

## FELIXSTOWE ROMAN PORT

by JOHN FAIRCLOUGH

IN OUR PROCEEDINGS for 2000 Tom Plunkett and I set out the evidence for the Roman fort of Walton Castle, lost beneath the waves off the coast at Felixstowe.<sup>1</sup> Now this article brings together the evidence for a Roman port at Felixstowe. There are signs of activity here before the fort, which was presumably placed to control shipping. This part of East Anglia is an obvious point of access for travel up and down the east coast: in later times the Orwell was used by colliers sailing between the Tyne and London before the railways. It is also a point of departure for the Rhine estuary as seen in modern ferry services from Harwich and in the concern of Chaucer's medieval merchant about keeping open the seas between Orwell and Middelburg. The Romans certainly needed to ship supplies for Hadrian's Wall up to the Tyne, and across to the Rhine for the army in Germany. The biggest problem is that the sea has removed all trace of the Roman port even more effectively than it destroyed Walton Castle. Nevertheless I believe the evidence for its existence is compelling.

### THE ROMAN ROAD TO FELIXSTOWE

First of all we can trace the main Roman road at least from Ipswich (Fig. 68). I have described elsewhere the pattern of main Roman roads in East Anglia and finds at Ipswich.<sup>2</sup> Excavation at the Blackfriars in the south east of Ipswich revealed a cobbled road which was respected by Anglo-Saxon buildings of the early tenth century, but cut by the town ditch, probably dug in

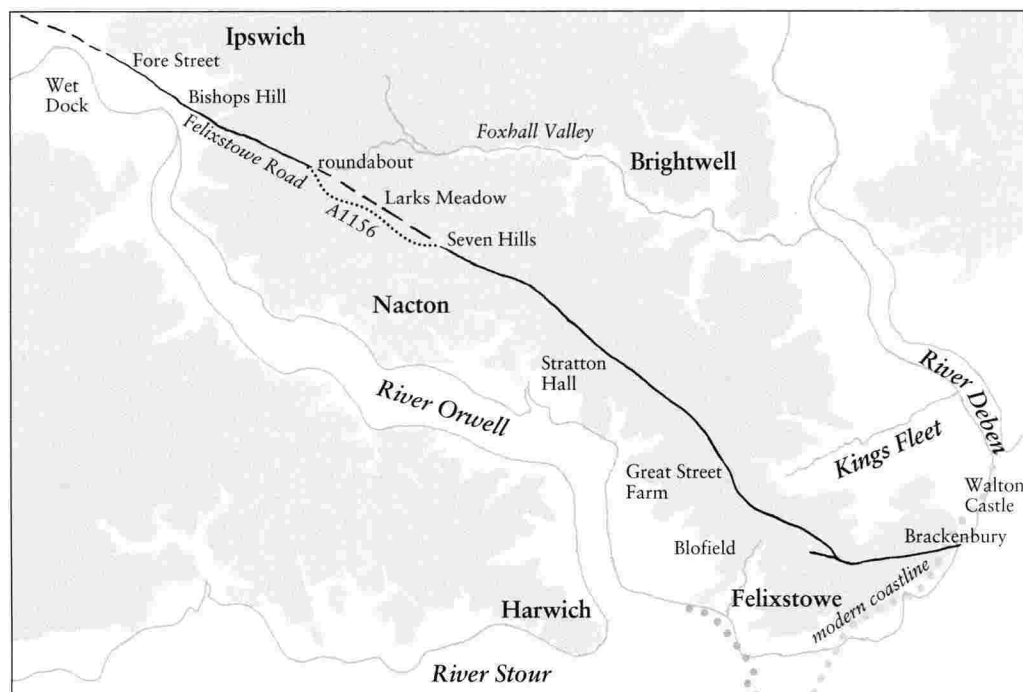


FIG. 68 – The Roman road from Ipswich to Felixstowe. Darker shading indicates the higher ground.

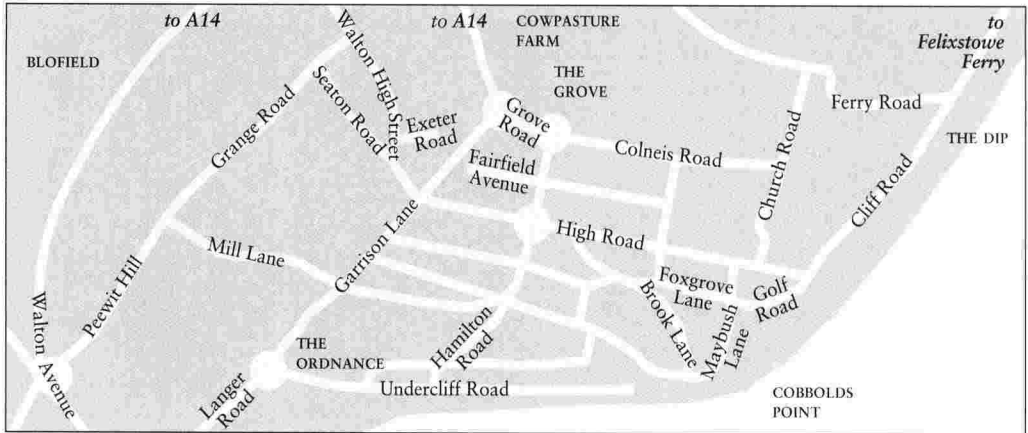


FIG. 69 – Streets named in the text.

917 to protect its Danish defenders from the English army of Edward the Elder. This road was almost certainly a Roman construction from the Cornhill directly to the bend in the River Orwell, where it survives as Fore Street, changing its line to avoid the edge of the river before proceeding in true Roman fashion straight up Bishops Hill. The obvious line is preserved by the modern Felixstowe Road continuing into Bucklesham Road. A slight change of line on higher ground picks up a length of lightly metalled road, now disused but respected by tenth-century activity, revealed by excavation at Larks Meadow, Murrills Road, and Purdis Farm. At this point the road was over 4m wide and probably closer to 9m.<sup>3</sup> This line rejoins the modern road at Seven Hills, Nacton, and continues as the old main road parallel to the new A14. It marks a small part of the boundary of the parish of Stratton Hall, which probably took its name from the Roman road (*stræt* being the Old English word for road).

In Trimley the road passes Great Street Farm, which is presumably Mickle Gata of Domesday Book, where *gata* is the Danish version of the Saxon *stræt* while *mickle* means great. A change of direction at Walton, to which I will return, starts the final single alignment into High Road and the first part of Cliff Road (Fig. 69). A photograph taken in 1889 shows the road at the junction of High Road and 'Wilks Lane' (now Cliff Road) beside 'The Priory' with a gate across a wide raised carriageway.<sup>4</sup> This does look like a Roman road maintained in use, as it appears to run on a wide raised agger which is now under the modern road. At the time it was photographed it led to little more than the cliff edge where I observed a band of shingle in the cliff face below the Brackenbury Fort site (at TM319355) in the 1990s, which was presumably a section of this road cut by coastal erosion. A part of this Roman road is said to have been seen in 1916 when Brackenbury Barracks were being built. The main road runs at a conspicuously higher level than the adjoining roads, as St George's and Church Roads slope up towards it. It is possible that the areas observed by Samuel Wall and others as shingle, septaria and crushed brick one foot thick, four feet below the surface of Cliff Road at the corner of St George's and Cliff Roads, were side roads or front yards adjoining this main road.<sup>5</sup>

This road does not head for Walton Castle and is almost certainly the original direct main Roman road to a sheltered port on the south side of the lost headland on which the fort was built later. Presumably the mouth of the valley north of Brackenbury now known as The Dip would have provided a suitable location for quays protected from the open sea. Brackenbury is rather high above the sea, but the road would have dropped down in the area lost to erosion. We have no way of knowing how much space there was before the road had to reach

sea level but the loss of Walton Castle suggests there would have been at least half a mile and possibly more. We might suggest a situation similar to that at Orford where the road sweeps down from higher ground past the castle to reach the medieval harbour which was the inlet, now silted up, to the left of the road to the modern quay. The projected haven in the mouth of The Dip could easily have accommodated a port that would serve merchants trading along the British coast and across to the Rhine, as well as providing an anchorage for ships of the Roman fleet that guarded the British coast (Fig. 70). *Classis Britannica* (the British fleet) was an important unit of the Roman army, based at Boulogne and commanded by a senior Roman officer, and was presumably responsible for naval patrols round the whole coast of Britain. Walton Castle would have been a guarding presence overlooking the port.



FIG. 70 – A Roman gem showing a ship, the type of vessel that might have been based at Felixstowe (© Trustees of the British Museum).

ROMAN BURIALS

The greatest number of recorded Roman finds extend south along the present coast from the area of the Golf Club House almost as far as Maybush Lane (Fig. 71). It does seem that there

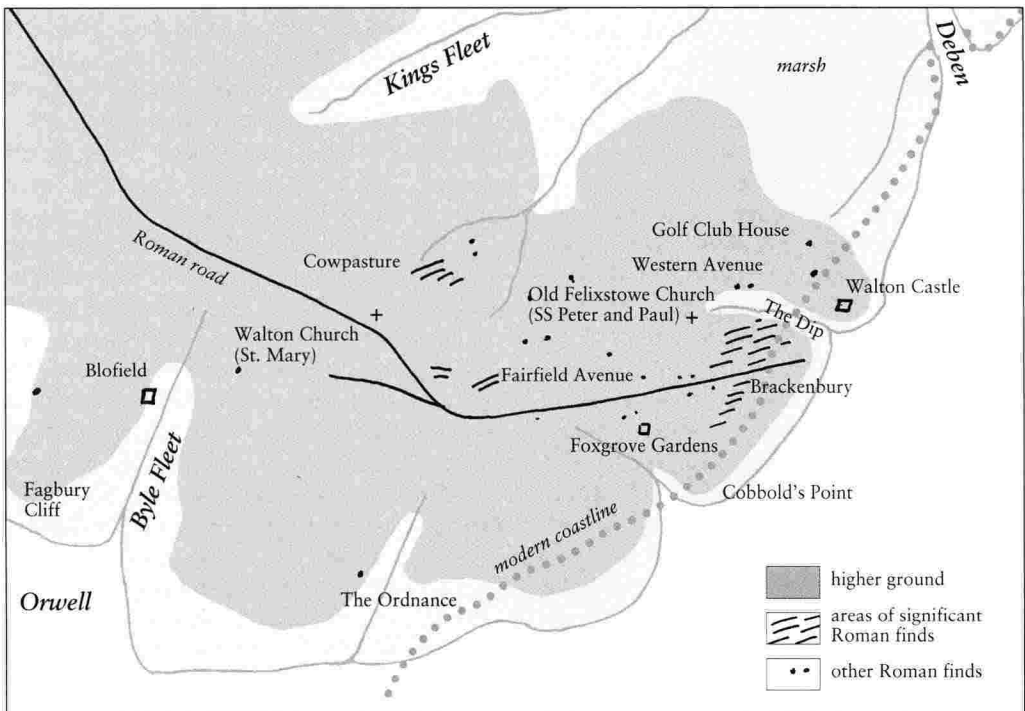


FIG. 71 – Roman finds in Felixstowe.

was a cemetery on the northern edge of the town throughout the Roman period, but its extent is not clear and it may have varied at different times. It is not clear from the records how many of the burials recorded from the area of The Dip were on the north or south sides of the valley. Some records suggest the recovery of grave goods typical of those buried with cremations in the first and second centuries AD. Others are inhumations, some in coffins, following third and fourth century practice. Perhaps Old Felixstowe's church of SS Peter and Paul was sited here later, at the head of the stream of fresh water flowing down The Dip valley into the sea, because the site was already regarded as sacred and attracted significant later burials in this corner of the existing cemetery.

It is not clear how many burials there may have been, but Hollingsworth says of Felixstowe 'A large and ancient castle and a vast tract of low land which served as a sheep walk belonging to the Duke of Hamilton have been covered by deep water. About eighty years since a plough and horses could go round the ruins of the castle.'<sup>6</sup> After quoting the last part in his manuscript 'History of Saxon Suffolk', Claude Morley adds:

But now all is completely engulfed by the sea, excepting that the foundations are yet visible at neap tides 250 feet off Repond Bottom [i.e. The Dip] and just opposite the old church with which it was connected by a valley wherein debris of dwellings occur, as I was informed in 1920 by the old sexton there, who added that within half a mile of it is a 'Roman' burial ground discovered in 1853 running south from opposite Golf House, whence unusually large human femora and other bones have been dug up by his brother and other workmen.<sup>7</sup>

Presumably the reference to 1853 is because in that year two skeletons were uncovered by Professor Henslow from a fall in the cliff here.<sup>8</sup> They had 'four bronze armlets in pairs of a larger and a smaller together'. One of the armlets survives in Ipswich Museum, described as 'a bronze bracelet with the radius, ulna and finger bones which it had stained green'.<sup>9</sup> Henslow corrected a remark he had made in a paper read before the Antiquarian Society at Cambridge. He had then ascribed an impression of a thumb to be seen on one of these to the formation of the green carbonate of copper whilst the thumb of the deceased person was in contact with the bronze. A better, and most probably correct, view was that the impression had been left upon the wax or clay model from which the mould in which the armlet was cast had been formed. A group of objects in the British Museum is said to have been found in Felixstowe in 1853, but without any precise location. They include 'bronze studs found in a lead coffin' and a necklace of glass and shell beads found in a glass urn with bone bracelets, as well as glass beads and several pots.<sup>10</sup> The coincidence of date might suggest they came from the same area as Henslow's find.

One report of nineteenth century discoveries is given by Major E. St F. Moore who describes finds made by men digging for coprolites in the Park, near Felixstowe church. He says: 'The few objects described are in my possession but many others are lost sight of, having been purchased by strangers and taken out of the county.'<sup>11</sup> The Park appears in the nineteenth century as the area north of the High Road, south of The Dip valley and between the church and the cliff. It included the area previously known as Great Long Dole. It was crossed by an avenue of trees called 'Colonel Tomline's Drive' and presumably the park was created by Colonel George Tomline, who bought Orwell Park, Nacton, in 1847 and later bought the Duke of Hamilton's estate in Trimley, Walton and Felixstowe. The Park produced many finds because men were digging pits in their search for coprolites and turned up Roman objects and human bones in the process. Coprolites are fossil animal dung which was used in the nineteenth century in manufacturing fertiliser.

Finds described by Moore include 'a fine vase of samian ware over a foot high beautifully

ornamented in slip with a hunting scene in relief, the stag and hounds in pursuit, and embellished with oak leaves and acorns' (Fig. 72).<sup>12</sup> From the same area came amphorae,<sup>13</sup> flagons, a small glass phial, bronze pins, small tweezers, a mirror, several brooches, rings of gold and silver, some set with stones, a gold chain formed of twisted wire, and a bronze armlet. Many burial urns were found, some containing bones and ashes and either closed with a cover or in some cases a stone, and all the above finds might have accompanied cremation burials in the first or second centuries. Other finds suggest later occupation across at least part of the area as there were fragmentary or entire brick flue tiles. There were many silver and bronze coins including issues of Severus, Gordian, Gallienus, Victorinus, Constantine and Arcadius, giving a range from the early third century to the end of the fourth. There was a great abundance of oyster shells as well as mussel, periwinkle, cockle and edible snail. He also notes a silver spoon

three and a half inches long, but in a second similar account Moore says the spoon has an eighteenth-century maker's mark so it was clearly not Roman.<sup>14</sup> He describes as probably Roman a circular brooch of lead covered with a layer of silver embossed with flowers and foliage, one and three fifths inches in diameter with broken iron pin. There was a Roman circular bronze brooch one and a half inches in diameter with stalk in the centre of the reverse, with traces of silvering; its face had two concentric circles enamelled and starred, each star had a yellow centre surrounded by circular ring pointed without, with blue outer edge having thirty-three stars.<sup>15</sup> He also noted a bronze thimble; a bronze brooch two inches long with blue enamel; a small bronze bell one and a half inches across; a circular bronze plate two and a quarter inches across; and a bronze object shaped like the spout of a vessel.

The map in G.E. Fox's article on Roman Suffolk shows the Park in 1900 but does not indicate its extent.<sup>16</sup> It shows the 'drive' continuing across Reed Pond Valley (i.e. 'The Dip') as far as Ferry Lane, so the north side of the valley might have been included, although the 1880s Ordnance Survey map only shows coprolite pits south of The Dip. It is still possible that some of the material recorded as from the Park east of the church was from the south-western corner of the cemetery which presumably continued north of The Dip valley, given the reported burials eroded from the cliff near the Golf House. It may be that some Roman burials remain to be found in the area between The Dip and the Golf Club House further back from the edge of the cliff, unaffected by erosion since Henslow's time. However Samuel Wall, in a note to Ipswich Museum dated 22 February 1940, said he 'scoured [the] beach below Brackenbury Fort' and added 'The cliff has gone badly further north, near the Golf House, but nothing has been found at this spot'. Perhaps we can see this area as the north-western limit of the Roman town, used as a cemetery just outside the settlement in the first and second centuries, then occupied by housing during an expansion of the town as shown by building

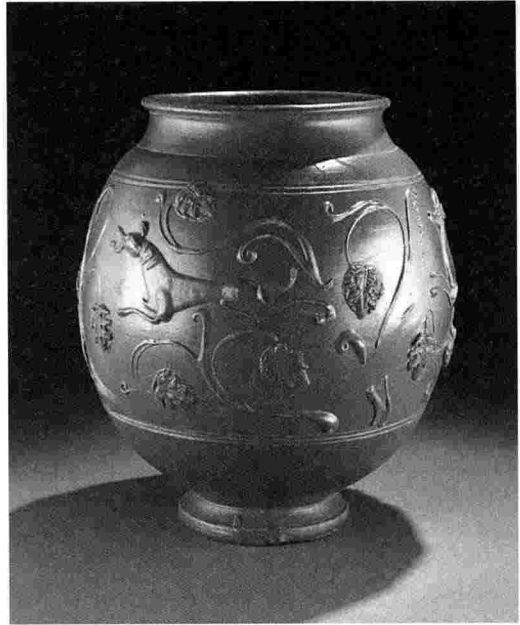


FIG. 72 – A very fine Roman samian vase found at Felixstowe in the nineteenth century and now on display in the British Museum (© Trustees of the British Museum).

debris. The subsequent contraction of the settlement area left it open for burials again towards the end of the Roman period and into Anglo-Saxon times.

There is a report in 1878 of burials found in the Park between the church and the sea:

Many skeletons, or 'cases of bones', have been found in the coprolite pits of the fields below the Church near the sea. Some were laid in uniform rows, as if of Christian burial; others were mixed together as if thrown in hastily after a fight; other remains, with numerous coins of Roman workmanship, appeared in dark-coloured dust and ashes. Pieces of crumbling wood, and very large nails, were mixed with some of these mortal relics, and in more, the bones were naked and without covering.<sup>17</sup>

The report of fragments of inhumed bones apparently accompanied by a Roman colour-coated bowl and fragments of coarse ware pottery, possibly fourth century in date, in the footings of a new house being built in 1955<sup>18</sup> might belong to the same group. There is an unconfirmed report of the finding of a lead coffin in the part of Western Avenue that is on the north side of The Dip in the 1950s, containing the remains of a nineteen-year-old boy, which is said to have been taken to Ipswich Museum. Two undated inhumations were found at 24 Western Avenue in 1975.<sup>19</sup>

Many, if not all, of these might be third or fourth-century Roman inhumation burials as the bulk of the recorded material is clearly Roman. However it is possible that some of these burials were inserted by Anglo-Saxons into the remains of Roman buildings, as some of the finds from the area are probably Anglo-Saxon burial offerings.<sup>20</sup> This is a situation reported in other places. At Long Melford excavation in 1997 revealed probable third or fourth-century burials, including a stone coffin, cutting through first-century features, suggesting a decrease in size or change of focus of the earlier small town, assuming the burials were on the edge of the later town. A similar reduction might have taken place at Felixstowe. It is of course possible that some of these burials are part of a medieval cemetery related to the church of SS Peter and Paul or to the priory of St Felix which was originally housed inside the Roman walls of Walton Castle.

#### POSSIBLE ROAD TO WALTON CASTLE

It is possible, but unproven, that at some stage a Roman road was constructed leading directly to Walton Castle, marked by a short stretch of Quinton's Lane east of TM310354 which might be extended along an existing footpath to run just south of the church. It might then follow 'the road to Breathings' where a map of the estate of Mr William Toaklove surveyed by Robert Ralph in 1766 shows Breathings as a field at the end of the road south of the church and the 'old footpath across Great Long Dole'.<sup>21</sup> A reference in the medieval court rolls might record the destruction of the eastward section: the record of the court of Friday after 29 June 1473 says that 'John Pope tenant of the lord of the old priory (*veterem prioratum*) ploughed up a way there'.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps he was creating the field known as Great Long Dole. The diverted route of this 'way' may be the 'old lane' which Rathborne notes on page 533 of his 1613 survey as marking the west and north boundaries of Great Long Dole, which was later taken into the Park.<sup>23</sup> If so, it was diverted from a direct west-east line from the south side of Old Felixstowe church to Walton Castle in order to follow the edge of Reed Pond Valley. On the general issue of Roman roads in Felixstowe we might note that David Elisha Davy wrote on Wednesday 15 July 1829:

Returned to Walton, and putting up the Gig, we walked to examine the Old Hall ... Having dined we drove to Falkenham Church, where we soon obtained the necessary notes; this is about three miles

from Walton, and I was rather surprized to find how good the roads are. I knew that the soil hereabouts was as good for corn as any in the County, but I was not prepared to find the *communications* so excellent.<sup>24</sup>

Perhaps they were Roman roads, which would explain this and the comment that ‘the stones of it [Walton Castle] were carried into all parts of Felixstow, Walton and Trimley; and footpaths were paved with them, on both sides of the roads.’<sup>25</sup> The story that stone for the roads came from the castle may have been invented to explain the high quality of the roads as noted by Davy. If they really were Roman roads kept in use, they might have been repaired over the years with stones robbed from the castle.

#### THE WESTERN EDGE OF THE TOWN

Evidence for the western edge of the Roman town has been recovered from a number of sites on or near the cliff along Cliff Road and Golf Road (Fig. 71). Finds include roof and box flue tiles as well as samian and other pottery. Coins have been recorded from building sites and from the beach below the cliffs. There is a record of finds on the cliff edge north of Brackenbury fort in 1920 by H.C.E. Hopegood, who examined the remains of a Roman deposit which included a crossbow brooch of about AD 300,<sup>26</sup> found with many jawbones in an apparent pit 3ft 6ins deep in which wood ashes and occasional coal ashes were plentiful. There were coins of Tetricus and Postumus of about AD 269. The finest crossbow brooches were made of gold, but even bronze ones probably indicate somebody with official status. They were worn prominently, pinning a man’s cloak at the shoulder, as is known from paintings and mosaics, and tend to be found in burials of the fourth century. Two crossbow brooches from Felixstowe are on display in Ipswich Museum and there is at least one in the British Museum.

In the nineteenth century two small excavations were carried out on the cliff edge, probably somewhere near Brackenbury. The precise locations will certainly have been destroyed by later coastal erosion. In 1906 the Revd Professor George Henslow wrote:

I do not think my father published any ‘Note’ upon our joint discovery of a sort of kitchen midden in the London clay cliff near Felixstowe in 1843. We had been getting crag-shells, sharks’ teeth, and ‘whale’s ears’ etc. and wandered on towards Bawdsey River [the Deben]. A little to the south of it we came across quantities of bits of rough pottery, bones, cores of deer-horns and I dug out a large ‘pocket’ of the common snail, *Helix aspersa*, which was supposed to have been a substitute for *H. pomatia* as an article of food. Further on a human bone protruded. In searching by digging around it numerous rusty nails turned up, probably indicating some sort of coffin, but close to the skull was an elegant red earthenware vase. We brought this and the skull home. My father placed them both, together with a water-colour drawing of the vase, painted by my uncle, the late G. Jenyns Esq., in the Ipswich Museum. I understand from the present curator that the vase has been sent to the ‘local archaeological museum at Christchurch’ [Christchurch Mansion]. Why it has been removed I do not know.<sup>27</sup>

The ‘vase’ was recorded by Ivan Moore in 1948, when he described it as a ‘red bottle’.<sup>28</sup>

In 1897 Frank Woolnough, curator of Ipswich Museum, and Gerald Arbuthnot from London excavated a Roman rubbish pit on the edge of the cliffs at Felixstowe. After he found Roman material exposed by a cliff fall at Felixstowe, Arbuthnot

Went to Felixstowe for the day last Thursday, met Capt. Pretyman’s agent and have got his sanction to cut away the cliff to a point within 4–5 feet of the railing and to dig in the debris at the foot ... It would probably take at least 2 clear days and a couple of workmen with spades and pickaxes would be required.<sup>29</sup>

According to the Minute Book of the Ipswich Scientific Society on 3 November 1897:

Mr Frank Woolnough introduced to notice a case of Roman remains, which, in company with Mr Arbuthnot the London archaeologist, he had recently unearthed on the edge of the cliff at Felixstowe. They had apparently, he said, hit upon an ancient U-shaped midden which was full of fragments of Romano-British pottery, of the bones of oxen, sheep and pigs and the shells of whelks, periwinkles, and oysters by the peck. The piecing of the pottery together was a task requiring time and patience, which they had not nearly got through with as yet, seeing that they had about a couple of bushels of fragments besides those exhibited in the case. The sight of some oyster shells sticking out of the cliff gave the first clue to the find and it was hoped that Captain Pretyman would give his consent to a continuance of their researches. Mr. H. Miller said that as a boy he used to pick up bits of old pottery at Felixstowe together with bones and a few coins. These relics were found in pieces of the cliff that had tumbled down.<sup>30</sup>

They found large pieces of samian and Castor ware vessels and black cooking pots among 'about a couple of bushels of fragments'. It seems that a second excavation was carried out in later November or early December, when the finds included a silver denarius of Caracalla, c. AD 202, samian ware, Castor ware and coarse wares (Figs 73, 74 and 75).<sup>31</sup>

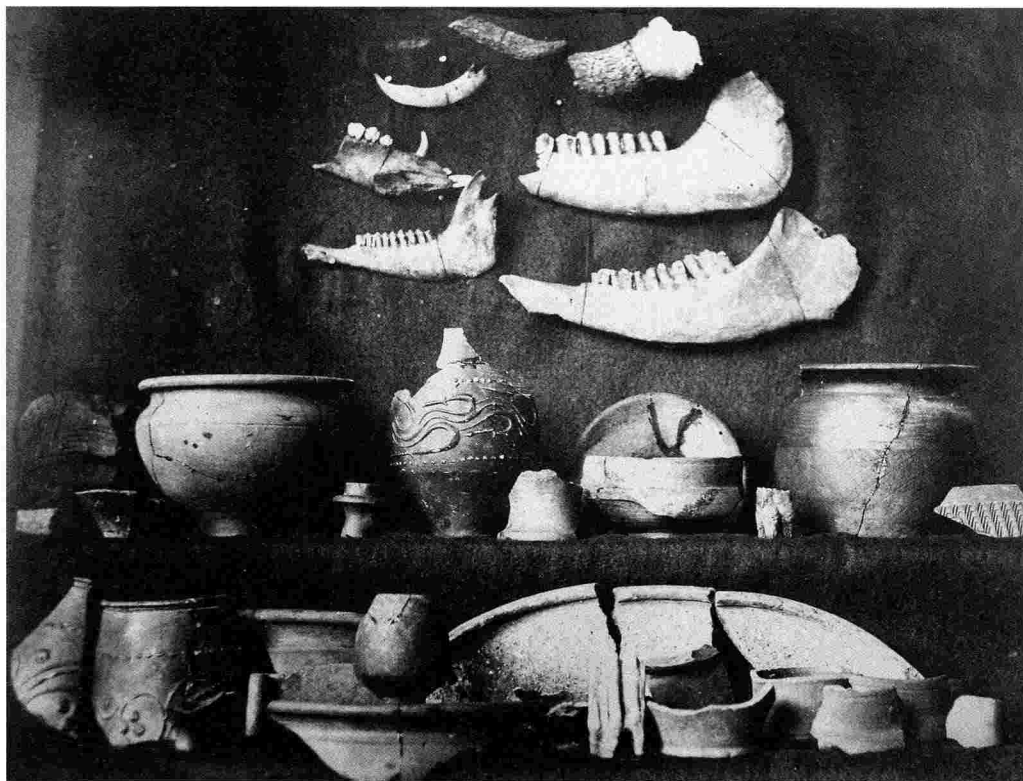


FIG. 73 – 'A few of the specimens excavated at Felixstowe by Gerald Arbuthnot and F. Woolnough in 1897. Samian Ware, Slipware, Grey pottery &c.' (by permission of the Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich, ref. Woolnough Collection, vol. 75, Felixstowe, p. 7).

In 1960 Felixstowe Archaeological Movement (FAM), a short-lived group of students, carried out a limited excavation immediately north of Cliff Road near St George's Road.<sup>32</sup> It should have provided some useful information about this area, but the record is sadly



confused. They found a compressed shingle road surface with ditches. This was attributed to the Middle Ages on the basis of some pieces of medieval pottery, but the relationship of these to the surface is not clear. We cannot say whether the road was Roman or later. The description of a 'rubbish pit' with Roman material below medieval suggests some of the stratigraphy was intact in this area. It is unlikely that we will make better sense of this FAM report given the problems found by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS) nearby at Brackenbury Battery in making sense of the 'brickearth' layer, looking like natural but containing archaeology. They comment that excavations and monitoring of construction trenches throughout this area of Felixstowe have revealed a fine silty subsoil, probably a loess deposit, in which archaeological features are virtually invisible and only confirmed by the presence of artefacts. Later activities, including a First World War military railway, might confuse things further. To get the two 9.2' howitzers to Brackenbury Fort during the First World War a lightly-laid standard gauge railway was laid beside High Road East from the sidings at the Town Station. The line remained throughout the First World War and was used to transport munitions to the fort.

Church Road, Old Felixstowe, was apparently constructed across the remains of buildings with stone footings. In his manuscript notes Samuel Wall says that writing in the *East Anglian Miscellany* on 29 July 1933 he mentioned that 'a hundred years ago there existed various pieces of walls and buttresses on the different plots of ground extending from the field below Felixstowe Church to Walton Street' (his source is probably the 'Guide to Felixstowe' published by J. Haddock c. 1872, which on p. 29 refers to 'vast walls and buttresses') and very shortly after this some men who were connecting a new house to the drainage system in Church Road called his attention to a wall below the surface of the road. Built of septaria, it measured 18ins in width. It crossed the line of Church Road, and Wall suggested it was probably Norman, not Roman, but earlier than Church Road, and refers to another wall below High Road traced for about 10yds. It is difficult to account for a wall under the road. If it was directly under the presumed Roman road, might it be some sort of stone-lined culvert either for drainage or as part of a water supply system? He may be right in suggesting these walls are medieval but a Roman origin seems probable and engineered water systems are not uncommon in Roman contexts. In 1935 Wall reported that when a trench was dug where Cliff Road merges into High Road at the corner of Church Road it revealed, about 2ft under ground, 'the foundations of an old building the materials of which are septaria, brick and rubble'.<sup>33</sup> Apparently they uncovered a 20ft length of wall foundation 2ft high which he thought was Roman. A silver denarius, probably of Severus Alexander (AD 222), was found opposite Marcus Road, also broken pieces of porringers with flanged lips and other potsherds and the foot of a cinerary urn.



FIG. 74 – A Roman beaker found at Felixstowe (Ipswich Museum 1920.50.3 © Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service).

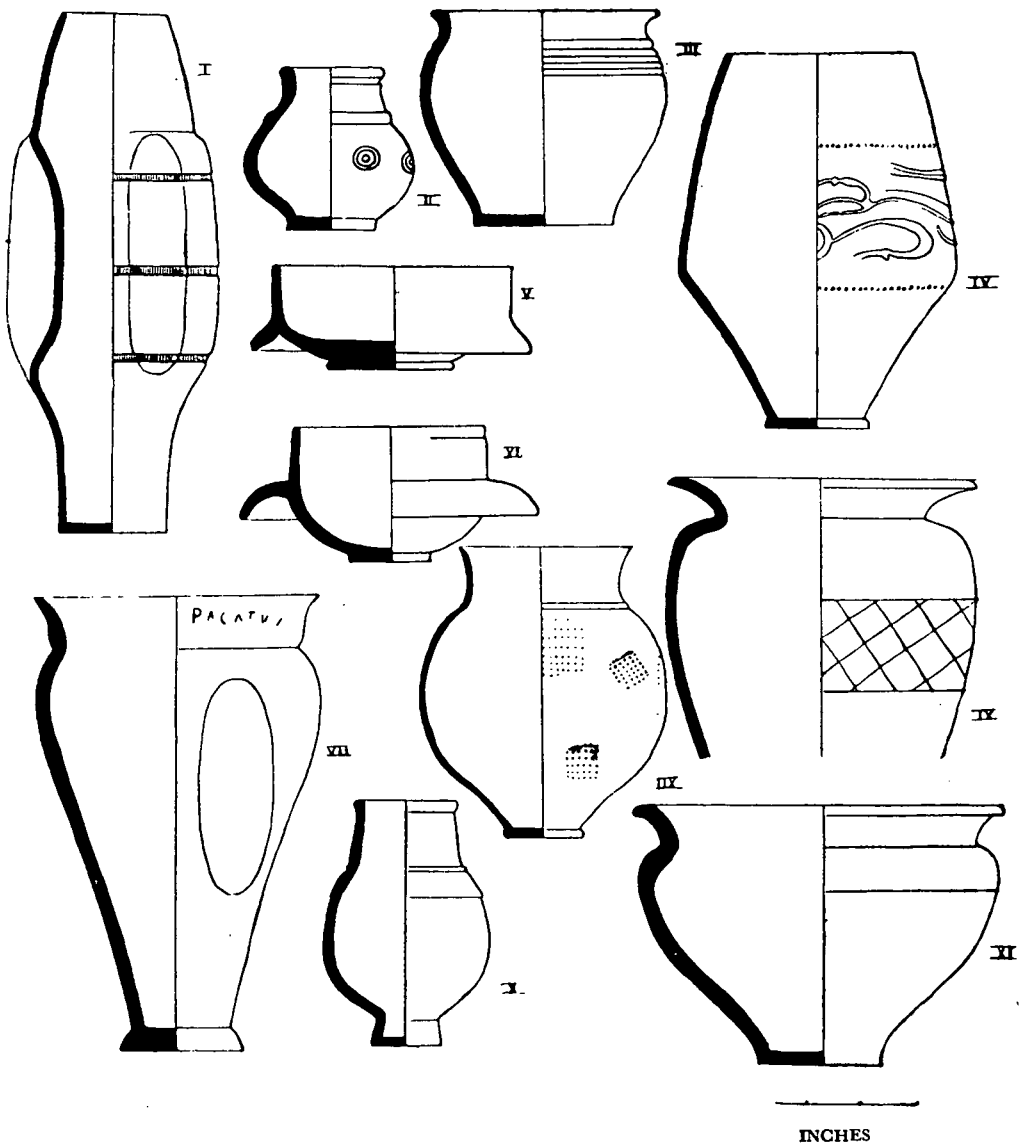


FIG. 75 – Some Roman pottery from Felixstowe at Ipswich Museum, drawn by Ivan Moore for his article on Roman Suffolk in our *Proceedings* for 1948.

#### BRACKENBURY: POSSIBLE TEMPLE

An evaluation trench excavation in 1995, at the site of the Brackenburg Battery near the edge of the cliff, did produce clear evidence of significant activity in the Roman period. The bulk of the Roman pottery belonged to the second and third centuries, with at least two sherds from the fourth century. The second-century finds show that Roman period occupation here started before the introduction of Saxon Shore forts. The presence of a large ditch dated by pottery finds to the Early Saxon period of such size as 'more commonly enclosed areas of activity, while the pottery and mussel shells ... suggest occupation in the vicinity' indicates

continuity beyond the end of Roman government. Substantial ditches were found, and the large quantities of domestic refuse in these included a 'fairly high percentage of fine wares including imported Samian and Rhenish wares', suggesting that this Roman occupation was of relatively high status. There was also a fragment of a face pot in an unusual orange fabric (Fig. 76). Structural evidence was confined to a single large post-hole of which the post-pipe (decayed remains of the actual bottom section of the post) was clearly identified. The packing of Roman tile (including fragments of tegula and imbrex and one partially burnt piece of box tile), septaria and fragments of German lava quern suggest a Roman date. The surviving stratigraphy did not include the level from which the post pit had been dug so it could be post-Roman, but the use of tile to pack the post looks more like Roman-period work. One piece of tile in the packing had been burnt so could come from a building destroyed by fire, but this could as easily have happened during the Roman period as at its end. The fragments of roof tile suggest there had been a substantial building here.<sup>34</sup>

The excavator suggested that this post 'may indicate the presence of a substantial aisled building on the site', but it is unsafe to do more than speculate on the evidence of one post-hole. If occupation of the site was domestic, this post probably formed part of a substantial building. If it was some sort of religious enclosure or precinct, then it is as likely to represent a single free-standing post of ritual use (a totem pole) as to be part of a temple building. The presence of fine pottery, hardly the accompaniment of a shepherd or stockman's snack, and the large post argue against the ditches marking enclosures for stock. We are left to speculate whether the remains come from a private residence or perhaps a commercial warehouse related to the port (hence the imported fine wares and pieces of quern) or a religious complex. Reported finds of objects with religious significance, coins and a possible ritual shaft would support the last thesis if they could be firmly related to this location, but most seem only to be noted as from the edge of the cliff or just 'from Felixstowe'.

It has been pointed out that although no Roman temples have been identified at Felixstowe, the parish has produced an exceptional number of religious items related to Mercury, Hercules as an infant, Mars, Atys (decoration on a steelyard), also an eagle, a goat, a leaf and a miniature bronze column.<sup>35</sup> Samuel Wall also refers to finds of a figure of 'a little golden man' and 'a little image, or figure, which the men called "Diana of the Ephesians"', an intriguing description which makes it all the more unfortunate Wall failed to acquire it.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps the 'little golden man' was similar to the unusual Early Anglo-Saxon silver figurine from Carlton Colville<sup>37</sup> which was partly gilded, so it might belong with the post-Roman material. Wall also records a portion of gold chain coming from the cliffs near Brackenbury during severe weather in 1870, along with other gold and silver ornaments.<sup>38</sup> This is probably a reflection of the size of the town here, although it is possible that the source of these finds was the temple enclosure proposed as an explanation of the evidence at Brackenbury. This could also be the source of

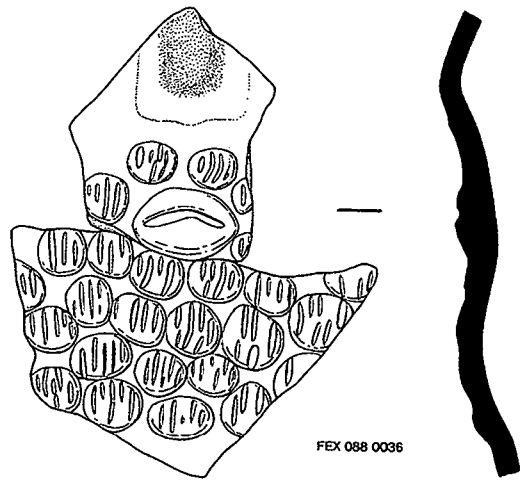


FIG. 76 – A fragment of a Roman face pot in an unusual orange fabric found during the excavation at Brackenbury in 1995 (drawn by Donna Wreathall © Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service).

some or many of the coins (gold, silver and bronze) which could have been religious offerings. It would be useful if we knew the precise location of what appears to be a ritual shaft said to have been found near Brackenbury fort. RCHME records 'on 28 May 1873 Mr Gervas Holmes discovered, on the cliff top, about a mile north of Felixstowe, a hearth with burnt and broken bones about 4ft below the surface. Beneath the hearth was a floor of red crag about 18ins thick below which was a well 30ins square and about 8ft deep, with sides of well preserved wood. At the bottom of the well was a Roman vase of 'Castor' ware, containing earth and acorns, but there was no sign of calcined bones. The vase is 7½ ins high, of brownish red ware with concave sides, most likely a drinking vessel.'<sup>39</sup> This does sound like a ritual shaft of the type recorded by Rosalind Niblett at St Albans.<sup>40</sup> Similar features have been recorded at Ashill in Norfolk and at Dales Road near the Castle Hill villa complex in Ipswich.<sup>41</sup> As there was only one pot recorded at Felixstowe it might just have been a well, but if we accept the argument for a temple here the presence of a ritual shaft becomes more likely.

At present this is the highest point on the cliffs, and if this position stood out as much before the considerable coastal erosion it would be a suitably imposing site for a temple within a ditched rectangular enclosure, but such use remains a matter of speculation. There might be a case for continued or renewed activity here after the Roman period if we link the Early Saxon pottery and the reports of skeletons found during the digging of military trenches at Brackenbury in 1939.<sup>42</sup> With them were rings and Roman pottery, but not necessarily associated with the burials which may be later insertions. The most likely interpretation seems to be that there was occupation of relatively high status here during the Roman period, and the preservation of the archaeological deposits means that one day positive evidence about its true nature might come from a proper excavation. From the same area the finds from a midden uncovered just beyond the eastern boundary of Brackenbury Fort (TM319 355), approximately two feet down and excavated by FAM, were examined by Judith Plouviez in 1997. She described many sherds as 'small', 'abraded' or 'undiagnostic', but the pottery does span the entire range from first to fourth centuries and includes samian although many pieces are tiny.<sup>43</sup>

Various Roman finds are recorded south of Brackenbury and south-east of the High Road, inland from Golf Road, in the area of Marcus Road and further inland between Priory Road and Maybush Lane. They are also noted along the present line of Cliff Road where it is a direct continuation of High Road East, beyond Church Road and along the cliff to number 61 just past the site of Brackenbury Barracks. In assessing the significance of these various finds the modern road names can introduce misleading distinctions between adjacent locations. Finds are also noted from Dunkery House, which was demolished to make way for Brackenbury Barracks, and along Golf Road at Bracklinn (incorrectly recorded as 'Brackham'). Further along the cliff immediately to the west of Martello Place in February 1936, according to Samuel Wall, a quantity of pieces of Roman pottery was dug out of a piece of land 'on which a house called Uyo has since been built'.<sup>44</sup> Uyo stands in Martello Lane off Golf Road, so there is evidence of Roman activity here. Eight small trenches in advance of building in the grounds of Martello Place, between the cliff and Golf Road, near Maybush Lane, only revealed three ditches, of which one contained two sherds of Roman pottery, some animal bone and oyster shell.<sup>45</sup> All the trenches revealed at least a metre depth of 'yellow-brown clayey silt' which was not natural subsoil as it included a sherd of medieval pottery. This layer sealed the ditches and may be similar to the 'dirty yellow brickearth' which sealed the features at Brackenbury as described above and was 'considered to be archaeological because of the finds recovered from it including Roman pottery, tile and prehistoric worked flint'.<sup>46</sup> The results of this evaluation are inconclusive apart from revealing that there are ditches of the Roman period which might border fields or houses. These could be features of

landscape management related to the occupation recorded at Foxgrove Gardens (see below) and Brackenbury or to some development between these two.

#### FOXGROVE GARDENS: AN IMPRESSIVE HOUSE

Some 700m south-west of Brackenbury, Foxgrove Gardens has produced evidence of a substantial Roman building including septaria footings of two walls 18ins wide, tesserae from a mosaic floor, window glass, painted wall plaster and roof tiles (*tegulae* and *imbrices*). Box flue tiles suggest a hypocaust heating system, showing a Roman building of substance and status once stood here. It is ironic that the most solid evidence for a substantial Roman structure in Felixstowe was not produced during a professional excavation by SCCAS or recorded in any scientific manner. Its discovery is noted in the papers of the amateur FAM in 1961 and 1962.<sup>47</sup> The first mention of finds in this vicinity appears rather earlier in an article by Samuel Wall in the *Felixstowe Times* of 26 February 1938, in which he noted that many fragments of Roman pottery were dug out during the construction of the Foxgrove Gardens road in 1925. Some finds were given to Ipswich Museum in 1933 and 1958,<sup>48</sup> as were three second-century beakers from the foundations of a new house nearby in Foxgrove Lane in 1956.<sup>49</sup> Subsequent finds in the garden of 11 Foxgrove Gardens by the owner's son resulted in a more thorough excavation undertaken by the FAM. Their report is incomplete and difficult to interpret. The main discoveries are contained in the FAM Bulletins and in a private letter written by the owner of the property at the time.<sup>50</sup> These confirm the presence of building material, including decorated wall plaster together with walls and at least one hearth, which was about 12ins in diameter and might be an oven or hypocaust stokehole. There were a couple of pits (one 2ft wide and over 8ft long) containing building debris and pottery and a great deal of pottery. This is the best evidence we have in Felixstowe for an actual building of the Roman period.

A first-century bronze brooch of dolphin type suggests occupation here started early, as do a few fragments of first-century samian and Belgic ware. This could relate to the possible Late Iron Age/early Roman features noted in the former grounds of Felixstowe Girls College behind Foxgrove Gardens during an evaluation excavation in 1996. The bulk of the dated pottery seems to come from the second and third centuries. FAM notes the finding of a coin (*antoninianus*) of Carausius at 1 Foxgrove Gardens. It is interesting, in the light of the little evidence from the nearby evaluation exercise in the former grounds of Felixstowe Girls College, to read that 'the site almost exhausted itself at the fence dividing our garden from next door.'<sup>51</sup> An indication of which side next door would have been nice, but the FAM report seems to indicate that it extended into the garden of number 9. More recently, Roman debris, including tiles, was uncovered during the digging of a swimming pool in the garden of number 9. Beyond question this was a major site of domestic occupation – a building of status. It was probably a substantial house on the edge of the town in a high enough position to command a view of the sea to the south. It may be significant that the area encompassing Foxgrove Gardens is a large rectangle on the 1881 OS map and on the tithe map of 1845, named as Fox Grove in the tithe apportionment.<sup>52</sup> The lane marking its southern boundary is named on Isaac Johnson's map of 1784 as 'Fosgrave Lane' which might record a Roman ditch (*fossa*) on this line (Fig. 77). It is noticeable that the field system in this area on both sides of the High Road is largely rectangular. The report of stone walls and buttresses noted by Samuel Wall in some of these fields north of High Road might be relevant. If the High Row Farm/Maybush area is treated as one block subdivided, there is a row of three roughly equal and roughly rectangular blocks: Foxgrove, High Row and Priory Farm. This might be significant.

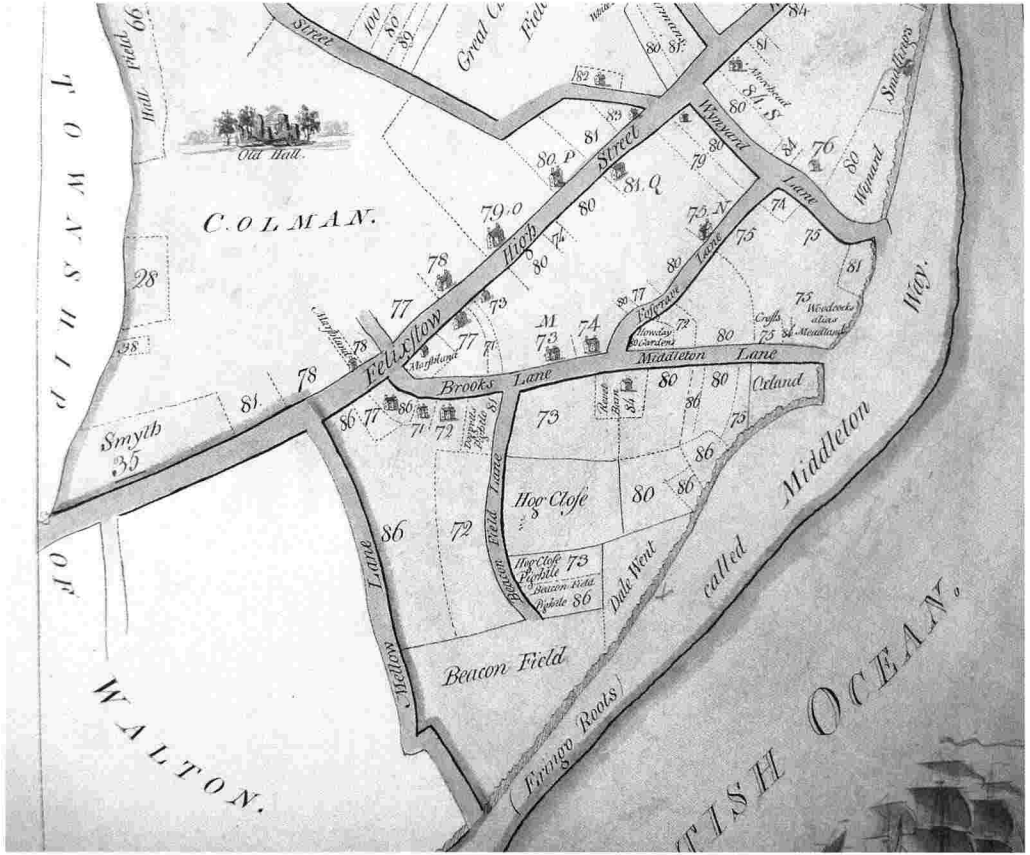


FIG. 77 – Isaac Johnson’s map of ‘The Estate of the Hon. George Nassau in Felixstowe, Walton and Trimley, 1784’ (reproduced with kind permission of the Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich, and the depositor, ref. HA 119/435/26, tab. XI).

#### THE SIZE OF THE TOWN

As there is no evidence of Roman activity in the area between Foxgrove Gardens and Martello Place or Brackenbury, and at least one negative evaluation excavation in that area,<sup>53</sup> we should probably see this substantial building as a detached residence outside the town. Adding the finds from the Park to those extending down Golf Road suggests occupation on a significant scale in an area extending over half a mile north to south. Even if we exclude Foxgrove, but allow for a significant area to the east destroyed by coastal erosion, the settlement is likely to have extended over far more than the 18 hectares (45 acres) suggested by Judith Plouviez.<sup>54</sup> It might rival the size of Combretovium (Baylham Mill, Coddensham), at an estimated 40 hectares (100 acres) the largest recorded Roman town in Suffolk. The poor preservation of evidence presents serious difficulties but we might note that even when Barry Cunliffe carried out a thorough excavation of a significant area of the interior of Portchester Castle the evidence for the Roman period was very limited and unclear.<sup>55</sup> We should not be surprised that we have problems in the absence of any proper excavation when we are dealing with areas outside the fort itself. At Brancaster the evidence from air photographs and excavation offers an interesting comparison regarding the extent and nature of occupation outside a Saxon Shore fort, particularly when we note that it only reveals part of the extent.<sup>56</sup>

To the west of Foxgrove Gardens there are a few reports of scattered finds, but no recorded concentrations. To the south of the known Roman sites at Foxgrove Gardens and Martello Place there are few recorded finds, but the likely area is covered by the development of the shops and houses of the first phase of modern Felixstowe in the second half of the nineteenth century. This may have proceeded without archaeological evidence being noticed and we should note that many reported finds are simply said to have been made 'in Felixstowe'. It is possible that there was a Roman harbour just south of Cobbold's Point at the mouth of the stream now marked by Brook Lane, but there is no evidence for this.

#### POSSIBLE ROMAN HARBOURS

As I suggested above it is most likely that the main harbour was in the sheltered inlet of The Dip adjacent to Walton Castle (Fig. 78). This would have additional shelter from the open sea, if the whole haven was protected by a promontory much longer than the modern Naze. Today ships leaving the Felixstowe and Harwich docks have to make a long diversion northward

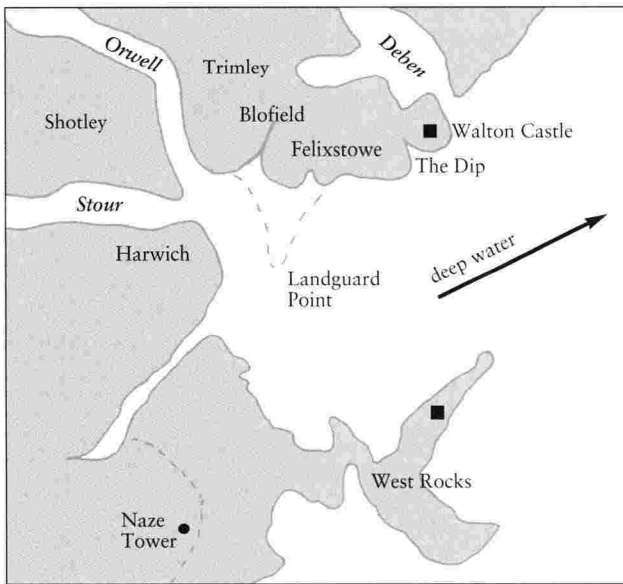


FIG. 78 – Felixstowe: the Roman haven

parallel to the coast to avoid an area of shallow water. Much of this was probably above water in Roman times, extending several miles beyond the Naze to the area now known as West Rocks. This may have been a promontory listed by the geographer Ptolemy, who wrote his description of the known world in Greek in the second century AD. Moving south along the east coast of Britain he proceeds from the mouth of the river Gariennus, which is generally accepted as the River Yare, to a projection or headland (Greek *exoche*) followed by the mouth of the river Eidumanis, which may be the River Blackwater. Unfortunately this identification of the Blackwater

is not certain, but if it is accepted there seems a strong case for the *exoche* being West Rocks.

As we pointed out in the article on Walton Castle, it is very possible that there was a second Roman fort on West Rocks incorporating Roman tiles in its structure.<sup>57</sup> West Rocks was the source of much septaria for the 'Roman cement' manufacturers and many smacks were dredging here between about 1845 and the 1870s. This doubtless reduced the height of the rocks, removing some of the septaria in the Roman masonry and simply discarding any tiles. They did not remove it all, as in the early part of the twentieth century a diver who was working on the sea bed near West Rocks reported seeing what he thought were Roman columns amongst white seaweed.<sup>58</sup> This might be part of some monumental Roman structure, or perhaps the cargo of a wrecked Roman ship.

There may have been a separate harbour on the River Deben near finds recorded from a property on the edge of Ferry Lane opposite the Golf Club House, so north of the Shore fort.

Here in 1961 Miss Jeffery reported that a Gas Board trench to Red House revealed a row of 'mudstone' piles 2–3ft. long by 10ins square under the south hedge-bank for 10yds with bases 1ft 6ins to 2ft below ground level, of which the west end of the row was found.<sup>59</sup> This interpretation assumes that the Deben estuary covered the present area of the golf course and Felixstowe Marshes before the construction of the sea wall, or that a substantial creek reached this point through the marshes as does a modern ditch. Sam Newton interprets the later name of the Deben estuary, Goseford, as deriving from Goose Fjord suggesting Scandinavians saw it as an attractive fjord.

It remains possible, but unproven, that there was a route to a harbour at the original mouth of the River Orwell by the present line of Garrison Lane, if the edge of the river was at the foot of the cliff at The Ordnance below Wadgate. Alternatively, Maidstone Road and Grange Road would lead to the foot of Peewit Hill, now marked by the roundabout at the main entrance to Felixstowe Docks from the Dock Spur Road (Walton Avenue). A harbour at either of these locations would provide direct access by water up the river to Ipswich and onward to Combretovium, and via the River Stour and Mistley to the colonia of Camulodunum (Colchester). The naming of Maidstone might signify the presence of a 'Great Stone Road', that is a paved Roman road, if the original form was *Maistana* for *magna*, meaning great in Latin and *stana* for stone, although it could refer to a single boulder or standing stone.

Outside the town there may have been a pottery making works in the area of Cow Pasture Farm where there are reports of a scatter of Roman greyware pottery extending over 150yds with a more intense concentration of sherds which may indicate the actual site of kilns. 'Shovelfuls of pottery' are said to have been unearthed here when digging a land drain trench in 1945.<sup>60</sup> From the Grove valley to the east the farm can be approached by a raised causeway suggestive of Roman construction. Only a narrow strip survives which might be remains of a solid agger running west from the Grove valley. If projected eastward it runs into Hyems Lane. There is a report of Roman material on the eastern edge of the Grove and a single coin of Constantine.<sup>61</sup> A small amount of poorly recorded Roman material found when houses were built in the area of Colneis Road might represent a 'manuring scatter' on arable fields outside the town.<sup>62</sup>

#### WALTON BURIALS AND OCCUPATION

Samuel Wall recorded evidence of Roman burials in the Garrison Lane area.<sup>63</sup> This included a number of cinerary urns and other pots from Fairfield Avenue and Glenfield Avenue found in 1936/8. Associated finds included a bone pin 4ins long with carved eagle on its head from Fairfield Avenue. There was a second-century cinerary urn with calcined bones, buried 2ft down; an urn with bones 18ins deep; and a 'folded' grey pot 18ins deep in Fairfield Avenue. Wall noted two grey pots from Exeter Road, one being a jar buried much deeper at 5ft, while the other was a grey urn found at 18ins deep but 'there were no bones in this urn'. There was also a dump of oyster shells. Basil Brown learned from Mr Meehan, the Felixstowe surveyor, that he had obtained three other 'cinerary urns' found in Exeter Road, one 'containing burnt bones', together with a pan-shaped vessel and also a piece of late third-century samian 'a few feet away but at a lower level'.<sup>64</sup> These might indicate a cemetery on the western edge of a small roadside settlement in the Walton area. Reports of unused Roman tiles from Pound Field behind Round House, Walton in 1934 may point to the site of a tile works outside the settlement. In this area the main road from Ipswich makes its only significant change of alignment. This was probably dictated by the need to skirt the head of the stream that flows through The Grove and into the King's Fleet (the upper part of this valley is now marked by the first part of Garrison Lane). The corridor of high ground between the valleys feeding the



Deben and Orwell is remarkably narrow through Trimley and Walton. However the line of High Road from Old Felixstowe seems to be continued by Seaton Road which heads towards the site at Blofield Hall. This is in the valley of the Byle Fleet stream, which ran into the River Orwell, and must have been an attractive inlet sheltered from the estuary. It is now obscured by Felixstowe Docks but the side of the valley is followed by the ‘Dock Spur Road’ of the A14. Excavation by SCCAS in 1998/9 revealed a large area of settlement in the pre-Roman Iron Age and the early Roman period. This included an Iron Age round house and a possible early Roman rectangular building with ground beams and posts as well as ‘groups of post-holes which probably represent further buildings’. This was related to an area of Iron Age and Roman fields and what might be a Roman temple.<sup>65</sup> It was interpreted as a farm, pleasantly sited looking towards the River Orwell, but this stream would be the obvious location for a sheltered harbour at which goods could be transferred between sea-going ships and river barges.

ROMAN COINS AS EVIDENCE

Felixstowe coin finds extend across the whole range from pre-Conquest Republican issues to the end of Roman government in Britain, and there were significant numbers of high value gold coins as well as large numbers of bronze small change (Fig. 79). G.R. Clarke’s *History of Ipswich* (1830) lists a large number of Roman coins found at Walton and Felixstowe then in

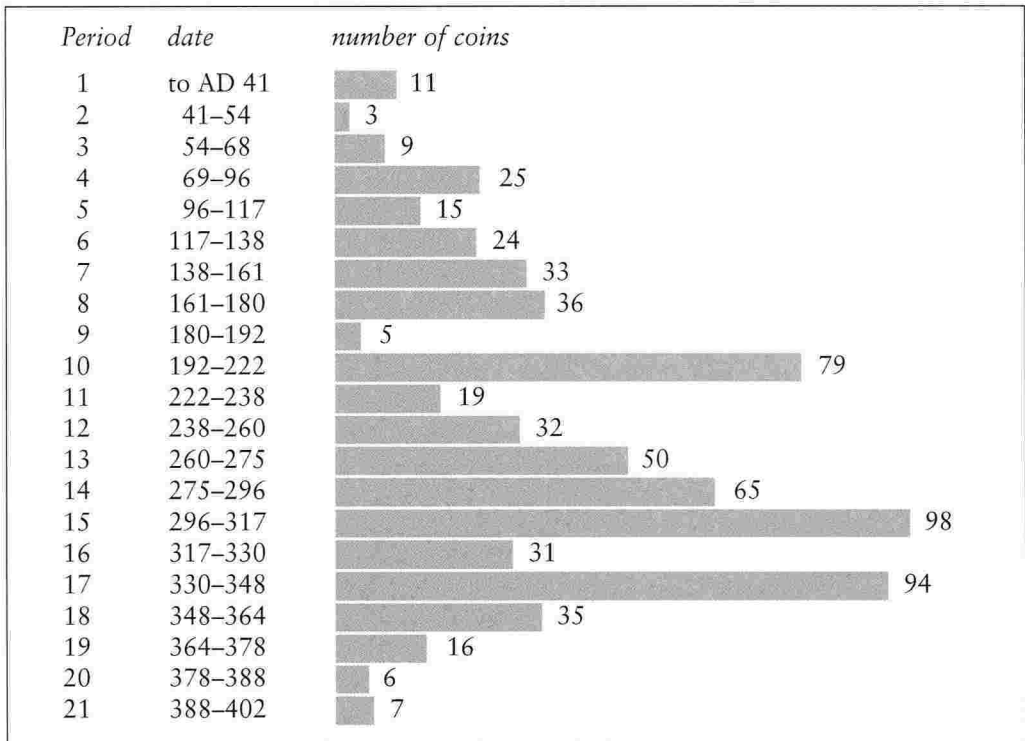


FIG. 79 – A graph of recorded Roman coins from Felixstowe. Note: this is based on a minimum number of coins which only includes those with reliable references and excludes possible duplicates. It is not based on a ‘closed set’ from a single excavation or a single type of record. The distribution of coins between periods 15 and 18 appears anomalous compared to other locations, but this may be the result of unreliable records for Felixstowe, making it unclear where some coins described as ‘Constantine’ should be placed.

the possession of 'a lady of Ipswich', including issues of various emperors from Vespasian to Gratian. There have been a number of other significant coin finds, some of which may be from Walton Castle itself, but more recent finds clearly come from some distance (at least half a mile) inland from the castle site. It is important to note that the recording of finds is selective. We do not even know the criteria by which Myers chose the 420 coins for his collection made during the final erosion of the castle in the 1740s, far less the nature or actual number of the bronze coins with which Mrs Thicknesse decorated the walls of her cottage at Cobbold's Point in the 1750s.<sup>66</sup> Samuel Wall tells of children 'skimming' many coins out to sea in the nineteenth century. So far it has been possible to determine dates for 693 coins. With regard to the early issues (11 dated before AD 41) we may note Richard Reece's comment that 'Republican silver continued in common use until withdrawn by Trajan soon after 100', so they support evidence of activity in the first century but not necessarily before the Roman conquest. The fairly high figure of 25 coins in the period 69–96 might indicate a revival of activity after the rebellion of Boudica. There is a peak of 79 coins in the period 192–222. This represents 20 per cent of all the coins recorded up to 296, when it is surpassed for the first time by a total of 98 for the typically productive period 296–317. It suggests activity in the early third century not seen on other local sites. Reece notes that few coins of this period reached civilian sites, but they were used to pay the army.<sup>67</sup> The coin records for Felixstowe, Caister-on-Sea and Brancaster all suggest activity at this date. Perhaps these key sites on the East Anglian estuaries, which later featured Saxon Shore forts, were already operating as supply bases for the armies in northern Britain and on the Rhine by the time of the campaigns of Septimius Severus. He campaigned into northern Scotland in 208–11, building coastal supply bases in Scotland, and restored Hadrian's Wall, including building a new granary at Corbridge<sup>68</sup> and probably extending the granaries at the South Shields supply base. It was certainly in use at this time as shown by Imperial lead sealings.<sup>69</sup> Felixstowe makes sense as one of the points from which supplies were shipped north under him and his successors.

Brancaster has a small coin 'peak' of 29 (out of total of 764) in the period 193–222, but only two up to AD 69 and only eight in all (including those two) up to AD 117.<sup>70</sup> Caister-on-Sea is less clear, but for finds outside the excavation there are 'abnormally high numbers for period VIII' (192–222) which appear to amount to 14 out of 359, with a further 8 out of 603 from the excavation.<sup>71</sup> Not overwhelming, but sufficient support to be interesting. Darling and Gurney in their report on the Shore fort at Caister-on-Sea suggest that it was probably constructed in the early to mid third century.<sup>72</sup> This might have been either by Septimius Severus as part of the support for his campaigns in northern Britain, or by his son Caracalla ahead of his operations in Germany in 213. Brian Philp considers that the first stone Shore fort at Reculver in Kent was started slightly earlier in AD 185–200 but completed to a revised plan from AD 212–15 under Caracalla.<sup>73</sup> All of these indicate serious activity on the east coast in the early years of the third century. We might expect the military supply system to be supervised by a unit of the British fleet, *Classis Britannica*, and its duties may already have included sending supplies across the North Sea to garrisons on the Rhine, as recorded in AD 359 under the emperor Julian. He had 800 ships built specially to restore the grain transport over the 103-mile route from Britain to the garrison on the River Rhine.<sup>74</sup> This interpretation may be based on limited evidence, but it seems to fit a pattern along our coast.

Coin finds suggest a fairly normal level of activity at Felixstowe during the rest of the third century. Entering the fourth century the peak of recorded coins under Constantine and family is typical of coin loss patterns everywhere so no help either way. There seem to be 98 in 296–317 and 129 in 296–330 plus another 94 in 330–48, although there is some uncertainty about the correct attribution within these Constantinian periods, where the last is normally the highest. The presence of even a few late coins (6 in 378–88 and 7 in 388–402) shows that

activity continues. Loss patterns at this date usually are low as opposed to finds in hoards such as Hoxne. By this time coin loss appears to have stopped at both Hacheston and Wenhaston. Given the presence of the fort at Felixstowe, this continuity is what one would expect. Throughout the Roman occupation it is a significant centre of activity and the records of at least 13 gold coins, with the implication of more, require some explanation. Gold coins are very unusual in Suffolk apart from late fourth-century ones,<sup>75</sup> but only one of nine listed by Fitch in the Dashwood manuscript is an issue of Theodosius. A group recorded at Felixstowe Lodge (later Cobbold's Point) in 1780, said to be about the size of eighteenth-century sovereigns, might also be late Roman solidi, but we are not told how many there were. Others are an aureus of Marcus Aurelius found with a metal detector in 1985; one of Claudius recorded by Hamlet Watling from the collection of Mr Whincopp of Woodbridge; and a gold coin of Constantine in the Myers collection. The other 8 in Fitch's list are gold coins of Nero, Vespasian, Domitian, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Faustina, Licinius and Valentinian. Army-related contexts are the commonest location of such finds outside the large urban centres, so they might relate to the military activities here. Other possible users include money changers for the exchange of gold and silver to copper, or official administrators responsible for tax collection and for payments in gold and silver to the army and local officials. Alternatively they might have belonged to groups of wealthy traders engaged in an import/export business using high value coins for ship-loads of goods. As a possible destination for goods, the Continental site at Domburg near Walcheren on the south-west side of the Rhine estuary by the Scheldt was a trading centre with links to England in both the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods. Mark Hassall reports the finding of over 150 Roman altars at Domburg and at Colijnsplaat (25km from Domburg itself) from shrines to the goddess Nehalennia, some dedicated by merchants, including four declaring themselves as trading with Britain 'negotiator Britannicianus', of whom two were in the pottery trade 'cretarius'.<sup>76</sup> These altars were set up about AD 200 beside the sheltered waters of the Rhine estuary to mark the successful conclusion of trading voyages across the sea. No doubt the traders had paused here on their outward voyage to pray for the protection of this goddess to guide and guard them, promising a new altar if they returned safely. This suggests that their trade was on a significant scale.

#### THE ROLE OF THE PORT

Any or all of this evidence could relate to a military supply base for the northern and Rhine valley armies and/or a major port for continental trade. If trade was with areas outside the Empire (e.g. north of Rhine in particular) it would presumably have to come through an approved port for customs control purposes, and the same port might be used by the military supply organisation (command ordnance depot). This would explain the presence of an apparently remote transshipment point to and from coastal vessels, with possibly some to road transport depending on local arrangements. The Roman Empire is likely to have been autocratic and dogmatic about such matters.

Also indicative of official activity are two Roman lead seals found at Felixstowe and engraved in Roach Smith's *Collectanea Antiqua* as being in the collection of Mr W.S. Fitch of Ipswich.<sup>77</sup> They are also illustrated in the Fitch/Dashwood manuscript. They showed a bull and were apparently marked PB[I] (there is no sign of the I in the drawing in the Fitch/Dashwood Manuscript). Similar examples of these sealings are recorded from Burgh Castle (found on Glebe Marshes by Breydon Water), Brough under Stainmore and Richborough.<sup>78</sup> It is generally accepted that the bull represents the Sixth Legion at York and PBI stands for Provincia Britannia Inferior, that is the province of Lower Britain, which was

governed from York. If so this only indicates contact with Provincia Britannia Inferior, which is not surprising, and there is no need for Felixstowe to be in that province, which was the northern division of Britain based on York. These seals may be taken as supporting evidence for goods being shipped through Roman Felixstowe under some sort of official supervision.

In any case, it is most likely that the significant amount of activity at Felixstowe in the Roman period, starting before an official dimension was added by the construction of the Shore fort, related to a busy port exploiting the estuaries of the rivers Orwell, Stour and Deben. Agricultural produce destined to feed the army or for sale would be brought down the rivers in small boats or barges for transfer to larger sea-going ships which had brought other goods along the coast or across from the Continent. Use of the sea and rivers as highways served by ships was the accepted way to move any bulk goods over long distances. It has been calculated that it was as quick to travel from Felixstowe by sea to the Rhine valley as to go by road to Bury St Edmunds. The Orwell provided direct access at least as far as the significant town and road junction at Combetovium. The Deben would be navigable for small craft as far as the small town at Hacheston, beside Wickham Market. It would also have been easiest to reach Colchester by boat up the River Stour to Mistley, then taking the direct road to the Roman colonia. It is likely that the port at Felixstowe came directly under the administration of the colonia, originally established as a town of retired legionary soldiers. It probably had total control of the northern part of the territory of the Trinovantes after they took part in the revolt led by Boudica in AD 61.

#### AFTER THE ROMANS

In the last years before the end of Roman government in Britain the garrison of Walton Castle might have included troops of Germanic origin from the northern part of Gaul. A distinctive belt slide from Felixstowe in the Fitch Collection is a type with chip-carved decoration that is



FIG. 80 – Finds from Felixstowe.  
*Left: chip-carved belt slide. Right: Middle Saxon strap end (by kind permission of Stanley West).*

believed to have been worn by such German soldiers in the Roman army (Fig. 80).<sup>79</sup> Perhaps a Germanic garrison remained in occupation of Walton Castle after the end of Roman administration. Presumably a local British population caused the later Anglo-Saxon rulers to call the town Walton, if its name can be derived from *weala-tun* for 'settlement of the British', as in the origin of the name Wales. But some prefer *wealh-tun* for 'settlement at the wall', which could refer to the stone fort. A number of other objects typical of the fifth to sixth centuries recorded from Felixstowe and Walton suggest that an early Anglo-Saxon cemetery was created within the area of the Roman settlement. These include two cruciform brooches, a girdle-hanger, two pairs of tweezers, and fragments of two bone combs. The presence of a seventh-century spiral headed pin, an eighth- or ninth-century bronze disc brooch with a backward facing animal design, three ninth-century Middle Saxon strap ends (Fig. 80) and four sceattas (silver coins, some with runic inscriptions) imply continued occupation here.<sup>80</sup> The quality of the Anglo-Saxon finds suggests this port remained active after the end of Roman government in AD 410. There is also a good case for believing that the Shore fort of Walton Castle was the *Dommoc* where St Felix established his bishopric.<sup>81</sup> Presumably extensive coastal erosion finally destroyed the port that must have been the focus of activity in Roman and Saxon times.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article owes much to the work of Sue Toomey and Ann Treweek, and I have benefited from discussions with Alan Baker and Phil Hadwen who were members of the Felixstowe Archaeological Movement in the 1960s. Sue Tod at Felixstowe Museum and the staff of Ipswich Museum have helped over access to the collections in their care. Judith Plouviez has commented on drafts of this paper and it has benefited greatly as a result, but all opinions expressed and any remaining errors are entirely the author's responsibility. Stephen Schwarz of Expression has created the maps and the coin graph.

#### NOTES

- 1 Fairclough and Plunkett 2000, 419.
- 2 Fairclough 2010.
- 3 Loader 2009, 18–20, Fig. 12.
- 4 Hadman *et al.* 1999, Fig. 52.
- 5 S.D. Wall includes a photograph in his album 'Roman and other coins and pottery from Felixstowe and Walton, July 1938' (Felixstowe Museum).
- 6 Hollingsworth 1844, 17.
- 7 SROI, HD603/1/5, p. 849.
- 8 Henslow 1853, 218.
- 9 IM 1921-52.63.
- 10 BM 53.8-15.29.
- 11 *East Anglian Notes and Queries*, NS I (1885), 11.
- 12 BM 81.6-26.9, presented by A.W. Franks in 1881. Usually on display in the BM.
- 13 IM 1920.50.23 said (MS note) to be intact amphora found at Felixstowe, from Mr Whincopp, a Woodbridge dealer in antiquities.
- 14 Moore 1887, 12.
- 15 Probably IM R1940-79.
- 16 Fox 1900, 116.
- 17 Haddock 1878, 31.
- 18 IM card 955-70.
- 19 HER, FEX 042.
- 20 West 1998, *sub* Felixstowe.
- 21 SROI, HD803/2.

- 22 SROI, Felixstowe Priory Rolls 4.7, quoted by Davison 1974, 146.
- 23 SROI, HB8/1/201, 'A Survaie of the Manor or Mannors of Walton cum Trymley and Felixtowe Priorie in the Countie of Suff. ... by Aaron Rathborne' made in 1613.
- 24 Blatchly 1982. Author's italics.
- 25 White 1844, 121, derived from Clarke 1830, 389.
- 26 Note by Hopegood with drawing in IM files (Moore 1948, 172 wrongly calls him 'Hopwood'); verified by Reginald Smith of the BM.
- 27 *Antiquary*, XLII (1906), 283.
- 28 Moore 1948, 172 and Fig. 7, V; IM 1920.50.4.
- 29 Letters in vol. 75 of the Woolnough collection: SROI, S92WOO, vol. 75.
- 30 SROI, GC444/1/3: Minutes 1885-1903.
- 31 Moore 1948, 172 and Fig. 6, illustrates some of the pots: IM 1920-50.3 (Castor beaker); 1920-50.7 (black bowl with flange); 1920-50.44 (black cooking pot).
- 32 *FAM Journal*, 1, pt. 3 (1960) and pt. 4 (SROI, qS Felixstowe 913); also Smedley and Owles 1960.
- 33 *East Anglian Miscellany* (*East Anglian Daily Times*) 1935, 30 (no 9449).
- 34 SCCAS, report 95/7 on FEX 088.
- 35 Moore *et al.* 1988.
- 36 Felixstowe Museum, Wall MSS, Felixstowe, fols 6 and 14.
- 37 Martin *et al.* 2001, 69.
- 38 Wall, handwritten MS, Felixstowe Museum. Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology has 'pieces of gold chain from Felixstowe', 1883.542.
- 39 RCHME Unique Identifier 391218, refs *Archaeol. J.*, 31 (1874), 303 (C. R. Manning) and Coles and Simpson 1968, 264.
- 40 Niblett 1999.
- 41 Robinson and Gregory 1987, 77; Reid Moir 1935, 141.
- 42 MS report at Felixstowe Museum.
- 43 *FAM Bulletin*, May 1962; Plouviez MS 1997 at Felixstowe Museum.
- 44 Felixstowe Museum, Wall MSS, Felixstowe, fol. 8.
- 45 SCCAS Report 94/18.
- 46 SCCAS report 95/7.
- 47 *FAM Bulletins*, September 1961 and March 1962: SROI, qS Felixstowe 913.
- 48 IM 1933.109-110, 1958.61.
- 49 IM, 1956.31; Smedley and Jarvis 1956, 114.
- 50 In possession of Tony Friend of Felixstowe Museum.
- 51 Letter in possession of Tony Friend.
- 52 SROI, Felixstowe tithe map (1845), FDA 96/A1/1b; apportionment, FDA 96/A1/1a.
- 53 Judith Plouviez, pers. comm.
- 54 Plouviez 1995.
- 55 Cunliffe 1975.
- 56 Hinchliffe with Green 1985.
- 57 Fairclough and Plunkett 2000, 448.
- 58 Bacon 1984.
- 59 Smedley and Owles 1961, 95.
- 60 Smedley and Aberg 1957; Smedley and Owles 1961, 95; *FAM Journal*, 1, part 4.
- 61 Smedley and Owles 1959, 28 and 163 (grid ref. corrected from 30423585 in *Proc. Suffolk Inst. Archaeol.*); the coin is no. 48 in S. D. Wall's list.
- 62 Main reference: copy of letter dated 20.4.1938 from E.J. Rudsdale at Colchester Museum to Guy Maynard at IM.
- 63 Wall 1939, 346-48.
- 64 HER, FEX 044.
- 65 Martin *et al.* 2000, 530.
- 66 Fairclough and Plunkett 2000, 446.
- 67 Reece 1987, 17 and 55.
- 68 Collingwood and Wright 1965, 1151.
- 69 Bidwell 1999, 76.
- 70 Hinchliffe with Green 1985.
- 71 Darling with Gurney 1993.
- 72 Darling with Gurney 1993, 242.

- 73 Philp 2005, 216.  
 74 Zosimus III, 5,2 and Eunapius Fr.12, and Ammianus Marcellinus XVIII,2,3 cf. Libanius Oration 18,82.  
 75 Roger Bland as reported by Judith Plouviez.  
 76 Hassall 1978.  
 77 Roach-Smith 1854, 197 and plate XXXII, 1–3.  
 78 Henig 1985, 36.  
 79 IM 962.142, collected by Robert Fitch of Norwich in the nineteenth century and transferred to IM in 1962.  
 80 IM 962.142; West 1998, 37 and Fig. 45; IM 1962.144, 145,151 A and B and 153, B 83-7-2.37; West 1998, 37 and Fig. 45; BM, AS 1856 AO 62746; IM 966.107; IM 962.147, 148A and 962.149; Newman 1996, 217.  
 81 Rigold 1961, 55–59 and Rigold 1974, 97–102.

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### Abbreviations

BM	British Museum
FAM	Felixstowe Archaeological Movement
HER	Suffolk Historic Environment Record
IM	Ipswich Museum
RCHME	Royal Commission on Historical Monuments England
SCCAS	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
SROI	Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich