



**CAM ARC Report Number 1030**

## **National Grid, Mill Common, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire:**

---

**An Archaeological Evaluation**

Thomas Lyons

June 2008

**CAM ARC Report Number 1030**

**National Grid, Mill Common,  
Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire:**

---

**An Archaeological Evaluation**

Thomas Lyons BA

With contributions by Stephen Wadeson and  
Rachel Fosberry

Site Code: HUN GAS 08  
CHER Event Number: ECB 2931  
Date of works: May 2008  
Grid Ref: TL 237 713

Status			
Author	Thomas Lyons		
Checked By	James Drummond-Murray		
Authorised By	James Drummond-Murray		

Editor: James Drummond-Murray BA MIFA  
Illustrator: Caoimhín Ó Coileáin BA

**CAM ARC OASIS Report Form**  
assign

**OASIS Number: HF to**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>				
Project name	National Grid Gas Site, Huntingdon			
Short description	Between the 19th and 21st of May 2008 CAM ARC conducted an archaeological evaluation at the National Grid Gas depot at Mill Common, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. 40m of trial trenches were excavated along the north side of the development area, in order to avoid services and contaminated ground. Trench 1, in the northeastern part of the development area, was the only trench to contain any archaeology. Two features were identified, the most substantial being a ditch dated to the Roman period. This was orientated east west and would have ran parallel to Alconbury Brook immediately to the south of the development area.			
Project dates	Start	19/5/2008	End	21/5/2008
Previous work	none		Future work	unknown
Associated project reference codes	HUN GAS 08			
Type of project	Evaluation – targeted trenches			
Site status	Industrial			
Current land use (list all that apply)	Gasworks & Depot			
Planned development	Housing			
Monument types / period (list all that apply)	None			
Significant finds: Artefact type / period (list all that apply)	Roman box flue tile fragments			
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>				
County	Huntingdon	Parish	Cambridgeshire	
HER for region	Cambridgeshire			
Site address (including postcode)	National Grid, Mill Common, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE29 3AU			
Study area (sq.m or ha)	0.63ha			
National grid reference	TL 237 713			
Height OD	Min OD		Max OD	
<b>PROJECT ORIGINATORS</b>				
Organisation	CAM ARC			
Project brief originator	Eliza Gore			
Project design originator	James Drummond-Murray			
Director/supervisor	Tom Lyons			
Project manager	James Drummond-Murray			
Sponsor or funding body	Entec			
<b>ARCHIVES</b>				
	Location and accession number		Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, database, context sheets etc)	
Physical	Cambs. County Store		Pottery	
Paper	Cambs. County Store		Plans & sections.	
Digital	CAM ARC		Digital photos	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>				
Full title	National Grid, Mill Common, Huntingdon, Mill Common, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation.			
Author(s)	Tom Lyons			
Report number	1030			
Series title and volume				
Page numbers				
Date	June 2008			

## **Summary**

Between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2008 CAM ARC conducted an archaeological evaluation at the National Grid Gas depot at Mill Common, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. 40m of trial trenches were excavated along the north side of the development area, in order to avoid services and contaminated ground. Trench 1, in the northeastern part of the development area, was the only trench to contain any archaeology. Two features were identified, the most substantial being a ditch dated to the Roman period. This was orientated east west and would have run parallel to Alconbury Brook immediately to the south of the development area.

## **Contents**

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Geology and Topography</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Archaeological and Historical Background</b>	<b>1</b>
3.1	Roman	1
3.2	Whitehills	2
3.3	Watersmeet	2
3.4	Glendower, Mill Common	2
3.5	The Edward House, 4 Mill Common	3
<b>4</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>3</b>
5.1	Trench 1	3
5.2	Trench 2	4
5.3	Trench 3	4
5.4	Trench 4	4
<b>6</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>List of Appendices</b>	
	Appendix 1: Context Summary	7
	Appendix 2: Roman Pottery, by Stephen Wadeson	8
	Appendix 3: Environmental Report by Rachel Fosberry	9
	Appendix 4: Ground Conditions, by Steve Boreham	11
	<b>List of Figures</b>	
	Figure 1: Location map	18
	Figure 2: Trench plans	19
	Figure 3: Section drawings	20
	Figure 4: Borehole location map	21
	Figures 5 & 6: Borehole Transects	22

## **List of Plates**

<b>Plate 1:</b>	<b>Trench 1 (from west)</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Plate 2:</b>	<b>Trench 2 (from west)</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Plate 3:</b>	<b>Trench 3 (from south west)</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Plate 4:</b>	<b>Trench 4 (from west)</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Plate 5:</b>	<b>Section 1 (from north)</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Plate 6:</b>	<b>Section 4 (from north)</b>	<b>25</b>

## **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 0702949OUT) 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 Oxford Clay, overlain by alluvium (British Geological Survey).

The site is located on the broadly sloping northern bank of Alconbury Brook. Land immediately to the north (the Edward House, Mill Common) is much higher than the current Gasworks. The 1885 1<sup>st</sup> OS map shows the land in the proposed development area sloping from 14.2m OD in the northwest corner of the site to 10.4m OD along the eastern side. The current heights for this land are 13.4m OD and 10m OD, respectively. This suggests that during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the proposed development area has been levelled with truncation of the land occurring towards the northwest corner (Atkinson, 2007).

It seems likely therefore that the made ground deposits encountered in the evaluation result from the disturbance and truncation of the original ground level rather than a deposition of new material.

## **3 Archaeological and Historical Background**

### **3.1 Roman**

The proposed development area sits between the A14 and the north bank of Alconbury Brook approximately 200m west of its confluence

with the River Ouse. The Roman town of Durovigutum is no more than 1km to the southeast, through which Ermine Street runs to the northwest.

This area seems to have been occupied in the Late Iron Age and Roman periods and has been the subject of previous archaeological investigations.

### **3.2 Whitehills**

A 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Century Roman Villa preceded by a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Century timber framed building was excavated in the 1960s. This was approximately 100m west of the current development area and provides a context for the other pieces of archaeological work in the vicinity.

### **3.3 Watersmeet**

This site was excavated by Archaeological Solutions (formerly Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust) in 2003 and was located immediately east of the current development area on the northern bank of Alconbury Brook (TL 239 713) (Nicholson, K. 2006)

Roman archaeology here was split in to two phases, the first being late 1<sup>st</sup> to mid 2<sup>nd</sup> Century. Phase One consisted of four ditches comprising two sides of a rectangular enclosure.

The second phase of activity consisted of further ditches and a large, partially enclosed, inhumation cemetery. The cemetery contained 72 individuals in total and dated to the mid/late 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> Century. The full extent of both the late Roman field system and cemetery remains unknown as they both extended beyond the limits of excavations at Watersmeet.

### **3.6 Glendower, Mill Common**

In 2003 CAM ARC (formerly Cambs. County Council Archaeological Field Unit) evaluated land immediately west of the current development area (Cooper, 2003). This revealed Roman artefacts sealed by alluvial clay.

A large ditch or natural watercourse contained Roman box and roof tile (at a depth of nearly 2m), suggesting the presence of a high status building in the vicinity.



### 3.5 **The Edward House, 4 Mill Common**

An evaluation immediately to the north of the current development area undertaken by Archaeological Solutions (formerly Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust) in 2003 revealed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Century Roman “pits and gullies” contemporary with the earlier structure at Whitehills and the first phase of enclosure at Watersmeet (Grant & Wilkins 2003).

## 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 machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked JCB-type excavator using a toothless 1.8m 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 which 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.

## 5 **Results**

### 5.1 **Trench 1**

Trench 1 was located in the northwest corner of the development area and orientated east west. It was 10m long and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.7m, on to natural geology, which was a mid/pale brown clay and firmer than the more alluvial clays encountered in other trenches. Make-up and levelling deposits had truncated any original soil sequences. A linear archaeological feature, presumed to be a ditch, was revealed along the length of the trench against the north-facing baulk. Immediately above the top fill of the ditch (4) were 0.3m of make up deposits, then 0.2m of hardcore and tarmac (Section 1). This ditch was excavated in three slots, **3**, **6**, and **8**, as initially slot **8** was 0.15m deep while slot **3** was 0.5m deep. A discrete archaeological feature was present at the east end of the trench against the north-facing baulk, **10**. This was 0.08m deep and contained no finds.

## 5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was located on the north side of the development area and orientated east west. It was 7.5m long and was excavated to a maximum depth of 2m, with a step on the south side. Natural geology was reached at a depth of 1.8m, which was a pale brown alluvial clay. Much of the soil sequence consisted of truncated and contaminated ground, which, along with the depth of the trench, prevented cleaning and work in the trench (Section 3). However the base of the trench did appear to contain the bases of truncated features, cut in to natural geology, one of which produced two sherds of Roman pottery.

## 5.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was located on the north side of the proposed development area and orientated northeast southwest. It was 10m long and excavated to a maximum depth of 1.6m. Natural geology, pale brown alluvial clay, was reached at a depth of 0.8m, which was at least a further 0.8m deep (Section 4). No archaeological features were encountered. Above the natural was 0.7m of relatively homogenous dark brown made ground (clay). This contained frequent stones and brick flecks. Immediately beneath the surface was 0.1m of hardcore.

## 5.4 Trench 4

Trench 4 was located in the northeast corner of the proposed development area, immediately north of one of the existing buildings on the site. It was orientated northeast southwest and was 10.5m long. Natural geology, a pale brown alluvial clay, was reached at a depth of 0.5m (Section 5). No archaeological features were encountered. A relatively undisturbed subsoil (0.3m thick) was present beneath the topsoil. A gas pipe was discovered following the orientation of the trench at a depth of 1m. This was exposed for 4m, to the east it went in to the trench baulk and to the west it sunk lower in to the ground. Towards the east end of the trench was a likely large gas pipe at a depth of 1.2m. This appeared to be on the same alignment as the smaller pipe, although it was only partially exposed.

## 6 Discussion

The single dateable feature found on site was the east west linear ditch in Trench 1. Although it was excavated in three 1m slots they are unlikely to be part of the same feature as **8** was 0.15m deep while **6** and **3** were 0.5m deep. The edges were unclear along the length of the feature and no distinction could be made in plan. The pottery recovered from the excavated slots, 26 sherds in total, is a variety of 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> Century wares. Most of these were quite abraded. The assemblage included CBM, tegula, box flue tile, a large amphorae fragment, and several sherds of Nene Valley and colour coated fine

beakers (Appendix A). No artefacts other than pottery were found in the trenches.

The presence of box tile and CBM alone suggests that the feature is perhaps late Roman in date, considering the proximity to the Whitehills Villa site.

It is orientated with Alconbury Brook and perhaps functioned as a boundary against the watercourse or flooded ground. The ditch might also be part of the same later Roman field system that was identified at Watersmeet, the chronological definition of which was described at "weak". These features had a range of 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> Century pottery (Nicholson, 2006).

Two rim sherds of pottery were recovered from the base of Trench 2. These were from grey coarse ware jars and date from the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Century (S. Wadeson pers. comm.)

The profile in Trench 1 shows truncation of the natural geology and archaeology by modern levelling layers (Section 1). Trenches 3 and 4 on the north side of the development area contained alluvial clay deposits at the base, immediately beneath thicker layers of made ground.

Trench 2 was located in area subject to heavy truncation and contamination. All upper soil sequences had been removed but it should be noted that Roman artefacts were recovered from possible features at a depth of 2m where they were sealed by clay.

## **7 Conclusions**

Archaeological evaluation has revealed the presence of archaeological remains in the northwest corner of the proposed development area at a depth of 0.7m, despite truncation of that land (Trench 1). Alluvial deposits and inundations recorded in Trenches 3 and 4 conceivably seal archaeological deposits at greater depth as suggested in Trench 2 and the Glendower evaluation to the west.

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

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Entec UK Ltd who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by James Drummond-Murray.

The brief for archaeological works was written by Eliza Gore, who visited the site and monitored the evaluation. The fieldwork was conducted by the author and Spencer Cooper.

## Bibliography

- |                         |      |   |
|-------------------------|------|---|
| Atkinson, S.            | 2007 | National Grid Property Holdings Ltd. Mill Common, Huntingdon: Cultural Heritage Desk Study  |
| Grant, J. & Wilkins, B. | 2003 | Land Adjacent to Edward House, 4 Mill Common, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation. Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust Report no. 1268. |
| Nicholson, K.           | 2006 | A Late Roman Cemetery at Watersmeet, Mill Common, Huntingdon. <i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society</i> , XCV, 57-90.                         |

## Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Length	Width	Depth	Other Comments	Date Range
1	3	fill	ditch	0		0.22	Upper fill of ditch slot [3] in Trench 1. Dk brown firm clay.	
2	3	fill	ditch	0		0.5	Lower fill of ditch slot [3] in Trench 1. Mixed mid/dk brown clay.	
3	0	Cut	ditch	1	0.6	0.58	Cut through ditch in Trench 1. Partial profile. West end of trench.	C2 -C4
4	6	fill	ditch	0		0.2	Upper fill of ditch slot [6] in Trench 1. Dk brown firm clay.	
5	6	fill	ditch	0		0.5	Lower fill of ditch slot[6] in Trench 1. Partial profile. Mixed mid/dk brown clay.	
6	0	Cut	ditch	1	0.6	0.54	Cut through ditch in Trench 1. Only half profile. See section 1.	C2 - C4
7	8	fill	ditch	0		0.15	Single fill of ditch slot [8] in Trench 1.	
8	0	cut	ditch	0.6	0.75	0.15	Cut through ditch in Trench 1. Partial profile.	C2-C3
9	10	fill	pit	0		0.08	Single fill of pit [10].	
10	0	cut	pit	0		0.08	Cut of truncated pit.	
12	0	layer		0			No. given for finds retrieval purposes in Trench 2.	C2 - C3

## Appendix 2: Roman Pottery, by Stephen Wadeson

Twelve sherds were recovered from four contexts. They weighed a total of 246g.

**Key:** C = Century, E = Early, M = Mid, L = Late.  
R = Rim, U = Undecorated body sherd, D = Decorated body sherd, B = Base.

SGW = Sandy Grey Ware, SOW = Sandy Oxidised Ware, CGSAM = Central Gaulish Samian Ware, STW = Shell Tempered Ware, NVCC = Nene Valley Colour Coated Ware, UOW = Unidentified Oxidised Ware.

Context	Fabric	Des.	Form	Quantity	Weight (g)	Decoration	Spot date
12	SGW	R	Jar	2	35		C2-C3
7	CGSAM	U		1	1		C2
7	SOW	R		1	7		C2-C4
5	NVCC	B	Beaker	1	4		C3-C4
5	NVCC	R	Lid	1	4	Rouletted	C3-C4
5	STW	U		1	9		MC1-C4
5	SGW	U		1	3		C2-C4
5	SGW	U		1	24		MC1-C4
1	Amphorae	U		1	144		C1-C3
1	NVCC	RU	Beaker	2	10		C2-C4
1	SGW	U		1	3		C2-C3
1	UOW	U		1	2		MC1-C4

## Appendix 3: Environmental Report, by Rachel Fosberry

### Introduction and Methods

Two bulk samples were taken from features within the evaluated areas of the site in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations. Both samples were taken from separate slots of the same Roman ditch.

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 a 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.

### Results

The results are recorded on Table 1.

Sample Number	Context Number	Cut Number	Flot contents	Residue Contents
1	2	3	Coke, hammerslag	Slag, Fe nail, pottery, hearth lining, oyster shell
2	4	6	Single charred grain	Pottery

*Table 1: Environmental Samples from HUN GAS 08*

### Discussion

The samples were poor in terms of plant remains. The finds retrieved from Sample 1 are significant as they represent the deposition of metalworking waste and fuel. Spheroidal hammerslag along with microscopic slag fragments suggest either primary smithing activities or welding is taking place in the near vicinity.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

In conclusion, the samples showed only a low abundance of charred material that is not considered worthy of further analysis.

If further excavations are planned for this area, it is recommended that a schedule for environmental sampling should be appended to the updated project design that would include targeted sampling for metalworking residues.



---

## **Appendix 4: Ground Conditions, by Steve Boreham Bsc. PhD.**

### **Introduction**

This report presents the results of fifteen boreholes sunk by hand-operated Dutch auger across the western end of the National Grid site at Mill Common, Huntingdon, and places them in the context of previous borehole and trial pit evidence from the site. The logs from these boreholes are presented in Appendix 1.

The Mill Common National Grid Site is confined to the south by the Alconbury Brook. To the north there is rising land occupied by the residential road named 'Mill Common' and by the A14 trunk road.

An initial analysis of borehole and trial pit evidence from the Mill Common site by the author identified a number of locations to the south and west of the site where organic peaty deposits were preserved beneath made ground. It became immediately apparent on visiting the site that many areas initially highlighted for potential investigation were beneath temporary buildings, inside locked storage compounds, had concrete hard-standing, were beneath stored materials or had buried services. Indeed National Grid would only give permission for borehole investigations within the car park and storage area to the west of the site (see Figure 4). Since a previous survey borehole (WS3) in this area had encountered peat at 2m depth, the Dutch auger boreholes reported in this report were located in a loose grid pattern in the adjacent area. Unfortunately, thirteen of the fifteen boreholes sunk by the author encountered impenetrable made ground at various depths across the western end of the site. Only boreholes BH-H and BH-O punched through the mantle of made ground and penetrated the underlying deposits.

### **Boreholes BH-H and BH-O**

Borehole BH-H encountered a thin layer of black fibrous peat (128-130cm), underlain by dark grey-blue organic silty clay with shells (130-138cm), on very stiff blue grey bedrock clay. Samples of the peat and organic silty clay were taken for environmental analysis and dating. This peaty horizon, although about a metre higher, is probably part of the same unit encountered in borehole WS3. Borehole BH-O was located adjacent to the eastern edge of a previously excavated trench. In this borehole silty sand (65-75cm) was seen to overlie very stiff grey blue silty clay bedrock.

### **Geology of the Mill Common National Grid Site**

Selected borehole and trial pit records have been used to construct two geological transects across the site (see Figures 4, 5 & 6). Almost everywhere made ground is present, sometimes down to a depth of 2m where it fills depressions cut into the underlying sediments.

Boreholes recording only made ground have not been included in these transects.

Transect 1 runs SW-NE from the edge of Alconbury Brook towards the northeast corner of the site. It is clear that in the vicinity of borehole BH2 there is a c.5m deep channel-form filled with gravel and an upper silty clay. A rising bedrock surface marks the edge of the channel at WS3 where peaty deposits represent the marginal channel-fill sediments. The sandy and gravelly clay of BH-O, BH4 and WS2A may represent colluvial slope wash sediments, perhaps forming a fan on the northern edge of Alconbury Brook.

Transect 2 runs NW-SE from the western edge of the site towards the Alconbury Brook. The sequence of silty clay at BH1 shows the vertical extent of the silty clay channel-fill sequence seen in BH2. It is at the same elevation as the peat in BH-H, which confirms this as channel-margin sedimentation. BH-O represents a bedrock high at the channel edge. The remainder of the transect shows the complex stratigraphy within the c.6m deep buried channel-form. Borehole WS3 again shows marginal peaty sediments, which merge into the upper silty clay of the channel fill. It is striking that at BH5 there is a peat unit *within* the sand and gravel. A similar unit of silty and sandy clay is seen within the gravel at WS5 and WS6. This material also has the appearance of channel-marginal and channel-central sedimentation.

## Discussion and Conclusions

The made ground encountered in this borehole survey appears to be a mixture of recent backfilled local material with concrete and asphalt, often exhibiting hydrocarbon residues. The archaeological potential of the made ground on the site seems to be rather low. It appears that a c.5-6m deep buried channel of the Alconbury Brook runs along the southern edge of the site from BH1, BH2, BH5, BH3 to WS6. It is worth noting that sandy and silty clay channel-fill sediments also occur at boreholes WS7 and WS8 near the site office. It seems likely that the basal gravel fill of this channel represents Late glacial braided stream deposits. The peaty marginal sediments (WS3) and silty and sandy channel sediments (WS5, WS6) *within* the gravel are important because they might represent the climatic amelioration (Windermere interstadial) of the Late glacial climate oscillation (13,500 Cal years BP). Similar deposits are known from elsewhere in the Great Ouse valley (Gao et al. 2007). The archaeological potential of these sediments is not high, but these peaty sediments may provide a 'snapshot' of environments and climates of the Late Palaeolithic during a period of rapid climate change. Alternatively, it is also possible that these sediments represent a mid-Holocene (for example Neolithic or Bronze Age) course of the Alconbury Brook, and that the overlying gravel unit is a 'lag gravel' resulting from avulsion of the river due to excessive sediment loads in the mid-Iron Age following deforestation of the catchment. Unfortunately, due to their location and depth, these sediments were outside the reach of this survey.

The upper silty clay channel-fill almost certainly corresponds to the 'Romano-British Silt', which is known to occur in most river valleys in southern England. This alluvial sediment may cover the Iron Age to Medieval period, and in floodplain areas (like Mill Common itself) may still be accumulating. The organic peaty material present at the channel edge (BH-H, WS3) almost certainly reflects emergent aquatic vegetation (reedswamp) and wet woodland. Again, the archaeological potential of this material isn't high, but analysis and dating could yield an environmental 'snapshot'.

It seems that BH4 may record a colluvial fan of slope wash material, which has been transported from the steeper slopes to the north, towards the banks of the Alconbury Brook. If this is the case, then these sediments may represent the best chance of finding terrestrial human activity on the site. However, it is hard to say when this material might date from, and it is likely that the oxidised nature of the sediment means that the preservation potential is not high.

In summary, a palaeochannel of the Alconbury Brook is preserved at the Mill Common National Grid Site. It contains organic material within a basal gravel unit that may be Late-Glacial, or possibly mid-Holocene in age. The overlying silty channel-fill and marginal organic sediments probably equate with the 'Romano-British Silt'. Both organic deposits have low archaeological potential, but may contain a well-preserved environmental and climatic record. Presumed sandy slope wash on the northern edge of the site may have a better chance of containing archaeology, although its age is uncertain the preservation potential is likely to be low.

Dr Steve Boreham 03-07-08

## Reference

Gao, C. Boreham, S., Preece, R.C., Gibbard, P.L., Briant R.M. 2007 Fluvial response to rapid climate change during the Devensian (Weichselian) Lateglacial in the River Great Ouse, southern England, UK. *Sedimentary Geology*, 202, 193-210.

## Appendix 1 – Mill Common National Grid Site boreholes

Hand operated Dutch auger - \*\* indicates borehole penetrating made ground

BH-A –TL 23770 71317

described top down

0-8cm Gravel and sand (made ground)

8cm hole stopped on tarmac/asphalt

BH-B –TL 23770 71310

described top down

0-8cm Gravel and sand (made ground)  
8cm hole stopped on tarmac/asphalt

BH-C –TL 23765 71310  
described top down

0-15cm Gravel and sand (made ground)  
15-18cm Tarmac/asphalt (made ground)  
18cm hole stopped on pebbles/hardcore

BH-D –TL 23766 71318  
described top down

0-10cm Gravel and sand (made ground)  
10-13cm Tarmac/asphalt (made ground)  
13cm hole stopped on pebbles/hardcore

BH-E –TL 23757 71317  
described top down

0-20cm Gravel and sand (made ground)  
20cm hole stopped on tarmac/asphalt

BH-F –TL 23755 71312  
described top down

0-15cm Gravel and sand (made ground)  
15-20cm Black tar-sand (made ground)  
20cm hole stopped on tarmac/asphalt

BH-G –TL 23750 71314  
described top down

0-15cm Gravel and sand (made ground)  
15cm hole stopped on tarmac/asphalt

\*\*BH-H –TL 23746 71318  
described top down

0-65cm Gravel and sand (made ground)  
65-78cm Black tar-sand (made ground)  
78-95cm Grey silty sand and gravel (made ground)  
95-100cm Grey silty clay  
100-105cm Orange coarse sand

---

105-128cm Brown ferruginous compacted gravel  
128-130cm Black fibrous peat  
130-138cm Dark grey-blue organic silty clay with shells  
138-150cm Very stiff grey blue silty clay (bedrock)

BH-I –TL 23737 71318  
described top down

0-10cm Gravel and sand (made ground)  
10cm hole stopped on concrete

BH-J –TL 23738 71310  
described top down

0-10cm Gravel and sand (made ground)  
10-15cm Concrete (made ground)  
15cm hole stopped on asphalt

BH-K –TL 23743 71320  
described top down

0-10cm Gravel and sand (made ground)  
10-20cm Yellow gravel (made ground)  
20cm hole stopped on concrete

BH-L –TL 23749 71324  
described top down

0-10cm Gravel and sand (made ground)  
10-15cm Yellow gravel (made ground)  
15cm hole stopped on concrete

BH-M –TL 23756 71326  
described top down

0-2cm Gravel and sand (made ground)  
2-14cm Yellow gravel (made ground)  
14cm hole stopped on concrete

BH-N –TL 23760 71327  
described top down




0-12cm Gravel and sand (made ground)  
12cm hole stopped on concrete

\*\*BH-O -TL 23770 71324 located adjacent to edge of previous excavation  
described top down


0-10cm	Concrete rubble (made ground)
10-55cm	Grey sandy silt (made ground)
55-60cm	Black tar-sand (made ground)
60-65cm	Chalky gravel and sand
65-75cm	Grey silty sand with pebbles, becoming silty with depth
75-125cm	Very stiff grey blue silty clay (bedrock)
125cm hole	stopped on large pebble/boulder

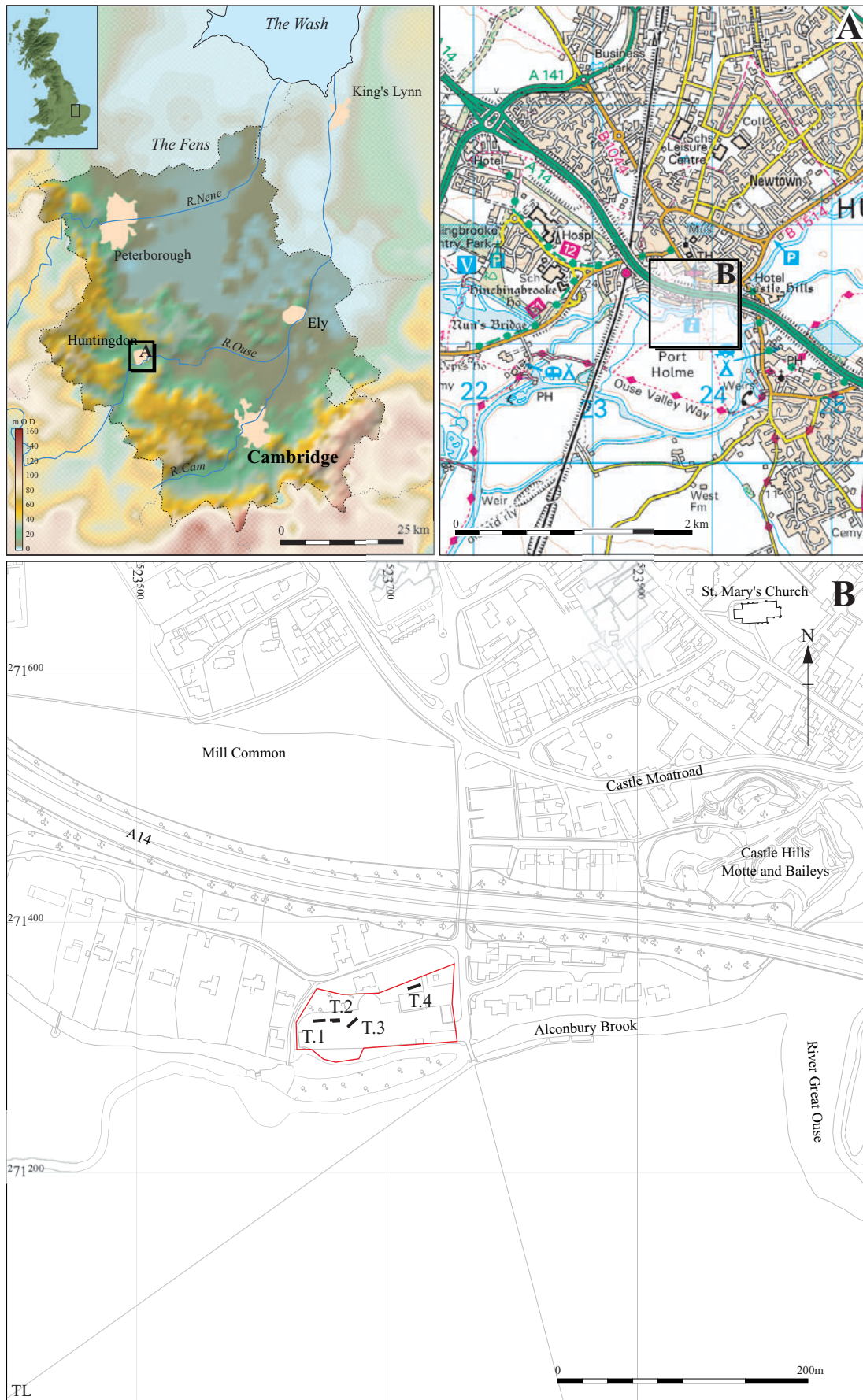
## Drawing Conventions

### Plans

Limit of Excavation	
Deposit - Conjectured	
Natural Features	
Sondages/Machine Strip	
Intrusion/Truncation	
Illustrated Section	S.14
Cut	
Archaeological Deposit	
Excavated Slot	
Modern Deposit	
Cut Number	<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">118</span>

### 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	<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">118</span>
Deposit Number	117
Ordnance Datum	18.45m OD ^
Inclusions	



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Cambridgeshire County Council 100023205 2008

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



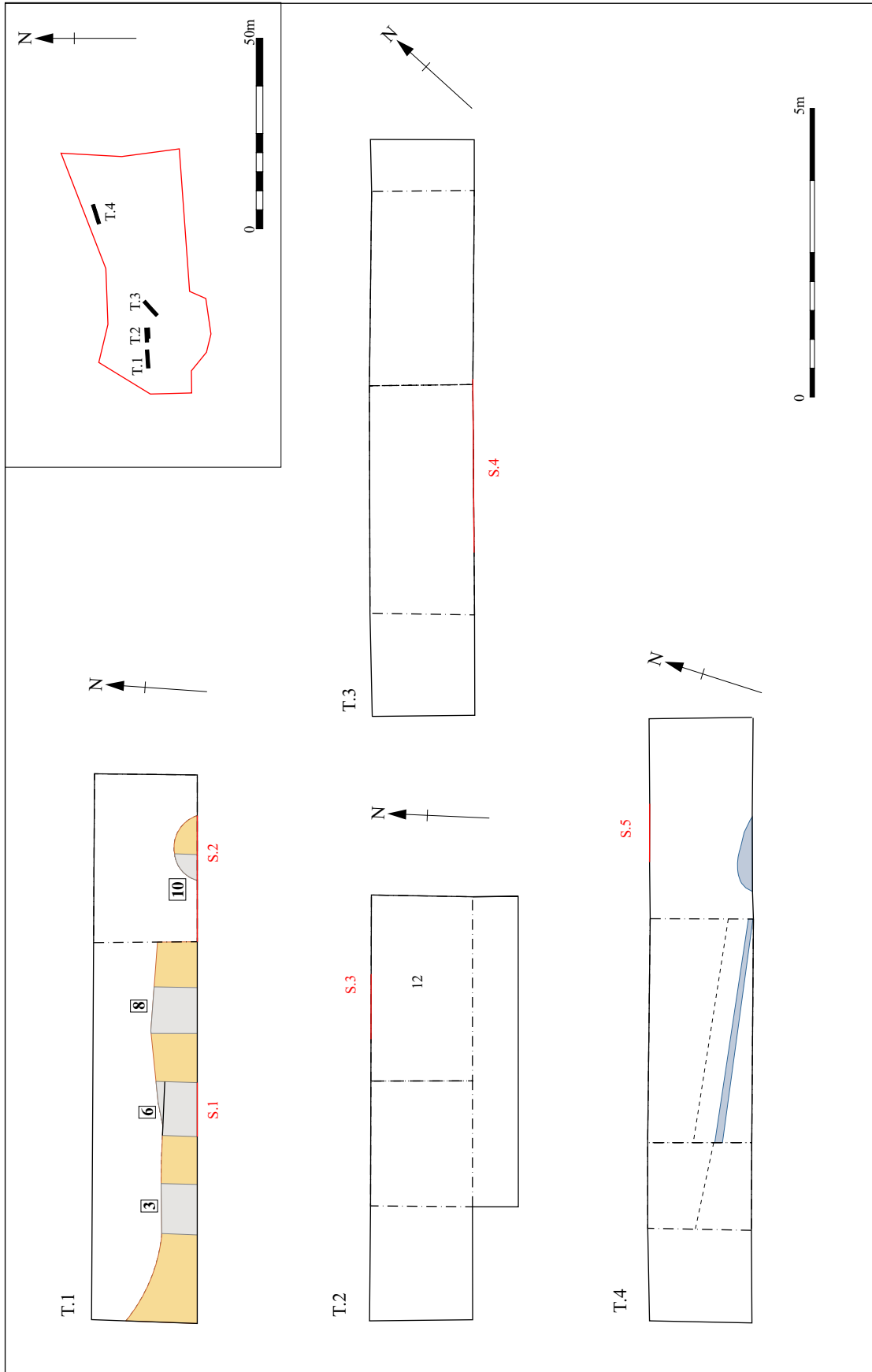


Figure 2: Trenches

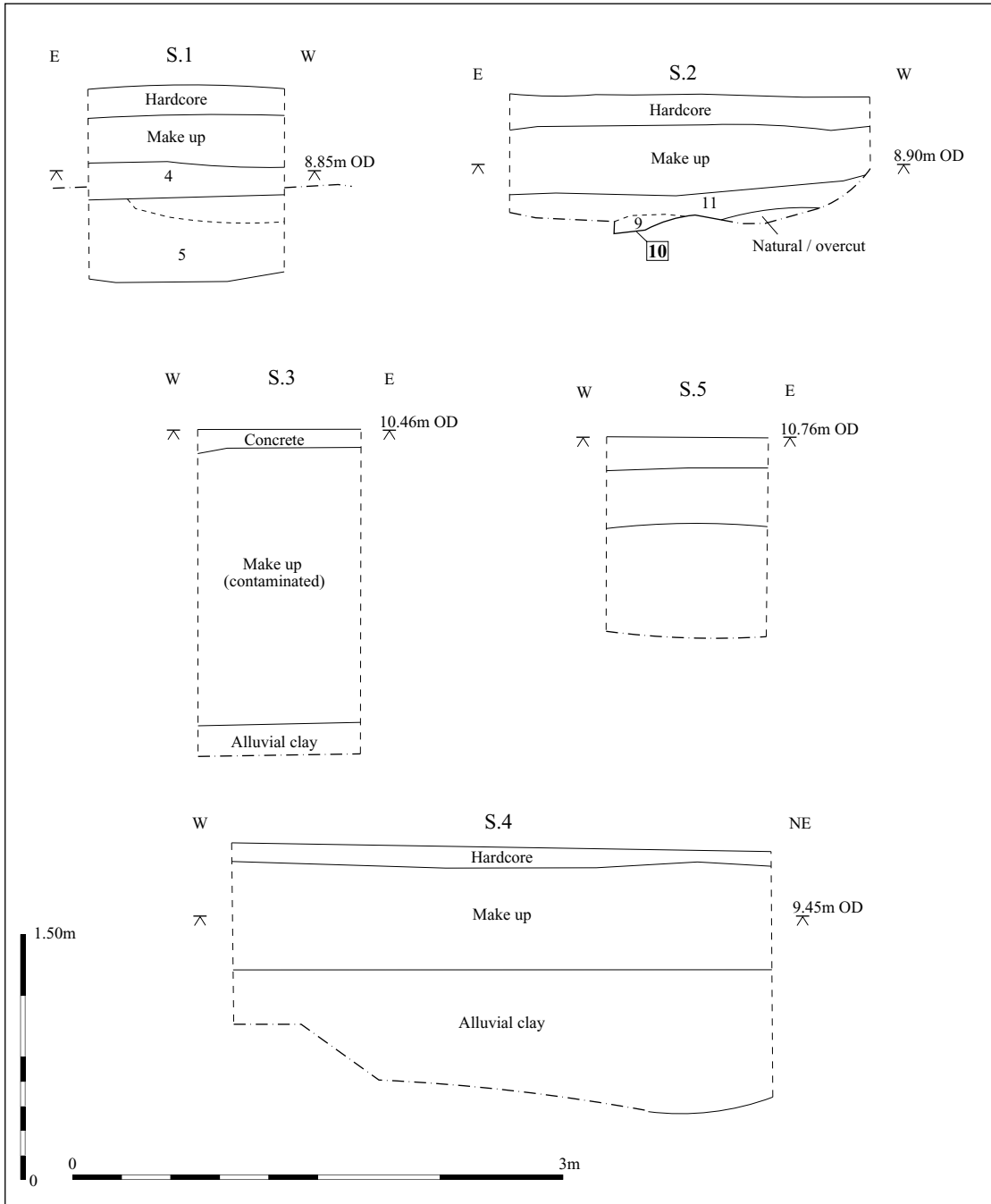


Figure 3: Section drawings

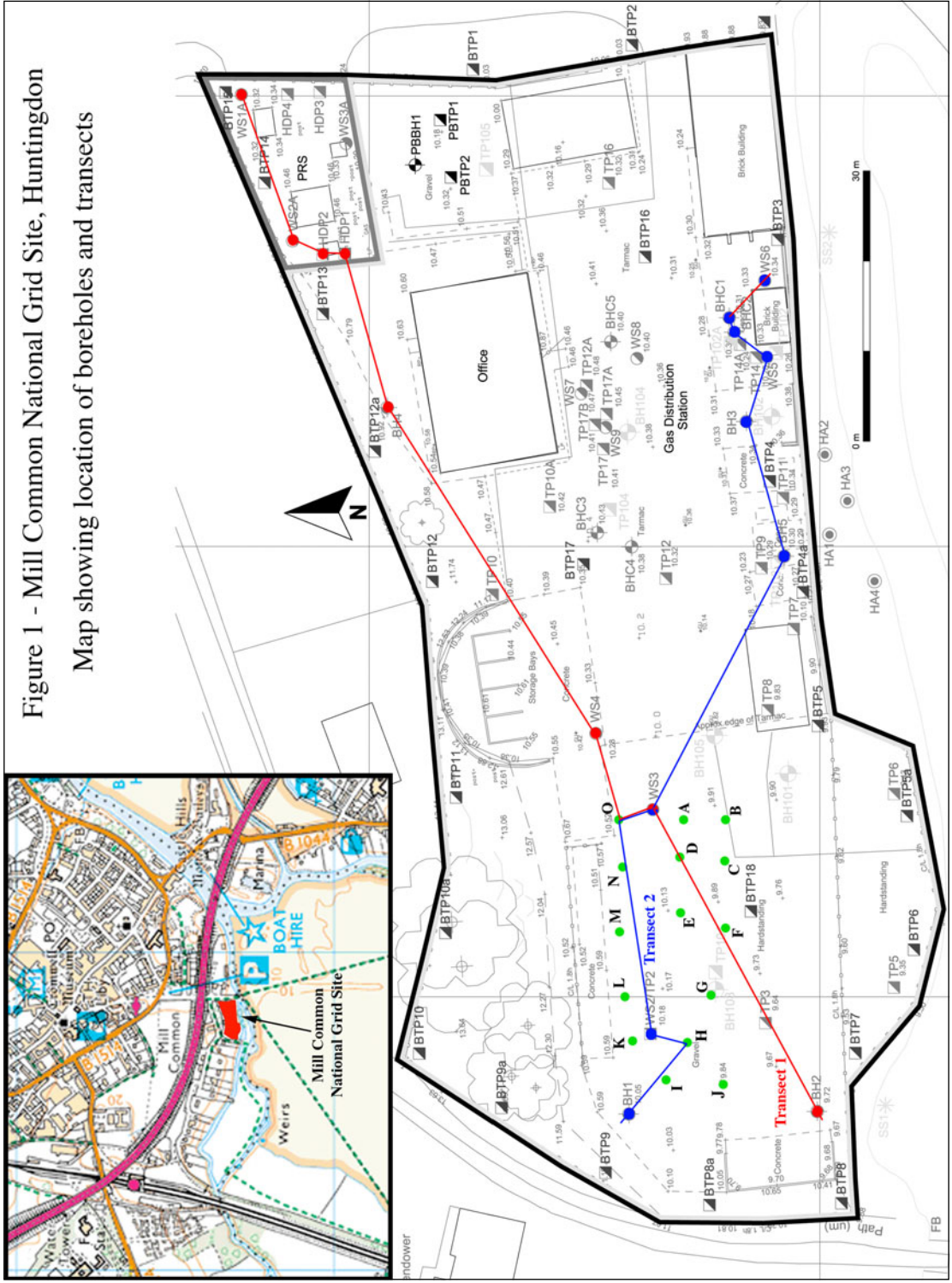


Figure 1 - Mill Common National Grid Site, Huntingdon  
Map showing location of boreholes and transects

© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Cambridgehire County Council 100023205 2008

Figure 4: Borehole location map

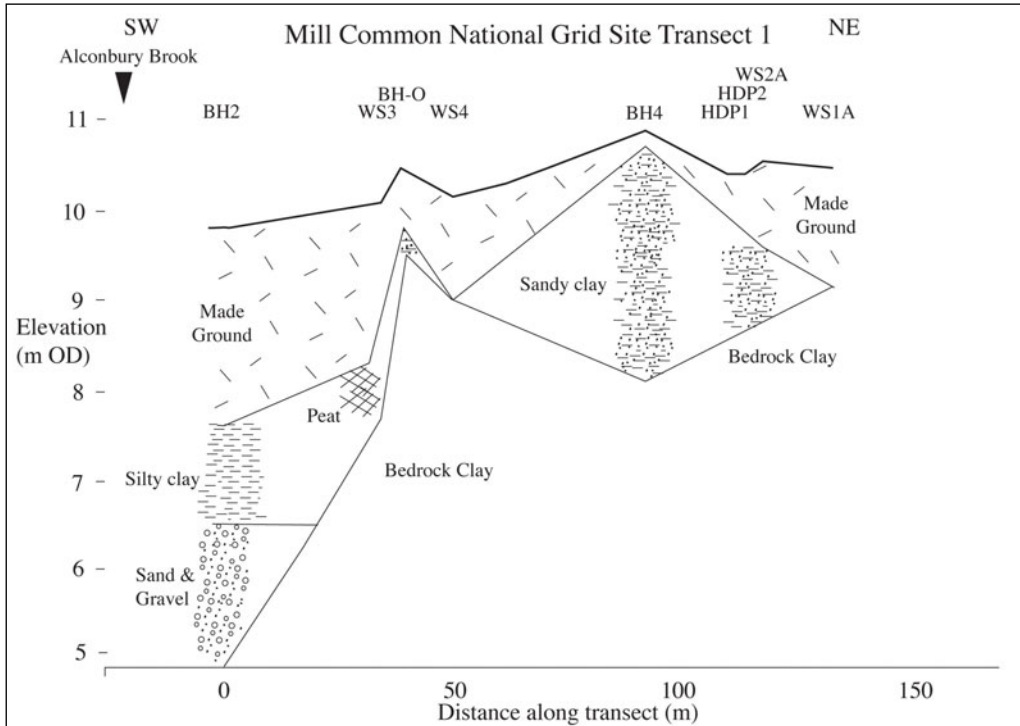


Figure 5: Borehole Transect 1

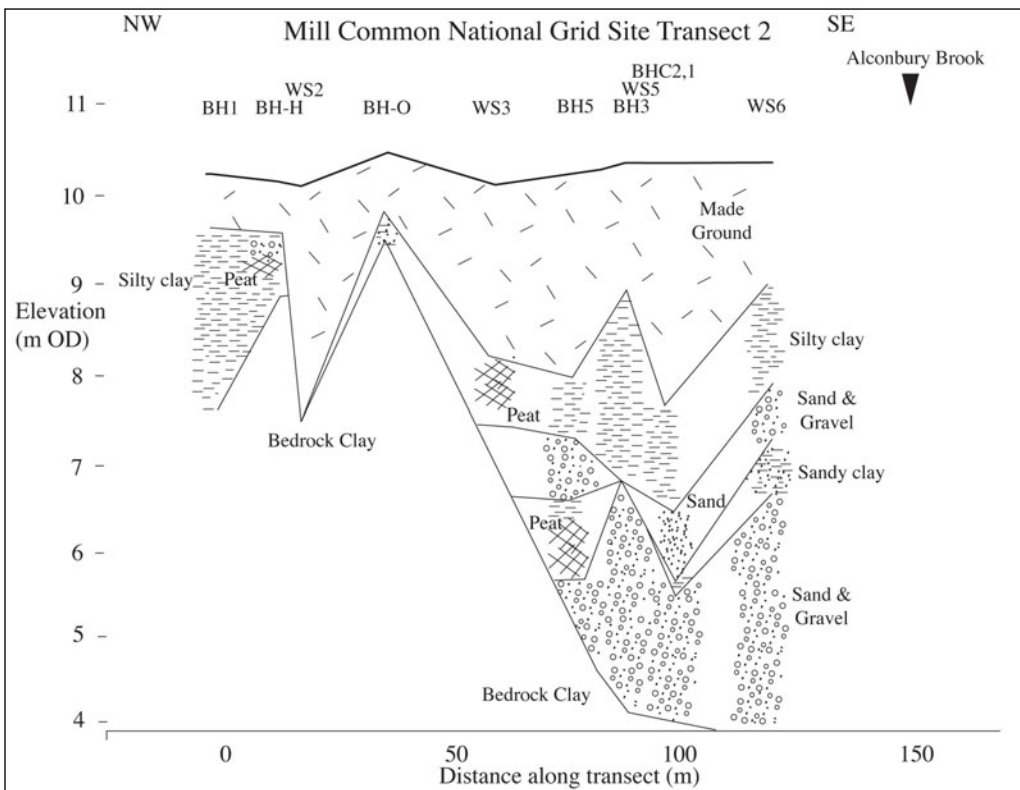


Figure 6: Borehole Transect 2





*Plate 1: Trench 1 (from West)*



*Plate 2: Trench 2 (from West)*





*Plate 3: Trench 3 (from south west)*



*Plate 4: Trench 4 (from west)*

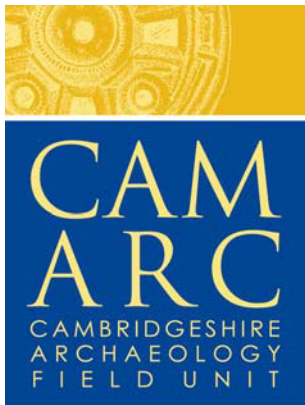




*Plate 5: Section 1 (from north)*



*Plate 6: Section 4 (from north)*



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>