

Godmanchester Flood Alleviation Scheme



Archaeological Evaluation Report



July 2008

Client:

Atkins

OA East Report No:

1049

OASIS No:

oxfordar3-48623

NGR:

TL 524 270

Godmanchester Flood Alleviation Scheme

Watching Brief

Site Code: GODSIN08

CHER No. ECB3005

Date of Works: 17th - 25th July 2008

Report No: 1049

Excavator: Dan Hounsell

Client: Atkins

Report Date: July 2008

DRAFT

Report Number: 1049

Site Name: Godmanchester Flood Alleviation Scheme

HER Event No: ECB 3005

Date of Works: August 2008

Client Name: Atkins

Client Ref: none

Planning Ref: -

Grid Ref: TL 524220 / 271223 – TL524235 / 269786

Site Code: GODSIN08

Finance Code: GODSIN08

Receiving Body: -

Accession No:

Prepared by: Dan Hounsell
Position: Project Officer
Date: 18 / 9 / 08

Checked by: James Dummond-Murray
Position: Project Manager
Date: 18 / 9 / 08
Signed:

Disclaimer

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

Oxford Archaeology East,
15 Trafalgar Way,
Bar Hill,
Cambridge,
CB23 8SQ
t: 01223 850500
f: 01223 850599
e: oaeast@thehumanjourney.net
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net/oaeast>

© Oxford Archaeology East 2008

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

Table of Contents

Summary.....	5
1 Geology and Topography.....	6
2 Archaeological Background	6
3 Methodology.....	7
4 Results.....	7
4.1 Bore Hole 1 (BH01).....	7
4.2 Bore Hole 2 (BH02).....	8
4.3 Bore Hole 3 (BH03).....	8
4.4 Bore Hole 4 (BH04).....	9
4.5 Bore Hole 5 (BH05).....	9
4.6 Bore Hole 6 (BH06).....	9
4.7 Bore Hole 7 (BH07).....	10
4.8 Bore Hole 8 (BH08).....	10
4.9 Window Sample 1 (WS01).....	10
4.10 Window Sample 2 (WS02).....	11
4.11 Window Sample 3 (WS03).....	11
4.12 Window Sample 4 (WS04).....	11
4.13 Test Pit 1 (TP01).....	12
4.14 Test Pit 2 (TP02).....	12
4.15 Sediment Sample 1 (SS01).....	12
4.16 Sediment Sample 2 (SS02).....	12
5 Discussion and Conclusion.....	13
Acknowledgements.....	13
Bibliography.....	14
Appendix A. OASIS Report Form	15

List of Figures

- Fig. 1 Site location map
Fig. 2 Location of ground works

Summary

On the 17th - 25th July 2008 2006, OA East carried out an archaeological watching brief in Godmanchester (TL 524 270). This monitoring observed the excavation of a number of probing ground works, including bore holes, window samples, trial pits and sediment samples pits. These ground works were undertaken In advance of a proposed flood alleviation scheme

The archaeological monitoring was unable to identify any archaeological features, artefacts or definitive archaeological layers. However, the work was successful in gaining an accurate deposit model in regards to the geology of western Godmanchester. Such a model may prove to be invaluable should any further archaeological works (evaluation or excavation) be undertaken in the area.

1 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 1.1.1 The areas examined lie on Oxford Clay beds, overlain by 1st and 2nd Terrace and gravel deposits of the Great Ouse system. (British Geological Survey 1975).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 Godmanchester is an area of known archaeological importance not only from the Roman period but from the earliest habitation in Cambridgeshire. Archaeological investigations have identified remains from the Neolithic, Bronze Age as well as Roman, Saxon and medieval periods.
- 2.1.2 The areas investigated were situated close to the core area of the Roman town of *Durovigutum*, with many of the groundworks lying close to and running parallel with the line of Roman road Ermine Street.
- 2.1.3 The importance of Godmanchester during the Roman period was primarily geographical as it controlled the crossing of the river Great Ouse. Roman forces moving north along the line of Ermine Street had established a legionary fort at Godmanchester within a year of the invasion of AD 43. The fort was abandoned within a few years as the frontier moved north, but an associated civilian settlement or *vicus* survived. During the Flavian period (AD 69-96) the *vicus* expanded and flourished with occupation concentrated along Ermine Street and the cross roads in the town centre, immediately to the east of the development area. Godmanchester was also a key ceramic production centre during the early Roman period in Cambridgeshire.
- 2.1.4 By the Hadrianic period (AD 117-38) a *mansio* and baths were designed and built in the centre of the town, to the north of the cross-roads, on the western side of Ermine Street. These were very large and elaborate buildings reflecting, in both their design and furnishings, the progressive Romanisation of the inhabitants. *Mansiones* were originally connected to the imperial postal service, providing overnight accommodation and fresh horses. This role later expanded to include facilities for other imperial travellers and later served as both a police post and a tax collection centre. The Godmanchester *mansio* as eventually built was one of the largest in Britain, at over 100 metres long, including stabling. Both *mansio* and baths were substantially built with masonry walls and were half-timbered above the ground floor. Floors were tessellated and walls were of painted plaster (Green 1977).
- 2.1.5 Recent work by CAM ARC in the area has uncovered more evidence for the Iron Age and Romano – British use of the area via field system ditches and settlement remains (Phillips 2007, Wright 2007) as well as quarrying and rubbish pits and several pottery kilns (MCB 12007-9 MCB 14699).

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1.1 The objective of this watching brief was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.
- 3.1.2 The specification (Drummond-Murray, 2008) required that all ground penetrating works undertaken by the client will be observed by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist.
- 3.1.3 The area of investigation took in much of the main centres and western side of Godmanchester, with the various probing works being scattered along the line of The Avenue, Post Street, Causeway and West Street. Following the line of the river Great Ouse which runs through the centre of, and then out toward the west of Godmanchester. The location of these works is illustrated in figure 2.
- 3.1.4 Site conditions were variable due to the scattered nature of the works, but no conditions were such that the identification of archaeological features, artefacts or deposits would have been hampered.
- 3.1.5 The probing ground works consisted of the excavation of bore holes, window samples, test pits and sediment sample slots. The bore hole work consisted of the initial hand excavation of a small rectangular pits, typically 0.45m x 0.45m x 1.10m. Following this a hollow, circular, steel boring jacket was hammered into place by the boring machine and the (0.20m in diameter) boring core inserted. A depth of, typically 15m, was achieved by progressively adding to the length of the jacket and driving the core deeper. The window samples followed a similar process, but went to a depth of typically 5m and inserted a narrow plastic tube (0.10m in diameter) which extracted a core of material. Both the test pits and the sediment samples pits were hand dug pits 0.45 x 0.45 x 1.20m deep in size.
- 3.1.6 All of the deposits observed during these works were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. The location of the groundworks were recorded on a plan of the area and digital photographs were taken of all of the works and deposits, where possible.

4 RESULTS

The monitoring did not reveal any archaeological feature, artefacts or deposits. What it did serve to do was to allow the identification of the geological make up of much of Godmanchester. The deposit models observed for the various borehole, trial pits and window samples are presented below (note that window samples 5 and 6 were never excavated).

4.1 Bore Hole 1 (BH01)

Located in a grazed meadow, within 5m of the river.

0.00m – 0.12m. **100.** Topsoil. A dark brown, compact, clayey silt with frequent inclusions of small stones.

0.12m – 0.43m. **101.** Subsoil. A mid orange brown gravelly, clayey, silt. Fairly loosely compacted with frequent small to moderately sized

stones.

0.43m – 6.65m. **102.** River terrace gravels. A mid orangey yellow, moderately compact, initially slightly silty gravel which becomes cleaner (less silty) with depth. Stones vary from small to moderate in size.

6.65m – 15.00m. **103.** Natural drift geology. A mid grey blue, heavy and plastic clay containing a occasional small gravel and chalk inclusions. Becoming cleaner and less included at depth.

Ground water began to penetrate the bore hole at around 1.20m depth

4.2 Bore Hole 2 (BH02)

Located in an overgrown and unkempt meadow, within 10m of the river

0.00m – 0.12m. **100.** Topsoil.

0.12m – 0.60m. **104.** Subsoil. A dark yellow brown, heavy and moderately compact clayey silt with occasional small stone inclusions.

0.60m – 1.10m. **105.** Subsoil. A mid Yellow brown heavy and plastic silty clay with occasional small stone inclusions.

1.10m – 1.80m. **106.** Subsoil – Alluvial. A mid blue grey heavy and moderately compact silty clay with pronounced areas of brown and orange banding (silts) and moderately frequent inclusions of small stones.

1.80m – 2.50m. **102.** River terrace gravels.

2.50m – 20.00m. **103.** Natural drift geology.

Ground water began to penetrate the bore hole at around 1.20m depth.

4.3 Bore Hole 3 (BH03)

Located in a car park off Post Street, within 8m of a mill pool in the river.

0.00m – 0.07m. **107.** Concrete Surface of car park.

0.07m – 2.00m. **108.** Made ground. A material that consisted of 50% mid yellowish brown, loosely compacted, clayey silt and 50% modern rubble, including broken bricks, tarmac, crushed stone, ash and other construction / demolition debris. As a whole the material was moderately compact.

2.00m – 3.00m. **109.** Subsoil – Alluvial. A mid grey brown, heavy and slightly plastic, slightly silty, clay. With occasional small inclusions of chalk and occasional inclusions of modern building rubble. This latter material was more common in the upper layers of the clay, petering out with depth.

3.00m – 8.00m. **102.** River terrace type gravels

8.00m – 15.00m. **103.** Natural drift geology.

Ground water began to penetrate at around 3m.

4.4 Bore Hole 4 (BH04)

Located in a cobbled and paved pedestrian area just in front of the town hall, off Causeway, and within 5m of the river.

0.00m – 0.08m. **110.** Modern paving slabs

0.08m – 0.15m. **111.** Levelling material. Clean, friable, yellow sand.

0.15m – 0.40m **108.** Made ground.

0.40m – 1.10m **105.** Subsoil

1.10m – 1.50m **112.** Alluvial / river edge subsoil. A dark, sticky, blue grey clay. Moderately compact and containing frequent small stone inclusions (approximately 30% of the matrix of this clay material was gravel). The dark and sticky nature of the clay was probably due to a high degree of decayed organic material within the clay, suggesting a river edge origin.

1.50m – 4.30m **113.** Alluvial / river edge subsoil. As **112**, but with a much higher sand and gravel content, this material now consisting of c.60% of the matrix of the material, this makes the material more loose and friable in nature. Dark colour is retained.

4.30m – 6.50m. **102.** River terrace type gravels

6.50m – 15.00m. **103.** Natural drift geology.

Ground water began to penetrate at around 2m.

4.5 Bore Hole 5 (BH05)

Located on a grassed road verge on the edge of Causeway and within 3m of the river.

0.00m – 0.18m. **100.** Topsoil.

0.18m – 0.56m. **104.** Subsoil

0.56m – 1.30m **102.** River terrace type gravels

1.30m – 15.00m. **103.** Natural drift geology

Ground water began to penetrate at around 1.50m

4.6 Bore Hole 6 (BH06)

Located on grazed meadow around 50m from the river

0.00m – 0.15m **100**. Topsoil.
0.15m – 0.34m **104**. Subsoil
0.34m – 0.80m **105**. Subsoil
0.80m – 15.00m **103**. Natural drift geology

Ground water began to penetrate at around 1.70m

4.7 Bore Hole 7 (BH07)

Located on a grass verge just up from the river bank, c. 8m from river itself.

0.00m – 1.80m. **114**. Turfed made ground. A dark blackish brown slightly clayey silt. Loose to lightly compacted with frequent inclusions of brick, modern pottery, crushed stone and ash.
1.80m – 2.20m. **106**. Alluvial subsoil
2.20m – 3.00m **115**. Alluvial subsoil. A very dark greyish black, with a heavy, plastic, sticky nature and occasional small stone inclusions. The dark and sticky nature of this material would seem to be the result of the decay of organic material and may be indicative of a river edge origin.
3.00m – 6.70m **102**. River terrace type gravels.
6.70m – 15.00m **103**. Natural Drift geology. Very similar to usual clay but a little darker and browner. Possibly due to presence of an organic content.

Ground water began to penetrate at around 2m

4.8 Bore Hole 8 (BH08)

Located in a wheat field. More than 100m from the river.

0.00m – 0.20m **100**. Topsoil
0.20m – 1.00m **105**. Subsoil
1.00m – 2.80m **102**. River terrace type gravel
2.80m – 15.00m **103**. Natural drift geology

Ground water began to penetrate around around 2.30m

4.9 Window Sample 1 (WS01)

Located in a large well kept garden, c. 30m from the river.

0.00m – 1.50m **116**. Garden soil. A mid brownish brown, loose and soft, slightly clayey silt with a moderate level of small stone inclusions.

1.50m – 2.20m **106**. Subsoil – Alluvial.

2.20m – 4.00m **117**. Subsoil – Alluvial. A dirty, mid grey blue clay, heavy and plastic with frequent small stone and occasional silt inclusions.

4.00m – 6.00m **102**. River terrace gravels.

Ground water penetrated at around 2.30m

4.10 Window Sample 2 (WS02)

Located in the river Great Ouse itself, toward the western bank.

0.00m – 3.50m **115** Alluvial material.

3.50m+ **118**. River gravel. A Hard, moderately sized, well rounded gravel, dark blackish yellow in colour.

4.11 Window Sample 3 (WS03)

Located in the river Great Ouse itself, toward the western bank.

0.00m – 2.50m **115** Alluvial material.

2.50m+ **118**. River gravel.

4.12 Window Sample 4 (WS04)

Located in an area of well kept grassland to the rear of some offices, 20m from the river.

0.00m – 1.10m **116**. Garden soil.

1.10m – 1.60m **105**. Subsoil

1.60m – 2.00m **102**. River terrace

2.00m – 6.00m **103** Natural drift geology. Similar in nature to the clay seen in **BH07**

Ground water began to penetrate at around 1.80m.

4.13 Test Pit 1 (TP01)

Located in a grazed meadow on the river bank (around 2m from the river)

0.00m – 0.10m **100**. Topsoil
0.10m – 0.65m **104**. Subsoil
0.65m – 0.95m **117**. Subsoil – Alluvial
0.95m – 1.20m **102**. River terrace gravel.

Ground water began to penetrate at around 1m.

4.14 Test Pit 2 (TP02)

Located in an unkempt meadow on the river bank (less than 1m from the river)

0.00m – 0.10m **100**. Topsoil
0.10m – 1.20m **105**. Subsoil

Ground water began to penetrate at around 1m.

4.15 Sediment Sample 1 (SS01)

Located in a grazed meadow on the very edge of the river (less than 1m from the river) in a water logged area dominated by tall reeds and rushes.

0.00m – 0.50m **105**. Subsoil.
0.50m – 1.50m **115**. Subsoil – Alluvial

Ground water began to penetrate at around 0.80m

4.16 Sediment Sample 2 (SS02)

Located in an overgrown and unkempt meadow dominated by tall reeds, rushes, nettles and thistles at a point near to the road bridge over the river and c. 7m from the river itself

0.00m – 0.40m **105**. Subsoil.
0.40m – 1.30m **115**. Subsoil – Alluvial
1.30m+ **102**. River terrace gravels.

Ground water began to penetrate at around 1m.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- 5.1.1 The watching brief did not identify any archaeological features or artefacts. Nor was it able to definitively identify the level / deposit within which any surviving archaeological deposits may reside. However, the deposit model that this work has allowed us to build up for this area of Godmanchester should prove to be invaluable if any further archaeological works (evaluation or excavation) need to be undertaken in this area at a future date.
- 5.1.2 The bore holes, window samples etc. have demonstrated that, at a depth of typically 2m – 5m, the area of Godmanchester examined was underlain by oxford clays. This clay was typically overlain by river terrace type gravels which were between 0.50m – 3m thick. This would appear to indicate that the water course which currently runs through Godmanchester may, at one time, have been more braided and / or have followed a number of different courses. Resulting in the widespread deposition of gravels seen. Above these gravels sat a number of more recently deposited alluvial type clayey subsoils (usually around 1m thick). In places, typically close to the river, these contained a considerable amount of decayed organic material giving them a very dark and sticky nature. On top of these subsoils lay modern topsoils, garden soils and areas of made up ground as well as modern hard standing surfaces.

Acknowledgements

- 5.1.3 The author would like to thank Atkins who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by James Drummond – Murray and run in the field by Dan Hounsell.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Green, H.J.M. 1977. Godmanchester.

Drummond Murray, J. 2008. Specification for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording: Godmanchester Flood Alleviation Scheme.

Phillips, T. 2007. Roman Remains At 8 New Street, Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation. CAM ARC report 935.

Wright, N. 2007. Godmanchester to Hemingford Abbots Water Main Renewal, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation. CAM ARC report 940.

APPENDIX A. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-48623		
Project Name	Godmanchester Flood Alleviation Scheme: Archaeological monitoring and recording		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	15-07-2008	Finish	25-07-2008
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	GODSIN08	Planning App. No.	N/A
HER No.	ECB 3005	Related HER/OASIS No.	N/A

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
--------	---

Please select all techniques used:

☒ Field Observation (periodic visits)	☐ Part Excavation	☐ Salvage Record
☐ Full Excavation (100%)	☐ Part Survey	☐ Systematic Field Walking
☐ Full Survey	☒ Recorded Observation	☐ Systematic Metal Detector Survey
☐ Geophysical Survey	☐ Remote Operated Vehicle Survey	☒ Test Pit Survey
☐ Open-Area Excavation	☐ Salvage Excavation	☒ 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
N/A	Select period...	N/A	Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)	
District	Huntingdonshire	No actual address as work undertaken all over Godmanchester not in on location.	
Parish	Godmanchester		
HER	Cambridgeshire HER		
Study Area	All across Godmanchester	National Grid Reference	TL 524 270

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Andy Thomas
Project Design Originator	James Drummond - Murray
Project Manager	James Drummond - Murray
Supervisor	Daniel Hounsell

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
None	OA East	Cambs County Store
Accession ID ...	GODSIN08	GODSIN08

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	☐	☐	☐
Ceramics	☐	☐	☐
Environmental	☐	☐	☐
Glass	☐	☐	☐
Human Bones	☐	☐	☐
Industrial	☐	☐	☐
Leather	☐	☐	☐
Metal	☐	☐	☐
Stratigraphic		☐	☐
Survey		☐	☐
Textiles	☐	☐	☐
Wood	☐	☐	☐
Worked Bone	☐	☐	☐
Worked Stone/Lithic	☐	☐	☐
None	☒	☒	☒
Other	☐	☐	☐

Digital Media	Paper Media
☒ Database	☐ Aerial Photos
☐ GIS	☒ Context Sheet
☐ Geophysics	☐ Correspondence
☒ Images	☐ Diary
☒ Illustrations	☐ Drawing
☐ Moving Image	☐ Manuscript
☐ Spreadsheets	☒ Map
☐ Survey	☐ Matrices
☒ Text	☐ Microfilm
☐ Virtual Reality	☐ Misc.
	☐ Research/Notes
	☐ Photos
	☐ Plans
	☒ Report
	☐ Sections
	☐ Survey

Notes:

Observation of probing groundworks (boreholes, test pits, window samples and sediment sample test pits) undertaken along the centre and western edge of Godmanchester.



Figure 1: Location of Boreholes in red with focus area highlighted.



Head Office/Registered Office

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496
e: info@thehumanjourney.net
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1GF

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606
e: [oanorth@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oanorth@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA East

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridgeshire
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850 500
f: +44 (0) 1223 850 599
e: [oaeast@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oaeast@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net/oaeast>

OA Méditerranée

115 Rue Merlot
ZAC La Louvade
34 130 Manguio
France

t: +33 (0) 4.67.57.86.92
f: +33 (0) 4.67.42.65.93
e: [oamed@oamed.fr](mailto: oamed@oamed.fr)
w: <http://oamed.fr/>



Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

*Oxford Archaeological Unit is a
Private Limited Company, N^o: 1618597
and a Registered Charity, N^o: 285627*