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ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2009/228

Church Bridge, Boxford BXF 022

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HER Information

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Summary

An archaeological monitoring and building recording was carried out at Church Bridge, Boxford which identified and recorded the stone-built support piers of a medieval bridge, which was largely superseded in the 17th and 19th century by a brick and ironwork bridge.

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1. Introduction

A building recording and monitoring exercise was carried out at Church Bridge, Boxford at the request of Suffolk County Council, Environment and Transport Division, ahead of proposed reconstruction to brickwork and the replacement of ironwork. The work was undertaken over a period of two non-consecutive days (7th May and 13th August 2009) in accordance with a Brief and Specification (Appendix 1) produced by William Fletcher (SCCAS/Conservation Team).

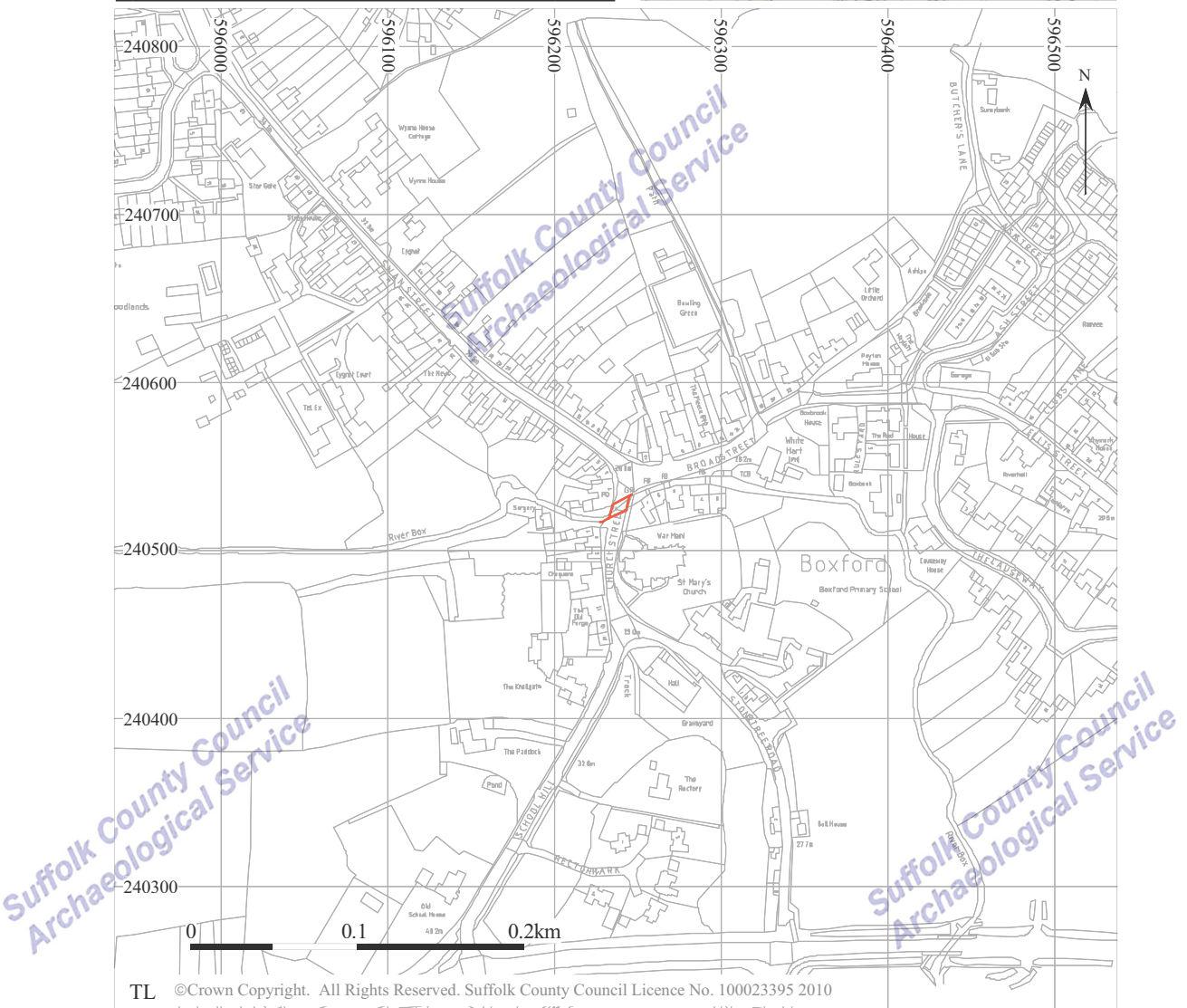
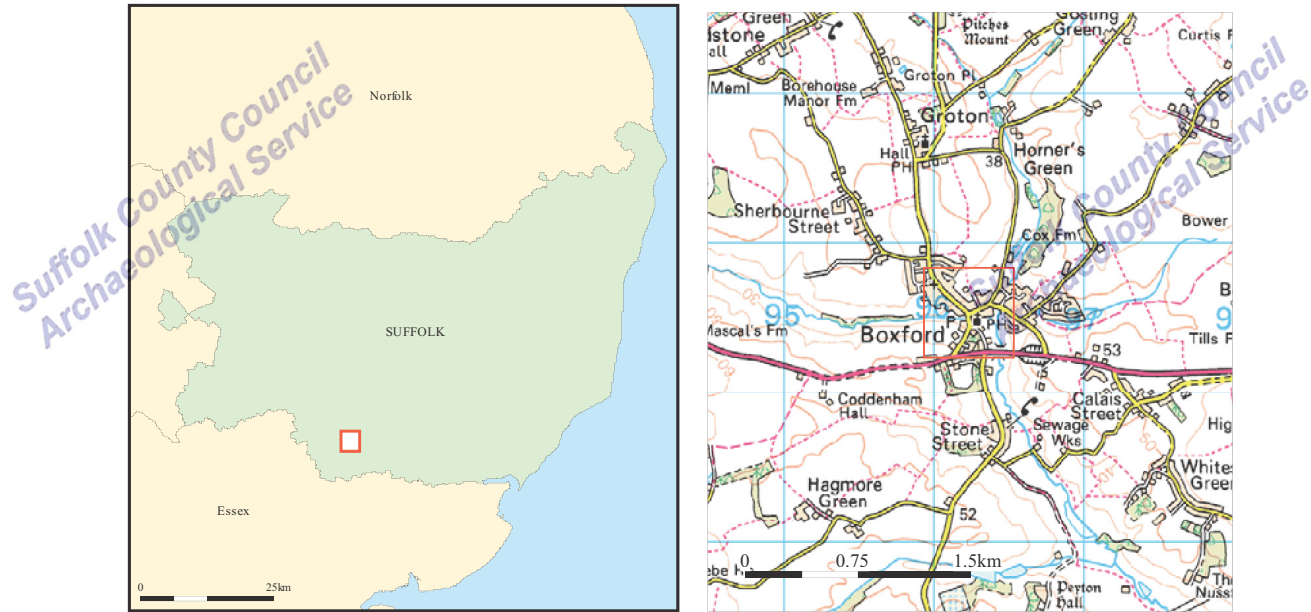
Boxford is located towards the south of the county of Suffolk, between Sudbury to the west and Hadleigh to the east (Fig. 1) and Church Bridge itself is situated near the commercial centre of the village, just north of St Mary's Church (Fig. 2).

2. Geology and topography

The geology of Boxford comprises London clay overlain by glacial sands and gravels (IGS 1969) and lies at the bottom of a valley at the confluence of two watercourses – the River Box and an un-named tributary. The subject bridge spans the River Box at the north end of Church Street at a height of approximately 27m OD and carries traffic. A second bridge for pedestrians is located immediately adjacent to the main bridge, to the east, but was not included in this survey.

3. Archaeological and historical background

A search of the Historic Environment Record database identified seven findspots or structures within a 0.5km radius of Church Bridge. Of these, the earliest finds are two Mesolithic flint tranchet axes and sharpening flakes (BXF 006) and a Bronze Age 'quoit head pin' (BXF 005) found in a tributary of the River Box. No evidence for later prehistoric activity has yet been identified. Very little of Roman date has been recovered although a fragment of lava quern (BXF 002) of unknown date, but possibly Roman, was found to the south-east of the subject site.



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Figure 1. Site location

There are a significant number of medieval buildings within the search area, including St. Mary's Church (BXF 008), which stands immediately to the south-east of Church Bridge, but no finds have been recorded. A slightly higher number of post-medieval records were identified and these include the arm of a moat at Parsonage Farm (BXF 015), which is situated south of the A1071 Sudbury to Hadleigh road, the site of Groton Brickworks (BXF 014) in Boxford itself and the present Church Bridge (BXF 012).

3.1 Documentary Research

The following is a brief summary of the documentary research carried out by Anthony Breen, the original (full) version of which is presented in Appendix 2.

There are two 15th century references to a bridge at Boxford. The first dates to 1431 and was found in the Boxford Parish Books and the second is from the Will of John Cowpere of Boxford, dated 20 January 1445, in which he leaves 4 marks 'to the stone bridge of the town' providing 'it can be finished and completed with stone'. These are followed by a series of references in the Boxford Churchwardens' Account Books to bridge repairs and associated costs for labour and materials throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. Interestingly, the Account Books also show that by the mid 17th century there were two bridges, referred to as 'the stone bridge' and 'bored bredge and causey'. The latter of these is assumed to be the footbridge.

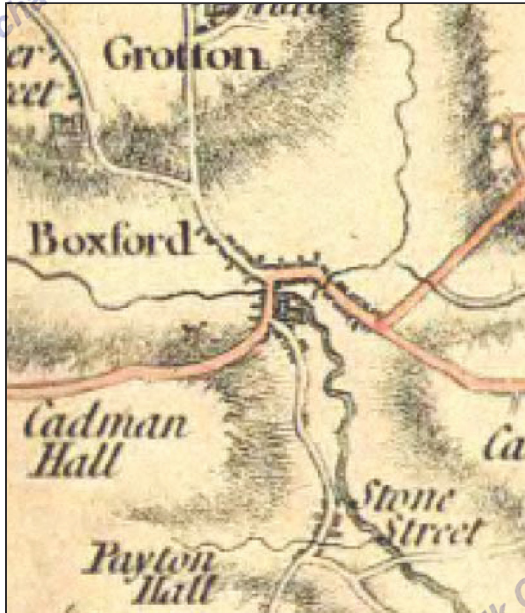
Entries relating to the bridge(s) during the 18th and 19th centuries are found in the Parish Books and refer again to repair and payments made. Of particular interest in these documents are the entries relating to the rebuilding of the bridge in the late 19th century. A decision was made at a vestry meeting of 21 April 1881 to rebuild the bridge and by November the same year the works were complete.

Further references to bridge repairs appear in 20th century documents, concluding with repairs to the ironwork railings in 1982, although their number is significantly fewer.

It is clear from the documents that the earliest bridge was constructed at least partly from stone, with a wooden deck covered with gravels. During the early post-medieval period the bridge changed to become partly brick-construction, a form it retained into the 19th century, when it gained the decorative ironwork railings that survived until the present work was carried out.

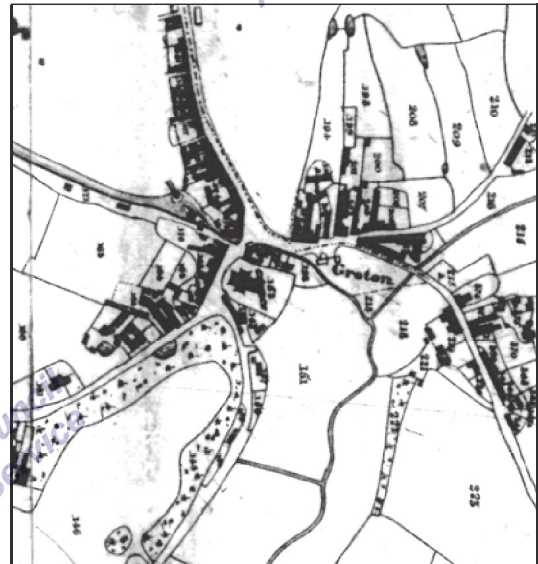
3.2 Historic Maps

To complement the archaeological building survey and the documentary research, relevant extracts of historic maps have been included below, showing the development of the village over time and the location of the bridge itself (marked by a red rectangle, Figs. 5 to 7). All images are aligned with north approximately at the top.



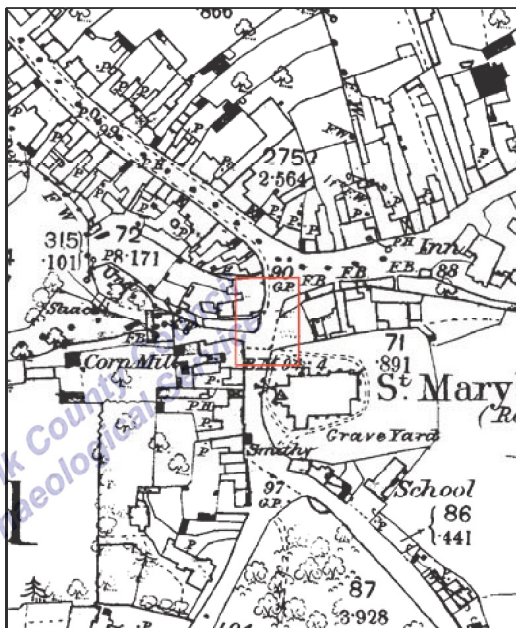
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Figure 2. Extract from Hodskinson's map (1783)



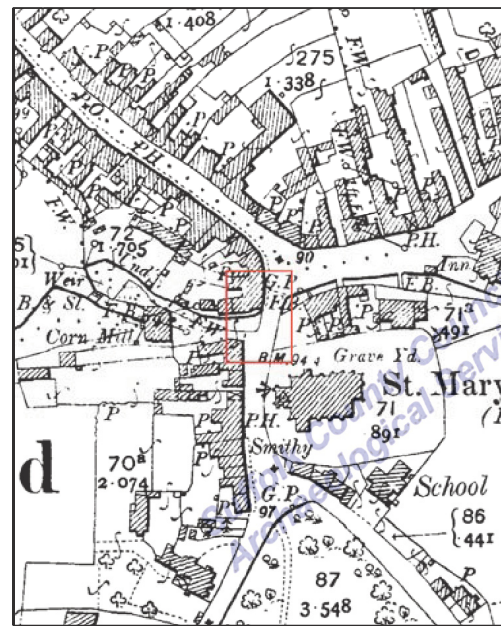
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Figure 3. 1840 Tithe map extract



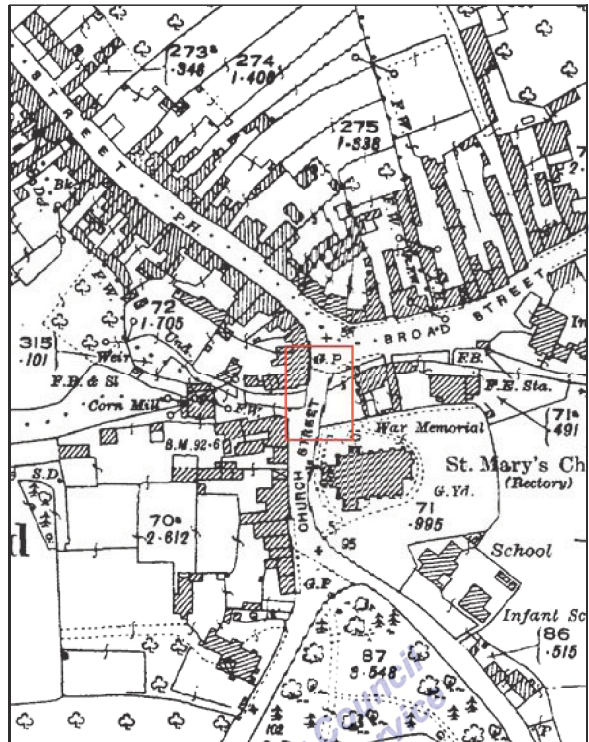
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Figure 4. 1st edition 1880's OS historic map extract



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Figure 5. 2nd edition 1890's OS historic map extract



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Figure 6. 3rd edition 1920's OS historic map extract

4. Methodology

The recording of the structure of Church Bridge was undertaken in two stages; the first was a Level 2 building recording survey (EH 2006 and RCHME 1996) and the second was a monitoring which took place whilst groundworks were being carried out by the contractor.

The Level 2 survey required that a descriptive record be made of the structure, which includes photographs and a location plan, with an analysis of its development and use. The monitoring required observation of the groundworks by an experienced archaeologist in order to record any elements of the bridge that might be destroyed by the works, to confirm the presence of an earlier, stone-built structure and to identify any previously unknown archaeological remains.

Photographs were taken using a high resolution digital camera and the location and direction from which they were taken was noted on a plan. Within the text, each

photograph is referred to as a 'Plate' with a corresponding JPEG number. All photographs are included on the accompanying disc in two folders, headed 'BXF 022 Building Recording 070509' and 'BXF 022 Monitoring 130809'.

No metal detecting was undertaken and no environmental samples were taken.

Church Bridge was also subject to documentary research, which was undertaken by Anthony Breen. The results of this are included as Appendix 2.

The site archive is stored in the SCCAS main store at Bury St Edmunds under HER no. BXF 022 and a digital copy of the report has been submitted to the Archaeological Data Service at: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>

5. Description

5.1 Building Recording

The present Church Bridge (Plate 1) spans the River Box in the centre of the village of Boxford, just north of St Mary's Church (Fig. 2) (Plate 0245). It is a beam bridge and its visible aspect is constructed from reddish orange brick, laid in Flemish bond, and ironwork, with a modern tarmac road surface.



Plate 1. Boxford Bridge, facing north-east

The brickwork is the main load-bearing element of the bridge and is also used as a revetment of the south-west bank (Plate 2). Above the curving revetment the brickwork has been built upwards to form a protective wall twenty five courses high (Plate 0233). This section of the wall rests upon a stone base (see below).

At the base of the bridge on both sides of the bank the bricks form the 'piers' on which the iron beam rests (Plate 0230). Each 'pier' is fourteen (visible) courses high. It is not possible to see what the north 'pier' rests upon as it is obscured by a shingle-and-rubble bank deposited by the river; the south 'pier' rests upon what appears to be a dressed stone base (see below). There are two points at which small sections of the brickwork appear to have been removed and replaced by dressed stones – one on each 'pier' (Plates 0229 and 0241). In places, the bricks have been discoloured by the leaching of minerals and/or covered with layers of pollutants.

At the north-west end of the north 'pier' there is an abutting return in the form of a brick buttress (Plate 0227). This buttress is constructed from comparatively well-made bricks, which may be buff-coloured (although it is difficult to determine due to the layers of



Plate 2. Brick revetment wall, facing south-east

pollution). There are at least eight visible courses before the buttress changes angle where another six courses can be identified. The lowest part of the buttress is covered with a thin concrete render. At the top of the buttress there is damage to the brickwork

which has been roughly repaired with a concrete mortar (Plate 0228). Positioned centrally in the buttress wall a roughly dressed stone has been inserted. The stone has an oval stippled relief with unclear initials at its centre – possibly JB or TB (Plate 0226).

On the south-west side of the bridge, the lower ten to eleven courses continue the 'piers' and curving revetment, whilst the upper fourteen to fifteen courses constitute the wall. The latter is topped by modern concrete capping 'stones' (Plate 0233). At the west end of the revetment/wall the line of brickwork is 'staggered' from the twelfth course upwards and protrudes by the thickness of one brick (maximum) to give the appearance of a pillar (although it is not freestanding) (Plate 0232). There is a second pillar effect at the end of the wall. There does not appear to have been an access point here, between the so-called pillars as the brickwork above the sill is continuous; below the sill however, at the tenth course (Plate 0232), there is a short course of brick sills, under which is evidence for a (now blocked) outlet in the form of a small crudely-made brick archway. It is unclear how this section relates to the main revetment/wall, or indeed to the modern wall which abuts it. The archway almost certainly marks the point at which a (?storm) drain/sewerage outlet fed into the river.

The bridge deck itself is probably made from a cast iron or steel frame and is of simple beam construction (Plate 0237). Nine sections of shallow brick vaulting form the underside of the bridge (Plate 0239), and each is reinforced with a ?cast iron rod. Here, on the non-visible part of the bridge, the bricks are laid in the less decorative – and perhaps crucially, cheaper – stretcher bond.

Decorative post-and-rail type railings (Plate 3), also of ironwork, form the bridge sides (Plate 0245 and 0251) and are painted white. The west railings comprise four rails and four posts; the north end of the rails are keyed into the south external elevation of the Post Office and the post at the south end abuts a red brick wall which curves to the south-west and forms an integral part of the bridge's structure (Plates 0247 and 0252).

The east railings are the same design but contain five posts as they extend and curve further to the north-east (Plate 0248).

Church Bridge rests upon stonework (Plate 4) that is best observed at the base of the revetment/wall (Plate 0233), although it is also visible on the south 'pier'. The stones are



Plate 3. View of the west railings, facing north



Plate 4. Stonework at the base of the bridge, facing south

large and roughly hewn and survive at four courses high above the stepped base (below the waterline) (Plate 0235 and 0236). It is not clear what type of stone was used, although it is probably limestone. A repair has been made to this part of the bridge using modern bricks (see Plate 0233).

Overall, the bridge is in a reasonable condition; most of the bricks are intact, despite a little weathering. Leaching of minerals and pollution appears to have had the greatest effect. Colonising vegetation and grass are growing on the brickwork and the bridge itself but do not appear to have caused serious damage as yet. Moss and water tolerant plants grow on the lower stone base close to the waterline.

5.2 Monitoring

Monitoring demonstrated that the bridge rests upon the brickwork piers (Plate 2681) and that the latter are of substantial brick and flint construction with an outer facing of brick (Plate 2682) (Plate 5). No further recording of the stone structure was undertaken as the groundworks did not impact on that aspect of the structure.

No archaeological remains were uncovered during the groundworks.



Plate 5. Exposed brick and flint construction piers, facing north-west

6. Conclusions

Documentary research (Appendix 1) indicates that there has been a bridge at Boxford from at least the early part of the fifteenth century and that it had stone piers and brick abutments. This has been confirmed by the building recording survey which identified the remains of stonework piers on which rest brick piers and a revetment wall.

It is most likely that the earliest documented bridge was constructed predominantly from stone despite the paucity of good local building stone in Suffolk, with the upper, non load-bearing elements constructed from timber. The deck of the bridge was probably timber planking, which, according to the accounts was covered with gravel.

It is probable that the bridge retained much the same appearance for a considerable length of time and that the first significant change came in the latter half of the 17th century when the piers and revetment/wall were re-built in the new and fashionable Flemish Bond (Mid-Suffolk Council). Further changes took place in the late 19th century, when the bridge was repaired and altered to the form it took at the time of recording: a cast iron deck replaced the timber boards and the decorative iron railings were installed.

The documentary research was not able to reveal the name of the person whose initials – JB, or TB – were carved into the dressed stone on the east side of the bridge.

Church Bridge has medieval origins, documented from the 15th century onwards; the very base of this original structure appears to survive below the late-medieval brick and post-medieval brick-and-cast iron structure.

7. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds T:Arc\All site\Boxford\BXF
022 Church Bridge

8. Contributors and acknowledgements

Building recording was led by Mo Muldowney with assistance from Abby Antrobus, and the monitoring was carried out by Liz Muldowney; all archaeological site staff from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team. The project was managed by David Gill.

Specialist documentary research was carried out by Anthony Breen.

The report was edited by Richenda Goffin.

9. Bibliography

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| English Heritage | 2006 | <i>Understanding Historic Buildings; A guide to good recording practice</i> |
| Institute of Geological Sciences | 1969 | Drift Edition Sudbury Sheet 206 |
| RCHME | 1996 | <i>Recording Historic Buildings A Descriptive Specification</i> 3rd Ed |
| Mid-Suffolk Council | Undated | http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/3F027BBE-0F0C-4A58-81C9-6A4C178942C4/0/Brickwork.pdf
Accessed: 02 October 2009 |

Disclaimer

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Team alone. Ultimately the need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its Archaeological Advisors when a planning application is registered. Suffolk County Council's archaeological contracting services cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to the clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.

Appendix 1. Brief and Specification

Brief and Specification for Recording and Archaeological Monitoring

CHURCH BRIDGE, BOXFORD, SUFFOLK

Although this document is fundamental to the work of the specialist archaeological contractor the developer should be aware that certain of its requirements are likely to impinge upon the working practices of a general building contractor and may have financial implications.

1. Background

- 1.1 Work to replace the deck of Boxford Church Bridge, Boxford has been proposed by Suffolk County Council, Environment and Transport Division. This work is conditional on an acceptable programme of archaeological recording being carried out. There is likely to have been a bridge or crossing at this point for some considerable time, and the surviving fabric is important and will need to be recorded and understood before being replaced.
- 1.2 The work in particular will firstly focus on a documentary survey, then on creating an archive record of the bridge and its abutments, and finally an archaeological monitoring of the replacement deck. This brief sets out the requirement for the recording and monitoring.
- 1.3 The development concerns a proposal to replace the deck of the bridge. Elements of the previous bridge will therefore be lost or subsequently hidden from view. The site may retain important archaeological information concerning the construction, character, date, and context of the bridge.
- 1.4 In accordance with the standards and guidance produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists this brief should not be considered sufficient to enable the total execution of the project. Detailed standards, information and guidance to supplement this brief are to be found in *Understanding Historic Buildings; A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006) and *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 2001). Technical standards, applicable to detailed survey, are covered by *Metric Survey Specification for English Heritage* (English Heritage 2000). Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) based upon this brief and the accompanying outline specification of minimum requirements, is an essential requirement. This must be submitted by the developers, or their agent, to the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR; telephone/fax: 01284 352443) for approval. The work must not commence until this office has approved both the archaeological contractor as suitable to undertake the work, and the WSI as satisfactory. The WSI will *provide the basis for measurable standards* and will be used to establish whether the requirements of the planning condition will be adequately met.
- 1.5 Before commencing work the project manager must carry out a risk assessment and liaise with the site owner, client and the Conservation Team of SCCAS (SCCAS/CT) in ensuring that all potential risks are minimised.

- 1.6 It is the archaeological contractor's responsibility to ensure that adequate resources are available to fulfil the Brief.

2. **Brief for Archaeological Recording**

- 2.1 Recording of the historic structure and archaeological recording, as specified in Sections 3 and 4, are to be carried out prior to and development.
- 2.2 The objective will be to compile a descriptive record appropriate to English Heritage Level 2 (Historic Buildings) of the bridge, prior to the work.
- 2.3 Works that might disturb archaeological deposits, including the replacement of the decking and work to the bridge abutments are to be observed during stripping and after they have been excavated. Adequate time is to be allowed for archaeological recording of archaeological deposits during excavation, and of soil sections following excavation.
- 2.4 The academic objective will be to provide a detailed understanding of the nature of the building, and to provide the historical context, development and significance of the building.

3. **Specification for Archaeological Recording**

- 3.1 The survey methodology will form part of the WSI and is to be agreed in detail before the project commences; defined minimum criteria in this outline are to be met or exceeded. Any variation from these standards can only be made by agreement with SCCAS/CT, and must be confirmed in writing.
- 3.2 English Heritage Level 2 recording will cover both the interior and exterior of the building. Both the exterior and interior will be viewed, described and photographed.
- 3.3 A block plan should be produced of the site, to locate the building within the local context. The main components of the complex shall be numbered for reference in the report.
- 3.4 A historical document search (documentary, cartographic and pictorial) should be undertaken to situate the history of the building within the immediate local context.
- 3.5 The record will present conclusions regarding the location, form, date, development and use of the building.

4. **Specification for Monitoring of Groundworks**

- 4.1 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to both SCCAS/CT and the contracted archaeologist to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.
- 4.2 Opportunity must be given to the contracted archaeologist to hand excavate any discrete archaeological features which appear during earth moving operations, retrieve finds and make measured records as necessary. Where it is necessary to see archaeological detail one of the soil faces is to be trowelled clean.
- 4.3 In the case of footing and main service trenches unimpeded access of trench must be allowed for archaeological recording before concreting or building begin. Where it is necessary to see archaeological detail one of the soil faces is to be trowelled clean. In

the case of the topsoil stripping and levelling, or other ground reduction (including replacement of internal floors) unimpeded access of trench must be allowed for archaeological recording before concreting or building begin.

4.4 If unexpected remains are encountered SCCAS/CT must be informed immediately. Amendments to this specification may be made to ensure adequate provision for archaeological recording.

4.5 All archaeological features exposed must be planned at a minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.

4.6 All contexts must be numbered and finds recorded by context. All levels should relate to Ordnance Datum.

4.7 Archaeological contexts should, where possible, be sampled for palaeoenvironmental remains. Best practice should allow for sampling of interpretable and datable archaeological deposits and provision should be made for this. Advice on the appropriateness of the proposed strategies will be sought from J. Heathcote, English Heritage Regional Adviser for Archaeological Science (East of England). A guide to sampling archaeological deposits (Murphy, P.L. and Wiltshire, P.E.J., 1994, *A guide to sampling archaeological deposits for environmental analysis*) is available for viewing from SCCAS.

4.8 All finds will be collected and processed (unless variations in this principle are agreed with SCCAS/CT during the course of the evaluation).

4.9 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County HER.

5. Report Requirements

5.1 An archive of all records and finds is to be prepared consistent with the principles of *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)*, particularly Appendix 3. This must be deposited with the County HER within six months of the completion of work. It will then become publicly accessible.

5.2 The project manager must consult the County HER Officer (Dr Colin Pendleton) to obtain a HER number for the work. This number will be unique for each project or site and must be clearly marked on any documentation relating to the work.

5.3 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*. The finds, as an indissoluble part of the site archive, should be deposited with the County HER Officer if the landowner can be persuaded to agree to this. If this is not possible for all or any part of the finds archive, then provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, analysis) as appropriate.

5.4 The project manager should consult the SCC Archive Guidelines 2008 and also the County HER Officer regarding the requirements for the deposition of the archive (conservation, ordering, organisation, labelling, marking and storage) of excavated material and the archive.

5.5 The WSI should state proposals for the deposition of the digital archive relating to this project with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), and allowance should be made for costs incurred to ensure proper deposition (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/policy.html>).

- 5.6 A report on the fieldwork and archive, consistent with the principles of *MAP2*, particularly Appendix 4, must be provided. The report must summarise the methodology employed, the stratigraphic sequence, and give a period by period description of the contexts recorded, and an inventory of finds. The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its interpretation. The Report must include a discussion and an assessment of the archaeological evidence, including palaeoenvironmental remains recovered from palaeosols and cut features. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the archaeological value of the results, and their significance in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3 & 8, 1997 and 2000).
- 5.7 A copy of the report, clearly marked DRAFT, must be presented to SCCAS/CT for approval within six months of the completion of fieldwork unless other arrangements are negotiated with the project sponsor and SCCAS/CT. Following approval, two hard copies, as well as a digital copy, of the report must be presented to SCCAS/CT and a single copy to the Suffolk Coastal District Council Conservation Officer.
- 5.8 A summary report, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, must be prepared and included in the project report.
- 5.9 County HER sheets must be completed, as per the County HER manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.
- 5.10 Where appropriate, a digital vector trench plan should be included with the report, which must be compatible with MapInfo GIS software, for integration in the County HER. AutoCAD files should be also exported and saved into a format that can be imported into MapInfo (for example, as a Drawing Interchange File or .dxf) or already transferred to .TAB files.
- 5.11 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.
- 5.12 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the County HER. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: William Fletcher

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Date: 09th January 2009

Reference: /ChurchBridge_Boxford2008

This brief and specification remains valid for six months from the above date. If work is not carried out in full within that time this document will lapse; the authority should be notified and a revised brief and specification may be issued.

If the work defined by this brief forms a part of a programme of archaeological work required by a Planning Condition, the results must be considered by the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council, who have the responsibility for advising the appropriate Planning Authority.

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Appendix 2. Documentary Research

Anthony M Breen

Introduction

This bridge crossing the River Box was entirely within the ecclesiastical parish of Boxford and the later civil parish. Formerly the parish boundaries of the ecclesiastical parish were interspersed with those of the adjoining parishes. In relation to the site of this bridge the parish boundary with the neighbouring parish of Groton was to the north of the bridge though smaller areas of that parish are shown on the 1840 Boxford Tithe map within the parish area of Boxford (ref. T116/2).

In 1530 'a county rate was permitted to finance the repair of bridges which were outside towns and not the responsibility of an authority or person' (Richardson 1986). Not all bridges were built and repaired at the cost of the county council and its predecessor the county's quarter sessions. In the case of Boxford Bridge the bridge is not listed in an account of the county Bridges in 1651 (ref. HA1/BB/3) or in any index of bridges in the index of Quarter Session Order Books (ref. B105/2/10-83). The card index to county council records held at the Suffolk Record Office in Ipswich contains references to bridge repairs. These are indexed under their respective parishes. The index cards for Boxford contain references to the new bridge built as part of the Boxford Bypass in the 1970's.

Amongst the county council records there is a single file relating to repairs to this bridge (ref. 4025/374). In September 1978 the then chairman of the Boxford Society wrote to the chief planning officer of Babergh District Council requesting repairs to 'the road and pedestrian bridges over the river Box at Church Street'. The requested repairs were for part of the brickwork between the two bridges 'parapet repairs, painting and the general "tidy-up" of the bridge'. The work was delayed due to difficulties in finding a firm capable of repairing the cast iron posts, as 'there are no foundaries or manufacturers to hand to do such work at cost'. The file contains a technical drawing of one of the iron parapet posts dated 24 October 1979. The work was delayed due to the cost and because 'the work involved is of a specialist nature only carried out by very few firms'. The work was completed in 1982.

Separate highways divisions for East and West Suffolk were established before the creation of the two separate county councils of East and West Suffolk in 1881. Church Bridge, Boxford is not listed in the published 'List of County Bridges in the Western Division of the County of Suffolk Revised and Adopted by the Court of Quarter Sessions the 6th day of July 1880'. In this list held at the Suffolk Record Office in Bury St Edmunds (ref. Q/AB 1) 98 bridges are listed under their respective hundreds, the then sub divisions of the county. There are two copies of this document and both contain later amendments. One copy states that the list was revised 3rd September 1896 though this date has been crossed out as the list contains a reference to 'Judes Ferry Bridge' Lakenheath dated 'Aug 8, 1898'. On the other copy of the list three additional bridges have been added. These were 99 Fornham All Saints added 8 May 1893, 100 Lakenheath' (possibly Judes Ferry Bridge) and '101 Boxford'. This additional bridge is not named and no date for the additional entry is given in this source.

West Suffolk County Council's 'Highways and Bridges Committee' minutes are held at the Suffolk Record Office in Ipswich. In the minute book for the period April 1889 to October 1901 (ref. W.S. A 3051/1) there are references listed under the index heading 'Bridges' to 'Boxford (near church)'. These relate to the meeting held on 13 February 1901 when the repairs to the approaches to various bridges were discussed the minutes noting that the approaches to this bridge were the responsibility of 'Cosford District Council'. At the same meeting there is a reference to 'Box Bridge' 'built by the Parish in 1894' however in the minutes for the meeting held on 18 July 1894 note that the 'Bridge over the River Box' was in Stoke-by-Nayland. At a further meeting held on 17 July 1901 Cosford District Council accepted the responsibility for repairs to the approach to the 'Bridge near Church, Boxford'. In the next minute book for the period February 1902 to July 1908 (ref. W.S. A 3051/2), there are additional references to 'Church Bridge, Boxford'. At the meeting held on 19 July 1905 it was noted that 'some damage has recently been done to one of the Piers of this Bridge by a heavy motor lorry running against it'. The owners of the lorry were 'Messrs. Burton and Saunders of Colchester' and the clerk had written to them expecting them 'to pay for making good the damage'. At a further meeting on 16 October 1907 some 'small repairs and painting' of the bridge were noted at a total cost of £2 10s. The records of Cosford Rural District Council are held at the record office in Bury St Edmunds and do not contain separate highways minutes.

Boxford Civil Parish records including the minute books from 1894 onwards are still in the care of the parish clerk. The collection also includes a separate 'receipts and payments book for the period 1895-1975' (Soni 1987).

There are a number of published local history books on Boxford. In 'Boxford From Old Photographs' there is a view of 'Boxford Bridge' though the photograph shows only the road over the bridge leading up to the church (Mead 1974). 'Boxford Past Present and Future' (Scott 1978) mentions the first reference to Boxford in the 'Chronicle of Jocelin de Brakelond in 1190'. The village was recorded as 'Kodenham' in the Domesday Survey of 1086. The bridge is mentioned in relation to the early references to the village based on the theory that Boxford was 'a route used by flint carriers' and that 'their track across East Anglia in the Stone Age was marked by pudding stones ... There is one by the bridge over the Box'. Under another section describing the street the aesthetic charms of the road bridge are unfavourably compared with the 'insensitive footbridge'. The 'causeye' or causeway leading to the bridge is mentioned in relation to a coach accident in 1620. The source of this reported accident was the diary of John Winthrop. There is further reference to another entry from the diary in 'Some Notes on the History and Development of Boxford' (Tugman 1972). This relates to the lost of the child of Jane Dryfield who 'fell into the river at Boxford Bridge' in February 1607. The author comments that 'the large increase in heavy traffic, even the modern bridge remains a major danger, though the risk to pedestrians has recently been reduced by provision of a footbridge'. A paragraph in 'Boxford A Miscellany' (Robinson 1998) is written quoting in full:

'Evidently really serious trouble arose in 1881 when the Vestry was summoned to consider 'what is best done about the bridge'. Students of present-day local government may be interested in the simple arrangements made in order to build a new one. The magistrates arranged for financial assistance. The County Surveyor, who oversaw all, occasionally, was paid by the Parish. Mr Kingsbury's tender for £148 to do the job was accepted and he was to forfeit 10s everyday after 1st September that the work was not completed. In the event, the bridge was not completed till 12th November'.

There are earlier references to this bridge in this book including a reference in one of the Parish Books in 1431 'for mending the causey against the boardwood bregg 5s 0d'. Other early references appear in the published churchwardens' accounts described

later in this report. Again in the Miscellany there is the interesting report that 'According to the late Mr Kemble of Hurrells Farm, barges used to go up and down the river carrying corn to the Stour, where it was transferred to bigger craft, tied up at Nayland, and thence to a wider world. The skeleton of one of these small barges was still to be seen in about 1970 by rotting remains of a staithe below Hurrells Farm'.

There are very limited manuscript map sources for Boxford and the tithe map dated 1840 appears to be the only detailed map to predate the first edition of the Ordnance Survey map sheet number LXX.3. The tithe map is of interest as it identifies a series of small parochial islands showing land belonging to the parish of Groton.

Some bridges were repaired at the expense of the lord and tenants of a particular manor. The lands in Boxford were divided between several manors, though properties close to the church and along Stone Street appear to have been held of the manor of Peyton Hall (ref. HD 2111/1 & FB C7/1-11). In the abbey of Bury St Edmunds 'Pinchbeck Register' there is a reference to John de Peyton who let a fifth of a watermill to 'John de Smallbregge' (Robinson op. cit.). This may be the same as the Sir John de Peyton who went on the Crusades in 1270 or that of his son also Sir John who 'built the Peyton Chapel adjoining the parish church of Stoke-by Nayland'. It is possible that a member of this family may have paid for the construction of an earlier bridge at Boxford or at least charged their manorial tenants with such work.

Boxford Parish Records

Parish Books: Vestry Minutes

The details of the rebuilding of Boxford Bridge are to be found in the Parish Book for the years 1718-1887 (ref. FB 77/A1/3). The book is made up of lists of overseers of the poor and their accounts dating from 1718, vestry minutes and memoranda re poor relief 1721-1743, churchwardens accounts 1739, 1743-1745 and 1757 further appointments of parish officers 1833-1883 and a section of vestry minutes and appointment of officers 1838-1894. The current catalogue description contains no reference to bridge repairs or to the rebuilding of the bridge in 1881. The decision to re-build the bridge was taken at a vestry meeting held on 21 April 1881 described on page 479 of the book. A copy of the notice of a further vestry meeting held on 25 June 1881 requesting tenders for the work is recorded in the book on the following page with the decision to accept Mr F.

Kingsbury's tender recorded at a further meeting held on 30 June 1881. The tender and plans for the bridge had been prepared by a Mr Joseph Moyer. This is likely to have been the London based architect Joseph Staines Moyer who had previously designed a house for William Simpson in Boxford in 1879 (Brown et al. 1991). There are no references to his plans for this bridge.

At a meeting held on 6 August the decision was taken 'that the iron rail of the bridge be extended from the girders to the brick work pier on the north side about 14 feet and to the distance of about 5 feet on the south side, containing about 19 feet in all'. The architect reported that bridge had been completed on 9 November 1881 and as £53 had already been advanced to Mr Kingsbury the remaining balance of £113 12s was then paid. The total cost being £163 12s and not the original tender of £148 (see page 485).

There may be further references to the bridge and earlier bridge repairs in this book. Though the churchwardens' accounts for 1742-1743 page 186, 1743 page 192 and 1745 page 210 are devoid of detail, other references are likely to be scattered through this book.

The unusually detailed surveyor's accounts covering the years 1836-1840 contains no references to bridge repairs (ref. FB 77/H1/1). The separate churchwarden's account book for the period 1867-1916 are purely financial accounts generally containing the names of those who had been paid rather than what they were paid for (ref. FB 77/E2/1). The earlier accounts are much fuller and containing numerous references to the bridge and bridge repairs.

Churchwardens Account Books

The repairs to Boxford Bridge were the responsibility of the parish churchwardens and the earliest churchwarden's accounts for the years 1530-1561 have been published (Northeast 1982).

The accounts are written in early modern English with the initial letter of a surname often appearing in lower case. The accounts contain the following references to minor bridge repairs:

In 1531 'Payd for the postys to the brege (bridge) ij s. & ix d.

In 1532 'p. to John coo for castyng of gravel onto the brege viij d.'

In 1533 'payd to herd for tember to the brege (bridge) and workmanschep xxij d.'

In 1540 'it. To Robert Tyler & Rycherd smythe For spredyng off Gravell on the bridge iiij d'.

In 1543 'it. For iiij lodys gravel layd upon the bridge xvj d.'

There were further repairs in 1543 that appear to have been far more substantial

'The Brydg

It. to John barker for hys werk by the space of viij ij s. viij. d.

It. for hys mette by the same tyme at iiij d. the day ij s.

It. for vj ankers with dobyll keyes vj s.

It. for xv steddys v s.

It. for iiij^c bord at ij s. the C & a quarter & odde Fotts } x s.

It. for iiij laborerys be the space of iiij dayes to stub & rame at vj d. a day eche of them for mett & wagys } vj s.

It. for x lodys of Cley ij s. iiij d.

It to hertwell for ij li. Of nayles v d.

It to Jasper for xiiij lodes of Gravell iiij d.

It. to William Coo for stubbyng & caryng of the same xx d.

It. to hertwell for a C of lede nayle wayng but lj li. vij d.

It. to the same hertwell for makyng of a bend of ovr Iren to the Caye (key) } ij d.

It. for a bord off xv ffotte to the bridge iiij d.

It. for nayles to the same ij d.

It to barker to ley the same For mette & wagys vj.d

Summa Totallis xxxix s. ij d.'

According to the glossary 'Anchor (ankers): in the repairs to the bridge in 1543 ... are presumably double-ended builders' ties' and 'Steddys (on the bridge): presumably part of the frame of the bridge: cf. *bed-stead*'. The use of the Roman numeral 'C' is for a quantity of one hundred and the use of superscript as in 'iiij^c' is for a quantity of 300. The account uses 'li' for a pound weight rather than the later 'lb'. Meat (mette) form a standard part of a labourer's daily wages at this period and later.

There are further entries:

In 1548 'Itm. pd. for gatherynge of two lodys of stonys for the bredge iij d.

'Itm. pd. for the caryage of the seyde stonys viij d.'

In 1555 'pd. more for ij lodes of brycke for the bridge v s. iiij d.

'payed to Rye for makyng of the corner of the bredge with bryk & for castyng of that side of the bredge & for mendyng of the churche wall by yongs howse iiij s. iiij d.

pd. to grimes for having the stonys owte of the Ryver ij d'.

In 1556 'pd. to froste for castyng gravell owte of the ryver for the bredge viij d.

'pd to lambe & to marchante for carryeng of the gravel onto the bredge xij d.'

The final series of payments suggest a second feature a 'caye'. 'Caye must mean 'quay' in this instance, for the cost is far more than a key would warrant. There must, it seems from this, have been a 'hard' somewhere by the bridge, to which small craft could be brought'.

The payments in 1561 were for

'payd to bankes for makyng off the caye xxx s.

for vij^{xx} fott off tymbre xxij s iiij d.

for iiij C & vj fott off bord xxvij s

for iij C off vj peny nayll xvij d

payd for caryng down off the tymbre xij d

payd for x lod off claye iiij s vj d v s (sic)

payd to the labrors for thear work xij dayes viij s. viij d.'

There was also a payment again for 'layeng off gravel on the bryg vij d.'

The various workmen mentioned in the accounts appear to have been predominately labourers with the exceptions of those paid for timber and John 'Hertwell' or Hartwell who was a smith and who was 'paid for numerous repairs involving ironwork'.

The churchwardens' accounts for 1608-1696 (ref. FB 77/E2/3) have not been published though again they contain numerous references to the bridge. These begin with further minor repairs:

In 1613 'It. Layde out for spills to mende the causie to the boarded bridge 7s'

In 1634 'It. For a plank for the bridge xii d'

In 1635 'It. Nathanel Pettit for mendyng the bridg & other charges about it vi d'

In 1636 'item for a lode of bricke & fower come of lime for mendinge the church walles and the bridge £1 1s'(a coombe was a measure of dry capacity).

In 1638 'itm to Thomas Runnacks for his worke at the bridge 1s 6d'

In 1640 'itm for fencing the churchyard & mending the bridg 16s 4d'

In 1642 'itm for a shorte poste at the borded bridge 6d'

In 1645 'itm for mending of the bridge to the mason 4s 10d'

The repairs in the accounts for 1648-49 appear to have been more substantial and clearly indicate two separate structures:

'Item to Goodman Pettit for mending the stone bridge 13s

Item to Goodman Pettit for mending the borded bredge & causey £3 11s 0d'

He was again paid money for bridge repairs on 30 November 1654 'for planke and work upon the Bredge on the casey 17s 6d'

There are further payments for work in 1657 totalling £2 11s 4d 'for the menden of the bridge bricke 18s, for timber 16s, for irone work 1s 3d for work 16s 1d' as well as a payment 'for menden the causye by the borded bridge 8s 6d'.

On 1 October 1664 there is a payment 'for 2 dayes worke to fetch gravel to mend causey & brig 14s'. In the accounts for the year 1665-66 'pd for a barre at the borded bridge 1s 4d, pd for a lock & bolt for the said barre 1s 6d' as 1665 was a year of the plague in Suffolk these might be primitive measures taken to check on travellers entering the village.

In 1667 Thomas Manning was paid 4s 4d 'for worke done to the boarded bridge as appeare per bill'. There is again evidence for two distinct structures in the following

years accounts 'pd for a load of clay to the barded bridge 1s 6d, pd for brick lyme & haire for the wall & stonbridge £2 3s 0d' and 'pd for 2 loades of sand to the church and bridge 3s 6d'.

An entry in the accounts for 1671 is described below.

In 1676 there are further payments 'for Stubbing gravel to lay upon the bridge 1s 6d, for 8 loads of gravel by Mr Lowe for the bridge 8s'. In 1688 there are again reference to a quay on 29 October 'pd John Grimwood for work and stuff at the keying of the river and bridge £12 9s' and on 24 November 'pd Ephraim Rote for work done by him to the pounds and keying £1 9s 8d, a pott and dirt skepp 2s 6d'. Some of the materials may have been lost as the same year on 25 September John Lock was paid 6d 'for gathering bricks out of the river'.

On 30 August 1690 John Clampon was paid £2 'for 20 loads of clay that was used at the bridge & causey' and finally in 1692 there is a payment of 7s 6d 'for reparaing the shopes at the Bridg'.

The later churchwardens accounts are incomplete. The parish book for the years 1680-1720 is made up mainly of overseers' accounts detailing payments to the poor of the parish (ref. FB 77/A1/1). It does include churchwardens' accounts for 1697-1699 (pages 116-118 and 125-126) and highway surveyors' accounts for 1689 and 1693 (pages 18-19) though these do not contain further references to bridge repairs.

Indictment

Amongst the parish papers there is a bundle of general papers including an indictment of Sir Ralph Hare, John Newman yeoman and William Parsons for not repairing a bridge of Groton and Boxford dated 15 January 1671 (ref. FB 77/A3/1). The indictment is written in Latin and relates to a common bridge situated, lying and existing between the parish of Boxford and Groton ... in the common or King's highway there leading from the parish of Assington ... towards the town of Hadleigh'. At an inquisition held on 16 January 1671 it was decided that the bridge was 'ruinous and in great decay as a result of defect of repairs and emendation'. The bridge was used 'for horse and carriages as well as a footbridge'. The document has a footnote '15 Janu 1671 ... triall &c Ralfe Hare convicted & the fine respited until the next sessions & in the meane time

&c Ralfe is ordered to reparaire the same' (ref. FB 77/A3/1). There is a reference in the churchwardens' accounts in 1671 'Laide out a courte late triell for brege against Sir Raffe Hare £5 6s 8d'. This dispute should have been heard before the county's quarter sessions; however there is no reference to the dispute in the contemporary Quarter Session Order Book for the years 1665 – 1676 (ref. (SROI) B 105/2/7). This may suggest it was settled without bring the matter to the court. The churchwarden accounts do not list the receipt of any additional amount that may possibly represent a fine. Though both Newman and Parsons were residents of Boxford, Sir Ralph Hare was 'late of Stowe Brigge in the county of Norfolk'.

Wills

Apart from significant bequests to various ecclesiastical bodies medieval wills often include bequests for bridge repairs. In the will of John Cowpere of Boxford dated 20 January 1445 he left 'For a silver cross 10 marks; to the porch of the same church 5 marks: to the stone bridge of the town, if it can be finished and completed with stone, 4 marks: if it happen that the cross, porch and bridge are not begun within two or three years at the most, the 19 marks to be disposed according to the discretion of my executors' (316 Northeast 2001). The sum of 4 marks is equal to £2 13s 4d.

Conclusion

A bridge has existed on this site from at least the early part of the fifteenth century. The structure or at least the piers appears to have been partly stonework with the abutments made of bricks. The deck of the bridge carrying the road into the village of Boxford was regularly covered with gravel. Close to the stone bridge and probably adjoining the structure there was a quay against the river's banks and small boats were able to carry goods up and down the river Box until at least the nineteenth century.

A separate footbridge referred to as a boarded bridge appears to have been close by possibly on the same site as the present footbridge. These bridges, the quay and the causeway leading up to the bridge were all maintained and repaired by the parish and its residents. There is no evidence of a substantial endowment for bridge repairs or any 'bridge lands' whose rents would have helped pay for such repairs. This is a slightly unusual arrangement. Though the county and the boroughs within the county paid for repairs to major bridges, smaller bridges had been built and repaired by the hundreds, former divisions of the county. The responsibility for other minor bridges rested with

individual manors whether lay or ecclesiastical or had been paid for through a large bequest from an individual. Given the close relationship between the Peyton family and the village of Boxford and the fact that their tenants occupied the properties along Stone Street it may be reasonable to suggest that the original bridge had been paid for by the lords of the manor of Peyton Hall and their tenants and later the responsibility for repairs passed to the parish's churchwardens.

Acknowledgement

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