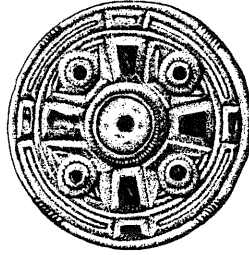


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Archaeological Field Unit

Archaeological Evaluation of Medieval cultivation remains at  
Glebe Lane, Buckden, Cambridgeshire.

S.N. Kemp

1998

**Cambridgeshire County Council**

Report No. B28

*Commissioned By Starhomes Builders Ltd*

**Archaeological Evaluation of Medieval cultivation remains at  
Glebe Lane, Buckden, Cambridgeshire. TL1934/6746.**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The development site is 0.52 ha in area and lies central to the village of Bucken, Cambridgeshire (Figure 1). Residential gardens lie on all sides of the development area and a large number of trees lying within or adjacent to the property were protected by tree preservation orders.

The geology of the area is mixed being composed of 3rd Terrace Gravels and Boulder Clays. Ground height lies between 23 and 24m OD.

**2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Recent records, including the Sites and Monuments Record for Cambridgeshire were researched to provide a background to the development of the village and the types of archaeological remains discovered in the vicinity of the site. The Ordnance Survey maps for the area and the Inclosure map of 1813 were also accessed to provide the recent landuse background and supplement our existing knowledge of the area.

The land is marked as old enclosure on the 1813 map and described as belonging to the Lord Bishop. Additional records such as the Court rolls of 1468-1539 and the estate maps of the Bishops lands are held by the Lincolnshire Record Office.

To the north of the site lie the remains of Buckden Palace, formerly the seat of the Bishops of Lincoln, who may have been in residence as early as 1066 and certainly were present during the mid twelfth century (VCH 1972). The existing Palace lands consist of a moat containing a gatehouse, chapel, hall, courtyards and gardens. The Palace was surrounded by a park in the early sixteenth century (Little Park) within which raised walkways, gardens and fishponds were in existence in the seventeenth century (Way 1997).

Other important remains lying close to the site include the Church of St Marys which has an early thirteenth century doorway and the Manor House of late sixteenth century which may have a medieval wall fronting Church Street (RCHM Hunts 1926); these lie about 100m to the north of the development area.

Medieval and post-medieval remains survive largely along the High Street and Church Street, although medieval cultivation remains are known from the south of the village. The Sites and Monuments Record also lists the presence of Palaeolithic hand axes within the gravel terraces to the east of the village and a Roman coin found on Church Street.

The existing format of the land and boundaries extends back to at least 1926 as shown on the 1" Ordnance Survey map of the area. The existence of surviving medieval

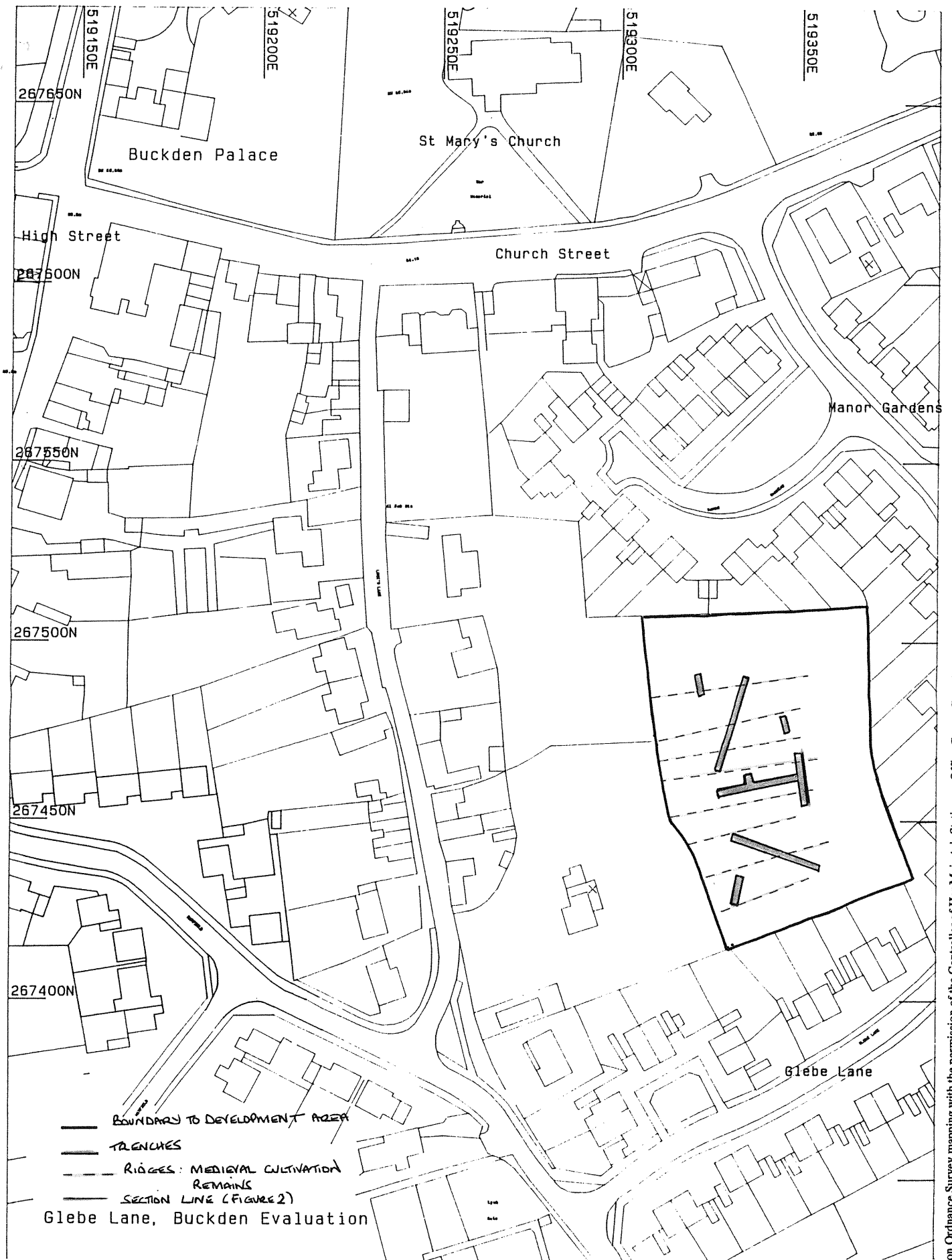


Figure 1 Trench Location Plan

cultivation remains and cartographic evidence indicates that the site has not been settled on since the instigation of strip cultivation.

During this piece of work it was considered that there was the likelihood that the pond and drainage system which are shown on the 1926 1" map as lying in the north-east corner of the site were linked to the seventeenth century landscaping, and particularly to the fishponds within the Palace grounds and also to a large pond to the south of the site at TL197673. However, whilst the pond in the north-east corner of the site is illustrated on the 1926 map it is absent from the Inclosure map of 1813. As the land is old enclosure it is possible that such details were considered not appropriate for the 1813 survey and therefore the pond was not illustrated. During inclosure in the nineteenth century gravel was required for the construction of roads which gave access to the new field systems and it is possible that the pond is the remains of one of these pits and therefore post dates the Inclosure award. All that can clearly be said is that the pond predates 1926 and post-dates the ridge and furrow which crosses this land and therefore may or may not be part of a complex drainage or landscaping design undertaken by the Bishops of Lincoln.

### **3 EARTHWORK SURVEY.**

Prior to trenching the site was inspected in order to undertake the risk assessment and formulate a trenching strategy which would avoid trees with preservation orders. Traces of ridge and furrow (medieval cultivation remains) were recognised, which although not described within the Brief prepared by the County Archaeology Office, required recording prior to trenching. This recording was undertaken with a Total Station (Figure 1).

The ridge and furrow stood 0.20 m from ridge to furrow and set at 10-11m intervals. A section across these remains was recorded during trenching (Figure 2). The section consisted of topsoil overlying a subsoil composed of the medieval plough soil, which overlay natural sands and gravel. The ridge and furrow was orientated east-west and within this field was incomplete, however, these strips continued westwards into the adjacent gardens.

A largely infilled pond lies in the north eastern corner of the site and the a ditch and culvert runs north to south along the eastern boundary of the property.

Two areas of nettles exist, one in the north western corner of the site and the other in the south western corner close to a make shift barn. No archaeological remains were encountered within these areas during trenching so it is probably correct to associate them with recent landuse and particularly with the use of the area as a paddock for donkeys.

### **3. EVALUATION**

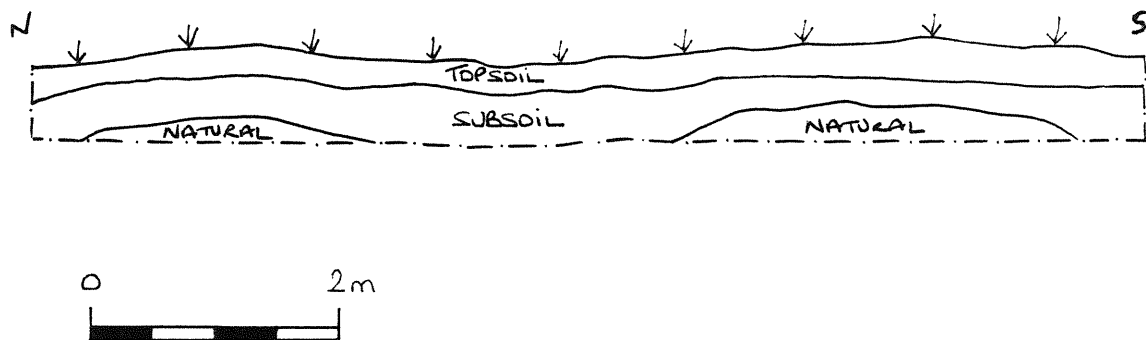
The evaluation trenching was based on the results of the desk based research outlined above. Trenches were therefore targeted on the areas of disturbance recognisable

within the medieval earthworks, to record a section across the medieval cultivation remains and to assess for the presence of archaeology beneath the pasture.

Seven machine-cut trenches, totalling 109m in length, were excavated within the development area and covered 5% of the total development area. Where appropriate these were excavated to expose the natural Boulder Clay and Gravel geology. The soil profile appeared to be disturbed throughout and there was no evidence for a buried soil within any of the ridges or for the presence of deposits which may have masked archaeological layers.

No archaeological features were encountered cut in to the natural within any of the trenches. Two features of possible archaeological origin were encountered and excavated. These proved to be natural and associated with the disrupted natural geology.

The trench sections were investigated to verify the absence of boundary features which may have predetermined the alignment of the medieval strips. None were encountered.



**Figure 2** *North-south section through the ridge and furrow*

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The archaeology present within the development area consisted of medieval earthworks indicative of cultivation and a more recent pond in the north east corner of the site. No earlier remains were encountered.

The results of this evaluation and the information provided in the Sites and Monuments Record would appear to indicate that later medieval occupation was centred on the High Street and Church Street and the medieval field systems lay in very close proximity to the settlement. The land to the south of Church Street in the ownership of the Bishops of Lincoln was enclosed early on and enclosure could relate to the imparkment of the Palace. In which case the Saxon and early medieval development of Buckden may be found along the existing High Street.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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