



Archaeological Field Unit

**The Travellers Rest Public House, Ely Road,
Chittering, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological
Evaluation by Trial Trenching**

Steve Hickling

November 2004

Cambridgeshire County Council

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SUMMARY

On the 22nd November 2004 the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit conducted an archaeological evaluation, consisting of one trench, at the Travellers Rest public house at Chittering. The only archaeological features were small pits or postholes dated by pottery and glass to the early 20th century.

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1 INTRODUCTION

During mid November 2004, the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) conducted an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching at the rear of the Travellers Rest Public House, Chittering, Cambridgeshire. The work was carried out at the request of Crickmore Developments in order to fulfil a Brief for Archaeological Investigation issued by Andy Thomas, Principal Archaeologist, Land Use & Planning, Cambridgeshire County Council, in advance of the construction of guest rooms as part of a campsite.

The site is located at the junction of Ely Road (A10) and School Lane at Chittering in the parish of Waterbeach.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

According to the British Geological Survey Map (Sheet 188, Cambridge, 1:50,000), the village is situated on a low ridge of Kimmeridge Clay and Lower Greensand, which divides the Waterbeach Fens from those of Cottenham.

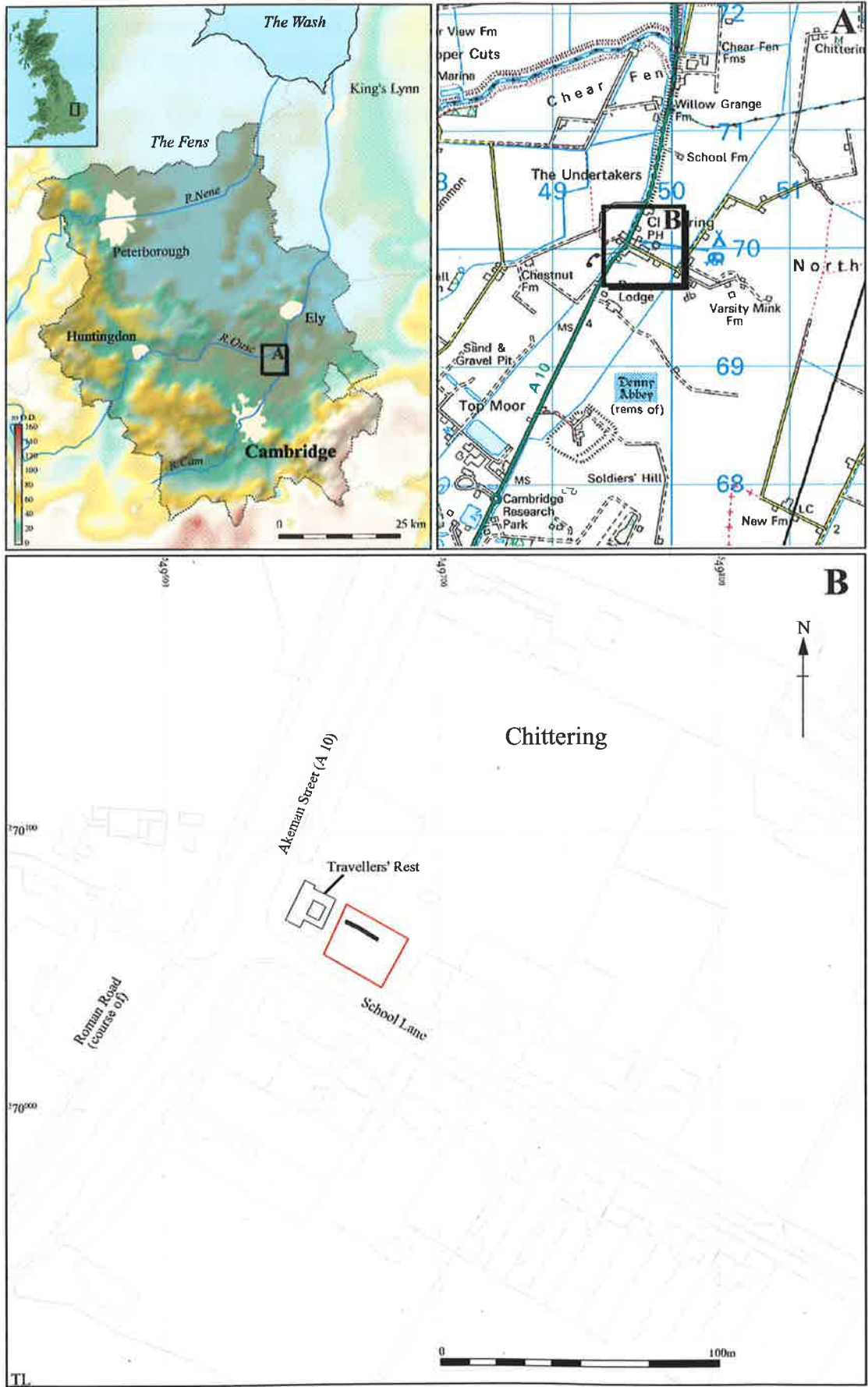
The topography is flat, at a height of 4.2m O.D.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Prehistoric

The gravely fens to the south of the site have produced several chance finds of Neolithic axes. The Fen Survey (Hall, 1996) identified a small site with fire-cracked flint near Denny Abbey to the south.

A Bronze Age barrow is recorded c.1.2km to the south of the site. Two more ring ditches have been identified to the west.



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

An extensive trial trenching exercise undertaken by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (Masser, 2000) to the west of Akeman Street identified a small Bronze Age settlement 0.5km to the north.

A considerable Iron Age site was identified 0.8km to the south.

The area of the present development lies on the fen edge in this period.

3.2 Roman

This area is rich in Roman remains, most notably the settlement earthworks in the field 100m to the north of the site (SAM 13605 and SMR 05703), consisting of upstanding remains of enclosures, tracks and possible house platforms. More extensive but ploughed-out (in 1954) remains are present 500m to the south-east. Large quantities of Roman material have been recovered from here. Similar sites have been identified to the south. 4km to the south lies the Car Dyke, a major Roman drainage and navigation canal. The modern A10, in the area of the site, lies on top of the Roman course of Akeman Street (SMR 05725), linking the Isle of Ely to the dry land to the south. Again, there is considerable evidence of Roman occupation in the area of the Dyke.

An extensive trial trenching exercise undertaken by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (Masser, 2000) to the west of Akeman Street identified Roman field systems.

Finds, including skeletons from both sides of the Roman road (SMR 05585) and Roman pottery (SMR 05630), have also been recovered in the vicinity.

3.3 Saxon and Medieval

The area of the site reverts to fen again in the post Roman period. Denny Abbey, 2km to the south was founded in the 12th century, presumably to take advantage of the considerable natural resources of the fen edge. Little other activity of this period has been identified in the vicinity of the present development.

4 METHODOLOGY

One trial trench 13.5m long and 1.3m wide was excavated using a 3-ton minidigger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under archaeological supervision. The topsoil was stripped off to the level of the natural geology.

The exposed surfaces were cleaned in order to clarify any features or deposits. All exposed features and deposits were excavated and recorded according to

AFU standards and practises.

5 RESULTS

0.35m of topsoil was stripped revealing an orange sand natural subsoil. Two service trenches and five pits or postholes were discovered and excavated. Three of the pits or postholes were found to contain modern bottle glass and pottery. The other two pits or postholes had similar topsoil like fills and so were probably of the same date.



Plate 1 View of the trench from the east

7 CONCLUSION

Despite the nationally important Roman remains within 200m of this site, no archaeological features or finds were discovered of an earlier date than the 20th century.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Crickmore Developments Ltd who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Aileen Connor. Crane Begg completed the illustrations.

The brief for archaeological works was written by Andy Thomas, County Archaeology Office, who visited the site and monitored the evaluation.

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