

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit

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**An Archaeological Watching Brief
at Creek Road, March,
Cambridgeshire.**

by

Laurence Jones

For further information please contact:
Simon Buteux, Iain Ferris or Peter Leach (Directors)
Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
Tel: 0121 414 5513
Fax: 0121 414 5516

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Introduction

In June 1996 Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit undertook an archaeological watching brief at Creek Road, March, Cambridgeshire (NGR TQ 418 967, Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Lawson Price Environmental on behalf of J.Sainsbury PLC prior to the construction of a retail food store. Geotechnical investigations on the south-east part of the site indicated the presence of a localised peat deposit or "soft spot" which needed to be removed for engineering purposes before the construction of the new building. This "soft spot" was located near to the position of a limekiln depicted on the 1889 1st Edition O.S. map (Chadwick 1996).

Objectives

The main aim of the watching brief was to locate and record any possible remains of the former limekiln that may have been revealed during the excavation of the peat deposit.

Methodology

Modern concrete and overburden was removed by a hymax-type, tracked mechanical excavator down to the peat deposit under archaeological supervision. Any archaeological features or deposits encountered were rapidly cleaned by hand and recorded. The peat deposit was then removed by machine.

Results

The extent of the peat deposit within the footprint of the new building was ascertained by the excavation of four linked trenches (Fig. 2). The stratigraphic sequence in all these trenches was similar (Fig. 3).

Under the modern concrete and sand and gravel make up (1000), 0.20m deep, was a dark brown, slightly sandy silty clay (1002), 0.80m deep, and containing brick fragments, sherds of post-medieval pottery and a sherd of medieval cooking pot. To the south, this was overlain by a greyish brown silty sand (1001), containing modern brick and concrete fragments, up to 0.80m deep. Below 1002, to the north and east, was an orange brown sandy silt (1005). Below 1002 to the south and west was a dark brown peat deposit (1003) which varied in thickness from 0.20m to 0.60m. Underlying 1003 and 1005 was an alluvial, grey silty sand with occasional orange mottling (1004). No features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed.

Discussion

The precise location of the limekiln was not clear from the map evidence. No evidence was found of the post-medieval limekiln or any other structure within the area of the excavations during the archaeological watching brief. It seems likely therefore that the limekiln lay outside the area of the excavations.

Acknowledgements

The project was managed by Alex Jones who also edited this report. Thanks are due to Mike Burgoyne of Shal and Louise Austin of Cambridgeshire County Council.

Bibliography

Chadwick P.R. 1996 Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of Land at Creek Road, March, Cambridgeshire (Unpubl. Client Report).

List of Figures

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: Location of excavation

Figure 3: North-west facing section

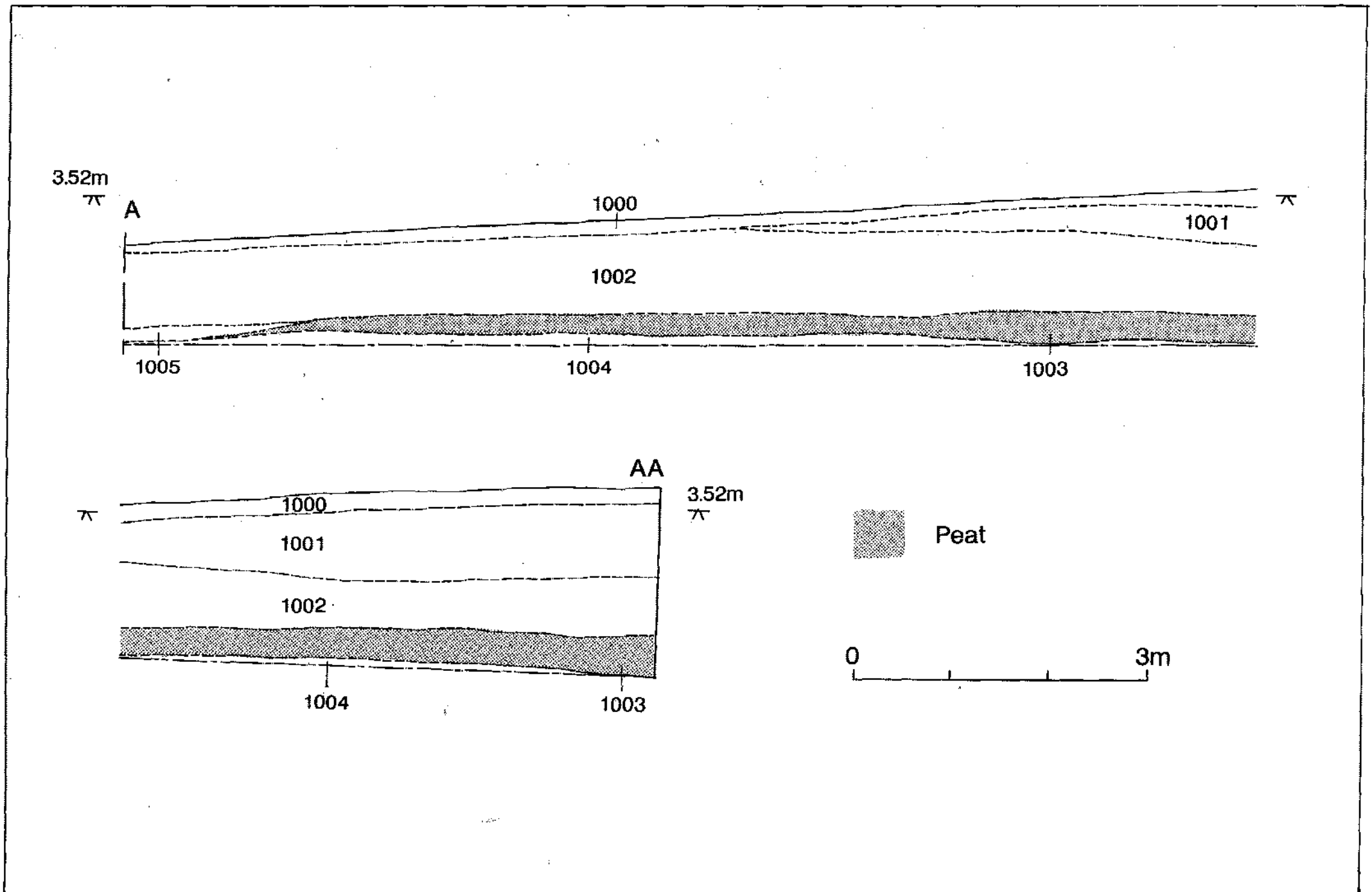


Figure 3