



Archaeological Field Unit

**338 Thorpe Road, Longthorpe, Peterborough:  
An Archaeological Watching Brief**

Steve Hickling

May 2005

**Cambridgeshire County Council**

Report No. 799

*Commissioned by David Turnock Architects on behalf of Mr & Mrs Clasper*



## Distribution List: Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough

Site Name: 338 THORPE RD., LONGTHORPE.....

Site Code: PETTHROS... Report No.: 799... Date Sent: .....

 1 Author(s)  Relevant Specialists (please list:) 3 Client (how many copies?) 1 Project Archive 1 Office Library Principal Archaeologist,  
SMR Office, Room A108,  
Castle Court, Shire Hall,  
Castle Hill,  
Cambridge CB3 OAP  
Box No.: ELH1108 A. Baker,  
Librarian,  
Haddon Library,  
Downing Street,  
Cambridge CB2 3DZ County Archivist,  
County Records Office,  
Room 001, Shire Hall,  
Cambridge CB3 OAP  
Box No.: RES 1009**Huntingdon Sites ONLY:**  
 Local Studies Librarian,  
Huntingdon Library,  
Princess Street,  
Huntingdon PE1 1RX Chris Jakes,  
Cambridgeshire Collection,  
Central Library,  
Lion Yard,  
Cambridge CB2 3QD**Fenland Sites ONLY:**  
 Local Studies Librarian,  
Wisbech Library,  
1 Ely Place,  
Wisbech PE13 EU Felicity Gilmour,  
National Monument Record,  
Kemble Drive,  
Swindon SN2 2GZ**Peterborough Reports ONLY:**  
 2 Ben Robinson,  
x 2 Archaeological Officer,  
Peterborough Museum & Art Gallery,  
Priestgate,  
Peterborough PE1 1LF**For English Heritage projects:**  
 Philip Walker,  
Inspector of Ancient Monuments,  
English Heritage,  
Brooklands,  
24 Brooklands Avenue,  
Cambridge CB2 2BU**For DC funded reports via the  
Cambs planning process send to:**  
 x 3 Andy Thomas,  
(inc. Land-Use Planning  
SMR) Room A107, Castle Court,  
Shire Hall, Castle Hill,  
Cambridge CB3 OAP  
Box No.: ELH1108**For English Heritage projects:**  
 Chris Scull,  
Archaeology Commissions,  
English Heritage,  
23 Savile Row,  
London W1X 1AB

# 338 Thorpe Road, Longthorpe, Peterborough: An Archaeological Watching Brief

Steve Hickling

April 2005

Editor: Elizabeth Shepherd Popescu  
Illustrator: Crane Begg



Report No. 799

©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  
<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/archaeology>

## SUMMARY

*During April and May 2005, the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit monitored groundworks for a new house at 338 Thorpe Road, Longthorpe. Test pits and foundation trenches for a boundary wall and the house were examined.*

*This evaluation revealed three features, all of which were undated. A moderate amount of unstratified medieval pottery was recovered along with an early 20th-century Masonic medal. The development area was probably always open agricultural land in the past.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>INTRODUCTION</b>   | <b>1</b> |
| <b>GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY</b>                                       | <b>1</b> |
| <b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</b>                     | <b>1</b> |
| <b>METHODOLOGY</b>  | <b>4</b> |
| <b>RESULTS</b>  | <b>4</b> |
| <b>DISCUSSION</b>   | <b>6</b> |
| <b>CONCLUSIONS</b>  | <b>7</b> |
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>   | <b>7</b> |
| <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>   | <b>8</b> |
| <b>Appendix: Finds Data</b>   | <b>9</b> |
| <b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>  |          |
| <b>Figure 1</b> Location of trenches                                | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Figure 2</b> Plan of foundation trenches, test pits and sections | <b>5</b> |
| <b>LIST OF PLATES</b>   |          |
| <b>Plate 1.</b> General view of the foundations                     | <b>6</b> |
| <b>Plate 2.</b> Masonic medal                                       | <b>9</b> |

# 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  $\frac{18.45\text{m}}{\text{X}}$  ODN


## Plans

Limit of Excavation 

Deposit - Conjectured 

Natural Features 

Intrusion/Truncation 

Sondages/Machine Strip 

Illustrated Section 

Archaeological Deposit 

Trenches/Test Pits 

Cut Number 118

**338 Thorpe Road, Longthorpe, Peterborough:  
An Archaeological Watching Brief  
TL 1620 9847**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

Between the 1st April and 11th May 2005 the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (CCC AFU) conducted a watching brief during ground works at 338 Thorpe Road, Longthorpe, Peterborough (Fig.1). The work was carried out at the request of David Turnock Architects on behalf of Mr and Mrs Clasper in response to advice issued by Ben Robinson, the Peterborough City Council Archaeology Officer. The development was the construction of a new dwelling.

The site is located on Thorpe Road, in the medieval core of the village in close proximity to Longthorpe Tower.

**2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

According to the British Geological Survey Map (Sheet 158, Peterborough, 1:50,000), the church is situated on third river terrace gravels on the north bank of the river Nene.

The topography is flat, at a height of 17.7m OD.

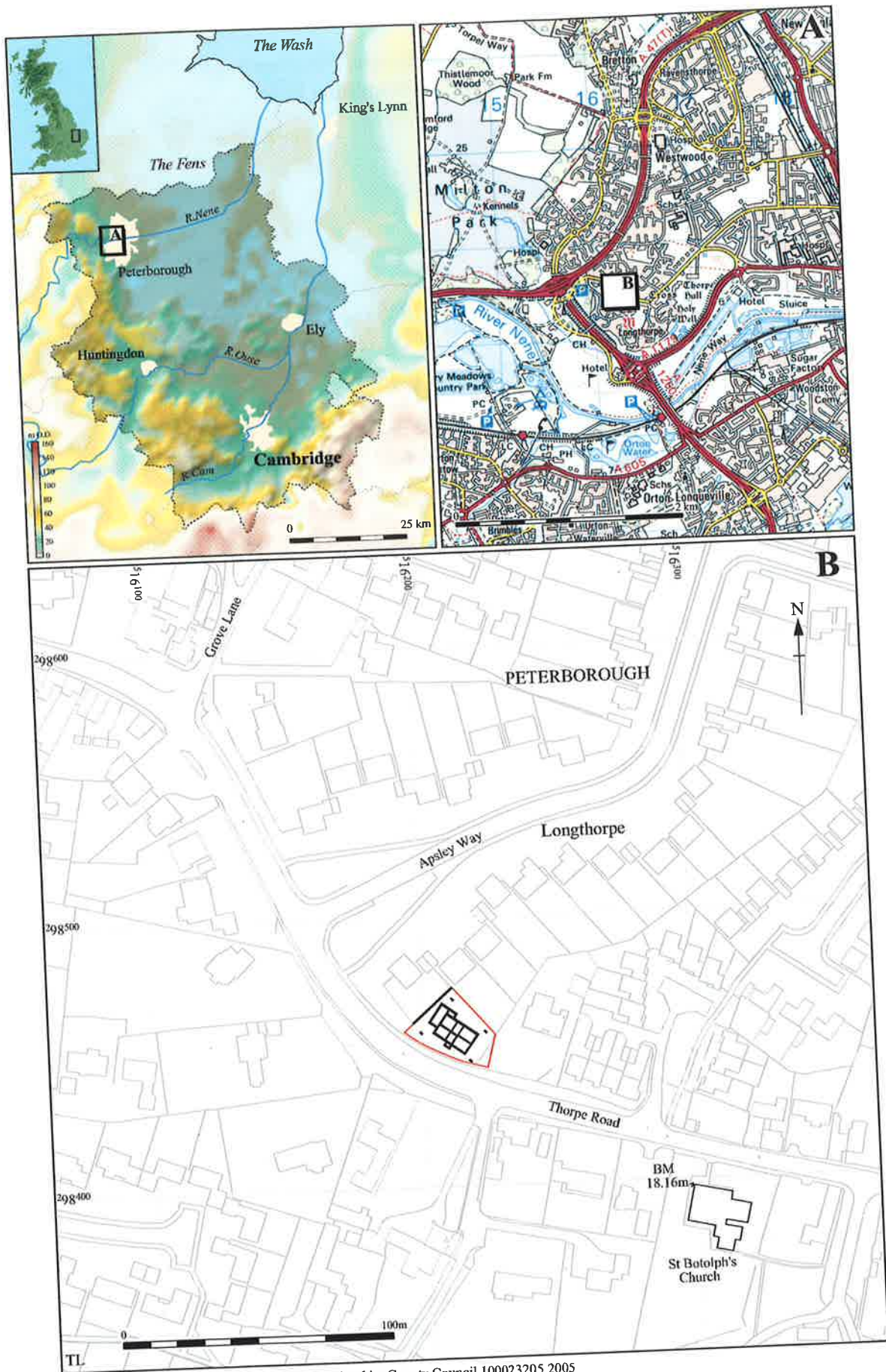
**3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

**3.1 Neolithic**

Neolithic remains are widespread on both sides of the River Nene. These occur mainly as isolated finds of flint tools (arrowheads). No settlement evidence is recorded in the area around Longthorpe.

**3.2 Bronze Age**

It has been suggested that there was widespread occupation of the Nene valley during the Bronze Age (2nd millennium BC). Bronze Age remains have been noted to the west of the site, on the southern bank of the River Nene. Barrows or burial mounds (dated to the Neolithic/Bronze Age period, SMR 1392 and 1620) have been located on low-lying land to the north of Orton



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Cambridgeshire County Council 100023205 2005

**Figure 1** Location of trenches with the development area outlined (red)



Longueville and a Bronze Age axe (SMR 1998) was found in the same area. On the northern bank of the river a Middle Bronze Age palstave is recorded (SMR 7844).

It would therefore appear that Bronze Age occupation in this area was concentrated close to the river, despite the fact that the land is relatively low-lying.

### **3.3 Iron Age**

Iron Age use of rivers from the Wash to the Fen is well attested and associated with continental Iron Age influence. Early Iron Age pottery ('Late Hallstatt' type) has been found in abundance near Peterborough (Kenney 2003).

An Iron Age farm has been recorded close to the Roman fort at Longthorpe and Iron Age coins have been found on the northern bank of the River Nene (SMR 10479 and 10478).

### **3.4 Roman**

Extensive Roman remains have been found in the Nene Valley and the well documented fort of Longthorpe (Scheduled Ancient Monument 135) with an associated Iron Age farm lying less than 1km to the west of the site. Roman occupation remains have also been found just south of the river. A fording place (SMR 4321) is known adjacent to the fort. A wealth of Roman occupation remains (SMR 01383), pottery kilns (SMR 01435c) and a cemetery (SMR 01386) have been found outside the fort as well as numerous surface finds.

### **3.5 Anglo-Saxon**

Possible Anglo-Saxon cross fragments still lie 300m to the east of the development site, reused as stocks and a whipping post (SMR 01657). Late Saxon building remains have been found cut by the fishponds 600m to the east (SMR 04454a). An Anglo-Saxon cemetery was found within Longthorpe fort (SMR 1382).

### **3.6 Medieval**

The parish church of St Botolph (SMR 01927) dates to the 13th century and was a chapel of ease until 1850 when Longthorpe became a separate parish. Documents suggest that there was an earlier church on the site. Longthorpe Tower, 150m to the west, (SMR 01709) is a medieval building of the 13th century with a fortified 'tower'. Medieval fishponds are visible 0.7km to the east (SMR 01649) near the Holy Well spring. Two Hundred metres to the north-west lies the socket of a medieval cross (SMR 01662), while 1km to the east lie medieval cultivation remains (SMR 08283).

A watching brief was carried out at Longthorpe Green in 2004, but no archaeological features were observed (Kenney 2003).

The Deserted Medieval Village of Botolph Bridge (also known as Bottlebridge or Botuleuesbrige) has been located immediately to the south (SMR 1805). It is known that Botolph Bridge was an embargement point on the Nene for the transport of stone from quarries beyond Alwalton along the fen waterways to towns such as Cambridge. Excavations here in 1999 and 2000 by CCC AFU revealed substantial medieval settlement remains (Kemp and Spoerry 2001).

During the medieval period nearby Peterborough was a major town with dense medieval occupation to the north of the river. Activity was initially centred around the monastic settlement and market but grew considerably during the medieval period.

### **3.7 Post-Medieval**

Some 600m to the east of the site lies the Holy Well, a natural spring encased in an 18th-century grotto (SMR 04454). Its presence may have lead to the development of Thorpe Manor and its earthworks which surround the spring.

The 1889 Ordnance Survey map shows the development area as open pastureland.

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

The site was inspected on four occasions, during the excavation of four test pits and during excavations of the foundation trenches.

The exposed surfaces were cleaned in order to clarify any features or deposits. All exposed features and deposits were excavated and recorded according to CCC AFU standards and practises. Digital and standard print/slide photographs were taken.

## **5 RESULTS**

### **5.1 Test Pits**

Four test pits were dug by minidigger (Fig. 2). Test pits 1-3 contained 0.3-0.4m of topsoil above 30-40 cm of mid brown clayey subsoil. One fragment of medieval pottery and a gold Masonic medal were recovered from the topsoil of Test Pit 1 (see Appendix). Test Pit 4 contained 0.3m of topsoil above a cobbled surface believed to be associated with a 20th-century garage on the site. Below this was 0.2m of subsoil.

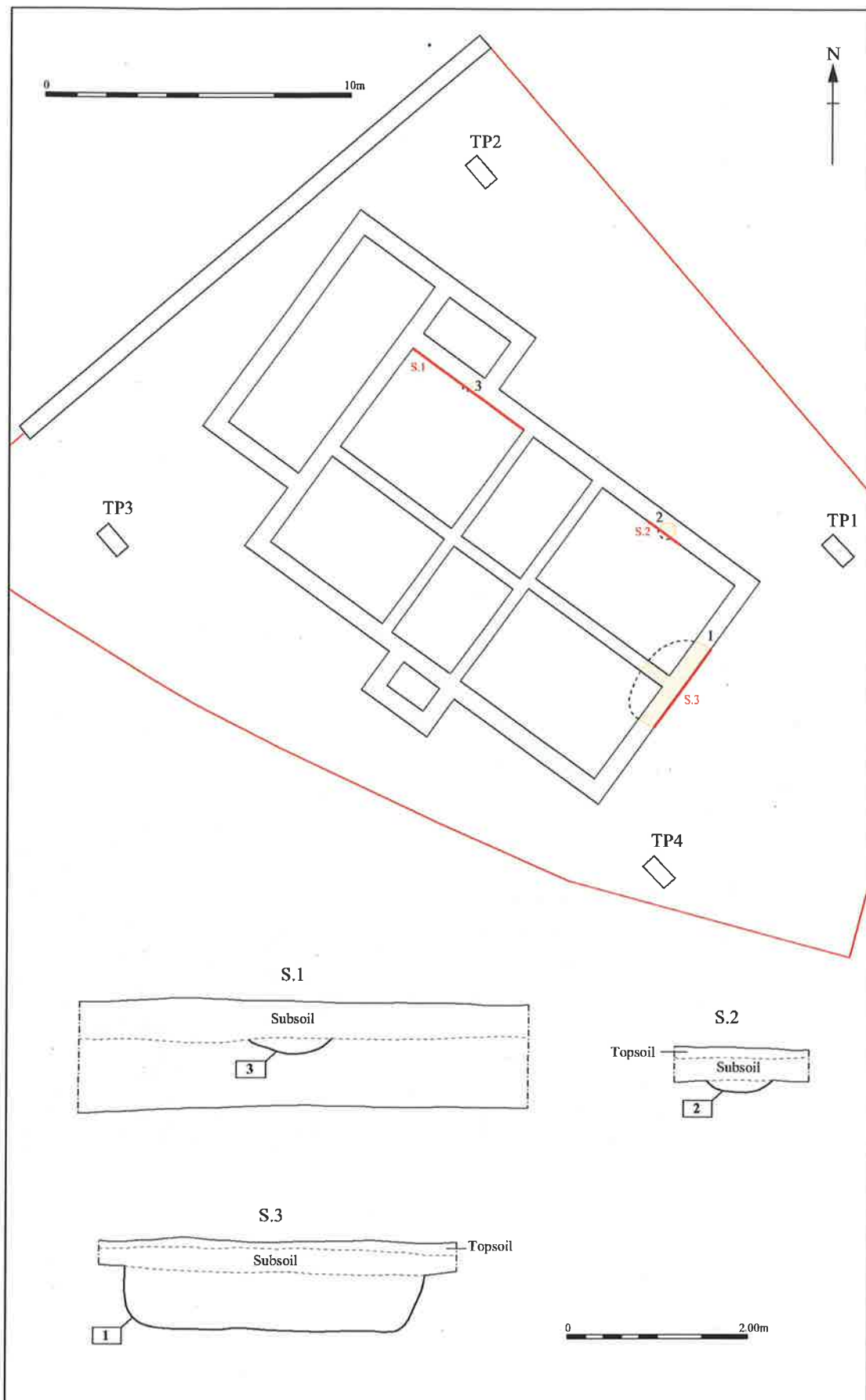


Figure 2 Plan of foundation trenches, test pits and sections

## 5.2 Foundation Trenches

The foundation trenches were monitored on three occasions after most of the topsoil had been removed. The whole of the house foundations and the western boundary foundation were inspected, with three features being discovered and recorded. The features were all sealed by 0.25m of subsoil.

Pit 1 was a large feature, at least 3.25m wide and 0.65m deep with vertical sides and a flat bottom (Fig.2, section3). Its fill was a mixed backfill, consisting mainly of dark brown sandy silt with moderate gravel and occasional charcoal and limestone fragments.

Pit 2 was a small pit or posthole 0.6m wide and 0.1m deep with a fill of dark brown silt with rare gravel, but frequent mussel shell and bone (Fig.2, section 2).

Pit 3 was a small pit or posthole, 0.4m wide and 0.3m deep. It was filled with a dark grey silty clay (Fig.2, section 1).



*Plate 1 General view of the foundations*

## 6 DISCUSSION

The development site was located just outside the edge of the conservation area and medieval core of Longthorpe, on the main road through the village and just across the road from Longthorpe Tower. This site was therefore

believed to have a lot of potential for the survival of archaeological remains. Although three features were examined, none of these contained datable finds or highly cultural remains (with the exception of pit 2 which contained refuse). It is possible that the large pit was a gravel quarry for road building, while the two smaller features were postholes for fence lines, representing edge of village activity. The first edition Ordnance Survey Map (1889) shows this area as pasture.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

This evaluation revealed three features, all of which were undated. A moderate amount of unstratified medieval pottery was recovered, and was an early 20th-century Masonic medal. The development area was probably always open agricultural land in the past.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank David Thurnock Architects who commissioned and funded the archaeological work on behalf of Mr and Mrs Clasper. The project was managed by Judith Roberts. Spencer Cooper and Glenn Bailey assisted with the fieldwork. Thanks must go to Crane Begg for providing the illustrations, Scott Kenney for photographing the medal and Carole Fletcher for commenting on the pottery.

Advice on the archaeological work was given by Ben Robinson, Peterborough City Council Archaeology Office.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Hickling, S. 2005 *St. Botolph's Church, Longthorpe, Peterborough: An Archaeological Watching Brief* CCCAFU report 784
- Kemp, S. 2001 *Botolph Bridge Excavations 1999 and 2000. Post-excavation assessment and updated project design* CCCAFU report PXA 28  
and Spoerry, P.
- Kenney, S. 2003 *1 Longthorpe Green, Peterborough: An Archaeological Watching Brief* CCCAFU report 711

## Appendix: Finds Data

The only finds recovered were from the topsoil. These comprise seven pottery sherds (Bourne B, local shelly ware and black glazed earthen ware, dated 1150-1700) and a Masonic medal dating from the 1920s.

The Masonic medal is circular, 38mm in diameter and 8mm thick. It is composed of a gold outer ring enclosing two panels of glass or crystal, one of which is broken. Within the glass was a metal panel with three figures beneath a triangle radiating beams and the date MDCCCXXX (1830) on one side, while on the other, the words 'HONORABLE TESTIMONIAL OF MASONIC CHARITY & BENEVOLENCE INSTITUTED BY HRH AUG: FRED: DUKE OF SUSSEX M W GRAND MASTER' with the compasses and set square beneath. Around the outside edge, the gold ring had been engraved with the words, 'W.BRO. H.P.HOOPER, served as *Steward* RMIB, 1920. RMIG. 1922'.



*Plate 2 Masonic medal*



**Cambridgeshire  
County Council**  
Environment &  
Community Services

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