

2011

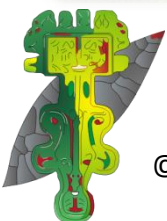
Results of an Archaeological Watching Brief, Minchinhampton Golf Course, Minchinhampton Common, Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire, GL6 9AQ



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Ref: AArc 47/11/WB

Acknowledgements

Absolute Archaeology would like to acknowledge the assistance of Mr P Worster (Golf Course Manager) and the staff at Minchinhampton Golf Course, in the production of this report.

Note

Whereas Absolute Archaeology have taken all care to produce a comprehensive summary of the known and recorded archaeological evidence, no responsibility can be accepted for any omissions of fact or opinion, however caused.

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General chronological table

Period	Date	Information
Prehistoric	800000 – 43 AD	Generalised period from the earliest human activity in Britain (Happisburgh) to the conquest of Britain by Claudius.
Palaeolithic	800000 - 10000 BC	Mobile groups, ephemeral habitation evidence, stone tool technology. Material evidence found predominantly in caves. Earliest evidence for hominins in Britain is at Happisburgh and Pakefield in Norfolk dating to the Early Pleistocene c.800,000 BP.
Mesolithic	10000 – 4000 BC	Period of major transformation in the European environment and landscape after the end of the last Ice Age. Mobile hunter-gatherer communities, sophisticated tool technology and some semi-permanent settlement, particularly along the east coast of England and in Ireland.
Neolithic	4000 – 2350 BC	Emergence of monumental architecture, such as long barrows and causewayed enclosures. Movement towards more complex society and sedentary lifestyles.
Bronze Age	2350 – 800 BC	Introduction of Bronze, construction of barrows/tumuli for the dead in the early stages replaced by a lack of monuments and the preponderance toward hoard deposition.
Iron Age	800 BC– 43 AD	Introduction of Iron and the return of monumental architecture in the form of hillforts, tribal boundaries and the introduction of coinage.
Romano-British	43-410 AD	Romano-British period including the emergence of villas and Roman infrastructure.

Anglo-Saxon	410 – 1066 AD	Post-Roman period including Saxon invasions and the arrival of Christianity.
Medieval	1066 – 1650 AD	Medieval period in Britain including Tudor activity, with arbitrary cut off point of 1650 AD.
Post-Medieval	1650 – 1900 AD	Period of rapid industrial development and changes to the English landscape.
Modern	1900 – 1950 AD	Including WWI, WWII and Cold War archaeology.

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**Minchinhampton Golf Club,
Minchinhampton Common, Minchinhampton
Gloucestershire, GL6 9AQ**

**Results of an
Archaeological Watching Brief
In the Vicinity of Hole 12**

**On Behalf of
Minchinhampton Golf Club**

**By
Absolute Archaeology**

NGR 86320 201280

Site Code AARC 47

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23rd May 2011

Summary

Absolute Archaeology was commissioned by Mr P Worster (Golf Course Manager, Minchinhampton Golf Club), to carry out an Archaeological Watching Brief to monitor the excavation of post holes, to facilitate the relocation of an existing fence line, in the vicinity of Hole 12 and adjacent to the Scheduled Monument known as the Bulwarks. The work was agreed in consultation with Mr Charles Parry (Senior Archaeological Officer, South Gloucestershire Council) and Mr David Bull (Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage). Scheduled Monument Consent was obtained prior to the commencement of the project.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were revealed during the course of the groundwork. No artefacts were recovered as a result of the watching brief.

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Maps

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Abbreviations

aOD

Above Ordnance Datum; used to express a given height above mean sea level.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Absolute Archaeology was commissioned by Mr P Worster (Golf Course Manager, Minchinhampton Golf Club), to carry out an Archaeological Watching Brief to monitor the excavation of post holes, to facilitate the relocation of an existing fence line, in the vicinity of Hole 12 and adjacent to the Scheduled Monument known as the Bulwarks. The work was agreed in consultation with Mr Charles Parry (Senior Archaeological Officer, South Gloucestershire Council) and Mr David Bull (Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage). Scheduled Monument Consent was obtained prior to the commencement of the project.

The Watching Brief was carried out on 16th March 2011. No archaeological features, deposits or layers were observed during the excavation of the post holes.

- 1.2. The site is located at NGR 386373 201298 and is recorded at 201m aOD (Fig 1).

2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1. A total of 8 small hand dug pits were monitored, measuring <500mm (l) x <500mm (w) x <500mm (d). The pits were excavated to accommodate footings for the concrete bases, with a metal sleeve and cap, which form the supports for the temporary fencing used annually to enclose an area of the Golf Course, in the vicinity of Hole 12, Minchinhampton Common. The fence line was moved to enhance the quality of the green in this area of the course, which has been disturbed by the grazing cattle, sharing the Common each spring (Fig 2).
- 2.2. Due to the location of the programme of work, adjacent to a scheduled earthwork, Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) was obtained by the client, prior to the commencement of the project.

- 2.3. The work was carried out following advice from Mr Charles Parry (Senior Archaeological Officer, Gloucestershire County Council) and Mr David Bull (Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage).
- 2.4. All spoil was monitored for artefacts.
- 2.5. All recording was carried out using Absolute Archaeology's recording system, which includes written, drawn and photographic records.

3. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE (Fig 3)

3.1. Minchinhampton Common

Minchinhampton Common is a large open area on the west side of the village of Minchinhampton. The land, which was given to the villagers in the time of Henry VIII by Dame Alice Hampton, originally comprised 1000 acres of land, but has been diminished by a succession of encroachments, to little more than 500 acres. Numerous Pillow Mounds noted across the site (numbering about forty) are probably medieval in date and may represent redundant rabbit warrens.

3.2. The Bulwarks

Minchinhampton Common is the site of the Scheduled Monument known as the '*Bulwarks*'. The earthworks comprise a broken earthen bank and ditch system curving approximately 2.4km across the Common, from the NW corner of Minchinhampton Park to the north of the Half Way House Inn. The earthworks have been dated to the Iron Age (800 BC- 43AD).

Excavations through the ditch were carried out by Mrs E. M. Clifford in 1937. The results showed that it was cut into solid rock, to a depth of 2.4m. At the base, the ditch tapered to 1.5m in width, whilst at the top, a width of 7m was recorded. The stone from the ditch was then used as a retaining wall for the front of the bank.

3.3. The Cross-dyke

The Cross-dyke is a linear earthwork that could be contemporary with the Bulwarks. Measuring approximately 238m in length and lying west of the reservoir, excavations in 1937 showed similarities in dimensions to those encountered during the 'Bulwarks' excavation.

3.4. Amberley Camp and Pinfarthing Camp

Amberley Camp and Pinfarthing Camp have been recorded as minor earthworks on the common and probably relate to modern field boundaries.

3.5. Whitfield's Tump

Whitfield's Tump is a disturbed Neolithic long barrow, located to the NW of Minchinhampton Common. The monument measures 23m in length x 11m in width, and dates to c. 3000 BC. It was used by Methodist preacher George Whitfield (1714-1770 AD) as the location of his open air services on a number of occasions.

4. RESULTS

4.1. An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Absolute Archaeology in March 2011. The monitoring targeted the replacement of fence post footings in the vicinity of Hole 12, Minchinhampton Golf Course, Minchinhampton Common, Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire, GL6 9AQ.

4.2. The hand excavation of pits 1-8 was monitored. The stratigraphy comprised a dark reddish brown soft silty clay topsoil/turfline, measuring from 100mm-150mm (Contexts 101-801), increasing gradually in depth from north-south, towards the earthwork. In pits 1-4, 7 and 8 the topsoil/turfline was seen to seal a deposit of degraded natural (Middle Jurassic Athelstan Oolite) throughout. In pits 5 & 6 (those closest to the Bulwarks' north facing bank), the topsoil/turfline was seen to seal (502) and (602), a mid reddish brown subsoil (5YR 5/3), soft silty clay subsoil mixed with abundant abraded

limestone fragments (c. 50%), measuring <150mm in depth. The subsoil was seen to seal the degraded natural, noted in the other pits.

5. CONCLUSION

Despite the proximity of the pits 5 & 6 to the north facing bank of the Bulwarks (<5m), no evidence of archaeological activity was identified as a result of the work. However, the sample area was limited by the scope of the project and it is possibly that large features may not have been apparent in the small areas that were exposed.

No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were identified as a result of the excavations.

6. REFERENCES

Clifford, E.M., 1937, *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* **59**. 287.

Dyer, J., 1973, *Southern England : An Archaeological Guide* 132-34.

7. FIGURES

Figure 1: Location of the site (Not to Scale)

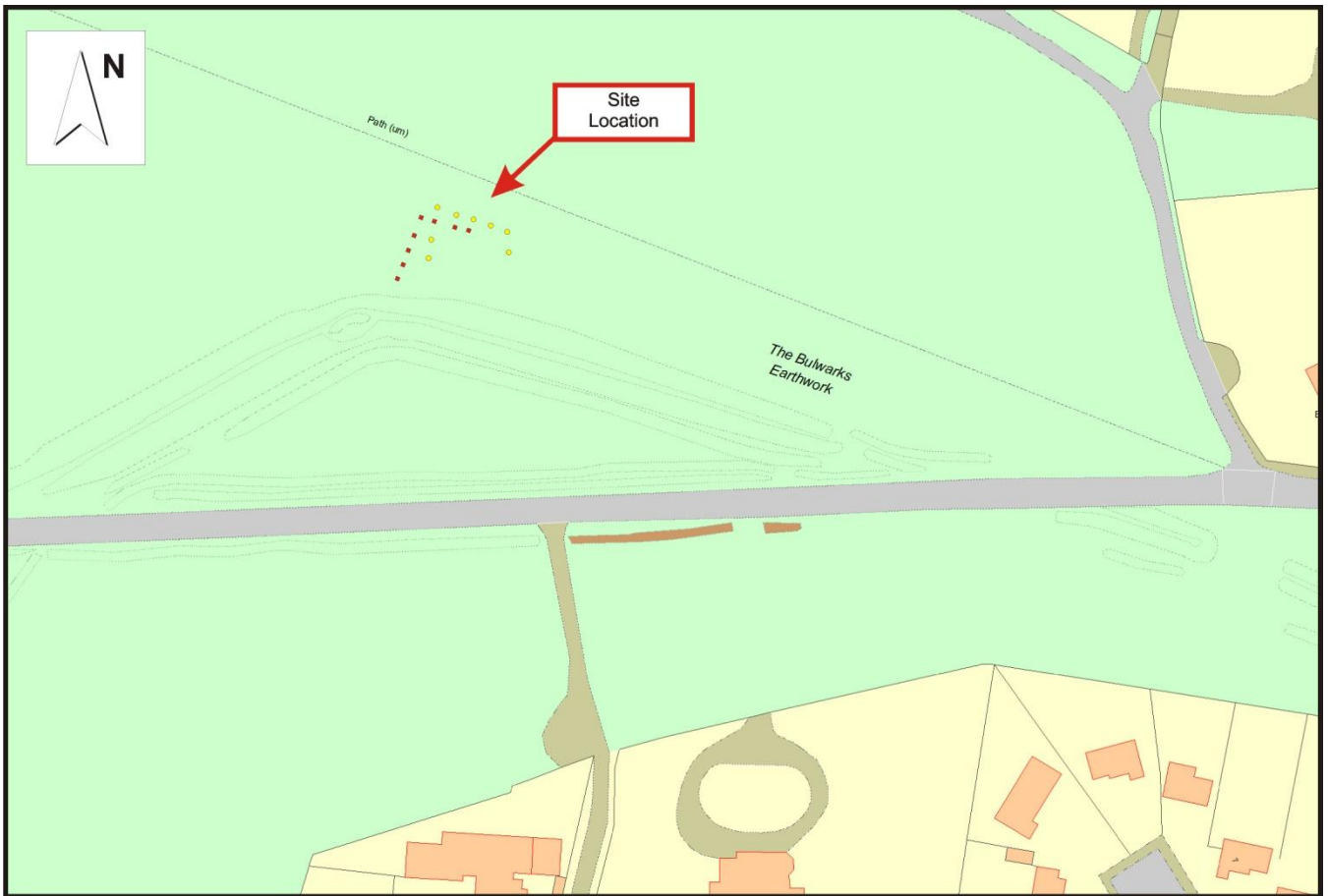


Site NGR 386373 201298

0 1km



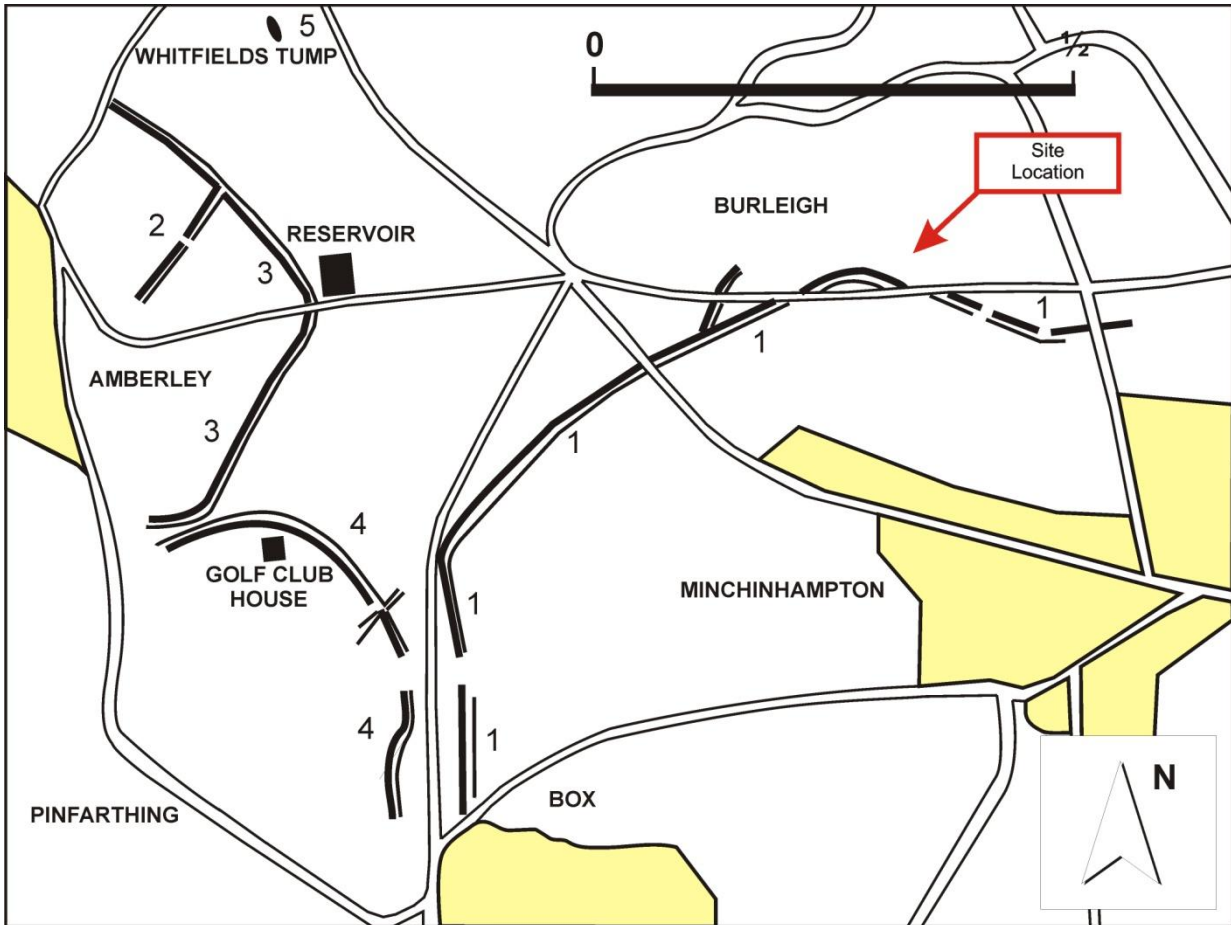
Figure 2 Location Plan of Post Holes (Not to Scale)



Site NGR 386373 201298

- = New Post Holes
- = Replaced Post Holes

Figure 3: Map showing the Location of Earthworks (Not to Scale)



1. The Bulwarks
2. The Cross Dyke
3. Amberley Camp and Pinfarthing Camp
4. Whitfield Tump

8. SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1 Post Hole 2 East Facing Section (Scales 1 x 500mm & 1 x 300mm)



Photo 2 Post Hole 8 West Facing Section (Scales 2 x 500mm)



Photo 3 General View of Bulwarks East Facing View