

A report on Intensive Archaeological Field Walking and Air Photographic Recording in the Area around Salter's Tree, Castor, Peterborough.



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(OASIS ID:- predevell 277637)

Pre Develop Archaeology

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Introduction

An intensive programme of archaeological and landscape research, including field walking and the analysis of finds, along with air photographic interpretation, was undertaken on land to the north and east of Salter's Tree, Castor, Peterborough (TL 137994). This work was commissioned by The Langdyke Trust with the financial support of the Earl Fitzwilliam Charitable Trust.

The area lies approximately 1.5 km to the north of Castor village centre, 5km to the west of the centre of Greater Peterborough and is bounded on the east by Milton Park Golf club and the Parkland of Milton Hall (Figure 1). The work was undertaken in the field between Monday 30th January and Thursday 2nd February 2017, with this report being presented in early March 2017.

The land lies at approximately 30m AOD- a spot height 300m south of Salter's Tree is at 28m AOD. The geology is of Cornbrash, with underlying Blisworth Clay and Limestone (Geological Survey of Great Britain, 1950) which has resulted in fertile, well drained soils which are extensively under arable cultivation.

The field work was supported by data available both in the Peterborough Historic Environment Record (HER) and by archival material. In addition air photographic material from the collection of the Nene Valley Archaeological Trust and the University of Cambridge was also used.

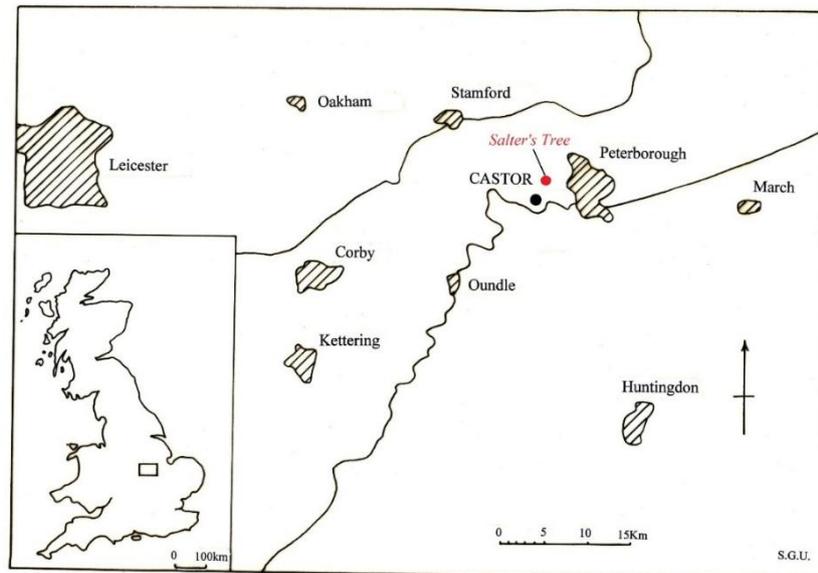


Figure 1. General map showing the position of Castor in relation to Peterborough and other local towns

Historical and Archaeological background to the Parish of Castor

The parish of Castor and the surrounding parishes have a detailed and well recorded past from the earliest times up until the modern era. Prehistoric features have been well documented within the local parishes including Neolithic finds and a defended Neolithic settlement at Ailsworth, Bronze Age settlements, burial features and field systems are known in many parts of the Castor and Ailsworth, including an upstanding barrow near the former Castor station

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site. There are also extensive Iron Age settlements and field systems, again in many parts of the surrounding parishes. Some of this detail of the prehistoric past has been published (RCHM 1969; Camus Project, 2004; Upex 2008) but the majority of the finds and sites either await publication or are listed within the HER held by Peterborough City Council.

It is during the Roman period that the area becomes the focus for intense occupation and development. The site of Salter's Tree lies 4 kms to the north of the Roman town of *Durobrivae* and 3 km from the junction of two major Roman roads, Ermine Street and King Street. Roman remains have been reported from the area of the village and the church at Castor since the 17th century and in 1733 comment was made that Castor 'as appears by ye ruins, (was) a City of large extent' (Upex 2011). Large-scale antiquarian excavations were carried out by Edmund Artis in the early 1820s when substantial remains of Roman masonry were still visible. Artis recovered the plans of several buildings which he interpreted as one unified structure. He was so impressed by the scale of the building ranges that he termed the site the '*Praetorium*' on his map of 1828. (Artis 1828) Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries finds of Roman material were continually made in the area centred around the church. During recent years more information has been accumulated through archaeological watching briefs, local building developments and a three day archaeological intervention by Time Team.

Our current knowledge shows that the Roman building(s) covered an area of 290 x 130m. (3.77 hectares or about 9.4 acres) within the centre of the village and contained many mosaic floors and heated rooms. The masonry which survives in parts of the village points to monumental architecture and the evidence now indicates two major phases of building that may link with political and historical events in the province. The main building underneath the church forms one of the largest buildings within Roman Britain.

In the post Roman period the site appears to have had some element of continuity as there was 5th century pottery and later 8th century occupation material from excavated contexts. A nunnery was supposedly founded at Castor in the mid 7th century by Cyneburgh (Kyneburgha), daughter of Penda who was the king of Mercia (Green *et al.* 1986, 144) The medieval church contains several fragments of 8th and 9th century stone sculpture and there are chance finds of a coin of Offa (*c* AD 757-96) and a Saxon pin and strap end, all from close to the church (Upex 2011).

The Saxon period saw the creation of significant religious settlement within the area with monastic sites being founded at Castor and Peterborough. Rural Saxon settlements are also known and one was initially reported by David Hall (Hall 1980; and Pers Com.) within the northern area of Castor parish and within the area of this survey.

The village of Castor evolved out of the late Roman and Saxon occupation centred around the site of the Roman Praetorium (Upex 2011). The parish church, built on the site of this Roman structure has a tower built in the 11th century which reflects the wealth of the land and that of Peterborough Abbey which controlled the religious life of the area. The medieval fields which developed over the whole parish of Castor have left extensive cultivation remains including pronounced ploughing headlands and surviving open field access ways in the form of 'green lanes'. These green lanes survive as Landys Green Lane to the south east of the village and, leading into the area of this survey, The Drift, which is connected to Cow Lane and Clay Lane. The Drift originally lead to Old Field Pond, an ancient, spring fed pond set within one of the large common fields of the parish (NRO Map T236 dated 1846). In addition The Maffit leaded out of Ailsworth to the north forming yet another medieval access way into the medieval field system. These medieval 'green lanes' form an impressive survival within the modern landscape and are a remarkable survival which need greater protection and conservation. The common arrangement of agriculture survived the period of Parliamentary enclosures and

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remained un-enclosed up to the end of the 19th century when the landscape was finally divided up into the field boundaries that survive today.

Field Areas and Methodology

The area within the brief for this survey consisted of four fields set close to the site of the farm buildings at Salter's Tree. These fields are shown in detail in Figure 2. The shape and area of Field 1 has been recently been modified due to the construction of a new section of road linked

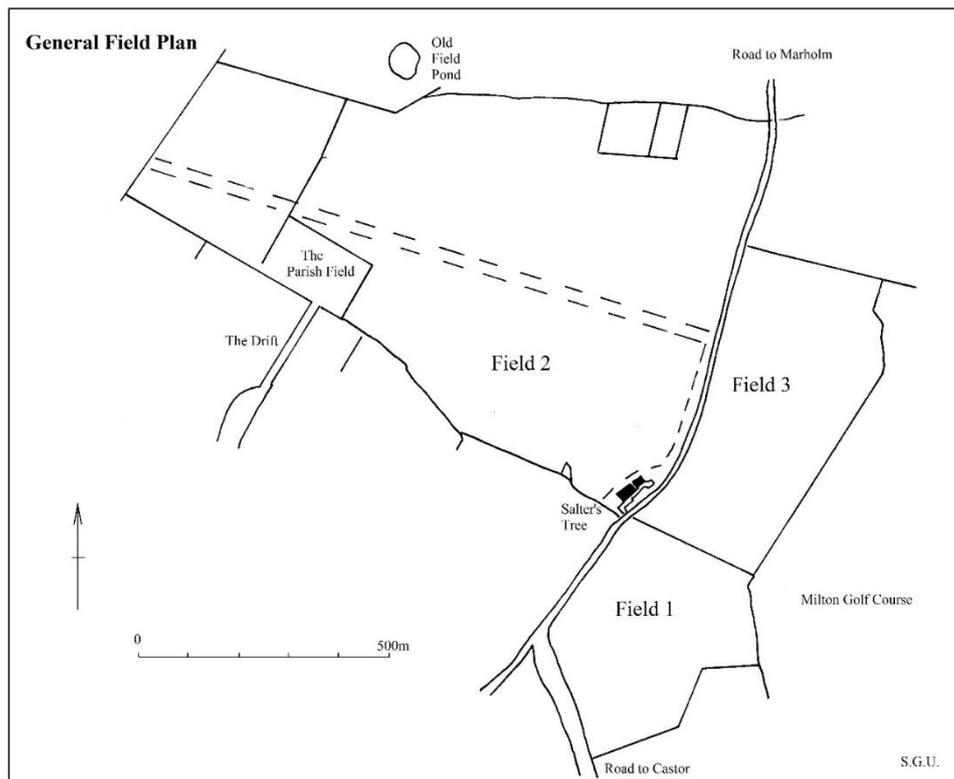


Figure 2 The area intensively surveyed within this report.

with the development of Castor by-pass. This re-organisation reduced the southern boundary of the field so that it is now bounded to the west and south by the feeder road that leads into Castor and to the west by the edge of Milton Golf Club. Field 2 is bounded to the south by the line of a dyke that originally followed the line of a Roman road (see below). To the east the field follows the line of the road linking Marholm with Castor, to the west it butts in part on the Parish Field and other enclosure field boundaries, while the boundary to the north is formed by enclosure period and in part modern boundaries that to the east follow a small brook. Field 3 follows the Castor to Marholm road which forms its western boundary and to the north and east its boundary is set by an area of woodland which then leads onto part of Milton Golf Club's boundary and then butts to the south onto Field 1. The Parish Field is situated at the end of The Drift and to the western side of Field 2. The southern part of the Parish Field also follows the line of the Roman Road as found along the southern boundary of Field 2.

The brief, related to the survey, was to record on the ground and from the available air photographic cover, aspects of the archaeological landscape. To this end a programme of

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field walking took place during late January and early February 2017. This work was then followed up by an analysis of the finds recovered during the field walking, detailed air photographic plotting and the preparation of this report.

Field walking

Each field to be walked (shown in Figure 2) was divided into transect areas and marked out by poles at each end of the transect area. Teams of walkers then systematically retrieved surface finds from each of the transects (see Figure 3). All ancient pottery and artefacts were recovered but modern pottery, including white glazed and transfer wares, was not collected.



Figure 3. Field walking 'The Parish Field' Tuesday 31st January 2017

The whole process of the field survey was conducted following the guidelines set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeology (CIfA 2014). The approaches and problems to field walking and the interpretations which can be drawn from this form of survey are well recognised (Reynolds, 1989; Boismier 1998; Upex 2004) and local studies using this method of survey have produced significant results (Upex 2002).

The factors concerned with the condition of the plough soil, the weather and the lighting conditions all were taken into account, as outlined by Woodward, (1978, 39). The soil conditions of each of the fields varied considerably and are set out in Table 1 below. Field 3 proved to be un-walkable due to the crop growth of kale. The remaining fields provided 'fair' conditions; the light on all days during the survey was poor/dull and all fields were walked after rain. Crop growth in Field 1 (Figure 4) limited the object retrieval process, while in Field 2 (Figure 5) the uneven surface of the field and the remaining straw from last year's crop were inhibiting factors in object recovery.

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Field	Ploughsoil conditions	Light conditions	Weathering	Weed cover as a % of 1 sq. m.	Comments
1	Fair, sown crop of winter wheat.	Poor/dull	Just after rain	40-60%	Limited retrieval or objects
2	Fair, recently harrowed, but rough surface conditions	Poor/ dull	Just after rain	5-10% but straw from last crop present	Fair, but with variable straw coverage from last crop and undulating surface.
3.	Fair- sown crop of kale	Poor/dull	Just after rain	80-90%	Un-walkable due to crop coverage
Parish Field	Good/fair	Poor/dull	Just after rain	20/30%	Fair retrieval of objects

Table 1. An overview of the field conditions during the survey



Figure 4. Surface conditions over Field 1- 30th January 2017



Figure 5. Surface conditions over Field 2 – 31st January 2017

Air Photographic Evidence.

Air photographs of the area were consulted as part of this survey. The collections of the Nene Valley Research Trust, The University of Cambridge and the collections of photographs held by Peterborough Museum and those photographs within the HER maintained by Peterborough City council were also used. Direct plotting from the air photographs was only provided for Field 3 as there was no chance of dealing with any surface recovery of objects due to the field conditions (see above).

Metal detecting surveys

A full metal detector survey was envisaged for all fields but in fact it was only possible to deal with sweeps in Field 1 due to the uneven surface or crop growth in Fields 2 and 3. The Parish Field was also not part of this survey as crop growth was again well advanced.

Recovery of objects.

Objects recovered during the field walking part of the programme were bagged on site, marked and removed from the field once their positions had been recorded. These finds were then washed, and re-bagged and subjected to identification and analysis. None of the metal objects warranted conservation.

Field walking and the recovery of objects

Field 1

The western side of Field 1 was field walked on Monday 30th January 2017. The area was divided up into 10 transect zones (shown in Figure 6) and the recovery of surface objects made and their positions recorded. Pottery proved to be the most common form of object recovered with material from the Roman, Saxon, medieval and post-medieval periods all present. Pottery

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was also noted from more recent times with white glazed and transfer wares also seen but this was deemed to be archaeological insignificant and probably a result of recent (Georgian and Victorian) manuring (for a general discussion on pottery distributions by manuring see Schofield, 1989).

The pottery from Field 1 by sherd numbers and weight is shown in Table 2. and by distribution in Figure 6. This shows that 80 sherds were recovered, of which 25 were Roman, 22 Saxon, and 16 and 17 medieval and post medieval respectively. The weight of pottery (total 865 grams) included 135 grams of saxon pottery (22 sherds) which would be considered an exceptional recovery rate for fields within the area , especially considering the field conditions and crop cover (see Figure 4 above).

Transect nos.	Roman pottery		Saxon pottery		Medieval pottery		Post Medieval pottery		Totals	
	Sherd nos	Weight in grams	Sherd nos	Weight in grams	Sherd nos	Weight in grams	Sherd nos	Weight in grams	Sherd nos	Weight in grams
1	0	0	2	10	3	15	0	0	5	25
2	3	15	4	20	1	10	0	0	8	45
3	2	20	1	5	2	25	6	30	11	80
4	3	15	1	10	4	20	3	25	11	70
5	1	15	2	10	0	0	0	0	3	25
6	1	10	4	15	0	0	0	0	5	25
7	2	40	3	20	4	150	0	0	9	210
8	7	100	2	15	0	0	3	25	12	140
9	6	150	3	30	2	20	5	45	16	245
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	25	365	22	135	16	240	17	125	80	865

Table 2: Field 1 Field Walking Quantification- Pottery

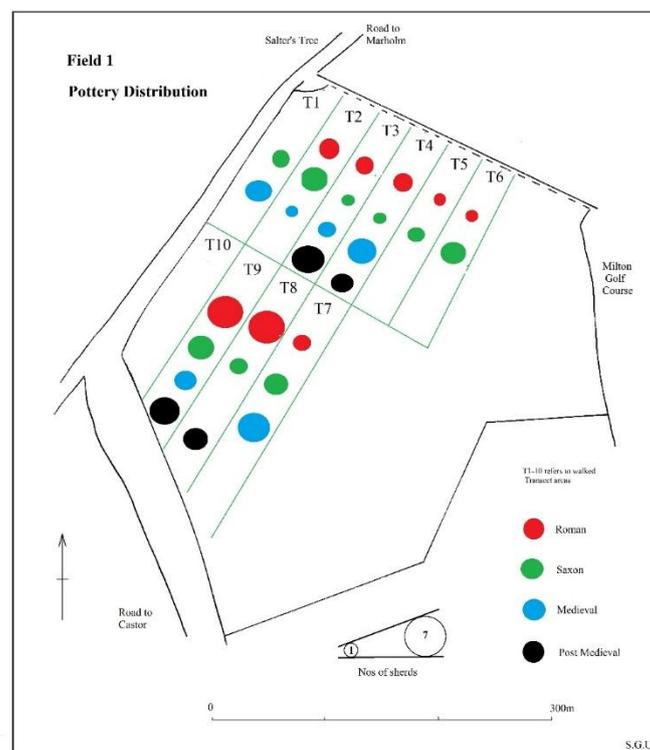


Figure 6. Pottery recovered from Field 1, by sherd count.

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Pottery and other finds will be discussed in more detail below but Figure 6 does suggest a concentration of Roman pottery within transects 8 and 9. And the distribution of Saxon pottery has been noted above as being high for field walking recovery programmes (see Parry 2006, 94-6)

Field walking also recovered worked flint from the prehistoric period as well as slag from metal working and ceramic building material (CBM) which was associated entirely with the Roman period. The numbers of fragments and the weights of material from each transect within the field are shown in Table 3 and by distribution in Figures 7 and 8.

Transect no.	Flint		Slag		Roman CBM		Tegula	Imbrex	Box	Brick
	nos	Weight in grams	nos	Weight in grams	Total nos	Total Weight in grams				
1	0	0	0	0	10	20	1		1	
2	0	0	3	40	10	300				
3	2	20	1	15	26	530	3	3	4	1
4	0	0	4	100	14	450	1		2	
5	5	20	3	100	21	900			2	1
6	2	15	4	120	15	560			1	
7	0	0	0	0	24	1,010	1		2	
8	1	10	5	100	36	1,500	2	1	3	
9	0	0	0	0	27	1,100	1	1	2	
10	0	0	0	0	4	220				
Totals	10	65	20	475	187	6,590	9	5	17	2

Table 3: Field 1 Field Walking Quantification- Flint, Slag, and CBM

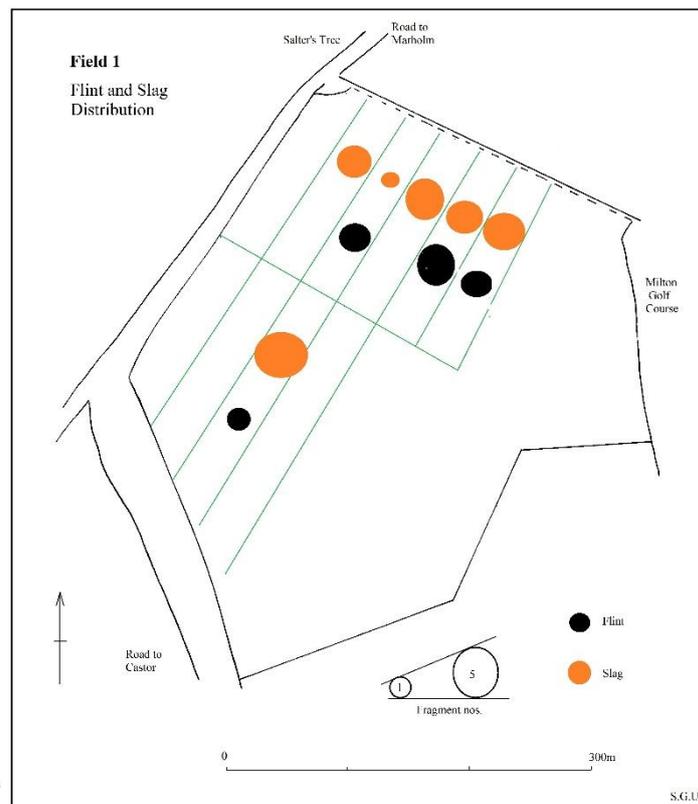


Figure 7. Distribution of flint and slag fragments within Field 1.

Table 3 and Figure 7 shows that both by weight and numbers of fragments there was a general spread of worked flints, mostly blades of probable Bronze Age date. Significant amounts of slag were also recovered. This slag is, in its present form, un-datable but when compared with other known and datable collections of similar material it is probably Roman. The CBM distribution shown in Figure 8 was exclusively Roman with high concentrations in transects 7, 8 & 9. The CBM was further divided up into types (see Table 3), including tegula, imbrex used as roofing tile, box tile associated with heating systems (hypocausts for rooms and baths) and Roman brick. The distributions of pottery, flint, slag and CBM will be discussed more fully below.

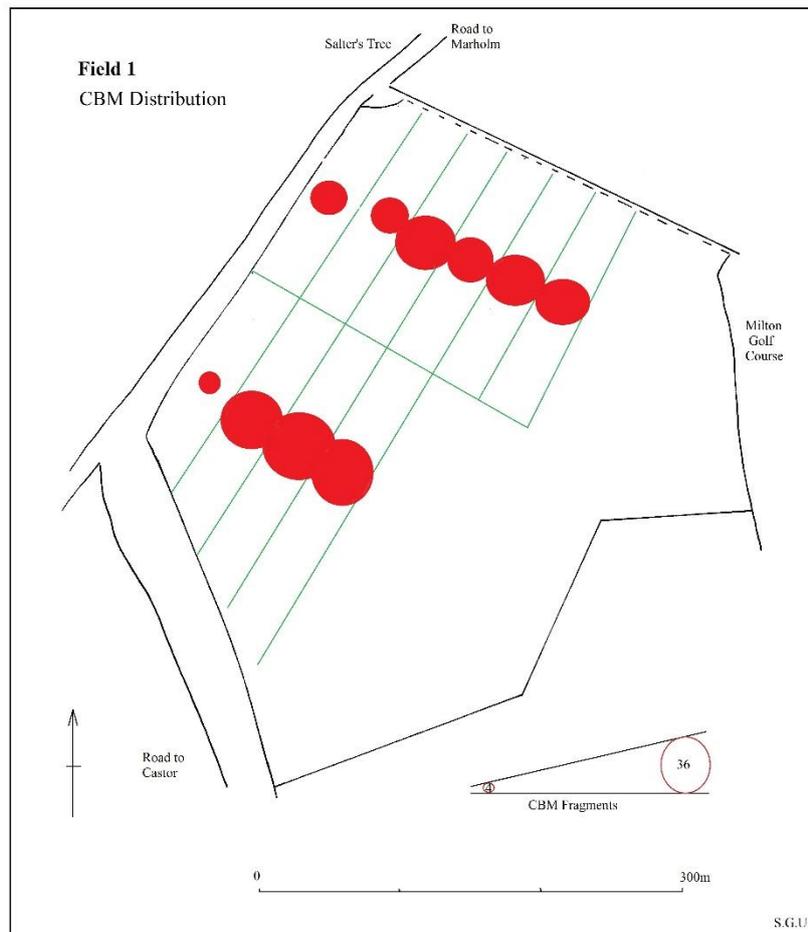


Figure 8. The distribution of CBM in Field 1

Metal detector survey within Field 1

A survey was also carried out within Field 1 using a metal detector to locate both ferrous and non-ferrous metal objects and artefacts within the top soil horizon. Ten objects were recovered from the 10 transects used within the survey and a list of these objects is given in Table 4. Eight of the objects were deemed to be modern or post medieval and the two fragments of lead,

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although un-datable, were possibly Roman- although without further analysis this suggestion is purely speculative. The overall distribution of these 10 finds seems to be random and without any archaeological significance and no distribution map of these finds has thus been made.

No	Material	Description	Grid Ref*	Comment
1	Ae	Small bore bullet	13469 99615	Modern
2	Cast metal (iron)	Unidentifiable fragment	13486 99620	Modern?
3	Fe	Ox shoe	13568 99756	Post Med
4	Cast metal (iron)	Fragment	13485 99626	Modern?
5	Cast Metal (iron)	Fragment	13468 99615	Modern?
6	Ae	Coin	13538 99738	Very worn – possibly Geo III
7	Ae	Coin	13495 99641	Very worn- Georgian /Victorian?
8	Ae	Thimble	13538 99742	Post medieval – Victorian
9	Pb	Fragment	13496 99659	Scrap lead fragment –possibly Roman ?
10	Pb	Fragment	13454 99599	Scrap lead fragment –possibly Roman ?

*All grid refs prefixed by TL

Table 4. List of metal objects recovered from the top soil horizon in Field 1

Field 2 (south)

Field 2 was walked in two parts, each at a different intensity. The southern area of Field 2 was intensively surveyed between 31st January and the 1st February 2017. This area was bounded to the north by the grass runway used by light aircraft, to the east by the Marholm Road and to the south and west by existing field boundaries and dykes. The remaining part of Field 2 (i.e to the north of the grass runway) was walked on the 2nd February 2017 in a less intensive way using a more rapid approach to walking the whole field area.

The area to the south of Field 2 was divided into 6 transect areas which are shown in Figure 9 and each walked intensively. Pottery, flint, slag and CBM was recovered from these transects and the quantification of these finds is shown in detail in Table 5. In all the total weight of pottery from this field walking was 1,115 kgs with only 41 sherds being recovered. Eight Saxon sherds weighing 80 gms provided the largest dated group of pottery.

Transect nos.	Roman pottery		Saxon pottery		Medieval pottery		Post Medieval pottery		Totals	
	Sherd nos	Weight in grams	Sherd nos	Weight in grams	Sherd nos	Weight in grams	Sherd nos	Weight in grams	Sherd nos	Weight in grams
1	0	0	0	0	4	25	1	50	5	75
2	1	15	0	0	7	100	0	0	8	115
3	2	25	4	40	3	40	1	10	10	115
4	1	100	1	20	7	415	3	200	12	735
5	2	15	3	20	0	0	0	0	5	35
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	40	1	40
TOTALS	6	155	8	80	21	580	6	300	41	1,115

Table 5. Field 2 Field Walking Quantification- Pottery

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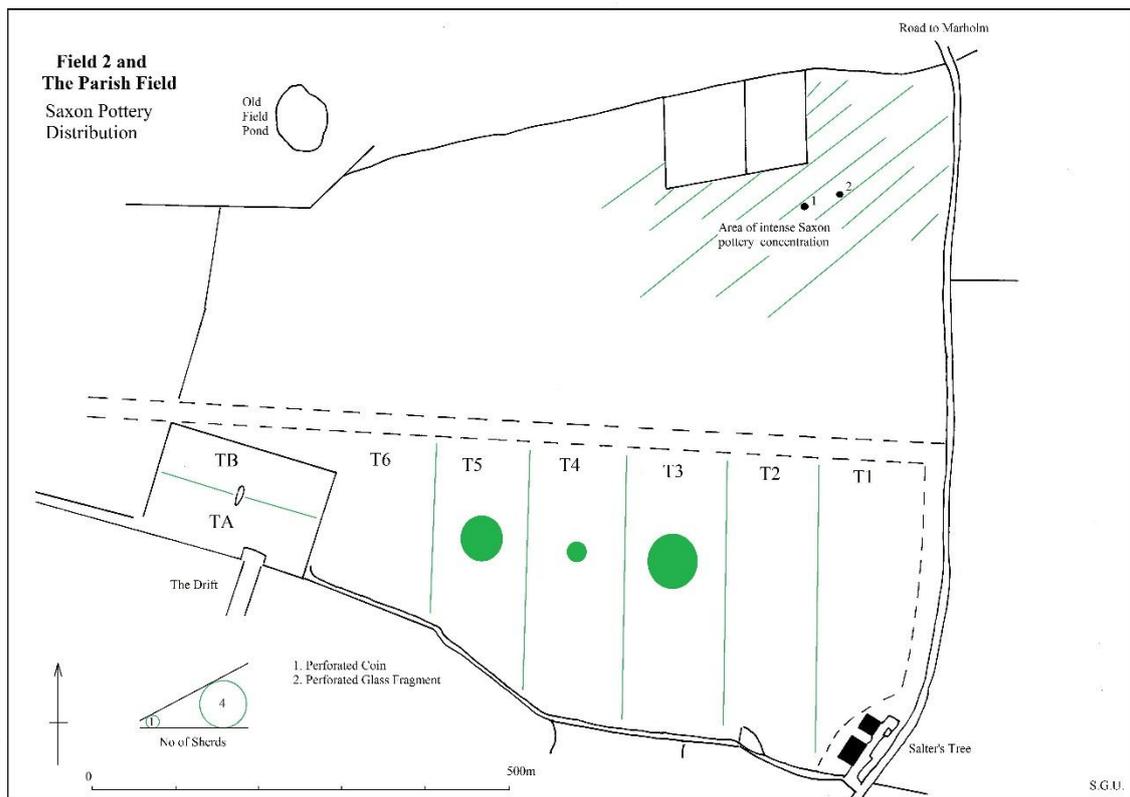


Figure 9. Field 2, The distribution of Saxon pottery

The distribution of this Saxon pottery is shown in Figure 9 as slight concentration within transects 3-5. As outlined above, the survival of Saxon pottery is not common within arable farmland and so even though the actual numbers of sherds is low the significance of even such low numbers is important. The numbers of sherds and their distribution within the other datable groups of pottery was deemed to be so low as to be insignificant and their presence probably represents manuring regimes within the parish.

The recovery of flint, slag and CBM from Field 2 is shown in detail in Table 6 with distributions plots of each of these sets of finds shown in Figures 10 and 11. The numbers and distribution of flint appears to be significant with finds being made within transects 1-4. These finds consisted of blades, most with secondary working, and scrapers.

Transect no.	Flint		Slag		Roman CBM					
	nos	Weight in grams	nos	Weight in grams	Total nos	Total Weight in grams	Tegula	Imbrex	Box	Brick
1	6	60	14	550	31	1000			2	
2	7	70	7	230	41	1800	1		1	1
3	5	60	7	390	55	2800	4	1	1	
4	1	20	0	0	60	4300	3	2	1	1
5	0	0	5	280	22	900	1			
6	0	0	0	0	6	450				
TOTALS	19	210	28	1,450	215	11,250	9	3	5	2

Table 6. Field 2 Field Walking Quantification- Flint, Slag, and CBM

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Significant quantities of slag were also recovered and are shown as a distribution plot in Figure 10. This distribution shows a bias to the eastern side of the field and although un-datable in its present form the slag seems to be of probable Roman date as it matches other slag concentrations seen in field-walking surveys carried out by the author.

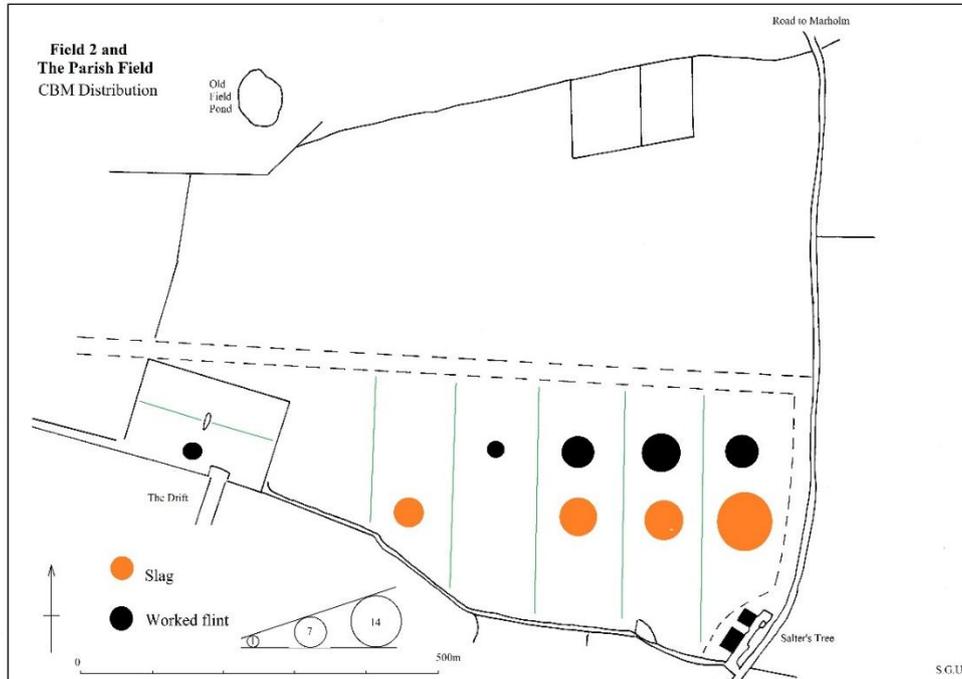


Figure 10. Field 2 Distribution of worked flint and slag

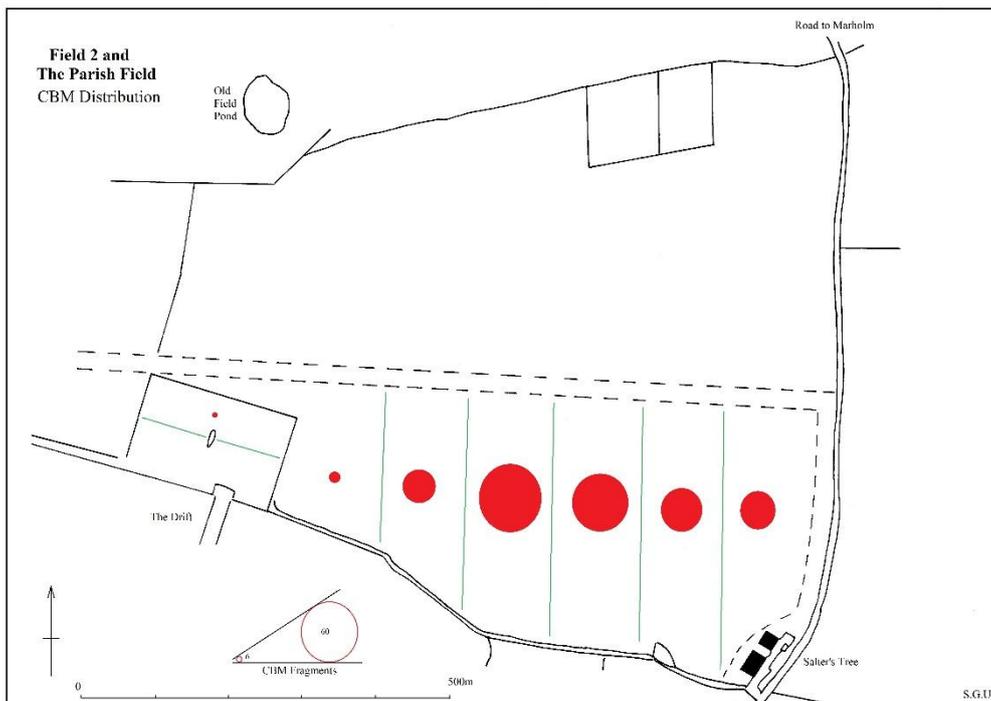


Figure 11. Field 2. Distribution of CBM

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The distribution of CBM in Field 2 shown in Figure 11 is shown to have major concentrations in transects 3 and 4. The quantities of CBM recovered during the field survey was impressive with a total of 11,250kg of material from all transects (See Table 6). The quantification of the types of CBM show that *tegula*, *imbrex*, box tile and some brick is present, and must represent the debris from some form of Roman hypocaust or bath suite.

Field 2 (north)

The northern part of Field 1, that is the field area to the north of the grass runway, was systematically walked during 2nd February 2017. Pottery was recovered but the amounts were so small that it wasn't deemed necessary to quantify the actual amounts which almost certainly represent manuring regimes of Roman, Saxon, medieval and post medieval date. Limited quantities of slag, some flint and CBM were also within the material recovered, but again not in significant quantities to suggest anything other than manuring regimes for the slag and CBM and of general 'background' occupation for the flint assemblage.

However, what was significant was the concentration of Saxon pottery encountered within the northern part of the field in the area marked in Figure 9. Detailed gridding and intensive walking was not possible in this area due to the time constraints of the whole project but the concentration on the field surface of pottery was as high as for any other field known to the author and must represent a major Saxon site of importance, perhaps a village or manorial centre. Within one timed 30 minute period 4 people recovered 79 pottery fragments weighing a total of 530gms. This compares with the 6 sherds of Roman pottery weighing a total of 90gms from the site during the same period of time. In addition a pierced Roman coin and a drilled glass fragment were also recovered from the same area. The significance of this site will be discussed below.

The Parish Field

The position of the field called the Parish Field is shown in Figure 2. This field was walked during 1st February when it was divided into two transects, A & B, which are shown in Figure 9. The crop, soil, weather and light conditions were all conducive for material to be recovered from the surface of the field but actually little of interest was found, with no concentrations of any type of material indicated. One blade of flint (Figure 10, and one piece of CBM (Figure 11) have been plotted but the rest of the very small assemblage of artefacts, consisting of medieval and post medieval pottery has not been quantified as it almost certainly represents manuring regimes.

Field 3

Field 3 which is shown in Figure 2 and which lies to the east of the Castor to Marholm road had during the survey period a well advanced crop of kale growing on it and thus no field walking was possible in any form. However, the crop of kale did show faint signs of underlying archaeological features in the form of differential crop growth (crop markings). The features seen on the ground (Figure 12) could be compared with features seen on the air photographic cover for this field (Figure 13). The field contained extensive crop markings of features which could range from the Neolithic to more recent times. These features have been shown in Figure 14 and listed in Table 7.

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Figure 12. The southern part of Field 3 showing crop marks (indicated by the black arrows) in a crop of kale



Figure 13. Air photograph of the southern end of Field 3 (south at the top) showing archaeological crop marks (see Figure 12 and Figure 14, no 1) with a background set of

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markings of geological origin. Field 1 is shown to the top of the image. (Curtesy of Ailsworth and Castor Neighbourhood Planning Group.)

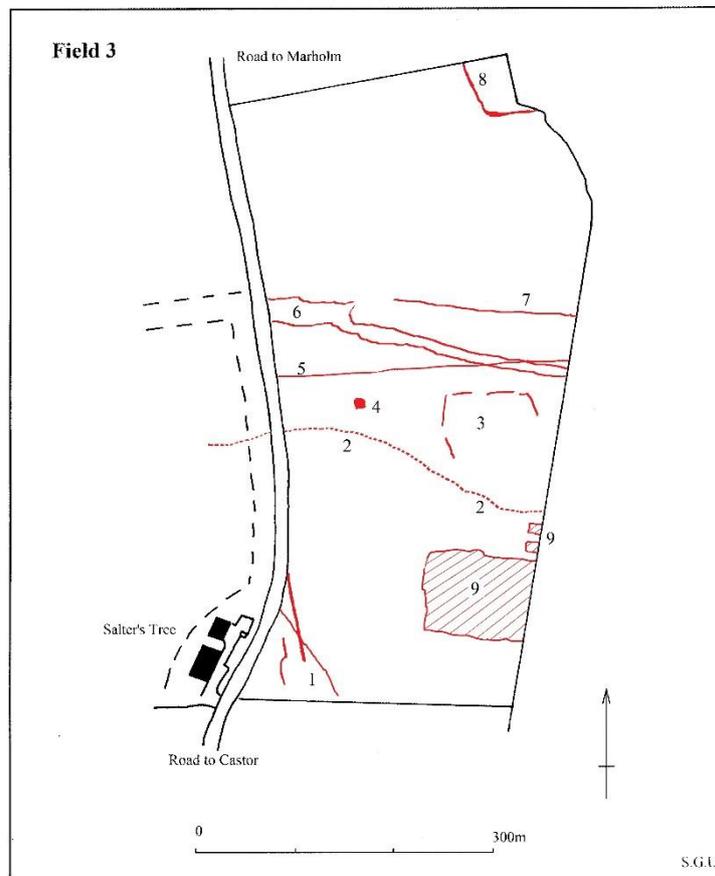


Figure 14 Plot of archaeological crop marks in Field 3. Numbers refer to 'set' of markings in Table 7.

No	Feature	Comment and dating
1	Terminal (?) of trackway with curved western arm.	Possible trackway terminal- may be related to the line of the enclosure road to the north and thus of medieval or post medieval date?
2	Pit alignment	Late Bronze Age or Iron Age date
3	Enclosure (?)	Enclosure with interruptions along its ditch lines. May be a form of Neolithic causewayed enclosure? Prehistoric
4	Large pit	Unknown date but it is from this area that the Anglo-Saxon helmet and bowl come from held in Peterborough Museum
5	Single ditch	Probably the ditch of the former hedge line shown on the OS and thus post enclosure in date
6	Trackway	Part of the trackway seen on air photographs which runs for over 3 kms to the west. Iron Age?
7	Single ditch	May be related to 7 above as a field boundary?
8.	Enclosure?	Part of an enclosure running into the woodland. Iron Age?

Table 7. Listing of the crop marks seen on air photographs and shown in Figure 14. No 1 is also shown in Figures 12 and 13.

The Finds

The quantification of finds and their distributions have already been outlined above. All finds were assessed off site and the need for any conservation reviewed. The pottery and CBM was washed and re-bagged and is housed in a plastic storage container.



Figure 15. Roman colour coated and a grey ware sherds from Field 1



Figure 16. Saxon shell and quartz tempered sherds, including three rims (Top row) from Field 1



Figure 17. Medieval sherds from Field 2

Pottery

The date range of pottery extended from the late prehistoric to the recent past. The earliest two sherds, which have not been classified in the outlines above, were of late Iron Age date in a shell tempered fabric. Roman sherds in both grey ware and colour coated wares (Figure 15) were all local products produced from Nene valley kilns including products from Stibbington and were exclusively late 2nd - 4th century in date (Howe *et. al* 1982; Upex 2008; 2008a; 2013). The Saxon sherds were all small and much abraded (Figure 16) as is common with material of this period recovered from field walking surveys and was in both shell and quartz tempered fabrics and of probable middle Saxon date. The medieval sherds were generally larger in size due to the greater thickness of the vessels from which they were derived and were all in shell tempered fabrics. The sources of this pottery are from local kilns at Peterborough, Stamford, Bourne and Lyvden (Spoerry 2016, *passim*).

All of the pottery from all of the fields examined during this research was abraded and worn and probably is derived from manuring regimes. Where the pottery derives from in terms of an original usage source is problematic. The Medieval material may well have come from the village centre of Castor, while the Roman and Saxon material may have come from more local settlements- the Roman from the enclosure just to the south of Salter's Tree (see below) and the Saxon material from the suspected settlement areas shown in Figure 9.

Pottery recovered from the Saxon site within the northern part of Field 2 is discussed below.

Flint Assemblages

The assemblage of flint recovered from the field walking must represent a general background occupation of the area from the Bronze Age onwards. There were no concentrations of flint but the presence of scrapers and worked blades (Figures 18 & 19) indicated that the landscape was being exploited during the Prehistoric period.



Figure 18. Bronze Age Scrapers recovered from Fields 1 & 2



Figure 19. Bronze Age worked flakes recovered from Field 1 & 2.

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Slag

The slag recovered from Fields 1 and 2 is difficult to date but when compared with material from other sites within the Nene valley, is probably Roman. Saxon and medieval slag is known from sites to the west of Wansford but little has been identified to the east of the Nene. The slag from the field walking fields appears to be basic 'tap-slag' (Figure 20) and either derives from a local metalworking site(s) in the immediate area (although such a site which would have produced a major concentration of slag was not identified) or has been spread by manuring regimes.



Figure 20. Slag recovered from Field 2

CBM

The quantities of CBM recovered from Fields 1 and 2 is considerable and poses a problem in its interpretation. One might have expected CBM to be present close to a major Roman building and the nearest known Roman structures are those under the modern village of Castor (Upex 2011). However, the enclosure to the immediate south of Salter's Tree has produced Roman material, including samian pottery (HER details and Hall's field notes) and it seems likely that this may also have had some form of developed structural elements which included either heated rooms or some form of bath house. Either this or there is another Roman site within the immediate area which has yet to be identified and from which the CBM is derived.

The other odd aspect about the quantity and distribution of CBM is that it does not match with the distribution and quantities of Roman pottery. Six fragments of Roman pottery were recovered from Field 2, compared with 215 fragments of CBM (weighing a total of 11,250kg). One might assume that if the CBM was derived from manuring regimes then there would also be larger quantities of pottery than was found. This at present poses a problem that the data collected so far cannot unravel.



Figure 21. Roman Box tile recovered from Field 2



Figure 22. Metal detector finds of two Ae coins and a thimble from Field 1

Metal detector finds

The finds from the metal detector survey within Field 1 are shown in Table 4. Little of significance was recovered from this work, with most of the finds being recent or modern in date (Figure 22). The exception to this is perhaps the fragments of lead (Figure 23) which may be scrap lead derived from a Roman source. At present this idea is unproven without further analysis on the lead itself but scrap lead is known from Roman sites within the area (Upex 2015) and there may be a link between such scrap and the quantities of box tile (CBM) which has been recovered, where lead piping and fittings could have been used within Roman bath house arrangements.



Figure 23. Metal detector finds of two fragments of lead from Field 1

Finds from the area of intense Saxon pottery to the north of Field 2

This area to the north of Field 2 (Figure 9) produced large quantities of Saxon pottery, including rim and decorated sherds (Figure 25) and two other finds of a drilled *Ae* Roman coin and a drilled fragment of Roman glass (Figure 24). The coin is worn but identifiable as a Radiate Issue of c. 260-296 (Reece 1986, 22-3). The intensity of the pottery, the decorated aspects of that pottery and its fabric and composition suggest that the site is that of a large settlement of middle Saxon date. Drilled items of Roman origin are not uncommon on Saxon sites (Adams and Jackson 1988) and the finds of a Roman coin and Roman glass fragment would indicate that these items were worn as personal decoration - perhaps as pendants or parts of pendants.

This area covers the site mentioned by David Hall (Hall and Martin 1980) who located the site in 1975 during his Soke Survey project. The notes from this survey indicate that when seen in 1975 there were not only large numbers of sherds on the surface of the field but large individual sherds were surviving. Hall mentions that in his calculation the site covers 25 – 30 acres and contained a few Roman sherds and a domestic bone assemblage indicative

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of domestic occupation (notes from Peterborough Museum and David Hall, pers. com). The site remains one of the most significant Saxon sites within the lower Nene valley.



*Figure 24. Finds from the Saxon settlement site to the north of Field 2.
Drilled Roman Ae coin and drilled piece of Roman glass.*



*Figure 25. Rim and decorated Saxon Shell tempered and quartz tempered wares from the
northern area of Field 2 (see Figure 9)*

Conclusions

1. The field walking survey, linked with a detailed analysis of the available air photographic coverage, shows that the landscape around Salter's tree has been intensively occupied since the Bronze Age and perhaps even the Neolithic period (see Feature 14, no 3 and Table 7). The bulk of the evidence points to Roman and Saxon occupation within the area and then later the area appears to have been used for agricultural purposes with surface material from the medieval and post medieval period perhaps representing manuring regimes from Castor.
2. Field 1, 2 and 3 all indicate from the surface finds and air photographic coverage that there are archaeological features of significance beneath the topsoil.
3. The distributions of CBM in Fields 1 and 2 suggests that there is a substantial Roman building within the immediate area although the exact location of this structure has not been resolved.
4. The air photographic coverage of the area to the immediate south of Salter's Tree, shown in Figures 26 and 27 indicated a substantial enclosure of probable Iron Age and Roman date and much of the residual surface material recovered during this survey may be derived from this source. This site may also be the source of the CBM outlined in 3 above.
5. The air photographic coverage of Field 2 (shown in Figures 28 and 29) shows a complex ancient landscape with drove or trackways, field systems of prehistoric and Roman date. Significantly the major Saxon site to the north of Field 2 does not appear on air photographs, perhaps suggesting that any buildings here are post-built and ephemeral enough to be invisible on air photographs.
6. The significance of the Roman road which forms the southern boundary of Fields 2 and the Parish field must be emphasised. This road is first described by Ivan Margary (Margary 1973 'The Fen Road, no 25) and listed by the Royal Commission (RCHM 1969, 39). It is shown in plan by Upex and the western area of the road in Castor parish is also shown as Plate 6 (Upex 2008, Figs 10 & 12, plate 6). The line of the road near Salter's Tree forms a low agar (now a modern farm track) and the line of the road may run across the field to the south of the enclosure shown in Figures 26 and 27. The road may have been the first route way to the north and constructed by the Roman army in the early 1st century AD. However, by the end of the first century traffic may have been reduced with the re-organisation of the road system and the construction of a new bridge over the Nene in the Waternewton – Castor area. The road will have remained locally significant serving the farmsteads to the north of Castor and clearly has remained an element within the medieval and modern landscape to the present day.
7. The land to the north of the major dyke along which the Roman road runs (RCHM 1969) and within Field 2 appears to be divided into zones during the prehistoric and Roman periods. A trackway (shown in Figure 28) may have provided a dividing line between arable areas and pastoral areas. This may explain the differing quantities of finds recovered as surface objects which perhaps indicate differing manuring ratios (intense on the arable and limited on the pastoral areas)
8. The Saxon site to the north of Field 1 (see Figure 9) is of local, regional and national importance. This site may have had connections with the contemporary Saxon nunnery at Castor and any relationship would provide a vital link with an understanding of the way that major Saxon religious sites of the 7th century interact with other major settlement areas.

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9. The late enclosure of the parish and the survival of manuscript maps of the parish allow a detailed match to be made of medieval open field features and the surviving landscape- such features include medieval headlands and surviving open field trackways such as The Drift and the preserved areas around Old Field Pond.
10. The land to the south and south west of Salter's Tree contains numerous sites of local and regional importance to the understanding of the development of the Nene valley and East-Midlands landscape. These sites consist of multi-period enclosures, farmsteads, burial sites, trackways and field systems. The land within this survey contains similar sites. The two areas are thus interlinked and would have operated in a symbiotic way in ancient times. The area to the north and east of Salter's Tree is therefore just as important as the area to the south, toward Castor, in the way that we can understand the past. The geological conditions within the whole area to the north of Castor village are also conducive to the production of detailed air photographs showing archaeological sites and features in great detail.
11. This 'Castor landscape' which is outlined in 10 above is one of the few places left within the East Midlands where an almost total recovery of the archaeological data is possible and therefore is of considerable interest and importance regionally and nationally. This recovery of data is possible because of excellent air photographic conditions; the preservation of archaeological sites due to the late enclosures of the parish (with minimal plough damage); the survival of archival material allowing some aspects of these early landscapes to be unravelled in ever greater detail, and the archaeological background to the lower Nene valley that has already been accumulated by earlier excavation, field surveys and academic research agendas.
12. Further archaeological work within the area might consider geophysical surveys over the Saxon site in the northern part of Field 2 (See Figure 9) in order to provide more definition to the suspected settlement site, with the potential to locate enclosure ditches and even house or building positions. In addition geophysical surveys conducted over the enclosure site to the south of Salter's Tree would give greater definition to the existing air photographic coverage and provide an insight into any structural elements within the enclosure which could be equated to roman heating systems as a source for the CBM found in the adjoining fields.

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Figure 26. Air Photograph looking east of the area to the south of Salter's Tree showing the enclosure of probable Late Iron Age and Roman date and the continuous ditch line that may mark the line of the Roman road that leads to a crossing of the Nene at Gunwade Ferry. Field 1 of this survey is top left and Field 2 bottom left. (Stephen Upex and the Nene valley Archaeological Trust)



Figure 27. The enclosure shown in Figure 26 looking west. Field 1 is at the bottom of the image- Salter's tree is just off camera to the right. (Stephen Upex and the Nene valley Archaeological Trust)



Figure 28. Field 2 looking south to Salter's Tree (top left), Field 3 is to the extreme left and the Parish Field to the extreme right. The image shows a background of geological features on top of which are trackways and field systems of Prehistoric and Roman date. (Courtesy of Ailsworth and Castor Neighbourhood Planning Group.)



Figure 29. Field 2 looking north with the Marholm Road on the right of the image. The Saxon site which produced large quantities of Saxon pottery lies to the lower right side of the small modern plantation- compare with Figure 9. (Courtesy of Ailsworth and Castor Neighbourhood Planning Group.)

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