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**A Possible Late Saxon Burial and a Medieval Manor:
Excavations at Waxham Great Barn, 2003-4**

39603 SEP

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A POSSIBLE LATE SAXON BURIAL AND A MEDIEVAL MANOR: EXCAVATIONS AT WAXHAM GREAT BARN, 2003-4.

By David Robertson

with contributions by Francesca Boghi, Val Fryer, Richenda Goffin, Stephen Heywood, Alan Hogg, and
Fiona Petchey

Introduction

(Figs 1 and 2)

Waxham Great Barn (TG 4395 2635; Norfolk Historic Environment Record (HER) 8365) is of great historical and architectural importance. Built in 1583/4 by the Woodhouse family, it is a massive building measuring *c.* 54m by *c.* 10.5m (567 sq. m) and is the largest surviving historic barn in Norfolk. Comparable large barns of similar date exist at Hales and Paston, but are smaller being 52.7m and 46.6m long respectively. At 64.8m long Baconthorpe Castle barn was larger, but half of it has been demolished (Heywood and Ayton 1994; Heywood pers. comm.).

Constructed of flint, with some ashlar and brick dressings, Waxham Great Barn has a tie-beam and hammerbeam thatched roof. A number of original 16th-century buttresses survive, with others dating to the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. A wing of probable early 19th-century date is attached to each of the south corners, with two late 19th-century wings attached at the northern corners. It is a Grade I listed building (Heywood and Ayton 1994; NHC 1884 Norfolk XLI NE; NRO BR276/1/63; NRO DS351; NRO DS352; Pevsner and Wilson 1997, 708-710).

The significance of the Great Barn is increased by the fact that it stands within a relatively intact manorial complex (Scheduled Ancient Monument SAM 12703; HER 8365), the origin of which may lie in the early medieval period. Surviving medieval elements of this complex include low upstanding walls, earthwork features, ponds and parts of St. John's Church (church HER 8372). Waxham Hall and an enclosure wall with a number of gateways, dating to *c.* 1583, also stand within the confines of the complex, along with 19th-century and modern farm buildings.

By the mid-1980s the Great Barn had fallen into disrepair and the owners were unable to find funds to repair it (Shaw 1985). Following an application to demolish, it was compulsorily purchased by Norfolk County Council. Following this, between 1989 and 1992, the Great Barn was extensively restored. During this work, the excavation of post-holes for a fence and the cutting of a water-pipe were monitored and a cobbled surface was revealed (HER 8365; Crowson 1991).

In 1996 the Building and Conservation Section of Norfolk County Council produced plans to further refurbish the Great Barn and associated wings, including the provision of a café, lavatories and services. Once Heritage Lottery Funding had been secured, Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU) was commissioned to carry out archaeological investigations ahead of the refurbishment. In 1997 the excavation of a pipe-trench was monitored, revealing a modern track surface (Gaffney 1997). An excavation took place in August and September 2003, with a watching brief undertaken between September 2003 and February 2004. This report presents the results of the work carried out in 2003-4 (HER 39603).

Archaeological and Historical Background

The oldest object recorded from the vicinity of the site is an Acheulian (Palaeolithic) hand-axe (HER 17013) which was collected from Sea Palling beach to the north-west. To the east, also on the beach, a relict ploughsoil (HER 32093) has been exposed which yielded prehistoric worked flints. These were probably residual finds, as Iron Age, medieval and post-medieval pottery, also medieval and post-medieval metal objects have been recovered from the deposit. In addition, it is thought to have sealed features containing unabrased Roman and medieval pottery.

Roman pottery has been found in three other locations on Sea Palling beach, one to the north-west (HER 8360), one directly to the north-east (HER 8361) and one to the east (HER 8363). At the easternmost site the sherds may have been associated with a metalworking hearth, although as Late Saxon and medieval pottery was also found the feature could be later in date.

A possible Early Saxon brooch (HER 31508) was found on Sea Palling beach to the north-west. Medieval finds from the beach include a number of coins, a pendant, an ampulla and a bronze leg from a vessel (HER 8360, 24406, 30339 and 31049). The medieval village of Waxham Parva (HER 11909) was located 0.5km to the north-east before it was lost to the sea.

During the reign of Edward the Confessor the Abbot of St Benet's Abbey held land at Waxham. In 1086 the St. Benet's Abbey continued to hold land, with the Earl of Richmond having secured part of the settlement (Brown

1984, 4.40, 4.42 and 17.54). Blomefield describes how by the late 12th century the Ingham family held the manor of Waxham. The manor then passed through the Stapleton family to the Calthorpe family. William Calthorpe sold it to Sir Thomas Woodhouse during the reign of Henry VIII (1509-1547; Blomefield 1805-10, 352).

Coins, a token, a jetton, lead weights, a buckle, a spur and a seal impression are amongst the post-medieval finds collected from Sea Palling Beach (HER 8360, 19009, 30339 and 32093). The foundations of a post-medieval building (HER 13292) have also been found on the beach to the east of the site. French's Farm House (HER 30681), to the south, is a brick, flint and thatched building of 17th-century date. Two World War 2 pillboxes (16793 and 32641) stand directly to the north-east of the manorial complex, with a searchlight battery (HER 34548) located to the north-west.

Undated cropmarks – including enclosures, a trackway and rectilinear structures – have been identified both 1km to the west and about 200m to the east (HER 36133 and 36125). An undated human skull was found beneath the Great Barn, possibly during the 19th century (HER 8365).

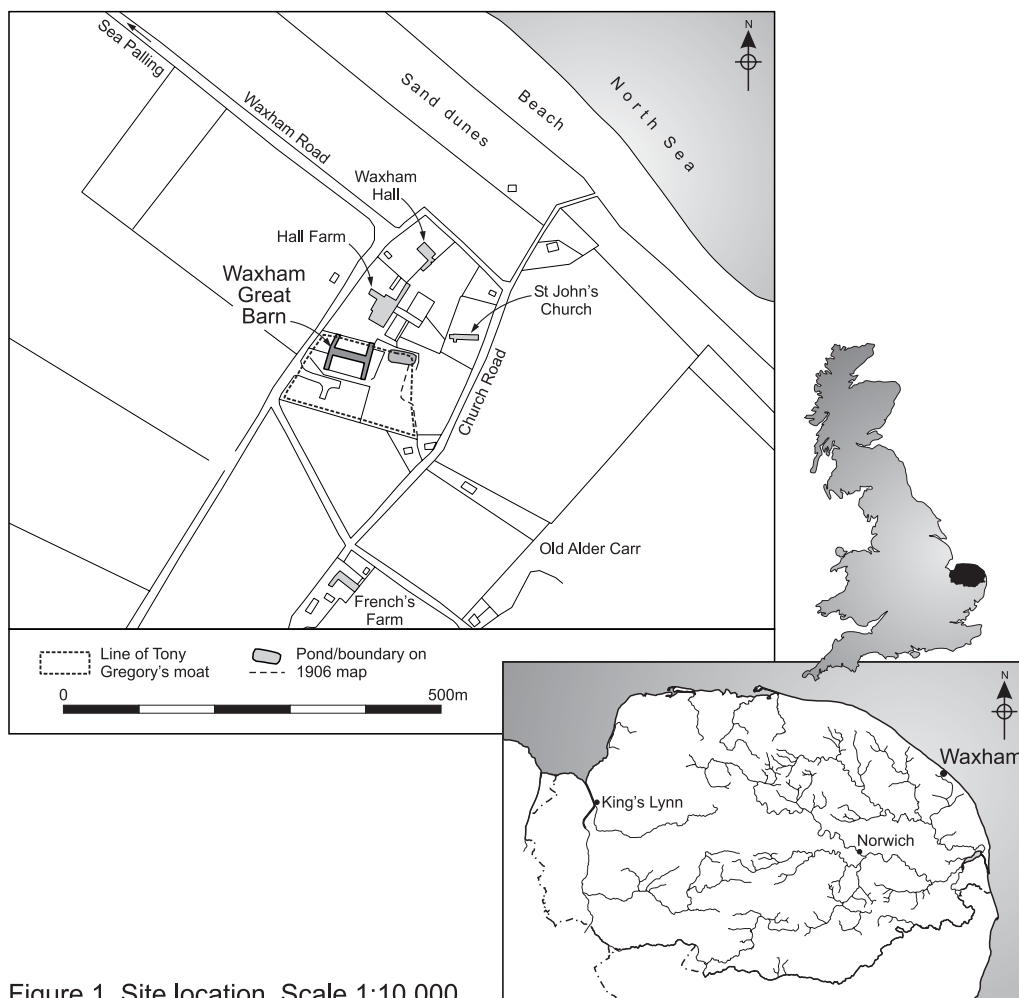


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:10,000

Location and topography

(Fig. 1)

The hamlet of Waxham is situated in north-eastern Norfolk, within the parish of Sea Palling, to the south-west of the village of Sea Palling. The Waxham manorial complex forms the majority of the hamlet. It is located amongst arable farmland and about 200m to the north-east are sand dunes and the north-eastern coast of Norfolk.

Waxham Great Barn is located in the south-east of the manorial complex. To the north are farm buildings, Waxham Hall and the enclosure wall. St John's Church is located about 100m to the north-east.

In the Waxham area the underlying solid geology is made up of Neogene and Pleistocene sedimentary rocks. These are overlain by a Pleistocene clayey reddish till, which itself lies beneath a series of Quaternary deposits of glacial and fluvial origin (Funnell 1994a; Funnell 1994b; Hodge *et. al* 1984, 6, 11-17). The upper surface of these (a yellow orange sandy clay) was encountered in all the excavation and watching brief trenches.

The soils of the Waxham area comprise calcareous silt and clayey marine alluvium, along with sand dunes (Corbett and Dent 1994; Funnell 1994c). Topsoil and subsoil were observed in two of the excavation trenches and the external watching brief areas. Combined they varied between 0.28m and 1.08m deep.

Excavation and watching brief methodology

(Fig. 2)

Three trenches were excavated. They were placed in the areas where it was thought that the impact of the refurbishment's would be greatest. All modern deposits were removed by mechanical excavator under constant archaeological supervision.

Trench 1 was located on the western edge of the south-eastern wing of the Great Barn. It was placed where footing and drainage trenches were to be sited, measured 21m long by 1.4m wide and was excavated to the formation level (between 0.6m and 1.2m, depending on the part of the trench). Trench 2 measured 4m by 7m by 1.1m deep and was located to the south of the south-eastern wing, where a sewage treatment plant was to be built. Trench 3 was to the south-west of the Great Barn, where the Schedule of Works described a ditch to be excavated. However, soon after excavation had begun, NAU learnt that the pipeline dug in 1997 had replaced the planned ditch and the investigation in this area was halted.

All the other refurbishment elements that involved reduction below existing levels were subject to watching brief. These included work within the Great Barn, work within the north-western and south-eastern wings and the excavation of service trenches to the east and south of the Great Barn (Trenches 4 to 11). All the watching brief reductions were carried out by on-site contractors under archaeological supervision.

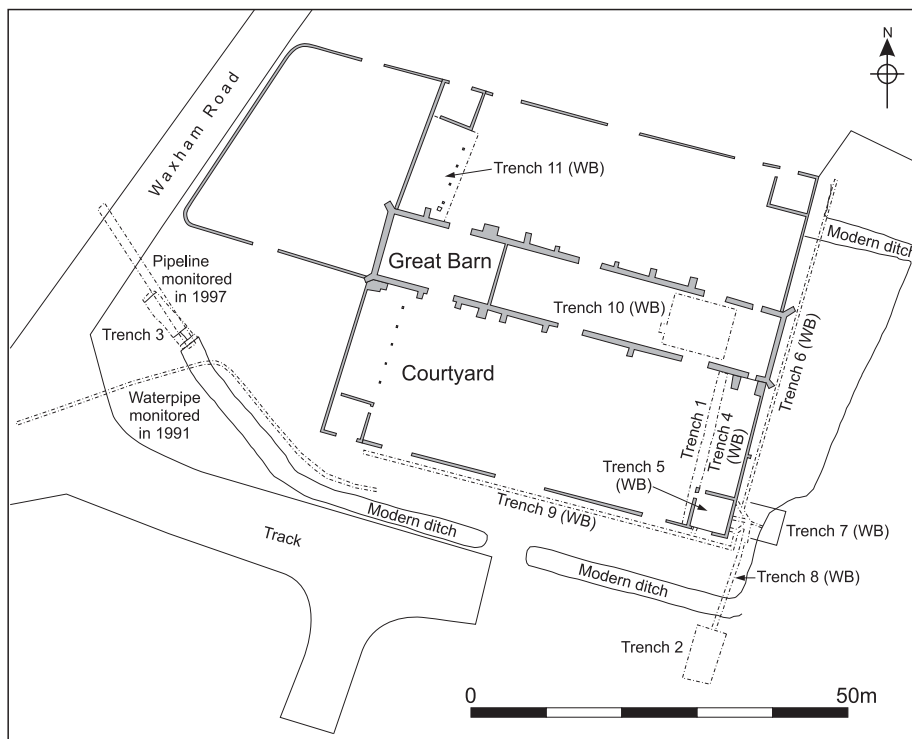


Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:1000

Excavation and watching brief results

The excavation and watching brief revealed a sequence of archaeological features of possible Late Saxon, medieval, post-medieval and modern date. The following phasing scheme has been applied to all contexts and has been used as the framework for this report.

Period 1: ?Late Saxon

Period 2: Medieval

Period 3: Late 16th century to 19th century

Period 4: 19th to 20th century

Period 5: 20th century

The report provides a summary of the excavated archaeology. Full details are provided in the Assessment Report and Updated Project Design (Robertson 2004) and the site archive. The archive is held by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service.

Period 1: ?Late Saxon

(Fig. 3)

At the northern end of Trench 1 the natural was cut by a roughly north-east to south-west aligned grave (108). The grave measured 1.1m wide and contained a body stain (110) and a fragmentary skeleton (SK109). The bone was radiocarbon dated to cal AD 960-1050 (Wk-15613), although the bone was very poorly preserved and this result should be treated with caution. The skeleton and body stain were sealed by a grey silty clay fill (116) which held no dating evidence and was cut by Period 2 and Period 4 features.

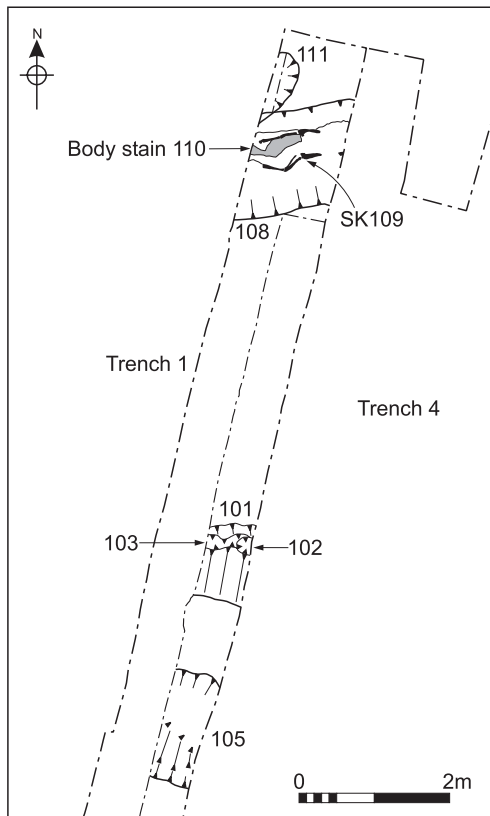


Fig. 3 ?Late Saxon grave and medieval pits, Trench 1. Scale 1:100

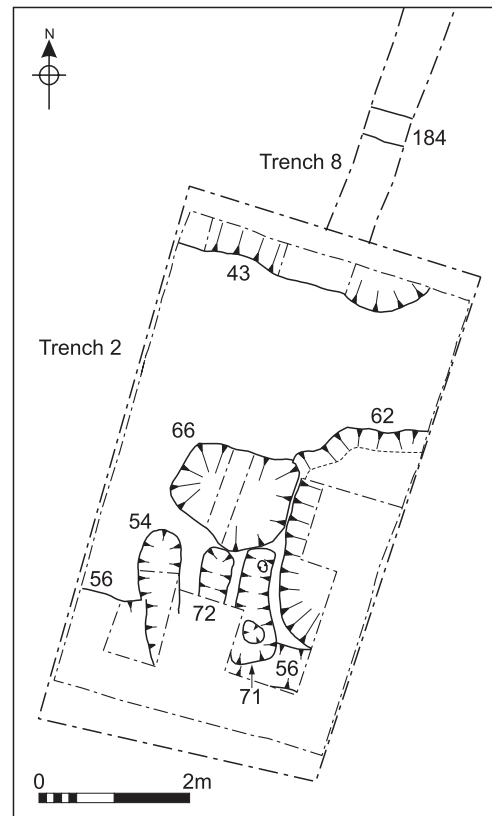


Fig. 4 Medieval features, Trench 2. Scale 1:100

Period 2: Medieval

(Figs 3 and 4)

Trench 1

A medieval cess pit (101) was located to the south of the grave. Two stake-holes found on the northern edge of this feature suggest that it was originally timber lined; both contained the decayed remains of stakes, whilst one held a piece of 11th- to 14th-century pottery. The pit was backfilled with four grey cassy deposits, the lower two of which each contained a sherd of 11th- to 14th-century pottery. An environmental sample suggested that lowest deposit included animal dung.

Two undated pits were located close to the cess pit and may have been contemporary features. That to the south (105) was filled by a cassy green clay. That to the north (111) cut the grave backfill and contained a single grey clayey silt.

Trenches 2 and 8 (watching brief)

In Trench 2 the natural was cut by two east-to-west aligned ditches (56 and 43). In Trench 8, to the north of Trench 2, the watching brief revealed a third east-to-west aligned ditch (184). The only artefact recovered from the gullies was an undated flint flake that may have been used as a hammerstone and/or a core (from gully 43). Although all three ditches were undated, the concentration of medieval features nearby suggests that they were medieval in date.

The fill of the southernmost ditch (56) was cut by three parallel north-west to south-east orientated gullies. The gullies were either V- or U-shaped in profile and were between 0.42m and 0.7m wide and about 0.3m deep. The westernmost gully (54) held fifty-eight fragments of lava quern and four sherds of 11th- to 14th-century pottery. While fired clay, a residual Late Saxon sherd and seventeen 11th- to 13th-century sherds were recovered from the easternmost gully (71).

To the north of the gullies, respecting their edges, was an irregularly shaped pit (66) that contained five sherds of 11th- to 14th-century unglazed pottery. On its eastern edge, a larger pit (62) truncated it. This had steep sides, and contained three clayey silt fills. An environmental sample from its lowest fill contained a very low density of detritus, whilst fired clay and twelve pieces of 11th- to 14th-century pottery were collected from the uppermost fill.

Period 3: Late 16th century to 19th century

(Fig 5)

The Great Barn was constructed in 1583/4. The upper part of the Great Barn's foundations were observed at the northern end of the Trench 1. The lower section comprised of at least 0.15m of flint cobbles in a clay silt matrix; above this was 0.12m of rammed lime mortar. During the watching brief the floor level within the Great Barn was lowered by 0.15-0.3m. Several spreads of make-up incorporating chalk, clay, flint cobbles and ceramic building material were seen. As no dating evidence was recovered from them, it was not clear if they were associated with the construction of the barn or later in date.

A yard surface (90) found in the centre of Trench 1 may have been laid at the time of the Great Barn's construction. A 4.4m long stretch of this survived, sealing two Period 2 pits. It was made from rounded pebbles with occasional pieces of medieval and post-medieval ceramic building material. It was repaired on at least four occasions, with a timber stake (107) pushed through one of the repair surfaces. The uppermost repair was sealed by a 0.05m thick green-grey sand with occasional organic patches. An environmental sample suggested this deposit accumulated as trample during the use of the yard. A small patch of cobbled surface (27; with medieval tile elements) found towards the southern end of the Trench 1 may have been contemporary with surface 90 or one of its repairs. It was also covered by a trample deposit.

Buttresses were added to the Great Barn at several points between the 16th and 19th centuries. Two of these may be 17th-century in date (146 and 144; Norfolk County Council 1991) and were located within the watching brief area immediately east of Trench 1 (Trench 4). The top of the limestone and sand foundations (145) of the easternmost buttress was exposed. They were truncated by a sand, ceramic building material and flint filled construction cut (150) for a east-to-west aligned brick wall (141). The wall extended between the two buttresses, abutting them both. It survived to a height of 0.4m and was a brick and a half wide.

Confined by wall 141, the two buttresses and the south wall of the Great Barn was a 0.3m thick yellow-brown silty clay make-up layer. It was sealed by a surface of rounded flint cobbles (149). As there is a door-opening in the south wall of the Great Barn between the two buttresses it is possible that they and wall 141 once formed a porchway, with the cobbled surface serving as its floor.

A yard or track surface (5) made from flint cobbles with rare post-medieval ceramic building fragments was found in Trench 3. During the watching brief two post-medieval pits were recorded (Trench 7 and 9; not illustrated), one of which contained four pieces of architectural limestone. How the surface and pits related to activity adjacent to the Great Barn was not clear.

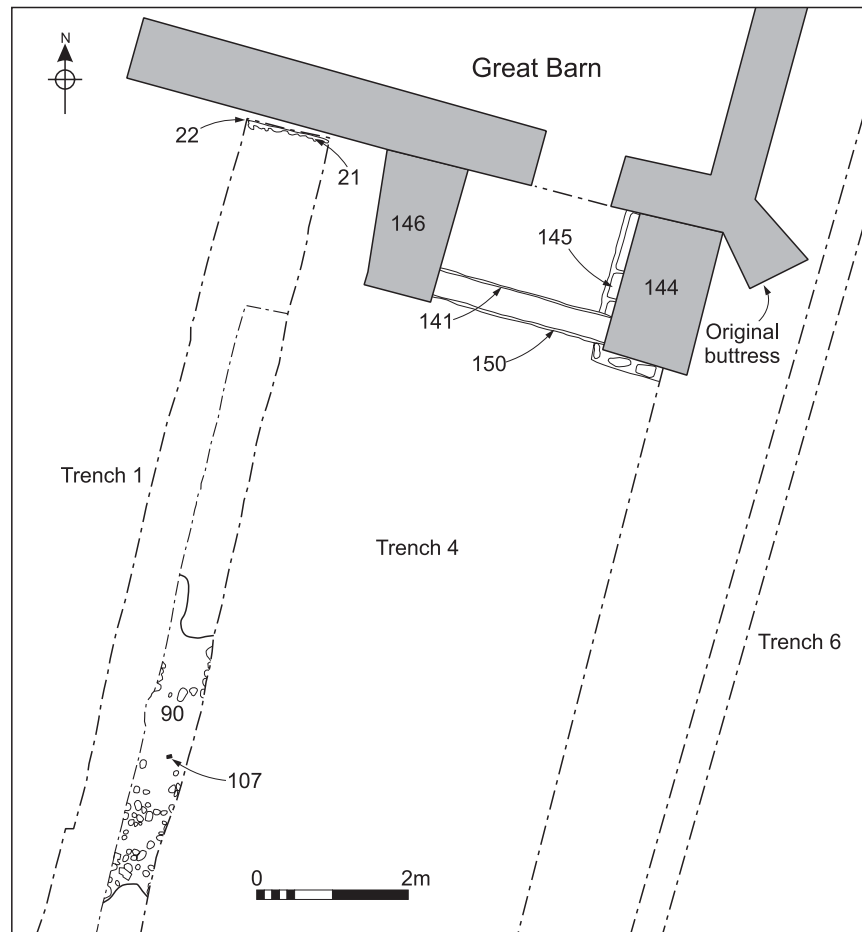


Fig. 5. Period 3 features, Trench 1 and watching brief Trench 4. Scale 1:100

Period 4: 19th to 20th century
(Fig 6)

The construction of the wings

Four wings, each with brick and flint cobble walls, were added to the Great Barn during the 19th century. The probable early 19th-century south-eastern wing was examined during the excavation of Trench 1 and the watching brief, whilst the late 19th-century north-western wing was examined during the watching brief.

Before the south-eastern wing was built, a number of layers were deposited to make-up the ground surface. In the northern part of the wing were two grey silty sands (147 and 148), whilst in the south were two yellow brown clayey silts (137 and 138). The foundations for the south-eastern wing were exposed in the south of Trench 1. It appeared that they cut the make-up layers and they were filled by flint, ceramic building material and lime mortar.

The wing was built with a small room at the southern end. To the north of this the western front was left open and the roof was supported by five posts spaced 2.3m to 2.6m apart. Post-holes for three of these (91, 94 and 96) survived truncation by later post-holes; the location of the missing two was suggested by the presence of replacement post-holes.

Within the north-western wing a 0.15m thick floor of rammed chalk directly overlay natural. Although no dating evidence was recovered, the floor may have been laid during the construction of the wing.

Repair to the south-eastern wing

After a period of time, the posts along the western front of the south-eastern wing were replaced. As no evidence for posts was found in the construction-phase post-holes, it seems likely that they were all removed. Five new post-holes (49, 67, 79, 80 and 86) were then dug and replacement posts placed within them in roughly the same locations as their predecessors, again all spaced between 2.3m and 2.6m apart. Posts survived in three of the post-holes (49, 80 and 86) and in four post-holes (49, 67, 80 and 86) post-pads were present. Two of the pads were made from timber planks, whilst two were limestone blocks.

Stake 28 was located on the western front of the wing, against the north-eastern corner of the southern room. It may have been pushed through earlier deposits as part of the initial phase of post setting, during the second phase or during repair work. Two timbers (33 and 121) were situated either side of post-hole 67 and were probably to do with repair work or attempts to stabilise the post in the post-hole. The watching brief revealed four circular stakes (173, 174, 175 and 176) had been driven through the natural in the northern part of the south-east wing. It was not clear how these related to the other timbers found.

At some point, a crack formed in the northern wall of the room, close to the western corner. A hole (134) was dug through the make-up layers in the room and repairs were made to the wall above and below ground. The hole was then backfilled. In the north-eastern corner of the room a post-hole (136) may have held a post that was used during repairs.

Period 5: 20th century

At some point during the 20th century, the south-eastern wing fell into disrepair. Two of the western front posts were removed entirely and three were removed above ground. It is probable that this removal led to two of the posts (30 and 31) leaning below-ground. Once the posts had been removed a 0.34m thick dark brown clayey silt (36 and 143) was deposited within the area covered by Trench 1 and the northern part of the wing. It contained frequent ceramic building material fragments, mortar flecks, wood pieces, lumps of concrete and rare pieces of modern plastic and probably accumulated during the use of the area as a farmyard.

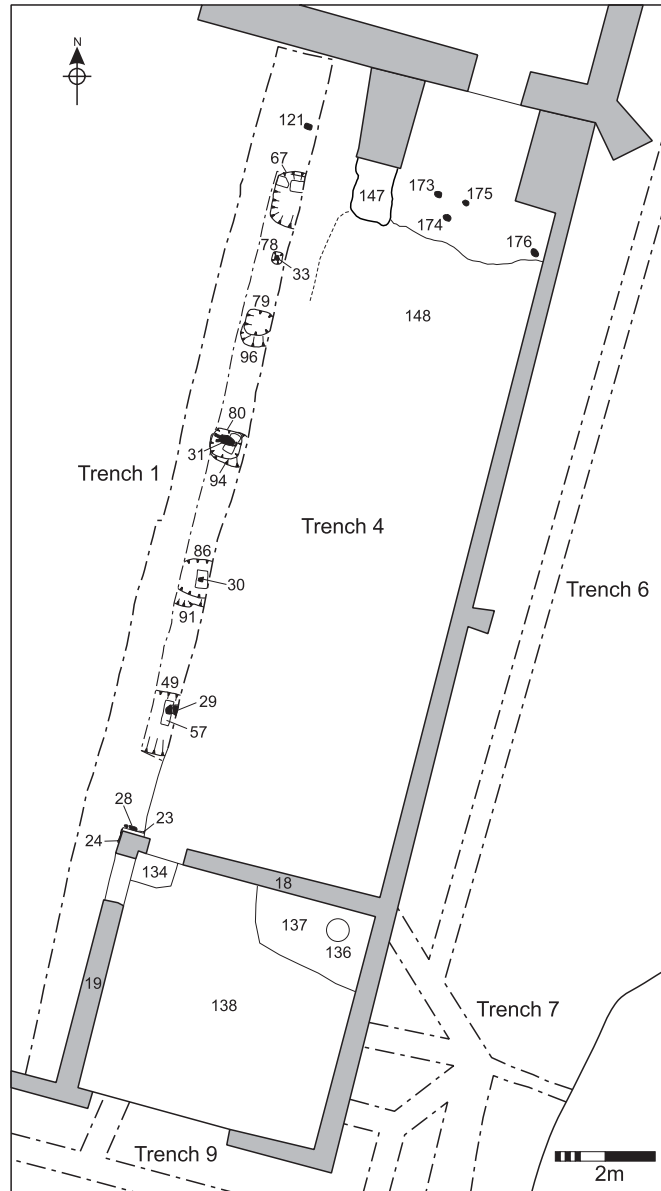


Figure 6. Period 4 features, Trenches 1 and 4.
Scale 1:150

Specialist reports

Pottery

by Richenda Goffin

The assemblage

Forty-seven sherds of pottery were recovered (weighing 0.278kg). The majority of the ceramics are medieval date, with a small amount of earlier and later wares.

Three fragments of pottery were recovered from Trench 1. Two fragments of Local medieval unglazed ware (LMU) were recovered from pit 101 and a discoloured sherd of oxidised medieval coarseware was collected from one of the associated stakeholes.

Forty-three fragments of pottery were collected in Trench 2 (weighing 0.264kg). Three fragments from the base of a medieval coarseware vessel and a single slightly abraded sherd of Local unglazed ware were present in gully 54. At least two LMU cooking pots or jars with simple everted rims indicative of 11th- to 13th-century date were recovered from gully 71. A third LMU cooking vessel or jar of a similar date range was present in this gully, together with the heavily sooted base of another coarseware vessel with a sandier fabric (which may be slightly earlier in date) and a fragment of Thetford-type ware. Five fragments of LMU were recovered from pit 66, whilst the uppermost fill of pit 62 contained twelve sherds of pottery. Two LMU cooking vessels or jars were identified, with simple everted rims dating to the 11th to 13th centuries. An animal burrow cutting into the upper fill of pit 62 contained a single fragment of a late post-medieval earthenware flower pot dating to the 18th to 20th centuries. The thick layer of topsoil in Trench 2 contained two LMU sherds and a small fragment of a Frechen stoneware jug dating from the late 16th to 17th centuries.

Discussion

Although a single sherd of Late Saxon date was present as a residual element in one of the gullies in Trench 2, the majority of the pottery dates to the 11th to 13th centuries. The small group of coarseware cooking vessels or jars may represent evidence of the occupation of the medieval manor.

The majority of the assemblage comprises a range of medieval coarsewares that are likely to have been produced locally. The majority of these have been catalogued as LMU, a collective term used to describe fine to medium greywares which are sometimes partially oxidised. Such vessels are usually wheel-thrown but often have distinctive wiping and trimming marks at the junction of the neck and shoulder of the vessel. Although no actual kiln sites have been identified, waster sherds recovered from fieldwalking at Woodbastwick and Potter Heigham indicate that some production is likely to have taken place in the vicinity (Jennings 1981). In addition, a smaller amount of coarser sandy wheel thrown wares were identified. Their precise source of manufacture has not been established. Such wares are likely to have been made at a number of production sites in East Anglia throughout the 11th to 14th centuries.

The ceramics are utilitarian and domestic in their nature, with some of the LMU jars showing evidence of having been used over a fire. There are no imported vessels or obviously non-local wares in the medieval component of the assemblage, and perhaps significantly, no glazed wares such as Grimston ware which dates from the late 12th to 14th centuries.

Human skeletal remains

By Francesca Boghi

The human remains recovered consist of a few bones (310g) from the pelvis, upper and lower limbs of an adult skeleton (SK109). They derived from a supine, roughly north-east to south-west aligned burial (head to the west) with the right arm partially flexed at the elbow and the other limbs extended. The east and west extremities of the grave lay beyond the limits of Trench 1. The bone was in poor condition due to post-mortem damage; it was fragmented with heavily eroded bone cortex.

The skeleton was classified as an adult (> 20 years) on the basis of the rate of epiphyseal union but the sex could not be determined. No measurements were possible. No pathological conditions were noticed other than common moderate arthritic changes (moderate lipping of the articular surface) in the phalanges of the left hallux.

Radiocarbon dating

By Alan Hogg and Fiona Petchey

A sample of human bone was submitted to the Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory, University of Waikato, New Zealand. It was dated using AMS methods to cal AD 960-1050 (1016 +/- 33 BP; Wk15613). Most well preserved archaeological bone protein ranges between 11 and 16%N, with an average 35%C and a C:N ratio range of 3.1-3.5. This sample had a very low %N value (0.16) and a high C:N ratio (4.24). Both of scores fell outside normally accepted parameters and the final result should, therefore, be treated with caution.

The results of d13C and d15N analysis suggest that the individual primarily had a terrestrial C-3 diet. The high d15N values (13.64) may indicate an aquatic (freshwater) diet (a freshwater value of 8 per Millie has been considered to be a 0% aquatic diet and 17 per mill a 100% aquatic diet), but it may also indicate a high level of protein in this individuals diet.

Stone

By Stephen Heywood and David Robertson

The site produced five fragments of architectural limestone. One was collected from a replacement post-hole in the western front of the south-eastern wing, with four recovered from a Period 4 pit. Of the four pieces from the pit, one is part of a 13th-century voussoir, one is a part of a window jamb and one features wave-moulding and is probably 14th-century in date. It is probable that some or all of the pieces came from Hickling, Ingham and/or Broomholm priories, properties acquired by the Woodhouse family after the Dissolution of the monasteries (Heywood and Ayton 1996, 24-26).

Plant Macrofossils

By Val Fryer

Three samples were collected for the extraction of plant macrofossils. The sample from the lowest fill of medieval pit 62 contains a very low density of detritus, some or all of which may have been blown in from other sources. Although mineralised concretions are common, they appear very homogenous and may be calcareous deposits rather than faecal material. An organic sand (37) that overlay post-medieval cobbled surfaces in Trench 1 appears to contain a high density of brushwood or hedging waste, probably derived from material accidentally trampled into the surface. Mineralised concretions are common in the fill of medieval pit 101, with some pieces structured, containing small fragments of bone and possible plant remains. Given the context, it is perhaps more likely that this material is derived from animal dung rather than human sewage. The presence of seeds of wetland, aquatic and salt marsh plants is somewhat puzzling and it is unclear whether these were introduced (for example in fodder or bedding) or formed part of the local flora.

Discussion

The burial found in Trench 1 may have been Late Saxon in date, although the radiocarbon dates from the bone are not secure. If it the burial was Late Saxon, Waxham is a new addition to a short list of rural sites in Norfolk where skeletons of this date have been excavated (other sites include Barton Bendish, Caister-on-Sea and North Elmham; Darling 1993; Rogerson and Ashley 1987; Wade-Martins 1980, 185-195). The burial would also be the first *in situ* evidence for Late Saxon activity within the hamlet of Waxham. The nature of this possible activity, however, is far from clear. It is not certain whether the burial was isolated or one of a number, as the previous discovery of a human skull beneath the Great Barn may suggest. If it was an isolated burial, the burial of someone outside accepted society, such as a criminal, traitor, suicide or murder victim, is a possibility. If it were one of a number of burials, it would suggest a focus of burial c. 120m south-west of the present churchyard of St John's Church. This could mean that St John's was not the first church at Waxham and an earlier one remains to be discovered. It may also mean that the origins of the manorial centre lay in the Late Saxon period, earlier than previously thought. In the mid 11th century the Abbot of St Benet's Abbey held land at Waxham (Brown 1984, 17.54). Perhaps he or one of his tenants had a manor house there, and possibly one similar to the halls found at North Elmham, Goltho in Lincolnshire and Sulgrave in Northamptonshire (Wade-Martins 1980; Williams 1992).

The earliest surviving feature within the manorial complex is the south wall of the nave of St. John's Church, which dates to the first half of the 12th century (Heywood and Ayton 1994, 24-26). This may have been built by the Ingham family, who by the late 12th century held the manor of Waxham (Blomefield 1805-10, 352). It is probable that the Ingham's would have had a manor house close to the church (although whether the manor house or church would have been built first is a matter for debate). As the excavated medieval pits were located just over 100m from the church they could have associated with the occupation of the manor house, serving as cess pits and rubbish dumps for the household. The ditches and gullies could have been garden or yard features.

Interpreting these features is, moreover, dependent on the location of the excavated features in relation to the probable manor house which is not securely located at the present time. Tony Gregory postulated the location of a moat that may have surrounded it. He noted how the 1906 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map (NHC Norfolk XLI 4) shows a rectangular pond to the south-west of the church and a curved boundary to the south of this, perhaps marking the former western edge of a similar, now infilled, pond. These two ponds could have formed a single water-filled, right-angled ditch or moat. If so, this feature may have extended westwards to form a rectangular shaped moat enclosing the site of the Great Barn. As it would be unusual for a 16th-century barn to have a moat constructed around it, it seems likely that the hypothetical moat would have been earlier, plausibly medieval, in date (Gregory 1989).

However, the archaeological investigations demonstrated that there was not a moat where Gregory suggested. Although both the pond and the curved boundary appear on the 1884 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (NHC Norfolk XLI NE), they are not shown on the Waxham tithe map (1840; NRO BR 276/1/63), a ?draft enclosure map (no date; NRO C/Ca1/67) or estate maps from 1851 and 1866 (NRO DS 351; NRO DS 352). This suggests that they not medieval in date but instead late 19th-century features. The lack of evidence for Gregory's moat does not mean that it and a manor house did not exist, but that if they did their location is at present unknown.

As far as the excavated medieval features are concerned, the best that can be said is that they were not located within a moated enclosure. They may have been associated with activity within a moated site/manor house, or they may have been associated with properties located close to the manorial centre.

Wherever the manor house was situated, it is more than probable that it was abandoned before or during the construction of Waxham Hall, its enclosure walls and the Great Barn in *c.* 1583/4. Sir Thomas Woodhouse bought the manor of Waxham during the first half of the 16th century and it was probably during the tenure of his brother Sir William (who succeeded to Waxham in 1571) that the building work took place (Heywood and Ayton 1994, 24).

Ecclesiastical stonework is present in the structure of the Great Barn and it is presumed that this was brought from the dissolved priories at Broomholm, Hickling and/or Ingham (Heywood and Ayton 1994, 26). The four pieces of worked limestone collected from a pit may also have come from one or a number of these sites. The original intention was probably to include them in the barn but instead they were buried, presumably because they were surplus to requirements.

The excavation uncovered a post-medieval cobbled surface to the south of the Great Barn, evidence for the area's use as a yard and/or working area. A trample deposit above it contained brushwood or hedging waste. This material could have been the remains of fuel that was brought to the barn for storage or material that was accidentally mixed with the corn that was stored and threshed in the barn (Heywood and Ayton 1994, 26).

The porch-like structure formed by a wall and two possible 17th-century buttresses is most unusual and its purpose is difficult to explain. The recording of the 19th-century south-east wing that superseded it proved a valuable exercise, with details on the construction of its foundations and open western front recovered. Excavation also showed that the wing was repaired a number of times before it was disused. During the 19th-century open fronted farm buildings were used for a variety of purposes and had roles including hay stores, cattle courts and cart sheds (Wade-Martins 2004, 86 and 92). It is probable that the south-east wing, along with the other three open fronted wings, were used in these and other ways.

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