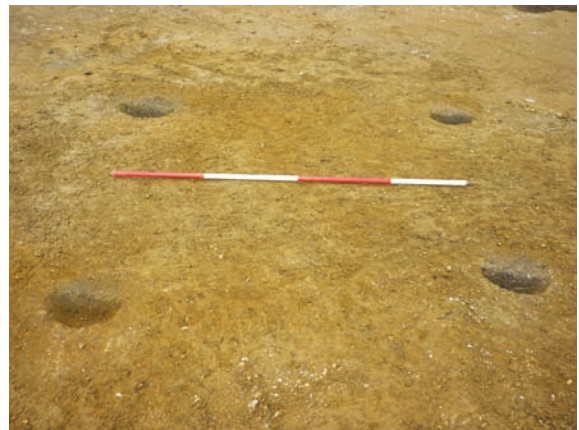


# Milton Landfill, Cambridgeshire

## A Post-Excavation Interim Assessment



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**Milton Landfill, Cambridge**  
*A Post Excavation Interim Assessment*

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### ***Non-Technical Summary***

*Cambridge Archaeological Unit undertook two open-area excavations at Milton Landfill in advance of its expansion. The two phases identified significant evidence for Middle Iron Age activity which was overlain by a large area of Romano-British agricultural planting beds. An extensive area of intercutting probable Romano-British quarry pits was also identified. Both phases of excavation were overlain by post-medieval furrows and ditches.*

## **Milton Landfill, Cambridge – Post Excavation Interim Assessment**

Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) was commissioned by the Waste Recycling Group (WSG) to undertake two phases of excavation at Milton Landfill, Butt Lane, Milton, Cambridgeshire (see Figure 1). Cell 18D was excavated between 6<sup>th</sup> August to 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2010, and Cells 19A and 19B between 23<sup>rd</sup> February to 24<sup>th</sup> March 2011. The work was carried out in order to mitigate the impact on archaeological remains of the landfills expansion by means of '*preservation by record*'. Both phases of excavation identified a series of Romano-British planting beds together with evidence for Iron Age settlement and related activity. Also present were a series of medieval/post-medieval furrows which overlay both excavation areas.

### **Introduction and Background**

Milton Landfill is located to the north of Cambridge, and the excavation areas are centred on TL 4623 6288 (see Figure 1). Both areas sloped downwards slightly from the northwest from a height of 11.7m OD, to 10.9m OD in the southeast corner of Cell 18D. The underlying geology is Gault clay with overlaying patches of Third Terrace gravel and sand deposits from the River Cam (British Geological Survey 1995). Cell 18D covered an area of *c.* 0.48 ha and Cells 19A and 19B an area of *c.* 0.85 ha.

The two excavations were a continuation of archaeological investigations at the landfill site. Previous phases of work to the south have identified Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age flints and residual finds suggesting transitory or low density usage of this landscape during those periods. Whilst also to the south, a pattern of scattered Iron Age settlement activity, together with a probable Romano-British villa with associated field-systems has been identified (Connor 1997) together with a significant area of intercutting quarry pits which also dated to the Roman period. Adjacent to both of the areas of excavation under discussion was a previous excavation which uncovered evidence for further Iron Age activity overlain by Romano-British planting beds and Medieval/post-Medieval furrows (Connor 1999). The projected route of the Roman road Mere Way is also purported to extend parallel the western edge of the landfill.

### *Methodology*

The topsoil and underlying deposits from each phase of excavation were removed under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist with a tracked 20-ton 360° machine using a 2.1m wide toothless ditching bucket. All exposed features were scanned by metal detector and a digital photographic archive was assembled. Excavation of archaeological features was carried out using hand-tools, with 1m slots excavated in ditches, pits/postholes half sectioned and ambiguous natural features tested. Bulk environmental samples were also taken where appropriate. The recording followed a CAU modified MoLAS system (Spence 1990) whereby feature numbers, F. were assigned to stratigraphic events and numbers [fill] or [cut] to individual contexts. The area was planned at a scale of 1:50 and individual sections were drawn at 1:10. All work was carried out in strict accordance with statutory Health and Safety legislation and with the recommendations of FAME (Allen & Holt 2010) and in accordance with a site specific risk assessment and the CAU Health and Safety policy. The CAU assigned site codes are MLF 10 and MLF 11 and the event numbers are ECB 3423 and ECB 3535 respectively.

## Results

### *Cell 18D*

A total of 147 archaeological features were identified, excavated and recorded across this area (see Figures 2 and 3). These included five Iron Age four-post structures, together with a dispersed scatter of other post-holes and pits, some of which were substantial and contained significant quantities of pottery and animal bone suggesting an area of domestic activity. Also present were 25 parallel, northeast-southwest orientated planting beds, evenly spaced between 2m and 3m apart. These features were present across the northeast of the site and were bounded by a gully to the southwest. The excavated slots within these features yielded quantities of Middle Iron Age pottery whilst the boundary gully contained a broach fragment, but no other dating evidence was recovered.

The planting beds are almost certainly Romano-British in date and clearly overlay the earlier Iron Age phase of activity. Whilst the Middle Iron Age pottery within those features is probably residual and is a result of the planting beds truncating large numbers of Iron Age features.

Within the western half of the site was an area of varying sized, intercutting pits, some of which contained a significant amount of Iron Age pottery. It is unclear at this stage whether these features are Romano-British in date with earlier material redeposited within them, or alternatively; an area of mixed phased pitting or, potentially, mainly Iron Age pitting.

### *Cells 19A (Partial) and 19B*

A total of 122 archaeological features were identified, excavated and recorded across this area (see Figures 2 and 4), including a substantial Middle Iron Age ditch on a northwest-southeast orientation which had a visible length of *c.* 10m before terminating. This ditch contained a significant number of artefacts within the upper fill suggesting it had been used as a dump for domestic refuse after it had fallen out use. A number of other similarly dated features were dispersed across the excavation area and included several substantial pits, although these noticeably petered out in the eastern half of the area.

Overlaying the Iron Age features were a continuation of the northeast-southwest orientated planting beds identified in the previous phase. A total of 37 were present here, although 10 of these were a continuation of those seen in Cell 18D. As before these were largely sterile, although a small number of Late Iron Age/Early Roman pottery sherds were recovered primarily from slots within the eastern half of the area.

## Discussion

The substantial number of Iron Age artefacts recovered from features across both phases of excavation suggests a settlement is located within close proximity. Although the only structural evidence identified were the series of four-post structures which are generally interpreted as being raised granaries.

It is clear the density of Iron Age features decreases towards the eastern parts of both phases of excavation. Whereas the Romano-British planting beds continue to the north, east and west suggesting a substantial area of organised cultivation probably linked to the nearby villa.

#### **Acknowledgements**

The work was commissioned by Waste Management and monitored on behalf of HET by Andy Thomas. CAU project manager was Emma Beadsmoore and site staff were Katie Anderson, Will Punchard, Hayley Roberts, Shannon Hogan, Stuart Ladd and Alasdair Wright. Thanks also to Bryan Crossan and Iain Forbes who surveyed the sites and digitized the site plans.

## References

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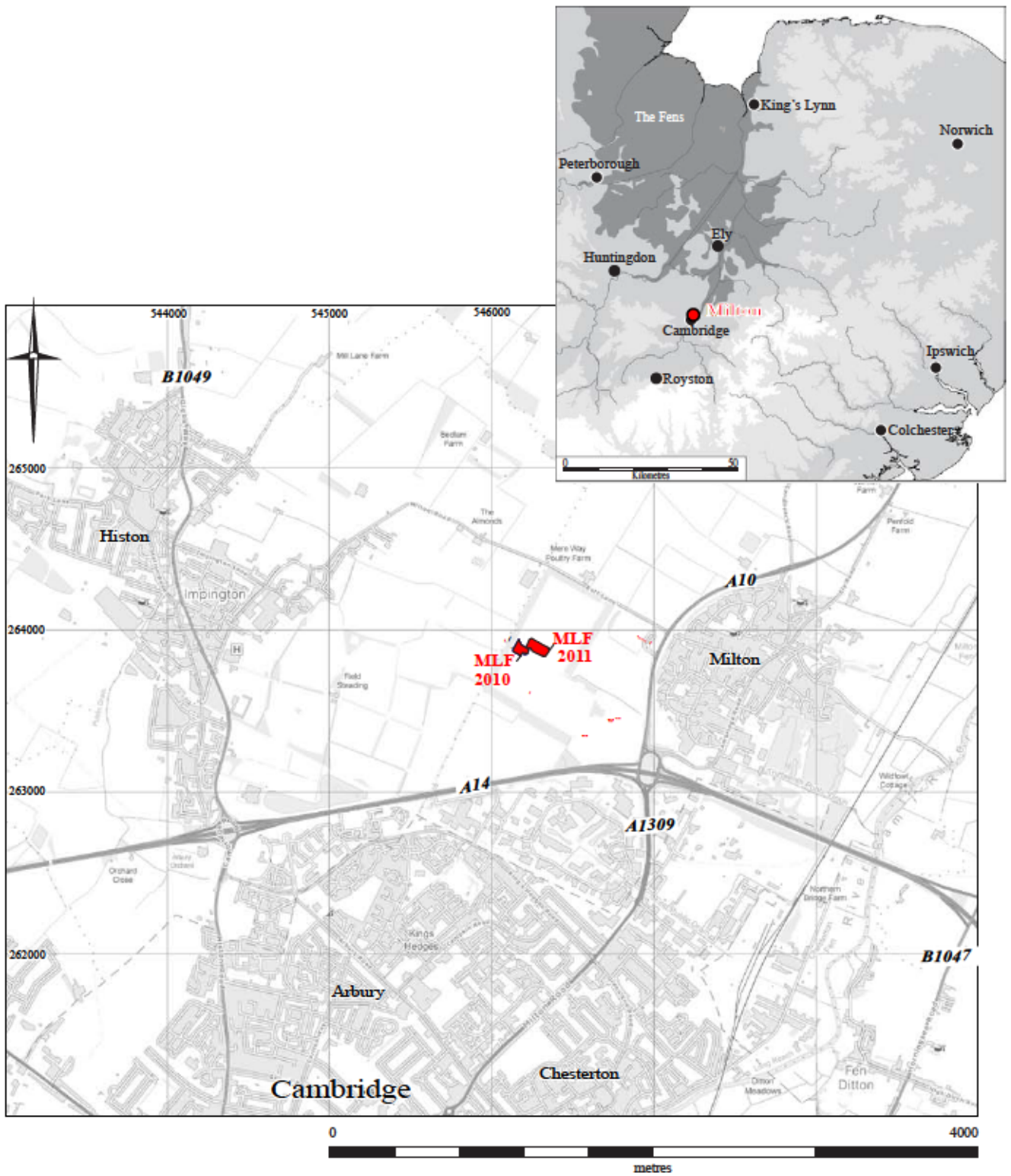


Figure 1. Location Plan



Figure 2. Plan showing 2010-2011 Excavation Areas



Figure 3. 2010 Excavation (Cell 18D)



Figure 4. 2011 Excavation (Cells 19A, partial, 19B)

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### Project details

Project name	Milton Landfill, Cambridgeshirer. A Post-Excavation Interim Assessment
Short description of the project	Cambridge Archaeological Unit undertook two open-area excavations at Milton Landfill in advance of its expansion. The two phases identified significant evidence for Middle Iron Age activity which was overlain by a large area of Romano-British agricultural planting beds. An extensive area of intercutting probable Romano-British quarry pits was also identified. Both phases of excavation were overlain by post-medieval furrows and ditches.
Project dates	Start: 23-02-2011 End: 24-03-2011
Previous/future work	Yes / Yes
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 1 - Minimal cultivation
Monument type	FOUR-POST STRUCTURES Middle Iron Age
Monument type	CULTIVATION BEDS Roman
Significant Finds	POT Middle Iron Age
Significant Finds	POT Roman
Investigation type	'Open-area excavation'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE MILTON Milton Landfill, Cambridge
Postcode	CB4 6DQ
Study area	1.33 Hectares

Site coordinates TL 4623 6288 52.2442269662 0.142070442339 52 14 39 N 000 08 31 E Point  
 Height OD / Depth Min: 10.90m Max: 11.70m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation Cambridge Archaeological Unit  
 Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body  
 Project design originator Emma Beadsmoore  
 Project director/ manager Emma Beadsmoore  
 Project supervisor Matthew Collins  
 Type of sponsor/ funding body Landfill Operations Company  
 Name of sponsor/ funding body Waste Recycling Group

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Cambridge Archaeological Unit  
 Physical Archive ID MLF 10/11  
 Physical Contents 'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Environmental','Metal','Worked stone/lithics'  
 Digital Archive recipient Cambridge Archaeological Unit  
 Digital Archive ID MLF 10/11  
 Digital Contents 'none'  
 Digital Media available 'GIS','Images raster / digital photography','Spreadsheets','Survey','Text'  
 Paper Archive recipient Cambridge Archaeological Unit  
 Paper Archive ID MLF 10/11  
 Paper Contents 'Survey'  
 Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Correspondence','Drawing','Map','Miscellaneous Material','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section','Survey ','Unpublished Text'

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