



FULBOURN VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY

"To save Fulbourn's past for the future"

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION IN PARK FIELD, FULBOURN , 2003 By Aileen Connor

During August and September 2003 the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council, in partnership with South Cambridgeshire District Council, the Fulbourn Village History Society, the Council for British Archaeology Mid Anglia Region, Tmpcom Ltd., Huntsman Ltd and LOC Plant Hire undertook an archaeological

excavation on a cropmark site in Park Field, Fulbourn, thought to be a possible Medieval moat. The excavation was run as a summer school attended by nearly forty students over a period of four weeks. Local volunteers helped with cleaning finds. The cropmark is situated in an arable field to the west of Fulbourn Manor and

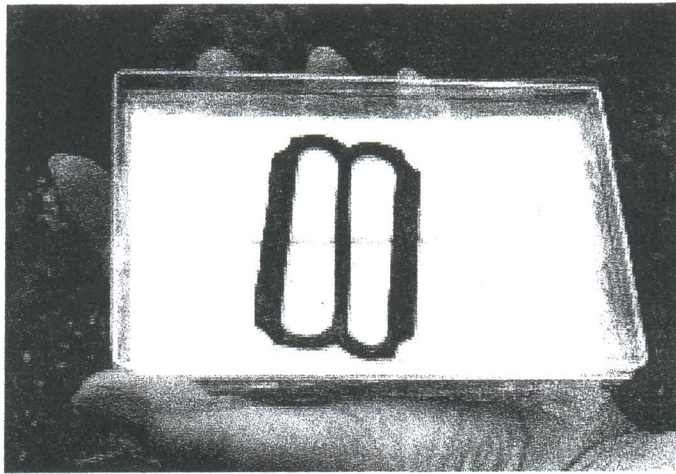
east of Ansetts Wood. It comprises a broad ditch (possibly part of a moat) with a series of smaller ditches inside. Among these a building is shown by a rectangular cropmark. A slighter ditched enclosure is attached to the south side of the possible moat. The east and north sides of the possible moat don't show as cropmarks since they merge into the modern field boundaries and drainage ditches. This site could well be the location of Colvilles' Manor, one of five main manors recorded in the parish of Fulbourn. It is possible to trace the ownership of the main manors which all eventually became absorbed and acquired by the Townley family, and became part of Fulbourn Manor Estate.

Colvilles' Manor is mentioned in Medieval and later documents, although there is no clear evidence for the location of Colvilles' there is reference to it standing within a moat together with a manorial chapel by 1200 (referred to as the "free chapel of St Edmund" (Lysons 1808). Its manorial farmstead was still kept in repair in the 1460's and apparently the one mainly used by the Zouches demesne farmer in 1515. The possible moated site in Park Field could well be the location of this manor.

Although only a single jetton had been found and reported from the site of Colvilles' moat, reports of metal detecting holes after ploughing each year strongly suggest treasure hunting has been taking place on the field. Other finds may therefore have

been discovered from the site. Field walking by the Cambridge Archaeological Field Group (CAFG) has also provided little evidence. Fragments of worked clunch blocks have, however, been dragged out by the plough from the vicinity of the cropmark building on a number of occasions. This lone stone building is of interest

as it is aligned west-east. If this is contemporary with the moat then it could be a chapel, possibly that of Colvilles' manor. The excavation of the site during Summer 2003 aimed to test the possibility that the rectangular building identified from cropmarks could be a chapel. With this in mind an area of approximately 20m x 15m was targeted for excavation over the location of the



BUCKLE FOUND ON SITE DISPLAYED BY AILEEN

building. The topsoil was stripped by a mechanical digger (kindly supplied free-of-charge by LOC Plant Hire) under the supervision of a professional archaeologist. Under only 30cms of topsoil the foundations of a clunch (chalk) building were revealed. Careful cleaning by students showed that the building had a much more complex history than the cropmarks had implied. Before the building was constructed a platform of mixed chalk and silt was spread over the natural peat raising the area by about 25-30cms. The building was then constructed on top of the platform; it was initially a simple, single roomed structure approximately 10m x 4m in size and floored with compacted chalk. A pit filled with chalk rubble was cut into the centre of the floor and may have held a post or (if a chapel) even a cross, a font or a pulpit.

The building was later extended to at least 10m long x 5m wide and the foundations for the walls were made deeper. The deeper foundations may imply that a second storey was added at this time, although the while building was laid on peat and the broad, deep foundations may have been put in to compensate for the unstable ground on which it was built. No floor survived for this phase, although a few fragments of plain floor tiles were found compressed into the top of one of the

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