

**An archaeological evaluation by  
metal-detecting on Kell Field,  
Petches Yew Farm,  
Finchingfield, Essex  
September 2006**

**report prepared  
by Chris Lister**

**commissioned by Mr Graham Hall  
of Prime Irrigation Ltd  
on behalf of  
Mr Alan O'Leary  
and Apol Silva & Orchards Ltd**

CAT project ref: 06/9e  
Braintree Museums accession code: 2006.86  
HEM site code: FFHH06  
NGR: TL 7006 3060



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**CAT Report 392**  
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EHER summary sheet

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## 1 Summary

*A metal-detecting survey was carried out on Kell Field, Petches Yew Farm, Finchingfield, Essex in September 2006 prior to the removal of topsoil ahead of the construction of a proposed reservoir. The site was systematically surveyed, with all archaeological material plotted with a Total Station. The survey recovered abundant quantities of modern material, which was discarded on site, as well as fifteen items of potential archaeological interest. These included six lead objects, six iron objects and three coins, of which one is Roman. This last find is in keeping with the overall Roman character of the site, the rest of the material detected from the topsoil is not. It should be noted that, as this survey was limited to the topsoil only, other archaeological finds may still be present within the subsoil.*

## 2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the archive report on a metal-detecting survey carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on Kell Field, Petches Yew Farm, Finchingfield, Essex.
- 2.2 The site is situated just north-east of Waltham's Cross, located between the villages of Wethersfield and Great Bardfield (Fig 1).
- 2.3 The metal-detecting survey was undertaken in relation to a planning application (no BTE/0175/05) for the construction of a reservoir on the site.
- 2.4 The work was commissioned by Mr Graham Hall, of Prime Irrigation Ltd, on behalf of Mr Alan O'Leary and Apol Silva & Orchards Ltd.
- 2.5 The proposed site of the reservoir is located on Kell Field of Petches Yew Farm, and the proposed reservoir itself covers an area of some 8,250 square metres, centred on National Grid Reference or NGR TL 7006 3060 (Fig 2).
- 2.6 The site is a small field, which is not cultivated at present. The land slopes gently down toward the north-east. The north-east end of the field flattens out onto the broad valley floor of the River Pant which is located only a short distance to the north-east. On the day of the survey, the field was wet and boggy due to recent rainfall with ankle- to knee-deep grass and weeds across the site.
- 2.7 A programme of trial-trenching for the 2005 evaluation identified significant archaeological remains comprising at least one Roman building (possibly a bath-house) in the south-east corner of the site and a complex of associated ditches and pits (CAT Report 329).
- 2.8 As a result of this work, Vanessa Clarke of the Historic Environment Management (HEM) team of Essex County Council (ECC) issued a brief for archaeological mitigation works which included a metal-detecting survey to take place prior to the construction of the reservoir when the topsoil within the footprint of the reservoir is to be stripped and spread over the rest of the field.
- 2.9 The metal-detecting survey was carried out by CAT on 27th September 2006.
- 2.10 All fieldwork was done in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) submitted by CAT which followed a brief which was supplied by the ECC HEM team. The project was monitored by Vanessa Clarke of the ECC HEM team.
- 2.11 This report mirrors standards and practices contained in the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IFA 1999) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IFA 2001). The other guidelines followed are *Management of archaeological projects* (MAP 2), and *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1. Resource assessment* (EAA 3), *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy* (EAA 8), and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14).

### **3 Archaeological background (Fig 1)**

- 3.1** There are a few records of archaeological finds in the immediate surrounding area. There are extant earth banks (Essex Historic Environment Record or EHER no 1506) running through Lodge Wood (TL 693 302), west of the site, which are thought to represent part of a Roman road. Also a stone coffin (EHER no 1505; TL 696 305), found west of the site, is thought to be Roman in date. The 2005 evaluation at Petches Yew Farm uncovered a Roman mortared flint foundation and a surface scatter of Roman roof tiles, flue tiles and building debris which make it clear that at least one Roman building stood here and that the building had at least one heated room. Another Roman building may have stood nearby. This was probably of timber construction. Beyond the buildings were ditches, some of which date back to the Middle and Late Iron Age, indicating extended occupation of the site (CAT Report 329).
- 3.2** A little further away, to the east of the site, Roman pottery (EHER no 6833) was found on the west side of Wethersfield village (TL 709 312).

### **4 Aims**

The aim of the survey was to establish and record the character, extent, date, significance and condition of any archaeological remains in the topsoil likely to be affected by the construction of the reservoir.

### **5 Methods (Fig 2)**

- 5.1** 10% of the footprint of the proposed reservoir was metal-detected by dividing the area into 10m-wide transects and surveying a 1m-wide corridor within each of these.
- 5.2** Detected material was removed from the topsoil only and not from the subsoil.
- 5.3** Material of archaeological significance (or of uncertain date or function) was retained. Obviously modern material was discarded on site.
- 5.4** Finds were registered on CAT pro-forma record sheets and assigned finds numbers according to context.
- 5.5** All material of archaeological significance was plotted with a Total Station.

### **6 Results**

Fifteen finds were retained from the survey including six lead objects, six iron objects and three coins. One 2nd-century AD coin was found at the north-eastern end of the field. The metal-detecting survey was able to locate objects to a depth of 300mm.

### **7 Finds**

#### **7.1 The small finds and bulk ironwork**

*by Nina Crummy*

This small assemblage contains one Roman and two modern coins. Apart perhaps from a lead plug, which may be Roman or medieval, none of the other objects need pre-date the post-medieval period, and most are modern.

SF 6. (60) L2. Hadrian/Antoninus Pius/Marcus Aurelius, as, reverse illegible, standing female. Diameter 28 mm. Date range 117-181.

SF 5. (55) L2. George III halfpenny, third issue, c 1799-1820. Diameter 30 mm.

SF 4. (59) L2. Victoria, farthing, 1866. Diameter 20 mm.

SF 8. (46) L2. Resolidified lead puddle. 54 by 35 mm.

SF 10. (47) L2. Crumpled fragment of lead sheet. 63 by 40 mm.

SF 3. (48) L2. Lead plug, with convex rounded section backed by a flat plate with rough underside. 43 by 30 mm.

SF 7. (49) L2. Small fragment of lead sheet. 18 by 14 mm.

SF 9. (57) L2. Resolidified lead puddle. 54 by 53 mm.

- SF 2. (58) L2. Resolidified lead drip. 18 by 16 mm.  
 SF 1. (53) L2. Iron washer. Diameter 24 mm.  
 SF 11. (56) L2. Iron rectangular-section spike, probably from a harrow or similar piece of farm machinery. Length 109 mm.  
 (50) L2. Iron nail with small square head. Length 37 mm.  
 (51) L2. Iron nail. Length 31 mm.  
 (52) L2. Iron ?horseshoe nail. Length 38 mm.  
 (54) L2. Iron tap slag. Weight 43 g.

**Table 1: quantity and weight of finds by context.**

Finds no	Context	Quantity	Weight (in g)	Comments
46	Topsoil	1	27	Lead object
47	Topsoil	1	76	Lead object
48	Topsoil	1	51	Lead object
49	Topsoil	1	4	Lead object
50	Topsoil	1	5	Iron nail
51	Topsoil	1	16	Iron nail
52	Topsoil	1	11	Iron nail
53	Topsoil	1	7	Iron washer
54	Topsoil	1	43	Iron slag
55	Topsoil	1	11	Copper-alloy coin
56	Topsoil	1	99	Iron spike
57	Topsoil	1	92	Lead object
58	Topsoil	1	7	Lead object
59	Topsoil	1	2	Copper-alloy coin
60	Topsoil	1	13	Copper-alloy coin
<b>Totals</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>464</b>	

## 8 Discussion

Few archaeological remains of significance were found within the topsoil of Kell Field. The 2nd-century coin is within the chronology for the structure located during the 2005 evaluation, and the remaining finds reflect the modern usage of the field. The condition of the field during the survey (ankle- to knee-deep grass and weeds) made it difficult to see any associated concentration of finds which might have been present on the surface. With only one definite Roman find from a detected sample of 90 (75 being discarded on site as obviously modern), it is unlikely that the proposed topsoil-strip will result in the the displacement of a significant number of archaeological objects.

## 9 Archive deposition

The site records, finds, associated papers and digital archive are currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF. These will be deposited permanently with Braintree Museum under museum accession code BRNTM 2006.86.

## 10 Acknowledgements

The Trust would like to thank Mr Graham Hall of Prime Irrigation Ltd for commissioning the survey, and Mr Alan O'Leary and Apol Silva & Orchards Ltd for funding it. The survey was carried out by Brian Hurrell and David Ross and supervised by Chris Lister.

## 11 Abbreviations

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
ECC	Essex County Council
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
HEM	Historic Environment Management
NGR	National Grid Reference

## 12 References

CAT Report 329		An archaeological evaluation on Kell Field, Petches Yew Farm, Finchingfield, Essex, June-July 2005, unpublished CAT archive report, by Stephen Benfield, 2005
EAA 3	1997	<i>Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1. Resource assessment</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, <b>3</b> , ed by J Glazebrook
EAA 8	2000	<i>Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, <b>8</b> , ed by N Brown & J Glazebrook
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, <b>14</b> , ed by D Gurney
IFA	1999	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i>
IFA	2001	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
MAP 2	1991	<i>Management of archaeological projects</i> , 2nd edition (English Heritage)

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Mr Graham Hall, Prime Irrigation Ltd, Darsham, Saxmundham, Suffolk  
Vanessa Clarke, HEM team, Essex County Council  
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



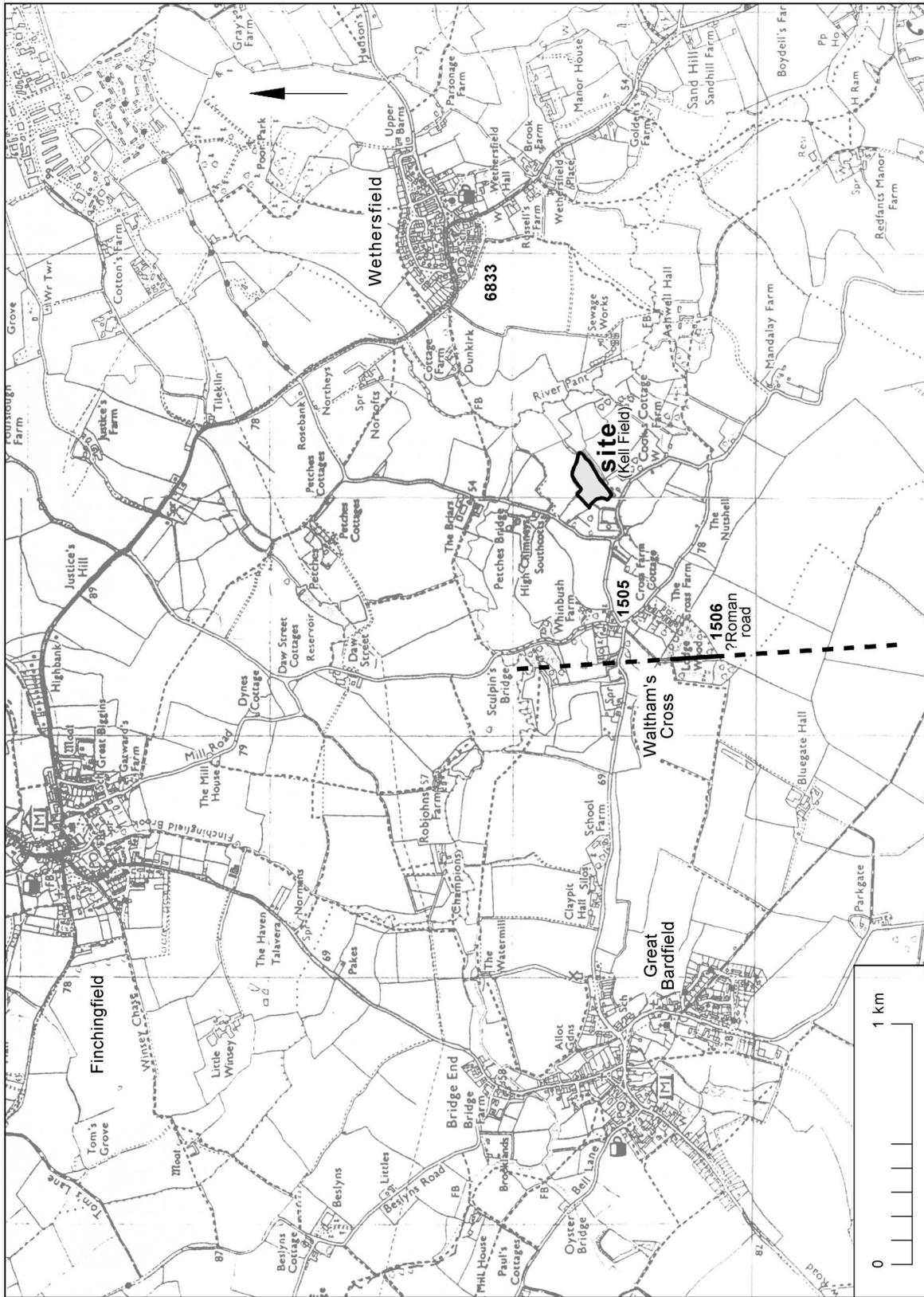
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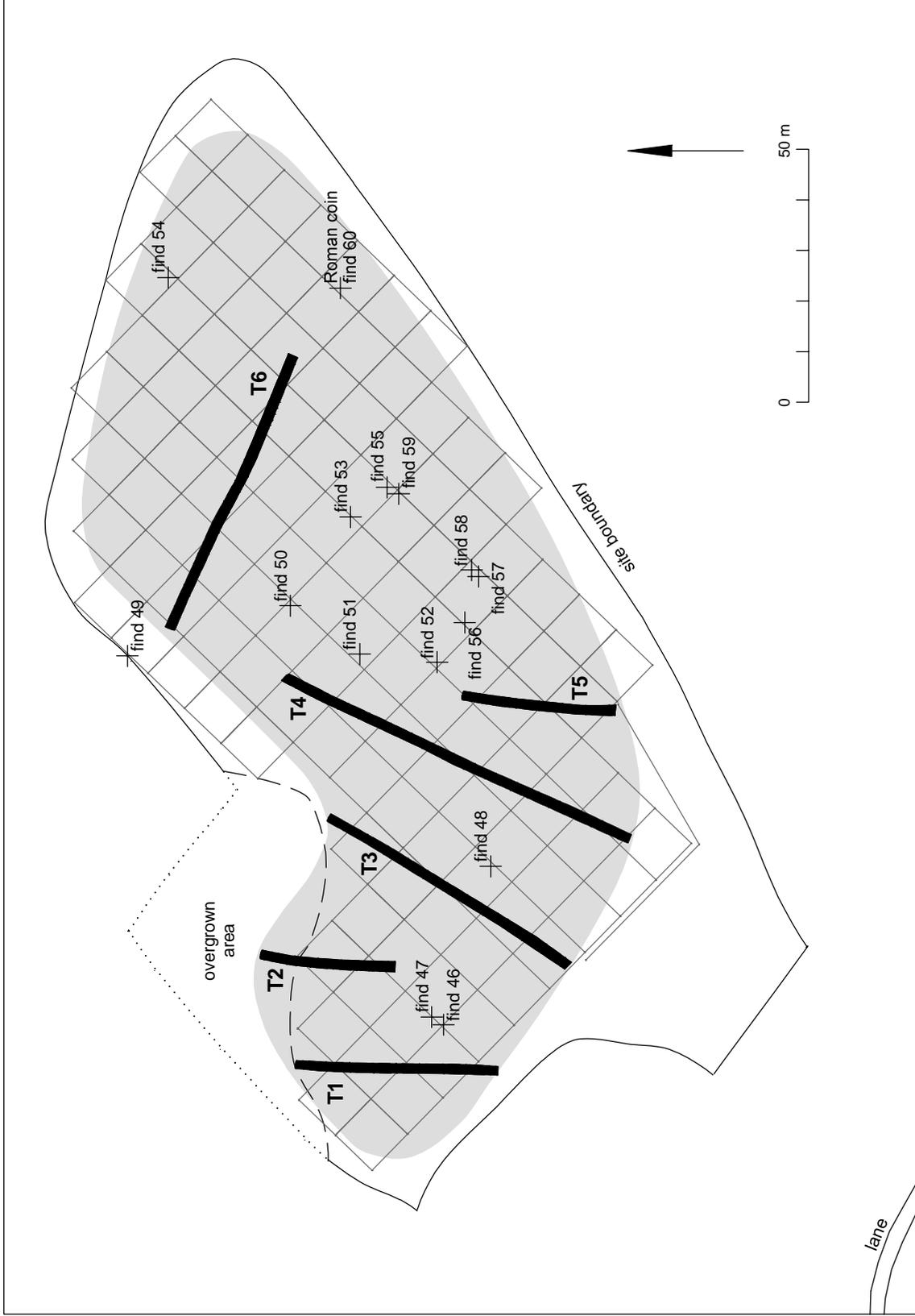
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Fig 1 Site location and surrounding archaeology.



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Fig 2 Location of metal-detected finds in relation to the proposed footprint of reservoir and topsoil spread (toned), and the trenches of the 2005 evaluation.

# Essex Historic Environment Record/ *Essex Archaeology and History*

## Summary sheet

<b>Site address:</b> Kell Field, Petches Yew Farm, Finchingfield, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Finchingfield	<b>District:</b> Braintree
<b>NGR:</b> TL 7006 3060	<b>Site code:</b> ECC site code FFHH06
<b>Type of work:</b> Metal-detecting survey	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> 27th September 2006	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 0.825 hectares (reservoir footprint) – approx 10% covered by transects
<b>Location of finds/curating museum:</b> Braintree Museum (accession code BRNTM 2006.86)	<b>Funding source:</b> Developer
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> Possibly	<b>Related EHER nos:</b> 1505, 1506, 6833
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 392 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
<b>Periods represented:</b> Roman and modern	
<p><b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b>  <i>A metal-detecting survey was carried out on Kell Field, Petches Yew Farm, Finchingfield, Essex in September 2006 prior to the removal of topsoil ahead of the construction of a proposed reservoir. The site was systematically surveyed, with all archaeological material plotted with a Total Station. The survey recovered abundant quantities of modern material, which was discarded on site, as well as fifteen items of potential archaeological interest. These included six lead objects, six iron objects and three coins, of which one is Roman. This last find is in keeping with the overall Roman character of the site, the rest of the material detected from the topsoil is not. It should be noted that, as this survey was limited to the topsoil only, other archaeological finds may still be present within the subsoil.</i></p>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> CAT Report 329	
<b>Author of summary:</b> C Lister	<b>Date of summary:</b> October 2006