

# Watching Brief on Site Investigations for the Cavenham-Icklingham Water Level Management Plan



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



October 2009

**Client: Environment Agency**

OA East Report No: 1129

OASIS No: Oxfordar3-66179

NGR: TL 736738 to TL 758729

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**Watching Brief on Site Investigations for the Cavenham-Icklingham Water  
Level Management Plan**

*Watching Brief*

By Rob Atkins BSocSc DipArch

*Site Code: XSFICK 09*

*CHER No.: CAM 049 for flints and pottery and TDD 021 for the possible palaeochannel*

*Date of Works: 16th to 28th September*

*Report No: 1129*

*Excavators: Rob Atkins and Jon House*

*Client: Environment Agency*

*Report Date: October 2009*

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## Summary

*From 16th to 28th September 2009, OA East carried out an intermittent archaeological watching brief on land along a c.2km stretch of the River Lark within Cavenham, Icklingham and Tuddenham parishes, Suffolk (TL 736738 to TL 758729). The archaeological monitoring was carried out during the excavation of exploratory holes by a geotechnics team from A F Howland's Associates. No archaeological features or artefacts were uncovered within the geological test holes, although on higher ground adjacent to the south of TP 5, near to the south bank of the River Lark at TL 7577 7290, artefacts were found in the backfill of rabbit burrows within a c.90m by 40m area. These burrows were more than 1m above the floodplain on either a natural scarp or an earthwork. The artefacts comprised twelve flint pieces dating from the Late Neolithic and Bronze Age including a core and a scraper, a Late Iron Age and two Early Roman pottery sherds. A possible palaeochannel was found in one of the geotechnical exploratory pits (HD 1) at TL 736738 with peat encountered to a depth of more than 3.3m.*

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## 1 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 1.1.1 The superficial geology shows there were glacial sand and gravel on both banks of the River Lark with till and peat to the south and east (BGS map on line).
- 1.1.2 The geotechnical pits were located on both banks of the River Lark over a c.2km distance (Figs. 1 and 2). Many of the geotechnical pits were located within tracts of land which have drains recorded on Ordnance Survey maps (Fig. 2). These imply they were on low land, and were presumably on the flood plain. The Ordnance Survey data shows the land targeted by geotechnical pits were on either side of the 10m OD contour line with test pits adjacent to Temple Bridge on the highest land (Fig. 2).

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The Suffolk HER have recorded several sites in the vicinity of the geotechnical test pits (Fig. 2). Ordnance Survey maps dating from 1883 to 1952 were accessed on line and these have given some additional information for the area.
- 2.1.2 There were 10 HER numbers recorded within 300m to the north of three hand dug pits (HD 1-HD 3). Several of the HER numbers relate to prehistoric flint being recovered (ICK 052 and ICK 143), Iron Age pottery (ICK 052 and ICK 081) or Roman artefacts (ICK 023, ICK 051, ICK 053 and ICK 143).
- 2.1.3 There were no known archaeological sites within 300m of geotechnical Trial Pits 1-4 and Window Samples WS 1- 4 (Fig. 2). A WWII pillar box on the east side of this field near the River Lark has not been recorded on the HER records.
- 2.1.4 Geotechnical trial pits TP 5-TP 7 and WS 5-6 were located just to the west of a routeway which was recorded on all the maps as the Icknield Way Trail or Icknield Way Path. This name was probably a medieval or post-medieval labelling as the Icknield Way was not at this location (pers. comm. Dr. Colin Pendleton and Edward Martin). The routeway was likely to date from the medieval period and it ran from The Green, Tuddenham, over the River Lark at "Temple Bridge" and to Icklingham. Temple Bridge may be the location of a Knight's Templers preceptory (HER IKL 117 and Cam Misc MSF211) although there is some dispute and it may have been located elsewhere, possibly at Cavendish (Fig. 2).
- 2.1.5 The bridge no longer survives across the river although the base of its c.16th to 17th century brick piers foundations can still be seen on either bank (HER IKL 117). There is map evidence for a bridge here in 1755 (Bowen's Map of the County of Suffolk). It is unlikely that there was a bridge here in the Roman period as the Roman routeway from Icklingham across the River Lark is thought to be further to the east directly to the south of Icklingham (pers. comm. Dr. Colin Pendleton). In recent times a weir has been built to the west of this former bridge and directly to the north of TP 5. Recent earthworks associated with the weir's construction were recorded in the earthwork survey on site (Fig. 3). To the SW of TP 5 there is a large block of land recorded on the HER (CAM 019) and this represented WWII anti-glider ditches.
- 2.1.6 About 150m and 200m to the north of TP 7 there were two HER recorded sites (IKL 140 and IKL 031 although both were just beyond the HER search; Fig. 2). IKL 031 appears

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to have been an earthwork. The 1883 map recorded this area as trees with Camp Close also labelled but in later maps these trees were removed.

- 2.1.7 The 1905 Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map recorded two gravel pits several hundred metres to the south and east of Temple Bridge.
- 2.1.8 One field adjacent to the east of the Icknield Way Trail was called "Bomb field" due to bombs being dropped here in WWII. This field is adjacent to the development area and as a consequence, all geotechnical pits within the development area were monitored by a specialist in bomb disposal.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1.1 The proposed development area is adjacent to the Cavenham Heath Nature Reserve which is primarily established for birds (Fig. 2). The aim of the proposed work is to raise the water level within certain parts of the area which will increase the opportunities of birds to feed etc. on the site. It is hoped the information gained from the geotechnical survey holes will inform the Environment Agency how this can be achieved and what affect any of the proposals will have on adjacent land.
- 3.1.2 There was no archaeological Brief or Specification for the geotechnical works. The investigation comprised the monitoring of three types of geotechnical investigations and the work was within three different parts of the development area.
- 3.1.3 Firstly, three Hand-Dug Trial and Dynamic Probing Pits (labelled HD1 to HD3) were excavated to the north of the River Lark over a 1km distance, at the west, centre and eastern end of a single field (Fig. 2). The field was not planted for crops although grass had been cut. The pits were positioned directly to the south of an east to west ditch which has been recoded in the modern maps as a "drain". These three pits were c. 0.35m in diameter and were hand dug using special "shovel type" instruments to a depth of c.2m. Hand augering then took place within the pits to a depth of up to 3m below ground level.
- 3.1.4 Secondly, four Window Samples (WS 1- WS 4) and four Trial Pits (TP1 - TP 4) were excavated 35m apart in a north to south line adjacent 20m to the east of a field boundary of a field to the south of the River Lark (Fig. 2). The window samples were c.0.35m in diameter and initially hand dug using special "shovel type" instruments to a depth of c.2m and then a rig was positioned and a core dug to up to 6m deep. The Trial Pits were about 4m in length and 0.45m wide and were excavated by mechanical excavator (JCB). The aim was to see how permeable the soil conditions were. This would inform how deep a sheet piled fence could be dug and this would start at the river and continue along this western field boundary. The fence/water weirs along the River Lark would keep the water level at a certain height within the field. There would also be an earthen bund positioned to stop any above ground water flooding adjacent land. The ground slopes upwards (visibly at least 1m and possibly as much as 2m) to the west and south of this western field boundary (within area called Tuddenham Heath) and also further to the east which would allow water levels to be affected over an area of many hectares. It is thought that weir(s) along the River Lark could then maintain water levels.
- 3.1.5 In the third area, work took place on both sides of the River Lark to the west and north-west of the former Temple Bridge and comprised three Trial Pits (TP 5 -TP 7) and two

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Window Samples (WS5 - WS 6) (Fig. 2). The Trial Pits were archaeologically monitored (but not the two Window Samples) and were excavated in the same manner as Section 3.1.4 above.

- 3.1.6 Whilst recording TP 5, a natural scarp or earthwork was seen directly to the south forming a relatively level plateau over an area c.90m by 40m within the field (apart from possibly quarry areas) up to its southern boundary (Fig. 3). This possible earthwork continued beyond the boundary to the south although this area was not recorded. General observations and an earthwork survey at 1: 1000 were made of the area to the north of the field boundary. Numerous rabbit burrows and their adjacent spoil cut into this feature and were inspected for artefacts.
- 3.1.7 All geotechnical pits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations were recorded on a plan with digital and black and white photographs taken.
- 3.1.8 Site conditions took place in dry conditions.



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## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 Hand-Dug Pits and Dynamic Probing in field to the north of River Lark

- 4.1.1 All three pits in this field were dug to a depth of c.3m with the water level encountered at between 1.4m and 1.5m below the ground surface (Fig. 2). No archaeological features or even artefacts were uncovered.
- 4.1.2 In HD 1, on the west side of the field, only peat was encountered below the grass surface to a depth of more than 3.3m. In the middle of the field, at HD 2, from 1m below ground level continuing to at least the bottom of the pit was a orange/brown sand with some flint/gravel. This layer was overlaid by peat which continued to ground level. At HD 3 on the east side of the field the pit found from 2m to 3m an orange brown sand with some gravel/flint. This was sealed a thin 0.2m thick lense of peat with small pockets of grey sand. The top 1.8m of the pit consisted of peat.

### 4.2 Trial Pits and Window Samples in field to the south of the River Lark

- 4.2.1 Four Trial Pits (TP 1 -4) and four Window Samples (WS 1 -4) were excavated along the western boundary of this grass field. The geological make up was relatively similar in all the holes and the water level was located c.1.4m below the ground level. No archaeological features or artefacts were found.
- 4.2.2 The geotechnical holes were excavated up to c.5m deep. From c.3m to 5m deep there were various lenses comprising clay sands, sands with silty chalk, sands with a little gravel. These lenses were sealed by a layer from c.0.5m to 0.8m below ground level to c.3m deep and consisted of mid brown grey sands and gravels. In turn, above this layer there was a peat deposit between 0.5m and 0.8m thick which started directly below the grass.

### 4.3 Trial Pits and Window Samples adjacent to former Temper Bridge on either side of the River Lark

- 4.3.1 On the south bank of the River Lark there was a single Trial Pit (TP 5) and a Window Sample (WS 6) excavated to the west of Temple Bridge. The trial pit was excavated to a depth of 2.2m below ground level with the water level recorded at a depth of 1.9m. From 1m to 2.2m there was a layer of grey brown chalk and sands. This was sealed by a 0.5m thick sand layer which was in turn overlaid by a 0.5m thick degraded peat layer. No features or artefacts were found in the Trial Pit.
- 4.3.2 During the monitoring work, a number of worked flint and pottery sherds were noticed in rabbit holes on adjacent higher land directly to the south and south-east of TP 5 within an area c.90m by 40m (TL 7577 7290; Figs. 2 and 3) and the opportunity was taken to record these. The soil from the rabbit holes consisted of sand implying this land was above the peat flood plain. This higher ground was, in the main a low flat plateau which started approximately 30m to south of the River Lark. The plateau is approximately 1m higher than the river bank and the surrounding land to the west and is approximately 90m across with steep sides north and north-west although there was a much more gentle on the north-east side. It was at least 40m wide running to the southern field boundary. This plateau continued to the south beyond the boundary for at least 100m and here the land increased in height by at least a further metre. It is uncertain whether this was a natural scarp or part of an earthwork. There were probably two recent ?

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quarry pits cut into the plateau, one circular (labelled A) c.30m by 30m and the other linear c.40m by 10m (labelled B). The former has been disturbed by earthworks associated with the building of the modern weir.

- 4.3.3 There were 12 flints which comprised a core, a scraper as well as small chips, chunks and flakes which date between the Later Neolithic and Bronze Age (pers. comm. Richard Mortimer). It was a mixed assemblage, not dating to any one period with the quality of the flint variable. The scraper was made on a wide blade and dated to the Later Neolithic. Most of the other flint had little re-working, two were repatinated. The single Late Iron Age pottery sherd (3g) was flint tempered in a reduced fabric with an oxidised surface (pers. comm. Alice Lyons and Richard Mortimer). There were also two Early Roman sherds consisting of an Early Roman rim sherd (7g) of a carinated lid-seated bowl in a sandy oxidised (SOW (mica)) fabric which dated to c.Middle C1-c.Middle C2 and a sandy oxidised body sherd (4g) (pers. comm. Alice Lyons).
- 4.3.4 On the north bank of the River Lark there were two Trial Pits (TP 6 and 7) and a single Window Sample (WS 5). The two Trial Pits were taken up to 2.5m and 3.4m respectively below ground level (Fig. 2). In the deepest, a flint and gravels layer was encountered from 3.3m deep. Peat sealed this layer up to the grass at ground level. No archaeological features or artefacts were recovered from either Trial Pit.

## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 The geotechnical pits were within four areas and were all on very low lying land. Peat or degraded peat was encountered within all the geotechnical holes directly below the ground level with no archaeological features or artefacts seen. The ground level in these sites would have been too low for human occupation and was, in the main, part of the River Lark's flood plain. In one of these areas (TL 736738) peat was more than 3m deep and it is possible that there was a palaeochannel at this point (pers. comm. engineer for A F Howland's Associates). The HER has given the number TDD 021 for the possible palaeochannel.
- 5.1.2 Twelve flints, a Late Iron Age and two Early Roman pottery sherds were recovered from rabbit burrows over a c.90m by 40m area (TL 7577 7290), near the southern bank of the River Lark to the west of Temple Bridge. These burrows were on either a natural scarp or an earthwork with the land more than a metre higher than the adjacent floodplain. There are no known archaeological sites at this location and it is uncertain how significant the recovery of these artefacts are. The HER has given a number CAM 049 for flints and pottery.

## 6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1.1 The author would like to thank the Environment Agency who commissioned and funded the archaeological work especially to Phil Catherall who organised the scheme. The project was managed by James Drummond- Murray and Aileen Connor edited this report. Rob Atkins and Jon House monitored the geotechnical pits. Alice Lyons and Richard Mortimer commented on the artefacts. Dr. Colin Pendleton supplied HER information and gave useful advice. Edward Martin, Archaeological Officer for Suffolk County Council supplied historical information. Louise Bush produced the illustrations.

## APPENDIX A. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

### Project Details

OASIS Number	Oxfordar3-66179		
Project Name	Watching Brief on Site Investigations for the Cavenham-Icklingham Water Level Management Plan		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	16-09-2009	Finish	28-09-2009
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	Unknown

### Project Reference Codes

Site Code	XSFICK 09	Planning App. No.	N/A
HER No.	TDD 021 and CAM 049	Related HER/OASIS No.	

### Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Faculty jurisdiction
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### Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Field Observation (periodic visits)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Record
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Excavation (100%)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Field Walking
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Recorded Observation	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Metal Detector Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pit Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Open-Area Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Excavation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watching Brief

### Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

List feature types using the [NMR Monument Type Thesaurus](#) and significant finds using the [MDA Object type Thesaurus](#) together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Earthwork?	Iron Age -800 to 43	Flints and pottery	Late Prehistoric -4k to 43
Earthwork?	Roman 43 to 410	pottery	Roman 43 to 410
Palaeochannel?	Uncertain		Select period...

### Project Location

County	Suffolk	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	Forest Heath	Land on both banks of the River Lark within Cavenham, Icklingham and Tudd parish
Parish	Cavenham, Icklingham + Tu	
HER	Suffolk HER	
Study Area	c.2km	National Grid Reference TL 736738 to TL 758728

## Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	-
Project Design Originator	-
Project Manager	James Drummond-Murray
Supervisor	Rob Atkins and Jon House

## Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Location ...Shire Hall, Bury St. Edmunds	Location ...OA East	Location ...Shire Hall, Bury St. Edmunds
Accession ID ...	Accession ID ...	Accession ID ...

## Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
<input type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input type="checkbox"/> Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Map
<input type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Matrices
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm
<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/> Misc.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey

### Notes:

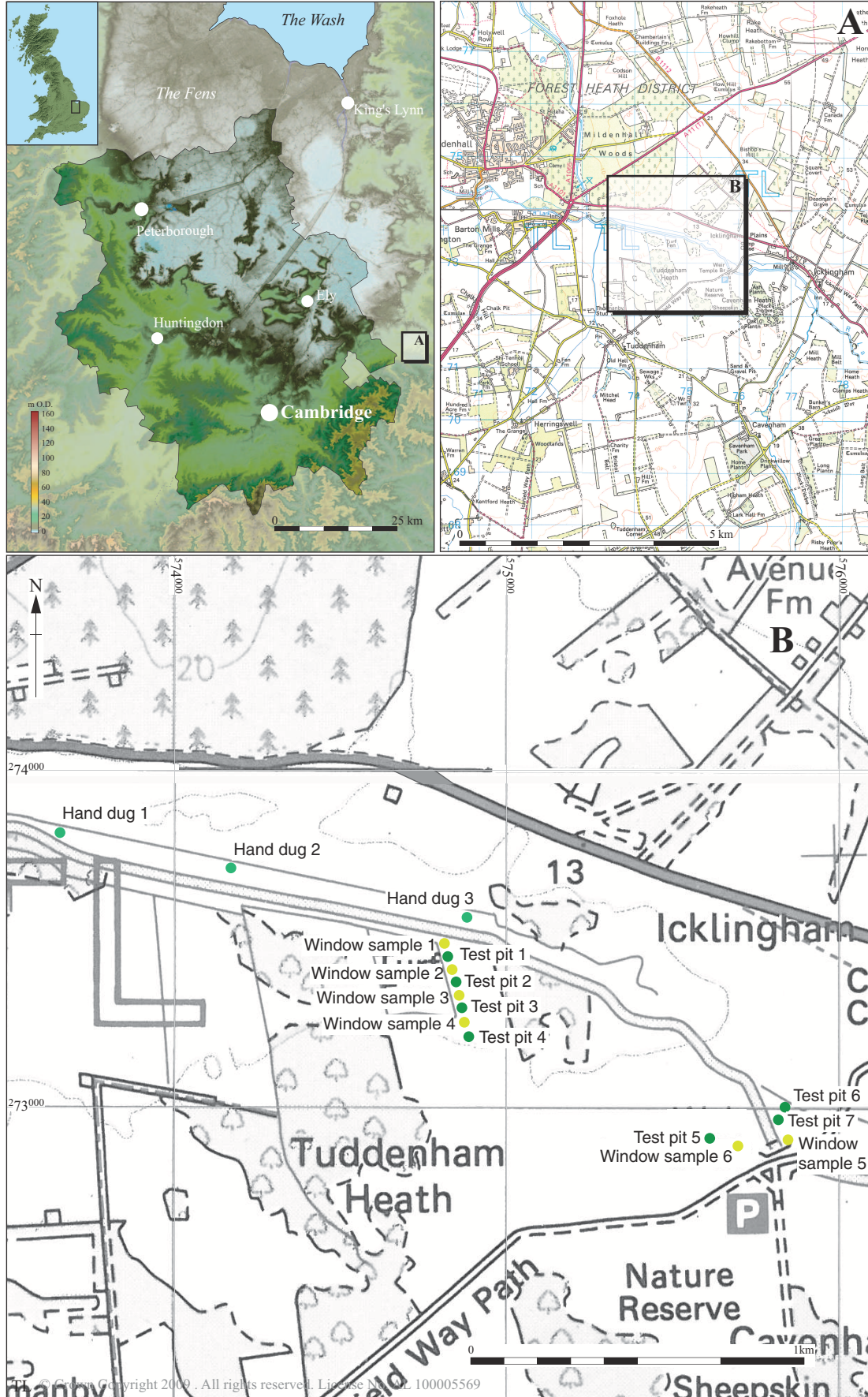


Figure 1: Site location map

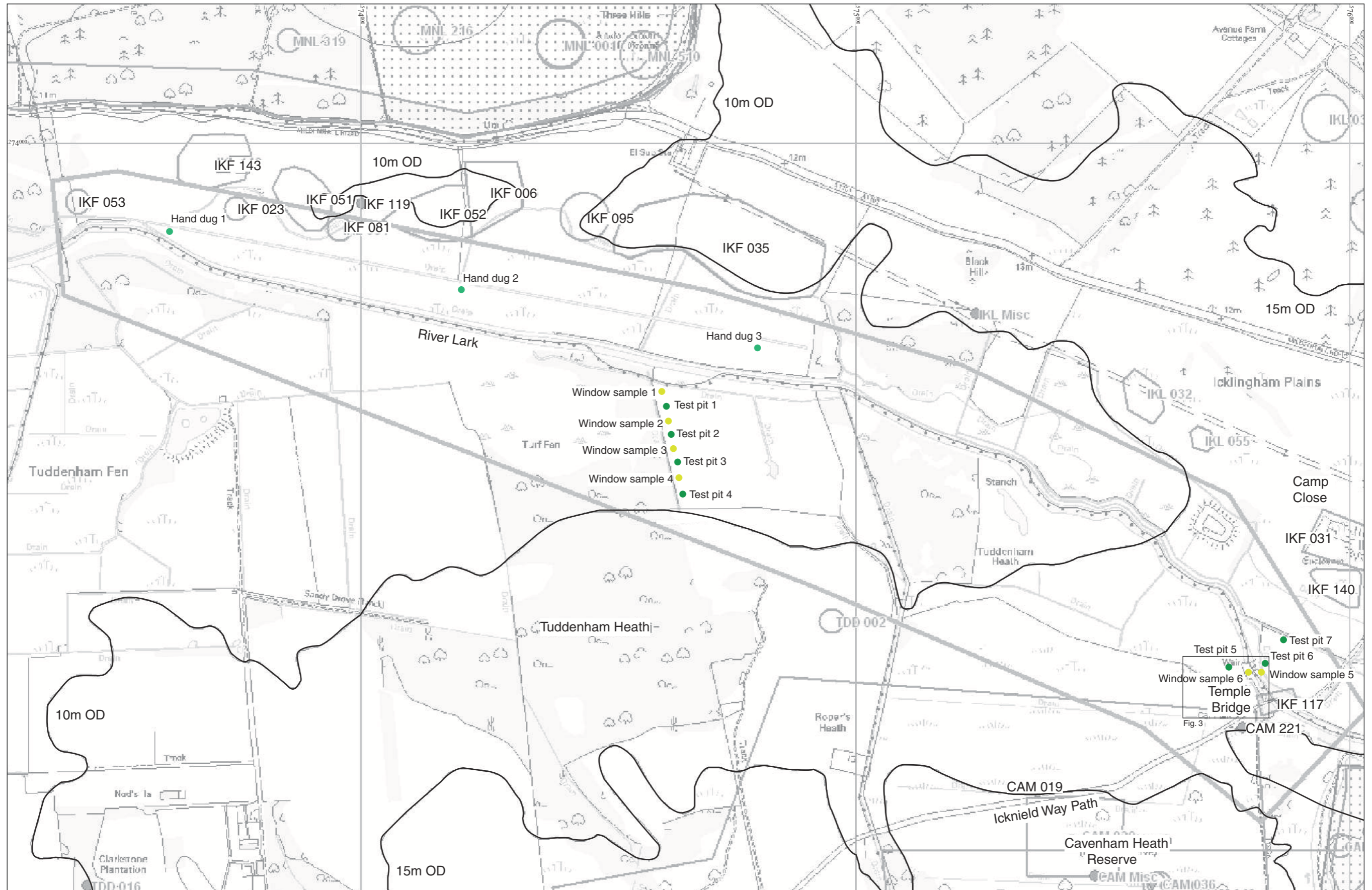


Figure 2: Location of geotechnical pits and adjacent HER sites with 10m OD and 15m OD contours labelled

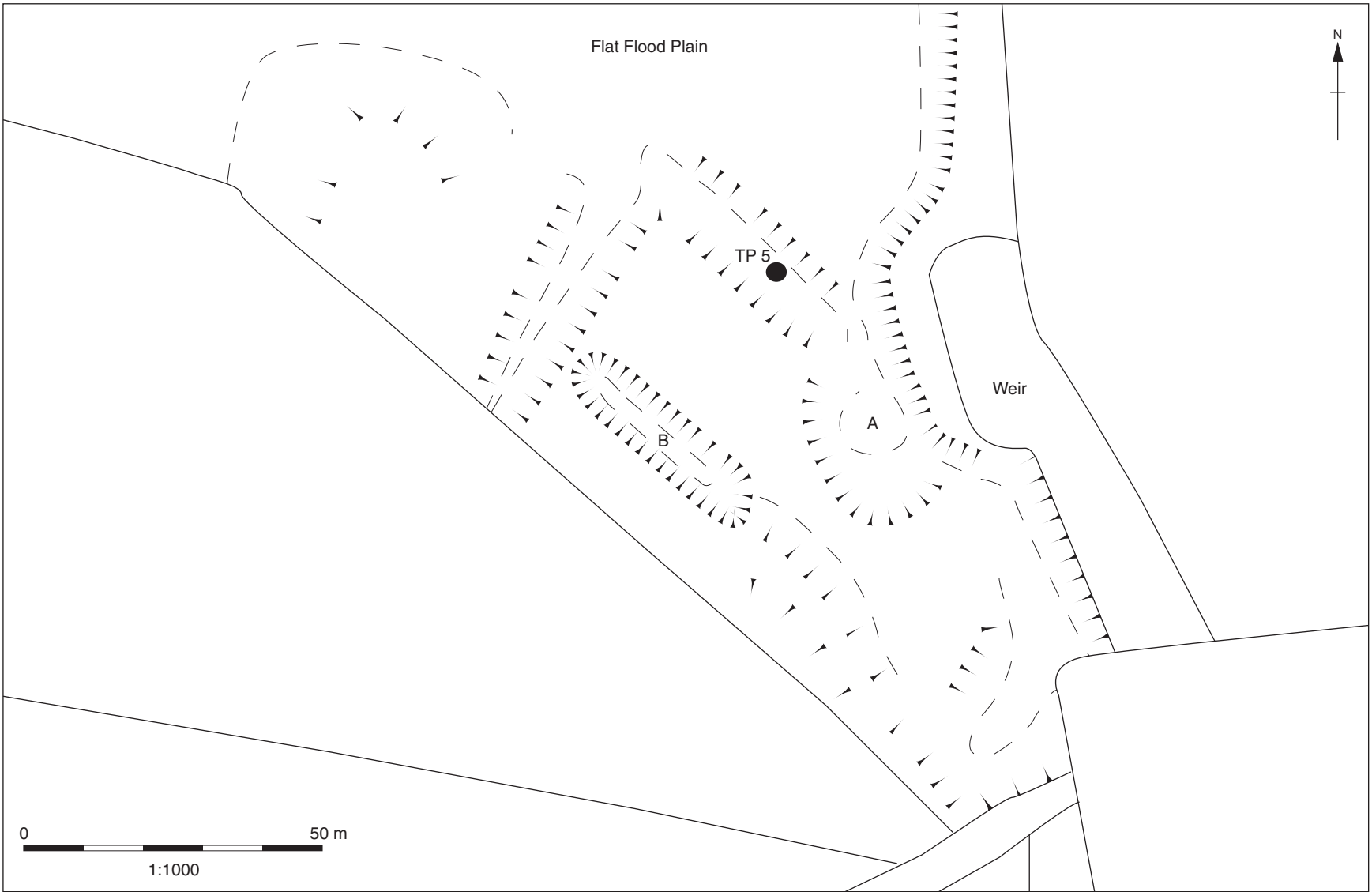


Figure 3: Earthwork survey of southern part of field containing TP 5



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