

**CAM ARC Report Number 1014**

## **Land at 2 Springfields, East Whittlesey: An Archaeologic Evaluation**

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**Archaeological Evaluation**

Chris Thatcher  
February 2008

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**Land at 2 Springfields, Eastrea,  
Whittlesey: An Archaeological  
Evaluation**

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**Archaeological Evaluation**

Chris Thatcher

Site Code: WHS SPR 08  
CHER Event Number: ECB 2870  
Date of works: 26<sup>th</sup> February 2008  
Grid Ref: TL 2929 9723

Editor: Aileen Connor BA MIFA  
Illustrator: Lucy Offord BA

**CAM ARC OASIS Report Form**  
**cambridg1-39973**

**OASIS Number:**

| <b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>  |  |          |  |          |
|---|--|----------|--|----------|
| Project name  | Land at 2 Springfields, Eastrea, Whittlesey An Archaeological Evaluation   |          |  |          |
| Short description   | <p>An Archaeological Evaluation was conducted at 2 Springfields, Eastrea, Whittlesey (TL 2929 9723) by CAM ARC on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2008, prior to the construction of 4 houses. The development comprised a 0.1ha parcel of land. The work was commissioned by Lee Klimczuk.</p> <p>CAM ARC was commissioned to mechanically excavate 2 trenches (total area 40m<sup>2</sup>) in the development area. The evaluation revealed modern disturbance in the form of rubbish pits containing modern ceramic material, glass, and metalwork and root disturbance. No archaeological remains were encountered.</p> |          |  |          |
| Project dates   | Start  | 25-02-08 | End  | 25-02-08 |
| Previous work   | none   |          | Future work  | no       |
| Associated project reference codes                              | WHS SPR 08<br>ECB 2870   |          |  |          |
| Type of project   | evaluation   |          |  |          |
| Site status   | none   |          |  |          |
| Current land use (list all that apply)                          | residential  |          |  |          |
| Planned development   | Residential  |          |  |          |
| Monument types / period (list all that apply)                   |  |          |  |          |
| Significant finds: Artefact type / period (list all that apply) |  |          |  |          |
| <b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>   |  |          |  |          |
| County  | Cambridgeshire   | Parish   | Whittlesey   |          |
| HER for region  | e.g. Cambridgeshire  |          |  |          |
| Site address (including postcode)                               | 2 Springfields,<br>Eastrea,<br>PE7 2AT<br>Whittlesey   |          |  |          |
| Study area (sq.m or ha)   | 0.1ha  |          |  |          |
| National grid reference   | TL 2929 9723   |          |  |          |
| Height OD   | Min OD   | 4.13mOD  | Max OD   | 4.25mOD  |
| <b>PROJECT ORIGINATORS</b>                                      |  |          |  |          |
| Organisation  | CAM ARC  |          |  |          |
| Project brief originator  | Eliza Gore   |          |  |          |
| Project design originator                                       | Aileen Connor  |          |  |          |
| Director/supervisor   | Chris Thatcher   |          |  |          |
| Project manager   | Aileen Connor  |          |  |          |
| Sponsor or funding body   | Lee Klimczuk   |          |  |          |
| <b>ARCHIVES</b>   | <b>Location and accession number</b>   |          | <b>Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, database, context sheets etc)</b> |          |
| Physical  |  |          |  |          |
| Paper   | CAM ARC  |          | Site records, written and drawn, evaluation report                       |          |
| Digital   | CAM ARC  |          | Digital photos, survey data  |          |
| <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>   |  |          |  |          |
| Full title  | Land at 2 Springfields, Eastrea, Whittlesey An Archaeological Evaluation   |          |  |          |
| Author(s)   | C Thatcher   |          |  |          |
| Report number   | 1014   |          |  |          |
| Series title and volume   |  |          |  |          |
| Page numbers  |  |          |  |          |
| Date  | February 2008  |          |  |          |

## **Summary**

An Archaeological Evaluation was conducted at 2 Springfields, Eastrea, Whittlesey (TL 2929 9723) by CAM ARC on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2008, prior to the construction of 4 houses. The development comprised a 0.1ha parcel of land. The work was commissioned by Lee Klimczuk.

CAM ARC was commissioned to mechanically excavate 2 trenches (total area 40m<sup>2</sup>) in the development area. The evaluation revealed modern disturbance in the form of rubbish pits containing modern ceramic material, glass, and metalwork and root disturbance. No archaeological remains were encountered.

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## **1 Introduction**

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Eliza Gore of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice team (CAPCA; Planning Application F/yr07/1282/F), supplemented by a Specification prepared by CAM ARC, Cambridgeshire County Council (formerly Archaeological Field Unit).

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 and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by CAPCA, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

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**

The site overlies one of the fenland gravel 'islands' formed of interglacial gravels overlying Oxford Clay. Whittlesey was once surrounded by ancient river tributaries to the south and east and open water to the north.

## **3 Archaeological and Historical Background**

The proposed development was located on one of the fenland gravel 'islands' in an area of high archaeological potential. In the immediate vicinity of the site numerous Iron Age and Roman settlement remains are identified in the HER (Historic Environment Record), these include a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 109) lying approximately 300m to the north-east of the development area.

A cropmark visible immediately to the west extends within the boundary of the site but no other archaeological remains have been previously recorded from the site itself. However, as stated above, a wealth of archaeological remains are known from the immediate surrounding area.

Prehistoric finds have been recovered at numerous locations along the fen edge from the area around Whittlesey. Evidence for both ritual activity and domestic settlement during the Bronze Age is also recorded nearby, including barrow mounds identified at Eldernell and

Suet Hill, to the south and settlement remains located between Whittlesey and Fengate, to the west. At Kings Dyke West a short lived late Bronze Age settlement consisting of five roundhouses, four post structures and pits, urned cremations and henges, was recorded during excavations there.

The extensive cropmarks in evidence close to the development area in all likelihood comprised elements dating to the Iron Age along with Roman material. The line of a second century Roman road, The Fen Causeway, whose route traversed the fenland between Peterborough and Denver, Norfolk, passed circa 400m north of this site whilst the line of the fen causeway Roman canal, later a Roman Road, across the central part of Whittlesey island lay less than 70m to the north of the site. The projected course of the Roman Fen Causeway crossed the north of Whittlesey and Eastrea island and it has previously been located at the point where it entered the island from Flag Fen and Northey, and also during excavations at Stonald Fielde parish (Knight, 2000).

A Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 109) is located to the northeast of the site; however, the cropmarks demarcating its limit do not extend into the development area. These remains are considered Anglo-Saxon, but it is highly likely that the remnants of Roman and probably earlier Iron Age settlement features are represented, as well as the Roman Fen Causeway.

The place name of Whittlesey indicates a late Saxon origin, being recorded in 972 as *(W)itlesig*, meaning 'Wil(t)el's island' from a personal name (Reaney, 1943). It is likely that at least one of the early farmsteads, and the area of primary settlement nucleation in the late Saxon period, lie around St Mary's church and St Mary's manor house and their environs, 100m-200m southwest of the site.

## **4 Methodology**

The objective of this evaluation 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.

The Brief required that at least 5% (40 square metres) of the total area of the site be subject to trial trenching. This equated to the excavation of two trenches, each 12.5m in length by 1.6m in width.

Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.

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.

Site conditions were favourable with bright and dry weather and dry ground conditions down to at least the base of the trenches.

## 5 Results

The evaluation revealed several modern intrusions, which largely comprised modern rubbish dumps along with root bowls. The fills of these features were very loosely packed and clearly topsoil derived and contained large quantities of modern ceramic ware, glass and metal.

### 5.1 Deposit Summary

Dark black brown topsoil composed of sandy silt with very occasional gravel inclusions sealed the whole site in a layer recorded as between 0.34m and 0.51m thick (100, 200).

This overlies an interface between the natural drift deposits and the topsoil (101, 201) that was between 0.12m and 0.31m thick.

The natural geological deposits (102, 202) comprised mid orange gravels and sand.

| Trench | No. | Topsoil       | No. | Subsoil       | Total trench depth |
|--------|-----|---------------|-----|---------------|--------------------|
| 1      | 101 | 0.34m – 0.44m | 102 | 0.12m – 0.13m | 0.46m – 0.57m      |
| 2      | 201 | 0.48m – 0.51m | 202 | 0.17m – 0.31m | 0.65m – 0.82m      |

Table 1: Depth of deposits across the whole development area

The ground level sloped away to the north of the site. In the Southernmost trench, Trench 2, the ground level was recorded at 4.25mOD whilst at the northern extent of the investigation area it had dropped to 4.13mOD. It seems likely that the ground level had been raised slightly towards the south as the depth of soil deposits recorded was up to 0.23m thicker in Trench 2.

## 6 Discussion and Conclusions

The evaluation revealed no archaeological remains despite the close proximity of extensive cropmarks dating to the Iron Age and Roman



period to the west and a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 109) located to the northeast.

Recommendations for any future work based on this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

### **Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank Lee Klimczuk who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Aileen Connor. Chris Thatcher carried out the evaluation with the assistance of Glenn Bailey. The illustrations were produced by Severine Bezie. Liz Popescu edited the report.

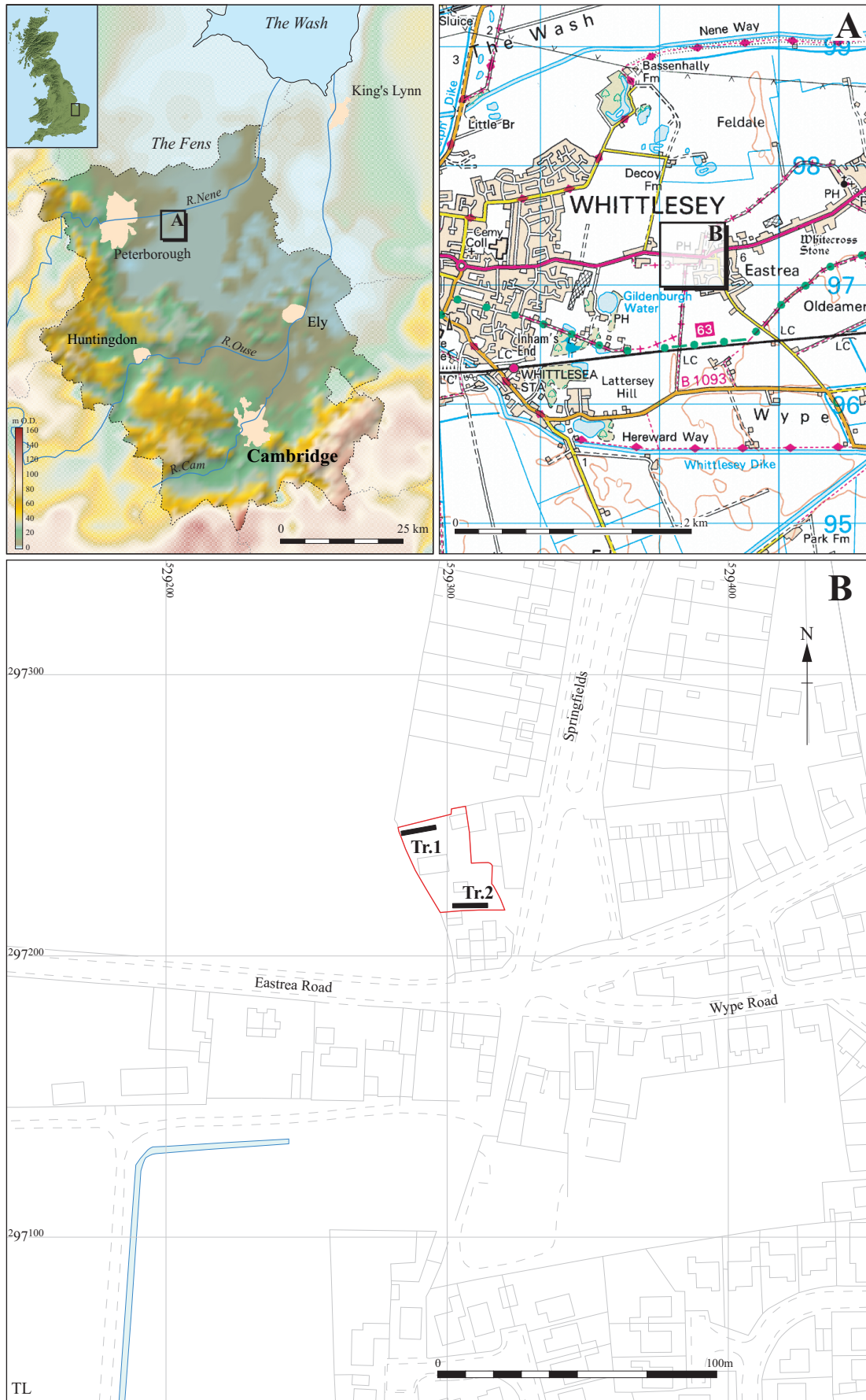
The brief for archaeological works was written by Eliza Gore, and the evaluation was monitored by Kasia Gdaniec.

### **Bibliography**

- |               |      |  |
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**Appendix 1: Context Summary**

| <b>Context Number</b> | <b>Trench</b> | <b>Type</b> | <b>Function</b>    |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------------|
| <b>100</b>            | 1             | Topsoil     | Layer              |
| <b>101</b>            | 1             | Subsoil     | Layer              |
| <b>102</b>            | 1             | Natural     | Geological Deposit |
| <b>200</b>            | 2             | Topsoil     | Layer              |
| <b>201</b>            | 2             | Subsoil     | Layer              |
| <b>202</b>            | 2             | Natural     | Geological Deposit |



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Figure 1: Location of trenches (black) with the development area outlined (red)

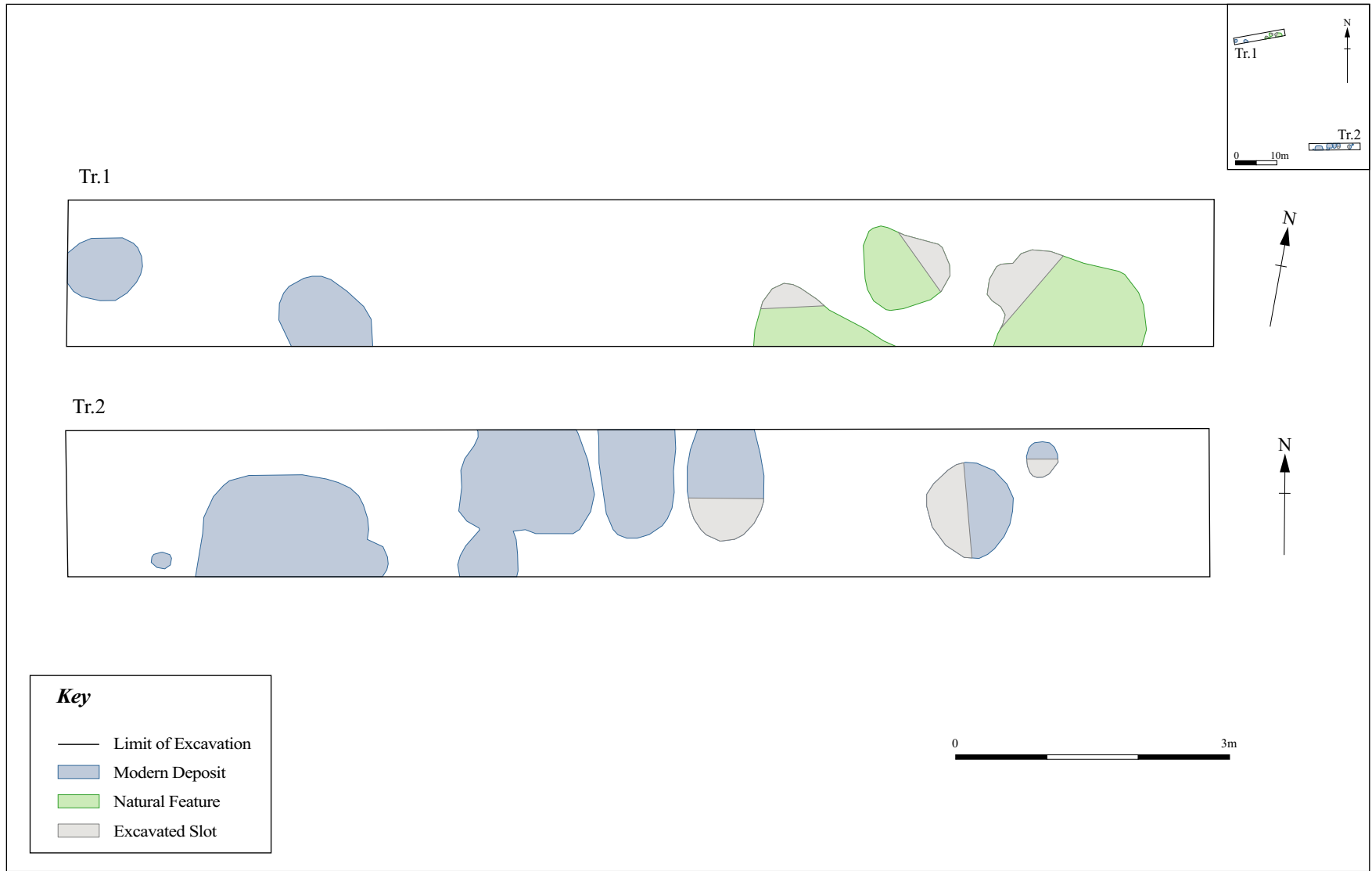
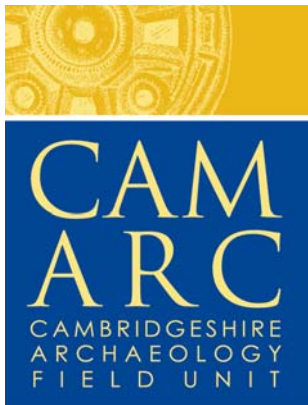


Figure 2: Trench plans



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>