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Archaeological Field Unit

**Archaeological Evaluation at Hauxton County
Primary School, Cambridgeshire**

Taleyna Fletcher

August 2004

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. 742

Commissioned by *Property and Procurement Division,*
Cambridgeshire County Council



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**Archaeological Evaluation at Hauxton County Primary School,
Cambridgeshire**

Taleyna Fletcher

August 2004

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Report No. 742

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SUMMARY

On 21st July 2004, the Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted an archaeological evaluation on land at Hauxton County Primary School, Cambridgeshire. The investigation consisted of three trenches located in front of the current school entrance, prior to the construction of a new school hall and associated spaces.

The site was in an area of high archaeological potential located close to the historic core of the village of Hauxton.

A swampy waterlogged deposit was encountered overlying the natural gravels, which contained bottles and ceramics dating to the late 19th to early 20th century. Subsequent build up layers of modern soil (presumably imported to the site during construction of the school) were also encountered.

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Archaeological Evaluation at Hauxton Primary School, Cambridgeshire (TL 4412 5197)

1 INTRODUCTION

On the 21st July 2004 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land at Hauxton County Primary School, Cambridgeshire by the Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council. The project was commissioned by Bob Page of the Property and Procurement Division of Cambridgeshire County Council. The investigation was carried out in advance of construction of a new school hall and associated services to be built at the front of the current school entrance. The work was carried out in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Office (Thomas 2004).

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site is located close to the historic core of the village of Hauxton, in a residential area constructed during the 1960s.

The British Geological survey has mapped the underlying geology and the site lies on 1st and 2nd terrace river gravels (BGS Sheet 205).

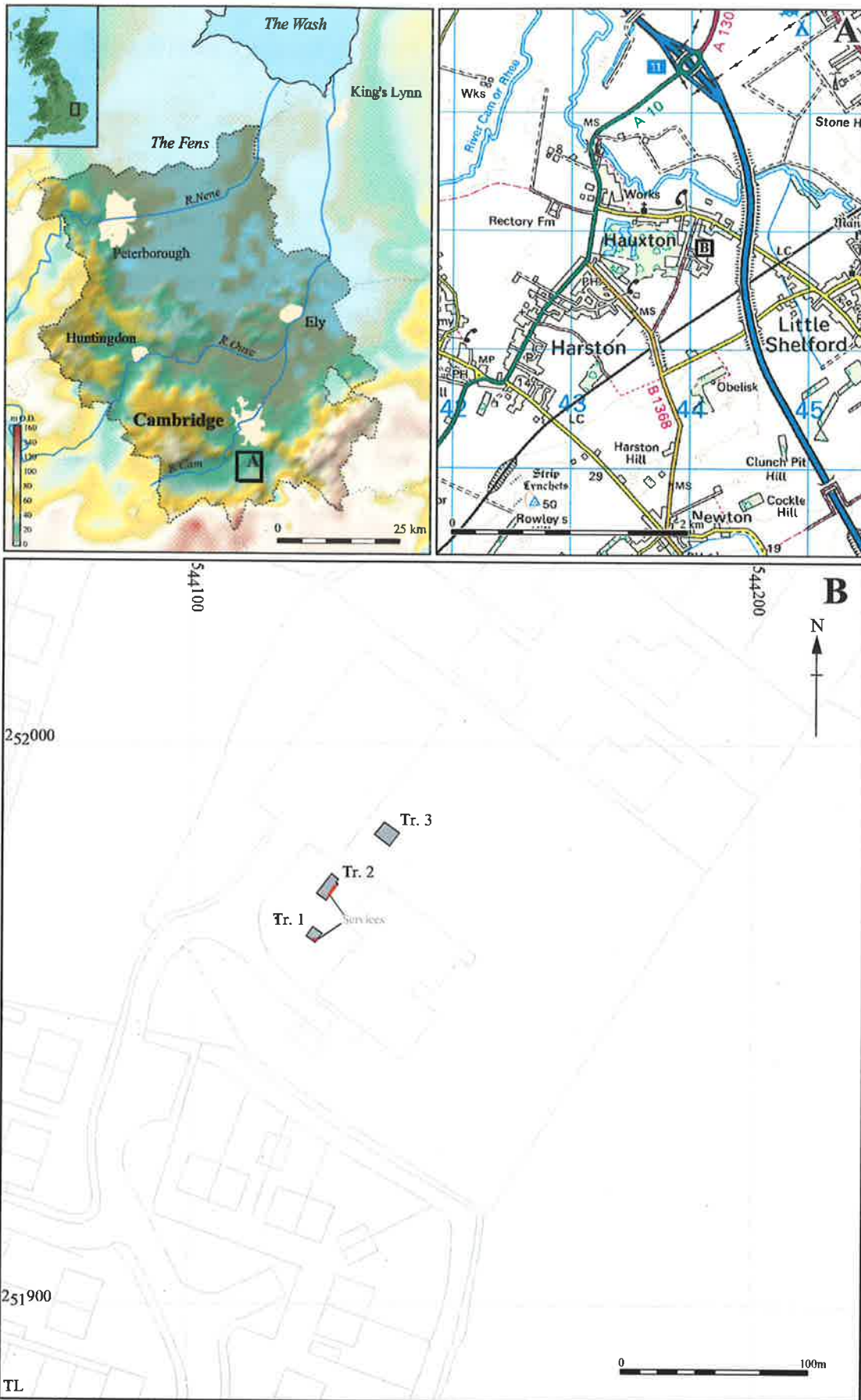
3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Prehistoric

Close to Hauxton Mill, Bronze Age finds have been retrieved (SMR 04979). These included an axe, palstave and a pestle.

Following the identification of extensive cropmarks, excavations in 1980 (Woodhuyse, Legg and Alexander, SMR 05090) recorded two phases of prehistoric activity. This activity was represented by drainage and enclosure ditches as well as a pit.

Excavations undertaken in 1975-76 in advance of the Cambridge Western Bypass (Alexander, Trump and Legg 1976, SMR 04503a) recorded a single entranced, ditched and banked oval enclosure from the Iron Age period.



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Figure 1 Location of trenches (grey) showing location of services (red)

This site lies approximately 0.9km to the north-east of the subject area, within the parish of Great Shelford.

The area to the north of Hauxton Mill has produced a significant amount of Iron Age pottery. Other Iron Age finds including a bone comb were recovered during phosphate extraction during the late 19th century, indicating that there may have been a settlement in this area.

Cropmarks to the east of the site indicate the location of late prehistoric and/or Roman settlement (SMR 09631) and further cropmarks to the south indicate the longevity and complexity of land use in the vicinity.

3.2 Roman

A cemetery has been recorded in the area on the "east side of the main road" to Hauxton Mill (SMR 04979a), to the north-west of the site, revealed during coprolite extraction during the late 19th century. The location of the cemetery, which contained cremations and inhumations, is not known exactly, and finds from the area included Roman glass, pottery, a bronze ring and a bead.

SMR entry 05032 records a burial ground discovered during coprolite extraction, on the left hand side of the approach road to Hauxton Mill. Presumably, this entry relates to the same cemetery as SMR 04979a. Finds from this site included several different pottery types and coins from the Roman period. The varied orientations of the inhumations and cremations suggests mixed period burials. A decorated bronze jug, dating from the 2nd to 3rd century, probably from a disturbed burial, has also been recovered (SMR 07893).

Excavations in 1980 (Woodhuysse, Legg and Alexander, SMR 05090a) recorded four phases of activity ranging from the 1st to 4th century.

A complex field enclosure system of unknown date has been identified through aerial photos to the east of the site (SMR 08346). They are located close to, and could form part of, a scheduled monument, believed to be a Roman settlement.

3.3 Saxon

A number of surface finds from the Saxon period have been recorded within the area of Hauxton Mill. These include coins (SMR 05032a) found near the burial area (SMR 05032) and three strap ends (SMR 05057), one bronze and displaying decoration. Saxon bronze disc-pins were also found near the mill area (SMR 04387). The area of the bridge (close to Hauxton Mill) has also yielded several finds from the Saxon period.

Other stray finds from the Saxon period, exact location unknown, include sherds of 11th century pottery (SMR 04385).

3.4 Medieval

Surviving medieval buildings in the vicinity include The Old House and the Tudor House, both dating to the 15th century.

Cropmarks show what appears to be remains of a ridge and furrow to the north and north-east of the site (SMR 09639).

3.5 Post Medieval

Cropmarks plotted during aerial surveys from the 1980s (SMR 09631, 09633, 09637) show several linear features, some parallel ditches and possible ring ditches. These remain undated at present, although some have been interpreted as the remnants of modern drainage ditches (Palmer 2004 and SMR 09631 and 09633).

3.6 Other

Little evidence of activity has been recorded to the west of the site. This may be due to inhabitable land, shown on the consulted Ordnance Survey maps as swamp or marshland. There is also a brook or small stream running through the site, the source of which is a spring located approximately 0.5km to the south of the subject site. Trench 1 was located less than 15m to the west of the stream. Looking the current route of this waterway, it appears that it may have been redirected around the site when the school was built. However, the route appears the same on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map, suggesting it is still its original location.

Hauxton Primary school was constructed in 1974, and was built to replace the traditional Victorian village school house located on the High Street. The children moved to the new school building, led by the head teacher at the time, Mrs Roulinson.

The improvements to provide better facilities for the current school building to mirror the events in 1974, when the primary school moved to a new building with such modern amenities as an indoor toilet.



Plate 1 Children outside the old Hauxton Primary School, 1974



Plate 2 Children outside the new Hauxton Primary School, 1974

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Aerial Photographic Survey

At the request of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology Office, an aerial photographic survey was commissioned. No definitive archaeological features were identified in or adjacent to the school grounds. Linear features identified through cropmarks were considered likely to be field drains (Palmer 2004) (See Appendix 1).

4.2 Excavation

Three small trenches were opened using a JCB 180° mechanical excavator using a 1.6m wide flat-bladed ditching bucket, under the constant supervision of an archaeologist. Due to the depth of the trenches, the sides were stepped to allow for safe access. The machine continued to remove overburden and deposits until reaching the interface between the soil horizons and the natural gravels. As all three of the trenches were empty with no evidence of any archaeological features, they were recorded, photographed and backfilled immediately following authorisation from Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Office.

4.3 Trench and Area Locations

The position of the trenches was determined by the area which was to be affected by building work and by the amount of land available for investigation which was not sealed by a path or a hard-standing play area. The area investigated represented 5% of the development area. The location of all trenches was approved by the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Office (CAO) (Fig. 1).

4.4 Recording

After machining, the trench sections were cleaned and drawn at a scale of 1:10. The trench locations were planned by hand in relation to the school buildings. Photographs were taken using a Canon A40 Powershot Digital camera. The spoil heaps were scanned visually for pottery and bone. The nearest benchmark was located on the corner of number 38 High Street and the height was subsequently traversed onto the site, where an average value of 12.54m OD was recorded.

5 RESULTS

Whilst machining live service cables were encountered in Trenches 1 and 2 (Fig 1). The findings of this evaluation will be presented trench by trench.

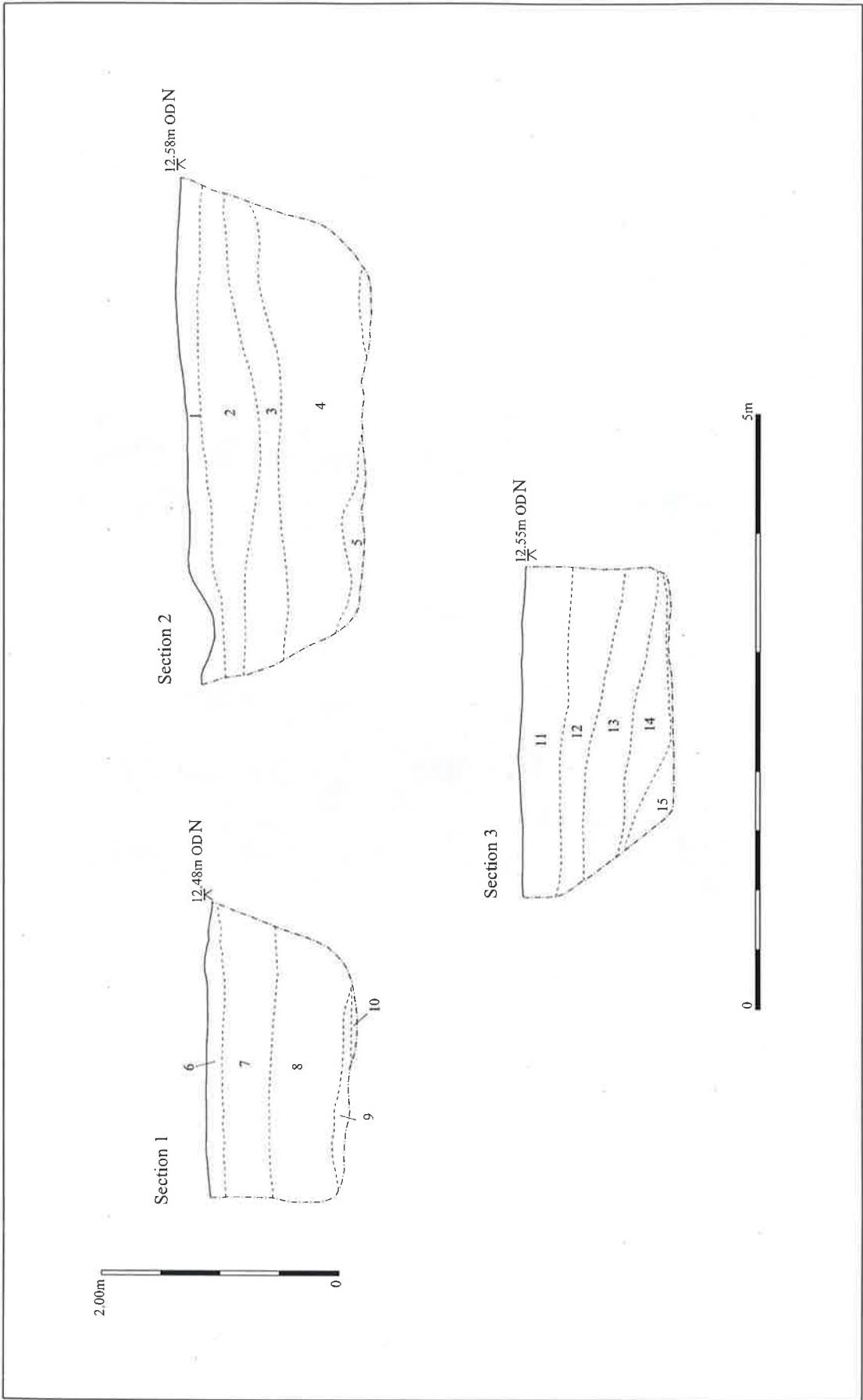


Figure 2 Section drawings

Trench 1

Trench 1 measured 2m x 2m and was excavated to a depth of 1.30m, where natural gravels were encountered. (Fig 2. Sec. 1). Five separate layers were recorded within this trench, including a topsoil (06), subsoil (07) and a thick modern make-up layer (08) which contained a post-medieval factory-made brick. Beneath the make up layer and overlying the natural gravels was a thick dark grey clayey, organic deposit (09). This deposit contained several broken bottles and ceramics dating to the late 19th/early 20th century. Two complete "Camp" Coffee and Chicory Essence bottles were also recovered as well as a complete ribbed cream stoneware storage jar (see plate 3). This layer concealed the natural gravels. No archaeology was recorded and water began to seep into the trench once at the level of the gravels.



Plate 3 Finds from trench 1

Trench 2

Trench 2 was 4m long and 1.6m wide, excavated to a depth of 0.80m where natural gravels were encountered.

Five separate layers were recorded within this trench, the upper four being equivalent to those in Trench 1 and included a topsoil (01), subsoil (02) and a modern make-up layer (03) (Fig 2. Sec. 2). Beneath the make-up layer and overlying the natural gravels, a thick dark grey and black clayey, organic deposit (04) was encountered equal to (09) in Trench 1. This deposit contained several broken bottles and ceramics dating to the late 19th to early 20th century. Beneath this, a very dark and organic layer was recorded. This also contained modern artefacts. This layer concealed the natural gravels. No

archaeology was recorded and water began to seep into the trench once at the level of the gravels.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was 4m long and 1.6m wide, excavated to a depth of 1.30m where natural gravels were encountered.

Five separate layers were recorded within this trench, the upper four being equivalent to those in trench 1 and 2 including a topsoil (11), subsoil (12) and a modern make-up layer (13) (Fig 2. Sec. 3). Beneath the make-up layer and overlying the natural gravels a thick dark grey and black clayey, organic deposit (14) was encountered equal to 09 in trench 1 and 03 in trench 2, however no finds were recovered here. Beneath this layer was a deposit of mixed silt and gravels (15), but no finds were recovered from this layer which concealed the natural gravels. The gravels were a brighter orange colour in Trench 3 than in Trenches 1 and 2 where the gravel was white. No archaeology was recorded and water began to seep into the trench once at the level of the gravels.



Plate 4 Trench 3

6 DISCUSSION

Investigations at Hauxton County Primary School have revealed that despite being within an area of high archaeological potential, no significant remains survive earlier than the late 19th/early 20th century. Several layers of soil were encountered in all three of the evaluation trenches. These layers were

presumably imported in to the site to make up the ground level during the construction of the primary school in 1974. The dark organic layers (04, 09, 14 and 05) appear to represent either a swampy, waterlogged pond or possibly an overspill of water from the stream located less than 20m to the south and west of the investigation area. The fact that there were no finds recovered from earlier than the late 19th to early 20th century suggests that the flooding or water collection happened around that time. As there were no earlier finds recovered, it must also be considered that earlier features and deposits may have been removed. There is documentary evidence of coprolite quarrying in Hauxton, and local residents who visited the site spoke of quarrying in an area to the west of the present school. Local residents also recalled that prior to the construction of the school, the previous land owner had kept a donkey on the field.

7 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this evaluation has identified that there is no surviving archaeological remains or deposit within the area of investigation. It has identified however, that the topography of the immediate area has been radically altered in the 1970's during construction of the present primary school.

The investigation has been highly successful in expanding on our knowledge and understanding of the area currently occupied by the school.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Cambridgeshire County Councils Property and Procurement Division, who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Mark Hinman. Thanks also to Claire Jacklin and Vicki James for their assistance on site and to Emily Oakes who prepared the illustrations.

The brief for archaeological works was written by Andy Thomas, County Archaeology Office.

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Thomas, A., *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation; Hauxton CP School, Jopling Way, Hauxton*

**HAUXTON COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL,
AREA CENTRED TL443518,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE:
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT**

SUMMARY

This assessment of aerial photographs examined an area of some 30 hectares (centred TL443518) in order to identify and accurately map archaeological, natural and recent features.

No archaeological features were identified within the Study Area other than two concentric arcs of ditch east of the M11.

Features identified are mostly field drains plus small areas of hand-dug quarry.

Geological disturbance in the form of pits and humps is apparent on some photographs.

Original photo interpretation and mapping was at 1:2500 level.

**HAUXTON COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL,
AREA CENTRED TL443518,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE:
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT**

Rog Palmer MA MIFA

INTRODUCTION

This assessment of aerial photographs was commissioned to examine an area of some 30 hectares (centred TL443518) in order to identify and accurately map archaeological and natural features and thus provide a guide for field evaluation. The level of interpretation and mapping was to be at 1:2500.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL FEATURES FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

In suitable cultivated soils, sub-surface features – including archaeological ditches, banks, pits, walls or foundations – may be recorded from the air in different ways in different seasons. In spring and summer these may show through their effect on crops growing above them. Such indications tend to be at their most visible in ripe cereal crops, in June or July in this part of Britain, although their appearance cannot accurately be predicted and their absence cannot be taken to imply evidence of archaeological absence. In winter months, when the soil is bare or crop cover is thin (when viewed from above), features may show by virtue of their different soils. Upstanding remains, which may survive in unploughed grassland, are also best recorded in winter months when vegetation is sparse and the low angle of the sun helps pick out slight differences of height and slope.

Grass sometimes shows sub-surface features through the withering of the plants above them. This may occur towards the end of very dry summers and usually indicates the presence of buried walls or foundations. Such dry summers occurred in Britain in 1949, 1959, 1975, 1976, 1984, 1989 and 1990 (Bewley 1994, 25) and more recently in 1995 and 1996. This does not imply that every grass field will reveal its buried remains on these dates as local variations in weather and field management will affect parching. However, it does provide a list of years in which photographs taken from, say, mid July to the end of August may prove informative.

Natural faults and deposits can cause similar differences in crop growth and may also appear as colour differences in bare winter soils. On the soils of this assessment area we may expect indications of periglacial activity – which may be mistaken for archaeological features – and of patches of deeper and shallower soil. Both can affect the growth of crops and become visible at the same times as archaeological features. The visible edges and extents of deep soil areas tend to vary from year to year with the amount of ground moisture content.

The most immediately informative aerial photographs of archaeological subjects tend to be those resulting from observer-directed flights. This activity is usually undertaken by an experienced archaeological observer who will fly at seasons and times of day when optimum results are expected. Oblique photographs, taken using a hand-held camera, are the usual products of such investigation. Although oblique photographs are able to provide a very detailed view, they are biased in providing a record that is mainly of features noticed by the observer, understood, and thought to be of archaeological relevance. To be able to map accurately from these photographs it is necessary that they have been taken from a sufficient height to include surrounding control information.

Vertical photographs cover the whole of Britain and can provide scenes on a series of dates between (usually) 1946-7 and the present. Unfortunately these vertical surveys were not necessarily flown at times of year that are best to record the crop and soil responses that may be seen above sub-surface features. Vertical photographs are taken by a camera fixed inside an aircraft and adjusted to take a series of overlapping views that can be examined stereoscopically. They are often of relatively small scale and their interpretation requires higher perceptive powers and a more cautious approach than that necessary for examination of obliques. Use of these small-scale images can also lead to errors of location and size when they are rectified or re-scaled to match a larger map scale.

PHOTO INTERPRETATION AND MAPPING

Photographs examined

Cover searches were obtained from the Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photographs (CUCAP) and the National Monuments Record: Air Photographs (NMRAP), Swindon. Photographs included those resulting from observer-directed flights and routine vertical surveys.

Photographs consulted are listed in the Appendix to this report.

Base maps

Digital data from original survey at 1:2500 were provided by the client.

Study area

Photographs were examined in detail for an area extending some 250m around the school grounds.

Photo interpretation and mapping

All photographs were examined by eye and under slight (2x) magnification, viewing them as stereoscopic pairs when possible. Interpretations, made at 1:2500 level, were marked on overlays to individual prints following procedures described by Palmer and Cox (1993). These overlays were then scanned and transformed to match the digital base map using Irwin Scollar's AirPhoto program (Scollar 2002). Transformed files were set as background layers in

AutoCAD Map, where features were overdrawn using standard conventions. Layers from this final drawing have been used to prepare the figure in this report and have been supplied to the client in digital form.

Accuracy

AirPhoto computes values for mismatches of control points on the photograph and map. In all transformations prepared for this assessment the mean mismatches were less than $\pm 1.50\text{m}$. These mismatches can be less than the survey accuracy of the base maps themselves and users should be aware of the published figures for the accuracy of large scale maps and thus the need to relate these mismatches to the Expected Accuracy of the Ordnance Survey maps from which control information was taken (OS 2004).

COMMENTARY

Soils

The Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW 1983) shows the area to lie wholly on river terrace and chalky drift (soil association 512f: Milton). Crops on this soil in adjacent parts of Cambridgeshire have indicated the presence of sub-surface archaeological and natural features.

Archaeological features

No definite archaeological features have been identified in or adjacent to the school grounds.

Two concentric arcs of ditch have been mapped east of the M11 at TL445518. There is no obvious extension of these into the Study Area.

Features indicated as 'possible ditches' are more probably field drains.

Non-archaeological features

The Study Area is crossed by at least one series of field drains and many of the remaining mapped features are likely to indicate drains some of which pre-date construction of the M11.

Three areas of hand-dug quarrying have been identified, one of which is now under recent housing. These may be northern extensions of the coprolite mining mapped by the Soil Survey immediately south of the Study Area.

Some air photographs show extents of slightly speckled soil which is probably of periglacial origin and likely to indicate pits and small humps (or harder ground) that may be apparent when topsoil is removed.

Land use

All fields were in arable use in 1946 and continued to be so throughout the dates of photography. The school and M11 were constructed by 1991 since which date the school field has been grass.

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- SSEW, 1983. *Soils of England and Wales: sheet 4: Eastern England (1:250,000)*. Soil Survey of England and Wales, Harpenden.

APPENDIX

Aerial photographs examined

Source: Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photographs

Oblique photographs

AP 50	18 June 1948
BEZ 63-65	12 April 1971
BEZ 67	12 April 1971
BRS 27	25 November 1974

Vertical photographs

RC8-FL 2-3	16 June 1983	1:5000
RC8-FL 25-26	16 June 1983	1:5000
RC8-IN 202-203	30 April 1986	1:5000
RC8-JM 233-234	30 June 1987	1:10000
RC8-JO 244-245	2 July 1987	1:10000
Z-knHC 215	5 August 1998	unknown

Source: National Monuments Record: Air Photographs

Specialist collection

TL4451/22-23	16 April 2002
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Vertical collection

RAF/106G/UK/1718: 3159-3160	6 September 1946	1:9800
RAF/106G/UK/1718: 4173-4174	6 September 1946	1:9800
RAF/541/507: 3010	20 April 1950	1:10000
OS/52R57: 86-87	7 September 1952	1:8000
OS/52R57: 105-106	7 September 1952	1:8000
RAF/58/1119/F22: 76-77	11 May 1953	1:10000
RAF/58/1119/F22: 94-95	11 May 1953	1:10000
RAF/540/1143/F22: 77-78	9 June 1953	1:10000
OS/67145: 130-131	5 June 1967	1:7500
MAL/69070: 15-16	22 July 1969	1:10500
MAL/71018: 164-165	11 April 1971	1:10000
MAL/71019: 136-138	11 April 1971	1:3000
OS/91163: 41-42	15 August 1991	1:8100

Most informative photographs

TL4451/22

MAL/71019: 137

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We suggest that if a period of 6 months or more elapses between compilation of this report and field evaluation new searches are made in appropriate photo libraries. Examination of any newly acquired photographs is recommended.

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APPENDIX 2: Context table

Context	Same as	Trench	Category	Function	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Thickness (max)	Findings
01	06, 11	2	Layer	Make up layer	Mid brown	Clayey silt	Modern roots, occ gravels.	0.2m	None
02	07, 12	2	Layer	Make up layer	Light-Mid brown	Clayey silt	Moderate gravels	0.50	None
03	08, 13	2	Layer	Make up layer	Mid orangish brown	Clayey silt	Moderate gravels	0.40	None
04	09, 14	2	Layer	Pond?	Mid-dark grey	Silty clay	Freq. charcoal	0.80	C.19\20 th slate, glass and ceramic
05		2	Layer	Pond?	Dark grey/black	Organic/clayey	Organic plant remains, freq. Charcoal, freq. gravels	0.20	C 19\20 th glass and ceramic
06	01, 11	1	Layer	Make up layer	Mid brown	Clayey silt	Modern roots, occ gravels	0.15m	None
07	02, 12	1	Layer	Make up layer	Light-Mid brown	Clayey silt	Moderate gravels	0.4m	None
08	03, 13	1	Layer	Make up layer	Mid orangish brown	Clayey silt	Moderate gravels	0.60m	Post-medieval brick
09	04, 14	1	Layer	Pond?	Mid-dark grey	Silty clay	Freq. charcoal	0.10m	C.19\20 th bottles, glass and ceramic
10	15	1	Layer	Natural gravels	Bright orange	Gravels	99% gravel	0.05m	None
11	01, 06	3	Layer	Make up layer	Mid brown	Clayey silt	Modern roots, occ gravels	0.40m	None
12	02, 07	3	Layer	Make up layer	Light-Mid brown	Clayey silt	Moderate gravels	0.45m	None
13	03, 08	3	Layer	Make up layer	Mid orangish brown	Clayey silt	Moderate gravels	0.35m	None
14	04, 09	3	Layer	Pond?	Mid-dark grey	Silty clay	Freq. charcoal	0.30m	None
15	10	3	Layer	Pond?	Mid brownish orange	Silty	Frequent gravels	0.30m	None

ADVENTURES WITH THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD UNIT

OUR MISSION, SHOULD WE CHOOSE TO ACCEPT IT, IS AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT HAUXTON COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL



WE ACCEPT, ARRIVE AND BEGIN TO MEASURE THE TRENCHES



hello there!!

claire

random worm

TALEYNA VS THE MACHINE



deeper please!

FIRST THEY STRIP THE TURF...



...AND THEN THE TOPSOIL

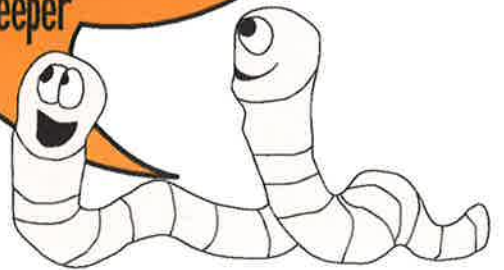


THE MACHINE REALLY GETS TO WORK!!

taleyna

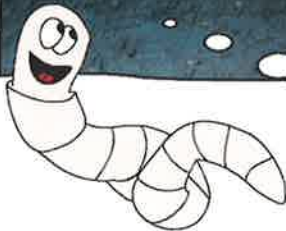


so, you see wilma, the spoil heap gets taller, whilst the hole gets deeper





THE TRENCHES WERE FILLED WITH A NASTY GREY SLIME



what could she have spotted?

GASP!!!!



COULD IT BE....?

TREASURES?



camp coffee 100 years old!!!



MEANWHILE...



ALL OF THE TRENCHES HAD TO BE RECORDED IN GREAT DETAIL



urrggh!!!
soggy feet!

vicki



RECORDING

SHORTLY...

ooh, what's
in there?

LOTS OF
PEOPLE
CAME
TO SEE THE
EXCAVATION

look at my
lovely bottles!

i saw those
last year when
i was down
that way

ooh yes,
very nice.



What, more visitors?

mark, the project manager



mrs roulinson

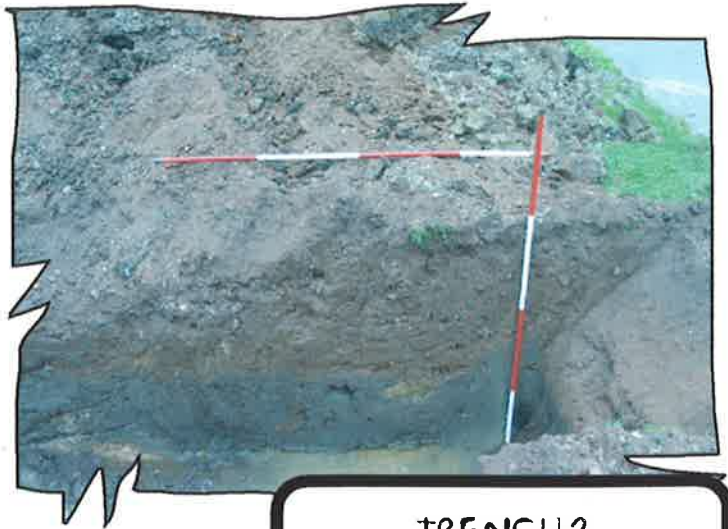
MRS PARTINGTON,
THE CURRENT
HEADMISTRESS,
MET MRS ROULINSON,
WHO WAS
HEADMISTRESS
OF THE 'NEW
SCHOOL'
IN THE 1970S.

mrs partington

THEY WERE VERY
INTERESTED!!



TRENCH 1



TRENCH 2



TRENCH 3

VERY WET TRENCHES!!!

where could she be?

THE WATER LEVEL RISES!!!

ON SITE SURVEYING



here i am!!!

SHORTLY...

**THE
MACHINE
ARRIVES TO
FILL IN THE
TRENCHES**



AARRGGH!!

BACKFILLING BEGINS!



GOING...



bye bye!!

GOING...



GONE!!!



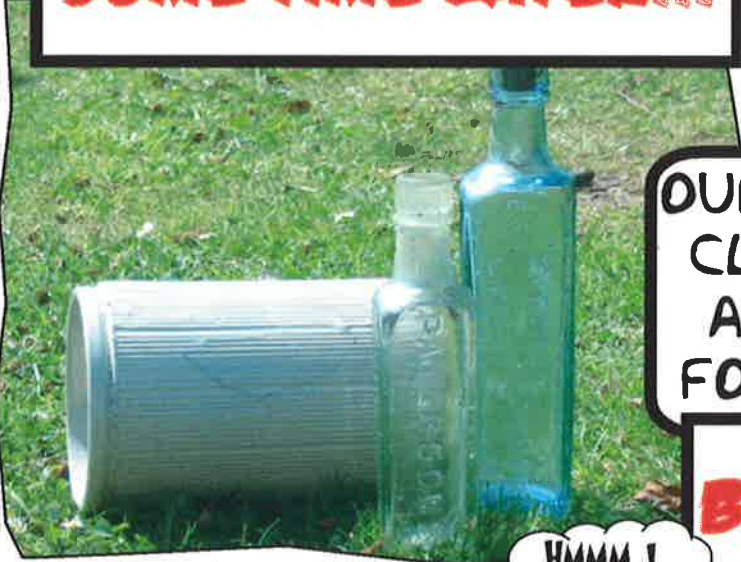
....AND WE'RE OFF!

'T WAS AS IF WE'D NEVER BEEN!!



SOME TIME LATER...

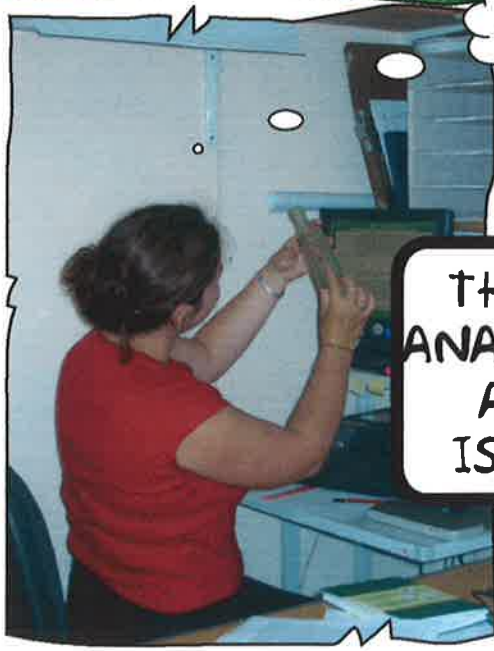
bye bye!!



OUR 'FINDS' ARE CLEANED UP AND READY FOR ANALYSIS

BACK IN THE OFFICE...

HMMM. I WONDER....



THE DATA IS ANALYSED AND A REPORT IS WRITTEN





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