

OFFICE COPY

library copy



Archaeological Field Unit

**A Roman Ditch and Medieval Rubbish Pits at 7
Victoria Street, Littleport, Cambridgeshire: An
Archaeological Evaluation**

Taleyna Fletcher

August 2004

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. 745

Commissioned by *Whitfield Associates*



Distribution List: Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

Site Name: 7 Victoria Street, Littleport, Cambridgeshire

Site Code: LIT.YST.04 Report No.: 745 Date Sent: 2.12.04

1 Author(s) Relevant Specialists (please list:)

Client (how many copies?)

1 Project Archive

1 Office Library

Principal Archaeologist, SMR Office, Room A108, Castle Court, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 OAP Box No.: ELH1108

A. Baker, Librarian, Haddon Library, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3DZ

Huntingdon Sites ONLY:

1 County Archivist, County Records Office, Room 001, Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 OAP Box No.: RES 1009

Local Studies Librarian, Huntingdon Library, Princess Street, Huntingdon PE1 1RX

Fenland Sites ONLY:

Chris Jakes, Cambridgeshire Collection, Central Library, Lion Yard, Cambridge CB2 3QD

Local Studies Librarian, Wisbech Library, 1 Ely Place, Wisbech PE13 EU

1 Felicity Gilmour, National Monument Record, Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2GZ

RCHME 24 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 2BB

Peterborough Reports ONLY:

x 2 Ben Robinson, Archaeological Officer, Peterborough Museum & Art Gallery, Priestgate, Peterborough PE1 1LF

For English Heritage projects:

Philip Walker, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage, Brooklands, 24 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 2BU

For DC funded reports via the Cambs planning process send to:

x 3 (inc. SMR) Andy Thomas, Principal Archaeologist, Land-Use Planning Room A107, Castle Court, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 OAP Box No.: ELH1108

For English Heritage projects:

Chris Scull, Archaeology Commissions, English Heritage, 23 Savile Row, London W1X 1AB

**A Roman Ditch and Medieval Rubbish Pits at 7, Victoria Street,
Littleport, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation**

Taleyna Fletcher

August 2004

Editor: Aileen Connor
Illustrator: Sam Whitehead

With contributions by Carole Fletcher and Rachel Fosberry



Report No. 745

©Archaeological Field Unit
Cambridgeshire County Council
Fulbourn Community Centre
Haggis Gap, Fulbourn
Cambridgeshire CB1 5HD
Tel (01223) 576201
Fax (01223) 880946

arch.field.unit@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
<http://edweb.camcnty.gov.uk/afu>

SUMMARY

The Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to 7 Victoria Street, Littleport in the Fenland area of Cambridgeshire. The work was commissioned by Whitfield Associates and was carried out in advance of development of the former Burberry factory site for new flats, access road and associated services.

Eighteenth century make-up layers were encountered in all three trenches. These are likely to be associated with the construction of the buildings of around this date on the street frontage. Disturbance from modern development on the site was also encountered in Trench 2.











Three trenches totalling 23m were excavated within the footprint of the development area. Archaeology was recorded in two trenches including a ditch dating to the Roman period and intercutting medieval rubbish pits.

TABLE OF CONTENTS











1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY	1
3	ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	1
4	METHODOLOGY	5
5	RESULTS	6
6	DISCUSSION	10
7	CONCLUSIONS	12
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	13
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	13
	LIST OF FIGURES	
	Figure 1: Site location	2
	Figure 2: Trench Plans	7
	Figure 3: Sections	9
	LIST OF APPENDICES	
	Appendix 1: Environmental Assessment	
	Appendix 2: Pottery Assessment	
	Appendix 3: Finds Quantification Table	

Drawing Conventions

Sections

Limit of Excavation	
Cut	
Cut - Conjectured	
Soil Horizon	
Soil Horizon - Conjectured	
Intrusion/Truncation	
Top of Natural	
Top Surface	
Break in Section	
Cut Number	
Deposit Number	117
Ordnance Datum	$\frac{18.45\text{m ODN}}{\times}$

Plans

Limit of Excavation	
Deposit - Conjectured	
Natural Features	
Intrusion/Truncation	
Sondages/Machine Strip	
Illustrated Section	
Archaeological Deposit	
Excavated Slot	
Modern Deposit	
Sondage	
Cut Number	118

A Roman Ditch and Medieval Rubbish Pits at 7 Victoria Street, Littleport, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation. (TL 5696 8681)

1 INTRODUCTION

Between 26th and 27th July 2004 the Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council undertook an evaluation on land adjacent to 7 Victoria Street, Littleport, Cambridgeshire. The work was commissioned by Whitfield Associates in advance of the proposed development of the former Burberry factory site for seven houses and twelve flats with associated access and service routes.

The excavations were carried out in accordance with the Brief dated 5th March 2004 (Gdaniec 2004). The archaeological objectives for the excavation were recorded in the specification for the site (Atkins, 2004). These objectives were to establish the character, date, state of preservation and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed development area. The specification (and location of the trenches) was approved by the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Office (CAO) before the start of the evaluation.

Three trenches were opened, two of which contained archaeological features.

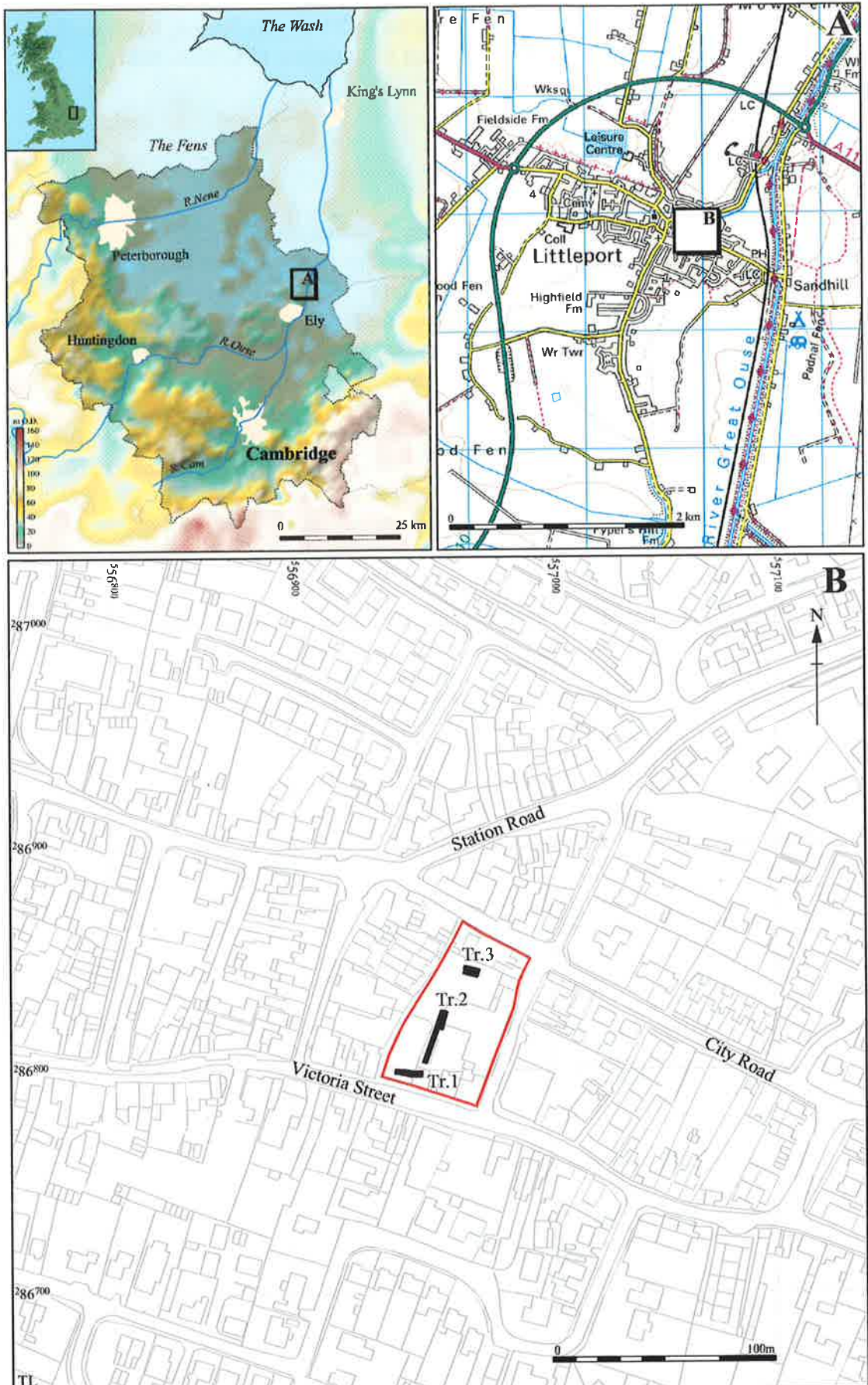
2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site lies on boulder clay (Till) with Kimmeridge Clay to the north and Glacial Sand and Gravel to the south (BGS 173). The site slopes from 4.3m OD in the north-east corner to approximately 6m OD at Victoria Street in the southern part of the site.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric (before AD 43)

Prehistoric activity is recorded in the parish of Littleport (Hall 1996). The Old Croft River was the principal channel of the Ouse river system during later prehistory and was a significant and determining factor for the location of archaeological settlement of all periods around Littleport. Archaeological remains in the parish are found either on the higher land or close to watercourses to exploit the available resources.



Based upon Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. (Cambridgeshire County Council licence No. LA 07649X 2003)

Figure 1 Location of trenches with the development area outlined (red)

The most important early prehistoric remains lie to the north-east of the parish, on higher land. This area represents the western extent of the intense prehistoric activity centres around Hockwold and Mildenhall in Norfolk and Suffolk. Other notable prehistoric activity in the parish is to be found at Apes Hall, again on higher ground overlooking the Old Croft River where Mesolithic and Neolithic flint scatters have been recorded. A Neolithic sickle was found c.250m to the north of the development area (SMR 07233).

An evaluation carried out at Highfield Farm c.500m to the south-west of the subject area revealed evidence of prehistoric activity (Dymond 1999). Two Neolithic ditches containing Peterborough Ware pottery, a type usually associated with ceremonial use, were discovered, along with a moderate concentration of flint artefacts associated with tool production. A "pond" containing flints and Beaker pottery was also found. While there were no indications of prehistoric settlement the evidence does suggest that the hill top was a focus of possibly dispersed ceremonial activity in the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods.

Bronze Age axes and chance finds have been discovered in Littleport, with a settlement site at Plantation Farm excavated by Clark in 1932 (Clark *et al* 1935). Early Bronze Age material was also discovered at Peacock's Farm (Clark *et al* 1935). Again these sites are related to the prehistoric activity to the east, in Norfolk and Suffolk. On Littleport island itself there have only been two sparse lithic scatters recorded, both assigned to the Bronze Age. To the north-west, at Apes Hall, Bronze Age flints and settlement evidence is recorded beneath and close to the later Roman archaeology (see below). During the Bronze Age the landscape around Littleport would have consisted of a peat fen which would have covered the minor roddons and waterways, although the Old Croft River remained active. Roddon silts were deposited along the edge of the Old Croft during the Iron Age.

The Iron Age is very poorly represented with only two sites recorded in the whole parish. This is a very low figure, given that the land around Ely (to the south) is fairly intensively occupied in this period. Both sites are located to the north-west of Littleport Island on higher ground at Butchers Hill. Indeed this site shows that the hill was continuously occupied from the Later Bronze Age until the end of the Roman period (Hall 1996).

Romano-British (AD 43-410)

Prior to 1997 there had been no significant Roman activity recorded in the modern town of Littleport, although this is probably due to fieldwork and development bias rather than the absence of such material. Roman activity is, however, very important within the parish of Littleport, and the focus lies to the north of the village. The Fenland Survey (Hall 1996) identified the main Roman activity as an array of saltern sites which occur in great density along the roddon of the Old Croft River. Within the fens roddons were well suited for this industry with the necessary brackish water easily accessible.

The most significant excavation of Roman remains to have taken place at Littleport occurred in 1997-98 at Camel Road, immediately to the south of the Blackbank Drain. Camel Road excavations were only c.300m from the subject site. This investigation revealed stratified deposits including ditches, pits, a round house and possible settling tanks. The recovery of high status pottery and painted wall plaster and tile from a bath house suggested that a possible villa-type estate was once present at Littleport, close to Camel Road. Occupation spans the second to fourth centuries, when the site was abandoned due to increased flooding (Macaulay 2002). At Highfield Farm (mentioned above) artefactual evidence indicated that limited Late Iron Age and Roman activity was focussed in the area (Dymond 1999). This was supported by a number of field boundaries which may relate to this period.

Investigations of Roman saltern sites in the Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire fens have concluded that such sites are associated with the *briquetage* (usually brown, yellow and red fired clay) used in the salt making process (Hall 1996). There are potentially as many as 30 such sites along the Old Croft River, the largest of which may cover over three hectares, although it is important to note that these sites have not been excavated, but identified from field survey. The largest site (No 36 in Fenland Survey, Littleport, Hall 1996) is considered a settlement in its own right and is linked to a 'Celtic' field system. In addition Eighteen 'hut' sites were identified, although this interpretation has been challenged, with the ring-ditches being potentially more saltern sites and briquetage mistaken for daub (Hall 1996, 25). At Apes Hall a second concentration of Roman sites were found, again thought to focus on salt making and located on the roddons. At least ten sites, lying on both sides of the Old Croft River make up this complex. 'Ladder' settlements (linear series of attached small paddocks on the roddon) are recorded, with larger curvilinear enclosures to the west on the island of Apes Hall, which consists of a total of 29 hectares. An evaluation carried out at The Hythe c.200m to the north of the subject area revealed materials relating to salt production (including briquetage) in a thick layer of mixed alluvium/levelling, believed to be of Roman date (Last and Crank 2001).

The Roman road of Akeman Street is thought to run through Littleport. Beginning at Cirencester it runs through Verulamium (St Albans), connects Ermine Street with Cambridge and then runs north-east into the fens towards Ely (Garrod 1938). No trace of the road, however, has yet been found north of Ely.

Anglo-Saxon (AD 410-1066)

To date there are no known Anglo-Saxon sites in the parish. Saxon settlement at Littleport was probably based around the hithe where the Old Croft River ran close to the island.

Medieval (AD 1066-1520)

The Domesday survey of 1086 records a *vil* with a population of 31 and it is assumed that the present town covers part (if not all) of the medieval centre. Littleport was allotted to the Bishop of Ely on the formation of the See of Ely in 1109. During the medieval period the island of Littleport was ploughed, visible as ridge and furrow, and the whole area (except the settlement itself) was given over to arable agriculture with summer pasturing along the fen edge. Evidence of ridge and furrow and field boundaries at Highfield Farm (Dymond 1999) supports this suggestion. At 3a Main Street, only 100m to the west of the development area, a well was discovered in 1994 (SMR 11726). Although capped with 19th century bricks the lining is earlier, possibly late medieval or post-medieval.

Post-medieval (AD 1520-present)

Surveys of the 14th century and later describe the state of the manor. At the end of the 16th century it was leased and in 1602 was sold by Bishop Heton to Sir John Peyton. In 1610 the manor had 160 acres of land in common fields. The Peytons sold Littleport in 1618 and eventually it passed to the Partridge family in 1654. The Partridges sold the manor to the Hardwickes in 1734 who kept it until c.1851: since then the property has been dispersed (Hall 1996).

Final enclosure occurred in 1840. By the middle of the 19th century the town was making considerable progress. Urban features such as a Gas Company (1867), Savings Bank (1868) and working men's club appeared as well as a town hall in 1879 (Pugh 1953).

The Ordnance Survey First Edition map of 1886 shows the street pattern is the same as today. A factory stands on the subject area with almshouses just to the west. The same evidence is presented in the Second Edition of 1902. The Ordnance survey map of 1926 refers to the building as a shirt factory.

Numbers 7 and 8 Victoria Street are specifically mentioned in the Victoria Counties History (VCH). They are referred to as some of the few buildings in Littleport of any antiquity or architectural distinction, along with the Old Turks Head Inn on Granby Street to the west of the site.

4 METHODOLOGY

Three trenches were opened, initially using 360° mechanical excavator, with a flat-bladed ditching bucket. All trenches were opened to a width of 1.6m under the supervision of an archaeologist, stepping and widening where deep deposits were encountered to allow for safe access. The total length of the trenches was 23m. The machine removed overburden and modern deposits until reaching the interface between the soil horizons and the natural sandy

silts; the level at which archaeological features were encountered. The position of the trenches was determined by the development area and was approved by the CAO before work began. (Fig.1)

After machining, the trench was cleaned in order to fully expose the archaeological features and to understand their extent and relationships within the trench.

All features were hand excavated and recorded using the AFU standard context recording system. The trenches were planned at a scale of 1:50 and sections were drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 depending on size and detail required. Colour print, colour slide and monochrome photographs were taken as well as digital photographs using a Canon A40 Powershot Digital camera. Environmental samples were taken where appropriate. The spoil heaps and trench surfaces were scanned visually for pottery and bone.

The trench locations were surveyed using a Leica Total Station Theodolite and tied in to the Ordnance Survey grid. The individual trench plans showing feature locations were then incorporated with the survey data.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1, running parallel with Victoria Street, was 8.5m in length with a maximum depth of 1.6m, and orientated on an east to west alignment. The trench was set back less than 5m from the present street frontage. Three deposits, were identified overlying the natural sandy clay; 47, 48 and 49 (Fig. 3, Sec 1). The layers all appeared to be make-up layers, probably dating to the 18th century, associated with the construction of the buildings of around this date on the street frontage. These layers were probably used to raise the ground level upon which buildings were constructed; raised safely above the natural waterlogged ground levels.

Pit 9: circular in plan, 0.35m in diameter x 0.37m deep. Filled by 10; a soft, greyish brown clay with rare stones, animal bone, pottery and glass and 11; a soft, greyish brown clay with rare stones and two sherds of pottery.

Pit 14: sub-circular in plan, 1.88m in diameter x 0.43m deep. Filled by 13: a moderately compact dark greyish brown clayey silt with light orange mottling, containing occasional small sub-angular pebbles, rare large angular stones and two sherds of pottery.

Pit 16: sub-circular in plan, 0.60m in diameter x 0.42m deep. Filled by 15: a compact, mid orange brown clayey silt with rare small sub-angular pebbles.

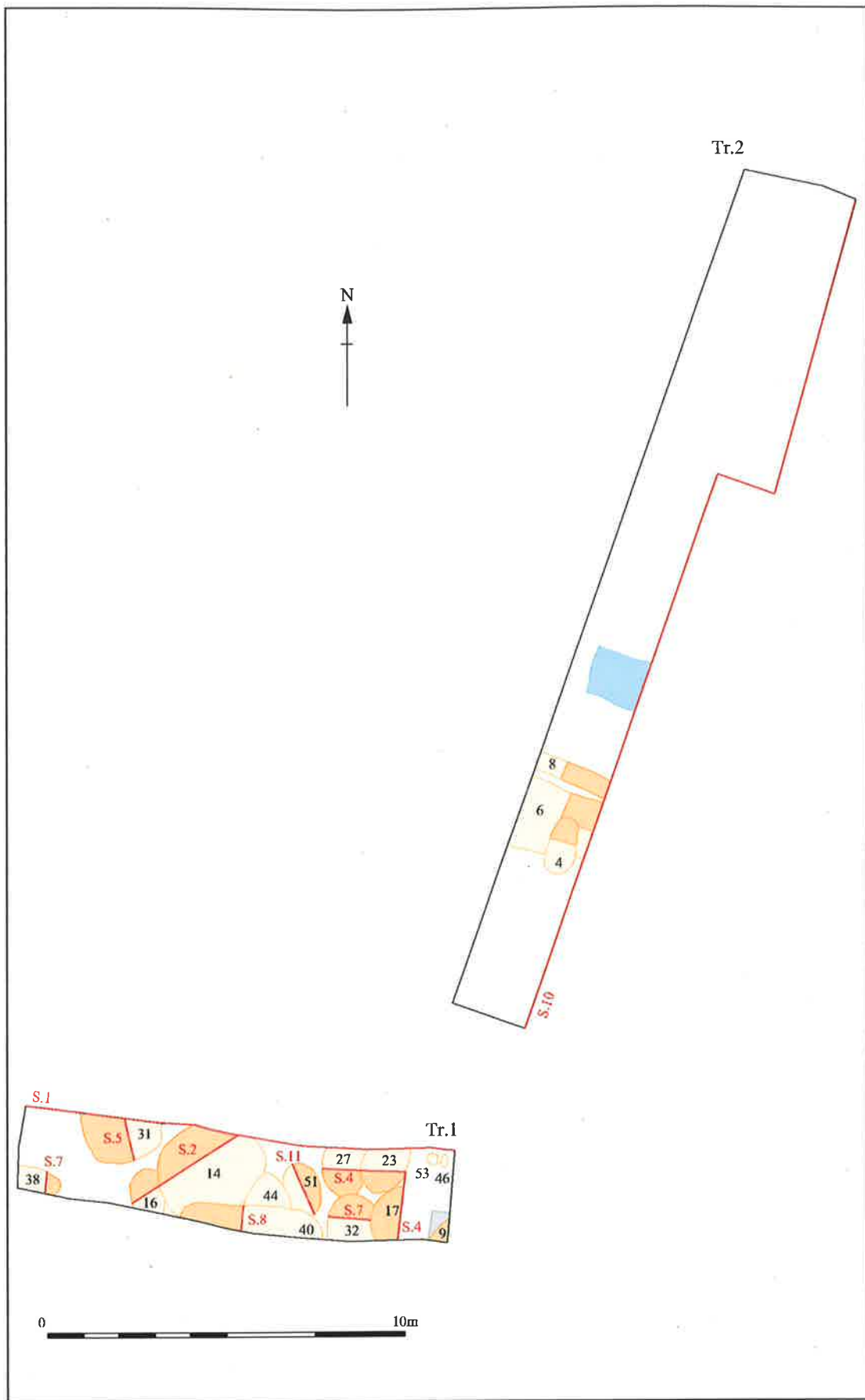


Figure 2 Trench plans

Pit 17: sub-circular in plan, 1.37m in diameter x 0.52m deep. Filled by 20: a firm, greyish brown silty clay including rare pieces of animal bone, 19: a greyish brown clayey silt with occasional small stones and 18: a firm, dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional small stones. Finds included fired clay, animal bone and pottery.

Pit 23: sub-circular in plan, 0.84m in diameter x 0.40m deep. Filled by 24: a fairly loose, greyish brown silty clay with yellow streaks and 25: a fairly loose, brownish grey silty clay with occasional small stones. Finds included animal bone, pottery and shell.

Pit 26: circular in plan, 0.30m in diameter x 0.17m deep. Filled by 28: a soft, greyish yellow clay with rare stones.

Pit 27: circular in plan, 0.30m in diameter x 0.17m deep. Filled by 29: a soft, greyish yellow clay with rare stones.

Pit 31: sub-rectangular in plan, 0.80m in diameter x 0.36m deep. Filled by 30: a moderately compact, dark greyish brown clayey silt with light orange and dark reddish brown lenses, containing occasional small pebbles. Finds included animal bone, and pottery.

Pit 32: sub-circular in plan, 0.90m in diameter x 0.30m deep. Filled by 34: a moderately compact, very dark brown silty clay with occasional stones and one sherd of pottery and 35: a soft, yellow brown silty sandy clay.

Ditch terminus 38: linear in plan, 0.85m long x 0.22m deep. Filled by 37: a moderately compact dark brownish grey clayey silt with occasional stones and fragment of fired clay.

Pit 40: Sub rectangular in plan, 0.80m in diameter x 0.28m deep. Filled by 39: a moderately compact, dark greyish brown clayey silt with occasional small stones and eight sherds of pottery.

Pit 44: Not excavated. Sub oval in plan, 1m in width, depth unknown. Filled by 43; a dark greyish brown silty clay including 3 sherds of pottery.

Posthole 46: Not excavated. Sub-circular in plan, 0.20m in diameter, depth unknown. Filled by a dark greyish brown silty clay. Two sherds of pottery were retrieved during surface cleaning:

Pit 51: Sub oval in plan, 1.10m long x 0.24m deep. Filled by 50: a moderately compacted light brown clayey silt with rare small stone inclusions and charcoal flecks.

Pit 53: Not excavated. Sub-circular in plan, 0.25m in diameter, depth unknown. Filled by 52; a dark greyish brown silty clay.

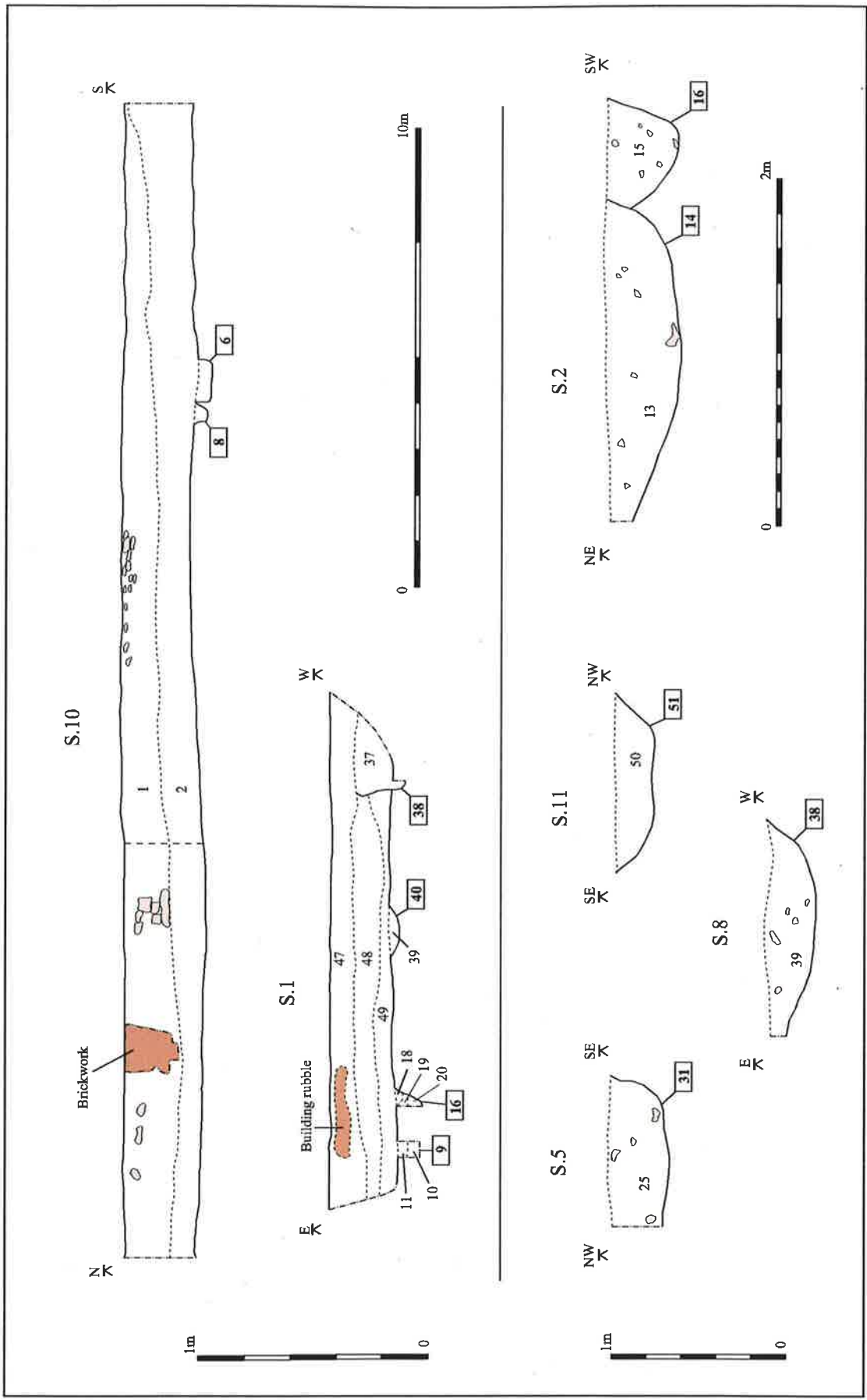


Figure 3 Sections

5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was 12m in length and orientated on a north to south alignment. A significant amount of post-medieval build-up was also encountered, up to a depth of 1.75m. As a result, the sides of the trench were stepped to allow safe access. Two deposits, 1 and 2, were identified overlying the natural sandy clay. Several modern intrusions truncated the sides and base of the trench (Fig. 2, Sec 10).

Pit 4: sub-circular in plan, 0.60, wide x 0.12m deep. Filled by 3: a firm, dark grey silty clay with occasional small stones, animal bone and fragments of post-medieval brick.

Ditch 6: Linear in plan, orientated east to west, 1m+ long, 0.70m wide x 0.35m deep. Filled by 5: a very compact, light brown silty clay with occasional small stones and animal bone.

Ditch 8: linear in plan, orientated east to west. 1m+ long, 0.40m wide x 0.30m deep. Filled by 7: a firm, dark brown silty clay with occasional small stones. Fill contained five sherds of pottery, animal bone, shell and slag.

5.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was 3m long, 1.75m wide and 1.65m deep. As with trenches 1 and 2, layers of post-medieval build up were recorded. No archaeology survived in this trench.

6 DISCUSSION

Three main phases of activity were identified on the site, spanning the Roman to post-medieval periods.

Romano British

The earliest activity recorded dates to the Roman period and comprises two ditches in Trench 2 and a number of residual pottery sherds in Trench 1. One of the ditches in Trench 2 contained Roman pottery, whilst the second is undated, although the proximity and similarity of orientation of the latter ditch suggests the two were contemporary. The identification of cereal grains and other remains in a soil sample from the dated ditch indicates good preservation of environmental evidence for this period.

The Roman pottery recovered in medieval contexts in Trench 1 is likely to have been redeposited from earlier deposits such as the undated pits or

perhaps layers of which no trace survives. Medieval activity, such as pit-digging and cultivation, and/or post-medieval levelling may also account for the redistribution of Roman pottery into later deposits on the site.

Medieval

The main period of activity, largely represented by dense pitting, appears to date to the medieval period and at least two phases have been identified. The presence of a number of undated features, in addition to intercutting pits within Phase 2, indicates fairly intensive activity on the site in this period. Phase 1 (10th to 12th century) comprises several large pits located in the western end of the trench, whilst the Phase 2 pits were smaller and appear to have been limited to the eastern end. The apparent 'zoning' of the pits indicates that they may relate to two separate properties or dwellings in the two identified phases.

Trench 1 was located less than 5m from the current street frontage of Victoria Street. The street itself appears to be part of the medieval street layout of Littleport, and may have had earlier dwellings on the frontage prior to the current 18th to 19th century buildings. If this was the case, then there is a strong possibility that these pits may be rubbish pits associated with dwellings on or near to the street frontage during the medieval period.

Soil samples were taken from two of the pits, one of which contained cereal grains, nutlets and wheat fragments, whilst the other contained cereal grains, nutlets, leaf fragments, fish scales, mussel shells and bird bones. The results of the soil sample analysis support the suggestion that these pits were for the disposal of domestic waste and also indicates good preservation and excellent potential for any future investigations in the vicinity.

Post-Medieval

The only surviving feature representing post-medieval activity on the site (other than late 18th to early 19th century make-up and disturbance) is the presence of a small pit in Trench 2. This pit contained a significant amount of animal bone weighing over 1kg. All of the bone retrieved appeared to be from a large mammal, probably a cow, and may represent butchery waste, suggesting that this was another rubbish pit. The pottery, which was also recovered from the fill of the pit, was identified as post-medieval red ware and Staffordshire slip ware, dating the pit to the 17th to 18th century.

7 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the evaluation has identified that a limited amount of activity from the Roman period has survived on the site, represented by a narrow ditch and possible contemporary parallel ditch in Trench 2. Although Roman activity has been identified previously in Littleport, this evaluation has been successful in identifying its presence, existing in the vicinity of Victoria Street.

This evaluation has also been highly successful in identifying the survival of medieval activity, present along the street frontage. Intercutting pits represent activity associated with settlement spanning four centuries. Preservation of environmental materials is also good.

Despite the truncation and disturbance by post-medieval activity, noticeable particularly in Trenches 2 and 3, features have remained undisturbed and well preserved closer Victoria Street.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Whitfield Associates who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Aileen Connor. Thanks also to Sam Whitehead for the illustrations and to David Brown, Dennis Payne, Dave Andrews, Rob Atkins and Spencer Cooper for their assistance on site. The brief for archaeological works was written by Kasia Gdaniec, County Archaeology Office, who visited the site and monitored the evaluation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Atkins, R., 2004 *Specification for Archaeological Evaluation; Land Adjacent to 7 Victoria Street, Littleport, Ely, Cambridgeshire*

British Geological Survey 1978(England and Wales) *Ely; Sheet 173. Solid and Drift Edition 1:50 000 series*

Cambridge Records Office (CRO)

Clark, J.G.D et al 1935 *Report on Recent Excavations at Peacock's Farm, Shippea Hill, Cambridgeshire* *Antiq. J.* 15:248-3.

Dymond, M., 1999 *Archaeological Evaluation at Highfield Farm, Littleport, Cambridgeshire* APS Report 79.99

Gdaniec, K., 2004 *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation; Land Adjacent to 7 Victoria Street, Littleport, Ely, Cambridgeshire (Former Burberry Factory Site)*

Garrod, J.R. 1938. *The Fen road from Durobrivae to Denver*, *Antiq. J.* 18, 76-77.

Hall, D., 1996. *The Fenland Project 10: Cambridgeshire Survey, the Isle of Ely and Wisbech*. EAA No. 79.

Last, J. & Crank, N., 2001 *The Hythe, Littleport, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Evaluation*. Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust, Report No. 881

Macaulay, S., 2002 *Romano-British Settlement at Camel Road, Littleport* Cambridgeshire County Council, Archaeology Field Unit Rep. 205.

Ordnance Survey Maps, *Cambridgeshire (Isle of Ely)*, 1st Edition, 1889

Victoria History of the Counties of England, 1967 *History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely*, vol. IV,

APPENDIX 1: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESMENT

by Rachel Fosberry

Five Samples were taken from across the excavated area and submitted for an initial appraisal. 10 litres of each sample were processed by bucket flotation for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The flot was collected in a 0.5mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through a 1mm sieve. Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. The dried residue was passed through 5mm and 2mm sieves and a magnet was dragged through each resulting fraction prior to sorting for artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope at x16 magnification and the presence of any plant remains or other artefacts are noted on Table 1 (below).

Samples 3 and 4 do not contain any plant remains other than a few flecks of charcoal in Sample 4. Samples 1, 2 and 5 all contained a few cereal grains. Preservation of these grains is by charring and is generally good.

Modern contaminants in the form of rootlets and a few common seeds such as *Sambucus* sp. are present in all of the samples.

Nutlets and leaf fragments of *Cladium mariscus* (saw-sedge) are present in Samples 1 and 2. Sample 5 contains a single fragment of fish scale along with a few mussel shells and a possible bird bone. Mussel shells are also present in Sample 1 along with fragments of bone and pottery and a small piece of slag. Hammerscale was not recovered in the flot.

The results show that there is potential for the preservation and recovery of charred macrofossils on this site. Grain was being consumed on site but there is no evidence for its processing in the form of chaff. Barley and bread wheat have been identified along with grains of either rye or oats.

A few charred weed seeds provide further environmental information; *C.mariscus* was commonly used for thatching.

With the exception of Sample 3, the samples are probably from features associated with rubbish disposal.

Table 1

Sample Number	Context Number	Comments	Flot Volume (ml)	Preservation	Weed Seeds	Modern Seeds	Fish scale	Snails from flot	Hamme r scale	Small Bones	Charcoal <2mm	Charcoal > 2mm	Residue Volume (ml)	Large animal bones	Marine molluscs	Snails from residue	Pottery	Slag
1	7	2 grains bread wheat, 1 grain oat/rye, 1 indet grain. Cladium mariscans, culm node	30	Charred	+	+		+		++	+		400	+	+	+	+	+
2	10	Cereal grains of wheat and oats/rye. Vicia, Rumex, Cladium nutlets and leaf fragments	10	Charred		+					+		500	+				+
3	0	Nothing in either residue or flot	10										60					
4	18	Flot comprised of modern seeds and rootlets	5			+					+		600	+			+	
5	25	Barley and wheat cereal grains. Single Gallium sp.?	15	Charred	+	+					+		400					

APPENDIX 2: POTTERY ASSESMENT

by **Carole Fletcher**

with contributions by Stephen Wadeson

The fieldwork generated a small assemblage of 41 sherds of pottery, weighing 0.618 kg, including unstratified material.

The main period represented in the assemblage is medieval however there is a significant amount of residual Roman pottery distributed across the site with a single context (7) producing only Roman fabrics. The majority of the medieval material is thirteenth or fourteenth century in date, with only two contexts producing earlier Saxo-Norman material consisting of an abraded Grimston-Thetford ware body sherd (Context 11) and a St Neots ware jar rim (Context 30), both sherds were recovered alongside Roman material. Similarly there is very little post-medieval material within the assemblage: only two such sherds were identified. These comprise an abraded sherd of Post-Medieval Red Ware (PMR) and a sherd of Staffordshire Slip ware (AD1600 to 1800) both from context (2).

The Roman material present is a mixture of Sandy grey wares, Sandy oxidised wares, Parchment or White wares, Samian and Orange sandy ware tentatively identified as Oxford ware.

The assemblage is small with an average sherd weight of approximately 15g; this weight is the result of the large Roman sherds in the assemblage. Statistical analysis is not viable on an assemblage of this size. The majority of the medieval material originates from Norfolk and includes glazed sherds from a Grimston ware jug. There is a high degree of residuality with more than a third of the assemblage consisting of Roman sherds. Almost all of the material is moderately abraded, suggesting some reworking of the material after initial deposition.

This assemblage contains no complete vessels. It is significantly fragmented and in a well-understood and published region would be deemed of limited value beyond the basic requirements of the stratigraphic sequence and the need to provide comparative period statistics.

The vessel types represented in the post-Roman assemblage are mainly jars, there is a single rim sherd from a St Neots ware jar, various sooted sandy ware sherds and a body sherd with a thumbled applied strip from a Grimston-Thetford ware jar. Only two glaze sherds were recognised both from a Grimston ware decorated jug and these represent the only table vessel present in the post-Roman assemblage, the assemblage would therefore appear to be domestic cooking kitchen wares.

CONCLUSION

The small size of the assemblage makes it difficult to generalise about activity on the site. However it would appear that the post-Roman assemblage is domestic in nature, with the majority of the vessels represented possibly used in the cooking of food. The residual Roman assemblage is a mixture of abraded and moderately abraded sherds from bowls and jars representing earlier domestic activity on or close to the site.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ayers, B., 2000, *Anglo-Saxon, Medieval and Post-Medieval (Urban) in Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy*, E. Anglian Archaeol. Occas. Pap. 8

Blake, H and Davey, P., 1983, *Guidelines for the Processing and Publications of Medieval Pottery from Excavations*, Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings Occas. Pap. 5

English Heritage, 1991, *Management of Archaeological Projects* (MAP2)

Medieval Pottery Research Group, 1998, *A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms*. Medieval Pottery Res. Group Occas. Pap. 1

Pottery Table

Context	Fabric	Number of Sherds	Weight in Kilograms	Rim/base/other	Vessel Forms	Spot Dating Date Range for Context
2	PMR	1	0.014	Body sherd	Bowl	17th to end of 18th Century
	STSL	1	0.003	Body sherd	Bowl	
7	Roman Samian	1	0.058	Body sherd	Bowl	AD 1st or 2nd Century
	Roman Parchment ware	1	0.014	Body sherd		
	Roman Orange Sandy Oxidised ware	1	0.037	Body sherd		
	Roman Sandy Greyware	1	0.007	Body sherd		
	Roman Sandy Oxidised ware	1	0.010	Body sherd		
10	Hand made Chalk & quartz temper	1	0.018	Body sherd	Jar	Mid 12th to mid 14th Century
	SHW	2	0.004	Body sherd	Jar	
11	GRIM	1	0.004	Body sherd	Jug	13th to mid 14th Century
	Roman Sandy Greyware	1	0.144	Rim	Jar (1st to 3rd Century)	
13	GTHET	1	0.059	Body sherd	Jar	10th to end of 12th Century
13	Roman Samian	1	0.007	Base	Bowl	
18	LMU	2	0.005	Body sherd	Jar	Mid 12th to end of 14th Century
25	LMU	3	0.010	Body sherd	Jar	13th to end of 14th Century
	Roman	1	0.050	Body sherd	Jar	
	Roman Sandy Greyware	1	0.067	Rim	Jar	
	MEL	1	0.021	Body sherd	Jar	
30	NEOT	1	0.004	Body sherd		10th to mid 12th Century
	Roman Fake Samian?	1	0.009	Rim	Jar	
	Roman Nene Valley Colour Coat	1	0.004	Body sherd		

Context	Fabric	Number of Sherds	Weight in Kilograms	Rim/base/other	Vessel Forms	Spot Dating Date Range for Context
34	LMU	1	0.002	Body sherd	Jar	Mid 12th to end of 14th Century
	Roman Parchment ware?	1	0.004	Body sherd		
	Roman Orange Sandy Oxidised ware (Oxford?)	1	0.004	Body sherd		
39	GRIM	1	0.012	Body sherd	Jug	13th to end of 14th Century
	Roman Sandy Greyware	1	0.010	Body sherd		
	MEL	3	0.011	Body sherd	Jar	
	LMU	3	0.010	Body sherd	Jar	
43	LMU	2	0.006	Body sherd	Jar	Mid 12th to end of 14th Century
	Roman Orange Sandy Oxidised ware (Oxford?)	1	0.003	Body sherd		
45	FSW	2	0.007	Body sherd		13th to end of 14th Century

Key

FSW	Fen Sandy ware	NEOT	St Neots ware
GRIM	Grimston ware	PMR	Post-medieval Red ware
GTHET	Grimston-Thetford ware	SHW	Shelly ware
LMU	Local Medieval Unglazed		
MEL	Medieval Ely ware	STSL	Staffordshire Slip ware

APPENDIX 3: FINDS QUANTIFICATION TABLE

Context	Material	Object Name	Weight in kg	Comments
2	Ceramic	Vessel	0.02	
3	Ceramic	Ceramic Building Material	0.03	
3	Bone	Bone	0.61	Ribs
3	Bone	Bone	0.35	
3	Bone	Bone	0.29	Humerus
3	Bone	Bone	0.08	Ulna (Frag.)
5	Bone	Bone	0.04	
7	Bone	Bone	0.07	Sample 1
7	Ceramic	Vessel	0.07	
7	Shell	Shell	0.01	Sample 1
7	Ceramic	Vessel	0.06	Samian
7	Fe:slag	Metal-working debris	0.00	Sample 1
7	Ceramic	Vessel	0.00	Sample 1
10	Bone	Bone	0.00	Sample 2
10	Bone	Bone	0.06	
10	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01	Sample 2
10	Ceramic	Vessel	0.02	
10	Glass		0.00	Sample 2
11	Ceramic	Vessel	0.14	
11	Ceramic	Vessel	0.00	
13	Ceramic	Vessel	0.06	
13	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01	Samian
18	Ceramic	Fired clay	0.01	
18	Bone	Bone	0.03	Sample 4
18	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01	Sample 4
18	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01	
20	Bone	Bone	0.08	
25	Bone	Bone	0.05	
25	Ceramic	Vessel	0.06	
25	Bone	Bone	0.00	
25	Ceramic	Vessel	0.09	
25	Bone	Bone	0.00	Sample 5
25	Shell	shell	0.01	
25	Shell	shell	0.00	Sample 5
30	Bone	Bone	0.02	

Context	Material	Object Name	Weight in kg	Comments
30	Ceramic	Vessel	0.00	
30	Ceramic	Vessel	0.02	
34	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01	
37	Ceramic	Fired clay	0.01	
39	Ceramic	Vessel	0.04	
43	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01	
45	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01	



Cambridgeshire
County Council

Education, Libraries
and Heritage

The Archaeological Field Unit
Fulbourn Community Centre
Haggis Gap
Fulbourn
Cambridge CB1 5HD
Tel (01223) 576201
Fax (01223) 880946