

EXCAVATIONS AND SURVEYS IN NORFOLK 1991

Edited by David Gurney

This annual report comprises summaries of archaeological excavations, fieldwork and surveys carried out during the year. As it is often several years before post-excavation work is completed and a full excavation report is published, these summaries provide a useful guide to current archaeological research.

Sites are listed alphabetically by parish, and their locations are shown on Fig. 1. The directors of excavations, organisations involved, the intended place for the deposition of finds and intended place of publication are listed, where known. The following abbreviations are used:—NAU — Norfolk Archaeological Unit; NLA — Norfolk Landscape Archaeology; NCM — Norwich Castle Museum; Site — Norfolk Sites and Monuments Record Site Number; EAA — East Anglian Archaeology.

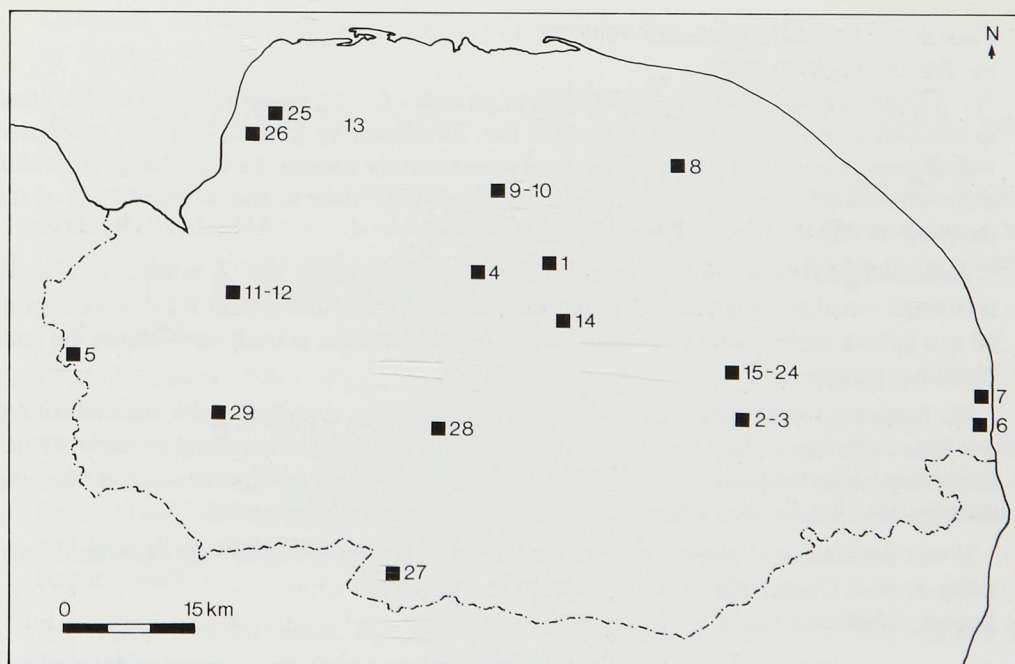


Fig. 1

Locations of excavations and surveys in Norfolk in 1991.

1. *Billingsford* (Site 7206; TG 007 203)
by Heather Wallis, NAU.

In September 1991, a large excavation was started on an area threatened by gravel extraction. Work was funded by Atlas Aggregates Ltd. The site has been identified as having a high archaeological potential through several years of systematic metal detecting and field survey. It lies on the edge of a Roman settlement close to a fording point on the River Wensum.

All topsoil was metal-detected as it was removed. This recovered 500 non-ferrous metal objects, of which 350 are coins. These date from the 1st century BC to the medieval period. The majority, however, belong to the 2nd to 4th centuries AD.

Excavation in 1991 revealed three Romano-British post-built structures and a series of property/field boundaries, as well as waste pits. A small graveyard, possibly of Romano-British date, was also exposed and an area of Middle Saxon ironworking. Work continues in 1992.

2. *Caistor St. Edmund*, Roman town (Site 9786; TG 230 036)
by Peter Wade-Martins

Since 1988, the Norfolk Archaeological Trust has been carrying out a wall consolidation programme on the 3rd-century defences, with grant-aid from English Heritage. This has continued during 1991, and the final phase of the work on the west and south sides of the town is due to be completed during 1992.

3. *Caistor St. Edmund*, Markshall (Site 9584; TG 230 505)
by Trevor Ashwin, NAU.

An evaluation excavation was undertaken of an area of c.2.5 hectares at Markshall, close to the confluence of the Rivers Yare and Tas, threatened by gravel extraction associated with Bypass construction works. Excavation was necessary because the disturbance lay within a known area of intense prehistoric activity. It also lay close to the presumed site of the deserted medieval village of Markshall.

Archaeological features were sparsely distributed across the site. A number of distinctive small round pits containing worked flint and quantities of Grooved Ware were confined to a hillock in the centre of the site, providing evidence for activity here during the later Neolithic period.

No features of Roman date were identified, surprisingly, considering the site's proximity to *Venta Icenorum* a short distance to the south. An isolated pit contained an early Anglo-Saxon vegetable-tempered bowl very similar to those from the nearby cemetery at Morning Thorpe: this feature was interpreted as a solitary grave of the period.

It was demonstrated that the deserted medieval village of Markshall lay elsewhere, probably around Chapel Hill a short distance to the west.
Report: SMR and EAA.

4. *East Bilney*, Hall Carr (Site 7253; TF 9462 1970)
by Phil Andrews, NAU.

Limited excavation and survey was carried out on this moated site prior to the construction of a house. The work was funded by the landowner, Mr. A. Fell. Profiles were drawn across the site, which has been almost entirely levelled, and a trench dug across part of the infilled moat. This revealed a well-preserved timber revetment along the inner face of the moat which was approximately 7m wide, 1.5m deep and flat-bottomed. Within the area enclosed by the moat were a stone wall and evidence for a fence, both of which may have extended around the internal perimeter of the moat. It is probable that structural remains and other features remain well-preserved towards the centre of the site which, on the basis of the small amount of pottery recovered, is thought to have been a post-medieval rather than medieval creation.

Report: SMR.

5. *Emneth*, St. Edmund's Church (Site 2386; TF 4884 0739)
by Edwin Rose, NLA.
Following the discovery in 1987 of a tiled pavement in the north chapel, the remainder of the chapel floor to the west was replaced in 1991. A second pavement was uncovered, separated by a clay floor from the tiles at the east end found in 1987. It occupied the area around the central pier of the chancel arcade and consisted of a fragment of a pattern of diagonally-set blue and yellow tiles, 4½ inches square, edged by rows of tiles 5½ inches square, glazed blue-black and yellow or green. This is an important combination, as the 4½ inch Flemish tiles have been dated in the past to c. AD1400, and the 5½ inch tiles have occurred in contexts of the late 15th to mid-16th centuries; yet here they clearly form a pavement of a single period. Loose fragments of other 14th/15th-century tiles recovered include an unusual variant of a Bawsey fabric and a Flemish tile with a very unusual slip and copper glaze. The pavement may have been a standing for an altar against a parclose screen.
6. *Gorleston*, Addison Road (Site 10562; TG 5245 0518)
by Heather Wallis, NAU.
In July 1991 an evaluation excavation was carried out on a proposed development site between Addison Road and Burnt Lane in Gorleston. The work was funded by Norfolk County Council.

The site was thought to lie within the precinct of the Augustinian Friary which was founded in the mid-13th century. No evidence of the Friary was revealed by the excavation, but documentary research and analysis of the results of previous excavations in the vicinity confirmed that the site does indeed lie within the Friary Precinct.

Report: SMR.
7. *Great Yarmouth*, Town Wall — St. Peter's Plain (Site 4294; TG 5268 0728)
by Brian Ayers, NAU.
Survey work on a stretch of town wall was conducted prior to consolidation. A written description was supplemented by drawings and photographs. The work was undertaken on behalf of the NAU by Robert Smith and was funded by Great Yarmouth Borough Council and English Heritage.
Report: SMR.
8. *Iteringham* and *Wickmere*, The Mannington and Wolterton Estates (TG 142 320 and TG 163 318)
by Alan Davison
Arable fields have been systematically walked and pastures and woods checked for earthworks in this survey for NLA and English Heritage. A pilot survey in 1990, within Wolterton Park, was mainly concerned with the site of the deserted village of Wolterton. In 1990-91 the Mannington Estate and a portion of the Wolterton Estate were covered. Finds range from the Neolithic to the post-Medieval period, and include Romano-British, Middle Saxon, Late Saxon and medieval 'sites'.
9. *Kettlestone* (Site 7107; TF 951 289)
by Kenneth Penn, NAU.
An evaluation trench was excavated across a site threatened by gravel extraction. It revealed small ditches of probable medieval date. The work was funded by Pioneer Aggregates.
Report: SMR.

10. *Kettlestone* (Site 7107; TF 951 289)
by Dennis Jackson, Archaeological Consultant
An additional trench examined an area sealed below colluvial deposits, but this found only one further medieval ditch and the base of a prehistoric pit. The work was funded by Pioneer Aggregates.
Report: SMR.
11. *Middleton Saltern* (Site 23181; TF 655 144)
by Mark Leah, NAU.
Excavation was undertaken as part of the Fenland Management Programme on the site of a Romano-British salt production site in the Nar Valley. The work was funded by English Heritage.

The work demonstrated that the necessary environmental conditions for salt production existed in the Romano-British period, a useful section of silts and a burned soil yielding samples for micromorphological and pollen analysis.

The earliest evidence of human activity on the site consisted of a dark brown, briquetage-rich layer, up to 0.2m thick on the crest of the mound. Set into the mound were a number of boiling hearths. The structures were quite sophisticated, with stoke-holes at either end, a flue with a fired clay lining and flue arches. Pedestal bases also occurred along the flue edge, perhaps to support troughs. Clay-lined settling tanks were presumably used for the storage of sea water and to allow sediment to settle out.

The area was clearly subjected to unpredictable flooding episodes, as the mound was surrounded and partly overlain by flood silts. It was after flooding that a ditch was apparently dug around the mound, perhaps fed with sea water by feeder channels running in from the south-west. Later boiling hearths were supplied with sea water by a large channel, running north from the shoreline, which cut through the earlier feeder channels. In addition a large pit or reservoir was cut into the ditch around the mound, at its south-east corner. This feature appears to have filled up with sea water at high tide and to have been used as a storage facility, probably associated with an extensive, but badly damaged, area of burning to the north-east.
Report: EAA.
12. *Middleton, Setch Road* (Site 23011; TF 6450 1475)
by Sarah Bates and Andy Crowson, NAU.
Evaluation fieldwalking and excavation were undertaken on the site of known pot-boiler spreads. The distribution of pot-boilers was recorded, indicating that any pot-boiler mounds had been redistributed by the plough. The work was funded by the landowner, Mr. Fullers.
Report: SMR.
13. *Norfolk Monuments Management Project*
by Helen Paterson
Norfolk County Council, English Heritage and the Norfolk Museums Service have combined to launch a new initiative to encourage the better management of earthwork sites. In a pilot scheme in north-west Norfolk, more than 100 sites have been visited, including Scheduled Ancient Monuments as well as other, at present unprotected earthworks. Approximately half of the sites visited have been identified as requiring some positive management. Some owners have been willing to undertake this without grant-aid, while on other sites the present farming regime is already compatible with the well-being of the site.

Elsewhere, actions such as scrub clearance, elimination of rabbits, and fencing are being considered, and it is hoped that by April 1992 the first management agreements will be signed.

14. *North Tuddenham* (Site 28341; TG 0482 1368)

by David Gurney, NLA.

A watching brief by Mr. R. Nelson for NLA on the bypass line during topsoil stripping located a scatter and patches of potboilers, and approximately one-third of the circumference of the eaves-drip gully of an Iron Age house. Salvage excavation revealed that the gully had an external diameter of c. 12m, and that in one area at least this had been recut. The fill contained pottery, animal bones, charcoal, fired clay and potboilers indicating domestic use. The pottery is undiagnostic, but a 3rd or 2nd century BC date is suggested.

Finds: NCM. Report: SMR.

15. *Norwich, Castle Mall* (Site 777; TG 233 084) (Plate I)

by Liz Shepherd, NAU.

Excavation of this six-acre urban site was successfully completed in May 1991. Work in 1989 and 1990 established that the area had been extensively settled in the Late Saxon period and that the imposition of the Norman castle and its southern bailey had been at the expense of this settlement. Work during 1991 concentrated on the area encircled by the massive barbican ditch. Major discoveries included a proto-barbican ditch, a large 14th-century flint-built well measuring some 30m in depth (Plate I), and the flint and mortar remains of the barbican gatehouse itself, which had been pushed into the ditch at some point during the 18th century. Excavation to the base of the castle bridge revealed a plinth of nine chamfered Caen stone risers dressed in a 12th-century style, making its date of construction earlier than had previously been thought. Work was funded by Estates and General (Investments) Plc, Ove Arup Ltd. and English Heritage.

Report: EAA.

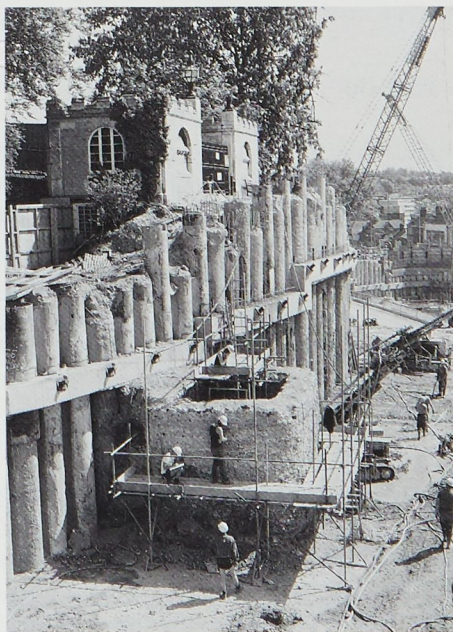


Plate I

Medieval flint-lined wall under excavation, Castle Mall, Norwich, 1991 (NBM 6).

16. *Norwich, City Wall* (TG 2361 0768)

by Brian Ayers, NAU.

Survey work was conducted on the line of the City wall adjacent to Carrow Hill prior to repointing. A written description was supplemented by drawings and photographs. The work was undertaken on behalf of the NAU by Robert Smith and was funded by Norwich City Council. Work continues.

17. *Norwich, Gentleman's Walk* (Site 868; TG 2295 0845)

by Heather Wallis, NAU.

In August 1991 a small excavation was carried out at a development site on the east side of Gentleman's Walk. This revealed evidence of domestic occupation, including a hearth provisionally dated to the 12th century. Later in the year a watching brief on the same site indicated that archaeological deposits survive to a depth of 3m in this area.

Removal of a ceiling during the development works uncovered a large fragment of a Norwich newspaper dated 1735. The work was funded by Sears Property & Developments Limited.

18. *Norwich, Heigham Street* (Site 862); TG 2245 0918)

by Heather Wallis, NAU.

An evaluation excavation on the site of a proposed development fronting Heigham Street, Norwich, was funded by BPCC Land & Estates Ltd.

The site lies within a suburb of the medieval city of Norwich. Previous archaeological work carried out in the vicinity had located evidence of occupation from the 14th century onwards. The trial excavation revealed evidence of probable on-site butchering of animals and a possible tanning process dating from the 13th century. Later medieval properties were also identified.

The possibility of earlier occupation on site exists as it was not possible to excavate the trenches down to the natural sands and gravels.

Report: SMR.

19. *Norwich, St. Andrew's Hall* (formerly Dominican Friary) (Site 428; TG 2312 0883)

by Phil Andrews, NAU.

A small evaluation was carried out in the south-west corner of the garth, adjacent to a 19th-century turret staircase within the cloister range to the north of the Blackfriars' church. This work was necessitated by a proposal to carry out structural repairs to the turret staircase and was funded by Norwich City Council. A sequence of layers was revealed including probable pre-Friary marsh deposits, and dumps of chalk, sand and clay associated with the levelling-up of the area following construction of the foundation courses of the cloister walls in the later 14th or early 15th century. Few later deposits survived.

Report: SMR.

20. *Norwich, St. Andrew's Hill* (Site 864; TG 2313 0867)

by Andy Shelley, NAU.

Renovation work on this post-medieval building uncovered archaeological features within the northern cellar. A 12th-century pit had been cut by a later, deeper pit for which no date could be established but which had been backfilled with chalk to consolidate the cellar floor. A herringbone brick wall overlaid the earlier pit — unfortunately not enough remained to ascertain whether this wall predated the building. The work was funded by Norwich City Council.

Report: SMR.

21. *Norwich*, St. George's Church, Tombland (Site 454; TG 2332 0883)
by Phil Andrews, NAU.
An archaeological survey of the chancel arch of this largely 15th-century church was carried out prior to remedial works, and was funded by the church. Partial stripping of the plaster on either face of the chancel arch revealed extensive cracking of the masonry and structural failure of the brick relieving arch. Evidence of repair, possibly over several centuries, was indicated by superficial remedial actions including the filling of cracks with oyster shells in a lime mortar, tiles, timber wedges, molten lead, mild steel sheet and sheetply.
Report: SMR.
22. *Norwich*, Theatre Royal (Site 372; TG 2274 0833)
by Brian Ayers, NAU.
Survey work and a small excavation were undertaken by Kevin Forrest and Richard Moore of a flint wall and adjacent deposits prior to demolition of the wall during refurbishment of the Theatre Royal. The work was funded by the Trustees of the Theatre Royal. The wall is almost certainly medieval in origin although the absence of artefacts from the excavated deposits hinders absolute dating. The structure was repaired and repointed on several occasions, utilising dressed stone from a demolished ecclesiastical building. Demolition in early 1992 revealed a carved limestone label stop in the shape of the head of a mitred bishop.
Report: SMR.
23. *Norwich*, 37-39 Timberhill (Site 872; TG 2316 0824)
by Andy Shelley, NAU.
Two weeks' excavation of this site during November 1991 found evidence, in the form of a ditch, to suggest that All Saints' Church (All Saints' Green) was founded in the 11th century and that its northern boundary was finally fixed in the later medieval period when yards behind the Timberhill street frontage were established. No definitive evidence could be found, however, for Saxon occupation of the site. The work was funded by D. Grady, Esq.
Report: SMR.
24. *Norwich Southern Bypass*
by Jayne Bown, NAU.
Fieldwalking and detecting work was completed along the route of the Norwich Southern Bypass. The route was walked after the topsoil had been stripped off (fieldwalking had taken place in previous years to collect surface finds). Over 25km was examined in a transect that crossed the river valleys of the Yare and Tas. Concentrated and scattered evidence of prehistoric occupation was discovered along the whole length of the route. Hearths, pits, a good assemblage of pottery and flint and a hoard of bronze axes were found. Finds of other periods included an early Roman kiln dump, Roman metalwork and coins, Late Saxon and Medieval pottery and metalwork. The work was funded by English Heritage.
Report: EAA.
25. *Sedgeford* (Site 1079; TF 710 363)
by Sarah Bates, NAU.
A watching brief and excavation were carried out along the line of a water pipe which was being laid through an area known to contain possible Middle Saxon settlement and burials. The work, which was funded by Anglian Water, provided an opportunity to study the development of the nearby fen and gave a likely Early Medieval date for the construction of a causeway over the Heacham river. An oven, dating to the Middle Saxon period, was

excavated and boundary ditches and occupation spreads, also probably dating to this period, offered an insight into the location and extent of the settlement.

Report: SMR.

26. *Snettisham*, Station Road (Site 28450; TF 680 337)

by Myk Flitcroft, NAU.

Evaluation of a 10.5 ha site was undertaken in advance of proposed development, 630m of machine-excavated trenches being investigated in a two-week period in July 1991. The work was funded by Wagg Jex Ltd.

The evaluation revealed extensive remains of Romano-British occupation in all parts of the site. Ploughing appears to have truncated features, but remains of enclosure/field ditches and pits were preserved below a layer of mixed top- and subsoil which itself produced large quantities of Romano-British finds.

Three concentrations of material were identified, connected with ironworking and pottery production and two well-preserved kilns were excavated. Initial analysis of the wasters from these kilns, and from the site generally, suggest a period of occupation possibly extending from the early 2nd to the early 4th centuries AD.

Report: SMR.

27. *Thetford*, Abbey Farm (Outer Court of Cluniac Priory) (Site 5748; TL 865 835)

by Kenneth Penn, NAU.

An evaluation, funded by Breckland District Council, revealed part of a bell-pit of probable 12th-century date and associated bell-founding debris.

Report: SMR.

28. *Watton*, Norwich Road (Site 25014; TF 9262 0090)

by Heather Wallis, NAU.

Evaluation excavation was carried out on the site of a proposed development fronting Norwich Road, Watton. The work was funded by Mr. V. Sommers.

The site had been identified as having archaeological potential as a result of metal-detecting in the area. Further metal-detector survey was carried out prior to excavation across the site, recovering thirteen Romano-British coins dating from 2nd-4th centuries, and five medieval objects.

The excavations themselves revealed an area of Romano-British activity. The archaeological features consisted of ditches and pits containing artefacts which indicate the nature of the site to be domestic. Two features dating to the Iron Age were also excavated.

Report: SMR.

29. *West Dereham*, St. Mary's Abbey (Site 4396; TF 661 006)

by Kenneth Penn, NAU.

The site of West Dereham Abbey, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, (founded 1188, dissolved 1538) was redeveloped in 1690 as a monumental mansion in the Italian style, using the surviving 16th-century gatehouse and flanking corridor as the main entrance and north front. This mansion survives today as a single ruinous range (a Listed Building) and current proposals to develop this as a house initiated a need to establish possible medieval wall and floor locations before proposals could proceed. Eight small trenches of varying sizes were excavated (funded by Mr. G. Shropshire) around the standing ruin. These revealed that, where examined, the range sat on a massive foundation, about 1.0m wide and over 1.30m deep. This foundation cut through a probable 16th-century destruction layer, a medieval yard surface and into the natural Gault Clay. Other trenches revealed a similarly massive

wall, probably of the medieval abbey, and the footings of the 16th-century wall which was incorporated into the 1690s mansion and which largely survives in the existing ruin. A rough rammed chalk 'floor' may be the base of the flanking corridor.

Report: SMR.