



Archaeological Field Unit

**Test Pitting along an Anglian Water Pipeline  
at School Road, Wood Ditton, Cambridgeshire:  
An Archaeological Monitoring Project**

GD Bailey

2004

**Cambridgeshire County Council**

Report No. 760

Commissioned by Anglia Water

**Test Pitting along an Anglian Water Pipeline  
at School Road, Wood Ditton, Cambridgeshire:  
An Archaeological Monitoring Project  
(TL 6746 5987)**

GD Bailey BSc

2004

Editor: Stephen Macaulay BA, MPhil, AIFA  
Illustrator: Alexandra Howe



Report No. 760

©Archaeological Field Unit  
Cambridgeshire County Council  
Fulbourn Community Centre  
Haggis Gap, Fulbourn  
Cambridgeshire CB1 5HD  
Tel (01223) 576201  
Fax (01223) 880946

[arch.field.unit@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:arch.field.unit@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
<http://edweb.camcnty.gov.uk/afu>

## SUMMARY

*Between 9th October and 23rd November 2004, the Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted archaeological monitoring on the route of a water pipeline from School Road to near Saxon Hall, in the parish of Wood Ditton. The work was commissioned by Anglian Water. Eight test pits; each approximately 3.0m in length and 0.8m wide were machine excavated.*

*One test pit had two small ditches present within it. The proximity of these ditches to a known Roman road and the Icknield Way (Prehistoric Routeway) and their provisional alignment suggests that they were drainage ditches for the southern side of Icknield Way.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY	1
3	ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	1
4	METHODOLOGY	3
5	RESULTS	3
6	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	3
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	7
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	7
	LIST OF FIGURES	
	Figure 1:Location of Test Pits with pipeline highlighted	2
	Figure 2:East-facing section of Test Pit 5	4
	Figure 3:1st edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch series 1885 showing Icknield Way and footpath adjacent to Test Pit 5	5
	LIST OF APPENDICES	
	Appendix 1:Test Pit Soil Profiles	8

**Test Pitting along an Anglian Water Pipeline  
at School Road, Wood Ditton, Cambridgeshire:  
An Archaeological Monitoring Project  
(TL 6746 5987)**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

Between 9th October and 23rd November 2004, the Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted archaeological monitoring on land from School Road to near Saxon Hall, Wood Ditton (TL 6762/6000). The work was carried out at the request of on behalf of Anglia Water. The evaluation was conducted following the laying of a water pipe.

The presence of archaeological remains was considered possible by the CAO on the basis of information contained in the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), which records prehistoric, Roman and medieval finds in the general vicinity of Saxon Street.

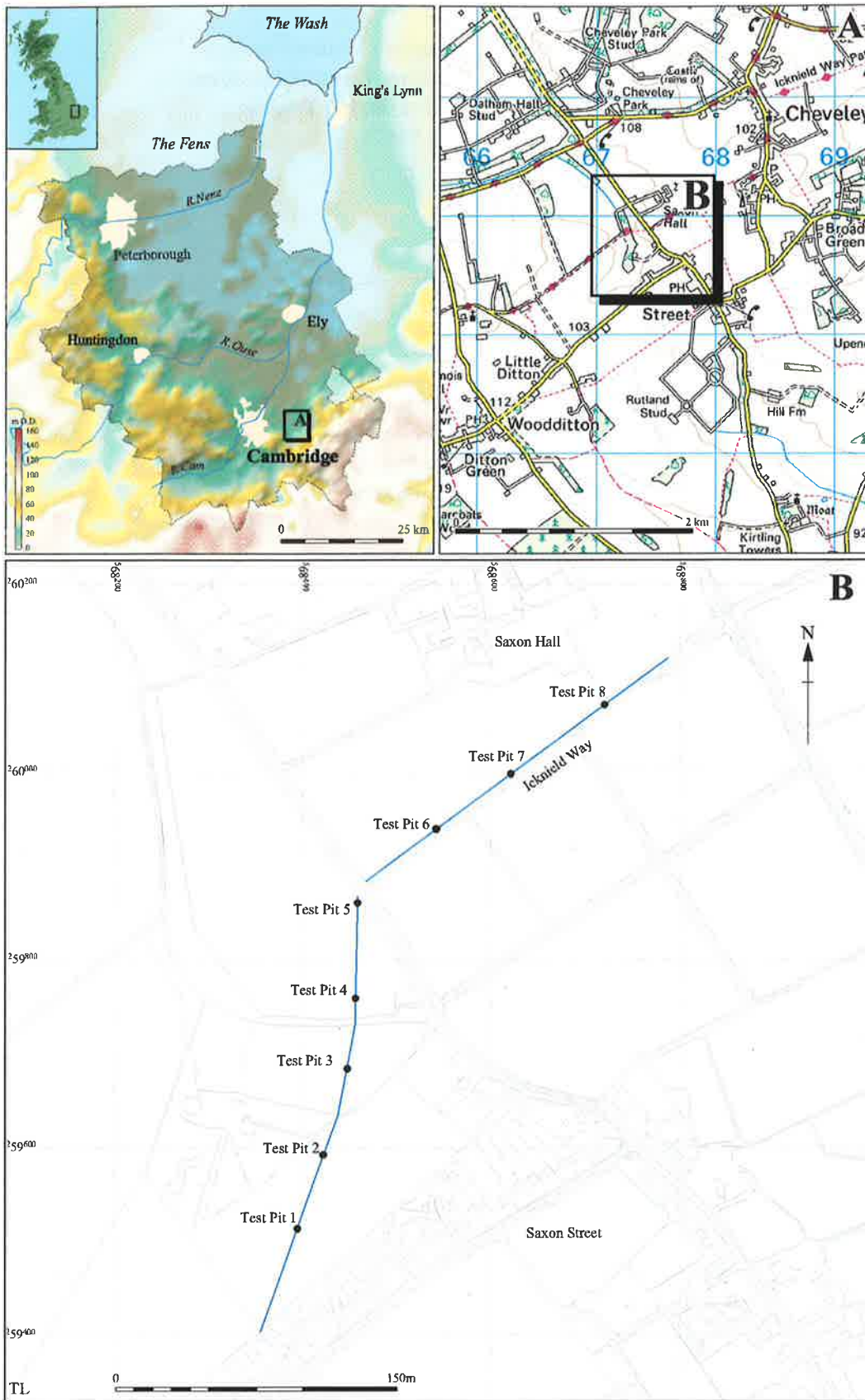
Weather conditions during the fieldwork were fine. The small size and presence of water in the test pits were factors that are likely to have had an adverse effect upon context recognition. Observations on site showed that the water was not an issue in determining the presence of archaeological features. Accordingly, the confidence rating to be applied to the results is judged to be high.

**2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

The British Geological Survey shows this site lies in a broad area of boulder clay. Inspection of the test pits confirmed the presence of underlying boulder clay. The test pits 1 to 4 were located in the middle of modern arable fields north of Saxon Street. Test pit 5 was adjacent to an existing roadside hedge. Test Pit 6, 7 and 8 were along the route of the Roman road; Icknield Way, to the northeast.

**3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The area to the southeast of Newmarket, close to the villages of Wood Ditton, Saxon Street and Cheveley, is an area of known archaeological importance.



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Cambridgeshire County Council 100023205 2004

**Figure 1** Location of test pits with the pipeline highlighted

The Ickneild Way runs along the northernmost section of the subject site, while the known medieval moated site of Saxon Hall (SMR 01190) is 1km to the north.

#### **4 METHODOLOGY**

The site lies on the northern side of the village of Saxon Street. It consists of eight test pits, each approximately 3.0m in length, 0.8m wide and cut to a depth of approximately 1.3m. The test pits were located at intervals along the route of a new water pipeline. The test pits were excavated using a JCB-type machine with a 0.8m wide toothed bucket. Archaeological monitoring was undertaken when the pipe laying was completed. The spoil was scanned for artefact retrieval.

Trenches were cleaned by hand where appropriate, planned and photographed, and recorded using the AFU's single context recording system. Archaeological recording of all exposed trenches constitutes a 100% sample of the total disturbed area.

#### **5 RESULTS**

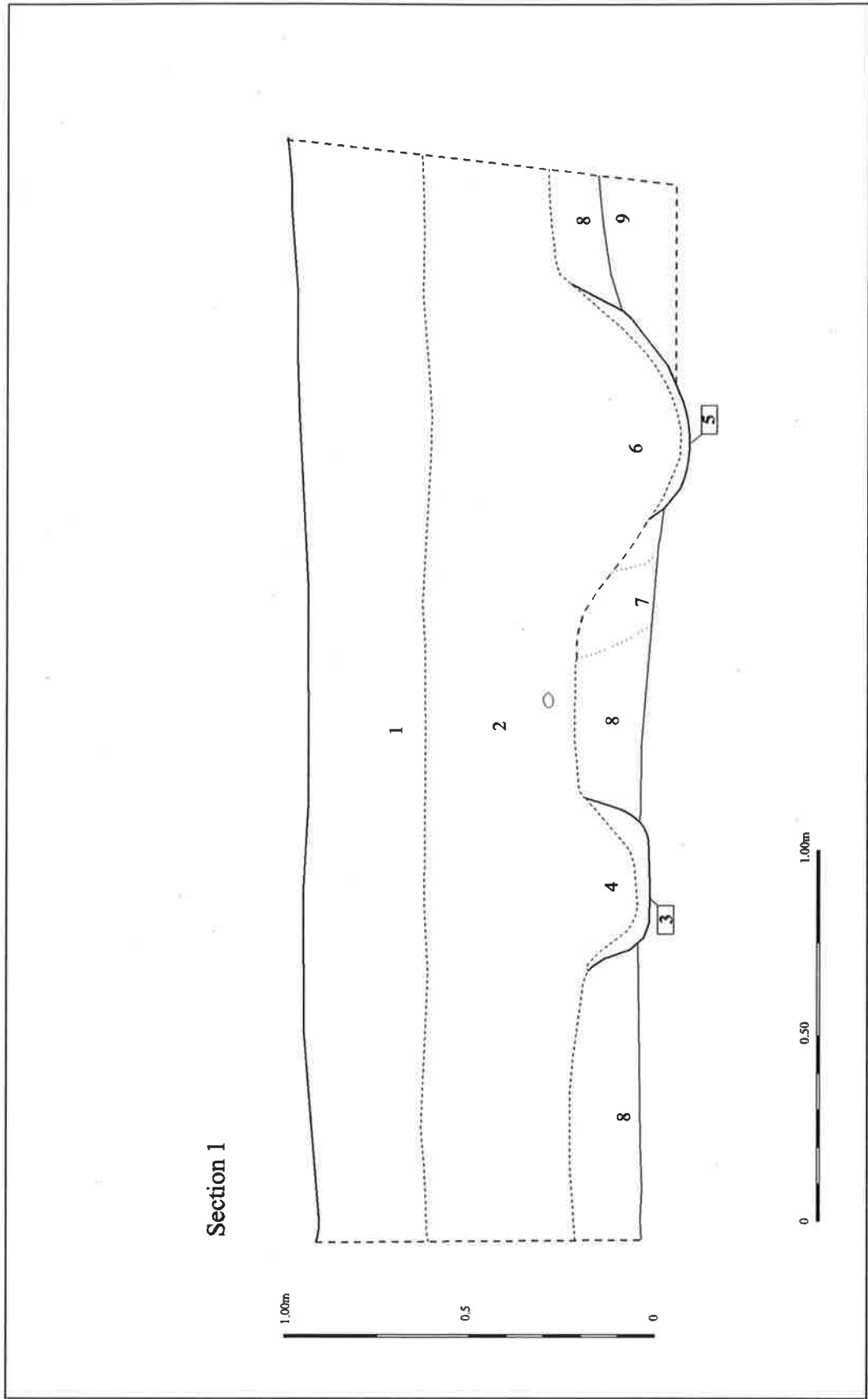
Test Pits 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8 had no identifiable archaeological features present.

Test pit 5 had two small ditches [03] and [05] present. Ditch [03] measured 0.50m wide and 0.21m deep. Ditch [05] measured 1.03m wide and 0.39m deep. One very small, abraded pottery fragment was recovered from the soil between the two ditches and was provisionally identified as either Iron Age or Saxon in date.

#### **6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

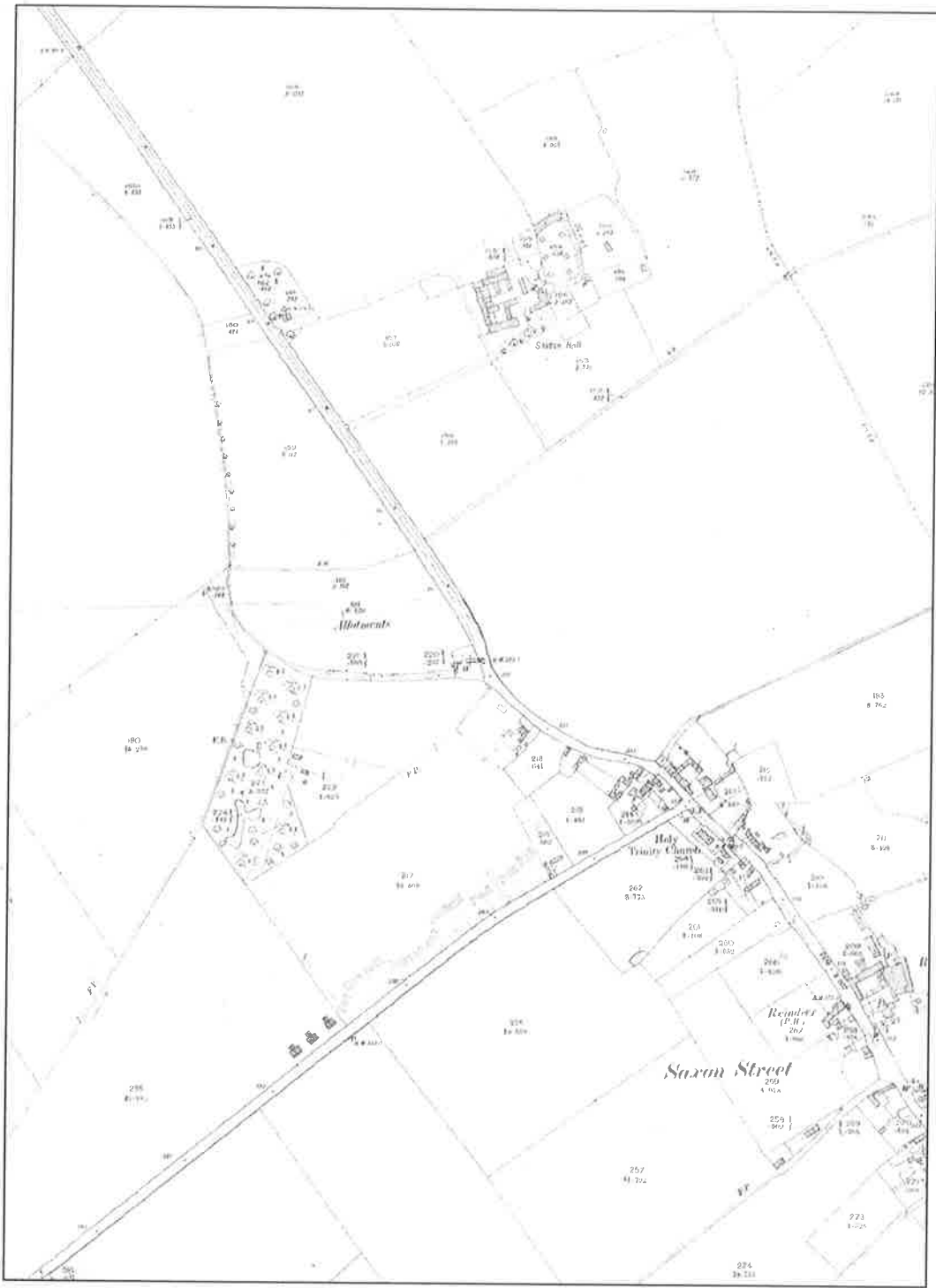
The majority of the test pits were devoid of any identifiable archaeological features, the exception being test pit 5. The arable fields where the test pits cut showed no clear previous use. The predetermined location and small size of the pits also contributed to the lack of features revealed.

The position of test pit 5 close to the known route of a Roman Road and the Prehistoric Routeway Ickneild Way, did allow the roads southern extent to be investigated. The two adjacent ditches revealed during excavation did indicate



**Figure 2** East facing section of Test Pit 5





**Figure 3** 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch series 1885 showing Icknield Way and footpath adjacent to Test Pit 5

that the road might have continued southward. From the very short section excavated, they seemed to run parallel to each other in a southwest to northeast direction. The proximity of these ditches to a known Roman Road and their provisional alignment suggests that they were perhaps drainage ditches for the southern side of the Road. The presence of sizable flints in both ditches supports the idea of them being in filled by material derived from the road. Unfortunately soil profile gives no indication as to their relationship to each other or the depth from which they were cut. The one small pottery fragment was recovered from the soil equidistant from the two ditch cuts but was too small and abraded to give a very firm date. The ground level and underlying natural deposits slope gentle upward at the northern end of this test pit. This indicates that the continuation of the Roman road directly to the north of this trench would have been topographically suited.

The objective of the project was to establish the character, date, state of preservation of any archaeological remains within the site. Information from the evaluation will allow an assessment of any further proposed development's archaeological implications and to inform an appropriate mitigation strategy.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The author would like to thank Anglia Water who commissioned and funded the archaeological work and Paul Chapman who was the on site liaison. The project was managed by Stephen Macaulay. Also thanks to Crane Begg who illustrated the report.

The brief for archaeological works was written by Andy Thomas, County Archaeology Office.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

British Geological Survey; Sheet 188; Cambridge

Cambridgeshire County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)

[www.old-maps.co.uk](http://www.old-maps.co.uk)

## APPENDIX

### Test Pit Soil Profiles

#### Test Pit 1

0.00-0.27m Topsoil. Firm greyish brown silty clay. Frequent angular flint, chalk lumps and flecks.

0.27m-0.56m (base of TP) Soft chalky clay- well mixed chalk lumps (mostly <0.05m) and flecks. Occasional subangular flints (<0.10m).

Water level 0.47m.

Animal burrows significantly disturb the profile.

#### Test Pit 2

0.00m-0.36m Topsoil. Dark greyish brown clayey silt. Frequent angular flints (<0.15m) and chalk lumps (<0.10m).

0.36-0.95m max. Topsoil-type soil filling possible periglacial crack (ill defined lower horizon).

0.36-1.25m max. Dark orangey brown soft sandy clay (ill defined lower horizon) lies stratigraphically below this deposit reaches down to water level.

0.36-1.28m Outside of and below the "ice wedge" the natural chalky clay is exposed.

Water level at 0.96m.

No artefacts or cultural debris were found in association with the "ice wedge" feature.

#### Test Pit 3

0.00m-0.28m Topsoil. Dark greyish brown clayey silt. Frequent angular flints (<0.15m) and chalk lumps (<0.10m).

0.28-0.76m Mix of firm yellowish brown, silvery grey and mid greyish brown silty clay.

0.76-0.80m Angular flint layer, coinciding with the water level.

#### Test Pit 4

0.00m-0.48m Topsoil. Dark greyish brown clayey silt. Frequent angular flints (<0.10m) and chalk lumps (<0.10m).

0.48-0.70m Firm mid yellowish brown clay, with no inclusions, grades into the next deposit.

0.70-1.34m Firm pale yellowish brown natural chalky clay.

#### Test Pit 5

0.00-0.33m Topsoil. Dark greyish brown clayey silt. Frequent angular flints (<0.10m) and chalk lumps (<0.10m).

0.33-0.75m (02) firm dark brown clayey silt. Moderate chalk flecks, occasional small and medium sized angular flints.

Firm yellowish brown clay. Rare chalk flecks and fragments, and rare small and medium sized angular flints.

0.75-0.94m fill (04) in ditch [03], soil description as (02).

0.72-1.10m fill (06) in ditch [05], soil description as (02).

0.94-1.20m+ Firm pale yellowish brown natural chalky clay.

**Test Pit 6**

0.00m-0.20m Topsoil. Dark greyish brown clayey silt. Frequent angular flints (<0.15m) and chalk lumps (<0.10m).

0.20-1.00m Firm pale yellowish brown natural chalky clay.

**Test Pit 7**

0.00m-0.20m Topsoil. Dark greyish brown clayey silt. Frequent angular flints (<0.15m) and chalk lumps (<0.10m).

0.20-0.40m Mid brown clayey silt. Moderate chalk gravel and occasional flint gravel.

0.40-1.00m Firm pale yellowish brown natural chalky clay.

**Test Pit 8**

0.00m-0.20m Topsoil. Dark greyish brown clayey silt. Frequent angular flints (<0.15m) and chalk lumps (<0.10m).

0.20-1.00m Firm pale yellowish brown natural chalky clay.



**Cambridgeshire  
County Council**

Education, Libraries  
and Heritage

The Archaeological Field Unit  
Fulbourn Community Centre  
Haggis Gap  
Fulbourn  
Cambridge CB1 5HD  
Tel (01223) 576201  
Fax (01223) 880946