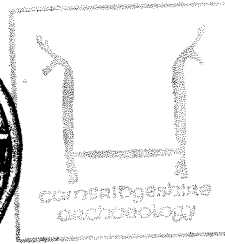
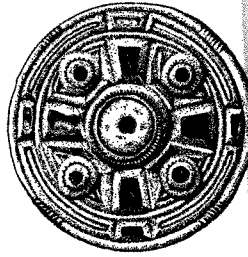


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## An Archaeological Evaluation at Meadow Lane, Linton

S Kenney

August 1995

**Cambridgeshire County Council**

Report No. A68

*Commissioned By G Impey & Co (Development) Ltd*

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Linton**

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## **SUMMARY**

*In August 1995, the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council (AFU) conducted an archaeological evaluation on land at Meadow Lane, Linton. Despite being close to the Medieval core of the village, only two features of nineteenth, or twentieth century date, were found in the four machine trenches excavated. However, sherds of Roman and Medieval ceramics were recovered from the underlying alluvial deposits.*

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# **An Archaeological Evaluation at Meadow Lane, Linton**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Between 2nd and 4th August 1995, the AFU carried out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to 10 Meadow Lane, Linton (TL5603/4688). The work was carried out at the request of G. Impey & Co. (Development) Ltd, in advance of a proposed residential development, and was in response to a brief set by the County Archaeological Office (CAO). The brief highlighted the archaeological potential of the site, situated as it was within the Medieval settlement, and only 100m from the possible location of a Priory (SMR 10850).

No previous archaeological evidence had been found on the site or in the immediate vicinity, and documentary sources did not indicate the historical presence of any structures.

## **2. GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

The site lies on the Granta river valley alluvia, which overlie the first terrace gravels. The ground is flat along the river banks, but slopes upwards to either side, in both directions along the High Street away from the site. It is probably the lowest part of Linton, at approx. 38m. OD (see fig 1).

## **3. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

Linton lies 15km. south-east of Cambridge, on the river Granta. It was first granted a market charter in 1246, and remained an important market centre until the nineteenth century.

Prehistoric finds have been rare, only a few Neolithic flint tools being discovered, until, in 1948, an Iron Age 'house' was found during chalk quarrying south of the village (TL5568/4638).

A Roman presence is indicated by burials found at the Village College (TL557-469-), and a villa to the south-east at Barham Hall (TL571-/462-).

Anglo-Saxon burials have been found, both within and close to Linton, and a large cemetery was discovered on 'Linton Heath', the exact location of which is no longer certain.

The site fronts onto Meadow Lane, and backs onto the Granta. It is located within 70m of the river crossing, and within 50m of the High Street. Meadow Lane itself does not appear on a map of 1850, but it may have been a track, and as such, not worthy of recording. It would have lead to the Westrop Meadow, common land until at least 1550, now partially occupied by the recreation ground. Most recently, the site was in use as a builders yard.

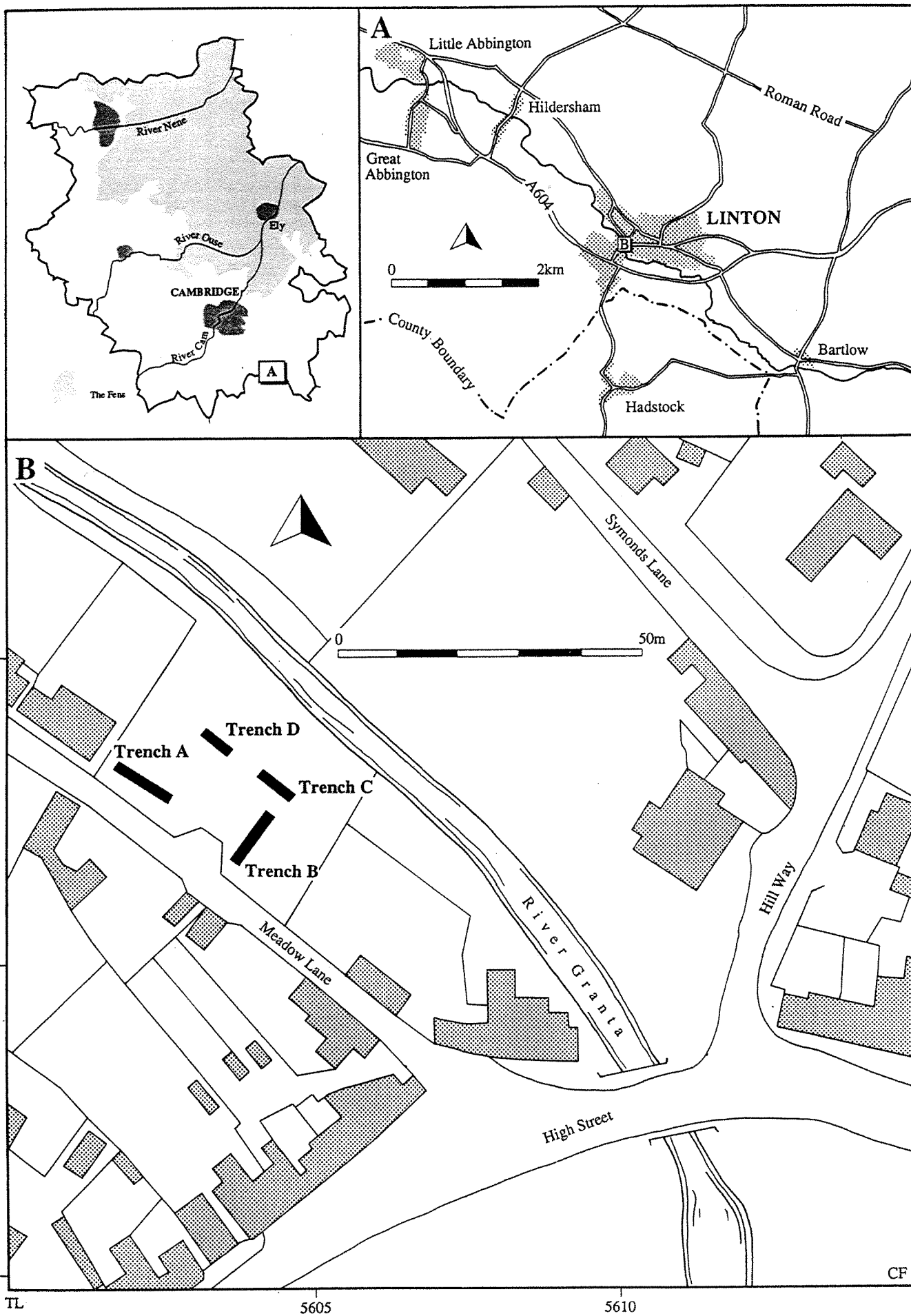


Figure 1 Location Map

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

Four trenches were opened using a mechanical excavator with a 1.5m toothless ditching bucket, under the supervision of an archaeologist (see fig. 1). Two trenches, A and B, were each ten metres long, the others, C and D, being five metres each. The former were placed to assess the street frontage for any buildings which may have existed, the latter to check for the presence of garden features or domestic refuse disposal areas.

Where features were encountered immediately below the topsoil, in trenches A and C, no further excavation was carried out by machine. Trenches B and D, where no features were uncovered, were machined down to the gravel by removing the layers of alluvium stratigraphically. This was done to ensure that any features masked by subsequent alluviation were identified.

The trenches were cleaned by hand, photographed, and sample sections drawn. Features were sample excavated, and recorded using the AFU's standard system.

#### 5. RESULTS

In all four trenches, approximately 0.15m of topsoil overlay any archaeological features. These were in turn cut into the upper of three layers of alluvium. Finds were recovered from both features as well as from all three alluvia.

Trench A produced a single straight linear feature, [2], 0.1m deep, more than 6.0m long, and 0.4m wide, with a square butt end to the south-east. It clearly ran parallel to Meadow Lane, and extended beyond the north-western end of the trench. It was filled by (1), a very dark greyish brown silty clay, containing fragments of glass, and several sherds of nineteenth or twentieth century pottery. Bone was recovered from alluvium (10) at 37.50m OD, and a single Medieval potsherd from alluvium (12) at 37.00m OD.

Trench B produced no features, and was excavated by machine to the top of the gravel, at 36.46m OD. Fragments of bone, and a single Medieval potsherd were recovered from alluvium (3) at 37.65m OD. A fragment of abraded Roman wall tile was recovered from alluvium (9), at 36.55m OD.

Trench C produced a single circular pit, [7], 0.6m in diameter, and 0.38m deep. It had vertical sides, a flat base, and contained a single fill, (6), a very dark grey silty clay. Twentieth century finds were recovered from the fill. Bone fragments were recovered from alluvium (4), at 37.60m OD, and a fragment of abraded Roman wall tile from alluvium (5), at 36.45m OD.

Trench D produced no features, and was excavated by machine to the top of the gravel, at 36.39m OD. Fragments of bone were recovered from alluvium (8) at 37.50m OD.

## 6. DISCUSSION

The evaluation trenching suggests that, either the site was unoccupied until the nineteenth century, or all traces of occupation have been removed. Both of the features uncovered seemed recent in character, and pit [7] contained twentieth century material. It probably dates from the period when the site was in use as a builders yard.

It seems likely that, until this century, the site has always been riverside meadow, possibly grazing land on the western edge of the village. The lack of Medieval finds from the earliest phase of alluviation, and its markedly different appearance, including the presence of charcoal patches, might indicate that it belongs to an earlier period than subsequent phases.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

No further archaeological works are recommended before the proposed development takes place.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank G Impey & Co. (Development) Ltd for funding the project, particularly Les for the machining, and Steve for his interest. Thanks are also due to Louise Austin of the CAO, who prepared the brief, Dr. Paul Spoerry, the Project Manager, Chris 'The Full Monty' Montague for unstinting hard work on site, and Carole Fletcher for the illustration. Special thanks are due to Steph Leith and Richard Heawood for assistance with the surveying.

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### Maps

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## APPENDIX A

### List of Contexts

<u>Context</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Nature</u>	<u>Below</u>	<u>Above</u>
1	Fill	2.5Y 3/2 very dark greyish brown silty clay	Topsoil	2
2	Cut	Straight narrow linear	1	10
3	Alluvium	2.5Y 4/4 olive brown silty clay sand	2	12
4	Alluvium	2.5Y 4/4 olive brown silty clay sand	Topsoil	12
5	Alluvium	2.5Y 4/1 dark grey sandy silt clay	4	Gravel
6	Fill	2.5Y 3/1 very dark grey silty clay	Topsoil	4
7	Cut	Circular pit	6	4
8	Alluvium	2.5Y 4/4 olive brown silty clay sand	Topsoil	5/9
9	Alluvium	2.5Y 4/1 dark grey sandy silt clay	11	Gravel
10	Alluvium	2.5Y 4/4 olive brown silty clay sand	2	12
11	Alluvium	2.5Y 5/4 light olive brown silty sandy clay	3	9
12	Alluvium	2.5Y 5/4 light olive brown silty sandy clay	10	5/9





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