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Fig. 2 Trench location plan showing archaeological features
Fig. 3 Section through ditch 106. South-west facing
An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in September 2003 at the request of Mr D. Deacon at Cleeveway Manor, 22 Evesham Road, Bishop’s Cleeve, Gloucestershire. In compliance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation, two trenches were excavated across the development area.

The evaluation has demonstrated the presence of archaeological deposits between 0.32m and 0.50m below current ground level. Two ditches, a post-hole, and a stone feature were encountered. All were undated apart from one ditch dating to the medieval period, probably representing a boundary ditch similar to others identified on a number of other sites in the local area.

No evidence pre-dating the medieval period was encountered. The absence of any Romano-British activity demonstrates the settlement identified at Home Farm to the south in 1993 (Barber and Walker 1998) does not appear to extend this far north.
1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In September 2003 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Mr D. Deacon at Cleeveway Manor, 22 Evesham Road, Bishop’s Cleeve, Gloucestershire (centred on NGR: SO 95710 27880; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to aid the determination of planning permission for the construction of four dwellings with garages.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by CA (2003), approved by Mr Charles Parry, Senior Archaeological Officer, Gloucestershire County Council. The fieldwork also followed the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999) and the Statement of Standards and Practices Appropriate for Archaeological Fieldwork in Gloucestershire (1995).

**The site**

1.3 Bishop’s Cleeve lies below Cleeve Hill, approximately 7km north of Cheltenham. The site is located to the north-west of the village centre, with the development area comprising 0.11ha of the grounds of Cleeveway Manor (Fig. 2). The site lies on flat land at approximately 53m AOD.

1.4 The underlying geology of the area is mapped as Cheltenham Sand of the Quaternary period (GS 1981).

1.5 Current land use includes bare ground with occasional patches of grass. A number of trees are situated within the development area.

**Archaeological background**

1.6 Archaeological interest in the site arises from its location close to the historic core of Bishop’s Cleeve. A number of previous archaeological excavations and recorded observations within the village has yielded evidence for occupation spanning several millennia. Flint artefacts dating from the Mesolithic to early Bronze Age have been recovered from a number of sites (Rawes 1986; Kilminster 1990) with evidence for mid-late Iron Age occupation identified at Gilder’s Corner and Bishop’s Cleeve Mill.
Evidence for Romano-British activity has been identified from a number of sites around the village signifying a landscape of small Romano-British settlements spanning the 1st-4th centuries (Barber and Walker 1998).

1.7 Of particular relevance is the excavations at Home Farm, approximately 150m to the south of the development area. In 1993 Cotswold Archaeological Trust (CAT) identified a Romano-British settlement site comprising a complex series of ditches spanning the 2nd to late 4th centuries (Barber and Walker 1998). Although no buildings were encountered, the presence of domestic rubbish and building debris suggested a significant building was located within the local environs.

**Archaeological objectives**

1.8 The objectives of the evaluation were to establish the character, quality, date, significance and extent of any archaeological remains or deposits surviving within the site. This information will assist the Local Planning Authority in making an informed judgement on the likely impact upon the archaeological resource by the proposed development.

**Methodology**

1.9 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of two trenches (15m in length, 1.5m wide). As specified in the WSI (CA 2003) the trenches were distributed to assess archaeological potential across the development area (Fig. 2).

1.10 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with the CA Technical Manual 1: *Excavation Recording Manual* (1996).

1.11 Although deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential, no samples were taken. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with the CA Technical Manual 3: *Treatment of Finds Immediately After Excavation* (1995).
1.12 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the site archive (including artefacts) will be deposited with Corinium Museum.

2. RESULTS

2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds can be found in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively. Details of the relative heights of the principal deposits and features expressed as metres above Ordnance Datum (m AOD) appear in Appendix 3.

Trench 1

2.2 Natural 103 was encountered at a depth of 0.32m (53.19m AOD). This was overlain by 0.12m of subsoil deposit 102 which in turn was sealed by 0.20m of topsoil 101.

2.3 Two ditches 106 and 108 were encountered cutting the natural substrate, both sealed by subsoil 102 (Fig. 2). Ditch 106 was identified towards the centre of the trench running north-east south-west (Figs. 2 and 3). Two sherds of medieval pottery was recovered from fill 107. Ditch 108 was identified running north south across the trench. No dating evidence was recovered from this feature. One shallow undated post-hole was also encountered towards the north-eastern end of the trench.

Trench 2

2.4 Natural 203 was encountered at a depth of 0.50m (53.37m AOD) at the eastern end of the trench sloping to 52.96m AOD to the west. This was overlain by subsoil deposit 202 which increased in thickness east to west from 0.21m to 0.68m. This in turn was sealed by 0.20m of topsoil 201.

2.5 A spread of irregular limestone blocks were encountered sitting on the natural substrate (Fig. 2). Although the stones, varying in size and shape, were loose and unbonded, the absence of other areas of stone within the two trenches does suggest that the origins are archaeological and not geological. No dating evidence was recovered.
The Finds

2.6 Artefactual material from the site is restricted to two sherds of medieval pottery (Malvern Chase courseware) from ditch fill 107. These broadly date to the 12th to 14th centuries.

The Biological Evidence

2.7 The deposits identified failed to demonstrate biological or geoarchaeological potential, hence no samples were taken.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 The limiting factor when assessing the results of this evaluation is the lack of datable evidence. Of the four archaeological features encountered, only ditch fill 107 produced pottery, dating to the 12th to 14th centuries. Evidence suggests the medieval landscape of Bishop’s Cleeve was dominated by open-field cultivation (Barber and Walker 1998). Similar medieval ditches to 106 have been encountered on other sites around the village (Isaac 1986; Parry 1991) and interpreted as probable property boundary ditches. Although heavily truncated by later intrusions, several small gullies were encountered dating to the 12th century during the excavations at Home Farm (Barber and Walker 1998). Aligned east west, these gullies may well be part of the same medieval field system also represented by the north south ditches 106 and 108 identified as part of this evaluation. A similar assemblage of finds were recovered from the two sites, namely small amounts of pottery similar in date, type and style (cooking pots).

3.2 No evidence pre-dating the medieval period was encountered. The absence of any Romano-British activity demonstrates the settlement identified at Home Farm to the south in 1993 does not appear to extend this far north.

3.3 The lack of dating evidence and the small exposure level of stone feature 204 makes interpretation difficult. It may represent the base foundation course of a wall which has been subsequently robbed, however no evidence of this was encountered. It could also represent the remains of a stone walkway or path,
although the choice of material is unusual. No building debris was identified within the stone spread so it seems unlikely to represent demolition rubble.

**Conclusions**

3.4 The evaluation has demonstrated the presence of archaeological deposits between 0.32m and 0.50m below current ground level. Although the majority of the features remained undated, at least one ditch was dated to the medieval period and probably represents a boundary ditch similar to others identified on a number of other sites in the local area.

3.5 The evaluation failed to identify any features pre-dating the medieval period, in particular no evidence was encountered dating to the Romano-British period.

4. **CA PROJECT TEAM**

Fieldwork was undertaken by Kevin Colls, assisted by Darren Muddiman. The report was written by Kevin Colls. The illustrations were prepared by CA illustrator. The archive has been compiled by Kevin Colls, and prepared for deposition by Ed McSloy. The project was managed for CA by Clifford Bateman.

5. **REFERENCES**


CA 2003  *Land at Cleeveway Manor, 22 Evesham Road, Bishop’s Cleeve, Gloucestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*


Rawes, B. 1986 ‘The Romano-British settlement at Haymes, Cleeve Hill, near Cheltenham’
Trans. Bristol Gloucestershire Archaeo. Soc. 104, 61-93
APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Topsoil deposit. Mid grey sandy silt. 0.20m in thickness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Subsoil deposit. Yellow brown sandy clay. 0.12m in thickness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Natural Cheltenham Sand. Brown red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Cut for post-hole. 0.30m in diameter, depth 0.05m. Filled by 105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Post-hole fill. Mid grey brown sandy silt with occasional charcoal fragments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>Ditch cut. Steeply sloping sides with flat base. Running north-east south-west. Filled by 107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>Ditch fill. Mid orange brown sandy silt with occasional charcoal fragments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>Mid orange brown sandy silt with occasional charcoal fragments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trench 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>201</td>
<td>Topsoil deposit. Mid grey sandy silt. 0.20m in thickness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202</td>
<td>Subsoil deposit. Yellow brown sandy clay. Maximum thickness 0.68m in thickness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>203</td>
<td>Natural Cheltenham Sand. Brown red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>204</td>
<td>Limestone spread sitting on natural sand. Irregular in shape and varying in size.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2: THE FINDS

Artefactual material from the site is restricted to 2 sherds of medieval pottery weighing 8g. The medieval pottery, from ditch fill 107, consists of two body sherds of a Malvern Chase type coarseware (Gloucester Type TF40), broadly dating to the 12th to 14th centuries. Condition is reasonably good with no abrasion apparent and inclusions intact. One sherd exhibits traces of external ‘sooting’, almost certainly from use as a cooking pot.
APPENDIX 3: LEVELS OF PRINCIPAL DEPOSITS AND STRUCTURES

Levels are expressed as metres below current ground level and as metres above Ordnance Datum, calculated using a spot height located in Evesham Road (54m AOD).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trench 1</th>
<th>Trench 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current ground level</td>
<td>0.00m (53.48m)</td>
<td>0.00m (53.87m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top of archaeological</td>
<td>0.22 (53.25m)</td>
<td>0.91m (52.96m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>features</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit of excavation</td>
<td>0.29m (53.19m)</td>
<td>0.91m (52.96m)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upper figures are depth below modern ground level, lower figures in parentheses are metres AOD.
Fig. 1 Site location plan
Fig. 2  Trench location plan showing archaeological features (1:500)
Fig. 3  Sections through ditches 106 and 108 (1:20)