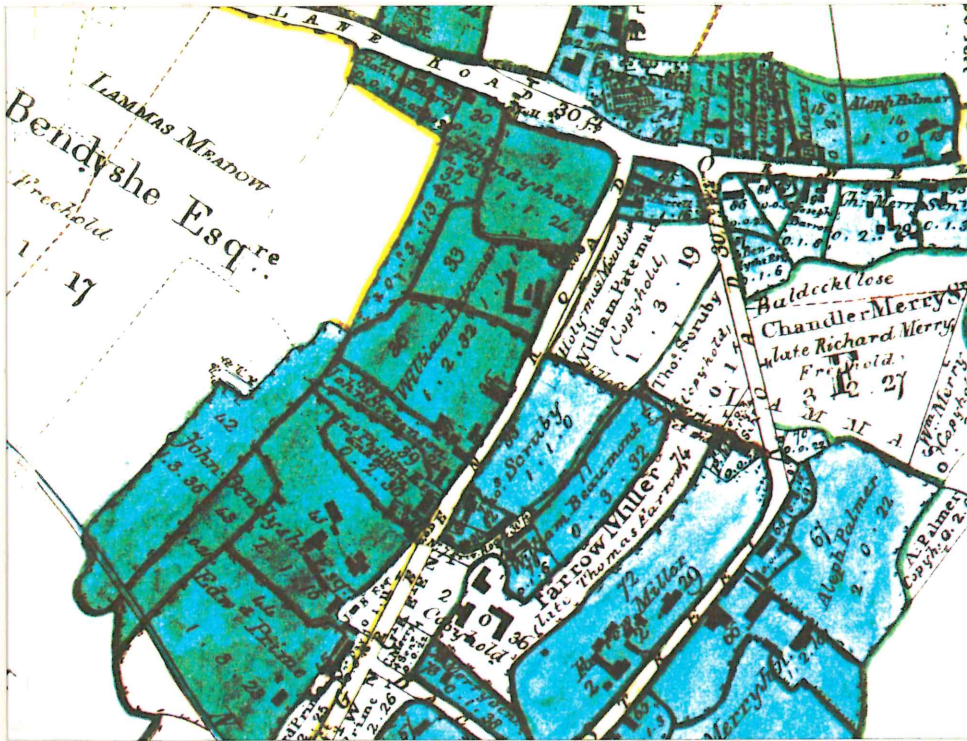


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## Medieval & Post-Medieval Features at Chapel Orchard, Town Green Road, Orwell



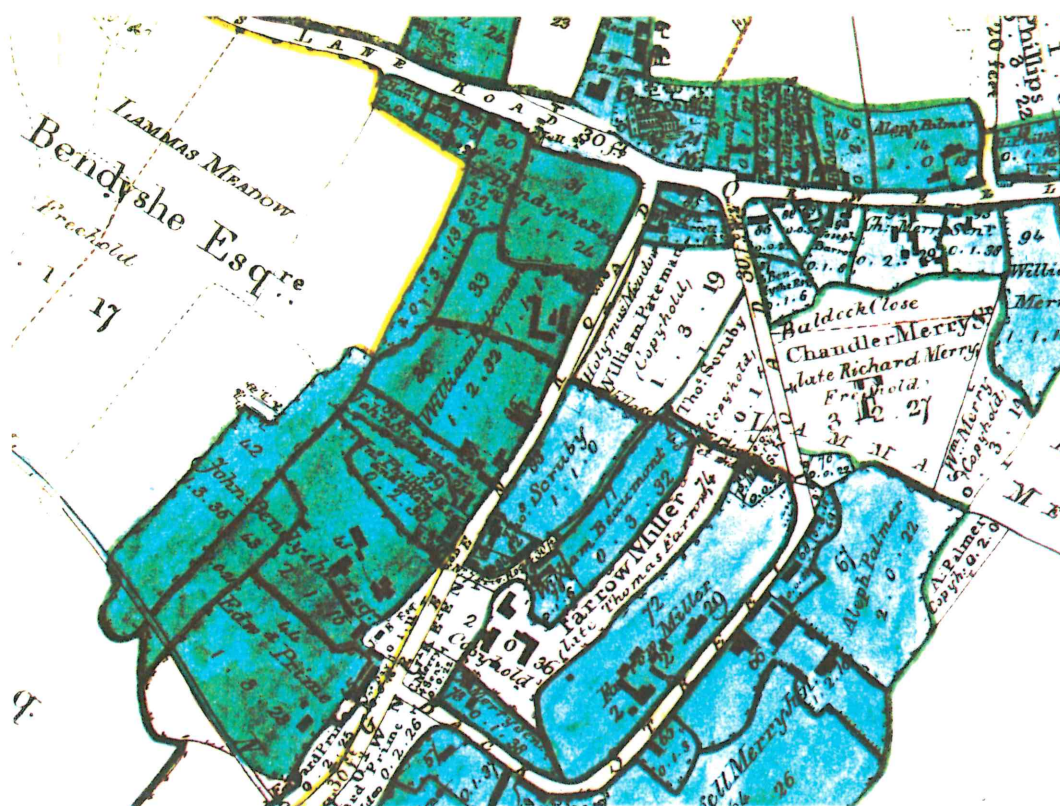
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# Medieval and Post Medieval Features at Chapel Orchard, Town Green Road, Orwell

Paul Spoerry

1993

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Report no. 80

Inclosure Map: Orwell 1837

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# Medieval and Post-Medieval Features at Chapel Orchard, Town Green Road, Orwell, Cambridgeshire

NGR: Centred on TL3615/5035

Paul Spoerry BTech, PhD

## SUMMARY

*Earthworks recently identified in the historic core of the village of Orwell were thought to be either a medieval moated site, or a medieval street frontage platform in front of other, unexplained, features. Two major phases of use were identified on the street frontage platform. Compacted chalk marl foundations for one or more buildings, and some associated features, are believed to be of medieval date, whilst a later chalk rubble wall that possibly represents a boundary feature rather than a structure, dates to sometime between 1350 and 1680. At the north end of the site trenching revealed about 1.5m of make-up adjacent to the 'Lordship' ditch. This make-up may derive from spoil deposition after successive ditch clearances/re-cuts. The central area of the site contains raised and/or flattened areas separated by ditches. Trenching revealed that chalk rubble walls, similar to the later wall found on the frontage platform, delimit at least some of the scarp edges of the earthworks. These walls do not appear to have been very substantial, and could not have performed any major retaining function on their platform edge locations. They have been interpreted as part of a formalised orchard/garden arrangement, dating to sometime between the late medieval period and the late 17th century. The ditch on the southern edge of the frontage area produced evidence for a timber bridge and/or revetment of uncertain date. The earthworks at this site have therefore been explained as a street frontage platform with medieval occupation, behind which attempts have been made in the late 14th to late 17th centuries to drain the land and construct dry platforms, for use as an orchards (or similar).*

*The site archive and finds are held in Cambridgeshire County Council's archaeological store. Access can be arranged by contacting Cambridgeshire Archaeology at Fulbourn, or Shire Hall, Cambridge.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Building proposals initiated the need for an evaluation of this 'earthwork' site located within the historic core of the village of Orwell. Morphological interpretation of the earthworks had suggested that the site was either a medieval 'moat' or a series of unidentified features behind a street frontage platform. Documentary evidence suggested there may have been a medieval 'motte' on the adjacent holding known as The Lordship and the possibility that associated features would be recovered could not be ruled out.

Excavations were carried out by Cambridgeshire Archaeology, on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council, for two weeks in November-December 1992.

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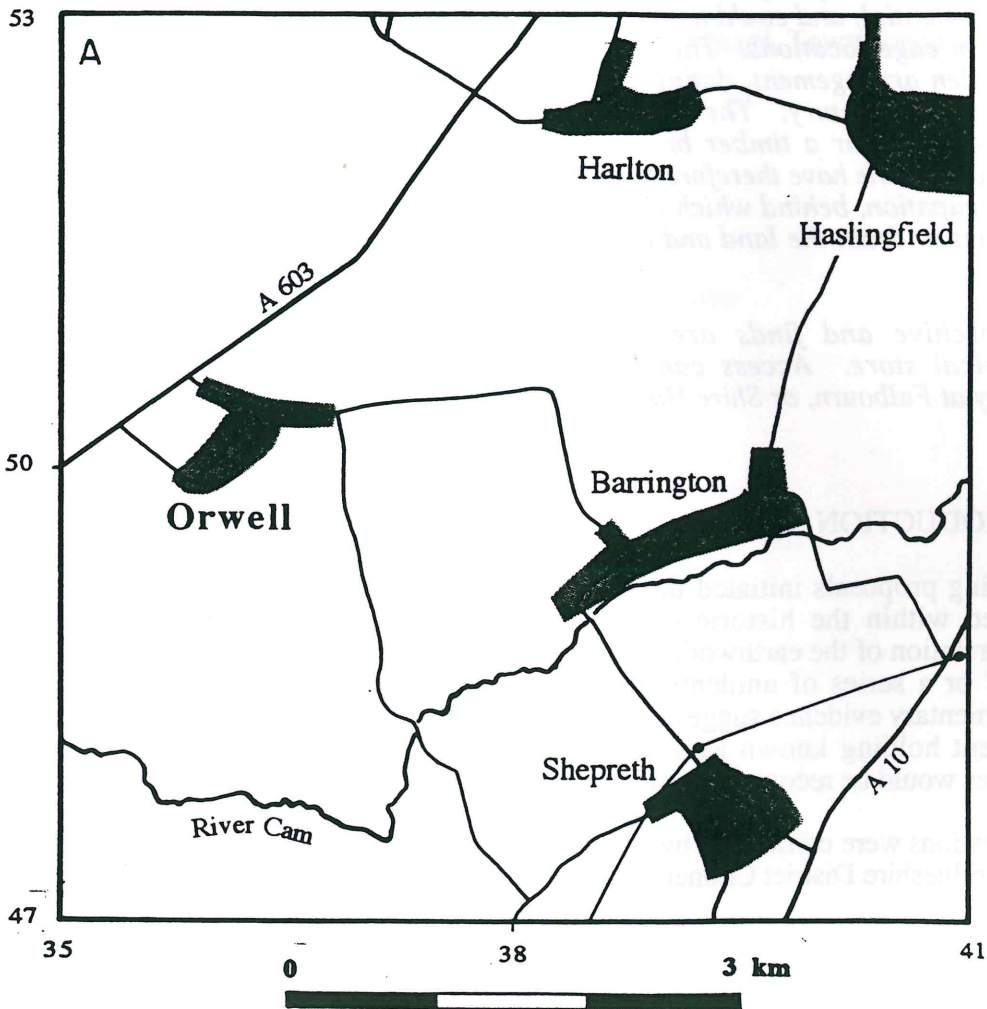
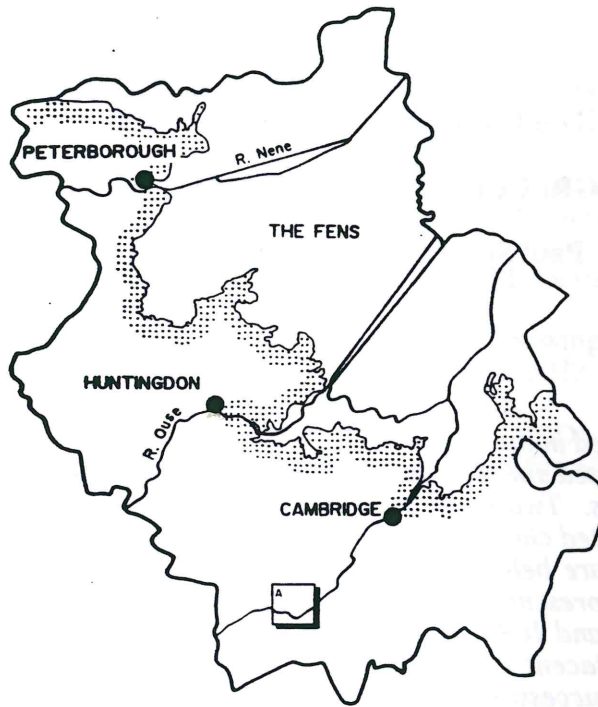


Figure 1 Location Maps.

## 2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

Orwell is a 'spring-line village' lying at the base of the porous chalk where water issues forth on encountering the impermeable Oxford Clay. The edge of the chalk forms a south-facing scarp slope which juts out into a spur at Orwell itself, whilst the clay land is a flat, wet vale. The village lies astride these two different geologies facing south onto the valley of the river Cam or Rhee (Figure 1). The centre of the village is at the north end of Town Green Road where it joins the east-west axis of High Street -Fishers Lane. The parish church lies on the north side of this junction, whilst The Lordship, probably the original site of the Manor of Orwell, lay in the western part of the 'T' until its destruction by either coprolite mining or the construction of a new school in the 19th century. The Chapel Orchard site is to the south of The Lordship (Figure 2), and includes a piece of the western frontage of Town Green Road. It is likely that the eastern side of this road was open green throughout much of the medieval period; a map of 1686 still has part of this green as open land (Figure 3). It is assumed that the older occupation sites on Town Green Road will therefore be those on the west side, and towards the northern end (the church and village centre). This site is therefore a prime location for early settlement remains.

A spring issues from the north west corner of the site. Most of the water is now piped away, but it must have been an important water source in earlier periods, and may even be the 'well' or spring from which the village gets its name. Towards the rear (west) of the area being studied, and adjacent to the spring is a property that was known as 'Reasts Grove' or 'The Grove'. This appears to have always been rough ground and this may well be due to its inherent wetness, being so close to the spring.

## 3 DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH

The full report is included as Appendix A

Prior to fieldwork a study of the documentary evidence available for the site was undertaken by Twigs Way on behalf of Cambridgeshire Archaeology. This showed that the site has possessed no substantial buildings for at least 300 years, having been divided between adjacent properties during this time. It is likely that the main part of the site remained as orchard and/or croft throughout a number of boundary changes that occurred during this period. Two areas of land immediately to the west of Chapel Orchard also come within the area of the brief. One, The Grove, is discussed above and the other (the westernmost) is now part of a field, and appears to have been so since at least the 16th century. No references to a 'moat' can be found for the land covered by this investigation.

An adjacent holding known as 'the Lordship' is, however, referred to as 'le mote' and 'le mott', and is shown as a mound on the 1686 Map (Figure 3). It is suggested that this was in fact the site of the manorial moated site, and no similar explanation is possible for Chapel Orchard (Way, Appendix A, this report).

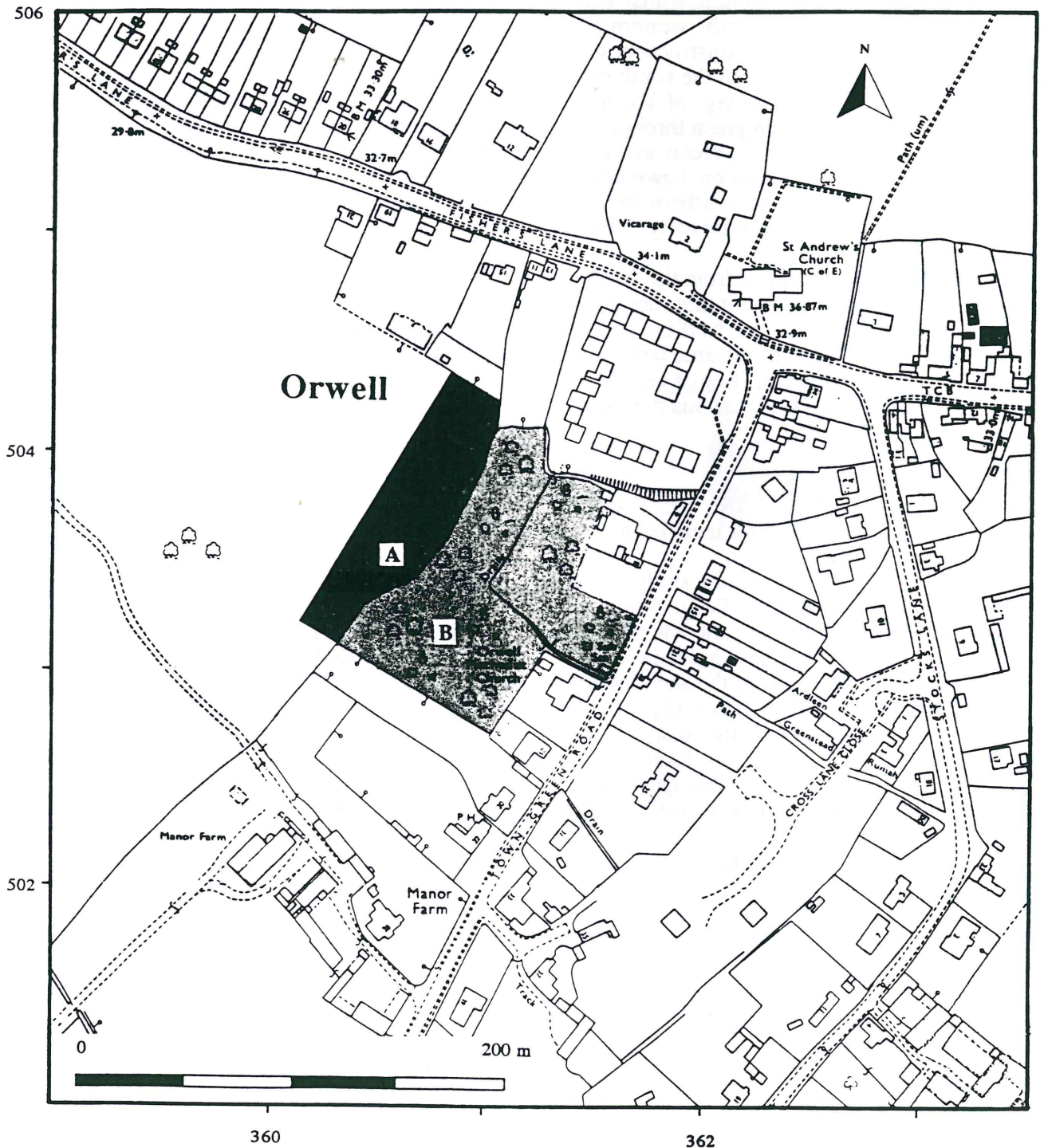
## 4 THE EVALUATION

The evaluation was carried out between late November and early December 1992.

### 4.1 Area A

The area now under plough (Area A, Figure 2) was initially fieldwalked in a non-structured manner and, as no material of any antiquity was evident at that time, it was decided that little further work was required in this area. Subsequent to completing the excavations, however, a follow-up visit to the site revealed a

discrete and quite dense scatter of medieval pottery along the central part of the boundary between Areas A and B. As this area had proved devoid of finds in the original study it must be assumed that the pottery had weathered out of the ploughsoil in the intervening month. This finding has become important as very little medieval pottery was recovered from any of the evaluation trenches. The medieval pottery is recorded in Appendix B.



**Figure 2** Location of Areas A and B.

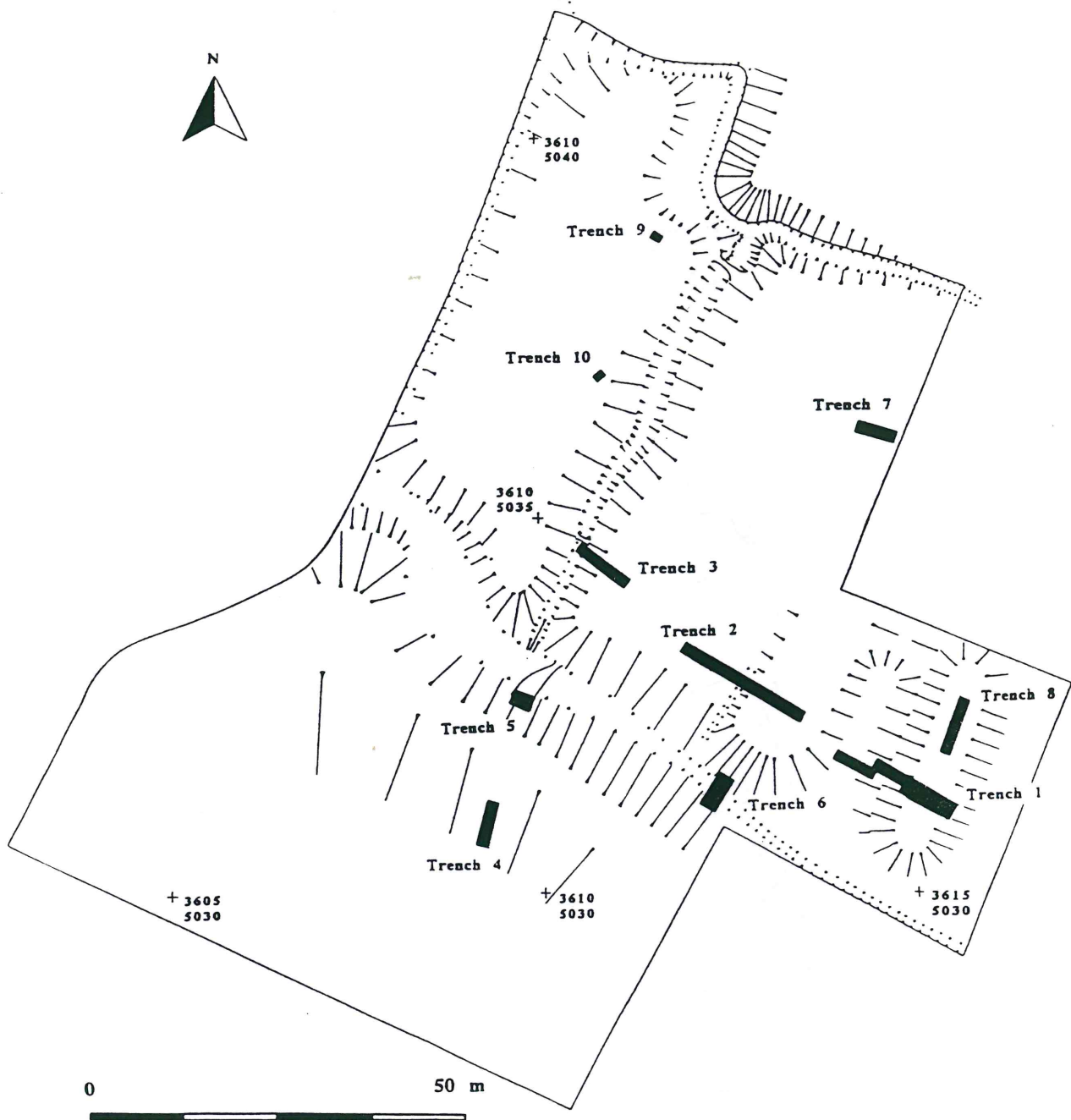




*Figure 3 Part of the 1686 Chicheley Estate Map showing the site and its surroundings*

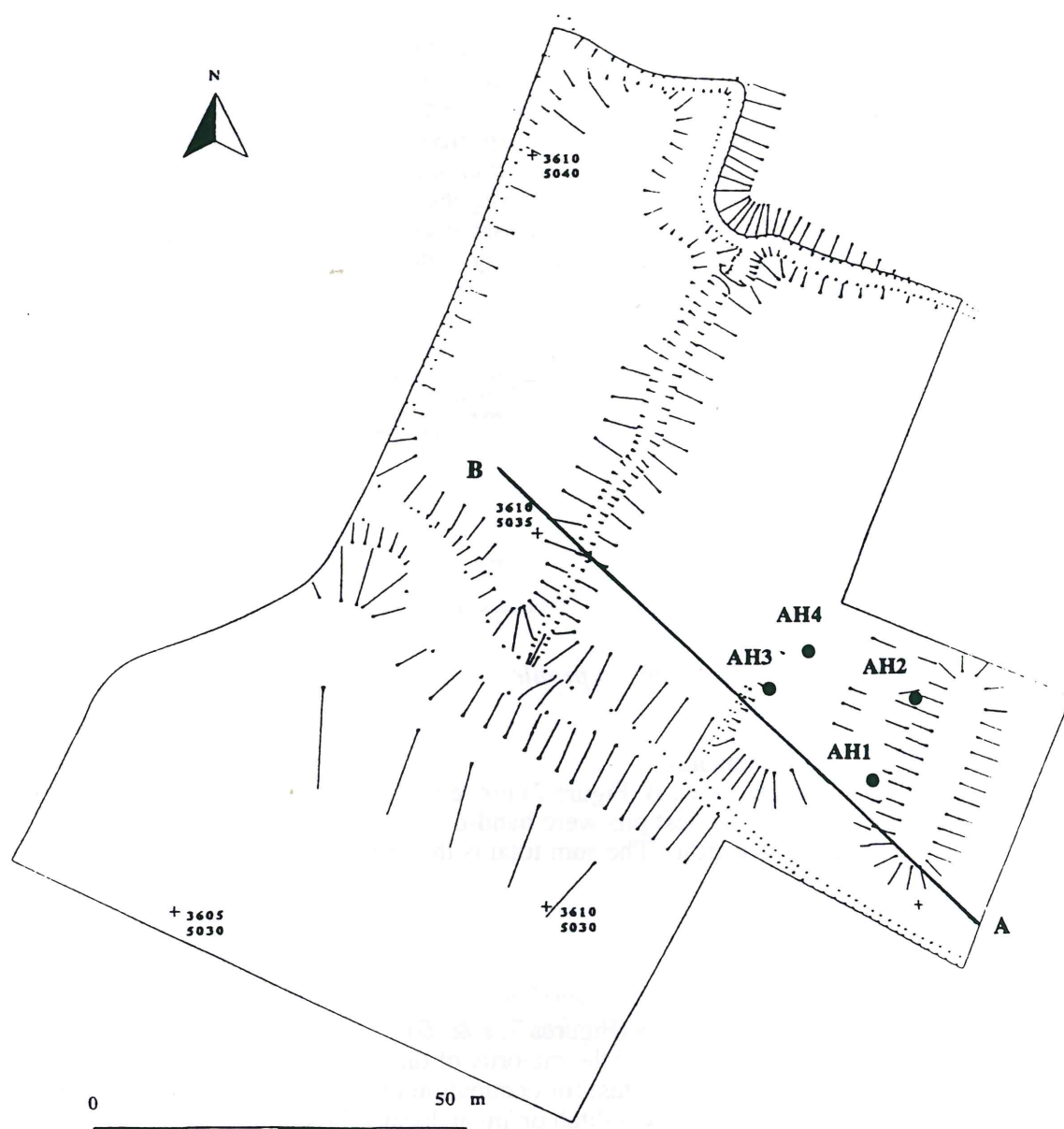
#### 4.2 The Earthwork Survey (Figure 4)

The earthworks consist of two artificial platforms in the east, separated by a wide ditch. The easternmost (or 'street frontage') platform is set back from, but parallel with, Town Green Road. Its position is not dissimilar to that of the older houses present on the west side of Town Green Road, and the platform is of a size commensurate with that of a cottage. It is 26m long and 6m deep and reaches a height of about 0.8m above the base of the ditch behind the platform and the pavement in front, although there is a further dip of 0.1 to 0.2m between this latter and the platform itself. The ditches behind, and to the south of, this platform join a complex system of wide ditches that stretch across the whole site. These are variable in size, up to 20m across at the top and up to 2m deep, although this latter



**Figure 4** Earthwork plan and location of trenches.

figure probably represents use of natural contours as well as actual excavated depth. Some parts of this complex have narrow ditches of more recent date cut into their base, most of which are currently (December 1992) water-filled (e.g. the southern ditch and the central ditch adjacent to Trench 3). The ditches are continuous with those around The Lordship to the north. In general they appear to channel water away from one or more springs in the north west part of the site, although this would have required a water table that would have been higher than that of December 1992 for all of the wide, shallow ditches to have carried water. Local information indicates that the majority of water is now piped away through the field to the west, although the precise details of this are not known. This could

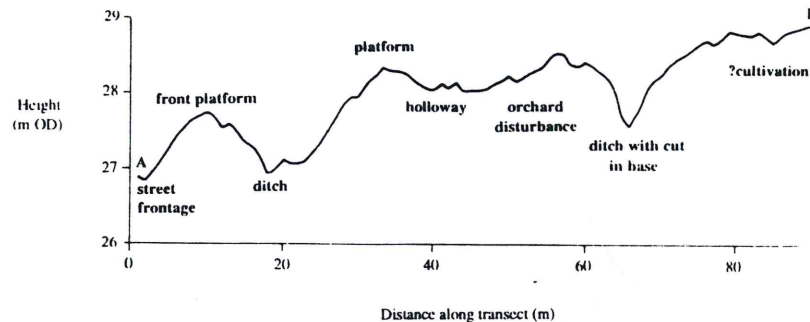


*Figure 5* Location of levelled transect and auger holes.

partly explain why some of the ditches do not now hold water (even during a wet winter). The central platform is, by virtue of natural topography, almost half a metre higher than the frontage platform. The actual amount of make-up on these features is was observed in trenches and auger holes. The frontage platform has two major phases of make-up totalling about 0.7m in depth, whilst the central platform appears to have been raised between 0.4m and 0.6m above the natural ground surface. The ditch separating these features appears to have only been excavated about 10cm at most below the original ground surface of the frontage, but the rise in ground to the rear indicates that rather more removal of soil was required to cut the ditch into the slope.

#### 4.3 The Levelled Transect

A levelled transect was taken across the earthworks, from south east to north west, located as shown on Figure 5 and providing the profile illustrated in Figure 6. This identified that two areas of ground disturbance appeared to be evident alongside the more obvious earthwork features as shown in Figure 4. These are the rear (north west) half of the central platform (between Trenches 2 & 3 on Figure 4) and the extreme north west end of the transect (both identified on Figure 6). The former has been interpreted as being a result of orchard-related disturbance, whilst the latter is either similar, or a residual survival of ridge and furrow. The second of the two suggestions for the rear area is the less likely, although if it were the case, it would assume some significance as any arable activity in this 'old enclosure' is likely to date to the medieval period.



**Figure 6** Levelled transect profile

#### 4.4 Evaluation Trenches

The main site (Area B, Figure 2) proved very wet. Eight trenches were opened by machine and two test pits were hand-dug in areas that proved inaccessible to even a tracked excavator. The sum total is therefore ten trenches, located as on Figure 4.

### 5 EXCAVATION

#### 5.1 Trench 1 and Trench 8 (Figures 7, 8 & 9)

These trenches produced the majority of direct evidence for occupation on the site. They were intended to test for occupation on the 'frontage' platform, and to study any fills in the main N-S ditch or 'moat' located behind the frontage.

On top of the platform the following sequence was recorded:-

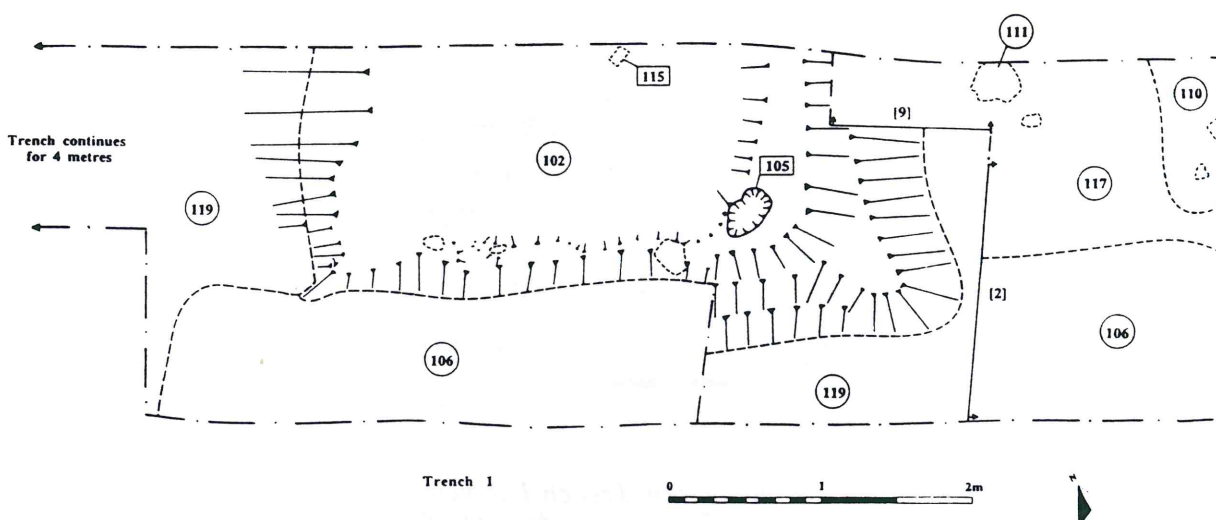
##### Phase 1 (or natural)

Natural, or re-deposited natural, the latter being unlikely. Located below (102).

##### Phase 2a

An off-white compressed chalk marl platform, *circa* 40 cm deep, (102) was uncovered in Trench 1 at a depth of about 30cm. This has been interpreted as being the base for a structure (Figure 7). The only evidence for the presence of any former walls is a ridge along the south western edge of the feature. This could have provided a beam location or may respect the out edge of a previously existing daub wall. Cut [105], although located in a prime position for a structural post-hole, has been interpreted as a tree-hole. Further root disturbance is evident along the southern edge of (102). Evidence for internal features is sparse except for a solitary stake hole [115]. This may, however, be part of a fence line constructed after any platform walling, and therefore any substantial building, was

removed (see Phase 2b). To the south east of (102) a grey sandy clay silt (117) has been deposited, extending the platform at a slightly lower level. Following this a grey silty clay (106) has been dumped on the south west side of (102), extending the platform in that direction at a similar level to (117). This is stratigraphically later than (117), but it is suggested that the two may be fairly contemporaneous, representing one platform enlargement (see Figure 8 for sections through these deposits). These have been phased with (106) as it is difficult to understand how (106) could have functioned as an isolated feature, especially as it presumably possessed a structure on top. In Trench 8 (102) is represented by (805), and (806) is comparable to (117) in its nature, although it lies on the opposite (north west) side of the chalk platform (Figure 9a). The 'ditches' around this earthwork probably provided the material for the secondary platform deposits, e.g. (106), (117), & (806). The fact that (106) possesses a much higher clay content than either (117) or (806) may be purely because it was scraped up from the deeper, wetter side ditch. This phase can therefore be described as construction of the platform (all three deposits) and possibly the creation of a building on (102).



**Figure 7** Plan of south east part of Trench 1 showing 'building platform' (102) and associated Phase 2a and 2b deposits.

#### Phase 2b

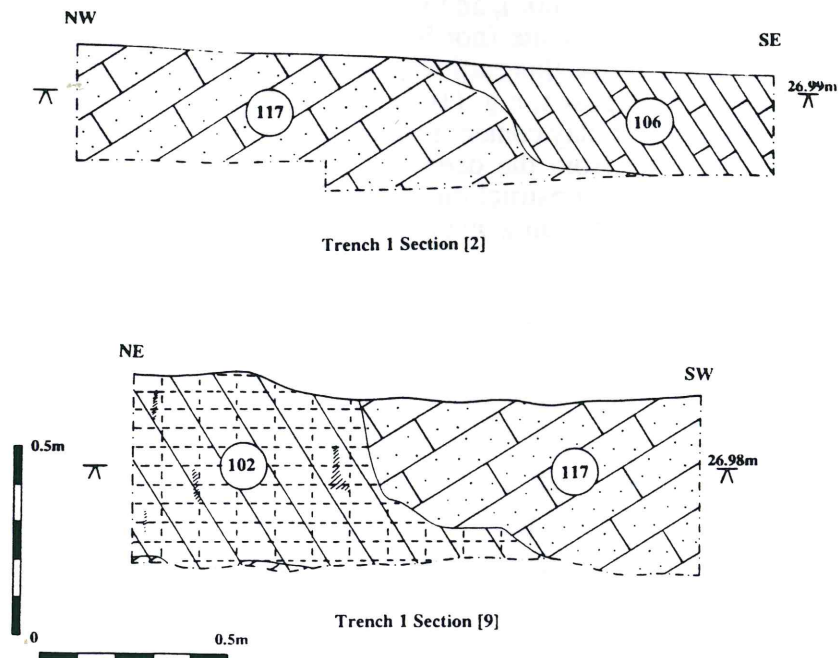
This phase represents the use, or re-use, of the features outlined for Phase 2a. Patches of chalk marl and some probable stake holes are present in (117), indicating perhaps 'yard' activity. As described above, one possible stake hole [115] is cut into (102). If this is comparable to the stake holes on (117) it may suggest that (102) was not, or was no longer, an enclosed area or building by the time these were in position. Alternatively the structure may have been only partially-walled (an agricultural 'shed', and thus any 'fence' or other feature represented by these stake holes could have continued into the building itself.

In Trench 8 part of a possible pit was found cut into (805) ([808] filled with (807)). Its function and date are not known.

#### Phase 3

This phase represents the period after the Phase 2a and 2b features went out of use. The first episode is a substantial build-up of the platform, probably from cleaning, or re-cutting of the surrounding ditches. This is represented by (103) in

Trench 1 and (802) in Trench 8. This may be a deliberate platform rebuild/levelling operation because a chalk rubble wall foundation (803) is then cut into the surface of (803) in Trench 8 (Figure 9b). This wall may not have been part of a roofed structure, but this is uncertain. It's construction is echoed in possible 'orchard' walls seen in Trenches 2 and 3 (below). Some root damage of the structures on the platform has occurred. It is possible that this occurred during Phase 3, as it may well be that this represents the establishment of a formal orchard rather than the effects of very recent scrub cover.

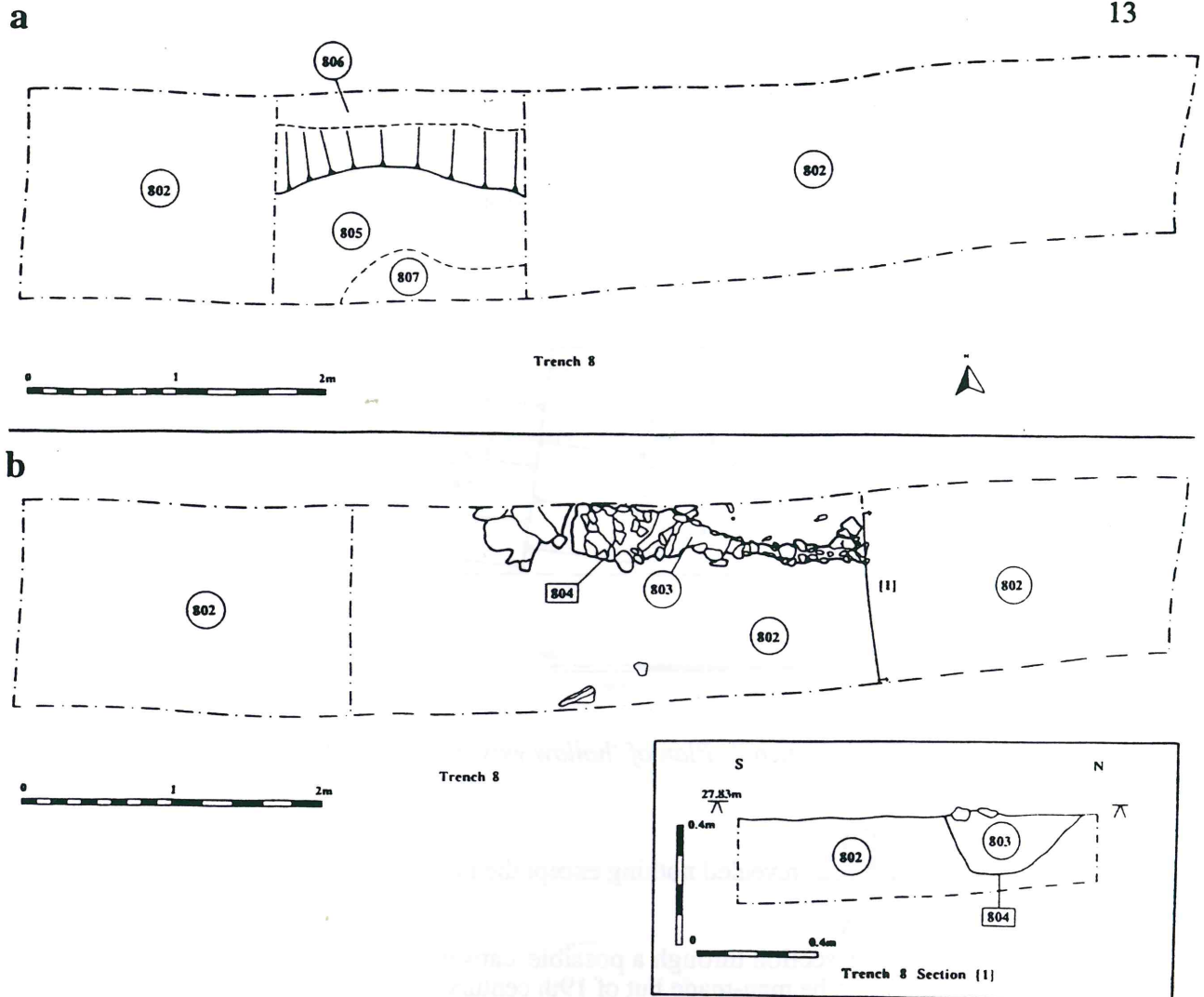


**Figure 8** Sections from Trench 1 showing, (upper) relationship between (106) and (117), (lower) edge of (102) and (117). Located as on Figure 7.

Much of the pottery is of Roman date and is presumably residual, being redeposited when the platform was made. The date of this latter is not known, but it was undoubtedly after the village form was established, but before the creation of the 1686 Map.

Two large sherds of Siegburg stoneware, dated to the period 1350-1500, were found within wall (803). The rest of the pottery recovered from Trench 8, although more abundant than that from Trench 1, did little to further the dating of the phases of make-up and use on this platform. It can, however, be noted that no finds of post-medieval date were found in any Phase 2a or 2b deposit in either trench. The pottery is discussed in more detail in Appendix B.

Nothing was found in the ditch at the west end of Trench 1. It appears to have been kept scoured clean since, or throughout, any periods of use. Auger holes were placed in the base of this ditch, adjacent to the trench and also a few metres to the north, to look at a greater depth and scope of deposits. In both cases the results indicate that there is nothing but naturally-derived and natural silt for a metre below the topsoil (see 5.10 below).



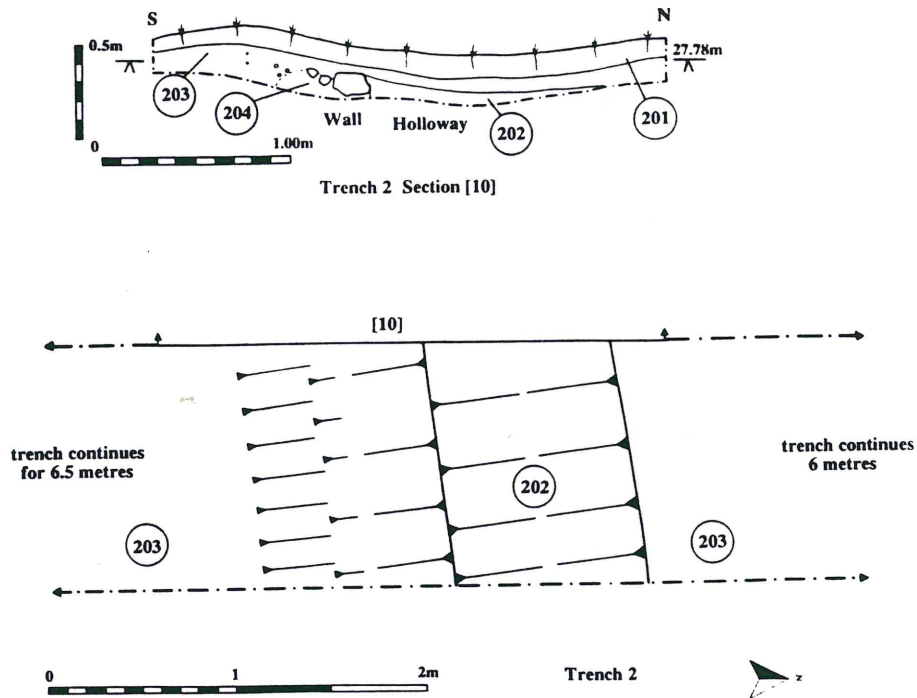
**Figure 9** Trench 8: (a) Plan of wall (803) and section through wall and wall cut [804]. (b) Plan of Phase 2a and 2b features.

### 5.2 Trench 2 (Figure 10)

Trench 2 was sited to test for occupation and other features within the bounds of the possible 'moat', on an area identifiable as an artificial platform (see Figure 4). The trench cuts a small 'hollow-way' (running NE-SW), observed from the earthwork survey. The south east side of this 'hollow way' lies adjacent to the edge of the highest platform. Excavation revealed that this edge of the platform is retained by a chalk-rubble structure (204) that may have been a low wall (Figure 10). No similar feature was observed on the south east side of the platform. No evidence for occupation was observed in Trench 2, although an auger hole taken to the north of the trench may have identified a buried soil at a depth of 25-35cm (AH3, Figure 13). The small 'hollow-way' may represent a natural pathway adjacent to the walled edge of the higher platform. The wall sealed pottery of medieval date.

### 5.3 Trench 3

A similar chalk rubble wall appears to have enclosed the platform at the edge of the ditch in Trench 3. The area being 'de-marked' is continuous with the lower platform of Trench 2. Only a stub of such a wall was identified in Trench 3, but a sub-round cut through it suggests it has either been robbed out, or more likely, it has been removed for tree-planting on the ditch edge.



**Figure 10** Trench 2: Plan of 'hollow way' features with NE-facing section.

#### 5.4 Trench 4

Trench four revealed nothing except the natural green clay-silt.

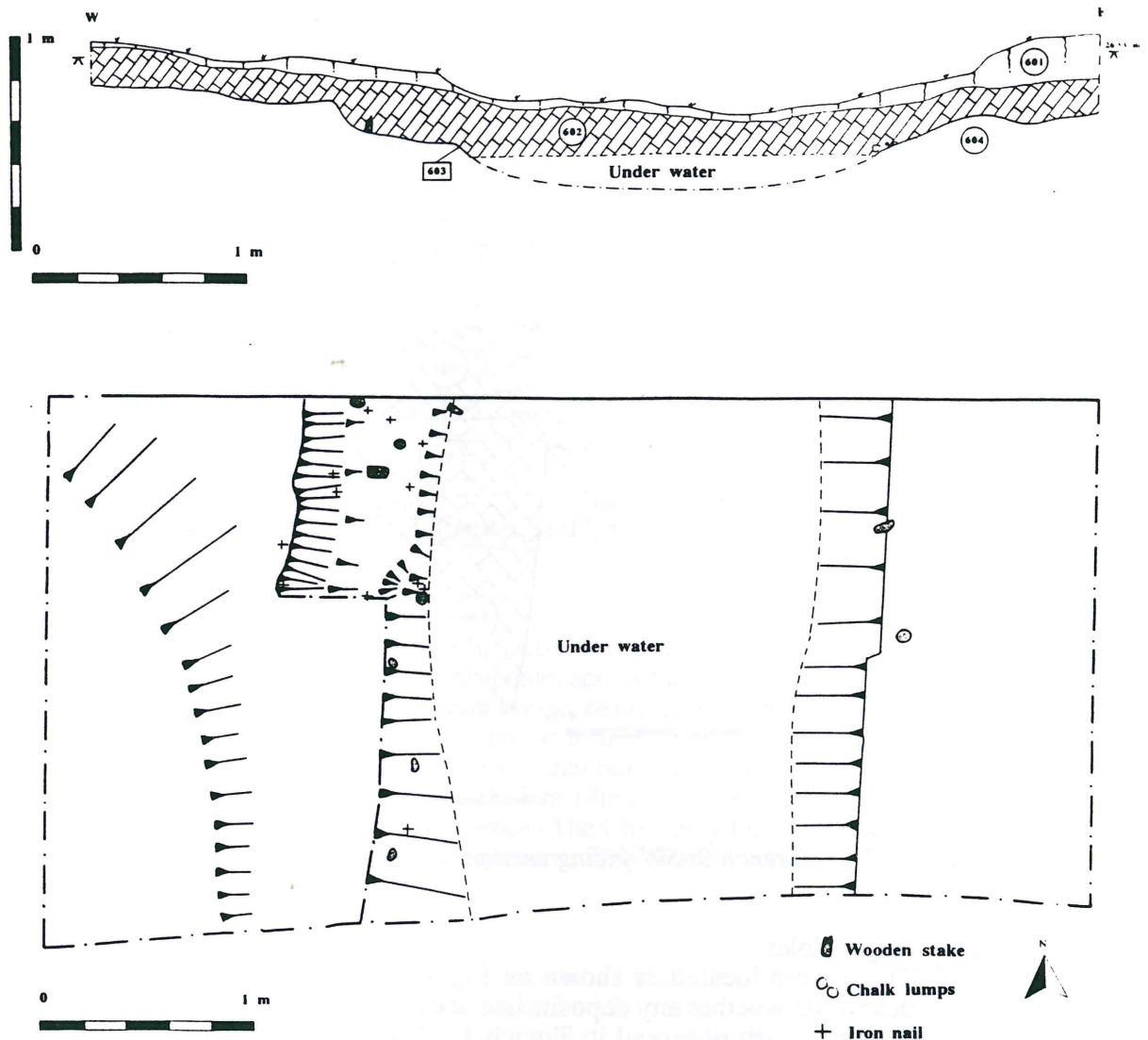
#### 5.5 Trench 5

This is a section through a possible 'causeway' across the south-western ditch. It proved to be man-made but of 19th century date, with a more modern rebuild.

#### 5.6 Trench 6 (Figure 11)

The south-western ditch. Little topsoil was present and the base of the ditch appeared to be 'clean' silt, although this was not confirmed as the ditch is currently a stream. A number of waterlogged timbers were discovered in the sides of the ditch. There are two on the east side and eight or nine on the west side. These were upright and have been deliberately shaped as stakes, and set into the ground. They were associated with a number of nails, very few of which have been found elsewhere on the site. Interpretation of the timber structure is difficult from such a small excavation, but it is suggested that it was either a bridge, or revetment, or both. The latter argument currently finds most favour. Two timbers were disturbed by the machine, and were therefore removed. They have not received detailed study, but it is evident that they have been manually shaped (with an adze?) and are of varying size. The largest was embedded in the ditch side (probably the subsoil) to a depth of 70cm. No satisfactory dating evidence has been retrieved, but the fact that the timbers were so close to the surface, and that it is likely that the ditch was regularly scoured in the past, suggests dating evidence may be very difficult to acquire. Unfortunately, although well preserved, the timbers are too small to supply dendrochronological dates on their own. This would really only be possible if several larger examples were recovered. Furthermore the expense of a radiocarbon date cannot really be justified as only a small portion of the structure has been excavated and it may in fact be less than 100 years old.





**Figure 11** Trench 6: Plan of trench and SE-facing section through base of ditch.

### 5.7 Trench 7

The foundation of an earlier (but modern) boundary wall, less than 2m behind the current fence line, was the only feature identified here.

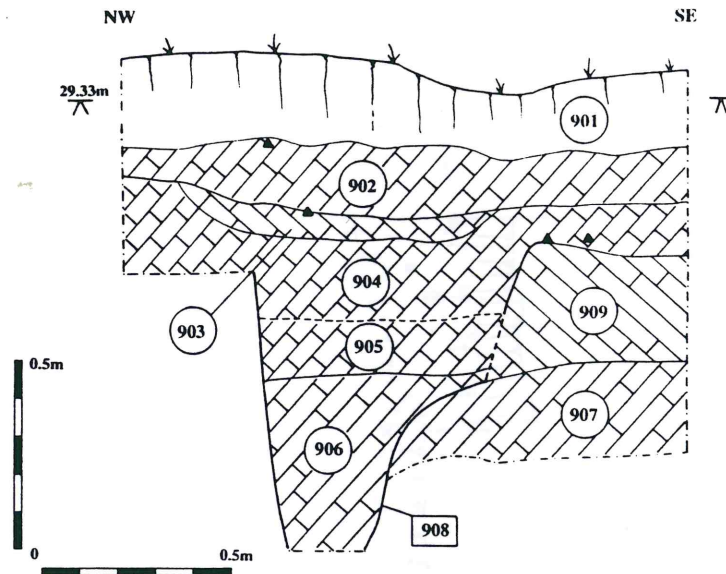
### 5.8 Trench 9 (Figure 12)

This was a hand-dug test pit, located close to the 'Lordship' ditch at the north end of the site to test for occupation and activity in this general area. A total depth of deposits of 1.3m were encountered. These comprised 25cm of topsoil and then 20-25 cm of clayey-silt (902) with a relict portion of a buried soil (903) surviving in an area of slump above a pit or ditch. Below this was a clay-silt deposit (904) which also slumped into the ditch/pit. The cut of this latter feature ([908]) may in fact represent two episodes of excavation. The upper part of the feature is cut through another layer of make-up, in this case a silty clay (907), whilst the lower portion of the cut appears to reach natural. The base of the cut is filled with (906), which is a clayey silt. Small amounts of pottery were discovered at all levels, post-medieval towards the surface and Roman at greater depth. This sequence of deposits has been tentatively interpreted as the dumping from a number of episodes of cleaning of the 'Lordship' ditch, although this does not explain [908].

The Roman material could still be residual, as elsewhere on the site, but this is not certain. The pit could therefore conceivably be Roman in date.

#### 5.9 Trench 10

Nothing was found in Trench 10, another hand-dug test pit, below the 20cm of topsoil.



Trench 9 Section [4]

**Figure 12** Trench 9: SW-facing section showing depth of deposits.

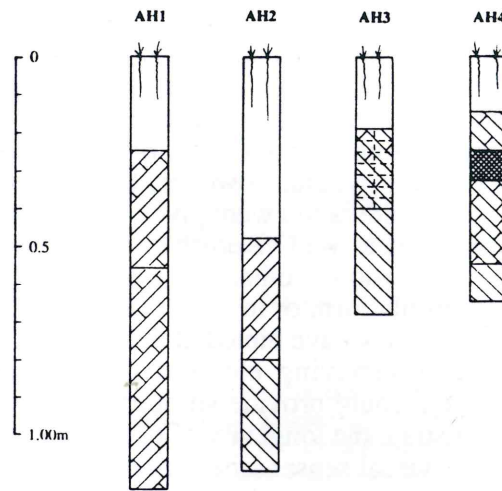
#### 5.10 Auger Holes

These were located as shown on Figure 5. AH1 and AH2 were intended to determine whether any deposits had accumulated in the base of the ditch, below the clayey silt observed in Trench 1. This was believed to be natural, or re-deposited natural. Figure 13 illustrates the reconstructed auger samples. It is evident that the clayey silt is indeed the top of the natural. AH3 and AH4 were taken to check for the presence of any occupation layers within the central platform. Unfortunately no time was available for a more substantial programme here. AH3 produced no information not already obtained from Trench 2. AH4, however, determined the presence of a buried soil at a depth of 25-35cm.

## 6 INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 6.1 General

There is no evidence, either cartographic or archaeological, to suggest that the earthworks at Chapel Orchard were ever a medieval 'moated site' in the accepted sense of the phrase. The results of the earthwork survey and evidence from Trenches 2 and 3 all point to an absence of occupation deposits over most of the site. Instead, the features found suggest landscaping to produce formal, flat, dry areas, perhaps for the establishment and maintenance of orchards, with the excavation and maintenance of complementary water courses. The chalk rubble wall foundations (Trenches 2, 3 & 8) and timber bridge/revetment discovered in Trench 6 probably represent features constructed as part of the management of the orchards and drainage features.



**Figure 13** Results of auger samples; AH1, AH2, AH3, AH4.

### 6.2 The Frontage Earthwork

There is significant evidence for activity/occupation (Trenches 1 & 8, Phases 2a and 2b), presumably of medieval date, across the 'street frontage' platform. It is in a prime location for a medieval house, being close to the centre of the medieval village and also in a position similar to that of cottages further along the street frontage. A later phase of activity, either building construction or orchard creation takes place sometime between the late 14th century and the late 17th century. By the latter date cartographic evidence (The Chicheley Estate Map) indicates that the site as a whole had become an orchard. The Phase 3 wall may date to a period of formal orchard landscaping.

### 6.3 The 'Lordship Ditch' area

Over 1.5m of deposits have been located close to the 'Lordship ditch' (Trench 10). These can probably be explained as build-up from successive ditch clearances, however, some quite well preserved pottery of Roman date was recovered from these layers and it is possible that a cut feature of Roman date exists here.

### 6.4 Area A

Some medieval activity is suggested from the pottery scatter on the field in Area A, beyond the central western ditch terminus in Area B. The exact nature of this is not known.

### 6.5 Residual finds

The fact that most of the large deposits that were excavated possessed large amounts of residual Roman pottery suggests that there is likely to be, or have been, significant remains of Roman date quite close by.

### 6.6 Vulnerability of archaeology to groundworks

Except for on the frontage platform and by the 'Lordship' ditch, the archaeological remains are very close to the surface. Even on the two former areas, almost all features are present in the top metre. All verbal reports on the recent development at the Lordship indicate that, due to excessive wetness and ground instability, extremely deep foundations were required. Similar measures may be necessary here.

### 6.7 Recommendations regarding the archaeology of this site

The frontage platform constitutes a group of medieval occupation deposits that are of major archaeological value, particularly as this appears to be the only well-preserved earthwork of a medieval house site in the village. It is strongly recommended that this feature be preserved, or at least fully recorded prior to development. Either option would, however, be rendered less worthwhile on academic grounds if no consideration were given to the lower lying land around it and the central platform area as well. Refuse disposal features and activity areas complementary to the occupation or other usage on the frontage platform may still exist either on the central platform or in the flat area north west of Trench 8 (the results from Auger Hole 4 may have hinted at the former). The frontage platform has intrinsic value as a surviving element of the historic village that, if sympathetically managed, could provide an open space that could look visually satisfying as well as illustrate the longevity of occupation in Orwell. This would, however, only work in a visual sense if the earthwork could be seen in relation to the features around it. A preservation decision might thus require the retention of all the landscape features between the street frontage and the north western end of Trench 2.

The 'Lordship ditch', on the extreme north east edge of the site, is a surviving medieval feature that is the only remaining physical evidence for the early medieval Manor of Orwell and the possible early post-conquest Motte seen on the 1686 Map. This may be a strong enough argument to warrant preservation of this as a landscape feature. If development proceeds further archaeological works could also focus on the area adjacent to the Lordship ditch, to study its use-history and also to investigate the possible Roman deposits observed here (Trench 9).

A case for further archaeological work prior to development could also be argued for the area around Trench 6, with the intention of understanding the wooden feature observed here and also attempting to date this structure.

The remainder of the earthworks on the site appear to represent post-medieval drainage and levelling to provide orchards. These features are unlikely to have enough intrinsic archaeological value to warrant preservation or further record.

## 7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank South Cambridgeshire District Council for providing the funding to carry out this evaluation. Thanks must also be extended to Twigs Way, for providing a most useful report on the documentary research, and to Crane Begg for his efforts in many turning mud-covered site plans into accurate and visually satisfying illustrations. The work on-site was carried out with application, thought and good humour, despite the seas of mud, by Stephanie Leith, Stephen Macauley and David Mitchell. I am further indebted to Steph Leith for the earthworks survey (Figure 4).

## Appendix A

### Historical Documentary Research for Chapel Orchard and Adjacent Properties, Town Green Road, Orwell

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*Archaeological Landscape Consultant*

November 1992

#### Introduction

This report has been produced at the request of the Cambridgeshire County Council Field Archaeology section to assist in their archaeological assessment of the Chapel Orchard site, Town Green Road, Orwell. The report will concentrate on the immediate vicinity of the assessment site and does not include any manorial or parish background material other than where this is of direct relevance to the site.

#### Sources/Methods

Documentary sources used include both secondary and primary texts as well as cartographic material and this has been supplemented by reference to the Sites and Monuments Record. Only locally held material was consulted at this stage, although it is noted that further information is available in national repositories should more detailed research prove necessary. Research concentrated on records held in the County Record Office (CRO) and Cambridge University Library (CUL).

Orwell has an extremely well preserved series of records running from the late 16th century onwards. These records include an almost complete series of manorial court rolls for the periods 1589 to 1688 and 1714 to 1939. Court minutes are also available for approximately the same period, and some gaps in the court rolls are covered by the minutes. (CRO cat. manorial records). A series of surveys were carried out in the 17th century, that of 1607 is complete (CRO L63/49) whilst those of 1601 and 1680 are only partial (CRO L63/57/5 and CRO L63/56/10). The survey of 1680 appears to have been originally in book form and was probably compiled to complement the estate map of c.1686 (CUL Maps. Ra1). This book has unfortunately been lost.

Parish records are similarly well preserved and have been transcribed. These were used to give information on holdings which were known by personal names (e.g.. Reasts Grove).

Cartographic sources are not as numerous. Subsequent to the late 17th century Chicheley Estate map no plans covering the Town Green site are known until the 19th century pre enclosure and enclosure maps and awards (CRO uncat; CRO Q/RDc52). Early OS maps give information on changes to boundaries during the nineteenth century.

A collection of 14th and 13th century extents are held in the Public Record Office and the British Museum also holds grants and deeds from the 15th to 17th centuries which can be consulted.

#### Documentary History of the site

##### 1. Current situation

Following the inclusion of the village of Orwell in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (1989) an archaeological visit was made to Chapel Orchard. The site was then described as being 'covered by overgrown orchard' and containing various linear earthworks which were interpreted as the remains of a moated site (SMR PRN 09919). Immediately to the north of the site there is a small housing development. This development is on the presumed site of a possible mound or 'motte' (SMR PRN 03267).

##### 2. Nineteenth century

The first large scale map of the area is the 1886 6" Sheet LIII.6. (Figure 14). This shows some minor boundary changes which may be of importance in interpretation of the present earthworks. To the west of the Methodist chapel the boundary running parallel with the Town Green Road has changed, whilst the pronounced ditch to the north contains water and is indicated as having a spring on the western corner. A school is shown in the position of the present housing development. (This has led to the false claim in the SMR record that the 'motte' site was demolished to make way for the school.)

Orwell was enclosed by an Act of Parliament in 1836/7 and both the award and maps are available. (Figure 15) as well as a pre-enclosure map of the paths and boundaries. The name of the landholder and

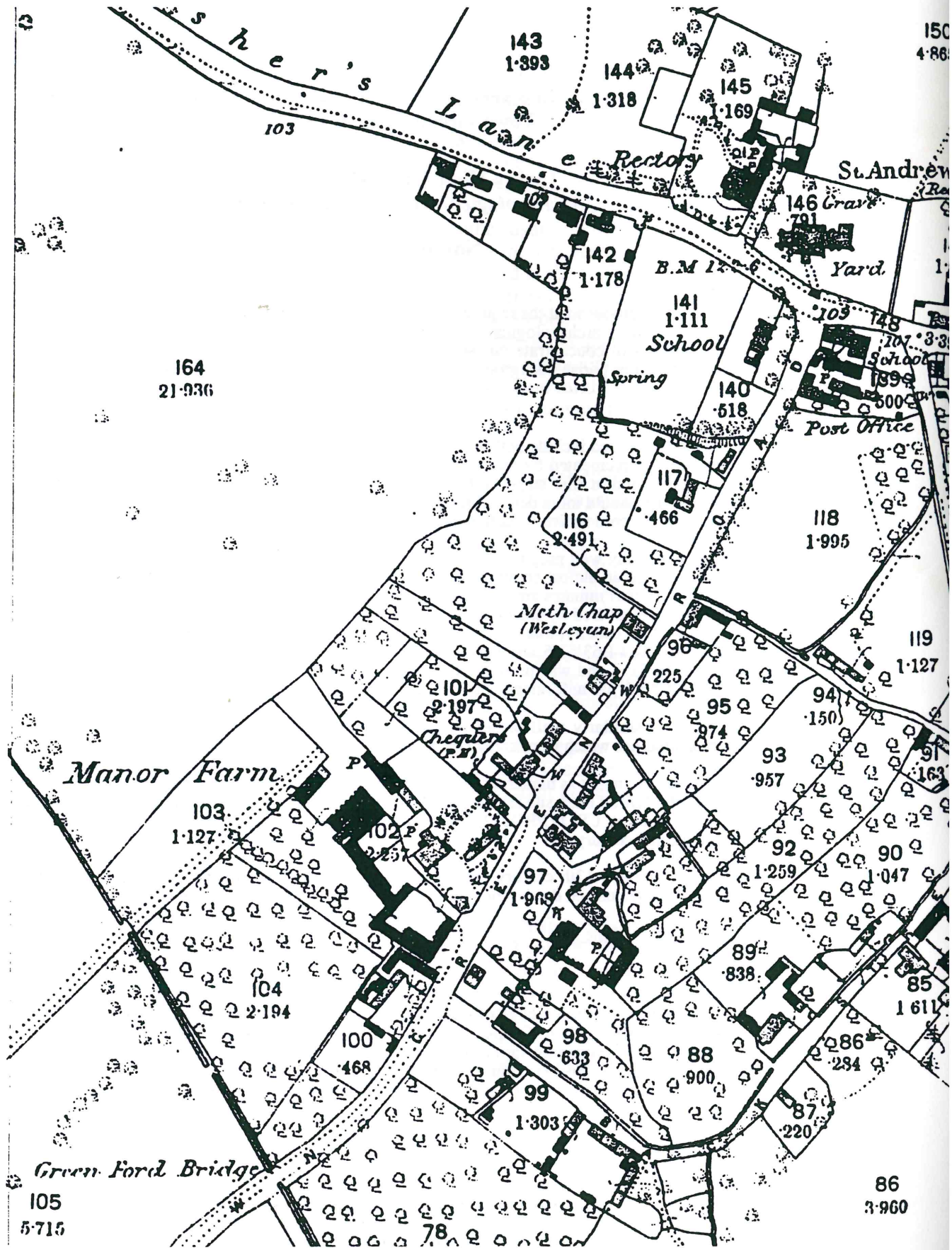


Figure 14 OS 6" Map 1886, Sheet LIII.6

size of enclosures are recorded on the map with extra details in the award. The Chapel Orchard site is shown as held by William Pateman, being divided into two holdings. Field 36 (to the south) is recorded as containing 1-2-32 and is described as 'orchard'. Field 33 (north) contains 1-1-01 and is described as 'House, yard, orchard etc'. To the immediate north of the site is Field 31 'The Lords Close' (1-1-24) and to the west 'The Grove' (0-3-13) both held by J. Bendyshe then lord of the manor. It is important to notice that the boundaries running parallel to the Town Green Road do not exist on this plan and the boundary that runs east west between the two plots does not follow the line of the ditch/boundary recorded on the 1886 OS map. Springs/wells are shown to the north and south of the site and it is possible that the grove area to the west represents a wetter area.

Field 31 is shown as surrounded by a stream and water filled channels (this is particularly clear on the pre-enclosure map). No earthworks are indicated within this area and this contradicts the assertion by both Fox (1923, 137-138) and Conybeare (1910, 256) that a 'prehistoric earthwork' or 'ringwork' existed in this area. Both of these sources claim that the earthwork was destroyed in the late nineteenth century for coprolites and a licence to extract coprolites in the parish has been consulted, however the area to be exploited is not specified. It is not unusual for earthworks to be omitted from enclosure maps and as will be discussed below the evidence for an earthwork in this area is extremely strong.

Slightly after the date of the enclosure a surrender by Patemen to Merry describes the area as 'all that close of pasture theretofore Normans and before Butlers . . . . and all that messuage or tenement, orchard and close of pasture, sometimes Meads . . containing together 3 acres with barn, stable and cowshed'.

Having established the name of the landholders manorial records were then used to trace the history of the site and to search for descriptions of its immediate surroundings. The results of this are presented briefly.

### 3. Pre nineteenth century

Transfer of land from Jo. Norman to the Patemen family occurred in 1781 and included a messuage tenement and orchard. A previous transfer to the widow of (an earlier) Jo. Norman describes a 'messuage and tenement (formerly two tenements) and two crofts of pasture thereunto adjacent'. Unfortunately the entry is so brief as not to allow of positive identification, no locational details being given. If it is the later Chapel Orchard site this suggests that there had been further boundary changes. The original transfer to Norman could not be found, although the 19th century entry indicates that this was from Butler, who indeed held much land in the parish.

Research on the second part of the entry (land sometimes Meads) was much more successful, and landholding has been traced back to the late 16th century. However, it appears that following the death of Mead in 1634 land was transferred to the Barnard family rather than coming directly to the Patemen family.

Work on parish registers has confirmed that the Meade family were no longer present in the area after 1683, whilst the name of Pateman did not appear until much later. This area is also described as messuage, croft and orchard from the first records in 1577/78 when Th. Meade was admitted. Again, the actual size of the plot appears to vary slightly over time.

### 4. 1686 Map

A plan of the whole of Orwell parish was produced in approximately 1680/86 in connection with transfer of the manor from Thomas Chicheley. (Ms Plans Ra 1) (Figure 16). This is an extremely informative plan detailing the names of holdings (often co-incident with their holders), size of holdings and land use. The site of the later Chapel Orchard is again shown as being divided into two plots, known as 'Barnards Close' and 'Barnards Homestall'. The total area covered by the two plots is 2-3-38 (almost 3 acres). But the boundary between the two plots has changed substantially from that shown on the pre enclosure map (Figure 15). The line of the boundary now follows much more closely that indicated by the earthwork shown on Figure 1. However, there is no sign of a boundary running north south within the plot.

The area to the immediate north is shown as a large mound called the 'Lordship'. This is presumably the mound described by Fox (1923) and Conybeare (1910) (*ibid.*). No dwelling is shown on this plot. To the west is an area called 'Reasts Grove'. The situation and shape of this grove is unusual in a village context and the position of springs to the south and north may indicate that the area was left rough due to wetness. The name 'Reast' is presumed to come from holding by the Reast family - present in the parish from at least 1570 until the 1640s.

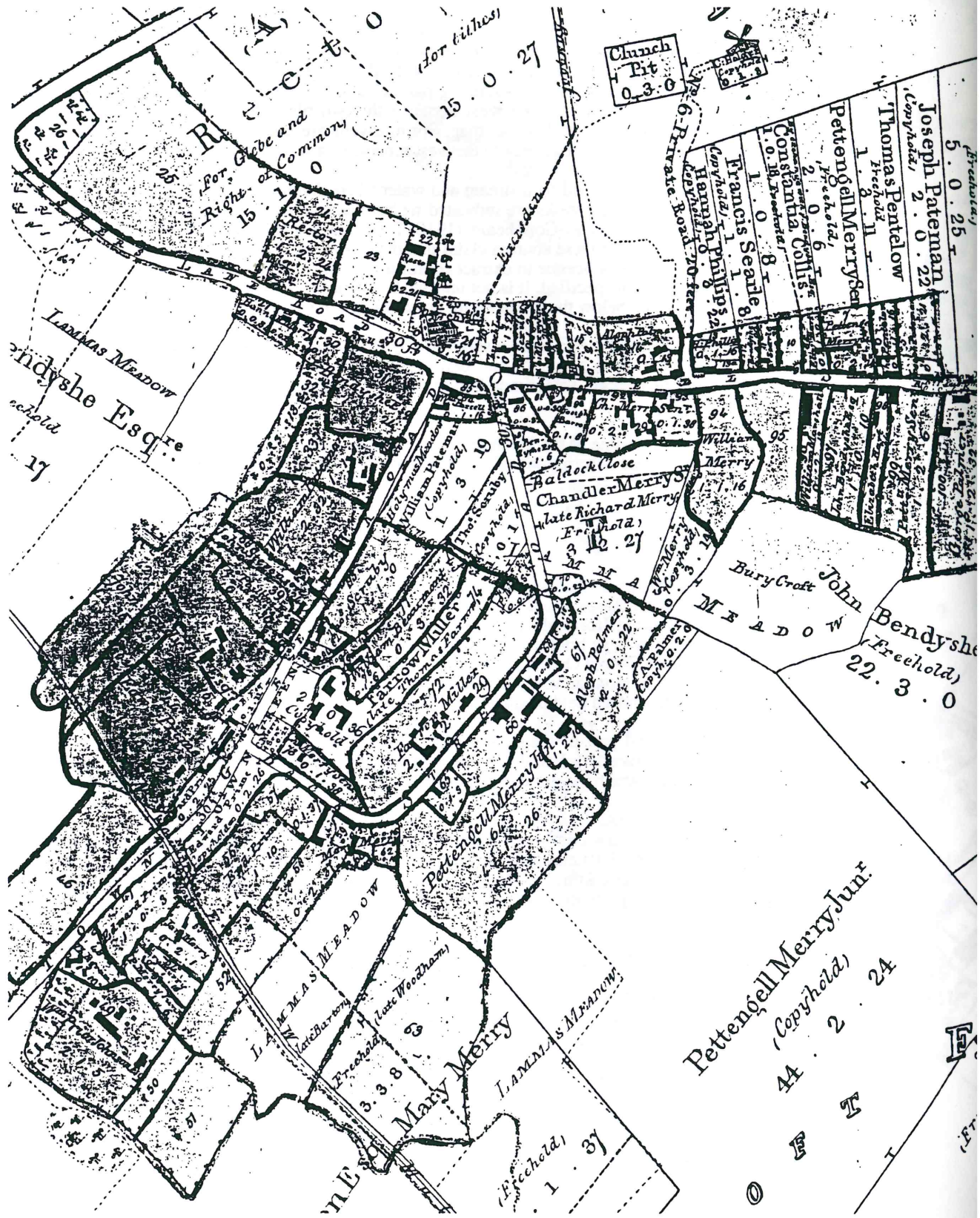


Figure 15 Enclosure Map 1836/7, CRO Q/RDc 52



## Discussion

### **i. Chapel Orchard**

Much of the history of the site can be traced back until the 16th century. On the basis of descriptions given in land transfers and the cartographic evidence it can be suggested that there have been several boundary changes. Land use has only varied in the number of buildings present on the site, its usage has always been described as house/mansion house, with croft, outhouses, orchard and (occasionally) backside adjoining. No moated site is referred to on this actual site.

### **ii. the Lordship**

There are two indications that a moated site was present in the immediate vicinity of Chapel Orchard. The first is an incomplete terrier of 1601 (CRO L63/57/5) which refers to a parcel of pasture called 'le mote alias le Lordshipp' lying to the south of the church and to the north of a cottage in the tenure of Thomas Meade. A further (undated) rental probably from the early 17th century (CRO L1/130) refers to pasture lying below 'le mott' in the tenure of Thomas Meade.

Unfortunately, as the site was obviously held directly by the lord of the manor there are no land transfers dealing with it. The few extant deeds dealing with transfer of the lord of the manor are held in the PRO. The manorial moated site at Whittlesford was, however, also called 'the Lordship' (Maynard Ms CRO R58/5/9 f96) and it seems very likely that this area was indeed the site of a moated manor house prior to the sixteenth century. The only other moated site in the parish is that at NGR 373/482 (SMR PRN 01248) associated with the Malton manor.

## Conclusion

Documentary research on the site of the later Chapel Orchard has indicated that the site has changed hands frequently. Site use concentrates on homesteads with associated pasture close and orchards, however several boundary changes have taken place as part of re-organisation of these elements. Archaeologically the remains of earthworks associated with these boundaries may be expected, in addition to remains of any of the more substantial outhouses, stables etc.

The boundary to the north of the site appears to have at one time formed part of a moated site situated to the north and probably formed the site of the manor house of Orwell. It is unknown whether it was a 'motte' and the archaeology of the site is now destroyed other than this boundary. The boundary to the west has remained constant since the seventeenth century at least, although it is possible it may have formed part of the 'backsides' of tenements prior to this. The boundaries to the east appear to be relatively modern as the plots originally extended onto the Town Green Road.

It appears unlikely on the basis of the historical research that the 'enclosure' formed by the banks and ditches recorded during the archaeological field visit in 1991 is anything more than co-incidental alignment of boundaries dating from various periods.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

Maynard Ms CRO R58/5/9

SMR PRN 03267, 09919, 01248.

OS 6" 1886, Sheet LIII.6

Enclosure Map and Award 1836/7 CRO RDc52

Pre Enclosure Map of Public paths and boundaries CRO uncat

Chicheley Estate Map of Orwell 1686 CUL Maps Ra.1

Various manorial court rolls, minutes, surveys and deeds. CRO L1/130; CRO L63/40 -49; L1/124-129; R59/14/15/1-3; L63/57/5; L63/56/10

Layers History of Cambridgeshire Gough Ms Cambs 19 f99-104

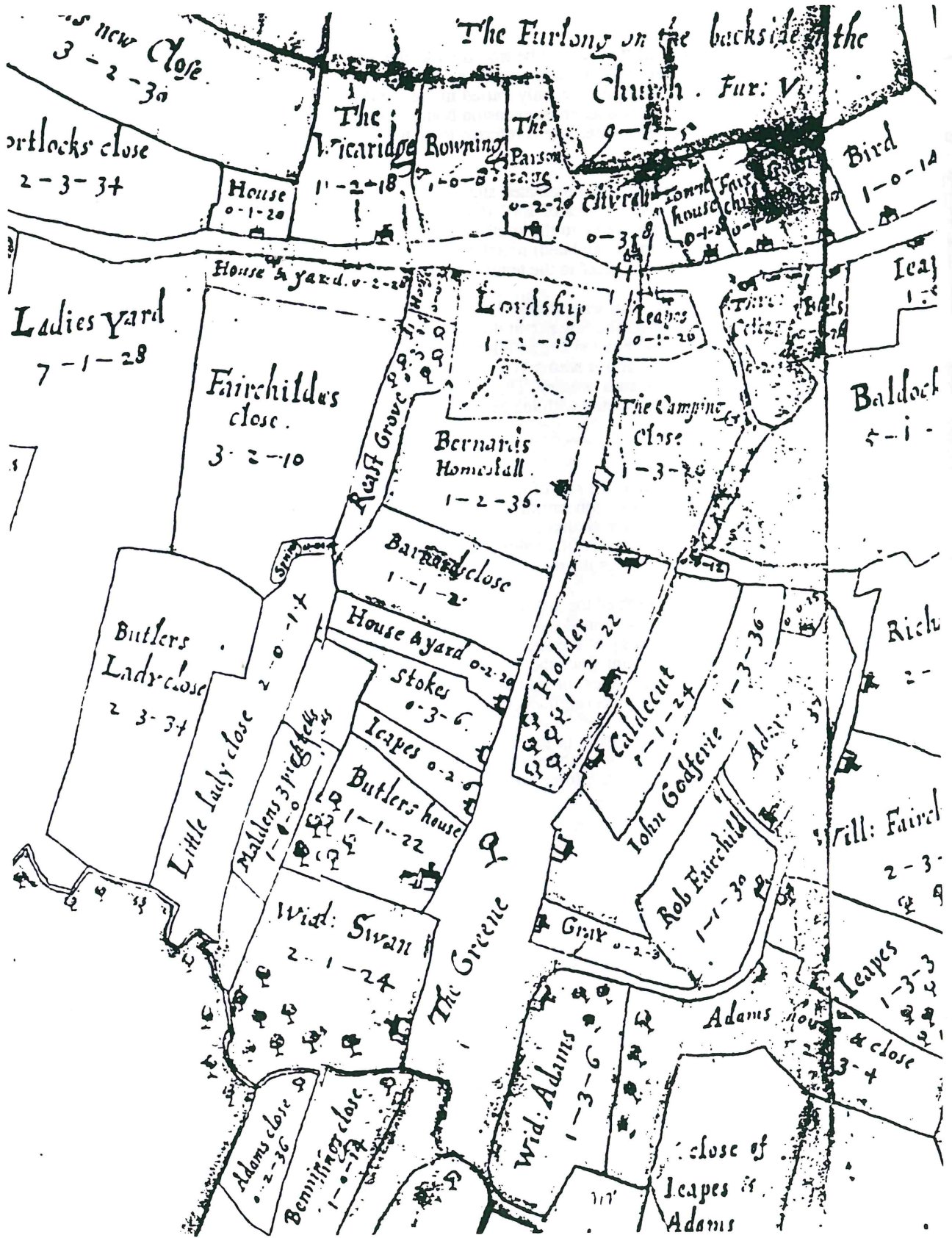


Figure 16 Map of Chicheley Estate (Orwell) 1680/86, CUL Maps Ra.1 (Copy CRO uncat.)

Secondary Sources

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## Appendix B

### Summary of Pottery, Chapel Orchard, Town Green Road, Orwell.

*Paul S. Spoerry BTech, PhD*

Most of the pottery recovered from this site, regardless of date, is in the form of small, rather abraded sherds. Exceptions to this are a few post-medieval earthenware sherds from topsoil contexts and a small number of Roman sherds from (902).

Below the topsoil the majority of the dateable sherds are Roman. Medieval material is mostly St Neots type shelly wares, except for the two sherds of late medieval Siegburg stoneware that were recovered from the fill around the chalk fragments of wall (803). It is believed that most of the pottery, both Roman and medieval, is residual where recovered. The site has experienced several periods of landscaping, and presumably also ditch clearance, and these episodes would have re-deposited earlier pottery into later features.

Problems with using this pottery for dating can be seen in, for instance Trench 1 and Trench 8, the street-frontage platform. In Phase 2a, which is believed to be the primary phase of medieval platform construction, contexts produced only seven sherds of medieval pottery, alongside five of Roman date. No pottery was recovered from the secondary 'use' phase (2b). The following platform make-up and rebuild is represented by Phase 3. The make-up produced 32 sherds or more of Roman pottery and up to 31 sherds of medieval pottery, whilst the wall (803) produced 2 Roman sherds and four of medieval date (including the two Siegburg). It is therefore apparent that these phases, all of which are believed to be of medieval or early post-medieval date, contain about equal proportions of Roman and medieval pottery. Also the fact that most of the sherds derive from the Phase 3 platform make-up, which undoubtedly involved re-deposition of soil in bulk, does indeed suggest that the ceramic assemblage is likely to contain a large residual component.

#### Codes

BOCH	Bone China (not transfer-printed)	1800+
ENGS	English stonewares	1690-1900
NEOT	St Neot's type ware	1000-1300
PMR	Post-medieval redwares	1600-1800(+)
RGW	Roman grey wares	40-400
RGWC	Coarse RGW	40-400
RGWF	Fine RGW	40-400
SAM	Samian-type wares	40-200
SIEG	Siegburg Stoneware	1350-1500
TGW	English Tin glazed wares	1600-1800
TRANS	Transfer-printed creamware/bone china	1780+

Rpot	Roman pottery
Mpot	Medieval pottery
Xpot	Post-medieval pottery
Upot	Pottery of uncertain date





















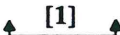
bs                      Body sherd(s)

Context	Pottery	Fabric codes and/or notes
(103)	2 x Rpot 4 x Mpot 2 x Xpot 4 x Upot	1 x large RGW bs, 1 x small RGW bs NEOT 2 x glazed PMR Sandy, Rpot or Mpot
(104)	1 x Mpot 1 x Upot	NEOT Hard redware, either Rpot or Xpot
(106)	2 x Rpot 4 x Mpot	RGWF ?NEOT
(117)	3 x Rpot 1 x Mpot	RGW Rim in chalky fabric

	2 x Mpot	NEOT
(201)	2 x Rpot 3 x Mpot 7 x Xpot	1 x Buff and 1 x RGWC 1 x glazed jug, 1 x sandy, 1 x NEOT 5 x PMR, 2 x TGW
(202)	6 x Rpot 2 x Xpot	1 x SAM, 1 x RGW PMR
(203)	1 x Rpot	Black colour coat, buf fabric ?Nene Valley
(204)	5 x Rpot 2 x Mpot 1 x Upot	small bs ?NEOT
(301)	2 x Xpot	1 x ENGS, 1 x TGW
(305)	1 x Upot	redware
(502)	4 x Xpot 2 x Upot	Various 19th cent, Probably medieval
(503)	1 x Xpot	BOCH
(504)	6 x Rpot	1 x moulded red colour coat
(505)	3 x Rpot 6 x Mpot 8 x Xpot	small sherds various small various 19th cent.
(601)	2 x Mpot 6 x Xpot	small bs 1 x PMr, 6 x BOCH & TRANS
(802)	30 x Rpot  26 x ?Mpot	2 x bs colour coat, 1 x bs with ext buff slip, 1 x RGWF rim, 2 x RGW rim, 17 x assorted RGW bs, 1 x hard- fired buff handle, 6 x assorted buff wares, But some possible Rpot! 19 x bs and 2x rims of assorted shelly and NEOT, 5 x other bs
(803)	2 x Rpot 4 x Mpot	1 x RGW and 1 x buff fabric 1 x NEOT, 1 x soft black fabric, 2 x SIEG
(902)	5 x Rpot 5 x Mpot	1 x SAM, 1 x large sherd Horningsea ware (late Roman) small sherds of NEOT
(904/5)	1 x Rpot 1 x Mpot	RGW ?NEOT
Tr9 'subsoil' from spoil	1 x Rpot 1 x Upot	RGW
(906)	2 x Rpot	1 x RGW, 1 x red earthenware base
(1002)	5 x Xpot	BOCH & TRANS
Area A Fieldwalking	9 x Rpot 24 x Mpot	Assorted abraded sherds includes 5 x assorted decorated jug fragments

### Appendix C

#### Key for Illustrations

	Limit of excavation		Topsoil		Chalk marl
	Extent of cut		Silt		? Former topsoil
	Extent of cut, unexcavated		Clayey silt		Chalk pebbles
	Extent of deposit (in plan)		Clay silt		Bone
	Extent of deposit (in section)		Clay		Root action
	Extent of deposit, uncertain (in section)		Silty clay		
	Datum level				
	Deposit number				
	Cut number				
	Section line and number				

## Appendix D

## List of Contexts

Conxt	Description	Nature	Below	Above
101	Topsoil	organic-rich silt 10YR 3/3		103
102	Degraded/compacted chalk 'foundation'	'chalk marl' 2.Y 8/3	103	118
103	Final (chalky) make-up of platform earthwork	sandy clay silt 2.5 Y 5/2	103	106
104	Fill (as 103) of post-hole [105]	sandy clay silt 2.5 Y 5/2	103	
105	Cut for post-hole	-		
106	Clay-rich make-up	silty clay 2.5 Y 5/2	103	in 117
107	Cut for ?stake-hole	-		in 110
108	Cut for ?stake-hole	-		in 110
109	Cut for ?stake-hole	-		in 110
110	Patch/layer of chalk (mix of 102 & 103 matrix)	sandy silt 2.5 Y 8/3	103	117
111	As 110	as 110	103	117
112	Fill of ?stake-hole [107]	sandy clay silt 2.5Y 5/2	103	
113	Fill of ?stake-hole [108]	sandy clay silt 2.5Y 5/2	103	
114	Fill of ?stake-hole [109]	sandy clay silt 2.5Y 5/2	103	
115	Cut for stake-hole	-		in 102
116	Fill of stake-hole [115]	sandy clay silt 2.5Y 5/2	103	
117	Lower platform make-up	sandy clay silt 2.5Y 5/2	103	119
118	Base of chalk 'foundation' 102	'chalk marl' 2.5Y 8/3	102	119
119	Natural subsoil			
201	Topsoil	organic-rich silt 10YR 3/3		203
202	Fill of 'hollow way'	silt, dark grey-brown	203	204
203	'Platform' make-up	silt, mid grey-brown	201	202
204	Wall (foundation)	chalk rubble up to 20cm	202	205
205	Natural	clay-silt 10YR 5/1	204	
301	Topsoil	Organic-rich silt 10YR 3/3		305
302	Natural (dark grey-brown)	clay silt 10YR 4/2	303	
303	Chalk rubble wall (foundation)	fine component=silt clay, 10YR 6/3	?304	302
304	Sub-round cut (?tree hole)	-		in 302
305	Make-up (dump) on ditch edge	sandy silt loam, brown grey	305	306
306	Fill of [304]	clay silt, grey with yellow- brown lenses	305	302
307	?Cut into [304]/(306)	-		?in306
501	Topsoil	silt with high organic content		502
502	?causeway' bank	silt, 2.5Y 4/2	501	503
503	?causeway' bank	clay-silt, 5Y 4/2	502	504
504	Dump layer below 'causeway'	clay silt, olive grey	503	505
505	?Buried soil below 'causeway'	dark grey brown silt	504	506
506	Natural subsoil (or slump of natural from ditch side)	clay silt, medium grey brown	505	
601	Topsoil	organic silt		602
602	General 'wash' into ditch	clay silt, 10YR 5/2	601	604
603	Cut for ditch	-		in 604
604	Natural	clay silt, 10YR 7/1		602
605	Wooden stakes on SW side	-	602	604
606	Wooden stakes on NE side	-	602	604
801	Topsoil	organic-rich silt, 10YR 3/3		802
802	Final make-up of platform (chalky)	silt clay, 10YR 5/2	801	806
803	Chalk rubble wall (foundation)	fine component=silt clay 10YR 4/2	801/ 802	802
804	Cut for wall 803	-		in 802
805	Platform make-up (like 117)	not excavated	802	
806	Layer below 802 and lying on edge of 805 'platform'	silt clay,	802	
807	Fill of ?cut 808 (?pit)	dark grey-brown 10YR 4/2	802	

901	Topsoil	silt clay, 10YR3/3	901	902
902	Make-up/ditch clearance deposit	clayey silt, 10YR 5/1	902	903
903	Buried soil (slumped into ?pit)	silty clay, 10YR 3/3	903	904
904	Make-up/ditch clearance deposit	clay silt, 10Yr 5/2	904	905
905	? Pit fill	clay silt, 10YR 5/1	905	906
906	? Pit fill	clayey silt, 10Yr 6/1	909	
907	?Natural subsoil	gravel-based clayey silt		in 907
908	Cut for ?Pit	-		907
909	Make-up/ditch clearance deposit,	silty clay, 10YR 5/1	904	



## GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS.

**Anglo-Saxon.** The period dating between the withdrawal of the Roman legions in 410 and the Norman invasion of 1066. Within this period several ethnic groups from northern Europe vied for control of the British Isles, including the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danes, and Norwegians. The latter two groups are collectively known as the Vikings and became involved in British politics from the eighth century, later than the others. The Vikings were successful in occupying a large part of the north and Midlands of England, before providing a King (Cnut) for the whole of England. For most of this time England was divided up into several kingdoms until Saxon resistance to Viking incursions led to the unification of England under Aethelstan and Alfred.

**Artefact.** Any object made by people. Generally, this word is used for finds such as pottery, stone tools, or metal objects, but it can be used in a much wider context in that the landscape we have today is a product of human activity and is thus an artefact itself.

**Auger Survey.** A field technique where a hollow probe is screwed into the ground and a sample of the material below the ground is retrieved, either within the 'bit' of a screw auger, or within a specially-designed chamber of a more complex tool. The nature and depth of strata thus revealed are recorded.

**Coprolite mining.** The activity of digging to recover fossilised animal dung (coprolites), of high phosphate content and an important fertiliser in the 19th century. Layers known to be rich in coprolites were systematically 'mined' in open quarries.

**Croft.** A small enclosed piece of land, usually arable but sometimes pasture, attached to a rural property (toft).

**Dendrochronology.** A scientific dating method whereby the age on felling of pieces of timber can be told by the study of annual growth rings.

**Earthworks.** The remains of any former activity area or structure, now evident as variations in level of the ground surface. Study of the form of these earthworks can usually indicate their original form and function.

**Enclosure.** An area defined by a continuous surrounding ditch. These may be enclosures around human settlements, fields, or paddocks for stock. Rectilinear enclosures are ones with straight sides and corners, whilst curvilinear enclosures are ones with rounded sides.

**Fieldwalking.** Technique of archaeological survey. Walking over ploughed and weathered soil, an experienced observer can collect many ancient artefacts, and by plotting the distribution of such find spots on maps an idea of the use of the landscape can be built up for each period of the past.

**Medieval.** Historic period that begins with William the Conqueror's invasion in 1066, and ends around 1500.

**Moated Site or 'Moat'.** A particular class of monument from the medieval period. Most 'moats' represent the former site of a 'Manor House' with a partial or complete moat dug around it. 'Moat' building is believed to have been more of a 12th-13th century fashion statement, than an actual attempt to defend a settlement site.

**Modern.** The period since modern industrialisation, roughly corresponding to 1800 onwards.

**Motte.** An early medieval fortification in the form of a flat-topped mound. A motte would usually be expected to have possessed a stockaded enclosure on top of the mound, and would often have been accompanied by a defended enclosure known as a bailey.

**Natural.** The local subsoil that is unaltered, in nature and location, by human action.

**Post-Medieval.** This period is generally considered to date from 1500, and is not used for dates after about 1800.

**Posthole.** A hole dug to receive a post. They can also result from driving posts into the ground. The latter, however, do not have distinct fills such as packing and a post pipe. A post pipe is the fill of a posthole which formed in the place of a removed post.

**Ridge and Furrow.** Medieval cultivation techniques led to a phenomenon of corrugated fields. Strips of land were allotted to individuals and a furrow was left between one person's strip and the next, leading to a corrugated ridge and furrow effect. Ridge and furrow shows up as cropmarks on air photographs and more rarely as earthworks in pasture fields.

**Roman.** Historic period AD 43 - 410 when much of Britain was part of the Roman empire. The term Romano-British is now widely used to describe the people of this period, as few were Roman themselves, but they were a provincial manifestation of the empire developing in a unique way. AD 410 was the date the legions were withdrawn, but the Romano-British culture continued for some time into the 5th century in tandem with Anglo-Saxon migration.

**Stakehole.** As *posthole*, but corresponding to a smaller piece of wood, usually from an insubstantial structure.

**Stoneware.** Pottery deliberately fired to a high temperature which results in a 'stone-hard' fabric.

**Toft.** A medieval rural house site, usually accompanied by a *croft*.