



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

DURING GEOTECHNICAL TEST PITS

AT

WHITTINGHAM WAY, BISHOP'S STORTFORD,

HERTFORDSHIRE

TL 485 190

On behalf of

CgMs Consulting and

Hertfordshire County Council

OCTOBER 2007

REPORT FOR John Morris
College Farm
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FIELDWORK 10 September 2007

REPORT ISSUED 30 September 2007

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Site Code LCCF 07
JMHS Project No: 1828
Archive Location Buckinghamshire County Museum Service
Awaiting Accession number

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services during ground-works for the construction of a new agricultural building at College Farm, Long Crendon. The site lies on the north-east side of Long Crendon, off Chearsley Road. The watching brief was intended to address the concerns of the archaeological advisors (BCAS) to Aylesbury Vale District Council that the ground works might encroach on potential archaeological remains.

The fieldwork was carried out on 10th September 2007 and consisted of monitoring during machine excavation of footings for the new build. No archaeological remains were encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location

The site lies on the north-east side of Long Crendon, off Chearsley Road at NGR SP 6987 0942. Geologically the site is situated on a ridge of Portland Limestone, very close to the boundaries of the Whitchurch Sand Formation and Gault to the north and Portland Sand Formations and Kimmeridge Clays to the south.

1.2 Planning Background

Aylesbury Vale District Council granted permission for the erection of a new agricultural building at College Farm, Long Crendon. Since the site lies within an area of potential archaeological interest a condition was attached requiring the implementation of an archaeological watching brief during groundworks. Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) prepared a *Brief* for the work. John Moore Heritage Services undertook the work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by BCAS.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Long Crendon is of considerable archaeological interest with evidence for Iron Age occupation and Roman burials in the area. There is little earlier evidence for prehistoric activity in the area although a flint flake (SMR 6635) was discovered 100m to the east of the site.

Middle Iron Age and Belgic pottery (SMR 4437) was recovered 200m to the south of the site during the excavation of a water main in 1978. This led to a small excavation in 1979 that located a ditch and pit (SMR 4437) with associated Iron Age pottery (Cowell 1978).

At a distance of 300m to the south-west an Iron Age decorated bone weaving comb was discovered as a chance find.

In 1984 the water main in the area was extended to the north of Long Crendon. This was within 150m of the site. The associated watching brief located an occupation layer of dark loam. This layer extended approximately 90m in length. Finds recovered from this layer included Middle Iron Age and Belgic pottery (SMR 5404). Also recovered were ditches, heaths a clay – lined oven and a storage pit indicating a settlement located in the vicinity (Carstairs 1984).

Within 50m to the south-east of the site is an area marked as “Roman burial ground” (SMR 0564). Many skeletons as well as cremations were recorded here in 1824. Finds from the area include stamped Samian ware, cremation urns and a lamp. Also found during ploughing was a

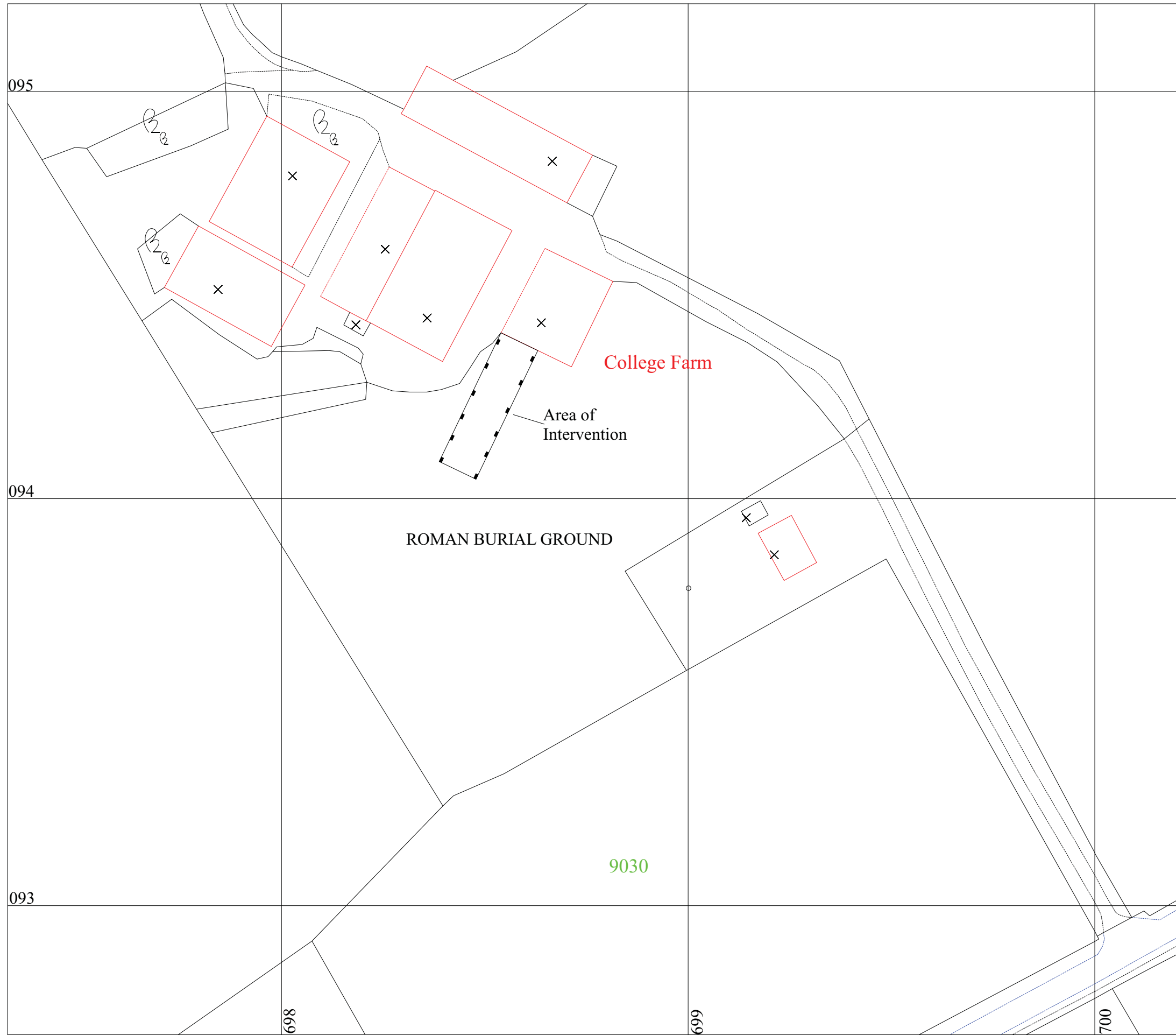


Figure 1. Site location

0 50 m

small sarcophagus containing three cremation urns. Coins from Claudius 41 – 54 AD have also been recovered from this location.

Also found at this cemetery in 1851 were bones of large mammals, axe and spear heads and a small quantity of jewellery. A Saxon date has been put forward by some but no other Saxon finds have been recovered from the area. It is likely that this material is of Iron Age or Roman date. Sherds of a 1st–2nd century Roman jar (SMR5532) were recovered 100m to the south of the site. Sherds have also been recovered 150m to the south (SMR 5404) during fieldwork in 1984. Further sherds of Romano-British pottery (SMR 4437), were found 200m to the south in 1978. Pottery of this period is also scattered to the north-east, as the finds have been recovered from up to 500m away (SMR 4353).

A coin of Constantine the Great was discovered while digging a grave in the churchyard 350m to the south (SMR 1015).

The nearby Chearsley Road, known as “Angle Way” is possibly of Roman Origin (RCHM 1912).

The village is recorded in the Domesday Book as *Credendone* and rated at 20 hides. It is held by Walter Giffard, son of Osborn De Bolebec. On the death of Walter’s son, also called Walter, the lands reverted to the crown. In 1191 the manor was partitioned between William Marshal and Richard de Clare.

The remains of Walter Giffard’s castle are reputed to lie 500m to the south-east on Cop Hill (SMR 2014). The 12th century church (SMR 1015) lies 400m to the south of the site.

Other medieval structures in the vicinity of the site include, the court house (SMR 0158) that lies 400m to the south, the fish ponds and manor, (SMR 0209) 500m to the south, and the site of a cross (SMR 2189). This cross marked the site of the weekly Thursday market allowed to William Marshal in 1218.

To the east at a distance of 400m is a disused gravel pit (SMR9092) dating from the 19th century. An undated rectilinear crop-mark (SMR 6208) lies 450m to the north.

Ridge and furrow can be seen in fields to the north and west, but not in the area of the site.

A watching brief was conducted in 1995 at College Farm during the initial stages of construction of a new agricultural building 50m to the north-west of the site. No archaeological remains were recorded (Parkhouse 1995).

Aerial photographs taken in 1946 (CPE/UK/897 f/20/58sqdn) and 1950 (541/479f20/16,800) show minimal farm buildings in the area. One photograph, (CPE/UK/2436 f20/16500/541sqdn), shows a possible circular feature to the south of the site adjacent to the access road. This also appears to be visible on the 1985 photograph (RC8-HH 225). This photograph also shows that the access road has slightly changed course. Some indistinct marks are visible on a photograph (20 88 202) from 1988 although the circular feature is not visible.

Both Jeffery’s map of 1770 and Bryant’s map of 1825 show no development in the area of the site. The Historic Landscape Characterisation map depicts the site in an area of parliamentary enclosure dated to 1827. The enclosure map recorded several small fields in the area; one to the south is named as “Pond Piece”. This possibly indicates the presence of a pond at one time in the vicinity.

The first edition OS map of 1885 has similar field boundaries to those present today. The area of the site is marked as “site of cemetery”.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To identify and record any significant remains revealed during the course of the groundworks.
- In particular to record and date
 - any Iron Age and Roman remains
 - any Saxon and medieval remains
 - any evidence for activity to support the theory that a medieval earthwork stood on this site and any related domestic, industrial or commercial deposits.
- To make public the results of the investigations

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

3.2 Methodology

A desk-based assessment of the site was undertaken and the results were incorporated into the Written Scheme of Investigation and into this report.

All invasive ground-work was monitored by an archaeologist and all resulting surfaces were then inspected for any significant archaeological features.

Monitoring took place on 10th September 2007.

4 RESULTS

All deposits were assigned individual context numbers. There were no cuts recorded and layer numbers are indicated in brackets ().

The proposed line of the new agricultural building projects directly off the end of an already existing barn in a north-easterly direction, (NGR SP 6987 0942). This is located in a field currently given over to pasture and containing cattle on the day of the watching brief. The new

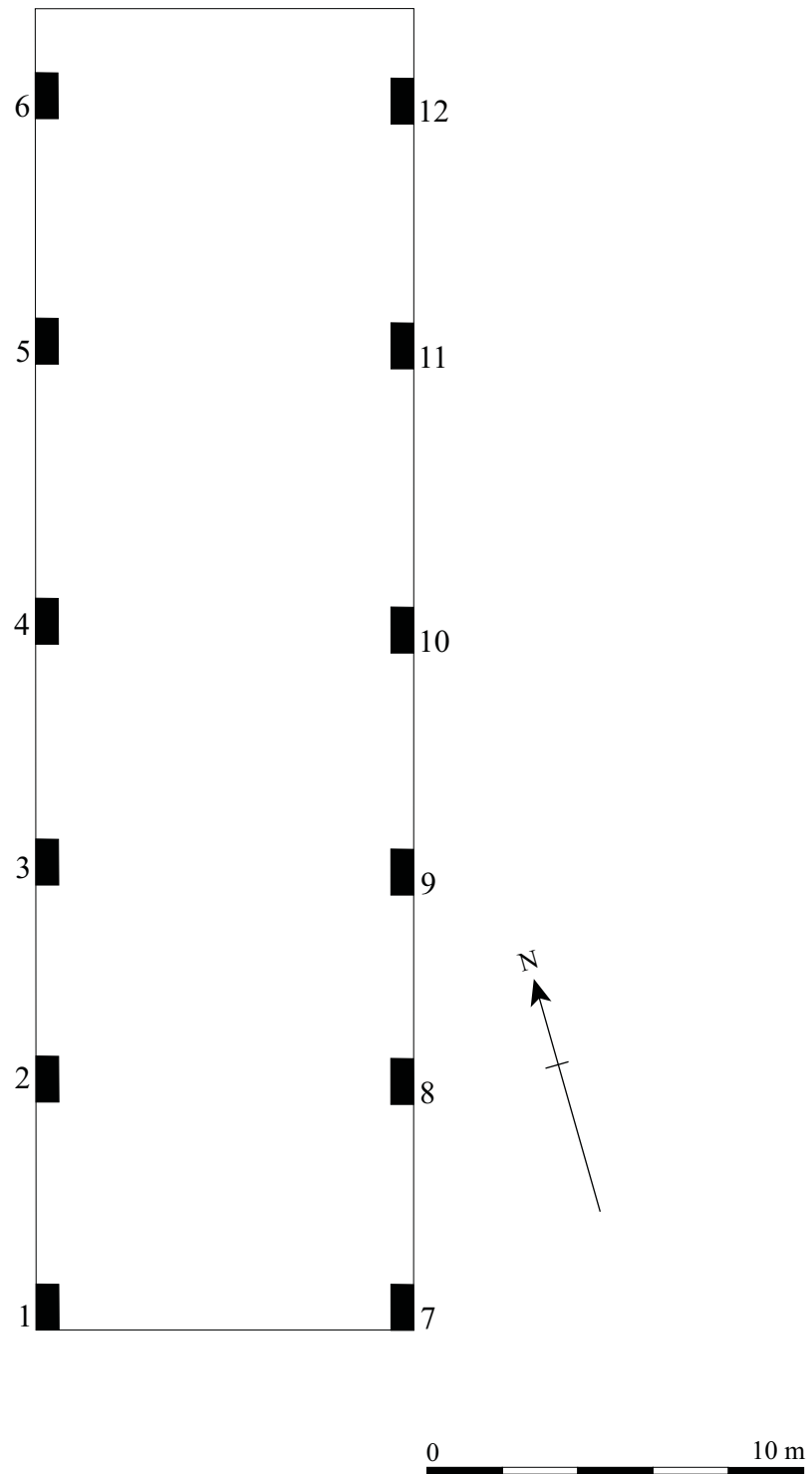


Figure 2. Plan of barn footings

build is a post built structure and as a result intrusive excavations existed in the form of footings pits only rather than full-length foundations trenches.

The floor dimensions of the new build are 35m in length x 10 m wide, with a 1m x (approx) 70cm footing every 7 meters giving a total number of twelve footings in two parallel lines with a ten meter spacing between them.

All of the footings contained only two contexts in the form of layers, (01/00) and (01/01), (01/00) being a ploughsoil and (01/01) being friable but heavily compacted limestone natural. The ploughsoil varied in thickness from 400mm in pit 8 to 1000mm in pit 1 and 1300mm in pit 2. elsewhere it was 600-900mm thick.

All of the footings were of slightly varied depth due to the varied level of the limestone and the various levels of its compaction. The digger being used was not powerful enough to penetrate the more highly compact areas to any substantial depth. The deepest footings reached 1.6m deep, the shallowest around 0.9m.

No archaeology was present in any of the footings. Services were present in footings 3, 6 and 9 in the forms of water and electricity, (water pipe being severed in footing 3).

5 FINDS

There were no finds present in any of the footings. On the surface of the field nearby to the footings were small scatters of agricultural rubbish, in the form of iron machinery parts and broken brick, all modern in date. Close to the NE corner of the field were the remains of a dump and bonfire containing modern wire and iron fragments and some 19th and 20th century pottery fragments. It appears that the field has been regularly used for burning waste. None of the finds were retained.

6 DISCUSSION

No archaeological remains was discovered within the footings and only modern materials were found within the immediate vicinity.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

BCAS Brief	The primary site records
Written scheme of investigation	The drawn record
The project report	

Archive Location

The archive is currently maintained by John Moore Heritage Services pending notification of an accession number. On receipt of an accession number the archive will be transferred to:

Buckinghamshire County Museum, Technical Centre, Tring Road, Halton, Aylesbury HP22 5PJ

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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