



SHARP Interim Report



2011 Season

Edited by Eve Richardson & Luke Taylor
Designed by Luke Taylor

Welcome to the 2011 edition of our report.

This year has been particularly busy, not only with our excavation projects but also with our ongoing research and the writing up of the first phase of SHARP's fieldwork at Sedgeford. Our main excavation project, the Anglo-Saxon settlement in Chalk Pit Field, continues to yield exciting insights. During the 2011 season we opened up a trench within the large D-shaped enclosure, the first time we have worked inside this feature. We have an article on the results of this work and also an interesting report on a phosphate analysis survey that was undertaken during the excavation. Both accounts offer further understanding of the enclosure's function.

However, Chalk Pit Field has seen more than just Anglo-Saxon settlement activity. The discovery of a

crouched burial in the northern area of the field in 2009 has been dated to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age, suggesting human settlement in the area over a period of almost 4,500 years. A second crouched burial was discovered in 2010, quite close to the previous year's. Over the past winter, radiocarbon dating analysis was carried out on a sample of human remains from this second burial; read our article for the rather surprising news that it delivered!

The project group working at the First World War aerodrome continues to produce an absorbing picture of life at the base, and during 2011 the focus was on the airfield's technical buildings and the discovery of a drying room for aircraft repair. At its peak, almost 1,200 personnel were stationed at the aerodrome, and obviously there would have been a considerable social impact on Sedgeford. This edition carries two

articles on how the airfield affected life within the village.

Over the past year, a new project group has been set up specifically to help our understanding of the broader landscape of the parish. We have an article on this project, along with further reports by our finds and lithics project teams.

As many of you will know, SHARP is not just about archaeological and historic research. We also take pride in our community outreach and educational development. This year's report gives accounts on both of these important areas.

And finally, it is with great sadness we report the passing away of 'Miner' John Hensby. John was a truly remarkable character, who led a truly remarkable life. A lifelong love of archaeology brought John to SHARP where, apart from being an

excellent digger, a valuable member of the committee, and organiser of the annual cricket match, he was also great fun to have on site. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. Just before his death, John submitted his article on work he had carried out at Well Cottage in the village. SHARP will be setting up a bursary fund in his name that will offer those with limited means, but the passion and interest for the subject John loved, the chance to participate in archaeology at Sedgeford.

Enjoy our report.

Gary Rossin

SHARP

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SHARP 2011 CHALK PIT NORTH EVALUATION

This year's season at SHARP saw the Chalk Pit excavations extending further south, into the crop-field, than we have ever had the opportunity to go before. After its thirteen predecessors, the aptly-named 'Trench 14' allowed for our first major foray into what has become known as the D-shaped enclosure, and also filled in the gaps between previous years' trenches.

Excavations commenced at the southern end of Trench 14, a good distance inside the major enclosure, and immediately some interesting features presented themselves. Two shallow oval-shaped features provoked considerable debate. Their apparent association with several postholes (at least one each) led to the suggestion that they may have been sunken featured buildings (SFBs). The finds associated with these features seemed to add weight to this belief. Sunken featured buildings may have been used during the Early Anglo-Saxon period as domestic workshop

spaces for activities such as weaving and wool production. The two pin beaters and a spindle whorl found in one and bone comb fragments found in the other seemed to fit nicely with this model. One of the pin beaters was made from animal bone, which was fairly common during the Saxon period, but the other was made from ivory - a rare commodity. The ivory is most likely walrus, certainly not a

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 "...THE [IVORY] PIN BEATER IMPLIES AN ELITE PRESENCE AT SEDGEFORD, POSSIBLY WITH TRADE LINKS TO SCANDINAVIA..."

native English species. This pin beater therefore implies an elite presence at Sedgeford, possibly with trade links to Scandinavia (see News from the Finds Hut).

As time went on, doubts arose about the true nature of these features. The second of the two, from which the

bone comb fragments were found, lost its shape upon further investigation and appeared more natural than man-made. The first also lost credibility as an SFB, but remained an important feature, as will be discussed later on.

Further down the trench, we reacquainted ourselves with the straight edge of the D-shaped enclosure. Whilst we have put sections

through this feature several times in the past, this year's excavation revealed a terminus, which may have been where entry to the enclosure was controlled. Led by none other than Neil Faulkner (SHARP founder) himself, a small team extended the trench westward in search of the terminus on the other side of the entryway and any evidence



of a gatehouse. Unfortunately, they found neither.

The 'Big D' had another surprise in store for us this year. A metallised surface (made of broken stone, not metal in the modern sense) was discovered running partially along a re-cut of the boundary's straight edge. The stone seemed to be worn smooth

in previous years, or it may have been eroded away by hill wash. Either way, it adds an interesting new strand of evidence towards the interpretation of our major enclosure...

The northern extent of the trench was investigated towards the end of the season. Labelled by some as the 'uninteresting' end, it soon delivered



by traffic along the surface and was very nicely dated by the pottery that came from each layer above and below it. Interestingly, a groove was worn into the surface along its length that some interpreted as wear caused by carriages. It would stand to reason that the metallised surface ran further than the few feet we saw of it in

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 "...MORE POSTHOLES WERE REVEALED, SUGGESTING TWO MORE POSSIBLE STRUCTURES..."

Trench 14. Perhaps we have missed it

features and finds to prove them wrong. More postholes were revealed, suggesting two more possible structures outside of the D-shaped enclosure. Then, in the most easterly corner of the trench, a feature containing four huge pieces of bone was found. These bones were too large to belong to any land mammal from Britain and have been provisionally identified as whale bone (see The Animals of Sedgeford).

We return now to the mysterious features at the southern extent of Trench 14. Throughout almost the entire six weeks of excavation, a seemingly bottomless pit was being excavated next to the supposed SFBs. Visitors to the site were

amazed to watch an entire six-foot-tall archaeologist disappear down the pit until only the yellow top of a hard hat was visible. Many were the interpretations and explanations for such a feature. One of the more convincing was that it was a form of vauculian spring (a spring that rises up a steeply inclined passage, creating a small surface pool), which upon drying up was dug into in order to 'chase' the water. This would certainly explain its great depth. Whatever the purpose of this huge pit, many of the more seasoned members of the team said that it was the largest pit they had ever seen excavated at Sedgeford.

As well as having the usual crowd of volunteers, supervisors and BERTs on trench, this year SHARP played a pioneering role in the Dig-For-A-Day scheme, giving enthusiasts, young and old, the unique opportunity to spend a day excavating alongside our archaeologists. It was a huge success and made for an interesting, exciting new dynamic on trench. We will be seeing the Dig-For-A-Day scheme returning to SHARP in 2012.

The 2011 season in Chalk Pit Field was full of surprises and has furthered our understanding of the Anglo-Saxon settlement at Sedgeford, providing exciting glimpses into the lives of those who lived and died there. We are all certainly looking forward to finding out what the field has in store for us in 2012...

JAMES WESTOBY

THE ANIMALS OF SEDGEFORD

Since 2007 the excavations in Chalk Pit Field have produced thousands of animal bone fragments, giving insight into the lives of the Anglo-Saxons: what animals they kept, what they ate, and with whom they traded. Additionally, they provide tantalising clues to Sedgford's status and place in the wider economy.

The animal bones from the Chalk Pit excavations 2007-2011 are dated between the Middle and Late Anglo-Saxon periods. As was common on many Mid-Late Anglo-Saxon sites, cattle, caprines (sheep and goat) and pig were the most highly exploited livestock, with the frequencies of each varying over

each time period. Caprines are by far the most commonly exploited livestock throughout all periods, which is unsurprising given that East Anglia is dry and flat, favouring sheep husbandry. It is difficult to distinguish morphologically between sheep and goat in the archaeological record; however, contemporary Anglo-Saxon sources record that the more popular livestock during this period was sheep and fewer goats were kept.

All skeletal elements of the key livestock have been recorded as present - from skull to meat-bearing limbs and feet - suggesting that the inhabitants of Sedgford were self-sufficient: unlike those in the towns,

they did not rely on pre-butchered joints from the market, but raised and butchered animals on site or traded them on the hoof. Livestock were like a walking larder, a failsafe way of securing meat when needed, particularly during hard times when crops were less productive. Raising and butchering their own livestock also enabled the inhabitants of Sedgford to exploit animals for secondary products such as milk and wool, and for traction. We can tell from the bones that many of the sheep/goat and cattle were kept to an old age, implying they were put to such uses.

The inhabitants of Sedgford likely kept sheep for their wool, some of

which they would have used to clothe themselves. Pin beaters and spindle whorls (left page, right hand side image) have been recovered during many of our seasons at SHARP, with further beautiful examples being found during the 2011 season. These items were tools commonly used to tame wool into clothing and illustrate the connection between animals and humans, tying the animal bones beautifully to the material culture of Sedgford.

Pig was the third most common livestock kept during this period in Sedgford. Unlike cattle and sheep/goat, pigs are not an economic animal to keep as they are only good for their meat and manure. Sedgford has a higher number of pigs compared to other local contemporary sites and this number increases in the later Anglo-Saxon period, suggesting that the people of Sedgford became affluent as time went on. This is particularly

shells. Articulated remains of sheep vertebrae and other faunal fragments were also found in the pit.

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 " ...AN EXCITING, TANTALISING GLIMPSE INTO THE LIVES OF THE SEDGEFORD ANGLO-SAXONS..."

Despite the fact that our Scandinavian neighbours often practiced whale hunting during this period, whales were not hunted in Anglo-Saxon England due to the innate, deeply held fear of this large creature and its aquatic environment. Therefore, the Sedgford whale fragments would have come from a stranded whale, the initial butchery and processing of which would have taken place on the coastal shore to make the meat more

be removed by land tenants.

The presence of whale bone on the Sedgford site is important as it is commonly found on high-status Anglo-Saxon sites. However, in the 8th century it was still being used to make mundane items, walrus ivory being restricted at this time. A wider set of data and evidence from the rest of Sedgford's material culture is needed before the whale bone can be placed in context.

These are just a few of the things we have learnt so far from the animal remains, and more are being uncovered each year. What has been discussed within this article represents an exciting, tantalising glimpse into the lives of the Sedgford Anglo-Saxons through their diet, and there is still much to discover.

ZOE KNAPP

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 " ...THE STAR ANIMAL BONE FIND OF THE '11 SEASON HAS TO BE THE FOUR FRAGMENTS OF WHALE BONE RECOVERED..."

interesting as in the later Anglo-Saxon period there is also an increase in horse, red deer and roe deer, animals typically associated with 'higher status' sites.

The star animal bone find of the 2011 season has to be the four large and heavily butchered fragments of whale bone that were recovered from a pit filled with an unusual amount of razor, oyster, mussel and cockle

transportable.

Literature from the Late Anglo-Saxon period records that stranded whales, dolphins and porpoises - highly prized, and valued far above their nutritional value as high-status meat - were the property of lord or king. However, legal ownership was often challenged by the finders, and when a stranding was reported, the manorial lord would lay claim to the beast before it could



MORE NEWS FROM THE FINDS HUT

The summer of 2011 was yet another exciting season for the Finds Hut. What quickly became apparent was the amazing range of materials represented by our discoveries. While the finds are from the Anglo-Saxon settlement area, the dates of most have yet to be determined. It is impossible to include news on all finds, so what follows is our pick of the best.

WHORLS AND WEIGHTS:

Following on from the beautiful chalk spindle whorl found in 2010, we recovered three more possible examples made from a surprising variety of materials.

The most unusual example is bone, possibly an unfused human femoral head (the 'ball' at the top of the thigh bone that fits into the hip socket). Its shape is hemispherical, whereas animal femoral heads tend to be 'plum-shaped'. While the perfect shape for a whorl, it is light (16gm) and possibly not very effective for weighting a spindle. This use of a possibly human bone should not be interpreted as disrespect for the dead; bones are brought to the surface by burrowing animals and the person who found it may not have known that it could be human.

The second example is a circular dome

of smoothed worked stone (24gm) with a flattened top and base, and a central hole.

The third possible whorl is lead (37gm), also circular with a flat lower edge and central hole. The item may have been used as a whorl or, alternatively, as a weight – lead weights are not uncommon and our site has revealed a few in the past.

BONE, ANTLER AND IVORY:

Causing great excitement was the finding of an ivory pin beater (97mm, circular shaft: diam 7mm, 5.92 gm), a first for our site. Pin beaters (rods with pointed terminals used in weaving to adjust threads) are typically made of animal bone. This one is thought to be made of walrus ivory and would indicate high status.

Of three pin beater fragments found, two fit together and are clearly from the same artefact. These show signs of burning on one broken edge, and one has been incised with three crosses.

Fragments of two tooth plates and a connecting plate from three Anglo-Saxon combs illustrate how these personal items were made. Several plates were cut from widths of antler, into which teeth were filed along one or both sides. The tooth plates were held

by two outer plates, often decorated, and the assembled sections bound by iron rivets. The two rows of nicks on connecting plate (SF3263) show that it came from a two-sided comb, and that –as was usual –the comb was assembled before the teeth were cut.

A probable needle fragment (56mm) was also recovered. A length of smooth bird bone has been shaped, with a hole drilled through the flattened end for the eye. Unfortunately, the circular shaft has been broken.

EXCITING IRON!

Our site usually gives up an abundance of iron artefacts, and several knife blades and knife blade fragments of varying size and style, often still with tang, were discovered in 2011. Punch-like tools are common finds, as well as a staggering array of different types of nails. Collectively such finds are vitally important as together they portray the past industry of the site.

From horseshoe nails to tiny fish hooks, all are welcome!

OTHER METALS:

Although outnumbered by the iron finds, other metals were also represented in our 2011 assemblage of small finds.

An unusual sub-rectangular decorated

lead mount (24mm x 22mm) was an interesting find. The design has a central raised boss surrounded by intricate raised dot detail. It has a single circular shaft on the reverse for fitting, presumably to a horse harness or belt.

Two bent but complete Anglo-Saxon copper alloy dress pins were also found. One (70mm) has a plain spherical head. The other (41mm) has a multi-faceted head with ring-and-dot decoration.

AND EVEN MORE BEADS!!

Continuing our luck of 2010 was the discovery of more beads.

The first was admirably noticed by one of our 'Dig for a day' volunteers. Made from amber, its rich orange colour revealed when the bead was chipped during excavation, it turned out to be only half a bead, but a beautiful find (diam 13mm, 0.30gm). A smaller, complete bead (diam 5mm, 0.06gm) may also be amber, but we are not going to chip it to find out!

Three complete glass beads and one broken one were found. Two spherical beads (diam 14mm, 2.56gm; less than diam 4mm, 0.03gm) have a lovely blue iridescent

shine; however, the iridescence was not a deliberate effect but the result of weathering in the soil. The third complete glass bead (diam 7mm; 0.35gm) is more cylindrical, brownish with a white criss-cross curving line design. The broken glass bead is greenish.

The final bead (also broken) has a double ring design. Its blackish colour suggests it may be jet or shale, but this is yet to be confirmed.

Can 2012 live up to the previous two seasons and reveal even more of these tiny but often beautiful beads?

AND FLINT...

Several flint tools recovered throughout the season reflect more ancient activity on our site. These tools include a blade, end scrapers, and a horseshoe scraper (so-called for its flat-butted discoid shape). A thumbnail scraper (about the size of a man's thumbnail) is from the Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age, fitting with the first of our crouched burials.

Acknowledgements to Martin Hatton, Naomi Payne and Kath Walker

ANN SMITH



SF3256 Because of where this fragment is broken, it is not possible to know if this is from a single- or double-sided comb.



SF3263 Part of a connecting plate. The nicks were made during the cutting of the teeth.



SF3264 Part of the tooth plate of a single-sided comb.

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 "...CAUSING GREAT EXCITEMENT WAS THE FINDING OF AN IVORY PIN BEATER, A FIRST FOR OUR SITE. AND THOUGHT TO INDICATE HIGH STATUS..."

A MESOLITHIC TEMPORARY HUNTING CAMP AT SEDGEFORD: WHAT THE FLINT CAN TELL US

What can bring a greater connection with the past than handling something made by our ancestors? There are few materials which appeal to the senses as much as flint: smooth to the touch, tangible ripples from the working process, and attractive colours and patinas. The staggering number of people who booked for the 2011 day course to learn how to recognise struck flint and to examine some of the flint artefacts found in previous seasons of excavation and fieldwalking is testimony to the fascination it holds. It is, after all, the primary survivor in the archaeological record from a time before metals and, in the case of the bulk of the lithic material from the Reeddam and Boneyard excavations, a time before pottery. It is this period, between the retreat of the glacial ice around 10,000 BC and the advent of societies in Britain that began to base their livelihood on farming around 4000 BC, to which the overwhelming majority of flint finds from these trenches can be attributed. An extended presence can be seen up into Chalk Pit Field. This is the period known as the Mesolithic, when Norfolk was populated by small groups of hunter gatherers.

TRANCHET ADZE PRODUCTION AND USE

Gradually, after the Ice Age, the

climate improved and the wide open landscape was replaced by woodland, including colonisation by juniper, birch, pine and hazel, with animals such as elk, roe deer and pig (Butler 2005: 83). Tool technology was modified to account for such changes. Mesolithic people did this successfully with the invention of hafted flint axes and adzes. Axes were used primarily for felling trees, whereas adzes, with the blade hafted horizontally, rather than vertically, would have been better suited to carpentry, such as for the production of log boats or dugout canoes (Butler 2005: 100). These adzes, of which an example was found in Chalk Pit Field, were distinctive tools of the Mesolithic period. Skilfully sharpened by a transverse blow across the cutting edge, they gained the name 'tranchet adzes', 'tranchet' meaning 'slice'. The resulting flakes from this process are also present within the lithic assemblage. While these finds, like all other lithics found at SHARP, have been moved in the ploughsoil and therefore are out of their original contexts, they can still give an indication of some of the activities being undertaken in the area at that time.

Blades, bladelets, flakes and cores Lower down the slope in the valley of the River Heacham, Mesolithic

blades, bladelets and long flakes dominate the assemblages from Boneyard and Reeddam, and were the basis for most of the Mesolithic flintworking process. The majority do not have any cortex (outer 'rind' material) present on their dorsal surfaces, but a few do. Many have suffered post-patination breaks, through a variety of more recent processes and reflect the degree of later human activity in this part of the landscape. A number of blades show indications of having been struck with a soft hammer, made from wood, bone or antler, whereas other flakes have the characteristic striking platforms and more prominent bulbs of percussion which are achieved with a hard pebble hammer of quartzite or flint. A few of the cores from which the blades and bladelets were struck have been collected.

USE-WEAR

A high percentage of these blades and flakes display a distinctive use-wear pattern, often in straight lengths of little more than 10mm along one edge, and occasionally, but rarely, creating a shallow notch. Occasionally, this is accompanied by some continuous retouch by applying pressure to remove minute flakes with a pointed bone or antler tine. The wear may best be accounted for by the working,

stripping and cutting of plant-based materials growing in the river valley, for any number of purposes such as basketry, though some may also have had a use for preparing arrow shafts. Some were modified as piercers. Generally, they do not appear to follow any conventional model, but were just expedient tools manufactured quickly for a specific task, then discarded.

MICROLITHS

Microliths, which were used in arrows as tips, points or barbs on a wooden shaft, and other composite tools, broadly define the whole of the Mesolithic flintworking technology (fig. 1) They were multi-functional and various uses have been proposed, including reaping tools, harpoons, drill bits (Clarke 1976) and simple cutting tools (Healy et al. 1992). While microliths were produced throughout the Mesolithic, their variety of forms allow them to be used broadly for

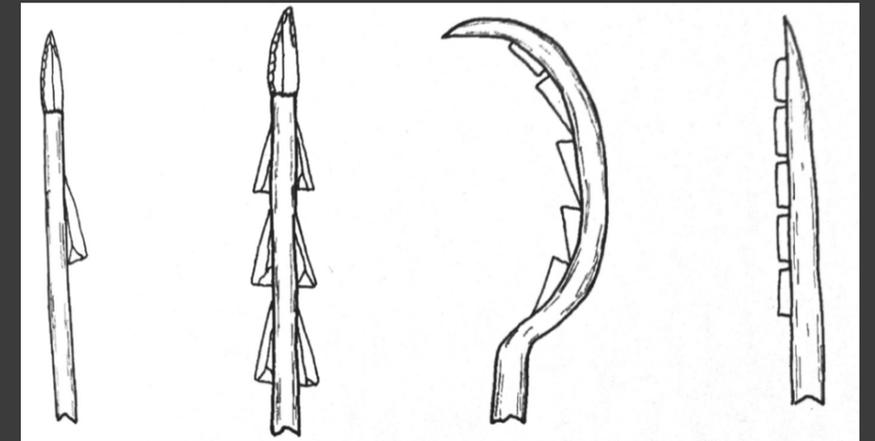


fig 1. Examples of hafted microliths. After Clark 1976. Butler 2005: fig 32.

inundated (Wymer 2005; 15). Across the North Sea, people were adopting a farming way of life and it would not be long before Britain followed suit. With the Early Neolithic came a new array of tools, some of the most diagnostic pieces appearing in the lithic assemblage at SHARP.

These include the leaf-shaped arrowhead from Reeddam and the

example of a miniature barbed and tanged arrowhead from Reeddam cannot go unmentioned and is broadly contemporary with one, if not both, of the crouched burials from Chalk Pit field. Within this time bracket from Chalk Pit Field also, are a flint flaked axe and a rod-shaped fabricator whose purpose is uncertain, but it is thought that these may have been flintworking or firelighting tools due to the wear on either end (Butler 2005: 56). Neolithic horse-shoe shaped scrapers are present, as well as small, diagnostically Early Bronze Age thumbnail examples, though not in any great number.

One of the barbed and tanged arrowheads, from the topsoil of Reeddam, has been badly damaged by burning. Other burnt flakes and natural pieces of flint which were formerly called 'pot boilers' litter the site, though it is now recognised that this term is somewhat of a misnomer due to the multitude of explanations for their existence. It is likely that much of this has been caused by recent bonfires, but the spatial distribution of burnt flint is worthy of investigation.

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 "...THE STAGGERING NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO BOOKED FOR THE 2011 FLINT DAY COURSE IS TESTIMONY TO THE FASCINATION IT HOLDS..."

dating. The particularly small size and style of those found in Reeddam and Boneyard place them in the later part of the Mesolithic period.

BEYOND THE MESOLITHIC

Despite sharing a continuous landmass with the Continent, Britain had become an island by around 6500 BC. The Fens were becoming

superb laurel leaf point from Field 30. The lithic evidence from the Neolithic period onwards is sparser in the Reeddam and Boneyard assemblages; however, arrowheads such as the aforementioned example, plus two Neolithic chisel arrowheads, and Early Bronze Age barbed and tanged specimens show that there was still a presence in the landscape, and they most likely represent occasional hunting losses. A particularly nice

People continued to use flint tools throughout the Bronze Age and possibly into the Iron Age in Sedgeford. While there is far less evidence for these later periods from the main trenches in Boneyard, Reeddam and Chalk Pit Field, fieldwalking assemblages – most notably that from Kang's Corner, two fields across from the southeast of the carpark – presents strong evidence for activity from the later Bronze Age or possibly even the Iron Age period, with a significant number of poor quality flakes and cores which characterise these later assemblages.

THE RAW MATERIAL, ITS TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

The quality of the flint raw material used across these periods ranges from poor to good. Generally, the Mesolithic people were proficient at selecting reasonable quality flint which they would have collected locally in an age before deep shaft mining of the kind seen at Grimes Graves. Much of the good flint here is a buff colour, translucent in thinner blades and flakes. Good quality flint has also been used for the production of more specific tools like the adze, and later axes and fabricator, the last of which has developed a smoky blue and white patina and occasional iron spotting. Much of the flint has some large, coarse inclusions and these have taken their toll on the knappers, resulting in numerous unpredicted fractures and weaknesses causing tools to break during use, though overall, people were skilled and had a good understanding of the materials with which they worked.

CONCLUSION

The flint evidence from SHARP presents a picture of a Late Mesolithic temporary hunting encampment in the Heacham valley (Robins pers. comm. 1998). Here, over 6000 years ago, in the area of the Boneyard and Reeddam excavations, hunter-gatherers collected flint and knapped small blades, bladelets and flakes, using hammerstones and soft bone, wood or antler hammers. They made tools for hunting, furnished with tiny flint microliths. They cut, scraped and worked plant-based materials that grew in the damp conditions of the valley, and they made and hafted adzes with which they worked wood. Their structures left no traces, they did not make pottery, and they did not use metals, but the flint shows us they were here. Neolithic and Early Bronze Age scrapers, a fabricator and flaked axe-heads, as well as waste material from the knapping process, show this was not an empty landscape in later periods of prehistory. Arrowheads indicate that people hunted in the valley on occasion during the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age when, up the slope in Chalk Pit Field, they buried selected members of their community in a crouched position where they were discovered by SHARP volunteers some 4500 years later.

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A large percentage of the hard work on SHARP's flint has been carried out by Geraldine Crann and John Ames, with contributions from several others, in particular, some detailed notes and identifications by Peter Robins. Without their efforts, an understanding of SHARP's lithic assemblages would be further away from completion. Any errors or omissions are, of course, my own.

Image reproduced with kind permission of Chris Butler.

KATH WALKER

SHARP LANDSCAPE ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

In 2010, Dr Keith Robinson taught an Introduction to Landscape Archaeology course during week 1 of the SHARP season. This was so well received that there was a request for Landscape II to be taught the following year. In 2011 the Landscape Archaeology course consisted of equal numbers of Landscape I & II students, which was managed by teaching some material jointly and some just to LI students, leaving the LIs to undertake a project on historical water management on the Heacham River, which had been discussed in 2010.

There have been several reports and publications on the river and its uses. One suggestion was that there was a medieval canal at Eaton (a deserted village downriver from Sedgeford) which ran through to Fring 'Harbour' (now a pond in the centre of Fring, a village upriver from Sedgeford). Others have identified suggested that there was a carstone near Eaton as the ruins of a mill and lock, mill leat possibly the and that this could be site of one of four mills recorded for Sedgeford in the Domesday Book.

The group decided to review the evidence, so donned waders to walk the riverbed from where the Sedgeford to Heacham Road crosses the river at Mill Bridge (could this be

a clue for one of the sites?), up as far as the footbridge on the path that runs beside Sedgeford Church. This produced several points of interest were identified, such as spreads of stone not native to the area and possible sites of fords.. It must also be said that wading a beautiful stream on a fine day has much to commend it.

By the end of the week we had not proved or disproved any theories, body's ideas and it was decided to form a landscape archaeology group and continue with this work out of the digging season, and to form a Landscape Archaeology Group. A cursory survey of SHARP's archives at the OVH revealed that a considerable amount of work has been done on landscape archaeology since the SHARP's inception, of SHARP, some of which remains incomplete. This gives us a wider remit than our current river project.

The disadvantage of a summer time walk along a stream is the dense vegetation which impedes visibility. To overcome this, the group spent a weekend making a more detailed examination of the mill site and its environs in late November 2011. Following this, we have obtained permission from the Ken Hill Estate

to conduct further surveys and some excavation in the area of Eaton in the summer of 2012.

So in summary, we have formed a Landscape Archaeology Group within SHARP with the intention of extending the study of human settlement of the area by non-invasive techniques. Our programme for the immediate future is to become familiar with all the landscape work to date, to catalogue it and prepare a list of work in need of completion. The revamped website will have a Landscape Archaeology section and completed projects will be added to the on-line archive. Meanwhile, we will extend our work on water management along the Heacham River.

Our biggest difficulty to date has been in selecting a suitable name for the group since both SHARP Landscape Archaeology Group and Landscape Archaeology Group of SHARP produce acronyms open to misinterpretation.

DAVID CREASE

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

2011 was a big year for outreach and education at SHARP. As well as continuing to provide a wide range of day- and week-long courses throughout the season and our popular annual open day to the public, new programmes and activities were introduced into our repertoire this season. This was largely down to two factors: the introduction of a new 'teaching trench' solely for educational purposes, and SHARP's partnership with the BBC's Hands on History initiative.

TEACHING TRENCH

One of the big changes that took place this season was that the schools programme was given a big makeover. Gone were the plastic swords buried in a sandpit; in its replacement was a shiny (but not new, per se) teaching trench, a machined section of a previously excavated portion of Chalk Pit Field. The rationale behind this was to provide a controlled area to explain the principles and practices of archaeologists, as well as to allow groups of children a chance to actually excavate.

What did they dig? Project Director Gary Rossin kindly donated a bricollage of Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Medieval finds that he had collected for teaching purposes, and the supervisory team was tasked with creating faux-features similar to the ones we were excavating

as part of Trench 14 for the children to excavate. After a week of mattocking and burying during setup week, the teaching trench consisted of a flint stone wall, several pits with animal bone and pot remains, a six post-hole standing structure, a 'treasure hoard' of four or five replica Roman coins (lent from the site gift shop) and a ditch filled with typical early Medieval debris.

Each child was given a light trowel, a finds tray, and custom-made clipboards and recording sheets with

which to learn to excavate, like the archaeologists on the adjacent trench. This was done out of respect to the children – to recognise them as being capable of learning and understanding the basic methods of archaeology, and to not patronise them with unrealistic and simplified scenarios such as sand pits. Our confidence and trust in them paid off, as there was not a single child who proved themselves incapable of trowelling like a pro by the end of their day at SHARP!

A typical day on the re-vamped



schools programme therefore began with a quick tour of the site, starting at Boneyard Field before moving up to Chalk Pit Field and Trench 14, where the group would be shown some of the finds and features that the archaeologists were working on. With their interest piqued, the basic methods and principles of archaeology were explained to them, and a tools demonstration was conducted. Then, the school group would be broken up into groups of four or five children plus an adult (teachers from the school or SHARP volunteers) and assigned a feature each to dig for about 45 minutes. A series of mini-lectures by experts from the SHARP team were also introduced, so as to give the schoolchildren a break from the digging and/or the

rain, including animal bone specialist Zoe's introduction to animal skulls and flint specialist Kath's crash course on flint tools.

Kids and teachers alike from the five participating school groups commented on the success of the teaching trench and the experience it offered throughout the season. The trench also got its literal five minutes of fame when a BBC Look East reporter came to film Sedgeford Primary School's Years 3 and 4 participating in the schools programme. Mike Liggins, the reporter, joined in with the kids and dug briefly in the rain, leaving with a newfound appreciation of how much hard work archaeology entailed. The teaching trench also made headlines in local newspapers, having been

featured in both Lynn News and the Eastern Daily Press in July 2011.

BBC HANDS ON HISTORY

SHARP's outreach and education this season was also heavily impacted upon by our collaboration with BBC's Hands on History initiative. To maximise the benefits of the press and web coverage that the BBC were going to bring on board, Gary Rossin and I decided to come up with a new day programme which would hopefully entice new visitors to SHARP, and whet their interest in the practice of community archaeology.

DIG FOR A DAY

Dig for a Day' was introduced from



Week 2 onwards, offering a rare opportunity for anyone to visit SHARP and participate in our excavations. After a safety briefing and a tools demonstration, members of the public were brought onto Trench 14 alongside our volunteers and supervisors, and were allowed the opportunity to actively contribute towards SHARP's work and research. Being publicised on the BBC's website and on promotional flyers and leaflets meant that our limit of 10 people per day was being filled almost every day by a diverse range of people. The event was extremely popular with families, but also for couples on holiday, or locals who had never thought they could join in with the project. We even had a bricklayer whose sections were so straight that he was being summoned to sort out uneven sections dug by our volunteers! In terms of the strategy for promoting SHARP, the free digging experience promoted by Hands on History has led to many people signing up for week-long courses for the 2012 season who had not previously heard of our site before, so in hindsight it was highly successful.

Dig for a Day also had its five minutes of fame, with day diggers featuring on two recent BBC archaeology programmes: How God Made the English, and Michael Wood's Great British History.

OPEN DAY

The 2011 season open day was hailed as one of SHARP's best yet, with the sunshine helping to draw record numbers of visitors out towards our field. The campsite, marquee and

Chalk Pit Field were transformed into multiple activity zones to suit all ages and levels of interest, from site tours, informal lectures and an adapted 'dig for an hour' running all day to the more entertainment-led human fruit

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 " ...SHARP'S OUTREACH AND EDUCATION THIS SEASON WAS ALSO HEAVILY IMPACTED UPON BY OUR COLLABORATION WITH BBC'S HANDS ON HISTORY INITIATIVE..."

machine, 'torc-la' and a set of comical stocks that both Project Directors Gary and Neil Faulkner posed in. Our new artefact display cases in the Finds Hut were a huge hit with the visitors, as was the Human Remains display featuring demonstrations of how to record human bones using a 3D scanning camera kindly loaned from Cranfield University for the day. Feedback from the public was extremely positive, and the SHARP team was praised for their dedication and commitment to both archaeology and Sedgeford in particular.

As well as being a brilliant tool for outreach and education at SHARP, the open day excelled as an enterprise in fundraising for the project. Through a series of innovative activities, from Pat's cake stall to 'sponsor a grid square' and the season's Grand Raffle, over 1100 pounds were raised. All in a successful day's work for everyone involved!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The outreach and education work that

took place during the 2011 season would not have been possible without the support of the entire SHARP team. In particular, Gary Rossin was instrumental in designing and implementing the new schools programme; Jon Cousins must

be thanked for his daily organizational skills on Trench 14 for fitting in ten newbies every day for four weeks; all of the supervisory team must be thanked for their role in making Teaching Trench a reality; special thanks to volunteers Dan Crampsie, Camilla Foster, Tyler Mackie, Charlie Mijatovic for their help with school groups and Dig for a Day; Jannine Parry for the excellent catering of snacks and squash for the schoolchildren (and accommodating my irregular lunch times!); and Sally Faulkner and Bren Stibbons for booking in all our schools and members of the public.

I would also like to thank each and every person who came to dig for a day for making the experience such a memorable one, as well as all of the school groups who showed their support of the new programme: Redgate Junior School, West Lynn Primary School, Sedgeford Primary School, Docking Primary School, and Education Otherwise.

.....
 VALERIE TEH

THE INVESTIGATION AND EXCAVATION AT WELL COTTAGE, DOCKING ROAD, SEDGEFORD

As having previously been involved in test pits in the Sedgeford Village Survey in 2004 I have always taken notice of planning applications, concerning Sedgeford Parish, which appear in the Public Notices in the local press "The Lynn News". On Friday July 2nd 2010 the Lynn News had a Public Notice Concerning Well Cottage, Docking Road, Sedgeford where Mr. L. Smith had applied for permission to Demolish an existing outbuilding.

I went to visit Mr and Mrs Smith, introduced myself as being a member of SHARP and as they were

quite new to Sedgeford explained what SHARP was all about. I mentioned about previous test pits being done including some close by and would they allow SHARP to do one in their garden, this they agreed to.

Whilst there Mr. Smith took me to see what was to be demolished, all the brickwork was to be left and just wood was involved in the demolition. I notice that some of the wooden boards appeared to be from ammunition boxes from both the 1st and 2nd World Wars. I thought that this would be worthy of further investigation and suggested



- SHELL**
Included cockle, mussel, oyster and snail shells.
- C.B.M.**
a few pieces of common brick and roof tiles.
- CLAY PIPE**
4 pieces of clay tobacco pipe.
- GLASS**
Various fragments of glass.
- CHARCOAL**
Small pieces of charcoal and coke.
- CERAMICS**
1 Blue white part of tile,
2 Greyish pot sherd,
3 White with green rim part of cup,
4 Fragment of glazed white with indent groove,
5 White foot of dish,
6 Brown/Orange design on white part of plate,
7 Yellowish fragment,
8 White with the words "much dang" imprinted,
9 White with green rim,
10 White fragment,
11 White with flower design in blue,
12 Pale blue with small design including Gold Harp,
13 small white sherd,
14 same,
15 same,
16 small cream fragment.



that others from the SHARP TEAM would be interested and could they come to record and photograph, this was also agreed.

I agreed to make a start on the test pit on Thursday morning 15th July 2010.

TEST PIT

On Thursday 15th July 2010 together with Luke Taylor and Mr & Mrs Smith a site was selected that would not make too much of a mess in the back garden. A one square metre was measured out and excavation commenced. The ground was quite hard and numerous shells animal bones and metal objects were found but nothing earlier than 19th Century.

The test pit excavation continued on Friday 16th July 2010 but this time my assistant was Oliver Cantello-Slatery it became obvious that although

the pit was only .50metre in depth, we had hit natural so it was drawn, measured, photographed and then backfilled.

METAL

Assorted nails screws and nuts and bolts of various sizes including fencing nails. Some washers a spring from a clothes peg some buttons a quite heavy circular light fitting and 3 Nobel 12 bore shotgun cartridge bases.

Any ideas or opinions on the ceramics would be most welcome. Especially on the origin of the words "much dang" this could be much danger perhaps? Perhaps something to do with life boats?

ANIMAL BONE

Various animal and bird bones including a near complete cat.

THE CAT SKELETON

Some of the bones such as ribs etc are too fragile to make any attempt to assemble the cat.

WELL COTTAGE-OUT HOUSES FOR DEMOLITION

A ramshackle assemblage of out houses made from timber planks, red brick, shingle tiles, breeze blocks and large flint like stones. Consists of large double height room (with garage door) on North side, with a walk-through single-storey room to the South, through into a single-storey full width room that has a staircase in the middle of it, running from South to North. Further South, opposite the staircase is another door into a later lean to extension, built from breeze blocks to the South and West.

The East Wall is of stone and is the West wall of the small outside lean to. This has a door to the North and once had a sloping roof. The top course of the walls are red brick and the edge of the roof at least was made from large red curved tiles. This lean to is thought to have been an outside toilet at some point. To the North of this is an area of concrete that was presumably the flooring of the 'SAUNA' room.

Going upstairs there are rooms to both left and right and also a door out onto a mezzanine that looks out over the garage space. In the upstairs 'hallway' a door to the East just goes outside into the garden (it slopes up from the house) but there used to

be a further room here (door has a SAUNA sign).

The stairs and the floor of the upstairs room to the left appear to have been made from ammunition boxes cut down to make planks. Writing appears on the front of some of the steps in yellow and white paint.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since the work done at Well Cottage in 2010 and the delay in getting this report completed, mainly due to my illness, fellow SHARP member Brenda Stibbons brought to my attention a book "The Taylor Bedmobile of Sedgeford" written by Tony Beadle and published by Panic Button Press. I have purchased this book and recommend it to all SHARP members.

Gerald Taylor left the RAF in 1947 and bought Well Cottage in Sedgeford. His contacts with the RAF could explain the wooden ammunition boxes. The Bedmobile motor caravan conversions were initially carried out in the small garage/workshop behind Well Cottage, this could also explain the mass of nuts, bolts etc. found in the test pit, no doubt the whole garden may be similar.

In conclusion thanks to Anna Gow for help on the out houses and to Mr. and Mrs Smith for their assistance and keeping us supplied with refreshments.

JOHN HENSBY



MEET THE SUPERVISOR: JON COUSINS

Jon mutters apprehensively as we turn on our recording device...

1. WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN THE PROJECT?

My role in the project is to direct the excavations on the Saxon settlement site which entails telling everybody what to do, or making them feel like they can make their own decisions confidently.

SO YOU'RE THE INVISIBLE HAND?

I should be the invisible hand, yes.

2. HOW DID YOU FIRST GET INVOLVED WITH S.H.A.R.P.?

I first came to Sedgeford in 2001. I came on the open day, it was raining. I remember meeting Pat Reid, who was then the Supervisor for Human Remains. She showed me some skellies, it was all very nice. And even though it rained and we didn't have a chance to look in the trenches because everybody was hiding in the old marquee, I came and did my BERT course in 2002.

AND YOU HAVN'T LOOKED BACK SINCE?

I've looked back many times...

WAS THAT YOUR FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH ARCHAEOLOGY?

I was doing continuing education through Cambridge University from 2000 but that's my first site.

3. WHAT KEEPS YOU COMING BACK SINCE 2001?

The community, probably – yeah. The family.

4. FOLLOWING ON FROM THAT, WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE S.H.A.R.P. MEMORY OR MOMENT?

It's got to be PG? Happy memories – of which I can't divulge... I'm happy to give names because they're not here anymore. That's a hard one, 10 years worth of memories... Nothing special sticks out, apart from that one really special moment but erm... There is no standout memory, really, to be honest. I suppose the early years were my favourite times, the

2002, '3, '4 seasons cause it's all new, I was one of the young ones – which I was then, now I'm an old bugger. But yeah, having really good mates and that: less responsibility, chalk pit every night.

5. WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PERIOD IN ARCHAEOLOGY AND WHY?

I have no favourite, I really do not have any favourite.

I HEAR YOU WERE QUITE KEEN ON GETTING INVOLVED WITH THE AERODROME PROJECT?

I do like the aerodrome project, modern concrete archaeology how I like to think of it. [Thinks to himself]. Well it's always been what's on my doorstep that's interested me and Sedgeford is particularly good for me because my family comes from



"...NOTHING SPECIAL STICKS OUT... APART FROM THAT ONE REALLY SPECIAL MOMENT BUT UHM..."

Sedgeford. I have heritage from here going back to about 1660.

6. IF YOU WERE TO TRAVEL BACK IN TIME, WHEN AND WHERE WOULD YOU GO?

Hmmmm. I think I'd like to have a go at hunter gathering! It's like, they make their own buildings, make their own clothes, they hunt their own animals, gather their own food – it's all that sort of thing, self-sufficient. No pressure – you don't have to think about going to work, the really basic simple... and I suppose Sedgeford, why not?

7. WHAT'S IT LIKE HAVING YOUR FAMILY ON SITE?

Errrrrrrrm. It's kinda nice and it's kinda not. It adds to your responsibilities obviously, having two young kids on site and a stressed partner whose

running the kitchen. But seeing them everyday is fantastic. Wouldn't want to change it but it has it's ups and downs. It's good, for most of the time.

8. WHAT'S YOUR PREFERRED WAY OF UNWINDING AFTER A HARD DAYS WORK?

Seeing my newly born child running at me, smiling, joyfully – and falling over several times before he gets to me!

9. IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT S.H.A.R.P. WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

That's difficult aint it... [Thinking] Haha Dig for a Day!?! Less dig for a days would be awesome yeah! I suppose to make it a little bit more financially viable for myself. I really like the idea of it being voluntary, no one gets paid and that, but it's two



months out of your working life.

10. WHAT IS THE MOST ROMANTIC THING YOU'VE EVER DONE?

I've picked wild flowers for my beautiful Jannine. Yeah it's cheap aint it!

11. WHAT IS YOUR IDEAL FIRST DATE?

[Chuckles] My ideal first date....? A long walk through some woods gathering berries in the autumn.

12. AND DESCRIBE S.H.A.R.P. IN FIVE WORDS.

[Long pause]. So, it's in tents, as in 'it's in tents!' It's intense [looks pleased with himself], this is good this, are you writing this down? [Repeats in tents and intense to himself proudly] This is clever... Hard and fun.

In-Tents, Intense, Hard, Fun.

LUKE TAYLOR & VALERIE TEH

PHOSPHATE ANALYSIS IN CHALK PIT FIELD

Soil phosphate analysis of the SHARP 2011 Trench 14 (T14) excavations has revealed that people and/or animals once inhabited Chalk Pit Field. Raised soil phosphate levels across T14 indicate that at some time in the past some form of animal husbandry was practiced, or a settlement located, within the field. Further chemical analysis is being carried out in an attempt to identify specific areas of activity or dwellings.

The collective cry is going to be 'tell us something we didn't know', and, on the face of it, this is all that soil phosphate analysis can tell, but most fields of archaeology have developed hugely over the last couple of decades and archaeological chemistry is no exception. Phosphate analysis is being used more and more to identify uses of particular parts of excavated sites and can even identify and differentiate between uses of rooms within buildings.

Phosphate analysis of soils first took place nearly one hundred years ago, but it was not until the 1930s, after it was noted that soil phosphate levels are increased at sites of human occupation, that archaeologists adopted a method for prospecting for settlements. Phosphorous is present in all living things and is essential for bone growth in mammals, but too much phosphate causes excessive bone growth and the excess is excreted in urine and faeces. The phosphorous in this waste matter readily bonds with metals in the soil, which prevents it from leaching away. It is this bonding which

enables phosphates to remain in the soil for many hundreds or even thousands of years, and this persistence makes it very useful for archaeologists. Huge amounts of phosphates are also deposited by decaying bones (Brothwell & Pollard 2001).

ANALYSIS METHODS

Soil phosphate analysis will normally fall into one of three categories. First, qualitative: a prospecting method using simple 'spot' testing to cover large areas quickly and cheaply. Second, quantitative: an absolute method used for comparing different sites, usually laboratory-based, and therefore time consuming and expensive. Third, comparative or relative testing: phosphate levels are compared only against the background level of the particular site. All three require a background value for phosphates taken from archaeologically sterile areas of the excavation to enable raised levels to be identified from elsewhere on the site.

The most common method used for comparative phosphate analysis is to separate the phosphates from the soil sample using a hot acid, add a reagent, and measure the results using a spectrophotometer or a colorimeter. This is a simplification, but sums it up nicely.

TRENCH 14

In 2011, preliminary research was carried out to ensure that the colorimeter produced reliable results tested against

the tried and trusted laboratory method.

Six soil samples were taken at places where no features were visible, either on the surface or on the geophysics plot. These samples, once processed, provided values of 3.1, 2.8, 1.8, 2.5, 5.9 & 4.2 parts per million (or mg/l). The average value for background samples would therefore be just less than 3.5ppm. However, the two higher readings were excluded because it was later found that these had been collected from within half a meter of ditch features [14064] and [14251] in the case of the 5.9 reading, and [14024] for the 4.2 reading. This left an average value of 2.9, nominally 3.0ppm.

It was possible to collect an 'absolute zero' reading because ditch features [14206] and [14308] had been overcut into the 'natural' sand, both providing readings of 1.1ppm. This simple comparison proves the science that the phosphates are persistent and non-leaching, and that the Chalk Pit excavations are particularly suitable for this type of analysis. As well as these 'natural' and background samples, Robin Putland and his intrepid team of environmentalists collected a 100 gram sample from each context fill, layer or deposit, and these together with other surface collected samples make for an interesting comparison.

So what exactly can phosphate analysis tell us? What it can't do is provide a date, or separate different ages (Iron Age from Roman from Anglo-Saxon etc.), and for this reason is best used in conjunction

with other archaeological techniques. This interim report focuses on two particular areas of interest from T14, the large deep pit feature at the extreme southern edge of T14 [14006], and the post hole and beam slot alignment at the northwestern edge of T14 [14186], [14188], [14190], [14259] and [14268].

The top two fills of pit feature [14006] contained an assemblage of large animal bones and several sherds of both Ipswich and Thetford ware, and so it would be anticipated that the phosphate levels here would be increased; in fact, (14009) had 15.0ppm and (14091) had 14.6ppm, or around three times the background reading. With each deeper level the phosphates decreased through 13.5ppm, 11.0ppm, 8.0ppm and down to the bottom fill at 4.5ppm. This would suggest that during the later Anglo-Saxon period only the top part of the pit was still open and being used as a midden, and that the bottom part had at least partially filled in naturally through erosion.

The most interesting results were obtained on the surface surrounding the pit. Five samples were collected at one meter intervals due east of the edge of the pit in an attempt to establish its use. Was it a watering hole for domesticated animals, or was it a well of some description tapping into the spring line on the hill?

The nearest sample had phosphate levels of 4.5ppm; this increased dramatically and at 2 meters the level was 14.4ppm; at 3 meters, 12.4ppm; at 4 meters, 15.5ppm; and at 5 meters, 16.0ppm – or well over five times the background levels. It is possible that animals were excluded from the edge of the well/spring by a fence or

bank of some kind, but that a trough was located nearby which was filled by people lifting water from the spring. It should be noted that there were no archaeological features immediately east of the pit to otherwise explain the massively raised phosphate levels.

The post hole and beam slot alignment also produced interesting results, but not what was expected. Six samples were taken from the surface, one meter either side of the beam slots and one meter apart, the theory being that the phosphate levels inside the structure would be higher than outside (unless, of course, an animal enclosure was attached to the structure). In fact, all six samples were almost identical at 0.7, 0.7, 0.7, 0.8, 0.8 and 0.9ppm. These are not only below the background sample totals but also less than the 'absolute zero' natural levels.

There are a number of possible explanations. The collection and/or processing of these samples was flawed in some way; however, this is unlikely because they are so similar in value.

It may be that the ground was cleared of topsoil before the structure was erected.

Or, it may be that here is the first real evidence for a dwelling: if the structure was a stable, byre or workshop, the phosphate levels would be much higher both inside and outside the walls. Parnell and Terry suggested that in areas of high traffic, such as entrances, phosphate levels will be lower, or even absent altogether; it may be that these six samples were collected from the entrance to a dwelling. Further investigation is necessary.

T14 soil samples being boiled in

hydrochloric acid and filtered ready for analysis.

The purpose of this research is to develop a cheap and reliable method of soil phosphate analysis to be carried out on site, and these results have been produced using an imported hand held colorimeter. The filtrate from these 33 samples has had to be diluted massively to allow the colorimeter to give a relative value. These results should not and cannot be compared to results using other extraction methods and/or apparatus. All 120 samples collected during the 2011 season will have been processed using a desktop spectrophotometer by the start of the 2012 season and a complete report made.

Much has been written in recent years regarding the advances in analytical chemistry in archaeology, but only two references have been used here:

Brothwell, D., & Pollard, A., 2001. The handbook of archaeological sciences.

Wiley & Sons, Chichester, West Sussex. Parnell, J.J., & Terry, R.E., 2002. Journal of archaeological science (e-journal) vol29 pp379-404.

PHILIP HILL

THE SEDGEFORD AERODROME PROJECT IN 2011

2011 saw the Sedgeford Aerodrome Project enter its third year. The Project continues the attempt to categorise the types of buildings found on the aerodrome, as seen in contemporary aerial photographs, aiming to relate the surviving traces of buildings to the 1918 plan. We also aim to create a phasing of the site in order to understand its growth from farmland to small military town and back to farmland. Additionally, we hope to be able to relate later WWII features and those reflecting re-use of the site in recent years.

As has now become traditional, the year kicked off with a winter survey weekend, led by Jerry Revell. The summer excavation team was a mix of volunteers and students gaining practical field experience on the Modern Conflict Archaeology course.



Geophysics survey underway at Sedgeford Aerodrome, February 2011

GEOPHYSICS SURVEY

In February 2011 we set out to solve a mystery building that appears on the 1918 map of the aerodrome. This is an 'H-block', marked only in outline, that lies north of the hangers and just to the west of the railhead. We decided to conduct a resistivity survey of this area to see if anything remained of this structure.

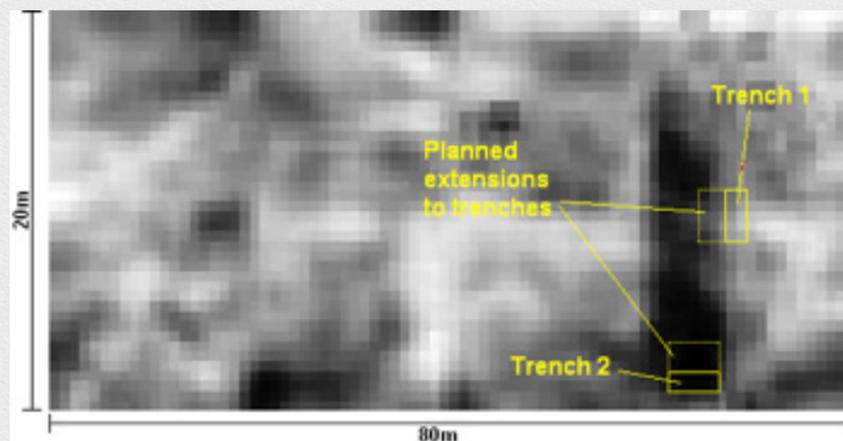


Trench 1 prepared for photography

The results were not what we expected; no evidence of the H-block was found, but we did detect a 15 metre-long high-resistance feature running parallel to the known route of the railway. There also appeared to be a possible rectangular low-resistance feature. As these could be related to the railway, we decided to target them for investigation during the main season. A pair of trial excavation trenches were planned, and duly opened in the summer.

SAP 2011 SUMMER EXCAVATION SEASON

The initial project of the summer was to investigate the geophysics results from earlier in the year. Two trenches were opened in the hope they might provide additional information about activity around the railhead, which had been constructed in late 1918 as part of a plan to treble the size of the aerodrome's facilities, plans cancelled



Geophysics results and planned positions of the trial trenches dug in the 2011 summer season

after the Armistice.

EXCAVATION OF TRENCH 1

Trench 1 was located over one of the low-resistance geophysics features, with plans to extend this westwards into the high-resistance area. As

we were excavating plough soil we dispensed with trowels and worked with picks and shovels. Alas, apart from remains of bricks and tiles and the base of an old bonfire, no substantial archaeology was found in this trench. We did note, however, that the plough soil was unusually deep here, about 25

to 30 cm before we hit the natural chalk bedrock. A narrow sondage (small test trench) was dug at the eastern end of Trench 1 to confirm natural had been reached.

As we had found so little in Trench 1 we decided to open a small test pit across the area designated as Trench 2 before committing ourselves to a full excavation here. This yielded similarly negative results with only a scatter of rubble was found in the plough soil. Furthermore, it was only about 10 cm deep before we hit the natural chalk bedrock.

We concluded that the difference in plough soil depths could explain the difference in the resistivity measurements between the areas dug in Trenches 1 and 2. This may have been due to the structures that once stood on this site, but there is now very little left to find. We therefore decided to close down excavations in this field.



Sondage in Trench 2 cleaned and prepared for photography



Building foundations uncovered at the rail head



Excavation of the Doping Shed in the Royal Flying Corps area of the Aerodrome

"...ANOTHER BUSY SEASON WITH YET MORE INTERESTING DISCOVERIES...."

Further work also continued along the line of the rail track to the east of Hangars 1 and 2, extending work begun in 2009 and 2010. The team here fared better, uncovering several foundations aligned with the direction of the railway but these are proving difficult to interpret. They do not appear to be fully enclosed buildings.

They could be the bases of unloading platforms but they don't all face the line of the tracks. They could also be the foundations for ancillary support structures such as water towers

The arrival of extra hands, in the shape of students from the MCA course, allowed us to open up two new areas. One was in the long leg of buildings running south from the south-west

shed where aircraft wings would have been repaired. An acetate solvent was applied to the canvas wings, shrinking the canvas and stretching it over their wooden frames. The solvent was called 'dope' because the fumes made people high; in high doses it could be lethal. The concrete pedestal supported electric fans that would have pushed the toxic fumes down into the conduit and out of the shed

The team were able to define the plan of the structure. They were also able to establish the relationship of the pit to Hangar 2, filling, as it did, the area between the hangar wall and the base of two of the hangar's angled supports. This parallels the layout of the range of ancillary buildings, associated with Hangar 1, that we excavated last year, but here the buildings offer differing functions.

As time pressed, it was decided to take down only one of the 'cells' to find floor level. The cell proved to be well over a metre deep and had obviously functioned as some kind of sump; whether for fuel or oil, or as part of a sanitation system, is not yet clear.

Another busy season with yet more interesting discoveries, proving again that although only 100 years old, the site still presents us with many unknowns. Despite official building regulations and mass production, the organic growth of the aerodrome and its interaction with the landscape and the people who lived and worked there help to give the site its unique character.

JERRY REVELL & KEITH ROBINSON

"...DESPITE OFFICIAL BUILDING REGULATIONS AND MASS PRODUCTION, THE ORGANIC GROWTH OF THE AERODROME AND ITS INTERACTION WITH THE LANDSCAPE AND THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED AND WORKED THERE HELP TO GIVE THE SITE ITS UNIQUE CHARACTER....."

corner of the aerodrome's core, which formed a technical area of the Royal Flying Corps. The second was an area of concrete structures attached to the western flank of Hangar 2.

In the technical area we had, whilst rooting around in the undergrowth, come across an unusual concrete H-shaped concrete pedestal, which had curved, almost scalloped, surfaces when seen in section. This proved to be part of a very unusual building (Building 8) with a large, concrete-lined conduit running down the centre of the floor, which led to the base of a chimney. To one side of the building a small annex contained the odd concrete pedestal. From our post excavation research we now know this is the remains of a doping

via the chimney.

This was confirmed by the discovery in the annexe of a small metal plate inscribed with the name Blackman Motor No. 52033, with further electrical specifications. Jerry was able to track this down to the firm of James Keith Blackman Ltd, a company registered in Manchester, which made extractor fans for power stations before WWI.

Meanwhile in Trench 4, work progressed on the structure associated with Hangar 2 which proved to be a large concrete lined pit, with a further internal wall almost dividing it into two equal cells. Excavating this proved to be tough going amongst the roots of the trees that have reclaimed much of this area.

NOT ALL CROUCHED BURIALS ARE THE SAME...

AN UPDATE ON S8001, THE FIRST CROUCHED BURIAL

Sedgeford's first crouched burial, S8001, was discovered in 2009 and reported in the Interim Report for that year (Hatton, 2009:8-10). Since then, the discovery of another crouched burial – S8002 – has been reported in the 2010 Interim (Pye-Watson, 2010:6) and, in more detail, in this current Interim. Although we now know that the two burials are of very different dates – S8001 was c.2300BC, whereas S8002 is about 2000 years more recent at 373-203BC – they will inevitably be compared and contrasted. This note is therefore intended to ensure that the information on S8001 is fully up to date.

In 2009, it was not possible to excavate the whole of the grave cut for S8001 because of the proximity of the southern baulk of Trench 10. In 2010 Trench 13 was excavated as, in effect, a southern extension of Trench 10 and thus allowed the completion of the excavation of the grave. The result is shown in Fig.1. Based on this plan, it might be better to describe the grave cut as 'sub-circular' –or even 'roughly square with rounded corners' –rather than the 'sub-oval' it appeared to be in 2009. No new finds were recorded in the bit excavated in 2010, but the fill was extensively sampled for wet sieving and environmental analysis. As well as being

interesting in their own right, it will be useful to compare these results with those obtained from the fill of S8002 to see if the local environment changed in the 2000 years between the burials.

The 2010 excavations also showed that ditches dug by the Anglo-Saxons had slightly disturbed S8001. Fig.2 shows

was taken the feature was incompletely excavated, but it had, when originally dug by the Anglo-Saxons, skimmed the upper surface of the skeleton and then continued westwards over the shoulders of the excavator on the left (Lorraine Horsley). Later, this SE-NW ditch (shown bold on the plan in Fig.3) was intersected by a north-

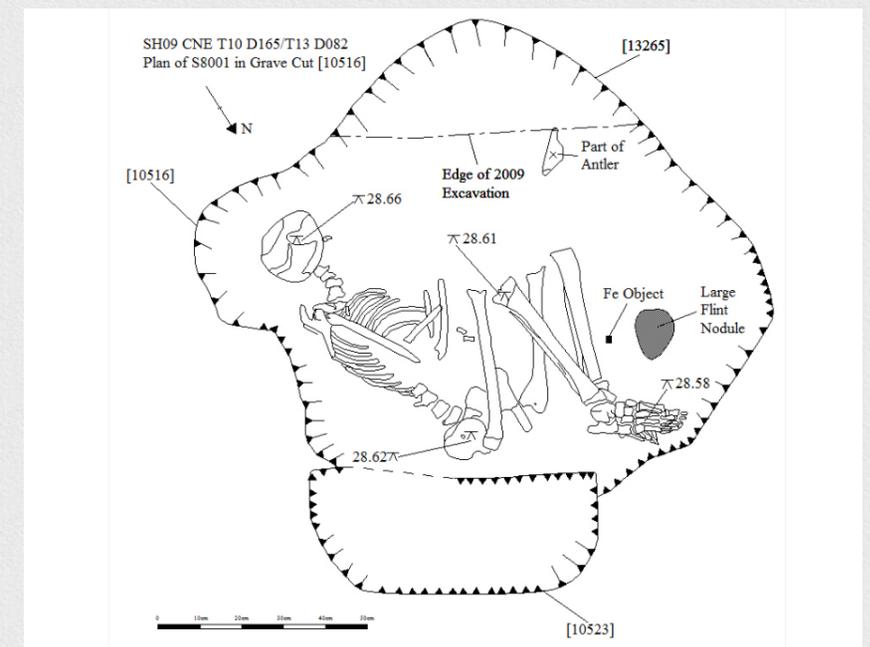


Fig.1 Plan of Grave of S8001 - 2009 and 2010 excavations combined. Bill Howard

the initial cause of the disturbance coming in from the bottom right of the picture (just beyond the head of the skeleton). At the time this photograph

south-trending ditch(re)cut deeper in the centre, and subsequently itself intersected by another ditch curving in from the west that also appears to have

been recut. It was in a fill at the bottom of this in the position marked on Fig.3 that Miner John (Hensby) and Doctor John (Jolleys) in 2010 found part of a human frontal bone (forehead), a right patella (knee cap) and three front teeth: the upper right 1st incisor, the lower left 1st incisor and the lower right 2nd incisor. All of these were missing from S8001, all were of the right size, and – the clinching proof – the bit of frontal found in 2010 fitted nicely together with the bit of frontal originally excavated in 2009. As the bones were all found close together, it seems likely that they were simply swept a metre or two westwards when the SE-NW trench was dug from SE to NW as indicated on Fig.3 by the dotted and bold lines. This ditch subsequently silted up, and when the later ditches were dug they did not go quite deep enough to disturb the bones. What had appeared to be the lowest level of recut of the ditch curving in from the west was, in fact, the last surviving few centimetres of the bottom of the SE-NW ditch, the rest of it having

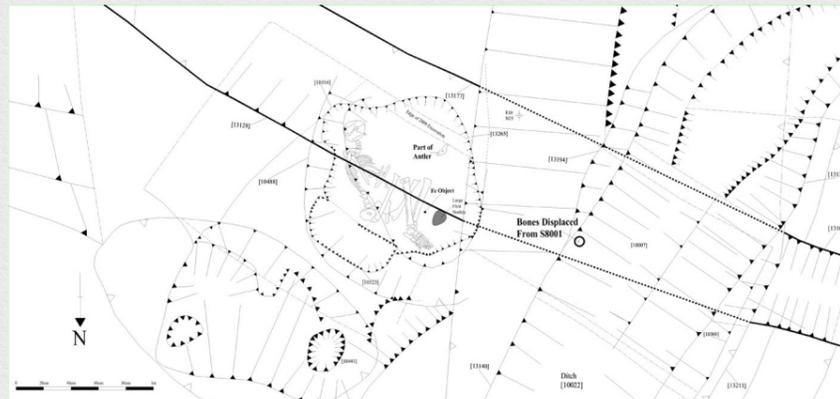


Fig.3 Plan of S8001 and adjacent A-S ditches. Bill Howard

been completely obliterated by all of the other ditch cutting and recutting in the vicinity.

There are still a few bones missing from S8001, including most of the hand bones. The possibility that the hands had been removed prior to burial had been suggested; apparently, such things are not unknown in Neolithic/Early Bronze Age burials. Now it seems most likely that they, too, were removed by the same SE-NW ditch as removed the bit of frontal, etc.

Indeed, the digging of this Anglo-Saxon ditch might shed light on a couple of other mysteries. One was how a 'tiny iron object' (SF3124, marked on Fig.1) came to be in a burial which dates from before the Iron Age. A possible explanation is that it is a piece of natural iron rather than a man-made object. Another possibility now is that it was intrusive, introduced in the bottom of the A-S ditch. The other mystery solved was why S8001 was so highly fragmented, particularly the skull (see Fig.4). The Human Remains Team had hoped to reconstruct the fragmented skull as the measurements might have told us

something about the origins of this person. They might even have yielded information relating to the cause of death. A limited attempt by Mel Van Twest at simply sticking it together quickly showed that this was unlikely to be successful. We are now hoping that the individual fragments can be 3-D scanned and then virtually reconstructed and measured. At the moment, Ray Baldry's photo-montage of the bones (Fig.4) is the most complete image that we have of S8001.

Possible cause(s) of death remain highly conjectural. However, to the observations and speculations made in the 2009 Interim about possible infection of the ear canal (which can be fatal if it extends to the cranial cavity) and the effects of spina bifida occulta (which might contribute to general debilitation), I would now add one more: As previously noted, most of the epiphyses (rounded, articular ends of the long bones) were unfused, although the dental ageing suggested an age at death of about 20 years old. A paper by Weise et al (2001) demonstrates that fusion at the growth plates is dependent on oestrogen levels (in rabbits, at least).

Fig.2 S8001 being excavated 2009



Fig.4 Skeleton S8001 showing fragmentation.

This is true of males as well as females. If this was the case for S8001, we can now add possible endocrine disorder to the list of pathologies from which he or she may have suffered.

It is necessary to say 'he or she' because of the problem of sexing skeletons with unfused pelvises. In the 2009 Interim, the possibility of sexing on the basis of tooth measurements was suggested. I assumed that the tooth sizes of sexed adult Anglo-Saxons buried on Boneyard could be applied to S8001. However, since S8001 dates from twice as long before the Boneyard skeletons as they are from the present day, I now think that this assumption is unjustified. In this instance, I think we should follow normal practice and regard this individual as unsexable.

Based on the assumption that S8001 was male, the 2009 report suggested a height of about 5ft 8in (173cm). This is similar to the average British Bronze Age male height given by Brothwell (1961). If we apply the female equations to the same tibia length data we get an estimated height of 5ft 6.5in (169cm). This is quite a bit bigger than the average British Bronze Age female height of 5ft 3.5in (161cm) in Roberts and Cox (2003:86). However, the validity of applying either the male or

the female equations to S8001, who had not yet stopped growing, is highly questionable.

As well as radiocarbon dates, we have also had the stable isotopes carbon-13 and nitrogen-15 determined for S8001 (and S8002). These can give us an indication of their diets. The figures for S8001 were d13C: -20.2 per mil and d15N: 9.7 per mil. This is fairly typical for a British Neolithic/Bronze Age terrestrial diet. It has a little more fish in it than some, but it is not what you would call 'a marine diet'. It is also very similar to the average results we obtained when we measured the stable isotopes of 45 Anglo-Saxons from Boneyard. The figures for them were d13C: -20.2 per mil and d15N: 9.1 per mil (Corr, 2003:153). The small difference in nitrogen-15 suggests that in the Neolithic/Bronze Age S8001 had slightly more animal protein in his/her diet than the Anglo-Saxons had, but the identical carbon-13 levels indicate that the proportion of it taken as fish did not change. Modest levels of sea fish consumption are rather surprising given how close Sedgeford is to the coast.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With thanks to all who have been

involved with all the excavation and post-excavation work on S8001, especially Bill Howard for Figs 1 and 3.

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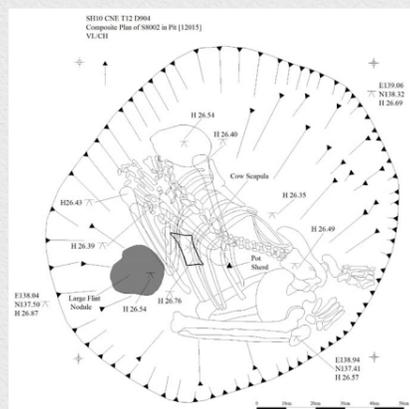
MARTIN HATTON

S8002 – A SECOND CROUCHED BURIAL

Regular readers of the SHARP interim will know how often Martin Hatton and the other members of the Human Remains team have said that NEVER AGAIN will we find any new human remains. In 2010 we were once more proved wrong...



For once, however, the discovery was early enough in the season for us to save the Human Remains team's blood pressure. Towards the end of the first week, Victoria Lucas – a first time SHARP volunteer – was set to work on an orange-brown circular feature, just over one metre in diameter, in the north-eastern end of Trench 12 (marked S8002 on fig.1, above).



Early on she found a small fragment of a pot thought to be Anglo-Saxon, and a shoulder blade of a cow (marked on fig.2, bottom left). Then, when she had dug down about 25cm, she found two long bones that were identified as human - S8002 (fondly known as Tanwen).

The crouched burial S8001 (aka Nellie/Nelson) found in 2009 turned out to be much older than expected – it was carbon dated to around 2300 BC. It was found only about 25m WSW of where Victoria was working, so we conjectured that the two skeletons were probably linked. Because of this (and because everyone looks cool in Hazmat suits), we decided to try and complete the rest of the excavation under near forensic conditions. Masks, gloves and coveralls were hunted out for use (fig.3, below) in the hope that we would be able to do tests on the bones once they had been lifted. Victoria was joined by various members of the Human Remains team, including Mel Van Twest and Claire Hannington, with supervision from Katie McKinnon.

THE BURIAL

As the excavation continued, excitement on trench grew: We had a second



complete crouched burial! (figs. 2 and 4a, below). The head was face down in the NW corner of the pit, with the knees curled underneath in a kneeling position and the arms folded tight to the chest, hands under the head. The head itself had been placed on two large flint 'pillow stones' (fig.4b, above). This was very different from S8001, which lay tightly curled on its left-hand side, a position



typical of burials at other archaeological sites. In fact, the position of S8002 is quite unusual.

There has been a great deal of speculation as to why people were buried in a crouched position. One explanation is that smaller holes were needed than for a body buried in the 'Christian' style, flat on the back. However, crouched burials are often from periods of time when large earthworks were constructed, which would have required a great deal more

digging effort than extending a pit by half a metre. We should know; we spend a lot of time digging... Alternatively, the foetal position of crouched burials may symbolise a return to Mother Earth, but whether this belief has existed since prehistoric times is unknown. Yet another theory is that the burial position was one in which the individual had spent a lot of time during life – while sleeping. At first glance this would appear to be more relevant to S8001 than S8002, as many people would regard S8002's as a very unnatural sleeping position. However, a 1953 paper in an anthropological journal written by HRH, Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, describes and shows the posture in which S8002 was buried (fig.5, below).



THE SKELETON

The cleaning and analysis of the bones proved delicate work, as the skeleton was very fragile. Victoria and Claire were joined by Martin Hatton and Ray Baldry for this part. We took five samples in the hope of carrying out future examinations, such as on DNA, and tests to see what this person's diet was like. Samples were also sent for carbon dating. The results were not what we had expected: S8002 died in the middle Iron Age, between 373 and 203 BC; that is about 2000 years after S8001 had died.

What remains of the bones from the pelvis and skull suggests the skeleton was female. The estimated age at death,

based on the bones of the pelvis and the wearing of the teeth, is at least 45-55 years. From the length of her leg bones, her height was estimated to be, 170cm (5ft 7in) – making her about 7.6cm taller than the average Iron Age woman. We can even say that her weight was approximately 72.6kg (11st 6lb). From those two figures we calculated her BMI (Body Mass Index) as 25.1 – according to current medical recommendations, making our woman on the cusp of overweight.

Once Claire, Martin and Ray started looking in detail for pathology on the skeleton, we realised there were some interesting things going on. There are squatting facets on both ankles of our skeleton, and changes to some of the muscle attachments on the bones at the hip - all changes that can occur when a person spends a lot of time in a squatting position. As discussed earlier, there are many possible explanations for crouched burial positions, and this evidence could support the theory that people who spent enough time in a crouched/squatting position to affect their bones may have found it natural to bury their dead in this position too.

The left big toe shows changes to the bone consistent with gout. Those readers who have suffered with gout will no doubt appreciate the pain that such a small lesion can cause – without treatment, it could have been fairly disabling for this woman. Gout is often associated with rich diets, and this together with the finds from the grave fill (see below) suggests that this woman was of high status. The stable isotope tests done on her bones also showed that her diet was quite high in animal protein. This includes dairy produce as well as meat and fish. Another unusual feature in the feet caught our attention.

We believe that she lost her right little toe during life: the bone behind the one lost seems to have changed its shape so that it could function as a 'replacement toe'. The bones of the spine, pelvis, and right arm show some growths which might be evidence of psoriatic arthritis (an inflammatory arthritis associated with the skin condition psoriasis), or something similar. Obviously, we can't tell from the bones alone if this was the case here.

FINDS FROM THE GRAVE

The cow scapula (fig.2) was almost complete. Naomi Payne spoke to Lorrain Higbee, Wessex Archaeology's zooarchaeologist, who said the perpendicular cut edge was a 'classic butcher's cut'. It is unlikely to have been used as an artifact or tool.

Next to the skeleton was a large, roughly cylindrical, flat-topped flint (figs.2 & 4a), which was inspected by our lithics expert Kath Walker. She believes that the surface has not been worked in any way, but that it does appear to have been placed, perhaps with an offering on it. Although there aren't any known examples elsewhere, it could be compared to the substantial flint found in the grave with S8001, which was large and roughly triangular with a flat top. Two small flakes of possible worked flint were recovered from environmental sampling of the grave fill.

There were nine pottery sherds in the grave fill. At least one of these, a tiny fragment of just 1gm, is believed to be Anglo-Saxon, from high up in the fill: its presence could be explained by soil movement over the years. Of the other eight sherds, six were recovered from the environmental sampling/wet sieving and had a combined weight of just 4gms. Our on-site finds guru, Ann Smith, says:

"All of these sherds we are at present identifying as Iron Age in origin. This pottery type is very dark in colour and sandy in texture. It is not uncommon to recover this material from our site. What is unusual are the two much larger sherds, weighing a total of 24gms, also recovered from the grave fill. Both from the same possible food vessel, they form part of the base. The sherds are dark brown in colour with many grit and quartz inclusions within the fabric (fig.6). They are well fired, with one even displaying signs of possible burnishing, an attempt to 'polish' the vessel side, leaving it smooth and slightly shiny. These larger sherds have been shown to a number of pottery experts, most dating them once again to the Iron Age period."



One of these sherds was found at the level of the skeleton, deep within the grave (see fig.2), so we would expect it to be contemporary with the burial itself. The radiocarbon dating of the skeleton itself to the Iron Age is therefore consistent with the pottery dating.

The most exciting finds from the grave fill are seven tiny beads, at least one of which is amber. An expert opinion from Alison Sheridan (National Museums of Scotland) is that at least some, if not all, of the others could also be amber, which further microscopic examination would confirm. Kath Walker believes the amber to be of Baltic origin, collected from

beaches, possibly locally. Similar beads have been found in other high status prehistoric burials from down the east of Britain.

ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

The entire grave fill was environmentally processed. At SHARP we are lucky enough to have our own mollusc expert, Adrian Donaghey, who had a look at the snails found in the soil. From the species found, Adrian could tell us about the environment in which this woman lived and was buried. Sedgeford in the middle Iron Age was dry chalky or sandy exposed grassland. There was little tree cover and the land was probably used for grazing.

THE NORFOLK CONTEXT

In order to put S8002 (and S8001) into a wider context, we looked for information on other prehistoric crouched burials in the Norfolk area. So far, we have identified in the county Historic Environment Record only eight other sites where similar burials have been found. Most are some distance from Sedgeford, but two, one in Heacham and the other in Docking, were in adjacent parishes. Although the dating on some of these sites is uncertain, most seem to be Neolithic or Bronze Age, like S8001. None of the sites which we have identified so far have been confidently attributed to the Iron Age, like S8002.

CONCLUSION

The discovery and excavation of the first crouched burial in 2009 was important. The discovery nearby and excavation of a second crouched burial of completely different date, reported here, is probably unique for Norfolk. This raises an obvious

question: Are there any others in the vicinity?

Possibly. Since 2007 a few individual bits of disarticulated human bone have been found elsewhere in the Chalk Pit Field excavations. These include part of a thigh bone, the big toe of a teenager, and the collar bone of a young child. The most likely explanation is that they have come from disturbed burials, as yet undetected, contemporary with one or other of the crouched burials. So, here's to next year's excavations!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With thanks to all who have been involved with all the excavation and post-excavation work on S8002, especially Bill Howard for figs 1 and 2.

IMAGES

Fig.1: Satellite Image of 2010

Excavations. (Image: Google Earth; Additional Graphics: Bill Howard).

Fig.2: Plan of Skeleton S8002 in the Grave. (Plan: Bill Howard)

Fig.3: Excavating S8002. (Photo: Peter Stibbons, Poppyland Productions)

Fig.4a: S8002 in situ

Fig.4b: Pillow Stones (highlighted) on which the Head of S8002 Rested

Fig.5: Tibetan Caravaneers Sleeping (Photo: H.R.H. Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, 1938)

Fig.6: Pottery from the Grave Fill (Photo: Eve Richardson)

KATIE MCKINNON & MARTIN HATTON

'MA' DREWERY OF SEDGEFORD



When Mrs. Emma Drewery died in June 1947, the Lynn News marked the occasion with a front-page article, referring to her as one of Sedgeford's 'best known characters'. They paid tribute to the way in which she had made her little cottage a home from home for airmen during both the 1914-18 and 1939-45 wars: 'Every night, pilots and airmen crowded the little kitchen to enjoy her cakes, her eggs and her graciousness.'¹

Shortly after I moved into that same little cottage, almost forty years later, neighbours told me stories about 'Ma' Drewery's hospitality. During the

following years further details emerged, mostly from chance encounters and communications with some of her surviving grandchildren.

Emma Agnes Curtis was born in Norwich on 6th December 1873. I have so far found out nothing about her childhood, apart from the fact that she was disabled from an early age. The Lynn News refers to her as 'crippled from birth,' although her grandson Barry Porter said that she had to 'wear a leg-iron and walk with crutches, due to her having polio as a child'.²

In February 1894, Emma married Eli

Drewery (who was the same age) in Norwich. Eli worked as an agricultural labourer, and they appear to have moved a few times during the early years of their marriage. The 1901 census records Eli Drewery, 'teamster on farm', living with Emma, two sons and a daughter in Great Snoring, near Fakenham.³ Alfred had been born in Norwich, Grace and Earle Percival (Percy) in Rudham. The couple had a total of eleven children, of whom nine were still alive at the time of their golden wedding anniversary in 1944.

At some point soon after the 1901 census, the family moved to the

Littleport area of Sedgeford. According to the Parish Council minutes of August 1908, Eli Drewery was one of fourteen applicants for village allotments for which the Council had asked Mr. Ingleby to provide land.⁴

In 1915, Emma Drewery began to invite homesick young airmen from the local airfield into her home, and, by the end of the 1914-18 war, her hospitality was renowned. Barry Porter wrote: 'During the First World War, Granny ran an open house for the Royal Flying Corps men from the local airfield.'² Sedgeford aerodrome was established in 1915 in response to the threat of Zeppelin attacks and expanded rapidly. Photographs taken at the time suggest that many of the young airmen were likely to have been living in tents with only rudimentary facilities, so they no doubt welcomed the opportunity to relax in a homely environment, only ten minutes' walk from their 'camp'.

One of several photographs sent by Barry Porter and dated April 1918 shows, from left to right, Eli Drewery, Ma (seated), their daughter Grace, and then two unidentified airmen standing behind an older woman, thought to be an aunt. (Left)

An undated photograph of Ma Drewery was included in A West Norfolk Camera.⁷ Vera Clifford identified the two young boys in the trap with Ma as her uncles Eric and Clarence, and the young woman holding the horse's bridle as her mother, Grace. Grace married Frank Porter in December 1919. The caption suggests that the photo was taken earlier than this, at a point when a squadron of Canadian fliers had arrived

in the area. The younger boy, Clarence, was born in 1913 and could have been about four.

One of Ma's 'boys' was cricketer Jack Hobbs, who joined the Royal Flying Corps in about 1915, serving as an air mechanic: he is said to have enjoyed many a supper at her kitchen table. Another was T. Neville Stack, who was later awarded the Air Force Cross. Henry B Tyers appears to have been a regular visitor. Barry Porter had an autograph book, which may have belonged to his mother, containing drawings by Tyers, including the one of an airman reproduced here (below).



The cottage was renamed Avro Cottage. Barry Porter recalls:

At Avro there was the complete propeller from a WW1 aircraft mounted over the stairs. The front door carried a plaque from an Avro aircraft of similar vintage.²

This was a memento from a plane that had crashed near the cottage and killed one of 'her boys' in 1917.

Her nephew Sidney Raines recalled:

She was a cripple, she had a pony and trap. She looked after the air force boys. They used to go there for cups of tea and she would make cakes. She was my Aunt Emma. She was a wonderful lady, and I believe up to the time of her death she was still getting correspondence from people from the First World War.⁶

One of the intriguing stories about her concerns the gift of a royal carriage. Barry Porter provided the following account:

As a result of the good work done by Granny, an article appeared in, I think, the News of the World, and this came to the notice of the Queen (I guess that would be Queen Mary, but I'm not too sure when this happened). The Queen then called, unannounced, at Avro, and following this, Granny received a 4-wheeled carriage that was surplus to Royal requirements. This proved to be too much of a handful for her, and at some stage was replaced by a smaller trap. The Royal carriage had lamps on it, with candles as the light source. Very High Tech - they had automatic, spring-loaded candle-holders, so as the candle

burned down, the holder moved up. These had Queen Victoria's crest on them, and I remember them well, as they were kept, and when we moved to Snettisham, we still had them. They were placed in a barn there with some other furniture and things, and then were stolen.

Vera Clifford wrote:

I can only remember going in the big black carriage once. I was about 6 years old. My Uncle Eddie and Aunt Win got married at Heacham, and my Grandma and family, me included, went in the big carriage. Two large brass holders for lights on it. (This would presumably have been about 1930-31.)

It seems likely that the Drewerys did not keep the carriage for long. Vera Clifford remembers a smaller vehicle:

She used to take me out in it on a Sunday for a ride ... She had a stable for Kitty the horse, she had her for years ... When my Gran couldn't look after her, she went to the beach with the donkeys. She was a lovely little horse, like family.

One of Barry Porter's photographs shows Ma in a trap with her adopted son, Donald. Standing by the pony (assumed to be Kitty) is Mrs. Futter, who lived at ³ Littleport Cottages (photo above).

Grandson Brian Drewery, son of Percy, was brought up in Warrington, Cheshire. He remembers visiting Sedgeford shortly after the end of World War 2 and being met at the station by a pony and trap, but is not sure whom it belonged to.



Some time in the early 1930s, Ma fractured her right leg and was admitted to Lynn Hospital. The Lynn News printed a photograph of her with Donald, pet jackdaw Jack (perched on her head), dog Prince and Kitty the pony. The reporter commented that her humour was 'the life of the Gurney Ward'.

Emma evidently carried on entertaining local airmen during the twenties and thirties. Recalling the period between the wars, granddaughter Vera Clifford commented:

Every Sunday she had car loads of air force men from Bircham Camp. They came to tea for a shilling: they had bread, butter, eggs, all sorts of cakes that she made, and mugs of tea ... I used to go round and clear up for her.⁵

Mr. EF 'Ted' Hare was posted to Bircham Newton, just a few miles from Sedgeford, in 1923: he said that 'any spare time was used to cycle to Sedgeford, where a lady called 'Ma' Drewery would serve free cups of tea to

the airmen'.⁸

From the following decade, Les A Smith recalls:

Certainly one of my favourite memories is of walking or cycling to Sedgeford and calling on 'Ma' Drewery for tea and cakes. After the tea and cakes we would sit and chat for a couple of hours and she would regale us with stories of all her RFC friends from Great War days who did the same thing all those years ago. This was probably in the summer of 1937 before we had any inkling we would be involved in a war.⁸

Barry Porter commented:

I understand that Granny continued to provide cups of tea and food for the, by now, RAF men up until the early days of WW2, when the old airfield became a dummy airfield, intended to keep the German bombs away from the real ones at Bircham and Marham.

Not long after the start of World War 2, in November 1939, the Daily Mirror printed an article about Ma Drewery, illustrated by a photo of her standing outside Avro cottage with a little dog.⁹

The newspaper reported that, since the loss of her pony five years earlier, she had been unable to use the trap: 'When you are imprisoned by infirmity, the other end of the street is like a promised land', wrote their special correspondent. Ma had been saving threepenny bits to buy a wheeled chair.

Dacre.¹⁰ It was then hung on a wall of a cottage in a French village, together with a copy of the original newspaper article.

The story didn't end there, however! Thousands of readers had been moved by Ma's sacrifice, and one wrote to offer

Vera Clifford has very fond memories of her grandmother: 'She was so kind to everyone, one in a million ... She was a lovely person, never turned anyone away from her door.'⁵

There may be others who still remember Ma Drewery: if so, I would be interested to know more about her.

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11. *Daily Mirror, (November 24th, 1939)*

SUE CRUMP

"...SHE WAS SO KIND TO EVERYONE, ONE IN A MILLION... SHE WAS A LOVELY PERSON, NEVER TURNED ANYONE AWAY FROM HER DOOR..."

However, she had decided to donate her savings to the Daily Mirror Darts Fund, commenting in her letter:

I'm sure I'll never save enough, as I'm sixty-five, and the money will do the dear boys more good. Will you kindly send it to the RAF? ... Even if I got my chair, I shall not have many years to enjoy it. There is so little a woman of my age can do, and the boys will get so much more pleasure from dart boards than I could hope to get from my chair.

The article continues: 'One night,' says Mrs. Drewery, 'an RAF officer knocked to ask for a drink of water. I asked him inside for something more tasty and he stood at the parlour door as though he was dreaming. There, round the fire, were twenty RAF men. "You lucky devils!" he exclaimed at last, and stayed for the fun.'⁹

Another Daily Mirror cutting shows a dartboard purchased with Ma's threepenny bits being presented to men of the RAF by Air Commodore GB

her a wheelchair that had belonged to the correspondent's mother. A third newspaper article then describes her first outing in this chair, with a photograph of two RAF men pushing her across the road:

With an RAF escort on either side, Ma Drewery went for her first ride. Only a little way she ventured from her cottage. 'When my husband comes home, I'll go out again,' she said. 'He's really done as much for the RAF boys as I have. He starts to cut great plates of bread and butter for them as soon as he gets home from work and then he helps to entertain them when they drop in.' Since the last war, men of the RAF have made Ma Drewery's cottage their home from home. Some of her latest visitors in uniform are the sons of her last war guests.¹¹

As a result of these articles, letters arrived from former 'boys', some of whom she had not heard from for twenty years.

A VOLUNTEER'S ACCOUNT TYLER IS STUCK IN THE BIG PIT: HILARITY ENSUES.

Before SHARP, I was a digging virgin. I had never used my shiny trowel. My clothes were not caked in dirt and my boots were fresh out of the box. I had never camped and never travelled alone, certainly not from my tiny village in Scotland to an equally tiny village in Norfolk. I had no idea what to expect, save from guesses based on the SHARP poster that advertised 'a cross between Glastonbury and Time-Team'.

And then I became a BERT (Basic Excavation and Research Techniques) trainee, assigned my first excavation.

I stand a very small five foot two and was the shortest person on site. Was it fate, irony, or the deliberate work of the site supervisors that I was given the largest pit in the trenches to dig, thus beginning the legend of the Big Pit?

I was excited by my first find—a mussel shell! I felt like Christmas had come, complete with rainbows and kittens. A few days later, I was sick of shells—particularly oyster shells. I think Anglo-Saxons ate ridiculous amounts of oysters purely to annoy future archaeologists.

However, I began to find animal bones and soon uncovered a cow scapula. I was both thrilled and mesmerised.

So thrilled and mesmerised that I attempted to yank the thing straight out of the ground and broke the poor scapula in half! I'm certain I saw a tear run down supervisor James 'Westy' Westoby's face. I was politely asked to handle animal bones more carefully and the subsequent finding of incomplete ones was always followed by: 'Tyler, did you break another bone?'

"...I THINK ANGLO-SAXONS ATE RIDICULOUS AMOUNTS OF OYSTERS PURELY TO ANNOY FUTURE ARCHAEOLOGISTS..."

By the end of the week the pit was so deep that I had given up lying on the surface and dangling my upper body and arms into the pit to excavate (I felt like I was doing handstands), and resorted to jumping inside the feature. There were major advantages to this: I got shelter from the wind and rain, and I got to wear a yellow hard hat!

Clambering in and out of the pit required some real acrobatic skills. I'd always thought I was flexible, but I came out of the pit with my only pair of waterproof trousers torn on the backside after snagging them on a bone. Many jokes ensued. The next

day, I witnessed SHARP director Jon Cousin jump in and out the pit with grace and agility. And all without kicking in the sides, breaking bones (his own or any of the animal ones), or ripping his trousers. I was put to shame.

Sadly, I never finished excavating my pit, which I had grown so fond of over my three-week stay, and I passed the

torch (or burden, depending on your perspective) onto Westy.

BEYOND THE PIT

SHARP was more than excavations and research. The anthem of Toto's Africa proved to be very catchy and was either sung or played daily, becoming almost a mantra on site. I experienced first-hand several of the infamous punch parties, one extremely muddy one echoing Glastonbury's own muddy atmosphere, and another where I won musical chairs, the only sport I take seriously. I even took part in a cricket match against the team

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from a near-by village, Snettisham, which SHARP came close to winning: I had never played cricket before, but proved to be good at catching the ball with my forehead. Film nights with hot chocolate and outings to the beach meant that there was always something fun to do, and I never had time to read the book I’d brought.

What I found to be integral and unique to SHARP is its ethos of community. After spending only a few weeks with people, I was pleased to

call everyone there my friends, who feel like an unofficial extension of my family. A new volunteer’s thoughts and ideas are valued as much as those of someone who has worked at the site for years, and everyone is willing to help without a second thought.

SHARP has proven to be a truly rewarding experience on many levels, going beyond just fieldwork experience. I went home caked in mud, messy-haired, with a worn trowel and ruined clothes, extremely happy.

And I hope I am able to dig at SHARP again very soon.

PS. I am very sorry, Westy; I promise to never snap a scapula again.

TYLER MACKIE



2011 SEASON GALLERY

The 16th season of SHARP in all its’ wonder captured on camera; the baking sun, the annual flood, *that* giant pit, the cricket match, Dig for a Day, How God made the English,

Michael Wood’s Great British History, BBC’s Hands on History, Christmas dinner and of course all the irresistible archaeology!





For further information about the project and our work visit our website
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