
Huntingdon Street, St. Neots: from Medieval Suburb to Early 20th Century Household

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Excavations on the eastern side of Huntingdon Street, St. Neots, revealed a sequence of fluctuating occupation spanning the 11th–early 20th centuries. A roadside ditch along Huntingdon Street was established around the 11th century and by the 12th century the area was divided into a series of long narrow rectangular plots fronting onto Huntingdon Street. These represent a suburban expansion of the town of St. Neots; this development thrived throughout the 13th–mid 14th centuries, before going into a period of prolonged decline with identifiable activity ending in the late 16th–early 17th century. Occupation began again in the mid 17th century and has continued until the present. Some early 20th century garden features produced substantial groups of material associated with the inhabitants of Cressner House. Overall, the excavations present a useful insight into the fluctuating fortunes of St. Neots and interesting information on a specific early 20th century household.

Introduction

An evaluation and excavation were undertaken by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit in advance of a cinema development on the site of the former Old Fire Station and Household Waste Disposal Site, located on the eastern side of Huntingdon Street, St. Neots, Cambridgeshire, on behalf of Turnstone Estates (Cessford 2011; Cessford 2012a) (Figs 1–3). Although a considerable amount of archaeological investigation has been undertaken in St. Neots, the only work in the immediate vicinity consists of a largely unpublished excavation at No.14 Huntingdon Street in the early 1960s (Tebbutt 1978: 281) and an unproductive evaluation at the Cedar House Car Park (Roberts 1997). In broad terms the site is believed to lie outside the Late Saxon settlement and on the periphery of the medieval town (Spoerry 2000), and it was hoped that its excavation would provide evidence for the fluctuating economic fortunes of St. Neots. Detailed feature descriptions and specialist information are presented in the grey literature report (Cessford 2012b), and as a result only the significant findings are presented here. The nature of the archaeological record means that this paper divides broadly into two rather disparate sections; a general 11th–19th century narrative and a

more specific early 20th century assemblage from a single household.

11th–early 17th century occupation and decline

Although small quantities of Prehistoric struck flint and Roman and Early/Middle Saxon pottery were recovered as residual material there was no evidence of occupation prior to the Norman Conquest. Then, in the late 11th century, a roadside ditch was established, running along the eastern side of Huntingdon Street (Fig. 4). It appears likely that this comprised the continuation of a feature that was previously identified in the 1970s lying to the north of the site at No.14 Huntingdon Street (Tebbutt 1978: 281). Occupation proper began in the 12th century, however, when a building (Building I) and a well (Well I) were constructed. By the 13th century occupation was well-established, with evidence for a series of long narrow rectangular property plots fronting onto Huntingdon Street. These plots were *c.* 65m long, with timber buildings beside the street frontage and yard areas behind where ancillary structures (Building B; Fig. 5), wells and other features were located. The area in the rear of the plots to the east was given over to horticulture and other activities, few of which have left any archaeological trace apart from sporadic gravel quarrying. One quarry pit (Pit I) is particularly significant as it contained a silver penny that was in circulation *c.* 1244–1250 and is likely to have been deposited around that time. Pit I also contained a buckle plate (Fig. 6.1) and some ceramics including Brill/Boarstall ware and Lyveden/Stanion ware, which can be closely dated by association.

The pottery from the site indicates a marked decline in occupation from the early/mid 14th century onwards. All the buildings were demolished and the only evidence for continued occupation comprises a few gravel quarries and other pits, dating mainly to the late 15th–early 16th century, plus the continued use of one of the wells (Well II; Fig. 7). A bunghole cistern with a complete skull of a horse aged 9–11 years lying directly on top appears to have been deliberately placed in the base of one of the quarry pits for some

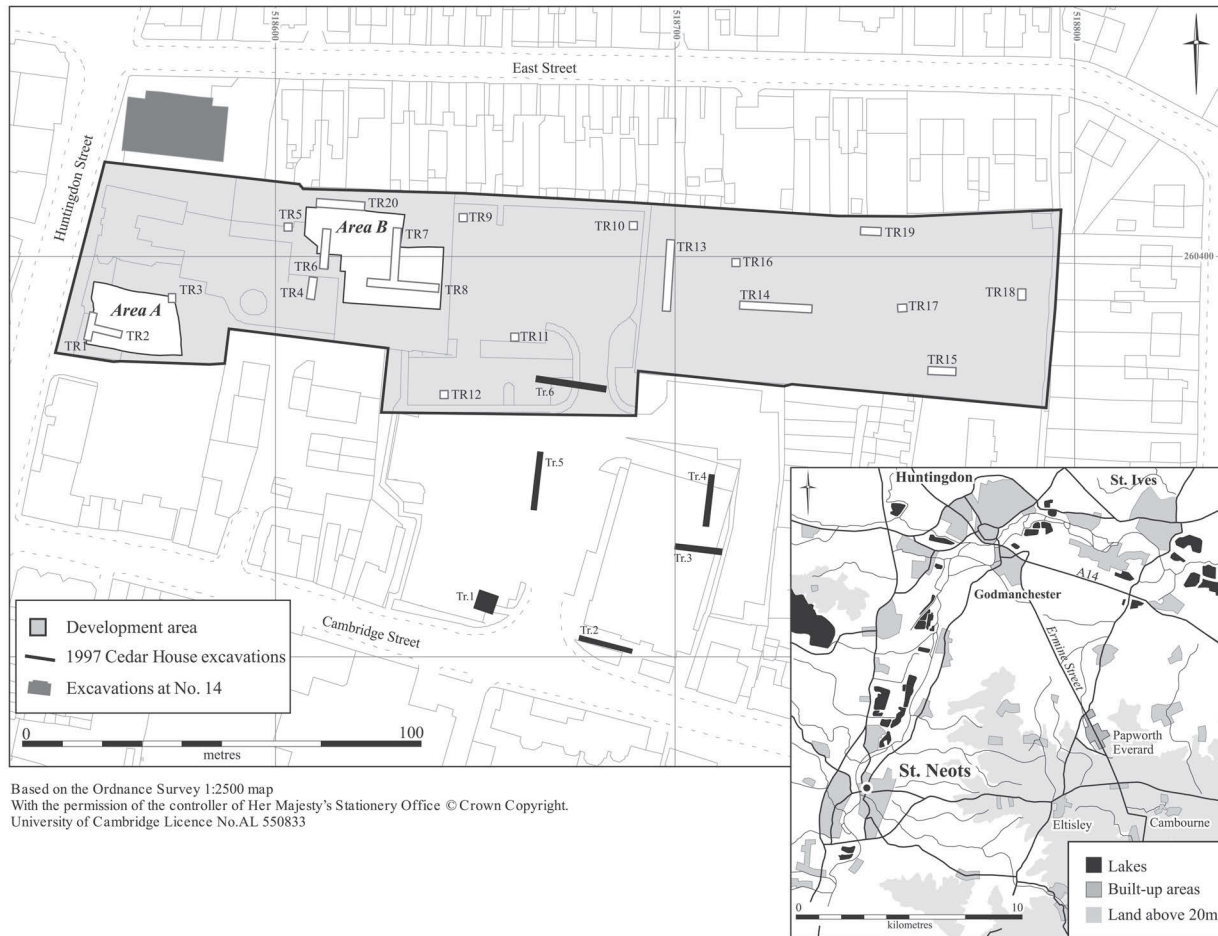


Figure 1. Location map and site plan.

reason (Pit II; Figures 7.1 and 7.3). Well II finally went out of use in the late 16th–early 17th century, its back-fill being dated by a jetton produced c. 1586–1635. This marks the final cessation of the lingering remnants of the medieval occupation, as by this time the area was largely given over to a series of open strip fields.

Finds and environmental evidence

Coins and jetton

Martin Allen

Two medieval silver coins were recovered. Pit I produced a Henry III (1216–72) silver penny of Short Cross class 8b3 (Mass class 8c) (Mass 2001, 61–62), minted by the London moneyer ‘Nichole’ (Nicholas of St Albans) in c. 1244–1247. This penny was probably deposited between c. 1244 and the end of the recoinage of 1247–1250, which replaced the Short Cross coinage of 1180–1247 with Henry III’s new Long Cross coinage. There was also an Edward I to Henry VII silver halfpenny, probably from the London mint, and of c. 1285–1488. This halfpenny was probably deposited no later than the debasements of the English coinage in 1544–1551, which eliminated most earlier silver coins from circulation (Allen 2005: 51–55), but was disturbed and

re-deposited in a mid 18th-century feature (Pit II). A copper-alloy Nuremberg jetton of the Rose/Orb type produced by Hans Krauwickel II (fl. 1586–1635), with the inscription *Das Wort Gotes Bleibt Ewick* (The Word of God is Eternal) on the obverse (cf. Mitchiner 1988: 435–436, nos. 1494–1503), was recovered from Well II.

Metalwork

Craig Cessford

The only noteworthy piece of metalwork was a typologically 13th–14th century copper-alloy riveted buckle plate decorated with an eight pronged starburst motif from Pit I (Fig. 6.1). Although this is a common artefact type it is significant as it was found in association with a silver penny that was probably deposited c. 1244–1250.

Pottery

David Hall

The medieval and Post-Medieval pottery assemblage consists of typical fabrics and forms for the period (Table 1). Some material including Brill/Boarstall ware and Lyveden/Stanion ware was found in Pit I – probably dating to c. 1244–1250 – providing useful dating evidence for the occurrence of these wares in

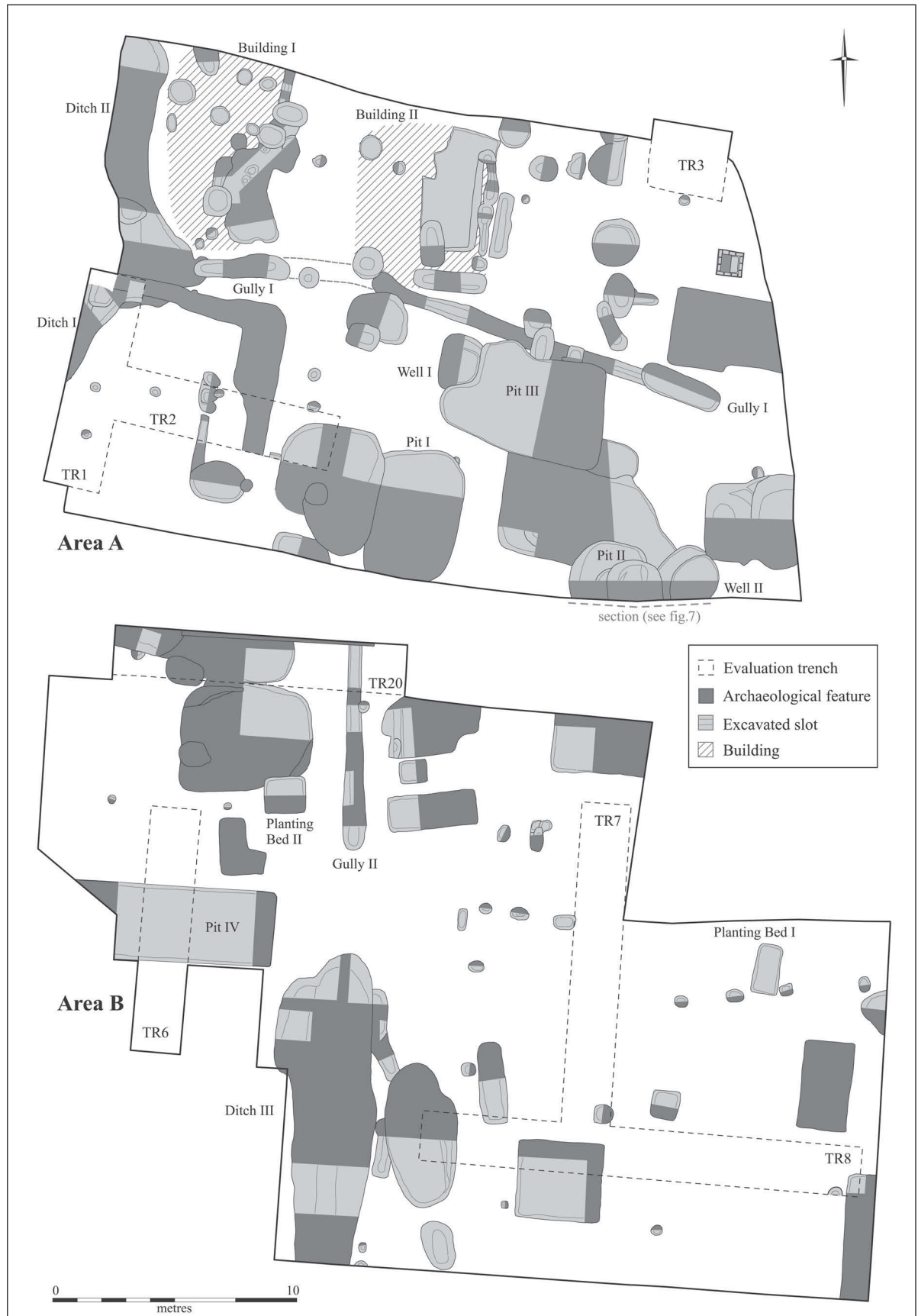


Figure 2. Plans of Areas A and B.



Figure 3. Photographs of excavation areas; upper Area A facing northwest, lower Area B facing southwest.

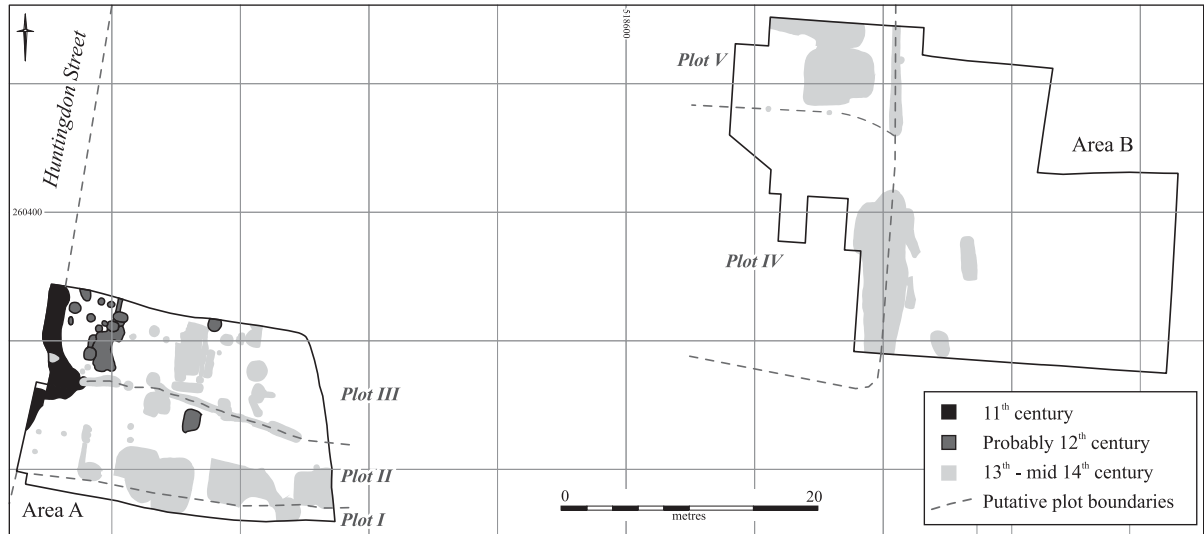
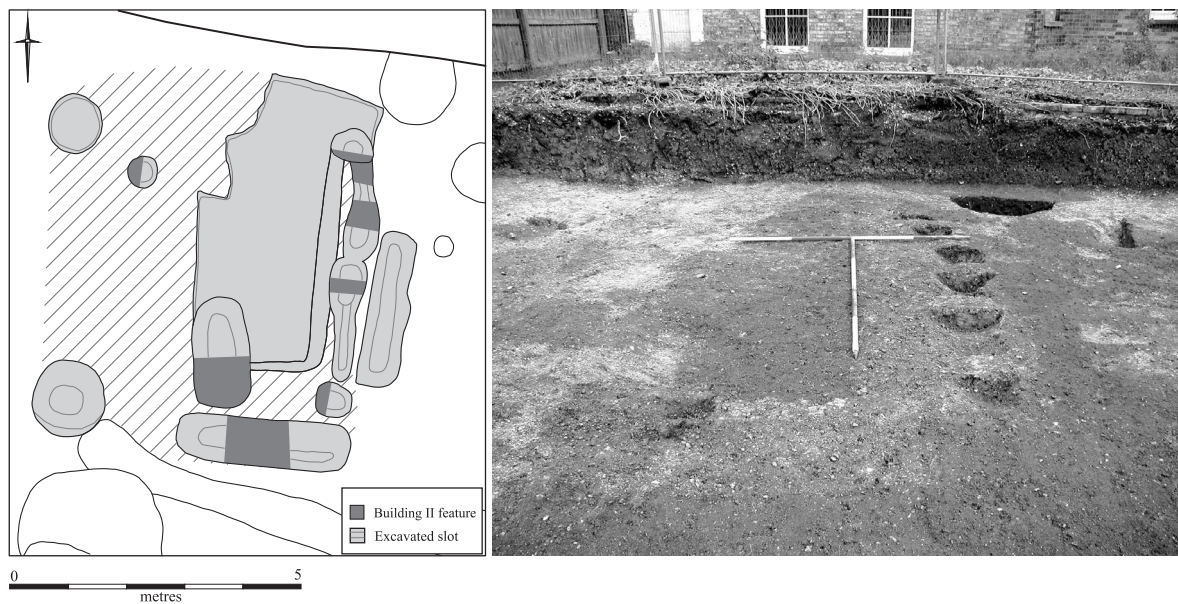


Figure 4. 11th – early 17th century features.

Figure 5. Building II, plan of structure and photograph facing north.



Fabric	Count	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
Thetford-type	17	213	12.5
St. Neots-type	86	748	8.7
Stamford	4	123	30.8
10th–12th century total	107	1084	10.1
Miscellaneous coarsewares	516	6811	13.2
Shelly coarsewares	147	1572	10.7
Thin bodied rilled greyware	14	159	11.4
Brill/Boarstall	35	1016	29.0
Developed Stamford	3	12	4.0
Lyveden/Stamion	13	127	9.8
Potterspury	4	29	7.3
Miscellaneous finewares	3	35	11.7
13th–15th century total	735	9761	13.3
Plain greyware	79	2801	35.5
Plain redware	22	284	12.9
Glazed red earthenware	16	279	17.4
Iron glazed ware	12	180	15.0
Frechen stoneware	3	125	41.7
Raeren stoneware	4	114	28.5
Staffordshire-type slipware	3	38	12.7
Miscellaneous wares	11	639	58.1
16th–17th century total	150	4460	31.9

*Table 1. Overall 10th–17th century pottery assemblage.
MSW= Mean Sherd Weight*

St. Neots. Other notable discoveries include a distinctive thin bodied greyware with horizontal rilling and in one instance a vertical thumb impressed stripe. This fabric dates to the 13th century and the only recognisable form was a globular jar (Fig. 6.2). There was also a significant proportion of a Brill/Boarstall ware jug, which had been reused as packing in a posthole of Building I (Fig. 6.3; compare McCarthy and Brooks 1988: 294 no. 1076). The only significant Post-Medieval pieces came from late 15th–early 16th century Pit II, they consisted of most of a Late Medieval Reduced Ware bunghole cistern, probably from Higham Ferrers (Hall 1974: 55–57, no. 244; Hardy and Charles 2007: 70–81, 100–12) (Fig. 7.1) and a cup in a fine pink fabric and a dense green glaze with two handles on one side (Fig. 7.2). The grey ware cistern is of interest because of the complete profile. Although bungholes are often present in assemblages the complete bung-hole jar/jug forms are frequently elusive. For a recent discussion of Late Medieval reduced wares in the region see Slowikowski 2011.

Animal bone

Vida Rajkovača

The medieval and Post-Medieval animal bone consists of the typical species for sites of this period. It is composed almost entirely of domestic species, with a few possible wild bird species. A number of groups of animal bones were either deliberately placed or deposited as groups. These include a cow skull placed in the terminal of part of Ditch II in the 13th–14th century, a partial chicken in a 14th century posthole which may represent the remains of meal, a dog in a 15th century pit and a horse skull in late 15th–early 16th century Pit II (Fig. 7.3). In the late 16th–early 17th century two pigs were deposited; a foetal or neonate animal in Well II and a juvenile animal aged less than

a year in Ditch III, indicating pigs were raised on site.

Plant remains

Anne de Vareilles

Two 13th–14th century deposits contained well preserved and plentiful charred plant remains, though these consisted solely of assemblages of crops commonly found in medieval settlement sites. Free-threshing wheat (*Triticum aestivum* sl.) dominated both assemblages, with hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare* sl.) and oats (*Avena* sp, possibly wild) also present. A few straw nodes and free-threshing wheat rachis nodes were recovered from one of the deposits. The wild plant seeds were dominated by vetches and/or wild pea (*Vicia/Lathyrus* sp.); other weed types included field gromwell (*Lithospermum arvense*), knapweed (*Centaurea* sp.) and grain-sized grass seeds. From this it can tentatively be suggested that the crops were grown on relatively poor well-drained non-clay soils.

Mid 17th–mid 19th century reoccupation

The stage at which the area was re-occupied is rather ambiguous and in part revolves around issues of definition. The recent investigations revealed no features dating to between the early 17th century and the mid-18th century, although the presence of several clay tobacco pipes of c. 1660–1680 in residual contexts indicates some level of activity. One crucial issue is the dating of Cressner House (No.12 Huntingdon Street) and No.14 Huntingdon Street, located a short distance to the north of Cressner House. The Royal Commission survey recorded No.14 Huntingdon Street as a 17th century two storey timber-framed building, to which a barn was added in the 18th century (Royal Commission on the

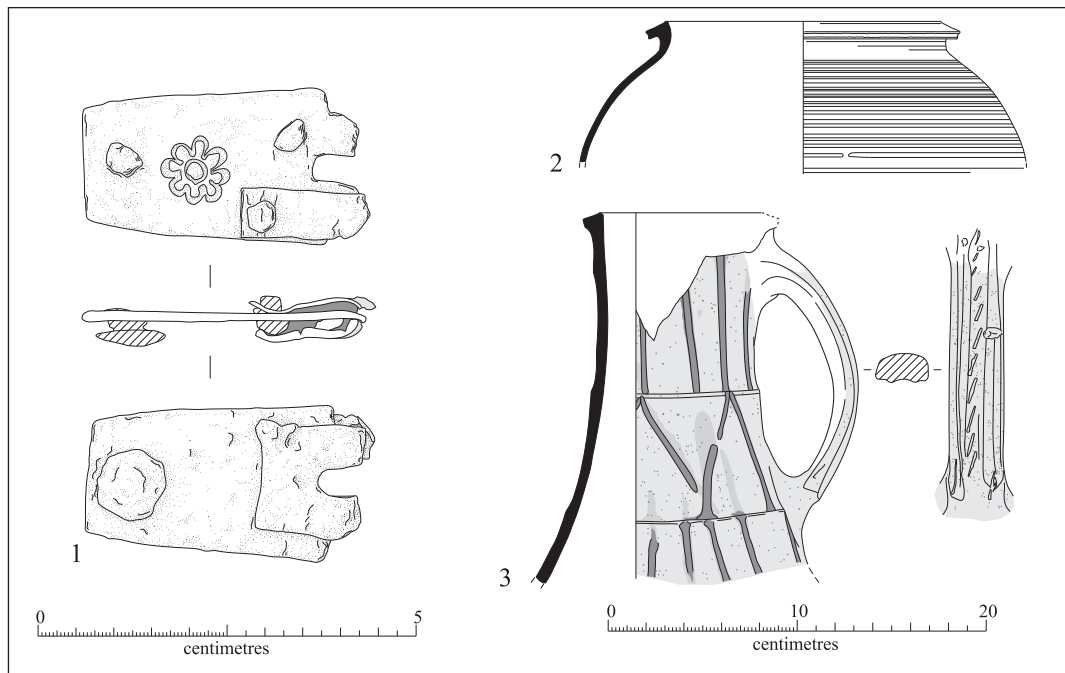


Figure 6. 13th–16th century artefacts.

- 1) 13th–14th century decorated copper-alloy riveted buckle plate from Pit I
- 2) 13th century fine greyware rilled globular jar
- 3) 13th–mid 14th century decorated Brill/Boarstall jug from posthole of Building I

Historical Monuments of England — RCHM(E) — 1926: 228). No.12 Huntingdon Street was omitted entirely, indicating that they believed it to be no earlier than the 18th century. After the demolition of No.14 Huntingdon Street and building works at Cressner House in the 1960s these were both re-interpreted as fine 16th-century or earlier double cross wing timber-framed country/farm houses (Tebbutt 1978: 122–24, 279). This dating has been questioned and it has been suggested that Cressner House is in fact of 17th century origin (Young 1996: 56, Figs. 64–65). This later dating appears more likely and would accord better with the other early buildings in this part of St. Neots, as well as the evidence of the clay pipes.

The evidence from the buildings suggests that the site began to be re-occupied in the mid 17th century, but that at this time the area formed an agricultural fringe on the edge of St. Neots with farm buildings located along the eastern side of Huntingdon Street. This is the situation depicted on the earliest reliable map of the area, the draft enclosure map compiled in 1770 (Huntingdon Libraries and Archives map 352a/A7831). The cartographic evidence indicates that whilst the western side of Huntingdon Street was relatively densely occupied and effectively urban in character, the eastern side was less built-up until well into the 19th century. The only 18th century archaeological features were a single large gravel quarry (Pit III) and two rows of postholes with clay packing that relate to fence lines (Fig. 8). This is consistent with the area still being predominantly agricultural in character.

Cressner House was occupied by the Leightonstone

family (1770–1814). They sold it in 1814 to Lt. Col. Humbley, who served (1807–1854) with the Rifle Brigade, and although he sublet the building he was probably responsible for it being rebuilt as the current two storey brick structure. In 1814, as well as Cressner House the property included a substantial close of pasture to the east with one acre and 2 roods (c. 6070m²), plus a toft and barn covering 2 acres, 1 rood and 24 perches (c. 9122m²) (Tebbutt 1978: 279). The property was still predominantly agricultural in character, although by the mid 19th century the occupation of Cressner House itself was separate from the agricultural activities taking place on the rear of the plot to the east.

Finds and environmental evidence

Clay tobacco pipe Craig Cessford

Only a small assemblage of clay tobacco pipe was recovered, mainly from the large gravel quarry Pit III. This produced two noteworthy bowls; one of c. 1660–1680 has a depiction of a mulberry tree on both sides of the bowl. This was a common form of decoration locally and other examples are known from St. Neots (Addyman and Marjoram 1972: 189). The second bowl was of an unusual form, with an upright bowl and splayed heel and the initials RL on the upper side of the stem near the bowl (Fig. 9). There is no evidence for clay tobacco pipe manufacturing in St. Neots prior to the mid 19th century and the nearest 18th century

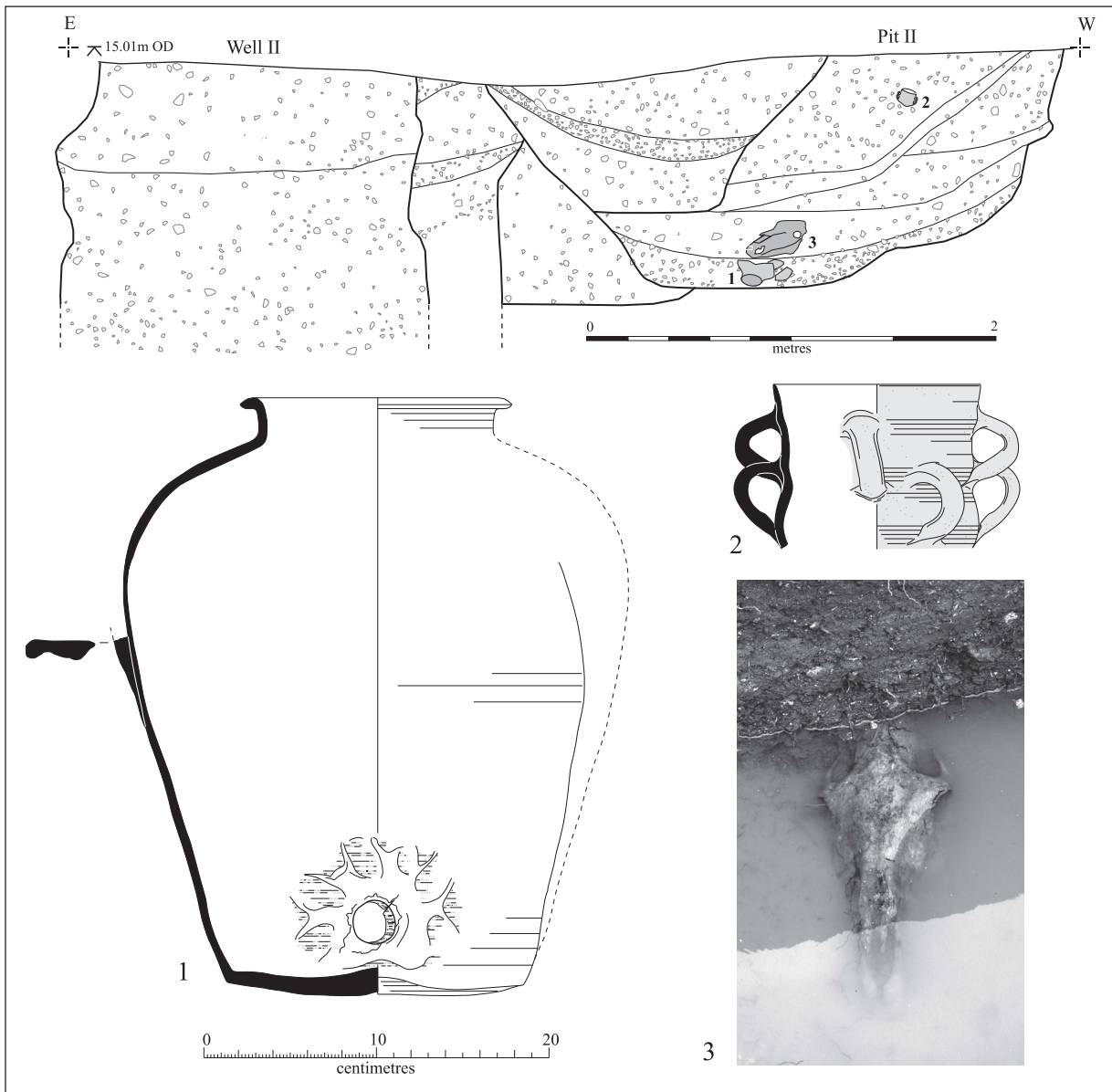


Figure 7. Section of Well II and adjacent quarry Pit II, with illustrations of:

- 1) Late 15th–early 16th century bunghole cistern with handle, Late Medieval Reduced Ware probably Higham Ferrers ware
- 2) Cistercian form cup with two handles on one side in pink fabric with dense green glaze
- 3) Photograph of horse skull, facing south.

production centre was St. Ives, where manufacturing began in the 1720s (Cessford 2001). The most likely candidate for producing the bowl marked RL is Richard Lewis of St. Ives. The earliest evidence for the family being present in St. Ives is the baptisms of the children of Richard and Mary Lewis in 1734–1750. Richard Lewis himself died in 1760. An advert in August 1747 offered a dwelling house and pipe office in St. Ives ‘now in the occupation of Richard Lewis’ for let, as well as ‘All sorts of Utensils in the Pipe making way are to be sold, at a reasonable Price; being determined to leave off Trade’ (Moore 1987: 27).

Early 20th century gardening

(Incorporating information from V. Rajkovača)

In the early 20th century there was evidence for a considerable amount of activity to the east of Cressner House. This occurred in an area lying immediately to the east of what appear to have been ornamental gardens, in a space which is best interpreted as a kitchen garden for growing vegetables and flowers. Here, six features interpreted as planting beds were identified, plus a number of postholes and a pit dug to dispose of a dog. Two of the planting beds (Planting Beds I–II) are noteworthy because they contained considerable



Figure 8. Mid 18th–early 20th century features, with early 20th century features overlaid on 1885 Ordnance Survey map.

groups of animal bone in their bases, presumably as ‘percolation’ fills to aid drainage (Fig. 10; Table 2). The nature of the material suggests that the assemblages were derived from single households – rather than representing communal disposal – and a number of pronounced similarities indicate that this was the same household, which had presumably occupied Cressner House. The two assemblages are broadly contemporary, although they may have been separated by a few years. Whilst the assemblages provide a detailed insight into aspects of the household that generated them it is one that will be affected by decisions concerning what to discard and what to retain, themselves influenced by a range of factors including value and worth, both monetary and emotional.

Manufacturers’ names on glass bottles indicate that the larger group (Planting Bed I) must have been

Table 2. Summary of material from Planting Beds I and II. MVC = Minimum Vessel Count

Material	Planting Bed I Count	Planting Bed I weight (g)	Planting Bed I MVC/MNBU	Planting Bed II Count	Planting Bed II weight	Planting Bed II MVC/MNBU
Pottery	279	9043	45	250	8492	52
Glass	187	5466	39	25	776	12
Animal bone	504	6579	25	1	8	1
Metal	5	296	4	30	350	3
Worked bone	4	127	4	0	0	0
Leather	2	120	1	0	0	0
Total	981	21631	118	306	9626	68

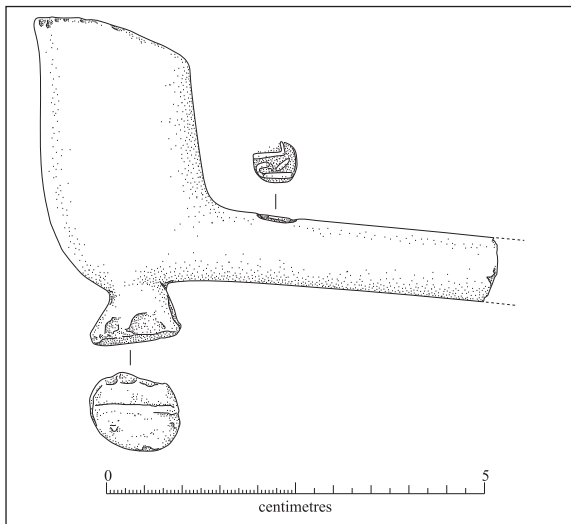


Figure 9. Clay tobacco pipe with initials RL on upper side of stem near bowl from Pit III.

deposited after 1901 and that some bottles were produced no later than 1913. During this early 20th century period Cressner House was occupied by at least six tenants/owners and there is no way to determine with absolute certainty which household the assemblages relate to. The presence of a military cap badge makes a date for the deposition of the assemblage during or relatively soon after the First World War more probable. As this cap badge of the Civil Service Rifle Volunteers does not relate to a local Huntingdonshire regiment it can be tentatively linked to a particular individual with local connections (Fig. 10.1). This is a die struck badge in the form of a garter with two loops on the rear for attachment and a blank c. 23mm central circular area with two piercings, suggesting that a piece of cloth or similar material was attached with thread. This form of attachment is rare after 1903 and the cap badge is not of the common form for the regiment in World War One (cf. Doyle and Foster 2010: 32–34, 131). The most likely explanation for this unusual form of badge is that it was used briefly at the start of World War One, when the massive recruitment drive of volunteers for ‘Kitchener’s Army’ placed strains on supplying equipment. It is even possible that the badge represents use of some pre-1903 cap badges that had not been generally distributed but lain abandoned in storage for over a decade.

The 1/15th (County of London) Battalion (Prince of Wales’s Own Civil Service Rifles) was recruited from London, rather than Huntingdonshire. It was mobilised in 1914 and landed at Le Havre in 1915, becoming the 140th Brigade in 47th (2nd London) Division in May 1915 (Anon 1921; Knight 2004). The only individual serving with the Civil Service Rifle Volunteers during World War One with an identified link to St. Neots is Private Edwin W. Harvey who was killed in action on 15th September 1916 and buried at the Caterpillar Valley Cemetery Longueval in the

Somme region of France. Private Harvey died during the Battle of Flers-Courcelette, part of the Battle of the Somme, in which his division captured High Wood with ‘huge losses’ and ‘wanton waste’ with 80% of its soldiers killed or wounded and the loss of 15 officers and 365 other ranks over four days (Anon 1921: 111–17; Knight 2004: 80–90). His tombstone records that Private Harvey, service no. 4172, was born in London c. 1890 and describes him as the only son of Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Harvey, of No.1 Kia Ora Cottages, Rycroft Avenue, St. Neots, Huntingdonshire.

Although Edwin Waby Harvey had been born in London (c. 1853) and lived there most of his life his wife Mary Ann Catling (born c. 1850), whom he married in 1880, came from the St. Neots area and probably belonged to a family from Hail Weston. When Edwin Waby Harvey retired in c. 1910 they moved to Belton Villas, Hail Weston, St. Neots. In the 1911 census Edwin Harvey junior was recorded as a commercial clerk living at 33 Barclay Road, Leightonstone. Edwin Harvey senior outlived his son by several decades, with his death registered in St. Neots in 1942.

Cressner House had been owned since 1899 by a John Franks, who retired to live there in 1916 until his death in 1920 (Tebbutt 1978: 281). The property was then occupied by Hannah Franks, probably John’s daughter, who had been born at Eaton Socon in 1864. Hannah, who was described as a dealer in antique furniture in the 1901 census, married, in 1920, widower Albert Harvey, who was probably born in St. Neots in 1872. Albert Harvey died in 1932 and his wife Hannah died in November 1937.

As far as can be determined there was no familial relationship between Albert Harvey and Edwin Harvey senior and junior. Although one is not impossible it is likely that the matching surnames are coincidental. This renders the presence of the cap badge difficult to explain although it is possible that there was some link between the either the Franks or Harvey families and the Catlings, in which case the cap badge may have been some form of treasured memento. Such items occasionally occur in assemblages dating to and just after the World War One, which have no other military associations (Cessford 2012b: 797). In this context one explanation for the unusual rather old-fashioned form of the cap badge is that Edwin Harvey was issued with an up-to-date version at some point, and the older and now surplus badge was given to a family member.

In addition to the cap badge there are several interesting aspects of these assemblage(s). Unless stated otherwise, the specific items discussed derive from the larger group (Planting Bed I). There is a strong emphasis on middle class values and activities such as tea drinking. At least five different tea drinking services are represented. These are mostly highly decorated and colourful and two of them were also represented in the smaller group. In several instances the services simply consisted of a single matching tea cup and saucer. One rather plainer service with a gilt tea leaf design (Minimum Vessel Count (MVC) six) had two teacups and matching saucers plus a serv-



Figure 10. Photographs of early 20th century Planting Beds I–II, facing south, and examples of material culture from them:

- 1) Cap badge of the Civil Service Rifle Volunteers
- 2) Cat figurine
- 3) Fragments of a porcelain doll
- 4) Fragments of black transfer printed Adriatic pattern dining vessels with monogram that is a combination of C, R, S and &.

ing dish and a side plate, suggesting that this was the service typically utilised for afternoon tea when more than one person was present. Another hand-painted, multicoloured floral design with red flowers (MVC four) included at least two teacups, a side plate and a cup probably for coffee. This was presumably a breakfast service.

The more colourful and highly decorated of the tea services can be defined as bric-à-brac (cf. Mullins 2011: 34–35; Mullins and Jeffries 2012) and there are several other items with similar overtones, particularly a large figurine of a cat wearing a jacket and top hat and holding a cane with a container on its back, possibly for flowers (Fig. 10.2). The female presence is confirmed by a pair of ladies leather shoes with wooden heels and metal fittings and at least four perfume bottles. There is also strong evidence for children, including the head and arms of a porcelain doll (Fig. 10.3), a matching toy cup and saucer and a multicoloured rubber ball. There are ten pharmaceutical bottles in the assemblages, the only identifiable product was a complete bottle for Owbridge's Lung Tonic in the smaller assemblage. This was a patent medicine that Walter Thomas Owbridge began to produce in c. 1874 in Hull; it continued to be popular well into the 20th century. It was supposedly a cure for 'all affections of the chest, throat and lungs', including asthma and tuberculosis.

The colourful tea services contrast with two rather different black transfer-printed dining services on ivory-dyed ceramic bodies. One, named the Adriatic pattern (Fig. 10.4), was found in both assemblages (MVC three and two respectively) while the other, found only in the smaller assemblage, incorporated a pineapple in its design (MVC three). These are both asymmetrical Japanese-influenced Aesthetic-style patterns (cf. Majewski and Schiffer 2009: 201–05), a pervasive but relatively short-lived style that must have been manufactured c. 1864–1907, with a pronounced peak of production of c. 1882–1888 (Samford 1997: 19, table 1, Fig. 17). These Aesthetic-style pattern dining services were c. 30–60 years old when deposited. Ceramic tablewares of this period typically have a lifespan from production to discard of 15–25 years, although some items do survive for over 30 years (Adams 2003). This time-lag between manufacture and deposition suggests that the dining services were probably distinctly old-fashioned by the time they were thrown away. This contrasts with the tea services, which all appear to have been of more recent manufacture. There were also four near identical plain scale-tanged worked bone handles. These are cutlery handles and a three pronged iron fork head may well have been associated with one of the cutlery handles. The discard of this number of handles is atypical of other assemblages of this period excavated locally (Cessford and Dickens in prep); it may possibly relate to such items beginning to be manufactured in plastic on a significant scale after the patenting of Bakelite in 1907 and more especially the improvements in chemical technology during World War One.

Planting Bed I contained a significant quantity of animal bone. In total there were 237 assessable specimens — those fragments which could be identified to some degree and counting refitting fragments as one — weighing 6570g, which represented a common range of species (Table 3).

Table 3. Number of Identified Specimens (NISP) and Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI) for all species from Planting Bed I; the abbreviation *n.f.i.* denotes that the specimen could not be further identified. Although some bones can only be identified to species or general size they have been combined in the tables where identifications appear overwhelmingly likely.

Taxon	NISP	%NISP	MNI
Cow (+ cattle-sized)	46 (44+2)	19.4	1
Sheep (+ ovicapra + sheep-sized)	122 (22 + 68 + 32)	51.5	10
Pig	4	1.7	1
Rabbit	33	13.9	2
Chicken (+ Galliformes)	12 (10 + 2)	5.1	2
Goose	5	2.1	1
Anseriformes (goose or duck)	4	1.7	
Cat	1	0.4	1
Bird <i>n.f.i.</i>	10	4.2	-
Total	237	-	18

The bone was all in good condition and there was no evidence of any gnawing, indicating that it was rapidly covered or buried so that dogs and rodents in particular could not access it. The bones are almost exclusively from species that would have been eaten, the lone exception being a cat metapodial fragment. Post-1750 animal bone is often not deemed worthy of archaeological attention (Thomas 2009: 20), although there are some notable exceptions (e.g. Fryer and Shelley 1997: 209, 214–15). Archaeologically this quantity of material is unusual, as after c. 1850 animal bone becomes extremely rare as a component in archaeological assemblages (Jeffries 2006: 286). This general absence may relate to changing attitudes of what represented 'dry and proper rubbish', plus possibly an increased use of animal bone mainly as agricultural fertiliser. Excavations on sites of this period frequently recover only small faunal assemblages (e.g. Casella and Croucher 2010: 70–72). For example, of the 18 substantial post c. 1850 artefactual assemblages from the Grand Arcade excavations in Cambridge, which were deposited into broadly comparable features, only seven contained any animal bone at all and these produced less than 200 fragments in total (Cessford and Dickens in prep). In contrast, Planting Bed I contained 504 fragments. Planting Bed II in comparison contained only a single chicken metatarsus, and this is much more typical of assemblages of the period. This rarity means that the recovery of a substantial early 20th century assemblage of animal bone from

Planting Bed I is extremely significant. Animal bone is also particularly significant as it is likely to have accumulated over a relatively short period immediately prior to deposition rather than being a mixture of material acquired over years or even decades as is clearly the case for ceramics and glass in this assemblage. As such it provides a much more temporally discrete group of material, especially as there is no evidence for the presence of residual material.

Skeletal element analysis showed that certain animals/types of meat were only represented with a restricted number of elements/joints. Coupled with this careful selection of meat joints was a high percentage of butchered material with cut, saw or chop marks (50.2% of the assessable specimens). No comparable values are available from other early 20th century British sites, however only 17% of the 19th century domestic animal bones from Stafford Castle bear such marks (Thomas 2011). Cattle were only positively identified based on a number of ribs and vertebrae (Table 4) (Wolsan 1982). These bones relate solely to the two beef joints that in American historical archaeology are considered the most expensive (Huelsbeck 1991: table 1) and the situation in Britain is likely to have been broadly comparable although research is still needed on this area. The most common species, sheep/ovicapra, were represented with bones corresponding to joints of relatively expensive meat and with a complete absence of skull and mandibular elements. The relatively expensive cattle and beef joints may indicate a well to do household, there is no particular evidence for this in the other material such as the ceramics and glass. This ceramics and glass deposited may, however, be biased as it is possible that more expensive items may either have been retained or sold and therefore not have entered the archaeological assemblage.

Pork was rarer and only eaten as ham hocks and legs from a single animal. Rabbits must have been brought in and prepared 'whole', and poultry consisted of chicken, represented by wings and feet, and goose, represented by a leg or two. Some bird bones could not be identified to species; these are all poorly preserved limb shaft fragments that in all likelihood are a mixture of chicken and goose. Although the bulk of the deposit was not sieved a considerable number of small bones were recovered and a ten litre environmental sample that was floated contained only a single fish bone, suggesting that fish was not a major dietary component.

Analysis of butchery marks showed that carcasses had undergone a degree of processing and that joints had arrived at the site 'dressed'. The basic butchery tools were a cleaver, a saw and a knife(s). Use of the cleaver for chopping is restricted to vertebrae, where carcasses were split down the sagittal plane into left and right portions. The most striking aspect of the assemblage is the high occurrence of sawing marks (Table 5; 79.8% of all butchered bone), which would be even higher if rabbits and birds — which saws would not usually be employed upon at all due to their size — were excluded. Saw marks are charac-

terised by regular delineations on the surface of the cut itself; a saw will not fracture the bone and the surface will demonstrate the striations through to completion of the cut. The presence of a high proportion of sawing marks reflects the increased use of the specialist butcher's saw, which is similar in form to a hacksaw and was invented in the 18th century. A knife would be used initially to cut through soft tissue, as the saw teeth would rapidly become clogged if used for this. The saw would then be used on the bone. In earlier periods a cleaver would have been used, but the saw was preferable as it reduced the splintering of the bone. By the early 20th century, as well as the butcher's saw there were other specialised

Table 4. Skeletal element count for all species from Planting Bed I.

Element	Cow (+ cattle-sized)	Sheep (+ ovicapra + sheep-sized)	Pig	Rabbit	Cat	Chicken (+ galliformes)	Goose (+ anseriformes)	Bird n.f.i.
Mandible	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-
Maxilla	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
Skull	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Coracoid	-	-	-	-	-	2	(+1)	-
Humerus	-	3 (+1+1)	-	4	-	1	1	1
Radius	-	1 (+2)	-	2	-	-	-	3
Ulna	-	(+2)	-	2	-	1 (+1)	(+1)	-
Pelvis	-	(+12)	-	6	-	-	-	-
Scapula	-	2 (+3)	-	2	-	-	-	1
Femur	-	(+16+2)	1	2	-	-	2	-
Fibula	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Tibia	-	4 (+20)	2	5	-	1	2	2
Astragalus	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Calcaneum	-	5 (+3)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carpometacarpus	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Centroquartal	-	(+3)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Metacarpus	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Metapodial fragment	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Tarsals	-	-	-	-	-	4 (+1)	(+2)	-
Furcula	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Rib	25 (+ 1)	(+22)	-	-	-	-	-	1
Phalanx	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Cervical vertebrae	-	(+1+4)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lumbar vertebrae	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Thoracic vertebrae	2 (+ 1)	(+0+1)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unknown vertebrae	1	(+5+1)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Limb-bone fragment	-	(+0+1)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	46	122	4	33	1	12	9	10

Species	Total No. of bones	Cut	Cut %	Chop	Chop %	Saw	Saw %	Total with butchery marks	Total with butchery marks%
Cattle	46	1	2.2	4	8.7	38	82.6	43	93.5
Sheep	122	7	5.7	2	1.6	54	44.2	63	51.6
Pig	4	1	25	-	-	3	75	4	100
Rabbit	33	5	15.2	-	-	-	-	5	15.2
Bird	31	3	9.7	1	3.2	-	-	4	12.9
Total	236	17	7.2	7	3	95	40.3	119	50.4

Table 5. Number and proportion of butchered bones from food species in Planting Bed I.

variants such as the 'beef splitter' and the 'pork packers saw' (Disston 1916: 24) although it is impossible to distinguish exactly which saw(s) were employed. It is likely that a range of different knives were employed for various purposes. Although the butcher's saw was a commonly utilised tool by the early 20th century, in some instances it was employed even when it was not the most appropriate tool. The most likely explanation is that the saw was effectively the default tool, which was sometimes utilised because it was the most readily available implement rather than the one best-suited to a task. It is even possible that the butchery was carried out by relatively poorly-equipped butchers who did not have access to the full range of tools in use during the early 20th century.

One question that arises from such assemblages is what quantity of meat the animal bone equates to, which has implications for the diet of the household and also what period of meat consumption by the household the animal bone is likely to represent. Using meat weight calculations from 18th–early 20th century carcass weight data (Turner et al. 2001; 2003) and the concept of the Minimum Number of Butchery Units (MNBU) (Lyman 1979) it is possible to estimate the amount of meat represented (Table 6).

Table 6. Minimum Number of Butchery Units (MNBU) and meat weights from Planting Bed I.

Species/ meat	Joint	Total No. bones	MNBU	Estimated meat weight (kg)	Total estimated meat weight (kg) by meat type
Cattle/ beef	Thin rib	25	2	3.4	35.6
	Fillet, sirloin	19	2	14.4	
Sheep/ mutton	Leg	36	12	3.3	48.2
	Shoulder	14	2	4.3	
	Other	40	1	-	
Pig/pork	Leg (partial)	4	1	8.2	8.2
Rabbit	-	33	2	c. 3.6	c. 7.2
Chicken	-	10	2	c. 0.25	c. 0.5
Goose	-	5	1	c. 0.1	c. 0.1
Total	-	186	25	-	c. 100

Unfortunately, the MNBU — whilst useful for comparative purposes (Fig. 11) — substantially overestimates the actual amount of meat consumed. This is because the MNBU relates to wholesale units, whereas in 19th–20th century Western market economies the pieces of meat that are actually purchased from butchers or probable Retail Units of Acquisition (RUA) represented by animal bones are likely to have been much smaller (Huelsbeck 1991: 69–70). These are more difficult to calculate accurately, but the actual quantity of meat purchased may have been in the region of 25% of the MNBU value (Huelsbeck 1991: table 2).

The condition of the bone indicates that it was rapidly covered and its distinctive nature suggests that it does not represent mixed material from a wide range of sources. Annual meat consumption in the 1830s was c. 39.4kg per person, although there was undoubtedly a high degree of variation (Rixson 2000: 333). By the 1870s it had risen to c. 50kg and by the 1890s to c. 54kg (ibid.). Meat consumption was c. 60 kg per person per annum when the Planting Bed I assemblage was deposited. A series of early–mid 19th century faunal assemblages from Grand Arcade, Cambridge (Cessford and Dickens in prep), where household size can be accurately assessed through census data, suggests that the animal bone represents c. 7–72 days worth of meat consumption (Table 7). If allowance is made for assemblages where there is likely to be a significant component not linked to the domestic household, for instance when they were engaged in some form of business involving food, then the range is likely to have been between a week and a month. The 25kg (RUA) of Planting Bed I represent c. 150 person days of meat consumption. If a month's consumption is present then this would indicate a household with five members, whereas if only a week's consumption is present then a household of 22 is indicated. Lack of census information for the relevant period makes certainty impossible, but the combination of smaller household and longer period appears the more probable.

By the 1920s trade directories indicate that there were typically five or six butchers in St. Neots at any one time. Most of these individuals were located on the High Street, but suggestively the southern end of the adjacent property No. 14 Huntingdon Street was used as a butcher's shop at this time, principally by

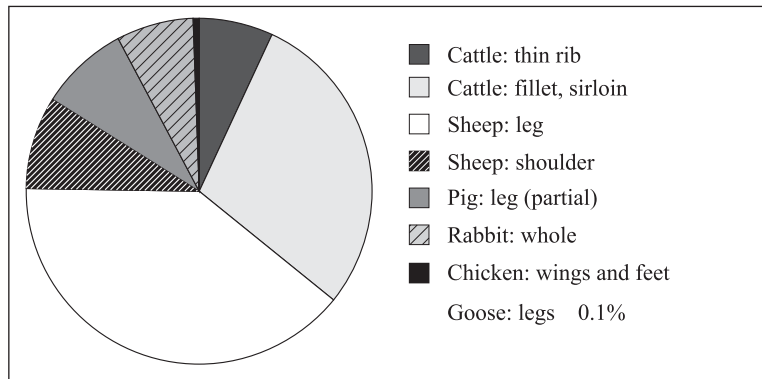


Figure 11. Relative proportions of meat represented in the assemblage from Planting Bed I.

Feature	Meat weight by MNBU (kg)	Meat weight by RUA (kg)	Date	Estimated household size	Meat weight by RUA divided by estimated household size (kg)	Days for estimated household by RUA	Comment
Planting Bed I	100	25	1910–1930	2–5	5.0–12.5	32.9–82.2	Cressner House
Soakaway 2 (GA)	51.2	12.8	1813–1823	7	1.8	16.7	Grocer plus family
Planting Bed 3 (GA)	147.8	37	1822–1834	15	2.5	23.1	School, probably had extra non-boarding pupils
Soakaway 3 (GA)	101.7	25.4	1808–1825	5	5.1	47.2	College cook, some meat may be non-household
Cellar 7 (GA)	15.3	3.8	1830–1850	5	0.8	7.1	Butcher plus family
Cellar 4 and Pit 63 (GA)	188.0	47	1830–1845	6	7.8	72.3	Inn, some meat non-household

Table 7. Meat consumption from Planting Bed I compared to early–mid 19th century faunal assemblages from the Grand Arcade, Cambridge (GA). RUA= Retail Units of Acquisition.

John Brown Bartlett and Sons. It is tempting to speculate that the bulk of the meat consumed at Cressner House was obtained here.

There were also thirteen bottles of Eiffel Tower fruit juices (Planting Bed II), manufactured by Foster Clark and Co of Maidstone. This company was founded in 1891 and the design of their bottles changed very little until the 1930s (Fig. 12). The ‘fruit juice’ in the bottles was probably concentrated lemon juice, used principally for cooking rather than drinking. There was also a single complete Lea and Perrins Worcestershire sauce bottle, which by the mid to late 19th century was the most popular sauce in Britain (Keogh 1997). Whilst the Eiffel Tower fruit juice bottles perhaps represent an idiosyncratic personal dietary preference, the Lea and Perrins Worcestershire sauce is part of a much more generic national display of tastes, as it is found in many mid 19th to early 20th century assemblages regardless of the wealth or social status of the household. Indeed, this was a truly international product, as is demonstrated by its prevalence across areas such as the American West (Dixon 2005: 97), and as such it can be viewed as a representative of globalisation.

At least four large, vertically-sided rectangular rubble-filled features were dug in the garden area of

Cressner House. These may simply have been gravel quarries that were then used to dispose of the debris from building demolition, but alternatively they may have acted as substantial soakaways associated with some form of specialised activity. These pits seem unlikely to have been linked to the domestic occupation of Cressner House. Following the death of Hannah Harvey, Cressner House became the St. Neots Urban District Council offices in 1938 (Tebbutt 1978: 281) and the partial clearance of the site at this time seems to provide a more plausible context for these features. These pits contained relatively few finds; however, one (Pit IV) had at least three Eiffel Tower fruit juice bottles. As this feature was not fully excavated it is possible that many more bottles were present, and their prominence suggests that they derived from the clearance of Cressner House following the death of Hannah Harvey, as the features are more likely to relate to the St. Neots Urban District Council offices, but the bottles are domestic in nature. This would also fit with a broadly recognised pattern that the deposition of large assemblages of material is often linked to the end of lifecycle of households headed by women (Wheeler 2000, 11–12).



Figure 12. Group shot of Eiffel Tower fruit juice bottles Planting Bed I, plus detail of text on the sides of the bottles.

Conclusion

Although the investigated area is in many senses peripheral to the main development and narrative of the town of St. Neots, the expansion and contraction of occupation here provides a useful barometer of the fluctuating fortunes of the town (cf. Keene 1976; Schofield and Vince 2003: 66–68). As such, the earlier part of the story accords well as a local reflection of what are in effect the major British and indeed pan-European watersheds of the medieval period. At a local level the establishment of urban occupation along Huntingdon Street in the 12th century fits with a major shift in the focus of occupation of the town after 1113, when the Priory of St. Neots was granted the whole manor in which it was situated. Yet it is also emblematic of the pan-European pattern of population growth and increase in national economies that had begun in the 10th century (Schofield and Vince 2003).

This general phenomenon reached its height in the 13th–early 14th century (Schofield and Vince 2003), when the site displays the greatest extent of urban expansion and prosperity. Its subsequent decline corresponds to the 14th century ‘Crisis of the Late Middle Ages’. By the late 13th century Europe may have become overpopulated and the ending of the Medieval Warm Period brought on the period known as the Little Ice Age, with harsher winters and reduced har-

vests. Food shortages and rapidly increasing prices resulted in malnutrition and increased susceptibility to infections. Several years of cold and wet winters, beginning in 1314, led to catastrophic famine, which may have killed over 10% of the population of north-west Europe. There had been little if any demographic recovery by the time the Great Mortality, or Black Death, pandemic struck in 1348–1350, killing 30–60% of Europe’s population. There were then further outbreaks of plague in England in 1361–1362, 1369, 1379–1383 and 1389–1393 (on 14th century demography see Hinde 2003; Platt 1996; Sloane 2011). At the site the mid 14th century saw the beginning of a prolonged period of decline, which culminated during the early 17th century in a total reversion of the area to agriculture. Urban occupation was not then re-established until the mid 18th century, during the boom of the Georgian Era and the Industrial Revolution.

If the archaeological remains of the 11th–19th centuries make an, albeit minor, contribution to a grand pan-European narrative, the focus shifts in the early 20th century. The material remains linked to Hannah Harvey’s occupancy provide an intimate portrait of aspects of the life of an identifiable individual household, albeit one whose details are relatively elusive in the documentary record. It is unclear if the material was deposited before or after the death of Albert Harvey in 1932, so the precise composition of the household that generated the material is impossible

to determine. Even if the material was deposited in 1920 then Hannah and Albert were aged 56 and 48 respectively and the household is likely to have consisted of simply the married couple or the widowed Hannah plus one or two servants.

The Harvey household probably ate eggs and drank coffee for breakfast using a colourful service, and later in the day dined on a wide variety of cuts of meat using bone handled cutlery, and was extremely fond of the products of baking using concentrated lemon juice although we can not know if she herself undertook the baking. The household possessed two sets of black transfer-printed dining ceramics, these were several decades old having probably been manufactured c. 1882–1888. As Hannah Harvey née Franks was born in 1864 it is possible that she acquired these then highly fashionable items when she was in her late teens or early twenties. As her husband Albert was rather younger than Hannah he provides a less likely origin for this material, although it is possible that they were wedding gifts for his first marriage to Mary Ann Phillis Childs in 1892. Whatever the source of these ceramics by the time of their deposition they were relatively old that possessed a distinct ‘object biography’ (e.g. Joy 2009). Drinking tea from a range of rather gaudy services was an important household activity, although a rather plainer and more staid service with a gilt tea leaf was probably employed when there were visitors present. Hannah or some other member of her household probably suffered from ill health, including problems with the chest, throat and lungs. As well as material relating to the members of the post-World War One household also present was a cap badge, perhaps a memento of Edwin Harvey, who died in 1916. There is evidence for at least one child who played with a doll, a miniature tea service and a rubber ball, although whether these items represent a contemporary child or retained childhood mementos is uncertain.

One theme linking the two rather disparate elements of the site narrative is that of agriculture. Whilst the archaeological narrative has rightly focussed upon the occupation centred along Huntingdon Street, it should be remembered that up until the 20th century the bulk of the area located further east of Huntingdon Street was always given over to food production. The scattered finds, from Neolithic flint onwards, hint at the likely usage of the land for millennia without creating a significant archaeological impact. Even at the height of medieval occupation in the 13th–mid 14th century, at most only the c. 65m closest to Huntingdon Street were occupied, with c. 180m or nearly three quarters of the length of the plots remaining as open fields. The occupied area itself was not intensively utilised and it is likely that much of it was dedicated to food production, such as the growing of vegetables and rearing of pigs. One explanation for the prolonged period of declining occupation from the mid 14th to early 17th century is that the area had been given over solely to food production, but that it made sense to retain some earlier features such as Well II. The country/farm house style buildings of

Cressner House constructed in the mid 17th century are agricultural in character and this pattern continued well into the 19th century. The shift away from agriculture began in the mid 19th century, but even the early 20th century planting beds may represent a form, albeit attenuated, of food production on a minor scale and the meat being eaten was presumably obtained largely from a professional butcher. It is likely that with the creation of the St. Neots Urban District Council offices in 1938 that domestic food production largely ceased, as there was no longer a substantial garden area associated with Cressner House, and even then much of the area remained open space until the current development.

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