

Leckhampton House, Cranmer Road

Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

An Archaeological Excavation



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Cambridge Archaeology Unit
University of Cambridge
September 2011

Report No. 1038

ECB 3594

SUMMARY

Between the 21st June and 16th July 2011 the Cambridge Archaeological Unit carried out an archaeological evaluation and open excavation within the footprint of a proposed new student accommodation block on Corpus Christi College land at Cranmer Road (no.25 Cranmer Road), Cambridge, adjacent to the college sports field. The investigation began with the digging of four evaluation trenches. Two suggested Saxon-Early Medieval ditches were located, and as a result, an area of c.180 sq m was opened up and excavated, revealing what appears to be the partly in-turned entrance of a sub-circular enclosure. Three of these ditches produced Middle Saxon pottery, fragments of weathered lava quern, burnt stone, daub, and considerable amounts of animal bone – most of the latter coming from the terminal ditch segment which may have been dug as a quarry pit just beyond the end of the original ditch. Another ditch dug across the inside of this entrance was constructed somewhat differently, and appears to be of a much later date. Little more can be said about the interpretation of this small enclosure, except that it confirms the relatively rare occurrence of a Middle Saxon settlement in this area.

Introduction

This archaeological trench evaluation took place between 21st-23rd June 2011 and consisted of the digging of four trenches (22m) parallel to the south and east sides of the (existing) student house at no.25 Cranmer Road (TL 43635803) (Figure 1). This included one (E-W) justification trench and also the boxing-out of another following the discovery of archaeological features. Trench 2 was then left open following the decision to go to a small open-area excavation. This excavation (180 sq m) commenced on 30th June and finished on 16th July. Following that a final trench (Trench 6) was dug on the western side of the house simply to confirm that the archaeology did not continue in this direction. Consequently it was decided that no watching brief was necessary during the demolition of the existing house and also groundworks carried out prior to the construction of the new student accommodation block.

Topography and Geology

Leckhampton House lies on the 2nd River Terrace gravels of the River Cam just above the Gault Clay, the latter outcropping to the west of the sports field (BGS 1974). The presence of Gault Clay at fairly shallow depth beneath the gravel here appears to have been confirmed by the discovery of a plug of clay within a geotechnical borehole encountered during the digging of evaluation Trench 4. Despite this, the site seems well drained, and possesses a light, dry, sandy soil. The most noticeable feature of the underlying gravels was the presence of a chalky substrate, almost certainly a marl horizon formed within the sandy-silty gravel as a result of the precipitation of lime from former calcareous spring seepages. The ground level of the garden and lawn surrounding no. 25 Cranmer Road is fairly level, the ground height prior to excavation ranging from 10.42m to 10.58m AOD.

Archaeological and Historical Background

Mesolithic and Neolithic axes (an axe or adze and a polished stone axe respectively) have been found in Newnham (Appleby & Webb 2009) and also quite a bit of residual Early Neolithic at Ridley Hall (Brittain 2010), but closer than this on either side of Grange Road are Bronze Age finds, such as a rapier now within the Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology and a single Bronze Age pit at the King's Garden Hostel (Dodwell 2001). Iron Age archaeology has been identified at Burrell's Walk (Gdaniec 1992), the University Library, Newnham College and Newnham Playing Field, whilst a richly adorned 2nd-3rd century BC burial was also found at St Mark's Church, Newnham Croft (Fox 1923).

Evidence for dispersed Roman settlement has been identified within the Newnham area (Appleby & Webb *ibid.*), the density of both finds and archaeological sites suggesting that Newnham and Grange Road lay within the hinterland zone of the Roman town. A large amount of Roman pottery from Newnham College is to be found within the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, whilst other evidence of this settlement including 1st-2nd century AD ditches and a pottery dump were found during investigations preceding the construction of the College Buttery (Webb et al.

2006). Burials which may have been Roman have also been reported from the area of Grange Road, whilst Roman archaeology identified at Burrells Field in 1992 indicated the presence of a Roman settlement, possibly a farmstead, beneath Robinson College (Appleby & Webb *ibid.*). More recently, some evidence for Roman settlement has been uncovered at Ridley Hall (Brittain *ibid.*) Meanwhile there is some suggestion of a N-S Roman Road in this area, one that lies parallel with or perhaps even coincident with the route of Grange Road. There is even some reference to a Roman Road beneath the grounds of Leckhampton House (see old correspondence at Leckhampton House; M.Martin *pers.com.*), although no real archaeological evidence has to date been found to support this.

There are several known Anglo-Saxon cemeteries within the vicinity of Grange Road and Sidgewick Avenue. An important (Early Saxon) cremation and inhumation cemetery dating to the 5th-7th centuries AD was found beneath St.John's College Playing Field, a site which is relatively close to the eastern end of Cranmer Road (Fox 1923). Meanwhile a further cemetery with at least 21 burials was excavated by the CAU at King's College Garden Hostel (Dodwell 2001). Of greater interest perhaps to our knowledge of Saxon settlement within this area was the excavation of the footing for a timber-built house (5m x 10m), a possible byre, and two sunken-featured buildings or *Grubenhäuser* at the nearby Institute of Criminology (Dodwell et al. 2004). Associated with this site was the evidence for textile manufacture (finds of loom weights), and the recovery of Early-Mid Saxon pottery and lava quern. Meanwhile, there is some suggestion that the skeleton recovered during the excavation of a man-hole at the Corpus Christi Sports Field (<40m from no.25 Cranmer Road), was that of a Saxon burial (M.Martin *pers.com.*). There is no confirmation of this at present.

Hall & Ravensdale's *West Fields of Cambridge* (1976) shows the area of Cranmer Road and Leckhampton Hose within an area of fields near to a N-S trackway known as *Custresbaultk* which crosses the valley of the Bin Brook sometime during the 14th-century AD. Newnham was then a small village centred upon a locally important mill and manor house. The location of Leckhampton House would then, as now, have been part of the lands of Corpus Christi College (the West Fields are based on the 'Corpus Terrier', a document which lists all the titheable lands owned by Corpus Christi in the middle of the 14th-century).

Method

Most of the archaeological trenching was carried out using a 7-ton 360° machine with a 1.8m wide ditching bucket. However, Trenches 4 & 5 were both cut using a much smaller machine with a 1m wide bucket (Trench 4 being only 1m wide). Each site was CAT scanned for services prior to trenching, then both the trenches and the spoil from them were routinely metal detected. Topsoil and subsoil layers were stripped to the top of the archaeological levels and recording sheets were completed for each trench/excavation area. Archaeological features were then dug by hand, with 1m wide section slots cut through ditches being cut approx. 1m wide (and dug to sample approx. 25% of each feature), with pits being half-sectioned. Trench and open area excavation plans were drawn at 1:50, sections at 1:10, with the recording (contexts +

feature descriptions) and also digital photography following standard CAU procedure. 10-20 litre environmental samples were taken from each of the main ditch sequences.

Results

Trench Evaluation (Figure 2)

No archaeology at all was found within Trenches 1, 3 and 5. The natural here consists of reddish-brown coloured silty-sandy gravels with patches of paler buff-coloured sand as well silts, sands and gravels concreted with marl.

Trench 2 revealed the terminus of a short section of NW-SE ditch (F.1) at its southern end. Within the fill(s) of this ditch was found a small amount of fragmented lava quern, some tile, burnt stone and worked flint. As a result of this find, an area of approx. 7 sq m was boxed out. No further features were found, but more of the southern end of the ditch was exposed.

Trench 4 encountered a short segment of another N-S ditch (F.2). From the base of this were recovered two small sherds of cooking pot of which a preliminary identification placed this within the Saxon-Early Medieval period.

On the basis of these finds and the initial identification of features it was decided to move straight into an open area excavation.

Excavation (Figure 2)

An area of approx 180 sq m (or c.40% of the area of the garden to the east of the house) was stripped, revealing the full extent of the NW-SE ditch terminus of F.1 (6m long + 2.5m wide). Significantly this feature showed no evidence for any continuation beneath the house. Indeed, there was no evidence of archaeology to the west of this point. However, 4.5m to the east of this terminus lay the tip of another ditch, possibly an opposite terminus of a curvilinear ditch some 10m long made up of several ditch segments (F.2, F.4, F.5 + F.6) delineating an arc of nearly 180°. The juxtaposition of F.1 with this curvilinear suggested an inturned entrance to an enclosure. Another ditch (F.7) which lies at right angles to and terminates just to the east of F.1 appears neither to be related to or of the same date as the others. Pottery recovered from the curvilinear ditch has since been identified as Middle Saxon, which by inference dates the whole of the suggested enclosure.

F.1 was sampled in three slots (Figures 2 + 6). The butt end of this ditch (Slot 2) contained four fills without any finds: (014) a basal weathering fill consisting of a mottled mid-grey/brown/orange-brown fine sandy silt, (013) a primary slump consisting of a firm grey clayey chalky silt with frequent grit and occasional sub-angular stone and gravel, (012) a tertiary fill consisting of a firm but friable greyish-mid brown silt with occasional gravel, and (011) a final (upper) fill consisting of a firm mid brown slightly clayey silt with occasional burnt stone and flint (Figure 3:middle). The middle section (Slot 1) contained the same number of rather similar fills, from which a number of finds were recovered. The primary slump weathering (009) consisted a white-grey clayey chalky silt with frequent calcareous grit and occasional sub-angular stone and gravel and no finds, above this lay (008) a secondary slump weathering (similar to (013)), then (007) a tertiary fill (similar to (012)) containing some animal bone and worked flint, and finally the upper or final fill (006) (which is similar to (011)) which contained animal bone, tile, worked stone (partly disintegrated lava quern), burnt stone as well as some

redeposited worked flint (a small possibly Mesolithic-Early Neolithic blade core and an unassociated tertiary flake SEE Beadmoore: Flint report). The most southerly slot (Slot 3) cut against the excavation edge revealed only two contexts; a basal fill (031) containing a looser sandy silt with inclusions of fine (<20mm) flint gravel (Figure 3:top).

F.2 was sectioned and recorded only in the evaluation. This very small segment of ditch (part of the curvilinear (F.2, F.4-F.6)) was only 1m long by 1.4m wide and about 0.4m deep. The upper or secondary fill (002) consisted of a light yellow-mid brown compact silt with occasional gravel inclusions (<30mm diameter) and finds including a moderate amount of animal bone (towards top), occasional charcoal and a small amount of burnt clay (Figure 4:top). The lower or primary fill (003) was a still more compact pale yellow gravelly sandy silt with wispy lens-like inclusions of marl, flecks of chalk, and finds including some fragments of a small gritstone-sandstone quern (<100mm diameter and possibly made of Culham Greensand), some very weathered fragments of lava quern, and just two pottery sherds identified broadly as being of Saxon origin. Two thin lenses of a gravelly silt (004) with flint inclusions (<30mm diameter) represented slump/erosion deposits formed against the sides/bottom of the feature. The cut for this [005] was U-shaped with a flat yet slightly convex-irregular base and steep sides; the west side being convex with a sharp bottom break of slope and the east side concave and moderately steep. The feature could originally have been a quarry pit subsequently included along the line of the curvilinear enclosure ditch.

F.3 This small feature was revealed when examining the western section of Trench 2. At the time this was thought to be the remains of a highly degraded ditch, possibly even the return of F.1 where it turned west to form the corner of an enclosure. However, on full excavation this was shown to be an area of just very extensive rooting. This therefore formed the terminus of F.1 and there was no extension of the archaeology westwards.

F.4 was sampled in two slots (Figure 2). At the north end of this (Slot 2 Section 4) this 1.65m wide ditch segment revealed an asymmetric profile consisting of a steep stepped western side and gently sloping eastern side and flat to sloping base [037] and a primary fill (036) consisting of a pale grey-yellow mottled chalky-silty sand with washed lenses of marl, chalk, sand and minor gravel affected by heavy rooting disturbance. One metre to the south of this (Slot 2 Section 6) the profile across this same feature was more symmetrical with a flat to slightly concave bottom and moderate to steep sides [041]. The primary fill at this point (038) was similar and equivalent to (036) but had patches of a red-brown to pale brown-grey and yellow-grey sand and scattered inclusions of gravel, and was also heavily rooted. Finds recovered from this included two sherds of Middle Saxon pot, some animal bone, and some small fragments of Niedermendig lava quern (no grinding or diagnostic faces on these quern fragments survived). Against the sides of the ditch were thin erosional lenses consisting on the south side of a washed-out natural brown-yellow mottled silty sand (039), and on the north side a pale grey silty sand (040). At the south end of F.4 (Slot 1) the section profile is similar, though the SW side of the cut appears shallower. Here the primary fill (050) (which is equivalent to (036) and (038)) contains further animal bone and some five sherds of Middle Saxon pot. It appears likely on account of its irregularity that F.4 was also dug as a quarry upon the line of the curvilinear ditch. This then appears to have been moderately well-middened prior to it being dug out again for the deposition of animal remains (F.8).

F.8 appears to be a dump of animal bone including that of the partial remains of an adult and a juvenile cow. It was assumed at the time that these were partial animal burials, thus they were dug into a pit (ditch segment F.4) already being used as a midden. On this assumption separate cut and fill number(s) have been given, though the precise location of this cut (or re-cut) could not be determined. An approximate location for this c.2m long by c.0.7m wide (and approx. 0.3m deep) cut (i.e. [025] + [049]) is against the east side of F.4 (see Figure 2). The limits of this feature were recorded in both Slot 2 (Section 4 + 6) and Slot 1 (Section 6): at the south end (Slot 1 Section 6) the main fill containing animal (cow) bone (033) consisted of a moderately compacted mid-greyish-brown sandy silt with occasional gravel, whilst at the base of this lay a lens (034) of fine creamy white silty sand with pale grey-brown mottled sand and marl and gravel washes. There was a small amount of burnt stone present plus fragments of abraded pot. At the northern end (Slot 2 Section 6) the same cut for this appeared to be U-shaped similar to that of the ditch segment itself. Here the main fill (047) of this feature (equivalent to (033)) consisted of a mid reddish-brown sandy silt with occasional scattered patches of smallish gravel, together with much bovid bone and a small amount of burnt stone (see Figure 3:

bottom). Against the NE side of the ditch in section could be seen a thin slump deposit (048) consisting of a mid greyish-brown sandy silt with chalk and marl washes.

F.5 The end of a sub-circular ditch formed by several mostly joining ditch segments (Figure 2). The somewhat pointed terminal of this ditch segment appears to be the end of a continuous ditch relating to an incurved settlement enclosure entrance. This ditch segment appears to be at least 3.5m long and a maximum of 1.2m wide (with a depth of up to 0.3m). The cut for this ([044] = [046]) is a broad U-shape with a flattish slightly concave bottom and with steep sides, the NW side steeper than the SE. The main fill at the south end of this feature (042,) at the point where this is cut by a brick soakaway, appears to be more or less identical with that in the section to the north of this (045), and also at the junction between the intercutting ditch segments F.5 and F.6 (i.e. Slot 5): (025) was a mid pale brown-grey moderately compact and slightly clayey sandy silt. A small amount of bone and burnt stone was recovered from this plus fragments of undiagnostic pot. From (025), common to both F.5 and F.6, came sherds of Middle Saxon pot. The infills of both these ditches appear to have formed at the same time. From (045) came a small fragment of redeposited Roman tile.

F.6 The deepest of the consecutive ditch segments which form this curvilinear enclosure ditch, F.6 was sampled at its junction with F.5 (Slot 5), and also within a 1m long slot adjacent to the east side of the excavation (Figure 2). F.5 which forms the original (earlier) terminus of this part of the curvilinear was cut by the end of F.6, a segment dug along the same course as F.5 but a little to the north-east. The cut [026] for this ditch section (F.6) was similarly U-shaped, but once again slightly asymmetric on both north and south sides of the ditch between the section of Slot 6 located on the excavation section, and the section at the end of the Slot 6 extension. Erosional or thin slump lenses of sediment lay against both ditch sides; on the south side (022) a light grey-brown loosely compacted silty sand with frequent gravel and scattered chalk flecks was overlain by (024) a reddish-brown sandy silt, and on the north a thin lens of (023) similar to (022). Small amounts of animal bone and burnt stone and six sherds of Middle Saxon pot (including an everted pot rim) were recovered from (025) during excavation (Figure 4:middle), whilst another undiagnostic sherd was recovered from an environmental sample (Sample 2) taken from the ditch section at the eastern edge of excavation (Figure 9:bottom). From this sample came charcoal, and several grains of carbonised barley, indeterminate cereal grain and grass seed.

F.9 A small sub-round pit of approximately the same period as the ditches, but cut by the end of ditch segment F.5 (Slot 5) (Figure 2). The cut [021] for this pit was 1m long by 0.85m wide and 0.17m deep; this had a flat-slightly concave base with very gently sloping sides. The fill (020) consisted of a moderately compacted light brown-grey sandy silt with few small gravel inclusions and patches of marly sediment, with some rooting disturbance. The only finds were a small amount of animal bone. Whilst this pit might originally have been a small quarry pit, it showed no obvious evidence of subsequent midden fill.

F.7 A 4m long evenly cut straight linear ditch 1-1.5m wide and 0.6m deep with a symmetrical U-shaped x-sectional profile with gently sloping concave sides and an evenly rounded bottom [032] (Figure 2). This contained three fills: on the base (031) a loose sandy silt with a fine (<20mm) flint gravel, (030) a pale grey-brown compact silt with occasional gravel and charcoal flecks and some root holes, and on top (029) a light mid-brown sandy silt with gravel inclusions. There were few finds from this, amongst this a small amount of animal bone and some burnt stone, whilst from the lowest fill was recovered a small section of clay pipe stem. Whilst the latter could have been intrusive, it implies that the feature may be Post-medieval -modern. However, the shape of this does not imply anything recent. An environmental sample (Sample 3) taken from (030) on the edge-of-excavation section produced no seeds but two carbonised cereal grains of *Triticum* sp. (wheat). The ditch terminates approx. 1m from F.1, and is at right angles to it. The terminal is cut by a modern brick-filled soakaway.

Discussion

Archaeological excavation has revealed part of a Middle Saxon curvilinear ditch composed of intercutting ditch segments (F.5 + F.6) and a terminal end composed of two further separated ditch segments (F.2 + F.4), the latter originally dug perhaps as quarry pits. Some 4.5m to the south-west of this was the terminal of another linear

(F.1) which may have been contemporary with the above and probably associated to it. This has been interpreted as part of an inturned entrance to a sub-circular ditched enclosure constructed either to hold animals or perhaps to surround a dwelling. However, there is no evidence at the moment to suggest that F.1 and another as yet undated linear (F.7) which lay at right angles to this were related. The short distance (1m) of the gap which lies between these seems too small to be an access point, whilst the ditch profile and also the fill of F.7 is quite different to that of F.1.

In some ways the Middle Saxon dating of this small enclosure was a surprise, given the rarity of settlement features (as opposed to cemeteries) of this date in Cambridge. In other ways the abundance of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries within the tract of ground that stretches between Newnham, King's Garden Hostel and St John's Playing Field on Grange Road pre-supposes the presence of nearby contemporary settlement, either to the west or east of this line. More relevant perhaps was the discovery of some Early to Middle Anglo-Saxon dwellings near the King's Garden Hostel, less than 400m from Leckhampton House (Dodwell *et. al.* 2004). The presence of the latter might imply a continuation of occupation within this same general area extending into the early 8th-century AD. For example, if there was a (Middle Saxon) settlement on the line of Grange Road, then the presence of dispersed farmsteads within 500m of this, particularly at a location such as the Bin Brook, is only to be expected. Indeed this area of Corpus Christi land continued to be agriculturally important. Almost 500 years later this was at the centre of the Early Medieval West Fields of Cambridge (Hall & Ravensdale 1976). The importance of this is clear: very little Saxon settlement evidence has been found in Cambridge, previously it was believed that most of this was focused around the Market and Peas Hill, Castle Hill and possibly Newnham (Dodwell 2001).

Unfortunately, given the small area of Middle Saxon archaeology exposed, it will not be easy to draw close parallels between the ditches and pits at Leckhampton House and similar examples found elsewhere. However, what we can say is that the putative Leckhampton enclosure appears to be an oval-shaped example with a lateral in-turned entrance and external dimensions of around 20m by 10m. Probably the best Cambridgeshire example of an excavated Middle Saxon settlement is of the Phase 5 settlement development at West Fen Road, Ely (Mortimer *et. al.* 2005). This settlement which dates from the early 8th to the mid-9th century AD is one that appears to be dominated by enclosures. Almost without exception these West Fen Road enclosures are large (between 45 – 100m) and rectilinear in shape, and clearly formally organised, some of these enclosures containing rectangular post-hole defined structures, probably the buildings occupied as dwellings. However, at Riby Cross Roads, Lincolnshire (Steedman 1995) we find oval-shaped stock enclosures, but these are generally larger, and cannot be compared directly with the small oval or D-shaped enclosure we have at Leckhampton House. A much better match might be found with the Late Saxon (Phase 6) enclosures at West Fen Road which are composed of a series of curvilinear ditch elements. For example, there are the paddock enclosures (comparable examples of these being the Paddocks A-B and E) located within Enclosure 13/14 in Figure 3.6 of the West Fen Road publication. As at Leckhampton House most of these enclosures appear to be made up of intercutting ditch segments, though at West Fen Road all of the (paddock) enclosures appear to be linked. Because of this there is still no obvious match between this and what was perceived at Leckhampton to have been a separated example. Part of the problem could be that we

do not actually have enough of this enclosure to be certain either way. However, at the level of finer detail both the profiles and dimensions of the ditches appear similar. For instance, some of the shorter sections of ditch at Leckhampton House (such as F.2) compare well with the flat-bottomed Saxon pits, as does the strange-shaped terminal of F.4 with the boat-shaped pits described by Mortimer at West Fen Road, Ely, at Cottenham, and at Denny End, Waterbeach (see Mortimer 1996,1998).

Wheel-turned Middle Saxon pot (Ipswich Ware) first appears in the Cambridge area around 725 AD, and it is likely that these sherds are early examples of this. However, the small amount of undiagnostic pottery from this site may limit any finer resolution of dating, determination of kiln source, or the characterisation of vessel form. Nevertheless, this type of pottery and the weathered and partially exfoliated fragments of fine-grained Niedermendig lava quern seem quite typical of the material culture previously found within small Early-Middle Saxon midden contexts in the Cambridge region (Timberlake 2007). In addition to the lava quern, the small sandstone quern fragments found at Leckhampton House seem to have been made from a gritty facies of the Lower Greensand (probably the Culham Greensand). Interestingly, this same type of rock was also found used as quern at the Roman settlement of Vicar's Farm, West Cambridge (see Hayward in Lucas & Whittaker 2001).

The animal bone finds from the Leckhampton House Saxon site provide us with a fairly reasonable record of the domestic animals used for food. The main food animal represented was cow (minimum three individuals) compared to goat/sheep (minimum two individuals), a slightly higher ratio than recorded at West Fen Road where sheep/goat (MNI) appear to be dominant. At West Fen Road a peak in the number of pigs culled was also recorded during the Middle Saxon phase. Both pig and goose were important elements of Saxon diet, and both have been recorded within the faunal remains from Leckhampton House (minimum one individual each). Meanwhile the significance of the abundant cow bone which appears to have been dug as a feature (F.8) into an existing rubbish pit (F.4) deserves some mention. Here the remains of three individuals (a neonate, juvenile and young adult) are represented, though none of these were burials of intact skeletons (*V.Rajkovača pers.com.*). Various unused sections of animal were discarded including some partially articulated vertebrae and ribs. These elements seem to have been buried whole, after the limb bones and other choice cuts had been removed. As regards other foodstuffs, a small amount of environmental evidence suggests the use of cereals, probably barley.

Conclusions

This is an important archaeological find of a previously unknown Middle Saxon settlement site in West Cambridge, probably of a small farmstead located some 400m west of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at King's Garden Hostel on the east side of Grange Road. At Leckhampton House we have a rather incomplete picture of what appears to have been an oval-shaped ditched enclosure with an inturned entrance to the south-west. The faunal evidence and material culture recovered from the ditches and pits of this structure suggests the presence of a small and relatively low-status subsistence-based agricultural settlement or dwelling(s), one linked perhaps to the raising of domestic animals, some of which appear to have been butchered on site.

Acknowledgements

The archaeological work was carried out at the behest of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. The Site Manager at Leckhampton House (Corpus Christi) was Michael Martin. Lattenbury Services undertook the machining of the site. Thanks also due to Peter Turner at Kirkby Diamond, David Faichney of Barnes Construction, and Ian Bird. Chris Evans was CAU Project Manager. Kasia Gdaniec (Cambridgeshire County Council Planning Archaeologist) monitored the archaeological work. Donald Horne and Jane Matthews undertook the surveying of the site. Jane Matthews digitised the plans and Andy Hall and Bryan Crossam produced the graphics.

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APPENDIX

Pottery

David Hall

Feature 1 – linear ditch

<12> (09) 1 sherd 16g ?17th century tile N.B. intrusive

Feature 2 – curvilinear ditch segment

<5> (04) 5 sherds 19g Saxon

Feature 4 – curvilinear ditch segment

<31> (38) 2 sherds 1g Mid-Saxon

<43> (50) 5 sherds 75g Mid-Saxon

Feature 6 – curvilinear ditch segment

<18> (25) 6 sherds 32g Mid-Saxon

<48> (25) 1 sherd 1g undiagnostic N.B. Sample 2 (enviro.)

Faunal Remains

Vida Rajkovača

The excavations at Leckhampton House resulted in the recovery of a small faunal assemblage totalling 193 assessable specimens and weighing 7023g. The assemblage was assigned to Middle Saxon period and will be considered as a whole. The material was well preserved (Table 1) and showed a considerable degree of fragmentation, with no complete specimens. Surprisingly the only feature producing poorly preserved bone material was F.7, a possible ‘modern’ linear.

The zooarchaeological investigation followed the system implemented by Bournemouth University with all identifiable elements recorded (NISP: Number of Identifiable Specimens) and diagnostic zoning (amended from Dobney & Reilly 1988) used to calculate MNE (Minimum Number of Elements) from which MNI (Minimum Number of Individuals) was derived. Identification of the assemblage was undertaken with the aid of Schmid (1972), Hillson (1999) and reference material from the Cambridge Archaeological Unit. Although most of the ovicaprid bones are difficult to identify to species, it was possible to identify a selective set of elements as sheep from the assemblage, using the criteria of Boessneck (1969) and Halstead *et al* (2002). Ageing of the assemblage employed both mandibular tooth wear (Grant 1982; Payne 1973) and fusion of proximal and distal epiphyses (Silver 1969). Taphonomic criteria including indications of butchery, pathology, gnawing activity and surface modifications as a result of weathering were also recorded when evident.

Preservation	Contexts	% Contexts	Fragments	% Fragments
<i>Quite Good</i>	9	81.8	188	97.4
<i>Moderate</i>	1	9.1	3	1.6
<i>Quite Poor</i>	1	9.1	2	1
Total	11	100	193	100

Table 1. Preservation of the material by context and fragment count

A group of possible ditch segments (F.2, 4 and 6) and an associated pit F.9 have collectively produced 176 assessable fragments with a combined weight of 6689g. A possible 'modern' linear F.7 yielded two specimens only, one of which was a cow tooth fragment. Ten specimens derived from ditch F.1, of which seven were possible to identify as cow, sheep and pig.

Of 193 specimens, only 94 (48.7%) were assigned to species. The dominant species is by far cattle and large number of cattle-sized elements confirms this (Table 2). Sheep/ goat was also recorded with sheep being positively identified based on two specimens. Two pig scapulae and a mandible were noted, as well as a near complete goose humerus.

Butchery was recorded on ten specimens (*c.*5% of the assemblage), of which seven were cattle. Deep marks were noted on two cattle mandibles, both of which seem to have been chopped through the diastema. The specific activity reflected could be the marrow removal as the mandible contains some marrow fat. One would, however, expect to see burning marks on basal part of the diastema to render the marrow liquid before breaking it open to pour the marrow out. Other butchery actions noted include meat removal and bone breaking.

Ageing data was obtained from a number of specimens, a testimony to a good level of preservation. Two neonate and juvenile animals aged 0-7 months and 8-18 months at death and a young adult were recorded, confirming the minimum number of three individuals as noted from the skeletal element representation. It was possible to age two animals within the ovicaprid cohort, a juvenile aged 12-20 months and an adult of 3-4 years at death. In addition, a pig scapula was recorded with an unfused bicipital tuberosity implying that the animal died during its first year.

The limited range of species and overwhelming reliance of domestic sources of meat, especially cattle, are somewhat typical for the period and for an urban location of the site. The presence of neonates and juvenile individuals do confirm that breeding took place on site or locally. Due to the small sample size, it was difficult to assess the level of economic specialisation or whether a consumption of meat carried a status value.

Taxon	NISP	%NISP	MNI
Cow	77	81.9	3
Ovicaprid	11	11.7	1
Sheep	2	2.1	1
Pig	3	3.2	1
Domestic goose	1	1.1	1
Sub-total NISP identified to species	94	100	.
Cattle-sized	90	.	.
Sheep-sized	9	.	.
Total	193	.	.

Table 2. Number of Identified Specimens and Minimum Number of Individuals for all species. Hand-recovered material only.

Bulk Environmental Samples

Anne de Vareilles

Three bulk soil samples were processed using an Ankara-type flotation machine. The flots were collected in 300µm aperture meshes and the remaining heavy residues washed over a 1mm mesh. Both the flots and heavy residues were dried indoors prior to analysis. Sorting of the flots and identification of macro remains were carried out under a low power binocular microscope (6x-40x magnification). Frances Cox scanned through the small heavy residues; a little charcoal but no artefacts were

recovered. Nomenclature follows Zohary and Hopf (2000) for cereals, Stace (1997) for all other flora and an updated version of Beedham (1972) for molluscs. All environmental remains are listed in Table 1.

All archaeobotanical remains were carbonised. The samples contained very low volumes of charcoal and a total of six cereal grains. Identification of specimens was severely limited as all caryopses are heavily puffed, broken or abraded. Their condition, along with ubiquitous vitrified charcoal, attests to high firing temperatures and/or long burning fires. Modern rootlets were abundant showing that all contexts have been disturbed by recent vegetation. The intrusive blind burrowing snail (*Ceciloides acicula*) was frequent.

The three ditches produced similar results. Archaeobotanical remains are sparse, and have been intensively modified during and after carbonisation. Evidence for the site's function and purpose was not uncovered in these samples.

Ditch F.1 (Sample 1) contained charcoal but no seeds, whereas the Middle Saxon ditch F.6 (Sample 2) contained a single carbonised grain of barley (*Hordeum* sp.), a grain of barley or wheat, an indeterminate cereal grain, and three wild grass seeds. Sample 3 (Ditch F.7) on the other hand contained two grains of wheat but no identified barley (ST).

Poor preservation and bioturbation have certainly affected the sediment matrix and the finds therein, it nevertheless remains unlikely that burnt food or agricultural waste was intentionally discarded into the analysed deposits. The plant remains are unsuitable dating material.

Table 3: Macro-fossils from the Bulk Soil Samples

Sample number		1	2	3
Context		27	25	30
Feature		1	6	7
Feature type		Ditch	Ditch	Ditch
Phase/Date		Middle Saxon		?
Sample volume - litres		8	10	10
Flot fraction examined - %		100	100	100
Charcoal				
	>4mm	-	+	
	2-4mm	+	+	+
	<2mm	+++	+++	++
	Vitrified charcoal	++	-	+
	Estimated charcoal volume - ml.	1	<1	3
Cereal caryopses				
<i>Hordeum vulgare sensu lato</i>	Hulled Barley		1	
<i>Hordeum/Triticum</i> sp.	Barley or Wheat		1	
<i>Triticum</i> sp.	Wheat			2
	Indeterminate cereal grain		1	1
Non cereal				
<i>Fallopia convolvulus</i> (L.) A. Love	Black bindweed			1
Large Poaceae >4mm	wild grass seed		1	
Medium Poaceae 2-4mm	wild grass seed		1	
Small Poaceae <2mm	wild grass seed		1	
	Indeterminate seed		1	
	Modern <i>Chenopodium</i> sp.	1		
	Modern rootlets	P	P	P
Mollusca				
<i>Ceciloides acicula</i>	Intrusive	P	P	P

Key: '-' 1 or 2, '+' <10, '++' 10-50, '+++>50 items. P = present.

Flint

Emma Beadsmoore

Two worked flints were recovered from the site, an exhausted blade core and a tertiary flake. The Late Mesolithic/Early Neolithic blade core was systematically worked from well maintained opposed platforms. The tertiary flake was neatly removed to clear awkward stepped scars and rejuvenate a blade core; the flake is broadly contemporary with the blade core and dates to the Late Mesolithic/Early Neolithic.

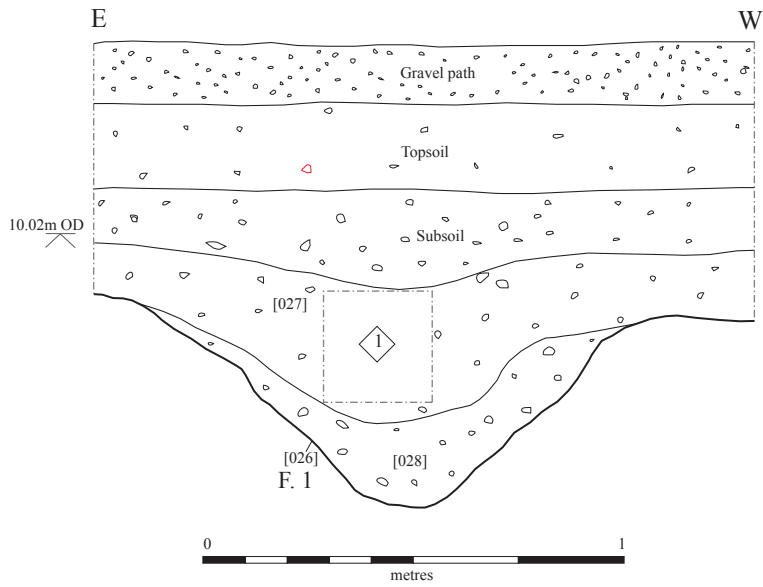


Based on the Ordnance Survey 1:25000 map. With the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown Copyright. University of Cambridge Licence No.AL 550833

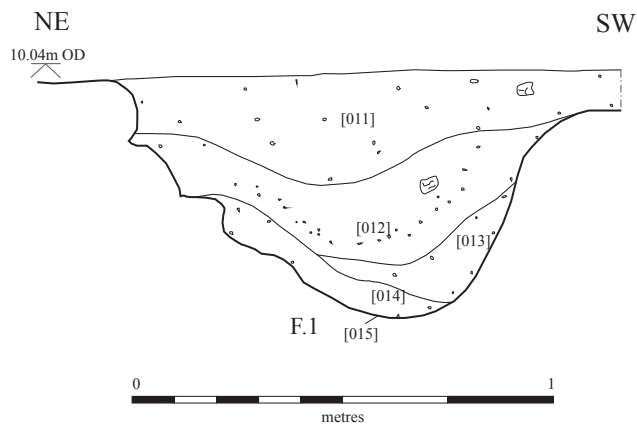
Figure 1. Site location



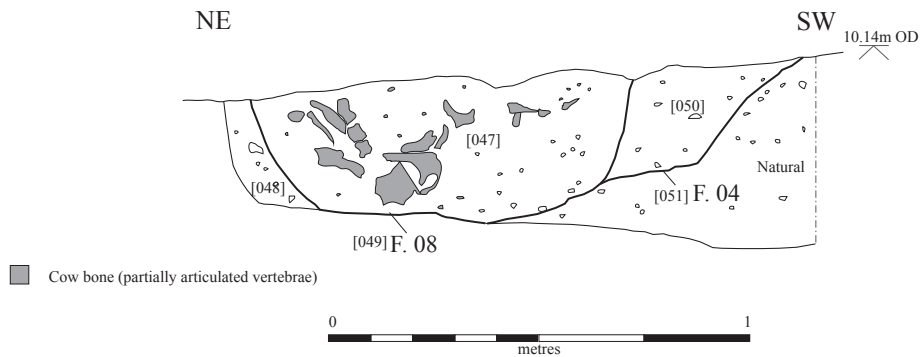
Figure 2. Excavated area, earlier trenching and exposed archaeological features



North facing section of F.1 in Saxon ditch at the Southern edge of excavation



South facing section of F. 1 (slot 2)



North facing section of F. 4 and F.8 in Middle Saxon ditch / quarry pit (slot 2, F.4)

Figure 3. Selected sections

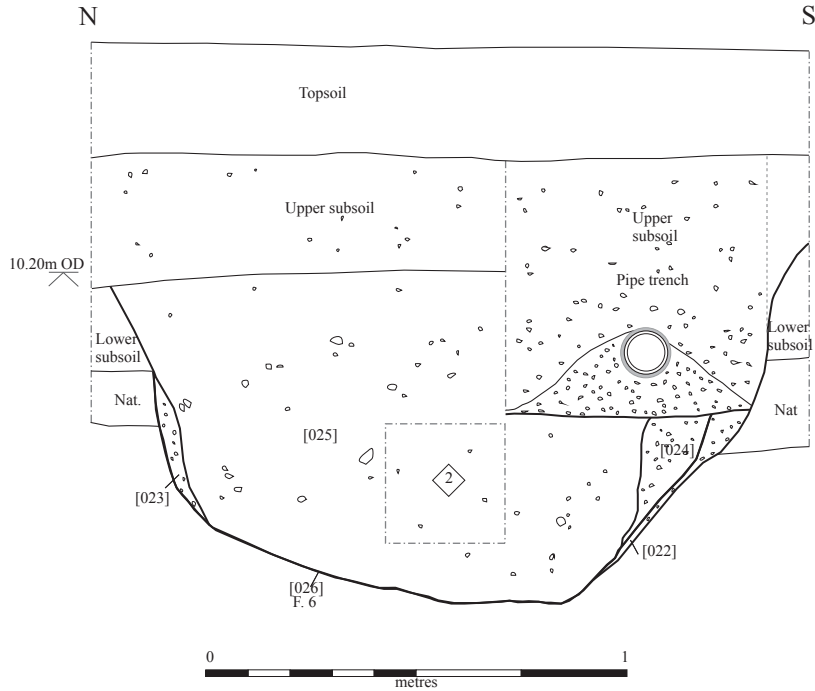
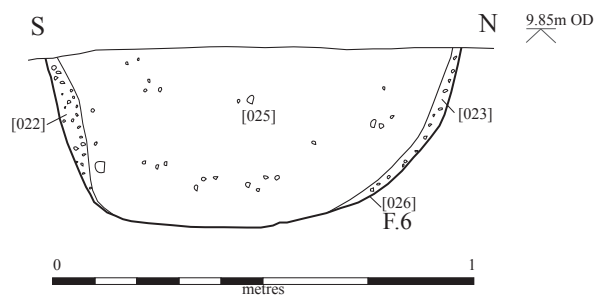
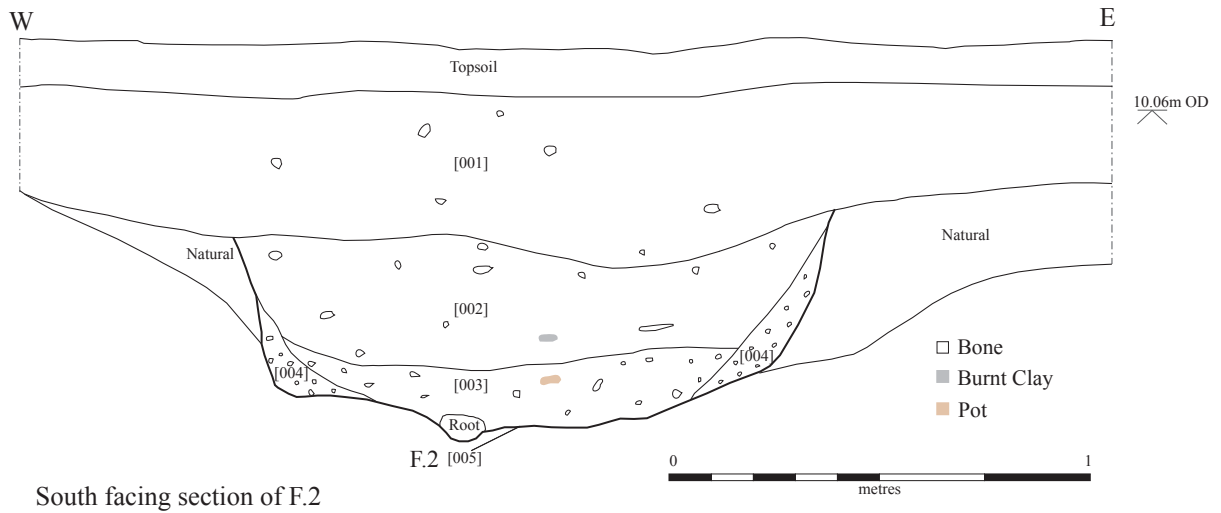


Figure 4. Selected sections



Figure 5. View of excavated site taken from the 1st floor of No. 25 Cramner Road



Figure 6. Photograph of excavated slots through F.1, looking south (left) and sections through F.4 and F.8 showing partial cow skeleton (right)

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OASIS ID: cambridg3-109643

Project details

Project name	Leckhampton House, Corpus Christi College
Short description of the project	Between the 21st June and 16th July 2011 the Cambridge Archaeological Unit carried out an archaeological evaluation and open excavation within the footprint of a proposed new student accommodation block on Corpus Christi College land at Cranmer Road (no.25 Cranmer Road), Cambridg, adjacent to the college sports field. The investigation began with the digging of four evaluation trenches. Two suggested Saxon-Early Medieval ditches were located, and as a result, an area of c.180 sq m was opened up and excavated, revealing what appears to be the partly in-turned entrance of a sub-circular enclosure. Three of these ditches produced Middle Saxon pottery, fragments of weathered lava quern, burnt stone, daub, and considerable amounts of animal bone - most of the latter coming from the terminal ditch segment which may have been dug as a quarry pit just beyond the end of the original ditch. Another ditch dug across the inside of this entrance was constructed somewhat differently, and appears to be of a much later date. Little more can be said about the interpretation of this small enclosure, except that it confirms the relatively rare occurrence of a Middle Saxon settlement in this area.
Project dates	Start: 21-06-2011 End: 16-07-2011
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	LHC11 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	ECB 3594 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	SMALL ENCLOSURE DITCH Early Medieval
Monument type	PITS Early Medieval

Significant Finds	POTTERY Early Medieval
Significant Finds	LAVA QUERN Early Medieval
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Early Medieval
Significant Finds	WORKED FLINT Early Neolithic
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE CAMBRIDGE CAMBRIDGE Leckhampton House, Corpus Christi College
Postcode	CB3 9BL
Study area	180.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 4363 5800 52.201111111111 0.101944444444 52 12 04 N 000 06 07 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 10.42m Max: 10.56m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Christopher Evans
Project director/ manager	Christopher Evans
Project supervisor	Simon Timberlake
Type of sponsor/ funding body	Landowner
Name of sponsor/ funding body	Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Physical Archive ID	LHC11
Physical Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Environmental','Worked stone/lithics'
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Digital Archive ID	LHC11
Digital Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Environmental','Stratigraphic','Survey'

Digital Media available 'GIS','Images raster / digital photography','Spreadsheets','Survey','Text'
Paper Archive recipient Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Paper Archive ID LHC11
Paper Contents 'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Environmental','Stratigraphic','Survey'
Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Map','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section','Survey '

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title Leckhampton House, Cranmer Road, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge An Archaeological Excavation
Author(s)/Editor(s) Timberlake, S.
Other bibliographic details Report no. 1038
Date 2011
Issuer or publisher Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Place of issue or publication University of Cambridge
Description 16pp text with 6 figures incl. 2 colour photographic plates, bound with cover plate and backing. Also .pdf version.

Entered by Dr Simon Timberlake (st410@cam.ac.uk)
Entered on 9 September 2011

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