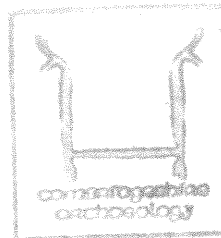
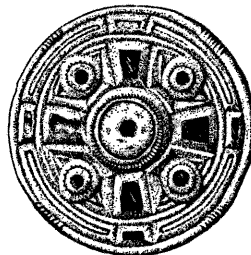


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ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD OFFICE  
FULBORN COMMUNITY CENTRE  
HAGGIS GAP, FULBORN  
CAMBRIDGE CB1 5HD Tel: 881614  
(Fax 881678)



Archaeological Field Unit

# Prehistoric and Roman Archaeology at Barford Road, Eynesbury

Steve Kemp

1993

**Cambridgeshire Archaeology**

Report No 90

*Commissioned By  
Messrs. Tesco Stores Ltd*

**Prehistoric and Roman Archaeology  
at Barford Road, Eynesbury**

**1993**

**Steve Kemp BA. AIFA.**

**Editors: Alison Taylor & Tim Reynolds PhD**

**Illustrator: Twigs Way MSc AIFA**

**with contributions by Twigs Way MSc AIFA & CAI French PhD MIFA**

*REPORT NO. 90*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD UNIT  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY  
FULBOURN COMMUNITY CENTRE  
HAGGIS GAP, FULBOURN  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB2 5HD  
TEL (0223) 881614  
FAX (0223) 881678

**Barford Road, Eynesbury  
Site Code EYN BR 93  
NGR TL 184/583**

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## **Non-Technical Summary**

The archaeological resource within the proposed development site of Barford Road, Eynesbury (NGR TL 184/583) was evaluated by the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Cambridgeshire County Council on behalf of GL Hearn & Partners. Archaeology was evaluated by trenching formulated on the basis of aerial photographic evidence.

Trenching exposed an interrupted prehistoric ring-ditch approximately 15m in diameter with opposing 'entrance ways' on the southwest and northeast sides, shown on the aerial photographs. A row of posts crossed the southwestern 'entrance way', the posts being deliberately removed at a later date. A number of pits lay outside the enclosed area of the ring-ditch. These were found to contain 'dumped' charcoal and burnt clay.

A Roman/post-Roman trackway bounded on either side by ditches crosses the development area. Cropmarks indicate an entrance way on the south side of the trackway system, this is likely to have provided access to fields. The trackway system cuts across two earlier, though undated, ditches.

In the southern part of the development area, defined by an area of deeper soil bounded to the north by the gravel terraces, a semi-circular ditch was discovered at a depth of 0.70m, this is likely to be of prehistoric date; no other archaeological remains were recognised at this depth. The only other archaeological features recognised in this southern area cut through the alluvium and a buried soil disturbed by medieval and post-medieval ploughing. Such ditches and quarry pits are recent in date.

Cropmark evidence and excavation indicates that the archaeological remains within the development area are concentrated on the gravel terraces to the north and that the southern areas have been partially disturbed by pitting and quarrying associated with the construction of the A45.

The archaeological resource of the area consists of Neolithic, Bronze Age and probably Iron Age and Roman remains including cursus, small henge monuments, ring ditches, pit alignments and trackways. Prehistoric settlement remains may also occur. Cropmarks and archaeological fieldwork show the survival of prehistoric archaeology on the eastern side of the Great Ouse river allowing the archaeologist the opportunity to (conceptually) 'rebuild' the prehistoric, Roman and medieval landscapes.

## 1.0 Introduction

Archaeological evaluations of the proposed development area off the A45 and Barford Road, Eynesbury were undertaken on behalf of GL Hearn & Partners following recommendations by the County Archaeology Office (CAO) for a pre-planning assessment of the archaeological resource. Aims and objectives of the evaluation were to assess the nature, quality, and extent of the archaeological resource in order to minimise the impact of the proposed development on the archaeological record.

## 2.0 Location

The development area is located to the south of St. Neots and southeast of Eynesbury (Fig. 1), lying immediately to the north of the A45 at the junction with the B1043 Barford Road, to the east of the Great Ouse river and south of Barford Road Farm (NGR TL 184/583). Figure 1 indicates the location of the development area and details the extent of archaeological work.

## 3.0 Geology and Topography

Superficial geological deposits are of 1st and 2nd terrace gravels, these were referred to as 'natural' during the course of the excavation trenches terminating at this depth. Gravels overlie glacial tills and solid geology of Jurassic mudstones.

The land rises to the east and west, with the development area lying within the floodplain of the Great Ouse river valley, 15-16m OD. Proximity of the site to the Great Ouse river and sediments exposed in trenching indicate that the area was affected by over bank flow and alluviation during historic and prehistoric periods. This is likely to have lead to the preservation of artefactual remains at depth as fluviually deposited sediments built up over the archaeological deposits. Because of these *formation processes* there is the potential for the preservation of a greater suite of features ie banks, barrow mounds, etc. which are rarely preserved in ploughed environments. Preservation will also depend on the competence of the Great Ouse, shifting of the river course may lead to the erosion of archaeological deposits. The present course of the Great Ouse appears to have been maintained from at least the mid eighteenth century. Gravel terraces within the proposed development area and the location of the archaeology show that the river made significant course shifts prior to the Neolithic/Bronze Ages since when alluviation appears to have been the main response of the river system to anthropogenically and climatically induced changes to the landscape.

## 4.0 History

The site is located at some distance from the settlement areas of St. Neots and Eynesbury. Present landuse is of an agricultural nature with arable cropping predominating, the presence of ridge and furrow shown in trench sections suggest arable cropping from an early date. A sinuous field boundary which is often indicative of medieval field systems is located to the south of the A45. This boundary appears to represent a post-enclosure boundary change (Appendix A). The area has been arable since at least 1550 with no evidence of meadow land in the immediate vicinity which suggests that the River was not causing seasonal flooding of the area. Proximity of the site to the Great Ouse river, soil depth and soil profile (Fig 7) indicate occasional waterlogging and alluviation which may have had a significant effect on the agricultural regime and economic potential of the region at times.

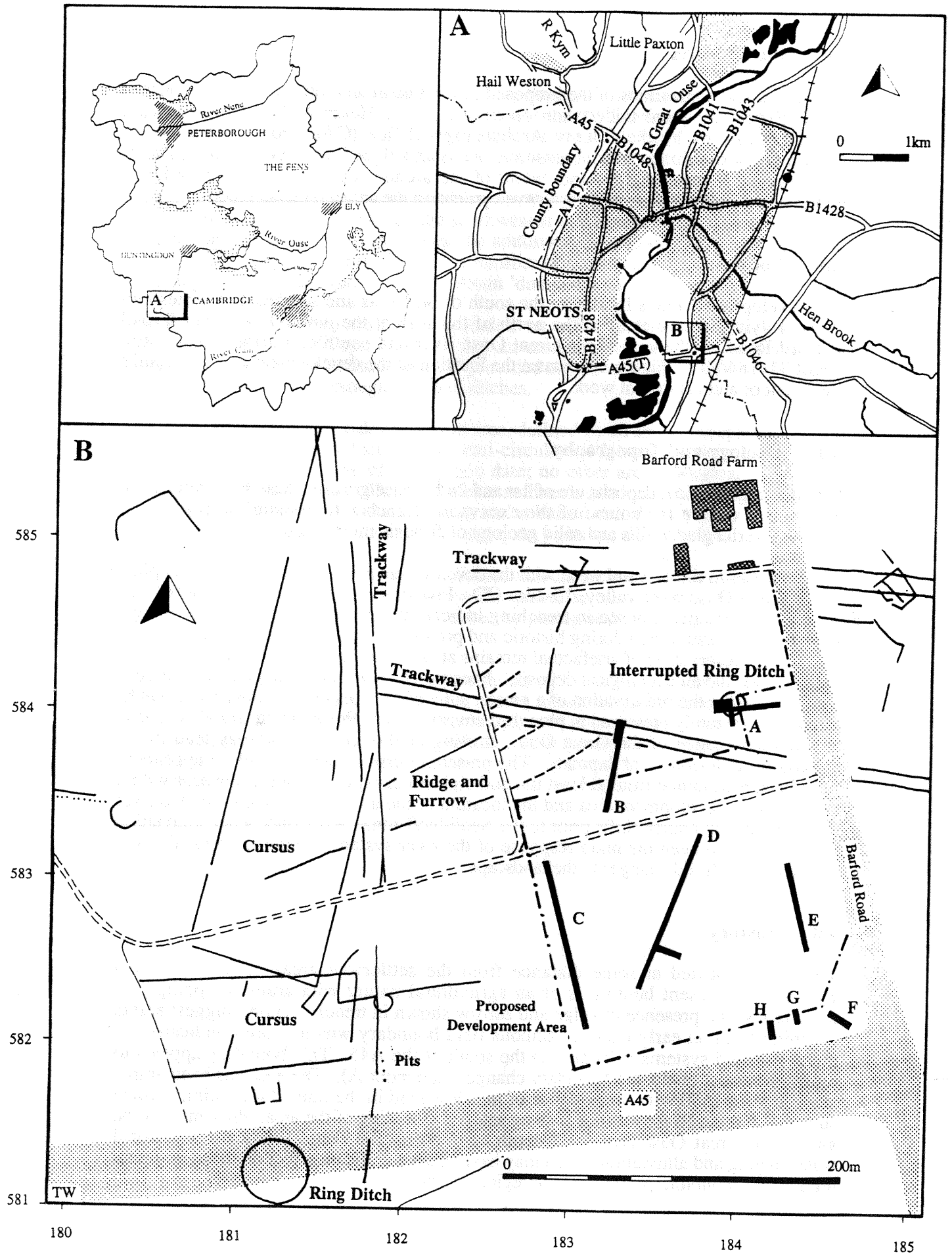


Figure 1 Location of Site and Trenches

Recent land use has included quarrying associated with the construction of the A45. This appears to have resulted in the relocation of much of the present topsoil, shown by the presence of gravels separating topsoil from subsoil deposits in southern areas.

## 5.0 Archaeological Background

River terrace gravels along the course of the River Great Ouse are known to contain Palaeolithic material indicating the potential for the preservation of lithic scatter sites at depth within the development area. Alluviation of the landscape during prehistoric and historic periods would have aided the preservation of archaeological remains. Alluviation has been linked with human impact (Bell & Walker 1992) reflected in the sediments of the middle and lower reaches of a river system. Such deposits may indicate changes in land management upstream of the development area leading to increased erosion and sediment transportation with deposition and storage down stream. There is little evidence for migration of the river system in these middle reaches during later prehistory which would have in turn destroyed evidence for human activity in the immediate landscape.

Cropmarks indicate the presence of a prehistoric landscape lying close to the Great Ouse river. The landscape consists of three cursus remains, ring ditches and interrupted ring ditches, field boundaries, trackway systems and pit alignments. Archaeology is unknown from within the area north of the A45 and south of the enclosure trackway system (Fig 1), (now ploughed out) shown as an east-west aligned ridge through the field. Aerial photographs indicate the presence of deeper soils which may disguise archaeological remains.

Metal detectorists have recently discovered Anglo-Saxon burial artefacts within the development area.

The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) for Cambridgeshire held by the CAO lists Mesolithic (SMR 00373, 00377 & 00512), Neolithic, and Bronze Age (SMR 00447 & 00373) artefacts being recovered from the surrounding area. A cropmark complex (prehistoric settlement? SMR 10065) lying to the east of the development area has been destroyed by housing development. A Bronze Age ring ditch (SMR 10198) at TL 181/581 was excavated during 1983/4. Neolithic, Iron Age, Romano-British and Saxon material was recovered during these excavations (Herne 1984). Aerial photographs (SMR 06150) and finds spots indicate a continuation of the prehistoric landscape to the east, west and north of the proposed development area consisting of *ritual* monuments i.e. burial mounds, cursus and henge monuments, which have now been ploughed flat. The only archaeological deposits remaining are those preserved in areas of deeper soil or cut into natural sands and gravels.

## 6.0 Evaluation

Limited trenching was used to evaluate the nature of the archaeology, locating archaeological 'features' such as pits and ditches which were then excavated by hand. Trenching strategy was based on the aerial photographic evidence plotted out and interpreted (Fig 1) by Air Photo Services.

Approximately 400m of linear trenching, 1.8m wide, were opened during the field evaluation. Two trenches were located to assess the trackway system Trench B) and interrupted ring ditch in the northern half of the development area (Trench A). Further trenching (Trenches C, D, E, F, G and H) were used to assess the archaeologically sterile area; quarry and compound areas.

Due to the absence of an accessible bench mark levels are not set to ordnance datum. However, they are internally consistent within the development area. The area lies around 15 to 16m OD.

[=cut]

(=deposit; fill or layer)

Trench A located to assess the interrupted ring ditch on the northern edge of the assessment area. Topsoil depth in the area was 0.30m, overlying a shallow disturbed subsoil and gravels (Appendix B). The ring ditch proved to be shallow, 0.25m in depth, the eastern segment was poorly defined barely cutting the natural gravel deposits. Cropmarks indicate an enclosed area of about 15m diameter. The interrupted segment (entrance way) on the southwestern side of the ring ditch is crossed by an irregular post alignment deliberately removed by a later ditch ([41]). It is possible that the aligned post-holes ([43] [45] [47]) are associated with post-hole [35] in which case an earlier phase of structures on the site may be indicated. There appears to be considerable variation in ditch form suggesting the remains represent construction and alteration of the monument over time or a number of structures being represented by the archaeological remains, in which case one presumes that earlier remains were still visible and a particular importance attached to the land.

Outside of the area enclosed by the ring ditch three pits were partially exposed within the trench; one of these was excavated [14] and found to contain charcoal and burnt clay. These may indicate the presence of settlement/occupation activities in the vicinity or be associated with activities occurring inside ring ditched enclosure.

Trench 48m long

Topsoil depth 0.30m

Subsoil depth 0.15m contains lenses of gravel

- [14] Pit lying against the north section in the eastern arm of Trench A.; 1.80m in diameter full extent unknown and a depth of 0.90m. The presence of at least two other features of similar size and surface deposits verifies the interpretation of this feature as a pit. The pit is flat based with gentle slightly concave sides. A small gully of 0.20m in depth and 0.30m in length lies on the western side of the ditch. This is part of the pit system, with the fills extending from this gully into the main pit suggesting that both elements were active at the same point in time and back filled as one. The pit is largely filled with a deposit of sandy clays with charcoal flecks. Much burnt clay was found in this deposit. The quantity of material in evidence may indicate an industrial process taking place near to the site, especially if as expected the other pits contain similar material. There is no evidence for firing occurring within the pit. No other finds were recovered.

#### Ring Ditch complex

- Trenching exposed the southern half of an interrupted ring ditch with varying forms of ditch defining an area about 15m in diameter (Fig 2), as indicated by the cropmarks. The eastern side of the ring ditch was recognised during initial cleaning but lost during defining and excavation episodes. It is argued that the ditch did exist at this point but was so shallow in nature (as shown by other segments) that the effects of ploughing 'heavily' truncated this segment.
- [30] Segment of interrupted ring ditch in the southern arm of Trench A. (Fig 2). The ditch was 0.25m in depth, 0.80m wide. The feature appears to have been truncated by modern ploughing and development of medieval ridge and furrow. Contains a deposit of grey brown sandy silts and clays. Cut by [32]. No finds.
- [32] Northeast-southwest aligned sub-rectangular feature in the southern arm of Trench A.; about 2m in length. 0.80m wide and 0.40m in depth. Cuts ring ditch segment [30]. Contains a deposit of yellow grey brown sandy clayey silts. No finds associated.
- [33] Terminal of interrupted ring ditch ? on the northwestern side of Trench A. 0.33m in depth and 0.80m in width. Contains a mottled orange, grey brown and dark grey deposit of silts, clays and sands. Width and depth corresponds to segment [30], however dimensions and form indicated by the cropmarks (Figs 1 & 2) suggest that this feature lies outside the ring ditch complex. The scale of the plot used (1:2500) may cause some inaccuracy in defining size and shape. No finds.
- [35] Posthole cut by ditch terminal [33]. 0.50m in diameter and 0.20m in depth. Contains a deposit of reddish orange brown sandy clayey silts with occasional gravels. No finds.



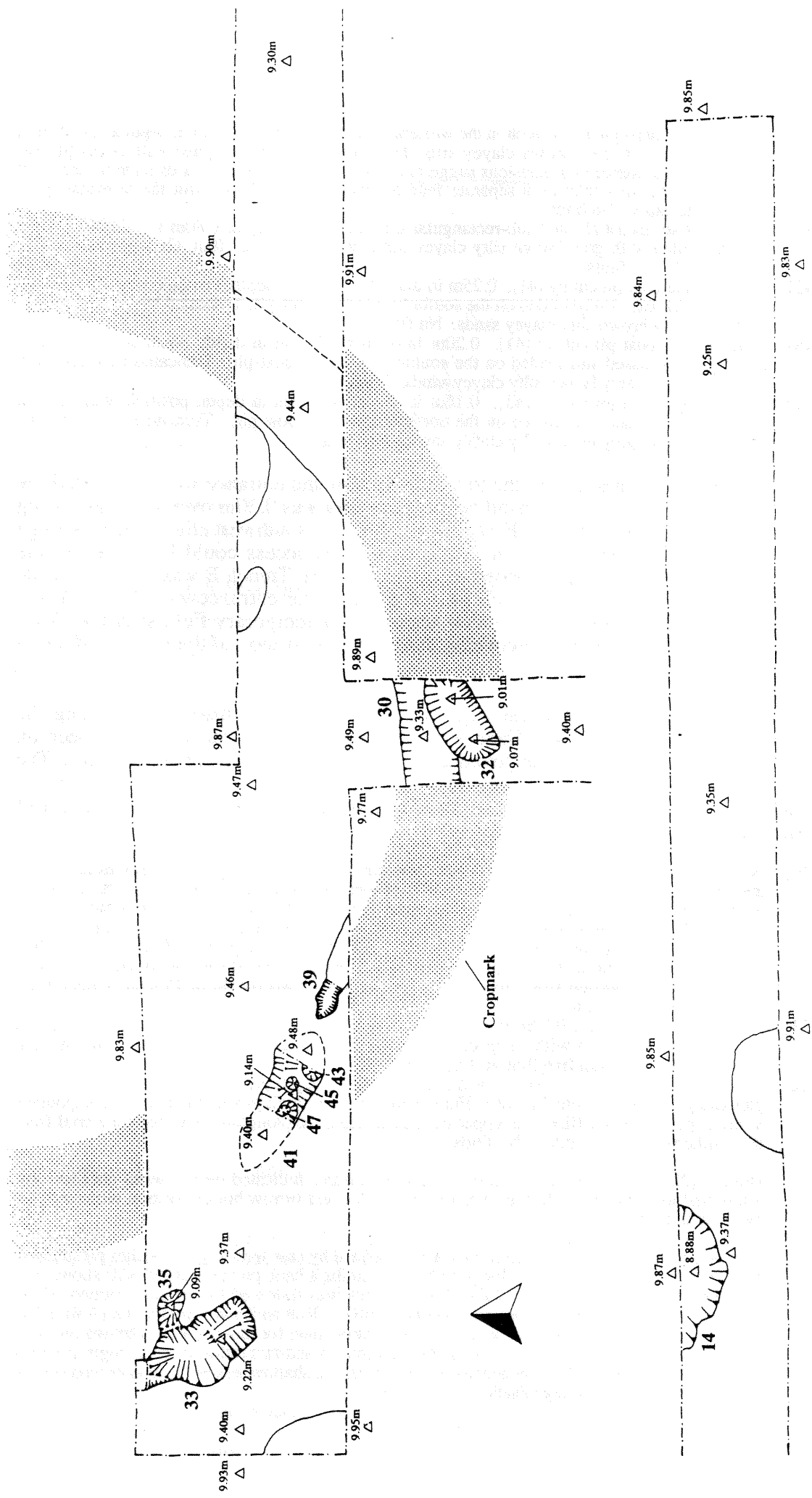


Figure 2 Trench A Ring ditch



- [39] Terminal of interrupted ring ditch in the western area of Trench A. 0.12m in depth and 0.40m in width. Filled with grey brown clayey silts. The ditch segment is aligned with segment [30] (Fig 2), the difference in dimensions suggests a change in ditch form towards its termination. It is possible that this may be a separate feature from the ring ditch, with the terminal lying beneath the bank. No finds.
- [41] Northwest-southeast aligned sub-rectangular ditch; 0.30m in depth, 0.80m in width 2.25m in length. Filled with grey brown silty clayey sands with occasional flint. Cuts postholes [43], [45] & [47]. No finds.
- [43] Posthole and post-pit cut by [41]. 0.25m in diameter 0.25m in depth. Posthole was vertical sided and flat based surrounded on the southern side by a post-pit. Truncated by [41]. Filled with dark grey brown silty clayey sands. No finds.
- [45] Posthole and post pit cut by [41]. 0.20m in diameter 0.15m in depth. posthole was vertical sided and flat based surrounded on the southern side by a post-pit. Truncated by ditch [41]. Filled with dark grey brown silty clayey sands. No finds.
- [47] Posthole and post pit cut by [41]. 0.16m in diameter 0.18m in depth. posthole was vertical sided and flat based surrounded on the northern side by a post pit;. Truncated by ditch [41]. Filled with dark grey brown silty clayey sands. No finds.

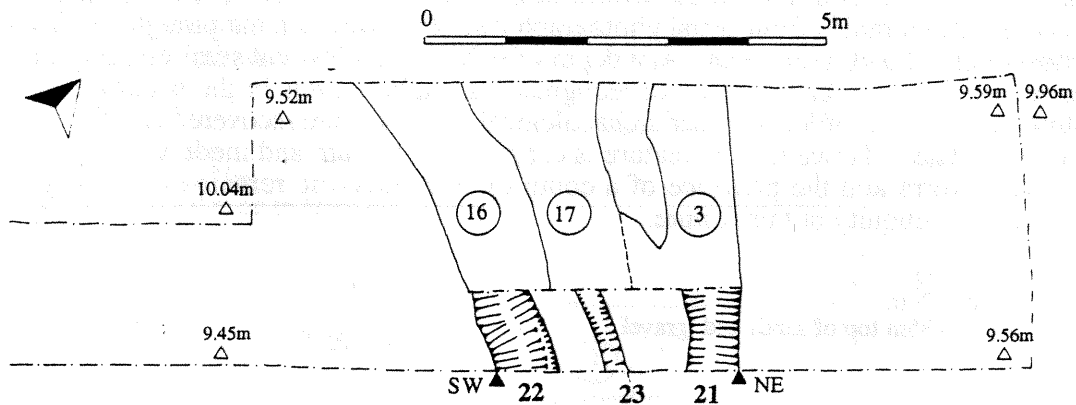
**Trench B** was located to assess the trackway system and entrance way recognised by aerial photography (Fig 1). Topsoil depth in the area was 0.30m overlying undulating gravels and a disturbed subsoil. East-west or northeast-southwest aligned narrow ridge and furrow was shown in section. As only limited access could be gained to the trackway system within the proposed development area, Trench B was located outside the development area. The trench passed through the entranceway shown on the cropmark plot this may have provided access to contemporary field systems. Two pieces of Roman pottery were recovered during the excavation of the northern ditch of the trackway.

A series of northeast-southwest aligned ditches were recognised as predating the trackway system (Fig 3 & 4). Their presence corresponds to 'vague' features seen on the cropmark plot originally interpreted as ridge and furrow by Air Photo Services. The stratigraphic data provided by excavation and spatial relationships indicated by the cropmark plots may suggest the presence of boundaries associated with the complex of other prehistoric features in the area.

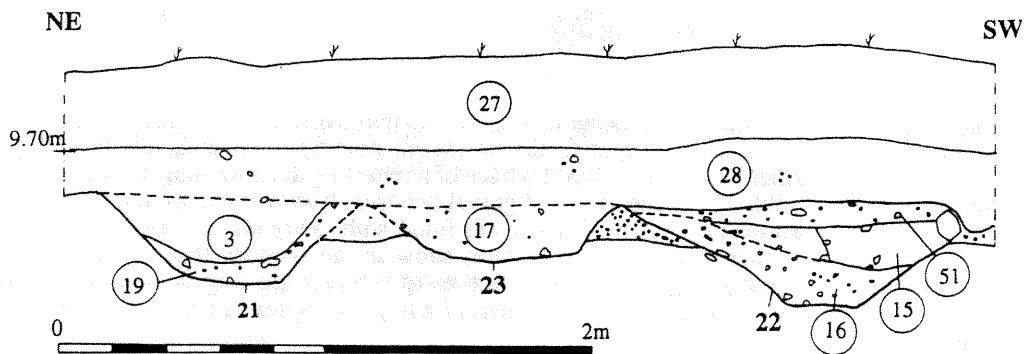
- [20] Northwest-southeast aligned ditch; 0.90m in width and 0.30m in depth, probably truncated by medieval ploughing. Cuts through ditch [23]. Filled with yellow brown clayey silts with flint and clayey sands and flint gravels. Alignment and location indicate that this is the northern ditch of the trackway system shown on the aerial photographic plots. No metallurgy or road surface features were in evidence to the south. The absence of a parallel ditch to the south is suggestive of an entrance way, possibly to a field as no other ditch alignments or activity centres were recognised from trenching or cropmarks. Two pieces of Roman pottery were recovered from the feature.
- [23] East-west aligned ditch; 0.90m in width and 0.25m in depth probably truncated by medieval ploughing. Flat based with steep convex sides, cutting ditch [22]. Contains fills of light brown yellow silts with fine flint gravels. No finds.
- [22] East-west aligned ditch; 1.30m in width and 0.40m in depth probably truncated by medieval ploughing., V-shaped with flat base. Filled with brown silty clays with high gravel components in the upper and lower fills. The upper fill may indicate the ploughing-in of bank material from the southern side of the ditch. No finds

Ditches [22] and [23] lie on the same course as features indicated on the aerial photographs. These had initially been interpreted as traces of ridge and furrow but excavation indicated that these are ditches.

Two phases of land use are recognised, the first defined by east-west aligned ditches presumably recut-or realigned overtime, the first probably containing a bank on the southern side shown as a band of coarse gravels in the section (Fig 4). This was followed by the construction of the trackway system after the ditches had become infilled. Roman finds were recovered from the upper fill of the ditch suggesting a Roman/post-Roman date for this deposit. The unstructured nature of the deposit may suggest slow but continuous sedimentation from a single uniform source producing a largely homogenous fill. However the shallowness of the feature would have provided little control or organisation of sedimentation.



**Figure 3** Trench B Prehistoric and Roman ditches



**Figure 4** Trench B Section through prehistoric and Roman ditches

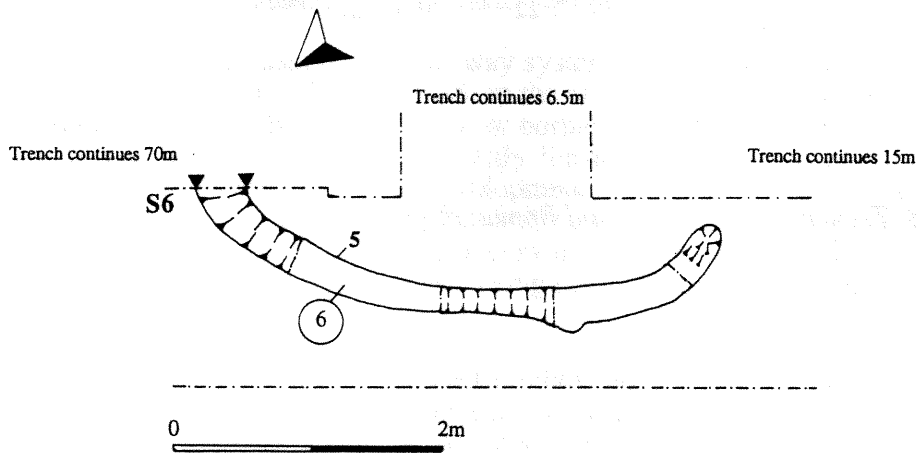
**Trench C** was located to assess the presence of borrow pits, where archaeology would have been disturbed. The quarry pit was recognised 15m from the northern end of the trench, and close to the A45. Gravel and construction materials separate the top soil and subsoil deposits indicating the removal of topsoil within the southern half of the assessment areas.

Trench 100m long  
 Topsoil depth 0.30m  
 Subsoil depth 0.70m onto sands and gravels

No archaeological remains

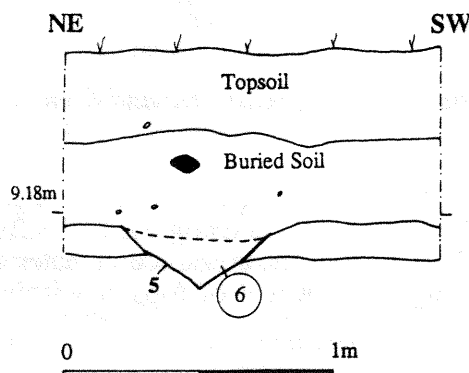
**Trench D** was located to assess the presence of archaeology and the extent of the quarrying in the southern area where deeper soils were believed to disguise archaeological remains from aerial photographic survey. Beneath the plough soil lies a subsoil of about 0.40m in depth. At a depth of 0.70m a shallow cut semi-circular ditch was revealed. This feature was not recognised at higher levels in the section due to disturbance of the profile. No other archaeological remains were recovered and the ditch remains undated. However, the feature is capped by alluvium and medieval ridge and furrow, its form and the presence of a complex of prehistoric remains in the region indicates the antiquity of this feature.

Trench 100m long  
 Topsoil depth 0.30m  
 Subsoil depth 0.35m top of sands and gravel



**Figure 5** Trench D Prehistoric ring ditch

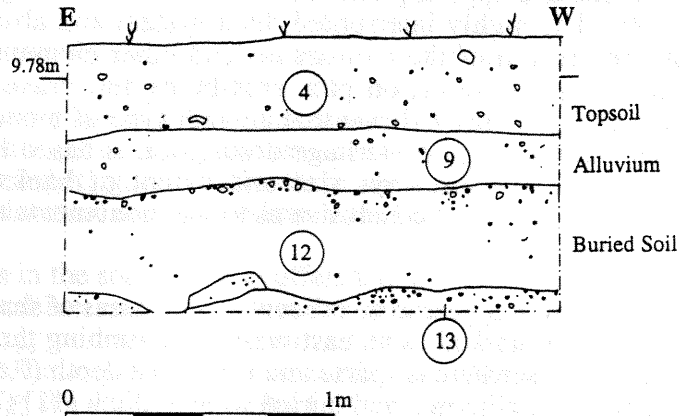
- [5] Semi circular ditch located at a depth of 0.60m, cut into sands and gravels; 0.25m in depth, 0.50m in width. Feature is deeper to the northeast, grading level with the natural on the southern side. Further trenching showed no trace of a returning ditch forming an enclosure. The feature was not visible above the sand and gravel deposits, however the section was disturbed by rooting and earthworm activity. The cut was filled with sandy clayey silts, with occasional flint gravels. No other archaeological features show in the sections (banks) or cut into the gravel (pits, post-holes) to give any indication as to whether the ring ditch was cut from a higher level, overlain by alluvium or forms part of a larger complex of prehistoric activity. No finds.



**Figure 6** Trench D Section through prehistoric ring ditch

**Trench E** was located to assess the presence of archaeology close to Barford Road. A modern pit and northeast-southwest aligned linear ditch was recognised cutting the subsoil deposits, no finds were recovered. A slight buried soil was recognisable overlain by alluvium (Fig 7). Natural sands and gravels were recognised at a depth of 0.70m.

Trench 50m long  
 Topsoil depth 0.30m  
 Subsoil depth 0.70m on to sands and gravel



**Figure 7** Trench E Soil profile

[11] Northeast-southwest aligned ditch; 0.70m in width and 0.33m in depth. Steep sided cut with flat base, filled with grey brown silty sands and clays. This feature cuts through the subsoil deposits of alluvium and buried soil. No finds.

**Trench F** located to assess for the presence of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery reported by local metal detectorists. No archaeological deposits were discovered.

Trench 15m long  
 Topsoil depth 0.30m  
 Subsoil depth 0.35m on to sands and gravel

No archaeological remains

**Trench G** located to assess for the presence of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery. The area had been disturbed by modern quarrying.

Trench 10m long  
 Topsoil depth 0.30m  
 Subsoil depth 0.35m on to sands and gravel

No archaeological remains

**Trench H** was located to assess for the presence of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery. The area had been disturbed by modern quarrying.

Trench 10m long  
 Topsoil depth 0.30m  
 Subsoil depth 0.35m on to sands and gravel

No archaeological remains

## 7.0 Results and discussion

The aerial photographs appear to give an accurate representation of the archaeology in the region; the interrupted ring ditch and trackway systems were recognised in the trenches. However, other features were exposed in Trench A suggesting a greater complexity of activity than initially indicated by the aerial photographs. Charcoal and burnt clay lying within pits may indicate settlement or industrial activities, no other finds were recovered from these features. This absence of finds makes it difficult to date features with any accuracy, however, the form is suggestive of hengi-form monuments on the basis of size and opposing entrance ways as defined English Heritage (English Heritage 1989). The highly interrupted ditch system and absence of bank material (possibly due to erosion of the monument) and other elements expected inside the enclosure such as pits, cremation pits, post-holes and graves, and post-holes and cremation pits external may indicate that another type of monument, possibly burial related is present. The English Heritage description is based largely on earthworks, number and nature of causeways size and extent of banks. In the absence of earthworks it is difficult to be conclusive as to the monuments type due to similarities with other monument types.

Archaeological deposits appear to be concentrated in areas of shallower soil north of the modern track system marked as an east-west ridge running through the centre of the field. Archaeology elsewhere is sparse and is at some depth (0.60m). Features cutting the subsoil deposits of alluvium and buried soil i.e. ditch [11] (Trench E) are likely to be recent.

The trackway system is interpreted as giving access to field systems of the Roman and post-Roman date (possibly pre-open field systems). The system stretches from the east where it appears to cross a series of small circular enclosures possibly indicative of late prehistoric settlement (now under housing). To the west, the trackway appears to join a north-south aligned trackway which may be the Middle Path referred to in the Glebe terrier 1550/1600 (Appendix A).

No traces of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery were recovered, however trenching was very limited. The presence of Anglo-Saxon burial artefacts in such an area could prove to be deceptive, much of the soil appears to have been relocated during the construction of the A45 and the area appears to have been disturbed by pitting.

## 8.0 Conclusion

Artefactual evidence is inconclusive as to the date of the archaeological remains, however, the cropmarks and stratigraphic evidence indicates the preservation of a prehistoric landscape throughout the area. The main activity foci lie on a terrace of higher gravels in the northern zone of the evaluation area. Deeper soils have developed in areas affected by seasonal (?) alluviation, areas liable to flooding are bounded by the terrace gravels. A Roman/post-Roman trackway system crosses the site leading towards the river where it joins a north-south aligned trackway running parallel with the course of the Great Ouse. Entrance ways may give access to field systems.

Medieval ridge and furrow followed by recent mechanised ploughing has disrupted the upper sequence of the soil profile in all areas. Modern disturbances associated with road construction would have caused major destruction to potential archaeological deposits in the southern area. Pitting appears to be spread throughout the area with the largest quarry located to the west of Trench D, with other pits situated in Trenches E, G and H.

## 9.0 Recommendations and further considerations

Impact of the proposals could be minimised by locating development areas requiring deep foundations or services in the southern portion of the evaluation area.

The archaeology recognised in Trench A suggests the need for further work by open area excavation in order to define the nature, extent and date of activity types, particularly those in association with the interrupted ring ditch. The site as a whole needs to be placed in its temporal, spatial and social landscape to provide a wider understanding of the archaeology.

Archaeological remains are located within areas of deeper soil but appear to be less concentrated than those lying on the gravel terrace. This area would be difficult to investigate by any method other than excavation (trenching), this process could be enhanced by detailed augering to define areas of made ground/quarry pit areas which appear to be scattered throughout the southern area. Trench strategies could then be refined to assess undisturbed deposits and excavated archaeological deposits.

Storage of sediments in the southern area offers the opportunity to study anthropogenic affects on the immediate environment and impact on sediment supply upstream. However, archaeology and sediments (non-organic) in this case may provide few opportunities to date the sequence, such research work should be built into a regional programme assessing the response of the Great Ouse river to human and climatic impact. Further assessment of the aerial photographic evidence could provide data on channel movement which may be seen as an indicator of channel competence, this may indicate areas where archaeology is likely to have been removed and the affects of the River on contemporary populations.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Documentary Research for Archaeological Evaluation at Barford Road Farm, Eynesbury, Cambridgeshire TL184/585**

Twigs Way BSc, MA, AIFA

#### **Introduction**

This research was carried out as part of the archaeological evaluation of the area to the immediate south of Barford Farm. The documentary work was not requested until after the excavation had taken place and was designed specifically to address questions raised in the course of that excavation.

There were four main queries, all of which could be categorised as focusing on previous land use;

- i. During the excavations a small trackway was noted leading east-west. It was hoped that documentary research would enable a date to be assigned to the track, which was suspected to be relatively modern;
- ii. A sinuous boundary was located to the south of the area investigated. The other field boundaries in the area appear to be post enclosure but the shape of this boundary suggested that it dated to the period of the open field system. It was hoped documentary research might confirm this.
- iii. Relict ridge and furrow was recovered in the sections of the trenches. This appeared to be aligned east-west whereas the crop mark evidence had previously suggested that the ridge and furrow ran north-east to south-west. It was hoped there would be a documentary record of the strip layout of the open fields;
- iv. Top soil was deeper to the south of the area investigated. It was queried whether this might be attributable to a particular type of land use in the past.

Documentary research was able to answer the first three of the above questions and also to provide a land use history back to the sixteenth century.

#### **Sources**

The proximity of Eynesbury to St Neots (and its recent partial incorporation into that administrative area) has resulted in documentary sources being split between Huntingdon Record Office and Bedfordshire Record Office. Earlier material (largely concerned with manorial descent) is held in national archives in London. For the purposes of this research only those documents held in the Huntingdon archives were consulted. This collection includes early OS maps (1882/87 Sheet XXV15); Enclosure map and award of 1800 (HRO 2603/26/3); Estate Map of Eynesbury 1757 (HRO MD2 Maps 20 and 21); Glebe Terriers of 1550/1600, 1607, 1673 (HRO 2603/3/1-3); Tithe agreements 1769-1773 (HRO 1603/3/1/4). In addition to this the Victoria County History for Huntingdonshire was consulted.

For the present purposes this material was sufficient. Should more work become necessary in the future the HRO also holds the court books from 1704 onwards, whilst Bedfordshire Record Office holds some seventeenth century terriers and deeds.



## Discussion

### *i. Trackway and ii. Sinuous boundary*

Both of these features were evident on the 1886 OS map of the area. The track led east-west and then turned for a few yards south. For the east-west portion the track follows a straight field boundary. The sinuous boundary to the south runs from the road to the river, also approximately east-west.

Neither of these features are present on the Enclosure map of 1800 and they are not referred to in the accompanying award. The award specifically states the boundaries and size of each allocation and also separately lists all paths, tracks and roads. At enclosure the area under consideration was divided between two land holders. The northern part was awarded to P. Pattison (who also held the separate field which was to become Eynesbury Field Farm, now Barford Farm), whilst the southern area was allotted to the Rector for tithes. It is the area that was allotted to the Rector that was subsequently divided further - resulting in the sinuous boundary.

It can be stated confidently that both of these features are post 1800, although it is possible that the sinuous boundary has been placed with reference to an earlier feature (ie. furlong boundary).

### *iii. Ridge and Furrow*

The fact that field divisions allocated at Enclosure ran predominantly north-east south-west strongly suggests that the furlongs within the earlier open field also had that orientation in the most part. However, at Eynesbury we are fortunate in having an excellent estate map of 1757 which confirms this. This map (comprising of two parts) illustrates the strips as they lay within the open fields of that period. It is 'incomplete' in that it only shows those strips held by the manor belonging to the Earl of Sandwich, but it is complete enough for present purposes. The open field within which the area under consideration lay was called 'Sand Field'. This field ran from the south and east of the village of Eynesbury to the parish boundary in the south and east, taking up most of this part of the parish and extending to both sides of the road from 'Little Barfield to St Neots'. The field was further subdivided by a footpath which ran parallel to the turnpike road further to the south. On the estate map this is referred to as a 'Balk', however in a Glebe terrier of 1550/1600 the same area is referred to as the 'middle path'. Some of this detail, such as the extent of 'Sand Field,' can also be seen on the Enclosure map, where the St Neots Road is referred to as the 'Turnpike Road'.

Although it can be seen from the estate map that the predominant alignment of the strips is north-east to south-west (as suggested by the crop mark evidence) in fact some strips within the area now under examination run at right angles to this, and there is also an area where the alignment is not illustrated (as the strips were not held by Earl of Sandwich). Unfortunately it is difficult to relate the exact modern boundaries to this estate map but the area lies approximately in the area of strips no. 91-97. It is very unlikely that in the area not illustrated the strips ran in a third direction.

It is possible that the sinuous boundary, which later subdivided the area allotted to the Rector at enclosure, follows the division between these north-east south-west aligned strips and those aligned at right angles to this. As far as can be calculated it is in the area of this junction.

### *iv. Land Use*

At the enclosure period (1800) allotments in the area of 'Sand Field' are referred to as being under arable cultivation. Between the western boundary of the field and the River Ouse lies an area described as 'meadow' and other areas of meadow within the parish are also marked separately and distinct from arable.

On the estate map of 1757, as discussed above, the 'Sand Field' is divided into cultivation strips typical of arable land. Areas of meadow are also marked separately on this map.

Earlier confirmation of this arable status comes from an excellent series of Glebe terriers from 1550/1600 to 1673. These terriers describe the allocation of church land within the parish and thus give information on each of the fields throughout which the land was scattered. Strips lying in the 'Sand Field' are described as being arable and lying with the east abutting the 'Barford Highway' and the west abutting the 'Middle Path' (thus also confirming the later alignment). Meadow land is described separately and does not include any land in 'Sand Field'.

Tithe agreements in 1769-1773 describe the crops and animal produce of all the landholders in the parish who paid tithe, and comparison of this information with the estate maps (which gives ownership of holdings) confirms that 'Sand Field' was arable at this period.

Land use from the sixteenth century to the modern period has thus been consistently arable. This does not in itself solve the 'problem' of the greater soil depth to the south. There are at least two factors that might be considered here. The first is the proximity of the river which has, over time, been liable to flooding and consequent deposition of material - although there appears to be no reason why this should be greater in this one area than another. The second is the dual alignment of the cultivation strips. If the area examined is at the approximate junction of the aligned strips then there may have been a build up of soil at the headland of these strips. The field name suggests a friable soil perhaps liable to movement by continuous cultivation.

## **Appendix B**

### **Eynesbury, Barford Road 1993: Soil Assessment**

CAI French PhD MIFA

#### **Observations**

The open trenches were inspected by the writer on August 18, 1993.

Throughout the assessment area, a buried soil of variable thickness and preservation was present. It is a yellowish brown, silty (clay) loam to sand/silt which exhibits numerous vertical earthworm castings, and occasionally exhibits two distinct horizons. The latter occurs where the alluvial cover is thickest in the south-eastern corner of the site. The lower horizon is distinguished from the upper by a slight greater illuvial deposition, gleying and iron deposition. Nonetheless, this soil is much disturbed and truncated by east-west orientated, narrow ridge and furrow, particularly over the southern half of the assessment area. Beyond and to the south of the stream channel which meanders across the site in an approximately diagonal line from north-east to south-west, the buried soil is better preserved and probably less disturbed. It is overlain by a thin layer of silty clay, or alluvium, deposited by overbank flooding of the river probably on a seasonal/occasional basis.

The present day plough soil is an extremely distinctive dark greyish brown silty clay loam. Essentially this is an alluvial topsoil which has probably had 'night-soil' dumped on it in the earlier years of the century.

#### **Research Potential**

Although the stream channel is as yet undated, the greater degree of burial afforded to the buried soil by alluvial deposition to either side of the stream channel holds out the prospect of better archaeological preservation, especially of the often more enigmatic prehistoric features. The crescentic ring gully found in the trial trenches in the south-eastern corner of the assessment area is a case in point.

The possible small, interrupted ring-ditch also revealed in the trial trenches in the less deeply buried area in the north of the assessment area may be a variant on the late Neolithic hengi-form type of monument commonly found in the lower Nene and lower Welland valleys (for example, Etton Landscape 2 in the lower Welland valley (French & Pryor, forthcoming), and at the Co-op assessment site Cat's Water, Fengate, Peterborough in the lower Nene valley (Pryor, forthcoming)). This would also repay comparison with other sites excavated in the area, such as nearby Eynesbury (Herne and Hunter, pers comm) and elsewhere to the south-west in the Great Ouse valley near Bedford (various excavations by the Bedfordshire County Council Archaeology Unit).

The former site of Eynesbury revealed a barrow mound and ring ditch, pre-barrow occupation and ploughing and post-barrow alluviation. The buried soil and associated deposits were studied by the writer in 1986 (unpublished). It revealed a lengthy land-use sequence of forest development, clearance, cultivation and occupation, truncation and barrow construction, and seasonal waterlogging. It would be a valuable comparative study to examine the buried soil at this Barford Road site by similar micromorphological techniques as little other work has been done in the area.

## References

French CAI 1986 *The micromorphological analysis of the late Neolithic buried soil at Eynesbury, Cambridgeshire*. British Museum, unpublished report.

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Archaeological Field Unit  
Fulbourn Community Centre  
Haggis Gap  
Fulbourn  
Cambridge CB1 5HD  
Tel (0223) 881614  
Fax (0223) 881678



**Cambridgeshire**  
**County Council**  
**Archaeology**

The Archaeology Office  
Rural Management  
Department of Property  
Shire Hall, Castle Hill  
Cambridge CB3 0AP  
Tel (0223) 317312  
Fax (0223) 317341