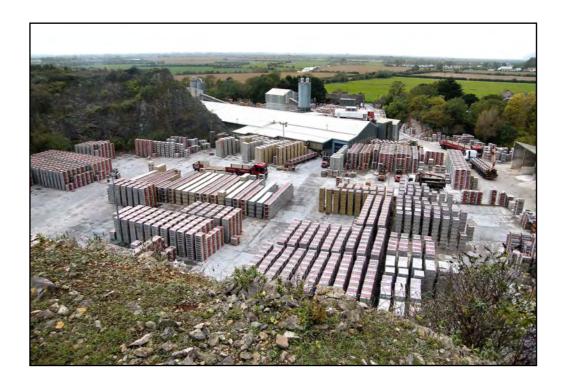
# The Marshalls Manufacturing Works, Bleadon, North Somerset

North Somerset HER 2011/207

# **Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment**



on behalf of

# Marshalls Mono Limited

Nick Corcos BA, MA, PhD, AIFA Avon Archaeological Unit Limited

Bristol: October 2011

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Frontispiece: Part of the main manufacturing facility, showing silos and conveyor, from a position at the south-west area of the site. View to north-east.

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Avon Archaeological Unit Limited was commissioned by Marshalls Mono Limited to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment of their site at Bridge Road, Bleadon, North Somerset. The site is centred on NGR ST 34115 56659, and occupies a total of 8 acres (3.24ha), within a former quarry, although the area proposed for development is expected to be confined to the quarry floor, consisting of about 6 acres (2.43ha). By far the bulk of the site is currently occupied by a plant manufacturing concrete products, and large areas of the works are given over to the open-air storage of the plant's output, and imported Marshalls product. The quarry itself has not been operational for many years. There is as yet no formal proposal for the nature of the development which may eventually be put forward, but it is likely to be either wholly residential, or residential with a small element of commercial. There are no statutory heritage designations, of any kind, affecting the study area; and although part of the western boundary of the Mendip Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty runs only 220m to the north of its northern boundary, the site itself lies outside the AONB.

The earliest available map covering the area of the site, dating to 1658, shows that at that date it consisted of agricultural land, and indeed this continued to be the case up to and beyond the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. A small quarry immediately south of, and outside, the study area, was opened in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century under the provisions of a Parliamentary enclosure act for Bleadon, for which the award was granted in 1791, but it was only in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the quarry currently occupied by the present Marshalls plant was established, at some point between 1840 and 1884. This was known as Little Down Quarry, and it supported at least two limekilns which are identified on OS maps. Later map evidence shows that throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the quarry site supported a range of buildings but at a low density; between 1962 and 1971, however, a new large concrete plant was constructed, and this still forms the core of the present operations on the site; quarrying operations ceased at some point in the same period, although new buildings have been constructed since the early 1970s.

The study found that there had been no previous archaeological work, of any description, carried out within the site boundaries, and the Historic Environment Record notes only a few items in the immediate vicinity. One of these, however, at Whitegate Farm, close by to the north, represents a major Iron Age site of national importance. In addition, the local Carboniferous Limestone, by virtue of its physical nature in containing sometimes extensive cave and fissure systems, has a well-established tradition of producing evidence of extremely early (ie Palaeolithic) faunal remains, sometimes, crucially, associated with evidence of contemporary human activity which of its type is considered to be of international significance. An important site of this kind lies very nearby at Uphill Quarry, and indeed such finds are recorded from other quarries within Bleadon itself.

On the basis of the documentary and other evidence reviewed in this report, the study area is considered to offer a low potential for the survival of buried archaeologically-significant deposits and structures.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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#### **NOTES**

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#### **ABBREVIATIONS**

AAU Avon Archaeological Unit AOD Above Ordnance Datum NGR National Grid Reference

NMR National Monuments Record, Swindon
NSHER North Somerset Historic Environment Record

OS Ordnance Survey

SRO Somerset Record Office

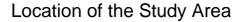
#### 1 INTRODUCTION

Avon Archaeological Unit has been commissioned by Marshalls Mono Limited to carry out an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment on land at Bridge Road, Bleadon, North Somerset. The site is centred on NGR ST 34115 56659, and its northernmost boundary lies 125m due south of the southernmost boundary of the yard of the parish church of Sts. Peter and Paul. The site encompasses a total area of about 8 acres (3.24ha), and is very roughly rectangular in shape, with its long axis oriented east-west, and with a rectilinear projection at its north-eastern corner. At its greatest extent, from east to west, the site is about 265m in length, and north to south, about 170m in width (Figures 1 and 2). It consists of a single, compact area within the bounds of a former quarry known historically as Little Down Quarry, and it includes the old working faces of the Carboniferous Limestone, as they were left when quarrying operations ceased (Plate 6). A small area of the old quarry face on the southern side of the site, close to the main production facility, has been reinforced with steel mesh netting, but this is the only part of the site for which this was considered a necessary precaution. There are no statutory heritage designations, including listed buildings, affecting the study area itself.

By far the greater part of the level areas *within* the site (amounting to about 1.7ha in all, or just under 90% of the total *working* area) remain open, and are used chiefly for the bulk storage of the products of the on-site production plant, but also for the predistribution storage of goods from other sites within the Marshalls Group, including natural stone products. It is also worth pointing out that although the spaces within the site itself are for the most part open, virtually the entire area has been surfaced with concrete to produce a flat rolling surface for the wheeled vehicles which move around the site; this surface also provides a secure, stable platform for the extremely heavy stacks of pallets, loaded with cement and concrete products, which are distributed across the site (**Cover** and **Plate 7**). At its north-eastern corner, an upwards ramp gives access to an additional open storage area at a slightly higher level than the rest of the site, although once reached, this area too has a level, concreted surface. Originally, part of this area formed a small, separate extension, detached from but associated with the main site immediately to its south-west.

By far the largest single building on the site is the main processing and manufacturing building, with a floor area of 1,427m², and erected at some point between 1962 and 1971. This structure, which lies towards the south-western part of the site, is rectangular in shape, with its long axis oriented south-west/north-east. At its maximum, it is just under 100m long, and about 23m wide, at its north-eastern end where a large 'outshot' projects away from the main body of the building. Other, much smaller buildings lie around the peripheries of various parts of the site, but most are concentrated close to the main entrance, at the western end, and comprise office buildings, amenities such as a canteen and toilets, and general storage space. The site is entered via a single point of vehicular access off the eastern side of Bridge Road, Bleadon (**Plate 4**). There is as yet no formal proposal for the nature of the development which may eventually be put forward, but it is likely to be either wholly residential, or residential with a small element of commercial.

Finally, planning policy relating to the archaeological resource within the North Somerset unitary authority is expressed in its Replacement Local Plan Written



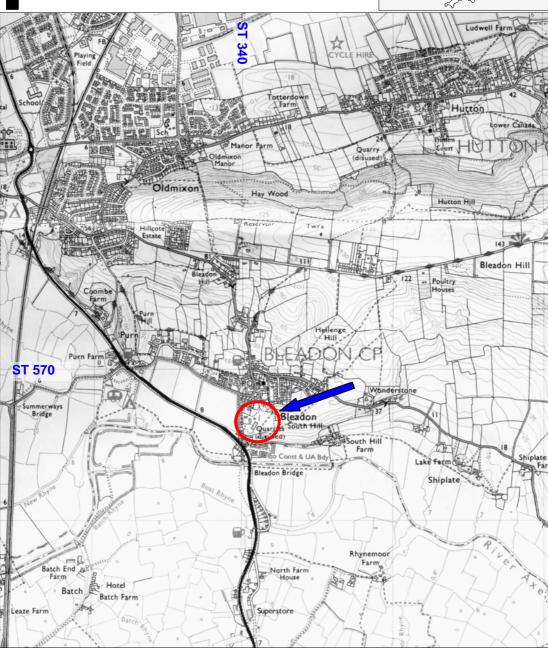
The Study Area



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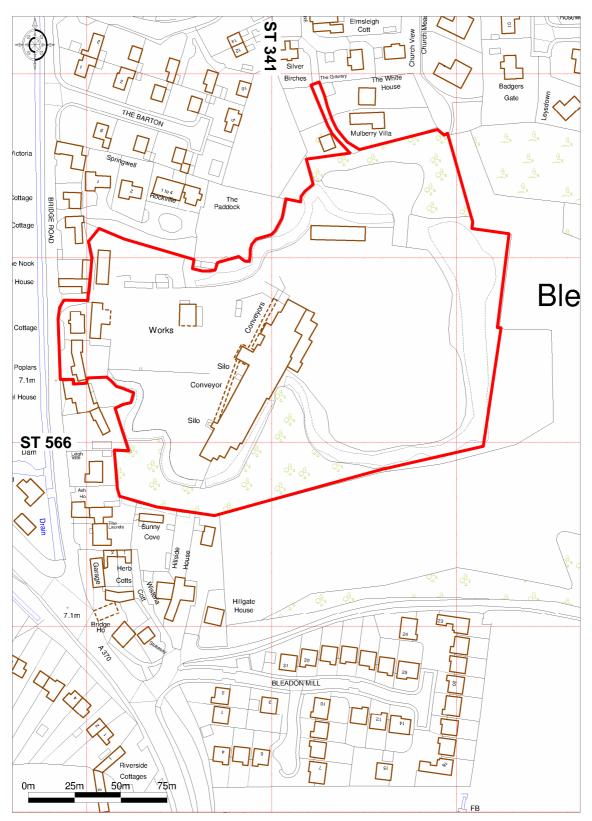




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### Site Location Plan and Boundary of the Study Area



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Statement, which was adopted by the authority in March 2007. Matters relating to archaeology are dealt with as part of Chapter 5, *Environment and Cultural Heritage*, Paras. 5.19 to 5.28. The local authority's rationale in regard to the protection of archaeology within the district is outlined in Policy ECH/6, as follows:

Development will not be permitted where it would involve significant alteration or cause damage to nationally-important archaeological remains (whether Scheduled or not), or would have a significant impact on the setting of such remains.

#### 2 METHODOLOGY

Searches were made of the indices of the collections of the Somerset Record Office, Bristol Record Office, and the main Arts and Social Sciences Library of the University of Bristol. A variety of online bibliographic resources, most notably COPAC, BIAB, The Archaeology Data Service, and Google Scholar, were used to identify potentially useful sources of information, whether published or otherwise<sup>1</sup>. In addition, information was utilised from a trawl of the North Somerset Historic Environment Record, conducted on behalf of AAU Limited by Mr Vince Russett, Archaeological and HER Officer for North Somerset. Finally, local authority historic planning files relating to the site were consulted on microfiche at Weston-super-Mare Town Hall<sup>2</sup>. A visit to the site was made by the author on Thursday, 22nd September, 2011, and a digital photographic record was made (**Cover**, **Frontispiece** and **Plates 1** to **7**). This report will be archived in the North Somerset HER under reference 2011/207.

#### 3 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The topographical characteristics of the site are slightly unusual in that, by definition from its history as a quarry, the peripheries are in part defined by sudden changes of level marking the point at which the old working face climbs steeply (although not vertically), from the quarry floor. The latter is flat and essentially level over large parts of its area, although overall there is a gentle upward gradient from west to east: the height immediately below the cliff face on the extreme eastern side of the site is just under 11.40m AOD, dropping to around 8.50m AOD just east of the main entrance on the western side of the site - this is a horizontal distance of around 180m. At the northern side of the site, about halfway along its length, the height lies at around 11m AOD, and also has values of around that figure on the opposite, southern side of the site at the base of the old quarry face, a distance of around 120m, measured to the cliff face immediately south of the main manufacturing building. As already noted, however, at the north-eastern corner of the site, an upwards ramp gives access to an additional storage area at a rather higher level than the rest of the site – it is pretty much level, with values lying between about 16.75 and 17.00m AOD across most of its area. The highest point actually within the site boundary is attained just to the east of the old quarry face top at the eastern side of the site, where the 35m contour passes within the study area. The height of the cliff top tends to descend from east to west, following what would clearly have been the natural profile of the original hill,

www.copac.ac.uk; www.biab.ac.uk; http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/; www.scholar.google.com

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> I am grateful to Mr Nigel Adkins, of the North Somerset Council Customer Service Team, for searching out the relevant files for me.

and at the south-west corner, on the cliff top just above the main production building, a height value of around 20m AOD is recorded, and descending fairly rapidly westwards thereafter. Before the advent of the quarry, it is clear that the profile of the western end of South Hill sloped westwards and southwards, and the foot of its original slope at its western end would have been marked pretty much by the line of houses that fronts onto the northern half of Bridge Road. Indeed, virtually the entire western end of South Hill has been truncated by quarrying of one kind or another.

It is perhaps stating the obvious to say that it is the nature of the local geology which gave rise to the existence of the quarry in the first place, and indeed the Little Down Quarry was merely one example of numerous such workings, of all sizes, which were established to exploit the local Carboniferous Limestone of which the hills and ridges at this western end of the Mendip upland are mainly composed. The limestone had two main uses, as a building stone or in burning for the manufacture of lime mortar. Bleadon Hill itself, Worle Hill, Sand Point, Brean Down, and indeed the two Bristol Channel islands, Steep Holm and Flat Holm, all represent the final, surface expressions of the main plateau of Mendip rather further to the east; and although physically detached from Mendip by the valley of the Lox Yeo river, running roughly north-east/south-west a short distance to the east, Bleadon Hill represents probably the largest single remnant 'block' of Carboniferous Limestone west of the main Mendip pericline. The Carboniferous Limestone is, however, by no means a homogeneous deposit, and indeed it can vary greatly in its nature depending on where one is in the sequence. Bleadon Hill itself is composed of the Black Rock Limestone subgroup, which represents pretty much the lowest of the major 'massive' limestone groups within the sequence.

As, in effect, merely a western extension of Mendip, Bleadon Hill, shares, in miniature, some of the main characteristics of the parent body further eastwards, in that it consists, essentially, of an anticlinal outcrop of limestone, surrounded, to north and south, and indeed curving around its western end, by later deposits of the Triassic Mercia Mudstone group of calcarious marls and clays; these deposits 'lap' unconformably around the lower flanks of the limestone, and north and south of Bleadon Hill they are in turn covered by the much later, and highly varied alluvial drift deposits, mainly of Holocene date, which further afield make up the bulk of the Somerset Levels and Moors, both north and south of Worle Hill. Interestingly, the geological map seems to suggest that Little Down Quarry, in which the study area lies, exactly coincides with a local outcrop of a very particular part of the Carboniferous Limestone sequence, known as the Goblin Combe Oolite, after its type site, between Weston-super-Mare and Bristol. This lies stratigraphically above the Black Rock Limestone, and it is not, as the name might suggest, a full oolitic stone like Bath Stone or Dundry Stone, but is rather an ooidal limestone. Its exploitation at Little Down Quarry probably has less to do with its physical characteristics, and is probably rather related to the fact that this is the only point along the whole of the southern flank of Bleadon Hill where a limestone actually outcrops in an easily-accessible location at the base of the hill, and is not covered by the later deposits of Triassic Mercia Mudstone (BGS).

#### 4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Historically, the study area lay in the ancient ecclesiastical parish of Bleadon, which in turn lay in the Somerset Hundred of Winterstoke. Winterstoke was one of the largest of the Somerset Hundreds, extending in length, west to east, from Weston-super-Mare on the Bristol Channel coast, inland to East Harptree (a distance of just over 25km), and in width, from its northernmost point at Kenn, southwards to its southernmost at Rodney Stoke, a distance of just over 20km. This hundred has not yet been covered by the Victoria County History for Somerset, so that there is as yet no *modern*, well-referenced historical narrative, firmly underpinned by primary sources, that can be used for Bleadon. However, Dr Frank Thorn has very recently undertaken a detailed critical review of the historical evidence for the hundred, its internal structure, origins, and its relationship and affinities with surrounding hundreds (Thorn 2011).

Modern authorities consider it most likely that the place-name itself is from Old English blēo dūn, meaning 'variegated hill', possibly a reference to a perceived vegetational mottling of colour on the flank of the hill (Mills 2011, 62; Gelling and Cole 2000, 168). In coming to this conclusion, scholars in this field are fortunate in that Bleadon first emerges into documentary history through not one, but two Anglo-Saxon charters, both of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. These are respectively, S606 dated to AD956, and S804, dated to AD975, in Sawyer's standard catalogue of these documents (Sawyer 1968)<sup>3</sup>. As with all charters of this date, a great deal of scholarly ink has been spilled in reviewing these documents in terms of their actual (as opposed to their *purported*) dates, and the veracity, or otherwise, of their content. The minutiae of these views stands well outside the remit of this study, and it will be sufficient for present purposes to present a very brief overview of the main lines of argument. The earlier of the two charters is considered pretty much genuine by most authorities, and of, or close to its purported date. It deals with the transfer of an estate of 15 hides at Bleadon from King Eadwig to a retainer called Æthelwold. It contains a detailed boundary clause in Old English which still awaits a satisfactory, and definitive solution, despite the fact that it also contains a great deal of detailed topographical information, including minor toponyms which survived to be preserved on maps from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards<sup>4</sup>. The general academic view, however, is that the Bleadon estate of 956 encompassed roughly the area of the later ecclesiastical parish, and there are certain stretches where the two boundaries can actually be shown to coincide. The earlier charter is also intriguing in that it provides glimpses of features which, by the mid 10<sup>th</sup> century, could probably be regarded as archaeological. For example, at an as yet unknown location somewhere on the hillside above the modern village, and perhaps, indeed, not too far from the study site, it mentions a cyric stædc, a 'church site or enclosure'. Michael Costen is of the view that

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The full texts of both these charters, with references to critical scholarly opinions, can be found on the Anglo-Saxon Charters website: www.ascharters.net

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> As with so many of the relatively very large corpus of Anglo-Saxon charters relating to Somerset, to date the only sustained, *published* attempt to provide an 'end to end' solution for the Bleadon example remains that proposed by G B Grundy. This is not, however, entirely reliable, and a modern review, integrating far more recent principles of historical topography, place-names and archaeology, is urgently needed; Grundy 1935, 154-60.

This was an abandoned church site and one which had little relevance to the settlement pattern of the tenth century (Costen 1994, 98)<sup>5</sup>.

If true, by definition this would suggest very strongly that by the mid tenth century at the latest, something approaching the present, far more nucleated pattern of settlement had been established, at its far more convenient site at the southern base of the hill, and perhaps with the site of the present church as its focus. The charter also mentions *ba ealdan.....dic*, "the old dyke", which, when used in this context, "was nearly always a ditch and a bank" (Costen 1994, 103). Michael Costen notes that although such features

Could have been described as 'old' at various points in their history.....it seems most likely that they were 'old' because they were pre-existing, like Wansdyke and Grim's Ditch and that, where convenient, they had been chosen as boundaries (Costen 1994, 104).

It is quite possible that this feature may well survive in the modern landscape, its significance unrecognised, and this simply reinforces the need for the Bleadon bounds to be solved using modern techniques of landscape analysis, so that the exact location of it, and the church site, can be identified.

By contrast, the later of the two charters, of purported date 975, is regarded with deep suspicion by most of the experts in this field who have looked at it, and attempted to understand its provenance. It is, supposedly, a grant of land at Bleadon to the Old Minster at Winchester. The bounds are not in Old English, but, from the toponyms alone, is in a form which manifestly post-dates 1066, and indeed may be no earlier than the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the date of the earliest surviving manuscript copy of the bounds. In addition, the preamble, in describing the resources of the estate, seems clearly to have lifted at least some of the figures out of the entry for Bleadon in Domesday Book. This charter is a clear forgery, and almost certainly designed to bolster Winchester's claim on the estate, which in itself may well have been genuine: there is plenty of precedent for an Anglo-Saxon nobleman donating an estate to a religious house either on his death, or retiring there in old age and 'taking' the estate with him as a gift. It may well be that Æthelwold, if it were indeed he, died before he could make a charter formally 'booking' the land to Winchester, or that such a charter had been made, but was subsequently lost. There may even have been competing claims on the estate, of which Winchester's was merely one. Either way, that house clearly felt the need to fabricate a charter in its own favour, although as Lesley Abrams has reminded us regarding items of similarly dubious provenance in the Glastonbury archive,

a forged document does not necessarily indicate a false claim. Charters can have been fabricated for a variety of reasons, not all of them dishonest (Abrams 1996, 319).

Whatever the exact means it is, anyway, clear that at some point in the 130 years between 956 and 1086, an estate at Bleadon had come into the hands of the See of Winchester, because it was firmly in the possession of the Bishop of Winchester at the time of Domesday Book, and indeed remained so until the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> It needs to be explicitly stated that the site of the present church at Bleadon cannot, by definition, also mark the site of the pre-Conquest 'field-church' noted in the charter of 956; since the latter, by that date, had clearly become isolated on the *boundary* of the estate. This is important because at least one expert authority has, regrettably, claimed otherwise; see Blair 2005, 385, n.65.

(Thorn and Thorn 1980)<sup>6</sup>. In the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Bleadon estate was still assessed at 15 hides, with a very high proportion of the land (two-thirds) held as demesne. Surprisingly for an estate of this large size at that date, no mill is mentioned, although later evidence suggests very strongly that the existence of an extensive area of open-field arable land would certainly have justified it. However, although impossible now to quantify exactly, there was clearly a large area of pasture, recorded as being one league long and half a league wide. Using Oliver Rackham's formula that equates a league at this date to 1½ miles (Aston et al 2011, 79-83), this comes out an area of just over 700 acres, or 288ha; this was probably split between unenclosed grazing lands on the upper slopes of Bleadon Hill, and the large area of low-lying, partially reclaimed moor ground west of the village, contained within a loop of the River Axe on its north bank, and known historically as Bleadon Hams. The DB surveyors also considered that Bleadon had enough arable land to service no fewer than 17 ploughs, although a total of only 14, split between the demesne and the tenants' lands, were actually in operation there. But such relatively large areas of both arable and pasture also probably explain why Bleadon seems to have been almost totally bereft of woodland in 1086, with only a single acre of underwood (ie not 'timber' woodland) recorded, and even that was not on the main manor, but on a small one-hide sub-holding. This seems extraordinary for a manor of Bleadon's size, and it can be contrasted with other estates nearby, such as Winscombe, at this date belonging to the Abbot of Glastonbury, which seems to have had by far the majority of its area covered by woodland (Aston et al 2011, 79-83).

Bleadon had two open arable fields in the medieval and indeed at least into the early modern period – these were known as West Town Field and East Field. The possible extent of the system has been mapped and it seems to have occupied large areas of the middle slopes of Bleadon Hill east and west of the village. The East Field lay on the slopes above Shiplate and it appears to have been particularly extensive (Iles and Stacey in Iles 1984, 55-56). Bleadon's medieval field system is significant because it appears that at least elements of it, in terms of certain individual furlongs, were laid out deliberately to respect pre-existing field boundaries of much earlier date, perhaps part of a Romano-British, or even prehistoric arrangement. Well-preserved and extensive areas of this earlier system survive on the upper slopes of Bleadon Hill, especially north-west of the village, and they are regarded as important local survivals of their type (Fowler 1978, 29-47, and esp. at 37). They are as yet, however, completely undated<sup>7</sup>.

Throughout the medieval and into the early modern period, Bleadon appears to have remained an unremarkable rural parish. To the west, on the low-lying alluvial moor ground of Bleadon Hams (also known as Bleadon Level), a succession of concentric, curvilinear sea defence walls were constructed, the earliest dating probably from the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, and with each one superseding its predecessor. Stephen Rippon has identified four stages in the full reclamation of the Level, not all of them accurately dated (Rippon 1994, 241); but the last was certainly associated with a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> There is a tradition that the transfer was effected by the Lady Gytha, wife of Earl Godwin of Wessex, in the mid 11<sup>th</sup> century (see for example NSHER 5600), although the basis for this belief is somewhat problematic; this matter, and the question of the nature and origin of Bleadon's relationship with a small estate at Priddy, on central Mendip, have recently been reviewed by Thompson, 2011, 208-209 (and see further below).

 $<sup>^{\</sup>prime}$  The level of preservation of parts of the system is such that they are visible even on Google Earth.

formal parliamentary enclosure for which the award was granted in 1791. Historically however, settlement within Bleadon parish was not by any means completely nucleated in nature, and there were several isolated farmsteads and hamlets that appear to have been in existence by the medieval period, most notably Shiplate and Wonderstone east of the present village, and Purn to the west. A reference to scypeladæs pyllæ is, indeed, noted as a boundary point in the Anglo-Saxon charter of 9568. Neither should it come as any surprise that there are hints that settlement at Bleadon has contracted or at least shifted since the medieval period: for example the site of what appears to have been a small farmstead, of 12th or 13th century date, was revealed in the course of a pipeline watching brief in a rather surprising location, in the far west of the parish, on the now-reclaimed, low-lying saltmarsh in the north-western quarter of the Bleadon Level (Webster 2003, 204); clearly demonstrating that at least this part of the level was habitable by that date in terms of flood control.

In the general hiatus of the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century monastic Dissolution, and the subsequent Reformation which gave birth to the Church of England, Winchester Cathedral Priory was refounded, and the manor of Bleadon passed to the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral, in whose hands it remained until well past Collinson's day (Collinson 1791, III, 571-572). A further hiatus arising from the widespread tenurial displacements of the English Civil War, saw the manor pass, albeit temporarily, into the hands of Anthony Ashley Cooper, First Earl of Shaftsbury. It is this connection which explains the existence of a splendid 17<sup>th</sup> century map of Bleadon (and another one of Pawlett, near Bridgwater), which was made for Cooper in 1658 (copy at SRO T/PH/sfy/1), presumably not long after he acquired the manor, and the original of which remains in the hands of his descendant, the present (12th) Earl of Shaftsbury (see further below, **Historic Map Evidence**).

In the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century there were still extensive areas of open field arable farmed as furlongs divided into strips, and this was especially true of the East Field, which still, at that relatively late date, consisted of an extensive and continuous block of furlongs. However, enclosure had already begun by that date, and consolidated blocks had been taken out of the open fields, and doubtless this process continued right up to the eve of the passing of a formal parliamentary enclosure act in 1788 (Tate 1948, 43 and 68)<sup>9</sup>. An apportionment arising directly from the act was produced in 1791 (SRO A/AKH/22), and involved the formal enclosure of some 1,260 acres (510ha) of land, which as well as 'mopping up' the last remaining vestiges of open field arable, also, as already noted, took in the final phase of reclamation on the Bleadon Level, and also dealt with extensive areas of formerly open, common grazing land on the upper slopes of Bleadon Hill<sup>10</sup>.

By at least the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, and probably far earlier, a small estate at Priddy, in the centre of the Mendip plateau, was closely connected with the manor of Bleadon (or 'Bleadon with Priddy' as it sometimes appears in documents), and indeed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> The first element of this name is a reference to sheep. The second element is Old English *gelād*, 'a difficult river crossing', which topographically would make perfect sense from the place's location close to the north bank of the River Axe; Gelling and Cole 2000, 81-83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> A copy of the act itself can be found bound along with other Somerset parliamentary enclosure acts at SRO DD/SAS/c795/SE/10. Bleadon is on p87.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> The historical background to the Bleadon enclosure, and that for both for Wedmore and Westonsuper-Mare, has been examined in detail by Ingles; Ingles 1997.

surviving land tax records between 1766 and 1832 show that, for the purposes of paying the tax, this Priddy land was counted, effectively, as part of Bleadon (SRO Q/REI/42/5). Thompson has equated this estate with Plummer's Farm, in Priddy parish (see above, fn. 8).

As with many other parliamentary enclosures of this type, the award made specific provision for the establishment of a quarry, chiefly for the construction of new roads, or the repair, improvement or maintenance of existing ones. In the case of Bleadon, the site of this enclosure quarry was *not* the present study site, at Little Down Quarry, but much smaller workings immediately to the south; this site still exists, and its origins as a guarry are very clear even today. However, it was not just stone that was of interest as a useful resource to be exploited. Documents from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century record the granting of mineral rights, principally ores of copper and lead, across the whole parish, such as a lease from the Dean and Chapter of Winchester for this purpose, granted in 1791 to three Cornishmen described as 'merchants' (SRO DD/X/HAM/2). The documentary record ties in very well with aerial photographic evidence, which shows clear surface disturbance about 170m east of the guarry's eastern boundary, on South Hill, and which looks very much like 'gruffy ground', the local Mendip term for old mineral workings (see below, Aerial Photographic Evidence; Figure 9) (Atthill 1976, 147-149). These remains are, however, extremely difficult to date, and may come from a time well before the late 18th century. The workings have since become far less distinct due either to deliberate backfilling or natural erosion, or a combination of both, although their location is still visible on Google Earth.

At the very end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup>, persistent problems with flooding and the control and management of the drainage regime generally, especially as they pertained to the River Axe, reached a head, and a major scheme of works was initiated in the Bleadon area in an attempt to solve the problems once and for all. Although having many facets, the scheme was underpinned by the installation of a system of new sluices (locally known as 'clyces'), including a major one at Bleadon Bridge, at the point where the modern A370 road crosses the Axe (NSHER 46663), and immediately to the east of it, the excavation of a new, canalised course for the river, cutting off and bypassing a large southerly meander (NSHER 46664)<sup>11</sup>.

It is not possible to be precise about the date at which the Little Down Quarry itself was first established; it was certainly not present in the early 1840s, but had appeared by the time of the First Edition OS map, surveyed in 1884. Cartographic evidence suggests that the final phase of actual quarrying activity at the site, took place at some point in the decade up to 1970. Historic planning files housed at Weston-super-Mare Town Hall give some indication of the site's history in the postwar period, and up to 1991. Planning matters after that date fall within the local authority's current, 'live' system<sup>12</sup>. Most of these matters relate to relatively minor

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Some of the proposals for the scheme, including plans, and lists of landholders, are preserved at the SRO. See 'A Plan of the River Axe from Wear Bridge to Black Rock.... and of the Proposed Dam and Lock near Bleadon.....and the Proposed Sluice and Drain.....in the Parish of Lympsham', 1801. SRO Q/RUP/17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> The relevant file numbers (working backwards) are: 2265/91; 0014/87; 2403/87; 874/81; 3351/79; 1809/77; 37298/1968; 22142/1968; 65717/1963; 55008/1960;17237/1952; 5134/1949.

changes to existing structures, the demolition of older buildings, or the erection of small buildings associated with the operations at the quarry. One file of interest, however, is 17237 of 1952, which is an application for the manufacture of precast cement and concrete products at the site, to run in parallel with the normal quarrying operations. In the submission, the applicant's agent explicitly states that

It is anticipated that this will not interfere with the present workings of the quarry (3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1952).

#### 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The strict remit of this study is to consider the evidence for archaeological survival in the vicinity of the study site, based on current knowledge as expressed in the North Somerset Historic Environment Record. This specific aspect of this review, therefore, is underpinned by the results of a trawl of the HER carried out on behalf of AAU by Vince Russett, Archaeological Officer for North Somerset Council. It should be noted that the HER trawl revealed no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within a radius of 1km of the study area; also, because the proposed development is confined to the internal area of the former quarry itself, there should be minimal effects on the curtilages or settings of the Listed Buildings in the village.

A brief review of the general archaeological background will be useful to set the study site itself in the context of the known archaeological resource within the wider Bleadon area. A crucial, and very particular aspect of the local archaeology is the very full record of Pleistocene faunal remains, some of it associated with clear evidence of early human occupation and activity, which has been recovered from the sometimes extensive cave and fissure systems in the local Carboniferous Limestone. This material has attracted the attention of antiquarian scholars since at least the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, but more modern work has also led to important reassessments about its significance. The evidence for a human presence comes in the form of a wide range of worked tools made of both chert and flint, and is attested from many sites on western Mendip<sup>13</sup>. One of the key sites in this respect is Uphill quarry, which lies only 3km north-west of the present study area, and which in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was the subject of a series targeted field investigations overseen by Bristol Museum and the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Although some of the Uphill material, but faunal and of human manufacture, cannot be closely dated, the general view is that a large proportion of it is of Later Middle Palaeolithic and Earlier Upper Palaeolithic date (Jacobi and Currant 2011, 54). By virtue of both the range and quantity of finds discovered over the years at Uphill, the site is considered to be certainly of national importance, but not all of the human material from it is flint or chert; and the discovery of a later Aurignacian bone point which could be subjected to C14 assay, and which produced a date of 31,730 ± 250 yr BP, elevates the site to international significance (Jacobi and Pettitt 2000; NSHER 00003).

The proximity of the Uphill Quarry Pleistocene site is important because it has direct implications for the very similar geological sequences and structures to be found at Bleadon, and indeed the study site itself was the location of a series of fissures, now

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> The most recent and authoritative review of both the human and the faunal Pleistocene material from Mendip can be found in Jacobi and Currant 2011.

destroyed by the quarry, which produced faunal assemblages closely resembling those from Uphill, although not as extensive in terms of either size or range of types (NSHER 00040). The site is known formally as Bleadon Cavern, and the NSHER places its location pretty much where the main production and processing building now stands within the study site; it is considered to have been of Late Middle Pleistocene date, the Middle Pleistocene covering the time span 780,000 to about 126,000 years BP. The Bleadon material is not as well documented, or indeed published, as that from Uphill, and none of it seems to be of human origin; nonetheless its significance is understood by specialists in this field, and it contains, according to Polly and Eronen, "a rare British occurrence of leopard" (Polly and Eronen 2011, 32)<sup>14</sup>.

As already noted (above, Historical Background), the second important, general element of the archaeological context of the study site is the survival, on both Bleadon Hill and South Hill, of extensive areas of well-preserved field-systems that may be of Romano-British or prehistoric date. The South Hill fields, which are the part of the general system which is closest to the study site, is NSHER 0043, but other elements on different parts of Bleadon Hill are recorded separately under references 0038, 0026, 00100, 0027 and 0028. Again as we have already seen, the eastern boundary of Little Down Quarry has clearly impinged on, and destroyed, the western part of the South Hill field system, but much still survives, and its general extent has been mapped and discussed by Iles and Stacey (1983, 55-56; see also Fowler 1978, 29-47), and although none of it is scheduled, most of it does fall within the western boundary of the Mendip AONB. These published accounts of the Bleadon field system are relatively brief, but rather more recent reviews, based in part on new fieldwork, have been produced by Richard Wykes (1997, 1998a and 1998b). It is unfortunate, though, that none of these latter accounts are published, because Wykes makes the important suggestion that there may be remnants of a Late Bronze Age field system underlying the 'Celtic' [sic] fields. Indeed NSHER 05280, towards the eastern end of South Hill, is recorded as a cropmark enclosure of possible Bronze Age date. Since stone extraction ceased at Little Down Quarry, the immediate and direct threat to the field system on South Hill has been lifted. There has been no direct archaeological work in any part of the field system in terms of sectioning of the banks which represent its main surviving elements, for the recovery of either artefactual material, or organic remains that might be subjected to radiocarbon assay; so that, again as already noted, the system remains effectively undated, although there are landscape stratigraphic relationships with other surviving features of different types.

There have been scattered prehistoric artefactual finds from the parish which demonstrate human activity from the Neolithic period onwards, but none has come from within the 500m radius of the HER trawl (see for example NSHER 00032, a flint scatter from a field on the upper, south-facing slope of Bleadon Hill, just to the south of Bleadon Hill Road). The identification of actual settlement sites from the prehistoric period is more problematic, but a major discovery was made in 1996-1997 at Whitegate Farm, only about 200m NW of the study site and within the historic

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Other local faunal assemblages of Pleistocene date are known from Carboniferous Limestone contexts at Hutton, Bleadon, Brean Down and, most famously, Banwell. References to and discussion of all of this material can be found in Jacobi and Currant 2011, and Polly and Eronen 2010. In the latter see esp. Appendix 8.

settlement core of Bleadon village, when trial trenching in advance of development, later expanded to encompass a large, open area excavation, revealed intensive activity of the Mid to Late Iron Age (NSHER 40222); this consisted of a series of pits, some of them in what appeared to be a planned arrangement, and two of which had been used to deposit two crouched burials dated to the Late Iron Age. Residual ceramic evidence from the site suggested some activity across the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age transition, but the site produced no certain indications of structural remains that might have suggested the existence of occupation in permanent dwellings. The excavator suggests, however, that part of the reason for this may be that settlement shifted between the Middle and Late Iron Age. Be this as it may, it seems at least plausible that the extensive field systems on Bleadon Hill and South Hill may somehow have been associated with this archaeologically-attested activity (Young 2008).

The HER contains some indication of Romano-British activity both within the wider area of Bleadon parish, and much closer to the study site itself. NSHER 47453 records a hoard of Roman coins found on top of South Hill at a location only about 270m ENE of the study site's eastern boundary, although by definition, such a find says little about actual occupation of that date in the area. There have also been stray finds of Roman coins (such as NSHER 00039), although again, in terms of furthering our knowledge of occupation and settlement, such discoveries are effectively useless. In this respect, however, a site on the south-eastern flank of Bleadon Hill just above Shiplate, and just over 1.5km east of the study area (NSHER 00060), is more helpful, because it is recorded as a Romano-British occupation site. In this respect, and despite going unremarked in the NSHER, it may well be significant to note that the 1658 map of Bleadon (see further below, Historic Map **Evidence**) marks a large enclosure called Black Furlong very close to this location; this is significant because there is now enough accumulated evidence to suggest a very strong causal relationship between field names of the 'Black' type, and occupation sites of Romano-British date (Corcos 2008, 'Blacklands', and fn 26). Burials, attributed with some uncertainty to the Romano-British period, have come from Bleadon Hill (NSHER 00024).

There are no known occupation sites of RB date within the bounds of the study site itself, or in the immediate vicinity, and none was identified in the course of the intensive fieldwork at Whitegate Farm, close by the site to the north-west (Young 2008). The core of the medieval settlement of Bleadon in the late Anglo-Saxon and early post-Conquest periods is assumed to have lain around the church, only 125m north of the study site, and perhaps also extending westwards, north of the present Coronation and Bleadon roads. Archaeologically, however, this period is elusive, although a radiocarbon date of middle to late Anglo-Saxon date was returned from a single cereal grain recovered from Whitegate Farm, found intrusively in one of the Iron Age pits on that site. The same campaign revealed possible enclosures defined by ditches extending east of the excavated area, although no certain structures were identified, but as the excavator notes, "the enclosures were arranged along one side of the main north-south road through the medieval village and opposite the church". Pottery of mid 12<sup>th</sup> to early 14<sup>th</sup> century date was recovered from the ditch fills (Young 2008, 76). By contrast, structural evidence, with separate phases covering the same date range, was recovered from excavation of a paddock fronting onto the northern

side of Coronation Road, just south of Whitegate Farm (Young, *ibid*, 76-77; NSHER 46650).

Moving into the post-medieval and modern periods, the HER notes items of relevance within the bounds of the study site itself, but none of which actually survive on the ground today. These relate to the site of two limekilns picked up by the HER because they are marked on historic OS maps. NSHER 44044 was located just outside what is now the northern boundary of the study area, within what was originally the small north-eastern extension of the main quarry, now partly occupied by the storage area already noted, accessed from the floor of the main quarry by an upwards ramp (see above, Introduction). There was also a second kiln, within the main guarry itself (NSHER 44043), although it should be noted that the NSHER marks this in an incorrect position; and for which the only evidence appears, again, to be the early edition OS maps. Above ground remains of this structure have also now gone, although it is perfectly possible that footings may survive archaeologically beneath the concrete running surface that now covers a large area of the quarry floor. The presence of these kilns indicates very strongly that at least some of the limestone from the quarry faces very close by was being burned, presumably for the manufacture of lime mortar or cement. West of the quarry, fronting Bridge Road, the NSHER notes several post-medieval buildings of historical interest, but they are outside the bounds of the study area. However, well within the guarry, at a location immediately east of the main production building, NSHER 46653, is a record of a house which formerly stood at the western end of South Hill, until its site was swallowed up by the quarry. It appears on the tithe records and on the early OS maps, but had vanished between 1903 and 1931 (see further below, Historic Map Evidence). Further away from the site, towards the eastern end of South Hill, NSHER 03596 records what it describes as 'rabbit buries', presumably pillow mounds, to which it assigns a post-medieval date.

#### 6 SITE VISIT

The **Cover, Frontispiece** and **Plates 1** to **7** represent part of a photographic record made by the author during a site visit conducted on Thursday, 22nd September, 2011. The descriptive captions accompanying the plates will, it is hoped, be reasonably clear. No features of any archaeological or historic significance were noted during the course of the site walk-over, other than the old quarry faces themselves.

#### 7 HISTORIC MAP EVIDENCE

Researchers working on the historic parish of Bleadon are fortunate in that its varied ownership history has bequeathed to us a fairly good run of early maps, even though the study site itself does not necessarily appear on all of this material; some of the maps have already been noted in passing (see above, **Introduction**, and **Historical Background**) and indeed, the first map in the series which is included here is an especially splendid example of the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century estate-surveyor's craft.

Figure 3 represents an extract from a map of Bleadon manor dated 1658, and the provenance of which has already been noted (SRO T/PH/sfy/1). The area of the study site, as closely as can be judged, is outlined in red. The map is oriented, as it were, 'upside down', with north to the bottom, but it is clear that at this date, the study site was occupied by the largest, southernmost field of a group of enclosures known as Littleton Closes. This was a pasture field extending to just over 4 acres (1.6ha), and was in the possession of Joan Keene, described on the map as a 'widowe'. The remaining two of the other, rather smaller Littleton Closes, were also used for pasture. Superimposition of the modern red-line site boundary on this map suggests that the site also takes in part of John Morley's Littleton Close, representing the quarry's original north-eastern extension (in the area now accessed by the ramp at the rear of the site), and also that the line of Bridge Road, and the houses lining its eastern side, lie slightly to the west of the western boundary of the widow Keene's Littleton Close. There were no houses present along this line in 1658, and their subsequent construction at the western foot of South Hill, clearly had the effect of 'pushing' the building line, and hence the line of the later road, westwards.

Over a century later, in 1791, the Bleadon enclosure map (**Figure 4**) includes the study area but gives little detail about it, because, quite reasonably, it was not included within the lands affected by the enclosure (map, SRO Q/RDE/22; award, SRO A/AKH/22). As already noted (see above, **Historical Background**), the terms of the enclosure award established a small quarry immediately south of the study site, on a plot marked 41 on the enclosure map; and this quarry still survives. The map also demonstrates that other new quarries, not shown here, were established in Bleadon at the same time. What is now Bridge Road, in 1791, was known as Hobbs Boat Road, since it led down to a crossing point by ferry to the south bank of the River Axe; the ferry is commemorated in the name of the Hobbs Boat Inn, and it was overtaken by the construction of the Bleadon clyce and bridge in the first years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The map also names the landholders at the western end of South Hill, encompassing the study site, as Samuel Fear and Thomas Spencer Esqr. There is no information on land use at the time of this map, but it is reasonable to suppose that, as in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, it remained as pasture.

The Bleadon tithe map is dated 1843, and an extract from it is shown here as **Figure 5** (SRO D/D/Rt/M/416 and D/D/Rt/A/416 for the map and award respectively. The latter is dated 1841). **Table 1** presents an extract from the award listing owners, occupiers, and properties both on and in the vicinity of the study site. The figures contained in the tithe records are instructive about the state of agriculture in Bleadon in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. At that date, the parish is said to have extended to some 2,745 acres (1,111ha). Of this, no less than 2,425 acres (981ha), or just over 88% consisted of pasture land of one kind or another. In the 1840s, Bleadon had only about 300 acres (121ha) of arable land, in total contrast to the situation in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, for which the Shaftsbury map depicts massive areas of open-field arable still in operation. This was clearly the result of enclosure between the two dates, and conversion of arable to pasture, in which the formal parliamentary process of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century probably played a crucial, but almost certainly not the *only* role.

Table 1: Extract from Bleadon Tithe Award, 1841 (SRO D/D/Rt/A/416)

A – acres; R – Roods; P – Perches; Gdn – Garden; Pa – Pasture

Landowner	Occupier	No.	Name & Description	Cultivation	Α	R	Р
Ann Norman	Geo. Slade	155c	Wharf	Pa	8	0	0
Ann Norman	Geo. Slade	155d	Wharf	Pa	14	0	0
Geo. Northcot Barons Esqr	Jn. Amesbury	156	Wharf	Pa	0	1	27
Geo. Northcot Barons Esqr.	Jn. Amesbury	273	Buildings & land	Pa & gdn	1	3	20
Hannah Fear	Herself	274	Little Down	Pa	4	1	9
Parishioners	Sundry tenants	274a	Quarry with cottages & gdns. Thereon		0	3	38
James Avery	Himself	274b	House & gdn.		0	0	12
John Avery	Himself	274c	House & gdn.		0	0	5
Ann Binding	Herself	274d	House & gdn.		0	0	24
Mary Prankard	Herself	274e	House & gdn		0	0	13
John Cottle	Himself	274f	House & gdn.		0	0	10
Mary Podger	Herself	274g	House & gdn.		0	1	3
Sarah Pain	Herself	274h	House and garden		0	0	31
Thos. Pain	Himself	274i	House & gdn.		0	0	5
Jane Barnett	Herself	274k	House & gdn		0	0	15
Nathan Palmer	Himself	2741	House and gdn.		0	0	12
Nathan Palmer	Himself	274m	House and gdn.		0	0	11
Rev David Williams	Cornelius Tutton	275	Hill Close	Pa	1	1	35
Joseph Wollen	Wm. Durston	311	Hill Ground	Pa	33	0	0
Ann Pimm	Cyrus Purnell	311a	House & gdn.		0	2	18

The tithe map shows the area of the study site as plot 274, a pasture enclosure of 4 acres known as Little Down, which clearly gave its name to the guarry which later occupied the same site. Plot 311 represents virtually the whole of the upper slopes and top of South Hill, known then as Hill Ground, running to 33 acres (just over 13ha), and used for pasture. At the western end of South Hill, plot 311a, a house and garden, is almost certainly the same dwelling shown on later OS maps which was lost to the expanding quarry in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although not included in **Table** 1, Figure 5 also shows that some of the long, narrow plots immediately north of South Hill have clearly just been enclosed straight out of open arable strips, in what comparison with the map of 1658 shows were once Coome and East Coome Furlongs. Perhaps most remarkably however, the tithe map and award demonstrate that virtually all the houses fronting onto the eastern side of Bridge Road at that date were associated with the guarry (tithe plot 274a) established at the time of the 1791 enclosure, for they are described as a coherent group with the phrase "Quarry with cottages and gardens thereon", and they are all owner occupied, for the residents are also listed as the landowners. One therefore wonders whether these houses were specifically built for, and occupied by, quarry workers and their families, at some point between, say, 1800 and 1840. It was, anyway, certainly the establishment of these dwellings which pushed out the building line westwards, and it seems clear that the houses themselves, and their associated garden plots, actually occupy the original north-south line of the former Hobbs Boat Road, and Bridge Road must have been a much narrow, newly established route marking their western boundary. The structures shown on the tithe map as actually lying within the boundary of the original quarry, plot 274a, are probably not, at this date, houses, but working buildings associated with the quarry.

The next map in the sequence which depicts the area of the study site is the First Edition OS 25" sheet, surveyed in 1884, and published 1886 (Somerset Sheet 16.12) (**Figure 6**). This shows that Little Down Quarry had been established since the date

of the tithe map, and included its small, north-eastern extension. On the hilltop to its east, the house and its garden at the western end of South Hill (OS field number 336), remain intact. Within the quarry itself, the two limekilns already noted are identified, and, interestingly, the site of a stone mill, presumably used for crushing stone perhaps prior to burning, and/or for road metalling. This building is not recorded on the NSHER. This OS map also quite clearly shows that the limekiln within the main body of the guarry is located incorrectly by the NSHER (44043). Its site lies very close to, and very probably even underneath, a modern, open-fronted building towards the northern side of the northern site. The quarry's northern boundary in 1884 was about 40m to the north of where it is today, with the area in between now occupied by small groups of houses called Springwell and Rockville. and an open, green area called The Paddock. It also seems clear from this OS map that the main entrance to the quarry site in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, from the eastern side of Bridge Road, was much further to the north of where it is today, and indeed now lies just outside the site's northern boundary. The present-day entrance was in use, but only, apparently, as a subsidiary access. However, immediately to its south, the absence from the map of the only historic, stone building still surviving within the site boundary (Plate 1), confirms that the date plaque of 1897 almost certainly records its initial construction, and not a rebuild or extension of an earlier structure.

The OS 25" map covering the study site was revised in 1902 to produce a Second Edition sheet, published in 1903 (same sheet number as First Edition), and an extract is presented here as Figure 7. Already, the northern boundary of the site has been pushed southwards and eastwards with the establishment of the large house called Rockville, and it is clear that the original main entrance to the guarry has been closed off and appropriated by Rockville as its access. The 'new' quarry main access has moved southwards to its present position, and the present stone building immediately to its south, presumably erected in 1897, has now appeared. In addition, roughly in the middle of the quarry floor, a small L-shaped building has been erected, although its function is unclear. Importantly, the area of the guarry itself has been greatly expanded, to both east and south, so that its eastern boundary by this date ran hard against the western boundary of the house at the western end of South Hill (OS field number 336), although both the house and its garden enclosure remained otherwise intact. The stone mill recorded on the First Edition sheet had gone by this date, but the limekiln within the main guarry was still present. It seems clear, however, that the other limekiln (NSHER 44044), north-east of the main quarry, had fallen into disuse, because the OS identifies it as the 'Old Limekiln'. Unlike the main Little Down Quarry, its north-eastern extension, where the Old Limekiln lay, had not expanded since the time of the First Edition map, and indeed had also almost certainly been abandoned by this date.

The final OS sheet reproduced here is an extract from the revision of 1936, published in 1938 (**Figure 8**). The main body of the quarry has expanded outwards even further to the east and south, and indeed a sizable area to the north-east has also been newly cut. On the south-western side at least, this marks the final expansion, and the limit of the quarry on that side, but it was by no means the limit of quarrying in the eastern and south-eastern parts of the site. The house and garden at the western end of South Hill had by now been swallowed up by the quarry's eastwards march, and as already noted, intervening maps show this to have occurred at some point

before 1931<sup>15</sup>. A small rectangular area in the south-eastern corner of the old garden enclosure still, however, remains intact. The limekiln structure within the main quarry (NSHER 44043) appears still to be standing, but is no longer explicitly identified as such. Its twin within the old extension to the northeast, is still shown as a standing structure, but it is completely unlabelled and its original function is no longer identified. A large building has appeared roughly in the centre of the main quarry, and although its function is not identified, it is possible that it was a precursor to the much more recent, and much larger processing and production building that still stands on the site.

Subsequent OS mapping not reproduced here shows that stone extraction continued after 1936, and by the early 1960s, the eastern boundary was pretty much in its present position, mainly as a result of a pattern of extraction which had the effect of straightening out the boundary on that side, and to some extent in the south-eastern corner as well. The decade up to 1970 saw the final phase of actual guarrying work, and indeed, a major feature from this period was the large, triangular, northwardspointing protrusion which now occupies the middle of the southern cliff face, and against the western side of which the main manufacturing unit was constructed in the same period; it is likely, in fact, that the two developments were directly related, since, as already noted, the factory plant building was also erected in this period, and the western face of the cliff face protrusion has been given a dead straight edge, clearly to accommodate the building. In the north-eastern quarter of the quarry, part of the old extension on that side gradually gave over to housing, with, in particular, The White House and Mulberry Villa being constructed by 1970. It is probable that the former limekiln in this area was also lost in this period as it certainly still seems to have been extant in 1962. On the clifftop on the southern and eastern sides of the quarry, the fence lines were moved outwards to accommodate the final phase of expansion.

#### 8 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

For the purposes of this review, a trawl of all the available aerial photographic material held at the National Monuments Record, Swindon, was carried out on behalf of AAU by staff at the NMR; and the results of the entire trawl are given in **Appendix 1**. By definition, for this particular site, the advent of a usable aerial photographic record comes too late to chart the overwhelming majority of development which the quarry underwent between the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the fourth decade of the 20<sup>th</sup>; for by the latter date, as we have already seen from the historic map evidence, quarrying had already been going on at the site probably for well over 60 years by the time that the first aerial images become available at the end of the Second World War.

**Figure 9,** dating to 1946, represents an example from the earliest available run of RAF vertical images of the site in the collections of the NMR, and is reproduced here as an example, to emphasise this point<sup>16</sup>. At that date, the quarry had not yet reached its fullest extent, and there yet remained large areas of the eastern and south-eastern faces to be removed before the outline as it is today was to be attained. A number of small buildings are clearly visible within the quarry, and houses

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> www.old-maps.co.uk

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> There is, however, a *single* frame from 1942; see **Appendix 1.** 

and other buildings are crowding in on the northern and north-eastern sides. On the top and flanks of South Hill, traces of the prehistoric and/or Romano-British field systems are clearly visible, and a large area of what are almost certainly former surface mineral workings ('gruffy ground') is also very clear. Hard against the northern edge of the gruffy ground, and clearly cutting an earlier, east-west trackway, is a ditched, circular feature of uncertain origin. It cannot be a barrow, and none of the early maps consulted suggest the presence of a windmill at this position.<sup>17</sup> Its relative date will rather depend on whether the trackway which it cuts is seen as part of the early field system, although on balance this is unlikely as the track does not seem to respect elements of the latter. It is possible that the feature may be the remains of a bell-pit (another form of mineral extraction), or perhaps a WW2 searchlight or gun emplacement, or Royal Observer Corps spotting post. South-west of the larger area of mineral workings, a rather smaller, but still very distinct area of ground disturbance almost certainly represents further surface mining. The NSHER does not record the trackway, either area of gruffy ground, or the circular feature.

South of the hill, the River Axe sweeps round in a great southwards meander, and inside the loop, numerous palaeochannels and the courses of relict tributary streams can be seen. The northern side of the loop is bounded by the new cut made as part of drainage improvements at the very beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with, at its western end, a new clyce, and a bridge carrying the road over the river. The new channel clearly slices through pre-existing, north-south enclosure boundaries, and the river's original course west of the main road is clearly visible.

#### 9 PPS5: SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT AND IMPACT

In line with Planning Policy Statement 5 Policy HE6.1 a chapter detailing the significance of the heritage assets and the impact of the proposals on them is now a standard requirement of archaeological desk-based assessments submitted to North Somerset Council. As no detailed advice on this process and the criteria to be used is currently available, the standard procedures in the production of a cultural resource chapter for an Environmental Impact Statement have been followed, where relevant.

#### **Significance Criteria**

Planning Policy Statement 5 stresses the importance of retaining the heritage asset, rather than retaining a documentary record of it (PPS 5, para. HE12.1). In this scheme therefore, preservation by record of any part of the resource is viewed as an adverse impact where preservation *in situ* cannot be achieved.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> For this specific purpose, the one-inch county maps of Day and Masters (1782) and John Greenwood (1822) were also checked; Harley and Dunning 1981.

**Table 2: PPS5 Significance Criteria** 

Significance Criteria	<b>Description of Criteria</b>
Substantial beneficial	The archaeological and cultural heritage resource is retained
	as per PPS 5, with:
	a) enhanced protection and monitoring,
	b) the removal of identified threats,
	c) the non-intrusive recording of the resource against
	unspecified future threat,
	d) improved accessibility of sites and information to the
	general public
Moderate beneficial	The archaeological and cultural heritage resource is retained
	as per PPS 5, with 2-3 of the following:
	a) enhanced protection and monitoring,
	b) the removal of identified threats,
	c) the non-intrusive recording of the resource against
	unspecified future threat,
	d) improved accessibility of sites and information to the
	general public
Minor beneficial	The archaeological and cultural heritage resource is retained
	as per PPS 5, with 1 of the following:
	a) enhanced protection and monitoring,
	b) the removal of identified threats,
	c) the non-intrusive recording of the resource against
	unspecified future threat,
	d) improved accessibility of sites and information to the
	general public
Negligible	The archaeological and cultural heritage resource is retained
	as per PPS 5
Minor adverse	The majority of the archaeological and cultural heritage
	resource is retained, only peripheral elements cannot be
	preserved.
Moderate adverse	Some core elements of the archaeological and cultural
	heritage resource cannot be retained, but a substantial
	proportion remain.
Substantial adverse	All or a significant majority of the core archaeological and
	cultural heritage resource cannot be retained.

To date, no archaeological survey, of whatever nature, has been undertaken across the application site, and therefore the full potential for the preservation of significant buried archaeological deposits has yet to be defined. Intrusive archaeological survey is of itself a destructive process.

The proposed development of this site will involve the erection of residential properties, although the scope of any works to be undertaken has yet to be fully determined, so that any impact assessment must by definition be regarded as strictly provisional. Against that background, the following table summarises what are considered to be the main issues flowing from a preliminary assessment of the nature of the potential historic and archaeological resource, and the likely impacts on it as a direct result of the proposed development.

Table 3: PPS5 Impact Assessment for Proposed Development at the Marshalls Manufacturing Works, Bridge Road, Bleadon, North Somerset

	1	1
Proposed Works	Significance of the historic fabric/area that will be affected	Impact of the proposed works on the historic fabric/area
Clearance and preparation of the site in readiness for necessary groundworks	At the time of the site visit there were no surface expressions of possible buried archaeological features. There is only a single building on the site of any age, and this is a stone-built, late Victorian structure, almost certainly associated with the quarry. A chimney may indicate that it was used at least in part as a dwelling, and it probably also functioned as a workshop/store. It is, however, of relatively recent date and has been much altered both internally and externally. The old working faces of the quarry itself might be reasonably regarded as positive historical and ecological assets in their own right, and stand as a visually striking, lasting testimony to the original use of the site.	Minor Adverse. The proposals as presently framed would involve the removal of the site's modern buildings, none of which have any architectural or historic merit. The old quarry faces would remain intact, albeit possibly with additional reinforcing. The removal of the late Victorian stone building close to the present site access may well be required in order to allow safety improvements to the main entrance of the proposed development.
Proposed Works	Significance of the historic fabric/area that will be affected	Impact of the proposed works on the historic fabric/area
Construction of new residential development, perhaps with a small element of light industrial/office usage, with associated garden and parking areas, landscaping, and provision of all necessary ancillary services, both surface and underground.	It is clear from the map evidence that historically, there were no very large structures within the bounds of the study site itself until well into the 20 <sup>th</sup> century. It is possible, however, that footings of historic buildings survive under the modern concrete running surface with which the quarry floor is now covered, and a stone mill and lime kiln depicted on historic OS maps are of special interest ion this respect.	<b>Minor Adverse.</b> Potential loss of below ground archaeological deposits, features and building remains. Because, by definition, a quarry is essentially a deep cut into natural deposits, it can be stated with certainty that any remains which might survive underneath the present, concrete floor of the study area, will date <i>only</i> from the second half of the 19 <sup>th</sup> century.

#### 10 CONCLUSIONS

There has previously been no archaeological work, of any description, within the compass of the study site itself. However, the local Carboniferous Limestone, by virtue of its physical nature in containing sometimes extensive cave and fissure systems, has a well-established tradition of producing evidence of extremely early (ie Palaeolithic) faunal remains, sometimes, crucially, associated with evidence of contemporary human activity which of its type is considered to be of international significance. An important site of this kind lies very nearby at Uphill Quarry, and indeed such finds are recorded from within the boundary of the present study site itself.

The site also lies in an area characterised by a particularly well-preserved prehistoric and/or Romano-British field system, and with proven activity and possibly occupation in the Iron Age and medieval periods, very close by to the north-west at the former Whitegate Farm. The latter is a site of national significance. The study area lies very close to what was probably the original core area of the medieval settlement of Bleadon, and it remained in agricultural use, as hill-pasture, well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century; although immediately to its south a small quarry, which still survives, had already been opened through the provisions of a parliamentary enclosure award of 1791. At some date between 1840 and 1883, the present quarry on the study site was

established, and was subject to intermittent expansion throughout the later 19<sup>th</sup>, and well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially to the south and east. The quarry's eastwards expansion, in particular, had a significant destructive impact on the early field system at the western end of South Hill, and a house in the same area, first depicted on the Bleadon tithe map, also eventually succumbed. A variety of buildings within the quarry came and went, although a limekiln and a stone mill are of particular interest. Extractive quarrying at the site ceased at some point in the decade up to 1970, and in the same period the plant was modernised, with the construction of a major manufacturing facility making cement and concrete products, and a variety of associated ancillary structures.

In conclusion, and on the basis of the documentary evidence reviewed here, the study area is considered to offer a low potential for the survival of archaeologically-significant buried deposits and structures.

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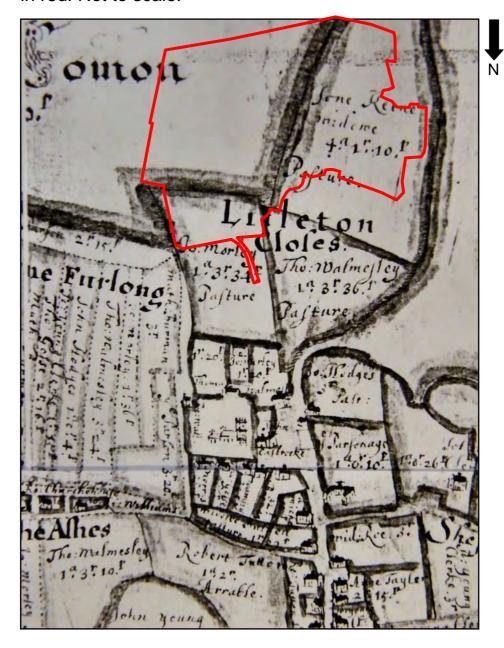
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	11616 13438 13438 20684 20687 20687 20690 20690 22577	11616 V 13438 V 13438 V 20684 V 20684 V 20687 V 20687 V 20690 V 20690 V 22577 V	11616 V 100 13438 V 214 13438 V 215 20684 V 2 20684 V 3 20687 V 66 20687 V 67 20690 V 188 20690 V 189 22577 V 417	11616 V 100 P 13438 V 214 P 13438 V 215 P 20684 V 2 P 20684 V 3 P 20687 V 66 P 20687 V 67 P 20690 V 188 P 20690 V 189 P 22577 V 417 N	11616 V 100 P ST 339 560 13438 V 214 P ST 337 568 13438 V 215 P ST 344 569 20684 V 2 P ST 344 560 20684 V 3 P ST 335 562 20687 V 66 P ST 345 559 20687 V 67 P ST 337 562 20690 V 188 P ST 344 560 20690 V 189 P ST 335 563 22577 V 417 N ST 340 563	11616 V 100 P ST 339 560 5 13438 V 214 P ST 337 568 4 13438 V 215 P ST 344 569 4 20684 V 2 P ST 344 560 1 20684 V 3 P ST 335 562 1 20687 V 66 P ST 345 559 1 20687 V 67 P ST 337 562 1 20690 V 188 P ST 344 560 2 20690 V 189 P ST 335 563 2 22577 V 417 N ST 340 563 4	11616 V 100 P ST 339 560 5 17 APR 1969 13438 V 214 P ST 337 568 4 08 APR 1989 13438 V 215 P ST 344 569 4 08 APR 1989 20684 V 2 P ST 344 560 1 11 JUN 1978 20684 V 3 P ST 335 562 1 11 JUN 1978 20687 V 66 P ST 345 559 1 03 SEP 1978 20687 V 67 P ST 337 562 1 03 SEP 1978 20690 V 188 P ST 344 560 2 04 SEP 1978 20690 V 189 P ST 335 563 2 04 SEP 1978 22577 V 417 N ST 340 563 4 18 MAY 1998	11616 V 100 P ST 339 560 5 17 APR 1969 A 13438 V 214 P ST 337 568 4 08 APR 1989 A 13438 V 215 P ST 344 569 4 08 APR 1989 A 20684 V 2 P ST 344 560 1 11 JUN 1978 A 20684 V 3 P ST 335 562 1 11 JUN 1978 A 20687 V 66 P ST 345 559 1 03 SEP 1978 A 20687 V 67 P ST 337 562 1 03 SEP 1978 A 20690 V 188 P ST 344 560 2 04 SEP 1978 A 20690 V 189 P ST 335 563 2 04 SEP 1978 A 22577 V 417 N ST 340 563 4 18 MAY 1998 A	11616 V 100 P ST 339 560 5 17 APR 1969 A 7000 13438 V 214 P ST 337 568 4 08 APR 1989 A 8500 13438 V 215 P ST 344 569 4 08 APR 1989 A 8500 20684 V 2 P ST 344 560 1 11 JUN 1978 A 10200 20684 V 3 P ST 335 562 1 11 JUN 1978 A 10200 20687 V 66 P ST 345 559 1 03 SEP 1978 A 10400 20687 V 67 P ST 337 562 1 03 SEP 1978 A 10400 20690 V 188 P ST 344 560 2 04 SEP 1978 A 10000 20690 V 189 P ST 335 563 2 04 SEP 1978 A 10000 22577 V 417 N ST 340 563 4 18 MAY 1998 A 7500	11616 V   100 P   ST 339 560 5   17 APR 1969 A   7000   12   13438 V   214 P   ST 337 568 4   08 APR 1989 A   8500   12   13438 V   215 P   ST 344 569 4   08 APR 1989 A   8500   12   20684 V   2 P   ST 344 560 1   11 JUN 1978 A   10200 6   20684 V   3 P   ST 335 562 1   11 JUN 1978 A   10200 6   20687 V   66 P   ST 345 559 1   03 SEP 1978 A   10400 6   20687 V   67 P   ST 337 562 1   03 SEP 1978 A   10400 6   20690 V   188 P   ST 344 560 2   04 SEP 1978 A   10000 6   20690 V   189 P   ST 335 563 2   04 SEP 1978 A   10000 6   22577 V   417 N   ST 340 563 4   18 MAY 1998 A   7500   12	11616    V   100    P   ST 339 560 5   17 APR 1969   A   7000   12   Black and White 9 x 9

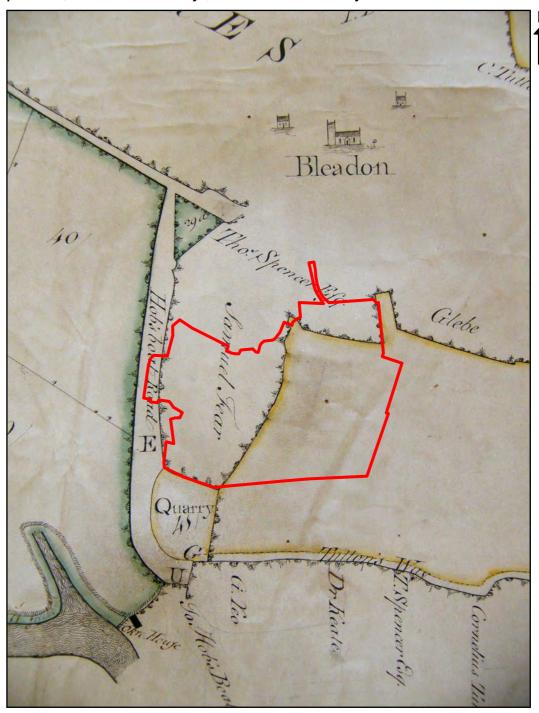
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# Figure 3

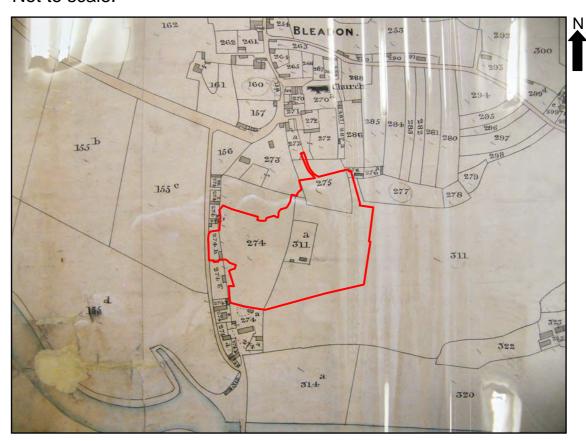
Extract from map of Bleadon manor, 1658. SRO T/PH/sfy/1. Approximate location of study site outlined in red. Not to scale.



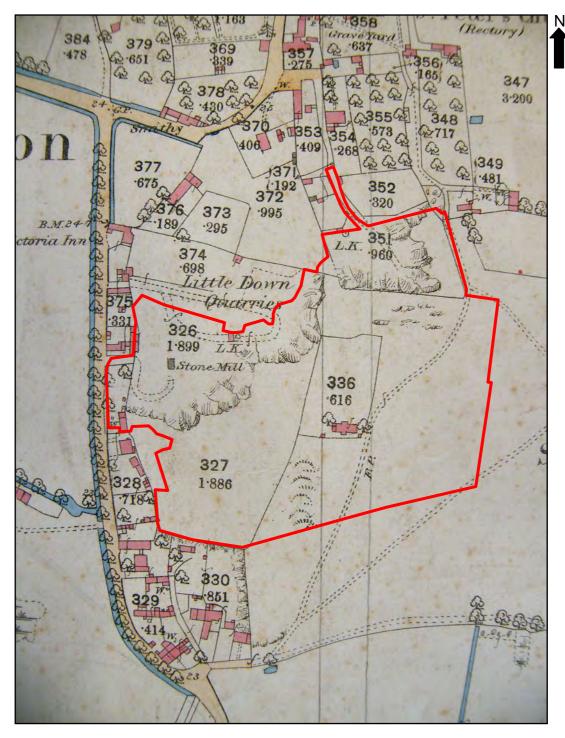
Extract from enclosure map for Bleadon, 1791, SRO Q/RDE/22. Approximate area of study site outlined in red. Note plot 41, marked 'Quarry', south of the study area. Not to scale.



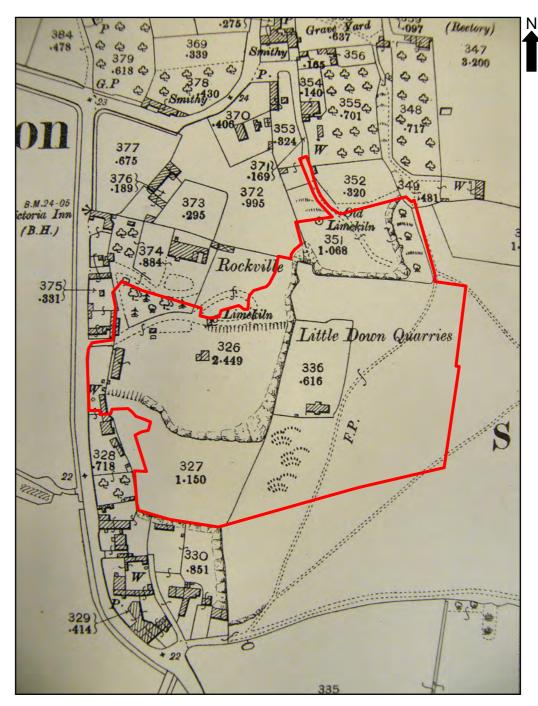
Extract from tithe map of Bleadon parish, 1843, SRO D/D/Rt/M/416. Best fit of study site to this survey, outlined in red. Not to scale.



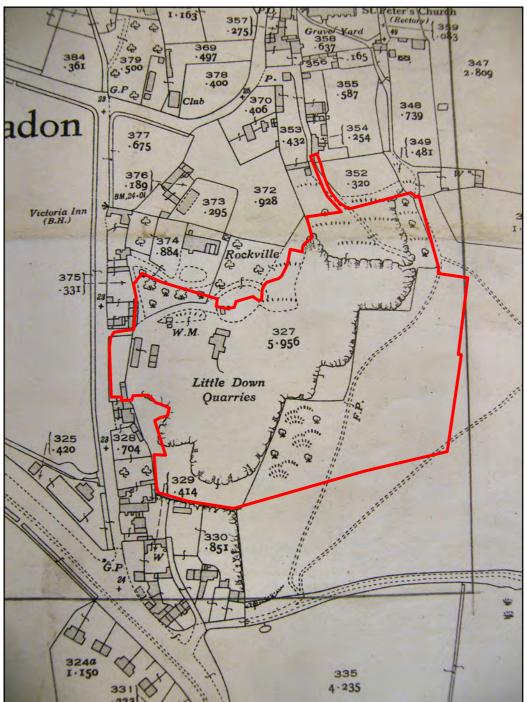
Extract from First Edition OS 25" map, Somerset sheet 16.12, surveyed 1884, published 1886. SRO. Study site outlined in red. Not to scale.



Extract from Second Edition OS 25" map, Somerset sheet 16.12, revised 1902, published 1903. SRO. Study site outlined in red. Not to scale.

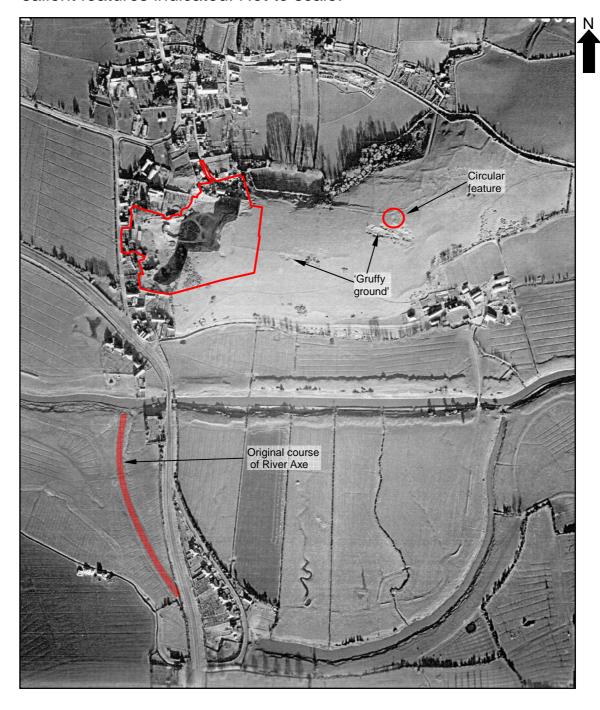


Extract from OS 25" map, revision of 1936, published 1938, Somerset sheet 16.12. SRO. Study site outlined in red. Not to scale.





Extract from RAF aerial photograph, Jan. 1946. NMR RAF/3G/TUD/UK/21, Frame 5375. Study site outlined in red, salient features indicated. Not to scale.



# **Plates**



1. Stone building on the southern side of main entrance. View to south-west.



2. Date plaque on the main, eastern elevation of the building shown in Plate 1, invisible from the outside due to being obscured by a modern, metal-clad extension attached to that side.



3. The central area of the quarry, showing the main buildings and plant involved in the manufacture of concrete products. View from about halfway along the site's northern boundary, looking south-south-west.



4. The main access into the site as it is today, from Bridge Road. The houses on the left were in existence by the time of the 1843 Bleadon tithe map. View to east-south-east.



5. The main processing and production building, with part of its eastern side built hard against the inwards-protruding section of quarry face which can be seen rising above its roof in the background. View to east.



6. A section of exposed, low quarry face on the northern side of the site, showing the dipping bedding planes of the native Carboniferous Limestone. View to north-west.



7. Composite panorama constructed from three separate images, and taken from the elevated area at the north-eastern corner of the site. The view swings round from south-east on the left-hand side of the frame, to south-west on the right-hand side, and shows the whole of the eastern and south-eastern quarry faces. Part of the main manufacturing building can be seen on the extreme right-hand side of the shot.