Rymes Reedbed, Holme, Huntingdonshire
Wetland Creation Project (Great Fen Project)

Archaeological Preliminary Evaluation Report

February 2013

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Rymes Reedbed, Holme, Huntingdonshire

Wetland Creation Project (Great Fen Project)

Archaeological Preliminary Evaluation Report

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Summary

As part of the Great Fen Project Oxford Archaeology East carried out a preliminary archaeological evaluation in advance of a scheme for wetland creation (the Rymes Reedbed). This scheme covers c145 hectare of land lying to the north and west of Holme Fen Nature Reserve, Cambridgeshire. The evaluation was carried out in January 2013.

The evaluation aimed to locate and sample the original course of the Medieval Yaxley Lode (Jackslade) in the north of the site and to evaluate the potential for archaeological remains to be present along the western edge of Whittlesey Mere. This comprised the machine-digging of five test-pits, the cleaning and recording of a section of a modern dyke, a borehole survey and the excavation of a trial trench.

The presence of alluvial deposits in BH4 and BH5 confirmed the course of the medieval Yaxley Lode as indicated from the desk study. However, these deposits were heavily truncated and found to be completely truncated in the dyke and trench sections making an exact plot of the former course impossible.

The test pits excavated on the western margins of the pre-existing Whittlesey Mere recorded the significant thickness of Upper Peat in this part of the site, overlying and protecting Barroway Drove Beds and a Lower Peat sequence which retains the potential to yield buried surfaces and archaeology from the Mesolithic, Neolithic and early Bronze Age periods.

The borehole survey has resulted in a detailed picture of how the environment across area has changed over the past 6000 years and provides a valuable addition to the body of work on the environmental history of this site.

No archaeological features were identified.
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 A preliminary archaeological evaluation was conducted at land north and east of Holme Fen, Holme, Cambs. This comprised the machine-digging of five test-pits, the cleaning and recording of a section of a modern dyke and the excavation of a trial trench. A borehole survey was also undertaken by Steve Boreham of the University of Cambridge Geography Department.

1.1.2 The scheme is for a wetland reedbed creation (the Rymes Reedbed project) covering 145 hectare of land lying to the north and east of Holme Fen Nature Reserve and is part of the larger Great Fen project, a scheme to recreated almost 4,000 hectares of wetland. The location of the scheme and current study area is presented in Figure 1. The work will include the excavation of new pools, the re-profiling and backfilling of existing dykes and the excavation of new channels. These works will also include (and result in) the creation of wet woodland, wet grassland and reedbeds in designated areas.

1.1.3 The current work builds on previous survey work carried out in 2007 consisting of new borehole sampling, examination of aerial photographs, a walkover survey and landscape mapping (radar, LIDAR, reviewing existing borehole data, peat C14 dating, peat redox assessments, geology and soil survey information). The results were assessed and written up by CAMARC (now Oxford Archaeology East) and can be found in CAMARC report 1007 (Begg, Boreham and Macaulay 2008).

1.1.4 The current work was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Kasia Gdaneic of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic (CCC; Planning Application 1200/729/FUL), supplemented by a specification prepared by OA East.

1.1.5 The work was designed to attempt to identify and provide preliminary data to characterise any archaeological deposits which may be impacted by the ground works and by wetland creation across the site. The success of these trial methods will then be used to inform what, if any, further evaluation work can be undertaken prior to ground works and re-watering being carried out or if monitoring during ground works is the most suitable mitigation technique.

1.1.6 This work has been carried out in accordance with the guidelines set out in National Planning Policy Framework (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2012). 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.

1.1.7 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 geology of the Holme Fen/Whittlesey Mere area exhibits a somewhat complex series of Holocene sediments overlying late-Glacial sediments and Jurassic bedrock. To the south-west near Holme village, Jurassic bedrock Oxford Clay forms higher ground at the fen-edge. Associated with the bedrock surface (rockhead) are thin sandy and gravelly deposits of presumed late-Glacial age. Near Holme Farm and Top Farm,
although not mapped by the BGS, these sediments occur capping ridges and ‘islands’, but to the north and east they are buried beneath the Holocene fen sediments.

1.2.2 The earliest Holocene deposit from this area is usually thought to be the basal or ‘Lower’ peat, associated with frequent ‘bog oaks’, which is generally taken to represent deposition in a damp woodland environment during Mesolithic and Neolithic times. Overlying the ‘Lower’ peat in the north and east of the area is a unit of intertidal saltmarsh, mudflat and tidal creek deposits assigned to the ‘Barroway Drove Beds’ representing the mid-Bronze Age marine incursion into this part of fenland that is thought to have persisted until at least 3400 calendar years BP.

1.2.3 Overlying much of the ‘Barroway Drove Beds’ is an overgrowth of organic deposits usually referred to as the ‘Nordelph’ peat. These sediments are a mixture of freshwater reed-swamp (Phragmites) peats and acid raised-bog (Sphagnum) peats dating from the late Bronze Age and Iron Age. In several locations, including the former sites of Whittlesey Mere, Trundle Mere and Ugg Mere, lake sediments of various types (including ‘shell marl’) are present overlying the ‘Nordelph’ peat indication large areas of standing water from the late Iron Age onwards. In other locations there was no such inundation by extensive open water, and raised bog peat accumulation continued unabated until the mid-19th Century.

1.2.4 The drainage of Whittlesey Mere and surrounding areas in 1850 led to a rapid desiccation and shrinkage of the organic sediments, including their internal breakdown through microbial processes. Hutchinson’s (1980) study of the peat ‘wastage’ around Holme Fen post shows the initially rapid and then ongoing lowering of the local ground surface amounting to almost 4m in 130 years.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 A desk-based assessment was undertaken in 2002 which outlined the known archaeological and historical background for the Great Fen project area at that time (Casa Hatton 2002). The Fenland project Volume 6 (26-32) and the Victoria County History of Huntingdonshire Volumes 1 and 3 give a good background to the archaeology and history respectively. A brief summary is given below.

1.3.2 The proposed development area has been peat fen since the later Bronze Age with the margins being slightly higher (and thus dryer) land prior to the peat development. The area has been subject to long term borehole survey principally, the published work undertaken by Godwin and Vishnu-Mitre’s (1975), Hutchinson’s (1980) and Waller (1994) forming the basis of these records. More recent borehole surveys (Boreham, S in Begg et al 2008) have demonstrated that the low lying fen floor is at a depth where archaeology may survive (e.g. Must Farm, Whittlesey). These remains can be at a great depth and thus undetectable until deep excavation has been carried out. It is thus possible that Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age archaeology may be present within the development area, although such remains would not be detectable on the surface.

1.3.3 The later freshwater meres e.g. Whittlesey, Trundle, Ugg and Dray were important areas for later Prehistoric, Roman and particularly Medieval activity. In the Medieval period these features became vital economic assets of the fen religious houses of Peterborough, Thorney, Ramsey, Sawtry and, through estate ownership, also Ely (VCH Huntingdonshire). Surface archaeology (notably Medieval fishing wharves e.g. ECB657) have been recorded on the edges of these features. It is therefore possible that archaeology of these later periods might be present and visible closer to the
surface. However, these features are unlikely to exist away from the lake edges and fen-edge, due to the wet conditions of the area.

1.3.4 A former course of the Yaxley Lode can be seen clearly on aerial photographs as a linear deposit of marly alluvium to the northwest of the East Coast railway line, to the south-west of its present course (Plate 5). This feature was recorded in 1227 as *Jackesiada* (Hall, 1992, 22) and is noted on Speed's 1662 map (Fig 5) and is potentially recorded on later 19th century maps such as Samuel's Map of 1829 (Fig 7) and Lenny's Map of 1833 (Fig 8). As it enters the investigation area, to the east of the railway line, it appears to fork into two routes before joining Trundle Mere (Fig 2). These possible routes have been plotted by the Fenland Project (Hall, 1992, 22, 24).

1.4 Acknowledgements
1.4.1 OA East would like to thank Lorna Parker - Great Fen Project Officer for the Wildlife Trust - who commissioned the work. The staff at Cambridge and Huntingdon Archives and the Wildlife Trust Office were very helpful in locating historic maps and other information. OA East site staff were Graeme Clarke, Jemima Woolverton and Kate Clover. The borehole survey was carried out by Steve and Julie Boreham of Cambridge University Geography Department. Site survey was carried out by Gareth Rees of OA East. The project was managed by Stephen Macaulay.
2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The evaluation sought to establish the character, date, state of preservation and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed wetland creation area.

2.1.2 The aims of this preliminary evaluation were twofold. The first was to determine if dyke cleaning, test-pitting and boreholes could identify archaeological remains that might be affected by the groundworks associated with the reedbed creation. The second was to ascertain if these remains could be evaluated in advance, or if monitoring and recording whilst groundworks were being carried out was the only practical solution to recording archaeology.

2.1.3 Specific areas for this phase of work as outlined in the CCC Brief (K. Gdaneic 2012) include examination of the former course of Yaxley Lode. A modern dyke (scheduled to be backfilled as part of the wetland creation scheme) which appears to have been cut through the projected routes of the Old Yaxley Lode was cleaned using the machine, followed by hand cleaning. Any riverine deposits showing in the section were recorded to confirm or disprove this hypothesis.

2.1.4 In addition, the low level evaluation of the western margins of Whittlesey Mere was undertaken to prove the depth of the underlying peat deposits and evaluate the potential for archaeological remains beneath this part of the site.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Although a Desk-Based-Assessment has already been carried out (Casa-Hatton 2002), a more detailed search of the available cartographic data and written material was undertaken as part of this project. The Cambridge and Huntingdon Archives hold archives of the Middle Level Commissioners and drainage boards, and also survey information prior to drainage. These records were consulted, along with books held at the Wildlife Trust office in Cambourne, and information was used to inform the location of the test-pits. A full list of all maps, books and documents consulted can be found in Appendix C of this report. All relevant historic maps have been reproduced as Figures 5 to 11.

2.2.2 The locations of Trenches 1 and 2 and Test Pits 1 to 5 excavated during this phase of work are shown on Figures 2 to 4. Eighteen boreholes were sited in the location of the proposed ponds, the course of the new channel and on the edges of Whittlesey, Trundle and Dray Meres. They were also sited along the possible course of the Medieval Yaxley Lode. The location of the boreholes are presented in Figure 1 of Appendix B.

2.2.3 ‘Trench’ 1 was a length of modern dyke that was targeted for hand-cleaning in order to see if the former course of Yaxley Lode was visible in section. A further trench, Trench 2, was excavated to target the possible route of this Medieval Lode where it entered the northernmost extent of the investigation area. A series of five test pits were excavated by machine around the western margins of the pre-existing Whittlesey Mere.

2.2.4 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked backhoe excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.

2.2.5 The site survey was carried out by Gareth Rees using a Leica 1200 GPS.
2.2.6 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 digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

2.2.7 No bulk environmental samples were taken.

2.2.8 Site conditions were poor, with snow and bad lighting levels.

3 **RESULTS**

3.1 **Introduction**

3.1.1 The upper horizon above ordnance datum (OD) of each deposit encountered is presented in Appendix A. The report of the borehole survey on the Lithology and Stratigraphy of Sediments at Rhymes Reedbed by Steve Boreham is presented in Appendix B.

3.2 **Trench 1**

3.2.1 Trench 1 exposed a 139m long section of the northern bank of this dyke.

3.2.2 The natural deposits exposed may be summarised below, from lowest to uppermost, in four units.

**Organic Lake Deposit** (organic detritus mud): comprising compact black and red organic silt, encountered along the base of the entire length of the drain.

**Marl Lake Deposit:** comprising grey calcareous silt with frequent shell and shell fragments. This was encountered at the southwestern end of the cleaned dyke section with a maximum thickness of 0.4m. This deposit extended for 52m to the northeast and gradually thinned to 0m thickness. The marl then reappeared 97m from the southwestern end and gradually thickened towards the northeastern end of the section. These deposits are considered to be the 'shell marl' indicative of standing water described in section 1.2.3 and associated with the pre-existing Trundle Mere from the Iron Age period onwards.

**Weathered Marl Lake Deposit:** comprising compact reddish brown clayey silt with occasional shells. This was encountered at the southwestern end of the cleaned dyke section overlying the marl. The maximum thickness was 0.4m, gradually thinning to 0m thickness at 31m along the dyke to the northeast.

**Topsoil:** comprising un-compact dark grey silt, encountered along the surface of the entire length of the dyke.

3.2.3 No evidence for fluvial deposits to confirm the former course of the Yaxley Lode were encountered.

3.2.4 No archaeological features were identified or artefacts recovered from the dyke.

3.3 **Trench 2**

3.3.1 Trench 2 was excavated 45m long and was positioned to reveal the former course of Yaxley Lode, where it appears to enter the field from the northwest (as seen from aerial photographs; Plate 5). Peat was encountered along the entire length of the trench underlying the topsoil. No evidence for the former course of the Lode was encountered.

3.3.2 No archaeological features were identified or artefacts recovered from the trench.
3.4 Test Pits 1 to 5

3.4.1 The natural deposits beneath this part of the site are summarised below, from lowest to uppermost.

**Oxford Clay:** comprising stiff green clay with shell fossils, encountered in all test pits.

**Pre-Flandrian Deposit:** comprising soft light grey silty clay, encountered in all test pits. These deposits may be equated to the thin sandy and gravelly deposits of presumed late-Glacial age described in section 1.2.1. Evidence of a palaeochannel was encountered with a silty sand and frequent flint gravel in the southwestern corner of Test Pit 1 between -6.59m and -6.29m OD.

**Lower Peat:** comprising red/black/orange/yellow firm fibrous peat, encountered in all test pits. A 'bog oak' was encountered in Test Pit 3 confirming a basal peat sequence from a damp woodland environment during Mesolithic and Neolithic times as illustrated in section 1.2.2.

**Fen Clay:** comprising very soft light brown silty clay, with a sharp upper and lower horizon, encountered in Test Pits 3, 4 and 5, of thickness 0.1m, 0.05m and 0.01m respectively. This deposit may be equated to the ‘Barroway Drove Beds’ representing the mid-Bronze Age marine incursion described in section 1.2.2.

**Upper Peat:** comprising layers of red/ black/ orange/ yellow firm fibrous peat, encountered in all test pits. This deposit may be equated to the 'Nordelph' Peat referred to in section 1.2.3.

**Topsoil:** comprising un-compact dark grey silt, encountered in all test pits.

3.4.2 The deposits encountered beneath this part of the site are consistent with the previous investigations undertaken by Steve Boreham (Begg et al. 2008) in the area and summarised in section 1.2.

3.4.3 No archaeological features were identified or artefacts recovered from any of the test pits.

3.5 Finds Summary

3.5.1 No finds were retrieved.
4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Medieval Yaxley Lode (Jackeslada)

4.1.1 The investigation hoped to be able to detect the old Medieval course of the Yaxley Lode. Extrapolating its route, it was possible that the channel would have been visible in the section of the modern dyke after it had been cleaned (Trench 1).

4.1.2 The section recorded (Trench 1) did not encounter any alluvial deposits. The lack of alluvial deposits combined with the presence of marl lake deposits confirms that the modern dyke was cut through deposits relating to Trundle Mere and not the old course of Yaxley Lode. The old course of the Lode would seem to lain further to the northwest (Fig 2).

4.1.3 There is an observable drop in the land to the northwest of the modern dyke (Trench 1), suggesting that the intersection of the old course of the lode and Trundle Mere was at this position. This intersection may be best described as a delta which may not be evident as a large river 'cut' but as distributeries of small streams (Boreham pers. comm.).

4.1.4 As part of the borehole survey of the site (Appendix B), boreholes BH4 and BH5 (which were located to the northwest of Trench 1) encountered a thin upper alluvial silty clay at the top of the sequence. This confirms the course of the Medieval Yaxley Lode where it entered Trundle Mere as indicated in Hall 1992, page 24 and as presented in Figure 2.

4.1.5 The surface elevation of boreholes BH4 and BH5 were extrapolated from the contour survey of the site undertaken by Oxford Archaeology to be -1.78m and -1.77m OD respectively. The alluvial deposit was therefore observed between -2.17m and -2.26m OD.

4.1.6 Trench 2 did not intercept the former course of the Lode. There are two possible explanations, the first being that the trench was sited in the wrong position to encounter it. The second explanation is that the former course of Yaxley Lode may have been ploughed out in the recent past due to the gradual wastage of the land surface. The ground level at Trench 2 is -1.99m OD. Disturbed topsoil in this trench was encountered to an elevation of -2.39m OD, which is at a lower elevation than the the alluvial deposits observed in boreholes BH4 and BH5.

4.2 Archaeological potential of peat deposits along western edge of Whittlesey Mere

4.2.1 No archaeological deposits were encountered in the test pits along the western margins of the pre-existing Whittlesey Mere.

4.2.2 Three of the test pits (Test Pits 3 to 5) revealed a thin marine clay lense which may, on the basis of previous investigation of the area, be 'Barroway Drove Beds' attributed to the mid-Bronze Age marine incursion (Begg et al. 2008) (see section 1.2.2). These results confirm that the marine incursion extended to exactly this area as denoted on Figure 3 of Begg et al 2008.

4.2.3 These test pits on the western margins of the pre-existing Whittlesey Mere prove a significant thickness of Upper Peat (up to 1.4m) in this part of the site, overlying and protecting Barroway Drove Beds and a Lower Peat sequence with potential to yield surfaces and archaeology from the Mesolithic, Neolithic and early Bronze Age periods.
4.3 **Significance**

4.3.1 The presence of alluvial deposits in BH4 and BH5 confirms the presence of the former course of the Yaxley Lode (*Jackeslada*). However, these deposits have been either heavily or completely truncated making an exact plot of the former course impossible.

4.3.2 The borehole survey has resulted in a detailed picture of how the environment across Rhymes Reedbed has changed over the past 6000 years and provides a valuable addition to the body of work on the environmental history of this site.

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

**General description**
Cleaning of north side of a modern dyke to locate the possible course of the medieval Yaxley Lode. Consists of topsoil overlying intermittent marl over black and red organic silt lake deposits.

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### Trench 2

**General description**
Trench targeting possible former course of Yaxley Lode in NW corner of evaluation area. Consists of topsoil overlying peat.

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### Test Pit 1

**General description**
Test pit on western edge of Whittlesey Mere. Consists of topsoil overlying (upper and lower) peat over soft grey silty clay underlain by Oxford Clay.

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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-4.39</td>
<td>Lower Peat</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Test Pit 2

**General description**

Test pit on western edge of Whittlesey Mere. Consists of topsoil overlying (upper and lower) peat over soft grey silty clay underlain by Oxford Clay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avg. depth (m)</th>
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**Contexts**

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<th>Height Upper Horizon (m OD)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>-2.99</td>
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<td>Upper Peat</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-4.39</td>
<td>Lower Peat</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Pre-Flandrian Deposit</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Layer</td>
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<td>-6.29</td>
<td>Oxford Clay</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Test Pit 3

**General description**

Test pit on western edge of Whittlesey Mere. Consists of topsoil overlying upper peat over a thin soft grey silty clay lense over lower peat, underlain by soft grey silty clay over Oxford Clay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avg. depth (m)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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**Contexts**

<table>
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<th>type</th>
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<th>Height Upper Horizon (m OD)</th>
<th>comment</th>
<th>finds</th>
<th>date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td>Upper Peat</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Layer</td>
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<td>-3.9</td>
<td>Fen Clay</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>Lower Peat</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-5.6</td>
<td>Pre-Flandrian Deposit</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-6.6</td>
<td>Oxford Clay</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Test Pit 4

**General description**

Test pit on western edge of Whittlesey Mere. Consists of topsoil overlying upper peat over a thin soft grey silty clay lense over lower peat, underlain by soft grey silty clay over Oxford Clay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avg. depth (m)</th>
<th>3.7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Width (m)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length (m)</td>
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**Contexts**
## Test Pit 5

### General description
Test pit on western edge of Whittlesey Mere. Consists of topsoil overlying upper peat over a thin soft grey silty clay lense over lower peat, underlain by soft grey silty clay over Oxford Clay.

### Contexts

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<td>Oxford Clay</td>
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</table>

**Avg. depth (m)**: 3.7
**Width (m)**: 2
**Length (m)**: 4
APPENDIX B. BOREHOLE REPORT


Steve Boreham BSc. PhD.

Introduction
This study focuses on the lithology and stratigraphy of sediments obtained from 18 boreholes sunk at strategic locations across the proposed site of Rymes Reedbed near Holme Fen, Cambridgeshire (see Figure 1). Previous studies in this area have included Godwin and Clifford’s (1938) study of fen-edge deposits, Godwin and Vishnu-Mittre’s (1975) paper on the Flandrian (Holocene) deposits of the fenland margin at Holme Fen and Whittlesey Mere, Hutchinson’s (1980) paper on peat wastage at the Holme Fen Post, and Martyn Waller’s (1994) Fenland Project report. More recently, the Quaternary Research Association published a Field Guide to the Nene Valley (2004) where Martyn Waller wrote a reappraisal of the Holocene deposits of Holme Fen and Whittlesey Mere.

Methodology
The 18 survey boreholes for this project were sunk using a combination of a ‘Dutch’ auger, narrow gouge auger and ‘Russian’ corer. In each case the boreholes were geolocated using a handheld GPS unit (accuracy ±3m). The ploughsoil was removed to a depth of c.30cm with a spade and the borehole was sunk below this depth. In some cases a second borehole was sunk at the same location when recovery of material was incomplete. The lithology was recorded in the field, and photographs were taken where appropriate. Boreholes were terminated when they reached stiff Oxford Clay bedrock. On one occasion lying snow meant that the drilling equipment was deployed using a wooden sledge with metal runners. On other occasions a wheelbarrow was used to transport equipment. Boreholes for palaeoenvironmental and archive purposes were sunk using a ‘Russian’ corer to avoid contamination. The cores were wrapped and labelled in the field and returned to the Geography Science Laboratories, University of Cambridge where they were stored in the dark at 4°C.

The 18 survey boreholes were arranged in six transects (T1-6) to provide a good coverage of the Rymes Reedbed site. The closely-spaced boreholes (BH1-5) in T5 & T6 were requested by the archaeologists in an attempt to find the location that a previous course of ‘The Jackslade’ flowed into Whittlesey Mere. Other boreholes were sited to attempt to detect the presence of other water bodies such as Dray Mere and Trundle Mere, or water courses such as Stilton Dyke and Caldecote Dyke. Additional boreholes from the BGS archive and the GFP Project (Boreham 2008) have been included here. Boreholes from Godwin and Vishni-Mittre’s (1975) survey in this area are problematic and have not been included at this stage. Note that surface elevation has not been surveyed in the field, but that digital elevation model (DEM) data suggests that the land surface is close to 0m DO across most of the site. A key to the lithology of sediments in the survey boreholes appears in Figure 7.
Figure 1 – Map of the Rymes Reedbed area showing transects T1 – T6, and the location of the boreholes (1 - 18) investigated in this study. The locations of other boreholes previously investigated (BGS TL29SW24/25) and (Boreham 2008 GFP5) are also shown.
Stratigraphy and lithology
The stratigraphy and lithology of sediments from the Rymes Reedbed borehole survey is shown as six transects in Figures 2-7 and as borehole logs in Appendix 1.

In general, the sediment sequence comprised Oxford Clay bedrock often overlain by a thin organic silt unit which graded into the overlying organic deposits. These sediments were often about 3 metres thick and comprised alternating sequences of detritus mud (fen deposits), reed peat (reedswamp deposits) and wood peat (carr deposits). Often one or more bands of *Sphagnum* peat (raised bog) were encountered, and bands of fine-grained organic gyttja (lake mud) sometimes occurred. To the south and east of the site, there were thin beds of silty clay interdigitated with the organic sediments representing the early Bronze Age marine transgression in this area. Above this, the lake marl of the later Whittlesey Mere/Trundle Mere complex was sometimes encountered. Particularly in the northern part of the site, an upper alluvial silty clay unit representing the sediments of 'The Jackslade' and other watercourses was occasionally detected.

Transect 1
Transect T1 (Figure 2) runs W-E from BH11 to BH17 across the southern part of the site. The Holocene sequence here is between 227cm and 287cm thick. To the west the sequence mostly comprises detritus mud, reed peat and wood peat, with a thin band of *Sphagnum* peat at 104-107cm. To the east the sequence is more complex with significant bands of gyttja (lake mud), *Sphagnum* peat, and at BH17 a thin band of Bronze Age marine silty clay and an upper lens of lake marl marking the western extent of Whittlesey Mere. It is notable that BH16 records multiple interdigitated layers of *Sphagnum* peat and detritus mud, which must represent a raised bog that formed the limit of both the marine transgression and the later Whittlesey Mere.

Transect 2
Transect T2 (Figure 3) runs NW-SE from BH6 to BH15 along the middle of the site. The Holocene sequence here is between 227cm and 273cm thick. For the most part the sequence comprises detritus mud, reed peat and wood peat, with a thin and impersitant band of gyttja (lake mud), *Sphagnum* peat. To the south the sequence is more complex at BH15, with two thin bands of Bronze Age marine silty clay. Lake marl from Whittlesey Mere is not seen in this transect.

Transect 3
Transect T3 (Figure 4) runs SE-NW from BH17 to TL29SW24 at the western edge of the site. The Holocene sequence here is between 257cm and 475cm thick. To the southeast at BH17 the sequence comprises detritus mud, reed peat and wood peat, with significant bands of gyttja (lake mud), *Sphagnum* peat, a thin band of Bronze Age marine silty clay and an upper lens of lake marl. BH18 has multiple interdigitated layers of gyttja (lake mud), detritus mud and *Sphagnum* peat, which must have formed a raised bog at the northern edge of Whittlesey Mere. Although the two BGS boreholes TL29SW24(25) record a long organic sequence that must include lake deposits from Trundle Mere, the driller’s description simply refers to the deposits as ‘bear’s muck’. In other words, fine-grained brown organic material.

Transect 4
Transect T4 (Figure 5) runs roughly S-N from BH11 to GFP5 in the northern part of the site. The Holocene sequence here is between 227cm and 350cm thick. The sequence in the southern part of the transect for the most part comprises detritus mud, reed peat and wood peat, with a thin and impersitant bands of *Sphagnum* peat. However, at BH9 an upper alluvial silty clay overlaid thin lake marl. This alluvial unit may represent the course of Stilton Dyke. In
contrast at GFP5 lake marl overlaid a thick band of Bronze Age marine silty clay. A band of gyttja (lake mud) was present in both BH9 & GFP5. This lake mud has been radiocarbon dated to the late Neolithic-Bronze Age boundary (Boreham 2008) at GFP5, and the basal organic sediments have been radiocarbon dated to the late Mesolithic.

**Transect 5**

Transect T5 (Figure 6) runs NW-SE from BH3 to BH9 at the northern edge of the site. The Holocene sequence here is between 274cm and 314cm thick. The sequence in the northern part of the transect for the most part comprises detritus mud, reed peat and wood peat, with a thin bands of *Sphagnum* peat. Both BH1 and BH9 record lake marl, which appears to terminate against a bank of *Sphagnum* peat at BH2. At BH9, a thin band of gyttja (lake mud) was present at 220-227cm depth, and there was an upper unit of alluvial silty clay.

**Transect 6**

Transect T6 (Figure 7) runs SW-NE from BH6 to BH5 at the northern edge of the site. The Holocene sequence here is between 252cm and 352cm thick. The sequence for the most part comprises detritus mud, reed peat and wood peat, with a thin bands of *Sphagnum* peat. Both BH4 and BH5 have a thin upper alluvial silty clay at the top of the sequence that probably represents the course of ‘The Jackslade’ where it once entered Trundle Mere.

**Discussion & Conclusions**

Taken together, these survey boreholes describe the changing palaeoenvironments across the Rymes Reedbed site for at least the past 6000 years. It is quite clear that very few locations at the site have remained unchanged during that time, and that most have experienced rising and falling water levels of various kinds. The concept that this landscape must have been a constantly changing mosaic of different vegetation types is an important one when the significance of these ‘heritage’ sediment sequences is considered. In addition to the compelling environmental and archaeological story of lakes, reedswamps, woodlands, heathlands, raised bogs and marine inundation that these organic sediments hold, this was the place where Professor Sir Harry Godwin began to first unravel the signals of climate and environment change stored like pages of a book beneath the ground.

From these boreholes it may be possible to construct a series of maps showing how environments changed across the Rymes Reedbed site through archaeological time. Detailed work on two key sediment sequences will provide crucial tie-points and palaeoenvironmental data from which correlations with previously published work can be made. In the northern part of the site, BH7 (T2) was chosen for palaeoenvironmental coring, largely because of its location, diversity of sediment types and thickness. In the southern part of the site, BH16 (T1) was chosen because it offers the chance to investigate a raised bog sequence at the edge of Whittlesey Mere, and also get a glimpse an earlier lake (a proto-Whittlesey Mere) of probable Neolithic age. Radiocarbon dating and pollen analysis should provide an excellent basis from which the past environmental history of the Rymes Reedbed site can be reconstructed.

Dr Steve Boreham 19-02-2013
References


### Appendix 1 – Lithology & Stratigraphy of boreholes from Rymes Reedbed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depth (cm)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 30</td>
<td>Ploughsoil: brown organic silt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 40</td>
<td>Grey-brown silty clay with shells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 50</td>
<td>Mottled orange/grey slightly marly silt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 60</td>
<td>As above; with shell fragments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 80</td>
<td>Grey silty clay; mottled orange/brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - 90</td>
<td>Bands of grey and brown silty clay (water table)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 - 100</td>
<td>As above; slightly greyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 - 110</td>
<td>Dark grey slightly organic silt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110 - 120</td>
<td>Dark grey organic detritus mud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120 - 130</td>
<td>As above; with shell fragments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130 - 150</td>
<td>Black crumbly organic-transition at 130 has shell fragments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150 - 180</td>
<td>Soft crumbly-fine grained organic detritus mud</td>
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<tr>
<td>180 - 190</td>
<td>As above, slightly browner, more rootlets</td>
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<tr>
<td>190 - 220</td>
<td>Chocolate brown, organic detritus mud</td>
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<tr>
<td>220 - 230</td>
<td>Golden brown lake mud (gyttja)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230 - 240</td>
<td>Gelatinous basal lake mud (gyttja)-(230-240cm (^{14})C sample)</td>
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<tr>
<td>240 - 244</td>
<td>Gelatinous lake mud (gyttja)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>244 - 300</td>
<td>Brown fibrous reed peat</td>
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<tr>
<td>300 - 315</td>
<td>Brown Wood peat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>315 - 320</td>
<td>Black fine-grade organic silt</td>
</tr>
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<td>320 - 330</td>
<td>Dark grey organic silt - (320-330cm (^{14})C sample)</td>
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<tr>
<td>330 - 340</td>
<td>Light grey silt with some organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>340 - 350</td>
<td>As above; grey sandy silt, occasional rootlets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>350 - 360</td>
<td>Stiff grey clay</td>
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<tr>
<td>360</td>
<td>Borehole stopped on bedrock clay</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<td>0 - 75</td>
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<tr>
<td>75 – 100</td>
<td>Light brown [marly] silt with pebbles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 – 175</td>
<td>Soft black peat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175 – 425</td>
<td>Soft ‘bear’s muck’ [organic detritus mud &amp; gyttja]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>425 – 550</td>
<td>Firm green-grey clay</td>
</tr>
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<td>550</td>
<td>Borehole stopped on bedrock clay</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<th>Depth (cm)</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Black peat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 475</td>
<td>Soft ‘bear’s muck’ [organic detritus mud &amp; gyttja]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>475 – 675</td>
<td>Firm green-grey clay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>675</td>
<td>Borehole stopped on bedrock clay</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
BH1 TL 519774 291080
0 – 30cm Ploughsoil-black crumbly 'rotted' peat with rootlets
30 – 40cm Black crumbly 'rotted' peat
40 – 62cm Grey-buff lake marl
62 – 75cm Brown Sphagnum peat
75 – 100cm Orange-brown Reed peat
100 – 125cm Grey-brown silty detritus mud
125 – 150cm Orange-brown Reed peat
150 – 175cm Brown Reed peat with rootlets and wood fragments
175 – 250cm Grey brown silty organic detritus mud
270 – 280cm Orange Sphagnum peat
280 – 300cm Grey brown silty organic detritus mud
300 – 355cm Grey clay
355cm Borehole stopped on bedrock clay

BH2 TL 519738 291115
0 – 30cm Ploughsoil-black crumbly 'rotted' peat with rootlets
30 – 40cm Black crumbly 'rotted' peat
40 – 62cm Orange Sphagnum peat
62 – 108cm Orange-brown Reed peat
108 – 121cm Grey-brown silty organic detritus mud
121 – 145cm Orange-brown Reed peat
145 – 200cm Grey-brown silty organic detritus mud
200 – 205cm Orange Sphagnum peat
205 – 240cm Orange-brown Reed peat
240 – 250cm Grey-brown silty organic detritus mud with reed stems
250 – 274cm Grey brown silty organic detritus mud
274 – 290cm Grey clay
290cm Borehole stopped on bedrock clay

BH3 TL 519703 291146
0 – 30cm Ploughsoil-black crumbly 'rotted' peat with rootlets
30 – 70cm Black crumbly 'rotted' peat
70 – 98cm Orange-brown Reed peat
98 – 112cm Grey-brown silty Reed peat
112 – 150cm Orange-brown Reed peat
150 – 200cm Grey-brown organic detritus mud
200 – 202cm Brown Wood peat
202 – 232cm Grey-brown organic detritus mud
232 – 244cm Grey brown silty organic detritus mud with reed stems
244 – 275cm Grey-brown organic detritus mud
275 – 282cm Grey-brown organic silt
282 – 300cm Grey clay
300cm Borehole stopped on bedrock clay
BH4 TL 519728 291186
0 – 30cm Ploughsoil-black crumbly ‘rotted’ peat with rootlets
30 – 40cm Black crumbly ‘rotted’ peat
40 – 48cm Stiff grey silty clay
48 – 84cm Grey-brown silty organic detritus mud
84 – 85cm Buff coarse sand
85 – 149cm Grey-brown silty organic detritus mud
149 – 155cm Orange-brown Reed peat
155 – 156cm Orange Sphagnum peat
156 – 190cm Orange-brown Reed peat
190 – 196cm Grey-brown organic detritus mud
196 – 210cm Black-brown organic detritus mud
210 – 235cm Orange Sphagnum peat
235 – 250cm Grey-brown organic detritus mud
250 – 275cm Brown organic detritus mud with rootlets, wood fragments and
reed stems
275 – 280cm Orange Sphagnum peat
280 – 288cm Grey silty organic detritus mud
288 – 289cm Orange Sphagnum peat
289 – 352cm Brown organic detritus mud with rootlets and reed stems
352 – 375cm Grey clay
375cm Borehole stopped on bedrock clay

BH5 TL 519747 291228
0 – 30cm Ploughsoil-black crumbly ‘rotted’ peat with rootlets
30 – 49cm Black crumbly ‘rotted’ peat
40 – 115cm Grey organic silt
49 – 115cm Black Reed peat
115 – 182cm Brown organic detritus mud with rootlets, wood fragments and
reed stems
182 – 207cm Orange-brown organic detritus mud
207 – 238cm Brown organic detritus mud with rootlets and reed stems
238 – 247cm Brown Wood peat
247 – 266cm Soft brown organic detritus mud with reed stems
266 – 284cm Brown-black Wood peat
284 – 298cm Grey-black silty organic detritus mud
298 – 350cm Grey clay
350cm Borehole stopped on bedrock clay

BH6 TL 519663 291051
0 – 30cm Ploughsoil-black crumbly ‘rotted’ peat with rootlets
30 – 55cm Black crumbly ‘rotted’ peat
55 – 115cm Brown-black Reed peat with rootlets
115 – 142cm Orange-brown organic detritus mud with rootlets and reed stems
142 – 152cm Orange-brown Sphagnum peat
152 – 220cm Chocolate brown organic detritus mud with rootlets and plant fragments
220 – 244cm Soft brown organic detritus mud
244 – 247cm Brown Wood peat
247 – 252cm Grey-brown silty organic detritus mud
252 – 275cm Grey clay
275cm Borehole stopped on bedrock clay
BH7 TL 519755 290884
0 – 30cm Ploughsoil-black crumbly ‘rotted’ peat with rootlets
30 – 40cm Black crumbly ‘rotted’ peat
40 – 45cm Brown-black detritus mud
45 – 102cm Black-brown detritus mud with reed stems
102 – 122cm Orange-brown Sphagnum peat
122 – 142cm Orange-brown Reed peat with some detritus mud
142 – 148cm Orange-brown Sphagnum peat
148 – 166cm Buff-brown gyttja (organic lake mud)
166 – 174cm Black-brown detritus mud with reed stems
174 – 185cm Orange-brown Reed peat with some detritus mud
185 – 205cm Black-brown detritus mud with reed stems
205 – 208cm Orange-brown Wood peat
208 – 250cm Black-brown detritus mud with reed stems
250 – 253cm Orange-brown Wood peat
253 – 266cm Black-brown detritus mud with reed stems
266 – 273cm Grey-black silty detritus mud
273 – 280cm Grey clay
280cm Borehole stopped on bedrock clay

BH8 TL 519888 290746
0 – 30cm Ploughsoil-black crumbly ‘rotted’ peat with rootlets
30 – 35cm Black crumbly ‘rotted’ peat
35 – 51cm Brown-black detritus mud with reed stems
51 – 104cm Brown-black detritus mud
63 – 104cm Brown-black detritus mud with reed stems
104 – 107cm Orange-brown Sphagnum peat
107 – 115cm Brown detritus mud
115 – 121cm Orange-brown Reed peat with some detritus mud
121 – 124cm Orange Wood peat
124 – 145cm Brown-black detritus mud with reed stems
145 – 148cm Orange Wood peat
148 – 185cm Brown-black detritus mud with reed stems
185 – 188cm Orange-brown Reed peat
188 – 223cm Brown-black detritus mud with reed stems
223 – 226cm Brown Wood peat
226 – 233cm Brown-black detritus mud with reed stems
233 – 235cm Brown Wood peat
235 – 242cm Brown detritus mud
242 – 244cm Brown Wood peat
244 – 257cm Brown detritus mud
257 – 263cm Brown detritus mud with reed stems
263 – 266cm Grey-black organic silt
266 – 273cm Grey-black silty detritus mud
273 – 280cm Grey clay
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51 – 65cm Brown-black detritus mud
65 – 104cm Brown-black detritus mud with reed stems
104 – 107cm Orange-brown Sphagnum peat
107 – 119cm Orange-brown detritus mud with reed stems
119 – 127cm Orange-brown Reed peat
127 – 132cm Orange-brown Wood peat
132 – 146cm Brown organic detritus mud with rootlets
146 – 149cm Orange-brown Reed peat
149 – 162cm Brown organic detritus mud with rootlets
162 – 163cm Orange-brown Wood peat
163 – 208cm Brown detritus mud with reed stems
208 – 216cm Brown Wood peat
216 – 223cm Brown detritus mud
223 – 225cm Orange Wood peat
225 – 233cm Brown-black detritus mud with reed stems
233 – 243cm Grey-black silty detritus mud
243 – 290cm Grey clay
290cm Borehole stopped on bedrock clay

BH12 TL 519979 290591
0 – 30cm Ploughsoil-black crumbly ‘rotted’ peat with rootlets
30 – 84cm Brown-black detritus mud with rootlets
84 – 105cm Orange-brown Sphagnum peat
105 – 126cm Brown-black detritus mud with reed stems
126 – 133cm Buff-brown gyttja (organic lake mud)
133 – 160cm Orange Reed peat
160 – 212cm Brown-black detritus mud
212 – 215cm Orange Wood peat
215 – 219cm Brown-black detritus mud
219 – 222cm Orange Wood peat
222 – 233cm Brown-black detritus mud with reed stems
233 – 243cm Grey-black silty detritus mud
243 – 295cm Grey clay
295cm Borehole stopped on bedrock clay

BH13 TL 520072 290471
0 – 30cm Ploughsoil-black crumbly ‘rotted’ peat with rootlets
30 – 50cm Black crumbly ‘rotted’ peat
50 – 85cm Brown-black detritus mud
85 – 96cm Orange-brown Sphagnum peat
96 – 103cm Orange-brown detritus mud with reed stems
103 – 133cm Orange-brown Reed peat with some detritus mud
133 – 144cm Orange-brown Sphagnum peat
144 – 153cm Brown organic detritus mud with rootlets
153 – 156cm Orange-brown Reed peat with wood fragments
156 – 214cm Orange-brown detritus mud with reed stems
214 – 216cm Brown Wood peat
216 – 226cm Grey-black silty detritus mud
226 – 227cm Brown Wood peat
227 – 245cm Grey clay
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**BH15 TL 520242 290198**

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BH18  TL  520392  290681

0 – 30cm  Ploughsoil-black crumbly 'rotted' peat with rootlets
30 – 40cm  Black crumbly 'rotted' peat
40 – 60cm  Brown-black detritus mud with reed stems
60 – 62cm  Grey-brown silt
62 – 68cm  Brown-black detritus mud with reed stems
68 – 72cm  Brown-black Reed peat
72 – 75cm  Brown-black detritus mud
75 – 83cm  Brown-black Reed peat
83 – 100cm  Brown-black detritus mud
100 – 103cm  Brown-black detritus mud with reed stems
103 – 105cm  Buff-brown gyttja (organic lake mud)
105 – 107cm  Brown-black detritus mud
107 – 113cm  Orange-brown Sphagnum peat
113 – 116cm  Orange-brown detritus mud with reed stems
116 – 127cm  Orange-brown Sphagnum peat
127 – 129cm  Buff-brown gyttja (organic lake mud)
129 – 135cm  Orange-brown Sphagnum peat
135 – 141cm  Brown-black Reed peat
141 – 143cm  Orange Wood peat
143 – 155cm  Brown-black detritus mud with reed stems
155 – 157cm  Orange Wood peat
157 – 172cm  Orange-brown Sphagnum peat
172 – 177cm  Brown detritus mud
177 – 186cm  Buff-brown gyttja (organic lake mud)
186 – 200cm  Orange-brown Sphagnum peat
200 – 218cm  Brown-black detritus mud with reed stems
218 – 223cm  Orange Wood peat
223 – 235cm  Orange-brown detritus mud with reed stems
235 – 242cm  Brown-black Wood peat
242 – 258cm  Brown-black detritus mud with reed stems
258 – 266cm  Grey-brown silty organic detritus mud
266 – 275cm  Grey-black organic silt
275 – 300cm  Grey clay
300cm  Borehole stopped on bedrock clay
Figure 3

Rymes Reedbed - Transect 2

Depth (cm)

NW  6  0
    7  200
    8  400
    12  600
    13  730
    14  950
    15  1150

SE Borehole metres
Rymes Reedbed - Transect 6

Rymes Reedbed - Lithology

- Ploughsoil and ‘rotted’ peat
- Lake marl
- Silty clay
- *Sphagnum* peat
- Fine-grained lake mud (gyttja)
- Detritus mud, reed peat & wood peat
- Bedrock Oxford Clay
APPENDIX C.  LIST OF RELEVANT HISTORIC MAPS AND DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Historic Maps

J Jansson's Map 'Comitatus Cantabrigiensis' 1646 (Cambridge Archives)
J Speed's Map of Huntingdonshire 1662 (Cambridge Archives)
Jonas Moore's Map of the Great Level of the Fens 1684 (1720) (Cambridge Archives)
John Bodger's Map of Whittlesea Mere 1786 (Cambridge Archives)
Samuel Well's Map of The Great Level of the Fens Called Bedford Level, 1829 (Cambridge Archives)
JG Lenny's Map of Lands Subject to the Eau Brink Tax 1833 (Cambridge Archives)
Map of Whittlesey Mere showing proposed drainage, 1840 (Huntingdon Archives)
Map of Whittlesey Mere 1845 (Huntingdon Archives)
Undated Map of Whittlesey Mere (Huntingdon Archives)

Historic Documents

Extracts from various sources concerning Whittlesey Mere. No date. Handwritten notebook (Huntingdon Archives)
Deed of Arrangement for Division of the Soil in Whittlesey Mere 1845. Contains a map (Huntingdon Archives)

'Additional Records of the Bedford Level Corporation' documents (Cambridge Archives). These include numerous bundles of hand written papers from 17th to 19th centuries: accounts, maps, plans, letters, fishing rights, leases, bills and acts of Parliament, meeting minutes, petitions, contracts etc. I looked at 'Whittlesea Mere Draft 1846 (A description and history of the proposed drainage)' (Box 85, Bundle 5). I also looked at 'Documents Relating to Whittlesey Inclosure' 1835-43 (Box 51, Bundle 1).

Scrapbook of historical and topographical information on the fens by JM Heathcote 1865 (Huntingdon Archives). Includes an account of finds made during the drainage of Whittlesey Mere.

Holmwood and Stilton Drainage Board Papers Etc. Papers mainly dating from c 1920 consisting of specifications etc for drains and pumping stations. Two typed sheets entitled 'The Yaxley 1st Fen Drainage Act 1768' were photocopied. (Huntingdon Archives).

Books held at the Wildlife Trust's offices in Cambourne (consulted, but not referred to in the text)

Godwin, H, Fenland: Its Ancient Past and Uncertain Future
Bevis, T, Water Water Everywhere – The Draining of the Fens
Heathcote, JM, Reminiscences of Fen and Mere
APPENDIX D. BIBLIOGRAPHY


Department for Communities and Local Government, March 2012 National Planning Policy Framework


Gdaneic, K, 2012 Brief for archaeological investigation, Rymes Reed Bed, Great Fen Project, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (unpublished),

Hall, D, 1992 The Fenland Project, Number 6: The South-Western Cambridgeshire Fenlands. E. Anglian Archaeol 56


Victoria County History of Huntingdonshire, Volumes I and III

Waller, M, 1994 'Ugg Mere and Whittlesey Mere' in The Fenland Project, No 9: Flandrian Environmental Change in Fenland. E. Anglian Archaeol 70
APPENDIX E. OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Details

OASIS Number: oxfordar3-141388

Project Name: Preliminary Evaluation at Rymes Reed Bed, Holme, Hunts (The Great Fen Project)

Project Dates (fieldwork): Start 14-01-2013, Finish 17-01-2013

Previous Work (by OA East): Yes, Future Work: Yes

Project Reference Codes

Site Code: HOMRRC12, Planning App. No. 1200/729/FUL
HER No.: ECB3893, Related HER/OASIS No.

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt: Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS 5
Development Type: Other

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
- [ ] Phosphate Survey
- [ ] Photogrammetric Survey
- [ ] Photographic Survey
- [ ] Rectified Photography
- [ ] Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
- [ ] 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 NMR 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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pit</td>
<td>Post Medieval 1540 to 1901</td>
<td>pottery</td>
<td>Post Medieval 1540 to 1901</td>
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Project Location
### County
Cambs

### Site Address (including postcode if possible)
Rymes Reed Bed, Holme, Wetland Creation Project (Great Fen Project)

### District
Huntingdonshire

### Parish
Holme and Yaxley

### HER
Cambs

### Study Area National Grid Reference
TL 2060 9040 (c)

### Project Originators

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<th>Organisation</th>
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<td>OA EAST</td>
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<th>Project Brief Originator</th>
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<td>Kasia Gdaneic - CCC</td>
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<td>Stephen Macaulay - OA East</td>
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<th>Supervisor</th>
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<td>Kate Clover and Graham Clarke</td>
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### Project Archives

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<tr>
<th>Physical Archive</th>
<th>Digital Archive</th>
<th>Paper Archive</th>
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<td>Location ...OA East</td>
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| Accession ID...   | Accession ID ...HOMRRC12 | Accession ID ... HOMRRC12 |

### Archive Contents/Media

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<th>Ceramics</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
<th>Glass</th>
<th>Human Bones</th>
<th>Industrial</th>
<th>Leather</th>
<th>Metal</th>
<th>Stratigraphic</th>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Textiles</th>
<th>Wood</th>
<th>Worked Bone</th>
<th>Worked Stone/Lithic</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Other</th>
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### 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
Figure 1: Location of the Great Fen Project (green), the current study area (red) and the area shown in Figure 2 (blue)
Figure 2: Location of current archaeological investigations and proposed works, showing former area of The Meres

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Figure 3: Surface model generated from LIDAR D series data, showing ‘Trench’ 1, with section points and Trench 2
Figure 4: Digital Elevation Model generated from LIDAR D series data and location of current archaeological investigations
Figure 5: J Jansson’s Map ‘Comitatus Cantabridgiensis’ 1646, J Speed’s Map of Huntingdonshire 1662 and Jonas Moore’s Map of the Great Level of the Fens 1684 (1720)

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Report Number 1438
Figure 6: John Bodger's Map of Whittlesea Mere 1786
Figure 7: Samuel Wells' Map of The Great Level of the Fens Called Bedford Level, 1829
Figure 8: JG Lenny's Map of Lands Subject to the Eau Brink Tax 1833
Figure 9: Map of Whittlesey Mere showing proposed drainage 1840 (scaled)
Figure 10: Map of Whittlesea Mere 1845
Figure 11: Undated Map of Whittlesey Mere
Plate 1: ‘Trench’ 1, cleaning modern drain to locate former course of Yaxley Lode

Plate 2: Test-pit 1 fully excavated, 2m scale
Plate 3: Test-pit 3 fully excavated, 2m scale

Plate 4: Trench 1 after cleaning northern face of drain, showing marl lake deposits