

Archaeological Field Unit

**Church Field Farm, Reach:  
A Basic Archaeological Investigation**

A. Hatton

1999

**Cambridgeshire County Council**

Report No. B61

*Commissioned by Mr J Colvill*

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## *SUMMARY*

*On the 12th May 1999, the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council undertook an archaeological investigation of 10 foundation pits , each 1m x 1m, at Church Field Farm, Reach (TL 570 663), before the construction of a new farm building. The object of the investigation was to observe and record any archaeological remains uncovered in the foundation pits.*

*The investigation revealed no archaeological finds or features .*

**Church Field Farm, Burwell Road, Reach:  
A Basic Archaeological Investigation (TL 570 663)**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

On the 12<sup>th</sup> May 1999 the author monitored the excavation of 10 foundation pits prior to the construction of a new agricultural building at Church Field Farm, Reach (TL 570 663) for the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit. The work was carried out on behalf of Ms S Austin and in response to a Brief prepared by Andrew Thomas of the Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Office (Thomas 1998).

**2 GEOLOGY, TOPOGRAPHY AND RECENT LAND USE**

The site is located on the eastern edge of the village of Reach on the Lower Beds (Chalk Marl) of the lower chalk (British Geological Survey sheet 188).

The land slopes gently to the north-west and forms part of an undulating Chalkland landscape. The site in more recent years had been the location of a small farm building with the only remains being large blocks of concrete into which the wooden uprights were housed.

**3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The richness of the area in both archaeological and historical terms dictated the need for an archaeological investigation to take place. Located to the south-west of the subject site is the nationally-important Devil's Dyke, a scheduled ancient monument, and beyond Devil's Dyke to the south-west evidence of Iron Age settlement is known (Sites and Monuments Record 06432, 06392, 06394) and to the south-east once again beyond Devil's Dyke, remains of a substantial Romano-British complex have been discovered. Reach Lode Roman canal and the Roman hythe lie approximately 600m north-west of churchfield Farm. Medieval furlong boundaries and remains of ridge and furrow cultivation, parts of the open fields of Burwell, lie to the south.

#### **4 METHODOLOGY**

Before the excavation of the 10 foundation pits the site was stripped of overburden down to the top of the chalk natural, a depth of approximately 0.40m. The locations of the 10 pits were then marked on the ground along the two longest sides of the building. Each of the pits was 1m by 1m and they were excavated to varying depths ranging between 0.80m to 1.20m using 360° earth mover with a toothed bucket.

A standard recording system was employed in accordance with the brief.

#### **5 RESULTS**

The removal of the grey-brown silty sandy topsoil revealed in the centre of the site an area of natural chalk, however excavation of each of the pits showed in section that the topsoil increased in depth from 0.40m in the centre of the site to a maximum of 0.80m at the periphery. The increase in the depth of the topsoil would appear to mask an underlying geology that is not gently undulating but much more severe.

Despite the large number of pits excavated no artefactual remains or cut features were encountered during the investigation.

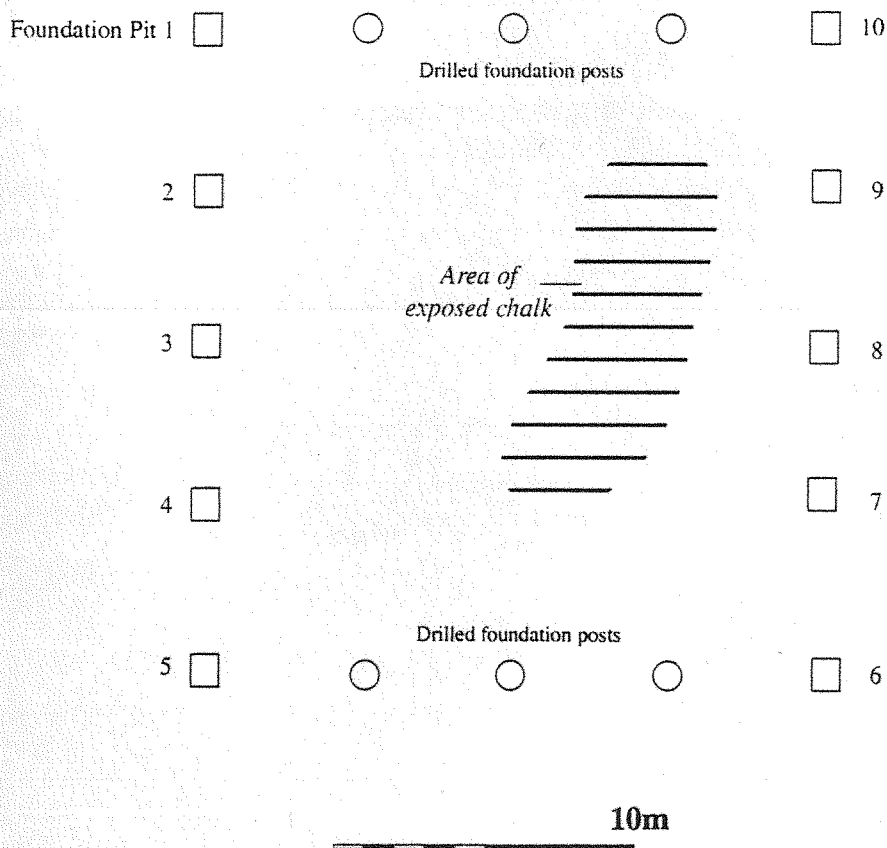
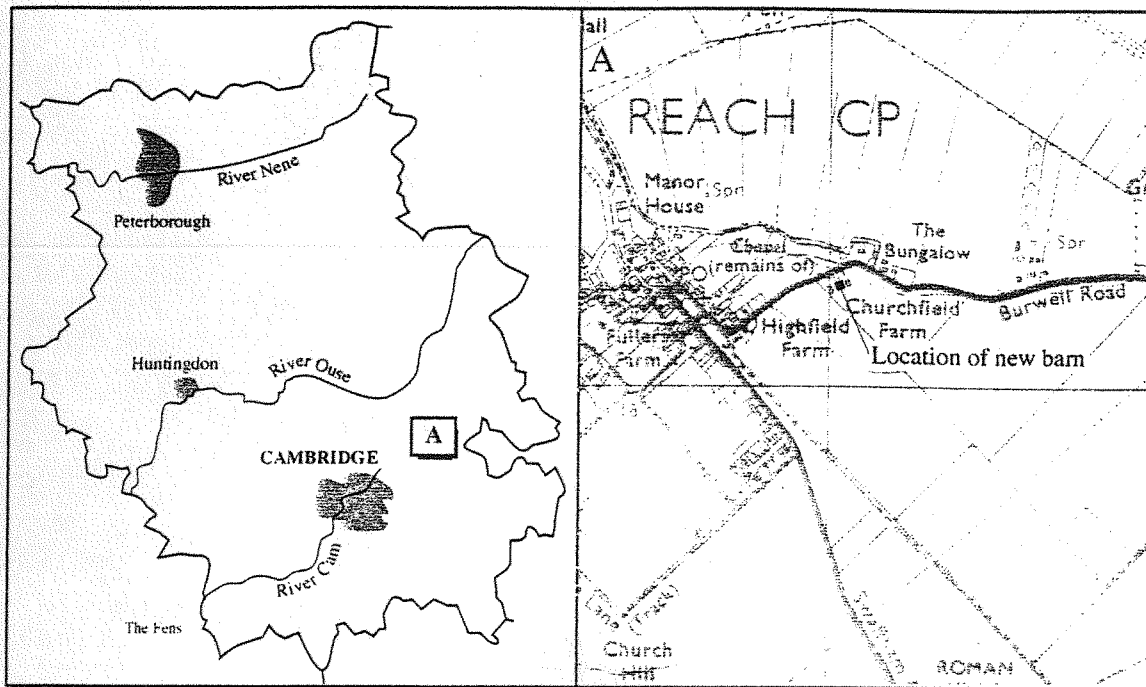
#### **6 CONFIDENCE RATING**

During the investigation the weather and ground conditions were good. Although the small scale of the excavation work may limit the conclusions that can be drawn from the investigation, there were no other factors that might have had an impact on the recognition of and subsequent recording of archaeological features.

#### **7 CONCLUSIONS**

Because the investigation was done on a small scale with each pit only being 1m by 1m the chances of missing archaeological evidence was greatly increased. It would not be safe to assume, however, that no archaeological

evidence exists on or near the site on the strength of one small investigation especially when considering the wealth of archaeological remains in the immediate vicinity. Nevertheless, no archaeological evidence was uncovered during the investigation.



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Figure 1 Location plan and schematic plan of foundation pits



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