

**Site name: Fore Street**

Site ref: IAS 5902

HER ref: IPS 746

CIMS Accession No: IPSMG:R.2009.56

NGR: TM16714422

Extent: 141 sq m

**Circumstances of excavation**

The site was formerly the Tolly Cobbold bottling yard, cleared in 1982, prior to the construction of a new road (Star Lane), as part of a new gyratory road system.

**Site constraints**

The excavation was restricted to the line of the new carriageway and by the funding available.

**Funding bodies**

The excavation was carried out by the Suffolk Archaeological Unit and funded by the Department of the Environment (Ancient Monuments Branch), Manpower services Commission (Youth Opportunities Programme) and Suffolk County council.

**Stratigraphic sequence (by period)**

***Prehistoric (PREH)***

No features of this date were recorded but two residual sherds of Grooved Ware and three sherds of Beaker were recovered from ditch *0134*.

***Early Anglo-Saxon, 600-700 (EMS)***

Three ditches, (*0134, 0141, 0142*) belonged to this period and were cut by MS ditch *0064*. The north-south ditch *0141* joined the east-west ditch *0134* at right angles to it and was clearly contemporary with it. A single sherd of grass-tempered, hand-made pottery was found in both ditches *0141* and *0134*. Ditches *0141* and *0142* overlapped but no stratigraphic relationship was established. Ditch *0141* was 1m wide and 50-60cm deep with a 'V'-shaped profile whereas *0142* was 80cm wide, 40cm deep and with a 'U'-shaped profile. The fills of these ditches was a leached sandy loam silt, usually an indication of pre-urban features in Ipswich. Sections *0143, 0144* and *0158* of ditch *0134* were aceramic. This alone casts doubt on the 22 pottery sherds recorded as coming from section numbered *0134* (number also used as the overall ditch number). This assemblage included three LMED Ipswich glazed wares but it was this section of the ditch that was cut by the LMED pottery kiln (*0013*) and is clearly contamination, as the stratigraphic sequence is unequivocal.

Spelt grain was identified from these ditches (Murphy *et al* 2003) and the lack of domestic refuse is highly suggestive that they were arable field boundaries.

***Middle Saxon: c.700-850 (MS)***

Following the filling of the EMS ditches, the north-south ditch (*0064*) was cut on much the same alignment as ditch *0134*. The middle section of the ditch (*0064*, also the number used as the overall ditch number) contained three Ipswich ware sherds whereas the north

section (0082) was aceramic and the southern butt end (0133) is recorded as containing two Thetford and two Early medieval sherds, which are clearly contamination.

A single pit (0117) dating to this period lay south of ditch 0064. Ten sherds of Ipswich ware were recovered from the pit but there were also nine later sherds, including three LMED Ipswich glazed, but as the pit was cut by LMED pottery kiln 0013 and MLS building 0073, this was clearly contamination.

There were only 141 sherds of Ipswich ware in total from the site and only one sceatta (0003/5902N), lost c.720-740, residual in EMED well pit 0130.

### ***Early Late Saxon: c.850-c.900 (ELS)***

Only one pit (0081) certainly belonged to this period but there were 12 features, mostly postholes, with Thetford ware only, in small quantities, which are likely to be ELS or MLS (0029, 0030, 0038, 0050 (which was not recorded on plan), 0052, 0059, 0069, 0076, 0092, 0094, 0164, 0171). At least two lines of postholes can be postulated, running north-south back from Fore Street, which may represent fence lines.

### ***Middle Late Saxon: c.900-1000 (MLS)***

A building (0073), one pit (0024) and one posthole (0168) certainly belong to this period. Only one coin (0002/5902N), an Edmund Memorial penny lost c.905-915, was found residual in EMED pit 0027.

### ***Building 0073*** (see scanned plan IAS5902\_0073.tif)

Only 2.8m of the eastern end of this sunken featured building fell within the excavated area. It was parallel to and 6m back from the Fore Street frontage, 3.55m wide and 1.1m deep. A long sloping entrance (0080) dropped down to the clay lined floor of the pit in five distinct steps. At its base, it was lined, on both sides, by two additional posts to the structural posts 0105 and 0108, indicating some form of covering over the lower levels of the entrance. Two post holes (0097, 0107), both lying slightly off-centre, appeared to block the approaches to the entrance from both the inside and the outside, but were probably a means of securing the entrance.

The side walls of the pit were vertical, and beam slots surrounded the base. On the east side slots were restricted to the area outside the line of the entrance. To the north of the entrance, slot 0100, probably representing the edge of a horizontally laid plank, ran from posthole 0108 into the slot lining the northern edge of the structure, although a large posthole (0106) was cut through the corner. A similar arrangement to the south of the entrance saw the slot cut by a similar corner post (0151) at the south-east. Although the slot (0152) continued on the south side for a short distance, it was replaced by another slot (0150) further to the west. These slots did not align with each other, making the south-east corner irregular in shape. Post holes 0185 and 0190 implied the existence of regularly spaced post holes along the two long sides of the building.

### ***Early Medieval: c.1000-1200 (EMED)***

A total of seven pits (0009, 0027, 0065, 0104, 0127, 0135, 0184), a well (0130), a building (0191), a hearth (0049) and seven post holes or small pits (0019, 0028, 0078, 0079, 0120, 0163, 0169) belonged to this period.

There were at least two phases of EMED activity. Pit 0009 was cut by building 0191, pit 0027 was cut by pit 0065 and pit 0184 was cut by the possible well (0130). All of these pits

were small apart from *0184*. This was only partially excavated, and its depth was not established but its size suggests that it was a gravel extraction pit.

The hearth (*0049*), on the northern edge of the excavation, was associated with seven Early Medieval ware sherds which appear to rule out it being part of a LMED pottery kiln.

### **Building 0191**

This surface laid building, 4.5m wide and over 7.5m long, was represented by two parallel foundation trenches (*0026, 0165*), 50-60cm wide and 40cm deep. Its long axis was parallel to and immediately adjacent to the current edge of Fore Street. No clear indication of the total length of the building was apparent, although the western butt end of the southern slot (*0026*) may mark the south-west corner. No postholes were recorded in the foundation trenches.

Some of the post holes crossing the interior from north to south may indicate the position of an internal partition (*0019* is certainly EMED in date).

A small slot (*0046*), only 5cm deep, ran south from the building for 70cm where it was truncated by LMED kiln *0013*.

### **Well 0130**

This deep circular pit was 8m to the rear of building *0191*, and probably contemporary. It was heavily truncated on its north side by the cellar of a post-medieval building (*0112*), and excavation was restricted by the eastern limit of the excavation. Only the top metre of fill was excavated, but an auger hole showed a further two metres of fill above the base of the feature. No waterlogging was recorded but the size and depth of the feature suggest that it was a well.

### **Late Medieval: c.1200-1470 (LMED)**

A pottery industry was established on the site during this period, producing Ipswich Glazed ware (Blinkhorn no date). One complete kiln (*0013*), and parts of two others (*0067, 0147*), lying outside the excavated area, were recorded along with 12 pits containing kiln waste (*0005, 0006, 0010, 0020, 0034, 0101, 0102, 0114, 0118, 0123, 0136, 0160*). Over 2100 sherds of Ipswich Glazed ware were recovered from the site.

### **Kiln 0013**

The kiln oven had been heavily truncated by a LMT flint and mortar lined cess pit (*0014*), with only the east side remaining intact. The kiln had twin flues fed by stoke pits (*0011, 0063*) at the north-east and south-west ends of the structure. Overall, it was 5.5m long from north-east to south-west, and had been set 40cm into the ground. The oven contained a central pedestal of fired clay, linked to the kiln walls by a series of fired clay arches. Cess pit *0014* had removed a considerable quantity of the contents. The kiln appears to have been abandoned following a collapse of the dome.

Samples of the kiln floor were sampled for archaeo-magnetic dating by the Ancient Monuments Laboratory, producing a date range of AD.1270 -1350 (Clark *et al.*).

### **Other kilns**

Pit *0067*, partially excavated on the west side of the site, produced large quantities of pottery and was interpreted as the stoke hole of a pottery kiln. It produced 391 sherds of

Ipswich Glazed ware, 2 London Glazed ware, 3 Hedingham coarse-ware and 877 sherds of local medieval coarse-ware.

Just over a metre north-east of 0067, a further oven (0147) was recorded in section.

#### Discussion: The Fore Street Pottery Industry

Clearly, kiln 0013 was not an isolated example as evidence of two further kilns was recorded in the north-west excavation edge. Monitoring of development just north-west of the site in 1987 (IAS 5907) recorded evidence for two further kilns. The quantity of Ipswich Glazed ware from the town also indicates that it was a significant industry.

Based on its similarity to London ware, and its occurrence within the Bridge Street sequence (IAS 6202), Paul Blinkhorn has dated the industry from the last quarter of the 13th to the first quarter of the 14th century (Blinkhorn no date).

#### ***Late medieval Transitional: c.1450-1600 (LMT)***

One building (0003), one cess pit (0014) and one pit (0012) belong to this period.

#### **Building 0003**

Footings representing the north-west corner of a building survived above pit 0024, where some attempt appears to have been made to strengthen the footings within an obvious soft spot. The rest of the building had not survived. The footing comprised a base layer of brick, septaria and limestone (0033), below a layer of loam (0032). This was overlain by another layer of brick and stone (0022), covered in another thin layer of loam (0021). This was then topped with a final layer of brick, rounded pebbles and septaria (0016) below another layer of loam (0015).

The latest pottery in the loam layers was LMED including Ipswich Glazed ware sherds, but the building is more likely of LMT date.

#### **Cess pit 0014**

This rectangular cess pit, 1.6m long, 95cm wide and 1.5m deep, was lined with brick, tile, flint and septaria.

#### ***Post Medieval: c.1600-1900 (PMED)***

The cellar of a building (0112) and the footings of a possibly associated outhouse (0111) belonged to this period. They appear to have cut across the footing trench of an earlier structure (0074) and slag-filled soak-away (0113). Two pipe trenches (0002, 0138) ran off the site in the direction of the street. The LMT cess pit 0014 was abandoned and filled in this period.

#### ***Undated***

There were about 60 undated features, mainly postholes.

Blinkhorn, P, no date *The Pottery from excavations in Ipswich, 1974-1990*

*Keith Wade*  
2014