ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING AT CAMBRIDGE GOLF CLUB, LONGSTANTON (TL 398 674)

by A. Hatton

April 1996

INTRODUCTION

On the 23rd April 1996 an archaeological recording brief was carried out by Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit at the Cambridge Golf Club, Longstanton (TL 398 674), on behalf of Mr K. Green in advance of the construction of a car park (Figure 1). The archaeological work was carried out at the request of the County Archaeology Office in order to determine the impact of the car park excavation on archaeological remains. The general area had previously formed the subject of an archaeological evaluation carried out by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) (cf Evans 1991).

GEOLOGY

The British Geological Survey 1: 50000 map shows the site to be located on an interface between river terrace gravels (to the west) and Amptill clay (to the east).

BACKGROUND

Longstanton is a 'street' village that developed along the Cambridge-Willingham road, from a string of small medieval settlements at Green End, Golden End, Church End and Longstanton St Michael; its form can be classed as polyfocal and linear. The village is low-lying but set back from the fen edge proper. The region's major rivers lie relatively distant: the Ouse 5km to the north-east and the Cam 11km to the west.

A medieval settlement and moated site has been identified at Fishpond Cottages. These were not absorbed into the main village, but remained as a separated hamlet until its final desertion in the late 19th century. The modern (post-1953) village was previously two distinct parishes, Long Stanton All Saints and Long Stanton St Micheal, the latter area still identifiable as a cluster of houses around a thatched, now redundant church (VCH Vol. IX, 1989).

The location of the village did not provide any particular topographical or economic advantages, unlike the situation with villages closer to the fens or major

waterways. Furthermore, it never possessed a dominant focus of settlement and thus remained a loosely connected group of hamlets throughout most of its history. Large parts of the area of probable medieval settlement have suffered from post-war housing development, which will have destroyed part of the archaeological record.

The archaeological investigation carried out by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit at Hatton's Farm employed a variety of techniques (aerial photograph assessment, geophysical survey, fieldwalking and trial trenching) to locate and investigate two cropmark complexes (SMR 08296, 09548) and their environs. The evaluation considered approximately 80ha of land, a large part of which is now given over to the Cambridge Golf Club course. The cropmark complexes were found to relate to Romano-British field systems and settlement, although Iron Age origins for this activity was suggested by the recovered pottery. A later Iron Age settlement, previously unknown, was revealed beneath a mill mound. The entire area was formerly part of the open field system of Longstanton. Remnants of ridge and furrow and slight earthwork headlands were noted during evaluation (cf Evans 1991).

The area of current investigations falls within the area designated by Evans as Site II, within the right-angle formed by the projected line of Evan's Trench 1 and Trench 24 (Figure 1). At least two enclosure alignments were revealed at Site II, both considered to relate to a Romano-British settlement core towards the west boundary of the development area (ie to the west of the area of current investigations). No definite trace of buildings were observed during the evaluation, and the paucity of pottery noted further confirmed distance from dwellings (ibid 46).

METHODS

The machine excavation of the car park area and dumping of foundation hardcore had taken place well before the archaeological recording brief was comissioned. Machine excavation varied in depth across the site from 650mm (below ground level) in the west portion of the area to 1.30m (below ground level) in the east. It was evident, that the entire area had been cleared well below the upper interface of natural deposits. Four sections had been exposed by machine excavation.

The exposed sections were hand cleaned in order to reveal feature profiles. Context recording followed the AFU's standard single context system, and

written records were supplemented by photographs and selective section drawing. An attempt was made to extract datable artefacts from the sections.

The west part of the car park area, which had been excavated to a lesser depth, was hand-cleaned in order to test for the survival of feature bases.

RESULTS

The general stratigraphic character across area was as follows:

Topsoil (modern): 150mm to 400mm depth, very dark brown silty clay with occasional flint inclusions.

Subsoil (? post-med/medieval ploughsoil): 433mm to 1m thick, dark brown silty clay with occasional flint inclusions.

Lower subsoil (? remnant of buried soil): 260mm thick, mid brown silty clay with a high percentage of flint inclusions due to mixing with the underlying river terrace gravel.

Section A

Three parallel ditches [1,3,5] running in an east/west direction were observed in section. They were sealed by the topsoil and cut the subsoil. Each ditch had a depth of approximately 0.25m and width of between 0.8m and 0.9m. No artefacts were obtained from either ditch.

Section A parallels the nearby CAU evaluation Trench 24. Unfortunately this trench is not described by Evans. However, the trench plan indicates similarly sized and aligned features to those described above. Perhaps, as they appear to be relatively recent, they were not deemed worthy of mention.

Section B

No archaeological features were identified in section. The depth of the underlying subsoil increased from west to east.

Section C

No archaeological features were revealed

Section D

The cleaning of section D revealed a ditch [7], sealed by the upper subsoil. The feature has a depth of 0.3m and a width of 1.17m. No artefactual evidence was recovered from the feature section. The feature may be correlated with F8 and F9 in CAU's Trench 1. It appears to form part of a sub-rectangular enclosure whose opposite side was revealed as F14. This frequently re-cut substantial ditch did not yield dateable artefacts during the evaluation and its position within the soil sequence is not recorded.

A resistivity survey (1) carried out during the CAU evaluation identified several linear features. The absence of two of these features (those that run in a north-east/south-west direction) in both CAU Trench 1 and the car park section suggests that the resistivity readings were not reflecting cut features.

DISCUSSION

Archaeological features certainly extended into the area excavated for car park foundations , although little can be now said regarding their character. Two ditches revealed in Section D conform with features of the Romano-British enclosure system, but less substantial associated remains (such as the post holes and gully visible in CAU Trench 1) if formerly present in the car park area have been quarried away entirely.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Mr Ken Green of Cambridge Golf Club for commissioning the work; Rebecca Casa for her assistance on site and Ben Robinson for managing the project. This investigation was conducted in response to brief drawn up by the County Archaeology Office.

REFERENCES

Cambridgeshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)

Evans, C. 1991 *Archaeological Evaluation at Hattons Farm, Longstanton, Cambridgeshire*. Cambridge Archaeological Unit.

Phillips, C.W. (ed.) 1970 *The Fenland in Roman Times*. London: Royal Geographic Society No 5.

Wilkes, J.J. & Elrington, C.R. (eds.) 1978. *A History of the County of Cambridgeshire and he Isle of Ely VII* (Roman Cambridgeshire). Oxford: University Press.