Medieval Occupation at The Old Post Office, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Client: The Whitfield Group

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Medieval Occupation at The Old Post Office, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in the courtyard to the rear of the Old Post Office, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire between 30/06/08 and 03/07/08. OA EAST (formerly Cambridgeshire County Council's CAM ARC) undertook the work on behalf of The Whitfield Group.

The evaluation was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed development area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning (Department of the Environment 1990).

A number of substantial pits were recorded within the development area. These included potential quarry pits, some showing re-use as rubbish pits, and a possible well. The archaeological remains recorded during the evaluation were similar in character to those encountered during excavations undertaken by The Whittlesey Society in the early 1980s. These works, comprising a total of fifteen test pits, revealed medieval pitting in the centre of the development area with a possible later cobbled surface towards the east.

The archaeological deposits recorded by the current evaluation and the excavations of the 1980s suggest that the plot formed part of a yard or garden during the Medieval period; in all likelihood this was associated with properties fronting the Market Square.
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at the courtyard to the rear of the Old Post Office, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire.

1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice team (CAPCA; Planning Application F/YR06/0633/F), supplemented by a Specification prepared by Richard Mortimer of OA East (formerly Cambridgeshire County Council's CAM ARC).

1.1.3 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by CAPCA, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

1.2 Geology and topography
1.2.1 The site lies on an island of sand and gravel (March Gravels) overlying Oxford Clay at a height of between 6.00m and 7.00m AOD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background
1.3.1 Whittlesey sits on a large gravel-capped island of high ground in the fens immediately east of the ‘mainland’ at Peterborough and straddles the Romano-British (or Romanised) ‘Fen Causeway’ route across the fens from Peterborough to March and on to Norfolk. It has been extensively settled and exploited, particularly in the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British periods, and large areas of ritual and settlement archaeology of these periods have been excavated along the western fringes of the island prior to gravel and clay extraction. However, little is known of the archaeology of Whittlesey itself as the town centre has seen little systematic archaeological fieldwork (Mortimer, 2008).

1.3.2 Medieval activity is likely to have been centred on the area of the current town centre. The Whittlesey Society excavations of the early 1980s recovered large quantities of medieval pottery along with animal bone, glass, worked bone and stone, and a few metal finds, including a 15th century silver penny and copper-alloy brooch (HER 01963 and 11910). The medieval St Mary’s Church and Manor House lie immediately to the south of the site and Anglo-Saxon remains were recorded in excavations within this area in 2004 (ECB 1616 and MCB 15935) (Mortimer, 2008).

1.3.3 The development area lies within the historic core of the town, close to the Market Cross (HER 02814 and SAM 32) and it was thought possible that Saxon as well as
Medieval deposits, features and finds of a domestic and/or industrial nature could have survived (Mortimer 2008).

1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 The author would like to thank Geoff Allen and The Whitfield Group who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Richard Mortimer. Chris Thatcher carried out the evaluation with the assistance of Spencer Cooper and Chris Faine. The illustrations were produced by Caomhín Ó Coileáin and Richard Mortimer edited the report. Thanks also to Simon of Rose Plant Ltd who machined the trenches.

1.4.2 The brief for the archaeological works was written by Andy Thomas, who visited and monitored the evaluation.
2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims
2.1.1 The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

2.2 Methodology
2.2.1 The Brief required an approximate 5% sample of the site be subjected to trial trenching (the development area is 730 sq m). The limited area of the site, and associated difficulty in manoeuvring the digger, made test pits the preferred option over trenches and two 4x4m and one 2x2m test pits (36 sq m) were opened.

2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked 3 tonne 360° type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. It was necessary to amend the trenching strategy as a result of the ground conditions and sub-surface obstacles. Trench 1 was excavated as planned but Trenches 2 and 3 had to be altered as a result of a large modern drain running through the development area. The shape of Trench 2 was altered to 6m x 2m in order to avoid the services. The overall size of Trench 3 had to be reduced to 1.2m x 2.10m as a result of the proximity of the drain, a boundary wall and a soak-away filled with modern brick which was encountered during excavation (Fig.1).

2.2.3 It was necessary to use a toothed bucket to remove an unusually deep and hard packed hardcore layer immediately underlying the brick paving that sealed the site. As soon as this was removed excavation of the underlying soils was completed using a toothless bucket.

2.2.4 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.

2.2.5 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's pro-forma sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

2.2.6 A total of three environmental samples were taken during the evaluation from features in Trenches 1 and 3.

2.2.7 Conditions on site were good with predominantly dry and bright weather conditions and dry ground conditions.
3 Results

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The trial trenching revealed a series of Medieval pits across the development area. The results are presented below by trench.

3.2 Trench 1

3.2.1 A significant level of modern disturbance, in the form of a large concrete service run and iron pipe, were recorded in this trench. Both were aligned north to south. Whilst these had not truncated the archaeological deposits the concrete did obstruct and preclude machining down to the natural sands and gravels along its length (Fig.2).

3.2.2 Three archaeological features were recorded, two pits (105 & 107) and a small posthole (109), none of which lay fully within the area of the trench. Pit 105 lay in the northeast corner of the trench and extended beyond the excavation area to north and east, and beneath the concrete service run to the west. The pit was c. 0.80m deep with steep, rough hewn concave sides and base. Three deposits were recorded filling the feature (102, 103 & 104; see Fig.2, section 1). The primary deposit comprised a black/brown sandy silt lining the bottom of the pit representing a layer of primary silting prior to the deposition of fill 103, a lighter brown sandy silt that filled most of the remainder of the feature. The tertiary fill (102) lay in the depression formed by the settling of 103 and was comprised of a grey-black sandy silt, and contained several sherds of 13th - 14th century pottery. There was extensive rooting in evidence throughout the feature.

3.2.3 Pit 107 extended beyond the south eastern limit of the trench. It was however possible to excavate a part section through the feature, which revealed it to be almost vertical sided with a flat base and 0.70m deep (Fig. 2, section 2). A single fill was recorded (106) that comprised a dark sandy silt containing numerous sherds of pottery, dated to the 13th - 14th century, alongside two sherds of residual Stamford ware. Animal bone and a sherd of window glass were also recovered.

3.2.4 In the northwestern corner of the trench, a shallow possible posthole (109) was recorded that contained a single dark brown sand silt fill (108). No finds were recovered from this feature.

3.2.5 Two further possible features were investigated close to the centre of the trench but these were found to be the result of root disturbance.

3.3 Trench 2

3.3.1 An area of fairly dense pitting was recorded on the western side of the trench. Upon excavating sections through this area two large pits were identified (208 & 210). Pit 208 was located towards the south of the trench and extended beyond its western limit (Fig.2). The section dug through it revealed to have a steep sided, slightly concave profile filled by three deposits (Fig.2 section 4). The feature was approximately 0.60m north to south and 0.40m deep. The primary fill (207) comprised a dark brown sandy silt that was probably the result of natural silting, overlying this was 206, a mid brown sandy silt. The tertiary fill (205), a dark grey sandy silt with infrequent gravel inclusions, contained a number of Late Medieval pottery sherds - Bourne D ware and Shelley wares, alongside residual, abraded Thetford ware. A few fragments of animal bone were also recovered.
3.3.2 Pit 210 was located to the north and was found to have vertical sides. It was excavated to a depth of 1.20m, at which point excavation ceased on safety grounds. The depth of the trench and the limited access to the cut as a result of the pit extending beyond the trench limit, precluded full excavation. Two fills were recorded, 213 was the lowest fill excavated and comprised a mid brown sandy silt, overlying this, the tertiary fill (209) was found to contain Late medieval pottery and animal bone.

3.3.3 A shallow pit or posthole 0.35m diameter and 0.18m deep (204) was located in the southern part of the trench; the single fill (203) contained no finds.

3.3.4 The edges of the Whittlesey Society test pits, dug in the 1980s, were recorded running along the eastern edge of Trench 2 (212). A section was excavated through the backfill (211) of these intrusions, which revealed them to have been excavated 0.12m below the base of Trench 2 (Fig. 2).

3.4 Trench 3

3.4.1 Pit 313 was recorded in the base of Trench 3, underlying 309. This feature was up to 0.59m deep (from where?) , square in plan and with a steep sided profile. The base of the cut was broadly flat. It continued beyond the northern limit of the trench and appeared to have a southern limit that had been truncated by a 1980s test pit (see below).

3.4.2 The fills of the pit comprised a primary deposit of dark black-brown sandy silt (312) mixed with darker bands with concentrations of charcoal throughout. The Late Medieval/Early Post Medieval pottery assemblage recovered from this fill was heavily sooted. Comparatively large quantities of animal bone, including a number of sheep, cattle and horse jaws were also recovered and a 20L environmental sample was taken (see Appendix X). This fill was up to 0.36m thick and by far the most extensive deposit within 313. Overlying this was a layer of grey brown sandy silt (311) that contained a lower frequency of animal bone. The uppermost deposit recorded in 313 was a lens of laminated, light grey silt (310) extending out of the western profile. This did not extend to the edge of the cut and it is suggested that this may have represented a layer of silting that accumulated in the depression formed by the settlement of the lower layers, this deposit was also sampled.

3.4.3 The western section of the trench (Fig.3 section 8) revealed a third feature cut from high up in the sequence (307). A single mid grey sandy silt (306) was recorded filling this pit and several sherds of Late Medieval Bourne D pottery were recovered from the lower part of the fill (Fig.3). These soils need a section of their own in the sequence.

3.4.4 The pit truncated two soil layers (308 & 309) interpreted as possible Medieval garden soils. These layers were 0.34m & 0.33m thick respectively and sealed pit 313.

3.4.5 The northernmost test pit, dug in the 1980s by The Whittlesey Society, was recorded in the southern part of Trench 3. This was recorded as 305 (Fig.3 section 7). The fills of this feature (301, 302 & 303) appeared to comprise redeposited material derived from pit 313, mixed with topsoil.

3.5 Finds Summary

3.5.1 The evaluation at The Old Post Office, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire produced a small pottery assemblage from three trenches. It included examples of late Saxon and early medieval Stamford and Thetford wares, which in this assemblage appeared to be residual; their presence alongside Early Medieval wares suggested that they were post conquest in date. The mid 12th,13th and 14th centuries were also represented with the
presence of Lyveden-Stanion and Shelly ware and the 16th century by the presence of Bourne D wares. The condition of the overall assemblage was unabraded with a large average sherd size. The assemblage revealed medieval and early post medieval occupation of this area of Whittlesey, hinting also at early medieval activity on or close to the site (Fletcher, App. C).

3.6 Environmental Summary

3.6.1 Three environmental samples were taken from features across the site. The plant remains in this assemblage included a mixture of cereal grains, associated weed seeds and sedges. The weed seed assemblage suggested utilisation of a wetland environment typical of the Fen-edge. Saw sedge was traditionally used in this area for thatching and could have been burnt accidentally. Sedges and spike rushes were also used as fuel for flash-firing of bread ovens (R.Ballantyne pers. comm.).

3.6.2 Cereal grains, in particular those of bread wheat were abundant in Sample 3. The presence of stinking mayweed (A.cotula) suggests that the crop were grown of heavy clay soils prior to importation to the site.

3.6.3 The presence of fish bones and shell fish in this assemblage suggesting that these were dietary constituents. Mineralised maggots were recovered from samples 1 and 3, which suggests that these deposits may have contained cess.

3.6.4 The preliminary appraisal of a selection of samples from this site showed that there is potential for the recovery of plant remains.

3.6.5 An informative assemblage of plant remains was recovered from Sample 3. The mixture of such a variety of cereals and weed seeds suggests that this feature was utilised for the disposal of domestic and culinary waste on a number of occasions.
4 Discussion and Conclusions

4.1 Medieval Pitting

4.1.1 The evaluation revealed a number of substantial pits across the development area, possibly excavated to fulfil a variety of functions. The rough hewn aspect of pit 105 and comparatively low frequency of finds when compared with 107, may suggest that it was dug as a quarry pit for the extraction of gravel and backfilled soon after with displaced topsoil.

4.1.2 Pits 107 and 208 had more regular profiles and their fills yielded a greater quantity of finds material, chiefly pot sherds and faunal remains. This could suggest that they were used for slightly more immediate, primary rubbish disposal. The pottery assemblage from this trench was dated to the 13th to 14th century. Unlike the features within Trenches 2 & 3 no Later Medieval or Post Medieval pottery was recovered from this part of the site.

4.1.3 Pit 210 had vertical sides and was considerably deeper than the other features on the site. It's shaft-like profile suggests that it may have served as a well. Whilst the excavated fills showed no evidence of being waterlain it may be that these represented the upper backfill of the feature, once it fell out of use, and sat above the level of the water table. The upper fill of this feature (209) was found to contain pottery dated to the late 15th - 16th Century. It seems likely however that the putative well was constructed at an earlier date.

4.1.4 Pit 313 was markedly different from the other archaeological features recorded during the evaluation in both its shape and size and the nature of its fills. The very regular and well-defined edge on its eastern side, and wide flat base extending beyond the limits of the trench to the north and west, suggest that it may have been a structural pit of some kind. Fill 312 contained a high frequency of charcoal and soot and a far higher concentration of animal bone, compared with the other features recorded on site. Furthermore, 310 appeared to represent an accumulation of silt, possibly the result of standing water. This suggests that the feature lay open after the deposition/accumulation of 312. This slow accumulation of sediment was not apparent in any of the other features.

4.1.5 The features recorded in Trenches 2 & 3 were broadly dated to the late 15th - 16th Century. There was very little abrasion in evidence on the sherds which suggests that they were deposited almost immediately and subsequently subject to very little post depositional mixing. This may suggest that the focus of activity was shifting towards the present day Market Place by Late Medieval Period. Furthermore, the presence of two sherds of Stamford ware in the Trench 1 is indicative of Saxo-Norman activity within the vicinity.

4.2 Impact of Previous Works

4.2.1 The archaeological remains recorded during the evaluation were not dissimilar to those encountered during the excavations by The Whittlesey Society in the 1980s (Fig.4). These were located in the centre of the development area and comprised a total of fifteen test pits, fourteen of which were 10 x 5 foot and one 10 x 10 foot pit. Fairly dense medieval pitting was revealed throughout along with a possible cobbled surface towards the east. In Figure 4 the Society's test pits have been located as defined by their, fairly rough, site plan. This does not precisely fit with the known locations of some of the test pits as recorded within the current evaluation trenches but, as the precise
number, dimensions and locations of these pits cannot now be ascertained, their locations have been left as stated on the original plan.

4.2.2 A large proportion of the total area of the development has been subject to investigation when the earlier works and the three trenches dug by OA East are taken in conjunction. As a result only the extremities of the site, particularly the southeastern corner of the development area, remain uninvestigated (Fig.4).

4.3 **Significance**

4.3.1 The archaeological deposits recorded by the evaluation and excavations of the 1980s suggest that the plot was used as a yard or garden throughout the Medieval period and into the Post Medieval period, in all likelihood this was associated with properties fronting the Market Square.

4.4 **Recommendations**

4.4.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.
APPENDIX A. HEALTH AND SAFETY STATEMENT

A.1.1 OA East will ensure that all work is carried out in accordance with relevant Health and Safety Policies, to standards defined in *The Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act, 1974* and *The Management of Health and Safety Regulations, 1992*, and in accordance with the manual *Health and Safety in Fieldwork Archaeology* (SCAUM 1997).

A.1.2 Risk assessments prepared for the OA East office will be adhered to.

A.1.3 OA East has Public Liability Insurance. Separate professional insurance is covered by a Public Liability Policy.

A.1.4 Full details of the relevant Health and Safety Policies and the unit’s insurance cover can be provided on request.
## APPENDIX B. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

### Trench 1

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>General description</th>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>E-W</th>
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<tr>
<td>Two pits [105] &amp; [107] and a shallow posthole [109] recorded. Medieval pottery recovered. Modern services and truncation throughout trench. Natural deposits comprised of sandy gravel.</td>
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<td>Tertiary fill of pit [103]</td>
<td>Pot</td>
<td>13th - 14th Century</td>
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<td>Fill</td>
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<td>Secondary fill of pit [103]</td>
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<td>106</td>
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<td>0.60</td>
<td>Single fill of pit [107]</td>
<td>Pot, animal bone, Glass, SF1</td>
<td>13th - 14th Century</td>
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<td>Cut of pit</td>
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<td>108</td>
<td>Fill</td>
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<td>Single fill of small posthole [109]</td>
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<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>Cut</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>Cut of shallow posthole</td>
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### Trench 2

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<td>Three pits [204], [208] &amp; [210] were recorded, from which Medieval pottery was recovered. The edge of the test pits dug in the 1980s was also recorded along the eastern edge of the trench [212]. Modern truncation for the paving present throughout trench. Natural deposits comprised of sandy gravel.</td>
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Trench 3

**General description**

A large, possibly structural pit [313] with very sharp, straight edges was recorded. This was truncated by the edge of one of the 1980s trial pits. The modern modern disturbance recorded in Trenches 1 & 2 extended into this trench. Large quantities of animal bone were recorded in pit 313.

**Orientation**

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APPENDIX C. FINDS REPORTS

C.1 Pottery

By Carole Fletcher BA AIFA

Introduction

C.1.1 The evaluation at The Old Post Office, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire produced a small pottery assemblage of 42 sherds, weighing 1.710kg, from three trenches. The assemblage includes a small number of sherds of STAM and THET, both types present in the late Saxon and early medieval periods, however in this assemblage they appear to be residual, their presence alongside EMW suggests that they are post conquest in date. The mid 12th,13th and 14th centuries are also represented with the presence of SHW, LYST and the 16th century by the presence of BOND. The condition of the overall assemblage is unabraded and the average sherd from individual contexts is large at approximately 41g.

Ceramic fabric abbreviations used in the following text are:

- BONBT: Bourne B
- BOND: Bourne D
- EMW: Early Medieval ware
- GRIM: Grimston
- HUNFSW: Huntingdonshire Fen Sandy ware
- LYST: Lyveden-Stanion
- SHW: Shelly ware
- STAM: Stamford ware
- THET: Thetford

Methodology

C.1.2 The basic guidance in the Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2) has been adhered to (English Heritage 1991). In addition the Medieval Pottery Research Group (MPRG) documents Guidance for the processing and publication of medieval pottery from excavations (Blake and Davey, 1983), A guide to the classification of medieval ceramic forms (MPRG, 1998) and Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics (MPRG, 2001) act as a standard.

C.1.3 Dating was carried out using OA East’s in-house system based on that previously used at the Museum of London. Fabric classification has been carried out for all previously described types. All sherds have been counted, classified and weighed. All the pottery has been spot dated on a context-by-context basis.

C.1.4 The pottery and archive are curated by OA East until formal deposition.
**Assemblage**

**Trench 1**

C.1.5 Two features in this trench contained pottery, the fill of pit 105 produced six sherds of high medieval date. These included glazed jug sherds from BONBT and LYST vessels and sherds from three separate SHW jars. Several of the sherds were abraded others moderately so and one was unabraded which suggesting some reworking of the material before deposition.

C.1.6 The second feature a shallow post hole 109 contained a single fill and the medieval pottery recovered included six SHW sherds from at least three different jars, the rim sherd from a BONBT jug and the rim from a HUNFSW bowl. In addition three residual early medieval sherds were identified, a rim from a small EMW jar and two glazed STAM sherds. These sherds are only moderately abraded, having undergone little reworking and indicate an earlier phase of activity on or close to the site.

**Trench 2**

C.1.7 Two pits within this trench produced pottery, the first 208 can be dated to the late 15th -16th century. Four sherds from an early post medieval BOND were found alongside residual medieval SHW and a small fragment of late Saxon or early medieval THET.

C.1.8 Pit 210 also produced a mix of medieval and post medieval sherds, two sherds from a highly decorated GRIM jug, two sherds from a decorated LYST jug and an unglazed LYST base also probably from a jug, alongside these a single BOND base sherd. The sherds are moderately abraded or unabraded and it is unclear if the medieval material is residual or the post medieval material intrusive. Non of the pottery came from the primary fill and the feature was not fully excavated, The presence of unabraded BOND suggests that this context is 16th century in date. However this does not preclude the possibility that the feature is earlier.

**Trench 3**

C.1.9 Four contexts in this trench contained pottery and all can be dated to the 16th century. Feature 307, context 306, contained a single large unabraded sherd from a BOND bowl, approximately 60% of the vessel is present and gives a complete profile of a medium sized bowl, which is internal partially glazed. The bowl may have been used as a cream pan and must have been deposited almost immediately after being broken and may have been recovered from its primary place of deposition.

C.1.10 Context 308 described as a layer, contained two BOND sherds a small body sherd from a jug and a large unabraded rim sherd from a large bunghole jug or cistern.

C.1.11 Context 309 produced six sherds of pottery, a single sherd from a medieval GRIM jug, a moderately abraded PMR bowl sherd and four sherds of BOND, including a body from a jar or jug with and internal deposit that may indicate it was used to store water or urine.

C.1.12 Only three sherds of pottery were recovered from pit 313, all from context 312, two unabraded BOND sherds and a moderately abraded LYST jug sherd, the second medieval sherd recovered from trench 3.

**Fabrics, Forms and Provenance**

C.1.13 There are few early medieval fabrics present, two sherds of STAM from Lincolnshire, a sherd of EMW and a small fragment of THET from Norfolk. Medieval fabrics include
from Lincolnshire unglazed and glazed jug sherds of BONBT, from Norfolk GRIM jugs sherds and LYST jug sherds from Northamptonshire. Also present are unglazed coarse ware SHW jars which may have been produced in Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire or near Peterborough, the same parent clay outcrops in all three areas.

The presence of other Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire wares illustrates trade regions for fine wares, and coarse wares may have arrived with these vessels, as containers for other goods. They may also be a more local product of the recently identified SHW production in the Peterborough area (A. Vince and P. Spoerry pers comm) A single sherd of PMR which may be from Cambridgeshire or Essex and 14 sherds of BOND (Lincolnshire) represent the post medieval elements of the assemblage.

C.1.14 Jugs are the most common form by sherd number in the assemblage in all periods, however bowls are dominant the form by weight due entirely to the presence the large BOND sherd in context 306. Jars are under represented due in part to the post medieval date of much of the assemblage, where present these are mainly SHW, the only other jar of note is the EMW rim in context 106.

Statement of Research Potential

C.1.15 An assemblage of this size would often provide only basic dating information for a site, however this assemblage was recovered from an area adjacent to an excavation undertaken by the Whittlesey Society in the 1980s, unfortunately unpublished, the pottery is held by the local museum (C. Thatcher pers. comm). Should further work be undertaken this assemblage should be reassessed alongside any new material recovered and with reference to the earlier excavated material.

C.1.16 The assemblage offers a brief glimpse into the medieval and early post medieval occupation of this area of Whittlesey, hinting also at early medieval activity on or close to the site.

Bibliography


Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings_Occasional_Paper 5

English Heritage 1991 MAP2


Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper I

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Table C.1. Pottery dating table
C.2 Faunal Remains

By Chris Faine

Introduction

C.2.1 A total of 20 "countable" bones were recovered from the Old Post Office, Whittlesey evaluation, with a further 18 fragments not identifiable to species, (47.3% of the total sample). All bones were collected by hand apart from those recovered from environmental samples; hence a bias towards smaller fragments is to be expected. Residuality appears not be an issue and there is no evidence of later contamination of any context. Faunal remains were recovered from a variety of contexts dating from the medieval period.

Methodology

C.2.2 All data was initially recorded using a specially written MS Access database. Bones were recorded using a version of the criteria described in Davis (1992) and Albarella & Davis (1997). Initially all elements were assessed in terms of sidding (where appropriate), completeness, tooth wear stages (also where applicable) and epiphyseal fusion. Completeness was assessed in terms of percentage and zones present (after Dobney & Reilly, 1988). The ageing of the population was largely achieved by examining the wear stages of cheek teeth of cattle, sheep/goat and pig (after Grant, 1982). The states of epiphyseal fusion for all relevant bones were recorded to give a broad age range for the major domesticates (after Getty, 1975). All measurements were carried out according to the conventions of von den Driesch (1976). Measurements were either carried out using a 150mm sliding calliper or an osteometric board in the case of larger bones.

The Assemblage

C.2.3 Faunal remains were recovered from 6 contexts, the largest numbers of which were recovered from context 312. Six ageable mandibles were recovered from this context; three from pig, two from sheep/goat and one from cattle. All are from individual animals. The two-sheep/goat mandibles were aged via tooth wear analysis to 4-6 years of age at death, with all three pig mandibles coming from animals around 2-3 years old. The single cattle mandible came from an animal around 1-2 years of age. No sexing information was available. With respect to the sheep mandibles little pathology was observed given the relatively advanced age of the sample. However, the M3 on one specimen had not erupted and was instead set deep inside the jaw with the roots through the ascending ramus. This is likely to be congenital as no alveolar resorption was observed. In addition to portions of horse maxilla were recovered from an animal around 2-3 years of age. Few post-cranial elements were recovered from 312 including a fragmentary cattle 1st phalange, metatarsal and horse scapula along with an intact domestic fowl ulna with extensive cut marks on the distal epiphysis.

C.2.4 The remaining contexts contain only small amounts of bone. Context 102 contained a single butchered sheep/goat metatarsal. Butchered postcranial cattle remains were recovered from contexts 106 & 309. Context 309 also contained the distal humerus and partial mandible and pelvis of an extremely large adult male pig. A single butchered goose proximal ulna was recovered from context 308.
Discussion

C.2.5 As one would expect the assemblage is dominated by domestic mammals, with the range of species and body parts present being indicative of waste from variety of possible processes (i.e. butchery for meat, skins etc), therefore the exact nature of the assemblage remains unclear. The small assemblage of mandibles from context 312 suggests the sheep/goats were kept for wool and breeding rather than meat (a practice characteristic of the period). Pigs were kept only until physical maturity before slaughter for meat, as they are limited in the secondary products they can provide.

References


APPENDIX D. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

D.1 Environmental samples

By Rachel Fosberry with identifications by Rachel Ballantyne

Introduction

D.1.1 Three samples were taken from a pit (Sample 1) and successive deposits within a ditch (Samples 2 and 3) within the evaluated area and submitted for an initial appraisal.

Methodology

D.1.2 The volume of bulk soil samples collected was between 10 – 20L.

D.1.3 Ten litres of each sample were processed by water flotation for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The flots were collected in a 0.5mm nylon mesh and the residues were washed through a 1mm mesh. Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. The dried residues were passed through 5mm and 2mm sieves and a magnet was dragged through each resulting fraction prior to sorting for ecofacts (e.g. animal bone, fish bone, charcoal, shell, etc.) and artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope at x16 magnification. Identifications were made by Rachel Ballantyne without comparison to
the OA East reference collection and should be seen as provisional. Nomenclature for the plant classification follows Stace (1997).

**Quantification**

D.1.4 The results obtained are summarised on Table D.1.

**Results**

**Preservation**

D.1.5 The plant remains were predominantly preserved by carbonisation. Sample 3 also contained a few seeds preserved by mineralisation. Mineralised maggots occur in samples 1 and 3. Preservation of plant remains is moderate to good.

**Plant Remains**

**Cereals**

D.1.6 Charred cereal grains are present in small quantities in Samples 1 and 2 and are abundant in Sample 3. Bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum sensu-lato*) predominates and barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) is common. Occasional grains of oats (*Avena sp.*) are also present. Chaff elements of all of these cereals also occur in Sample 3.

**Weed seeds**

D.1.7 Charred weed seeds are rare in samples 1 and 2 and abundant in sample 3. Seeds from wet-land plants include sedges (*Carex sp.*), spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*) and a nutlet of saw-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*). Grassland and possible crop contaminants include darnel (*Lolium tenuentum*), bedstraws (*Gallium sp.*), medick/clover (*Medicago/Trifolium*), knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), corn gromwell (*Lithospermum arvense*), stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*) and plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*).

**Legumes**

D.1.8 Legumes are rare and include vetches (*Vicia sp.*) and small peas (*Lathyrus/Pisum sp.*) found in sample 3 and a single specimen in sample 1.

**Ecofacts and Artefacts**

**Bone**

D.1.9 Small fragments of animal bone including rodent bones are present in Samples 1 and 3 and elements of fish bone occur in a Sample 3.

**Pottery**

D.1.10 A single small sherd of pottery was recovered from the residue of Sample 1.

**Metal objects**

D.1.11 Four rusty iron lumps were retrieved from sample 3.

**Marine shell**

D.1.12 Mussel (*Mytilus sp.*) and cockle (*Cerastoderma edule*) shells occur in Sample 3.

**Small Finds**

D.1.13 A fragment of a green glass bead was retrieved from Sample 3.
Contamination

D.1.14 Modern roots were present in most of the samples. Uncharred seeds of *Sambucus* sp. (elderberry) and *Rumex* sp. (dock) may be modern contaminants in sample 3.

Discussion

D.1.15 The plant remains in this assemblage are a mixture of cereal grains, associated weed seeds and sedges. The weed seed assemblage suggests utilisation of a wetland environment typical of the Fen-edge. Saw sedge was traditionally used in this area for thatching and could have been burnt accidentally. Sedges and spike rushes were also used as fuel for flash-firing of bread ovens (R.Ballantyne pers. comm.)

D.1.16 Cereal grains, in particular those of bread wheat are abundant in Sample 3. Associated chaff and seeds indicate that some fine sieving was carried out on site. The presence of stinking mayweed (*A.cotula*) suggests that the crop were grown of heavy clay soils to importation to the site.

D.1.17 The presence of fish bones and shell fish in this assemblage suggesting that these dietary constituents.

D.1.18 The presence of mineralised maggots in samples 1 and 3 and mineralised seed in sample 3 suggest that these deposits may have contained cess.

Conclusions and recommendations

D.1.19 The preliminary appraisal of a selection of samples from this site have shown that there is potential for the recovery of plant remains.

D.1.20 An informative assemblage of plant remains was recovered from Sample 3. The mixture of such a variety of cereals and weed seeds suggests that this feature was utilised for the disposal of domestic and culinary waste on a number of occasions.

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**Table D.1: Ecofact quantifications**

**APPENDIX E. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Mortimer, R 2008 Specification for an archaeological evaluation at The Old Post Office, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire

Thomas, A 2008 Archaeological Brief for an evaluation at The Old Post Office, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire
APPENDIX F. OASIS REPORT FORM

OASIS NUMBER: oxfordar3-47101

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PROJECT LOCATION

| County: Cambridgeshire     | District: Peterborough |
| Her: Peterborough         | Parish: Whittlesey    |
| Her Event Number: ECB 2979 | Site area (sq.m or ha): 0.1ha |

PROJECT ORIGINATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation:</th>
<th>OAEast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Brief originator</td>
<td>CAPCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project design originator</td>
<td>Richard Mortimer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director/Supervisor</td>
<td>Chris Thatcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>Richard Mortimer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name AND type of sponsor or funding body</td>
<td>Whittfield Group</td>
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PROJECT ARCHIVE

Notes on completing this section:
This section of the form must be completely carefully and accurately to detail what is in your archive.

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<tr>
<th>Location: Cambridge County Store</th>
<th>Accession ID: WHS OPO 08</th>
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Physical Archive

Contents (Please Y all that apply):

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<tr>
<th>Animal Bones</th>
<th>Ceramics</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
<th>Glass</th>
<th>Human Bone</th>
<th>Wood</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Y</td>
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Digital Archive

Contents: Relating to digital illustrations/specialist reports/other digital information relating to these categories (Please Y all that apply).

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<tr>
<th>Animal Bones</th>
<th>Ceramics</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
<th>Glass</th>
<th>Human Bone</th>
<th>Wood</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Y</td>
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<td>Leather</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Stratigraphic</td>
<td>Survey</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Textiles</td>
<td>Worked Bone</td>
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Digital Media: The media in which any of the above information is present. Raster Images are digital photographs, Vector Images are those produced by CAD/illustrator (Please Y all that apply).

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<th>Human Bone</th>
<th>Wood</th>
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Paper Archive

Contents: This may include physical illustrations/specialist reports/any other information relating to these categories (Please Y all that apply).

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Paper Media: The media in which any of the above information is present (Please Y all that apply):

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<th>Context Sheet</th>
<th>Correspondence</th>
<th>Diary</th>
<th>Drawing</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Manuscript</td>
<td>Map</td>
<td>Matrices</td>
<td>Microfilm</td>
<td>Misc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notebook/Research</td>
<td>Photograph</td>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>Report</td>
<td>Section</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Archive Notes: The archive is currently held at OAEast, 15 Trafalgar Way, Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB23 8SQ, and will be deposited with the .................. County Museum in due course, under the following accession number: ..................
Drawing Conventions

Plans

Limit of Excavation  
Evaluation Trench  
Deposit - Conjectured  
Natural Feature  
Sondages/Machine Strip  
Test Pit  
Intrusion/Truncation  
Illustrated Section  S.14

Archaeological Feature  
Archaeological Deposit  
Excavated Slot  
Modern  
Cobble Surface

Sections

Limit of Excavation  
Cut  
Cut-Conjectured  
Deposit Horizon  
Deposit Horizon - Conjectured  
Intrusion/Truncation  
Top Surface/Top of Natural  
Break in Section/ Limit of Section Drawing  
Cut Number  I18

Deposit Number  I17  
Ordinance Datum  18.45m OD  
Inclusions  Q3
Figure 1: Location of trenches (black) with the development area outlined (red)
Figure 2: Plans and sections of trenches 1 and 2
Figure 3: Plan and sections of trench 3
Figure 4: Trench plan of 1980s excavation by the Whittlesey society overlaying the modern trench locations
© Oxford Archaeology East
Plate 1: Trench 1, looking south
Plate 2: Trench 3, pit 313 looking west
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Osney Mead
Oxford OX20ES

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w: http://oamed.fr/

Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA
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