

Furrowfields Chatteris Cambridgeshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



July 2010

Client: Chatteris Town Council

OA East Report No: 1195

OASIS No: oxfordar3-79531

NGR: TL 3947 8657

Evaluation at Furrowfields, Chatteris, Cambridgeshire

Community Test Pit Evaluation

Site Code: CHAFFS10
CHER No. ECB3415
Date of Works: 29th June 2010
Report No: 1195
Excavator: Taleyna Fletcher
Client: Chatteris Town Council
Report Date: 6th July 2010

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Summary

On the 29th June 2010, Oxford Archaeology East carried out a test pit evaluation at Furrowfields, Chatteris (TL 3947 8657). The work was a community project involving local people and schools and was carried out within an area identified for the construction of a new play equipment.

The site was located within the Furrowfields playing ground which is a site of significant surviving visible ridge and furrow (CHER 08670).

This evaluation was carried out with pupils from Cromwell Community College who assisted in the excavation of the test pits. Children from nearby Kingsfield Primary School were also involved in the project as classes visited the excavations and were involved in activities throughout the day. An archaeologist also spent the day in the classrooms providing lessons about archaeology as well as opportunities to handle artefacts.

1 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 1.1.1 The site lies on West Walton and Ampthill Clay overlain by sands and gravels on the northeastern edge of the island of Chatteris at around 6m OD.
- 1.1.2 Furrowfields is a public open space and lies on the northern side of the historic town of Chatteris. The land drops away towards the fens immediately to the north of the site.
- 1.1.3 To the north running east to west is the A142, which joins the A141 that runs north south into the High St, to the west of the site. The town centre is about 0.5km to the south (Figure1).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric

- 2.1.1 During the Neolithic period a major river channel, with associated tributaries, ran close to the northern edge of the island. Tidal or intertidal marshes lay between the tributaries and, whilst much of the island was dry land, the soils were too heavy to attract settlement (Hall 1992). The majority of the settlement and finds evidence come from the southern and eastern part of the island although a flint scatter and Neolithic axe found to the west of the modern settlement and a polished axe from Delve Terrace suggest limited occupation elsewhere.
- 2.1.2 During the Bronze Age, peat fen encroached on the area covering the marine sediments. The relative dryness of much of the land during this time appears to have led to more extensive occupation of the island, as evidenced by the considerable amount of Bronze Age metalwork reported from Chatteris, possibly as a result of cemeteries being disturbed by agriculture. A dispersed barrow field occupying the eastern half of the island towards the fen edge was the chief monument from this period and comprised at least fifteen barrows (Hall 1992).
- 2.1.3 Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age pottery forms found in two areas suggest continued intensive occupation into the Iron Age period (Hall 1992). A number of pits and postholes datable to the Early Iron Age were also recorded during the CAM ARC excavation in 2001, and smaller settlement sites of later Iron Age date have also been identified.

Roman

- 2.1.4 Chatteris appears to have been an important area in the Roman period with evidence for settlement and a local economy based on stock rearing. A continuous sequence of occupation was identified in 2001 in the form of ditches (suggesting a field system), pits and postholes datable to the Late Iron Age/Early Roman period and enclosure systems, structures and industrial features datable to the 2nd to 4th century.

Saxon

- 2.1.5 No Saxon remains were identified by the Fenland Project survey around Chatteris Island, away from the town. It is possible that the present town is built over the Saxon settlement and a number of features recorded during the 2001 excavations to the south support this theory. These consisted of pits, postholes and ditches suggestive of

structural remains datable to the Anglo-Saxon period. The main island was subjected to Midland-type strip cultivation in the medieval period.

Medieval

- 2.1.6 Two manors are known for Chatteris from the medieval period. Athelstan Mannesson gave a part of Chatteris to Ramsey Abbey; Edgar confirmed the gift in 974. Eadnoth, Abbot of Ramsey founded a small nunnery at Chatteris between 1006 and 1008 (Hall 1992).
- 2.1.7 The church of SS Peter and Paul consists of a chancel, north and south chapels, a north vestry, clerestoried nave, aisles, two south porches and a west tower. It is built of rubble with stone dressings and the roof is part tiled and part leaded. The oldest remaining part of the structure dates from the mid-14th century and the porch is 15th century.

Post Medieval and Recent Investigations

- 2.1.8 The proposed development area is thought likely to contain evidence for the later Medieval and post-medieval development of Chatteris and has extensive ridge and furrow surviving across the whole area (CHER 08670). A survey of the earthworks was carried out which revealed that it was part of an “open field” agricultural system. The earthworks are known as Manor Park, although the nearest recorded manor was located more than 800m to the south on East Park Road.
- 2.1.9 Evaluations close to the site (Evaluation at 91 High St, Chatteris, 2008, Archaeological Solutions) and to the north at Bridge St and Black Horse Lane (Cooper 2005, CCCAFU Report 801 and Cooper 2002, CCCAFU Report B097) have revealed relatively limited archaeology, mostly post-medieval in date.
- 2.1.10 A recent evaluation was carried out on the land at Tern Gardens less than 250m to the northwest (House 2009). This investigation recorded remains of post-medieval backyard activity, associated with the property fronting onto the High Street at the southwestern end of the development area; features included relatively modern structural remains. The northeastern end of the site had seen much disturbance and soil displacement due to the construction and subsequent backfilling of a large pond in recent decades.

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1.1 The objective of this test pit evaluation 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 area of investigation was located within the middle of Furrowfields playing area, to the immediate northeast of an enclosed children's playground (Figure 1).
- 3.1.3 1m by 1m test pits were set out within the approximate area of the proposed all weather pitch (Figure 1). The turf was removed using a spade and the remaining contexts were excavated by hand using mattocks, shovels and trowels.
- 3.1.4 The test pits were surveyed using a Leica 1200 GPS which located their positions on the Ordnance Survey grid. This also provided height data.

- 3.1.5 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 3.1.6 Site conditions were good with constant warm sunshine.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Test Pits

- 4.1.1 Due to the nature of this community-involved evaluation, only one test pit was excavated to the depth of the natural geology. Test Pit 2 (Plate 1) was excavated to a depth of 0.40m where natural clay was encountered. There was a suggestion of the remnant of plough mark or furrow on the base of the trench, however this could not be investigated further.
- 4.1.2 All test pits contained the same sequence of soils, although the thicknesses varied slightly depending on its location on the ridge or furrow. Each test pit recorded a layer of turf, sealing a gravelly topsoil which was above a lighter, clayey subsoil.

Type	Layer	In Test Pit	Description
Turf	01	All	Dark brown, loose silty soil with grass on top
Topsoil	02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07	All	Very firm and compacted, mid grey brown, clayey silt with frequent stone inclusions. Finds included post-medieval pottery, glass, clay pipe, brick, tile and slate
Subsoil	10, 08, 12, 11	2, 3, 5	Firm and compact, light greenish brown silty clay with rare stone inclusions and occasional chalk flecks. Finds included post medieval clay pipe and pottery.

- 4.1.3 Appendix A provides a summary of the soil depths in each test pit.

4.2 Finds

- 4.2.1 A number of artefacts were recovered from the topsoil and subsoil layers. These included pottery, brick, tile, plastic, clay pipe, animal bone, glass and slate. All finds were considered post-medieval in date and notes, but not retained in the project archive.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 The investigations at Furrowfields sought evidence of activity on the site which may pre-date the visible ridge and furrow. No evidence of such activity or occupation on the site prior to the post medieval period was indicated through the finds recovered from the topsoil and subsoil layers.
- 5.1.2 There were a number of fragments of brick and tile, probably nineteenth century in date recovered from all the test pits. This may be an indication of a building located on or close to this site which has been demolished. Alternatively, it could be evidence of building rubble which has been ploughed into the soil to aerate the heavy clay.
- 5.1.3 This project also involved the local community and sought raise awareness of the local heritage. This was achieved through a project run with the Kingsfield Primary School, which included classroom sessions and a series of sitevisits (plate 2) and hands-on digging opportunities with Year 9 pupils from the nearby Cromwell Community College.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1.1 The author would like to thank Chatteris Town Council who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. Thanks are also expressed to the digging team which comprised Dave Brown, Jon House, Anne and John Jarzbek, Kasia Gdaniec and also to Gemma Tully who provided talks and activities at Kingsfield Primary School. The project was directed, recorded and surveyed by the author and managed by Stephen Macaulay.

APPENDIX A. TEST PIT SUMMARY

Test Pit 2						
General description				Orientation		
Consists of turf, topsoil and subsoil overlying a natural of clay. This test pit contained evidence of a possible plough mark or furrow on a NNE-SSW orientation.				Avg. depth (m)		0.40
				Width (m)		1.0
				Length (m)		1.0
				Height on top of test pit (mOD)		5.55
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
01	Layer	-	0.16	Turf	-	-
02	Layer	-	0.14	Topsoil	Clay pipe, pottery, glass, animal bone, brick and tile	Post-medieval
10	Layer	-	0.10	Subsoil	Clay pipe, pottery, brick and tile	Post-medieval

Test Pit 3						
General description				Orientation		
Consists of turf, topsoil and subsoil containing post-medieval finds				Avg. depth (m)		0.23
				Width (m)		1.0
				Length (m)		1.0
				Height on top of test pit (mOD)		5.41
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
01	Layer	-	0.10	Turf	-	-
03	Layer	-	0.10	Topsoil	Clay pipe, pottery, glass, plastic, brick, tile and slate	Post-medieval
08	Layer	-	0.03	Subsoil	Brick, tile, iron slag	Post-medieval

Test Pit 4						
General description				Orientation		
Consists of turf, topsoil and subsoil containing post-medieval finds				Avg. depth (m)		0.34
				Width (m)		1.0
				Length (m)		1.0
				Height on top of test pit (mOD)		5.25
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
01	Layer	-	0.10	Turf	-	-
04	Layer	-	0.20	Topsoil	Clay pipe, pottery, glass, plastic, brick, tile, glass and iron slag	Post-medieval
12	Layer	-	0.04	Subsoil	Pottery, brick, tile and animal bone	Post-medieval

Test Pit 5						
General description				Orientation		
Consists of turf, topsoil and subsoil containing post-medieval finds				Avg. depth (m)		0.25
				Width (m)		1.0
				Length (m)		1.0
				Height on top of test pit (mOD)		5.19
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
01	Layer	-	0.10	Turf	-	-
05	Layer	-	0.10	Topsoil	Clay pipe, pottery, brick and tile	Post-medieval

11	Layer	-	0.05	Subsoil	Clay pipe, pottery, bone	Post-medieval
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Test Pit 6						
General description				Orientation		
Consists of turf and topsoil containing post-medieval finds				Avg. depth (m)		0.28
				Width (m)		1.0
				Length (m)		1.0
				Height on top of test pit (mOD)		5.39
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
01	Layer	-	0.12	Turf	-	-
06	Layer	-	0.16	Topsoil	Pottery, tile and oyster shell	Post-medieval

Test Pit 7						
General description				Orientation		
Consists of turf and topsoil containing post-medieval finds				Avg. depth (m)		0.20
				Width (m)		1.0
				Length (m)		1.0
				Height on top of test pit (mOD)		5.16
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
01	Layer	-	0.10	Turf	-	-
07	Layer	-	0.10	Topsoil	Clay pipe, pottery, glass, brick, tile and iron slag	Post-medieval

APPENDIX B. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-79531		
Project Name	Test Pitting at Furrowfields, Chatteris		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	29-06-2010	Finish	29-06-2010
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	CHAFFS10	Planning App. No.	
HER No.	ECB3415	Related HER/OASIS No.	CHER 08670

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Test Pit Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Open-Area Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Excavation	<input 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
Ridge and Furrow	Medieval 1066 to 1540		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	Fenland	Furrowfields (off Furrowfields Road) Chatteris, Cambridgeshire PE16 6DY
Parish	Chatteris	
HER	Cambridgeshire	
Study Area	184sq m	National Grid Reference TL 3947 8657

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	n/a
Project Design Originator	n/a
Project Manager	Stephen Macaulay
Supervisor	Taleyna Fletcher

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
OA East Offices, Bar Hill	OA East Offices, Bar Hill	OA East Offices, Bar Hill
CHAFFS10	CHAFFS10	CHAFFS10

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/> Map
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:



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Figure 1: Location of test pits (black)



Plate 1: Profile of Test Pit 2



Plate 2: Pupils from Kingsfield Primary School identifying "mystery objects" on site



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