
**Proceedings of the
Cambridge Antiquarian Society**

(incorporating the Cambs and Hunts Archaeological Society)

**Volume CIV
(104)
for 2015**

Editor
Richard Halliday

Associate Editor (Archaeology) Professor Stephen Upex

Published by the Cambridge Antiquarian Society 2015

ISSN 0309-3606

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Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement and land-use at the Milton Landfill and Park & Ride Sites, Cambridgeshire

Tom Phillips with contributions by Michael Bamforth, Ian Baxter, Steve Boreham, Lisa Brown, Matt Brudenell, Chris Faine, Rachel Fosberry, Val Fryer and Sarah Percival. Illustrations by Sarah Lucas, Lucy Gane, Gillian Greer and Charlotte Davies

Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society CIV pp. 7–30

Excavations at two sites to the west of Milton, Cambridgeshire have revealed evidence for settlement and land-use in the Cam Valley spanning the earlier Bronze Age to the later Iron Age. Waterholes were the dominant features in almost all phases and these produced significant artefactual and ecofactual assemblages. Waterlogged remains include three log ladders that will add to the growing corpus of these items found in the region. Although the foci of settlement altered over time, and changed from 'open' in the earlier Iron Age to 'enclosed' in the later Iron Age, the general picture of a grassland-dominated landscape and predominantly pastoral-based farming economy, heavily focused on cattle, appears to have remained fairly constant. The large pottery assemblage (over 6000 sherds, c. 71kg), which is primarily earlier Iron Age in date, makes an important contribution to regional ceramic studies of the period and shows clear affinities with groups of material from sites further up the Cam Valley and within its hinterland to the east of Cambridge.

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Later Neolithic and Early Bronze Age activity at North Fen, Sutton Gault, Cambridgeshire

Jonathan Tabor with contributions by Lawrence Billington, Steve Boreham, Charles French, Val Fryer, Mark Knight, Vida Rajkovača and Simon Timberlake

Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society CIV pp. 31–54

Excavations at North Fen, Sutton Gault undertaken in 2010 revealed evidence of significant later Neolithic and Early Bronze Age activity comprising artefact scatters within preserved buried soil deposits and features, including pits, watering holes and ring ditches. Analysis of a substantial later Neolithic flint scatter suggests that during this period the North Fen 'island' was the focus for task-specific activity related, in part at least, to hunting. In contrast, evidence suggests a more long term commitment to place during the Beaker/Early Bronze Age period that resulted in the establishment of watering holes and funerary monuments, which were recorded alongside more tangible evidence of settlement/occupation. In addition, pollen analysis of samples from a watering hole – considered in conjunction with the results of previous palaeoenvironmental work – has provided evidence of a relatively dramatic change in the local environment during the later Neolithic and Early Bronze Age, comprising woodland clearance and an increase in arable activity.

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Late Iron Age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Medieval occupation at the former Church Hall site, High Street, Soham

Tom Woolhouse with Andrew Peachey, Julia EM Cussans, John R Summers and Antony RR Mustchin

Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society CIV pp. 55–70

Between June and July 2011, archaeological excavation on the site of St Andrew's church hall in Soham town centre revealed well-preserved multi-period settlement remains. The most significant discovery was a late Iron Age-to-early Roman (c. 50 BC – AD 70/80) ditched enclosure with associated rubbish pits, and evidence for high-status occupation, including potsherds from imported Gallo-Belgic vessels. Activity shifted away from the site before resuming in the late Roman period. A pit and residual Ipswich ware provide the first archaeological evidence for middle Anglo-Saxon occupation in the town centre. Important late Anglo-Saxon settlement remains were also present. Wheat formed the mainstay of the arable economy in all periods, although significant quantities of cereal grains were only encountered in Saxo-Norman and later contexts. The Saxo-Norman and medieval site also yielded numerous arable weed species.

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Change in a South Cambridgeshire parish: understanding the Bronze Age to late medieval settlement within Haslingfield

Cambridge Archaeology Field Group (CAFG). Illustrations by Lucy Gane

Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society CIV pp. 71–87

Extensive investigation within Haslingfield parish was intermittently undertaken between 1979 and 2012 by the Cambridge Archaeology Field Group (CAFG). It comprised field-walking about a quarter of available land within the parish, an earthwork survey, the excavation of 27 test pits and eight "casual observations" during other excavations largely within the present village.

Several likely settlement sites have been identified: a probable Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age site, a Middle/Late Iron Age to Roman settlement, a probable villa, an Anglo-Saxon settlement which may have been the nucleus of the present Haslingfield village, and a medieval-to-late medieval hamlet lying 500m to the north of the present village. This work gives new insights into how the present village probably represents a consequence of expansion in both the Saxo-Norman and medieval periods around, as well as within, an earlier large green.

Planned Redevelopments in Medieval and Early Post-Medieval Chesterton

Richard Newman. Incorporating material from Martin Allen (numismatics) Richard Darrah (timber), Val Fryer (environmental remains), David Hall (ceramics), Quita Mould (leather), Vida Rajkovača (faunal remains) and Simon Timberlake (worked stone)

Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society CIV pp. 89–105

Previous excavations conducted in and around the periphery of Chesterton have revealed details of the settlement's origins and early development. More recent work undertaken within the settlement core provides additional information pertaining to its subsequent medieval and post-medieval reorganisation and expansion. Here, c. 1200, a series of burgrave-type plots were established. Probably occupying former strips within the preceding open fields, their establishment marks the culmination of a wider process of village nucleation that may have been initiated by nearby Barnwell Priory. Numerous medieval features, including a stone-lined well, were investigated. In c. 1560 an extensive redevelopment was undertaken; the existing buildings were demolished, the ground-surface raised and a series of narrow tenements established. This latter event most probably represents a property speculation undertaken following the sale of the Priory's former demesne.

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Iron Age and Romano-British settlement at the Papworth Hospital car park, Papworth Everard, Cambridgeshire

Yvonne Wolfram-Murray and Andy Chapman with contributions by Simon Carlyle, Dana Challinor, Pat Chapman, Val Fryer, Matilda Holmes, Tora Hylton, Ian Meadows, Ed McSloy, Paul Kajewski

Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society CIV pp. 107–124

Part of a middle/late Iron Age and Romano-British settlement complex at Papworth Hospital and Business Park was excavated in advance of a new car park. The earliest artefact is a Neolithic polished flint axe. Settlement probably commenced in the middle/late Iron Age (2nd-1st centuries BC), but only the northern corner of a ditched enclosure lay within the excavated area; with the focus of settlement further south. This enclosure remained in use into the early Roman period, but by the later 1st century AD there was a new and more extensive system of boundary ditches and small sub-enclosures, which were modified over time. The coarse ware pottery indicates that this was a small rural farmstead, although a kiln plate may indicate short-lived pottery manufacturing. In the late Roman period there was a new ditch system, perhaps the corner of a large enclosure lying largely beyond the excavated area. The settlement was abandoned in the 4th century AD. Cropmark evidence and other nearby excavations indicate that the excavated area lay at the northern end of an extensive area of Iron Age and Romano-British rural settlement, and this is compared with other nearby contemporary settlement. Pottery from the final fills of the latest enclosure ditch is broadly dated to the 5th to mid-8th centuries AD, indicating nearby activity during the early/middle Anglo-Saxon period.

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The Medieval Schools of Cambridge, 1200–1550

Nicholas Orme

Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society CIV pp. 125–136

Cambridge was an important centre of school, as well as university, education from at least the thirteenth century. In addition to elementary teaching, which has not left traces, there came to be several grammar schools, most of them charging fees, with an endowed institution at Jesus College that was free and open to the public from 1506 to 1568. The article lists the known schools and schoolmasters, discusses what may be learnt about their pupils and studies, and examines the history and nature of the officer known as the 'master of glomery'. The university had an additional influence on school education beyond the city. In the late fourteenth century a course of study was introduced for a degree of 'master of grammar', which was mainly followed by serving or prospective schoolmasters in eastern England, and in 1439 William Bingham founded Godshouse to support the training of such schoolmasters. These initiatives faded away in the early sixteenth century, when the rise of humanist or classical Latin, followed by the Reformation, introduced a new era in the history of school education in Cambridge.

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Decline and growth in the late medieval fenland: the examples of Outwell and Upwell

John S Lee

Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society CIV pp. 137–147

This article looks at the evidence for growth and decline in the late medieval economy, a theme which has long been debated by historians, by examining the fenland communities of Outwell and Upwell. The fenland landscape shaped the local economy and society, with activities based around the exploitation of natural resources and the use of waterways as key transport routes. The landscape had itself been shaped by the embanking and diverting of rivers, and these efforts may have had to intensify during the 14th and 15th centuries to counter increased flooding risks. The reduced demand for land in this period is reflected in the accounts of the bishop of Ely and several monastic landowners. Nonetheless, the wills of smaller landholders, the prevalence of trading activities and guilds, and building works at Beaupré Hall, Welle Manor Hall and particularly at the parish churches, point to evidence of prosperity in Outwell and Upwell in the later Middle Ages.

Anglo-Saxon ‘work boxes’ and the Burwell Grave 42 Box, Christian or Pagan?

Anthony Gibson

Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society CIV pp. 149–160

The article discusses a highly decorated box recovered from Burwell (Anglo-Saxon cemetery) Grave 42, and attempts to establish if this and other boxes had solely a secular use or whether the possession of such boxes reveals the social identities of their owners and their beliefs, pagan or Christian. Since their earliest discovery, archaeologists and historians have been unable to reach a consensus on their purpose. These enigmatic containers have been variously described as work boxes, needle cases, amulet containers or relic boxes. A typology of such containers is outlined.

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Papists and Non-jurors in the Isle of Ely, 1559–1745

Francis Young

Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society CIV pp. 161–170

The Cambridgeshire Fens were one of the most strongly Protestant areas of early modern England, yet the incarceration of Catholic priests at Wisbech Castle brought into being a network of Catholic sympathisers in the area that allowed both priests and converts to escape. A small number of men from the Isle of Ely became (or tried to become) Catholic priests in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and there is strong evidence that some families, such as the Prances of March, were at least crypto-Catholic in sympathy. In the eighteenth century Catholics and Jacobite Non-jurors owned extensive lands in the Fens, and while some were absentee landlords, others such as Simon Hake and John Pitchford were residents. In the light of the evidence, this article argues that the perception that Catholicism was virtually non-existent in the Isle of Ely is in need of reappraisal.