

Coates Road, Eastrea, Whittlesey

An Archaeological Evaluation



Simon Timberlake

**Land off Coates Road, Eastrea, Whittlesey
An Archaeological Evaluation**

Simon Timberlake

Cambridge Archaeology Unit
University of Cambridge
July 2014

Report No.1241

ECB 4175

Between 11th-18th June 2014 the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) undertook an archaeological evaluation of land proposed for development at nos. 49 and 51 Coates Road, Eastrea nr. Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire. Twelve archaeological evaluation trenches totalling some 116m were dug across an area of about 0.4 hectares. Some 13 archaeological features (mostly pits) were found, at least five of these producing prehistoric pottery dating to the Late Bronze Age – Middle Iron Age. These included the poorly preserved remains of two ovens or pottery kilns, a couple of intercutting rubbish pits, a field ditch, and the possible base of a sub-rectangular SFB, the latter devoid of finds apart from a few sherds of prehistoric pottery. Amongst the most notable finds were sherds from an almost complete large bucket-shaped jar together with a triangular loomweight fragment from one of the ovens or kilns alongside a large part of the broken clay lining. The current archaeological investigation indicates the probable northerly and westerly continuation of a major Late Bronze Age – Iron Age field system and area of low density settlement area previously encountered on the south side of Coates Road. However, the survival of archaeology in this area would appear to be quite variable, with some features occurring at quite shallow depths.

Introduction

Between 11th-18th June 2014 the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) undertook an archaeological evaluation of land proposed for development at nos. 49 and 51 Coates Road, Eastrea nr. Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire. Twelve archaeological evaluation trenches totalling some 116m were dug across an area of about 0.4 hectares, consisting mainly of the access road and yard associated with a small removals business at no. 49 Coates Road, its associated lawn and garden, and that of no.51 which lies immediately to the east (Figure 1). Both properties are located on the north side of Coates Road and centre upon NGR TL 29589734.

Geology and topography

Located within a flat but slightly undulating landscape on the top of the Eastrea gravel island which is surrounded by fen, the ground elevation across the site ranges from about 6m to 8m AOD. The underlying geology here consists of marine/ estuarine sand and gravel (March Gravels) which overlies Oxford Clay (BGS 1984 Peterborough Sheet 158). The surrounding fen is composed of the Nordelph Peat.

Archaeological background

The PDA lies within an area of known archaeological activity which has been revealed through a series of archaeological investigations (see Figure 2 (with numbered sites indicated)). Six previous archaeological trench evaluations (i.e. [CHER2870] at 2 Springfields, Eastrea (Thatcher 2008) (1); [CHER2022] at 43 Coates Road (Fletcher 2004) (2); [CHER1849] at the Fenland Timber Yard (Cooper 2004) (3); [CHER2110] at 75 Coates Road (Upson-Smith 2006) (4); [CHER3280] at 80 Coates Road (Peachey 2009) (5)), and [CHER3671] at Eastrea Road (Patten 2012) (6)), an archaeological excavation ([CHER3404] on land adjacent to 80 Coates Road (Taylor 2010 & 2011) (7))), a watching brief ([CHER583] at 35, Coates Road (Meadows 1995) (8)), geophysical survey ([CHER3280] adjacent to 80 Coates Road (Malone 2009) (5)) plus various AP assessment/ fieldwalking exercises (such as Malone 2009 [CHER3280] (5) and Hall 1987 (Fenland Survey)) which includes the Eastrea Haulage Depot ring ditch and settlement sites ([CHER02834] +[CHER02834a] (9)) have been undertaken within a 500m radius of the current evaluation site. However, three of these investigations revealed only modern or undated archaeological features.

Prehistoric and Roman

The archaeological excavation carried out in 2010 on land next to 80 Coates Road (opposite the current site and less than 100m distant) uncovered a Late Bronze Age well or waterhole containing waterlogged remains including the lower part of a ladder [CHER3404] (7). A sequence of Iron Age field systems was subsequently established across this area, with most of the pottery from the excavation identified as Iron Age, with just a few Roman sherds. A human burial within a coffin was also discovered on this site, dating from the Late Iron Age – Roman period.

Just 'three doors down' from the PDA, three undated ditches and two postholes were found at no.43 Coates Road [CHER2022] (2). These were tentatively identified as being part of a roundhouse associated in some way perhaps with the large ring ditch scheduled monument [SAM 1006853] ([CHER02834] (9)) which is indicated by cropmarks (Hall 1995) and lies some 70m to the north (though less than 50m distant from the northern boundary of nos. 49/51 Coates Road). On the south side of the road immediately to the west of the PDA (and on land adjacent to no.80) is to be found a further monument which was identified on the basis of AP assessment, fieldwalking and geophysical survey [CHER04205] (10). Within this area were identified two ring ditches, a probable field system, a trackway and a hut circle; a subsequent trench evaluation confirming the presence of ditches towards the eastern part of the site from which prehistoric pottery was recovered (Peachey 2009).

Chance discoveries of archaeological finds within the near vicinity of the site include a small polished Neolithic flint axe [CHER 07847] (11) found within Eastrea Field some 400m to the SE. From close by to this also came the find of an upper stone of a Roman lava quern [CHER 01506] (12), whilst at a similar distance to the NE of the PDA were found the remains of a Roman burial associated with samian and colour-coat pottery sherds [CHER 10164] (13).

Saxon

Immediately to the north and east of the ring ditch monument another possible archaeological site has been identified. This followed upon the recognition on air photos of a number of small roughly rectangular-looking features (dark blobs) located across and to the east of the ring ditch [CHER02834a] (9) (info. R.Palmer 1983). The individual size and shape of these features suggest grubenhaus (SFB) dwellings, therefore the likely presence of an Early Saxon settlement [CHER02921] (Meaney 1964) (14). However, the site has still not been examined and this assertion currently remains unproven. A number of these features now lie beneath the extension to the Haulage Depot building and car park, the latter situated immediately to the east of no.51 Coates Road.

Medieval and Postmedieval

Potential medieval ridge and furrow [CHER3896] was identified at Bassenhally Farm some 600-700m to the NW of the PDA (15) during an evaluation carried out in 2011 (Peachey 2013), whilst postmedieval (18th and 19th century) pottery was recovered from the watching brief carried out in 1995 on building work undertaken adjacent to no.35 Coates Road [CHER11739] (8). Immediately to the east of the PDA lies the site of a former windmill (Eastrea Mill) [CHER 02910] (16) demolished prior to 1900. Meanwhile 17th and 18th century cottages still stand on the south side of Coates Road (no.3 Springfields) (17) and on Wype Road in Eastrea village (18).

Aims and objectives

The current programme of trial trenching was carried out to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by any future potential development on the site.

The regional context of this archaeological evidence will be assessed where appropriate, and any research issues relevant to the regional and national research framework will be highlighted.

Methodology

Given the difficulty of access into the narrow garden areas of nos. 49 and 51 Coates Road, machining was undertaken using two machines; a larger 8-ton 360° digger with a 1.5m wide ditching bucket operating within the yard, roadway and more open rear lawn areas, and a smaller 1-ton 360° mini-digger with a 1m wide ditching bucket to cut trenches within the gardens just to the rear of the houses. Although marked in using GPS, the final positions of these trenches was chosen to avoid the canopy (and hence sub-surface root systems) of any existing trees within the heavily overgrown gardens, as well as the vehicle yard services. For this reason all the trench areas were CAT scanned before digging.

Trenches were cut to between 1.5-2m wide, 1m generally being considered to be too narrow to work in and to properly investigate archaeological features, and double-width (i.e 2m wide) trenches being easier to excavate with the small digger. The exception to this was Trench 9 (1m wide) which had to be put into the extremely narrow garden of no.49 Coates Road. Turf, topsoil and subsoil were separated into piles either side, or along just one side of each trench depending upon space. This would enable the trenches to be more tidily backfilled following the archaeological investigation, permit visual scanning of the separate soil layers (i.e. topsoil and subsoil) for archaeological finds, enable bucket sampling, and allow the removed soil to be metal detected. This was carried out following the excavation of each trench.

Machining was undertaken down to the (uppermost) level of archaeology, either within the subsoil/ buried soil ('B horizon') or underlying natural sand and gravel. Following this the archaeological features cleaned, dug and recorded by experienced CAU staff. All trenches were then geo-located by the CAU Survey Department using GPS, and the heights (top and bottom of trench) recorded. Trench sections were logged in the field (irrespective of the presence or absence of archaeology), and where present the level of archaeology and any truncation accurately noted. Trenches with archaeological features were planned by hand at 1:20 scale. Linear features were excavated by hand digging 1m slots every 5m, whereas discrete features (such as pits or postholes) were 50% dug (half-sectioned), all sections being drawn at 1:10 scale. Context sheets were completed for each feature together with sketch plans and sections (following the CAU modified MOLAS system (Spence 1994)), the latter accompanied by a full colour digital photographic record. Finds were separately bagged for each context/ feature, recorded, then returned to the CAU Finds Department where they were cleaned, bagged and catalogued prior to in-house and external post-excavation analysis. Bagged bulk environmental samples (5-10 litre) were taken from individual contexts and processed (wet-sieved) at the CAU in order to recover small finds, charcoal, bone, macrofossil seed and plant remains, and molluscs.

Results

The recording of trench sections and levels

Twelve trenches were dug totalling 116.25m (Figure 3). Seven of these trenches had archaeology in them. Archaeological features were encountered within a group of five trenches forming a swathe across the northern end of the site (i.e. Trenches 1-3 within the removals yard and Trenches 5-6 within the areas of enclosed lawn abutting the field boundary (with the SAM) and haulage business to the east), and in another two trenches located at the southern end closest to the road (i.e. Trenches 11 and 12 within the gardens of nos. 51 and 49 Coates Road respectively). For each trench the base (in metres AOD) was recorded at either end, along with the level of archaeology, where this was relevant. Despite the small differences in height of the trench bases (i.e. between 3.9 – 4.2 m AOD), the actual level of archaeology (which could be its truncation level) was more variable, the difference in height across the site being up to 0.7m (i.e. between 3.97m and 4.58m AOD).

Trench 1 length 19.3m

W

E

@1m	@10m	@19m
concrete 0-0.2m	concrete 0-0.2m	concrete 0-0.26m
topsoil/ rubble 0.2-0.5m	brick/topsoil 0.2-0.4m	rubble/topsoil 0.26-0.56m
upper subsoil 0.5-0.8m	upper subsoil 0.4-0.8m	upper subsoil 0.56-0.86m
lower subsoil 0.8-1.0m	lower subsoil 0.8-1.0m	lower subsoil 0.86-1.06m
NATURAL gravel	NATURAL silt	NATURAL gravel

Trench base: 4.084m AOD

4.079m AOD

upper subsoil: dark brown sandy silt lower subsoil: orange-brown dirty gravel

Level of archaeology = 3.974 m AOD (F.7)

Trench 2 length 8.1m

N

S

@1m	@8m
bricks 0-0.2m	gravel 0-0.3m
topsoil 0.2-0.4m	topsoil 0.3-0.4m
upper subsoil 0.4-0.7m	upper subsoil 0.4-0.7m
lower subsoil 0.7-0.8m	lower subsoil 0.7-0.8m
NATURAL gravel	NATURAL gravel

Trench base: 4.032m AOD

4.072m AOD

Level of archaeology = 4.345 m AOD (F.4)

Trench 3 length 18m

W

E

@3m	@10m	@18m
rubble 0-0.25m	rubble 0-0.3m	rubble 0-0.4m
modern feature: upper subsoil 0.25-0.75m	upper subsoil 0.3-0.6m	upper subsoil 0.4-0.7m
clay + silt 0.75-0.85m		

(base)		
lower subsoil 0.85-0.9m	lower subsoil 0.6-0.8m	lower subsoil 0.7-0.85m
NATURAL gravel	NATURAL gravel	NATURAL gravel

Trench base: 3.9m AOD

4.0m AOD

Level of archaeology = 4 m AOD (F.1)

Trench 4 length 7.2m

W

E

@1m	@7m
concrete 0-0.3m	concrete 0-0.3m
	topsoil 0.3-0.4m
upper subsoil 0.3-0.7m	upper subsoil 0.4-0.7m
lower subsoil 0.7-0.9m	lower subsoil 0.7-0.8m
NATURAL gravel	NATURAL gravel

Trench base: 4.032m AOD

4.072m AOD

Trench 5 length 11.8m

W

E

@1m	@11m
topsoil 0-0.3m	Topsoil 0-0.3m
upper subsoil 0.3-0.6m	upper subsoil 0.3-0.7m
lower subsoil 0.6-0.8m	lower subsoil 0.7-0.8m
NATURAL gravel	NATURAL gravel

Trench base: 4.023m AOD

3.98m AOD

Level of archaeology = 4.143 m AOD (F.5)

Trench 6 length 12.2m

N

S

@1m	@12m
topsoil 0-0.25m	topsoil 0-0.25m
upper subsoil 0.25-0.45m	upper subsoil 0.25-0.45m
lower subsoil 0.45-0.8m	lower subsoil 0.45-0.7m
NATURAL gravel	NATURAL gravel

Trench base: 3.887m AOD

4.07m AOD

Level of archaeology = 4 m AOD (F.8)

Trench 7 length 5.9m

NW

SE

@1m	@5m
topsoil 0-0.20m	topsoil 0-0.3m
upper subsoil 0.2-0.5m	upper subsoil 0.3-0.5m
lower subsoil 0.5-0.8m	lower subsoil 0.5-0.7m
NATURAL gravel	NATURAL gravel

Trench base: 4m AOD (estimate)

4m AOD (estimate)

Trench 8 length 12.75m

S N

@1m	@12m
road make-up (rubble) 0-0.2m	road make-up (rubble) 0-0.3m
upper subsoil 0.2-0.6m	upper subsoil 0.3-0.8m
lower subsoil 0.4-0.8m	lower subsoil 0.8-1.0m
NATURAL gravel	NATURAL gravel

Trench base: 4.17m AOD 3.95m AOD

Trench 9 length 7.3m

N S

@1m	@7m
topsoil 0-0.3m	topsoil 0-0.3m
upper subsoil 0.3-0.5m	upper subsoil 0.3-0.5m
lower subsoil 0.5-1.1m	lower subsoil 0.5-1.0m
NATURAL gravel	NATURAL gravel

Trench base: 3.767m AOD 3.858m AOD

Trench 10 length 4.8m

W E

@1m	@4m
topsoil 0-0.25m	topsoil 0-0.3m
subsoil 0.25-0.6m	upper subsoil 0.3-0.55m
NATURAL gravel	NATURAL gravel

Trench base: 4.133m AOD 4.216m AOD

Trench 11 length 3.7m

S N

@1m	@3.5m
topsoil 0-0.3m	topsoil 0-0.3m
upper subsoil 0.3-0.5m	upper subsoil 0.3-0.4m
lower subsoil 0.5-1.0m	lower subsoil 0.4-0.8m
NATURAL gravel	NATURAL gravel

Trench base: 3.79m AOD 4m AOD

Level of archaeology = 4.58 m AOD (F.13)

Trench 12 length 5.2m

S N

@1m	@3.5m
topsoil 0-0.3m	topsoil 0-0.3m
subsoil 0.3-1.2m	upper subsoil 0.3-1.0m
	lower subsoil 1.0-1.5m
NATURAL silt	NATURAL gravel

Trench base: 4.031m AOD 3.614m AOD

lower subsoil: mid orange-brown silty clay **Level of archaeology = 4.13 m AOD (F.11)**

Feature and context descriptions

Some 13 features and 50 contexts were recorded from which 116 sherds of pottery (3995g) plus a limited number of other finds were recovered. Six bulk samples were taken for environmental analysis. The archaeological features consisted of seven pits (F.1, 3, 5-6, 8-10), one posthole (F.12), two linears (F.2 + 4), one possible SFB (F.7) and two clay oven or kiln-type structures (F.11 + 13).

Feature descriptions

F.1 Possible pit cut into gravel. Only half exposed on NE edge of Trench 3 c.1m from E end. Circular and bowl-shaped cut 1.3m diameter x 0.5m deep [02] containing a single fill consisting of a pale yellowish-orange brown sandy silt (01). No finds. The regular shape suggests a pit but the fill looks natural.

F.2 Small ditch running E-W exposed within evaluation Trench 2 some 0.6m from N end. Shallow 'U' shaped with rounded concave base, 0.5m wide and 0.13m deep [04] with a single fill consisting of a mid-brown loose gravelly silt (03). Sealed by subsoil. No finds.

F.3 A small circular pit/ posthole cut into gravel just 0.4m S of ditch F.2 (Trench 2). Feature is circular with a shallow rounded 'U' shaped base 0.4-0.5m wide and 0.06m deep [06] with a single fill consisting of a pale brown loose sandy silt with gravel inclusions (05). No finds.

F.4 A narrow ditch possessing an angular rounded terminus some 4m from the N end of Trench 2. In the terminus slot the ditch profile is steep and symmetrical with slightly convex-concave sides and a narrow rounded 'U' shaped base [08]; 0.7m wide and 0.35m deep. This contained a single fill consisting of a dark brown loose silty gravel (07) in which there was a small amount of animal bone and burnt clay. The base of this ditch sloped up gradually (i.e. shallowed) towards the terminus end. Another slot dug some 1.5m from the S end of Trench 2 revealed a slightly more asymmetric cut [13] but of the same dimensions as the ditch terminus. The fill at this point consisted of a dark brown loose silty gravel (12) which contained a very small amount of pot and burnt clay. The ditch here was cut over the top of an earlier pit (F.6).

F.5 A small 'burnt' pit encountered close to the northern edge of Trench 5 some 3m from its west end. The shallow circular pit was bowl-shaped with steep sides and a slightly rounded flattened bottom [11]; 0.8m diameter and 0.15m deep. This contained two fills, an upper dark reddish-blackish brown loose sandy silt containing fine pieces of charcoal (09) and beneath that a mid-brown loose sandy silt with occasional gravel (10). No finds.

F.6 A moderately substantial pit cut by ditch F.4 which was revealed in section by the slot cut 1.5m from the S end of Trench 2. This appears to be circular with steep convex-concave sides and a rounded base [15]; 0.8m wide and 0.45m deep. Within this was a sterile fill composed of a pale brown loose silt with fine gravel (14).

F.7 A square round-ended shallow feature cut into sand and gravel some 3.5m from the E end of Trench 1; possibly a little more than half of this is exposed in the floor of the trench (Figure 6a). The cut [18] is 2.7m long and just 0.3m deep, possessing short vertical sides and a flat base. This was half-sectioned, then completely excavated, the fills proving to be almost sterile. The upper fill consisted of a 150-170mm of dark brown loose gravelly silt (16) overlying 140mm of mid-brown loose sandy silt (17) (Figure 5b). From the latter fill three sherds of pottery were recovered (two of them from a bulk sample). This feature seems to be associated with a single external posthole (F.12) of similar depth, one which lies adjacent to the flat-sided eastern end. For this reason an 'SFB-type structure' was suggested, although a Saxon date for this is clearly not indicated following an examination of the pottery (see Pottery report). A bulk environmental sample <1> was taken from the basal fill (17).

F.8 A moderately deep oval-sub-circular shaped pit within Trench 6 (Figures 5a+c). The pit is 'U' shaped in x-section with moderately steep sides which are gently convex at top and near vertical to steeply concave beneath

with a sharp basal break of slope leading to a flat-slightly uneven rounded base [26]; 2m x 1.6m in plan view and 0.8m deep. Pit contained three fills: the upper layer (21) composed of a grey-green silty sand with occasional clay laminae and moderate to rare charcoal and burnt clay inclusions (300mm), and a middle layer (22) consisting of 120-150mm of medium-dark grey silt with much fine charcoal plus larger lumps as well as burnt clay and a moderate amount of variably weathered to fresh un-abraded pottery, especially towards the base, along with a small amount of butchered animal bone. Beneath this was 200-250mm of dirty brown to orange gravelly sand and silt containing numerous disseminated pebble inclusions (23). Underneath this a small wedge-shaped lens of silty-sandy brown gravel (24) as re-deposited natural was deposited against the northern edge of the pit by slumping following the erosion of the pit sides. This overlay the earliest fill resting on the base of the pit below the level of the current water table which consisted of 10-50mm of dark blue-grey to black organic peat (25) containing some charcoal that in places was transgressed by Fe/Mn pan locally concreted into nodules. The pit was one of two intercutting pits (perhaps originally rubbish pits) part backfilled and part infilled with washed-in silt, eroded daub, charcoal and organic material. A bulk environmental sample <2> was taken from the organic fill (22).

F.9 A poorly defined sub-circular shaped pit (SEE Trench 6 plan), only part of which survives, and which can be seen in section. In profile this pit is 'U' shaped with shallow sloping convex to concave sides and a rounded base [29]; 1.6m long, 1.4m wide and 0.6m deep. It contains two fills, an upper grey-green to mottled orange sandy silt (200-300mm thick) with an occasional to moderate amount of finely divided charcoal and rare inclusions of weathered burnt clay and pebbles (27), and a lower fill consisting of 50-70mm of a gritty pebbly orange-brown silty sand (28). Pit F.9 cuts pit F.8, and in turn is cut by a modern pit (F.10). F.9 appears to be one of at least two broadly contemporary pits. The more sterile and less organic fill(s) of F.9 suggests that rubbish was not intentionally deposited in this.

F.10 An oval-shaped pit (see Trench 6 in plan) which is asymmetric and also 'U' shaped in x-section with gentle to steep sloping convex-concave sides and a rounded base [30]; approximately 0.9m x 0.4m+ and 0.4-0.5m m deep. This has two fills, an upper one consisting of up to 400mm of dirty sandy gravel mixed up with garden soil, much of this fairly pebbly and full of roots (32), and at the base a thin (i.e. <50mm) layer consisting of dumped and broken-up wallpaper and plaster coloured dark green and red (31). This seems to have been a modern pit dug at the bottom of the garden for the burial of building waste from the house. This pit cuts both of the earlier pits (F.8 and F.9).

F.11 A sub-rectangular – oval shaped feature (in plan view) exposed at the south end of Trench 12 (see Figures 4a+b). This feature was defined by a ring of burnt clay – and is possibly an oven or small pottery kiln. It sits in a very shallow bowl-shaped scoop (in longitudinal x-section) possessing gentle sloping sides which become steeper in the middle [42]; 1.1m long by 1.4m wide and 0.3m deep. There is a complex of fills/ layers associated with this, a few of which appear to be in the form of *in situ*. clay lining. The uppermost fill (35) which shows traces of slumping in places consists of a dirty yellow sandy stony silt (grey-green towards the base) with occasional small inclusions of charcoal. From the centre of this fill came the find of a broken-up triangular 'Iron Age – type' loomweight (surface find <1>). This overlay a much darker thin (<100mm) layer of grey silt (36) containing a fair amount of fine organic material including charcoal fines, some larger lumps of charcoal (up to 10mm), together with small lumps of weathered burnt clay, butchered animal bone, and rare soft reduce-coloured pottery. A lump of burnt stone (surface find <2>), possibly Middle Oxfordian Corallian (equivalent to Ellsworth Rock), was recovered from the machined and trowelled surface. Beneath this, mostly on the eastern half of the pit lay a lens of yellow sandy silt (similar to 35) with lumps of burnt and unburnt (weathered) clay and some rare fragments of animal bone (37). On the other hand, against the western and northern edges lay a lens consisting of jumbled fragments of fresh-looking burnt (reddened) and unburnt (pale grey) clay mixed up in a matrix of decomposed pale grey clay and silt (38). This was associated with fairly frequent charcoal, and occasionally fragments of animal bone and rarely weathered pot, some of the latter in larger lumps. Below this around the north and south sides of this feature lay a discontinuous (i.e. in places removed) lining of red and pale grey clay (39). In most cases the red clay lay uppermost, yet the presence of grey clay overlying red beneath this might suggest re-lining. Underneath but perhaps incorporated the clay lining around the SE edge of this feature lay a large number of thick (10-15mm), broken, and in some cases associated sherds of a large

coarseware shell-tempered pottery vessel. The broken-up pieces of this were embedded in a layer of clay and silt (40), the pottery probably being part of one or more large broken up ?Iron Age storage jar(s), the pieces of which may have been inserted into the fabric of the burnt clay structure (see Figure 6b). However, it is also possible that this was part of a placed vessel crushed *in situ.*, or alternatively pottery debris discarded against the kiln/ oven side when almost whole. The oxidised/ reduced shelly tempered ware appears likely to be utilitarian in function and locally made. Within the very base of the pit lies a large mass of red clay (41), the bottom of which was still *in situ.*, but the upper part of which may have broken off and slid down, or quite simply have been placed there from the sides of the pit following its truncation. The individual layer(s) are between 50-70mm thick. Four bulk samples were taken for environmental analysis (i.e. <3> (036); <4> (035); <5> (039); <6> (041)).

F.12 A small shallow circular posthole situated just to the east of the mid-line of the large sub-rectangular pit F.7 referred to provisionally as being a SFB (SEE Trench 1 plan). Just 0.25m in diameter and 0.05m deep, this shallow rounded 'U' shaped cut [20] possessed a single fill consisting of a pale brown loose sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions (19). It seems likely that the posthole is associated in some way with F.7, yet an SFB would normally have a similarly placed posthole at the other end.

F.13 The end of another possible shallow scoop clay-lined oven or kiln, the end of which was just clipped during the machining of Trench 11. This then is only partly exposed in section within the S and W-facing trench sides (SEE Figure 4c). The cut (or perhaps re-cut) for this [49] is now defined by the outer edge of a loose and poorly defined broken-up oval to 'U' shaped ring of dried and now quite weathered red clay which is c.1m wide and 0.45m deep (as measured from the truncation level of the overlying garden topsoil). The 'fill' of this consists of a flattened 'ring' of broken-up and part-decomposed red clay mixed up with a well-humified silty soil (47) c. 100mm thick. In places this layer contains some hard lumps of dried red clay, although much of this is now plastic and fairly weathered and mixed up. This same layer also contains occasional lumps of charcoal and moderate-rare burnt stone (sandstone) fragments and pot. In the base of the cut lies another thin (<80mm thick) fill of dark grey-brown humic silt (46) possessing occasional small lumps of weathered clay, burnt stone, weathered animal bone, plus a single pot sherd most probably from a storage jar identical to those recovered from F.11 (see layer context (40)). Meanwhile a fairly sterile layer of yellow-brown silt containing thin horizontally repeated laminae of weathered clay (48) lay within the centre of this feature. Cut at a fairly high level into the surrounding subsoil (with upper part of this reaching the topsoil just 200mm below ground level), this feature had seriously been affected by drying out, oxidation, rooting and also garden cultivation (truncation), yet it was still recognisable as another probable example of a clay oven or kiln dating most probably to the Iron Age, the latter seemingly identical to F.11 in Trench 13. The length of this feature unknown, but is likely to be upwards of 1.5m.

Layer contexts

(33) Within Trench 12 overlying (34) and F.11, this layer was only recorded in section. Consists of a compact stony-silty light brown – mid brown clay rich soil (>2.7m long and up to 300mm thick). Possibly a buried soil – possibly part of the upcast of a bank. The base of this is c. 300mm *above* the top of F.11.

(34) Within Trench 12 overlying F.11 but below (33). This was recorded in section and in 1:10 plan of F.11. Consists of a moderately soft gravelly mottled orange to mid-brown sandy silt with ancient root holes and small stones throughout, plus rare flecks of charcoal (c.5m long and 250-300mm thick). The layer is transgressed by a thin iron pan at its base. This appears to be a buried soil overlying F.11 and the buried colluvium banked-up against this on its north side.

(43) Within Trench 12. This is a buried soil underlying F.11 – which is recorded in section and in the 1:10 plan. Consists of a mixed light yellow to dirty brown silt (2.2m+ in extent and 100-200mm thick). This context appears to be devoid of finds, charcoal etc. Probably the buried ground surface (thin soil) underlying the oven/ kiln.

(44) Within Trench 12. This is a probable colluvium layer overstepping the eroded edge of F.11, which is recorded in section. Consists of a yellow-orange sandy silt with soil streaks in it. It is overlain by the buried soil (34) but rests upon the (natural) gravels.

(45) Within Trench 11. This is a weathered redeposited soil or infill layer overlying the natural weathered gravels and lower subsoil at the north end of the trench. The cut for F.13 ([49]) sits within this layer, yet the boundary between (45) and the eroded bank of natural gravel on its southern side might actually be an intentional cut ([50]). The layer itself consists of a dark reddish brown crumbly silt/ humified silt complete with traces of decomposed burnt stone, burnt clay and the occasional fleck of charcoal.

Archive deposition

The pottery and other finds have been stored at the CAU presuming final deposition in an approved County storage facility.

Discussion

The results from this evaluation suggest a single date for all of these features, most likely of the Early-Middle Iron Age, but conceivably of the Late Bronze Age - Middle Iron Age.

Initially multi-period archaeological activity here seemed quite likely given that F.7 within Trench 2 resembled the footprint of an SFB (a Grubenhau dwelling). The location of this at the northern end of 49-51 Coates Road (site) also appeared to coincide with the southern distribution of numerous similar-sized rectangular-looking features appearing as cropmarks (dark blobs) on air photos, with most of the latter spread across and to the east of the ring ditch monument, these 'blobs' provisionally identified as a possible Early Saxon settlement (Meaney 1964). Yet the examination of this potential SFB (F.7) produced no culturally identifiable Saxon finds, and more to the point, the excavation of this feature returned instead sherds of Late Bronze Age – Iron Age pottery. The most likely explanation is that the features represent some sort of pit or dwelling, yet ones which may be late prehistoric in age.

One possible scenario here is that that we are looking at the northerly continuation of the same prehistoric field system encountered either side of no.80 Coates Road, some 100m to the east of nos. 49-51. That particular archaeological landscape may have had its origin in a series of Late Bronze Age well(s) which then became the focus for an Iron Age field system.

Another uncertainty surrounds the function of the two partially preserved clay 'ovens' or 'kilns'. The approximate size and shape of the better-preserved example (F.11) present within Trench 12 fronting Coates Road does at least seem resemble some types of excavated clay-lined Iron Age pit kilns (for instance one might well compare this with the MIA pottery kiln found at Turing College, Kent (canterburytrust.co.uk)). A similar comparison might also be made with the Romano-British example found nearby at Stonald Field, King's Dyke, Whittlesey (see Gibson & Knight 2002)). Meanwhile locally-produced shell-tempered storage jars dating to the Iron Age (similar to the example from F.11) were found at the Hurst Lane Reservoir site near Ely (see Evans, Knight & Webley 2007).

Unfortunately the possible location(s) of the stoke hole(s) could not be determined in F.11, nor was there much evidence of the expected kiln furniture such as bricks (yet there may have been one: see Appendix for burnt and worked clay, this report), burnt clay lumps and pottery wasters. Yet other evidence, such as the possibly coincidental presence of a large hand-made storage jar and lump of burnt shelly limestone (which seems identical to that used within the ceramic temper of the jar) does support the idea of local and possibly therefore *in situ*. pottery production. However, the environmental evidence from this feature is somewhat less conclusive as regards a kiln rather than an oven function. Burnt wheat as well as barley grain was found in small amounts within the charcoal-rich fill(s) of this feature, both being good indications for the use of this as a hearth or bread oven. As well as the pottery there was other domestic material, in this case animal bone waste and a fragmentary triangular 'Iron Age type' loomweight, the latter apparently associated with the 'dumped' fill present inside of this kiln or 'oven-type' feature.

The apparent 0.7m vertical range (AOD) in the level of archaeology encountered on this site would seem to have some bearing on what might or might not be preserved here as a result of truncation by agriculture (ploughing) or gardening. Yet other causes of truncation might have been the digging of foundations for buildings, such as the houses on nos. 49-51 as well as the warehouse units to the east. This variability in the former land level shows little consistency between the front and back of the plot, a fact which implies some form of natural or artificial terracing, or perhaps just disturbance resulting from contemporary small scale gravel quarrying.

The finds recovered from this archaeological evaluation would seem to indicate a date for this activity (and perhaps also any associated occupation) between the Late Bronze Age and Middle Iron Age.

Conclusion

A low-moderate density of archaeology has been shown to exist in the area evaluated, consisting of some 13 features (mostly pits), at least five of which have produced prehistoric pottery dating to the Late Bronze Age – Middle Iron Age. Amongst these were the poorly preserved remains of two ovens (or perhaps small pottery kilns), a couple of intercutting rubbish pits, a field ditch, and the possible base of a sub-rectangular SFB, the latter feature virtually devoid of finds. In fact few finds were recovered from any of these features, most notable amongst them being the large bucket-shaped jar and triangular loomweight fragment from F.11, alongside a large part of the broken lining for the clay oven/kiln. The current evaluation has indicated the probable northerly and westerly continuation of a Late Bronze Age – Iron Age field system and low density settlement which was previously encountered on the south side of Coates Road, Eastrea. The survival of archaeology in this area would appear to be variable, with some of it occurring at quite shallow depth.

Acknowledgements

This current scheme of work was undertaken for the landowner Ian Brown (no.49) and his neighbour Sue Trundle (no.51) of Coates Road, Eastrea, Whittlesey with the work facilitated by Graham Walker (Chartered

Architect). The machining of the trenches was undertaken by Chris Wisson of Lattenbury's Services. Katie Hutton (CAU) assisted with archaeological work on-site, John Moller (CAU) surveyed the trenches, whilst Jane Matthews digitised plans and Bryan Crossan (CAU) produced the graphics for this report. Emma Beadsmoore was CAU Project Manager. Dan McConnell of the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team provided the archaeological pre-determination brief and then monitored the archaeological work.

References

Cooper, S. 2004 *No.231-215 Coates Road, Coates, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire: an archaeological evaluation*. CCC Archaeological Field Unit report no.

Evans, C., Knight, M. & Webley, L. 2007 Iron Age Settlement and Romanization on the Isle of Ely: the Hurst Lane Reservoir site, *Proceedings of Cambridgeshire Antiquarian Society* 96, 41-78

Fletcher, T. 2004 *An archaeological evaluation at 43 Coates Road, Eastrea, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire*. CCC Archaeological Field Unit report no.717

Gibson, D. & Knight, M. 2002 *Prehistoric and Roman archaeology at Stonald Field, King's Dyke, Whittlesey*. Cambridge Archaeological Unit Report no. 498

Hall, D.N. 1987 The Fenland Project no.2: Cambridgeshire Survey, Peterborough to March. Ref. WHY S21. *East Anglian Archaeology* 35

Malone, S.J. 2009 *Land adjacent to 80 Coates Road, Eastrea, Cambridgeshire: geophysical survey*. Archaeological Project Services report no. 102/09

Meadows, I. 1995 *Archaeological Watching Brief Adjacent to 35 Coates Road, Eastrea, Northamptonshire* Archaeology Report

Meaney, A. 1964 *A Gazetteer of Early Anglo-Saxon Burial Sites*, p.70

Palmer, R. 1983 CUCAP AP BQE 5 air photos

Patten, R. 2012 *An archaeological investigation on land off Eastrea Road, Whittlesey*, Cambridge Archaeological Unit report no. 1070

Peachey, M. 2009 *Archaeological evaluation on land at Coates Road, Eastrea, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire*. Archaeological Project Services report no. 111/09

Peachey, M. 2013 *Archaeological evaluation on land at Bassenhally Farm, Whittlesey*. Archaeological Project Services report no.

Stace, C., 1997 *New Flora of the British Isles*. 2nd edition. Cambridge University Press

Taylor, G. 2010 *Archaeological excavation on land at Coates Road, Eastrea, Whittlesey. Assessment report and updated project design*. Archaeological Project Services report no. 87/10

Taylor, G. 2011. *Archaeological excavation on land at Coates Road, Eastrea, Whittlesey. Analytical report.* Archaeological Project Services report no.35/11

Thatcher, C. 2008 *Land at 2 Springfields, Eastrea, Whittlesey: An archaeological evaluation,* CAM ARC report no. 1014

Upton-Smith, T. 2006 *Archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to 75 Coates Road, Eastrea, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire.* Northamptonshire Archaeology Report

Wild, J.P. 1988 *Textiles in Archaeology,* publ. Social Science

Specialist reports

Pottery

Lorraine Mephram, Wessex Archaeology

Introduction

This assessment report considers a pottery assemblage comprising 98 sherds (3940g), of which 52 sherds (3492g) appear to belong to a single vessel recovered from F.11. The assemblage is entirely of late prehistoric date.

Pottery was recovered from a number of features across five of the trenches excavated (Trenches 1, 2, 6, 11 and 12), ranging in quantity from one sherd to 58 sherds per trench, and from one sherd to 57 sherds per feature.

The condition of the material is fair to poor. Apart from the single vessel, sherds tend to be small and abraded; for this part of the assemblage mean sherd weight is 9.7g. All sherds are in relatively soft-fired fabrics; the coarser shelly wares in particular are highly friable, and are suffering continued degradation.

Methods of Assessment

At this stage of assessment, full fabric analysis has not been undertaken. Instead, pottery has been quantified (by sherd count and weight in grammes) by broad fabric group, based on the dominant inclusion type (e.g. grog-tempered, shelly) within each context. A few tiny crumbs are too small to assign to fabric group, and have been omitted from the quantification. Notes have been made as to the occurrence of other inclusion types within the fabric groups, e.g. rare to sparse shell in the grog-tempered and sandy wares. Fabric identification has been undertaken by eye, aided by the use of a x10 binocular microscope to clarify inclusion type where necessary.

Diagnostic pieces (rims, decorated sherds) have been noted, but only the large vessel from F.11 preserves a measurable rim diameter. Some joining sherds within contexts have been noted, and these have been counted as separate sherds, even for fresh breaks. This quantified data is presented here in Table 1.

Pottery analysis

The pottery falls into four broad fabric groups: shell, grog-tempered and sandy. There is, however, considerable overlap between the three groups, as some sandy wares contain some grog, and both the sandy and grog-tempered fabrics in most cases also contain rare to sparse shell inclusions. None of these fabrics are particularly chronologically distinctive in the region, and dating therefore relies predominantly on the diagnostic forms present.

The most diagnostic sherds belong to the (probable) single vessel from F.11 in Trench 12 (catalogue numbers <22> + <25>). Rim and body sherds are present, deriving from a large, bucket-shaped jar with a thickened, flat-topped rim, and a pronounced 'shoulder' below the rim; the rim diameter is approximately 450mm. No direct parallels have at this stage been found for this unusual vessel. On the one hand the size, bucket-shaped form and rim profile could suggest a Middle Bronze Age date, but a date in the Early to Middle Iron Age is equally possible.

There are five other rims present, four in shelly fabrics and one grog-tempered; all came from F.8 in Trench 6. Of these, the most diagnostic is the grog-tempered rim, which derives from a shouldered bowl with slightly out-turned rim (no<8>). The shelly rims are all more or less upright; three have a slightly convex profile, but none are attributable to overall vessel form (three from <8>, one from <33>). All these would be consistent with a Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age date, as would two finger-impressed shoulder sherds (both from <8> F.8), almost certainly from shouldered jar forms. It is not possible, however, from this small sample, to comment on affinities with any of the Iron Age regional sub-styles.

This leaves several context groups with no precise dating, consisting only of undiagnostic body sherds. These can only be broadly dated as late prehistoric, although the likelihood is that they fall within the range of Late Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age. The absence of scored ware can be noted.

Recommendations

This is a small assemblage, and consists largely of small context groups containing undiagnostic and, in many cases, abraded sherds. One feature group from Trench 6 can be dated on the basis of diagnostic sherds. The large vessel from Trench 12 is unusual, and parallels should be sought for this in order to refine the dating. Further refinement for the remainder of the assemblage is unlikely. The large vessel, and at least two of the other rim forms, should be illustrated.

Ideally, this assemblage should be reassessed and analysed together with ceramics recovered from any further stages of mitigation on the site.

Cat no. <>	Context	Feature	Trench	No. sherds	Wt. (g)	Ware Group	Comments
1	17	7	1	1	12	grog	
4	12	4	2	1	43	shell	coarse shell, thick-walled
7	21	8	6	1	6	shell	sparse shell
8	22	8	6	2	44	shell	
8	22	8	6	2	8	shell	conjoining sherds from thin-walled rim: upright, slightly convex
8	22	8	6	8	63	shell	mostly leached, sparse voids; includes 2 finger-impressed shoulders
8	22	8	6	4	21	shell	conjoining sherds from upright rim; very rare shell
8	22	8	6	1	5	sandy	no visible inclusions, fine-grained, thin-walled
8	22	8	6	5	69	grog	sparse organics, rare shell; soapy feel
8	22	8	6	1	2	shell	very rare shell, small rim
8	22	8	6	2	36	grog	soapy feel; 1 rim: shouldered bowl with slightly out-turned rim
12	46	13	11	1	49	shell	
18	34		12	1	57	shell	SF4
22	38	11	12	1	206	shell	coarse shell, thick-walled
25	40	11	12	51	3286	shell	single vessel: large, thick-walled jar with upright, flat-topped rim, thickened; rim D approx. 450mm
29	17	7	1	2	4	grog	from sample 1
29	17	7	1	1	1	shell	sparse shell (from sample 1)
33	22	8	6	5	13	grog	very rare shell (from sample 2)
33	22	8	6	3	5	shell	thin-walled shelly, 1 rim: upright, slightly convex (from sample 2)
33	22	8	6	0	0	uncertain	tiny crumbs not included (from sample 2)
36	36	11	12	0	0	uncertain	tiny crumbs only (from sample 3)
41	35	11	12	3	8	sandy	some grog (from sample 4)
41	35	11	12	2	2	shell	from sample 4

Table 1: CRE14 Pottery by context

Burnt stone

Simon Timberlake

A total of **1.044 kg** of burnt stone was collected. The small cracked fragments of cobbles (30-80mm diameter) appear to be typical of heat and water-cracked stone ('potboilers') used in cooking, and as such these are typical of Iron Age or earlier contexts rather than later ones. The burnt and fragmented shelly limestone (catalogue no.<20>) recovered from the centre of the kiln/ oven (F.11) is different, the type of complete fragmentation/ granulation of the shell debris being quite unsuitable for cooking, but much better for the preparation of shell temper. The similarity of the fossil shell (which includes the bivalves *Ostrea* sp., *Pinna* sp. and the serpulid *Genicularia vertebralis* derived from a local Middle Oxfordian Corallian shelly limestone) to those inclusions within the shell-tempered pottery found immediately adjacent to it suggests that this rock, or similar pieces of it, might well have been broken-up for use in tempering and preparing large storage jars for firing on-site.

Cat no. <>	Trench	SF no.	Feature	Context	No. pieces	Weight (g)	Dimension (mm)	Geology	Description
06	2		4	12	1	22	30	med gr micac sstn (Mesozoic)	heat + water cracked rock
11	6		8	22	2	46	40	cracked micac sstn	"
15	11		13	4	1	62	45	micac sstn	cracked rock with oxid ext and reduce int
16	11		13	48	2	280	80 + 60	micac qtzitic sstn + poss greensand	oxid red patinated rock
20	12	2	11	036	1	634	130	oyster and shell debris rock – possibly Middle Oxfordian Corallian (equivalent to Ellsworth Rock)	roughly bruised/hammered lump of rock which has been burnt, cracked and broken up

Table 2: Burnt stone catalogue

Burnt and worked clay

Simon Timberlake

Some **830g** of burnt clay existing as finds (i.e. 6 bags = 33 pieces) was recovered from four features, the majority of this from F.11 (384g) and F.13 (348g), the clay-lined ovens or kilns. In addition, a further 7kg (damp weight) of clay rim lining was taken from F.11 (039) and another 9kg (damp weight) from the base (041) of this same feature as environmental samples (as neither of these samples were looked at, therefore are not included in this assessment).

Some 95% of the burnt clay seems to be associated with the oven/ kiln structures F.11 and F.13 and is composed of Fabric 3, a layered clay daub applied to the exterior. The accompanying Fabric 2 *could* be derived from the clay used in the making of brick supports as part of an associated kiln furniture. However, as no intact 'bricks' of this sort were found, this suggestion remains largely conjectural. Nevertheless a few pieces within the burnt clay assemblage (i.e. cat. no. <14>) do possess right-angled edges, the latter indicating some sort of hand-moulding of object(s). Fabric 1 might also be wall daub, whilst Fabric 4 seems clearly to be associated with the manufacture of a triangular Iron Age-type **loomweight**. Most typically these loomweights are thought to be Early-Middle Iron Age in date, yet their use extends from the Late Bronze Age to the Late Iron Age (Wild 1988).

The analysis of the burnt and worked clay in this assemblage supports a probable Iron Age date for these features, whilst an examination of the burnt clay structures suggests that these could either be ovens or simple pottery kilns. Unfortunately neither of these two structures (F.11 and F.13) could be seen in their entirety, with both of them poorly preserved and incompletely sampled in the area of exposed trench. In fact both these features appear to have been destroyed, partly as a result of their contemporary collapse, but also as a result of their weathering *in situ.*, disturbance by tree roots, and finally their truncation by ploughing or garden cultivation.

Fabric types

- Fabric 1* light pink to pinkish-red hard clay with slightly silty-sandy fabric and moderate amount of broken grey flint (<3mm) inclusions
- Fabric 2* porous and fairly soft loose heterogenous pink clay fabric with lumpy yellowish grog inclusions with some chalk and voids
- Fabric 3* hard but porous terracotta-type pink clay fabric with 'meshed' burn-out organic structure (plant material) and occasional to rare inclusions of burnt flint grit and rounded pale clay grog
- Fabric 4* hard but porous mid-dark grey silty micaceous clay fabric with buff-yellow col extern patina and with common burnt-out organic and much rarer flint inclusions (loomweight only)

Cat no.	Trench	SF no.	Feature	Context	No. pieces	Weight (g)	Dimension (mm)	Fabric	Worked clay	Description
024	12		11	38	1	10	25x16 (thick)	1		flat extern possibly a wall
005	2		4	12	3	70	largest 50x25 (thick)	2		daub
010	6		8	22	4	28	largest 40x25 (thick)	1		flat extern daub wall surface
017	11		11	unstrat	8	204	largest 60x35 (thick) + smallest 25x10	3		has some finger print marks. Most likely part of oven or kiln lining
014	11		13	47	9	348	largest 55x40 (thick) + smallest 55x5 (thick)	2 (x3) 3 (x5)	possibly some brick (Fabric 2)	oven/ kiln lining with voids formed by large (30mm diam) sticks PLUS square brick supports (kiln furniture?)
019	12	1	11	35	8	170	largest 65 + smallest 25	4	loomweight	non-fitting fragments from same triangular IA-type loomweight (warp thread perforat 15mm)

Table 3: Burnt and worked clay catalogue

Faunal Remains

Daniel Sharman

Excavations at nos. 49-51 Coates Road recovered 28 fragments of animal bone from four features, some 43% of which was identifiable to species. Despite the low fragment count the majority of bone was in moderate condition, with only one context returning material in quite poor condition, resulting in the recovery of two unidentified fragments (see Table 4).

The whole assemblage is made up of domestic species, with an even split between cattle (50%) and sheep/goat (50%). The majority of the sheep-sized NISP is made up of rib fragments (9) making this appear more substantial compared to the cattle-sized.

Preservation	Context count	Fragment count
Moderate	4	26
Quite Poor	1	2

Table 4: Preservation counts

Taxon	NISP count	NISP %	MNI
cattle	6	50	2
sheep/goat	6	50	2
species total	12	100	4
cattle-sized	1	-	-
sheep sized	11	-	-
Total	24	-	-

Table 5: Species representation

When looking at age ranges it was possible to take both fusion and MWS (mandible wear stage) into account. As a result one sheep/goat scapula was aged to <6 months. Four sheep/goat mandibles had MWS data recorded, however none of these gave a complete score. As a result all that could be discerned from them was that all of them were younger than 3 years (see Table 6).

Payne Stage	Grant MWS	Age in months
C	7	<18m
B	0	<8m
D	10	<30m
C	10	<18m

Table 6: Mandible age data

Four of the bone fragments showed signs of butchery; two fragments showing signs of meat removal and one cow metatarsal the signs of marrow extraction. In addition there was one bone fragment which in the process of being whittled and polished to a point, for use either as a needle or toggle, yet this was abandoned and discarded before it was finished.

Three bone fragments also showed signs of gnawing; a sheep mandible with rodent gnaw marks on the base of zone 1 below the M2 socket, plus the ends of two radius bones with signs of canid gnawing. Three bone fragments also showed signs of burning; two sheep-sized fragments, a rib and a humerus with signs of charring alongside one completely unidentifiable calcined fragment.

Assemblage by feature

Feature 4

Four fragments were recovered from the ditch including a juvenile sheep scapula and half of the cattle bone.

Feature 8

From this oval-shaped pit the majority of the bone fragments were recovered, these consisting of fragments from all the species and sub-species groups. This pit also contained all the burnt, as well as the partially-worked piece of bone.

Feature 11 & 13

These suggested oven or kiln features contained a mixture of cow and sheep/goat fragments. Of note was the gnawing of the radius bone ends in F.11, suggesting that this bone may have been left exposed here allowing it to be gnawed upon before becoming deposited within the feature.

Conclusion

Due to the moderately good condition of the assemblage any further excavation carried out here would likely produce material that would be easily assessed and provide a good amount of data to be analysed. Domestic features should be targeted to recover more material to help build a better understanding of the population

working and inhabiting the area. A more extensive assemblage from would allow for this Coates Road site to be put into its wider regional context.

Environmental remains

Val Fryer, McDonald Institute

Samples for the evaluation of the content and preservation of the plant macrofossil assemblages were taken from fills within a large pit or sunken-featured building (F7 sample 1), from pit F8 (sample 2) and from the hearth/oven/kiln F11 (samples 3 and 4).

Method

The samples were bulk floated at the CAU and the flots were collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed in Table 7. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace (1997). All plant remains were charred. Modern roots and seeds were also noted within all four assemblages.

Results

Cereal grains and seeds are present at a low density within all four assemblages. Preservation is generally poor, with most of the grains and some seeds being severely puffed and distorted, probably as a result of exposure to high temperatures during combustion. It is also recorded that the charcoal/charred wood fragments within sample 2 are very rounded and abraded, which may suggest that the material had been exposed to the elements for some considerable period prior to incorporation within the fill of pit F8.

Oat (*Avena* sp.), barley (*Hordeum* sp.) and wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains are recorded along with a small number of cereals which are too poorly preserved for close identification. Of the identifiable wheat grains, most appear to be of an elongated form typical of either emmer (*T. dicoccum*) or spelt (*T. spelta*). Chaff is exceedingly scarce, but the assemblage from sample 3 (F.11 (36)) does include a single barley rachis node.

Weed seeds occur very infrequently, largely as single specimens within an assemblage. All are of common segetal weeds including brome (*Bromus* sp.), small legumes (Fabaceae) and persicaria (*Persicaria maculosa/lapathifolia*). The assemblage from sample 3 (F.11 (36)) includes a single saw-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) nutlet, the only wetland plant macrofossil recorded. Charcoal/charred wood fragments are present throughout, with the highest density occurring within the assemblage from sample 2 (F.8 (22)).

Other remains are also exceedingly scarce. However, small fragments of bone (most of which are burnt/calced) are recorded along with a fragment of eggshell (from sample 3 (F.11 (36)) and small pieces of burnt or fired clay, all of which could be derived from domestic food refuse. The small fragments of black porous material found in three of the samples are thought to be the residue of the combustion of organic remains (including cereal) at very high temperatures.

Conclusions

In summary, since the assemblages are sparse, it is difficult to interpret the material with any degree of certainty. However, it is, perhaps, most likely that the remains are derived from scattered midden or hearth waste, much of which could be domestic in origin.

Although plant macrofossils are scarce within the current assemblages, those which are recorded clearly demonstrate that environmental evidence of potential archaeological significance is present within the

immediate evaluation area. Therefore, if further interventions are planned, it is suggested that additional plant macrofossil samples are taken from all features which are both well-sealed and dated. Analysis of such samples should provide valuable data about the utilisation and settlement of the Fen edge gravel islands during the later prehistoric period.

Feature type	Pit/SFB?	Pit	Oven/ kiln	Oven/ kiln
Trench	1	6	12	12
Feature no.	7	8	11	11
Context no.	17	22	36	35
Enviro sample no.	1	2	3	4
Date				
Cereals				
<i>Avena</i> sp. (grain)			x	
<i>Hordeum</i> sp. (grains)			xcf	
(rachis node)			x	
<i>Triticum</i> sp. (grains)			x	xcf
Cereal indet. (grains)	x	x	x	x
Herbs				
<i>Bromus</i> sp.				xcf
Fabaceae indet.			x	x
<i>Persicaria maculosa/lapathifolia</i>			x	
Polygonaceae indet.	x			
Wetland plants				
<i>Cladium mariscus</i> (L.)Pohl			x	
Other plant macrofossils				
Charcoal <2mm	x	xxxx	xx	x
Charcoal >2mm	x	xxx	x	
Charcoal >5mm		xxx	x	
Charcoal >10mm		x	x	x
Charred root/stem	x	x		
Other remains				
Black porous 'cokey' material	x		x	x
Bone		x xb	x	
Burnt/fired clay				x
Eggshell			x	
Small coal frags.	x			
Small mammal/amphibian bones	x			
Sample volume (litres)	15	4	9	8
Volume of flot (litres)	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
% flot sorted	100%	100%	100%	100%

x = 1 – 10 specimens xx = 11 – 50 specimens xxx = 51 – 100 specimens xxxx = 100+ specimens
 cf = compare b = burnt SFB = sunken featured building H/O = hearth/oven
 LIA = Late Iron Age ER = Early Roman

Table 7: Bulk environmental sample analysis

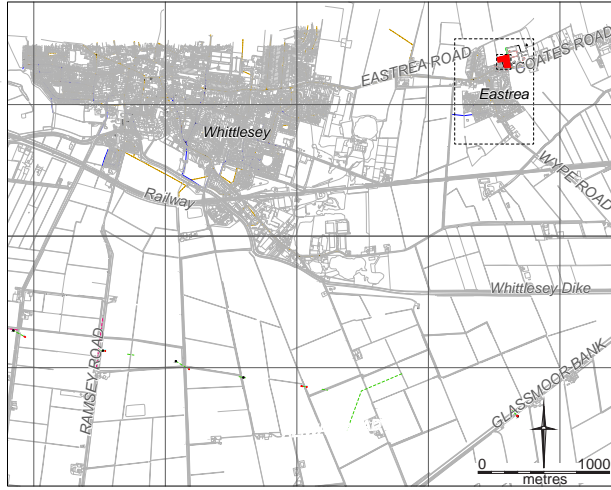
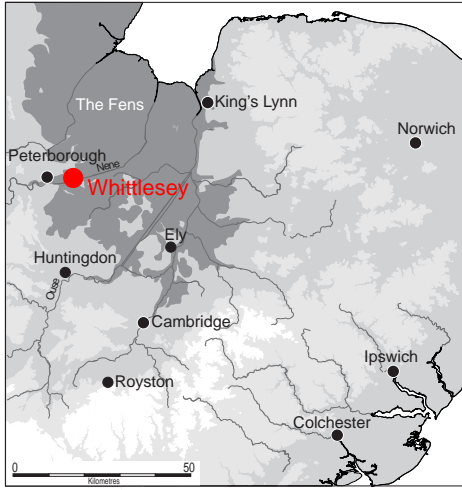
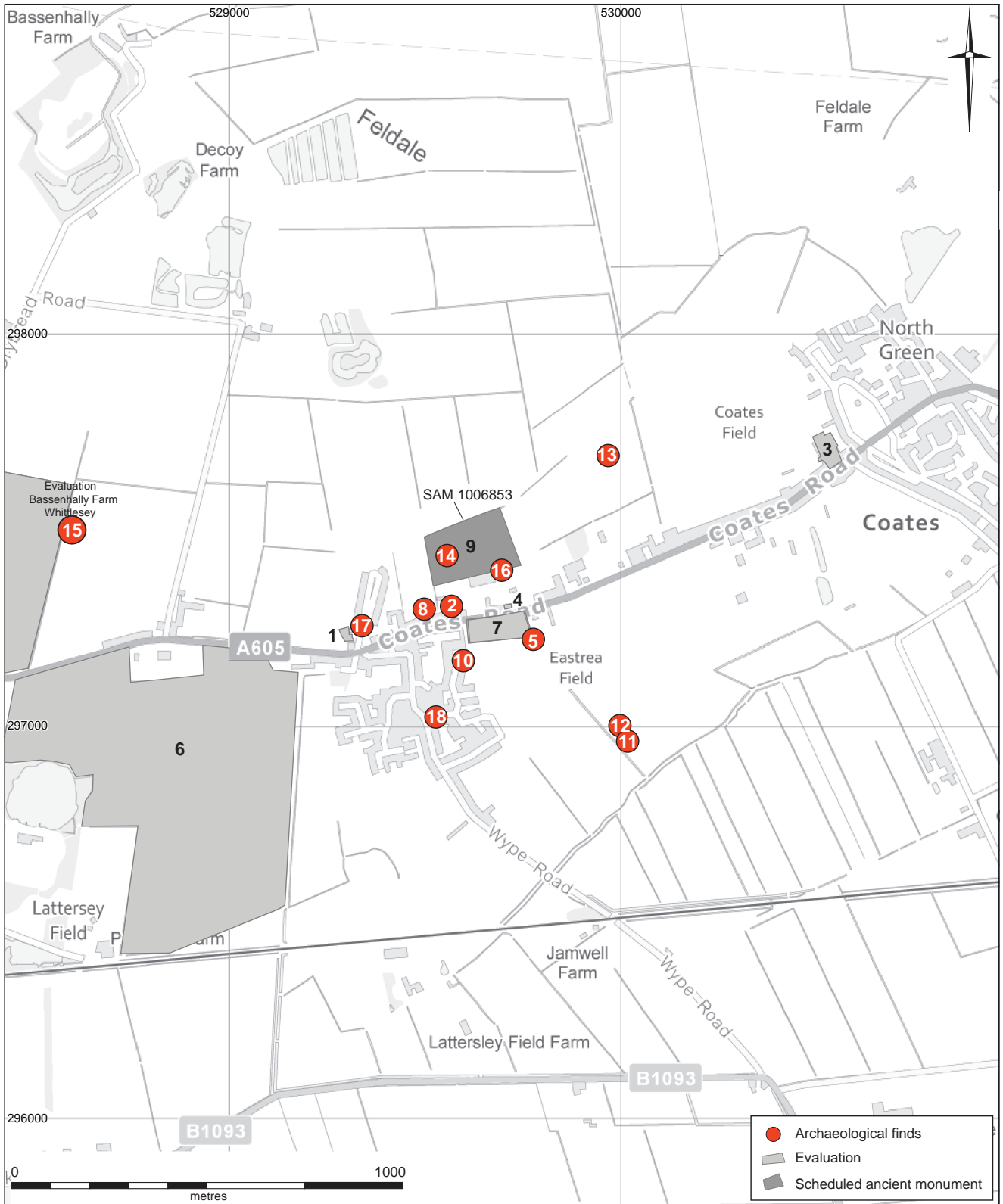


Figure 1. Location Plan



- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluation at 2 Springfield (2008) [CHER 2870] 2. Evaluation at 43 Coates Road (2004) [CHER 2002] 3. Evaluation at Fenland Timber Yard (2004) [CHER 1849] 4. Evaluation at 75 Coates Road (2006) [2110] 5. Evaluation adjacent to 80 Coates Road (2009-2010) [CHER 3280] 6. Evaluation at Eastrea Road (2011) [CHER 3671] 7. Archaeological excavation on land adjacent to 80 Coates Road (2010) [CHER 3404] 8. Watching brief at 35 Coates Road (1995) [CHER 583] 9. Monument and [SAM 1006853] ringditch and settlement | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Monument [CHER 04205] : 2 ring ditches, field system, trackway and hut circle. Land adjacent to 80 Coates Road. 11. Eastrea Field Neolithic stone axe [CHER 07847] 12. Eastrea Field Roman lava quern [CHER 01506] 13. Roman burial and pottery [CHER 10164] 14. Early Saxon settlement ? [CHER 02921] 15. Medieval ridge and furrow ? Bassenhally Farm [CHER 3896] 16. Eastrea windmill (site of) [CHER 02910] 17. Listed building 3. Springfields 18. Listed buildings |
|--|--|

Figure 2. Historic environment record

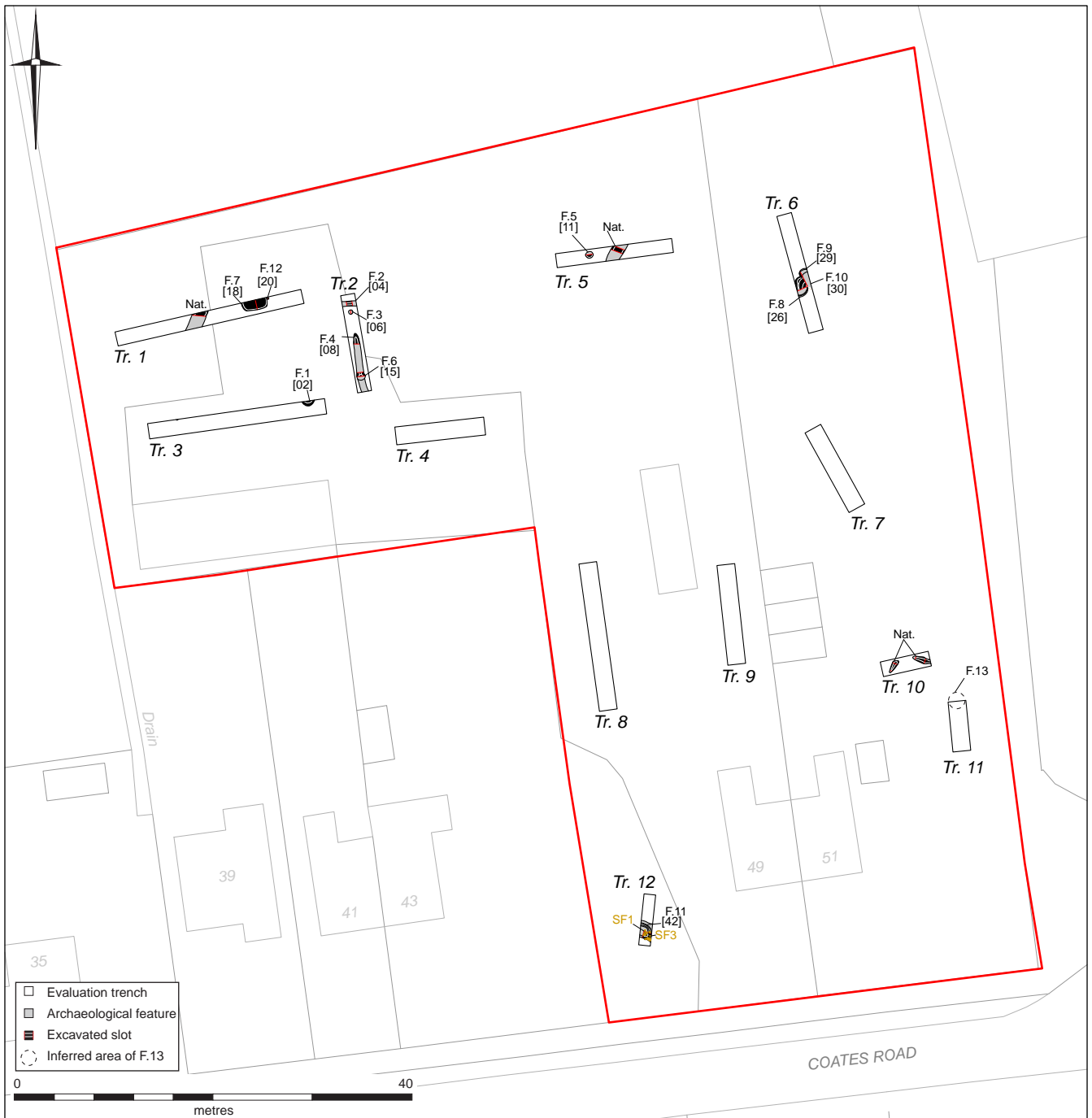


Figure 3. Plan of excavation trenching within site PDA

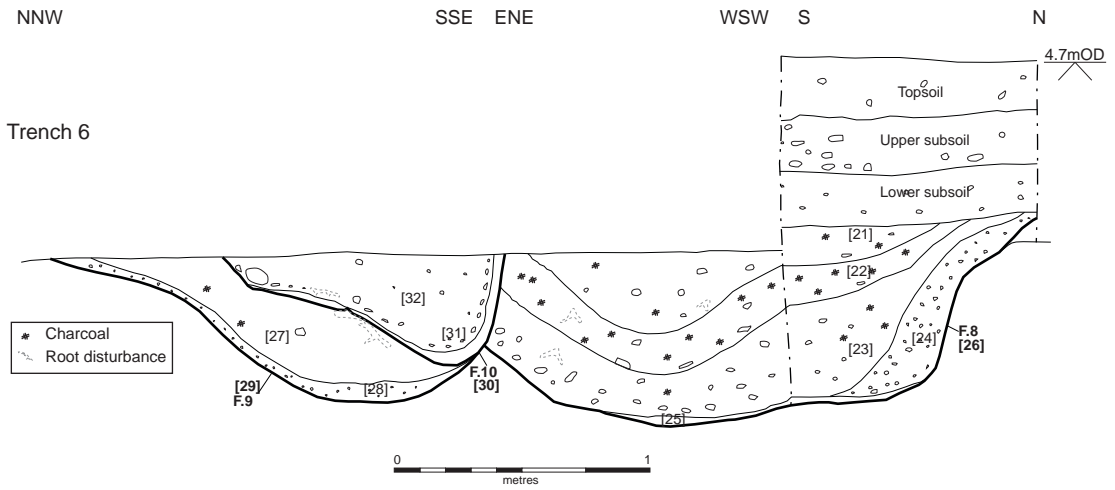


Fig. 5a)

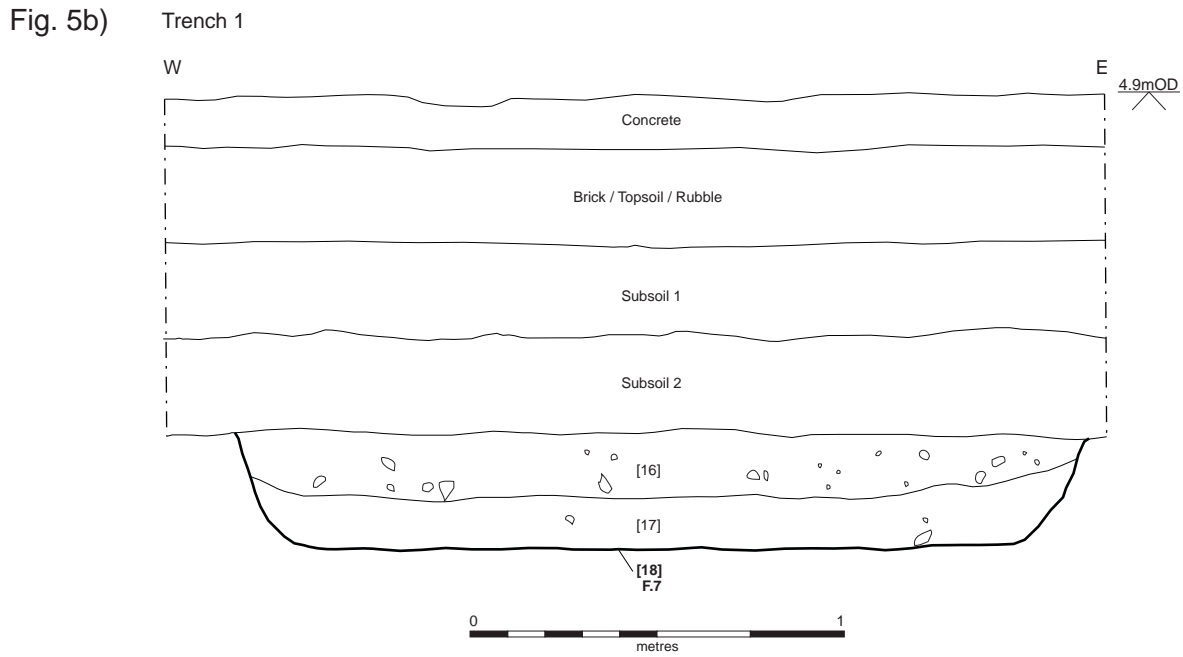


Fig. 5b)

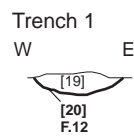


Fig. 5c)



Figure 5a. Section of intercutting pits F.8, F.9 and F.10. 5b. Section of F.7 / (SFB?) and F.12 (posthole) and 5c. Photograph of Intercutting pits (F.8-F.10)

Figure 6a.



Figure 6b.



Figure 6a. Fully excavated rectangular flat bottomed shallow pit and posthole feature F.7 - a possible SFB?. Figure 6b. Quarter-sectioned oven or kiln feature F.11 with sherds of large storage jar in Trench 12

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

[List of Projects](#) | [Manage Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

Printable version

OASIS ID: cambridg3-190914

Project details

Project name	Coates Road, Eastrea, Whittlesey
Short description of the project	Between 11th-18th June 2014 the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) undertook an archaeological evaluation of land proposed for development at nos. 49 and 51 Coates Road, Eastrea nr. Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire. Twelve archaeological evaluation trenches totalling some 116m were dug across an area of about 0.4 hectares. Some 13 archaeological features (mostly pits) were found, at least five of these producing prehistoric pottery dating to the Late Bronze Age - Middle Iron Age. These included the poorly preserved remains of two ovens or pottery kilns, a couple of intercutting rubbish pits, a field ditch, and the possible base of a sub-rectangular SFB, the latter devoid of finds apart from a few sherds of prehistoric pottery. Amongst the most notable finds were sherds from an almost complete large bucket-shaped jar together with a triangular loomweight fragment from one of the ovens or kilns alongside a large part of the broken clay lining. The current archaeological investigation indicates the probable northerly and westerly continuation of a major Late Bronze Age - Iron Age field system and area of low density settlement area previously encountered on the south side of Coates Road. However, the survival of archaeology in this area would appear to be quite variable, with some of this occurring at quite shallow depths.
Project dates	Start: 11-06-2014 End: 18-06-2014
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	CRE14 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	ECB4175 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	BOUNDARY DITCH Late Prehistoric
Monument type	PITS Late Prehistoric
Monument type	OVEN OR POTTERY KILN Iron Age
Monument type	SUNKEN FEATURED BUILDING Late Prehistoric
Significant Finds	COARSEWARE COOKING POT Late Prehistoric
Significant Finds	'BUCKET-TYPE' STORAGE JAR Iron Age

Significant Finds	CLAY OVEN/KILN LINING Iron Age
Significant Finds	TRIANGULAR CLAY LOOMWEIGHT Iron Age
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	Pre-application

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE FENLAND WHITTLESEY 49-51 Coates Road, Eastrea, Whittlesey
Postcode	PE7 2BA
Study area	0.40 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 2958 9734 52.5580555556 -0.0883333333333 52 33 29 N 000 05 18 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 4.70m Max: 6.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project brief originator	Self (i.e. landowner, developer, etc.)
Project design originator	Emma Beadsmoore
Project director/manager	Emma Beadsmoore
Project supervisor	Simon Timberlake
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Mr Ian Brown

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Physical Archive ID	CRE14
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Environmental","Worked bone","other"
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Digital Archive ID	CRE14
Digital Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Environmental","Stratigraphic","Survey","other"

Digital Media available	"GIS","Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Paper Archive ID	CRE14
Paper Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Environmental","Stratigraphic","Survey","other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Map","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Survey "

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land off Coates Road, Eastrea, Whittlesey: An archaeological evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Timberlake, S.
Other bibliographic details	report no.1241
Date	2014
Issuer or publisher	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Place of issue or publication	University of Cambridge (unpublished)
Description	20 pages typescript + 6 figures (incl colour photos) and cover. Bound copies and pdf version

Entered by Dr Simon Timberlake (st410@cam.ac.uk)

Entered on 24 September 2014

OASIS:

Please e-mail [English Heritage](#) for OASIS help and advice

© ADS 1996-2012 Created by [Jo Gilham](#) and [Jen Mitcham](#), email Last modified Wednesday 9 May 2012

Cite only: <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm> for this page