

***The Historic Towns of Cambridgeshire  
An Extensive Urban Survey***

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# **BURWELL**

**EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

## **Draft Report**

**Text Last Modified: 22 May 2003**

This document is an unfinished draft report compiled as a part of the Cambridgeshire Extensive Urban Survey.

All archaeological sites reported on since the date of last modification given above are not included in this text.

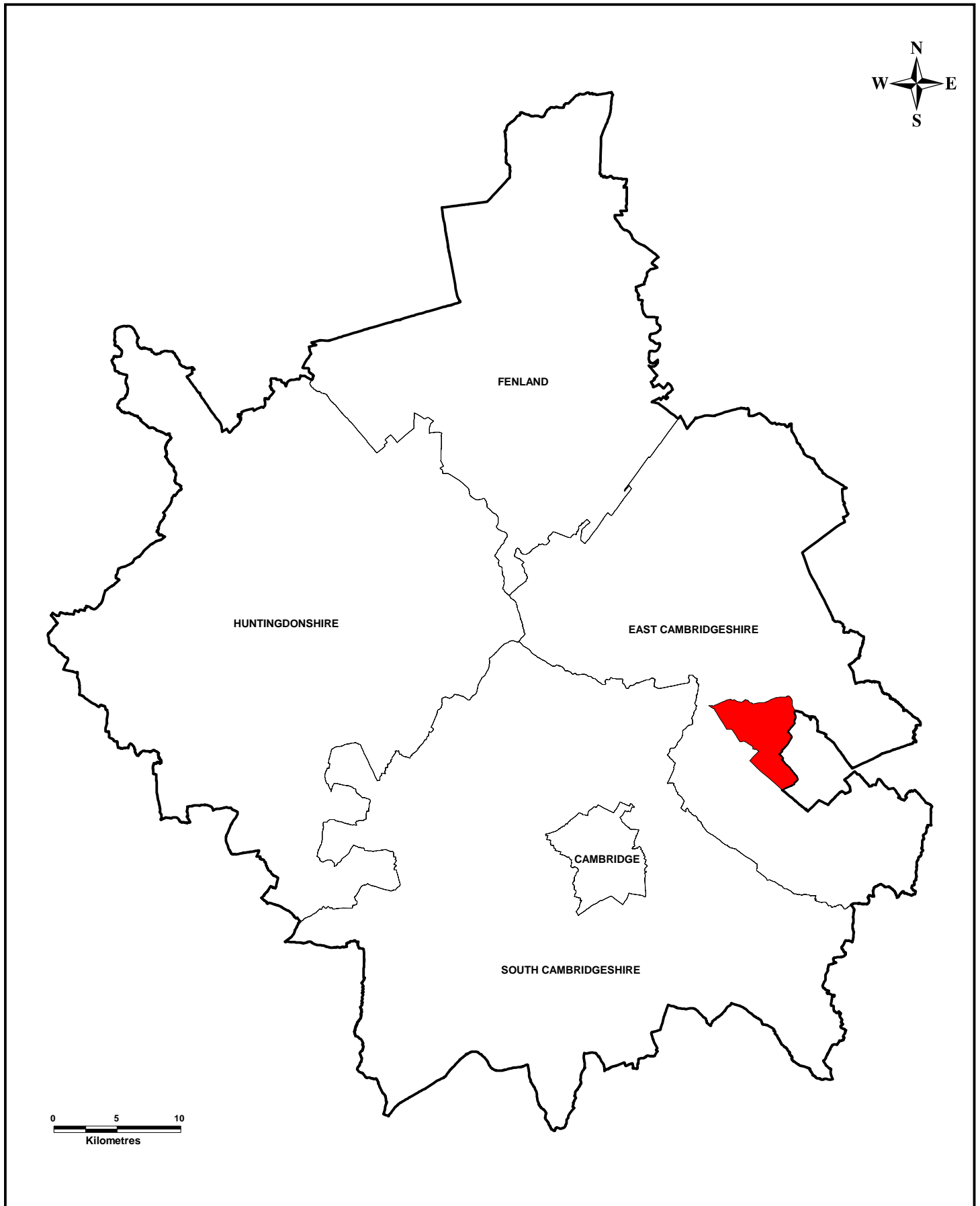
Throughout the text reference is made to Historic Environment Record (HER) numbers, Listed Building (LB) numbers and Scheduled Monument (SM) numbers. For further information on any of these sites the reader is referred to the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record.

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# Burwell: Parish Location



Scale (at A4): 1:400000

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## List of Abbreviations Used in the Text

AFU	Archaeological Field Unit
AOD	At Ordnance Datum
BGS	British Geological Survey of England and Wales
CAU	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
CCC	Cambridgeshire County Council
CPM	Countryside Planning & Management
CUCAP	Cambridge University Committee for Aerial Photographs format
CRO	Cambridge Record Office
LB	Listed Building
OS	Ordnance Survey
PCAS	Proceedings of the Cambridgeshire Antiquarian Society
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
RCHM(E)	Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments (of England)
SAM	Scheduled Ancient Monument
SM	Scheduled Monument
HER	(Cambridge) Sites and Monuments Record
TCHAS	Trans. of the Cambs. & Hunts. Archaeology Society
VCH	Victoria County History

## **SUMMARY**

*The parish of Burwell in East Cambridgeshire District covers an area of c. 2830ha. The north and east sides of the parish are bounded by Wicken Lode and the New River/Monks Lode. To the west Devils' Dyke and Reach Lode mark the boundary between Burwell and the parishes of Swaffham Prior and Reach.*

*The modern village is located approximately 16km to the north-east of Cambridge and 6.5 km to the north-west of Newmarket (Suffolk), on the Cambridgeshire-Suffolk border. It stretches on a north-south axis, at an average height of 10m AOD, and comprises three main nuclei, High Town at the south end, North Street at the north-east end and Newnham to the south-west of North Street. The village boundary on the west side is marked by the Weirs, a stream which runs parallel to the village main streets and separates the chalk upland from the fen.*

*The main bedrock geology is Upper Chalk with sand capping on the heath in the south-eastern tip of the parish. The northern part of the parish is occupied by fen where peat formed from the Neolithic period, partly burying earlier prehistoric sites.*

*Burwell together with Fordham, Chippenham, Snailwell, Isleham, Kennet, Reach and Swaffham Prior in Cambridgeshire forms part of the rich prehistoric landscape that stretches across the Suffolk and Norfolk borders. Early prehistoric activity within and around the village is documented by stray finds and finds scatters, namely lithic implements, distributed along the chalk slopes of the fen-edge and on outcrops of light sandy soil in the fen. Very little is known of the Iron Age period. Prehistoric finds of uncertain date include possible Bronze Age ring-ditches and enclosures located on the heathland and visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs.*

*Roman activity in the area is well documented through chance discovery of stray finds and excavations within and immediately around the village. The distribution of Roman remains would indicate that occupation stretched from the higher ground to the fen-edge. Most evidence seems to be consistent with activities peripheral to main areas of settlement, including a possible villa in close proximity to Burwell Castle.*

*Early Saxon Burwell remains elusive, despite the discovery of an extensive inhumation cemetery north of High Town excavated in the 1920s. The village itself may have Saxon origins, as suggested by the place-name first recorded in 1060, meaning 'spring by the burh'. Excavations at Burwell Castle in 1935 produced evidence for a pre-twelfth century settlement which had been partly obliterated by the construction of the castle. The results from recent archaeological investigations would suggest that this early settlement was probably Saxo-Norman and stretched from Spring Close to the western side of Reach Road.*

*At the time of the Domesday survey in 1086, the Abbot of Ramsey and Count Alan were the major landowners in Burwell, in Staplow Hundred. Five estates are recorded, Ramsey Manor (Hall Farm), Tiptofts (Manor House), Dullinghams (uncertain location), St Omers (Turnbridge Farm) and Castle Martin (Pembroke Farm).*

*It is known that in 1143 King Stephen ordered the building of a series of fortifications and castles in this region to control Geoffrey de Mandeville. Burwell Castle was probably part of this system of defences. Tradition has it that Geoffrey attacked the castle in 1144 and received a fatal wound from which he died at Mildenhall. The excavations carried out in 1935 showed that the castle was never finished, probably due to the death of Geoffrey the Mandeville. The site was later occupied by a building possibly associated with the manor of the Abbots of Ramsey who in 1246 were licensed to erect a chapel at Burwell. The site was abandoned during the fifteenth century.*

*Burwell represents an example of a medieval village which grew through a series of planned additions, High Town, North Street and Newnham, with street patterns reflecting the surrounding field-system. High Town is probably the earliest of the three medieval nuclei, having developed away from the Saxo-Norman settlement, the expansion of which had been brought to a halt by the construction of the castle. The area contained the twelfth century churches of St Mary and St Andrew, located on the opposite sides of High Street. Historical sources for Ramsey Abbey refers to a church in the later tenth century which was probably associated with the Saxo-Norman proto-nucleus and was probably later replaced by the church of St Mary. The settlement stretched along High Street, between the greens at Pound Hill and South Green to the south of St Mary's, with the parallel Mill Lane acting as a back lane to the east. The southern and eastern limits of the settlement were established through archaeological excavations which showed that High Town did not stretch to the south of the church and that the area between Newmarket Road and Mill Lane had been used for clunch extraction from the Roman period. Clunch extraction and lime production for building remained the main non-agricultural activities until recently. High Town was well positioned to exploit the chalkland arable which produced cereals.*

*The settlement at North Street (first mentioned in 1350) developed to the north of High Town. The two settlements were linked by a route-way called The Causeway which probably originated as a headland within the common fields and only became a road when North Street developed as a nucleated settlement. This stretched along North Street on the same alignment as former headlands of the common fields, with narrow street-frontage plots and rear properties extending westwards to the Weirs and eastwards to The Backlane (or Silver Street). Common and private hythes, basins and canals, now built-upon, were probably linked to the rear of some of the properties along the east side of the Weirs for easy access to the network of lodes (High Lode/Burwell Lode, Reach Lode, Monks Lode and Wicken Lode). North Street was probably a planned development created to provide access by water to villagers who were exploiting the fen resources, i.e. wild fowl, fish, sedge, rushes, turf, peat and arable crops from the fens to the village.*

West of the south end of North Street Newnham, referred to in 1440, was probably another planned development. Newnham had three parallel east-west aligned lanes Hythe Lane parallel to the common hythe, Parsonage Lane (established c. 1400) and Dark Lane (named 1671) which provided the main route for wheeled traffic before 1815. These roads were linked together by the north-south aligned trackway known as The Leys, and by Low Road along which the medieval moated sites of St Omer's Manor at Turnbridge Farm and (Ramsey manor?) at Hall Farm were located. The date of Newnham development is uncertain, although the place-name would indicate that it was later than the developments of High Town and North Street. It probably represented an extension of North Street, at the same time connecting the northern and southern nuclei of the village by means of a network of relief streets.

The only medieval extant building in the village is the twelfth century parish church of St Mary which stands in an irregularly shaped churchyard. The church is built of stones and flint rubble and consists of a chancel with crypt, nave with aisles, north and south porches, south-west vestry and tower, the lower two stages of which are twelfth century. The church of St Andrew is no longer extant. It originally stood to the north-east of St Mary's churchyard. In 1743 it was already ruinous. A few decades later the ruins were pulled down, revealing medieval coffins and human bone.

Burwell probably shrunk between the mid fourteenth and mid fifteenth centuries. Following economic recovery and population growth between the middle of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century, new houses were built along the main streets. In New Street, in particular, the re-development of water-borne trade following systematic drainage of the fen translated into the construction of many houses of high quality. By the time of Enclosure in 1812-1817 the village had grown by progressive infilling of the medieval plots. After Enclosure farmhouses were built in High Town and to the south-east of the village on former open-fields. By 1841 building along the Causeway had already begun. By contrast, in Newnham Hythe Lane, Parsonage Lane and Dark Lane, no longer the main route for wheeled traffic after Enclosure, were almost entirely uninhabited, and in the later nineteenth century humble wattle and daub houses were built here. Beyond North Street squatters had built hovels near Goose Hall, west of the Weirs.

Burwell village retained its traditional multi-nucleated and elongated shape up to the Second World War. After the war new development occurred to the west of New Street and High Town, together with infilling along the old roads. The 1970s witnessed expansion to the east and south of the historic village, prompted by a significant increase in the size of the population. Infilling of the post-war development areas continued throughout the following decades.

Very few pre-seventeenth century buildings survive in the village. These include timber-framed and clunch buildings later fronted in brick along High Street and North Street. Several seventeenth and eighteenth century clunch buildings survive at High Town and in Newnham. Along the west side of North

Street stands a line of originally seventeenth century timber-framed and clunch buildings which were extended or cased in brick or clunch in the eighteenth century. The few new houses erected here in the eighteenth century were mostly of clunch dressed or fronted in brick. Most buildings (public and domestic) within the village belong to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and are built of brick and clunch with tiled or slated roofs. These survive in North Street, High Street and along the Causeway. Among the buildings of historic interest are Turnbridge Farm (St Omer's Manor) a two-storey clunch house near the eastern side of the moat which incorporates elements of an earlier building; Isaacson Manor a fourteenth century house which was occupied by the Isaacsons, lords of St Omer's Manor in the eighteenth century; Manor House (Tiptofts Manor?) at the south end of High Town re-built in the seventeenth century as a two-storey timber-framed house with later alterations in the eighteenth; the nineteenth century Pembroke Farm, probably the site of the medieval manor house of John of Castle Martin; Burwell House on the east of North Street probably built by the Dunns in the late eighteenth century and reconstructed in the first half of the nineteenth century; the late sixteenth century Rectory House probably located on the site of the University's Parsonage Farm on Low Road. Industrial/agricultural buildings include two corn windmills on the east side of the village, Steven's Mill in Mill Lane and a mill in Newmarket Road Last worked in the 1950s, Steven's Mill was restored in the 1970s and given statutory protection as a LBII\*. It is a four-storey clunch tower mill built at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The wooden and iron machinery is contemporary with the tower.

Burwell contains one scheduled monument, Burwell Castle (SM 29382) of which earthwork remains survive. Although outside the village envelope, it is worth mentioning Devil's Dyke (SAM 5) which runs between the parishes of Burwell and Swaffham Prior. The village also contains 59 buildings of statutory designation, of which the twelfth century church of St Mary is the earliest extant monument and the only Grade I Listed Building (LBI) in the village. Steven's Mill at Mill Lane is the only Grade II Star Listed Building (LBII\*). The remaining buildings are all listed as Grade II (LBII). The two historic nuclei of High Town and North Street with part of Newnham lie within the village Conservation Areas, as defined in the Local Plan for East Cambridgeshire District Council (Deposit Draft 1997). High Town Conservation Area includes the scheduled earthworks of the castle (which is also a designated County Wildlife Site) and most listed buildings, with the exception of Steven's Mill. New Street Conservation extends to the Weirs and includes most listed buildings. There are no other designations of historical, archaeological or scientific interest within this area.

## **PART I: THE EVIDENCE**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

The parish of Burwell belongs to East Cambridgeshire District, in the eastern quadrant of the County of Cambridgeshire. The modern village is located approximately 16km to the north-east of Cambridge and 6.5 km to the north-west of Newmarket (Suffolk), on the Cambridgeshire-Suffolk border.

Presently, the parish as a whole covers an area of c. 2830ha, having lost in 1961 some 138ha of land on the west side to the newly formed parish of Reach, to the west of Devil's Dyke and Reach Lode. The eastern part of the small hamlet of Reach originally lay in Burwell parish. The north and west sides of the parish are bounded by Wicken Lode and the New River/Monks Lode. The south-eastern corner of Burwell reaches the ancient Icknield Way.

The historic settlement stretches north-south and comprises three main nuclei, High Town at the south end, North Street at the north-east end and Newnham west of the south end of North Street. The village is bounded on the west side by the Weirs, known as Head Lode until the 1670s (Wright 2002, 334), a stream which runs parallel to the village main streets and marks the boundary between the fen and the upland.

The main bedrock geology is Upper Chalk with sand capping on the heath in the south-eastern tip of the parish and drift sand under the fen associated with the Cam Valley. Most of the skirt soil in the fen is marl (Gallois 1981, BGS Sheet 188). The northern part of the parish is occupied by fen where peat formed from the Neolithic period, partly burying earlier prehistoric sites. By the late prehistoric period peat had spread over the marl of the chalky slopes, making the skirtland unsuitable for occupation during the Iron Age and Roman period (Hall 1996).

Part of Burwell Heath reaches a height of over 50m in the southern corner of the parish. The land gently declines on the north and then drops to where the village stretches at an average height of 10m AOD. The land drops further north to 0m in the fen.

### **2 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES**

#### **2.1 Historical Sources**

##### **2.1.1 Primary Sources**

Original documentary archive research is not undertaken as part of this study. For the present report reference is made to secondary sources and, in particular, to the study by A. P. M. Wright 2002 (VCH, Cambridgeshire, Vol. X).

Manorial records (Court Rolls, Rentals, Minutes and Dittos) dating from the late sixteenth century, parish records and census information for 1801-1991 are held at the CRO.

### 2.1.2 Secondary Sources

General outlines of the history of the county and accounts of individual parishes based on documentary sources can be found in the VCH of Cambridgeshire, X volumes and index volumes.

In addition, the RCHM(E) of Cambridgeshire (II volumes) provides detailed accounts and descriptions of extant monuments, earthworks and buildings of historical and architectural interest.

Regional studies concentrate on specific research topics, e.g. place-names (Reaney 1943), history of the religious houses in Cambridgeshire (Haigh 1988), architecture (Pevsner 1970), history of Cambridgeshire (Fox 1923, Taylor 1977; Oosthuizen 1996, Kirby and Oosthuizen (eds.) 2000), and the medieval fenland (Darby 1940, *Id.* 1983).

Local studies include accounts of the history of Burwell by Lucas (1930) and Gathercole (1978).

Historical and archaeological information for the parish is found in the *PCAS* and *TCHAS* series. The excavation reports by Lethbridge (1926, 1928, 1929: Saxon cemetery and 1936: Burwell Castle) are of particular relevance to this study.

## 2.2 The HER

The HER database contains 198 entries for the parish of Burwell, which include finds of all periods.

Prehistoric remains from the village comprise a series of stray finds from the southern and western fringes of the settled area, namely Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic axes (HER 01775B, HER 06477 and HER 02190), a scatter of Mesolithic worked flint (HER 06478) and a Bronze Age hoard (HER 06475).

The Iron Age is poorly represented. A possible Iron Age ditch was excavated to the north of the village recreation ground (HER 06736b/Browne 1977).

Entries for the Roman period include stray finds and excavations within and immediately around the village. Evidence for Roman occupation and a hoard of late Roman bronze vessels (HER 06736/06479/Browne 1977) were uncovered to the north of the village recreation ground. A second nucleus of occupation was excavated at Low Road (HER 11794 and HER 11989). Scatters of pottery (HER 10953 and HER 06807) were recovered during the Fenland Survey (Hall 1996). A quarry pit and building debris were recorded during excavations of the Saxon cemetery to the north of Saxon Drive in the

1920s (HER 06764a/Lethbridge 1929). Finally, residual pottery and building debris were found during excavations of the medieval castle (HER 0175a/Lethbridge 1936). In the are of the castle the HER records scatters of pottery and building debris (HER 04663 and HER 06787), together with stray metalwork (HER 06843 and HER 06768).

Saxon finds from the village include a large inhumation cemetery to the north of Burwell High Tower excavated in the 1920s (HER 06764/Lethbridge 1926; *Id.* 1928). To the south of the cemetery the HER records stray finds of a coin (HER CB14760) and a brooch (HER 06768).

Most entries for the village refer to standing medieval and post-medieval buildings and to areas of visible earthworks.

For the medieval period, besides the twelfth century church of St Mary in High Town (HER 00328), of particular interest are the remains of Burwell Castle (HER 01775) in Spring Close, to the south-west of the church. The surviving earthworks consist of a rectangular moated site with traces of outworks which were excavated by Lethbridge in the 1930s (Lethbridge 1935). Besides the castle there are earthwork remains associated with the following: Burwell Lode at the north-west end of the village (HER 06815); the Causeway north of High Street (HER 06815); the manorial sites at Hall Farm (HER 06863) and Turnbridge Farm/St Omer's Manor (HER 01121) to the west of the village. HER entries for Burwell also describe the site of the 'Priory of St John' (HER 06864) and the site of the former church of St Andrew (HER 06721), to the north-east and north-west of the church of St Mary, respectively.

Entries for the post-medieval period refer to extant buildings, including domestic dwellings, public houses and dovecotes, which are described in the inventory by the RCHM(E) (1972), and corn windmills known from cartographic evidence, one of which (HER 06393) is still extant. The HER also describes occasional stray finds, the site of limekilns and quarries to the west of Isaacson Road (HER 10889) and the results from recent archaeological excavations at Low Road (HER CB14590/ Kenney 1996).

Other HER entries refer to the parish as a whole and, in particular, to prehistoric sites identified through scatters of lithics and through cropmarks visible on aerial photographs. Aerial photographs also show the remains of medieval field-systems. Finally, there are HER entries for post-medieval drainage windmills and pumps across Adventurers' Fen to the north-west of the village.

### **2.3 Cartographic Evidence**

A list of estate maps of Cambridgeshire is provided by Bendall (1992).

Early cartographic evidence for the village is not available.

The first comprehensive and detailed map of the parish is the Enclosure Map of 1812. There is also a later Tithe Map dating to 1841.

Later maps of the village include editions of the Ordnance Survey from the end of the nineteenth century onwards.

All maps referred to above are held at the CRO.

Other cartographic sources for the parish include the following estate maps (in chronological order):

- Map of Newmarket Heath (with Southern part of Burwell Parish), 1768 (CRO TR 274/P3)
- Demesne of the Manor of Burwell Ramsey, 1806 (Public Record Office MR509)
- Estate of the King's most excellent Majesty, 1816 (Public Record Office MPEE80)
- Burwell Heath, 1817 (Pembroke College, Cambridge, Burwell C13)
- Land owned by the Crown and Sir Vincent Cotton, 1821–63, (Public Record Office CRES 2/107)
- Estate at Burwell, 1825 (Queens' College, Cambridge, 355 A21, B21)

## **2.4 Aerial Photographs and Overlays of Aerial Photographs**

The HER has a collection of OS-based maps showing overlays of aerial photographs plotted in the 1980s and digitised in 2001 from research in the CUCAP and NMR collections. The original aerial photographs of the parish were taken in the late 1940s-1980s.

In 1997-1998 Cambridgeshire County Council commissioned an aerial photographic coverage of the whole county. The photographs are available in digital format.

Aerial photographs for Burwell show the earthworks associated with Burwell Castle (HER 01775) and cropmark remains of medieval field-systems (furlong boundaries and ridge-furrow) distributed across the chalk upland on the eastern and southern sides of the village. Other cropmarks include possible Bronze Age ring-ditches and enclosures on the heathland in the southernmost part of the parish. These have been described as 'earthworks' in the inventory published by the RCHM(E) (1972, 40 (122-125)).

## **2.5 Earthworks**

In addition, the village of Burwell contains a wealth of medieval and post-medieval earthwork remains which have also been described by the RCHM(E) (1972).

### **Burwell Castle, HER 01775**

Burwell Castle is located in former pasture known as 'Spring Close' immediately west of the church, and overlooks open ground. In its present form the castle consists of a rectangular moated site with traces of outworks.

Until the 1930s the north-east corner exhibited some remains of rubble walling of a small keep or gatehouse, now destroyed, which was probably intended to control a bridge across the moat. The interior of the moat is 61m by 38m; the height from the base of the ditch ranges from 2,5m to approximately 5m. The entrance appears to be on the south side where a small brook, originally intended to fill the moat, forms the boundary of the site. The presence of low terraces of natural chalk in the ditch found during excavations in the 1930s indicates that the moat was never completed or filled with water (Lethbridge 1936). The areas immediately north and west of the moat are occupied by large spoil heaps which were dug and brought from the moat by way of shallow cuts in the sides of the ditch. Immediately north of the spoil heap on the north side are four (or five) rectangular closes delineated by low banks and shallow ditches and partially overlain by the spoil heaps. These are probably the only visible remains of houses removed to make way for the castle. East and north-east of the moat are slight earthworks which may be the sites of two buildings. North-east and east of the moat are a raised platform and the damaged remains of what is probably a medieval long house. Further east are the remains of a small embanked enclosure truncated by a sloping trackway which leads down into an old quarry. In the north-west corner of the site are two rectangular dry ponds beyond which is a series of undated ditches, banks and ponds extending for about 100m (RCHM(E), 1972, 41 (132)). The site of the castle is scheduled (SM29382).

#### Turnbridge Farm, HER 01121/LB 48953

Turnbridge Farm is located to the west of Low Road. It was probably the site of St Omer's Manor. There are earthwork remains of a small square moat some 140m by 140m which has been almost completely destroyed and filled-in and is now a farmyard. At the time of the survey by the RCHM(E) in 1972 the north-west corner of the moat remained, being some 10m wide by 1m deep. Elsewhere a shallow depression indicated the original outline. The south-west corner was occupied by a pond. There were also a shallow depression on the eastern side and a small ditch on the south. The extant two-storey house near the eastern side of the moat consists of a clunch-built range of the early seventeenth century and a brick range at right angles, possibly of the late seventeenth century with later additions. The clunch range on the north is probably the cross wing of an earlier large house; the brick south range may be a replacement of a former building containing the hall (RCHM(E) 1972, 35 (41)).

#### Hall Farm, HER 01122 and HER 01122a

To the south of Turnbridge Farm is the moated site of Hall Farm. At the time of the survey by the RCHM(E) in 1972 the site comprised two rectangular wet moats some 12m wide, of which the western (?) one was largely intact. The east arm of the eastern moat had already been almost entirely destroyed. Two later rectangular fishponds were constructed near the south side. The moat was surveyed in 1984 by the County Archaeologist. At the time of the survey only the (eastern?) moat was visible. The eastern portion of the site

had been developed, and the north arm of the moat filled-in. The manor house, no longer extant, originally stood in the eastern enclosure. It was a clunch-built and timber-framed two-storey house, the north range of which included the cross-wing of an earlier house (RCHM(E) 1972, 32 (39)).

#### The Causeway, HER 06733

The Causeway stretches between High Town and North Street where it runs parallel to the existing road of the same name. It consists of a low bank 530m long, 8-10m wide and up to 1m high. It probably originated as a headland within the common fields and became a road when North Street developed sometime during the medieval period. It went out of use following enclosure of the commons in 1812-1817 (RCHM(E) 1972, 47 (149)).

#### The Hythe, HER 0640

The Hythe, a navigable ancient common wharf 200m long and up to 20m wide, lay immediately west of Newnham and extended from the Weirs to the north end of Low Road, along the present Hythe Lane (RCHM(E) 1972, 43 (136)). The date of construction of the Hythe and the period of its use are unknown although this wharf was mentioned by Wright 2002, 337). Since the RCHM(E) survey in 1972 the hythe has disappeared following development along Hythe Lane.

#### Burwell Lode, HER 06815

Burwell Lode is first recorded in 1604. It is an artificial watercourse some 4km long and 12m wide which runs in a north-west direction across Burwell Fen from North Street (TL/5855/6780). It then turns sharply almost due west to its junction with Reach Lode c.1km to the south-east of Upware (TL/5475/6930). At its south-east end the lode flows at or slightly below the level of the adjacent fen and there are no retaining banks. About 300m from this end a bank, on the north-east side, gradually rises to 2m above the fen. On the south-west side the lode has no retaining bank for the first 1500m. Thereafter a bank rises to a maximum of 3m above the fen (RCHM(E) 1972 (133)). It replaced a medieval lode further north known as High Lode (Wright 2002, 334).

#### Devil's Dyke/Ditch, HER 07801 (Reach Parish)

Although outside the village envelope, it is worth mentioning Devil's Dyke, an ancient earthwork which marks the boundary between the parishes of Burwell and Swaffham Prior on the south-west. It is the largest and most easterly of the Cambridgeshire 'Anglo-Saxon' dykes, running in a north-west/south-east direction for 12km between the fen edge at Reach and the verge of the wooded clayland west of Wood Ditton. The portion of dyke south of the Swaffham-Burwell road is well preserved. The overall width of the *vallum* and ditch is around 33m, with the ditch 4.5m deep, the bank on the eastern side some 5m above the former ground surface, and the distance from the base of the ditch to the top of the bank 18m. As with the other dykes, it was

strategically positioned across the prehistoric/Roman Icknield Way (modern London-Newmarket Road) c. 2.5km south-west of Newmarket and the parallel Ashwell Street (or Street Way) further west. It was initially believed to be Iron Age in origin, marking the boundary between the territories of the *Iceni* and the *Catuvellauni*. The dyke was investigated by Fox and Lethbridge in the 1920s and 1930s. Early excavations showed the monument to be Saxon, possibly dating to the period of the Heptarchy in the seventh century. More recent investigations of the dykes in the 1990s by the AFU indicated that the ditch was probably post-Roman, having been originally built against Anglo-Saxon immigrants, and later reconstructed during the early Saxon period (Malim *et al.* 1997). The earthwork is presently scheduled (SAM 5).

## **2.6 Archaeological Excavations and Surveys**

The village of Burwell has benefited from a series of antiquarian excavations led by Lethbridge during the 1920s and 1930s.

### Saxon Cemetery (HER 06764 and HER 06764a)

An Anglo-Saxon cemetery was discovered in 1884 during the working of the Victoria Lime Pits, 500m to the north of the church of St Mary. At least 137 inhumations of both sexes and varying ages were found on the site between 1925 and 1931. The majority were unfurnished and uncoffined, having been placed in shallow graves east-west aligned. 12 burials were accompanied by knives and only four were richly furnished. The grave goods mostly consisted of iron chains, bone or bronze pins, iron buckles and beads. Noteworthy objects were a bronze drum-shaped box and a gold disc pendant set with garnets. The cemetery, probably dating from the late sixth and seventh century, was interpreted as being predominantly Christian. The excavator suggested that it lay near the site of St Andrew's church, though the connection is unlikely as the church appears to have been located 400m to the south. The cemetery had been laid out on a Roman site. A (late?) Roman quarry pit contained sherds of pottery, box and roof tiles, burnt stone, animal bones and traces of wood and charcoal, suggesting the presence of a substantial building nearby (Lethbridge 1926; *Id* 1928; *Id* 1929).

### Burwell Castle, Excavation 1935 (HER 01775 and HER 01775a)

Burwell Castle was partly excavated by Lethbridge in 1935. Three distinct periods of use of the site were identified. The earliest evidence was for Roman occupation associated with the presence of a substantial building, possibly a villa. Finds, mostly residual, comprised fragments of tiles, painted wall plaster, a rough cobbled floor, pottery and animal bone. To the north of the moat traces of the outer ends of long closes familiar in deserted sites of medieval settlements were also recorded. At their south ends three of the closes were overlain by the spoil heaps from the moat, suggesting that they were probably the remains of houses removed to make way for the castle. East and north-east of the moat the excavation revealed slight earthworks probably marking the site of two buildings. Sherds of Stamford ware found under the castle were probably associated with this earlier medieval

settlement. Excavations of the castle earthworks (above) showed that its construction had never been completed. Fragments of painted glass and lead *came*, a piece of dressed clunch with a graffito, MARIA, and part of a window frame from the site were interpreted as being associated with a chapel built by the Abbot of Ramsey in 1246 (Lethbridge 1936).

Land North of the Village Recreation Ground, Excavation 1969 (HER 06479, HER 06736, HER 06736a; HER 06736b)

Following the chance discovery of a Roman hoard of at least 15 bronze vessels dating to the fourth century (HER 06479), a brief trial excavation was carried out in 1969 at land to the north of the modern Recreation Ground. The work revealed evidence of late Neolithic-early Bronze Age activity in the form of disturbed deposits of worked flint. In addition, at least two ditch systems were identified, one of which was Iron Age, the other Roman in date. Second to fourth century pottery and building debris in the topsoil pointed to the existence of a Roman occupation site in close proximity (Browne 1977).

Since the introduction of PPG16 there has been extensive archaeological work within the core of the historic settlement.

Land east of Isaacson Road Assessment 1994

An archaeological desktop assessment and a series of geological trial pits at land off Isaacson Road showed that this area had been used for (medieval, post-medieval?) clunch extraction and limekiln activity known from cartographic evidence. The site had been in-filled by over 3m of chalk material (CPM 1994).

95/97, Low Road, Evaluation 1995 (HER 11794, HER 11989)

In 1995 two phases of an archaeological evaluation took place at 95/97 Low Road prior to residential development. A high density of features was recorded at the eastern end of the site, dropping off rapidly to the west. All features were sealed by a thin layer of topsoil between 0.10m and 0.25m thick. They consisted of palisade trenches or gullies on an east-west alignment which did not appear to outline buildings. Several pits of uncertain function were found, as well as a broad, shallow linear feature interpreted as a sunken trackways or holloway, possibly representing the precursor to the present path known as The Leys, immediately to the east of the site. Very few artefacts were recovered from the site. Pottery consisted largely of abraded late Roman sherds and some middle Iron Age sherds. Other finds included burnt flint and animal bone (Kenney 1996a).

106, Low Road, Recording Brief 1996 (HER CB14590)

A recording brief undertaken in 1996 during the excavation of foundation trenches for a bungalow revealed a large ditch of seventeenth century date running along the south edge of the site. It was interpreted as being

associated with the house and moat of Tunbridge Farm which stood on the adjoining property. A pit of the same date was found in the northern part of the site. Several other undated features, including postholes and a slot for a possible sill-beam, were uncovered. More buildings might have existed near the frontage of Low Road, as suggested by the presence of demolition layers. The undated pits were probably quarries for the extraction of clunch known to have taken place on the eastern side of the village. Two pits might have been earlier, possibly dating to the Iron Age (Kenney 1996b).

#### Pembroke Farm, Evaluation 1996

In 1996 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken at land belonging to the nineteenth century Pembroke Farm, on the site of the former medieval manor house of Castle Martin south of St Mary's Church. Despite the high potential for medieval remains, the site produced negative evidence, partly due to the high degree of truncation caused by clunch extraction in the north-eastern corner of the site, and by landscaping associated with the redevelopment of the farm in the nineteenth century. Even allowing for truncation of potential features, absence of medieval and post-medieval remains indicated that the investigated site was on the fringe of the manorial estate and that the medieval manor and associated buildings lay elsewhere (AFU 1996).

#### Mill Lane, Evaluation 2000

In 2000 an evaluation was conducted at the junction between Mill Lane and Green Lane in advance of housing development. A desktop assessment had been produced before work began (Hall 2000). Besides evidence for clunch extraction, the site produced negative evidence (Garrow 2000).

#### Reach Road, Evaluation 2001, Evaluation and Excavation 2002

In 2001 archaeological work began at Land off Reach Road during the construction of a new housing estate. A desktop assessment of the site's archaeological potential had been produced in 2000 (Dickens & Alexander 2000). The site had undergone extensive ground disturbance and levelling, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with the construction of a railway line (including cutting and building of a station) and the construction of a packaging factory in the 1940s. Nonetheless, undisturbed areas contained extensive archaeological remains dating to the Saxo-Norman period and thus closely linked to the medieval settlement centred on the Castle. A buried subsoil layer (former topsoil) was present at 0.30m below the present ground level. Beneath this layer structural postholes, sub-circular pits and ditches of a large field system survived within three undisturbed areas (Areas 1-3) located to the south-east and west of the site, in the southern edge and in the northern end of the modern road through the estate (Macaulay 2001). The evaluation of Areas 1-3 was followed by excavation (Connor, A., forthcoming).

In 2002 the second phase of evaluation was carried out on the site in Area 4, to the west of the 1991 investigation (Connor 2002). Rich archaeological remains were found buried underneath the twentieth century topsoil, although some parts of the area had been deeply truncated and contaminated by recent building activity associated with the former factory and railway line. Finds dating to the Late Saxon and Early Medieval periods were recovered from numerous ditches, pits, postholes and a probable palaeo-channel, showing that the remains discovered in previous archaeological work extended into this area and towards the ancient Fen edge. The earlier phases of Saxo-Norman occupation were characterised by structural remains in the south-west area of the site. During the early medieval period the occupation was characterised by the presence of ditches, possibly representing field or property boundaries coupled with drainage. In addition, two ditches contained prehistoric pottery, one dating to the late Neolithic or earlier Bronze Age and one dating to the late Bronze Age or earlier Iron Age period. These ditches showed no apparent distinction from the late Saxon and medieval one, suggesting that the ditch system found in this area of the site may have had its origins in prehistory and continued to have significance into the middle ages. A crouched burial was also found. Finally, a large channel followed a roughly south-east north-west alignment leading in the approximate direction of the Fen and 'The Weirs'. This channel was probably still open in the middle ages as evidenced by the presence of very abraded and leached medieval pottery from its fill. Waterlogged deposits were also preserved within this feature (Connor 2002).

#### 6, High Street, Evaluation 2002

In 2002 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land to the east of no. 6 High Street formerly known as 'The Old Manor House' or 'Isaacsons' Manor, dating from the early to mid fourteenth century. The evaluation revealed nineteenth century deposits and a pit of the same period below a thick layer of re-deposited topsoil 0.60m deep. No remains relating to the nearby fourteenth century house were detected. Absence of pre-nineteenth century archaeological deposits suggested that the area had been a yard or garden during most of its history (Hatton 2002).

#### Early Learners Centre, Evaluation 2003

In 2003 an archaeological evaluation was carried out at Burwell Primary School in advance of the construction of an Early Learners Centre close to the Primary School building. The evaluation produced negative evidence for past activity. Since the site was undisturbed, absence of archaeological features was interpreted as evidence for absence of occupation within the development area (Atkins 2003).

#### The Fenland Survey

During the Fenland survey a few prehistoric sites dating to the Mesolithic and Iron Age periods were identified along the fen-edge. The survey did not cover the highland as, by the time of the Fenland survey, this part of the parish had

already been included in the inventory of prehistoric monuments published by the RCHM(E) in 1972 (Hall 1996).

### **3 CONSERVATION AREAS AND EXISTING DESIGNATIONS**

#### **3.1 Scheduled Monuments**

The village of Burwell contains one scheduled monument, Burwell Castle (SM 29382/HER 01775) of which earthwork remains survive. Part of the site was excavated by Lethbridge (1936). A full description of the remains is contained in the RCHM(E) inventory (1972, 41-42 (132)).

Although outside the village envelope, it is worth mentioning Devil's Dyke (SAM 5), of possible Saxon origin, which defines the boundary between the parishes of Burwell and Swaffham Prior.

#### **3.2 Listed Buildings**

Details of the listed building are found in *Appendix 1*.

The village contains 59 buildings of statutory designation, of which the twelfth century church of St Mary (LB 48937) is the earliest extant monument and the only Grade I Listed Building (LBI) in the village.

There is also a Grade II Star Listed Building (LBII\*), the early nineteenth century mill known as Steven's Mill at Mill Lane (LB 48963). Formerly listed Grade II, it was upgraded in 1986.

The remaining buildings are all listed as Grade II (LBII).

Very few pre-seventeenth century buildings survive in the village. These include timber-framed and clunch buildings later fronted in brick along High Street and North Street. Several seventeenth and eighteenth century clunch buildings survive at High Town and in Newnham. Along the west side of North Street stands a line of originally seventeenth century timber-framed and clunch buildings which were extended or cased in brick or clunch in the eighteenth century. The few new houses erected here in the eighteenth century were mostly of clunch dressed or fronted in brick. Most listed buildings within the village belong to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and are built of brick and clunch with tiled or slated roofs. These survive in North Street, High Street and along the Causeway.

#### **3.3 Conservation Areas and Other Designations**

The two historic nuclei of High Town and North Street with part of Newnham lie within the village Conservation Areas, as defined in the Local Plan for East Cambridgeshire District Council (Deposit Draft 1997).

The southernmost of the two areas include the historic nucleus of High Town, together with the earthwork remains of the castle (SM 29382) which is also a designated County Wildlife Site. Besides the site of the castle, High Town Conservation Area includes most listed buildings of historical and architectural interest, with the exception of Steven's Mill (LB 48963).

The Conservation Area on the north includes the northern edge of Newnham and North Street. It extends to the Weirs and includes most listed buildings. There are no other designations of historical, archaeological or scientific interest within this area.

A County Wildlife Site is located off Mill Lane, less than 200m to the east of the High Town Conservation Area. Part of the site was recently developed. Immediately to the west of the area allocated for future Employment/Business Use in the southernmost fringe of the village there is another County Wildlife Site. Finally, the highland to the east of the village limit is a Nature Conservation Area.

Although outside the present village envelope, Devil's Dyke (SAM 5) is a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **4.1 Prehistoric**

Given the high density of prehistoric sites in the parish (*Appendix 2*), reference to the HER entries has been limited to finds from the village.

The following account is based on Hall (1996).

Burwell together with Fordham, Chippenham, Snailwell, Isleham, Kennet, Reach and Swaffham Prior in Cambridgeshire forms part of the rich prehistoric landscape that stretches across the Suffolk and Norfolk borders.

Early prehistoric activity from the Mesolithic period is documented by stray finds and finds scatters, namely lithic implements distributed along the chalk slopes of the fen-edge and on outcrops of light sandy soil in the fen. Prehistoric remains from the village comprise a series of stray finds from the southern and western fringes of the village, namely Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic axes (HER 01775B, HER 06477 and HER 02190), a scatter of Mesolithic worked flint (HER 06478) and a Bronze Age hoard (HER 06475). Prehistoric activity was also identified during excavations off Reach Road where evidence emerged for late Neolithic/earlier Bronze Age and late Bronze Age/earlier Iron Age field systems (Connor 2002).

Very little is known of the Iron Age period. Besides sherds of Iron Age pottery lying astride the parishes of Burwell and Swaffham, no sites were uncovered during the Fenland Survey (Hall 1996, 102). Excavations conducted to the

north of the village recreation ground produced evidence for a ditch which was probably part of a field system (HER 06736b/Browne 1977).

Prehistoric finds of uncertain date include possible Bronze Age ring-ditches and enclosures visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs. These are located on the heathland in the southernmost part of the parish.

## **4.2 Roman**

Roman activity in the area is well documented through chance discovery of stray finds and excavations within and immediately around the village. The distribution of Roman remains would indicate that occupation stretched from the higher ground to the fen-edge. Excavations to the north of the village recreation ground uncovered evidence for a settlement and a hoard of late Roman bronze vessels (HER 06736/06479/Browne 1977). A second nucleus of occupation was uncovered at Low Road during evaluations in the mid 1990s (HER 11794 and HER 11989). Immediately to the north and to the south of the investigated areas scatters of pottery (HER 10953 and HER 06807) recovered during the Fenland Survey (Hall 1996) confirmed the presence of a settlement at this location. Remains consistent with settlement were recorded to the north of Saxon Drive during the excavation of the Saxon cemetery by Lethbridge in the 1920s (HER 06764a/Lethbridge 1930). Finally, excavations at Burwell Castle in the 1930s produced residual pottery and building debris consistent with the presence of a Roman villa underneath the medieval castle (HER 0175a/Lethbridge 1936). Further to the south scatters of pottery and building debris (HER 04663 and HER 06787), together with stray metalwork (HER 06843 and HER 06768) might have been associated with this villa site.

## **4.3 Saxon**

Early Saxon Burwell remains elusive, despite the discovery of an extensive inhumation cemetery north of High Town (Lethbridge 1926; *Id.* 1928), and the possible location of Staplow Hundred meeting place (Meaney, 1994).

The village itself may have Saxon origins, as suggested by the self-explanatory place-name first recorded in 1060, meaning 'spring by the *burh*' (Reaney 1943, 187-188). It has been suggested that the name might derive from a Saxon burgh on the same site as the twelfth century castle near Spring Close, west of the church (Wright 2002, 334). Excavations at Burwell Castle (Lethbridge 1936) failed to produce evidence for an earlier fortification. However, evidence emerged for a pre-twelfth century settlement which had been partly obliterated by the construction of the castle. Recent excavations to the south-west of the site of the castle indicated that this Saxo-Norman nucleus of settlement stretched from Spring Close to the western side of Reach Road (Macaulay 2001; Connor 2002). Stray metal finds in the area (HER 06768A: coin and HER CB14760: brooch) further support Saxon occupation in this part of the village.

## **4.4 Medieval**

Unless otherwise cited, the content of this paragraph is drawn upon Wright (2002).

At the time of the Domesday survey in 1086, the major landowners in Burwell, in Staplow Hundred, were the Abbot of Ramsey and Count Alan. In addition, the King and the Nuns of Chatteris Church (Morris 1981, 11.2) each held ½ hide.

### **4.4.1 Manors**

#### **Ramsey's Manor**

In the 940s Edwin son of Othwulf gave Oda, archbishop of Canterbury, land at Burwell. Around 970 Oda's kinsman Oswald, then bishop of Worcester, gave it to Ramsey Abbey upon its foundation. The foundation was confirmed by King Edgar who granted further land to the abbey. At the time of the Domesday survey the Abbott of Ramsey held 10 hides and 1 virgate, and land for 16 ploughs. In lordship there were 3 hides and 40 acres and 4 ploughs, 42 villeins with 12 ploughs, 8 servi, meadow for 10 ploughs, pasture for the village flock and 2 mills rendering 6s 8d (Morris 1981, 7.9). The manor remained with Ramsey until the dissolution of the abbey in 1538.

According to Wright (2002), the manorial farmstead was probably located on the same site as the present Hall Farm, formerly Burwell Hall (HER 01122; LB 48927; RCHM(E) 1972, 32 (39)). In 1972 the building, no longer extant, retained at its north end the timber-framed cross wing from the south range of a medieval building which was extended southwards in the seventeenth century. In the RCHM(E) inventory (1972, 31 (31)) the site of the manor house is placed further to the south east, at No. 37, High Street. This is the address of a mid eighteenth century building located at the junction between High Street and Dark Lane. According to Haigh (1988, 4-5), the original manor of the Abbots of Ramsey was located on the site of the castle which would, therefore, represent a fortified manor. The manor was abandoned in the fifteenth century and probably transferred to Parsonage Farm.

#### **Tiptofts**

The Domesday Book (1086) records that Alan held 2 1/2 hides from Count Alan, land for 5 ploughs with 2 in lordship. There were 4 villeins with 3 ploughs, 4 servi, 2 mills at 6s 8d, meadow for 3 ploughs and pasture for the village flock (Morris 1981, 14.69). This fee was probably Tiptofts Manor which was acquired by the Tybotot (Tiptoft) family in the thirteenth century.

According to Wright (2002) the manorial farmstead mentioned c. 1300 was probably located on the same site as the extant Manor House at the south end of High Town (LB 48956). It was re-built in the seventeenth century as a two-storey timber-framed house with later alterations in the eighteenth century (RCHM(E) 1927, 29 (6)).

## **Dullinghams**

In the Domesday Book Geoffrey held 1 hide and 1 virgate from Count Alan, land for 2 ploughs, in lordship. There were 3 villeins and 2 servi, meadow for 1 plough and pasture for the village flock (Morris 1981, 14.70). This Richmond fee was probably the manor acquired by the Dullinghams at the beginning of the fourteenth century. From 1507 it was held of the honour of Richmond by Ely priory until its dissolution in 1539.

About 1500 Dullinghams' manor house stood somewhere east of North Street. It is no longer extant.

## **St Omers**

St Omer's estate probably derived from one or more of the large freeholds held of Ramsey manor. This is probably the estate held by Hardwin of Scales from the King in 1086. According to the Domesday Book, in Staploe Hundred (at Burwell) Hardwin possessed ½ hide, land for 4 oxen and meadow (Morris 1981, 24[26].2). In the fourteenth century the manor belonged to the de St Omers. In the early fifteenth century Catherine, widow of the De Burgh, gave the manor to endow her chantry in Burrough Green Church. The chantry retained the manor until the Dissolution.

According to the RCHM(E) inventory (1972, 35 (41)) the original St Omer's manor house was located on the site of the seventeenth century Turnbridge Farm (HER 01121, LB 48953).

## **Castle Martin (Pembroke)**

A holding acquired in 1342 by John of Castle Martin may have been the source of Castle Martin estate. The estate was given to Pembroke College, Cambridge, who retained it until the middle of the nineteenth century.

The manor house of Castle Martin was probably located on the same site as the nineteenth century Pembroke Farm (HER 06493, RCHM(E), 1972, 30 (14)).

### **4.4.2 Burwell Castle**

It is known that in 1143 Stephen ordered the building of a series of fortifications and castles in this region to control Geoffrey de Mandeville. Burwell Castle (HER 01775) was probably part of this system of defences. Tradition has it that Geoffrey attacked the castle in 1144 and received a fatal wound from which he died at Mildenhall in 1144 (*Chronicon Abbatiae Ramesiensis*, Rolls Series, 83, 331). It was formerly believed that the platform in the moat and the cuts through its sides were remains of siege works connected with this attack. However, excavations carried out by Lethbridge (1936) showed that the castle was never finished, as the moat had been only partly dug out and large spoil heaps were still piled outside the

ditch on the north and west sides. The death of Geoffrey the Mandeville had probably made the completion of the castle unnecessary. The 1935 excavations also confirmed that very little building had been completed when the attack came. The curtain wall had been carried a little way round the eastern and southern sides and a small gatehouse had been begun. The site was later occupied by a building possibly associated with the Abbot of Ramsey who in 1246 was licensed to erect a chapel on his manor at Burwell (RCHM(E) 1972, 41-42 (132)). The site was abandoned during the fifteenth century.

#### 4.3.4 The Churches

From the twelfth century until after 1550 Burwell had two churches, both located in High Town. St Andrew's on the east side of High Street was appropriated by 1280. St Mary's to the west remained a rectory until its appropriation in 1544 and was thereafter a vicarage.

##### *St Andrew's*

After 1200 St Andrew's passed to the hospital of the priory at Fordham. Following the Dissolution, the impropriate rectory was purchased in the mid seventeenth century for Cambridge University already holding St Mary's rectory. The two rectories were leased beneficially and sublet together.

A church of St Andrew is mentioned by c. 1170. It appears to have originally stood to the north-east of St Mary's churchyard (HER 06721). In 1743 it was already ruinous. A few decades later the ruins were pulled down, revealing medieval coffins and human bone. Fragments of carved stone were found during construction of the church girls' school in the mid nineteenth century. Some of the medieval materials were employed in the construction of the modern St Andrew's church which is located at the northern junction of North Street and Silver Street.

##### *St Mary's*

According to the Ramsey Chronicon Aelfgar had given a church and his Burwell estate to Ramsey Abbey in the 990s. Ramsey regularly presented to the rectory of the later church of St Mary until the dissolution of the abbey in the 1530s.

The Parish Church of St Mary (HER 00328; LB 48937) consists of a chancel with crypt, nave with aisles, north and south porches, west tower and south-west vestry. The walls are of stones and flint rubble, with limestone dressing; the roofs are covered with lead and tiles. The earliest parts of the fabric are the lower two stages of the tower which are twelfth century. In the fourteenth century a south aisle was built or partly built of which only the western section survives. In the fifteenth century, a new nave and chancel were started, the tower heightened and a vaulted undercroft built beneath the high altar. Considerable restoration was undertaken in the course of the nineteenth century (Pevsner 1954, 310).

In 1492 Burwell had a guildhall located on the north-east side of St Mary's graveyard. It was used for various purposes, including charity, until its demolition in the 1860s.

### *The Priory*

Pevsner (1970, 312) has been suggested that Isaacson Manor (HER 06808, LB 48942) located at No. 6, High Street was the site of a priory dedicated to St John, confusing the site with that at Burwell, Lincolnshire. The OS Map of 1886 describes the site of a priory (HER 06864) on the site of Parsonage Farm, the west of Low Road. However, there is no evidence that a priory ever existed at Burwell.

### 4.3.4 The Settlement

Burwell represents an example of medieval village which grew through a series of planned additions with street patterns reflecting the surrounding field-system.

The earliest evidence for occupation at Burwell has been found in the area of the castle where a Saxo-Norman settlement appears to have stretched from Spring Close (Lethbridge 1936) to Reach Road (Macaulay 2001; Connor 2002). The Ramsey Chronicon refers to a church in the later tenth century, possibly a wooden precursor of the twelfth century parish church of St Mary. St Mary's stands in the southern part of an irregularly shaped churchyard enclosed by High Street on the east side, and by the irregular course of Mandeville on the west.

By the twelfth century the village had shifted (or shrunken) from the earlier Saxo-Norman location, stretching along High Street to the east of St Mary's church. The construction of the castle (HER 01775/SM29382) during the Anarchy period had obliterated parts of the earlier settlement (Lethbridge 1936), affecting the street layout and, in particular, Mandeville, to the west of the church.

In the medieval period there were three main areas of settlement, High Town at the south end of the modern village, North Street and Newnham to the west of the southern end of North Street. High Town is probably the earliest of the three medieval nuclei, having developed away from the Saxo-Norman settlement the expansion of which had been brought to a halt by the construction of the castle. It stretched along High Street, with the parallel Mill Lane acting as a back lane to the east. The area contained the twelfth century church of St Mary (HER 00328/LB 48937), which probably replaced the church of the Saxo-Norman proto-nucleus, and the twelfth century church of St Andrew (HER 06721), possibly associated with the medieval, post-Anarchy, development. The two buildings were located on opposite sides of High Street. High Town stretched between Pound Hill (RCHM 1972, 18), the site of the north green (Wright 2002, 337), and the Church of St Mary to the south of which was another green (Map of Burwell Ramsey estate, 1806),

referred to as South Green in 1320. The settlement does not appear to have expanded beyond the church, as suggested by a recent archaeological investigation a Pembroke Farm, which produced negative evidence for medieval occupation (AFU 1996). The eastern limit of the settlement was established through past and recent archaeological excavations conducted in the area between Mill Lane, Newmarket Road and Isaacson Road (Lethbridge 1929; 2000; CPM 1994; Garrow 2002). These excavations showed that the area between Newmarket Road and Mill Lane had been used for clunch extraction from the Roman period.

The settlement at North Street (named c. 1350) developed to the north of High Town. The two settlements were linked by a route-way called The Causeway (HER 6733) which probably originated as a headland within the common fields and only became a road when North Street developed (RCHM 1972, 47). The Causeway is mentioned in 1575 and was still grazed by cattle in the 1640s (Wright 2002, 337). North Street was probably a planned settlement created to provide access by water to villagers who were exploiting the fen resources. The site stretched along North Street on the same alignment as former headlands of the common fields, with narrow street-frontage plots (Enclosure Map 1812) and rear properties extending westwards to the Weirs. Common and private hithes, basins and canals were probably linked to the rear of some of these properties for easy access to the network of lodes across the fen. To the east of North Street the plots stretched to The Backlane (or Silver Street after 1840). The date of development at North Street is uncertain. The author of this report would suggest that as a planned settlement it was created sometime during the thirteenth century. Reference to the grant of a market and two fairs to Robert Tybotot in 1277 could indicate that the village was, or was about to become, a potential centre of trade based on the exploitation of the fen resources and on extraction of clunch for building. Economic factors would have therefore triggered the planned development of North Street under the aegis of one of the local major landowners. It is also possible that the new development was encouraged by the Abbots of Ramsey who were also major landowners at Burwell until the Dissolution.

West of the south end of North Street Newnham, referred to in 1440, was probably another planned development, as suggested by the regular layout of lanes (RCHM(E) 1972, 18). Newnham had three parallel east-west aligned lanes which were almost entirely uninhabited by the 1840s (Tithe Map), i.e. Hythe Lane (named 1860) parallel to the common hythe, Parsonage Lane (established c. 1400) and Dark Lane (named 1671) which provided the main route for wheeled traffic before 1815. These roads were linked together by the north-south aligned trackway known as The Leys, and by Low Road along which the medieval manorial sites of St Omer's Manor at Turnbridge Farm (HER 01121) and (Ramsey manor?) at Hall Farm further south (HER 01122) were located. The date of Newnham development is uncertain, although the place-name would indicate that it was later than the developments of High Town and North Street. It probably represented an extension of North Street, at the same time connecting the northern and southern nuclei of the village by means of a network of relief streets.

To the south and east of the village the boundaries of the medieval fields are visible as large linear earthworks and cropmarks (ridge-furrow systems and headlands) that form a network on the chalk slopes based on the Devils' Dyke. The pattern suggests that the fields were part of a planned operation and not the result of piecemeal assarting (Hall 1996, 107).

The only medieval extant building in the village is the twelfth century parish church of St Mary which has been described above.

#### 4.3.5 Transport and Waterways

The medieval fenland of Burwell was dominated by lodes, a network of natural watercourses and artificial canals linking all the major *vills* (territorial units corresponding to modern townships or civil parishes) and religious foundations, including the abbey at Ramsey who owned land at Burwell. It is known that in the fourteenth and fifteenth century the fen waterways carried corn from Ramsey's Manor to the abbey (Wright 2002, 347). The date of construction of the lodes is uncertain, though absence of Roman finds at their landward ends and the connection with the early religious houses in the fenland would point to a late Saxon or early medieval origin. The main purpose of the lodes was probably water management to prevent flooding of the common meadows. They also represented communication and transport routes through the fen.

Among the main lodes were Burwell Lode (HER 06815), Reach Lode, Monks Lode HER 07112 and Wicken Lode. Until the mid seventeenth century the name Burwell Lode applied to a different and earlier watercourse (High Lode), probably also artificial, which was still known as Old Lode in the mid nineteenth century. This earlier lode ran from the fen edge south-west of Goose Hall, along the line of the present ditch called Black Lake (RCHM(E) 1972, 42 (133)). Monk's Lode/New River, a continuous watercourse nearly 6km long, marks the northern boundary of Burwell parish. The lode runs from its junction with Wicken Lode towards the north-east corner of the parish. At its east end is known as New River. This was almost certainly an eighteenth century cut to divert the Landwade Brook from that part of the fens known as the Broads, and to drain the Adventurers' Lands to the south-west (RCHM(E) 1972, 43 (135)). Wicken Lode is first recorded in 1636, although its construction is probably much earlier. It is an artificial watercourse over 2km long, being the boundary between Wicken and Burwell parishes. It links Reach Lode and Monk's Lode (RCHM(E) 1972, 42 (134)).

Within the village narrow watercourses extended from the Weirs towards, or close up to, the barns and farm buildings on the west side of the village. These canals were probably used as access ways for punts or small boats bringing sedge, rushes, turf, peat and arable crops from the fens to the village. The date of their construction is uncertain. The historic sources record fishing in the fen, possibly including mill sluices, lodes and canals, and the construction of boats at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Some of these canals might have started as natural watercourses. For instance,

excavations off Reach Road produced evidence for a large palaeo-channel on a south-east/north-west alignment leading in the direction of the Fen and 'The Weirs'. This channel was probably still open in the middle ages as suggested by the presence of very abraded and leached medieval pottery (Connor 2002).

The network of land roads was dominated by the ancient routes across the Devil's Dyke (including the Icknield Way and Ashwell Street across the southern heath) and by fieldways which linked Burwell with the surrounding villages. Among them were New Market and Swaffham Ways running from the south of High Town, and Ness (Fordham Way) running from North Street. Their course was maintained after enclosure in 1812.

#### 4.3.6 The Economy

##### *Drainage*

During the medieval period drainage of the fen was piecemeal. There is some evidence that parts of Burwell Fen close to the village were enclosed during the medieval period (HER 06828). A reference to ditches in *Le Brunde Fen* in 1294 may refer to the Broads in the north-east of the parish. The Broads are also mentioned in 1398-1399 but their condition is not specified. In addition, the fact that certain fen-edge lands were apparently always titheable, unlike the rest of the fen in the parish, may indicate that they were drained and enclosed in the medieval period (Tithe Map 1841).

##### *Agriculture and Fen Activities*

The bulk of the medieval economy was dominated by agricultural produce, and in particular by cereals. The open-field arable was subjected to a triennial rotation which included winter wheat and rye, and spring barley and dredge. By the late sixteenth century the heath was divided into sheepwalks which belonged to the larger holdings. To the north and east of the village lay the fen where meadow and pasture were regulated by common rights until the seventeenth century. Drainage for land reclamation only played a minor role, except for very small enclosures along the northern fen edge. One of the characteristic occupations in the fenland was cutting of turf and sedge which continued until the nineteenth century (Darby 1940). Fishing was also an important part of the fen economy until recently. The size of nets was controlled in the fourteenth and sixteenth century.

##### *Craft and Trade*

The main non-agricultural activity was clunch extraction and lime production for building. Stone from Burwell was used in the castle and in many collages in Cambridge. In the fourteenth century masons from Burwell were working at Ely cathedral and Windsor Castle. A clunch quarry belonged to Ramsey abbey in the late fourteenth century. A major quarry site depicted on the OS Map of 1886 was located to the east of Mill Lane. The quarry area stretched from the junction of Mill Lane and Newmarket Road to the junction of Mill

Lane and Isaacson Road. Archaeological evidence suggests that clunch extraction in this area continued from the Roman period up to the 1970s (Lethbridge 1929; CPM 1994; Garrow 2002).

The sources record the grant of a weekly market and two annual fairs to Robert Tybotot on his manor. These apparently came to nothing. Besides clunch extraction and lime burning, other medieval trades and crafts in the village probably included stone carving, roof thatching and milling. There are records of watermills and windmills at Burwell as early as 1086. The Domesday Book records that Richmond and Ramsey Manors each had two watermills. Windmills are recorded throughout the medieval period.

#### 4.3.7 Population

The Domesday Book records 42 villeins and 14 servi (Morris 1981). By 1279 (*Rot. Hund*) there were approximately 175 tenants. The Lay Subsidy Roll of 1327 states that tax was levied on 66 villagers. In 1377 some 460 holders paid the poll tax (East Anglian) (Wright 2002, 422). The population probably declined between the fourteenth and fifteenth century due to epidemics and famine.

### 4.5 Post-medieval

Unless otherwise cited, the content of this paragraph is drawn upon Wright (2002).

#### 4.5.1 The Manors

##### **Ramsey's Manor**

After the dissolution of Ramsey Abbey the manor was initially leased to local families. Throughout the post-medieval period the estate was enlarged with the acquisition of farmland (including Hall Farm). In 1961 the crown sold all its farmland to the County Council.

##### **Tiptofts**

During the post-medieval period the manor had many owners, including the Lovells, Charles Seymour duke of Somerset and the Harwoods in the nineteenth century.

##### **Dullingham**

After the dissolution of Ely priory the manor was granted to the North family who leased it to local men. It later belonged to the Duke of Somerset who sold it to the Harwood with Tiptofts with which it descended.

## **St Omers**

After the dissolution of the chantry of Burrough Green church in 1547, the Crown sold St Omer's estate. It had several owners until it was acquired by the Isaacson at the beginning of the eighteenth century who moved to a fourteenth century house to the south of High Town, at No. 6 High Street (HER 06808; LB 48942). In 1813 the lordship was bought by the Harwoods and descended thereafter with Tiptofts and Dullinghams.

## **Dunn's Estate**

Salisbury Dunn who from 1780 held the rectories of both St Mary and St Andrew on lease created a large estate that passed to Edward Ball by marriage in 1870.

Burwell House (HER 06481, RCHM(E) (74)) on the east of North Street was probably built by the Dunns in the late eighteenth century and reconstructed in the first half of the nineteenth century.

### **4.4.3 The Churches**

#### *St Andrew's*

The church building was already ruinous by the mid eighteenth century. During its demolition in 1772 stone coffins and human remains were uncovered. Carved stonework found during the construction of the girls' school in the mid nineteenth century was incorporated in the new church of St Andrew which was built in 1863 in North Street.

#### *St Mary's*

After the dissolution of Ramsey Abbey the advowson of St Mary's were granted to Cambridge University. The Rectory was probably located on the site of the University's Parsonage Farm on Low Road. The University sold the decayed Parsonage Farm to the Council in the 1960s.

The late sixteenth century rectory house incorporated a sixteenth century clunch walled two-storey building. A now partly derelict medieval tithe barn, one of two mentioned in 1628, was attached to it. It was altered during the eighteenth century (LB 48954; RCHM(E) 1972, 32 (40)). East of the house is a long range of sixteenth century brick and clunch two-storey outbuildings which were originally timber-framed. It has been suggested that the tithe barn originally belonged to Ramsey manor house which had replaced that on the site of the castle sometime after the fourteenth century (Haigh 1988, 5).

### **4.4.4 The Settlement**

Burwell probably shrank between the mid fourteenth and mid fifteenth centuries. Following economic recovery and population growth from the middle of the sixteenth century, new houses were built along the main streets.

In New Street, in particular, the development of water-borne trade translated into the construction of many houses of high quality. By the time of the Enclosure (Maps of 1812) the village had grown by progressive infilling of the medieval plots. After Enclosure farmhouses were built in High Town and to the south-east of the village on former open-fields. By 1841 (Tithe Map) building along the Causeway had already begun. By contrast, in Newnham Hithe Lane, Parsonage Lane and Dark Lane, no longer the main route for wheeled traffic after Enclosure, were almost entirely uninhabited, and in the later nineteenth century (OS Map 1886) humble wattle and daub houses were built here. Beyond North Street squatters fenmen had built hovels near Goose Hall, west of the Weirs (Tithe map 1841).

Late editions of the OS Maps up to the 1950s show that Burwell village retained its traditional multi-nucleated and elongated shape up to the Second World War. After the war new development occurred to the west of New Street and High Town, together with infilling along the old roads. The 1970s witnessed expansion to the east and south of the historic village. Infilling of the post-war development areas continued throughout the following decades.

Very few pre-seventeenth century buildings survive in the village. These include timber-framed and clunch buildings later fronted in brick along High Street and North Street. Several seventeenth and eighteenth century clunch buildings survive at High Town and in Newnham. Along the west side of North Street stands a line of originally seventeenth century timber-framed and clunch buildings which were extended or cased in brick or clunch in the eighteenth century. The few new houses erected here in the eighteenth century were mostly of clunch dressed or fronted in brick. Most buildings within the village belong to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and are built of brick and clunch with tiled or slated roofs. These survive in North Street, High Street and along the Causeway.

Turnbridge Farm (St Omer's Manor?) (HER 01121/LB 48953), a two-storey clunch house near the eastern side of the moat incorporates elements of an earlier building which has been associated with St Omer's Manor House.

Isaacson Manor (HER 06808, LB 48942) is a fourteenth century house located at No. 6, High Street. From the eighteenth century it was occupied by the Isaacsons, by then lords of St Omer's Manor. Pevsner (1970, 312) claimed that there was a priory dedicated to St John here. According to the RCHME(1972, 26-28 (5)), this house belonged to the Knights Hospitallers. However, there is no evidence for Knights Hospitallers at Burwell. Therefore, if this house belonged to one of the monastic houses who held land in Burwell, Ely (or Ramsey) would be more likely candidates (Haigh 1988, 4).

Manor House (Tiptofts Manor?) at the south end of High Town (LB 48956) was re-built in the seventeenth century as a two-storey timber-framed house with later alterations in the eighteenth century (RCHM(E) 1927, 29 (6)).

The nineteenth century Pembroke Farm (Castle Martin?) was probably the site of the medieval manor house of John of Castle Martin (HER 06493, RCHM(E), 1972, 30 (14)).

Burwell House (Dunn's estate?) (HER06481, RCHM(E) (74)) on the east of North Street was probably built by the Dunns in the late eighteenth century and reconstructed in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The late sixteenth century Rectory house was probably located on the site of the University's Parsonage Farm on Low Road (LB 48954).

#### 4.4.5 Transport and Waterways

The existing Burwell Lode had been cut by 1685. The work was probably carried out by the Bedford Level Commissioners in the 1650s at the same time as the new Reach Lode was cut. Major alterations were made to it in the second half of the nineteenth century, when the north-west part of the Lode across Adventurers' Fen was re-cut (by the Burwell Drainage Commission?) to the existing two straight alignments, replacing the older, slightly curved, line.

Common and private basins and canals (HER 06829) extended from the Weirs in an east direction towards the houses on the west side of North Street. Most of them have been partly filled in, and it is difficult to ascertain their original form. Their date is unknown. Many of them were probably (re-)built in the sixteenth-early seventeenth century in association with the development of water-borne trade in Newnham. Those lying south of the Hythe were out of use by 1841 (Tithe Map) by which date there was no access for boats beyond this point. Eighteen canals and five basins were still visible at the time of the survey by the RCHM(E) in 1972. The two best-preserved basins were located near the end of Burwell Lode. The northernmost one was known as 'The Slip'. Traditionally associated with barge building, in the mid nineteenth century The Slip was a coal wharf.

During the seventeenth century most established fieldways were turnpiked.

From the 1880s Burwell had a railway station south of high Town on the Cambridge-Mildenhall line. It was closed to passengers in the late 1960s.

#### 4.4.6 The Economy

##### *Enclosure and Drainage*

During the medieval period the northern part of the parish was largely occupied by marshes used as common pasture. The fen also produced sedge to cut for fodder and turf for fuel.

Following systematic drainage of the Bedford Level from the middle of the seventeenth century large areas of the fens were progressively divided and allotted. Although they were formally held in severalty, the fens were not

cultivated or even converted to regular pasture until the nineteenth century. The largest drainage scheme was applied to Adventurers' Lands (HER 06827) which comprised 250ha of fen bounded by Reach and Wicken Lodes and by the present Drainer's Ditch, in the north-west corner of the parish. The boundaries and internal divisions of the allotments still survive. The land was probably drained by gravity into the adjacent lodes (RCHM(E) 1972, 43 (138)). The construction of the Steam Engine and Engine Drain (HER 06821) by the Burwell Drainage Commissioners in 1841-1842 proved insufficient for draining and low-lying Adventurers' Lands in the angle between Reach and Wicken Lodes, much of this area being lower than the Engine Drain. As a result, individual farmers erected a series of small wind pumps to drain single fields or groups of fields by lifting water into the Engine Drain or other main ditches. Many of the pumps were inadequate and survived only a short time. Little is known of them, but the sites of eight of them are listed. They were apparently erected after 1841 and some may have been built in the late nineteenth century or even later. All were derelict or destroyed by the 1940s (RCHM(E) 1972, 45 (139-147)). Remains of these windpumps survive in Adventurers' Fen in the form of circular mounds/platforms (HER 06625, 06649, 06650, 06652, 06653, 06805, 06816, 06819, 06821). Another windpump in the same location is known through cartographic evidence (HER 06827). As late as 1800 flooding was still a problem, mainly due to poor maintenance of the drainage channels.

### *Agriculture*

The open fields of the parish were finally enclosed under the General Enclosure Act of 1814. Parliamentary enclosure did not affect the heath or the fen. The main effect of enclosure resulted in the economic contrast between the south of the parish mostly occupied by large farms and the fen with its isolated smallholders and labourers. The arable land still produced cereals. During the eighteenth and nineteenth century root vegetables were also introduced. Besides the meadows, and small portions of arable during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the fen still provided supplementary resources in the form of turf, sedge, fish and wildfowl. Renewed flooding due to imperfect drainage reduced productivity. By the early twentieth century sheep-flocks were no longer kept. Orchards were introduced as commercial crops at the beginning of the twentieth century, their number having declined after the Second World War.

Post-medieval windmills for corn (HER 06495 and HER 06496) were located on the eastern side of the village. OS maps show that many were still extant until the 1950s.

Only two corn windmills survive today, Steven's Mill (HER 06393/LB 48963) in Mill Lane and a mill in Newmarket Road (HER 06495/LB 48965). Last worked in the 1950s, Steven's Mill was restored in the 1970s and given statutory protection as a LBII\*. It is a four-storey clunch tower mill built at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The wooden and iron machinery is contemporary with the tower. Originally a corn mill when built in the nineteenth century, the clunch- and brick-built mill at Newmarket Road was

later used to mill coprolite, and is presently used as a store reduced to three storeys.

### *Crafts and Trades*

Before 1800 the main non-agricultural activities were represented by turf cutting and chalk quarrying in the area between Isaacson Road and Newmarket Road (HER 10889). Chalk continued to be quarried for clunch for building work and to burn into lime until the 1970s. From the later medieval period there are records of smiths, carpenters, wheelwrights, shoemakers and tailors, typical of a large village. There are also records of shipwrights who built boats and barges for navigation and transport of goods along the lodes and small canals stemming from the Weirs.

In the nineteenth century a single family dealt in corn, coal, timber, salt and Baltic Iron. Edward Balt took it over in the earlier nineteenth century, together with brick-making, and owned and worked the extant Stevens Mill until the 1950s.

#### 4.4.7 Population

Between the middle of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century Burwell witnessed substantial growth in the size of the population (Baptism Records, CRO). The 'Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Hearth Returns' list some 200 households in the period between 1662-1664, excluding the households exempted from the hearth tax, the number of which is uncertain (Evans 2000). The level dropped during the eighteenth century. Thereafter the size of the population continued to increase up to the middle of the nineteenth century. This growth was followed by a slight decline between the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century as surplus agricultural population moved to areas of industrial expansion. Since the 1970s there has been a significant increase in the size of the population as reflected by urban development.

Population figures for the nineteenth and twentieth century are summarised below. These figures are based on census information for the parish 1801-1851 and 1861-1991 held at the CRO. The figure from 1997 is taken from East Cambridgeshire District Local Plan (Deposit Draft 1997).

1801	1250
1851	2040
1901	1974
1951	2364
1971	4032
1981	4223
1991	4628
1997	4920

#### 4.6.8 Schools, Charities, Public Health and Non-Conformity

Non-Conformist dissident movement was strong from the late seventeenth century and Burwell had four chapels open between c. 1850 and 1930. The movement gained momentum under Baptist influence. The Particular Baptists had a chapel built on North Street in 1846. The chapel was renovated in 1968 (LB 48984; RCHM(E) 1972, 25 (4)). The Burwell Independent church had a meeting room built in 1747 in High Street. Revitalised as the Congregationalists, they built a larger chapel on the same site, over a graveyard which was enlarged in 1893 (HER CB14872; RCHM(E) 1972, 25 (3)). The chapel was sold in the 1990s. After membership began to fall, the congregation merged with the United Reform Church in 1975 and later, with the Burwell Methodists to form Burwell Trinity Church. The Methodists had previously used two chapels, one for the Wesleyans built on the east side of the Causeway in the 1830s (LB 48928; RCHM(E) 1972, 25 (2)), with the later addition of a Sunday School, the other for the Primitive Methodists built in the 1860s on North Street (OS Map 1886). This was sold for industrial use in 1986.

Besides the non-Conformist Sunday Schools, in the seventeenth century there was a free school for boys in the disused St Andrew's Church (LB 48937). This was closed in 1922 and demolished in the 1960s when schooling was reorganised. In 1846 Edward Ball had a British School built on North Street in 1846 which was later taken over as a council school. A few years later a girl's school was erected on the former graveyard of St Andrew's Church. A National school for labourers' children was built to the north of the new St Andrew's Church in 1871. Finally, a Middle School for farmers' sons was started in a rented house in 1867.

Charities for the poor are recorded from the late sixteenth century. Other charities were developed from the allotted portions of former common fen. In addition, 16 almshouses were built next to the churchyard in the early eighteenth century.

#### 4.6.9 Government and Administration

From 1835 Burwell belonged to the Newmarket Poor Law Union and passed to the Newmarket Rural District in 1894. From 1974 it was incorporated into East Cambridgeshire District (Wright 2002, 445).

## PART 2: ASSESSMENT OF THE EVIDENCE

### 1. SOURCES AND CONFIDENCE RATING

#### 1.1 Documentary Sources

Original documentary research has not been undertaken, as it lies outside the scope of this report.

General outlines of the history of the county together with in-depth accounts of individual parishes are provided by the VCH.

The VCH tends to be biased towards the following:

- the medieval ecclesiastical and manorial history
- social history

The VCH provides useful and reliable information on the historic, economic and social development of the town from the medieval period.

#### 1.2 The HER

The HER of Cambridgeshire County Council records many finds in the study area. Most entries for the village refer to the medieval and post-medieval periods.

The information provided by the HER is affected by the following:

- The distribution of entries for the village has a bias towards periods that are well represented by material culture, i.e. medieval and post-medieval remains, and towards classes of monuments which can be related to historical sources, i.e. religious buildings and manorial sites. This bias has its roots in the kind of information provided by the Ordnance Survey records, i.e. the precursor of the HER, that placed emphasis on extant remains, including earthworks, and important finds' spots
- Some entries refer to finds in Reach Parish, due to alterations to parish boundaries. In addition, there are entries which refer to finds, namely prehistoric barrows and ring-ditches, located in the County of Suffolk. This is an error generated in the RCHM(E) inventory (1972) on which those entries are based. HER entries for finds outside Burwell Parish are not listed in *Appendix II*.
- The distribution of entries is conditioned by the extent of archaeological work undertaken within and immediately outside the historic nucleus of the village.
- Many prehistoric finds are without provenience and generically located within the parish.

The HER collection represents a variable source of information that has been influenced by fieldwork strategies, collection of finds, antiquarian observations, local and professional interests. The degree of accuracy of the entry is therefore variable

### **1.3 Cartographic Evidence**

The available cartographic evidence for Burwell is very limited and late in date. The first comprehensive and detailed map of the parish is the Enclosure Map of 1812. The Tithe Map of 1841 adds little to the information contained in the Enclosure Map.

Later maps of the village include editions of the Ordnance Survey from the end of the nineteenth century onwards.

Bearing in mind the varying degree of accuracy and detailing of the pre-Ordnance Survey maps, as a whole the available cartographic evidence provides useful information for the nineteenth century and more recent development of the town and its surrounding landscape.

### **1.4 Aerial Photographs and Overlays of Aerial Photographs**

Overlays of aerial photographs (RAF, CUCAP) show cropmark remains of prehistoric enclosures and ring ditches, and medieval field-systems on the chalkland.

During the prehistoric period, activity concentrated along the fen edge and on outcrops of light sand where fieldwalking has identified spreads of lithics.

In the medieval and post-medieval periods there was limited reclamation of land along the fen-edge. The fen continued to be predominantly used as meadow and pasture until systematic drainage was implemented in recent times. Here, absence of cropmarks, e.g., ridge and furrow, is consistent with the wet condition of the fen.

There have been no recent re-assessments of the photographic collections.

### **1.5 Archaeological Excavations and Surveys**

High Town and at Newnham have been the subjects of antiquarian and modern investigations. By contrast, no archaeological work has taken place in North Street.

Investigations at High Town and, in particular, at Reach Road (Macaulay 2001; Connor 2002) have thrown light on the Saxo-Norman origin of the southern end of High Town, also showing the potential for preserved archaeological remains in undisturbed pockets within developed areas. Work in the triangle defined by Mill Street, Newmarket Road and Isaacson Road (CPM 1994; Garrow 2002) has confirmed the presence of clunch quarries known from cartographic sources (OS Map of 1886), also showing that

expansion beyond Mill Lane did not take place prior to the twentieth century. Finally, excavations to the south of the church of St Mary (AFU 1997; Hatton 2002) have established the southern limit of the settlement at High Town through negative evidence.

With reference to Newnham, recent investigations at Low Road (Kenney 1996a; *Id* 1996b) would indicate that occupation in this part of the village was probably not very dense during the medieval period. Finally, archaeological work at the Causeway (Atkins 2003) confirmed that the Causeway was developed fairly late and that expansion originally did not extend beyond the street frontage.

There have been no recent surveys of the earthwork remains associated with the castle (SM 29382/HER 01775) and the moated sites at Turnbridge Farm (HER 01121) and Hall Farm (HER).

## **2 DEPOSIT MAPPING OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS**

In this section an attempt has been made to map all known monuments and events and, based on mapping, to predict the existence of further remains in areas of archaeological potential. These predictions should not be used to produce 'constraint maps'.

### **2.1 Prehistoric**

The known distribution of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age sites suggests that occupation occurred along the chalk slopes of the fen-edge and on outcrops of light sandy soil in the fen. Prehistoric remains from the village comprise:

- Southern and western fringes of the village: stray finds of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic axes (HER 01775B, HER 06477 and HER 02190), a scatter of Mesolithic worked flint (HER 06478) and a Bronze Age hoard (HER 06475).
- Reach Road: Late Neolithic/earlier Bronze Age and late Bronze Age/earlier Iron Age field systems (Connor 2002).

To date there is scant record of Iron Age occupation at Burwell as a whole:

- Land north of the village recreation ground (HER 06736b/Browne 1977), Besides evidence for a ditch (part of a field system?)
- 95/97, Low Road abraded sherds of middle Iron Age pottery (HER 11794, HER 11989/ Kenney 1996a)
- 106, Low Road (HER CB14590/Kenney 1996b): two possible Iron Age pits

Prehistoric remains on the chalkland at Burwell appears to be masked by later features. For instance, at reach Road the prehistoric ditches showed no apparent distinction from the late Saxon and medieval ones (Connor 2002).

Similarly, in the area of Iron Age activity at Low Road and across the Weirs, the presence of Roman field systems and small features makes the identification of earlier (datable) remains difficult.

Based on the present state on knowledge, it is not possible to predict the existence of prehistoric sites within the village. The general distribution of known finds suggests that prehistoric sites could be encountered almost anywhere within undisturbed pockets of land.

## **2.2 Roman**

Roman activity in the area is well documented through chance discovery of stray finds and excavations within and immediately around the village. The distribution of Roman remains would indicate that occupation stretched from the higher ground to the fen-edge. Roman activity has been identified in the following areas:

- North of the village recreation ground: field-system possibly associated with a settlement nearby, and a hoard of late Roman bronze vessels (HER 06736/06479/Browne 1977).
- Low Road: field-system?, other (uncertain) activity (HER 11794 and HER 11989). Scatters of pottery (HER 10953 and HER 06807/ Hall 1996) from the area would suggest domestic occupation nearby.
- Saxon Drive: possible villa/settlement underneath the Saxon cemetery (HER 06764a/Lethbridge 1930).
- Burwell Castle: residual pottery and building debris consistent with the presence of a Roman villa underneath the medieval castle (HER 0175a/Lethbridge 1936). Pottery and building debris (HER 04663 and HER 06787), and stray metalwork (HER 06843 and HER 06768) have been found in this area.

Based on the available evidence, it is not possible to predict the existence of Roman sites within the village. These could be encountered almost anywhere within undisturbed pockets of land.

## **2.3 Saxon**

Despite the discovery of the extensive inhumation cemetery north of High Town (Lethbridge 1926; *Id.* 1928), early Saxon Burwell remains elusive. For the later Saxon-early Norman period past and recent archaeological investigations have identified a proto-settlement in the area of the castle (Lethbridge 1936) and on the western side of Reach Road (Macaulay 2001; Connor 2002). Its expansion was brought to a halt by the construction of the castle during the Anarchy period.

The extent of the original Saxo-Norman settlement is unknown. Based on the results of the archaeological investigations, it is possible that the site of the castle and the site at Reach Road are part of the same settlement. This would have stretched along an earlier course of High Street (to the east of the castle?) later re-routed to run to the east of the church. The church itself could

sit on the same site as a Saxo-Norman predecessor known from historical sources.

## 2.4 Medieval

It has been suggested (above) that modern Burwell developed from three medieval nuclei, High Town, North Street and Newnham.

- The only medieval extant building in High Town is the church of St Mary (HER 00328), to the east of the earthworks associated with the castle (HER 01775). The church of St Andrew (HER 06721) was located further north, on the eastern side of High Street. When its ruins were pulled down in the eighteenth century, medieval coffins and human bone were recorded. High Town is the only nucleus which has been subjected to past and recent archaeological investigations. The extent of the medieval settlement on the north, south and east sides can be reconstructed with a satisfactory degree of confidence through negative evidence for occupation. Archaeological investigations at Pembroke Farm (AFU 1996) and at Isaacson Manor (Hatton 2002) did not produce evidence for medieval occupation to the south of the church. Similarly, excavations to the east of Mill Lane (Lethbridge 1929; 2000CPM 1994; Garrow) showed that the area between Newmarket Road and Mill Lane had been used for clunch extraction from the Roman period. Although presently unknown prior to the nineteenth century, there is potential for the existence of limekilns. The extent of settlement to the west of High Street is unknown, as is the layout of the settlement, due to lack of archaeological work within the core of High Town and, in particular, along High Street.
- The settlement at North Street stretched north-south, on the same alignment as former headlands of the common fields. This settlement was probably the result of a commercial planned development (above). Little is known of this settlement, as no archaeological work has taken place in this part of Burwell. North Street is likely to have been flanked by properties extending westwards to the Weirs and eastwards to The Backlane. It is unlikely that the settlements stretched across the Weirs, due to the presence of the fen. Hithes, basins and canals were probably linked to the rear of some of the properties for easy access to the network of lodes across the fen. Although the water-borne trade seems to have taken off during the post-medieval period, it cannot be discounted that canals and hithes were already in existence. The network of lodes for water management and transport was established as early as the Saxo-Norman period for the convenience of the religious houses which held land in the fen. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to assume that the system at Burwell was extended to include the Weirs and its canals stretching to the village properties. Most activities associated with the canals would have left no trace. However, there is evidence for ship-building (at least from the later medieval period) as well as fishing. Both activities should leave traces in the material record.

- Newnham is a later development. It might have originally represented an extension of North Street, at the same time connecting the northern and southern nuclei of the village, and the manorial sites to the west of Low Road, by means of a network of relief streets. Its extent and function remain unknown. The presence of the manorial estates \*\*\* to the west of Low Road is likely to have prevented development along this side of the road.

To the south and east of the village there is potential for the survival of medieval field-systems, the boundaries of which are visible as large linear earthworks and cropmarks (ridge-furrow systems and headlands) that form a network on the chalk slopes.

## **2.5 Post-medieval**

Burwell village retained its traditional multi-nucleated and elongated shape up to the Second World War. Post-medieval development is reflected by the present layout of the village where extant historic buildings attest to the period of expansion from the sixteenth century. Village growth throughout the post-medieval period took the form of progressive replacement and/or refurbishment of earlier timber-framed and clunch buildings, together with infilling of the former property plots. At High Town the area to the east of Mill Lane continued to be used for clunch extraction well into the 1970s. North Street witnesses a period of prosperity with the revival of the water-borne traffic. The canals were in use until the middle of the nineteenth century.

Development from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards is documented through cartographic evidence and shows the expansion along the Causeway and the progressive contraction of Newnham, prior to redevelopment from the 1970s.

## **3 DEGREE OF SURVIVAL OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS**

In this section an attempt is made to assess the degree of survival of archaeological remains in the areas defined by deposit mapping. The assessment takes the form of a prediction model based on probability and not certainty. It is meant as a guide only.

### **3.1 Prehistoric**

Mapping suggests that the prehistoric period within the village may be under-represented, as the location of these remains is least well known and finds least well preserved, with particular reference to ceramics artefacts. Excavations at land north of the Village Recreation Ground, in 1969 (HER 06479, HER 06736, HER 06736a; HER 06736b) revealed evidence of late Neolithic-early Bronze Age activity in the form of disturbed deposits of worked flint. In addition, at least one of the two ditch systems identified was Iron Age (Browne 1977). During investigations at 95/97, Low Road (HER 11794, HER 11989) abraded sherds of middle Iron Age pottery were recovered (Kenney

1996a). At 106, Low Road (HER CB14590) two possible Iron Age pits were excavated (Kenney 1996b). At Reach Road, despite truncation and contamination by recent building activity, the condition of preservation of remains in undisturbed areas of the site was good. Besides evidence for Saxo-Norman occupation, two ditches dating to the late Neolithic/earlier Bronze Age and to the late Bronze Age/earlier Iron Age period and a crouched burial survived. The ditches showed no apparent distinction from the late Saxon and medieval ones (Connor 2002).

Based on the available data from the archaeological excavations undertaken within and immediately outside Burwell, the degree of preservation of buried prehistoric remains appears to have been variably affected by later occupation and by medieval/post-medieval settlement expansion, with particular reference to the historic core. Ploughing is also expected to have affected the survival of potential remains immediately outside the historic village core.

Based on the available evidence, the degree of preservation of potential buried remains is unknown.

### **3.2 Roman**

To date, evidence for Roman occupation at Burwell appears to be associated with agricultural and light industrial activities peripheral to areas of main settlement. These areas have not been identified with certainty. Remains found during excavations in the 1920s and 1930s (Lethbridge 1926; *Id* 1928; *Id* 1929: Saxon cemetery; *Id*. 1936: Burwell Castle) had been truncated by later activities. At land north of the Village Recreation Ground (HER 06479, HER 06736, HER 06736a; HER 06736b) there was evidence for field-systems. In addition, second to fourth century pottery and building debris in the topsoil pointed to the existence of a Roman occupation site in close proximity (Browne 1977). This site is likely to have been disturbed by ploughing. The site excavated at 95/97, Low Road contained features preserved underneath a thin layer of topsoil between 0.10m and 0.25m thick. Pottery consisted largely of abraded late Roman sherds (Kenney 1996a).

As with the prehistoric period, based on the available data from the archaeological excavations undertaken within and immediately outside Burwell, the degree of preservation of buried Roman remains appears to have been variably affected by medieval/post-medieval settlement expansion, with particular reference to the historic core and by agricultural practices.

Based on the available evidence, the degree of preservation of potential buried remains is unknown.

### **3.3 Saxon and Medieval**

The early Saxon inhumation cemetery (HER 06764 and HER 06764a/ Lethbridge 1926; *Id* 1928; *Id* 1929) located 500m to the north of the church of St Mary was found to be in good condition of preservation, having escaped

damage during clunch extraction and lime burning in the area. Notwithstanding the presence of the cemetery, early and middle Saxon Burwell is unknown.

For the Saxo-Norman period, recent archaeological investigations at land off Reach Road showed that the site had undergone extensive ground disturbance and levelling, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with the construction of the railway line and a packaging factory. Nonetheless, undisturbed areas contained extensive archaeological remains dating to the Saxo-Norman period. These were found buried underneath former topsoil to an average depth of 0.30m below the present ground level (Macaulay 2001; Connor 2002). By contrast, remains found at Spring Close in the mid 1930s (Lethbridge 1936) had been almost entirely obliterated during construction of the castle.

With reference to the later medieval period, absence of archaeological investigations within the medieval core makes it difficult to assess the degree of preservation of potential buried remains.

Should Saxon and medieval remains be encountered these are expected to have been variably affected by later building and agricultural activities. Potential remains are expected to have survived within undeveloped plots away from the street frontages.

### *Earthworks*

The remains of Burwell Castle earthworks (HER 01775 and HER 01775a/Lethbridge in 1935) are in good conditions of preservation. There is no surviving masonry nor is there any evidence of a chapel. The south arm of the moat is dry. Several areas of both ditch and bank were badly churned by cattle prior to change of land use from pasture in 1984. The site lies within the Conservation Area of High Town and is protected by statutory scheduling (SM 29382). Besides the castle, the degree of preservation of potential remains within the scheduled area is unknown due to lack of archaeological investigations.

The earthwork remains of the small moat at Turnbridge Farm (HER 01121) had been almost completely destroyed by the time of the RCHM(E) survey in 1972.

At the time of the survey by the RCHM(E) in 1972 Hall Farm (HER 01122) comprised two rectangular wet moats of which the western (?) one was largely intact. The east arm of the eastern moat had already been almost entirely destroyed. Two later rectangular fishponds were constructed near the south side. At the time of the survey by the County Archaeologist in 1984 only the (eastern?) moat was visible. The eastern portion of the site had been developed, and the north arm of the moat filled-in. The moat is located just outside the village limits and is not scheduled.

The Causeway (HER 06733) and the Hythe (HER 0640), as with all basins and canals stemming from the Weirs, have disappeared as the result of modern development.

The portion of Devil's Dyke/Ditch (HER 07801, Reach Parish) south of the Swaffham-Burwell road is well preserved. The earthwork is presently scheduled (SAM 5) and is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

### **3.4 Post-Medieval**

The historic nucleus of Isleham lies within the Conservation Area which includes most of the post-medieval Listed Buildings of historical and archaeological interest. Steven's Mill (LB 48963/HER 06393), the only LBI\* in the village, is outside the Conservation Areas. No information on the present condition of the Listed Buildings has been supplied by East Cambridgeshire District.

The degree of preservation of potential buried remains is presently unknown due to limited archaeological investigations within the village cores. At High Town excavations at Isaacson Road (CPM 1994), Mill Lane (Garrow 2000) and Pembroke Farm (AFU 1996) produced evidence for clunch extraction known from cartographic evidence. At the former site, absence of medieval and post-medieval remains indicated that the investigated site was on the fringe of the manorial estate of John of Castle Martin, and that the medieval manor and associated buildings lay elsewhere. Similarly, during investigations at 6, High Street no remains relating to the extant fourteenth century Isaacson manor house were detected, due to the evaluation area having been a yard/garden during the medieval and post-medieval periods (Hatton 2002).

At Newnham investigations at 95/97, Low Road, Evaluation 1995 (HER 11794, HER 11989) produced evidence for a shallow linear feature interpreted as a holloway, possibly representing the precursor to the present path known as The Leys. At 106, Low Road (HER CB14590) evidence emerged for structural remains and demolition layers possibly associated with buildings near the frontage of Low Road (Kenney 1996b).

Based on the evidence from Low Road, it is reasonable to assume that post-medieval remains may survive underneath the present village, allowing for a higher degree of truncation along the street frontage due to continuous alterations in the course of the medieval and post-medieval periods.

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## MAPS CONSULTED

Enclosure Map (n.d.)	CRO Q/RDc 29
Tracing of Enclosure Map, 1812	CRO R86/12
Tithe Map, 1841	CRO p18/
OS 1 <sup>st</sup> ed. 1890 (Surveyed 1886)	CRO Cambridgeshire XXXV. 12, 16 and XLI.4
OS 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed. 1903	CRO Cambridgeshire XXXV. 12, 16 and XLI.4
OS revised ed. 1926 and XLI.4	CRO Cambridgeshire XXXV. 12, 16 and XLI.4
Moore's Map of the Fens, 1663	Reproduced in <i>PCAS</i> XXXIII (1933)
BGS Sheet 188, 1:50000	