

## REPORTS

### Test pit excavation within currently occupied rural settlements – results of the English CORS project in 2015

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In 2015 an 11th year of test pit excavation within currently occupied rural settlements (CORS) was directed by Carena Lewis (at the University of Cambridge until August 2015 and at the University of Lincoln from September) and supervised by Catherine Ranson at Access Cambridge Archaeology (ACA). The aims and methods of the CORS project are outlined elsewhere (Lewis 2007a; 2014a). The ACA website (<http://www.access.arch.cam.ac.uk/>) includes pottery reports from each site and maps showing the distribution of pottery, period by period, from the prehistoric to the modern, for every settlement where test pit excavations have been carried out by ACA since 2005. Anyone wishing to explore further the summaries in this paper is advised to visit the website and consider the text alongside the maps.

Data on pottery finds from the test pits are submitted each year to Historic Environment Records (HER) in each county and archive reports prepared for each test pit. Discussion and conclusions are added when the decision is made that no further test pit excavations will be carried out in that community. Occasional research papers are published on specific aspects of the results (e.g. Lewis 2010; 2015b; 2016).

Summaries of the results are published annually in *Medieval Settlement Research* and online <http://www.access.arch.cam.ac.uk/reports>

#### 2015

185 test pits were excavated under ACA direction in 2015 in seventeen different parishes, all bar two in eastern England (Fig. 1). Five of these were new additions to the ACA programme, with work in the others building on that previously reported in *Medieval Settlement Research* (Lewis 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015).

The majority of the test pits excavated in 2015 were dug by secondary school pupils taking part in the Higher Education Field Academy (HEFA) programme, with a small number excavated by members of the public during community test pit digging events. As in previous years, for reasons of logistics and demand management some parishes where test pitting had taken place in previous years were not included in the 2015 programme, but may be returned to in the future.

Summaries of the test pit excavations in 2015 are presented below, listed in alphabetical order by county and then by parish. Introductions to each settlement are

included only when reporting on that place for the first time. In the case of those places previously excavated by ACA and reported on in earlier issues of the journal, the account presented here provides an update to those earlier reports.

#### Bedfordshire

##### Riseley, Bedfordshire (NGR TL 042628)

Eleven test pits were excavated in Riseley in 2015, bringing the overall total to 20 (Fig. 2). One sherd of early Anglo-Saxon pottery was found, in RIS/15/11 immediately adjacent to the site in Gold Street where nine sherds of Stamford Ware and St Neots Ware were found in 2014. It seems increasingly plausible that this area was the earliest focus of settlement at Riseley, although the absence of late Anglo-Saxon pottery from RIS/15/11 suggests the pre-ninth century activity here may not have continued directly into the later period. A very small (3 g) single sherd of Stamford Ware in RIS/15/06 may indicate late Anglo-Saxon or early Norman period activity some 400 m to the east along the present High Street, but this may relate to non-intensive activity such as arable cultivation. As in 2014, pottery of high medieval date was found along Rotten Row, Gold Street and at the eastern end of the High Street, suggesting the settlement expanded considerably in the 12th–14th centuries. The recovery of 74 sherds of Early Medieval Shelly Ware (AD 1100–1400) from RIS/15/11 in Gold Street is remarkably high and may indicate pottery production in this area. Notably less pottery of this date was found along the middle extent of the present High Street near where it meets Keysoe Road (pits RIS/15/05–09). This suggests this area was not intensively used for settlement at this time, possibly instead in use as manured arable fields. If this is the case, it appears that Riseley in the 12th–14th century comprised two discrete settlements, one 500 m south-west of the parish church along Gold Street and Rotten Row, and the other 500 m east of the church along the eastern end of the High Street. This suggests a more dispersed medieval pattern of settlement than is the case today. As in 2014, large amounts of late medieval pottery were found from many test pits (RIS/15/02–06 and RIS/15/08) which relate to pottery production in the immediately vicinity. This may be the period during which the discrete settlements at Riseley first merged, as RIS/15/05–08 produced much more late medieval oxidised ware. This suggestion is given some support by the presence of post-medieval and early modern

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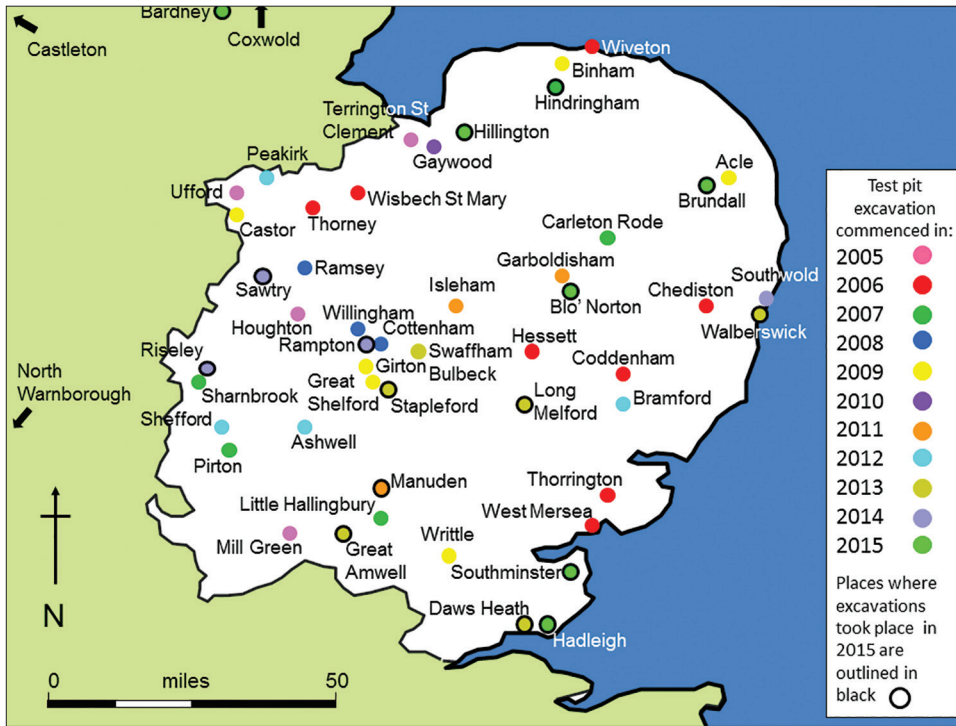


Figure 1 Map of Eastern England showing the locations of the CORS investigated by the HEFA project in East Anglia in 2015.

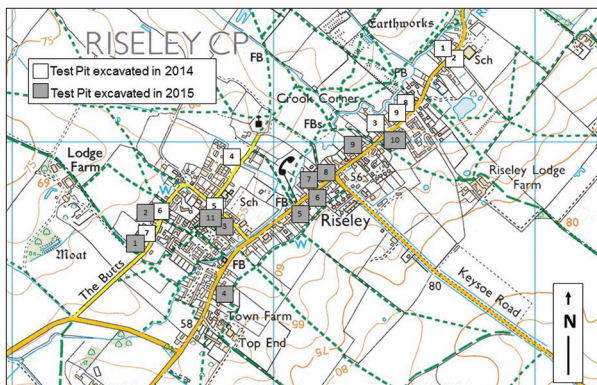


Figure 2 Riseley, Bedfordshire, showing approximate locations of excavated test pits.

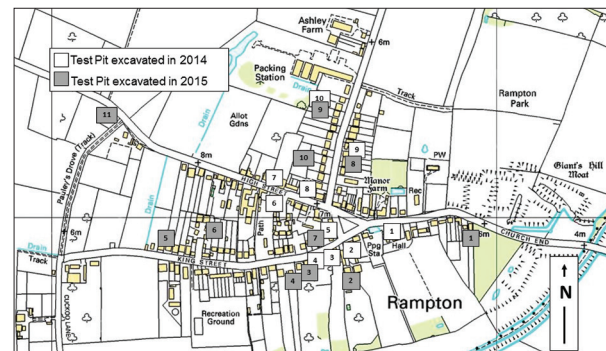


Figure 3 Rampton, Cambridgeshire, showing approximate locations of excavated test pits.

pottery in these pits, indicating a more continuous pattern of settlement along the High Street High since then.

## Cambridgeshire

### Rampton, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 542267)

10 test pits were excavated in Rampton in 2015 bringing the total to date to 20 (Fig. 3). Two pits produced pottery of Roman date, and while the tiny (1 g) single sherd from RMP/15/05 is unlikely to represent settlement, the recovery from RMP/15/07 of two larger sherds (weighing 20 g in total) may possibly indicate settlement somewhere in the vicinity. This is around 300 m from the Romano-British pottery found in 2014, and may suggest a separate node of settlement, if indeed either of these sites do in fact relate to settlement, which

remains unclear. A single small sherd of Stamford Ware from RMP/15/03 was the only find of possible late Anglo-Saxon date from 2015. And this combined with a similar dearth of evidence in 2014 suggests there was no significant settlement in the excavated areas before c. AD 1100. The picture changes markedly for the high medieval period, with pottery of this date, combined with that found in 2014, indicating a nucleated settlement compactly arranged along the present High Street and King Street, immediately west of the existing small triangular green.

Very little pottery of late medieval date was found from any of the pits excavated in 2015, confirming the pattern hinted at in 2014 of severe post-14th century contraction in population and settlement. Modest numbers of sherds of post-medieval date, with fewer than five found in most of the pits, suggests that when the settlement did pick up again, activity was muted.



**Sawtry, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 167837)**

12 test pits were excavated in Sawtry in 2015, bringing the total to 24 (Fig. 4). As in 2014, just a single tiny sherd of Roman pottery was found from just one pit (SAW/15/6), reinforcing the impression that the excavated areas, despite being near the major Roman road of Ermine Street, was not utilised for settlement at this time. No early Anglo-Saxon pottery was recovered, but three pits produced sherds of Stamford Ware dating to AD 850–1150. These occupied two discrete areas, one (a total of four sherds from SAW/15/3 & SAW/15/4) along Fen Lane north of the present Community College, the other, a more substantial assemblage of 12 sherds of Stamford Ware and St Neots Ware from SAW/15/02, a little to the west of the medieval parish church. The presence of St Neots Ware combined with small number of high medieval pottery sherds from this pit suggest the Stamford/St Neots Ware assemblage represents settlement of late Anglo-Saxon, rather than Norman date.

The focus of settlement may have shifted in the high medieval period, when only one pit (SAW/15/03) along Fen Lane produced levels of pottery very likely to indicate habitation in the vicinity (five or more sherds per pit). It is tempting to infer that settlement in the high medieval period extended along Chapel Lane and west of the church, but this is not strongly supported by the evidence excavated to date. Even less pottery of late medieval date was found, with a total of just five sherds from the 12 pits suggesting an almost complete absence of population in the excavated sites. Much larger numbers of sherds of post-medieval date are found in most of the pits in the northern part of the present settlement, indicating a lively post-medieval recovery.

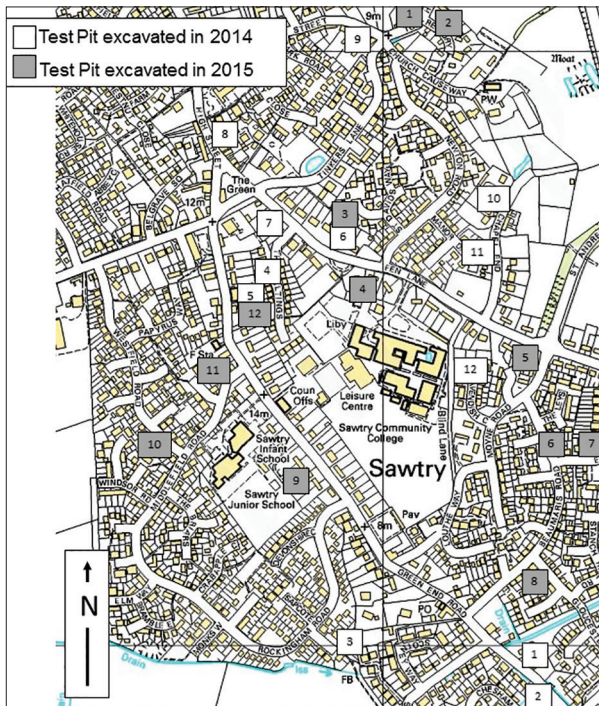


Figure 4 Sawtry, Cambridgeshire, showing approximate locations of excavated test pits.

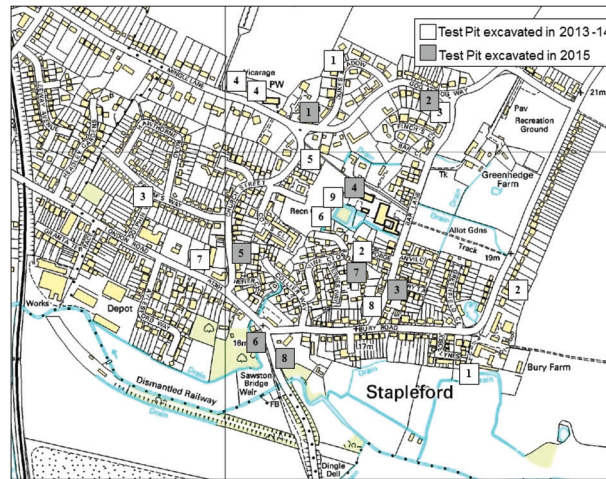


Figure 5 Stapleford, Cambridgeshire, showing approximate locations of excavated test pits.

**Stapleford, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 473517)**

Seven additional test pits were excavated by local residents in Stapleford in 2015 (Fig. 5), bringing the total to 20. No pottery of Romano-British date was found, reinforcing indications from previous test pit excavations in previous years that the areas excavated within the present settlement may not have been in use as settlement at this time. The only pit to produce any pottery of possible late Anglo-Saxon date was STA/15/05, along the southern extent of Church Street although c. 500 m from the parish church itself. The presence of St Neots Ware combined with the absence of habitative amounts of high medieval pottery suggest this may related to late Anglo-Saxon rather than early Norman period settlement. This site is some distance from the only other site (just south of the present school) to produce material of this date, possibly suggesting two separate nodes of settlement, although as no pits have been excavated between these two sites this is impossible to confirm at present. Four pits produced pottery of high medieval date, although in only two (STA/15/02 and 07) did the sherd count exceed four. On current data there thus appear to be two discrete nodes which can fairly confidently be identified as settlement, with areas to the west from the river up Church Street and north of the church possibly more like to be in use as manured arable fields. This low level of activity is however greater than in the late medieval period, with very little pottery of this date recovered from any of the pits in either 2015 or 2014. The volume of pottery of post-medieval date is greater, and distribution of material of this date favours the north and west of the area explored by test pit excavation to date, away from the river valley and closer to the church.

**Essex**

**Daws Heath, Essex (NGR TL 813886)**

A single additional test pit was excavated at Daws Heath in 2015 by local historical society members bringing the total to 24 (Fig. 6). This yielded a single tiny (1 g) sherd



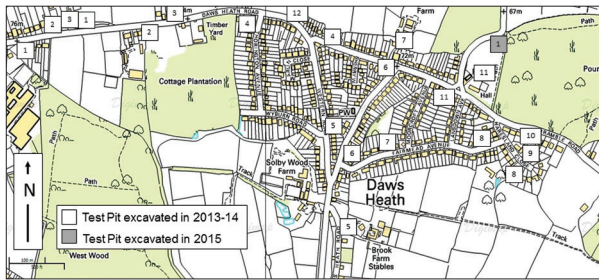


Figure 6 Daws Heath, Essex, showing approximate locations of excavated test pits.

of Romano British pottery and six of 19th / 20th century date.

### Hadleigh, Essex (NGR TQ 811871)

Hadleigh lies between 45–65 m AOD on the south coast of Essex overlooking Canvey Island across the Benfleet Creek which opens into the Thames estuary. Hadleigh sits on a small area of superficial sand and gravel deposits overlying Thames clays and sands (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). Hadleigh today is essentially a linear nucleated settlement with housing arranged along the A13 main road between Basildon and Southend and on estates laid out to its north. The area is now very extensively developed, encouraged in the 20th century by the area's proximity to London, leaving Hadleigh now effectively contiguous with Southend, whose central station lies 7 m to the east of Hadleigh's 12th century parish church. This lies in a traffic island around 1 km north of the 13th century castle. A little woodland survives to the north of the present town and the castle is surrounded by open ground.

The first edition 6-inch to 1 mile Ordnance Survey map shows Hadleigh in the 1870s to have been very different to today, notably smaller and somewhat dispersed. The settlement then was arranged along the same road now followed by the A13, but this only runs south of the church, in a widened form indicating its function as a marketplace with buildings either side. Immediately east of the church, the main east–west orientated road intersects with a north–south road. This has a few houses along it and a farm (Solbys) 400 m north of the church. To the west of the church, the east–west axial road narrows as it leaves the market area and continues into Hadleigh Common where there are a handful of buildings including a school and a former workhouse.

Fifteen test pits were dug in Hadleigh in 2015 (Fig. 7), three by members of the local history society. Romano-British pottery was found in three pits, all along the north–south orientated road which is plausibly of Roman origin. HAD/15/07 produced just a single tiny sherd unlikely to relate to settlement, but HAD/15/12 yielded a larger sherd (10 g) and HAD/15/10 a total of five sherds from a layer with no significant finds of later material. All five sherds were very small (7 g total assemblage weight) making it difficult to be confident that these represent settlement.

No material of identifiably Anglo-Saxon date was found, but seven pits produced pottery of high medieval

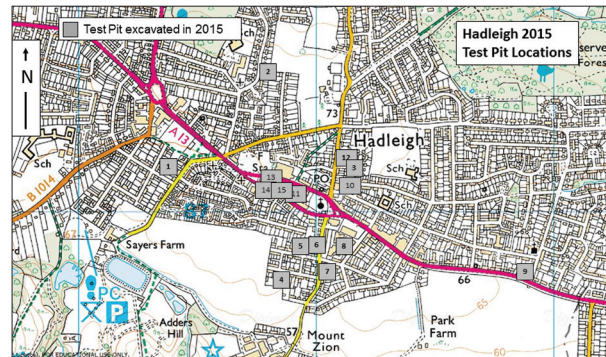


Figure 7 Hadleigh, Essex, showing approximate locations of excavated test pits.

date. HAD/15/01, 05, 07 and 08 yielded just a single sherd and may indicate the presence of manured arable rather than settlement. This absence is notable as the latter three pits all lie near the road running from the church to the castle which might be expected to attract settlement. In contrast, HAD/15/10 (north of the church) produced five sherds (enough to infer settlement in the immediate vicinity) and HAD/15/14 and 15 even large amounts, with the latter yielding more than 100 sherds, clearly indicative of intensive activity. Both these pits lie just over 200 m west of the church apparently beyond the market place at the point where the street runs onto the common-edge settlement. There is no significant decline in the late medieval period, while the only area to see an increase in the post-medieval period is that west of the church.

### Manuden, Essex (NGR TL 495265)

Twelve more test pits were excavated in Manuden in 2015, bringing the total to 40 (Fig. 8). Attention focussed on three outlying locations within this dispersed settlement pattern as well as the area of mostly modern housing east of Sheepcote Lane and Dogden Lane, c. 500 m north-west of the small settlement around the parish church. This is indicated as field and orchard in the 19th century.

No pottery was found pre-dating the 12th century, thus it seems increasingly clear that settlement in the Anglo-Saxon period may have been tightly restricted to the area immediately adjacent to the church. Although it might be

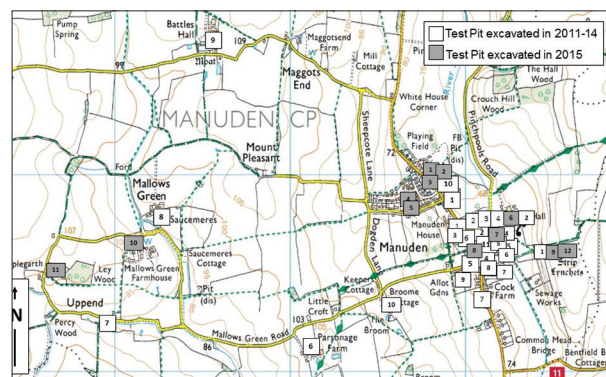


Figure 8 Manuden, Essex, showing approximate locations of excavated test pits.



suspected that some of the outlying ‘greens’ and ‘ends’ may be of pre-12th century origin, there is currently no evidence from the test pits to support this. In 2015 only a single sherd of high medieval pottery was found, a remarkably low count from 12 pits, again suggesting that the settlement may have been restricted and mostly focussed around the church and possibly at Parsonage Farm and Uppend. In the late medieval period, while the volume of pottery overall declines, several pits, notably two in the area east of Sheepcote/Dogden Lane (MAN/15/04 and 05) produced small amounts of pottery where none was found from earlier periods. For the post-medieval period both MAN/15/10 and 11 produced small amounts of pottery, and the overall pattern indicates that at least three of the outlying dispersed sites (Applegarth, Uppend and Mallows Green) were inhabited in this period, possibly for the first time.

### Southminster, Essex (NGR TQ 958996)

Southminster lies at c. 20 m AOD on the low-lying remote Dengie peninsula between Southend and Colchester but geographically cut off from these by the River Crouch to the south and the Blackwater estuary to the north. The present settlement of Southminster sits on a low ridge of river terrace sands and gravels overlying Thames clays and sands (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>), a little to the south of the Asheldham Brook. Southminster today is an essentially linear nucleated settlement with housing arranged along an east–west orientated road and minor roads running north and south. The 12th century parish church of St Leonard is thought to occupy the site of an Anglo-Saxon minster and lies in the centre of the present settlement adjacent to a staggered crossroad whose northerly arm extends towards Northend, now engrossed within the settlement.

The first edition 6-inch to 1 mile Ordnance Survey map shows Southminster in the 1870s to have been smaller and mostly arranged in a compact linear fashion along roads north, east and west of the church. Northend was a separate settlement comprising little more than a couple of farms. Buildings are more intermittently sited along South Street which follows a dog-legged route south from the church past cottages and then two farms named Wellingtons and Smyatts before leaving the village.

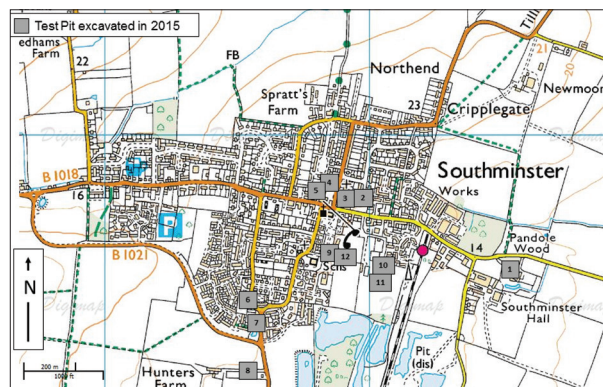


Figure 9 Southminster, Essex, showing approximate locations of excavated test pits.

Twelve test pits were excavated in Southminster in 2015 (Fig. 9). Unusually, the pottery included a sherd of Bronze Age pottery from SOU/15/06. Two pits (SOU/15/09 and 11) produced Romano-British pottery, both on or beyond the south-east margins of the present settlement within 200–300m of the church. No material of Anglo-Saxon date was found, but seven pits produced pottery of high medieval date. Six of these clustered in the area around and east of the church, suggesting this may have been where settlement was focussed in the 12th–14th century. Just three pits produced late medieval pottery, hinting at contraction in the post-Black Death period, while all pits produced post-medieval pottery, but in varying amounts indicating the settlement at this time was again focussed around the church with areas to the south and around Southminster Hall possibly used mainly for arable rather than settlement.

### Hampshire

#### North Warnborough (NGR SU 731515)

12 test pits were excavated in North Warnborough in 2015, adding to those excavated in 2013 and bringing the total to 33 (Fig. 10). As in former years, no material of Anglo-Saxon date was found, and just four pits produced pottery of high medieval date (NWA/15/02, 06, 09 and 10), none yielding more than a couple of sherds. Even less pottery of late medieval date was found, with just one pit producing a single sherd of late medieval transitional ware.

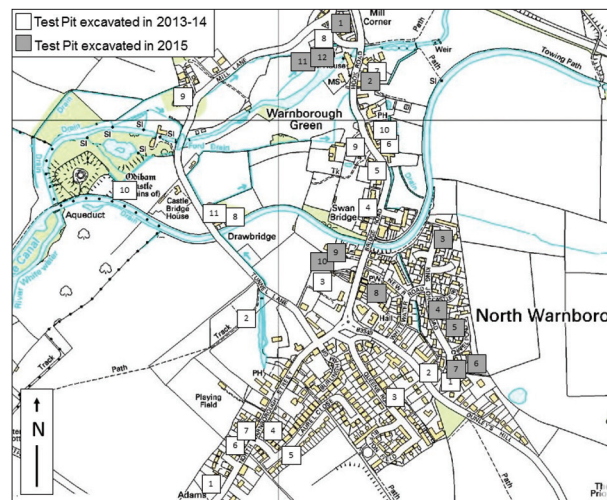


Figure 10 North Warnborough, Hampshire, showing approximate locations of excavated test pits.

### Hertfordshire

#### Great Amwell, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 372125)

Twelve test pits were excavated at Great Amwell in 2015, bringing the total to 35 (Fig. 11). Unusually, a sherd of Bronze Age pottery was found, located in GAM/15/02 in a paddock on the southern edge of the present settlement, and the 2015 excavations also indicated the possibility of an additional node of activity in the Iron

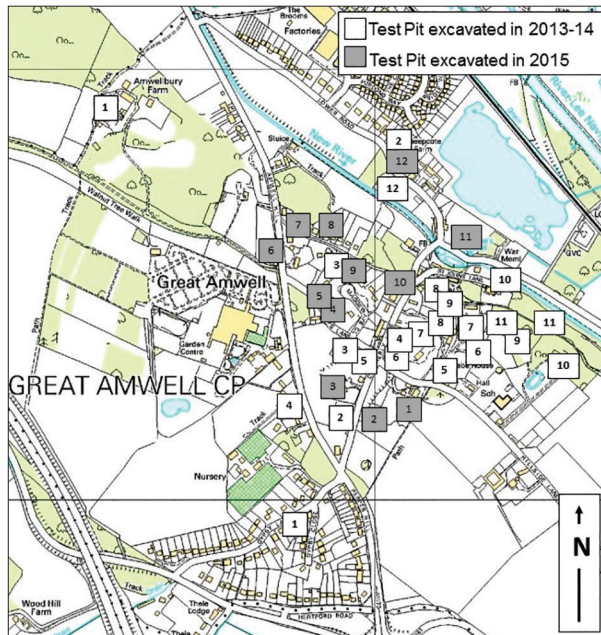


Figure 11 Great Amwell, Hertfordshire, showing approximate locations of excavated test pits.

Age and Roman periods, with sherds of this date found in GAM/15/04 and 05). These only amounted to a single small sherd from each pit, however, so it is difficult to surmise what this might indicate, although it is notable that there is now a series of pits producing material of this date, all at approximately the same height along this north-facing valley side, hinting at moderately extensive activity in an environment which may have been wooded at this time.

As in test pits excavated in Great Amwell in earlier years, pottery of Anglo-Saxon date was not found and that of medieval date was scarce, with just three sherds of high medieval material and five of late medieval date from all twelve pits. Overall, it appears unlikely there was an extensive medieval settlement here, but the activity which was carried out here does not seem to have been unduly adversely affected by post-14th century decline.

## Lincolnshire

### Bardney, Lincolnshire (NGR TF 119695)

Bardney lies between 8–12 m AOD on the edge of the Lincolnshire Fens *c.* 13 km east of the Roman and medieval city of Lincoln. Bardney sits on a low island of glacial sand and gravel at a point where underlying deposits of Amphill clay give way to mudstone (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). The present nucleated village is mainly arranged in a linear fashion along a WSW–ENE orientated road, with habitation also present along other routes extending north and south-east which meet east of the 15th century parish church. A further road runs north to the site of the former abbey of Bardney which lies *c.* 800 m north of the present village. To the west of the church, the village extends for *c.* 800 m towards the canalised

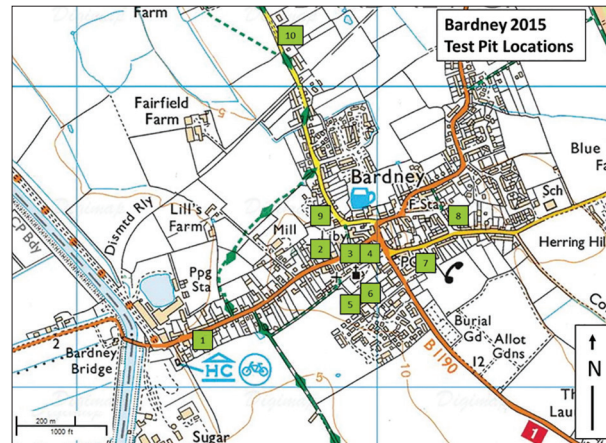


Figure 12 Bardney, Lincolnshire, showing approximate locations of excavated test pits.

River Witham where there is a modern bridge and some industrial works.

The first edition 6-inch to 1 mile Ordnance Survey map shows Bardney to have been a nucleated settlement with dispersed elements petering out along roads leaving the village. Settlement was sparse in the centre of the present village along Church Lane, but densely regimented along Station Road and clustered around two small triangular greens, separated by about 75 m, on which all the roads in and out of the village meet. Intermittent ribbon development along the road towards the river is more continuous as it approaches the point where a ferry was sited and a railway line was present. Interrupted row settlement extends sparsely, but nonetheless persistently, along most of the road towards the former Abbey and a similar pattern peters out along roads leading east out of the village.

Ten test pits were excavated in Bardney in 2015 (Fig. 12). No pottery pre-dating the Norman Conquest was found, which was interesting as Bardney Abbey was itself an Anglo-Saxon foundation. Three pits in the centre of the village along Church Lane and Station Road (BAR/15/02, 03 and 04) produced habitative volumes of high medieval pottery hinting at a core of settlement north of the church, possibly planned as a double row incorporating the parallel streets of Church Lane and Station Road. Somewhat more unexpected was the discovery of seven sherds of high medieval pottery from BAR/15/01, in the garden of a modern house close to the river and former ferry wharf/train station. It seems plausible that there was settlement of some sort here in the high medieval period, presumably sited to make use of the adjacent river. There is no evidence for any post-14th century decline, with the volumes of pottery rising slightly rather than falling. In the post-medieval period the settlement appears to extend a little to the east.

## Norfolk

### Blo' Norton, Norfolk (NGR TL 016797)

Blo' Norton lies at between 28–35 m AOD *c.* 15 km east of Thetford and *c.* 10 km west of Diss. Blo' Norton lies on gently undulating predominantly south-facing land



on the north side of the river Little Ouse. Lying barely 2 km from the watershed between this and the River Waveney, the underlying chalk geology of Blo' Norton is extensively overlain by glacial clays and gravels, with alluvial gravel to its west where it is closest to the Little Ouse valley (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). The present dispersed settlement is mostly arranged along two approximately parallel east–west orientated lanes, The Street (which runs east from the parish church) and Middle Road which lies about 400 m to its south. These lanes are connected at their west end by Church Lane and at the east end by Self's Lane, both orientated approximately north–south. These are just over 1 km apart, although there was formerly another north–south connecting lane approximately midway between Church Lane and Self's Lane. The church today sits alone bar a single farm, separated by *c.* 250 m from cottages and farms which extend intermittently along The Street for *c.* 850. 170 m south of the church, a single farm lies 100m from a cluster of houses at the western end of Middle Road where it joins Thelnetham Road and then Fen Lane.

In the 1880s, the first edition 6-inch to 1 mile Ordnance Survey map shows Blo' Norton to have been even more dispersed, with many fewer buildings along The Street or at the west end of Middle Road. The present parish church of St Andrew dates to the 13th century, although the first Edition Ordnance survey maps records the former presence of another church adjacent to this, dedicated to St Margaret (NHER 10920) and demolished in 1394 while cropmarks of a DMV (NHER 12983) have been recorded west of Blo' Norton Hall, a moated site *c.* 450 m west of the church.

Eight test pits were excavated in Blo' Norton in 2015 (Fig. 13), five along The Street, two south of the church and one at the eastern end of Middle Road. No pottery was recovered predating the 12th century, and while five pits produced material of this date, only three (BNO/15/01, 02 and 05) yielded more than a single sherd, and none more than three. Single small sherds only were found at Church Farm (BNO/15/03) and Whitehouse Farm, suggesting these areas may have been manured arable but were unlikely to have had high medieval settlement in the immediate vicinity. The late medieval period hints at a potentially interesting shift as the area with the most high medieval pottery (south of the church) sees a marked decline with only BNO/15/01 and 20 together yielding just a single tiny sherd. Conversely, in the area west of the junction of The Street and Hubbards Lane the

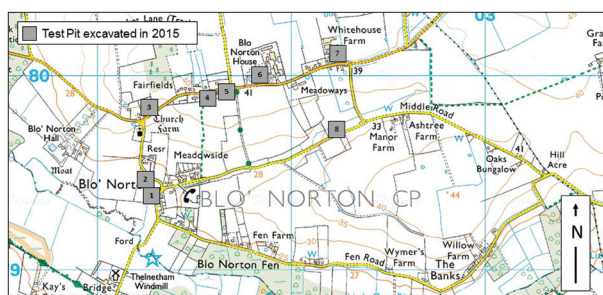


Figure 13 Blo' Norton, Norfolk, showing approximate locations of excavated test pits.

number of pits producing pottery rises from one to two. Again, however, overall quantities are small, with only four sherds found in total. In the post-medieval period the settlement pattern seems to settle down into two small clusters on these same locations, with BNO/15/01, 02, 04 and 05 all producing pottery of this date, with BNO/15/04 and 05 in particular producing more than ten sherds each. All pits produced pottery of 19th–20th century date, supporting the evidence from the first edition Ordnance Survey map.

#### Brundall, Norfolk (NGR TG 325084)

Brundall is located at *c.* 10 m AOD immediately overlooking the River Yare to its south, 8–10 km east of the medieval cathedral city of Norwich and 19–21 km west of the coast at Great Yarmouth. Brundall sits on quaternary deposits of marine Crag sands and gravels overlain for *c.* 200 m in the centre of the present village by more recent glacial clays. (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). The present nucleated village is arranged in a linear fashion along an axial W–E orientated road, with minor roads extending N and S of this giving access to other housing and commercial premises, while the 13th century parish church lies south of the axial road to the west of the present village's midpoint.

The first edition 6-inch to 1 mile Ordnance Survey map shows Brundall to then be exclusively arranged along The Street and extending for little more than 600 m (compared to *c.* 2 km today), mostly only on the north side of the road. St Lawrence's church stands quite isolated, 100 m south of any habitation along The Street and 200 m from its easternmost neighbour on the south side of The Street, with no settlement at all to the west.

21 test pits were excavated in Brundall in 2015 during two HEFAs, held in April and June. Bronze Age pottery was found in two pits sited close together in the same close. Their proximity along with the general rarity of this pottery from test pits suggest there was activity of some sort here in this period. One of these pits (BRU/15/06) also produced 12 sherds of Romano-British pottery, an unusually large assemblage which seems likely also to indicate intensive activity, probably settlement, in the immediate vicinity. Most of the sherds were quite small, suggesting a considerable degree of post-depositional disturbance. The same pit (BRU/15/06) also produced a stamped sherd of early Saxon pottery, a very unusual find from test pits suggesting activity, possibly funerary, in the period between AD 450 and 700. The same

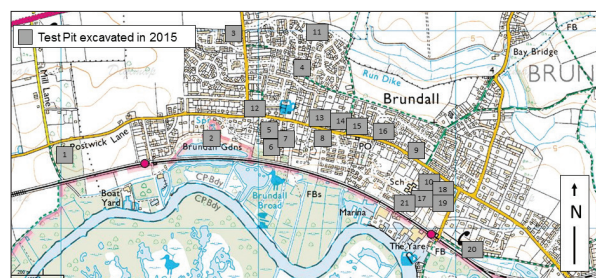


Figure 14 Brundall, Norfolk, showing approximate locations of excavated test pits.

site again produced three sherds of late Anglo-Saxon pottery, the only one excavated in Brundall in 2015 to produce any material of this date, and also ten sherds of high medieval pottery. This hints at the possibility that the earliest antecedent of the present village was sited near the church in the later Anglo-Saxon period, perhaps continuing possibly intermittent use of this same site since the Roman period. Pottery of high medieval date was found in four other test pits, although only two of these (BRU/1508 and 16), either side of The Street, yielded more than a single sherd.

There seems to be some contraction in the later medieval period, as only two pits (both south of The Street) produced any pottery of this date, and both yielded only a single sherd. The pattern changes dramatically in the post-medieval period, with 13 pits producing pottery of this date, indicating growth of the settlement boosted by its proximity to Norwich, Yarmouth and the River Yare connecting the two. The importance of the river to Brundall's post-medieval development is indicated by the presence of pottery of this date in three of the pits closest to the present marina (BRU/15/10, 17 and 21), where wharves and a boat yard were present in the 19th century.

#### Hillington, Norfolk (NGR TF 722 254)

Hillington is located at 22–33 m AOD *c.* 10 km north-east of Kings Lynn and *c.* 1 km south of the Babingley River which empties into the Wash. The settlement lies on glacial boulder clay overlying Gault mudstone immediately west of its boundary with chalk (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). The present small village is arranged in two discrete linear rows, one aligned along the main A148 road between Kings Lynn and Cromer and the other extending for 300m between the A148 to the 15th-century parish church of St Mary along Station Road, which then continues south to Grimston. North of the A148 lies Hillington Hall and an adjacent moated site (possibly ornamental rather than habitative (NHER 3511)) surrounded by parkland which extends as far as the road.

The first edition 6-inch to 1 mile Ordnance Survey map shows Hillington to then be similarly divided into two, although both parts of the settlement were then much smaller. The area along Station Road had just a school, the rectory and a couple of farms and cottages, while that along the main road comprised two inns, a farm and a dozen or so cottages. North of the road, the Ffoulkes Inn lies within the west end of a very regularly laid out block of thirteen plots, most of which were unoccupied in the 1880s.

Nine test pits were excavated in Hillington in 2015, all in the Station Road area (Fig. 15). Two pits (HIL/15/04 and 08) produced Bronze Age pottery, with the latter yielding two large sherds (13 g and 20 g respectively) from undisturbed contexts with no later material, strongly indicating settlement or funerary activity in this area of higher ground west of the much later church. Just one pit contained a single sherd of Roman material and no material of early or middle Anglo-Saxon date was found. The picture changes again in the late Anglo-Saxon period, with six of the pits (HIL/15/01, 02, 03, 04, 06 and 09) producing Thetford Ware dating to AD

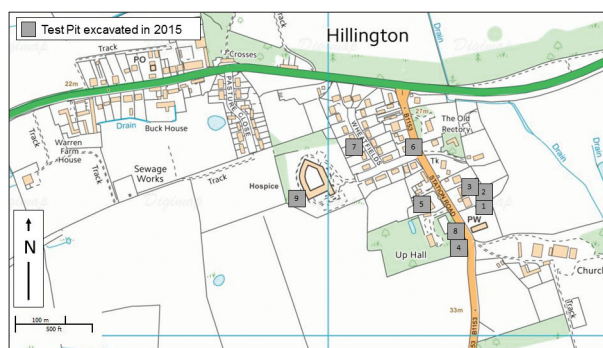


Figure 15 Hillington, Norfolk showing approximate locations of excavated test pits.

850–1100. No pits produced more than four sherds, but nonetheless this does provide a strong indication that a settlement north of the church was in existence at this time. Unusually, there is no rise in pottery yields in the high medieval period, with the same six pits producing pottery of this date, in similar numbers. This is in spite of the proximity of the contemporary pottery production centre in nearby Grimston, barely 2 km south of Hillington. Notably, however, casual scanning of the area around HIL/15/09 (where building work at the time of the test pit excavations had exposed much disturbed ground) collected more the 0.4 kg of high medieval pottery, hinting at the possibility that settlement extended west of the early modern community along Station Road.

There is a dramatic decline in the later medieval period, as no pottery of this date was found in any of the test pits excavated in 2015. While this may to some extent reflect the cessation of pottery production at nearby Grimston, it nonetheless hints at the possibility that there was very little activity in Hillington in the 14th–16th centuries. Recovery in the post-medieval period seems tentative, with only four pits producing pottery of this date, and only three (HIL/15/02, 03 and 05), all at the southern end of the present settlement, near the church, yielding more than a single sherd.

#### Hindringham, Norfolk (NGR TF 984364)

11 test pits were excavated in Hindringham in 2015, bringing the total to 33 (Fig. 16). Two test pits (HIN/15/03 and 09) produced a single sherd each of Ipswich Ware dating to AD 720–850, from pits separated by *c.* 600 m north and south of the church, hinting at dispersed activity extending across quite a wide area in the middle Anglo-Saxon period. Five pits produced Thetford Ware, adding to finds in previous years which together now suggest at least seven separate clusters of activity which may relate to settlement dispersed widely across the area. Six pits produced high medieval pottery in 2015, contributing to the overall picture of a modest increase in activity across the area of the present settlement in this period, with approximately two thirds of all 33 excavated pits producing one or more sherds of this date and around half producing two or more.

Four pits produced late medieval pottery, but only a single sherd from each, and overall the pattern is one of growth thrown into reverse in the late medieval period





Test pit excavation in CORS in the eastern region will continue in 2016 as a joint programme between the University of Cambridge and the University of Lincoln, with academic director Carezza Lewis based at the University of Lincoln from September 2015 and fieldwork from Cambridge overseen by Alison Dickens. The results of test pit excavations carried out in 2016 as part of the CORS project will be reported in the next volume of *Medieval Settlement Research*.

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