
Site: Land south of Ypres Road

NGR: TL 993 232

Reason for Watching Brief: Ground clearance

Architect: - Contractor: - Owner: MoD

Fieldwork By: C. Crossan

Report By: C. Crossan

Date: 2nd December 1999

An initial visit was made in response to a report via the museum that digging was taking place in the Ypres Road area. The Ministry of Defence is engaged in clearing a very large open area of buried ordnance, including live ammunition. The land lies to the south of Ypres Road (see plan) and was used as a training ground during World War I. The work has already been in progress for several weeks and the schedule appears to be open-ended, lasting perhaps for a further month or two if necessary to make the area safe. Clearance involves a team of people with ferrous metal detectors scanning roped lanes, followed by a JCB digging for the source of any signal. They are currently averaging about 35 holes a day and have collected at least three large skips full of scrap iron (mainly barbed wire, spikes, nails, buckets) to date. The JCB cuts can be any size from small scoops in the topsoil to holes up to 5 metres in depth. Since they are only digging for iron much of their excavation is likely to be in ground previously disturbed by WWI training activity. However, the holes are dug in a rough manner which may well reveal intact material of archaeological value at the same time.

One hole was watched while in the course of excavation. Approximately 2m diameter by 1 m deep, the excavated material was composed entirely of dumped modern soil. Several small heaps and freshly backfilled patches of ground were inspected but no surface finds of any antiquity were noted. In the works cabin is a collection of bottles and pottery amassed since the beginning of the clearance work: all seemed to be of 19th - 20th century date.

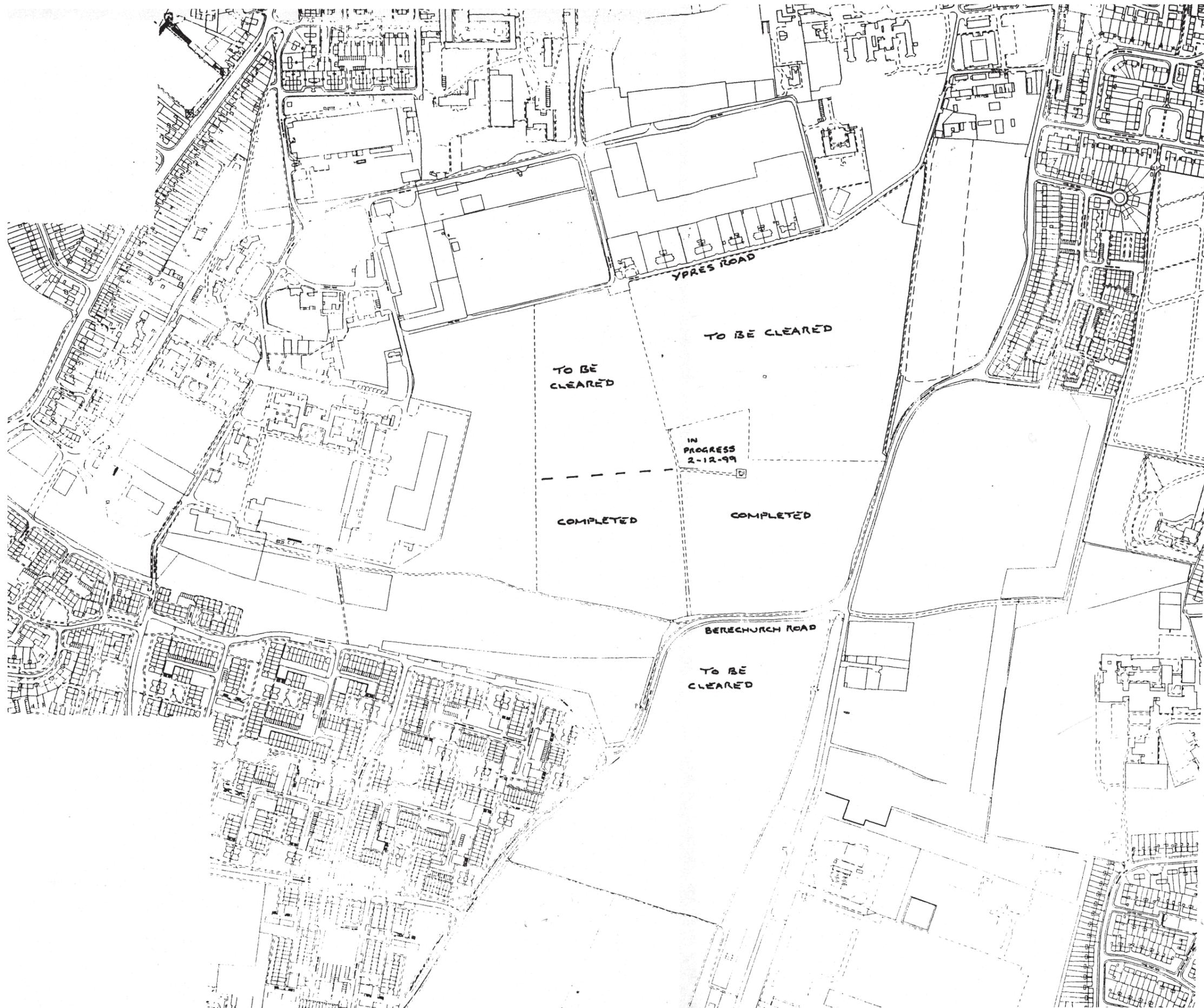
Further observation will depend on the availability of funding.

Site contact: Sgt Thompson.

Possible contact for civilian organisations: Paul Bew. Tel: 46512 (ext?)274

Appended: location plan

Finds: none to date



MOD
GROUND CLEARANCE

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