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**Dogsthorpe, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire**  
**An Archaeological Evaluation 1997**

by  
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# **DOGSTHORPE, PETERBOROUGH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

## **AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 1997**

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## **AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 1997**

### **1.0: SUMMARY**

The archaeological potential of an area proposed for clay extraction and landfill (hereinafter called 'the site') was tested by an archaeological evaluation involving a brief desk-based assessment, followed by trial-trenching.

No features, except field boundaries, were identified within the study area by the desk-based assessment. Similarly, no datable archaeological features were identified by trial-trenching, although two worked flint tools, and a very small quantity of tile of possible Roman date, were recovered from the ploughsoil.

### **2.0: INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)**

This report describes the results of an archaeological assessment of approximately 3 ha. of land, located adjoining Eye Road, Dogsthorpe, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire (centred on NGR. TF 217025). Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit was commissioned to undertake the archaeological evaluation by Shanks and McEwan, in accordance with the guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (November 1990). The methodology of this evaluation conforms to a design brief prepared by the County Archaeology Office, Cambridgeshire County Council (Austin 1997), and a Specification prepared by BUFAU (Jones 1997).

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains which may be affected by the landfill development. In particular the evaluation was intended to determine the potential of the site to contain evidence of Roman settlement or activity, recorded both to the north and to the southeast of the site. It was also intended to consider the significance of any sequences of alluvial deposits associated with archaeological features.

### **3.0: THE SITE AND ITS SETTING**

The site and surrounding area in the parish of Eye have been the subject of a detailed archaeological survey (Hall 1987), although the area of the present site was not investigated for the Hall Fenland survey. Little evidence of Mesolithic or Neolithic activity in this parish has been found. To the southeast of the site was an occupation site of Late Bronze Age date (Hall 1987, fig. 15, site 2: Cambridgeshire County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) No. 02985). To the north of the site a cropmarked possible ring-ditch (SMR No. 03155) was identified in 1950-1, but has since been quarried out. The other Bronze Age sites in the parish are barrows, located near to Catswater, which runs approximately north-south, to the east of the site. The only

identified settlement of Iron Age date in the parish is located to the southeast of the site, and comprises a scatter of pottery and animal bone associated with three cropmarked hut circles (SMR No. 03025).

The southeastern bounds of the site are formed by the course of the Car Dyke (SMR No. 02227), a canal of Roman date, which is no longer visible as an earthwork within the site. A stretch of the dyke to the north of the Welland Road is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Cambridgeshire County Monument No. 219). A section of the dyke in Northborough parish measures 52m in width, and comprises a low central zone between two linear gravel spreads which represent the eroded banks, now measuring no more than 1m in height (Hall 1987, 28). Roman activity in the parish of Eye includes settlements to the east of the site, near to Catswater. To the north of the site is a Roman kiln site, or dump of waste, represented by a large spread of tile (SMR No. 03010), which could also derive from a waste cargo carried on the Car Dyke. Also to the north of the site is the location of a possible villa (SMR No. 03155), identified from a scatter of *tegulae*, hypocaust fragments and box-tiles. In 1984 two skeletons (SMR No. 00182), buried one top of the other were identified during quarrying, immediately to the southeast of the site. These skeletons were associated with pottery of late 1st-2nd century date. The Roman fen edge lay approximately 400m to the southeast and to the northeast of the site (Hall 1987, fig. 16).

An Anglo-Saxon cemetery was identified 1.5 km to the northeast of the site. The village of Eye was probably extant by the Domesday Survey of 1086, although it is not mentioned in documents until 1125. The medieval settlement was dominated by Peterborough Abbey, and comprised separate villages at Singlesole to the northeast of the site, and Eyebury and Tanholt to the southeast of the site.

Nineteenth-century mapping indicates that the site lay to the north of Eastwood House, later Eastwood Farm. No buildings are recorded on the site.

#### **4.0: METHODOLOGY**

As a first stage in site evaluation a brief desk-based assessment of secondary historical and archaeological sources was undertaken to place the site within its topographic, historical and archaeological context.

Trial-trenches were positioned to examine the site as widely as possible, although a particular priority in trial-trenching was the examination of the area nearest to the Roman sites recorded to the northwest of the site, and also the southern zone of the site, near to the Car Dyke, although trial-trenching in the immediate vicinity of the dyke was prevented by prior tree planting. All six trenches measured 2m in width and 50m in length, amounting in total to a 2% sample by area of the site.

In each trench the overburden, comprising the ploughsoil, was removed by a mechanical excavator under archaeological control, to expose the uppermost horizon of the natural subsoil. A sample of the anthropogenic, or suspected anthropogenic features was tested by hand excavation.

Recording was by means of printed pro-forma recording sheets, supplemented by plans, sections and photographs, held in the archive.

## **5.0: RESULTS (Fig. 2)**

### **5.1: Trench 1**

Trench 1 was aligned northwest-southeast in the southwest corner of the site. A machine-cut sondage at the southeastern end of the trench exposed the uppermost surface of the underlying gravel (1003) at a depth of 1m below the modern surface. The gravel was sealed by a naturally-deposited layer of brown-yellow clay (1002), containing patches of blue-grey clay. The uppermost horizon of layer 1002, exposed by machining, was cut by a land-drain (F104), and by three features (F101-F103). Curvilinear feature F101 was 0.15m in depth, and was recorded for a length of 1.5m in the trench. Feature F102 was oval in plan, measuring 2.2m in length, and contained a deeper disturbance in its base (F103). Features F101-F103 were interpreted to be of glacial origin, or derived from tree root disturbance. Layer 1002, and features F100-F104 were sealed by the brown silt-clay ploughsoil (1000).

No anthropogenic features of archaeological significance were identified in this trench, and no finds were collected.

### **5.2: Trench 2**

Trench 2 was aligned northeast-southwest in the centre of the site. The natural subsoil, a brown-yellow sand-clay (2001) was recorded at a depth of 0.3m below the modern surface. The subsoil was cut by two field drains (F200-F201). The infilled field drains, and the subsoil were sealed by a layer of dark brown silt-clay ploughsoil (2000).

Other than the field drains no anthropogenic features were identified in this trench, and no finds were collected.

### **5.3: Trench 3**

Trench 3 was aligned northwest-southeast in the north of the site. The natural subsoil was a yellow clay (3001), containing patches of blue clay. The subsoil was cut by two field drains (F302-F303). The northeastern butt-end of a possible linear feature (F300), filled with brown silt-clay (3002) was recorded cutting the subsoil towards the south of the trench. A further elongated, oval feature (F301), filled with brown silt-clay (3003) was recorded cutting the subsoil in the extreme north of the trench. Both features may have been caused by root or geological disturbance. The subsoil, field drains and infilled natural features were sealed by the brown silt-clay ploughsoil (3000).

No anthropogenic features of archaeological significance were identified in this trench, and no finds were collected.

#### 5.4: Trench 4

Trench 4 was aligned southwest-northeast in the northeast of the site. The subsoil was a brown-yellow clay (4001), with patches of grey-blue clay, located at a depth of 0.3m below the modern surface. A sub-rectangular disturbance (F400) in the subsoil, recorded at the western end of the trench, filled with grey-brown clay-silt (4003), was probably caused by tree disturbance. A further amorphous disturbance in the subsoil to the west (F401), filled with similar material was similarly interpreted. Other amorphous disturbances in the subsoil may be attributed to root (F402), or animal disturbance (F403-F405). Features F400-F405 and the subsoil were sealed by a layer of dark brown silt-clay topsoil (4000).

No anthropogenic features were identified in this trench. A narrow, blade-like flint flake recovered from the fill of feature F405 was probably intrusive; no other finds were recovered from this trench.

#### 5.5: Trench 5

Trench 5 was aligned northwest-southeast in the east of the site. The subsoil comprised a yellow clay (5001), containing patches of blue-grey clay, located at a depth of 0.3m below the modern surface. Two field drains (F503-F504) were identified in this trench, cutting the subsoil. Three amorphous areas (F500-F503), first revealed as patches of dark brown silt-clay overlying the subsoil were identified as root holes, or geological features, following hand-excavation. Other disturbances (5002-5010) in the subsoil were identified after hand-cleaning to have been caused by animal burrows or root disturbance. The subsoil, field drains and the natural and geological features were sealed by the brown silt-clay ploughsoil (5000).

No anthropogenic features of archaeological significance were identified in this trench, and no finds were collected, with the exception of tile fragments found in the ploughsoil (5000).

#### 5.6: Trench 6

Trench 6 was aligned approximately north-south in the extreme south of the site. The subsoil here comprised a brown-yellow clay (6001), containing bands of blue-grey clay, recorded at a depth of 0.3m below the modern surface. Two plough furrows were recorded in the subsoil surface (6004, 6005). Two sub-circular disturbances in the subsoil (6006, 6003), both measuring 0.1m in depth, and filled with grey-brown silt-clay were identified by hand-excavation to be probably caused by root disturbance. The subsoil, and the infilled areas of plough and root disturbance, were sealed by the brown silt-clay ploughsoil (6000).

No anthropogenic features of archaeological significance were identified in this trench. A flint end-scraper and tile fragments were recovered from the ploughsoil (6000).

## **6.0: SPECIALISTS REPORTS**

### **6.1: Flint** by Lynne Bevan

One narrow, blade-like flake was recovered from feature F405 (Trench 4) and an end-scrapers was found in the ploughsoil (6000), in Trench 6. The flake was of a poor quality beige flint, probably derived from a river gravel source, and the scraper, extensively worked at both ends was of a high quality dark grey-black flint, which might have originated from a primary source, since remnant cortex has the appearance of flint mined from chalk deposits. Neither piece is chronologically diagnostic.

### **6.2: Tile**

Three sherds of tile were recovered from the ploughsoil (5000) in Trench 5, and two sherds derived from the ploughsoil (6000) in Trench 6. This tile could possibly be Roman in date, although the fragments were not diagnostic.

No other finds were recovered.

## **7.0: DISCUSSION**

The Trench 1 sondage revealed a gravel horizon at a depth of 1m below the modern surface. This gravel was sealed by deposits of brown-yellow clay, recorded in all trenches, forming the uppermost horizon of the subsoil, which contained patches of blue-grey clay, recorded at a depth of 0.3m below the modern surface. No alluvial horizons were identified.

With the exception of the field drains no anthropogenic features were identified by trial-trenching. The other possible features identified were found by hand-excavation to have been caused by animal or root disturbance. The small number of artifacts collected were residual. The two flint artifacts found probably derived from early prehistoric activity in the vicinity. This trial-trenching provides negative evidence for the extent of Roman settlement and activity in the vicinity of the Car Dyke. No evidence was found of the later exploitation of this area, except for plough-marks.

## **7.0: IMPLICATIONS AND PROPOSALS**

In view of the negative results of the trial-trenching further archaeological fieldwork in advance of quarrying at this particular location may not be justified.

## **8.0: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## **9.0: REFERENCES AND SOURCES**

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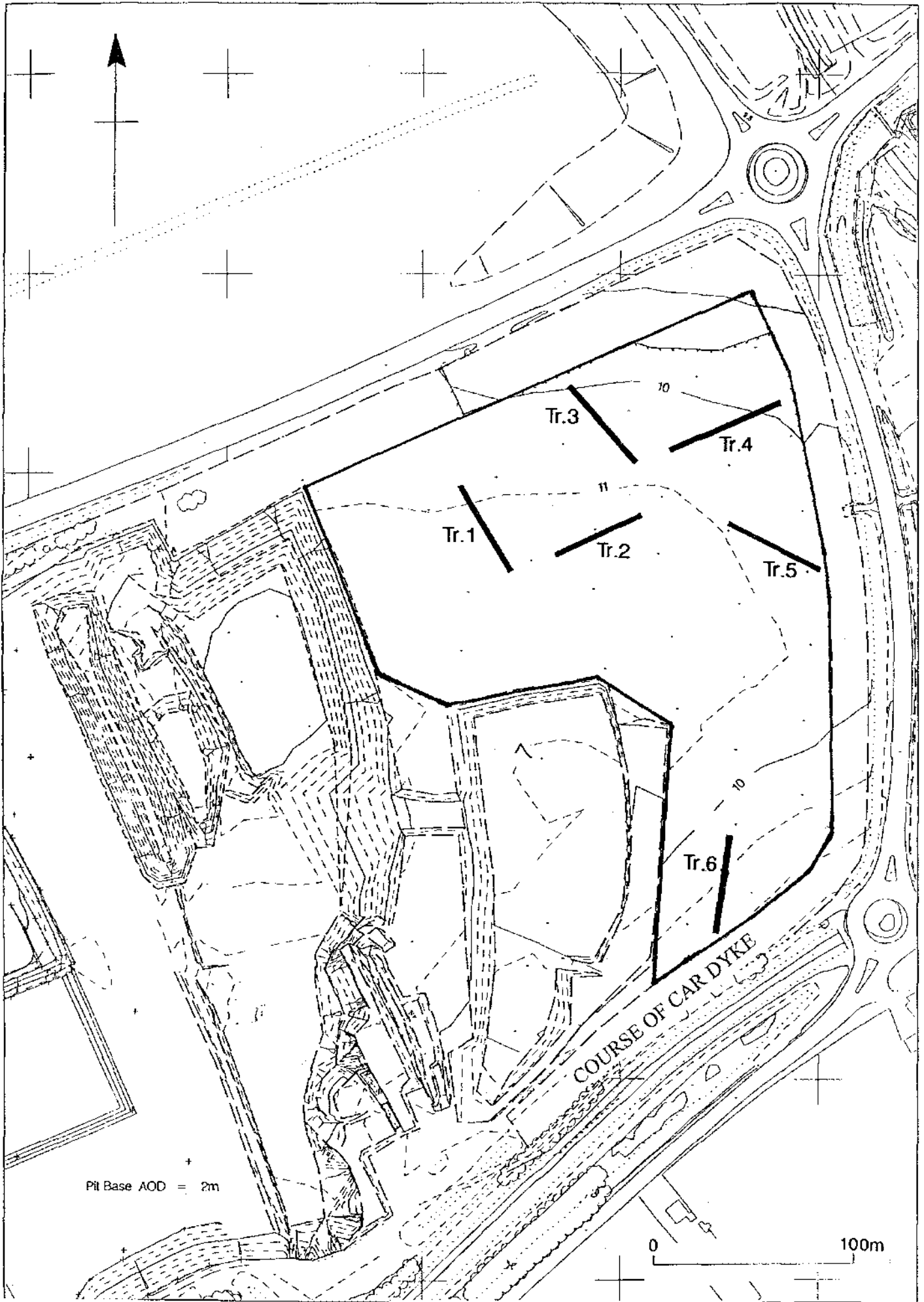


Fig. 2