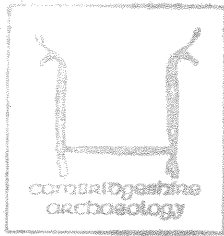
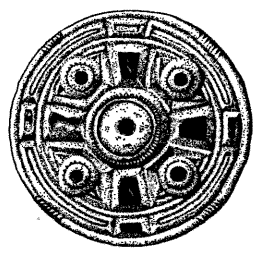


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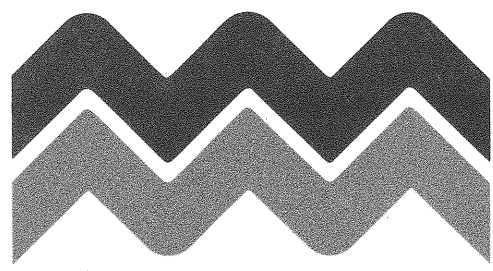


An Archaeological Evaluation at Nene
Valley Service Station, Wansford,
near Peterborough, 1993

Simon Bray

On Behalf of
Heron Garage Properties

Report No A6



Cambridgeshire
County Council

ABSTRACT

In May, 1993, Cambridgeshire Archaeology completed an archaeological evaluation of land on the flood plains of the River Nene to the north of the A47 (fig. 1 (TL0843/9960)). Six trenches were opened using a mechanical excavator. No significant archaeological remains were encountered.

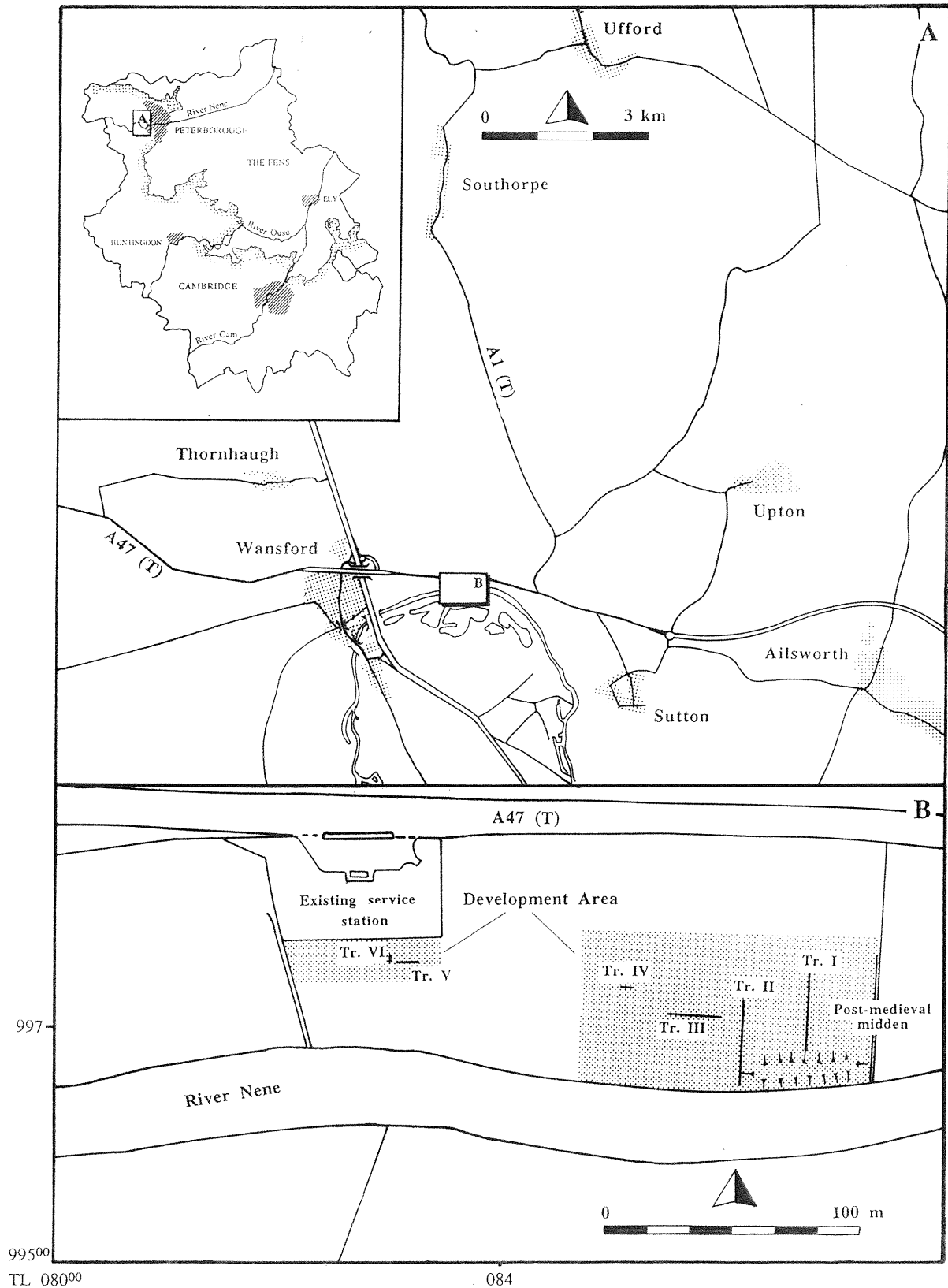


Figure 1 - Location of Site

1.0 INTRODUCTION

From the 4th - 6th May 1993 work was carried out to assess the archaeological potential of six acres on the floodplains of the River Nene adjacent to the A47 (fig. 1). The work was completed for Heron Garage Properties who plan to extend an existing service station on to the site.

The site is located to the immediate south of the A47 on the northern floodplains of the River Nene. The archaeological potential of the site was indicated by known concentrations of Roman material in the immediate vicinity. The proximity of the River Nene and a Roman road suggest the possibility that the site could have been used for purposes associated with the storage, transfer and transportation of goods in the Romano-British period.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The site is located on the floodplains of the River Nene and lies on second terrace river gravels. Situated in the parish of Wansford, 7.5 miles to the north-east of Peterborough, the site is immediately to the south-west of the A1 which follows the course of Ermine Street, a principal Roman road.

The parish of Wansford is particularly well documented on the County's sites and monument record (SMR), which shows extensive evidence of Romano-British settlement. Of particular interest is an extensive scheduled ancient monument (SAM 201 (fig. 2)), located 200 metres to the north-east of the area under study and described as a cropmark complex, which is comparable in plan to other Roman settlements and field systems. To west of the site traces of a Roman building are recorded and to the south, immediately across the River Nene, several Roman burials have been excavated.

In addition there is more limited evidence of prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval activity in the immediate vicinity (fig. 2).

The area proposed for development is adjacent to the River Nene, is mostly flat, and is currently under pasture. In the south-east corner of the site, on the bank of the Nene, a large mound is extant in the field and will be levelled by the development.

3.0 METHODOLOGY OF EXCAVATION

Six trenches were opened by a mechanical wheeled excavator with a 1.6 metre wide toothless ditching bucket. The trenches were positioned across the area proposed for development (fig. 1). The exposed areas were cleaned by hand and any archaeological features were sampled and recorded using Cambridgeshire Archaeology's single context recording system.

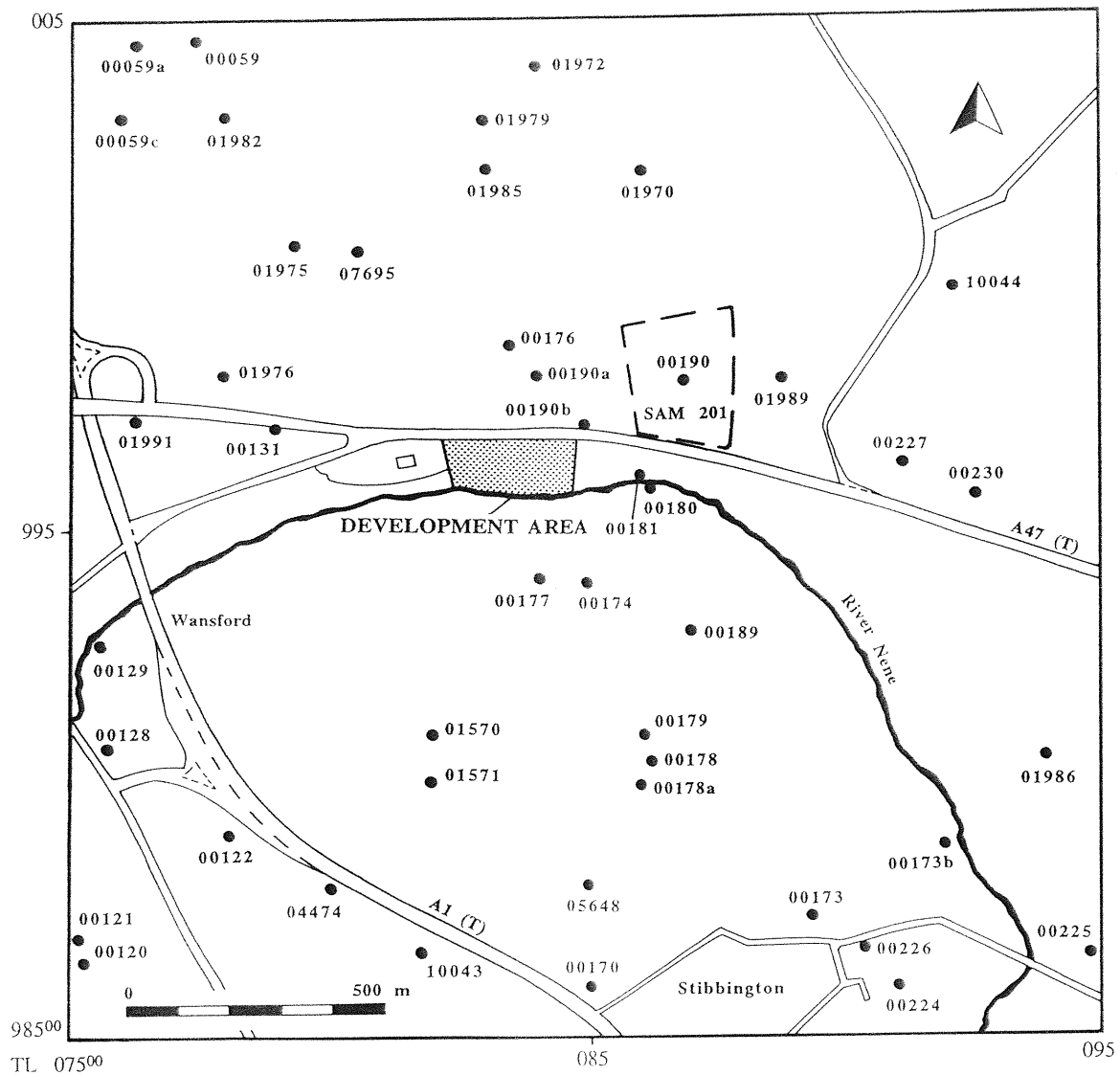


Figure 2 Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites and Find Spots

- | | |
|--|---|
| 00059 - Roman metal working site | 00225 - Post-medieval dovecote |
| 00059a - Roman villa, coins, wall plaster | 00226 - Medieval church |
| 00059c - Roman gravestone | 00227 - Ring ditch, linear feature |
| 00120 - Anglo Saxon spearhead | 00230 - Post hole |
| 00121 - Bronze Age cist burial | 01570 - Roman pottery |
| 00122 - Roman building, iron working site | 01571 - Roman pottery |
| 00128 - Post-medieval inn | 01970 - Neolithic worked flint |
| 00129 - Anglo Saxon spearhead | 01972 - Neolithic knife |
| 00131 - Roman building | 01975 - Roman pottery, tile |
| 00170 - Roman pottery kiln, building, well,
rubbish pit, cemetery | 01976 - Neolithic, Bronze Age worked flint |
| 00173 - Post-medieval great house | 01979 - Neolithic, Bronze Age worked flint |
| 00173b - Fishponds | 01982 - Neolithic worked flint,
Roman pottery |
| 00174 - Roman coffin, urn, skeleton | 01985 - Roman coin |
| 00176 - Bronze Age cist burial | 01986 - Ring ditch |
| 00177 - Roman burial, pottery, coin | 01989 - Roman coin |
| 00178 - Bronze Age ring ditch, barrow | 01991 - Roman pottery, glass, coin,
tile, wall plaster |
| 00178a - Roman fort | 04474 - Enclosure |
| 00179 - Roman vase, manicure implement | 05648 - Mound |
| 00189 - Roman money box, pottery, mortar,
coffin, horseshoe | 07695 - Roman pottery |
| 00190, a, b - SAM 201 - Cropmark complex,
possibly Roman field system | 10043 - Cropmark |
| 00224 - Post-medieval rectory | 10044 - Cropmark |

N.B. Numbers refer to the Cambridgeshire Sites and Monuments Record

4.0 RESULTS

Within the area examined there was limited evidence of archaeological activity. Two 20th century drains were found aligned north/south, running from the A47 to the River Nene. Alongside one the gullies, in Trench III, two contemporary postholes were identified. A trench through the mound in the north-eastern corner of the field showed it to be an accumulation of debris which included large quantities of unopened freshwater mussels, coal, bone, 17th century pottery, river silts and gravels. The nature of the deposit suggests that the mound is a result of periodic dredging of the Nene during the Post-medieval period to maintain the navigability of the river.

Common to all the trenches, immediately below the topsoil, a thick, compact homogenous clay deposit was recorded. Excavation through this layer found it to be over a metre deep, sterile and overlying a compact grey/blue clay. These deposits were sampled in Trenches I & II and were found to be over 2 metres deep, the actual depth of the layers was not reached due to the waterlogged nature of the site which made deep excavation unsafe. Both layers were found to be sterile, compact and are likely to represent post-glacial flooding of the River Nene.

5.0 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

On the basis of the results it seems that the river bank at this point was not subject to significant activity in the Romano-British period. The many finds of this date from the area probably indicate the presence of a Roman cemetery on the opposite, south, side of the River Nene, as well as settlement and agricultural activity upslope from the site on the north bank of the river. The activities associated with these locations do not appear to have extended down to the current riverside area, and it may well be that this was always rather waterlogged and therefore an unsuitable location for either settlement or burial practises.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

No features of archaeological significance were identified within the depths to be affected by the proposed development. It is recommended that no further work or mitigation strategy are required.

A full site archive has been completed. This is held by Cambridgeshire Archaeology, along with all artefactual material.

Copies of this report have been lodged with the County Archaeological Office and Peterborough City Planning Department.

10/05/93
Simon Bray

Appendix A - List of Contexts

Ctx. No.	Description	Nature	Finds	Above	Below
001	Topsoil	Dark brown compact silt		2,3,4,6,12	
002	Midden, F010 deposit	Light brown with slight orange staining	mussels & animal bone	8	1
003	Clay deposit	Mid orange/brown occ. mid yellow mottling	N/A	14	1
004	Fill of gully [5]	Light yellow/brown, clay	N/A	9	1
005	Cut of drainage gully				
006	Fill of gully [7]				1
007	Cut of drainage gully				
008	Midden deposit	Mid Reddy Brown sandy/gravel	mussels, animal bone	11	2
009	Primary fill of ditch [5]	Mid brown with occ. yellow mottling, silt.clay	N/A		4
F010	Midden	Post-Medieval Midden from dredging the Nene contains deposits 2,8,11			
011	Midden, F010, deposit	Mid brown clayey silt	P.Med. Pot	3	8
012	Fill of [13]	Mid brown compact clay	N/A		1
013	Cut of posthole				1
014	Clay deposit	Blue/grey compact clay			3