
112	geology	Lias clay, fairly hard with small grits and small lumps of stone and mudstone	natural Lias clays

Context (**105**) is the same as context (**102**), which was numbered during the initial machining operations so that pottery sherds recovered during that operation could be located and identified properly.

After the machining had been completed the silt deposits were identified by a new number, context (**105**). The silts did not change colour on exposure to the air to any great extent either from their surface to their base or along the length of the paleochannel.

Silts (**106**) were the same as (**105**) except that they were very densely coloured with extensive orange and brown oxidised mottles. These silts were not only mottled after oxidation of the surface had occurred but were heavily mottled after the first clean. Although there was a vague boundary between (**105**) and (**106**), there was no positive identification of an artificial cut. Context (**108**), to the south of (**106**) and separated by a later recut [**113**], was also very heavily mottled and is probably the same deposit. (**108**) contained some small snails.

During the initial machining, pottery and bone found within the channel silts were bagged as individual finds and labelled as context (**102**) with the appropriate finds bag number; contexts (**102**) **/ 1** through to (**102**) **/ 14**.

position in palaeochannel	finds bag numbers	date range
upper layers of the channel silts	3, 4, 8 and 13.	Late Iron Age
within the channel silts	1, 2, 5, 7, 9 and 12.	late Iron Age to early Romano-British (1x sherd)
the base of the silts and the stream bed	6, 10, 11 and 14.	C3-C1 BC

iii) Base of the paleochannel silts - contexts (109), (110) and (111)

Silts (**105**) lay above pockets of paler, finer, shelly silts, and above the surface of the natural geology of blue Lias Clay and Lias mudstones, context (**112**). In some areas the river silts lay upon the water-borne gravels and stones of the channel bed, this deposit sometimes containing pottery sherds and animal bone fragments. Similar gravel spreads were encountered during the watching brief on other parts of the site. Contexts (**109**), (**110**) and (**11**1) were all similar deposits. All were pockets or lenses of a very fine, silty, pale grey clay with occasional charcoal flecks and some gravel lenses. Similar deposits were noted on the north end of the channel when that was drawn but these were not assigned context numbers.

It is possible that these deposits represent the remnants of the earliest, natural, channel fills prior to the depositions of the silts filling the palaeochannel.

iv) cuts into the paleochannel silts

context	type	description	interpretation
123	fill	very soft, fine sticky grey silts with some snails	fill of ditch 124
124	cut	complex profile: wide V-shaped with broad uneven base, northern side forms a wide platform; c 2m wide x c 0.5m deep	ditch cut, or several recuts

Ditch [**124**] is the lowest of the cuts within the palaeochannel silts, cutting through layer (**109**) and the base of the channel into the natural Lias clay, and, presumably, the earliest. Further silts accumulated above this channel. The edges of the cut were clearly seen, but no finds were recovered from the fill.

Two further artificial cuts cut from high in the channel silts could be seen, both filled by fill (**122**).

context	type	description	interpretation
122	fill	dark blue-grey silts with light mottles	fill of ditches 125
125	cut	complex profile of at least two intercutting ditches; c1.8m wide x c0.5 and 0.5m deep; 1x profile U-shaped, the other V-shaped with flat base; both cut from upper silts of palaeochannel	two intercutting ditches filled by 122

Due to the watching brief conditions (this part of the palaeochannel lay beneath the haul road and was only available for a short time), it was not possible to recover any finds from these ditches, but ditch [**113**], cut from the same strategraphic horizon at the top of the palaeochannel silts (**105**), produced many sherds of late Iron Age pottery.

context	type	description	interpretation
107	fill	firm blue to blue-grey clay with occas. orange mottles; with small frags. Of chert and small stones, rare pottery,bone and charcoal (larger charcoal near base)	fill of ditch 113
113	cut	V-shaped profile with slightly dished base; up to 1.2m wide x 0.55m deep	ditch cut filled by 107

Ditch [**113**] cut through the channel silts [**106**] and [**108**].

6.0 Discussion

6.1 The large negative feature containing the silts (105/102) was originally interpreted as a palaeochannel during the watching brief because of its size, its broad U-shaped profile and the existence of gravels at the base. Geoarchaeological analysis accorded with this interpretation (Jordan 2001).

6.2 The geoarchaeological report went on to suggest that the palaeochannel silted up in the Iron Age and was managed for some time by the excavation of channels into the silts to aid drainage. Intensification of agriculture on the surrounding upland leading to soil erosion was suggested as the most likely origin of the sediments clogging up both the palaeochannel and the ditches cutting into the silts (Jordan 2001).

6.3 Shortly before the Roman invasion (43AD) efforts to keep the palaeochannel clear ceased and nearby settlement (not seen but inferred from the finds) was abandoned. No pottery was found in the hard orange clays above the surface of the paleochannel; no pottery dating to the second century AD was recovered.

It may well be that further intensification of land use during the Roman period also caused accelerated soil erosion and increased run-off rates from the surrounding hills (Butzer 1982, 124), causing not only clogging of the watercourse but also accumulation of alluvium on the flood plain.

6.4 The old course of the Back Brook was probably cut as a successor to the paleochannel and the Iron Age ditches, presumably at a time when the course of the paleochannel was still waterlogged and recognisable.

6.5 The gravels (**110**) at the base of the palaeochannel indicate that the watercourse originally carried water with sufficient energy to carry silty fractions away, exposing beds of gravels too heavy to wash downstream. The dating evidence from the pottery suggests that the sediments clogging up the palaeochannel and filling the river valley accumulated over a relatively short period, perhaps only a few hundred years. This does not appear to be an isolated phenomenon; similar sediment sequences have been studied in detail at Walpole Landfill Site[4]. Other buried landscapes of similar character and date have been noted at Ilchester (Thew 1994), in the valley of the River Yeo, and at Carhampton[5]. Siltation of the River Janet at Uphill, where it flows into the River Axe, has also been investigated using both excavation and retrogressive map analysis (Hollinrake 2004).

Further studies of this phenomenon of siltation should focus on resolving the question of how quickly the silts clogging the watercourses first accumulated with a view to understanding whether they represent a sudden intensification of agriculture or whether a long-term steady increase in activity reached a tipping point in the carrying capacity of the hydrological systems in operation at the time.

6.6 This work demonstrates that silting of the watercourses in Somerset is nothing

[4] C & N Hollinrake Ltd. reports from 1999 to 2013, Somerset HER no. 17904, http://www.hollinrake.org.uk/walpole/about-the-site/
[5] C & N Hollinrake Ltd. Reports from 1994 to 2013.

new and is not confined to the Somerset Levels; rather it is a phenomenon with a very long history and a corresponding long history of the development and maintenance of practices and techniques which mitigate the problems this siltation continues to create. Central to these mitigation strategies is the clearance of silts from clogged watercourses. It is anticipated that similar processes will be found to have taken place in most of the river valleys in the county.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Wyvern Waste Ltd. for agreeing to these excavations, for the provision of storage space and for their continual co-operation and interest in the project. Mr. Martin Ellis, Dimmer Landfill site manager, was always generous with his time whenever problems occurred and Messrs. John Bentley and Simon Cutforth always provided help and assistance when necessary. The construction work was carried out by P. Trant Ltd. and we are especially grateful to site manager Colin Monaghan and works manager Tony Austin for their unfailing help during a difficult project, and for provision of site offices and stores. The Geoarchaeology report was written by David Jordan of Terra Nova and we are grateful for his valuable observations and continued interest in the site. The Somerset County Council archaeological monitor was Richard Brunning

Charles and Nancy Hollinrake
31st March 2014

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Finds List

context	{__	_____pottery ____	_____	_____}	bldg materials		miscellaneous
	qty	fabric & weight	surface	century	qty		
102/1	2	rims, v. small, sandy 2g	joining bead rims	BC-AD			3x bone frags.; 8g
	10	BBS types; 41g	some grey/brown	BC-AD			2x fired clay frags.; 14g, <1g
	1	rim BBW; 9g	black	BC-AD			1 frag. Chert; 6g
102/2	3	fired clay?					6x bone frags; 14g
							2x fired clay; 9g
							2x limestone, burnt red; 79g
102/3	1	reduced, gritty, some small quartz temper;9g	reduced	BC-AD			1x small frag. Bone with sharpened end; 4g
	1	small, fine, sandy; 2g	reduced grey	BC-AD			
102/4	2	gritty, reduced; 6g, 2g	gritty, reduced	BC-AD			1x bone frag.; 5g
							1x pale chert; 22g
102/5	1	rim; reduced, gritty, some sm. quartz; 4g	sm. bead rim; reduced	BC-AD			4x fired clay; 6g
	1	base; reduced, gritty; 13g	inner brown surfaces	BC-AD			1x burnt brown stone; 2g
	8	various reduced fabrics; 8g	oxidized	BC-AD			1x smooth orange pebble; 7g
	1	fine sandy; 3g	dark grey	BC-AD			
102/6							50x bones and teeth; 101g
102/7	1	rim; BBW; 3g	black, simple rim	BC-AD			3x fired clay; 4g
	1	handle BBW; 8g	black	BC-AD			
102/8	1	rim; BBW type; 17g	black	BC-AD			3x joining bone; 12g
	2	gritty, dark grey; 2g,2g	dark grey	BC-AD			1x fired clay; 69g
	1	buff-grey, sm. grey & black grits; 3g	buff-grey	BC-AD			
	1	reduced, sandy	black	BC-AD			
102/9	1	reduced, sm. quartz temper; 2g	reduced	BC-AD			
102/10							18x bone; 65g
							1x chert; 9g
102/11	11	limestone and fossil shell temper; 123g	oxidized and reduced	C5-3BC			
	11	as above; 7g					
102/12	1	reduced BBW type; 9g	black	BC-AD			

102/13	1	thick (12mm) grey, limestone & grit; 12g	buff, gritty	C5-3BC			1x animal tooth; 2g
	1	as above; 2g					
	1	base; black; 13g	orange, soapy, voids	C5-3BC			
	1	grey, abundant grits; 22g	smooth	C5-3BC			
	2	smooth, sandy, pale grey; 6g	light brown inner	BC-AD			
	12	various; reduced, gritty; 25g	reduced, gritty	BC-AD			
102/14	1	black, limestone temper	reduced, gritty	3-1BC			31x bone; 158g
105	1	brown, sandy, quartz temper; 5g	reduced, gritty	BC-AD			
107A	1	BBW type rim; 2g	simple rim	BC-AD	Q		
	1	grey, sandy; 3g	grey	BC-AD	R		
	1	rim; grey, pale margins; 24g	black burnished	BC-AD	S		

context	type	description	interpretation
100	deposit	mid-brown silty clay, small stones (up to c30cm thick), surface relatively level over the whole site but gently sloping down to the south	turf and topsoil
101	deposit	pale orange hard clay with some small stones; depth from 0.4m to 0.8m; below 101,seals all deposits below	alluvial clay
102	fill	blue-grey silty clays	fill of palaeochannel = 105
103	deposit	pale orange clay at base of 101, not always obvious; above 104	base of 101
104	deposit	hard grey-blue clay with orange flecking, only visible below 101 and 103 some time after exposure, not uniformly present	base of 101, possibly containing more organic material
105	fill	blue-grey silty clay heavily mottled with orange and brown lenses; with bone, pottery, small stones and frequent charcoal lenses	fill of palaeochannel =102
106	fill	grey silty clay with very heavy and dense orange mottles, visible even when first cleaned;	fill of palaeochannel
107	fill	firm blue to blue-grey clay with occas. orange mottles; with small frags. Of chert and small stones, rare pottery,bone and charcoal (larger charcoal near base)	fil of ditch 113
107C	fill	stiff light blue-grey clay with orange mottles; occas. pottery and small charcoal flecks in base	fill of ditch 113C
108	fill	blue-grey silty clay heavily flecked with orange-brown mottles; with small snails;	fill of palaeochannel = 106
109	deposit	patch of silts with less dense mottling near base of 108	fill of palaeochannel
110	deposit	lens of fine silty, gritty gravel with grey silts	fill of palaeochannel = ? 109, 110
111	deposit	grey, fine grits	fill of palaeochannel =? 109, 110
112	geology	Lias clay, fairly hard with small grits and small lumps of stone and mudstone	natural Lias clays
113	cut	V-shaped profile with slightly dished base; up to 1.2m wide x 0.55m deep	ditch cut filled by 107
122	fill	dark blue-grey silts with light mottles	fill of ditches 125
123	fill	very soft, fine sticky grey silts with some snails	fill of ditch 124
124	cut	complex profile: wide V-shaped with broad uneven base, northern side forms a wide platform; c 2m wide x c 0.5m deep	ditch cut, possibly recut
125	cut	complex profile of at least two intercutting ditches; c1.8m wide x c0.5 and 0.5m deep; 1x profile U-shaped, the other V-shaped with flat base; both cut from upper silts of palaeochannel	two intercutting ditches filled by 122