

CCC AFU Report Number 829

Ely City Golf Course Reservoir

An Archaeological Evaluation

Richard Mortimer

Site Code: ELY CGC 05
CHER Event Number: ECB 2015
Date of works: September 2005
Grid Ref: TL 5349 7923

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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 head, 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 Hinchinbrooke Iron Age Farm	Environmental analysis
Research and publication	Monument Management, Bartlow Hills

Summary



























On the 14th and 15th September 2005 the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council carried out a trench evaluation on land at the Ely City Golf Course, Ely, Cambridgeshire. The work was carried out in advance of the construction of a storage reservoir.

Three trenches were excavated. There were no sub-surface archaeological features within the trenches, however, a scatter of Neolithic surface flint and parts of a medieval Ely ware vessel were recovered.

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Drawing Conventions

Sections	Plans
Limit of Excavation 	Limit of Excavation 
Cut 	Deposit - Conjectured 
Cut-Conjectured 	Natural Features 
Soil Horizon 	Intrusion/Truncation 
Soil Horizon - Conjectured 	Sondages/Machine Strip 
Intrusion/Truncation 	Illustrated Section 
Top of Natural 	Archaeological Deposit 
Top Surface 	Field Drain 
Break in Section 	Modern Deposit 
Cut Number 	Animal Disturbance 
Deposit Number 117	Cable 
Ordnence Datum $\frac{18.45m}{7} ODN$	Cut Number 118
Stone 	Flint 
Brick 	Pot 
Bone 	

1 Introduction

The proposed development comprises the construction of a winter fill reservoir of approximately 0.6ha in area (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ely City Golf Club Ltd.

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Kasia Gdaniec of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice team (CAPCA; Planning Application 05/00432/FUL), supplemented by a Specification prepared by Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (CCC AFU).

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 CAPCA, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by CCC AFU and will be deposited at an appropriate county store.

2 Geology and Topography

The site is on glacial boulder clay, sands and gravels overlying greensand (British Geological Survey 1980).

The site lies at around 10m OD at the centre of a tongue of land that extends due south from the main high land of Ely. The Cambridge Turnpike road runs down the middle of the tongue with the Golf Course along its eastern side. The River Ouse runs parallel 1km further east.

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

Archaeological investigations on and around the city of Ely have revealed Bronze Age, Iron Age, Romano-British, Anglo-Saxon and medieval settlement remains as well as a heavily exploited agricultural landscape. The closest known archaeological remains are some 300m east of the development area – cropmarks of a rectangular and a circular enclosure (HER 06966), presumably prehistoric.

Prehistoric and Roman remains have been excavated at several sites on the lower ground around the fen edge (e.g. HERs 11967, 14805,

15479, 15472, 15536) and to a lesser extent on the higher ground near the city centre (HERs 15549, 10170B).

Remains of an Early Anglo-Saxon burial ground were excavated just 500m to the northwest across Cambridge Road (Quinton Carroll pers. comm.) and it is possible that evidence of settlement dating to that period may lie within the golf course area.

There are extensive medieval remains around the Isle of Ely and upstanding earthworks are still visible which indicate the presence of both settlement and agriculture. Medieval Ely ware pottery was also produced 800m to the northeast at Potter's Lane (MCB 13883).

4 Methodology

The objective of the evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

The Brief required that a minimum of 5% of the area affected by the development should be subjected to trial trenching. However, the bottom quarter of the site, at the southeast, was covered by large poplar trees and crossed by electricity cables, leaving approximately 0.45ha available for evaluation. Three trenches totalling 163m in length were excavated, equal to 261 sq m, a 6% sample of the available area.

Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket 1.60m wide.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were visually scanned for artefacts. All hand-collected finds were retained for inspection.

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 digital photographs were taken throughout the course of the evaluation.

As no archaeological features other than land drains and a modern tree throw were found, no environmental samples were taken.

Site conditions and access were fine throughout.

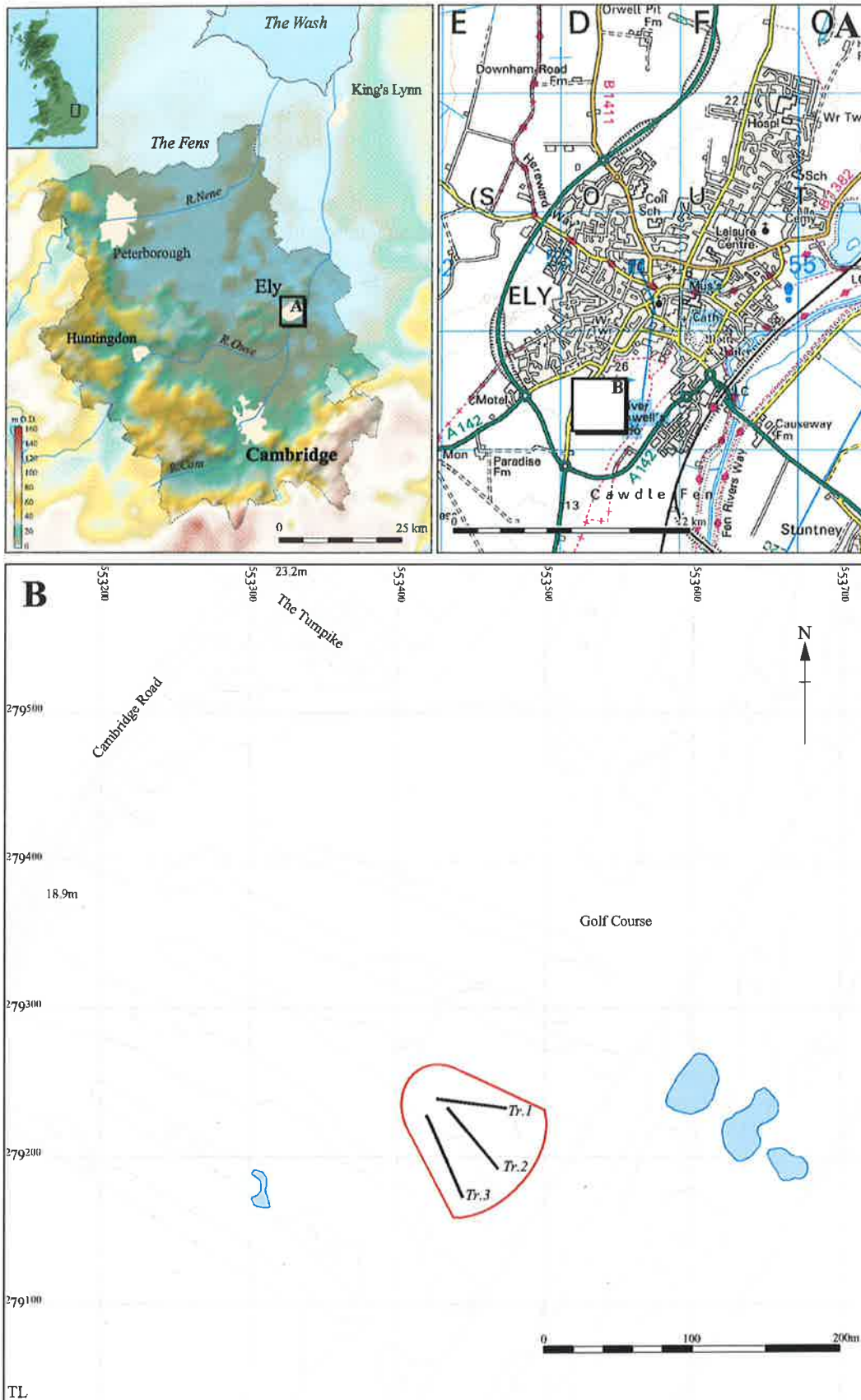


Figure 1 Location of trenches (black) with the development area outlined (red)

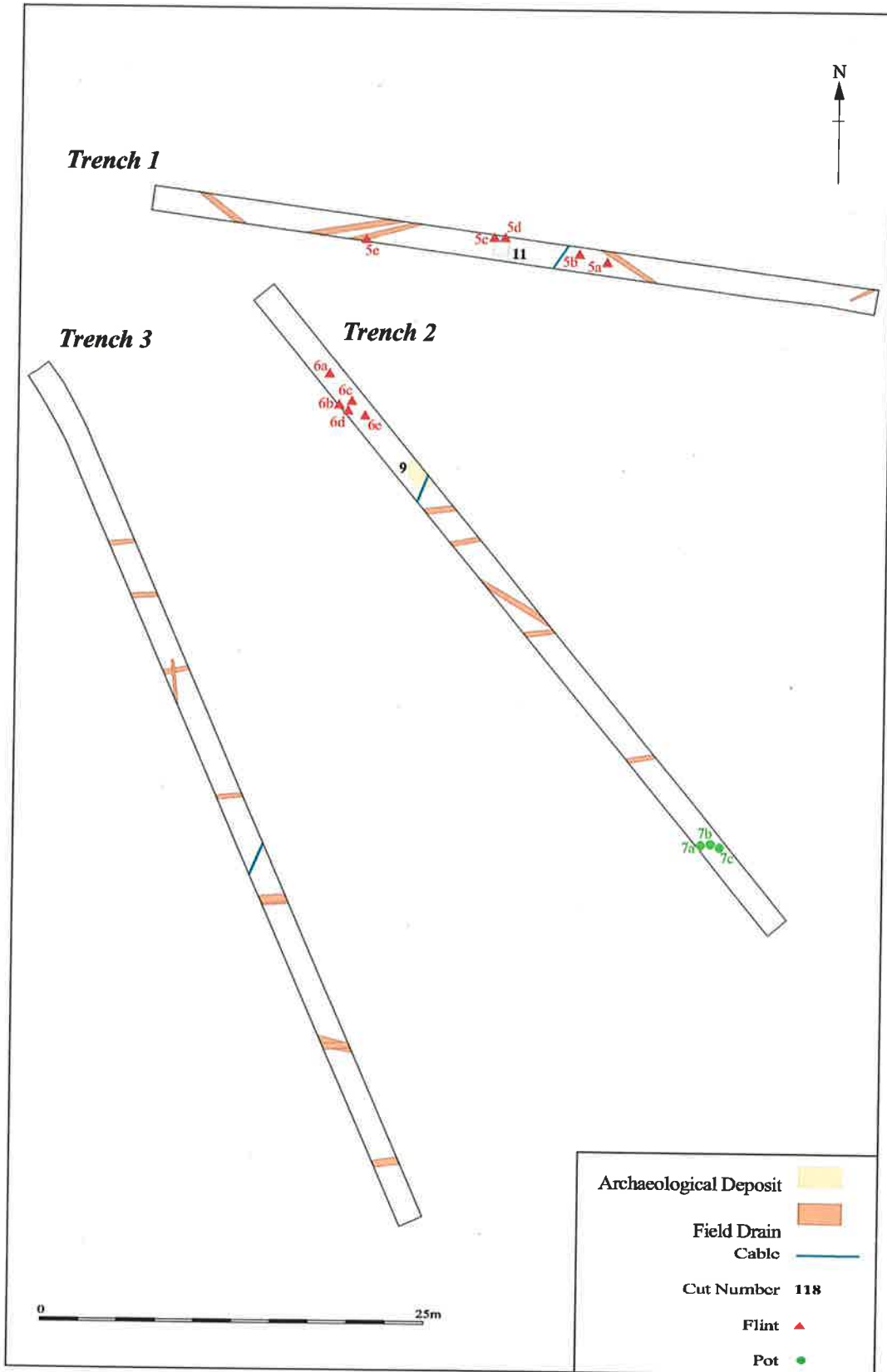


Figure 2: Trench plans

5 Results

Two large silt-heaps, the results of previous scouring of the golf course's other reservoirs, lay within the evaluation area. These, along with the poplar trees and pylons to the southeast, resulted in the final trench plan forming a 'fan' shape, with the western ends of the trenches closely spaced at the northwest and running east (Tr.1), southeast (Tr.2) and south-southeast (Tr.3). They were, respectively, 54, 61 and 48m long (Fig. 2). The bases of the trenches lay at approximately 11m OD at the northwest and 9.60m at the east and south.

Topsoil (001) throughout was c. 0.28m deep and varied from an orange-brown sandy clay at the northwest to a dense grey-brown clay down-slope to the east. There was no significant medieval ploughsoil/subsoil, but for the last 7m at the east of Trench 2 there was 0.15-0.20m of yellow-brown clay colluvium (003) infilling a slight hollow. Context numbers were assigned for machining finds from topsoil/weathered natural, contexts 002, 003 and 004 (Trenches 1, 2 and 3 respectively).

Two main phases of post-medieval and modern land drains crossed all the trenches, as did a modern cable connected to the course's irrigation system.

5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was 48m long and aligned approximately west to east. No archaeological features were recorded. However, spread over approximately 16m of the natural surface, below the topsoil, was a scatter of Neolithic flint debitage (context 005a - e). The scatter consisted of 9 pieces of struck flint including a single small, early Neolithic blade and two burnt pieces, one of them worked. A 1m test pit was excavated into the natural surface at the centre of the scatter (011) to ensure that this was not in fact a buried soil. The test pit was excavated to a depth of c. 0.12m and no further flint was recovered.

5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was 54m long and aligned approximately northwest to southeast. No archaeological features were recorded except a circular three throw (009), the fill of which (008) contained post-medieval brick. However, the flint scatter recorded in Trench 1 was again picked up, though covering an area of only 7m at the north of the trench and

consisting of 6 pieces of struck flint including 3 small Neolithic blades (context 006a - e).

At the eastern end of the trench, in the upper levels of the colluvial layer 003, was a scatter of pottery in a c. 2m spread (context 007a-c). 16 base and body sherds of the same vessel were recovered. The vessel is an Ely ware jug, with splashes of green glaze and dates from the 12th-14th centuries. The pottery was not contained within a feature but was lying within the colluvial soil.

5.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was 61m long and aligned approximately north-northwest to south-southeast. No archaeological features were recorded and no surface finds were recovered.

5.4 The Finds

Context	Material	Description	Weight (kg)	Date
002	Flint	1 burnt flint	0.06	?Neolithic/BA
003	Ceramic	1 sherd Glazed Red Earthenware	0.04	18th/19th C
003	Ceramic	1 sherd stoneware	0.04	19th/20th C
004	Ceramic	Tobacco pipe	0.00	c. 19th C
004	Flint	1 small, patinated core	0.01	Neolithic
005a	Flint	5 struck flint debitage, 1 burnt flint	0.04	?Neolithic/BA
005b	Flint	1 rough core	0.03	?Neolithic/BA
005c	Flint	1 small blade, 1 piece debitage	0.02	Neolithic
005d	Flint	1 piece debitage	0.00	?Neolithic/BA
005e	Flint	1 piece debitage	0.00	?Neolithic/BA
006a	Flint	1 fine, small blade, 1 burnt, struck flint	0.00	Early Neolithic
006b	Flint	1 possible struck flint	0.02	?Neolithic/BA
006c	Flint	1 blade	0.01	Neolithic
006d	Flint	1 small, fine blade	0.00	Early Neolithic
006e	Flint	Possible debitage	0.00	?Neolithic/BA
007a	Ceramic	Ely ware jug, 3 body sherds	0.02	12th-14th C
007b	Ceramic	Ely ware jug, 3 body sherds	0.03	12th-14th C
007c	Ceramic	Ely ware jug, 10 base & body sherds	0.16	12th-14th C
008	CBM	Brick	0.08	19th/20th C

Table 1: The finds

6 Discussion

No archaeological sub-surface features of any significance were recorded. There was a slight surface scatter of, principally, earlier Neolithic struck and burnt flint, including some fine, small blades. The scatter did not sit within a buried soil but on the surface just beneath the modern ploughsoil. The scatter was recorded in both Trenches 1 and 2 and extended over an area of at least 20m northeast to southwest on the brow of the slope at the 10m contour. That the scatter included debitage, cores, blades and burnt pieces suggests a number of activities had been taking place at this location – flint working, tool use and heating or cooking.

Further to the southeast, towards the south end of Trench 2, was a spread of pottery sherds from a single Ely ware vessel, probably a large jug. That the sherds were not within a sub-surface feature and yet still together may suggest that little deep ploughing has taken place in the area – judging by the frequency of the land drains, the slope here is generally wet and this area may have lain under pasture for much of the time. Another indicator if this is that there is no obvious 'manuring' material within the topsoil here, no general background scatter of abraded medieval pottery, nails, roof tile etc. Large parts of a single vessel are more likely part of a single break & discard episode.

7 Conclusions

This part of the golf course lies on an east-facing, wet slope, underlain by dense clayey gravels. No archaeological features were recorded and the archaeological finds recovered suggest perhaps temporary occupation(s) in the Neolithic and some medieval, probably agricultural activities. Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Michael Hoare, the secretary of Ely City Golf Club who commissioned and funded the archaeological work, and Andy Baker, the head green keeper who oversaw the on-site work and provided whatever back-up was needed (including the golf carts). The project was managed by Judith Roberts, the trenches were located (by EDM) by Steve Hickling and John Bolderson and the finds were processed by Tikshna Mandal. The illustrations were produced by Séverine Bézie and Barry Bishop commented on the flint. The report was edited by Elizabeth Shepherd Popescu.

The brief for archaeological works was written by Kasia Gdaniec, who visited the site and monitored the evaluation.

Bibliography

British Geological Survey 1980 Sheet 173



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