

Archaeological
Monitoring at Marham
Multi Use Games Area



**Archaeological
Watching Brief Report**



February 2012

Client: Marham Parish Council

OA East Report No: 1345
OASIS No: oxfordar3-120246
NGR: TF 70721 09904

Archaeological Monitoring at Marham Multi Use Games Area

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

By James Fairbairn

Editor: Aileen Connor BA AIFA

Illustrator: Stuart Ladd MA

Report Date: March 2012

Report Number: 1345
Site Name: Marham Multi use games area (MUGA)
HER Event No: ENF 128441
Date of Works: February 2012
Client Name: Marham Parish Council
Client Ref:
Planning Ref: 07/02196/NMA_1
Grid Ref: TF 70721 09904
Site Code: XNFMAR12
Finance Code: XNFMAR12
Receiving Body: Norfolk County Council

Accession No:

Prepared by: James Fairbairn
Position: Supervisor
Date: February 2012

Checked by: Aileen Connor
Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: March 2012

Signed:

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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>

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Summary

On the 14th of February 2012 Oxford Archaeology East monitored the removal of top soil and subsoil from an area measuring 285sqm adjacent to the bowling green at Coronation playing fields Marham in advance of the construction of a multi use games area (MUGA). Although the area is close to the scheduled monument of Marham Abbey. No archaeological features were observed, possibly because the ground disturbance was not deep enough to expose archaeological deposits. However a small number of archaeological finds were recovered during the monitoring, a whetstone and a few sherds of medieval and post medieval pottery.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 Archaeological monitoring was conducted at Coronation playing fields, The Street, Marham, Norfolk, NGR 70652 09833
- 1.1.2 This archaeological monitoring was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Ken Hamilton of Norfolk County Council (Planning Application 07/02196/NMA_1).
- 1.1.3 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed development area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010). The results will enable decisions to be made by CCC, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The county of Marham lies on the border between The Lower Cretaceous Lower and Middle Chalk solid Geologies. The soil landscapes of Marham are also divided between those of the West Norfolk Lowland to the North and West of the county and those of the Breckland series.
- 1.2.2 The West Norfolk Lowland soils are mostly sands and very mixed from brown sands and podzols to orange and brown sands (Corbett and Dent 1994). Breckland is typified by soils developed in coversand over a chalk-sand drift (*ibid.*) The site itself lies on the Lower Cretaceous solid geology with overlying West Norfolk Lowland soils.
- 1.2.3 The area of the archaeological monitoring was located to the rear of the bowling green and on the Coronation playing field which is located adjacent to the the scheduled monument of Marham Abbey (List Ref: 1016482), one of only two cistercian nunneries in England.
- 1.2.4 The area was generally flat at a height of at c.9.80m AOD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 Marham is a village and a parish in Downham district, Norfolk. The village stands one and a half miles south of the river Nar and three and a quarter miles south west of Narborough railway station and seven miles north of Swaffham.
- 1.3.2 The parish name derives from old English and means “homestead by or with a pond or mere” The land here was recorded in the Domesday Book as being owned by St Etheldreda before 1066. In 1087 a mill is recorded.
- 1.3.3 The Fenland Project survey fieldwalked in the north west of the parish and has recorded finds dating from the mesolithic period (NHER 24377), and a possible early to middle neolithic settlement (NHER 3926,4478 and 4479). Two mounds were recorded in the 19th Century but have since been destroyed (NHER 4482 and 4497), these may have been Bronze Age Round Barrows. A dyke within the parish known as Bitchamditch

or Devils Dyke (NHER 3973) is traditionally dated to the Saxon period but may be Iron Age.

- 1.3.4 The Fen Causeway (NHER2796) runs through the parish. This Roman Road runs from a junction with Ermine Street and King Street near Peterborough across the Cambridgeshire and Norfolk fens. Fieldwalking and metal detecting in and around Marham have located a possible Roman settlement. Finds from the settlement include coins, pieces of pot, a ring, a weight and a bracelet.
- 1.3.5 An archaeological evaluation on the site of The Old Bell by Archaeological Solutions revealed Saxo/Norman activity in the form of pits and ditches (Hogan and Pole 2008; (NHER 49785). This area is situated c.160m to the south east of the subject site.
- 1.3.6 Marham Abbey (NHER 4483) was a Cistercian nunnery dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and Saints Babara and Edmund. It was founded in 1249 by Isabel, widow of Hugh D' Albini. In 1252 it was incorporated into Waverly Abbey, the mother house of the Cistercian order in England. This was a small abbey and housed only 10 to 15 nuns and was only one of two Cistercian abbeys founded for nuns. To the south of the Abbey is an unusual square earthwork (NHER 13644 amnd 11462). This has been identified as a castle. This may be the castle recorded as being illegally constructed by William Belet. If this is the case it was more likely to be a defended manor. The site of another moated medieval manor, Shouldham Hall (NHER 44631), is now in the grounds of Marham Hall.
- 1.3.7 A spread of medieval pottery, shell and bone was located nearby (NHER 24378) this suggests another centre of medieval activity on the road to Narborough and Swaffham other finds include a pilgrims ampula (NHER 7243). Elsewhere in the vicinity finds of a medieval date include a papal bull (NHER 23357) and two seal matrices (NHER 24949 and 24545) indicative of medieval religious settlement.
- 1.3.8 Post medieval buildings of note close to the development area include Marham House (NHER 4502) which stands on the site of an earlier 19th century house. Marham Hall (NHER 4503) is an 18th century building that was extensively altered during the 19th century.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank Marham Parish Council, for commissioning and funding the work, and particularly to Tina Hawkins who organised the work and ensured facilities were available, also for her keen interest. Ken Hamilton (Norfolk County Council) provided the planning advice and Brief for Archaeological work. Aileen Connor managed and monitored the project.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The objective of this archaeological monitoring was to investigate and record any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area in accordance with a Brief issued by Norfolk County Council (Ken Hamilton).

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The Brief required that the area of the MUGA (approximately 285sqm) should be stripped under archaeological supervision, and any archaeological features uncovered should be investigated and recorded by the monitoring archaeologist.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision using a wheeled JCB-type excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.
- 2.2.4 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 2.2.5 Conditions on site were cold and dry.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The development area was stripped by machine to an average depth of 0.40m and was checked by an experienced archaeologist for archaeological features and artefacts. The results are discussed below.

3.2 Description

The area was stripped of all topsoil (101) and partly stripped of subsoil (102) to a depth of 0.40m (plates 1 and 2). The topsoil consisted of a dark grey brown sandy silt with a maximum depth of 0.20m. Pottery and worked stone were recovered from the base of the topsoil. The reddish brown sandy silt subsoil was removed by machine to a depth of 0.20m and contained only a few small pieces of animal bone. Underlying geology was not exposed by this operation. No archaeological features or deposits were uncovered.

3.3 Finds Summary

3.4 Pottery

3.4.1 Finds were sparse and were confined to the base of the topsoil (101). Three small sherds of medieval pottery, one piece identified as Thetford ware (10th -11th century) were recovered (plate 3).

3.4.2 Two small sherds of post medieval pottery were also recovered from the topsoil. These were blue and white decorated stone ware dating to the 19th century.

3.5 Worked stone

3.5.1 A sharpening stone or whetstone made of granite and of an indeterminate date was also recovered from the topsoil layer (101). It is incomplete and is broken into two parts. It finishes in a blunt point. The whetstone seems to be well used and was probably discarded after it was broken (plate3).

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Discussion

4.1.1 Although no archaeological features were revealed a small number of finds were recovered. These consisted of a small amount of post medieval pottery, a sharpening stone of indeterminate date and three sherds of medieval pottery all found within the topsoil layer (101). The pottery sherds were abraded suggesting that these sherds could have come from some other part of the field, Coronation playing field would have undergone episodes of landscaping or levelling in this vicinity and the pottery could have been imported from outside the monitored area during this process.

4.2 Significance

4.2.1 The development works did not penetrate deeply enough to expose archaeological features and so it is not possible to comment on their presence or absence here. The presence of a small quantity of medieval pottery from the topsoil is further confirmation of medieval activity in Marham, although it may not be specifically associated with this location.

4.3 Recommendations

- 4.3.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

| Area 1 | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-----------|-----------|----------------|-----------------------|-------|
| General description | | | | Orientation | | E-W |
| Area one was devoid of archaeology. A dark silty topsoil overlay a reddish brown sandy silt subsoil | | | | Avg. depth (m) | | 0.44 |
| | | | | Width (m) | | 21 |
| | | | | Length (m) | | 37.70 |
| Contexts | | | | | | |
| context no | type | Width (m) | Depth (m) | comment | finds | date |
| 100 | Layer | - | 0.2 | Topsoil | Pottery, worked stone | - |
| 101 | Layer | - | 0.2 | Subsoil | - | - |

APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Knowles, D. and Hadcock, R.N. 1971 *Medieval Religious Houses*. Pp 272, 275.

Hogan, S and Pole, C *Archaeological Solutions*. Report 2171. 2008

Funnel, B 1994 *Solid Geology and The Soil Landscapes in An Historical Atlas of Norfolk*, Wade-Martins, P. (ed.)

APPENDIX C. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|-------------|------------|
| OASIS Number | 120246 | | |
| Project Name | Archaeological monitoring at Coronation Playing Field Marham, Norfolk. | | |
| Project Dates (fieldwork) Start | 14-02-2012 | Finish | 14-02-2012 |
| Previous Work (by OA East) | No | Future Work | No |

Project Reference Codes

| | | | |
|-----------|------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Site Code | XNFMAR12 | Planning App. No. | 07/02196/NMA_1 |
| HER No. | ENF 128441 | Related HER/OASIS No. | n/a |

Type of Project/Techniques Used

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Prompt | Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16 |
| Development Type | Amenity Area (e.g. public open space) |

Please select all techniques used:

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - interpretation | <input type="checkbox"/> Grab-Sampling | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new | <input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-Core | <input type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch | <input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning | <input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Augering | <input type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors | <input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search | <input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling | <input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography | |

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 |
|----------|--------|---------|----------------------------|
| None | None | Pottery | Medieval 1066 to 1540 |
| | None | Pottery | Post Medieval 1540 to 1901 |
| | None | | None |

Project Location

| | | | |
|------------|---------|--|----------------|
| County | Norfolk | Site Address (including postcode if possible) | |
| District | Downham | Coronation Playing Fields, The Street. Marham. Norfolk. PE33 9HR | |
| Parish | Marham | | |
| HER | Norfolk | | |
| Study Area | 285sqm | National Grid Reference | TF 70721 09904 |

Project Originators

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Organisation | OA EAST |
| Project Brief Originator | Ken Hamilton (Norfolk County Council) |
| Project Design Originator | Aileen Connor |
| Project Manager | Aileen Connor |
| Supervisor | James Fairbairn |

Project Archives

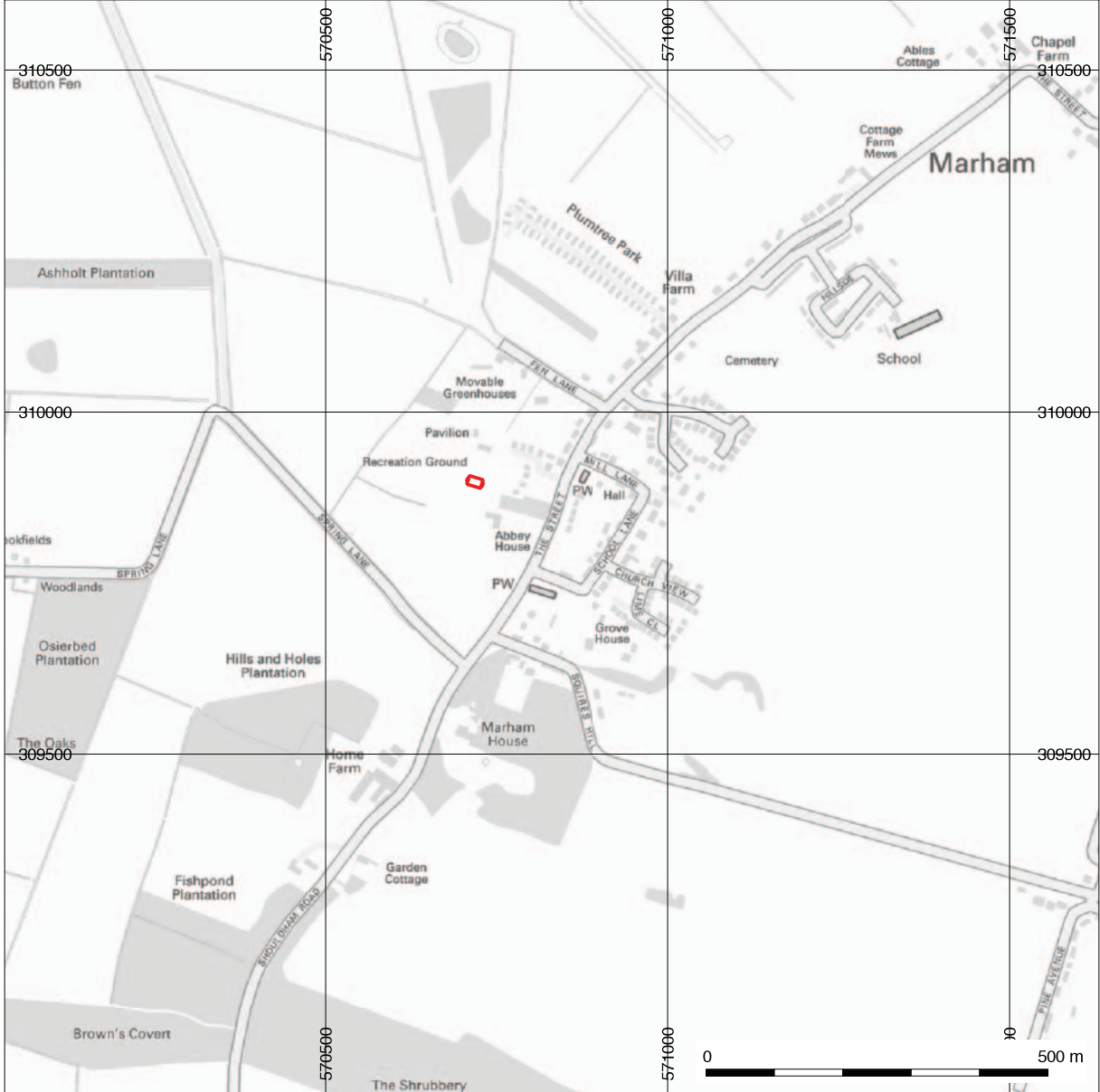
| Physical Archive | Digital Archive | Paper Archive |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| OA East | OA East | OA East |
| XNFMAR12 | XNFMAR12 | XNFMAR12 |

Archive Contents/Media

| | Physical Contents | Digital Contents | Paper Contents |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Animal Bones | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ceramics | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input 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 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Survey |

Notes:



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Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Trench plan



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking north-west



Plate 2: Removal of topsoil



Plate 3: Pottery and whetstone



**Head Office/Registered Office/
OA South**

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
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 850500
f: +44 (0) 1223 850599
e: [oaeast@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oaeast@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>



Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

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