ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2009/242

Plymouth Road Car park, RAF Lakenheath, Eriswell
ERL 154

J. Duffy and E. Muldowney
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Lucy Robinson, County Director of Environment and Transport
Endeavour House, Russel Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX.
# HER Information

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<td>RD Carr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Officer:</strong></td>
<td>John Duffy</td>
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Summary

An archaeological excavation was carried out on land to the south of Plymouth Road within the confines of RAF Lakenheath Airbase, between June and July 2006. This work was carried out in advance of the construction of a carpark on previously unused land that had been part of a belt of trees forming a shepherds droveway. The archaeology comprised a large number of ditches and a small number of pits. The majority of the site had been heavily disturbed by tree roots associated with the post-medieval droveway, and a number of modern service trenches associated with the use of the airbase had destroyed many relationships between features.

Dating evidence was sparse, many features contained no artefacts, and where pottery was present it was usually only a single sherd. The majority of the small assemblage was early Anglo-Saxon in date with a very small percentage of Romano-British and prehistoric wares present. Some of the latest features might have been the continuation of middle Anglo-Saxon ditches recorded in the larger excavation to the north ERL 114. However, the majority of the features could not be phased or assigned to period with certainty.
1. Introduction

A programme of archaeological work was conducted ahead of the proposed development of an area of land to the south of Plymouth Road in an area known as Shepherds Belt Path, RAF Lakenheath (TL 7309 8022 in Eriswell parish). The work consisted of archaeological monitoring followed by excavation of the identified deposits and this work was outlined by R. Carr (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team), who also monitored the work.

The project was initially a monitored strip of the overburden to the car park formation level or the top of the preserved archaeology, whichever was shallower. The depth of the preserved archaeology immediately below the topsoil and the density of the features meant these deposits would be lost during the construction works. In consultation with the Archaeological Officer, R. Carr, it was decided a full excavation of the site was to be conducted before development could commence.

2. The excavation

2.1 Site location
The site was located within the confines of the RAF Lakenheath base at TL 7309 8022 in an area known as Shepherds Path Belt (Fig. 1). This was a line of trees visible on 19th century maps of the area and surviving today as an area of grass with some remaining trees. The development area was approximately 1200m² and was to become a new car park.

2.2 Geology and topography
The area before construction started was level and located at approximately 12m OD and was likely to have been heavily damaged by tree roots. The underlying geology was deep well-drained sands.
Figure 1. Location map showing location of archaeological interventions near Plymouth road
The land occupied by the airbase was initially enclosed in 1940, before this the area was unenclosed heath and common. The Shepherds Path Belt ran approximately east to west separating Caudle Common to the north from the arable fields to the south in the late 19th century (Fig. 2). The parish of Eriswell is located in a transitional zone between the fenland areas to the west and the Breckland areas to the east.

![Figure 2. 1st edition OS showing development area (red)](image)

### 2.3 Archaeological and historical background

There are a significant number of archaeological sites recorded on the habitable land on the fen edge. These date from the Mesolithic through to the medieval and post-medieval periods. Archaeological remains were first encountered in this area in the 1930’s during the construction of the airbase.
A number of archaeological interventions have taken place within the confines of the base in advance of modifications to the base facilities, and has revealed a pattern of moderately intense rural settlement and land use from the Mesolithic through to the middle Saxon period (Fig. 1).

A Bronze Age burial mound was recorded during excavation (ERL 148) and a possible Bronze Age mound with associated burials was recorded during excavation of a car park site immediately to the north of the current development area (ERL 114). This probable mound was the focus for an early Anglo-Saxon cemetery that respected its presence.

Iron Age features were recorded during excavation to the south-west of the current development area (ERL 089) and during excavation at Liberty Village south of Lord's Walk (ERL 147).

A late Iron Age to Romano-British settlement has been identified approximately 500m to the north-west at Caudle Head close to the location of a spring site. Iron Age and Romano-British field systems, probably associated with this settlement, have been recorded across the base. Part of a rectilinear Romano-British field system was recorded in excavations ERL 046 and ERL 114 immediately to the north of the Plymouth Road site and early Roman occupation (ERL 111, 112 and 118), to the south-west.

Early Anglo Saxon cemeteries have been recorded in the vicinity (ERL 104 and ERL 114). Settlement of a similar period was recorded to the north of these cemeteries with some sunken featured buildings overlying the Romano-British settlement at Caudle Head. Anglo-Saxon ditches believed to be part of field systems and droveways have been recorded immediately to the north of the current site (ERL 046 and ERL 114). These features were broadly on two different alignments and represented three phases of construction and use. They have been assigned to the middle Anglo-Saxon period and in some cases post date the earlier Anglo-Saxon cemetery.
3. Methodology

The site was initially stripped using a 360 degree machine fitted with a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket. The machine strip removed the topsoil overburden down to the top of the archaeological deposits. This was carried out under constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist. After the machine removal of the overburden the site was hand cleaned. This was followed by sample excavation of all the deposits. 50% of pits/discrete features were excavated and 10% of ditches were excavated, including excavation at ditch junctions to identify feature relationships. All identified archaeological deposits were given a unique four-digit context number, starting at 0001, with a full written record produced for each. All records were created using SCCAS proformas. All excavated features were drawn in section at 1:20 and photographed using colour digital and black and white film. All features were planned using a Total Station Theodolite (TST) and then the full site plan was located onto the OS national grid using MapInfo.

Archaeological contexts were assigned an individual context number from a single sequence. Segment numbers were applied on site predominantly to individual segments excavated through ditches that were assigned group numbers, but in some instances refer to the location of an intervention through multiple features that were unlikely to be associated. Group numbers were assigned during the excavation where groups could be confidently identified in the field. Additional context numbers have been assigned where required and added to the project database. Basic information has been added to the database and the sections and matrix updated. A new sequence of group numbers has been assigned (G1 to G22 and G24) that represent construction/use events, for instance the construction and use of a ditch or enclosure or a number of associated features. Any redundant contexts and group numbers have been assigned to G23 in order to ensure that all features have been addressed. This does not form a stratigraphic or functional group. Detailed context information, including group information, is included in Appendix 1.
All finds were retained for inspection, and no environmental samples were taken.

4. Results

4.1 Introduction
Archaeological features were encountered across the whole development area, increasing in density in the north-east part of the site (Fig. 3). The number of feature types was however restricted, the majority were ditches with a small number of pits present.

There was some vertical stratigraphy, however, extensive modern intrusions (service trenches), site constraints, tree root disturbance and poor survival of the often shallow features means that a site wide sequence could not be established.

Pottery assemblages recovered from the features were generally small, and often consisted of a single sherd. Thirteen features produced pottery. The majority was early Anglo-Saxon handmade wares with a very small percentage of Romano-British sherds and a single prehistoric sherd present.

The incomplete stratigraphic sequence and the small finds assemblage means that it has not been possible to assign the features to specific periods or phases. Therefore the results are described below according to location and stratigraphic sequence. All stratified features are described moving from the west side of the site to the east, and then all isolated, unstratified features are described.
Figure 3. Site plan showing context locations
Figure 4. Site plan showing groups
4.2 Stratified features (Fig. 4)

**Group G1 - Ditch**

*Contexts: 0132, 0134, 0232, 0154, 0174, 0178*

An L-shaped ditch located at the south-west corner of the excavation area. It was aligned north-north-west to south-south-east for 2m before turning at the southern end at right angles and continuing for approximately 10m on a west-south-west to east-north-east alignment. At the west-north-west end the ditch was truncated by modern service trenches and its line was not recorded beyond this. At the east-north-east end it was truncated by ditch G4 (Fig. 7, Section 48). It may have continued beyond this as ditch G3 which ran on a broadly similar alignment, but the plan of this feature is confused by the presence of the modern service trenches and the relationship could not be established. Ditch G2 ran at right angles to ditch G1 and may have been later than it, although the relationship was not well attested in section (Fig. 6, Section 32).

The ditch was recorded in three excavated slots (two partial slots and one full profile). Where fully excavated the ditch had gradual sides with an imperceptible break of slope to a concave base (Fig. 5, Section 19). It measured 0.7m in width and 0.15m in depth. The single fill recorded in the slots was described as being light yellowy grey sand becoming mid grey sand towards east-north-east. One sherd of Romano-British greyware pottery was recovered from fill 0134 at the ditch corner.

**Group G2 – Ditch**

*Contexts: 0233, 0155, 0135, 0137*

A linear ditch 8.6m in length, oriented north to south, located towards the south-west corner of the excavation area. The ditch continued to the south beyond the limit of excavation, to the north its line stops abruptly. It is not known whether it had become increasingly gradual and was lost at this point or whether there was some disturbance at this point. It was recorded as possibly truncating ditch G1 in section (Fig. 6, Section 32).

It was recorded in two excavated slots (one partial to determine relationship to
ditch G1 and one showing the full profile). Where fully excavated it had gradual sides and an imperceptible break of slope to a concave base. It measured between 0.32m and 0.56m in width and was 0.17m at its deepest (Fig. 6, Section 28). The single fill was described as being light greyish yellow sand, no artefacts were recovered.

**Group G3 – Ditch**  
**Contexts: 0173, 0177**

A slightly irregular linear ditch oriented west-south-west to east-north-east measuring 4m in length. It was truncated to the west by ditch G4 (Fig. 7, Section 48), to the east it was obscured by modern disturbance and to the south it was truncated by a service trench. It may have been the continuation of ditch G1 to the south-west but the level of disturbance/truncation is too great to be certain. It was deeper and steeper sided than ditch G1 though.

It was recorded in two excavated slots (one partial and one showing the full profile). Where fully excavated the ditch has steep sides with a sharp break of slope to a concave base. It measured 1.2m in width and 0.5m in depth (Fig. 7, Section 52). The single fill was a mid to dark grey soft sand that contained no artefacts.

Layer 0179 was mid grey soft sand and described as being modern in origin. This layer partially sealed ditch G3.

**Group G6 – Ditch**  
**Contexts: 0169, 0170, 0240, 0195**

3.2m long west-south-west to east-north-east oriented linear ditch in the western half of the site. It was truncated to the west by a modern service trench; its line was not recorded continuing beyond this point. It was truncated by ditch G4 (Fig. 7, Section 42), and at the east end it appeared to butt end before being partially truncated by ditch 0193 (Fig. 6, Section 39). Modern disturbance 0196 was recorded on its south-east edge, the section suggests that the ditch cut the modern layer but this is unlikely.
A full profile through the ditch was not recorded in either excavated slot. However the ditch measured 1.4m in width in plan and was 0.4m at its deepest excavated point. It had gradual sides with a gradual break of slope to a flattish base where seen. The single fill was described as light brownish yellow sand with iron pan mottling and as light orangey yellow sand. No artefacts were recovered from the feature.

**Group G4 – Ditch**
*Contexts: 0234, 0176, 0235, 0159, 0151, 0236, 0157, 0158, 0237, 0188, 0238, 0171*
This ditch was recorded running north to south in the western half of the site. It measured 17.6m in length and continued to the north beyond the limit of excavation. To the south its plan stops 1m from the southern baulk. It was stratigraphically later than the west-south-west to east-north-east oriented ditches G1, G3 and G6 (Fig. 7, Sections 42 and 48), and earlier than the west-north-west to east-south-east oriented ditches G5 and G7 (Fig. 7, Section 43 and Fig 6, Section 46).

It was recorded in five excavated slots (four partial slots to determine relationships and one extended slot showing the full profile). Where fully excavated it had steep sides and a gradual break of slope to a slightly concave base (Fig. 6, Section 47). It measured 1.1m in width and 0.35m in depth. Between one and two sandy fills were present in the excavated slots. Two pieces of worked flint and an iron nail were recovered from the lower fill (0157). Part of an early Anglo-Saxon cruciform brooch (SF 1001, Plate X) dating from the early 5th to mid 6th century AD was recovered during metal detecting and assigned to the fill of the ditch (0171).

**Group G5 – Ditch**
*Contexts: 0199, 0200, 0239, 0152, 0147, 0148*
This ditch was located in the western half of the area. It measured 14m in length and was oriented north-west to south-east. To the north-west its line ends abruptly on plan and does not continue beyond, to the south-east it was obscured by a large spoil heap. It was probably stratigraphically later than
ditch G4 although the section was inconclusive (Fig. 6, Section 46).

It was recorded in three excavated slots (two partial slots and one showing the full profile). Where fully excavated it was shallow with fairly gradual sides and a sharp break of slope to a flattish base (Fig. 6, Section 45). It measured 0.7m in width and 0.2m in depth. The single fill was light yellow brown sand containing no artefacts.

Pit 0229 was located in the western half of the area. Its full form was not recorded in plan and no section was drawn, the description suggests there is some doubt as to its authenticity. It may have been a natural feature, and was described as having uneven sides and base. The single fill 0230 was light yellowy grey sand with no artefacts. Its relationship to pit/ditch 0227 was uncertain, but it may have been earlier than it.

Pit/ditch 0227 might have been stratigraphically later than possible pit 0229. It was not fully recorded in plan and its full form is uncertain. It was shallow with gradual uneven sides and a flattish base (Fig. 7, Section 62). It measured 0.4m in width and 0.24m in depth. The single fill 0228 was very light greyish brown sand containing no artefacts. It was probably truncated by possible ditch 0225.

Possible ditch 0225 measured 1m in length, 0.4m in width and 0.14m in depth. It probably truncated pit/ditch 0227, and was in turn probably truncated by ditch G7 (Fig. 7, Section 62). It was aligned north-east to south-west but its line was not observed continuing either to the south-west beyond the modern disturbance, or to the north-east beyond ditch G7. Two fills were recorded in the ditch, lower fill 0231 was mid grey sand, upper fill 0226 was very dark grey sand. Neither fill contained artefacts.

**Group G7 – Ditch**

**Contexts:** 0185, 0187, 0241, 0242, 0181, 0182

This ditch was located in the western half of the area and was oriented west-north-west to east-south-east. It measured 10.2m in length, at the west-north-
west end it was truncated by a modern service trench and its line was not
clearly recorded beyond that, although a line on the TST plan might have
been its continuation. If so the plan suggests it was truncated by ditch G5.
however, the nature of the recording means that this is purely speculative. To
the east-south-east its line stops before the spoil heap at the point where it
met ditch 0183. The TST plan suggests that it might have been truncated by
ditch 0183, but the nature of planning by this method means that this is also
speculative. Ditch G7 probably truncated short ditch 0228, and was
interpreted as being stratigraphically later than ditch G4 (Fig. 7, Section 43).

The ditch was excavated in three slots (two partial and one complete profile).
Where fully excavated the ditch was shallow with steep sides and a gradual
break of slope to a concave base (Fig. 6, Section 33). It measured 0.29m in
width and 0.09m in depth. The single sandy fill contained no artefacts.

Ditch 0183 was located immediately to the north of ditch G7. It was 9m in
length and oriented north-west to south-east. At the north-west end it merged
with ditch 0193, the relationship between the two was not established. Its line
was partially obscured by modern intrusions, and at the south-east end it
merged with ditch G7. The TST plan suggests that ditch 0183 was the later of
the two but it is not clearly defined. The ditch was shallow with gradual sides
and a gradual break of slope to a concave base (Fig. 6, Section 33). It
measured 0.54m in width and 0.13m in depth. The single fill 0184 contained
no artefacts.

Ditch 0193 was located to the north of and merged with ditch 0183. It was
recorded in a single excavated slot and was 0.75m in width and 0.36m in
deepth. It was v-shaped in profile with steep sides and a sharp break of slope
to a concave base (Fig. 6, Section 39). It truncated the eastern terminal of
ditch G6. The single fill 0194 contained a single Romano-British greyware
pottery sherd, six fragments of worked flint and a piece of burnt flint. This ditch
may have been the continuation of ditch 0183, with a deeper and better
defined profile or it may have been the continuation of a north-west to south-
east oriented ditch recorded in plan continuing to the south-east but not
excavated. To the north-west it had been disturbed by a modern intrusion at the point where it met north to south ditch G4, no relationship between the two was established and its line was not picked up continuing to the west of ditch G4.

Pit 0163 was located in the southern part of the site. It was truncated on the south side by curvilinear ditch G8, and may have originally been sub-circular in plan. It was steep sided with an uneven base and measured 0.9m in width and 0.13m in depth (Fig. 7, Section 54). The single fill 0164 contained five sherds of early Anglo-Saxon pottery.

Pit 0202 was located 1.2m to the south-west of pit 0163, it was also truncated by curvilinear ditch G8. It had probably been circular in plan with steep sides and an uneven base (Fig. 7, Section 59). It measured 0.45m in width and 0.14m in depth. The single fill 0203 contained no artefacts.

**Group G8 – Ditch and soakaway**

*Contexts: 0214, 0207, 0243, 0204, 0161, 0162, 0166, 0167*

This group comprises a curvilinear ditch that was recorded as terminating to the east in a large oval pit 0166. The ditch truncated two small pits 0163 (Fig. 7, Section 54) and 0201 (Fig. 7, Section 59) and was in turn truncated by ditches G9, G10 (Fig. 7, Section 55) and G11. To the south the ditch was truncated by a modern service trench and its line was lost.

The ditch was recorded in three excavated slots, where a full profile was recorded the ditch had steep sides with a gradual break of slope to a concave base. The single fill contained one sherd of early Anglo-Saxon pottery, two pieces of worked flint and two small pieces of fired clay. All were recovered from the ditch where it cut pit 0163. The pit 0166 was quartered, it was described as having irregular sides and an uneven base. The ditch was described as terminating within the pit although this was not recorded in plan or section. The pit may therefore have been a soakaway for the ditch and has been tentatively grouped with it as such.
**Group G9 – Ditch**  
*Contexts: 0189, 0191, 0139, 0140, 0245, 0205*

This irregular linear ditch was located in the southern part of the site and was oriented north-west to south-east. It truncated ditch G8. It was partially obscured on the south side by a spoil heap and thus its interpretation as a single ditch is tentative. At the north-west end it was truncated by a modern feature and its line was lost, to the south-east it stops abruptly in plan 1.4m to the west of north-north-east to south-south-west oriented ditch G11. It was parallel with and 1m to the north of similar ditch G10.

The ditch was recorded in three excavated slots, where the full profile was observed it was shallow with steep sides and an imperceptible break of slope to a concave base (Fig. 6, Section 41). It measured 0.6m in width and between 0.21m and 0.25m in depth. The single fill contained no artefacts.

**Group G10 – Ditch**  
*Contexts: 0141, 0142, 0246, 0208*

This ditch was located 1m to the south of and parallel with similar ditch G9. It was slightly curvilinear in plan and oriented north-west to south-east. It measured 4m in length, its north-west end was obscured by a spoil heap, to the south-east it stopped abruptly on the TST plan 1m from the limit of excavation. It truncated ditch G8 (Fig. 7, Section 55).

It was recorded in two excavated slots, where the full profile was observed it was shallow with steep sides and a gradual break of slope to a concave base (Fig. 6, Section 41). It measured 0.55m in width and 0.17m in depth. The single fill contained no artefacts.

Curvilinear ditch 0143 was located in the eastern half of the site and was oriented west-north-west to east-south-east. It terminated to the north-west where it was sectioned, to the south-east it was truncated by ditch G11. Its line was not observed continuing to the south-east beyond ditches G11 and G12, but ditch G22 was on a similar alignment. It was u-shaped with steep sides and an imperceptible break of slope to a concave base (Fig. 6, Section 41).
It measured 2.4m in length, 0.58m in width and 0.34m in depth. The single fill 0144 contained a lens of very dark grey material 0145 (soil matrix not defined) that contained a single sherd of early Anglo-Saxon pottery.

Pit/posthole 0048 was located in the eastern half of the site and was truncated on its east side by ditch G16. It was sub-circular with gradual sides and a flat base (Fig. 5, Section 16). It measured 0.75m in length, 0.4m+ in width and 0.07m in depth. The single fill 0049 contained no artefacts.

**Group G16 – Ditch**  
*Contexts: 0014, 0017, 0015, 0044, 0046, 0059, 0060*

This ditch was located towards the eastern edge of the area. It was a slightly irregular linear ditch oriented north-west to south-east and measuring 13m in length. The ditch was recut by ditch G17, which clipped its eastern edge (Fig. 5, Section 4). To the south-east it terminates abruptly in plan 1m from the limit of excavation.

The ditch was recorded in three excavated slots, where the full profile was observed it was steep sided with a gradual break of slope to a concave base (Fig. 5, Section 15). It measured 0.96m in width and 0.4m in depth. Two of the slots contained a single identified fill, one had evidence for a lower fill of light grey sand below the darker main fill. One piece of fired clay and two flint flakes were recovered from the lower fill 0017, five sherds of early Anglo-Saxon pottery, one piece of animal bone, three flint flakes and a core fragment, two pieces of burnt flint and one piece of fired clay were recovered from the upper fill 0015.

**Group G17 – Ditch**  
*Contexts: 0251, 0037, 0002, 0047, 0061, 0063, 0062, 0050, 0052*

This curvilinear ditch was located in towards the eastern edge of the area, it was approximately 15m in length. It ran north-west to south-east before curving to run west-north-west to east-south-east at the southern end. The ditch was probably a recut of similarly aligned ditch G16 and truncated its eastern edge (Fig. 5, Section 20). It was in turn truncated by three east to
west ditches; ditch 0035, ditch G18 and ditch 0106. It probably predated all of the east to west ditches recorded at the northern limit of excavation but some relationships could not be established in plan or section.

The ditch was recorded in four excavated slots, where its full profile was observed it had steep, slightly irregular sides with a sharp break of slope to a deeper channel in the concave base (Fig. 5, Section 13). A single fill was observed in three of the excavated slots, two fills were recorded in one slot. Twelve pieces of fired clay were recovered from fill 0037, six sherds of early Anglo-Saxon pottery were also recovered 0062.

Thirteen sherds of pottery were recovered from the surface ditches G16 and G17, these included eleven sherds of early Anglo-Saxon pottery and two sherds of Romano-British pottery. These were assigned to context 0003.

Ditch 0110 was located 1m to the north-west of pit/posthole 0048 on a north-west to south-east alignment, it was recorded over a distance of 2m and was truncated by pit 0108. To the south-east its line stops abruptly on plan and its relationship, if any to pit/posthole 0048 was not recorded. It had steep sides with a sharp break of slope to a flattish base. It measured 0.9m in width and 0.23m in depth. The single fill 0111 contained no artefacts.

Pit 0108 truncated ditch 0110 and was in turn truncated by east to west ditch 0106. It was oval with steep sides and a sharp break of slope to a flat base. It measured 0.94m in length, 0.7m in width and 0.26m in depth. The single fill 0109 contained no artefacts.

Ditch 0106 was east to west oriented and 7.4m in length. It terminated to the east 0.4m beyond ditch G17, which it truncated. To the west its line ended abruptly 0.6m to the east of ditch G15 and no relationship between the two was established. It probably formed part of a sequence of east to west oriented ditches recorded at the northern end of the area. It was also stratigraphically later than pit 0108. The ditch was very shallow, the sides truncated almost to the concave base, it measured 0.45m in width and 0.12m
in depth. The single fill 0107 contained no artefacts.

**Group G18 – Ditch**

*Contexts: 0252, 0038, 0007, 0008*

This ditch was located at the northern end of the area and was part of a sequence of east to west oriented ditches. It measured 8m in length and was located just to the north of similarly aligned ditch 0106. It was stratigraphically later than ditch G17 (Fig. 5, Section 12) and was earlier than the recut ditch G19, immediately to the north (Fig. 5, Section 1). At its east end it ends in plan 1m from the limit of excavation. To the west it may have continued as similarly aligned ditch 0022, although this could have been the continuation of ditch G19.

The ditch was recorded in two excavated slots, it had gradual sides and a gradual break of slope to a concave base, it measured between 0.6m and 1.1m in width and approximately 0.2m in depth. The single fill contained no artefacts.

Ditch 0035 was located at the northern limit of excavation and formed part of the east to west oriented sequence of ditches (Fig. 5, Section 12). It was observed only in one excavated slot and its line could not be projected with certainty beyond this slot. It had fairly steep sides with a gradual break of slope to a concave base and measured 0.65m in width and 0.4m in depth. The single fill 0040 contained a flint core fragment and a single flint flake as well as a piece of fired clay. It truncated ditch G17 at an oblique angle.

**Group G19 – Ditch**

*Contexts: 0253, 0039, 0005, 0006*

This ditch was located in the northern part of the development area immediately to the north of and truncating ditch G18 (Fig. 5, Section 1). To the east its line stops in plan 1m from the limit of excavation. To the west its line became indistinct, it may have continued as ditch 0022.

It was recorded as present in two excavated slots and was shallow with
gradual sides and a gradual break of slope to a concave base. It was only
clearly observed in the east slot, to the west it was recorded only tentatively
(Fig. 5, Section 12). It is possible that the ditch did not continue into this slot
and it was certainly difficult to discern in the photograph (Plate 1). The location
of the ditch in Section 12 and its planned position do not match, there is a gap
of 0.6m in plan between ditches 0036 and 0253, but in the section they are
immediately adjacent. It is possible that the feature seen in this section, if real,
was part of another east to west ditch shown in plan but not excavated to the
north of ditch G19. The possibility that ditch G19 turned at right angles to the
north 2m to the west of the east slot can not be discounted.

Plate 1. Section 12, looking east, 2m scale partially visible

**Group G20 – Ditch**

**Contexts: 0053, 0055, 0064, 0058**

This ditch was located towards the north-east edge of the site. It was 9m in
length, broadly linear in plan and oriented north-north-east to south-south-
west. It was stratigraphically later than ditch G19, its relationship to adjacent
ditch 0056 could not be determined in section but the plan suggests it was
later than ditch 0056. It was stratigraphically late and on a similar alignment to ditch G11 and its recut G12.

It was recorded in two excavated slots, it had gradual sides with a sharp break of slope to a flattish base. It measured 0.5m in width and 0.25m in depth. It merged with ditch 0056 and a single context number 0055 was ascribed to both features (Fig. 5, Section 14). This deposit contained one sherd of early Anglo-Saxon pottery.

Ditch 0056 was recorded in section immediately to the east of and merging with ditch G20. Its line could not be traced much beyond the excavated slot but it has been planned as running north-east to south-west. Its fill 0055 merged with the fill of the adjacent ditch and a single number was ascribed to both unrelated features.

**Group G13 – Ditch**
*Contexts: 0086, 0087, 0074, 0075, 0036, 0041*

This ditch was located at the northern end of the development area and formed part of the sequence of east to west oriented ditches. It measured 13m in length and extended to the west beyond the limit of excavation, to the east its line was lost beyond the excavated slot 0036. It was possibly stratigraphically earlier than ditch 0035 to the north (Fig. 5, Section 12), and was earlier than ditches G11 and G12.

It was recorded in three excavated slots, it had steep sides and a sharp break of slope to a concave base. It measured 0.7m in width and 0.24m in depth. The single fill contained no artefacts.

Ditch 0082 was recorded in the northern part of the site and formed part of the east to west oriented ditch sequence. To the west it passed beyond the limit of excavation, to the east it was truncated by ditch G11 and its line was lost. Its profile was obscured as it merged with adjacent ditch 0084. The single fill 0083 contained no artefacts.
Ditch 0084 was recorded in the northern part of the site and formed part of the east to west oriented ditch sequence. To the west it passed beyond the limit of excavation, to the east it was probably truncated by ditch G11 and its line was lost. Its profile was obscured as it merged with adjacent ditch 0082. The single fill 0085 contained no artefacts.

Ditch 0092 was recorded in the northern part of the site and was oriented north-east to south-west and survived over a distance of 1.4m. To the south-west its line stopped abruptly on plan and its line was not re-established, to the north-east it was truncated by ditch G14 part of the east to west sequence of ditches. It was steep sided with a concave base. The single fill 0093 contained a single sherd of early Anglo-Saxon pottery.

Pit/ditch 0070 was recorded in the northern part of the site. The majority of the feature had been truncated by later activity and only the north-east quadrant of a possibly originally circular pit survived. It was stratigraphically earlier than east to west oriented ditch G14. It had gradual sides with an imperceptible break of slope to a concave base and measured 0.3m in depth. The single fill 0071 contained no artefacts.

**Group G14 – Ditch**
*Contexts: 0090, 0091, 0072, 0073*

This ditch was located at the northern end of the development area and formed part of the sequence of east to west oriented ditches. It measured 6m in length and extended to the west beyond the limit of excavation, to the east it truncated pit/ditch 0070 before its line was lost. It was truncated by the parallel ditches G11 and G12.

Recorded in two excavated slots, it had irregular gradual sides and a gradual break of slope to a concave base. It measured 1.2m in width and 0.3m in depth. The single fill contained no artefacts.

**Group G11 – Ditch**
*Contexts: 0247, 0220, 0069, 0094*
This ditch was located in the eastern half of the site, it was 20m long and aligned north-north-east to south-south-west. It continued into the baulk to the north and to the south its line stopped abruptly after it had been truncated by a modern service trench. It was later than ditches G8, G13 and G14 as well as ditches 0143, 0082 and 0084. The ditch merged with adjacent parallel ditch G12 but no relationship between the two could be discerned.

The ditch was recorded in two excavated slots and was shallow with gradual sides and an imperceptible break of slope to a concave base. The single fill contained no artefacts.

Small pit 0214 was located in the southern half of the site and was partially truncated by ditch G12. It had steep sides with a sharp break of slope to a flattish base (Fig. 7, Section 56). Neither fill 0216 or 0215 contained any artefacts.

**Group G12 – Ditch**
*Contexts: 0248, 0217, 0249, 0219, 0250, 0095, 0067, 0068*

This ditch was located in the eastern half of the site, it was 16m long and aligned north-north-east to south-south-west. It continued into the baulk to the north and to the south its line stopped abruptly at the point where it was truncated by a modern service trench. It was later than ditches G13 and G14 as well as pit 0214 (Fig. 7, Section 56). The ditch merged with adjacent parallel ditch G11 but no relationship between the two could be discerned (Fig. 6, Section 25).

The ditch was recorded in four excavated slots and was shallow moderately steep sides and a gradual break of slope to a flattish base (Fig. 5, Section 21). The single fill contained no artefacts.

Pit 0024 was located in the northern half of the development area in an area subject to some confusion in plan. Its full form in plan was not observed as it was seen only in an excavated slot. The exposed southern half indicates that
it had been circular in plan with steep sides and a gradual break of slope to a flat base. The pit contained two fills 0026 and 0025 neither of which contained artefacts. The record indicates that this pit was cut by the northern terminal of a north-east to south-west oriented ditch G15. Its relationship to east to west oriented ditch 0022 is uncertain, it was thought possible that the ditch cut across the pit but the section was inconclusive. The relationship between the pit and south-west to north-east oriented ditch 0031 to the north was not established.

Ditch 0022 was located in the northern half of the development area and formed part of the east to west aligned ditch sequence. It was recorded over a distance of 2.8m. To the east it may have continued as either ditch G18 or G19, to the west it was recorded as terminating. However, a general shot of the site (Plate 1) suggests that this ditch may have been truncated by a possible north-north-east to south-south-west oriented ditch seen in the photograph but not observed during excavation. This possible ditch may have cut across ditch 0022, if so then ditch 0022 may have originally continued to the west as ditch G14. The ditch had gradual sides and a flat base, it measured approximately 0.8m in width and 0.15m in depth. Single fill 0023 contained no artefacts.

**Group G15 – Ditch**

**Contexts:** 0027, 0043, 0042, 0030, 0029, 0028, **0122, 0123**

This ditch was located in the northern half of the development area. It measured 4m in length and was oriented north-east to south-west. At its northern end it was recorded as being later than and terminating over pit 0024. To the south-west its line ended abruptly in plan, the photographs suggest it may have been very shallow and petered out here (Plate 2).

It was recorded in two excavated slots, at the terminal five fills were recorded within the ditch (Fig. 5, Section 10), however just 2m to the south-west only one fill was noted (Fig. 6, Section 35). It had steep slightly irregular sides with a concave base, and measured 0.73m in width and 0.36m in depth. Six fragments of animal bone were recovered from fill 0123.
Ditch 0031 was on the same alignment as ditch G15 and might have been associated with it. Its relationship to pit 0024 was uncertain but it was suggested that it might have been later than it. The grounds for this suggestion are unclear. It was recorded over a distance of approximately 2m. To the north-east it merged with the east to west oriented ditches and was lost. The ditch was shallow with a steep eastern side and a gradual break of slope to a flat base. It measured 1.34m in width and 0.2m in depth. The single fill 0033 contained no artefacts.

Pit 0124 was located in the northern half of the site and truncated ditch G15. It was oval in plan with steep sides and a flat base. The single fill 0125 contained no artefacts.

Ditch 0103 was located in the eastern half of the development area. It was oriented east-north-east to west-south-west and was 1.2m in length. To the east it was truncated by ditch G22 to the west its line stopped abruptly in plan. It had gradual sides with a concave base and measured 0.52m in width and 0.07m in depth. The single fill 0104 contained no artefacts.

**Group G21 – Ditch**

**Contexts: 0011, 0010, 0012, 0013, 0078, 0077, 0115, 0116**

Ditch G21 was located in the eastern half of the development area. It was curvilinear in plan and measured approximately 10m in length. It was truncated by curvilinear ditch G22 and short ditch segment 0113 (Fig. 6, Section 34). Isolated pit 0221 may have been associated with ditch G21 because of its location 1m to the south-west of its south-west terminal. However, there are other isolated pits of this form in the vicinity and its position may be purely coincidental.

It was recorded in four excavated slots, it had gradual sides with an imperceptible break of slope to a concave base (Fig. 5, Section 7). It measured 0.45m in width and 0.19m in depth. The single fill contained one sherd of prehistoric pottery and one sherd of early Anglo-Saxon pottery.
**Group G22 – Ditch**  
*Contexts: 0101, 0102, 0098, 0100, 0099*

Ditch G22 was located in the eastern half of the development area. It was curvilinear in plan and measured approximately 7m in length. It truncated curvilinear ditch G21 and ditch 0103. To the east it was truncated by a modern service trench and its line was not recorded beyond. To the west it ended abruptly on plan.

It was recorded in two excavated slots, it had steep sides with a gradual break of slope to a concave base (Fig. 6, Section 24). It measured 0.3m in width and 0.15m in depth. Two fills were recorded in one slot, a single fill in the other, two sherds of early Anglo-Saxon pottery were recovered from the ditch.

Ditch 0113 was located in the south-eastern part of the development area. It was a short north-west to south-east oriented ditch measuring 2.8m terminating at either end. It truncated curvilinear ditch G21. The context record refers to this ditch cutting into pit 0197 to the north-west, but this relationship is not shown in plan or section. It was shallow though steep sided with a gradual break of slope to a flattish base (Fig. 6, Section 34). The single fill 0114 contained one sherd of early Anglo-Saxon pottery.

**4.3 Isolated features (Figs. 3 and 4)**

**Group G24 – Ditch**  
*Contexts: 0126, 0127, 0120, 0119, 0118*

A short segment of curvilinear ditch measuring approximately 3.5m in length, located close to the northern limit of excavation. To the north-east the ditch ended abruptly in plan 1m from the limit of excavation. To the south-west it also ended abruptly in plan. It had fairly steep sides with an imperceptible break of slope to a concave base (Fig. 6, Section 37). It measured 0.38m in width and 0.1m in depth. One slot contained a single fill; two were present in the other. The upper fill 0118 contained one fragment of fired clay

Pit 0209 was located 3m to the south of ditch G24. It was oval with fairly steep
sides and a concave base. It measured 0.8m in length, 0.6m in width and 0.3m in depth. The single fill 0210 contained no artefacts.

Pit 0211 was located 3m to the north-east of pit 0209. It was circular with gradual sides and a concave base. It measured 0.34m in width and 0.14m in depth. The single fill 0212 contained no artefacts.

Pit 0128 was located 3.8m to the north-east of pit 0211. It was oval with gradual sides and a concave base. It measured 0.84m in length, 0.38m in width and 0.1m in depth. The single fill 0129 contained no artefacts.

Ditch 0130 was located 3.6m to the north-east of pit 0128. It was 0.8m in length, linear in plan and oriented north to south. At the north end it stopped 1m before the limit of excavation to the south it was truncated by a modern service trench; its line was not recorded to the south of this disturbance. It had steep sides and a concave base. It measured 0.35 in width and 0.15 in depth. The single fill 0131 contained no artefacts.

Ditch 0080 was recorded in the northern part of the site and formed part of the east to west oriented sequence of ditches. It was the northernmost ditch in the sequence where excavated adjacent to the north-west baulk. It was 2m in length and extended beyond the limit of excavation both to the east and west. It was u-shaped with fairly steep sides and a gradual break of slope to a concave base. Its measurements were not recorded. The single fill 0081 contained no artefacts.

Ditch 0088 was recorded in the northern part of the site and formed part of the east to west oriented sequence of ditches. It was 1.4m in length and extended beyond the limit of excavation to the west, to the east its line was lost. It was very shallow with gradual sides and an imperceptible break of slope to an irregular base. It measured 0.4m in width and 0.06m in depth. The single fill 0089 contained no artefacts.

Ditch 0020 was recorded close to the northern limit of excavation. It is
recorded as running north-north-east to south-south-west for approximately 2m, however, the TST plan is unclear. The ditch merged with east to west oriented ditch G13 and was truncated by a modern service trench. As excavated it was shallow with steep sides and a gradual break of slope to a slightly concave base. It measured 1.15m in width and 0.25m in depth. The single fill 0019 contained no artefacts.

Pit 0197 was located in the southern half of the site. It was oval with near vertical sides and a flat base. It measured 1.1m in length, 0.97m in width and 0.12m in depth. The single fill 0198 contained four sherds of early Anglo-Saxon pottery and a single fragment of animal bone. The context record states that ditch 0113 truncated the pit and terminated within it, however, in plan it was not recorded as continuing this far to the north-west.

Pit 0221 was located in the southern half of the site 1m to the south-west of the terminal of ditch G21. It was oval, with an irregular steep sided profile, and a flat base. Lower fill 0223 contained two fragments of fired clay, upper fill 0222 contained one piece of animal bone, two flint flakes and a core fragment, one burnt piece of flint and a piece of fired clay. Its form in plan and position in relation to ditch G21 suggests that they may have been associated.
Figure 5. Sections
Figure 6. Sections, continued
Figure 7. Sections, continued
5. The finds evidence

5.1 Introduction

Table 1 shows the quantities of finds collected during the excavation. A full quantification by context is included as Appendix 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Find type</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Wt/g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fired clay</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked flint</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnt flint</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal bone</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Bulk Finds quantities.

5.2 The pottery

A total of 50 sherds of pottery was recovered, weighing 0.563kg. The majority of the assemblage dates to the Early Saxon period, although a small number of sherds are prehistoric and Roman. The pottery consists mostly of small and medium body sherds, many of which are abraded, and there are no examples of complete or substantially complete vessels, and only a few examples of rims or bases.

Methodology

The ceramics were quantified using the recording methods recommended in the MPRG Occasional Paper No 2, Minimum standards for the processing, recording, analysis and publication of Post-Roman ceramics (Slowikowski et al 2001). The number of sherds present in each context by fabric, the estimated number of vessels represented and the weight of each fabric was noted. Other characteristics such as decoration and condition were recorded, and an overall date range for the pottery in each context was established.

A ×20 microscope was used for fabric identification and characterisation. Form terminology used for the Early Saxon pottery was based on Hamerow (1993), although the assemblage consists mainly of body sherds. The recording methods used are based on a system of letters for fabric codes based on the major inclusion types, which has been employed on other Saxon
sites recorded by SCCAS ceramic specialists. The catalogue is included as Appendix 3.

**Prehistoric pottery**

A single fragment of abraded prehistoric pottery was recovered from ditchfill 0013 (0.019kg). It is made from a medium sandy fabric with occasional small to medium burnt flint inclusions up to 4mm in length. It has a grey core with buff brown margins, and some parallel surface striations on the outer surface.

**Roman pottery** (identifications by Cathy Tester)

Two fragments of a Roman jar with a thickened rim dating to the early to mid 1st century were identified amongst the pottery recovered over the surface of ditches 2 and 4. In addition two abraded sherds of roman greyware were present in ditchfills 0134 and 0194.

**Post-Roman pottery**

**Fabrics**

Forty-five fragments of Early Saxon pottery were recovered (0.510g). All the pottery was hand-made. The sherds were catalogued according to fabric, based on major inclusion type. Seven fabric groups were identified, but as Saxon pottery is so variable it is likely that some of the pottery could be further subdivided into smaller fabric types with further identifications of other inclusions. The most frequent fabric type is ESO2, which is a sandy fabric containing some grass or organic tempering. Other sandy wares are also present (ESQZ, ESCQ), but smaller quantities of finer fabrics, (ESFS, ESGS, ESGO) and a small number of sherds with granitic inclusions were also identified (ESCF).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fabric Code</th>
<th>Fabric description</th>
<th>No of sherds</th>
<th>Weight (kg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESCF</td>
<td>Granitic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESCQ</td>
<td>Coarse quartz</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESFS</td>
<td>Fine sand</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESGO</td>
<td>Grog &amp; organic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESGS</td>
<td>Sand &amp; Grog</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMSM</td>
<td>Medium sand</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES02</td>
<td>Grass &amp; sand</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESQC</td>
<td>Quartz conglomerates</td>
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<td>0.089</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESQZ</td>
<td>Quartzite</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Breakdown of Saxon pottery by major fabric type

*Forms*
Most of the assemblage consists of fragments of body sherds which could not be assigned to individual vessel types. Several thick-walled sherds in coarse sandy fabrics, some of which have surface striations, may have come from larger vessels which could have been storage containers. Only two rims were present, the largest of which came from a vessel with a slight shoulder in 0003 (diameter c200mm). The second vessel, a jar from 0198 has an upright, rounded rim, the diameter of which is too small to measure with any degree of accuracy.

*Decoration and surface treatment*
None of the pottery showed any evidence of decoration, such as stamps, bosses or incised decoration. Most sherds had been smoothed or burnished on one or more surface, and some fragments had been wiped externally.

*Distribution*
The majority of the hand-made pottery was recovered from a series of different ditches, which were mostly located on the eastern side of the site. A further nine sherds were found in the fills of three pits.

*Dating*
The small assemblage consists for the most part of undecorated body sherds, which are intrinsically difficult to date beyond the general span of the Early Saxon period. In addition, certain plain sand-tempered hand-made wares can also be Iron Age in date, and given the location of the site it is possible that some sherds have been assigned incorrectly to the Saxon period. Given these limitations, certain observations can be made on the predominant fabric types, which offer some dating implications. The main fabrics are quartz tempered, or quartz and organic tempered, with smaller quantities of grog and granitic
tempered wares. These are also present in some quantities on the neighbouring sites of ERL 046, ERL 104 and ERL 114, which consist of much larger assemblages including vessels associated with inhumations and cremations. The current understanding from preliminary work on Eriswell and other sites in Suffolk suggests that organic tempered vessels may occur late in the Early Saxon sequence (Anderson, forthcoming). Organic tempered vessels are most frequent in the 6th-7th century cemetery ERL 104, and the probable late settlement area ERL 101, which also produced Ipswich ware (Sue Anderson, pers comm).

5.3 Fired clay
A total of 21 fragments of fired clay were recovered (0.603kg). Small, mainly featureless fragments made in fine fabrics with occasional organic inclusions were found in ditchfills 0015, 0017, 0040, 0118 and 0162. A larger quantity from ditchfill 0037 is made from two different fabrics. One piece is made from a fine to medium sandy fabric with occasional chalk inclusions up to 4mm in length. The remaining thirteen fragments are made in the same fabric, which is finer and contains more frequent organic material of different sizes, some of which is still in situ. None of the fragments show any evidence of structural impressions, and as they were collected from ditchfill 0037 it is not possible to determine their function, or surmise their date.

The most significant pieces of fired clay were recovered from two pitfills 0222 and 0223. Three fragments of orange hard-fired, tile-like material were collected, made in a sandy fabric with occasional large, burnt-out voids, which were probably originally shell. The largest fragment which has a flat base, is joined by another fragment which has an outer edge forming a corner. The fragments may have been wiped on the inner surface. It is possible that these two fragments may be part of a briquetage-related container associated with salt production on the fen edge of unknown date.

5.4 Worked flint (identifications by Colin Pendleton)
A total of 20 worked flints was recovered from the excavation (0.368kg). The assemblage has been fully catalogued (Appendix 4). The vast majority of the
flint was collected from ditches, but three flints were found in pitfill 0221 with fragments of fired clay and also burnt flint. Overall the group is likely to date to the Later Bronze Age or Iron Age, as the overall workmanship is relatively crude. The nearest Bronze Age feature is the burial mound located to the north of the site.

5.5 Burnt flint
Small quantities of burnt flint and a burnt stone were present in ditchfills 0015 and 0194. Another fragment of burnt flint was present in pitfill 022, which also contained a fragment of possible briquetage.

5.6 Small Finds and metalwork

Iron
An iron nail was recovered from 0003, and a second fragment, which may be the shank of another nail was present in 0157.

Copper alloy
The remains of a copper alloy cruciform brooch of Early Saxon date was recovered through metal detecting (SF 1001). The footplate and the catchplate are still present (surviving length 56mm). The animal head is elongated with pronounced raised eyes, and parallel lines diagonally incised above the nostrils (Fig * Insert photo here). The knobs, pin and the headplate are missing. The brooch can be classified as a Mortimer Type A, an early form of the cruciform brooch which has a date of Early 5th to mid 6th century (West, 1998, 296).

5.7 Biological evidence

Animal bone
Nine fragments of animal bone were collected (0.036kg). The majority of the fragments are fragmentary and undiagnostic, but a shattered bovine molar was present in 0015.
5.8 Discussion of the finds evidence
The finds recovered from the excavation reflect the location of the site, which lies in the middle of an area of intense archaeological activity. Although a considerable amount of worked flint of later prehistoric date was recovered, mainly from ditch fills, there was only a single sherd of prehistoric pottery, and four Roman sherds. The majority of the pottery is Early Saxon in date, reflecting the site’s position to the south of the edge of the Early Saxon settlement, and closer still to the large Saxon cemetery sites (ERL 046, ERL 104 and ERL 114). Some of the Saxon pottery may have come from vessels accompanying burials in the cemeteries originally, as well perhaps as the cruciform brooch. However, none of the sherds are decorated and this may suggest that the pottery is more likely to represent evidence from domestic assemblages. The fabric types also suggest on current evidence that the assemblage is likely to date to the 6th-7th century.

6. Discussion
Archaeological features were encountered across the whole of the relatively small development area. However, the persistence of certain alignments, paucity of dating evidence, extent of modern truncation, root disturbance, short vertical stratigraphic sequences as well as poorly defined horizontal stratigraphy mean that it has not been possible to phase the site nor even to produce an adequate relative sequence of activity for the site. Some of these problems are discussed in greater detail below.

It has been possible to make some broad suggestions, based on the integration of this site with three further interventions in the immediate vicinity (ERL 046, ERL 114 and ERL 130). These are then discussed.

6.1 Dating evidence
Fifty sherds of pottery were recovered during the excavation, ninety percent of the assemblage was of early Anglo-Saxon date, four sherds were Romano-British and a single prehistoric sherd was also present. Pottery was recovered
from seventeen contexts representing two unstratified contexts and thirteen features. Eighteen of the fifty sherds were assigned to the two unstratified contexts leaving thirty two sherds from the other fifteen contexts. Eleven of these contexts contained a single sherd only, the remaining four had between four and six sherds. These therefore represent extremely small individual assemblages, none of which are sufficient to provide a reliable date.

It is possible to suggest that the majority of the features are likely to be Anglo-Saxon in date, because the majority of the assemblage was of that date. If the majority of the features had been Romano-British in date a higher incidence of pottery deposition would have been expected even in features set some distance from a focus of settlement. The small number of prehistoric and Romano-British pottery sherds do suggest some activity of this date is likely within the development area, but assigning features to these periods has not been possible.

6.2 Post-depositional truncation

Post-depositional changes to the features have also significantly affected their survival and their potential for analysis. The development area had been part of a post-medieval belt of trees forming an east to west droveway (Fig. 2). The tree roots had done significant damage to the underlying archaeology in the nutrient deficient heathland context.

The site had been subject to horizontal truncation, presumably due to post Anglo-Saxon agricultural practices. Many of the ditches and pits had been truncated almost to their bases. This perhaps accounts for the incomplete plans for many of the features.

The site had been criss-crossed by modern service trenches associated with the use of the air base since the 1940’s. In some instances these modern intrusions removed archaeological relationships. The storage of spoil from the excavation within the development area also severely restricted the horizontal stratigraphy. The large spoil heap at the southern edge of the site obscured the relationships between the ditches running across the two halves of the
area. If it had not been present or it had been removed and the archaeology recorded it may have been possible, survival of the archaeology dependent, to make connections and produce a relative phased structure for the site.

6.3 Planning methodology

All site planning was carried out using the total station theodolite (TST). This method, although providing an instant digital record, is not a satisfactory way of producing a final site plan where there is any degree of complexity. A hand drawn site plan provides a means of both establishing excavation progress and identifying areas that require further work to resolve outstanding issues. In its absence a significant number of features end abruptly on the TST plan, relationships were not adequately investigated, stray lines are shown and features overlap. These problems would not have become apparent till the files were downloaded and the plan produced. By the time this would have taken place it is likely that the site was completed and the opportunity to resolve these problems would have gone. The result of this is that the plan is not robust enough to resolve questions and form a basis for interpretation, particularly in the more intensively used areas where the planned record is incomplete and confusing. The difficulties associated with excavations on geology of this nature, the extent of the root damage and modern intrusions, although significant do not account for all the discrepancies.

The northern part of the development area had the most intensive sequence of archaeology and is the most confused part of the plan. As such it has been very difficult to construct relationships across this part of the area and build sequences of activity. It is possible that part of this confusion is because there is a ditch that is visible on several of the photographs but not present on the plan. Photographs can be deceptive and it is not possible to state categorically that this feature did exist, however, it seems likely that a narrow linear ditch oriented north-east to south-west ran from the northern baulk towards the south-west before merging with ditch G12 (Plate 2). This feature can be seen cutting across ditch 0031 (Plate 3) and possibly clipping the east edge of ditch 0020 (Plate 4). The photographs indicate that this feature was late in the sequence and cut across the darker east to west ditch G14 and
possibly also ditch G13. If this ditch were present it is likely that ditch 0022 did not terminate to the west as planned, but that it was truncated by the north-east to south-west oriented ditch. If so ditch 0022 is likely to have been the shallow continuation of ditch G14.

Plate 2. Possible ditch (highlighted) running north-east to south-west, looking north
Plate 3. Possible ditch cutting ditch 0031, looking north-north-east, part of 2m scale.

Plate 4. Possible ditch clipping east side of ditch 0020, looking north, 2m scale
6.4 Broad patterns
Despite the problems with the archive discussed above, it is possible to highlight some general trends within the archaeology encountered in the development area.

The archaeology in general represents an overlapping sequence of enclosure/boundary ditches that probably formed part of field systems. There is a repetition of certain alignments within an overall shifting pattern of change and development (Fig. 8).

The earliest features in the sequences were generally west-south-west to east-north-east and north-north-west to south-south-west oriented. Although the features on these alignments, ditches G1, G3, G16, G17 and G21 contained prehistoric, Romano-British and early Anglo-Saxon pottery and therefore cannot be assigned to a single phase with any confidence.

In the western half of the development area the alignments then change with ditches oriented north to south (ditch G4) then north-west to south-east (ditches G5 and G7). In the eastern half, the alignments became east to west (ditches G13, G14, G18 and G19 etc) and the latest defined features ran north-north-east to south-south-west (ditches G11, G12 and G20). This is a simplistic discussion ignoring a number of curvilinear features, features on other alignments and the pits within the sequence.
6.5 Plymouth Road in its wider context

Three other excavations had taken place in the vicinity of the Plymouth Road site, ERL 130 to the west and ERL 046 and ERL 114 to the north (Fig. 9).

These three sites had a number of isolated prehistoric features including Bronze Age burials and pits. The presence of these features suggests that some of the isolated features on the Plymouth Road site may well have been prehistoric in date, despite the absence of sound dating evidence.

Some late Iron Age to early Romano-British pits and ditches were located in excavation ERL 130. The majority of the features were undated. A small amount of residual flint and some ferrous slag was also recovered, but no pottery from any other period was encountered despite being less than 60m to the west of the Plymouth Road site. The undated features were presumed to be broadly contemporary with the late Iron Age and early Romano-British features.

A small number of Romano-British features were encountered on sites ERL 046 and ERL 114. These were stratigraphically early, predominantly west-
north-west to east-south-east oriented ditches with some evidence to indicate they were part of a rectilinear field system. The Romano-British ditches in the southern part of site ERL 114 were on a similar alignment to the east to west oriented ditches at the northern end of the Plymouth Road site. However, this same alignment recurred in the overlying mid Anglo-Saxon rectilinear field systems. Ditches G11 and G12 are likely to be the continuations of ditches X on site ERL 114.

Figure 9. The Plymouth Road site (ERL 154) in relation to other sites in the vicinity

7. Conclusions and significance of the fieldwork

A number of broad conclusions can be drawn from excavation at the Plymouth Road site, particularly when considering it in relation to the other three excavation areas to the west and north.

- This area was definitely beyond the limits of the early Anglo-Saxon burial ground identified in sites ERL 046 and ERL 114 to the north.
- The site is likely to have been multi-period, although the dating
evidence for pre Anglo-Saxon activity is sparse.

- Its use was likely to be contemporary with sites ERL 046 and ERL 114, with some slight evidence for prehistoric, Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon activity. No features could be ascribed to the late Iron Age to early Romano-British period unlike the activity in site ERL 130.

- The form of the features and their alignments suggest that in the mid Anglo-Saxon period it was part of the same agricultural landscape that followed the use of land to the north as a cemetery.

- Some prehistoric activity within the area is likely – and is probably represented by the isolated undated pits, on the basis of the results from the larger excavations to the north.

- The majority of the features are likely to be field boundaries, with alignments shifting over time. There is no evidence for a focus to the early to mid Anglo-Saxon settlement, with which these fields were presumably associated, within the development area. No structures or features indicative of domestic activity were encountered.

- The duration of use of the site within any of the proposed represented periods is uncertain. The general paucity of prehistoric and Romano-British pottery indicates that any use of this area in those periods was likely to be peripheral in nature and of short duration. The timescale for the Anglo-Saxon use of the site is also uncertain, however, all the pottery has been indentified as early Anglo-Saxon (6th to 7th century AD), though possibly at the later end of that range because of the predominance of X. There was no evidence for later Anglo-Saxon or early medieval pottery types and as such the use of this area presumably stopped at some point in the mid Anglo-Saxon period.

In isolation this site has limited scope for any further analysis. The combination of the difficulties discussed in section 7 and its small scale mean that its results are of limited value. However, when considered as part of the wider landscape within Eriswell and particularly within the context of the extensive excavations on the RAF Lakenheath site its value increases. The results of this excavation should be included in any
analysis of the wider landscape.

8. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds
T:\Arc\ALL_site\RAFLAKEN\ERL 154 Plymouth Road Car Park
Finds and environmental archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds. Store Location: Row, Bay and Shelf (if known).

9. List of contributors and acknowledgements

The excavation was carried out by a number of archaeological staff, (Rob Brooks, Tim Browne, Phil Camps, Jo Caruth, John Duffy, Roy Damant, Mike Green, Nick Taylor, Andrew Tester and Jonathan Van Jennians) all from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team.

The project was directed by Jon Duffy, and managed by Jo Caruth, who also provided advice during the production of the report.

The post-excavation was managed by Richenda Goffin. Finds processing was carried out by Anna West and Gemma Adams, and the specialist finds report by Richenda Goffin. Other specialist identification and advice was provided by Colin Pendleton and Cathy Tester. The report was checked by Richenda Goffin.

10. Bibliography


West, S., 1998, A Corpus of Anglo-Saxon material from Suffolk, EAA Report No 84
Appendix 1  Context and Group information

Appendix 1 is in
T:\Arc\ALL_site\RAFLAKEN\ERL 154 Plymouth Road Car Park\ERL 154 Report Appendices\ERL 154 Report 2009_242 App 1.doc
Pages 49 to 78

Do not try to add it into the word document it crashes and corrupts the document!
The appendices need combining as pdfs
Appendix 2  

Grouped Context Matrix

This is a pdf of an AutoCAD dwg and is located in:
T:\Arc\ALL_site\RAFLAKEN\ERL 154 Plymouth Road Car Park\ERL 154 Report Appendices\ERL 154 Report 2009_242 App 2 context matrix.pdf

This should be page 79 and on A3
Appendix 3  Pottery Catalogue

Appendix is in

T:\Arc\ALL_site\RAFLAKEN\ERL 154 Plymouth Road Car Park\ERL 154 Report Appendices\ERL 154 Report 2009_242 App 1.doc
Pages 80-83
Appendix 4  Flint Catalogue

Appendix is in
T:\Arc\ALL_site\RAFLAKEN\ERL 154 Plymouth Road Car Park\ERL 154 Report Appendices\ERL 154 Report 2009_242 App 1.doc

Pages 84-85