

Cover Images

Machine stripping, Soham	On-site surveying
Roman corn dryer, Duxford	Guided walk along Devil's Dyke
Bronze Age shaft, Fordham Bypass	Medieval well, Soham
Human burial, Barrington Anglo-Saxon Cemetery	Timbers from a medieval well, Soham
Blue enamelled bead, Barrington	Bed burial reconstruction, Barrington Anglo-Saxon Cemetery
Aethusa cynapium 'Fool's parsley'	Medieval tanning pits, Huntington Town Centre
Digging in the snow, Huntingdon Town Centre	Beaker vessel
Face painting at Hinchingsbrooke Iron Age Farm	Environmental analysis
Research and publication	Monument Management, Bartlow Hills

CCC AFU Report Number 797

Ridge and Furrow and Post-Medieval Boundary Ditches at Littleport County Primary School, Littleport

An Archaeological Evaluation

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Site Code: LIT PSC 05

CHER Event Number: ECB 12345

Date of works: 30th March to 4th April 2005

Grid Ref: TL 5572 8690

Editor: Elizabeth Shepherd Popescu BA MIFA

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Summary

Between the 30th March and 4th April 2005 the Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted an archaeological evaluation at Littleport County Primary School, Parsons Lane, Littleport (TL 5572 8690) in advance of construction of a new primary school. The work was commissioned by Mouchelparkman.

Eight trenches (total length 588m) were mechanically excavated in the development area. The evaluation identified ridge and furrow which may date to the medieval or post-medieval period. Two post-medieval boundary ditches cut into the furrows.

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Drawing Conventions

Sections

Limit of Excavation	
Cut	
Cut - Conjectured	
Soil Horizon	
Soil Horizon - Conjectured	
Intrusion/Truncation	
Top of Natural	
Top Surface	
Break in Section	
Cut Number	
Deposit Number	117
Ordnance Datum	$\frac{18.45\text{m ODN}}{\wedge}$

Plans

Limit of Excavation	
Deposit - Conjectured	
Natural Features	
Intrusion/Truncation	
Sondages/Machine Strip	
Illustrated Section	
Archaeological Feature	
Excavated Slot	
Cut Number	118

1 Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (CCC AFU) at Littleport County Primary School, Parsons Lane, Littleport, Cambridgeshire (TL 5572 8690) to fulfil requirements of a planning application (E/03003/03/CC) to construct a new primary school. The archaeological evaluation was undertaken between the 30th March and 4th April 2005.

The archaeological brief for the site was dated 25th May 2004 (Thomas 2004) and the brief stipulated that there should be a geophysical assessment. The geophysics found only ridge and furrow and modern features (Masters 2005).

The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

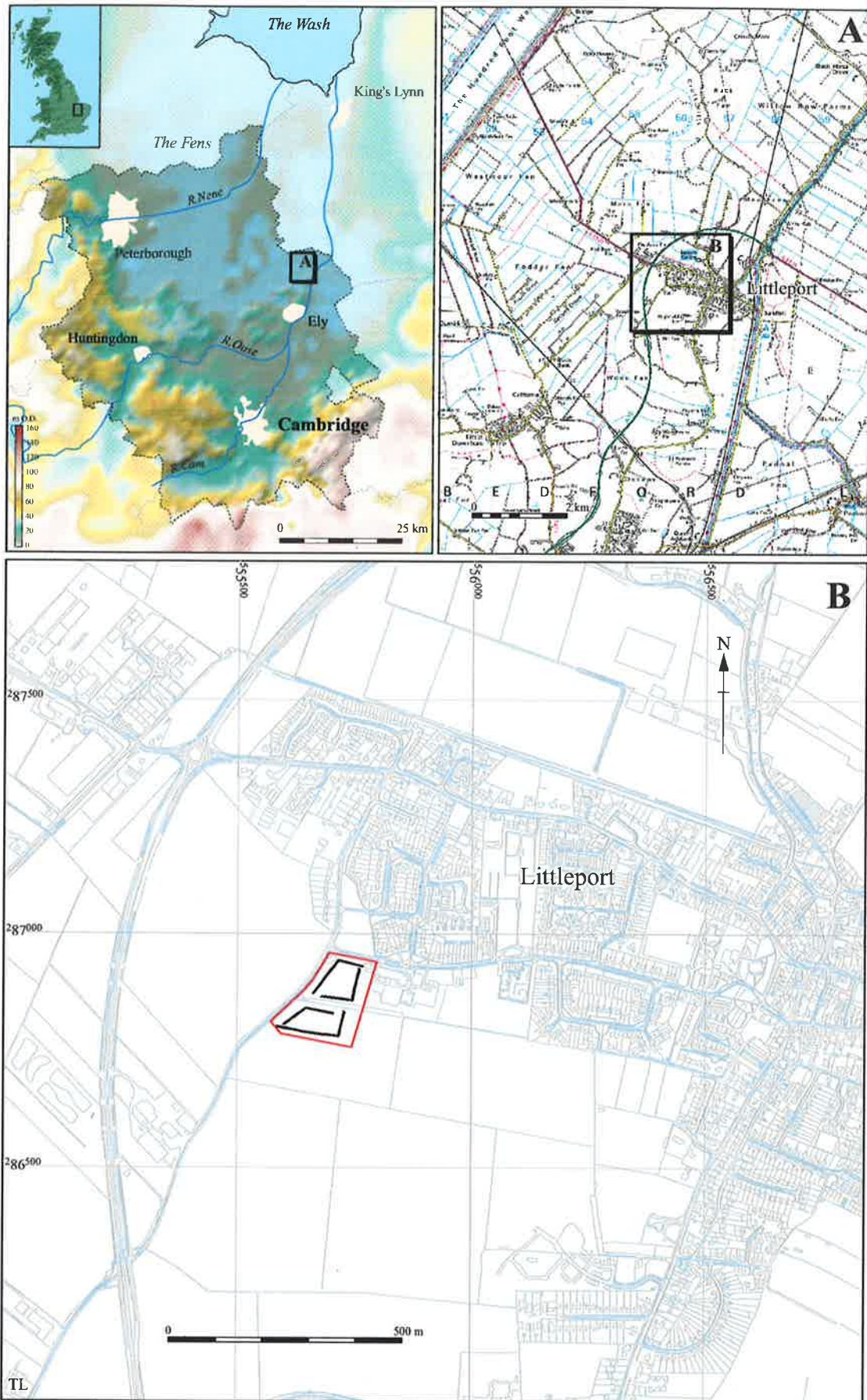
The site archive is currently held by CCC AFU.

2 Geology and Topography

The site is on Boulder Clay (Till) with Kimmeridge Clay to the south (BGS 1980). Within the evaluation trenches the natural subsoil consisted of Boulder Clay. The ground was on flat land at about 4m OD.

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

Another archaeological evaluation took place on land adjacent to the east of the site (Dymond 1999). The two nearest trenches (72 and 84) were c. 200m to the east of the current site and within them there were furrows running north-west to south-east, as well as one undated east to west ditch in the former trench. This evaluation found prehistoric remains 400m to the east and Saxon remains more than 600m to the south to east. Roman remains have been found more than 800m to the north-east (Macaulay 2002).



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Figure 1: Location of trenches and development area

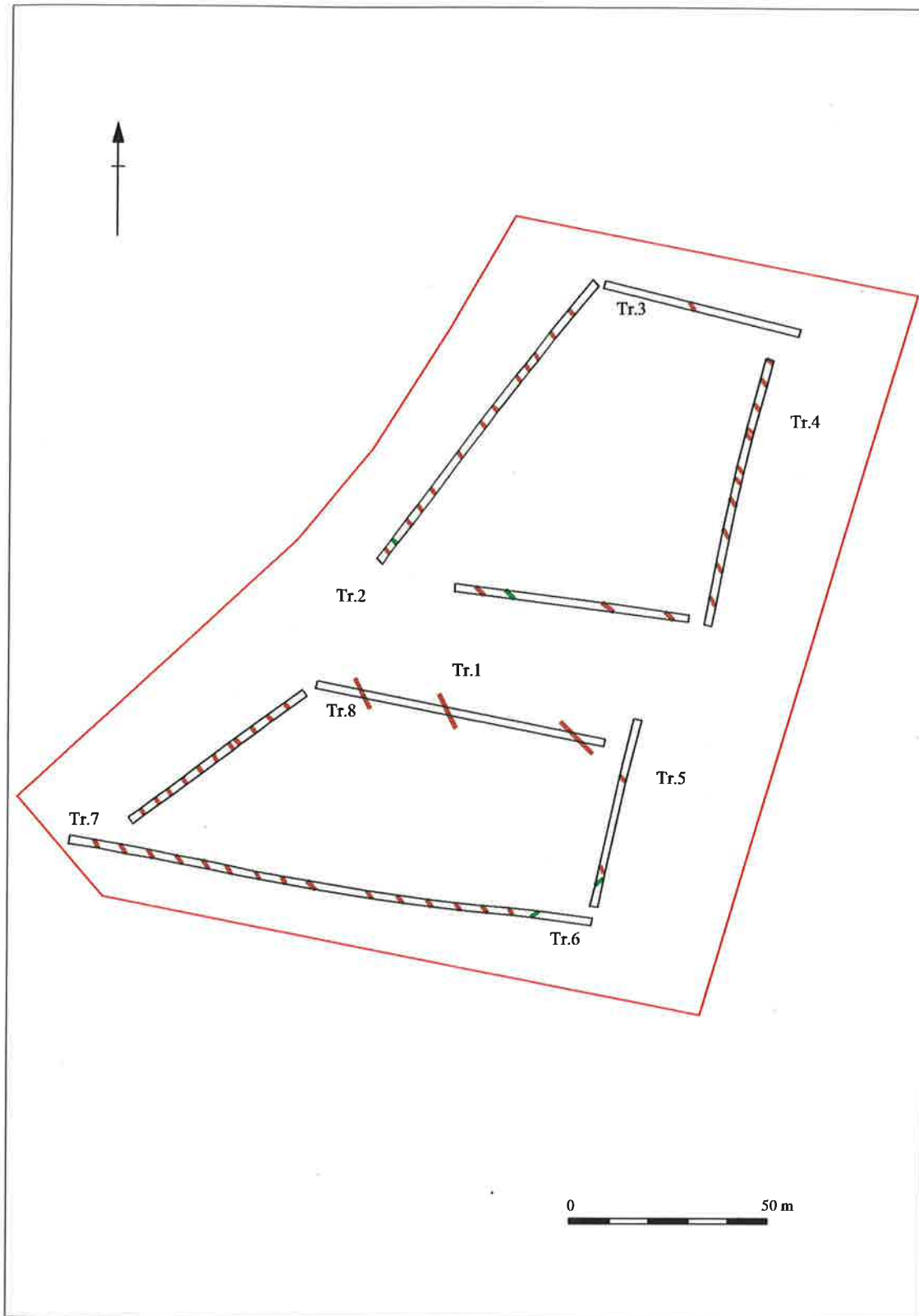


Figure 2: Excavation trenches showing furrows and development area

The only feature recorded in the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map (1890) is an east-west field boundary running through the site. This boundary was filled in by time of the modern day Ordnance Survey map, presumably when the school was built and the development area became part of the school playing fields.

4 Methodology

A 360° mechanical excavator with a 1.8m wide ditching bucket was used to excavate eight trenches under archaeological supervision (Fig. 1). A few of the trench locations were changed due to a football pitch were still being used on the extreme south-eastern part of the site. A total of 588m of trenching were excavated providing a c. 5% sample of the site.

The trenches were all planned using a total station with all features recorded (Fig. 2). Monochrome, colour slide photographs and digital pictures were taken. A representative sample of the furrows was investigated as well as all other possible features. A metal detector survey took place within the trenches and across the spoil heaps.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using CCC AFU's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

5 Results

5.1 Geophysical survey

The geophysical survey within the development area found furrows running north-west to south-east within the southern part of the evaluation and east to west in the northern part (Masters 2005 fig. 2). There was a single east to west boundary ditch in the centre of the site. This corresponds with a field boundary in the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map. Apart from these furrows the geophysics found only modern features reflecting the former use of the site as a recreation ground.

5.2 Trenches

There were no features predating the furrows in any of the trenches. The furrows found all the trenches correspond with the geophysics results (Fig. 2; Masters 2005 fig. 2). A representative sample of the furrows was sampled which were up to 0.6m wide and 0.18m deep. In two places (Trenches 1 and 5) post-medieval boundary ditches (6 and 12 respectively) cut furrows. The ditches were 1m and 0.6m wide, and up to 0.14m deep with a single post-medieval red ware sherd recovered from ditch 6. The furrows were sealed by subsoil layer up to 0.2m thick consisting of mid orange brown silty sand with some clay and a topsoil layer between 0.3-0.4m thick.

Trenches	Length (m)	Archaeological Features
Trench 1	60	Post-med boundary, cuts furrow
Trench 2	91	None
Trench 3	50	None
Trench 4	70	None
Trench 5	50	Post-med boundary, cuts furrow
Trench 6	135	None
Trench 7	57	None
Trench 8	75	None

Table 1: Trenches, showing length and archaeological features

6 Discussion and Conclusions

The evaluation has found no archaeological remains or artefacts pre-dating furrows which were the remnant survival of the former medieval strip fields of Littleport. The spoil heaps and furrows did not contain any pre-modern artefacts. Two post-medieval ditches cut the furrows and were probable field boundaries. A post-medieval red ware sherd was recovered from one of the ditches.

Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Mouchelparkman who commissioned and funded the archaeological work and the staff of Littleport County School. The project was managed by Stephen Macaulay. The site staff consisted of Rob Atkins, Steve Hickling and Dennis Payne. Steve Critchley kindly undertook the metal detector survey. Crane Begg and Carlos Silva drew the illustrations. Carole Fletcher commented on the pottery sherd and the text was edited by Liz Popescu.

The brief for archaeological works was written by Andy Thomas, Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning & Countryside Advice and Adrian Scruby who visited the site and monitored the evaluation on behalf of Andy Thomas.

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