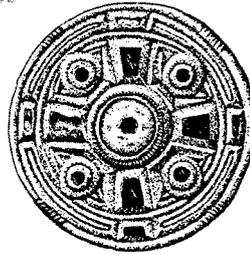




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Archaeological Field Unit

Roman, Late Saxon, Medieval and Post-Medieval
Archaeology at Clay Lane, Castor near Peterborough.
An Archaeological Evaluation 1997.

Stephen Macaulay

1997

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. A113

*Commissioned By Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick on behalf of
The Commission for the New Towns*

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An Archaeological Evaluation 1997.**

Stephen Macaulay BA, MPhil, AIFA

1997

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Report No A113

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SUMMARY

Evaluation trenching in April 1997 produced evidence of Roman, Late Saxon, medieval and Post-medieval archaeology in eight of nine trenches. These remains were not extensive or representative of dense occupation. Roman remains were two ditches, several pits and postholes. The evidence of Late Saxon/Norman occupation was confined to a single deep, steep sided pit (well) which was dug through the colluvium, a layer which sealed the earlier Roman archaeology. The medieval and Post-medieval archaeological remains included a large boundary ditch and disturbed ridge and furrow in the western field. The ground surface of the entire site was uneven and pitted the result of periods of Roman and Post-medieval quarrying, dumping of building stone and infilling of a pond. Artefactual recovery was poor, suggesting that the archaeology was outside the Roman development of Castor, similarly the absence of substantial Saxon and medieval artefacts confirms that the site has primarily been used for agriculture since the Roman period.

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**ROMAN, LATE SAXON, MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL
ARCHAEOLOGY AT CLAY LANE, CASTOR NEAR PETERBOROUGH.
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION. (TL 1226 9877)**

1 INTRODUCTION

Over a period of two weeks in April 1997, an archaeological evaluation was carried out in advance of an application for a residential development by the Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council. The work was commissioned by Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick (SWK), the agents of the developers and landowner *The Commission for the New Towns* (CNT). The work carried out followed the specification described in a research Design provided by SWK (March 1997) which was derived from a Desk-Based Archaeological survey produced by John Samuels Archaeological Consultants (January 1997). These documents were drawn up from a specification produced by the County Archaeology Office - Development Control (September 1996).

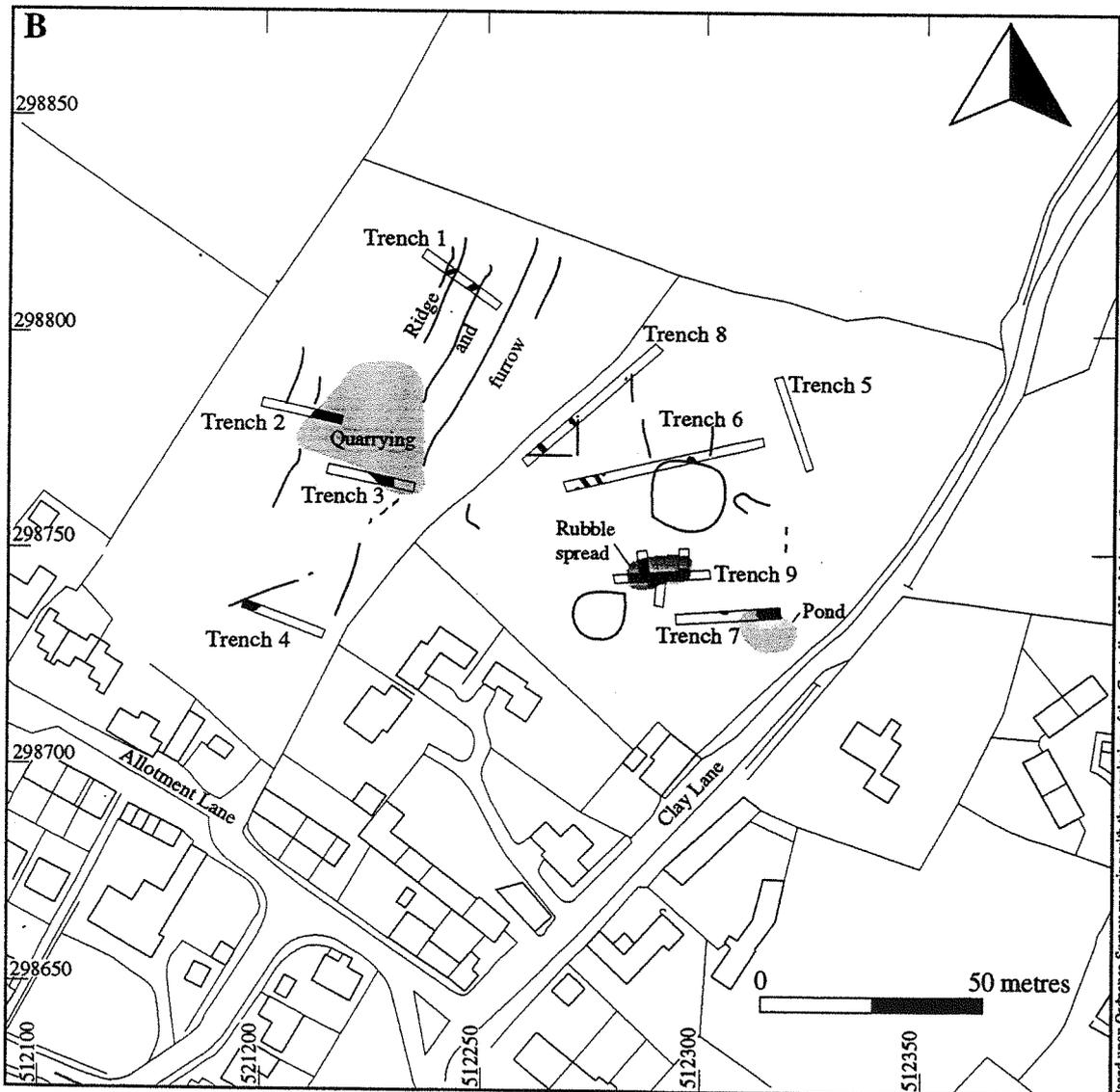
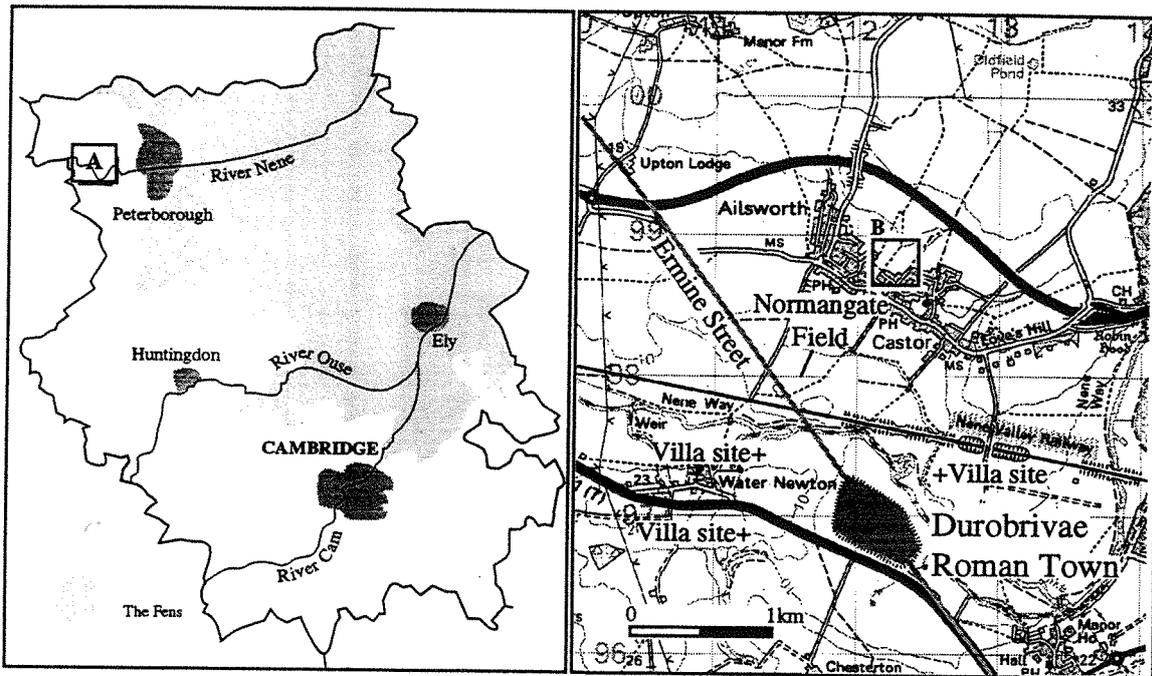
2 GEOLOGY, TOPOGRAPHY AND LAND USE

The village of Castor lies on the western outskirts of Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, approximately 5km south-west of the junction between the A1 and A47 roads. The site has an uneven land surface, it is pitted and disturbed, lying on the northwestern outskirts of the village and is bounded by a large open drain to the north. The proposed development area covers two pasture fields on the northwestern edge of the village of Castor (TL 1226 9877), approximately 1.5ha to the north of Allotment Lane and west of Clay Lane, the site slopes downhill from north to south and southeast, at approximately 15m OD.

The soils are brown rendzinas over the parent chalk, generally well drained calcareous silts. The base geology is Jurassic limestone and clay which is overlain by river terrace gravels. Within the investigation area trenches were cut into natural clays, river gravels and the calcareous silts. Along the ridge to the north of Castor a series of natural springs regularly flow down the slope, resulting in episodes of colluvial deposition and water sorting of soil matrices.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The archaeological and historical background has been extensively researched and described in the Desk-Based Assessment produced by John Samuels Archaeological Consultants which is contained in detail in Appendix A.



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Figure 1 - Location plan of the site, showing trenches (1-9) & plots of potential archaeological features predicted from aerial photographic and geophysical surveys.

4 METHODOLOGY

Nine trenches were machine excavated across the site using a 1.9m wide toothless ditching bucket (unless otherwise stated all trenches were 1.9m wide). The trenches (*Figure 1*) were positioned to test the results of geophysical survey and features suggested from aerial photographic survey (Appendices C & D in John Samuels Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of Clay Lane 1997). The location of seven trenches (1-5 & 6-7) were determined by the client's archaeological consultant John Samuels, based on their desk-based assessment. Trenches 6 and 9 were opened to determine more accurately the extent and nature of archaeology following observations in the field.

During the backfilling of trenches using a JCB, again using a toothless ditching bucket (1.6m wide) was used to investigate large quarry pits in Trenches 2 and 3 and to further determine the nature and extent of archaeology observed in Trench 9.

5 RESULTS

The evaluation trenches were opened to test visible features (ridge & furrow in Trench 1) and predicted features from survey results. All but one trench (5) contained archaeological features, however the density of remains was not high.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was 20m long and 0.30m in depth, it was positioned on a northwest-southeast alignment at the northern limit of the site. The trench was located to investigate supposed remains of ridge and furrow cultivation running northeast-southwest detected from aerial photography (John Samuels 1997).

Beneath the modern topsoil (very dark grey-brown sandy silt (1) average 0.30m deep), two linears were revealed cut into the natural clay geology. Trench 1 was the only trench cut into the clay. There had been no significant sub-soil development. Linear 24, located in the northwest of the trench ran almost west-east, at a differing angle to the supposed ridge & furrow. It was 0.12m deep and 0.64m wide with a rounded bottom and gradually sloping sides. It contained one fill (23), a yellow-brown silty clay with occasional pebbles and no finds. The more easterly ditch 26, did follow the north-south ridge and furrow alignment. It was also 0.12m deep and significantly wider at 1.35m wide, also with a flat base and gradually sloping sides. It contained a single fill (25), a yellow-brown silty clay with occasional pebbles and no finds. The field has undergone significant truncation by flooding and extensive ploughing which accounts for the shallow nature of these ditches. Linear 26 is likely to be the remnants of medieval ridge and furrow, the ridges

having been truncated. However, linear 24 is more probably a field boundary ditch, of indeterminate date.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was 20m long and 0.30m in depth, it was positioned on a generally east-west alignment to the west of the site. The trench was located to investigate supposed ridge and furrow running northeast-southwest predicted from aerial photography (John Samuels 1997).

No evidence of ridge and furrow was identified in the trench, however at the eastern limit of the trench a large quarry pit was revealed, the natural of the trench was gravel. This pit 44 covered the entire eastern end of the trench (*Figure 1*) and extended to the east into Trench 3 (Pit 36). This large quarry pit may extend for over 25m x 15m, the sides are shallow, sloping down to 0.71m depth in Trench 2. The base was uneven and pitted and suggests several open quarrying pits. The pit contained a single fill (45), a yellow-brown silty sandy clay with gravel, and looks to have been deliberately infilled in a single episode. No finds were recovered from the fill; however, the quarrying appears to be Post-medieval in date as it interrupts the earlier ridge and furrow (*Figure 1*).

Trench 3

Trench 3 was 20m long and 0.40m in depth, it was positioned on a general east-west alignment in the centre of the site, immediately to the west of the modern hedge (*Figure 1*). The trench was located to investigate a geophysical anomaly and to determine the reason for the disappearance of the ridge and furrow running northeast-southwest to the north predicted from aerial photography (John Samuels 1997).

Topsoil (0.20m deep) overlay a dark yellow-brown sandy silt subsoil (2) horizon (0.20m deep), which in turn overlay the base gravel geology. The trench was located down slope of Trenches 1 and 2. No traces of the ridge and furrow was identified, due to truncation by a large pit, likely to have extended from Trench 2 (*Figure 1*). This pit 36 was a large irregularly shaped feature extending over 6.7m long, filling the width of the trench cut, over 0.50m deep. The base was irregular and pitted and is likely to have been formed by several pits excavated for quarrying the gravel. It contained a single fill (35) a yellow-brown silty sandy clay with gravel which contained a single piece of Roman floor tile. The pit cut *through* the subsoil layer (2) and is likely to be similar to pit 44 in Trench 2. The extension of this pit truncates the medieval ridge and furrow and indicated a probably Post-medieval date for the quarrying.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was 20m long and 0.35m in depth, it was positioned on a generally east-west alignment to the south of the site at the foot of the slope (*Figure 1*). The trench was located to investigate a geophysical anomaly and to determine the reason for the disappearance of the ridge and furrow running northeast-

southwest, from the north predicted from aerial photography (John Samuels 1997).

Topsoil depth varied (0.20m-0.35m deep) and overlay a dark yellow-brown sandy silt subsoil (2) horizon (0.10m deep), down onto the base gravel geology. No traces of the ridge and furrow was detected and again this may be the result of the later quarrying activities. At the western end of the trench a large linear was discovered, confirming the geophysical prospecting. This linear 27 was itself truncated by a feature 28 which ran under the baulk to the west. The ditch 27 was orientated northeast-southwest, perhaps running beneath the ridge and furrow and under the modern hedge line (on a similar alignment) to the east (*Figure 1*). The ditch was 0.75m deep and 2m wide with a flat base and concave sides. It was likely that the ditch was open for some time, with gradual weathering fills on the sides (33), a gravelly orange (dark yellow-brown) silty sand, with a base fill (30) a dark yellow-brown clayey sandy silt with occasional gravel and pebbles. The final infill (29) was a dark yellow-brown sandy silt with gravel and pebbles. No finds were retrieved from any contexts. The ditch was cut directly *beneath* topsoil and *through* the subsoil horizon. Although indeterminate in date it is likely to post-date the Roman archaeology, which lies *beneath* the subsoil, its relationship with the ridge and furrow is unknown. The most likely interpretation is that of a medieval field boundary which the modern hedge line continues.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was 25m long and over 1m in depth, it was positioned on a generally north northwest-south southeast alignment to the northeast of the site at the top of the slope (*Figure 1*). The trench was located to investigate a geophysical anomaly and to test supposed blank areas.

Topsoil (0.20m-0.35m deep) overlay a dark yellow-brown sandy silt subsoil (2) horizon (0.35m deep), which was above a colluvium layer (34), an (orange) dark yellow-brown silty sand (0.40m deep). Below this the natural limestone (calcareous) silts extended for more than 1.35m below topsoil. No archaeology was observed and the geophysical anomaly was not detected.

Trench 6 (*Figure 2*)

Trench 6 was 45m long and up to 1m in depth. It was positioned on a west southwest-east northeast alignment in the centre of the eastern field (*Figure 1*). The trench was located to investigate geophysical anomalies and test potential ditches and quarry pitting suggested from aerial photography (John Samuels 1997).

Topsoil (0.21m-0.27m deep) overlay a dark yellow-brown sandy silt subsoil (2) horizon (0.25m-0.35m deep), which lay on an (orange) darker yellow-brown silty sand layer (0.27m-0.65m deep), hillwash (colluvium) filling a natural hollow, and this layer spread throughout the eastern field. The topsoil has been heavily ploughed and the lower deposits have been both water

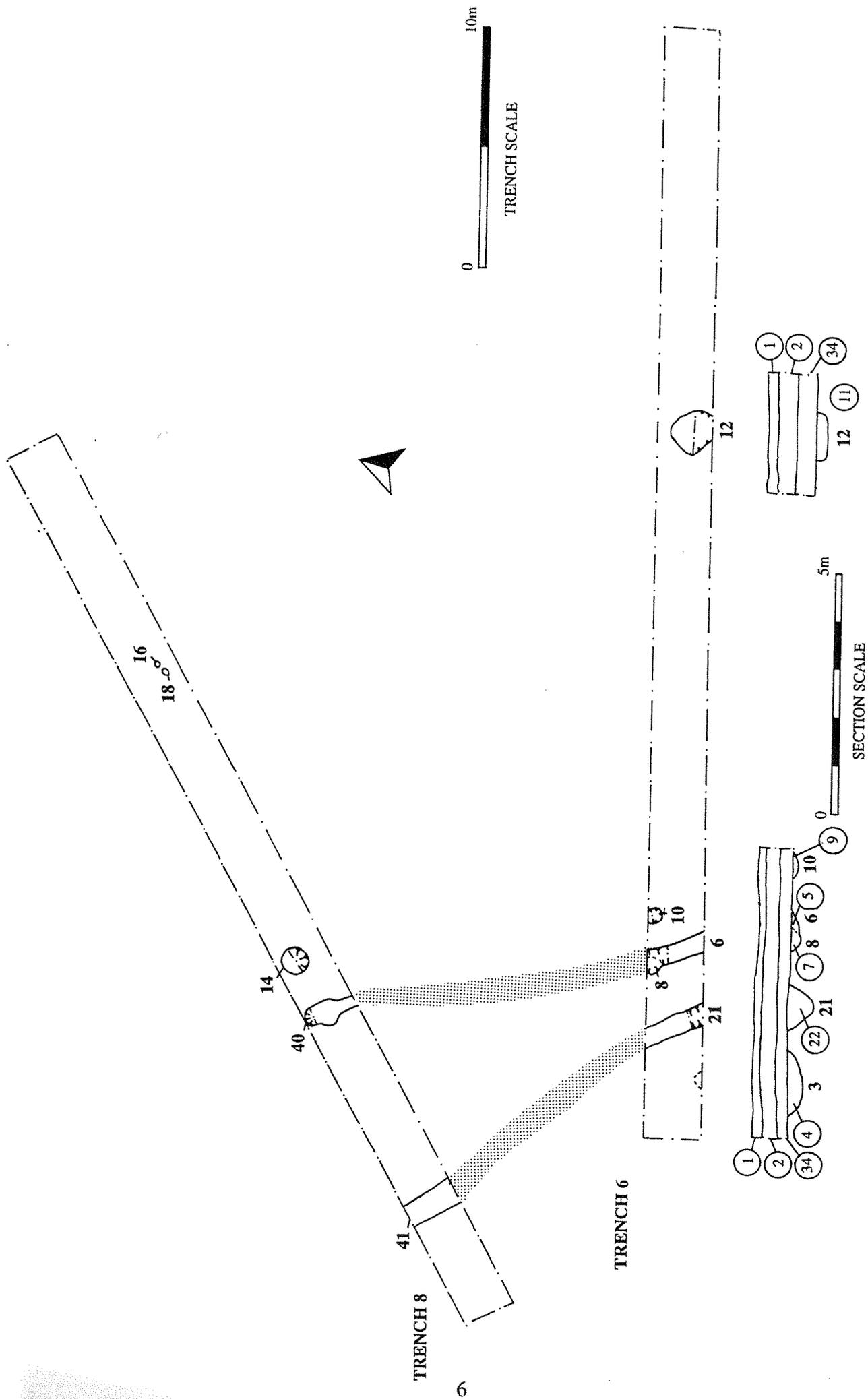


Figure 2 - Plan of Trenches 6 & 8 including sections of excavated features

deposited and sorted by regular fluvial action from the ridge line springs. The natural is formed by the calcareous silts.

Archaeological features (pits, postholes and ditches) were observed within this trench, *below* the subsoil and colluvial horizons at depths of 0.89m-1m below the present land surface. The topography forming depressions in the modern land surface may explain the prediction of quarrying; however no such pitting was present.

Two linears were recorded and these run west into Trench 8. The predictions from aerial photography (*Figure 1*) do *not* accurately plot their course, both run northwest-southeast. Linear 6 was truncated by a later posthole 8. The ditch 6 (=40) was 0.70m wide and 0.15m deep with gently sloping concave sides and a rounded base. The ditch contained a single fill (5) a dark yellow-brown slightly clayey silt with a few pebbles and no finds. The ditch is cut by a posthole 8 and this is mirrored in Trench 8. The posthole was circular in shape, 0.55m wide and 0.20m deep. It contained a single fill (7) a dark yellow-brown slightly clayey silt with no finds. Although truncated, these postholes may represent a fence line which followed the original boundary of the ditch.

Linear 21 (=41) was slightly larger, 1.1m wide and 0.52m deep, with steeper sides forming a more V shaped profile, again with a rounded base. It contained one fill (22) a dark yellow-brown silty clay with angular flint nodules and occasional pebbles. The ditch contained no dateable material; however, it produced well preserved animal bone (251g). This feature was sealed by the subsoil (2) and colluvium (34).

Three pits were excavated within Trench 6. Pit 3 was an irregularly-shaped feature extending out of the southern side of the trench. The pit was 1.4m wide and 0.32m deep with gradually sloping concave sides and a rounded base. It contained a single charcoal rich friable fill (4) a dark brown sandy silt. The fill (4) contained burnt clay (46g) and burnt animal bone (39g). The pit was *sealed* by the colluvium (34).

Pit 10 was 0.60m wide and 0.10m deep with gently sloping concave sides and a rounded base. It was oval and contained one fill (9) a dark yellow-brown slightly clayey sandy silt with no finds.

Pit 12 was 0.18m deep and 1.35m wide with steep, straight sides and a flat base. It was subcircular in shape and contained a single fill (11) comprised of a brown-yellow-brown chalky silt. The fill was characteristic of a cess-pit with a yellow-green tinge (phosphate?). Animal bone (20g) and a Roman floor tile (130g) were recovered from its fill.

Trench 7 (*Figure 3*)

Trench 7 was 25m long and 0.80m deep, it was located at the southeastern corner of the eastern field (*Figure 1*). The trench was opened to investigate geophysical anomalies and quarry pitting suggested from aerial photography (John Samuels 1997).

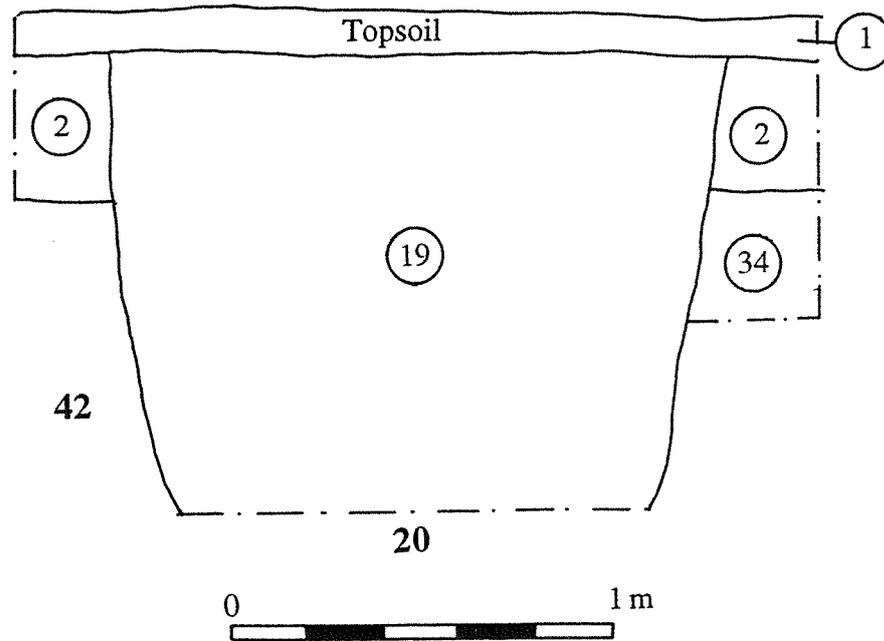


Figure 3 - Section of Late Saxon well **20** in Trench 7

Topsoil (0.10m deep) overlay a dark yellow-brown sandy silt subsoil (2) horizon (0.39m deep), which lay on colluvium (34) an (orange) darker yellow-brown silty sand layer (0.33m deep). The topsoil has been heavily ploughed and the lower deposits have been both water deposited and sorted by regular fluvial action from the ridge line springs. The natural is formed by the calcareous silts with gravel to the east.

Archaeological features were a pit or well **20** which was cut *through* the subsoil and colluvium, and this feature also cuts an earlier pit. A supposed quarry pit **38** at the far eastern end of the trench was identified. However, the 1901 and 1927 OS 6" and 25" maps show a pond in this position and this is the infilled remnants.

Pit **20** (*Figure 3*) was over 1.20m deep and 1.5m wide, the feature was not bottomed for health and safety reasons. It was circular with straight almost vertical sides, indicative of a well perhaps. It contained a single fill (19) a dark grey-brown clayey silt. Bone (38g), burnt clay or daub (130g), fragments of a lava quern (47g) and pottery (157g) dating between 900 to 1150 AD (St Neots, Stamford and Thetford wares) were recovered from its fill (see Appendices C and D).

Trench 8 (*Figure 2*)

Trench 8 was 40m long and up to 0.75m in depth, it was positioned on a southwest-northeast alignment to the west of the eastern field along the modern hedge boundary (*Figure 1*). The trench was located to investigate the continuation of ditches discovered in Trench 6.

Topsoil(0.36m deep) overlay a dark yellow-brown sandy silt subsoil (2) horizon (0.39m deep). The natural is formed by the calcareous silts.

Archaeological features (pits, postholes and ditches) were observed within this trench, *below* the subsoil.

Two linears were recorded and these have continued from Trench 6 running northwest-southeast. Linear **40** was truncated by a later posthole, similar to Ditch **6** in trench 6. The ditch **40** was 0.70m wide and 0.3m deep with gently sloping concave sides and a rounded base. The ditch appears to butt end right on the north edge of the trench. The ditch contained a single fill, a dark yellow-brown slightly clayey silt with a few pebbles and no finds. The ditch was cut by a posthole (see Trench 6). The posthole was circular in shape and contained a single fill a dark yellow-brown slightly clayey silt with no finds.

Linear **41** (= ditch **21** in Trench 6) was 1m wide and 0.50m deep, with steep sides forming a V shaped profile, with a rounded base. It contained one fill a dark yellow-brown silty clay with occasional pebbles. The ditch contained no finds. This feature was sealed by the subsoil (2).

To the north of the ditches a pit **14** was located, in the same position as in Trench 6 (see pit **10**). The pit was circular, 0.18m deep and 1.05m wide with slightly concave sides and a rounded base. It contained one fill (13) a dark yellow brown slightly clayey silt with large rounded pebbles and no finds.

Two stakeholes were recorded at the northern end of Trench 8. Stakehole **16** was circular with straight sides, 0.40m deep and 0.23m wide. It contained a single fill (15) a brown silt with no finds. Stakehole **18** was circular with slightly concave sides, 0.14m deep and 0.26m wide. It contained a single fill (17) a dark yellow brown silt with no finds.

Trench 9 (*Figure 4*)

Trench 9 was irregularly shaped 20m long, positioned on an east-west alignment (*Figure 1*). The trench was positioned to investigate a large mound in the eastern field and was additional to the original archaeological consultants trenching plan. The trench revealed an extensive rubble spread, and as a result of this several annexes were extended by machine off the original trench, two to the north (6m long) and one to the south (8m long). In addition machine dug sondages were opened to determine the depth (and nature) of the feature in the centre and at both ends of the original trench.

Topsoil(0.26m deep) lay directly above the rubble spread **37** which was comprised of Barnack stone mixed with topsoil (0.15m-0.40m deep). This sealed a buried soil horizon (48), a dark grey-brown clayey silt (0.20m deep) which overlay the subsoil layer (2) a yellow-brown sandy silt (0.39m deep) and the dark yellow-brown silty sand (0.35m deep) colluvium layer (34) The natural is formed by the calcareous silts and gravels.

An anomaly was detected by the geophysical survey (Appendix D; John Samuels Desk-Based Assessment 1997) as either ferrous material or bricks adjacent or overlapping a large earthwork mound. In fact the response *was* the

mound, the dump of Barnack stone and topsoil 37 forms the feature. The spread was 13.5m long by 11m wide. The dump forms a significantly raised mound which slopes away in all directions. No artefacts were recovered from the deposit, significantly the feature was *above* the subsoil and colluvium formation. The feature may potentially have been a platform, however other than the rubble spread itself, no evidence was discovered to support this. The likelihood is that the feature is a clearance cairn of sorts, although the lack of any dating material is strange.

The rubble spread 37 sealed a topsoil horizon (buried soil), the spread is itself mixed with topsoil and this is likely to be a mixture of the buried topsoil when the stone was deposited. The buried soil (48) contained a fragment of Roman tile (279g), two sherds of indeterminate Roman pottery (9g) and a significant amount of cattle bones (256g).

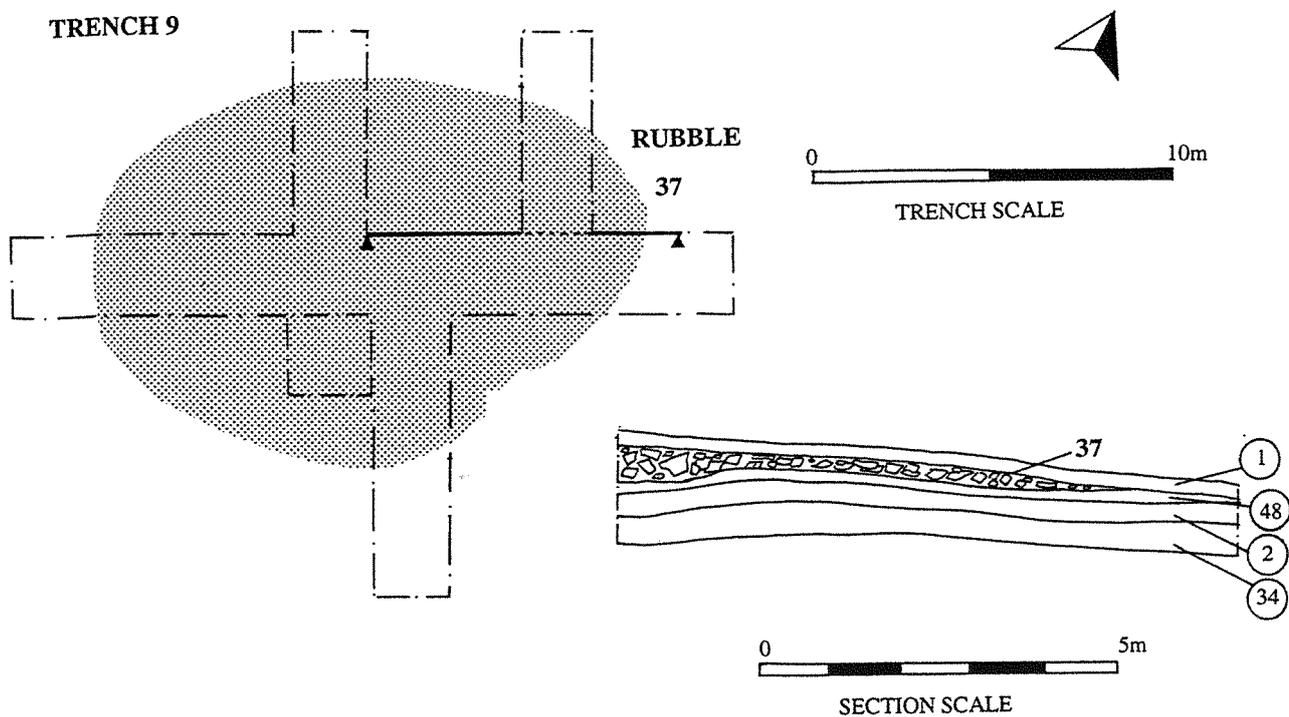


Figure 4 - Plan of Trench 9 and section of rubble spread 37

6 INTERPRETATION

There were no significant concentrations of archaeological remains within the development area, however archaeology was detected in all but one of the trenches, with more archaeology being discovered in the eastern field. This archaeology divides into those features (ditches, pits and postholes) sealed *beneath* the subsoil and colluvium layers in Trenches 6 and 8, which are likely

to be of Roman date, and later features which are cut *above* the subsoil (and colluvium in the eastern field) horizon in Trenches 1-4, 7 and 9. These later features are a Late Saxon well (Trench 7), a (medieval?) ditch (Trench 1), medieval ridge and furrow (Trench 1), which is disturbed by quarry pitting (Trenches 2 and 3) and a rubble spread (Trench 9). The archaeology supports the medieval function (ridge and furrow=agricultural) of the fields as being *outside* the Roman and Saxon developments of Castor in an area of agricultural use.

Trench 1

Trench 1 contained two ditches, the easterly **26** is the furrow of medieval cultivation, and was predicted from aerial photography. The western ditch **24** is of a differing shape and profile, with a more westerly alignment. It may still be a furrow, however it may be a field boundary ditch.

Trench 2

No evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation was detected in this trench, however a large quarry pit **44** was recorded which extended to the east. This feature continues into Trench 3 (pit **36**) and accounts for the disappearance of the ridge and furrow in this area. The quarrying is likely to have been Post-Medieval as it truncates the ridge and furrow, however no dating evidence was recovered, although sizeable sections were excavated.

Trench 3

Similar to Trench 2, a large quarry pit **36** has truncated the medieval ridge and furrow. This pit spreads across the centre of the western field and is picked up in Trench 2 (**44**). The quarrying is Post-Medieval, truncating the medieval ridge and furrow cultivation.

Trench 4

Trench 4 contained a large U shaped ditch **27** which was orientated northeast-southwest. The ditch was cut *through* the subsoil layer (2), and was itself cut by a later feature **28**. This linear is probably a medieval (or Late Saxon) field boundary and it is not known whether it predates the ridge and furrow. No artefacts were recovered from its fills.

Trench 5

This trench was devoid of any archaeological features.

Trench 6 (Figure 2)

Trench 6 produced archaeological remain, the major significance of which was that they were all sealed *beneath* the subsoil (2) and colluvium (34) horizons, at depths of 1m below the modern ground surface. These features were suggested by the aerial photographic assessment, although their alignment was not accurately plotted (Figure 1). Two linears were recorded (6 and 21), both extending into Trench 8 (40 and 41). A large circular pit 14 was located to the north(east) of ditch 6 in Trench 6 and this was mirrored in Trench 8. In addition ditch 6 was cut by a posthole (again mirrored in Trench 8) and this is thought to have been a fence line re-established along the original ditch boundary. These ditches are likely to be field boundaries of agricultural land during the Roman period. In addition two pits were excavated in Trench 6. Pit 3 a shallow scoop had a burnt fill which contained fired clay and burnt animal bone. Pit 12 is the remains of a cess pit and contained the only dateable material (Roman floor tile fragment). All the features contained quantities of bones of domestic animal species (Appendix C).

Although no dateable material was recovered from the fills of the ditches, and only a single Roman tile sherd from a pit, these features are thought to have been Roman in origin. The Late Saxon and medieval features are cut *through* the subsoil (2) and colluvium (34) layers whilst these features are sealed *beneath* these layers.

Trench 7 (Figure 3)

Trench 7 contained a steep sided pit 20 or well, which contained Late Saxon pottery (Thetford, Stamford and St Neots wares) dating between 900-1150 AD. The Stamford ware provides a more precise date from around 980-1100 AD. The well also contained residual Roman pottery, which is present in the buried soil (see (48) in Trench 9) and animal bone, as well as fragments of a lava quern. No other Late Saxon archaeology was discovered and this feature is likely to have been a water source on the fringes of the Saxon settlement.

The Desk-Based Assessment (John Samuels 1997) predicted a quarry pit in this location, however the large feature 38 is in fact the infilled remains of a pond located in this position on the 1901 and 1927 OS Maps.

Trench 8 (see Trench 6/Figure 2)

This trench contained the continuation of two linears (40 and 41) from Trench 6 (6 and 21). As mentioned above ditch 40 (=6) also was cut by a posthole, probably due to a fence along the line of the ditch boundary. At the northern end of the trench two isolated postholes (16 and 18) were recorded.

Trench 9

Of all the archaeological features identified during the assessment the remains in Trench 9 are the most baffling. The initial machine dug trench revealed a spread of the locally quarried Barnack stone 37. Subsequent machine and

hand dug annexes of the trench determined it to be an oblong spread approximately 13.5m long and 11m wide, with a maximum depth of 0.40m narrowing to 0.15m at the limits of the spread towards the foot of the mound. The stones had been deposited on and against a natural rise. Initially the feature was thought to be a platform of some kind (house or mill?), however there was a complete absence of associated artefactual material, with nothing other than the spread to indicate any activity. The other likely interpretation for this feature is that of a clearance cairn. There is no documentary evidence for there having been any buildings on the land at Clay Lane. Whether the dump is the result of more recent (Post-Medieval at least) deposition is open to question. There is topsoil mixed with the rubble, which itself overlays a buried topsoil. This buried soil (48) contained some sherds of Roman pottery, Roman tile and animal bone. Importantly, a machine dug sondage through the rubble layer determined that the stone was *above* the subsoil (2) and colluvium (34) layers.

7 CONCLUSION

The evaluation has determined that there are limited archaeological remains within the development area. The archaeology of the close vicinity is rich in Roman, Saxon and medieval remains, most notably associated with the Roman town of Castor and the later developments linked to the Saxon nunnery of St. Kyneburgh, which occupies a similar location to the Roman remains. The archaeology revealed in the assessment trenches is not associated with any major Roman and/or Saxon developments, being more characteristic of rural/agricultural land. The landuse of the site is therefore likely to have been agricultural from the Roman period, right through to the development of the medieval ridge and furrow and to the present day.

The Roman remains are most likely to have been ditches for field boundaries or enclosures for livestock. There was a notable absence of domestic Roman pottery etc. which would have been expected if the site was close to the settlement. The pits are only isolated refuse dumps.

A single Late Saxon pit (well) was excavated. This feature was important as it (unlike the features in Trench 6 and 8) is cut *through* the subsoil (2) layer and has provided the first conclusive dating material (pottery dating from 900-1150 AD). This feature is isolated and cannot be seen as anything more than a well on the edge of settlement, possible for livestock.

No definitive medieval remains were identified and no dateable (pottery, tile etc.) evidence relating to medieval occupation was recovered. A single large ditch **27** (Trench 4), probably a boundary, is thought to have been medieval, having been cut *through* subsoil (2), although it may have been a Saxon boundary. Medieval ridge and furrow was recorded both from aerial photography and within Trench 1.

Finally, a later quarry, of Post-Medieval date, was recorded in Trenches 2 and 3. This feature is dated due to its truncation of the ridge and furrow which disappears from the aerial photographic data in the area. Indeed both fields in

the development area show signs of an uneven land surface and pitting. It is likely that there has been quarrying for the gravels within the site, and there may be evidence of Roman quarrying although this was not detected during the assessment.

The rubble spread of Barnack stone 37 recorded in Trench 9 remains the most enigmatic feature, the morphology of the deposit is suggestive of some kind of platform, however there is no other evidence (structural or artefactual) to support this hypothesis. A more probable explanation is that of a clearance cairn (stone clearance), nevertheless the dumping of such quality building material is a dilemma. The feature was extensively sampled and investigated, which further detracts from the function of the feature as a building platform, as no other supporting data was uncovered. It may be that the stone has been deposited as waste material from other buildings or a platform which was never built on.

The results of this assessment conclude that, although archaeology was recorded in all but one of the nine evaluation trenches, there was no significant concentration of archaeological deposits. The nature of the remains indicate that the fields in question are likely to have been in agricultural use throughout the Roman and Saxon periods up until the formation of the remnants of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation, and through to the present day. The rubble spread 37 is the only feature which presents any uncertainty in its nature and function. However, the absence of associated material either artefactual or constructional suggests that this features function was as a dump, either for clearance or of waste material rather than a platform for construction.

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APPENDIX A - Archaeological and Historical Background

From "An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of Land Adjacent to Clay Lane, Castor, Cambridgeshire (John Samuels 1997)

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 Place-name evidence

3.1.1 The parish of Castor is within Nassaborough Hundred in the Soke of Peterborough, formerly a part of Northamptonshire, but within Cambridgeshire since the local government reorganisation of the late 1960s. The name Nassaborough was first recorded in the 12th century and may derive from the Scandinavian word *ness* describing a promontory, such as this hundred forms between the Welland and Nene rivers, pushing out into the Fens.

3.1.2 The name Castor first appears in its present form in 1086 in Domesday Book. It is derived from the Latin *castra*, meaning 'camp' and referring to the small town at Water Newton. In earlier records, the village is called the 'fort of Kyneburga' (*Kyneburga caestre*), referring to the parish church, dedicated to saint Kyneburgha. The Roman 'small town' at Water Newton was known as *Durobrivae*, 'bridges-fort', and is placed near a number of crossing points on the River Nene.

3.1.3 Clay lane was first recorded in a Rental from c.1400 as *Clayfurlong*.

3.2 Listed Buildings

3.2.1 There are a number of listed buildings in the village of Castor, the most impressive of these being the parish church, dedicated to St. Kyneburgha in 1124. Other than this, there are two 17th-18th century buildings that bound the proposed development site at 5 Clay Lane and 12 Allotment Lane, and many other Grade II listed buildings in the village. Only the two adjacent to the study area and the church are described here.

St Kyneburgha's

This is a Grade I listed building and retains much of its original structure though with 13th and 14th century additions. The exact date of dedication is recorded on a carved stone built into the wall, putting it at 17th April, 1124. St. Kyneburgha is reputed to have founded a nunnery at Castor in the 7th century. It was apparently destroyed in the Viking raids of the 9th century. Excavations in the grounds of the churchyard have identified middle Saxon remains (see below para. 3.3) and Saxon sculptures are to be found within the church.

5 Clay Lane

a Grade II listed cottage to the southeast of the proposed development site. Built in either the 17th or 18th century of coursed stone rubble with a thatched roof.

12 Allotment Lane

also a 17th-18th century Grade II listed cottage built of coursed stone rubble and a thatched roof to the southwest of the proposed development site.

- 3.3 The fields of Castor were only enclosed in 1898, one of the last parishes in Northamptonshire to give up the three field system. By 1846, however, a Tithe Award shows that the proposed development site had been privately enclosed with roughly the same boundaries as are still current. This map showed no signs of development and, other than the miller's and the station master's houses, all houses were on the village street (Tate 1949, p31). No development is known to have taken place since this time and the evidence of surviving ridge and furrow in part of the site supports this view (see below para. 3.9).
- 3.4 The earliest documentary record of Castor is an Anglo-Saxon charter of 664 in which Wulfhere, King of Merica grants land from several village/manors to Peterborough Abbey. A later charter of 972AD records King Edgar's confirmation of this grant.
- 3.5 The parish church is dedicated to St. Kyneburgha who founded a nunnery in Castor in the mid-seventh century. According to Bede's *A History of the English Church and People*, Kyneburgha was the daughter of Penda, a pagan King of Mercia. Bede wrote his history in the early eighth century and records how Kyneburgha's husband was instrumental in converting Penda's son Peada to Christianity.
- 3.6 It is likely that the nunnery of St Kyneburgha was destroyed by the Danes during the raids of c.870. Excavations, both in the garden of a house to the north of the church (Elmlea) and in the southern extension of churchyard, have produced evidence of structures and pits dated to the middle Saxon period by associating pottery. Between c. 850 - 1050 AD there is a noticeable dearth of material, supporting the theory of Danish violence having interrupted the occupation here. Stamford and St Neots ware provide the dating for the early medieval occupation, followed by substantial amounts of 13th and 14th century Lyveden ware.
- 3.7 Other Saxon remains in the village include the base and stump of a 12th century cross (SMR 09813) which is currently located on an island in the Green, to the south of Clay Lane.
- 3.8 The Roman occupation is the best represented of all periods both in the village of Castor and in the Nene Valley generally. The Saxon and medieval buildings of Castor had been built amongst the ruins of either a Roman 'palace' or *praetoria* (official building), parts of which can still be seen, incorporated into later walls to the north of the church. Excavations have revealed much of the floor plan of this building complex. However, as most of the excavations were carried out by Artis in the 1820's not all remains are well dated or accurately plotted. a large part of the village, centred on the church, is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM County Number 93) and the majority of unprovenanced finds are thought to have come from within this area and the Normangate Field complex (SAM County Number 127) to the south of the village.

- 3.9 The main structure was probably constructed in the mid 3rd century AD, possibly replacing an earlier villa. The buildings were on two terraces with the main east-west axis facing south and two north-south aligned wings facing into a courtyard. In total the complex would have measured 275m x 122m; a single building in the left wing was at least 24m long with under floor (hypocaust) heating for its entire length. The walls were at least 1m thick and the total height of the left wing, including the terracing would have been 19.2m. This plan is comparable with that of a *palatium*, examples of which are known from London, Cologne and Dura-Europos (Mackreth 1995).
- 3.10 This *palatium* was approached from the south by a metalled road with at least two buildings bordering it (pers. comm. I. Meadows). The line of this road was continued by a ditched trackway in Normangate Field where the remains of the suburbs of the town of *Durobrivae* (Water Newton) have been identified. These suburbs contained evidence of metalworking and pottery production, both on a large scale. Pottery appears to have been manufactured on this site from the early to mid 2nd century and occupation continued certainly into the 4th century.
- 3.11 Roman forts in the area are known at Lynch Farm, 2.9km southeast of Castor, Longthorpe, 3.4km to the east and Water Newton, 1.5km southeast. The Roman road of Ermine Street passes through *Durobrivae* to meet the projected line of King Street approximately 0.5km east of Castor and a network of other roads can be identified branching off them. A possible road running northeast from Ermine Street was suggested by Margary to have followed the line of Clay Lane. However, an archaeological watching brief carried out during the construction of the bypass to the north of Castor found no evidence for a Roman road on this line, and it has been suggested that Clay Lane was instead a medieval headland.
- 3.12 Castor was within the northern part of the Catuvellauni territory as identified by Roman histories and coin evidence. No Iron Age or earlier prehistoric sites have been identified in the immediate vicinity of Castor village, although the Nene and Welland valleys both show signs of fairly dense occupation. Closest to the village of Castor are the late Iron Age sites of Monument 97 (Orton Longueville), Werrington, Ashton, Longthorpe (later cleared to make way for the Roman legionary fortress) and some fairly recent aerial photographic evidence for several hut circles and an enclosure at two separate sites to the north of Castor. At these latter sites, fieldwalking has produced Iron Age and Romano-British pottery. A Bronze Age site has been recorded in the north of the parish and in the adjacent parish to the west, Ailsworth, a number of Neolithic and Bronze Age flints have been recovered.

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APPENDIX B - Pottery Assessment

by Dr Paul Spoerry

A very limited assemblage of pottery and ceramic material was recovered from hand excavated deposits at Clay Lane, Castor. The assemblage comprises a total of 166g (31 sherds) derived from only two contexts (19 & 48). The majority was retrieved from (19) the single fill of a possible well (steep sided pit) in Trench 7. Two sherds of indeterminate Roman pottery were retrieved from the buried soil horizon (48), which was sealed by **37** the spread of Barnack stone in Trench 9 (platform? or clearance cairn). Other ceramic material recovered from the site included burnt clay or daub (130g), also from context (19) and three fragments of Roman floor tile (423g) from contexts (11, 35 & 48).

The pottery assemblage consists of; St Neots Ware and other shelly fabrics dating to 900-1150 AD (78g); Thetford Ware (light grey fabric) dating to 900-1150 AD (4g); Stamford Ware (including both yellow and green glaze), forms include a spouted pitcher handle which dates to 980-1100 AD (68g); Oolitic shelly fabric, from Northamptonshire (3g); and single sherd of residual Roman Buff Sandy Ware (4g).

The Stamford Ware dates the assemblage in context (19) to the 11th century AD, a late Saxon or Saxo-Norman date.

The lack of a Roman pottery assemblage is surprising considering the proximity of a major Roman period settlement. The small assemblage of late Saxon date implies limited activity but the general absence of material across the site seems to indicate that the site lies outwith the settlement zone and was an agricultural field long before the development of the medieval ridge and furrow.

APPENDIX C - An Assessment of the Faunal Remains from Clay Lane, Castor
by Lorraine Higbee

A small assemblage of 75 fragments (or 604g) of animal bone was recovered from hand excavated deposits. Therefore, despite the good preservation of much of the material, the range of information available is limited.

The majority of fragments (44) were identifiable to either species or size classes (see table. 1), whilst the remainder are unidentifiable splinters greater than 1cm.

Unidentifiable	31 (3 charred)
Large mammal	3
Medium mammal	5
Cattle	20
Sheep/goat	3
Horse	13
Total	75

Table. 1 Species present and size classes

Only three domestic species are represented, cattle, sheep/goat, and horse. A few specimens exhibit signs of butchery in the form of chops and knife cuts. No pathological conditions were recorded.

APPENDIX D - Finds Quantification

CASTOR, CLAY LANE 1997 - Finds Types by Weight (in grammes)								
Trench	Context	Pottery Weight	Pottery Count	Tile	Fired Clay	Animal Bone	Lava Quern	Total Weights by Context
Tr 6	4				46	39		85
Tr 6	11			132		20		152
Tr 7	19	157	29		130	38	47	372
Tr 6	22					251		251
Tr 3	35			12				12
Tr 9	48	9	2	279		256		544
Total Weights by Finds Type		166	31 sherds	423	176	604	47	1416

APPENDIX E - Context List

CONTEX	CUT	TRENCH	FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	FINDS	ABOVE	BELOW
1	n/a	All	topsoil	very dark grey-brown sand/silt	none*	2	n/a
2	n/a	3-9	subsoil/colluviu	dark yellow-brown sand/silt	none*	var	1
3	3	6	cut of pit	irregular pit (14m x 0.32m deep)			
4	3	6	fill of pit	dark brown clay/sand/silt, friable	bone	3	2
5	6	6	fill of ditch	dark yellow-brown clay/silt + pebbles	none	6	8
6	6	6	cut of ditch	U-shaped ditch (0.7m x 0.15m deep)		nat	5
7	8	6	fill of pit	dark yellow-brown clay/silt	none	8	34
8	8	6	cut of pit	circular pit or posthole in side of ditch		5	7
9	10	6	fill of pit	dark yellow-brown caly/sand/silt	none	10	34
10	10	6	cut of pit	oval scoop (0.6m x 0.1m deep)		nat	9
11	12	6	lower fill of pit	brown-yellow-brown sand/silt	bone, tile	12	32
12	12	6	cut of cess pit	subcircular pit (1.35m x 1.35m x 0.93m)		2	11
13	14	8	fill of pit	dark yellow-brown clay/silt	none	14	34
14	14	8	cut of pit	circular pit (1.05m x 0.18m deep)		nat	13
15	16	8	fill of stakehole	brown silt	none	16	34
16	16	8	cut of stakehole	circular (0.23m x 0.4m deep)		nat	15
17	18	8	fill of stakehole	dark yellow-brown silt	none	18	34
18	18	7	cut of stakehole	circular (0.26m x 0.14m deep)		nat	17
19	20	7	fill of pit	dark grey-brown clay/silt	pot, bone	20	1
20	20	6	cut of pit	circular vertical pit (1.5m x 1.2m+ deep)		2	19
21	21	6	cut of ditch	U-shaped ditch (1.1m x 0.52m deep)		nat	22
22	21	1	fill of ditch	dark yellow-brown silt/clay	bone	21	2
23	24	1	fill of ditch	yellow-brown silt/clay	none	24	1
24	24	1	cut of ditch	U-shaped ditch (0.64m x 0.12m deep)		nat	23
25	26	1	fill of furrow	yellow-brown silt/clay	none	26	1
26	26	1	cut of furrow	broad U-shaped (1.35m x 0.12m deep)		nat	25
27	27	4	cut of ditch	large U-shaped (c.2m x c.0.75m deep)		2	33
28	28	4	cut of pit?	unexcavated pit cut by 27		nat	27
29	27	4	upper fill of ditc	dark yellow-brown sand/silt	none	30	28
30	27	4	lower fill of ditc	dark yellow-brown clay/sand/silt	none	33	29
31	28	4	fill of pit	dark yellow-brown sand/silt	none	29	1
32	12	6	upper fill of pit	yellow-brown sand/silt	none	11	1
33	27	1	basal fill of ditch	dark yellow-brown gravel/silt/sand	none	27	30
34	n/a	6, 7, 8	subsoil layer	thick colluvium	none*	var	2
35	36	3	fill of pit	yellow-brown clay/sand/silt + gravel	tile	36	2
36	36	3	cut of pit	irregular pit (6.7m+ x 1.5m + x 0.35m+)		nat	35
37	37	9	Rubble spread	barnack stone dump	lithic	2	1*
38	38	7	cut of pit	irregular (5.5m+ x 0.35m deep)	none	2	39
39	38	7	fill of pit	light brown-grey sand/silt	none	39	1
40	40	8	cut of ditch	extension of ditch 6 from Trench 6			
41	41	8	cut of ditch	extension of ditch 21 from Trench 6			
42	43	7	fill of pit	dark yellow-brown sand/silt	none	43	20
43	43	7	cut of pit	sub-oval pit cut by 20		nat	43
44	44	2	cut of pit	irregular based, (multi?) pit (6m+)		nat	45
45	44	2	fill of pit	yellow-brown silt/sand/clay+gravel	none	44	1
46	47	2	fill of ditch?	yellow-brown sand (natural?)	none	47	1
47	47	2	cut of ditch	U shaped feature (natural?)		nat	46
48	n/a	9	buried soil	dark (grey) brown clay/silt	Pot,tile,bone	34	37



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