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archaeological field unit

CAM ARC Report Number 1003

Sawston Hall, Sawston, Cambridgeshire

Excavation Area 1: Late Saxon & Early Medieval

Richard Mortimer

February 2008

Cambridgeshire County Council
Environment & Community Services

Commissioned by Adrian Critchlow

CAM ARC Report Number 1003

Sawston Hall, Sawston, Cambridgeshire

Excavation Area 1: Late Saxon & Early Medieval

Richard Mortimer MIFA

With contributions by Barry John Bishop MA, Chris Faine MA, Carole Fletcher BA AIFA, Rachel Fosberry and Dr Gabor Thomas

Site Code: SAW SHA 06
CHER Event Number: ECB2427
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Author	R Mortimer		
Checked By	J D-Murray		
Authorised By	J D-Murray		

Editor: James Drummond-Murray MIFA
Illustrators: Gillian Greer BA MAAIS and Edeltraud Aspoeck

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PROJECT DETAILS				
Project name	Sawston Hall, Sawston, Cambs. Excavation Area 1: Late Saxon & Early Medieval			
Short description	The first excavation stage at Sawston Hall has produced archaeological remains (finds and features) dating from the 8th to 13th centuries comprising of pits, ditches, an infilled solution hollow, pottery, faunal remains and a late Saxon pewter brooch. Neolithic and Bronze Age material was recovered residually and remains were recorded from the WW2 Airforce occupation of the site.			
Project dates	Start	18/12/06	End	22/12/06
Previous work	Desktop CCC AFU Report 743 Evaluation CCC AFU Report 977		Future work	yes
Associated project reference codes	CAM ARC site code SAW SHA 06; HER Event number ECB2427			
Type of project	Excavation, environmental sampling, metal detecting			
Site status	none			
Current land use (list all that apply)	Scrub, waste ground			
Planned development	Car park			
Monument types / period (list all that apply and use thesaurus of monument types)	Ditches, pits, natural features. Mid-Late Saxon and Early Medieval			
Significant finds: Artefact type / period (list all that apply and use MDA object thesaurus)	Early/Middle/Late Saxon pottery assemblage. Carolingian Pewter Brooch			
PROJECT LOCATION				
County	Cambs	Parish	Sawston	
HER for region	Cambridgeshire			
Site address (including postcode)	Sawston Hall, Sawston, Cambs CB2 4JR			
Study area (sq.m or ha)	700 sq m			
National grid reference	Easting (6 figure)	4884	Northing (6 figure)	4912
Height OD	Max OD	25.5m	Min OD	25m
PROJECT ORIGINATORS				
Organisation	Cambridgeshire County Council, CAM ARC			
Project brief originator	Kasia Gdaniec			
Project design originator	Richard Mortimer			
Director/supervisor	Richard Mortimer			
Project manager	James Drummond-Murray			
Sponsor or funding body	Adrian Critchlow			
ARCHIVES	**Location and accession number**		**Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, database, context sheets etc)**	
Physical	CAM ARC Bar Hill		Pot, bone, flint, stone, metalwork	
Paper	ditto		Site Records, Photographs	
Digital	ditto		Access database, Excel tables, photographs etc.	
BIBLIOGRAPHY				
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Summary

This report represents an interim statement on the first excavation stage of the Sawston Hall development, following on from desktop study and trench evaluation phases. The excavation of Area 1 has produced archaeological remains (both finds and features) dating from the 8th to the 13th centuries comprising pits, ditches, a large infilled solution hollow, pottery and faunal assemblages, as well as a Late Saxon pewter brooch of continental origin. These almost certainly relate directly to the earlier versions of the hall and the area may lie between the Mid-Late Saxon hall and the early core of the village.

Neolithic and Bronze Age flintwork was recovered as residual material within later features and subsurface remains were recorded relating to the NAAFI buildings constructed during the Second World War Airforce occupation of the site.

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1 Introduction

This archaeological excavation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Kasia Gdaniec of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice team (CAPCA; Planning Application S/1800/04/F, supplemented by a Specification prepared by CAM ARC, Cambridgeshire County Council (formerly the Archaeological Field Unit).

The works comprised the first stage of excavation (Area 1, see Fig. 1) following on from an evaluation of the larger site undertaken in May 2006 (Mortimer 2006b) and a desk-based assessment in 2004 (Howe & Mortimer 2004). The area will be variously affected by development to refurbish the Hall as a hotel, an alteration also requiring development within the Hall grounds. This report applies solely to the excavation undertaken on Area 1 of the forthcoming development, that part of the grounds affected by the new car park.

The main aim of this phase of the project was to preserve the archaeological evidence contained within the excavation area by record in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990) and to attempt a reconstruction of the history and use of the site.

The site archive is currently held by CAM ARC and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

2 Geology and Topography

Sawston village lies 11km south of Cambridge on the eastern side of the valley of the River Cam. The Hall lies at approximately 25m OD, on a narrow spur of land projecting westwards into the Cam valley. The underlying geology of the hall and its grounds is Middle Chalk with 1st/2nd Terrace Gravels and possibly alluvium along the western fringes, marking the edge of the river valley (British Geological Survey 1985). The grounds cover *c*. 22 ha and are bounded by Church Lane and St Mary's Churchyard to the north, housing development to the west, housing and open fields to the east and by West Green Plantation and the Pampisford Parish boundary to the south. Immediately to the south of the Hall, taking up nearly two thirds of the grounds, are extensive low-lying damp woodlands and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the form of fen/meadow.

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

Sawston Parish is bordered by the Rivers Cam (to the west) and Granta (to the north) with the village in the southwest of the parish on the east bank of the Cam (Fig. 1). The parish occupies a central position on the broad chalk belt between the Fens and the high claylands of Essex traversed by Southern England's principal west-east routeways from prehistoric times – the Icknield Way and Ashwell Street. There may also have been a north to south prehistoric and Romano-British route, passing through Sawston from London to Cambridge along the eastern side of the Cam valley.

3.1 Prehistoric

Several prehistoric finds have been made within the parish, few however, within the vicinity of the Hall itself. A collection of Neolithic flint tools were found near the vicarage (HER 04113) with further finds to the south at The Spike. A Late Bronze Age hoard (HER 04110) consisting of a winged axe, two socketed spearheads, two socketed axes and other pieces were found 'within the parish'. Significant quantities of Neolithic and Bronze Age flint were recovered from the recent evaluation stage of the Sawston Hall project (see below: Evaluation Results).

Recent excavations to the north of the village, around the junction of Cambridge Road and Babraham Road, have revealed parts of an extensive Middle Bronze Age ditched field system (Cessford and Mortimer 2004; Mortimer 2006a). Other parts of this system, including a posthole structure and a well or shaft, have recently been excavated at Lynton Way to the northeast by Archaeological Solutions (Gdaniec pers. comm.). There is evidence for the continuation of this field system across the north of the parish in the form of a group of rectangular or D-shaped enclosures which can be seen as a series of crop marks from Borough Hill in the west across to Lynton Way in the east.

Borough Hill, an Iron Age Hillfort (or more appropriately a contour fort) is one of the largest in Cambridgeshire and occupies a spur of land overlooking the Cam 1500m to the west of the village at the site of Spicer's paper factory. Although little is now evident above ground, the sub-surface remains are extensive and in a good state of preservation (Mortimer 2001).

3.2 Romano-British

Two possible Roman roads have recently been recorded in Sawston (ECB1464), on excavations prior to the construction of the new Police Station at the north end of the village (Cessford and Mortimer 2004), and a scatter of Roman pottery was found to the southeast (HER

04115). Significant quantities of Late Iron Age and Early Romano-British pottery were recovered from the recent evaluation stage of the Sawston Hall project (see below: Evaluation Results).

3.3 Medieval, Post-Medieval and Modern

The Evaluation Report (Mortimer 2006b) provides a full discussion of the medieval, post-medieval and modern archaeology of both Sawston and the Hall. Relevant sections are reproduced below:

The village of Sawston is almost certainly Anglo-Saxon in origin and is first mentioned in the 10th century as *Salsingetune,* either 'farm of *Salse'* or 'of *Salses* people'*,* and later in Domesday (1086) as *Salsiton(e)* (Reaney 1943). An Early Anglo-Saxon burial was found on Huckeridge Hill, on the Cambridge road to the north of the village (HER 04537). The richly furnished burial was uncovered during road widening early in the 19th century and it is likely that others are, or were, present. It is unclear whether it relates to settlement at Sawston itself, to an Anglo-Saxon settlement at Dernford Farm to the northwest, where there are a series of earthworks and cropmarks (HER 10958) or to Early Saxon occupation of the Iron Age Hillfort. An Anglo-Saxon brooch (HER 04112) and Saxon/Viking key (HER 04111) were found in the parish although their locations are not certain. Significant Late Saxon and early medieval features and finds were recorded in the recent evaluation stage of the Sawston Hall project (see below: Evaluation Results).

The Hall was requisitioned by the military during the Second World War and used as headquarters of the 66th Fighter Wing of the 3rd Air Division of the American Eighth Air Force. There is clear evidence for this occupation in the grounds with an air-raid shelter, brick outbuildings and concrete roadways and platforms; there are also relics of the period – graffiti drawings - in the Hall itself.

3.4 Previous Archaeological Work

Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) carried out an evaluation at Sawston Hall in 1991 prior to the development of a tennis court in the orchard to the northeast of the Hall. Two trenches were excavated and no archaeological features were recorded.

Within the parish of Sawston further work has been carried out at Borough Hill Iron Age hillfort in 1993 and 2001 by CAM ARC (Bray 1994) and the CAU (Mortimer 2001) (respectively HER ECB1086 and ECB1378). Further large-scale trenching was carried out in 2001 by John Samuels Archaeological Consultants (Samuels 2001). An evaluation and watching brief was conducted by the CAU at Sawston Police Station (HER ECB1464). This revealed the remains of two

ditched enclosures originally thought to be possible Roman military camps but now, following subsequent excavation to the north, seen as part of an extensive Middle Bronze Age ditched field system. The Bronze Age ditches appear to have been used as a focus for a subsequent Roman road junction, probably dating to the 1st century AD (Cessford and Mortimer 2004). An evaluation at The Spike (HER 11720) revealed a series of undated ditches (Sutherland 1995).

Further work at an extension to the Police Station site (Mortimer 2006a) revealed additional elements of the Bronze Age field system, along with what appear to be extensive 'closing' deposits of later Bronze Age worked flint. A recent evaluation in the grounds of the Bellbird Primary School, to the east of the High Street and just 100m to the north of the Hall, produced no archaeological features (Mortimer 2007).

3.5 Evaluation Results

Four trenches were excavated in the area to the west and south of the Hall (Mortimer 2006b). The archaeological remains found within the trenches represented four main periods: Neolithic/Bronze Age, Late Iron Age/Early Roman, earlier medieval and late medieval/ post-medieval. Upstanding remains from the 1940's wartime occupation of the Hall were also recorded.

The prehistoric archaeology was finds-related, comprising a relatively large worked and burnt flint assemblage recovered residually within later features, mostly in Trench 4. The Late Iron Age and Early Roman material, also found in Trench 4, dates that occupation to a very limited period in the middle of the 1st century AD, perhaps no more than a generation after the conquest.

In this area the principal prehistoric and Early Roman feature recorded was a wide channel, possibly draining from a well or spring. There was a cut at the base of the channel, presumably 'canalising' a natural feature. The channel would appear to have been open throughout the Neolithic and Bronze Age, perhaps being re-cut in the Early Roman period. In the area of this channel were two contemporary wells or shafts, a ditch and a posthole.

The earlier medieval archaeology consisted of ditches recorded in all four trenches. These could represent field ditches, although this close to the known location of a medieval manor house, they are more likely to be part of the manor grounds. Their alignments were of interest, suggesting a different alignment for the earlier Hall building and its attendant moats and grounds. The principal medieval feature recorded was a large moat ditch aligned north-northwest to south-southeast within the walled garden immediately behind the Hall. This may be part

of the original 12th/13th century manor, backfilled in the late medieval period.

Trench 1, at the centre of Area 1, and the subject of this report, produced few finds but three early medieval ditches were recorded alongside several large natural features. The date of the ditches was not clear from the evaluation and it was thought possible that one or more may date to the Romano-British period.

4 Methodology

The excavation of Area 1 took place in December of 2006, since when there has been a break in the project. There is an intention to resume works in the near future, at which point the remaining archaeological programme (in Areas 3 and 4, and around the Hall building itself) will be continued. This report represents an interim statement on the archaeology of Area 1 only, and will be integrated with the findings from other areas upon completion of the project.

The objective of this excavation was to preserve by record the surviving archaeological deposits within this part of the development area (Area 1).

Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked 360^{o} excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. The area opened up measured 17m x 42m, or approximately 700 sq m.

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 that were obviously modern.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using CAM ARC's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits. The excavation area and site grid were tied into the OS grid by EDM. Environmental samples were taken from three archaeological features.

Site conditions were cold and damp, with frosts and thick freezing fog throughout.

5 Results

5.1 Natural features

A series of periglacial features lay in a roughly linear band across the site from south-southwest to north-northeast (Fig. 2). There were also a few prehistoric tree throws scattered among them. The fills of these features, with the exception of the largest (see 142 below), were mid red-brown or pale-mid orange-brown silty clays with variable amounts of chalk and flint nodule inclusions. None of those that were excavated (again, with the exception of 142) contained any finds and all were irregular at their sides and bases.

On the surface, many of these features resembled pits, postholes and ditches, and some were excavated as such. Though their upper levels contained no finds it was not until excavation neared their bases that it became clear they were natural features, created by sinkholes, ice cracks and other periglacial effects.

5.2 Late Saxon/Early Medieval features

5.2.1 Tree throw 104 (Fig.2)

This feature was ovate in plan, 1.80m x 1.35m, with very irregular sides and base when excavated, and a depth varying from 0.25m to 0.60m, steepest and deepest at the south. The fill (103) was a mixed pale brown-grey silty sand with common flint nodules. The feature was half-sectioned.

Three sherds of pottery weighing 15g were recovered from the upper part of the feature, an Ipswich ware rim and two sherds of Thetford ware. The Ipswich demonstrates an earlier 8th/9th century presence on the site but the Thetford sherds date the infilling of the feature to the 10th century or later.

5.2.2 Pit 135 (Figs.2 & 3)

This sub-rectangular pit 1.70m x 1.05m x 0.40m deep, had a square eastern end, slightly rounded western, vertical sides to a flat base. After use the pit had been left open and the lower fill (137) was a weathering infill, a compact pale brown silty loam, around all edges and onto the base of the feature. The main fill (136) was a dark brown, charcoal-rich, silty loam with few inclusions (flint nodules, chalk fragments, pottery, bone, burnt stone, charcoal fragments).

The feature was 100% excavated and nine sherds of pottery weighing 84g were recovered. The assemblage exhibits a wide date range. The lower fill contained two abraded Romano-British sherds, the upper fill

three handmade Middle Saxon sherds (7th to 9th centuries) and four Thetford ware sherds. As with tree throw 104, there is clearly an early element in the assemblage but the Thetford ware would date the final infilling of the feature to the 10th century. With an almost equal number of handmade sherds this may represent a late 9th/early 10th century assemblage. How long the feature stood open before final infilling is not known.

A small quantity of animal bone (660g) was also recovered from the feature, along with a fragment of coprolite. The bone assemblage consisted chiefly of butchered cattle and sheep/goat remains, some of it burnt, and domestic fowl and bantam. An environmental bulk sample from the upper fill produced a limited assemblage of charred cereal grain.

5.2.3 Solution hollow 142 (Figs.2 & 3)

A very large irregular, natural feature, the main body of which was approximately 7.50m north to south by 6.00m east to west. There were irregular 'ditch-like' offshoots at the corners and further similar extensions running off to the north. Several small sections were excavated at the edges of the feature, into the offshoots, and a long section was cut into the centre of the feature where it was truncated by ditch 4 and foundation trench 141 (see below). This section, almost 5.00m long, reached a depth of 1.70m at its centre but the base of the feature was not encountered. Excavation ceased at this point for reasons of health and safety. This section proved to have been excavated at the southern edge of a deeper central shaft within the feature approximately 4.00m in diameter. A band of pale weathered chalk lay around the sides of the shaft and four fills were recorded above this: 148, a mid-dark brown clay silt with chalk fragments, 147 a pale brown gritty silt with frequent chalk flecks and fragments, 144 a mid brown sandy silt with flint and chalk fragments, and 143, slightly darker and loamier. All the fills were gradual accumulations and weathering, there appeared to have been no deliberate infilling of the feature.

For dating purposes the pottery assemblage has been split into upper and lower fills, the former includes surface finds, the fills of the excavated areas around the edge of the feature and fill 143, the top 20cm of the central excavation. The few finds that were recovered from the fills at the extremes of the feature (122, 146) were found at the upper limits of the fills or as surface finds.

The lower fills produced seventeen sherds of pottery weighing 172g: three handmade sherds, ten of Thetford ware and three of St Neots ware. The combination of Late Saxon sherds with handmade Middle Saxon pottery, and the absence of the clearly 11th century material seen in the upper fills (below) again suggests a possible 10th century date for these contexts.

The upper fills also produced an assemblage of seventeen sherds weighing 138g and with a very similar make-up. There were two residual Roman sherds, two handmade Middle Saxon sherds, ten of Thetford ware and one St Neots sherd, but also two sherds of early medieval pottery that would push the date of the upper infill into the 11th century.

A fragment of the upper stone of a rotary lava quern was recovered from the upper fill (304g). One surface survived and the stone had a maximum depth of 55mm. A small assemblage (1.4kg) of animal bone was recovered from the upper fills of the feature consisting largely of horse and butchered cattle remains with single pieces of sheep/goat and cat. An environmental bulk sample from lower fill 148 produced a limited assemblage of charred grain and a few rodent bones.

5.2.4 Ditch 6 (Fig.2)

A short length of shallow ditch, part of a precursor to ditch 9, at its eastern end. The ditch was 6.00m long, a maximum of 1.00m wide (truncated along most of its southern side by ditch 9), 0.25m deep toward the butt end and 0.40m deep where excavated in the evaluation.

Two sherds of pottery were retrieved from the feature during evaluation, a Thetford ware sherd and an abraded sherd of probable Roman date. Despite the full excavation of the butt end of the feature, no further finds were recovered.

5.2.5 Ditch 9 (Figs.2 & 3)

This ditch formed a right-angled semi-enclosure, its western side 15.00m long but continuing south beyond the excavation and its northern side 13.00m long. The feature was *c*. 1.30m wide and around 0.50m deep. The northern and western edges were steep, southern and eastern shallower and the base was narrow and flat. There was no clear evidence for a bank on either side. The lower fills (115, 124, 127) were compact pale grey-brown clay silts with fairly frequent chalk fragments, the upper fills (114, 117, 126) relatively dark brown silty loam with more frequent inclusions (flint, chalk, pottery, bone etc).

Three full sections were initially excavated through the ditch. Following the discovery of a Late Saxon pewter brooch (see Appendix 1) within the upper fill of the ditch (during the metal detector survey), 16 further sections through the upper fill (finds numbers 151-57, 164-72) were excavated in order to provide as tight a date for the brooch as possible.

The lower fills of the ditch produced just six sherds of pottery, weighing 40g: two Thetford ware sherds and four of St Neots ware. The assemblage from the upper fills was considerably larger at fifty-seven

sherds weighing 296g but this was distributed over the entire length of the ditch (approximately 24m). The three largest individual assemblages of eight, eleven and twelve sherds all came from the northwest of the feature, around the bend in the ditch (contexts 126, 155 & 157 respectively). The general composition of the assemblage is similar to that in the lower fills: five handmade Saxon sherds, thirty-two of Thetford ware and 16 of St Neots ware. There are also single sherds of Roman, Early Medieval ware and Developed St Neots. These latter two sherds would date, together, to around the 12th century, though within this larger, earlier assemblage, and because they come from the very upper fill of the feature, they are perhaps most likely to represent later surface material within the hollow of the earlier ditch. The overall date for the infilling of the upper part of the ditch is more likely 10th, possibly 11th, century.

Small quantities (111g & 14g) of degraded lava quern were recovered from two contexts within the upper fill along with two fragments of Roman roof tile. A small quantity of burnt sandstone, possibly hearth stone fragments, was also recovered from one context.

A small assemblage of animal bone (1.12kg) was also recovered from the upper fills, consisting largely of butchered cattle bone, with smaller amounts of sheep/goat, pig and domestic fowl. An environmental bulk sample from lower fill 127 produced a limited assemblage of charred cereal grain but also some fish bone.

5.2.6 Ditch 4 (Figs.2 & 3)

Ditch 4 ran the length of the site, north to south, and continued beyond the excavation in both directions. It was approximately 1.20m wide and 0.40m deep, both edges were steep (*c.* 45^{o}) and the base was flat. Tip lines indicate that a bank was likely to have sat on the eastern side of the feature. The lower fills (109, 112) were compact light grey-brown sandy clay silts with fairly frequent flint nodules and chalk fragments, the upper fills (107, 110) mid grey-brown silty loam with slightly more frequent inclusions (flint, chalk, pottery, bone etc).

Two full sections were excavated through the ditch followed by four partial excavations of the upper fill (finds numbers 160-63) and partial excavation in the area of feature 142. The lower fills produced no pottery, though four sherds had been recovered in the evaluation (one Roman, two Thetford, one early medieval sherd).

Fifteen sherds weighing 95g were recovered from the upper fills and the assemblage contains a wider variety of pottery types: one handmade sherd, two of Thetford ware, five early medieval micaceous (11th century) and six other fabrics of the 12th to 13th centuries including Hedingham and Colchester ware jug sherds. All the sherds

are relatively small and abraded and most were recovered from the uppermost levels of the fill.

A number of degraded lava quern fragments (76g) were recovered from the lower fill, a fragment of slag (6g) from the upper along with a small quantity (140g) of butchered cattle bone.

5.3 Modern features

The area had undergone three main phases of modern disturbance: the British and American Airforce occupations of the 1940s, the development of the Language School in the 1970s and the clearance of these prior to the current excavations.

The site was first developed in the 1940s with the construction of a NAAFI kitchen and canteen huts. The area was then part of the wider woodland that stretches to the north and south of the site and this would have necessitated the clearance of some large trees. Many modern tree throws were evident, particularly in the north of the area, and around the largest of them the indentations of the digger's or bulldozer's teeth were recorded.

The height of the area would have been reduced, with topsoil and subsoil removed, and concrete rafts and surfaces laid for temporary buildings. The bases of two stoves or ovens were recorded (see foundation cut 142 below) along with service trenches for water and kerosene pipes (the latter still containing a small amount of residual fuel).

In the 1970s the wartime buildings were replaced with portacabins and further service trenches went in, including electricity cables and large ceramic drains. The concrete rafts and surfaces, and some of the service pipes, were subsequently removed by machine, shortly before the excavation took place.

The only modern feature that was excavated and recorded to any extent (beyond brief initial investigation to ascertain date) was the base of a NAAFI stove that had been dug into an area of deep archaeology at the north of the site. The cut for the foundation (141) was very large, chiefly due to the depth the builders had to go to in order to reach solid chalk, having cut through both ditch 4 and the western side of solution hollow 142. The foundation trench was 5.00m north to south, 2.80m east to west and 1.20m deep. The base itself was brick built, 2.10m long by 1.00m wide, 0.90m deep and sat on a concrete foundation 0.30m deep.

Immediately to the south of cut 142 part of the medieval ditch 4 had been neatly excavated, emptied of its fill and re-filled with brick and chalk rubble. This represents the replacement of the soft, probably wet

ditch fill with hard-standing material, on the same line as the stove base to the north, and may suggest that another load-bearing feature, or part of the structure, stood in this area. To the north of the stove base, the trench for the kerosene pipe ran up the eastern side of ditch 4, exactly parallel to it.

Eleven sherds of residual pottery (10th to 13th century) were recovered from the feature; these would have been redeposited from the fills of ditch 4 and solution hollow 142.

6 Discussion

The prehistoric element of the site is small and was found residually within later features. The worked flint here should be seen in the context of the larger assemblage recovered from the spring channel in Area 4 at evaluation (Mortimer 2006b). The principal elements of the archaeology are those of the Middle to Late Saxon period.

6.1 Archaeological features

Fourteen sherds of handmade Saxon pottery and a single sherd of Ipswich ware were recovered from the excavations (a second Ipswich sherd was recovered 50m to the south during the evaluation). While most of these sherds are small and abraded, there are a few large, fresh sherds, and there is easily enough material to indicate a settlement presence in close proximity to the site from at least the seventh century.

Very little cultural material was recovered from within the earliest archaeological features on the site - ditch 6, tree throw 104, pit 135 and the lower fills of solution hollow 142 and ditch 9 – what material there was indicating a general scatter of 7th to (mostly) 10th century date. Larger quantities of pottery were recovered from the upper fills of ditch 9, partly as a result of the intensive level of excavation undertaken. The infilling of this ditch probably dates to the late 10th or early 11th centuries, a date commensurate with the pewter brooch found within it, itself probably a 10th century object (Appendix 1).

The earliest feature on the site is perhaps pit 135, the use, and weathered infilling, of which could date to the earlier part of this period, before the scatter of later 9th/10th century material reached the site. The earliest major site feature is the right-angled enclosure of ditch 9, sufficient to suggest that the area at this time was sub-divided as part of a larger enclosure, either manorial or as part of the pre-conquest village. That the later ditch 4 respects the terminus of ditch 9, and that ditch 4 itself follows the (at least) post-medieval roadway from the Hall grounds to the parish church and Church Road, suggests that this

route, or at least a boundary that became this route, may have been in existence at the time. Ditch 4 dating to the 12th or 13th centuries, would have been in use at the time of the earliest build of the church.

Preservation of the limited assemblage of archaeobotanical remains was by charring. All the samples contained roots and snails and two contained uncharred seeds of bramble and elderberry. These probably represent modern intrusions, along with the roots. What archaeological plant remains there were consisted of low levels of charred barley and wheat, chiefly the latter, and were found in all three samples.

6.2 Solution hollow

There is a spring line that feeds the medieval and post-medieval moats to the southeast (Evaluation Trench 2), and the Neolithic, Bronze Age and Roman filled channel in Trench 4. The springs feed the ponds, fens and streams in the Hall grounds to the south and drain into the Cam. The area is close to the junction of two chalk formations (Holywell and Zig Zag), between which is a band of Melbourn Rock. The groundwater running through this rock can create underground caverns by eating away at the chalk. These can then collapse, giving rise to deep shafts – solution hollows.

Solution hollow 142 is an interesting feature and at present of unknown depth. It is possible that it may require further excavation at some stage in the future – the NAAFI builders of the Second World War were forced to dig deep to find bedrock for their foundations, and any future development is likely to have to remove the soft fill of the feature and replace it with hardcore, or face the prospect of further slumping in the future. For the upper two metres of the feature to have become gradually infilled over the course of the 10th/11th centuries would imply that the shaft is either very deep, and had been gradually infilling over centuries, or that it only appeared relatively late on. The presence of small quantities of pottery and bone in the ditch-like offshoots around the feature may suggest that the latter is more likely. This soil within these offshoot features appears to be relatively undisturbed subsoil, quite clean, and to have sunk directly into the cracks caused by the creation of the hollow.

7 Conclusions

The findings from this first stage of excavation at Sawston Hall have proved to be of greater significance than the initial evaluation suggested. This should be no surprise given the proximity here to the Hall itself and indeed to the presumed location of the earliest Anglo-Saxon village core, thought to lie at and to the south of the junction of Church Road and the High Street. Area 1 may lie equidistant between

the Saxon manor and village; there are strong indications of proximity to occupation dating to at least the 7th to 13th centuries. The latter part of this range almost certainly represents the manorial settlement to the east and southeast. The earlier part of the range could be linked to either village or manor.

The brooch found in ditch 9 would seem to be of continental, Carolingian, origin - imported from either the Rhineland or the Low Countries - and dating to between the late 9th and earlier 11th centuries. Only a single example of this type, from a 10th-century context at Coppergate, York, has been published from England (Mainman & Rogers 2000). Its presence here sheds new light on the contacts between Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Europe during the late 9th and 10th centuries. Clearly a rare object, it shows that the owner had the contacts, and the standing, to enable them to exhibit clear links to the continental elite. The probability is that the quality of this object reflects its location and this area was also within the manorial enclosure in the 10th century, and very possibly before.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Adrian Critchlow who commissioned and funded the archaeological work, and the staff of Sawston Hall, in particular Louise and Andrew, for their interest and help throughout the project. The project was managed by James Drummond-Murray and the report was edited by Elizabeth Popescu. The site staff were the author and Steve Graham and the area was surveyed by Taleyna Fletcher. Particular thanks are extended to those members of the Cambridge Archaeological Field Group, the Cambridge branch of the Young Archaeologists Club and the Sawston Youth Group who all helped with the extensive excavation of the upper fills of ditch 9 in order to obtain better dating for the lead alloy brooch.

The plant was supplied by LOC of Fordham and particular thanks to Nick Richardson for his help, advice and excellent work in general, but also for metal detecting the site and uncovering the pewter brooch in the process. This report was illustrated by Gillian Greer, and the illustration of the brooch is by Edeltraud Aspoeck of Reading University. Many thanks to Gabor Thomas for his advice on the brooch and for his report on the same. The pottery was spot-dated by Carole Fletcher and the author.

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

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Appendix 1: Lead alloy brooch

By Gabor Thomas

A lead alloy brooch (SF 1) was recovered from within the upper fill of ditch 9 (context 171).

Cast in the form of a cross with each arm terminating in a pair of protruding circular bosses. The reverse is countersunk and retains the fastening mechanism, minus its iron pin.

The front of the brooch is decorated in relief with a design combining bosses and false filigree borders. The central portion is taken up by a self-referential cross-within-roundel motif with a conical boss located in the centre of the cross and with a circular boss located between each of its arms; the latter are decorated internally with two small granules. The arms of the brooch are decorated internally with a central granule surrounded by a pair of concentric arched borders whose ends touch the border of the central roundel. The pairs of protruding bosses at the terminal of each arm are similarly enclosed in false filigree borders. The illustration below is reproduced at 2:1.

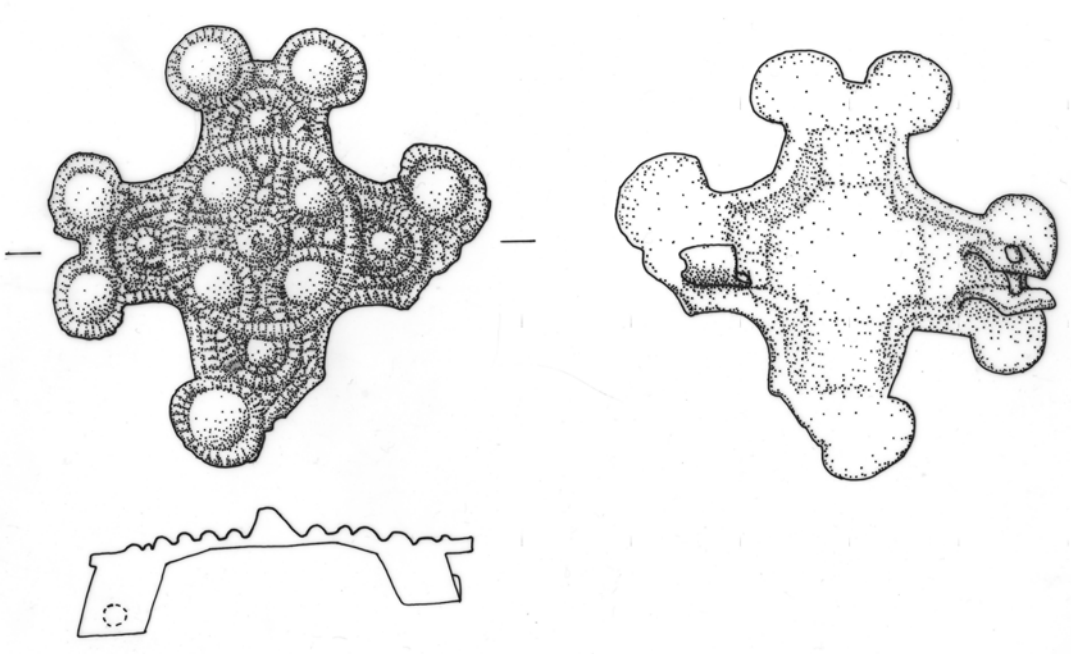

Figure 4: Lead alloy brooch

Discussion

The Sawston brooch represents an important addition to the corpus of Late Anglo-Saxon ornamental metalwork. One of the first of its type to be found on English soil, it is made in the tradition of a continental series of Carolingian cross-shaped brooch and may well represent an import from either the Rhineland or the Low Countries.

Six main variants of cross-shaped brooch have been identified on the continent and together their distribution extends across the enlarged Carolingian realm between the rivers Rhine and Elbe (Müller-Wille 2003). Whilst diverse in form and decorative treatment, a recurrent feature is the elaboration of cross terminals with raised bosses or clustered granules, as exemplified by the Sawston piece. The same is also a feature of the so-called 'Worms' type of the continental series, the most of elaborate of which bear filigree work and stone inlays in the tradition of high-class Carolingian ornamental metalwork of the 9th century (ibid., 448-9).

No precise parallel exists for this brooch in the continental literature although a fragment of a lead-alloy brooch sharing the same distinctive paired terminal bosses and false filigree borders appears within the impressive collection of Carolingian and Ottonian jewellery from Mainz, Germany (Wamers 1994, 134-5, no. 227). A continental Carolingian origin for the Sawston piece thus seems most likely.

Only a single example of this class of brooch, recovered from 10th-century levels at 16-22 Coppergate, York, has been published from England, although the accompanying discussion cites two unpublished metal-detector finds from Norfolk and Lincolnshire as parallels (Mainman & Rogers 2000, 2547, fig. 1270). A simple piece made of copper-alloy with expanded arms and a pair of bosses at each terminal, this brooch falls firmly into one of the established continental variants attributed to a Frisian source on the grounds of the distribution of finds (Wamers 1994, 137-142, fig. 83).

The combination of raised bosses and false filigree which characterises the decoration of the Sawston brooch, imitative of metalwork in the premier league of Carolingian craftsmanship, is a *leit-motif* of a metropolitan jewellery style which swept across north-west Europe during the 10th century and which remained popular throughout the succeeding century. Its most famous English manifestation is the suite of pewter beads and brooches from the Cheapside hoard, London, usually attributed to the 11th century (Richards 2000, 112, fig. 63). If the Sawston brooch is indeed an import as opposed to an English copy (and the former interpretation is to be preferred on current evidence), then it provides material witness to the importance of portable, mass-produced jewellery as a mechanism by which continental fashions were assimilated into the mainstream of Late Anglo-Saxon art. As such, it sheds interesting new

light on the cultural impact of political and commercial contacts between Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Frankia during the late 9th and 10th centuries.

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Appendix 2: Lithic Assessment

By Barry Bishop

Introduction

Further phases of archaeological investigations at the above site resulted in the recovery of nineteen struck flints and just under 0.50kg of burnt flint fragments. This report comments on the material and is intended as an interim assessment, pending the completion of all phases of archaeological investigation at the site.

Quantification

Context	Flake	Blade	Concoidal Chunk	Retouched	Burnt Flint (no.)	Burnt Flint (wt:g)
100	2					
103	2					
127					1	6
136	1				7	369
137	1				1	87
143				1		
144	1					
146	2		1			
147	1					
157	2					
161	1					
162	1					
167	1					
169		1				
170	1					
172					1	11

Table 1: Quantification of Lithic Material by Context

Burnt Flint

Burnt flint fragments weighing 473g were recovered from four different contexts. It all had been burnt to a high degree, consistent with having been in a hearth. Burnt flint is perhaps most commonly encountered on prehistoric sites although, once excavated, it cannot be dated and, due to the possibility of redeposition, it is uncertain whether it was residual or contemporary with the contexts from which it was recovered.

Struck Flint

Nineteen struck flints were recovered, all in small quantities and from a variety of features. The assemblage's condition was variable although most pieces exhibited some edge chipping and rounding, suggesting that most, if not all, had been residually deposited. The raw materials consisted of small weathered nodular fragments and alluvially rounded pebbles and small cobbles, all easily available from local river terrace and derived glacially affected deposits. The assemblage was dominated by flakes, with one blade and a single retouched piece present. The blade was systematically produced and would be characteristic of Mesolithic or Early Neolithic industries. Around a quarter of the assemblage, which included a number of blade-like flakes and broken fragments that may have originally been blades, were also likely to belong to these periods. Interestingly, all of these pieces had fully recorticated. The remainder of the assemblage, which was un- or only incipiently recorticated, consisted of flakes that were mostly short and thick and with wide, unmodified striking platforms. These can only be reliably dated to the Neolithic or Bronze Age, although they more likely belong to towards the latter part of that range than its beginning. No cores were present and the only retouched piece consisted of a partially recorticated fragment of a side scraper of uncertain date.

Recommendations

This assemblage is comparable to and complements the lithic assemblages recovered at this site during earlier investigations. It would be desirable, once all fieldwork has finished, to analyse and describe for publication the all of the lithic material from this site.

Appendix 3: Pottery spot-dating

By Carole Fletcher and Richard Mortimer

Feature	Context	Category	Fabric	No.	Grams	Abrasion	Earliest	Latest
pit 135	135	upper fill	THET	2	2	Moderate	900	1200
			Mid Saxon	1	1	Moderate	650	850
	136	upper fill	Mid Saxon	1	1	Moderate	600	800
			Mid Saxon	1	1	Abraded	650	850
			THET	2	2	Moderate	900	1200
	137	lower fill	OX CC	2	2	Abraded	200	400
tree throw 104	103	fill	IPS Gritty	1	10	Moderate	750	875
			THET	2	5	Moderate	900	1200

Table 2: Pottery spot-dates Features 135 & 104

Feature	Context	Category	Fabric	No.	Grams	Abrasion	Earliest	Latest
ditch 9	117	upper fill	THET	3	13	Moderate	900	1200
			NEOT	1	3	Moderate	850	1150
	126	upper fill	THET	5	13	Moderate	900	1200
			NEOT	2	5	Moderate	850	1150
			GW	1	4	Moderate	100	400
	127	lower fill	NEOT	3	15	Moderate	850	1150
			THET	1	2	Moderate	900	1200
			NEOT	1	11	Moderate	850	1150
	151	upper fill	THET	1	17	Moderate	900	1100
	152	upper fill	THET	1	17	Moderate	900	1200
			DNEOT	1	4	Moderate	1150	1350
	154	upper fill	Mid Saxon	1	6	Abraded	650	850
			THET	1	6	Moderate	900	1200
			NEOT	2	3	Abraded	850	1150
			UNK	1	8	Moderate	1150	1350
	155	upper fill	NEOT	6	46	Moderate	850	1150
			THET	4	12	Moderate	900	1200
			Mid Saxon	1	3	Abraded	650	850
	156	upper fill	THET	2	12	Moderate	900	1200
			EMEMS	1	3	Abraded	1000	1200
	157	upper fill	Mid Saxon	1	3	Moderate	650	850
			Mid Saxon	1	16	Moderate	650	850
			NEOT	1	2	Moderate	900	1150
			Mid Saxon	1	2	Abraded	650	850
			THET	1	6	Abraded	1000	1200
			THET	7	29	Moderate	900	1200
	165	upper fill	THET	1	5	Moderate	900	1200
	166	upper fill	NEOT	1	6	Moderate	900	1150
	169	upper fill	NEOT	2	5	Moderate	900	1150
			THET	2	9	Moderate	900	1200
	170	upper fill	NEOT	1	21	Moderate	900	1150
			THET	1	2	Moderate	900	1200
	171	upper fill	THET	1	7	Moderate	900	1200
	172	upper fill	THET	2	8	Moderate	900	1200

Table 3: Pottery spot-dates ditch 9

Feature	Context	Category	Fabric	No.	Grams	Abrasion	Earliest	Latest
solution hollow 142	121	upper fill	THET	2	10	Moderate	1000	1200
	122	upper fill	OX CC	1	6	Abraded	200	400
	130	upper fill	SRW	1	5	Abraded	100	400
	132	upper fill	Mid Saxon	1	8	Abraded	650	850
	143	upper fill	THET	4	55	Moderate	900	1200
			Mid Saxon	1	3	Moderate	650	850
			EMEMS	1	6	Moderate	1000	1200
			EMEMS	1	1	Abraded	1000	1200
	144	lower fill	THET	3	27	Moderate	900	1200
			NEOT	1	8	Moderate	850	1150
			Mid Saxon	1	6	Abraded	650	850
	146	upper fill	THET	4	38	Moderate	900	1200
			NEOT	1	6	Moderate	850	1150
	147	lower fill	THET	1	4	Moderate	900	1200
			NEOT	1	2	Moderate	850	1150
			NEOT	1	4	Abraded	850	1150
			Mid Saxon	2	7	Abraded	650	850
			THET	4	66	Moderate	900	1200
	148	lower fill	THET	2	2	Moderate	900	1200
			NEOT	1	46	Moderate	850	1150

Table 4: Pottery spot-dates solution hollow 142

Feature	Context	Category	Fabric	No.	Grams	Abrasion	Earliest	Latest
ditch 4	107	upper fill	MEMS	1	13	Abraded	1200	1400
			SSHW	1	18	Abraded	1200	1400
			THET	1	7	Moderate	900	1150
			EMEMS	2	5	Moderate	1000	1200
			Mid Saxon	1	9	Abraded	650	850
	110	upper fill	COLT (Fabric 21)	1	3	Moderate	1200	1400
			EMEMS	1	4	Abraded	1000	1200
			MSW	1	4	Abraded	1150	1350
			SW	1	3	Abraded	1150	1350
	134	upper fill	THET	1	3	Abraded	900	1200
	160	upper fill	EMEMS	1	18	Moderate	1100	1250
			HEDI	1	4	Abraded	1200	1350
	161	upper fill	EMEMS	1	3	Abraded	1000	1200
	162	upper fill	HEDI	1	1	Abraded	1200	1350

Table 5: Pottery spot-dates ditch 4

Feature	Context	Category	Fabric	No.	Grams	Abrasion	Earliest	Latest
foundation cut 141	140	upper fill	NEOT	1	11	Moderate	850	1150
			DNEOT	1	9	Moderate	1150	1350
			EMEMS	1	4	Moderate	1000	1200
			MEMS	1	4	Abraded	1150	1350
			MEL	1	7	Abraded	1150	1350
	145	upper fill	NEOT	3	6	Moderate	850	1150
			HEDI	1	2	Abraded	1200	1350
			THET	2	7	Abraded	900	1200
topsoil	100	layer	THET	1	3	Moderate	900	1200

Table 6: Pottery spot-dates foundation cut 141 & topsoil

Abbreviations Used

Romano-British

Oxford Colour-coat	OX CC
Sandy Reduced ware	SRW
Greyware	GW

Saxon & Medieval

Colchester Type ware	COLT
Developed St Neots	DNEOT
Early Med Essex Micaceous Sandy ware	EMEMS
Hedingham ware	HEDI
Ipswich, Gritty	IPS Gr
Medieval Ely ware	MEL
Medieval Essex Micaceous Sandy ware	MEMS
Medieval Sandy ware	MSW
Hand made Early/Middle Saxon	Mid Saxon
Sandy wares	SW
Shelly ware	SHW
Sandy Shelly ware	SSHW
Thetford ware	THET
Unknown	UNK

Appendix 4: Faunal remains

By Chris Faine

The assemblage consists of 3.47 kg of hand-collected bone from 32 contexts. These features consist of pits, ditches and a possible solution hollow dating from the 9th- 12th centuries. All contexts were briefly scanned, with fragments being identified to species where possible.

Pit **135** yielded 0.66kg of bone. Context 136 contained a number of butchered cattle and sheep/goat remains along with two domestic fowl and bantam coracoids. In addition a number of the cattle remains were burnt, one of these a 1st phalange showing evidence of pathology.

A total of 1.44kg of bone was recovered from fills of a possible solution hollow **142**. Material from these contexts (122, 129, 143, 144, 147 & 148) consists largely of horse and butchered cattle remains. Horse remains consist largely of lower limb elements such as tibiae, astragalus and phalanges. Cattle remains include horn cores, cranial elements and portions of long bones. A single piece of sheep/goat distal tibia and cat mandible was recovered from context 147. All remains were from adult (i.e. physically mature) animals.

A total of 1.12kg of bone was recovered from fills of ditch **9**. Material from these contexts (117, 126, 127, 154, 155, 157, 165 & 167) consists largely of butchered cattle long bones and distal elements, along with smaller amounts of sheep/goat and pig remains. A single domestic fowl coracoid was recovered from context 155.

A few fragments (0.14g in total) were recovered from ditch **4**, consisting of portions of shattered cattle mandible and humerus.

1 Conclusions

It appears the majority of the assemblage represents domestic/settlement debris, with the range of species present being consistent with those of other contemporary sites. There were no measurable mandibles and few measurable elements were recovered (NISP: 10). Whilst there is little potential for further analysis within the sample itself, full recording of the assemblage at the final report stage is recommended.

Appendix 5: Environmental appraisal

By Rachel Fosberry

1 Introduction and methods

Three bulk samples were taken from features within the excavated area in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations. The features sampled were a pit, a ditch and a solution hollow all thought to date to the Late Saxon period.

Ten litres of each sample were 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 an 0.5mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through a 1mm 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 other artefacts are noted on Table 1.

2 Results

The results are recorded on Table 1.

Sample	Context	Feature	Feature Type	Flot contents	Residue contents
101	127	9	Ditch	Cereal grain, fishbone, seeds, snails	Bone, pottery, flint debitage
102	136	135	Pit	Cereal grain, seeds, snails	Bone, pottery
104	148	142	Solution hollow	Cereal grain, small rodent bones	Bone, pottery

Table 1: Environmental Samples from SAW SHA 07

Plant macrofossils

Preservation is by charring and is generally moderate. All samples contain numerous roots and snails. The plant remains consisted of charred cereal grains of barley (*Hordeum* sp.) and wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains with barley predominant. Samples 101 and 102 both contained uncharred seeds of bramble (*Rubus* sp.) and elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*) respectively. These seeds are extremely robust and may be contemporary with the charred plant remains or may be modern contaminants.

Other artefacts

Small sherds of pottery were present in two of the three samples. A piece of rouletted Thetford ware was recovered from Sample 104. Fragments of animal and small mammal bones were also recovered from the residues and Sample 103 contained fish bone.

3 Conclusions and recommendations

Cereal grains are present in three of the samples and could represent either discrete deposits or general scattering of grain preserved by accidental burning.

The samples show only a low level of charred material and are not considered worthy of further analysis at this stage. If further work is planned in this area, it is recommended that environmental sampling is included as this assemblage shows that there is potential for the recovery of plant remains.

Drawing Conventions

Plans

Limit of Excavation

Deposit - Conjectured

Natural Features

Sondages/Machine Strip

Intrusion/Truncation

Illustrated Section S.14

Archaeological Deposit

Periglacial features

Excavated Slot

Natural features

Modern Deposit

Cut Number 118

Context number *156*

Sections

Limit of Excavation

Cut

Cut-Conjectured

Deposit Horizon

Deposit Horizon - Conjectured

Intrusion/Truncation

Top Surface/Top of Natural

Break in Section/
Limit of Section Drawing

Cut Number 118

Deposit Number 117

Ordnance Datum 18.45m OD

Inclusions

Convention Key

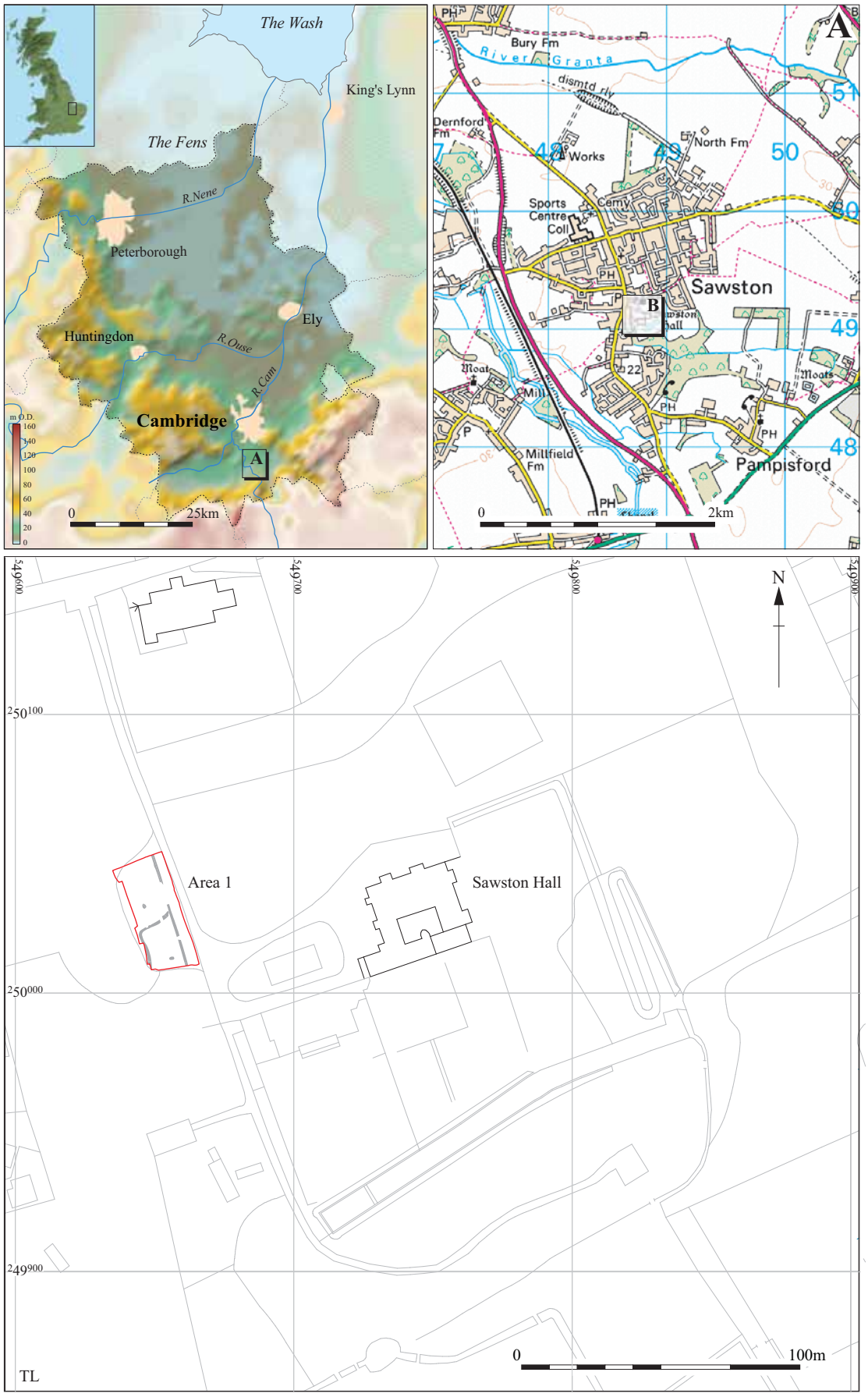


Figure 1: Site location with excavation area outlined in red.

Figure 2: Excavation Area 1

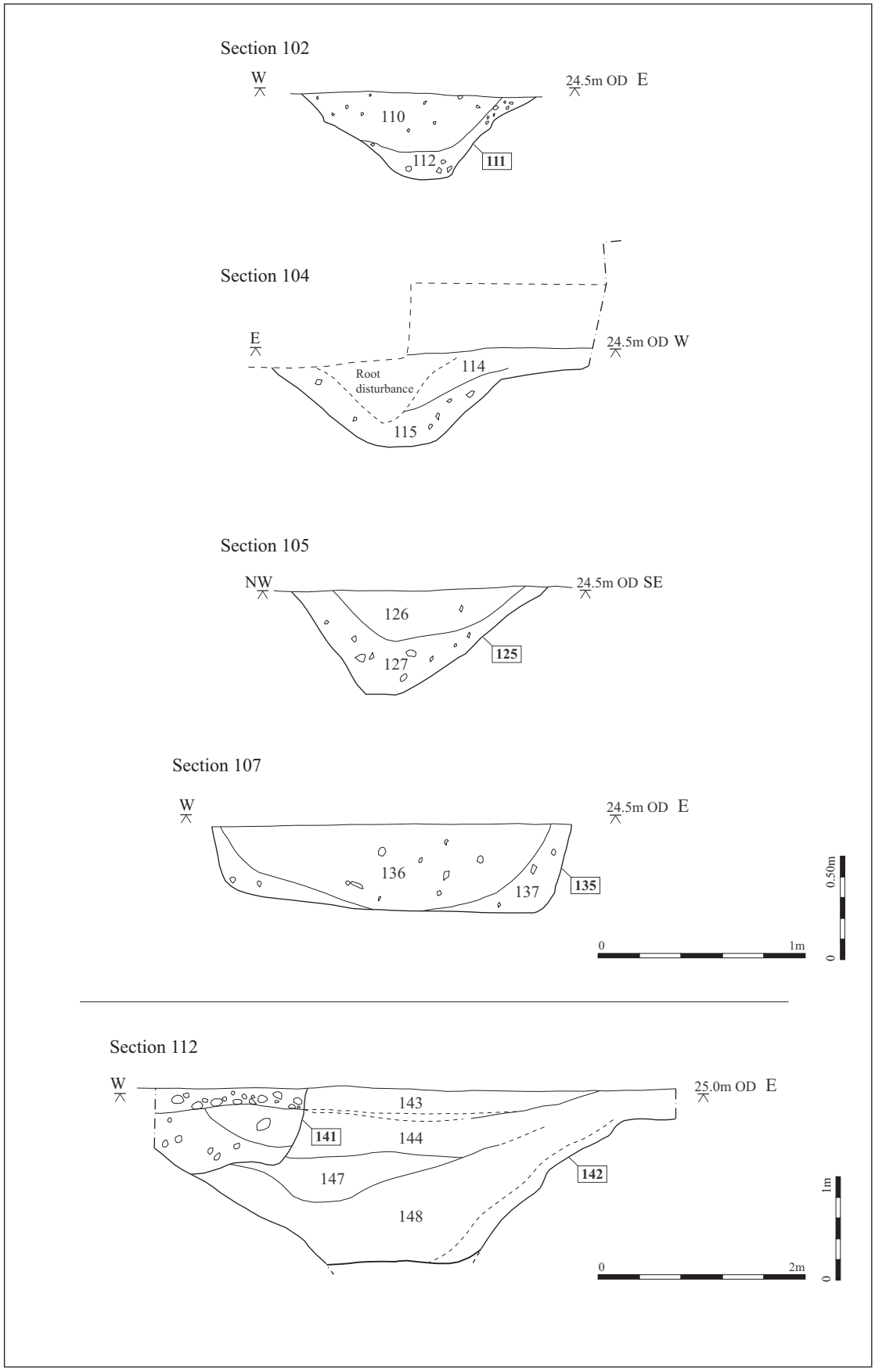
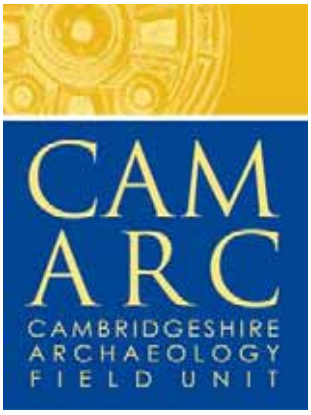


Figure 3: Sections



CAM ARC,
Cambridgeshire County Council,
15 Trafalgar Way,
Bar Hill,
Cambridgeshire,
CB3 8SQ

General Enquiries: 01954-204191
Fax: 01954-273376

http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/archaeology