

**ST. MARY'S SCHOOL
HIGH STILE
GREAT DUNMOW
ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SUMMER SCHOOL
EXCAVATION**



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

FEBRUARY 2009

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

HIGH STILE

GREAT DUNMOW

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SUMMER SCHOOL

EXCAVATION

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**ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL
HIGH STILE, GREAT DUNMOW
ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGY SUMMER SCHOOL
EXCAVATION**

Client: ECC Learning Services

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Dates of Fieldwork: 24th July to 5th August 2008

SUMMARY

An archaeological excavation was carried out at St Mary's Primary School, High Stile, Great Dunmow in late July 2008 as part of an archaeology summer school for local children. The project was run by members of the ECC Field archaeology Unit and staff from Helena Romanes School, and was funded by ECC Learning Services.

Great Dunmow has its origins in a Roman settlement that developed along Stane Street (the old A120). Archaeological remains have been found in the school grounds and the surrounding vicinity since their development from the 1960s and 70s onwards.

Four excavation trenches, located along the southern edge of the school playing field, were investigated during the week-long dig. The earliest artefacts recovered were a few residual sherds of possible Bronze Age pottery that perhaps indicate low-level activity in the area at this time. The majority of the discovered remains date to the Roman period. Earlier Roman features (c.2nd century) included a pit, a gully and a linear baked-clay feature. A fragment of dish recovered from the pit may have been part of a disturbed cremation burial. Late Roman remains comprised three gullies and three pits dated to the 4th century. A substantial quantity of artefacts of a domestic character was recovered from the largest pit. A fragment of a ceramic drinking vessel, collected from a cleaning context, had the name of its probable owner, 'Titianus', scratched upon it. The remains add to the picture of westwards expansion of the Roman town along Stane Street from the 2nd century onwards and decline at the end of the 4th century. No remains of later date were encountered, which is consistent with the area's subsequent agricultural land-use up until the mid-20th century.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of an excavation undertaken as part of an archaeology summer school held at St. Mary's School, Great Dunmow, at the end of July 2008. The excavation was carried out by members of the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) assisted by teaching staff from Helena Romanes School.

Copies of this report will be supplied to ECC Learning Services, St. Mary's Primary School, the ECC Historic Environment Management team and the Essex Historic Environment Record. A digital version of this report will be submitted, along with a project summary, to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>). The full site archive and copies of the report will be deposited at Saffron Walden Museum.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and Geology

St Mary's Primary School is located slightly west of the centre of modern day Great Dunmow in an area of the town known as High Stile. The school sits behind Stortford Road, the main east-west route through the town, and is surrounded largely by residential development which has grown up since the 1960s. The school buildings and playgrounds occupy the front of the site, along High Stile, with a grassed playing field to the rear. It is likely that this playing field has been levelled during its construction. A broad band of trees, bushes and other vegetation runs down the south side of the field, behind the properties fronting onto High Fields road.

The site lies on a terrace above the river Chelmer which flows to the east of the town. The geology consists of sand and gravel of the Kesgrave Formation overlying London Clay.

2.2 Archaeology and History

This archaeological and historical background is based on the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held by Essex County Council at County Hall, Chelmsford.

Great Dunmow is a Roman 'small town' which was situated along Stane Street (roughly the former A120), at its junction with the Chelmsford to Great Chesterford road. It is thought that at its height the town covered an area of 10-12 hectares, most of which lies under the present town. Much of what is understood about the Roman town is derived from chance

discoveries and investigations undertaken up until the 1970s. These have previously been described and interpreted by Wickenden (1988). The site is located toward the centre of the perceived extents of the Roman town and is within an area of proven archaeological potential. Evidence suggests that the town originated in the 1st century close to the junction of the two roads and gradually expanded westwards along Stane Street through time (Wickenden 1988; Robertson 2005).

Archaeological remains have previously been discovered both in the general High Stile area and, more specifically, within the school grounds.

Quantities of Roman pottery and some coins were found during the original construction and subsequent extension of the school buildings, as well as remains of a fired-clay structure and evidence of metal working (Wickenden 1988, 82). Excavations in 2001, prior to the construction of a new classroom block at the rear of the school, revealed the presence of a small 2nd century cremation cemetery (EHER 19657; O'Brien 2005). Most recently, excavation ahead of the westwards extension of this same block identified a series of pits dating to the 2nd century, one of which contained a number of disturbed cremation burials, and a 4th century north/south aligned ditch (pers. comm. Andy Phelps, NAU).

A number of sites have been excavated in the surrounding vicinity of the School. In 1970-72, immediately to the northeast of the school playing fields, on Chequers Lane, a stratified sequence of remains spanning the prehistoric to Saxon periods was investigated ahead of construction of a residential home. This included a small mid-Roman cremation cemetery and a late Roman shrine as well as number of enclosure ditches (EHER 13869; Wickenden 1988). More recent excavations directly to the east of the playing fields, at Redbond Lodge, have revealed remains of Roman domestic occupation particularly dating to the 3rd and 4th centuries (EHER 46170; Robertson 2005).

Roman Stane Street has been postulated to run through the school site (Wickenden 1988, Fig.1a), or else to its south roughly under High Fields road (Fig. 1). No archaeological investigations were undertaken prior to or during the 1950s and 60s construction of this road and surrounding housing estate. However, there is anecdotal evidence for significant Roman remains having been present. Indeed, a substantial assemblage of Roman domestic material has been retrieved from the garden of 52 High Fields since the Redbond Lodge fieldwork was undertaken (Robertson 2005, 194).

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The general aim of the investigation was to identify and record the location, extent, date and character of any surviving archaeological remains within the excavation areas.

The research objectives for the project sought to address those laid out in *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000). Specific objectives comprised:

- To determine whether or not Stane Street passes through the school grounds
- To investigate the nature of occupation, or other land-use, in this part of the Roman settlement

4.0 METHOD

The excavation areas were located in the east of the school site, on the southern edge of the flat grassed playing field close to the vegetation boundary (Fig. 2). Trenches 1 and 2 were positioned just within the boundary, upon grass, and Trenches 3 and 4 were located just beyond it, in areas of tall undergrowth. The four trenches were opened under archaeological supervision by a mechanical excavator fitted with a c.1.5m-wide, flat-bladed bucket. Trench 1 was L-shaped in plan and measured 12m long by 4.4m at its widest point. Trench 2 was rectangular in plan and measured 13.3m by 3.5m. Trench 3 was T-shaped in plan and measured 6m by 3.3m. Trench 4 was rectangular and 4m long by 1.5m wide. Trenches 1-3 were hand cleaned prior to investigation. Trench 4 was not further investigated.

Much of the manual excavation, finds retrieval and initial processing was undertaken by the students participating in the Archaeological Summer School. All fieldwork was carried out under the close supervision of ECC FAU archaeologists and all recording completed by them.

The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' by-laws and guidelines (IFA 2001) and complied with ALGAO's Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003). Standard ECC FAU excavation, artefact collection and recording methodologies were employed throughout.

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS

A number of archaeological features and deposits were identified and recorded, and are described in chronological order within each of the trenches excavated. Additional context information is presented in Appendix 1 below. Plans of remains in Trenches 1-3 are presented in Figure 2.

All trenches were cut through dark grey clay silt topsoil and a number of variable subsoil deposits. The overburden varied between 0.5m and 0.8m in depth. There was no evidence of any major levelling works associated with the construction of the school and its playing fields, though clearly the existing topsoil may have originated at this time. The underlying brownish grey silt contained post-medieval finds and may have been part of the former ploughsoil.

5.1 Trench 1 (Plates 1 – 3)

The overburden in Trench 1 varied from 0.5m to 0.75m in thickness. It was deepest at the southern end of the trench where it overlay a possible natural deposit of grey silty gravel. Here the overburden comprised 0.2m of dark grey gravelly clay silt overlain by c. 0.35m of dark brownish grey gravelly clay silt and 0.2m of dark grey topsoil. Elsewhere in the trench natural deposits were rarely exposed.

One of the earliest features in Trench 1 was a shallow linear band of dark grey/brown silt (7). This was broadly aligned east-west and may represent the truncated remains of a gully. Although not fully excavated, finds included early Roman pottery and a sherd of Roman bottle glass.

In the north end of the trench was a linear, northwest-southeast aligned, feature comprised of yellowy-orange and red baked clay (34) in excess of 1.3m long. It was truncated to the west by later pit 31 and by a possible second pit (not recorded) to the south. In the centre of the feature was flat yellowy orange baked clay c.0.3m wide with a 0.04m raised edge of orange-red baked clay on either side (Plate 3). It is possible that these are the partial remains of the base of the flue of a corn-dryer or oven. Although no dating was recovered from this feature, it was sealed beneath a chalk and clay-flecked deposit (15) from which 65 sherds of Roman pottery dating to the 2nd century were retrieved. Early Roman pottery was also recovered from a small exploratory sondage (24) through a probable contemporary deposit to the east of the possible flue.

In the south of the trench was a sub-circular post-hole (21), 0.5m long by 0.13m deep and filled with dark grey silt (20). Two tiny undiagnostic sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from its fill. The post-hole cut into an irregular patch of pink (baked) and yellow clay flecks that may be part of the fill of an earlier feature.

The largest and best-defined feature in Trench 1 was substantial pit 31 (Plate 2). This was not fully excavated but measured over 2.8m long in excess of 0.4m deep. It was filled with dark grey sandy clay silt (16/17) that produced over 400 sherds of 4th century pottery. Other finds included vessel glass, a copper alloy coin, copper alloy and bone hairpins, nails and a possible iron balance arm.

The machining of the southern arm of Trench 1 had revealed a general deposit of dark grey silt in the base of the trench. This was investigated in a series of segments (22, 23 and 25) all 0.10m or less thick. Finds from this silt were consistently 4th century in date. Segments 22 and 23 removed onto dark grey silty gravel and segment 25 overlay a sub-circular baked-clay feature (35). This feature was unexcavated but comprised an inner area of chalk flecked yellow clay surrounded by an outer ring of reddened baked clay. Further 4th century material had been recovered from the hand-cleaning of Trench 1 (4) and from initial ground reduction (5 and 6) in the southern arm of the trench.

It is likely that the dark grey gravelly clay silt noted in the base of the section is part of a general layer of 4th century date along with deposits 22, 23 and 25 and ground reduction contexts 5 and 6. This layer might be the remnant of a contemporary topsoil or part of an organic deposit that built-up in the immediate post-Roman period.

5.2 Trench 2 (Plates 4 – 6)

The overburden in Trench 2 was 0.5m thick. Natural brownish grey gravel in the base of the trench was overlain by 0.3m of dark brownish grey gravelly silt and 0.2m of dark grey topsoil. Several archaeological features were excavated. The earliest dated feature was an oval pit (27) located in the centre of the trench. This was approximately 1.7m long and 0.42m deep. Finds from its fill (9) included animal bone, baked clay, iron nails and 209 sherds of 2nd century Roman pottery. One larger fragment of burnt BB2 dish recovered from this pit contained a distinct brownish fill that produced tiny fragments of burnt bone and a hobnail and might possibly have been part of a disturbed/re-deposited cremation burial.

In the west of the trench was a shallow, poorly defined, north-south aligned gully (33). This measured in excess of 3.5m in length by 0.9m wide and 0.10m deep. It was filled by dark grey sandy clay silt (19) that contained 13 sherds of Roman pottery dating to the 4th century.

Two pits of possible 4th century date were located along the northern edge of the trench, neither was fully excavated and both seemingly contained a number of intrusive post-medieval and/or modern finds. Although regarded as pits, an alternative possibility is that these features could have been the terminals of regularly-spaced gullies that ran parallel with gully 33 to their west. Pit 26, in the east of the trench, was shallow, poorly-defined and root-disturbed. Finds from its fill (8) included three sherds of 4th century pottery. Pit 32 was located in the centre of the trench and appeared to truncate the northern edge of earlier pit 27. It was 0.35m deep and filled with dark brownish grey clay silt (18) that produced 31 sherds of 4th century pottery. Sherds of 4th century pottery were also recovered from the initial cleaning of the trench (11); of note is part of a Nene Valley beaker with the name of its owner scratched upon it (Plate 5).

Situated between gully 33 and pits 27 and 33 was a small oval post-hole (28), 0.5m long by 0.17m deep with a concave profile. Three sherds of undiagnostic Roman pottery were recovered from its fill (10). A number of vague dark grey silty gravel patches amidst the natural gravel in the base of the trench appeared to be of natural origin, probably the result of root disturbance.

5.3 Trench 3 (Plates 7 & 8)

The overburden in Trench 3 was approximately 0.8m thick. Natural deposits of gravel and orange/brown clay were sealed by 0.28m of dark greyish brown gravelly clay silt. This was overlain by 0.33m of dark brownish grey clay silt and sealed by 0.2m of gravelly topsoil.

Two parallel north/south aligned and intercut gullies (29 and 30) were excavated (Plate 8). Gully 30 was 0.8m wide by 0.44m deep and was filled with dark brownish grey sandy clay silt (14) containing common small-medium pebbles. Adjacent gully 29 was 0.55m wide by 0.4m deep and appeared to possibly cut the fill of gully 30 when seen in section. Gully 29 was filled with dark brownish grey sandy clay silt (13) containing common small pebbles. Both features contained 4th century pottery. A partially-excavated deposit of dark grey silty gravel to the immediate west of gully 30 may have been part of a third undetermined feature (not contexted).

5.4 Trench 4

The overburden in Trench 4 was 0.8m thick and similar to that in Trench 3. At the base of the sequence was 0.25m of dark brownish grey gravelly clay silt. Above this was 0.35m of mid to dark greyish brown clay silt sealed by 0.2m of dark grey topsoil. Exposed in the base of the trench was greyish brown gravel. Although no obvious features were noted cutting the gravel, their presence cannot be completely ruled-out as the trench was not cleaned-up by hand and a few sherds of Roman pottery were present on the spoil tip. However, no further investigation was carried out in this trench.

6.0 FINDS REPORT by Joyce Compton

Finds were recovered from twenty-four contexts, and a Roman copper alloy coin (SF4) was found unstratified. All of the finds have been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context. Full quantification details can be found in Appendix 2. The finds are described briefly by category below.

6.1 Pottery

A moderate amount of pottery, amounting to 1554 sherds, weighing 13880g, was recovered from all twenty-four contexts. Post-medieval and modern pottery, some of which is obviously intrusive, formed 2% by weight of the assemblage and was present in eleven contexts. Two contexts produced flint-tempered body sherds of prehistoric date, probably Bronze Age. Almost all of the pottery assemblage, however, is Roman and mainly of 4th century date. Only three contexts contained pottery which could not be closely dated. Three contexts date to the 2nd century with a further two containing early Roman pottery. Most of the later Roman contexts contained residual 2nd century pottery to some degree. Late 4th century material was present in four contexts.

Sixteen contexts contained imported samian ware, with at least two potters stamps recorded on the internal surfaces of base sherds. In contrast, imported amphoras used to transport wine and olive oil, were absent. Most of the commonly-occurring Romano-British pottery types are present, including locally-made coarse wares. The proximity of the Hadham kilns is reflected in the amounts of Hadham oxidised and grey wares found in most contexts. Nene Valley colour-coated ware, common in Essex from the 3rd century onwards, was also present in some quantity. Of interest is the shoulder of a Nene Valley rouletted beaker, unfortunately unstratified, with a graffito which read TITIANV[S] (Titianus – probably the owner's name; reading provided by Dr R.S.O. Tomlin, Oxford Institute of Archaeology).

6.2 Metalwork

Items of iron and copper alloy were recovered from sixteen contexts. Much of the ironwork is undated, comprising nails and unidentifiable fragments. A possible balance arm (SF10) was excavated from fill 17 of pit 31. Nothing obviously modern was noted apart from a rasp/file from fill 9 of pit 27, although this object is as likely to be Roman. The copper alloy items include a 1967 penny of Elizabeth II and three Roman coins (see below). Two hairpins (SF1 and 2), one complete, were collected from fill 17 of pit 31. Initial impressions are that these are 2nd century types.

Roman coins (identified by Phil McMichael)

SF No	Obverse	Reverse	Date
4	Helmeted, cuirassed bust left with shield and spear "CRISPVS NOBIL. C."	"BEATA TRANQVILLITAS" with altar inscribed "VOTIS XX" surmounted by a globe and 3 stars	AD321-2
	Good condition, 2g, 19mm diameter	PLON = London mint	
5	Diademed, head right "[TET]RICVS CAE[...]"	No detail visible	AD273-4
	Poor condition, 2g, 20mm diameter		
6	Head right	Worn, no detail visible	AD375+
	Poor condition, 1g, 12mm diameter		

6.3 Glass

Nine contexts produced glass, most of which is post-medieval or modern. Nine sherds of Roman glass were recorded, all in natural blue-green glass. Five joining sherds, unstratified, form the complete circuit of a bottle/jug rim, and rim sherds from a tubular-rimmed vessel were found in fill 16 of pit 31. Tubular-rimmed cups and bowls were common during the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Two undiagnostic vessel/bottle body sherds were also recorded.

6.4 Worked bone

Items of worked bone are relatively common. Most are fragmentary, comprising probable shafts from hairpins. Two fragments from fill 17 of pit 31 join to form a near-complete hairpin (SF7) with a plain globular head. The unstratified pin head (SF9) is decorated with incised vertical lines. The shaft from a needle (SF12), with the remains of the eye, was found in layer 6.

6.5 Brick and tile

A surprisingly small amount (8.3kg) of fragmentary brick and tile was recovered, although its presence was recorded in twenty contexts. A large proportion comprises post-medieval roof tile. Both *tegula* flanges and *imbrices* (Roman roof tiles) were noted and a single piece of box-flue tile came from fill 17 of pit 31.

6.6 Clay pipes

Seven contexts produced post-medieval clay tobacco pipe fragments, mainly stems, two of which are likely to be intrusive. The bulk of the assemblage was found unstratified and likely derives from late overburden deposits.

6.7 Baked clay and briquetage

Fifteen contexts produced baked clay, totalling 1kg, almost all of which comprises small fragments in a chalky fabric. Some pieces have flat surfaces and there is a shaped piece (too small for identification of function) in fill 9 of pit 27.

Briquetage, probably deriving from salt containers, was identified in two contexts, layer 23 and fill 16 of pit 31.

6.8 Animal bone

Small amounts of animal bone, totalling 3.8kg, were recorded in twenty-one contexts. The fragmentation has made identification of the skeletal elements difficult, but sheep/goat (14 contexts) and cattle (12 contexts) are the most numerous. Pig was noted in two contexts and an antler burr was found in fill 16 of pit 31.

6.9 Shell

Very little shell was recorded, twenty pieces, weighing 56g, from five contexts, all of which is oyster in relatively poor condition.

6.10 Slag

Four contexts produced slag fragments, with a total weight of 1125g. Most of the pieces are light and vesicular, with probable furnace lining occurring in fill 17 of pit 31.

6.11 Comments on the assemblage

A relatively large quantity of finds was recovered, indicating the good potential for further discoveries in this part of Great Dunmow. Roman material was collected from every context

and there is a wide range and variety among the finds. The largest amount of material was excavated from Trench 1, with pit 31 containing approximately a quarter of the total assemblage. Significantly fewer finds came from Trench 3. This probably indicates where excavation work was concentrated, since there is no apparent difference in the date or the types of finds across the excavated area. Of interest is the number of hairpins in both copper alloy and worked bone, and the relatively high number of coins. The vessel with the graffiti is also significant since it clearly represents a legible Roman name, indicating a level of literacy in the local population. All of the finds suggest domestic occupation in the vicinity, and that the inhabitants had access to a range of goods, probably due to the proximity of the main Colchester to Bishops Stortford road (Stane Street).

Post-medieval and modern material is present at a low level throughout. Most of this has been discarded following recording. All of the smaller, undiagnostic, animal bone, baked clay and brick and tile pieces have also been discarded. The unstratified Roman pottery was selected for retention during recording and, for the remaining categories, only the large and/or diagnostic unstratified items have been retained. There is scope for further work on most of the finds, since this is a summary report of the material present.

7.0 DISCUSSION

Archaeological remains were present in three of the investigated trenches (1-3). Of particular note is the survival of stratified remains in Trench 1, with layers and features dating both to the early and late Roman periods. Although not all exposed features and deposits were fully investigated, sufficient information has been gathered to characterise the nature, date and survival of archaeological remains in this part of the school.

Prehistoric

Probable Bronze Age pottery sherds were recovered from two late Roman contexts. Sparse residual pottery of Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date was also recovered from the excavation in advance of construction of the new classroom block in 2001 (O'Brien 2005). The presence of this pottery perhaps suggests low-level prehistoric activity in the landscape at this time. Interestingly, there appears to be no pre-Roman Iron Age settlement activity, as has been found at other small Roman towns in Essex such as Braintree and Kelvedon.

Roman

The dating of the collected finds suggests two main phases of activity at this location within the Roman town; in the early and late Roman periods. The early Roman activity

predominately dates to the 2nd century and the later activity to the 4th century. However, given the broad date ranges for some of this pottery it is perhaps unlikely that there was a distinct hiatus of activity in the 3rd century.

The 2nd century evidence is fairly sparse and comprises a pit, possible gully, layer, associated finds and the baked-clay remains of a probable corn dryer or oven. The activity which these remains represent would appear to be contemporary with the cremation cemetery recorded beneath the near-by classroom extension (O'Brien 2005) and the series of pits recently excavated by NAU (in prep). One of these pits contained disturbed cremation burials and it is likely the same is true for pit 27 in Trench 2.

4th century activity appears to have been more intense and its remains were more numerous and widespread, occurring in all three excavated trenches. Features included multiple gullies, pits and layers. The gullies were broadly aligned north-south and might represent parts of a system of land division running at right angles to the Roman road, postulated to lie a short distance to their south. The range and quantity of finds recovered are indicative of domestic occupation in the immediate vicinity, perhaps within enclosures fronting onto the road, and may support the idea of an expansion of the town at this time. Of note is the vessel with graffiti which indicates that at least some of the local population were literate.

Post-Roman

Although early Saxon occupation remains were recorded during the excavations in Chequers Lane (Wickenden 1988), no post-Roman features were identified within the trenches at St Mary's School. This perhaps implies that subsequent occupation within the area of the former Roman town was small-scale and short-lived. The focus of medieval settlement shifted northwards and it is likely that the vicinity of St Mary's Primary School reverted to agricultural usage. This location was evidently fields in the post-medieval period, until expansion of the modern town in the mid-20th century. Some of the recovered post-medieval finds (e.g. pieces of clay-pipe) may relate to casual loss and discard within the landscape whilst others (e.g. ceramic material) may be evidence of agricultural activities such as manuring. The depth of the overburden has been a significant factor in preserving the underlying archaeological remains.

8.0 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

As well as successfully introducing local school children to the techniques of archaeological excavation, and meaningfully engaging them in the discovery of the origins of their town, this investigation has provided additional useful evidence in the furtherance of the understanding of the Roman settlement at Great Dunmow.

The results of the archaeological investigation broadly mirror those from the Redbond Lodge excavation (Robertson 2005) to the east of the school playing field where activity was noted in the 2nd century, with probable settlement in the 3rd and 4th centuries. However, at St Mary's School, the presence of the near-by cremation cemetery and contemporary pitting suggests that settlement had occurred in the vicinity by the 2nd century.

The recorded remains are indicative of occupation activity and are consistent with previous postulation that this part of the settlement comprised strip enclosures fronting on to the Roman road, within which a range of domestic, processing, manufacturing, horticultural and disposal activities may have been conducted. No remains of the Roman road or of roadside features such as ditches were encountered and it appears likely that the route of Stane Street lies further south, under High Fields.

Stratified remains have also been recorded in the near-by classroom extension excavations (O'Brien 2005; NAU in prep), only 30-40m to the northwest of Trench 1. This suggests that extensive archaeological remains are present and in a good state of preservation/survival within this part of the school site, to the east and perhaps south of the main buildings, and may not have been significantly disturbed by groundworks associated with previous construction and landscaping.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The ECC Field Archaeology Unit would like to thank Louisa Silwa of ECC Learning Services for initiating and commissioning the work. Particular thanks are due to Valerie White, head teacher of St Mary's Primary School, for allowing access to excavate within the playing field and use of on-site facilities.

The fieldwork was supervised by Trevor Ennis and Andy Letch of the ECC Field Archaeology Unit, with assistance from Neal Foster, Emily Wiffen and Hayley Ellis, all teaching staff from Helena Romanes School. Additional archaeological assistance was provided by Jackie Ennis (volunteer). Finds were processed by Phil McMichael and analysed by Joyce Compton, with Illustrations produced by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed by Mark Atkinson of ECC FAU.

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DATA

All dimensions given in metres.

Context	Location	Type	Description	Date
1	Trench 1	Finds	Unstratified, from spoil heap	-
2	Trench 2	Finds	Unstratified, from spoil heap	-
3	Trench 3	Finds	Unstratified, from spoil heap	-
4	Trench 1	Finds	Unstratified, from cleaning	-
5	Trench 1	Layer	Dark grey clay silt	Roman
6	Trench 1	Layer	Dark grey clay silt	4th century
7	Trench 1	Fill	Dark grey/brown silt, 0.05m+ deep (part exc. only)	Early Roman
8	Trench 2	Fill of 26	Dark grey pebbly silt	?4th century
9	Trench 2	Fill of 27	Dark brownish grey clay silt	4th century
10	Trench 2	Fill of 28	Dark grey sandy silt	Roman
11	Trench 2	Finds	Unstratified, from cleaning	4th century
12	Trench 1	Layer	Dark grey silt, c. 0.10m spit	2nd century+
13	Trench 3	Fill of 29	Dark brownish grey sandy clay silt, common small pebbles	4th century
14	Trench 3	Fill of 30	Dark brownish grey sandy clay silt, common sm-med pebbles	4th century
15	Trench 1	Layer	Greyish brown silt, 0.05-0.010m thick	2nd century
16	Trench 1	Fill of 31	Dark grey sandy clay silt (west)	4th century
17	Trench 1	Fill of 31	Dark grey sandy clay silt (east)	4th century
18	Trench 2	Fill of 32	Dark brownish grey clay silt, common pebbles	?4th century
19	Trench 2	Fill of 33	Dark grey sandy clay silt, root disturbed	4th century
20	Trench 1	Fill of 21	Dark grey silt	Roman
21	Trench 1	Post-hole	Sub-circular, 0.5m x 0.4m x 0.13m deep	Roman
22	Trench 1	Layer/fill?	Dark grey sandy clay silt	4th century
23	Trench 1	Layer	Dark grey clay silt	4th century
24	Trench 1	Sondage	Slot c. 0.12m deep through dump material	early roman
25	Trench 1	Layer	Dark grey clay silt	4th century
26	Trench 2	Pit/linear?	1.6m+ x 1.2m x 0.15m deep, (not fully exc)	?4th century
27	Trench 2	Pit	Oval, 1.7m x 1.2m x 0.42m deep, flat bottom	4th century
28	Trench 2	Post-hole	Oval, 0.5m x 0.4m x 0.17m deep, concave profile	Roman
29	Trench 3	Gully	1.3m+ x 0.55m x 0.4m deep (western gully)	4th century
30	Trench 3	Gully	1.3m+ x 0.8m x 0.44m deep (eastern gully)	4th century
31	Trench 1	Pit	2.8m+ x 2.6m+ x 0.42m+ deep	4th century
32	Trench 2	Pit	1.4m+ x 0.8m x 0.35m (not fully excavated)	?4th century
33	Trench 2	Gully	Linear, 3.5m+ x 0.9m x 0.10m, flat bottom	4th century
34	Trench 1	Linear	Baked clay, 1.3m+ x 0.5m x 0.04m+ deep	early Roman?
35	Trench 1	Feature	Sub-circular baked clay, 0.9m+ x 0.7m+	Roman

APPENDIX 2: FINDS DATA

All weights in grams

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
u/s	-	1	2	SF4 Copper alloy coin	Roman
1	u/s	1 15 32 9 9 1 76 4 11 139	8 80 182 24 32 2 1300 770 114 1625	Copper alloy penny, Elizabeth II Iron nails (Discarded) Animal bone, inc cattle and sheep/goat (Discarded) Clay pipes, mainly stems (Discarded) Glass; bottle body sherds, brown, green and colourless (Discarded) Glass; vessel body sherd, blue-green Brick and roof tile fragments (Discarded) Tile fragments, inc tegula flanges Pottery; rim and body sherds, some glazed, four are white earthenware (Discarded) Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, inc samian (with stamped f33 base), Nene Valley and Oxford colour-coated wares, Hadham grey and oxidised wares, B4 and B6 dish rims in fine grey ware, D13 buff ware mortarium sherds, Cam 254 type jar in shell-tempered ware (sample of 27/675g retained)	1967 - - Post med. Post med/ modern Roman Post med/ modern Roman Post med/ modern Roman
2	u/s	5 10 1 5 4 50 9 55	82 76 8 20 2 1300 70 720	Iron spike and nails (Discarded) Animal bone, inc sheep/goat (Discarded) Baked clay, with flat surface, chalky fabric (Discarded) Clay pipes, inc fragment from large bowl, blackened/burnt (Discarded) Glass; window sherds (Discarded) Brick and tile fragments, mostly post-medieval (Discarded) Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, some glazed, inc flowerpot rim (Discarded) Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, inc samian footring sherd, Hadham oxidised ware, inc Romano-Saxon decorated sherd (sample of 11/120g retained)	- - - Post med. Post med. Mixed Post med/ modern Roman
3	u/s	7 19 7 2 19 6 3 67	148 158 38 24 765 1375 10 680	Iron objects and nails, one clenched (Discarded) Animal bone, inc pig and cattle (Discarded) Clay pipes, inc part of bowl (Discarded) Glass; one green bottle body sherd, one window sherd (Discarded) Brick and tile fragments (Discarded) Tile fragments, inc tegula flange (3/192g discarded) Pottery; body sherds, two white earthenware, one late medieval, slip-decorated (Discarded) Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, inc samian, body sherds from large flagon, Hadham oxidised ware, Nene Valley colour-coated ware, one body sherd with barbotine dots, a second with rough-casting, C16 bowl rim sherd in black-surfaced ware (sample of 22/164g retained)	- - Post med. Post med. Post med. Roman Late med/ modern Roman
4	u/s	5 51 2 1 2 1 14	96 330 4 2 24 1 348	Iron spike (as for 2) and nails (Discarded) Animal bone, inc cattle and sheep/goat (Discarded) Baked clay, chalky fabric (Discarded) Clay pipe stem (Discarded) Glass; dark green bottle base and body sherds (Discarded) SF9 Worked bone pin head Brick and tile fragments (Discarded)	- - - Post med. Post med. Roman Mixed

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
		1 49	10 560	Pottery; body sherd, glazed (Discarded) Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, inc samian, Hadham grey and oxidised ware, Alice Holt grey ware, Nene Valley colour-coated ware, inc flange from ?wall-sided mortarium, B6 dish rim and H39 type indented body sherd, both in fine grey ware (sample of 18/280g retained)	Post med. Roman
5	Layer	2 15 7 5 3 16	6 34 18 124 18 66	Iron nails Animal bone, inc sheep/goat (Discarded) Baked clay, chalky fabric Brick and tile fragments (Discarded) Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, two glazed Pottery; body sherds, coarse wares (8/12g tiny sherds discarded)	- - - Post med. Post med. Roman
6	Layer	1 13 1 1 12 1 14 1 50	6 66 8 196 92 1 212 4 280	Iron object, triangular Animal bone, inc cattle (Discarded) Shell; oyster, one valve (Discarded) Slag Baked clay, chalky fabric SF12 Worked bone needle shaft Brick and tile fragments (Discarded) Pottery; white earthenware plate rim sherd (Discarded) Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, inc samian, Nene Valley colour-coated ware, Hadham oxidised ware, inc Cam 296 type pedestal base sherd, B1 and B6 dish rims in fine grey ware, late shell-tempered ware (15/32g tiny sherds discarded)	- - - - - Roman Post med. Modern Roman
7	Layer	1 1 1 13	4 2 50 120	Animal bone; sheep/goat maxilla fragment with two molars Glass; bottle body sherd, blue-green Tile spall Pottery; rim and body sherds, inc storage jar rim sherd and flagon body sherds in Colchester buff ware (4/8g tiny sherds discarded)	- Roman Roman Roman
8	26	1 1 2 3	<1 18 22 12	Baked clay (Discarded) Roof tile fragment (Discarded) Pottery; body sherds, glazed Pottery; body sherds, Hadham oxidised ware, roughcast Colchester colour-coated ware and white-slipped grey ware	- Post med. Post med. Roman
9	27	1 6 146 - 1 11 1 1 209	412 32 870 1 20 170 20 4 2870	Iron object; rasp or file Iron nails, inc hobnail from fill of BB2 dish Animal bone, inc cattle (skull fragments and horn cores) and sheep/goat; several pieces are burnt (49/24g small pieces discarded) Bone/burnt bone fragments from fill of BB2 dish Shell; oyster, one valve (Discarded) Baked clay, chalky fabric, inc shaped piece and four crumbs from fill of BB2 dish Roof tile fragment (Discarded) Tile fragment, from fill of BB2 dish Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, inc samian (f33 cups and base with part-stamp), storage jar sherds, BB2 dish section, North Kent grey ware carinated jar section (Monaghan 2G2), flagon neck in white-slipped grey ware, distorted G23 jar section in sandy grey ware, body sherds with barbotine dots and with comb-stabbing, eight tiny sherds from fill of BB2 dish; some sherds are burnt, inc BB2 dish	?Modern - - - - - Post med. Roman Roman

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
10	28	1 3	326 18	Tile; tegula flange Pottery; rim and body sherds, coarse wares	Roman Roman
11	u/s	1 1 4 22 17 5 1 3 8 2 70	1 1 26 142 70 10 4 42 240 12 450	SF6 Copper alloy coin Copper alloy flat fragment Iron nails and flat fragment (Discarded) Animal bone, inc cattle and sheep/goat (Discarded) Baked clay, chalky fabric (6/2g tiny pieces discarded) Glass; bottle/jug rim, joining sherds, blue-green Clay pipe stem (Discarded) Roof tile fragments (Discarded) Tile fragments, inc several imbrex (sample of 3/174g retained) SF3 Pottery; joining shoulder sherds, Nene Valley colour-coated ware rouletted beaker, with graffito Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, inc samian, Nene Valley colour-coated ware, Hadham grey and oxidised wares, B1 dish rims in black-surfaced and fine grey wares, bowl or beaker rim, with barbotine dots and incised rosettes, in fine grey ware, B6 type dish rim in burnt Oxford red colour-coated ware (sample of 24/240g retained)	Roman - - - - Roman Post med. Post med. Roman Late Roman Roman
12	Layer	2 54 1 3 71	46 228 42 286 1010	Iron; flat fragments (Discarded) Animal bone, inc cattle (horn core) and sheep/goat (22/18g small pieces discarded) Baked clay, chalky fabric with flat surface Tile fragments Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, inc samian, joining D2 mortarium rim sherds, North Kent grey ware, roughcast Colchester colour-coated ware, BB2 dish rim sherd, roughcast Nene Valley colour-coat, white fabric, storage jar sherds	- - - Roman Roman
13	29	1 57 1 3 18	4 184 1 32 134	Iron nail Animal bone, mostly cattle molars (48/40g small pieces discarded) Clay pipe stem (Discarded) Tile fragments, one is certainly post-medieval Pottery; rim and body sherds, inc Hadham grey and oxidised wares, white-slipped grey ware, B4 dish rim sherd in fine grey ware, B1 dish rim sherd in black-surfaced ware	- - Post med. Undated Roman
14	30	8 20	10 144	Animal bone fragments (Discarded) Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, inc Nene Valley colour-coated ware rouletted sherd and wall-sided mortarium, G9 type jar rim sherd in black-surfaced ware, footring base and rouletted body sherds in Hadham oxidised ware	- Roman
15	Layer	2 22 8 1 4 1 65	8 60 30 1 62 2 366	Iron nails Animal bone; undiagnostic fragments (Discarded) Baked clay, chalky fabric Glass; colourless vessel/bottle rim sherd Tile fragments, at least one is post-medieval Pottery; small glazed rim sherd Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, inc samian, one with barbotine trail, B2 dish in black-surfaced ware, buff ware ?mortarium body sherd, coarse wares	- - - Modern Undated Post med. Roman
16	31	1 9 106	2 58 735	SF5 Copper alloy coin Iron nails and fragments, inc hobnail Animal bone, inc cattle, sheep/goat, pig and deer, inc antler burr (sample of 11/232g retained)	Roman - -

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
		18 6 8 1 2	156 22 164 1 2	Baked clay, chalky fabric Briquetage Slag, light and vesicular Clay pipe stem (Discarded) Glass; vessel rim sherd, tubular rim, blue-green; tiny modern ribbed sherd, smoky grey	- - Post med. Roman
		12 181	432 1435	Tile fragments, one or two may be post-medieval brick fragments Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, inc samian, Nene Valley colour-coated ware dishes, Hadham grey and oxidised wares, inc bowl rim sherd with mock handle, late shell-tempered ware, B3 dish rim in black-surfaced ware	Roman Roman
17	31	2 1 1 27 112 8 33 42 4 2 320 4	4 1 12 214 420 2 280 755 3 126 1825 22	SF1 SF2 Copper alloy hair pins Copper alloy, folded sheet with stamped decoration SF10 Iron ?balance arm Iron nails, flat fragments and ring/washer Animal bone, inc cattle and sheep/goat (sample of 14/134g retained) Shell; oyster fragments (Discarded) Baked clay, chalky fabric Slag, mostly light and vesicular, inc furnace lining SF7 SF8 SF11 Worked bone hair pins Box-flue tile fragment and small undiag piece (this discarded 12g) Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, inc samian, North Kent grey ware base and lower wall (probably belongs to bowl in 12), Nene Valley colour-coated ware, Hadham grey and oxidised ware, inc B5 and large B3 dish rim sherds, very many small coarse ware body sherds Pottery; body sherds, flint-tempered	Roman - - - - - - Roman Roman Roman Prehistoric
18	32	2 9 3 31	2 148 20 242	Glass; dark green bottle body sherd and window sherd Brick and tile fragments, one may be Roman (Discarded) Pottery; rim and body sherds, two glazed, rim is white earthenware Pottery; rim and body sherds, inc samian, Hadham oxidised ware, B4 and B5 dish rims in black-surfaced ware	Post med. Post med. Post med/ Roman
19	33	20 3 13	82 16 96	Animal bone, inc sheep/goat and cattle (sample of 5/46g retained) Tile fragments, one is post-medieval (Discarded) Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, inc Hadham oxidised ware, Nene Valley colour-coated ware, small B6 dish rim sherd in fine grey ware	- Undated Roman
20	21	2 1 2	26 1 1	Iron nails Animal bone; sliver Pottery; tiny body sherds, one samian, one sandy grey ware	- - Roman
22	Layer	2 7 2 2 12 1 22	8 40 6 10 244 1 222	Iron nails Animal bone, inc sheep/goat Shell; oyster fragments Baked clay, chalky fabric Tile fragments, all post-medieval except for tegula flange (this retained 34g) Pottery; small glazed rim sherd, as 15 Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, inc Hadham oxidised ware, B2 dish sherds, coarse wares	- - - - Roman Post med. Roman

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
23	Layer	4	38	Iron nails	-
		35	150	Animal bone, inc cattle and sheep/goat	-
		8	20	Shell; oyster, one valve and fragments, poor condition	-
		1	14	Burnt flint	-
		1	10	Slag	-
		1	38	Baked clay	-
		1	4	Briquetage	-
		1	2	Pottery; glazed body sherd	Post med.
		77	555	Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, inc samian, Hadham grey and oxidised ware, B6 dish rim in sandy grey ware	Roman
		1	4	Pottery; body sherd, flint-tempered	Prehistoric
24	Layer	6	32	Animal bone, inc sheep/goat	-
		16	222	Baked clay, chalky fabric	-
		5	72	Pottery; base and body sherds, inc samian dish footing and buff ware flagon base sherds	Roman
25	Layer	3	2	Animal bone slivers	-
		1	10	Baked clay, chalky fabric	-
		4	50	Roof tile fragments (Discarded)	Post med.
		12	66	Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, inc samian, Hadham grey ware beaker base, Portchester D jar rim sherd	Roman

APPENDIX 3: CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE

Site Name: St Mary's School , Great Dunmow

Site Code: GD 25

Index to Archive:

1. Introduction/Research Archive

- 1.1 Client Report
- 1.2 Finds Reports

2. Site Archive

- 2.1 Context Record Register
- 2.2 Context Records (1 to 35)
- 2.3 Plan Register
- 2.4 Section Register
- 2.5 4 x A4 plan/section sheets
- 2.6 Levels Register
- 2.7 Trench location plan
- 2.8 Photographic Registers
- 2.9 Site Photographic Record (1 set of Black & White prints, 1 Set of digital images on disk)
- 2.10 Miscellaneous notes/plans

Not in File

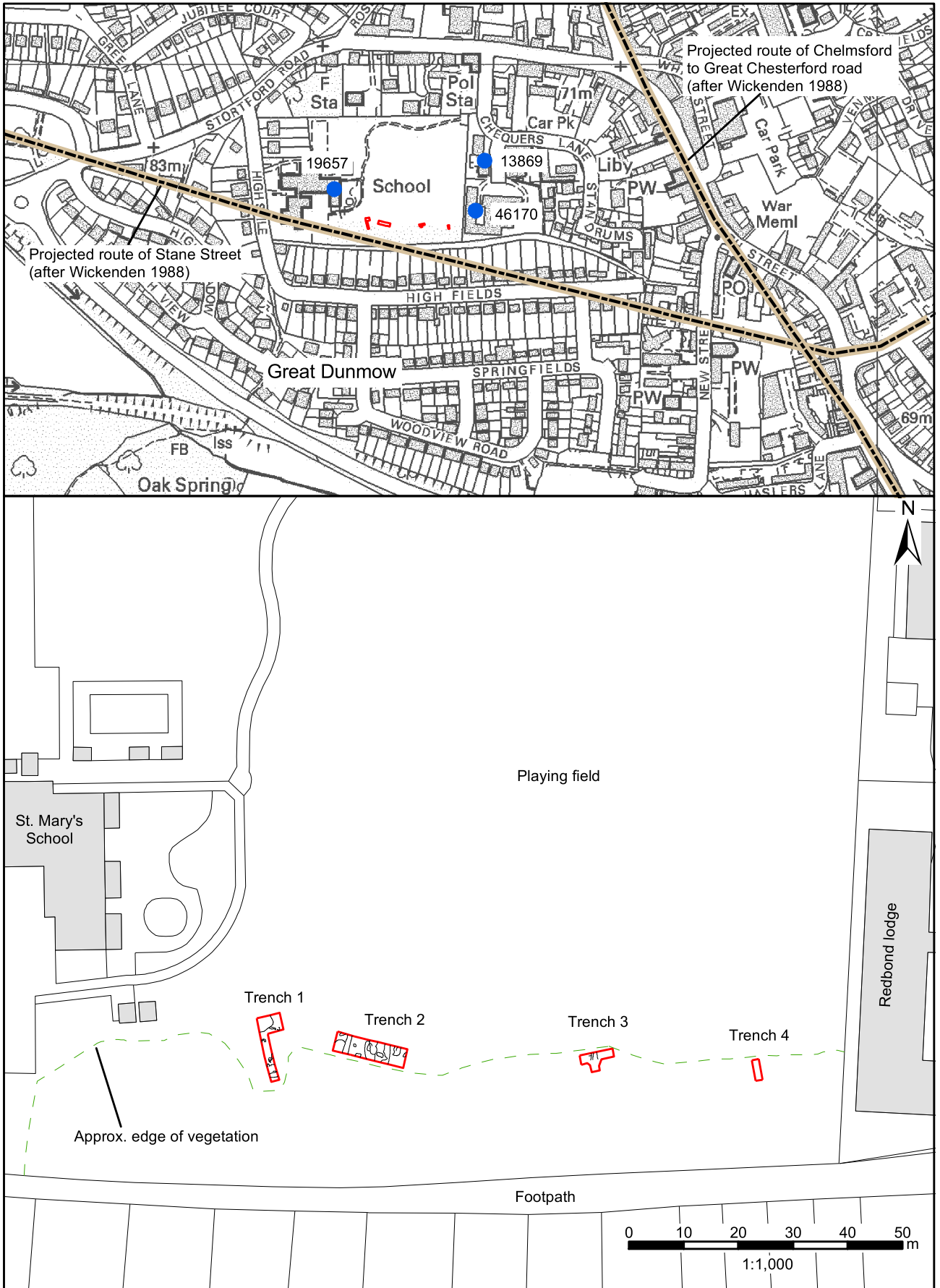
- 2 large plan sheets

Finds

The retained finds occupy three boxes.

APPENDIX 4: ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: St. Mary's School, Great Dunmow, Essex	
Parishes: Great Dunmow	District: Uttlesford
NGR: TL 62460, 21824	Site Code: GD25
Type of Work: Excavation	Site Director/Group: T. Ennis, ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Dates of Work: 24th July to 5th August 2008	Size of Area Investigated: 86 sq m
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Saffron Walden	Funding source: ECC Learning Services
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER Nos.: 19657
Final Report: EAH summary	Oasis No.: essexcou1- 51280
Periods Represented: Prehistoric, Roman	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p>An archaeological excavation was carried out at St Mary's Primary School, High Stile, Great Dunmow in late July 2008 as part of an archaeology summer school for local children.</p> <p>Four excavation trenches, located along the southern edge of the school playing field, were investigated during the week-long dig.</p> <p>The earliest artefacts recovered were a few residual sherds of possible Bronze Age pottery that perhaps indicate low-level activity in the area at this time. The majority of the discovered remains date to the Roman period. Earlier Roman features (c.2nd century) included a pit, a gully and a linear baked-clay feature. A fragment of dish recovered from the pit may have been part of a disturbed cremation burial. Late Roman remains comprised three gullies and three pits dated to the 4th century. A substantial quantity of artefacts of a domestic character was recovered from the largest pit. A fragment of a ceramic drinking vessel, collected from a cleaning context, had the name of its probable owner, 'Titianus', scratched upon it. The remains add to the picture of westwards expansion of the Roman town along Stane Street from the 2nd century onwards and decline at the end of the 4th century.</p> <p>No remains of later date were encountered, which is consistent with the area's subsequent agricultural land-use up until the mid-20th century.</p> <p>No remains of the Roman road or of roadside features such as ditches were encountered and it appears likely that the route of Stane Street lies further south, under High Fields.</p> <p>The evidence from this excavation and others beneath the near-by classroom extensions (O'Brien 2005; NAU in prep) suggests that extensive stratified archaeological remains are present and in a good state of preservation/survival within this part of the school site, to the east and perhaps south of the main buildings.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports: O'Brien, L. 2005 'A Roman cemetery at Great Dunmow' <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 36 , 71-91	
Author of Summary: T. Ennis	Date of Summary: February 2009



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Fig.1. Site location and surrounding sites with EHER references

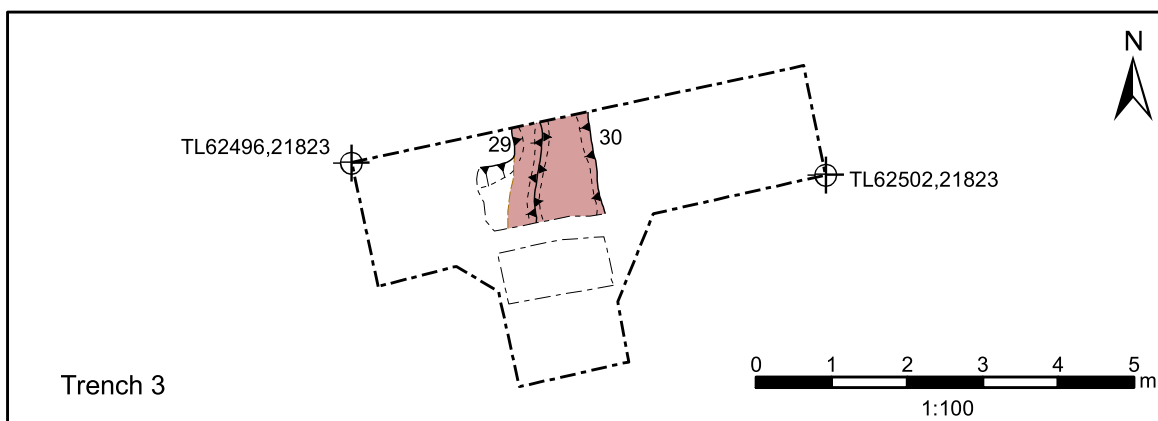
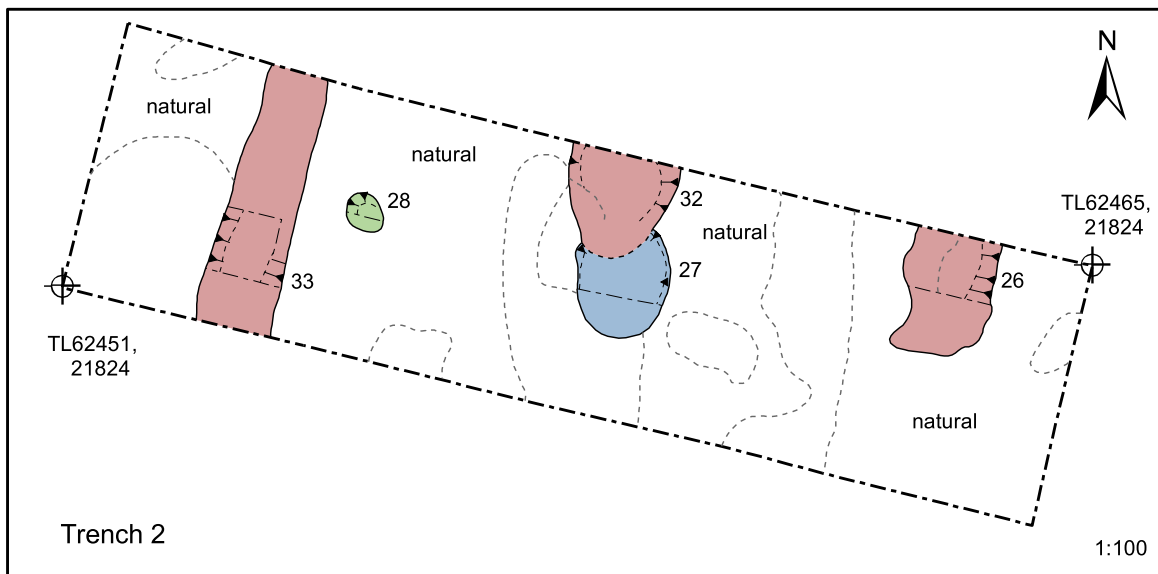


Fig.2. Trenches 1, 2 and 3



Plate 1. Trench 1 south end



Plate 2. Trench 1 north end



Plate 3. Baked-clay feature 34 (1m scale)



Plate 4. Trench 2 (looking east)



Plate 5. Graffito pot



Plate 6. Pit 27 (1m scale)



Plate 7. Trench 3 under excavation



Plate 8. Gullies 29 and 30 (1m scale)