An Archaeological Evaluation at Bluntisham Baptist Church

Archaeological Evaluation Report

OA East Report No: 1076
OASIS No: 51932
NGR: TL 3682 7460

Client: Bluntisham Baptist Church

December 2008
An Archaeological Evaluation at Bluntisham Baptist Church

Archaeological Evaluation

By Thomas Lyons BA

Editor: James Drummond-Murray

Illustrator: Séverine Bézie BA MA

Report Date: December 2008
Report Number: 1076
Site Name: Bluntisham Baptist Church
HER Event No: ECB 3070
Date of Works: November 2008
Client Name: Bluntisham Baptist Church
Client Ref: May 190/06
Planning Ref: 0402557FUL
Grid Ref: TL 3682 7460
Site Code: BLU BAP 08
Finance Code: BLU BAP 08
Receiving Body: CCC Stores, Landbeach

Accession No:

Prepared by: Thomas Lyons
Position: Archaeological Supervisor
Date:

Checked by: James Drummond-Murray
Position: Project Manager
Date:
Signed: ........................................................................................................

Disclaimer
This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

Oxford Archaeology East,
15 Trafalgar Way,
Bar Hill,
Cambridge,
CB23 8SQ

t: 01223 850500
f: 01223 850599
e: oaeast@thehumanjourney.net
w: http://thehumanjourney.net/oaeast

© Oxford Archaeology East 2008
Table of Contents

Summary..........................................................................................................................................................6

1 Introduction..................................................................................................................................................7
   1.1 Location and scope of work..............................................................................................................7
   1.2 Geology and topography..................................................................................................................7
   1.3 Archaeological and historical background......................................................................................7
   1.4 Acknowledgements.............................................................................................................................8

2 Aims and Methodology...............................................................................................................................9
   2.1 Aims.......................................................................................................................................................9
   2.2 Methodology..........................................................................................................................................9

3 Results.........................................................................................................................................................10
   3.1 Introduction..........................................................................................................................................10
   3.2 Trench 1..............................................................................................................................................10
   3.3 Trench 2..............................................................................................................................................10
   3.4 Finds Summary....................................................................................................................................10

4 Discussion and Conclusions.......................................................................................................................12
   4.1 Trench 1..............................................................................................................................................12
   4.2 Trench 1..............................................................................................................................................12
   4.3 Significance.........................................................................................................................................12
   4.4 Recommendations...............................................................................................................................12

Appendix A. Trench Descriptions and Context Inventory............................................................................13
Appendix B. Pottery Table............................................................................................................................14
Appendix C. Bibliography............................................................................................................................15
Appendix F. OASIS Report Form..................................................................................................................16
List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Site location map</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Trench Plans</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Section Drawings</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List of Plates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Trench 1, looking north</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Putative graves at north end of trench</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

On the 17th and 18th of November 2008 Oxford Arcaheology East undertook an archaeological evaluation within the grounds of Bluntisham Baptist Church. This was in advance of an extension to the recreational building, immediately to the south west of the Church. Two trenches were excavated with a total length of 17.75m. Trench 1 was located to the east of the recreational building, and south of the church. It contained three possible grave cuts and several small features which were thought to be medieval or post medieval in date. Trench 2 was located to the south of the recreational building. It contained evidence for probable quarrying and a discrete feature, again dating to the 15th or 16th Century.
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at Bluntisham Baptist Church, Cambridgeshire.

1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application 0402557FUL), supplemented by a Specification prepared by 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 CCC, 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 1st Terrace river gravels (British Geological Survey 1993) and was located at around 16.5m OD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

Baptist Church

1.3.1 The Chapel was founded in 1786 and had been almost entirely rebuilt by 1874

Rectory Road, Bluntisham

1.3.2 Open area excavation to the south east of the proposed development area uncovered ditches, pits and post holes from the Bronze Age thorough to the Roman period. Most of this activity was dated to the late Iron Age and early Roman Periods. This consisted of enclosures and field boundaries and also included a crouched inhumation dating from the 2nd Century BC. Several post holes were also recorded, suggestive of structures and settlement. The earliest feature present was a pit containing Beaker pottery. Two Roman animal burials were recorded, dating from the later 1st or earlier 2nd Centuries AD (Burrow & Mudd 2008).

Previous evaluation on the site revealed substantial evidence for gravel quarrying in the post medieval period as well as several other unexcavated features assumed to be post medieval (Hatton 2004).

1.3.3 Other significant artefacts from the vicinity include two finds of Iron Age pottery and two Roman coins. These were located on the east side of the modern village, just beyond
Hollidays' Road (HER nos. 01722, 03930, 00929 & 01939). Lithic implements, including a Neolithic arrowhead, were discovered to the west of the village (HER nos. 03625 & 01761).

1.4  Acknowledgements

1.4.1  The work was funded by Bluntisham Baptist Church. Fieldwork was completed by the author and Zoë Úi Choileáin. James Drummond-Murray managed the project and Andy Thomas from CCC monitored the excavation.
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 that

2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled mini-digger using a 1.2m wide toothless ditching bucket.

2.2.3 Surveying was conducted manually and located using buildings located on the OS Grid.

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 No environmental samples were taken.

2.2.7 Site conditions were good.
3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Two trenches were opened within the proposed development area, one to the east of the existing recreational building and one to the south.

3.2 Trench 1

3.2.1 Trench 1 was located to the east of the recreational building and to the south of the Baptist Church. Approximately 2.5m to the east of, and parallel with, the trench was a row of headstones with graves presumed to be between them and the trench. Trench 1 was 10m long and excavated to a depth of 0.5, whereupon archaeological features were visible. Four possible grave cuts were identified, three at the north end of the trench (Plate 2) and one at the south end (Plate 1), none of which were excavated. At the north end of the trench two graves were conceivably intercut. The fill of these features (Contexts 12 & 13) was a mid brown gravel silt. The feature at the south end of the trench was linear and ran across the width of the trench. It was filled with a dark brown clay silt (Context 1).

3.2.2 Several small sub-rectangular features were present in the central part of the trench (3, 5, 7, 9 & 11). These were filled with a homogeneous and sterile mid/dark brown clay silt and were between 0.1m and 0.44m deep. Pottery was recovered from Features 3 and 7. These were both single sherds of probable medieval pottery, although accurate dating was made difficult by the lack of further diagnostic material.

3.3 Trench 2

3.3.1 Trench 2 was located to the south of the recreational building and was L-shaped in plan. It was 7.75m long and excavated to a depth of up to 0.7m. Two archaeological features were revealed. Pit 27 was located at the east end of the trench and was almost entirely visible in plan, cut in to natural geology. It had a diameter of 1.5m and was 0.4m deep. It was filled by a single dark brown silty clay which contained relatively large amounts of animal bone and x sherds of late medieval pottery.

3.3.2 At the centre of the trench was Feature 25. This initially appeared to be a linear feature but upon excavation proved to be a large, 0.4m deep, steep sided feature. It also contained fill 23, which occupied the west end of the trench, in plan. This was a redeposited sandy gravel and was initially thought to be natural geology, but upon excavation overlay the brown silty lower fill (24) of feature 25.

3.4 Finds Summary

3.4.1 The two sherds of pottery in Trench 1 were pieces of Hunts Fen sandy wares, dating from the 12th or 13th Centuries.

The pottery recovered from Trench 2 was from the Late or Post medieval periods. Pit 27 yielded 9 sherds of late 15th Century and 16th Century pottery as well as a relatively substantial animal bone assemblage. Feature 25 (context 24) contained 5 sherds of Post medieval pottery as well as 5 pieces of Ceramic Building Material, some of it large. Context 24 also contained a piece of a glass vessel and part of a clay pipe, both Post Medieval in date.

3.4.2 Animal bone was recovered from Feature 25 in Trench 2. Context 24 contained a mixture of cattle, pig and sheep remains which consisted of mandible, vertebra, skull
and horn with a few rib fragments. The total weight of these remains was 0.51kg. Context 23 which overlay Feature 25 contained 0.214kg of animal bone, including cattle, horse and sheep remains.

3.4.3 Pit 27 also produced the same mixture of cattle, sheep and pig bone. Again, limb bones were rare with vertebrae, metatarsals, skull fragments and teeth predominating. The total weight of animal bones in context 26 was 1.87kg.
4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Trench 1
4.1.1 Of the features identified in Trench 1, those at the north end were more likely to be graves (Contexts 12 & 13). Context 1, at the south end of the Trench (Plate 1), was relatively dark in comparison to all other fills in the trench. This could have been a relatively modern fill of a feature associated with the recreational building, rather than a grave. It appeared linear and was orientated towards the corner of the building.

4.1.2 The other features in the trench were similar in size, shape but not necessarily contemporary. The two pieces of medieval pottery recovered from the fills were not enough to suggest with confidence that they were recovered from a primary context and therefore it remains difficult to assign a conclusive date to these features.

4.2 Trench 2
4.2.1 Feature 25 in Trench 2 went beyond the limits of the trench and was possibly very large indeed. It is interpreted as a quarry pit, presumably to provide gravels for a part of the Baptist Church or Churchyard. It could be contemporary with the gravel extraction noted in the evaluation at Rectory Road (Hatton 2004). Feature 25 had silted up naturally until it was only a shallow hollow. At this point it appeared to have been deliberately backfilled and made level by a layer of redeposited natural sand and gravel. The ceramic material recovered from contexts 23 and 24 make a post medieval date for this feature a certainty.

4.3 Significance
4.3.1 This evaluation has revealed the presence of likely grave cuts to the south east of Bluntisham Baptist Church, within the churchyard. Other features, which were not securely dated, were revealed that were likely to be either medieval or post medieval in date and perhaps contemporary with the first Baptist Church erected on the site in the late 18th Century.

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. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

## Trench 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>context no</th>
<th>type</th>
<th>Depth (m)</th>
<th>comment</th>
<th>finds</th>
<th>date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fill</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>Dark (grave) fill (?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fill</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>Fill of [5]</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>Medieval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cut</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>Cut of Feature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fill</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>Cut of Feature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fill</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>Fill of [7]</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>Medieval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cut</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>Cut of Feature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fill</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>Fill of [9]</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>Post medieval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cut</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>Topsoil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Fill</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>Fill of [11]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Cut</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>(Grave) Fill (?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Fill</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>Subsoil / Disturbed material</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>Topsoil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Fill</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>Topsoil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Fill</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>Topsoil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>Topsoil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Trench 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>context no</th>
<th>type</th>
<th>Depth (m)</th>
<th>comment</th>
<th>finds</th>
<th>date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>Topsoil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>Subsoil / Disturbed material</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Fill</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>Redeposited material</td>
<td>CBM &amp; pottery</td>
<td>Post medieval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Cut</td>
<td>Sherd no.</td>
<td>Weight (kg)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.095</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.126</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPENDIX B. POTTERY TABLE**
APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY


Hatton, A. 2004 Iron Age and Roman Activity at 6 Rectory Road, Bluntisham. Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit Unpublished Report 740
APPENDIX D. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number: oxfordar3-51932

Project Name: An Archaeological Evaluation at Bluntisham Baptist Church


Previous Work (by OA East): No, Future Work: Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code: BLU BAP 08

HER No.: ECB 3070

Planning App. No.: 0402557FUL

Related HER/OASIS No.: 

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt: Planning condition

Development Type: Public Building

Please select all techniques used:

- [ ] Aerial Photography - interpretation
- [ ] Aerial Photography - new
- [ ] Annotated Sketch
- [ ] Augering
- [ ] Dendrochronological Survey
- [ ] Documentary Search
- [ ] Environmental Sampling
- [ ] Fieldwalking
- [ ] Geophysical Survey
- [ ] Grab-Sampling
- [ ] Gravity-Core
- [ ] Laser Scanning
- [ ] Measured Survey
- [ ] Metal Detectors
- [ ] Photographic Survey
- [ ] Photogrammetric Survey
- [ ] Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
- [ ] Rectified Photography
- [ ] Sample Trenches
- [ ] Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure
- [ ] Targeted Trenches
- [ ] Test Pits
- [ ] Topographic Survey
- [ ] Vibro-core
- [ ] Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit)

Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

List feature types using the MNR Monument Type Thesaurus and significant finds using the MDA Object type Thesaurus together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state “none”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monument</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unident. Features</td>
<td>Post Medieval 1540 to 1901</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>Select period...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Select period...</td>
<td></td>
<td>Select period...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Select period...</td>
<td></td>
<td>Select period...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Project Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Site Address (including postcode if possible)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambridgeshire</td>
<td>Bluntisham Baptist Church High Street Bluntisham</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| District        | 
|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Huntingdon      | 

| Parish         | 
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Bluntisham     | 

| HER            | 
|----------------|--------------------------------|
|                | 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Area</th>
<th>National Grid Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.02ha</td>
<td>TL 3682 7460</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Project Originators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>OA EAST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Brief Originator</td>
<td>Andy Thomas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Design Originator</td>
<td>James Drummond-Murray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>James Drummond-Murray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Thomas Lyons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Project Archives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Archive</th>
<th>Digital Archive</th>
<th>Paper Archive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambs County Store</td>
<td>OA EAST</td>
<td>Cambs County Store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLU BAP 08</td>
<td>BLU BAP 08</td>
<td>BLU BAP 08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Archive Contents/Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Physical Contents</th>
<th>Digital Contents</th>
<th>Paper Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animal Bones</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceramics</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Bones</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratigraphic</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked Bone</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked Stone/Lithic</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Digital Media

- Database
- GIS
- Geophysics
- Images
- Illustrations
- Moving Image
- Spreadsheets
- Survey
- Text
- Virtual Reality

### Paper Media

- Aerial Photos
- Context Sheet
- Correspondence
- Diary
- Drawing
- Manuscript
- Map
- Matrices
- Microfilm
- Misc.
- Research/Notes
- Photos
- Plans
- Report
- Sections
- Survey

### Notes:
Drawing Conventions

Plans

Limit of Excavation

Deposit - Conjectured

Natural Features

Sondages/Machine Strip

Intrusion/Truncation

Illustrated Section

Sections

Cut

Deposit Horizon

Deposit Horizon - Conjectured

Intrusion/Truncation

Top Surface/Top of Natural

Break in Section/
Limit of Section Drawing

Cut Number

Deposit Number

Ordnance Datum

Inclusions

117

118

18.45m OD

2
Figure 1: Location of the development area (red)
Figure 2: Trench plans
Figure 3: Section drawings
Plate 1: Trench 1, looking North

Plate 2: Putative graves at North end of Trench 1