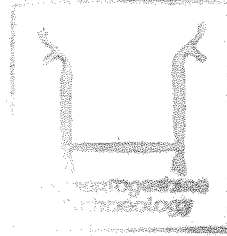
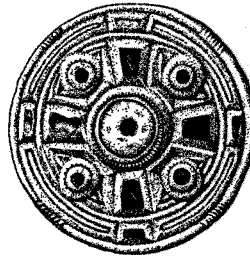


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Archaeological Field Unit

## An Archaeological Assessment at the Cathodean Crystal Site, Linton

K Welsh

1993

**Cambridgeshire Archaeology**

Report No A16

*Commissioned By Bidwells Chartered Surveyors*

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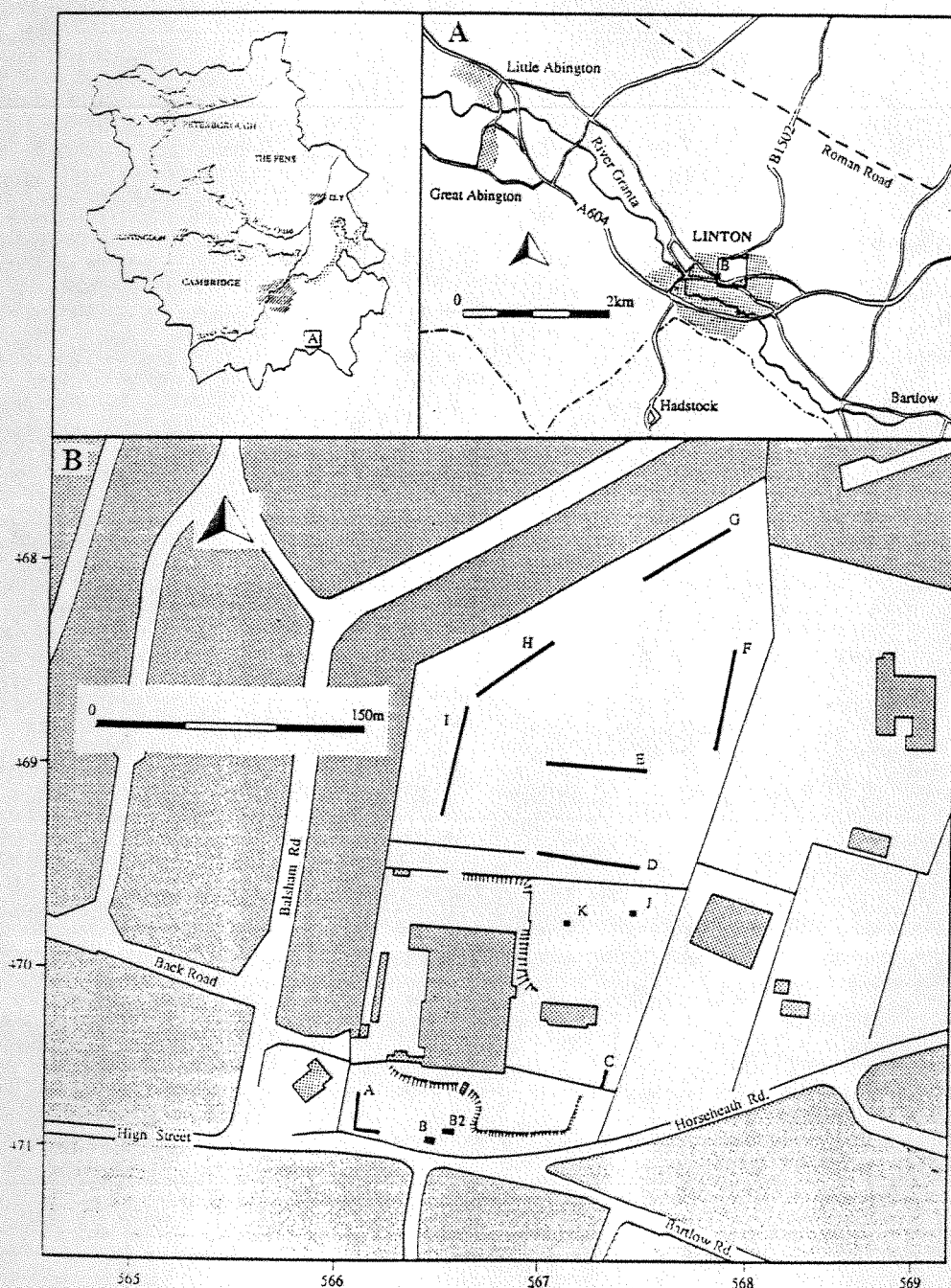
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## NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

*In July, 1993, Cambridgeshire archaeology undertook an archaeological assessment of land at Linton, Cambridgeshire.*

*Although close to the medieval core of Linton and no more than 200m from earlier discoveries of Anglo-Saxon burials, only a single, nineteenth, or early twentieth, century ditch was found. A large number of small, natural channels were observed, almost certainly produced by glacial meltwater.*



*Figure 1 Site location showing position of Trenches*



## INTRODUCTION

Between 22nd and 28th July, 1993, the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological assessment at the site of the former Cathodean Crystal factory, Linton (TL 5670/4700). The work was carried out at the request of Bidwells Chartered Surveyors (Agents), following a brief provided by the County Archaeology Office in order to produce a planning determination. It is proposed that a residential development should be built on the factory site and on the field immediately to the north.

No previous archaeological finds have been reported on the site itself, but it fronts onto the High Street and it was felt possible that the medieval settlement of Linton extended so far east. The discovery, in the 1930s, of pagan Anglo-Saxon burials some 200m to the west, raised the possibility that further burials would be found here.

## TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The site lies in the north-eastern part of the modern village of Linton, on the side of a small, north-south valley (Fig 1). In general, the land slopes fairly steeply from 56.5m OD in the north-east to 47.0m OD in the south-west, although the southern end of the site is flatter. This is due, in part, to landscaping in front of the Cathodean Crystal factory.

The site lies on Middle Chalk although this, as was subsequently shown during the evaluation, is cut into by many periglacial stream channels.

## 3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The ancient market town of Linton straddles the River Granta about 15km south-east of Cambridge. It was first granted a market in 1246, and remained an important market centre until the nineteenth century.

No evidence has been found of early Prehistoric activity and little, beyond one or two stray finds of Neolithic flint tools, until the Iron Age. In 1948, an Iron age 'house' was found during chalk quarrying to the south of the village (TL 5568/4638). The Roman period is more fully represented, with inhumations and other remains found at the Village College (TL 557-/469-), and a villa site lying to the south-east at Barham Hall (TL 571-/462-).

Anglo-Saxon remains, in the form of burials, have been found at various times both within and close to Linton. A large cemetery, was discovered during the nineteenth century to the east of Linton, on 'Linton Heath'. Unfortunately, this can no longer be located with any certainty. Of more immediate relevance, was the discovery, in the 1930s, of several early Saxon burials only about 200m to the west of the site (TL 564-/468-).

The site fronts onto the High Street at the extreme eastern end of the Medieval village. A medieval wayside cross, Barham Cross, was apparently situated close to the south-eastern corner of the site. An east-west road, Cambridge Way, formerly crossed the site, the line of which is preserved, just to the west, as Back Road.

## METHODOLOGY

Ten trenches and two small test pits were opened using a mechanical excavator with a 6ft toothless ditching bucket, under the observation of an archaeologist (Fig 1). Six trenches, D-I, each fifty metres long, were excavated in the field behind the factory. Two test pits, J and K, were positioned in an area of slight landscaping in order to establish the depth of overburden. Trench C was located on the presumed line of the old Cambridge Way. In order to investigate the street frontage, three trenches, A, B1, and B2 were opened. Further trenching along the frontage was originally intended, but it proved impossible owing to the large number of live, underground pipes and cables in the area.

Once opened, the trenches were cleaned by hand, photographed, and planned so that any features so revealed could selectively excavated and recorded using the standard techniques of the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire Archaeology.

## RESULTS

In each trench, the topsoil was completely removed using the mechanical excavator. Over most of the site there proved to be about 0.3m of topsoil, increasing to about 0.4m in Trench I, at the bottom of the slope. Landscaping in front of the factory has reduced the depth of topsoil in Trenches B1 and B2 to only 0.15m. In Trench A, the topsoil varies in depth from 0.25m, near the road, up to about 0.6m.

Beneath the topsoil, in Trench A, a layer of slightly clayey sand was seen to a depth of about 1.0m below the ground surface. Below this was a layer of pale brown sand containing flint nodules. After stripping the turf in Trench B1, it was discovered that there was insufficient room between the road and two modern service trenches to excavate any further. Therefore, a second trench, B2, was opened a few metres to the south. It contained two recent tree-holes and a north-east to south-west channel, filled with brown, slightly clayey sand, cut into weathered chalk.

Trench C exhibited no sign of the former Cambridge Way. A narrow channel ran from north-east to south-west across the trench. It was filled with orange-brown, slightly clayey sand containing occasional flint nodules.

Trenches D, E, F, and G all showed similar features. Directly beneath the topsoil, cut into the natural, weathered chalk, were a series of channels, up to 1.5m wide, containing orange-brown, slightly clayey sand with flint nodules. Many of the channels also contained patches of pale brown sand. All of these channels were orientated parallel to the direction of slope. Trench F also contained an east-west ditch, Cut 3, 1.1m wide, at least 1.8m long, and 0.1m deep. It contained a brown, sandy clay, Fill 2, along with fragments of nineteenth or early twentieth century, ceramic land drain.

Trench H contained similar sand-filled channels, but overlying them was a layer of orange-brown, silty sand, about 0.15m thick.

Trench I, at the bottom of the slope, showed, beneath the topsoil, a layer, 0.40-0.65m thick, of dark brownish grey, silty clay. It contained fragments of brick, charcoal, and chalk. Below this, was a layer, up to 0.4m thick, of orange-brown, silty sand with flint nodules. It overlay the natural, weathered chalk into which were cut two sand-and-flint-filled channels. In this case, the channels were up to 3m wide.

Test Pits J and K both showed about 0.25m of topsoil. In Test Pit J, this overlay weathered chalk. In K, there was a layer, 0.3m thick, of dark brown, silty clay and chalk fragments, containing pieces of brick, beneath the topsoil.

## DISCUSSION

Except for the ditch in Trench F, all of the features observed appear to be of natural origin. The channels all run parallel to the direction of slope and are certainly periglacial in origin. Cut 3 appears to be nineteenth century in date and probably represents a field boundary. No evidence of Saxon burials, or indeed of any other activity, was found. Trench I contains a layer of what is probably post-Medieval colluvium (hill-wash) overlying a clean sandy layer (also seen in Trench H). This earlier layer is probably also colluvium and may well date from a period only a little later than the stream channels which it seals.

Landscaping, in front of the factory and in the area of the test pits, may have removed any archaeological deposits. However, since, in Trench A, the ground surface has been built up and, in Trench B, the weathered surface of the chalk is still present, it seems more likely that no significant truncation has occurred. In this case, it must be assumed that the Medieval settlement of Linton ended further to the west.

## CONCLUSIONS

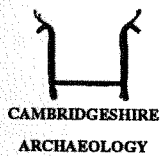
No significant archaeological materials or features were found during this assessment although many interesting geological features were observed. There is a possibility that early Prehistoric features may be sealed beneath the colluvium at the bottom of the slope, but it is unlikely that the construction of housing would disturb such deeply buried deposits. It is, therefore, felt unnecessary to carry out any further archaeological investigation in advance of development.

## REFERENCES

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