

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
White Cliffs Play Area, Fox Hill Down
Langdon Cliffs, Guston
Dover, Kent**

**NGR: 633442 142215
(TR 33442 42215)**

**ASE Project No: 160104
Site Code: LCD 16
ASE Report No: 2016149
OASIS id: archaeol6-248331**





By Gary Webster

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Revision:			

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Abstract

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Archaeology South-East at the White Cliffs visitor centre at Fox Hill Down, Langdon Cliffs, Guston, Dover, between on the 15th and 16th of March 2016. The fieldwork was commissioned by The National Trust in advance of the construction of a playground.

In the excavation of 20 hand excavated postholes that were monitored there was a very small assemblage of finds from the late 19th and 20th Century. There were no structural remains, or archaeological features or deposits encountered.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by The National Trust to carry out an archaeological watching brief on works associated with a new playground at the White Cliffs property, Dover, Kent (NGR 633442 142215; Figure 1).

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The site is located on Langdon Cliffs overlooking Dover harbour at a height of more than 80m AOD. Much of the area is now given over to car-parking and associated access roads. A visitor centre, offices and residential accommodation also lie within the boundaries of the site, which encompasses a number of terraces.
- 1.2.2 According to current data from the British Geological Survey the underlying bedrock is the Seaford Chalk Formation. No superficial geology is listed for the site (BGS 2016).

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 The watching brief at White Cliffs was undertaken on the advice of Caroline Thackary of The National Trust. Prior to the watching brief monitoring, a Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief in Kent (KCC 2011) was produced.
- 1.3.2 There have been two previous watching briefs on this site. A watching brief was carried out on a new footpath in September of 2010. A report was produced for this in December 2010 (ASE 2010). In February 2012 a watching brief was carried out on a new visitors centre. A report was produced for this in March 2012 (ASE 2012).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The specification (KCC 2011) states the aim as being "...to contribute to heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of the archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks."

1.5 Scope of Report

- 1.5.1 This report details the findings of the watching brief which was undertaken by Gary Webster (Archaeologist) on the 15th and 16th of March 2016.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The following information is drawn from the watching brief report (ASE 2010) on the path from the coach park to the visitor centre.
- 2.2 Little is known of the details of pre-19th century occupation of the site. The clifftops were occupied by open downland, probably exploited for arable use during the later prehistoric period. A possible earthwork boundary dating to this period was recorded east of Langdon Hole in 1999.
- 2.3 Between 1884 and 1897, the site was occupied by Dover Convict Prison, a series of buildings set on substantial terraces cut into the slope, bound by a large brick wall and flanked to the west by the Governor's House. Following its closure, the prison site was handed over to the War Office and used for storage and office accommodation by the nearby Langdon Battery (now the Coastguard Station). In 1901 it returned to penal use, this time as the Broadleas Military Prison, with some modifications made. This second prison closed in 1909, remaining unused until the First World War, when it was used as a transit camp for troops *en route* to the continent and renamed Langdon Barracks.
- 2.4 During peacetime, the site again fell into disuse, and many of the buildings were demolished by 1925. During the Second World War it was utilised for equipment storage by the nearby anti-aircraft unit and subsequently as a detention camp for Axis prisoners-of-war captured in Italy. It closed in 1948 and was acquired by Dover District Council in the 1950s as an open space. It was gifted to the National Trust in 1988.
- 2.5 Most available historic mapping is of little use – the prison was a military installation for much of its life (under the control of the War Office from the 1890s until the 1950s), consequently the Ordnance Survey plotted the location of the boundary wall but recorded (or at least published) no details of the interior layout.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology (Figure 2)

- 3.1.1 An unexploded ordnance and contamination survey was carried on site, prior to the excavation of the postholes.
- 3.1.2 The layout of the playground was set out by an engineer from Touchwood Play, the primary contractor on site.
- 3.1.3 The instalment of 20 hand-excavated postholes were monitored an experienced archaeologist. They were c.0.4m in diameter, and excavated to a depth of c. 0.6m, 0.2m of which was cut into the natural chalk.
- 3.1.4 Deposits were recorded using standard ASE recording sheets and a digital photographic record of the watching brief was maintained.

3.2 The Site Archive

- 3.2.1 ASE informed Dover Museum prior to the commencement of fieldwork that a site archive would be generated. The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at Dover Museum in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Context sheets	3
Section sheets	0
Plans sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	65
Context register	1
Drawing register	0
Watching brief forms	2
Trench Record forms	0

Table 1: Quantification of site paper archive

Bulk finds (quantity e.g. 1 bag, 1 box, 0.5 box 0.5 of a box)	1
Registered finds (number of)	0
Flots and environmental remains from bulk samples	0
Palaeoenvironmental specialists sample samples (e.g. columns, prepared slides)	0
Waterlogged wood	0
Wet sieved environmental remains from bulk samples	0

Table 2: Quantification of artefact and environmental samples

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Twenty hand excavated postholes

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
01	Layer	Topsoil	Site	Site	0.30 – 0.70m
02	Layer	Natural Chalk	Site	Site	-
03	Masonry	Brick	0.22	0.105	0.07

Table 3: List of recorded contexts

- 4.1.1 All of the postholes that were excavated had the same stratigraphy. The natural chalk [02] was overlain with a topsoil [01]. All of the postholes were excavated into banks, sloping down towards a terraced platform.
- 4.1.2 The topsoil, and to a lesser extent, the natural chalk were severely affected by both animal burrows and bioturbation.
- 4.1.3 A brick was recovered from the west of the site, within the topsoil [01] of PH17. This was originally thought to be in situ masonry, but was in fact a single loose brick.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 A small assemblage of finds was recovered during the watching brief and were washed and dried or air dried as appropriate. They were subsequently quantified by count and weight and were bagged by material and context (Table 4). All finds have been packed and stored following ClfA guidelines (2014). No further conservation is required.

Context	CBM	Wt (g)	Glass	Wt (g)
PH1	1	139		
PH15			1	194
PH17	1	2819	1	7
Total	2	2958	2	201

Table 4: Finds quantification

5.2 The Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber

- 5.2.1 Just two pieces of brick and tile were recovered from the site, both consisting of complete pieces. PH1 produced a 140g floor tile measuring 76mm square by 12mm thick. The tile has a moulded back and a good red-brown surface glaze which shows notable wear. A mid-19th- to early 20th- century date is suggested.
- 5.2.2 PH17 produced a complete brick measuring 232 x 104 x 65mm (2810g). The brick is dull yellow and tempered with sparse fine quartz, common/moderate slag to 3mm and sparse/common chalk to 1mm. It is poorly formed, with a crude frog and is overfired. This has caused cracking and distortion showing the brick to be a second. Despite this it has been used, with adhering light grey fine sandy cement and one white-washed stretcher face. A late 19th- to early 20th- century date is probable for the brick.

5.3 The Glass by Luke Barber

- 5.3.1 PH15 produced a complete colourless glass bottle with gold painted aluminium screw cap (Base 58mm diameter, rim 24mm diameter, height 174mm. 196g). The bottle has embossed zones of dots near its base and around its shoulder and 'Scheppes' printed around the screw cap. The piece is clearly a mixer of later 20th- century date (eg tonic, bitter lemon etc).
- 5.3.2 The other piece of glass was recovered from PH17 (4g) and consists of part of a colourless glass cylindrical bottle with externally embossed fine mesh/net pattern. A later 20th- century date is also suspected for this piece.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The excavation of the 20 postholes did not reveal any archaeological features. Several finds, recovered from the topsoil, dating to the late 19th and 20th Century were identified. None of the finds were specific to the history of the site, and are of little to no archaeological significance.
- 6.2 Due to the location of these postholes, cut into the bank of a terraced platform, it was unlikely that any structural remains would be encountered. Previous watching briefs on this site had success in finding structural remains, so the survivability of such remains is not in doubt.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank The National Trust for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Ben Found, County Archaeologist at Kent County Council for his guidance and monitoring. The excavation was directed by Gary Webster. Justin Russell produced the figures for this report; Neil Griffin managed the excavations; Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift the post-excavation process.

HER Summary

Site code	LCD 16				
Project code	160104				
Planning reference					
Site address	Fox Hill Down, Langdon Cliffs, Guston, Dover, Kent				
District/Borough	Dover, Langdon				
NGR (12 figures)	633442 142215				
Geology	Chalk				
Fieldwork type			WB		
Date of fieldwork	15 th and 16 th March 2016				
Sponsor/client	The National Trust				
Project manager	Neil Griffin				
Project supervisor	Gary Webster				
Period summary					
				Post-Medieval	
Project summary (100 word max)	<p><i>This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Archaeology South-East at the White Cliffs visitor centre at Fox Hill Down, Langdon Cliffs, Guston, Dover, between on the 15th and 16th of March 2016. The fieldwork was commissioned by The National Trust in advance of the construction of a playground.</i></p> <p><i>In the 20 hand excavated postholes there were several finds from the late 19th and 20th Century. There were no structural remains, or archaeological features or deposits encountered.</i></p>				

OASIS Form

OASIS id: archaeol6-248331

Project details

Project name	An archaeological watching brief at the White Cliffs, Fox Hil
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Archaeology South-East at the White Cliffs visitor centre at Fox Hill Down, Langdon Cliffs, Guston, Dover, between on the 15th and 16th of March 2016. The fieldwork was commissioned by The National Trust in advance of the construction of a playground. In the 20 hand excavated postholes there were several finds from the late 19th and 20th Century. There were no structural remains, or archaeological features or deposits encountered.
Project dates	Start: 15-03-2016 End: 16-03-2016
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	LCD16 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	National Trust land
Current Land use	Coastland 5 - Cliff and related features
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	KENT DOVER LANGDON Fox Hill Down, Langdon Cliffs, Guston, Dover
Postcode	CT16 1HJ
Study area	30 Square metres
Site coordinates	TR 33442 42215 51.13087905784 1.336953385823 51 07 51 N 001 20 13 E Point
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief originator	Kent County Council
Project design originator	National Trust
Project director/manager	Neil Griffin
Project supervisor	Gary Webster
Type of sponsor/funding body	National Trust

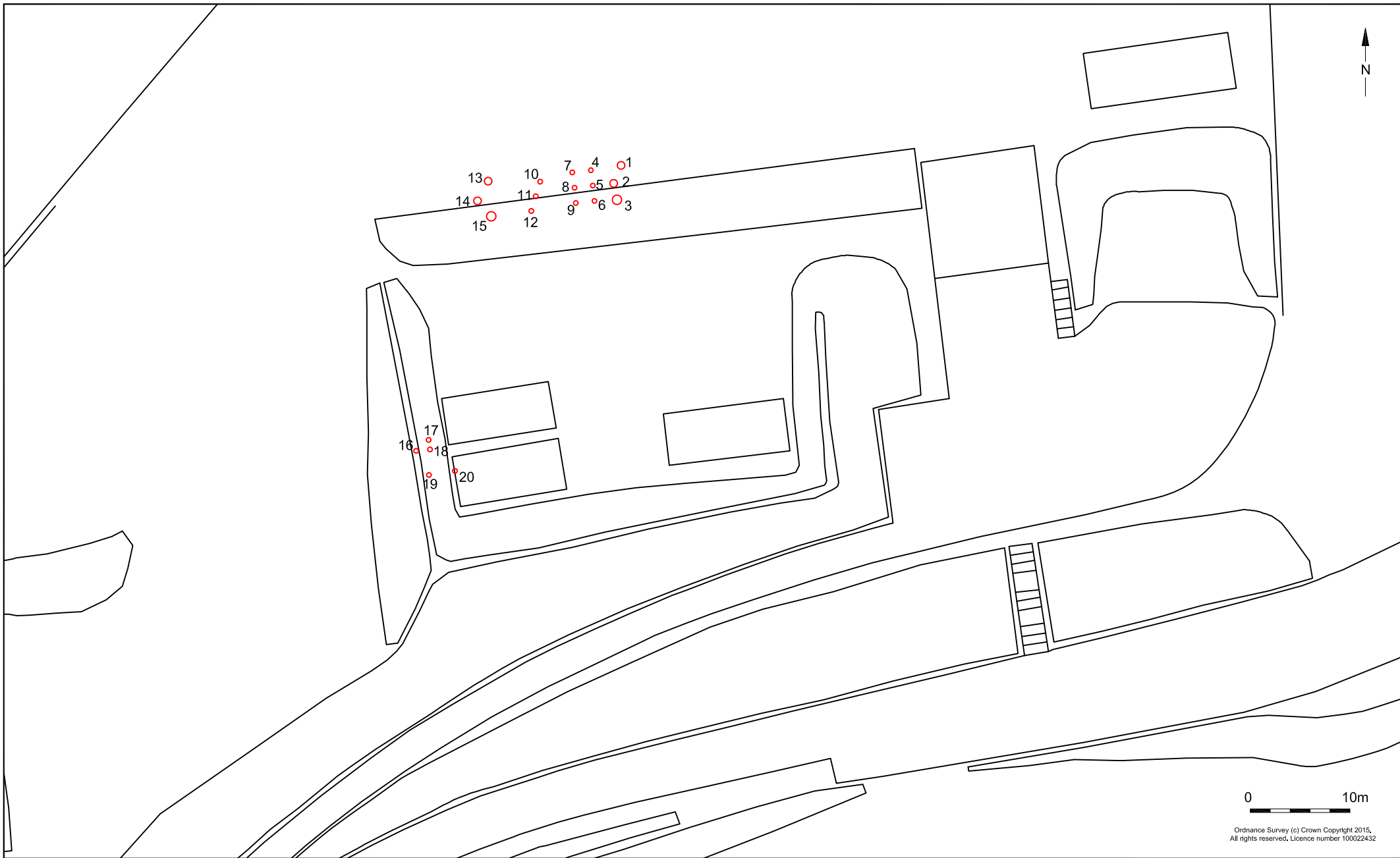
Project archives
Physical Archive
recipient Dover

Digital Archive
recipient Dover

Paper Archive
recipient Dover



© Archaeology South-East		Whit Cliffs Play Area, Fox Hill Down, Langdon Cliffs	Fig.1
Project Ref: 160104	April 2016	Site Location	
Report Ref: 2016149	Drawn by: LG		



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© Archaeology South-East		White Cliffs Play Area, Fox Hill Down, Langdon Cliffs	Fig.2
Project Ref: 160104	April 2016	Posthole Location	
Report Ref: 2016149	Drawn by: LG		



View of slope looking north



Pre-ex view of postholes 4-9



Pre-ex view of postholes 1-3



Posthole 5 with brick 003 looking north



Representative example of postholes

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