

A submission to Swaffham Town Council for permission to conduct an archaeological excavation on Campingland in 2022 in recognition of the centenary of Howard Carter's discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922



Campingland
Extracted from ARCHI 2020 Lidar DTM

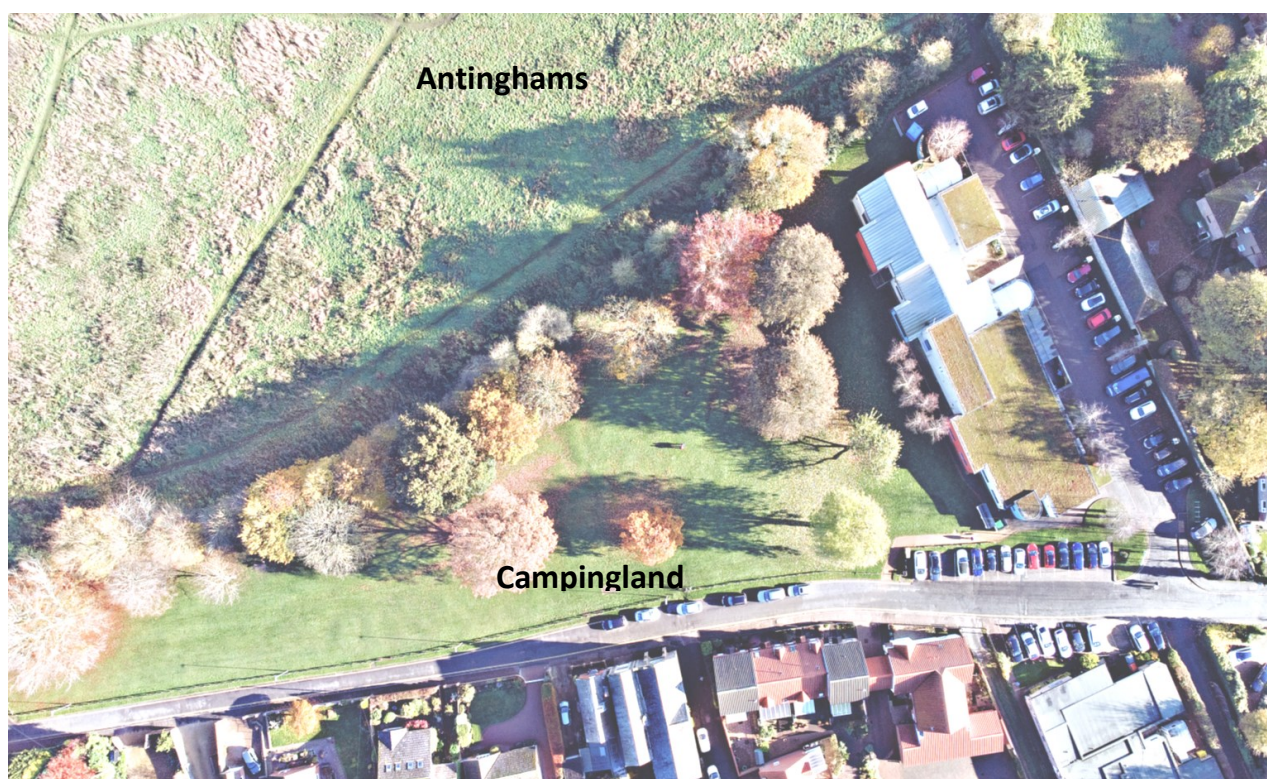
The project	To organise, complete and report on a community archaeological excavation of parts of the Campingland under the supervision of a qualified archaeologist and following the Norfolk County Council standards for archaeological projects in Norfolk (Robertson et al. 2018)
Expected duration	2 weeks during the Summer 2022
Budget	£10,000 has been earmarked from the HE Cultural Consortia bid
Lead	Dr Sue Gattuso as member of SCC, project manager of Carter 22 and volunteer manager of Swaffham Heritage museum (or ANO)
Output	The progress of the event will be relayed on a website and social media. A written, video, oral and photographic report will be published online. An exhibition of the excavation will be on view in a building in the market place at the Festival in September A completion report will be published.
Outcomes	This is an unusual opportunity in which many residents can participate or follow. It is not expected that young children would participate, unless an as yet unanticipated opportunity presents itself. Campingland is an ancient piece of land donated to the town in 1474/5 but about which little is known. It has not been ploughed since at least that time. It is well used and enjoyed by the residents, who recognise it as part of the heritage of the town Several theories have been mooted which are contained in the submission. The excavation will add to the knowledge of Swaffham and its ancient history New friendships will be formed and new skills learnt It will be an enjoyable and informative event.
What are we looking for? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 18th century building in the centre of Campingland • Artefacts from medieval to modern eras • Saxon artefacts which might indicate a settlement 	

Dec 2021 – Jan 2022	Contact local housing developers for possible equipment loans and other help, advice and participation they are able to offer. Communicate with other parishes/organisations who have arranged community digs for advice.
Jan-Feb 2022	Decide on the dates and times of the Dig and the management of the site. Consider and arrange security, risk assessment and insurance. Do we need a shed or storage tent?
March-April 2022	Make sure we can cover all of the regulations required.
April-May 2022	Preparatory work including a Geophysical survey
July-August 2022	The Dig and make good
Sept-Oct 2022	Report and evaluation

Campingland is to the east of the Swaffham Marketplace, SE to the parish church.

It consists of a parcel of land bounded by land belonging to the church to the north, Heygate estate on the north-east and east, by a road and residential properties to the west and south. The Community Centre sits at the southern edge.

Several ancient footpaths cross the churchyard, Campingland and the Antinghams. The latter belongs to the Heygate estate – the Manor estate.



Historical background

Swaffham is of ancient origin with finds from the Stone Age onwards. As part of the Honour of Richmond it enjoyed trade and toll privileges which placed the town firmly at a crossroads at the centre of Norfolk.

On 2 April 1474 the rector, John Botright, who had acquired several pieces of land to the south-east of the church, donated the parcel to the town by deed.¹

“a croft or close lying in the town of Swaffham aforesaid, between the common lane on the west part and the close of John Notygham on the east part, the north head of which abuts on the common lane from the church towards Keelysgap and the south head of which abuts on the closes ort pightles of William Lobbe, William Sutton and Walter Taylour. Which croft or close, indeed, I lately had by the purchase, grant and release of divers persons, as it appears more fully in divers charters and releases compiled for the purpose.”²

The origin of the name Campingland for this piece is not yet known. The deed records “Le Cherche Croft” which presumably means “church croft” but also “Camping Land”. Possibly the land was already used informally for the playing of the medieval game of Camp, a popular if brutal type of rugby throughout East Anglia at the time.

The churchwardens were to lease the land or “let it to farm for as much money as they can and better for the advantage of the church.”

“It shall be”, he decreed, “a place for all and each of the parishioners ... in which they may play their games such as involve running, shooting and carrying out those things pertaining to military drill and other honest games which it will please them to do so for evermore.”

The assumption has long been made locally that the reference to shooting was to archery, but just at this time gunpowder weaponry was beginning to flourish. Guns were used, for example, during the siege of Caister Castle in 1469, but this was probably more to do with the use of gunpowder in cannons. During the war over Calais in the 1470s, in the reign of Edward IV, the modernisation of hand gun technology moved forward rapidly and it may be either that the Rector wished to keep to the old English traditions of the yeoman’s long-bow or that he wished to embrace the modern.³

Faden’s map of 1797 records the land as the “Shooting Ground”.

¹ W.B.Rix in Pride of Swaffham has 1463 but the deed states clearly in the fourteenth year of the reign of Edward IV who reigned from 1461.

² Grant of Le Chercecroft or Camping Land at Swaffham, Norfolk, 1474. NNRO PD52/273-278.

³ David Grummitt, “The Defence of Calais and the Development of Gunpowder Weaponry in England in the Late Fifteenth Century” War in History Vol. 7, No. 3 (July 2000), pp. 253-272

The twelve trustees of the land are named in the deed. Robert Fuller was the vicar of Swaffham at the time and the other eleven were probably churchwardens or those who formed the Vestry.

Why Dr Botright chose to give this plot of land to the town is not known. Before he arrived in Swaffham in 1435 he was Master of Corpus Christi, Cambridge and Proctor of the University. He was chaplain to Henry VI and from him had received grant of rights to tin and lead mining in Cornwall. He died in Swaffham in 1475 and is buried in the chancel of the church.

He came at a time when the old church was becoming dilapidated and finally collapsed around 1454. The church itself was owed a considerable amount of money from the parishioners and Dr Botright took on the task of calling in the debts and building a new church. His accounts were kept in what is now known as "The Black Book of Swaffham". To help with his accounting he chose 12 persons, possibly the twelve mentioned above? As well as listing the debtors he also listed the names of those who donated items or money to the building of the new church, amongst them John Chapman, the Pedlar of Swaffham. A trawl through the names indicates that the population of Swaffham consisted of no lords and ladies, a few sirs, esquires and "maisters", but mostly men and women who were recorded by their first and surnames.

Perhaps he gave the land in thanks for their support in building the church.

There are a few mentions of the area through the early churchwarden's account, mainly to do with leasing for pasture but since that time only one structure has ever been allowed to be built on Campingland, although the building has been replaced.

In his will of 1724 Nicholas Hamond, possibly Lord of the Manor of Swaffham at the time, left £1000 to build and endow a school for 20 boys to be built "at the south end of the close commonly called by the name of the Camping Land in Swaffham if the town will consent and agree thereto."⁴

The town – or the twelve trustees - did agree and the school was duly built "according to Sir Andrew Fountaine's plan" and opened in 1736. The school moved to a site on the Marketplace in 1898 but the Campingland building was occupied as a private dwelling until it was demolished in 1930. A Youth Centre was built on almost the same footprint in 1967 and this was replaced by the Swaffham Community Centre in 2005 (Iceni Swaffham Hub).

The residents living to the west of Campingland in the 18th century were mostly labourers or craftsmen. Some of the houses came under the slum clearance scheme of the 1930s.

We know that in the 19th century the plot was used as a drying place. Townspeople would leave drying posts permanently on the land until 1895 when they were told they may no longer leave them out over night. At the same time an attempt was

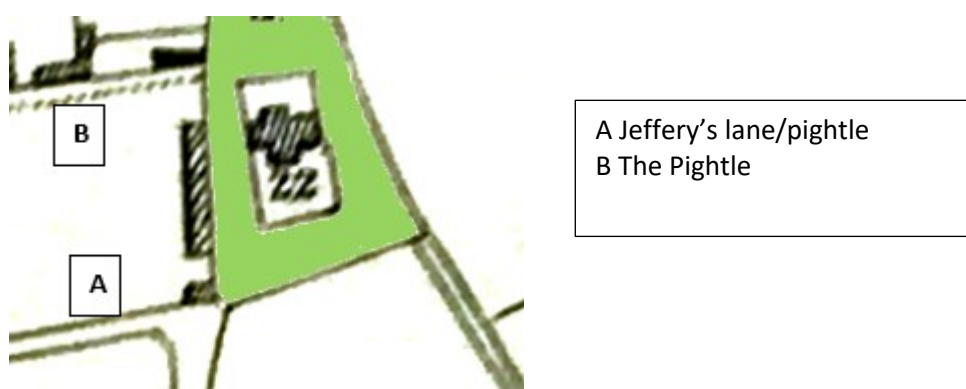
⁴ John Gretton, A History of Hamond's High School 1736 – 1986, 1986.p.13.

made by members of the Urban District Council to charge the managers of the National School, now built along Campingland, for schoolchildren using Campingland as a playground. This was judged illegal as every child had a right to be there.

There have been rumours and reports that the Grammar School was built in the middle of Campingland, opposite the Pightle, and was later moved to the southern edge. This is not substantiated by the 1724 bequest which placed it at the southern edge.

Neither are there any reports in local newspapers about a move of the school within Campingland. Between 1895 and 1889 the school and its boarding house moved to the Marketplace and the old school was let out as a private dwelling.⁵

However 18th and 19th century maps appear to place it more in the centre.



A 1997 Towns Gardens survey includes Campingland and gives historical information which needs to be evidenced, including the location of the grammar school.⁶

It would be interesting to discover whether there were any signs of a building such as a school at the centre of Campingland at any time.⁷

In his book, Ribbons from the Pedlar's Pack, Ben Ripper mentions the elevation of the area around the Antinghams which abuts Campingland. He wrote: "It has not the appearance of a natural undulation, but rather of a mound built up by man." (24).

Although a survey of The Antinghams is not part of this excavation Ripper's statement lends some credence to workings within the area of Campingland.

In 1969 a pagan 6th century Saxon cemetery was unearthed between Cley Road and Haspalls Road (The Paddocks). In all 19 burials and one cremation of men, women and children, were discovered during an excavation of part of the site the

⁵ See John Gretton. A History of Hamonds's High School Swaffham 1736 -1986, pp 17-22.

⁶ Landscape History Research. Norfolk Gardens Trust. Town Gardens Survey., 1997, p.8-9.

⁷ There is an unevidenced report of a proposal that a British School should be set up on Campingland, but that this was rejected. A British School **was** proposed in Swaffham in 1838, but newspapers so far viewed make no mention of a site.

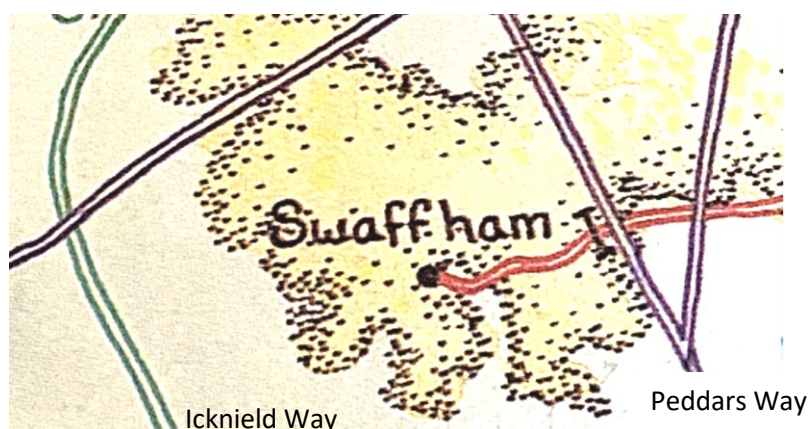
following year. The bodies, with their grave goods, were found from two to three feet below the surface.⁸

This becomes relevant when we consider Ripper's statement in Ribbons that "the complex of pathways on both Campingland and The Antinghams which could well have been the original street layout, leads one to wonder if this place could be an earlier settlement in pre-Saxon times (24).

He continues

"...it is known that pagan Saxons buried their dead sometimes as far as half a mile away from their village ... the cemetery, discovered at the Paddocks, is nearly half a mile away from the Antinghams. Significantly, too, Shoemaker Lane, and alleys from Theatre Street to The Antinghams via the Campingland are all in a line. Might they not be the remaining vestiges of an older road? (26).⁹

More recent research has not confirmed his thesis of distance, but with Peddars Way to the east of Swaffham and Icknield Way to the west there may have been a route from one to the other across the town.



Map extracted from Norfolk Origins 2: Roads and Tracks, Bruce Robinson and Edwin J. Rose, 1983

In notes to Ribbons Ripper wrote:

"When bungalows were built on part of the strip, residents cultivating their gardens unearthed human remains which had been buried on a part of the old Campingland".

This has not yet been verified.

However, although a considerable number of pre-historic and Roman artefacts have been found in the town of Swaffham, Saxon findings have been meagre and scattered.

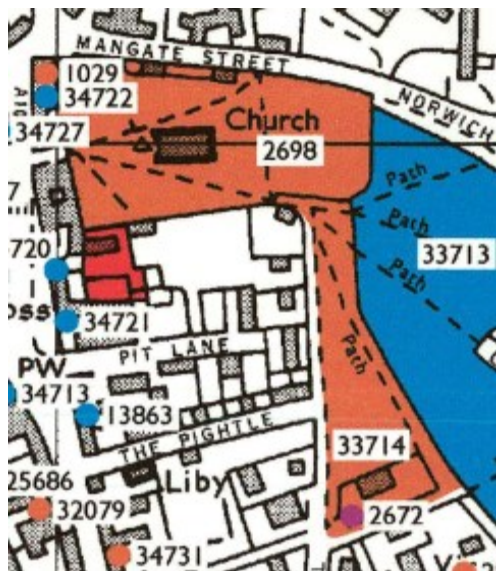
⁸ Ribbons from the Pedlar's Pack, B. Ripper, 1979, p.26-29.

For the report on the excavation see Hills, C. and Wade-Martins, "The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at the Paddocks, Swaffham, Norfolk". East Anglian Archaeology. No 2 pp 1-44. Some of the items are at Swaffham Heritage; others in the Castle Museum, Norwich.

⁹ Part of that footpath crosses the Marketplace, follows through the Red Lion yard (no longer a public right of way) and across the churchyard in front of White Lodge to Campingland.

“A small number of Saxon objects have also been recovered from other locations across the parish, including pottery sherds, four brooches, a pair of “late Saxon tweezers”, a late Saxon stirrup mount and a coin of the middle Saxon ruler Coenwulf”.¹⁰

Excavations in recent years around the Campingland area have also uncovered a meagre number of Saxon artefacts.



A desktop survey of an area south of the church was conducted in 2001.¹

The report cites the artefacts found locally and states:

“With the exception of the cemetery site, the evidence for Saxon activity at Swaffham is scant. Middle Saxon and Late Saxon pottery has been recovered from sites some distance to the north-west and south-east of the study area.

and

“A large erratic boulder in the garden of a post-medieval house (Site 3415), approximately 230m to the north west of the study area is held by some to be the Saxon foundation stone of the town; however, there appears to be little archaeological or historical evidence to justify such a claim.”



Settlement Stone. Close to the Post Office

A monitoring survey to about 1 metre deep was conducted at the Parish Church in 2016 when a new drainage system was installed.¹¹ Amongst the finds were some medieval and post medieval pottery sherds and building material and some post medieval tobacco pipes and glass. The report also mentions scattered finds. An investigation of a sunken area east of the chancel did not result in any significant features.

¹⁰ The Book of Swaffham. Swaffham History Group, 2012. p. 11

¹¹ Report on Archaeological Monitoring. The church of St Peter and St Paul, Swaffham, Norfolk. NHER ref. ENF 134000, 2016.

The report also states that:

“Massive foundations’ under grass at Grady’s Hotel 350m to the SE are suggested as being those of the ‘lost’ St Mary’s Chapel. Some worked stone reused in St Mary’s Barn another 100m to the S have also been suggested as possibly relating to the site of this chapel of ease which is known to have been founded in, or near, Swaffham in 1304. The chapel decayed after the reformation and its actual site is unknown (NHER).”(4). The site is at the eastern edge of the Antinghams.

The Neighbourhood Plan of 2019 considers Campingland to be “an important historic feature” and a possible site, along with The Antinghams, of a Saxon settlement.¹²

It describes Campingland thus:

“Campingland: A triangular section of grassland given to the town in the middle ages it was used for archery practice and playing the old game of ‘camping’, a forerunner of football. The 18th century free school provided by Nicholas Hamond was originally sited here.

- The western boundary is formed by a tarmac roadway and the open frontages of a 1970s flat roof doctors’ surgery, a small development of cottage style dwellings and the 19th century listed flint and brick church rooms with associated red brick cottage. The remainder consists of more recent infill of individual dwellings. There are views of the town centre skyline including one of the old Maltings buildings now converted to accommodation.
- The eastern boundary is formed by a mature hedge and trees separating it from the Antinghams.
- The southern end is bordered by the high flint and rubble wall of the Vicarage.

The Community Centre building sits at this end on the site of the old free school. It is a contemporary environmental architect designed single storey. From outside, the building adds some carefully chosen colour to the landscape with a low profile broken up by the mature specimen and fruit trees spaced in front, enhancing the conservation area.”

A community garden was set up in 2018 at the northern edge of Campingland with some initial funding and advice from the RHS. It consists of three raised gabion planters made with cobble stones donated by a local quarry, a circle of logs for storytelling, a herb bed, fruits trees and a donated laser cut steel sign.

Today it forms an important part of Swaffham’s Open Spaces and is used by organisations and the Day Nursery who are based at the Icen Community Hub. It is used by dog walkers, joggers and walkers and is a pleasant place to sit and relax on a Summer’s Day.

¹² Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2036, 2019, p. 80- 81, 89.”

Progress sheet

Proposal submitted to Swaffham Town council	21 November 2021
Receipt acknowledged. To come before general council meeting Dec 2021	22 November 2021
Permission granted ¹³	December 2021
Ensure insurance is sufficient	
Write a WSI (Written Scheme of Investigation) for a geophysical survey at the site. Send to Norfolk County Council for approval.	December-January 21/22
Approval received(1)	
Commission a geophysical survey	
Survey completed and report received	
Meet with archaeologist to decide on trenches. This will depend on cost and time	
Produce a 2 nd WSI for NCC with details of where and why trenches have been decided upon	
Receive approval (2)	
Organise and confirm excavation (may be monitored by NCC). Include dates, times, volunteers, equipment, security, photography, videography, website, social media. Professional archaeologist advice	
Post excavation. Cleaning and logging finds using volunteers and professional guidance. Arrange storage of items. Excavation area made good.	
Excavation area made good	
Collect feedback from participants, followers and visitors	
Report on excavation	
Expected end date	31 December 2022

(1) If approval not received seek another site in Swaffham

(2) If approval not received, ascertain the reason and seek a workaround.