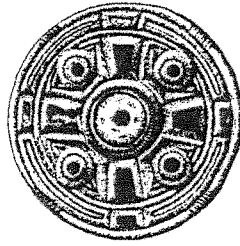


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**Meadow Drove, Earith:  
An Archaeological Evaluation**

Andrew Hatton

2002

*Cambridgeshire County Council*

*Report No. 109*

*Commissioned by Balsham (Buildings) Ltd*

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An Archaeological Evaluation**

Andrew Hatton BSc

2002

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*Report No. B109*

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## **SUMMARY**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2002, the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted an archaeological evaluation on land at Meadow Drove/Short Drove, Earith, Cambridgeshire (TL 3922 7552). The work was commissioned by Balsham (buildings) Ltd on behalf of Mr R.E. Harradine.

No archaeology was found in any of the three trenches excavated.

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**Meadow Drove, Earith:  
An Archaeological Evaluation  
(TL 3922 7552)**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2002, the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council (AFU) carried an archaeological evaluation on land at Meadow Drove/Short Drove, Earith, Cambridgeshire (TL 3922 7552). The work was carried out at the request of Balsham (buildings) Ltd on behalf of Mr R.E. Harradine, and was in response to a brief set by the County Archaeology Office (CAO); it was supervised on-site by the author.

The site lies on the northeast boundary of the village of Earith and to the south of Meadow Drove. It is irregular in plan and covers an area of approximately 3600 square metres. The area to be developed previously function as an orchard.

The presence of archaeological remains was considered likely by the CAO on the basis of information contained within the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). It records the presence of extensive prehistoric and Roman remains to the north and post-medieval remains to the south of the subject site.

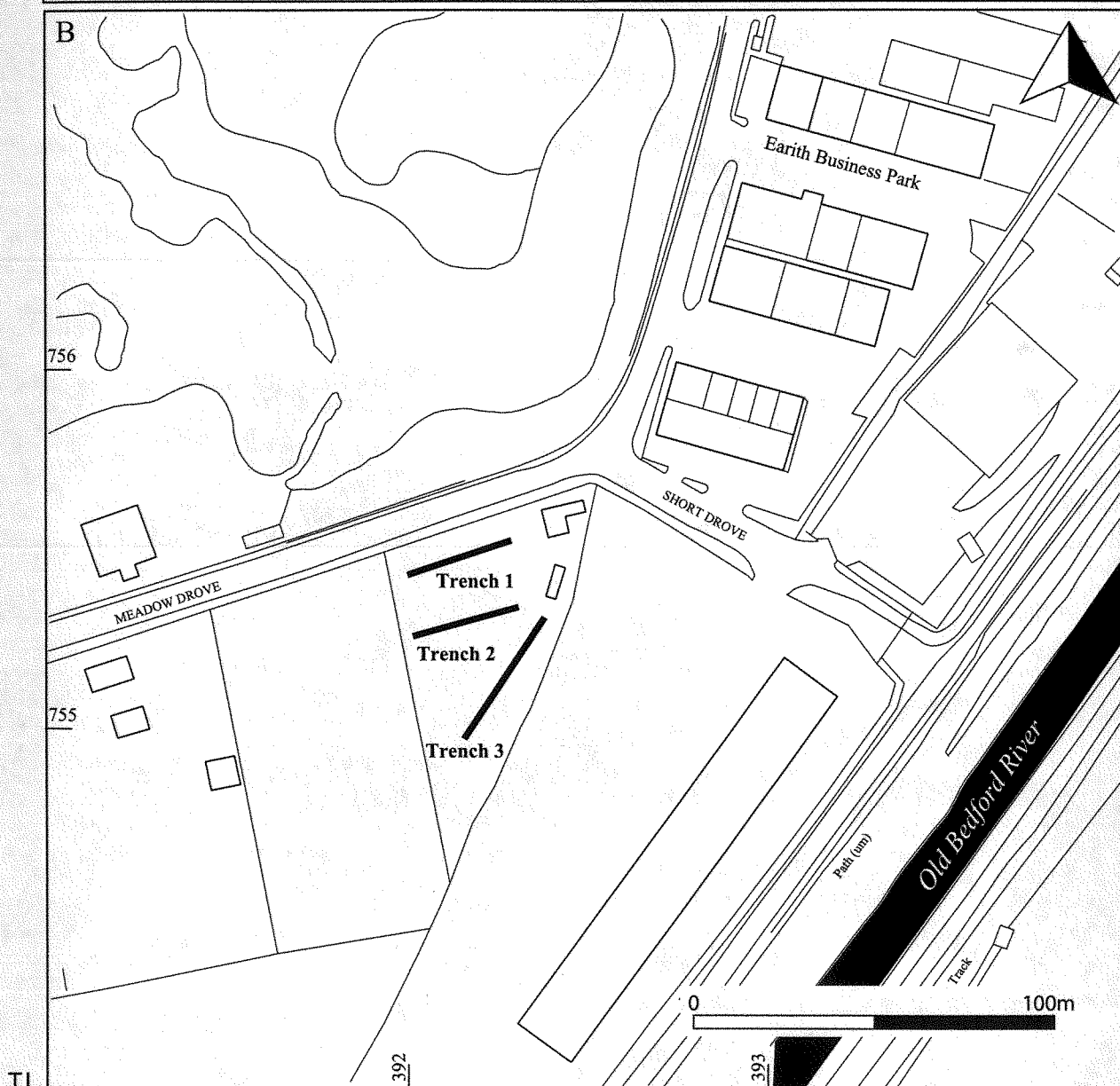
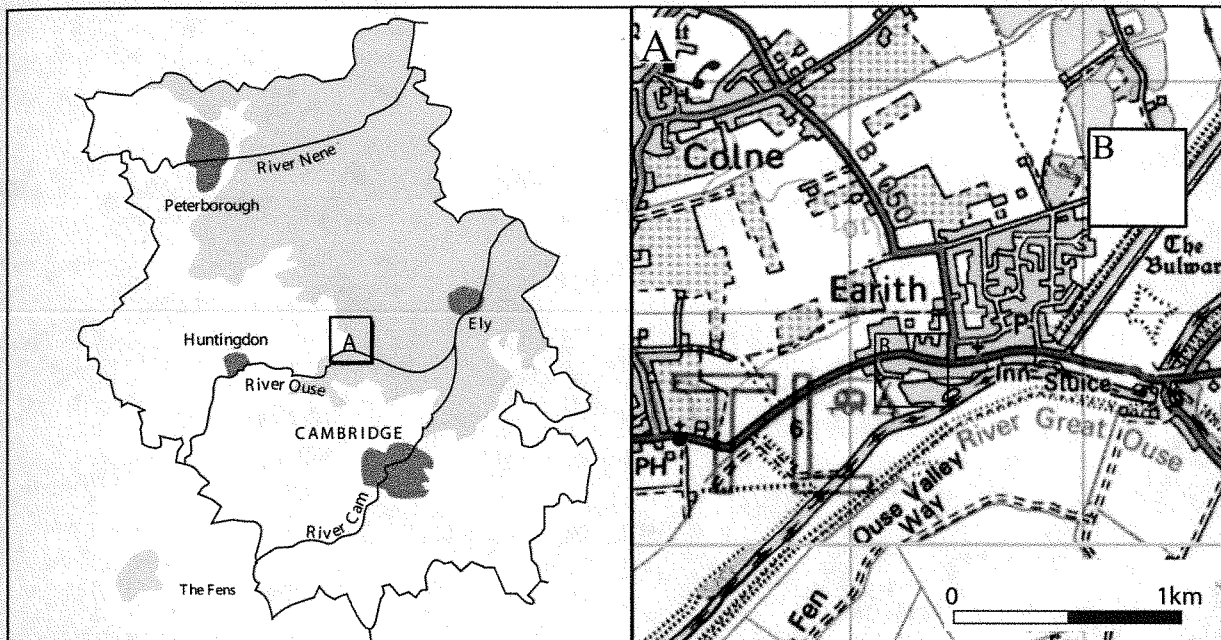
**2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

**2.1 Geology**

According to the British Geological Survey, the site lies on 1<sup>st</sup> Terrace Ouse River Gravels.

**2.2 Topography**

The site is located on higher ground within the parish at 6m OD. Land immediately to the east drops off rapidly onto the fens.



Based upon Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. (Cambridgeshire County Council Licence No. LA 07649X 2002)

**Figure 1** Site location



### **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 Historic Background**

Lying 8km northeast of St. Ives, Earith was not mentioned in Domesday, and the first reference to it is in 1219 as '*pontem de Herith*', meaning Earith Bridge. The name probably means 'muddy landing place', which is appropriate for the village's location on the bank of the Ouse (Reaney 1926). Earith is mostly strung out along the road to Bluntisham and St.Ives. Much of the northern part of the village is relatively modern.

#### **3.2 Archaeological Background**

Extensive prehistoric and Roman remains have been recovered in the area, most notably during the gravel extraction works in the nearby quarries located to the north of the development site. Post-medieval remains have also been identified in the vicinity of the development site.

##### **Prehistoric**

-SMR 1680 (TL 389/756), to the northwest of the development site: the entry describes the recovery of a double-edged scraper fashioned from grey flint.

-SMR 1681 (391/759), to the northwest of the development site: the entry describes the recovery of a scraper fashioned from brown flint.

-SMR 1695 (391/759), to the northwest of the development site: the entry describes the recovery of a flake of brown flint and a blade of white flint, retouched along both edges.

-SMR 1786 (391/763), to the north of the development site: the entry describes the recovery of a bifacially-worked tool fashioned out of grey flint and a core of brown flint.

-SMR2542 (3895/7595), to the northwest of the development site: the entry describes the recovery of a flint implement, possibly a scraper.

##### **Roman**

SMR 907 (3917/7598), to the north of the development site: the entry describes the observation and excavation of a large Roman settlement.

-SMR 907 a-k (391/759), to the north of the development site: the entry describes the recovery of various artefacts which include: fragments of an iron plate, half a bronze bracelet, face from a face urn, bone pin, bronze pin, fragment of a quern stone, clay loom weight, lid of red-brown ware jar, mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century coin, sherd of coarse ware pottery and a decorated wooden handle?

-SMR 1937 (390/758), to the northwest of the development site: the entry describes the recovery of a Roman pottery.

#### **Post-medieval**

-SMR1780 (3930/7500), to the southwest of the development site: the entry describes The Scones Civil War fortification.

-SMR 8813 (3903/7536), to the southwest of the development site: the entry describes a sub-circular enclosure with an entrance on the south side, visible as a cropmark.

-SMR 8814 (393/758), to the north of the development site: the entry describes a rectilinear enclosure together with a circular gun-emplacement.

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

Three trenches, with a total length of 100m, were opened using a mechanical excavator with a 1.6m ditching bucket, under the supervision of an archaeologist (Fig. 1).

The trenches were cleaned by hand where appropriate, photographed, and base planned.

## **5 RESULTS**

Trench 1 was 30m long, oriented south-west/north-east. At the south-western of the trench a dark greyish brown topsoil (0.25m thick) overlay a brown silty subsoil (0.06m thick). The sequence remained the same at the north-eastern end of the trench, however, the topsoil thickness increased to 0.43m and the subsoil thickness also increased to 0.07m. No archaeological features were identified in this trench.

Trench 2 was 30m long, oriented south-west/north-east. At the south-western of the trench a dark greyish brown topsoil (0.18m thick) overlay a brown silty subsoil (0.21m thick). The sequence remained the same at the north-eastern end of the trench, however, the topsoil thickness increased to 0.28m and the subsoil thickness decreased to 0.08m. No archaeological features were identified in this trench.

Trench 3 was 40m long, oriented south-west/north-east. At the south-western of the trench a dark greyish brown topsoil (0.22m thick) overlay a brown silty



subsoil (0.12m thick). The sequence remained the same at the north-eastern end of the trench, however, the topsoil thickness increased to 0.28m and the subsoil thickness also increased to 0.30m. No archaeological features were identified in this trench.

## **6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

The aim of the project was to establish the character, date, state of preservation, and extent of any archaeological remains within the site

Despite development areas locality within a rice archaeological landscape, no evidence was found of archaeological remains of any period.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank R.E. Harradine who funded the archaeological work, Stephen Macaulay 1 for managing project and Jon Cane who produced the illustration. The work was carried out in response to a brief drawn up by the County Archaeology Office.

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