

Lattenbury Farm, Godmanchester Cambridgeshire.

An Archaeological Evaluation.



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Illustrations by Bryan Crossan

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Report No. 895
Event No. ECB 3249
August 2009

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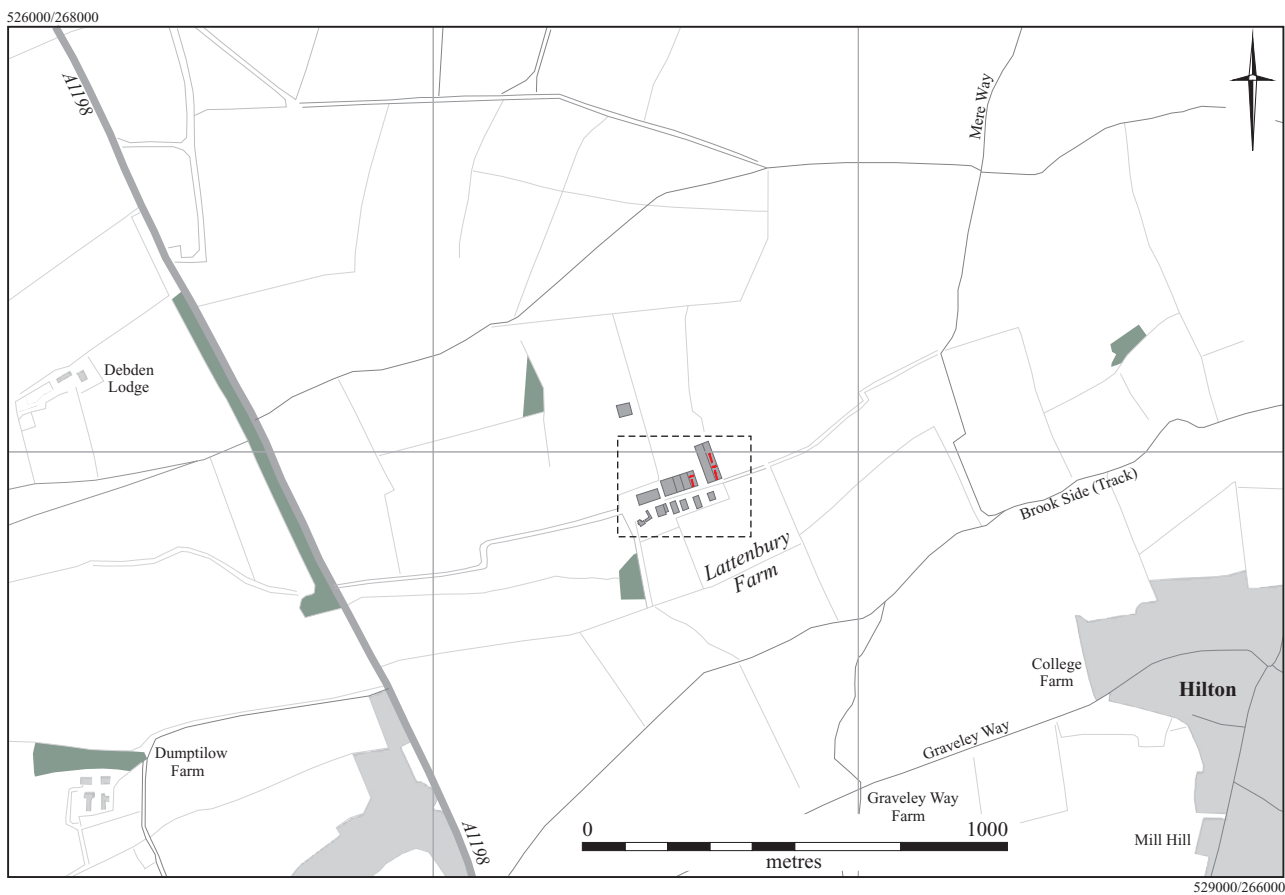
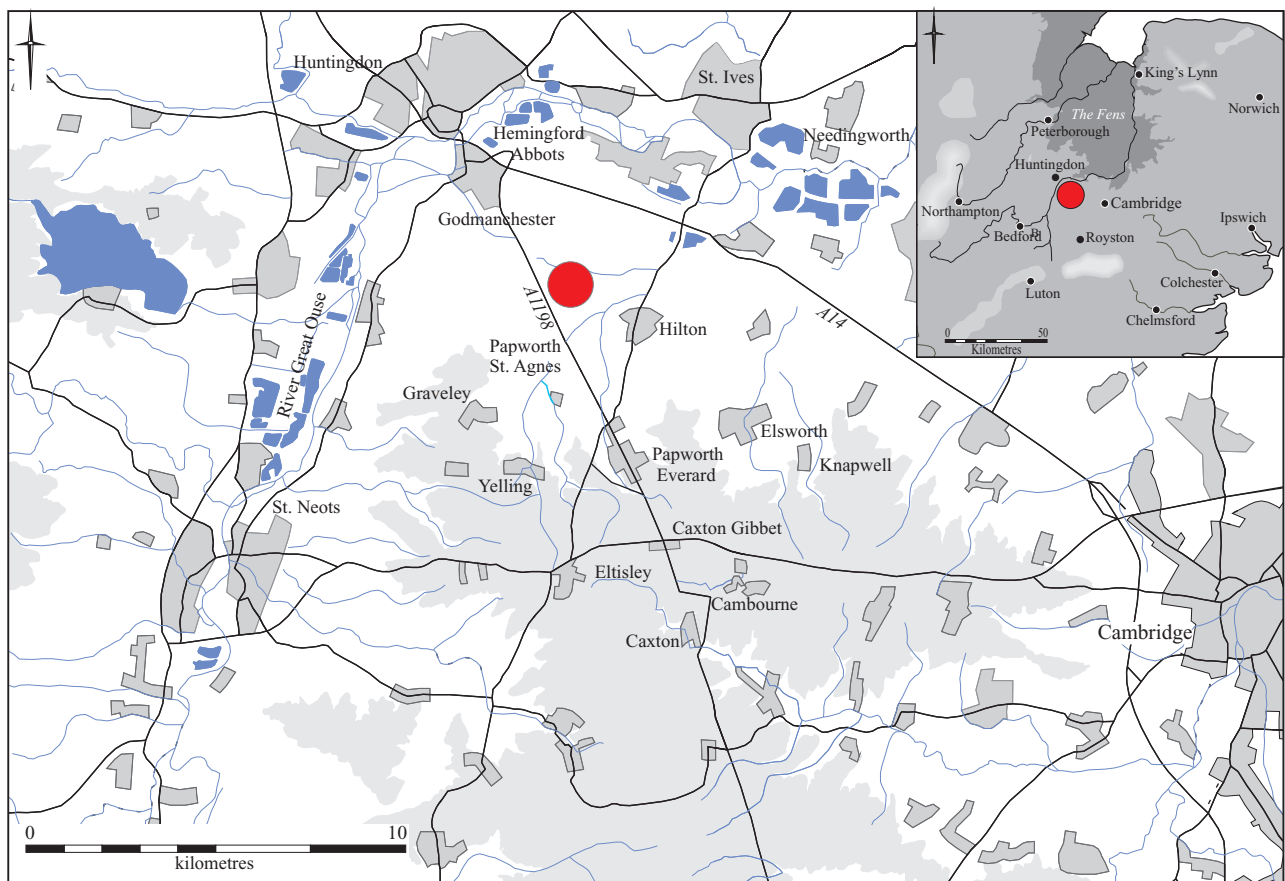


Figure 1. Location Map

Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Lattenbury Farm, near Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire, (NGR TL 276 669) between 10th and 11th August 2009 to address a condition placed upon planning permission for the construction of two agricultural buildings (a cattle shed and a machinery store). The land is located within the farm area, immediately adjacent to existing standing structures, and the underlying geology is Oxford clay (British Geological Survey 1978). The area extended over c. 1900 sq m and at approximately between 16m and 17m OD.

The evaluation trenches were excavated across the Proposed Development Areas (PDA) in order to determine the presence/absence of any archaeological remains and investigate their date, extent, character, significance and state of preservation. The trenches revealed no significant archaeological remains other than a filled-in ditched field boundary in Trench 3 that contained modern rubble and other building debris.

Archaeological Background

Extensive cropmarks have been identified to the south of the farm including a complex of linear features and enclosures, possibly representing the site of a Roman Villa at NGR TL 2769 6723, NE of Lattenbury Farm complex (CHER: MCB18473). In the same field there are other previously identified cropmarks around TL 279 672, and an additional possible Roman villa site identified from aerial photographs (CHER: MCB16157). All these features lie to the south of a relict stream channel on a local gravel spur, at their closest about 300m away from the farm complex.

Further west (TL 251 678), a number of undated features were identified along the proposed new route of the A14 using gradiometer survey including an L-shaped ditch (CHER: MCB18444). Several areas of remnant ridge and furrow agriculture are known west of the A1198 (CHER: 02520, 02521, 02524 and 02526).

Methodology

In total, 5 trenches of varying lengths ranging from 8m to 20m were machine excavated; totalling 71 linear metres or 127.80m². The trenches were stripped to the level at which archaeological activity would be revealed using a 360° tracked excavator with a toothless ditching bucket under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist. The CAU-modified version of the MoLAS recording system was used; features were planned at 1:50. All work was carried out in strict accordance with statutory Health and Safety legislation and following the recommendations of SCAUM. The site was surveyed into the Ordnance Survey Grid and Ordnance Datum by means of a RTK GPS unit.

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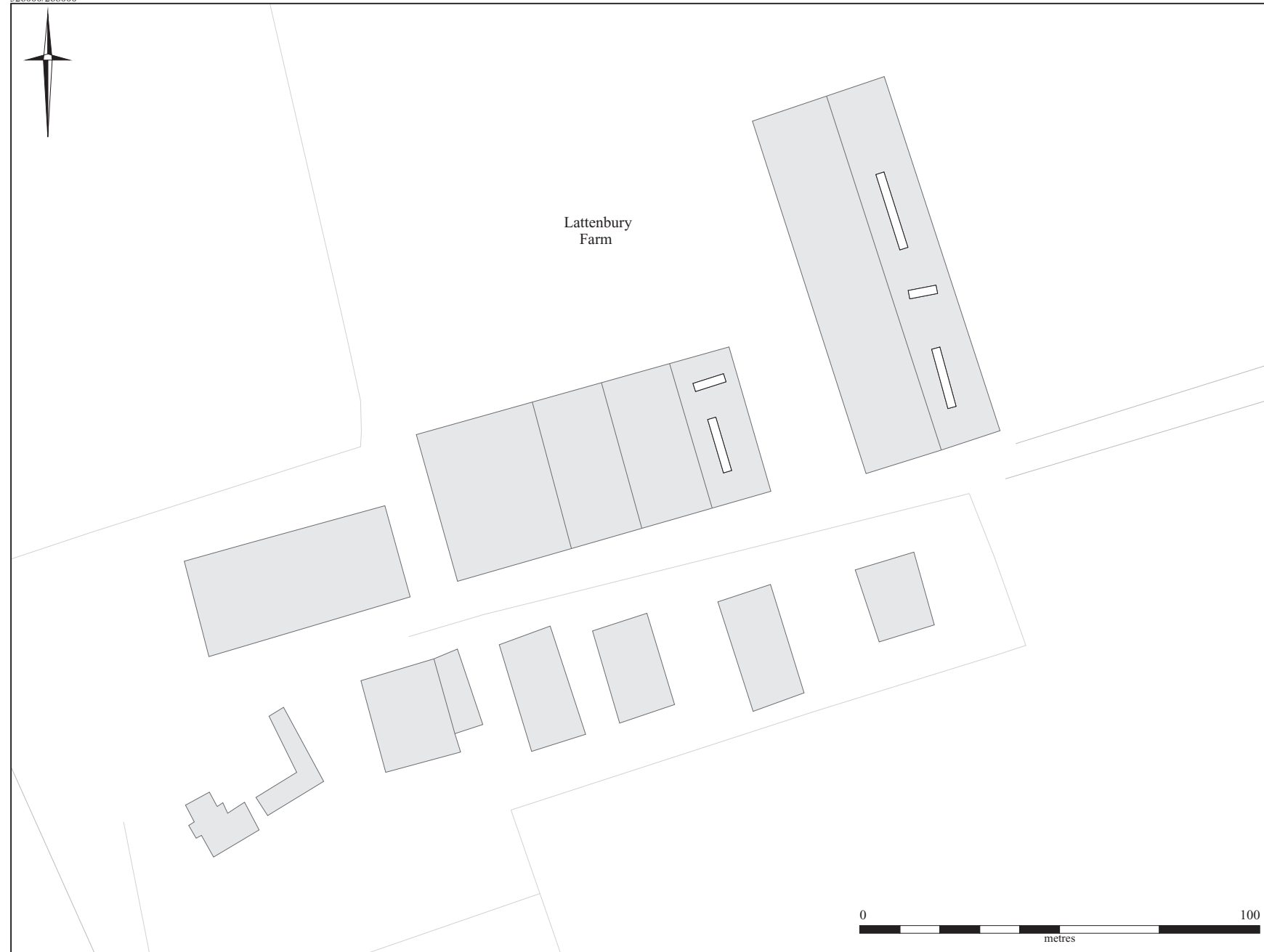


Figure 2. Trench Plan

Excavation Results

Two trenches were machined adjacent to an existing building used for grain storage (Trenches 1 and 2) with a further three (Trenches 3, 4 and 5) placed on the eastern side of an existing cow shed (Figure 2). In Trenches 1 and 2, there was a layer of hard core placed directly on top of the natural geology, as the topsoil had previously been stripped prior to the laying of hard core. There were no archaeological features in these trenches.

Trench 3 contained an old ditched field boundary (on a north-south orientation) that had been backfilled with modern building rubble and debris and modern material culture. This ditch can be seen continuing north of the farm on a north-south orientation and was evident on the 1888 Ordnance Survey Map. Trench 4 contained a field train and the rooted remains of a tree. Trench 5 also contained a field drain and a modern square-shaped pit. The natural geology in this area was mixed varying from dark blue/grey to brown/orange clay.

Discussion

The natural geology in this part of the landscape was Oxford clay and would not have been favoured for settlement or agricultural activity in the past. The evaluation provided no evidence of archaeological features with the exception of the field boundary ditch. The archaeological activity appears to have been restricted to the gravel spur to the south as evidenced from the crop marks visible on the aerial photographs.



Figure 3. Photograph of infilled boundary ditch in trench 5 and trench 4 (above).

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Appendix

Trench Depths

Trench No.	Length	Orientation	Location	Depth of Hardcore	Depth of clay	Overall depth	Geology
1	15m	N-S	0m S	0.24m	0m	0.42m	Grey/blue green clay
1	15m	N-S	7.50m	0.42m	0.06m	0.59m	Grey/blue green clay
1	15m	N-S	15m N	0.36m	0.05m	0.53m	Grey/blue green clay
2	8m	E-W	1m W	0.31m	0.19m	0.68m	Grey/blue green and orangeclay
2	8m	E-W	4m	0.46m	0m	0.66m	Grey/blue green and orangeclay
2	8m	E-W	8m	0.23m	0m	0.35m	Grey/blue green and orangeclay
3	20m	N-S	0m S	0.29m	0.20m	0.56m	Orange/brown clay
3	20m	N-S	10m	0.64m	0m	0.77m	Orange/brown clay
3	20m	N-S	1m N	0.58m	0m	0.84m	Orange/brown clay
4	8m	E-W	1m W	0.28m	0m	0.58m	Orange/brown and grey/blue/green clay
4	8m	E-W	4m	0.27m	0m	0.53m	Orange/brown and grey/blue/green clay
4	8m	E-W	8m	0.24m	0m	0.49m	Orange/brown and grey/blue/green clay
5	20m	N-S	0m S	0.22m	0m	0.55m	Orange/brown and grey/blue/green clay
5	20m	N-S	10m	0.43m	0m	0.65m	Orange/brown and grey/blue/green clay
5	20m	N-S	20m	0.32m	0m	0.50m	Orange/brown and grey/blue/green clay