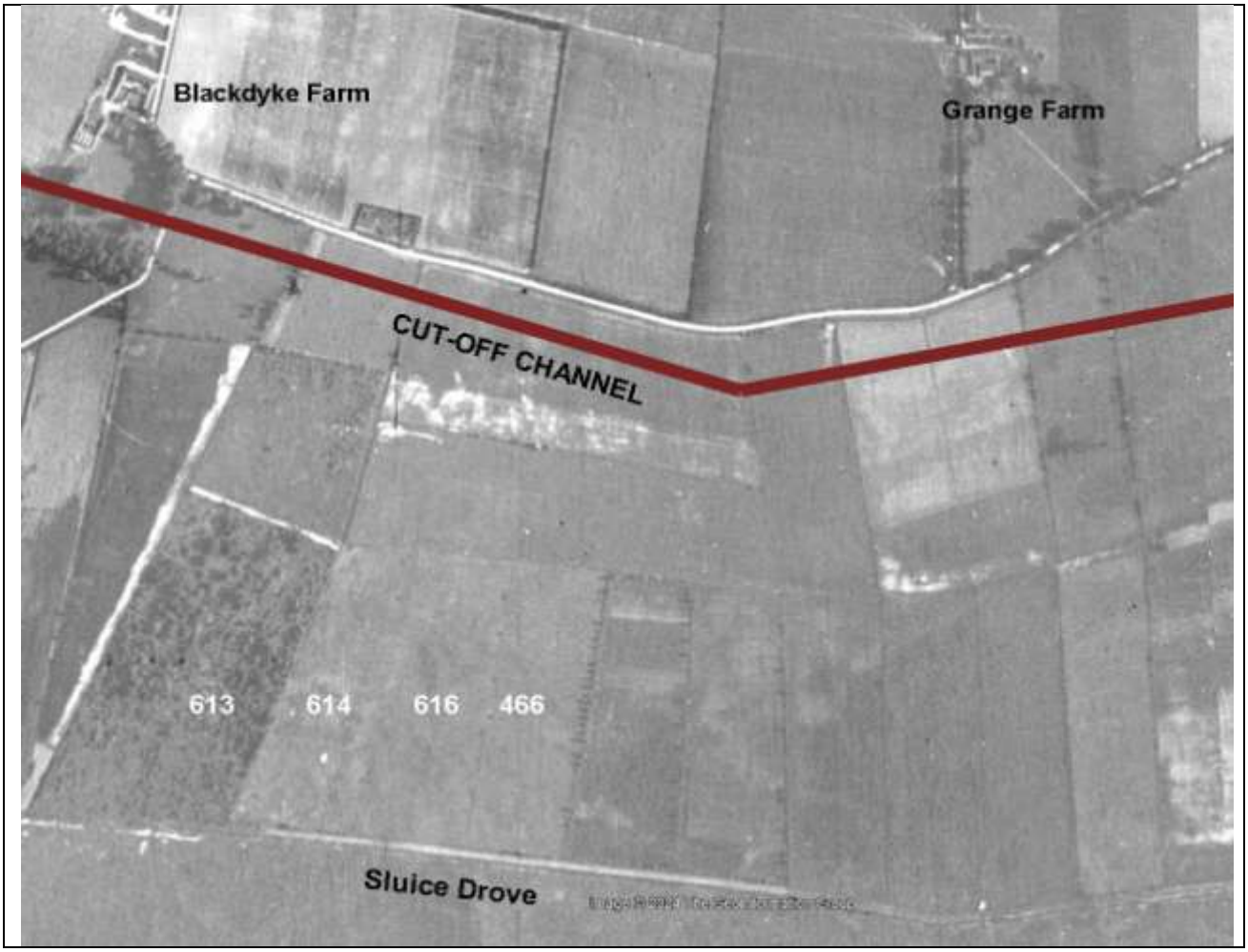
FEN-EDGE SITES AT HOCKWOLD

The late FW (Frank) Curtis did much archaeological field walking in the Hockwold and Feltwell area, along with others including EB (Eric) Secker and AJ (Pip) Orange. They collected material at about the time when deep ploughing was breaking up old Fen-edge pastures and deep drainage using mechanical diggers and the construction of the Cut-Off Channel (finished 1964) were dewatering the peat. Stratified Neolithic and Bronze Age archaeology in good condition was revealed in wasting peat overlying basal sands and putty chalk 'marl'.



RAF aerial photograph, 1945, Annotated to show old field numbers and route of Cut-off Channel.
Image courtesy Google Earth.

In Hockwold, particular attention was paid to fields at Blackdyke Farm. Field 613 was an old poor's allotment used for turbary; it is now woodland and fishing lakes. Fields 614, 616 and 466 are now arable. Finds have been published in Healy, F. *The Fenland Project, Number 11: The Wissey Embayment: Evidence for pre-Iron Age Occupation*. East Anglian Archaeology #78, 1996, including the following:

Field 613	5308/c1 (63)	Hearth containing ash, charcoal, burnt flint and quartzite, haematite, Beaker pottery sherds. [* Photo below]
	5308/c2 (62)	Hearth cut into chalk with Beakers and BA sherds.
	5308/c3 (69)	Oval pit 1 m deep, with hearth and occupation layer with flint, bone, fired clay and pottery.
613/614 ditch	5308/c4 (61/68)	Scattered pottery, incl Neolithic bowl, Food Vessel and Beaker type, three stone axes, pot-boiler heap, bone, antler..
Field 614	5373 (22)	BA and Beaker pottery. Flint. Animal bone.
	5332 (66)	Ploughed-out hearths (defined by chalk lumps) with pottery, bone awl and spearhead, flint tools. [* Photo below]
	5308/c4 (68)	Site of 1980s research test pit, with stratigraphy of a) putty chalk, b) sand, c) humose sand, d) peat, e) humified peat loam. Occupation layer

Field 616	5324 (93)	in humose sand, with flint, pot-boilers, bone, Beaker pottery, grain of emmer wheat. Circular area with three hearths sheltered by birch stakes making windbreak, with bone and Beaker pottery; fragment of Cu alloy.
Field 466		Neolithic and Beaker pottery and bone archer's bracer.

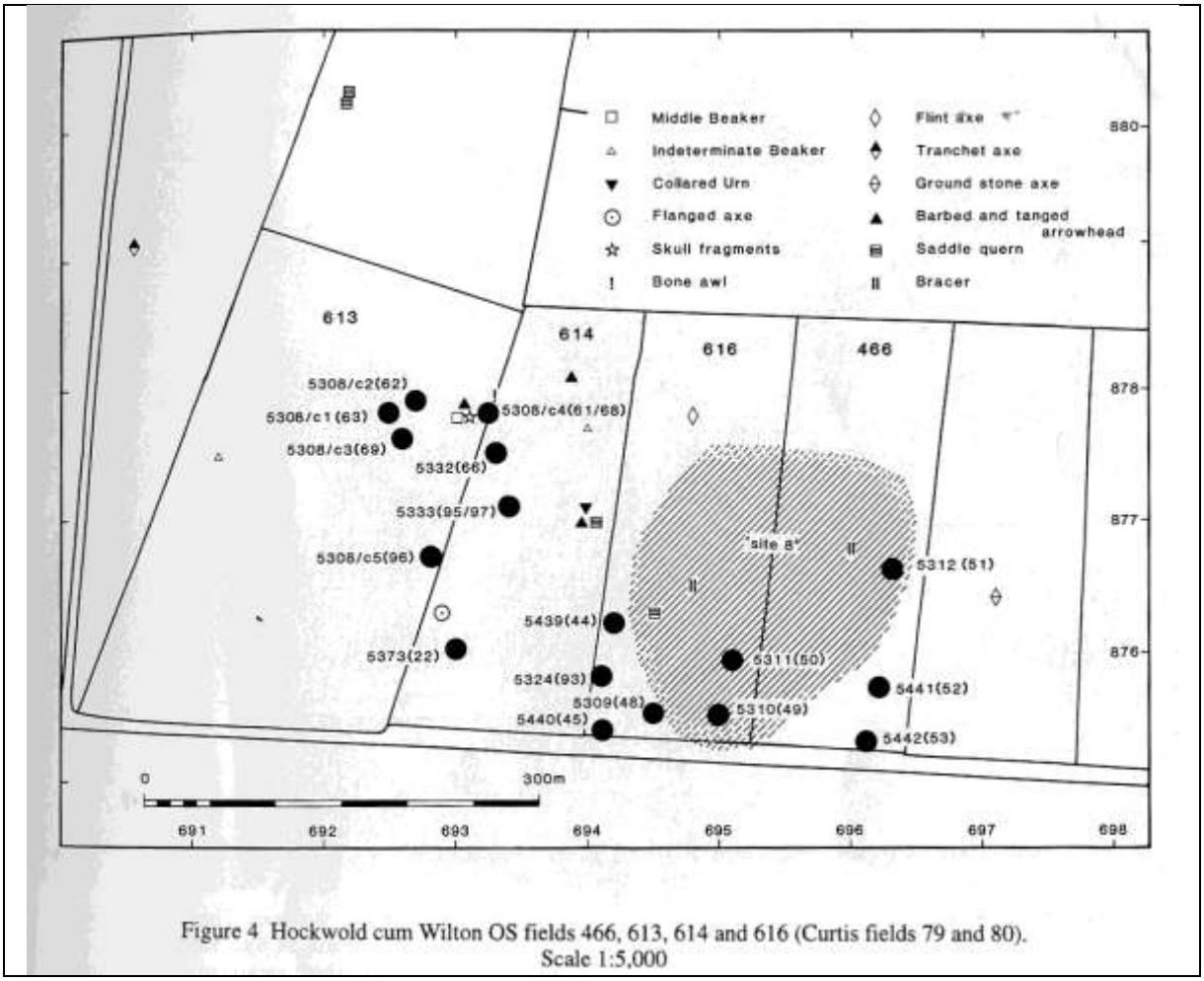


Figure 4 Hockwold cum Wilton OS fields 466, 613, 614 and 616 (Curtis fields 79 and 80).
Scale 1:5,000

Fig. 4 from Healy (1996).

Plate V The excavation of a 'fire pit', probably Site 5308/c2 (62) or Site 5308/c1 (63), in HCW OS 613 in 1964

Plate VI Site 5332 (66) in HCW OS 614, 1965

Photos of 1960s excavations (Healy, 1996).