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Archaeological Field Unit

Phase II Archaeological Assessment at Hinxton Hall

S Leith

1993

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No A25

Commissioned By Fuller Peiser on behalf of The Wellcome Trust

**Phase II Archaeological Assessment
at Hinxton Hall**

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

In November 1993, Cambridgeshire Archaeology undertook a second phase of archaeological assessment at Hinxton Hall (TL 496/448), restricted to the southern part of the Hall park. The work was part of wider site investigations in the grounds of the Hall for a development proposal by Fuller Peiser on behalf of the Wellcome Trust.

The evaluation revealed prehistoric remains which strongly suggest the presence of a late Neolithic settlement.

The early medieval settlement identified during the first phase of evaluation appears to be limited to a discrete area in the southern part of the site. Outside the apparent enclosure ditch surrounding the settlement, an area of activity was revealed which appears to be contemporary with the settlement. This area showed rubbish pits and ditches which produced Saxon and early medieval pot sherds.

An isolated burial was found to the east of the settlement area. The burial, of a woman over forty five years old, was found with an iron object, probably a knife, and appears to be Anglo Saxon in date.

A hollow way was found which corresponds to the continuation of Hinxton High Street towards Great Chesterford. Other post-medieval activity on the site was represented by rubbish pits, quarry pits, and smelting or smithying.

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Figure 1 Trench Location Plan

1 INTRODUCTION

Between the 1st and the 12th of November, 1993, Cambridgeshire Archaeology carried out a second phase of archaeological assessment at Hinxton Hall (TL 496/448). The work was part of wider site investigations in the grounds of the Hall for a development proposal by Fuller Peiser on behalf of The Wellcome Trust. This phase of evaluation was restricted to the southern part of the Hall park in the area proposed for the construction of research facilities.

2 SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS WORK

The first phase of archaeological evaluation was carried out on the site between the 9th and the 27th of August, 1993. Geophysical survey in the southern part of the site had indicated a number of magnetic anomalies which were investigated in evaluation trenches. Eight trenches were opened in this area with a total length of 200m.

The evaluation trenches revealed an area of occupation, previously unknown, dating to the eleventh to twelfth centuries. The settlement was represented by a number of rubbish pits, ditches, and postholes which produced an amount of occupational debris, including pot sherds, animal bone, and building material. The latter, with the postholes, indicated the presence of structures. The area of settlement was surrounded by a large, deep ditch or ditches which were mostly undated and may not be contemporary with the site. However, the possibility of a moated settlement is suggested.

A number of ditches in this area produced worked flint, suggesting a prehistoric date. To the north-west of this area, two undated chalk clunch wall foundations were revealed which seem to correspond with field boundaries shown on the 1831 plan of the Hinxton estate.

3 METHODOLOGY

After completion of the first phase of fieldwork, a second geophysical survey was undertaken to the north-west of the area of early medieval occupation. This showed a number of possible archaeological features and ferrous anomalies. The second phase of evaluation trenching was intended to investigate these features and to define the limits of the area of medieval occupation in order to target the area to be investigated during the full-scale excavation.

Machine excavated trenches were opened using a tracked 360 degree excavator with a 1.6m toothless ditching bucket in order to leave a clean surface in which archaeological features could be identified. A total of 220m of trenching and one 10 x 20m area were excavated under the close observation of archaeologists (Figure 1 and 2).

Trenches L and M, measuring 30m and 100m respectively, were intended to investigate whether prehistoric features found in Trench B continued further north and to investigate the fall-off of features in the eastern part of the development site.

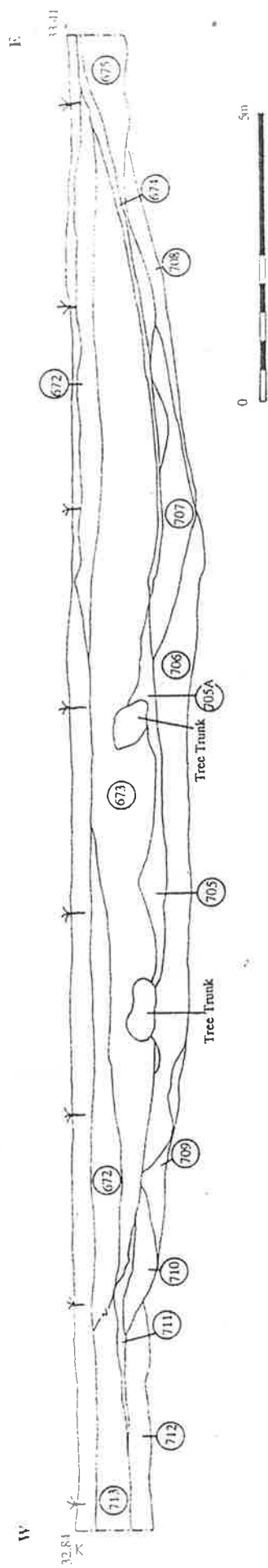


Figure 4 Trench M, South-Facing Section of Hollow

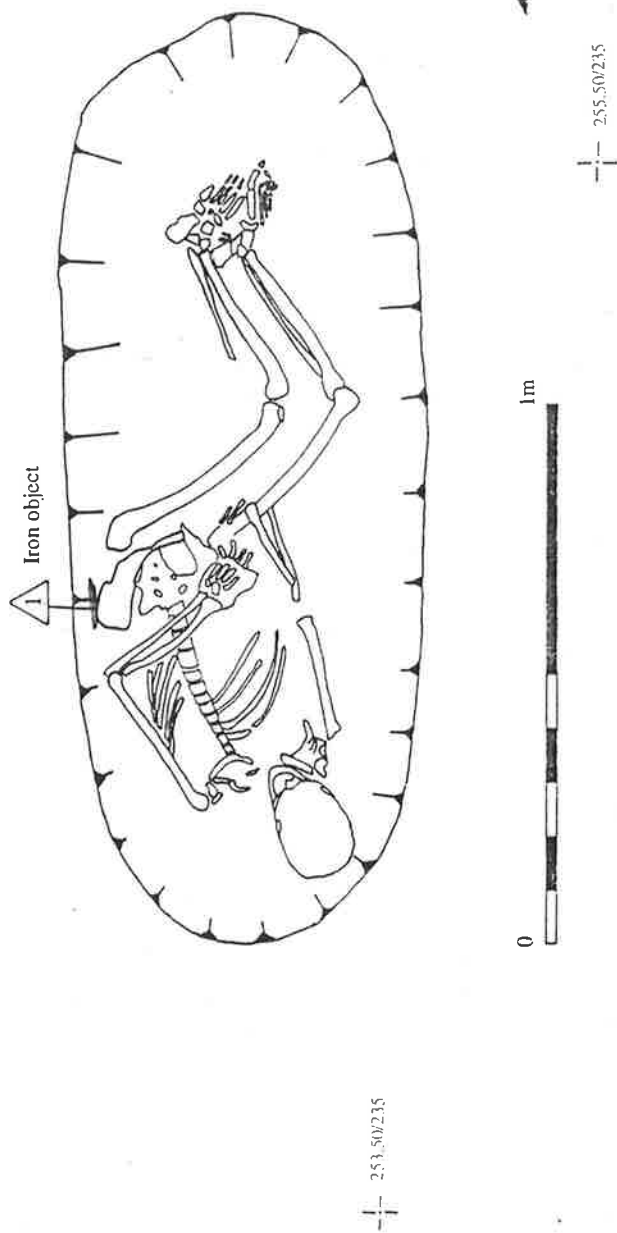


Figure 3 Trench M, Plan of Skeleton 699

Trench N, measuring 20m, was located in an area of ferrous anomalies indicated by the geophysical survey, and Trench O was intended to investigate possible features revealed by the geophysical survey.

The location of Trench P was intended to show whether medieval features continue down slope into the edge of the flood plain of the River Cam.

Trench Q was intended to investigate the fall-off of features to the north, in the area of the proposed lake.

The trenches were cleaned by hand, photographed and planned so that any features revealed could be recorded and excavated using the standard techniques of the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire Archaeology. Samples were taken from certain features in order that an assessment of their environmental potential could be made.

4 RESULTS

The southern area of the Hinxton Hall park appears to have been ploughed in the later medieval period, and is shown on the 1799 map of Hinxton as fields. Remnants of the medieval ridge and furrow field system were visible in Trench D, running parallel to the park boundary. This whole area appears to have been levelled during the emparkment to create a flat lawn. These two factors have resulted in some truncation of archaeological features.

4.1 Trench L

This trench showed 0.3m of topsoil over 0.25m of mid brown silt subsoil. A number of periglacial features of irregular shapes containing mid reddish brown clay silt were apparent within the chalk natural. The natural was encountered at 34.14m OD at the west end of the trench, at 34.0m at the centre, and at 33.84m at the east end.

No archaeological features were encountered in this trench.

4.2 Trench M

This trench showed 0.2m of topsoil overlying 0.25m to 0.55m of mid reddish brown sandy clay silt with a moderate number of flint pebbles and chalk flecks. This subsoil may represent an ancient ploughsoil dating from before the time of emparkment.

An oval pit with concave sides and base, 682, was located 15m from the east end of the trench. It measured 1m wide and 0.8m deep, and was cut through the subsoil and was sealed only by the topsoil. It contained (681) a mixed grey brown sandy silt with chalk fragments and pebbles, and appeared to be a relatively modern feature.

A sub-rectangular burial cut, 684, was found 35m from the east end of the trench and was sealed by 0.55m of subsoil (Figure 3). The burial cut was orientated with the feet pointing north-east, and measured 1.7m long, 0.75m wide, and 0.4m deep, with vertical sides and a flat base. The skeleton, 699, of a female aged 45+ was complete apart from a few disintegrated toe and finger bones. The body was supine, the legs flexed with knees to the right and feet close together. The right arm was straight along the body, the left flexed with the hand over the pelvis. An iron object 0.13m long, probably a knife, was found on the left side of the pelvis.

TRENCH N

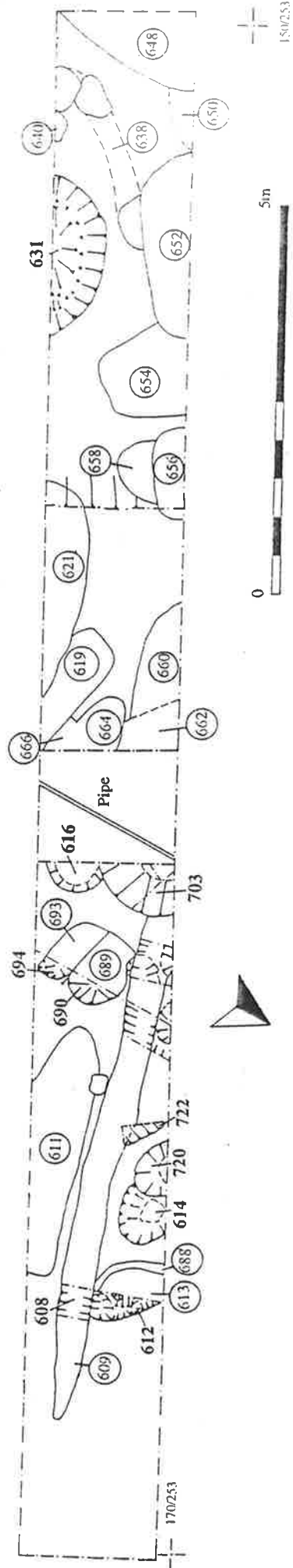


Figure 5 Plan of Trench N

A wide hollow, probably linear in plan, was located at the west end of the trench (Figure 4). The hollow measured 20m wide and 2.3m deep, and appeared to be orientated north-west / south-east. Compact chalky fills (672) and (673) appeared to be the result of relatively recent in-filling. These dump layers sealed (711), (705), and (674), a layer of very dark grey brown silty clay containing brick fragments, charcoal flecks, metal wire and a fragment of copper. This layer was thicker in the centre of the hollow (705) where it was up to 0.4m deep, and here it was flanked by two tree stumps, 4.25m apart. Below these, a compact layer up to 0.65m thick of mid grey sandy silty clay containing brick fragments and charcoal flecks (706) filled the base of the hollow, overlying the natural.

The chalk natural contained irregular periglacial features with mid orange brown silt fills and was encountered at 33.58m OD at the east end of the trench, at 33.69m 30m from the east end, at 32.44m 60m from the east end, and at 32.06m at the west end of the trench.

4.3 Trench N (Figure 5)

This trench showed 0.2m of topsoil overlying a layer 0.15m thick of mixed white and light orange brown clay silt with a high proportion of chalk lumps (604). This overlay 0.15 to 0.2m of dark black brown silt containing flecks of charcoal and small brick fragments (605). These layers probably correspond to a dump of material to level the ground surface during the emparkment (604) and the buried ground surface underneath (605).

These layers sealed a number of deep intercutting pits in the south-west part of the trench (619, 621, 638, 640, 648, 650, 652, 654, 656, 658, and 631). The pit 631 was excavated and was sub-circular, 2m wide and 1.8m deep, with steep sloping sides to a flat base. It contained a series of chalky clay silt fills, the lowest fill containing charcoal flecks, large brick fragments, and one sherd of pottery, probably residual Roman. A number of these pits produced brick fragments when partly excavated by machine.

The deep pits in the south-west part of the trench were cut through a layer of mid brown sandy silt 0.6m deep (606). This layer might represent an ancient ploughsoil dating from before the emparkment.

This layer (606) sealed a number of truncated features.

A linear ditch ran through the trench, orientated roughly east / west although curving slightly. It measured a minimum of 7m long, 0.4m wide, and 0.15m deep, with straight sides sloping to a flat base. It contained a mid greyish brown slightly sandy silt, with chalk flecks, charcoal flecks, one fragment of oyster shell, one worked flint flake and one scraper.

A number of pits seemed to respect the edge of the linear ditch.

A roughly oval pit 612 measured 0.6m wide, 0.7m long, and 0.15m deep, with concave sides sloping to an irregular, rounded base. A possible posthole was cut into the centre of the base. The pit contained two fills: (613) a dark brown sandy clay silt with black mottling containing charcoal flecks, and (688), the lower fill, a mid brown sandy clay silt mottled with yellow orange sandy chalk marl. This fill was in both the base of 612 and in the possible posthole.

TRENCH O

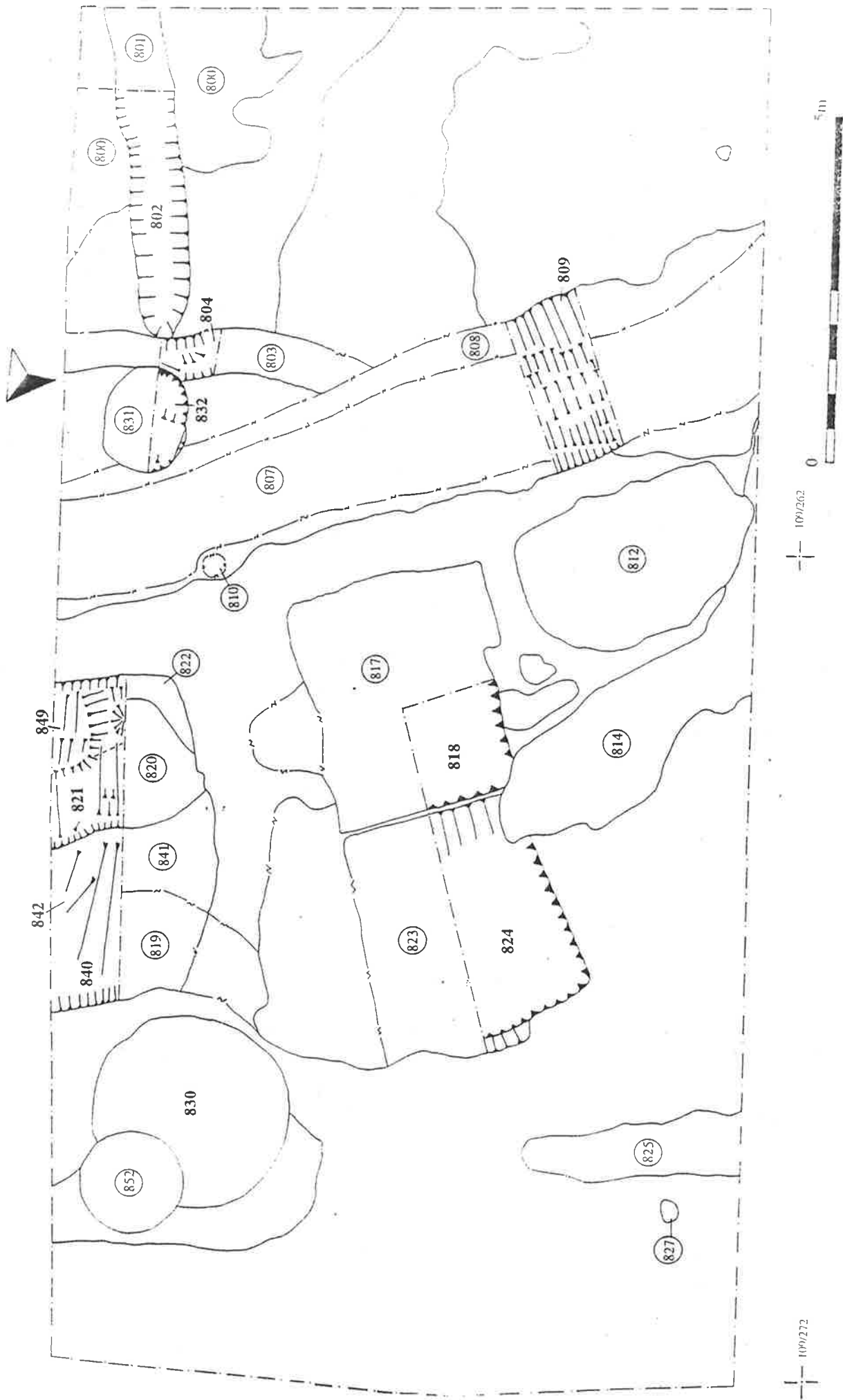


Figure 6 Plan of Trench O

A large sub-rectangular pit **610** measured 3m long and a minimum of 0.8m wide. It contained (611) a dark black brown slightly sandy silt with charcoal lumps. This pit was not excavated.

A sub-circular pit **614** measured 0.8m wide and 0.2m deep, with concave sides and a rounded base. It contained (615) a light mid yellow brown sandy silt mixed with chalk marl, with charcoal flecks, one animal bone fragment, and two worked flint blades.

614 was cut by **720**, a sub-circular pit measuring 0.4m wide and 0.1m deep, with shallow concave sides and a rounded base. It contained (721) a mid yellow brown slightly sandy clay silt with chalk lumps, charcoal flecks, and two worked flint flakes.

An oval pit **690** measured 1m long, 0.8m wide, and 0.15m deep, with sides gently sloping to a rounded, irregular base. The fill (689) was a compact light grey silty clay with chalk flecks and no finds.

690 cut **694**, an adjacent roughly rectangular pit 1m long, 0.4m wide, and 0.12m deep, with steep sides to an irregular base. It contained (693) a light brown silty clay with one worked flint flake.

The linear ditch **608** cut **722**, a small pit, possibly sub-circular in plan. Its minimum measurements were 0.7m long, 0.55m wide, and 0.35m deep, but it was not excavated to its full depth. The sides were concave, sloping to the base. It contained (723) a mid yellow/grey brown slightly sandy clay silt with lumps of chalk marl, containing one fragment of animal bone.

The linear ditch **608** was cut by **703**, a pit which was probably sub-circular in plan. It measured 1m long, 0.6m wide, and 0.45m deep, with steep concave sides to a flat base. It contained two fills: (702) a mid grey brown sandy clay silt with chalk flecks, and the lower fill (714) which was very similar, but with more chalk.

The pit **703** also cut **616**, a small circular pit measuring 0.45m wide and 0.3m deep, with steep sides sloping to a flat base. It contained (617) a mid brown mottled sandy clay silt with chalk flecks and charcoal flecks.

A number of unexcavated features may be related to these pits: (660), (662), (664), and (666).

The chalk natural was encountered at 30.61m OD at the north-east end of the trench, at 31.15m at the centre, and at 31.20 at the SW end.

4.4 Trench O (Figure 6)

This trench contained 0.3m of topsoil, in the majority of the trench directly overlying the degraded chalk natural. In the south-east corner of the trench the topsoil overlies 0.25m of mid brown clay silt subsoil.

A small circular pit **853** measured 1m in diameter and 0.45m deep, with concave sides sloping to a rounded base. It contained (852) a very dark greyish brown sandy clay silt.

853 cut **830**, a large circular pit 2.5m in diameter and 1.6m deep. It appeared to have straight, steep sides and a flat base, although it was not excavated fully.

853 and **830** both appeared to cut an unexcavated linear feature, which was possibly the butt end of a ditch.

A rectangular pit **840** measured 2.2m wide, a minimum of 2.5m long, and 1.85m deep. The north-east side was almost vertical, the south-west side a gentle slope to a narrow rounded base. It contained two fills, (841) and (819), both mid brown slightly clayey sandy silts. The lower fill contained one worked flint flake.

Adjacent to **840** was another rectangular pit **821** measuring 2.2m wide, a minimum of 2.5m long, and 0.9m deep. The north-east side was almost vertical, the south-west side a gentle slope to a flat base. It contained five fills: the upper fills, (845) and (820), were mid dark brown clayey silts, and the lower fills, (846), (847), and (848), were similar but with a higher clay content. The fills (846) and (820) contained tile, shell, animal bone, and post-medieval pot sherds.

821 cut **849**, a sub-rectangular pit about 1.3m wide and 2.5m long. The south-west side was steep and convex to a flat base, the north-east side was truncated by **821**. A possible posthole was cut into the base, measuring 0.45m wide and 0.2m deep. The pit contained three fills: the upper fill (822) a mid-dark brown clayey silt with patches of sand, (850) a mid grey brown clayey silt containing two worked flint blades, and the lower fill (851) very similar to (850) but with more stones.

Both **821** and **840** cut **842**, a probable sub-rectangular pit measuring a minimum of 2m long, 1.4m wide, and 0.7m deep. The sides were both truncated, by **840** on the north-east and by **821** on the south-west, and the base was flat. It contained two fills: (844) a very light brown sandy silt with chalk lumps containing one animal bone, and (843) a dark grey brown clayey silt.

A rectangular pit **824** measured 3m wide and 0.6m deep. The north-west and south-west sides were vertical, while the south-east side sloped to an irregular, flat base. It contained three fills: the upper fill (823) a pale grey brown clayey sandy silt, (837) a dark grey brown sandy silty clay containing one sherd of 17th-18th century English stoneware, and (838) a pale grey silty clay mixed with dark yellow sand. Both (837) and (838) contained animal bone, fresh water mussel shell, and tile.

824 was adjacent to **818**, a rectangular pit with vertical sides very similar to **824** but deeper. It measured about 3m wide, and was only partly excavated. It contained fill (817) a mid grey brown sandy clayey silt with chalk flecks. At a depth of 0.5 to 0.6m, two horse skulls and other articulated bones were uncovered.

824 and **818** were cut by (814), an unexcavated linear ditch which was in turn cut by (812), an unexcavated oval pit.

Unexcavated features in this part of the trench include (827), a possible posthole, and (825), a linear feature.

A straight linear ditch **809** running north-east / south-west across the trench measured a minimum of 11m long, 2.65m wide, and 1m deep. The south-east side was a slightly convex slope, the north-west side slightly concave in the upper half and convex near the narrow, flat base. Its original fill (808) was an olive brown clay silt with chalk flecks containing one worked flint blade. The ditch was recut **833** on exactly the same line, however not central to the original ditch, but closer to the north-west side. The recut had steep, irregular convex sides, with the same base as the original ditch, and measured 1.65m wide. It contained three fills: the upper fill (807) a dark greyish brown sandy clay silt with some gravel and stones concentrated in the lower part of the fill, (834) a dark brownish grey sandy clay silt, and (835) the lowest fill a mid brownish grey silty clay. (807) contained one sherd of pottery, probable early - mid Saxon chaff-tempered ware, and several fragments of Niedermendig lava, probably from a quern.

The original fill of **809** was cut by (810) a possible posthole, and by **832**, a sub-rectangular pit 1.2m long, 0.9m wide, and 0.95m deep. The sides were almost vertical with a flat base. It contained (831) a mid-dark brown clayey silt with occasional chalk fragments and numerous tiny bird or animal bones from several individuals, but with no skulls. (831) also contained six sherds of pottery, mostly mid Saxon handmade chaff-tempered ware and some early late Saxon sherds.

832 also cut **804**, a linear ditch running north-east / south-west extending into the north-east edge of the trench. The sides sloped gently to a rounded base, and it measured a minimum of 4m long, 0.35m wide, and 0.32m deep. It contained fill (803) a mid-dark brown clayey silt mixed with darker flecks and lighter pale orange brown.

804 cut **802**, a linear ditch running north-west / south-east extending into the south-east edge of the trench. The north-west end is rounded and the sides slope gently towards a slightly concave base. It measured a minimum of 4.9m long, 0.8m wide, and 0.18m deep. It contained two fills: (801) a mid brown silty clay with occasional charcoal fragments, animal bone, two sherds of Thetford type ware, and four worked flint blades; and the lower fill (836) a dark grey brown patchy clay silt with a high organic content, three worked flint flakes (one burnt), and two sherds of Thetford ware.

802 cut (800) a deposit of dark brownish grey clay silt 0.3m thick, varying from dark to almost black and containing one sherd of a coarse flint tempered ware, probably mid Saxon. This overlay a layer of flint nodules and other stones (805) in pale brown mottled sandy clay, 0.32m thick. This layer was possibly a natural deposit.

The natural subsoil, yellow white degraded chalk mixed with patches of orange brown sand, was encountered at 31.17m in the north-east corner of the trench, at 31.22m in the north-west corner, at 31.0m in the centre, at 31.02m in the south-east corner, and at 31.15m in the south-west corner.

4.5 Trench P

This trench showed 0.2m of topsoil overlying a layer of mid brown sandy silt subsoil 0.3m deep. In the south-west end of the trench, this overlay a layer of mid grey brown sandy clay silt 0.4m deep. This sealed the natural light yellow brown chalk marl mixed with patches of orange sand.

No archaeological features were encountered in this trench.

4.6 Trench Q

This trench showed 0.2m of topsoil, in places directly overlying the degraded chalk and gravel natural. In the south end of the trench, the topsoil overlay a dark grey brown clayey sandy silt subsoil 0.25m thick (680). In the north end of the trench, the topsoil overlay 0.2m of dark brown clayey sandy silt (670) over a layer of dark yellowish brown clayey sandy silt with chalk flecks and animal bone (671). These deposits appeared to fill a depression in the chalk natural and may have been dumped here at the time of emparkment to fill a hollow and level the ground surface.

(670) and (671) sealed a linear ditch **669** running west-south-west / east-north-east across the trench. It measured 0.65m wide, 0.58m deep, and a minimum of 1.8m long with steep concave sides and a gently rounded base. It contained (668) a dark greyish brown sandy clay silt with charcoal flecks, animal bone, and one brick fragment.

Near the centre of the trench, a large sub-circular pit 698 was sealed by the topsoil. It measured 0.6m deep, a minimum of 1.3m wide, and a minimum of 3.4m long, with concave sides rounding to a flat base. It contained (697) a very dark brown black sandy clay silt with brick fragments which appear to be late medieval or early post-medieval, burnt clay, slag, animal bone, charcoal, and pot sherds including one Roman Samian sherd, and two mid to late Saxon sherds.

At the south end of the trench, a linear ditch 679 was sealed by the subsoil (680). The ditch was orientated west-south-west / east-north-east running across the trench. It measured 0.9m wide, 0.4m deep, and a minimum of 1.8m long, with slightly concave sides and a rounded base. It contained (678) a yellowish brown sandy clay silt with occasional small stones.

The degraded chalk and gravel natural was encountered at 29.94m OD at the north end of the trench, at 30.44m at the centre, and at 30.17m at the south end.

5 INTERPRETATION

5.1 Trench M

The burial appears to be of a type in keeping with pagan Anglo Saxon burials, based on the grave cut, orientation, and grave goods. However, there is no definite evidence to confirm an Anglo Saxon date. The iron object, now awaiting analysis, appears to be a knife. According to Owen-Crocker (1986, p. 45) knives are the commonest of grave goods in Anglo Saxon burials of both sexes, and many are accompanied by nothing else. They were carried stuck through the belt point upwards, the majority worn on the left hip as here. The skeleton itself, of a woman over 45 years of age, is awaiting analysis.

The wide hollow at the west end of the trench appears to be a hollow way or trackway running north-west / south-east. This track still existed at the time of the 1958 OS map which shows a tree-lined path running south-east across the park as a continuation of the original Hinxton High Street from the junction with the road to Ickleton. The hollow way appears to have been filled in soon after this date, probably at the time of the construction of the present lab building. The 1799 OS map shows the Hinxton High Street continuing south-east past the Hall in a straight line directly to Great Chesterford. It has been suggested that this track has its origins as a Roman road linking Cambridge and London, although there is no archaeological evidence to support this.

5.2 Trench N

The deep intercutting pits in the south-west part of the trench appear to be post-medieval, probably quarry pits for the extraction of chalk for building purposes. They could relate to the construction of the Hall building in the late seventeenth century, or to additions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The truncated features in the rest of the trench produced a number of worked flints, which strongly suggests a prehistoric date. An initial analysis of the flints gave a late Neolithic date. The density of features and the nature of the deposits, many containing charcoal, suggest settlement or other intense activity in this area.

5.3 Trench O

This trench is divided into two by the deep linear ditch 809 running north-east / south-west across the trench. The ditch seems to have served as a field boundary for some time, appearing as such on the 1799 map and as a pathway on the 1958 map. However, the ditch could have been in use as a boundary or drainage ditch for some considerable time before 1799, and at present the dating evidence remains inconclusive. One worked flint was present in the original fill (808), and there was one Saxon sherd in the upper fill of the ditch recut (807). The post hole (810) suggests that the ditch was fenced on the north-west side at some point after the deposition of the original fill (808).

To the north-west of the linear ditch are several rectangular post-medieval pits which are aligned according to the linear ditch. This suggests that the ditch was open when the pits were dug. These pits are probably rubbish pits, for example 818 containing horse remains, or quarry pits. In the north-west corner of the trench, the large, deep circular pit 830 also appears to be a quarry pit.

The rectangular pits 821 and 840 truncate two earlier features, 842 and 849, which appear to be prehistoric, possibly related to the prehistoric features found in Trench N.

Further features are located to the south-east of the linear ditch. These appear to be related to the early medieval settlement found in Trenches D and E. The rubbish pit 832 produced a number of mid to late Saxon sherds, and the linear ditch 802 produced several sherds of Thetford type ware (*c.* eleventh century). These features and their fills resemble those in Trench D; in particular 802 has similar dimensions and alignment to the linear ditch 60. 802 also contained seven worked flints, which suggests that prehistoric features were disturbed in this area.

5.4 Trench Q

The linear ditch 669 and the large rubbish pit 698 both appear to be post-medieval features. The presence of slag, charcoal, and burnt clay within the fill of 698 implies industrial activity in the area, possibly smelting or smithying. The Roman and Saxon sherds within the fill of 698 suggest earlier features in the area.

The linear ditch 679 contained no dating evidence, but its shape and fill resembled other prehistoric features on the site.

6 CONCLUSIONS

There appear to be three phases of activity in the southern part of the Hinxton Hall park: prehistoric, Saxon to early medieval, and post-medieval. The prehistoric remains are centred around Trench N, and strongly suggest the presence of a late Neolithic settlement. Very few settlement sites of this period have been excavated in Britain, giving the research potential of this site great importance.

The early medieval settlement identified during the first phase of evaluation appears to be contained within a discrete area in the southern part of the site, with features appearing only in Trenches C, D, E, F, and O. If the large ditches visible in Trenches C and E are in fact continuous and enclose the area of settlement, the features in Trench O may indicate an area of activity related to the settlement but intentionally located outside the enclosure. For example, the features here contained very few pot

sherds in comparison to those in Trenches D and E, which contained a significant number of sherds from charred cooking pots. This might suggest that activities other than cooking took place outside the enclosure. The linear ditch in Trench O which served as a later field boundary may have been in use during this period as a second enclosure.

The number of Saxon pot sherds found in Trench O suggests that either the settlement was occupied from the Saxon through to early medieval periods, or that a Saxon settlement is located nearby. The presence of the burial in Trench M may also indicate the proximity of a Saxon settlement. Isolated Anglo Saxon burials are not uncommon, but the possibility remains that this burial is part of a small cemetery.

Undocumented Saxo-Norman settlements are rare, and this site is particularly interesting because it may have been moated. In addition, it appears to have fallen out of use at a time when many others were expanding. Further work here will provide an opportunity to reconstruct the activities and economy of a settlement which may have been occupied from the Saxon to early medieval periods.

The post-medieval period saw the site used for various activities, represented by rubbish pits, quarry pits, and possibly smelting or smithying. These activities may be related to the Hall. However, the primary interest of the site clearly lies earlier, with evidence of settlement activity from the late Neolithic and Saxo-Norman periods which may be of national importance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank The Wellcome Trust for their financial support of the project, and Paul Woods and Paul Roberts of Fuller Peiser for their cooperation. Thanks are also due to Murray Cairns and the Sanger Centre for use of their facilities and store; to Tony Hurley for his assistance and cooperation; to Mary Alexander, Simon Bray, Richard Heawood, Malin Holst, Scott Kenney, David Mitchell, Chris Montague, Charles Rowland Jones, and Duncan Schlee for their hard work and good humour on site, to Malin Holst for the illustrations, and to Tim Reynolds and Paul Spoerry for their advice and support.

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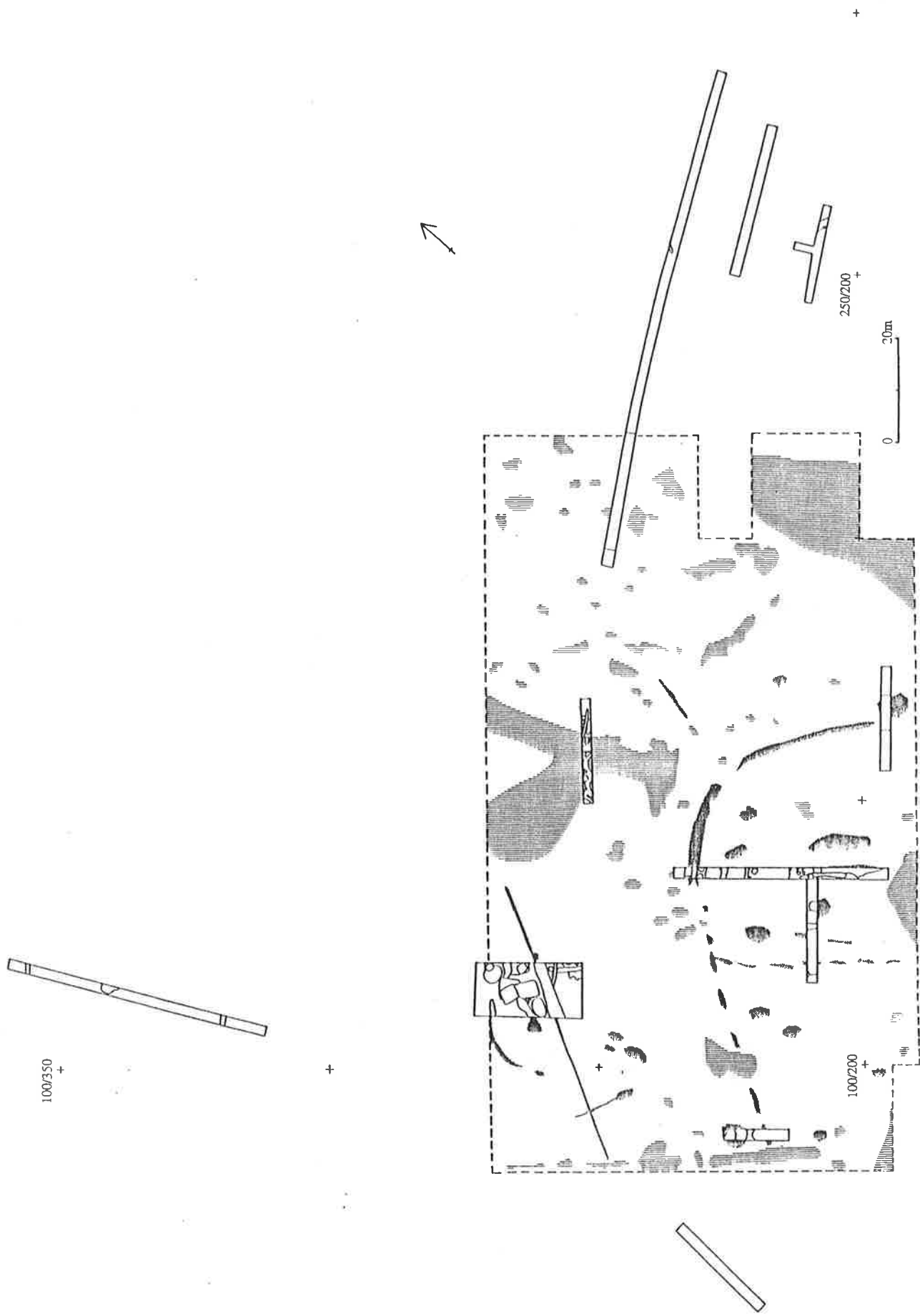


Figure 2 Plan of Trenches Showing Features and Geophysical Survey Results

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS

Anglo-Saxon: The period dating between the withdrawal of the Roman legions in 410 and the Norman invasion of 1066. Within this period several ethnic groups from northern Europe vied for control of the British Isles, including the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danes, and Norwegians. The latter two groups are collectively known as the Vikings and became involved in British politics from the eighth century, later than the others. The Vikings were successful in occupying a large part of the north and Midlands of England, before providing a King (Cnut) for the whole of England. For most of this time England was divided up into several kingdoms until Saxon resistance to Viking incursions led to the unification of England under Aethelstan and Alfred.

Artefact: Any object made by people. Generally, this word is used for finds such as pottery, stone tools, or metal objects, but it can be used in a much wider context in that the landscape we have today is a product of human activity and is thus an artefact itself.

Enclosure: An area defined by a continuous surrounding ditch. These may be enclosures around human settlements, fields, or paddocks for stock. Rectilinear enclosures have straight sides and corners, whilst curvilinear enclosures have rounded sides.

Geophysical Survey: Investigation of changes occurring in the magnetic and electrical characteristics of the soil, which can often be induced by human activity.

Hollow way: A track cut down below the level of the surrounding fields. The cutting is due more to water erosion than to deliberate excavation.

Medieval: Historic period that begins with William the Conqueror's invasion in 1066. Post-Medieval is generally considered to date from 1500.

Natural: The local subsoil that is unaltered, in nature and location, by human activity.

Neolithic: Prehistoric period c. 3500 - 2000 BC when farming and pottery were introduced. Stone tools of fine workmanship were produced and exchanged over long distances, but before the use of metals.

Post hole: A hole dug to receive a post. It can also result from driving a post into the ground. The latter, however, does not have distinct fills such as packing and a post pipe. A post pipe is the fill of a post hole which formed in the place of a removed post.

Ridge and Furrow: Medieval cultivation techniques led to a phenomenon of corrugated fields. Strips of land were allotted to individuals and a furrow was left between one person's strip and the next, leading to a corrugated ridge and furrow effect. Ridge and furrow shows up as cropmarks on air photographs and more rarely as earthworks in pasture fields.

Roman: Historic period AD 43 - 410 when much of Britain was part of the Roman empire. The term Romano-British is now widely used to describe the people of this period, as few were Roman themselves, but they were a provincial manifestation of the empire developing in a unique way. AD 410 was the date the legions were withdrawn, but the Romano-British culture continued for some time into the 5th century in tandem with Anglo-Saxon migration.



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