

Deeping Gate Trees, Market Deeping, Lincolnshire

An Archaeological Evaluation



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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Three trenches opened within a 1.05ha area at Deeping Gate Trees to the north of Market Deeping produced only three cut features. Two unrelated postholes contained charcoal-rich fills but were otherwise undated. A linear feature of unknown date aligned northeast-southwest was identified in one trench only. A linear cropmark identified by aerial photography as traversing the site was not observed as a cut feature.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by Deeping Gate Trees, whose assistance during machining of the trenches is gratefully acknowledged. Jan Allen (Historic Environment Officer for the Planning Department of Lincolnshire County Council) oversaw and monitored the development control of the investigation. David Gibson (CAU) was the Project Manager, and the fieldwork was carried out by the author. Graphics were produced by Vicki Herring, and the site was surveyed by Brian Crossan.

1. INTRODUCTION

Archaeological evaluation was carried out by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) at Deeping Gate Trees, Northfield Road East, Market Deeping, Lincolnshire (Figure 1), between 4th and 5th December 2012, to address a condition placed upon planning consent for a proposed irrigation reservoir. The completed site was subsequently surveyed on 18th December 2012.

Work commenced on the construction of the reservoir in June 2010, but was halted when it became apparent that planning consent was required. These works resulted in the extraction of sand and gravel in two areas within the proposed development area (PDA) which are illustrated in Figure 2. Planning permission has subsequently been sought for the creation of an irrigation reservoir with pump house to serve the tree nursery (planning application PL/0259/10 and superseded by PL/0201/11).

1.1 Location, Topography, Geology

Deeping Gate Trees is situated c.1km north from the town of Market Deeping at TL 5150 3123 (Figure 1). It is bounded to the east by Cross Road, and by the A16 Market Deeping Bypass to the south, with open fields to the north and the tree nursery at the west. The PDA extends across an area of c.1.05ha with a comparatively flat south-north elevation of c.2.68-2.75m AOD, and is currently open grassland containing two sizeable ponds (Figure 2). The underlying geology is 1st Terrace Gravel Deposits overlying Oxford Clay.

1.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

No previous archaeological work has been undertaken directly within the grounds of Deeping Gate Trees. Reports of various investigations from within the environs around the current PDA provide a detailed account of the broader archaeological landscape. A brief summary of these is provided below. Aerial photographs of the PDA show that a linear cropmark traverses the site along an east-west course. The nature and potential date of this anomaly is unknown, although a prehistoric date has been assumed (see below), and no other immediately obvious target areas may be observed.

1.2.1 Prehistoric

Four post holes and an accompanying pit dated by radiocarbon to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age have been excavated less than 1km to the east of the PDA during trial trenching in advance of the A16 road development (Cope-Faulkner 1999). Neolithic finds have been documented as residual to later contexts, and Early Bronze Age inhabitation is evidenced by pit clusters, a ring ditch with an inhumation, and a circular post-built structure all within 2km north of the PDA (Brittain *in prep*; Hall 2000; Hutton 2008a; Webley 2004).

Two heavily truncated ring ditches, undated but of likely Bronze Age origin, were excavated within 1km southwest of the PDA (Trimble 2000; Site 8). Crop marks to

the immediate east of the PDA illustrate another potential ring ditch (Cope-Faulkner 1999: 1-2, SK56.104; see also HER 34758), and cropmarks passing through the PDA have been interpreted previously as irregular sub-rectangular and ovoid enclosures or field boundaries (HER 34759). These continue on a northwest-southeast alignment into the field to the north of the PDA in which an Early to Middle Bronze Age stone axe hammer has also been found (HER 33432).

The wider Bronze Age landscape is dominated by an extensive network of ditches forming field allotments and droveways, generally oriented north-northwest to south-southeast with substantial and waterlogged pit wells with pit clusters all dating within the middle of this period (approximately 1600-1300BC). These are associated with at least two settlement areas comprising of circular post-built structures, with an enclosed cemetery of multiple ring ditches and cremated and inhumed burial deposits (Brittain *in prep*; Hogan 2012; Hutton 2008a, b; 2009; 2011; Hutton and Dickens 2010). Cropmarks across the wider landscape attest to the likelihood that Bronze Age settlement patterns are extensive across the local region.

Later Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement associated with early and developing salt-winning technologies have been recorded within 1.5km northwest of the PDA. This includes a full sequence of changes in ceramic styles represented up to the latest phases of the Iron Age, thereby illustrating a rare and important assemblage for south Lincolnshire (Hall 2000; Hutton and Dickens 2010; Webley 2004).

1.2.2 Romano-British

To the south of the PDA along the northeast outskirts of Market Deeping is a scheduled Romano-British settlement site at Priory Meadow (SAM 179; HER 30047) with extensive cropmarks aligned predominantly upon an east-west axis. Early Roman pottery has been collected through walkover survey, including Samian imports suggestive of at least the 1st to 2nd century AD; a bronze 'crown' was also found here in 1966.

Aligned upon the east-west axis are extensive Romano-British trackways and field systems relating to a settlement or farmstead that have been investigated c.0.5km to the north of the PDA in the 'Bluebells' site, broadly dating from the mid-2nd to mid-3rd centuries AD, with sporadic instances of 4th century AD material further to the south of this area (Collins 2010; Hutton 2007). A third set of Romano-British field systems, also aligned east-west, have been excavated 0.5km north of the Bluebells site (Northamptonshire Archaeology 2009; Mudd 2004). It may be postulated that each of these settlements are situated in relation to the Car Dyke, the largest of the Romano-British canal systems in the country that runs broadly on a north-south alignment approximately 2km to the east of the PDA.

1.2.3 Medieval / Post-Medieval

Within the Bluebells land to the north of the PDA a system of field allotment along a northeast-southwest axis was broadly dated as Medieval / post-Medieval (Collins 2010; Hutton 2007). This was also identified throughout the investigations along the A16 Bypass development, noted in particular as ridge and furrow both to the east and west of the PDA (Trimble 2000).

Second World War defences are also distributed over the Market Deeping / Langtoft landscape, the impact and survival of which is not clearly documented.

1.3 Methodology

The work followed specifications previously outlined by the CAU (Gibson 2012) in accordance with a Design Brief for archaeological evaluation issued by the office of Conservation Services at the Lincolnshire County Council.

The evaluation comprised of three trenches totalling 165.35m in length and covering a 3% sample of the 1.05ha PDA. Topsoil and underlying deposits were removed under archaeological supervision of a tracked 360° machine using a 1.8m wide toothless bucket. Work was undertaken in accordance to statutory Health and Safety guidelines and a CAU risk assessment detailed under the recommendations of SCAUM (Allen and Holt 2007). The site was CAT scanned for services prior to excavation of the trenches. The spoil removed from the trenches was systematically scanned with a metal detector. All archaeological features and deposits were excavated by hand and recorded using the CAU modified version of the MoLAS recording system (Spence 1990). Linears were excavated with a slot of a minimum 1m in length, with pits, postholes and other discrete features subjected to a 50% sample. Trenches and features were digitally photographed and then planned at a scale of 1:50, with trench and feature sections planned at 1:10. All plans were correlated with fixed points on the OS grid using a Global Positioning System. Progress of the evaluation was monitored by the Historic Environment Officer of the Lincolnshire County Council.

1.4 Archive

Information detailing the character of each of the trenches was recorded on a data sheet that, along with the digital photographic record, has been catalogued together within an archive following the procedures outlined in MoRPHE (English Heritage 2006) and the Lincolnshire Archaeology Handbook (Lincolnshire County Council 1997, revised 2012). These are being stored with the processed material finds record at the Cambridge Archaeological Unit offices under the site code DTR12.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

The principle objective is to determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains and to establish their character (e.g. chronological range and quality of preservation) and local, regional and national significance.

The archaeological significance of the broader environs around the PDA has been highlighted on a number of occasions (e.g. RCHME 1960; Hayes and Lane 1992). Taking this into account, and with reference to current East Midlands research agendas (Cooper 2006; Knight *et al.* 2012), particular attention is centred upon the prehistoric and Romano-British inhabitation observed throughout this area.

3. RESULTS

The topsoil was composed of thick and sticky alluvial dark grey silt-clay, varying between 0.2m and 0.3m in thickness. Subsoil comprising dark reddish brown gritty sand-silt was only occasionally observed in patches, predominantly at the northeast of Trench 1. The lack of subsoil is not uncommon to the local environs; however, topsoil coverage to the north of the PDA is considerably less clay-rich with greater silt content.

Eighteen feature numbers have been assigned (Figure 3), although only three of these may be actual cut features, the remaining fifteen being of a natural origin. All of these were excavated and fully recorded. No artefacts were found from within any of the deposits, including the topsoil and subsoil horizons. Details of the individual trenches are outlined in Tables 1-3.

The features identified as natural (**Fs.1-9, 12-15, 17, 18**) represent hollows with either irregular plans or profiles, with sterile firm fills of silt-clay ranging in colour from pale brownish grey to darker grey (Figures 4 and 6). Small quantities of charcoal flecking were identified in the upper deposits of a small number of these features, but need not be attributable to anthropogenic factors. Silt and clay patches were also tested to the southwest of the PDA at the Market Deeping Northfields Industrial Estate and were similarly concluded to be of a natural origin (Thatcher 2006: 7). F.14 and F.15 are part of a tree-throw or burrow extending into the north pond.

Two postholes (**F.10** and **F.11**) were identified in Trench 1 (Figure 5). These were sub-circular in plan and contained charcoal-rich clay-silt fills. Their profiles varied in character, with F.11 being well-preserved with straight vertical sides and a rounded base at a depth of 0.28m (Figure 4); this contained two fills, the uppermost being reddish sand-silt [10] overlying mid grey clay-silt with rare charcoal flecks [11]. By contrast, F.12 was only 0.02m in depth with an irregular, but near-flat base (Figure 4 and frontpiece), and was filled with a dark charcoal-rich clay-silt [8]. A date for either of these features could not be ascertained. To the southern end of Trench 2 a shallow linear (**F.16**) with an irregular concave profile was recorded to a maximum depth of 0.24m, with an averaging depth of 0.18m (Figure 5 and frontpiece). This contained a single fill of firm silt-clay [1], of a mixed blue- and yellow- mid-brown colour, and was aligned on a northeast-southwest axis and although not observed within Trench 3 it is likely that this represents an additional sub-division within the current PDA, most probably of a post-Medieval date. Its shallow profile may indicate temporary usage, perhaps not warranting cartographic notation, and it is not illustrated on Ordnance Survey maps consulted from the 1880s to the present (Figure 3).

3.1 Discussion

It is noteworthy that there were no apparent signs of features or deposits relating to the linear cropmark identified in aerial photographs as traversing the PDA. **F.5** is most likely closest in proximity to the projected course of the cropmark, but was too irregular and indistinguishable from other 'natural' deposits to warrant interpretative correspondence with the cropmark (Figure 4). Whilst it is possible to suggest that the cropmark is of a natural phenomenon, perhaps formed through glacial action, there

remains a possibility that this is a cut linear feature that has been either missed by the trenches or depleted through truncation. As has been shown in numerous investigations to the north of the PDA, prehistoric ditches that form part of a broad system of Middle Bronze Age field enclosure have been exposed to varying degrees of truncation. Many of these are also composed of multiple segments, often separated by interruptions of several metres. The alignment of the linear cropmark within the PDA is also on a slightly different axis to cropmarks and excavated features that have been shown to be either of a Prehistoric (north-northwest – south-southeast), Roman (west-southwest – north-northeast) or medieval (west-southwest – north-northeast) date. Taking these factors into consideration, the prospect that this represents a continuation of one of these systems is increasingly unlikely.

Given the density of archaeology to the north and south of the PDA, particularly of a Roman date, it is perhaps surprising that a total absence of material culture along with a paucity of archaeological features has been identified at Deeping Gate Trees. The degree to which truncation is a factor in this is difficult to deduce, particularly given the survival to almost 30cm depth of at least one of the postholes (F.11). It is possible, therefore, that this localised area represents a hinterland between communal centres to the north and south. That being said, the low density of archaeology within the three trenches does not preclude an entirely negative landscape, as habitation margins have consistently provided ground for burial architecture (as seen through aerial survey of ring ditches) along with sporadic industrial activities (e.g. salt-winning and metal working), and the surprising proximity of funerary monuments to Early and Middle Bronze Age post-built dwelling structures has also been noted to the north (Brittain *in prep*), having previously been missed by trenching evaluation.

4. CONCLUSION

In light of the results outlined above the archaeological potential of the PDA is considered to be minimal. However, taking into account the difficulty of identifying settlement and related activity areas as registered in contexts to the north of the PDA, and the general sparse presence of postholes in previously investigated areas of the Baston / Langtoft environs, the presence of two postholes in near proximity to one another may be illustrative of localised archaeological activity, but of what date and broader character remains uncertain. Evidence for prehistoric or Roman linear features was not forthcoming and, whilst the caveats for this absence have been noted above, this supports a view that the cropmark evidence is a natural anomaly.

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- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed development area Quarried Areas Other Investigations | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Baston Quarry Area A (1998) 2. Baston Quarry Area B (2001) 3. Baston Quarry Area C (2002) 4. Baston Quarry Areas D-E (2003) 5. Outgang Road Excavation (Heritage Lincs.) 6. Outgang Road Watching Brief (Heritage Lincs.) 7. Cross Road Watching Brief (1998-99) 8. Langtoft Common Watching Brief (2001) 9. Areas F-H The Bluebell Land (2006) 10. Glebe Land (2007 and 2008) 11. Freeman Land (2007-2012) 12. Whitfield Land (2007) 13. Northampton Archaeological Unit (2007) 14. Baston Quarry (2009-2012) Evaluation 15. 2010 Evaluation |
|--|--|

Figure 1. Location map with cropmarks and previous archaeological work in the vicinity

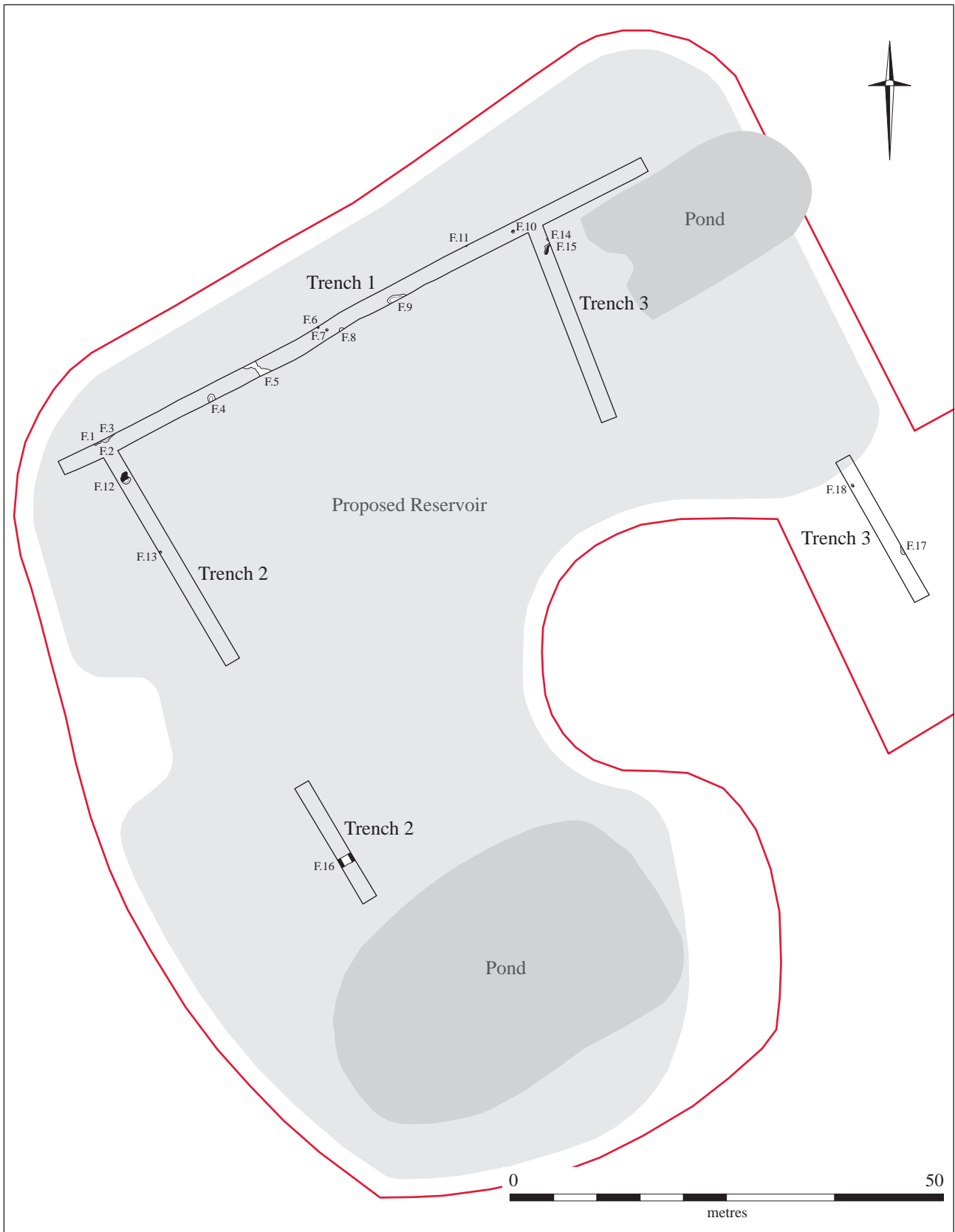


Figure 2. Trench plan

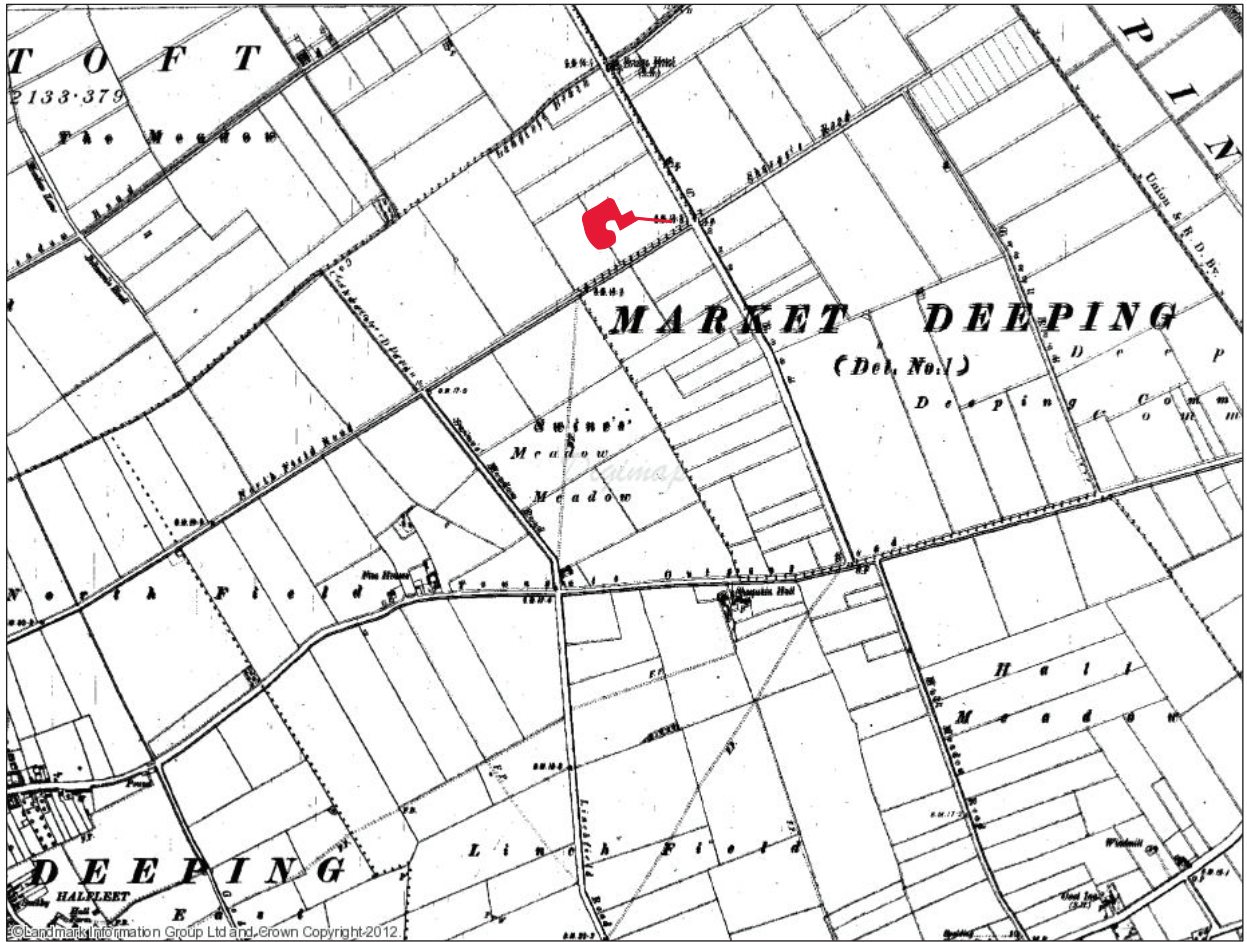


Figure 3. 1890 Ordnance Survey Map

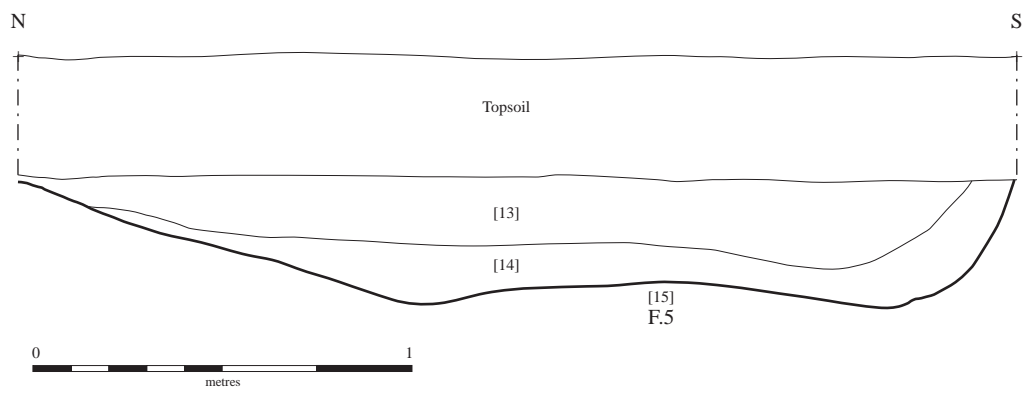
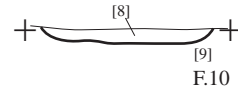
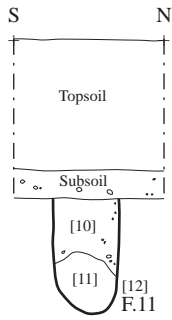


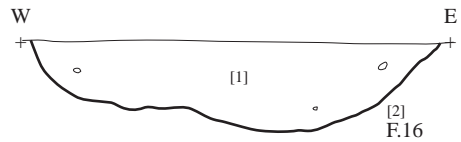
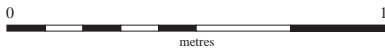
Figure 4. Section and photographs of F.5



F.10



F.11



F.16

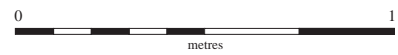


Figure 5. Section and photographs of F.10 (top), F.11 (middle) and F.16 (bottom)



Figure 6. Photograph of features F.1-3

6.2 Feature Descriptions

Trench 1						
Eleven features recorded of which 9 are natural hollows or tree-bowls. Two circular post holes identified, one well preserved, and the other very truncated. Sporadic observation of subsoil, although geology was very soft sand at N-end of trench. No artefacts recovered.					Avg. Topsoil Depth (m)	0.29-0.35
					Avg. Subsoil Depth (m)	0-0.07
					Orientation of Trench	NE-SW
					Width of Trench (m)	1.8
					Length of Trench (m)	80.2
Contexts						
F.No.	F.Type	C.No.	Cut/Fill	Dimensions (m)	Description	Comments
1	Natural	18	F	0.5 (W) 0.38 (D)	Firm and friable yellowish brown gravelly (silt) sand with occasional patches of sandy gravel	Natural hollow or tree-bowl, possibly combined with F2 and F3
		20	F		Mid greyish brown sandy clay silt	
		25	C		Sharp concave sides with flat base; sub-circular in plan	
2	Natural	18	F	0.3 (W) 0.38 (D)	Firm and friable yellowish brown gravelly (silt) sand with occasional patches of sandy gravel	Natural hollow or tree-bowl, possibly combined with F1 and F3
		20	F		Mid greyish brown sandy clay silt	
		24	C		Sub-circular in plan with concave irregular sides and base	
3	Natural	18	F	3.6 (W) 0.4 (D)	Firm and friable yellowish brown gravelly (silt) sand with occasional patches of sandy gravel	Natural hollow or tree-bowl, possibly combined with F1 and F2
		19	F		Firm mid bluish grey silty clay	
		21	F		Firm mixed dark bluish grey and yellowish brown silty clay	
		22	F		Friable and compact mid orange sandy gravel	
		23	C		Irregular elongated oval plan with irregular shallow concave sides	
4	Natural	26	F	0.75 (W) 0.29 (D)	Moderately firm mid grey clayey silt with occasional small rounded stones	Natural hollow
		27	C		Concave profile; sub-circular plan	
5	Natural?	13	F	2.65 (W) 0.35 (D)	Moderately compact mid-yellowish brown sandy clay with rare charcoal flecks and sub-angular stones	Shallow hollow with natural silting
		14	F		Moderately firm mid to dark grey clayey silt, slightly mottled with orange staining	
		15	C		Broadly aligned NW-SE with irregular sides generally concave from sharp to very shallow. No discernable plan.	
6	Natural?	16	F	0.17 (W) 0.07 (D)	Soft light 'silvery' grey clayey silt	Aligned with F7 and F8, but most likely Natural
		17	C		Sub-circular plan with concave profile	
7	Natural?	28	F	0.09 (W) 0.06 (D)	Soft light 'silvery' grey clayey silt	Aligned with F6 and F8, but most likely Natural
		29	C		Sub-circular plan with concave profile	
8	Natural?	30	F	0.42 (W) 0.14 (D)	Soft light 'silvery' grey and yellowish brown clayey silt	Aligned with F6 and F7, but most likely Natural
		31	C		Circular in plan with concave sides.	
9	Natural?	41	F	2.25 (L) 1.0 (W) 0.23 (D)	Firm yellowish brown clayey silt with very rare charcoal flecks and small sub-angular stones	Irregular natural hollow
		42	F		Moderately firm mid grey clayey silt with occasional small rounded stones	
		43	F		Firm and friable yellowish brown gravelly (silt) sand	
		44	C		Irregular oval in plan with sharp to shallow concave sides and undulating base	
10	Post Hole	8	F	0.29 (L) 0.22 (W) 0.02 (D)	Soft mid grey silt with very frequent charcoal flecks	Undated & very truncated post hole
		9	C		Sub-circular plan with shallow truncated profile; flat base.	
11	Post Hole	10	F	0.18 (W) 0.28 (D)	Soft dark reddish brown sandy (clay) silt	Undated well-preserved posthole
		11	F		Soft light grey clayey silt with occasional charcoal flecks	
		12	C		Circular in plan with vertical sides and slight concave base	

Trench 2						
Three features recorded, of which 2 are natural clayey silt-filled hollows. A NE-SW linear, probably considerably truncated, follows the line of post-Medieval field boundaries. Little or no subsoil present.					Avg. Topsoil Depth (m)	0.29-0.32
					Avg. Subsoil Depth (m)	0
					Orientation of Trench	NW-SE
					Width of Trench (m)	1.8
					Length of Trench (m)	42.0
Contexts						
F.No.	F.Type	C.No.	Cut/Fill	Dimensions (m)	Description	Comments
12	Natural	32	F	0.85 (W) 0.10 (D)	Soft Dark bluish grey clayey silt with occasional charcoal flecks	Natural hollow or tree-bowl
		33	F		Compact mid yellow brown gravelly sandy clay	
		34	C		Irregular sub-circular plan with concave sides and near flat base	
13	Natural	35	F	0.13 (W) 0.08 (D)	Mid grey clayey silt	Natural hollow
		36	C		Oval plan with concave sides and base	
16	Linear	1	F	1.08 (W) 0.24 (D)	Firm & stiff mixed mid-bluish & yellow brown silty clay	Post-Medieval field boundary
		2	C		NE-SW linear with irregular concave sides and undulating flattish base	

Trench 3						
Four features recorded/tested, all proving to be natural hollows filled either with soft clayey silts or firm darker clays. Little or no subsoil present.					Avg. Topsoil Depth (m)	0.25-0.31
					Avg. Subsoil Depth (m)	0
					Orientation of Trench	NW-SE
					Width of Trench (m)	1.8
					Length of Trench (m)	42.15
Contexts						
F.No.	F.Type	C.No.	Cut/Fill/Layer	Dimensions (m)	Description	Comments
14	Burrow / rooting	39	F	0.13 (W) 0.26 (D)	Mottled soft dark grey with mid yellowish brown clayey silt; rare charcoal flecks throughout	Burrow / rooting with F15
		40	C		Identified in section. Near vertical sides with rounded base	
15	Burrow / rooting	37	F	1.0 (L) 0.62 (W) 0.36 (D)	Mottled soft dark grey with mid yellowish brown clayey silt; rare charcoal flecks throughout	Burrow / rooting with F14
		38	C		Curvilinear terminating plan with very irregular profile illustrative of rooting/burrowing	
17	Natural	3	F	1.08 (l) 0.24 (D)	Firm & stiff mid brown silty clay with occasional small sub-angular stones	Natural hollow
		4	F		Moderately soft dark grey brown clayey silt with occasional small sub-rounded stones	
		5	C		Concave sides, steep at east, very shallow at west; oval plan.	
18	Natural	6	F	0.1 (W) 0.18 (L) 0.07 (D)	Soft mottled dark grey and orangey brown silty clay	Natural hollow
		7	C		Oval in plan with concave profile.	

Tables 1-3 with detailed trench descriptions

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

OASIS ID: cambridg3-141506

Project details

Project name	Deeping Gate Trees, Market Deeping, Lincolnshire. An archaeological evaluation
Short description of the project	Three trenches opened within a 1.05ha area at Deeping Gate Trees to the north of Market Deeping produced only three cut features. Two unrelated postholes contained charcoal-rich fills but were otherwise undated. A linear feature of unknown date aligned northeast-southwest was identified in one trench only. A linear cropmark identified by aerial photography as traversing the site was not observed as a cut feature.
Project dates	Start: 04-12-2012 End: 05-12-2012
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	DTR12 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 1 - Minimal cultivation
Monument type	POST HOLE Uncertain
Monument type	LINEAR DITCH Post Medieval
Significant Finds	N/A None
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Service infrastructure (e.g. sewage works, reservoir, pumping station, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	LINCOLNSHIRE SOUTH KESTEVEN MARKET DEEPING Deeping Gate Trees
Postcode	PE6 8GX
Study area	1.05 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 5150 3123 51 0 51 57 30 N 000 12 18 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 2.68m Max: 2.75m

Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project brief originator	City/Nat. Park/District/Borough archaeologist
Project design originator	David Gibson
Project director/manager	David Gibson
Project supervisor	Marcus Brittain
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Deeping Gate Trees
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Digital Archive ID	DTR12
Digital Contents	"Survey"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Spreadsheets", "Survey", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Paper Archive ID	DTR12
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Correspondence", "Notebook - Excavation", 'Research', 'General Notes', "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Deeping Gate trees, Market Deeping, Lincolnshire. An archaeological evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Brittain, M
Date	2013
Issuer or publisher	Cambridge Archaeological unit
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Description	15pp; 4 figs; 3 tables, Contents: 1.Introduction 2. Research Design 3.Results 4.Conclusion 5.References 6.Appendices
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