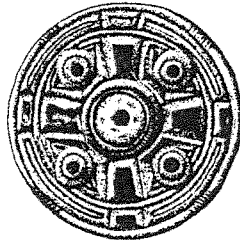


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*Archaeological Field Unit*

**Undated Ditches at New England Stud Swaffham  
Bulbeck: An Archaeological Evaluation**

Andrew Hatton

2002

*Cambridgeshire County Council*

*Report No. B 102*

*Commissioned by Bidwells on behalf of New England Stud farm Ltd*

# **Undated Ditches at New England Stud Swaffham Bulbeck: An Archaeological Evaluation**

Andrew Hatton Bsc

2002

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Report No. B 102

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## SUMMARY

*The Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council has conducted an archaeological evaluation on just under 0.5 hectares of land located southwest of the "New England Stud", beyond the Swaffham Heath Road (TL 5880 6065). This was in advance of a proposed development, which includes 2 residential buildings and 12 horse boxes.*

*Two ditches aligned northeast/southwest were revealed in Trench 4, but no datable finds were recovered from them.*

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	
<b>Figure 1</b> Site location	<b>2</b>
<b>Figure 2</b> Trench plan and section	<b>4</b>

**Undated Ditches at New England Stud Swaffham Bulbeck:  
An Archaeological Evaluation  
(TL 5880 6065)**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

On the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> June 2002, the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council (AFU) conducted an archaeological evaluation on land at New England Stud, Swaffham Bulbeck, Cambridgeshire (TL 587/606). The work was commissioned by Bidwells (Property Consultants) on behalf of New England Stud Ltd and in response to a brief prepared by the County Archaeology Office (CAO)

**2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

**2.1 Geology**

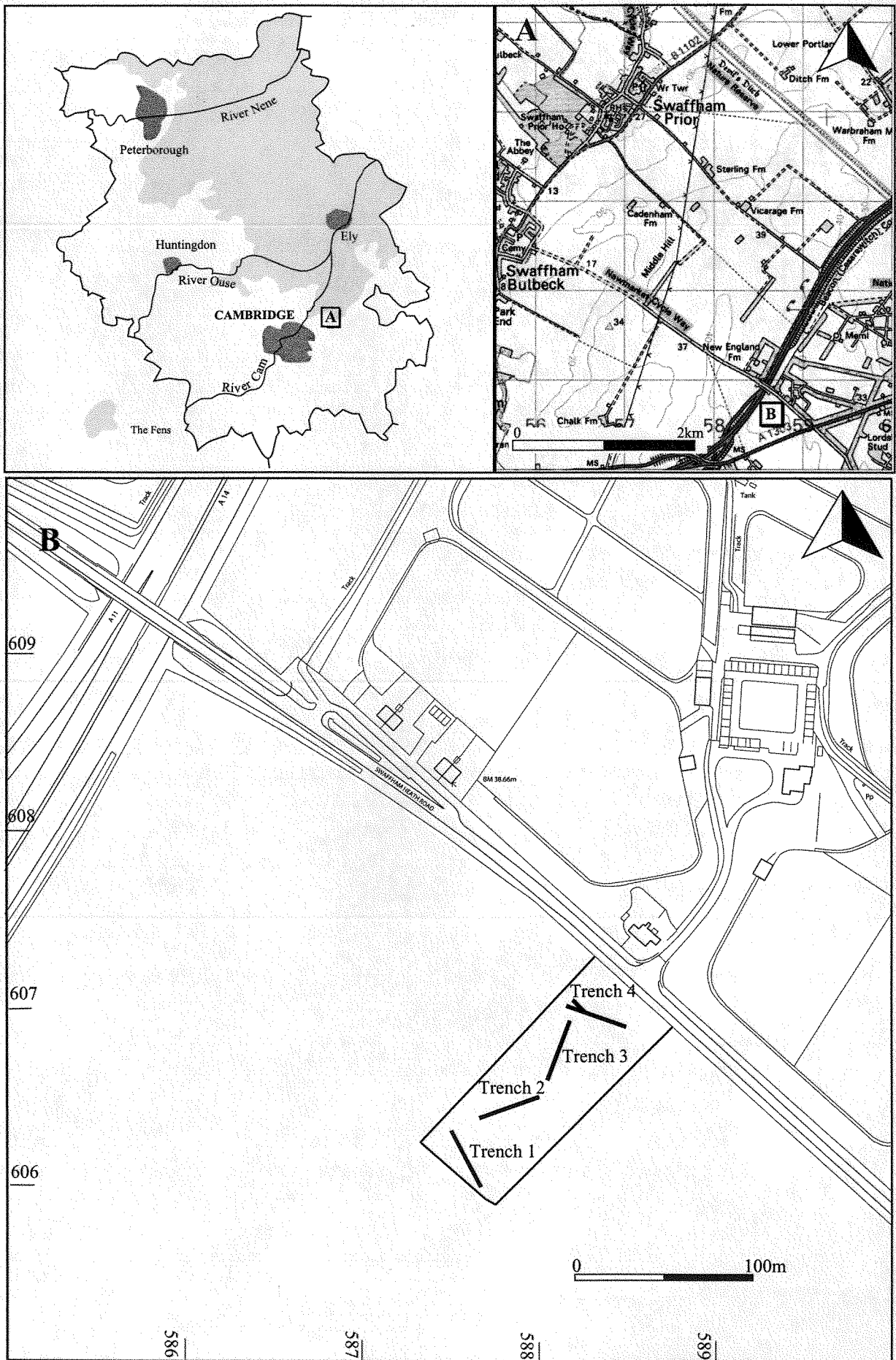
The local geology consists of Middle Chalk (BGS Sheet188).

**2.2 Topography**

The site lies at the top of a slight rise at a height of 43m OD. The land then gradually drops away to a height of 40m OD on the north-western, south-western and south-eastern sides and 35m OD on the north-eastern side of the subject site.

**3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The SMR maps and records show no evidence for prehistoric activity within the immediate vicinity of the subject site. Indeed there are no recorded sites within 700 m of the development area, and those that have been identified lie to the south, east and north. The sites identified include a Neolithic Long Barrow (Cambs SMR 06485), Bronze Age Barrows (Cambs SMR 06837, 06758, 06759), Bronze Age Ring Ditches (Cambs SMR 06462, 06461, 06688, 09252 and 06417).



Based upon Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. (Cambridgeshire County Council licence No. LA 07649X 2002)

**Figure 1** Site location and Trench Plan



Recorded evidence for medieval activity is restricted to crop marks (Cambs SMR 09245) located to the south, and a headland (Cambs SMR 06689) located to the east of the site. The post-medieval period saw the construction of two farmhouses, within close proximity to the development site: "New England Stud", located to the north-east, consists of a farmhouse and barn constructed c. 1833. To the south of the development site is the location of "Four Mile Stable Farm", which includes a farmhouse and two barns constructed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

Four trenches with a total length of 149m were opened using a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket under the supervision of an archaeologist. They were hand cleaned, planned and photographed.

## **5 RESULTS (Figs 1 and 2)**

### **5.1 Trench 1**

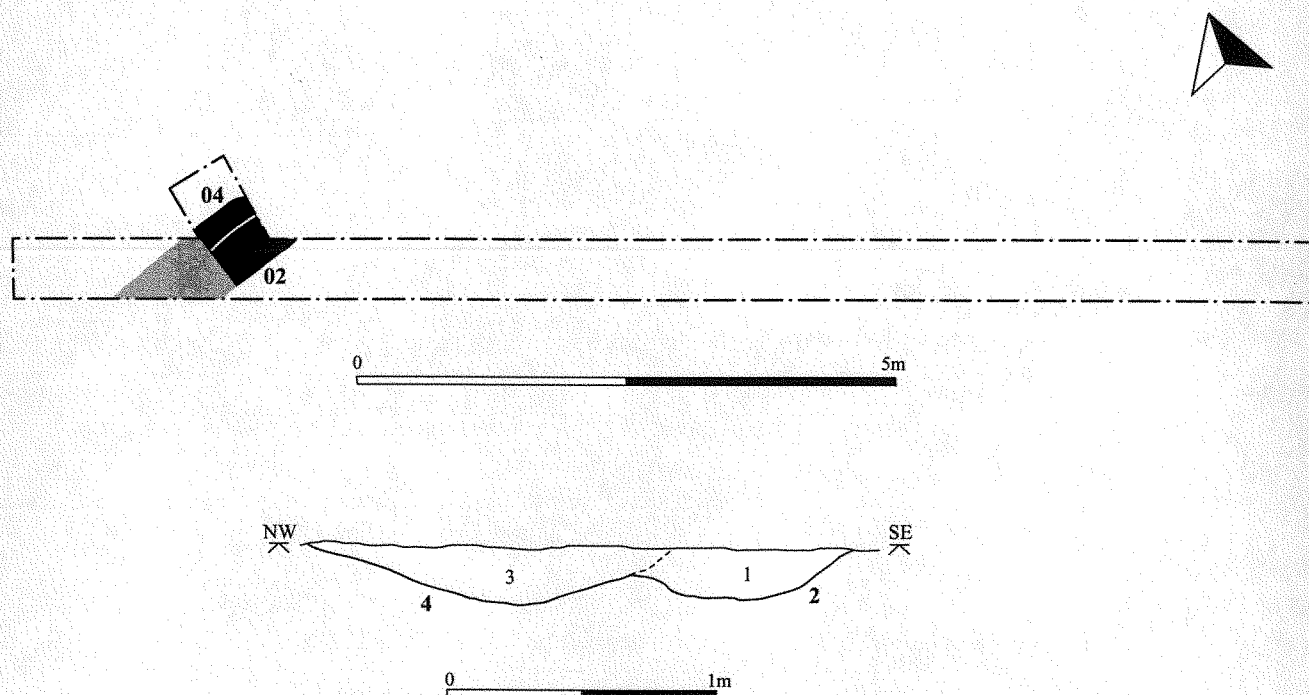
Trench 1 was 36m long, oriented south-east/north-west. At the south-eastern end of the trench a dark greyish brown topsoil (0.26m thick) overlay the chalk natural geology. The sequence, including topsoil thickness remained the same at the north-western end of the trench. No archaeological features were identified in this trench.

### **5.2 Trench 2**

Trench 2 was 36m long, oriented south-west/north-east. At the south-western end of the trench a dark greyish brown topsoil (0.24m thick) overlay the chalk natural geology. The sequence, including topsoil thickness remained the same at the north-eastern end of the trench. No archaeological features were identified in this trench.

### **5.3 Trench 3**

Trench 3 was 40m long, oriented south-west/north-east. At the south-western end of the trench a dark greyish brown topsoil (0.24m thick) overlay the chalk natural geology. The sequence remained the same at the north-eastern end of the trench; however, the topsoil thickness had increased to 0.30m. No archaeological features were identified in this trench.



**Figure 2** Trench plan for Trench 4 and section across ditches 02 and 04

#### 5.4 Trench 4

Trench 4 was 35m long oriented north-west/south-east. It contained two ditches, **02** and **04**. A short extension (2m long) was added on the north-eastern side, approximately 5m from the north-western end of the trench. The extension was added in order to avoid the excavation of an oblique segment across the two ditches.

At the south-western end of the trench a dark greyish brown topsoil (0.26m thick) overlay the chalk natural geology. The sequence and topsoil depth remained the same at the north-western end of the small extension. At the north-eastern end of the trench the topsoil reduced in thickness to 0.24m. Removal of the topsoil revealed the presence of mid-brown, silty sandy subsoil (0.32m thick), which extended for a distance of 8m from the north-eastern end of the trench. At the point where the subsoil stopped the natural chalk dipped down, exaggerating the topography visible before the trench was excavated.

**Ditch 02** (0.90m wide, 0.20m deep) oriented south-west/north-east, moderate sides concave base. Fill 01 brownish orange silty sand with occasional small chalk blocks, contained no artefactual material.

**Ditch 04** (1.20 wide, 0.21m deep) oriented south-west/north-east, moderate sides concave base. Fill 01 brownish orange silty sand with occasional small chalk blocks, contained no artefactual material.



The relationship between the two ditches was not apparent due to the leached nature of the fills.

## **6 DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS**

The aims of the study were to highlight the potential for preservation of the archaeological remains on the subject site and to identify the nature of any remains that may be affected by the proposed development.

The development involves the excavation of foundation trenches, services and road construction.

The area investigated by trenches 1, 2 and 3 contained no archaeological remains. Trench 4 produced archaeological remains in the form of two linear ditches **02, 04**. Investigation of the ditches provided no artefactual dating evidence, however the lack of organic material and the excessive leeching of the ditch fills suggested a prehistoric date for their initial excavation.

The ditches may have functioned as drainage channels, as they appear to run down-slope in a south-westerly direction from the higher ground to the north-east.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

*The author wishes to thank Bidwells who commissioned and funded the work, Emily Oakes, who prepared the illustrations and Aileen Connor for managing the project.*

*Andy Thomas (CAO), wrote the Brief for the archaeological work and Jeremy Parsons (CAO), visited the site and monitored the evaluation.*

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