

Culvert of the Cold Bath
Wilderness
Heythrop Park
Oxfordshire



Archaeological Excavation Report



January 2007

Client: Richard Glover

Issue N^o: 1
NGR: SP 3628 2610

Client Name: Richard Glover

Client Ref No:

Document Title: Culvert of thew Old Plunge Pool, Heythrop Park,
Oxfordshire

Document Type: Archaeological Excavation Report

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: SP 3628 2610

Planning Reference:

OA Job Number:

Site Code: HEYPCP06

Invoice Code: HEYPCPEX

Receiving Museum: Oxfordshire County Museum Service

Museum Accession No: OXCMS:2006.147

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Document File Location H:\PROJECTS\Oxfordshire OX\Cherwell CH\5640
Heythrop Park\exREP.doc

Graphics File Location Servergo/AthruH/HEYPCP06/HEYPCPEX/Culvert to old
plunge pool, Heythroppark/GS/3.12.06

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Culvert to Cold Bath, The Wilderness, Heythrop Park, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION REPORT

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SUMMARY

On November 30th 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological excavation on the culvert leading to the Cold Bath at Heythrop Park, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 3628 2610). The work was commissioned by Richard Glover in order to determine the condition of the structure. The excavation revealed that the portion of the culvert running under the track had been replaced by modern salt glazed pipes. The western end of the culvert was intact. that the eastern end of the culvert was much further up the stream than anticipated and that it had been subject to partial collapse and heavy silting.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 On November 30th Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological excavation on the culvert leading to the Cold Bath at the Wilderness, Heythrop Park, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 3628 2610). The work was commissioned by Richard Glover in order to determine the condition of the structure.

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 Heythrop Park is situated approximately 29 km north-west of Oxford and 4 km west of Chipping Norton (Fig. 1). The site is located on the western edge of the park and lies on a south-west facing slope at approximately 155 m above OD. The underlying geology is Great Oolite limestone with alluvium over undifferentiated clays (Geological Survey of Great Britain, sheet no 218).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief has been prepared using "The Victoria County History of Oxfordshire" of which an abridged version is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 Heythrop Village, whose Anglo-Saxon name means "high farm or hamlet" lies in the centre of the parish overlooking a tributary of the River Glyme. The village, together with Kiddington, was given to by Offa, king of the Mercians, to Worcester priory c.780. It was reportedly lost by the priory in the 9th century and was held in 1086 by Hasculf Mustard together with Kiddington.
- 1.3.3 The manor then passed through several lines of succession before being purchased by Ralph Milbank in 1695 and sold on to Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury in 1705.
- 1.3.4 Heythrop House and park were begun shortly after the return in 1707, of Charles Talbot from Italy where, in 1704, he obtained a plan for a house from Paolo Falconieri. Charles architect was Thomas Archer, who had also recently returned from Italy and the builder was Francis Smith of Tettenhall, Staffordshire. The

designer of the landscape is not known, but landscape and house are clearly part of one design, and Archer may have been responsible, although stylistically and circumstantially an attribution to Henry Wise could be supported. As royal gardener, he would have been under the Duke of Shrewsbury's control, and he also designed the landscape at Blenheim, where he occupied a keepers lodge.

- 1.3.5 The house lies at the south-eastern end of a spur of level ground laid out between two steep valleys. On the slopes south-west of the house a naturalistic garden was possibly in existence by 1710, a remarkably early example of its type. A small spring there supplied water to an oval bath and a well house.
- 1.3.6 With the death of Charles Talbot in 1718, the house passed to Gilbert Talbot who never lived there and then onto George Talbot in 1743. His nephew Charles inherited it in 1787, but only infrequently resided there, finally renting it to Henry, Charles Somerset, Duke of Beaufort in 1820. The house was gutted by fire in 1831, the flames being visible up to 40 miles away. The house was abandoned until 1870 when it was sold to Albert Brassey, the railway engineer. The interior was restored by Alfred Waterhouse, who retained little more than the outer walls of the main block, re-planning the interior around a Vanburghian central hall and replacing the wings by larger stables and offices, each of which surrounded a central courtyard. In 1923 the house was sold to the Society of Jesus, who built 2 halls of residence in the grounds, before finally being bought the National Westminster Bank in 1969.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence or absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To determine the extent and condition of the culvert.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The area surrounding the culvert, including the line of the stream, was cleaned by hand in order to determine the extent and alignment of the culvert.
- 2.2.2 A plan showing the extent of the culvert and the immediate area was drawn at a scale of 1:50. The culvert and surrounding area was photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

- 3.1.1 Cleaning the area surrounding the culvert failed to expose any obvious cut for the culvert running across the track. The southern end of the culvert consisted of a

drystone constructed exit and side walls (1), with a stone lined open culvert (2) leading into the Cold Bath, but no evidence for an entry on the northern side of the track could be observed.

3.1.2 Examination of the interior of the culvert showed that it ran diagonally across the track (north-west to south-east) and that it constructed of salt glazed pipe (3), butting up to the drystone exit. Projection of its alignment showed that it run towards a collection of stones within the stream bed placed approximately 2.5 m north-west of the track. Careful cleaning and observation of the stones showed that the water was entering the culvert via a void between two of the stones (4), rather than through the original entrance.

3.1.3 Examination of a pool sited 2 m upstream from the stones showed that its western lip was constructed of stones placed in a wide "V" shape (5) suggesting an entrance to the culvert. This pool had been silted up level with the top of these stones (At least 0.5 m deep established by probing), probably blocking the entrance to the culvert and forcing the water to find its way through a gap in the culverts side.

3.2 Finds

3.2.1 No dating evidence was recovered during the cleaning operation.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 The investigation showed that the original stone culvert under the track had been replaced with modern salt glazed sewer pipe, probably during the late 19th/ early 20th century. The stone built exit for the culvert was probably rebuilt as this time, but probably assumes the same form as the original. The entrance to the culvert from the stream is probably original, but the collection pool has become heavily silted with the water finding it's way into the culvert via a void/collapse within it's stone construction.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Structure	2.5 m	0.3 m	Drystone constructed exit to culvert	-	C19th/ C20th?
2	Structure	0.6 m	0.15 m	Open stone culvert running to bath house	-	C18th ?
3	Structure	0.2 m	-	Salt glazed pipes under trackway	-	C19th/ C20th?
4	Void	0.25 m	0.15 m	Void within stone collapse	-	C18th ?
5	Structure	1.0 m	> 0.6 m	Probable original stone entrance to culvert	-	C18th ?

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OAU, 1992 *Field Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson)

Victoria History of the County of Oxford Vol.IX (ed. R.B.Pugh, 1969)

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Culvert of Cold Bath, Heythrop Park, Oxon

Site code: HEYPCP 06

Grid reference: SP 3628 2610

Type of Excavation: Clean and record of stone constructed culvert leading to the Old Plunge Pool

Date and duration of project: 1 day, 30-11-06

Area of site: Approximately 40 m²

Summary of results: The excavation showed that the culvert under the track had been replaced by salt glazed pipe in the late 19th/early 20th century, when the exit was also probably rebuilt. The original entrance is still in situ, but blocked by silt and collapse, with the water entering the culvert via a void in the collapse.

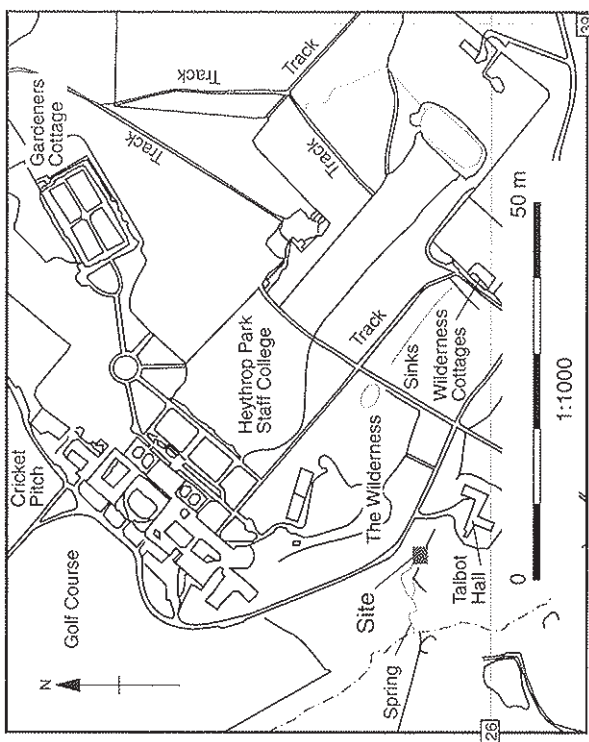
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS:2006.147



Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 1: Site location



Plan of culvert

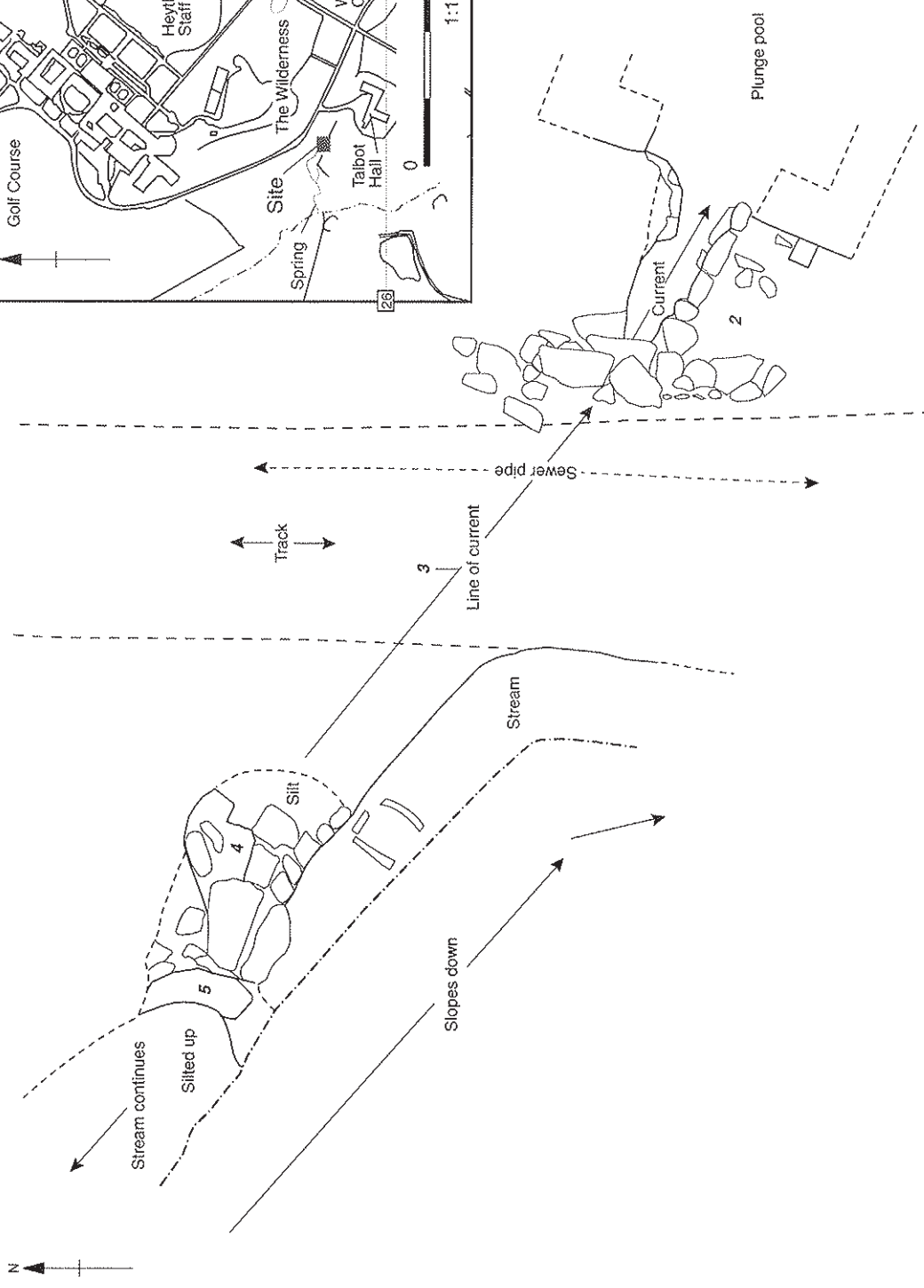


Figure 2: Site plan



Plate 1: Void/sink amongst stones



Plate 2: Southern end of culvert



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