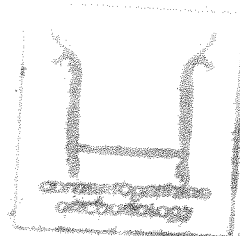
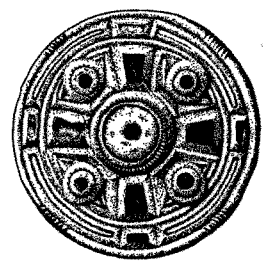


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Archaeological Investigations on Proposed Parking Bays at the Recreation Ground, Oakington

S P Macaulay

1994

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No A36

Commissioned By South Cambridgeshire District Council

**Archaeological Investigations on Proposed
Parking Bays at the Recreation Ground, Oakington**

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

In May 1994 the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council carried out an archaeological evaluation at the Recreation Ground, Queens Way, Oakington (TL 416 646) on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council prior to the proposed construction of three parking bays.

The work was carried out in conjunction with the larger scale project of excavating the site of an Anglo-Saxon Cemetery, also situated on the Recreation Ground. The full extent of the cemetery is unknown and thus the proposed parking bays were to be investigated to determine if they may have disturbed some of the burials.

Three machine trenches were opened over the proposed parking bays. No archaeology was detected in any of the trenches. It would seem highly probable that to the west of the existing road, there has been substantial importing of soil related to the construction of existing houses and that the known Saxon cemetery does not extend this far

INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of May 1994 the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council were employed by South Cambridgeshire District Council to conduct an archaeological evaluation on three proposed parking bays at the Recreation Ground, Queens Way, Oakington (TL 416 646).

Following the discovery of human remains in June 1993 at the children's playground within the Recreation Ground, there was the need for investigation of any ground disturbing activities, given that the full extent of the cemetery was unknown. The work on the parking bays was to form part of a larger scale investigation on the cemetery itself situated to the northeast (*Figure 1*).

BACKGROUND

Apart from Anglo-Saxon burial remains, the Cambridgeshire Sites and Monuments Record identifies few archaeological remains for Oakington. Scattered around the village are insubstantial medieval earthworks, most notably the survival of ridge and furrow to the southwest of the Recreation Ground (SMR nos; 05175, 08958, 09202, 09220, 09535).

Evidence for the existence of Anglo-Saxon burials first appears in 1928. Three skeletons with a spear head, knives and a shield boss were discovered (SMR 05270). The site of the burials was located beneath the Blooms Nursery Garden to the southeast of Oakington Parish Church. Excavations for the construction of a children's playground in June 1993 (including the foundations for a slide, swings and climbing frame), resulted in the disturbance of a further 7 individual burials (Archive Report Kemp 1993). Again Saxon artefacts were recovered, including a female adult buried with annular brooches and a bronze belt buckle, typical of grave goods associated with burials of the early 6th century AD.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

It was determined to locate, date, characterise and map the existence of any archaeological deposits likely to be disturbed by the proposed parking bays and in particular determine if the known Anglo-Saxon cemetery extended into the development area. Within the scope of the evaluation, if the presence of substantial archaeological deposits were identified, a further series of archaeological works would have to be formulated.

GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The land is low lying (below 10m OD) and generally flat, the result of market gardening activities and levelling for playing fields (c.1950). Geology of the area consists of 2nd and 3rd terrace gravels overlying gault clays which appeared to be much contorted by periglacial activity.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was based on machine dug trenches to investigate the site with cleaning by hand to reveal archaeological features where appropriate. In total three trenches were excavated (1-3), located directly over the proposed parking bays (*Figure 1*). Each trench was opened using a 3 ton Kubota Minidigger and a toothless ditching bucket (1.3m in

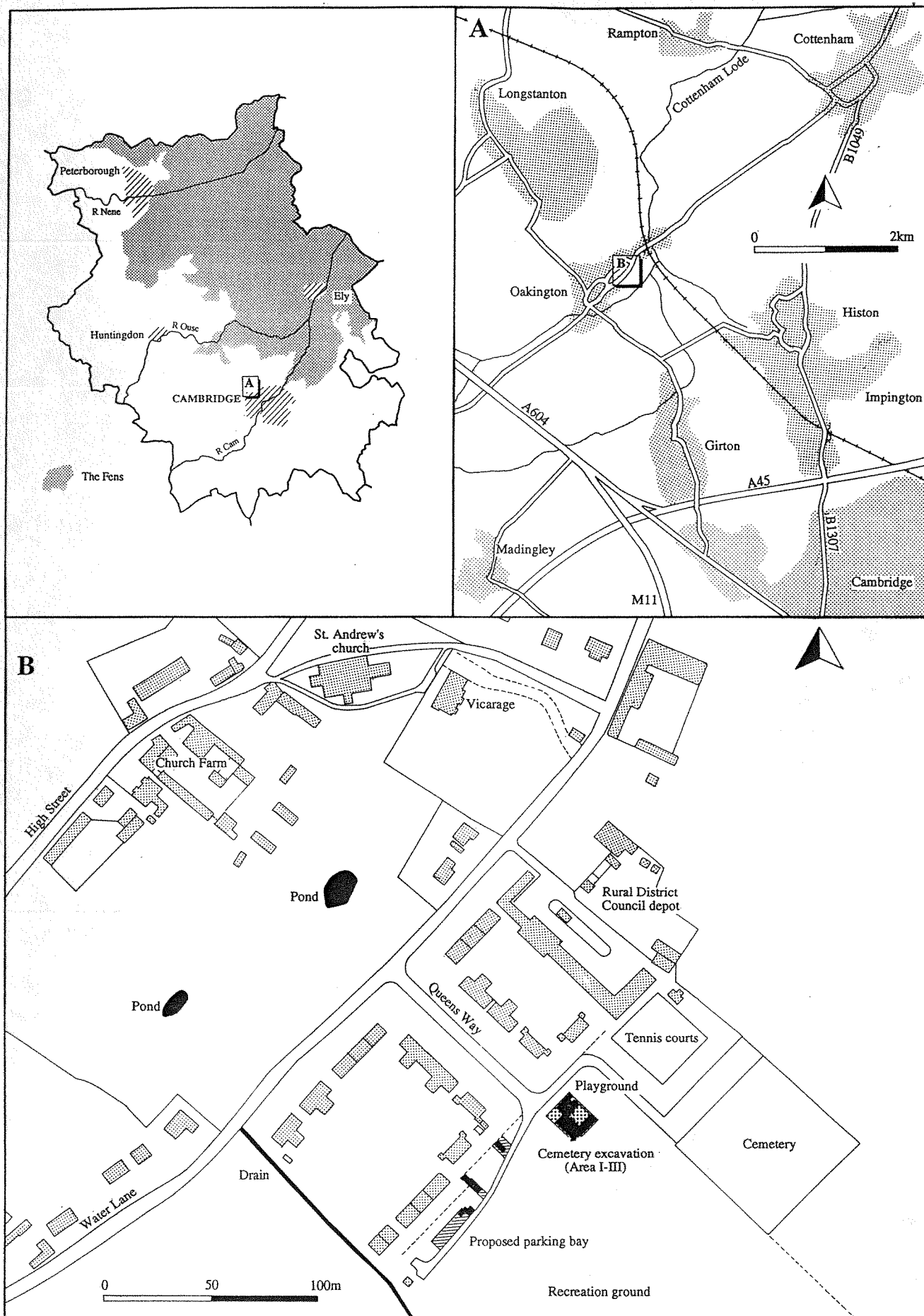


Figure 1 - Location plan showing Proposed Parking Bays & Cemetery Excavation

width). Topsoil was removed and machine dug sondages to the depth of the natural geology (gravels) were excavated where archaeology was not present.

RESULTS

Trench 1 was located to the southeast over the largest parking bay (*Figure 1*). The position of the trench was staggered initially to avoid and then confirm that the area was already disturbed by a modern (c.20th century) sewer drain. No archaeology was detected nor was there any evidence to suggest that there had been any deposits which had existed that may have been disturbed by the sewer trench. Gravel natural was not reached in this trench for fear of damaging the sewer. The trench was a total of 9.7m in length and excavated to a depth of 0.50m.

Trench 2 was 10m in length running northwest-southeast. Topsoil, a mid-dark brown silt/clay, extended to a depth of 0.20m. Gravel appeared at a depth of 0.90m. The subsoil make up was a brown sand/silt which contained occasional 20th century debris (pot, tile and iron material). No archaeology was present along the entire length of the trench.

Trench 3 was 5m in length again orientated northwest-southeast. Topsoil depth was only 0.10m again with gravel occurring at a depth of 0.90m. Immediately beneath the topsoil a mixed gravel and topsoil layer appeared 0.10m in depth, related to existing access road make-up. Below this the subsoil consisted of a firm brown sand/silt, however no dateable material was retrieved from this layer.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The archaeological evaluation at the proposed parking bays at the Recreation Ground, Queens Way, Oakington, produced no identifiable archaeological remains.

The results of the investigation of the Saxon cemetery indicated burials occurring at depths of as little as 0.20m and no greater than 0.40m. In the evaluation of the Parking Bays trench depths were to almost 1m with a thick sub-soil layer which has not been found over the areas where burials were discovered.

The proposed parking bays which cause ground disturbance to no greater than 0.30m will not affect any archaeological deposits. However, it was not possible, within the scope of the larger investigation, to determine the extent of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery. Any development which affects the Recreation Ground to the east of the access road should be subject to archaeological investigation.



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