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# Archaeological Excavations in Saffron Walden, Essex, 2013

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LOTTERY FUNDED



**Archaeological excavations in Saffron Walden, Essex,  
2013**

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## 1 Summary

*In July 2013, two archaeological trenches were excavated on Saffron Walden Common by 30 local sixth-form students in a programme of excavations funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund 'All Our Stories' scheme and supported by the AHRC Connected Communities theme under its Cambridge Community Heritage project. The excavations were planned and supervised by Access Cambridge Archaeology in collaboration with Saffron Walden Museum. The trenches were sited over a feature identified during geophysical survey by Tim Dennis of the University of Essex, which crossed The Common on the approximate line of the outer castle bailey ditch proposed by Steven Bassett in 1982, but not previously proven. Over a period of 5 days, the excavations exposed two parts of a cut feature which proved to be a ditch with 12<sup>th</sup> century pottery in the base. The excavations thus provided firm evidence, for the first time, for the position and line of the outer castle bailey in this area.*

## 2 Introduction

Between 22<sup>nd</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> July 2013, two trenches were excavated on the north-western corner of The Common in Saffron Walden in north-west Essex. The work was undertaken in collaboration with Saffron Walden Museum and with permission by Saffron Walden Town Council who own the common. The excavations were undertaken by 30 16 plus students from both Saffron Walden County High and Newport Free Grammar School. The excavation was co-funded by the Heritage Lottery fund (HLF) under their *All Our Stories* funding stream and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) under their *Connected Communities* programme, *Cambridge Community Heritage*. The excavations were planned and undertaken in collaboration with Access Cambridge Archaeology (ACA), based in the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge, who provided advice, logistical support, on-site instruction and supervision and post-excavation support.

### 2.1 All Our Stories, Connected Communities and Cambridge Community Heritage

The *All Our Stories* grant programme<sup>1</sup> was funded by HLF to help local communities explore and discover more about their past. AHRC *Research for Community Heritage* grants were part of AHRC's broader '*Connected Communities*' theme and were specifically intended to promote contacts and interaction between community groups bidding for All Our Stories grants and academic researchers based in UK universities, with the aim of giving community groups greater access to resources and expertise that exists within universities, while creating new opportunities for academics to conduct research and gather data in a community context. Successful in responding to the *Research for Community Heritage* grant call, a team of researchers based in the University of Cambridge was funded to form 'Cambridge Community Heritage' (CCH), to support community groups in eastern England interested in making use of this funding opportunity<sup>2</sup>. A series of structured networking sessions were held in 2012 allowing interested parties to meet CCH researchers who then advised them in developing funding bids for submission to HLF. In total 500 projects were funded by the scheme nationwide, including 25 that were supported by CCH, who then provided support to the projects as they were delivered in 2013. One of these was Saffron Walden Museum's castle ditch project.

### 2.2 Saffron Walden Museum

Saffron Walden Museum is the accredited public museum for Uttlesford district (NW Essex). The Museum service's aim is "to give people a sense of place in the present, and inspiration for the future, through our wide-ranging collections and the histories they represent and by sustaining a proactive, high-quality service". The collections focus on the human and natural history of the district but include other British and worldwide material, notably ethnography and ceramics. The Museum is open 363 days per year and provides the usual range of museum displays and services including special exhibitions, activities and events, access to collections for research and services for visiting educational groups.

The Museum is operated by Uttlesford District Council which is responsible for staffing and revenue budgets. The Museum buildings and collections are owned by Saffron

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hlf.org.uk/news/Pages/AllOurStories.aspx> (accessed October 2013)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.arch.cam.ac.uk/aca/cambridgecommunityheritage.html> (accessed October 2013)



Walden Museum Society Ltd which founded the museum in 1835. The Museum Society provides funds for purchases to the collections and other specific collections-based projects, and fund-raises for capital projects.

The Museum's district is a large rural area and the museum has between 15,000 and 18,000 visitors per year, about 40% local residents, 30% from East of England and 30% visitors from other UK regions or overseas. The audience for activities and events is predominantly local, with family activities every holiday and half-term. The Museum works closely with a large number of local organisations in heritage, local history, wildlife and environment, and welcomes about 2,500 school pupils (2011-12 figures) (mostly junior schools) for special sessions with the Learning Officer.

### 2.3 Access Cambridge Archaeology (ACA)

Access Cambridge Archaeology (ACA) (<http://www.access.arch.cam.ac.uk/>) is an archaeological outreach organisation based in the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research in the University of Cambridge. ACA aims to enhance economic, social and personal well-being through active engagement with archaeology. It was set up by Dr Carenza Lewis in 2004 and specialises in providing opportunities for members of the public to take part in purposeful, research-orientated archaeological investigations including excavation. Educational events and courses range in length from a few hours to a week or more, and involve members of the public of all ages.

Thousands of members of the public have taken part in scores of programmes run by ACA, including teenagers involved in Higher Education Field Academy (HEFA) test pit excavation programmes intended since 2005 to build academic skills, confidence and aspirations. More widely, ACA has involved thousands of members of the public of all ages and backgrounds, including those with special needs, in a wide range of archaeological activities including field-walking, excavation, analysis and reporting. These have included projects funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and events in 2011-12 as part of the Cultural Olympiad for the 2012 London Olympic Games.

### 3 Aims, Objectives and Desired Outcomes

#### 3.1 Aims

The aim of the 2013 excavations on Saffron Walden Common were for Saffron Walden Museum to involve local secondary pupils in archaeological excavations which would seek to confirm whether the suspected line of the outer bailey ditch of the medieval castle bailey crossed the north-west side of Saffron Walden Common. There is potentially much public interest in local history and the castle ruins and their importance to the town need improved promotion and interpretation.

1. To advance knowledge and understanding of the origins of the town, how and why the castle bailey ditch was constructed, and what happened to it subsequently.
2. To engage with local schools and local communities, widening the participation of people in the heritage of Saffron Walden and its castle.
3. To enable local secondary school pupils to experience archaeological excavation and to develop a wide range of practical and analytical skills.
4. To increase knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Saffron Walden, its Castle and its environs amongst visitors to the excavations, the blog and the open day.
5. To inform future interpretation and presentation by Saffron Walden Museum of the history of the town and the castle.

#### 3.2 Objectives

1. To run an introductory after-school club workshop for students from each school in spring / early summer 2013 at Saffron Walden Museum
2. To carry out geophysical survey to pinpoint the course of the ditch and determine the optimum location for archaeological excavation.
3. To complete the excavation of one or more trenches across the outer bailey ditch on The Common, Saffron Walden excavation.
4. To enable up to 30 secondary school pupils from Saffron Walden County High School and Newport Free Grammar School to take part in the excavations.
5. To provide guided tours of the excavations, internet posts and a post-excavation event to enable the public to learn about the aims and results of the excavations.
6. To help Newport Free Grammar School pupils 'cascade' the story of the castle and the 2013 excavations to younger pupils in Newport Free Grammar's local 'feeder' primary schools.

#### 3.3 Desired Outcomes

1. An improved knowledge and understanding of the location, date, character, and condition of the archaeology of the north-west corner of Saffron Walden Common and specifically of the outer bailey ditch of Saffron Walden Castle in this area
2. Around 30 secondary school pupils better informed about the archaeology and history of Saffron Walden than before
3. Around 30 secondary school pupils with new archaeological skill including hands-on experience of practical archaeological research, excavation,

processing, recording and analysis, and in recognising and recording archaeological finds and features.

4. Around 30 secondary school pupils with new practical and presentation skills
5. Up to 30 secondary school pupils with an enhanced interest in the archaeology and heritage of Saffron Walden in the future
6. Up to 30 secondary school pupils with an enhanced interest in archaeology and heritage generally in the future
7. At least 100 local people and visitors with an enhanced understanding and awareness of Saffron Walden castle and the 2013 excavations on the Common.

This report presents the results of activities pertaining to objective 3.2.3 (above): the excavation of two trial trenches across the line of the castle bailey ditch.

## 4 Methodology

### 4.1 Trial Trench Excavation

The open area excavation followed standard procedures for trial trench excavations as suggested by the standards set for field archaeology in the east of England (Gurney 2003).

- Two trenches were sited across a linear anomaly identified by geophysical survey in the north-western corner of the common.
  - Trench one was the north-eastern of the two, orientated north-south and measuring 9.8m by 2.12m.
  - Trench two was the south-western of the two trenches and measured 14.1m by 2m and was orientated east-west. Trench two also had an extension eastwards at its south eastern corner of 1m by 2m.
- The trenches were excavated by machine to the top of natural under supervision, using a tracked digger to the chalk natural. Cut features were excavated sequentially by hand to natural. No built features were encountered.
- c.50% of bulk-removed spoil was sieved by hand after machining through a 10mm mesh to ensure maximum retrieval of archaeological finds.
- A register was kept of all photographs taken including feature/context number, direction of shot and date and time of day.
- At the end of the excavations, the trenches were backfilled by machine and the land re-seeded to fully restore the site.

### 4.2 On-site Finds Identification and Retention

Non-metallic inorganic finds and bone (unless in very poor condition) were washed on site where possible, thoroughly dried and bagged separately for each context of the test pit or trench. Either on site or during post excavation the animal bone, pottery, burnt clay, flint and burnt stone are bagged separately, ready to be given to specialists.

### 4.3 On-site Archaeological Supervision

The excavation was carried out by school pupils aged 16+ with training, supervision and specialist interpretation provided by professional archaeologists from ACA for the duration of the excavations. One supervisor was assigned to each of the two trenches to ensure required standards of excavation were met, with the site director on site throughout the excavations to provide additional specialist input and analysis, determine strategy, monitor progress, present the results to volunteers and the public each day and ensure the excavations overall met their stated aims (3.1.1-5 above).

### 4.4 Trench Closing and Backfilling

A member of the archaeological team inspected each trench before it was declared finished to confirm whether or not natural had been reached.

After the excavations were completed the archaeological records and finds are retained by the University of Cambridge for analysis, reporting, archiving and submission to HERs, publication and on-going research into the origins and development of rural

settlement. Finds are returned to owners after analysis is complete if they are requested; otherwise they are curated by the University of Cambridge.

## 4.5 Recording

The trenches were recorded following a Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) modified MoLAS system (Spence 1990); whereby numbers (fill) or [cut] were assigned to individual contexts and feature numbers F. to stratigraphic events. Sections were drawn at 1:10 and base plans at either 1:20 or 1:50, with a photographic archive consisting of digital images.

The site code was SWA/13.

## 4.6 Finds Processing and Recording

Few excavations retain all the finds that are made if they are deemed to be of little or no research value

### 4.6.1 *Finds appropriate for recording, analysis, reporting, retention and curation*

- All pottery has been retained.
- All faunal remains, worked and burnt stone have been retained
- All other finds from contexts pre-dating 1800 have been retained.
- All finds pre-dating 1900 have been retained.

### 4.6.2 *Finds appropriate for disposal after recording and reporting*

- The following finds which are not considered to warrant any further analysis have been discarded after they have been photographed and their weight and number by type has been recorded,: Slate, coal, plastic, Perspex, modern glass, modern metal objects (including nails), concrete, modern mortar, modern fabric, shoes and other modern items (including batteries and shotgun cartridges), naturally occurring animal shells, unworked flint and other unworked stone (including fossils).
- C20th window and vessel glass has been discarded after sorting, counting and weighing.
- C19th and C20th CBM have been discarded after counting and weighing. One sample of any hand-made, unusual or older type of CBM was kept with the remainder discarded after counting and weighing.
- Most fragments of C20th metal whose use can be identified has been discarded and the same is true for any unidentifiable object of ferrous metal, aluminium or modern alloys from contexts containing other material of post-1900 AD date. Modern nails have also been discarded but handmade nails were retained.
- C20th tile (floor, roof and wall) have been discarded after counting and weighing, with a sample of each type of pre-modern tile retained with the remainder discarded after counting and weighing. Any decorated examples have been retained unless these have been recovered in very large quantities in which case representative samples were retained with the remainder discarded after counting and weighing.
- Modern wood was weighed and counted but was also discarded.

#### 4.6.3 *Legal ownership of finds*

- Ownership of objects rests in the first instance with the landowner, except where other law overrides this (e.g. Treasure Act 1996, 2006, Burials Act 1857).

#### 4.6.4 *Curation of Archaeological Finds*

- All retained finds are stored temporarily by ACA at the University of Cambridge while analysis takes place, and will ultimately be curated by Saffron Walden Museum.
- All finds which are not discarded are retained and stored in conditions where they will not deteriorate. Most finds are stored in cool dry condition in sealed plastic finds bags, with small pierced holes to ventilate them. Pottery, bone and flint have been bagged separately from other finds.
- Finds which are more fragile, including ancient glass or metal objects, are stored in small boxes protected by padding and if necessary, acid free paper. Metal objects are curated with silica gel packets if necessary to prevent deterioration.
- All finds bags/boxes from the same context have been bagged/boxed together, and bags from all test pits excavated in the same settlement in the same year will be kept together. All the trench finds have also been stored together. All bags and boxes used for storage will be clearly marked in permanent marker with the site code (which includes settlement name code and year of excavation code), test pit number and context number.

### 4.7 Geophysical survey

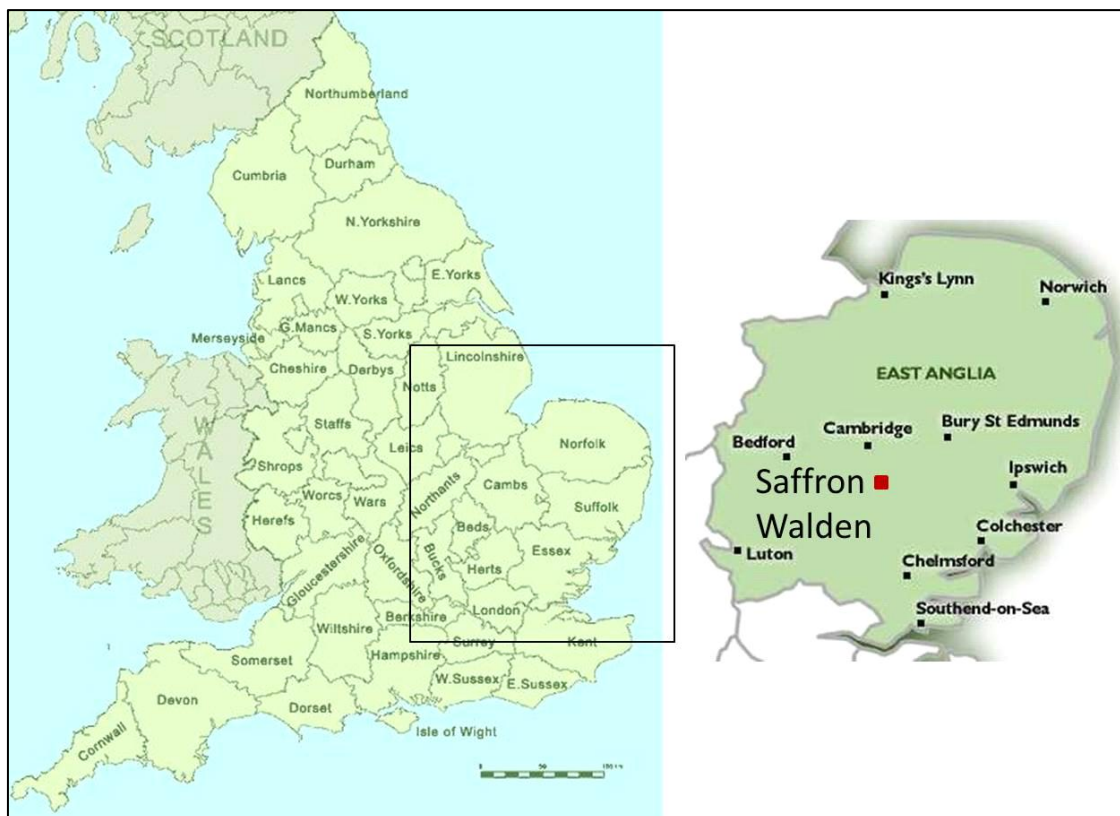
Geophysical surveys including ground penetrating radar (GPR), magnetometry and resistivity were carried out by Tim Dennis (University of Essex) and Ralph Potter in advance of and during the excavations in summer 2013. GPR survey in advance of the excavations covered an area of 40 x 40 m using a Mala X3M with 500MHz screened antennas with antenna separation of 18 cm. The user interface was a RAMAC XV Monitor. Tracking uses 300mm diameter wheel and encoder. Timewindow was 67 ns., with 512 samples within this period. Track spacing was 0.5 m and track length 40m. Nominal sample spacing along track 5 cm (= 20 samples/metre).

The same 40x40m area was also surveyed with a magnetometer (gradiometer) in advance of the excavations, using a Geoscan Research FM256 with a sensitivity of 0.1 nT. Eight samples were taken per metre along the track, with 2 tracks per meter (spacing 0.5 m), aligned approximately east-west. The video dynamic range was +/- 4 nT with positive anomalies shown black. Post-filtering limited the amplitude of small-scale features while preserving large ones.

The resistivity survey used a TR Systems instrument with 0.5 m probe spacing and covered two blocks, each side of the western (NS) trench, 13.5 x 25 m on the west side, and 20.5 x 24 m on the east side. The sample spacing was 0.5 m in X and Y directions. This survey was carried out while the excavations were in progress primarily for educational purposes.

## 5 Location

Saffron Walden is located in the north-west corner of Essex, 21.9km south-east of Cambridge and 18km north-east of Bishops Stortford, and the common, the focus of the 2013 excavations is centred on NGR TL. Saffron Walden is by-passed by the M11 to the west, the A11 to the north and the main Cambridge to Haverhill road, A1307 to the north and east.



**Figure 1:** Map of England with close up insert of East Anglia and the town of Saffron Walden highlighted in red. (Map courtesy of Digimap)

The historic core of the town is centred on St Mary's church and Walden Castle that both sit on an area of higher ground overlooking the Slade valley, and are bounded by two parallel roads, Church Street to the south and Castle Street to the north. A planned settlement within a large enclosure ditch was then laid out down slope to the south and west of the outer bailey with a new market place and streets. The town stayed relatively small until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, during which there has been a great expansion of modern developments on all sides of the town.<sup>3</sup>

There are seven roads that lead into the town from all directions and the main road is the B184, entering the town to the north-west from The Chesterfords and exiting to the south-east towards Thaxted. The B1052 also crosses the town from the north-east at Linton to the south-west and Linton, and the B1053 enters from the east from Radwinter. The last two small roads into the town are Debden Road in the south and Ashdon Road in the north-east, leading to both the villages of Debden and Ashdon respectively.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/documents/website/Planning/Core Strategy Historic Environment Characterisation Report.pdf](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/documents/website/Planning/Core%20Strategy%20Historic%20Environment%20Characterisation%20Report.pdf) (Accessed March 2013)

There are over 130 listed buildings recorded in the Saffron Walden today and the town is said to have the largest number of surviving timber framed buildings in Essex. Some have had later brick facades added and the majority have also peg tiled roofs with slate more abundant from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup>

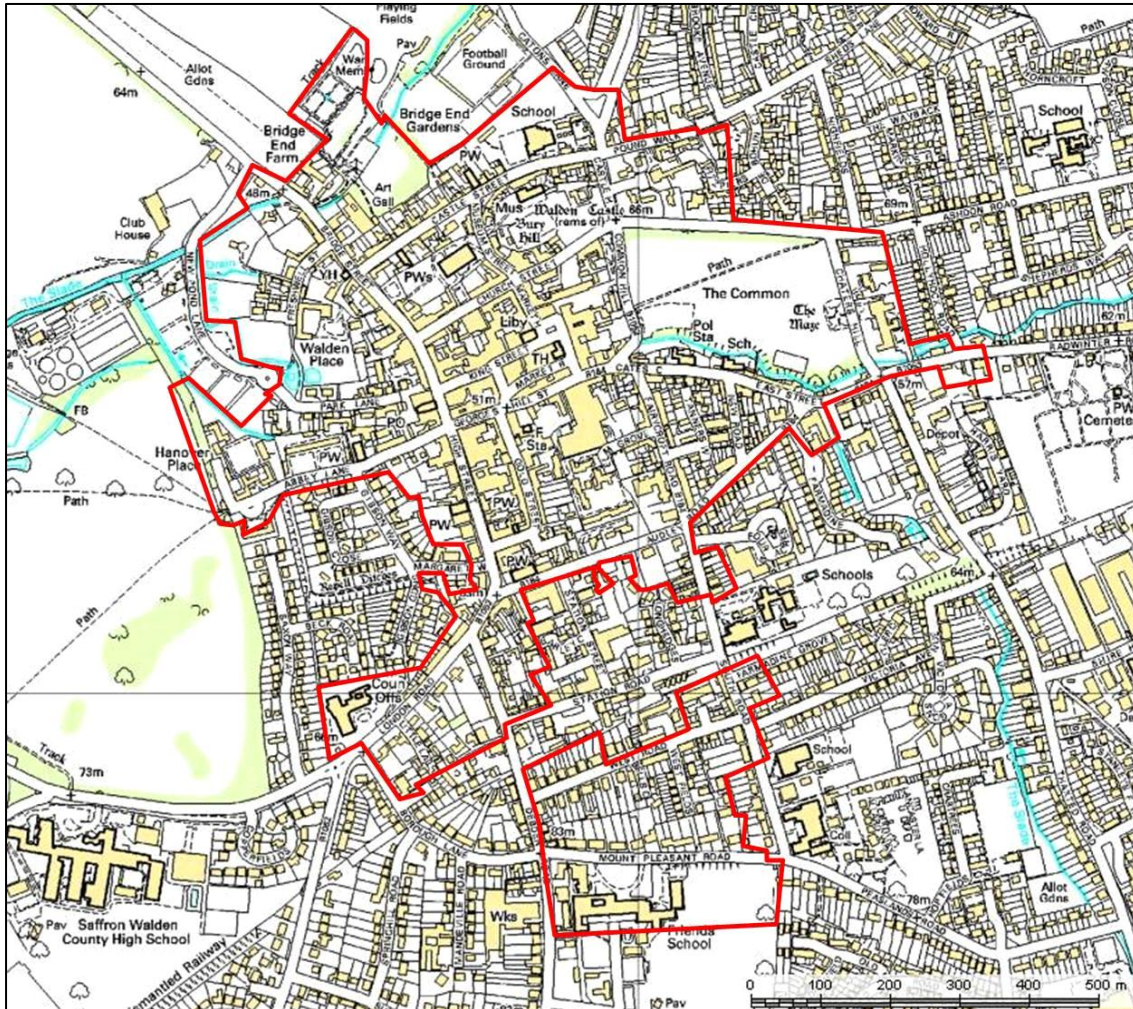


Figure 2: Extent of the Saffron Walden conservation area (Map courtesy of Digimap).

The extent of the town conservation area (as shown in figure 2), is focused on the historic medieval core of the town and its subsequent expansion during the post medieval. The vast majority of the town today however is 20<sup>th</sup> century development, all of which has been excluded from the conservation area. The site of the 2013 excavations on the common is located close to the eastern extent of the conservation area.

The town of Saffron Walden today has a wide range of local amenities, including a number of shops of High Street brands, charity shops and individual sellers. There are also markets, hotels, B&B's, pubs, supermarkets, doctor's surgery, dentist, hospital, a library, an art gallery, museum, primary and secondary schools, a cinema, a town hall,

<sup>4</sup> [http://uttlesford-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/saffron\\_walden\\_caa?pointId=1327079821843](http://uttlesford-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/saffron_walden_caa?pointId=1327079821843)  
(Accessed March 2013)



community centre, fitness centres, sports fields and a golf club. The population of the town was recorded as 14,659 in 2009.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/uttlesford/file/Saffron Walden Final\\_low\\_res.pdf](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/uttlesford/file/Saffron%20Walden%20Final_low_res.pdf) (Accessed March 2013)

## 6 Geology and Topography

Essex is a coastal county in East Anglia bounded by the North Sea to the east, Suffolk to the north, Cambridgeshire to the north-west, Hertfordshire to the west and London to the south. Saffron Walden is situated in the north-west corner of the county, the historic core of the town lies on a spur of land at c.65m OD known as Bury Hill, between the two streams of the River Slade, known as Kings Slade on the south and Madgate Slade to the north. These two streams converge to the west of the town as the Slade which flows into the River Granta to the north and west of Audley End. The Granta flows north to join the River Cam at Cambridge, before joining the River Ouse and entering the sea at The Wash.

The topography of Saffron Walden has been classified as part of the Cam Valley, which is characterised by a wide and deep valley that has rolling valley hillsides in the north with gentler slopes to the south. The valley sides have large regular arable fields that are divided by broken hedgerows, whereas the valley floor has enclosed small fields with dense areas of woodland. Small nucleated settlements are also present with one small town of Saffron Walden. The M11 skirts the western side of the valley and was built upon its highest parts. The underlying geology consists of upper and middle chalk, sand and gravels.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> [www.the-edi.co.uk/downloads/cb\\_lca\\_essex\\_2003reduceddoc1a.pdf](http://www.the-edi.co.uk/downloads/cb_lca_essex_2003reduceddoc1a.pdf) (Accessed March 2013)

## 7 Archaeological and Historical Background

The focus of the 2013 excavations on Saffron Walden Common was the outer bailey ditch of Walden Castle, where it is thought to cross the north-west corner of The Common. This area, presently under managed grass, has remained undeveloped throughout the town's history, so buried features are likely to survive intact. The ruined Norman keep is the most notable and oldest standing monument in town, but there are relatively few references to it in historical sources. Archaeological finds preserved in Saffron Walden Museum are from earlier and small-scale excavations around the inner bailey area and other parts of town. The castle's outer bailey defines the limits of the 12th century market town, when Geoffrey II de Mandeville, earl of Essex, transferred the market from nearby Newport to his castle at Walden.

### 7.1 Prehistoric Period

There is a scatter of prehistoric activity that has been identified along the Cam valley and through Saffron Walden (Essex county Council 1999), although most come from spot finds rather than as settlement evidence, until the Iron Age when the land around Saffron Walden appears to have been settled. The large number of pre Iron Age artefacts that were however also recorded suggest that this part of Essex along the river valleys was important for both survival and trade.

A small number of both Palaeolithic and Mesolithic implements have been recorded on the HER, but the majority of the prehistoric finds identified from Saffron Walden date from the Neolithic and later. A possible Palaeolithic hand axe was recorded to the west of town (SMR 389) with some flint flakes (SMR 388 and 493). A Mesolithic tranchet axe has been found at Audley End House (SMR 400), a sharpening flake from a tranchet axe was also found from the Abbey Lane area (SMR 426) and a number of flints have been found in the Abbey Lane, Elm Grove area at the Cinema Maltings. These consist of six graver spalls, one probable micro-burin and four flakes (SMR 429). Further flakes were also recorded from the Rose and Crown Hotel site (SMR 472) and around the Longheads area where Mesolithic flints, tranchet axes, axes and bladed cores have all been identified (SMR 509).

A total of seven flints were found on the surface at Bridge End Gardens in the north of the town during the excavation of a Victorian maze and have been dated to the Mesolithic-Neolithic periods. Only three flints had any evidence of use and have been identified as a blade, a scraper and a small rejuvenating flake (SMR 1941).

The Neolithic finds have been found all over the parish, including a number of flint flakes at Shortgrove Park (SMR 226) and just to the west of town a number of Neolithic tools were found, consisting of a small semi-polished axehead (SMR 384), a polished axehead (SMR 385), a semi-polished axehead (SMR 386) and a thin butted polished axe (SMR 387). Another axe was recorded from the western side of town (SMR 398) with an axehead recorded from Gibson Way (SMR 448). A Late Neolithic arrowhead was found at Abbey Lane (SMR 427) and both Neolithic pottery and a concentration of 1163 flints were found during excavations on the Abbey Lane to Elm Grove area of the town (SMR 430) with possible evidence for post holes, suggesting use as a palisade for agricultural activities rather than a structure. A Late Neolithic denticulate tool was found from the medieval Battle/Repell ditches in the town (SMR 439) with cores, 'other struck' nodules, unretouched pieces, and four awls and piercers (SMR 440). Additional

Neolithic flints were also recorded from Grimsditch Wood consisting of flakes, cores, scrapers and hammerstones (SMR 4784 and 4786) and from Byrds Farm (SMR 4823).

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century excavations of the Saxon cemetery to the west of town (see section 7.3) a number of prehistoric artefacts were also recovered dating to the Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age (see below). The Neolithic material recorded only consists of fragments of pottery (SMR 455). Fragments of Neolithic pottery were also found in a medieval feature at the Rose and Crown Hotel site during excavations (SMR 473). A possible Neolithic site has also been identified at Greenways as flakes; scrapers and a calcined flint were all found together (SMR 507). Excavations undertaken along West Road have yielded evidence for both probable Neolithic and Bronze Age activity. A possible causewayed enclosure was identified with two or three skeletons that were thrown into the ditch in haste. There were also a number of deep pits, which contained red deer antler and a date of Bronze Age has been suggested for these (SMR 508).

A few Bronze Age finds have also been recorded on the HER, including a penannular ring that was found in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century from Spring Wood at Audley End (SMR 266) and two barbed and tanged arrowheads which were found during excavations prior to a housing development in the Abbey Lane to Elm Grove area (SMR 431). Bronze Age pottery was also recorded from the Saxon cemetery (SMR 456) and a scatter of possible Bronze Age flints were also found along the routeway for the M11, to the far west of town (SMR 4891).

An archaeological evaluation prior to work on the Friends School in the south of the town has revealed evidence for Middle Bronze Age to Iron Age activity. This was in the form of both finds and features with a cluster of Middle Bronze Age flints and Early Iron Age pottery (SMR 14594).

A likely Early Iron Age hillfort has been identified to the west of Saffron Walden and Audley End, on the western banks of the River Granta at Ring Hill (SMR 151). Four entrances have also been recorded, although they may relate to different phases of occupation and the whole area encompasses about 6500 square metres and is now heavily wooded. A potential large Iron Age settlement has also been recorded at Rowley Hill Farm to the north of Saffron Walden (SMR 4885 and 6753) where there have also been scatters of Iron Age pottery also identified to the south of the farm (SMR 4883), with another identified by Grimsditch Wood (SMR 6752). A further area of Iron Age activity has been identified in the Abbey Lane to Elm Grove area of the town during excavations in the 1970's prior to a housing development. Evidence for a fenced enclosure was recorded with a linear boundary that was flanked by a lynchet and contained a number of pits used for storage and agricultural features. It was concluded from the pottery as well as the features that the site was in use through the Iron Age and may have been near to a settlement in both the Early and Late Iron Age, but the drop off in finds during the Middle Iron Age suggests that as the site had less use it was most probably away from an area of settlement at that time (SMR 432).

Iron Age Belgic style pottery was recorded in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the West of Bears Hall to the south-east of town (SMR 262) and from the higher ground at the castle during excavations during the 1970's and suggesting the finds are consistent with land being under cultivation at that time (SMR 409). Also potentially associated with the activity on Bury Hill is the identification of three parallel Iron Age ditches that were found at Myddylton Place (SMR 513). Three Iron Age ditches were also recorded along the High Street during sewer trench work in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (SMR 514). Further pottery fragments have been recorded from along Abbey Lane (SMR 420) and

from the Saxon cemetery excavations to the west of town (SMR 457) as well as at the Rose and Crown Hotel site where Middle to Late Iron Age pottery has also been recorded (SMR 474). A small scatter of Iron Age pottery has also been recorded to the west of Grimsditch Wood (SMR 4887) and on open land to the north-west of town (SMR 6726 and 6743).

There have also been some flint flakes found and recorded on the HER that have just been dated as prehistoric, including a flint blade butt from just to the west of town (SMR 375), awls, scrapers, cores and piercers from Abbey Lane (SMR 425) as well as further cores, scrapers, one hammerstone, awls, points and piercers from the Abbey Lane, Elm Grove area at the Cinema Maltings (SMR 428). The 19<sup>th</sup> century excavations of the Saxon cemetery revealed a number of undated flint tools, consisting of a flint core, a hammerstone and another struck nodule (SMR 451). Whilst digging along the railway line between Saffron Walden and Audley End in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century a range of faunal remains thought to be prehistoric in date were found. These were identified as both deer bone and antler remains (SMR 486). Additional prehistoric pottery has also been found close to the Waterworks in town (SMR 504). A post-Mesolithic dated utilised flake has also been recorded from within the town (SMR 510) and three flints have also been found to the west of Grimsditch Wood (SMR 4888). A concentration of flint flakes and artefacts were recorded on the gravel to the north of Rowley Hill Lodge sited to the north of town (SMR 6760) and from allotments between Saxon Way and Gibson Gardens (SMR 16852).

## 7.2 Roman Period

A large Roman settlement at Great Chesterford, just c.5km north of Saffron Walden, started life as a small fort during the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. This was short lived and was soon replaced by a large planned town that was walled during the 4<sup>th</sup> century<sup>7</sup>. A Roman settlement site is also known in Little Chesterford at Rowley Hill Farm (SMR 4878 and 4884). A number of likely Roman farmsteads and small isolated settlements were also evident through the Cam valley and Saffron Walden given the scattering of Roman finds that have been recorded on the HER and found mainly through fieldwalking.

A number of Roman coins have been found; most have not been specifically dated (SMR 399, 468, 470), although a number have been and include a Bronze coin of Claudius II from Borough Lane (SMR 515), a silver coin of Vespasian dating to AD 79 from the east of Audley End Park (SMR 467), a gold coin of Nero from the north-western edge of town (SMR 4903) and a silver coin of the Pomponian family (SMR 264) that was found near Copt Hall.

A range of other Roman finds have been found around the town, including some from the Iron Age hillfort at Ring Hill (SMR 152), grit mill stones were found to the west of Bears Hall (SMR 263) and a stone mortarium, fragments of lava mill stones, pudding stones and pottery were also all found from Hunter's Well, to the south of town (SMR 271) and fragments of millstone have also been found near to the waterworks in the south of the town (SMR 505). A double headed iron axe has also been recorded on Ashdon Road on the southern edge of the common (SMR 466) and a likely Roman bronze bracelet was identified from upcast from the Kings Slade (SMR 478).

Roman pottery fragments have been identified from the west of Bears Hall (SMR 261), at Barnard's Yard (SMR 414), at Abbey Lane (SMR 433) and the cinema maltings

<sup>7</sup> [www.Uttlesford.gov.uk/documents/website/planning/Core Strategy Historic Environment Characterisation Report.pdf](http://www Uttlesford.gov.uk/documents/website/planning/Core Strategy Historic Environment Characterisation Report.pdf) (Accessed March 2013)

(SMR 444). Pottery was also recorded at the Rose and Crown Hotel site (SMR 475), on Swan Meadow (SMR 489), to the east of Audley Park (SMR 222), at Westley Farm (SMR 4882) and on land to the north of Saffron Walden (SMR 6744). Roman pottery and building material remains have also been found in medieval occupation layers at the site of the castle (SMR 410), as well as in Saxo-Norman boundary ditches at Abbey Lane (SMR 422) and in the Battle or Repell ditches of the town (SMR 441).

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century excavations of the Saxon cemetery site (see section 7.3) a number of likely residual Roman finds were also recorded, consisting of pottery, tile, coins and brooches (SMR 452). Up to 50 of the burials that were excavated from the same cemetery site to the west of the current town may be Roman in date (SMR 458) and the excavators at the time (during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century) have suggested that the Saxon cemetery may have been a continuation of a Roman one. A Roman urn was also recorded at Alms House Meadow in the north of the town (SMR 471). A number of possible Roman cremation burials were also discovered on the north-eastern edge of town (SMR 516) as well as an inhumation burial from close to Grimsdtich Wood (SMR 4807). This burial likely contained a chest, with remains of samian bowls and a dish, a glass 'unguentarium', a bottle of thick green glass, the rim of a small glass vessel as well as fragments of pottery. Also found were an iron lamp-holder, part of an iron spear head, a spear shaft, a pair of rude iron hinges, parts of an iron staple and hasp, pieces of lead and six lion-headed bronze studs. Other finds from same field include a Samian bowl, a cup, a small deep patera, parts of a large dish, part of a bottle of thick green glass, a wide mouthed vessel of very thin greenish glass, three very small bronze studs, a dupondius of Trajan, and a small part of a very large amphora.

At Audley End House evidence for a pottery kiln was found in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (SMR 399), with fragments of pottery and coins so a likely nearby small settlement is almost certainly to have also been in existence at the same time.

The possible line of a Roman road has also been recorded on the HER, although this is still subject to conjecture it may run east-west through the current town (SMR 213).

### 7.3 Anglo-Saxon Period

Evidence for Saxon occupation within Saffron Walden is limited as it seems that the focus of settlement at this time was to the south and west of the historic medieval core of the town, and close to the Gibson Close area. A large Middle to Late Saxon cemetery (SMR 418, 453) has been excavated in this area in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and has revealed evidence for both Christian and Pagan burials, suggesting the cemetery was in full time use until sometime between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, until the current location for St Mary's church was chosen. Its extent is known to have been just a few metres from the western edge of the Battle Ditches (the medieval town ditch) and there are areas of the cemetery where there are no burials, suggesting the possible presence of a small church on site.

Excavations in the 1970's have also revealed evidence for a settlement (SMR 419) that dated mainly to the Late Saxon period and continued into the early part of the high medieval. This settlement is the most likely to have been the village of *Waledana*, as it was recorded in the Domesday Book (see section 7.4) prior to the movement of the settlement to its current position during the 12<sup>th</sup> century as a new planned town. The excavations revealed that it was a palisaded enclosure, within which were a number of boundary ditches, but there was also a lack of structural evidence, which has been explained by the fact that they may have been built of cob, fragments of which were identified in the upper fills of the boundary ditch and will leave little or no trace in the

ground. Iron knives, nails and worked bronze objects, including a spoon were also recorded with the pottery. Evidence for an Early Saxon settlement was also noted during the cemetery excavations in the form of early pottery and possible sunken featured buildings. It seems likely that there was a settlement here throughout the Saxon period, although the focus of which moved as the village developed.

Further fragments of Early, Middle and Late Saxon pottery (SMR 421) were also recorded in the same area at Abbey Road and are probably associated with the Saxon settlement. Fragments of Early-Middle Saxon and Late Saxon pottery have also been recovered from both the medieval town ditch as well as medieval boundary ditches (SMR 434, 435, 442, 445) and from nearby farmsteads, including Westley Farm (SMR 4881) and Rowley Hill Farm (SMR 4886 and 6756). A clay loom weight and pottery have also been recorded at Byrd's Farm (SMR 4824) and pottery from land to the east of Grimsditch Wood (SMR 4890) to the north-east of the town and two small long brooches have also been recovered from land to the east of Audley Park and to the west of town (SMR 7306).

## 7.4 Medieval Period

As already mentioned, (Saffron) Walden was recorded in the Domesday Book as *Waledana*, which in Old English means 'valley of the Britons' (Reaney 1935, 537) and was held by a man called Esgar prior to the Norman Conquest at 19 and ½ hides. By 1086 the manor had been given to Geoffrey de Mandeville, the first Earl of Essex, it being his second most valuable manor, after Great Waltham.<sup>8</sup> The Domesday Book extract entry that:

*'there were 8 ploughs, now 10, the men had 22 ploughs, there were 66 villans, now 46, there were 17 bordars, now 40, and there were 16 slaves, now 20. Then and later there was woodland for 1000 pigs, now 800 and there were 80 acres of meadow and 1 mill. Attached to this manor were 13 freemen, now 14, holding 6 and ½ hides. Then there were 8 and ½ ploughs, now 8 and there were 10 bordars, now 14. There was woodland for 50 pigs, now 30 and there are 20 acres of meadow and the third part of a mill. There were then 6 horses, 11 head of cattle, 200 sheep, 110 pigs, 40 goats and 4 hives of bees. There are now 9 horses, 10 head of cattle, 243 sheep, 100 pigs, 20 goats and 30 hives of bees. Then and later it was worth £36, it is now worth £50. Of this manor, Odo also holds 1 hide and 1 virgate and Reginald holds 1 hide less 12 acres and there are 2 ploughs and 13 bordars and this is worth 50s'* (Williams & Martin 2003).

The castle built by Geoffrey de Mandeville's grandson, also called Geoffrey, probably sometime in the second quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century but probably completed by 1141 (Bassett 1982, 16) on a spur of high ground known as Bury Hill, between the two streams of the Slade (Kings Slade and Madgate Slade). The keep (the only surviving remains) was built from flint and mortar and was at least three storeys high and was surrounded by an inner bailey, which was in turn enclosed in a much larger outer bailey that not only enclosed the castle, but also the church and the newly planned town and market place and followed the contours of the Bury Hill promontory (Bassett 1982, p 15-20 and fig 10). The line of the inner bailey has been reconstructed with some confidence (fig 3). This formed an oval measuring c. 150m (north to south) by 200m (east to west) extending from immediately east of the keep west almost to the

<sup>8</sup> [www.uttlesford-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/saffron\\_walden\\_caa?pointID=1327179821843](http://www.uttlesford-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/saffron_walden_caa?pointID=1327179821843)  
(Accessed March 2013)

church: the keep was thus located close to the eastern perimeter of the inner bailey. The line of the outer castle (and town) bailey is more conjectural, but sections of ditch have been observed in excavations in Barnards Yard (Bassett 1982, 64-6), at Castle Hill house (Bassett 1982, 61-3) and Castle Street (Ennis 2005) and is thought to run some 60-70m outside the present lines of Church Street and Castle Street and cross the north-west corner of The Common.

The castle was seized from de Mandeville in 1143 AD by King Stephen and although subsequently restored to him, in 1157 money was collected for the demolition of the castle, along with de Mandeville's other Essex castles including Pleshey. Pleshey was refortified between 1167-80 AD and it is likely that this also happened at Walden, probably before 1200 AD (Bassett 1982, 16) although no evidence exists to indicate whether the residence was fortified or merely rendered habitable at this time. A licence to crenellate was granted in 1347 AD and by 1381 AD a masonry hall had been built west of the keep (Bassett 1982, 17).

In a charter dated 1141 AD, de Mandeville was granted a licence to move the weekly market from the nearby town of Newport, into Walden where it was probably sited within the castle's outer bailey. This was close to the site of the current High Street, between Church Street and Castle Street, where an old stone market cross was also recovered during the early 20th century.<sup>9</sup> The crown also granted the right to re-route the main road from an earlier line close to the River Cam to what is now known as the High Street, which crosses the western end of the outer bailey (ECC 1999).

A Benedictine priory was sited on the later site of Audley End House, to the west of Saffron Walden, at the meeting of two streams and four roads for 'the convenience of the poor and of travellers'. The priory was built in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century by Geoffrey de Mandeville and was endowed 19 churches, including St Mary's at Walden as well as many acres of land and mills. It was dedicated to St Mary and St James the Apostle and was elevated to the status of an abbey in August 1190 and the patronage passed to the crown, before being passed back to the Earls of Essex. There was also an abbey church on site that was probably built in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century and was dedicated to St Mark. Patronage was known to have passed back to the crown, prior to the dissolution in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>10</sup>.

A church, dedicated to St Mary (after the priory) was also erected on the same spur of high ground as the castle, immediately to its west and quite central within the outer bailey. It is very unlikely that there was an earlier Saxon church on the site given the location of the Saxon settlement focused away from the new medieval town, although that settlement may well have had a wooden church given the evidence for early Christianity in some of the cemetery burials (see section 7.3). The first reference to the church was in a foundation charter for Walden Abbey (1139-1143) when it was assigned to the 'parish church of the Blessed Mary of Walden' (*ibid*). The current church is built from flint with dressings of both limestone and clunch and consists of a west tower and spire, a perpendicular style nave, wide north and south aisles, north and south porches, a chancel and a north and south chapel. The earliest part of the building dates from the later 13<sup>th</sup> century but was largely rebuilt from the middle 15<sup>th</sup>

<sup>9</sup> [www.recordingtutlesfordhistory.org.uk/saffronwalden/saffronwaldenhistory.html](http://www.recordingtutlesfordhistory.org.uk/saffronwalden/saffronwaldenhistory.html) (Accessed March 2013)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=39831> (Accessed March 2013)



century to the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, with restorations evident from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards<sup>11</sup>.

By the early 13<sup>th</sup> century the manor of Walden had passed to the de Bohun family who ordered the construction of a new, larger town which was laid out on a gridded plan between 1227 and 1230 (Bassett 1982, 23) to the south and west of the outer bailey of the castle. A new town ditch was dug (known as the Battle Ditches, Repell Ditches or the *magnum fossatum*) and was roughly square in shape, enclosing an area of about 20 hectares or c.0.2 square kilometres (Bassett 1982, p 15-20, fig 10). The 12<sup>th</sup> century outer bailey ditch of the castle, if still in existence by this time, must have been levelled and backfilled at this point

The new town was laid out with a gridded street pattern, with the High Street, Gold Street (the original line of Cross Street/Church Path) and Market Street set east to west and Abbey Lane/George Street/Hill Street, Church Street and Castle Street set north to south. A new market place was also laid out in a rectangular fashion between Cross Street, Hill Street and Market Street. By the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century however it seems that only the High Street and the market area were built up, with the remainder being under agricultural use (ECC 1999).

From the late medieval period onwards the town prospered as an important trading centre as part of the East Anglian wool and cloth industry, particularly with the production of saffron crocus, that was used to make dye and from which the town eventually took its name<sup>12</sup>. St Mary's church benefited greatly from this new wealth as it became one of the largest parish churches in Essex and Walden Abbey even kept flocks of sheep as part of this economy. Any spare gardens within the town were also utilised for the production of the crocus as both the soils and the climate of the area proved ideal for cultivation<sup>13</sup>.

## 7.5 Post-Medieval and Later Periods

The trade of Saffron for both the cloth and wool industries continued through the early post medieval period, although tolls by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century were becoming a burden, with a gradual decline into the 18<sup>th</sup> century accelerated when cheaper Saffron began to be imported from southern Europe and the Middle East<sup>14</sup>. Manufactured dyes were also becoming more widely available and the focus of the cloth industry actually focused elsewhere in the country, all of which contributed to the decline of the industry in Saffron Walden<sup>15</sup>.

By the late 18<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century however, the town became the centre of the Essex malting industry and as many as 15 pubs existed in the town, which in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was still within the confines of the medieval ditched town. It was only at this time that the town ditch was finally infilled, which allowed for the expansion of the town, particularly with the coming of the railways in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The station was built in the south of the new town and became an important manufacturing centre with the erection of goods sheds, a cement works, a stream driven corn mill, an iron foundry

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/buildingsproject/St Mary's Church SW Statement of Significance Sept 2011.pdf](http://www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/buildingsproject/St%20Mary's%20Church%20SW%20Statement%20of%20Significance%20Sept%202011.pdf) (Accessed March 2013)

<sup>12</sup> [http://unlockingessex.essexcc.gov.uk/uep/content\\_page.asp?content\\_page\\_id=132&content\\_parents=48,94](http://unlockingessex.essexcc.gov.uk/uep/content_page.asp?content_page_id=132&content_parents=48,94) (Accessed March 2013)

<sup>13</sup> [www.saffronshops.com/index.php?id=history](http://www.saffronshops.com/index.php?id=history) (Accessed March 2013)

<sup>14</sup> [www.visitessex.com/saffron-walden](http://www.visitessex.com/saffron-walden) (Accessed March 2013)

<sup>15</sup> [http://unlockingessex.essexcc.gov.uk/uep/content\\_page.asp?content\\_page\\_id=132&content\\_parents=48,94](http://unlockingessex.essexcc.gov.uk/uep/content_page.asp?content_page_id=132&content_parents=48,94) (Accessed March 2013)

and malting's<sup>16</sup>. The malting trade eventually declined as well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mainly due to heavy taxation, although Saffron Walden was able to still grow, mainly due to the market which was central for local agriculture<sup>17</sup>.

Saffron Walden railway was part of the line from Cambridge to London, although the first station was built at Audley End in the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and by-passed the town entirely. Due to public demand, the line was extended to Saffron Walden and to Bartlow as part of the Stour Valley Railway that was opened in 1865. The line was finally closed in 1964<sup>18</sup>.

Walden Abbey became the 6<sup>th</sup> wealthiest in Essex when it was recorded in the Valor of 1535 at £372 18s 1d<sup>19</sup>. The last abbot was removed soon after the Dissolution and the land was purchased by Sir Thomas Audley in 1538, who then built a house, incorporating some of the abbey remains. Excavations in the late 1970's revealed that the north, south and east sides of the inner court at Audley End House and probably the west side also incorporated the lower parts of the walls surrounding the monastic cloister. Further foundations have been recorded under the eastern lawn and flower beds, as well as under the bowling green, where burials have also been noted<sup>20</sup>.

Audley End House was actually built by Thomas Audley's grandson, Thomas Howard and was much larger than his grandfather's property when it was built between 1603 and 1614, but was also named in honour of his grandfather. The current building today is only a third of the size of the original house that once stood on site and mainly dates from after 1762, when a vast remodelling and restoration project was undertaken. The original house was built as a palace and was frequently utilised to entertain royalty, and was actually owned briefly by King Charles II in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, which he used as a base to attend Newmarket races<sup>21</sup>.

## 7.6 Previous Archaeological Work along the Outer Bailey Ditch

More 50 excavations, evaluations and watching briefs have been carried out in Saffron Walden as well as some antiquarian investigations (eg Smith 1884). A number of these relate directly to the outer ditch of the castle bailey (eg Andrews, Munday and Walker 2002; Bassett 1982; Clarke 1998; Ennis 2005a; Ennis 2005b; Letch 2006; Ravetz and Spencer 1961) and have allowed its position to be firmly established in three places and conjecturally reconstructed elsewhere (fig xx). The following summary is restricted to consideration of work undertaken along the projected course of the outer castle/town bailey ditch, which are most relevant to the 2013 excavations on The Common.

The most recent work undertaken over the bailey ditch was in 2005 by Essex County Council Archaeology Field Unit (Ennis 2005) at 63a Castle Street. Both archaeological excavation and a watching brief were undertaken in advance of the construction of three properties on the site. The outer bailey ditch was recorded through the middle of the excavation area on a north-east/south-west alignment and was 6.4m wide and just over 3.5m in depth and had a steep V-shaped profile. The ditch was originally dug through the chalk bedrock indicating that the bank would have been made up of pure chalk up-cast. A small amount of medieval pottery was also found from the upper fills of

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>17</sup> [www.visitsaffronwalden.gov.uk](http://www.visitsaffronwalden.gov.uk) (Accessed March 2013)

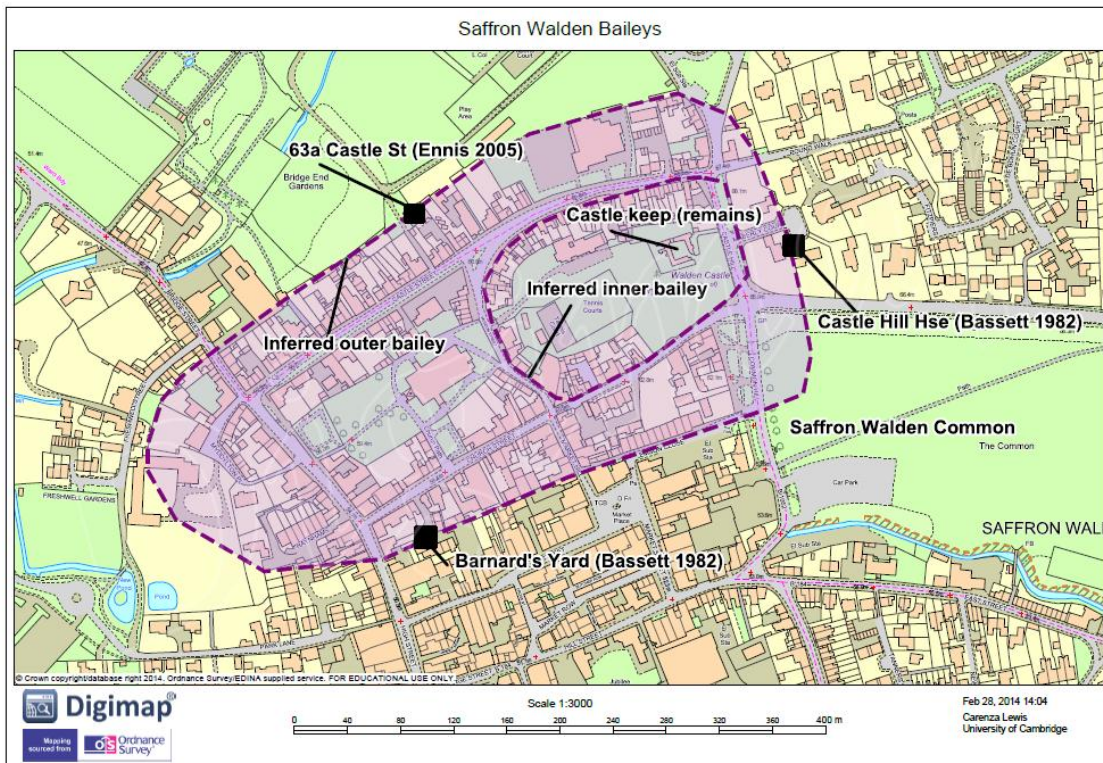
<sup>18</sup> [http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/s/saffron\\_walden/](http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/s/saffron_walden/) (Accessed March 2013)

<sup>19</sup> [www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=39826&strquery=](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=39826&strquery=) (Accessed March 2013)

<sup>20</sup> [http://pastscape.org/hob.aspx?hob\\_id=373672](http://pastscape.org/hob.aspx?hob_id=373672) (Accessed March 2013)

<sup>21</sup> [http://pastscape.org/hob.aspx?hob\\_id=541502](http://pastscape.org/hob.aspx?hob_id=541502) (Accessed March 2013)

the ditch, dating from between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, dating to the period when the ditch began to silt up naturally. No later pottery or finds were recorded from the ditch and it was inferred that it was deliberately in-filled by the later medieval period when it was also capped with a layer of compact chalk. There is some evidence for later activity on site, with the presence of undated post holes, pits and a gully, which all likely relate to post medieval occupation on site.



**Figure 3:** Saffron Walden, showing excavation sites mentioned in the text and the inferred lines of the inner and outer bailey ditches (dashed lines).

A number of excavations were undertaken within the town during the 1970s, including one at Castle Hill House which is situated just 30m east of the castle keep (Bassett 1982). The outer bailey ditch was identified here following a north-west/south-east alignment and was 6.5m wide and had also survived to a depth 2.4m below the 19<sup>th</sup> century landscaping. There was evidence that the ditch experienced some natural silting up, but also that there was also a dump of material that entered the ditch from the south-west and it has been suggested that this may have been from a deliberate reduction of the bank.

The ditch of the outer bailey was also recorded in trial trenching at Barnard's Yard situated on the south side of Bury Hill with frontages on both the High Street and Church Street. Although the amount of excavation that was able to be carried out was limited, a number of sherds of pot of 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century date were recorded in the upper fills with a few sherds dating to the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century. The evidence suggested that there was natural infilling of the ditch, with also a lot of slippage from the bank and was also then certainly levelled as part of the 13<sup>th</sup> century extensions of the town (*Ibid*).

## 8 Results of the Excavations on Saffron Walden Common

### 8.1 Geophysical survey

The best results were achieved from the GPR survey (fig 4) which revealed a substantial linear cut feature continuing the line of Emson Close crossing the common from west to east. This feature was on the same alignment as the outer bailey ditch excavated in Barnard's Yard in the 1970s (Bassett 191982, 61-66). Approximately 45m east of from the western edge of The Common, the feature turned by a little over 90° to head in a roughly northerly direction in line with the ditch section excavated on the Castle Hill House site (Bassett 191982, 61-66). GPR survey indicated the feature was likely to be a ditch 2-3m deep. The magnetometer survey picked up the same feature, albeit less clearly, but suggested the feature was a ditch partially backfilled with topsoil, which would be more magnetic than the surrounding chalk natural. Although the feature identified by the GPR survey followed the conjectured line of the outer bailey ditch in terms of its general alignment, its turn was much more sharply angled than had previously been supposed (Bassett 1982, 6). In addition, the GPR survey indicated that the north-south orientated arm of the ditch appeared to continue south beyond the point where it turned west/met the east-west orientated part of the feature. Both these characteristics contradicted the anticipated results, and called into question the interpretation of the feature as the outer bailey ditch. Excavation was therefore essential in order to test this interpretation and to attempt to date the feature and establish its character, use and condition.

Immediately south of the ditch corner, in the south-east of the surveyed area, a faint circular feature was tentatively interpreted as a potential ring ditch. This was not excavated in 2013.



**Figure 4:** Results of ground penetrating radar survey conducted in 2013.

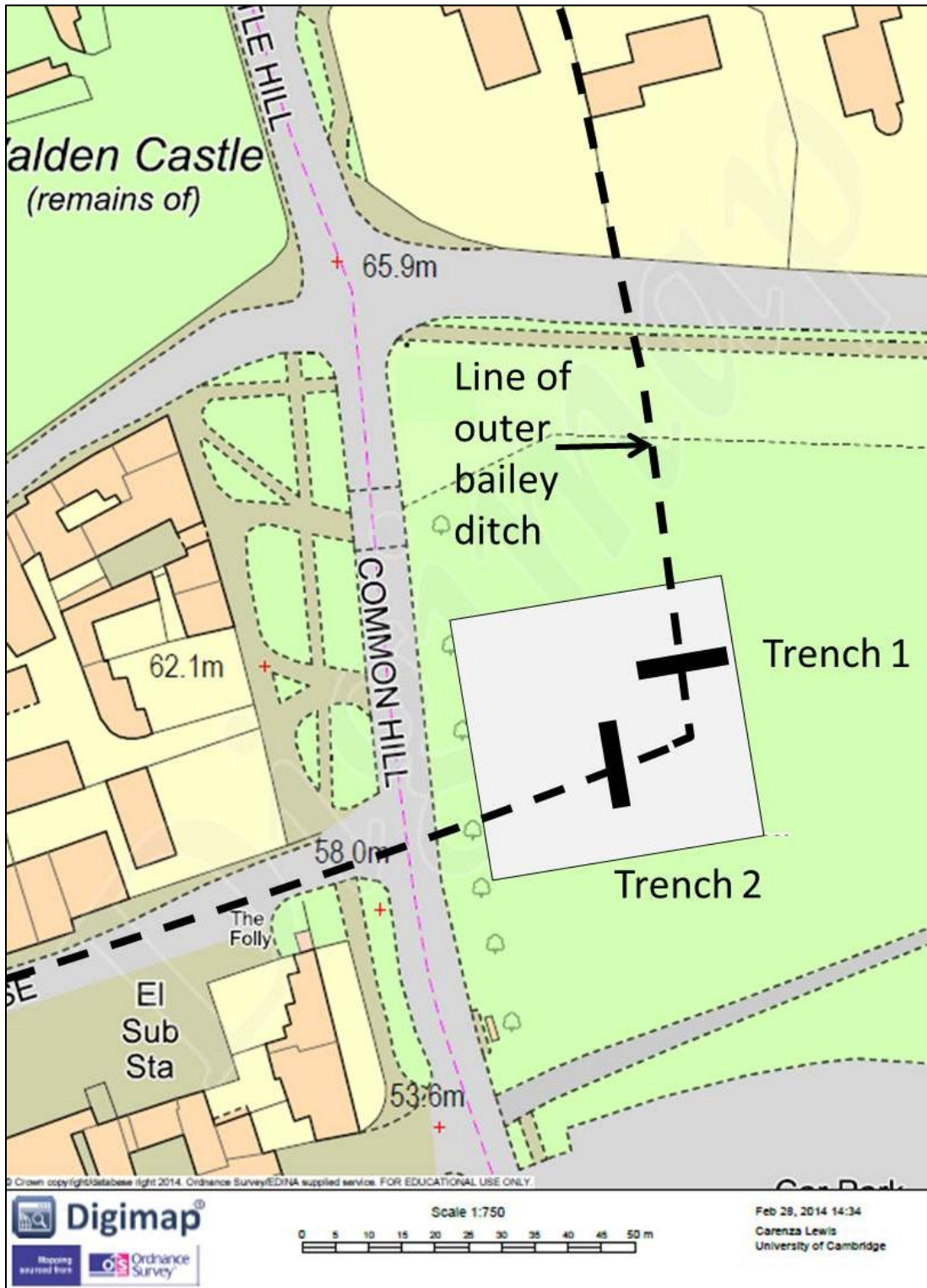


Figure 5: Trenches excavated in 2013 on Saffron Walden Common. The area of geophysical survey shown in grey with the line of the outer castle bailey ditch indicated by geophysical survey and confirmed by excavation shown as a dashed line.

## 8.2 Trench 1

Trench 1 was the eastern of the two trenches, orientated east-west and measuring 9.8m in length, 2.12 in width and was excavated to a maximum depth of c.0.47m. The trench was machine excavated to the natural and a single north-south orientated linear feature (SWA13/F.1) was identified running through the middle of the trench, cutting into the natural.

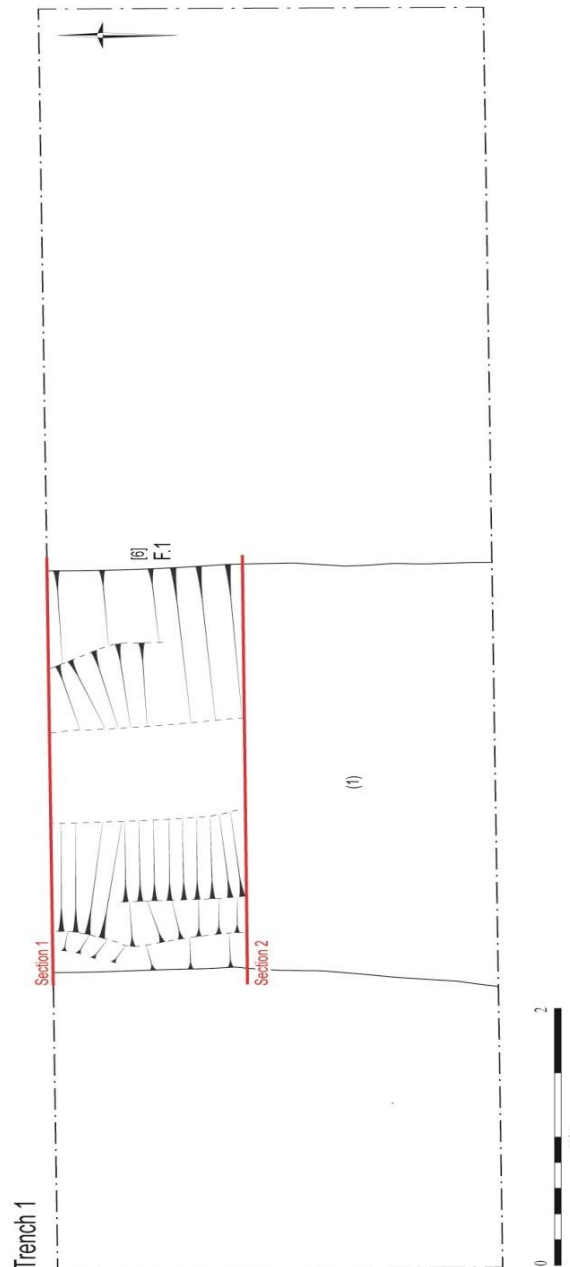


Figure 6: Plan of Trench 1



**Figure 7:** *Photograph of Trench 1 before excavation showing ditch flanked by periglacial features*

SWA13/F.1 was a linear ditch 3.3m in width and 1.57m in depth with a regular steep-sided V-shaped profile sloping at c. 50° to a gently rounded base [6]. It contained five fills, the basal fill being (5) a moderately compact chalk deposit with occasional light brown silt inclusions, three snail shells and a small assemblage of primary, secondary and tertiary flint flakes. This was overlain by a thicker deposit (4) a moderately compact dark brown silt with frequent chalk lumps, large natural flint nodules concentrated in the centre of the feature and several fragments of snail shells but no other finds. (3) was a slump fill on the western side of the ditch comprising a fill of light brown clayey silt and angular chalk lumps with frequent large flint nodules concentrated in the centre of the feature and stone inclusions. Two snail shells and a corroded iron nail were found in (3). A mid-level slump fill was (2), a compact clean chalk with occasional medium flint inclusions. No finds were recovered from this fill. The uppermost and largest fill of the linear was (1) a moderately compact light brown slightly clayey silt and chalk fill with frequent small stone inclusions and occasional large flint nodules. Finds from this fill consisted of tile, glass, slag and scrap metalwork, as well as worked flint comprising five secondary flakes and two tertiary flakes.

Approximately 50% by volume of the machine-excavated spoil from trench 1 was sieved through a 10mm mesh. The wide range of mostly modern finds that were recovered from this process are listed in appendix 13.5. A range of pottery was also recovered from the spoil heap sieving, consisting of Early Medieval Sandy Ware, Orange Sandy Ware, Hedingham Ware, Red Earthenware, Cistercian Ware, English Stoneware and 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century wares. A number of animal bone species were also recorded from the spoil heap including cow, sheep/goat, pig, horse, rabbit and an additional smaller number of fragments only recorded as cattle- and sheep-sized remains and bird bones. Five pieces of worked flint were also recovered and have been identified as four secondary flakes and one tertiary flake.

The majority of the small finds that were identified from sieving the spoil heap of trench 1 were modern in date and consisted of a bullet, cap badge, thimble, tube fragment, shotgun cartridge, buckles, strap fittings and lead shots. Further post-medieval finds were also recorded as a lead token with the inscription J.W. as well as two lead shoe fittings and an unidentifiable piece of lead



**Figure 8:** *South facing section through F.1, Trench 1*



**Figure 9:** *North facing section through F.1, Trench 1*



Section 1

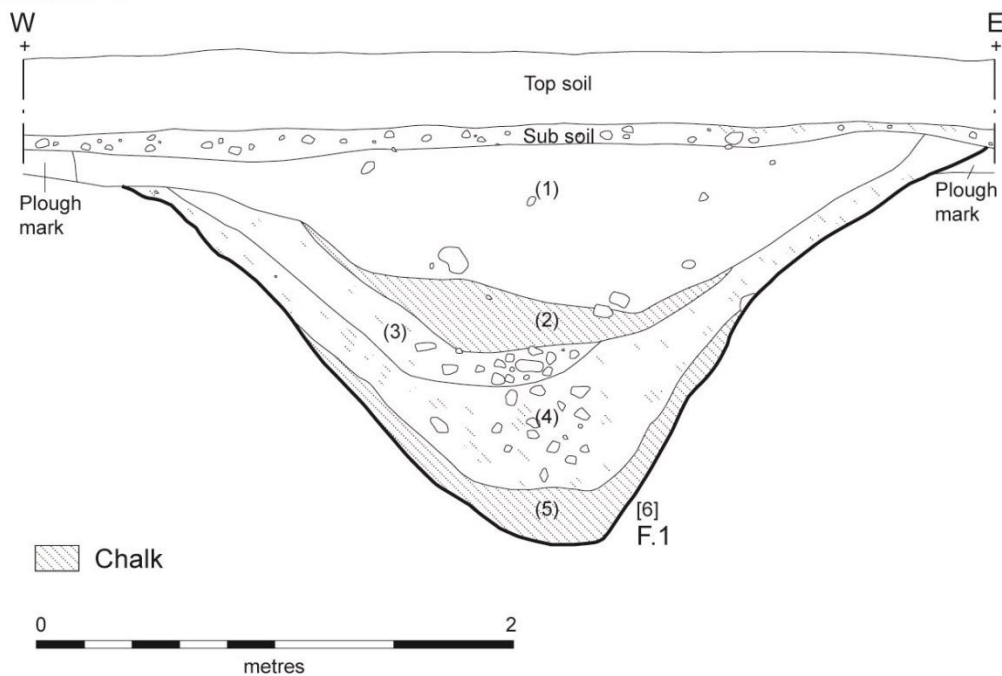


Figure 10: South facing section through F.1, Trench 1

Section 2

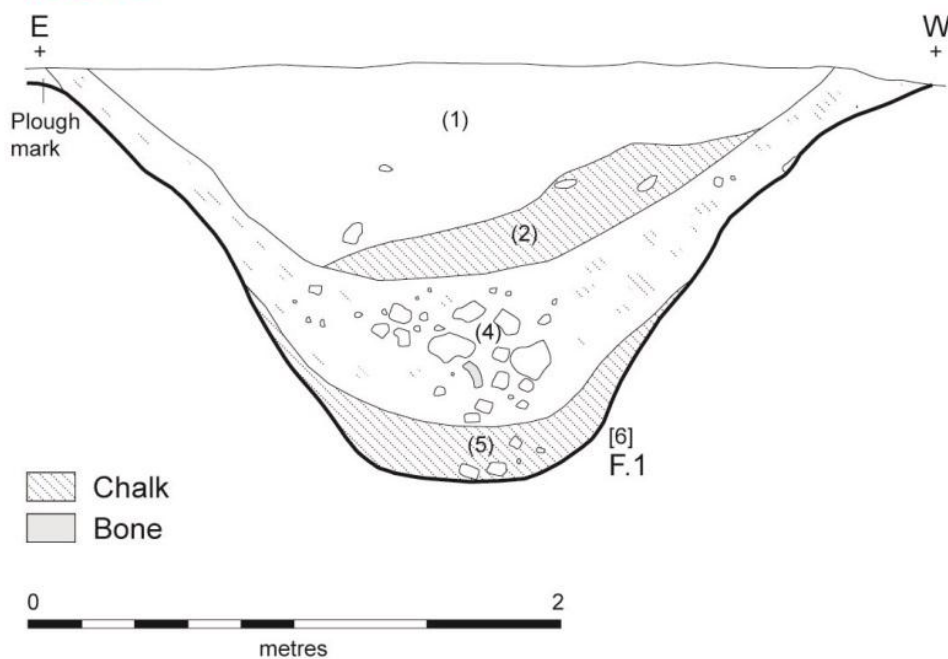


Figure 11: North facing section through F.1, Trench 1

### 8.3 Trench 2

Trench 2 was the westernmost of the two 2013 trenches and was orientated north-south, measuring 14.1m by 2m. It was machine excavated to a maximum depth of c.0.4m with identified cut features excavated by hand. A single slot extension was added to the south-eastern corner of the trench, measuring 1m in length and 2m in width. This extension was entirely hand-excavated.

A single feature was encountered in trench 2, F.2, which was an east-west orientated linear ditch 4.4m in width and 1.74m in depth with steep sides dropping to a slightly rounded base [12]. While the north side of the ditch sloped at a fairly consistent angle of around 40°, the south side was much more irregular, and may have been unfinished or partly stepped. F.2 contained five fills, the lowest of which was (11), a compact dark brown sandy silt with snail shells and numerous sherds of Early Medieval Sandy Ware pottery, several of which were large and heavily sooted. A single sherd of Roman pottery was also recovered, along with eight sheep/goat bones and five fragments of sheep-sized animal remains. A second basal fill was (10) a mixed chalk and light brown silty loam soil with large flint inclusions. No finds or pottery were present in (10). The mid fill was (9), a crumbly dirty chalk deposit with large flint inclusions that also contained a single piece of CBM, one sheep/goat bone and smaller fragments of both cattle- and sheep-sized bones. Although no identifiable mortar was noted during excavation, fill (9) had a creamier colour and sandier texture which hinted at the possible inclusion of mortar in the mix. (8) was a compact upper fill of mixed chalk lumps and brown silty loam soil with medium flint inclusions and no finds or pottery present. The uppermost fill of the linear was (7), which contained compact large clumps of chalk with light brown silty loam inclusions. A fragment of brick and small piece of slate were present along with Cistercian Ware and 19<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> century ware pottery sherds as well as two secondary flint flakes.

Around 50% of the machine excavated spoil from trench 2 was sieved through 10mm mesh sieves, which produced a wide range of finds, the full list of which can be seen in appendix 13.5. The pottery recovered consists of Early Medieval Sandy Ware, Orange Sandy Ware, Hedingham Ware, Red Earthenware, Cistercian Ware, English Stoneware, Frechen Stoneware, Staffordshire Manganese Ware and 19<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> century wares. A number of animal bones were also identified from the spoil heap and have been identified as cow, sheep/goat, pig and dog with additional fragmentary remains recorded as both cattle- and sheep-sized animals. A single flint scraper was also found from the spoil heap.

All small finds recorded from trench 2 were recovered from the top soil and as in trench 1 the majority were modern in date. These included were a ceramic ball/bottle stopper, a gold plated Royal Canadian Sea Cadets cufflink, two machine made thimbles, a ceramic ball, a lead bullet,, a possible break block, a jew's harp, a copper alloy ferrule (possibly the end of a snooker cue), a copper alloy washer, an eyelet and a copy of an East Asian coin used for jewellery ornamentation. A few finds dating to the post medieval period were mainly identified as pieces of scrap lead, but a copper alloy double-tongued buckle was also recorded along with some 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century finds. These have been identified as a hairpin, a mother of pearl button, half a pince nez, a pocket watch winder and a mother of pearl button or cufflink. An undated glass bead was also found.

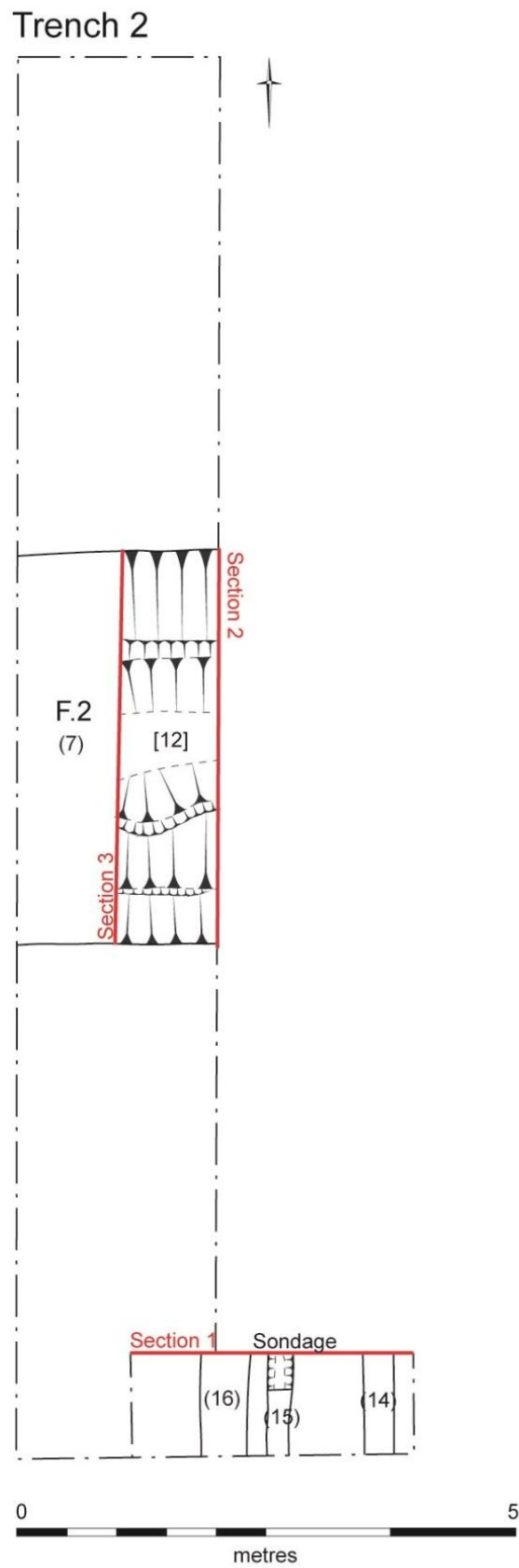


Figure 12: Plan of Trench 2

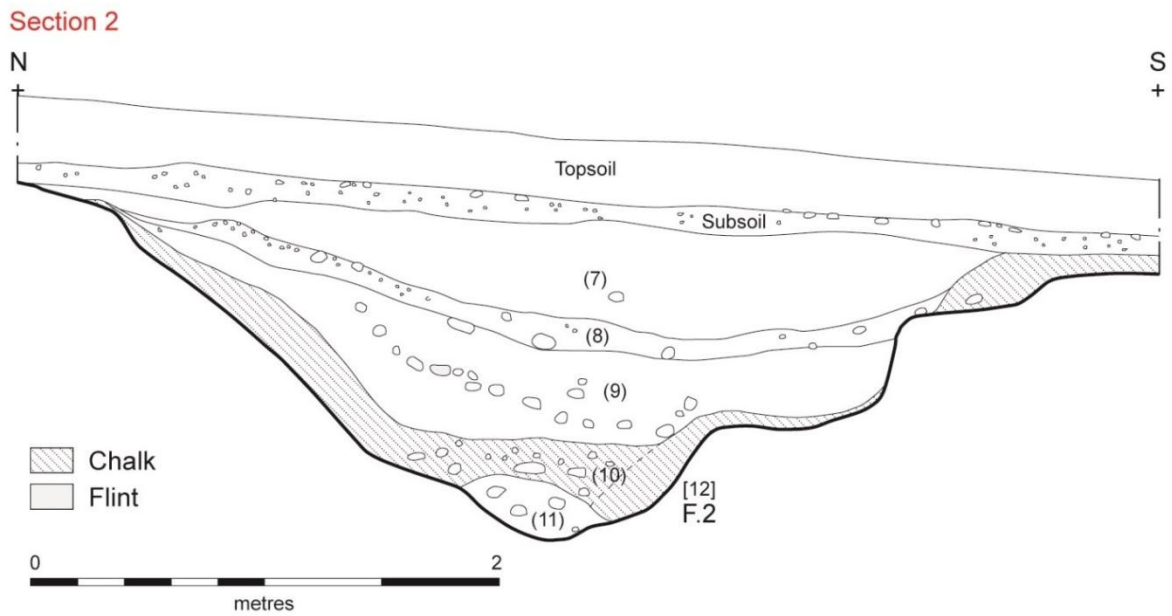


Figure 13: West facing section through F.2, Trench 2

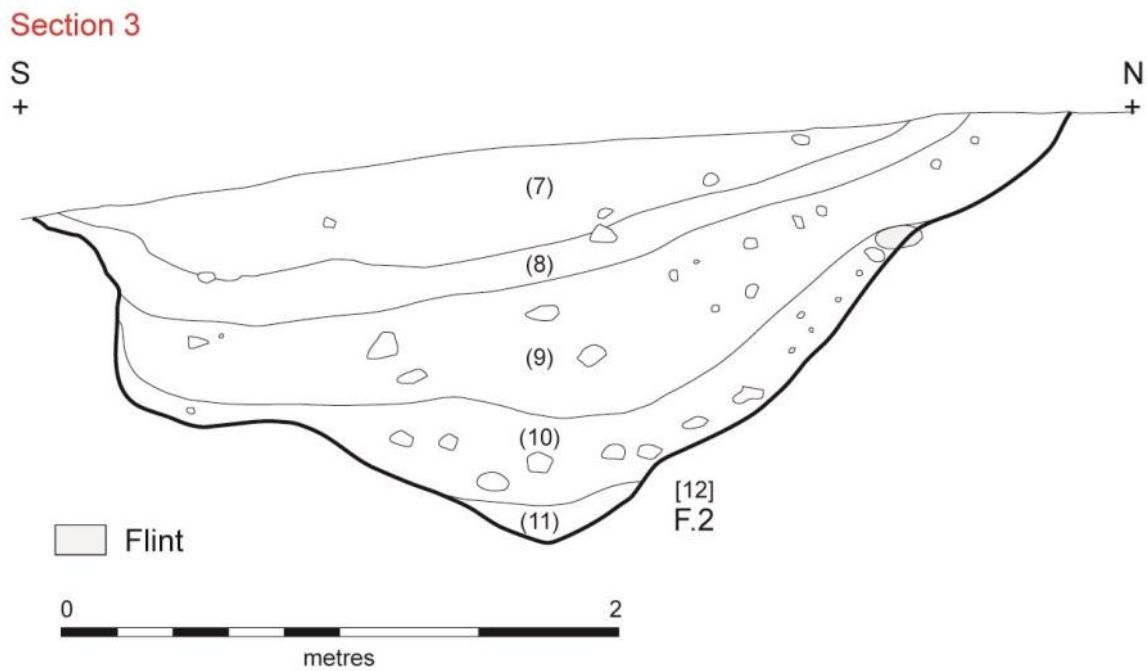


Figure 14: East facing section through F.2, Trench 2



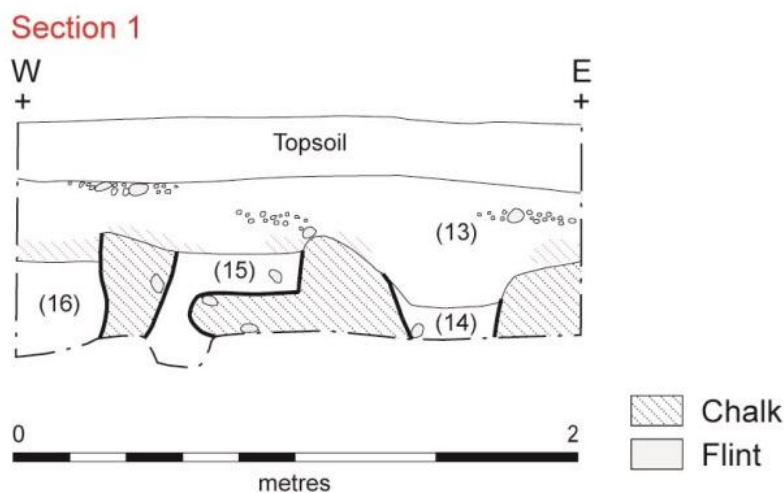
## 8.4 Trench 2 extension

Narrow linear features orientated approximately were noted widely across both trenches after the machine-excavated overburden had been removed and the exposed surface of the natural cleaned by trowelling. All were orientated approximately north-south, therefore running across the contours of the site. A small extension was added to the south-eastern corner of trench 2 in order to determine the origin of these features. The extension was 2m in length and 1m in width and was entirely hand excavated. This revealed three of these features (fig 17 & 18) which on excavation proved to be shallow and irregular in profile although predominantly vertical-sided. The top soil was metal detected and the full finds list can be seen in appendix 13.5. No pottery was recovered.

(13) was a compact dark grey clayey silt layer under the topsoil and contained moderate stone and flint inclusions and chalk lumps. A small number of animal bone fragments were found in this layer and have been identified as pig and horse with also fragmentary remains of a sheep-sized animal.

(14) was a compact light orangey brown sandy silt with occasional large flint nodules and frequent chalk flecking. Animal bone was also recorded from this layer and has been identified as sheep/goat, pig and horse with fragmentary remains of sheep-sized animals also recorded.

(15) and (16) were similar to (14), although (16) had more chalk and stone. Fragmentary animal bone from (15) could only be identified as sheep-sized remains.



**Figure 17:** South facing section through periglacial features in the extension to trench 2



**Figure 18:** *Photograph of south facing section through periglacial features in extension of Trench 2*

## 9 Discussion

Most of the archaeological evidence recovered in 2013 dates to the medieval period, but some material residual from earlier activity was recovered as well as a number of finds relating to post-medieval and modern use of the area as open recreational space close to the town centre.

### 9.1 Periglacial era

Narrow linear features crossing the contours (ie up and down the natural slope) of The Common were extensively present cutting into the natural in areas where the natural had not been removed by the cutting of SWA13/F.1 and SWA13/F.2. Three of these were excavated in the extension to trench 2. Despite the presence of small amounts of mostly fragmentary animal bone the orientation of these features and their form shows them to be natural features created by periglacial cryoturbation and downslope solifluction scoring grooves as material was dragged downhill. The contrast between the resulting grooves and surrounding chalk may have been subsequently enhanced by tree root growth and worm action, which would also have allowed artefactual remains such as animal bone to become incorporated. These features are similar to those noted in excavations elsewhere in Saffron Walden (Limbury 1982).

### 9.2 Prehistoric period

A small assemblage of worked flint including eight pieces of prehistoric date and 10 possibly of prehistoric date attest to activity in the late Neolithic to later Bronze Age in the area. With the exception of three flakes (two of which may be medieval) from the basal fill (5) of SWA13 F.1, all the worked flint came from uppermost ditch fills or topsoil. The small size of the flint assemblage, despite 50% sieving of the machine-excavated deposits (even without the observation that more than half the recovered flakes may derive from medieval or early modern flint-working related to construction rather than prehistoric tool-making), suggests that prehistoric activity in this area was not intensive or sustained, with no indications of settlement in the vicinity. Where worked flint of likely prehistoric date was found within the ditch fill, it appears most likely to have been incorporated in the medieval period as residual material from this earlier use of the landscape. However, given that ditches which may be part of rectilinear field systems of Iron Age date have been noted nearby (Bassett 1982, 2-8 and fig. 4, A), it is possible that one or both of the features excavated in 2013 originated in this period.

### 9.3 Roman period

A single very small sherd (2g) of Romano-British pottery from the primary fill (11) of F.2 (which also contained later pottery) is residual in this context. The minimal volume of material of Romano-British date recovered from the 2013 excavations indicates that contemporary settlement identified further to the west (Bassett 1982, 5-9; 27-47) did not extend into the area of the present Common, although it is possible that this sherd has been incorporated as a result of manuring of arable fields with material from the nearby settlement.

### 9.4 Anglo-Saxon period

No finds or features were identified which dated to the Anglo-Saxon period, suggesting this area was not intensively exploited in this period.



## 9.5 Medieval period

The medieval period is the only one for which any dated archaeological features could be identified in the 2013 excavations, with the ditch section in SWA13/ trench 2 securely dated by its basal ceramic assemblage to this period, and the ditch in SWA13/ trench 1 likely to be contemporary. The pottery from the basal fill of SWA13/F.2 is dated to the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and given the position of this deposit, this must relate to the construction of this ditch or its earliest post-construction use or alteration before it had silted up or been infilled. The date of this assemblage corresponds closely with documentary evidence for the construction of the castle between 1125 and 1141 AD (Bassett 1982, 15-16), but also with that of the demolition of the castle not long afterwards in 1157-8 AD (Bassett 1982, 16), but probably predates the late 12<sup>th</sup> century reconstruction of the castle which is unlikely to have begun before 1167 AD. The ditch assemblage certainly predates the 13<sup>th</sup> century enlargement and replanning of the town.

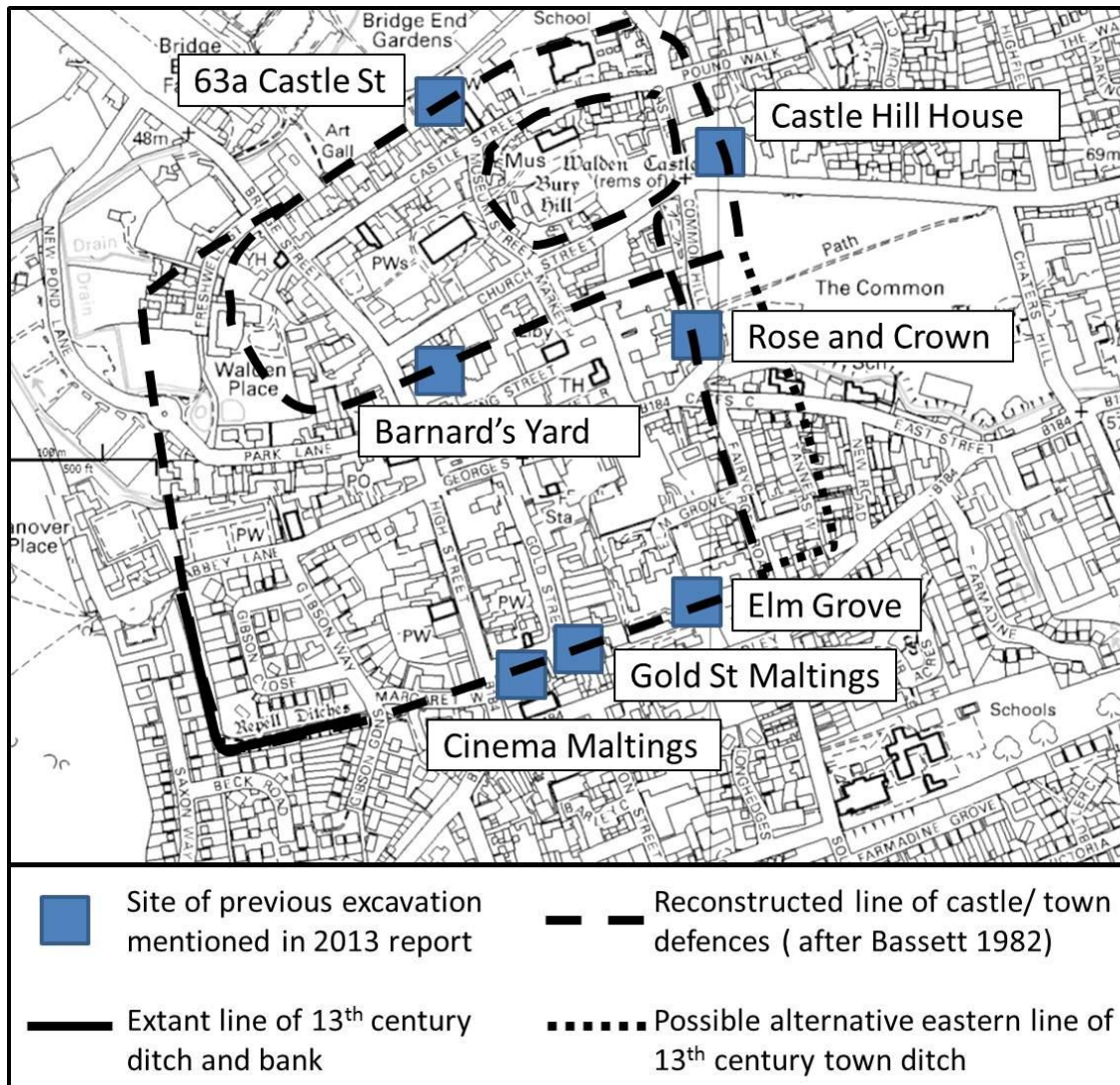
The two sections of ditch excavated on The Common in 2013 are likely to have been in existence at the same time, and be part of the same feature, as they display a number of similarities and also appear to join. The profiles of both excavated sections of the ditch are broadly similar, as are their dimensions (3.3m wide and 1.57m deep in trench 1, and 4.4m wide and 1.74m deep in trench 2). The inference that the two ditch sections are contemporary is supported by the geophysical survey which indicates that they are conjoined, although the area of the join does not show very clearly. If the two ditch sections are indeed conjoined and contemporary, as they appear to be, then both can be dated by the pottery from the base of F.2 in trench 2 to the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century AD. Given this date, and the fact that the locations of the 2013 ditch sections are directly in line with sections of the outer bailey castle/town ditch previously observed during excavations at Castle Hill House and Barnard's Yard, it can be inferred with some confidence that these are indeed part of the ditch of the outer bailey of the 12<sup>th</sup> century castle. The route of this feature across The Common is thus now confirmed.

The sequence of construction and use of the ditch sections excavated in 2013 can be reconstructed from the observed fills. In SWA13/ trench 1, the 0.2m deep primary fill of SWA13/F.1 is a thin lens of clean white chalk, derived from the rapid erosion of exposed chalk from the freshly cut (or cleaned) ditch faces. This could have built up over as short a period as a few months. The chalk spoil removed from the ditch is presumed to have been used to build an earthwork bank or rampart running parallel with the ditch. Although no trace of any bank survives, such a feature is certain to have been present, and the absence of any cut features such as pits or post holes on the inner (west) side of the bailey ditch does at least not contradict the suggestion that the natural in this area is undisturbed because it was covered by the bank. The primary chalk fill of SWA13/F.1 is overlain by a light brown lensed deposit (4) of mixed chalk and silt, showing that the ditch remained open for long enough to acquire a veneer of soil and thin vegetational cover but not enough to fully stabilise and develop an established turf line. It should be noted, however, that a very similar fill at nearby Castle Meadow was interpreted as re-deposited turf stripped from the castle rampart prior to it being levelled (Bassett 1982, 60). Whether or not fill (4) in SWA13/F.1 was created by weathering or demolition, the two bulky fills immediately above it (3) and (2) are much more easily identified as deliberate backfilling of the ditch. Both these fills are constituted of dirty re-deposited chalk natural containing angular chalk and occasional concentrations of large flint nodules (especially notable in the centre of the ditch in trench 1). These fills favour the west side of the ditch and suggest that ditch was infilled with material from the bailey bank to its west while the unsorted character of the

deposits suggests this infilling was a deliberate act rather than due to gradual erosion. The cluster of large unworked flint nodules in the centre of this fill, probably drawn down into the lower fill by their greater mass, are tentatively interpreted as deriving from revetting of the sides of the ditch or bank, or from a flint wall on top of the bank. The presence of two distinct fills (2) and (3) suggests the deliberate infilling of the ditch may have been carried out in two phases, although the similarity between the two fills and the absence of any turf line between these fills suggests either that little time elapsed between these two episodes, or alternatively that the sides and base of the partially filled ditch were cleaned of accumulated soil and vegetation shortly before (2) was deposited. The later seems rather unlikely, and it is more plausible that the two fills represent different loads of material tipped into the ditch during a single phase of levelling. A similar sequence with silt/loamy fills overlain by cleaner chalk deposits, was noted in ditches at other sites including Castle Meadow (Bassett 1982, 60) where it was likewise interpreted as a demolition deposit involving material from the bank being shovelled or tipped into the ditch.

In trench 2, the depositional sequence, while generally similar to that in trench 1, does display some significant differences. The pottery in the base of SWA13/F.2, overlain by the lowest fill, firmly dates this to the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century, but the irregular profile of the southern side of SWA13/F.2 suggests the ditch here may have been unfinished (like the ditch at Castle Hill House (Bassett 1982, 62)). The pottery is overlain by a silt and loam fill similar to that in the lower level of SWA13/Trench 1, probably suggesting the ditch was open for long enough to acquire some vegetation on its sides but still to be eroding moderately actively, although again, it may be significant that a similar deposit has elsewhere been interpreted as resulting from rampart demolition (Bassett 1982, 60). Also similar to SWA13/F.1, in SWA13 trench 2, the deposits immediately overlying the silty/loam fill are dominated by dirty chalk, this indicating an episode of deliberate infilling of the ditch with re-deposited natural, presumed to be material from the bank associated with the ditch. The possibility that mortar may be included in this deposit hints at the possibility that a structure such as a wall on top of the bank may have been present here. Unlike SWA13/F.1, however, in SWA13/F.2 there is a second silt/loam fill indicating that the partly infilled ditch continued in existence as a cut feature at least 0.4m deep for long enough for a soil horizon at least 0.15m deep to build up.

It is thus evident that in both sections excavated in 2013, there is a sequence of use/deposition which involves limited natural weathering of the cut faces of the ditch (dated in F.2 to the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century) followed by deliberate backfilling. It is difficult to say exactly how long either section of ditch was in existence as if the ditch it was kept clean (as was observed along the extant section of the 13<sup>th</sup> century town ditch around the south-west of the medieval town (Ravetz and Spencer 1982) and inferred where sections of the bailey ditch were observed at the Rose and Crown (Bassett 1982)), deposits would only accumulate after this had ceased. It is certainly possible that the ditch on the common was only in existence for a few years, or even just a few months, and the possibility that T.2 was unfinished does lend some support to the suggestion that it was indeed very short-lived. Certainly there is nothing in the archaeological evidence to contradict the inference that construction of the outer bailey ditch was begun late in its possible historical window (1130-1141 AD), and was still at least partly unfinished in 1157 when the order was received for the castle to be demolished, and was mostly infilled at this time, remaining in places visible as a slight linear hollow until this also was infilled. The recovery of small numbers of sherds of pottery dating from the later 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards from the mechanically removed topsoil, contrasts with the complete absence of any finds of this date from the ditch fills, and suggest that the infilling was completed before the later 12<sup>th</sup> century, probably by the late 1170s AD.



**Figure 19:** Saffron Walden showing the location of excavations revealing sections of the castle/town ditches mentioned in this report, and the reconstructed lines of the ditches around the 12<sup>th</sup> century castle and 13<sup>th</sup> century town

It is interesting to compare the ditch sections excavated on The Common in 2013 with other observed stretches of medieval ditch in Saffron Walden (fig 19). This shows that the dimensions of the ditch on The Common (3.3-4.4m deep by 1.6-7m deep) are noticeably smaller than those of the 12<sup>th</sup> century outer castle bailey/town ditch where seen at 63a Castle (6.4m wide by 4m deep); Castle Hill House (5.5-6.5m wide by 2.2-2.4m deep) and Barnard's Yard (5.8m wide by 4.05m deep). However, The Common ditches are similar in size to those excavated at the Rose and Crown (3.9-3.4m wide by 2.3-2.5 deep) and the Cinema Maltings (3.7-3.3m wide by 1.5-2m deep). This is intriguing as both these ditch sections are thought to be part of the 13<sup>th</sup> gridded town plan rather than the 12<sup>th</sup> castle/town bailey. It is possible that this size difference is insignificant, or due to later alteration such as truncation of upper levels leaving the surviving ditch narrower than it was originally (quite possible at the Rose and Crown and Cinema sites, although less likely on the Common). On the other hand, however, it does raise the alternative possibility that The Common ditch may have remained in use as part of the 13<sup>th</sup> century town plan, with the Rose and Crown ditch in fact representing a chequer boundary within the town. Although (as noted above) it is certain that the ditches on the common were in existence by the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century, and while seems most likely that it had been infilled before the end of the 112<sup>th</sup> century, the

excavation data do not actually rule out the possibility of the ditch (especially its north-south-orientated section) remaining open for longer, as if it was kept clean and then infilled deliberately sometime after the 13<sup>th</sup> century, no finds from its continued period of use would be able to accumulate in the ditch or its fills. While this line of argument does require perhaps over-robust use of negative evidence, other evidence can be brought to bear which does lend some support to this interpretation.

Firstly, the ditch at the Rose and Crown (already noted as similar in dimension to those on The Common) also produced very little medieval pottery, with just five sherds recovered from four 1m wide slots across the ditch. This has been convincingly identified by Steven Bassett (1982, 25-7 and fig. 8) as part of the early 13<sup>th</sup> century town plan and so it is potentially significant that in both form and pottery assemblage, the ditches on The Common are similar to the 13<sup>th</sup> century ditch at the Rose and Crown.

Secondly, as has been noted above, the 2013 geophysical survey of The Common tentatively suggested that the north-south orientated part of the ditch continued south beyond the point where it met its east-west orientated stretch. While this southerly extension was not as clearly defined as the rest of the ditch on either the GPR or the magnetometry data, it was clearly present on the GPR survey from about 1.3m depth (fig. 20). Its alignment is also the same as that of the other north-south orientated boundaries of the 13<sup>th</sup> century chequered street plan, including those along the High Street and Gold Street, as well as the ditch behind the Rose and Crown. In addition, and perhaps most tellingly, the interval separating these boundaries from the GPR feature is exactly what would be expected had it been forming the easterly boundary to another line of chequers, the same width as the others.

The possibility that the 13<sup>th</sup> century town plan did indeed include an easterly line of chequers (additional to those currently identified), bounded on its east by the north-south ditch across The Common is given some further support by the fact that this resolves one unsatisfactory aspect of Bassett's inferred layout, wherein the inner bailey of the castle projects irregularly beyond the 13<sup>th</sup> town enclosure. Although this could be explained away by the castle having been slighted in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century, it is very likely that the castle was rebuilt in some habitable form in the later 12<sup>th</sup> century and was certainly in use as a castle, complete with a licence to crenellate, in the later 14<sup>th</sup> century. If the eastern line of the town ditch, followed the north-south feature identified in 2013, the new town layout would perfectly encompass the castle, which would comfortably and completely occupy the north-east corner and overlook the town. As it is clear from its layout elsewhere, the 13<sup>th</sup> town was boldly planned on a grand scale, with considerable care taken to ensure its regularity and symmetry. The new postulated layout, with the easternmost boundary running north across The Common and encompassing all of the land around the castle, represents a much more pleasing layout which matches well with the rest of the new town plan.

If the north-south ditch (SWA13/F.1) across The Common does indeed represent the eastern side of the 13<sup>th</sup> century town, it must have followed a different developmental trajectory to that of the east-west (SWA13/F.2) arm of the ditch, and there is some evidence to support this. As has been noted, F.2 may be unfinished and contains 12<sup>th</sup> century pottery which strongly suggests it was in-filled before the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century in two phases (represented by the two silt/loam fills). F.1 however, shows no sign of being unfinished and contains nothing to suggest when it was in-filled, but when this did happen it was completed as a single event. The nature of the intersection between the north-south and east-west arms of the ditch on The Common is not clear and was not investigated in 2013, but the difference in signal strength and depth recorded from the southerly extension of the north-south ditch during the geophysical

survey also suggest a different historical development. Given the presence of two silting lines in F.2 and only one in F.1, it

In summary, there is every reason to suppose, and no reason to reject, the suggestion that the outer castle bailey ditch across The Common was partly in-filled in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century, but remained visible as a slight depression whose north-south (F.1) line was cleaned out and extended to the south to form the easternmost boundary to the new town plan, at which point the surviving east-west hollow (F.2) was completely in-filled. F.2 remained in use as the nominal eastern boundary of the town until it too was in-filled at some unknown date. The lack of pottery in the surrounding topsoil suggests that this part of the town, like that in the south-west, never fulfilled the ambitions of its creators and remained unused except for grazing animals.

## 9.6 Post-medieval and modern

The small assemblage of finds and pottery which were recovered from the spoil heaps of both trenches is indicative of minimal activity in this area until the later 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century. The recovery of modest amounts of 17<sup>th</sup> century pottery from the spoil heaps which were identified mainly as drinking pottery vessels may relate to episodes of work nearby such as stone robbing from the castle, or use of The Common for recreational purposes. Finds of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century date are more numerous and varied in type, and clearly reflect the expansion of the town towards and around The Common as well as recreational use of The Common. The character of the assemblage, dominated by low-denomination coins, shot, clothing fasteners and items of personal adornment such as hairpins, badges and brooches, while being those which might be expected from casual loss or discard of broken items in such an area, nonetheless do provide an interesting glimpse of the range of past activity on this area of public land, and constitute an assemblage which might be compared with those from other space such as private gardens.

## 10 Conclusion

The 2013 geophysical survey and excavations on Saffron Walden Common have confirmed that the line of the 12<sup>th</sup> century outer bailey of the castle did cross the Common and have enabled its line to be reconstructed. They have also identified a possible alternative line for the easternmost ditch of the 13<sup>th</sup> century town, while showing that this area was not densely inhabited in the medieval and post-medieval periods. They have also provided some evidence for the use of the land in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The 2013 excavations were very successful in achieving their archaeological aims of locating and dating the castle bailey ditch, and also in engaging large numbers of the public as well as the 30 local sixth-form students who took part and universally rated their experience extremely highly. The excavations were a lively focus of interest throughout the time the trenches were open, with hundreds of people visiting these and also the open day in September 2013.

In such a short time, the excavations inevitably raised new questions as well as answering those they were intended to. Further excavation, if possible, would ideally be needed to explore the point where the ditch turns to see how the two ditch sections join, or if there was any entrance in this area, and to establish whether the north-south arm of the ditch did indeed continue south beyond the point where it meets its east-west arm.

## 11 Acknowledgements

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## 13 Appendices

### 13.1 Pottery Reports – *Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised 372 sherds with a total weight of 2,085g. It was recorded utilizing a coding system and chronology based on that of the Post-Roman pottery from Colchester (Cunningham (1985; Cotter 2000), as follows:

- RB: All Romano-British.** 1 sherd, 2g.
- F13: Early Medieval Sandy Ware,** early 11<sup>th</sup> – early 13<sup>th</sup> C. 15 sherds, 493g.
- F21: Orange Sandy ware,** late 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> C. 7 sherds, 34g.
- F22: Hedingham Ware,** mid/late 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> C. 9 sherds, 30g.
- F40: Red Earthenware,** late 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> C. 3 sherds, 8g.
- F40C: Cistercian Ware,** late 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> C. 23 sherds, 45g.
- F45: English Stoneware,** late 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> C. 9 sherds, 109g.
- 45D: Frechen Stoneware,** mid-16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> C. 1 sherd, 5g,.
- F48X: Miscellaneous 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> C wares.** 303 sherds, 1,056g.
- F50A: Staffordshire Manganese Ware,** 1680-1750. 1 sherd, 1g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 1. All the wares are types which are well-known in the region.

By far the most significant group of pottery is that from context 11, the base of the ditch. It consists of a small group of large, well-preserved sherds, from three large unglazed jars, all in Early Medieval Sandy Ware (fabric F13). All of them have sooting on the outer surface, showing that they had been placed on a fire at some point during their use-lives, but none had internal lime-scaling. They are entirely unworn, and appear to be a primary deposit.

All three pots are represented by base-sherds, and, in one case, a rim. The first of these vessels (Fig. SW1) had an original base diameter of 280mm, and is well-made, with a fairly dense, even fabric, and another (Fig. SW2), with a base diameter of 320mm, has large quantities of relatively coarse sand temper. Cotter (2000, 40) notes that both these traits are typical of products of the tradition which date to the early 12<sup>th</sup> century or later. The third vessel is also represented by a rimsherd (Fig. SW3). It has a hard, grey fabric, similar to that of Medieval Grey Sandy Ware (Essex fabric F20), known as fabric F13T (ibid. Figs 25 and 26), and is virtually indistinguishable from fabric F20. Fabric 13T is thought to date to the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (ibid. 91). Fabric 20, which is entirely absent from the site, seems to have come into general use in the last quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, so it seems likely that this assemblage dates to before that time. The rimsherd had an original rim diameter of 220mm (16% complete), and the profile is very common, Cotter's type A4B (ibid. Fig. 27), which

occurs throughout the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> and the whole of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The shoulder shows traces of incised decoration..

Another factor to take into consideration is the lack of Hedingham Ware (fabric F22) from this group, despite it being present in topsoil contexts (see Table 1). Evidence from Colchester suggests that, although mid-12<sup>th</sup> century groups of such pottery are known from a few sites in Cambridgeshire, it did not really become common until the late 12<sup>th</sup> – early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries (ibid. 84). Taking all this into consideration, it seems most likely that this group of pottery dates to around the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

The bulk of the rest of the assemblage is unstratified, and from topsoil deposits. The range of pottery types present indicate that there was low-level activity at the site throughout the medieval period until the early-mid 16<sup>th</sup> century, after which time it appears to have remained undisturbed until the late 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century. The majority of the late- and post-medieval pottery comprised drinking pottery in the form of Cistercian Ware and German and English Stonewares, and may consequently relate to episodes of stone-robbing.

Tr	Cntxt	RB		F13		F21		F22		F40		F40C		F45		F45D		F50A		F48X		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
1	Spoil-heap			5	19	2	5	4	13	1	2	4	15	2	26					132	444	U/S
2	Spoil-heap			1	3	5	29	5	17	2	6	18	28	6	79	1	5	1	1	170	604	U/S
2	Ditch, 10-20													1	4							L17thC
2	7											1	2							1	8	19thC
2	11	1	2	9	471																	M12thC
	Total	1	2	15	493	7	34	9	30	3	8	23	45	9	109	1	5	1	1	303	1056	

**Table 1:** Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

### 13.2 Small Finds – *Mary Chester-Kadwell*

Site	Object	Material	Broad Date	Description
Trench 1 F.1 (1)	unidentified	iron	modern	piece of unidentified ferrous?
Trench 1 F.1 (1)	unidentified	iron	modern	piece of unidentified ferrous?
Trench 1 Soil heap	shoe	iron	post medieval	iron shoe fitting
Trench 1 Soil heap	shoe	iron	post medieval	iron shoe fitting
Trench 1 Soil heap	token	lead	post medieval	inscription: .J.W
Trench 1 Soil heap	unidentified	lead	post medieval	unidentified lead
Trench 1 Soil heap	buckle	white metal alloy	modern	machine made buckle frame, gilded base metal
Trench 1 Soil heap	buckle	iron	modern	tiny iron buckle
Trench 1 Soil heap	buckle	iron	modern	tiny iron buckle
Trench 1 Soil heap	bullet	lead	modern	unexploded ordnance
Trench 1 Soil heap	cap badge	white metal alloy	modern	possible cap badge, sea creature
Trench 1 Soil heap	shot	lead	modern	lead shot
Trench 1 Soil heap	shot	lead	modern	lead shot
Trench 1 Soil heap	shot	lead	modern	lead shot
Trench 1 Soil heap	shot	lead	modern	lead shot
Trench 1 Soil heap	shot	lead	modern	lead shot
Trench 1 Soil heap	shotgun cartridge	copper alloy	modern	bottom of a shot gun cartridge
Trench 1 Soil heap	strap fitting	iron	modern	round strap fitting
Trench 1 Soil heap	thimble	copper alloy	modern	small machine made thimble
Trench 1 Soil heap	tube	zinc	modern	
Trench 1 Soil heap	unidentified	copper alloy	modern	unidentified plate, copper alloy
Trench 2 Extension topsoil	ball	ceramic	modern	ceramic ball with iron deposits, very light
Trench 2 Extension topsoil	break block	steel	modern	steel? Break block?
Trench 2 Extension topsoil	bullet	lead	modern	20 <sup>th</sup> century lead bullet, machine made
Trench 2 Extension topsoil	jew's harp	iron/steel	modern	

Trench 2 Extension topsoil	thimble	copper alloy	modern	machine made open top thimble
Trench 2 Topsoil small finds	bead	glass	unknown	segmented semi-opaque light blue glass bead
Trench 2 Topsoil small finds	unidentified	copper alloy	unknown	copper alloy blob
Trench 2 Topsoil small finds	buckle	copper alloy	post medieval	Double-tongued post medieval buckle
Trench 2 Topsoil small finds	unidentified	lead	post medieval	Scrap lead
Trench 2 Topsoil small finds	unidentified	lead	post medieval	Scrap lead
Trench 2 Topsoil small finds	unidentified	lead	post medieval	Scrap lead
Trench 2 Topsoil small finds	ball	ceramic	modern	Possible ceramic ball from pottery manufacture, 19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> century
Trench 2 Topsoil small finds	cufflink	white metal alloy	modern	Royal Canadian Sea Cadets cufflink, gold plated, 20 <sup>th</sup> century
Trench 2 Topsoil small finds	eyelet	copper alloy	modern	copper alloy double eyelet, once attached to something iron
Trench 2 Topsoil small finds	ferrule	copper alloy	modern	possibly the end of a snooker cue
Trench 2 Topsoil small finds	jewellery	copper alloy	modern	Copy of a East Asian coin used for jewellery ornamentation
Trench 2 Topsoil small finds	thimble	white metal alloy	modern	thimble, machine made
Trench 2 Topsoil small finds	washer	copper alloy	modern	copper alloy washer
Trench 2 Topsoil small finds	pince nez	metal (alloy?, gilt)	Victorian	1 lens and part of frame of pair of Victorian gold rimmed pince nez
Trench 2 Topsoil small finds	hairpin	tortoishell/ plastic and paste	Victorian/ early 20th century	one arm of tortoise-shell (imitation?) and paste/imitation diamond set hair decoration.
Trench 2 Topsoil small finds	button	mother of pearl	Victorian/ early 20th century	machine-made mother of pearl button, 4 holes, 1cm diameter
Trench 2 Topsoil small finds	button/cuffli nk	mother of pearl	Victorian/ early 20th century	mother of pearl set in copper alloy
Trench 2 Topsoil small finds	pocket watch winder	copper alloy	Victorian/ early 20th century	

**Table 2:** *The small finds*

### 13.3 Faunal Remains - *Vida Rajkovača*

A small assemblage came from two trenches, as well as from the collection of the material from the top soil. The total amount of bone recovered came to 93 assessable specimens, 43 of which were assigned to species level. The assemblage showed an overall good level of surface preservation, with only a few specimens showing signs of weathering or being affected by gnawing. The material was highly fragmented, however, with the largest proportion of unidentifiable elements being assigned to size-categories. The overall dominance of sheep/ goat and pig is reflected in the high counts for the sheep-sized splinters.

Trench 1 contained slightly more bone than Trench 2, and, although pigs accounted for more than all other species combined, it has to be noted that the number includes a proportion of loose teeth and mandibular elements, which are more fragmentary.

<b>Taxon</b>	<i>Spoil heap material</i>	% NISP
Cow	3	20
Sheep/ goat	5	33.3
Pig	6	40
Horse	.	.
Rabbit	1	6.7
<b>Subtotal to species</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>
Cattle-sized	6	.
Sheep-sized	13	.
Bird n.f.i.	1	.
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	.

**Table 3:** Number of Identified Specimens for all species from Trench One; the abbreviation n.f.i. denotes that the specimen could not be further identified

A similar range of species came from Trench 2, which was dominated by the remains of ovicapra.

<b>Taxon</b>	<i>Spoil heap material</i>	[9]	[11]	[13]	[14]	[15]	<i>Total NISP</i>	% NISP
<i>Cow</i>	5	.	.	.	.	.	5	17.8
<i>Sheep/ goat</i>	2	1	8	.	1	.	12	42.9
<i>Pig</i>	1	.	.	1	6	.	8	28.6
<i>Horse</i>	.	.	.	1	1	.	2	7.1
<i>Dog</i>	1	.	.	.	.	.	1	3.6
<b>Subtotal to species</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>.</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Cattle-sized</i>	3	3	.	.	.	.	6	.
<i>Sheep-sized</i>	4	7	5	1	4	3	24	.
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>58</b>	.

**Table 4:** Number of Identified Specimens for all species from Trench Two

A number of elements recovered from the top soil showed signs of butchery, with most common actions recorded being sawing and chopping to portion-sizes. The skeletal element count showed a prevalence of mandibular elements and loose teeth, although

a few cattle and pig metapodials were recorded, as well as a few sheep/ goat humeri and a pig ulna with a chop mark, suggesting the assemblage's domestic character.

### 13.4 Worked Flint – *Lawrence Billington*

A total of eighteen worked flints were recovered from the excavations. The raw material is generally a good quality dark flint with a fresh cortex suggestive of a source directly from the chalk or from closely associated deposits. The assemblage can be separated into two clear groups. The first comprises seven flakes and a scraper, all bearing traces of cortication (patination). These pieces appear to be the product of a fairly expedient hard hammer flake-based technology and probably relate to prehistoric activity from the late Neolithic to the later Bronze Age. There is no clear evidence for any earlier flint work of Mesolithic or earlier Neolithic date.

The second group of material comprises very irregular, fresh struck pieces with no evidence for systematic reduction. These flints are less likely to relate to prehistoric flint working and may represent later activity, perhaps the by-product of dressing and using flint nodules for use as building material in historic or modern times.

TR	Feature	Context	primary flake	secondary flake	tertiary flake	scraper	<b>totals</b>	Of which fresh flakes, possibly post-prehistoric
1	1	1		5	2		<b>7</b>	5
1	1	5	1	1	1		<b>3</b>	2
1	1	spoil heap		4	1		<b>5</b>	3
2	2	7		2			<b>2</b>	
2	2	spoil heap				1	<b>1</b>	
			<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	

**Table 5:** *Quantification of the flint assemblage*

### 13.5 Other Finds – Catherine Ranson

Trench 1	Ceramic (excluding pottery)	Glass	Metal & metal-working	Stone	Other
Spoil Heap	red flat tile x41 =806g, red flat roof tile x2 =63g, red brick fragments x7 = 855g, red CBM x106 =622g, clay pipe stem x37 =89g, clay pipe bowl fragments x2 =5g, modern drain fragment =16g, blue and white glazed modern tile fragment =12g	green bottle glass x25 =145g, clear container glass x32 =153g, clear flat glass x32 =36g, blue container glass =2g, orange/brown bottle glass =7g, round glass bottle stoppers? x2 =17g	corroded metal wire x5 =14g, corroded metal drinks bottle tops x2 =5g, modern metal spring =10g, fragments of horseshoes? x2 =25g, long thin metal rod with hoop at one end =13g, scrunched silver foil =<1g, think folded metal wire =1g, corroded iron nails x19 =95g, square corroded iron nails x6 = 25g, corroded pieces of scrap metal x30 =123g, corroded iron bolts x2 =49g, slag =4g, coin dated 1840 =5g, half penny coin dated 1929 =6g, farthing coin dated 1860 =3g, new penny coin dated 1977 =4g, lead shots x5 =40g, bronze handle (sea serpent?) =18g, fragments of metal tubing? x2 =9g, small rounded buckle parts x2 =2g, D shaped metal hoop =3g, square U shaped metal handles? x2 =32g, bullet? =16g, metal thimble =3g, buckle part? =2g, pieces of lead x2 =12g, cloth seal? 4g, metal buttons x6 =11g	round stone balls x13 = 101g, large stone ball with mortar remains on it? =209g	slate pencils x3 =11g, slate x6 =20g, oyster shell x9 =39g, snail shell x2 =9g, clear plastic wrappers x2 =<1g, half a white plastic lolly pop stick =<1g, red plastic partially melted tube fragment =1g, black plastic/glass bead pendant =3g, strip of wood =1g, wooden buttons x2 =2g, black button =1g (Lewis and Compi Ranelaghist)
F.1 (1)	flat red tile =30g	clear container glass x2 =3g	corroded blade fragment? =13g, thin flat corroded strip of metal =4g, slag? =3g		
F.1 (3)			corroded iron nail =4g		snail shell x2 =4g
F.1 (4)					snail shell fragments x2 =<1g
F.1 (5)					snail shells x3 =6g

**Table 6:** All the non-pottery, flint and bone finds from Trench 1





Trench 2	Ceramic (excluding pottery)	Glass	Metal & metal-working	Stone	Other
Spoil Heap	red flat tile x46 = 1275g, red brick fragment =511g, red CBM x45 = 261g, clay pipe stem x39 = 81g modern brick fragment =55g, pink/orange brick fragment =219g	green bottle glass x41 = 175g, orange bottle glass =2g, half a blue glass? bead =<1g, clear container glass x20 =140g, clear flat glass x32 =55g, turquoise glass double bead =1g, clear glass round bottle stopper? =7g	corroded drinks bottle top =4g, small corroded metal horseshoes x4 =99g, small corroded metal keys x2 =24g, corroded metal wire x13 =55g, corroded iron nails x35 =161g, corroded square iron nails x31 = 141g, corroded iron bolts x2 =98g, corroded thin metal rod with hook at one end =16g, pieces of scrap metal x11 =95g, detachable metal ring pull =<1g, end of shotgun cartridge =5g, thick metal washers? X2 =9g, bike valve? =3g, half pair thin rounded spectacles =6g, silver coin =<1g, coin = <1g, three pence coin dated 1940 =7g, new penny coin dated 1974 =4g, half penny coin dated 1941 =6g, 5 pence coin dated 1990 =3g, half a new penny coin dated 1971 =2g, think metal washers? x2 =9g, flat disc with square hole through centre =3g, Royal Canadian Sea Cadets badge/pin =8g, metal buttons x7 = 14g, buckle =9g, fragments of lead x3 =39g, lead shot =8g, metal thimble =3g	round stone balls x4 =25g, coal =2g, sandstone building fragments x7 = 2466g	black bottle stopper =21g (Watney Combe Reid Walden), red and yellow stripy drinks straw =1g, inner ink stem of biro =1g, slate x9 =64g, oyster shell x22 =74g, small rubber hells from shoe =15g, whelk shell x2 =8g, snail shell x2 =4g, slate pencil =2g, purple plastic clown feet from a tiny figure =<1g, black plastic button =1g, pink plastic =1g, mother of pearl button? =2g, hair pin with horseshoe shape jewels on one end =3g
Spoil Heap Extension			metal thimble =3g, fragment of lead =5g, metal buttons x3 =4g, round corroded metal ball =7g, , half penny coin dated 1920 =6g, two pence coin dated 1971 =7g, one penny coin dated 1990 =3g, two pence coin dated 1999 =7g one penny coin dated 2006 =4g		
7	red brick fragment = 70g				slate =2g
9	red CBM =12g				
11					shell fragments x3 =<1g

Table 7: All the non-pottery, flint and bone finds from Trench 2