

Norman Hall, Mill Lane, Ickleton Cambridgeshire

An Archaeological Evaluation Assessment.



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**Land to the rear of Norman Hall, Mill Lane, Ickleton,
Cambridgeshire**

An archaeological evaluation

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Between the 9th-10th May 2013 the CAU undertook an archaeological trench evaluation within the grounds of Norman Hall, Mill Road, Ickleton. This consisted of 13m of trenching dug across the middle of the proposed development area (PDA) at TL 49607 43956. Up to 1.2m of soil overlay the natural gravel, and within this sequence was found a buried soil containing moderate amounts of worked flint ranging from the Mesolithic/Early Neolithic to the Middle Bronze Age/ Iron Age plus a small amount of Iron Age and Medieval pottery. No prehistoric features were identified, though some flint-filled tree-throws were located beneath the buried soil. However, at the north end of the main trench a NE-SW aligned Postmedieval? Boundary ditch was discovered, the base of which truncated an earlier pit/ tree-throw containing Roman pottery.

Introduction

Between the 9th-10th May 2013 the CAU undertook a small archaeological trench evaluation within the grounds of Norman Hall, Mill Road, Ickleton on the footprint for a proposed new dwelling. This consisted of 13m of trenching dug across the middle of the proposed development area (PDA) at TL 49607 43956, the latter centred upon an area of open lawn surrounded by trees at the eastern end of this now divided property (this property was split into two following the sale of the Grade II 15th-century farmhouse). The PDA covers 2600 sq m; whilst the area of trenching dug amounted to just 18 sq m. The 1.2m-wide and 1m wide trenches (Trenches 1 and 2 respectively) were dug to a depth of between 1.2 and 0.9 metres.

Site location and topography

The building plot lies within a NW-SE aligned hedge and tree-bordered rectangle of lawn (c 40m x 60m) surrounded by a 2.5m-3m high brick wall on three sides. This area is set back from the road by an 18m long entrance corridor and gravel driveway. The historic heart of Ickleton Village (St. Mary Magdalene's Church, village green and war memorial) lies just to the west of the adjacent garden and house of Norman Hall with its front on Church Street, whilst just 80m to the east of the PDA lies the main N-S railway line to London Liverpool Street. On the other side of the railway lies the meandering course of the River Cam or Granta, with Hinxton Hall and the Hinxton Genome Campus just 0.5 km to the north, and the village of Great Chesterford c.1 km to the south. The village of Ickleton therefore lies on the western edge of the valley of the Granta. The PDA is located at an altitude of between 32.7m and 34.5m AOD above the western edge of this floodplain.

Geology

The site overlies the silts, sands and gravels of the 1st-2nd River Terrace, the solid geology underneath this being the Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation of the basal Turonian (Middle Chalk). Most of the fresh flint on surface here probably derives from the wasting of the overlying New Pit Chalk Formation with its numerous flint beds, alongside the more flinty Upper Chalk (Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation) on the higher land towards Strethall in the south (BGS 2002).

Archaeological background

On the western side of the village at Priory Farm on Back Lane (1) a Neolithic pit was found during archaeological investigations here 2001 (Prosser & Murray 2001). Only a handful of features were found here, most of them containing no dateable evidence. Just one of these pits contained a substantial assemblage of Neolithic pottery, struck flint and animal bone, though it was unclear whether this was an isolated find, or else part of a larger group [CB 15408].

Less than half a kilometre to the north of Norman Hall a major archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken on the site of the planned extension to the Hinxton Genome Campus (located at GR TL 499 443 immediately the south of Hinxton Hall [MCB 15805]) in 1998. This revealed a background scatter of Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age flintwork within the topsoil and later archaeological features, alongside

cut features of Late Iron Age date (2). The latter represented a probable small farmstead, and comprised post-built structures, pits, boundaries, midden deposits infilling ditches, and enclosures (Kemp & Sperry 2002). In addition a sequence of riverside sedimentation was examined which included palaeochannels of prehistoric date along with areas of degraded peat (Kemp 2002).

Roman activity was also identified on the Hinxton campus, suggesting a continuation of the same Iron Age land use pattern, and the perpetuation of a Romano-British farmstead, followed by pitting and quarrying later in the same period. A little closer to Norman Hall, a late Roman coin of Constans was found in the vicinity of Butcher's Hill, Ickleton (TL 494 439), just 100m to the west of the PDA (3). Meanwhile, less than a kilometre to the east of here another Roman coin, a silver coin of Caracalla, was found approx. 100m south of Stump Cross 'towards the site of the old Roman town at Great Chesterford' [Essex HER 4919] (4). The site of this fort and late Roman walled town lies just a kilometre to the south-west of Norman Hall at TL 503 432 (5), whilst the Roman road heading from here to Cambridge follows the course of the present day A11(T) northwards from Stump Cross, which at its nearest point passes within 500-600m of the PDA. A Roman villa site has also been identified to the south of Ickleton village and to the west of the Great Chesterford fort and town (sites) at TL 497432 (6). The latter lies within 800m of Norman Hall.

Evidence of Early Anglo-Saxon occupation in the form of a discreet zone of pitting (7) also occurs along the riverside within the area of the Hinxton Genome Campus (Kemp & Sperry *ibid.*). More importantly, a major Anglo-Saxon cemetery consisting of 161 inhumation graves, 33 cremation graves, and 2 horse and 2 dog burials ([Essex HER 4939]) was found beneath the route of the present-day M11 to the north-west of the Roman town (at TL 501 435) (8). This cemetery also contained a number of very late Roman burials dating to the period AD 450-600, some of these evidently of wealthy people (merchants?) accompanied by exotic grave goods. The latter provides evidence for an interesting continuity (perhaps) with the cemetery of the succeeding Early Saxon settlement (Evison 1994).

Early Medieval activity within the area around Ickleton is attested by evidence for agriculture in the form of strip lynchets on Coploe Hill (TL 493 425) to the south of the village (9), and by an air photographic assessment indicating possible headlands either side of two enclosures ([MCB 17716]) located at Hinxton (TL 499 444) (10). In the later middle ages the parish of was dominated by Ickleton Priory, the priory of St Mary Magdalene being founded for Benedictine nuns in the mid-12th century (11).

A series of large early postmedieval farmhouses dominate the historic core of the village, alongside the large Caldrees Manor located to the west and north-west of the church (12). Norman Hall itself dates to the 15th century, and represents the sort of 'yeoman's house' typical of this prosperous village. There are more than a dozen Grade II listed buildings either side of Abbey Street, and to the north of the village green.

Aims and Objectives

The current archaeological investigation was undertaken with the aims of determining the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any

surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development.

The objectives were to undertake detailed recording, and if necessary sample excavation of any archaeological features revealed, with particular attention to the evidence for prehistoric, Roman, Saxon/ Medieval occupation. An attempt will be made to assess the local/ regional context of any of the remains uncovered (Medlycott 2011).

This includes an assessment of the presence and degree of truncation of buried deposits, the existence of a palaeosoil, and the sampling of deposits within any buried (negative) features.

Methodology

Given the small size of the building footprint, and also the results of geotechnical investigations suggesting the presence of a deep but fairly compact soil sequence, an initial 15m trench was requested. However, following the discovery of archaeological finds within a buried soil underneath, further mitigation was requested, in the form of another 3m of trench. Following CAT-scanning for buried services, both the topsoil and subsoil layers were stripped off down to the natural, the work being carried out under close archaeological supervision. Machining was undertaken using a 1-ton 360° excavator fitted with a 1m wide ditching bucket; in the course of this the soil layers were removed to a maximum depth of about 1.2m. Both topsoil and sub-soil layers were deposited on either side of the trench and were examined visually for the presence of finds, then again bucket sampled, and finally monitored using a metal detector. An overall plan of these trenches was produced by GPS total station, whilst one complete 15m long N-S section containing possible archaeological features and a buried soil was then recorded and drawn by hand, together with a trench plan, both at a scale of 1:50. The layers revealed were recorded using an amended version of the Museum of London context system. A scaled photographic (digital colour) record was also undertaken following the cleaning of the trench base and section. Finds were bagged and labelled, then washed and re-bagged within the CAU Finds Department, before being examined by in-house specialists.

Results

Modern topsoil (garden soil) layer(s) were present across the site to a depth of about 0.3m beneath grass. However, no clear sub-soil was identifiable immediately beneath this, given the presence of an area at the north end of Trench 1 consisting of slightly earlier (but still modern) garden diggings backfilled with soil, bonfire waste and dumped gravel, and the presence of a thick buried soil (B horizon) at the south end, the latter merging almost imperceptibly with the modern garden soil. The full sequence of soil, redeposited soil, sub-soil, buried soil and sub-soil overlying the natural loose marly gravel and patches of dark yellow silt, sand and gravel is given below. A single postmedieval – modern ditch (F.1) was encountered cutting the base of the soil sequence and underlying natural, whilst beneath this a number of potentially ancient tree throws and rooting holes i.e. F.2–F.8 were identified within

the top of the gravel (most of these also containing small amounts of residual worked flint, animal bone and more rarely pottery sherds), all of these being buried beneath the 'modern' soil sequence, the palaeo-soil and sub-soil. Environmental samples were taken from the 'B horizon' buried soil (07) as well as from from the fill of F.2 (10), which lies stratigraphically beneath this

Generalized soil sequence including modern garden 'pit' (F.9):

(01) 0 – 0.3m. Upper topsoil – a fairly firm dry stony/flinty light grey-brown silt with occasional modern pottery, glass and flower pot

(02) 0.2 – 0.4m. Lower topsoil – a mid to dark grey-brown coloured, slightly more organic-rich stony and silty loam containing similar material, including small brick and tile fragments

(25) 0.2 – 0.55m. Small (1m wide) lens of redeposited soil truncating top of (02) and (03). Consists of a fine light to mid grey loamy silty sand with few or no gravel to pebble sized flint or stone inclusions

(03) 0.25 – 0.7m. Redeposited soil and ash – consisting of a loose dark mottled grey-black silty loam with much finely divided ash and charcoal plus other burnt debris including flint, stone, CBM, nails plus occasional modern pottery and china. Lens of material covers an area of about 7m within the top of the backfill of a digging into the garden soil (F.9 cut [24]). Probably 20th C date?

(04) 0.3 – 0.95m. Redeposited mixed gravel and topsoil. This consisted of tip lines of dirty yellow silt and sandy gravel with darker laminae of soil in between, the latter representing humic material, along with occasional inclusions of tile, ceramic and coal. Perhaps represents gravel dug out within an area just to the north of the trench (as indicated by the presence of hummocky ground immediately beyond this), then redeposited here through backfilling, and as inwashed material (F.9 cut [24]).

(05) 0.4 – 0.9m. Subsoil horizon composed of a grey-brown silt with frequent cobble-size inclusions of naturally angular flint, and to a lesser extent stone. Contains much evidence of both early and modern rooting activity. Appears to contain some rare modern inclusions (coal/ pottery etc.). The base of this is formed by the cut for the modern digging F.9 ([24])

(07) 0.25 – 0.8m (?). *Buried soil (B horizon)* with uncertain boundary with overlying topsoil. More clearly cut by modern garden 'diggings' ([24]). Consists of a fine, largely undisturbed tilth composed of a dark grey to slightly reddish-brown silty loam containing moderate amounts of 'chunky' fractured/flaked flint waste, plus rarer fine bladed flint flakes, and cores with struck platforms. Also many sub-rounded pebbles of black flint with little in the way of a white cortex surround. Disseminated charcoal flecks and occasional small (<10mm) pieces, moderate amounts of apparently butchered animal bone, and rarely, some slightly abraded prehistoric (probably Iron Age) and medieval pottery. The structure of the buried soil is disturbed in places by very significant modern rooting activity. No modern cultural material noted. Prehistoric? Maximum depth 0.5-0.6m, and known extent 7m+

(06) 0.8 – 1.1m. Early sub-soil (i.e. below B horizon). A brown to grey – chocolate-reddish brown coloured silt containing large angular lumps of natural flint and stone, and very occasionally worked flint waste from crude nodule preparation plus even rarer bone fragments and burnt flint.

Below these soils were a number of underlying 'archaeological' features, including a ditch (F.1) and some probable ancient tree throws (F.2 – F.8). All of these were examined as part of the current investigation, and any inclusion of worked or fractured flint was noted, and the finds collected.

F.1 A 1.5m-wide and 0.5-0.6m deep 'U-shaped' ditch ([09]) which pre-dates the modern garden digging excavation (F.9 cut [24]) present within the topsoil. The latter truncates this earlier feature, therefore the ditch may originally have been deeper. This contains two fills; a lower main fill (08) consisting of a loose grey-brown silt with large angular flint and stone, a small amount of burnt flint and animal bone, but no worked flint. Several traces (crushed small fragments) of tile and brick were also noted, yet it was not possible to show for certain that these were contemporary, some of these possibly being intrusive, as a result of rooting. On balance it was concluded that this probably represented a Postmedieval-Modern NE-SW aligned field drain or boundary ditch.

F.2 An oval-irregular shaped 1.5m long by 0.5m+ wide and 0.4-0.5m deep cut with uneven but steeply concave sides and an approximately 'U-shaped' cross-section in one orientation ([11]). This feature contained a single fill (10) which consisted of a mid-brown grey to reddish-chocolate brown gritty silt fill containing a moderate amount of natural angular flint, occasional broken and flaked flint nodules,

some rare burnt flint, and two re-fitting Roman pot sherds. Scattered throughout the moderately compact silt fill was a fair amount of charcoal; most of this being flecks, but also some moderate-sized pieces (<10mm). Filling (rooting) hollows present within the base of the cut was a small amount of pea-grit sized gravel. The pottery finds may date this feature, which could be a dug pit, but most likely is a small tree throw (or else is a pit subsequently modified by tree rooting).

F.3 A bowl-shaped hollow about 0.8m diameter and 0.25m deep with gently sloping concave sides and a rounded base ([13]). This contained a single fill (12) consisting of a mid-brown chocolate coloured to yellow-brown gritty sandy silt intermixed with a small amount of yellowish-white flint gravel alongside some pea-grit sized gravel sitting within irregular hollows in its base. This same silt fill contains occasional flaked and fractured black flint as well as some naturally weathered angular flint. No bone was present, and also very little charcoal. Probably this represents the hollow formed by the bole of a small tree.

F.4 A 1.2m + long, 0.3-0.4m wide and c.0.25m deep sinuous gully in the gravel surface, with steep irregular sides and an uneven base ([15]). This contained a single fill (14) consisting of a chocolate-brown to yellow-brown coloured gritty silt with some intermixed yellow-white flint gravel (similar to fill (12)). Within this was a small amount of chunky fractured/flaked flint, and very minor burnt flint. Probably a large horizontal (lateral) tree root hole associated with a tree throw of similar 'prehistoric' date (to F.3 and F.2).

F.5 A similar-shaped and sub-parallel sinuous gully to F.4 with moderately sloping sides and a rounded to steep and narrow irregular base ([17]). Some 0.4-0.5m wide and 0.2 to 0.25m deep, this contained a single fill (16) consisting of a dark chocolate brown coloured silt with moderate amounts of charcoal inclusion (some as pieces (<10mm) and some as flecks), and some fractured and crudely shaped flint nodules; the latter probably as redeposited primary-worked flints. Similar to F.2-F.4, this has several lenses of pea-grit sized gravel infilling irregularities in the base. The feature is probably a tree root hole.

F.6 A 1m+ long, 0.3m wide and 0.2-0.25m deep gully (similar to F.4-F.5), possessing steep sides and a narrow irregular base ([19]), which appears to continue westwards into Trench 2, but which is truncated in several places. The single fill consists of a dark chocolate brown coloured silt with minor amounts of charcoal (small points and flecks), alongside a moderate amount of fractured and flaked flint waste, and small fragments of animal bone. Towards the base were lenses of fine pea-grit sized gravel. A prehistoric lateral tree root hole?

F.7 A small round-irregular shaped hollow c. 0.25-0.3m diameter and 0.1-0.15m deep (21) filled with a dark chocolate brown-grey coloured silt (20) containing a small amount of fractured/flaked black flint, alongside a fair amount of charcoal, both as flecks and small pieces (<10mm). A small 'prehistoric' tree throw, or part of a tree throw.

F.8 Another lateral tree rooting hole associated with a tree throw. This took the form of a similar sinuous gully-type cut ([23]), 1.2m+ long, 0.3m wide and 0.15m deep; the fill of this (22) consisting of a dark chocolate brown-grey silt with inclusions of flint. Amongst this was some fractured and flaked (worked) black flint, with minor charcoal flecks, plus small pieces of broken-up bone, and a lump of burnt clay.

Discussion

The relatively high incidence of worked flint in the form of a Mesolithic/Early Neolithic to Middle Bronze Age/ Iron Age mixed flint assemblage present within this 'buried soil' and overlying topsoil (garden soil) at Norman Hall was initially unexpected, yet on reflection such an incidence is perhaps not wholly surprising, given the rather similar occurrence of flint within the 'topsoil' and later archaeological features at a similar location above the gravel terrace on the opposite side of the river at the Hinxtton Genome Campus (Kemp & Sperry 2002), as it was some 3km to the north of here at the Hinxtton Quarry in 1993 (Evans 1993). At

Hinxton Quarry Evans believed that most of the prehistoric (and in some cases later) features had been removed by ploughing, such that the presence or absence of original 'sites' might only be determined through the careful mapping of artefact densities present in the topsoil. A similar mix of Early Neolithic and much cruder flaked Iron Age flint was also recovered from the western edge of the Granta valley at Rickett Field, Granta Park near Abington (Armour 2006), suggesting that we may be looking at a wider phenomenon of longevity in flint procurement and use here in these South Cambridgeshire valleys as well as the compounded issues of residuality and also the mixing of artefacts within soil profiles.

At Ickleton, with only a very small section exposed through a deep (1m+) soil sequence, the most likely interpretation is that parts of this prehistoric (and perhaps Roman – Medieval) buried soil horizon still survives, but that it has been re-worked (both by digging and rooting) to include later material, such that any form of unambiguous junction with an overlying topsoil is now difficult to determine. This scenario is suggested also by the mixture of Iron Age and Medieval pottery (alongside the mix of prehistoric flint) recovered during the machine excavation of the trenches, although the 'unstratified' nature of this material (here loosely referred to as coming from the 'buried soil' (007)) does not exclude the possibility that discrete earlier and later horizons may still be present. For example, a more detailed examination of this type of deposit which is possible in a larger excavation might reveal the presence of Roman and Medieval-period soils overlying earlier ones. Alternatively we may be dealing here with a relatively undisturbed pre-Postmedieval buried soil, but one which has been re-worked over a long period of time. The complete absence of any sort of 'modern' material within this lower soil profile (see Figures of soil sections) would appear to support this idea, as perhaps does the environmental sample evidence, with the finds from the soil section at the south end of Trench 1 contrasting markedly with those from the north end, where possible gravel diggings and later garden 'pitting' predominates. In fact, the identification and delineation of two discrete flint artefact concentrations (A and B) within the soil at the south end supports this idea (see Figure 2), suggesting the presence of former features (or at least the evidence of deposition) somewhere within the buried soil or sub-soil of this area. Unfortunately no features, but only ancient tree throws were identified cutting the top of the gravel at between 1-1.2m depth, although rare finds of worked and burnt flint (but nothing more recent than this) was recovered from their fills. Given this, there would appear to be some potential for the discovery of prehistoric features *beneath* the level of the flint-filled 'buried soil'.

Of the two possible features identified at the north end of Trench 1, the largest one appears to be a NE-SW oriented Postmedieval boundary ditch aligned with the property boundary and parallel to Hill Lane, the other one being a small truncated pit (or more likely a tree-throw) from which Romano-British pottery was recovered. The latter may simply be chance deposition, reflecting the contemporaneity of the tree, and also its location within a busy part of the Roman landscape.

Conclusion

Although no contemporary archaeological features were uncovered here, the high incidence of worked flint within the deep soil sequence underlying this garden to the rear of Norman Hall, Ickleton attests to a prehistoric presence in this area, and also

confirms the potential for finding archaeology wherever larger scale developments (excavations) are planned. The recovery of Iron Age, Roman and Medieval pottery from this trench also serves to emphasize the longevity of occupation of this area, and the importance of this riverside location above the floodplain edge. The examination of these buried soil sequences and the processes of deposition of artefacts forms an interesting study in itself.

Acknowledgements

The archaeological investigation and monitoring work was carried out at the behest of Peter Owen, the owner of the property at Mill Lane, Ickleton. Machine excavation on site was undertaken by Lattenbury's Services, with the archaeological work being supervised by Simon Timberlake (CAU). Alison Dickens was CAU Project Manager, with survey work being undertaken by John Moller, whilst the illustration, section and other graphics work was undertaken by Bryan Crossan. The flint was examined by Lawrence Billington (CAU), the pottery by Matthew Brudenell, and the animal bone by Vida Radjkovaca. Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Dan McConnell of Cambridge Heritage Environment Team (CHET).

Specialist reports

The Flint *Lawrence Billington*

Quantification

A total of 63 worked flints were recovered from the excavation together with a single large unworked burnt flint weighing 374g. The majority of the assemblage (46 pieces) was recovered from buried soil deposit [07] whilst small numbers of worked flint were also found in the fills of cut features. There are no clear differences in terms of technology, condition and raw materials between the flintwork from different contexts and it seems likely that the flint from cut features has been inadvertently incorporated into feature fills from scatters within the buried soil.

Feature	Context	chip	chunk/irregular waste	primary flake	secondary flake	tertiary flake	blade/bladelet	blade core	truncated bladelet	total worked	unworked burnt no.	unworked burnt weight (g)
1	8									0	1	374
2	10	2			2					4		
3	12				1					1		
4	14		1							1		
5	16		1		1					2		
6	18	1	1		1	3				6		
7	20					1				1		
8	22					1				1		
buried soil	7	7	5	5	16	7	3	2	1	46		
	totals	10	8	5	21	12	3	2	1	62	1	374

Table 1. Basic quantification of the flint assemblage.

Raw materials

The assemblage is made up exclusively of flint. Generally this takes the form of a dark grey/black fine grained flint. Surviving cortical surfaces suggest the exploitation of small to medium sized rounded and sub rounded nodules some of which were thermally flawed. Cortical surfaces are generally thin, hard and abraded and suggest the flint derives from a secondary, superficial, source, probably local gravel deposits.

Condition

The condition of the assemblage is generally good although few of the pieces could be described as fresh and minor edge damage/rounding and breakage is frequent. This suggests most of the flints have seen some post-depositional disturbance. Cortication (“patination”) is rare but occurs on several pieces, it does not appear to be chronologically significant.

Technology and dating

The technological traits of the worked flint suggest the assemblage represents a multi-period assemblage. Early activity is evinced by two blade cores, three fine blade based removals and several flakes with similar technological traits from buried soil [07]. These pieces clearly demonstrate a concern with the systematic exploitation of cores to produce regular blades and narrow flakes, a hallmark of Mesolithic and earlier Neolithic technologies. In addition a fine tertiary bladelet with an oblique distal truncation was also recovered from this deposit, and is likely to be Mesolithic in date (Clark 1932, xxiii).

The remainder of the assemblage is less diagnostic but is largely made up of flake based waste. Some of this is likely to represent the less distinctive elements of Mesolithic/earlier Neolithic technologies but is generally more typical of later flintwork. Cortical pieces are very well represented, suggesting that the early stages of core reduction and raw material testing are well represented in the assemblage. The technological traits of the flake based material, including unprepared/natural striking platforms, pronounced bulbs of percussion and irregular morphologies, suggest an expedient and relatively unsystematic approach to working cores and at least some of this material is likely to represent later prehistoric (Middle Bronze Age to Iron Age) activity (Ford et al 1984).

Summary

Although relatively small (and with few strictly diagnostic pieces), the assemblage from the excavations clearly demonstrates activity at the site from the Mesolithic well into later prehistory. The flintwork, especially the later flake based material, shows a clear emphasis on the earlier stages of core reduction and may indicate the preliminary working and testing of locally available raw materials.

Assessment of Bulk Environmental Samples *Anne de Vareilles*

Methodology

The two bulk soil samples taken on site 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. The flots were dried indoors prior to analysis. Plant-macro remains were identified under a low power binocular microscope (6x-40x magnification). Nomenclature follows Zohary and Hopf (2000) for cereals and Stace (1997) for all other flora. All environmental remains are listed in Table 2.

Preservation

All plant remains were carbonised and poorly preserved. Grains are heavily pitted and fragmented, as are the other recovered plant remains. Their physical conditions suggest the grains and seeds probably moved around on the ground surface, where they suffered most attrition, before burial. Post-depositional movements also seem likely as both ‘features’ appear to have contained active soils. Rootlets, decomposing plant matter, intrusive seeds and insect or nematode faeces were present in both samples, suggesting a high degree of bioturbation.

Results

Prehistoric tree-throw, F.2 [10]

A few cereal grains were present but were too fragmented to be identified. Three hazel nut shell fragments (*Corylus avellana*) were also found. Although hazel nuts are often associated with the Neolithic and Bronze Age, these findings cannot be assigned to a specific archaeological period.

Buried soil [07]

Remains from the buried soil were a little better preserved. A free-threshing wheat grain (*Triticum aestivum sensu lato*) was identified, along with a single stinking mayweed seed (*Anthemis cotula*), and a possible dogwood fruit (*Cornus sanguineus*). Free-threshing wheat was cultivated during the Neolithic and then appears to disappear until the mid-late Roman period (Greig 1991). I would be reluctant, however, to date context [7] on this single find knowing how bioturbated and replete with finds from various periods the buried soil was.

Sample number		1	2
Context		7	10
Feature description		buried soil	tree-throw
Date		?	pre-hist.
Sample volume - litres		6 L.	5 L.
Flot fraction examined -%		100%	100%
large charcoal (>4mm)		+	+
med. charcoal (2-4mm)		++	+
small charcoal (<2mm)		+++	+++
vitrified		+	-
estimated charcoal volume - millilitres		1 ml.	1 ml.
Cereal and wild plant remains			
<i>Triticum eastivum sensu lato</i>	free-threshing wheat	1	

Indeterminate cereal grain fragment		1	6
<i>Corylus avellana</i> L.	Hazel nut shell frags.		3
<i>Cornus sanguineus</i> L.	Dogwood fruit	1 cf.	
<i>Anthemis cotula</i> L.	Stinking mayweed	2	
Large Poaceae	>4mm long wild grass	3	
Indet. Poaceae fragments	wild/cultivated grass	2	7
Indet. Poaceae culm node	grass stem node	1	
Indet. Seed or fruit fragment			1
Indet. Culm fragment	unknown stem frag.		1
indet. Thorn			1
Key: '-' 1 or 2 items, '+' <10 items, '++' 10-50 items, '+++' >50 items.			

Table 2. Charred plant macro-remains from bulk samples 1 & 2

Conclusion

Sparse charred plant remains were recovered from both samples 1 and 2, the majority of which were too badly preserved to be identified. Both contexts appeared heavily bioturbated and, in the case of the buried soil, contained finds from various archaeological periods. Although, theoretically, the plant remains could all be Neolithic, their temporal and spatial provenance is at present inconclusive.

Pottery *Matthew Brudenell* (MB) & *Craig Cessford* (CC)

Spot datings were undertaken on five sherds of pottery (85g); three of these sherds being unstratified, though probably derived from the buried soil (07), with another two adjoining rim sherds recovered from the fill (10) of an artefact-filled tree-throw (F.2).

Iron Age (MB)

A single sherd of shell-tempered hand-made pottery of probable Iron Age origin weighing 50g was recovered as an unstratified find, yet in all probability this came from the buried soil (07).

Roman (MB)

Two re-fitting rim sherds (total 22g) were recovered from the artefact-filled fill (10) of a probable treethrow (F.2). These were identified as being probably Roman in date.

Medieval (CC)

One 8g sherd of c. 13th-15th century AD coarseware with a pinkish-reddish exterior and slightly reduced interior plus another smaller sherd (4g) were recovered as unstratified finds, most probably derived from the machining of the buried soil (07).

The occurrence of both Medieval and Prehistoric pottery within this buried soil does not provide any reliable indication of date, but instead implies a mixed and possibly more complex history of deposition.

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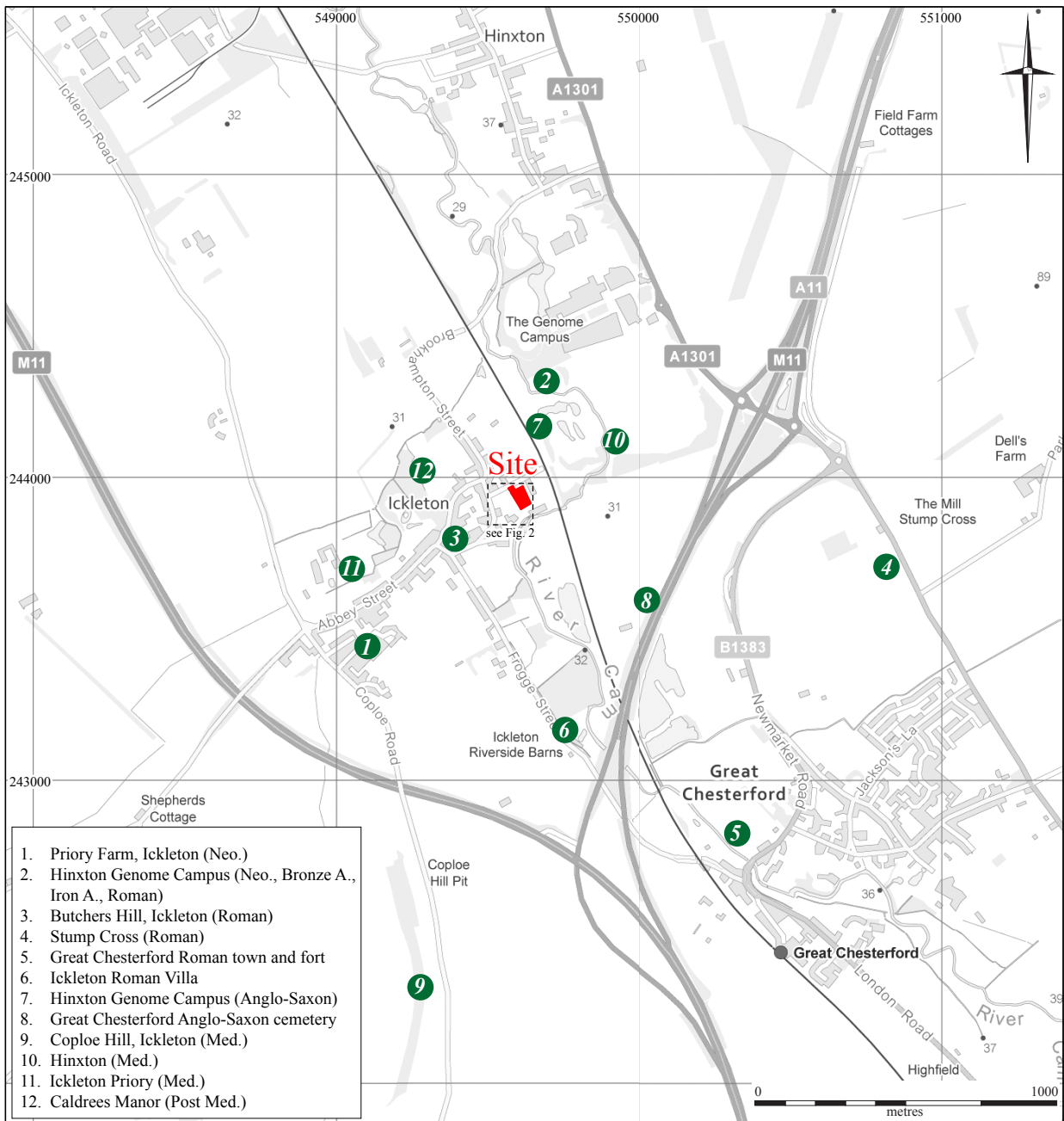
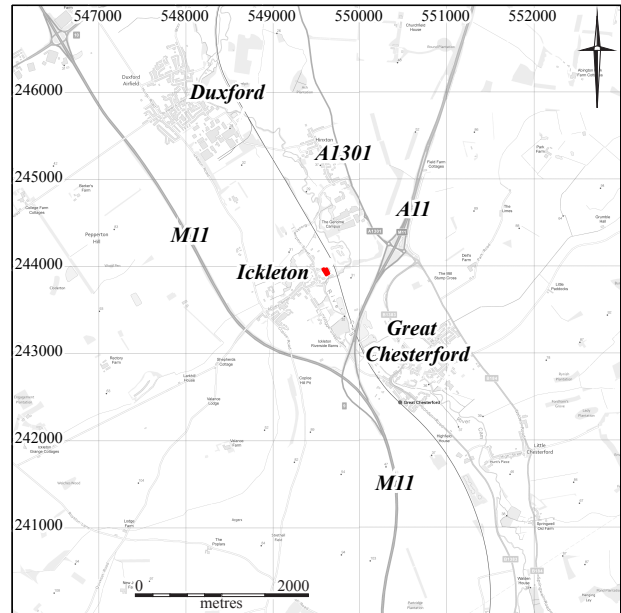
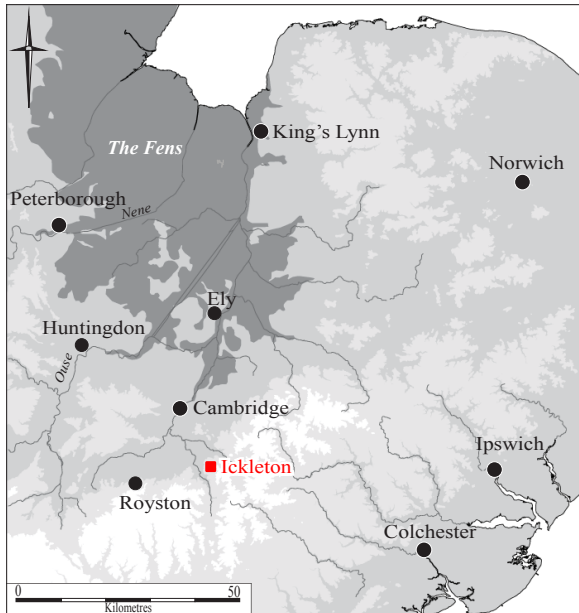


Figure 1. Location Plan.

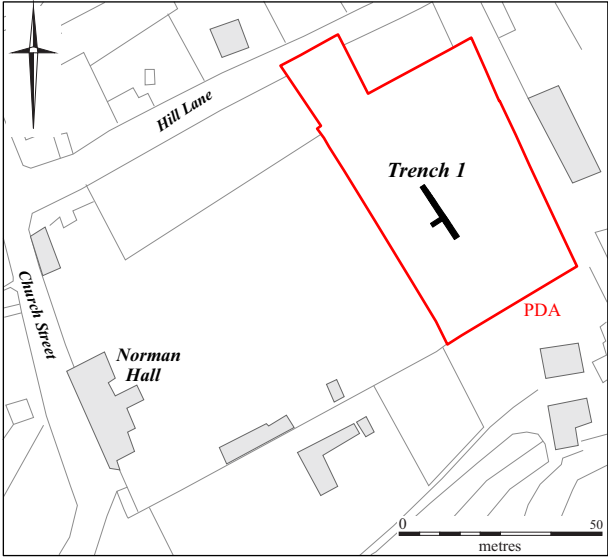


Figure 2. Trench Plan.

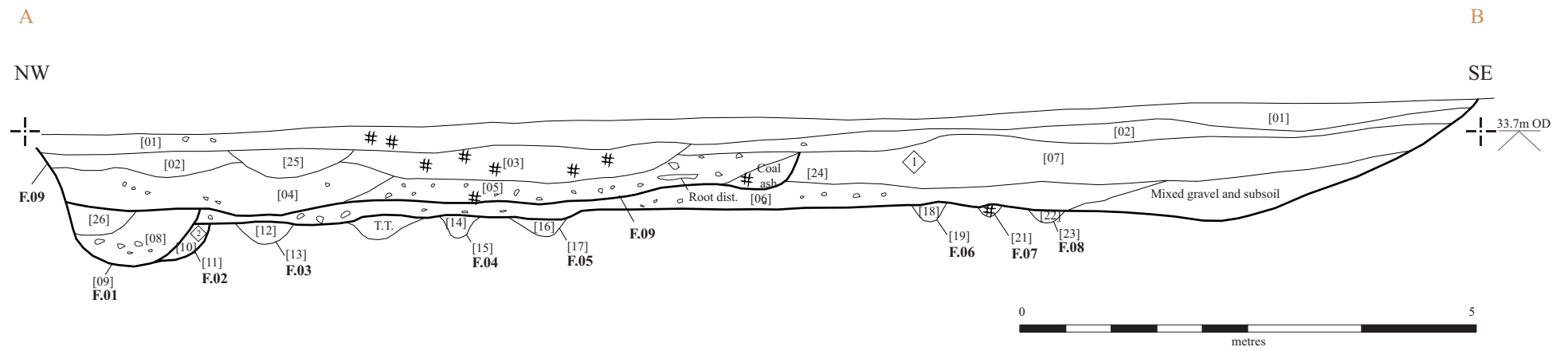


Figure 3. Section of South-West facing Trench 1, showing buried soil and treethrow feature in gravel.



Figure 4. Photograph looking SE along Trench 1 showing ditch (F.1) in foreground and treethrows behind.



Figure 5. Photograph of ditch (F.1) cutting artefact-filled treethrow (F.2). West-facing section Trench 1.



Figure 6. Photograph of garden pit disturbance (F.9) truncating buried soil (07). West-facing section Trench 1.



Figure 7. Photograph of tree root hole (F.6).

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OASIS ID: cambridg3-151986

Project details

Project name	Norman hall, Mill lane, Ickleton, Cambridgeshire
Short description of the project	Between the 9th-10th May 2013 the CAU undertook an archaeological trench evaluation within the grounds of Norman Hall, Mill Road, Ickleton. This consisted of 13m of trenching dug across the middle of the proposed development area (PDA) at TL 49607 43956. Up to 1.2m of soil overlay the natural gravel, and within this sequence was found a buried soil containing moderate amounts of worked flint ranging from the Mesolithic/Early Neolithic to the Middle Bronze Age/ Iron Age plus a small amount of Iron Age and Medieval pottery. No prehistoric features were identified, though some flint-filled tree-throws were located beneath the buried soil. However, at the north end of the main trench a NE-SW aligned Postmedieval? Boundary ditch was discovered, the base of which truncated an earlier pit/ tree-throw containing Roman pottery.
Project dates	Start: 09-02-2013 End: 10-05-2013
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	NHI13 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	ECB3969 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	BOUNDARY DITCH Post Medieval
Significant Finds	FLINT BLADE Early Neolithic
Significant Finds	FLINT SCRAPER Middle Bronze Age
Significant Finds	FLINT Iron Age

Significant Finds	FLINT Mesolithic
Significant Finds	POTTERY Iron Age
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Small-scale (e.g. single house, 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 SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE ICKLETON Norman Hall
Postcode	CB10 1SL
Study area	18.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 49600 43927 52 0 52 04 23 N 000 10 59 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 33.00m Max: 35.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Alison Dickens
Project director/ manager	Alison Dickens
Project supervisor	Simon Timberlake
Type of sponsor/ funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/ funding body	Peter Owen

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Physical Archive ID	NHI13
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones", "Ceramics", "Environmental", "Worked stone/lithics"
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Digital Archive ID	NHI13
Digital Contents	"Environmental", "Worked stone/lithics"

Digital Media available	"GIS", "Images raster / digital photography", "Spreadsheets", "Survey", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Paper Archive ID	NHI13
Paper Contents	"Environmental", "Stratigraphic", "Survey", "Worked stone/lithics"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Map", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey "

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land to the rear of Norman Hall, Mill Lane, Ickleton, Cambridgeshire: An archaeological evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Timberlake, S.
Other bibliographic details	Report no.1172
Date	2013
Issuer or publisher	CAU
Place of issue or publication	University of Cambridge
Description	Printed and pdfversions of report with colour photo cover and 7 figures including location plan, trench plan and features, section and excavation photographs
Entered by	Dr Simon Timberlake (st410@cam.ac.uk)
Entered on	4 June 2013

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