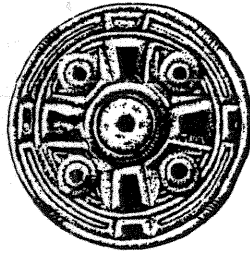


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Archaeological Field Unit

**Church Hall, Bury:
an Archaeological Desktop Assessment**

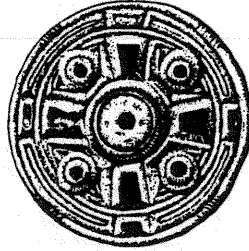
Rebecca Casa Hatton

March 2001

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. A176

Commissioned by Marshall Sisson, Architect
on behalf of the Vicar and PCC of Holy Cross, Bury



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**Church Hall, Bury:
an Archaeological Desktop Assessment
(TL 2875 8375)**

Rebecca Casa Hatton PhD

2001

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SUMMARY

This Desktop Assessment was undertaken by Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit prior to development of land at Holy Cross Church Hall, Meadow Lane, Bury, near Ramsey, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire (TL 2875 8375).

The development site comprises a triangular area of some 1250sqm to the east of Holy Cross Church, within the core of the medieval village.

No finds are known from the subject site itself. However, the archaeological potential of the whole area can be considered high, with particular reference to the presence of the twelfth century church.

Earthwork remains of medieval date survive some 150m to the south of the development site (and church). They consist of a series of house platforms and a trackway/holloway leading into fields where ridge and furrow survive.

The distribution of known finds also focuses on the church. In particular, west-east aligned inhumation burials have been uncovered together with medieval pottery immediately south of the church.

The state of preservation of any archaeological remains and deposits encountered during ground work is bound to have been affected by modern interventions in the area.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	SITE BACKGROUND	1
2.1	Planning Background	1
2.2	Topography and Geology	1
2.3	Archaeological and Historical Background	1
3	ASSESSMENT	5
4	CONFIDENCE RATING	5
5	ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL	5
6	CONCLUSIONS	6
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	7
	<i>Figure 1: Location Plan and SMR Entries</i>	2

**Church Hall, Bury:
an Archaeological Desktop Assessment
(TL 2875 8375)**

1 INTRODUCTION

The Desktop Assessment was undertaken by Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit prior to development of land at Holy Cross Church Hall, Meadow Lane, Bury, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire (TL 2875 8375). The work was commissioned by John Limentani of Marshall Sisson Architect on behalf of the Vicar and Parish Church Council of Holy Cross Church.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Planning Background

A Planning Application (Application No. 00/01633/FUL) was submitted by the Vicar and Parish Church Council of Holy Cross Church. The proposal entails the erection of a new church hall. Given the known background of the area (below), the possibility of there being archaeological remains determined the requirements for a Desktop Assessment as part of the implementation of a programme of archaeological work (Condition 4 of Planning Permission, Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Huntingdon District Council, 25 January 2001).

2.2 Topography and Geology

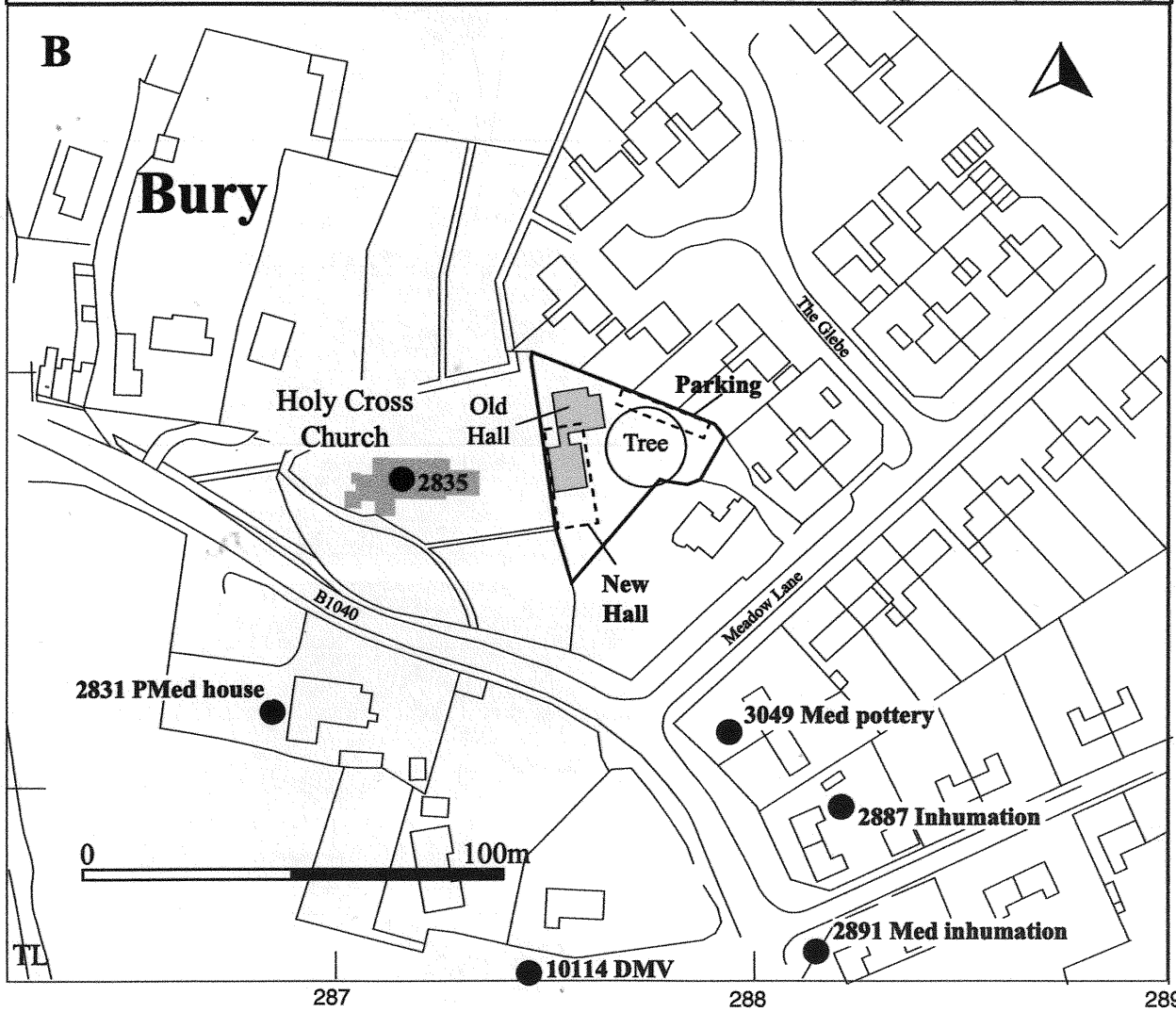
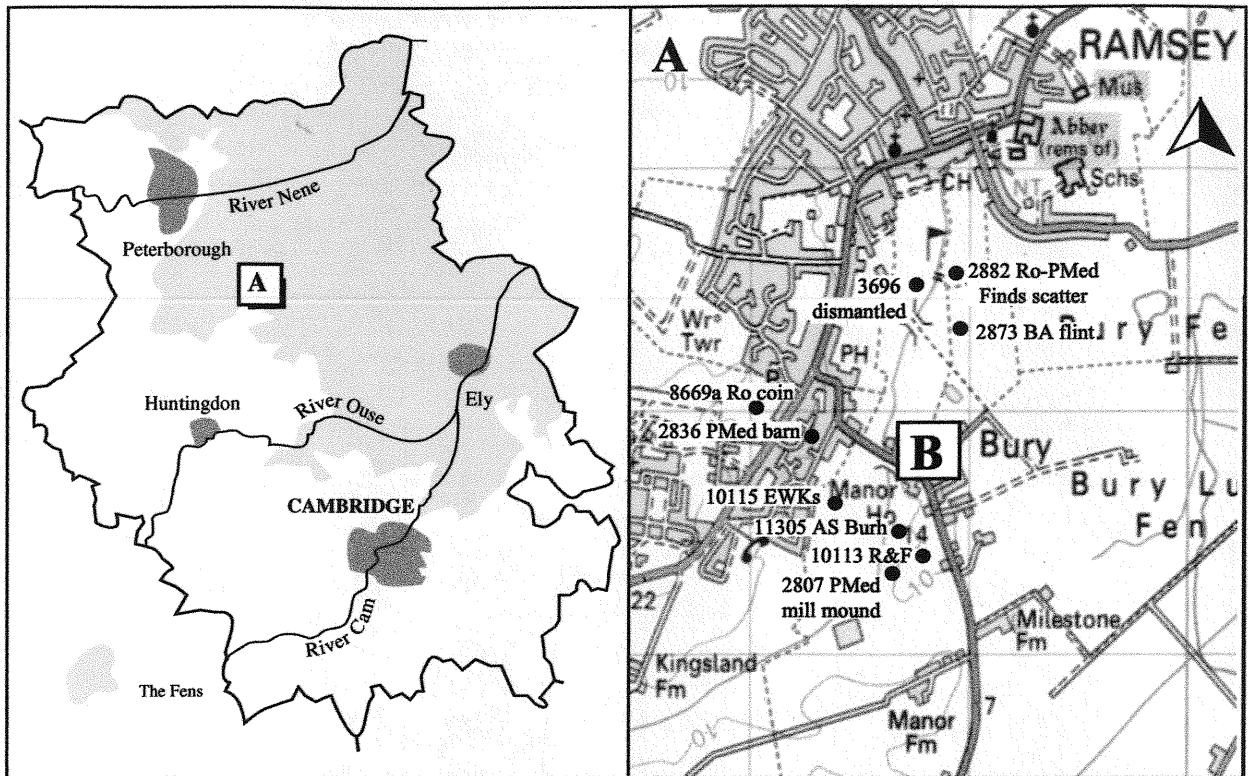
The parish of Bury lies to the south of Ramsey. The land rises on both sides of the brook which runs through the parish from north-east to south-west.

The underlying geology is Oxford Clay with boulder clay capping on the plateau. In the fen the Flandrian deposits are a uniform marine clay with roddons representing watercourses that drained northwards. Thereafter the fen developed peat deposits (Hall 1992, 49).

In relation to Bury, the development site is located to the east of Holy Cross Church, near the junction of Meadow Lane and High Street, at a height of 13.6m OD. It comprises a triangular area of some 1250sqm that is presently occupied by the 'old hall' with the churchyard boundary to the west, and by a car park that flanks a belt of trees (eastern boundary). A further constraint is the presence of a tree in the middle of the site.

2.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

A documentary search within 1km radius was undertaken. Information was obtained from the following: Cambridgeshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record Office (CCCSMR) and Huntingdon Record Office.



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Figure 1 Location plan and SMR entries

CCCSMR Parish Files and overlay maps of aerial photographs were consulted, and the results from archaeological interventions in the area integrated with the SMR entries.

Finally, cartographic evidence (HRO maps) was integrated with documentary sources produced at both local and national level (the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments for Huntingdonshire, and the Victoria History of the County of Huntingdonshire).

Prehistoric

Evidence for prehistoric activity within and around Bury is scanty and poorly recorded, as in the case of the neolithic flint scatter generically assigned to TL28--/83-- (CCCSMR02871). A Bronze Age flint scatter has been found 800m to the north of the development site in the parish of Ramsey (CCCSMR 2873).

A recent excavation conducted at Owl's End some 700m to the south west of the development site has revealed evidence of a Later Iron Age farmstead that continued into the early Roman period (Begg & Lucas 1997).

Roman

In addition to the site mentioned above, evidence for Roman activity is known from antiquarian observations. Cist burials were found in 1840 some 1.5km to the south, in the parish of Wistow (CCCSMR 2862). In the adjoining field, rubbish pits/hut sites produced coins and sherds of pottery (CCCSMR2863). Further stray finds and finds scatters have been located less than 1km to the west of the development site (PCCSMR8669a: a coin of the reign of Tiberius) and north (CCCSMR2882: two undated Roman coins). These finds, in addition to a Flavian coin and a first century quern stone generically located at TL28--/83--, would indicate early Roman activity in the area.

Saxon

Saxon Bury remains elusive and no finds of this period are known in the area.

It has been suggested that the site marked on the OS Map (6 inch to 1 mile) as a Roman camp may represent the Danish Burgh of Wistow from which Bury could have derived its name (CCCSMR11305). To date, no finds have been recovered to provide any dating evidence.

Medieval

Bury is known as *Byrig* (c. 1000) and later as *Bury* (14th century), probably from the undated earthwork described above (Mawer & Stenton 1969, 206). It was a berewick with a separate organisation (possibly attached to Wistow or Kingston) that had been granted by Oswald Archbishop of York to Ramsey, about 974. The manor remained with Ramsey Abbey until the Dissolution (VCH 1932, 164).

The monastic church at Wistow (1086) served Bury until the twelfth century, when Holy Cross was built. Before the end of the same century, this latter had become the parish church with Wistow and Raveley as its chapelries.

The brook that runs from Wistow to Bury and, hence, to the High Lode north of Ramsey, presumably including the Great Whyte, was the original western boundary of the parish. Beyond it, was the manor of Hepmangrove. This is referenced in the statutes of Abbot Aldwin (1091-1102) under which the profits from the manor were assigned to Ramsey Abbey. It is later shown on Bowen's map (c. 1750) (Mawer & Stenton 1969, 207).

A recent excavation at Owl's End Road, i.e. in former Hepmangrove, uncovered evidence of Saxo-Norman and early medieval occupation (Begg & Lucas 1997). According to the excavators, the expansion of the manor may have been linked to the development of Bury as a parish. However, the manorial site went out of use in the early fourteenth century, possibly due to frequent flooding in the area and/or, it may be added, due to the growth of Bury.

The two manors of Bury and Hepmangrove appear to have been united (Bury cum Hepmangrove) before the Dissolution. After the Dissolution, Bury and Hepmangrove, together with Ramsey, were granted as separate manors to Richard Williams, *alias* Cromwell, who claimed the church of Holy Cross as a donative. At a later stage, the descendants became the patrons of the church, and the manor house became the vicarage (VCH 1032, *passim*).

The early twelfth century church consisted of a nave and chancel (later rebuilt in the 15th century). The north aisle and tower, and the West Chapel were added during the thirteenth and fifteenth century, respectively. The glass in the building all dates to c. 1400 (CCCSMR2835A). The South Porch is modern (RCHME1926, 43ff).

In the course of the Middle Ages Bury developed as a nucleated village, the church of Holy Cross acting as the focus of settlement growth.

Earthwork remains of medieval date survive some 150m to the south of the development site (and church). They consist of a series of house platforms (CCCSMR10114) and a trackway/holloway leading into fields where ridge and furrow survive (CCCSMR10113 and CCCSMR10115).

The distribution of known finds also focuses on the church. In particular, west-east aligned inhumation burials have been uncovered together with medieval pottery immediately south of the proposed development area (CCCSMR2891 and, possibly, CCCSMR2887), in what may have originally represented church properties. In addition to the burials, there is evidence for a midden deposit from domestic activity. It is possible that the burials away from the main graveyard adjacent to the church belonged to less prestigious individuals. Alternatively, given that dating is debatable and that stratigraphic sequences may have been misinterpreted, it is possible that the inhumations belonged to a different (later Roman?) period.

Post-medieval

To the south of the church is the Manor House, a two storey building with rubble walls and some timber-framing, built probably in the sixteenth century (CCCSMR2831). It is uncertain, whether it had a medieval precursor.

A barn also survives in the former 'Hepmangrove' side of Bury.

The analysis of the post medieval development of Bury is assisted by cartographic evidence. An estate map shows the property of Sir Robert Bernard of Brampton to whom the manor of Bury cum Hepmangrove was

conveyed in 1776 (HRO LR5/315). A more comprehensive record of properties is provided by the tithe map of 1841 (HRO 2196/5A). The parish was finally enclosed in 1844 (Enclosure Map and Award, HRO CCS36). The evidence would suggest that the proposed development site underwent few changes during the post-medieval period.

3 ASSESSMENT

The aim of the background research was to obtain information to be analysed in order to determine the location, extent, survival and significance of the known archaeological and historical remains in the vicinity and within the development area.

All available sources were consulted (above). They have been discussed below.

4 CONFIDENCE RATING

Little is known of Bury prior to the Middle Ages. Small areas (namely the uplands) of Bury, Wistow and Warboys have been the subject of recent surveys that have produced negative evidence (Hall 1992). However, it is possible that the deep deposits of the fen may prevent both archaeological features from showing on aerial photographs, and finds from being brought to the surface by ploughing.

With reference to the prehistoric period, the chance discovery of a Bronze Age boat at Warboys in 1910 (Noble 1914) at a depth of 0.60m below the surface shows that some of the roddons were navigable and that communication was possible across the fens. Barrows previously undetected by aerial photography have been recently discovered on the clayey gravels that extend north into Ramsey fen (Hall 1992, 42).

Lack of archaeological excavations linked to local development have further reduced chance discoveries. Significantly, recent work at Owl's End at Bury has demonstrated the presence of a later Iron Age/Romano-British settlement on the floodplain of the brook, at a height of some 5m OD. The presence of a settlement in a relatively marginal area seems to corroborate Hall's theory, according to whom the boulder clays on the upland may have been densely settled during the Iron Age and Roman period (Hall, *ibid.*).

No Saxon sites are known to date, and none would be expected on the poorly drained clay terrain (Hall 1992, 42).

The medieval and post-medieval history of the site is well documented (above).

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

Based on the assessment of the available evidence, rating can be described as follows:

Mesolithic/Neolithic/Bronze Age	low/unknown
Iron Age	low/unknown
Romano-British	low/moderate
Saxon	low/unknown
Medieval	high
Post-medieval	high

The present study shows that the site lies within the core of the medieval village. No archaeological finds are known from the subject site itself. However, its archaeological potential can be considered high, with particular reference to the presence of the twelfth century church of Holy Cross.

Although presently unknown, evidence for later Iron Age/Romano-British and late Saxo-Norman activity may be uncovered, the excavation at Owl's End having produced evidence for occupation on the lower ground to the west of the development site.

The state of preservation of any archaeological remains and deposits encountered during excavation is bound to have been affected by modern interventions in the area, with particular reference to the 'old hall' in the western part of the site. The eastern side under the car park may have escaped damage, although some degree of compaction should be expected. Finally, the site contains a tree the presence of which may have affected preservation (below).

In view of these considerations, complementary archaeological surveys, with particular reference to aerial photography appraisals and geophysical analysis may be deemed unnecessary.

6 CONCLUSIONS

An assessment of the surrounding archaeology would suggest that the proposed development may affect an area of archaeological potential, with particular reference to the medieval period.

The following recommendation does not concern archaeological strategies. These will be outlined in a brief issued by the Planning Authority of Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Section (CAO).

As in Condition 3 (Planning Permission, Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Huntingdon District Council, 25 January 2001), the need to preserve trees and hedgerows may prevent direct evaluation of some areas of deemed archaeological potential. Any conflicts of planning requirements has to be resolved between the District Council Arboralist and the archaeology adviser (CAO), with particular reference to areas where trenching and soil deposition may take place.

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Noble, W. 1914. Discovery of an Ancient Boat at Warboys Fen. *Trans Cambs and Hunts Archaeol Soc* 3: 143-144.

RCHM(E) (Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England); Huntingdonshire 1926.

VCH (Victoria County History), Huntingdonshire 1932, Vol. 2.

MAPS

Estate Map of 1776 (HRO LR5/315)

Tithe Map of 1841 (HRO 2196/5A)

Enclosure Map of 1844 (HRO CCS 36)

OS 1926, Huntingdonshire Sheet XIV 4, 1:2500

OS 1976, TL 28 SE, 1:10000

OS 1976, TL 28 SE, 1:10000, Overlay based upon



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