

**Archaeological monitoring at  
Lion Point decoy, near Cockett Wick Farm,  
Cockett Wick Lane, St Osyth, Essex  
March 2012**



**report prepared by  
Adam Wightman**

**on behalf of  
Roger Lord**

CAT project ref.: 12/02c  
NGR: TM 13945 13289 (c)  
English Heritage codes: Scheduled Monument 32412, HA 1016864  
Colchester and Ipswich Museums accession code: COLEM 2012.12



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**CAT Report 637**  
March 2012

## **Archaeological monitoring at Lion Point decoy, near Cockett Wick Farm, Cockett Wick Lane, St Osyth, Essex**

This is a summary report about the archaeological monitoring carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on the 7th March 2012 during the de-silting of a decoy pond located 810m south-east of Cockett Wick Farm, Cockett Wick Lane, St Osyth, Essex (NGR TM 13945 13289 (c); Fig 1).

Decoy ponds are artificially created or modified pools of water onto which wildfowl were lured to be trapped and killed for food and for feathers. The Lion Point decoy dates to the mid 19th century and is a scheduled ancient monument (English Heritage codes SM 32412, HA 1016864). English Heritage advised that archaeological monitoring be undertaken as part of the monument consent for a programme of conservation work at the site (Priddy 2012). The monitoring was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CAT (CAT 2012).

The rectangular pool survives in a near-complete state of preservation. The removal of silt and reeds from the pool was undertaken to help maintain this high level of preservation and minimise future damage to the monument. Following the clearance of blackthorn scrub from around the edge, to a distance of 10m, the toothless ditching bucket of a mechanical excavator was stretched out as far as possible into the pool to undertake the de-silting. The dark black silt was between 0.3m and 0.5m deep and overlay a dark blue/grey alluvial clay at the bottom of the pool. The scraped-up silt was spread out evenly on the banks of the pool. The pool contained a small amount of water, enough to obscure the bottom and the lower part of the bank. The excavator was careful not to disturb the banks which consisted of dark blue/grey or orange clay overlaid by the upcast material from the construction of the pond. The middle of the pool was not de-silted and an area of reeds was retained.

The decoy pond has one curved arm or ditch (known as a 'pipe') leading off its northernmost corner (Fig 2, Plate 1). The birds were lured by a decoyman and his dog down this pipe where nets would have been constructed over the narrowing end. In decoy ponds generally, there were numerous pipes (sometimes up to five) arranged in symmetrical patterns around the pool. During the de-silting of the Lion Point decoy pool, no evidence was uncovered to suggest that more than one pipe had been constructed. Moreover, barely 0.1m of silt and grass had accumulated in the extant pipe, which suggests that it is unlikely that there are any other pipes hidden in the silt.

English Heritage describe the Lion Point decoy in its Scheduled Monument list entry (<http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1016864>). The rectangular pochard pond is a rare example of its kind. The pochard is a diving bird which was rarely caught in pipes because they did not rise when a decoyman appeared. They were instead caught by means of nets fixed to long poles which were weighted down. When the pochards took off into the wind at dusk, or were disturbed by the discharge of a gun, the poles and nets were released so that they sprang upright. The pochards hit the net, fell into pens or trenches at the bottom, and were secured. Wooden posts, presumably associated with the process described above, were recovered during the de-silting of the pond and photographed (ie Plate 2). It was difficult to ascertain whether the posts had been driven into the ground or whether they had been dumped in the pool. In the northern corner of the pool, the stumps of four posts which formed a line across the entranceway to the pipe were observed (Fig 2).

The decoy pond is thought to have been constructed around 1860 and has not been worked within living memory. Rubbish discarded in the pond included old car and bike tyres and plastic storage boxes. A glass bottle embossed with the words 'Jaffajuce gold cup' had been thrown into in the pond in the second half of the 20th century, presumably by a holidaymaker from one of the neighbouring holiday parks (Plates 3-4).



Plate 1: the pipe de-silted.



Plate 2: wooden posts.



Plate 3: 'Jaffajuce' bottle, 1954.



Plate 4: advertisement from <http://www.historyworld.co.uk/advert.php?id=715&offset=0&sort=0&l1=Food&l2=Soft+Drinks>

## References

**Note: all CAT fieldwork reports are available online in .pdf format at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk>**

- |                  |      |   |
|------------------|------|---|
| CAT              | 2012 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological monitoring at Lion Point decoy, near Cockett Wick Farm, St Osyth, Essex</i> , by E Spurgeon, February 2012  |
| English Heritage | 1999 | <a href="http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1016864">http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1016864</a>   |
| Priddy, D        | 2012 | <i>Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979; Section 2 control of works. Application for Scheduled Monument Consent. Lion Point decoy 810m south-east of Cockett Wick Farm, Essex</i> , ref. S00027051, English Heritage communication, January 2012 |

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## **Appendix 1: contents of archive**

One A4 document wallet containing:

### **1 Introduction**

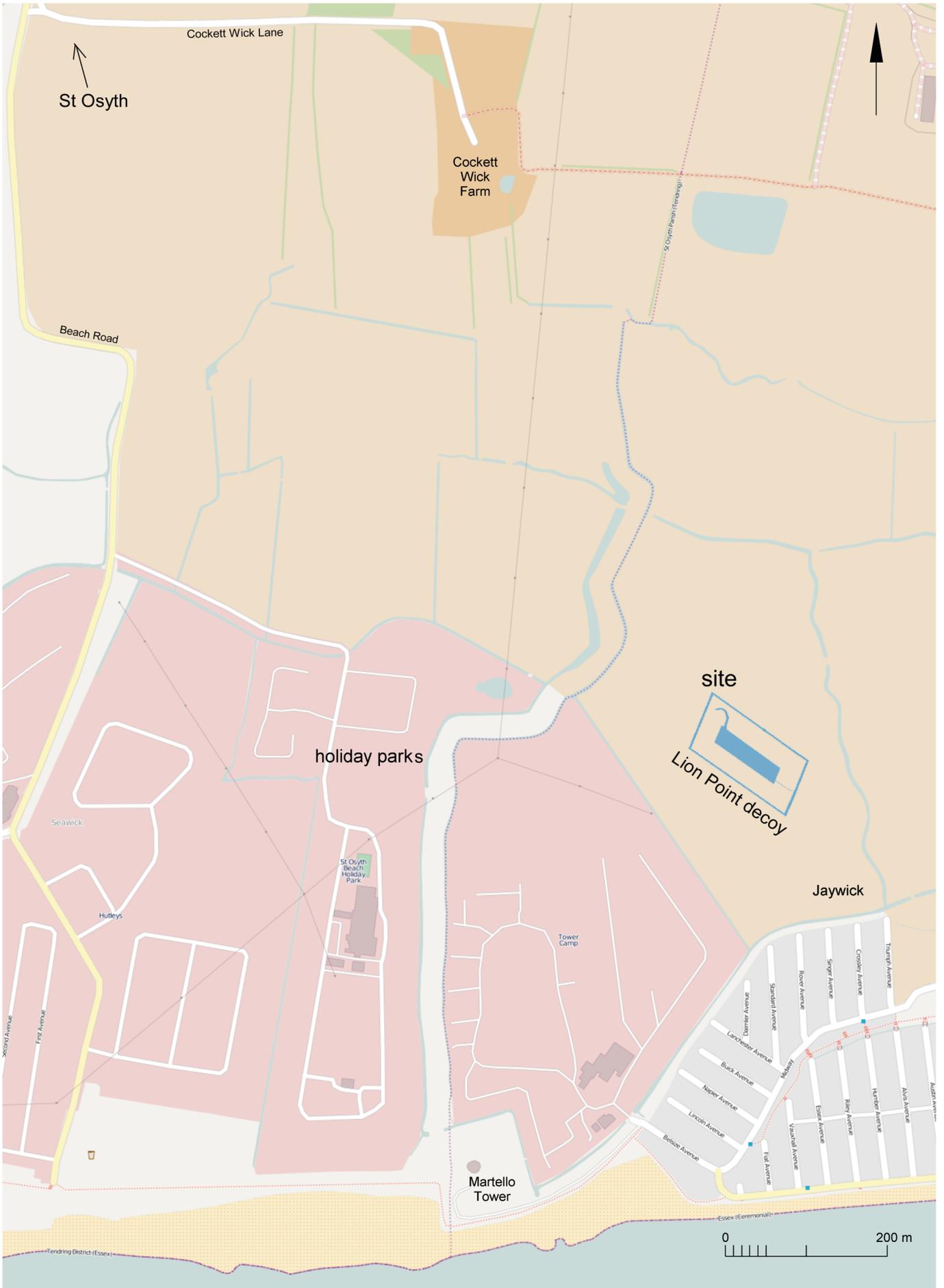
- 1.1 Copy of the scheduled monument consent
- 1.2 Copy of the WSI produced by CAT
- 1.3 Risk assessment
- 1.4 1 x A4 site plan from English Heritage
- 1.5 English Heritage list entry summary

### **2 Site archive**

- 2.1 Digital photographic record
- 2.2 Attendance register
- 2.3 Site photographic record on CD

### **3 Research archive**

- 3.1 Monitoring (client) report



Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, CC-BY-SA available on <http://www.openstreetmap.org/>

Fig 1 Site location.

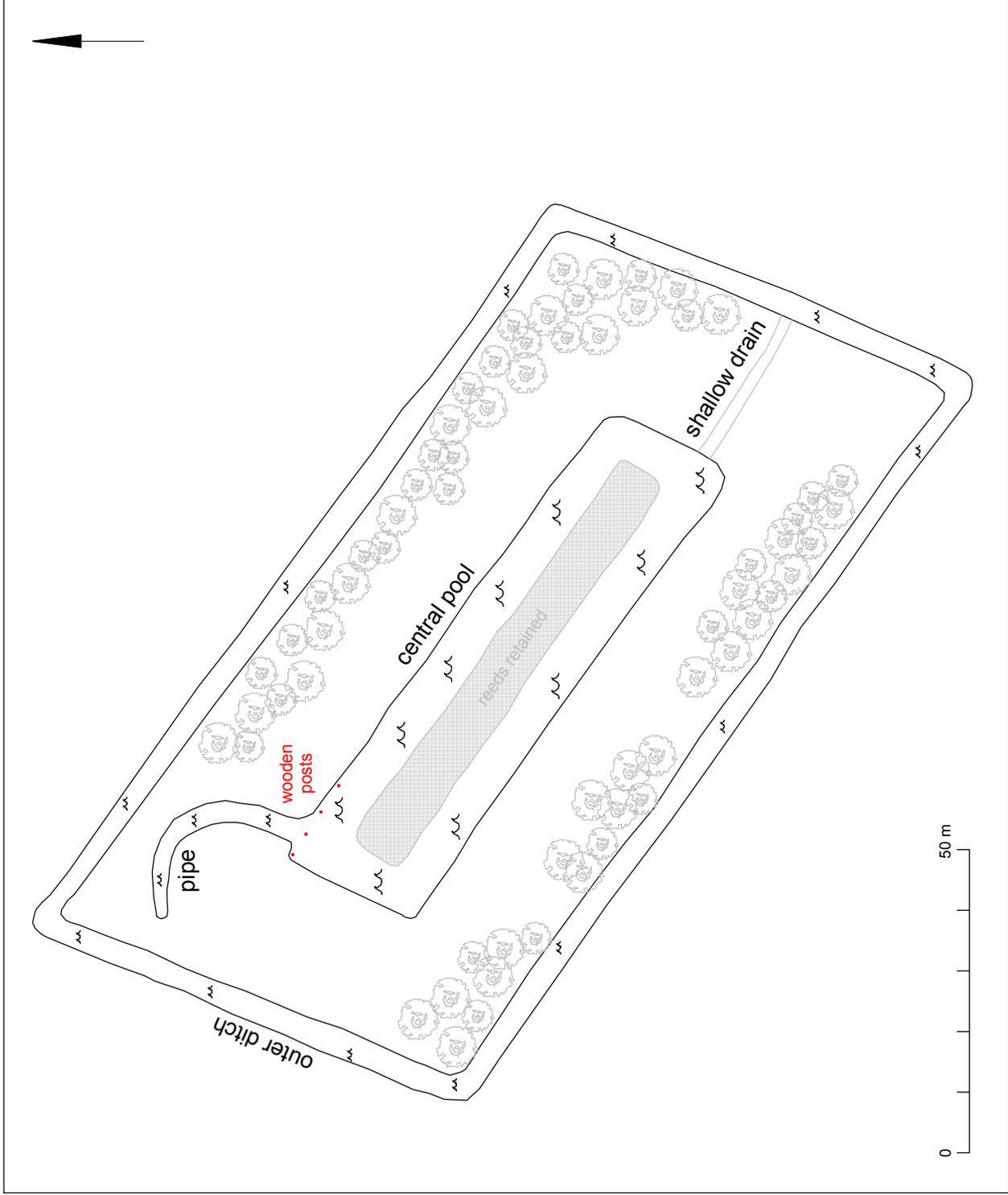


Fig 2 Plan of the Lion Point decoy with key features labelled.

## Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

### Summary sheet

<b>Site address:</b> Lion Point decoy, near Cockett Wick Farm, Cockett Wick Lane, St Osyth, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> St Osyth	<b>District:</b> Tendring
<b>NGR:</b> TM 13945 13289 (c)	<b>Site codes:</b> CAT project - 12/02c English Heritage - SM 32412, HA 1016864 Museum accession - COLEM 2012.12
<b>Type of work:</b> Archaeological monitoring	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> March 2012	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> approximately 2,500m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Location of finds/curating museum:</b> Colchester and Ipswich Museums	<b>Funding source:</b> Roger Lord/Natural England
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related EHER nos:</b> -
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 637	
<b>Periods represented:</b> modern	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> <i>During archaeological monitoring of the de-silting of a decoy pond located 810m south-east of Cockett Wick Farm, Cockett Wick Lane, St Osyth, Essex, no evidence was uncovered of any additional 'pipes' or other silted-up earthworks associated with the pond's use for the entrapment of wildfowl. Wooden posts, which may have been attached to nets used to catch pochard, were recovered from the silt.</i>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> None	
<b>Keywords:</b> decoy pond	<b>Significance:</b> neg
<b>Author of summary:</b> Adam Wightman	<b>Date of summary:</b> March 2012