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Excavation Report



Neolithic, Early Iron
Age pits and peripheral
Later Iron Age and
Roman activity at
Longsands Community
College, St Neots,
Cambridgeshire

Excavation Report



May 2011

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**Neolithic, Early Iron Age pits and peripheral Later Iron Age and Roman activity
at Longsands Community College, St Neots, Cambridgeshire**

Archaeological Excavation

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Table of Contents

Summary.....	5
1 Introduction.....	6
1.1 Location and scope of work.....	6
1.2 Geology and topography.....	6
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	6
1.4 Acknowledgements.....	9
2 Aims and Methodology.....	10
2.1 Aims.....	10
2.2 Methodology.....	10
3 Results.....	12
3.1 Introduction	12
3.2 Evaluation Trench (Fig. 1).....	12
3.3 Excavation Area (Figs. 1, 2 and 3).....	12
3.4 Finds Summary.....	15
3.5 Environmental Summary.....	15
4 Discussion and Conclusions.....	16
4.1 Earlier prehistoric	16
4.2 Iron Age and Roman.....	16
4.3 Significance.....	17
Appendix A. Context List.....	18
Appendix B. Finds Reports.....	21
B.1 Lithics.....	21
B.2 Small Finds.....	23
B.3 Prehistoric Pottery.....	23
B.4 Roof Tile	26
B.5 Fired Clay or Daub.....	27
Appendix C. Environmental Reports.....	28
C.1 Faunal Remains.....	28
C.2 Environmental samples.....	29

C.3	Shell.....	30
Appendix D.	Bibliography	31
Appendix E.	OASIS Report Form.....	34

List of Figures

- Fig. 1 Location of excavation area and evaluation trench (black) with the previous evaluations (dark grey)
- Fig. 2 Phase plan of all features
- Fig. 3 Section drawings

List of Plates

- Plate 1 Sports Hall trench looking east
- Plate 2 Early Neolithic pit **15** looking west showing large placed stones?
- Plate 3 Early Iron Age pit **53** looking west showing probable placed deposits

List of Tables

- Table 1 Context List
- Table 2 Quantification of Struck Flint by Context
- Table 3 Pottery
- Table 4 Roof tile
- Table 5 Fired Clay
- Table 6 Animal species distribution for the assemblage
- Table 7 Environmental sample results

Summary

An archaeological investigation comprising an evaluation trench followed by an excavation was undertaken during May and June 2010 by OA East within part of the area of a proposed all-weather pitch and sports hall at Longsands College, St Neots (TL 1905 6086). The excavation revealed a sparse quantity of features across the site dating from the earlier prehistoric to modern periods with four main phases of activity identified.

Perhaps the most significant archaeological remains comprise an Early Neolithic pit in the extreme southern part of the excavation area. Residual Neolithic, Early and Late Bronze Age pottery was also recovered within later features within 20m of the pit, which may imply further prehistoric features have not survived. There were at least three Early Iron Age pits identified across the area. This is significant as Early Iron Age remains are relatively rare on other clayland areas (but not on the alluviated flood plain) in this part of Cambridgeshire. Features spanning the Middle or Late Iron Age and possibly up to the Early Roman period were also present within the site, comprising a large boundary or enclosure ditch, a probable droveway and two pits. These features were presumably the precursor to, and/or part of, a known Early Roman settlement discovered in 2006, c.200m to the west (Connor 2006). A further nine undated pits and three post-holes were dispersed across the excavation area. Most, if not all, of these probably relate to any of these above periods and were unlikely to be post-medieval or modern in date. Evidence of arable fields in the form of ridge and furrow was recorded across the site and this activity seems to have stopped in the early post-medieval period. A single ditch was uncovered which probably related to when the site was part of a post-medieval to modern parkland. The concrete foundations of Longsands College mid-20th century former changing rooms were also found.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation and an excavation were conducted at Longsands College, St Neots, Cambridgeshire (TL 1905 6086). The evaluation took place on 25th May 2010 and comprised a single trench across the area of the proposed sports hall building (Fig. 1). Subsequently a small excavation took place from the 1st to the 18th June within the eastern half of the proposed all weather pitch.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological work follows on from earlier evaluations at the school (Connor 2006; Fletcher 2006 and Phillips 2007). It was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Kasia Gdaniec (Gdaniec 2006) of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application H/05030/06/CC), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East (Drummond-Murray 2010).
- 1.1.3 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 Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010). The results will enable decisions to be made by CCC, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The British Geological Survey of England and Wales (BGS 1975) shows the area to lie on a boulder clay bedrock over which, in the south-west corner of the study area, there is a deposit of 1st terrace river gravel. In reality the geology encountered was predominantly boulder clay with only occasional patches of sandy gravel.
- 1.2.2 The site is within the Great Ouse Valley on the gentle slopes of the eastern valley side, approximately 1km to the west of the River Ouse itself. The valley bottom at the River Ouse is at about 14m OD with the land on each side rising to c.30m OD. The site lies within clay subsoil whereas the valley base and the river has light gravel/sandy soils. The change from clay to gravel/sands occurs an unknown distance to the west of the site. The excavation was on gently sloping land, with a slight fall from the south-east corner of the site with archaeological features cutting the natural sub-soil at c.20m OD, falling to 19.11m OD at the northern extent, 18.80m OD at the western side and the evaluation trench to the south-west of the excavation area at 18.20m OD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

Recent archaeological work at Longsands school

- 1.3.1 The present site is adjacent to a Roman settlement found c.200m to the west during a previous archaeological evaluation (STNLSC06; Connor 2006; Fig.1). Here, five trenches (5-9) were excavated within the original proposed location of the all weather pitch on slightly lower ground at between 17.10m and 17.70m OD. This evaluation revealed significant archaeological remains including a possible roundhouse, a ditched track and a series of large ditches that may have been part of an extensive Roman



enclosure system. Pottery from the features indicated that the settlement was in use during the Early Roman period (mid 1st and 2nd centuries), although the roundhouse and track may have been earlier.

- 1.3.2 After this work, the proposed location of the all weather pitch was moved 100m to the east. A further evaluation took place consisting of seven trenches, each 25m long across the proposed area of the pitch overlapping into the present excavation area (Phillips 2007; CHER 2350; Fig. 1). This evaluation found limited archaeological remains on the western side of the pitch only - this comprised six undated features (three ditches, two small pits and a post-hole).
- 1.3.3 The results of this evaluation suggested the Roman settlement was petering out with only its eastern periphery lying within the current proposed development area. The 2006 evaluation revealed that Roman features survived to a depth in excess of 0.5m below ground level. This relatively deep level, combined with the natural comprising boulder clay, has meant none of the settlement was revealed in an air photo assessment of the area (Palmer 2006). Other archaeological work adjacent to this area shows some boundary limits to this Roman settlement. A second area of archaeological trenching as part of Connor's 2006 evaluation (STNLSC06), c.120m to the south, found no Iron Age or Roman features (Fig. 1, trenches 1-4). Likewise, a separate evaluation in 2006 (Fig. 1, STNCEC06), 60m to the south of the excavation area only identified a post-medieval feature (Fletcher 2006).
- 1.3.4 Former ridge and furrow was recorded in the 2006 air photograph assessment on an east to west alignment across the site - suggesting that this area was part of the town's medieval/post-medieval field system (Palmer 2006). Tebbutt (1995) has documented this farmland as belonging to the Baynton family in the 18th century but was sold to William King and then bequeathed to his daughter after his death. She married Ousley Rowley and together they took this land out of agriculture when they founded Priory Hill Park in 1795 (Tebbutt 1995, 283-4). Longsands school was built within the southern part of the former parkland in the mid 20th century. An avenue of trees survives directly to the west of the site and this forms part of the last vestiges of the parkland. The present excavation area has always been within the area of the school's playing fields, located to the north of its main buildings. The only structure within the excavation area since the mid 20th century had been located on the northern part of the site and this comprised a concrete changing block. This building has been demolished in recent years .

Nearby archaeological work and historical background

Early Prehistoric (not illustrated)

- 1.3.5 There is evidence for early prehistoric activity slightly further afield from the site, particularly on the alluviated flood plain of the Ouse Valley there have been many important discoveries. Excavations in advance of the construction of the St Neots bypass in 1983-4 approximately 4km to the south-west of the site, close to the river, revealed remains of Mesolithic and Neolithic flint working sites as well as a ritual site in the form of a Bronze Age ring ditch and associated features (Herne 1984; CHER 10198, 10198a). Directly to the north of this, investigations have taken place on a 12 hectare area in Eynesbury and uncovered a prehistoric ritual complex (Kemp 1993; 1996; 1997; Ellis 2004; CHERs 00381 and 11671; MCB17676). Neolithic remains included two cursus enclosures, a hengiform ring-ditch, a long barrow, a double enclosure believed to represent another ritual or funerary monument and discrete pits containing placed deposits. Later funerary activity included an Early Bronze Age urned

cremation burial, a small number of unurned cremation burials and a large enclosure made up of c. 440 pits of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date (CHER MCB17704), which may also have been of ritual significance. This important site is seen as an integral part of the ritual landscape of the Neolithic and Bronze Age along the Ouse valley (Malim 2000). Bronze Age ring-ditches (probably the remains of burial mounds) are located close by (CHERs 08281, 04754, 09837).

- 1.3.6 Environmental evidence from Eynesbury reveals a landscape that remained largely deforested during the Late Neolithic (French and Wait 1988). By the Bronze Age the local landscape was predominantly open consisting of short grassland interspersed by occasional stands of trees. The role of the Ouse corridor in the development of trade and continental contact is noted by Malim (1999) with many examples of surviving evidence of Neolithic occupation, mainly in the form of a developing ritual landscape. There is also an increase in finds along the Ouse corridor datable to this period suggesting the development of riverside activity. It has also been suggested that an early fording point just north-west of the study site at Little Paxton, c.4km to the north, was in-use at this time (Alexander 1992). This would have supported both communication and movement of goods along the valley corridor as well as east-west trade from the Midlands and East Anglia.
- 1.3.7 Away from the River Ouse, a different type of site and land-use has been identified on areas of sub-soil where only very sparse earlier prehistoric archaeological features were encountered on two major works at Loves Farm, c.1km to the east (Fig. 1) and at Wintringham between 1-2km to the south-east (Hinman 2008, Hinman forthcoming; Hinman and Phillips 2009). Loves Farm comprised an extensive area with over 50ha investigated of which 30ha was excavated (CHER ECB 2482, 2483). Five Early Neolithic pits, one Late Neolithic pit and two Early Neolithic hollows were found in two separate locations within the site. There was a hollow in each area with two and three pits respectively. It is possible the natural hollow was used for 'occupation'. The six pits were between 0.5m and 1.18m diameter and 0.09m to 0.36m deep. The pits varied from fairly sterile to primary dumped deposits (e.g. pottery recovered from the pits ranged from 3 sherds to a pit with 182 sherds of pottery with the latter largely consisting of plain bowls). Eighteen natural features, of which seventeen were undated may represent evidence of Neolithic tree clearance. There was limited Bronze Age activity at Loves Farm and this comprised a single Early Bronze Age waterhole and a Middle Bronze Age coaxial field system which consisted of a series of rectangular fields demarcated by shallow ditches spaced at intervals of roughly 60m, 80m or 100m with associated tracks/droeways (Hinman 2008, Hinman forthcoming). At Wintringham Park 1km to 2km to the south-east, an extremely large area (162 hectares) has been evaluated (Hinman and Phillips 2009). Here, the only definite Neolithic feature on the entire site was a pit although there was a possible second pit. No remains dating to the Bronze Age (c.2000-750BC) were found.

Iron Age and Roman

- 1.3.8 Loves Farm and Wintringham have not found evidence of Earlier Iron Age activity but both sites have found significant levels of occupation from the Middle Iron Age up to the Late Roman (Hinman 2008, Hinman forthcoming) and at Wintringham (Hinman and Phillips 2009). The start of this permanent occupation was dated at Loves Farm to some time after 350BC (Hinman forthcoming). Collectively, at Loves Farm and Wintringham, there were five permanent settlement sites (of different sizes) over a c.4km linear area. These sites were not all were populated at the same time, but despite this, there was undoubtedly an increased population in this period. Initially the

pattern of settlement was dispersed and the earliest settlements were unenclosed although the first roundhouses were positioned close in to the boundaries of the existing fields. The preferred locations for the earliest settlers, as in the preceding earlier prehistoric periods, were shallow depressions (created by glacial melting) on south-facing slopes, ideally those with an easterly aspect (Hinman forthcoming). Subsequently sites became enclosed. Most of these five settlements continued into the end of the Roman period.

- 1.3.9 Other, smaller-scale excavations within the wider area have confirmed the presence of many Iron Age sites and most continued into the Roman period. Excavations along the Ouse valley for example have recorded occupation sites stretching from Huntingdon (Malim 1990; Hinman 1997, 2000) to Brampton (Malim and Mitchell 1993), to Paxton (Greenfield 1968; Alexander 1992) and Eynesbury (Alexander 1993; Kemp 1993, 1997; Macaulay 1994; Stansbie 2008). The scale of Romano-British infrastructure and wealth found in the area is also evidenced by the number of find spots recorded in the CHER records. It is uncertain how/if the river Great Ouse, or a Roman road that ran between Sandy and Godmanchester (Margary 1967), influenced these various settlements. The nearest east-west crossing point of the river is thought to be a few hundred metres to the north of the medieval bridge, in the area of Islands Common.

Anglo-Saxon and medieval

- 1.3.10 The subject site is located to the north-east of the historic core of the town of St Neots. There is evidence of Early Saxon occupation in the St Neots area and of the development of the town during the Middle and Late Saxon periods. Certainly by the medieval period St Neots was well-established within the parish of Eynesbury (Addyman 1973). Evidence of Late Saxon settlement (CHER 00573) and burials (CHER 00574, 00570) has been found nearby, with further evidence of Saxon activity to the north of the site (CHER 00622).

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank Cambridgeshire County Council who funded the work. The project was managed by James Drummond-Murray and Rachel Clarke edited this report. The brief for archaeological works was written by Kasia Gdaniec, of Cambridgeshire County Council, who visited the site and monitored the excavation. I am grateful for specialist analysis from Nina Crummy, Barry Bishop, Chris Faine, Rachel Fosberry, Rob Ixer and David Mullin. Steve Wadeson supervised the post-excavation work on the artefacts and Rachel Fosberry the environmental material. The illustrations were drawn by Séverine Bézie. The site was metal detected by Steve Critchley. Rachel Clarke surveyed in the excavation area. The fieldwork was carried out by Rob Atkins with the assistance of Lukas Barnes, Jon House and Gareth Rees.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The objective of this investigation 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.
- 2.1.2 The Brief for the site set three research priorities (Gdaniec 2006):
- 1) To establish the chronology of the site's evidence and to situate it within the expanding evidence of Roman settlement in St Neots.
 - 2) To determine the type of economy prevalent using the material culture and faunal remains recovered.
 - 3) To attempt to define the character of the Neolithic/Bronze Age occupation evidence that may have survived the truncating effects of the Roman activity. Residual worked flints were found in later features (in the evaluation), what do they suggest in terms of the known dispersed contemporary evidence from St Neots?

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The Brief originally required an open area excavation of the site (Gdaniec 2006). In the actuality only the eastern half of the proposed pitch, on higher ground, was subjected to an archaeological investigation. The western half, on lower lying land, will not be affected by the proposed development as the ground level in this area is to be levelled-up. Therefore, all archaeological deposits in this western part were undisturbed and left *in situ*. The new sports hall, located to the south of the proposed all weather pitch, was to be first evaluated by an archaeological trial trench. If sufficiently important archaeological remains were encountered in this trench, then the whole area of the proposed sports hall was to be excavated.
- 2.2.2 All archaeological work took place within heras fencing. On the 25th May 2010 a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket opened up a single trench across the proposed location of the sports hall building. A single undated ditch was found within the trench. Kasia Gdaniec, Senior Archaeologist at Cambridgeshire County Council, decided that no further archaeological work was required within this part of the site and therefore the sports hall was not subject to an area excavation. From the 1st to the 18th June a small excavation took place within the eastern half of the proposed all weather pitch. A 360° excavator using a toothless ditching bucket carried out this work under constant archaeological supervision. The spoil was deposited by a moxy dumper on the western half of the site with the topsoil and subsoil separated. Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.
- 2.2.3 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. The trench and excavation area were located onto the national grid using a Leica GPS 1200. The excavation revealed a multi-period site comprising a few, largely discrete archaeological features. The leica GPS was used to create a base plan. Pits and ditch sections were individually hand-drawn, although most furrows including their excavated sections were planned by GPS. Sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

2.2.4 Ten environmental bulk samples were taken from features in the evaluation and excavation areas. The samples, up to 30 litres in size, were taken from a mixture of features (post-holes, pits and ditches). Work took place during the summer, under dry conditions, although the natural water table was only encountered within the deepest ditch. This perched water level was presumably due to the underlying clay not allowing water to drain easily. The lowest layers within this ditch were not organic implying there were no permanent waterlogging within the site. All environmental remains survived by charring only.

2.2.5 During the post-excavation stage the features were assigned to four periods:

Period 1 Neolithic to Bronze Age

Period 2 Early Iron Age to Late Roman

Phase 1 Early Iron Age

Phase 2 ?Late Iron Age/Roman

Period 3 Medieval to early post-medieval

Period 4 Modern

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The results are presented in two parts. Firstly, the evaluation trench is described and secondly, the excavation area (by chronological period). A full context list is included in Appendix 1.

3.2 Evaluation Trench (Fig. 1)

3.2.1 The evaluation trench measured 25m long and 1.8m wide. A single possible ditch or furrow (4) was found cutting the natural within the western end of the trench (Plate 1). It was orientated south-east to north-west, roughly in the same alignment as furrow 27/92 in the main excavation area (Fig. 2). It was 1.13m wide and 0.34m deep with moderate sides and a slightly rounded base (Fig. 3, S.1). The fill comprised a single, undated and largely sterile light to mid-brown clay silt but included a single worked flint and a horse tooth. It was sealed by a 0.26m thick subsoil layer (2) which was a light to mid brown silt with a little clay. This was overlaid by a topsoil (1), 0.30m thick, and comprised a mid to dark grey brown slightly clayey sandy silt.

3.3 Excavation Area (Figs. 1, 2 and 3)

Period 1: Neolithic to Bronze Age

3.3.1 Only one probable earlier prehistoric feature survived on the site (pit 15) and this was within the southern side of the excavation area (Fig. 2; Plate 2). There may originally have been other Neolithic and Bronze Age features within the area as a residual Neolithic pottery sherd was found within furrow 92 in the extreme south-western part of site. Early and Late Bronze Age pottery sherds were found as residual artefacts in a possible Late Iron Age ditch (30; see below) in the extreme southern part of the site. All the earlier prehistoric pottery from the site were recovered from the southern ten metres of the site and all in the south-western corner. This concentration at this part of the site may be more than a coincidence.

3.3.2 Pit 15 was sub-sounded in shape, 0.80m by 0.65m across and 0.25m deep with vertical northern side and slightly undercutting on the south; it had a flattish base (Fig. 3, S.6.). The pit was backfilled with a mid-to dark-brown clay silt with some charcoal flecks. There were frequent stones, near the base of the pit, up to two 'courses' thick comprising c.25% of the total fill. These stones consisted of 13 pebbles of varying sizes from 18cm x 14cm x 14cm to very small. In addition, there were some extremely small stones up to 2cm in diameter including chalk pieces. There were two flat limestone fragments on the southern part of the pit (18cm x 15cm x 2cm and 12cm x 12cm x 1.5cm) which overlaid small pebbles and abutted the top of the very large pebbles to form a flattish surface. These stones were placed here but it is uncertain why this took place. The backfill also contained many artefacts including a Mesolithic or Early Neolithic trimming flake (See Bishop, Appendix B.1) and frequent very friable pottery sherds comprising 168 sherds (190g) representing several vessels. The vast majority were from Early Neolithic bowl(s) in a sandy and grass temper with at least one of the bowls being carinated. A thin-section of a sherd includes plant matter and cereals (See Ixer, Appendix B.3). There was 6g of intrusive Early Iron Age pottery (See Mullin, Appendix B.3). Within this fill there was a small quantity of fired clay (6 fragments (22g). There was no identifiable animal bone and a bulk soil sample found only charcoal (sample 12; See Fosberry, Appendix C.2).

Period 2: Phase 1 (Early Iron Age)

- 3.3.3 The three Early Iron Age pits (**6**, **12** and **53**) and a further pit probably of this date (**80**) were spaced over a 40m by 20m area. All these pits were fully excavated. Pit **6** was in the far north-eastern part of the site, just within the site's eastern baulk. It was sub-rectangular in shape and measured 1.02m by 0.70m across and 0.17m deep (Fig. 3, S. 6), with steep sides and a flattish base. It had been backfilled with a single deposit consisting of a light to mid brown silt and clay with occasional chalk and pebble pieces and some charcoal. Some of the pebbles (up to 0.15m in length) were burnt. Within the deposit, there were four fragmentary pottery sherds (11g) in two different fabrics; two of the sherds are probably Early Iron Age in date. Fired clay/daub comprised 13 small fragments (46g). A soil sample only produced moderate charcoal (Sample 10).
- 3.3.4 Pit **12** was in the extreme south-eastern corner of the site, it was circular in shape, 0.60m diameter and 0.26m deep with near vertical sides and a flat base (Fig. 3, S.5). The basal fill (13) was 0.14m thick and consisted of a largely sterile light to mid brown silty clay with rare small stones and occasional charcoal fleck. The upper fill (11) was a very dark grey brown clay silt with frequent charcoal flecks. This deposit contained occasional burnt pebbles up to 0.15m x 0.10m x 0.10m, in addition to unburnt sandstone pieces, small unburnt chalk and flint fragments up to 20mm in length. Two worked flint pieces were recovered with only one datable to the Middle Bronze Age or later (See Bishop, Appendix B.1). There were frequent pottery sherds (91 sherds weighing 274g) from at least nine different vessels (See Mullin, Appendix B.3). Seventeen small fired clay fragments (29g) were also recovered. A few charred seeds comprising three cereal grains and a single glume base (sample 11) were present in the sample.
- 3.3.5 Pit **53** in the centre of the site was sub-circular in plan and measured 0.68m by 0.66m and 0.24m deep; it had moderate sides and a flattish base. Due to the large quantity of possibly placed animal bone deposits it was excavated in plan and not half-sectioned (Plate 3). A single backfill deposit, comprising a mid to dark grey brown clay silt (52) was recorded. This contained a Mesolithic or Early Neolithic worked flint flake, a possible worked sandstone block, five flint tempered pottery sherds (F1), and nine separate identifiable bones from cattle, sheep and possibly red deer were recovered (See Faine, Appendix C.1). The bone was laid flat across the pit possibly signifying they had been laid deliberately. Butchery marks were found on at least one of the bones (a sheep/goat radius). A soil sample only produced moderate charcoal (sample 15).
- 3.3.6 Pit **80** was adjacent and to the north of pit **12**. It measured 0.47m in diameter and 0.08m deep with gentle to moderate sides and a concave base (Fig. 3, S.16). Unlike the other three Early Iron Age pits, this pit was noticeably smaller in size and backfilled with a relatively sterile single deposit comprising a mid yellow brown silty clay. Within this fill was a small Mesolithic/Early Neolithic flake, three very small flint tempered pottery sherds (2g) and only sparse charcoal from the bulk sample (sample 18).
- 3.3.7 There was a possible Iron Age pit (**67**) located on the north-western part of the site and measured 0.56m in diameter and 0.40m deep, with near vertical sides and a flat base (not illustrated). Its backfill (66) comprised a mid brown sandy clay which contained a single small pottery sherd (5g).

Period 2: Phase 2 (?Middle Iron Age to Roman)

- 3.3.8 A large possible Middle Iron Age or later boundary or enclosure ditch (**86/30/19**) with a possible recut (**84**) was found aligned roughly east to west within the extreme southern part of the site. This ditch was fairly large and was more substantial on the eastern side

of the site where there was higher ground. Here, the ditch (19) was 2.91m wide and 0.81m deep (Fig. 3, S.7), whereas in the centre of the site ditch (30) was 2.20m wide and 0.85m deep (Fig. 3, S. 8) and at the western side (86), just 1.84m wide and 0.84m deep (Fig. 3, S. 18). The ditch sides were fairly similar in all three sections, being steep at c.60° and the bases were slightly rounded. The ditch was backfilled with three different deposits on the eastern side, two in the central section and just a single fill on the western side, indicating that the ditch was backfilled with different deposits along its length. Presumably these backfill deposits derive from ground adjacent to the ditch. The ditch contained artefacts of different date within all three backfilled sections. These include three flint pieces from ditch 19 (Upper Palaeolithic/Mesolithic, Mesolithic/Early Neolithic and undiagnostic). The pottery sherds comprise an Early Bronze Age piece (10g) with chevrons on its rim (upper fill ditch 30), a very small probable Late Bronze Age sherd (2g) from the lower fill of ditch 30, nine Early Iron Age sherds (20g) from the lowest deposit of ditch 19, a sherd of Roman (4g) from the upper fill of ditch 30 and two undated sherds (6g) from ditch 86. It is likely the Roman sherd from the top fill of ditch 30 marked the end of the use of the ditch. The small possible recut (84) within the top of ditch 86 was not seen within the other two excavated ditch sections and it is possible that instead of being a 'recut', this was the upper deposit of the ditch.

- 3.3.9 Adjacent and to the north of this large boundary or enclosure ditch was a possible driveway with the external sides demarcated by two ditches (49/90/10) and (36/88/34). The driveway was orientated roughly east to west with the ditches not parallel creating a slightly funnel shaped track, having an internal width of c.8m on the eastern side widening to c.11m on the western side. The northern ditch (49/90/10) was between 0.93m and 1.68m wide and 0.34m to 0.47m deep compared with the slightly smaller southern ditch (36/88/34) which was between 0.74m and 0.85m wide and 0.15m and 0.34m deep (Fig. 3, Sections 4, 19 and 20). The more substantial ditch section 10 was drawn along the baulk (i.e. not slightly truncated by machining) and it is likely that the ditches were originally around this size. The profiles were all fairly similar with moderate to steep sides and a slightly concave base. All excavated sections were backfilled with single relatively sterile deposits comprising mid or mid to dark grey brown clay silt. The only artefacts were a small scrap (1g) of flint tempered pottery from ditch 10, three fired clay fragments (5g) and an intrusive small tile fragment at the top of ditch 49. A single undiagnostic bone fragment was also recovered.
- 3.3.10 Pit 47 on the western side may date to the Roman period. It was 0.7m in diameter, 0.21m deep (Fig. 3, S.11) with a flattish base. The pit had very steep sides on its northern edge whereas it was gentle to moderate to the south. The lower backfill deposit (46), 0.10m thick, was sterile and comprised a mid orange brown clay. The upper fill (45) was a dark reddish grey clay, with frequent charcoal (c.5% of deposit), and contained a single small quartz tempered pottery sherd (6g), 6 fragments (8g) of fired clay and two oyster shells. A soil sample (14) was charcoal rich but produced no seeds.

Period 3: medieval to early post-medieval

- 3.3.11 Medieval or early post-medieval furrows were recorded on a roughly east to west alignment across the site (Fig. 2). These furrows, which had previously been identified on aerial photographs, were very ephemeral surviving between 0.70m and 1.80m wide and 0.05m and 0.20m deep. They were filled with a mid brown clay silt; several furrows contained small fragments of medieval and post-medieval roof tile. No other artefact types (clay pipe, glass or pottery) were found.

Period 4: Modern

- 3.3.12 Very few modern features were present within the excavation area. The exceptions were a north to south ditch and the concrete foundations of the school's former changing rooms (Fig. 2).

"Unphased"

- 3.3.13 Nine undated pits (**8**, **21**, **40**, **44**, **63**, **65**, **69**, **78** and **82**) were recorded across the excavation with no obvious concentrations (Fig. 3). They varied in size from 0.51m to 1.12m in diameter/length and 0.22m to 0.4m deep (Fig. 3, Sections 3, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 17). The profiles varied, from vertically sided and flat bases (**8** and **69**) to others with gentle, moderate or steep sides and rounded bases (e.g. pits **44** or **82**). All the pits were backfilled with single deposits except pit **44** which had three fills (Fig. 3, S.9). Only pit **82** contained a charcoal enriched deposit and it was also had a sherd of pottery (1g) which could not be dated; pit **63** produced two fragments (4g) of fired clay. These two pits are likely to be either prehistoric or Roman, whereas pit **65** may be relatively modern as it had a small post-medieval tile fragment (15g) in its backfill. This has been assigned an unphased date as only one ditch was modern in date and this tile may therefore be intrusive. A single pit (**21**) contained a fragment of unidentifiable bone.
- 3.3.14 Three undated possible post-holes (**71**, **73**, **76**) were within a 20m area in the north-western part of the excavation area. The post-holes were so far apart that they can not relate to each other. They measured between 0.27m and 0.41m in diameter and 0.12m to 0.17m deep (Fig. 3, S 14). No pottery was found within any of the post-holes although two fired clay fragments (5g) was found within **76**. Two of the post-holes (**73** and **76**) were sampled (16 and 17) and these respectively produced only sparse charcoal and charcoal enriched soils.

3.4 Finds Summary

- 3.4.1 The excavation produced a range of five artefact types but the numbers of finds in each of these categories were only very small or small (See Appendices B.1-5). These five categories consisted of lithics, small finds, pottery, roof tile and fired clay/daub. There were 11 struck flints which date from the Upper Palaeolithic/Mesolithic to at least the Middle Bronze Age periods. The four small finds comprised three metal objects from subsoil or unstratified contexts and a possible worked stone fragment. A total of 288 pottery sherds (705g) was recovered, most were very fragmentary prehistoric assemblage dating from the Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages but including a few later sherds from the Roman and later periods. A petrological analysis was carried out on a Neolithic fragment. A small collection of 27 ceramic roof tile fragments (956g) dating to the medieval and post-medieval periods was recovered mostly from within furrows and a very small quantity of fired clay or daub (57 fragments weighing 111g) were recovered from prehistoric or Roman features.

3.5 Environmental Summary

- 3.5.1 There was three environmental reports from the site (Sections C.1-3). The animal bone consists of just 39 fragments (970g) of which only 16 were identifiable to species. The majority of these (nine) were found in just one Early Iron Age pit (**53**). The results from the nine environmental samples were extremely poor with just two samples producing a total of four cereal grains; two oyster shells form the basis for the final report.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Earlier prehistoric

- 4.1.1 The excavation has revealed sparse evidence for activity in the earlier prehistoric period (Mesolithic to Bronze Age). The former is represented by at least one worked flint blade which dates to the Upper Palaeolithic or Mesolithic period, although the earliest feature found on site was of Early Neolithic date. Other finds comprise residual Neolithic, Early and Late Bronze Age pottery sherds from later features, in addition to five Mesolithic or Early Neolithic flints, one possibly Middle Bronze Age flint. These may represent background activity or short-lived/intermittent occupation during this period. The pit and earlier prehistoric pottery were all within an area measuring c.20m by 10m in the far south-western part of the site (although earlier prehistoric flint was found across the site). It is possible that further features and artefacts of this period continued directly to the south of the excavation area.
- 4.1.2 The single Early Neolithic pit implies some probable 'domestic' activity as parts of several vessels were found, in association with fragments of fired clay as well as significant quantities of charcoal. The careful placing of selected stones at the base of this pit may have some ritual significance. The soil sample from the pit produced no evidence of crops being grown. This feature has parallels with a Neolithic pit from Loves Farm, 1km to the east, which was similar in size and also contained significant quantities of artefacts (see Section 1.3.7). The nature of this activity may have been determined by the site being on a natural clay. Major archaeological work at adjacent sites within 2km of Longsands (Loves Farm and Wintringham) were also on clay and have also found very few features and artefacts of the Neolithic and Bronze Age (see Section 1.3.7). This lack of earlier prehistoric evidence on clay is in contrast to extensive funerary and occupation evidence on the alluviated flood plain of the Ouse Valley (see Section 1.3.5-1.3.6). It is uncertain if this evidence suggests the area next to the river was being extensively used in this period whereas further away (on clay), there was far less activity.

4.2 Iron Age and Roman

- 4.2.1 At least three or four Early Iron Age pits were found across the excavation area, but this may have been an underestimation as other pits in the excavation were sterile or contained pottery which was not closely datable. It is uncertain whether these pits were part of an unenclosed settlement or just represent a few short visits to the area. It is possible these features are more indicative to a long-lived site that was a precursor to a Roman settlement, dating from the 1st century AD, located 200m to the west (Connor 2006). Alternatively, it is possible that the Early Iron Age pits were not directly related to this later site - it may be significant that excavation at Loves Farm and Wintringham did not reveal any Early Iron Age settlement evidence; indeed no features or artefacts to this date were found (See Section 1.3.8). These extensive landscape archaeological workings only revealed settlement and features dating to the Middle Iron Age onwards, implying that settlement only began to extensively colonise the claylands when population was expanding and new farms were being established on less favourable land.
- 4.2.2 The backfill of the three definite Early Iron Age pits from Longsands College contained significant evidence for a settlement in this location. Pottery from several different vessels was recovered, in addition to quantities of fired clay, many large bone fragments from cattle and sheep. Cereal grains were also present in the sample.

- 4.2.3 The evidence for there being a long lived settlement in the area is supported by the discovery of several features that probably date to the Middle or Late Iron Age and Early Roman periods. A possible large Middle or Late Iron Age boundary or enclosure ditch extended across the site for at least 40m, the dating of which rests on several Early Iron Age sherds found in the primary backfill and a sherd of Roman pottery in the final silting. The size of this ditch (2.91m wide and 0.85m deep) indicates it is extremely unlikely to be Early Iron Age in date as there are few extensive ditches of this date in this area. This ditch has similarities (size and lack of many contemporary features) to a Middle Iron Age enclosure 4km to the west, at Bushwood Road, Eaton Socon (Stansbie 2008). This enclosure, which was sub-square or sub-rectangular, measured 42.8m by at least 28.2m in area with the ditch being 1.41m wide and 0.59m deep; however only one internal feature survived within the excavation area (Stansbie 2008, 43).
- 4.2.4 The possible driveway runs towards the Roman settlement identified during an evaluation, c.200m to the west (Connor 2006). The two ditches were of similar size and roughly parallel (between 8m and 11m apart) with the ditches presumably acting as a possible "funnel" for the cattle or other stock. The lack of artefacts (1g of pottery and 5g of fired clay) within the ditches implies that the domestic settlement was located at some distance away. The paucity of finds in the other pits and three post-holes seems to confirm that the excavation area was located within the fields associated with the settlement. The presence of three undated post-holes may indicate that there were structures or fence lines in this area, presumably agricultural in origin.
- 4.2.5 There were no Saxon or early medieval features found on site suggesting that this area was open, possibly pasture in this period? The furrows were probably late medieval or early post-medieval in origin. This arable farming probably stopped in the early post-medieval period; with roof tile comprising the only finds within furrows. The lack of clay pipe or modern pottery suggests that arable farming had ceased before the late 17th century as these types of items might be expected if this activity had continued into the 18th century. It is likely the land-use changed to pastoral farming in the c.17th century. Documentary evidence shows that this area was farmed by the Baynton family in the 18th century until it became part of a new parkland in 1795 (See Section 1.3.4). The present school, which was founded in the mid 20th century, has had little impact on the archaeology in this area with only one major feature, a concrete foundation for changing room block, causing localised disturbance.

4.3 Significance

- 4.3.1 The results of this excavation are of some significance as they provide evidence for the colonisation/exploitation of the claylands from at least the Mesolithic period albeit at a small fraction of the occupational evidence found within the alluvial subsoil near the River Ouse. The work also hints of possible continuity of settlement from the Early Iron Age to the Roman period which is unusual for this clayland area of Cambridgeshire.

APPENDIX A. CONTEXT LIST

Context	Same as	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Length	Width	Depth	Period and Phase
1		0	layer	topsoil		0			4
2		0	layer	subsoil		0			4
3		4	fill	ditch		0			0
4		4	cut	ditch		0	1.13	0.34	0
5		6	fill	pit		0			2/1
6		6	cut	pit		1.02	0.7	0.17	2/1
7		8	fill	pit		0			0
8		8	cut	pit		1.12	0.8	0.2	0
9		10	fill	ditch	?droveway	0			2/2
10	49 90	10	cut	ditch	?droveway	0	1.68	0.47	2/2
11		12	fill	pit		0			2/1
12		12	cut	pit		0.6		0.26	2/1
13		12	fill	pit		0			2/1
14		15	fill	pit		0			1/0
15		15	cut	pit		0.8	0.65	0.25	1/0
16		19	fill	ditch	?boundary	0			2/2
17		19	fill	ditch	?boundary	0			2/2
18		19	fill	ditch	?boundary	0			2/2
19	30 86	19	cut	ditch	?boundary	0	2.91	0.81	2/2
20		21	fill	pit		0			0
21		21	cut	pit		0	0.92	0.22	0
22		23	fill	ditch	furrow	0			3
23		23	cut	ditch	furrow	0	0.7	0.06	3
24		25	fill	? unknown		0			0
25		25	cut	? unknown		0	0.68	0.16	0
26		27	fill	ditch	furrow	0			3
27		27	cut	ditch	furrow	0	1.37	0.2	3
28		30	fill	ditch	?boundary	0			2/2
29		30	fill	ditch	?boundary	0			2/2
30		30	cut	ditch	?boundary	0	2.2	0.85	2/2
31		32	fill	ditch	furrow	0			3
32		32	cut	ditch	furrow	0	1.75	0.15	3
33		34	fill	ditch	?droveway	0			2/2
34	36 88	34	cut	ditch	?droveway	0	0.74	0.15	2/2
35		36	fill	ditch	?droveway	0			2/2
36		36	cut	ditch	?droveway	0	0.85	0.2	2/2
37		38	fill	ditch	furrow	0			3
38		38	cut	ditch	furrow	0	1.05	0.05	3

Context	Same as	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Length	Width	Depth	Period and Phase
39		40	fill	pit		0			0
40		40	cut	pit		1.02	0.58	0.21	0
41		44	fill	pit		0			0
42		44	fill	pit		0			0
43		44	fill	pit		0			0
44		44	cut	pit		0.62	0.62	0.4	0
45		47	fill	pit		0			2/1
46		47	fill	pit		0			2/1
47		47	cut	pit		0.9	0.9	0.21	2/1
48		49	fill	ditch	?droveway	0			2/2
49		49	cut	ditch	?droveway	0	0.93	0.34	2/2
50		51	fill	ditch	furrow	0			3
51		51	cut	ditch	furrow	0	0.78	0.06	3
52		53	fill	pit		0			2/1
53		53	cut	pit		0.68	0.65	0.24	2/1
54		55	fill	ditch	furrow	0			3
55		55	cut	ditch	furrow	0	0.85	0.07	3
56		57	fill	ditch	furrow	0			3
57		57	cut	ditch	furrow	0	1.8	0.07	3
58		59	fill	ditch	furrow	0			3
59		59	cut	ditch	furrow	0	1.7	0.05	3
60		61	fill	ditch	furrow	0			3
61		61	cut	ditch	furrow	0	1	0.06	3
62		63	fill	pit		0			0
63		63	cut	pit		0.6	0.6	0.41	0
64		65	fill	pit		0			0
65		65	cut	pit		0.56	0.56	0.22	0
66		67	fill	pit		0			2/1
67		67	cut	pit		0.56	0.56	0.4	2/1
68		69	fill	pit		0			0
69		69	cut	pit		0.51	0.37	0.17	0
70		71	fill	pit/p/h		0			0
71		71	cut	pit/p/h		0.4	0.4	0.12	0
72		73	fill	pit/p/h		0			0
73		73	cut	pit/p/h		0.3	0.3	0.15	0
74		76	fill	post-hole		0			0
75		76	fill	post-hole		0	0		0
76		76	cut	post-hole		0.27	0.27	0.16	0
77		78	fill	pit		0			0
78		78	cut	pit		0.72	0.72	0.14	0
79		80	fill	pit		0			2/1

Context	Same as	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Length	Width	Depth	Period and Phase
80		80	cut	pit		0.47	0.47	0.08	2/1
81		82	fill	pit		0			0
82		82	cut	pit		0.55	0.5	0.15	0
83		84	fill	ditch	?boundary	0			2/2
84		84	cut	ditch	?boundary	0	0.54	0.17	2/2
85		86	fill	ditch	?boundary	0			2/2
86		86	cut	ditch	?boundary	0	1.84	0.82	2/2
87		88	fill	ditch	?droveway	0			2/2
88		88	cut	ditch	?droveway	0	0.81	0.34	2/2
89		90	fill	ditch	?droveway	0			2/2
90		90	cut	ditch	?droveway	0	0.99	0.38	2/2
91		92	fill	ditch	furrow	0			3
92		92	cut	ditch	furrow	0	1.8	0.15	3

Table 1 *Context List*

APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Lithics

By Barry Bishop

Introduction

- B.1.1 The excavations resulted in the recovery of 11 struck flints. They were present in a variety of features dating from the Early Neolithic through to the historic periods and, with a few possible exceptions, are mainly residually deposited. No diagnostic implement types are present although typological and technological traits indicate that the assemblage was probably manufactured over a considerable period of time.

Methodology

- B.1.2 Each piece of struck flint was examined by eye and X10 magnification and catalogued by context according to a basic typological/technological scheme (Table 2). All metrical descriptions follow the methodology of Saville (1980).

Context	Decortication Flake	Chip	Flake	Flake Fragment	Blade-like flake	Blade	Backed Blade	Suggested date	Discussion
3	1							?	
11		1	1					MBA+	Squat flake with wide obtuse SP decortication chip
14		1						Meso/ENeo	Platform trimming flake
17				1			1	UPal-Meso	Prismatic blade with faceted striking platform and steep blunting type retouch along right lateral margin, distal missing
18						1		Meso/ENeo	Distal Segment
50				1	1			?	Small fragment
52					1			Meso/ENeo	Small flake
79						1		Meso/ENeo	Very tiny

Table 2 Quantification of struck flint by context

Description

- B.1.3 The assemblage is small, comprising only 11 pieces, and consists of flakes and blades, some of which are very small and were recovered during the processing of samples. No cores and only a single retouched implement are present.
- B.1.4 The latter was manufactured from a fine-grained 'glassy' flint, predominantly of a translucent brown or grey colour but with one piece of opaque grey flint also present.

Cortex is present on five pieces and this mainly consists of thermal surfaces although one piece has a rough cortex. The raw materials were most likely obtained from alluvial gravel deposits as present along the valley floor of the nearby River Ouse. As might be expected from a predominantly residual collection, the condition of the material varied although most pieces are in a reasonably good condition and there are no reasons to suppose that they were not recovered from close to where they were originally discarded.

- B.1.5 Perhaps the earliest piece, and the only retouched implement present, consists of a relatively large prismatic blade, recovered from Early Iron Age ditch 19, that measures at least 46mm in length but is missing its distal end. It has a faceted striking platform and steep blunting-type retouch along its right lateral margin with shallower, more acute, retouch along its left lateral margin. It is in a notably chipped condition and, unlike the rest of the assemblage, is heavily recorticated and also iron stained. Such pieces are typically present in industries dating from the Upper Palaeolithic through to the Mesolithic, the condition of this example suggesting that it may considerably pre-date the other pieces recovered during the excavations.
- B.1.6 The bulk of the assemblage is also blade-based and consists of blades, blade-like flakes and a platform-trimming flake, all of which can be dated to the Mesolithic or Early Neolithic periods and potentially contemporary with the Early Neolithic activity evidence by the pottery recovered at the site. The single feature of this date excavated at the site, pit (15), produced only a single small platform trimming flake, the remainder of this material being recovered residually from later features.
- B.1.7 Contrasting with Mesolithic or Early Neolithic material is a flake recovered from pit (12). This is relatively thick and wide, having a Length/Breadth ration of 0.65. It has a thick, unmodified striking platform with a very obtuse striking platform/ventral angle. It is comparable to squat flakes (Martingell 1990) and would be typical of flakes from later second or first millennium BC industries (eg Herne 1991; Young and Humphrey 1999; Humphrey 2003; 2007). Its probable date and good condition indicates that it could be at least broadly contemporary with the infilling of the pit. Also recovered from this pit was a small undatable cortex removing chip. The remainder of the assemblage from the site also remains undatable and consists of a decortication flake and two small flake fragments.

Discussion

- B.1.8 The assemblage from this site is small in size but does indicate flintworking activities occurring, albeit on a very limited scale, over a long period of time. Of note is the backed blade, which appears to pre-date the remainder of the assemblage, and is most likely to date to the Upper Palaeolithic or Early Mesolithic periods. The remainder of the assemblage can be dated to the Mesolithic/Early Neolithic and the later prehistoric periods. It complements the chronology of activity at the site as suggested by the stratigraphic and pottery record, but its size suggests that flintworking was never an important activity. Although on a smaller scale, it is also broadly comparable to the lithic assemblage found close by at Loves Farm (Bishop forthcoming) and, likewise, indicates that an interest was taken in the claylands from at least the Mesolithic period, an area that has traditionally been thought of as thickly wooded and not conducive to early settlement.

B.2 Small Finds

By Nina Crummy

Results

- B.2.1 Two of the four objects from the site cannot be dated. One is a fragment of a weathered sandstone block of uncertain function, the other is a piece of partly folded copper-alloy sheet. Of the other two items the earlier is a medieval pan weight marked on one face with a cross (SF 2). Several systems of weight were in use over the medieval period, they were sometimes altered and individual weights could themselves vary from the standard they were meant to represent (Egan 1998, 301). Allocating a weight to a particular system is therefore difficult and this example is no exception, although it is close to two weights of 4.35 g and 4.4 g from London that may relate to coinage (*ibid.*, 307, table 15). The later object is a fragment of a large rectangular shoe buckle with decorated frame dating to the 18th century or 19th century. Similar buckles stratified in contemporary contexts have been found at Norwich and Winchester (Margeson 1993, 28, fig. 17, 179; Hinton 1990, 524, fig. 135, 1255).

SF 2. (2). Thin lead disc with an incised cross on one face. There are slight irregular indentations scattered over the other face. Maximum diameter 25 mm, 1 mm thick. Weight 4.4 g.

SF 1. (99999). Fragment of a large rectangular shoe buckle, curved on its long axis. The frame has raised beaded margins. Length (incomplete) 30 mm, width 41 mm.

SF 3. (2). Copper-alloy sheet, loosely folded over at one end. Length 40 mm, width 37 mm.

(52). Fragment of a sandstone block with one original straight edge surviving. The surfaces and the original edge are all worn smooth and weathered, and one broken edge is also weathered. The thickness decreases towards the edge. Maximum dimensions 85 by 72 mm, edge 79 mm long, thickness 44 to 32 mm.

B.3 Prehistoric Pottery

By David Mullin with a note by R Ixer on petrological analysis of a Neolithic pottery sherd from context 14

Introduction and methodology

- B.3.1 A total of 288 sherds of pottery weighing 0.705kg was recovered. The majority of the material was recovered from a series of pits, post-holes and ditches but is poorly preserved and fragmentary.
- B.3.2 The total numbers of sherds and weight were quantified by context. Fabrics were assessed macroscopically by x10 hand lens and microscope (x20). A single sherd of the Early Neolithic pottery was submitted to Dr Rob Ixer for petrographic analysis.

Results

- B.3.3 The majority of the material recovered was of Early Iron Age date, although earlier material was recovered from three features.

Early Neolithic

- B.3.4 Pit 15 (context 14) contained numerous small sherds weighing 0.16kg in a sandy fabric with much leached material, probably shell. At least three sherds have carinations, but

no base sherds or rims are present. This material represents at least one early Neolithic carinated bowl, but it is not possible to be certain about vessel numbers or size due to the lack of rims and the small size of the assemblage.

- B.3.5 A total of 22g of fired clay and a small amount of Early Iron Age pottery were also recovered from this feature.
- B.3.6 Context 91 contained a single rim with slashed decoration. The fabric of this vessel contained frequent, coarse crushed and burned flint and it is probably part of an early Neolithic "Mildenhall" style bowl.

Neolithic pottery description by Dr R.A.Ixer FSA

- B.3.7 Initially the exposed surfaces, cut surface and thin section of the sherd (as provided) from context 14 (pit 15) were investigated using a x20 hand lens and the Geological Society of America rock-color chart. A standard thin section was prepared and was investigated using transmitted light petrography. The emphasis of the report is on providing detailed petrographical characterisation of the sherd.
- B.3.8 Clay: A clean clay carries minor amounts of fine-grained, monocrystalline quartz, muscovite and small micrite (<0.1mm in diameter) areas. Larger, inorganic, non-plastics comprise sparse, rounded to angular, monocrystalline quartz; rounded to sub-rounded, polycrystalline quartz including fine-grained sandstone and chert; rare fossils and one phyllite and one fine-grained igneous rock clast
- B.3.9 Temper: Burned out plant matter is the most abundant temper. Linear plant matter but with circular cross sections suggesting it is grass (grass here includes cereals) stalks is linear in shape and has mainly burned out. Although some of it forms curved moulds within the clay much is straight, of a similar length and has sharp terminations suggesting cutting. Other plant matter shows a relict cellular texture possibly suggesting more woody material. The amount of plant matter clearly shows that this was intentionally added as temper.
- B.3.10 Rock fragments present in minor/trace amounts include micritic limestone, polycrystalline quartz including fine-grained sandstone and chert, plus two unusual rock clasts namely a biotite-muscovite-quartz phyllite and a fine-grained pyroxene-bearing igneous rock. A very large fragment of a mollusc shell with sparry calcite infilling voids, suggesting that it is a fossil rather than Recent in age is present. No provenance is attempted.

Early Bronze Age

- B.3.11 Ditch 30 (context 28) contained a single sherd in a grog fabric, decorated with a chevron design. This most likely belongs to a Collared Urn, but a Roman sherd was also recovered from this context.

Early Iron Age

- B.3.12 Pit 6 (context 5) contained 4 sherds weighing 11g of possible Early Iron Age pottery, alongside 46g of fired clay. Small amounts of material in a similar fabric was recovered from pit 80. Pit 53 (context 52) had 5 sherds (17g) in flint tempered fabric.
- B.3.13 Pit 12 (context 11) contained a total of 274g of pottery in a variety of fabrics. The majority is a fine-walled sand tempered fabric, two sherds of which show a carinated profile and probably belong to an Early Iron Age bowl. The other fabrics have a variety of different concentrations of flint, with two refitting rim sherds and one with a brushed finish. All are fine-walled and also probably early Iron Age bowls. A total of 29g of fired clay was also recovered from this pit.

Roman

- B.3.14 Only one definite Roman sherd (4g) was recovered and this was found at the top of ditch **30**. A possible Roman sherd (4g) was found in furrow **59**. A few very small sherds were undated and may date to this period.

Discussion

- B.3.15 The Early Neolithic material from pit **15** is significant and adds further context to the Neolithic material recovered from the Great Ouse gravels at Eynesbury, where similar material was recovered from pits and a hengiform monument (Ellis 2004). Sandy fabrics with leached voids were present here, but it is not clear from the published report (Mepham 2004) if these voids represent leached shell or burnt-out organic matter. Similar leached fabrics were also present at Hurst Fen (Clark *et al* 1960), whilst organic temper was present amongst the pottery recovered from Etton (Kinnes 1998).
- B.3.16 It is not possible to be certain about the number of vessels represented, or to what degree they were open or closed forms. The lack of decoration does, however, have much in common with the Neolithic bowls from Eynesbury, where only one of a total of 29 vessels was decorated. No carinated bowls were present at Eynesbury, however, but this form was present at both Etton and Hurst Fen.
- B.3.17 Collared Urn was also present at Eynesbury, where a complete vessel containing cremated human bone was recovered from a pit. The vessel was tempered with coarse grog, but the use of grog as a tempering agent in the region appears to be long-lived as grog-tempered fabrics here included Beaker and Late Neolithic material.
- B.3.18 A reasonably large assemblage of Early Iron Age material was recovered from Eynesbury. This was in a variety of fabrics which included flint and sand and shouldered vessels were also present in the assemblage. The material from the current excavation fits well within this tradition of potting and adds to the limited number of sites in the area from which Early Iron Age pottery has been retrieved.
- B.3.19 Fabric codes used in pottery and fired clay database (Tables 2 and 4):

F1: frequent, small flint inclusions (<2mm)

F2: moderate, medium flint inclusions (2-5mm)

F3: moderate, small flint inclusions (<2mm), oxidised outer surface

F4: fine crushed flint (<1mm) with larger occasional flint inclusions (up to 8mm). Fine, carinated bowl.

F5: sparse, small flint inclusions (<1mm), surface brushing.

F6: frequent crushed and burned flint up to 8mm.

F+Q: flint and quartz sand

F+G: flint and grog

Q: quartz sand

Q+G: quartz sand and grog

Q+S: quartz sand and shell

O: organic

Context	Cut	Feature	NO.	Weight	Rim	Wall	Fabric	Decoration	Notes	Date
5	6	Pit	2	7			F2			?EIA
5	6	Pit	2	4			Q+G			
9	10	Ditch	1	1			F		crumb	
11	12	Pit	2	12	2		F4		refitting rim	EIA
11	12	Pit	39	91		2	Q			EIA
11	12	Pit	16	37			F1			EIA
11	12	Pit	11	35			F2			EIA
11	12	Pit	6	48			F3			EIA
11	12	Pit	2	17			F+Q			EIA
11	12	Pit	1	10			F5			EIA
11	12	Pit	2	6			F+G			EIA
11	12	Pit	12	18			F			?EIA
14	15	Pit	107	160			O		at least 3x carinations	NEO
14	15	Pit	1	3			F1			EIA
14	15	Pit	45	22			Q			
14	15	Pit	5	5			F1			EIA
17	19	Ditch	9	20	1		F1			EIA
28	30	Ditch	1	10	1		G	1	chevron on rim	EBA
28	30	Ditch	1	4			Q			RO
29	30	Ditch	1	2			F			?LBA
45	47	Pit	1	5			Q			?RO
52	53	Pit	5	17			F1			EIA
58	59	Furrow	1	4			Q			?RO
66	67	Pit	1	5			Q+G			?IA
79	80	Pit	3	2			F1			?EIA
81	82	Pit	1	1					crumb	?
85	86	Ditch	2	6			F+G			
89	90	Ditch	11	2			F		crumbs	
91	92	Furrow	1	14	1		F6	1	slashed rim	NEO
99999			1	154		1	Q			?-med or RO
			293	722						

Table 3 Pottery

B.4 Roof Tile

By Rob Atkins

Introduction and methodology

- B.4.1 A small quantity of ceramic roof tile fragments (27 fragment weighing 956g) was recovered from nine separate contexts (Table 4). Seven of these contexts were furrows and single fragments came from the top of ditch 49 and from within pit 65.
- B.4.2 The roof tiles are probably all peg tiles, most date to the medieval period although a few are post-medieval in date. It is likely these derived from manuring scatters.

Context	Cut	Feature	No.	Weight	Comments
22	23	Furrow	3	12	orange oxidised sandy fabric
31	32	Furrow	8	434	Roof tile in two fabrics: 1) 2 yellow sandy (385g) 2) 6 orange oxidised sandy (49g). Mortar on two.
37	38	Furrow	3	37	Orange/red sandy fabric. Flint inclusions. Post-medieval. 1 mortared
48	49	Ditch	1	17	Orange/red sandy with flint inclusions
54	55	Furrow	4	87	Roof tile in two fabrics: 1) 3 orange sandy oxidised (47g) 2) 1 mixed orange/yellow - crude (40g)
56	57	Furrow	2	275	Roof tile in two fabrics: 1) 1 orange sandy oxidised (hard) fabric (191g). Flint tempered. Mortar on top edge and internal. 2) 1 orange reduced (hard) fabric (84g). Mortar on one side.
58	59	Furrow	4	61	Roof tile in two fabrics: 1) 3 orange sandy (45g) ? post-medieval 2) 1 orange/yellow crudely mixed (16g)
64	65	Pit	1	15	Post-med tile in a red (hard) fabric.
91	92	Furrow	1	18	Yellow sandy fabric.
			27	956	

Table 4 *Roof tile*

B.5 Fired Clay or Daub

By Rob Atkins and David Mullin

Introduction and methodology

- B.5.1 A small quantity of very abraded fired clay lumps all in a orange sandy with flint temper fabric (57 fragments 111g) was recovered from seven features (Table 5). None of the fired clay was diagnostic. Where dated the fired clay were recovered from prehistoric and Roman features but it is uncertain whether the fired clay are remnants of daub or from domestic or industrial activities.
- B.5.2 Pit 15 was probably Neolithic in date and the fired clay from this feature may represent hearth material. Pits 6 and 12 are Early Iron Age and these two contexts produced over half the fired clay from the site (13 fragments 46g and 17 fragments 29g respectively). In these three pits, there was a reasonable quantity of fired clay/daub.

Context	Cut	Feature	Date	NOSH	Weight	Fabric
5	6	Pit	EIA?	13	46	flint
9	10	Ditch	IA or RO?	3	5	flint
11	12	Pit	EIA	17	29	flint
14	15	Pit	NEO?	14	22	flint
45	47	Pit	RO?	6	8	flint
62	63	Pit	0	2	4	flint
74	76	post-hole	0	2	5	flint
				57	111	

Table 5 *Fired Clay*

APPENDIX C. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Faunal Remains

By Chris Faine

Introduction and Methods

- C.1.1 A total of 0.97kg of animal bone was recovered from the excavation consisting of 39 fragments (16 of these being identifiable to species). All bones were collected by hand apart from those recovered from environmental samples; hence a bias towards smaller fragments is to be expected. Faunal material was largely excavated from pits and ditches dating from the Iron Age and Romano-British periods, with identifiable fragments being recovered from nine contexts. Contexts 11, 14, 17, 20, 26, 37, 45, 66, 74, 85 and 87 contained no identifiable fragments.
- C.1.2 Bones were recorded using a version of the criteria described in Davis (1992) and Albarella and Davis (1994). Initially all elements were assessed in terms of siding (where appropriate), completeness, tooth wear stages (also where applicable) and epiphyseal fusion. Completeness was assessed in terms of percentage and zones present (after Dobney and Reilly 1988). Initially the whole identifiable assemblage was quantified in terms of number of individual fragments (NISP) and minimum numbers of individuals MNI (Table 6). The ageing of the population was largely achieved by examining the wear stages of cheek teeth of cattle, sheep/goat and pig (after Grant 1982). Wear stages were recorded for lower molars of cattle, sheep/goat and pig, both isolated and in mandibles.

The Assemblage

- C.1.3 Table 6 shows the species distribution for the assemblage. Faunal remains from ditch contexts are limited, consisting largely of loose cattle and sheep/goat teeth and long bone fragments. A single horse molar was recovered from context 3. The majority of identifiable fragments (NISP: 9) were recovered from Early Iron Age pit fill 53. These consisted of fragmentary cattle mandible, inominate, humerus and cervical vertebra, along with sheep/goat mandible, tibia and radius. An extremely fragmented portion of ungulate metatarsal was also recovered and tentatively identified as red deer. The cattle mandible was from an animal around 2-2 ½ years of age at death, with the sheep/goat mandible from an animal around 3-4 years of age. The fragmentary nature of the remains makes identifying butchery difficult. However the sheep/goat radius was chopped midshaft. Also present in the context were fragments of quern or rubbing stone.

Conclusion

- C.1.4 Aside from the material from context 53 the faunal sample is too small to draw any conclusions from. The material from context 53 consists of non meat bearing elements and may in the first instance have represented processing waste. The reason for their deposition along with other finds is unclear. Similar features were excavated at Eynesbury associated with a Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age "ritual" pit alignment (Ellis 2004). However, these features most likely represent related activity in the area rather than being ritual deposits in themselves, and it possible that the material in context 53 can be interpreted in the same way.

	NISP	NISP%	MNI	MNI%
Cattle (<i>Bos</i>)	9	56.3	6	54.5
Sheep/Goat (<i>Ovis/Capra</i>)	5	31.3	3	27.3
Horse (<i>Equus caballus</i>)	1	6.2	1	9.1
Red deer? (<i>Cervus elaphus</i>)	1	6.2	1	9.1
Total:	16	100	11	100

Table 6 *Animal species distribution for the assemblage*

C.2 Environmental samples

By Rachel Fosberry

Introduction and Methods

- C.2.1 A single bulk sample taken during the evaluation phase of Longsands College had shown that there was limited potential for the recovery of charred plant remains other than charcoal. Consequently, during the subsequent excavation of this site, sampling was targeted towards deposits that were considered to have archaeobotanical potential. Nine samples were taken from across the excavated area. Features sampled included pits and post-holes of dates ranging from Bronze Age to Roman and a single Iron Age ditch.
- C.2.2 The samples were soaked in a solution of sodium carbonate for one day prior to processing in order to break down the heavy clay.
- C.2.3 The total volume of each sample was processed to maximise recovery. Up to thirty litres of each sample was processed by tank flotation for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The flot was collected in a 0.3mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through a 0.5mm sieve. Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. The dried residue was passed through 5mm and 2mm sieves and a magnet was dragged through each resulting fraction prior to sorting for artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope at x16 magnification and the presence of any plant remains or artefacts are noted on Table 7.

Results

Sample No.	Context No.	Cut No.	Feature Type	Flot Contents	Residue Contents
10	5	6	Pit	Moderate charcoal	Pottery, flint debitage
11	11	12	Pit	Charcoal rich, single glume base, 3x cereal grains, single rodent limb bone, snails	Pottery, fired clay, flint debitage
12	14	15	Pit	Charcoal only	Pottery, fired clay, flint debitage, calcined bone
13	18	19	Ditch	Moderate charcoal, 1x partial cereal grain, snails	Calcined bone

14	45	47	Pit	Charcoal rich	Burnt flint
15	52	53	Pit	Moderate charcoal	Animal bone
16	72	73	post-hole	Sparse charcoal	No finds
17	74	76	post-hole	Charcoal rich	No finds
18	79	80	Pit	Sparse charcoal, snails	Flint debitage

Table 7 *Environmental sample results*

C.2.4 Preservation is by charring and is generally poor. Modern contaminants in the form of rootlets are present in all of the samples.

Discussion

C.2.5 The samples examined from the excavation closely resemble those taken from the evaluation in that they were largely unproductive. A few cereal grains were recovered from the Iron Age features but these were abraded and unidentifiable.

C.2.6 Charcoal was recovered from all of the samples. The general morphology suggests that it is wood that is being burnt rather than grass/straw. The small fragment sizes would not be suitable for species identification but the quantity would be sufficient for dating purposes.

C.3 Shell

By Rob Atkins

C.3.1 Two oyster shells were recovered from context 45 (Pit 47).

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APPENDIX E. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	Oxfordar3-90562		
Project Name	Neolithic, Early Iron Age pits, and periphery Later Iron Age and Roman activity at Longsands Community College, St Neots, Cambridgeshire		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	25-05-2010	Finish	18-06-2010
Previous Work (by OA East)	Yes	Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	STNLOG09	Planning App. No.	H/05030/06/CC
HER No.	CHER 3126	Related HER/OASIS No.	CHER 2350 and 2743

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt

Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Field Observation (periodic visits)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Record
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Excavation (100%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Field Walking
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Recorded Observation	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Metal Detector Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pit Survey
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open-Area Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Watching Brief

Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

List feature types using the NMR Monument Type Thesaurus and significant finds using the MDA Object type Thesaurus together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

Monument	Period	Object	Period
pit	Neolithic -4k to -2k	pottery	Neolithic -4k to -2k
pits and ditches	Late Prehistoric -4k to 43	pottery and animal b	Late Prehistoric -4k to 43
pit	Roman 43 to 410	pottery	Roman 43 to 410

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	Huntingdon	Longsands Community College Longsands Road St Neots Cambridgeshire PE 19 1LQ
Parish	St Neots town	
HER	CHER 3126	
Study Area	0.35ha	National Grid Reference TL 1911 6072

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Kasia Gdaniec, Cambridgeshire County Council
Project Design Originator	James Drummond-Murray, Oxford Archaeology East
Project Manager	James Drummond-Murray
Supervisor	Rob Atkins

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
CCC Store, Landbeach	Oxford East	CCC Store, Landbeach
STNLOG09	STNLOG09	STNLOG09

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input type="checkbox"/> Images	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/> Map
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Matrices
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm
<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/> Misc.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:

Sections

Limit of Excavation -----

Cut _____

Deposit Horizon _____


Top Surface/Top of Natural _____


Break in Section/
Limit of Section Drawing -----

Cut Number 117


Deposit Number 117


Ordnance Datum 18.45m OD
X


Pottery 


Stone 

Flint 

Chalk 

Pebble 

Charcoal 

Sample Number 

Convention Key

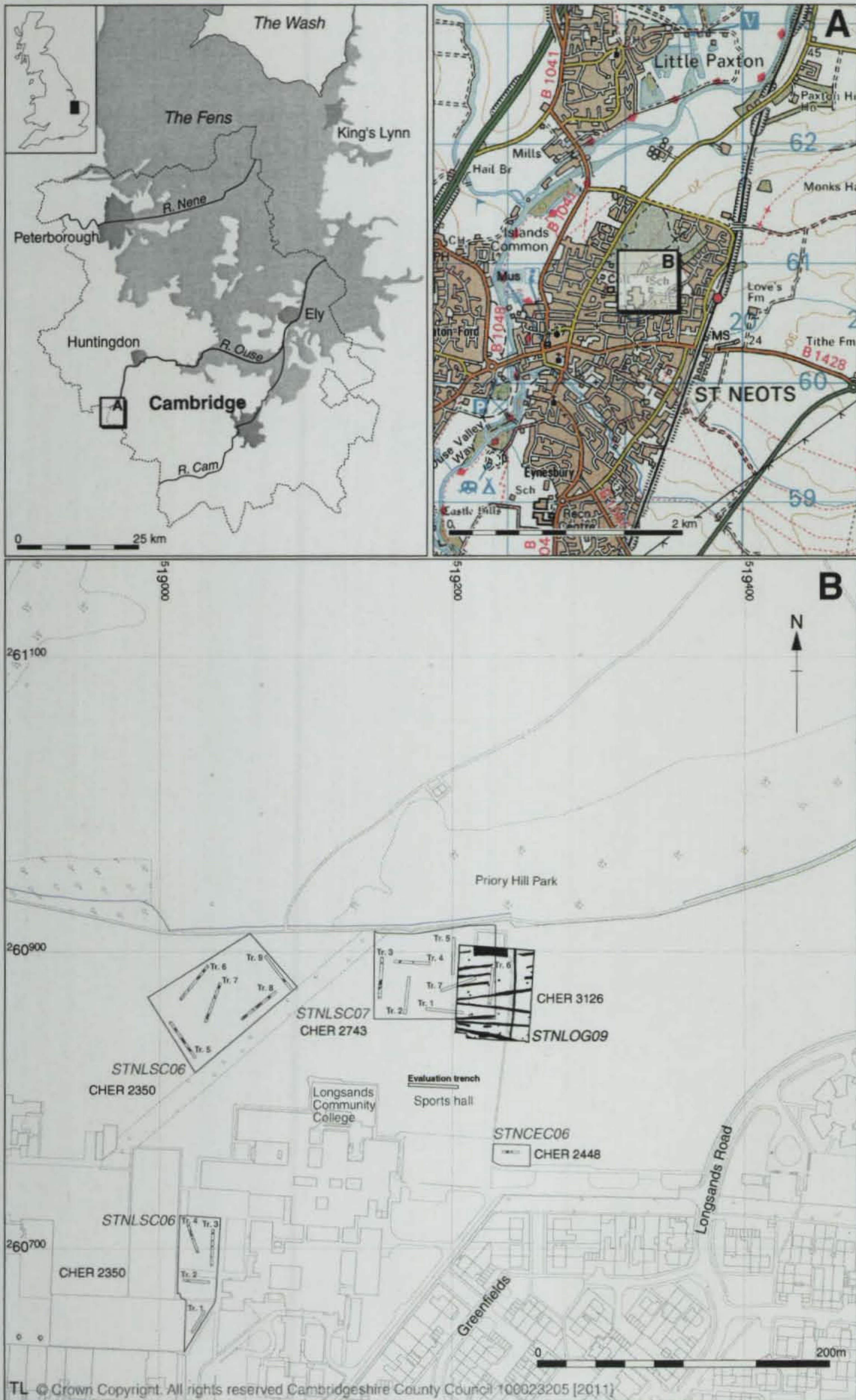


Figure 1: Location of excavation area and evaluation trench (black) with the previous evaluations (dark grey)

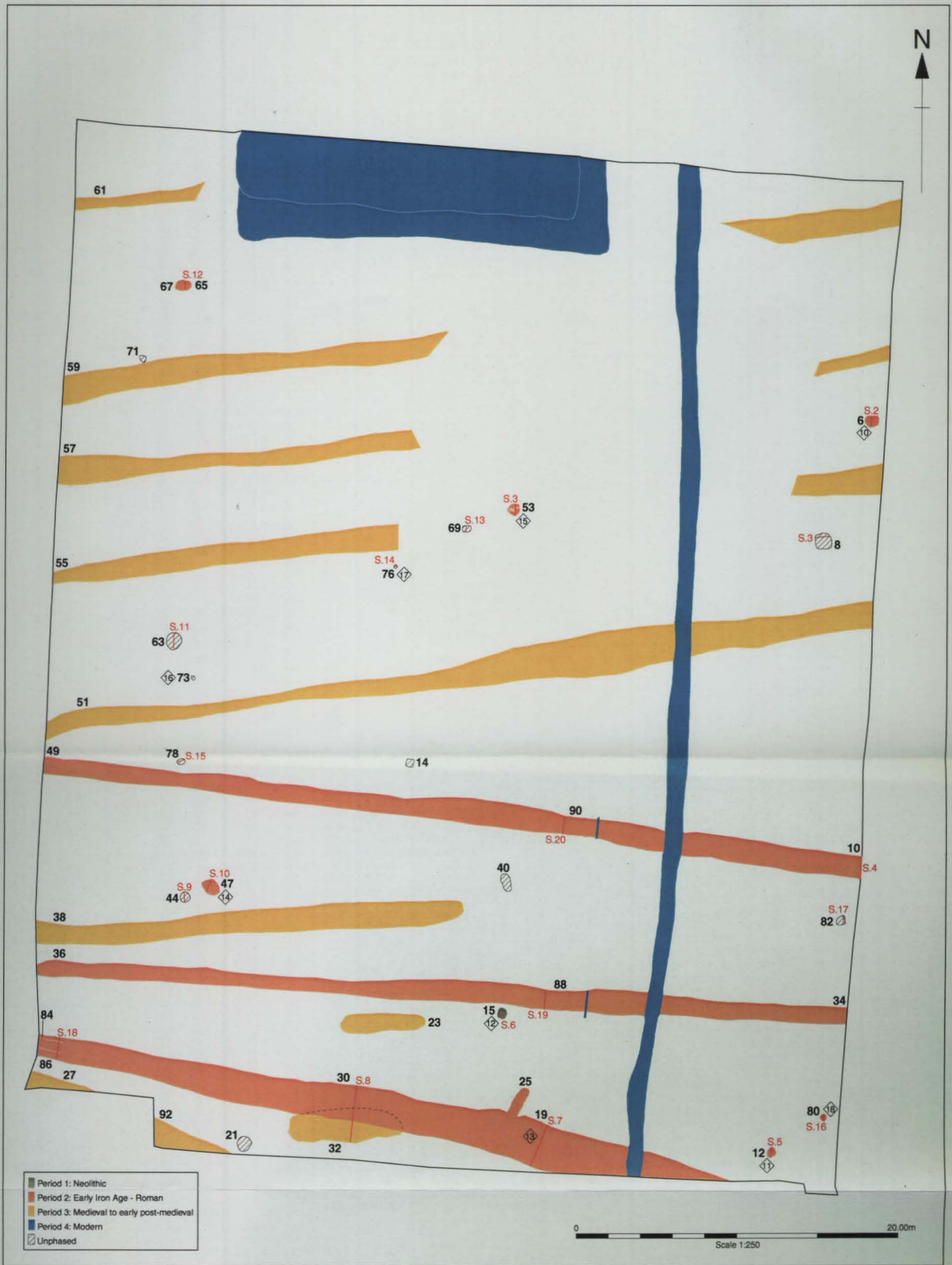


Figure 2: Phase features within excavation area

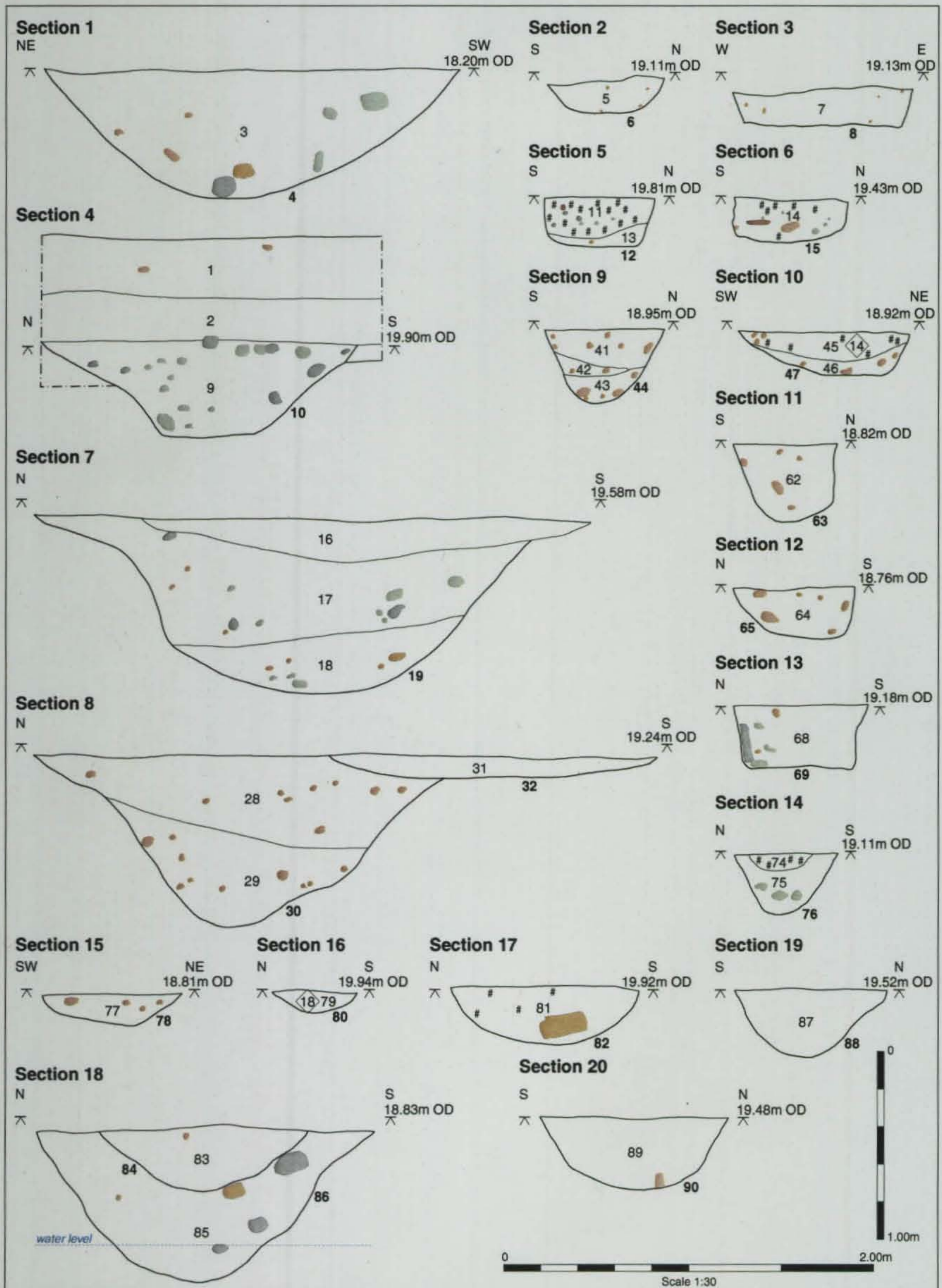


Figure 3: Section drawings



Plate 1: Sports Hall trench looking east



*Plate 2: Early Neolithic
pit 15 looking west
showing large placed
stones ?*



*Plate 3: Early Iron Age
pit 53 looking west
showing probable
placed deposits*



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